



culture 21

UCLG Committee

VIRTUAL PEER- LEARNING VISIT **ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE**

NOVEMBER 2020



ACTIVITY

Peer-learning visit

DATES

24, 25, 26 November
2020

PLACE

Virtual visit to
Esch-sur-Alzette,
from Abitibi-
Témiscamingue,
Baie-Mahault,
Barcelona, Elefsina,
Galway, Izmir, Leeds
Malmö and Swansea.



PEER-
LEARNING VISIT



INTRODUCTION

In the context of the **Pilot Cities programme**, an initiative of the **Committee on Culture** of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), in cooperation with **Culture Action Europe**, a peer-learning visit took place on 24, 25 and 26 November 2020, as one of the regular peer-learning activities involving Pilot Cities that the programme has organised since 2015. Due to travel restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the visit took the shape of a virtual seminar organized in three consecutive sessions, which offered simultaneous interpretation between French and English. Videos of the first two sessions are available [here](#) and [here](#).

The sessions focused on different aspects of cultural policies of Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg) and their relation to local sustainable development. They allowed to introduce activities conducted by Esch-sur-Alzette in the context of its work programme as a Pilot City and to provide critical reflection on their implementation; to become familiar with key cultural agents and projects in Esch-sur-Alzette and to learn from their achievements, and to address themes related to the **Culture 21 Actions** toolkit. The sessions focused on four relevant areas, namely the establishment of a solid governance of culture, the enhancement of the economic dimension of culture, the improvement of the coordination between culture and education, and the rethinking of cultural events, specifically the Culture Night.

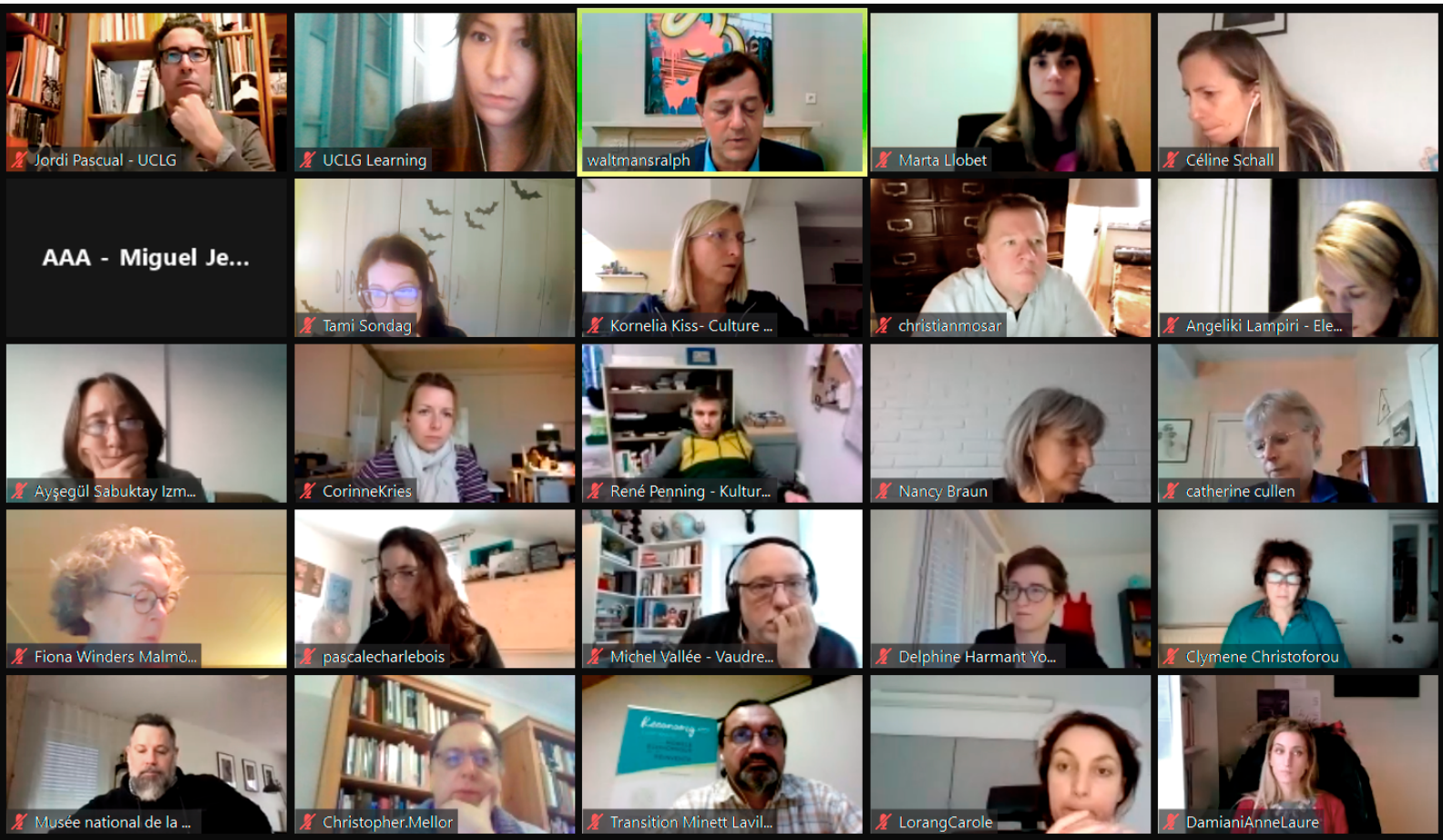
The sessions provided an informal networking space for participating cities and other stakeholders to meet and exchange views as well. Participants to the peer-learning seminar included representatives and cultural stakeholders of the city of Esch-sur-Alzette and representatives of the cities of Abitibi-Temiscamingue, Baie-Mahault, Barcelona, Elefsina, Gabrovo, Galway, Izmir, Leeds, Malmö, Swansea, Terrassa and Vaudreuil-Dorion, as well as the Agenda 21 for culture experts and UCLG Committee on Culture representatives. Participants were invited in advance to read several documents related to local cultural policies, which are available in French and English on [Esch sur Alzette's page as a Pilot City of the Agenda 21 for culture](#), especially the City profile, the Self-assessment Radar and the Work programme, as well as the good practices "Cultural Policies", "Cultural Governance Council" and "Kufa's Urban Art".

TUESDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2020

Jordi Pascual, Coordinator of UCLG Committee on Culture, opened the first session welcoming and introducing the participants, and giving initial remarks on the Pilot Cities programme of Agenda 21 for culture. He stressed the work done to promote the role of culture as a pillar of sustainable development and addressed the event as an opportunity to guarantee local democracy and widen freedoms, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Catherine Cullen**, Independent expert on Culture and Sustainable Development, briefly explained her experience as expert of the Esch Pilot City programme and congratulated the involved actors for their outstanding work, and **Kornelia Kiss**, Operations Director of Culture Action Europe, noted the participation of CAE in the programme as a cross-sectoral network representing civil society.

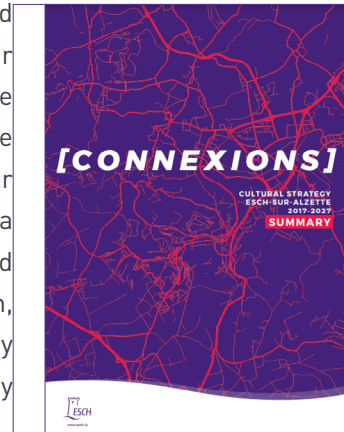
Pierre-Marc Knaff, Councillor for Culture of the city of Esch-sur-Alzette, gave the institutional welcome from the city and shared a first portrait of Esch-sur-Alzette, the former "Iron Metropolis", which has over 36,000 inhabitants and 122 nationalities, and it is located in the industrial area of Luxembourg. He highlighted the vibrant cultural life of the city, which organises several major events and festivals throughout the year, and mentioned the most relevant cultural institutions and organisations, well represented by some of the participants to the seminar. He also emphasized the important role of culture in the sustainable development of Esch-sur-Alzette, and the will to support,

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strengthen and encourage the city development through a long-term cultural plan, the elaboration process of which began in 2010 with a territorial and cultural democracy approach.

The start of the Esch Pilot City programme in 2017, when the cultural strategy [Connections] was unanimously adopted by the City Council, was recalled as well by the Councillor for Culture. In this framework, the programme allowed to create and foster synergies among cultural actors and other policy areas, at a local and regional level, and to establish concrete and operational objectives. The designation of Esch-sur-Alzette as European Capital of Culture in 2022 was presented as a major landmark in this process. By 2027, the city is intended to become a creative cultural centre recognised at different scales, with a solid identity linked to creativity, diversity and innovation. As a conclusion, Pierre-Marc Knaff invited everyone to discuss the cultural strategy and the pilot measures implemented within the Esch Pilot City programme.



After this first overview of the cultural policy of Esch-sur-Alzette and a first brief presentation of the cultural strategy [Connections], **Ralph Waltmans**, Coordinator of the Culture Service of Esch-sur-Alzette, presented the balance after three years of work within the Pilot Cities programme, explaining in more detail the links between the Agenda 21 for Culture, the city's ambition to become a European Capital of Culture, the long-term cultural development plan and the first effects on the evolution of the cultural landscape in Esch-sur-Alzette, drawing parallels with other pilot cities participating in the three sessions of the peer-learning seminar such as Elefsina and Timișoara.

In 2015, the Ministry of Culture officially opened the Call for cities in Luxembourg to be a European Capital of Culture in 2022, and Esch decided to write a bid. Despite counting on high aspirations, an impressive cultural offer and the will to transform the city in a sustainable way, the city lacked an established long-term cultural development strategy, although reflections involving many cultural players had started in 2010, and at the national level there were no references to draw on either. Furthermore, there were doubts about how the ECoC title could contribute to the cultural strategy. In that context, Ralph Waltmans pointed out that Emmanuel Vinchon, member of the association Ecoute le Paysage !, brought up the experience of Lille 2004. He had collaborated with Catherine Cullen, Deputy Mayor for Cultural Affairs in Lille at that time, and witnessed the impressive transformation of the city with the adoption of Agenda 21 for culture. That was how in May 2016 Esch-sur-Alzette committed to the principles of Agenda 21 for Culture.

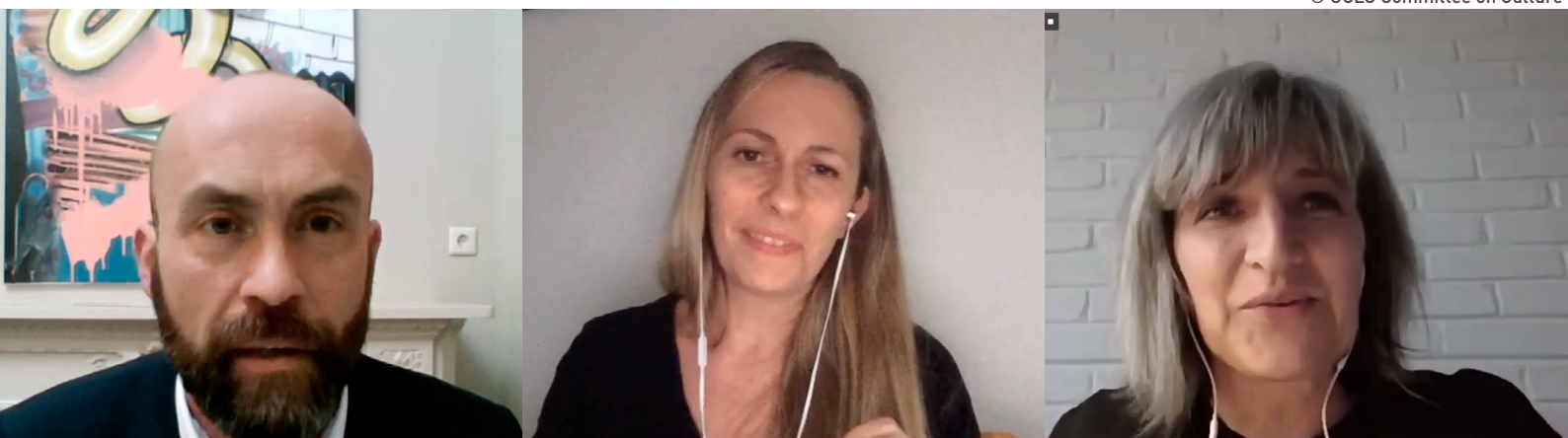
The city became a Pilot City in autumn 2016, under the guidance of Catherine Cullen. The self-assessment workshop carried out in February 2017, where more than 70 participants from culture and other policy areas identified strengths and weaknesses with a cross-cutting approach, was a key moment in the process and helped to shape the roadmap for [Connections] and to achieve the ECoC 2022 title in November 2017.

“It was the best accelerator imaginable regarding political decisions for the cultural sector.” From that moment on, four pilot measures based on commitments 3, 5, 6 and 9 of Culture 21: Actions were developed with the support of all cultural actors, and action on other commitments was also taken. Ralph Waltmans invited all participants to discover the pilot measures throughout the seminar:

1. Establishing cultural governance and fostering an ecosystem (related to Commitment 9: Governance of culture)
2. Supporting the economic development of culture through targeted actions (related to Commitment 5: Culture and economy)
3. Rethinking Esch-sur-Alzette’s cultural event, the Culture Night (related to Commitment 6: Culture, equity and social inclusion)
4. Improving coordination between culture and education (related to Commitment 3: Culture and education)

After the first introductory speeches, a short virtual tour through the city and its cultural institutions illustrated main ideas presented. **Ralph Waltmans** and **Céline Schall**, Research and Training Officer of the Culture Service of Esch-sur-Alzette, guided participants providing information on some of the most relevant organisations and facilities, including Annex 22 (Esch 2022 premises), the Municipal Theatre, the Municipal Gallery, L’Ariston (former cinema), the Museum of the Resistance, the Municipal Library, the Municipal Conservatory, KulturFabrik -KUFA- (alternative cultural centre), Hariko (cultural association), the Kamellebutteck and Schlassgoart art galleries, Building IV (cultural complex), Mesa and Facilitec (facilities of the association Transition Minett), Kongschthal (contemporary art centre), Bridderhaus (artists residency), Rockhal and RockLab (music venues), Belval University and past editions of the Culture Night.

When the virtual tour finalised, **Nancy Braun**, Director General of Esch 2022, described how the city is preparing to launch Esch 2022 and the objectives of the programme. She emphasized the programme’s catalytic effect on the cultural strategy of Esch-sur-Alzette and the pilot measures being implemented, as well as the territorial approach prioritised to favour a long-term impact. In this regard, collaboration with partner cities Kaunas and Novi Sad, also future ECoCs in 2022, and other partnerships at European and international level were mentioned as part of the efforts put in place in order to succeed. To conclude, Nancy Braun highlighted the importance of the educational, economic -including tourism- and governance elements of the programme, well aligned with the pilot measures.





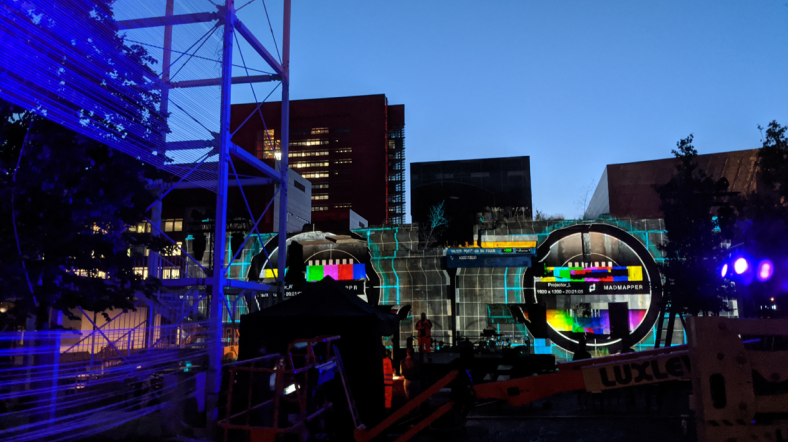
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Then the in-depth analysis of the pilot measures started. **Ralph Waltmans** presented Pilot measure 1: “Establishing a suitable governance and promote an ecosystem”, related to Culture 21 Actions’ Commitment 9 on the governance of culture. This measure was designed as a reaction to the absence of a solid cultural strategy and to the weaknesses in the field of cultural governance identified at the self-assessment workshop that took place in February 2017. Later on, Céline Schall presented the work carried out in this area, with its main phases and achievements, providing insights on the learning that has brought to the city.

“THE CROSS-CUTTING INTEGRATION OF CULTURAL FACTORS IN LOCAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES SHOULD BE BASED ON THE SHARED RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL ACTORS INVOLVED, RECOGNISING THE COMMON NATURE OF CULTURE AND ITS CENTRAL PLACE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF COMMON SPACES OF RECOGNITION, EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING.”

Céline Schall affirmed that a shared governance was the first objective of the cultural strategy [Connections]. Therefore, the pilot measure included a first invitation for the directors of the major institutions in the city, both municipal and non-municipal, to help constitute a Governance Council with its missions and an ethical charter. Further phases sought to provide the Council with a regular framework for meetings; to study the training needs and expectations of professionals in the cultural sector and other related sectors, and to set up a Youth Culture Council as well, for youngsters from 12 to 30 years old. Since it became operational, the Governance Council has very frequently met on three major processes: at the monthly Culture Breakfasts, at the evaluation of cultural projects by occasional juries, and at the meetings held to organise the Francofolies and the Culture Night, which were presented in the session held on 25th November.

The 24 Culture Breakfasts held in 2018 and 2019 tackled a wide variety of themes such as the role of a cultural strategy, audience research and evaluation in the field of culture, culture and youth, ecology and urban planning, and the principles of Agenda 21 for culture. In 2020, a new formula consisting in culture lunches and culture days have focused on strengthening the governance ecosystem and providing training on communication and citizen participation. In addition to those meetings, occasional juries evaluated 16 cultural projects through specific funding procedures aimed at encouraging fair and reasoned financing for entrepreneurs, and a specific jury will evaluate the needs of 65 cultural projects selected to be developed in 2022.



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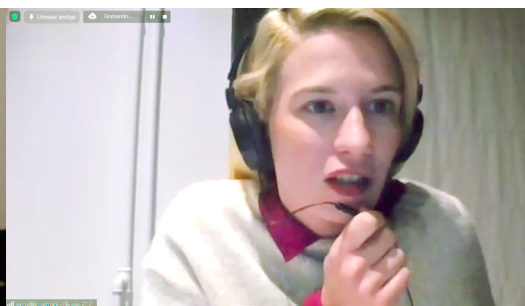
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To finalise her speech, Céline Schall assessed the activities implemented and commented on the least and most successful outputs. Although the Youth Culture Council was not set up, audience development and focus group studies were organised and allowed to have precise, scientific data and analyses on large samples of population about local cultural practices, the image of the city and its cultural offer or the impact of artistic education in schools. The opinion and expertise of cultural actors became vital too, and fostered an atmosphere of constructive dialogue where seeking consent is better than reaching consensus. In addition, activities permitted to acquire and reinforce a common vocabulary and to build a stronger ecosystem by strengthening links between institutions, organisations and stakeholders.

Olivier Bouton, Director of Projects & Communication at the National Museum of the Resistance, related then their experience as a relevant actor involved in the implementation of the pilot measure on cultural governance. He highlighted the benefits brought by the pilot measure through the regular informal meetings among stakeholders. Meetings allowed to better identify museum visitors, to adapt activities and to launch specific research programmes, considering and protecting, at the same time, the linguistic specificities of the city, and to establish synergies and exchange expertise among local organisations from diverse cultural sectors and policy areas.

Questions and comments from guest cities included interventions by Ayşegül Sabuktay from Izmir, Angeliki Lampiri from Elefsina and Michel Vallée from Vaudreuil-Dorion; three cities that have undertaken substantial work on cultural governance. **Ayşegül Sabuktay** noted that the local particularities and backgrounds of cities determine unique cultural policies. Regarding the governance of culture, she asked whether Esch-sur-Alzette had experienced difficulties given the sometimes-different aspirations of cultural actors and politicians. **Angeliki Lampiri** commented that Elefsina's cultural strategy is the most challenging point of its work programme. She addressed three questions: how the independent artistic scene was included in the cultural strategy; what could be a good advice for a city that is building its cultural strategy, and whether a capacity building and networking activities programme for the community was designed. **Michel Vallée** emphasized the similar features of Esch-sur-Alzette and Vaudreuil-Dorion, also in the field of cultural governance, and congratulated all involved actors for the activities implemented in the context of the Pilot Cities programme.

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Céline Schall and **Ralph Waltmans** answered the questions by stressing the efforts put into developing awareness raising on key elements towards sustainability, and working together in order to share a same language and common objectives, despite different backgrounds of stakeholders involved in the pilot measure. They also noted the use of tools to improve communication and define needs and expectations, including the design of a training programme in collaboration with Belval University. “We teach and train each other”. As for the involvement of the independent artistic scene in [Connections], they said the impulse to artists residencies was a good resource.

Their responses gave way to a brief break, during which two pieces of music – by the groups Klein and Child – provided by Music:LX were shared so participants had a little insight into Luxembourg’s culture.

After the pause, Pilot measure 2: “Supporting the economic dimension of culture through targeted actions”, related to Culture 21 Actions’ Commitment 5 on culture and economy was presented and analysed. This measure was elaborated to reinforce the tourism development strategy drawn up by the Economic Promotion, Tourism and International Relations Service, which in turn relies on [Connections]. Ralph Waltmans pointed out that the self-assessment workshop carried out in February 2017 showed the suitability to analyse and valorise the economic impact of the cultural sector and to connect and boost sustainable tourism activities.

“TO BE SUSTAINABLE, ECONOMY SHOULD ANALYSE THE VALUES UNDERLYING IT AND CONSIDER THE CULTURAL RESOURCES OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH IT DEVELOPS. THE ADAPTATION OF THE ECONOMY TO LOCAL RESOURCES IS THE SOURCE OF ITS LEGITIMACY AND DYNAMISM.”

Andreja Wirtz, Head of Economic Promotion, Tourism and International Relations Service, outlined the overall process, with its objectives and achievements, which was deeply connected to the European Capital of Culture title. The measure was developed in two phases, which included a) drawing up an economic and tourist development strategy, together with actors of the cultural and the economic spheres of the city, and b) setting up specific tools to attract creative people to Esch-sur-Alzette, such as artists residencies and cultural activities in public space.

Since Luxembourg is a small and quite centralised country, in order to make a difference and stand out above other cities with similar features, there was the need to position culture and tourism as key economic components in the city, and to support this local economy with technology and research. Andreja Wirtz emphasized that the approach taken prioritised a city for its inhabitants, with people-centred and innovative activities. Most of all, the goal was to keep the local talent and become “the most sustainable city in Luxembourg”. Thus, the unique topography, landscapes and industrial heritage of Esch-sur-Alzette were promoted, and inclusivity was fostered with specific programmes addressed to women and vulnerable groups.



Lia Ghilardi, International Expert in the field of cultural mapping and planning, and Founder and Director of Noema Culture and Place Mapping, gave her views as advisor to the Culture Service of Esch-sur-Alzette who collaborated in the development of the pilot measure. She highlighted inhabitants as their first concern as well, and the holistic and transversal approach adopted, with a long-term perspective of 10 years. “We tried to engage locals in telling the story; we focused in culture with a small “c”.” She said that one of the main activities consisted in elaborating a culture mapping including cultural stakeholders. Thus, capacity was boosted through diversity, enhancing the variety of languages spoken as a result of immigration, for instance. Thereafter, local experiences were built to attract people and wealth in very diverse areas such as retail, design, ecology and food.

Following the previous comments, **Corinne Kreis**, Deputy Head on Tourism and Mobility of Esch 2022, highlighted some key aspects of the Esch 2022 tourism strategy, namely the will to contribute to transforming the Grand Region into an attractive cultural destination with the goal to produce a long-lasting impact at all levels, inspired by the motto “Remix Culture”. She also referred to digital technologies such as virtual and augmented reality as enablers of the development of innovative projects in different areas of the city and the region. A virtual guide of a cycling tour connecting all the municipalities was mentioned as an illustrative example.

On his turn, **Eric Lavillunière**, Coordinator of Transition Minett, presented this ecologist association focused on resilience and sustainable development, which is very involved in the design and implementation of the cultural strategy [Connections] in Esch-sur-Alzette. He highlighted the role of culture to make possible positive change at individual and collective level for the city, the people and the planet, helping transform imaginaries through creativity and innovation. He mentioned ongoing projects Facilitec – in support of circular economy – and Mesa – the House of Transition –, and its role as cultural spaces for encounter at the city centre.

Right afterwards, actors and projects from creative industries contributing to economic development with and by culture in the city were invited to participate. **Sam Reinard**, Manager of Rocklab, presented this project as a creative lab for artists and music professionals that is part of the Rockhal Centre for Amplified Music, and it is designed to inspire and promote the creativity and talent of local youth at national and international level. **Giovanni Trono**, Director of Musik:LX, presented this project as a non-profit association aimed at promoting local and national music at international level and facilitating professionalization and exchanges among musicians through support in financing, communication, information and research.





Time for questions and comments from guest cities allowed to deepen some relevant aspects. **Pascale Charlebois** from Abitibi-Témiscamingue inquired about the way to enhance transversality, creating links with non-cultural companies, and between departments as well. **Brian Barret** from Galway poised that people come to Galway attracted by its culture, and he was concerned about tourism as a means of commodification and loss of uniqueness. **Gaby Paradis** from Leeds, also speaking on behalf of her colleague Pam Johnson, said the city was in the process to re-evaluate the cultural strategy delivery framework in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and would launch a pilot measure to engage local artists and youth. Despite the cancellation (by the European Union in the context of Brexit) of the British process for the ECoC in 2023, to which Leeds had already worked in-depth, the city is focused on its 10-year strategy and works on the notion of legacy.

In response to the first two questions, **Lia Ghilardi** explained that in order to ensure a cross-cutting approach the city was thought as an ecosystem, a system of relations with its own DNA formed by people, and the cultural mapping of all kind of entrepreneurs and stakeholders facilitated their mobilisation and the preservation of its uniqueness as well. The transversal mechanism of delivering action was being developed in order to connect policy areas too at institutional level. **Ralph Waltmans** further added on the question of legacy that the title of European Capital of Culture was a great tool and not an end in itself. Following these remarks, **Jordi Pascual** closed the session, which was attended by over 60 participants.

WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2020

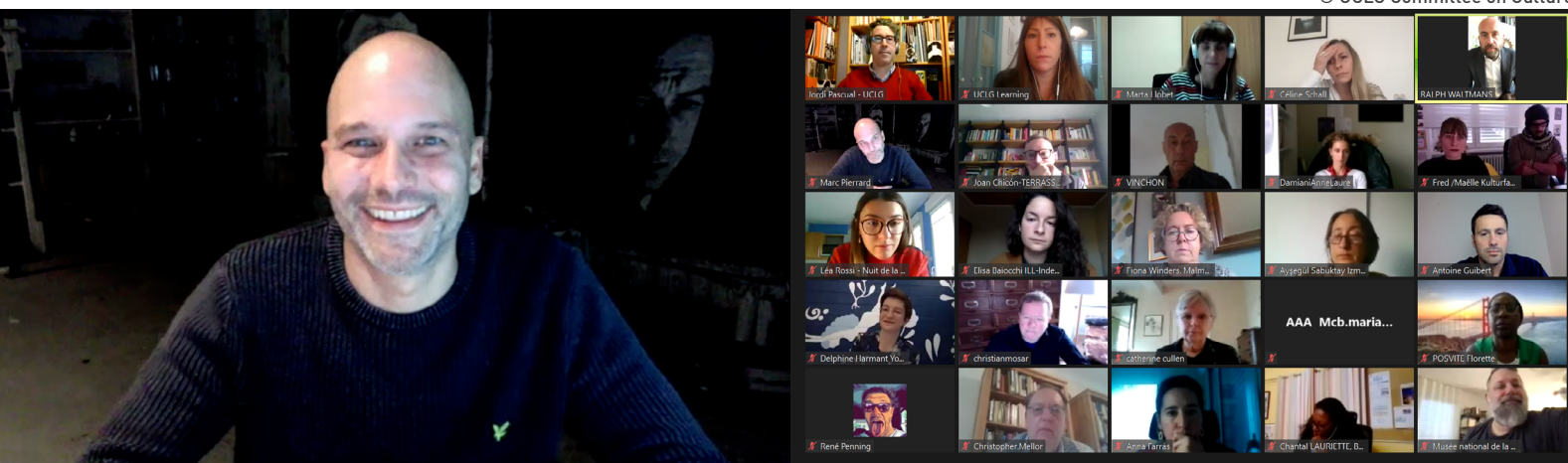
The second session was devoted to present and analyse Pilot measure 4: “Improve coordination between culture and education”, related to Commitment 3 on culture and education, and Pilot measure 3: “Rethinking the cultural event of Esch, the Culture Night”, related to Culture 21 Actions’ Commitment 6 on culture, equity and social inclusion, in this order, which are part of the work programme of Esch Pilot City. After introductory remarks by moderator **Jordi Pascual**, **Ralph Waltmans** started the discussion highlighting the necessity to better communicate to young people about cultural activities, identified at the self-assessment workshop held in February 2017.

“CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IS UNDERSTOOD AS A PROCESS LEADING TO INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPRESSION AND ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE, AND IS CLOSELY LINKED TO LIFELONG LEARNING.”

Ralph Waltmans recalled that this pilot measure was one of the activities carried out towards youth and that non-formal education was also addressed in the cultural strategy [Connections], alongside other measures. Specifically, the relationship between young people and the education system was targeted. Phases included: 1) the appointment of cultural coordinators in primary schools and in the Education Service to improve coordination between culture and education; 2) in collaboration with such coordinators, to take stock of the existing cultural offer and to promote it; 3) setting up the Biergerbühn, theatre workshops for children and teenagers initiated and conducted by the non-profit organisation Independent little lies - ILL, and 4) to identify new opportunities for schoolchildren and for an arts and cultural education programme.

Marc Pierrard, Teacher, Director of the Brill School and also a Musician and a Visual Artist, took the floor to present his experience as the Cultural Coordinator for Schools appointed in the framework of the pilot measure. He noted the growing involvement of all schools in Esch-sur-Alzette in the activities organised in the context of the Culture Night in the past two years, and their participation in the Urban Art programme, among others, achieved with the collaboration of the Coordination Service for Research and

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Innovation in Education (SCRIPT) and Technology (SCSRIP) and the Innovation Division (INNO) of the Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth of Luxembourg. His work, therefore, facilitated regular contacts between the city, cultural institutions and schools.

Céline Schall expanded on this issue presenting next phases of the pilot measure. For the second phase, two collaborators from primary schools in Esch-sur-Alzette and the Education Service, took stock of the cultural offer for young people aged 0-25 from 19 institutions and non-profit organisations, and listed and analysed it in detail. Among the suggestions made upon the strengths and weaknesses identified, there was to take a better account of the reception of cultural activities by young people and to better understand their expectations; to promote a city open to student cultural participation; to foster schools as places of culture, and to support, with specific studies, the reflection of stakeholders about the cultural offer for young people.

The third phase was presented by **Elisa Baiocchi**, Member of the interdisciplinary theatre group Independent Little Lies and Coordinator of the Biergerbühn project. This project was set up in order to familiarise children and adolescents with performing arts, and therefore contribute to develop young audiences. Theatre and dance pedagogues, actors, and other experts such as writers and set designers lead weekly theatre workshops resulting in a final show performed at the big stage of the Kulturfabrik at the end of the school year. She highlighted the positive results achieved, and revealed that the concept of the Biergerbühn will continue and evolve, and in the coming year it will be part of Esch 2022, as a participatory project involving citizens of all ages.

As **Céline Schall** further commented, phase 4 consisted in the creation of an Artistic and Cultural Education Pathway (PEAC - Parcours d'Éducation Artistique et Culturelle) targeted at schoolchildren. Reflections on the objectives of PEAC took a long time and it could not be set up at city level. This phase will be resumed next year, and will include training for future teachers, permanent collaboration between teachers and institutions, openness to culture and through culture and courses for high schools, universities and citizens in general. Precisely, **Delphine Harmant**, Head of Young Audiences of Esch 2022, outlined the plans to take over the work around the Artistic and Cultural Education Pathway in the context of Esch 2022, notably with the city but above all with the Ministry of Education and the whole territory.



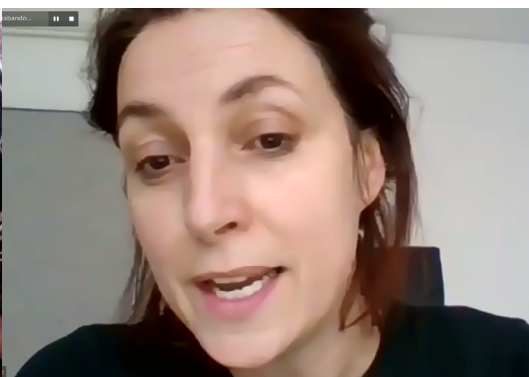
© Eschonaute - Kufa's Urban Art

Other projects with an emphasis on connecting culture and young audiences were presented as well. **Fred Entringer** and **Maëlle Lepetit**, Coordinator and Production Manager of the Eschonaute programme at Kulturfabrik, respectively, introduced Eschonaute as one of the projects developed in the context of the Urban Art programme. It was carried out in 2019 in collaboration with the Education Service, the Tourism Service and the Ministry of Education of Luxembourg. Eschonaute is a touristic guide created by children of primary school, which encourages to explore the city of Esch-sur-Alzette through art interventions. In the process of implementation of the project, teachers were trained in the use of urban art as a tool for children. At the end, the guide was distributed to 3,300 students for free. The project was evaluated and showed successfully the relevance of artistic education in schools.

Carole Lorang, Director of the Municipal Theatre of Esch-sur-Alzette, commented her experience in the implementation of a programme targeted for children from 4 to 12 years old since 2018, including a variety of disciplines such as cinema, theatre, musical theatre, dance and objects theatre, to encourage and develop openness to artistic expression in the field of performing arts. The programme includes pedagogic introductory sessions at school for children, before attending performances, and meetings with the artists after the shows, as well as pedagogical exercises of reflection on performing arts. This programme is another activity related to the Pilot measure 4 that has proved vital for the overall success of the implementation of [Connections].

Marianne Donven and **Anne Braun**, Managers of Hariko, presented this cultural association and its activities in Esch-sur-Alzette as well. Hariko is an artistic project for underprivileged young people from 12 to 26 years old. Through workshops delivered by artists, in collaboration with schools and educative institutions it encourages reflection and creation, offering access to diverse forms of artistic expressions. The main objective of the project is to stimulate young people to actively participate in artistic creation under the principles of equality and tolerance, promoting respectful exchange between artists and young people from various origins and horizons.

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Questions and comments from guest cities included interventions from Fiona Winders from Malmö, Jaume Muñoz from Barcelona, Chantal Lauriette from Baie Mahault and Christopher Mellor from Swansea. **Fiona Winders** emphasized how important is to count on cultural ambassadors in schools where teachers are often under pressure to meet national targets, as shown by previous speakers from Esch-sur-Alzette. She also keenly recognized the structural difficulties for young people with few socioeconomic resources to access professional careers in the arts, although culture can be an end in itself. She asked whether young people in Esch-sur-Alzette can opt to placements for internships at local cultural institutions, which is an issue developed in Malmö.

Jaume Muñoz mentioned the programme In Residence, a very successful project started 12 years ago, in which artists visit schools and develop artistic projects with students throughout the year, and he brought up inequalities as an issue that has exacerbated in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Chantal Lauriette** commented that in the self-assessment workshop carried out in 2019 in the framework of the Pilot Cities programme participants recognized that although Baie-Mahault was developing many activities to enhance the connection between culture and education, they were little known by citizens, so action was taken in this regard. **Christopher Mellor** first thanked speakers for highlighting the challenges of working with teachers, and raised a question to all attendees: “What can we all do together, as a sector, to engage teachers so that culture can get into the curriculum?”

Emmanuel Vinchon intervened to add that this matter is well-acknowledged and it is being tackled in Esch-sur-Alzette, and **Carole Lorang** affirmed that the Municipal Theatre is keen to work with trainees. **Maëlle Lepetit** emphasized the partnership developed between institutions, organisations and stakeholders at local and national level regarding the Eschonaute programme and others at Kulturfabrik, and **Olivier Bouton** also affirmed that the National Museum of the Resistance has a good collaboration with educational institutions at national level and offers training for young people. In this view, before the break, in which local music was featured, **Jordi Pascual** reminded to participants that the peer learning event was an opportunity to exchange bilaterally with colleagues from other cities.

After the pause, Pilot measure 3: Rethinking the cultural event of Esch-sur-Alzette, the Culture Night, related to Culture 21 Actions' Commitment 6 on culture, equity and social inclusion, was presented and analysed. As **Ralph Waltmans** commented, this measure had to be adapted this year due to the COVID-29 restrictions but it was already included in the work programme of Esch Pilot City as an event to be redesigned before de pandemic started, because the self-assessment workshop carried out in February 2017 showed that the relation between culture, equity and social inclusion was weak,

despite social policy in the city was strong. Main phases entailed reflection on the new programming for 2018, 2019 and 2020, the organisation of the 2018 edition and, depending on the results, the organisation of the 2019 edition. Objectives also include to change the image and perception of the city through culture and creativity, and to prepare it to be an ECoC.

“ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE IS ONE OF THE KEYS TO SOCIAL INCLUSION (...). CULTURE IS AN ESSENTIAL MEANS OF ESTABLISHING NEW MEETING PLACES AND DEVELOPING NEW COLLECTIVE MEANINGS.”

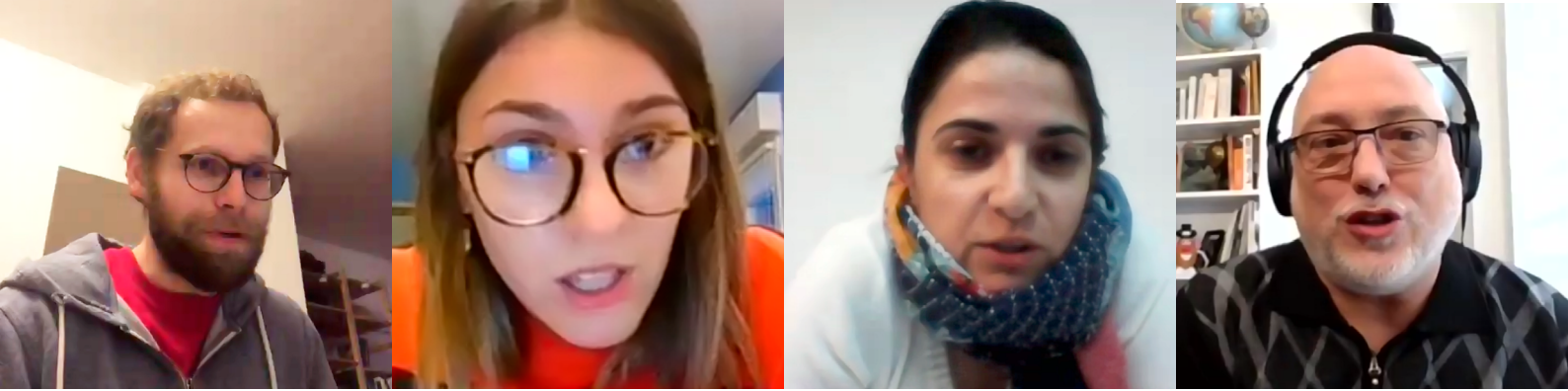
Emmanuel Vinchon, Artistic Advisor and Coordinator of *Ecoute le Paysage !* who has been actively involved in the implementation of this pilot measure, explained the methodology followed. Rather than offering to citizens a cultural event, the proposal was reversed and amateur and professional artists were invited to participate in the design of the project. The number of potential partners multiplied, including professional operators, but also amateur associations, shopkeepers, schools, and the social, history, sports and leisure sectors. Schedules were moved towards the night again, as in initial editions. The event was redesigned to take place in public space, not in the cultural facilities of the city, used mainly by those already “convinced”, and it was decentralised to different districts and least known places, as industrial wastelands. It was agreed to encourage collective imagination around a single new annual theme: dreams, water and air for 2018, 2019 and 2020. Overall, experimentation was favoured at the risk of failure.

With those premises in mind, the editions of 2018 and 2019 has its successes and failures as well. Despite the involvement of the city’s social fabric, associations could have collaborated even more. Some proposals were not well received at first, yet in general experiments served to show different forms of creations related to street arts, sound installations or visual poetry, to get very different people to work collectively, and to allow everyone to project themselves into the city as a whole. Testing different approaches was also useful to get ready for Esch 2022, as Emmanuel Vinchon said, allowing to establish collaborations at international level, for instance.

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Emmanuel Vinchon's speech was a good starting point to reflect on other views on the project, like the ones by **Loïc Clairet** and **Léa Rossi**, General Coordinator and Head of Production of the Culture Night, respectively. **Loïc Clairet** explained the preparation of the Culture Night 2020, which took place in September 2020 and saw many twists and turns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, the event was not banned because of restrictions, although the big show of the evening, *Exit*, by the company *Inxtremiste*, was entirely broadcasted for safety reasons, and some of the shows had to be rescheduled within the year or the 2021 edition.

Artists were also asked to adapt, not in terms of artistic content but in the way they interacted with the audience. That collective work was a challenge but made the team grow in organisation. Despite setbacks, the programme included new elements of folklore and counted on a new partnership with the Association of Municipalities of the Pays Hauts Val d'Alzette. **Léa Rossi** added that the Culture Night will definitely be consolidated in 2021 with a more European and international approach, and she also noted that the event is including relevant elements of the global debate on sustainable development such as ecological transition and urban planning and public space.

Following those interventions, guest cities were invited to share their own experiences regarding the organisation and adaptation of big cultural events in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Martina Grueva** from Gabrovo noted that the city is also trying to decentralise cultural events to different districts, including the Carnival. In this regard, she felt inspired by the images of the Culture Night shared by Loïc Clairet. **Michel Vallée** felt equally recognised in the activities presented, as Vaudreuil Dorion also has experience in organising large participatory cultural and artistic events such as the *Je suis* project, and explained the current organisation of activities related to contemporary visual arts and emergent music in collaboration with local cultural associations.

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Jordi Pascual referred then to a question raised by participants, a certain confrontation between cultural activities at the service of something else and culture by itself. He said cultural actors are not explaining well what capabilities you acquire when you are participating actively in cultural practices. This is something that the 2020 Rome Charter has tried to improve. The Charter and its capabilities approach show how a human rights-based approach to development is built, and it provides a language to explain that what cultural do is contributing profoundly to this human rights-based development. **Catherine Cullen** also added that culture must be acknowledged as the 4th pillar of sustainable development, and as a subject by itself. Otherwise, “if culture is everywhere, it will be nowhere”.

To conclude, **Ralph Waltmans** and **Céline Schall** thanked all participants for their contributions and, on his turn, **Jordi Pascual** closed the session thanking the Esch Pilot City team for the extraordinary contents and great organisation of the session, as well as the involvement of local cultural actors and participants from guest cities.



THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2020

The session of Thursday 26 November 2020 was not public and was not recorded either in order to facilitate exchanges among participants with a critical perspective. It aimed at analysing specific problems encountered during the implementation of the pilot measures. It was less “formal” than the previous ones: discussions were not prepared upstream and room was left for discussion. Thus, this report briefly presents the main issues addressed during the session, rather than collecting exchanges made by participants.

The session was built up around three main issues identified and presented by the Esch Pilot City team:

1. The cooperation of several actors at different scales
2. Crisis situations
3. Governance, its difficulties and its political use

As a conclusion, the contributions of the Esch Pilot City programme with the prospects for the future were mentioned, and there was a collective wish to take care of each other and to participate in the discovery of collective and imaginative solutions for the next two years.



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