



**culture 21**

UCLG Committee

## **Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Cities**

Key Themes and Examples  
in European Cities



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United Cities  
and Local Governments

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# Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Cities

## Key Themes and Examples in European Cities

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# Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Cities

## Key Themes and Examples in European Cities

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## 1. Background

Since the adoption of the **Agenda 21 for Culture** in 2004, the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) promotes the understanding of culture as a fundamental dimension in sustainable development. This nexus gains particular importance at the local level, as reflected in the cultural policies of local governments and in the cultural values and practices of individuals, groups, civil society organisations and other stakeholders.

Cultural heritage, including its tangible and intangible aspects, is a testament to human creativity, as well as a resource for the construction of the identities of people and communities. As with other components of cultural life, the aspects that make up cultural heritage, including memory and knowledge, pertain to the core of human dignity, and respecting, protecting and enhancing them requires appropriate rights-based, people-centred policies. The latter should recognise that cultural heritage is alive, diverse and constantly changing, and that its components and meaning evolve and interplay with the other dimensions of sustainable development, including social, environmental and economic aspects.

The European Union has called 2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage. In the view of the UCLG Committee on Culture, this provides a suitable context to stress

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the existing links between cultural heritage and sustainable development, and its particular implications at the local level, in the projects, programmes and policies of local and regional governments, civil society organisations, informal groups, heritage professionals and other stakeholders active in this field. This is somehow in line with the **European Year of Cultural Heritage's objectives**, including those that concern enhancing the contribution of cultural heritage to society and the economy, promoting sustainable development, encouraging approaches to cultural heritage that are 'people-centred, inclusive, forward-looking, more integrated, sustainable and cross-sectoral', and promoting innovative models of participatory governance and management of cultural heritage.

Links between cultural heritage and sustainable development have also been integrated in the UN's **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**: in particular, Target 11.4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) calls to '[strengthen] efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage' (UN General Assembly, 2015), in order to achieve Goal 11 – 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable'. Despite the advocacy efforts of several global and regional networks, including UCLG, and other stakeholders, explicit references to cultural aspects in the SDGs remain weak. However, UCLG believes that cultural aspects inform and are fundamental to the achievement of objectives in all areas of sustainable development (UCLG 2018).

Drawing on its experience in policy advice, advocacy and monitoring, the UCLG Committee on Culture believes the European Year of Cultural Heritage provides an opportunity to strengthen the understanding of the place of culture, and cultural heritage, in contemporary society and in sustainable development. To this end, this publication presents some key themes and illustrative examples addressing this relation. While particular emphasis has been placed on evidence drawn across Europe, its messages could resonate in other world regions as well.

## HERITAGE IN THE WHITE PAPER ON CULTURE

### TERRASSA, CATALONIA, SPAIN

Tangible and intangible heritage as pillars of cohesion, identity and visibility

The **White Paper on Culture** was an initiative of Terrassa's Local Council on Culture and the Arts, in order to give visibility to the diversity of local life in the 21st century. The resulting Paper was the product of debates, working groups and a shared will to strengthen the place of culture in the city.

Interview with **Carles Sánchez**, Terrassa Municipal Museum.

**How has heritage informed Terrassa's city vision? Could you give any concrete examples?**

The efforts made to promote the heritage value of Terrassa have contributed to an increasing identification of Terrassa with heritage among the broader public (in Catalonia, especially in the Barcelona metropolitan area, as well as in Spain and Europe). Initiatives such as the bid of Seu d'Ègara to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site and large annual events with an attractive narrative (e.g. the Modernist Fair) have fostered Terrassa's global visibility. The result of this effort to recognize heritage is the label of "Cities and Towns with character" (2017), a recognition awarded by the Catalan Tourism Agency to Catalan cities due to their historical, cultural, creative and artistic value.

**Which priorities has Terrassa's White Paper on Culture set in relation with cultural heritage?**

The White Paper on Culture in Terrassa is the result of a process of participation and dialogue promoted by the Local Council of Culture and Arts that aims to promote culture towards new horizons. The cultural heritage working group established two specific axes. Firstly, the need to promote the great elements of architectural heritage – i.e. medieval and modernist industrial heritage - to achieve greater citizen involvement and visibility for the city. It should be remembered that one of the pillars in the field of cultural heritage is the support of the candidacy of Seu d'Ègara

to obtain the distinction of World Heritage, granted by UNESCO, based on the belief, supported by solid scientific arguments, of its outstanding universal value. Secondly, the White Paper on Culture also establishes as a priority to advance towards the establishment of a large collection of high-level art from Terrassa which comes from the confluence of the existing public collection and that of the Antiga Caixa Terrassa Foundation (a savings bank foundation).

**Which role do citizens play in the conservation and contemporary uses of tangible and intangible heritage?**

The fact that Terrassa is a cultural capital results from its tangible and intangible cultural heritage, which are connected by a rich civic and associative fabric. We cannot forget that cultural organisations in Terrassa have always played a leading role in the conservation and external projection of the city's heritage, whether by turning cultural facilities into important event venues (e.g. the Heritage Day of the casteller group Minyons de Terrassa being held at the Seu d'Ègara), or by combining the values of art and music (e.g. the Sons del Temps music festival being held in the medieval and modernist heritage of the city, and Christmas events at the Seu d'Ègara). These are initiatives related to heritage that, rather than anchoring cities in their past, make them a precious scenario for cultural exchange and external visibility.



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## 2. Cultural heritage in a human rights perspective

The right to take part in cultural life, recognised as a human right in the **Universal Declaration on Human Rights** (1948) and the **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** (1966), has several implications related to cultural heritage., As described in 2009 by the **UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, the right to take part in cultural life involves, among others, the following aspects related to cultural heritage:

- everyone's right to have access to their own cultural and linguistic heritage and to that of others;
- public authorities' obligation to respect and protect cultural heritage in all its forms, in times of war and peace, and in the face of natural disasters;
- the obligation to respect and protect cultural heritage of all groups and communities, in particular the most disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups, in economic development and environmental policies and programmes;
- the obligation to respect and protect the cultural productions of indigenous peoples, including their traditional knowledge, natural medicines, folklore, rituals and other forms of expression;
- the obligation to provide appropriate education and public awareness concerning the right to take part in cultural life, including on the need to respect cultural heritage and cultural diversity; and
- the obligation to develop programmes aimed at preserving and restoring cultural heritage.

In recent years, the successive UN Special Rapporteurs on Cultural Rights have contributed to further describing the specific implications of this human rights-based approach to cultural heritage. In her **2011 report**, Farida Shaheed stressed that cultural heritage is dynamic ('[it] links the past, the present and the future as it encompasses things inherited from the past that are considered to be of such value or significance today, that individuals and communities want to transmit them to future generations'), diverse ('to speak of cultural heritage in the context of human rights entails taking into consideration the multiple heritages through which individuals and communities express their humanity, give meaning to their existence, build their worldviews and represent their encounter with the external forces affecting their lives') and people-centred ('the definition of cultural heritage is not limited to what is considered to be of outstanding value to humanity as a whole, but rather it encompasses what is of significance for particular individuals and communities, thereby emphasizing the human dimension of cultural heritage') (UN Independent Expert in the Field of Cultural

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Rights, 2011). The connections between cultural rights and cultural heritage were further explored by Karima Bennoune in her **2016 report**, which places particular emphasis on the impact of the intentional destruction of cultural heritage on a range of human rights, including the right to take part in cultural life.

In the European context, the role of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (**'Faro Convention'**, 2005) cannot be overemphasised. Article 4 of the Faro Convention sets out a set of rights and responsibilities related to cultural heritage, including everyone's right, alone or collectively, 'to benefit from the cultural heritage and to contribute towards its enrichment'; everyone's responsibility, alone or collectively, 'to respect the cultural heritage of others as much as their own heritage, and consequently the common heritage of Europe'; and that the exercise of the right to cultural heritage may be subject only to those restrictions which are necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the public interest and the rights and freedoms of others (Council of Europe, 2005, article 4). The **Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe** report, published in 2015 by a consortium of European organisations active in the fields of culture and heritage, stressed that the Faro Convention 'puts people and human values in the centre of a renewed understanding of cultural heritage' (Sanetra-Szeliga, 2015: 10).

The UCLG Committee on Culture believes that human rights, including cultural rights, provide the basis for understanding cultural heritage as part and parcel of sustainable development, as explained in the 2015 toolkit **Culture 21: Actions**. This should be reflected thereafter in the adoption of policies that take into account everyone's rights and responsibilities, and which pay particular attention to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Local governments and other stakeholders active at the local level are particularly well-positioned to identify obstacles to the exercise of cultural rights and take measures to make them effective.

## JAMTLI OPEN AIR MUSEUM

ÖSTERSUND, SWEDEN

Fostering community participation, educational opportunities and intercultural dialogue

The **Jamtli Open Air Museum** offers an exciting journey through the history of Jämtland and Härjedalen. Every summer, the open air museum turns into Jamtli Historieland (a living history theme park). Historical buildings come alive with history and role plays, where visitors are drawn into eventful and playful stories from 1785 until 1975. As a visitor, Jamtli Historieland enables you to associate with the actors who bring to life and portray people from the past.

Interview with **Henrik Zipsane**, CEO Jamtli Foundation.

**How have local communities been involved in the development of Jamtli's activities through the years?**

First of all the public is represented in the board of the Jamtli Foundation, which runs the museum. The public authorities of the region and the municipality have the majority of the members on the board. Other members are appointed by two regional associations of the art society and the local history society. Secondly we have a friends organisation which primarily organises our many volunteers. The management of the museum is represented in the board of this organisation. You can say that these are the formal ways in which we involve our community in the work of Jamtli.

In reality in our daily practical work we involve the public much more. We do that through different initiatives. For example through projects where we document different things. When we created our 1970s environment on the open air museum with a playground and four houses we had a community-based collection campaign which involved many hundreds of people who donated clothes, furniture, toys and everything else from their youth or childhood in the 1970s together with memories. We had several working groups with people who helped us through their memories to make lists of what we needed to collect and to shape the stories we wanted to tell. That was great fun! We made hundreds of new friends!

**On the basis of your experience, what is the role of local cultural heritage in enriching educational experiences?**

The local or regional tangible and intangible heritage is easy for people to relate to through their own memories or those of their relatives. That means that this kind of heritage – especially in recent past – becomes a very efficient tool when it comes to create learning experiences which can really reach people in community. For example it becomes easy to shape learning experiences where we make parents (and grandparents) feel competent in relation to their children (grandchildren).

**Jamtli has placed particular emphasis on access to culture for everyone. Could you give some specific examples of this?**

Our work with intercultural dialogue has been intensified as we now build Jamtli Village with 17 small houses at the museum. In collaboration with our local municipality and the municipal housing company we will have some 40-50 people living in the museum. The first tenants are already there! Two thirds of the tenants will be young families with children and with refugee background. Our volunteer manager is allocating half her time to facilitate for our new friends. The families will have access to use the whole museum as their playground and in exchange they will teach us how we in the future can use our museum for all kinds of new celebrations etcetera. A few years from now it should be as natural to celebrate the end of Ramadan at Jamtli as today it is to celebrate Midsummer.



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### 3. The need for all-encompassing, development-related cultural heritage policies

Contemporary definitions of heritage have become increasingly comprehensive, including natural and cultural aspects, tangible and intangible elements, which have been inherited from the past and which are seen as important for the present and the future. In the words of the Faro Convention, cultural heritage 'is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify... as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.' (Council of Europe, 2005, article 2).

The recognition that heritage relates to the environment and to landscape, and that it is conveyed in knowledge, beliefs and values, places heritage in close connection with a wide range of practices and places. This also points to the need to acknowledge the place of heritage in several policy fields, and indeed to the policies and strategies that relate to sustainable development at local, national, regional and global level. Both the broad understanding of the meaning of cultural heritage and the connection with sustainable development have increasingly gained a place in declarations, statements and general policy documents in recent decades, as exemplified in documents produced in the context of the European Year of Cultural Heritage (e.g. the Decision establishing the Year, see above), the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the New Urban Agenda.

While the **UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** falls short of giving cultural aspects their due place in sustainable development (see e.g. UCLG 2018), it is worth noting that the most explicit reference to culture in the SDGs, in Target 11.4, refers to the need to 'strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage', thus emphasising the connection between heritage protection and the promotion of inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements. As UCLG has explained in the recently-published **Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A Guide for Local Action**, a more thorough understanding of the link between culture and sustainable development should serve to acknowledge that cultural aspects are relevant to all SDGs. Of particular relevance in the field of heritage is the work of the **International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)**, which has conducted extensive research, advocacy and assistance on the implementation of Target 11.4, as well as on the heritage-related aspects of other SDGs.

More interesting references can be found in the **New Urban Agenda** adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) held

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in Quito in 2016, which is particularly relevant for cities and towns. Governments gathered at Habitat III committed 'to the sustainable leveraging of natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in cities and human settlements, ...through integrated urban and territorial policies and adequate investments at the national, subnational and local levels, to safeguard and promote cultural infrastructures and sites, museums, indigenous cultures and languages, as well as traditional knowledge and the arts, highlighting the role that these play in rehabilitating and revitalizing urban areas and in strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship.' The New Urban Agenda also refers to the inclusion of culture as a priority component of urban plans and strategies, the fact that strategic development policies should safeguard tangible and intangible cultural heritage and landscapes, and to the support for the leveraging of cultural heritage for sustainable urban development, recognising its role in stimulating participation and responsibility, and engaging indigenous peoples and local communities in the promotion and dissemination of knowledge of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and the protection of traditional expressions and languages (UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, 2016, para. 38, 124 and 125).

Despite these declarations, and the emergence of an increasing number of interesting practices, as the examples presented in this document attest, efforts are still necessary in heightening the understanding of the connection between cultural heritage and sustainable development and in making it effective in specific policies and programmes at all levels. In particular, the integration of intangible heritage aspects in many areas of policymaking (e.g. those that relate to urban planning, the environment, education, social cohesion, etc.) and the consultation of communities in mapping, planning and evaluation exercises and in public policy planning are still limited, and a more holistic, comprehensive understanding of the connections between the cultural and natural dimensions of cultural heritage is pending. These themes are further addressed in the following sections. These are also some of the areas in which European cities and regions could draw inspiration from developments in other world regions, where often connections with natural heritage are richer.

## EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2019

### MATERA, BASILICATA, ITALY

Cultural heritage provides the basis for debating the present and the future in Matera and in Europe

Matera, future **European Capital of Culture for 2019**, has set as an objective being at the forefront of a movement stripping away the barriers to culture, especially through new technologies and learning. Having a vibrant and innovative artistic approach, the programme

also presents an inclusive policy aimed at bringing together those frequently excluded from culture into projects, rather than creating parallel project lines.

Interview with **Ariane Bieou**, Cultural Manager; and **Rosella Tarantino**, Development and Relations Manager, Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation.

**How does Matera connect tangible and intangible heritage with contemporary life?**

An idea that runs through the 2019 European Capital of Culture programme of Matera-Basilicata is the aim to acknowledge the wealth of local heritage and to reinterpret it in the light of contemporary challenges. Particular emphasis has been placed on the axis that connects heritage, education and community, and a number of activities are already underway or will be implemented in 2019 to illustrate this. Steps are also underway to ensure that these connections are maintained at the end of the European Capital of Culture year.

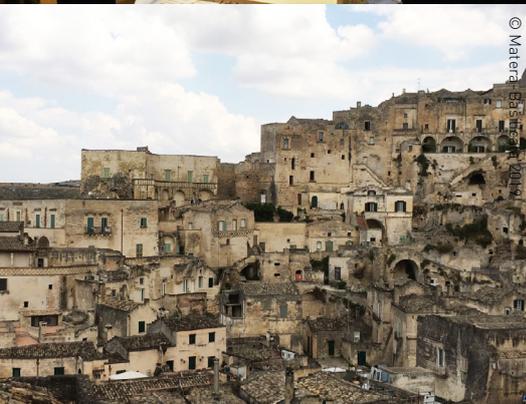
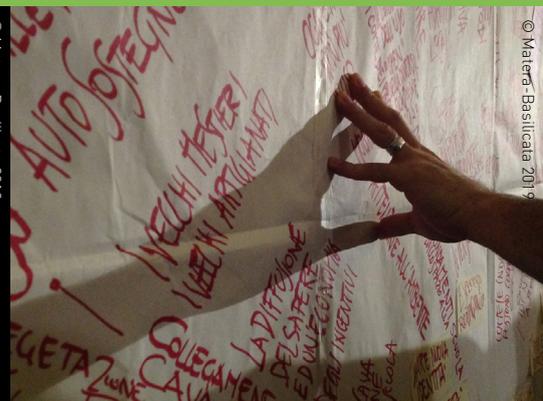
**Could you give some examples?**

In the context of the 2019 European Capital of Culture programme, the project Inhabiting the Opera (Abitare l'opera) will operate as a 'distributed' opera performance, with the city as stage and inhabitants as its cast and audience. Meanwhile, the project I-DEA, conceived as an 'archive of archives and collections', addresses the anthropological wealth of the region of Basilicata, and the

potential for archives to become a source of inspiration for contemporary creativity. Artists will be invited to explore local collections and the stories related to them, and to work with schools as a way both to foster partnerships with archives and to use technological tools in creative ways. Archives are being digitised, with a view to enabling new creative work around collections of the past once the I-DEA project comes to an end.

**How would you describe the European relevance of Matera's cultural heritage?**

The approach adopted by Matera connects the past, the present and the future and involves a dynamic view of heritage. This has been recognised in some European initiatives, including 'Voices of Culture'. One of the issues that Matera is also addressing, and which has European resonance, is the relation between tourists and residents, aiming to address it as a relationship, rather than focusing on the potential tensions, and seeing art as something that can facilitate that relationship, particularly when residents are given a voice as creators.



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## 4. Cultural heritage, economic development and urban tensions

One of the main factors that has driven attention towards cultural heritage in recent decades is the recognition of its potential contribution to economic development. Tangible cultural heritage sites and monuments, and cultural expressions related to intangible heritage (crafts, festivals, traditions), can attract tourism and investment, and may provide new sources of income and employment generation. Synergies can also be found with other elements of the cultural and creative ecosystems, including the development of new products and services. Many impact studies have been conducted around these issues at local, national and international level (see e.g. Sanetra-Szeliga 2015; UNESCO 2016).

The relation between cultural heritage and economic development requires several reflections. To start with, policies and programmes that aim to explore the economic dimension of tangible and intangible cultural heritage should involve appropriate expertise and knowledge, including staff with training in heritage preservation, interpretation and management. Employability programmes in areas related to heritage and its management should include suitable cultural knowledge and skills. The intrinsic value of maintaining traditional trades and crafts, regardless of their economic implications, should also be recognised.

The impact of cultural heritage in the local economy should be regularly analysed, including who benefits from it, and to which degree men and women, local communities and disadvantaged sectors, are part of this. It is also necessary to examine and address, where applicable, the potential negative effects of cultural heritage attractiveness, including in terms of rising housing prices and 'gentrification' processes.

Furthermore, the dynamic, changing nature of cultural heritage should also apply to economic approaches to cultural heritage. In practice, this involves recognising the ability of elements of intangible cultural heritage and the interpretation of all forms of cultural heritage to evolve in line with the evolution of local communities, and the potential inclusion of elements of innovation in them. It should also prevent the 'freezing' of cultural heritage in its past or exotic form, and the decontextualization of cultural identities for the purpose of maximising economic results.

This is in line with the need for approaches to cultural heritage and tourism around them to be inclusive and sustainable. Sustainable tourism management should take into account the impact of visits on the preservation, meaning and traditional uses of cultural heritage. Part of the benefits generated by tourism should be reinvested in the cultural ecosystem, particularly in those aspects which are necessary for cultural

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development but less likely to obtain funding from other sources. Policies in these areas require participatory approaches to governance and management, involving local communities in an inclusive way.

Economic development may have other impacts on cultural heritage, including the neglect or destruction of tangible and intangible heritage elements in the context of urban regeneration, infrastructure development and other urban planning initiatives. In order to face this, local urban planning instruments should explicitly recognise the importance of cultural issues and resources, and 'cultural impact assessment' tools should be established and used in all relevant contexts. Architectural guidelines that take into account traditional materials, knowledge, and construction techniques should be developed at local level, and applied in the renovation of existing buildings, the planning of new buildings, and in other relevant contexts. **Culture 21 Actions** includes a section or 'commitment' dedicated to the relation between culture, urban planning and public space, which provides guidance, among others, in this area.

## “TAKE ME IN YOUR VILLAGE”

### GABROVO, BULGARIA

Cultural and natural heritage leading to intergenerational learning

The Gabrovo Municipality applies the principles and ideas of the Agenda 21 for culture, implementing a coordinated range of cultural activities and programmes, including the Strategy for Culture 2014-2024; the municipal programme on culture, the bid to become European Capital of Culture in 2014; participation in the Pilot Cities programme, membership of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, etc. The initiative “Take Me in Your Village” falls entirely within the scope of these policies with its aim to explore, preserve and promote the living cultural heritage of the rural settlements of Gabrovo, by transferring knowledge, skills, practices, as well as understandings, perceptions, sensitivity from the elderly to the young. The project effectively develops an original approach by bringing together the elderly villagers and the urban youth, who live and work together in the natural environment of the villages, as “grandparents for rent” and “grandchildren to lend”.

Interview with **Sevdalina Nenkova**, chief expert, Gabrovo Municipality.

**Gabrovo is one of the Pilot Cities of the Agenda 21 for culture. In your view how does a project like “Take Me in Your Village” relate to the principles of the Agenda 21 for culture?**

By experiencing diverse cultural practices, young people are provided with favourable conditions for “a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence”, having the chance

to live, work, explore, communicate, create and express themselves in unconventional and completely unknown ways. The project is realized in a “dialogue between identity and diversity, individual and group...” contributing to cultural diversity through a common process of shared activities, interactions and exchange between the elderly and the young. By providing access to this

secluded, unexplored cultural mini-universe of the rural environment, young people are given a unique chance to achieve an “interactive relation with the territory”.

**By focusing on the exchange of experiences between generations and the promotion of Bulgarian traditions and heritage, which have been the impacts of the project?**

Having started as a stand-alone initiative with a dozen of participants, based on an idea given by a Gabrovo university student, this initiative/project has turned into an annual event with a growing number of participants, sought after by children and young people from the region, the country and abroad. The realization of this project contributes considerably to the process of exploring and developing local cultures. Through direct participation and involvement, the personal expressiveness and creativity of the young are provoked and incited under the guidance of the elderly, based on their experiences and knowledge of traditions and customs. Both target groups benefit from the opportunity provided to create and invent, to experience and share the abundance of the rural life and the richness of the cultural layers, hidden in the secrecy of this, endangered to lapse into oblivion, world.

**More broadly, how do tangible and intangible heritage play a role in Gabrovo’s Strategy for**

**the Development of Culture?**

Both tangible and intangible heritage are valuable factors in Gabrovo’s strategy as they are the main factors in moulding the identity of the local community. Many local tangible heritage elements are recognized as being part of national heritage - the Museum of Architectural and Historical Reserve “Bozhentsi”, architectural buildings, such as houses and old factories, which are suitable for various types of initiatives and provide an opportunity to turn the city into a centre for art residencies that could be organized in a natural environment close to the Balkans and two national parks. The crafts, kept alive in the local community at the Open Air Ethnographic Museum “Etar”, are part of the intangible heritage and could make the city a centre of creative industries. This potential is proven by Gabrovo’s membership in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network, as a City of Crafts and Folk Art. The emblematic local sense of humour, taking shape and materialized through the activity of the House of Humour and Satire, complements the uniqueness of the city branding. A variety of initiatives, such as “Take Me in Your Village”, are organised not only to preserve the intangible heritage but also to contribute to the interpretation, acceptance and understanding of all its forms and to the evolution of cultural identity along with the natural evolution of the local community.



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## 5. Cultural heritage, inclusion, diversity and social development

The rights-based, people-centred approach to cultural heritage requires recognising that there are many valid interpretations of the legacy of the past and its relevance for the present and the future – heritage and memory should increasingly be thought of in the plural: heritages, memories. It is necessary for heritage policies to guarantee opportunities to access and interpret heritage for everyone, and for preservation schemes to care for a diverse range of tangible and intangible cultural resources.

The Decision establishing the **European Year of Cultural Heritage** stresses that cultural heritage plays an important role for community cohesion. It goes on to argue that new participatory and intercultural approaches to heritage policies have the potential to increase trust, mutual recognition and social cohesion. Indeed, in addition to an understanding of access and participation in heritage as a human right, evidence gathered over the years demonstrates that participation in cultural heritage activities can contribute to the enhancement of individual and collective self-esteem and confidence, promote further engagement in civic activities, strengthen social capital, stimulate intercultural dialogue, and recognise cultural diversity, among others (Dümcke and Gnedovsky, 2013; and Sanetra-Szeliga, 2015).

The exploration of the social dimension of cultural heritage entails that heritage-related measures need to be adopted in a wide range of policy fields in the social sphere. These include education, which needs to provide opportunities to access several forms of heritage and to understand their context, meaning and relevance. Learning opportunities connected to heritage and traditional knowledge should be provided throughout life, including in intergenerational contexts: indeed, this is one of the areas where recognition of the knowledge existing in older generations is essential, and where opportunities exist for cross-generational encounters.

Similarly, cities and towns, as well as governments at other levels, should ensure that the heritage of diverse communities and groups existing in a territory can be properly preserved, managed and visualised. Where possible, opportunities for intercultural dialogues around memories and heritages should be provided.

A gender dimension should be mainstreamed in heritage policies, just as in other areas of policymaking. Particular attention in this field should be paid to the recognition of the practices, knowledge, customs and sites related to women, which have often been neglected in the presentation of cultural heritage. Measures are also necessary to

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ensure that women have full, equal access to training, employment, volunteering, and decision-making opportunities in areas related to cultural heritage, addressing the outstanding obstacles where necessary.

In line with **Article 30** of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, states should take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy access to cultural spaces, including museums, and, as far as possible, to monuments and sites. Principles of universal accessibility are relevant for all disadvantaged or vulnerable groups, and public authorities should take into account the specific obstacles that are applicable in their respective contexts.

## “SPECIALLY UNKNOWN”

### THE NETHERLANDS

An oral history project to diversify heritage narratives and empower refugees

A total of 248 refugees, forced to leave their countries over the past decades, have participated in the oral history project **Specially Unknown**, where their stories have been told on film. The narrative focuses on the way they have built a new life in the Netherlands, and the way they have contributed to the country and the cities they live in. Specially Unknown aims to collect and create a permanent record of individual refugees' life histories, contributing to a new perception of refugees and to the diversification of heritage institutions.

Interview with **Dilek Karaagacli**, Stichting BMP – Foundation for the Promotion of Social Participation.

#### **Where did the project emerge from? Which organisations were involved in its design and implementation?**

In 2013 Stichting BMP started an innovative community-based refugee oral history project in the Netherlands. The title of this project, *Ongekend Bijzonder*, means 'Specially Unknown' in English. The project was inspired by a similar initiative in London called 'The Refugee Communities History Project'. Specially Unknown involves several cultural and heritage institutions in Amsterdam, The Hague, Utrecht and Rotterdam, that make up the steering group.

#### **What have been the results?**

Throughout the initiative, 248 interviews with former refugees have been conducted, paying special attention to how they contribute to

development in their cities. 24 fieldworkers with a refugee background were trained to conduct oral history interviews, and later took part in the organisation of 16 artistic projects involving refugees and their stories. A big festival was held during two months in close collaboration with cultural partners, with over 30 artistic productions that reached over 350,000 people. The oral history interviews have become part of the city archives and are available for online streaming. Several publications and educational materials have also been produced. Furthermore, there emerged a network of heritage institutions, cultural organisations and refugees who know each other and can develop further initiatives. On the basis of that project, a new Specially Unknown project with partners in 9 EU Member States has been launched.



### In your view, what is the significance of migrants and refugees' stories for the experience of cultural heritage in Europe today?

Cultural and heritage institutions play a significant role in documenting and telling the stories of people, but they barely have relationships with refugee communities. Because their stories are not visible in these institutions, refugees feel insufficiently involved and represented in their cities. The intention of Specially Unknown was to initiate the process of changing these representations

and perceptions. It has indeed proven how important feeling at home and belonging are for the participation and integration of refugee communities in Dutch cities. Collecting life stories and sharing them with the receiving society in creative ways contributes to a stronger awareness of our collective migration past and growing compassion, understanding towards new groups now and in the future. We believe that cultural participation contributes to the empowerment and active participation of refugees in new networks and in society overall.

## 6. The governance of cultural heritage

Universal accessibility and participation in cultural heritage also applies to decision-making and management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Just as in other areas of cultural life, plural models of governance are necessary in cultural heritage. Several aspects should be taken into account in this respect.

Firstly, the need for appropriate participatory approaches to the governance of cultural heritage, involving public, private and civil society stakeholders and, whenever possible, enabling everyone in a community to be engaged in relevant decisions. This may require providing training opportunities to develop the skills necessary to engage in management and decision-making procedures. The need for multi-stakeholder governance frameworks and for making participation possible at all stages of the decision-making processes was noted by the EU Council of Ministers in its **2014 Conclusions on Participatory Governance of Cultural Heritage**, which also stressed that digital means could contribute to increasing access and participation in governance for all social groups.

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Secondly, as the previous sections have indicated, a rights-based, people-centred approach to cultural heritage that recognises its connections with broader sustainable development should require 'joined-up' policies and an understanding of the importance of cultural heritage by decision-makers in many policy fields – including culture, education, environment, tourism, employment, social affairs, youth, gender, etc. Again, this may involve the provision of appropriate training where necessary, as well as the setting-up of effective coordination mechanisms, including working groups, joint strategies and transversal programmes.

Thirdly, appropriate multi-level governance frameworks are necessary. This includes the decentralisation of competences on cultural heritage where possible, which should also involve the allocation of appropriate financial, human, technical and material resources to make decentralisation effective. It also involves the establishment of adequate dialogue mechanisms between local, regional and national authorities, enabling appropriate distribution of tasks and collaboration. At operational level, efforts should be made to foster and enable national and international networking among heritage professionals and institutions.

## THE INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN LEEDS' HERITAGE POLICIES

LEEDS, UK

Strong partnerships to preserve and celebrate cultural heritage

The development of cultural and other urban policies in Leeds relies on a range of civil society organisations, which contribute to the preservation of buildings and the organisation of activities that celebrate tangible and intangible heritage. Among them is the Leeds Civic Trust, a voluntary, non-political body, open to everyone who wants to participate in and influence the development of Leeds, as well as other organisations such as the National Trust.

Interview with **Leanne Buchan**, Principal Officer for Culture & Sport, Leeds City Council.

**What is the role of civil society organisations, such as the Leeds Civic Trust or the National Trust, in the preservation and promotion of heritage?**

Leeds Civic Trust and other NGOs in the city play an active role in its future development from taking part in major consultations on both the tangible built heritage of the city and how this evolves as new developments take shape, but also in terms of how our

intangible heritage and the culture of our city is recognised and shared with new audiences. In 2016 Leeds began work on its first co-produced Culture Strategy seeking to create an iterative document that would bring together partners from across the city to create a new framework for the governance of culture. Leeds Civic Trust and several of its member societies, e.g. local history and heritage groups, 'Friends Of' groups and volunteers continue to contribute



to both the Culture Strategy and its associated Delivery Plan. These groups were also heavily involved in the development of the city's bid for European Capital of Culture 2023.

**What mechanisms for collaboration exist between the local government and these organisations?**

Leeds Civic Trust and Leeds City Council have a long history of dialogue and collaboration. The Civic Trust is a member of our Sustainable Economy & Culture (SEC) Partnership Board which makes up part of the City Council's formal partnership arrangements with public, private and third sector partners in the city. The SEC

Partnership Board meets quarterly to consider aspects of progress in delivering the overall long-term Vision for Leeds. In addition to this the Leeds Civic Trust are also an active voice in consultations relating to future developments and regeneration projects in Leeds, attending the Leeds Property Forum and the city's formal meetings such as Planning Decisions and Executive Board Meeting. More recently the Leeds Civic Trust, working with Leeds Chamber of Commerce and Leeds City Council, has led on the development of a new Waterfront Strategy, preserving the history and heritage of this area whilst opening up new developments and inviting citizens to reconnect with this space.

## 7. Lesser-known stories and the global dimension of cultural heritage

Initiatives like the European Year for Cultural Heritage provide an opportunity to unearth many stories and narratives that have not been told, or been given less prominence in mainstream heritage accounts. Within European societies there is increasing appetite for stories that have been hidden or silenced, and which can provide a more multi-layered way to understand the past and the present.

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Addressing the lesser-known stories should involve bringing attention to the so-called 'dissonant heritage', that heritage which, by focusing on conflicts, terror, genocide, or oppression, may hurt and challenge mainstream explanations in the past. Fully embracing cultural heritage requires exploring these realities as well, recognising their respective value, and adopting necessary measures in the legal, social, economic and cultural spheres where appropriate.

In the case of Europe, this approach has both an internal and an external dimension. In the internal context, authorities should be encouraged to identify those aspects of their respective histories which have been given less prominence, and determine the appropriate ways to explore and recognise them.

As per the external sphere, Europe's relationship with other world regions, including that of societies which were colonised, deserves further attention. This includes giving visibility to the diversity of voices and stories that may contribute to a plural, multi-sided understanding of the past. A wealth of objects exist in European museums and heritage institutions which could be given new interpretations under this light, including by fostering collaboration with the countries of origin and with migrant communities, and providing space to their narratives, as an increasing number of ethnological museums and 'museums of world cultures' and similar institutions are doing. Aspects related to the ownership and care of collections of the past could also be addressed in this context. Unearthing the past, including Europe's relations with other world regions throughout history, should also help to address the legacy of colonialism in contemporary times, including its ramifications in the economic and political spheres.

Finally, Europe should increasingly recognise the value of approaches to tangible and intangible cultural heritage existing in other parts of the world, in areas such as community ownership, participation and inclusion. Whereas the EU's recent documents on international cultural relations (see e.g. European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2016) have often placed emphasis on the ability to transfer European knowledge and skills in heritage management to other world regions, it could be necessary to provide opportunities to learn from approaches elsewhere as well.

## RED STAR LINE MUSEUM

### ANTWERP, FLANDERS, BELGIUM

The heritage of global migration given new meaning in the 21st century

In 2004 the Antwerp City Council decided to turn the former buildings of the Red Star Line shipping company into a commemorative site. Three former warehouses that had served as control stations for passengers wishing to emigrate to the New World were restored, and the new **Red Star Line Museum** opened in September 2013. Until recently, it was the

only migration museum on the European mainland housed in the original departure halls. With the museum Antwerp also stresses that heritage is not only about buildings, but also about the diversity of local, intangible cultures.

Interview with **Karen Moeskops**, Director of Red Star Line Museum.

**What are the main narratives that your work on migration-related heritage has helped to uncover?**

The museum tells the story of the millions of Europeans who were courageous or desperate enough to leave their old life behind and look for a better existence. For many people, the trip to the New World began in a warehouse in Antwerp. Red Star Line ocean steamers paved the way to a new life for about two million men, women and children between 1873 and 1934. The Red Star Line Museum invites you on an eventful journey in the footsteps of these emigrants. It is a journey to the past but also an encounter with the present. Migration might have a different face these days, but the human side of migration is timeless and universal.

**How has the preservation of intangible heritage related to migration positively impacted on Antwerp's citizens?**

Some of the feedback we received from our NT2-teachers:

- "It was a very nice evening and I would like to thank the museum for the late night opening. My evening class students mainly come from Eastern Europe and they were delighted to locate their home town on the maps, or to recognize Polish surnames on the passenger's lists." (Liliane)
- "The students found it most interesting and they want to come back to the museum. The introduction and the manual for guiding the group around the museum were very comprehensible." (Kirsten)
- "The Red Star Line Museum moves people. When I watched the film I was sitting next to a woman of Asian origin. She was not one of my students. In the middle of the film she left the room and went outside. She apologized for being so overcome by her emotions." (Aline)

**Which are the main communities or target groups addressed by the Museum? How are you working with them?**

We work with a wide range of audiences. They include members of the general public with a love and interest for culture, as well as more specific groups. Among them are schools, as the Museum is an ideal destination for a surprising class excursion that examines a fascinating and topical subject in more detail; we offer tours tailored to several educational levels and ages. There is also a family-tailored tour, and a 'suitcase with exciting little tasks' for families to accompany them during their visits. We also welcome many people with a migration background – Antwerp is nowadays a frequent final destination for migrants, and the museum's stories from the past are unmistakably linked to the here and now in Antwerp and in Belgium.



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