

IZMIR PILOT CITY: FINAL ARTICLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SEPTEMBER 2019

The Izmir Metropolitan Municipality became a member of the Pilot Cities Europe Programme in 2015. The coordination of the process has been undertaken by the Izmir Mediterranean Academy, a semi-autonomous branch of the Municipality. Developments have built on the process initiated with the Izmir Cultural Workshop of 2009, which is seen as the first and most important step towards a new cultural vision and a cultural strategy in Izmir.

More specifically, in the context of Pilot Cities a self-assessment workshop was conducted in March 2016. This enabled to identify the city's strengths and weaknesses and led to the identification of priorities, which were then integrated in Izmir's work programme. The latter, designed by a team of interlocutors comprising representatives of public, private and civil society initiatives following a feasibility study, focused on four thematic areas: Culture and Education, Culture and Economy, Culture and Social Inclusion, and Culture and Information.

FINAL
ARTICLE





PROJECTS¹

In line with the four thematic areas outlined above, four specific projects have been conducted, as follows:

GOOD DESIGN IZMIR

An annual design days event, initiated by the Design Committee of the Izmir Mediterranean Academy. Its main goals, briefly, involve rendering design a distinctive feature of the city and increasing the sector's competitive capacity by bringing designers, producers, non-governmental organizations and investors together. It has been carried out three times between 2016 and 2018, and the fourth is scheduled to take place in October 2019.

BASMANE URBAN DESIGN

The Basmane region, which is in close proximity to the historical centre of Izmir, has long been neglected and deprived of infrastructure and public attention. Nowadays home to new settlers, mostly refugees from Syria, it has a rich and diverse history. Generated with the collaboration of the Izmir Mediterranean Academy, designers and design associations, the project's aims were contributing to the revival of the region, creating a triggering effect, raising awareness by drawing attention to the region's social and historic values and positively supporting the interaction within. Here, a participatory process led to the production of new urban design elements – such as multilingual signposts, recreational and leisure urban equipment, improvement of the building surfaces- by considering both the historical and current diversity of Basmane.

KÜLTÜRLAB

An initiative to establish an educational platform amongst the cultural institutions and organisations in Izmir, kültürLab started with a forum including the participation of representatives from 17 cultural institutions and organisations in central Izmir, in 2017, after which a set of priorities were established. In the period since, there has been a more positive engagement of stakeholders and strengthening in educational programming and visibility. However, the platform is still in need of a better, inclusive programming for measurable results, besides support from the local government.

MAPPING THE CULTURE AND ART VENUES OF IZMIR – 2017

In 2016, the Izmir Culture Platform Initiative (IKPG) set out to elaborate a mapping exercise for culture and arts venues. The resulting study has been particularly important in numerous aspects: it provided cultural routes within the diverse districts of the city, was able to raise cultural attendance overall; and inspired various other projects influenced by Izmir's urban culture.

¹ For additional details on Izmir's pilot measures in the context of the Pilot Cities programme, you can also view the publication Izmir Governance of Culture and Pilot Projects, available at http://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/cities/content/izmir-pilot_low_1.pdf



FINAL THOUGHTS

Building on these experiences, here are some final reflections on what has been achieved, and what could be accomplished in the near future:

- Good Design Izmir has been adopted by the design circles in the city. However, some stakeholders mentioned that there is a need to emphasize its role as an economic forerunner by further including creative industries.
- Izmir's [peer-learning visit to Lisbon](#) proved that a special emphasis and effort was given to social inclusion and culture. This insight has provided a better approach and acknowledgement to local cultural initiatives on deprived zones, such as Darağaç.
- Another positive outcome is a possible artists' support mechanism which is presently being studied by the Arts and Culture Department of the Metropolitan Municipality in coordination with IKPG.



FURTHER INFORMATION

This is an executive summary of the full article written by Gökçe Suvani, available in English on the Agenda 21 Culture website.

For additional details about Izmir's participation in the Pilot Cities Europe programme, please visit <http://www.agenda21culture.net/our-cities/izmir>



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IZMİR METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY



