URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC SPACE

CULTURE AS A DRIVER FOR CITIES

REPORT

© Chantal Vanoeteren

ROUND TABLE EVENT ON 4TH OF JUNE 2015 IN BRUSSELS
OFFICIAL SIDE-EVENT OF THE 8TH EU-LAC SUMMIT /
2ND EU-CELAC SUMMIT

BOZAR
CENTRE FOR FINE ARTS
BRUSSELS

EU-LAC
EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

REPORT

The round-table event was co-organised by:

BO ZAR
CENTRE FOR FINE ARTS
BRUSSELS

EU-LAC
EU-LAC Foundation
Fundación EU-LAC

With the support of:

European Commission

EUNIC

MORE EUROPE
external cultural relations

In the framework of:

EU-CELAC
Summit 2015 Brussels

INDEX

REPORT

1.
INTRODUCTION

This paper is the outcome of a round table event that took place on the 4th of June 2015 and which was organised in the context of the 8th EU-LAC Summit / 2nd EU-CELAC Summit of 10-11 June 2015. This initiative, taken by the EU-LAC Foundation in partnership with the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels (BOZAR), with the support of the European Commission - DG DEVCO, EUNIC and More Europe - external cultural relations, had the objective of strengthening the relations between Europe, the Caribbean and Latin America. More than 20 experts from different backgrounds - academics, members of international institutions, artists, journalists and specialists from private and public sectors and civil society - from those regions gathered to discuss the theme "Urban Development and Public Space: Culture as a Driver for Cities" which was in line with the Summit's theme "Shaping our Common Future: working for prosperous, cohesive and sustainable societies for our citizens".

REPORT

Dr. Keith Nurse, Dirk Seghers and Silja Fischer. © Yannick Sas

This Round table Event pursued four objectives:

• To use the opportunity of the 8th EU-LAC / 2nd EU-CELAC Summit to further raise awareness on the role of culture in international relations on the one hand, and its importance for economic and social changes on the other hand;

• To emphasize the importance of structured, planned and inclusive urbanisation as well as cultural and societal values for the development of the economy and society;

- To inspire a long-term dialogue between EU and LAC Countries and future pilot projects in the field of culture and urbanisation, also with the perspective of the Habitat III conference in Quito (Ecuador);

- To bring together experts and leading figures from both regions in order to create mutually beneficial networks working towards this common goal.

The round table discussions centered around two questions, presented by the organisers: "How can cultural and innovative cities contribute to urban and economic development?" and "How can culture shape cities and strengthen the social dimensions of sustainable urban development?". From this starting point the participants shared their experience, ideas and thoughts. In this report we have assembled the main statements and suggestions derived from those discussions.

2.
BACKGROUND

According to the UN Habitat 2012 report *State of Latin American and Caribbean cities. Towards a new urban transition,* "there is no doubt that in Latin America and the Caribbean - a global laboratory for many innovations related to urban planning and management - the resources and the capabilities to promote new models of urban development for the twenty-first century are available; models that are simultaneously centred on the welfare of people and their inclusion in society; models that favour local employment, social and cultural diversity, environmental sustainability and the reaffirmation of public spaces."

Silvia Sanchez Di Martino, Frédéric Meseeuw and Guillemette Madinier
© Yannick Sas

REPORT

REPORT

European cities are also in a transition phase and face the need to promote their smarter, more sustainable and socially inclusive development. Not only must they compete in attractiveness, they also need to be a fertile ground for science, culture, innovation and creativity, while coping with unemployment, poverty, social cohesion and climate change.

Arts and culture, as well as urban planning and spaces, play a pivotal role in enhancing social cohesion and in nurturing the economic fabric. Culture has the ability to help cities in being more inclusive, tolerant and safe. It is also recognised as a component of growth creation. Public spaces are a vector for exchange of goods, services and ideas. They are places for commercial exchanges, multidisciplinary cultural expressions, social interplay and spatial coexistence. Urbanisation is not only a demographic and social challenge, it is a key opportunity for the development of a city.

Economic entities on their own, cities are also drivers of social and political transformation. Cultural dynamism and civil society's participation in public spaces and cities thus play a key role for promoting social cohesion and a business friendly urban development; they enhance quality of life, and make cities 'vibrant'. The assumption is that a vibrant and creative city attracts talented inhabitants and becomes more economically sustainable. The assumption is also that the mobility of these inhabitants will increase.

Cities in the EU and in LAC countries have the opportunity to take advantage of their complementarities to jointly address similar challenges – social inclusion, security, territorial leadership and economic development, environmental sustainability, etc. – and develop their overall attractiveness through renewed and creative models of urban development leading to diverse, inclusive, peaceful, creative and vibrant cities in both Regions. Culture certainly is a vector for these dynamics.

3.
FORMAT OF THE DISCUSSIONS

The format entailed three round table discussions followed by reporting and plenary discussions. The round tables' success in advancing the debate on urbanisation and cultural spaces in cities was based on the participation of and synergy among the highly experienced, diverse and multidisciplinary professional groups brought together: leading architecture networks, doers and thinkers, artists, cultural and urban planners, all engaged in inclusive urban development.

REPORT

Jordi Pascual, with his background with Agenda 21 for Culture (UCLG), was the overall moderator of the event. © Yannick Sas

The main objective of the round table discussions was an active exchange of experiences and ideas where synergies and differences were investigated between European and LAC cities. Each table discussed the following questions:

1. How can cultural and innovative cities contribute to urban and economic development?

- Culture as vector of a sustainable urban and economic development: can culture be an image-maker, a resource in a city's planning and management process, a leverage for private sector's contributions, local government and civil society?

- Districts of creativity: what is the contribution of culture in innovation? And are there spill over effects in other sectors?

- Sustainable urban planning: What are the key conditions? Urban planning, culture and public space, what comes first?

2. How can culture shape cities and strengthen the social dimension of sustainable urban development?

- Culture as a language and a binder between communities, sectors, urban spaces, and with other cities. How can culture enhance social cohesion and inclusiveness? Can culture be an identity builder for citizens, especially for deprived groups, and youngsters?

- Culture as a resource in a city's planning: how can culture offset the negative externalities of rapid urbanisation?

- How might a new partnership between Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean help us rethink how we consider culture in both regions?

The topics of discussion led to the formulation of recommendations to better inform EU and LAC policymakers and various stakeholders for future initiatives on urbanisation and cultural spaces in cities from both regions, and also referred to the themes of the 2015 summit «Shaping our common future: working for prosperous, cohesive and sustainable societies for our citizens».

4.
ELEMENTS DISCUSSED IN THE ROUND TABLES

4.1. MAIN TOPICS

4.1.1 SOCIAL COHESION

Empowerment of local communities

The issue of social cohesion was largely discussed in all three tables. One of the central topics was the importance of the empowerment of local communities both in LAC and Europe. The discussions raised the need for these local communities to take ownership of the cities. This could be reached by fostering public interaction in public spaces; by creating a platform of citizens; by engaging youth (cf. infra); by bringing popular culture to the fore (cf. infra), by supporting education (arts, urban planning...), etc.

Mr. Elkin Velásquez, director of UN Habitat for LAC raised the question "Is culture an input or an output, an entry or an outcome? Do we invest in a big culture project or in the local communities to build their 'citizenship culture'? How do we intervene? Top down or bottom up?"

"The main conditions for creating a real participatory process is some preliminary background work with prior education and an information campaign" says Franco Bianchini. People need to make informed choices. Therefore they have to be aware of all aspects of a cultural programme, for example also the financial picture. It is important for governments, be it local mayors or national officials, to create optimal conditions and instruments to enable citizens to participate in the decision-making process for local public space or local events.

REPORT

Popular/citizenship culture

Popular culture can be considered as an underlying element in cities. It can be seen from two angles: as the culture of the people that live in a certain city - and therefore the culture of the city – or as the sum of specific cultures of a series of groups of people that live in that city. In both cases however, popular culture is the expression of an identity and - as such – both reflects and shapes how people behave in a specific territory (the whole city or a neighbourhood). Popular culture therefore constitutes, *de facto*, an important element of urban identity and therefore development. There is however a sense that it could be more and better used for various purposes such as (but not limited to) *social integration*. The possibility to express a cultural identity and to see this identity recognised as an element of the city - or an element of the culture of the city - is a way of giving dignity to a group of people. When applied to less favoured neighbourhoods, through cultural projects, involving arts, it has frequently been proven (Rio, Medellín, Liverpool, Glasgow's Carnival for refugees and immigrants) that popular culture can be a vector for expression that creates linkages between the people of a neighbourhood and between that and other neighbourhoods in the city, thus favouring integration.

Dr Keith Nurse highlighted the link between culture and economic, urban and social development. © Yannick Sas

Youth

Youth is seen as a central actor in the development of cities. Participants of the three round tables agreed that youth insertion and involvement as well as their access and participation to culture is an important goal, both in Europe and LAC countries.

Talking about the major issue of empowering youth, Franco Bianchini highlighted that: "they have a more global outlook; they blame immigrants less; environmental values are more familiar for them".

Children and youth education can play a key role in social cohesion in cities, by

enabling intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding, as well as by creating awareness of the importance of active citizenship. The success of 'El Sistema' (a music education program: social action for music) in Venezuela is a good example here.

REPORT

Jolita Butkeviciene, director for Latin-America and the Caribbean at the European Commission (DEVCO). © Yannick Sas

4.1.2 URBAN PLANNING & CULTURE AS TWO MUTUALLY REINFORCING TOOLS

Urban planning of public spaces cannot be built on the basis of architectural and aesthetic principles alone, but should at all times keep in mind that the public space is a people's place. The citizens are the users and should be the main actor in this common place, this common good.

The three tables also agreed that the role of public space should be the focus of cultural and urban strategies at city-level. In this regard, several participants have referred to the importance of festivals in order to enhance community involvement. A festival can be financially and thematically organised by an official organisation (be it a government organisation or an independent organ in collaboration with local officials) but relies on the creative input of local residents. A festival is a cultural event that is rooted in the local community, both through the implication of locals in the creative process as through the thematic line that usually ties the local community together.

In turn, the "cultural" use of such spaces will have an impact on the development and planning of the city. Culture in public spaces can contribute to safer, more secure and tolerant societies, but it can also be a driver for economic development (see point 4.1.3),

Five aspects of urban planning that haven proven efficient came out of the discussions:

• Long-term strategic planning;

• Respect for collective memory, heritage and socio-cultural context;

• Collaborative & participatory processes between the groups engaged in the given urban reform (citizens, tourists, local authorities and businesses together);

• Hybrid spaces: avoid areas for one purpose alone, and foster complementary mix between living space, green space, working space and leisure space, and also spaces where different kinds of communities, with different backgrounds and origins, share the same space and/or activities. This approach fosters social inclusion and respect for diversity;

• Take care of the urbanistic project's image, its power and quality.

4.1.3 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Urban planning is not about social policy and community development; it is an economic agenda too. As "Culture is not only about art but about everyday life: what food you eat, consumer patterns... Its role is closely linked to economic, urban and social sustainability. Cities are at the forefront of the changes that have to be made" says Keith Nurse.

Latin American and European cities are facing societal, economic and environmental challenges. In this perspective, city governments have a key role to play: the more they invest in education and culture, in urban planning (including mobility facilities), and upgrading the business environment, the more companies settle in a city, hire people, pay taxes, and the more citizens are likely to be active economically – and culturally – in the city. Local governments should nurture good practices in the cultural and urban field not only financially, but also structurally and politically.

The economic aspect was looked at from several points of view:

• culture as an image-maker: cities use culture-driven strategies to market themselves globally. E.g. the European Capitals of Culture and notably the cases of Lille 2004 (FR) and Liverpool 2008 (UK) which, with a long term vision, used this opportunity as catalyst for change – image change being the most successful one;

• the empowerment of "citizen culture": popular culture can allow for numerous

REPORT

economic developments, inter alia: food services ("ethnic" restaurants, classes, street food events, etc.); crafts (production and sale); arts: visual arts, dance, theatre, etc. (workshops, exhibitions, shows, etc.);

- Youth unemployment in LAC and Europe: this issue could be tackled in the same way, youth employment can be pushed through creative industries;

- culture as a vector for added value through the creation of cultural products (shows, arts, crafts, etc.), through the development of cultural industries (cinema, music, software, etc.) and finally through tourism based on a joint offer of cultural products, cultural structures (museums and exhibitions spaces, theatres, cultural centres, etc.) and heritage, the latter needing to be considered both as public space and common wealth.

Silvia Sanchez de Martino shared an example in Paraguay about how a photographic project about Asunción – unintentionally – turned into a business opportunity for the photographer. The so-called "Guggenheim effect" shows how a museum revitalised Bilbao's urban and economic fabric.

REPORT

David Escobar Arango shared its valuable experience in the city of Medellin, Colombia. © Yannick Sas

4.2. OTHER TOPICS DISCUSSED

Security issue

All table members agreed on the fact that security is a fundamental issue. It plays a key role in quality of life in cities in LAC and Europe. In Latin America, many cities suffer from violence, often as a result of poverty or drug traffic. In consequence people want to be separated from the "other". This leads to the fragmentation of the city and the creation of gated communities. In Europe the growing social inequality is

developing into a situation that resembles that of Latin America and the Caribbean, to a lesser level of threat/violence.

In both regions, cultural projects in public spaces have helped improving the security in cities. Medellín in Colombia, or the El Raval neighbourhood in Barcelona, Spain, are some famous examples.

Media and communication

The discussion also opens the door to the idea of virtual spaces aside of public space. **Media** is an important ally to projects that seek rethinking the city. They provide visibility and help raising awareness and support both from the people and policy makers. It is also relevant to understand how to take advantage of the digital communication tools.

5.
PERSPECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As result of the round table event entitled "Urban Development and Public Space: Culture as a Driver for Cities", the following conclusions and/or recommendations were attained.

The EU and LAC regions would benefit from bi-regional cooperation and sharing knowledge on urban planning and public space in relation to culture. An **organisation-to-organisation collaboration** and **construction of proper networks** is a promising option (e.g. **joint exchange programmes**). At bi-regional level the cooperation between cities that share similar processes and intentions/objectives should be encouraged, allowing to exchange best practices or to develop joint schemes. Such initiatives already exist in the framework of decentralized cooperation projects of inter-cities cooperation in networks such as United Cities and Local Governments (www.uclg.org). It seems that interaction between the city authorities and the people can allow for better inclusion of culture in the process of urban planning and for the set-up of cultural activities. Within the city this interaction could allow for a **blend of bottom-up and top-down projects**, with an intention to make those projects meet when possible, or coexist into an extended array of cultural offer, development projects, including business support activities (e.g. definition of business projects, accompaniment, advisory services, incubators). Investing in these initiatives can help to enable culture to emerge and lead to a stronger social cohesion. It is very important to bring up culture to the government's attention as an influential tool that has to be taken into account as part of political policies of the EU and LAC countries.

The interaction between, artists and cultural actors, citizens, local government and the private sectors (in particular in the case of creative or cultural industries) is a

REPORT

good method for generating innovation both in terms of urban planning and use of the public space and in the economic arena.

Local differences and "sensitivities" have to be taken into account. There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution. It is necessary to tailor interventions to the cultural habits and interest of the citizens and in particular of younger people (e.g. by the use of digital tools), who are central actors in the urban context.

An all-citizens approach in the context of urban design and public space is necessary. People have to be involved in the projects affecting their city, and culture is a perfect instrument to facilitate participation and for empowering dialogue. In this direction, **participatory budget projects** also arise as a good solution and help generate a common place in a sustainable way through a synergic and horizontal method. Also, **work with laboratory models** that identify synergies between theory models and the knowledge of local people, as well as the **implementation of small pilot projects** to gradually expand them.

Some of these initiatives already exist. Further research is necessary in order to identify these existing projects and the key urban and cultural actors.

The need for a **platform** to assemble tools and best practices has been put forward. Many initiatives are small but very decisive; however, they often lack the means to share their experience with others. We suggest creating a place where everybody can easily share stories about projects that show positive results. It could be an option to include projects that seemed to fail in order to help to avoid making the same mistakes. Such platform would work both as **an observatory of good practices** of people participating in the development of their society, and as **a community of multidisciplinary actors** (artists, entrepreneurs, researchers/experts) who together design projects for implementation.

REPORT

© Yannick Sas

ANNEX I
PARTICIPANTS TO
THE ROUND TABLES

REPORT

FROM LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN

Mr. **David Escobar Arango**, Executive director, Interactuar, *Colombia*

Mr. **Raul Lemesoff**, multidisciplinary artist, *Argentina*

Dr. **Keith Nurse**, Executive Director, UWI Consulting Inc., *Barbados / Trinidad & Tobago*

Mr. **Oscar Pujol**, Director, Instituto Cervantes Rio de Janeiro – EUNIC network, *Brazil / Spain*

Ms. **Silvia Sanchez Di Martino**, journalist, Kurtural, *Paraguay*

Mr. **Jesús Antonio Treviño-Cantu**, Urban planning & Public Policy, *Mexico*

Mr. **Elkin Velasquez**, Director, UN Habitat Regional Office for the Caribbean and Latin America, *Brazil / Colombia*.

FROM EUROPE

Ms. **Silvia Abalos**, Artistic Director, International Festival of Latin American Folklore of Brussels, *Belgium / Mexico*

Mr. **Franco Bianchini**, Professor of Cultural Policy and Planning, Leeds Beckett University, *UK / Italy*

Mr. **Eric Corijn**, Cultural philosopher and social scientist, founder of COSMOPOLIS, Centre for Urban Research at the VUB - Free University of Brussels, *Belgium*

Ms. **Catherine Cullen**, President of UCLG (United Cities & Local Governments) Committee on Culture, *France*

Mr. **Teodor Frolu**, Architect and entrepreneur in creative industries, DC Communication; EUNIC network representative, *Romania*

Ms. **Svetlana Hristova**, South-West University in Blagoevgrad; Chair of ENCATC thematic area "Urban Management and cultural policy of city", *Bulgaria*

Ms. **Maria Muñoz Duyos**, co-founder, Urbanitas Berlin Barcelona, *Germany / Spain*

Mr. **Daniel Paül**, lecturer, University of Lleida, Geography & Sociology department, *Spain*

Mr. **Dirk Seghers**, Artistic coordinator, Recyclart, *Belgium*

Ms. **Yolanda Smits**, Director of International Affairs, KEA, *Belgium*

Mrs. **Chantal Vanoeteren**, Urbanist, co-founder of Human Cities, *Belgium*.

MODERATORS

Mrs. **Silja Fischer**, Secretary General, International Music Council, *France / Germany*

Mrs. **Mercedes Giovinazzo**, Executive Director, Interarts Foundation; President, Culture Action Europe, *Spain*

Mrs. **Martha Gutierrez**, Relais Culture Europe, *France / Colombia*

Mr. **Jordi Pascual**, Coordinator, Agenda 21 for culture (UCLG), *Spain*.

OBSERVERS, RAPPORTEURS AND ORGANISERS

Ms. **Ana Sofia Bäumberg**, Manager - Communicate Programme, EU-LAC Foundation, *Germany / Portugal*

Ms. **Bénédicte de Brouwer**, Institutional Advisor, BOZAR, *Belgium*

Ms. **Laura K. D'Halleweyn**, PR and marketer, *Belgium*

Ms. **Carmen Ducaru**, Deputy Director, Romanian Cultural Institute Brussels, *Belgium / Romania*

Mr. **Paul Dujardin**, CEO and Artistic Director, BOZAR, *Belgium*

Mr. **Stefano Facchinetti**, More Europe – external cultural relations

Ms. **Malena Famá**, President, Latin American and Caribbean Youth Forum, *Argentina*

Ms. **Carmen Fenollosa Sánchez de León**, Operations Director, Culture Action Europe

Mr. **Renaud Guillonnet**, Manager - Venture Programme, EU-LAC Foundation, *Germany / France*

Ms. **Erika Guzmán**, Manager, Connect Programme, EU-LAC Foundation, *Germany / Mexico*

Mr. **Cătălin Hrişcă**, Romanian Cultural Institute Brussels, *Belgium / Romania*

Ms. **Yanina Kowszyk**, Director, InnovacionAL, *Chile*

Ms. **Hanne Lapierre,** Institutional Advisor, BOZAR, *Belgium*

Mr. **Marc Litvine**, Senior Expert, European Commission - DG DEVCO, Regional Programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean

Ms. **Guillemette Madinier**, Project Officer, More Europe – external cultural relations

Mr. **Frédéric Meseeuw**, Institutional Advisor, BOZAR, *Belgium*

Ms. **Sana Ouchtati**, Director, More Europe – external cultural relations

Ms. **Anna Lucia Pinto**, European Commission - DG DEVCO, Regional Programmes for Latin America and the Caribbean

Ms. **Louise Prouteau**, Culture Action Europe

Ms. **Sylvia Reyes**, Deputy Cultural Attaché, Embassy of Mexico and Mission to the European Union, *Mexico / Costa Rica*

Mr. **Felipe Santos**, Director, Instituto Cervantes Brussels, *Belgium / Spain*

Mr. **Jorge Valdez Carrillo**, Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation, *Germany / Peru*.