



Webinar
Report



CREATE SUSTAINABLE – LOOKING FOR BEST PRACTICES FOR ART & CULTURE

10 May 2023, 14.00-17.00

ORGANISERS

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SPEAKERS ON BEHALF OF THE PARTICIPATING CITIES (in alphabetical order of the cities)

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Sophia Kontos	Dresden (DE)	Office of Culture and Monument Preservation
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Dóra Kanizsai-Nagy	Veszprém (HU)	Senior manager for green mobility – Veszprém-Balaton 2023 – European Capital of Culture
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INTRODUCTION: THE OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT “CREATE SUSTAINABLE”

In the framework of the German-French Project Development Fund (FFA) the Goethe-Institut and the French Institute in Hungary launched a common project with the title **“Create Sustainable - “Best practices for sustainable art & culture in the city: policies, activities, and education”**.

The project aims to offer a platform for an exchange of best practices for sustainable arts & culture between France, Germany and Hungary. The cultural sector is a significant greenhouse gas emitter: culture and leisure are the third most important reason for the mobility of Europeans and the number of cultural buildings in Europe that need to be thermally renovated is in the tens of thousands. The latter issue has become even more pressing since the energy crisis, for many institutions are hardly able to pay their bills.

The project is divided into three parts:

1. Focus on policies at the municipal level – since this has a great impact on the sector of arts & culture – this first part is the occasion for representatives of different cities to discuss at a webinar meeting in May 2023
2. Focus on concrete activities and strategies at production houses
3. Focus on educational techniques to raise awareness and integrate wider audiences.

This report is a summary of the webinar that took place on the 10th May 2023 between representatives of 6 different cities in France, German and Hungary.

THE OBJECTIVE OF THE WEBINAR

The webinar is the 1st part of the project “Create Sustainable”. It is interested in all facets of cultural sustainability as seen by selected municipalities from France, Germany, and Hungary that have shown great interest to join the project.

This can range from best practices to municipal strategies, from small steps to complex proposals, from challenges to promising responses. What environmental strategies or concepts do cities have for the artistic and cultural sector? How do they deal with the climate and energy crisis from a cultural perspective? How can culture and art become “greener”?

WHAT IS THIS PROJECT ABOUT?

It focuses on **sustainability in culture in a broader sense**. Currently, several cultural institutions are struggling to be financially sustainable, and might not worry too much about environmental sustainability. But for a certain extent, the problem for the green sustainability are the huge energy and travel costs for cultural creation. In this sense, maybe we can also look at **green sustainability as a contribution to financial sustainability**. Now the question is whether this is part of the strategies and policies of the cities.

It is a clear aim of this project to investigate cultural sustainability questions on the city level, because this is the level where policies are made, and most of the cultural players are located in these three countries.

THE (CULTURAL) PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPATING CITIES

Due to the number of inhabitants, the participating cities have a wide range from 60,000 to half a million people. However, as a basis for further analysis, it was interesting to find out how the representatives of the cities briefly characterise their own city.

Debrecen is the second largest Hungarian city with over 200,000 inhabitants. It is an important university city. Economy (e.g. car manufacturing) is growing rapidly. Debrecen has twice been a candidate for the title of European Capital of Culture.

Dresden is a typical medium-sized German city with over 500,000 inhabitants located in the eastern part of the country. The artistic and cultural scene is very lively. The Office of Culture oversees all city cultural institutions and the free scene.

Lille has more than 200,000 inhabitants, but as a metropolis region it covers over 1,000,000 people. It is in the north of France on the crossroads of London, Brussels, and Paris. Lille was a successful European Capital of Culture in 2004.

Miskolc is located in the northern part of Hungary, and is the third largest city of the country with around 160,000 inhabitants. It has a difficult post-communist industrial heritage which is still one of the biggest challenges for urban development.

Pécs is a 2000 years old town with 140,000 inhabitants currently. It used to be European Capital of Culture in 2010. It has a vivid cultural life and is an academic hub, but 13 years after the ECoC, there is need for recreating the city's cultural structure.

Veszprém is one of the acting European Capitals of Culture this year, but also a UNESCO City of Music since 2019. It has a population of 60,000 inhabitants. The Capital of Culture involves the whole Bakony-Balaton region covering 300,000 people altogether.

BEST PRACTICES & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

From an exhaustive strategic approach (identified problem, new strategy, or development programme), to a more specific project as best practice, each city has introduced one strategic initiative from their city related to sustainable art and culture goals.

Debrecen (Hungary)

In Debrecen's view, the energy and climate crisis forces us to a more sustainable institutional system. Therefore, crisis can be seen positively as it leads to innovation and change. The climate debate has not reached most of the society, but the energy crisis does. So finally, the energy crisis somehow "helps" to solve the climate issues. It makes sense to distinguish between the concrete ways and a wider interpretation of sustainability development.

As a concrete example, Debrecen has spent a lot of EU-resources for the **energetical renewal of the municipal institutions** (culture, education, public health) from 2017-21. This operation will continue within the next EU financial perspective. The biggest energetical project in the cultural sector planned for the next EU-period is the renewal of a big cultural centre including a concert and conference hall, and the contemporary gallery MODEM.

The wider interpretation of sustainability development means to find the proper proportion and dimension of cultural institutions and activities in the city. Debrecen has planned cultural institutions that are a bit oversized compared to the city's size and cultural capacities (audience), however this development was based on the long-term vision to become a big regional centre in Hungary. So, the long-term perspective is to "grow up" to the **size and the dimensions of the cultural institutions**. But at present, the situation cannot be described as sustainable.

For Debrecen, the challenge of identifying the right proportions and dimensions of the cultural network is an integral and important part of the sustainability concept.

But also in a much wider sense, we need to **re-think cultural architecture** all over Europe: Big, exceptional and well-designed cultural halls and palaces are wonderful but over-dimensioned and not sustainable (e.g. the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao or the Humboldt Forum in Berlin).

Dresden (Germany)

Dresden set the aim to achieve overall climate neutrality before 2050, and this goal is of highest municipal priority. The Cultural Department focuses on **sustainability development as a structural change** (instruments: strategic planning, budgeting/recruiting, funding, networking, and cooperation). Dresden understands sustainability as a **holistic consideration** of the ecological, economic, and social dimension. The vision is that all cultural institutions in Dresden have an **impact on society** with a successfully implemented sustainability strategy. The core project of the development process is called "**Culture for Future**" – a pilot with five different cultural institutions (orchestra, festival, library, theatre, museum) working on their own sustainability strategies for one year. A **bottom-up and top-down** process at the same time. The municipality identified **five fields of action** for 2022-24: Procurement/Use of resources, Energy, Mobility, Education and Monitoring/Reporting.

So far, two clear outcomes can be reported: the "**Dresden Charta for Sustainability in the Cultural Sector**" signed by 38 institutions until now, and the "**CO2 calculator for the cultural sector**" including all three scopes on the bases of the GHG-Protocoll. It is an open access tool for all cultural institutions based in Dresden and Leipzig. Currently around 50 institutions in Dresden are participating in trainings and are using the calculator. Another result of the process is the "**Climate Network CULTURE**" for knowledge transfer among the players.

The first experiences or lessons from Dresden can be summarized like this: connect “bottom-up and “top-down”; higher-level control and coordination beneficial; promote knowledge transfer & networking (internal and external); data collection is difficult but necessary.

More Information: <https://www.dresden.de/de/kultur/nachhaltigkeit.php>

Lille (France)

The Council of Lille declared a climate emergency in 2019, and one of the main priorities of the current municipal mandate is sustainability. The overall approach of the municipality is **the transition starts within the municipality administration** and the institutions: the main tool is the Sustainability Department integrating the agendas of sustainability and inclusion – coordinating 13 cultural departments. This means to train and coordinate 600 people during the ecological transition.

Some achievements in 2022 are the **exchange programme** with the city of **Leeds (UK)** in sustainability in culture, the climate budget and self-evaluation, the promotion of the Guide of Eco responsible events, the self-evaluation of the cultural actors, but also Utopia – a cultural season about the relationships between arts, nature, and culture. Another highlight of the year was to host the **Eurocities Culture Forum**.

Further achievements and goals are expected in 2023/24 such as the revision of the **51 measures** to put in place on the local level (ecological transition and inclusion), the collaboration with Eurocities on the “**Call of Lille for sustainable culture**” – Brussels Urban Summit or the aim to get onto the map of the most responsible European cities regarding sustainable culture in 2024 (20 years after the European Capital of Culture year Lille 2004).

Lille has learned a lot from the process so far: The topic is difficult for the colleagues and therefore the teams need strong support as their training level is low. The ecological transition policy implies changes in practice and logic. The training time must be taken into account when developing such policy, and last but not least the importance of a strong political commitment.

Two main **good examples** of cultural actors are the Lille Fine Arts Museum with the Sustainable Museum Project (with eco-designed temporary exhibitions e.g. by cutting half of the art works to be transported to Lille and the energy efficiency concept), and the Lille National Opera with lowering production costs, e.g. through donating costumes.

The **Eurocities Lille Call to Action** is a core international activity with up to 40 cities meeting regularly (online). It lists 16 priorities for sustainability. The next meeting forum will be the Brussels Urban Summit in June 2023. To become a signatory member, every city needs to be committed to implement one policy in sustainability in culture, and another one in inclusion.

Miskolc (Hungary)

The history of Miskolc in the 2nd half of the 20th century was dominated by a forced **heavy industrialisation** in the socialist era. The result of the breakdown of the socialist industry was a huge unemployment and the population dramatically decreased.

By the early 2000s the city went through the recession successfully. International companies and supermarkets appeared in the area. The local government is trying to **strengthen the city’s role in culture** and tourism. A new perspective on sustainability: Miskolc became a member of **100 Climate-Neutral Cities by 2030**.

Further efforts in the field of environment protection and smart development are the **Overall Green Strategy** (protecting the natural environment, rehabilitation of the wounded environment and developing the built environment), and the **Smart City – Smart Miskolc** programme – a commitment to build a citizen and environment friendly city. Another development programme for transport and mobility has been designed aiming a significant CO2 reduction; dust monitoring system throughout the city.

Culture and society related best practices and initiatives:

- **“Culture builds the city”** concept based on social cohesion, intellectual and material heritage, and sustainability such as turning the industrial heritage into public cultural spaces or recreating and reinventing of old cultural venues or districts.
- **“Szinva Green Corridor”** and **“Szinva Heritage Days”**: investments, reconstruction and new events along the Szinva creek based on community planning (participation) and taking environmental aspects into account.
- **“Miskolc Graffiti Park”** – a best practice for reinventing the abandoned city spaces: <https://youtu.be/lzFTdOQA0cY>

Pécs (Hungary)

Pécs used to be European Capital of Culture in 2010, but the values of this year have faded out and the city’s **cultural life and management needs to be restructured** based on a new strategy. The principles of strategy building (of change) are the **principles of the New European Bauhaus Initiative** of the EU: aesthetic quality, sustainability, and inclusivity. Apart from this, Pécs and artists from the city played an important role in the original Bauhaus movement (e.g. Marcel Breuer).

According to the mission, Pécs should become a **decentralised cultural centre** in Hungary and an attractive tourism destination. The city should participate in EU programmes or projects, and become a member of established cultural-creative networks. The municipality intends to achieve these goals through modern, interconnected, and **sustainable operations**.

The methodology of the strategy development is based on the so-called value chain approach. The reconstruction of the cultural sector means to see the big picture of how the cultural sector works. Among many other **sustainability goals** (e.g. green festivals, no-cash payment), the strategy is focusing on one important sustainability goal: **technology and sustainability** which means to establish a concentrated professional facility management unit. Sustainability or efficiency tasks need professionals – they cannot be solved

by artists, art professors or directors. The strategy also plans to develop a granted programme for the **sustainable energy transition** of the cultural institutions (properties).

Veszprém (Hungary)

Veszprém’s European Capital of Culture programme includes a region with a lot of **fragile natural sites** (lake Balaton, Bakony woods). Three out of the 9 programme clusters are focusing on **environmental or sustainability topics** (e.g. Fragile Balaton, Region Alive). Some of the **flagship projects** are built around environmental sustainability like the “Balatorium” programme which is a scientific, artistic and communication project and festival about the **ecological balance** of the lake.

The European Capital of Culture management established a strategic **partnership in mobility** with transport companies (local, regional, and international buses, railways, electric scooters).

Some **good examples** already working in the city and the region:

- Visitors and partners can access the programmes with the **lowest carbon footprint**
- New ticketing solutions with fixed prices, for 24-hours
- Night transportation solutions for events
- **Awareness raising**: vehicles as cultural venues (e.g. the “Music Buses”), **carbon footprint visualisation** (knowledge sharing)

SUSTAINABILITY & CULTURE: EXPERIENCES, ACHIEVEMENTS & FUTURE VISIONS

Three discourse areas have been identified in the context of sustainability in the cultural sector: Change & Players, Networks & Cooperation, and Future & Success.

1. CHANGE & PLAYERS

The aim of this round was to identify the needs for change and action in the cities. Who initiates the local debate and the change? Who are the players participating in the local discourse? What are the driving factors of the discourse and the wish for change? Is it an idea, an ideology, or rather a group of people?

In **Lille** it all started within the municipality with 600 people to be trained, who are all participants of the sustainability change process. This huge team working in the cultural departments, represents a huge diversity of tasks, duties and positions. Therefore, it is really complicated to create a **proper training plan**. The Sustainable Culture Department developed 51 measures in its action plan and these are connected to 51 project managers who had to be trained first. In a next step, some specific measures for the different types of jobs within the departments and the institutions had to be defined. At the end, Lille will have a system of around 12 **specific information for every specific job**. In addition, an **awareness raising strategy** has been elaborated (e.g. on the directors' level).¹

The Sustainable Culture Department is not a real department in the vocabulary of the local administration but a Mission. There is an Ecological Transition Department who is a close cooperation partner (e.g. for setting up a carbon footprint evaluation it's perfect to Ecological Transition Department). The other strong partner within the administration is the Cultural Department. The Sustainable Culture Department – as a mission – has a fixed budget for action. The head of the department is an experienced colleague from the administration who had been responsible for performing arts for a long time, and thus has a very close relation to the sector. It is extremely impor-

tant that the person in charge speaks **the same language** as the cultural players to speak about the urge of change.

Dresden prefers a mixed development which is **top-down and bottom-up at the same time**. The municipality selected five municipal institutions for the “Culture for Future” project, but then it turned out that some of them had already a working group within their structures with colleagues from different areas like production or marketing. It became clear that it is better to approach the specific departments of the institutions to meet those colleagues who deal with sustainability questions during their everyday work. To sum it up: the bottom-up approach is **to work with employees** in the cultural institutions.

For **Pécs**, education is crucial since employees in the cultural management are not trained in cultural sustainability. They learned about sustainability in general, but would need a specific training programme. This is also a lesson learned from this very project.

It is also important to **define “change”**: usually, change means to leave everything behind and start from the beginning. The new cultural concept of Pécs is based on **four categories of action** (of change): create, strengthen, reduce, and eliminate – this model comes from the business sector and is more sophisticated than reinventing the wheel.

Veszprém's good examples for including people into the sustainability debate emerged from the European Capital of Culture activities. An example of this was when the team invited the neighbourhood during a living estate reconstruction planning. It was a huge block of flats area – one third of Veszprém's population is living there. There was a **community planning** process for the reconstruction of the public spaces between the houses. One of the results was a running path around the buildings which was a joint decision of the local community.

There was also a strong **capacity building and audit process** with the cultural institutions. Ten institutions joined the programme with **expert trainings on eco-sustainability and social sustainability**. It was also about developing their websites or buildings in a sustainable and accessible way. Not only the managers but also the employees have been involved in the trainings. By establishing a roundtable of disabled people, the capital of culture team learned a lot about their needs and how to develop cultural institutions and programmes to become more accessible in terms of social inclusion and sustainability.

Beside experts, the management also invites students to the projects as a result of a collaboration with the university. **Students** help to create new communities and networks. There is also a broad network of **volunteers**.

2. NETWORKS & COOPERATION

Many of the city representatives mentioned the importance of networks and communities who create a forum for sustainably cultural issues. Equally important are European and international platforms and cooperation projects. But in what kind of relevant international networks, programmes, or projects do the cities take part? What are the benefits of such cooperation among international players?

Miskolc – similarly to Debrecen, Dresden and Pécs – is member of “100 Climate-neutral Cities”. This cooperation and the goals of the network play an important role for the North Hungarian city. Miskolc has started **several pilot projects** on emission reduction, carbon neutrality, rethinking the local city transport (optimisation, introduction of e-bikes or rollers). One of them aims to establish a new, North-South traffic corridor to deliberate the West-East axis.

The **participation of inhabitants** is very strong in Miskolc – just like in Veszprém. The municipality organised a participation assembly with a lot of people taking part. It was organised by the so-called Participation Office with the help of volunteers. The experiences with asking the inhabitants and to involve them into the planning processes are absolutely convincing. Locals were

asked about the necessity of climate goals and pilot projects.

Another promising project is a micro historical project on cultural digitalisation under the umbrella of the New European Bauhaus initiative lead by the city of Aschaffenburg (DE). It is about (re) creating new city memories by asking local people for personal photographs, documents etc. to be collected in a so-called City Lab. Miskolc sees this as a new way of **cultural sustainability**.

Debrecen is an example for **intersectoral cooperation**. Economic growth plays an important role in the city’s development. Currently, a huge BMW manufactory is being build – this will be the first zero emission plant of BMW globally. In this case the philosophy or the initiative of sustainability in the local community is not just top-down or bottom-up. Sometimes it comes **horizontally** – from the economy. The fully electric BMW production needs battery production that pushes the city to seek for new, sustainable solutions in the industrial capacities (e.g. water management). Now the municipality is planning a solar panel plant to provide the whole municipal institutional system with solar power in couple of years. Altogether, the economic change has changed the life of the city, but has also an **effect on sustainable thinking and culture**, too.

3. FUTURE & SUCCESS

The participating cities agreed that establishing sustainability in culture is not just a vision, but mainly a long-term learning and development process (that must be monitored). If we accept this, we will need to define success in terms of culture and sustainability. Where do they see their cities in some 20 or 30 years?

As a good example for defining success, **Dresden** stated that all city cultural institutions should have an impact on society with a successfully implemented **sustainability strategy by 2030**. In addition to a diverse and high-quality artistic programme, comprehensive educational offers for all generations are to be developed and partnerships with scientific and environmental institutes are to promote cross-cutting thinking and action. Every cultural institution has successfully im-

plemented a sustainability strategy that on the one hand contains **measures for climate protection** and – on the other hand – has organised **internal social and economic structures in a sustainable way**.

A clear commitment to sustainability is also the **Dresden Charta for Sustainability**. A change towards ecologically and socially sustainable structures is established through a cultural change, communicated through the clear positioning and the creative space of cultural actors.

THE NEXT STEPS WITH THE “CREATE SUSTAINABLE” PROJECT

The webinar was only the first step of a broader project dedicated to sustainable culture. This was the first occasion for city representatives from Hungary, France and Germany to have a discussion together about cultural sustainability. Public policies in favour of sustainable culture are at different stages depending on the local context. Some cities are more advanced than others. This is precisely one of the challenges of this webinar: to ensure that these shared experiences can be inspiring for all concerned.

The cooperation with the participating cities should therefore be continued. The next meeting is in September in Budapest where representatives and professionals from houses of production from the three different countries and the participating cities will join.

10 MAY 2023

14:00-17:00