5 European cities as cultural projects

Where is culture in urban sustainability policy?

Nancy Duxbury

> Cities are not just economic engines, they are unrivalled as providers of the basic ingredients for quality of life in all its senses: environmental, cultural and social.
> — European Commission, Directorate General
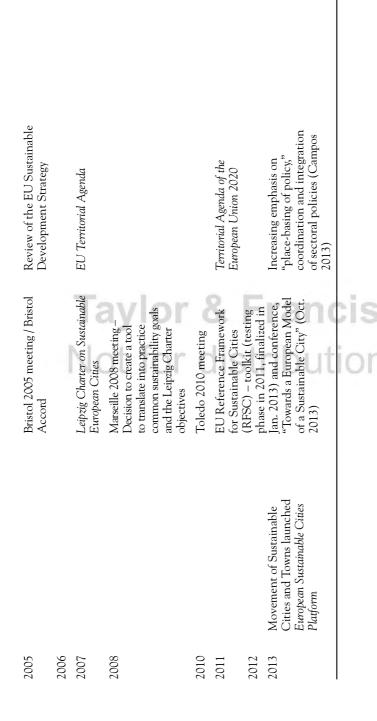> for Regional Policy (2011, 42)

Cities are identified as key sites of action in global policy initiatives to recognize the important role of culture in sustainable development and to integrate culture in policy contexts at all levels (e.g. UNESCO 2013). Within Europe, culture has played a driving role in urban redevelopment, economic and branding strategies, and social inclusion initiatives. A variety of European-level policy statements cite the important cultural roles played by European cities, and there is a generalized refrain of "European cities as cultural projects" (Duxbury et al. 2012). But how strong is the link between culture and urban sustainability? To what extent are cultural dimensions included in policy/planning frameworks for "sustainable cities" in Europe? How do these policy frameworks suggest pathways for culture in building more sustainable urban futures?

Europe-wide frameworks concerning urban sustainable development have been informed by collective statements and initiatives from three main sources: *European cities*, primarily developed through meetings/conferences and advanced by associations of cities and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities; *national ministers of EU member states with responsibilities for urban development*, meeting under the auspices of the Council of Europe or the European Union; and the *European Commission*, through EU policy, reports, and funding programmes. From time to time, policy documents also cite European research programmes intended to inform policy and practice, and extra-European reference points such as charters and principles collectively developed by cities.

This chapter examines the major European urban sustainability planning/policy frameworks and guides (see Table 5.1), and it investigates to what extent and how cultural considerations are incorporated. The analysis focuses on key documents from the mid-1990s. This choice of time span means that greater emphasis is placed on the role of the European Commission and less on the Council of Europe, but it recognizes the Council's important role in the 1980s in Western Europe and in the 1990s in Eastern Europe and the enlarged EU.

Table 5.1 Chronology of key European policies, statements, and programmes

Year	Local and regional authorities	National Ministers	European Commission	
	European Cities: Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign (1994–2013) / Movement of Sustainable Cities and Towns (2013–)	*European Union: Ministers Responsible for Urban Development*	*European Union: Policy Statements*	*European Union: Funding Programmes*
1994	The Aalborg Charter (27 May 1994)			URBAN (support for urban regeneration initiatives) (1994–1999)
1997		*Towards an Urban Agenda in the European Union*		
1999			*Sustainable urban development in the European Union: a framework for action* (COM(98) 605 final) adopted	
2000		Lille 2000 meeting		URBAN II (support for urban regeneration initiatives) (2000–2006)
2001			EU Sustainable Development Strategy (Göteborg Strategy)	
2002				URBACT (2002–2013)
2003				
2004	The Aalborg Commitments ("Aalborg + 10")	Rotterdam 2004 meeting		

Year			
2005		Bristol 2005 meeting / Bristol Accord	Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy
2006			
2007		*Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*	*EU Territorial Agenda*
2008		Marseille 2008 meeting—Decision to create a tool to translate into practice common sustainability goals and the Leipzig Charter objectives	
2010		Toledo 2010 meeting	
2011		EU Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC) – toolkit (testing phase in 2011, finalized in Jan. 2013) and conference, "Towards a European Model of a Sustainable City" (Oct. 2013)	*Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020*
2012			
2013	Movement of Sustainable Cities and Towns launched *European Sustainable Cities Platform*		Increasing emphasis on "place-basing of policy," coordination and integration of sectoral policies (Campos 2013)

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Analysis was guided by two questions: how are cultural considerations incorporated (or not) in these documents? How does this text point to potential pathways for developing more explicit connections with culture in urban sustainability policy and initiatives? This chapter aims to help bridge a divide often observed at the local level: cities continue to struggle to understand how to integrate culture into urban sustainability, and municipal cultural administrations are still not regularly involved in large urban development processes and issues.

The Aalborg Process: the European cities movement

The trail of city-driven efforts to conceptualize urban sustainability and advance policy and planning practices begins with the *Aalborg Charter* (1994) and *Aalborg Commitments* (2004), which were developed and carried forward through the Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign (1994–2013) and, since 2013, the Movement of Sustainable Cities and Towns. This city-driven movement is currently encapsulated in the European Sustainable Cities Platform (ESCP), an information portal that brings together "all relevant partners working on issues around sustainable cities" and provides a one-stop shop for local communities (ESCP 2014).

The Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign was a bottom-up movement with a threefold mission: "to support the exchange of experience between cities, collect information on the activities undertaken at the local level and serve as interface between the European Union and the local sustainability movement" (all quotes from ESCP 2014). The Campaign played a key role in "defining what a sustainable European city should look like" (*Aalborg Charter* 1994) and in "setting out a process for making this vision a reality" (*Aalborg Commitments* 2004). Together, these two documents form a framework for movement toward sustainability in cities/towns, and they are generally referred to as the *Aalborg Process for Local Sustainability*. The European Union (2008b) credits these efforts for introducing the *sustainable city* concept into the European policy realm.

The *Aalborg Charter* was an urban *environmental* sustainability initiative, declaratory in nature, approved by participants at the first European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns in Aalborg, Denmark, on 27 May 1994 (signed by over three thousand local authorities from more than forty European countries, with Spain and Italy representing significant proportions of these signatories). The Charter was inspired by the Rio Earth Summit's Local Agenda 21 plan and was intended to contribute to the European Union's Environmental Action Programme, "Towards Sustainability."

In the *Aalborg Charter*, European cities and towns are described as "centres of social life, carriers of our economies, and *guardians of culture, heritage and tradition*" (1994, 1 [emphasis added]). Cities and towns are also viewed as "key players in the process of changing lifestyles, production, consumption and spatial patterns" (1) – dimensions closely linked to cultural expression, activities, and related dynamics. However, when the Charter goes on to note local authorities' intentions "to integrate people's basic social needs . . . [and] work towards improving

the quality of citizens' lifestyles" (3), there is no explicit mention of culture as an aspect of these "basic social needs."

Ten years after the release of the Charter, the *Aalborg Commitments* were developed at the 4th European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns (Aalborg) to articulate "a common understanding of sustainability" and, consequently, "to develop a framework to be used at the local level that would better articulate how to embed sustainability across municipality sectors" (ESCP 2014). The Commitments comprise a list of fifty qualitative objectives organized into ten themes and represent a structured approach, requiring the signatory to comply with "time-bound milestones" (see ESCP 2014). The Commitments were positioned in reference to Local Agenda 21 and the forthcoming EU Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment (2006), and have about seven hundred signatories, with local authorities from Spain and Italy dominant and including signatories from outside Europe (in Niger, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Senegal).

Within the *Aalborg Commitments,* culture is mentioned under two themes – (1) urban planning and design, in reference to urban cultural heritage, and (2) social equity and justice, in reference to equitable access to cultural activities:

- Planning and Design (no. 5) – "We are committed to a strategic role for urban planning and design in addressing environmental, social, economic, health and *cultural* issues for the benefit of all."
  - Sub-item no. 4: "ensure appropriate conservation, renovation and use/re-use of our *urban cultural heritage*."
- Social Equity and Justice (no. 9) – "We are committed to securing inclusive and supportive communities."
  - Sub-item no. 2: "ensure *equitable access* to public services, education, employment opportunities, training, information, and *cultural activities*."
  (*Aalborg Commitments* 2004 [emphasis added])

In 2013, building on twenty years of the Campaign, and recognizing the array of initiatives now in play, the Movement of Sustainable Cities and Towns, also referred to as the "European Sustainable Cities Movement," was launched. This new framework is rooted in four principles of "Sustainability DNA":

1 Holistic thinking – In light of the many environments to take account of in a city ("global, local, *cultural*, urban, rural, political and social . . . [the] necessary ingredients of our holistic environment"), policy initiatives should span across multiple dimensions of the city with decisions made across sectors to further "the interests of the whole as defined at city level" and to "represent the city's vision in its entirety" rather than the advancement of one particular area;

2 Sustainability skills – The knowledge to make responsible choices and understand the consequences of choices for both current and future generations;

3 Partnerships – Among municipalities and across sectors; and

4   Research – Although focused largely on hard science and technology, the social sciences are seen to play an important role in providing "a better understanding of the social processes that cause people to change their behaviour for the good."

(ESCP 2014 [emphasis added])

In this framework, the cultural environment is explicitly viewed as one of the "necessary ingredients" within a holistically conceptualized city that should be considered when making policy and decisions.

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is an additional player among the "city" voices, acting as a political "bridge," encouraging cities to take advantage of European programmes and funding opportunities, and expressing cities' perspectives and priorities to the EU. This official political conduit complements the more operational focus of the Campaign/Movement and has been highly relevant in the past.

National ministers with responsibilities for urban development: the urban agenda

An explicit "European consensus" on principles of urban development – referred to as the *Acquis Urbain* – has emerged through an ongoing, intergovernmental process of more than two decades and the practical experiences gained through projects financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes since 1989. The political trail features six informal ministerial meetings on urban development between 2000 and 2010, which have "shaped common European objectives and principles for urban development" and helped forge "a culture of cooperation on urban affairs" among member states, various European bodies, and "urban stakeholders" through European city organizations (EC-DGRP 2011, 7). The chief outcomes of this process have been the *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities* (2007), consequently linked to the objectives of Europe 2020 through the Toledo Declaration (EU 2010), and the operationalization of the *Leipzig Charter* through the development of the Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities (2011–2013).[1]

The European Ministers responsible for urban development signed the *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities* on 24 May 2007. With this charter, the twenty-seven member states, for the first time, "outlined an ideal model for the European Sustainable City and laid the foundations for an integrated urban policy" (EC 2014). The *Leipzig Charter* stated that to achieve the objective of sustainable cities, an integrated approach to urban issues must be chosen, and that European structural funds should be made available for local projects embracing this integrated approach (EU 2007).

In the *Leipzig Charter,* the Ministers declare that

all dimensions of sustainable development should be taken into account at the same time and with the same weight. These include economic prosperity,

social balance and a healthy environment. At the same time attention should be paid to cultural and health aspects . . . [and to] institutional capacity in the Member States.

<div align="right">(EU 2007, 1)</div>

European cities are described as possessing "unique cultural and architectural qualities" and functioning as "centres of knowledge" but also suffering from an array of social and environmental problems. The Charter argues that to fulfill their functions as "engines of social progress and economic growth" (cf. Lisbon Strategy), the social balance within and among them must be maintained, cultural diversity must be ensured, and high quality in the fields of urban design, architecture, and environment must be established.

In the *Leipzig Charter,* the concept of the *Baukultur* of a city's living environment is introduced, understood in a broad sense as "the sum of all the cultural, economic, technological, social and ecological aspects influencing the quality and process of planning and construction" (EU 2007, 3). While the approach is viewed as "particularly important" in the preservation of architectural heritage such as historical buildings and public spaces, the Charter argues that this holistic approach should also be applied to the city as a whole and its surroundings. The *Baukultur* approach also stresses citizen inclusion in planning processes (EC-DGRP 2011).

At the 2010 informal meeting of Urban Development Ministers, held in Toledo, Spain, the topic of "integrated urban regeneration" was discussed further. The background reference document for the meeting, prepared by Spain, is structured using the "classical viewpoint of the multiple dimensions of sustainability (economic, social, environmental, cultural and governance)," indicating an elevation of the place of culture within sustainability. European cities and heritage are positioned as both *key elements* and *repositories* of "the rich and varied European history and culture" (EU-Spain 2010, 4). Within a section outlining "the key features of the integrated approach," the adoption of a holistic mode of thinking is primary. This involves considering the city as a whole, incorporating transversal or multidimensional approaches, and aligning different policy areas and resources across "all the multiple dimensions of sustainability – economic, social, *cultural* and environmental" (5 [emphasis added]).

However, despite prominently including culture in the sustainability framework, the report has difficulty going beyond a focus on physical heritage and public space rehabilitation. The report notes that preservation of "the historical and cultural heritage of the city, particularly its architectural heritage and the 'Baukultur' " is generally understood as necessary to keep alive "the collective memory that is characteristic of the European city model" (4). The "inhabitability and attractiveness" of this physical heritage is also necessary to "keep it really alive" (4). The report goes on to discuss building rehabilitation and improving degraded public spaces to increase their attractiveness and local attachment to the urban environment and community. This process of rehabilitation and physical improvement, it notes, will contribute to "cultural enrichment" and citizenship by

fostering "the values of democracy, coexistence, exchange, civic progress, diversity, living together and freedom . . . key factors in the culture of the European city, which are expressed most effectively in the public realm" (4). No mention is made of cultural creation and expression or access to culture for citizens.

In 2008, the European Ministers decided to build "a reference framework for the sustainable city, in a spirit of solidarity, for the application of the Leipzig Charter" (EU 2008a, 5). This free tool would promote and "translate into practice the common sustainability goals and the Leipzig Charter objectives" (EC 2014) and give cities a tool to help them reach "a European vision of 'integrated urban development' " (personal communication, C. Guichard, Architecte Urbaniste de l'État, CEREMA, France, 18 March 2014).

Self-described as "a toolkit for the integrated approach," the Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities (RFSC) is designed for local authorities and "intended to offer guidance and support for improving decision-making and action on sustainability" (EC 2014). Acknowledging that each city has its own history, cultural identity, economic background, and specific issues, the RFSC is not normative or prescriptive but offers selected questions and indicators to ensure that every political dimension, including cultural ones, had been taken into account (personal communication, C. Guichard, 18 March 2014).

The RFSC results from a collaboration between EU member states, European institutions, and European organizations representing cities and local governments. In the development process, workgroups studied more than seventy existing tools, methods, and reference frameworks from different cities, and twelve were assessed in depth (EC 2014). Projects identified as "good practices" were also examined. These analyses formed the basis for building the question grid and indicator list in the RFSC. The testing phase, with sixty cities, occurred in 2011, and the "final" version of the tool was released in January 2013.

The RFSC is built around twenty-five core objectives derived from four pillars of sustainability – economic, social, environmental, and governance (EC 2014) – and offers three main pathways of use:

1   *Develop your strategy/project* – The user picks from a list of "actions/objectives" those that best suit local priorities (additional actions/objectives can be created), indicates their level of commitment to each objective (on a scale of: Initiation – Commitment – Maturity), and then "checks the relevance" of the chosen objectives. If some domains of sustainability are not addressed, the system advises the user that the strategy "is likely to be unbalanced regarding urban sustainability." The inclusion of cultural objectives may lead some users to consider cultural objectives or dimensions that may not have been considered during initial planning phases.

2   *Check the integrated approach* – The user lists the "priorities" of an integrated planning initiative (using the same list of objectives) and ranks each by level of importance (Low – Medium – High). The system then provides a "results" analysis and plots the positioning of each of the selections on a circle graph with twenty-two axes, providing at a glance a visual representation of the

importance given to each selection, and a profile of the (un)balanced nature of the overall project (e.g. a deficiency of attention to cultural objectives and sub-objectives results in a "gap" in the graph).

3   *Monitor progress* – This section of the tool suggests an array of indicators, linked to each Core Objective and sub-objective, and the user chooses to select each or not (see Table 5.2). It is in this section that the conceptual ideas are translated into operational monitoring strategies.

The RFSC promises to shape the basis for sustainable development planning practice going forward, as a minimum of 5 percent of EU funding support is now earmarked for integrated sustainable urban development, with an implicit expectation that the RFSC will be used in this work (EC 2013).

Among the core objectives defining "a European vision of the sustainable city," culture is explicitly referenced in three ways in the RFSC – (1) a social quality (cultural diversity), (2) social activities, and (3) a dimension of the built environment:

Objective 12 is "Promote cultural and leisure opportunities and ensure access for everyone," with four sub-objectives:

•   Encourage and value cultural diversity
•   Support and encourage cultural and artistic creation and exchange
•   Ensure broad, affordable, and equal access to culture for everyone
•   Provide leisure and sports facilities

Objective 17 is "Preserve and promote the high quality and functionality of the built environment, public spaces and urban landscape," with two of four sub-objectives referencing heritage and architecture respectively:

•   Identify, preserve and promote the existing heritage according to the local and cultural context
•   Promote and enhance the architectural quality of urban landscapes, public spaces, and the built environment

Linked to the cultural objectives, the RFSC system provides an array of indicators to measure conditions and monitor change (see Table 5.2). The cultural indicators were inspired by a number of sources, including the Urban Audit data from Eurostat, the Global City Indicators Framework, and the UK Audit Commission (personal communication, C. Guichard, 18 March 2014). While it is not possible in this chapter to conduct a full critique, the two Core Objectives appear to be supported by their sub-objectives, but the alignment between the objectives and the indicators selected for monitoring them is problematic. Analysis of the suggested indicators shows a primary focus on physical assets and, due to the mix of culture with leisure and sport, very general relations between some of the indicators and "culture." No indicators explicitly measure the sustainability of local culture (although the combination of government and resident support,

Table 5.2 Cultural indicators within the Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities (February 2014)

	Objectives[a]	Indicators	Cultural dimension[b]
Social Domain			
Core Objective	**Promote cultural and leisure opportunities and ensure access for everyone**	K 14 – Percentage of municipal budget allocated to cultural and sporting facilities	Built environment
Secondary Objectives	Support and encourage cultural and artistic creation and exchange	SI 186 – Percentage of jobs in the cultural sector	Social activity
		SI 187 – Number of persons employed in the culture and entertainment industry	Social activity
		SI 188 – Engagement in the arts	Social activity
		SI 189 – Culture and leisure expenditure	Social activity
		SI 190 – Civic participation in the local area	Social activity
	Ensure broad, affordable, and equal access to culture for everyone	SI 191 – Satisfaction with cultural facilities	Built environment
		SI 192 – Total loans of books and other media per resident	Social activity
		SI 193 – Use of public libraries	Social activity
		SI 194 – Citizens' satisfaction with the local community/ municipality with regard to the level of cultural, recreational, and leisure services	Social activity
	Provide leisure and sports facilities	SI 195 – Proportion of the area in sports and leisure use	Built environment
		SI 196 – Satisfaction with public parks and gardens (green spaces)	Built environment
	Take specific measures to support language skills for foreigners	(None)	Cultural diversity / social quality
	Promote multicultural exchange between the inhabitants (festivals, fairs, culture exchange, etc.)		Cultural diversity / social quality

Environment Domain

Core Objective	**Preserve and promote the high quality and functionality of the built environment, public spaces, and urban landscape**	K 20 – Satisfaction with public spaces	Built environment
Secondary Objectives	Identify, preserve, and promote the existing heritage according to the local and cultural context	SI 269 – Number of listed buildings	Built environment
		SI 270 – Share of listed buildings restored	Built environment
		SI 271 – Expenditure on listed buildings	Built environment
	Promote and enhance the architectural quality of urban landscapes, public spaces, and the built environment	SI 272 – Satisfaction with the beauty of street and buildings in one's neighbourhood	Built environment
		SI 273 – Satisfaction with public parks and gardens	Built environment
		SI 274 – Satisfaction with public spaces	Built environment

Notes:

[a] Cultural objectives listed on the RFSC website are replicated within the RFSC tool, with one exception – "Encourage and value cultural diversity" (website) is converted into two objectives in the tool: "Take specific measures to support language skills for foreigners" and "Promote multicultural exchange between the inhabitants (festivals, fairs, culture exchange, etc.)."

[b] Categories derived from policy documents reviewed in this study.

engagement, and satisfaction, monitored over time, may serve as a proxy), nor do the indicators suggest the roles of culture within broader urban sustainability. The indicators can be reviewed through two lenses: (1) What are the overall characteristics of the suggested indicators? (2) How do the indicators reflect or align with the three cultural dimensions articulated in the policy literature?

Overall characteristics. In the RFSC system, four categories of indicators are evident: on the "supply" side, measures of investments and levels of infrastructure available, focusing on physical assets (listed heritage buildings and land for sports and leisure use); and on the "demand" side, indicators relating to the public's direct use or "engagement" with culture and leisure and their "satisfaction," again focusing primarily on the physical environment of the city, but also considering (with one indicator) their satisfaction with "the level of cultural, recreational, and leisure services" in the community. A general indicator of "civic participation in the local area" complements this but goes well beyond the present scope. No indicator is provided for the objective to promote multicultural exchange among inhabitants. Overall, indicator selection seems influenced by the general data availability.

Alignment with cultural dimensions in urban policy. Viewing the suggested indicators in the light of the three dimensions of culture articulated in "a European vision of the sustainable city" – as a social quality (cultural diversity), as social activities, and as a dimension of the built environment – reveals more starkly the limited extent to which the indicators measure any *cultural* aspects within these dimensions:

- *Social quality / cultural diversity* – This appears to be the least developed area in the RFSC system. Two objectives address a population's cultural diversity, but no indicators are allocated to these objectives, although language services provision could be seen as a yes/no item. However, data relating to cultural, ethnic, or language diversity in a population is commonly available as part of broader city social and demographic data. Although not directly referenced among the selected objectives, this "contextual" information is likely to be integrated in some way into the planning processes using the RFSC system. More explicitly linking these data to the cultural objectives and indicator analyses may be a useful refinement of the system.
- *Social activities* – Culture as a social activity is reflected in the indicators relating to direct employment, use, and "engagement" with the arts. The "use" indicators relate only with municipal library use, which is too narrow to represent this dimension, and the uncertainty in the definition and data available to track "engagement" leaves this dimension vague. Measures of satisfaction with "the level of cultural, recreational, and leisure services" in the community indirectly reflect culture as a social activity, but there is much still to be developed in this area. Overall, it appears that the scope and quality of the indicators in this category may be dependent on the availability of reliable extra-municipal data covering the broad spectrum of activities necessary to capture cultural dimensions of social life.

- *Dimension of the built environment* – Most indicators relate to the physical or built environment, either in terms of provision of "infrastructure" or in satisfaction of the population with different aspects of the city's physical dimensions. The key indicators associated with the two culture-relevant Core Objectives are found in this category, reinforcing its dominance. However, the cultural dimensions of the indicators in this category are absent or largely implicit.

The European Commission and sustainable urban development

Sustainable development is a fundamental principle of the European Union set out in the Treaty, and promoting sustainable urban development is a key element of European Cohesion Policy (EC 2014). The EU "territorial agenda," which ran parallel with urban policy processes, is also linked to urban development. From 2007, with the introduction of the EU *Territorial Agenda* and the *Leipzig Charter,* the European Commission's growing attention to local planning has been noticeable (Campos 2013). By 2011, territorial development was prominent at the EU level, marked by the *Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020* (EU 2011). Looking forward, greater emphasis will be put on "place-basing of policy," including the coordination and integration of sectorial policies (Campos 2013).

In this context, two recent examples of European Commission initiatives illustrate the nature of efforts to link culture and sustainable urban development. In 2010, a major research initiative, "European Cities of Tomorrow," was undertaken to inform the development of policy for European cities, providing key strategic lines to envision and act on key issues for urban areas. From a more tactical perspective, the *Policy Handbook* was developed in 2012 to raise awareness among local, regional, and national authorities about the potential of cultural and creative sectors in regional and local development, and to help them formulate integrated strategies.

Organized by the European Commission Directorate General for Regional Policy, the "cities of tomorrow reflection process" brought together urban experts and representatives of European cities to think about the future of cities in Europe. Four workshops were organised in 2010, and written contributions were received in the form of issue papers or responses to expert consultations. The exercise contained a SWOT analysis and articulated the challenges and desired trajectories for cities in meeting the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy – smart, green, and inclusive growth (EC-DGRP 2011).

A European vision of "the cities of tomorrow" sees them as places of

- advanced social progress – e.g. where the elderly can participate in social and cultural life;
- democracy, cultural dialogue, and diversity – with diversity rooted in "culture, identity, history and heritage" incorporating "social diversity and different cultural expressions" (34, 36);

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- green, ecological, or environmental regeneration; and
- attraction and engines of economic growth – bringing together "a high qual-
  ity of life, . . . architecture and . . . functional user-oriented urban space,
  infrastructure and services, where cultural, economic, technological, social
  and ecological aspects are integrated in the planning and construction"
  (11).[2]

A subsequent vision of the *creative city* highlighted the following: "clearly vis-
ible" cultural activity produced by a rich and diverse array of established and
grassroots groups; the expressive ways in which "inhabitants 'live' their city";
creative use of public space; and an openness to the cultural diversity of newcom-
ers, reflected in new social events and "in a constant political and cultural effort
to weave links not only within communities, but also with the rest of the world"
(EC-DGRP 2011, 36). From an urban environment perspective, it outlined
how culture is "mainstreamed into the provision of public services" such as dis-
tinct urban design and way-finding signs and systems; urban infrastructure such
as street furniture and street lighting; high visibility of public and community
amenities and services in promotion spaces; and visualization of place-specific
urban legends and stories by "statuettes, messages or signs on the asphalt" (36).
Altogether, it presented an attractive and compelling vision, with some sense
of integration, but not one that is readily recognizable as a core component of
sustainable urban development.

The *Policy Handbook* was more specifically targeted to integrating culture
in regional and local development. The European Commission estimates that
between 2007 and 2013 it invested more than six billion euros in cultural infra-
structure, cultural heritage, and cultural services through the EU Culture and
Structural Funds, and it states that the current challenge is to "further integrate
the cultural and creative sectors into regional and local development strategies"
(EC-CRD 2014). Towards that end, the *Policy Handbook* (2012) was developed
to "better sensitize local, regional and national authorities on the potential of
cultural and creative sectors in boosting regional and local development, and
help them formulate integrated strategies for these sectors" (EC-CRD 2014).

The *Policy Handbook* notes that the key challenge is how to further integrate
cultural and creative sectors into "regional innovation strategies for smart spe-
cialization, which . . . will be an ex ante conditionality to access funds" (Working
Group 2012, 19). Smart specialization is an innovation policy of the European
Commission designed to boost regional innovation through identifying and
building on (economic) strengths and "high-value added activities which offer
the best chances of strengthening their competitiveness" (EC-RI 2014).

While the *Policy Handbook* includes an array of interesting recommendations
for action, few items refer to *sustainable development* or *sustainable cities*. However,
sustainable development is listed as one of twelve policy areas with which cultural
and creative industries (CCIs) have links. A discussion of CCIs and *environmen-
tal* sustainability notes that the "specific intervention of CCIs on the environ-
ment can contribute decisively to its future preservation" (53). Two Spanish case

studies are presented[3] that use cultural approaches to explore and understand the relationship between art and nature/environment, providing spaces for debate and discussion and platforms for exhibitions, publishing, and other activities. While the examples are inspiring, they do not provide much guidance to planners who are looking for strategies to integrate culture within sustainable city/region policies and plans.

Closing reflections

This analysis has shown that cultural dimensions are included in policy/planning frameworks for "sustainable city" building in Europe and have been an ongoing part of policy discussions. However, culture is referenced inconsistently and, in the sphere of urban sustainable development policy, still holds a marginal role. While culture as values is embedded in present European policies, greater attention is needed to the "institutionalized" cultural sector and cultural activities.

This chapter has outlined the main messages and developments from three main groups of actors: European cities, national ministers for urban development in Europe, and the European Commission. From these sources, we observe three key points: (1) culture is recognized politically as an important dimension of local/urban/sustainable development; (2) there is a growing emphasis on holistic and integrated strategies for urban planning and development; and (3) broad planning frameworks and tools to encourage or enable this integration are being built.

Within this policy context, three cultural dimensions are emphasized: (1) the built environment (heritage, architecture, and urban design of public spaces); (2) culture as social activities (in relation to creation, exchange, and access); and (3) culture as social quality (i.e. cultural diversity). An array of suggested objectives and indicators to monitor changes and impacts has been proposed to support planning efforts and investments. However, the selection and coverage of cultural dimensions is uneven, and a more developed conceptual framework is needed to structure the cultural objectives and the indicators. Moreover, in the middle of this picture we find a "black box" at the European level – the issue of *how* to integrate culture into sustainable urban development is not addressed (i.e. operational pathways or methods to support planning practice). Through cultural interventions, policy experimentation, and civic creativity at the local level, avenues of operationalization will be incrementally developed but would be more effectively advanced through facilitated coordination and knowledge networking at the European level.

The issue of integrating culture into sustainable development requires both *conceptual* and *tactical or operational* support and capacity development. To advance this process, two types of city-level tensions must be addressed. The first source of tension relates to the lack of a knowledge base and skills training to support integrated approaches and practices that include culture. The second tension resides within planning systems that continue to support departmental or discipline-specific silos rather than integrated teams. Such "separations" must be viewed from two perspectives: on one side, is "culture" (e.g. cultural officers of a

municipality) invited to be part of broader (sustainable development) planning decisions? On the other side, can "culture" (e.g. the municipal cultural department) see itself in these (sustainable development) planning contexts?

From a research perspective, two major gaps require attention. On the conceptual level, the development of an overall framework incorporating the multiple aspects of culture would provide a common starting point from which to consider the various roles of culture in urban development. On the operational level, the issue of *how* to integrate cultural considerations into planning for sustainable urban development should also be investigated. Previous research on topics such as cultural planning and cultural mapping, heritage and historic centre planning, cultural events and urban revitalization, or culture and social inclusion should be revisited and adapted to meaningfully inform a culturally sensitive "urban sustainability" context and practices of urban sustainable development. Complementing this, local experiments in current practice should be examined in a context-sensitive and interdisciplinary manner, as an array of "bottom-up"-informed approaches may illuminate pathways and contribute to the clarification and advancement of these issues.

Notes

1 Running parallel with the urban policy process, the EU "territorial agenda" is also linked to urban development. The *Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020* (EU 2011) links territorial cohesion with the Europe 2020 strategy and builds on an integrated and cross-sectoral approach. It highlights the importance of improving territorial connectivity and "managing and connecting the ecological, landscape and *cultural* values of regions" (EC-DGRP 2011, 8 [emphasis added]).
2 This dimension also highlights the heritage and architectural value of historic buildings and public spaces for the urban landscape, nurturing places where local residents are given the possibility to "identify themselves with the urban environment" (11).
3 The Beulas Foundation's Centro de Arte y Naturaleza, in Huesca, and the César Manrique Foundation, in Lanzarote, Las Palmas, Spain.

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