

ACTIVITY REPORT

CULTURAL CITIES COMMISSION (CCC) / RŪTA STEPANOVAITĒ 2019

1. General description:

Chair from April 2018 Rūta Stepanovaitė, Kaunas (LT)

Vice Chairman Radosław Krajewicz, Chojnice (PL)

Steering Committee: Rūta Stepanovaitė (LT), Külli Hansen (EE), Czesław Zdrojewski (PL), Radosław Krajewicz (PL), Iveta Ķelpe (LV).

Members of the Commission: 54 representatives from 10 countries.

Aims & Goals

The Commission wants to work strategically and cross border with central national and international bodies dealing with policy making for sustainable and inclusive development within the Baltic Sea strategy and EU 2020 strategy. The Cultural Cities Commission wants to be voice for culture on local level in order to have the cultural issues on local level heard and taken into account in all policies for developing the local level on regional, national and international context.

2. Meetings/seminars/conferences:

Meetings:

1 meeting of Chair and Steering Committee member was held in Kaunas, Lithuania in May. The current situation, possibilities and challenges, together with further activities of the Commission were discussed. Both Chair and Steering Committee member attended international European Capital of Culture Forum.

2nd meeting with Steering Committee members will be held on 15 October and a general meeting of the Commission will be held on 16 October, both in Kaunas, Lithuania. The general meeting of the Commission will practically address an instrumental of a cultural planning by discussing the next questions: 1) How cultural initiatives transform the neighbourhoods? Cases and methods; 2) Sustainability of local cultural initiatives: what resources are needed and how to get them?; 3) How the cooperation between the residents, cultural actors and strategic institutions works?

3. Projects

2018-2021, UBC CCC objective: Regional identity

Partner/Leading partner of the project: Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat
Project: “Baltic Sea Cultural City“

Short description: The Baltic Sea Cultural Cities (BSCC) project connects cities, people, cultural organisations and cultural professionals by increasing the visibility of the cultural diversity on local level within the Baltic Sea Region. It is a cross-border, multi-level governance project which annually or biannually will nominate the “Baltic Sea City of Culture”. Under the principle of ‘water connects us, but culture unites us’ it is aimed to create synergies and cooperation focussing on citizen participation and citizen ownership rather than on competition among the participating cities and communities.

Objectives: the BSCC initiative encourages every city or municipality, every cultural organisation, every cultural professional and every person living in the Baltic Sea Region to participate in the project, even if they are not directly connected to the nominated “Baltic Sea City of Culture”. The project is a platform for cooperation and cultural exchange and regional identification rather than a competition between cities. The nomination of the “Baltic Sea City of Culture” is a mechanism to create visibility for the project. This ensures a long-term sustainable Baltic Sea cultural format on a local level. Everyone living in the area is invited to take part in each step of the project. The project aims to promote the Baltic Sea Region cultural diversity and will also be valuable to the Policy Area Tourism.

Activities: local artists, art in public places, cultural and historical heritage within each city will be made more aware of and the substantial meaning of art as part of urban and regional cultural life will be easier to understand for a broad audience.

The annual or biannual nomination of the “Baltic Sea City of Culture” is the flagship of the project and ensures continuity and a strong unity of the cooperating cities, as every city can contribute to the programme and bring in their ideas, while also being able to develop own projects and striving to be nominated the next time.

Current status: the project is currently in its seed-funding phase, which will last until February 2021. Until then a strategy on how to continue the project will be developed. The project partners are developing a communication strategy, comprising the branding and marketing of the project and aiming to brand the BSCC even outside the Baltic Sea Region.

Partners:

- Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS);
- Union of Baltic Cities (UBC);
- Kaunas Artists' House (KAH);
- City Culture Institute in Gdansk;
- Agency for International Affairs and Regional Cooperation Kaliningrad;
- Ars Baltica;
- Regional Council of Ostrobothnia – Cultural Department;
- Ministry of Justice, European Affairs, Consumer Protection and Equality Schleswig-Holstein;
- City of Kiel, Department of Youth and Culture.

Budget: the total budget of the initiation of the project funded by the Swedish Institute is 500.000 SEK (approx. 47.000€).

4. Cooperation with other organisations

1) 2018-2019, UBC CCC objective: Professionalization of the cultural and creative field / audience development

Partner: ARS Baltica

Project: "ARS BALTICA Creative Dialogue (ABCD)"

Cooperation: attending the partner meetings, facilitating the project activities in the UBC CCC partner cities, inviting the culture professionals to attend the workshops.

The ABCD intends to gather creative and cultural practitioners, provide space for discussion in an open environment and create synergies for and with the participating partners. The format wants to highlight crosssectorial links and allow policy-makers to follow the debates and share their perspectives on the impact of culture and cultural practice. The underlying understanding is that culture is an essential driver for sustainability. The main ambition is to contribute actively to integrating the cultural landscape in the Baltic Sea Region by bringing innovative cultural players together and establish a forum for continuous exchange.

2) 2019-2020, UBC CCC objective: Urban transformation through culture

Partner: Danish Cultural Institute in Riga

Project: “UrbCulturalPlanning”

Cooperation: attending the UrbCulturalPlanning conference in Kiel, Germany, facilitating the project activities in the UBC CCC partner cities, inviting the culture professionals to attend the workshops.

Cultural, education, municipal organizations from 9 BSR cities were brought together by the Danish Cultural Institute to develop sustainable cultural planning practices in the region within the Interreg BSR project UrbCulturalPlanning. Among them are UBC members Pori, Riga, Gdansk, Kiel and Guldborgsund. By activating local cultural resources, the project co-creates and launches cultural initiatives in the neighbourhoods in cooperation with the residents and stakeholders.

5. Communications

The Commission has proceeded managing the CCC Facebook platform during the year (<https://www.facebook.com/ubcccc/>). Several Newsletters of the UBC CCC were distributed.

6. Other activities

Partnership in process: the Commission is in negotiation with Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC).

The Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture focuses on improving operational conditions for cultural and creative industries, bridging the gap between various sources of funding, sectors of activity and strengthening cooperation between project owners, business communities, the public sector and international institutions throughout Northern Europe.

The goal of the UBC CCC is to collaborate on the projects, directed towards solving culture accessibility problems in the region.