

# les rencontres

association des villes et régions de la grande europe pour la culture  
association of european cities and regions for culture

**Les Rencontres, network of elected leaders and senior policy officers in charge of culture and the arts in local and regional authorities throughout Europe.**

## Position Paper

As an open forum for co-operation, debate and action on cultural policymaking in cities, counties, provinces and regions, our network aims to develop interesting proposals, initiatives and joint projects on cultural policymaking at the local level in Europe. Created in 1994, our network gathers about **125 member-authorities** from all levels of administration (local, intermediary and regional) **in 27 countries** of the European continent. Our activities foster creative networking and cooperations between local and regional policy-makers, experts, culture professionals, trend watchers, artists and representatives of European associations and networks from all over Europe and beyond.

Our network gathers key cultural stakeholders (Directors of cultural affairs and elected leaders in charge of culture) who work in **medium-sized cities but also in small or capital cities, counties, provinces, regions - located either in urban or rural areas, in dynamic or remote local and regional authorities**. Our actions contribute to give more visibility and impact to innovative thoughts and projects which are elaborated on the ground by all these different stakeholders.

Nowadays there is undoubtedly a real need to keep federating local and regional authorities of all sizes and from all corners of Europe in order to **disseminate the Creative Europe Programme's objectives within all local and regional authorities of the continent and not only in big and dynamic ones**.

Our network promotes and encourages:

- the consolidation of cultural policies at a local and regional level
- complementary actions and dialogue between the different levels of local government (local, regional, national and European) particularly in the process of the decentralisation of cultural policymaking
- the setting up of European joint projects between the Western, Eastern, Northern and Southern parts of Europe

20 years after its creation, our network is entering a **participative Re-founding process**. Our strategy is being reevaluated with our members. Since 1994 our network has been working on cultural policymaking at local and regional levels. We have gained a lot of experience and expertise in that field. We are now aware that there is a real need for local and regional authorities to foster cooperations.

### Main activities:

- European Campus of local and regional authorities of culture
- Meetings in European Capitals of Culture
- Steering Committee, Ordinary General and Board meetings
- Training sessions
- Animation and coordination of working groups
- Publications : Green and Whiter papers, guide, studies, minutes, reports, position papers...
- Sending of recommendations and declarations
- Creative networking and coordination between our members, European and international networks, partners and actors from other spheres

## 1) European Campus of local and regional authorities for culture

After the first edition of the 'European Campus of local and regional authorities for Culture' which was held in Paris from 21 to 24 November 2012, the second edition, 'The Tampere Seminar' took place in the Finnish city, from 18 to 21 September 2013. Our third Campus will be held in the Nord-Pas de Calais Region (Lille and Louvre Lens) from 5 to 8 November 2014 (*dates to be confirmed*).

For the three and a half day-duration of the Campus, we have planned an intensive programme including training, reflection, dialogue and team-work for the local and regional leaders in charge of culture (at the political and technical level in various parts of Europe) in collaboration with key players in the field: researchers, intellectuals, artists, representatives of European cultural institutions, representatives of the European Commission and students specializing in cultural policies (MA and PhD level). Inter-generational and inter-disciplinary, the European Campus' concept relies on vigorous brainstorming, in a relaxed atmosphere, with participants from different disciplinary and geographical backgrounds who are provided the opportunity to become contributors.

The central theme of the European Campus' concept is **'The role of the cultural policies of local and regional authorities in achieving the Europe 2020 Strategy'**. The unifying theme of the 2013 European Campus was **"Culture and social innovation"**. Indeed, the specificity of the Tampere Seminar was its focus on the strengths of Finland in the fields of education, creativity and innovation, quality of life, citizen participation, social cohesion, among other positive facets, in relationship with the cultural policies of Finnish local and regional authorities, and putting these dimensions in a European perspective. The unifying theme of our 2014 Campus will be **Europe creative at the local and regional levels and international cultural cooperations**.

## 2) Cooperations with organisations throughout Europe and beyond

Les Rencontres cooperates with **EU institutions and other bodies**. Our network has been selected several years, including 2012, by The Education, Audiovisual and culture Executive Agency (EACEA) of the **European Commission** to receive a grant in the framework of the Culture Programme (2007-2013), Strand 2 *Advocacy networks*. Our network participates in conferences and meetings organised by the European Commission and cooperates with the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions.

As the only European network of local and regional authorities for culture, we maintain close relations with :

- other networks of local and regional authorities: ENTP - European New Towns Platform, Association of European Borders Regions, Focus Europe, Banlieues d'Europe...
- cultural networks : Culture Action Europe, European Theater Convention, IETM, On the move, EUNIC, Trans Europe Halles, Art Nouveau Network, European Festivals Association, ACCR Europe...

Members of our Executive team and Board are invited to participate as speakers in various events organised by other networks. In the same way, we invite directors or heads or representatives of other networks. Furthermore we recently organised two roundtables gathering European networks in Paris and Brussels.

At the international level, we are partners of Cities of culture in nature (CCIN) based in Israël. In 2012 we participated in a meeting held in China (Chengdu) which gathered more than 2000 Chinese representatives. We intend to develop partnerships with international networks. In Latin America we have also strengthened our collaboration with Interlocal (the Iberoamerican Network of Cities for culture). We have developed cooperation with the Mediterranean, notably with the Palestinian Association of Local Authorities (PALA) and the Union of Local Authorities of Israel (ULAI).

### 3) Discover our new blog! <http://blog.lesrencontres.eu>

We invite you to visit our new blog in which you will periodically find **articles about the cultural policies and actions of:** local and regional authorities in Europe (cities, counties, provinces, regions, Länder...), cultural institutions, cultural networks, universities, professionals in the fields of arts, culture and cultural management... **News of our network, our current projects, the staff, calls for contributions and other information** will also be featured in this blog. The contents will be as rich and diverse as the members of the association! And it will always be linked to the essential dimensions of our mission: **Culture, European integration, Co-operation and Local and Regional Authorities.**

### 4) The White Paper on the cultural policies of local and regional authorities in Europe

Since October 2004 and the publication of the **Green Paper** on the cultural policies of local and regional authorities in Europe, the European cultural landscape has changed considerably.

In 2009 we published a **White Paper on the cultural policies of local and regional authorities in Europe.** The first part of this document relates to the priorities that should guide cultural policymaking for tomorrow, the second part gives examples of **best practices.** Particular attention is paid to concrete proposals for a legal basis for Culture in Europe, for methods of funding culture, for the definition and use of cultural indicators for a better qualitative evaluation. The White Paper is published online (on the following link: <livre-blanc.lesrencontres.eu>).

### 5) Launching of an Agency for the development of artistic and cultural cooperation

Our network intends to launch an Agency for the development of artistic and cultural cooperation in order to coordinate the setting-up of new and concrete projects of cooperation. This agency would be a light, flexible and independent organisation that would **promote and develop cultural projects with a European potential** and that are initiated by local and regional authorities. This agency would for instance develop **inter-regional cooperation in other neighbouring areas** such as the Mediterranean, Asia and Latin America.

#### **Who's who**

*Chairman:* Roger Tropeano, Paris

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