

Cities' external cultural relations: trends and actions

EUROCITIES study, September 2017

About EUROCITIES

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities, with over 140 members, representing more than 130 million people. We work in all areas of interest for cities, from culture to mobility, environment to social affairs, economic development to smart cities. We facilitate learning experiences between cities, and represent cities' interests to the European Union.

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Executive summary

The EUROCITIES study on 'Cities' external cultural relations: trends and actions' highlights the role of large European cities in external cultural relations. Based on responses from 13 cities, it describes cities' roles as key actors in the field of external cultural relations, actively developing and maintaining cultural relations with cities around the world.

Cities as laboratories for new ways of working

- Cities are laboratories for new models and working methods for external cultural relations, making the most of their unique position. Their size and status make them important actors on the global stage, while their proximity to citizens allows their policies and actions to be responsive and innovative. Cities are a source of inspiration for new ways of working and engaging culturally with external partners, employing a collaborative approach in a spirit of co-creation, mutual understanding and mutual benefit, all while keeping European values at the core of their actions.

Engaging rather than showcasing

- Cities are test-beds for a new way of engaging with external partners based on collaboration and cocreation rather than the showcasing that is traditionally associated with cultural relations and cultural diplomacy. This new way of engaging internationally is frequently described as a 'paradigm shift' at a national and European level; at the level of cities this paradigm shift is well underway, and is already firmly embedded in the policies and working methods of many European cities.

Conveying European values

- Cities are transmitting European values outside the EU and EFTA through a city to city and citizen to citizen model. They have a core set of values which inform their external cultural relations - values which can be clearly categorised as European values including respect for human rights, freedom of artistic expression, and support for democracy and good governance. Many cities expressly refer to their European values as a key driver of their external cultural relations.

This study is particularly timely, coming shortly after the European Council adopted their conclusions for an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations. In these conclusions a key role is proposed for local authorities, with an invitation to member states to enhance collaboration between the relevant ministries and local authorities. The Commission also invited to consider pilot projects in third countries to test forms of collaboration, including joint actions and creative cross-sectoral partnerships, with the involvement of local cultural actors and local authorities.

The EUROCITIES study 'Cities' external cultural relations: trends and actions' clearly shows city authorities to be important potential partners for such pilot projects and future EU actions in the field of international cultural relations. There are many innovative policies and actions already present in cities, which have the potential to inform and inspire the future development of international cultural relations at a national and European level.

Introduction



Cultural relations play an increasingly important role in the international sphere, with growing consensus on the positive outcomes of better intercultural understanding. This is increasingly true at a city level; in the age of instant digital communication and increased mobility, cultural diplomacy has become far broader than the actions of national governments. Considering this and recent developments at the EU level, EUROCITIES has decided to investigate both the existing cultural relationships between our member cities and external cities and the future priorities of members in their external cultural relations.

Cities truly are global players, engaging directly with their external partners. City authorities also play a key role in local cultural landscapes, working with and directly funding many of the local cultural institutions and actors. They therefore also offer an insight into how these local actors operate internationally. We examined the working methods, motivations and core values of cities' engagement with external partners, the challenges they face and the innovative ways through which they overcome them.

Our understanding of external cultural relations

By external cultural relations we mean city authorities' cultural relations outside the European Union and EFTA (Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein). This can include both formalised relations, such as written partnerships with non-EU/EFTA cities, and more informal relations, for example based on individual projects.

Methodology

The survey 'Developing a shared understanding of cities' external cultural relations' was sent to EUROCITIES members and attracted a broad response from across Europe. 13 cities responded. The survey ran from January - April 2017.

The survey responses include three capital cities, one current European Capital of Culture and a range of medium-sized cities. We received responses from member cities in Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania and Finland - a broad geographic range from south to north and west to east.



Figure 1: Map of cities that responded to the survey

Full list of cities that responded

Aarhus, Denmark; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Bydgoszcz, Poland; Dortmund, Germany; Espoo, Finland; Karlsruhe, Germany; Klaipeda, Lithuania; Lisbon, Portugal; Madrid, Spain; Munich, Germany; Nantes, France; Ostend, Belgium; Prague, Czech Republic.

Latest European developments on external cultural relations

“When Europe engages with the world, culture has to be at the core of our foreign policy.” These are the words of Federica Mogherini, high representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and vice-president of the European Commission during her speech¹ at the 2016 European Culture Forum. These words neatly summarise the core message of the proposed EU strategy in the joint communication ‘Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations’ from the European Commission and the high representative on 8 June 2016.

- The European Commission aims at making the EU a stronger global actor and envisions a crucial role for culture in the strengthening of international partnerships. The EU's experience of diversity and pluralism is a considerable asset to promoting cultural policies as drivers for peace and socio-economic development

¹ Available to view here: <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/player.cfm?ref=1119797>

in third countries.

- The strategy also recognises the important role of cities in cultural relations. The EC external relations service proposed supporting several actions to involve cities in the implementation of the strategy; these would include the exchange of experience between European cities and third countries' cities. Peer-to-peer learning, aiming to strengthen the cultural policies in third countries is also proposed (for example, by sharing the successful European Capital of Culture experience). Supporting the role of the local authorities in partner countries would also be at the core of the new strategy.

On 23 May 2017, the European Council adopted conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations.² The conclusions recognise that culture forms part of a strategic and cross-cutting approach to the Union's international relations and highlight the importance of encouraging cultural diversity within the EU.

- The emphasis is on a flexible, bottom-up approach which encourages direct contact between artists, cultural operators and civil society. Empowering citizens to broaden their cultural appreciation and knowledge through intercultural dialogue is also a key feature of the conclusions. Consistency and coherence of effort should be encouraged between member states and European and international actors, avoiding duplication of efforts while maximising impacts.
- A key role is proposed for local authorities, with an invitation to member states to enhance collaboration between the relevant ministries and local authorities, and to the Commission to consider pilot projects in third countries to test forms of collaboration, including joint actions and creative cross-sectoral partnerships, with the involvement of local cultural actors and local authorities.
- The Council also recommends the creation of a new Friends of the Presidency group to draw up an integrated, comprehensive and step-by-step strategic EU approach to international cultural relations, working as a cross-cutting platform.

The Committee of the Regions has adopted an opinion on the joint communication which emphasises the role of local authorities³, as has the European Economic and Social Committee, which further highlights the importance of collaboration and cocreation.⁴ A joint report by the Culture and Education (CULT) and Foreign Affairs (AFET) committees⁵ of the European Parliament was adopted on 13 June 2017.

² Available here: <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7935-2017-INIT/en/pdf>

³ CoR opinion available here: <http://bit.ly/2sWHL1j>

⁴ EESC opinion available here: <http://bit.ly/2rYUzXC>

⁵ EP report available here: <http://bit.ly/2uqHk02>

Mapping existing external cultural relations in cities

All of the cities surveyed pursue some form of external cultural relations, although there are differences in the level of activity between surveyed cities. There is also a wide range of geographical locations with which cities work, although there are some key thematic areas that are common to most cities. The range of different cultural areas, activities and projects is also broad, but again with some clear areas of overlap between cities.

Key areas of culture involved

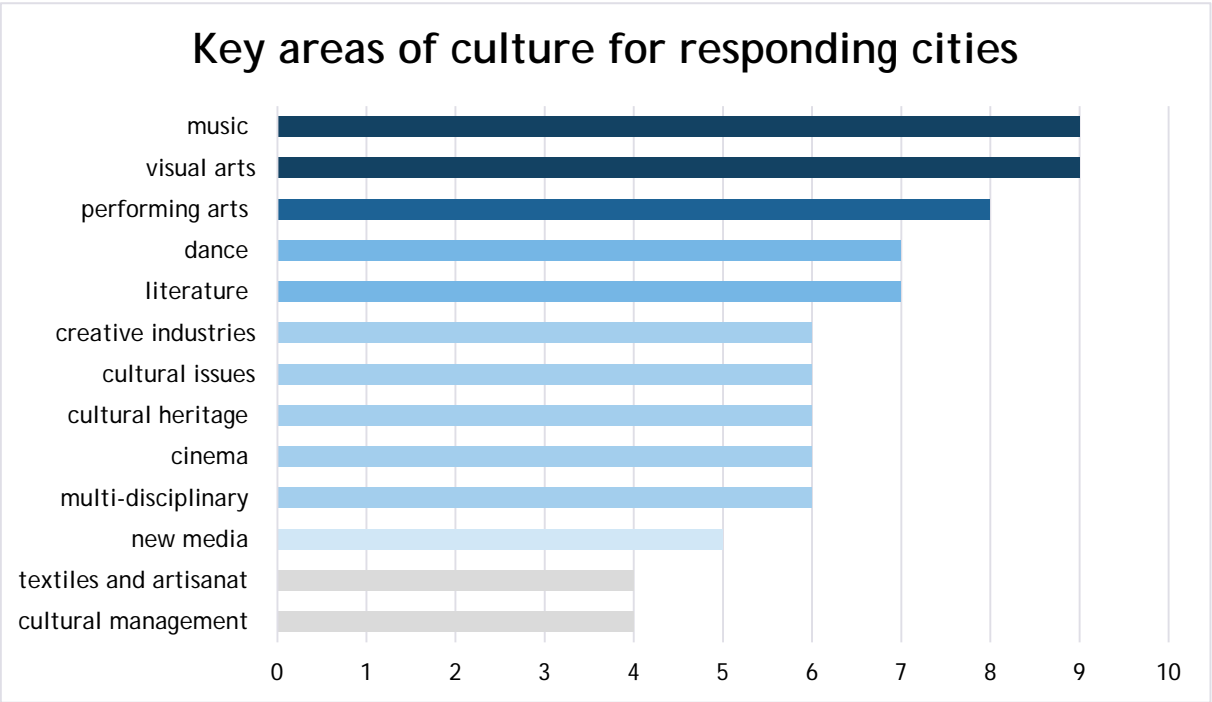


Figure 2: Chart of key areas of culture for responding cities' external cultural relations

Music, the visual arts and performing arts form the key areas of culture for the responding cities' external relations, perhaps due to the strength of these areas within the broader urban cultural landscape and the relative ease of international mobility in these fields.

Many cities are internationalising in specific areas of interest in line with their cultural policies and priorities. For example, Aarhus and Espoo both cultivate relationships with non-EU/EFTA cities in the field of libraries and library management:

- Aarhus and Chicago have cooperation between libraries which also feeds into the library conference 'Next Library.'⁶
- Espoo City Library participates in a project entitled 'Libraries for development' (2012-2017), a development project in cities in Namibia and Tanzania and led by the Finnish Library Association.

⁶ Next Library conferences are international gatherings of forward-thinking library professionals, innovators and decision-makers.

These areas of interest can also be broader and more cross-cutting; Nantes has been working with Recife to foster more citizen participation in their cultural policy, attracted by the innovative policies of their Brazilian partner city.

Key geographical areas

The clearest illustration of this is the map of cities that responded to the survey and their non-EU/EFTA partners (Figure 3).

- By far the most common area of interest for surveyed cities to have cultural partner cities is East Asia, in particular China, South Korea, Japan and Taipei. Dortmund explains their interest in China very clearly:

The foundation of the city partnership with the Chinese city took place against the backdrop of the rise of China to become a new political and economic world power.⁷

- Another clear area of interest is the European neighbourhood, both southern and eastern. Cities in Ukraine, Georgia, Turkey and Morocco are common partners of surveyed cities, as cities in Russia have traditionally been, although this has changed in many cases due to geopolitical tension and political uncertainty. North America is also a key focus, particularly along the eastern seaboard of the United States and Canada.
- Relatively neglected areas geographically are generally in the global south, with fewer partner cities located in South America, Africa, South Asia or Oceania. An exception to this are Iberian cities, who pursue relations with Latin American partners to a much greater degree than other European cities, due presumably to historical, cultural and linguistic ties. Interestingly, Munich cites this very imbalance when explaining the origins of their partnership with Harare, Zimbabwe. Local actors were key to forming this relationship with *“different ‘one world’ / north-south associations and pressure groups / civil society advocating for a north-south twinning relationship resulting in the twinning between Munich and Harare.”*

⁷ Original response: *Die Begründung der Städtepartnerschaft mit der chinesischen Stadt erfolgte vor dem Hintergrund des Aufstiegs Chinas zu einer neuen politischen und wirtschaftlichen Weltmacht.*

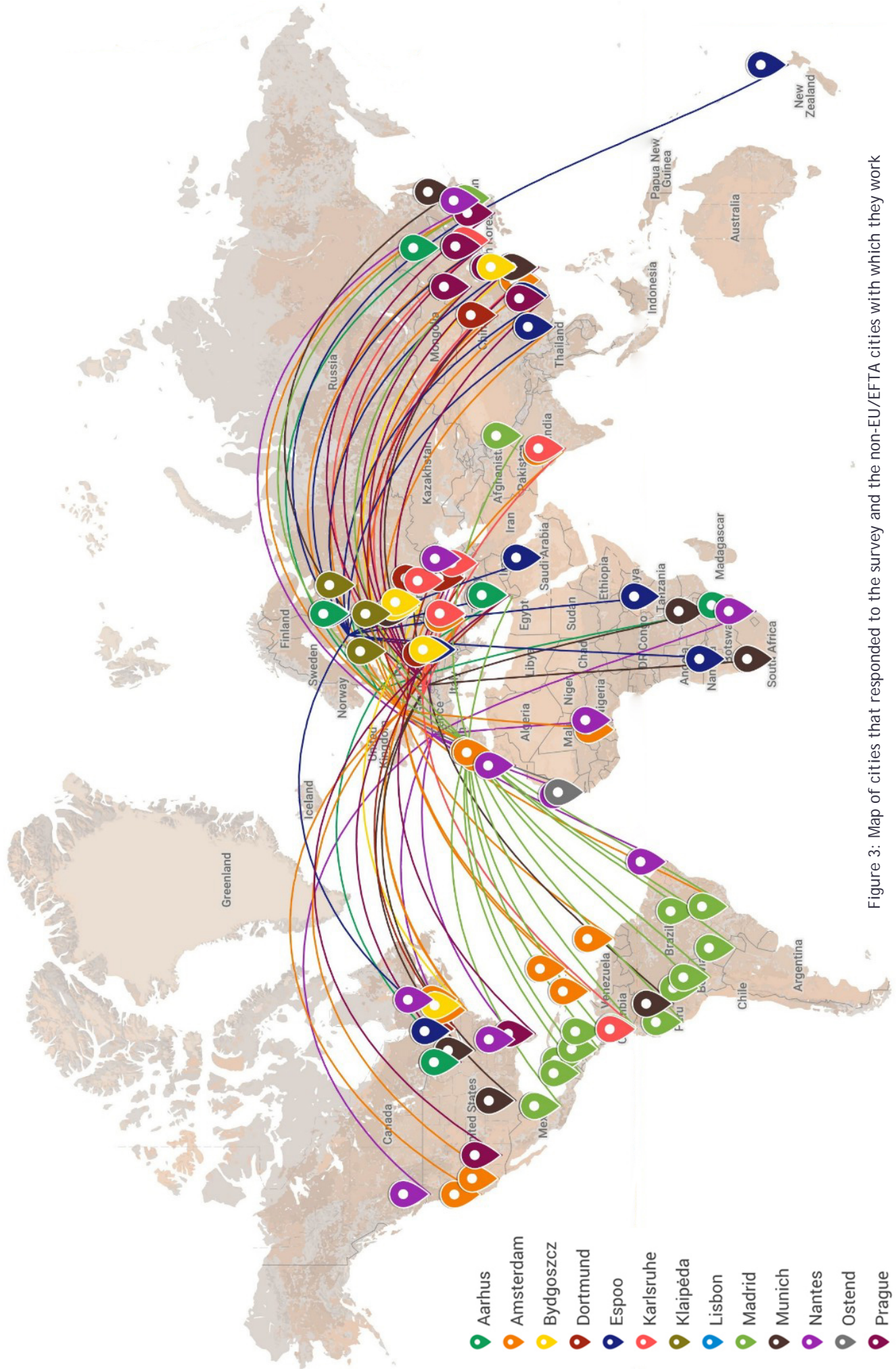


Figure 3: Map of cities that responded to the survey and the non-EU/EFTA cities with which they work

Policy and governance of external cultural relations in cities

External cultural relations in city policy

None of the 13 surveyed cities have a separate strategy document for their external cultural relations; many of them do, however, have an international strategy or a cultural strategy which includes external cultural relations and serves as a strategic document guiding cultural engagement with external partners.

External cultural relations in cities' international strategies

Some cities include external cultural relations in their international strategy documents. For example, culture is embedded in Madrid's upcoming 'Integral strategy for international standing', with a role for the cultural administration alongside other stakeholders within the municipality:

Madrid City Council is working on the elaboration of an 'Integral strategy for international standing', including cultural aspects. Nowadays there is a working group on international promotion of the city where all the city council departments are represented.

Munich, for example, has gradually built their international cultural policy through a number of council resolutions which should now be rationalised into an overall international policy which will define the role of external cultural relations:

We have an international cultural policy, but it's not about external relations in the diplomatic sense. It's written down in a number of city council resolutions, starting in 2009. Currently, an overall international policy of the city of Munich is in the making, headed by the Department of Labour and Economy. It should result in a city council resolution later this year.

External cultural relations in cities' cultural strategies

Besides those cities which include culture in their international strategy, there are also examples of cities that embed international aspects into their cultural strategy. Aarhus is in the process of adopting a new cultural strategy with internationalisation at its core:

The vision in Aarhus' new cultural strategy is: 'Aarhus - an international city where culture sets the agenda.' The European Capital of Culture title Aarhus 2017 has been very important for the development of a lot of new international relations on all levels. The strategy has not been politically adopted yet, but is just about to be. Focus is on growth and welfare.

This is in turn similar to the current strategy in Nantes, for whom *“international cultural relations are part of the overall cultural strategy of the city.”* Once again, Klaipeda’s ambitious new culture strategy reserves a key role for external cultural relations:

We have a new Culture strategy 2030 of Klaipeda, which also includes cultural cooperation and partnership fields.

New policy developments

A significant proportion of those that do not yet have an external cultural relations strategy are planning to produce one. Interestingly, many of the cities which already have international strategies with cultural aspects are in the process of updating them, including Amsterdam, whose current international policy runs until 2018 and is currently being reshaped. Karlsruhe is increasing the role of culture in their overall internationalisation strategy:

The city of Karlsruhe has set up an internationalisation strategy, which is currently being updated. Culture should be more strongly represented in this internationalisation strategy than before.⁸

Intercity partnership models in external cultural relations

Many cities distinguish between ‘twinned cities’, with which they have long-term cross-sectoral relations, and project specific partner cities, with which they work on a certain project or topic on a temporary basis. Not all cities work within this pattern however - Prague works with non-EU/EFTA cities in a range of different structures, some formalised and some less so, and sees very little difference in the quality of these relationships.

Espoo is quite representative of surveyed cities, working within the framework of both long-term and short-term partnerships:

Espoo has both long-term partners and short-term partnerships and projects. Some of the long-term partnerships are non-active and based on sister city agreements. Because of the fast growth of Espoo, some of the sister city relationships have become less important - mainly because of a lack of mutual interests and challenges with e.g. cities that are considerably smaller than Espoo. However, size is not a decisive factor.

The culture unit works very much within projects and short term relationships. Some projects have a long-term partnership as their foundation and some are more based on a wide network of contacts.

⁸ Original response: *Die Stadt Karlsruhe hat eine Internationalisierungsstrategie aufgesetzt, die aktuell fortgeschrieben werden soll. Die Kultur soll in dieser Internationalisierungsstrategie stärker als bisher vertreten sein.*

Some cities have culture specific relationships with external cities, often directly between local cultural institutions, while others have much broader intercity relationships, of which culture forms a part. Most cities employ both structures in their external cultural relations. Amsterdam, for example, works on a basis of broader intercity relationships with a cultural element; Nantes views cultural relations as an integral and vital part of any external intercity relationship, be it social or economic; Munich's 'artist-centred' approach leads to a much more project-based structure in their external cultural relations. Dortmund works exclusively in a city partnership structure:

All city partnerships are permanently established and are based on bilateral contracts between Dortmund and the respective partner city. The quality of the partnerships with non-EU / EFTA cities is the same as the city partnerships within the EU.⁹

In the case of Aarhus, the 2017 European Capital of Culture title has facilitated the development of external intercity relations, something that was also shown in the evaluation of Pilsen's 2015 European Capital of Culture title¹⁰. The reasons cited for this are the increased international exposure and attention for the title-winning city during their title year, forging new relationships which can become longer-term collaborations if properly maintained.

Key actors in cities' external cultural relations

City administrations are key stakeholders in the field of external cultural relations, not only building new relationships but actively maintaining them. The actor overwhelmingly responsible for the creation of new cultural relationships with external cities is the city itself, as can be clearly seen in Figure 5. The most active actors after the city are other local actors - the development of new external cultural relationships is clearly predominantly a local initiative. This trend becomes even more apparent when we examine the actors responsible for the maintenance of these relationships - it is the city which is responsible in all survey responses.

City administrations often play the role of enabler or broker for local cultural institutions in their external actions. Munich gives multiple examples of projects which began at the initiative of local actors and were subsequently supported by the municipality:

The Apartment of Art in Munich, an artist-run art space, was the local motor for the cultural exchange project between Munich and Taipei (Taiwan). This also applies to other projects with other local partners.

⁹ Original response: *Alle Städtepartnerschaften sind dauerhaft angelegt und beruhen auf zweiseitigen Verträgen zwischen Dortmund und der jeweiligen Partnerstadt. Die Qualität der Partnerschaften mit nicht EU/EFTA-Städten entspricht dem gleichen Standard wie die Städtepartnerschaften innerhalb der EU.*

¹⁰ Ex-post Evaluation of the 2015 European Capitals of Culture, Final Report November 2016; European Commission. Available here: <http://bit.ly/2qBW89z>

A second example is the LGBTI cooperation between Munich and Kyiv which started with a formal agreement between associations of the respective civil societies in 2013 and which then lead to the Department of arts and culture funding this cooperation and to the political commitment of local politicians from Munich.

This once again forms part of Munich’s ‘artist-centred’ working method, which places the emphasis on a bottom-up approach enabling direct people-to-people contact. Espoo shows the range of external relations that can exist at an institutional level in cities:

The city library, the city symphony orchestra Tapiola Sinfonietta and the city museum are very well connected internationally. Espoo also has international festivals and events, choirs and artist groups that work in international networks and perform abroad, and take in performers, exhibitions etc. from outside of Europe. The International Theatre of Finland is located in Espoo and has a broad international repertoire, with many plays outside of EU/EFTA. Events concentrating on specific cultures have been arranged in collaboration with embassies, for example the Japanese and Mexican ones.

A key role of the city administration is to bring together these different partnerships and contacts, thereby maximising their potential by enabling more collaboration. The city can also have a supporting role, as in the above case of Munich, taking a bottom-up initiative and allowing it to grow and be sustained.

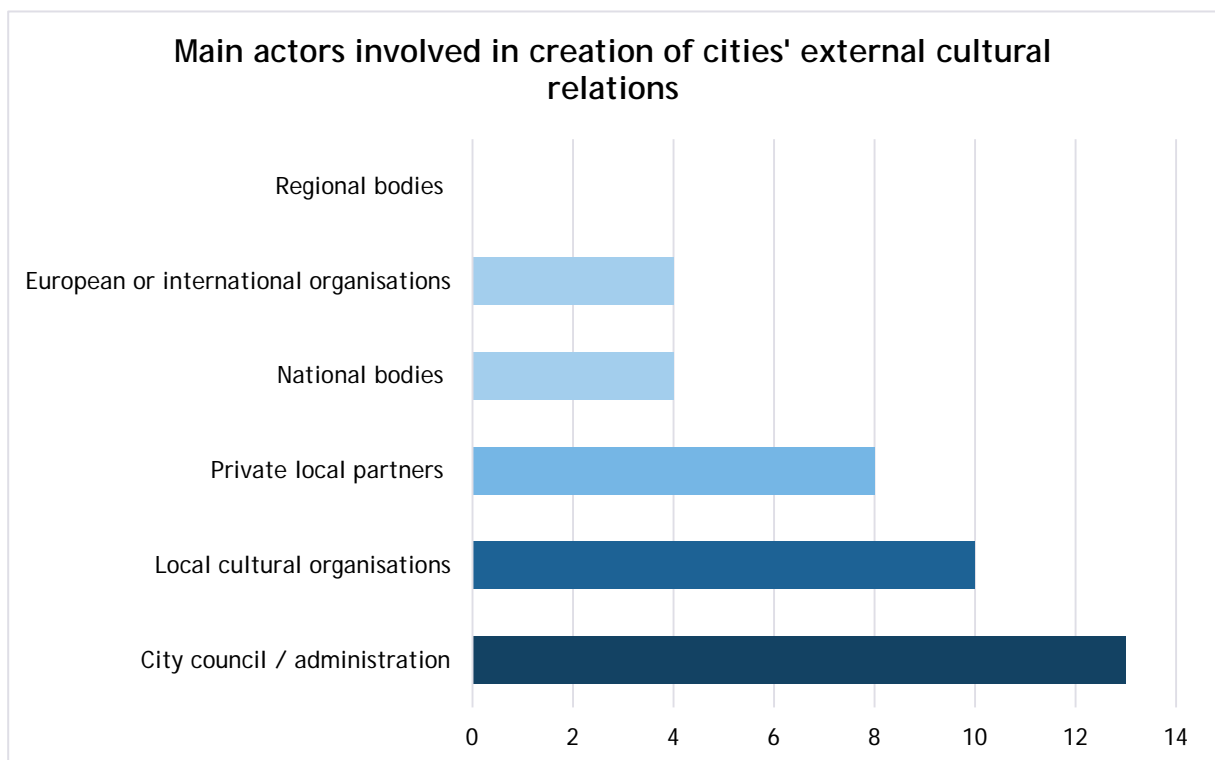


Figure 4: Chart of main actors involved in the creation of external cultural relationships in responding cities

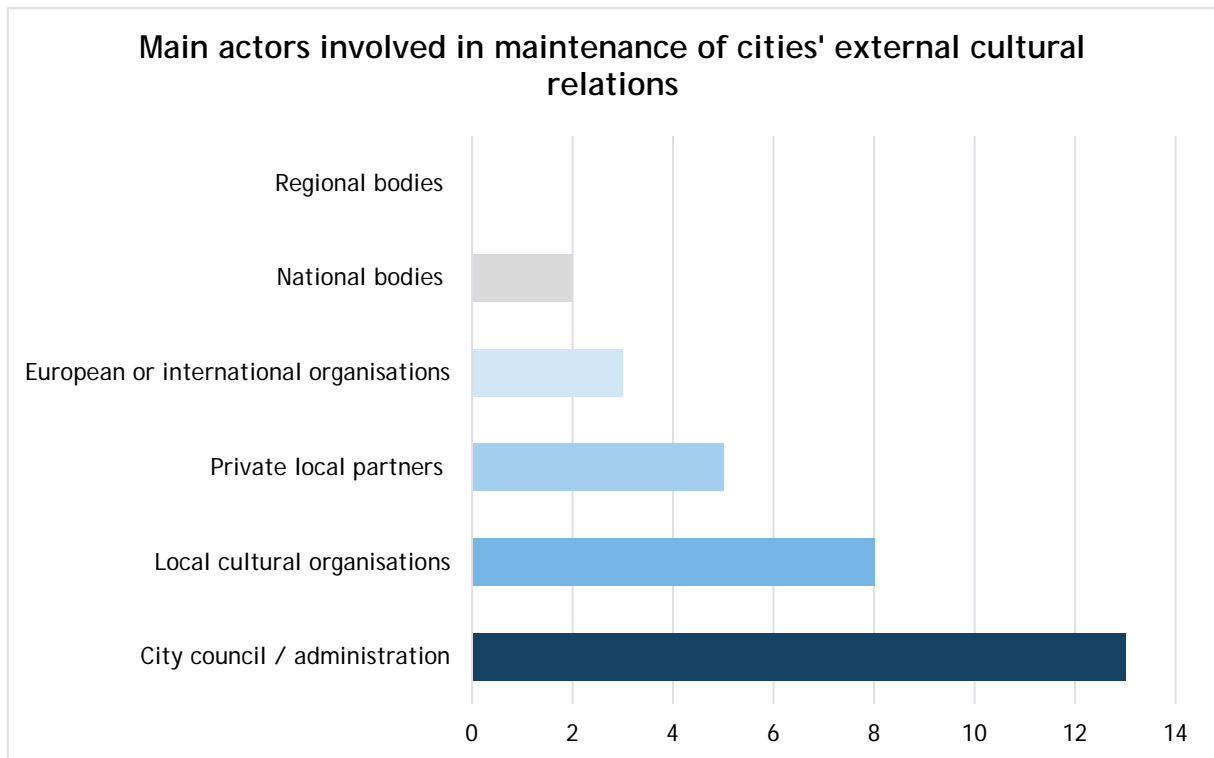


Figure 5: Chart of main actors involved in the maintenance of external cultural relationships in responding cities

Funding and financing cities' external cultural relations

The vast majority of funding for cities' external cultural relations comes from the city's own budget. In the example of Prague, 100% of funding for external cultural relations comes from the city budget. In Bydgoszcz, 90% is taken from the city budget, with the remaining 10% coming from national bodies. Much of this is also dependent on individual projects; in Nantes, projects for the mobility of artists are co-funded on a 50/50 basis by the city and the Institut Français, a national cultural body responsible for the promotion of French culture abroad.

External cultural relations within city administrations - Who is in charge?

Many of the surveyed cities have an officer in charge of external cultural relations, the majority on a full-time contract. Of those cities that employ an officer for this task, the majority work in the culture department of the city administration, although there are a significant number who work within the international relations department of the city.

The job titles of these officers often reveal how external cultural relations are organised by their respective cities. For example, Munich has an officer specifically in charge of "international cultural work"¹¹, much like Dortmund's "senior officer for external cultural

¹¹ Original German title: *Internationale Kulturarbeit*

exchange”, or Karlsruhe’s officer in charge of “international cultural relations, cultural contacts with partner cities”¹², all working directly in the culture department. In Nantes, it is the director of culture who is responsible for external cultural relations; in Prague, an officer from the International relations and protocol unit (attached to the mayor’s office) administers the city’s external cultural actions alongside the general international

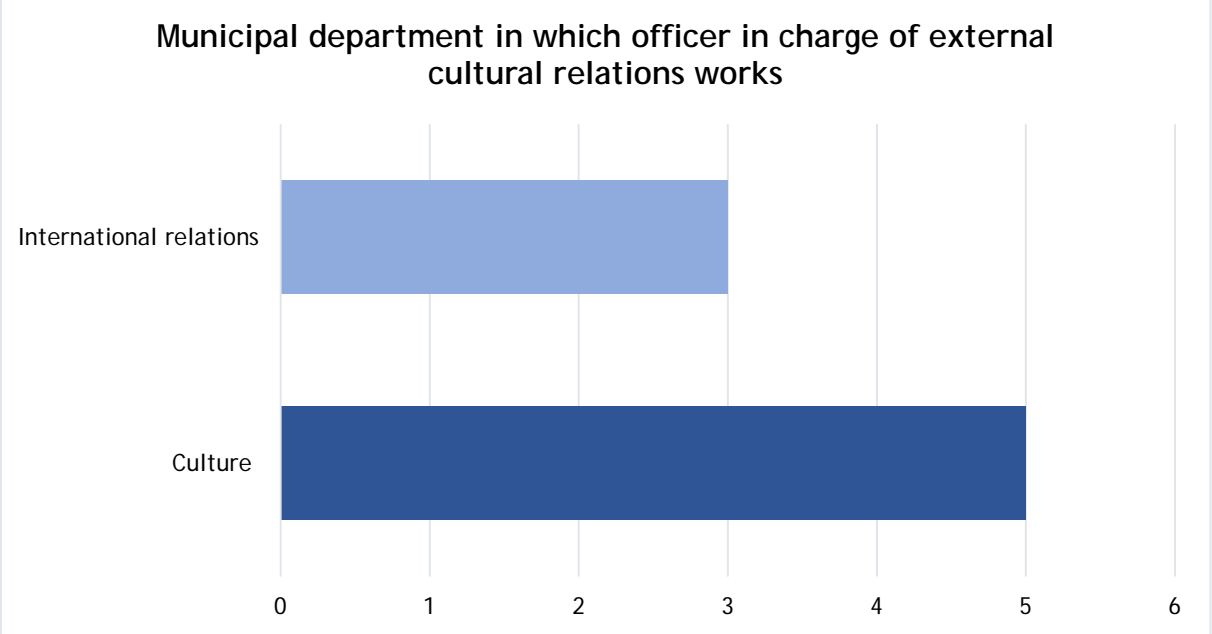


Figure 6: Chart on municipal department in which officer in charge of external cultural relations works

relations of the city.

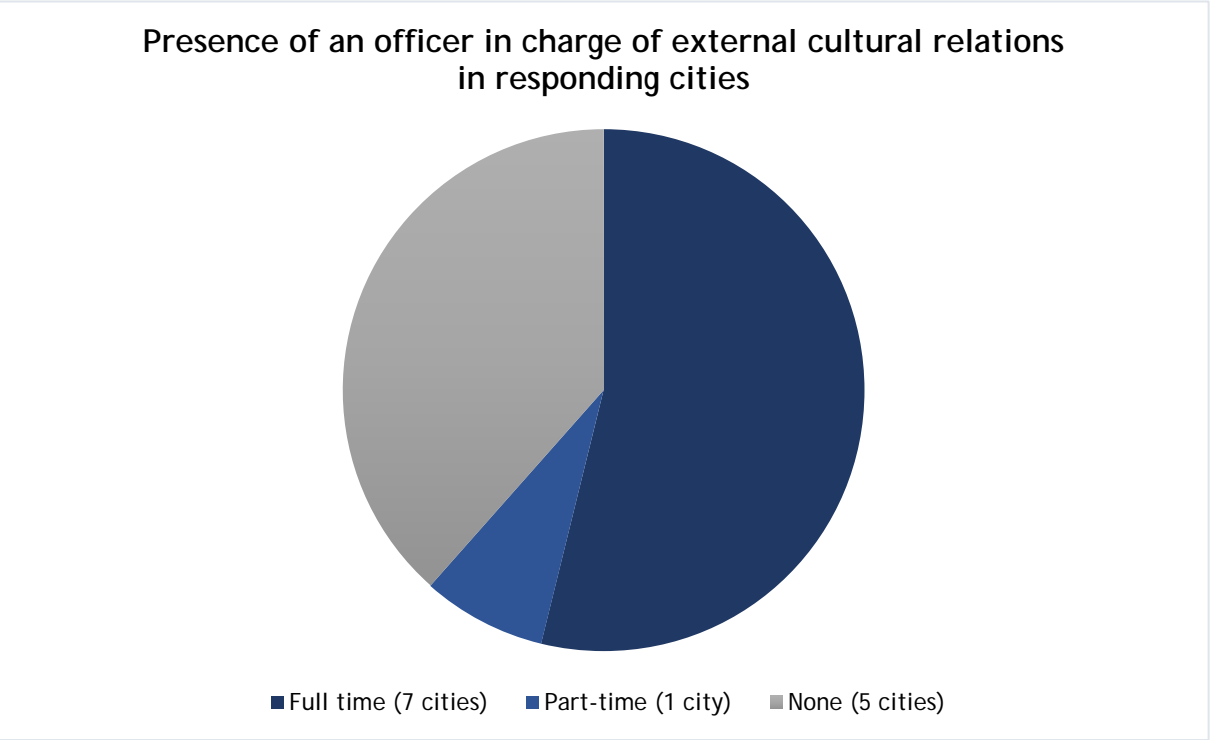


Figure 7: Chart on the presence of an officer in charge of external cultural relations in responding cities

There is, therefore, no common governance structure across surveyed cities - each find different ways to manage their external cultural relations within the broader city administration.

From showcase to collaboration: cooperation rather than competition

Cities are already moving away from a more traditional 'showcase' style of cultural relations to a more collaborative, exchange based approach, much like the one suggested in the 2016 joint communication of the European Commission and European External Action Service:

In order to fully realise the potential bridging role of culture in international relations, it is necessary to go beyond projecting the diversity of European cultures, and aim at generating a new spirit of dialogue, mutual listening and learning, joint capacity-building and global solidarity. (...) Reciprocity, mutual learning and co-creation should



Figure 6: Word cloud representation of the most frequently used language in cities when talking about external cultural relations, based on survey responses.

*therefore underpin the EU's international cultural relations.*¹³

This 'paradigm shift' may need time at a national level, but it is clearly already well underway at a city level. We can see this in Figure 8, representing the words most used by cities when referring to their external cultural relations; the words 'collaboration' and 'exchange' come overwhelmingly to the fore, with words such as 'diplomacy' and

¹³ From Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations. Available here: <http://bit.ly/2riTxWo>

'influence' hardly used by comparison.

This collaborative approach translates into working methods as well, as in the case of Munich:

We try to empower our target groups internationally, i.e. enable and support them to enter into international working relations and cultural exchange. We as an administration remain in the background and do not operate in a top-down manner. So it's less about cultural diplomacy but about cultural exchange of the people we are there for (our community).

The collaborative approach can also be seen in the external cultural projects undertaken by cities, such as in Dortmund, which runs multiple jointly managed, long-term projects and sees this dynamic as a key for success in their external cultural relations:

Successful international cultural relations are based on continuous exchange, particularly between cultural institutions and organisations in Dortmund and the partner cities, which jointly manage long-term projects (e.g. East-West Jazz Orchestra).¹⁴

Dortmund refers to this as a 'principle of reciprocity', giving concrete examples of how this dynamic is achieved and why it is an advantageous working method:

The artistic quality as well as the 'principle of reciprocity' is the technical basis for international cultural exchange. For example, a public event must take place both in Dortmund and in the partner city. This ensures that not only is the cultural offer in Dortmund enriched, but also the cultural achievements of Dortmund are more internationally present.¹⁵

This also applies financially, with 'host cities' partly covering the costs of cultural activities when receiving delegations. Prague also employs the term 'reciprocity'; for Prague "*reciprocity and prosperity of both sides is the core of our system.*"

EU cities sometimes work together in their external cultural relations, creating added value through collaboration. Nantes, for example, works in partnership with Rennes and Montreal, enabling a broader range of activities than if they were working only bilaterally.

¹⁴ Original response: *Erfolgreiche internationale Kulturbeziehungen basieren auf kontinuierlichem Austausch insbesondere zwischen Kultureinrichtungen und -organisationen in Dortmund und den Partnerstädten, die langfristige Projekte gemeinsam verantworten (z.B. East-West-Jazzorchester).*

¹⁵ From Dortmund's report "Kulturaustausch mit Partnerstädten im Jahr 2016". Original text: *Fachliche Grundlage des internationalen Kulturaustausches ist die künstlerische Qualität sowie das „Prinzip der Gegenseitigkeit“: Beispielsweise muss sowohl in Dortmund als auch in der Partnerstadt eine öffentliche Veranstaltung stattfinden. Damit wird sichergestellt, dass nicht nur das Kulturangebot in Dortmund bereichert wird, sondern dass ebenso die kulturellen Leistungen Dortmunds international präsenter sind.*

The overall approach demonstrated by surveyed cities is neatly summarised by Amsterdam's international policy:

*"...when it comes to governments, more is achieved through cooperation than competition."*¹⁶

¹⁶ Taken from the Amsterdam city policy document 'Internationaal Beleid 2014-2018 - Amsterdam Internationaal Verantwoordelijke Hoofdstad', page 6. Document available (in Dutch) as a PDF here: <http://bit.ly/2qxxhdE> Original text: *...als het gaat om overheden, met samenwerking meer wordt bereikt dan met concurrentie.*

Priorities and challenges of external cultural relations in cities

Why do cities maintain and develop external cultural relations?

Espoo: External cultural relations are very important for increasing understanding between cultures, for social and economic development and for developing culture itself. In a connected and globalised world, not developing relations outside of Europe is not an option.

Cities share many of the same motivations behind their external cultural relations, even if this is expressed in different ways. A key motivation is to broaden the horizons of citizens by enabling international contact for city residents:

Munich: International cooperation and exchange makes people grow and learn with and from each other. Often it's a boost in quality. Excitement for audiences makes a city and its cultural supply more attractive. Today's cities ARE international. Globalisation and internationalisation is a fact and a key factor for development. No city can afford to ignore it.

The impact of external cultural relations on the cultural offer is also a major motivator, as well as their role in city promotion and attractiveness. Social and economic impacts are frequently cited. Peer learning is seen as an additional benefit of external cultural relations:

Nantes: External cultural relations can help drive Nantes' policies, as in the example of Recife which has innovative methods to better involve citizens in city life. Mutual learning is therefore a useful aspect of external cultural relations.

Factors influencing partner choice

Linguistic links are an important factor in the choice of partner cities outside of the EU/EFTA for many cities. Language is clearly a factor for European countries with a colonial past - Nantes works frequently with francophone partners, often in partnership with the *Institut Français*; Madrid works predominantly with Spanish-speaking cities in Latin America, often through the framework of the International Union for Latin American Capitals (UCCI).

Historical ties also play a role in the choice of partner city - Nantes works with Jacksonville, USA, with whom they share a history linked to the slave trade; Dortmund works with Netanya in Israel, explaining their motivations here:

The partnership with the Israeli city was decided primarily as an act of reconciliation against the background of the persecution of Jews during

*the Nazi dictatorship in Germany.*¹⁷

These intercity relationships use shared history to bridge other cultural differences, and can use culture to help address sensitive periods of history and their relevance to intercultural relations today.

Shared demography between an EU city and its non-EU/EFTA partners can be a motivation to forge an intercity cultural relationship. In cities in countries with significant populations from immigrant backgrounds, such as Germany or the Netherlands, links are often created between large diaspora communities and their countries of origin. This can be seen through Amsterdam's relationships with Moroccan, Surinamese, Ghanaian and Turkish cities:

*The international policy of Amsterdam is aimed at the main countries of origin of Amsterdammers (Surinam, Morocco, Turkey, Ghana, the Netherlands, Antilles, Curacao and St Maarten, and the capitals of EU accession countries (Budapest and Riga));*¹⁸

This is also the case for Dortmund:

*The partnership with the Turkish city was founded in the context of the strong Turkish migration in Dortmund.*¹⁹

This relationship is reversed in cities in countries which are traditionally departure countries for migration rather than destination countries. Prague is a good example of this type of dynamic:

The City of Prague cooperates a lot with Chicago. Both cities are active on the political level, and in the cultural area, student exchange, internships and expert groups. There are rich relations between the cities, supported by historical contacts and big Czech immigration to Chicago before World War II.

Many cities see the advantage of building external cultural relationships based on their minority populations for boosting social inclusion - this is the case for Espoo and Madrid.

¹⁷ Original response: *Die Partnerschaft mit der israelischen Stadt wurde vor allem als Akt der Aussöhnung vor dem Hintergrund der Judenverfolgung während der Nazi-Diktatur in Deutschland beschlossen.*

¹⁸ Taken from the Amsterdam city policy document 'Internationaal Beleid 2014-2018 - Amsterdam Internationaal Vernetwoordelijke Hoofdstad', page 6. Document available (in Dutch) here: <http://bit.ly/2qxhndE> Original text: *Het internationale beleid van Amsterdam is (...) gericht op de belangrijkste herkomstlanden van de Amsterdammers (Suriname, Marokko, Turkije, Ghana; op de toenmalige Nederlandse Antillen Curacao en St Maarten en op hoofdsteden van EU-toetredingslanden (Boedapest en Riga);*

¹⁹ Original response: *Die Partnerschaft mit der türkischen Stadt wurde vor dem Hintergrund der starken türkischen Migration in Dortmund begründet.*

Madrid cites '*better understanding of migration*' as a motivator for their external cultural relations, and Espoo explains their interest in external cultural relations for social inclusion in great detail:

A big challenge in Espoo is how to be able to transform the cultural services so that they reach a diversifying population. The cultural services should better reach out to, for example, Russians, Asians and Somalis. By developing our relations to these parts of the world, we could, for example, offer cultural events in their mother tongue. If we could better engage these minority groups in co-creating services, it would also have a positive impact on cohesion.

Madrid does, however, offer a practical tip to ensure that all groups in the city benefit from external cultural relations based on large minority groups - ensuring that events are not solely oriented to the minority community without translation into the majority language.

Role of political and cultural values

Many cities have a clear set of cultural and political values which guide the management of their cultural relations, and are often a key motivation for their development and maintenance. For example, "*Nantes has certain values that the city adheres to.*"

Cities want to contribute to global peace, stability and good governance through their cultural relations; as Nantes says in their response to the survey, "*Culture is a vehicle for shared values, and international cultural relations help to construct a common European culture.*" The idea of common European culture and values was cited by a number of cities when describing the values behind their external cultural relations. Dortmund outlines the importance of external cultural relations thus:

External cultural relations are essential for citizens' contacts beyond their own borders. In Dortmund, they are strongly influenced by the reconciliation policy after the Second World War, the desire for understanding people and peace in the world.²⁰

For Karlsruhe, "*Partnership is also seen as a support for political democratic development.*"²¹ Karlsruhe also says that this forms part of their motivation for developing

²⁰ Original response: *Externe Kulturbeziehungen sind essentiell für bürgerschaftliche Kontakte über die eigenen Grenzen hinaus. Sie sind in Dortmund stark geprägt durch die Versöhnungspolitik nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg, dem Willen nach Verständigung der Menschen und Frieden in der Welt.*

²¹ Original response: *Partnerschaft wird auch als Unterstützung zur politischen Demokratieentwicklung gesehen.*

external cultural relations: *"There is an international responsibility to contribute."*²²

When asked whether differences in political climate with a potential partner city regarding freedom of expression, censorship, democratic systems, rule of law etc. would affect its willingness to form a cultural relationship, Madrid responded that:

Yes, these differences could affect our cultural relationships depending on the level of lack of respect for human rights of the potential partner city. In the case of existing cultural relationships, we would try to influence in order to transmit our main values.

Karlsruhe also sees external cultural relations as playing a key role in furthering and transmitting their values, once again described as European values:

*Particularly in times when political educational activity (e.g. Turkey) is limited, cultural educational activity is becoming more and more important, which should lead to a strengthening of European integration within the EU, and to further the debate outside the EU on and about the values and culture of the European Union.*²³

This is furthered by Espoo:

One role of culture is to promote European values through art. Culture is a key player in transforming societies and building bridges and dialogue between people and societies. Therefore, we do not consider different democratic values an obstacle, even though it makes the situation and collaboration more complex and may make some forms of collaboration difficult.

Amsterdam gives its political and cultural values centre stage in its international policy document, entitled *Amsterdam - Internationaal Verantwoordelijke Hoofdstad* or *Amsterdam - Internationally Responsible Capital*. The document explains what this means in practice:

Fully addressing the challenges facing world cities requires reciprocal international cooperation and knowledge sharing between cities and urban areas. (...) Amsterdam wants to position itself as an internationally responsible capital, in order to play a prominent role on

²² Original response: *Es besteht eine internationale Verantwortung, hier einen Beitrag zu leisten.*

²³ Original response: *Gerade in Zeiten, in denen der politischen Bildungsarbeit (z.B. Türkei) Grenzen gesetzt werden, kommt der kulturellen Bildungsarbeit eine immer größere Bedeutung zu, die innerhalb der EU zur Stärkung der europäischen Integration führen soll und außerhalb der EU zur Auseinandersetzung über und um Werte durch die Kultur dient.*

*the world stage.*²⁴

Although the document is not a strategy specifically for cultural relations, it forms the guidelines for Amsterdam's external cultural relations, with the precept of international responsibility at its core.

Cities also take part in specific activities to promote their values. A prime example is Munich and Kiev, who have a *"cooperation of LGBTI scenes of both cities with community building, fighting for human rights and cultural activities."*

Cultural and political values, indeed European values, clearly form a core set of guidelines for when cities engage culturally with the world; guidelines which are clearly in line with those proposed thus far for any future EU strategy for international cultural relations.

Political challenges

Cities often prefer institution to institution contact rather than 'official' political channels when working with cities in areas of political instability, geopolitical tension, or with regimes that do not respect human rights. This is the case with many of the surveyed cities relations with Russian partners in recent years; projects often continue on an institution to institution or artist to artist basis using the contacts that were acquired in times of less tension. Many cities cite their values as a motivation to continue their external cultural relations in spite of political tension or repressive regimes, using culture as a vehicle to communicate democratic values. An interesting case here is Munich and Harare:

The political relations between Munich and Harare had been frozen several times due to the interference of the national government in Zimbabwe with local affairs. When the freely elected city council (and mayor) in our twin city of Harare was sacked by the Mugabe government (which happened a few times), the Munich city council halted all official contacts until the democratic city government was re-installed. The city council of Munich had made it very clear that it would only accept partners in Harare who had been installed in a free and fair election. However, relations on an individual level had always continued (projects with artists, private institutions etc.).

We can again see the importance of an established set of values in cities' external cultural relations, and the use of culture to support democracy and the rule of law in third states - even if this is through civil societal collaborations rather than 'official' intercity contact.

²⁴ Taken from the Amsterdam city policy document 'Internationaal Beleid 2014-2018 - Amsterdam Internationaal Vernatwoordelijke Hoofdstad', page 6. Document available (in Dutch) here: <http://bit.ly/2qgxhndE> Original text: *Om de uitdagingen waar wereldsteden voor staan daadwerkelijk te kunnen adresseren, is wederkerige internationale samenwerking en kennisdeling tussen steden en stedelijke regio's noodzakelijk. (...) Amsterdam zich wil positioneren als internationaal verantwoordelijke hoofdstad, om zodoende een prominente rol te kunnen spelen op het wereldtoneel.*

Future priorities for cities

Consolidating partnerships

Many of the surveyed cities are not actively pursuing new partnerships. Aarhus, for example, will not increase the number of twinned cities but rather work with other cities on a project by project basis while retaining the strong intercity relationships they already enjoy with their established twinned cities. For Dortmund *“there are no plans at present for other cultural partnerships because the activities will be focused on existing partnerships and the budget is limited.”*²⁵ Nantes is very similar, albeit with strategic rather than budgetary reasoning:

Nantes’ current strategy runs from 2014 to 2020 in accordance with the mandate of the current mayor. Nantes is not actively targeting cities or geographic regions but is open to collaboration. Nantes wishes to concentrate on the existing partnerships, at least until 2020.

Developing new partnerships

For those cities that are actively pursuing new relations outside of the EU/EFTA, there is very little geographical overlap between targeted cities and regions. New relations are generally being sought due to specific challenges that a city has; for Prague, *“Tel Aviv is a prospective city for closer cooperation, particularly in the area of innovation and ‘smart’ perspective on urban development.”* Espoo, Klaipeda and Bydgoszcz would like to broaden their collaboration with Russia and non-EU/EFTA Eastern European countries due to their geographic proximity:

In new Culture Strategy 2030 of Klaipeda, we chose to seek cooperation with the Baltic region and Nordic countries, also one of our goals in the new strategy is to become “a bridge” of cooperation between the post-soviet non-EU countries and EU countries.

Munich and Madrid are both interested in potential collaboration with East Asia due to growing economic development, with Karlsruhe wanting to further develop their cultural and economic relations with the Indian city of Pune.

²⁵ Original response: *Es werden derzeit keine weiteren kulturellen Partnerschaften angestrebt, weil die Aktivitäten auf bestehende Partnerschaften konzentriert werden sollen und das Budget begrenzt ist.*

What can national and European institutions learn from cities?

Cities are global actors in external cultural relations

Cities are global actors, overwhelmingly responsible for the development and maintenance of external cultural relations at a local level. Their close contacts with the various stakeholders of their local cultural ecosystems, including the citizen, inform the way in which they engage internationally. Cities also have core cultural and political values which guide their external cultural actions. This gives cities a rich knowledge and experience in the field of international cultural relations.

Cities are early adopters in external cultural relations

Cities are early adopters of a collaborative and interactive approach when it comes to their external cultural relations, experimenting with innovative working models, projects and actions which bring their citizens closer to the rest of the world. There are lessons to be drawn from these initiatives at a national and European level; effectively upscaling and building on the knowledge and experience already present in cities.

Cities transmit European values through external cultural relations

Transmitting European values is key to the way in which cities engage with the rest of the world, using culture to transmit values of diversity, democracy, artistic freedom and good governance. This is, however, no one-way street - cities are keen to learn from their global partners and engage on the same level in the spirit of mutual learning and understanding. It is not cultural diplomacy that interests cities, but rather international cultural cooperation and exchange - a dynamic which nations and European institutions are also beginning to adopt.

Cities have mutual external cultural relationships

The mutual basis of intercity cultural relationships is a major factor for success - there needs to be an interest on both sides in order to maintain a fruitful working relationship. This mutuality is best achieved through collaboration and reciprocity, organising projects jointly and ensuring that any initiative which takes place in one city also takes place in the other. This model can easily be applied to national and European contexts.

Cities are brokers and facilitators for external cultural relations

Cities acts as brokers and facilitators - they broker contact between local cultural institutions and their counterparts in international partner cities, mirroring the multi-stakeholder approach propounded in the EU's proposed strategy for international cultural relations. Cities bring stakeholders together, maximising their potential through collaboration; ensuring complementarity in much the same way as proposed in the conclusions of the European Council for an EU strategic approach to international cultural

relations.

Cities engage with citizens in their external cultural relations

The citizen is at the heart of cities' external relations. An example of this is Munich's 'artist-centred' working method, which places the emphasis on a bottom-up approach enabling direct people-to-people contact.

As the EU moves towards a strategy for international cultural relations, cities are in turn updating existing strategies to reflect the increased role of culture in their external actions, or embedding external cultural relations into new strategies based on their practical knowledge and experience as both local and global actors. Member states and the European institutions could draw inspiration from cities, and work alongside them as Europe forges new ways of engaging with the world.