



PLaces
DECLARATION

*on the European City
of Scientific Culture*

Foreword

The FP7 project **Platform of Local Authorities and Communicators Engaged in Science (PLACES)** resulted in EU-level blueprints for the **European City of Scientific Culture**.

The essence of a European City of Scientific Culture is that it supports science-informed strategies in cities involving society's major drivers for economic growth, innovation and structural change.

Main partners of the project were Ecsite, the European network of science centres and museums (coordinator), European Science

Events Association (Eusea), European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN) and Pompeu Fabra University (UPF).

The project involved

- » City Partnerships facilitating knowledge exchange among local stakeholders to develop locally-relevant and effective science communication policies.
- » Local Action Plans targeting key challenges in cities based on science-informed solutions.
- » Pilot Activities that tested innovative approaches to science communication.

» Annual Conferences, Science Cities Workshops, training opportunities and Thematic Working Groups bringing PLACES stakeholders together in a united effort.

» The PLACES Stakeholders Assembly offered expert insight and analysis on project outputs at the European level.

This Declaration will help to establish and further develop the concept of the European City of Scientific Culture, drawing on knowledge developed by PLACES participants who strongly believe that the concept can and will contribute

to transparent, informed and smart decision-making processes at the local, regional and European levels.

The PLACES Declaration is based on the project outcomes which have been documented as definitions, recommendations, and criteria for Cities of Scientific Culture. The Declaration was approved by the PLACES Executive Committee on 1 October 2013 and was then disseminated among PLACES partners who identified local authorities in support of its tenets.

Cities are acknowledged as the focal points of civilization and for many centuries they have contributed to economic, social, cultural and political life both within the city and in surrounding regions. The idea of a European City of Scientific Culture sheds light on one important facet of the city - the ability to stimulate scientific thinking which benefits the lives of its citizens and the world. A city of scientific culture is one that pro-actively cultivates scientific understanding to facilitate economic competitiveness and an improved educational system which encourages innovation and scientific discovery. A city of scientific culture is a place where social and cultural development requires an understanding of science just as much as the humanities and where science supports democratic processes through evidence-based policy making.

Science is not a secondary priority, but the basis of an enhanced civilization for Europe and the world. The diversity of Europe's cities means that cities follow different trajectories, histories and meanings with regard to scientific culture.

The sciences and humanities are most valuable to economic growth, job creation, innovation, and are essential for structural and cultural changes. They are of utmost importance for the future of our society and urban development since both soft and hard locational factors contribute to cities' identity and image.

In a European City of Scientific Culture, scientific evidence and advice, as well as demands and input from citizens, should be strongly considered in political decisions. Policies should reflect outcomes of dialogues between citizens, researchers and other stakeholders. These cities should promote science education and literacy with the belief that informed citizens enhance decision-making on topics related to science and technology.

A European City of Scientific Culture provides one or more different access points to scientific knowledge where information and interactions between the political world and science, the humanities, business and the general public are facilitated. Relevant infrastructures are scientific institutions or knowledge hubs in research and education which have regional, national or international reputations for facilitating science engagement and societal dialogue on varying topics and developments. Science centres, science museums and science festivals are considered central points in the participation of society in, with and for science.

A European City of Scientific Culture is able to learn and unlearn in order to prepare the ground for innovation. Only a city that overcomes best practices of the past can keep up with the times and win competitions of the future.

To maximize its potential, a European City of Scientific Culture needs to achieve European and international visibility.

Modern, future-oriented city governments in Europe respond to the increasing importance of science and the demands of citizens by involving local scientific institutions in their social, political, urban and cultural development strategies. Acknowledging that the globalized world is highly competitive, these cities invest in science, humanities, research, innovation and education on principle in order to attract and retain talent.

Elements of a European city of scientific culture

Though capacities and priorities may differ from one city to the next, a European City of Scientific Culture meets many of the following criteria:

A European City of Scientific Culture invests in science, research and innovation to pursue a future of economic competitiveness which creates jobs, stimulates growth and safeguards social welfare. Furthermore, it recognizes that economic competitiveness requires informed and engaged citizens.

In order to develop and flourish, a European City of Scientific Culture has a strategic and sustainable action plan developed in dialogue with politicians, policy makers, scientists, entrepreneurs, cultural agents and citizens. Such an action plan must continuously evolve and adapt to social and cultural change.

A European City of Scientific Culture aims for a spirit that generates an anticipatory, inclusive, reflective and responsive interaction in the political decision-making process and an improved participation in democracy. Such a city supports and implements the economic and societal goals of the European Union as expressed in EU policies for science and innovation strategy.

A European City of Scientific Culture encourages science in, with and for society. A permanent interdisciplinary exchange between scientists, policy makers and the public will facilitate trust and confidence in science and the humanities – a prerequisite for scientific development which will help to attract and foster young talent, scientists and investors.

The European city of scientific culture and Europe

Cities are complex structures and no two cities can be the same. They are often in competition for resources, talent and economic and cultural investment. This does not mean that cities cannot cooperate in many ways. Cities can share knowledge and exchange ideas in a spirit which benefits all cities and regions. In this way, a European City of Scientific Culture adds value to the European ideal of a smart, sustainable and inclusive society.

This Declaration calls for political representatives of European Cities of Scientific Culture to acknowledge the important role of science in developing strong cities and regions in Europe. This is a bottom-up process in which political representatives have an important and decisive role to play. A city can only flourish and be developed to its best when the local scientific culture concept is a sustainable part of a city's development.

Although a European City of Scientific Culture involves bottom-up thinking and actions, it must also be supported by top-down policies and thinking from a European perspective. European Cities of Scientific Culture therefore depend on long-term regional, national and European support in order to maintain platforms and networks to exchange best practice and exploit fully the potential of mutual learning and societal dialogue which will move forward the European integration process and shape the European identity at the local level. To this end, and in order to foster the European dimension of scientific culture, outstanding examples need to be acknowledged through European awards and networking and exchange should be funded amongst these cities.



Bremen, Germany, March 2014

SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby support the views and ideas expressed in the PLACES Declaration.

Name:

Full professional title:

Village / Town / City / Region:

Date:

Signature: *please sign inside box below*

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