

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

REVIEW OF ELEFSINA'S CULTURE 21: ACTIONS SELF-ASSESSMENT

MARCH 2019



culture 21

UCLG Committee



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and Local Governments

In 2004 the Agenda 21 for Culture was agreed by cities and local authorities from across the world to enshrine their commitment to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and creating conditions for peace. Culture 21: Actions, the document adopted by the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in March 2015, transforms this into practical commitments and actions providing a common template for cities to examine their strengths and weaknesses in the area of culture and sustainable development.

Based on Culture 21: Actions, the Pilot Cities programme engages participating cities to 'pilot' or test the Agenda 21 for Culture and Culture 21: Actions through a participatory process of learning and capacity building, to create a global network of effective and innovative cities and local governments. In Europe, the Pilot Cities programme is coordinated by the UCLG Committee on Culture and Culture Action Europe, in collaboration with the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

The report presented here is the executive summary of the full report elaborated of the first self-assessment workshop which took place in the context of the participation of Elefsina to the Pilot City programme.



SELF
ASSESSMENT



BACKGROUND

Elefsina is a culturally rich city. From its Ancient monuments to its industrial heritage, its proud workers to its community associations. It is the site of the **Eleusinian Mysteries**, the birthplace of **Aeschylus** and a major industrial centre, with the largest oil refinery in Greece. It is the home of the Aeschylia Festival, the longest running arts event in the Attica Region and now **Eleusis2021**, the soon to be, European Capital of Culture. Just 18 kilometres from Athens it sits along the dramatic coastline of the Saronic Gulf.

In the framework of Pilot Cities Europe, the City of Elefsina has joined other European cities to address some of the weaknesses it identifies and build on its perceived strengths. It is important to note that their engagement in this programme complements and extends the work being carried out by **Eleusis2021** for the European Capital of Culture.

This document provides an overview of the discussions that emerged from a self-assessment workshops held in the city on the 26th January 2019, which followed a planning meeting September 2018. The self-assessment workshop was convened by Angeliki Lampiri, Focal Point, Elefsina and was facilitated by Clymene Christoforou, Expert Pilot Cities, Marta Llobet, UCLG Committee on Culture, and Kornelia Kiss, Culture Action Europe.

This workshop brought together politicians, municipality workers, community association representatives, cultural professionals, academics, environmental actors, legal and business representatives, interested citizens and the Eleusis 2021 team

The workshop formed a key element of Activity 1 of the Pilot Cities programme in Elefsina. The stakeholders from across civil society, public and private sectors were divided into 4 working groups and were actively engaged throughout the workshop.

During the workshops, the participants were asked to score their city in relation to the nine 'Commitments' that make up Culture 21: Actions. The results have been drawn up in this document by Clymene Christoforou, the expert appointed by UCLG's Committee on Culture and Culture Action Europe, to work with Elefsina on this Pilot Cities Europe programme. It summarises and analyses the assessment made by participants and compares it with the results of a 2015 Global Panel.

It aims to highlight the strengths and weaknesses for Elefsina and identify a direction of travel for future programme development that builds on the city's strategic commitment to culture as part of a sustainable city.



METHODOLOGY AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

METHODOLOGY

The workshop participants assessed the current status of Elefsina in relation to the nine 'Commitments' (thematic areas) that constitute Culture 21: Actions. Discussions took place in four separate groups, each including individuals with expertise or responsibilities in areas related to one or more of the thematic areas under discussion.

The participants subsequently attributed a score (between 1 and 9) to each of the 100 actions contained within these areas. Scores are ranked within three broad stages of progression: '*Emerging*' (scores 1-3), '*Developing*' (scores 4-6) and '*Advanced*' (scores 7-9). The group collectively agreed each final score, and at the end of each thematic area they were asked to identify good practices and areas for improvement.

OVERVIEW

Figure 1 illustrates the results of the workshop against a global score, which was produced in 2015 by a panel of 34 experts as a snapshot of the way in which cities around the world are advancing an integrated vision of culture in sustainable development cities.

Across the workshop Elefsina scored lower than the global average in 7 of the 9 commitments and in '*Culture, Urban Planning and Public Space*' the scores were the same. However, in '*Culture and Environment*' it scored significantly higher than the global average. Across the board, very little was judged as being in the '*Advanced*' stage.



METHODOLOGY AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

Figure 1: Elefsina Self-Assessment and data from the Global Panel 2015



The self-assessment exercise undertaken in Elefsina is summarised in the next paragraphs.

- 1) **Cultural Rights.** The group that assessed this section scored lower than the global panel's mark with 22.5/100 compared to 35/100.
- 2) **Heritage, Diversity and Creativity.** The group that assessed this commitment again scored significantly lower than global panel's mark with 26/100 compared to 51/100.



METHODOLOGY AND GENERAL OVERVIEW

- 3) **Culture and Education.** The group that assessed this section scored it a little lower than the global panel's mark with 32.5/100 compared to 38/100.
- 4) **Culture and Environment.** The group that assessed this section scored well against the global panel's mark with 47/100 compared to 30/100. This was the only commitment to score significantly higher than the global average.
- 5) **Culture and Economy.** The group that assessed this commitment again scored significantly lower than the global panel's mark with just 19/100 compared to 38/100.
- 6) **Culture, equality and social inclusion.** The group that assessed this section scored lower than the global panel's mark with 23/100 compared to 35/100.
- 7) **Culture, Urban Planning and Public Space.** The group that assessed this section gave a similar score to the global average, with 43/100 compared to 44/100. This was the only section to score in line with the global average.
- 8) **Culture, Information and Knowledge.** The group that assessed this section again scored lower than the global panel's mark with 24/100, compared to 43/100.
- 9) **Governance of Culture.** All groups assessed this commitment, and across the board scored just under the global panel's mark with 31/100, compared to 37/100.



CONCLUSIONS

Elefsina's rich cultural and industrial heritage underpins this programme. What the city lacks in cultural infrastructure (built environment) it makes up in the wealth of public spaces and industrial heritage sites available for cultural development and production. It has strong examples of good practice from major festivals to community activity, from contemporary installations to community cinemas and has the unique opportunity to test and progress an extraordinary cultural programme through Eleusis 2021 and the European Capital of Culture.

What was evident, throughout the workshop was the commitment of the participants to their city and the openness they had to the role of culture in its sustainable development. Honest and critical, each commitment and every action were considered and reconsidered, with real thought put to the measures that would need to be adopted to address the issues and celebrate those things they do so well.

The role of Eleusis 2021 and its function within the city was considered alongside the wider role of culture through Agenda 21 for Culture and Culture 21: Actions and its participatory process of learning and capacity building.

There were many examples of good practice, and even more proposals for new activity. What came from each group and across all commitments was a greater need for a participatory governance of culture and 3 clear strands of activity emerged:

POLICY WORK

Whilst the city has a cultural policy, there was a perception that it needs to be better tailored to Elefsina. Furthermore, there was a lack of clarity about the role of culture in other policy areas and a marked lack of knowledge of either their existence or the detail of their visions or action plans. All groups highlighted a weakness in the existing cultural policy where each of the Culture 21: Actions commitments would benefit from a clearer shared vision inscribed in a long-term cultural policy that extended beyond political mandates.

PLATFORMS FOR EXCHANGE

A step towards the development of policies or strategies is to support and grow platforms for public, private and civil society engagement. Platforms to exchange good practice, share knowledge, raise awareness and advocate for the role of culture in the life of the city.



CONCLUSIONS

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMES

A third recurring theme was the need for capacity building programmes, for professionals and citizens alike. These might consider social inclusion and cultural rights, employability and professional development or communication and audience development.

NEXT STEPS

Following this workshop, a steering group made up of a representative range of workshop participants will be called for, and a work programme will be developed to build on the good work being done and address the issues identified in this first phase of the Pilot Cities programme.



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