



[CONNECTIONS]

CULTURAL STRATEGY
ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE
2017-2027

SUMMARY

The towns' strategy was adopted in June 2017 by the City Council. It is the result of a long process started in 2010 and it's the product of a thorough analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks that are impacting culture in Esch and the self-evaluation of Agenda 21 Culture.

e n i n e m e t	2010	The Culture Forums.	
	2011	Presentation of the results of the Culture Forums, definition of an initial set of measures.	
	Since 2012	Workshops for cultural decision makers: how to set measurable goals? How to increase collaboration? etc.	
	2014		Participation in the designing of the cultural component within the framework of the development program for seniors.
	2015	Expert advice, organisation of workshops with groups of decision makers and cultural actors (artists, associations managers, policy makers): What vision for Esch in 15 years?	
	April 2016	Adoption of the Agenda 21 for Culture by the Municipal Council.	
	October 2016	SWOT analysis of culture in Esch.	
	December 2016	Esch becomes pilot city for the European Programme Agenda 21 for Culture.	
	Since January 2017	Meetings and work with experts (cultural planning, mediation, cultural and public policy).	Participation in the development of the Culture section of the municipal Integration Plan.
	February 2017	Organisation of an auto-evaluation workshop.	
	April 2017	Workshop organised by PRO-SUD on the development of a long term cultural strategy for the South region.	
	June 30 2017	Presentation to the Municipal Council of a 'Road Map' document, laying the foundations for a cultural strategy for Esch (2017-2027).	



Graphic source : Cultural Commission of CGLU based on results given by participants to the first workshop organised by the city of Esch-sur-Alzette (February 2017) and the average obtained by a World panel of 34 experts (in 2005).

At the end of this process, the key elements were in place to ensure a sustainable and harmonious development for culture, but at the time the city lacked an overall vision for the long term shared by all and based on the cooperation of diverse stakeholders regardless of the changing political context.

The intention as displayed by *[Connexions]* is the following:

“ Transform Esch-sur-Alzette into a creative cultural centre (within the city, the region, the country and the Greater Region), recognised for the diversity of its culture and its capacity of innovation and creation.”



By 2027, the city wants to have a “cultural identity ” that is clearly recognised by all audiences along with potential audiences of the Greater Region and further afield. This cultural identity will be defined by creativity, diversity and innovation.

Creativity, diversity and innovation are intimately linked because we believe creativity is born from innovation and diversity (Hybridation). This fits the unique DNA of Esch which is a city recognisable by its multiple cultures, traditions, and industrial heritage. Thus, the intention here is to improve not only the image of the city, but also the cultural offer and citizens’ participation.

To this end, the 9 commitments of the Agenda 21 Culture (cultural rights; legacy, diversity and creativity; education; environment; economy; social inclusion; urban planning; information and knowledge; governance) have been reformulated for the strategy purpose and have been given the necessary goals along with implementation and evaluation tools.



In particular, to enable the right conditions for the implementation of this ten-year long cultural strategy, the following five principal axes (or goals) have been identified by degree of priority:

1. Bolster creation across the city
2. Support local economic development through culture
3. Encourage cultural diversity and access to culture for all
4. Encourage both cultural education and access to formal & informal education through culture
5. Enhance both the external and internal (among its citizens) image of Esch



Our goals are interlinked (e.g. diversity can bolster creation, which in turn impacts on image which then influences the economy. In this way, everything is connected). However, as numerous initiatives have already been undertaken in these fields throughout the past five years, it is mainly the "Connexions" between key players, cultural institutes and diverse departments of the local government e.g. economic development, environment, tourism, urban planning, youth, minorities) that need to be established in the first instance.

Four principal levers will be activated to achieve those goals by 2027 :

1. The setting up of governance mechanisms tasked with formulating a cultural road map along with priorities for cultural actions/initiatives

2. The establishment of a joined-up ecosystem of players linked to culture in different degrees and working together to achieve the key five goals

3. The launch of studies and mapping exercises aimed at both: taking evidence-based decisions and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions already in place

4. Training and forming culture professionals

However, before implementing the goals above, it is important to enable the right conditions for the implementation of the strategy. Thus an «operational goal» is added to the five aims (see the following table, p.7). Each of the goals is broken down into a set of objectives, sub-objectives and tools.

Our cultural strategy is collaborative and evolving. This is why its objectives will be assessed and reformulated by the local actors in the cultural field together with key decision-makers before end of 2017. In addition, we believe that aims and objectives should be reviewed periodically (for example in 2019 and 2022) and be refined on the basis of both: the results of the planned studies and mappings and exterior factors (such as the ECoC 2022 title if granted). Above all to embed culture locally, we believe the goals and objectives of the strategy should be incorporated into the plans of local institutions and organisations. Planned evaluation exercises to be conducted in both: 2022, and just after will also provide an opportunity for the city to assess, and potentially to re-adjust, the strategy in mid-term.

As indicated above, name given to the strategy shows that our goals to be intrinsically linked and "connected". For convenience and also to make the strategy a "useful" and "usable" document for the city and the stakeholders involved, we feature here each goal/ tool without specifically focusing on the links existing between them.

The commitment of the city to become European Capital of Culture is one of the highlights of the strategy, and especially because the title would be an opportunity for the city to strengthen its actions in terms of economic development and image to name but two. This is why we have ensured that the objectives defined in the Esch 2022 bid book strongly converge with those of [Connexions]. This commitment is not just limited to a «more intense» cultural year: 2022, but demands strong investments and preparing the ground for hosting a large number of visitors upstream; and downstream, the reinforcement of the legacy of events that were the most appreciated (during the year of culture) as well as raising awareness of the cultural, economic, social benefits of Esch 2022. It is also in this general perspective that the [Connexions] actions have been planned over time. In this way, (for example) an overall increase in budget for culture, the systematisation of the professional training of cultural workers and an evaluation plan are guaranteed for 10 years.

Goals and Objectives

Goals	Objectives
0 Establish joined up mechanisms to deliver on the objectives	1 In October 2017, assist team ECoC to get the Label 'European Capital of Culture' for Esch in 2022.
	2 In 2018, the responsibilities of the stakeholders tasked with the delivery of the strategy are defined and management tools are created (governance).
	3 In December 2017, municipal institutions and policy makers have been engaged in an ecosystem: they are briefed on the strategy, contribute, and then adopt it. From 2018, they include it in their own institution's goals and priorities, and participate in its implementation (ecosystem).
	4 In March 2018, the expectations and the training needs of the culture and media professionals are known. In 2027, culture professionals can train in Esch in the areas defined by them as priorities.
	5 At the beginning of 2018, a series of studies are launched to get to know better the situation of Esch in several areas. The studies are also used to define (quantitatively) the targets. From 2021, studies and evidence gathering are a regular feature in the management of culture. By the end of 2026, a genuine 'culture of evaluation' is born among professionals and policy makers.
1 Supporting artistic creation in the city	6 By 2019, the actors in the cultural field are sensitized to the issues and the implications of cultural creation.
	7 In 2027, the opportunities for both: production and consumption of culture are more frequent; an attitude conducive to creation is clearly more noticeable across Esch and contributes to the generation of new audiences.
	8 In 2022, the number of creative people in Luxembourg has increased and most work in Esch and the region. In 2027, Esch is perceived as the prime 'host city' for artists and 'creatives' in the broad sense.
2 Support economic development through culture	9 By the end of 2019, the Culture Department has helped to influence the local economic development agenda, and has firmly defined the place of culture in this field. By 2021, municipal services and municipal cultural institutions have accepted and integrated the cultural strategy.
	10 From 2018, ECoC label has direct effects in the short term on tourism and economic development (periodical increases in the number of tourists, hotel nights, consumption in restaurants, trade) across the city.
	11 After 2022 and until 2027, the positive effects on tourism, economic development and social cohesion achieved through the implementation of the strategy, together with ECoC 2022, are maintained. In addition, local cultural products (for example, in digital music) are exported overseas and have international visibility. These have tangible positive effects on the sustainable economic development of the city and its inhabitants.

Goals

Objectives

3 Promote the recognition of cultural diversity and access to culture for all	12 In 2019, cultural diversity is seen by cultural institutions, artists and decision makers as an enrichment and not as a problem.
	13 From 2019, the local cultural offer is more diverse and more in line with the needs and expectations of the local audience.
	14 By 2020, the public for cultural institutions and associations is increased and more diverse (in socio-demographic terms, essentially: nationality, origin, language, CSP, gender, level of education) than in 2017. This diversity is perceived by local audiences as positive.
4 Facilitate the possibility for all, to learn through culture and cultures (formal and life long learning)	15 From 2021, pupils and students (primary, secondary, University) are guaranteed to receive cultural education, which seeks to expose pupils and students to diverse forms of artistic expression while allowing the development of curiosity and critical thinking. Key stakeholders in the education field (formal education) are given the tools to facilitate access to culture and are encouraged to use them. Municipal services are on board, have integrated and use such tools.
	16 By 2027, the number of informal education workshops and courses have considerably increased from 2017, and are capable of responding to the needs and expectations of the audiences of Esch. The number of people participating in workshops of non-formal education is higher than in 2017.
	17 By the end of 2019, the Culture Department supports the Public Relations Department in the development of a clear and appropriate communication strategy, integrating and highlighting the cultural potential of Esch.
5 Enhance both the internal and external image of Esch. Improve internal perceptions	18 By the end of 2022, the visibility of Esch is stronger and perceptions of the city among citizens, professionals and the press are positive (creativity, innovation + image agreed with stakeholders).
	19 By 2027, brand Esch is well established externally whilst, internally, perceptions have been positively influenced by the legacy projects of ECoC 2022 among other.

A more detailed document (in French) may be downloaded from esch.lu.