



# NEW AGENDA 21 FOR CULTURE: LILLE'S KEY MESSAGE

---



By **Catherine Cullen**

*Presidency of the Committee on Culture of UCLG,  
Deputy Mayor on Culture of Lille.*

23 February 2014

*« The challenge of our commitment has been placing culture at the core, to make it a factor of sustainable transformation of an area. Our support for Agenda 21 for culture continues contributing to it. »*



For Lille City Council, which has adopted an Agenda 21 for culture since 2005, the challenge was both to deepen the reflection on the impact of culture in the development of the city and its residents and to expand the field of traditional culture to open up to other policies and actions in the city. Thanks to the impetus of Lille 2004 European Capital of Culture, we have been able to expand the notion of culture to a more inclusive and participatory vision. By adopting an Agenda 21 for culture, Lille City Council has committed to envisaging culture as a challenge for democracy, joint projects and citizenship education.

For us, culture is today a central element of urban planning, a key dimension of our development policy, and this is why it is important that culture is recognised, in its specific implementation both at local and international level, as the 4th dimension of sustainable development, along with social, economic and environmental concerns.

By committing to an Agenda 21 for culture, Lille City Council has enlarged the work undertaken before and during the holding of Lille 2004 to strengthen the developments and cultural facilities in this region, renew heritage, establish new connections between neighbourhoods, transform the public space and create new cultural structures such as the "Maisons Folie" and the "Fabriques culturelles" at the level of a cross-border metropolis. The programme was ambitious in order to make the year 2004 a real laboratory of what can perhaps be a new art of living in the early 21st century. The aim was to turn this opportunity into a challenge: the challenge of our commitment has been placing culture at the core, to make it a factor of sustainable transformation of an area. Our support for Agenda 21 for culture continues contributing to it.

The new Agenda 21 for culture must stress the place of cultural rights and the rights to cultural expression, social and socially-committed economy, the relation between culture and public space and eco-organisation in all sectors of culture. The role of culture in sustainable development must be clearly expressed as a 4th dimension: social equality, environmental responsibility and cultural vitality.

After 10 years of experiences throughout the world, the Agenda 21 for culture must resume the lessons of these practices by putting forward an implementation guide: how to engage and specifically develop an Agenda 21 for culture. There are already many examples of "good practices" which are often unknown to the cities who wish to adopt it. Moreover, Agenda 21 for culture must better develop its own assessment methods regarding the implementation and monitoring of the document and its impact on local policies.

It is also necessary to increase the possibilities of exchanges of these good practices – the success, difficulties and also failures – in the implementation of an Agenda 21 and facilitate the communication of the world network of local governments in terms of culture.

More attention must be drawn to governance, ensuring that the cities adopting an Agenda 21 for culture are aware that this involves a change of mentality and a greater effort in cross-over contacts with the other delegations within the local governments, as well as work on awareness and sharing of responsibilities with the cultural actors and residents.

Finally, it will be necessary to clearly explain why the work undertaken in culture at a local level has an important impact on the major international debates, such as sustainable urban development, the millennium goals and the post-2015 agenda, or Habitat III, and better assert among the groups the challenges for them of the engagement of the UCLG Committee on culture in all the debates regarding culture at a world level.