



REPORT

CULTURE 21 PLUS ELEFSINA

March 2024

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INTRODUCTION: **THE UCLG CULTURE COMMITTEE, CULTURE ACTION EUROPE AND CULTURE 21 PLUS**

The City of Elefsina (Greece) has been one of the first cities in the world to organise a Culture 21 Plus workshop, on 9 March 2024. The aim of the workshop, designed by the Culture Committee of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Culture Action Europe (CAE), was to self-assess for a second time the local cultural policies and to test the new toolkit “Culture 21 Plus” (working title), which will replace Culture 21: Actions from 2025 onwards.

The **UCLG Culture Committee** is a unique global platform of more than 830 cities, organisations and networks to cooperate and promote the role of culture in sustainable cities. It aims at “promoting culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development through the international dissemination and local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture, as well as fostering and making more explicit the relationship between local cultural policies and sustainable development”.

Culture Action Europe is the major European network of cultural networks, organisations, artists, activists, academics and policymakers. CAE is the first port of call for informed opinion and debate about arts and cultural policy in the EU and brings together all practices in culture, from the performing arts to literature, the visual arts, design and cross-arts initiatives, to community centres and activist groups. Culture Action Europe has been working in close collaboration with the Committee on Culture of UCLG since 2014, bringing its experience and its expertise as main partner of the Pilot City programme in Europe.

The UCLG Culture Committee has the following founding documents: **Agenda 21 for Culture**, adopted in 2004 by cities and local governments from the five continents committed to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and the creation of conditions for peace; the political declaration “**Culture: the Fourth Pillar of Sustainable Development**”, adopted in Mexico City in 2010; and the guide **Culture 21: Actions**, adopted in Bilbao in March 2015 during the first UCLG Culture Summit.

Culture 21 Plus enables the **UCLG Pact for the Future of Humanity**: for the People, for the Planet and for Governments, adopted at the UCLG World Congress in Daejeon in October 2022, to be implemented through concrete actions. Culture 21 Plus is a new toolkit that builds on the latest developments in the field of cultural policies and on the experience developed by the cities of the network that have worked since 2015 with Culture 21: Actions,

particularly the cities that take part on the **Pilot Cities**, **Leading Cities** and **Culture 21 LAB** programmes. The initial draft of Culture 21 Plus, elaborated in 2023, outlines 6 blocks, with 30 key areas and 200 actions, that try to comprehensively analyse the interlinkages between culture, citizenship and sustainable development. The toolkit allows two possible uses: (1) to carry out a self-assessment of the state of play of the cultural policies of a territory; (2) to design local cultural strategies based on cultural rights and sustainability. The first draft of Culture 21 Plus is an initial proposal and will undergo a process of experimentation, debate and shared cocreation with the cities of the network; therefore, this draft is intended to evolve and be constantly improved until its adoption in 2025.

CONTEXT: **ELEFSINA, PILOT CITY OF THE UCLG CULTURE COMMITTEE**

In the framework of Pilot Cities Europe, in 2018 the City of Elefsina joined other European cities to address some of the weaknesses it identified and build on its perceived strengths in the field of culture and sustainable development. As a parallel programme to the European Capital of Culture, Pilot Cities invited Elefsinian citizens to consider and assess the role of culture (past, present and future) in the sustainable development of their city. The Pilot Cities programme in Elefsina was facilitated by expert, Clymene Christoforou.

The process included a self-assessment workshop in January 2019, meetings of the Cultural Mediators group, created in June 2019 and composed by citizens; the development of the work plan with concrete pilot measures and its implementation of projects and programmes with the support of Eleusis 2023; international peer learning exchanges with other Pilot and Leading cities with similar interests and concerns, and a final self-assessment workshop in March 2024.

WORKSHOP PREPARATION

PREPARATORY MEETINGS ‘CITY, CULTURE, CONTINUITY’

In advance of the final workshop, Michael Marmarinos, General Artistic Director, Aggeliki Lampiri, Director of Cultural Training and local focal point for Elefsina Pilot Cities and Georgia Voudouri, Director of Cultural Development for Eleusis 2023, facilitated 3 preparatory meetings with 23-25 participants at each:

- **Meeting one** (9th February 2024) Where we are now: A history of Pilot Cities was given and the First self-assessment report presented. Participants expressed a desire to review the legacy of Eleusis 2023 programme and the future of the newly developed cultural venues.
- **Meeting two** (16th February 2024): What happens Next: The Eleusis 2023 legacy programme was presented alongside international legacy programmes of other European Capitals of Culture.
- **Meeting three** (26th February 2024) Pilot Cities, the Final Workshop: In this meeting Culture 21 Actions, the six blocks and main thematic were outlined, as were projects delivered last year that address/form part of these blocks.

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

The Eleusis 2023 team launched an open call for participants in advance. The aim was to create a workshop with representative voices from across the city taking into account gender, identity, disability, race and ethnicity and including public, private and civil society actors, intergenerational and intercultural representatives, and participants from across the political spectrum. Participants who applied to attend and were asked what areas of culture they were interested in. 66 participants were selected. Some of those had participated in the first self-assessment workshop in 2019, and some were part of the Cultural Mediators Group.

THE WORKSHOP

On 9 March 2024, as an activity that marked the end of the Elefsina Pilot City programme, a final self-assessment workshop based on the draft of “Culture 21 Plus”, the new draft international policy framework for cultural rights was held in Elefsina.

The aim of the workshop, designed by the UCLG Culture Committee with the collaboration of Culture Action Europe, was to self-assess, for a second time, Elefsina’s cultural practice and policy development, following its participation in the Pilot Cities programme, and with a view to consolidate the legacy of the ECoC Eleusis 2023 by testing the new toolkit Culture 21 Plus.

The one-day workshop brought together politicians, municipality workers, community association representatives, cultural professionals, academics, environmental actors, legal and business representatives and interested citizens.¹ The workshop was facilitated by expert Clymene Christoforou, and the table discussions were facilitated by the Eleusis 2023 team. After introductory words and welcome by Vice Mayor Charalampos Tsafaras, Angeliki Lampiri representing the Eleusis 2023 team and focal point for Pilot Cities in Elefsina, Marta Llobet as a member of the Secretariat of the UCLG Committee on Culture, and Kornelia Kiss as a member of Culture Action Europe. Clymene Christoforou then presented the agenda of the workshop and the exercises.

Using the Culture 21 plus tool, with its six Blocks addressing Rights, Communities, Prosperity, Territories, Nature and Governance participants were asked to prioritise 5 key areas for future development. The 66 citizens of Elefsina identified the following 5 key areas for the future development for the city:



Photo Credit: Marta Llobet



Photo Credit: Eleusis 2023

¹ See Annex for a detailed list of participants.

1. **Communities - Culture, inclusion and social cohesion, poverty and inequalities** - Implementing cultural programmes and actions to promote social cohesion and the inclusion of all people, in particular those facing, or at risk of exclusion
2. **Governance - Cultural strategies and policies** - Adopting explicit local cultural policies and strategies, based on cultural rights, and with a cross-cutting approach that places culture as a driver of sustainable development
3. **Rights - Cultural public services, infrastructures and spaces** - Creating cultural public services, infrastructures and spaces, reaching all populations and places
4. **Communities - Culture and education** - Promoting cultural education for all, regardless of age, whether in the formal education system, in cultural actions and activities, or through informal education
5. **Governance - Culture and Citizen participation** - Encouraging active citizen participation in cultural management and strengthening the capacities of civil society to generate an autonomous and independent cultural life.

Exercise 1.

Identify challenges

This first and quick exercise asked participants to respond to challenges for the role of culture within the 4 pillars of sustainability. (Sustainability is often referred to as reliant on social, economic and environmental factors. Together, these have been known as the “three pillars of sustainability. As presented during the introduction to the workshop, the mission of UCLG’s Secretariat for Culture has been to promote culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development through the international dissemination and the local implementation of Agenda 21 for culture.)

The participants split into 4 groups. In broad terms the following challenges for culture were identified across the 4 pillars:

SOCIAL PILLAR

- Interaction between Stakeholders.
 - o The group identified a lack of interaction and cross fertilisation between community stakeholders in the city.
- Confidence.
 - o There were concerns that those interested in culture did not have their voices heard, and that where cultural activity within communities was strong, there was an introversion in terms of ambition, innovation and wider geographic engagement.
- Diversity.
 - o Here there was a concern for a lack of diversity and agency in regard to both cultural actors and audiences for the city’s cultural events.

ECONOMIC PILLAR

- Economic impact of culture.
 - o The view of many - especially the older participants - was that culture does not contribute to the economy. They did not understand the economic component of performances or that a large proportion of our fellow citizens earn an income through artistic production. On the whole the younger participants expressed the opposite view that culture is directly linked to the economy, that culture is productive while at the same time it is a need, a desire and a quality.

- Education.
 - o In the context of developing the city's culture on the basis of economy and education, it was said that there was a lack of basic vocational training to provide skills and competences for future generations, with more needed to develop educational tourism and skills.
- Professionalisation of culture.
 - o It was thought that Culture both needs to be recognised as a profession and that Cultural development and delivery need future professional production methodologies and management.

ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR

- Urban Planning.
 - o A revision of the general local urban plan is needed with a focus on the use of land (it was proposed that "in a few years we will not have any free land").
- The City's relationship with the Sea.
 - o Strengthening the city's relationship with the coastal front - removal of uses such as the port + give to the citizens areas that are "closed" to them e.g. industries.
- Environmental Strategy action plan.
 - o There is a need for a citywide (Municipal) environmental strategy and action plan for measures to reduce pollution from industry including land, air and sea.

CULTURE PILLAR

- The size of the City.
 - o There was a proposal to engage the surrounding municipalities and encourage collaborations with other Greek cities and internationally.
- Public/Private Cooperation.
 - o The group identified that there are underused resources, noting that generally buildings are privately owned and not available for development or reuse and that we need to engage individuals from the private sector to face these challenges.
- Political leadership and grassroots engagement.
 - o The group expressed a lack of political representation for culture and the difficulties of getting voices from small collectives to political power, higher authorities and securing financial resources.

- Education.
 - o It was observed that there is no formal higher education, no arts education, and inadequate opportunities for children to participate in culture. That the education system in general does not meet the needs.
- Information and communication.
 - o Here the group questioned if culture is embedded in the consciousness of residents. It was felt there was a lack of visibility and promotion of activities and plans for the cultural development of buildings and infrastructure. The group expressed the need for a common vision for culture, and questioned whether a city can have a single Identity?

Exercise 2.

Self-assessment of the current situation

The workshop allowed participants to assess the current status of Elefsina in relation to the blocks and thematic areas that constitute Culture 21 Plus. Discussions took place in 7 separate groups, each including individuals with expertise or responsibilities in areas related to one or more of the thematic areas under discussion. The second exercise was a self-assessment in groups relating to each block.

Each block had one table with between 8-12 people and the Governance Block had 2 tables. The participants were asked:

- To self-assess the current situation: What programmes and gaps exist in each area?
- What is the level of presence of this area in the city? To give each area a score from 1 to 9
- To Identify what gaps and difficulties they detect in each area?

The participants attributed a score (between 1 and 9) to each of the 30 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 on each final score, and at the end of each thematic area they were asked to identify good practices and areas for improvement.

A final Radar was created charting the results of the 2019 workshop against the 2024 results.

The participants also prioritised 3 areas out of the 30 that are part of Culture 21 Plus, as the main opportunities for further improvement in local cultural policies.

BLOCK 1: RIGHTS

Ensuring cultural democracy by promoting the capabilities of all inhabitants to discover, create, share, enjoy and protect cultural resources. Here the group awarded the city an overall score of 4.6/9

What we are doing already:

- There was a perceived lack of policy around **cultural rights**, with accessibility mentioned specifically and a lack of mapping of vulnerable groups. Although

it was noted that in the last 10-15 years most cultural spaces are gradually becoming more accessible, the approaches can be fragmented for some events and organisations.

- In contrast to neighbouring municipalities there was a consensus that there is a large **Cultural Ecosystem** in Eleusis which includes private, professional and voluntary actors and organisations.
- There was a feeling that cultural decision-making is not equally represented among all groups, that whilst there are signs of a strengthening of **cultural democracy and expression** there remains an entrenched polarisation between some of the city's cultural groups, hindering the fostering of a culture of proximity.
- There was a common acceptance from all participants that **there are now many cultural venues in the city**, perhaps disproportionate to the size of the city. Arkopolis - referenced as a good practice of collective infrastructure in public space. As were the development of open, public spaces.
- **Promotion of knowledge** through traditional and digital channels, museums, special reference in community radio. Existence of educational and folklore associations-citizen initiatives.

Challenges:

- There was a perception of **exclusion of various groups** in local cultural policies (for example no programmes were shared or delivered in minority languages and there was a feeling of intergenerational exclusion in the universally accessible programmes in the city). Some expressed accessibility issues for hearing and visually impaired audiences and actors.
- Others expressed there was a fear of creating programmes that are "bold" in relation to social inclusion. There was a similar sentiment towards the municipality's perceived **low emphasis on culture** with its lack of long-term cultural strategy and focus on cultural rights.
- It was suggested that organisations are **not working collaboratively**, between each other and with the municipality, with an over reliance on interpersonal rather than organisational relationships - it was felt that some groups were operating as 'closed systems' with little space for engaging the wider community.
- The need for a **common communication platform was identified**, alongside the observation that existing platforms needed to be modernised with intersectional representation (including local press, municipality platforms, library).

There was a concern for the preservation and sustainability of **cultural infrastructure and spaces** - with no overall centralised/organised management system across the city.

BLOCK 2: COMMUNITIES

Mobilising culture in order to reinforce social cohesion and inclusion, to address local challenges and to build sustainable and strong communities. Here the group awarded an overall score of 3.6/9.

What we are doing already:

- The group **identified the following communities as at risk of exclusion:** Roma community, LGBTQ+, women in domestic work, elderly, disabled, abused women, refugee and migrant communities (e.g. Pakistan, Albanian), communities with low incomes. With the exception of the Roma community, there was mention of activities which do **include some groups**. Participants highlighted the Free University open to all ages and The Centre for Abused Women (highlighting their need for further support).
- Discussions of cultural programmes and actions to enhance people's **physical and mental wellbeing** immediately focused on available fitness infrastructure, rather than culture, while mental health struggled to be coherently defined and was seen to have been exacerbated by poverty. The fear of socialisation post-covid was identified, but it was suggested the ECoC programme had softened this.
- The group identified several avenues for **formal and informal cultural education** including training programmes, Mystery 137, as well as exchange from international groups staying in the city, in regard to the 8 months stay of Time Circus, a young voice in the group said: "We learned how to live as an artistic collective, how to function, we learned how to love".
- References were made to exhibitions by local artists tackling gender and **sexual identity**, and to exhibitions and folklore associations mainly run by women. In general, there was strong participation of Eleusinian women in all the artistic activities. Finally, it was recorded that the Municipality has advice centres dealing with violence against women.
- Fostering **peace, security and coexistence** in the community the Voices of Elefsina web radio was noted, while the Arkopolis space was highlighted as a meeting ground for different ethnicities and associations.

Challenges:

- It was suggested that there was a lack of **accessible infrastructure** for disabled people, with an absence of social centres/spaces that can accommodate joint citizens' activities and an absence of trained social workers. It was also noted that individuals face **financial barriers to access culture. Difficulties** were mentioned in the form of **Taboos**, such as domestic violence and sentiment toward the Roma community - One participant said "Elefsina still acts with the culture of a village".

- Taboos around **mental health** were raised as a barrier to access cultural aids, such as drama therapy and speech therapy.
- Both nationally and locally the group highlighted a lack of focus on culture in **education** as well as a perception of a lack of cultural experts within municipal structures. They identified a desire for longer lasting projects, to allow residents to attend and make a stronger impact. Criticism was levelled at the **ECoC's website** as being hard to use and linguistically inaccessible in the description of activities.
- With **gender and culture**, there was a feeling that work done by non-governmental organisations such as Culterra needed more support. Fear of non-traditional expression was suggested as a barrier to events like Pride and the city lacks the feminist association that existed in the past. All activities relevant here were only conducted youth initiatives.
- Political unrest is seen to be a barrier to **peace**, the same public spaces are used for mixing as sites for protests and riots by both Nationalists and Anarchists. Refugee and minority migrant groups were identified as lacking their own space from which to create and form associations.

BLOCK 3: PROSPERITY

Making culture a driving force for a sustainable and inclusive local economic development. Here the group awarded an overall score of 4.4/9.

What we are doing already:

- Several cultural institutions were highlighted as promoting **economic development**. The group drew attention to new cultural institutions in development as well as funding by the municipality for festivals and sports camps.
- The number of people **working in culture** is much higher than in 2019. Existing walking routes were highlighted as potential tourist products.
- Under the ECoC framework, **fair and satisfactory fees** were secured and the group were happy with how copyright has been recorded and secured in ECoC contracts; it would be seen as positive if this could be expanded to share methods and expertise across agencies throughout the city.
- With regard to **sustainable tourism**, the group felt there has been a rapid increase in visitors (especially in 2023), due to cultural activities that were held by both the Municipality and other city's institutions, as well as the overall strengthening of the city's brand and networking at an international level. New cultural infrastructures have been constructed and other urban regeneration projects have been activated such as the main square development and the seafront regeneration plan, with info points and it was felt that increased opportunities have been given to the private sector.

- In terms of **digital culture**, the group drew attention to the digital repository of ECoC projects in collaboration with the Research Centre Athina under the RRF funding, as well as the My Eleusis augmented reality project, and the digitisation of local archives.

Challenges:

- The group agreed that the existing **cultural strategy is limited** in terms of scope and implementation with little input from local cultural bodies. Lack of cooperation between folklore associations was also identified by the group as limiting the potential of the industry.
- The group mentioned a lack of **cultural experts** within the municipality as well as difficulties with funding mechanisms in the region. They also highlighted a lack of formal mapping of the creative sector from the municipality, which could prevent informed policies around funding/sponsorship.
- There is concern that the **fair pay** of artists in the ECoC programme is an isolated case that needs to be considered in the long run although some **limited and isolated training programmes** from ECoC have been implemented. There was a feeling that volunteering is a symptom of a lack of funding, and festivals such as Aeschylia felt they needed more money. There was negative sentiment toward the contracts system, suggestions that it can leave artists facing difficulties being legally employed, and other legal/financial safeguarding issues for creative professions.
- The group felt there was a lack of an overall **tourism strategy** and cooperation between public and private organisations/resources. It was proposed by some that funding is given to folklore associations - only for political reasons- without any work evaluation that might encourage them to plan their activities in a more extroverted and knowledgeable way.
- The group highlighted a desire for one common **communication platform** for the promotion of the city's activities with integrated presentation of the local touristic and cultural life as well as a platform for sales and distribution of cultural products.

BLOCK 4: TERRITORIES

Making culture a key dimension of land planning and territorial development in order to improve the living environment, the sense of belonging and the quality of life of the population. Here the group awarded an overall score of 5.4/9.

What we are doing already:

- On the topic of **culture in urban planning**, attention was drawn to the designation of sites as historical, as well as the repurposing of areas such as the Old Oil Mill Factory for cultural activities. Similarly, the reclamation of green space and seafront was viewed positively.

- The group felt that despite the lack of closed spaces, **open public spaces** (inactive railway lines, pedestrian streets, neighbourhoods) were used in an imaginative way as sites for art/culture. As a result of the ECoC, the municipality being able to buy new public spaces was seen as a positive.
- It was felt that the city has an intense social mosaic and diverse **cultural heritage**, with many groups promoting its protection, highlighted in some artistic projects. There was also a feeling that old is being mixed with new, and that the city is moving away from stereotypes, while maintaining its connection to its roots.
- It was discussed that in recent years there has been a lot of local actions around **public art and wider creation in public space**. Projects such as light installations, other permanent visual interventions in public space and reference to the ECoC Opening Ceremony and the events that took place in Kanellopoulou Street were highlighted as examples of good practice.
- In terms of **culture, architecture, and urban design**, people pointed to the efforts to create new landmarks and cultural venues while maintaining and redeveloping old ones and the new sustainable lighting system and participatory planning as positives.

Challenges:

- On **culture in urban planning**, there was a perception that the continuing legacy of industrial land use, the lack of green space, imbalanced territorial planning and absence of culture in the planning of the wider Attica Regulatory Plan 2011-2021 all presented challenges.
- Accessing the **public space** was seen to be at times problematic with difficulties acquiring permits for artistic and cultural projects due to ownership rights. The group also felt some scepticism about the different public constructions, with particular reference to the completion of Heroes Square.
- There was a feeling that the **dissemination of information** about events related to cultural heritage held by local organisations was scattered and not shared in a common platform, and that more innovation is needed in the way cultural heritage is promoted. Moreover, it was proposed that cultural heritage that is promoted by local folklore associations can be used by local political actors.
- It was said that **projects in public space** are not well represented, there are feelings that they do not appeal to everyone locally (lacking a sense of co-creation) with issues of vandalism and accessibility. The group expressed a feeling that public expression needs to be cultivated.
- For **culture, architecture, and urban design**, the group identified studies which had not been acted on for land planning including Sonia Schubert, (a study on the regeneration of public squares), and failure to integrate folk architecture monuments into modern planning for the Synikismoi neighbourhood for example. Sentiment was expressed around a lack of planning and political will to address the range of abandoned and unoccupied buildings and houses.

BLOCK 5: NATURE

Fostering harmony between nature and culture and mobilising culture as an engine for ecological transition and climate resilience development, and against climate change
Here the group awarded an overall score of 4.25/9.

What we are doing already:

- In terms of **nature, heritage, and landscapes**, in the last 2-3 years, it was felt that the identification of local natural spaces with particular ecological significance has intensified, with the support of groups with a strong activist character (e.g. ecoeleusis).
- The group suggested that **Agriculture** has seen an increase in the number and networking of farms and farmers, backed up by scientific groups promoting agriculture and green energy transition. They felt **gastronomy** was well preserved and promoted by local associations while **connection with our earth** was backed up by The Garden of Sustainability and other projects held by the Centre of Local Environmental Education Network of Western Attica.
- With regard to **ecological and social transition**, the group suggested there has been a dynamic relationship between industrial history and agricultural tradition, viewed through the lens of culture (ECoC, Eleusis 2023).
- There was a suggestion that **climate change** has mobilised the culture and heritage sector, particularly educational programmes including activities of the Environmental Education Center of Eleusis and the 'Schools for Climate' network.

Challenges:

- An identified barrier to **nature and culture** was ecological degradation, seen to be exacerbated by weak political vision and low citizens' awareness, poorly defined land-uses in urban plans, insufficient development of education on environmental awareness, decline in the initiatives of local businesses about Corporate Social Responsibility.
- For **agriculture and food**, the group identified insufficient green spaces and a lack of a unified strategy for the use of agricultural land, absence of practical assistance and support for farmers and inadequate technical expertise in agricultural development. They also highlighted a distrust regarding the quality of local products from the area's industrial heritage.
- While climate change has reinvigorated **ecological action** and awareness, it is disorganised and not centralised in public discourse.
- The table unanimously agreed that the issue of **climate change** has not been understood to its full extent by citizens, they saw the need for a clearer definition. They also feel that the positive actions are uncoordinated, and the continuing quarrying, use of private vehicles, and lack of reforestation are big issues.

BLOCK 6: GOVERNANCE

Building a participative, transversal and cooperative local governance of culture. Here there were two tables, this summary brings together both groups and identifies divergences. Here the group awarded an overall score of 5.7/9.

What we are doing already:

- On the topic of **cultural strategies and policies**, the group felt that although there are good long running events (Aeschylia, ECoC) with the promotion of culture as a 4th pillar of sustainable development, strategies that are in place (e.g. within Operational Plan 2016-25), are not followed in practice by all institutions and organisations, and that some events should be made permanent (Folklore Festival). The capacity of **Volunteers** was highlighted as a resource to make greater use of.
- In **cultural public management**, the Aeschylia Festival has managed to establish itself as a cultural activity in the consciousness of the residents due to its continuity and long-standing activity, offering longer term opportunities for associated cultural programming.
- With regard to **citizen participation**, there were diverging opinions between tables, at one it was accepted there was an (unsatisfactorily small) increase in the usual citizens' participation, due to the ECoC events. At the other it was considered that there was no substantial increase. Good practices mentioned were the folklore associations, the Aeschylia Festival volunteers, the Greek Guides and Scouts, participation in sports activities, and the creation of new cultural groups such as Culterra, Radio group "Voices of Elefsina", Free University group, Stalker group.
- No strong positives were given for **mechanisms for governance and cooperation**, other than the Aeschylia Festival and its implementation over the last 50 years, giving the possibility of long-term planning and that this continuity is very important for other cultural activities.
- On **international cooperation**, the group was positive: the ECoC was suggested to have been very helpful, alongside the Erasmus+ programme and municipal projects, such as twin-cities. Similar exchange programmes through culterra, mediator groups such as Pilot Cities, and participation of PAKPPA members in the Opening Ceremony of the Matera 2019 were seen as positives. Sports events travelling to other cities were also highlighted.
- ECoC has been a boon for wider **communication**: Many foreign journalists from major international media have covered the ECoC events with several visiting to cover events in situ. Through the communication sponsors, information was multiplied, and were it paid for, it would have cost 3 million euros. The impact was high in the international press along with the brand awareness of 2023 Eleusis. Attention was also drawn to Investments in communication that have been made by KEDE in the context of the Aeschylia Festival.

Challenges:

- The need for cooperation between **cultural and sports organisations** and the need to map local artists for active engagement was highlighted. In pushing for greater cultural strategy development, the lack of a centralised body to drive it, was seen to be problematic. (The question was asked: How can the city, after the ECoC, maintain its extroversion and be attractive to more diverse artists, beyond the list of artists usually expected at the Aeschylia festival?)
- It was posited that there is no long-term master plan for **cultural public management** and a feeling that the Municipality was preoccupied or overburdened and would benefit from more funding and the establishment of a vice mayor for culture. On audience and engagement, the need for a single communication platform was expressed, adding that there are no strategies for expanding audiences.
- The need to broaden the **active audience in local cultural actions** was noted, linked to a lack of communication in the media, a lack of political disinterest in culture and a reduction in funding for cultural organisations and associations. The **cultural engagement** of schools was seen as being limited by the individual capacity of the staff.
- Challenges were identified relating to **governance and cooperation** with participants stressing the importance of cooperation between cultural organisations, of collective consultation and of information exchange. It was suggested that during the ECoC title year there was not enough time for collective decisions to be made to connect and embed the ECoC programme within the Aeschylia festival. The group proposed that a new cultural strategy serves as the city's local bible.
- On **international cooperation**, fears were expressed that after the ECoC, maintaining and creating new collaborations would be challenging and that there was a greater need to strategically plan for engagement in international programmes and grants and to communicate the presence of Elefsina internationally.
- Concerns were expressed in relation to a **communication strategy** with a proposal for a specific communication department within the municipality (to be linked to the recently created Tourism and International Relations Department). The group expressed frustration at using the Eleusis 2023 website because of the quantity of cultural activities and language used. Two-way communication between the City and the ECoC during the title year was seen as a gap: with confusion of responsibilities between the two entities.

Radar 2

The final radar resulting from the second self-assessment workshop, and following the ECoC year, showed an overall growth in confidence across the 9 commitments with the exception of Environment where a conclusion could be drawn that recent ecological disasters of fires and flooding in Greece and specifically the local area has raised consciousness about the scale of the job ahead to prevent global warming and confront the climate crisis.



The results of this workshop showed that scores were higher in all areas, except for Culture and environment. This could be due to the increased awareness of citizens and stakeholders of the challenges of the climate change emergency, and specifically the challenges created by Elefsina as an industrialised city.

The most significant upgrade was for Heritage, diversity and creativity. Area 18 of Culture 21 PLUS – “Cultural heritage” – received a score of 8/10 points, probably, among other things, because of the recent implementation of the European Capital of Culture programme.

Culture, equality and social inclusion, as well as Cultural rights, remain low as in 2019, despite the slight increase of the latter. This shows room for improvement in concrete areas such as 'Cultural public services, infrastructures and spaces', 'Culture, health and well-being' and 'Culture, peace, security and coexistence', which were attributed significantly low scores.

Governance of culture also experienced an upgrade, produced to a large extent by the positive appreciation of area 'International cooperation', which counterbalanced the low score for 'Mechanisms for governance and cooperation' and 'System of cultural public management'.

Prioritisation of areas

At the end of Exercise 2, all participants were asked to consider all 30 areas under the 6 blocks and select the most important by placing a coloured dot on the wall. The majority of the participants contributed to this exercise.

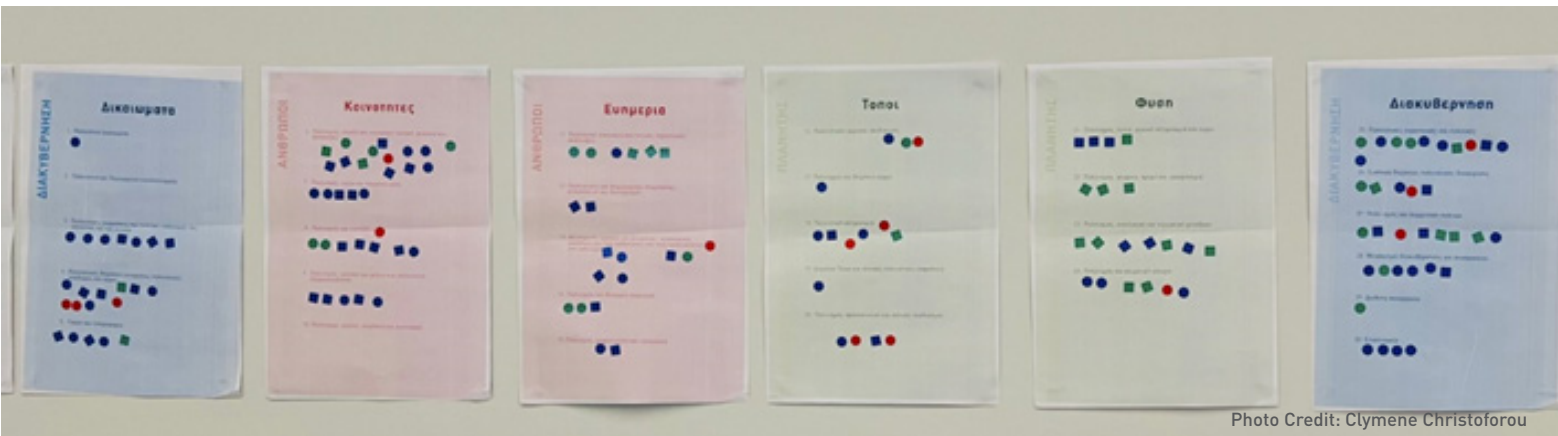


Photo Credit: Clymene Christoforou

From here a clear pattern emerged for the prioritisation of areas desired by the workshop participants:

ELEFSINA

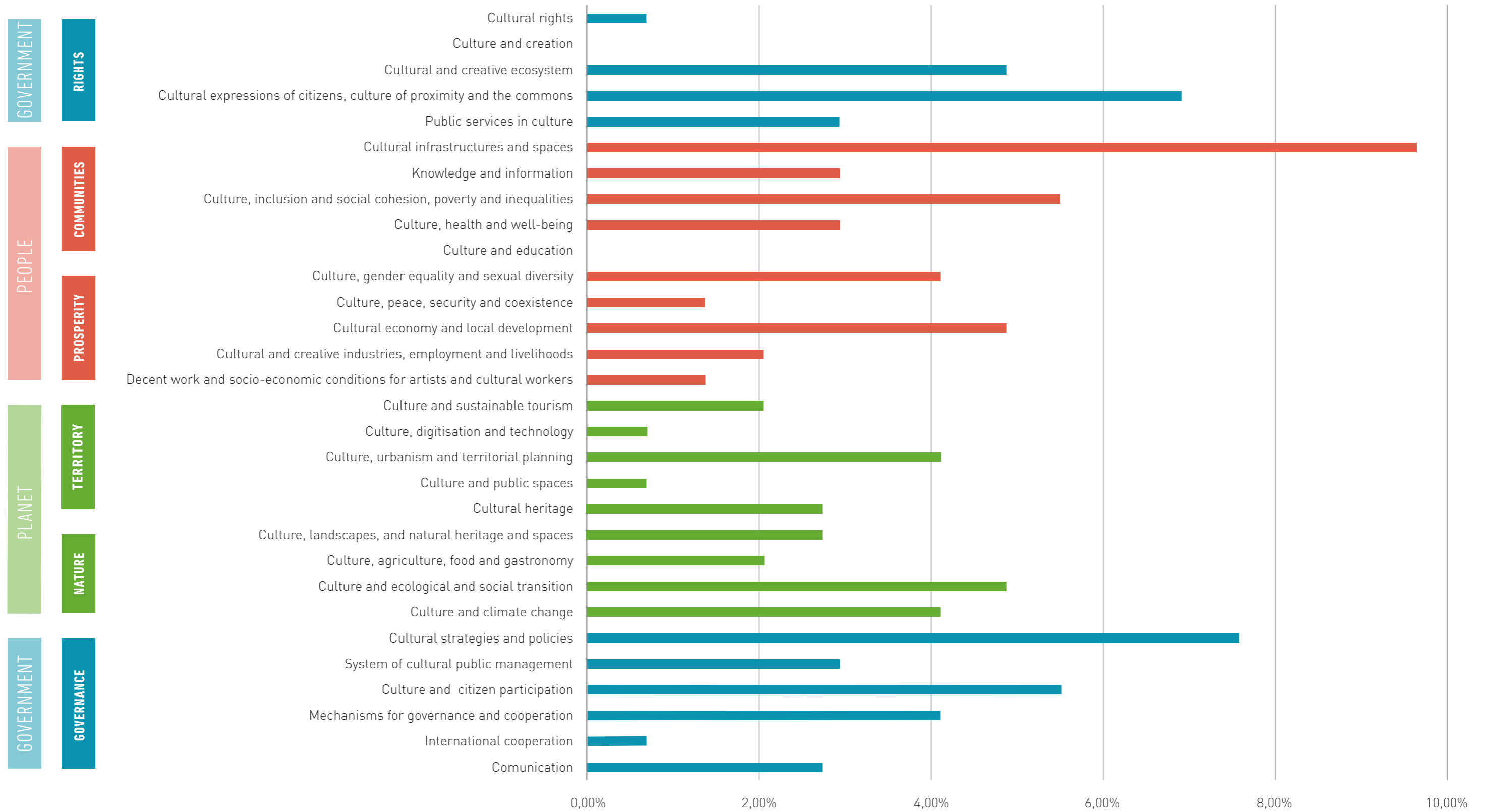


Figure 2. Prioritisation of blocks and areas

Exercise 3: The future

For this exercise the participants remained in their groups and focused on what is needed within the city to support and enhance culture in relation to the themes of the 6 blocks. The groups responded to 2 questions: Can it be applied/deepened in the city? And they were asked for a 'Proposition of actions to implement this area in the city'. The participants took notes and the appointed rapporteur distilled the key results.

1. RIGHTS

To promote **cultural rights** the group suggested accessibility training programmes for all the city's cultural institutions, so that all local cultural activities are universally accessible. They also felt there should be a shift to inclusive discourse and use of an "easy to understand" language in communication. To reduce barriers, where prices apply, the group suggested affordable tickets.

On supporting **cultural and creative ecosystems**, the group suggested lowering the barriers to entry: the **creation of a common cultural** fund with equal distribution and open call processes, creating empowerment mechanisms and artistic programmes for accessible participation and more training and skills development. They also proposed an annual conference of local associations to foster cooperation and identify the needs and objectives of all cultural organisations.

To grow the **cultural expressions of citizens, culture of proximity and the commons**, they proposed communication campaigns and workshops for cultural rights and culture of proximity. They also proposed making Elefsina a model for the decentralisation of cultural actions, including new mapping of the city with alternative centres. Finally, they sought a more meaningful relationship and contact between citizens and local government (Promotion of participatory planning practices, regular meetings and interaction).

To increase **cultural public services, infrastructures and spaces**, there was a suggestion that the Municipality should become responsible for the creation of universally accessible spaces, as well as the creation of a museum drawing on the archives of the folklore associations.

To promote greater access to **knowledge and information** the group proposed the use of inclusive, simplified, language and multilingualism in formal communication. They also suggested the modernisation/digitisation of archives and greater awareness raised, and creation of, training programmes on culture in the workplace.

2. COMMUNITIES

On promoting **inclusion and social cohesion**, the group suggested creating a new community centre for all, strengthening existing structures, making them more accessible creating cultural activities for young people and within companies. With regard to the Roma community, there was a suggestion of outreach “We should ask them what they want to do and not dictate to them. We have to get to know their way of life”, perhaps culminating in a 2-day Roma festival. They also suggested the creation of teams of mediators, specially trained, from different fields, who will contact socially excluded groups and record their needs.

The group were particularly interested in how to develop **culture and education**, the highlight being the creation of a Department of Fine Arts in Elefsina. They also suggested year-round workshops in schools involving parents’ associations in cultural activities. Proposals were also made for cultural exchange through travel, participatory art projects in all neighbourhoods, and continuation of the Open University of Elefsina.

On **Culture, gender equality and sexual diversity**, the team highlighted strengthening the motto “The secrets of Elefsina” and creating a brand and visual identity and increasing representation of women who perform domestic tasks and raise their children through a “Housewives” association. They also felt there should be promotion of a feminist magazine or radio programme and PRIDE parade and queer festival with a specific date each year. Finally, they debated awareness-raising in schools and communities by the Rainbow group, and the existence of specific guidelines on political correctness for cultural events.

To grow **culture, peace, security and coexistence**, the team suggested safe public spaces, the activation and use of ARKOPOLIS as a free inclusive centre by the Culterra youth group, fostering cooperation between associations. They also proposed open debates, where everyone expresses themselves and is recorded (“The Municipal Cafe”) as well as hearing from experts. At the end of this theme the group insisted that “Elefsina is the city of contrasts”.

3. PROSPERITY

On **cultural economy and local development strategies**, the group suggested updating and implementing a cultural tourism strategy, as well as setting measurable targets (Key Performance Indicators) for allocating culture funding. They suggested there should be municipal staff who are trained in cultural fundraising including European grants.

For **cultural and creative industries, employment and livelihoods**, they felt there should be an Adoption of PPPs (Public-Private Partnerships) to improve infrastructure and job opportunities, with detailed monitoring by the Municipality or other competent body and appropriate formulation of support policies and micro-grants (e.g. Creation of cultural incubators or collaborative spaces, or applying for regional funds).

To promote **decent work and socio-economic conditions for artists and cultural workers**, the group suggested the establishment of collective organisations/cooperatives to represent and support artists and cultural workers, and to develop volunteering into work opportunities in the cultural field. These initiatives should be done in conjunction with the national government.

In promoting **culture and sustainable tourism** the team suggested updating the municipality's tourism strategy and developing a plan for the sustainable use of infrastructure that will promote the special character and reputation of the city (brand) that might include conference and educational tourism. They also felt there should be incentives for new cultural/tourism products.

The group felt that advancing **culture, digitisation and technology** could be achieved by converting the ECoC's website into a tourism website to act as a single platform for promotion of cultural activities, using other ECoCS as good practice templates. It should be fully accessible to all and with easy-to-understand content.

4. TERRITORIES

To advance **cultural territorial planning**, the group advocated for active participation in planning through fostering public - municipal communication, perhaps a Consultation Committee with the inclusion of experts and local collectives. This should be backed up with a campaign to raise awareness and a new General Urban Plan, defining land use and the protection of urban green areas, parks, and cultural areas. Thereby simplifying cultural use of spaces that might otherwise go unused.

To promote **culture and public spaces**, they suggested free access for unemployed and vulnerable groups, lowering barriers to entry to public events for all groups regardless of gender, social, ethnic barriers. They also proposed simplifying and making more transparent the processes to access and use public spaces, for example designating a responsible person to act as communicator to the public and organisations for each public building.

On **cultural heritage**, there was a need suggested to improve equality in the funding process and objective criteria for access to cultural funding. For education to aid this, they felt there should be synergy with university and cultural institutions, with training programmes for cultural managers and those in schools, as well as instituting the Free University programme as a key programme of the municipality. Finally, more cultural routes like the Stalker programme should be developed, with citizens who are already trained on these approaches.

To develop **Public art and urban cultural expressions**, the group suggested there be info panels constructed in central parts of the city and discourse with those that might vandalise them, to promote co-creation instead of destruction, thereby including groups

that feel excluded through a participatory process to create shared public spaces for expression and art production.

The group mirrored their suggestions for cultural territorial planning when it came to **culture, architecture and urban design**.

5. NATURE

On developing **culture, landscapes and natural heritage and spaces**, the group proposed the implementation of art projects in playgrounds and upgrading the OASIS, creating gardens and Forest Days at schools for early years to promote climate change awareness. They also proposed the creation of green spaces in Urban Social Housing districts and the creation of a local forum and info point on climate change. For institutions, they suggested an Institutionally registered zone of agriculture and livestock farming, putting pressure on businesses with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and a change of land use.

For **culture, agriculture, food and gastronomy**, they proposed identifying areas for environmental regeneration, engaging farmers for traditional knowledge and practices and supported by the creation of a museum of memory with older people and children. They also felt folklore associations should be housed in a single building for greater integration.

On **culture and ecological and social transition**, the group felt there should be changes to land use to preserve native species, the promotion of urban and school vegetable gardens as well as Energy Poverty Awareness, and that local communities and groups should engage in the development of arts, society, innovation and climate change workshops. They also felt the municipality should be involved through coordinated projects.

The group felt that to tackle culture and climate change, initiatives to be expanded and complemented with the reopening of the railway, electric public transport within the urban network and mandatory interconnection with the “Thriasio” Hospital, as well as a new Sacred Sea Route.

6. GOVERNANCE

On deepening **cultural strategies and policies**, the group felt there should be a formal body to implement cultural policy, including the creation of a Vice-Mayor for Culture and establishment of an independent cultural management committee responsible for the creation, implementation and evaluation of the local cultural strategy. It was proposed that the cultural strategy be updated via participatory processes, involving representatives of all the city’s cultural groups and organisations, through the adoption of a charter such as that of Culture 21 Actions.

To build a **system of cultural public management**, the establishment of a cultural management committee was mentioned again, as well as participatory planning where representatives from each cultural organisation/body in the city are involved in the drafting of the cultural strategy, prior to its adoption by the City Council. They also proposed the use of technology and AI practices and the minimisation of bureaucracy and staffing the system with appropriate and qualified people.

To encourage **citizen participation**, they felt local groups should be facilitated to establish associations and non-profit organisations and there should be mapping of all cultural organisations in the city. There was also the feeling that there should be a better two-way communication policy, between groups and the official cultural body. Finally, they proposed that there should be incentives and encouragement for citizens to express their needs.

They felt that **mechanisms for governance and cooperation** could be enhanced by the establishment of a Vice-Mayor for Culture department with a specialised staff. Public and private organisations could meet monthly to create a dialogue around the city's cultural development and a common model of action plan defining the roles/responsibilities of each body.

The group felt that **international cooperation** could be fostered by using the benefits of the ECoC to continue networking with national and international organisations and more submission of applications for participation in European funding and mobility programmes.

To develop **communication**, the group suggested that there could be the creation of a press team for the Vice Mayor for Culture. Beyond that, they felt there should be direct means of communication: door-to-door information, communication boards in busy places (including banks, supermarkets, squares), also use of advanced technological means (e.g. user-friendly website) with immediate and continuous information.



ANNEX.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

SURNAME	NAME	POSITION	SUBJECT
Adam	Sofia	Employee of National Social Security Authority), Former Vice-President of K.E.D.E. (Public Benefit Enterprise of the Municipality of Elefsina)	GOVERNANCE
Androni	Voula	President of Photography Club of Elefsina	PROSPERITY
Andronis	Dimitris	Music Teacher	PROSPERITY
Antoniou	Maria	Post-graduate student of “Sociology and Art”	COMMUNITIES
Arvanitaki	Agathi	Political Science	RIGHTS
Yovanou	Irini	Teacher of 2nd and 4th Gymnasium School of Elefsina	COMMUNITIES
Gkiokas	Panagiotis	Founder of Cultural Organizations “Chorus” & “Mentor”	PROSPERITY
Gkogka	Konstantina	Student in the University “Performing Arts”	GOVERNANCE
Grigoriadou	Eleni	Photoreporter	OBSERVER
Dalliou	Vicky	Member of the Local Community Radio “Voices of Elefsina” and local Sailing Group	COMMUNITIES
Delaportas	Christos	Dr. Theology, Post-Doctoral Researcher on Folklore, U.O.A. (University Of Athens)	GOVERNANCE
Diamanti	Violeta	Visual Artist	NATURE
Efstathiou	Elissavet	Web Content Manager at Design Solutions Web Creations, General Secretary of Photography Club of Elefsina	PROSPERITY
Zigaj	Rezarta	University student, Department of Biosystem Science and Agricultural Engineering	COMMUNITIES
Ilia	Sofia	Architect	TERRITORIES
Imbrahimi	Argiro	Fashion designer	PROSPERITY
Kavvadia	Evgenia	Freelance Cultural Professional	RIGHTS
Kavvadia	Meletis	Private Employee	TERRITORIES
Kakosaio	Evaggelos	President of A.M.E.A. Association of Elefsina (People With Special Needs)	RIGHTS

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SURNAME	NAME	POSITION	SUBJECT
Kalimnakis	Ioannis	Former President of the Association of Volunteers of the Thriassian Field	GOVERNANCE
Koliofoti	Aikaterini	Early Preschool Teacher	NATURE
Koutalieri	Antigone	Visual artist	NATURE
Koutsourelis	Menelaos	Retired	TERRITORIES
Kritsilas	Dimitrios	Freelancer	GOVERNANCE
Lazarou	Petros	Retired	GOVERNANCE
Lakrintis	Athanasios	EU Affairs & Funding Senior Associate, PwC Greece	RIGHTS
Laskou	Sophia	Literature Teacher	COMMUNITIES
Leftheriotis	Stefanos	Representative of the Corfu Folklore Association of Elefsina	NATURE
Liapi	Georgia	Doctor, Pathologist-Anatomist	NATURE
Mitropoulou	Mary	Coordinator of PAKPPA (Municipal Centre of Culture, Sports, Social Politics and Pre-school Education of Elefsina)	GOVERNANCE
Baloka	Stavroula	President of the Hellenic Guidance Body of Elefsina	GOVERNANCE
Beja	Katerina	University student of "Philosophy, Education & Philology"	RIGHTS
Binioti	Eleni	Head of CEO Support & Project Coordination Office of 2023 Eleusis	GOVERNANCE
Bouriti	Aemilia	Researcher & Visual Artist, Founder of Syn+ergasia	NATURE
Nezis	Konstantinos	Student of Archeology and Cultural Heritage Management	COMMUNITIES
Papakonstantinou	Maria	Director of Student Community Activation and Participation of 2023 Eleusis	PROSPERITY
Parzakonis	Galinos	President of the Thessalian Folklore Association of Elefsina	GOVERNANCE
Pavlakis	Christopher	Student of Free University of Elefsina IN SITU	OBSERVER

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SURNAME	NAME	POSITION	SUBJECT
Pavlopoulos	Giorgos	Historical Researcher	TERRITORIES
Peppa	Aspasia	Production Assistant, Master's University Student on "Urban and Regional planning"	TERRITORIES
Roussis	Ilias	K.E.D.E. Employee (Public Benefit Enterprise of the Municipality of Elefsina)	GOVERNANCE
Stasini	Daphne	Member of the Local Community Radio "Voices of Elefsina"	GOVERNANCE
Stefanidi	Aspasia	Archeologist	TERRITORIES
Straitouri	Zoe	Freelancer and Former Vice-President of K.E.D.E. (Public Benefit Enterprise of the Municipality of Elefsina)	GOVERNANCE
Tzanakaki	Evi	Architect Engineer, Representative for the Agreement of Mayors, Centre for Renewable Energy Sources & Saving	NATURE
Tzani	Sophia	Architect	COMMUNITIES
Tzounopoulou	Eleni	Head of CEO Support & Project Coordination Office of 2023 Eleusis	GOVERNANCE
Cenaj	Fjorida	Assistant of Community Participation Office of 2023 Eleusis, Member of Cultterra group	COMMUNITIES
Tsiatsianis	Yiannis	Founder of T&T Productions, Cultural Events Producer	PROSPERITY
Tsiggou	Alexandra	Teacher & Responsible on Environmental Education	NATURE
Tsitos	Sotiris	University Student of Economics	PROSPERITY
Chatzinikolaou	Elpida	Sculptress, Marble Sculpture Student of Fine Arts School of Athens	RIGHTS
Chatzipanagiotou	Dimitra	Cultural Manager, Member of Cultterra group	GOVERNANCE
Christoudi	Katerina	Interior Architect, Member of Cultterra group	COMMUNITIES
Tsoukalas	Georgios	Former Mayor of Elefsina	NATURE
Elefsiniotis	Spiros	Head of the Environmental Department of the Municipality of Elefsina	TERRITORIES

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SURNAME	NAME	POSITION	SUBJECT
Anouar	Mohamed	Representative of Pakistan community of Elefsina	COMMUNITIES
Balokas	Christodoulos	Civil Engineer	RIGHTS
Elefsiniotis	Ilias	High School Student	TERRITORIES
Gkioka	Ioanna	Graphic Designer	TERRITORIES
Mira	Aemilia	Researcher Visual Artist	OBSERVER
Gkioka	Sophia	Architect	TERRITORIES
Papadimitriou	Maria	Visual Artist	OBSERVER
Tsafaras	Charalambos	Deputy Mayor of Municipal Clinic, Park of Traffic Education and Cultural Events - Aeschylia Festival	OBSERVER
Roumeliotis	Georgios	Municipal Councillor - International Relations and Tourism Development Sector of Elefsina	OBSERVER
Zervou	Konstantina	Municipal Councillor	OBSERVER



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