

## **ÓBIDOS CHARTER – A PACT FOR CREATIVITY**

On January 22, 2009, Mayors from Portugal, Spain, Hungary, Romania, United Kingdom and Italy convened in Óbidos for the “1<sup>st</sup> Creative Mayors’ Summit: Small Cities for Creativity”, incorporated in the *CREATIVE CLUSTERS – Creative Clusters in Low Density Urban Areas* network, supported by the EU programme URBACT II. Other Portuguese Mayors attended this meeting, namely those from the *National Network for Creativity*, along with other local and regional authorities who privilege creativity and innovation as a driving force for development.

### **CONSIDERING THAT:**

- Cities and regions are the main players for global competitiveness, as well as European Union’s dynamic force.
- Creativity and innovation are key factors for the economic, political, social and cultural development of cities and regions and also the answer to many challenges that Europe nowadays faces, among them: globalization, demographical alterations, climate changes, and the creation of a knowledge society.
- Aside from promoting creativity and innovation, each region, city or urban area should base their development strategies in differentiating territorial factors, promoting their local identity, for example with traditional products, indigenous species, and tangible and intangible heritage.
- These new factors of competitiveness attract businesses, investments and projects with a high level of I&D, knowledge and creativity (the so called creative industries) and the fixation of talents (the so called creative class).
- Creative industries are of the highest importance for the improvement of economic performance. They not only have a direct impact in macroeconomic variables, such as GDP and employment, but also have a multiplying effect on other sectors of the economy (namely textiles, furniture, agriculture, tourism or gastronomy).
- Cultural diversity and life quality (highlighting natural and historical/cultural heritage, events and festivals, cultural infra-structures, etc.) are key factors for the attraction of creative human resources to a city or region.

- Creative clusters are based on partnership strategies between businesses, cultural institutions, art spaces, individual artists, media centres, etc., but are essentially communities where one lives, works, learns and interacts, as well as a place where production is linked to cultural consumption.
- Creative clusters are not only feasible in large cities and metropolises, but can be considered an important force for the development of small and medium sized urban and rural areas.
- Cooperation between cities, namely small and medium sized urban and rural areas, is crucial for their competitive affirmation at a European level.
- The creation of a network comprising of common projects between towns, cities and regions should receive more attention in detriment to other emerging capitalist ventures.
- The current economic slowdown that is being felt throughout Europe has provided opportunities for change and as for such, creativity and innovation should play a leading role in upcoming national and European policies.

#### **WE, MAYORS, ACKNOWLEDGE**

- The importance of the conclusions of the Informal EU Council of Ministers for Urban Development, that took place in November 2008, and defended that cities are the source of economic development and innovation. One of the guidelines of the EU Czech Presidency defends the creation of new urban/rural partnerships.
- The importance of the launching of the “Green Paper for Territorial Cohesion”, in which a straight cooperation is underlined as one of the guidelines for promotion of sustainable development of European cities and regions.
- The relevance of the strategic documents: “The Economy of Culture in Europe” (2006) and the “European Agenda for Culture in a Globalized World” (2007), recognising culture and creativity as a vehicle of economic and social development.
- The importance of launching by the European Commission of Cultural Sector Platforms, one of them dedicated to the “potential of creative and cultural industries”, and that counts with the interactive participation of different entities and European organizations.

- The importance of the European Union designating 2009 as the “European Year of Creativity and Innovation”, which considers creativity and innovation as a motor of economic prosperity and of social and individual well being.
- The relevance of the discussion topics of the European Year that encompass: cultural diversity as a base for creativity and innovation; creativity and innovation in the public sector; creativity and innovation in education; creativity and innovation for a knowledge society; creativity and innovation and sustainable development; arts and creative industries.
- The importance of the “Green Paper for Creativity”, being developed by the European Union, in the ambit of the European Year for Creativity and Innovation.

#### **WE, MAYORS, ASK**

- National, regional and European authorities to take into account the policies concerning creativity as being multi-sectorial and horizontal, articulating economic, cultural, urban, scientific, technological, instructional, educational, energetic and environmental areas.
- National, regional and European authorities to create new information and artistic production systems, in the cultural and creative domains, that respond to the demands of a creative economy and that evaluate their respective impacts in society, supporting the decision processes of public and private players.
- National, regional and European authorities to encourage investment strategies in education and oriented in increasing creative capacity, the spirit of initiative and entrepreneurship of individuals, of organizations and of communities.
- National, regional and European authorities to promote new strategies that give incentive to creative industries, at a regional and local level, by creating a specific financial program. This is crucial for economic development and improvement of financial and investment conditions of SMEs.
- National, regional and European authorities to create programs that promote the rotation and mobility of projects and creative people in the European area, namely through residence scholarships, creative housing and common agendas.
- National and regional authorities to create agencies, equipped with specific resources that will implement strategies and action programs related to Creativity.

- National authorities to create an Innovation and Creativity Voucher that gives incentive and develops a close relationship between businesses and the creative class.
- National and regional authorities to increase and strengthen the relationship with Universities and its research units, generating new centralities or innovation territories, and take advantage of the excellence of these centres and existing technological parks.
- National, regional and European authorities to acknowledge the role played by the small and medium urban and rural areas, as a motor of creativity and innovation and as a source of polycentric development of the territory, namely through an increase of its financial capacities while implementing local strategies of economic territorial development.
- National, regional and European authorities the effective recognition of the creative sector, mainly in the referred urban areas, and include it in Structural Funds, and/or other European Union support programs, as well as national and regional programs.
- European authorities to include some visionary case studies of small and medium cities and rural areas in the “Green Paper for Creativity”, in preparation for the “European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009”.
- European authorities to promote an initiative called “European Network for Creativity”, which will bring together networks and cities of European member states and articulate existing EU projects.
- European authorities to launch an initiative called “European Excellence Network of Innovation and Creativity” that will annually distinguish a network of one or more member states with the award - “Creative Territory”. The idea is to reward small and medium urban areas and not only large metropolises.

#### **WE, MAYORS, ARE COMMITTED TO**

- Promoting the best social, cultural and spatial conditions in order to enable creativity to emerge in our territories.
- Developing strategies and planning actions for creativity based on the differential factors and a unique image of the territories.

- Stimulating active participation of the community in developing these strategies and action plans, including public organisms, universities, schools, businesses, regional business associations, financial institutions and citizens whether artists, scientists, engineers, architects, or designers.
- Exploring growth potential of the creative businesses (specialised investment funds, intellectual property policy, marketing initiatives, etc.).
- Promoting creativity in Education by discovering new talents through teaching programmes, namely with the participation in the creative schools competition of the URBACT II network.
- Assuming the concept of creative entrepreneurship as a key element for creativity policies that promote not only cultural consumption, but especially production.
- Offering adequate infrastructures that will contribute towards the growth of the creative sector by making available different spaces for citizens, in particular for young people, so they can express, experiment and develop their ideas on urban regeneration of degraded and abandoned spaces.
- Promoting creative attractiveness of the regions, cities and urban areas through pro-active strategies of territorial marketing based on the distinctive factors of the places, combining heritage and innovation.
- Increasing cooperation processes in the areas of creativity and innovation with other cities and urban areas at a national, European and international level, while sharing best practices and developing joint initiatives.
- Promoting talent mobility and collaboration between organizations of the several regions, cities and urban areas of the creativity network.
- Developing planning policies that qualify the territory and fixate the creative class.
- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of strategies and action plans for creativity based on shared intelligence structures.

**WE, MAYORS, INVITE OTHER LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES TO JOIN THE PACT FOR CREATIVITY, WHICH INTENDS TO ESTABLISH/STRENGTHEN A EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR CREATIVITY.**

Óbidos January 22, 2009