

## FACTSHEET ON CULTURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

# Culture and Cultural Heritage at ICLEI Europe

In recent years, culture and cultural heritage have emerged as central themes in discussions about sustainable development and climate change. Culture and our shared heritage can be seen as a powerful resource in the time of crisis, capable of driving forward debates on our common urban future.

A number of initiatives and actions on culture and sustainable development have been undertaken both at the international and the European level. ICLEI supports local governments in exploring new opportunities for fostering local/regional identity, integrating culture in climate change policies, developing place-specific civic economies, and involving diverse groups and their traditions in developing a shared vision of a sustainable city.



ICLEI Europe works to better support cities in linking their culture, climate and sustainability agendas through encouraging:

- ✦ **Culture, creativity and place-based change.** Culture, whether tangible or intangible, is central to what makes cities attractive, creative and sustainable. It plays a fundamental role fostering social and economic development through a new sense of belonging and heightened social cohesion.
- ✦ **Cultural heritage as part of the transition to a circular city.** This can be through the adaptive reuse of existing buildings and spaces plays a central role here by reducing raw material and energy consumption, as well as waste production.
- ✦ **Resilience in cultural/historic areas which are increasingly at risk** of environmental disasters, and planning for sustainable development by embedding their identity as well as the economic, social and environmental functionality.
- ✦ **Cultural tourism, which rather than being considered** a volatile and “value extractive” economic sector is rather used to have a positive impact in shaping the development of innovative heritage-led integrated strategies, products and services which focus on people, places and nature.

*“ We seek to contribute to the preservation of the traditional cultural and economic diversity of the central historical area, appreciating the architectural and heritage value of the built environment and related open spaces, as well as their aesthetics, while improving the daily life of the inhabitants and visitors, focusing on better coexistence in a more beautiful, sustainable and inclusive area. ”*

Ana Oregi,  
Vitoria-Gasteiz  
(Spain)



## ICLEI INVOLVEMENT IN STRATEGIC FRAMEWORKS

In line with the [New European Bauhaus Initiative](#), participatory processes, bottom-up solutions and local community engagement can bring together culture and creativity to create place-based change and regeneration of urban and rural areas.

ICLEI is a member of the EU Urban Agenda's [Sustainable Tourism Partnership](#) and the [Cultural Heritage Expert Group of the European Commission \(DG EAC\)](#) and the [EU Task Force for Climate Neutral and Resilient Historic Urban Districts](#) via the ARCH project.

On an international level ICLEI Europe is a member of [Climate Heritage Network](#), a voluntary, mutual support network of government agencies, NGOs, universities, businesses, and other organisations committed to tackling climate change and achieving the ambitions of the Paris Agreement.

## IMPACT

**132+ communities**  
engaged

**9 Action Plans** for Heritage-Led  
Regeneration **4 Actions Plans** for  
circular adaptive reuse of cultural  
heritage & **6 Action Plans** and  
concept solutions for sustainable  
cultural tourism

Involved in creating the  
standardisation of an  
**Integrated Approach to the  
Resilience** of Historic Areas

## RESOURCES

### Publication on Innovative solutions for cultural heritage

The report showcases a range of European cultural heritage innovations and how they can benefit different sectors of everyday life.

### Online resource hub for resilience

The ARCH HUB is a resilience knowledge base, developed as part of a project within which ICLEI was involved, which is for historic areas, providing links to tools for assessing and planning for resilience interventions.

### Joint Paper: Paving the Way for Climate Neutral and Resilient Historic Districts

Produced by the EU Task Force for Climate Neutral and Resilient Historic Urban Districts.

### European Standard CWA 17727:2022 City Resilience Development - Guide to combine disaster risk management and climate change adaptation - Historic areas

A temporary working group, set up under the ARCH Project brought together a broad community of experts, including municipal staff to create a European Standardisation framework to help, for example, practitioners, decision-makers, heritage managers, public administrators, and other actors in the field of Disaster Risk Management, Climate Change Adaptation of historic areas.

### Local Action Guide: Collaborative approaches to adaptive reuse of cultural heritage

The CLIC Guide offers an innovative perspective on adaptive reuse processes that encourage integration and social cohesion, as well as inclusive, circular, economically and ecologically sustainable design and implementation. Applying a circular approach to cultural heritage adaptive reuse projects not only reduces waste, raw material consumption and energy use, but it also reuses knowledge, preserves tangible and intangible heritage elements.

### CLIC Pilot Local Action Plans: One Approach, Diverse Outcomes

A unique approach to address adaptive reuse of cultural heritage in a circular way was developed and tested as part of the CLIC project. The co-creation process resulted in a Local Action Plan for Adaptive Reuse of Cultural Heritage. The report firstly presents the Heritage Innovation Partnership / "Local Action Plan" development process in each CLIC pilot area, while the second part reflects on the HIP process and the considerations needed to optimise it as a replicable collaboration model for adaptive reuse of cultural heritage throughout Europe – and beyond.

### Be.CULTOUR Action Plans for Sustainable Cultural Tourism

Six Pilot Heritage Sites located in Italy (Basilicata), Spain (Aragon), Cyprus (Larnaca), Sweden (Västra Götaland), Serbia (Vojvodina) and the cross-border region of North-East Romania and Moldova (Cross-Border region) established local Heritage Innovation Networks and co-created activities as the Be.CULTOUR Community of Practice.

## Connect with us:

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## ICLEI Europe

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability is a global network working with more than 2500 local and regional governments committed to sustainable urban development. Active in 125+ countries, we influence sustainability policy and drive local action for low emission, nature-based, equitable, resilient and circular development.

