

Future cultural spaces in cities: Emerging trends

Examples from the
Eurocities Brno Culture
Forum 2025



What does the future of cultural spaces look like in cities?

Under the title 'Spaces for vibrant cultural and creative scenes: Building blocks of a developed cultural and creative scene', the Eurocities Brno Culture Forum 2025 welcomed 147 participants from 61 cities and 21 European countries to explore how culture reshapes our cities -physically, socially, and imaginatively.

This catalogue showcases examples from over 30 member cities presented at the forum; from small to large-scale initiatives, from mobile spaces to those in city centres or peripheral neighbourhoods. These initiatives offer a glimpse into the future of shared cultural spaces as multifunctional hubs for culture, resilient communities, and sustainable urban innovation.

It also highlights emerging trends shaping the future of cultural spaces in cities and outlines how we can strengthen our commitment to sustainable and inclusive culture as a foundation for vibrant and resilient cities.

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10 trends for future cultural spaces in cities

Cities are designing cultural spaces that celebrate their unique local identities, cultural heritage and creative ecosystems.

Cities are prioritising adaptable cultural spaces; temporary, modular, mobile, hybrid and multi-purpose solutions that can change or be relocated as needs evolve. (Leeuwarden p.12, Berlin p.17, Turin p.41).

Cities are embedding circular and sustainable practices in the design and operation of cultural spaces. They're repurposing vacant industrial sites, transforming heritage buildings and reusing materials. (Bordeaux p.18, Oulu p.38, Tilburg p.40, Uppsala p.42).

Cities are decentralising cultural spaces to bring culture closer to residents. New satellite venues are being created in peripheral neighbourhoods to improve access outside of city centres. (Gothenburg p.10, Lisbon p.35).

Cities are co-creating with local communities. Residents, grassroots organisations and independent artists are engaged in participatory design processes for cultural spaces to meet local needs. (Brno: Brnox p.20, Leuven p.33).



...10 trends for future cultural spaces in cities

Cities are empowering future generations by developing youth-driven cultural spaces. This gives young people the agency to directly shape the future of their cities. (Eindhoven p.26, Kortrijk p.29, Osmangazi p.37).

Cities are innovating through hybrid governance models. They're blending public, private and independent management across sectors to ensure the long-term sustainability of cultural spaces. (Leeuwarden p.12, Turku p.14, Brno: Kumst p.23).

Cities are supporting artists and creative professionals, ensuring access to affordable workspaces and fair conditions in a changing urban context. (Brno: CO.LABS p.8, Belfast p.16, Brno: Vitamin p.24, Leipzig p.32, Tampere p.39).

Cities are designing inclusive cultural spaces. they're using digital tools, artificial intelligence and assistive technologies to make them more accessible and participatory for all residents. (Florence p.27, Ghent p.28, Milan p.36).

Cities are using cultural spaces as social hubs. These third spaces improve residents' health and wellbeing through opportunities for social interaction, creativity, learning, and relaxation. (Leeuwarden p.12, Turku p.14, Brno: Káznice p.22, Eindhoven p.26).

Plenary session: Cities re-imagining cultural spaces

During the plenary session, four cities showcased how they are experimenting with new approaches to reinvent cultural spaces and respond to community needs.



Brno

Czech Republic

CO.LABS: A collaborative space for independent culture

CO.LABS is a newly renovated space for independent artists and cultural workers without a permanent base in Brno. It offers shared studios, event spaces, and support for original projects in the contemporary arts and civic engagement, as well as leading on concepts developed in-house. Blending cultural and sports facilities, CO.LABS is a great example of a multi-use cultural space which successfully integrates interdisciplinary activities and organisations.



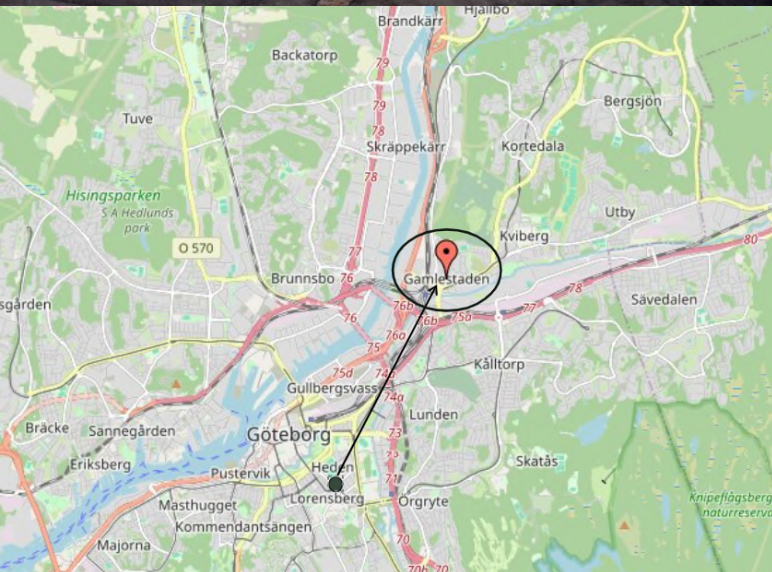
"A key goal is to make these spaces accessible and free for independent artists."

Simona Augustin,
CO.LABS member of artistic and
executive management,
Brno



Gothenburg

Sweden



Relocating the Kunsthallen: Cultural centres beyond the core

As part of Gothenburg's strategic reimagining of cultural infrastructure, the Gothenburg Kunsthallen is relocating from its central site to Slakthusområdet, a former meatpacking district on the city's periphery. The project aims to cultivate new cultural epicentres within the city, rethinking key cultural spaces through community participation to build inclusion across a highly segregated urban landscape.

"Moving cultural buildings out from the centre of a city gives the opportunity for people to have access to cultural venues and for organisations to work with them to open those cultural venues."

Marie-Pierre Bresson,
Chair of the Eurocities
Sustainable Culture
Taskforce,
Deputy Mayor for
Culture, Decentralised
Cooperation and
Tourism, Lille

Speaking about the relocation of Gothenburg's
Kunsthalle

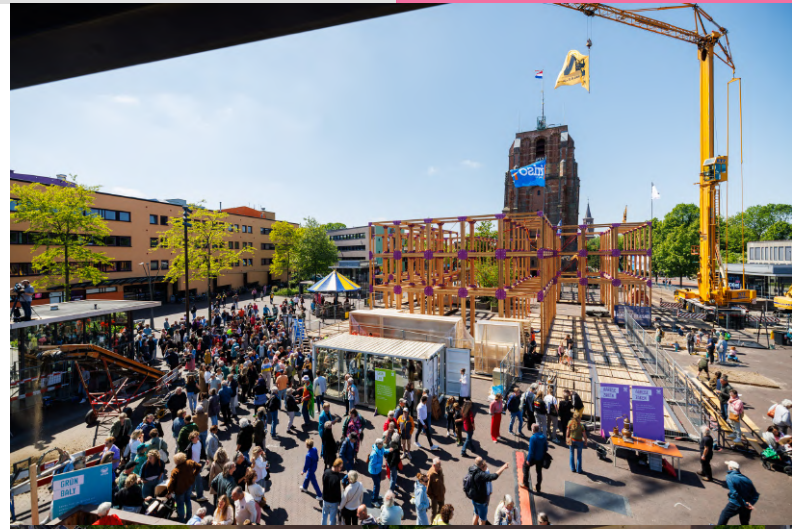


Leeuwarden

the Netherlands

Bouwwurk: Modular architecture for a mobile cultural space

Bouwwurk (The Build) is a modular, mobile cultural space built from circular materials. It serves as a creative hub for community-driven cultural programming at the heart of Leeuwarden, and after 100 days it will relocate to the Spoordok residential development area. Bouwwurk exemplifies how adaptive, sustainable cultural spaces support evolving societal and urban needs.



"The temporary building is entirely modular, with spaces for people to come together, relax or enjoy cultural events and workshops from writing and cooking to dance classes...

Jantine Verver,
Senior Advisor
for Economy,
Tourism and
International
affairs,
Leeuwarden



Turku

Finland

Art House Turku: The city's 'living room' in a former factory

Art House Turku is a rapidly expanding cultural centre housed in a former tobacco factory in Turku's Old Town. Opened in 2022, it now houses three galleries, a cinema, artist studios, educational spaces, and around 20 creative businesses. The project's hybrid public-private funding model offers a practical blueprint for cultural spaces championing artistic livelihoods.



Speed-networking session: Sharing good practices for cultural spaces

Over 30 cities showcased innovative approaches to cultural spaces, exploring themes from sustainability and inclusivity to community participation and adaptable design.



Belfast

Northern Ireland (UK)

From vacant to vibrant: Rethinking cultural infrastructure to support artists

Vacant to Vibrant sees long-term empty real estate in Belfast converted into working studios and venues for vulnerable artists. Launched as part of the city-wide cultural strategy 'A City Imagining 2020-2030', it has supported over 200 artists displaced from unsuitable living and working conditions by rehoming them in repurposed sites, ranging from churches to former supermarkets. Utilising a unique matchmaking system between creatives and property owners, the scheme not only allows for arts venues to flourish, but it tackles dereliction across the city, thus reframing culture as a tool for social renewal.



Berlin

Germany

Culture on wheels: Mobile cultural spaces as neighbourhood hubs

Both funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as part of Berlin's KuBiST programme for cultural infrastructure, the Groovelineer music school bus and the MakerMobil library reimagine cultural education as mobile, playful, and accessible. Launched in 2025, the Groovelineer, run by Spandau Music School, brings music education to underserved neighbourhoods, doubling as a mobile stage to engage young people and invite spontaneous community connection. Since 2020, the Berlin-Mitte Library's MakerMobil has functioned as a learning workshop, media lab, and mobile event space, collaborating with schools, family and youth centres and libraries to offer flexible programming linking many diverse ways of learning with library resources. Together, these mobile cultural hubs turn everyday spaces into accessible centres for creativity, inclusion, and neighbourhood life.



Bordeaux

France

The cultural recycling centre in a submarine base: A new model for circular culture

Bordeaux's cultural recycling centre is France's first municipal recycling centre dedicated to cultural institutions. Housed in a WWII submarine base, it collects and redistributes unused exhibition materials, ranging from furniture to stage design, across 12 cultural institutions in the city. This way, the centre aims to reduce waste and embed eco-design into cultural production. The centre also aims to educate cultural staff on minimising resource waste and embedding eco-design into the production of cultural events and exhibitions. As budgets for culture tighten across Europe, this circular model, 'combining municipal leadership with not-for-profit values', offers a smart and scalable blueprint for sustainable cultural infrastructure.



When I return to my city, I'm most looking forward to tackling the challenge of...

“helping communities, making stronger links between the cultural sector and diverse social communities”.

Erwan Le Corguillé,
Director of Project Management
and Cultural Heritage,
Bordeaux

Brno

Czech Republic

Brnox: Reviving the 'Bronx' of Brno

BRNOX is a project by visual artist Kateřina Šedá focused on Brno's Cejl district, often called the "Brno Bronx" and long perceived negatively due to its social makeup and history. The first phase of the project was an unconventional guide mapping the everyday life of local residents, their stories, and places usually overlooked by typical tourist guides. Its aim was to change public perception of the district and present it as a vibrant, authentic neighbourhood. The second phase introduced concrete interventions in public space; new street furniture, a playground, wall paintings, and other improvements designed to meet the needs of the local community. BRNOX combines art, urbanism, and social engagement, working to improve both the image and quality of life of this part of the city.



Brno

Czech Republic

INDUSTRA: Turning industrial heritage into creative infrastructure

INDUSTRA is an interdisciplinary hub for arts, design, and technology in Brno, Czech Republic. Spanning approximately 5,000 m², it offers a curated visual and performing arts program, international residency opportunities, makerspaces, coworking spaces, as well as a café and roastery. Breathing new life into the old factory halls of Nová Zbrojovka, INDUSTRA is constantly evolving - challenging, innovating, and pushing boundaries, connecting the Czech Republic with the rest of the world.



Brno

Czech Republic

Káznice: From former prison to creative commons

The former prison known as Káznice is a vast complex situated close to the centre of Brno and remains one of the city's most significant brownfield sites. Built in 1784, it served as a prison until 1956. Following, until 2018, it has only been partially used as an archive or police station, or abandoned. Since 2018 however, part of the complex has been actively revitalized thanks to the efforts of individuals and associations such as Tripitaka, Odjinud, and Káznice Studios. The venue now hosts a wide range of cultural events, exhibitions, concerts, and festivals, and even regular masses are held in the former prison chapel. Káznice also provides space for community and social projects and is open to diverse opportunities for collaboration, both at a local and international level. Káznice also organises the Faktor K. festival, held on location every autumn.



Brno

Czech Republic

KUMST, Gamebaze: Incubating innovation in the creative industries

KUMST is a design and business incubator that bridges the worlds of entrepreneurship and creativity. It provides expert consulting and long-term development programs for companies and individuals, primarily in architecture, product and fashion design, and digital reality. Gamebaze, a part of KUMST, is an incubator dedicated to supporting early-stage projects in the gaming industry. Both initiatives were founded by the innovation agency JIC, in collaboration with the City of Brno, the South Moravian Region, and local universities.



Brno

Czech Republic

Vitamin, KONEKT: A grassroots guide connecting creatives in Brno

Vitamin is a platform to support grassroots culture and communities, hosting events in live music, audio/visual art, radio broadcasting, experimental theatre, club nights, markets and workshops. Vitamin showcases culture and brings both established and emerging creative communities together. Vitamin also supports KONEKT, a cultural and methodological guide designed to welcome and integrate creatives arriving in Brno, whether as tourists, students, or artists-in-residence. Conceived as a pocket-sized handbook, the project offers a curated and accessible profile of Brno's contemporary cultural scene. KONEKT is a connective tool linking international visitors with local institutions, curators, and communities while providing historical, practical, and sensory insights into the city.



"Vitamin's project, young people spotlighting grassroots makers, is interesting. It's also a theme we deal with in our city. How can we give more space to independent creators without this impacting larger cultural institutions?"

Hanna van Gent,
Policy Advisor for Culture and
Events,
Rotterdam

Eindhoven

The Netherlands

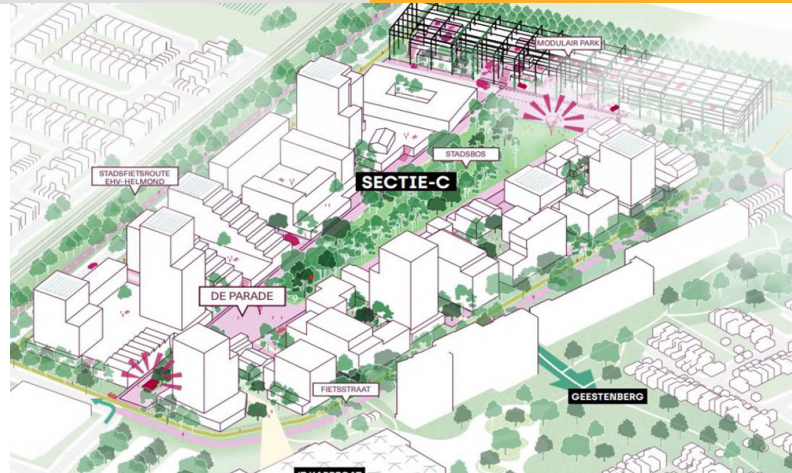
Urban culture: Promoting inclusion through community co-design

Eindhoven is piloting new models for hybrid cultural infrastructure that utilise effective collaboration between residents, designers and developers.

At the intersection of urban arts and sports programming, Area51, designed in partnership with residents of Strijp-S, a previously industrial district turned lively neighbourhood, reflects the city's increasing focus on street culture.

At TAC, multidisciplinary workspaces are shared, facilitating knowledge exchanges for a variety of creatives, and the nearby NUL ZES initiative supports neighbourhood-level skills development, including baking workshops.

These are examples of how mixed public-private funding and participative design contribute to the successful evolution of cultural spaces.



Florence

Italy

Challenges for inclusive access to cultural heritage: Perspectives from the Brancacci Chapel

The Brancacci Chapel is a civic museum hosting one of the most famous painting cycles of the Renaissance. Part of a complex monitoring and diagnostic programme carried out with the support of the National Council of Research and now with the AccessS project, we aim to; develop innovative solutions to support accessible and inclusive design, produce advanced life cycle analyses of heritage buildings, facilitate mobility and allow full access to services and facilities by creating a barrier-free environment. The challenge is to improve accessibility to the Brancacci Chapel, adapting the space to everyone's needs in terms of both the well-being and comfort of its users, including visitors and staff. At the same time, we want to ensure the preventative conservation of the frescoes utilising digital innovation; combining diagnostic data and smart technologies.

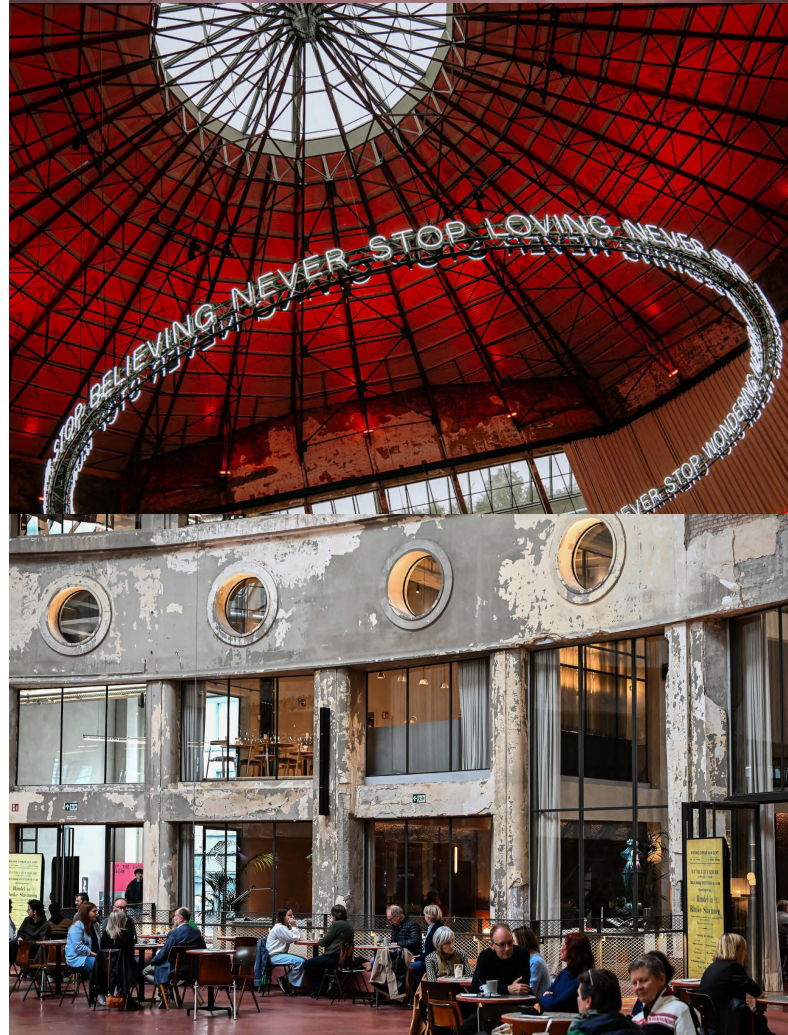


Ghent

Belgium

Winter circus to innovation hub

In 1885, Ghent opened the “New Circus” for citizen entertainment. It was rebuilt in 1920, later transformed into a car workshop, and housed vintage cars from 1978 until the city acquired it in 2005. After extensive renovations, the Wintercircus reopened in 2024. Today it stands as a 15,000 m² architectural landmark in the heart of Ghent. Just steps from the university and multifunctional library building, it offers workspaces for tech and innovation start-ups and scale-ups, providing space for a community of changemakers tackling social, ecological, and technological challenges. The vision: entrepreneurship, innovation, and collaboration as keys to a better future. But the Wintercircus is more than a workplace. It hosts an impressive central hall for events, exhibitions, and TV productions, alongside cafés, restaurants, and a rooftop brasserie with panoramic city views. Beneath the main square lies a 500-seat concert hall—an intimate music club equipped with an immersive sound system. In short, the Wintercircus is a vibrant space for curious minds. Where technology and creativity meet.



Kortrijk

Belgium

From disruptive places to hidden gems: Putting young people at the centre of cultural placemaking

‘From disruptive places to hidden gems’ puts young people at the centre of cultural placemaking, supporting them to design and develop their cities outside of formal structures. An international Erasmus+ funded collaboration with the city of Elefsina, Greece, the project involved a successful exchange of young people collaborating to autonomously transform a disused hotel into a temporary creative hub. The project offered weekly support, funding, and skills-building workshops on underexplored topics related to gender, queerness and urban artistic expression. With an eye to future expansion, the aim is to empower young people to reimagine marginalised spaces, positioning the next generation as long-term co-creators of future cultural sites.



""We don't inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.", we have to think about young people when we talk about creating the cultural spaces of the future."

Anke D'Haene,
Coordinator for Art in Public Space,
Kortrijk

quoting Wendell Berry, environmental activist and author

Leeds

UK

A cultural heritage framework for Leeds

With a strong push towards growth and regeneration, Leeds is changing. Every part of the Metropolitan District is being shaped by economic, environmental and social drivers for change. Consequently, heritage must remain integral to the City's future, as well as its past. Maintaining and enhancing the diversity of Leeds' heritage is crucial in supporting community cohesion. Having a framework that recognises and protects this diversity is important. Leeds City Council is working with partners across the city to create a strategic framework for cultural heritage. This framework will raise awareness and appreciation of the city's heritage among residents and policymakers, while linking cultural heritage to key priorities like inclusive growth, health and wellbeing, and the transition to net zero. It will set meaningful shared goals for heritage-led investment and define clear next steps for a future direction with a shared sense of heritage-led optimism.



Leipzig

Germany

House of Festivals: The sound of Leipzig's independent arts scene

To strengthen Leipzig's unique reputation as a city of music, the municipality is transforming a former theatre into the House of Festivals, an accessible, city-owned, multi-use hub for the independent arts scene. Scheduled to open by 2029, it will house offices for cultural organisers, artist residencies, shared studios and Leipzig's first permanent jazz club. Strategically located near other key cultural institutions, the project is not only expected to provide independent creatives with much-needed space but also to increase their visibility and foster opportunities for institutional collaboration. This innovative reuse of heritage builds community, expands access, and enhances the city's capacity to support independent culture. The project builds on Leipzig's recognition as a recipient of the European Heritage Label for "Leipzig's Musical Heritage Sites" in 2018.



Leuven

Belgium

Scenes of Justice: Reimagining the Town Hall as a democratic and civic cultural space

Leuven is remodelling its historic Town Hall, finished in 1469, into a shared civic and cultural space centred on democracy, participation and social imagination. Fully reopening in 2029, the building will become a 'European hall of democracy,' hosting artists' studios, 'innovation labs' and participatory programmes alongside municipal offices across its floors. With collaborations from residents, students, artists and activists already in progress, programmes like the 'Scenes of Justice' exhibition explore how participants envision the future of their city. A high-budget project linking cultural heritage and the work of the city archives to civic engagement, Leuven positions its Town Hall as a new cultural space for collective ownership.

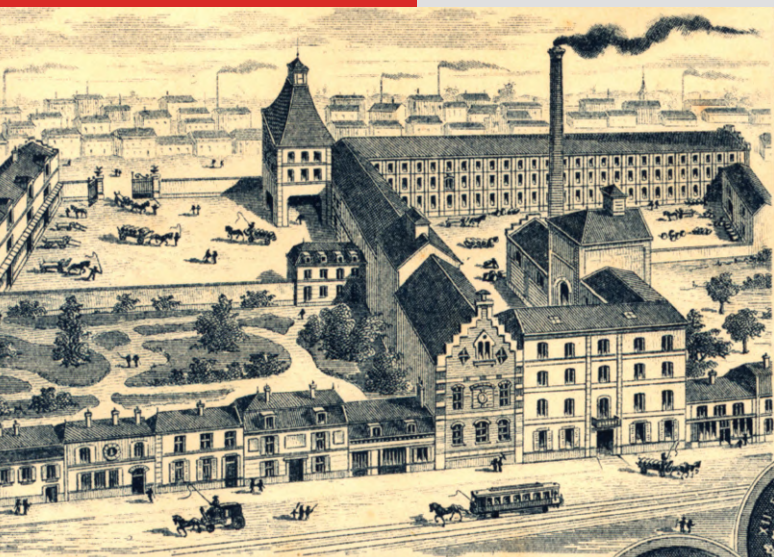


Lille

France

20 years of cultural placemaking: From 'Crazy houses' to sustainable and inclusive cultural policy

After its success as a European Capital of Culture in 2004, Lille has led a long-term cultural transformation by converting disused industrial buildings across the city into neighbourhood cultural hubs. These welcoming, multifunctional 'crazy houses' (Maisons Folie) are accessible, participatory, and rooted in local identity. Today, Lille builds on its legacy with a city-wide cultural strategy based on inclusive and low-carbon policies. With 29 municipal cultural venues, including 2 crazy houses in different districts and a dedicated cultural workforce of over 400 people, Lille champions the centrality of cultural spaces for both urban resilience and democratic life.



Lisbon

Portugal

A theatre in every neighbourhood: Decentralising culture, expanding opportunities

Lisbon's "A Theatre in Every Neighbourhood" programme was created in response to the lack of spaces dedicated to cultural activities in the city, reimagining how cultural infrastructure is conceived. Launched in 2021, the project currently consists of a network of six mid-sized, multifunctional venues located in areas with limited cultural offerings. These venues are set in diverse contexts, from gardens to farms, and are so far managed by cultural associations, parish councils, or the municipality. Each space seeks to connect artistic creation with community needs, from youth support to tackling unemployment. By linking artists and residents across the city, Lisbon not only fosters intellectual decentralisation but also, through proximity, ensures more frequent and direct access to culture. The project offers a scalable model for future cultural spaces grounded in social utility, creative equity, and territorial inclusion.



Milan

Italy

Culture without barriers: Accessibility in the museum network of the Milan municipality

Milan is applying the national Plan for the Elimination of Architectural Barriers (P.E.B.A.) across its civic museums. A municipal audit highlights both the challenges and best practices of accessible design, such as including tactile paths, 'easy to read' guides, and inclusive digital tools. The audit now informs a new accessibility strategy, including plans to improve staff training on accessibility, as well as launch a permanent accessibility working group. This city-wide initiative positions inclusive design as a way for museums to both maintain cultural relevance and improve cultural access.



*MILAN MUNICIPALITY - CULTURE DEPARTMENT
Heritage Enhancement and Sites Security Area*



CULTURE WITHOUT BARRIERS:
accessibility in the Museum network of
the Milan Municipality

Osmangazi

Turkey

Preserving industrial heritage: Adaptive re-use of the Romangal Silk Factory

In Osmangazi, the transformation of the long-abandoned Romangal silk factory near Bursa's Old Citadel marks an ambitious effort to activate brownfield heritage for cultural use. Still in development, the site is envisioned as a space to explore Silk Road legacies and for architectural experimentation in collaboration with local universities. While the exact functions of the site and its funding mechanisms are still being explored, the concept shows potential as a test site for the adaptive reuse of dormant spaces in fast-changing urban contexts.



Oulu

Finland

The Aalto Silo: Reactivating culture in a modernist landmark

Oulu is transforming a disused industrial silo, designed by Alvar Aalto, into a cultural and architectural landmark. Near demolition, the structure was acquired from the city by architect Charlotte Skene Catling and Factum Foundation, an organisation renowned for digital heritage innovation. Located in an underserved area, the project has gained international recognition for sustainable reuse through the EU's New European Bauhaus initiative. With performances, memory archiving and community/international events already underway and further activation planned for 2026, the Aalto Silo is a model for how cultural repurposing and placemaking can drive local renewal.



Tampere

Finland

Meanwhile Spaces: Temporary art hubs in public premises

Tampere's meanwhile spaces model transforms vacant real estate into short-term cultural hubs, offering artists and art collectives rent-free premises for up to six months. Since its launch, six open calls have been organized. Originally based around city-owned buildings, the model has evolved to engage private property owners and has now extended opportunities beyond the Pirkanmaa region. Also featuring a dedicated user guide, the initiative shows how the temporary use of 'meanwhile spaces' can contribute to urban and experimental cultural activity.

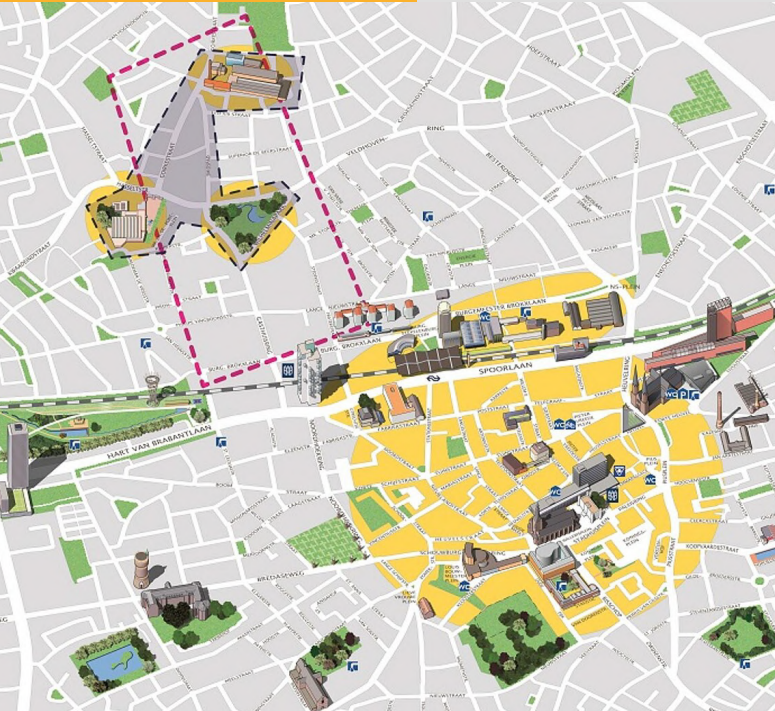


Tilburg

The Netherlands

The Textile Campus: Weaving a city's future from its past

In Tilburg, textiles are embedded in the city's DNA. At the heart of its evolving museum quarter, the textile lab and textile museum combine traditional craft with cutting-edge innovation. Now expanding into a full textile campus, this will connect designers, schools, residents and entrepreneurs in a shared experimental space championing circularity. Supported by a €50 million city investment, the textile campus reimagines heritage as a platform for participation and urban regeneration.



Turin

Italy

Culture in motion: Mobile and temporary spaces for inclusion

Turin is expanding cultural access through initiatives that combine mobility and local presence. The Culture Around the Corner programme creates a network of neighbourhood-based cultural hubs across libraries, community centres, and public spaces. It offers free performances, workshops, concerts, and meetings, engaging residents of all ages and bridging gaps between the centre and the suburbs to redefine culture's place in urban life. Complementing this, the city's Bibliobus fleet brings library services directly into underserved neighbourhoods. Equipped with over a thousand books, digital resources, and spaces for activities, the buses function as mobile cultural and social hubs, delivering opportunities for reading, learning, and participation to communities' doorsteps. Together, these initiatives demonstrate how flexible and proximity-based cultural services can foster inclusion, strengthen communities, and ensure culture is accessible for all.



Uppsala

Sweden

Hospitalet: Psychiatric hospital to creative hub

Hospitalet in Uppsala is a former closed psychiatric district that has been gradually transformed into a vibrant, shared, and multifunctional cultural hub. Today, around 80 cultural and creative actors are active in the building, which hosts artist studios, a collective printmaking workshop, artist residencies, and public programmes. The site also holds outdoor exhibitions and its proximity to Uppsala's Food Council links cultural activity with local food and production, creating a dynamic meeting place where culture, history, and sustainable living intersect. As part of Uppsala Municipality's long-term investment in culture-driven urban development, Hospitalet plays a central role in shaping an area set to undergo major infrastructure and housing developments. The project shows how a previously closed institutional site can be given a new life, combining heritage preservation with new creative meeting places and sites for cultural production.



When I return to my city, I'm most looking forward to tackling the challenge of...

“Sustainability. We need a city-wide coordinated taskforce on what cultural institutions are doing for sustainability. We're going back home to see how we can emulate other cities we've heard from during the forum”.

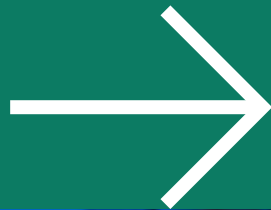
Hanna van Gent,
Policy Advisor for Culture and
Events,
Rotterdam

"The arts and culture are not just add-ons. They are at the heart of urban transformation: driving progress on climate action, green procurement, the circular economy, social inclusion, and citizen participation."

André Sobczak,
Secretary General
of Eurocities



What next? The Eurocities Lille Call to Action for low carbon and more inclusive culture



...what next? The Eurocities Lille Call to Action for low carbon and more inclusive culture

The Eurocities Lille Call to Action for low carbon and more inclusive culture is an initiative, led by the city of Lille and Eurocities, inviting mayors from across Europe to commit to the development of local cultural policies and events that prioritise sustainability and inclusivity. To date (October 2025), it has been signed by 59 mayors from across Europe.

The call to action is structured around 16 priorities, categorised in two pillars: the ecological transition of local cultural policies and events, and inclusion in culture and through culture. By signing it, cities commit to developing sustainable and inclusive cultural policies, implementing at least one principle from each pillar, and providing examples of their initiatives each year.

The Call to Action is a significant step towards a more sustainable and inclusive cultural landscape across Europe. By working together, cities can lead the way in driving positive change and fostering a greener and more inclusive future.



For all further information on the Eurocities Lille Call to Action for low carbon and inclusive culture, click [here](#) or scan this QR code.

"We can only make changes in our cities and across Europe through cultural change, because culture is the golden thread that runs through every policy area in our cities."

Annette Christie,
Chair of the Eurocities Culture Forum,
Councillor/Convener for Culture,
Sport and International Relations,
Glasgow



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