

THE LEGACY OF DONOSTIA / SAN SEBASTIAN BEING NAMED THE 2016 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE



HERITAGE CITIZENSHIP PEACE DIVERSITY
IDENTITY ASSESSMENT **CAPACITY**
EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL SECURITY

1. Background

The city of *Donostia*, or San Sebastian, is the capital of the Gipuzkoa region in Euskadi / Basque Country, Spain. Donostia / San Sebastian was the 2016 European Capital of Culture along with the city of Wroclaw, Poland under the programme, "Transforming Culture for a Decade of Coexistence". The programme was the result of a participatory process that began in 2009, and it focuses on education and culture as the central tools for preventing and combating issues around coexistence, which the city has struggled with for many years. Despite being a city with a pluralistic and diverse identity, San Sebastian's past is marked by episodes of violence, beginning with the Spanish Civil War, then under



the Franco dictatorship, and, up until recently, ETA's terrorism. It is a city where the two official languages of Basque and Spanish coexist alongside French due to proximity to the French border, and even English. It is a city where tourism and trade form a large part of the base of its economy, as well as education and research.

2. Donostia / San Sebastian and Culture

In 2016, San Sebastian was the European Capital of Culture along with the city of Wrocław, Poland under the programme, "Transforming Culture for a Decade of Coexistence". The programme required, "an active, responsible, and supportive citizenry", equipped with the strength of "its transformative power". The programme's vision was:

- A more open society, where diversity is respected and valued as a source of wealth, and equality is promoted
- A society where citizens participate more actively and responsibly, while having the skills and tools to live in peace
- A more cosmopolitan society that connects local life with Europe and the world
- A creative society, capable of inventing new bases for economic, environmental, social, and cultural sustainability

These self-imposed objectives transcended the traditional field of culture to establish a culture of lasting peace, to celebrate the diversity (linguistic, religious, cultural, and gastronomic) of the territory, and to value geography and unique landscapes (bays, cultural parks, coastal trails, and a chain of lighthouses). As a result, more than 3,000 activities carried out were organised around the Lighthouse of Peace, the Lighthouse of Voices, and the Lighthouse of Life. Following this, the city needed to continue emphasising these principles, while integrating lessons learned into the city's cultural life.

Donostia Kultura is primarily responsible for safeguarding the important legacy of being the European Capital of Culture. It works alongside other entities in the city to mainstream the cultural processes that were launched in 2016. "Culture for Coexistence" remains the main driver of the city's strategic



cultural plan, and places special emphasis on the principles of Agenda 21 for culture such as human rights, governance, sustainability in the region, economy, and social inclusion. Similarly, the city works to adhere to the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda, specifically 4 and 11, but also numbers 3, 5, 12, 13, and 16.

IN 2017, THE PREVIOUS YEAR OF BEING THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE WAS ASSESSED. SUBSEQUENTLY, PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS WERE DESIGNED AND IMPLEMENTED TO TRANSFER LESSONS LEARNED TO THE STRUCTURES AND PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE CITY AND THE REGION.

Donostia / San Sebastian has a 2020 Strategic Plan, whose objectives fully coincide with those of being the capital of culture: a cohesive city without social exclusion or violence; a city with an active, participatory citizenry; a city proud of its Basque identity that combines modernity, globalization, and integration. When culture plays a central role, a city stands out in all areas linked to culture, education, knowledge, and innovation, and makes it a model for environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Finally, the 2020 Strategic Plan fully undertakes the challenges of the environment and of peace.

3. Objectives and Project Implementation

3.1 Primary and Specific Objectives

The main goal of the project is to consolidate the legacy of the 2016 European Capital of Culture. Once the first assessment was carried out, the European Committee of Regions shared its observation, affirming that “the impact of the European Capital of Culture can be even greater if it is part of a long-term strategy on cultural development for a city capable of generating a sustainable, social, cultural, and economic impact.



3.2 Project Development

Main Actions Carried Out

The primary action carried out has been to evaluate the "Transforming Culture for a Decade of Coexistence" programme using external companies and the institutions involved. On top of economic successes, the following are notable achievements:

ALONGSIDE ITS STATUS AS THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE, THE CITY DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED A VOLUNTEER PLAN THAT HAS INSPIRED, TRAINED, AND EMPOWERED CITIZENS TO BECOME ACTIVE AND COMMITTED PLAYERS IN THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROJECTS THROUGH TO THEIR EVALUATION.

- It has helped bring the issue of coexistence to the forefront with programmes like "No Goodbye" ["*Sin Adiós*"] in which creators drew the cultural map for the memory of victims
- Governance of culture has been improved: public-private collaboration has been essential, and cooperation has been promoted between different cultural entities such as museums, theatres, creative centres, and cultural centres. Furthermore, all municipal services have been adapted to host all events
- Great steps have been taken to ensure that the internationalisation of the city was based on positive values
- It is clear that the city has cultural actors capable of creating unique events such as "A Midsummer Night's Dream". More than 80% of the budget has been managed by local stakeholders
- A network of artists, translators, writers, or social agents involved in defending minority languages has also become involved (UNESCO Protocol for Guaranteeing Linguistic Rights, New Translators, New Commissioners, Corners, Other Words ...)



- Being the Capital of Culture has yielded remarkable results such as the “Olatu Talka” festival or the “Waves of Citizen Energy”.

With respect to the intended beneficiaries of 2016’s legacy, the Council for the Capital of Culture of was responsible for coordinating the year’s main programmes along with other councils, the Regional Government of Gipuzkoa, and the Basque Government. A budget of 1.5 million Euros was provided for each of the institutions to integrate the programmes into their missions. The vision has focused on coexistence, participation, innovation, and internationalisation in the field of culture. Institutional coordination meetings have been held that will strive to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21 for culture: Donostia Kultura, Centre for Teaching Resources on Human Rights, Tabakalera, Cristina Enea Foundation, Municipal School of Music and Dance, Musikene, Basque Culinary Centre, Zinemaldia International Film Festival, Musika Hamabostaldia / Quincena Musical, Gordailua. Gipuzkoa Heritage Collections Centre, Koldo Mitxelena Kulturunea / Koldo Mitxelena Cultural Center, Deputy Ministry of Language Policy of the Basque Government, Etxepare Basque Institute, Emakunde. Basque Institute of Women, the Mintzola Foundation, the Albaola Basque Maritime Factory.

4. Impact

4.1 Direct Impacts

Impact on the Local Government

Changes to the city government include:

- The city’s unique agenda
- Communication and awareness campaigns on citizenship and urban landscape protection
- Sustainable mobility plan
- Creation of the advanced control post for safety, health, and prevention during large events
- One-stop shop to manage public roads for events



- Welcome plan for visitors Sustainable and respectful tourism that considers the identity of the city
- Inclusion of gender, social, environmental, and linguistic focuses

On the other hand, the City Council has assumed the responsibility of promoting a research grant to analyse how the city has changed since 2016.

Impact on Culture and on Local Cultural Actors

- The project led to the laugh and socialization of the new Tabakalera Contemporary Culture Centre.
- Expansion and training in the cultural and creative industries.

THANKS TO THE SUCCESS OF 2016 AND THE FOLLOW-UP DURING 2017, NEW PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPACES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN DONOSTIA / SAN SEBASTIAN FOR CULTURE AND STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL CULTURAL FABRIC OVERALL.

Impacts on the Territory and Population

- Ensuring the arrival of tourists even outside of the summer months thanks to cultural events.
- The Ardora Committee is an example of citizen participation: 194 citizens select cultural proposals
- Internationalisation and networking in different projects.

All of this is in addition to the economic impact 47 million Euros of direct spending led to a total of 70.6 million of investments and an estimated 612 jobs

4.2 Assessment

Evaluating the results of 2016 was carried out in 2017 by the office in charge of the Capital of Culture in collaboration with the consulting firm LKS and the faculty and students of the UPV / EHU, using indicators that include the Donostia Kultura strategic plan.

The indicators used by Donostia Kultura and other stakeholders are cross referenced at the interinstitutional coordination board for culture. From time to time, through the public development society, economic impact studies are carried out. Finally, the citizen survey on quality of life in 87 European cities was carried out under the auspices of the Urban Audit project promoted by the European Commission.

4.3 Key Factors

- The project had a clear and defined strategy based on a thorough knowledge of the society on which the "Culture for Coexistence" project is focused.



- The initiative also relied on institutional leadership shared with organised civil society, subsequently ensuring citizen participation in the design, implementation, and evaluation of cultural policies.
- The central role of culture in all local policies is vital for the generation of wealth and economic development.
- Furthermore, the investment in culture in annual institutional and administrative budgets has been a crucial element of success.
- Aside from this, the inclusion of creators, artists, and cultural industries in the project, while guaranteeing adequate economic valuation and respecting authorship are also important.
- Finally, joint work among all stakeholders in the education sector, including universities, research centres, and cultural agents, has contributed to the project.

ASSESSMENT OF THE 2016 CAPITAL OF CULTURE PROGRAMME USED A SYSTEM OF QUALITATIVE INDICATORS FOR EVALUATING CULTURAL PROJECTS HELD YEAR AFTER YEAR, MONITORING THE DEVELOPMENTS AND CHANGES PRODUCED BY CULTURE.

4.4 Ongoing Work

The City Council continues to lead the institutional working group (2016 Board of Trustees) that was created to ensure the legacy of 2016. Additionally, there are different areas of coordination that need to be addressed in order to continue identifying the most important cultural challenges facing the city, territory, and country: Regional Council of Culture and the Interinstitutional Commission where the three capitals of San Sebastian, Bilbao, and Vitoria, alongside the regional Basque councils of Gipuzkoa, Bizkaia, and Araba work alongside the Basque Government.

Chaired by the city's Mayor, Donostia Kultura deals with universal access to culture through its network of libraries, cultural centres, organising bodies, and its partnerships with other Basque

capitals and coastal Basque-French cities. The bulk of the City Council budget for culture in 2018 was 35 million Euros.

5. Further Information

Donostia / San Sebastian was a candidate for the third "UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (November 2017 - May of 2018). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June of 2017, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

This article was written by Jon Insausti Maisterrena, Donostia / San Sebastian Council of Culture, Gipuzkoa, Basque Country, Spain.

Contact: Jon_insausti@donostia.eus

Website: www.donostia.eus and www.donostiakultura.eus