

Overview: Project Groups of the “Europe Bottom-Up” Platform

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Project Groups of the “Europe Bottom-Up” Platform	2
1. “A Soul for Europe” Project Group	2
2. “Cities and Festivals” Project Group	2
3. “Carbon-Neutral Cultural Work” Project Group	3
4. “Local Europe” Project Group	3
5. “European Capital of Culture” (ECOC) Project Group	4
6. “European Perspectives on Local History” Project Group	4
7. “Civil Society Initiatives for Europe” Project Group	5
8. “Local Democracy as a Model for European Democracy” Project Group	5
9. “Cultural Initiatives and Artists for Europe” Project Group	6
10. “Integration Policy” Project Group	6
11. “Performing Europe” Project Group	7
12. “Cities for Europe” Project Group	7

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Project Groups of the “Europe Bottom-Up” Platform

The project groups use the platform to broaden their networks, present existing projects, and jointly develop new projects. In addition, they are able to discuss their respective experiences, jointly organise events and publicize them to one another.

The project groups are listed alphabetically here.

1. “A Soul for Europe” Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Sara Dutch

Partners: Kathrin Deventer, Nele Hertling

Mission Statement: The aim of “A Soul for Europe” on the “Europe Bottom-Up” platform is to strengthen Europe by using the means of art and, in so doing, to create a digital network.

Description: The “A Soul for Europe” initiative is sponsored by the Strategy Group: a group of 40 Europeans from the European cultural sector. Their common aim is to strengthen Europe from below by using the means of art. Their most important project is the “A Soul for Europe” conference. Every year, they bring together leading figures from government, business and the European cultural scene at the conference to present different perspectives on Europe and to promote mutual artistic and cultural understanding.

In addition to the “A Soul for Europe” conference, they host forums in various European cities, in order to have exchange with local communities and to strengthen Europe from below. On the “Europe Bottom-Up” platform, the initiative develops its own projects and makes use of the broad network to link up with other actors and to promote its idea of strengthening Europe from below using the means of culture.

2. “Cities and Festivals” Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Afrodita Bojadjieva

Partners: Kathrin Deventer, Nele Hertling

Mission Statement: The aim of Cities and Festivals on the “Europe Bottom-Up” platform is to bring together festivals and their host cities, including city officials, for the benefit of Europe.

Description: Festivals, in particular, have the potential to unite smaller local contexts with larger European issues. Art and the artists, as well as the city and the urban community, are the key to every cultural programme in this regard. The Festival Cities Initiative, which was founded by the European Festival Association, comprises a group of festivals and cities that are convinced of the importance of the relationship and the cooperation between a city and its cultural partners and civil

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society actors for promoting European development. The project group analyses this potential for strengthening the European project and gives it visibility. The findings of the project group serve as a basis for jointly developing strategies and specific formats with festivals and cities. The latter are expected to provide ideas to other European cities and their festivals on the “Europe Bottom-Up” platform and to show them possibilities for undertaking joint projects.

3. “Carbon-Neutral Cultural Work” Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Sara Dutch

Partners: Daniela Berglehn, Jacob Bilabel, Birgit Heidsiek, Dieter Kosslick, , Christian Thomsen

Mission Statement: The Carbon-Neutral Cultural Work project collects positive examples of zero-emissions, sustainable cultural work on the “Europe Bottom-Up” platform.

Description: In partnership with politicians and artists, this project group shows and further develops examples and measures for zero-emissions cultural work. The initial focus of the substantive work is on the film industry. The driving force behind this project group is the former director of the Berlin International Film Festival, Dieter Kosslick. The integration of the project group on the “Europe Bottom-Up” platform is intended to extend its work to other areas of cultural work. The main objective is together to help Europe to develop in a more climate-neutral direction by way of concrete activities. All the activities of the platform share the goal of bringing together actors in the cultural sector both with politicians on the local and European levels and with scientists. The aim of the project group is to practice zero-emissions cultural work all across Europe as a means of contributing to the success of European unification and to make clear the need for developing measures and strategies for sustainable cultural work and facilitating their implementation in partnership with political actors.

4. “Local Europe” Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Afrodita Bojadjieva

Partners: Volker Hassemer, Anke Plättner, Matthias Ruffert and other members of the “We are Europe” (*Wir Sind Europa*) grassroots initiative

Mission Statement: Local Europe organises citizens forums in various European cities and facilitates exchange on European issues. In the future, this collaboration will also take place digitally on the “Europe Bottom-Up” platform, in order to allow participants to share their experiences.

Description: The goal of the “We are Europe” initiative is to get young people, above all, excited about Europe. To this end, it aims, by way of well-prepared visits to European cities, to enter into open and unbiased dialogue with the local residents, in the hope of ultimately giving them a new perspective on Europe’s significance and, in the best case, getting them to participate in its

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development. “We are Europe” shares its experience in visiting European partners on the platform, in order to generate and collect further examples of European dialogue formats. “We are Europe” also enters into dialogue with interested municipal governments, in order to prepare new visits, make contacts, and promote their contribution to the strengthening of the European project at the local level.

5. “European Capital of Culture” (ECOC) Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Afrodita Bojadjieva

Partners: Cluij Cultural Center, Ulrich Fuchs, Nele Hertling, Carolin Hochleichter

Mission Statement: The European Capital of Culture project serves to establish connections among cities that have applied for the title of “European Capital of Culture” and also those that have become it. This allows the cities to discuss their cultural concepts with one another and to benefit from their respective plans.

Description: Each year, the European Union bestows the title of “European Capital of Culture”. Cities applying for the title of European Capital of Culture develop ideas for a culturally-driven European urban development strategy. The goal of the project group is to strengthen the cooperation among European Capitals of Culture and to make use of the strategies that they have developed for the purpose of a culturally-driven urban development policy. Together with the successful candidates, but also runners-up in the national selection process, the project aims to highlight and further develop the methods of such a culturally-conceived urban strategy. In this way, the project group hopes to give rise to a set of tools also for cities that do not apply for the title of Capital of Culture, but that do indeed want to pursue an ambitious urban development policy. For what is at stake is the development of strategies ensuring that local and national and, ultimately, European development policy all make use of the cultural potential of Europe.

6. “European Perspectives on Local History” Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Sara Dutch

Partners: Hella Dunger-Löper, Christian Johann

Mission Statement: This project aims to strengthen the cooperation between local history initiatives on the “Europe Bottom-Up” platform for the benefit of Europe.

Description: This project promotes linkages among local European history associations and initiatives, in order to strengthen Europe from below. Apart from exchange among participants and mutually raising awareness about the European aspect of the work of the initiatives and associations, the focus is on the joint realisation of concrete projects. For anyone who digs in front of

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their home in Europe will discover not only local, but always also European history. A pronounced reciprocal influence between regions and nations is apparent over the last centuries: whether in the darkest hours of recent history during the Second World War or in countries' striving for more freedom and independence in the Eastern Bloc. Nonetheless, these aspects are too rarely the focus of local history initiatives. The "Europe Bottom-Up" platform allows for exchange among members of the project group.

7. "Civil Society Initiatives for Europe" Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Sandra Chamier

Partners: Brigitte Russ-Scherer

Mission Statement: This project aims to create a Europe-wide network of pro-European initiatives and to promote exchange among them; their cooperation is to be facilitated by the possibilities of digital technology.

Description: This project encourages civil society initiatives to link up and exchange with one another, in order to strengthen Europe together. The most important concrete realisation of this exchange of experiences is the already repeatedly implemented idea of a digital "marketplace", which serves the purpose both of internal cooperation and of increasing external visibility. The project group will reflect on how cooperation among civil society initiatives can be enabled and facilitated by Europe-wide exchange. Thanks to the boom in digital means of communication, the Corona pandemic has already considerably expanded the possibilities. One of the missions of the platform will be to reach out to local initiatives across Europe and to encourage them to participate. The Cities for Europe network can serve as a disseminator here and act as a hand stretched out to local initiatives.

8. "Local Democracy as a Model for European Democracy" Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Sara Dutch

Partners: Helga Fassbinder, Ulrich Fuchs, Josef Lentsch, Cornelia Poczka, Anett Szabó

Mission Statement: The project serves to strengthen European democracy and to create linkages among various initiatives in this area. The aim is to collect examples of what local, participatory democracy can look like.

Description: The initiative wants to place a greater focus on the potential of local democracy initiatives. It enters into exchange with local actors about examples of democratic practices in European cities. This is meant to give citizens' initiatives and mayors the opportunity to learn from one other and to make connections. The project aims to make members of the European Parliament aware of the importance of democratic practice in the cities and to encourage them to support it.

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For everyday democratic practice is one of the main pillars of the EU. The project will collect and analyse examples of successful, local democratic practice in Europe. Both good and bad examples are to be presented, so as to learn with one another and from one another. Thus, cases of exemplary democratic practice are also to be included on the platform as structural examples, in order to stimulate substantive discussion. Competitions and awards, like the naming of a European Capital of Democracy on the initiative of a Vienna-based project, will also be publicized and promoted.

9. “Cultural Initiatives and Artists for Europe” Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Sara Dutch

Partners: Christiane Lötsch, Yves Mettler, Christian Schneegass

Mission Statement: This project group comprises a network of cultural organisations and artists who expressly support Europe and whose support is also reflected in their work.

Description: Support for the European project has declined in recent years. In combination with Euroscepticism, growing populism all across Europe is a challenge for the European Union. It is thus all the more important that not only politicians promote the European project, but especially EU citizens themselves and their organisations. For it is the citizens who make up Europe and should be involved in shaping it. This includes all areas: also precisely initiatives situated in the field of culture. Hence, we are inviting cultural organisations to view themselves as participants in an “Alliance for Europe”: an Alliance for Europe under whose name they run their events, so that Europe is always kept in mind. The idea is to send a signal by openly expressing one’s support for Europe. The platform also offers an opportunity for encouraging other domains to found similar alliances.

10. “Integration Policy” Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Sara Dutch

Partners: Brigitte Russ-Scherer, Gesine Schwan

Mission Statement: This project group will focus on the role of municipal migration and integration policy. It aims to bring together cities and civil society initiatives to exchange experiences, develop forms of cooperation and own initiatives and to jointly formulate demands to policy-makers.

Description: Against the background of the EU's migration and integration policy, it is the cities and municipalities that do the tangible work of receiving and integrating refugees and migrants. They have the necessary experience and tools to drive a new approach for European policy in this field. The "European Alliance of Safe Harbours" offers an example of how European cities are already networking around the issue and advocating for a European migration and refugee policy "from below". In addition, projects such as that of the Municipal Development Councils show how the especial potential of cities and municipalities for participatory democratic schemes can also shape

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integration policy at the local level. Already, civil society organisations such as the "Seebrücke" consult and cooperate with cities and municipalities to shape the reception and integration of migrants and refugees and to formulate demands on policy-makers at the national and European levels. These various networks between municipalities and civil society actors are to be strengthened and expanded through the platform.

11. "Performing Europe" Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Sara Dutch

Partners: Georg Blokus, Georg Kentrup, Manuel Moser

Mission Statement: The project brings together a variety of people from the fields of theatre and youth-oriented social work. The group promotes European values and plans a variety of artistic actions.

Description: PERFORMING EUROPE is a trans-European action network comprising children and youth theatres, participatory theatre collectives and progressive actors, directors, etc., as well as artistically and politically active children and young people. Beyond national borders and languages and regardless of class, education, status, origin and skin colour, as well as gender, sexuality and handicap, they stand together for an inclusive future Europe: a "Europe for All". To this end, PERFORMING EUROPE organises itself across national boundaries, in order together to make a cultural contribution to the socio-ecological transformation towards a Europe of democracy and solidarity. The group wants publicly to stand up for European values and to carry out a variety of artistic actions and performances, in order to strengthen the European spirit.

12. "Cities for Europe" Project Group

SZB Coordinator: Afrodita Bojadjieva

Partners: Rafal Dutkiewicz, Ulrich Fuchs, Volker Hassemer, Ursula Kleuters, Hendrik Kloniger, Bernhard Schneider, Yuriy Vulkosky

Mission Statement: "Cities for Europe" comprises a network of pro-European mayors on the European continent. The aim is pan-European exchange and thereby the strengthening of Europe.

Description: European mayors and municipal governments come together under the heading of "Cities for Europe" with the common goal of strengthening Europe "from below". The point is to help gear municipal practice towards the benefits for European development by way of concrete examples, to share experiences, and to win over more cities to a "Europe Bottom-Up" attitude. The focus of attention here should be getting cities to have even their entirely normal municipal tasks guided by the aims of a common Europe. On the initiative of Bernhard Schneider (architect and urban planner and member of the Board of Trustees of the *Architekturpreis Berlin*) and Yuriy

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Vulkovsky (Foundation for Urban Projects and Research), a primer on culturally-driven urban development policy for candidates for the title of European Capital of Culture was written some time ago. The project group will undertake to expand this primer, so that it can serve as a guide to culturally-oriented urban development for all cities. The guide is to be made available on the platform for those interested. In addition, it can be supplemented and further developed by way of tips and best-practice examples.

Partners:

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