Best Practices - ECHC

The Context

Europe is a cultural community. This is a statement that probably few Europeans would debate, however, its official iteration has only been circulating in the public and political arena since 2017.[1] The haste with which the Commission tries to forge a common denominator, a sense of self and belonging among the 28 (now 27) nations and to promote a powerful concept of a shared European continent has been visible for the past few years. The relevance of this emphasis on culture and education as pivotal elements in forging a European community has been underlined by several representative continent-wide surveys on social trust and European cohesion. The surveys have made it rather visible that the success and the future of Europe lies first and foremost in upcoming generations in general, and in their shared cultural values and European identifications in particular.

Admittedly, there have been important precedents to this process ranging from the famous European student mobility programs (Erasmus, Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, Marie Curie and Jean Monnet fellowships), cultural initiatives (Creative Europe, ECoC), European Frameworks of Excellence in research and teaching, the Horizon 2020, the Europe for Citizens program to the creation of the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area (ERA), all of which have been operating with a rather high degree of success. However, several important elements needed for a cultural community still await: for example, working out the criteria for common standards of excellence in research, education and artistic performance, creating common meanings of Europeanness and constructing a more general (positive) European collective memory, and building harmonized and collaborative practices of education, political culture and social participation to mention but a few. Creating these systems on a continent with diverse cultures, historical nation states with starkly different pasts, different heritages and inherited issues, different economic performance and living standards, memories, and visions are demanding because it means reaching a consensus over who "we" are as Europeans and what we want to achieve in the 21st century without replicating the horrors of the 20th.

The challenge is quite considerable. The nation state is eroding (populist politics is a clear symptom of this) and as Stuart Hall saw it, globalization and the expansion of global capital has produced paradoxical consequences, namely the strengthening of supranational ties and local allegiances and identities within the nation state.[2] The meaning of the "local" and "local identity" has also changed as a consequence of globalization: the strengthening of local identities is not as much the revival of particular communities of the past, but more as a construction of a sense of community which, although operates locally, does so according to the logic of globalized processes.[3] In other words, community and culture are not essential entities, but always reflect a concrete contextual positioning. Cultural heritage and its twin sister collective memory, which are so often resorted to when forging strong communities, are (often competing) narratives that construct values as much as they preserve them, they divide communities as much as unite them. In this sense building a European cultural community (from diverse communities) and strengthening European identity requires us to dig deep into the intricate mechanisms of global processes, cultural battles over the past and the formation of new networks and alliances within and beyond Europe as well.

[1] Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture. The European Commission's contribution to the Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017, Strasbourg, 14 November 2017.

[2] Stuart Hall, "Culture, Community, Nation", in Cultural Studies, 1993, 7:3, 354.

[3] ibid.

Four Best Practises, A, B, C & D.

Preface: All mentioned best practices have to be studied and analysed within the cultural, civic and social context of the EU and the respective member states they must operate. The growing interaction between cultural and heritage actors on the one hand and civic, non-governmental organisations and citizenship educators on the other hand are experiencing new ways of providing a democratic environment for feeling safe and at home in Europe for more and more citizens. The presented best practices can inspire workers in the field to include elements or even join some of the examples mentioned here. All mentioned practices are familiar to some or all partners in ECHC, have been presented and discussed during the courses and do have a wider and tested influence in the local and regional environment. Stake holders are: local authorities, publishing houses, members of the EP, the EC, the Council of Europe, social and cultural entrepreneurs in the EU and beyond.

To identify the best practices, we used five key-characteristics: 1: good management & (social) entrepreneurship. 2: the European heritage component. 3: the cultural content. 4: European values. 5: promoting European citizenship.

- A: one interdisciplinary cultural, social and innovative intergenerational meeting place, program developer, think tank and interlingual networking agency: Pakhuis de Zwijger. Keywords: 1, 3, 5.

- B: one emblematic example of the use of the concept of European Cultural Capital (ECoC) to spread European values by including civil society and individual citizens through revalidating local and regional (cultural) heritage: “iepen mienskip” at Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018. Keywords: 1, 2, 3, 5.

- C: one successful example of interaction between local communities, heritage sites and stories, tourism, citizenship education, small enterprises and (inter)national bodies: the European Routes of Emperor Charles V. Keywords: 1, 2, 3, 4.

- D: one, probably the only existing, boardgame to learn European democracy: Eurocracy. A proven very successful tool to foster thinking and discussing Europe for an endless variety of target groups. Very effective in educational settings and cultural events like festivals and workshops. Keywords: 1, 4, 5.

A: Pakhuis de Zwijger, Amsterdam Pakhuis de Zwijger is a unique cultural organisation which opened its doors in 2006 and has grown to be an independent platform for and by the city of Amsterdam and its inhabitants.
Pakhuis de Zwijger celebrates its tenth birthday. It started with a dream, sprung from Cultuurfabriek and the directorship of Over het IJ Festival almost 20 years ago, which became reality in 2006 at the southern part of the IJ-bank – at that time a bare plain with old warehouses far away from the city centre. A major challenge to start a successful cultural enterprise, to say the least. Transformed by architect André van Stigt, today the former refrigerated warehouse functions as a debate centre of the 21st century, putting dialogue before debate and connection before opposition. It stimulates collaboration towards a livable city, puts urgent matters on the agenda, linking them to the creative industry. It is about integrating, connecting domains and disciplines, sharing knowledge and experiences, and designing and imagineering the future of everyday living.

With an amazing team of co-workers, we keep the building buzzing and created countless special projects, design sessions, presentations, movie screenings and talkshows – from tens a year in the beginning to over 600 in 2016, gathering a community close to 100,000 members following us live and online. As an internationally operating platform for the city in transition we do research, develop online

platforms, set up meetings and organise challenges, City Expeditions, and think tanks together with some two hundred partners while building local, national and international networks of City Makers and City Embassies. We welcome everyone regardless of age, sex, race or cultural background. At the same time, it represents the bottom-up vanguard: people with guts and perseverance, contributing actively to societal issues in the city, inspiring and activating people and communities and putting the collective interest.

The past year was one filled with highlights: we were cultural intendants of the EU 2016 Arts and Design programme Europe by People, creating FabCity at the head of Java-eiland, we organised the first City Makers Summit and presented the (Im)Pact of Amsterdam – as a call to action to the EU minister council as part of the Urban Agenda for the EU. We played a defining role in Amsterdam winning the EU Innovation Capital Award 2016-2017, together with the City of Amsterdam, Amsterdam Economic Board, Waag Society and Kennisland. Last but not least we made an impact at the UN Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador, where the worldwide New Urban Agenda was established and Pakhuis de Zwijger together with local City Makers set up Fabrica Ciudad, our new City Embassy in Quito.

In the next few years, we will focus on the question: Who owns the city? Can we rethink the Amsterdam values? Will Amsterdam become a real inclusive city? Are we able to connect neighbourhoods to necessary innovations and can makers also make the difference in urgent urban challenges? Will we all profit from the economic growth in the metropolitan region? Are we able to turn our old economy into a new green and circular one? Can we make sure our children will grow up in a livable, sustainable and self-sufficient city with equal opportunities for everyone?

In 2017, we will – in collaboration with our city partners – continue our daily programmes and organise new activities that will address these matters. For example, the challenge Make your City! (a spin-off of the EU Innovation Capital Award), the educational programme for primary school students Mijn Amsterdam, and the project Maakplaats 021 at several locations of the Public Library Amsterdam. Projects with a focus on 21st century skills, digital making, and city-making where young people can grow into the creators of our future city.

B: Iepen Mienskip, ECoC, Leeuwarden, 2018

C: European Routes of Emperor Charles V

THE EUROPEAN ROUTES OF EMPEROR CHARLES V, DECLARED A EUROPEAN CULTURAL ROUTE

The European Routes of Emperor Charles V have obtained a European Cultural Route certificate, awarded by the Council of Europe through the European Institute of Cultural Routes.



This declaration gives greater and visibility to and revitalises a legacy based on the career, vicissitudes of history and artistic, political, cultural, academic and social legacy of the last emperor of Europe, a legacy which constitutes a cultural and historic reference for the peoples of the continent.

The Route of Emperor Charles V in Extremadura forms part of these European Routes which will now hold this distinction.

The Government of Extremadura has actively supported this candidature, submitted to the Council of Europe by the Cooperation Network of the European Routes of Emperor Charles V, based in Cuacos de Yuste, which the European Academy of Yuste Foundation has formed an active part of since its foundation in 2007, currently holding the secretaryship.

The Association of La Vera and the Association for the Development of the Region of La Vera (ADICOVER) also forms part of this network, among other institutions.

The Route of Emperor Charles V has been a Festival of Regional Tourist Interest since 2011.

EUROPEAN CULTURAL ROUTE

The Cultural Routes initiative of the Council of Europe aims to create a bond between the citizens of Europe and its cultural heritage. They are roads between sites of particular interest which are sometimes historical paths, but they are not just tourist routes; they are living patrimony based on the mutual enrichment of exchange, facilitating the awareness of a common European identity.

Each Cultural Route encourages the participation of citizens in a democratically defined cultural heritage which is interesting due not just to its beauty and age but also, above all, to its fundamental intangible value. The Cultural Routes therefore reflect the cultural diversity of the continent of Europe.

In this sense, Europeans are invited to discover the plural wealth of their continent along alternative paths, thereby presenting tourism as a form of sustainable economic growth for the regions involved. Apart from this tourist objective, the aim is to achieve social cohesion and respect for the environment by means of the suitable integration of the cultural and natural heritage.

D: Game Lecture on European Democracy

The debate about the future of the EU has been dominated for decades by the dilemma whether the process of European integration should lead to the creation of a sovereign state of Europe or result in a Europe of sovereign states. As recently as 2005 the Belgian politician Paul Magnette published a

study under the title: What is the European Union?[4] In a rare twist of logic the author refrained from answering the question he posed in the title of his book. Seven years onwards Rosas and Armati concluded their widely acclaimed study on EU Constitutional Law by expressing serious doubt as to whether the EU can ever be defined.[5]

Friedrich Nietzsche should be remembered for giving his successors a sound piece of advice. The German philosopher suggested that, if you encounter a problem which can not be solved, by no means whatsoever, you should turn it into a game.[6] Treading in his footsteps I decided to turn the unidentifiable and unsolvable European Union into a board game, called Eurocracy.



On the board, the EU member states are portrayed according to their size with 1 to 4 cities. Players represent political parties competing for power. They embark on a continuous election campaign through the EU. They obtain Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) by winning municipal elections. Other parties landing on the same city may challenge them in fresh elections, which are democratically decided by the throw of the dice. They may also deal and swap cities in order to get entire countries. The first player to command a qualified majority in the European Parliament, wins the game and is proclaimed President of the European Union.....on condition of sufficient support in the European Parliament.

Eurocracy is played with six persons per game. When played in the classroom, the winners on each table are invited to engage in a Speech Battle. They have to deliver a speech in which the propose their

[4] Paul Magnette, What is the European Union?, London 2005
[5] Allan Rosas and Lorna Armati, EU Constitutional Law, Oxford 2012
[6] Friedrich Nietzsche, Ecce Homo, Leipzig 1908

priorities on taking office. During this part of the event, the other pupils assume the role of the European Parliament and decide which winner will be the ultimate EU-President.



The game in the classroom

After play, the teacher/trainer/professor invites the participants to engage in a debate about the EU. Is the EU a state or an organisation of states? What are the characteristics of the Union? Are there differences with other regional organisations and, if so, can you name these differences?

By asking and further questioning, the group arrives at the point where the problem must be faced as to whether the EU fits or does not fit in the Westphalian system of International Relations. This moment constitutes the turning point. It depends on the time available how many minutes or hours are spent on the Westphalian system. It forms the basis of the Organisation of the United Nations and underlies the distribution of international justice. Moreover, it sets the rules for the global financial markets. Currencies function on the basis of the Westphalian paradigm.

However, when the distinguishing qualities of the EU are compared with those of states on the one hand and those of organisations of states on the other hand, it becomes instantly clear that the Union is neither a state nor an international organisation. The implication of this conclusion is that the Westphalian paradigm has lost explanatory value with respect to the EU. As it is a general academic rule that obsolete paradigms have to be replaced, the Westphalian paradigm in international relations should also be substituted with a new one. Since the European Union exists of both citizens and member states, the diplomatic perspective of international relations should be replaced with the civic approach of democracy and the rule of law.

From this point of view, the common feature of all EU member states is their respect for democracy and the rule of law. The famous Copenhagen-criteria for the accession of new member states stress

that they should fulfil stringent criteria of human rights and democracy. As the essence of democracy is that the citizens are the authors of the laws, which they themselves must respect, it would appear that this principle has also bearing on the governance of the EU. This line of thought leads to the discovery of the Law of Democratic Integration. Whereas the Westphalian system prescribed that the EU should either become a sovereign state of Europe or establish itself as a Europe of sovereign state, the Law of Democratic Integration holds that, if two or more democratic states decide to share the exercise of sovereignty in a number of fields with a view to attain common goals, the organisation they create for this purpose should also be democratic.

At this juncture it becomes possible to draft a Citizens' Definition of the EU. Beyond the Westphalian paradigm the European Union may be defined as a democratic polity of citizens and member states. The distinctive quality of this polity is that the citizens are entitled to participate in the national democracies of their countries and in the common democracy of the Union.



EP President Martin Schulz happy to show the Citizens' Definition of the EU!

In conclusion, it may be suggested that the term 'common democracy' is of primordial importance for the EU. Whereas the term is void of meaning in the old Westphalian paradigm, it is obvious from the new perspective that the EU is evolving from a common market to a common democracy.