

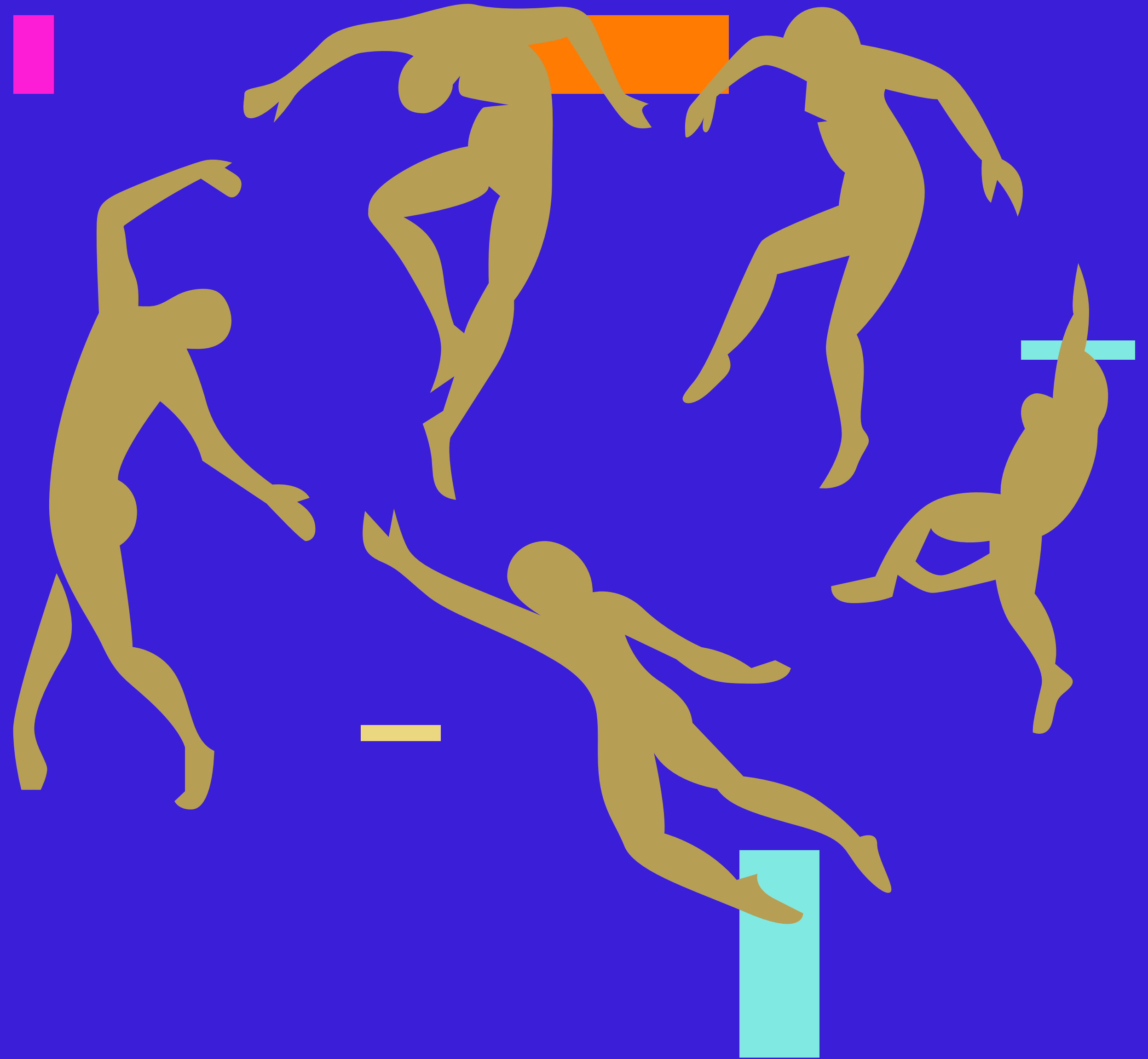
CULTURE
NEXT



Co-funded by
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THE 14TH
CULTURE
NEXT
CONFERENCE

Leeuwarden, Friesland, The Netherlands, 2025



LEEWARDEN, THE NETHERLANDS

8-10/07/2025

CONFERENCE REPORT

14TH CULTURE NEXT CONFERENCE

Agenda

Continuing the established tradition of Culture Next Conferences, the event began with a pre-meeting day centered on the SDG Thing workshop and the internal Culture Next management meetings. After these meetings, the official reception was held, where Ștefan Teișanu, Secretary General of Culture Next Network and Sjoerd Bootsma, Creative Director of Arcadia welcomed the group.

The Opening day was dedicated on two main topics: How can Cultural Participation grow in our cities? How can youth be more involved in cultural initiatives? After the welcoming from On the opening day, Lateesha Verwey, a curator, moderator and alumni of the youth program Blikopeners of the Stedelijk Museum, discussed on how cultural institutions can engage teenagers in their practices, bringing examples of do's and don't's. Pitches on culture and youth engagement in the cultural sector at the local level were presented from 15 Culture Next members. For the first time, the matchmaking session for the CN

mobilities programme was introduced and after lunch break the whole group was transferred to Het Lage Noorden for an experiential workshop on "Developing European Cultural Participation through Youth Programmes".

The day began with a presentation by Youness Iken, vice-chair of Ghent's youth panel, highlighting the city's approach to youth cultural participation as European Youth Capital 2024, followed by an open dialogue on youth inclusion led by Nynke Bruinsma. Afterward, cities were engaged in "Therapy Sessions" for networking and experience sharing, organized around four themes: legacy, implementation, loss, and bidding. The "Next on Culture Next" segment offered updates on the network's future activities, thematic working groups, missions, mobilities, next conferences and decision-making processes. Parallel to these sessions, youth representatives took part in the second phase of a workshop to further develop the European Youth Program, collaborating with local youth involved in

Leeuwarden's 2028 bid to refine ideas and integrate diverse perspectives.

For the first time we had two conference's moderators: András Farkas - PONT Group and Executive member of Culture Next Network and a moderator representing the youth community, Bianka Machová from Budweis 2028 ECoC.

In parallel, Leeuwarden's ECoC legacy programme Arcadia provided a rich cultural backdrop, with 100 days of events and exhibitions. Participants were also welcomed to Bouwurk on the first day, a community-built space that served as an informal hub for networking and cultural immersion.

This edition touched upon Culture Next's future vision for youth-led legacy building, cross-border collaboration, and keeping culture relevant together.

Check the full agenda of the event [here](#).

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Keynote Speeches

Engaging teenagers in your cultural institution - the do's & dont's

By Lateesha Verwey

Lateesha Verwey is a curator, moderator and alumna of the youth program Blikopeners of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. She has a background in Art History and worked for several museums. Currently she is involved at the International Documentary Festival and the Dutch Resistance Museum focusing on outreach and education. Lateesha is committed to making different perspectives visible and advocates for the influence of young voices within the cultural sector.

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EYC Ghent: Youth Cultural Participation in Ghent as European Youth Capital in 2024 andbeyond

By Youness Iken

As European Youth Capital 2024, Ghent stands out as an inspiring example of youth participation in cultural affairs. Youness, vice-chair of the youth panel behind the program's development, shared their approach and reflected on its impact on both the team and the young people of Ghent.

Youness is a 27-year-old writer, actor, and graphic designer based in Ghent. He is currently completing a Master's degree in Journalism while serving as the co-president of the Ghent Youth Council. His leadership experience includes acting as vice-president of the ambassadors' group for Ghent European Youth Capital 2024, where he also spent six months as a communication assistant. With a decade of volunteer work in culture and

youth engagement, Youness has consistently taken on meaningful roles, ranging from editor-in-chief of his faculty's student magazine to regularly interning as a host at Film Fest Gent, Belgium's largest film festival.

After the presentation, the audience started a conversation on how to best tackle challenges that come with youth integration. Having a young person to help answer these questions provides a more accurate vision for participants.

This session was co-organized with the CN member city of Ghent.

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This year's edition brought a different perspective. Participating cities were represented by young delegates aged 18–27, who worked alongside policymakers, creatives, and local initiatives to co-develop ideas and actions.

To lay the groundwork for youth participation and integration in the cultural field, both professionally and personally, there were organized two unconventional workshops to foster dialogue and collaboration among participants of all ages. Youth-led panels, workshops, and networking sessions highlighted their vision and urgency, echoed in one participant's words:

“We are no longer waiting to be invited in. We've started building something new”

The first workshop was set in the green surroundings of Friesland and the activity offered a relaxed yet dynamic environment for meaningful exchange. Bringing the participants to an outdoor location, making them collaborate through a less conventional way to lower the cultural gap between generations. This activity facilitated networking among participants as they were randomly assigned to teams. Working on a playful task formed more organic interactions between them.

The second work session took place in parallel with the internal activities and gathered all the youth representatives for a more hands-on practical session. This was a moment in which the frustrations of young people working in culture got out, allowing them to identify root causes. This activity resulted in a manifesto, among other outcomes, from the youth, in which they expressed how their experience can be improved in this sector. A good opportunity for Culture Next to use the input when developing future strategies for the network. Other participants benefit from hearing feedback that might not otherwise be this honest. Delivered at an international level, the points mentioned should raise questions and hopefully solutions for cities across Europe.

— Youth
engagement
as our main
■ focus

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Cities' presentations

Youth integration in cultural matters across Europe

Young and cities' representatives took the stage to present good practices and concrete examples of youth engagement in the cultural sector at the local level. It was a moment to gain inspiration and insight into the value of intergenerational collaboration. 10 initiatives were showcased including youth-led projects, advisory councils, and cross-generational partnerships.

All the presentations are in the following [link](#)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. City of Kortrijk: | "Placemaking project" |
| 2. České Budějovice – Evropské hlavní město kultury 2028: | "The Young Creators project" |
| 3. Molenbeek for Brussels 2030 | |
| 4. ECoC Bad Ischl Salzkammergut Legacy: | "Youth curated projects in our youth programme Next Generation You" |
| 5. Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture: | "Why it is important to create paid opportunities for diverse young people to be part of your delivery company" |
| 6. Leeds City Council: | "THE PLATFORM: Exploring youth theatre engagement through a youth work informed creative process" |
| 7. Fondazione per la Cultura Torino: | "Youth cultural participation, specifically the presentation of some valuable projects from the City of Turin, which address important social issues through culture" |
| 8. Dublin City Council Culture Company: | "Cultural participation and youth-centred programming" |
| 9. Gemeente Den Haag: | "What is the impact of projects when they are organised by and for young people in The Hague?" |
| 10. Creative Institute Trencin: | "Engagement of youth in ECOC activities/sustainability of youth work led by municipality" |



Day 2 was dedicated to updates on the network's future activities, thematic working groups, mobilities, conferences, membership, missions, decision making etc.

Moreover, there were organized separately the following sessions dedicated to mobilities' matchmaking and therapy sessions:

Day 2 Presentations [link](#)



Mobilities' match making

Session dedicated to match making full member cities for the CN mobility programme. The open call was launched.

Therapy sessions

This session included 4 talking groups for networking, sharing and support. The groups were divided as follows:

- Bidding cities
- Cities in their implementation phase (was merged with cities in legacy phase)
- Cities that were not awarded the title
- Cities that are in their legacy phase



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Parallel programme

Bouwurk tour

The 14th Culture Next Conference coincided with the Arcadia's triennial programming and will be hosted at Bouwurk — a unique space created by and for the community. More than just a venue, Bouwurk is an oasis of creativity, connection, and growth. It embodies the principle of *mienskip* (community) and provides a welcoming space where generations, ideas, and cultural expressions meet. In Bouwurk, local artists, makers, and young talents activate the space, turning it into a vibrant hub that celebrates both tradition and innovation.

It's a place where collaborations flourish, stories are shared, and people grow together, making it the perfect setting for Culture Next Network experience.v

Excursion and workshops at Het Lage Noorden

A unique place on the Frisian Wadden Sea coast for national and international artists, creative makers and researchers, locals and moochers. The participants had the opportunity to visit this artistic residency space, experience the countryside of Friesland, meet local artists, have the first collective workshop on youth engagement and finish the day with a lovely local dinner.

Morning activity: yoga

CN members began the conference's second day with an early morning yoga session in the White Box of Bouwurk, a chance to stretch, breathe, and connect.



Participants



LEEWARDEN, THE NETHERLANDS

Participants

The 14th Culture Next Conference, hosted in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, brought together 97 participants in total from across 39 European cities for two dynamic days of dialogue, exchange, and cultural strategy. Framed as this year's Cultural Camp, the conference focused on cultural participation and legacy, with youth engagement at the core.

97 Total number of participants

58 Female participants

39 Male participants

0 Non-binary participants

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Participating cities:

- Aveiro, Portugal
- Bad - Ischl Salzkammergut, Austria
- Bielsko-Biała, Poland
- Bradford, UK
- Braga, Portugal
- Brno, Czechia
- Burgas, Bulgaria
- České Budějovice, Czech Republic
- Chemnitz, Germany
- Cluj, Romania
- Debrecen, Hungary
- Dublin, Ireland
- Elefsina, Greece
- Faro, Portugal
- Ghent, Belgium
- Jerez de la Frontera, Spain
- Katowice, Poland
- Kortrijk, Belgium
- Larnaka, Cyprus
- Leeds, UK

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- Leeuwarden, The Netherlands
- Leuven, Belgium
- Lviv, Ukraine
- Lublin, Poland
- Molenbeek, Belgium
- Namur, Belgium
- Novi Sad, Serbia
- Odesa, Ukraine
- Oulu, Finland
- Oviedo, Spain
- Plovdiv, Bulgaria
- Rzeszów, Poland
- Tartu, Estonia
- The Hague, The Netherlands
- Torino, Italy
- Trencin, Slovakia
- Valmiera, Latvia
- Victoria, Gozo, Malta
- Zalău, Romania

Logistics

Accommodation

Arcadia team booked accommodation for 71 participants, having Hotel Vie Via (Tweebaksmarkt 23) and Hotel Post Plaza (Tweebaksmarkt 27) as conference hotels.

4 participants had rooms booked in Hotel Post Plaza, while 67 participants had rooms booked in Hotel Vie Via (14 board members, 2 participants from Whitelabel, 1 participant from ECoCNews, 1 expert member, 43 full members, 1 keynote speaker, 7 observing members and 2 representatives of other cities).

Venues

Day 0	Day 1
Zuid4 space for SDG Lab&Arcadia's office for internal CN management meetings	Bouwruk, first half of Day 1 and Het Lage Noorden, second half of Day 1

Transport

Schiphol Amsterdam Airport: approx. 2 hrs by train, train station is below the airport, tickets can be purchased at location or online.

Eindhoven Airport: approx 3 hrs by train, shuttle buses from airport to central station, tickets can be purchased at location or online.

Recommended the participants to check rental bikes and scooters, as

Leeuwarden is very bike friendly. Walking was also recommended as all venues for the conference were in the central area, including the accommodation.

To and from Het Lage Noorden there were used 2 buses, 100 seats, through Arriva.

Food

Day 0	Day 1	Day 2
Zuid4 for lunch & Roast for reception dinner	Roast for coffee and snacks; De Koperen Tuin for lunch & Het Lage Noorden for dinner	Saray for lunch; De Kanselarij for coffee and snacks & Roast for coffee and snacks and Bouwurk

Language

English is widely spoken in all areas of the Netherlands. The conference was hosted in English. Leeuwarden hosted Fries, Dutch, and English speakers.

Time Zone

CET - Central European Time

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Communication highlights

The Leeuwarden conference benefited from a consistent communication effort. Over 15 posts and another 25 Stories were created across Facebook and the newly launched Instagram page, which gained more than 100 new followers during the event. The Culture Next Facebook page also grew by 17 new followers. Cumulatively, the content reached almost 7,000 people and generated more than 10,800 views.

To highlight one of the conference's key themes, the involvement of young people in the cultural sector, several video testimonials were recorded with participants from both the organizational and youth representative sides.

The 2025 communication plan focuses on amplifying Culture Next's identity as a collaborative European network, showcasing impact beyond ECoC bids, and enabling cultural mobility and cross-city

collaboration. Core messages highlight culture-led local development, the power of the network, the legacy of bids, and real mobility stories of artists and ideas.

Key audiences include citizens and creative communities, city authorities, European cultural stakeholders, and media. Member cities are encouraged to regularly share local stories using common visual identity and editorial themes, submit quarterly contributions, and participate in a new Culture Exchange Board for matchmaking cultural programs.

Content formats range from monthly "Built Different" and "City Spotlight" features to quarterly "We move with culture" stories and seasonal visual maps. The network supports members with European-wide visibility, branded tools, mobility facilitation, and thematic storytelling.

Numbers

519

reactions on social media

6.9k+

reach on social media

2.4k+

website users

39

European cities present

97

participants in total

1

SDG Thing workshop

LEEWARDEN, THE NEDERLANDS

Media appearances

Rzeszów as an "observatory member" at Culture Next in Leeuwarden

15.07.2025

Events | Stay updated | Rzeszów as an "observatory member" at Culture Next in Leeuwarden

We concluded our participation in the **14th Culture Next Conference in Leeuwarden**, representing Rzeszów as an "observatory member."

We visited inspiring creative spaces such as Bouwurk, Arcadia, and Hetlagenoorden, where we participated in workshops dedicated to developing youth participation in culture. Surrounded by the natural beauty of Frisia, we discussed how to create inclusive, accessible, and engaging cultural activities for young people.

During the second day of the conference, we focused on how to increase residents' involvement in the cultural life of cities and how to support youth initiatives.

The third day was devoted to internal discussions within the Culture Next network – an important step towards further developing cooperation between European cities. We return with renewed energy, ideas, and contacts that will translate into activities in Rzeszów!

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The 14th Culture Next conference in Leeuwarden: "Cultural Participations"

By Editorial staff | Mercoledì, 21 Maggio 2025

dimensione font | Stampa | Email



BDSK - Leeuwarden

Foto by Thomas Vior

The fourteenth Culture Next conference will be held in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, European Capital of Culture in 2018. It is focused on the theme "Cultural Participation" and gathers representatives from 50 European cities and their



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Aceitar

A Braga 25 participou, de 8 a 10 de julho, na 14.ª conferência da

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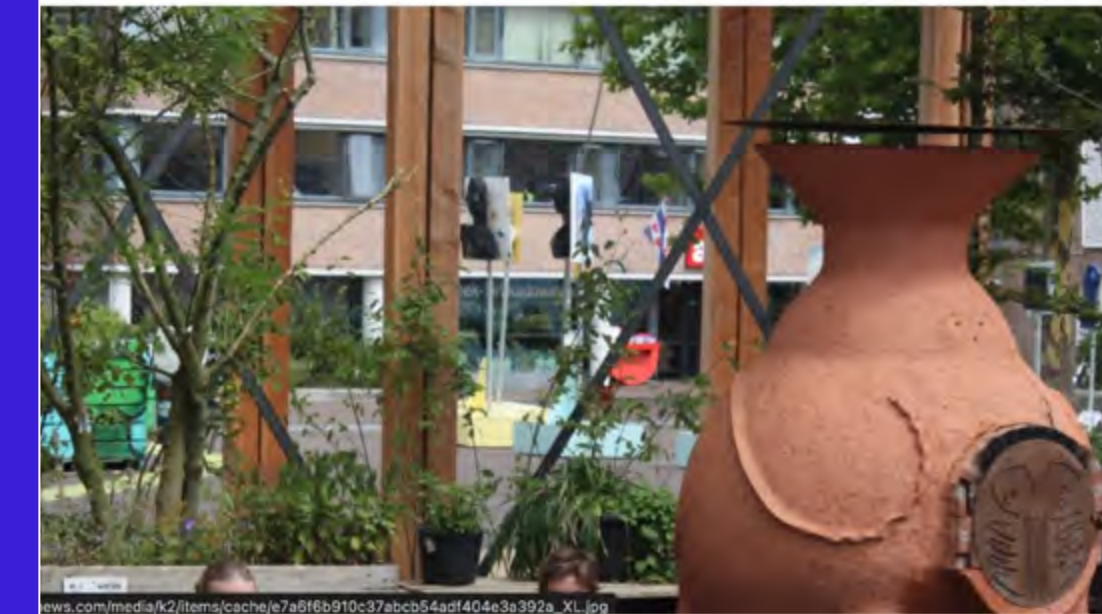
Home > Culture Next > Ecoc, real youth involvement needed

CULTURE NEXT

Ecoc, real youth involvement needed

By Serafino Paternoster | Giovedì, 17 Luglio 2025

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news.com/medias/2/items/cache/7a6f6b910c37abc654d9f404e3a392a_XL.jpg

Jerez 2031 participa en la 14ª Conferencia de Culture Next centrada en la participación cultural y la juventud que se celebra en Leeuwarden, Países Bajos

Forma parte del grupo SDG Lab, una innovadora metodología vinculada a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible

09 07 2025

Ficheros relacionados

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Os jovens europeus no caminho ativo da cultura | Por João Palmeiro

Há cidades que já estão a envolver os jovens na fase de candidatura a capital europeia da cultura, como, por exemplo, Turim teve o logotipo desenhado com a colaboração de jovens estudantes"

10 July, 2025 / News

Oviedo advances in its bid for European Capital of Culture with its participation in the Culture Next conference in the Netherlands



The artistic director of the candidacy, Natalia Álvarez Simó, attended the 14th Culture Next Conference, held from July 8 to 10 in Leeuwarden (Netherlands), as an observer. This European forum focuses on cultural participation, with a special emphasis on youth.

The conference brought together representatives from over 50 European cities, youth delegations aged 18 to 27, local artists and cultural organisations. Its agenda included lectures, workshops, collaborative sessions and networking spaces, all with a shared objective to exchange experiences, build new alliances and design joint strategies to promote the active involvement of young people in the cultural life of cities.

Oviedo shared working spaces with other candidate cities – some that have already held the title, and others that, although they didn't obtain it, continue to develop strong cultural programmes. This international collaboration is essential to nourish Oviedo's candidacy, generate synergies and help shape a shared European cultural

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