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**Hosting a session of the European Cultural Parliament**

The European Cultural Parliament (ECP) was founded in the premises of The Council of Europe, Strasbourg, in November 2001. The objective was – and still is – to strengthen the role of cultural and artistic ideas and initiatives in Europe and to promote ethical and aesthetic values in the European project. The ECP should amplify voices of independent artists and cultural personalities. Their voices should be heard in order to balance the strong influence of technocracy in the European integration project. In addition, the founders of the ECP wished to strengthen the dialogue and cooperation between citizens in EU countries and Neighbouring European countries and between various sectors of arts, philosophy and letters. To this end, outstanding artists and other cultural personalities from all parts of the continent have been nominated Members of the ECP. By February 2023 there are about **160 Members from 43 European** countries in the Cultural Parliament. New members are nominated by a Nomination Committee upon proposals from already ECP members and from ECP host cities. An ECP member has the right to propose two new members from countries other than his/her own. **Each host city has the right to nominate 3 new ECP members.**

The ECP has had **twenty sessions so far** – in

Bruges 2002,

Graz 2003,

Genoa 2004,

Lisbon 2005,

Turku 2006,

Sibiu 2007,

Liverpool 2008,

Gothenburg 2009,

Athens 2010,

Pécs 2011,

Berlin 2012,

Edinburgh 2013,

Prishtina 2014.

Girona 2015

Batumi 2016

Rotterdam 2017

Berlin 2018 (workshop)

Dilijan, Armenia 2019

Berlin 2020 (digital seminar)

Berlin 2021 (symposium)

Kaunas 2022

The sessions usually last for **three days** – mostly Friday-Sunday, with arrival of participants on Thursday evening. At the opening ceremony a politician from the host country and/or the local mayor could welcome the participants. Two or three key-note speakers (at least one prominent artist/cultural personality from the host country) could address participants at the opening. The session then includes plenary sessions, inter-active meeting with local artists, workshops and artistic events. Main theme of the session is decided in cooperation between the host city and the ECP.

Important European topics have been discussed, such as

*Tolerance and Understanding,*

*Creative Milieus in Europe,*

*The role of Culture in promoting European Cohesion,*

*Intercultural Dialogue,*

*The importance of Quality*

*Democracy as a challenge for culture and media.*

*The Relevance of Europe in a Globalized World*

*Freedom of Speech*

*Populism and Extremism in Europe*

*Creativity, Innovation and Cultural Identity,*

*European Values,*

*Migration issues*

*Humanitarianism in Culture and Education*

*The role of Culture in times of war*

Several new Pan-European **projects** have been born within the framework of the ECP, such as *NUROPE - The Nomadic University for Arts, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe* (Headquarters in Turku, Finland)and *Love Difference* (Headquarters in Biella, Italy) *Citybooks* (Headquarters Graz, Austria), *Music Mind Trust* (Headquarters Sussex, UK). Furthermore, the ECP has been looking at various aspects of *“the Strategic Role of Culture in the European Project”* and “*The Creative Process – What Arts & Culture can offer Society”.*

The ECP is also an important European **Think-Tank**. Its Research group has produced reports on the Lisbon Strategy (2006) on Intercultural Dialogue (2007) and on Democracy (2008). More about the ECP, its members and its various sessions can be found on the website [www.kulturparlament.com](http://www.kulturparlament.com/) . It cooperates with many important projects and institutions, such as *A Soul for Europe*, Berlin, *The Transatlantic Dialogue,*TAD,Luxemburg, *Institute for Cultural Diplomacy*, Berlin and *The Academy for Cultural Diplomacy,* Tbilisi, Georgia.

Since 2010 the ECP also has a network for young artists and cultural managers (age 18-35). Apart from separate local meetings the ECP YN was organizing a youth session (separately financed) in connection with each ECP annual session. From 2017 the network is called **ECP Future Generation.** In autumn 2019 the network organized a Festival in Brussels.

The ECP is a non-for-profit network and forum without basic financial resources for preparing and organizing big sessions. The administration is based on voluntary work. All twenty sessions so far have been financed by the host cities or regions.

The costs for bringing about 70 - 100 ECP members from about 25 - 40 European countries to a conference of three days depend on flight prices, local transfers, local accommodation, catering costs and availability of conference facilities. In some cases the host has offered only local accommodation, catering costs and conference facilities. When no flights have been offered, we cannot count with more than 50 – 60 participants. In such case, covering travel costs for a selected number of members (e.g. relatively long distance from the host city) could be considered and would increase the geographical diversity of participants.

The 20 European cities mentioned above can testify that an ECP session is a big event with a great potential for interesting, fruitful and inspiring meetings between European and local artists and intellectuals. For European Capitals of Culture like Bruges, Graz, Genoa, Sibiu, Liverpool, Athens, Turku, Pécs and Kaunas the ECP sessions have contributed importantly to a true European dimension, either during preparations or during the year itself or as follow up to the cultural year. The ECP members are famous cultural actors from all fields of Arts and Culture – literature, music, theatre, philosophy, history, film, dance, architecture, visual arts and new media. **All artists are eager to have inter-active contacts with local colleagues** and are at the disposal of local media for personal interviews during the session. An ECP session is always **open to interactive activities in collaboration with the host organisations. It is also open to co-operation with media and interested observers from local cultural life, universities, arts schools and other relevant institutions**.

For more information about the possibilities of cooperation with the ECP, please contact the co-founder and Secretary General, Ambassador, Dr. H. C. Karl-Erik Norrman:

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For information about the ECP sessions and ECP members, please visit our website:

[www.kulturparlament.com](http://www.kulturparlament.com)