

Press Release – May 2013, 22

Forum d'Avignon, Bilbao Metropoli 30 and the european centre for creative economy (ecce) make call for cultural and creative actions to become drivers and catalysts in urban development

This one year transnational project, called CATALYSE, is financially feasible thanks to a European Union Culture Program's grant.

The "CATALYSE" project is founded upon the fact **social and political challenges European nations are currently facing cannot be solved by economic means only, but require solutions from the European cultural roots likewise:** culture and creativity cannot be neglected when defining the modern European project, given their particular impact on territories' development, as well as on local and transnational identities.

As the European Union is interested in culture and creativity as drivers for change, the three project partners, Forum d'Avignon, Bilbao Metropoli 30 and the European Centre for Creative Economy (eCCe), created this project to realize three international conferences and model urban actions in order to showcase how culture and creativity can concretely push and catalyse the future of territories.



These three activities are based on existing partnerships and different events – the Forum Avignon Ruhr (June 2013, 27 & 28), the Forum Avignon (November 2013, 21.22 & 23), and Forum Avignon Bilbao (March 2014, 6 & 7). Thus "CATALYSE" gathers the three national organizations' teams within a successful European cooperation: the **Forum d'Avignon** (France) as coordinator, and **Bilbao Metropoli 30** (Spain) and the **European Centre for Creative Economy (ecce)** (Germany) as coorganizers.

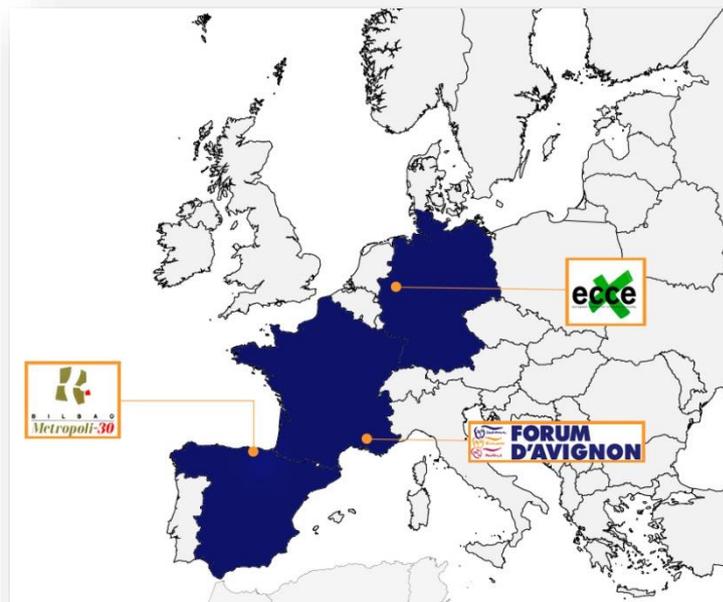
Based on the previous experiences' results, the shared objectives of this project can be defined in the short-term and the long term :

- **To engage key decision-makers and the general public in Europe to make evident the lever effect of cultural and creative investments** – public ones as well as private ones - on the GDP and job creation.

- **To sensitize European cities and citizens**, about the benefits of integrated strategies to make culture and creativity catalyse the quality of life in Europe.
- **To start more cultural and creative actions to foment sustainable growth and social cohesion** in a truly European living-together.

Through these goals, this cooperation project is meeting the three specific objectives of the EU Culture Programme: to support the trans-national mobility of people working in the cultural sector, to encourage the trans-national circulation of artistic and cultural works and products and to encourage intercultural dialogue.

Catalyse is the result of a long-lasting relationship, initiated in 2011. “CATALYSE” has been developed by the 3 organizers taking as a reference the know-how of the 5 previous editions of Forum d’Avignon (2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012) and, most especially, the successful experience of the Forum d’Avignon Ruhr 2012, the first step to extend this original concept through partnerships with other institutions and countries across Europe. And we expect to achieve the same success for our collaboration in 2013.



This successful cooperation confirmed the appropriateness of this format mixing culture, economy and media, leading to the next step: **expanding from a cross-sector logic to a cross-country one.** Our new partner, Bilbao Metropoli 30, is a perfect match to our European collaboration, as the city of Bilbao has become an emblem of what urban and economic renewal through multiple means of culture and creative investments. Catalyse is therefore the result of an already existing and successful experience which justifies the willingness of the partners to **develop a more ambitious cross-European cooperation project.**

The project's preparation, as well as the process leading to the grant's positive decision has been made possible with the technical support of the Brussels based organization **CUMEDIAE, Culture & Media Agency Europe aisbl** (www.culture-media.eu).

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