

The success of the first Forum d'Avignon Ruhr 2012 in Essen calls for broadening the Franco-German cooperation on culture.

The success of the first Forum in Ruhr, with one hundred and fifty participants coming from twenty countries, confirms that culture should be regarded as an essential investment in the development of Europe. This dynamic calls to add Culture to Education and Youth already registered by General de Gaulle and Chancellor Adenauer as pillars of the Franco-German cooperation. This call makes sense on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Elysée Treaty, in January 2013.



The place, the World Heritage site, Zollverein in Essen, is a symbol! Of the renewal of a brownfield; the old factory converted into a mining international cultural center attracts over two million visitors a year and helping to change the image of an entire *lander*, the North Westphalia. As part of this archetype of successful cultural investment that enhances the attractiveness of an area, creating jobs and changing the perception and reputation of a region, the first meetings of the Forum d'Avignon Ruhr plunged hundred and fifty participants from twenty different countries, in the heart of economic development of territories perspectives based on a commitment to public and private investment in culture.

The bet was not in advance. Both the economic and social context increases the current concerns about the future of public investment in culture, creates doubts about the creativity and innovation capacities in Europe compared to the emerging countries, highlights challenges of designers to find viable business models, opposes the practices of digital consumption and access to the Internet, with an ideology that promotes culture as free.

"*You have to recognize the power of the invisible cultural hand*" has hammered, in reference to Adam Smith, Charles Landry, author of the study, 'Creativity, Culture and the City: a question of interconnection'. The debates and interventions, backed by the latest studies* have emphasized the positive impact of cultural investment, as it combines technological progress, cultural needs and social development. Creators, public and private decision makers, have testified that culture can revitalize virtuous ecosystems for job creation, attraction and territorial well being of citizens. More than ever, culture, existing heritage and heritage to-be-build should be included as a factor of sustainable development for citizens, city or territory.

For this critical issue for future generations, the Forum d'Avignon Ruhr was the opportunity for a call for cooperation and mobilization of all institutional artistic and economic decision makers, at the European scale.



"We are here to fight pessimism. Creativity is the essence of art. Technology has never changed the nature of human values that bring together the peoples of Europe." insisted Nicolas Seydoux, chairman of the Forum d'Avignon, who makes a proposal. "In a globalized and diversified world, our main challenge is to work together. While we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Elysée Treaty which symbolically sealed the Franco-German reconciliation, creating a genuine friendship between the two peoples, and especially their youth, we suggest **a new foundation of the Treaty where culture would be the heart of this 'building of a united Europe, which is the goal of both peoples'**, like Maurice Schumann and Konrad

Adenauer, the founding fathers, wrote. We must work together, convince people of our two nations, in the framework of Agenda 2020, and incessantly plead in Brussels that the sustainable footprint will be cultural or will not exist".

Forum d'Avignon Ruhr

Created in the framework of a partnership between the Forum d'Avignon and the ECCE (European Centre for the Creative Economy), the Forum d'Avignon Ruhr holds its first edition on the 8th and 9th of March 2012 in the SANAA-Building in the area of the Zollverein legacy of brownfields in the Ruhr declared World Heritage by UNESCO.

Get the latest updates on the Forum d'Avignon: www.forum-avignon-ruhr.org

The Forum d'Avignon

The Avignon Forum is a think tank supported by 25 partners and international public and private sponsors including the Ministry of Culture and Communication since its inception in 2008. By combining culture, media and cultural industries - the hub of the knowledge economy - the Avignon Forum explores not only the economic dimension of culture and heritage but also its role in terms of social cohesion and job creation, anchored on the experiences and innovations in the field.

The Forum d'Avignon organizes international meetings between actors of culture, economy and media, offers tracks of reflection and highlights the best work at international, European and local scale. The 2012 edition will be held on 15, 16 and 17 November 2012 at the Palais des Papes in Avignon.

Get the latest updates from the Forum d'Avignon and all the studies conducted by the Forum d'Avignon, interviews and videos: www.forum-avignon.org, [Facebook](#), [twitter](#) and [youtube](#)

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Cultural undertaking and investment: from intuition to the decision making - by Kurt Salmon for the Forum d'Avignon 2011 (available free online).



How is the decision to invest in equipment or cultural projects taken? What are the criteria and triggers? What are the arguments to foster and promote cultural projects? What is the position of different actors: artists, institutions, companies? What are the "strategies" observed at the origin of a project?

The study sheds, with a hundred interviews conducted worldwide, the mechanisms and decision models related to an investment in a cultural project, aiming to define a framework for the attention of makers. It seeks to identify non-economic criteria that prevail in the decision in favor of cultural investment, whether from public or private operators.

Forum d'Avignon

International meetings of the culture, economic and media

forum-avignon@forum-avignon.org

+ 33 (0) 1 42 25 69 10