



Project author or developer:  
**The European Cultural Foundation**

Where:  
**NH / North Holland / Amsterdam**

Website:  
**[www.culturalfoundation.eu/](http://www.culturalfoundation.eu/)**

The European Cultural Foundation inspires, empowers and engages people through culture. “Democracy is a creative act, engaging people in a conversation beyond the ballot box. Democracy needs imagination.” Peter Vermeersch, quoted in “Reclaiming Public Space: Democratic Practices Reinvented?” a debate during Imagining Europe, Amsterdam, 5 October 2012.

Over the past 60 years, ECF has been striving towards an open, democratic and inclusive Europe in which culture is a valued and key contributor. However, in recent years we have witnessed a growing gap between people, democratic processes and structures.

ECF seeks to bridge that gap, to reconnect people and re-invigorate our democracies by identifying, connecting, nourishing and illuminating a network of local cultural change-makers.

This will enable a European-wide community of practice to emerge, a group that evolves naturally, based on common interests and enables members to learn from each other and collectively develop their ideas, skills and expertise. These connected, or networked, local community-building organisations will present a different European picture – one that grows from the bottom up, through cultural actions.

Over the past four years, we set out to uncover new narratives for Europe at a moment when the prevailing narratives seemed to have lost their resonance. This focus on Narratives for Europe led to our new thematic focus for 2013–2016 – “Culture, Creative Communities and Democracy”™. This new networked approach will inform our work over the next four years.

Our activities will continue to initiate and support cultural exchange and creative expression across wider Europe; we will share and connect knowledge across the European cultural sector, and campaign for the arts on all levels of political decision-making. We will link policy and practice, to act as catalysts for artistic and cultural expression and to have a concrete impact on European cultural policies and strategies.

We do this through our activities, grants, advocacy, publications and digital presence.

Our vision

An open, democratic and inclusive Europe within which culture is a valued and key contributor.

Our mission

ECF is dedicated to supporting and connecting cultural change-makers in Europe whose work contributes to an ongoing cross-sectoral debate on Europe and Europe’s place in the world.

Our values

We are imaginative: We imagine the future, we seek creative solutions and we act as a catalyst.

We are a connector: We are respectful of different cultures and backgrounds and we link people and ideas. We build bridges between citizens and institutions, policy-making and practice.

We are considerate: We are attentive to people’s needs.

We are reflective: We explore, learn and share knowledge.

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