



Berlin Declaration by the 'Cities for Europe' Initiative

1. On the eve of the European Year of Citizens 2013, we are united in our will to pave the way for a bottom-up Europe that will breathe life into the Europe of institutions.

2. Where do Europe's citizens encounter Europe?

In their own cities.

- It is in Europe's cities that the specifically European cultural achievements are born.
- It is here and in Europe's regions that the commemorative sites connected with major European events are to be found.
- This is where the integration of people of different cultures succeeds – or fails.
- This is where derelict buildings are given a new lease of life and entire city quarters are reclaimed.
- This is where people work together across borders.
- This is where citizens preserve and use Europe's heritage – the traces of Europe's cultural diversity down through the ages.

3. This being the case, it is up to the cities and their citizens to build the Europe of Citizens at local level. This responsibility is not one that they can delegate to anybody else.

We are aware of our responsibility here and have agreed, through cooperation between urban society, politics and administration, to move towards a true Europe of Citizens, towards a new culture of European democracy.

4. We are joining forces to create the 'Cities for Europe' initiative. This should and does not involve any sort of institutional commitment; it is rather a mutual affirmation of our engagement for Europe. We invite everyone, large and small cities and their citizens, to join our initiative. Also invited are civic groups who wish to share in this engagement.

- In our cities, we are launching and supporting cultural, social, economic and societal initiatives that aspire to pan-European significance: projects, conferences and discussions related to Europe, awards for European action, etc.
- We are advocating that in future cities should only be honoured with the designation 'European Capital of Culture' if their application contains evidence of their lasting contribution to the process of European integration.
- We support our cities' policy of making increasing use of the cultural resources and competences of our citizens to raise our European profile.
- We are advocating that more European cities are invited to participate in this initiative and are stepping up exchange between the citizens of our cities through joint projects.
- We are encouraging civil society forces, private organizations and foreign-born citizens – as well as people of all generations – to assume and share responsibility for these efforts.
- We are asking our locally elected European Parliament members and the European institutions to provide political backing for our initiative.
- We intend to meet once a year to take stock of how the 'Cities for Europe' initiative is progressing, to agree on new tasks and welcome new members to the initiative. This meeting should form part of the events organized by the respective European Capital of Culture, to celebrate its special contribution to European development.

Berlin, 9 November 2012