

About the survey

The survey was open for answers from city officials within the EuroCities network from March to May 2021. 56 responses were gathered from participants from 45 cities in 22 countries.

The results were presented and discussed at the transnational meetings of the Erasmus+-project “Creative Ageing”, during the 2021 EuroCities Culture Forum in Tampere, Finland, and influenced the recommendation paper written by the project members.

What is cultural participation?

Cultural participation refers to approaches designed to enable people to participate in cultural life. This includes, e.g., reading books, visiting cultural offerings and leisure facilities, or helping to (co-)create them. It can also mean private creative activities or playing musical instruments. In addition, the promotion of cultural participation includes supporting cultural and leisure facilities in realising cultural participation strategies (organisation, staff, and programme).



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CREATIVE AGEING

Europe-wide survey among city officials within the EuroCities network

BERLIN



Creative Ageing - Europe-wide survey

Background

Europe's population is ageing: in 2018, around 20% of the European population were aged 65 and over. By 2050, this share is expected to increase to 30%. The project "Creative Ageing - Cultural Participation Instead Of Social Isolation" has been dealing with questions of cultural participation opportunities for senior citizens since 2019. In the spring of 2021, the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe carried out a Europe-wide survey among EuroCities Culture Forum members in cooperation with the Berlin Institute for Research on Cultural Participation. This survey's aim was to find out how the topic of "cultural participation of older people" is anchored and implemented in European cities.

Questions

The survey consisted of about 80 questions, included opportunities to link to or upload documents, submit answers to open questions. It included questions on the following topics:

- The promotion of cultural participation of older people
- Cultural guidelines and documents
- Institutions, measures, and projects to promote the cultural participation of older people
- Influence of the Corona pandemic
- Personal details
- Participants' interest in a (professional) exchange on the topic

Key takeaways from the city administration survey

Structural issues



More than a third of cities **do not currently have city guidelines** (general or related to culture); most cities **do not officially define** the group of older people in culture-related guidelines.



The promotion of cultural participation of older people **is expected to become more important in the future** than it is now and has been.



The promotion of cultural participation of older people is **in competition with that of other age groups**.

Thematic issues



Greatest barriers for older people's cultural participation: **social isolation, digital content, and economic barriers**.



Digital participation: both barrier *and* opportunity (especially during pandemic) but not main objective.



Most common topics of planning documents: **libraries, inclusion, public spaces**.



Looking ahead

How can we find out more about barriers to and success factors of older people's cultural participation? Cities, governments and practitioners will need to think about how to set up programmes and funding, how to make offers inclusive and accessible, and how to reach older people who might have limited digital knowledge and financial possibilities. While this survey provides insight into the current situation in cities across Europe, many follow-up questions remain:

How can we fight social isolation, lower economic barriers and make digital participation accessible? What are the causes for the competition between the promotion of cultural participation of older people and that of other age groups? Libraries, public spaces, and inclusion are strongly represented in the planning documents - which other cultural institutions and topics might be worth thinking about?