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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Council conclusions on on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative, as approved by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its meeting on 29-30 November 2021.

Council conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Acknowledging the steps already taken by the European Union and its Member States to enhance the important role of culture, high-quality architecture and built environment on the political agenda and to ensure the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, as well as its lasting impact for our societies and future generations,

Recalling the main political references as set out in the Annex to these conclusions,

Building on the Work Plan for Culture 2019 – 2022, in particular on its on Priority B ('Cohesion and well-being'), and the actions on the topic 'high-quality architecture and built environment for everyone',

WELCOMES the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative, and in this context

UNDERLINES THAT

1. Architecture and the built environment are embodiments of past and present culture, ways of living and values. They establish the stock for our cultural heritage of the future and contribute to shaping our societies and identities.
2. The built environment¹ is a reflection of a community, and the responsibility for its overall quality rests in the hands of the relevant public sector bodies and other stakeholders, working in close cooperation with all citizens.

¹ See definition in the Annex

3. It is important to ensure that both the development of existing building stock – through restoration, renovation, adapted re-use and conservation – and the creation of new buildings and spaces are of high quality.
4. Architects, inter alia, play a central role in all phases of the development of high-quality architecture and living environment, and can therefore contribute in a significant manner to the public interest by taking into account territorial diversity and the needs of civil society.
5. Culture, high-quality architecture² and built environment contribute to the achievement of the United Nations’ sustainable development goals (SDGs)³ in many ways. They can contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal⁴ and its aim to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.
6. The NEB is a transdisciplinary initiative combining three inter-linked dimensions: aesthetics, sustainability and inclusion. It relies on a participatory approach and aims to involve all people across the Union, including those from disadvantaged groups, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda and the European Green Deal’s objective of leaving no one behind.
7. The NEB initiative draws inspiration from the original Bauhaus⁵, which already had a holistic, sustainable, high quality and inclusive approach to design, architecture and art in mind.

² As defined by the 8 criteria of the Davos Baukultur Quality Tool

³ As set out in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (see reference in the Annex)

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

⁵ The Bauhaus (Weimar, Dessau and Berlin, 1919–1933) is the 20th century’s most influential School of Architecture, Design and Art.

8. While respecting Europe's diverse cultural heritage, the NEB initiative aims to create an enabling context to transform the living environment and make our way of life more beautiful, sustainable and inclusive, *inter alia* through innovation and high-quality architecture⁶, design, urbanism, and many other artistic and creative areas.
9. Europe's cultural and architectural heritage constitutes an important benchmark for the experiential and physical quality of our built environment. It is also a strong asset that can inspire and nourish social cohesion, innovation, transformation and regeneration. The NEB initiative therefore acknowledges the importance of our architectural and archaeological heritage, landscapes, and tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
10. The multi-dimensional nature of high-quality architecture and built environment requires cross-sectoral cooperation, participation, co-creation and transdisciplinary approaches, particularly in terms of sustainability and policy coherence.
11. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a funding mobilisation at all governance levels, *inter alia* for high-quality architecture and built environment. These financial resources should be used in a sustainable and quality-oriented manner, in line with the principles of the Davos Baukultur Quality Tool (DBQT) the recommendations of the OMC expert group⁷ and the ICOMOS revised Quality Principles for EU-funded interventions with potential impact on cultural heritage⁸.

⁶ Including interior and landscape architecture and spatial planning

⁷ Open Method of Coordination (OMC) working group of Member States' experts on high-quality architecture and built environment for everyone.

⁸ European quality principles for EU-funded interventions with potential impact upon cultural heritage - ICOMOS updated edition: <https://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/committees/regional-activities-europe/90984-quality-principles-new-version-available>

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE AREAS OF COMPETENCE, TO:

12. Reaffirm the role of culture and cultural heritage as intrinsic to and inseparable from the built and living environment, and as an important contribution to sustainable development, including the circular economy, social and territorial cohesion, the environment, the biodiversity and climate targets, prosperity and the well-being of all people in Europe.
13. Facilitate appropriate synergies between the NEB initiative and other processes engaging people in Europe, such as the Conference on the Future of Europe⁹, as well as with other strategies and action plans that promote architectural and aesthetic quality, such as the Renovation Wave¹⁰, and accessibility, such as the [Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030](#)¹¹.
14. Contribute to creating a holistic understanding and shared culture of high-quality architecture by further raising awareness, e.g. through formal, non-formal and informal education from an early age on, and by widely promoting and disseminating information about the NEB initiative and the role of culture, high-quality architecture and built environment therein.
15. Work towards a holistic, inclusive, transdisciplinary, high-quality-led and long-term vision for architecture and the built environment by integrating different policies and expert knowledge in all processes, guidelines and co-creation projects shaping our living environment, including the report of the OMC expert group¹².

⁹ <https://futureu.europa.eu/?locale=en>

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1835

¹¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8376&furtherPubs=yes>

¹² See reference in the Annex

16. Take into account a quality-driven approach that includes the quality principles mapped out in the DBQT¹³ as the basis for informed choices and decisions throughout the entire lifecycles of built structures and landscape planning and management (conception, investment plans, funding mechanisms, support measures, planning processes, maintenance, refurbishment, conservation, adaptive re-use, demolition and recycling).
17. Stimulate sustainable growth, liveability and innovation in European urban and rural areas by applying holistic, high-quality criteria, co-creation methods and the ICOMOS principles for the provision of EU financial support to architectural and built-environment projects, where appropriate.
18. Promote the optimisation of energy efficiency of the existing building stock through a holistic approach, while respecting all DBQT criteria, including the preservation of built heritage.
19. Explore solutions to enable access to affordable and decent housing, in particular for young people entering the labour market, as well as for other vulnerable social groups.
20. Include the participatory co-creation principles by involving all relevant stakeholders in processes such as decision-making, planning, design and construction concerning the built and living environment and spatial planning at all relevant governance levels.
21. Promote an approach that respects dialogue between the existing cultural heritage, landscape setting and contemporary creation, including through adaptive re-use where relevant.

¹³ Governance, functionality, environment, economy, diversity, context, sense of place and beauty

22. Create favourable frameworks for high-quality architecture to underpin public procurement rules, regulatory simplification and innovative procedures that foster a high-quality-based approach over a solely cost-based one by following the best practices for conducting public architecture, landscape architecture and spatial planning competitions.
23. Further promote and strengthen the awareness, knowledge and competences of decision-makers and dedicated teams at all relevant governance levels, including technical experts and contractors, in order to enable them to use high-quality criteria and standards in their decisions related to architecture and the built environment for everyone.
24. Promote the best use of relevant EU funding programmes and other available financing tools in order to:
 - apply and increase high-quality standards in planning, design, building, conservation, restoration, renovation and adaptive re-use processes;
 - further improve the training and skills of architects and related professionals such as civil engineers, landscape architects, spatial planners, designers, artists, heritage experts, conservators-restorers, nature conservators, building contractors etc. not only as specialists in individual professions, but also as educators and researchers with an understanding of the broad challenges at stake, in the context of the integration of sustainability, quality of experience and social inclusion.
25. Keep the momentum and continue the process of reflection and exchange on the cultural, social, economic and ecological roles of high-quality architecture and built environment.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO:

26. Enhance policy coherence for high-quality architecture and built environment through appropriate coordination among all relevant ministries and administration levels, agencies and services in order to embed a quality-based and holistic approach in all policies and activities that have an impact on the built and living environment.
27. Promote the mainstreaming of the NEB and the circular economy principles and approaches in the national socio-economic and territorial development strategies, including sustainable design and architecture.
28. Set up and support, at the appropriate governance levels, advisory expert groups composed of architects and other relevant professionals, such as the State and City Architect Teams¹⁴, as well as quality-driven procedures to ensure or strengthen the inclusion of required professional competences and skills in decision-making processes in order to achieve high-quality outcomes.
29. Nominate an entity as a contact point for the NEB initiative and reach out to communities at local level, following a place-based approach¹⁵, in order to involve, as appropriate, all civil society members and relevant stakeholders.
30. Empower and provide appropriate support to actors who promote the cultural and qualitative aspects of the built and living environment to all audiences.

¹⁴ See definition in the Annex

¹⁵ See definition in the Annex

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

31. Facilitate the uptake of the DBQT, with its eight quality criteria, in relevant investments, regulatory frameworks and EU funding programmes, and apply these quality principles as owner, developer and property user.
32. Provide opportunities for research, capacity building and peer learning in the areas of culture, high-quality architecture and built environment for everyone in all relevant EU programmes.
33. Seek synergies among relevant existing and planned EU regulations, programmes and policies with a view to making the green and digital transitions consistent with the NEB principles and objectives, and mainstream cross-disciplinary cooperation and decision-making.
34. Facilitate information and access to available financial instruments to support projects related to high-quality living environment, including small-scale initiatives on the ground and projects in cultural and creative sectors.
35. Take into account geographic balance, as well as the geographic, climate, economic, social and cultural diversity of the EU, when designing and implementing NEB strategies, projects and actions.
36. Promote synergies between art, architecture, landscape and interior architecture, spatial planning, design and craftsmanship, as well as innovative training models for architects and other related professionals, including training on cutting-edge digital technology.

37. Promote the function of historic sites in enhancing the existing and emerging physical environment of local communities with the use of state-of-the-art digital technologies in documenting and presenting the built and living environment.
 38. Strengthen cross-sectoral awareness and cooperation by promoting the NEB initiative, the Davos Declaration and the ICOMOS Principles among relevant policy sectors, particularly those sectors involved in shaping the built and living environment.
 39. Report on a regular basis to the Council and/or its preparatory bodies, as well as to the entities entrusted as contact points for the NEB, on the implementation progress of the NEB initiative, and facilitate the exchange of best practices among the Member States on its follow-up at national level.
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A. REFERENCES

In this context, the Council of the European Union recalls

1. Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
2. The work and the report of the OMC group on High-quality architecture and Built Environment for Everyone (2020-2021) <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bd7cba7e-2680-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>
3. The 1975 European Charter of the Architectural Heritage
4. The Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe - The Granada Convention (1987)
5. The 2000 European Landscape Convention
6. The Council Resolution of 12 February 2001 on architectural quality in urban and rural environments (OJ C 73, 6.3.2001, p. 6)
7. The Council conclusions of 13 December 2008 on architecture: culture's contribution to sustainable development (OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 13)
8. The Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 (2018/C 460/10)
9. The Council conclusions of 26 November 2012 on Cultural Governance (2012/C 393/03)
10. The Joint statement 'Heritage, Contemporary Architecture and design in Interaction' adopted at the Riga Conference on 13 March 2015
11. The UNGA Resolution of 25 September 2015 on 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (A/RES/70/01)

12. The Urban Agenda for the EU – Pact of Amsterdam (launched in 2016)
(<http://urbanagendaforthe.eu/pactofamsterdam/>)
13. The Commission communication on ‘A long-term Vision for the EU’s Rural Areas - Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040’ -
COM(2021) 345 final
14. The Davos Declaration ‘Towards a European vision of high-quality Baukultur’, adopted at the Conference of Ministers of Culture (Davos, 20-22 January 2018)
(<https://davosdeclaration2018.ch/media/Context-document-en.pdf>)
15. The Davos Baukultur Quality System, published in May 2021
(<https://davosdeclaration2018.ch/quality-system/>)
16. The New Leipzig Charter - The transformative power of cities for the common good, adopted at the Informal Ministerial Meetings organised on 30 November 2020
(https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/12/12-08-2020-new-leipzig-charter-the-transformative-power-of-cities-for-the-common-good)
17. The ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), ‘European Quality Principles for EU-funded interventions with potential impact upon cultural heritage’ (new version 2021)
(<http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/2436/>)
18. The Commission Communication of 14 September 2021 on the New European Bauhaus: Beautiful, Sustainable, Together (doc. 11892/21 + ADD 1 + ADD 2 + ADD 3 – COM(2021) 573 final)
19. The Council of Europe Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005) (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>)
20. The Territorial Agenda 2030: a future for all places
(https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/brochures/2021/territorial-agenda-2030-a-future-for-all-places)

B. DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of these Council conclusions, the following definitions apply:

- ‘Baukultur’ (literally ‘building culture’) is a German term for a concept describing all human activity that changes spaces and the living environment in a positive way. It includes existing buildings, including monuments and other elements of built heritage, as well as the design and construction of contemporary buildings, infrastructure, public spaces and landscapes embedded in and relating to the natural environment. Baukultur also refers to planning procedures for building projects, infrastructures, cities, villages and open landscapes, and to traditional and innovative building techniques and methods. There is a broad implicit societal understanding of quality as well as tools, procedures and practices, hence the selective use of the word ‘culture’ in the term.
- ‘Built environment’ is the existing space that surrounds people, which they actively shape and which in turn impacts on people’s life and behaviour. It includes the living environment.
- ‘Circular design’ is about creating products and services that no longer have a lifecycle with a beginning, a middle and an end. The purpose is to design products that can be used, re-used and recycled, resulting in less resource consumption, less waste and more value added to the ecosystem. Circular design focuses on creating products and services for the circular economy.
- ‘Davos Baukultur Quality System’ is a set of instruments that enables the definition and assessment of ‘Baukultur’ qualities in places incorporating and weighing up social, emotional and cultural values equally to technical and functional aspects, with the help of the following eight criteria: governance, functionality, environment, economy, diversity, context, sense of place and beauty.

- ‘Living environment’ is a balanced composition of the artificial and natural environments, which includes both outdoor and indoor spaces. The planning and creation of a sustainable and integrated living environment (urban or, more broadly, spatial design) include planning and designing activities (including spatial planning, architecture, landscape architecture), construction activities and the spatial coordination of other space-related decisions (such as traffic and mobility possibilities, utility services, agriculture etc.), with the goal of improving the living environment for as many people as possible in the long term through spatial decisions.
 - ‘Place-based approach’ is an approach that targets the specific circumstances of a place and engages the community and a broad range of local organisations from different sectors as active participants in their development and implementation.
 - ‘State Architect and City Architect Teams’ are teams of architects within public administrations whose mission is to provide design leadership and strategic advice to the government, in order to improve the design of public constructions, promote spatial quality and foster a place-making culture.
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