



STRATCULT-coordinator  
Ms. Amann  
T: +43-7235-660-5411  
M: [office@strategyforculture.net](mailto:office@strategyforculture.net)  
<http://www.strategyforculture.net>

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## **STRATCULT-statement on public consultation of Objective 3 “The Interregional Cooperation Programme (INTERREG IVC)”**

On behalf of the STRATCULT INTERREG IIIC consortium (local and regional authorities from Austria, Czech Republic, Finland and Slovenia), we welcome basically the integration of cultural and natural heritage into the priority topics of the new Interregional Cooperation Programme.

Nevertheless, we would like to take the opportunity to point out that the draft operational programme does not make full use of the potentials culture and cultural heritage could provide for the improvement of the effectiveness of regional development policies.

We propose therefore the integration of the following into the final version of the Interregional Cooperation Programme:

1. Natural and cultural heritage are important issues for the sustainable development of the European regions. **We propose to clarify in the Interregional Cooperation Programme that cultural heritage is meant in the broadest sense** including current cultural and artistic achievements which constitute the cultural heritage of future generations including its economic development potential (e. g. cultural economy, cultural industry).
2. Culture, heritage and identity constitute the very basic input for a region's competitiveness. Culture is therefore a major issue in implementation of the Lisbon agenda. **The Interregional Cooperation Programme should integrate cultural aspects also into the thematic priority 1 “Innovation and knowledge economy”**. Potential regional initiatives could comprise cooperation of authorities to make best use of cultural regional development e.g. to support a sound demographic change. The programme could also support cooperation of territorial authorities in the field of cultural economy or cultural industries.
3. We propose **to add in the operational objectives, chapter 5:** “6. Enhancing the attractiveness of the territory in support of socio-economic development and sustainable tourism by protecting and developing in a creative way the cultural heritage and landscape.”
4. We propose **to integrate the following amendments into the list of supported activities, chapter 5:** “Development and exchange of common strategies and tools in the fields related to the protection, enhancement and creative development of cultural heritage and landscapes.”; “Exchange of know-how among territorial authorities on good practice in tourism development and/or cultural regional development with a particular focus on integrating sustainability aspects.”; “Development and exchange of common strategies for the promotion of cultural assets as potential for the economic development of the regions, notably for sustainable tourism.”
5. Last but not least, **we propose the integration of at least one theme in the field of cultural regional development into the list of potential Fast Track Action networks:** “Culture, heritage and identity constitute the basic input for a region's competitiveness and in the same time the glue that keeps the society together (*compare ESPON project 1.3.3, page 5*). Territorial authorities working on this theme will aim to fully integrating all cultural development potentials into the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas of the European Union. Specific focus will be given to the related regional and rural development policies in the framework of EU Structural Funds.”
6. **Integration of the topic culture/cultural heritage in the first thematic call for regional initiatives.**