

**Capitals of Culture International Cooperation
Format Analysis:**

**How Cities and Local Governments
Can Contribute to Better Relations
Between Africa and EU/rope?**

Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

“No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.” (Nelson Mandela)

Current intercontinental relations between Africa and EU/rope are perceived by many stakeholders of cooperation as not going well. This was one of the motivations for the EU project “Deconfining” which aims at enhancing the international cultural exchange between cities which were, are or will be so-called Capitals of Culture (CoC) by the means of art, culture, and policy.

To, this study was elaborated between July 2022 and March 2023 with the aim to contribute to improved policy and frameworks for intercontinental cooperation between the two continents EU/rope and Africa. It included exchanges of the author with an intercontinental team, a series of interviews as well as several online encounters of stakeholders from both continents.

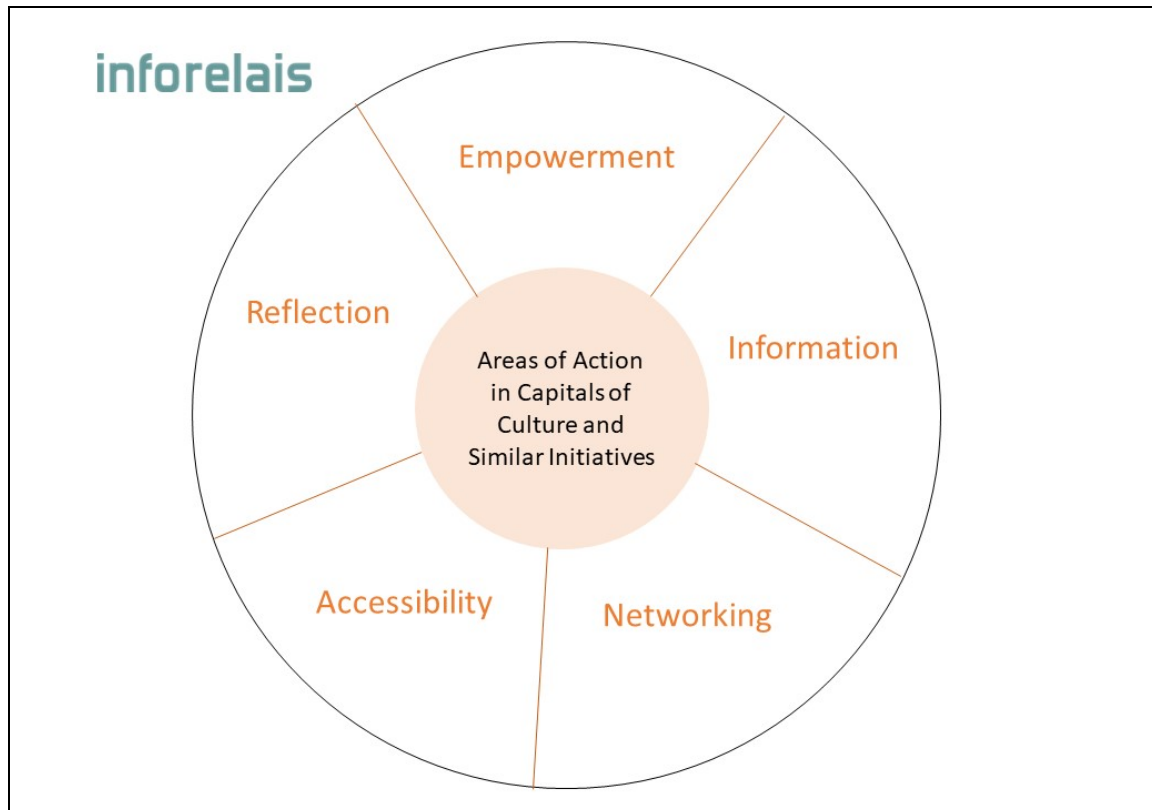
We have momentum to improve intercontinental relations between Africa and Europe.

The developments in recent years including the **enhancement of international cultural cooperation in the context of the European Union** as well as the growing interest of European Capitals of Culture in cooperation outside EU/rope, the realisation of the first edition of the **African Capital of Culture** in 2022-23 and the considerable further involvement of cultural and creative industries stakeholders from Africa in global cultural exchanges and local cultural development provide a favourable framework for improvements and modernisation of the relations between EU/rope and Africa.

Cities and local governments engage more in international cooperation, but the related potential is not yet fully brought into practice. Capitals of Culture are related engines for broader and faster modernisation of cooperation actions, structures, and frameworks. Similar initiatives like UNESCO Creative Cities or major cultural development endeavours in cities and regions dispose equally of accelerator potential for more and better international cooperation. **Transformation scenarios are a further context to be aware of to use opportunities** for common win-win actions and to **cope together with related (global) challenges**. This study aims at answering to the question how cities and local governments including Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives can enhance intercontinental cultural relations between Africa and EU/rope.

Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives can contribute to enhanced Africa-EU/rope – EU/rope-Africa relations in a wide range of areas.

These initiatives have considerable potential to generate positive intercontinental impacts in the field of culture and beyond. Especially five areas of action should be taken care of by Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives:



Reflection comprises the addressing of common history in an intercontinental perspective, to dialogue and share know-how for common opportunities and to contribute to a better understanding that intercontinental cooperation is an active asset for and a long-term engagement of cities and local governments.

Empowerment covers areas like cultural policy, cultural management, intercontinental audience engagement and furthering of global citizenship, as well as updated capacity-building programmes in a spirit of dialogues of competences in local-to-local cooperation settings and global solidarity.

Information needs include data, research, and good practice how culture benefits local development, the involvement of researchers and experts from both continents as well as the provision of information sessions on frameworks, management, finance, and regulations for intercontinental cooperation of cultural operators.

Networking of Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives with culture and city networks, national ministries and cultural institutes, the African and European Union cooperation endeavours has an accelerator role. Engaging for global culture campaigns further supports the common cause of improved relations.

Accessibility of all actions taken is crucial including the opening-up of cultural programmes for interventions from the other continent(s) while ensuring people-centred local-to-local co-creation settings as well as just transition, dedicated financial means and access to funding including calls for projects, and if possible, generating wider social / economic benefits.

There is also responsibility for many other stakeholders to engage, implementation teams of Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives must not be left alone.

All actors of cooperation are required to improve frameworks of intercontinental relations in a sustainable and stable manner. What can we do next?

The inter-related multilevel (governance) frameworks of international (cultural) cooperation involves a wide range of stakeholders for enhanced EU/rope-Africa – Africa-EU/rope relations in culture and beyond. Many framework conditions like visa rules are not favourable for enhance relations and at the same time not easy to modernise. We recommend the following concrete actions as starting points:

Policymakers on EU-and AU-level should further enhance initiatives including those related to Capitals of Culture and provide financing and structural support for updated development of cities and regions by the means of culture.

National policymakers are able to contribute in the short run to more balanced partnerships involving cultural institutes and their networks, associations for intercontinental relations, as well as Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives.

Local policy stakeholders can professionalise and modernise their international cultural relations, related strategies, and benefit of the accelerator role of Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives for sustainable intercontinental cooperation.

Implementation teams of Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives should start with ensuring appropriate support for local stakeholders engaging in intercontinental cooperation, with involving local youth and populations in global encounters, and with providing mobility and financial support. Furthermore, they should be a strong voice for intercontinental perspectives to be integrated in local development endeavours and support international exchange of knowledge carriers.

Organisations which aim to work (more) internationally should network with like-minded partners on both continents as well as involve their audiences and local cooperation partners in intercontinental encounters and dialogues. They should also use the opportunities for enhanced intercontinental cooperation provided by Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives.

In addition, **the Deconfining multiannual intercontinental EU project has potential to provide a platform** related to some **concrete actions of Capitals of Culture and similar initiatives on both continents**. This could comprise providing spaces of encounter for the further co-development of the following flagship actions in the framework of the dialogues of competences and excursion programmes of the EU project “Deconfining”:

Flagship Action 1: **An intercontinental meeting of (cultural) mayors from Africa and EU/rope**

Flagship Action 2: **Online EU/rope-Africa creative industries labs**

Flagship Action 3: **The co-development of international Africa-EU/rope cultural strategies**

Flagship Action 4: **An Africa-EU/rope Youth Culture Forum**

Flagship Action 5: **An EU/rope-Africa Mobility and Cooperation Fund**

Flagship Action 6: **An Africa-EU/rope Culture Expert Twinning Initiative**

It's time to act now for enhanced intercontinental relations between Africa and EU/rope. We are looking forward to continuing together this journey with your engagement!

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