

## Invitation to join the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe

A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe aims to trigger thinking, to raise visibility, and to propose actions on culture's contribution to a citizens' Europe. In a true multi-directional process of engagement we aim to empower citizens by connecting civil society, artists and intellectuals, and politicians to collaboratively build a vision for Europe's future. The Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe: the Decisive Deal will connect these 3 nodes of society to create a Europe of citizens, of participation, and of democracy.

We would like to invite you to work together to develop our 2013-2014 process, a series of Conversations all across Europe culminating in the Berlin Conference 2014. The work during this period will involve partners in events across Europe to develop two projects of the Cultural Coalition that will be launched in the framework of this event. The debate in the Berlin Conference 2014 will center on the top candidates from each of the major European parties who will be challenged with questions and visions from leading thinkers and artists of Europe in preparation for European elections in May 2014. This is a real opportunity in a European public space for citizens to challenge their future leaders on their own visions and the visions of their parties to determine which visions align with the perspective of civil society and which need challenging.

The first output of the Cultural Coalition will be a multimedia project called Conversations on Europe developed as the input of the Access to Culture Platform to the Cultural Coalition. In this project, three simple questions on the future of Europe will be put to citizens across Europe. Partners of the Cultural Coalition can use this proposal to collect text and video interviews in their various events and enter them into the docking station that is the Cultural Coalition. A book of these views on our European future will be published at the Berlin Conference 2014.

The second output of the yearlong process will be a proposal for a European Resolution on Culture launched just before the European Parliamentary elections in May 2014. The resolution will be a tool and a vision for cultural development at the European level. It will offer the European political parties and the European Institutions the vast expertise of the cultural sector, their visions of the role of

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culture for Europe, as they embark on the next political cycle of the European Union. This element can also be taken up in all partner events as it will be developed and updated based on the experience of the Cultural Coalition throughout the next year. The final proposal will be presented at the Berlin Conference 2014.

The concept of the Decisive Deal is that by giving citizens a stronger voice at the European level and improving the European narrative that unites us, policies can be enacted that lift Europe from the current crisis and drive us towards a better future. We are addressing you now as the three nodes: the leaders of Europe!

## **Artists and Intellectuals**

We invite artist and intellectuals to become partners of the Cultural Coalition, offering their inspired visions on the future of Europe. Your visions on Europe will address the most urgent matters that must be tackled by policy leaders throughout Europe.

The Artists and Intellectuals will:

- Meet as a steering group to develop a narrative and topics for the Berlin Conference 2014 and related events and a conceptual framework that structures the larger involvement of many individuals on the following:
- Develop personal statements on the future of Europe based on the Conversations for Europe and European Resolution on Culture prompts
- Participate in the various ‘A Soul for Europe’ events (Berlin Conference, Brussels and Amsterdam Conversations, Forums, etc.)
- Come together in a meeting in Brussels in Autumn 2013

## **Civil Society**

It is the role of civil society organizations, including the Strategy Group of “A Soul for Europe,” to multiply and spread the message of a citizens’ Europe, a cultural Europe. With your strategically important position between major institutions, national and local governments, and individual citizens, you play an important role in making sure the message of the Resolution reaches all parts of society. The civil society organizations will manage interventions such as texts, publications, and events that will first develop the concept of the Decisive Deal and second to multiply its message.

The civil society members will utilize their organizational and project expertise to:

- Publish books and texts of the Artists/Intellectuals node
- Multiply the project via their large networks to mobilize citizens into action
- Organize project events and Conversations that bring together all three nodes and citizens (ex. Berlin Conference, ASFE Forums, Brussels and Amsterdam Conversations, Politicians in Residence)
- Propose speakers and contributors to the Berlin

## **Politicians**

Participation from the political sphere is a requirement for success. Politicians, at the European, national, regional, and local levels are invited to join the coalition to engage with citizens across Europe on their shared future. It will be their responsibility to formulate the ways in which a Europe of citizens can be realized through our political institutions via legislation and political acts. In preparation for the European Parliamentary elections in late spring 2014, the politicians taking part in the political node should work to develop concrete platforms on culture that can be presented to the political parties and accepted as part of their election platform. The concepts developed with the Parliamentary elections in mind, for example including a cultural dimension in all policy areas and a minimum budget percentage devoted to culture, should be applicable and lobbied for at all levels from the European Institutions down to the local by the political node.

The Political Node will:

- Co-organize, develop, and participate in the Berlin Conference 2014
- Finalize and accept a European Resolution on Culture
- Develop the Resolution in their political party agendas
- Support the inclusion of cultural platforms in their personal EU parties prior to elections
- Contributing personal statements to the Conversations on Europe project

We hope that you accept this invitation to build a Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe together with us. Now that the initial meetings with citizens across Europe have been held, the Cultural Coalition would be delighted about your participation and look forward to developing your participation.

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**To Join the Coalition as an individual, please subscribe at <http://www.asoulforeurope.eu/cultural-coalition/join>.**

**To become a partner organization, please contact Hannah Splitt ([splitt@asoulforeurope.eu](mailto:splitt@asoulforeurope.eu)).**

**To access the event calendar, please visit <http://www.asoulforeurope.eu/cultural-coalition/events>.**

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## Towards 2014, a Decisive Deal!

### **"A Soul for Europe's" Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe**

*"Europe must acquire a soul. The present arrangement cannot and should not remain a technical and economic enterprise. It requires a soul, the conscience of its historic affinities and its present and future responsibilities, a political will serving the same human ideal."*

*Robert Schumann*

A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe is a new civil society project that aims to strengthen participation of citizens from all sectors of society in building a better Europe. We involve citizens, including politicians, artists, intellectuals, and civil society leaders, in shaping the future Europe. We aim to trigger thinking, to raise visibility, and to propose actions about culture's contribution to a citizens' Europe. In a true multi-directional process of engagement we aim to empower citizens in the EU integration process.

Under A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe, "A Soul for Europe" organized 3 events during fall 2012: the Berlin Conference 2012, the Brussels Conversation 2012 and the Amsterdam Conversation 2012, to kick-off of the European Year of Citizens 2013. After hearing from citizens in these 3 high-level meetings across Europe, the Cultural Coalition will now assemble its plan of action to find practical solutions through culture to address the needs expressed by citizens, civil societies, and politicians. The underlying thought behind the project is that by giving citizens a stronger voice at the European level and improving the European narrative that unites us, policies can be enacted that lift Europe from the current crisis and move us towards a better future.

ASfE is now moving forward and preparing a series of Forums all across Europe, looking towards 2014 - the next Berlin Conference, the next Brussels Conversations, the next Amsterdam Conversations - that will introduce a strengthened working model with 3 nodes of activity: civil society, intellectuals and artists, politicians. We will work to collaboratively draft and to introduce a common agreement on the position of culture in all legislative bodies of Europe, reaching a Decisive Deal by introducing a European Resolution on Culture. The European Resolution on Culture will aim to create a standard level of attention devoted to culture in all the Member

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States of the European Union, addressing the essential role of culture in the European project in all of its legislative areas.

In 2014, the Cultural Coalition will focus on the outcomes that emerged through our discussions with citizens across Europe:

1. Creating new narratives which help us re-imagine and recreate Europe;
2. Redefining democracy and citizenship in Europe and raising awareness on their development;
3. Developing a new model for collaboration and action based on 3 Action Nodes: Civil Society (organisations and individuals), Artists and Intellectuals, and Politicians that connects policy makers to citizens in new ways;
4. Translating the narrative of a cultural Europe into policy proposals to present to European leaders in preparation for the 2014 election cycle, including a joint mechanism for assessing the achievements of ‘culture and Europe’.

## **2014: 10 Years and Counting, Building from the Berlin Conference**

Society will not live up to the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century unless active citizens join forces through culture to bring about social progress. Over the past 10 years the Berlin Conference has involved individuals and representatives from civil society organizations, activists, and politicians in a dialogue on the advancement of the European process. This concept sees culture at the center of the political process. Our cultural values are our European values, and as such are the core of innovation and of human capital investments. From the beginning, the Berlin Conference prompted dialogue that created partnerships for developing Europe from the bottom up. In 2014, we will bring together all of our experience and ideas gathered throughout our 2013 work plan with the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens’ Europe to present new visions of our European future to the leaders of the European political parties to challenge them to a debate on their own visions and thoughts leading up to the 2014 European elections.

The first Berlin Conference was held in 2004 with the active involvement of former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer. It was at this conference that the newly elected President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, made his first official appearance, addressing the

audience with the words *"the EU has reached a stage of its history where its cultural dimension can no longer be ignored"*.

Discussion panelists at the bi-annual Berlin Conferences since that first year have included Roland Berger; EU Commissioners Ján Figel', Benita Ferrero-Waldner and Androulla Vassiliou; EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering and former EP President Pat Cox; Timothy Garton Ash; Navid Kermani; Wolfgang Schäuble; Louis Schweitzer; George Soros; István Szabó; Nilüfer Göle; Richard von Weizsäcker; Wim Wenders as well as many other intellectuals, business representatives as well as a great number of people from civil society from across Europe.

## **The Decisive Deal 2014: Three Action Nodes**

1. Civil Society Groups and Citizens' Initiatives
2. Artists and Intellectuals
3. Politicians

The Europe of tomorrow is about opportunities, responsibility, leadership and involvement! It is about values, and it is up to each of us to make our contribution!

The first action node of the new 3-node system is the Strategy Group of "A Soul for Europe" and its civil society partners who actively work all across Europe to set the pace for 2014. They include networks, arts spaces, civil society organisations, and many more. The Strategy Group, as the driving force of ASfE, will continue to be responsible for the conceptual development and dissemination of ASfE's messages through projects and initiatives.

A second partner consists of a group of artists and intellectuals, professions that have been advancing European integration long before the European Union came into existence. They are now as ever raising their voices throughout Europe. Europe today needs a narrative formulated by society: a conceptual framework that supports the values we stand for. This Europe needs the stakeholders to develop and "brand" this conceptual framework of a cultural Europe – a citizens' Europe. Intellectuals – innovative and creative messengers who embody the expression of the hearts and minds of Europe's citizens – provide the political and official institutions with the interlocutors they need to help them develop a new discourse on Europe. Through the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe a group of intellectuals who think in innovative and groundbreaking ways will give their voice to the process.

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The political node is the third partner and forms a new standard of the Cultural Coalition initiatives: for the first time, the Berlin Conference and Coalition events aim for citizens and politicians to share responsibility. Legitimate participation from the political side is thus undeniably important. Politicians and political institutions are invited to join the Coalition, and first of all the European Parliament, the political representation of Europe's citizens, which in 2014 has its elections, as well as members of city or regional councils and politicians on the national level.

This proposal is in line with Jose Manuel Barroso's call in his 2012 State of the Union Address:

*"This debate has to take place in our societies and among our citizens. But, today, I would like to make an appeal also to European thinkers. To men and women of culture, to join this debate on the future of Europe...That's why I believe we need a serious discussion between the citizens of Europe about the way forward... That is why we need a new thinking for Europe, a decisive deal for Europe. That is why we need to guide ourselves by the values that are at the heart of the European Union. Europe I believe has a soul. This soul can give us the strength and the determination to do what we must do."*

## **2014 Cultural Coalition Events**

2014 is the nations of Europe into hostility and mutual extermination – a disaster preceding the even more devastating destruction of World War II. One hundred years after this catastrophe, the Berlin Conference 2014: Conversations on a Decisive Deal (Working Title) has to be a profoundly serious project: “if Europe has a meaning it is cultural” (Michael Zeeman, 2004 *de Volkskrant*). On one hand, it interlinks Europe and culture. On the other, it gives the conference the twofold task of:

- assessing the state of European integration in cultural terms and drawing appropriate conclusions, and
- evaluating the impact of culture on this process, once more drawing conclusions that demand implementation

To achieve this goal and to create ties to the important changes occurring in the European Union institutions in 2014, leaders from the major European political parties will be brought together in this setting to debate this current situation and to offer visions for the future. This discussion will be based on the European Resolution

on Culture and will give the all involved in the Cultural Coalition a clear task for the coming 5 year political cycle, developing the future of Europe through culture.

Yes, Europe has its economic, social and political crises. At the same time, the nightmare of Europe's bellicose past, which once dominated the post-war narrative of European unification, has faded away. In spite of recent wars in the Balkan region, Sarajevo 2014 is not comparable to the Sarajevo 1914. They still have in common, however, a set of deeply rooted cultural stereotypes such as the construct of mutually exclusive national or ethnic "identities", often linked to grandiose historical narratives, that until today in a number of member states convey an atavistic urge of getting rid of "the other".

The aim of this Cultural Coalition will be to identify and implement essential cultural contributions to European project within a continuous process resulting from the ten years of work by "A Soul for Europe" and the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe.

The integration process has obvious weaknesses, instabilities and insecurities, but one year after the European Year of the Citizens 2013, establishing a consistent Berlin Conference 2014: a Decisive Deal (Working Title) will send out a message addressing those challenges: The outdated narrative can be replaced by the European dream based on cultural forces, human values and the responsibility of citizens.

When addressing cultural forces boosting European integration, the conference must also address cultural sources of disintegration. Europe's rightly praised cultural diversity has its destructive side as well, even more so, as political and economic integration factors are losing momentum.

It is the citizens of Europe themselves who invest the immense resources of their cultural diversity, skills and networks in the integration process. They will build a citizens' Europe from the bottom up. For their part, politicians at all levels will assume their share of responsibility for Europe, making use of their respective competencies and expertise within the political institutions, organisations and networks of Europe.

In 2014 all 3 action nodes, civil society, artists and intellectuals, and politicians, will gather at the Berlin Conference, the Brussels Conversations, the Amsterdam Conversations, as well as all other Cultural Coalition events. By using different terms and views, they will share a common agenda and strive for joint conclusions and

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implementation agreements – building on the results of the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe. In the long run, the "Cultural Coalition: The Decisive Deal" will fulfill its task of innumerable cooperation activities between civil society, artists and intellectuals, and politicians in Europe.

We look forward to working towards this Decisive Deal in the years to come!

*The Berlin Conference and its process is part of the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe and linked to the Brussels Conversations and Amsterdam Conversations. Together with more initiatives European-wide, they form "A Soul for Europe's" contribution to the Europe from bottom up. Berlin / Brussels, January 2013*

## Achievements

[A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe](#) is a new programme/civil society initiative that aims to strengthen participation of citizens from all sectors of society in building a better Europe. We involve citizens, including politicians, artists, intellectuals, and civil society leaders, in shaping the future Europe. November 2012 saw 3 high-profile events in Berlin, Brussels and Amsterdam. Activities in 2013 include a series of participatory forums, meetings with political leaders across Europe, and the presentation of joint actions. We aim to trigger thinking, to raise visibility, and to propose actions about culture's contribution to a citizens' Europe. In a true multi-directional process of engagement we aim to engage citizens in process of building a better Europe. The initiative is supported by the EU programme "Citizens for Europe".

We look forward to working together with you!

### A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe

Three events took place in November: the [Berlin Conference 2012](#) and its pre-conference "Cities for Europe", the [Brussels Conversations 2012](#) and the [Amsterdam Conversation 2012](#), all leading up to the kick-off of the [European Year of Citizens 2013](#). Our partner Alt Art in Romania also contributed with their workshop and conference on "European Cultural Capitals 2020+" in Cluj, Romania. Our programme for the year is dedicated to strengthening citizen participation in building Europe with active citizens developing new definitions of democracy and participation.

### Berlin Conference 2012: Launching the Coalition



The Berlin Conference on 10 November 2012 was the kick-off to the activities under the umbrella of the "Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe". Panels on Democracies at Risk, Cities, Citizens, and their Responsibilities and Environmental Challenges: Cultural Approaches brought strong results. Panelists raised the need for a better

understanding and definition of democracy and citizenship. We were urged not to forget that politicians are citizens themselves: that the divide is not as great as some of the rhetoric of the day suggested.

Check out the [photos](#) of the event as well as the [documentary](#) by Berlin TV Station [ALEX TV](#).

## Cities for Europe: Inviting City Leaders to Join the Coalition



We invited mayors, artists, cultural actors and active citizens to a conference at the Berlin town hall on 9 November 2012 to discuss how cities can contribute to the creation of a “Europe of citizens”. It was produced in cooperation with the City of Berlin, the City of Guimarães, European Capital of Culture 2012, and the Federal Agency for Civic

Education. Projects and initiatives from many European cities were presented, showing how Europe is experienced and how important it is to use culture as a tool for the creation of a “Europe of citizens”. The signing of the [Berlin Declaration](#) “Cities for Europe” was a commitment from participants not just towards Europe, but at the same time to engage in a vivid, colourful, and diverse Europe.

Check out the initiative’s [manual](#) on “Cities and Regions: Their Cultural Responsibility for Europe and how they can fulfill it” and [www.citiesforeurope.eu](http://www.citiesforeurope.eu) for more info.

## European Cultural Capitals 2020+: Mapping the journey



Cultural producers, city planners, citizens and experts from past, present and future European Capitals of Culture came together in Cluj on November 14, 2012, to envision how cities in Europe will look like 10 years from now and what expectations citizens have from the future ECOC programme. Following the conference, the cultural

contributors in Cluj, along with the international guests were invited to a collective process of vision and analysis aiming to set the milestones of the necessary planning that will lead Cluj to a successful application for the European Capital of Culture title.

Check out the [photos](#). Contact: Rarita Zbranca, rarita (at) altart.org, AltArt Foundation for more info.

## Brussels Conversations 2012: Setting the Action Points



The European House for Culture (EHfC) and partners organized the [Brussels Conversations 2012 on A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe](#) on 16-17 November 2012. The discussions set the key action points to be developed during the European Year of Citizens 2013, on such topics as arts and culture bringing “added value” to

citizenship, fear and resentment, and the state of democracy in Europe. It was clear that the voices and actions of leaders are needed in the shaping of a new narrative for the future of Europe, which was one of the calls to action made at the Brussels Conversations 2012. An over-arching theme of the discussion was the responsibility of cultural actors, revealing that it is not only politicians that carry responsibility – cultural actors must also play their part.

Check out the [programme](#), [texts](#), [photos](#), [interviews](#), and the [report](#).

## Amsterdam Conversation 2012: The Cultural Dimension of Citizenship



[The Amsterdam Conversation 2012: The Cultural Dimension of Citizenship](#) held on the 30 November 2012 incorporated the progress made in Berlin and Brussels to further develop the Cultural Coalition's action plan. It highlighted that there are existing platforms to connect European citizens but these are not used properly, therefore the goal must be

to strengthen or improve the existing ones and facilitate citizens' participation in them instead of just looking for new tools. The evening lecture “Ethics, Banking and Citizenship” by George Möller (Chairman of the Board of Trustees of The Netherlands Authority for the Financial Markets) and following debate focused on issues such as: how should ideally the responsibility be shared among the nation states, the financial sector, the European Union, global organisations? And what is the role of us, citizens, in this process?

Check out the [programme](#), [video extracts](#), [youtube compilation](#) and [report](#).