



Katowice GZM 2029

Candidate City ► European Capital of Culture ►► Selection



Play!



When we talk of the GZM Metropolis, we mean the Górnośląsko-Zagłębiowska Metropolia with 41 municipalities included in our Bid for European Capital of Culture



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Introduction – General considerations

Q1

Confirming our concept

If you play fair, you don't change the rules in the middle of the game. We just see that our concept Play! is working. When we talked to cultural operators from all over the Metropolis, with residents of the cities, with our European and international partners – our concept Play! really resonated with them.

The enthusiasm of the cultural operators, especially those from outside Katowice, from the smaller towns in the metropolis hit us like a warm wave. They showed their eagerness for the concept Play! and what it means. They showed us how much they want to join, how excited they are that there is so much going on WITH THEM. The appreciation that they are truly onboard from the very beginning. Many of them felt heard and seen for the very first time, were finally given a space to articulate their ideas, their needs, their achievements and their potential.

Let the games begin

Play! has become a peaceful battle cry. A call to feel free to develop playfully and access a much larger and diverse audience. And an invitation to work harder, be more international, more daring and edgy. A call to take up the challenge of overturning the status quo again. A call to believe that change is possible. That we can design it for us and for the people of Katowice and the Metropolis, and that we can make it happen NOW – to become a better place and partner for Europe.

Everyone in Katowice still remembers the transformation that the ECoC contest brought about following 2010. Last year we were unsure whether we could evoke this enthusiasm, this yearning for radical change again. Now we can say with confidence – we can, and we did. And our cooperation partners around Europe – whether we met them live at some of the

ECoC openings, online or at network meetings – share the enthusiasm of a “new” European player on the scene. A place in Europe where playing is still possible because it is an open, unfinished space.

Changes? Definitely!

So, what has changed since the pre-selection phase? Not Play! but our playing field. Poland is again ‘playing’ in the European orchestra. Through the European dimension of our application, we want to contribute to a better and fuller sounding of this orchestra. Another big change is that Silesian is on the way to being recognised as a regional language. As a playful element of our daily lives and a contribution to European cultural diversity we take pride in sharing it with Europe through some key projects in our programme.

Play! should also benefit generations to come. Playing it fair recognises that processes that had been slowed down in recent years, have been reignited – the green transition and the shift to greener energy sources from fossil fuels – so meaningful to our region. It is all about reinventing ourselves – through Play!

Klachy, pizza and what left us speechless

Over the past months, we've also met with the local and regional groups during consultations, workshops, research walks. And in conversations over pizza (with young Ukrainian refugees) or exchanging a bit of klachy (Silesian for “gossip”) together to develop our programme into something that makes sense for them.

And then, of course, the results of our large-scale survey among citizens and cultural operators came back. And we were – speechless. Far too many people (21%!) said that they had not taken part in ANY artistic or cultural activity in the past year. Not even going

to the cinema, not to the library or a festival, not even a zoo or an amusement park. Almost 40% (in the words of the speechless: forty percent) said that “culture and artistic activities are of little importance to me”. We definitely must be doing something wrong – we, meaning the culture zone operators! What can we say other than: this survey shook everyone up. It has informed this second part of our bidding process significantly. But it did not lessen the enthusiasm. We stick to the idea of Play! because now we know even better who we will be playing with. We see more clearly the challenges we face.

The old, the young and the restless

We find it worthwhile to say that the older generation (60+) from all walks of life – not only the usual suspects – is much closer to traditional art forms and institutions than the young people. Our answer: Even more projects involving young people in cultural and circular activities to whet their appetite for more in the future. Almost 50% of the people in the survey answered that the best place to encounter culture is a festivity event. Teenagers repeatedly referred to this format with a strong multicultural twist: let’s cook together, let’s celebrate stuff with people from other countries, let’s meet them in person in a relaxed atmosphere, no “education”, just play. Pure experience of being together and sharing joyful stuff. Which we find a good way into tackling hate speech and xenophobia.

Perhaps a bit less surprising was that less than 50% of the participants in the survey recognise video games as part of culture. But this unfortunately also includes hobbies, artistic practice done at home and in amateur groups. They are NOT perceived as part of “culture” either. And that explains a bit why 40% come to the conclusion that culture and arts are of little importance to their lives.

In Polish, when we talk about “culture”, we usually mean “serious culture”, high brow. In our ECoC process, we see our task as showing that all play is created equal! That all playfulness is culture – whether it is Silesian joke-culture or our Silesian language practice or knitting or baking bread and having klachy. And that “serious culture” is actually fun and playful and just comes in a slightly different shape – and sometimes in buildings which apparently can be intimidating to some. The consultations with our local and regional residents confirmed that culture should be accessible to all. “Get out of temples of art” and “cultural zones”. “Be as playful as possible”, was their message to us as a bidding team.

The lure of the dark side

However, even something as bright as Play! has its dark side – as referred to in the preselection report. And yes, we won’t pretend that this is not our problem.

Addictions to digital culture, including gaming, online gambling, social media-induced overstimulation, hate speech raging on the web – all of them related to mental health issues which we don’t ignore. On the contrary – we think that our concept Play! and the programme we have developed brings playfulness back into the game. And as we take the dark aspects of Play seriously, we are addressing them in a multidimensional project, **Exploring the Light and Dark Side** in which we assess the risks, introduce measures to counteract the effects, but also prepare in particular young people to use the joys of the digital world responsibly.

Play! has pointed us in the right direction towards re-injecting European values and an international dimension into our Katowice and the Metropolis. This will benefit us and like-minded cities, citizens and cultural operators around Europe. Let’s play to bring back the notion of culture as a source of wellbeing. Let’s play to keep our humanity and our sanity. Let’s play to counterbalance and cope with anxiety and stress. Let’s play to learn. Let’s play to regain trust. Let’s play to build better social ties, to create equal and broad access to culture. Let’s play to reinvent Katowice and GZM as a European player.

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1

Contribution to the long-term strategy

Q2

Changes in the strategy

As we described during preselection, work on Katowice’s Cultural Strategy began in 2020 and was largely completed last year. Since then, we have made some important developments, although the core of the strategy and its four objectives – increasing participation, creative cooperation, reimagining public and cultural spaces, and revitalising our cultural image – remain the same.

The Strategy for Development of Culture for the City of Katowice 2035 was formally adopted by the City Council on 29 May 2024. This has extended the operating period of the Strategy by five years. And, as well as its formal adoption and extension, we have made some improvements to some of its key features.

This has been driven by a strengthening of our strategic ambition, helped by the experience of and feedback from the preliminary round. Our ambitions are even bolder for the role of culture in the development of our city and our region, placing it in a broader European context whilst recognising the ability of our more playful approach to reach more deeply into places where culture hasn’t been on the radar very much. To play with the well known phrase, we have thought global and acted local!

5000 views shaped our thinking!

The final Strategy has also reflected a major piece of research on both cultural audiences and our cultural operators, involving some 5000 people across the GZM Metropolitan area. They have also informed this Bid Book in terms of supporting a genuinely inclusive long term vision, the artistic vision, our approach to involving local cultural operators and, naturally, Outreach

and audience development. The research backs up with real evidence the need for the radical change in the way culture is defined and delivered which is at the core of our bid. We set out HOW in the following sections of this Bid Book.

This includes a strong desire on the part of our cultural operators to better cooperate across sectors, far beyond mere networking between existing cultural institutions. Goals around building intersectoral connections with business, NGOs, academia, creative industries and artists as well as an emphasis on increasing international cooperation were adopted into the Strategy.

A cultural Metropolis

Cultural cooperation across the entire GZM Metropolis has also been incorporated as one of the strategic aims in the document, along with joint implementation of a number of programme components. Connected to this, we are currently working on the creation of a Metropolitan Charter for Accessible Culture. This is part of the bidding process (see Q15), but is closely connected to the Strategy and will be implemented come what may.

The table to the right gives a summary of how the strategic objectives and planned ECoC goals connect with each other. Working with local people and creative organisations, culture forms the “imagination scaffolding” to support a new cultural vision.

Q3

Long term impact

In its City Development Strategy, which sets out a vision for the city across a broader scope than the Cultural Strategy, Katowice speaks about aiming to be a city effectively addressing the challenges of the modern world. And there sure are plenty of challenges in the world at the moment. Not least with a raging war on our border which has seen 250,000 of our Ukrainian neighbours taking refuge in our area (see Q15).

Even so, it is absolutely right that we should look beyond our immediate challenges to a future that offers hope and encouragement. And despite all of the difficulties we face, it has been encouraging to see how our ECoC process has enabled so many local people to contribute to our programme and our vision. After all, people are the experts in their own lives and their

City of Katowice Culture Development Strategy 2035

MISSION

Katowice becomes a city recognised for its culture at both European and community levels



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Increased participation

- broadening the field of culture
- deepening cultural participation
- ensuring access

Creative cooperation (across GZM Metropolis)

- cross-sector cooperation
- support for creative and cultural industries
- better connecting creators, artists and creative circles
- strong focus on growing and empowering NGOs

New approaches

- more accessible cultural institutions
- continuous review of the state of culture
- culture fills the spaces of the city
- more active cultural tourism

A coherent image for City and Metropolis

- integrating the presence of culture into a new coherent image for Katowice and the GZM Metropolis



ECoC Programme

Personal Playlist

- putting culture on everyone’s radar

Fair Play

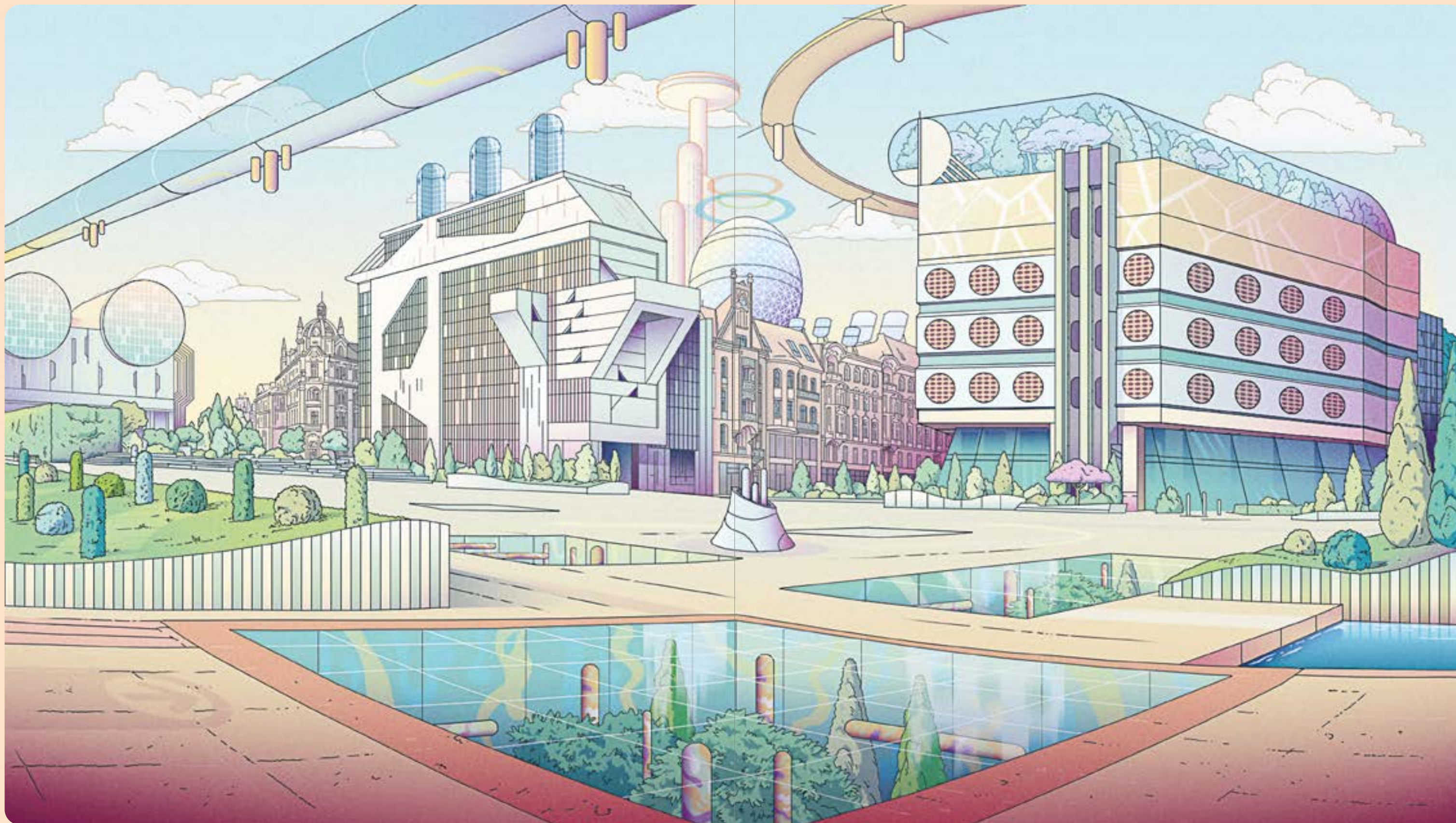
- new models of cultural cooperation
- a common system of culture across the Metropolis
- fully accessible culture

Total Immersion

- culture beyond the zones
- rebuilding and reimagining spaces and places

Re:play

- new narratives
- recognising the unrecognised



The pictures marked with the caption **Open Call** (including those on the inside covers of this Bid Book) are examples from our **Open Call for Artwork** described in Q9/10

Open Call Piotr Perłowski, KTW main square 20XX



Open Call Agata Mendziuk, A New Perspective



views have been inspirational in helping us to understand what success looks like for Katowice 2029 and, especially, beyond.

Today, many if not most cities, when setting out their marketing pitch, talk about being a city where people can: live, work, study and, yes, play! But we put Play! first. So how does the future look? Here's our playful answer.

A 4G City?

No. We haven't gone backwards in technological terms. By 2030 we want to have taken a huge step forward in addressing our challenges and becoming the place people are excited about. And we want to build it around 4 Gs which encapsulate the features of our programme and our strategy: **Gardens. Gigs. Games, Growth.**

Gardens

is where our journey started. The City of Gardens. The concept for our last bid and the organisation which has led this current one. The Garden of our future is our Metropolis where we plan to transform public space and public service. Effectively making the entire Metropolis a playground where people can act (or sing) out their dreams. No longer divided into "culture zones" on the one hand and the rest on the other.

As we said above, culture is the imagination scaffolding around which we build lasting communities and community values. By 2030 we will have rebalanced the relationship between the cultural and the commercial in the way development is organised. Culture is now seen and funded as a core public service in our Metropolis. As a source of life and connection, like water supply or public transportation. Equal access is available for all people living here. Our Metropolis will be more liveable, greener and more focussed on physical and mental wellbeing.

Gigs

is not just about going to see our wonderful Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra – though we are happy that more and more do. It's about playing together. Getting to know each other and in different places. Our melting pot of identities and cultures and our cultural diversity is celebrated as a major strength – both economic and social. Local identity is an important component of our culture – it is what connects us to place and history and is fully recognised in everyday cultural life. Great local cultural events develop a lasting sense of empowerment and civic connection.

Games

We can all play. Our professional painters, actors and musicians are not the only great artists. We all create culture. And not only high culture is worthy of recognition. Culture created from the bottom up and locally is appreciated, promoted and supported so that it can develop and improve. People have the tools they need to create when and how they want to. This goes hand in hand with open and welcoming institutions, cultural facilities and vibrant local cultural hubs.

Culture is seen as something that brings joy, self-fulfilment, a sense of belonging and identification. And even Growth.

Growth

Gardens, Gigs and Games = Growth. We have turned old Maslow's pyramid on its head. Cultural capital becomes the key to inclusive growth, challenging economic and cultural exclusion. Not just through education, but also through a whole set of competencies that help build resilience in the face of life's many challenges. People across the Metropolis are more confident, creative and capable. We now truly appreciate what great wealth comes from our diversity.

Age is no barrier to our model of inclusive growth. Firstly, the future is not wasted on the young. Young people have benefitted hugely from the new kind of cultural model we implemented across the Metropolis. They benefit from a revitalised cultural education model in their schools, they have plenty to do in a safe and accessible city. They can see a future here and are deeply involved in delivering it. And secondly, nobody is ever too old to play. We genuinely can be a place to live, work, study and Play! For everyone.

But how can we measure it?

As we transition between our long-term impacts and our plans for Monitoring and Evaluation, we have set out a number of KPIs against which we plan to measure our progress.

WHAT THE 4G CITY LOOKS LIKE	WHAT WILL IT BRING? KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO QUANTIFY SUCCESS	KPI CONSISTENT WITH
<div><div>○ Gardens</div><div>There is a new collaborative cultural – creative ecosystem in place across Katowice and the Metropolis</div></div>	<div><div><div>• Over 50% of CCI jobs created during ECoC stay after 2029</div><div>• Numbers of creative enterprises and creative jobs in Katowice and the Metropolis increase every year</div><div>• The contribution of CCI to the local economy increases every year</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)
<div><div>• Cultural operators play together</div><div>• Current divisions are replaced by mechanisms of collaborating, negotiating and representing collective interests</div><div>• For cultural operators international activity is part of daily business</div></div>	<div><div><div>• 90% of projects in the ECoC programme involve collaboration between local cultural organisations</div><div>• At least 30% of the external experts supporting the ECoC office have origins outside Poland</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Culture Next & Pollyloop (benchmarking of Sustainable Development Goals for culture); Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	<div><div><div>• At least 30% of cultural organisations partnering in ECoC have an ongoing, long-term partnership with an organisation from Silesia (for Zagłębie) and Zagłębie (for Silesia)</div><div>• The same proportion applies to organisations from abroad</div></div></div>	
	<div><div><div>• At least 30% of cultural operators engaged in ECoC declare having made FRIENDS with someone from Silesia / Zagłębie</div><div>• 20% declare the same for international friendships</div></div></div>	
	<div><div><div>• At least one local cultural network is self-sustainable (not driven by ECoC any more) and capable of: 1.supporting its members with knowledge and various material resources; 2.lobbying for the CCI sector 3.representing the sector abroad</div><div>• Cultural operators from Katowice and the Metropolis are more visible in international projects, networks and expert bodies</div><div>• Number of international productions locally and of productions delivered abroad is increasing; the same applies to memberships in international networks and in policy-making agendas</div></div></div>	
	<div><div><div>• ECoC governance is a laboratory for a wider change</div><div>• We create a supportive learning environment in which research is an important means for growth</div><div>• We implement good practices in management, we share our stories of success and failure (number of citations of good practices and research outside KTW / GZM 2029 context)</div></div></div>	
	<div><div><div>• At least 60% of individuals engaged in ECoC declare that they have grown through the process</div><div>• The same applies to 90% of those who took part in capacity building programmes</div></div></div>	
<div><div>• CCI is widely considered an environment in which people flourish</div><div>• More opportunities are available to learn, experiment, and create</div></div>	<div><div><div>• At least 30% of cultural volunteers in ECoC keep themselves engaged for a period longer than a year</div><div>• There is a steady rise in numbers of cultural volunteers and hours dedicated by them in ECoC</div></div></div>	Culture Next & Pollyloop
	<div><div><div>• A rise in % of people aged 16–25 who find career in culture attractive</div><div>• A rise in % of cultural organisations that secure part of their budget for building competences</div><div>• A decrease in number of culture workers that leave their jobs for financial reasons</div></div></div>	Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	<div><div><div>• A significant growth of social and intellectual capital of cultural operators as well as of material resources in cultural organisations</div><div>• A rise in % of culture declaring a positive work-life balance, that also highly evaluate their professional well-being and the quality of their workplace</div></div></div>	Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	<div><div><div>• Local culture leaders and members of informal groups consider CCI to be a friendly and supportive environment</div><div>• A rise in numbers of informal groups and non-institutionalised organisations</div><div>• A rise in % of those groups and organisations that operate for more than a year</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035

WHAT THE 4G CITY LOOKS LIKE	WHAT WILL IT BRING? KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO QUANTIFY SUCCESS	KPI CONSISTENT WITH
<div><div>Cultural operators, politicians and officials communicate more effectively</div></div>	<div><div><div>• Politicians and officials are actively engaged in doing ECoC by mutual dialogue – they feel that ECoC is also their responsibility</div><div>• Good mutual dialogue between cultural operators, public administration offices, and politicians, e.g. a Community Council for Culture working as a fully independent, expert body</div><div>• There is a long-term cultural policy for CCI in Metropoly, elaborated with involvement of cultural operators</div><div>• It is based on multiannual support programs and steady monitoring and evaluation of culture impacts</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on M&E
	<div><div><div>• A rise in number of multiannual grant schemes for culture forwarded by local public administration</div><div>• A rise in proportion of budget dedicated to multiannual vs one-year schemes</div></div></div>	
	<div><div><div>• Steady rise in overall public findings for CCI every year + in funding per capita</div><div>• 4% of Katowice’s budget is devoted to CCI in 2030</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Culture Next & Pollyloop (benchmarking of Sustainable Development Goals for culture); Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	<div><div><div>○ Gigs</div><div>Access to culture is treated as an unquestionable norm – like access to drinking water</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	<div><div><div>• Accessibility becomes the new normal</div><div>• More and more cultural venues are fully accessible</div><div>• More cultural organisations implement creative accessibility solutions</div></div></div>	Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	<div><div><div>• 90% of cultural organisations engaged / partnering in ECoC comply with the minimal standards explicated in the Metropolitan Charter for Accessible Culture, including providing honest and up-to-date information about the accessibility of buildings and events’ sites</div><div>• Number of cultural organisations audiences that take advantage of accessibility tools is doubled</div></div></div>	
<div><div>Our cultural audience is widened by those people who haven’t participated in culture</div></div>	<div><div><div>• At least 60% of residents declare having taken part in some ECoC activity</div><div>• A least 20% of ECoC audiences are “first-timers” with regard to genre / venue / type of experience</div><div>• ECoC produces a rich body of knowledge and good practices concerning who the “non-audiences” actually are (number of citations of good practices and research outside Katowice GZM 2029 context)</div><div>• Diversity of cultural audience is strengthened (by age – teenagers, young and middle-aged adults; place of living; people with disabilities, with migrant / refugee backgrounds)</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	<div><div><div>• At least 30% of cultural organisations have an ongoing, long-term collaboration with educational institutions</div><div>• Rise in % of residents who think participation in cultural activities is an attractive way of spending time with kids / grandchildren</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on M&E
	<div><div><div>○ Games</div><div>Metropolitan residents are convinced that culture is “for me”, it is “about me” and it is “mine”</div><div>Culture is considered – by cultural operators, audiences, residents, officials, politicians – as a powerful means of improving people’s life</div></div></div>	Culture Next & Pollyloop
	<div><div><div>• At least 75% of residents find the cultural offer of the local CCI attractive</div><div>• At least 60% declare that usually they can find something “for them”</div><div>• Rise in % of residents that: a) think that arts and cultural activities play a major role their life; b) feel motivated to participate in culture</div><div>• In public discourse culture is a feature of good life just like health care, education, infrastructure</div></div></div>	ECoC guidelines on M&E

WHAT THE 4G CITY LOOKS LIKE	WHAT WILL IT BRING? KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO QUANTIFY SUCCESS	KPI CONSISTENT WITH
Cultural organisations move from the role of “gatekeeper” to catalyst of creativity	• A rise in % of cultural organisations that declare doing their program outside their venue on a regular basis	
	• A rise in % of cultural organisations that declare having undertaken some creative practice “for the first time” (by art genre, form of activity, topic)	Culture Next & Pollyloop
	• At least 30% of cultural organisations create some part of their program together with audiences and / or have a long-term volunteering programme	Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
Our cultural offer is richer by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art genres and forms of activity• Encouraging new perspectives, e.g. on current local or European / global issues• By localisation of culture out of the zone• Levels of involvement	• At least 30% of ECoC program is realised in “non-traditional” venues, incl. outdoors	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	• At least 90% of audiences of ECoC programmes are satisfied with their experience	
	• A rise in % of cultural audiences that consider personal interests, hobbies, and sport activities as part of culture	
	• A rise in % of cultural audiences who declare “deeper” involvement in cultural practices (in-home hobbies, participatory art projects, becoming artists)	
	• A rise in % of regular cultural audiences that declare having tried out new art genres and forms of activities	
	• A rise in % of residents that declare having done some voluntary work during the last 12 months	ECoC guidelines on M&E; European Social Survey
	• A rise in % of residents that have a cultural venue within 15 mins of walk from their home	
	• A majority of residents believe they can meet many of their social and cultural needs within 15 mins of home	
• For youngsters cultural activities and spaces become tools for self-realisation and self-expression	• We have the teenagers engaged in ECoC operations: at least 15% of audience members, 15% of co-creators and artists, 25% of volunteers	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	• By 2035 a significant proportion of youngsters engaged in ECoC have professional connections with CCI: as volunteers, contractors, culture workers, etc.	
	• A rise in % of youngsters that are part of regular cultural audiences are involved “deeper”, e.g. create things on their own, are part of programming teams, become volunteers	ECoC guidelines on M&E
<div>● Growth</div> <div>“Old” and “new” residents of the Metropolis identify themselves with a metropolitan identity. This does not mean that they erase other local identities; rather, they place a certain set of shared values above historical divisions</div>	• A rise in % of residents that score high in indices of social trust, openness to diversity, and declare a stronger sense of belonging to common Metropolitan and European space	European Social Survey, European Values Survey; Culture Next & Pollyloop
	• A rise in % of residents that declare strong sense of belonging to more than two types of identity (e.g. district /city or town /Silesia or Zagłębie)	ECoC guidelines on M&E; European Social Survey
Variety of identities crossing and co-existing in Śląsk and Zagłębie are celebrated as source of cultural vibrancy of the region	• A rise in % of residents that identify themselves as belonging to: a) an ethnic /national groups other than Polish, b) a migrant / refugee background, c) LGBTQA+, while at the same time declaring strong sense of belonging to a district, city or town, Silesia, Zagłębie or the Metropolis	
	• At least 50% of the ECoC programme incorporate heritage, history and European challenges of the future within contemporary creative practices and formats	ECoC guidelines on M&E
	• At least 30% of cultural organisations engaged in or partnering in ECoC have done multicultural projects	
	• A rise in % of residents that declare a sense of belonging to a common European space and appreciation for diverse European cultures, heritage and history	

WHAT THE 4G CITY LOOKS LIKE	WHAT WILL IT BRING? KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO QUANTIFY SUCCESS	KPI CONSISTENT WITH
Variety of identities crossing and co-existing in Śląsk and Zagłębie are celebrated as source of cultural vibrancy of the region	Officially approved educational programmes have a strong component of culture, arts, heritage, identity	
	A majority of residents declare that Silesian language is something that they find familiar, “normal” in public spaces	
We revive and develop the “Silesian hospitality” image as something very inclusive, linking old traditions with contemporary challenges, a reason to be proud	At least 30% of ECoC programme takes place in local neighbourhoods – close to where people live	
	At least 25% of programme actively involves people (not only as spectators)	
	A rise in % of residents that declare knowing their neighbourhoods past / history	
	A majority residents believe that, in spite of multiple differences “old” and “new” residents share some common challenges and outlooks	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	Among ECoC audience there is a rise in % of people that declare they have neighbours they can count on when in trouble	Quality of Support Network – Better Life Index, OECD
CCI are part of the solution to climate crisis, not part of the problem: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural operators believe their decisions make a difference and are actively engaged in combating climate crisis• ECoC audiences believe that their environmental actions can make a difference, while at the same time bringing joy and satisfaction	A rise in % of residents that consider spending time with their neighbours a good thing to do	
	There is a significant reduction of emissions in CCI	Culture Next & Pollyloop
	At least 60% cultural organisations engaged / partnering in ECoC implement environmentally sustainable solutions in their operations	
	• A rise in % of cultural audience that display responsible attitudes towards climate crisis and use sustainability-oriented practices, including travelling by other means than a car /taxi /plane	
	• There is a decrease in the amount of waste gathered from public spaces, esp. greenery	
The image of Katowice and Silesia is based on strong associations with culture and creativity, residents' well-being, and long-term sustainability	Majority of residents consider access to nature as one of key elements of people's well-being	
	• At least 75% of residents declare awareness of ECoC in Katowice and the Metropolis	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Culture Next & Pollyloop (benchmarking of Sustainable Development Goals for culture)
	• At least 75% of this group take pride in the fact that it takes place in their city / town	
	• A rise in % residents that identify Katowice as a city of culture	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	• A rise in % of residents that score high in indices concerning optimism for the future	Social Optimism Index – Eurobarometer; Culture Next & Pollyloop (benchmarking of Sustainable Development Goals for culture)
	• A rise in % of tourists from Poland and abroad that visit Katowice and the Metropolis for culture-related reasons	ECoC guidelines on M&E; Strategy of the Development of Culture 2035
	• A rise in number of professionals that choose to live in Katowice and the Metropolis, incl. expats and students	Culture Next & Pollyloop (benchmarking of Sustainable Development Goals for culture)

Q4

Monitoring and Evaluation

How do we make Monitoring and Evaluation playful? If we can make them more playful, the results of our ECoC process on peoples' lives will be more visible and accessible. And people become part of the process rather than the subjects of an experiment. So we are totally committed to an open and involving approach to Monitoring and Evaluation which people in our area can join in.

Rules! Of course we need to have some rules for our game. We apply the golden standards of research: robust data gathering and scientifically-approved methods. Everyone, from people researched, to project leaders and curators, to the key stakeholders, needs to know that we produce knowledge that is objective, reliable and accurate, that our findings are a good starting point for reflecting, learning, and making decisions.

Fairness The recent debates over defining the value of culture have pointed to its social and cultural impacts, breaking the dominance of economy-centred frameworks. With a mixed method approach we provide an integrated insight into the change that KTW 2029 will bring to people and places.

Our special focus is on sustainability, individual and collective well-being, and cultural vibrancy. Fairness means to us also that we give voice to all people engaged and affected by ECoC: from artists, curators and cultural operators, through audiences and residents, to local officials and policy-makers. We give special attention to the so-called non-audiences. It's time to reframe this game and narrate the stories of non-attenders on their own terms.

Engagement In our experience, the best Monitoring and Evaluation plans are integrated with the existing organisational practices. And given that our M&E plan is based on continual gathering of multiple types of data, we definitely need cultural operators on board (or even better – having ourselves on board with them). Our strong current system of reporting cultural activities is our natural ally here; yet, we see the need to refine it.

The research tools employed will combine ECoC goals with the interests and needs of concrete cultural organisations and professional groups. Most research on audiences and non-audiences merge the standardised questions with parts that can be tailored to each party interested. The same logic applies to monitoring

of ECoC projects: we will combine metrics that are vital to the overall ECoC process (including the ECoC M&E guidelines) with issues that are meaningful to particular artists and curators (like those elaborated in the CreaTures Framework, resulting from a project under the same name that traced links between creative practice, eco-social change, and transformative futures). With such an approach we believe we get high-quality data about the ECoC process, while providing each cultural operator with knowledge about themselves and about the whole environment they operate in.

We give special attention to the so-called non-audiences. It's time to reframe this game and narrate the stories of non-attenders on their own terms.

Fun to the people! Thanks to ECoC, the acclaimed research platform Medialab Katowice (more in the Artistic Programme) comes back to life, continuing and expanding on the good practices it established in the past. The most common of these practices include open-sourcing data, tools and results, organising and participating in conferences and lectures (locally, in Poland, and abroad), and presenting our findings in a fully interactive website. However, there is much more to the future Medialab as we plan it. We want to create an environment for mutual learning and creating value together with the key stakeholders and all people interested. We want to open as many research processes to the public, organising events like workshops and hackathons, but also long-lasting research collectives responsible for doing selected studies together, from scratch. Research results will be translated into engaging and accessible forms, including large-scale exhibitions, quizzes and games, walking guides, artistic objects and collective performative actions.



Last but not least, as children are champions in combining learning with fun, we invite them as full-blown research collaborators. Not only do we want to discover the city and cultural experiences through their eyes. In Medialab we re-invent, test, and standardise methods and tools for children’s engagement, making an open-source repository one of M&E legacies available to researchers across Europe and the world. And all this – with active participation of kids as self-advocates, experts in their own case, and most severe judges of fun-usability.

Multiplayer mode All this can be done in a good team of people combining local knowledge with international experience and recognition. In Medialab we will continue our already tried-and-tested collaborations with academicians from the Silesian University and the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Katowice (especially with regard to data visualisation), independent researchers and agencies. We will further develop the Culture Next / Pollyloop international benchmark on measuring the culture impacts with relation to Sustainable Development Goals.

Who dunnit? We will start new collaborations concerning specific research projects. On board we already have one of the coordinators for the Polish edition of the European Social Survey (ESS), Jaroslav Chodak from Maria Curie-Sklodowska University in Lublin. We will join forces to carry out a baseline research on residents of the Metropolis, using ESS methodology and tools. This way we will achieve comparability of our results with Poland and other parts of Europe. What follows is that we will be closer to determining to what extent it was the ECoC intervention that brought about changes, or broader trends occurring in the whole country or Europe.

We want to create an environment for mutual learning and creating value together with the key stakeholders and all people interested.

Working on research methods for and with children we will be collaborating with Aleksandra Zalewska-Królak (University of Warsaw, Section for Sociology of Children and Childhood in the European Sociological Association and in Polish Sociological Association).

Finally, Aleksandra Kołtun, the research leader, who has already been carrying out evaluation of our operations in 2023 and 2024, will continue to work as an external, independent expert. Her main task is to coordinate all research under ECoC, overlook its quality and rigour, and provide a comprehensive synthesis of knowledge gained. She has been recruited based on experience in conducting large-scale, multi-method research projects as well as academic background and an in-depth understanding of the European and regional contexts of Katowice GZM 2029.

Getting better and better Our M&E framework addresses two basic goals. The first goal is delivering local, up-to-date knowledge that turns into informed decisions about the activities under way. The second goal is tracking the gradual progress of the ECoC interventions towards the long-term impacts. However, the M&E activities are also supposed to create a legacy of their own.

In 2030 we want to see an environment with abundant opportunities to learn and a strong appreciation of making evidence-based decisions. An environment in which creating and sharing knowledge has become one of many other organisational practices, bringing joy and even more curiosity to people involved.

Our progress in M&E will be measured not only in terms of enhancing our skills and gaining new knowledge, but also fostering mutual understanding and willingness to take yet more adventures together – among researchers, culture professionals, audiences and policymakers. Cultivating this environment will be the Medialab’s key task after 2030, with strong focus on providing evidence for the evaluation of Katowice’s Cultural Strategy.

WHAT SOURCES OF INFORMATION DO WE USE? WHAT RESEARCH DO WE DO?		WHEN DO WE DO IT?	WHO DOES THE RESEARCH?
Set-up and baseline studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Establishing the local research team and partnershipsReactivation of Medialab Katowice	2024	M&E coordinator (MEC), Medialab Katowice (MK)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final refinement of the conceptual and methodological layer + indicators		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Design of monitoring toolsIntegration with local practices of the ECoC team and other cultural operators	1st half of 2025	
Comprehensive diagnosis of the cultural sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Re-examination of knowledge gathered in consultations, workshops and surveys conducted in 2023 and 2024	2025	MK, interested experts, lay audiences (open research process)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Survey for individual cultural operators: “quality of working conditions” from OECDSurvey for collective cultural operators: diagnosis of the organisational environment (scope and types of operations, audiences, organisational practices, relational networks)	Baseline studies: 2025 + 2030 + 2035 (as part of evaluation of Strategy for Culture)	MEC, MK, external agency / researchers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Desk research – socio-economic diagnosis of the sector based on public statistics and other public sources (demographics, structure of employment, numbers and types of formal entities, their geographical dispersion)		MK, interested experts, lay audiences (open research process)
Cultural audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Re-examination of knowledge coming from the representative survey with audiences’ segmentation, completed in 2023; special focus on the “non-audiences”	Baseline study: 2023 + 2030 + 2035	MK, interested experts, lay audiences (open research process)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Regular quanti-qualitative studies of existing, real audiences of ECoC and the partners (incl. post-event surveys, mobile- / video- / photo-aided interviews, collecting drawings, making collages, storytelling, participatory workshops...)	2025–2028: selected ECoC activities 2029: all ECoC activities	MEC, MK, project leaders & curators, all interested cultural actors
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Qualitative study of the “non-attenders” based on existing sources of knowledge on “attenders”, but designed specifically to find and profoundly understand the former group (incl. interviews, + participatory workshops, walking ethnography, participant observation, mystery shopping...)	2026	MEC, MT, interested experts and lay audiences (open research process)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mixed methods research on teenagers and young adults, designed specifically to find and profoundly understand their motivations, cultural practices and tastes	2025 +	
Residents, + the city and region	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Desk research – a diagnosis of the city’s and region’s demographic and economic potential (with special focus on tourism, gastronomy, entertainment) + diagnosis of civic participation mechanisms and practices	Baseline study: 2025 + 2030 + 2035	MEC, MT, interested experts, lay audiences (open research process)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Baseline survey of residents’ perceptions, attitudes and practices: their local and European identities, cultural and political participation, attitudes towards other people and institutions, wellbeing		MEC, MT, European Social Survey partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Baseline survey of local, national and international image of Katowice and the Metropolis	Baseline study: 2023 (local & national image) + 2025 + 2030 + 2035	MEC, MK, external agency / researchers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Qualitative research into local communities and quality of public spaces (semi-structured, quantitative tool based on Jan Gehl’s studies, strong cooperation with the Healthy Street project)	Baseline study: 2023 (based on Share your Neighbourhood) + 2025 + 2030 + 2035	MEC, MT, interested experts, lay audiences (open research process)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engagement of kids into research practices / as researchers: re-inventing, prototyping, testing, doing, sharing of research methods and tools as well as general methodology and ethical principles	2025–2029	MEC, MT, experts on the topic, lay audiences (open research process)
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitoring reports based on regular feedback from ECoC team (interviews, surveys for project leaders and team members), analysis of documents and media contents, interviews with key stakeholders	Executive summaries on selected topics every 6 mths, full reports every 12 mths	MEC, MK
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Report from 1st round of baseline studies	1st half of 2026	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Final report from both rounds of baseline studies & monitoring	end of 2030	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Post-ECoC report on long-term impacts (3rd round of baseline studies), as part of new Cultural Strategy	2035	MK
Communication & dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Whenever executive summary / full report / partial results appear + on demand from ECoC teamalso done as part of Medialab operations and the ECoC artistic programme – an annual event for experts and lay audiences summarising the subsequent years of ECoC + regular educational, artistic, performative activitiesWhenever possible – international conferences on the topics researched, expert meetings, policy-making roundtables		



↑

Sebas Velasco© 15 Step
oil on canvas

2

Cultural and artistic content

Q5

Our artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme

If anything, since preselection our artistic vision and strategy has not changed but sharpened. Listening to the people we spoke to from all over the Metropolis, whether cultural operators or people participating in outreach walks or in the survey, we realised: One theme kept resonating with our interlocutors. “Moving out of the culture zones.”

The artistic vision and strategy behind the artistic programme is to create the Culture Zone 2.0 – or to say it very simply and clearly: “Moving out of the zones”.

Sounds radical and smells like dynamite? No worries, we won’t be blowing anything up! The concert hall of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra NOSPR and the Silesian Museum are safe and do a great job with their audiences.

“Getting out of the zones” is not a contradiction to the existing culture zone. It is, in fact, the most palpable legacy of Katowice’s first effort in 2011 to win the title of ECoC 2016. The site of the former coal mine, converted into a culture zone, where the city’s most important cultural institutions – the NOSPR and the Silesian Museum – now operate. Our Culture Zone 2.0 is a necessary complement to it, based on the knowledge of how culture works today and an analysis of our residents’ expectations.

Regardless of the outcome of the current competition, we want to leave behind a Culture Zone 2.0 – a legacy that will have a lasting impact on the residents and the city for years to come. This time, however, we don’t weave it into the visual fabric of the city, but into its social fabric.

Our zones are vicious circles in which cultural life gets stuck sometimes. To emerge from the zones is to break stereotypes, to remove obstacles and restric-

tions that for years have made culture seem as something alien to most of our residents. Yes, in the back of our minds we constantly have the results of our surveys – with 21% of Metropolitan residents in 2023 who did not attend any cultural event, and 41% for whom culture is something of little concern to their lives.

With our artistic vision and strategy we are moving out of the realm of elitist culture. By introducing what has so far been ignored or marginalised – video games, handicrafts, hobby classes or amateur creativity – we make our residents realise that culture is closer than they think. That it is far from “something not for me” but rather something they have long been engaged with and passionate about.

This is just the first step, which we hope will whet appetites for more. The next step is – hopefully – that people feel invited to try new and more art events. When Marta (15) has acted in an amateur play in her district (Borderless Theatre project), she might want to go to the Silesian Theatre. Even better if the theatre comes to her. If Tymek (8) has joined the Joyful Youth Orchestra in his school, he might want to go see the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra. And incidentally, the musicians of the Orchestra might even come to his home (for Music in the House)! If Andrzej (71) has participated in an open air painting jam session, he might want to see an exhibition of non-professional art. And it is just around the corner from where he lives. Baby steps are key. We present parts of these next steps at your fingertips, in your neighbourhood – on the street, in your backyard, or even in someone’s home, served in an accessible, playful form. Because “getting out of the zones” also means going outside the “temples of art” as often as possible to places where everyday life takes place.

We are also getting out of the zone of inaccessible culture. No event or project will be in the Katowice GZM 2029 programme if it does not meet the standards of the Metropolitan Charter for Accessible Culture. Accessibility is finally becoming the new normal – the ideal is that we simply take it for granted.

We are leaving the zones defined by city boundaries, the area of operation of institutions and the division into what is Silesian and what is from Zagłębie Basin. The entire GZM Metropolis is our playground and everyone is invited to play. This is the first step to building a Metropolitan consciousness and a Metropolitan cultural ecosystem. This is not only one of our goals as ECoC. It’s also one of the goals included in the Katowice 2035 Cultural Strategy.

Finally, “getting out of the zones” is a change in the image of Katowice and the GZM Metropolis. The final reckoning with the too-long stereotype of the land of the coal-black and poor. No more old clichés, it’s time for new, real images.

If we want culture to truly become a part of our residents’ lives, we need to engage them. And what’s



Our Rawa River has lost its original ecosystem. We want to pay attention to it and take responsibility for it. We want the river back!

more engaging than something that’s fun? An invitation to play an exciting game? Preferably together, with a neighbour, fellow resident or partners from a neighbouring city. No more culture only for serious people in suits. It’s time to play with culture.

Q6

Cultural and artistic programme and structure

LEGEND

- Who can play along?
- Where do we play?
- Why do we play? *
- With whom do we play?

* corresponding to 4G impacts in Q3

- Gardens** → towards creation of a new, collaboration and knowledge-based cultural ecosystem
- Gigs** → more opportunities for audiences, esp. kids and “non-attenders”, accessibility as new normality
- Games** → culture is everyone's interest: expansion from “cultural zones”, enrichment of the offer, youngsters on board
- Growth** → more environmentally-sustainable culture, strengthened communities and diversified local & European identifications

▶ **Proposals entered through the open call Submit Your Idea**

- < 100 000 €
- 100 000 – 500 000 €
- > 500 000 €

KATO4U project name

BLOCKS flagship project

Personal Playlist

Personal Playlist is about the individual, their interests, preferences and active involvement. Personal Playlist concentrates on the person and creates opportunities for authentic and personal cultural experience. We do not believe in a one size fits all approach. That is why we put so much emphasis on consultations, surveys and evaluation of the existing cultural offer. To find the underrepresented niches hoping that everyone will find something new and exciting for themselves.

MOVE YOUR BRASS

- inhabitants, visitors, passers-by
- outdoor areas of Katowice and Metropolis
- Gigs, Games
- Marlena Hermanowicz (PL) & Jacob Dijkstra (NL) – curators, Silesian Association of Choirs and Orchestras (PL), European Brass Band Association (BE), The World Association for Symphonic Bands Ensembles, World Association of Marching Show Bands
- ▶ Kamil Iwanicki (Victoria Cultural Center, PL)

€ €

For a few days the GZM Metropolis becomes the European capital of brass bands, taking the living tradition of mining orchestras (included on the National Intangible Heritage List) and elevating it to a European level.

Starting from the huge brass parade on **1st of May 2029** to celebrate 25 years of Poland in the European Union, it’s going to be a chance to see local bands from more than 12 Silesian cities, but also orchestras from Ireland, Germany, Spain, Lithuania, Sweden, Italy, Portugal, Estonia, France, Great Britain, and Hungary (and youth from the **EUPhoria** project – see further below). All of them start with a performance in different cities of the Metropolis and then bands arrive in Katowice by railway, bus, bicycles, scooters, trams, cars, etc. Their reunion will change the city centre into a real stage for marching and drill shows, music battles and a dance party for the inhabitants. The next 5 days of the festival will be full of concerts (The Cory Band, Grimethorpe Colliery Band, Carlton Frickley Colliery Band, etc.) in surprising locations like brownfields, coal mines, amusement parks, markets, roofs and balconies or even detention centres.

Everything to bring music into the streets and give people a chance to stop and enjoy. The concerts include bands from post-industrial areas like the Ruhr in Germany, Nord-Pas-de-Calais in France and the Cornwall area in the UK. This will present Silesian music heritage in a European and global context.

Not forgetting about the young ones, Move Your Brass is a package of free music workshops for kids and their parents on the playgrounds in at least 12 cities of the Metropolis. Their open formula gives a chance to everyone who would like to try to play an instrument.

Move Your Brass is programmed by local specialist in brass music Marlena Hermanowicz and Jacob Dijkstra, Dutch conductor, organiser of Dutch Open Brass Band Championships in Drachten and the former President of the Music Commission of the European Brass Band Association.

► BALKAN EXPRESS

- art lovers, gallery non-goers, non-professional artists
- Silesian Museum, Museum of the History of Katowice, parks, streets and squares of Janów, Nikiszowiec, Giszowiec and Szopienice districts
- Games, Growth
- Silesian Museum (PL), Museum of the History of Katowice (PL), Eko-Art Silesia Association (PL), European museums and collections mentioned below
- ▶ Summer School of Social Art (PL)

€ € €

The most significant and original heritage of Katowice – the non-professional art (formerly known as naïve) of the Janowska Group – will be presented in a major exhibition juxtaposed with the work of their contemporaries from France, Czechia, the Balkans and Estonia. The exhibition will also serve as a pretext for the largest ever open-air painting session in this part of Europe.

The Balkan Express is the popular name of the train that carried workers to the Giesche coal mine in Katowice passing through the Janów district. It often appeared in the paintings of the Janowska Group who created in Janów in the second half of the 20th century – a fascinating collective of originals who metamorphosed from miners and steelworkers to Katowice’s bohemians after work. The core of the exhibition will be based on the vast collections of the Silesian Museum in Katowice, as well as examples of this movement from all around Europe. Foreign museums will be invited to cooperate including Museum of Art in Olomouc (CZ), Museum of Naive Art in Koprivnica (HR), Kondas Center in Valijavi (EE), Collection “La Fabuloserie” (FR) and private collectors from Poland and abroad.

The exhibition will be curated by Ph.D. Anežka Šimkova from the Olomouc Art Museum, Helena Kušenić from the Koprivnica Museum and Sonia Wilk from the Silesian Museum in Katowice.

The incomparable attraction of this painting style will be strengthened by the largest international painting plein-air, bringing together hundreds of artists in picturesque districts of the city such as Nikiszowiec and Giszowiec (a former garden city) and infecting all generations with this passion during numerous workshops. Residents will be prepared for this by local plein-air Summer School of Social Art (also preparing artists to work with residents) created by local artist Agata Szymanek, starting as early as 2025, and the final event will be organised with the Eko-Art Silesia Foundation, which promotes contemporary international non-professional art in Katowice.

YES AND NO FESTIVAL

- youth, young adults, poets, improvisators
- theatres, clubs and bars, streets of Katowice and Metropolis
- Gigs, Games, Growth
- Szymon Paszek (Impro Silesia, PL – coordinator), Gael Doorneweerd-Perry (co-coordinator, Flock Theatre, NL), Juš Milčinski (coordinators, KD Improvizacijsko gledališče Ljubljana – IGLU, SI)
- ▶ Impro Silesia (PL)

€ €

Starting with a Multilingual Impro Show, a performance in which improvisers from different countries speak in their native languages, that breaks down language barriers, but also provides the audience with an amazing experience. Multilingual improvisation emphasises the universality of human emotions and interactions, ensuring that every audience member, regardless of language and cultural background, can fully enjoy the performance. Created in Katowice, the performance will be staged as a co-production with Flock Theatre from the Netherlands and KD Improvizacijsko gledališče Ljubljana (SI).

The festival focuses on presenting best European examples of improv, spoken word, jazz poetry, literary arts in the form of poetry slams, freestyle rap, open mics, improv competitions and hyde park.

A special part in the programme is devoted to activities related to the Silesian language.

- ODE TO JOY – INTERNATIONAL RADIO ORCHESTRAS MARATHON

 music-lovers

 concert halls, broadcast Europe-wide

 Gigs, Games


 Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra – NOSPR (PL) and European orchestras mentioned below


 Tomasz Łuczak (PL, Music on the House)


€ € €


With ‘JOY’ as the keynote of the programme, the Marathon presents the most prominent European symphony orchestras united by their membership of the radio ensemble family. As the home of the leading Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra since 1947, Katowice feels particularly entitled to host the event, which will feature ensembles from neighbouring countries (in order to limit project’s carbon footprint) including the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra (CZ), the Symphonieorchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks (DE), the Ukrainian Radio Symphony Orchestra (UA), and further afield the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra (SE), the Orchestra of Roman Switzerland (CH), the BBC Symphony Orchestra (GB), enhanced by Europe’s top virtuosos. Together they explore the idea of joy in the music of composers from the 17th to the 21st century (from Haydn to Lutoslawski). To increase the event’s outreach, the concerts, in addition to being broadcast on the European Broadcasting Union (CH), will also be streamed in high definition to selected concert halls and cinemas in the Metropolis. To bring music even closer to the people, throughout the Marathon classical and jazz musicians will offer free concerts as part of the Music on the House project.

- PLAYGROUND

 local communities, art lovers

 schools, playgrounds, museums, galleries

 Games, Growth

 Sebastian Cichocki (curator, PL), Muzeum Sztuki Współczesnej (PL), Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej Kronika w Bytomiu (PL), Galeria Sztuki Współczesnej BWA Katowice (PL), Irish Museum of Modern Art (IE), Museu d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona (ES)

€ € €

Playground is an art biennial that combines contemporary art with radical and experimental education. Works by artists from all over the world are presented, including ‘outsider’ work or that which falls into other disciplines: architecture, design or natural sciences. Invited to participate in the inaugural edition of the biennale are Francis Alÿs, Tarek Atoui, Alicja Bielawska, Johanna Billing, Luis Camnitzer, Gauri Gill, Petrit Halilaj, Sharon Lockhart, Steve McQueen, Oscar Murillo, Thao Nguyen Phan, Rivane Neuenschwander, Precious Okoyomon, The Otolith Group, Laure Prouvost, Superflex, Rirkrit Tirivanija, Jaśmina Wójcik, among others. New art projects are realised in a participatory spirit, involving different communities: school groups, people involved in gardening, crafts, dance, music, as well as urban and climate activists.


Scattered across the Metropolis the inaugural edition of the Biennale allows viewers to move between cities and find more places and experience the local specificity of individual neighbourhoods. The exhibition makes as much use of museum and gallery spaces as it does of educational ones: primary schools, university buildings and community centres, relying also on existing playgrounds.


→ →


Cultural Zone, former coal mine “Katowice”




START ME UP

 local musicians and sound artists

 MusicHubs, music clubs, Europe

 Gardens, Games

 MusicHub (PL), MusikZentrum Hannover (DE), Le Fil Saint-Etienne (FR), Hangvető (HU), Pszczyna (PL), JazzDanmark (DK) and cities and festivals mentioned below


€


Our music scene is broad and diverse, but it needs systemic support, especially for debutants. Start Me Up is an extension of the proven concept of MusicHub Katowice – a programme to professionalise young artists and an open rehearsal space.


Branches of MusicHub will be established in the sub-regions of the Metropolis as part of our project Local Culture Hubs. They will be open to young bands selected each year. In 2027 and 2028 the five bands chosen by an expert panel will become official ECoC representatives. In addition to the training at the Katowice MusicHub, they will also have professionalisation sessions with our European partners [Le Fil](#) (FR) and [MusikZentrum](#) (DE). In 2029, they will go on an international tour through our partner cities like [Veszprem](#) (HU, [Street Music Festival](#)), [Norrköping](#) (SE, [Future Echoes](#)), [Brno](#) (CZ, [Marathon Hudby](#)) and [Metz](#) (FR, [Fête de la Musique](#)).


Implementing the principle of gender equality, we will develop within Start Me Up a project of unique workshops for female music school students **Jazzcamp for Girls** together with [JazzDanmark](#) (DK), directing their interests towards improvised music.

MOVING STAGES

 theatre lovers, theatre beginners, theatre intermediate

 professional and improvised stages, public spaces

 Gigs, Games, Growth

 Dagmara Gumkowska (curator), Jordi Duran (co-curator for Multi Play, Place ‘n’ Plays, ES), Florian Borchmeyer (curatorial consultation for Best of... European Theatre and Echoes across Europe, DE), Serge Rangoni (curatorial consultation for Best of... European Theatre and Echoes across Europe, BE), Antonio Araujo (co-curators for Europe from Afar, BR), Silesian Theatre (PL) and institutional partners below.

€ € €

The year-long **Moving Stages** project will create the conditions for regular contact of audiences with the whole spectrum of theatrical and performance forms – dramatic theatre, physical theatre, movement, dance, visual theatre, performance art activities and outdoor projects.

Multi Play

An overview of contemporary European independent theatre: object theatre, animation, movement theatre, contemporary circus art or combining various forms of expression. Multi Play discovers new phenomena, shows current trends, presents performances dealing with themes relevant to Europeans. The broad spectrum of interests of contemporary artists will allow us to boldly explore all themes: identity and gender ([Rash Dash](#), UK), illness and passing away (Israeli artists [Dana Ruttenberg](#) / [L4-L5 Productions](#), IL), stereotypes related to the perception of the body ([Spitfire](#), CZ), power and leadership ([SKaGeN](#), BE) or sexual harassment (Spanish group [Les Impuxibles](#), ES).

The programme will be created in collaboration with our institutional partners: [Studio Alta](#) (CZ), [Teren](#) (CZ), [Hellerau](#) (DE), [Oda Theatre](#) (Kosovo), [Festival Homo Novus](#) (LV), [Summerhall](#) (UK).

Best of... European Theatre

Presentation of theatrical achievements of the most interesting European artists (e.g. [Thomas Ostermeier](#), [Tiago Rodrigues](#), [Ivo Van Hove](#)) and activities of leading European stages (e.g. [Schaubühne](#) in Berlin, [Théâtre de Liège](#), [KVS](#), [Netherlands Dance Theatre](#), [Prague National Theatre](#), [Teatrul Național Radu Stanca Sibiu](#), [Dailes Theatre](#), [Lithuanian National Drama Theatre](#) (LT)).

We plan to close the event with the conference of the [IETM International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts](#).

Place ‘n’ Plays

Pursuing the vision of ‘moving out of the zone’, we present performative projects in two types of open spaces:

- Urban zone – projects breaking into the busy urban and reclaiming for art the marginalised spaces (e.g. [Compagnie 1 Watt](#), [Electrico 28](#), [Kamchatka](#))
- Extra-urban zone – projects exploring the spaces of parks, agricultural or wooded areas located within the city limits (e.g. ‘[Ramat SiMfónic](#)’ – [Moon Ribas & Quim Girón](#)).

The programme will be developed with the collaboration of partners [ISACS Irish Street Arts](#) (IE), [Fira Tarrega](#) (ES), the [Passage Festival](#) (DK), and the support of the [Lieux Publics](#) centre (FR).

Play! Katowice GZM 2029

II

►

Europe from Afar


A programme line-up dedicated to performances and artistic projects exploring European or broadly Western culture as dominant or postcolonial. This kind of reflection is increasingly echoed in the work of a number of non-European artists, such as [Jaha Koo's](#) (KR) / [CAMPO's](#) ‘The History of Korean Western Theatre’ (What Korean theatre art might have looked like had it not been disrupted by foreign models) or [Albert Ibokwe Khoza's](#) ‘The Black Circus of the Republic of Bantu’ from South Africa, which deals with the shameful practices of the colonial era. Also part of the project will be ‘Of All The People In All The World: Europe’, a combination of performance and display by the [Stan's Cafe](#) (UK) team, who use grains of rice to visualise thought-provoking statistics.


Echoes across Europe


A European project initiating the creation of new dramatic texts related to the theme of European identity, migration and cultural roots. The project supports new dramaturgy and is a stimulus for reflection on narratives constructing European identity. It will look for differences, but also similar stories echoing across Europe. The collaboration with the authors will be coordinated by the Katowice partner institutions around Europe, where workshops, authors’ meetings and readings will take place as a decentralised part of the project.


We intend to invite, among others, the following to collaborate: [Staatstheater Kassel](#) (DE), [Staatstheater Mainz](#) (DE), [National Theatre Bratislava](#) (SK), [Theatre Institute – Bratislava](#) (SK), [Theatre Institute Prague](#) (CZ), [National Theatre Prague](#) (CZ), [Théâtre du Nord](#) (FR), [KVS](#) (BE), [Théâtre de Liège](#) (BE), [Qendra Multimedia](#) (XK), [SIRENOS Festival](#) (LT).

WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME DANCE

 everyone who want to dance

 Katowices’ parks and squares

 Games, Growth

 [Mauro Durante](#) (IT), [Laura Perrone](#) (IT), [Justin Adams](#) (UK), [Music Meeting Festival Nijmegen](#) (NL), [Folk Music Ontario](#) (CA), [Kapela Fedaków](#) (PL)

€ €

The largest and most global dance party in this part of Europe. In several tents scattered around Katowice’s parks, we are practising dances that heal: the Salentinian pizzica, the Brazilian candomblé or the dances of the indigenous people of North America, accompanied by artists for whom music and dance are part of their identity.

►► Cultural and artistic content


31


Nowadays, in our part of the world, it has lost parts of its social functions. However, in many places in Europe and around the world, a tradition of dance is still being cultivated that has a much deeper meaning – a dance that heals, helps to overcome traumas, and builds and strengthens bonds within communities.


Concerts, shows, workshops and immersive experiences led by amazing artists from Italy, Africa, Canada and India that will turn the city into an international celebration of sharing and community building, through the irresistible power of dance.


Our curators [Mauro Durante](#) and [Laura Perrone](#) reach out to international partners, [Folk Music Ontario](#) (CA) will support the selection of North American musicians, [Music Meeting Festival Nijmegen](#) (NL) will extend the global reach of the programme and [Katowice's Kapela Fedaków](#) will share its experience in organising dance events.

EUPHORIA

 children and teenagers from European countries

 Katowice's squares and streets

 Gardens, Games

 participants of JOY project and of similar ones from countries mentioned below

€

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Poland’s membership in the European Union, for one day Katowice will belong to those who will become the next generation of the Community – young people from all over the continent. They will do without translators as they will speak the universal language of music. The hosts will be the young people participating in the **JOY** project (see [Fair Play](#)). Their peers participating in similar projects from all parts of Europe will be their guests. Groups of several young people (with their chaperones) will arrive in Katowice a week early to get to know each other, discover the city, but also play music together. With the help of professionals, they will compose and perform together a hymn tune for the 25th anniversary and play it at the start of a parade through the city, which will start the **Move Your Brass** festival.

Young people from Poland will meet their peers in Katowice from, among others: [Amarante](#) (PT), [Lliria](#) (ES), [Matera](#) (IT), [Saint-Etienne](#) (FR), [Chemnitz](#) (DE), [Leuven](#) (BE), [Limassol](#) (CY), [Uppsala](#) (SE), [Budweis](#) (CZ), [Lviv](#) (UA).

►►

VIRTUOUS IN THE VIRTUAL

😊

everyone in the multiverse

📍

Internet

❓

Games

🌐

Paryż Foundation (PL), Marlena Niestrój (curator, PL), Gioia Lelli (CH) – co-curator, AI consultant



In the early 1980s, the Katowice-based artist Piotr Szmitke (1955–2013) created a movement in art called metaverism. He anticipated the inevitable virtualisation of the world and, as part of his artistic practice, created works by imagined artists, while furnishing them with separate, fictional biographies and histories.

Piotr Szmitke’s metaverism was a prophetic warning against losing oneself in the artificial reality that is becoming a reality today, in the age of the Metaverse and evolving AI.

Referring to his creative method and taking advantage of the possibilities already offered by AI, we will invite everyone willing to create the artistic reality of the metaverse together.

We will begin with an online workshop accessible to a global audience, which will be a creative play led by visual artists, directors, writers and art theorists. Under their guidance, participants will create their artistic avatars using, among other things, AI technologies. The project will culminate in a major global exhibition in the Metaverse.

Fair Play

Fair Play is about communities. This programme line concentrates on relationships between people and the trust that culture can foster. Fair Play shines a spotlight on fair and equal rights to participate in culture. We believe they are as important as access to drinking water.

48H: THE STREETS ARE OURS

😊

active people

📍

urban space, city centres in the Metropolis

❓

Games

🌐

Skate PTG (PL), tera ino tera (PL), Graffiti Hangaren Malmö (SE), Uppsala 2029 (SE), Skateholders project Budweis 2028 (CZ)



For 48 hours, Katowice will celebrate the positive impact of subcultures can bring to the fabric and feel of the city. For two days the cityscape is handed over to amateur urban sports people – skaters, skateboarders, BMX riders and parkour artists, as well as graffiti creators.

Closed streets and squares in the city centre become temporary skateparks where amateurs practise and present their skills. Competitions are held in several disciplines, whose arenas are the cities of the Metropolis, and become an unofficial European championships. The grand finale is the crossing of the 16 km long main thoroughfare connecting several cities of the Metropolis, the Drogowa Trasa Średnicowa, which will be closed for traffic for the occasion. Everyone living in the Metropolis will have the unique opportunity to traverse it in an alternative way – by bicycle, skateboard or rollerblades.

The city also becomes a musical stage for music associated with urban sports – hip-hop or breakbeat, while lots of buskers bring a fun and family feel.

The preparation for the 48H Games is the **Try!Urban** project. Local NGOs promoting major urban sports go into disadvantaged neighbourhoods across the Metropolis encouraging young people to try their hand. We are networking our educators with their peer partners from the Budweis 2028 Skateholders project.

The **Spray & Play** project (graffiti jams proposed by young people themselves – see [Q16](#)) will take place in **Graffiti Playgrounds** curated by Pärre Von Andreasson, a Swedish street artist who runs Graffiti Hangaren in Malmö and was the organiser of the first such event in Katowice in the early 1990s. He will also be supported by artists from the Uppsala graffiti scene (with the support of ECOC candidate Uppsala 2029).

JOLLY YOUTH ORCHESTRA JOY

😊

children in primary schools (7–11 yo)

📍

22 primary schools in Katowice and at least 10 all over the Metropolis

❓

Gigs, Games

🌐

local brass bands and musicians, State Secondary Music School in Katowice (PL), L'École de l'Oralité Association (FR), project Hangár Veszprém (HU)



Jolly Youth Orchestra JOY introduces classes on wind instruments and drums (cajons) for children from 7 to 11 into the curricula of primary schools. JOY gives a second life to the cultural legacy associated with the traditions of mining brass bands, included on the National List of Intangible Heritage.



Piloted by local cultural institutions (with the institution Katowice City of Gardens as the leader), we are reviving the amateur music movement by drawing on the most vibrant tradition of Upper Silesia and Zagłębie. We use brass bands as a universal tool for integration, irrespective of linguistic or musical predispositions, cultural conditions or financial possibilities.

Making music together positively influences the condition of peer groups, families and local communities. By popularising brass music among children and young people, we encourage them to engage in intergenerational dialogue, to become continuators of local traditions and to place them in new, current contexts. Starting as early as 2025, the aim is to enable several thousand children to experience the joy of playing music. Our partners from L'École de l'Oralité Association (FR) and from Hangár music hub in Veszprém (HU) will help us build a system of activities also outside the schools, based on their experience of the Atelier Météore Band (FR) and Hangjáték (HU) project.

Young participants in the project will be involved in celebrating the 25th anniversary of Poland’s membership of the European Union (also see **EUphoria**).

SUPPORT YOUR TEAM

😊

soccer enthusiasts, audiences with an interest in sports, football clubs, European football fans and clubs, especially from ECoC cities

📍

Museum of Katowice’s History, stadiums, schools

❓

Games, Growth

🌐

Trenuj Bycie Dobrym (PL), Museum of Katowice’s History (PL), Sport in Art (CZ)



Nothing unites the people of the Metropolis more than our love of football. At the same time, football can be a driver of division and conflict between our cities, neighbourhoods and even families as loyalties are split between different teams. With the multifaceted Support Your Team project, we want to make these battle lines at least a little less sharp to keep the passion but lose the poison.

Together with all willing fan communities, we will prepare a community exhibition at the Museum of Katowice’s History. It will cover five main topics: the local history of men’s and women’s football, the development of fan culture over the years, the art of football, football fashion. The accompanying Retro Metropolitan League will recreate the history of football in the Metropolis live (amateur footballers will play the role of players from teams that no longer exist).

Football is, of course, the world’s most watched game. Mega stars on mega money. But it has the hum-

blest of origins, especially in communities like ours – all over Europe. Where some of our greatest clubs grew from the mines or from religious societies. Today football can drive society in positive ways – the growth of women’s and disability football, standing up to racism – but there is also a darker side to the game. Sportswashing, and the racist chanting and hooliganism that still exists in part of the football world. Football fans that are also poets (and we have a lot of them!) will take part in a football poetry competition. Non-fiction authors, on the other hand, will be invited to a sports writing workshop.

Mitigating animosities between fans, to be effective, must start with the youngest. Support Your Team is a programme for schools consisting of several points – lessons in the Football3 formula teaching fair play and developing social skills, street art workshops and quiz duels on sports knowledge. It will also include football academy coaches – a workshop teaching how to run activities with respect and without animosity.

We will invite some of our footballing partners from the ECoC world to join us in a rousing concert of football anthems as well as a thought provoking conference on the impact of football on society, including showing best practice examples of how football can change lives through the inspiration of the football brand. We know that this project will especially reach out to groups of men who prefer the match to the museum. But its appeal will be much wider.

▶ OPERA UTOPIA

😊

people at risk of exclusion, elderly, opera buffs

📍

streets, prisons, senior homes, opera house

❓

Gigs, Games

🌐

Tobiasz Sebastian Berg (curator, PL), FEDORA – The European Circle of Philanthropists of Opera and Ballet (FR), Municipal Social Welfare Centre (PL), Silesian Opera House (PL)



With utopia as its theme, the Opera Utopia project will involve excluded people and those at risk of exclusion in the preparation of a full-scale opera work. Based on the assumption that the utopia of solidarity, idealism and equality will be best told by those who have lost their freedom, curator Tobiasz Sebastian Berg chooses to raise this issue of sovereignty with prisoners, the elderly, and the homeless as the foundation of his dea.

Tobiasz Sebastian Berg is a member of Opera 2025, a council of 16 artists from across Europe (recommended by Opera Europa and Fedora). The council’s goal is to programme new solutions for the contemporary





opera environment. The project Opera Utopia is the result of Tobiasz Berg's experience in preparing and effectively conducting assignments, socially engaged art and cultural education.

By including various disadvantaged social groups opera becomes a bridge in the context of contemporary culture by confronting tradition and modernity. The performance and the process of its preparation is in line with the three pillars of the Next Stage Opera programme: sustainability, equality and digital transformation.

The stages of work comprise workshops (2027) in the form of interviews, analysis of the concept of utopia, and music and composition workshops.

Composition work and the creation of a libretto (2028) will be based on the recorded material, many of the recordings being incorporated into the work.

Rehearsals and premiere (2029) will take place in the Silesian Opera House in Bytom. The event will also be complemented by opera installations in various unusual places in the Metropolis (locations to be determined in cooperation with people in a homelessness crisis) and a prison premiere through the prison's own radio is also planned.

METROPOLIS OF CULTURE

- ☺ employees of the cultural sector, NGO's
- 📍 culture institutions, Metropolis
- ❓ Gardens, Growth
- 🌐 culture institutions from Metropolis GZM and Poland, partner institutions from other: Wrocławski Instytut Kultury – Wrocław 2016 (PL), Staromiejski Dom Kultury Warszawa (PL), Institute for the Study of Cultural Organisations (PL)



This is a capacity building programme for culture people. Its design is based on data obtained at workshop meetings in the sub-regions of the Metropolis carried out during early 2023 and attended by people from the cultural sector (employees of institutions, NGOs, activists in the cultural sector as well as artists and civil servants). The programme consists of elements such as: competence-enhancing workshops, study visits, joint projects, mentoring in areas like: cultural management, universal design, budget management, project application writing, funding and sponsoring, marketing and communication, environmental sustainability, audience development, accessibility monitoring and evaluation, legal support, intercultural competence and more.

The basic premise of the programme is constant communication and collaboration. So it is also a platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience with our partners from other ECoC cities. Training and workshops take place in institutions that act as local operators (in all sub-regions of the Metropolis) – so that the offer reaches a wide audience of cultural workers. The series also includes dedicated, specialised workshops for professionals (museum professionals, librarians, artists), study visits to our partners in Warsaw and Wrocław and also discussion group activities. A permanent component of the programme is the Metropolis of Culture Congress, which will continue to bring our sector together as we build up to 2029. Local partners from GZM Metropolis: Bieruński Ośrodek Kultury (Bieruń), Bytomskie Centrum Kultury (Bytom), Chorzowskie Centrum Kultury (Chorzów), Miejski Dom Kultury Bogucice-Zawodzie (Katowice), Miejski Klub im. Kiepur (Sosnowiec), Miejski Ośrodek Kultury (Zabrze), Miejskie Centrum Kultury (Tychy), Tarnogórskie Centrum Kultury (Tarnowskie Góry)

LOCAL CULTURE HUBS

- ☺ everyone that doesn't need to be in the centre all the time
- 📍 decentralised spaces all over the Metropolis
- ❓ Gardens, Gigs
- 🌐 local NGOs from subregions, local municipalities and cultural institutions



As a capacity building project for local communities we will create a network of five hubs (one in every sub-region of Metropolis) – umbrella institutions created as incubators for fledgling cultural creators, local leaders, informal groups lacking structural support as well as access to space and amenities.

The running of Local Culture Hubs will be entrusted to local NGOs, selected through a competition. The Hubs will offer anyone interested in community activities premises with technical facilities, an Internet portal, a notice board, legal and accounting assistance.

This supports networking between NGOs and individual activists as well as cultural institutions and local governments. They will provide mentoring, access to experts, sponsorship support, information on calls for proposals and a database of available infrastructure: spaces, equipment, instruments, lighting.

With the launch of the Tkanki Kultury (Tissue of Culture), a meeting for NGOs and cultural practitioners in 2024, we began to map the needs, contacts and networking between different sectors. Local Cultural Hubs are also a title management tool for our Metropolis. The

Hubs will have their own budget for European Capital of Culture activities. As a venue they will be the closest to the inhabitants of the sub-regions of the Metropolis.

DIFFERENT VOICES

- immigrants, people suffering from depression, stressed city dwellers, people who need their voice to be heard
- streets, forests, rehearsal rooms, concert halls
- Gigs, Games, Growth
- Chórtownia Foundation (PL), Kuczeryki (PL), Silesian Association of Choirs and Orchestras (PL), Lviv Radio (UA), ECoC candidate Leuven 2030 (BE)



Based on the conviction that singing is an extremely effective and empowering way of positively influencing people, we target selected groups with projects using singing, but also listening, as ways of integrating and improving psychological well being. We invite the rapidly expanding group of immigrants from Ukraine to take part in **Holosy** – regular workshops led by artists from the Metropolis-based ensemble Kuczeryki, meetings on the Slavic tradition of white singing techniques for Polish and Ukrainian women. In 2030 Holosy will be transferred to Leuven (BE) as a good practice.

The process of integrating the new inhabitants of the Metropolis coming from Ukraine will be facilitated by the **School of Listening**, using field recording and experience gained by our partners from the Ukrainian Lviv Radio. **Lift Your Spirits** (by Chórtownia Foundation) will engage choirs from all over Poland in activities dedicated to the growing proportion of people suffering from and at risk of depression and involving them in open rehearsals, vocal workshops and concerts.

KATO4U

- young people aged 15–20
- Katowice
- Gigs, Games
- Youth Council of the City of Katowice, Department of Education of the City of Katowice, The Nook project – Oulu 2026 (FI)



Research into the cultural needs of teenagers and young adults has indicated that they lack independent but safe places to spend their free time together. Just to hang out with no expectations or “education”

purpose – unless they choose it. This gap will be filled by Kato4U – youth spots created at nodal schools for at least Katowice’s 11 main districts. Selected and created in cooperation with the City Hall’s Education Department and in a dedicated school space, they will be completely independent of the schools and based on the mechanisms developed by the Katowice City Youth Council. Each Kato4U spot will have a separate rest area, equipped with some basics (computer, projector, game console), relaxation and kitchen space.

Their offer will be complemented by activities chosen by the users themselves – from cultural events to workshops to training sessions to expand young people’s knowledge and competencies. Two Kato4U spots are already operating successfully as permanent ECoC pilot projects in the city centre and in the Ligota district.

PLAYSPACE / GRALNIA

- everyone who needs to talk to somebody
- neglected district in Metropolis
- Gigs
- Guardian Angels Home Foundation (PL)



A glazed, but cosy, room filled with board games. Inside, comfortable armchairs and a table for playing. The room is developed in a mobile container that is placed in different (especially disadvantaged) districts of the Metropolis.

The Playspace is occupied during opening hours by one person with a particular expertise – the Player – open, talkative, willing to listen, having received psychological and interpersonal training.

The game is the accelerator of the conversation. It facilitates opening up to the other person. Confiding about problems. Or maybe it’s just a panacea for loneliness. The Playspace is not a psychological office, but in special cases, the Player will need to be assisted by contact with specialist institutions. On a day-to-day basis, however, it is a place to come, chill, talk and play.

The Playspace is a development from an idea submitted by Nadzieja Siarhejka (BY) a young, aspiring artist. The aesthetic side of it (design, artistic setting) will be made in collaboration with Nadzieja and international artistic duo Heleen Haijtema (NL) and Bouke Groen (NL).

The methodology of day-to-day work of the Playspace warden, the Player, will be consulted and supported by organisations experienced in street working practices: Guardian Angels Home Foundation.



LISTEN UP!

- d/Deaf and everyone else
- Metropolis
- Gardens, Gigs, Games
- Ingraft Foundation (PL) – coordinator, GAG – The Group of Deaf Artists (PL), Migawka Foundation (PL), Silesian Museum (PL), Compagnia Teatrale Laboratorio Zero (IT), Teater Manu (NO), Riksteatern Crea (SE)



A series of events centred around Deaf culture. The ideas came from the d/Deaf Roundtable, which we mention in Outreach. It aims to showcase d/Deaf creative activity not as a disability but as a cultural minority. It will include: exhibitions by d/Deaf artists from Poland and the World, concerts by groups singing in Polish Sign Language (PJM) and International Sign, performance shows by Deaf theatre groups.

To allow the hearing majority the d/Deaf experience, we will playfully invert the accessibility issue: these events will have translations for hearing people.

We want d/Deaf culture events to become a permanent part of the Metropolis’ stages. This is complemented by an interdisciplinary educational project that includes, among other things: courses for sign language interpreters in culture and art, lectures on improving d/Deaf education and promoting sign language learning. Ingraft Foundation will be responsible for the linguistic and educational side of the project.

European theatre groups Compagnia Teatrale Laboratorio Zero, Teater Manu, Riksteatern Crea that work with implementation of sign language communication will be invited to share their experience and workshop ideas with local communities. World renowned Deaf artists like Nancy Rourke, Arnaud Balard or Frederik Vauthey have confirmed their interest in the project curated by a Deaf artist couple Kinga-Hołda Justycka and Michał Justycki.

KUTZOWISKO FILM AND MEDIA SCHOOL FOR YOUTH

- youth
- Szopienice
- Games, Growth
- Kieslowski Film School (PL), Silesia Film Institute (PL)



This project creates a non-formal education facility for children and young people in the field of film art and internet media at the house that was owned by Kazimierz Kutz. Kutz is one of Silesia’s best-known film and theatre directors, a social activist and politician, who died in 2018.

It is located in Szopienice, one of the Katowice districts most in need of revitalisation. As part of the workshop Time for Szopienice – Changing our Towns for a Better Future – sketches for a development strategy for the Szopienice district were created. The need for an institution combining cultural activities with recreation and rehabilitation services was underlined as part of that strategy.

The school would educate young people in the following fields: directing, editing, sound production, cinematography, image realisation in internet media (including Youtube, TikTok, Twitch and other social media platforms).

Detailed scopes will be prepared in consultation with those specialising in those fields. We’ve confirmed, for example, the renowned Polish directors and film professors like Dagmara Drzazga (documentary film director), Jerzy Łukaszewicz (film director and cinematographer), Krystyna Doktorowicz (the Dean of Kieślowski Film School) and also European, independent filmmakers like Emilie Girardin (film director, teacher at SAE Institute Germany). Classes would be held daily during after-school hours in a system of courses culminating in an audiovisual project.

The project envisages a strategic partnership with higher education institutions in Katowice, primarily the Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School but also Silesia Film Institute. The last institution manages three arthouse movie theatres in Katowice, so cinema screenings of works of students and alumni is a likely possibility.



Total Immersion

Total Immersion is about space, both virtual and real. This programme line is about embracing the future with all its new shiny toys and the Force luring us to the dark side. Total Immersion focuses on the cityscape we are immersed in, rethinking the roles and functions of public spaces in times of digital enhancements.

CITY QUEST: UNVEILING THE HIDDEN STORIES

- residents and visitors of Katowice and the Metropolitan area, detectives
- urban space of Katowice
- Games, Growth
- Mikołaj Wicher (curator, PL), Liveform (PL), Funeral (PL), Sirius Games Studio (PL), local historians



Amid the noise of scraping brakes and clouds of steam, the train stops at the old station in Kattowitz. It is Friday 10th of September AD 1909 and you have just arrived in this booming city alerted by a mysterious letter from long-lost cousins. Surprisingly, they didn't come out to pick you up at the train station. How do you find them in a foreign city? And what happened to them?

Welcome to City Quest, a grand interactive LARP (live action role playing) adventure inviting residents and visitors of Katowice to embark on a thrilling exploration of the city's hidden and forgotten stories.

As the city comes alive with possibilities, players experience a captivating journey filled with immersive role-playing, engaging puzzles, and interactive challenges.

Beyond the realm of entertainment, City Quest fosters a sense of pride and belonging within its inhabitants and provides an opportunity for visitors to forge a deeper connection with the cultural heritage of Katowice. Through partnerships with local cultural organisations, historians, and artists, City Quest ensures an authentic and meaningful experience. Each storyline and puzzle is carefully crafted to breathe life into forgotten narratives and engage the participants.

The Quest will be held three times on the occasion of the city's anniversary in September.

THE LOOP

- music lovers from the Metropolis, trainspotters
- tracks of Metropolis
- Gigs, Games
- Tauron Nowa Muzyka (PL), Piotr Rachwalski (PL, curator), Koleje Śląskie (PL), Ideala Collective (JP)



The Loop is a travelling music stage on a special night train in the Metropolis. The iconic EN-57 train set will host three micro-stages where artists from the field of electronic and experimental music, selected in collaboration with the organisers of the Tauron Nowa Muzyka Festival – More Music Agency, will perform. The placement of the stages will allow the audience to circulate freely throughout the train, which will close with a chillout wagon. Setting off at dusk from the station in Gliwice, located in the west, the train will travel through almost the entire area of the Metropolis twice in about eight hours on the line Gliwice – Dąbrowa Górnicza – Pyrzowice – Bytom – Gliwice. Participants who buy a ticket for The Loop will be able to get on and off the train at any of the stations it passes. Piotr Rachwalski, a public transport expert, will be responsible for the logistical coordination of the project.

LIGHT AHEAD

- the general public, passers-by, culture tourists, art professionals
- public space all over the Metropolis, urban and rural indoor and outdoor locations, abandoned, un-loved and unknown places
- Gardens, Growth
- Andrea Moller (curator, NL), ILO International Light Festivals Organisation (NL), Visualia Pula (HR), Interference Tunis (TN), Tajny Projekt (PL), Laszlo Bordos (HU), Raumzeitpiraten (DE), Jan-Philip Scheibe (DE)



Six days a week, more than 8 hours a day, the miners in Silesia were underground. So it often happened that they hardly experienced any sunlight for a whole week.

Light Ahead invites communal interaction with light and media art projects that tell the story of mining and the energy transition in the Metropolis. Artists shape the Metropolitan cities, its suburbs and villages with media-, sound- and light art, temporarily changing the look and feel of locations, and actively involving the public in co-creating images and sounds. With



Andrea Moller (Media Art Friesland Foundation, NL) as a curator and with the support of the International Light Festivals Organisation, the most interesting artists of the field are at our fingertips. We can already mention, for example, Laszlo Bordos (HU), Jan-Philip Scheibe (DE) or Raumzeitpiraten (DE), who stand by to work with us.

EXPLORING THE LIGHT AND DARK SIDE OF PLAY

- researchers, game enthusiast, teachers video game sceptics
- Silesian University
- Gardens, Games
- curator Michał Kłosiński Head of Game Studies Research Centre (PL) and game studies experts from acclaimed European institutions such as University of Silesia (PL), Cologne Game Lab (DE), Center of Excellence in Game Studies Cultures (FI), Institute of Digital Games (MT), Center for Digital Play (DK)



Play! is like the Force in the Star Wars universe: everyone starts on the light side of the Force, but the dark side tempts and attracts you to lose yourself in it. This project proposes a series of educational seminars. Aimed at raising awareness about the contemporary state of cultural, psychological, and game studies knowledge on games. We will stress the positive and transformative power of games by showing how games are a key part of our contemporary culture, how they shape it, comment on it, and propose solutions to our everyday problems is pivotal to disenchanting the stereotypes and prejudices towards games and play.

The seminars will be tailored to popularise game studies knowledge for all age groups and create space for discussion on games and play among the general public. During the seminars, we will invite participants to engage in game-hacking practices, unlocking the games' potential to simulate and propose solutions to the issues they identify in their immediate environment. These projects will allow them to see games as tools for positive change in the spirit of global initiatives such as ecogaming, serious games (also called applied games), and games for change.



NOMADA

- intergenerational group of youth and seniors
- Katowice city centre
- Gigs
- Urszula Osolińska (curator, PL), Academy of Fine Arts Katowice (PL)



An outdoor game in the form of an installation in public space dedicated to all those of us suffering from low ability to orient ourselves spatially due to dependance on digital maps and navigations. It allows to practise concentration, spatial memory, navigation in the field and encourages physical activity. Its opening is complemented by an intergenerational workshop in which seniors share analogue map and orientation skills with young people, while young people help master modern digital tools for navigating the city space.

LET'S PLAY

- young people aged 6–18 yo, teachers
- online, schools, NGOs, Gaming and Technology Hub
- Gigs, Games
- Dominik Koziarski (curator, PL), Little Bit Academy (PL), Reykjavik University (ISL), Palacký University Olomouc (CZ), Intel Extreme Masters Katowice – ESL Gaming (PL/DE)



This programme of educational and artistic activities and events aims to create good conditions and a friendly environment for young people to explore the world of video game culture, targeting children and youth aged approximately 6–18 years. Each of the following activities has been designed to enrich the knowledge and skills of the participants, while promoting the positive aspects of game culture.

A handbook for parents and teachers introducing the world of games

It contains practical advice on how to use games for education and personal development of children and youth, while promoting online safety and healthy gaming habits.

Lesson plans on video game culture

Integration of video game-related topics into school lessons shows students that their passions can also be a source of learning and inspiration.



Integrative workshops and game jams for children and youth

The themes of the game jams will address challenges such as climate change or issues of tolerance, encouraging participants to engage with important societal topics through the medium of game development.

Tournaments of selected games for schools

The finals, held during the prestigious event of the Intel Extreme Masters, give young talents the chance to showcase their skills at a large forum, which can inspire them to further develop their passion and professional aspirations in the gaming industry.

BLOCKS

- the City
- city's skyscrapers
- Gigs, Games
- private business, Future Processing Laboratory – Silesian University of Technology (PL), Silesian Philharmonic (PL)

€ € €

Blocks is the opportunity of a lifetime to play classic video games from the arcade era such as Space Invaders, Pac Man, Tetris and Pong. And not just play them on a computer screen – but on the walls of Katowice's skyscrapers! We have several office towers close to or over 100 metres high. They are all located in the city centre, so players can walk from one game to the other on foot.

The games will be accompanied by performances by ensembles with the Silesian Philharmonic playing the soundtracks of classic video game titles from the 1970s and 1980s with a hint of improvisation.

Technologically it boils down to computer management of the circuits of lighting in the rooms on different floors of the buildings. This makes it possible to arrange the illuminated windows into different shapes and sequences allowing alphanumeric characters and simple animated shapes to be shown. All in real time.

The final effect will be a great play of lights visible from almost every part of the city. This project is not based on nostalgia, it is nostalgia.

INTO THE FOREST

- all the living and breathing creatures
- Protective Forest Belt Upper Silesian Industrial Region, schools, galleries
- Growth
- partners mentioned below

€ €

The core of the Metropolis is surrounded by a unique forest ring – the Protective Forest Belt of the Upper Silesian Industrial Region. It was intended to prevent the expansion of heavy industry, the destruction of the natural environment and to provide a place of recreation in direct contact with nature for residents. It was the only forest belt not only in Poland but also in continental Europe and enshrined in national law. Even the Greenbelt of New York was modelled on the Upper Silesian solution!

In Katowice alone, forests account for 43% of the area, making it the most forested city in the voivodeship. Yet residents of the city and the Metropolis have limited identification of the forests as a city space. In addition, the policy of the State Forests is focused on economic exploitation, which threatens the very existence of the ring, so important in a region subjected to exceptional civilisation pressures. The five parts of Into the Forest include:

Living Ecology

Under the guidance of activists from several environmental NGOs (Ecological Thought Club Foundation, School of Cultural Miners and Living Education Workshop), we will immerse ourselves in the forest according to the philosophy of deep ecology. Children, together with their parents, follow in the footsteps of Tales from the Olden Days through the forest, in which animals, plants, fungi and people are treated as equals. Adults can take part in workshop "The Council of All Beings". The aim is to change ecological awareness – striving to restore a sense of connection with nature, while seeking one's place in the world."



Industrioklimaks
Industrioklimaks is a series of year-round walks that allow people to discover and join in the social process of researching areas where primary succession is taking place, i.e. colonisation by previously non-native plant and insect species. Together with the participants, the Seasonal Workshop, an artistic project by artists Joanna Zdzenicka and Paweł Szeibel within the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice, will join the process of documentation and artistic interpretation. The finale will be an exhibition presented at the Wilson Shaft Gallery, in the former guildhall of the Wieczorek coal mine.

Forest Mental Map
In the Forest Mental Map project, we enter the world of intimate stories about the forest. How do we remember it? What did we do in it? What grew in it? What did we call the different places? Together with social archivists as well as artists from the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice and students from the Faculty of Architecture at the Silesian University of Technology, we will collect these stories among the inhabitants of the cities and districts directly adjacent to the forests. The whole will make up a digital, freely accessible map.

Secrets of the Forest
The Silesian Puppet and Actor Theatre Ateneum in Katowice will invite children aged 8–11 (with a focus on children with special needs) to participate in interdisciplinary workshops inspired by the mysteries of forest nature and its unique adaptive skills. The results of these meetings, compiled into stories, will be used to create a radio play, a theatre performance and a Book of Forest Wisdom.

Ambient For/Rest
Conducting a series of music therapy sessions in the forested areas of the Metropolis within Ambient For/Rest projects (provided by Katowice's Sound-scape Foundation (PL) and Binaural Nodar (PT) aims to draw participants away from the urban hustle and bustle, inviting them to commune with nature.

MEDIALAB KATOWICE

- ☺ all people willing to play with knowledge and data
- 📍 various public and semi-public spaces: cultural organisations, parks, streets, shopping malls etc, wherever you invite
- 🔍 Gardens
- 🌐 Academy of Fine Arts Katowice (PL), Budweis 2028 (CZ), MateraHUB (IT), Creative Prague (CZ)

€ €

Medialab is our way of dragging research from “the academic shrines of knowledge” back to everyday curiosity about ourselves, about the other people and the world around us. We revive what successfully operated between 2012 and 2021. You will find detailed plans for research in Medialab in the chapter concerning Monitoring and Evaluation (Q4).

A special place in all these processes will be granted to youngsters and kids. After several research activities carried out in 2023 and 2024, we are fully convinced that youngsters are the best experts in their own case. Often unheard, and even more often patronised, youngsters are ready to speak up. Medialab will give them tools and all support to achieve this, while, at the same time, being more than happy to learn their ways, especially when it comes to handling cyberviolence, remixing traditions, and understanding the digital cultural tribes and cultural consumption. Next, we will engage children (and their parents) to develop methods and tools for doing research specifically in this group. We believe that this is a huge gap in the current state of research across Europe and the world.

Medialab is our agenda for creating the ECoC legacy: a new cultural ecosystem in which knowledge feeds people interests, decisions and everyday practices.

INDUNATURE 2029

- ☺ slow-tourists, industrial heritage geeks, visitors, inhabitants,
- 📍 post-industrial and industrial spaces, nature points of interest
- 🔍 Games, Growth
- 🌐 Marcin Doś (curator, PL), Śląskie.Travel – Silesian Tourist Organisation (PL), Academy of Fine Arts Katowice (PL), RER Europe project – Bourges 2028 (FR)
- ▶ Agata Magdalena Nowak – Morfika Brand (PL)
- ▶ Przemysław Michałek (PL)

€ € €

How about an off the golf course turbo golf game in the corridor of a former coal mine or climbing to the top of the brownfield in the Murcki district combined with admiring the view of the remains of the ancient Silesian Forest? InduNature is an alternative tourism office for visitors from all around Europe. Instead of monuments, museums and cities, we visit post-industrial sites (those revitalised and those untouched but accessible), as well as mines, steel mills or factories still in operation. In cooperation with Bourges 2028, two routes as a continuation of their Europe RER project will be prepared. A permanent attraction of InduNature is the urban game **Not Just Mines – Getting Lost in**

Katowice that invites participants to get to know the city from iconic places to inconspicuous nooks and crannies, which tell the story of Katowice and allow anyone to explore the city on their own.

The journey begins at the market square and is guided by an interactive map and a succession of clues. Step by step the participants delve into the city's secrets: traces of the castle, the pilgrim statue of St. John or the “flying saucer” sport hall.

Both InduNature tours, as well as the urban game, are based on a combined app. Its touristic functionality guides tourists along the most easily accessible routes and implements the **Sculptureality** component, which invites you to get to know the region through the eyes of the monuments, sculptures and bas reliefs around. The project uses Augmented Reality technology to bring stone mouths alive and tongues to loosen. An app will enable motion and voice activation through the phone screen directed at the object.

HEALTHY STREET

- ☺ those who can imagine a better cities
- 📍 streets of Katowice closed to traffic
- 🔍 Growth
- 🌐 Klaudia Mańka, Łukasz Harat (curators, PL), AntyRama Foundation (PL), Places Foundation (PL), Parent in the City Foundation (PL), Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions (NL), Streets for Kids – Global Designing Cities Initiative (USA), Belgrade International Architecture Week (RS), Robin Playhood project Budweis 2028 (CZ), project Freedom Boulevards – Molenbeek 2030 candidate city (BE)

€ €

A healthy street is a space that showcases the city's multicolour and unique character, becoming an urban living room for everyone. With Healthy Streets we make space for people. We plan on using opportunities of temporary street closures to carry out experiments, research and a series of social and artistic initiatives. This will help to define a new function of the street – the Healthy Street. We want to create places where everyone feels safe and thrives, treating people and the environment equally as partners. Events will include a Street Ball, where we will get to know each other by dancing, singing and playing, Neighbourhood Without Violence is a workshop about resolving conflicts and working out solutions that suit everyone involved.

Part of the events will also be aimed at younger citizens and street users, exploring the idea of Healthy School Streets. The areas around schools often function

as chaotic parking lots, cutting children off from the rest of the city. The idea of the project is to allow children to get involved into creating their own direct surroundings, involving play, the environment and the local context.

One of the motivations behind this project is car traffic related issues in Poland and Silesia in particular. Automotive addiction, car accidents involving pedestrians and cars occupying vital urban living space are a challenge that we must face together as urbanites in Europe.

PHOTOSYNTHESIS

- ☺ young photography enthusiasts from Europe and beyond
- 📍 Chorzów, Piekary Śląskie, Ruda Śląska and Zabrze
- 🔍 Growth
- 🌐 Rozbark Theater (PL), Lokal in Bytom (PL), Rozbark Lovers Association (PL), Theatre Incubator Foundation (PL), Bytom Historical Detective (PL); Association Novo Mundo (PT), Petric Help (CZ), Education Studio Association (RO), Hyvarilal Youth Center (FI), Association ATELIER EUROPEO (IT), Association Luminos (SK), Association Viksjöforsbaletten (SE), ZAVOD DOBRA POT (SI), Udruzenje Svetlost (RS), Torraha (EG)

€ €

PHOTOsynthesis offers international photo-meetings in Silesia for young people from different parts of the world where the photography is a tool for cultural and historical education, learning about sustainability and climate change while exploring the natural environment devastated by coal and iron industries over the last 100 years introduces reflections about the coal-powered energy. From 2025 to 2028 we will implement one international photo encounter in each of the Silesian cities with great tourist potential, but still facing social and economic challenges: Chorzów, Piekary Śląskie, Ruda Śląska and Zabrze and in 2029 in the entire Metropolis. Teenage participants from European, African (EG) and Middle Eastern (JO, LB) countries will enjoy a week-long programme full of workshops (digital, analog techniques, camera obscura) and countless meetings with ex-miners, football fans, and young green activists.

Our partners from abroad will co-organise at least two photo-exhibitions in their countries to inspire local activists there. This will showcase the works of the young artists to an even wider international audience.

Re:play

Re:play is about heritage and taking a critical look at it from a bit of a distance. Through a replay we better understand what transpired, we gain perspective and a more nuanced understanding. Re:play asks questions about hidden assumptions dictating the unspoken rules... and changes them!

THREE EMPERORS' CORNER

- visitors, history buffs, local communities
- Sosnowiec, Mysłowice, Jaworzno
- Games, Growth
- LORI – Laboratory of Moving Image and Interaction at the Academy of Fine Arts Katowice (PL), HelloWood (HU)

€ €

The Metropolitan area is an area of complicated history. A special place is the now inconspicuous Triangle of Three Emperors on the border of modern Mysłowice, Sosnowiec and Jaworzno – where the former borders ran between the Russian, the Austro-Hungarian and the German Empires before 1918. It was a place of confluence of empires and a testimony of difficult Polish fate. The virtual exhibition comes alive through VR glasses. Our partner LORI – Laboratory of Moving Image and Interaction at the Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice is one of the few experimental studios in Europe for the production of the most advanced multimedia, whose staff ensure the highest level of expertise. The archival materials and Foley sound effects that will be used to produce a simulation of the space will be collected during queries in open workshops for students of cultural studies, history, media studies, cognitive science, library science and philology. We also invite communities from the three contemporary cities to build an installation together with HelloWood (HU) as a symbol of building bridges between borders that still influence how we live together today.

The virtual part of the project envisages launching avatars of characters from the past who never came to the place. The deeply immersive nature of the installation is complemented by the voices based on letters, memoirs, literary texts and newspapers of the period. The virtual installation will be located in a temporary space with three rooms placed in a triangular plan at the historical site. An exhibition (which will be touring the three cities) will complement the virtual installation by available multimedia and recordings of the voices of the last three emperors of this frontier patch of land and water: Wilhelm II Hohenzollern, Nicholas II Romanov and Charles I Habsburg.

GRANDFATHER'S SPOON

- local communities, current and former residents of Upper Silesia, those who have a story
- online, local galleries
- Growth
- Europa Nostra Heritage Hub for Central and Eastern Europe in Krakow (PL), Post Bellum Foundation (CZ), New Museum Association (UA), Leuven 2030 (BE)
- Tomasz Kontny (PL, comics curator)

€ €

Grandfather's spoon came from his toolbox when, as a young soldier conscripted into the Wehrmacht, he was sent to an American prisoner of war camp. The spoon is still used to serve Silesian dumplings at Sunday lunch and became the basis for a story about the difficult fate of the people of Upper Silesia.

The history of our lands is an intertwined story of different nationalities, changing borders, complicated questions of identity and at the same time a sense of belonging to this particular place on earth. How do we tell an often difficult story in an accessible way? Through the 'big stories of small things' – family heirlooms, smaller and larger objects passed down from generation to generation along with the story of the past and the fate of the ancestors.

The stories of objects, the fates of families (currently or formerly living in the Metropolis area) will be collected, described and illustrated in the form of comics.

THE HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES

- gamers and nongamers
- Gaming and Technology Hub
- Games
- Museum of the History of Computers and Information Technology in Katowice (PL), ComputerSpieleMuseum – Berlin (DE), Heinz Nixdorf Museum – Paderborn (DE), Home Computer Museum (NL), Software Heritage Paris (FR), Informatics History Museum Szeged Hungary (HU)

€ € €

Europe today gives the world outstanding examples of highly artistic video games. Poland's 'This War of Mine', which recounts the horrors of war from the perspective of civilians and is full of dramatic choices the player must make, became the first game included on the supplementary "reading" list in high schools. Denmark's 'Limbo' and 'Inside' are dark, allegorical

tales of fantasy worlds full of mystery and danger. The Estonian 'Disco Elysium' is, by the creators' own admission, a full-fledged "novel that pretends to be a game". The visual side of the Spanish game 'Blasphemous' and its sequel is inspired by a religious painting of Seville.

The History of Video Games is a large, comprehensive, cross-sectional and most importantly – playable exhibition presenting the history of video games from the scientific and technological experiments in the 1940s and 1950s, through the entry into increasingly private spaces (home, pocket) to the formation of a completely new and unique field of art. The exhibition has the immodest ambition to propose a new language for telling the history of the medium that focuses on artistic and social meaning and emphasises the essence and importance of the European contribution to the development of this art form.

The exhibition will be located in the Gaming and Technology Hub in Katowice, will cover an area of 2,500 sqm and will consist of a few thousand museum exhibits and will be co-created with people currently involved in video game development like Magdalena Cielecka (Anshar Studios) and Marta Fijak (Mechanistry).

Substantive support and exhibits will be provided by the Museum of the History of Computers and Information Technology in Katowice in possible collaboration with ComputerSpieleMuseum – Berlin (DE), Heinz Nixdorf Museum – Paderborn (DE), Home Computer Museum – Helmond (NL), Software Heritage – Paris (FR), Informatics History Museum – Szeged (HU) and others.

PIEKARNIOK

- inhabitants and guests interested in local traditions and culinary heritage, bread aficionados
- local squares and courtyards all over the Metropolis
- Gardens, Gigs, Growth
- Lokal Bakery (PL), Kolektyw Studio (PL), Festiwal Miast Partnerskich Łączy nas chleb (PL), Muzeum Chleba w Radzionkowie (PL), Creative Knowledge Foundation (US), Kul.turista Office Budweis 2028 (CZ)

€ €

Piekarniok (free-standing bread oven in Silesian) was part of almost every working-class neighbourhood in Upper Silesia. Before every weekend, the ladies of the house would gather there to bake their own bread or cakes (kołocz). The bakery was thus the central place of each community, serving practical purposes and even more so, community building.

With this in mind we recreate the experience of preparing and baking bread and cakes together, accompanied by lots of klachy (small talk). Our Piekarniok is a bakery in the mobile form of a food truck, travelling through different parts of Katowice and the Metropolis. Referring to the community-forming role of the local bread ovens, our Piekarniok is a meeting place for the local community.

In order to tell the story of our Piekarnioki in Europe we will invite the Kul.turista Office Budweis 2028 to join us, and we will also visit Kul.turista Festival with our mobile bakery. It will be the space where you can learn about baking traditions from different regions of Europe and beyond, learning about different cultures, by baking with invited bakers from, for example Morocco (in cooperation with Molenbeek for Brussels 2030) or other craftspeople from the Global South (in cooperation with Creative Knowledge Foundation).

This is an inclusive experience which we want to realise both in subregions of the Metropolis, as well as through the organisation of a event in the form of a baking festival organised in a green public space such as the Silesian Park or Katowice's Three Ponds Valley. We invite our visitors to a lively meeting with the traditions of the people living in our neighbourhoods, which is the foundation for building a society that is open and caring.

A NEW QUEERSTORY OF SILESIA – BARBÓRKA PARADE

- LGBTQ+ community and everyone who like rainbows, people who want to redefine their Silesianness
- street, squares, parks, local cultural centers, cafes and pubs
- Gigs, Growth
- Paweł Ziegler, Paweł Świerczek (curators, PL), Śląsk Przeglęty (PL), Laundry Collective (PL), pozqueer (PL), Checky 007 (PL), Mauczka Group (DE), Compagnie Marteau (FR)

€

St. Barbara's Day (or "Barbórka", as we call it here) was the most important date in the Silesian calendar as a miner's holiday, with local marches by miners' orchestras and cultural events in the neighbourhood. That was the moment when the local community had the opportunity for artistic expression: non-professional, communal and without undue professionalisation or subjective judgments. Originally growing out of the mining culture, it is quite paternalistic and conservative. The juxtaposition of it with queer culture will produce results that are difficult to predict, but certainly refreshing and stimulating.



The new queer-themed Barbórka Parade about mining traditions and post-industrial spaces is the centrepiece of the project, which aims to redefine Silesian identity, complete with the voices of the excluded.

The parade kicks off a festival of queer music, drag, burlesque, cabaret, stand-up and other performing arts that aims to network the work of LGBTQ+ people and creates the opportunity for a new queer story of Silesia. Through the arts we strengthen the local LGBTQ+ community and build national and international relationships. An important element of the programme is the open stage, which provides opportunities for debutants and newcomers to perform.

The curators of the project, Paweł Ziegler and Paweł Świerczek, with a support of LGBTQ+ NGOs, invite the Mauczka Group, a German collective that explores Silesian identity from the perspective of Germans with Silesian roots, to be involved in creating both the parade, as well as the programme of the festival, to include the queer community from German post-industrial regions like Ruhr.

SHARE: YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD / YOUR STORY / YOUR HERITAGE

- 👤 local communities, guests interested in local stories, people who like to walk and talk
- 📍 Katowice and Metropolis neighbourhoods
- 📈 Growth
- 🌐 Adam Pisarek (PL), Magdalena Czerny-Kehl (PL), University of Silesia (PL), Center for Community Archiving (PL)



The power of sharing stories from one's own backyard is immense. It can connect people to each other and to the places where they live. Katowice and the Metropolis need not only the big stories, but also the smallest, diverse narrations from the neighbourhood. The ones that make you feel a little more at home in a post-industrial city. That's why we're creating a multi-generational group of local guides who, during walks, trigger an avalanche of memories, impressions, emotions and ideas about our city's more and less popular districts. In the future, our guides will form a Network of Local Guides who will be able to tell the local history of the Metropolis to our national and international visitors.

At the same time we are initiating a responsible conversation about what makes a good neighbourhood. We also give voice to young residents, who create their guided walks to places important for them, and seniors, who exchange klachy – local gossip from the past and present. Our aim is to share know-how with other institutions and stories with loved ones, so

we are preparing toolboxes, micro-guides and workbooks. Sharing is caring!

BETWEEN ARTS & CRAFTS

- 👤 DIY fans, arts & crafts practitioners, museum- and gallery-goers
- 📍 galleries, museums, communal workshops
- 📈 Gardens, Games
- 🌐 Cieszyn Castle arts & crafts hub (PL), social economy enterprises and private craft workshops, KatoWerk (PL), Orange Makerspace in Roskilde (DK), PLACCC International Festival of art in public space (HU), ECoC candidate Kortrijk 2030 (BE)



In our region, rich with industrial traditions, the maker culture thrives. In partnership with KatoWerk (PL) and Orange Makerspace (DK), we are calling on all citizens – regardless of age, gender, or skill level – to join us in this creative revolution. Our DIY and circular and social economy hallmark FabLabs (small-scale workshops) will be created in five subregions of the Metro polis, providing inclusive spaces where individuals can share their talents, ingenuity, and resources. These open workshops are designed to welcome both tech-savvy 3D printing enthusiasts and those interested in knitting and fashion design. By providing equal access to diverse creative tools, we aim to foster a zero-waste mindset, combat fast fashion, and promote the principles of the circular and social economy.

Our goal is to break down gender bias and inspire the next generation to embrace all forms of creativity. Initially housed within Local Culture Hubs, we envision these multipurpose FabLabs growing in popularity as communal workspaces for a wide array of creative projects.

Through captivating gallery exhibits featuring textile-based crafts such as bobbin lace, macrame, needlepoint, knitting, and weaving, we aim to celebrate and elevate these traditionally undervalued forms of creativity, often dismissed as mere “women’s busywork.”

The project will feature an exhibition curated by Maciej Cholewa, showcasing both grassroots “in passing” art and professional works, all responding to the exhibition’s central thesis. Monika Drożyńska, a pioneer in contemporary embroidery techniques and textiles in public spaces, will lead participatory activities with invited artists.

BORDERLESS THEATRE

local communities, inhabitants of neighbouring districts of Katowice and Sosnowiec

courtyards between Katowice and Sosnowiec

Games, Growth

Teatr Poddąnczy – theatre NGO (PL), Zagłębie Theatre, Sosnowiec (PL), Silesian Theatre, Katowice (PL), “It’s time to collect stories” project – Nova Gorica2025 (SI)

€ Katowice (Silesia) and Sosnowiec (Zagłębie) were once separated by the border between the German and the Russian Empires. Today the residents are still separated by much more than just a river – stereotypes, prejudices, sometimes distrust. The Borderless Theatre, led by professional theatre creators and curator Honorata Mierzejewska-Mikosza experienced in similar projects, will install itself in neighbourhoods on the former border, where it will collect stories about Katowice and Sosnowiec on both sides, and thus listen to residents talking about themselves as well as their neighbours. The final effect of the whole process will be staged – a neighbourhood performance woven from the stories of residents and prepared together with the residents.

TRUE COLOURS

local and international artists, local communities

urban spaces, streets, walls, backyards of Katowice and Metropolis

Games, Growth

Axel Void (curator, US/ES)

€ € In 2015, for the opening of a mural of an Spanish-American street art artist Axel Void inKatowice-Szopienice, the local community organised a picnic. It was a spontaneous, bottom-up event and an expression of gratitude to the artist for his work and genuine interest in the district of Szopienice.

This story became the inspiration for True Colours – residency programme for street artists, creators of murals, installations and objects in space). Six artists from abroad and six from Poland (half selected by the curator, half by an open call) are invited to create artistic interventions in the city space in dialogue and collaboration with the local community. Axel Void is the curator of the project. With a focus on people as part of a global community, he explores the cultural and social structures that regulate our interactions and habits. Searching for the “true colours” of the district.

ŚWIĘTO – A DAY TO CELEBRATE

children and those who want to learn from them

schools, theatre, playgrounds and backyards

Gigs, Games, Growth

Ateneum Theater (PL), Spilno Hub (PL), We Are For You (PL), Social Welfare Centre/MOPS (PL)

€ The project aims to integrate children (age 8 – 11) from different backgrounds by exploring the theme of festive holidays (like International Children’s Day or Roma Language Day etc.) as a time to celebrate life’s values. Children will be invited to reflect on what they consider important to celebrate in their lives and what daily rituals they would like to introduce. The children will develop a concept for a new holiday that will unite all participants. There will be children from Poland and from other nationalities with a focus on those at risk of marginalisation like Roma children and kids from Ukraine. In these endeavours we are supported by the Generation Association, which supports refugees, as well as through cooperation with MOPS – we have the direct support of an educator who organises day care classes for children from Ukraine – Denis Ivanow. The project involves the creation of a performance about a holiday invented by the participants.

ANATOMY OF THE SENSES

everyone who want to feel something

Katowice

Growth

Zuzanna Łapka (PL), Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice, Department of Sound Katowice (PL)

€ An expansion of the interactive sculpture created in 2019 as part of the Medialab Katowice Microgrants entitled We Are Connected by the young artist Zuzanna Łapka. The installation explores the electrical resistance flowing in the body of the person touching it, generating modulated sounds when the sculpture is touched by a human hand. The sculpture encourages people to express themselves and learn about others in a non-verbal way, straining to pay attention to their senses.

Observing the action and qualities that come from experiencing the sculpture, Zuzanna Łapka will develop the project with elements of education and learning about the functions of the senses. Through a series of workshops, she wants to show how working

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►

with the senses positively influences creativity, deepening non-verbal communication and self-knowledge. Workshop participants will create a group performance for the finale, drawing on their acquired knowledge and experience.

FOCUS SILESICUM

professional photographers, emerging photographers

Metropolis

Gardens, Growth

Rafał Milach (curator, PL), Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School (PL), Magnum Photos (US)

€ € A series of photographic activities dedicated to the region by young artists (professionals under 30 years of age) from all over the world curated by Rafał Milach. With the participation of renowned international artists: Karolina Wojtas (PL), Dita Pepe (CZ), Mark Power (UK), Jim Goldberg (US) and in cooperation with the Kieslowski Film School and Magnum Photos.

The image of Upper Silesia and Zagłębie as a heavily industrialised region is slowly fading, but the new identity is still undefined.

Each year, a group of four young artists under the guidance of a tutor – a prominent Magnum Photos photographer will create photographic projects on the social, cultural, political and ecological landscape of the Silesian Metropolitan region. The tutors, in addition to artistic supervision, will also create their own photographic projects, which will then be included in a publication summarising the year’s activities of Focus Silesicum.

The year 2029 will be devoted to the development of a summary of the project: a publication and exhibition that will travel throughout Poland and abroad.

49

TWO TOWERS

inhabitants, visitors, young architects

Five Ponds Valley between Katowice and Sosnowiec

Growth

Robert Konieczny (PL, curator), Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik (DE), Silesian Park (PL), Municipal Greenery Company Katowice (PL)

€ € € The (no longer existing) 54-metre-high greenhouse tower was an admired landmark and attraction in today’s Silesian Park between 1968 and 1983. A structure ahead of its time, full of modern mechanical and hydroponic solutions, it is today a forgotten symbol of our region’s modernity. The reason for the structure’s disappearance was also symbolic – air pollution darkened the glass and the greenhouse no longer fulfilled its function. With the help of art, we are restoring this imaginatively stimulating object to the collective memory of the inhabitants of the Metropolis.

The artist selected in an international competition will recreate the greenhouse tower as a contemporary installation (using ecologically sustainable or bioengineered materials as a prerequisite) on the border between Katowice and Sosnowiec, a place where the barrier between Upper Silesia (part of Germany until 1918) and the Zagłębie region (part of Russia until 1918) is still perceptible and present in the inhabitants’ consciousness.

The process will be supervised and supported by Robert Konieczny – one of the most influential Polish architects working in Katowice (nominated for the Mies van der Rohe Prize in 2024). Our partners from the Berlin Centre for Art and Urbanistics (DE) will support us in the implementation of the competition, as well as ensuring its international reach.

Play!

Katowice GZM 2029

●

►►

Cultural and artistic content

►►

Programme Line	Project Name	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029												2030 +
							Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Personal Playlist	FAJER UP! ✱																		
	Move Your Brass																		
	Balkan Express																		
	Yes and No Festival																		
	Ode to Joy – International Radio Orchestras Marathon																		
	Playground																		
	Start Me Up																		
	Moving Stages Multi Play																		
	Moving Stages Best of... European Theatre																		
	Moving Stages Place 'n' Plays																		
	Moving Stages Europe from Afar																		
	Moving Stages Echoes across Europe																		
	We Are All In The Same Dance																		
	EUphoria																		
Fair Play	Virtuous in the Virtual																		
	48h: The Streets are Ours																		
	Jolly Youth Orchestra JOY																		
	Support Your Team																		
	Opera Utopia																		
	Metropolis of Culture																		
	Local Culture Hubs																		
	Different Voices																		
	Kato4U																		
	Playspace / Gralnia																		
	Listen Up!																		
	Kutzwisko Film and Media School for Youth																		
	City Quest: Unveiling the Hidden Stories																		
	The Loop																		
Total Immersion	Light Ahead																		
	Exploring the Light and Dark Side																		
	Nomada																		
	Let's Play																		
	Blocks																		
	Into the Forest																		
	Medialab																		
	InduNature 2029																		
	Healthy Street																		
	PHOTOSynthesis																		
	Three Emperors' Corner																		
	Grandfather's Spoon																		
	The History of Video Games																		
	Piekarniok																		
Re:play	A New Queerstory of Silesia – Barbórka Parade																		
	Share: Your Neighbourhood																		
	Between Arts & Crafts																		
	Borderless Theatre																		
	True Colours																		
	Święto – A Day to Celebrate																		
	Anatomy of the Senses																		
	Focus Silesicum																		
	Two Towers																		

Q7

Choosing events and projects

✱ FAJER UP! [FAIƏR]

We’re firing up our ECoC year in January with a Fajer Up! party. Why ‘fajer’? Because ‘fajer’ in Silesian means having a good time. We do ‘fajer’ when we want to celebrate something – a birthday, an anniversary, or no particular occasion. Now we will celebrate our Europeaness and 12 months of playful adventure.

The people of Katowice and the Metropolis will come together in a place they all regard as a common-place of relaxation – the Silesian Park. It is one of the largest parks in the world, in the middle of the Metropolis, surrounded by major cities, Katowice included.

The heart of Fajer Up! will be the Silesian Stadium – an arena ready to accommodate up to 50,000 visitors. It is there that the centrepiece of the programme will take place – an impressive spectacle that will tell the story of our part of Europe and our vision of the future through music, theatre and cutting-edge stage design.

We will involve European and local artists (maintaining parity here). We will also involve local people in its creation – amateur choirs, young participants of the **Joyful Youth Orchestra** or non-professional painters from the Summer School of Social Art (whose paintings will be transformed into fragments of the scenography). Artists from the cities that were awarded the title for 2028 – Budweis, Bourges and Skopje – will also find their place on stage, as well as those from ECoC 2030.

Fajer Up! will also encompass a large part of Silesia Park, which will become the field of the open-air game – Metropolis. It is there, in the atmosphere of a great cultural picnic (never mind the frost!), moving freely from field to field, that we will get a foretaste of what awaits us over the remaining months – brass band music and amateur concerts for fun, dancing and baking bread together, outdoor performances and artistic interventions.

Our way will be lit by bonfires (in the form of carbon-neutral light installations, of course) – being the original symbol of the community we now want to rebuild. In Katowice itself, the winter gloom will be illuminated by the first **Light Ahead** installations, and huge video games from the **Blocks** project will appear on the skyscrapers.

The main responsibility for integrating new projects into the artistic programme will lie with the Programme Line Curators of the Katowice GZM 2029 Office. This being said, the programme presented in **Q6** is a fair share of the game (about 60% of the final 2029 programme) – but not all of it. From the experience made during our bidding phase, we expect more partners from home and abroad will want to join us. So we left space for that.

Play! as an open invitation to join a game for ECoC 2029 encouraged more than 100 people to propose projects for the European Capital of Culture as part of the second open call. Many of these have made it into the current programme. Others, just as interesting, are waiting to be more closely assessed by the Programme Line Curators if we receive the title.

No less positively, international and national curators and artists responded to our direct invitation. We are planning to keep an open call policy until quite late in the process since things move quickly and the developments on AI and other digital and cultural fields are fast paced. We will continue to invite international artists, without overhyping it to the disadvantage of local artists who can benefit most from ECoC in the long-term. We are aiming for a healthy mix, where local artists – by working with international artists – have an opportunity to network and dialogue about different points of view and new techniques. We also feel that being focused on process rather than projects, will sometimes rather mean that we select artists and curators. And not necessarily on the basis of a specific project, but rather on an approach towards developing a project for a specific neighbourhood or urban space.

Many of the curators and artists that have agreed to work with featured in the artistic programme have a personal relationship to Katowice and the Metropolis. The same accounts for many of the curators from abroad. This is an important criterion for selecting projects and artists/curators – we want to avoid disconnected activities. It is important to us that the programme of ECoC 2029 Katowice and the Metropolis will be created by committed people who care about the city and its people.

Since we have already established relationships and agreements with artists and curators, the open calls will focus on new content for the planned projects. However, we have made such positive experiences with open calls that are truly open for everyone that we don’t want to miss the opportunities and surprises

that micro-grants like Spójnk or open calls without too many limitations can bring.

The four Programme Line Curators will decide on which open calls to issue and which projects to select. However, they may set up juries or let the curators make a preselection before the final vote. They will also have the task of pre-evaluating projects proposed for implementation by residents who wish to benefit from the support of the **Local Culture Hubs**.

To reach our artistic vision of the Culture Zone 2.0, all decision-making on project selection will be guided by the framework set up in this Bid Book:

- The Consultative Council as an important advisory body for outreach and citizen engagement
- The Metropolitan Charter of Accessible Culture for social inclusion
- The 4 Gs that we set out in our expected long-term impacts: Gardens. Gigs. Games. Growth.

Adhering to the first two will be mandatory, whilst the third can variate between the 4 Gs – no need for any one project to tick all the boxes. But this way, we will make sure that the idea of Play! will actually produce the results that we need for a Culture Zone 2.0.

Q8

Combining cultural heritage and experimental cultural expressions

As a post-industrial region, we are in a constant process of revitalisation and re-invention, including of our heritage and traditions. And this is only possible by putting them into a contemporary context.

How crucial that is for us, is demonstrated by the fact that two of our four programme lines deal directly with cultural heritage and combine traditional art with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions: Total Immersion as an attempt to reinterpret the urban space and re:Play, which pushes the boundaries of what is currently considered local identity and heritage.

Heritage reloaded

Heritage, especially intangible, requires a constant effort to be known and re-thought by every generation. Its rediscovery and renewed appreciation through cultural projects is our goal, and playfulness the most important method.

Our **City Quest** project – a LARP, or live-action role playing game – will embrace the entire city and involve several thousand participants in a game of discovery of its forgotten histories and unsolved mysteries. Following this lead, we are also planning a more digital urban game **Not Just Mines – Getting Lost in Katowice**, which is introducing the city in a playful way. Using a dedicated app, it will allow us to show the contrast of how the city looked like and how it presents now, while walls and monuments will tell unknown stories using Augmented Reality technology. It would be hard to find a better guide for visitors – be they national or international – in 2029.

How about reviving in VR a place that has been gone for more than 100 years? As we are playing with the diverse Metropolis, the most symbolic site for this part of Poland is **Three Emperors' Corner**. Before 1918 it was a place where the borders of three empires – the Russian, the Austro-Hungarian and the German – met. As a border crossing point and popular tourist destination of the fin de siècle era, it is extremely culture- and myth-ridden. By current solutions in the field of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality we will show how this place looked before and after 1918.

While our visitors discover the city, they will certainly encounter a surprising language that may seem familiar to visitors from Germany and the Czech Republic. Silesian is a language spoken in the historical area of Upper Silesia in southwest Poland – Katowice and part of the GZM Metropolis. It is our huge heritage and part of our regional identity. We are in the process of having Silesian recognised as an official regional language. Through the **Yes and No Festival** we will have the opportunity to make its vitality and quirkiness come to life for many locals and Poles who have been looking down on it as an inferior expression. Silesian deserves its re-injection into the contemporary mix of European cultural diversity.

The past in deep conversation with the contemporary

We intend to use our intangible heritage, the brass band tradition that grew in the era of coal mining, to strengthen social cohesion in schools in the **JOY – Joyful Youth Orchestras** project. By inviting children to enjoy music played on trumpets and cajons, we will revive a tradition that their parents, and certainly their grandparents, can still remember. It's also a way to make our brass band tradition become attractive to young people as they experience the joy of performing live music. It is not impossible that some of them will want to go further and continue their musical education.





We have also deepened the social aspect of the **Piekarniok** project, making it even more innovative. Years ago, 'piekarnioki', or community bread ovens, were a feature in almost every neighbourhood in Katowice and other cities in the Metropolis. They were a pivotal place for local communities. We want to return to this role by creating a mobile "piekarniok" in the form of a food truck, which will visit many neighbourhoods. Now we have decided to add an international aspect to them as well.

Thanks to a collaboration with the Creative Knowledge Foundation (USA), we will invite bakers from the Middle East, among other places, to share their bread-baking traditions with us. The clash of small, local communities with representatives of completely different cultures can, we hope, have the value of opening up and bringing the Other closer. In our still homogeneous society this can be the first step to prepare ourselves for the challenge of functioning in a multicultural society.

Talking about the traditions of the mining region, we have to mention the heritage of the patron Saint of miners, St Barbara, or 'Barbórka'. In the memory of the locals, there is still its ceremonial dimension with the parade of the miners' orchestra waking up the inhabitants of many districts until not long ago. "Barbórka", however, has always also had a ludic dimension, and it is to this dimension that we refer in the project **A New Queerstory of Silesia – Saint Barbara's Parade**. Its reinterpretation will be undertaken by the queer community by creating its festival and also inviting the mining community to join in. We can't wait to see the results of this experiment with heritage! Ready for the journey?

Q9 + Q10

Involvement of local artists and cultural organisations

The involvement of local artists and cultural organisations has been a big success in our Culture Zone 2.0 process so far. A wow-factor that took us somewhat by surprise. As we mentioned in **Q1**, many of the local cultural operators had never experienced the kind of involvement, dedication and openness that the ECoC process has been offering.

We expanded our focus to embrace the whole Metropolis, hearing out the narratives of smaller-scale institutions, semi-professional NGOs and informal groups, helping to fulfil their potential. We know that

this is the hope and the challenge for people working in the CCI – getting out of business-as-usual towards more cooperation, openness, experimentation. This is exactly what we mean by Culture Zone 2.0.

From the consultations with local cultural operators and activists in the five subregions of the Metropolis came the request for more support of bottom-up initiatives without big bureaucratic hurdles. We set-up a mini-grant programme that is easy to apply for.

Spójnik!

Spójnik (the Polish word for "connective") was designed specifically to address the needs of local and regional cultural NGOs. In 2023 we selected 20 projects for a grant of up to 1,200 EUR. In 2024 we launched the second edition with 130 applicants of whom 19 received a grant of up to 2,400 EUR. This might seem like small fish, but it was a necessary step to involve our independent cultural field into the ECoC process and build trust.

Spójnik is cherished for fostering collaborations between institutions, NGOs and local groups. And because it hit the spot, we will continue it throughout the preparation years, because it ticks two important boxes: It is a practical component complementing our capacity building programmes. And secondly, it is focused on cooperations between cultural institutions, NGOs and informal groups that implement projects resulting from the needs and the participation of a local community.

Image of Katowice

We also involved local artists in the creation of artwork for this Bid Book which will ultimately culminate in a curated group exhibition in the run-up to 2029. From our open call for artwork we received more than 250 pieces of art presenting artistic activities in the Metropolis, both from professional and amateur artists. The selected artistic works create a narrative of culture in the Metropolis.

Submit your idea!

Our 2024 open (for all) call for ECoC projects received overall 100 applications, out of which we selected 14 to complement the programme of this Application. Those who did not make it into the Bid Book will be further assessed if we are designated.

Moving to implementation

How will we involve operators and artists in the implementation? Crucially, the playground will be finally open to all cultural operators – which is no trifle. Not only ones that are big enough to secure their own resources in the process. Not only those that produce high-brow events or large festivals. Not only those that are mostly appraised and commonly recognised. They are welcome, of course!

But this time we set the priority on those organisations and groups that require support to flourish – because only this way will we create a sustainable impact. We are focussing on those who have been self-limiting their potential due to unfavourable conditions. Who are round the corner in almost every neighbourhood and have been raising generations of readers, in-home musicians, non-professional actors, and simply – audiences for many years. These are the organisations that – as we know well from research and personal meetings – are in need of change. And that so far have been quite excluded due to the rules of the game.

Our answer to the consultations and the data from research with artists and cultural operators is our long-term capacity building programme Metropolis of Culture. It is geared towards the cultural sector and was piloted with a Metropolis of Culture Congress in October 2023 with more than 400 participants. The programme is planned to run throughout the ramp-up years, through 2029 and beyond.

By June 2024, more than 1,000 people participated in 45 workshops and seminars. The topics of the proposed workshops and training sessions result from research activities and ongoing consultations with representatives of the cultural sector. Specialised training topics for professionals are agreed upon – e.g. with museum professionals or librarians – to respond to the most current needs. The programme is monitored and evaluated to respond to changing needs in the sector. The numbers prove that we are on the right track for involving the local and regional operators:

94% of participants said that they learnt useful practices for their work, 86% agree that the workshops change their approach to certain issues and 84% want to further develop their knowledge and/or skills on the topic. Finally, over 95% said they are happy they took part.

Let the games begin!

Beyond capacity building and on a more artistic level, we give just a few examples of how we plan to involve local artists further. For our project **Focus Silesicum** we will invite photographers from 2025 onwards to create projects on the social, cultural, political and ecological landscape of the Silesian region under the guidance of the project’s curators. In 2029 we will have 16 individual projects from participants and 4 projects from the curators that will create an exhibition about the new image of the Metropolis. This exhibition will travel throughout Poland and abroad showing these emerging artists and the Metropolis to the world. This will be a great opportunity for networking and mobility for artists.

Our **Start Me Up** project includes an open call for local bands. Those selected will be promoted through a regular series of concerts. The best can count on an international exchange programme with UNESCO Cities of Music and other partners.

The open stage of **A New Queerstory of Silesia – Barbórka Parade** gives opportunities for debutant and up-and-coming artists to perform and a lot of workshops to help them improve their makeup and show skills. Providing also a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community. In the next question we provide a more comprehensive overview of which local artists and organisations are involved or lead partners in our artistic programme.

ARTISTS FROM OPEN CALL FOR ARTWORK

- Babiarz Ewa, Cesarska Marta
- Bednarz Alina, Dąbrowska-Okrasko Marta
- Bogucki Jacek
- Brzakalik Eilia, Ryś Jacek
- Bąk-Stępień Martyna
- Dembiec Zuzanna
- Dzięwit Jakub
- Faruque Sara → p. 16
- Flaner – Grzegorz Kosiński, Maciej Iwasiów
- Gawin Marta
- Gawron Anna → p. 16
- Gawroński Karol
- Górka Ola
- Grela Marek, Piróg Marta
- Kaczor Sławomir
- Layer Grzegorz
- Lemańska Jadwiga → inside cover
- Lewandowska Julia
- Lewczuk Oskar
- Makowska Dorota
- Mendziuk Agata → p. 10
- Meres Katarzyna
- Mońka Ewa
- Nikiel-Katolik Krystyna
- Okreglicki Oliwer
- Pacha Patrycja
- Perłowski Piotr → p. 8–9
- Pikiewicz Paulina
- Polmańska Alicja
- Porada Anna
- Pławski Artur
- Skalik Irena
- Sobczyk Agata
- Strzelczyk Maria
- Supergut Studio
- Szłapa Krzysztof
- Szlęk Aleksandra
- Tarnowska Julia
- Tomczyk Eliza
- Walterowicz Anna → p. 98
- Wesołowska Magdalena

LOCAL PLAYERS

► Proposals entered through the open call Submit Your Idea

Project	Partner	What they do (when they are not involved in ECoC)	What’s their role in their ECoC project (by ‘author’ we mean that the idea for the project is theirs)
Focus Silesicum	Rafał Milach	Visual artist, photographer, and educator. Professor at Krzysztof Kieślowski Film School in Katowice, member of Magnum Photos	Author and curator, leading partner
Move Your Brass	Marlena Hermanowicz	Producer, singer and cultural expert	Author and co-curator
Two Towers	Robert Konieczny	Architect, ten times nominee of the European Award of Mies van der Rohe Foundation	Curator
Between Arts&Crafts	Maciej Cholewa	Visual artist, works at Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice. Focuses on themes related to the periphery, local identity	Curator of the exhibition, cooperation partner
Playground	Sebastian Cichocki	Sociologist, curator and art critic	Author and curator, leading partner
Opera Utopia	► Tobiasz Sebastian Berg	Dancer, choreographer and socially engaged artist	Author and curator, leading partner
Moving Stages	Dagmara Gumkowska	Theatre curator, cultural manager, organiser of cultural projects	Co-curator
Sculptureality (InduNature 2029)	► Agata Magdalena Nowak	Experienced design researcher	Author, leading and implementing partner
Not Just Mines – Getting Lost in Katowice (InduNature 2029)	► Przemysław Michałek		Author and originator
InduNature 2029	Marcin Doś	Promoter of industrial site tours	Curator, leading partner
Move Your Brass	► Kamil Iwanicki	Researcher of Silesia, guide	Cooperation partner
Balkan Express	Sonia Wilk	Curator at the department of non-professional visual arts at the Silesian Museum	Co-curator
YES and NO Festival	► Szymon Paszek	Stage improvisation trainer	Co-curator
Virtuous in the Virtual	Marlena Niestrój	Physical theatre actress	Co-curator
A New Queerstory of Silesia – Barbórka Parade	Paweł Świerczek and Paweł Ziegler	Artists, part of the collective Śląsk Przeglęty	Curators
Music on the House (Ode to Joy – International Radio Orchestras Marathon)	► Tomasz Łuczak	Publisher and editor-in-chief at Jazzin.co.uk	Author and curator, lead partner
Let’s Play	Dominik Koziański	Video games educator	Curator, leading partner
Kutzwisko Film and Media School for Youth	Dagmara Drzazga, Jerzy Łukasiewicz, Krystyna Doktorowicz	Renowned Polish directors and film professors from Kieślowski Film School	Educators
The History of Video Games	Magdalena Cielecka and Marta Fijak	Game virtuosos	Co-curator
Industrioklimaks, part of Into the Forest	Joanna Zdzienicka and Paweł Szeibel	Local artists focused on nature	Cooperation partners
Listen up!	Kinga Hołda Justycka and Michał Justycki	Deaf artists	Curators
We are all in the Same Dance	Kapela Fedaków	Family band playing traditional music from Silesia	Cooperation partner
Summer School of Social Art, (Balkan Express)	► Agata Szymanek	Artist, activist and educator	Author, cooperation partner
Light Ahead	Tajny Projekt	Artistic collective operating in the field of new media	Cooperation partner
Different Voices	Kuczeryki	Traditional choir ensemble	Supporting partner
Grandfather’s Spoon (comics part)	► Tomasz Kontny	Screenwriter writing for comics and film	Author and leading partner

LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

Project	Partner	What they do (when they are not involved in ECoC)	What's their role in their ECoC project (by 'author' we mean that the idea for the project is theirs)
Let's Play	LittleBitAcademy	Informal education of the youngest generations, educating on habits connected with the use of new technologies	Lead partner
Yes and No Festival	► Impro Silesia Foundation	Silesian centre for stage improvisation	Cooperation partner
Between Arts&Crafts	KatoWerk	Silesian community workshop	Implementing partner
A New Queerstory of Silesia – Barbórka Parade	Śląsk Przeglęty	Interdisciplinary collective dedicated to queering Silesian traditions	Lead partner
48h: The Streets Are Ours	Skate PTG	Association of people with strong ties to skateboarding	Cooperation partner
	Tera ino Tera	Making people aware of the meaning and importance of exercise	Supporting partner
Different Voices	Chórtownia Foundation,	Promotes and supports the practice of professional and amateur choirs	Cooperation partner
	Silesian Association of Choirs and Orchestras	Enriching locally based choirs	Supporting partner
Balkan Express	Eko-Art-Silesia Association	Promotion and popularisation of the emerging artists	Cooperation partner
Virtuous in the Virtual	Paryż Foundation	Promotion and popularisation of the emerging artists	Cooperation partner
Listen up!	Ingraft	Foundation for the Anthropology of Communication	Lead partner
	GAG – The Group of Deaf Artists, Migawka Foundation	Foundation co-founded by deaf, hard-of-hearing and hearing people	Cooperation partners
Healthy Street	AntyRama Foundation, Places Foundation	Urban collective that brings together the creative industry in the Silesian region	Cooperation partners
The Loop	Tauron Nowa Muzyka	Electronic music festival	Cooperation partner
Piekarniok	► Łączy nas chleb	Association promoting homemade, traditional food, exploring world cuisines	Cooperation partner
	Museum of Bread	Cultivating and teaching respect for bread and the traditions associated with it	
	Lokal Bakery, Kolektyw Studio	Local artisan bakeries	Supporting partner

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

Project	Partner	What they do (when they are not involved in ECoC)	What's their role in their ECoC project (by 'author' we mean that the idea for the project is theirs)
Metropolis of Culture	Cultural centres in Bieruń, Bytom, Chorzów, Katowice, Sosnowiec, Zabrze, Tychy, Tarnowskie Góry	Local culture institutions	Capacity building partners
Ode to Joy – International Radio Orchestras Marathon	Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra – NOSPR	Symphony orchestra in Katowice	Lead partner
Balkan Express	Silesian Museum	Regional museum showcasing its intellectual and artistic heritage	Lead partner
	Museum of the History of Katowice	Protect the documentation of Katowice's past	Cooperation partner
Moving Stages	Silesian Theatre	Silesia's largest dramatic stage	Cooperation partner
Opera Utopia	Silesian Opera House	Create a bridge between the classical beauty of opera art and contemporary audiences	Lead partner
Playground	CSW Kronika, BWA Katowice	Centre for Contemporary Art	Capacity building partners
Two Towers	Municipal Greenery Company	Maintenance and care of green areas in the city	Supporting partner
Blocks	Silesian Philharmonic	Largest philharmonic orchestra in the region	Cooperation partner
Kutzowisko Film and Media School for Youth	Silesia Film Institute	Activities in the field of cinematography, protection of film heritage	Supporting partner
The History of Video Games	Gaming and Technology Hub, Museum of the History of Computers and Information Technology	The district of new technologies in Katowice	Cooperation partner
The Loop	Koleje Śląskie	Regional railroad company	Lead partner
Święto – A Day to Celebrate	► Ateneum Theater	Silesian Puppet and Actor Theatre	Lead partner



Q11 a, b

Common European themes,
shared heritage, cultural diversity

In the round of consultations with the residents of Katowice and the GZM during the selection phase, we always asked the same question: Are Katowice and the Metropolis European? The answers were always affirmative and strong: yes, of course! The answers became more tentative when we asked what we were contributing to Europe. This is where the hesitation began, the moments of reflection, the longer moments of silence.

Despite the fact that Silesians and people from the Zagłębie region are for the most part enthusiastic about Europe, they often lack confidence that they are contributing enough to it. Our innate modesty prevents us from proudly flaunting our European heritage and values. It makes us question whether what we represent is 'European' enough. For too many decades, we have felt like a human appendage to coal mining and steel smelting to now feel confident on the European stage. That is why the title of European Capital of Culture will be more than an accolade here. It will give our people incredible self-confidence and pride!

Meanwhile, paradoxically, there is hardly a region in Poland more marked by European history, and thus symbolically representing European diversity, than Upper Silesia and the Zagłębie region. For although we are now simply a region in southern Poland, for several centuries we were a border region, passing from hand to hand. Influences from German, Austrian, Czech, Polish and, in the Zagłębie, Russian culture have left a lasting mark here in material and immaterial culture. It is enough to listen to the Silesian language – a mixture of old Polish with elements of German and Czech – to understand this. Any visitor from Europe and the world should feel at home here in 2029. In a slightly different one than their own home, but nevertheless like in a European home.

What does this experience give us at the dawn of the 2030s? First of all, it is a great foundation on which we can build the ECoC 2029 programme! The people of our region are hospitable and open to other people. It is no coincidence that we speak of "Silesian hospitality", an upgrade to Poland's openness to visitors. At first, our people may seem distrustful, but they quickly cast off their masks of indifference and show a keen interest in the guest and their differences. This is why we have structured our programme so that as many of our guests as possible from all over Europe and a large part of the world – artists, curators or social and cultural operators – have direct contact with the locals (ex. **Euphoria, Playground, True Colours, Moving Stages**).

Our artistic vision of 'moving out of the zones' is not only a response to the need to make culture more 'for everyone'. It's also a way for our residents to have ongoing creative encounters with artists from everywhere, many of whom will be creating at their fingertips – on their street, in their backyard, in their neighbourhood park. They will bring to us different ways of looking at the world, ideas that might not be familiar to the residents. But with the artists they turn into a concrete face, a smile, a twinkle in their eyes. Real people with whom it will be possible to discuss, not online profiles with whom we can only argue. And all in the spirit of playfulness – engaging, not exclusive, lively, not pushy.

Let's Not Hide the Dark Side

Because, let's not hide the dark side, in times of migrant crisis and rising radical political groups, xenophobia is stronger than ever. And let's not delude ourselves that this is only a problem of the 'new Europe'. Extremism and intolerance, fuelled still by anti-European forces, have long become our common challenge. Evoking bad emotions is easy. It is more difficult to quell and counteract them. Culture can be a big part of the solution. It helps us realise that **We Are All In The Same Dance**, to use the title of one of our flagship projects. And this is just one example of an event whose quiet aim is to open our eyes to the beauty of the diversity and richness of other cultures.

We will display it wherever possible. Even while baking bread together at **Piekarniok**, our travelling bread oven. Because difficult issues are best discussed while engaging in simple activities such as kneading dough and then eating bread together. Especially if its recipe and baker comes from Turkey or North Africa.

We became acutely aware of the scale of the problem when Poland became a frontline country and took in thousands of refugees from war-torn Ukraine. The first wave of public enthusiasm for helping visitors from Ukraine naturally died out and reluctant and even hostile voices are sounding more and more frequently and loudly.

Shared Space / Shared History

With Katowice 2029, we want and need to counter this, while at the same time helping our new residents arriving from Ukraine to acclimatise to their new place. In our programme we have devoted a lot of attention to looking after their psychological well-being (**Holosy**), helping them to tame the new space around them (**School of Listening**) or inviting their children to join the **Joyful Youth Orchestra** and share their culture at **Święto – A Day to Celebrate**.

Our difficult shared history often divides Poles and Ukrainians and is abused to fuel hostility. We alone cannot untie these Gordian knots, but we can help bring people on both sides of the border closer together by showing the commonality of experience. That is why we have invited the Lviv-based **New Museum Foundation** to the **Grandfather's Spoon** project, to collect stories of Poles and Ukrainians previously living side by side.

Polish Polarisation

Xenophobia is advancing hand in hand with social polarisation in Europe. Increasingly sharp disagreements over world views are sharpening political debate. All of this is further amplified by social media. Disagreement is the main fuel for building reach and attracting attention in social media – and that is what our project **Exploring the Light and Dark Side** will make young people aware of.

In Poland, polarisation has reached epidemic proportions over the past eight years, with Poles divided into two, hostile tribes. The change of government after the 2023 elections did not magically make the Polish-Polish war suddenly end. The divisions run deep, even through families. Combined with low levels of social trust, this creates an explosive mix that threatens social cohesion. Our prescription for Poland and Europe is: more Play! Katowice 2029 will be the European laboratory where we will test the impact of culture on improving social trust and increasing optimism levels (see **Q3**). Our playfulness strategy (see **Q5**) can be at least a partial answer to social polarisation. We will make more people come out of their social and online bubbles and meet others face to face while playing together. Because Play! focuses on cooperative interaction, at all levels – starting from the neighbourhood (**Healthy Street**), the city (**48h: The Streets are Ours**), the Metropolis (**Borderless Theatre**) to Europe (**Move Your Brass**). In 2029, Katowice and the Metropolis can become the game board of the European game, where the main prize will go to everyone, because it will be a healthier, less divided, more cohesive society.

Mobilising Metropolis

Our game board is as vast as the Metropolis – 41 cities and municipalities, over 2 million inhabitants.

Our artistic vision of
'moving out of the zones'
is a response to the
need to make culture
more 'for everyone'.

Europe has been successfully testing this model of governance for a long time. In Poland, our Metropolis is a unique entity and still very fresh. The joint candidacy of Katowice with the Metropolis for the title of ECoC is the first undertaking of this magnitude, and right away on a European scale. But you have to aim high when what's at stake is the development of an area facing such serious challenges as ongoing post-industrial transformation and a shrinking population. The ECoC is a once-in-a-decade opportunity for the Metropolis to emerge in the minds of Europeans as the European Union in a nutshell.

Here is European history, the glorious one (economic development through coal and steel) and the shameful one (fratricidal struggles for the region to belong to one or the other state a century ago). Here is European heritage (our Garden City District of Giszowiec was the most modern in Europe 100 years ago). Here is European charisma (bonds based on neighbourhood and work). Here are European challenges (post-industrial era, transition, migrations). And lastly here is European hospitality. Through ECoC 2029 we want to tell Europe about itself and show it from different, often surprising perspectives.

Whether it's looking at the macro scale, from the top of a former slag heap during an **Indunature** tour, or at the micro scale, watching nature reclaim its former habitat (**Industrioklimaks**). Dipping into the past to when we were a border region (**Three Emperors' Corner**) or boldly reinterpreting traditions with us (**A New Queerstory of Silesia**). Or even, why not, by playing our history (**The City Quest**).

ECoC will help the Metropolis to rethink itself on a European level and develop models for how it will function in the future. We will make use of activities at the interface of science and art and invite our foreign partners to support us (**Medialab**), and even exploit the potential for simulating reality inherent in video games (**Exploring the Light and Dark Side of Play**). The results of these activities will not only be valuable to us, but will be our legacy – an intellectual and practical contribution that other emerging European Metropolises can benefit from.

Q11 c, d

Cooperations with European artists, operators, and cities
Some specific examples of planned European and international cooperations

Artistic international circulation is to the cultural ecosystem what oxygen is to nature. Without the constant circulation of artists, curators and ideas, cultural life wilts, new projects dwindle and good ideas fail to multiply. Katowice and the Metropolis had their place in this process. Until the pandemic. And it is not the fault of the virus itself, because COVID is gone, but the foreign creators have not returned. Inflation, the fall in the value of the currency and the difficult financial situation of local governments have firmly turned the tap on this life-giving oxygen for culture.

ECOC 2029 is supposed to be more than just the opening of this valve. It is meant to be a wave of fresh air coming from over Europe, bringing us a rain of intriguing artists, curators and activists and creating a climate for new, pan-European and even global connections and collaborations.

We first sent an invitation to play to international players for whom Katowice and the Metropolis is not terra incognita. We couldn't pass up the chance to build collaborative projects or entrust curatorial responsibilities to creatives who have got to know Katowice and Silesian culture, met our people and, arguably in many cases, developed a fondness for them.

This is the case of Jacob Dijkstra (co-curator of Move Your Brass), a brass band specialist known throughout Europe, with whom we worked together on a support programme for Silesian mining orchestras. An excellent musician from Salento, Mauro Durante, leader of Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino (the best world music group of 2018 according to Songlines magazine), can also call himself a friend of Katowice; he has visited us with his band several times and has now proposed the We are all in the same dance festival programme. In turn, the example of community engagement set by Spanish-American muralist Axel Void in 2015 inspired us to create the True Colors project together. Some of these relationships are more than 30 years old, as in the case of Pärr Von Andreasson (involved in Graffiti Playgrounds), a graffiti artist, one of the initiators of the visit of Swedish artists to Katowice in the early 1990s, from which we count the history of this trend with us. Also Andrea Möller, a well-known

European specialist in new media, has a long history of relations with Katowice, which she has visited, among other things, as a juror of a film festival, and has now prepared the concept of the Light Ahead festival for the city.

And let's not forget those artists who are Polish, but whose careers have already taken on a completely international dimension, as in the case of Rafał Milach, a photographer from the Metropolis who, as a permanent member of the Magnum agency, will invite his friends to lead the photographic project **Focus Silesicum**.

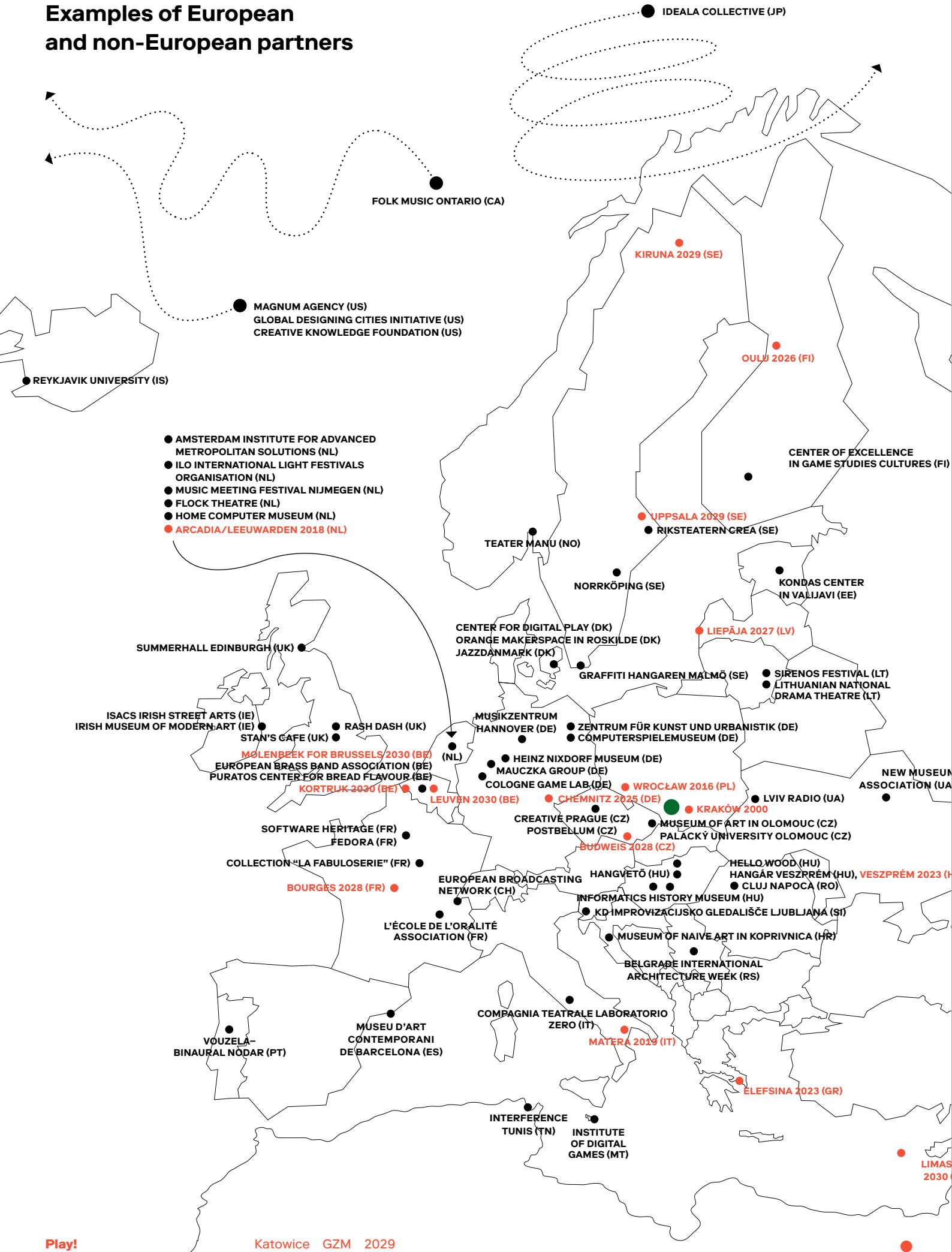
We are excited to think about collaborations with two important centres of contemporary art: the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IRL) and the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (ES), who will support us in the creation of the Playground Biennial. We are also looking forward to the results of the meeting of Silesian non-professional art with works collected at the Museum of Art in Olomouc (CZ), the Museum of Naive Art in Koprivnica (HR) and the Kondas Center in Valijavi (EST), consequence of curatorial choices of Anežka Šimkova and Helena Kušenić.

Our foreign partners will also help us to take the works created during the ECOC 2029 celebrations beyond the borders of Katowice as well, as in the case of the improvised performance Multilingual Impro Show, which will also visit Flock Theatre (NL) and KD Improvizacijsko gledališče (SI) after Katowice. They will also help our young artists to develop, extending their competences during residencies at MusikZentrum Hannover (DE) or Le Fil in Saint-Etienne (FR), and later presenting their talent at events such as Fête de la Musique in Metz (FR), Future Echos in Norrköping (SE) or Street Music Festival in Veszprem (HU).

Networking with transnational networks that bring together hundreds of international artists, ensembles or cultural institutions is also our strategy to ensure the appropriate internationalisation of our programme, which will be helped by the European Brass Band Association, ILO International Light Festivals Organisation or FEDORA – The European Circle of Philanthropists of Opera and Ballet. If we are awarded the title, we will join the IETM International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts and organise their international conference in the year of celebration.



Examples of European and non-European partners



We are particularly proud of the quality of our partnerships with universities, think-tanks and institutions dealing with urban topics (such as the Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Metropolitan Solutions or the Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik) or topics related to games and digital culture (such as the Cologne Game Lab, the Center of Excellence in Game Studies Cultures or the Insitute of Digital Games). Together we have the chance to develop innovative solutions for Katowice, the Metropolis and Europe.

As a city that has welcomed one of the largest numbers of migrants from Ukraine fleeing the war, for obvious reasons we will be working hand in hand with Ukrainian partners, both for the benefit of the community in Poland and acting in Ukraine. A natural partner here is the city of Lviv and its cultural community. We are already envisaging activities with them in the **School of Listening, Holosy or Grandfather's Spoon** projects.

In planning international cooperation, we reserve the right not to prejudge already now who will receive an invitation to play together at ECoC Katowice 2029. Hence the numerous projects in which artists will be selected through open calls (**Echoes across Europe, True Colours, Medialab**), or international competitions (**Two Towers**).

Q12

Attracting the interest of a European and international audience

A new player on the European cultural stage, Katowice's and the Metropolis' artistic programme cares about the individual, about community, space, and heritage. With our offer we are thinking of Marco from Brescia, Italy who is a huge football fan and comes to Poland for the first time to enjoy the offer of **Support Your Team**. Or Ruth from Kortrijk, Belgium who is a teacher and interested in the way we laid out the digital education activities in **Let's Play**. Or Nitika, an Indian student and slam poetry fan of the newest generation on her study-abroad-year who comes over from Newcastle, UK to explore the **Yes and No Festival**. We want to offer everyone something that floats their boats. Playfulness is a strategy of speaking about emotions first. Katowice 2029 invites the European audience to take part in a shared experience of emotion.

Let's see what else might appeal most to our visitors from abroad... Games, for sure. In 2029, the generation that is then around 50, not to mention younger

ones, will already have a natural period of fascination with video games in their biography (often still ongoing). This makes events such as the immersive exhibition **The History of Video Games** in the just-completed Gaming and Technology Hub worth coming to Katowice for. Especially if you can immediately play colossal Tetris or Space Invaders on the wall of an office building during our project **Blocks**. Games are a natural source of endorphins, the excitement of competition, but also the sense of community that comes from playing together.

Joyful experience of art is what music was made for. It used to be that it could only be experienced together with other people, and we will recreate that sense of community during the **Move Your Brass** festival, when the music of brass bands and orchestras from all over the world will move people to play in the streets, squares and even brownfields, amusement parks or balconies. Bring your trumpet!

In the Salento region of Italy, it is said that whoever dances the pizzica will never die. This is far too optimistic an assumption, but people love to dance and forget all their worries, so **We are all in the same Dance**. With its focus on dance as a therapeutic and socially creative form, this project has the potential to become a collective European art therapy session.

Beyond the artistic event we plan to close our theatre projects of **Moving Stages** with the conference of the IETM International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts and a conference in our **Support Your Team** about the effects of football on communities. We also see good chances to interest academia and cultural operators on how we disseminate the results of our evaluation and how we set up our research design for non-audiences, next to finding cutting-edge methodologies on digital education for children of the Alpha generation growing up with AI.

Playfulness is only authentic if it is accompanied by a bit of surprise. We will be surprising our visitors with unexpected artistic interventions – whether at the biennial **Playground** exhibition or during the new-media fest **Light Ahead**. What is more memorable than a sudden, surprising discovery of a European region that was not on your mental map yet but now leaves indelible emotional experiences?

We are aware that we live in a time of informational excess, which we will have to cut through with our message. But we have faith in the appeal, including media appeal, of our programme. Images of hundreds of players at a LARP in **City Quest** or of huge crowds painting open air in **Balkan Express** or the musical train **The Loop** – images that could go viral on SoMe will be surprising and different enough to break through to potential audiences all around Europe and the cybersphere.

Q13

Links and cooperation plans with European Capitals of Culture

The right partner is a guarantee for success – no matter whether you're playing bridge or making the European Capital of Culture a truly European experience. That is why, although we consider numerous cities awarded the ECoC title in our artistic programme, we pay special attention to those that will best fit the rules of our Play!

What we have in common with our Czech neighbours' Budweis 2028 is the special attention they pay to community development, supported and initiated by artistic and cultural projects. This translates into activities that, on the one hand, are implemented in the immediate surroundings of the inhabitants, but also involve them to the greatest extent in their co-creation. It would be hard to find something closer to our vision of 'moving out of the zones' and the playful strategy of inviting people to play together. That is why we decided to invite the most interesting realisations of Budweis' Kul.turista Festival project – a festival dedicated to communities and neighbourhoods – to enrich the programme of **Piekarniok**, our mobile bread oven, at which we also want to gather visitors in Budweis in 2028.

Our Czech partners, like us, see the potential in popularising urban sports among young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods. We will be following up their Skateholders, (yes, it's about skateboarders) project to use it for our **Try!Urban** programming. The only mild language barrier will allow us to invite Czech instructors to Katowice. Budweis 2028 also shares with us the belief that playfulness can even be a tool for social design, so we will combine Robin Playhood's Czech activities with Katowice's living urban laboratory **Healthy Street**.

The technological and playful dimension of our candidacy naturally steers us towards Oulu 2026, who boldly introduce experimental technologies into their artistic programme. We will therefore be keeping a close eye on the results of the ArtTech City project to use during our new-media **Light Ahead** and **Virtuous in the Virtual**. But the project we are most excited about is the ECoC Board Game created by the Oulu team. If we join this prestigious family, we will immediately integrate it into our outreach activities and use it to promote awareness of ECoC and to get more young people involved.

Living in a region particularly affected by the devastation of nature, we are exceptionally impressed

by the care taken by the sustainability dimension of Bourges 2028, which is why we have invited their slow tourism-based RER Europa project to co-create the offer of our alternative travel agency **InduNature**. We are also united by our deep conviction that culture is a tool for increasing equality in society, which is why in the year of the celebrations we will be hosting an exhibition dedicated to the forgotten female composers Femmes Oubliées, prepared in France, while Compagnie Marteau, creators of Bourges' Cabaret Queer Européen, will support us in preparing **The Queerstory of Silesia**. The ECoC family offers unlimited opportunities also when it comes to exchanging experience and sharing knowledge in organising such a large-scale event as the ECoC. Our future volunteers will learn on the spot from experienced colleagues from Liepaja 2027 (LV), Oulu 2026 (FI), and Budweis 2028 (CZ), and work together with volunteers from candidate cities Kiruna or Uppsala 2030 (SE), and then they can share their experience with the team from candidate Leuven 2030 (BE). While with ECoC candidate Kortrijk 2030 (BE) we have agreed to work on their handcraft project Handcraft your City and our **Between Arts & Crafts**.

But in the end, work is not enough! That is why we are inviting musical young people from Matera 2019 (IT), Chemnitz 2025 (DE), Leuven (BE), Limassol (CY), Uppsala (SE) and Budweis 2028 (CZ), among others, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Poland's membership of the European Union for our **EUPhoria** parade.

Among the Polish and Swedish cities that are in the second stage of the competition, we have formed an agreement whereby we have committed ourselves in solidarity to work together regardless of the outcome of the competition.

4

Outreach

By now we hope it is clear that, in the words of our Consultative Council, we are “driven by a passion to ensure that access to culture must be a universal and un-questionable norm just like access to drinking water.”

We said that in our first Bid Book and our commitment to that hope hasn’t changed one iota. It sets out the frame for our audience development strategy and underpins our approach to Outreach which we are trying to do in a joined up way that is both strategic in its vision and bottom up in its practicality.

As we said in Q5, our Artistic Vision is to extend culture beyond the Culture Zone so that it is weaved into the social fabric of our city and Metropolis. In practice this means:

- Reaching groups for whom “culture is not on my radar”
- Attracting people who find the cultural offer uninteresting
- Engaging with communities who are “excluded” from culture
- Making culture and cultural spaces accessible and inclusive
- Finding dynamic ways to increase audiences for culture

So we asked people!

Between preselection and now we conducted a major survey using CAPI and CAWI methodology on a representative group of more than 5000 (!) metropolis citizens. We want to invite people to play together but playful attitude does not exclude a science based approach. Our survey has helped us to learn more about our audience. Their views on culture (how they define it? what is the role of culture?). How they engage in cultural activities. And, last but not least, what are the reasons they chose not to attend, not to engage, not to play along and any barriers that get in the way.

More than 40% of the people surveyed agreed with a statement that “Cultural and artistic activities are generally of little relevance to me”. In other places around 30% of people declared that participation in culture was “not important”. This confirmed that our intuition was correct and that we need a new definition of culture together with new and engaging ways of involving different communities.

But two conditions must be met. We need to develop institutional empathy and a wide variety of people from marginalised or disadvantaged groups must be a part of the core organisational structure (see Q15).

We applied this first of all to our own organisation. Our Consultative Council – a group of socially aware stakeholders and artists who keep us on our toes – was enriched with new members. They represented Ukrainian refugees and Young people (two of the new members are under 18). Every chapter of this Bid Book has been reviewed by them and... when they felt necessary, they didn’t bite their tongues.

[...] We are “driven by a passion to ensure that access to culture must be a universal and un-questionable norm just like access to drinking water.” We said that in our first Bid Book and our commitment to that hope hasn’t changed one iota.

We are also committed to further strategic surveys to reach into our communities and find out more about how better to involve them. The next is planned for 2025. This will go much deeper into patterns of attendance and participation, including a large variety of in-home hobbies and pastimes. Then, taking advantage of both studies we plan on conducting research into the so-called “non-audiences”.

People who, for various reasons, do not attend or participate in arts and culture. This will be the first research project dedicated specifically to this group, allowing us to meet them on their own terms. Let’s face it, people are the experts in their own lives. A further survey – before 2029 if we are awarded the title – will ask more specific questions about the ECoC programme and will contribute to our Monitoring and Evaluation model as we described in Q4.

So that's the strategic analysis and research which will underpin our ongoing approach to audience analysis and development. But we have also invested time in 3 specific areas which link to the 3 core questions of the Outreach section:

- How local people have been involved in developing the programme and will participate in it (Q14)
- How we have addressed the needs and barriers of some very specific and disadvantaged groups (Q15)
- Young people and schools (Q16)

Here are our plans.

Q14

Involvement of the local population

We started from a micro, very local scale, because we know that a paradigm shift always starts at the bottom. And our aim has been to plant a seed in the minds of local people that will allow them to think of themselves as full participants in a cultural capital and co-creators of it.

A cultural capital where there is room for dreams, connections, fun and work. And where life is lived between diversity and openness (we are famous for our hospitality), respect and fairness (without these qualities, the dangerous work in the mines or steel mills could not be done together) and commitment and agency (the work done by the bottom-up concept implemented by the ECoC 2029 office).

We are still talking

As we said in our first Bid Book, conversation and consultation are among the most important components of our application. Without them there is no cooperation and no participation. Without it wouldn't be fair play.

Our ECoC candidacy office has its doors open all the time. You can come to us, ask questions, talk about ECoC and our application, make proposals for the programme or express your opinion. Constructive criticism is just as important to us. Or just have some klachy over coffee. You can also call us. Meetings are held face-to-face and online. It is also possible to use a sign language interpreter during the meetings. We had more than 250 meetings face-to-face and online this year.

Like in the first phase of the competition, we had many conversations with people living in Katowice and

the 40 other cities in the metropolitan area. In April and May 2024, we had 10 information and consultation meetings in the five subregions of the Metropolis. They were open to people living in the area as well as local activists, people representing the NGOs and the cultural environment.

Compared to 2023, we saw a greater diversity of participants at these meetings in terms of the types of organisations represented. There were also people who were not affiliated with any institutions or organisations. People who were there for the first time and regulars, people who were already involved in our activities, such as **Spójnik**.

Each meeting had a workshop component, where we covered topics important to us from the application. At each we asked the question, "Are we in Europe? Is Katowice / Metropolis in Europe?" Geographically, of course! – that was the most common first answer. It was also the beginning of a discussion on the European dimension. The Metropolis is like a small version of the European Union – many different local communities that seek dialogue with each other – this was a very popular conclusion.

But that's not all. We participated in an international multilingual meeting. Here we were able to talk to people from all over the world who live in Katowice, whether students or people who have chosen this place as their home. We also talked with teenagers from five different schools in the Metropolis about our Bid Book (more about this in Q16). We invited refugee kids from Ukraine to make pizza with us and talked with them about their interests. We organised a couple of meetings for educators and NGO networking meetings for each subregion which will continue up to September 2024.

And you're never too old to play! 20% of seniors in the survey declared that they went to a centre for culture during the last 12 months, compared to the average for the whole population of 22%. In Poland these tend to be the main venues which organise activities specially dedicated for seniors, supported for years now by targeted policies and funding. With this it's fair to say that well-designed policies and adequate funding allows to design activities that are attractive and accessible for this group. This shows that seniors are not so marginalised, because this group is well supported.

Yet we also know that we'd like to create more opportunities outside the "senior" zone, to increase that 20% and to encourage more intergenerational play. We want them to be a part of our intergenerational volunteer programme. In **Grandfather's spoon** we will invite them to tell their stories, which will be the basis for construction of the exhibition and creation of the comic book. They are a huge part of **Share: your neighbourhood**, no one knows more stories about the district than they do!

We are still walking.
We are still talking.



We began to map the needs, contacts and networking between different sectors – Tkanki Kultury

Share Your Neighbourhood





Yet we also know that we'd like to create more opportunities outside the "senior" zone [...] and to encourage more intergenerational play.



We are still walking

After winter, we were able to return to our workshops on the move: **Share: Your Neighbourhood**. We walked through almost all of Katowice, but still we have a few neighbourhoods to walk around and many stories to listen to. In June and July 2024 other cities from Metropolis, Chorzów and Radzionków, joined our neighbourhood walks.

As a response to the lack of young people on the Share Your Neighbourhood walks we started a project **Follow Me**. A guide to places of importance. In cooperation with NGO Przestrzeń Otwarcia. This is a project that gives voice to young residents of Katowice (with Szopienice district as a pilot) and allows them to talk about spaces that are meaningful and important to them in their daily lives. We started conversations with young people and listened to their stories about their nearest surroundings. Afterwards they shared their neighbourhood with us by taking us on walks based on those stories. The result of those meetings will be a guide in the form of an author's artzine, which will be a collaborative, multifaceted and polyphonic story about the neighbourhood where modern young people grow up, establish relationships, and spend time.

Spójnik

Local communities are a vital part of our microgrant programme Spójnik. It was they who gave their ideas to local institutions and NGOs for events that should become part of our candidacy.

If we win, from 2025, we want to expand the Spójnik to include informal groups, local citizens so that any resident can submit a project, without an intermediary, and be a part of our ECoC. It will strongly involve the local communities, inviting them to exercise their powers as experts on their own neighbourhoods.

We are definitely planning to keep the Spójnik programme in the run-up to 2029 as well as beyond – as an ECoC legacy.

More ideas!

We wanted to create this candidacy and the plans for the ECoC together with all the residents, that's why we issued a second open call for projects **Submit Your Idea**. We asked people to write their proposals, we also asked a couple of questions about how this proposal matches the Play! idea.

Anyone has been able to submit a proposal to the Katowice 2029 ECoC programme, regardless of age or origin. The idea could be submitted through different channels, including one based on face-to-face contact, filling the text form downloadable from our page, one involving a Polish Sign Language interpreter and through an online form. This was the most frequently used communication channel. We collected 100 ideas. And if we are designated as ECoC, the au-

You're never too old to play!

thors of selected proposals will be invited to co-create the key parts of the Katowice GZM 2029 programme with us.

Examples of authors and projects from second open call: Przemysław Michałek: **Not Just Mines – Getting Lost in Katowice**. Urban game and Tomasz Łuczak: **Music on the House**.

Press Play!

If we are successful with our bid, we will move on with aspects of our programme right away. We want to involve as many locals as possible and invite even more people to join our game, and continue some that we started during the bidding years like: **Share: Your Neighbourhood, Spójnik**.

For example, **Balkan Express** is scheduled to start in 2025 with large open air painting sessions and an exhibition everyone can join.

An important statement that came from younger people is the lack of consultation of events and activities aimed at this age group directly with them and the lack of giving them the initiative. For the project **Kato4U**, we will involve them already at the stage of designing the space through workshops with an interior designer and design thinking. We will start the project early, so that in 2029 there will already be 22 such points in operation.

In **Music on the House**, part of the **International Radio Orchestras Festival**, locals will be able to create a concert hall in their homes, garages or gardens and connect closely to the musicians.

We will invite locals to be a part of **Grandfather's Spoon** exhibition and tell this big Silesian story through small objects. They will be invited to create a comic book about it, too.

Music has a good effect on a person's well-being, reduces stress, counteracts depression. We want it to be a part of people's lives from an early age. **The Jolly Youth Orchestra JOY** will teach children in primary schools to play wind instruments starting in 2025. In 2029, in the **EUPhoria** project, children from JOY together with participants from other EU countries will compose and perform together a simple hymn tune for the 25th anniversary of Poland's membership in the European Union and play it at the start of a parade through the city.

Q15

Opportunities for less privileged groups

We said in our introduction to this section that the new definition of culture together with new and engaging ways of involving different communities could not happen unless a wide variety of people from marginalised or disadvantaged groups were central to our focus. We identified the following groups as being in need of some special support. And we also describe our plans to create the kind of “institutional empathy” we described in the introduction above.

Process not project

Within the Katowice GZM 2029 Office we will have a department (Inclusion and Accessibility Team) responsible for implementing accessible solutions to our programme with self-advocates as coworkers and colleagues. After all, for centuries our Polish constitution says *nihil novi sine communi consensu* (commonly interpreted as “nothing about us without us”).

The Metropolis of Culture programme is aimed at capacity building of cultural staff which includes educating organisers and decision-makers on accessible culture. It was launched in 2023 and continues in 2024 with training and workshop activities – including training related to the accessibility of cultural services in different types of institutions (e.g. digital accessibility audit of websites, workshops on accessibility in museum spaces). The results of these training activities are increasingly being seen in the activities of cultural operators.

We have regular meetings on accessibility with representatives of cultural institutions in the Metropolis. We’ve met with representatives of our NGO sector and Katowice’s NGO Council supports our bid unanimously. They have the knowledge, the methodology and they know how to teach in order to learn. A large part of our workshops are run by professionals from the third sector (e.g. a workshop on standards for the protection of minors is carried out by the Stowarzyszenie Moc Wsparcia (Power of Support Association) that runs a youth intervention centre).

The lack of cooperation between cultural institutions has been one of our biggest concerns. Together with representatives of cultural institutions (accessibility coordinators) from the region, we have therefore started work on the creation of the Metropolitan Charter for Accessible Culture (MCAC) – a document

constituting a commitment to cultural accessibility and at the same time a contribution to regular meetings and exchange of experiences. All propositions to the ECoC programme must follow its guidelines. It’s important to note that the MCAC will provide guidelines also on how to communicate and promote accessibility and how to talk about it with the audience. Accessibility starts from the first information about projects.

During our first meeting accessibility coordinators pointed out many obstacles (overwork, lack of training, small budget and out-of-date infrastructure) but all of them spoke about accessibility and inclusion with passion, positive attitude and with hope that things will go in the right direction.

“Friendly audits” between institutions are one of the ideas we want to implement into the Metropolis of Culture programme. It’s a simple but effective idea of job shadowing – visiting each other and checking (auditing) accessibility, ending with recommendations, hints on how to improve accessibility in a given institution. It would concern both space, programme and communication.

There are also many great examples from the European Union that we should study and through the Metropolis of Culture programme we will organise study visits with our European partners.

“Make Culture Great Again!” — Anonymous

34% of residents of the Metropolis with lower levels of educational attainment declared cultural participation as “not important” compared to 8% with high education. 28% of residents with lowest income compared to 9–15% with higher income stated the same. Those gaps need to be addressed with a programme that is engaging and without financial or educational barriers. What is interesting is that only 10% of residents with children agreed with the statement. Are kids a “vehicle” for participation in culture?

Large chunks of our programme will be free of charge with lowest possible requirements of entry. We have also established cooperation with the entity organising public transport in the GZM Metropolis (buses and trams). We will jointly organise additional, often free, travel to events organised as part of the programme.

Welcoming our neighbours

In Katowice and Metropolis there are more than 250k refugees from Ukraine.

There are a number of existing initiatives focused on integrating them in Polish cities. But there are still areas that need our attention. Kyiv International Institute of Sociology estimated that only 22% of refugees learned Polish on a basic level and only 10% speak fluently.

Different Voices is one of the projects that proposes integration by bringing together new residents

or people with special needs. For example through the project **Holosy** (Slavic white singing for Polish and Ukrainian women) or **Lift Your Spirits** (choirs for people with depression). Halyna Khalymonyk, a member of our Consultative Council, wants to concentrate her efforts on refugee Youth and teenagers. It’s a group that has it especially hard – most taken by force out of their communities and peer circles.

We’ve met with some of them during the cooking workshops we mentioned earlier (so that they could open up in a safe and friendly atmosphere) and they pointed out that what they need are places they could feel at home at.

We have been developing highly specialised informal education projects with integration potential like **Let’s Play** and **Kutzowisko: Film and Media School for Youth**. There is no better way of integrating than working on a cool, fun project together (like a video game or a movie).

We can speak for ourselves

Within the Katowice GZM 2029 office our Community Team will continue to find ways to make our programme more accessible. For now we have conducted regular meetings with marginalised and / or disadvantaged groups. What came out of those meetings was:

- Our Deaf Round Table created **Listen Up!** which ‘reverses’ accessibility
- A local social enterprise run by people with intellectual disability consulted ETR (easy to read) text with basic information about ECoC and Play!
- **A New Queerstory of Silesia – Barbórka Parade** – festival and showcase of performative arts within Queer Culture
- **Opera Utopia** is highly artistic co-creation during workshops with groups at risk of exclusion (people in homelessness crisis, prisoners etc)
- Supporting the implementation of film screenings, performances and concerts with augmented subtitles and sensory-sensitive conditions will be part of the guidelines in the Metropolitan Charter of Accessible Culture.
- Local Culture Hubs will help us further identify needs and respond within the local communities.

Volunteers of Europe, Unite

We are planning an innovative intergenerational volunteer programme, based on the principles of the Play! concept.

■ **PERSONAL PLAYLIST:** Will offer volunteers various forms of involvement, (short-term, long-term, event-driven, specialist, student, face-to-face and online volunteering eg. social media team, customers service team) as well as a catalogue of interesting and diverse tasks (such as collaboration with artists, audience service, cultural accessibility activities).

► **FAIR PLAY:** We invite anyone interested in volunteering, regardless of age, ethnicity, interests, previous experience and skills. We put emphasis on the exchange of experiences, mutual inspiration, cultures and a focus on intergenerational connections. We will invest in the development and motivation of volunteers, including organising: training courses (e.g. diversity and inclusion, intercultural communication, teamwork), team-building meetings (kick off meetings, thematic culinary meetings, celebration of the International Volunteer Day, final party) or dedicated cultural events (concerts, film screenings films, art workshops).

When recruiting volunteers, we will establish cooperation with schools, universities, local NGOs, Universities of the Third Age and senior citizens’ organisations. Regional Institute of Culture in Katowice, local operator of Erasmus+ programme is our official partner and we will also launch projects within the framework of the European Solidarity Corps – this will allow us to engage people from all over Europe. From 2026 forward, we will also organise volunteering visits to other ECoCs. This intergenerational group of volunteers from Katowice and the surrounding Metropolitan area, will get involved in organising and handling key cultural events. This will enable them to gain experience and skills necessary to serve as volunteer leaders in 2029. We’ve already confirmed partners from Uppsala, Liepāja, Oulu, Kiruna, Leuven and Budweis.

● **TOTAL IMMERSION:** To work with volunteers, we introduce modern yet easy and accessible solutions: online volunteering, communication using social media and dedicated portals, training in the form of e-learning and interactive classes.

◀ **RE:PLAY:** We propose practices, solutions and standards, the implementation and dissemination of which will result in the permanent presence of volunteers in cultural institutions of the GZM Metropolis.

Q16

Audience development plans, education and schools

We described some of the strategic plans behind our Audience Development strategy in the introduction. Here we focus specifically on young people and schools.

“Play is the highest form of research”

— *Probably not Einstein*

Play! is not only our artistic concept but also a key practical Audience Development tool, with a particular resonance with young people. We set out in **Q5** an Artistic Vision in which 15 year old Marta and 8 year old Tymek can be inspired by starting to act or play. In fact to engage in any way they want in cultural activities. The engagement of young people in creative and cultural activity is not only the salvation for the cultural system as we know it. But also for the creative future on which we want to build our Metropolis.

A flute out of a carrot!

During one of the musical workshops we offered, children could create their own flutes out of common root vegetables. It made a furore among both children and parents and it's a perfect embodiment (emcarrotment?) of the Play! idea in practice.

Our survey showed that elementary school age children's favourite activities mediated by electronic devices are playing video games, listening to music, browsing and creating content on social media (TikTok, Instagram), watching films and concerts.

For those who play video games, together with Little Bit Academy we are preparing a **Let's Play** project that will concentrate on what's best that video games design can offer. **Kutzowisko Film and Media School For Youth** will be a place where they can bring their internet content creating passion to a new level.

We are also planning to involve kids in our M&E activities. We want to understand arts and culture through their lens, but also to develop methods of research that are suitable for this age group. All this will be done with kids' active participation, compliant with the rule saying that “nothing about me without me”. Our experiences from this process together with a methodological package for researchers will be one of our legacies.

There is a wide discussion in Poland about the rights and the autonomy of underage people. We have this discussion in our Consultative Council which in the future should also prepare recommendations and guidelines for our projects. We want to be ahead of the curve.

Need for causality

Oliwia Myczkowska, one of our Consultative Council teenage members, expressed that it is not enough to listen to what young people have to say. They need to know that their point of view will be represented and their ideas and opinions implemented.

Together with the local NGO **Agere Aude** we've consulted our first Bid Book with 110 teenagers from five different schools in the Metropolis.

There is a common misunderstanding that young people don't value tradition enough. What we have found is that they do, but they want traditions to be redefined. Queer reinterpretation of Silesian celebrations will be a part of **Barbórka Parade**. Although it's worth mentioning that 15% of participants specifically pointed out that they would not want to participate in that kind of event. Perhaps due to the fears towards LGBTQ+ people. Other than that at no consultation meeting was there any mention of “us and them”, “locals vs visitors”, “people with disabilities and without”. These oppositions seem to be blurring giving way to a curiosity and frank openness that is much greater than that of the older generations. That is very encouraging for us and our inclusive vision.

Teenagers liked the **Piekarniok** idea and wanted to extend it with intergenerational workshops of bread-making techniques. They want to rediscover their City and find untold stories through **City Quest**. They liked our musical project but they warned us to beware of sound pollution. They want to have the keys to a place they feel is their own. It will be possible through the **Start Me Up** project and **Kato4You**.

A sign of respect for the opinions and views of others was expressed by pointing out the need for public consultations, e.g. in the case of creating graffiti on the walls of buildings in the neighbourhoods of the Metropolis' cities. After the workshops we have implemented their **Spray and Play** idea as part of our project **48h: The Streets are Ours**.

Less than 50% respondents of our large surveys recognize video games as culture and there is an obvious generational gap. For people under 30 a statement that games are culture and can be art is a truism. For those who doubt that, we've prepared educational, popularising activities like **The History of Video Games** exhibition and seminars within **Exploring the Light and Dark Side!**

It's natural for young people to consider climate change and just energetic transformation as an issue that needs to be addressed (also) through cultural activities. We will work with them to create a Green Culture Charter.

Within the **Share: Your Neighbourhood** walks groups of young people will have a chance to create their own maps of important places and stories. We will publish the effects. For Katowice GZM, as young people have requested, we truly will give them the keys to a Metropolis that they can feel belong to them.



Kids sharing their neighbourhood – Follow Me. A guide to places of importance

The engagement of young people in creative and cultural activity is not only the salvation for the cultural system as we know it. But also for the creative future on which we want to build our Metropolis.

5

Management

5.1

Finance

Q17

Total operating budget

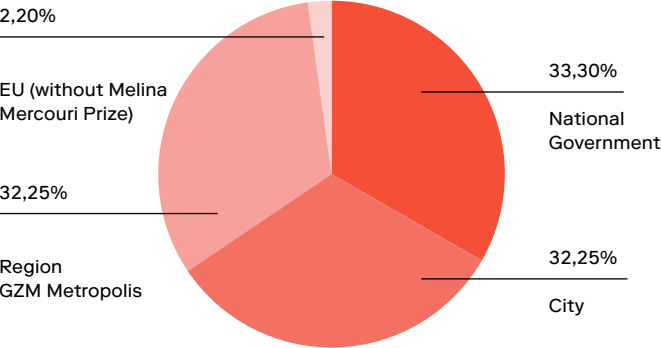
INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE	IN €	%
FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR	45 890 000	94,4%
FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR	2 700 000	5,6%
Total	48 590 000	100%

The change in the budget was due to a decision by the Ministry of Culture. At the preselection stage we did not know the financial contribution of the State, it was an estimation at the level of Wrocław 2016. This year the Ministry confirmed its commitment at the level of 15 290 000 EUR.

Q18

Income from the public sector

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER OPERATING EXPENDITURE	IN €	%
National Government	15 290 000	33,30%
City	14 800 000	32,25%
Region GZM Metropolis	14 800 000	32,25%
EU (without Melina Mercuri Prize)	1 000 000	2,20%
Total	45 890 000	100%



Q19

Financial commitments towards operating budget

CITY: The decision to fund the ECoC was taken unanimously by City Council resolution number III/19/24 on 29th of May 2024.

REGION: The budget for the ECoC project was passed by unanimous decision of the Assembly of the Metropolis (constituted by the Mayors of the 41 municipalities of the Metropolis) No. LVI/421/2023 on 13 September 2023.

STATE: The Ministry of Culture confirmed the State's financial contribution to the ECoC project in writing in April 2024.

Q20

Financial support from Union programmes towards operating budget

If you play, it's best together! We are looking for additional funding options so that the game board can be expanded. For a number of projects, we have se-

EU PROGRAM / COMPONENT (2025–2029)	OUR PROJECT	PARTNER	CONNECTION
Creative Europe: Culture and MEDIA, a cross-sectoral strand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kutzwisko Film and Media School for YouthMoving StagesLet's PlayThe History of Video Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Silesia Film InstitutetbdLittle Bit AcademyGaming and Technology Hub	Promoting new creative forms joining several sectors with innovation or tech use
Erasmus+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Metropolis of CultureEUphoriaVolunteers' programme focussing on the participation of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8 local partnerstbdInstytut im. Korfantego	Promotion of international dialogue & education, cultural exchange
European Solidarity Corps	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Volunteers' programme focussing on the participation of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Instytut im. Korfantego	Engaging youth & organisations dealing with solidarity and voluntary work
New European Bauhaus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Piekarniok	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Festiwal Miast Partnerskich Łączy nas chleb	Experimental design component promoting sustainable future
Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Opera UtopiaA New Queerstory of Silesia – Barbórka Parade	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Silesian Opera HouseŚląsk Przeglęty NGO	Engagement & Participation component is important for cultural sector, art. & cultural engagement is an important tool to promote common positive values
The Recovery and Resilience Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local Culture HubsMove Your Brass	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8 local partnersSilesian Association of Choirs and Orchestras	EU flagship initiative with the purpose of mitigating the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic
Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Different VoicesHolosy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chórtownia FoundationSilesian Association of Choirs and Orchestras	Strengthening and developing the common European asylum system
Just Transition Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none">InduNature 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none">tbd	Support to territories facing serious socio-economic challenges arising from the transition towards climate neutrality
The Digital Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Medialab	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice	Innovating the sector with modern technologies & digitalisation both as a medium and a tool

cured partners with whom we want to submit joint funding applications. For example, to the Creative Europe programme we plan to apply with our partners Teatr Śląski and Teatr Zagłębia.

Fundraising is no easy task. That's why we plan on hiring help. Additionally to securing additional funds with private sponsors, our fundraising manager will coordinate an external NGO or company that will assist with identifying funding opportunities for our programme through private, national and European programmes.

The table shows programmes and projects which are likely to apply for additional funding from the European Union funding schemes.

Q21

Timetable for income of operating budget

SOURCE OF INCOME FOR OPERATING EXPENDITURE	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031
EU			100 000	250 000	300 000	350 000		
Nat. Gov.*					12 645 000	2 645 000		
City	329 000	705 552	940 736	940 736	1 646 288	10 566 688	300 000	300 000
Region	470 000	705 552	940 736	940 736	1 646 288	10 566 688	300 000	300 000
Sponsors		200 000	500 000	500 000	500 000	1 000 000	100 000	100 000
Total	799 000	1 611 104	2 481 472	2 631 472	16 737 576	25 128 376	700 000**	700 000**

* There was no direct consultation with the Ministry on the subject of resource allocation. A letter from the Ministry indicates that the funding is for the period 2028–2029.

** The funds indicated for 2030 and 2031 are additional legacy funds for ECoC projects and activities that we negotiated with the City Council and are not included in the overall ECoC budget.

Q22

Involving sponsors and partners to support Katowice 2029

Katowice, once known for mining and metallurgy, is now developing into a centre for modern technology and international business. And with the European Capital of Culture Play! comes into play as well.

But let's play the business game for a moment: The city has won accolades such as 5th place in the 2022 / 2023 ranking for fDi Intelligence European Cities and Regions of the Future and a distinction in the Top 10 of the 2023 ranking for Large European Cities of the Future.

Katowice is also the venue for many international events such as the Intel Extreme Masters finals and the EuroScience 2024 conference. In this context, we think Katowice GZM 2029 promotional strategy offers sponsors image success and high coverage rates. With a population of 290,000 and 2.2 million in the en-

tire Metropolis, the city is an attractive destination in terms of promotion, and the long time horizon of activities starting in 2025 will enable companies to plan advertising budgets and develop original and playful forms of promotion that fit the programme and overall tone. We want to invite our sponsors to join up as a Players' Guild that sets out on the quest to support the noble cause of Play!

Strategic sponsors

We plan to start our strategic sponsor acquisition activities in 2025 with the preparation of a framework sponsorship offer. We will establish a position for a fundraising specialist within our organisation and will work closely with a company specialised in fundraising who helped us prepare this strategy.

Large business and economic events with a location in Katowice, such as the European Economic Congress, will also be used to establish and develop business contacts.

Sponsors who join our ECoC 2029 early on will not only be able to plan financial resources in the advertising budget for 2029 and the ramp-up years, but also to develop original forms of promotion that fit in with the selected ECoC events, matching current trends and developing technological possibilities.



In addition to financial sponsorship, sponsorship cooperation in the form of in-kind organisational support is also envisaged, including: the free provision of advertising space and time, land and real estate for the implementation of events or electric cars for the needs of the staff of the ECoC 2029 office, who will have to move around the city and the Metropolis throughout the year.

Industries with high strategic sponsorship potential for Katowice GZM 2029 include: FMCG, fashion brands, car manufacturers, IT, telephony, airlines, hotel chains, travel agencies, retail chains and malls, as well as mining and energy companies. The Katowice Special Economic Zone is home to 600 companies, including those from France, Italy, Germany and the USA.

Small and medium-sized businesses

SMEs operate at direct contact with the local community and their owners are often members of these communities. It is planned to organise a Local Heroes Programme, under which companies will provide advertising space and in return, we will enable the use of the brand and communicate the partnership. Companies can support the events financially, in-kind, technically, promotionally and through employee volunteering. In order for the partnership to take place,

long-term information and education activities targeting local entrepreneurs will be key. Workshop series are planned to improve skills in communication and marketing, the use of digital tools, creativity, CSR and counteracting online hate speech.

Public institutions and enterprises

Public bodies in the Metropolis have great financial and organisational potential. A key action, beneficial for us in terms of both cost and promotional potential, will be to establish cooperation with the Metropolitan Transport Authority, the Silesian Railways and Katowice International Airport in two respects:

1. Making transport available free of charge to participants and attendees of the ECoC events (such a situation has already taken place in the case of the Metropolis of Culture congress in 2023). The offer of free transport is a strong argument promoting the events, facilitating the decision to participate (especially for people from outside Katowice and from abroad).
2. Using their promotional potential: trams, buses (a total of 1,700 vehicles), trains (66 train sets, 400 routes per day), bus and tram stops and railway stations (a total of more than 7,000),

international airport (more than 5 million passengers per year). The Metropolitan Transport Infrastructure are spaces perfectly suited to promote and inform about our ECoC events.

NGOs

Silesia has over 12,000 registered NGOs, many of which are active in culture, education and social activation. Cooperation with the third sector will supply organisers with specialists in culture and education, especially for children and young people. Support from corporate foundations, which have increased in number over the past decade, can include funding, employee volunteering and employee community engagement.

Foundations more and more often involve the founding company's employees in community activities by offering them volunteering opportunities or participation in community actions (40% of foundations run employee volunteerism and 63% of entities organise community involvement of their employees). An opportunity to involve sponsors and employees as co-creators of ECoC. As first steps in our fundraising strategy, we plan the following activities:

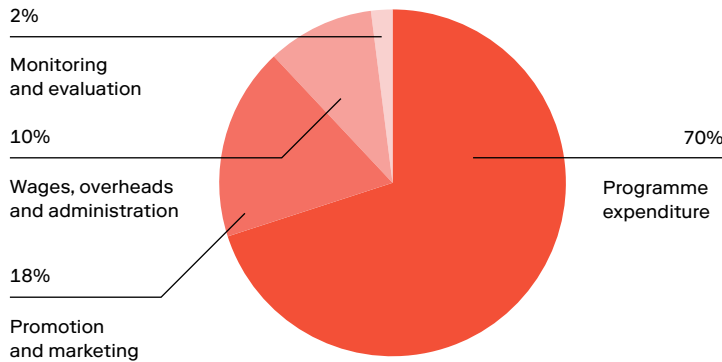
- invitations to play and become a part of our Players' Guild in the European Capital of Culture with the respective benefits
- the creation of partly AI generated promotional materials that present the benefits of sponsorship, including the expected reach and impact of the events organised
- reports on international and national events already organised in the GMZ and national events (conferences, congresses, climate summit, etc.) that showcase the successes of sponsorship
- networking meetings and events
- participation in conferences, trade fairs and conventions to establish contacts with company representatives
- an awards ceremony for sponsors to recognise their contribution, increase engagement and attract more companies to work with them
- creating a loyalty programme offering benefits from a long-term sponsorship partnership.

We believe that sponsorship is not only about giving money, but also a mutual invitation to play at eye-level and create something together.

Q23

Breakdown of operating budget

BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING BUDGET	IN €	%
Programme expenditure	34 013 000	70
Promotion and marketing	8 746 200	18
Wages, overheads and administration	4 859 000	10
Monitoring and evaluation	971 800	2
Total	48 590 000	100



Q24

Timetable for spending operating budget

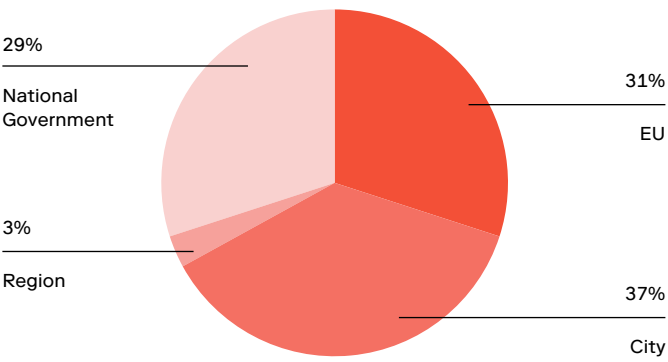
TIMETABLE FOR SPENDING	PROGRAMME		PROMOTION AND MARKETING		WAGES, OVERHEADS AND ADMINISTRATION		MONITORING AND EVALUATION	
	IN €	IN %	IN €	IN %	IN €	IN %	IN €	IN %
2024*	271 660,00		247 690,00		79 900,00		199 750,00	
2025	1 020 390,00	3	262 386,00	3	161 110,40	3	48 590,00	5
2026	1 700 650,00	5	437 310,00	5	248 147,20	5	68 026,00	7
2027	1 700 650,00	5	524 772,00	6	263 147,20	5	48 590,00	5
2028	11 224 290,00	33	3 411 018,00	39	1 673 757,60	35	320 694,00	33
ECoC 2029	18 367 020,00	54	4 110 714,00	47	2 512 837,60	52	485 900,00	50
2030*	455 000,00		105 000,00		70 000,00		70 000,00	
2031*	455 000,00		105 000,00		70 000,00		70 000,00	
Total for 2025–2029	34 013 000,00		8 746 200,00		4 859 000,00		971 800,00	

*Additional legacy/preparation funds, not included in Q17/Q23.

Q25

Income towards capital expenditure

INCOME FROM THE PUBLIC SECTOR TO COVER CAPITAL EXPENDITURE	IN €	%
National Government	83 000 000	29
City	103 000 000	37
Region	9 000 000	3
EU	85 000 000	31
Total	280 000 000	100



Q26

Financial commitments towards capital expenditure

The investments indicated in this Bid Book are projects that are already underway and the funds for their implementation have been secured.

Kilar House – this year the finishing touches will be completed and installation of the exhibition and equipment will begin. Kilar House will open in 2026. By decision of the city, the institution Katowice City of Gardens will be the operator of this building. All funds are secured for this investment.

Gaming and Technology Hub – the architectural design has been selected, and groundworks and renovation of the old post-industrial buildings will begin this year, 2024. The end of the first phases of the project is planned for 2026, with the majority of the complex to be completed in 2029. The division of the works into three stages allows the building to be used while further work on the entire complex is ongoing. Funds for the construction have been secured in the city, state and regional budgets. More than €72 m have been secured from the European Funds for the Silesian Voivodeship between 2021 and 2027.

Witosa Cultural Centre – the project is fully secured. The facility will open in 2025.
Himalayan Centre – all funds have been secured. The architectural design has been completed and the construction tender is now underway. The centre will open at the end of 2027. By decision of the city, the institution Katowice City of Gardens will be the operator of this building.

Q27

Financial support from Union programmes towards capital expenditure

The investments indicated in this Bid book benefit from EU funding – mainly from the Silesian Voivodeship Funds for 2021–2027. The Gaming and Technology HUB may be expanded in the future, for which EU funding is planned, including from the National Recovery Plan or the new financial mechanisms.

Q28

Timetable of income to cover capital expenditure

SOURCE OF INCOME FOR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE (IN €)	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
EU	10 000 000	28 000 000	47 000 000			
Nat. Gov.	11 000 000	26 000 000	44 000 000			
City	10 000 000			27 000 000	27 000 000	27 000 000
Region (Metropolis GZM)				3 000 000	3 000 000	3 000 000
Total	31 000 000	54 000 000	91 000 000	30 000 000	30 000 000	30 000 000

Q29

Amounts spent for new cultural infrastructure for ECoC

PLANNED INVESTMENT	IN €
Construction of a cultural centre in the Witosa district	6 000 000
Kilar House – Wojciech Kilar Music Education Centre	5 000 000
Gaming and Technology Hub – building a centre for new technologies and games	250 000 000
Himalayan Centre – History of Mountaineering dedicated to the memory of Jerzy Kukuczka	19 000 000



↑ Anthropologic. Digital artwork by AUSGANG Studio, 2024



5.2

Organisational structure

Q30 + Q31

Governance and delivery structure + Management and global leadership of the project

The Katowice City of Gardens institution is currently responsible for coordinating the candidacy for the European Capital of Culture 2029. It will also be the organising body, should we be designated as ECoC for 2029 with a team exclusively dedicated to ECoC and its own CEO under the roof of the existing organisation. The City of Gardens is inextricably linked to the whole idea of European Capitals of Culture. After failing to win the title for 2016, the city authorities decided to continue the project that had raised such

enthusiasm in the city, its cultural organisations and people. So, the City of Gardens (back then being the title of our concept) lived on! It is now one of the largest self-governing cultural institutions in Poland realising many projects such as the OFF Festival, Tauron Nowa Muzyka, and JazzArt Festival. It also conducts a wide range of evaluation, research and educational activities for small and large players.

We believe that this is an invaluable potential that allows the institution to lead the activities of the ECoC if we are awarded the title.

The advantages of building the ECoC team under the roof of the existing organisation are:

- 1. Specialised staff who have implemented hundreds of cultural projects across Poland (small- and large-scale) in cultural venues and unusual places. Even 320 metres underground in an old coal mine.
- 2. Know-how in the operation of cultural funding mechanisms in Poland, in raising national and European funds.
- 3. 12,000 sqm of office space in the centre of Katowice with a concert hall of 1,000 seats, spaces for artistic activities and artistic residencies (our building has 30 hotel rooms).
- 4. Good technical, equipment and transport facilities.
- 5. Extensive international contacts (e.g. the City of Gardens is a UNESCO Creative City title operator and member of the ICORN network).

In line with our philosophy, we want to use resources in a sustainable way and therefore, despite the autonomy of the ECoC 2029 Office (which will be a branch of the institution), we want to take advantage of all the opportunities and benefits of being part of such a large cultural organisation. We have thought of

the risks that could potentially emerge from this model (like any other) – as for example having to share some of the resources (means of transportation, workspaces) – but we feel that the advantages of being able to build on solid ground outweighs by far the potential disadvantages.

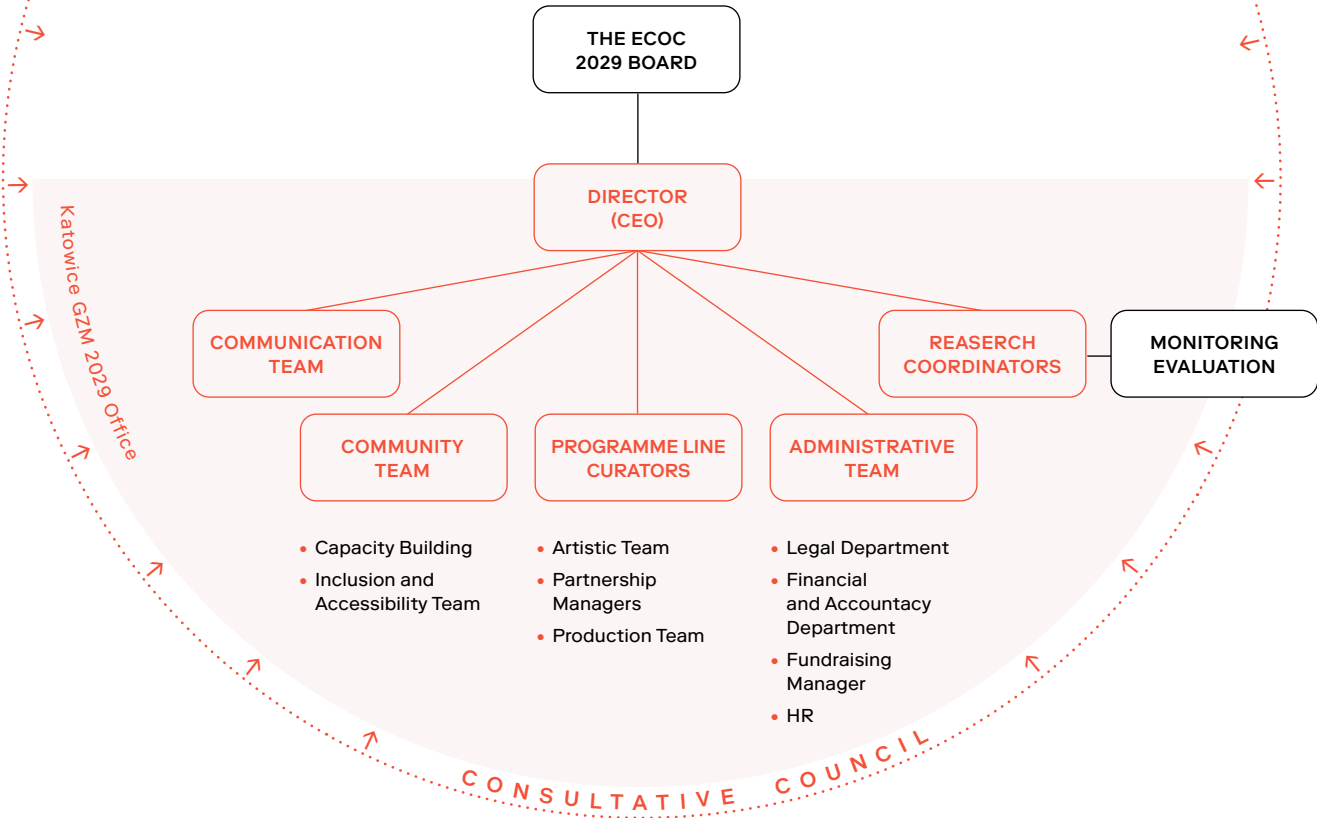
Our values

The values and philosophy of the 2029 bidding team have been based on several pillars from the beginning, including bringing a sense of play and openness in line with the approach set out in this document. These include:

- transparency, equality and openness
- accessibility both to cultural people and organisations and to communities
- genuine representation of a wide range of interests and needs in the structure
- balanced allocation of activities between Katowice and the Metropolis
- constant evaluation of activities and improvement
- openness to dialogue and to Europe.

These values have guided us in the design of the key features of our planned organisation as described below.

The management structure will be as simple and clear as possible. Ours is based on years of experience as a large cultural institution, on thorough analysis of



evaluation reports of other ECoCs and our discussions with experts and colleagues.

Supreme decision making body will be The ECoC 2029 Board. This will consist of one representative of the City, one representative of the Silesia region, one representative of the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and five representatives of the Metropolis (one for each subregion).

The ECoC 2029 Board will take part in choosing the director of the ECoC Office, will approve the budget and will supervise the overall ECoC process. It will also have the final say in case of any potential conflict situations. The Board can act as an advisor to the CEO and the whole ECoC Office. The Board is also the connector on any political level: regional, national or European. The Board will meet at least four times a year starting in 2025.

The Katowice GZM 2029 Office will be the main operative body of the process. It will be a part of the City of Gardens but as an autonomous team, with its own CEO and its own budget. The positive side of this solution is the possibility to share part of the resources (i.e. office premises, office tools, means of transportation) while maintaining independence.

The Consultative Council will be the advisory body to the whole Katowice GZM 2029 Office (without decision-making power) for the community and participation process, especially safeguarding the interests of disadvantaged and marginalised people. It shall be the guardian of our civic and social responsibilities. We have already created the first draft of the rules and regulations for its selection and operation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation will be entrusted to an external body in order to maintain transparency and avoid conflicts of interest. The external Evaluation Unit will act in accordance with the plan laid out in [Q4](#). The Unit will be responsible for the continuous monitoring of the implementation of the European Capital of Culture 2029. As a large part of the programme has a built-in research component where each project has to collect some data, it is planned to work on a “sincere friend” basis, in which the results of the projects’ own research will be overseen, reviewed and shared at regular intervals. The collaboration will be overseen by the Katowice GZM 2029 Office’s Research Coordinators in order to properly disseminate the results and present them in an interesting and playful format to a wide audience.

KATOWICE GZM 2029 OFFICE OVERVIEW

The ECoC office is the operational team and will manage all day-to-day processes and the implementation of the programme. It will consist of five main branches: Administrative, Artistic, Communication, Community Team and Research Coordinators.

Director (CEO)

Administrative team

- **Legal Department**
- **Financial and Accountancy Department**
- **Fundraising Manager**
- **HR**

Programme line curators and artistic team

- **Programme Line Curators**
Our model rests on the conviction that we should have a group of people making artistic decisions, rather than just one person. The main decision-making artistic body consisting of four people will be appointed in a competitive process following a call for applications. Each of them will be responsible for one programme line and they will lead the artistic team in the implementation of the artistic programme.
- **Artistic team**
A team responsible for programme implementation, cooperation with partners, workshops and day-to-day activities. They report to the four Programme Line Curators.
- **Partnership manager**
Responsible for contact with national and international partners.
- **Production Team**
i.e. technicians, event managers, sound engineers.

Community team

- **Community Management**
Responsible for implementing Local Culture Hubs (described in [Q6](#)) and afterwards maintaining continuous contact with them and other local parties.
- **Capacity Building Team**
Managing the Metropolis of Culture programme (described in [Q6](#)).
- **Inclusion and Accessibility Team**
A specialised team responsible for introducing facilities and amenities for people with special needs into our day-to-day work. This is also where self-advocates will be employed. This unit will be responsible for analysing the programme and checking which points will be most attractive to groups at risk of exclusion. This is where solutions such as audio description, ETR (easy to read), sign language interpretation, or Braille will be implemented.

Communication team

The tasks and goals explained in [Q37–41](#).

Research coordinators

Evaluation and Monitoring will be outsourced and this internal unit will be responsible for liaising with contractors, co-designing the research, drafting reports and proposing changes. Research may not be of much interest to many people but, due to our vast experience with visualisation and playing with data, research coordinators will promote their findings widely and in an interesting way, as well as stimulate discussion.

External experts

Since the beginning of the work on the first Bid Book, the ECoC bidding team has cooperated with a number of local and foreign advisers and experts which has proved to be extremely helpful in providing an external perspective and bringing in best practice, especially from a European dimension.

The task of the external experts and consultants will be to support the ECoC team in its activities as well as to contribute content and ideas to the programme. A minimum of 30% of the external experts will not originate from Poland in order to support the European dimension of the project. The selection of experts is made directly by the ECoC Office – based on the experts’ knowledge and experience.

STAFF STRUCTURE OF KATOWICE GZM 2029		2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
CEO	full time	1	1	1	1	1
Administrative Team	full time	2	2	3	10	10
	part time	1	1	2	5	5
Artistic Team	full time	4	7	12	12	15
	part time / freelancers	0	3	8	8	6
Community Team	full time	1	3	5	8	7
	part time / freelancers	1	3	5	7	7
Communication Team	full time	2	4	5	5	6
	part time / freelancers	1	2	5	5	5
Research Coordinators	part-time	2	3	5	7	8
Total		15	29	51	68	70

Q32

Ensuring the capacity of staff to plan, manage and deliver ECoC

There are some advantages that team Katowice GZM 2029 will have in the ECoC game. Our City of Gardens institution already has an experienced staff of 73 players – ready to hit the ground running! Not all of them will be taking care of ECoC full time. Parts of the team still have cultural buildings to run and cultural projects to carry out. But there is a good basis and more colleagues will be hired specifically for the ECoC project.

And, bearing in mind that our candidacy covers 41 municipalities and a large and diverse area, we are obviously planning to significantly expand the office team.

Katowice and the Metropolis also boast a number of experienced and independent cultural operators and cultural managers who are already knocking on our doors to be part of the project as team members. We expect that in case we are designated as ECoC we will have attractive conditions to hire experienced staff and also some newcomers from all over Poland and Europe. And even some that might come home to Katowice and the GZM for this project.

The application process was also a boost of new experience and knowledge for us – the existing City of Gardens team. We have done the biggest cultural sur-

vey ever done in Poland, we are learning new things through workshops with our cultural partners, we are internationalising through our contacts to players in Europe and all over the world, and we are constantly talking to our fellow players from the Metropolis. We are in fact building our capacities as we speak, and will continue the capacity building for the ECoC team and other cultural operators and activists as part of the Metropolis of Culture programme. Knowledge is key. We believe in simple principles – justice, equity, diversity and inclusion in working. JEDI for short. So our Jedi Order will look like this – May the Force (and a strong and committed team) be with us.

Q33

Cooperation with local authorities

Katowice GZM 2029, the City Hall and the Metropolis are in multiplayer mode. The City of Gardens institutions has well established processes in liaising with the City as well as with the Metropolitan authorities. The bidding phase has deepened and furthered these ties and communication channels.

On the management level, the ECoC 2029 Board is to liaise between the ECoC management and the Katowice and GZM authorities. After all, the members of the Board are representatives of these authorities.

Having the only Metropolis in Poland is an advantage, too – thanks to the structure of the Metropolitan Assembly, the respective teams of the ECoC can meet every six months (or more often if necessary) with the 41 Mayors of the municipalities that make up this body. According to what is needed and necessary (mostly keeping the Mayors in the loop and addressing issues which need the assistance of the Mayors) this will be carried out either by the CEO and their administrative team, or by the artistic team represented by the four Programme Line Managers and occasionally also by the Communication or Community team.

For the purposes of the European Capital of Culture, a position of an ECoC plenipotentiary will be created in the office of the GZM Metropolis administration. So that all arrangements can be discussed at regular intervals.

The same applies to the city. The City Council felt that the European Capital of Culture needs proper support and communication with the city administration

and unanimously set up a special cultural commission to act as a liaison between the office of the Katowice GZM 2029 and the City Council. For the operative coordination with his office, the Mayor has designated the city's Vice Mayor for Culture to be the main liaison officer for anything needed from the city government.

Q34

CEO and Artistic Team

General director

The General Director of Katowice GZM 2029 Office has not been appointed yet. If the ECoC title is awarded to Katowice and the GZM Metropolis, Katowice will immediately undertake a recruitment campaign.

The Director of ECoC will be appointed with the help of The ECoC 2029 Board. The appointment will follow an internal competition within the City of Gardens institution. Selecting a Director from the application team will maintain continuity and coherence.

For the position of Director the following requirements have to be met:

- extensive experience and education in managing (also international) cultural/artistic events
- experience in the process of building international partnerships
- significant experience in planning and managing complex projects
- knowledge of the ECoC process and Play! concept
- knowledge of the local and national cultural environment
- ability to perform representational roles
- fluent in Polish and English
- communication and team player skills to work with the Artistic Team.

Artistic Team

Decision-making for and management of the artistic programme lies with the four Programme Line Curators. The group will be appointed following an open competition. The competition will be held in 2025 and the hiring process concluded that same year.

The Programme Line Curators will preferably have the following skills:

- education in the field (matching most a specific programme line)
- more than 5 years of curatorial experience
- proven excellence in creating and organising cultural activities for
- diverse audiences
- openness and capacity to implement innovative working models
- ability to establish partnerships (both internally and externally) and to explore new creative relationships with local, national and international artists
- proven experience in developing, communicating and managing projects, budgets and milestones
- fluent in English

Katowice GZM 2029, the City Hall and the Metropolis are in multiplayer mode. The City of Gardens institution has well established processes in liaising with the City as well as with the Metropolitan authorities. The bidding phase has deepened and furthered these ties and communication channels.

5.3

Contingency planning

Q35 + Q36

Risk assessment and mitigating measures

We conducted an extensive risk analysis when planning our 2029 programme and activities.

We developed a risk management plan based on desk research of strategic documents and internal meetings and our wide experience of managing programme risk in the City of Gardens organisation.

Ongoing risk assessment will be the responsibility of the evaluation and monitoring team.

The most significant risks in each area are presented in the table, along with their significance and our plans to mitigate or remove.

CATEGORY	CAUSE	RISK	EFFECT	PROBABILITY	IMPACT / SIGNIFICANCE	MITIGATION MEASURE	RESPONSIBILITY
				LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH			
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of sufficient funding for the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limits the ability to implement planned programme in full	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poorly conceived, insufficient programme• Jeopardise European / international outlook	LOW	MEDIUM	Game on! <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generate programme funding interest from a variety of public and private sponsors * more in Q18, Q20 and Q22	CEO, ECoC 2029 Board, Fundraising manager
Organisation and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High turnover of project staff during Project duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incomplete knowledge or lack of commitment on part of inexperienced team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delays in implementation	MEDIUM	HIGH	There is no “i” in team <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of the reasons for staff changes• Taking remedial measures – considering the possibility of employing additional staff or reviewing remuneration packages	HR
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No continuity of political support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Withdrawal of political support or lack of political commitment can result in organisational problems• Also reduced funding and diminished impact of the title in the metropolis and Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced impact, Reduced activities• Less coverage internationally	LOW	MEDIUM	Team up! <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confirming the guarantee of political support• Effective stakeholder communication in order to maintain confidence	The ECoC 2029 Board + CEO
European dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate promotion – difficulty in reaching European audience groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of interest in the programme from European / international audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited impact of the project on a European scale	LOW	MEDIUM	Get your fans to cheer you on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Projects dedicated to European audiences, promotional activities implemented outside the country• Active partnerships with European organizations and cities• Targeted communication	Communication Dep. + Programme Line Curators
European dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too many partners, lack of longer relationships with partners, lack of proper selection of partners• Lack of vision for cooperation before and after the year of celebration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Superficial partnerships• Few viable partnerships with a long term approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of relationships• Weak partnerships• Lack of projects on a European scale	LOW	MEDIUM	Make friends on the playground <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Precise selection of partners,establishing relationships well in advance• Inserting projects into a long term with action plans for years beyond the ECoC year	Partnership manager
Marketing / promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inconsistent communication activities, Not finding the right communication styles to attract interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negative perception of the project• Misunderstanding of the project• Lack of proper identification with ECoC 2029	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of project visibility• Lack of proper project identification	MEDIUM	HIGH	Play out your strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication activities will be carried out in a consistent manner• Listening to needs / wishes / suggestions to communicate well with the local field• Finding the right kind of playfulness for each target group	Communication Dep.
Organisation and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scale and scope: Involvement of the cities of the Metropolis, and thus a large space of implemented activities and a large number of partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Added layer of complexity in managing with a metropolitan range	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of a unified system of action in the cities of the metropolisCommunication challenges associated with the large number of entities involved in implementation	HIGH	MEDIUM	Never play alone <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of Local Culture Hubs in 5 subregions of the Metropolis• Clear management strategy with big range of independence and autonomy	Community Team + The ECoC 2029 Board
Capacity building / participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate efforts to gain local support and community involvement in building the programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of community and stakeholder buy in	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited interest in activities, no sense of commitment, no public support	LOW	MEDIUM	Up your game <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing the programme in close cooperation with stakeholders from the very beginning. Ensure good communication both through the media and specially developed networking tools, such as Local Cultural Centers, the ECC platform and Metropolis of Culture Congresses, to share narratives from 2023 to 2029 and beyond	Community Team
Capacity building / participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financial, mental, communication, accessibility barriers to participation in cultural events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low audience involvement with high barriers to participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of effective activities for “non-audiences”• Failure to break down barriers to cultural participation	LOW	MEDIUM	Invite everyone to play along <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with the public from the beginning of the project. Building confidence in the programme Reaching audiences through a network of community partnerships and through micro-community projects	Community Team
Global (health) issues /security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Escalating wars beyond Ukraine and Russia; beyond Israel and Palestine, Pandemics, Social unrest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crisis in the sense of security of potential participants in the events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discouraging impact on international and local public opinion, economic destabilization, and many other hard-to-predict consequences	MEDIUM	HIGH	Play to keep your sanity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on creating a programme that focuses on building social ties and well-being. At the same time – developing program options appropriate to emerging circumstances (including hybrid options)	The ECoC 2029 Board + CEO + Programme Line Curators
Global issues / environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing risks related to climate change – extreme weather events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Risks to programme implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discouraging impact on local and international audience participation• Negative public opinion Reduced interest in attending cultural events	MEDIUM	HIGH	Play indoors and online <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considering alternative options for programme delivery – indoor alternatives, also hybrid or online events	Production Department



You cannot play by just watching! You have to get immersed and be active and invested to Play!

5.4

Marketing and communication

* Play! →

gra!	gry	grający	niegrające
gry	gier	grana	niegrających
grze	grom	grałbym	niegrana
grę	gry	gracie	niegrającą
grą	grami	grających	niegranej
grze	grach	grane	niegranemu
gro	gry	grałbyś	niegranego
	Graj!	granego	niegrane
grałem	grającymi	grajcie	niegrającego
grająca	niegrającej	grateś	niegrającemu
grajcież	granej	granemu	niegrający
grało	grajże	grali	niegrającymi
grani	grajmy	grajmyż	niegrająca
graliby	grałoby	grały	grano
grają	grania	graniach	wygrana
grałyby	gralibyście	gralibyśmy	wygrać
graniami	grając	grająca	
graliście	grałybyście	grałybyśmy	
grające	granie	graniem	
grałyście	graliśmy	gram	
graniom	grającego	grającej	
gramy	grałyśmy	grań	
	graniu		

Q37

The slogan

Our slogans will play on Play! The Polish language is our biggest ally in this since playing with the verb “to play” and the noun “game” (also “play” in Polish) lends itself to a million plays on words and idioms. Just for a little dis “play” of our rich language – this above is the conjugation and declination table of the verb and noun play / game (Polish: gra). *

Do we have you on (the) board on this game, Europe? Hm, perhaps there is a reason why Polish is not the universal language of Europe... go figure.

It is a game that we start from a simple ‘Let’s play’ to the more daring ‘Be the game you want to play with the world’. Our mottos will capture the essence of the programme and showcase European values. We play the Europe we would like to live in.

And we even have a Silesian word for that situation. **SZPILAĆ**, i.e. playing / participating in a game, is also Polish for ‘to skewer, to pin down’.

The English-language version of our slogans will perhaps not be as variable as the Polish and Silesian ones, but as one can see throughout this Bid Book, the play on Play! and game references lend themselves to a lot of fun variations.

Q38 + Q39

Planned marketing and communication strategy + Media partnerships

We have a saying in Poland: Sit in a corner and they will find you. We don’t believe that is true for a European Capital of Culture. Neither for the people we want to involve and invite within the GZM Metropolis nor – and even less so – for the European and international audience we want to attract. After all we have to be found among thousands of large-scale cultural offers that go on in Europe every year. So be it. Let the games begin!

Naturally, we invite Europe to Play! It’s our concept, but it’s also a story for Europe. A story of a Metropolitan region that is ready to step onto the European cultural stage. In our region, we like to make things clear, to go straight to the point. Is this a time for Play? We say, it is.

But: Sorry, Europe, you cannot play by just watching! You have to get immersed and be active and invested. That’s where the match starts being fun.

Creating content is fairly easy. Making it stand out and appeal to people is more difficult. Actually getting people to even notice it is the biggest hurdle of every cultural player, especially with a limited budget. There is no way around a multi-channel approach (social media, video sharing platforms, traditional newspa-

KATOWICE, GZM CITIES AND TOWNS	TWIN CITIES OF KATOWICE	ECOC AND CANDIDATES 2026–2030	CITIES OF THE CULTURENEXT NETWORK	METROPOLITAN AREAS OF THE EUROCITIES NETWORK	CITIES OF THE EUROCITIES NETWORK
2024 →	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
2025 →					
2026 →					
2027 →					
2028 →					
2029 →					2030 +
from Będzin to Zbrosławice – all 41 cities of the Metropo	from Groningen to Pula-Pola to Saint- Etienne to Shenyang	from Trencin to Oulu, from Evora to Chemnitz, from Kiruna to Larn	from Aveiro to Savonlinna and all the ones in between	from Aix-Marseille- Provence Metropole to Lille Metropole	from Aarhus to Zaragosa

pers etc) tailored to a range of target groups in Europe and at home. The national Visit Poland organisation together with the network of Polish embassies and Institutes promoting polish culture around the world and the Polish expats living and working all around Europe and beyond will be our most important allies to push our content into different channels and reach a diverse international audience. Both in our target markets, but also within new interest groups we want to approach – from gamers who might join us for a match of Tetris on a highrise in Katowice **in Blocks**, to the tech geek who comes for a VR experience of **Three Emperors' Corner** (and realises that Silesia and Zagłębie always have been a mix of European stories, languages and identities), to the football fan who doesn't mind a bit of culture when it comes in the package of a project like **Support Your Team**.

Digital communication will probably be the first contact point for most foreign and out of town visitors and AI analytics will help us to tailor our messages and individual programme tags to specific groups. Our idea is to use our European networks as one of those multiple channels to bypass the 'we have always done it like this'-trap. Our usual target markets are great places to start with, but even greater are the networks that are more tuned in to our cultural offer. Our playground will grow each year, bristling with new cities included in the communication game – twin cities of Katowice (from 2025), designated ECoC cities (from 2026), cities of the CultureNext network (from 2027), metropolises of the Eurocities network (from 2028) and further cities of the Eurocities network (from 2029) as shown below are our contacts to place outdoor ads and online banners, connect to our website and offer live streaming events to. Not to forget the European network of our project Echoes across Europe in our **Moving Stages** programme where live events will take place in several places around Europe.

Within the urban network context, we will work closely with the City of Katowice and their intel on international contacts, with the active participation of the Katowice City Culture Commission.

Who will come out and play?

Our communication will focus on five segments of players defined by generations. We have developed a tags chart to show which narratives and values we will base our messages on. Further below these will be referenced in the different generation groups.

- 1 Today's youngest group – the **Alpha Generation** – are people who were born after 2010 and are currently in their teens. The oldest of them will be 19 y/o by the time we open our ECoC year. They are the first generation to grow up entirely in the 21st century and will enter adult life using Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality just as Generation Y grew up using smartphones. Data processing algorithms and machine learning influence how they interact with their world. We have yet to learn what will tickle their fancy when they are old enough to be tickled. A lot of projects in our artistic programme are geared towards this age group, accompanying them through their 'éducation digitale' (to misquote Flaubert), through its light and its dark sides. And why not include their peers from abroad? Who might get to Katowice on their first Interrail trip or on an Erasmus+ exchange and might have even heard of the ECoC directly from their peers. Social studies define them as hyperconnected, individual, independent and divers in their view points and tastes. We will adapt over time whether to reach them through other values than #personalplaylist and #totalimmersion.
- 2 **Generation Z** youngish Europeans are the largest group we will communicate with. Their Polish contemporaries have not known a time without the

hashtags: #KATOWICEGZM2029 #KTWGM2029 #KatowiceNaStolicę (Katowice for Capital)					
NARRATIVE LINES					
#personalplaylist (individual)	#fairplay (community)	#totalimmersion (space)	#replay (heritage)	#metropolis	#knowledge
PERSONAL <ul style="list-style-type: none">involvedinterestedinnovativeexperiencingdevelopingIndividual dimension, personal commitment	RELATIONSHIPS <ul style="list-style-type: none">linksconnectionssimilaritiespartnershipsequalityMetropolitan spirit, intersectoral approach, well-being	TECHNOLOGY <ul style="list-style-type: none">absorptionaberrationmediationVRAIdigitalisationlight and dark sidesurban/natureshaping, urban / green spacecreative cooperationshaping the ecosystem of the City /Metropolis	FLOW <ul style="list-style-type: none">inspirationniche culturecultural frontiersalternative cognition / recognitionnew narrativesnew meaningsre-contextualisationco-creation of a coherent imageconstruction of a new identity	CAPACITY BUILDING <ul style="list-style-type: none">learninginternationalisationqualityearningcreative industriesMetropolis of Culture	RESEARCH <ul style="list-style-type: none">insightlisteningchangerethinkingadaptingagilityresearch based knowledgeresearch thinkingshared tools

European Union and the Internet, so they are the best reference point for us. They are the ones who spend up to more than 9 hours a day on smartphones in 2023 (see the report Youth vs. mobile). They are extremely pragmatic, genuinely tolerant, highly sensitive to climate issues, engaged and in dialogue. They need immediate feedback. And while smartphones are their command centre for their entire lives, they value nothing as much as face-to-face meetings. They are collectors of experiences, and it's important for them to match the values offered with the values that are important to them. They play online games – not alone, but in a group. They are multi-taskers, but don't do everything at once, but one at a time. They expect stimulation and they respect mentors.

We will interact with them through social media relationships – Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Discord, Twitch (and maybe some new tool will be created?). Here, image, voice and online meetings are of importance. And above all, engagement. Our decisions related to choosing the right SoMe channels will be made and will change dynamically, in response to where Gen Z will be on the Internet. We will follow them with AI tools and the Internet. Invite them reactively, especially with messages based on #fairplay and #totalimmersion, as these values are key for them.

3 The second group after the Zetas is **Generation Y**, the people of LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Twitter(X). They grew up in the company of smartphones, computers and the Internet. They communicate asynchronously, spending about

6.5 hours online. Atmosphere and stimulation are important to them, as well as having fun. Therefore, with them and to them we will write. Here, communication will be based on the narrative they will be able to read / play at any given time. And the information about the events to which they will be invited by us will arrive fast enough for them to plan the most convenient arrival. We are targeting them with #personalplaylist and #replay.

4 With **Generation X** we will model new behaviours, as they are experimenters looking for new paths. Here again, the communication tool will be social media – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter(X) to create the world. They are focused on innovation, so we will be particularly interested in including them in #replay and #totalimmersion.

5 There are also representatives of the **Baby Boomer Generation**, who tend to communicate only when something is wrong, because they believe that if everything is fine, feedback is not needed. We will be telling them about events, inviting them to fun activities, shows and allowing them to develop their interests. The #personalplaylist and #fairplay line events are their game.

Since evaluation and monitoring as well as capacity building play a huge role in our approach, we have included the tags #metropolis and #knowledge to connect to our cultural operators, the creative industries, researchers in Europe and the 'welcoming industry' from taxi-drivers to hotel receptionists who will be the first smiling faces our visitors will meet.

Live streaming will never replace direct contact, but it can bring the capital closer to the periphery, so we will also use virtual tools and technologies connecting people across countries around the idea of Play!

Roping in the Media

We will redistribute information to the media associated with the European city networks mentioned above through press services and cooperate on using our mutual channels of traditional and digital media. For international media we intend to work on the basis of “network of networks” – tapping into the contacts of project partners, cooperating cities and existing media contacts throughout the GZM Metropolis players. Most effective as we have realised in past experiences, are invitations of special interest journalists for multi-day visits and with a specific programme. With the European Capital of Culture we expect the international press corps in Poland to follow our invitations and ensure wider international coverage. Soon enough we will be able to provide AI generated simulations of projects which give stronger incentives to actually cover projects for moving image media.

We will seek close cooperation with national stations, especially those who are part of the European Broadcasting Union. Locally, our support will be the local press and radio. Our goal is for Katowice GZM 2029 to become an umbrella for a coalition of local media working to build connections in the areas of culture, arts and social action. The ECoC 2029 Office will be responsible for building such an offer and then creating a coalition of Silesian and Zagłębie local media.

In our impacts question we speak about our 4G City – Gardens. Gigs. Games. Growth. Our goal is to make Europe discover a whole new European 4G City and Metropolis without having to give up on any digital advancement.

Q40

Citizens as communicators of Katowice GZM 2029

Nowadays everyone is a separate news agency, whether they are 65 years old and use Facebook or 16 y/o and broadcast on TikTok. With more than 2 million inhabitants across the Metropolis, we know that approximately 1.6 m are between 12 and 75 y/o. Potentially, if 1 m of them reach out to 5 people each, our citizen communicators can reach 5 m people in Poland and

far beyond – thinking of our large group of expats living in other European and overseas countries. So, next to reaching out to a European audience, our Outreach activities which we have started during the bidding phase and which we will continue if we get the chance to implement our ECoC can make a huge difference.

At the same time, we have a great deal of humility knowing that culture is not at the top of the list of topics that thrills people in everyday conversation and social media. But after all, we’re not just talking about culture. We are talking about Play!, right? Activities that are playful, engaging, within reach.

Once again, our vision of ‘moving out of the zone’ becomes the perfect tool not only to shape the artistic programme, but also to mobilise people to become communicators of ECoC 2029. How will we make people who are not checking the cultural news every day and plan their next weekend at the opera, communicate to their closest friends, colleagues and family members?

Projects like **Piekarniok**, **True Colours**, **Borderless Theatre**, **Light Ahead** or **Move Your Brass** will draw attention to our potential communicators, our citizens, by changing the daily routine of their street, their neighbourhood or their city. They will naturally become a ‘media fact’, finding their way into people’s conversations. We strive to achieve enthusiasm, joy, excitement through this – and then naturally, people like to share their experience by sharing conversations offline, pictures and video clips through social media into the wider world.

In our programme we have more than one so-called “stop the city moment”. Those will be the events that will focus the attention of a wide audience – the whole city and beyond. During the **48h: The Streets Are Ours** we will close a part of an important street and in **Blocks** we will play with the Katowice panorama.

But it is not only about the digital world. Our information will be visible on the Silesian Trams and



Metropolitan buses, we will sign a cooperation agreement with the Silesian Railways and closeby airports so that Katowice GZM Metropolis 2029 can be seen in the means of commuting transportation. We will not forget about Metropolitan bicycle transportation and city dressing either as far as ecologically sensible. Engaging artists in mixed forms of PR/programme activities helps us to look at our cities and towns with pride and a sense of belonging. Good emotions to share with colleagues, friends and family closeby as well as with your loved ones living abroad.

Many of our programmes foster involvement and co-creation as we show in our Outreach approach and artistic programme. For those deep in the digital world, we prepare immersive tools that allow them to become co-creators of the programme – interactive maps that give everyone a chance to choose the location of the orchestra’s musical happening at **Move Your Brass** or to vote for a place worthy of artistic intervention during **Light Ahead**. Microgames placed on our ECoC website will encourage people to delve more deeply into the content. Playing together will draw everyone further into our orbit, gradually changing their roles from observers to promoters.

The continuation of our Outreach activities such as **Spójnik** microgrant programme and **Submit Your Idea** will be our natural allies in getting residents involved in promoting Play! Over the preparation years, **Spójnik** (2025–2029) will generate a growing crew of ECoC 2029 ambassadors of both individuals and institutions. Adding them to our expanding group of volunteers over the years, and with the whole of Katowice and the GZM Metropolis pulling in the same direction we want a million people talking proudly about Katowice and the GZM Metropolis as THEIR European Capital of Culture by 2028.

Q41

Creating visibility of ECoC as an action of the European Union

Every obverse has a reverse. The game has light and dark sides – both illuminate each other and both contradict and complement each other. If there is a capital – there is a province around it. If there is culture – it grows out of nature. If there is a Metropolis – then there is also the

polis. If there is a game and its rules – then there is also the setting of the rules and the breaking of the rules.

Carlo Goldoni’s The Servant of Two Masters hits the point very well: The European Capital of Culture brand has at least two masters, too. The European Union as the brand owner and each city that is allowed to carry this brand through a period of one year plus preparation years for its communication with the whole world.

But whilst the servant in Goldoni’s play betrays both his masters, the ECoC brand has done nothing but serve as a great booster for cities and regions all around Europe. So our Play! will not follow Truffaldino’s mischievous ways but rather find playful ways to present the European Capital of Culture as an action of the European Union.

As opposed to UNESCO who obliges the cities that are designated as Creative Cities to carry the name in the title, the European Union has omitted this obligation. However, if not by this, we feel bound by other obligations. For example, we are well aware of what a designated city owes to the brand. Therefore, the visibility of the European Union within the European Capital of Culture will be ensured at multiple levels. The European Union information and logo will be placed on all printed material, websites, social media and graphic materials – in accordance with the official guidelines.

Since we talk about Play! so much: How would it be to “play” Poland before its joining the European Union. Sometimes it is helpful to remind ourselves which streets, infrastructures, commodities, renovations, consumer protection laws, environmental directives etc. would just not be there or look very differently.

The opening ceremony has – in previous ECoC – also proved to be a good platform to show how the ECoC is inseparably connected to the EU. Invitations to the opening as well as a forum for official addresses by EU and specifically European Commission representatives will be an opportunity to reach out to a larger audience and media.

Applying for EU funds for ECoC projects will present a double opportunity to show that the Katowice GZM 2029 programme is made possible by being part of the European Union.

We will show that the ECoC 2029 is an action of the European Union first and foremost through action. “Getting out of the zones” also means getting out of the misconceptions about the European Union. Our Play! concept will highlight that the safe European playground that we all enjoy – even if we sometimes forget – is provided by a larger community of shared values and shared cultural traditions.





↑

Open Call Anna Walterowicz
Zapisy Pleśni Współczesne

[...] and that's it, folks. That's our bid. We had a lot of fun writing it, so we hope you enjoyed the read. Whatever comes next, you are always welcome to join us and Play!

6

Capacity to deliver

Q43

Plans for infrastructure projects

To play the game, we need adequate spaces for culture. In addition to having a large office space for the ECoC team with a concert hall attached, we are creating some exciting new spaces that will be game-changers.

The Witosa Cultural Centre is being built for the local community of the city district Witosa, which did not have its own community centre. The project is nearing completion and will open in 2025. It will be a huge change for the people of this neighbourhood, and we want to play with them by implementing community projects Different Voices there or improving the skills of its staff through the Metropolis of Culture project.

Music has always been in our DNA – that's why we bought the house left by the famous composer Wojciech Kilar (where he created the music for Dracula!) and in it we are creating a Music Education Centre. This is where children and young people will learn the ins and outs of playing on the equipment in brass bands – **Move Your Brass** project or the **Jolly Youth Orchestra JOY**. The investment is nearing completion and music will start playing there in the 2026.

We aim high by remembering our history, which is why in Bogucice, a district that is subject to revitalisation plans, we will create a place commemorating the famous mountaineer Jerzy Kukuczka – the Himalayan Centre. The place will be a combination of sport and culture. It is here that we will play **48H: The Street Are Ours**, the festival of urban sports with the inhabitants. The centre will invite people to its premises in 2027.

And the biggest game – the Gaming and Technology Hub is an investment that will transform a large part of Katowice. It is a game design studio, a place for creative work and an interface between many fields of culture and industry, design and new technologies. Thanks to the phasing of this huge investment, we will be able to put the first playing cards on the table as early as 2026 in the renovated former mining buildings. It is here that tech-related projects like Medialab and our great **The History of Video Games** exhibition will be hosted. And the year of celebrations will also be the year of the grand opening of the entire complex!

Q42

Political support and commitment

The authorities of Katowice, the Metropolis, the region and the government are all involved in the project.

The political will of the City Council was confirmed by the relevant resolutions to support the efforts and provide funding for the institutions, which were adopted unanimously. Notably, the new City Council (local elections were held in 2024) decided to separate the commissions that operate in the City Council. Since May 2024, we have had a stand-alone Culture Commission with far-reaching decision-making power on culture. As the council emphasised in its resolution, culture requires special care from the city council in connection with the European Capital of Culture 2029 efforts to create the best possible synergy between the Cultural Strategy, the long-term impacts of ECoC and the international reputation and networks.

The Assembly of the Metropolis, consisting of 41 mayors of its constituent cities, unanimously support the bid and the financing of the project.

The government, through the Ministry of Culture, confirmed its commitment in writing in April 2024, announcing that funds have been secured for the city that will be designated as the European Capital of Culture 2029 in Poland.

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