

## European parliamentarians get to know the "C-City" cultural project

Travelling to Brussels: Head of the Department of Culture Andreas Kimpel.

**Gütersloh.** 23 January is to be a day that sets the course for the transnational cultural project "C-City - Europe is next door", which was born in Gütersloh: In Brussels, Gütersloh's Head of Cultural Affairs Andreas Kimpel, together with representatives of the twin cities from Sweden, France, Poland and Great Britain, will present the project to the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education. The aim: to inspire the EU parliamentarians with the idea of "C-City" and to get a commitment for funding.

"I am very pleased that the chairwoman of the committee, Sabine Verheyen, has invited us," Andreas Kimpel said in a statement from the city. "This is an honour and a rare, great opportunity to make the project and its goals known to politicians from a wide range of countries." In the network launched by Gütersloh's cultural councillor, Gütersloh and the twin towns of Châteauroux (France), Falun (Sweden), Grudziadz (Poland) and Broxtowe (Great Britain) work together on around 40 cultural projects. The spectrum ranges from a cultural cookbook to a C-City youth parliament and exchanges in the fields of music and culture to sports cooperation. Whereas coordination used to be the exclusive responsibility of Gütersloh, recently one city has been given responsibility for a specific overarching theme: Châteauroux for the C-City Youth Parliament, Gütersloh for the cultural cookbook and the 2025 festival year, in which the first joint events will be presented, Broxtowe for music, jazz and civic stage, Falun for art and literature, and Grudziadz for sport.

Andreas Kimpel will make the presentation to the EU cultural politicians. He will be accompanied by Jan Fors and Karin Perers from Falun, Adrianna Klimkiewicz and Rosa Lewandowska from Grudziadz and Zulfiqar Darr from Broxtowe. A video message will be played by Jean-Yves Hugon from Châteauroux. They all hope that the EU committee will grant the "C-City" project 70 to 80 per cent funding. "The type and scope of further project development will depend largely on this," Andreas Kimpel makes clear. The total project costs until the end of 2026 are estimated at around one million euros. The Gütersloh councillor sees good reasons for "C-City" to be eligible for funding, especially since its content touches on several funding strands at once. "With 'C-City' we are living European diplomacy at the municipal level," Kimpel emphasises with reference to the approach of "urban diplomacy" that the German government has included in its coalition agreement. Culture as a bridge builder between people of different nations, a network growing sustainably between five cities as an amplifier of the European idea: in Kimpel's view, the "C-City" model could hardly be more topical and meaningful in view of Brexit and the war in Ukraine.

He expects a decision from the EU on funding in early summer. Should the vote be negative, the project would not be discontinued, but it could only be carried out in a significantly reduced version. In any case, Andreas Kimpel is full of energy for Monday: "We want to inspire and infect the EU Culture Committee with our C-City idea.

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