

Hopes for EU funding for "C-City" rise



At the European Union in Brussels: (from left) Sara Hedström (Falun), Markus Prutsch (Research Administrator at the European Parliament/Culture and Education), Andreas Kimpel, Sabine Verheyen, Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education, Jan Fors (Falun), Rosa Lewandowska (Grudziadz), Zulfiqar Darr (Broxtowe) and Adrianna Klimkiewicz (Grudziadz).

Gütersloh. The presentation of the European network of cultural cities "C-City - Europe is next door" by Gütersloh's Head of Cultural Affairs Andreas Kimpel to the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education in Brussels met with a positive response. The city now announced. "There was a lot of praise and approval for our model project from the MEPs," Kimpel is quoted as saying in the statement.

Committee Chairwoman Sabine Verheyen summed up "C-City" and another project from Leverkusen: "The transnational projects 'C-City' and 'UrbanSpaces' impressively demonstrate how promising citizens' projects with a decidedly European perspective can also and above all be initiated 'from below'. It must be the task of the EU and thus also of the European Parliament to support such projects and the cooperation of European cities and regions in the cultural and educational sector more strongly."

The actors from the five partnered "C-Cities" hope for EU funding. Kimpel said that they are looking into which programmes would be eligible for an application. "We will maintain the newly established contacts with the EU and promote the project. Every advocacy counts," he emphasised on behalf of the delegation. With him, representatives from Falun (Sweden), Grudziadz (Poland) and Broxtowe (Great Britain) were on site. A video greeting was available from Châteauroux (France), which is also involved in the network. The committee meeting was simultaneously translated and livestreamed and can be accessed online.

Kimpel explained to the MEPs and representatives of the EU Commission the motivation behind the development of the "C-City" project he initiated. "The world is becoming increasingly confusing for

many, crises are shaking us. Some are turning away from democratic structures or distancing themselves. Europe is abstract for many, including young people, and many of Europe's achievements are taken for granted," Kimpel noted. "C-City wants to stand up to this, focus on dialogue, build bridges and promote tolerance through culture and sport. "The EU must become more tangible in people's everyday lives," said Kimpel. A new form of "grassroots work" and "urban diplomacy" is necessary, which is what "C-City" is doing. The "C-Cities" Broxtowe, Falun, Châteauroux, Grudziadz and Gütersloh, all cultural and economic centres in their region, wanted to be models and role models.

All of the approximately 40 projects that the five cities have developed together and want to implement together in the next few years are based on the EU Charter of Values with goals such as transparency, gender equality, sustainability, respect and tolerance. The projects range from a cultural cookbook to a C-City Youth Parliament and exchanges in music and culture to sports cooperation. Once a year, a C-City conference lasting several days takes place in one of the partner cities.