

## THE FUNCTIONAL TERRITORY OF CULTURE - LED SMART SPECIALIZATION: AN EU MODEL FOR THE EUROPEAN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONS

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### **Abstract**

*After the “territorial dimension” introduced since 2000 by the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), followed by the goal of “territorial cohesion” set by the Lisbon Treaty, the Territorial Agenda 2020, currently, makes reference to the “functional territory”. This new terminology suggests a transition towards a new, flexible “territorialization” of the European space, which is not limited by official administrative boundaries, nor is it necessarily linked to the prerequisite of geographical continuity. The configuration of the new territorial entities issuing from this process, is based upon the existence of common geo-morphological and/or functional characteristics and the capacity of putting together their own governance scheme.*

*Within the framework of “functional territories”, development is linked to “smart specialization”, in other words, the optimization of an area’s particular competitive advantage through knowledge and innovation. The EU focuses particularly on tapping culture with the aim of achieving the diversification and specialization of local economies.*

*Based on the above remarks, this paper argues the emergence of a new model of local and regional development in Europe, with culture as a vehicle of “smart specialization” of “functional territories”.*

**Keywords:** Smart specialization, territoriality, cultural development, functional territories.

### **1. Introduction**

From 1980 onwards, under the influence of globalization, the world turns into a market without frontiers, where production factors depend on global parameters, such as the existence of infrastructure, low production cost, and price levels (Ohmae K., 1995). As these criteria surpass national boundaries, the theory of neo-liberalism argues in favor of the “bottom-up” decision making and development planning models (Pike A., Pose A., 2007). As a consequence, and although the nation state still remains the main institution of wide decision making process, one can also observe the progressive development of a “hybrid” system of “governance” (Loughlin J., 2009), where the role of the existing official administrative institutions is being

questioned and redefined, with regard to their international and internal interactions with other administrative levels and socio-economic partners.

Progressively, in the development theories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there is a shift from economic growth to sustainable development goals, with a view of tackling the contemporary problems of preserving the planet's natural and cultural eco-systems (Παταργιάς Π., 2010).

These developments bring to the fore the re-invention of the context of culture, with the investigation of possible new aspects of its' contribution to development, such as innovation and creativity. According to the most recent version of sustainability, culture can be considered, not only as a pillar, but as the vehicle of the development of "functional" territories, guiding the reform of the future local productive structure and identity.

## **2. Methodological approach**

This paper is based on a literature review of policy documents, publications and research work, concerning the perspectives of both territoriality and culture, in the European development planning process. At the same time, through a document mapping, it was attempted to identify common approaches that could lead to conclusions regarding the new challenges concerning these two notions, as dimensions of the future European development models.

## **3. The new context of culture**

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the development of digitalization and global networks caused a shift in western economy, from the "old-fashioned" sectors of processing and trade, to those of innovation and services.

The "invention" and evolution of the notion of "cultural and creative industries", appears to be a similar innovation, within the context of both economic and cultural policies in Europe. As a consequence of this innovation, during this period, the concept of "culture" was enlarged and redefined, so as to move away from just cultural heritage and "noble" arts, embracing massive and popular - and even everyday life - goods and services, which, in some way, require the contribution of creativity.

Television and radio, cinema, publishing activities and press, marketing, fashion, video, digital services and products, are present in everyday life of millions of people, serving both usability and creativity purposes, and thus affirming that human inspiration is present in the process of industrial production and dissemination.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the first attempt of defining and mapping the "creative industries" is to be found in the cultural policy documents of the UK, a country that, two centuries ago, championed the industrial revolution in Europe, while other countries were still strangling any structural change, with their attachment to "old regimes".

Obviously, this first, British categorization of the creative activities (DCMS, 2006), originating from the work of the "Creative Industries Task Force" established since 1998, prioritized sectors of the world economy which gave the country the competitive edge, such as, knowledge-based society, ICT, networks, software, copyright, intellectual property, etc (Pratt A.,2005).

Other mapping approaches, match creativity with patent, intellectual property rights and trademark (Howkins J., 2001), or expand the catalogue to include all "knowledge professions" (Florida, 2002). Country policy documents also make their own contributions, adding notions like the "experience economy", referring to thematic parks, and even gastronomy (Sweden).

In order to tackle the large diversification in the context of the new, enlarged notion of culture, the program ESSnet-Culture was set up in 2009, aiming at promoting, at the EU level, the establishment of common definitions and the creation of a common statistics system for the follow-up of data. These efforts have recently resulted in the common determination of 10 cultural “activities”, with each one of them referring to 6 corresponding “functions”.

#### **4. CCIs and the specialization of local economies**

The EU acknowledges the significance of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), since the previous programming period. According to the Document “*Guide to research and innovation strategies for smart specializations (RIS3)*”, May 2012, of the European Commission, the new challenge now consists in exploiting the CCI in an effort of fostering the capacities of regions in the field of innovation, with particular regard to “*smart specialization*”, a term, referring to the exploitation of an area’s “competitive advantage” through innovation and knowledge.

In this framework, regions must fully investigate the links between the “traditional” cultural sectors (heritage, art, existing cultural institutions) and the possibility of promoting creative industries, within the scope of boosting tourism further.

As it derives from many EU texts, “smart specialization” can be combined with a large scale of other Structural Funds priorities, in the fields of environment, SMEs’ competitiveness, education and training, social cohesion, research and innovation, etc (Παταργιάς Π., 2012). The E. Commission, Staff Working Document “Elements for a Common Strategic Framework”, since 2012, in view of the 2014-2020 period, provides for the Structural Funds to support investments that utilize culture to promote the diversification and specialization of local economies. Cultural heritage and landscape, in particular, are considered to be further exploitable for rural development and urban regeneration.

Also, the Funds are expected to coordinate their actions with the “Creative Europe” program, which aims at boosting the CCIs, emphasizing the added value generated by their use, in both the rural and urban space.

These views and recommendations give a new dimension to the contemporary cultural policy, which evolves, from a social benefit tool, into a means of multidimensional strategic regional planning. With this new context, culture constitutes for the regions and cities, a field of institutional initiative, and an opportunity for growth and development, in cultural, but also in economic, social and environmental terms.

This point of view also complies with the new “vision” of sustainability, according to which, culture constitutes the “fourth pillar” of sustainable development, along with the other three of economy, society and environment (Hawkes J., 2001). Even further, within the notion of “cultural development”, some tend to see a “holistic” evolution of a given human society at a given time and space, where “culture” represents the whole of material and cognitive achievements thereof.

#### **5. From regionalization to the “functional territories”**

Smart specialization through the development of CCIs is currently considered as a barometer of a region’s growth capacity, as it is directly linked to some of the most crucial assets for growth: local synergy, cultural and social vitality, tolerance, connectivity, innovation and communication, are the exact same elements that both foster creativity and define the capability of a given territory to generate growth, almost substituting the material prerequisites of the previous century, referring to infrastructure, capital and workforce (Camagni R., 2009).

These new immaterial assets mostly refer to a place's capacity to demonstrate coordinated public and civil action and commitment, to ensure social trust and safety, and to generate cultural production and consumption in a multicultural environment.

Along with the promotion of the smart specialization of regions, and from a different starting point, EU policy documents underpin the role of a place's "*competitive advantage*", as an element of the "*territorial capital*" (ESPON, 2007), namely a territory's endogenous exploitable (material and immaterial) qualities and assets, in the development of knowledge and information based local economies, attractive to SMEs and market networks (Ζαχαρή Β., 2009).

In this context, the previous social benefit and redistributive EU regional policies are gradually being replaced from financing programs that focus in the strengthening of local economic competitiveness through the utilization of the particular, territorial, endogenous development dynamics (Brenner N., 1999).

Consequently, under this point of view, many Structural Funds subsidies no longer support horizontal or regional state policies, but address "ad hoc" "*functional territories*", which come up with an integrated development strategy, set up and implemented by a widely representative local governance system.

The "*functional territories*" constitute the foundations of a new territorialization of the European space (Τοπάλογλου Ε., 2011), which is no longer based upon the old geographical and/or demographical criteria that used to determine the regionalization of "traditional" nation - states in the past, but which now relies upon particular, common development conditions, namely the "*competitive advantage*", that project and define a territory within the global space, through its' specialization (ESPON INTERCO, 2008).

After the Lisbon Treaty (2007), which first introduces the notion of "territorial cohesion", and the 2008 Green Bible (Ε. Επιτροπή, 2008), the Territorial Agendas 2011 and 2020 consider territorial cohesion as a prerequisite of sustainable economic growth and socio-economic cohesion, stating that its' achievement depends on the establishment of "*functional territories*" and the implementation of "*multilevel governance*".

Even more explicitly, the ESPON 2014 study "Making Europe Open and Polycentric", while focusing on future scenarios concerning European territorialization up to 2050, suggests that "*Beyond the nationalistic idealism born in the late eighteen century, European governance has to be redesigned the best possible way to promote sustainable and inclusive development for the next generations of Europeans*" (ESPON 2014). The study describes the emergence of the "Europe of Cities and Regions", based upon development points designated by the global networks, where territorial identities will eventually transcend national ones.

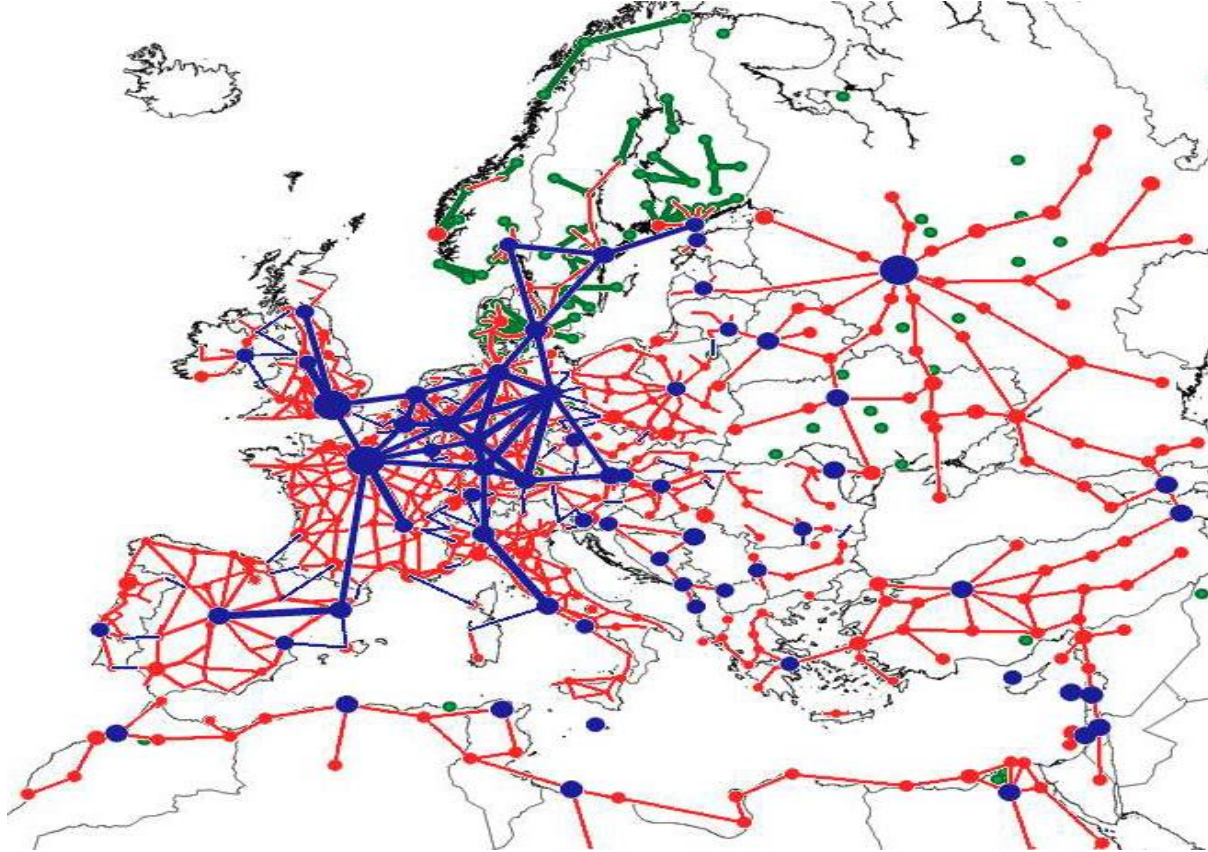
**Figure 1: ESSnet-Culture framework on Culture (Indicative activities and «functions»)**

	<b>CREATION</b>	<b>PRODUCTION/ PUBLISHING</b>	<b>DISSEMINATION / TRADE</b>	<b>PRESERVATIO N</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>MANAGEMENT / REGULATION</b>
<b>HERITAGE</b> – Museums – Historical places – Archeological sites <b>ARCHIVES</b> <b>LIBRARIES</b> <b>BOOKS &amp; PRESS</b> <b>VISUAL ARTS</b> – Plastic/Fine arts – Photography – Design <b>PERFORMING ARTS</b> – Music – Dance – Drama – Circus – Cabaret – Combined arts – Other live shows <b>AUDIOVISUAL &amp; MULTIMEDIA</b> – Film – Radio – Television – Video – Sound recordings – Multimedia works (incl. videogames) <b>ARCHITECTURE</b> <b>ADVERTISING</b> <b>ART CRAFTS</b>	-Creation of musical, choreographic, lyrical, dramatic works and other shows – Architectural Creation -Creation of graphical & plastic art works -Creation of literary works – Writing of cultural articles for newspapers and periodicals	– Museums sciences activities (constitution of collections) – Recognition of Historical Heritage – Publishing – Production of visual Art works	– Museums exhibitions – Art galleries activities (incl. e-commerce) – Trade (incl. e commerce) Organization of visual arts conventions and event organizing activities – Galleries & other temporary Exhibitions – Organization of film/video conventions and event organizing activities – Radio and TV broadcasting (incl. by the internet)	– Operation activities for historical sites – Preservation Activities – Protection activities	– Formal and non formal: artistic, cultural teaching activities -Formal and non formal: artistic, cultural teaching activities	– Administrative management (State, local or other bodies – Supporting activities for managing rights and royalties -Artistic agents and engagement agencies

**Based on:** ESSnet-Culture/DEPS, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, 2011.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: Deroin Valérie, “European statistical Works on Culture - ESSnet-Culture Final report, 2009-2011”, Culture Etudes, Politiques Publiques et Regulations, aout 2011, <http://www.culturecommunication.gouv.fr> , accessed on 17.06.2015

**Figure 2:** Territorial Vision in 2020<sup>2</sup>: Development based on cities and regions



## **6. Governance and diversified territorial development through culture-led smart specialization**

### **6.a. Large urban areas**

The “functional territorialization” process described above, depicts the structure of a new local development model, based on two pillars: multilevel governance and the promotion of knowledge and innovation. The starting point of the implementation of a similar model in Europe, can be identified within the programs of urban cultural regeneration, with the essential contribution of the CCIs.

Indeed, this “bi-polar” model based on a new, participatory local governance system and the implementation of an integrated development plan focusing on cultural regeneration, has already emerged in Europe, within the socio-economic structure of large cities and metropolitan areas, that have long been considered as an ideal environment for the attraction of the “creative” working class and the support of the creative entrepreneurship. The presence of networks, advanced electronic services, massive consumption, skills specialization, large variety of options and cultures, and tolerance, are only a few of the elements that promote innovation and sustain creative professionals in large cities (Bianchini, F & Parkinson, M., 1993).

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<sup>2</sup> ESPON ET205 ([www.et2050.eu](http://www.et2050.eu)), “Making Europe Open and Polycentric”, 2014

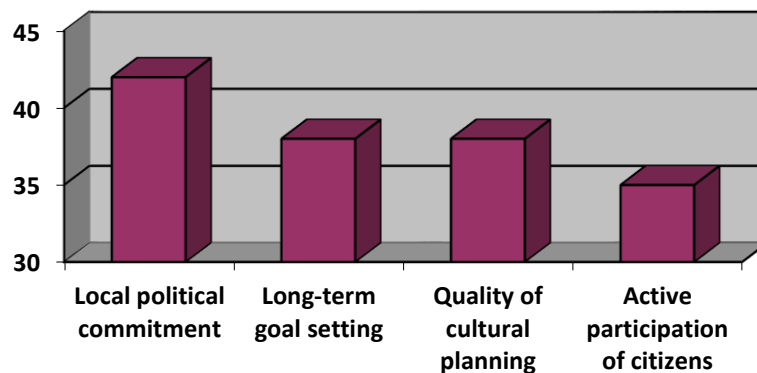
The development of city networks that brought together urban zones with common characteristics, facing the problem of industrial decline, led, from the 1980 decade onwards, to the development of integrated development plans for European cities, based on urban regeneration through the linkage of urban planning with culture and creativity.

Within this framework, cities like Glasgow, Bilbao and Sheffield, facing deterioration as a result of de-industrialization, were among the first to attempt their economic restructuring through cultural initiatives. These efforts were largely supported by the successful and particularly adapted implementation of the “European Capital of Culture” (ECoC) scheme (Arvanitaki A., 2007).

Beside their regenerating and restructuring effects on the socio-economic texture, the ECoC programs gave prominence and increased the institutional capacity of the cities involved, with reference to self-governance, giving way to some degree of “functional autonomy” against their nation state.

The following diagram shows the crucial influence of “local political commitment” and “long-term goal setting”, as essential components of self governance, on the successful implementation of the ECoC regeneration programs.

**Figure 3:** % Strong points of successful E. Capitals of Culture<sup>3</sup>



Cultural regeneration plans include, among others, measures of city branding, and conversion of old industrial areas into sites of creative and cultural activities, with typical example the case of the Temple Bar in Dublin, a degrading and infamous neighborhood which turned into the most vibrant place in the city.

Other cities emphasize the creation of hubs for the training and counseling of creative professionals and entrepreneurs and maximize digitalization of education and cultural heritage context (E. Commission, 2012), or build infrastructure which improves both cultural and environmental conditions and improve living standards.

New public management adjustments include the implication of private sector, as well as social and cultural actors in the management schemes of cultural institutions and activities, including the contracting of the management of historical heritage sites. Such is the example of the

<sup>3</sup> Based on: ICC analysis of Selection Panel for the European Capitals of Culture reports (2001 to 2012), from the Report “European Capitals of Culture: Success Strategies and Long-term Effects”, ( 2013)

roman antiquities in the French city of Nimes, the management of which has been entrusted to “CULTURESPACES Nimes Romaine”, under a particular contracting framework (Poirier A., 2006).

In most cases, the cities develop infrastructure and promote social and institutional adjustments that make the city appealing and promising for creative professionals and activities, in terms of networking, market accessibility, even working and living conditions.

### **6.b. Small towns and rural areas**

Unlike large cities and metropolitan areas, medium sized towns with their rural surroundings face more difficulties in proving their capability to attract their own share in smart specialization, and particularly in the creative sector.

However, more recent studies have established that elements related to the quality of life offered by small communities, such as the healthy natural and living environment, sociability and tradition, constitute factors of attractiveness for a significant number of creative workers, particularly those who enjoy flexible working conditions (Selada C., 2011). This can also justify part of the recently observed tendency of a certain population come-back towards rural areas.

At the same time, local governance initiatives can multiply and diversify the opportunities offered within their territory, through the enrichment and evolution of their existing cultural and economic structure, aiming at the development of a socio-economic environment of cultural and creative vitality.

As in the case of the large cities, the right “mixture” consists of, not only the existing local capital, but also a dynamic governance scheme, capable of planning and providing for the proper infrastructure and conditions of living, communicating, participating, creating and accessing the markets. Only in this way, can the small scale traditional locality function as a “creative rural economy”, which counterparts the “talent – tolerance – technology” model of the large city (Selada C., 2011).

The most typical example of such an attempt is probably to be found in the case of Obidos, a Portuguese historical and traditional town, of 3.000 inhabitants, which managed to change its’ profile into that of a “creative” town, setting up its’ own brand name through a model of “smart” utilization of its’ own cultural heritage and tradition (Dozhdeva V., 2014).

## **7. The “culture - led smart specialization territory” as a european model of cultural planning**

All the above examples clearly demonstrate the significance of CCIs as a “vehicle” of development, for any level of territorialization. In addition, development models like those presented in this paper and already implemented in large cities, entire regions, or small sized rural areas, can hereafter be adapted to the needs of any “functional” geographic or “thematic” territory, which does not necessarily coincide with any official administrative borders.

This functional territory can refer to a neighborhood, a city network, or an area defined in terms of common characteristics (e.g. a mountainous or maritime region, etc.).

A recent attempt of applying “functional territorialization”, is the case of the new Structural Funds scheme of the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) (E. Commission, 2014), which, starting from the current financing period 2014-2020, subsidizes local development collaborations of public



authorities with all kinds of local actors and citizens, within a “freely” defined, multi-scale geographic area, which does not necessarily coincide with official regional levels.

More specifically, an ITI can apply to a neighborhood, a territory combining urban and rural areas, a network of cities, or coastal / mountainous localities, etc. At the same time, the ITI is considered to be ideal for cross-border cooperation programs. In all cases, an ITI is implemented by an autonomous, commonly set-up local governance scheme.

“*Culture led smart development territories*” are probably an EU response to what other continents consider as “cultural planning” programs, implemented as a new bottom-up approach of sustainable development.

Already, the authors of «*Culture in Sustainable Communities: Integrating Culture in Community Sustainability Policy and Planning in Canada and Europe*», (2012), attempt a comparison between Canada’s Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSPs), introduced as a coordinated implementation of a local cultural sustainable development model, and the ECoC, as the respective European example of a coordinated, local cultural planning process (Duxbury, Jeannotte, Mateus & Andrew, 2012).

However, apart from the integration of culture in the development models, the European “smart territory” process seems to present specificities, such as the promotion of common administration instruments, for collaborating localities of different countries.

In any case, the cultural regeneration programs, like the ECoC or the “Creative Obidos”, and the “local specialization” schemes promoted by the “Territorial Agendas” can be considered as the pioneers, leading the way of transition towards a culture-driven “territorial specialization, together with the establishment of a new development planning process, related to multilevel, territorial governance.

## **8. Concluding remarks - Proposals**

The new territorial planning process implies major reforms with regard to the European territorial institutions and local administration systems, in line with the conclusions presented by the ESPON study, “*Making Europe Open and Polycentric*” (2014): (In the future), “*....different government levels will have to play different roles in a multi- scalar governance system. In essence, what is needed is a functional and flexible approach that both respects the principles of subsidiarity and can be adapted to a functional geography and the specificities of different territorial scales..... What seems to be increasingly important is the capacity to shift from a government to a governance mode suitable to the scale of the challenges. Such a governance mode must be capable of integrating formal government structures with more dynamic and flexible governance procedures to cope with challenges that do not respect strict administrative boundaries.*”

In order to respond to the new functional needs of a culture-driven “smart territory”, countries should re-adapt the institutional framework of their public administration and their local government system, to include among others:

- technology – industry (indicatively, use of graphic arts, multimedia, digitalization and Inclusion of the cultural pillar in European sustainable development models, and the establishment and coordinated implementation of a culture-led local development process, focusing on the CCIs.
- Greater planning and decisive “emancipation” of local institutions, with a view of strengthening the capacity of local authorities to coordinate and implement a highly participatory and multi-scale development planning programs.

- Establishment of a local cultural development planning process, focusing on innovation and smart specialization, through the CCIs.
- Transfer of more competences from the central to the local level, in the field of culture, particularly the management of historical sites, cultural education and training tasks, social inclusion programs, development of infrastructure, etc.
- Development of new legal tools, such as new forms of contracts, and management schemes, allowing the cooperation of public- private sector and the setting up of participatory models in cultural management.

Research is already being carried out by a number of European countries (e.g. Germany), for the determination of the future European cultural development model, in the context of which the role of local governments is being redefined, to serve the territorial sustainable development planning, particularly in terms of social inclusion, local democracy, cultural expression and education, equal access and quality of life (Schneider W., 2015).

### **Greece: current status**

Greece, on the other hand, long hesitates to emancipate its' local administration institutions, and is lagging behind with regard to the implementation of multilevel governance schemes, while its' cultural policy still remains focused on cultural heritage. The aims of boosting CCIs and advancing with the transition towards the governance era, can both be served by a coordinated, formal recourse to culture-led integrated territorial planning models, with a locally diversified context.

Through the implementation of such models, the Greek "functional territories" would specify and promote their own identity, and exploit culture in a multifunctional context.

A "competitive advantage", for Greece, could be sought in linking cultural heritage with

- technology – industry (indicatively, use of graphic arts, multimedia, digitalization and internet applications, film industry),
- environmental priorities (i.e. use of renewable energy models in museums and other cultural infrastructure, cultural products with an environment - related context, etc),
- further development of the "experience" economy, (tourism related to thematic parks, agro-tourism, gastronomy, etc), as well as
- documentation and exploitation of traditional knowledge and way of life, as a source of sustainability

Other priority axes, particularly in cities, could also refer to

- Urban regeneration of declining neighborhoods
- Spaces of recreation, combining environmental and cultural upgrading
- Job creation and investments in economic activities related to the CCIs
- Boosting cultural vitality
- Support of social inclusion, equal participation and expression, in a cultural context.

The abovementioned reforms are necessary for states and places to cope with international change, which is already underway. More specifically, the prospects deriving from the EU policy documents on territorial cohesion and cultural policy configure a European development model based on the cities and regions deriving from the "*functional territoriality of culture-led smart specialization*".

In this framework local governance and culture meet as essential dimensions of territorial capital development, with reference to smaller or larger spaces, determined by development qualities and functionalities, independently from formal administrative frontiers. In this context, the CCIs occupy a prominent position, as a crucial enabler of sustainable development, directly related to growth, creativity, local identity, vitality, security and the contemporary sense of belonging.

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