



Territories of the Future



Bourges 2028
Candidate City

European Capital
of Culture

COVER PHOTO

Photo by Benesté of the new Maison de la Culture in Bourges, the first one built in the 21st century inaugurated in September 2021. The sculpture of the doe on the roof is a work by Olivier Leroi, artist.

Q1

Why Bourges wants to become European Capital of Culture

Middle, noun, /mid-dle/, to be between the beginning and the end, a part which is equidistant from the ends, it also means to be a moderate part between two extremes. The middle is central, medium, and intermediate.

Bourges is all that. Located in the middle of France, it is an average city. Medium? Middle? We sometimes miss the meaning of words we use every day. We should also use other adjectives to qualify Bourges. Bourges is magnificent, ambitious, and charming, Bourges is crucial. Yet Bourges has this adjective that sticks to its skin like a vice, **it is average.**

This is also the name of the main street in Bourges, the rue Moyenne. Thus, Bourges is stuck in this intermediate place which pejoratively serves as a catch-all category for so many cities in France and Europe. The average is never good enough. It does not have the charm of the small ones. Nor the power of the big ones. Don't we use in France the «diagonal of the void» to qualify this part of the territory as only composed of small and medium-sized towns? Void. No wonder the Mayor of Bourges, Yann Galut, categorically refuses to qualify Bourges as an average city and prefers to speak of a **"city on a human scale"**.

Is it not in this middle, this medium where the resentment and anger that has characterised France for several years has built up and erupted in the form of the crisis of the yellow vests which paralysed the country in 2018? It found its roots in the forgotten, often rural France, the France of roundabouts, the France of what in European public discourse has gained awareness as **"the places that do not matter"**.

Bourges briefly became the epicentre of the yellow vests movement in January 2019, the city, conveniently located, served as a point of convergence for demonstrators by limiting their travel times. How many cities in Europe are in the same situation as Bourges? Cities with less than 100,000 inhabitants represent half of the citizens in France and the European Union (more than 150 million people).

Europe is not obvious in Bourges. Poorly served, it is not easy to get here either. No Erasmus students to roam the streets, no cosmopolitanism to remind us of the coherence of the European project, and too rural to see anything other than the Common Agriculture Policy in Europe. The exact geographical centre of continental France is just a few kilometres from Bourges. It is the city in France that is the most distant from all national borders, and thus from our European neighbours. And yet, Europe can be very close. Following the system change in Eastern Europe, the defence industry present in the area almost completely collapsed and jobs and population numbers dropped significantly. Within the last 30 years Bourges shrank from 80,000 to 65,000 inhabitants.

It is not a question of drawing here the most pitiful portrait of Bourges to arouse sympathy and compassion. On the contrary, **it is about asking the right questions.** How to make Europe self-evident for towns like Bourges? How to get Europe to the most remote places? How to refocus Europe?

The middle is also the centre. That might be a possible solution. Centre, noun, /sâte/, a point, a place where activities, various actions converge or from which they radiate.

Bourges was a major humanist centre, with the very rich heures (Book of Hours) of the Duke of Berry and the treasurer Jacques Coeur who organised far reaching trade, a renowned university and a cathedral on the pilgrimage route to Compostela. More recently, Bourges was at the heart of the French cultural decentralisation orchestrated by André Malraux (writer, Minister for Culture 1958-69). Tired of seeing culture monopolised by the big cities, the Maison de la Culture was Malraux's tool to bring a culture of the best possible quality to the most remote places in France. Yet the truth is that it has not really happened – despite Malraux's ambitious decentralisation plans, unique in Europe and initiated in Bourges in 1963 with the opening of the first Maison de la Culture in France.

The reality for our city and many others like us is a general policy of centralisation and focus on regional metropolises over the past 50 years. This has heavily impacted the peripheral territories, the small and median cities, but also and especially their peripheries. Rurality and what is called today **ultra-rurality**. Yet these cities are the necessary connectors between the national and European metropolises and rural areas and are the **driving forces behind European territorial cohesion.**

Here in France, funding has been concentrated on the outskirts of metropolises rather than medium and smaller cities. This has affected all areas of development: economy, mobility, health, culture, and services, leading to a breakdown in territorial equity between citizens. Today, three times as much is spent by the national government on culture per year and per citizen in the outskirts of Paris compared to a median city like Bourges. In various recent studies, notably by the Agence Nationale de Cohésion des Territoires, the people of Bourges suffer from enormous problems of mobility to Paris, at a time when the Grand Paris Express and its colossal budget are being planned. The paediatric hospital in Bourges is in danger and might be closed, which would force citizens to travel more than an hour by car with little public transportation to have their child treated. This situation has had a serious impact on the ability of the median cities to attract talent, particularly in the creative industries. Moreover, we struggle to attract doctors!

But times are changing. And so can we. With the help of ECoC. In recent years, successive crises – economic, social, covid, climate change – have made small cities attractive again, especially for young talent. The **national and European press talks about "demetropolisation"**. Cities on a human scale, agile, with new forms of governance that can go far beyond simple participation and focus on carbon balance.

They are what we call **the territories of the future**, ideal for prototyping tomorrow's innovative solutions, adaptable in whole or in part for a large number of cities of our size, which, as we said, represent a majority of citizens in France and the EU. And ECoC

had already shown the way with smaller cities like Tartu, Veszprém, Nova Gorica and Trenčín being handed the opportunity to deliver creativity-led transformation. Maybe now is the time for a **small city in France**.

The title of European Capital of Culture is the ideal lever for Bourges and the Centre Val de Loire Region to develop a project of transformation – urban, social, economic, well-being, soft mobility, citizen-led. Based on **a new common narrative which revitalises median cities**, allowing them to attract new talents, helping them to be what they should be. The **backbone of the Union**.

Q2 Involving the surrounding area

We have four “surrounding partners” involved in this project. A Region – **Centre Val de Loire Region** (2.5 million inhabitants, the smallest French continental region with 1,757 municipalities). A Département – **Cher Département** (300,000 inhabitants). The **Bourges Plus** conurbation (104,000 inhabitants, 17 municipalities including Bourges), and **Bourges city** (65,000 inhabitants). The Bourges 2028 bid is supported by political entities from all four.

Ours is a region of plains and plateaus, characterised by its agriculture, forests and prestigious vineyards like Sancerre or Pouilly, and contains four Unesco World Heritage sites. Each prefectural town is an hour's drive or train ride away from its neighbour. Bourges is two hours away by low speed train from Paris.

A candidacy to revitalise Berry

One of the main strategic goal of the region's support for Bourges 2028 candidacy is focused on the need for our region to rebalance itself and develop its southern part, Cher and Indre.

The Region comprises six Départements including Cher, two small metropolises, Tours and Orléans (150,000 inhabitants), a few others (Blois, Chartres, Vierzon, Châteauroux) with less than 100,000 inhabitants.

The northern Départements of Centre Val de Loire Region around Orleans and Tours (Loiret, Loir et Cher, Indre et Loire), have a higher tourist profile and a higher average income per inhabitant than the southern Départements (Cher and Indre). They all have a long common history and quite similar profiles and landscapes: **small and medium-size cities surrounded by nature, villages and communities** since a few years called in France places of ultra-rurality (one hour or more from a small or medium-size city). There are many common issues and challenges that these cities are facing, which provide them with a strong motivation to join the bid.

Cher is the Département of which Bourges is the centre, and Indre is directly adjacent to the west. These two Départements, which were industrialised in the 19th century around mechanics, ceramics, foundries and defence, experienced a major industrial recession at the end of the Cold War. They are redeploying their tourist activity **around the Berry brand**, a pre-French Revolution province comprising Cher and Indre.

Bourges 2028 may be a real **game changer** in putting this culturally and economically more behind southern part of the region under the

Medium-sized, not mega cities can be the future of Europe. In the post-covid era, they have rediscovered their place in Europe. We must now show France – so proud of its ability to be a cultural pioneer – and Europe that their time has come.

Because Bourges has designed an ambitious and innovative project which offers a new future for cities like us. No longer “Stuck in the Middle With You”. Instead **at the Heart of France and the Heart of Europe**.

national and European spotlight. Dynamically reconnecting us to our strong European cultural heritage.

However, in recent years, as a result of the covid crisis, like other rural areas, it has experienced **renewed interest from the urban populations of large metropolises**, starting with Paris and Île de France. Both nature and culture appear as assets to be developed to make our territory even more attractive.

Moreover, the Regional connection with ECoC provides a symbiotic two way cultural strategy exchange where both city and regional strategies reinforce each other and see culture as a critical and positive change driver. It also brings with it an ability to connect the Bourges 2028 cultural programme to regional cultural powerhouses like Orleans and Tours who will provide an additional number of events and exhibitions contributing to a truly regional dimension of our programme.

An application that is part of a regional cultural space and strategy

The regional space is organised around artistic creation, artistic emergence, shared governance and sustainable development – the Region is, for example, the first in France and one of the first in Europe to have developed a regional Conference of the Parties (COP), mobilising volunteer teams around collective challenges for climate change. The regional cultural policy is defined around 30 key points, voted on at the regional council in June 2022. Culture, seen as an essential part of regional policy, has seen its regional budgets maintained and even slightly increased in 2023 despite the difficult economic period, unlike the majority of French regions. This regional cultural policy connects with and informs Bourges own cultural strategy, described in Q5.

We benefit from a strong national and international image around the Loire Valley and the Loire castles (Chambord, Chaumont), but remain not open enough to European networks, to structural and sustainable European exchanges due to the Region's landlocked situation. Better **overall European networking of players in the sectors culture, education, social, health, and mobility** throughout the region is an important challenge for Bourges 2028 and a feature of our European dimension.

Our application is also part of a Bourges Plus conurbation which brings together 17 municipalities in the Greater Bourges area. The agglomeration supports and actively participates in the bid. The

challenge is to develop artistic projects with all the municipalities of the agglomeration since culture can provide better cohesion between them and create a stronger shared identity. Mainly residential, these relatively small towns do not for the most part have the means to develop large-scale artistic projects. As we said in Q1, the last years marked by the movement of yellow vests and a form of citizen despair, have shown how peripheral France is **affected by a strong social divide. Bourges 2028 can act as a unifier**, reconnecting people with a sense of belonging and active citizenship.

Finally, Bourges is at the heart of the rural Département Cher. Artistic links exist with a number of places and sites. Bourges Contemporain (contemporary art festival from June to September) regularly associates the site of the pyramidal barns in the north of the Département, the contemporary ceramic centre of La Borne, and the cultural meeting centre of the Abbey of Noirlac – a basis for future shared ECoC projects. Bourges and the Cher have a history and waves of immigration linked to the industrial revolution which are often overlooked, unknown locally. The 19th century saw an important series of

mechanical, metallurgical, ceramic and defense industries develop along the Berry canal, built from 1805 to 1840, 320 km long, today downgraded and transformed into a soft route. Several industrial archeology sites can be found along the Canal, notably between Bourges and Vierzon. The Second World War saw immigration from Indochina for the military effort of the arms industry (nearly 12,000 people), then after the war Portuguese, Polish, Italian immigration, and finally North African and new Asians in the late 1970s fueled local industries. These communities are relatively well integrated into the local population, most have kept an associative or community structure around their roots.

Many artists are settled in rural communes of the Département and are invited to Bourges to exhibit or perform. Projects for 2028 with **rural areas envisage the development of soft and low-carbon transport** such as the RER by biogas-fuelled bus (we will explain further in Q11) between Bourges and Noirlac set up by Bourges 2028 as a prototype project during the summer of 2022 to discover works of art and heritage in rural areas.

Q3

The cultural profile of Bourges

Bourges was once a remarkable intellectual, artistic and humanist centre in Europe. Duke Jean de Berry commissioned “Les Heures” (Book of Hours) masterpieces of the Middle Ages – a few decades before the Medicis started to sponsor artists in Tuscany. It can certainly be argued that modern cultural patronage started here in Bourges. And as a major financial, religious and education centre at the end of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the city of Bourges attracted skilled craftspeople from all over Europe.

In fact, the **people of Bourges – known as Berruyers** – are known through centuries as telluric, connected with nature, bon vivant/gourmet, interested and innovative, trailblazers in art. However, when we proposed to compete for the ECoC title, the Berruyers were at first rather sceptical if their city could even compete with some of the other contestants. Although there is a rather large cultural audience and a continued interest in all things artistic, the cultural pride and self-confidence of the Berruyers has suffered several blows towards insignificance somewhere between the Renaissance and today.

Indeed, Bourges is a great capital of the Renaissance, less known than for its mediaeval heritage, with important constructions and major figures which made it an important intellectual centre of the 16th century. Marguerite de Navarre (author and sister of King François I, she was the protector of the University of Bourges leading it to a historical peak of prosperity) or the humanist printer Geoffroy Tory (1480-1533), both contemporaries of Leonardo da Vinci, directly link the city of Bourges to the Renaissance heritage of the region.

The cultural orientation of the city has been reaffirmed in modern times with the National School of Fine Arts, the first Maison de la Culture in 1963 and the creation of the festival Printemps de Bourges. In 1959, André Malraux, the great writer, Résistance fighter and Minister of Culture announced to the deputies that one house of culture per Département should see the light of day within three

years, so that **“any sixteen-year-old child, however poor, can have a real contact with its national heritage and with the glory of the spirit of humanity”**.

Perhaps our long-standing connection with culture is the reason why Malraux chose Bourges. The **first ever Maison de la Culture (MC) was inaugurated here** and became the symbol of cultural decentralisation in France. For years it fulfilled the role that Malraux had intended for it. We directly trace its impact to people like Gérard Capazza, who built his appetite for culture at the MC Bourges and founded an internationally renowned contemporary art gallery in rural Sologne in 1975. Another important clue is the choice of **Bourges to devote to culture 15% of the city's total budget** and how it punches above its weight in culture for a city of its size as long-term effects of Malraux's vision and first director of MC Gabriel Monnet's translation of the concept into a practical approach.

Do we value that heritage?

The mediaeval heritage of Bourges is considerable. The historical centre with the half-timbered houses is one of the most important in France. The Saint-Etienne cathedral (12th-13th centuries) is listed as a UNESCO world heritage, the “Palais” Jacques Coeur is one of the most important European civil buildings of the Flamboyant Gothic style.

However, in terms of heritage, the **absence of a modern museum**, adapted to the public of our time and meeting contemporary scientific requirements is a major gap for a city of our cultural significance. Bourges has a museum exhibiting old collections that is now closed, a museum dedicated to the painter Maurice Estève following a donation, and the museum of the Meilleurs Ouvriers de France (Museum on French craftsmanship) and a natural history Museum. However, the museums of Bourges, despite a highly qualified team, struggle to be contemporary and relevant. Bourges has considerable collections of **pieces from Antiquity**,

most of which are dormant in reserves even though the ancient past has very few vestiges in the city (Bourges-Avaricum was a large metropolis of Roman Gaul). The lack of investment in recent years has notably led to the closure of the largest of them due to an outdated electrical system. However, Bourges has just adopted a future strategy for museums by 2028.

The more recent industrial past (in particular that linked to the armament industries dating from the second half of the 19th century or to foundries) is not the subject of museum exploration. The city's **industrial past and working-class memory are a blind spot** even though a large part of the city and entire neighbourhoods were built around these industries: defence, ceramics, mechanics.

The challenge of "inhabiting a heritage" underused by artistic projects is a necessity. There are temporary exhibitions of visual art in places such as the chapel of the **Hôtel Dieu** (13th century). Through the ECoC programme we are considering a more permanent occupation such as that of the **Grange aux Dîmes** (tithe barn) with the **FacTory** project led by the Mille Univers association around the Renaissance humanist Geoffroy Tory, or the VR arts installation of a collective of young artists at Le Château d'eau-Château d'art (an 18th century water reservoir).

The dynamism of live performance

After being closed for 10 years, the **Maison de la Culture has regained its walls: a new building** with two performance halls, two cinemas, a mediation room, a restaurant, and a workshop space for companies was inaugurated in September 2021. The new MC has more than 5,000 subscribers and offers a varied programme of live shows (dance, theatre, circus, music). It hosts many artist residencies, has a decorating workshop that radiates throughout France, is active in rural areas, with schoolchildren and challenged audiences. The MC is a partner of the cinema and theatre courses of two high schools in Bourges.

And out of the Maison de la Culture was born in 1977 the current yearly music festival **Le Printemps de Bourges**. Nationally and internationally known and recognised, after having been devoted to song has turned to current music and the selection of emerging artists to be accompanied in their professionalisation. With regional networks throughout France and European networks with Brighton and Eurosonic Groningen festivals, Le Printemps is one of the major meetings of the profession (specialised journalists, programme-makers, producers, etc.). U2 and Simple Minds performed as emergent bands at Printemps de Bourges before they became famous.

The festival attracts around 200,000 people and 5,000 artists over five days each spring. It has turned to sustainable development in recent years by promoting a culture that is more respectful of the environment and promoting ecological action. There are six other smaller festivals in Bourges.

Strong in visual arts with difficulties in retaining artists

Bourges is home to **one of the seven National Schools of Art (ENSA)** in France. This school has 150 students. It has an exhibition gallery (La Box). Many artists or cultural professionals living in Bourges and its region graduated at ENSA. Cultural associations have been founded by former students. The most important of these is **Antre Peaux** which occupies the brownfield with the same name. Today it comprises a contemporary art centre (Le Transpalette), a

contemporary music scene (Le Nadir), a dance studio, a film studio, recording and rehearsal studios open to groups from the region.

Bourges has an **exhibition centre, Le Château d'eau-Château d'art**: it hosts a comic strip festival (Bulleberry), a video and digital art festival (Multiple Worlds), a spring exhibition dedicated to young creation (residency offered to post-graduates from the School of Art) and a summer exhibition as part of **Bourges Contemporain**. This last event brings together contemporary art venues in Bourges and Cher each summer and schedules between seven and fifteen exhibitions per year. It is a collaboration between the City of Bourges, the Antre Peaux and the School of Art. Bourges Contemporain associates the preparatory class for admission to the art schools of the Lycée Alain Fournier which has its own gallery: La Transversale.

However, the **difficulty today is to convince artists to stay**. The lack of workshop spaces pushes young artists to leave Bourges once they have obtained their diploma. Some settle in municipalities where rent prices are lower; Paris and its region are still attractive for young artists who want to be close to what they see as "the action". Bourges 2028 will bring the action here!

An active public service

Finally, the city of Bourges **has a good cultural structure and an engaged cultural audience** (albeit consisting of the "usual suspects"), a **dynamic network of libraries** (a central media library, two neighbourhood libraries, a heritage library, etc.), a **Conservatory of Music, Dance, and Theatre**, which is backed by an auditorium with an educational programme, two broadcasting rooms, and a **Natural History Museum** which organises exhibitions and conferences, and which is nationally recognized. Attached to the development of artistic practices, the city has set up for two years a programme promoting the intervention of artists in schools: Aux Arts les enfants!. The cultural institutions together with **amateur associations** of Bourges also work to create new paths for culture, taking into account the growing need to capture new audiences and engage new people and parts of the city in cultural life. Finally, there is a **deep link between nature and culture** that characterises Bourges. Nature is present everywhere in the city and appears as a source of inspiration. The Garden of the Prés-Fichaux is a historical masterpiece, there is a specific project for the Marshes, no less than five rivers run through the city...

Bourges is a pleasant and liveable city where it is easy to walk or bike. From **the year 2023 onwards, public transport will be free**. Bourges Plus is currently working on a cutting-edge city bus-project including an electric shuttle, bus priority lanes, and high frequency circulation. Public programmes are tied up together to facilitate and promote these more eco-friendly modes of transport.

Our stage is set for the challenge of delivering the European Capital of Culture in 2028. We have the capacity, the stories, the venues and the people. Let's once again, in the words of Malraux, make real contact with our European heritage and with the glory of the spirit of humanity.

Q4

The concept of the programme

Our concept is **Territories of the Future**. Not a concept that you might expect for what people might think of as a typical, medium-sized French city with a decent historical past. Cities like us are expected to middle along, respecting our historical past without ever really understanding just how significant Bourges has been on a truly international level. And can become again. So we just settle for the fact that our best years are behind us? Not a chance.

Territories of the Future enables us to prototype new ways of cultural and city governance which will be genuine gamechangers for Bourges and cities like us. **The cities of less than 100,000 people which are the backbone of Europe**. As we said in Q1 - the so-called "places that do not matter" are in fact the driving forces behind European territorial cohesion.

More than half of the population (both of France and Europe) live in them. So let's not pretend we can consign several hundred million people to living in the past. Yet we have often been ignored by planners, investors and even big event awarders who have concentrated on the biggest cities and their suburbs. Result? People leave. People get angry. People give up. People lose hope. Not any more. Because here, if you have the courage to try, things get done more quickly. The impacts can be big, and visible. Agility in decision making is more and more key to making things happen. And shrewd people have seen that ability in Bourges.

Maybe there is something in our DNA. Something that made Malraux site France's first Maison de la Culture here. A DNA that pushed local authorities to try out its exciting experiment of choosing citizen panels by lots. Here we find ways to make things happen.

Bourges is not just a **typical city**. But we are **proto-typical**! Not just a lab that tests things. We find ways to translate ideas into action. Malraux put his Maison here because he knew the local guy (Gabriel Monnet) would deliver. And we can deliver Territories of the Future. Using the exciting ECoC framework and momentum to build our programme around 4 of the biggest challenges which hold back not just cities like us, but cities of all shapes and sizes.

Territories of the Future will prototype solutions for the 21st century to help create a forward-looking Europe which truly understands its history and uses this knowledge to build a powerful and exciting future. Our concept is built around **4 key features** which underpin the core of our long-term vision (Q8) and frame a really innovative Cultural and Artistic Programme (Q11 and 12). Briefly here they are.

1. Innovative City Governance

Using the inspiration of Bourges' own citizen council, the Conference on the Future of Europe and the EU's own strategy, Bourges 2028 will construct a wholly new model to connect the project both with its own people and with the people of Europe. A fully representative "Council" of 32 people will be set up in 2023, half from Bourges and half from elsewhere in Europe. The Council will guide key aspects of our project and also how we measure its success. It will also manage and select 20% of the programme based on calls that the Council will oversee.

2. City of Artists and Low Carbon Cultural Capital

Using our "can do" ability, we will move from awareness to action in pursuit of a genuinely low carbon ECoC. This will bring truly innovative ways of attracting people to the city and the region, given that transport is a huge issue for the connectivity of regions like ours all over Europe. Together with our artists who will be key participants in this project, we will explore and measure new ways of delivering major events with the lowest possible carbon footprint. We also have an entirely novel concept for supporting artists who come to Bourges so that career development in cities of our size is transformed.

3. A European matrix of Territories of the Future

We can do this on our own but sharing and learning across Europe would be much better. So we are developing a network of 15 European cities that are partners in our bid, with the same profile as Bourges - median cities on the periphery. Already most participated in the three European symposiums that have been held to develop the project, as well as in several of the projects set out in Q11. These cities are: Five in the Region: Châteauroux, Issoudun, Vierzon, Blois, Bourges, five in France: Avignon, Angoulême, Béthune, Nevers, Guingamp, and five in Europe: Matera, Bodø, Tartu, Oulu, Bad Ischl.

4. Cultural Rights in Europe

Bourges 2028 finds exciting and creative ways to explore and embed the changes that the #metoo movement has provoked in our European societies for the last five years. Eco-feminism, a fairer place of women in our societies, equity for all minorities and ages in their relationship with culture and the city.

From George Sand to Antre Peaux, Bourges has been a territory of reference on feminism and equality, and a strong component of our programme will be structured on these values. We will work in particular on revisiting history by giving a proper place to women and minorities and to rethink the urban public space of median cities by women artists on a European scale.

More detail on how we will frame our project is set out in the questions that follow. Join us as we stop looking back in anger and look forward with optimism and excitement to the Territories of the Future.

Bourges' Cultural Strategy and plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond 2028

How is ECoC included in this strategy?

Bourges' Strategy for Culture and Heritage was adopted unanimously by the city council on 6 October 2022. The ECoC ambition to shape Bourges and the participating area into **Territories of the Future** resonates every bit with our cultural strategy. Both the application and the cultural strategy have been conceived in the same spirit: reigniting the territory by prototyping new ideas and harnessing the potential to attract people to the heart of France, although the heart is a bit broken just now. Culture can fix it.

The cultural strategy has developed from an analysis of needs identified by research carried out by the Agence Nationale de Cohésion des Territoires (ANCT). The ANCT was created in 2020 as a national entity to support areas that face geographic, economic, demographic or other challenges. Bourges was selected to be one of six pilot cities in France included in **an extensive survey including 1,125 people** in each of the cities. The results of this study "Bourges en commun" have pushed the city to develop a cultural strategy tackling the identified cultural shortcomings. Building on the feedback from inhabitants in the survey combined with a series of consultations and cultural debates (Les Debouts de la Culture) the cultural strategy was developed with its 10-points plan around three axes **reflecting the needs and wishes gathered through the participatory process with citizens and cultural operators**. (More about this in Outreach).

Here is a summary of the Cultural Strategy's content:

On the strength of its rich humanist heritage, its historical and natural heritage and its emblematic cultural facilities, Bourges wishes to take up the challenge of making itself more visible and attractive. The ambition to make culture a fundamental lever for the revitalisation as well as the economic and touristic development of its territory is a priority that can resonate with many crucial partners. Not just cultural partners, but business partners and social organisations, too. The main lines of this project are based on multiple challenges and objectives: to radiate and attract from the local level to Europe and, more broadly, to the international level; to connect and de-compartmentalise areas and audiences, to join up and create links between players, and to welcome and support the emergence of new artistic and cultural expressions. And today, of course, all projects have a responsibility to consider the major challenges of the ecological transition.

The city of Bourges is committed to a long-term artistic and cultural development process through a cultural and heritage strategy based on three key axes:

Axis 1: Encourage and develop artistic and cultural practices

This includes objectives geared towards co-creation of policies with the people as well as the more literal development of cultural and artistic practices through workshops e.g. with resident artists. But it also means to develop cultural practices in connection to climate change and the environment.

Axis 2: Facilitate access to works and collections in all artistic, cultural and heritage fields

The objectives here revolve mainly around how to create

accessibility to culture and heritage in all respects, how to enhance audience engagement, and how to strengthen cultural operators in their approaches towards audiences, especially new ones.

Axis 3: Support creation and artists at all stages of their careers and at all ages

This is about how Bourges can support artists through residencies, European mobility, and multi-year grants – and through the European Capital of Culture, should Bourges secure the title.

So, how is ECoC included in this strategy?

Within the Cultural and Heritage Strategy the plans for Bourges 2028 are seen as a crucial catalyst of the developments the city is pursuing. Just as the survey and consultations informed the cultural strategy, they also influenced the shaping of the Bourges 2028 vision and programme.

We have developed the challenges and objectives that we want to tackle through the European Capital of Culture to connect **closely to the Cultural Strategy to ensure that those objectives are going to continue long after 2028** and that the closing of the 2028 ECoC year marks the kickoff of a new, exciting cycle of culture-led development for the city and its territory.

The main challenges – translated into our programme lines in Q11 – and how they connect to the Cultural Strategy:

CHALLENGE 1

Prototyping governance and democratic representation in culture, our political relationship with our environment

What we initiate and achieve through the projects and activities in this challenge will be handed over at the end of 2028 into Axis 1 of the Cultural Strategy. Participatory policymaking, innovative cultural practices with citizen governance and finding new ways to view and interact with our environment will be the focus in this challenge and the corresponding programme line.

CHALLENGE 2

Prototyping the role of the artist in Europe in the light of new European narratives 2050

Whilst Axis 3 of the Cultural Strategy will create the basis for artists to find in Bourges and the region favourable conditions for their work, with challenge 2 we are looking at the role of the European artist in the light of new European narratives with 2050 as the horizon. Climate challenges force us to adapt and change behaviours quickly – what role can artists and cultural operators play in that? And how do we create a truly pan-European dynamic and dissemination around artistic production?

Prototyping agile medium-sized cities for the cohesion of the European territory

With this challenge we are embracing the overall vision of Bourges' Cultural Strategy to become a more visible city to attract and retain residents, artists, talents, health and service persons as well as visitors – a process to be continued far beyond 2028. Our impression is that especially young people in Europe prefer the 15-minute-cities to the metropolises. In this respect we can learn how to take advantage of the conditions in a small city from others in Europe and share our experiences.

Prototyping Cultural Rights in Europe

Axis 2 of the Cultural Strategy formulates in a diplomatic way the huge mind shift Bourges 2028 will create in what we're calling cultural rights: Yes, we talk about accessibility. But we are going a huge step further. Whether it is youth, eco-feminism, the digital challenge and digital inclusion of non-audiences like elderly, people in hospitals, people with mental issues or in prisons – we have not seen previously developed cultural rights sufficiently to really say that it is inclusive and for all.

The closely knit texture between the Cultural Strategy and the topics proposed for Bourges 2028 will allow a **smooth continuity and create a legacy with both intermediate and final milestones** on which to build next steps and a new Cultural Strategy for 2030 onwards. The direction for Bourges is clear either way: Towards Territories of the Future.

Q6

Bourges' cultural and creative sectors

Bourges is totally committed to building the Territory of the Future around culture and creativity. It's just that - like in much of classic French literature, the hero does everything possible to escape from the provincial town into the embrace of "high society"... But the time is right to turn this around. Of course, we must also turn around the conditions so that our "heroes" want to stay.

Bourges has great potential for attracting talents and entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative industries. But at the moment we start from a situation that compares relatively badly to regional, national and European benchmarks. Yet that can change. Bourges offers **a post-pandemic quality of life of a city on a human scale**. Natural spaces, low real estate costs for renting or buying. But these assets must be complemented by an increase in the frequency of mobility to Paris – a dynamic that the Bourges 2028 bid will accelerate with the SNCF.

The situation of Bourges in 2022 compares to those of cities of similar size such as Mons and Matera at the beginning of their ECoC planning cycles. Such cities have been able to develop and **capitalise on a winning strategy of economic development around the CCI sectors** thanks to structured planning. Like Mons, with attractive metropolises less than an hour's drive or train ride away (Brussels and Lille), Bourges benefits from the proximity of attractive cities in the north-east of the region (Orleans and Tours) less than an hour away, and two hours from Paris.

The CCI fabric is denser in the eastern departments of the Region (Loiret and Indre-et-Loire) but weak in the south around Bourges (Indre and Cher). The percentage of CCI in the overall value creation **is 2.5% in Cher and Bourges and remains 50% below the national average** (3.9%) and half of European Union average, Bourges which is home to a National School of Arts and a high level engineering

school, but has not managed to be attractive for students to stay in the territory after receiving their degree. The low proportion of graduates who settle in Bourges is currently more active in artistic creation than in the more commercially oriented CCI sectors.

There are, as we set out below, a few recent developments and future plans to strengthen the CCIs and connect them to the economic and social sectors. Bourges 2028 can become a dynamic and structuring framework for the whole process. All of these development projects are focused on "as found" buildings. Bourges 2028 does not plan to construct new buildings in order to minimise the carbon footprint of the project.

What is already happening...

Around Bourges, two public communities are developing interesting initiatives around CCIs that will boost the creation of activity and entrepreneurship in the département and nearby.

In Vierzon (30 minutes to the west), a former tractor factory of 18,000 m² based on Eiffel architecture, the B3, has been transformed into a venue dedicated to **digital technology and CCIs**, with the establishment of a Digital Campus, several digital schools and incubators, and exhibition spaces.

Speaking of connections to the economic sector, in Vierzon four of the eight founders of Vierzon-based company and world leader in computer security, Ledger, are creating an **art centre for immersive technologies** in a 6,000 m² factory: immersive tours of places, immersive recording of live concerts will be developed in this centre as part of Bourges 2028.

The company Ledger has already agreed to be our close partner in

all projects that involve digital production as well as being one of our main private sponsors. In Nevers (30 minutes to the east), a 4,000 m² space, **the Inkub, is open to digital entrepreneurs and CCIs**. The Nièvre river region is positively impacted by the phenomenon of “demetropolisation” of young talent from Paris and its suburbs.

...and some concrete future plans

As part of the European Capital of Culture candidacy, **three major Creative Districts in Bourges’ city centre, northern and southern suburbs** are being developed around CCIs and new European mobility. They are supported by public authorities, private partners, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and strategy of funding from France 2030, Banque des territoires, and accompanied by the Bourges 2050 endowment fund.

Axereal – Creative district in an underprivileged neighbourhood of the city around society and innovation

The Axereal brownfield is located in a deprived northern neighbourhood of Bourges, 1km from the train station. The project’s business plan is in the study and design phase which has been entrusted to Ernst and Young France. The 4000 m² brownfield will provide, by 2027, **workspaces, shared tools, a restaurant, housing** and artists’ lodgings around the theme of society and innovation, with an exclusive orientation towards CCIs, on the model of Darwin (Bordeaux) and Waag Society (Netherlands). This project aims to develop a strong link with the neighbourhood and the inhabitants, with the Institut Universitaire de Technologie (IUT), a performance hall, with the Hublot, a centre with a performance space and workspaces, nearby. The Axereal aims to boost the local fabric of commercial and non-commercial creative production and to **attract national and European players** within the CCI sectors.

EDF Mazières Bourges – Creative district around the new European mobilities

On the southern outskirts of Bourges, 1.5 km from the city centre, Électricité de France (EDF) is in the process to give to the city a 5,000 m² brownfield on a former electrical production site with transformers dating from the early 20th century. This site will be

cleaned up by EDF and transformed by 2027 into a **mixed exhibition space** (2,500 m²) with development of activities around new European mobilities in connection with the new forms of tourism and mobility developed by Bourges 2028. The project aims to **attract players in new low-carbon mobility**: companies connected to research or production of bicycles, electric cars, scooters and buses, biogas, hydrogen mobility, etc. The site is ideally located on the banks of the Berry Canal, which offers 200 km of soft mobility (bicycle paths, electric scooters, connected to EuroVelo 6 – Atlantic–Black Sea).

Hôtel-Dieu – Creative District on Pan-European CCI Creations

The city of Bourges has formulated in their artistic strategy the support for CCIs and dissemination of artistic work. Bourges 2028 has the same objectives and we have planned a legacy project, European City of Artists and Authors (EC2A), that supports pan-European creation and dissemination of artistic production as well as helping artists access the Culture Moves Europe mobility scheme within the EU Commission’s Creative Europe programme. 50% of the projects that will emerge from the EC2A will be aimed at local artists and structures. We are planning to house the EC2A project in the Hôtel-Dieu, a former hospital in the heart of the city, with 1,500 m² and with a 16th century gothic wing. This centre will provide various unique services on a **continental scale to support artists and allow the creation of pan-European projects**: translation, property rights, social rights, mobility, low carbon design. It will be associated with a series of living spaces and residences developed with social housing estates and private promoters, on a basis of 20 housing units allowing the reception and work of artists from the commercial and non-commercial sectors. The EC2A will be a real lung for the attractiveness of Bourges 2028 and will be able to **welcome and house up to 400 artists per year** for periods of three weeks, in various disciplines. It will draw on the skills of structured and existing networks involved in the Bourges 2028 project: Printemps de Bourges (music, “musiques actuelles”), Paris Mozart Orchestra (classical music), Maison de la Culture de Bourges and Festival d’Avignon (performing arts), Angoulême (comic strips and audiovisuals), Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Art and Antre-Peaux (visual arts, digital arts, bio-art), and the Abbaye de Noirlac (sound arts, spoken word, heritage and rurality).

Q8

Expected long-term impact

Bourges 2028 is a unique lever for long-term territorial transformation – in respect to the **cultural offer and audiences, social fabric and wellbeing, urban and economic** aspects.

What might be the most pressing of them all is the **ecological transformation** to give the next generations even the chance to be creative and enjoy culture.

In Bourges, all of the players who firmly united around this application have set themselves the target date of 2050 as the pivotal point for carbon balance. This is reflected in the creation of an endowment fund run by the local and Cher entrepreneurs called “Bourges 2050, Territory of the Future”.

This very long-term vision sets an initial target of a 50% reduction in overall carbon emissions by 2030, which explains several of the directions of our project, particularly in terms of mobility, but also in

terms of exhibition sites design, audience/visitors catering, artistic drive and narratives. This is the principle that drives us to design the first truly low-carbon European Capital of Culture, whose **carbon impact will have been reduced by 50% compared to what it would have produced**, had these orientations not been taken.

The aim is for these guidelines, prototypes, positive and alternative solutions to become permanent in the operation of this Territory of the Future after 2028. Additionally, we are building our project upon the European Commission’s sustainable development objectives, of which we will follow a number of metrics, as described in question 9, and the Donut methodology developed by The Brussels Region we partner with, linking sustainable development and social/wellbeing development. The more specific longer term impacts are set out below.

Qualitative long term impact generated by the programme

Programme line & Clusters	Cultural & social impacts	Urban & economic impacts
Lots of Neighbours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innovative citizen governance Who speaks for Nature? European Parliament of the living and the non-living Meeting our neighbours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural projects shifted from participatory to shared and equitable governance (drawn by lots), with even representation in age and social background, including minorities SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) and associated methodologies like the Donut are used to follow up carbon sustainability and social/wellbeing Bourges has a structural frame of a bottom up and citizen driven follow up system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban space design is now taking gender equality, young, old, people with disabilities into consideration Increased respect of nature (animal/vegetal) in urban projects Bourges and Berry become a major hub for creative talents (architect, urbanists, creators)

Programme line & Cluster	Cultural & social impacts	Urban & economic impacts
The Language of Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A low carbon European Capital of Culture, new European mobility A European City of Artists and Authors for a European identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new narrative based on positive and alternate sustainable behaviour of tourism and sustainable use of energy is in place A common narrative between neighbour citizens of Bourges, rurality, Region and Europe developed based on a European anchor Bourges owns a unique structural frame for European creation / dissemination There is a structural frame for Interaction of artistic creation with technology, health, social care, schools etc High level of cultural consumption inherited from Malraux and ECoC dynamic The new creative districts make of Bourges a platform of prototyping able to attract and retain talents Increased cultural offer and lifestyle attract doctors and other professionals to make homes and careers here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bourges increased its touristic results with balanced social / well being /carbon sustainability (Sustainable Development Goals and Donut) Bourges is connected to Europe and France (and vice versa) with a low carbon transport network (trains, electric / hydrogen cars, electric / hydrogen busses, bicycles highways, electric planes) Train stations are the heart of mobility and become green artistic hubs for social innovation / training for sustainability Mobility with Paris and regional cities is improved · Mobility from and to rurality is enhanced with cultural routes Creative districts are operating on new European mobility and City of Artists Bourges is anchored in European agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New European Bauhaus pillars creativity, sustainability, inclusion The City of Artists retains CCI-related graduates of Centre Val de Loire in the territory The City of Artists attracts national and foreign talents of the CCI, becomes a knowledge centre and prototyping centre in Europe

Programme line & Cluster	Cultural & social impacts	Urban & economic impacts
On a Human Scale <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A European network of median cities becoming Territories of the Future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Berruyers see themselves as carriers of a new prototype of cultural transition, reinventing the legacy of Malraux 60 years later 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With regional, national and ECoC network of cities with less than 100 000 inhabitants, best practices are exchanged, policies joined, private sponsors and partners solicited more easily Citizens, policy makers, economical and cultural stakeholders are dynamised by an organised platform allowing strong networking between members

Programme line & Cluster	Cultural & social impacts	Urban & economic impacts
Right Here Right Now <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eco-feminism, the driving force of European society in the 21st century Enhancing heritage with the digital Art in specific environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of feminist values in society Reappropriation of cultural history by citizens Reappropriation of cultural heritage artefacts from world-leading institutions by citizens through digital artefacts Increase of in situ museum audience (Grand Musée de Bourges, Bourges 2050 programme, Musée de la Paix) (for all segment of audiences) increase of 20% Remote Museum audience (Euroverse, NFT): up to 5 times total annual visitors More inclusive approach for people with special needs Health institutions (nursing homes, psychiatric centre, hospital, doctors) are integrated in the cultural policy Schools have become art centres Culture as “prescription” is recognised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distance tourism is well developed Digital tools allow creation of “as found” exhibition spaces in disused industrial buildings or department stores with lower budget and low carbon footprint Existing digital Creative Districts are enhanced Social, well being and resilient impact of culture is given an economic value Health centres (nursing homes, psychiatric centre, hospital, doctors) and residents are active part of the cultural proposal changing cultural mapping of culture venues on the territory Schools and education centres are part of this movement

... and some expected quantitative long term impacts 2035

Cultural

- Number of visitors/year, average duration of stay in Bourges – increase by 50%
- Number of visitors/year, average duration of stay in Cher and Indre – increase by 25%
- Number of visitors/year to museums – increase by 50%, with balanced (social) diversity
- Remote Tourism/Museum – 5 time increase in visitors/year
- Digital Museum/Euroverse – access to 4 million distant visitors
- Artistic ateliers – 400 artists in residence/year (including

European and international)

- 17 Art Centres in Nursing homes, schools, hospitals
- 30 Artist residencies/year in rural area, enterprises, administration (including European and international)

Social

- Citizen assembly drawn by lots govern 10% of cultural budgets
- Support French EAC – increase by 50% (EAC = each citizen given opportunity to participate in one artistic offer/year)
- Pass Culture – every citizen in Bourges and Berry has one (Pass Culture = individual budget and free access for young people to cultural offer)

Urban

- 3 new creative districts
- Frequency of train shuttles to/from Paris/Orléans/Tours – increase by 40%
- RER low carbon to rural areas – 4 lines
- Trans Europ Culture: 20 trains/year, 3,000 people
- Overall carbon emissions by 2030 – decrease by 50%

Economic

- CCI employment – increase by 100%, focus young entrepreneurs
- Hotel/restaurants – increase in income by 25%

Q10

The artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme of Bourges 2028

Prototyping Territories of the Future. Proto-what?

Prototyping, verb, /'preotetaipɪn/, the act of creating a first full-scale and functional, albeit incomplete form of a construction, software, or process.

Our artistic vision might sound a bit technical, and indeed, the word itself stems from computer science and manufacturing.

But whilst prototyping meant until fairly recently simply creating an archetype of a product on which all subsequent editions of that same product are modelled, software programming has pretty much changed this concept. In computer science, and in our case, prototyping is meant as in the definition further above. Something that is translated from an idea into real-life but is not complete without the feedback from the users.

We don't want to just "create" Territories of the Future from an intelligent design process. Our approach is to realise ideas and **create prototypes so that people can co-create, try and feedback on the process**, the project, the product, the programme. It cannot be a coincidence that they all begin with the syllable "pro" like prototyping: We are onto something here...

Change is another driver that makes "prototyping" the only way for us. In a fast moving world it is almost impossible to plan and design for every eventuality. Prototyping means avoiding complete paralysis in the face of crisis and uncertainty. And perhaps it is the small and medium-sized cities like Bourges with their short decision-making processes that lend themselves best to this strategy. Prototyping is **designed to react to fast changing conditions**. It is not like creating a model and then implementing it – a one-directional process with a beginning and an end. Prototyping is a looped co-creation process. Failure, by the way, is also a valued result and gets fed back into the loop. It is not the end of the project, but the beginning of an improved prototype.

Prototypes end up in different results in different places. The one-size-fits-all solution has only led to frustration, to streamlined products, streamlined cities, and streamlined culture. What convinces us so much about prototyping: **It is playful, it is site-specific, it is inclusive, it is fun**. And we are allowed to fail and start afresh.

In Q7 we already set out the challenges we want to tackle. In the next section of this application (Q11) we will show how and what we are going to prototype through our projects. For this purpose, and with a view to a future audience, we have transferred our challenges into programme lines.

Challenge 1: Prototyping governance and democratic representation in culture, and our political relationship with our environment

Projects here include the European Citizen Council drawn by lots. With the people and natural features we call home and who need to be given a voice we find around us **Lots of Neighbours**.

Challenge 2: Prototyping the role of the artist in Europe in the light of new European narratives 2050

Beyond Umberto Eco's bonmot, what is actually **The Language of Europe?** Is it art? Does it consist in new approaches to the challenges of climate change? Is it finding a new joint language on pan-European artistic production? Let's prototype!

Challenge 3: Prototyping agile medium-sized cities for the cohesion of the European territory

What if small and medium-sized cities become the new Territories of the Future all over Europe? Then many Europeans can live in cities **On a Human Scale**.

Challenge 4: Prototyping Cultural Rights in Europe

Right Here Right Now is a call to action to stand up for cultural rights that include everyone.

Our programme commitments and values

The Bourges 2028 cultural programme makes a strong commitment to **low carbon impact** and follows 2030 climate objectives of the European Union. We will set up a dedicated team within our top management responsible for carbon balance as well as monitoring software from design phase to execution. With this approach **we intend to reduce the carbon emissions of our event by 50%** accompanied by the French think tank **The Shift Project**.

The use of **existing buildings "as found" and digital technologies** rather than massive artefacts transportation for most of our main exhibitions allows us to develop low carbon strategies. We are learning best practices from partner institutions in particular for our exhibitions, from the **Tri Postal in Lille 3000, Kanal Center Pompidou in Brussels, and the Biennale de Lyon**.

Bourges 2028 will be **free for young audiences age 14 to 20**. In addition to the budget available for the culture pass by the French Ministry of Culture and through its tools we will give free access to the Bourges 2028 programme for young people. This will also provide data to adapt our youth strategy in real time and to feed the monitoring of the project on this audience segment. To facilitate the access of young people from the territory to the Bourges 2028 programme, the application benefits from free intercity transport

for young people aged 18 to 25 supported by the Centre-Val de Loire Region. As we show in the outreach chapter we value that **people participate in and co-create this programme** above all. Our prototyping vision intrinsically contains participation and co-creation as its crucial elements. This is also reflected in the artistic projects (e.g. European Citizens Council) and intertwined with the governance structure.

From the outset, we have included a massive **capacity building project** (European City of Artists and Authors EC2A) and many additional activities to support our CCI sector.

Many of our exhibitions will be integrated into the collection of the **Digital Museum of the Micro-Folies network** – initiated by

Public Establishment of Park and Grande Halle of La Villette – Paris and French government – allowing our exhibitions to be widely disseminated in various types of territories often far from European metropolises in 1,000 places in France and Europe by 2028. This concept will allow us to target 4 million remote visitors per year.

Let's stop discussing and start prototyping:



Micro-Folies



Capacity building



Participative



Low carbon

Q11

The structure and activities of our cultural programme

The structure of our cultural and artistic programme is based on four programme lines and nine clusters as shown on the next page:

Programme lines	Clusters	Projects
Lots of neighbours	Innovative Citizen Governance	European Citizen Council
	Who speaks for Nature?	European Parliaments of Rivers
	Meeting our neighbours	Stages Across Borders
The Language of Europe	A low carbon European Capital of Culture, new European mobility	Trans Europe Culture – The New European Grand Tour Gares végétales – Stations of Cultivation Métro and RER Europa Le Printemps de l'Europe Euro Renaissances – 30 venues for contemporary art in heritage spaces
	A European City of Artists and Authors for a European identity	A European City of Artists and Authors – The engine of Bourges 2028 Breaking Silos – The role of artists in European society of the 21st century
On a Human Scale	A European network of median cities becoming Territories of the Future	The Matrix
	Eco-feminism, the driving force of European society in the 21st century	Missing Women – Rehabilitation of women in the history of European music La Maestra Europe 2028 Through the Eyes of Women – A European Biennial George Sand and the Women of Berry – Pioneers of Eco-feminism

Right Here Right Now

Enhancing heritage with the digital

Les Heures of Duke of Berry – Europe's narrative starts here!

The Missing Pages

Sainte Chapelle – Euroverse and Miniverse exhibition

Reunited Mourners

André Malraux – An Imaginary European Museum

European Light Nights

Our (European) Stories

Art in specific environments

Ageing Artfully

Our Gallery

Departure Class

C-Ware Celebrations

YourSpace

Connected Micro-Folies

Pompidou / Europe – Decolonising 50 years of Video Art, New Media and Cinema

Centre Pompidou @ Palais Jacques Coeur

Lots of Neighbours

Innovative Citizen Governance

European Citizen Council



A unique European Citizen Council will be established as part of the Bourges 2028 governance structure. 32 European Citizens will manage and guide projects on the basis of 20% of the total budget for artistic calls.

- 16 people from Bourges, 16 from other EU countries accompany the preparation, implementation and evaluation of Bourges 2028.
- They represent the social, gender generation and community diversity of the city and the Union.
- The citizens, drawn by lots, are given a mandate for a six month period. They pass on their experience and ideas to their successors. Bourges is the first city in France to have adopted a participatory democracy with a municipal citizens' council drawn by lot since 2021. The most important initiative for direct representation in European policy-making by the EU was the Conference on the Future of Europe. During the French Presidency, the 242 regions of the member states saw 32 citizens drawn by lot, representing social, generational and gender balance, putting forward their vision for the Union. Our own Bourges 2028 European Citizen Council will help us implement a European dimension and will prevent us from French navel-gazing.

Partners/Partners in progress: Citizen Council Bourges, Missions publiques (leading implementer of Conference on Future of Europe for French Regions)

Who speaks for Nature?

European Parliament of Rivers Internationale des fleuves



Loire, Danube, Dniepr, Elbe, Po, and Rhine – the rivers and watersheds of Europe are our precious and nurrishing neighbours: they deserve a voice and representation in the new framework of the «rights of nature »'s development on other continents. The European Parliament of Rivers is a pan-European extension of the artistic project Towards a parliament of the Loire, by Berlin-based artist, political scientist, professor, and writer Camille de Toledo which was produced by the POLAU urbanistic association in Tours. This pioneering real life narrative triggered huge public debate. For our Bourges 2028 project, The European Parliament of Rivers (including the six rivers mentioned above), a dozen public hearings will be proposed to citizens and will take place in each of the five partnering areas linked to the participating European rivers. These hearings put into action a collective research to assess the potential of a river ecosystem and involve in a fictional parliamentary commission that has to decide wether the agentivity of all the elements of the rivers should be recognised as a legal person like it was done in other regions of the globe (New Zeland, Ecuador, Columbia...).

These hearings (also moments of conviviality and sharing) involve researchers and thinkers (philosophers, anthropologists, ecologists, biologists, legal experts) and the users of the six European rivers locally.

The final results will look like this:

- An artistic festival of projects linked to the rights of nature.
- A dialogue with similar projects is developed in Colombia, New Zealand and India.
- The publication of a manifesto/investigation book on the new wave of the rights of rivers.
- Creating a house of European rivers in Tours offering exhibitions, a documentation centre and a legal resource centre.
- Giving a European resonance to Parliament of the Loire in Tours and its phase 2 promoted by POLAU locally.
- Developing interspecies-négociation method with regards to the Cher, a tributary of the Loire near Bourges, in connection with the Assises des Marais (Marshlands) in Bourges

Partners/Partners in progress: Bourges Plus Conurbation, City of Tours, Centre Val de Loire Regional Council, Bourges Museum of Natural History, Novi Sad 2022 (RS), Johannes Kepler University Linz (AT), Ukrainian Institute (UA), Rechtenvoordenatuur (NL), Central Commission for the navigation of on the Rhine (DE), Notre Affaire à tous (legal association), Institute for advanced studies and Le Lieu unique in Nantes

Meeting our Neighbours

Stages Across Borders



The Maison de la Culture (MCB) will create in Bourges, and in several performing arts structures in the Center Val de Loire Region, a series of «cross-border scenes» while we are quite landlocked in France, which normally makes European exchanges difficult. Major culturally relevant European cross-border sites like Nova Gorica/Gorizia, Saarbrücken, Mons/Maubeuge, Lille/Tournai/Kortrijk inspired MCB to create imaginary cross-borders links with various countries and institutions. Common programmes, common festivals, cross residences of artists will create a rich “cross-border programme”. Low carbon mobility will be achieved by remote access through digital devices on a 1/1 scale inspired by the Café Europa of Mons 2015, but also by low carbon journeys on (night) trains allowing meetings of European audiences around the artistic projects.

Partners/Partners in progress: Maison de la Culture de Bourges, Festival d'Avignon, Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles (BE), Cultural Centre Belém (PT), Madrid National Dramatic Center (ES), Trafo Budapest (HU), National Touring Company Riksteatern (SE), Sirenos Vilnius (LT), Espoo Theater (FI), Zirkus des Wissens JKU Linz (AT), Kléber-Meleau-Lausanne Theater (CH), Blue City Theater-Geneva (CH)

The Language of Europe

A low carbon European Capital of Culture, new European mobility

Trans Europ Culture The New European Grand Tour



Bourges 2028 will develop a programme of themed and cultural low-speed trains and exciting cultural train journeys. Coming to Bourges will be an experience where the focus is on meeting people and finding the cultural treasures along the way – rather than racing to destination with our heads in our tablets! Get on board with us!

Our objectives are to bring about low-carbon behaviour for long-distance travel from Europe to Bourges and from Bourges to Europe, to revive the history of the European railways, (which for many is the foundation of their European identity before Erasmus), to link countries and European cultural institutions including ECoCs in themed routes, to give these routes social links and a relationship with the landscape. **Building European communities through cultural journeys.**

Night trains have been requested for a decade by European citizens, massive petitions have been made but the various fossil fuel lobbies remain dominant at the level of the European Council. “Back-on-tracks” citizens’ collectives are campaigning for new European

mobility in 10 European countries. A mobility that meets the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. French railways SNCF have agreed to sit down with us and create a business plan to implement this ambitious project. Our approach follows three directions:

Night network boost 2028

First approach is to boost the existing and growing networks of night trains, the high and low-speed trains via offers such as the recently renewed Interrail. The use of calculator widgets will allow the public to value the reduction of their carbon footprint over a long distance journey. We will integrate these low-carbon routes into our communication and propose important incentives in Bourges and in the partner cities as stopovers, e.g. free access to exhibitions and guided tours for visitors using low carbon means. “Routes to Bourges” low carbon tourist guide books will be issued to promote their use.

A “cultural charter” for trains

Bourges 2028 will develop cultural chartered trains based on the rolling stock of night trains already available for hire, and currently undergoing major deployment with SNCF Intercités as a partner.

These trains will be decorated on the inside with creative objects from the 27 EU countries, and a selection of musical creations proposed by Printemps de Bourges and European partners. A multi-

purpose wagon will allow piano playing (like in SNCF stations) and other artistic forms.

These trains will either go directly to Bourges, or stop in partner towns, with organised curated visits. We plan to develop with SNCF Intercités three lines with neighbouring countries linking ECoCs and UNESCO listed cities. They will enable foreign visitors to make a low-carbon journey to Bourges, but also our local and regional inhabitants to travel to European cultural destinations.

North Star: Brussels (hub for Netherlands, West Germany) , Lille, Bourges and return

Danube Star: Broumov and České Budějovice ECoC 2028 (hub for Hungary, Poland, South Germany), Vienna, Linz, Bad Ischl, Bourges and return

Primavera Star: Matera/Bari (hub for the Balkans), Brescia, Avignon, Bourges and return

Cultural trains stops

Trains for pan-European artistic calls – The 50% of the budget for project calls dedicated to projects with a pan-European component can be combined here. For example, a participatory musical art project built site-specifically for a train, together with people from Centre Val de Loire and partner cities (Avignon, Brescia and Matera). Building actual European communities.

Trains for European challenges – Low speed trains are neutral places, out of time, they allow to create the ideal conditions for innovation, breaking silos, developing collective creativity. In 2025, Bourges 2028 will invite three groups of 150 European personalities from different fields to meet around the three current New European Bauhaus themes: creativity, inclusion, sustainability. During a one-week return trip to Bourges cultural visits, seminars, and debates will be organised and three white papers published. We are planning other thematic trains that will allow us to develop new European communities.

Partners/Partners in progress: SNCF Intercités, Regional Council Centre Val de Loire, Printemps de Bourges, Lille 3000, Antre-Peaux, EMAP European Network, Avignon 2025, Rail Trip - low carbon tour operator (BE), Kanal Centre Pompidou and Royal Library (BE), Ars Electronica (AT), Bad Ischl 2024 (AT), Matera-Basilicata 2019 (IT), Brescia Musei and Brescia 2023 Italian Capital of Culture (IT). Back-on-Tracks collectives in FR, ES, IT, BE, NL, DK, SE, PL, DE, UK, SNCB (BE), Ferrovie Statali (IT), Deutsche Bahn (DE), Österreichische Bundesbahn (AT), CD-Ceské Drahý (CZ)

Gares végétales Stations of Cultivation



We are planning to shock travellers with vegetation at the station. It even rhymes!

Train stations are a strategic place at the centre of our mobility flows – and an ideal place to reach the general public on the issues of climate change. In cooperation with the Centre Val de Loire Region we want to create an aesthetic and psychological shock for travellers by inviting internationally renowned artists of plant creation and landscape architecture to create a monumental plant space in five of the Region's stations, and in Paris-Austerlitz (the station connecting with Bourges).

The curatorial team comprises Bourges 2028, the Chaumont-sur-Loire International Garden Festival, major European art institutions and SNCF Gares et Connexions.

These works of art are in reduced water consumption, ideally perennial after 2028.

The location of the work is chosen individually with regard to site-specific issues. Potentially on forecourt, hall, platforms, annex buildings and others. Each station can become a place for meetings (e.g. with schools), site-specific artistic projects, and the development of skills around environmental action. This project will be connected to Metro and RER Europa.

Partners/Partners in progress: Regional Council Centre Val de Loire – Vice President Transportation, Chaumont-sur-Loire International garden festival, SNCF Gare et Connexions, Ecole Nationale Supérieure de la Nature et du Paysage de Blois with students and teachers, Ecolonomie, Bad Ischl and their project Art Nomadic revitalising local ÖBB stations (AT).

Metro Europa and RER Europa Citizen-driven low carbon mobility



- Two connected projects: one for the city and its conurbation (Metro Europa) and one for the rurality (RER Europa)
- Develop a citizen-driven network of Metro Europa lines (as self-guided walks) on the themes of the Territories of the Future and European challenges
- Develop a network of low-carbon RER lines with biogas or electric buses, connected to the network of Gares Végétales
- Develop rural and ultra-rural routes in conjunction with local residents and cultural institutions
- Develop a network of connected intermediate places

Metro Europa is a fun and ironic proposal for dynamic low-carbon routes to follow on foot, by bike, by electric scooter in median cities (incl. mobile application presenting the route and points of interest). It is a project that allows one to take a self-guided tour along an imaginary “metro” line, linking places identified through citizen decisions. The metro lines highlight players and places of the city but also of the municipalities of the Bourges plus Conurbation like Mehun-sur-Yèvre or Plaimpied-Givaudins. Places that are sometimes forgotten or hidden but that we will link thematically to their European dimension. The proposed urban “subway” network includes a maximum of four lines. It covers an average of seven stations per line and a distance of 1,500 to 2,000 metres per line.

RER Europa – again, this might puzzle those of you who know that the RER network is limited to the area around Paris. Claiming an RER is challenging the issue of low-carbon mobility in remote, rural and ultra-rural areas – quite the opposite of what it stands for in Paris and a central issue in the question of European mobility.

Scheduled services allowing audiences to visit artistic events is a challenge in rural areas. But it is possible to imagine innovative mobility solutions serving a vast rural territory in a low-carbon way. From July to September 2022 Bourges 2028 created a low-carbon RER (bus) from Bourges to Noirlac – fueled by biogas produced from household waste. It was a four-hour guided tourist route in the ultra-rurality of the Cher département, commissioning works of contemporary artists in heritage sites far from the city centre.

The objective of this successful prototype was to create a systemic chain of operators involved in a new low-carbon strategy for tourist routes, to measure the impact of these new proposals, and to estimate its metrics like CO2 emissions and operational budgets.

Starting in the summer of 2023, Bourges 2028 will develop three low-carbon RER lines for tourists in the Cher département, and by 2028, from the five Stations of Cultivation and other stations in the region to a network of 30 cultural venues of the New Renaissance exhibition platform detailed further below.

Partners/Partners in progress: Regional Council Centre Val de Loire
- Vice President of Transportation, RATP Dev - public company of Parisian transports, PONY (electrical scooters)

Le Printemps de l'Europe



Umberto Eco wrote that the language of Europe is translation. But isn't it music? Music crosses borders, languages, social issues. It is often the basis of our imagination. Being the continent of great composers and great musical works, 25% of Europe's CCI's are now based on music. The birth of Printemps de Bourges in 1977 changed the relationship to music for many – through its format, the 5,000 artists invited, its attention to emerging artists, its organic link with the city and its urbanity, its approach to social inclusion.

For Bourges 2028, Printemps will expand its European collaborations on artistic emergence, and sustainability of artistic touring through the calls of the European City of Artists and Authors where music will represent 25% of the budget. Main partners will be Nuits Botaniques (Brussels), Eurosonic (Groningen), Artmania (Sibiu), Sziget (Budapest), Pohoda (Trenčín), and Beam (Bilbao). Existing European federations in which Printemps de Bourges is operating will be activated to support this large scale movement for current music and emergent artists, i.e. YourEurope (112 festivals in 26 European countries), ETEP – a programme aiming to create real development opportunities for artists in the Union and to offer the European public more diversified European pop music.

There will be a musical wagon in our trains, open stages where renowned artists will meet emerging artists, karaoke with live music, a musical selection in the stations. Besides emergent artists, some of the most creative European artists of our time will be invited like Alex Turner (Arctic Monkeys), Angélique Kidjo, Jarvis Cocker (Pulp), Daymon Elbar (Blur), Marianne Faithfull.

Partners/Partners in progress: Nuits Botaniques (BE), Eurosonic (NL), Artmania (RO), Sziget (HU), Pohoda (SK), Beam (ES), YourEurope and ETEP European networks; Partnering institutions of Le Printemps de Bourges: Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers (SACEM), Society for the collection and distribution of performers rights (SPEDIDAM)

Euro Renaissance

30 venues for contemporary art in heritage spaces



- A revitalisation of heritage sites in the region through contemporary art exhibitions, sometimes in ultra-rural, peripheral areas. Transport routes are strengthened through Bourges 2028 low-carbon railway stations and RERs, as well as a unique cycling network. The exhibitions are held in controlled atmosphere venues and in venues «as found» without air treatment, or outdoors to reduce carbon footprint
- From 2027, major European institutions are invited to participate in this programme. We will invite Kanal Brussels (B), Art

Encounters Timisoara (RO), Le Louvre (F), Centre Pompidou (F), Ars Electronica (AT) and some other major institutions to join.

- From 2023 onwards, several venues will host artists' studios and exhibitions, under the joint supervision of the Region and the Centre Pompidou. These venues will eventually become part of the regional network of creative residencies of the European City of artists and authors (EC2A).

Since 2018, the Centre Val de Loire Region has developed a strategy of large thematic exhibitions spread over different locations in the region under the name «New Renaissance». Based on this network of public and private venues, heritage and contemporary art venues, remarkable gardens, and the nearby Noirlac Abbey, the castles of Chaumont and Chambord, and the museums of art in Orleans and of contemporary art in Tours. In 2022 the project attracted almost 800,000 visitors to 650 labelled projects and increased the cycling tourist numbers on the more than 150 regional cycling circuits by up to 66%. Within this framework Bourges 2028 will extend the project to include further European institutions as of 2026.

Participating venues and sites to Euro Renaissance and ateliers d'artistes Centre Pompidou: Parc du Perche, Refuge la Tanière, Domaine du Ciran, Châteaux de Chaumont-sur-Loire, Chambord, Cheverny, Amboise, Beaugency, Bouges, Montargis, Musée Beaux-Arts Orléans, Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré Tours, George Sand House in Nohant, Palais Jacques Coeur, Tower and crypt of Bourges Cathedral, Noirlac Abbey, etc ...

Atelier Calder, Maison Max Ernst, Canal de Berry: The 320 km of the 19th century canal transformed into a soft mobility route will be used for contemporary art exhibitions in situ or in various industrial brownfields, notably in Bourges and Vierzon.

A European City of Artists and Authors for a European identity

European City of Artists and Authors The Engine of Bourges 2028



Bourges 2028 will develop a European City of Artists and Authors (EC2A). **A true service, knowledge and resource centre for artists and their access to the European stage.** Our aim is to make this the no.1 legacy of Bourges 2028 and guarantee this institution far beyond 2028.

The European City of Artists and Authors will create a welcoming space for artists, giving them a rethought social and collective role, accompanying them towards the possibilities of European creation, work residences, prototyping, but also health, social, and retirement support for the most precarious. EC2A will develop the European narratives and imaginations of tomorrow based on a strong, revitalised European identity.

Setting up an innovative approach for open calls

The budgets for project-calls for Bourges 2028 will be grouped together in the European City of Artists and Authors – a budget of €5 million, which we estimate to be €10 million in total including the co-productions generated. In programming our calls for projects, Bourges is associated with two leading cities of international renown in different artistic fields: Avignon for the performing arts and Angoulême for comics and audiovisual animation.

For the calls we are supported by our partners around the following disciplines: Current music (led by Printemps de Bourges), Classical music (led by Paris Mozart Orchestra), Visual arts, video art, urban

art, digital art (led by Antre Peaux, National Art School Bourges, Ceramic art (led by La Borne), Sound art, spoken word, rurality projects (led by Abbaye de Noirlac), Performing arts and cinema (led by Maison de la Culture de Bourges), Landscape and plant artistic creation (led by Chaumont-sur-Loire).

Cultural and Artistic Programme Budget allocation process		
	Budget	Budget decisions made by
European City of Artists and Authors	5m € → estimated at €10m including co-productions	- 80% by the artistic team (see Q32) - 20% by the European Citizen Council (drawn by lot)
Rest of the artistic programme	20m €	Artistic team (see Q32)

Innovative narratives related to climate change will be favoured in the calls for projects as well as those connected to the three pillars of New European Bauhaus (inclusion, creativity, and sustainability). Further focus is on low-carbon design, mobility of audiences, mobility of artists, social rights, copyright, intellectual property, switching to digital platforms, low-carbon web 3.0 to name a few. An equitable distribution of genres and generations will be required for the winning projects. Breaking silos between disciplines, proposing artistic projects and practices in education, enterprises, health centres will be followed.

Give artists the tools to create on a pan-European scale

Today, it remains extremely difficult for artists and particularly individuals or small structures to create on a pan-European scale, to envisage that their creations can be addressed to an audience in 27 member countries of the Union. For example in the 24 official languages of the Union and in the non-official languages that are the foundation of European identity such as Yiddish or Romani.

To find European co-producers, to have residences in other European countries, to envisage tours or broadcasts throughout the Union in countries where social regimes, copyright and salary levels are very different, and with a low carbon footprint. Even if programmes exist at the national and European level, it is not easy to find them, write applications, and follow-up. Bourges 2028 will create a structural interface that allows artistic production teams to have organised relay services for the production and pan-European dissemination of projects including capacity building for the entire chain of stakeholders of artistic production. Hôtel-Dieu will host a team of 5 experienced staff people to support the programme, classes for capacity building, an exhibition space in the gothic aisle open to local stakeholders and European partners/artists. 50% of our budget for the European City of Artists and Authors' artistic calls will be directed towards projects with a pan-European vocation, i.e. projects conceived in international co-production, having a distribution in a minimum number of European countries and interacting with a minimum number of European audiences.

We will use the existing and structured European networks of the partners to develop a comprehensive network of European work residencies in the different disciplines based amongst others on the EU programme Culture Moves Europe.

Partners/Partners in progress: Antre Peaux, ENSA, Maison de la Culture, Printemps de Bourges, Paris Mozart Orchestra, Abbaye de Noirlac, Festival d'Angoulême, Festival d'Avignon, Society of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers (SACEM), Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers (SACD), National Music Centre (CNM) with One Voice for European Music, National Centre for Cinema and Moving Image (CNC), New European Bauhaus, ECSA European Composer & Songwriter Alliance, European Media Art Platform - EMAP, ACCR European Network, Réseau Printemps de Bourges / One Voice for Europe

Breaking Silos

The role of artists in European society of the 21st century



- Putting artists at the centre of our innovation and social processes, following the 3 pillars of New European Bauhaus: inclusion, creativity, sustainability
- Proposing 25% of artistic creation residencies in connection with the social and economic sectors: research centres and public and private laboratories, health institutions, administrations, and especially schools
- As far as possible, create these residency programmes in neutral spaces (out of the box for engineers/researchers, administration executives, etc.)

Commission President von der Leyen's New European Bauhaus initiative proposes a specific interdisciplinary dynamic to boost European creativity.

Bourges 2028 wants to use and amplify these innovative strategies and programmes through the dynamics and social visibility of a European Capital of Culture.

On a Human Scale

A European network of median cities becoming Territories of the Future

The Matrix



15 cities from the region, from France, and from Europe. A matrix convinced that the dynamics of the European territories of the future lie in the median cities located on the periphery. The Bourges 2028 Matrix programme is a continuation of the exchange and capacity building process developed during our European conferences during the pre-selection phase. The 15 cities are already on board. We will use the technology developed during these conferences for remote connection and simultaneous translation. 15 cities of less than 100,000 inhabitants will be able to interact with low carbon footprint from February 2023 onwards. Exchanging on the Bourges 2028 prototypes, adopting them for their own city, sharing their good practice.

This is an informal capacity building organisation dedicated to innovation, prototyping and the deployment of common and grouped solutions.

The participants in the quarterly interaction sessions come from a variety of backgrounds and communities: elected representatives, government officials, cultural managers, artists, entrepreneurs, citizens, students, pensioners, etc.

We have already agreed with 14 cities to work together:

5 cities in Centre Val de Loire Region: Bourges, Châteaurox, Vierzon, Issoudun, Blois

5 French cities: Avignon (South-PACA Region, ECoC 2000), Angoulême (New Aquitaine Region), Guingamp (Brittany Region), Béthune (Hauts de France Region), Nevers (Burgundy Region)

5 ECoC cities: Matera, Bodø, Oulu, Tartu, Bad Ischl

We have two specific partnerships with 2 French creative cities:

- Angoulême, a creative city with UNESCO literature, has a complete image ecosystem: an international comic strip festival, 15 schools of higher education linked to the image (including the Ecole Européenne Supérieure de l'Image), the Cité Internationale de la Bande Dessinée (CIBDI), the Pôle Image Magelis (more than 80 image-related companies). It is a place of residence and advice for artists thanks to the Maison des Auteurs attached to the CIBDI.
- Avignon, the leading European city for performing arts thanks to its world-famous Avignon Festival, will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the European Capital of Culture Avignon 2000 with a program of Maisons Folies, conceived during Lille 2004 European Capital of Culture, adapted to the social environment of the city's difficult suburbs. The Mayor of the city wishes to put Avignon back into its European networks.

Right Here Right Now

Eco-feminism, the driving force of European society in the 21st century

Missing Women

Rehabilitating women in the history of European music



Here is a challenge for you: Name five European women composers! From French Élizabéth Jacquet de La Guerre to the contemporary Finnish Kaija Saariaho, from the Italian Francesca Caccini to the Austrian Olga Neuwirth, from the German Hildegard von Bingen to the Belgian Jacqueline Fontyn, from the Greek Saint Cassian of Constantinople to the Romanian Violeta Dinescu... stories of women composers throughout Europe from the 9th to the 21st century are almost invisible. Currently, only 1% of works programmed in European institutional concerts are by women composers.

Faced with centuries of invisibility, there is an urgency to enable the discovery and proposal of new works. Harpsichordist and musicologist Claire Bodin has taken up the challenge. She created

the Festival Présences Compositrices and has brought together her research in an international digital information portal called «Ask Clara», in honour of the composer Clara Schumann. Bourges 2028 dedicates an exhibition to the works of European women composers, enriched by concerts, publication of works and recordings. It is time to bring this hidden treasure to light and do it justice. «We also want to deconstruct two tenacious presuppositions – that women composers do not exist or are few in number, that their works are of mediocre quality and that they are not well known.» (Claire Gibault)

A project led by Claire Gibault, former MEP

Artistic and Musical Director of the Paris Mozart Orchestra in residence in Bourges

Co-founder and co-director of La Maestra, International Competition and Academy for Conductors

La Maestra Europe 2028



Why a competition and an academy exclusively for female conductors? The question is legit, but then again, although more and more female conductors are leading successful careers, discrimination against them is still all too common.

With the International Competition for Female Conductors & La Maestra Academy, the Paris Mozart Orchestra and the Philharmonie de Paris have a threefold objective: to encourage vocations, to unite the international musical world around specific commitments to female conductors, and to offer the youngest among them the support they have often not fully benefited from during their education.

The first editions of the La Maestra Competition, held in Paris in 2020 and 2022, were an exceptional success with female conductors from all over the world: 220 applications, 51 nationalities, a wide variety of backgrounds, an exceptional artistic level... Their stories, which describe very contrasting situations from one country to another, reinforced our commitment. With La Maestra, we aim to give them the visibility and support they deserve. On the occasion of Bourges 2028, La Maestra will partner with major musical institutions across Europe to strengthen the pan-European endeavour of the initiative.

Partners/Partners in progress: Paris Mozart Orchestra, La Philharmonie de Paris, Maison de la Culture de Bourges

Through the Eyes of Women A European Biennial



In the line of unceasing struggles for freedom throughout history, the one that appears most urgent remains the feminist struggle. In 2017 and 2019, the Biennials organised by the Regional Contemporary Art Fund FRAC Centre-Val de Loire have opened up the prospect of exhibiting women artists and architects.

The concept of “feminist democracy”, which we borrowed from the author Marie-Cécile Naves, gives rise to several questions that are by the heart of the Biennial: which cities and which urban planning programmes are designed by and for women? How can their productions be brought out of invisibility? What rereading of art history through the prism of feminism?

This event is part of the public space in participating medium-sized cities of the Region. Site-specific works of artists and architects will outline new urban practices by melting into everyday landscapes. At the same time, the exhibition The Built World of Women will bring together three French collections (Centre Pompidou, National Museum of Architecture and Heritage, and FRAC Centre-Val de Loire) and European collections and will explore the plurality of the productions made by women architects, from social housing to places of memory. Throughout the Biennial, the Tiers Féminisme, which is both a forum for debate and a cultural programme, will invite women artists and architects from local cities to reflect on an ideal society and changes in public policies and citizen actions.

Partners/Partners in progress: Regional Contemporary Art Fund FRAC Centre Val de Loire, National Museum of Architecture and Heritage, Centre Pompidou

George Sand and the Women of Berry Pioneers of Eco-feminism



George Sand was a prominent figure in Berry, and a precursor of the eco-feminist movement. She has inspired many of today's artists in the movement that has been radically changing European and world society for some years. Jacqueline and Jean Lerat, creator of the medallions of women on the façade of the Lycée Marguerite de Navarre, was another important local feminist.

Given this prominent ancestry in feminism Bourges 2028 will organise an exhibition on eco-feminism. It will be based on the personality of George Sand, and will draw on the stories of Florence Rochefort, a resident of Berry and author of a world history of feminism, and many others. Additionally, the curators of this exhibition are also thinking about calling upon the work of feminist artists with whom Antre Peaux has worked for many years, such as Reine Prat or Paul B. Preciado, and to put this local historical analysis into a European perspective and with the new generation of European women creators.

Curation: Antre Peaux, ENSA

Enhancing heritage with the digital

Les Heures of Duke of Berry Europe's narrative starts here



This exhibition will propose as a world premiere a unique travel across the birth of European narratives and visuals developed in Les Heures, Book of Hours. The masterpieces of the Middle Age, commissioned by Jean, Duke of Berry, at a time when Bourges was a major French and European artistic, knowledge and political centre, once the capital of France.

The exhibition will show how Les Heures influenced the artistic creation and narratives in Europe, 50 years before Renaissance and the Medicis started in Tuscany. “There are colours and paintings in it that look unbelievable, extraordinarily contemporary”, said Umberto Eco, who had a lifelong fascination for Les Très Riches Heures.

Jean de Berry (1340-1416), third son to French king Jean II, played an important political role in the kingdom. He was ruler over a large territory which included the Duchy of Berry, the province of which Bourges was the centre, the Duchy of Auvergne and the County of Poitou. The Duke was a great bibliophile and at the end of his life he owned around 300 manuscripts. He is known to have commissioned six Book of Hours, executed according to his instructions, masterpieces of Middle Age art and narratives. They are currently held in national libraries and renowned museums in Paris, Chantilly, Brussels, Turin, Los Angeles, and New York. The exhibition will include a combination of original documents and digitised ones.

Partners/Partners in progress: Bourges Museums, Libraries of Bourges, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Musée Condé Chantilly, Royal Library, Brussels (BE), Getty Center, Los Angeles (US), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (US), Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, Turin (IT)

Hours of 2028 – The Missing Pages



In the Book of Hours commissioned by the Duke of Berry which is now kept as one of the major works in the collection of the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels, pages 171 to 180 of the manuscript are missing. There are several possible explanations: a numbering error, an undelivered leaf, or something mysterious.

Bourges 2028 wants to draw inspiration from these missing pages, from this gap. We will invite schools with their students, local and European artists, citizens all over Europe with remote access, scientists and elected representatives to this collective brainstorming session in a unique, pan-European approach to imagine: How can we complete the Book from our contemporary perspective? What would be our Book of Hours in 2028, what narrative and visual daring would we propose to pass on to our heirs? And on what medium would we do it to try to make these Hours last 600 years or more? The final result will be shown in a medium and way to be defined by the participants.

Partners/Partners in progress: Mille Univers, Antre Peaux, ENSA, The Matrix, National Academy Orléans-Tours, ACCD European network, EMAP European network, Regional Council Centre Val de Loire, Data Centre and Conservation Services, University of Orleans and University of Tours, INSA Engineering school Bourges

Sainte Chapelle Euroverse and Miniverse exhibition



This project reconstructs Bourges' Sainte Chapelle that was destroyed in 1775 as an immersive digital space – an exceptional monument completed in 1397, modelled on the Sainte Chapelle of Paris. It housed, among other treasures, the tomb of Jean de Berry with 40 sculptures of exceptional mourners. Using period documents, Bourges 2028 digitally reconstructs the building in all its magnificence and splendour, with the local unicorn IT company LCNTR/Ledger.

The exhibition will present, in an original immersive scenography, the Belles Heures of the Duke of Berry (Metropolitan Museum New York), the Très belles heures (Bibliothèque Nationale de Belgique), the Très Riches Heures (Musée Condé - Chantilly) digitised with a perspective of their historical value in the history of European art.

Through Euroverse, a European Metaverse channel by LCNTR, remote audiences will have access to the exhibition. Whereas the Miniverse gives access to the entire immersive exhibition on the physical site of the Sainte-Chapelle, non-digital audiences will find support experiencing the Miniverse.

All of the digital corpus will be stored and backed up on the Centre Val de Loire regional data centre, and a proposal to save this content over time will be put forward in partnership with the services of the Universities of Tours and Orléans and INSA engineering school in Bourges.

Partners/Partners in progress: Le Centre / LCNTR, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Regional Centre Val de Loire data centre, University of Orléans, University of Tours, INSA engineering school Bourges, Musée Condé Chantilly, Royal Library, Brussels (BE), Getty Center, Los Angeles (US), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (US), Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, Turin (IT)

André Malraux: The Imaginary Museum



A major exhibition will revive André Malraux's idea of the imaginary museum in a contemporary way. Malraux and his cultural policy are intimately linked to the city of Bourges through the creation of the first Maison de la Culture, with its immense political importance in the strategy of cultural decentralisation of France. Yet few tributes have been paid to André Malraux, to his revolutionary ideas, his writings on art, rediscovered by new publications in the early 2000s. An exhibition is being prepared for the 50th anniversary of André Malraux's death in Paris in 2026. Bourges 2028 will complement this with a major exhibition on Malraux's concepts of the imaginary museum, but taking a contemporary turn with the transition from print and photography to digital media in the first instance 2026, and to immersive Metaverse and NFT processes in 2028 in the second instance.

Partners/Partners in progress: André Malraux Foundation, Antre Peaux Art Centre, EMAP Europe Creative network

Reunited Mourners



The life-size statues of the mourners from the tomb of the Duke of Berry are masterpieces of mediaeval sculpture. Of the 40 mourners that surrounded the duke's tomb, several were stolen or disappeared during the destruction of the Sainte Chapelle and during the French Revolution.

Today, 27 are identified, in marble or alabaster, throughout the world, including 10 in the Musée du Berry in Bourges, and others in the Louvre, the MOMA in New York, the Rodin Museum, the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg. An exhibition will bring together, for the first time, as many as possible of the mourner statues – we are aiming for 27! The project will include participatory elements as a form of reconstruction of the collective identity of the Berry region. This could include role playing games and recreating a tableau vivant as well as treasure hunts to try and find the missing mourners possibly forgotten in some corner since the French Revolution. This project will be accompanied by an exhibition by Berruyer artist Gilles Gabry who revisits the mourners in a contemporary way, and workshops for young people. A Euroverse/Miniverse exhibition will be proposed in the Sainte Chapelle space based on the 3D digitisation of the mourners.

Partners/Partners in progress: Museums of Bourges/Musée du Berry, tbc Rodin Museum, Le Louvre, MOMA, New York (USA)

European Light Nights



In 2027, 2028 and 2029, Bourges 2028 will turn the Nuits Lumières into an expanded European Light Nights event. We plan to use the projection infrastructure available all year round, and will propose, via calls for projects from the European City of Artists, original visual and sound creations by European artists on the theme of Territories of the Future seen from their own territory. The Nuits Lumières were initiated in Bourges in 2000 and take place annually from July to September.

They consist of seven stations at the city's heritage sites, where projections on the heritage facades tell the story of the city. Before

Covid the festival attracted 200,000 spectators, mainly families and transgenerational audiences.

In 2022, Bourges 2028 proposed creations by contemporary Serbian artist Dejean Stojkov and Lithuanian artist Maksimilianas Prishka, in homage to Novi Sad 2022 and Kaunas 2022, presenting respectively the resilience of the Serbian people beyond the NATO bombardments, and the requests integrating the word «liberty» in the year of Lithuania's entry into the Union in 2004. These two projects made an impression on the Bourges audience because of their content and the different vision these artists gave of Europe. We will develop a series of interactive online video games projected in real time onto the facades of heritage buildings that can be played collaboratively from players all over the world.

Partners/Partners in progress: Ville de Bourges, Antre Peaux, Printemps de Bourges, Magelis Cluster Angoulême

Our (European) Stories



Through an exhibition based on audiovisual archives (cinema, video, photographs), we will develop a history of European, asian and North African immigration in the Cher, linked to the waves of industrialisation of the territory, along Berry Canal, in Mazières, Rosières and Bourges. Poles, Italians, Portuguese, but also Asians and North Africans came to Bourges and settled here. This programme aims to establish a collective reappropriation of two neglected histories: the rich diversity of immigration in the Cher and a very rich but under-valued industrial epic. The project will be based on calls for archive documents, and through Ciclic, the regional film and book agency, which manages and runs a regional programme for the collection, memory and conservation of a remarkable intangible heritage based on filmed images. We will relate this approach to the project Remixing Industrial Pasts: Constructing the Identity of the Miners by Esch 2022, which invited artists, engineers and researchers to work jointly on identity reconstruction.

Partners/Partners in progress: Ciclic - Regional agency for cinema and book, tbc Centre for Contemporary and Digital History (C2DH) of the University of Luxembourg (L)

Art in specific environments

Ageing Artfully



EHPADs (French nursing homes) have the reputation of being places of “the last hour”. Art centres are perceived as austere and inanimate places. Both nursing homes and art centres are places of passage whose image we want to reimagine using art in a way that is intimately linked with the residents. It is not a question of implanting art in an EHPAD, but rather of making it appear because it is already there. The challenge is to bring out forms of life and artistic expression, and to value them as ways of being in the world one last time. A prototype project was designed and implemented in June 2022 with the teams and residents of an EHPAD in Chambéry by the artists Mohamed El Khatib and Valérie Mréjen. The projects are underway with some of Bourges 2028 partners: in Avignon, in Brussels with the Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles, and in Madrid. Bourges 2028 proposes that the two artists develop a project within the largest EHPAD in France, the Bellevue residences, located in Bourges, and two others in the Centre Val de Loire region, and that

the experiences developed between staff, doctors and residents be made accessible either through a digital or physical medium to a wider audience.

Partners/Partners in progress: Zirlib company - artistic direction Mohamed El Khatib, Malraux, scène nationale de Chambéry, Festival d'Avignon, Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles, Résidences de Bellevue, Bourges, ARS Centre Val de Loire, Région Centre Val de Loire

Our Gallery



Bourges 2028 will set up new small art centres in a dozen high schools and colleges that have applied for projects. The art centres will be based on the model of the well-established gallery «La transversale» at Alain Fournier high school in Bourges. In synergy with the National Education Academy in Orléans-Tours, a series of actions of mediation and artistic capacity building for the students will be implemented. The artists of the European City of Artists and Authors will carry out residences and present their work here as well. French artist Eric Minh Cuong Castaing will create a programme for young people with physical and mental disabilities in collaboration with local institutions that provide their medical support, to work on inclusion of disabled youth in schools. The art centres in the schools will be Bourges 2028's ambassadors for the French Ministry of Culture's cultural pass, which will be integrated as a driving force to attract the younger audiences.

Partners/Partners in progress: National Education Academy of Orléans-Tours, Lycée Alain Fournier - La transversale, Shonen Company - Eric Minh Cuong Castaing

Departure Class

Social transformation with art



The number of young people dropping out of school affects all European and French territories. Classe Départ is a national network offering individualised social transformation programmes for young people aged 17 to 26 who have dropped out of school. Through artistic workshops (writing, acting, music, singing, dancing) they are empowered to redevelop personal and collective work objectives. At the end of this 7-month cycle, they present a collective show before an audience. Bourges 2028 will develop one Class Départ per year from 2026 to 2028 with a mixed class of local and European students.

Partners/Partners in progress: Classe Départ network

C-Ware Celebrations

The exhibition proposed in La Borne Ceramic Centre and in Nevers at the Museum of Earthenware (Faïence) will trace the history of those two arts and industries, the interactions of the territory with European or overseas countries that have influenced the techniques and artistic creativity, like Italian, Flemish, Persian and Chinese iconography. La Borne and Nevers have been major centres for ceramics and earthenware respectively since the Middle Ages. Since the 17th century, La Borne has been a hotspot for French ceramics. It has hosted more than 800 artists in residence in recent years, 80

of whom reside in the village, from 13 European nationalities. Nevers, for its part, asserted itself in the 17th century as the French capital of earthenware. The exhibition will be accompanied by workshops for the general public on ceramic and earthenware creation.

Partners/Partners in progress: La Borne Center for contemporary ceramics, Nevers - Museum of earthenware and fine arts, tbc: Vista Alegre/Aveiro (PT), EU Japan Fest (JP)

YourSpace

Rurality and intermediate rural venues



The Abbey of Noirlac, a member of the network of the Association of Cultural Encounter Centres (ACCR), will be the partner to pilot the Bourges 2028 projects related to rurality and to the intermediary places that constitute a very important network in our territory.

Geography: The rural can be seen as the space for smart imagining as opposed to smart working. Following the tradition from Leonardo da Vinci to Gilles Clement, it can be a place of production of vision, flipping the perspective from the city that produces “words” for the countryside, to the rural, the villages, nature that ‘imagine’ the inhabited space; leisure as a place of imagination.

Mobility: Connecting to the Trans Europ Culture / RER bringing people from all over Europe to the countryside, disseminating ideas (Europe/Bourges/Rural space/Bourges/Europe), also in terms of production

Health: Approaching cultural welfare, where along doctors you have artists together in common spaces taking care of the local community (between inhabited areas and nature)

Some proposed activities:

- Creating an exercise of imagination from these places, involving artists (who build their production around the local community involvement)
- Generating a process of ‘assisting’ people by double offer (health/culture – from pill to poem – narratives of wellbeing)
- Working on ‘memory of changing landscape’, bridging the gap of younger generation (leaving the rural areas, called back as producer) and the older (‘owners’ of memories)
- Educational field trip / imagination workshop – trekking as a walking laboratory – for young people from rural areas Rural Rapping: younger rappers (in workshops with poets) rapping in the rurality.

Partners/Partners in progress: Noirlac Abbey, ACCR network, Trans Europe Halles European Network

Connected Micro-Folies



The Micro-Folies network, as mentioned earlier, is a programme of the French Ministry of Culture. Each Micro-Folie is a cultural centre including a digital museum presenting French and European museum collections. In addition to creating content for most of the Bourges 2028 exhibitions, Bourges 2028 will develop several initiatives starting in 2025.

- The three Micro-Folies of Vierzon, Bourges and Nevers will be prototypes from 2025 to develop communities with a number

of European Micro-Folies on the model of the Cafés Europa of Mons 2015. From daily exchanges, shared playlists, live cooking classes, citizen capacity building and artistic exchange programmes will be developed from community to community. Train tours by Trans Europ Culture are envisaged between participants of the Micro-Folies communities.

- We propose a new immersive space linked to our Euroverse in other European Micro-Folies for an immersive presentation of the Bourges 2028 exhibitions
- Bourges 2028 will offer live events that will be broadcast in other French and European Micro-Folies

Partners/Partners in progress: EPPGHV Public establishment of the park and Grande Halle of La Villette - Paris, Micro-Folies Bourges, Vierzon, Nevers, Micro-Folies all around France and Europe

Pompidou/Europe

Decolonising 50 years of video art, new media and cinema

As the Centre Georges Pompidou is temporarily closing its doors for refurbishment, Bourges 2028 proposes a major exhibition based on the new media and cinema collections of the Centre most of which have not been offered outside of Paris and France. The project offers the possibility of continuing a research project initiated in 2017 with the artist Pierre Michelin, in collaboration with David Legrand and Seloua Luste Boulbina, on the decolonisation of collections in national museums.

Partners/Partners in progress: Centre Pompidou, Antre Peaux, ENSA, EMAP European Network

Centre Pompidou @ Palais Jacques Coeur

Exhibition Centre for Design

The Centre Pompidou will set up a seasonal exhibition in Bourges each year from 2024 onwards at the Palais Jacques Coeur, master piece of Renaissance architecture, around design, sustainable design and the rewriting of design by giving women their place. To date, only 15% of the Centre Pompidou's design collections contain works by women artists. The history of architecture and design is very much intertwined with the evolution of modern art, the disciplines intersect, the artists exchange and influence each other. This is why the Musée National d'Art Moderne also has a leading design collection. The Centre Pompidou's design collections are among the most important in the world. They include nearly 8,000 works, representing 900 designers, and range from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day.

Partners/Partners in progress: Centre Pompidou, Centre des Monuments Nationaux - Palais Jacques Coeur, Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine - Paris, ENSA Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Art Bourges, ESAD Ecole Supérieure d'Art et de Design Orléans, European partners tbc

Bourges is a city where people have their say! Perhaps that is why in 2020 our city put participatory democracy at the heart of city life. Doesn't maybe sound so sexy, but actually it is. Drawn by lots, so we could avoid the charge of "the usual suspects", we set up a new style of citizens assembly. We also set up **neighbourhood councils in 6 areas of the city**. These new style assemblies feature people of all ages and from all socio-professional groups.

This approach to citizen participation has also driven our approach to Outreach and even the design of our organisational structure. We want local people to have a say in our ECoC programme too. The other **key building block in our consultation model** was a major survey of local cultural practice in 2021. We benefited from the fact that Bourges – again – was chosen to be a pilot city for a programme of the National Agency for Territorial Cohesion (ANCT) to study the cultural practices of local people. Called "Bourges in common", this extensive survey helped us to understand the cultural expectations of Berruyers. The questions asked were:

How do Berruyers occupy their free time? What are their practices and habits? What knowledge do they have of what exists (or not) in terms of the cultural offer in their area? What are their needs, desires, breaks, and ideas for improving the cultural life of Bourges?

It told us a lot. And it was not always comfortable reading.

The main thing local people told us **was a need to Open Up (Désenclaver)**. The major finding of the Participative Enquiry was that the gap between culture and ordinary people needs to disappear. They want to deliver culture for everyone and not just a perceived cultural elite. And, as we have said previously, the key issue is that Bourges maybe at the very heart of France, but many people see it as "far from the sea, far from the mountains" – kind of in the middle of nowhere. Far from everything. A sleeping city. With a cultural system that is great for a week – when Printemps de Bourges is on. But everything else seems not so hot and to be constructed largely to appeal to tourists and not really to local people.

Hard hitting this may be. But this is actually really helpful because it showed the people of the city are ready for a cultural awakening. And that this what ECoC can bring.

So we built on these 2 major initiatives by setting up a process of involvement and co-creation that would underpin **the cultural reawakening of Bourges and the surrounding area**. Taking us from the middle of nowhere to the heart of France and the heart of Europe. These are the main things we did.

We held consultative workshops with all cultural and community actors in the territory who were keen to be included in the Application. This had a double benefit. To get people to understand what our candidacy could mean to enable them to co-create our project with us. We defined **5 main participation phases** around the years 2022 and 2023. Here they are.

Phase 1

In early 2022, we set up the **Let's choose Bourges 2028 together** phase. We asked local people to choose on the visual identity of the candidacy between 3 proposals made by young graduates of the School for Design and Art (ESAD) in Orléans. More than 3000 voters took part in the online campaign through our social media. Local children were invited to vote for their favourite logo in the classrooms. An educational kit had been given to teachers to explain the European Capital of Culture.

As a result they chose the "leaf" identity, which refers to lightness, protection of the environment, and biodiversity. It was a strong choice for what we want to do with the ECoC bid. Creating a city close to nature and rooted in rurality. The visual identity was revealed on February 14 2022 on the occasion of Valentine's Day around an event "Europe, I love you!". The idea was to get residents to understand that **by choosing Bourges 2028, they were choosing Europe**.

We built on this by taking advantage of the period of our annual music festival Printemps de Bourges in spring 2022 to tell – especially younger – people about the candidacy. This included a major presentation evening at the Maison de la Culture attended by almost 500 people. It was where the title comes from, and how the designated cities can benefit from it. We shared material from Leeuwarden 2018 to show Berruyers that cities with less than 100,000 inhabitants can also deliver every bit an inspirational and transformative programme as can larger metropolises.

Phase 2

In June we inaugurated the **Let's imagine Bourges 2028 together** phase. This involved the three European conferences that we organised on the three axes of our candidacy. The structure was a plenary session where each speaker had about ten minutes. Then in the afternoon, speakers and participants mixed in a joyful brainstorming. To lead the afternoon workshops around the themes discussed in the morning, we used the "fishbowl" technique.

The first conference "Encounters #1" therefore took place at the Maison de la Culture in Bourges and at the Conservatory on the theme of culture as a lever against climate change. It welcomed 17 speakers from 7 different countries, including Lydie Lescarmontier, sponsor of the candidacy and a glaciologist by training. On July 11 and 12, we went to Avignon for "Encounters #2" at the Palais des Papes in partnership with the City of Avignon. The subject was "The European city of artists and authors". Catherine Magnant from the European Commission came to talk to us about European cultural policy. We closed the "Encounters" with the third part at the Abbaye de Noirlac in our own Cher Department on September 20 with a theme of "Inspiring and modelling cities with less than 100,000 people". We welcomed Giovanni Padula who spoke about the experience of Matera 2019.

The three conferences allowed us to create a network of loyal residents who made the effort to come to the three meetings and participate in each workshop. The goal was not for them to simply be spectators of the interventions but also become co-creators

on themes that concern them directly. Barbara, 53, told us: "The Bourges Encounters are made for everyone. They are aimed at every citizen. Everyone can come and bring their ideas, their participation and come to inquire."

Phase 3

During the summer of 2022, we started the **Let's innovate together** phase. This phase was designed to show that even in the application phase we could create innovative projects to give local people a taste of what is possible until and beyond 2028. Mobility is a major challenge for our candidacy and, as shown by the "Bourges in common" study, a central concern for locals. Bourges is a city with an area of 68.74 km² where distances are relatively short. Yet the study "Bourges in common" shows an isolation of Bourges in the minds where the districts are closed in on themselves and where the city centre and the less well-to-do districts in north Bourges do not communicate or very little.

This finding drove us to build the exciting project METRO EUROPA. Bourges 2028 wanted to wink at "demetropolisation" by creating a METRO EUROPA, a fictional and artistic "metro" (to be used as a self-guided walk) in the City of Bourges, combining cultural places, everyday places, heritage sites and unprecedented artistic events. Playfully, local people were invited to follow a marking on the ground symbolised by small coloured "m"s and to look up at the metro station signs strategically placed in front of the places chosen for the route. Three prototype lines were offered to residents during the summer:

- **A blue "Nuits Lumière" line:** to highlight the night show route which highlights - thanks to the mapping technique - emblematic places in the historic centre of Bourges. We discovered the works of Dejan Stojkov (Novi Sad 2022) and Maksimilianas Opiška (Kaunas 2022) on the building of the former Archdiocese. The association Bourges 2028 named the "stations" according to designated ECoCs who provide best practices for Bourges to follow.
- **A pink "Bourges Contemporain" line:** Since 2019, "Bourges Contemporain" has been highlighting contemporary artistic productions in the City and its surroundings during the summer period. Bourges 2028 completed the Bourges Contemporain offer with a "rue d'Auron" station to discover contemporary art galleries and two stations at the Maison de la Culture and the Librairie La Plume du Sarthate, where two mailboxes were installed where people could drop their letters to George Sand and André Malraux.
- **A green line "Gardens":** The public gardens are not much used or even known. Yet they bring a breath of fresh air to Bourges, and by their number, they are essential to the heritage of the city and its region. This Gardens line invited people to stroll through these corners of Eden and enjoy their summer programmes...

To extend METRO EUROPA's low-carbon cultural adventure beyond the urban context of the city of Bourges, we have also created an RER line (Réseau Express Régional), which connects, by biomethane shuttle, the Gardens of the Archdiocese of Bourges to the Abbey of Noirlac, for an afternoon. Generously made available by the RATP dev (Régie autonome des transports Parisiens) for the operation, this shuttle makes it possible to visit treasures of the area, all of which stand out for their environmental and heritage interest, and are rediscovered through the prism of contemporary creation in nature. A cultural mediator accompanied the shuttle to raise awareness and provide answers concerning the environmental, heritage and artistic proposals relating to the sites visited.

These two projects helped local people to rediscover their city and the territory to Berruyers and the inhabitants of Cher. They were the main target of these operations which turned out to be a real success because people constantly asked us if new metro lines and new RER routes were going to be created in the future! This enthusiasm has led us to organise major citizen consultations in autumn 2022 to build the future METRO EUROPA and a new RER route for 2023.

We now want to get out of this experimental phase and reflect with the inhabitants on the future lines of the METRO EUROPA. In this sense, we proposed during the autumn of 2022 AGORAS allowing any citizen to come and build the future METRO EUROPA of 2023. Bourges 2028 offers citizens to become authors, thinkers, architects and manufacturers of new lines in a spirit of openness to Europe. In the context of learning and European networking, it will be a question of imagining the themes of the lines, bringing them to life and animating them. With this project, we push the participation further by offering them to become co-creators of the Bourges 2028 projects. They know better than anyone the forgotten places to be restored, the secret routes that can be practised for walking or cycling in the city, which makes them essential experts to support our core team.

Phase 4

From January 2, 2023, we will enter the **Fingers crossed together for Bourges 2028** phase. This new stage will be symbolised by the demonstration of a 100% electric aeroplane flight, the pipistrelle. The pilot will take our application file with them and will fly over the north of the Department of Cher.

In addition to getting residents on board around 2028 by symbolising the take-off of our candidacy, it is once again a question of positioning ourselves on new mobility by 2030 and 2050. By promoting soft mobility and train travel, we are aware that above all, we must not stigmatise air travel. On the one hand, for reasons of inclusion and accessibility, we know that it is not possible to offer elderly Europeans, families with young children or people with disabilities, trips by train from the confines of Europe over 15 hours. Bourges wants to be a pioneer and therefore plans to teach about the progress of low or nil carbon aviation. This is not a gimmicky flight, we need to show that these are concrete innovations that will make clean aviation possible in several years.

Phase 5

For this phase we enter dreamland. If we are designated as ECoC in late 2023, we will then enter the last phase of this entire application process: **Celebrating with Bourges 2028**. This will be an opportunity to inaugurate a new participation process for the population in the build up years. The European Commission has developed a series of initiatives for the direct representation of citizens in the European policy-making process. Building on the Conference on the future of Europe during the French Presidency, Bourges 2028 will see its governance accompanied by a Council of 32 European citizens (16 from Bourges, 16 from the European Union) for the stages of preparation, implementation and evaluation of the project. This Council will manage and direct projects based on 20% of the total artistic budget. **Innovative participation will be at the heart of our artistic programme creation.**



Direct involvement of citizens in a European citizen council



Give nature rights in Europe

European scale up of Parlement de la Loire methodology on 5 major European rivers
watersheds: Rhine, Elbe, Pô, Danube, Dniepr



Trans Europe Culture

Bourges 2028: the first low carbon ECoC at the center of a European rail spider for low carbon transportation and an artistic experience starting from home





Gares végétales: the climate change hubs of Bourges 2028 giving an aesthetic shock with vegetal and landscape artists, and positive alternatives for 2030 objectives of the European Union



Printemps de l'Europe

Bourges 2028 is the first ECoC to give music the place it deserves and that it actually has in the CCI of Europe: 25% of the creation budget will be devoted to music and contemporary music



Artists at the center of the ECoC

The Hôtel Dieu will host the legacy of Bourges 2028: a European City of Artists and Authors, a service center for artists to enable them to create and disseminate on a pan-European scale. Two other creative districts will reshape the urbanity of the city



« You must understand that
what is happening here is a
certain adventure probably
unique in the whole world. »

André Malraux

Inauguration of the first Maison de la
Culture in Bourges, April 18, 1964.

BID BOOK TEAM

**Pascal Keiser, Louise Tournillon,
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The participants of the 3 European participatory conferences in Bourges, Avignon, Noirlac

The 14 sister cities generating ideas and innovation

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