

RAVELLO LAB – International Forum
**URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS, CREATIVE ECOSYSTEMS
AND SOCIAL COHESION**
European Cultural Policy, from Crisis to Development
Ravello (Salerno, Italy), 27-29 October 2011

Federculture, the European University Centre for Cultural Heritage and FormezItalia are joint organisers of an initiative whose aim is to analyse and exchange experiences in the field of cultural management at an international level: the **Ravello Lab International Forum**.

The topic chosen for the sixth edition of the Ravello LAB International Forum, which is scheduled to take place in Ravello on 27-29 October 2011, is:

URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS , CREATIVE ECOSYSTEMS AND SOCIAL COHESION

The economic and financial crisis that recently hit the whole world's economies has induced us all to give serious consideration to the need for new paradigms as the basis for new strategies of sustainable development (there has been serious talk in some academic circles about the possibility of "serene negative growth", in which the cultural element would play a significant role). This international crisis has impacted drastically on wide swathes of the population, singling out young people for especially severe treatment, as they run the risk of long-term exclusion from the labour market. It is here that both the profit and the non-profit sectors of the entire knowledge economy have the potential to play an important role.

There is a growing sense of conviction in western economies that no truly new perspective of development can take hold without including culture and the creative industries. In both the **Lisbon Strategy** and the **European Agenda for Culture**, the European Union has confirmed its support for development based on knowledge and innovation for competitive, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, generating increased employment and **social cohesion**.

The same perspective was adopted in the European Commission's Green Paper *Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries*, the focus of much of the work at the 2010 edition of Ravello Lab.

In this context, the Ravello LAB International Forum sets out to make a useful contribution to reorienting public policies focusing on the relationship between culture, creative industries and local development, as well as to increase awareness that it is here that the European economy will make or break its future competitive capacity on the international scene.

To achieve this, the Ravello Lab agenda envisages tackling specific issues identified from the targets established by the European institutions, focusing primarily on how the processes of urban transformation relate to the rise of cultural industries and how new social technologies impact on geographical areas, on the forms of production and, last but not least, on the quality of human relationships (**creative ecosystems**).

The forthcoming edition of Ravello LAB will also offer an opportunity to examine the issues raised by the **European Year of Volunteering**, in particular how it relates to cultural and socio-economic



development policies, emphasising the possibilities that this area of activity holds out for non-profit organisations – especially those involving young people – to achieve growth.

Another important topic for the Forum will be the **quality of training** available for those whose work in both the public and the private sectors involves dealing with a new vision of culture as a driver of local development.

Ravello's geographical location and cultural traditions naturally also encourage the Lab to spotlight **Euro-Mediterranean issues**: development policies based on culture may well constitute a viable model for co-operation that the EU in general – and Italy in particular – has every interest in promoting, in order to secure sustainable, inclusive growth for the countries in the region.

Methodology

The general consensus that Ravello LAB plays a useful purpose derives from the clear strategic vision expressed in its aims and from the participation of public administration decision-makers, scholars and private-sector operators committed to making meaningful contributions and proposals based on concrete experiences.

The agenda for each edition of the International Forum is drawn up by an Academic Committee chaired by Professor Pier Luigi Sacco and submitted to an eminent international Steering Committee for its approval.

Each edition ends with a summary of the proceedings (the *Ravello LAB Recommendations*), which are disseminated suitably, so as to constitute the core of the political agendas pursued by the various different levels of institutions responsible for shaping public development policies.

Over the years, the Community that has come together at Ravello LAB has developed into an invaluable heritage of contacts and experiences that is often used to identify common ground for future developments, based on exchanging experiences and good practices and sharing innovative projects at European level.

The European Union and the six-month Presidency

In recent editions, Ravello Lab has built on its belief in the idea of gradually establishing a living laboratory to serve European policies for development focused on culture and the knowledge economy. To this end, it has embarked on a special relationship with the European Commission, with the invaluable assistance of the European Parliament Information Office in Italy, achieving inclusion in the series of events supported by the six-month Presidency of the EU Council (Sweden in 2009 and Belgium in 2010).

Ravello Lab now aims to continue along this path, developing the contacts already established with **Poland**, so as to be included in the agenda of its semester of European Presidency in 2011.