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How culture can strengthen social resilience in the Baltic Sea region



Kiel (ots) -

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The Baltic Sea region is a unique area of ecological and cultural diversity. A total of eight European Union states border the Atlantic Ocean's inland sea in the north of the continent. More than 80 million people live in this region. The cities and municipalities here do not always have sufficient resources to launch and realise cultural projects. The impact of even small impulses can therefore be enormous. This is where the BSR Cultural Pearls project comes in. It recognises smaller towns and municipalities in the Baltic Sea region that promote social resilience through culture and creativity.

"Social resilience is important because communities in the Baltic Sea region are facing challenges such as geopolitical uncertainty, climate change and economic pressures", explains Felix Schartner Giertta, BSR Cultural Pearls Project Coordinator at the Council of the Baltic Sea States Secretariat. "Smaller towns are also struggling with ageing populations, out-migration and limited opportunities. Strong, adaptable communities help to overcome these challenges together and make the region more inclusive, sustainable and fit for the future."

The project focuses on cooperation and encourages local decision makers to work more closely with citizens and the cultural sector. A visit to Kiel shows just how successful this can be. On a cloudy, rainy day, the huge graffiti on the wall of a playground acts like a battery charger for the eyes and the soul. Almost 100 square metres in size, the combination of various maritime motifs results in a picture that features scenes from the Pirates of the Caribbean movie franchise as well as comic-like depictions of animals that inhabit the nearby Baltic. The graffiti, on the Lerchenstraße playground, is a joint project by well-known local street artists and the Trauernde Kinder Schleswig-Holstein association.

Only a short walk away, in the city's theatre, a small music ensemble and several children are engaged in a rehearsal for 'Nixe Kieliane sucht die Ostseeperle' (Kieliane the mermaid searches for the Baltic Sea pearl). It's a mobile opera featuring sounds of the sea that were compiled by third-grade pupils during a project week. "The children have relatively little prior knowledge, but they are incredibly open-minded", says the opera's composer, Thomas Dorsch. "And you can really work with the children in the most diverse fields." In addition to supporting participating cities, the project, which is co-financed by the European Union (Interreg), is creating a permanent network that increases local and international visibility and makes the region more resilient, while strengthening quality of life, a sense of belonging and trust.

"This project has really put the spotlight on culture and social cohesion in Kiel", says Annette Wiese-Krukowska, Head of the Department of Culture and Creative City of the award-winning city of Kiel. "It also illustrates very well how important this is, especially in these times, and how it also contributes to democratic thinking and action. And that will continue to have an impact."

Contact:

Medieninhalte



The Baltic Pearl graffiti on the Lerchenstraße playground in Kiel was created by children and young people in collaboration with the Schleswig-Holstein Mourning Children's Association and the Kiel graffiti studio Vanartizm. Photographer: EU4Regions / More information via ots and www.presseportal.de/en/nr/177283 / The use of this image for editorial purposes is permitted and free of charge provided that all conditions of use are complied with. Publication must include image credits.



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Annette Wiese-Krukowska, Head of the Department of Culture and Creative City of the award-winning city of Kiel, holds the 'BSR Cultural Pearl 2024' award in her hands at Kiel City Hall. Photographer: EU4Regions / More information via ots and www.presseportal.de/en/nr/177283 / The use of this image for editorial purposes is permitted and free of charge provided that all conditions of use are complied with. Publication must include image credits.



Rehearsals for the children's opera 'Nixe Kieliane sucht die Ostseeperle'. The mobile opera has been in the repertoire of Kiel Opera since January 2025. Photographer: EU4Regions / More information via ots and www.presseportal.de/en/nr/177283 / The use of this image for editorial purposes is permitted and free of charge provided that all conditions of use are complied with. Publication must include image credits.



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