

THE CITY AS A POWERHOUSE OF INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

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Good morning.

It is a great honour for me to be here for the opening of the Smart City Forum and the Beijing Design Week. This is a great opportunity for Barcelona to show you its creativity and culture as the Guest City at this year's Beijing Design Week.

On behalf of the Barcelona Delegation, I would like to thank the organisers and the citizens of Beijing for their wonderful welcome.

In this introduction I want to tell you about the success story that is Barcelona today. I would like to explain why Barcelona is a city where innovation and creativity have always been linked to development.

For many years, culture has been the backbone to this progress. Above and beyond economic growth, culture has also made Barcelona a dynamic, innovative city that attracts talent, and where everyone can express their own cultural identity.

With 5 main questions, I will answer you explaining how Barcelona, how the city is a powerhouse of innovation and creativity.

THE FIRST QUESTION

WHICH IS THE TRADITION OF CREATIVITY IN BARCELONA ?

First, I would like to look back at our history and the creative tradition that has brought us here today. Our culture has Mediterranean roots. Barcelona is on the shore of a sea that was a cradle of civilisation and culture.

Trade and culture have defined the peoples on both sides of the Mediterranean. We inherited arts and creativity from the Greeks and Romans to communicate with the world, and today arts and creativity have brought us to Beijing.

Barcelona has two thousand years of history. We are proud of our cultural heritage, which lies at the heart of our expressive, creative city today. Catalan culture has received many contributions over the centuries.

Barcelona today is made up of many different layers. The beautiful murals painted in our twelfth-century churches, the innovative architecture in our fourteenth-century palaces and our many artistic geniuses are all examples of our culture and creativity.

For centuries Barcelona has used culture as its showcase to the world. Our culture is the main feature of our identity as a community and as a city.

The one great moment that defines Barcelona's creativity and innovation is the twentieth century. Barcelona leapt forward thanks to talented geniuses. This was not spontaneous, but grew in a context that fostered artistic expression.

Barcelona became a benchmark for modernity thanks to creators like innovative architect Antoni Gaudí; artist Pablo Picasso, who never forgot his early years here; and pioneer Joan Miró. For me, the artist of the 20th century.

These are the main examples of how Barcelona fostered genius and creativity at a key time in our development as an innovative, creative city.

THE SECOND QUESTION

WHICH IS OUR OUTLINE OF CULTURE TODAY ?

Thanks to this past tradition, Barcelona today is a superb example of how a city can use culture and creativity as a key vector for growth. But, what defines Barcelona today as a city of knowledge and innovation?

First, our architectural heritage is fundamental to Barcelona's creative character. The city is an open-air museum where you can find work by Gaudí, our great Gothic cathedrals and the remains of our medieval wall.

Second, Barcelona is an exemplary Smart City. Technology and innovation are changing our metropolis. We are pioneers in making our citizens' lives more efficient and sustainable. My colleague Vicent Guallart, Barcelona's Chief Architect, will be explaining more about this in his talk this morning.

Third, Barcelona has a vibrant street culture. It is the city of festivals: we have almost 150 music, film, circus and new-technology festivals every year. These festivals see culture as a fun, social, participatory tool that attracts lots of visitors from all around the world. City streets become the stage for culture and help project our international image.

Fourth, Barcelona has a rich ecosystem of organisations and associations. A recent study found that ten per cent of Barcelona residents belong to a cultural association. This high

level of cultural involvement is key to the city's dynamic, creative character. It is vital to get all citizens involved in culture.

And Fifth, we are determined to be a true culture lab. Great creative cities not only spread culture but also produce it. Cities have to create structures to support artists' work and provide the necessary conditions, so that talent, creativity and innovation can shine and take shape. Artists and creatives should always be at the centre of the city's cultural and artistic production. Over eight years ago Barcelona set up the Creation Factories program. Old factories were renovated by the City Council and turned into a network of work spaces for artists and creators. These over forty Art factories, all around the city, are related to different artistic languages. They are poles of attraction for talent in Barcelona. I encourage you to find out more about the Art Factories project to understand our city's creative character.

These are the 5 fundamental sides to our character as a creative city.

THE THIRD QUESTION

WHICH IS, FOR US, THE INTERNATIONAL SCOPE AND WHAT IS THE BARCELONA PROJECT IN BEIJING ?

Well. Like all creative and innovative cities, Barcelona needs an international scope for its culture. I would like to talk about this international scope as a key point for our model of cultural development. In the twentieth century it is impossible to imagine a cultural city growing in isolation. You cannot create a viable cultural and creative city without international contacts, without international links.

Every year Barcelona welcomes 8.5 million visitors from around the world, who are interested in our culture and creativity. They are a huge asset for our culture's international scope.

Even more important is the way our leading cultural spaces (our major museums, our opera house, our music auditorium, our leading theatres, etcetera) have joined international cultural and artistic networks.

Cities must rise to the challenge of joining these great creative highways in today's world. Our desire to project our culture worldwide is what brought us here to Beijing. Thanks to the Ramon Llull Institute, and his director, Mr. Àlex Susanna, Barcelona has come to Beijing Design Week with a selection of the very best of our city's design, creativity and innovation.

I urge you to discover the project we have brought to Beijing, That includes 5 exhibitions, 17 talks and over 20 activities throughout the city. The Barcelona Pavilion is in the Water Tank in District 751. It includes the exhibition *"Barcelona: A Future Inspired by Design"*,

which presents the city as a rich ecosystem for design and creativity. The Pavilion has a packed agenda of activities and talks by the leading names on our cultural and creative scene.

Barcelona is also presenting 3 projects in the Dashilar district, offering a fascinating insight into our emerging young artists. The most visible sign of our tradition of street culture is the very special giant horse we have brought to Beijing. We are sure it will be very popular.

All this effort only makes sense if we manage to continue our legacy beyond Beijing Design Week. We share many strategic objectives, and we hope it will be the start of an intense cultural and creative exchange between the two cities: Beijing and Barcelona.

THE FOURTH QUESTION

WHICH IS OUR NEW and STRATEGIC DESIGN PROJECT ?

I now want to talk about a strategic project for Barcelona that goes right to the heart of this Forum. A major new design building opens in Barcelona on December this year: the BARCELONA DESIGN HUB.

This new space will help form the creative bridge we are building between our two cities. This major cultural space occupies over 25,000 square metres and, will be the main entranceway for creativity and innovation in Barcelona, as a cultural centre devoted exclusively to the world of design.

It encompasses the decorative arts, architecture and new digital technologies. All very much in keeping with Beijing Design Week.

The design industry includes the most creative and dynamic communities in our cities. The Barcelona Design Hub will be a new meeting-point for creative industries in Barcelona.

A recent study by the city's development agency (Barcelona Activa) found that eleven per cent of Barcelona's working population works in the creative industries. This includes not only the traditional creative industries but also videogames, software, animation, electronic publishing and research and development.

The new Barcelona Design Hub has three components: three institutions that guarantee the future of the design industry in Barcelona. **The first** is the FAD. This association of craftspeople and creators in Barcelona is over a hundred years old. It brings together artists and professionals working in different fields of design. **The second** is the Barcelona Design Centre. This private organisation brings together entrepreneurs linked to the design industries who have played a vital role in the huge development of the design industry in Barcelona. **And third**, the Design Museum. It contains collections in the

decorative arts, textile, graphic design and ceramics that have been put together for eighty years through purchases and donations.

Please come and visit it when you are next in Barcelona !

THE FIFTH QUESTION

WHICH ARE OUR MAJOR FUTURE CHALLENGES ?

To conclude my speech I would like to set out the major future challenges I foresee for creative, innovative cities like Barcelona. A creative city has to be able to create the ideal ecosystem for cultural creation. This means attracting and retaining creative talent and being a recognised producer of culture.

This is not easy given the large number of cities in the world today vying to be a creative city that attracts talent. Creating this ecosystem means cultivating a city's own cultural heritage, getting all citizens involved in their city's cultural life (in the broadest sense) and creating large cultural spaces of excellence with international connections.

A creative, innovative city has to make its own voice heard in major international flows of creation and debate. We live in what some have called a "Global Village", where the messages that are heard are cities' own genuine stories. If we want a voice on the global stage, we have to promote and develop our own cultural heritage.

Let me set out five key vectors for cities wanting to compete globally in the fields of creation and creativity.

The first key vector is internationalisation, because a city's projects have to expand. The city has to promote its creativity on the best circuits and be a powerhouse for local development. It has to link all the talent it attracts to its own local talent and help it develop and forge international ties.

The Second key vector. Creativity and innovation should be boosted through different artistic languages. I am talking about multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity. The most radical creativity is now found on the interface between different artistic areas, in work spaces where different professionals can join forces to share their knowledge.

The third key vector. To be fully connected worldwide, a city and its creative talent need to form part of professional networks. This way, they can update their knowledge and find joint solutions. We call this "shared intelligence". New dynamic partnerships help let us collaborate beyond competing. New technologies open minds and lead to highly innovative working communities, and to creative, educational, social, academic, business communities. Today, models of collaboration include figures like co-production, co-participation or co-financing.

The fourth key vector: This model has to strive towards excellence and quality. This means adding value to each and every phase in cultural production to build this cultural lab.

Finally, **the fifth key vector:** Public-private collaboration is key to Barcelona's success. Our hybrid model means a sustainable city and projects. The public sector has to create the necessary structures so that creativity can flourish. Private companies have to invest if they want to get an economic and social return they can then reinvest in society. In the English-speaking world, we talk about the three **Ps**: Public & Private Partnership.

[CLOSURE AND FAREWELL]

To conclude my speech I would like to transmit that Barcelona is delighted to be the Guest City at Beijing Design Week and is enthusiastic about sharing its experience and knowledge.

Later, our Mayor, Mr. Xavier Trias, will talk about Barcelona as a Smart City. In the XXI century, Barcelona wants to lead a new urban revolution building a city made for the people and with the people.

We want to inspire a new urban model based on mobile and smart city technology, social innovation and advanced services. And for those reasons, Barcelona is proud to be the Mobile World Capital, and is recognised as the first European Capital of innovation.

Thank you very much for your attention.