DIARY GDANSK- Poland, October 2-4, 2019

It was my first Urbact meeting on Commons; this one was held in Gdansk. As a lawyer working for the Municipality of the city of Amsterdam I was a member of the Amsterdam delegation together with my colleagues Nathalie van Loon and Sandra van den Berg. My job is to produce review the legal instruments we have in Amsterdam for facilitating the Urban Commons. The aim is to create a legal framework, together with the lead expert Christian Iaione and the lawyers of the six other cities involved in Urbact, benefitting not only the Amsterdam Commons but Urban Commons in the whole of Europe.

The seven European cities working together in this project are: Naples (Lead Partner, Nicola), Barcelona, Gent, Gdansk, Iasi, Presov and Amsterdam.

The host City of Gdansk (Magda) did a great job: she put up an interesting program. Gdansk is a very nice and clean city, well restored after World War II. The inner city looks like a combination of Belgium and Austrian cities, and also the inner city of Amsterdam. It is a modern and dynamic European city.



On the first night we had a very nice informal dinner meeting. The next morning we met the group by the Neptune fountain on Dlugi Targ square, see picture. We met here every morning, and walked to the various meeting locations from there. The first day, we started the conference in the city hall, where we were welcomed by a deputy mayor and members of the city council.

In the afternoon we had an interesting lecture given by Peter Wolkowinski about Commons and values. What are the important values, why are we doing this urban project on Commons? It gave us a good reflection, and for me was a good introduction to the subject.

After that we visited some project sites of the pilots of Gdansk. The neighborhood houses are introduces to create cohesion in residential areas. It is a good working concept here in Gdansk.

In the Netherlands the concept of neighborhood houses was very successful in the seventies, eighties and nineties of the 20th century. The use of these institutions is declining, but it is very possible that we will see a revival, now that the neoliberal market policy of our government is a total failure.

What I take home from the visit to Gdansk is the following:

I was rather skeptical about Europe and European politics. But the Gdansk visit has changed my mind. It was very inspiring to see all those motivated people from seven different countries who struggle with similar questions and work together to find solutions and agreements.

Thank you Gdansk and the Urbact project!

Amsterdam, Marcel Kampers, alias Marcello

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