

# Southern Catalonia, Knowledge Region

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# Culture and Knowledge, future guarantee

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## Editorial

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“Culture or civilization, taken in its broad ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” This is one of the broadest and most basic definitions of culture that the anthropologist Edward Burnett Tylor formulated in 1871. Culture is a phenomenon that shapes identity, and is one of the strengths of European society. The European Commission’s work plan for culture (2015–2018) aims to strengthen the collective identity as a mechanism for social cohesion and well-being.

Eurostat and UNESCO publications on cultural indicators reveal a picture of the reality in different European regions. The cultural level of a state reflects its level of development. Development is also measured in terms of knowledge and investment in the cultural sector. Understanding culture as a holistic hub from which build bridges with other sectors such as education, entrepreneurship and creativity or innovation. For this reason, cultural indicators are essential if an appropriate cultural policy for our region is to be developed and implemented.

This edition makes a reflection on culture. First of all, there is an article which highlights the link between economic and cultural development. Moreover, Xavier Graset, proposes his

view about culture and its role in Southern Catalonia. In addition, in the section on Good practices, Flemish Brabant is shown to be a paradigm of how culture can contribute to regional economic and social development. Finally, in the section Discovering Southern Catalonia, Tarraco Viva is presented as a representative example of a cultural event in our region.

**What is your cultural vision of Southern Catalonia?** It would be a pleasure to receive your opinions and comments so that a knowledge region can be developed that integrates us all.

**Francesc Xavier Grau Vidal**

# Art, culture and knowledge

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by Francesc Xavier Grau Vidal

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Art and culture are the strengths of Europe. They are a source of values and identity, as well as contributing to well-being, social cohesion and a sense of belonging. History has made us what we are today and, within history, the Greek, Roman and Arab civilisations have defined the foundations of our modern societies. Therefore, it is not surprising that the greatest concentration of cultural and artistic wealth occurs in large European countries such as Italy and Spain, countries with the greatest presence on UNESCO's list of world heritage. And our region of Southern Catalonia contributes significantly to this list through Poblet, rupestrian art and Roman Tarraco.

However, the fact that this heritage and the great artists, creators and thinkers of the past have been bequeathed to us and form an integral part of our history does not guarantee a similar level of cultural achievement in current society. Societies grow and flourish, but they also wither and die. And, today's cultural indicators are not those that one would expect from a country with our history, heritage and current wealth.

Eurostat's annual publication on cultural indicators paints a picture of the situation in the different member states, and it is not flattering for Spain or, I suspect, for Catalonia either. Despite being one of the largest countries in Europe, fifth in terms of GDP and population, Spain occupies only twentieth place in terms of cultural activity in relation to population or GDP.

Economic development is of little use if it is not accompanied by cultural and artistic development. The objectives of wealth creation must be linked to objectives of cultural creation and demand. Otherwise, our society would become a mere producer-consumer of cultural products, subordinated to more advanced ones. A clear indicator of the role that art plays in society is the demand for and supply of courses in higher art, which today have been totally distanced from a university that, despite this, is internationally competitive in the fields of humanistic and scientific knowledge. We must change this situation and

ensure that cultural and artistic activity takes place alongside the development of a knowledge-based society. In spite of all our history and cultural wealth, knowledge and the economy will be worthless if we do not develop culturally.

**Francesc Xavier Grau Vidal**

# Culture is also the best social policy for Southern Catalonia

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by Xavier Graset i Forasté

In her 1980s book *La cultura rima amb confitura* (Culture rhymes with confiture), Patrícia Gabancho's response to French author Marc Fumaroli's polemic *L'Etat culturel*, Gabancho systematically reflects on the role that culture should and does play in each society. This is a question that each generation is called upon to reflect, particularly in Catalonia. A look at history highlights the attacks that have been aimed at our culture, which range from being on the end of direct attempts at annihilation to being permanently and continually side-lined and ignored. And now is, at the beginning of the new century when the channels of cultural distribution have been changed by latest twists and turns in the Catalan political situation and by the global transformation resulting from the advent of the new technologies, the question is what does *culture* rhyme with now?

In the current situation, then, of budget cuts, of austerity, of curriculums that exclude the humanities, what role is given to culture? In what direction is it drifting? Is it in the hands of the market, the same market that now allows sponsors to dictate content? Concerts are now directly organised by beer brands. Who are the influencers on the internet? How are they created? Has technology also broken the paths of dissemination, has it made them more accessible for everyone? How have the young come to believe the idea that everything on the internet, music, cinema, books, is free?

Does our current situation reflect the one described by Gabancho in the 1980s? That is, do we still have a language in peril and a culture that remains undervalued and ignored by journalists and politicians thanks to its desertion by intellectuals and to the absence of a ruling class?

Do the various levels of government in this country engage in a harmful, invasive and ideologizing cultural policy such as that criticised in France by Fumaroli?

"Why did no Spanish writer attend the funeral of Jordi Sarsanedas? Why do Estopa, who were schooled under the language immersion policy, speak Spanish on the Catalan

television station TV3? Is Catalan culture a culture of militants? How many cultures are we talking about in the case of Catalonia? Two, i.e. a state of cultural diglossia? Three, i.e. a multicultural society? Why is it the case that in Catalonia Ana María Matute should be unaware of her contemporary Maria Aurèlia Capmany". Julià Guillamon compiles the questions raised by Gabancho. Are not the works of Carmen Posadas of a similarly low-brow quality to those of Maria de la Pau Janer, whose novel caused Juan Marsé to resign from the jury of the Planeta Prize? What motivates the contempt towards Catalan culture expressed by Félix de Azúa, a Catalan professor of the Spanish language?

How can we keep going in such a situation, with an industry that plays with one arm tied behind its back? Can we recreate the Noucentist enthusiasm for order, or is culture inevitably going to lead tension? Do we know how to do anything other than either moan or say nothing at all? Is the garden of culture, as some imagined, a private and untouchable garden?

To these questions, which allow us to reflect on the direction taken by current Catalan culture, we must add questions relating specifically to Southern Catalonia. Given our conviction that the best social policy is cultural and that creativity is the best tool is for competing in a globalized world, we have to ensure that we do not continue to lose ground.

In Southern Catalonia, we have long and rich cultural heritage some of which is even listed by UNESCO, for example Roman Tarragona, Poblet and cave paintings, but there remains much to do. There is much to be rediscovered. We have to ensure that, more than just being on a list, these spaces are regarded as assets to be known and understood by everyone. They need to be our points of reference and we need to work in many different ambits if we are to dignify, reclaim, explain and disseminate them.

The same can be said for our geniuses. The personalities of Pau Casals, Gaudí, Picasso and Miró bring tourists from far and wide to El Vendrell, Reus, Horta de Sant Joan and Mont-roig and the same should be the case for Rovira i Virgili, Montserrat Abelló, Zoraida Burgos, Gerard Vergés, Joan Sales and Carlos Barral, to name but a few. Such figures and others ultimately have an important stimulating effect on the region, they boost our self-esteem, as it were.

We have to know what we have given as a culture and what to continue giving. That said, in addition to from the stimulus provided by names and heritage, culture also needs infrastructures and channels. For example, libraries and museums have transformed and changed the way they are used and understood since the days of the Catalan Commonwealth. They are meeting spaces that generate culture and debate, that allow us to keep learning.

To be in the wheel of the big productions, you need to have the spaces where they can be seen and we can probably say that over the years this has been rectified. However, the next step for these auditoriums and theatres, these libraries and museums, is for them to become centres of production and creation and places that give birth to and enable participation online.

The way that film distribution has changed is another sign of cultural change; the multiplexes finished off the little cinemas but now they are having to rethink their

operations, given that digital platforms have restricted this social experience into the home.

It is clear that in some disciplines it is very difficult to “compete” with a creative area that has the volume and strength of Barcelona, but it is not impossible. Look at what the Gironans have done with the Temporada Alta festival, which has become the autumn theatre festival that Barcelona doesn’t have. Here it pains me to see how Reus, and by extension the Camp de Tarragona region, have let slip through their fingers the opportunity to show off our traditions in a similar manner. But we must not moan about what we do not have, instead we must turn around and strengthen what we do have.

Many years ago in Southern Catalonia we also had summer festivals, which now seem to be the new formula for mass consumption at that time of the year. Aside from fashions and trends, we have to be able to find mechanisms to attract the public and to support those who are trying to make it on their own.

It is clear that popular culture is incredibly rich in our villages and cities, with traditional processions of giants and beasts, music and dance. Human towers, choirs, theatre groups, music groups, examples of strength and public involvement that have few parallels elsewhere in the country.

Popular culture also transforms itself and invents tradition; just as batucada drumming has spread throughout the country, will we also see *holly parties* as another cultural act that is representative of modern Catalonia?

In any case, culture understood as a free act with public involvement means putting cultural tools in the hands of everyone to create a common asset that strengthens and brings together society. This is how I would like to see us evolve in the immediate future.

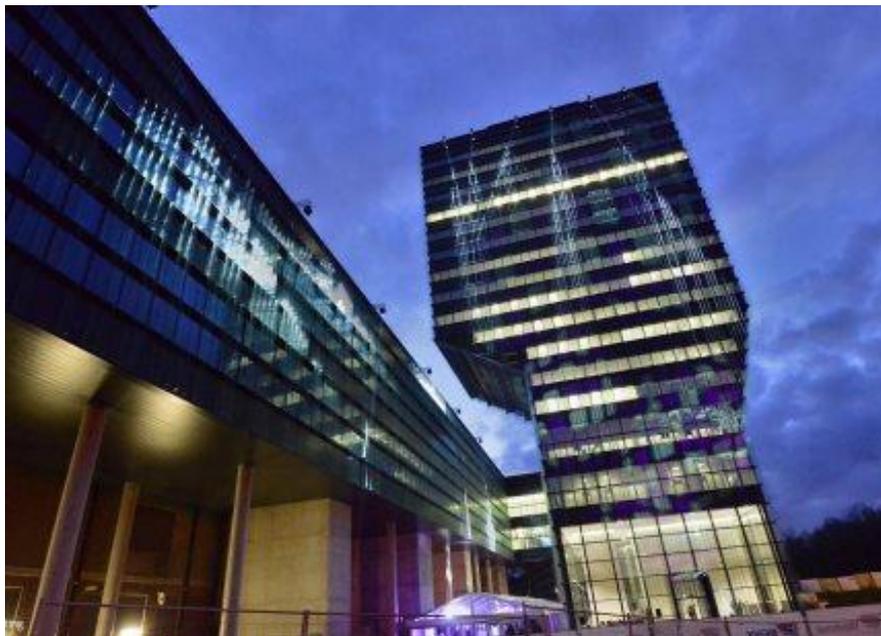
**Xavier Graset i Forasté**

Journalist

# Good practices and knowledge regions: Flemish Brabant

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The main theme of this edition – culture – reveals Flemish Brabant as an example of interest in this field.

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Good practices can be identified by studying other regions of knowledge. The case of Flemish Brabant is an example of how culture can contribute to regional economic and social development.

## **Economic and sectoral considerations**

Flemish Brabant is one of the five provinces that make up the Flemish region of Belgium. According to the European terminology of territorial units, it is a NUTS2 administrative division. It has a surface area of 2,106 square kilometers and is home to 1,129,849 inhabitants (100,291 in the city of Leuven), making it an area of influence around Brussels.

Flemish Brabant represents 9.94% of the population and 10.81% of the state GDP (€39,800 per capita). It has a high level of economic tertiarisation, but both industry and agriculture play an important role.

## **Educational system**

The University of Louvain (KU Leuven) is the most important institution in the educational system of Flemish Brabant. Founded in 1425, it is one of the most important universities in the world, as it is currently in 47th position in THE ranking of universities and between 51 and 60 in the THE ranking of World Universities' Reputation in 2018. It has a total of 44,412 students (of which 15% are international) and 1,200 employees.

The offer of courses is completed by university institutes that provide specialized training. Currently, the centers that make up this university system and host more than 25,000

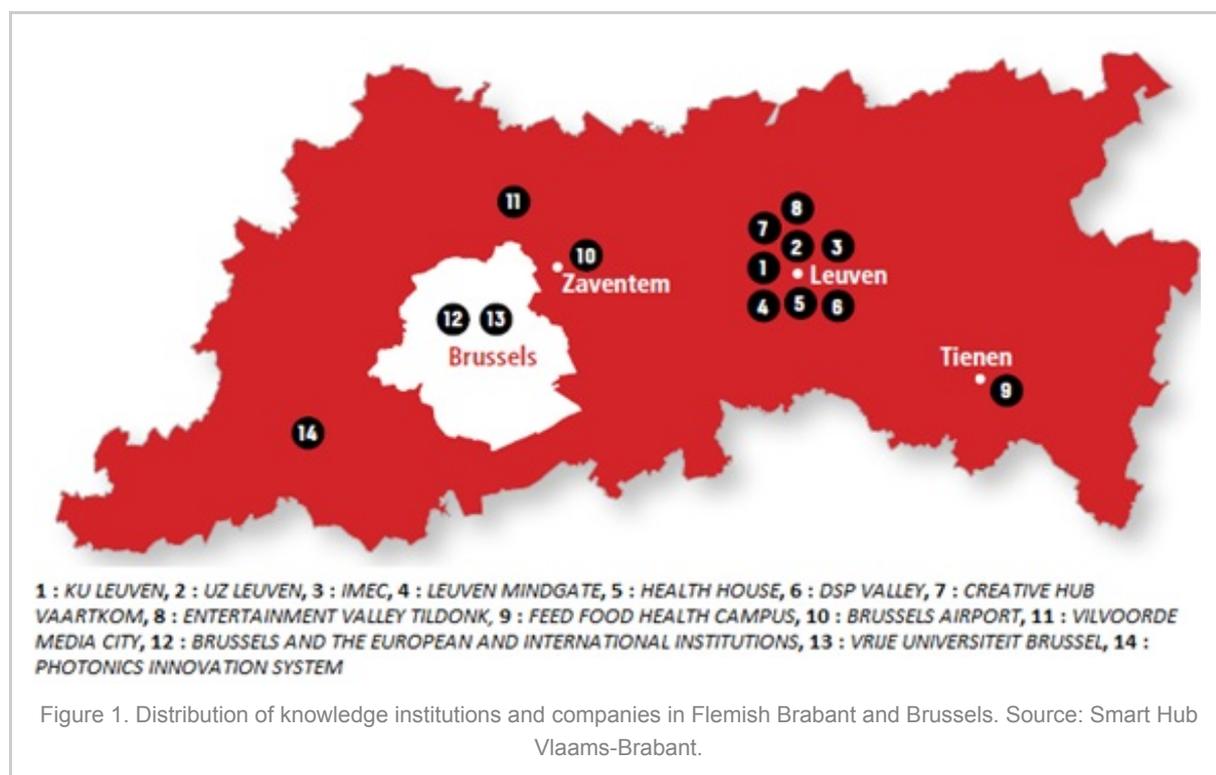
students are Erasmus University College Brussels, Group T – Leuven International University College, Hogeschool – Universiteit Brussel, Leuven University College and Luca School of Arts.

## Research, development and innovation (R&D&I)

The regional R&D&I system in Flemish Brabant receives an investment of 3.76% of the regional GDP, which is higher than the average for Flanders (2.37%) and Belgium (2.21%). The system is made up of the University of Louvain, which was chosen as the most innovative university in Europe in the 2018 edition of Reuters Top 100: Europe's Most Innovative Universities Rank, various highly reputable research centers (imec, VIB, IMinds), and a large number of science parks, incubators and spin-offs.

As a result of the different regional policies and strategies, this region has become a unique concentration of innovative institutions and companies, as can be seen in Figure 1. R&D&I focuses on its areas of specialization, which are organized into five Smart hubs (or clusters): health, logistics, agri-food, sustainable technologies and the creative industry.

A total of 56% of the employed population work in science and technology, which is an indication of the region's capacity. Also noteworthy is the fact that 1.83% of the total workforce are researchers, a figure much higher than the state average (0.78%), and that the Flemish population are generally very well educated (44.3% have completed university studies).



The combination of the R&D&I system in the knowledge institutions presented above and the human capital in the Flemish region facilitates regional knowledge-based strategies and actions. The European context is the perfect setting for promoting new joint projects. Flemish Brabant has not missed this opportunity and, so far, has been involved in more than 500 European projects for which it has received more than 81 million euros since 2007.

## Smart specialization strategy (RIS3)

Flemish Brabant does not have its own intelligent specialization strategy (RIS3), which is drawn up by the Flemish Government and includes the provinces (NUTS2) of Antwerp, Limburg, East Flanders, West Flanders and **Flemish Brabant**.

The regional objectives that condition Flemish Brabant are the seven priorities of the Flemish RIS3: circular economy, transition to industry 4.0, welfare 4.0, energy transition, intelligent housing, permanent education and intelligent mobility.

The broad outlines of the Flemish RIS3 strategy are represented by the five smart hubs mentioned above. Flemish Brabant has opted to take advantage of its strategic location to by undertake projects and strategies that one of the most important centers of logistical knowledge in Europe.

## Governance

The Provincial Government of Flemish Brabant, elected by the inhabitants of the province, is the body responsible for developing and implementing economic, social and cultural policies, coordinating actions with local stakeholders and financing regional projects.

It is supported by the Flemish Brabant Regional Agency (POM). Created by the provincial government itself, the Agency is the body responsible for the province's socio-economic policy, and focuses on the development and sustainable management of business parks, business support and strategies with the economic fabric.

The responsibility for innovation lies with the Department of Economics, Science and Innovation (EWI), which reports directly to the Flemish Ministry of Labour, Economy, Innovation and Sport. Therefore, regional strategies and actions have to be structured on the basis of the Flemish government's guidelines.

In addition to the provincial government and the POM, the system of governance also includes the Flemish Brabant Chamber of Commerce (VOKA) and the University of Louvain. From the collaboration of these four entities, the Smart Hub Vlaams-Brabant project emerged, the mission of which is to stimulate innovation, promote cooperation between knowledge institutions and companies and attract foreign investment.

It is also the body responsible for promoting and perfecting Flemish Brabant as a region of knowledge (based on reference case studies such as Skåne, Rhine-Neckar, North Brabant or Chengdu) in terms of its own territorial brand that represents its link with knowledge.

## Culture

Flemish Brabant is a European referent in cultural matters, according to The Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor provided by the Joint Research Centre.

The 2017 edition of the Monitor grouped a set of indicators into three major groups: cultural vibrancy, creative economy and enabling environment. In the category of enabling environment, Leuven is the highest rated city in Europe.

It is so highly rated because of its significant human capital and education, given the high

number of graduates in the arts and humanities, as well as in ICT, and the constant appearances of the university in the rankings; the high level of international and local connectivity due to its road and rail network; and finally, the quality of its governance system.

### **Comparison with Southern Catalonia**

Southern Catalonia and Flemish Brabant have similar demographic dimensions. Despite clear economic differences (GDP per capita), both regions have high economic tertiarisation and a significant industrial sector.

The university system also has similarities: the single university in the region plays an important role in research, training and governance.

The R&D&I models are also similar, despite the fact that in Flemish Brabant strategies based on knowledge and innovation are the basis for regional development. A number of research centres and other institutions can also be identified in both cases, but in the Belgian case there is a better structure for the whole system.

In both cases, there is an intelligent specialization strategy (RIS3) marked by other administrations (drawn up by the hierarchically highest authority superior administration, that is to say, the autonomous government): the Government of Flanders in the Belgian case and the Catalan Government in the Catalan case, but in the Belgians have managed to take advantage of the situation.

There are also differences in the system of governance. Both regions are also provinces and have their corresponding provincial governments but, despite having the same structure, the Flemish Brabant Provincial Government has more explicit powers for developing economic, social and cultural policies.

The fact that Flemish Brabant has a regional development agency (POM), very focused in economic terms, is one of the main differences with Southern Catalonia. The other main difference is that the knowledge region project (closely linked to the territorial brand) is being undertaken jointly by the provincial government, the POM, the University of Louvain and the Chamber of Commerce as part of the Smart Hub Vlaams-Brabant initiative.

Culture is also focused on differently in the two cases. While the cultural structure and strategy in Belgium has been highly rated by the European cultural indicators (Leuven as a European reference), Southern Catalonia shows considerable deficits in its cultural potentialities and in the definition of a strategy that includes culture as one of the axes of economic and social development.

Flemish Brabant is an example of a regional system that takes advantage of all its component parts through economic, social and cultural policies and strategies. This shows that if Southern Catalonia connects all its regional parts (quadruple helix components and infrastructures) in a single knowledge region project it may be able to implement its knowledge-based regional development model.

**Antonio Calero López and Josep Maria Piñol Alabart**

# Discovering Southern Catalonia: Tarraco Viva and other ways to disseminate our history

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## Reenactment festival with 20 years of success

In this section, we present those areas that are good examples of Southern Catalonia's status as a knowledge region. We discuss the economic, social, cultural and natural spaces whose peculiarities and characteristics constitute a social model based on knowledge, the objective of which is to help improve the quality of life of the people living in the region.

### **Tarraco Viva or transmission of cultural values**

Efforts to re-think ways of disseminating the past and to enhance the cultural heritage of Tarragona led to the creation of the most significant cultural event in our region: Tarraco Viva. Inspired by historical reenactments in the United States, Tarraco Viva is an annual festival that promotes awareness of the Roman period of Tarragona's history through living stories and performances that seek recreate a historiographically accurate and authentic representation of Roman Tarraco.

The added value of the cultural festival is that the transmission of cultural values takes place in the monumental spaces of the archaeological sites in Tarragona (declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO since 2000). Consequently, the reenactment group and the spaces they use play a symbolic role in the construction of an identity that seeks to bring tradition closer to the public. This highlights the value of the city's heritage and the

importance of studying and preserving it for future generations. In this context, experts at the Catalan Institute of Classical Archeology and the Department of History and History of Art at the URV play an important role in the research and transfer of knowledge by taking part in conferences and workshops, among other activities. In addition, the participation of different groups, such as university students, in the various activities that take place is sign of the important link between education and culture

### **Culture and tourism: the key to success**

Tarraco Viva is also important because it creates a perfect tandem between culture and tourism and thus generates a quality tourism experience in the region.

The number of visitors has increased in the last few years. By 2015 more than 701,400 visitors to Tarragona had taken in the festival.

This invites us to think of cultural marketing as a strategy for heritage dynamism and dissemination. According to Kotler, father of traditional marketing, this is based on the need to “build and maintain beneficial exchanges with target buyers for the purpose of achieving organizational objectives” (1993). Over the years, Tarraco Viva has become a leading example in Europe of how to position a region in terms of culture and tourism. It is therefore essential to understand the festival as an instrument for cultural promotion, where culture is at the centre of a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive development.

The commitment to historical re-enactment during a festival such as Tarraco Viva is a clear example of the festival’s capacity to explain history from another perspective in a knowledge-based society.

### **Tarraco 360° or how innovation helps to explain history from other perspectives**

The digital revolution has led to the use of new technologies to explain and disseminate cultural heritage. Archaeological recreations from digital imaging allows us to visualize research and facilitates the comprehension of the knowledge by democratizing the way that science is communicated.

In this framework has appeared Tarraco 360°, a project to develop an app and web browser that covers the archaeological site of Tarragona city. This initiative is the fruit of almost thirty years’ research by the SETOPANT research group (URV/ICAC), under the direction of the archaeologist and URV professor Joaquín Ruiz de Arbulo. The app simulates scenes to show how the city was in the past. The app also provides scientific explanations to help users understand the history of the moment. So far the app covers six monuments, including the Theatre, the Colonial Forum, Centcelles, the Arc de Berà, the Tower of Scipios and the Roman city.

Both research and the way of understanding the dissemination of the heritage have been reinvented and, thanks to the creation of new tools, we are now able to discover our heritage in 3D and hold up our region as a paradigm of innovation.