



Mag. Siegfried Nagl
Bürgermeister der Landeshauptstadt Graz
Kulturhauptstadt Europas 2003

Mr Georges Poussin
Division of Cultural Expressions and Creative Industries
UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris, Cedex 15
France

Graz, 27. July 2009

Graz's application for City of Design status

Dear Mr Poussin:

As Mayor of Graz, I am delighted to send you the documentation for Graz's application for City of Design status. It presents a modern city in Central Europe with around 260,000 inhabitants, a university city with 40,000 students at six universities and higher education institutions, and a city at the interface between east and west, which has always cherished its links with its eastern and south-eastern neighbours even through the decades of European division.

Now that Europe is united, the city has a function that it can fulfil with passion because of its historical development – as a cultural mediator, the much mentioned "gateway to the South-East", and as City of Human Rights in which today, in 2009, people from 160 nations have found a home. This development has not always been without friction. Yet the occasional complications have also helped the city and its inhabitants evolve a self-confidence and positive outlook that shows up in its unique cultural character.

The readiness to be avant-garde (in the best sense of the word) in going new ways and anticipating future developments is impressively reflected in Graz's dynamic arts and cultural life. From the 1960s to the present day, architecture and literature from Graz for example have enjoyed an

outstanding reputation internationally that has made a name for the city far beyond national boundaries. Of particular note in this respect is the major cultural project Graz 2003 – Cultural Capital of Europe, that has left indelible traces in Graz's cityscape and the consciousness of Graz's public. Architectural landmarks such as the Kunsthaus or Mur Island would not have been possible without the Cultural Capital event, which boosted many cultural activities in Graz that have since become a firm part of Graz life. 2003 was also a real milestone in terms of tourism, stabilising the number of visitors at a level well above the pre-2003 level.

Design is a relatively young discipline in Graz. But it has enormous potential, and is now a focal point of attention in the city. Since the mid-1990s, the specialist Joanneum FH College has made an important contribution to making Graz a centre of design and integrating it as such into the general European context. Its Industrial Design and Information Design courses are highly regarded internationally, and specialisms such as "Exhibition and Museum Design" and "Media and Interaction Design" attract young people to Graz from all over Europe. The courses provide top-quality design training, year after year producing appropriate expertise for graduates to take with them into their work in private enterprise.

Against this background, Graz's application for City of Design status is a logical step. But there is also solid statistical evidence of the importance of the creative economy in general and design in particular in Graz. The individual sectors of the creative economy in the Graz area produce gross value added of approximately 1.5bn euros. That is 14% of total value added – a circumstance that is taken into account also at the political level. The economic importance of this is reflected in the economic strategies of the City of Graz and the government of Styria. The creative economy is defined as one of the key areas of Styrian strength and is therefore also solidly fostered, by both the Styrian government and the City of Graz. Throughout Styria, the network company Creative Industries Styria acts as a conduit to channel creative forces and generate economic added value for the region as a whole.

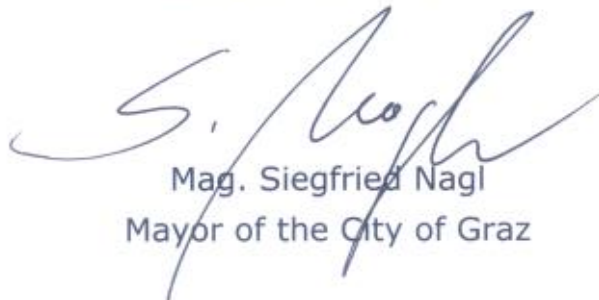
The CEO of Creative Industries Styria GmbH, Eberhard Schrempf, is in charge of Graz's application for City of Design status. Creative

Industries Styria will continue to co-ordinate all relevant projects and duties connected with the City of Design status in future, with the backing of a specially established City of Design Board, and will act as the first point of contact and interface between all the institutions involved from the realms of politics, business, science and culture.

We are particularly grateful for the wide support we have received from the creative economy in Graz as a whole, whose participants have shown great individual commitment and enthusiasm for the City of Design project and helped to shape it. Their broad support is the best guarantee for a successful and above all creative future.

I am firmly convinced that Graz has all the right conditions and meets all the required criteria for acceptance. And I am equally sure that the city will surpass expectations of it as an active member of the UNESCO Creative City Network and will put great effort into the development of the network.

With sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Nagl', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

Mag. Siegfried Nagl
Mayor of the City of Graz