BEDA

The Bureau of European Design Associations

TOWARDS A NEXT GENERATION DESIGN POLICY FOR EUROPE

ECOLOGY

1.1   Use design for circular economy to lead the paradigm shift and 'close the loop' by innovating production means and methods and changing consumer behaviours.

1.2   Embed sharing and collaborative economy principles into communities and education programmes.

1.3   Use design as a collaboration and consensus building method to bring together all stakeholders to co-develop key policy documents such as European Climate Pact, New Circular Economy Action Plan and Strategy for Green Financing.

1.4   Re-think the future of rural areas, farming and sustainable food chains using design futures and speculative design scenarios.

1.5   Educate about our impact on the environment and making the right choices through compelling data visualisation, inspiring graphic design and clever user interfaces.

E-EUROPE

3.1   Promote the triumvirate of design, data and digital for a modern world through new Digital Education Action Plan.
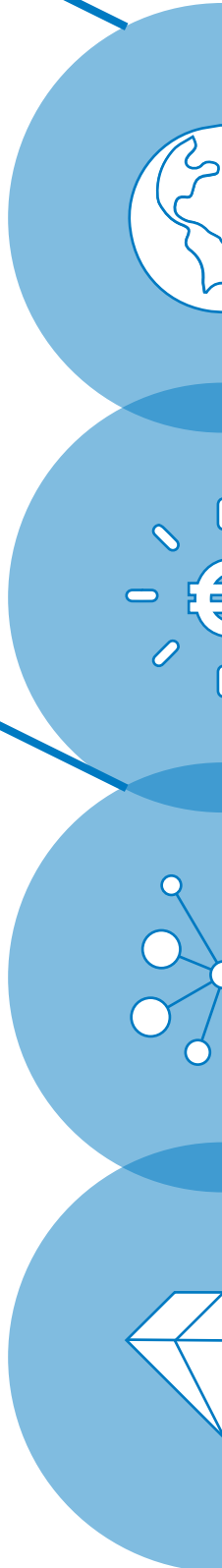
3.2   Build a capacity for service design in public sector while digitalising public services to ensure they respond to user needs.

3.3   Apply design to support inclusive dialogue on the ethical use of data to create ethical and legal frameworks that protect citizens while encouraging creative use of technology.

3.4   Provide funding to support the role of design in big data, robotics, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, smart cities, the internet of things and high performance computing.

3.5   Invest in research, experimentation and pilot projects, where private sector and citizens co-create solutions to solve greater challenges and drive demand for new technologies.

3.6   Launch discussion on digital ecology and cutting down the digital pollution through visual campaign.

EU PRIORITIES

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ECONOMY

2.1 Co-design the new future-proof Industrial Strategy.

2.2 Simplify business legislation and re-design support mechanisms for innovation and business growth from the enterprise perspective.

2.3 Integrate design into funding programmes for start-ups and SMEs and promote the concept of return on design investment.

2.4 Use design to co-create venture capital and social entrepreneurship funds with users.

2.5 Integrate design skills as collaboration, empathy, user experience, creativity, visualisation and programming into the new skills agenda, to enhance design literacy and demand for design solutions in the wider private and public sectors.

2.6 Update the standardisation system for collaborative economy including a focus on user needs, prototyping and iteration.

2.7 Adopt NACE code 74.10 to represent diverse design disciplines.

ETHOS

4.1 Use design and digital technologies to facilitate civic participation in decision-making to reinstate the legitimacy of public policy-making.

4.2 Use design to create visions for the future, different scenarios and perspectives to inspire and create discussion on the future of Europe and European values, starting from the Conference on the Future of Europe.

4.3 Train civil servants and policy-makers in design methods to equip them with the tools to apply the processes to their daily operations.

4.4 Update public procurement guidelines including a focus on user-centred solutions.

4.5 Engage citizens in co-creating European values to build a sense of pride and ownership in them.

4.6 Strengthen the brand 'Europe' and promote the best European practice on the global stage.

These are exciting times for design as a user-centred approach to problem-solving. Leading global companies have a new appetite for design, while governments are coming to see that design can play a major role in solving tough economic, social and environmental challenges. More and more over the last twenty years, design has been applied in a wider and wider range of contexts, from services to understanding user and citizen needs to defining strategy and policy at the highest levels in both business and government. In more established areas such as product and graphic design, design continues to be a vital differentiator and generator of value.

After over a decade of austerity and crisis management, Europe needs new impetus, optimism and a renewed sense of pride in our achievements and the future. There is an enormous potential for design to play a fundamental role in facilitating that transition and delivering solutions. Given the right conditions, it could help to grow Europe's global competitiveness, reinstate the legitimacy of public decision-making and instigate behavioural change in citizens and businesses towards the environment.

The European Council's New Strategic Agenda for 2019-2024 focuses on four main priorities around protecting civic freedom, ensuring strong economy, building climate-neutral and fair societies and promoting European interests and values globally. Building up on that the new political priorities for the next term's European Commission are:

- A European Green Deal;
- An economy that works for people;
- A Europe fit for the digital age;
- Protecting our European way of life;
- A stronger Europe in the world;
- A new push for European democracy.

Since we were established in 1969, BEDA has worked ceaselessly to champion design and bring together design organisations from across Europe. We have evolved with design itself as it has come to be seen as a discipline that can bring about far-reaching transformation in business, society, the economy and quality of life. After the success of various European Commission design initiatives including an 'Action Plan for Design-Driven Innovation', BEDA is now seeking to shape the next generation of design policy for Europe. Our vision is for design to be embraced in Europe as a driver for growth and prosperity.

In a truly mission-oriented way, we have aligned our vision with those European Commission priorities to show how to harness the power of design to drive innovation and fuel economy growth, while leading on green transformation; as well as to reinvigorate democracy and European values.

METHOD

The following recommendations have been developed in a series of Design Policy Workshops (created, facilitated and analysed by PDR – International Centre for Design and Research) with design sector representatives, policymakers and broader industry:

- BEDA European Design Forum, Thessaloniki, 7th June 2018 (main audience – design sector);
- International Design Policy Roundtable, Brussels, 20th November 2018 (main audience – policymakers);
- EU Industry Days, Brussels, 5th February 2019 (main audience – industry).

The workshops were structured around two interactive and collaborative exercises using design methods to build consensus among the stakeholders – exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the EU Design Ecosystem, and developing policy proposals using Design Action Cards to capitalise on strengths and address weaknesses. The Design Action Cards included a synthesised version of the actions included in seven design policies, action plans and strategies developed in Europe between 2012 and 2017. The last of the workshops, held in Brussels on 16th May 2019 at the BEDA 50th Celebration Insight Forum – EU Design Future, summarized the previous learnings and asked participants to reflect and propose actions for design to accelerate progress in the EU priority domains such as Single Market, digitalisation, circular economy or European values. Workshop transcripts and field notes were critically analysed to propose design actions for Ecology, Economy, E-Europe and European Ethos.

ECOLOGY - DESIGN FOR CLIMATE-NEUTRAL ECONOMY

Vision: Waste and pollution designed out of the production cycle, business models & consumer behaviours.

The EU has set ambitious and admirable goals towards a climate-neutral and zero-pollution continent and has accelerated progress towards a circular economy. The ecological costs of a product or material is almost entirely determined at the design phase. As creators of new things, designers have a huge role to play in the responsible sourcing of materials and production of goods, as well as the way in which they are traded and consumed. To support a transition to a circular economy, a growing number of designers and design researchers are exploring clean technologies and new ways to circulate materials and products. Design opportunities for circularity can be framed from production and business model points of view, moving towards energy-efficient digital solutions and sharing schemes. Furthermore, design can also instigate changes in consumption behaviour positioning the right choices as easy and attractive, as well as through persuasive visual campaigns and effective graphics explaining statistics and information on the environment. The collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of design can facilitate difficult discussions and solving challenges that will occur on the change path and ensure that the transition is fair and leaves nobody behind.

Actions:

1.1 Use design for circular economy to lead the paradigm shift and 'close the loop' by innovating production means and methods and changing consumer behaviours.

1.2 Embed sharing and collaborative economy principles into communities and education programmes.

1.3 Use design as a collaboration and consensus building method to bring together all stakeholders to co-develop key policy documents such as European Climate Pact, New Circular Economy Action Plan and Strategy for Green Financing.

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ECONOMY – ENSURING PROSPERITY FOR ALL THROUGH COLLABORATIVE DESIGN-DRIVEN INNOVATION

Vision: Creativity and user-led innovation ensure stable, fair and sustainable growth.

At a time of economic uncertainty, an integrated and equitable Single Market is crucial for Europe's industry. It needs to connect seamlessly with global value chains and stimulate European competitiveness. The European economy model should enable every citizens to thrive, and the private and public sectors to adapt to changes in the global economy promoting lifelong learning, equal opportunities and resilience. Design skills such as empathy, user experience, creativity, visualisation and programming, should be integrated into the new skills agenda to prepare future generations. To reflect changes in the workforce the NACE codes should also be updated. We will not benefit from European world-class research and technological development unless it is effectively converted into desirable, viable and usable products and services. Design can support industry and academia to focus on the needs of users and help to reduce the risk of innovating through iterative prototyping and validating new concepts.
User-centred approaches should also be embraced by the public sector to enable them to provide the best solutions for entrepreneurial citizens and develop services around their needs, creating a favourable environment to set-up and scale-up dynamic businesses.

Actions:

2.1   Co-design the new future-proof Industrial Strategy.

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E-EUROPE - DESIGN FOR DIGITAL & DATA

Vision: Power of digital is fully harnessed by humanizing the experience of e-transformation through design

Businesses and governments alike need to be prepared that the future is digital. Digital is at the core of industrial transformation where advances in technologies such as big data, robotics, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, smart cities, the internet of things and high performance computing. Among others, these technological advances are all linked by the user experience. Inherently, there are questions about the legal frameworks and ethical use of data and design can facilitate these discussions among stakeholders. Governments must ensure that those emerging technologies respect citizen's privacy and security and the outcomes are fair and beneficial to the society.
Digital and UX designers creating new e-solutions are also leading the way to a more intangible economy, cutting the physical waste. However, digital pollution made up by electronic devices and gargantuan amount of data stored on servers is a big contributor to climate change using up enormous amount of energy. This needs to be addresses through both new guidelines for digital products and services creation and an awareness-raising campaign.

Actions:

3.1 Promote the triumvirate of design, data and digital for a modern world through new Digital Education Action Plan.

3.2 Build a capacity for service design in public sector while digitalising public services to ensure they respond to user needs.

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ETHOS - DESIGN FOR DEMOCRACY, VALUES AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Vision: Citizen-centred policy-making and public services strengthen European values and provide inspiration globally.

In recent years there has be a crisis in democracy and the legitimacy of public policy-making. Growingly complex challenges, stringent austerity requirements and demands for greater participation in the political system from the discontented electorates in the last decade prompt public institutions to take decision closer to the citizens. Design becomes a central concept in that effort because of its user-centeredness that in a collaborative way bridges the gap between public polices, services and citizen's needs. It can help to transform public sector's role as empowering citizens to co-create and co-own public decisions and policies. There is also a need to foster an enhanced sense, protection and promotion of European values such as justice, fairness, rule of law, equality in diversity, and openness. Through empathetic engagement, design can facilitate deliberative democracy to build and strengthen consensus among citizens. Last, but not least designers should create inspiring, consistent and effective new image and brand for Europe that would communicate our values, strengths and global leadership.

Actions:

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