BEDA EUROPEAN DESIGN FORUM
Design Action Plan for Europe 2.0?
Workshop Transcript
Thessaloniki, 07.06.18
Design Action Plan for Europe 2.0?

The Bureau of European Design Associations (BEDA), a network of 50 design centres and associations, has been the voice of the European design community since 1969. Thanks to BEDA, design was elevated to a position of priority on the European Commission’s innovation agenda releasing funding and initiatives to better support design in Europe. This would not have happened without BEDA actively engaging with the highest levels of European Commission and driving the promotion of the value of design.

The launch of the European Commission’s Design Action Plan in 2013, was the culmination of a chain of events and engagement instigated by BEDA. There has been a snowball effect at the European level, which can be tracked across the following initiatives:

- 2007 - meeting between the BEDA board and the European Commission President;
- 2008 - review of the EU’s Broad-based Innovation Strategy;
- 2009 - consultation and staff working document on 'Design as a Driver of User-centred Innovation';
- 2010 - European Council commitments and Innovation Union policy;
- 2011 - European Design Leadership Board and its report 'Design for Growth and Prosperity';
- 2012-2015 - European Design Innovation Initiative involving six projects;
- 2013 - Action Plan for Design-driven Innovation;
- 2014-2017 - Design for Europe platform;
- 2015 - Innobarometer study on design;
  - EASME tender ‘Capabilities for design-driven innovation in European SMEs’;
- 2016 - Second Innobarometer study on design;
  - EU Policy Lab;
  - Horizon 2020 call on ‘User-driven innovation in SMEs’;
- 2017 - Interreg Europe Design4Innovation project;
- 2018 - Horizon 2020 calls on citizen-driven innovation in cities and public services.
BEDA representatives were able to demonstrate the value of design and convince Europe’s leaders to make design a core part of the agenda for innovation and economic growth. Design projects that have been funded as a result of that, involved many BEDA member organisations and contributed to progressing design as a tool for innovation in European countries and regions. European design community need to continue this work going forward to ensure design is an integral part of not only innovation policy, but also business, education, social and environmental policies.


The participants in the workshop contributed to the next iteration of the European Design Ecosystem, explored the strengths and weaknesses of thematic components of the Design Ecosystem and developed actions to advance the design agenda at a European level. The thematic areas of discussion focused on:

• Support & Funding;
• Promotion & Awareness;
• Education & Research;
• Design Sector;
• Public Sector, Government & Policy.

BEDA has aspirations to collaborate with pan-European government, innovation, education and design networks such as European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN), TAFTIE the European Association of National Innovation Agencies, Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), Business Europe, Cumulus the Association of Art and Design Education and Research, Service Design Network (SDN), the International Council of Design (ICO-D), among others. The purpose would be to create a Design Action Plan that was truly needs led and that could offer the European Commission a route to achieving various policy objectives.
Design approaches prescribe iterative phases of divergent and convergent thinking. We are currently in a divergent thinking stage seeking a broad range of input and ideas from various stakeholders and collaborators. Then we will refine, consolidate and validate the ideas to engage the European Commission with a coherent message jointly developed with them and that incorporates the perspectives of stakeholders and users.
Method

The Design Action Plan Workshop was structured around two interactive and collaborative exercises using design methods to build consensus among the stakeholders:

**Exercise 1: Exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the EU Design Ecosystem**

Building on the collective expertise and experience of BEDA members, workshop participants discussed strengths and weaknesses of the key five components of the EU Design Ecosystem:

1) **Promotion & Awareness** – this category refers to the awareness raising and capacity building for design such as national campaigns, design museums, exhibitions, awards, pop-up shops and trade missions, among other initiatives.

2) **Support & Funding** – support and funding programmes are interventions targeted at stimulating demand for design in the private, and sometimes public, sectors. They can include mentoring, matchmaking, grants, vouchers and demonstrators, among other initiatives.

3) **Education & Research** – education refers to the supply of quality design expertise from primary and secondary through to tertiary and lifelong learning. Research refers to the initiatives driving the design discipline forward such as through postgraduate and doctoral research, academia-industry collaboration initiatives and data collection on design.

4) **Design sector** – this theme refers to the capacity, distribution and maturity of the professional design sector as well as the networks and associations representing designers.

5) **Public Sector & Government** – this category refers to how the public sector and government understand and use design including for public service and policy development as well as in policies and strategies. For example, an Innovation Lab or including design in the Innovation Policy, Smart Specialisation Strategy, Industrial Policy, Creative and Cultural Industries Policy.
Exercise 2: Reviewing existing Design Action Plans and developing Policy Proposals

PDR analysed and clustered the actions included in seven design policies, action plans and strategies developed in Europe between 2012 and 2017:

- Denmark (2013): Denmark at Work. Plan for Growth in the Creative Industries ∙ Design;
- Finland (2013): Design Finland Programme. Proposals for Strategy and Actions;
- France (2013): Pour une Politique Nationale de Design;

Between them, these eight action plans have 176 design actions. Broadly, these actions have been categorised and clustered according to the five main components of the Design Ecosystem model using key word analysis. Sometimes an action may include more than one element of the Ecosystem and as such, the dominant element has been used for categorisation purposes.

Workshop participants reviewed the actions from existing design action plans to see if there are possible solutions that are relevant for the current situation and that could be adapted on European level. Ideas for action were prioritized using impact matrix according to higher priority, lower priority, shorter-term, longer-term. The adapted actions were complemented by policy proposals developed by workshop participants.
**Support & Funding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Highly experienced and competent business support organisations.</td>
<td>• Too few resources in comparison to the support for technology-driven innovation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Major European businesses use design (good examples).</td>
<td>• Business support organisations lack knowledge of design.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Start-ups using design (value of a new business grows if design</td>
<td>• Creative industries are treated as one, but they have completely different target groups.</td>
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<td>investment is indicated).</td>
<td>• Lack of strategic vision for design and design culture in companies.</td>
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<td>• European diversity could stimulate international demand.</td>
<td>• Cultural attitudes towards user experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Many (regional) studies on use of design in businesses.</td>
<td>• User empowerment missing.</td>
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<td>• ‘Design’ is mainstream – consumer wants ‘design’.</td>
<td>• Lack of recognition of designers’ work.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Studies of use of design are not comparable/lack of design metrics.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “Design washing” – superficial use of design or for styling only.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of long-term plan for balanced supply and demand of design services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Differentiate creative industries support into different sectors/streams.

Conduct a comparative study on design use and impact.

Include product/service design criterion into the conditions for business support measures.

Enhance cooperation among companies that invest in design as a competitive asset.

Create capacity within business environment institutions to deliver support for design-driven innovation for businesses.

Develop long-term metrics/KPIs for design value.

Simplify funding application procedures and improve access to financing.

Integrate design into research and development funding to better support commercial and societal applications benefiting from a strong user orientation.

Strengthen SMEs' ability to use design as a strategic tool in creating products and services with a higher value for their customers.

Create a new green transition/circular economy fund for sustainable products and services development.

Offer support for continuous professional development in design and innovation for SME staff.

Improve business and innovation skills of design entrepreneurs.

Introduce dedicated design support programmes.

Facilitate investment in design businesses.

Ensure take-up of design support through advisory services.

 Adopt a tax incentive scheme for design.

Develop long-term metrics/KPIs for design value.

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Promotion & Awareness

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<td>• Design is popular and in focus in many disciplines (but this has threats).</td>
<td>• ‘Popularity of design’ – overuse of the word ‘design’ (‘design thinking’) without understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Multitude of well-established initiatives in Europe (awards, weeks, exhibitions, museums, promotion centres etc.).</td>
<td>• Coordination of promotional activities on European level could be improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘European design’ as a brand is well-recognized and valued globally (a danger of losing the leading position).</td>
<td>• Too much ‘preaching to the converted’ – designers talking to designers; weak reach out to the general public, small and medium enterprises and politicians.</td>
</tr>
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<td>• Lack of design sector self-criticism and self-reflection.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lack of dialogue with industry bodies and other creative sectors.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No EU-wide media channels promoting the awareness of design.</td>
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</table>
Develop and publish Design handbook / ABC of Design to ensure common language.

Support cluster initiatives between design and other sectors.

Develop European design award scheme, different from existing national awards and with broad focus on public sector design.

Recognize BEDA’s role as official European Design Ambassador.

Establish EU Design Media staff (medium to long term).

Promote collaborative and multidisciplinary models.

Organise networking events for senior managers of companies and designers to encourage cooperation.

Introduce design criteria in business awards competitions.

Implement awareness-raising campaigns with particular focus among the actors of the ecosystem.

Create a “Designed in Europe” brand.

Organise/support exhibitions of European design.

Establish EU Design Media staff.

Communicate the value of design in Europe globally.

Market Europe as a design centre, in particular in relation to emerging markets.

Develop and publish Design handbook / ABC of Design to ensure common language.

Promote new collaborative and multidisciplinary models.

Support representation of European design in prestigious international events and competitions.

Promote exports of products with value-added design in foreign markets.

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## Education & Research

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| - World-renowned design universities and research centres.  
- Bologna system – teaching standardization on European level.  
- Erasmus initiative – students and researchers mobility.  
- High quality design research (although the volume is low).  
- A large number of educational institutions.  
- Substantial European representation in Cumulus (over 60%).  
- Diversity in education.  
- Big industry players engage well with academia and research. | - Lack of design teaching form early-years education leading to lack of understanding of design in the general public.  
- Ministry-led, economy-driven KPIs for universities > universities focus on quantity.  
- Weak connection between smaller and medium-sized companies and design research – lack of common language/mutual misunderstanding.  
- Lack of awareness and as a consequence investment in continuous professional development.  
- Design disciplines remain siloed.  
- Outdated curricula.  
- Lack of clear career paths.  
- Arts and technology teachers need upscaling in design.  
- Lack of design in programmes of studies of other disciplines.  
- Not enough design students?  
- Practice-based design education and apprenticeships in design need improvement.  
- Vagueness of design research – what is design research? How is it useful for society?  
- Other disciplines do not appreciate design research.  
- No infrastructure to take up design research findings. |
Establish a design education think tank involving Cumulus, BEDA and business stakeholders.

Develop internationally competitive, industry-focused, two-year doctoral programme in design.

Identify crossovers and apply design methods in multidisciplinary research and innovation programmes that address complex challenges.

Conduct research on design sector, design use in businesses and measure the economic impact of design and its role alongside other intangible assets in value creation.

Establish European design and innovation research community aimed at taking up research results.

Increase provision of continuing education for design professionals and provide continuing education of teachers of design-related subjects.

Increase success rate of design-driven projects proposals for EU’s research and innovation funding (medium to long term).

Conduct research on design sector, design use in businesses and measure the economic impact of design and its role alongside other intangible assets in value creation.

Strengthen design research and improve the application of research results in important growth sectors.

Conduct continuous and visual mapping of design education programmes in study programmes at all levels, and promote inclusion of design content in various education programmes (mid-term, mid priority).

Create new exchange formats and programmes for European students. [mid priority]

Evaluate current design research and innovation programmes for SMEs, identify gaps, create a new generation of design programmes for SMEs.

Increase design literacy through early childhood education.

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<td>Design sector is an important driver of non-technological innovation.</td>
<td>Lack of recognition for design profession.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Facilitates digital transformation and cultural changes.</td>
<td>Lack of comparable metrics on sector size and economic impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Design-oriented businesses have increased competitiveness and exports (EPO report).</td>
<td>Many small businesses lacking strong voice – weak representation, not able to convey value of design.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Mission-oriented” sector – strongly emotionally engaged with the job [downside – may be too idealistic].</td>
<td>Lack of self-identification as a profession/trade/industry (vs. architects, lawyers, doctors etc.).</td>
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<td>Connects disciplines, facilitates open and agile methods.</td>
<td>Weak professional identity, weak sense of community, shared values and ethics.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Analytical and evidence-based thinking for creative solutions.</td>
<td>Lack of external understanding of a profession – designer-celebrities vs. invisible in-house designers.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User-centred, visual, iterative, breaking down complexity.</td>
<td>‘Everyone can be a designer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connects strategy and creativity.</td>
<td>Design associations are small, lack funding and are under pressures of changes in the industry and way of working.</td>
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</table>

- Lack of influencers/lobbyists.
- Lack of broad trade/business expertise among designers.
- Designers don’t want to be organized.
Improve business skills of design entrepreneurs.

Promote role of designer, implement actions recognising work of designers and enhancing the status of designer.

Conduct research on design sector, design use in businesses and measure the economic impact of design and its role alongside other intangible assets in value creation and promote the value of design sector.

Establish partnerships between leading companies and creative designers/design agencies.

Create accelerator programme for design businesses.

Initiate a dialogue on the future of the labour market within design.

Increase scale and competitiveness of design sector - develop a coherent and consolidated mechanism for representation of the various design specialisations and support networking and collaboration activities across design businesses.

Tax deduction for commercial design/innovation investments by businesses redefine design as part of research and development.

Tax incentives for design sector.

Strengthen professional identification of the sector; enhance cohesiveness of professional design community.

Development and implementation of the quality compliance system for design – protect the designer title as qualified profession.

Strengthen professional identification of the sector, enhance cohesiveness of professional design community.

Attract and facilitate investment in design businesses [mid-term, mid priority]

Increase scale and competitiveness of design sector - develop a coherent and consolidated mechanism for representation of the various design specialisations and support networking and collaboration activities across design businesses.

Tax deduction for commercial design/innovation investments by businesses redefine design as part of research and development.

Promote females in leading design roles.
### Public Sector, Government & Policy

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<td>- Possibilities to mobilise Member States and their regions through a cascade effect from European policy and institutions.</td>
<td>- Lack of awareness of design for public sector transformation in EU institutions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- There is EU data on design and good stories.</td>
<td>- Lack of culture of design cascading to national, regional and local levels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Design can contribute to solving European societal challenges priorities.</td>
<td>- Gap between citizens and EU decision-making processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- The EU Policy Lab has ‘design for policy’ as a competence.</td>
<td>- Lack of shared language on design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- 2010 Innovation Union &gt; 2013 Action plan for design-driven innovation in Europe.</td>
<td>- Complexity in communicating design (de-mystifying design).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Distinctions between ‘design in policy’ and ‘design for policy’.</td>
<td>- Lack of design representation in innovation committees.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Design link in key EU strategies.</td>
<td>- Perception of lack of body of evidence of design impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Opportunities for design in Horizon Europe.</td>
<td>- Poor knowledge and know-how to use design in public sector – procurement problems in commissioning design – how designers are hired and involved in bids and tenders?</td>
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<tr>
<td>- EU IPO – European design protection authority.</td>
<td>- No community of practice of designers in public sector.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- DGs open to discuss design.</td>
<td>- Design perception connected to patents, IPs and technology.</td>
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Spread the practice of multidisciplinary design policy labs, practicing co-design of public policies and services with citizens across Europe.

Investigate the need to update the protection of the intellectual property rights for design.

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Facilitate continuous dialogue among the key stakeholders of design-driven innovation policy.

Promote peer learning and cooperation among public sector actors looking for design-driven solutions – map the actors and build community of practice.

Train designers in policy-making processes and include them in policy teams.

BEDA to identify national contact points for design strategy and influence member states’ level.

Collect stories of good practice and evidence.

Build shared language [mid-term, mid priority]

Promote design as a competitive advantage in municipal/local/regional development strategies.

Encourage the use of strategic design when seeking solutions for major societal challenges.

Use the EU structural funds to strengthen collaboration between elements of the design ecosystem.

On national level, lobby design competence and the utilisation of design in the public sector through EU structural funds.

Define priorities for design on national level and include it in different areas of public intervention.

Build the capacity of public sector administrators to use design methods.

Create an orderly legal framework for design that strengthens understanding and use of design (e.g. design integrated in legal bills and regulations) and implementation of design strategy.

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Workshop participants

designaustria, Austria – 2 representatives
Wallonie Design, Belgium – 2 representatives
Wallonia-Brussels Design Fashion, Belgium – 1 representative
Estonian Association of Designers, Estonia – 1 representative
Cumulus International Association of Universities and Colleges in Art, Design and Media – 1 representative
Ornamo, Finland – 2 representatives
Design Forum Finland, Finland – 1 representative
French Design Alliance, France – 1 representative
APCI Design, France – 1 representative
CITE DU DESIGN, France – 2 representatives
DESIGNERS+, France – 1 representative
Bayern Design, Germany – 2 representatives
IDZ, Germany – 1 representative
iF International Forum Design, Germany – 1 representative
CERTH, Greece – 2 representatives
KEPA, Greece – 3 representatives
Hungarian Design Council, Hungary – 2 representatives
Lithuanian Design Forum, Lithuania – 1 representative

Malta Business Bureau, Malta – 2 representatives

Valletta 2018 Foundation (Valletta Design Cluster), Malta – 1 representative

CLICKNL, Netherlands – 1 representative

BNO, Netherlands – 1 representative

Gemeente Eindhoven, Netherlands – 1 representative

Design and architecture Norway (DOGA), Norway – 2 representatives

House of design management and innovation, Slovenia – 1 representative

READ, Spain – 2 representatives

Swiss Design Association, Switzerland – 2 representatives

Design Business Association, UK – 1 representative

PDR / Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK – 2 representatives

Design Connect, UK – 1 representative

European Commission – 1 representative

ico-D – 1 representative
PDR Design Policy

Dr Anna Whicher
Piotr Swiatek
Jo Ward

PDR, 200 Western Avenue, Cardiff, CF52YB
www.pdronline.co.uk