



Introduction

When I heard President von der Leyen, in her September 16th State of the Union Address, introduce the idea of the New European Bauhaus, I felt that it was a unique opportunity for Europe to bring its cultural identity to the fore, and link it to the environmental and social challenges our planet faces today.

Unbeknownst to a large majority of us, our built environment accounts for 40% of all CO2 emissions. Our homes, our roads, our bridges and our cities are a central part of the climate change problem, and they are what the New European Bauhaus, at its core, strives to rethink. It also addresses a critical social dimension, as it is in housing that social inequalities are felt the deepest. The Covid lockdowns have underlined this forcefully....

The combination of 3 levels of action --cultural, social, and environmental-- attracts me strongly to this initiative and makes me profoundly interested and eager to add my contribution.

My connection to the project stems from my personal experiences

I was born in Greece - my roots are there; my childhood memories are there – so that *Greece is my country*. But, I was raised with German as a second mother tongue. I have a German high-school diploma. And, I studied and have lived all my adult life in Paris, the city where I raised my four children. *Europe is my life*.

Through my 20-year engagement with an international development NGO, whose Greek chapter I founded and chaired, I extensively travelled in the global South. Working on poverty and inequality, I came to realise how poverty issues are intrinsically linked to environmental degradation. I also realised that we are all sharing the same planet and that we will never be able to solve our problems unless we help them solve theirs too. Through this realisation, I started feeling a citizen of the world. *Earth became my home*.

I am profoundly convinced that the New European Bauhaus is important at all three levels: *local, regional, global*. It has to be rooted in the different cultures of European *countries*, respecting and drawing from their historical, geographical and artistic diversities. Yet, in essence it is also a regional project. European political-will and resources are a prerequisite. And in order to be implemented successfully, it will also require global citizen engagement.

Indeed, for the New European Bauhaus to reach its full impact and significance, we Europeans must understand that although Europe can *lead* and Europe can *teach*, Europe must also *learn*. This project must be much more than about reinventing sustainable construction methods and redesigning our common spaces and objects. The New European Bauhaus project has the potential to redesign our everyday life and along the future of our planet. And for this, we need the collective intelligence, wisdom, and creativity of people from all parts of the world. We need an *Earth Bauhaus*.

Raised in a political family, I am aware of the limits of top down political action if it is not complemented by stakeholder engagement, and grassroots, bottom-up, citizens' initiatives. I believe immensely in the value of listening, engaging, and working with diverse stakeholders; as well as in the capacity of each and every person to become an agent of change. I have seen it happen and know its potential.

Finally, through my work experience in the social, environmental and cultural fields, I have come to understand the importance of multidisciplinary, holistic, and cross-sectoral approaches and the need to inspire people's minds, bodies, and hearts.

I strongly believe that by combining the arts with technology, functionality with aesthetics, the intellectual with the manual, the human-centric with the earth-respectful, the New European Bauhaus could become the perfect vehicle for a sustainable built future.

My contribution to the project results from my professional activities

For the New European Bauhaus project to contribute to making Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050, it needs to unleash and multiply the creative potential of its citizens. We are in a climate emergency that requires a different way of thinking and acting, a mindset of transformation. It is not sufficient anymore to make things better. We need to make things different. We need a new paradigm.

To that effect I can contribute by:

- [World Human Forum - An emerging ecosystem](#)

Over the last 4 years I co-founded and actively work on the creation of the World Human Forum, a global citizens' initiative that has started bottom up from Greece, France & Germany, anchored in Delphi, and has now expanded with partnerships in the Americas and EMEA. The WHF is a think and do tank, a knowledge and action hub that aims to highlight and interconnect the innovative forces of our planet. By adopting the UN SDGs agenda it aspires to facilitate the transition to an ecological civilisation.

The World Human Forum profoundly believes in a holistic, multi-sectoral, interdisciplinary approach. Its work highlights the connection between Sustainability, Democracy, Education, Inner Transformation, Science & Technology and the Arts. Through the development of a dynamic ecosystem, it is currently working with interdisciplinary projects in different European Countries.

From its inception, the WHF approach and methodology have placed art and technology at its core. It can thus enable the necessary co-creative space for the innovative and diverse forces of Europe and beyond to meet and exchange visions and ideas on the new European Bauhaus project.

- [Greece/Athens - A Polis in transition](#)

Greece can provide the perfect venue to host one of the 5 initial projects of the New European Bauhaus, because:

It is a strong symbol of our common European history...

It is in Athens that government for the people by the people originated. In Athenian Democracy, citizens were also initiators, and aesthetics and culture were at the heart of the democratic experiment. Athens was a city where ideas were the product of dialogue in the Agora. Its architectural styles and concepts such as the golden ratio are still influencing modern architecture.

...and one that faces a number of modern challenges

The Athens Metropolitan Area has a highly concentrated and diverse population. Its transition in the XXth century from a small provincial town to a major European capital has left it with

increasing social and environmental problems. It is a city in search of regeneration after the severe economic and refugee crises. Athenian citizens are open and ready for change and their city can provide the ideal ground for the experimentation and implementation of the New European Bauhaus. Being a major touristic and cultural destination for people from all over the world, it can also offer a worldwide showcase for the program.

...which offers innovative project opportunities

Athens offers several locations that could be connected to the program, including “Hellinikon”, now the largest development project in Europe. Located in the Athens Riviera, it features the construction of an entire new neighbourhood in the vacant space of an unused airport. It could become an emblematic European project that will benefit from the New European Bauhaus vision and innovation.

• Delphi & the European Cultural Centre of Delphi - A reference point

Δῶς μοι πᾶ στῶ καὶ τὰν γᾶν κινάσω
Give me a place to stand on, and I will move the Earth
Archimedes

For the initiative to be embraced equally by all member states of the European Union, a neutral location would be useful. In antiquity, Delphi was both referred to as the “navel” (Omphalos) of the world, and considered by Greeks and non-Greeks alike as a “third space” or neutral location. With that history, Delphi can provide the modern meeting point for partners of the project to meet in person in an ideal environment which promotes dialogue and the creation of humane relations amongst participants.



The European Cultural Centre of Delphi, founded in 1977 by the Greek state and the Council of Europe, could serve that specific purpose. It was designed to become a European and worldwide intellectual centre aiming at serving international cultural interests and develop common cultural principles to unite the peoples of Europe.¹

Conclusion

I believe Europe has a moral obligation to embrace a leading role in the world today in addressing the climate crisis for which it carries a large responsibility. It is therefore vital for the New European Bauhaus to succeed in Europe, but also to create a model that is replicable and scalable in other continents, respecting their natural and cultural diversities.

To that effect, as a Greek, a European, and the leader of a global citizens' initiative, I believe I can contribute in the initial formation of the project by identifying and connecting the necessary stakeholders, facilitating dialogue and a co-creative space, and helping awake the creative potential that exist in each and every one of us in order to design our common future.

¹Interestingly, the inspiration for its creation came in the 1920s, the decade that saw the birth of Bauhaus. It was linked to a pioneering initiative to create a Delphic Centre where the innovative forces of the time together with the local people would create a community where science would meet the arts and crafts and whose financial autonomy would be based on its agricultural production, touristic revenue and cottage industry. Similar to the Bauhaus in its ideas and inspiration, unfortunately it was never realised in that form.