

**BEDA** The Bureau of European  
Design Associations

# MANIFESTO



Co-funded by the  
Creative Europe Programme  
of the European Union

**This publication is part of the 'Design Europe' project.**

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# DESIGN NOW

## The potential to meet great needs

These are exciting times for design. Leading global companies have a new appetite for design, while governments are coming to see that design can play a major role in solving the toughest social and environmental problems. More and more over the last fifteen to 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. At the same time, in more established areas such as product and graphic design, design continues to be a vital differentiator and generator of value.

At a time of daunting challenges for Europe, there is, therefore, enormous potential for design to play a fundamental role in delivering solutions. Given the right conditions, it could help to grow Europe's global competitiveness and make the connections between citizen and environmental needs and fiscal responsibility. The right conditions, of course, begin with understanding. In contexts where design is given its head, it proves its capability again and again. However, to those unfamiliar with it, its approaches are often counter-intuitive and its value unknown. Our members are, of course, well aware of this and do impressive work in their own countries to demonstrate design's benefits. However, they also know that, as much as they can achieve on their own, they can do exponentially more as part of a network.

This is, in short, a movement. By working together, we can share knowledge and skills and cumulatively gather and disseminate evidence. Working across Europe's increasingly fluid national borders, we can collaborate on mutually beneficial projects, engage more effectively and help to build capacity. In particular, we can work together to spread understanding of design to areas where they are currently under-used – and to the European Union's highest governance levels.

This last is, of course, crucial. From this will flow the vital support needed to nurture and expand the network. This is where we at BEDA come in.

Our vision is for design to be embraced in Europe as a driver for growth and prosperity.

# OUR ROLE

## Making the case for design and expanding the network

Since we were established in 1969, we have 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, national economies and quality of life.

In promoting this potential in the EU, we have made great gains. Over the past eight years, we have met with officials at the very highest level, including then European Commission President Barroso and then Vice President Günter Verheugen, also then European Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry. Making our case for design we have tirelessly lobbied the Commission, resulting in it launching, in 2011, the European Design Innovation Initiative, with BEDA's president and vice president on the Leadership Board, and, in 2013, the Action Plan for Design Driven Innovation. From 2012 to 2014 our efforts have been rewarded with the launch of a number of European Design Innovation Initiatives including the Design for Europe project.

Most recently, with the co-funding of the Creative Europe Programme, BEDA has launched its Design Europe 2021 project aiming to strengthen and grow our network as the European Design Authority.

All of this represents hugely significant advance. As a result of our work, design is now firmly on the agenda at the most senior levels in Brussels. That means significant concrete support that will greatly increase design's reach and influence across Europe. It is a major series of achievements and should inspire great pride in us all, as well as immense optimism. Most of all, however, it should galvanise us. While design is now well recognised within the Commission's Enterprise Directorate, there are numerous other areas where it could make a vital difference. We have made an impressive start that should give us a solid foundation from which to build.



# OUR STRATEGY

## A comprehensive plan for a complex and wide-ranging agenda

BEDA is now looking to the future with a new strategy to strengthen the perception of design across Europe, strengthening our network, increasing our standing as the design authority at European level and ensuring design has a recognised position in the European Innovation System. This is a campaign not just on multiple fronts, but with a complex variety of needs. It requires that we enhance awareness of design's value, while simultaneously strengthening design sector capacity to meet both the demand that we create and the future's challenges. It means radically altering perceptions to help businesses and governments understand how design can fuel the innovative capability by which they stand or fall.

The ambition, in other words, could not be higher. What follows is an overview of the plan we have developed, explaining both the thinking behind it and what we intend to do.

### 1. ENHANCE THE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE VALUE OF DESIGN.

Among certain audiences, design is still narrowly understood in terms of aesthetics and styling. This misses its great capacity to integrate functional, emotional and social aspects in response to user needs and add value at every stage of product and service development. Research shows that the earlier it is part of the process the better the results.

We will work with our national authorities to showcase tangible examples of how design delivers value to the European economy. We will also campaign for Design to be an integral part of European research programmes.

### 2. STRENGTHEN THE DESIGN SECTOR'S CAPABILITY TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS.

There are over 400,000 professionally-trained designers in Europe, generating annual turnover of €36 billion (European Commission, 2013). However, the dynamics of business in Europe are changing. BEDA seeks to identify future trends and upskill designers appropriately in order to increase the European design sector's gross value added.

We will advocate to the Commission's education programme to recognise design as a driver for growth and properly include design in future generations' education.

### 3. BUILD APPRECIATION AND USE OF DESIGN AMONG EU BUSINESSES AND INTERMEDIARIES (INNOVATION CENTRES, CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE...).

Research has demonstrated that companies that use design strategically generate a greater return on investment than companies that use it not at all or only as an add-on. However, companies and public-sector bodies struggle to understand and commission design.

We will inspire the public sector to use design and work with national administrations and intermediaries to share design commissioning best practice.

### 4. ADVOCATE DESIGN FOR PUBLIC SECTOR RENEWAL

Design methodology allows citizens to become active creators of the public services they use and their interactions with public institutions. This is because designers work with end users to understand their needs, then test solutions with them through prototyping. This hugely mitigates risk: design iterations fail early and cheaply, providing the necessary information to make them effective incrementally. As such, design can be a highly effective method of improving quality of life as well as a driver for cost reduction.

We will help institutions become more effective with a strong user focus and build design sector capacity to deliver it.

### 5. PROMOTE DESIGN AS A NEW APPROACH TO POLICY-MAKING (AND IMPLEMENTATION)

The same principles that make design effective for public services also apply at policy level: ie the capacity to involve diverse stakeholders to establish needs and mitigation of risk.

We will now pursue a much broader policy agenda, including input on research, environment, health and social policy at multiple governance levels across Europe.

# ACTION PLANNING

There are a series of short and longer term actions against each of these five areas and the detail of these can be found in the BEDA Strategic Policy Plan to 2021. We've pulled these various actions together into four streams, as follows:

**Building Capacity** through **BEDA GA+**. Run in conjunction with the General Assembly this will be a full-day programme of peer-to-peer learning aimed at empowering us all to become a more effective 'network engine'

**Connecting you to opportunities for growth** through **BEDA CONNECTS**. An annual opportunity to meet, expand your reach and connect with new projects, partnerships, collaborations, programmes and funding.

**Setting up and running Design Expertise Groups** through **BEDA CLUSTERS**. An opportunity to upgrade skills and competencies and collect and communicate the vital information that will help in building a better society as we grow the design sector.

**Continue to influence Policy** through **BEDA INTEGRATES**. An Insight Forum to inspire, communicate and discuss with leaders of the Commission, business and the public sector and, ultimately, a 'Design Davos' series – high-level summits aimed at embedding design at the highest levels within the Commission.





