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policies for culture

Technological Park Culture
Bulgaria

a Case Study prepared by **Milena Deleva**

based on a Policies for Culture action project initiated and implemented by the Technological
Park Culture - Project Team between 2001 and 2003
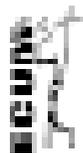
This case study is based on the Policies for Culture action projects *'Technological Park Culture I and Technological Park Culture II'* (TPC) which were implemented in Bulgaria between September 2001 and March 2003.

The project was initiated and put into action by the TPC Project Team in partnership with the Association *Exchange, Culture, Heritage* - Plovdiv; the City and Culture Foundation - Varna; the Department of Theory and History of Culture at the University of Sofia; the Department of Ethnology and Sociology at Plovdiv University; 'Dimitar Tsenov' Academy of Economics in Svishtov; the first Bulgarian *Cultural Community Centre* - Svishtov; the National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria; the National Civil Forum Culture; and the Red House Centre for Culture and Debate - Sofia, under the overall project coordination of Nelly Stoeva and Yuriy Vulkovski.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABREVIATIONS

PREFACE

CoC	*Committee on Culture (in the Parliament)*
CoM	*Council of Ministers*
ECF	*European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam)*
ECUMEST	*ECUMEST Association (Bucharest)*
NCFC	*National Civil Forum for Culture (also known as 'Forum')*
NGO	*Non-Governmental Organisation*
MoC	*Ministry of Culture*
PfC	*Policies for Culture Programme*
TPC	*Technological Park Culture (general)*
TPC1	*Technological Park Culture (phase one)*
TPC2	*Technological Park Culture (phase two)*

This is the second case study in the Policies for Culture series of practice-oriented publications. It follows the established formula of presenting concrete examples and action generated by the Programme's projects on the ground in South East Europe. The unique approach of the 'Technology Park Culture' initiative is to advocate for research supported change and civil society based reform to cultural policy frameworks in Bulgaria. It represents a distinct example of how Policies for Culture action projects have achieved their multifaceted impact in the region.

During the recent period of radical changes to infrastructures and management of Bulgaria's cultural sector, local researchers in the field of cultural policy often found themselves confined to a limited number of academic circles operating far from practical realities. Because there was no specialised cultural-policy research institution and because support for research and publications was severely lacking, exchange between the state's theoretical cores - the universities - and the actual implementation of new ideas in the practical cultural policy context of Bulgaria was very limited.

Provoked by a series of contradictory cultural policy reforms of different governments, both academics and students working in the field started to search for dialogue with the responsible public institutions and launched a new movement - 'Technology Park Culture' (TPC). At the start of the project in 2001, the right moment for starting such a timely process in Bulgaria had come. The incentive provided by the Policies for Culture Programme opened up space for the first experiment of testing an academic model for stakeholder participation in the cultural policy environment of the country.

'Technology Park Culture' emerged as a distinctive process of civil society development with the aim of playing the role of both observatory and laboratory in the field of cultural policy development in Bulgaria. It functioned as a wake-up call for

the country's academic community to operate as initiator, engine and organiser of new spaces for public dialogue. As a consequence, it also attracted the interest of organisations and experts from other countries in South East Europe and created opportunities for new partnerships in the region.

The process, however, is not finished yet - regardless of the formal accomplishments the project has already achieved. For a successful completion of the TPC mission, public policy institutions still need to take another step forward in recognising this civic movement as a useful partner and source of innovation, instead of seeing it as competing antagonist.

Besides making interested audiences both within and outside the country familiar with the 'Technology Park Culture' approach to cultural policy development, the current case study publication shall provide a widespread acknowledgment of this initiative among policy makers, academics and civil society stakeholders in Bulgaria, the SEE region and all over Europe.

With the dissemination of another good-practice example, Policies for Culture once more aims to provoke dialogue, stimulate reflection and enrich still much needed communication among civic and public players in the field of cultural policy development in South East Europe.

Tsveta Andreeva   November 2004

Policies for Culture - Bulgaria

CONTENTS

Background

In 1994, a group of Bulgarian university researchers initiated a study on the presence of culture in the pre-election campaigns and the programmes of candidate parties running for parliamentary elections. The process of this study resulted in the establishment of a research team, which, only a few years later, gave birth to the **Technological Park Culture** project (TPC). Though their common ideas on cultural policy brought them together again during a wide-spread national debate on culture in Bulgaria in 1998, it was the concept of *participatory policymaking* promoted by the *Policies for Culture* Programme[1] of the European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam) and the ECUMEST Association (Bucharest) which played a defining role in establishing the TPC.

The TPC action project within the *Policies for Culture* Programme was officially instituted in 2001 by a group of university researchers in the field of cultural policies and cultural management, in consultation with cultural operators from the third sector.

The TPC was envisaged as an independent inter-university organisation which could initiate, activate, optimise and facilitate the process of production, evaluation and selection of cultural policies.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'The academic experts involved were seen to be facilitators of cultural policy making with the ability to identify the problems at a macro level. Consequently their approach to culture is much closer to that of politicians rather than to the arts practitioners who tend to have a more the 'sectorised' approach.'

YURIY VULKOVSKY
PhD Student, Sofia University
TPC Project Initiator & Team Consultant

The term *Technological Parks* was coined by the engineering sciences. The main problem that the concept of a *Technological Park* addresses is how to achieve effective transition from the processes of applied research and technological development (R&D) to the practical spheres of actual implementation. Academic *Technological Parks* offer the possibility for processes to develop from research into technological and industrial production in a constantly changing environment.

Placed in a conceptual framework the Technological Park Culture identifies and analyses the actual problems of practice faced by cultural managers and decision-makers. It also generates

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mechanisms and produces technologies to resolve the problems of specific situations and to optimise the potential of the cultural field as a whole.

The main outcomes of TPC1 were the technologies developed and frameworks for analysis designed, for facilitating cultural policy processes. After the successful completion of TPC1 (September 2001 - March 2002), which operated predominantly at the national level, a second project phase (TPC2: March 2003 - October 2003) was devised. This second stage represented a logical continuation of the first project, but at the regional/local level of Bulgarian cultural policy.

Context

The main set of problems in the field of culture and cultural policy in Bulgaria, still stem from the social and political turmoil typical of the post-socialist transition period[2]. These problems are rooted in the necessary reform of legislative frameworks, the ongoing process of decentralisation and the plans for elaborating a national cultural strategy that were never realised.

While the infrastructures that cultural policy was built on during the socialist past have largely been demolished, they have not yet been adequately replaced.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'One of the main problems that we have identified is the lack of cultural infrastructure, needed to ensure the development, reproduction and dynamics of culture.'

IVA KUNEVA
TPC2 Project Team Member

2.1.1. The National Policy for Culture

At the national level, responsibility for formulating and implementing Bulgarian cultural policies is shared between *the legislature* (the Parliament), and *the executive* (the Council of Ministers). The supreme central executive body, which has the right to initiate legislation in the sphere of culture and to formulate the main principles of national cultural policy, is the Ministry of Culture.

The Bulgarian Parliament sets the policy guidelines and safeguards cultural policy implementation through legislation. Legislation is drafted by the *Committee on Culture* (CoC) of the Parliament. Some amendments to cultural legislation have been made to meet the new socio-economic conditions for culture in Bulgaria. The Council of Ministers implements cultural policy through the Ministry of Culture and in co-ordination with other government ministries and public institutions.

This process of national cultural policymaking is characterised, however, by a lack of transparency in decision-making, a lack of effective communication between agents in the making of cultural policy, a lack of political will to treat issues of cultural legislation as top priorities in legislative and executive processes, and a lack of competence in the field of culture.

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2 - For challenges of Bulgarian cultural policy in post-socialist transition, see also Policies for Culture Case Study No. 1: Local Cultural Strategy Development for the City of Plovdiv - Bulgaria by Alena Alexandrova, 2002.

The role of civil society is underestimated and there is no articulated mechanism for civil society to influence decision-making.

A lack of consistency from one elected public administration to another usually results in an irregular and rather unstable policymaking process.

2.1.2. Local Policies for Culture[3]

At the local level, cultural policies in Bulgaria are implemented by local self-governing administrative bodies known as *obshtini*. The hierarchy of administrative competence in the decision-making on cultural policies corresponds to the country's constitutional division of territorial administrative units into districts (*oblasti*) and municipalities (*obshtini*). Currently in Bulgaria there are 28 districts and 262 municipalities. The main unit of territorial administration is the municipality, which is legally autonomous. At the municipal level, cultural policy competence, including financial control, is handled in the local self-government administration by the respective municipal Councils on Culture. The cultural policy competencies of the intermediate district level (*okoliya*) are yet to be clarified[4].

On the legislative level, Article 2 (2) of the *National Act for the Protection and Development of Culture* stipulates decentralisation with respect to the administration and financing of culture. On the operational level, the Ministry has now adopted mixed state-municipal approach to financing culture. This, however, has only been partially successful and in fact, a rather centralised distribution of the funds is still the norm. The effects of this partial success lead, on the one hand, to competition rather than cooperation at the municipal level, and to the necessity to seek private sponsorship to combine with the state/municipal funds on the other. Direct state subsidies are still considered vital for the sector. On the level of politics, there still remains a lack of good will in establishing public funds and creating relevant organisations 'at arm's length' to ensure independence in the distribution of financial resources. As prescribed by the *Local Self-government Act*, the election of local authorities is the prerogative of the people. Therefore, the Municipality Councils act as local assemblies which are empowered with legislative functions, the executive power being with the mayor and the local authority. On these grounds, the municipality is in a position to pursue its own policies for culture.

Conversely, on the next administrative level up - that of the districts (*oblasti*) - there is no provision in the law for legislative and executive power at the local or regional level. The district administrations are subordinate to the national government. Their function is to monitor the implementation of national policy, including cultural policy at local level. Consequently, there is no legal body responsible for the implementation of regional (supra-local) policies for culture[5]. This was one of the first problems identified during the implementation phase of the TPC.

In order to meet the need of policies to address specific problems at the regional and local levels the TPC team came up with the concept of a *cultural-political region*. The 'laboratory

approach'[6] implemented by the TPC ensures permanent diagnosis of culture-related problems and helps with the assessment of the principal needs in this direction. The problem of defining the term *cultural-political region* as a basis for developing local cultural strategies and creating mechanisms for solving regional problems of culture was raised at the first seminar within the TPC2. In accordance with the preliminary ideas, the setting up of cultural-political regions would match those districts which are also university centres. In the future, however, special care will need to be taken of areas where there is no university, to avoid leaving them out of regional cultural policies.

Currently both national and local policies for culture in Bulgaria suffer from deficiencies in the following areas:
- Collaboration and co-ordination between different social actors on cultural policy issues
- Basic information and consistent monitoring of cultural policy
- Education in the field of arts management and policy development
- Media interest
- National, regional, and local strategies for culture
- Regional and municipal cultural policies
- A sustainable and effective dialogue between the different parties interested in cultural policy processes in Bulgaria - politicians, cultural practitioners and professionals, businessmen, media, consumers, etc.
- A creative social forum for public debate
- Ongoing research in the field of cultural policies

2.2. Cultural Policy and Research

The group of people that the TPC team has identified as being the most capable social agent to engage in the recovery of cultural infrastructures and to cope with the lack of cultural competence are *researchers*. However, their potential is often neglected by the state and consequently their academic findings in the field of social research are generally undervalued.

The report of the initial *Policies for Culture* National Workshop in Bulgaria - 'Decentralisation: Investing in Culture in the Regions' (Bistritsa, 2001) - identified universities, academics, and research institutes as good potential allies for the cultural sector. The report suggests that such academic centres can provide reliable data and expert information with strong and irrefutable arguments in favour of cultural investment. It also goes on to say that research and analysis of the cultural environment constitute the necessary base for formulating cultural policy[7].

The belief that researchers are successfully able to tackle the two main contextual problems, namely the breakdown of cultural infrastructures and the current lack of competence and relevant

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3 - Because of recent decentralisation efforts, each municipality in Bulgaria is free to implement its own cultural policy. That is why the term 'policies' is used in the plural, when the practices of local cultural policy development are described.
4 - cf. Bulgarian Cultural Policy Profile in the ERICArts/Council of Europe Compendium for Basic Facts and Trends (www.culturalpolicies.net); last update by the Ministry of Culture in 2003.
5 - The term 'regional' here refers to 'supra-local' regional levels within the national borders of Bulgaria, not to the more common meaning of regional (supranational) in the framework of South East Europe, Balkans etc.

6 - The implementation process of both TPC1 and TPC2 consisted of a combination between constructing theoretical models and carrying out practical activities. This methodology, where a theoretical construct is first introduced and then tested, is called a cultural policy 'laboratory'.
7 - This conclusion also represents one of the six cultural policy guiding principles which have been defined by participants of the workshop 'Culture and Civil Society - Promising Relationship or a Missed Opportunity?', initiated by the *Council of Europe* and held in Sofia in 2002.

information, is based on their ability to display a more neutral point of view on the political and cultural map of Bulgaria. They are able to grasp the picture as a therefore and identify problem areas on a macro level, while other interest groups often take a segmented approach based solely on the information available within their own sector. Therefore, researchers were considered capable of unifying their efforts to solve existing problems and to represent specific **common interests** of all those involved in the cultural policy process.

An internal weakness of the sector is that the researchers themselves are often not sufficiently aware of the importance of the social implications connected to their studies. Although there are only about ten university centres in Bulgaria, communication between the different researchers, despite their common interest in the field of cultural policies is unsatisfactory, to say the least. Apart from single individual attempts, a complete programme for research and analysis of cultural policies in Bulgaria is not yet in place.

As regards the availability of information about cultural policies, the newly established *Department of Analysis and Prognosis* - which replaced the *Institute of Cultural Studies* of the MoC and its annual reports on the various activities of the Ministry - does not provide regular and consistent updates on cultural activities to the civil sector. The MoC needs to do more to ensure transparency in developing and conducting its policy for the preservation and development of culture, as stipulated in the *Protection and Development of Culture Act* (Article 14).

2.3. Wider Context

The activities carried out within the TPC project are linked to a number of policy issues, which are currently under discussion at a wider European level, namely:

- The role culture plays in improving the quality of life
- The question of 'cultural rights', particularly in the context of 'cultural citizenship'
- The support and encouragement of civic participation and dialogue within a public space
- The ongoing development of international information networks

Although elaborating these policy issue s in any detail exceeded the scope of the research carried out for the case study in hand, they nevertheless represent essential elements of a wider contextual framework which has always been indirectly determining the entire TPC project. The TPC methodology and findings reflect the dynamics and trends common to and recognisable in other countries of the SEE region as well as in Bulgaria. In this respect, the main conclusions drawn from the project debates apply to the challenges facing cultural policy across the region. This illustrates that the TPC has successfully entered a process of cultural policy development that has relevance beyond the immediate context of Bulgaria.

Project Profile

3.1. Mission

The mission of the TPC project was to take an active part in the process of creating better conditions for developing Bulgarian culture through fostering effective interaction between university researchers, independent experts, and cultural operators.

TPC1 strove to include all possible groups of participants in a virtual '*room of public dialogue*' designed to facilitate the process of formulating, assessing and selecting alternative cultural polices in an atmosphere of openness and transparency - with particular attention to the input of academic experts. The emphasis of TPC2, however, was to guarantee the participation of emerging networks of researchers and cultural operators in the actual process of cultural policymaking.

3.2. Goals

The TPC project aimed at developing a model for all stakeholders in cultural policymaking, to help find solutions to the main areas of concern as regards cultural policymaking in Bulgaria. This model was intended to contribute to an open and continuous process of formulating, evaluating and selecting cultural policies.

The project covers the following areas which continue to date:

- creating a database of cultural organisations and institutions involved in policy-making and keeping it regularly updated
- actively including the opinions of (academic) experts and analysts in the evaluation of existing cultural policies
- establishing and maintaining 'rooms of public dialogue' for discussion and debate on cultural policy matters

While TPC1 aimed at *national cultural policy frameworks*, TPC2 targeted the area of *local cultural policies*.

Short-term Goals

- To create conditions for a constructive and effective dialogue on the subject of Bulgarian cultural policies
- To create the TPC network of researchers to facilitate the process of formulating and evaluating cultural policies
- To set up a database for the cultural sector
- To establish sustainable partnerships and coalitions between the main actors in the field of culture
- To develop and test a system or 'technology' for producing and monitoring national and local cultural policies

Long-term Goals

- To establish TPC as a legal organisation consisting of researchers and practitioners using up-to-date methods to facilitate and monitor cultural policy processes
- To support the existing network of researchers and experts within TPC and to provide adequate and continuous analysis on the situation of culture in Bulgaria
- To forge sustainable links between researchers and practitioners
- To bridge the gap between researchers in other fields of social practice such as the third sector, executive, legislative etc., both on the national and regional level
- To actively engage members of the public in the process of formulating and implementing national policies in dialogue
- To develop improved teaching models for cultural policy and management courses
- To promote and disseminate the results of the research carried out

CHAPTER 4

Project Implementation

4.1. Methodology

In order to create a public space for the debate of cultural policy matters, the project was realised by applying two complementary methodological phases: (1) developing a theoretical model of the so-called *optimised rooms of public dialogue for cultural policies* and (2) practical testing of this theoretical construct. **The first project phase** consisted of a series of preliminary surveys and analyses, which represented the basis for the creation of a theoretical model (technology). **The second methodological phase** consisted of a series of round tables, the so-called 'approbation' process, which represented the practical testing of the elaborated technology in a second phase of the project. The practical surveys carried out for these round tables served as basis for further refining the theoretical model elaborated in the TPC1 project. Practical activities in both TPC1 and TPC 2 allowed for a reality check of the different mechanisms and theoretical models. This laboratory approach led to several unforeseen events and outcomes, such as ad-hoc advocacy initiatives in the project's cultural and political environment.

4.2. Development of a theoretical model

During the first phase of the project, a theoretical model of the so-called optimised rooms of public dialogue for cultural policies was created. This model consists of two complementary tools: the seven positions of participation in cultural policy development (which helps to identify all relevant actors and their role within the policymaking process); and the five-step technology (which supports processes of problem resolution in cultural policy).

4.2.1. *Seven Positions of Participation* in Cultural Policy Development

The first component of the theoretical model was developed with the support of carrying out a preliminary analysis of all parties directly or indirectly interested in cultural policy development processes. This analysis was carried out through a research-based theoretical system of seven previously identified positions of participation. The following positions of participation in cultural

policy-making were identified:

(1) The position of **the political representatives**
(2) The position of **operators from the cultural sector**[8]
(3) The position of **consumers**
(4) The position of **business** (as potential sponsors of culture)
(5) The position of **the media**
(6) The position of **ethnic, religious, youth and other groups**
(7) The position of **researchers of culture and their institutions**

When the **Model of the Seven Positions** was applied to local levels it turned out that in many of the 'cultural-political regions' such a clear-cut distinction between the individual positions was not always possible. In some of the municipalities, it happened that participants represented more than one stakeholder position, for example, when an individual works for the state authority and at the same time represents an ethnic or religious minority[9]. In other cities, such combinations were often very productive, for example, when a person pooled the positions of private business, productive operator in the arts sector and civil representative[10]. These realities at the local level caused considerable reflection as the initially elaborated system needed to be more flexible to reflect the existing diversity within each of the positions. This led to an opening up of the *seven positions of participation model* to allow for the large number of mixed and hybrid positions of interest. This helped the project team to develop new perspectives and areas of interest in a number of cultural-political issues at the national and local level.

4.2.2. *Five-Step Technology* (Model for Problem Resolution)

The second tool of the theoretical model was the '*Five-Step Technology*' which was designed to support problem resolution in the field of cultural policy. The *Five-Step Technology* allows for the analysis of the role of different parties involved in addressing cultural policy issues at every stage of the envisaged resolution of a particular problem in the field. The five steps are:

(1) Identifying the cultural problem
(2) Articulating and coming to an agreement
(3) Deciding on priorities (setting up a strategy)
(4) Advocacy and lobbying
(5) Coming to common decisions on cultural policy

Each round table and activity implemented during the TPC project was based on this model of processing cultural policy developments (see description of next steps in the following chapters).

4.3. Practical testing of the theoretical construct

The practical implementation of the developed technologies was realised by organising a series of topical cultural policy round tables that would provoke the interest of the addressed stakeholders. These round tables were facilitated by realising a number of preparatory surveys and analyses on local and national level. Moreover, they were supported by parallel actions for a pro-active identification and involvement of all relevant actors to local and national policymaking processes.

4.3.1. Preliminary Surveys and Analyses

Conducting surveys on all potential stakeholders in cultural life represented the first concrete activities of the project. The initial project phase was especially dedicated to creating a map of the existing cultural field and identifying all parties interested in the development of the sector. This classification of all stakeholders in the field was carried out to facilitate the identification of potential key-actors in Bulgarian cultural policymaking processes.

One of the main deficiencies identified by the TPC team was the lack of adequate information about cultural organisations and their activities, and the weak level of interest in cultural policy issues of those concerned. To start dealing with this deficiency, a preliminary survey of the cultural policies in Bulgaria was conducted by four research teams:

- Research team *One* created typologies of relevant subjects from the political sphere and the media.
- Research team *Two* mapped out the arts and cultural organisations across Bulgaria.
- Research team *Three* studied potential business sponsors and cultural consumers.
- Research team *Four* conducted research and analysis within the NGO sector in Bulgaria.

The information collected by these research teams played a fundamental role in both the refinement of the theoretical model, and the successful implementation of the first Round Table organised by the project team. The research and survey phase corresponds to the Step One in the 'Five-Step-Technology' process, developed during the project, relating to the process of 'identifying the cultural problem'.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'This is the first time that a theoretical analysis with a practical dimension has been carried out[11]. This type of research is valuable in that it has the same significance as a genuine *policy paper*.'

BILIANA TOMOVA
PhD, Lecturer at the University of National & World Economy and the Technical University, Sofia
TPC Member

Following this first survey, many other specific surveys and analyses were conducted in the framework of the project. Both TPC1 and TPC2 generated a remarkable volume of background material, workshop reports and conclusions, open letters and statements, white papers, etc. Several reports, e.g. on economic aspects of Bulgarian culture and on legislation, were written by advisory members of the wider project team.

Preparation for an electronic database on culture began with TPC2. The aim of the database is to map out the areas of research taking place throughout Bulgaria and to register organisations concerned with culture and cultural policy. The map will show the extent of cultural organisations located in the areas around university research centres which should encourage the formation of regional cultural centres in which the identification of common structures and processes should be followed by the implemen-tation of regional cultural policy measures in these areas.

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8 - This position comprises culture NGOs, civil organisations, art managers and independent artists as well as public institutions and associations in the field of culture
9 - Such as the example of the city of Plovdiv has shown
10 - Such as another example in the city of Svishtov has shown

11 - Refers to the economic and legislative reports on culture made during the project

Studies focusing on this area of research, which have been initiated during TPC, represent the pilot phase of a long-term research project in its own right. It is envisaged that the established e-map inventory on culture and cultural policy will continue to be extended and updated during future research of the cultural field in Bulgaria.

4.3.2. Round Tables

The most important mechanism for testing the developed theoretical model was the implementation of a series of round tables on pressing issues concerning cultural policy.

In the course of TPC1, three round tables were organised on a national level. The purpose of the first Round Table was both to analyse the shortcomings of existing policy, exclusively among a circle of cultural operators directly affected by such problems, and to decide upon the nature of further activities based on a newly created coalition of stakeholders.

At the second Round Table, representatives of other potential stakeholders in culture (private business, consumers, etc.) got involved in this coalition.

During the third Round Table, this broad coalition of stakeholders addressed public authorities with concrete propositions for change.

During TPC2, the previously established laboratory model of working (i.e. theoretical problem analysis followed by the practical testing of identified solutions) was transferred to the local level. In the light of the project idea to establish cultural-political regions, the team referred to all 'local' TPC events at municipal level as 'regional' round tables. Three regional Round Tables and one National Discussion were organised within TPC2. The main criteria for deciding where the events would take place and in which regions, were the existence of strong university structures and the availability of researchers interested in cultural policy topics.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'The unique characteristic of the developed methodology is the fact that it identifies all positions of action in the cultural sector. However, the methodology has been established to operate at a central level, so some modifications may prove to be necessary at regional levels. Thus, this methodology may not yet be precise enough to detect all specificities at a regional level.**12**'

IVA KUNEVA
TPC2 Project Team Member

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a) First National Round Table (TPC1), Sofia:
Mechanisms for Financing Culture in Bulgaria

The target group for this event was position two of the *seven positions for participation* model - 'operators from the cultural sector' (see description of the model of 'seven positions for participation' in chapter 4.2.2). The main problems identified were the lack of ideas about, or strategy for, cultural policy development and the lack of transparency in creating public budgets for culture. One of the main conclusions was the urgent need for an association to represent the interests of the entire cultural sector to be established. The mandate of such an association would be to communicate the sector's common will and interests more efficiently and to facilitate participation in cultural policy decision taking.

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12 - The position of the business sector for example may have a more explicit function of social responsibility at regional levels (as the case of Svishtov illustrated). Another example is the role of the amateur arts, which, compared to the impact they have in the overall national context, show far more visible local community involvement and have significant impact in some local/regional environments.

Regarding the second workshop topic (*How shall tax payers' money be distributed for culture?*), most participants agreed that the present system was significantly defective and lacked transparency, most strikingly in its lack of clear guidelines concerning the distribution of public tax (income tax), resulting in uneven distribution between governmental and independent cultural organisations. In the light of the above, the idea of establishing 'independent' public funds was proposed, which should be administered and distributed by a system acting autonomously from state institutions. Such a system would ensure a better allocation of funds from donors and independent funding organisations, income tax etc. (see the so-called list of *The Seven Problems* of culture in Bulgaria identified during TPC 1 & TPC2 events in chapter 4.4.).

The final workshop topic (*How to raise and distribute alternative funds for culture (besides tax payers' money)?*) generated much discussion about the need to attract private donations and sponsorship for specific activities, and also warnings about having too high an expectation in being able to raise substantial private sponsorship money for the arts and culture.

b) Second National Round Table (TPC1), Sofia:
Cultural Policy Decision-Making in Bulgaria: Opportunities for Participation

For this event, the target group of the First Round Table was opened up to the private business sector, cultural consumers and other interest groups.

The discussion concentrated on the problem of financing culture; on how to generate more opportunities for public funding and on how business sponsorship could be better stimulated. One key question kept coming up in all the discussions, namely, *can organisations of cultural producers and managers, artists, private businesses, consumers, media and researchers work together and influence cultural policy in Bulgaria?*

At this second TPC Round Table, practical problems were highlighted and some concrete proposals for solutions were put forward. The main conclusions addressed the following areas:

- Establishing ('independent') public funds with a state autonomous administrative structure which would guarantee a fair and even distribution of tax income for culture
- Developing a strategy for co-operation with the media to achieve this goal
- Using lottery and similar income for the benefit of culture

At this Second National Round Table, participants became tangibly aware of being part of a network of individuals and organisations with common interests and belonging to a community of cultural sector stakeholders reaching for shared goals. The positive momentum created by the project task force at the first Round Table and the strong commitment of all participants at the following event inspired the creation of a *National Civil Forum for Culture* (NCFC) which was adopted by all participants of the Second National Round Table. The 'Forum' was established to unify the spirit, will and effort of all Bulgarian civil organisations linked to issues of culture. (*see chapter 5.1. for more details*)

c) Third National Round Table (TPC1), Sofia:
The Role of Civil Society in Formulating Bulgarian Cultural Policy

This Round Table finally brought together all 'seven positions of participation' in cultural policy development including representatives of the public authorities.

The purpose of the Third National Round Table was to scrutinise the role of civil society as an effective and responsible partner of the state in formulating and implementing cultural policies

in Bulgaria.

The fruitful discussions at the event were substantiated by; the methodological tools the TPC project team had previously developed; the *Seven Positions of Participation* which ensured the growing involvement of more and more stakeholders and the *Five-Step Technology* (Model for Problem Resolution) with its steady progression from the identification of the problem to its solution. The application of both technologies enabled representatives of the newly established Forum (NCFC) to enter into informed discussion with the public authorities with well thought out and concrete demands. The NCFC stipulations brought forward at the Third National Round Table made the following three demands:

The Right to Information: The NCFC should have the right to; advance access to information about forthcoming governmental decisions in the field of culture; plans for the implementation of new decisions and the status of decisions made previously.

The Right to Consultation: Consultation with the NCFC concerning legislative proposals and definite action plans under debate should be made obligatory. The authorities should not be able to adopt a decision without such consultation. Once such a consultation with the NCFC has taken place, the public authorities may still take fully independent decisions, even if these are not consistent with the position of the Forum. If however, the positions of both do concur, then public responsibility for the decision is shared and achieves broader consent.

The Right to Make Proposals: Public authorities and civil representatives responsible for culture should have the right to propose action to take for urgent problems to be solved. The NCFC should have the right to make binding proposals for structuring the allocation and distribution of subsidies; to initiate the creation of favourable conditions for raising alternative sources of funding; to establish procedures for announcing official grant competitions; and to assign leading management positions in the national, regional and local cultural institutes.

A factor that positively influenced the discussions at the TPC1 Third National Round Table was the significant representation of the highest levels of political decision-making. The debate was attended by the Minister and the Deputy Minister of Culture, the Chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Culture, and the Deputy chairman of the parliamentary fraction of the NMSS Party (National Movement Simeon the Second), which holds the ruling majority in Parliament, along with various representatives of the Bulgarian Presidency. The National Association of Municipalities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others also took part in the event.

A central focus of the whole discussion was the subject of competencies and rights of the different public and independent players involved in culture. Representatives of the civil organisations put forward the argument that public authorities and civil organisations have mutually *supplementing* competencies and obligations that should consequently result in supplementing rights. According to this view, the public authorities currently dispose of rights which do not match their actual competence. For example, they often take decisions on problems that could be better solved at lower levels - e.g. the level of the civil sector and NGOs. From the authorities' point of view, civil organisations dispose of competencies that are not even covered by actual rights. This means that civil organisations have a great potential for providing expert knowledge and making highly competent proposals to concrete problems; a potential, which they cannot, however, put into practice because current legislation does not provides them with right to do so.

The representatives of the public authorities obviously had another point of view on these issues. In their opinion, the key discrepancy lies in the question of responsibility. The public authorities bear all the responsibility for their political decisions and actions. Furthermore, they are entrusted with this responsibility because of democratic elections. From their point of view, the civil organisations do not bear any responsibility at all and therefore they cannot participate in political decision-making. Despite such differences in opinion, the genuine exchange of ideas which took place at the TPC1 Third National Round Table event may turn out to be an important basis for identifying key policy figures that would be helpful in future lobbying campaigns of the civil sector.

d) First Regional Round Table (TPC2), Svishtov:
Access to Culture for all Citizens

The First Regional Round Table within TPC2 took place in Svishtov, an old university town. This first TPC event addressing the local (municipal) level[13] was entitled 'Access to Culture for all Citizens in Cities, Small Towns, Municipal Centres and Villages. Interaction between Professional and Amateur Arts'.

The point of view of the discussions during this Round Table were from the taxpayers' perspective the emphasis on bottom-up approaches to develop national cultural policy and supporting the development of local cultural activities by creating a new fund for the amateur arts. This proposal was based on the recognition that amateur arts play a major social role in Svishtov. Well-established forms of local amateur arts exist thanks to social awareness, a sense of responsibility and the good will of many local stakeholders in Svishtov which are often involved in substantial donor and sponsorship activities.

The cultural development model of Svishtov would be worth a separate case study as the situation of cultural activity in the city presents a positive exception to the general picture which dominates the country. The crucial difference with Svishtov is due to its well-established tradition of private donations to culture. In addition, local stakeholders are usually directly involved in finding solutions for any cultural issue or problem that might occur in the town. Perhaps most importantly, local authorities and politicians are primarily citizens of the city, and their role as representatives of the local government is only a secondary concern. In this way, the typical antagonism between state officials and civil society that is so intrinsic to many regions of Bulgaria does not exist there. Svishtov's cultural infrastructure has all the prerequisites for implementing an effective and autonomous regional policy for culture.

> **VOICES FROM THE FIELD**
>
> 'Svishtov is an example of good practice in local policies for culture. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that the local authorities are in the first place perceived of as citizens, and only afterwards as state officials. All stakeholders are involved in local cultural development and to donate to culture is a widespread practice.'
>
> PLAMEN ALEXANDROV
> *Chairman of the first Bulgarian Cultural Community Centre ('Chitalishte'), Svishtov*[14]

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13 - Following the idea of establishing local entities named 'cultural regions' TPC referred to round tables taking place on municipal level as 'regional project events'
14 - Currently also holds the position of Vice Mayor of the City of Svishtov

e) Second Regional Round Table (TPC2), Plovdiv:
Dialogue between all Cultures and the Right to Culture

The city of Plovdiv hosted the Second Round Table of the TPC2 project. The central topic of the Round Table was related to the multiethnic landscape of the host region. Special emphasis was also given to issues of the Right of Access to Culture.

Representatives of different ethnic and religious groups were invited. Also present were local authorities, researchers, media representatives, candidates running for the mayoral office, civil organisations and many more local stakeholders. The discussion was substantially influenced by the results of previously realised surveys carried out about problems of the right of access to culture in five townships of the municipality of Plovdiv. The locations of the survey were selected based on their ethnic diversity, the development stage of their cultural infrastructures and/or the particular presence of minority groups.

These snapshots of cultural problems in these townships, proved that the cultural needs which were identified in these communities related more to ongoing developments in other regions and to the general cultural context of post-socialist Bulgaria, than they did to the to multicultural imprint of the Plovdiv region. It was therefore concluded that ethnic communities in Plovidv do actually possess equal ethnic rights of access to culture. The main problem of the townships analysed for the Round Table survey seemed, in fact, to relate to a genuine lack of tradition in consuming products of culture. Such a phenomenon could be directly connected to public education which does not sufficiently provide for the raising of awareness on the importance of cultural knowledge and activity. One of the main demands raised during the Round Table was therefore a call for more liaising between cultural and educational policies.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'There is equal, but rather insufficient access to culture.'

YURY VULKOVSKI
PhD Student, Sofia University, TPC Initiator & Team Consultant
(Summarising conclusions of the discussion at the TPC2 Round Table in Plovdiv)

As at the Svishtov event, a policy recommendation identified for the Plovdiv situation was to foster cultural co-operation in the field of the amateur arts, it being recognised as a crucial instrument for preserving the traditions of minority communities.

f) Third Regional Round Table (TPC2), Varna:
Culture in the City, Culture in the Village - Reality, Needs and Perspectives

The main accent of this Round Table was placed on the decentralisation of cultural life and the access to culture in different community centres that belong to the region of Varna. These problems were tackled by carrying out a topological diagnosis of the situation in large townships in the region, in smaller towns located close to Varna, in smaller towns that are in remote areas far away from the city, and in villages with cultural community centres.

One of the most successful results of this event was that the local organiser, the *City and Culture Foundation*, managed to attract many representatives from the policy level to participate

in the event: five party candidates running for the mayoral office in the upcoming local elections attended and presented their cultural visions for Varna during a session of intense discussion. One of the main outcomes of the debate was the idea of establishing a Regional Civil Forum for Culture in Varna, similar to the National Civil Forum for Culture (NCFC). The Varna Forum would work as an informal structure, in close co-operation with the local authorities and help to generate cultural dynamics throughout the Varna region. The main policy problems and recommendations identified during the Regional Round Table in Varna, were also summarised in an Open Letter addressed to the local and the central authorities.

g) National Discussion (TPC2), Svishtov:
Challenges for Regional Cultural Policies - Right of Access to Culture

The National Discussion, the concluding event of the TPC project, took place in Svishtov because of the positive experience of the first TPC2 Regional Round Table held there.

One of the primary goals of the National Discussion was for the central and local authorities to reach an agreement regarding principles and priorities of a joint political programme intended to revive cultural life in Bulgaria.

However, as many representatives of 'participation position one' (political representatives) unfortunately failed to attend the event itself, neither the Ministry of Culture nor other important Ministries, nor the different Parliamentary commissions were well represented - reaching the goal of a joint was considerably weakened[15]. This Declaration was drafted to be a key document for reaching consensus between all stakeholders in the policymaking process.

Next to this joint Declaration one of the most important outcomes of the National Discussion in Svishtov, was the creation of a Framework for developing a National Cultural Strategy which applies a bottom-up approach. This Framework is in line with agreements between the NCFC and the public authorities already concluded in earlier phases of the project[16]. In accordance with the needs identified at the beginning of the project (see project context in chapter 2), one of the most important aims connected to the Framework for creating a National Strategy was to achieve continuity in decision-making and cultural planning. In order to successfully maintain such a bottom-up planning and decision making process, it was crucial that the adopted Declaration was first supported by as many 'positions of participation' as possible, and that the civil sector clearly voiced its opinions to the authorities. Politicians however, despite all efforts, have not put culture top priority on their agendas. Improving the quality of life and strengthening society are often perceived as constitutive elements of a successful long-term vision for a well-developed cultural policy which allows

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VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'This National Event in Svishtov proves that the time is right for culture to become a state priority. This implies the approval and realisation of a national strategy for culture and the entire intellectual sphere. The strategy should comply to reality, namely, with the requirements of democratic development and free market conditions.[17] '

GEORGI PARVANOV
President of the Republic of Bulgaria

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15 - Nevertheless, the Declaration was unanimously adopted by all workshop participants and sent along to a large number of stakeholders including the state institutions, which should have brought about a certain impact.

16 - This especially concerns arrangements stipulated in the Agreement on Common Will and Common Efforts, which has been signed by cultural operators, the Ministry of Culture and the Committee on Culture at the Parliament on occasion of the Third National Round Table of TPC1. See also chapter 5.1.

17 - The complete appeal of Georgi Parvanov to the participants of the National Discussion in Svishtov is available on the web site of the Bulgarian Presidency: www.president.bg

general improvements for the benefit of the entire Bulgarian society. Hence, politicians could begin to think about using their election campaigns to promote the notion of culture as an important contribution to improving quality of life - always a popular and vote-catching goal.

Every single event, during both TPC1 and TPC2, spontaneously generated additional events and initiatives not previously planned. As stated earlier, the occurrence of this is phenomenon was due, in particular, to the laboratory approach to working introduced by the TPC team.

All four practical project implementation tools described in this chapter (*Seven Positions of Participation Model*, Surveys on Cultural Infrastructure, *Five-Step Technology*, and Round Tables & Debates) were developed to feed into a continuous process of methodological refinement and improvement of the theoretical systems already in place.

All the practical activities and events of the project were set up in order to feed a continuous process of methodological refinement and improvement of the proposed theoretical concepts.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'The politicians' behaviour is often noted for its general lack of political will to develop culture. Most of the politicians initially invited to the National Debate in Svishtov turned out to be too busy with the election campaign and did not attend. The fact that that they did not recognise that by attending this national cultural event they would actually support their pre-election campaign simply reveals their ignorance. Such politicians simply do not have issues of regional cultural policies on their agendas.'

LYUBEN POPOV
PhD, TPC Project Leader and Initiator
Department of Cultural Studies, Sofia University

4.4. Main Findings & Conclusions

The contextual framework which determined the project at the beginning of its implementation has been continuously enhanced since then by the identification of new needs and new solutions, especially at the local level. This is mainly a result of the numerous activities and concrete developments in the project environment which have been initiated since its beginning.

The so-called **'*Seven Problems*'** of cultural policy in Bulgaria which were identified during the First and the Second National Round Table of TPC1 are still very relevant to the present situation[18]:

1. Developing a long-term national strategy for cultural policy. Its implementation would be secured by the formulation of clear principles, priorities, evaluation criteria and the provision of appropriate resources

2. Setting up an inventory of all cultural resources in Bulgaria

3. Elaborating a so called 'satellite balance' (also known as 'consolidated budget')[19]

4. Establishing public funds for culture with independent administration structures in order to distribute tax income on a competitive basis

5. Developing opportunities to efficiently administer cultural monuments, which are currently under public ownership, by offering concessions and franchise contracts to private enterprises for their actual management

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18 - The Seven Problems are listed in descending order according to their importance
19 - Creating a 'satellite balance' describes an economic assessment methodology, which allows the calculation of the financial contribution of a certain sector (in this case the cultural sector) to the overall national economy, by developing a separate balance parallel to the general national or regional outputs. Taking into consideration the direct and indirect contributions of the sector to the GNP allows for a more effective policy planning.

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6. Setting a minimum percentage of the GNP (not less than 1%) to be spent on culture

7. Achieving concordance of all culture related laws by harmonisation of relevant regulations

Besides some very specific cultural issues in Svishtov, Plovdiv and Varna which have been identified with the assistance of local partners during TPC2, there is an array of cultural problems which are common to all areas of Bulgaria:

• Fiscal Decentralisation: there is lack of equality in the distribution of cultural budgets between local authorities and central government. This problem connects to the question of safeguarding the right of access to culture for all citizens.

• Audience Development: the need to revive citizens' cultural requirements, participation and consumer interest in cultural activity and production through audience development.

• Amateur Arts: the need for a consistent policy for amateur arts. Their role as a catalyst for social cohesion and cultural participation is largely underestimated. As the Plovdiv Round Table during TPC2 proved, amateur arts flourish best in communities of cultural minorities.

• Information: the difficult access to contemporary cultural practices for ethno-religious minority communities in remote places. The exchange of information and cultural products between large urban centres and small rural villages is unsatisfactory.

• Cultural Industries: the lack of communication and co-ordination between its many branches is strikingly evident.

• Management: cultural industries as well as community centres require more workers with cultural know-how.

• The lack of mechanisms to stimulate partnerships in amateur arts between business and culture (except in Svishtov where an outstanding practice in this field was identified).

Besides the existing dichotomies between professional arts/amateur arts; small village/large city; and ethnic minority/majority, during TPC2 the question of the disabled community was raised and their right of access to culture with proper facilities to enable this. TPC2 concluded that people with disabilities should be considered as citizens for whom equal rights to culture might be an issue. For a post-socialist country like Bulgaria, the fact that this question has been raised is a real step forward, since during communist times disabled people were largely neglected by the state.

As a result of all the activities undertaken during TPC, two levels of implementing possible solutions have been identified:

Solutions within **the sphere of competence of the local authorities**:

• After local elections, the municipalities, together with the local cultural practitioners and their civil organisations, should develop local cultural strategies as an integral part of regional socio-economic development plans.

• The municipalities should publish annual reports on culture.

• Culture-allocated budgets of the municipalities should be distributed on a competitive basis.

• An effective monitoring system for culture-related expenditures should be introduced.

• Developing good practice frameworks for the exchange of information and experience between the cultural institutions in Bulgaria's region is a necessity.

• Municipalities and administrations of the regional territorial units should create consultation centres to assist project preparation and fundraising.

• Together with local universities, municipalities should develop courses on marketing and management, which target local community cultural centres and other cultural organisations in the region.

Solutions within **the sphere of competence of national authorities**:

• There is an urgent need for a long-term national cultural strategy and policy to be developed in co-operation with civil organisations as well as with local and central authorities.

• Preparing an inventory of Bulgarian culture and elaborating a 'satellite balance' or 'consolidated budget' (see above) are compulsory prerequisites for establishing a long term national strategy.

• A national strategy to carefully analyse and evaluate all available cultural resources and all instruments and mechanisms foreseen to guarantee their growth should be established.

• Amendments to the Protection and Development of Culture Act should give more rights to civil organisations in order to guarantee their participation in developing, implementing and monitoring national and regional (local) policies for culture.

• The actual role of the local authorities in implementing local policies should be clearly defined.

• The whole concept of how cultural budgets are produced needs to be modified, namely by focusing on activities rather than on personnel costs alone.

• A normative framework of regulations calling for more transparent and unambiguous criteria should be created in order to help companies to demonstrate their support for culture more clearly.

• Regions of cultural planning need to be set up, similar to those existing regions of economic development planning[20]. Regional cultural planning would ensure equal rights of access to culture for the minority groups and small villages in remote areas. As stated earlier, the existing governing bodies of the territorial units (administrative districts) in the regions are not currently authorised to deal with specific regional cultural policies at all.

• The Ministry of Culture should appoint Regional Co-ordinators for Culture.

• Publishers and distributors of literature, especially in small towns and villages, should take more advantage of tax incentives and opportunities for loans at low interest.

• Amendments to the Protection and Development of Culture Act should include the establishment of a national network for the exchange of information, promoting products of amateur art and tax exemptions for cultural centres in local communities.

All events organised within the TPC project represent the practical implementation of single 'steps' included in the *Five-Step Technology* (Model for Problem Resolution), which was developed at the beginning of the project. Achieving concrete results and real policy improvements by launching ad-hoc advocacy and lobbying campaigns at the various project events proved, however, to be far more challenging and were largely dependent on the presence of policy representatives at any given event. Nevertheless, the project did achieve indisputable results, out of which the most important are:

• **The establishment of a researcher network:** TPC undeniably contributed to stimulating civic participation by organising a strong and innovative network of researchers in the field of cultural policy.

• **The establishment of the National Civil Forum for Culture** (NCFC) and other Civic Forums on regional level turned out to be extremely important for the beginning of a coalition building process among the many different players in the cultural life of Bulgaria.

The project output sometimes exceeded by far the expected results (e.g. the creation of the NCFC). On many occasions, its activities resulted in significant improvements which had an impact long after the end of the actual implementation schedule. Among the many other complementary outcomes, the established network of university researchers became the basis of a new Mobility Scheme for cultural policy lectures which was launched by *Policies for Culture* in 2003.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'One of the affirmative achievements of the project is the involvement of researchers in a problem solving process based on contemporary social practice, as well as the bridge which has been established between researchers and civil organisations.'

KRASSIMIRA KRASTANOVA
PhD, Department of Ethnology and Sociology, Plovdiv University
TPC Local Team Member

An additional important attribute of the developed methodology is its general applicability and validity, which makes it both useful and relevant for other social environments and other countries of the SEE region and beyond.

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20 - Existing economic development plans usually cover the whole country; a practice which is not yet reality in the field of culture. The lack of national development plans for culture is a serious obstacle for the development of regional/local policies for culture as described earlier in this study.

Project Outcomes[21]

One of the initial project goals was to develop a model for the participation of all stakeholders in cultural policymaking. Achieving this goal would lead to an open and continuous process of formulating and evaluating cultural policies in Bulgaria. The main findings and conclusions of the project implementation phase significantly contributed to advancing the development of such a participatory model of cultural policy-making.

In general, the main characteristics of any cultural policy model that strives for efficiency are **transparency**, **partnership**, **dialogue** and **political will**. Serious shortcomings in these four areas was the driving force behind the carrying out of this project and by the end of TPC1 and TPC2, each of these areas has been addressed and, to a greater or lesser extent, improved.

As all activities implemented within TPC were carried out using the unique project methodology which was developed at the beginning of the project, its activities contributed to progress in more than one of the following problem areas.

5.1. Fostering Partnership and Coalition building

One of the most outstanding results of the project is its network of researchers and the civil coalitions for culture that were conceived on national and regional levels.

The project legitimised the introduction of new cultural players to the scene. Innovative partnerships between pre-established and new cultural associations were created. As a result of the project, the established artist associations started to collaborate with newly emerging artistic organisations from the NGO sector. These new partnerships are one of the most significant outcomes of the project. The idea of forming coalitions among more established and new organisations from different areas of cultural activity has been a central element since the very beginning of the project and is an affirmative step forward in starting-up successful lobbying and advocacy actions towards policy level.

At the Second National Round Table (TPC1), a feeling of common interest and community awareness among the participating cultural operators became very tangible. The inspiration and commitment of all who had already been involved in the First National Round Table and the drive that the initiative had gained since then represented a solid basis for the positive atmosphere and the outcome of the second event. This further paved the way for the creation of the National Civic Forum for Culture (NCFC, the 'Forum') as an institutional body that united common will and the aspirations of civil organisations linked to issues of culture in Bulgaria.

From the very beginning of the project, practical working models applied to its implementation had been based on the principle of creating partnerships both within the sector

(horizontal links), but also and equally importantly, with the policy level (vertical links). Another guiding principle of the project was to follow up the creation of theoretical models with concrete testing of their applicability in practice (the so-called *approbation*)[22].

The creation of so-called Initiative Committees responsible for the organisation of the Second and Third National Round Table (TPC1) was the first concrete step in the process of increasing awareness of the urgent need for a **common initiative** and for the pooling of **joint efforts** between civil organisations in culture. This need had already become tangible prior to the project. In order to sustain these positive developments, and to stimulate the establishment of stable networks and coalitions between culture and policy representatives according to the terms and convictions of the different stakeholders', the TPC project team chose to withdraw gradually from the practical organisation of the Round Tables and supplementary activities, and to hand these tasks over to the newly established Initiative Committees instead, so as to keep the team's role limited to that of general guidance (both practical and in terms of content) and to process facilitation.

A concrete result of the increased readiness of the sector to pool its efforts was the adoption of the previously mentioned Open Letter to the MoC and the CoC of the Parliament. This public appeal was a provocative reaction to the former Ministry decision to create a working group to prepare for an amendment to the existing *Protection and Development of Culture Act*. For three reasons, which were clearly explained in the Open Letter, this proceeding attracted sharp disapproval from the civil organisations represented in the TPC Initiative Committees. Firstly, the short timeframe for putting the amendment of the law into force, arranged by the MoC, did not allow for any public debate on the anticipated changes. Secondly, only representatives of the established artist associations were allowed to participate in the working group convened by the MoC. Thirdly, and most importantly, there is an urgent need for a complete re-working of the whole legislative framework, directly and indirectly concerning the field of culture, so the proposed amendments to the existing *Protection and Development of Culture Act* are only addressing part of the problem.

The Open Letter created a lot of media attention and for the first time alerted the public authorities to the TPC project. This ad-hoc action is a clear example of TPC's laboratory working method and should be understood as a practical exercise of the project consortium to test participatory policymaking and coalition building processes. The actual feasibility of this ad-hoc testing approach was convincingly affirmed by some important moves made later on by a number of state officials, because of this intervention by the civil society.

As a direct result of the Second National Round Table (TPC1), the MoC actually met with civil organisations to discuss forthcoming changes to the Protection and Development of Culture Act. All organisations that had signed the Open Letter were invited to the meeting. This was also the first official meeting between representatives of civil organisations participating in the Technological Park Culture project and representatives of the public authorities, in particular from the MoC.

Consequently, an Agreement on Common Will and Common Efforts of the cultural operators, the Ministry of Culture and the Committee on Culture of the Parliament was arranged shortly before the Third National Round Table (TPC1) took place. This remarkably successful advocacy initiative finally paved the way for establishing the National Civil Forum for Culture (NCFC), a body which was officially constituted and legitimised in Article 6a of the concluded Agreement on

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21 - It is important to note that all results and follow-up activities, which are described below, were generated by an initiative that implemented its core project activities and initiatives within only 12 months. This illustrates the strong impact the TPC had on the Bulgarian cultural sector and all relevant policy levels.

22 - See also chapter 4.1. on project methodologies

Common Will and Common Efforts (see details below). The NCFC ('Forum') is an informal horizontal structure that includes individual representatives of all civic organisations who signed the Agreement at the Third National Round Table (TPC1). This includes a wide variety of organisations from the cultural sector, researchers, minority representatives, private businesses etc[23].

The Agreement on Common Will and Common Efforts stipulates that:
- The NCFC shall be considered as an equal and legitimate partner of the public authorities in cultural policy decision-making (Article 6a).
- The NCFC should co-operate to generate political initiatives towards development and parliamentary adoption of a sustainable long-term strategy for a national cultural policy with clear political engagements, principles, rules, priorities and assessment criteria (Article 6b).
- The NCFC should constantly monitor current conditions for cultural activities and take action to improve preconditions for the development of Bulgarian culture (Article 6c).
- The NCFC, in partnership with the public authorities, should work to improve the quality of management in all cultural sectors (Article 6d).

The setting up of the National Civic Forum for Culture can be seen as a logical continuation (and the highlight) of positive developments which have become more and more visible since TPC was launched. In addition to achievements at the national level in TPC1, continuity has also been achieved by various TPC2 connected initiatives on the regional level. Two important locally driven initiatives, which will potentially assure the sustainability of the regional processes launched, were conceived immediately after the project's concluding event, the National Discussion in Svishtov (TPC2):

1) The 'Rector' of the 'Dimitar Tcenov' Academy of Economics in Svishtov proposed the launch of a local MA programme in Arts Management.

2) A Local Coalition for Culture in Svishtov (Regional Civil Forum) was set up the day the National Discussion took place there. In order to guarantee continuity of best practice in cultural policy for the future in Svishtov, this local coalition will work in close partnership with the municipality.

In addition, one of the most tangible developments of TPC2 at regional/local level and a direct result of the forcible efforts of the local TPC partners in these cities is the establishment of two Regional Civil Forums for Culture.

Experience gained during the entire implementation phase has shown that stakeholder coalitions on local levels are forming with fewer obstacles than similar processes taking place at the national level. One reason for this might be that participants in local cultural processes are often wearing several hats at the same time. In addition, the integrated and important position which culture still seems to have in daily life at local community level substantially facilitates the set up of broad coalitions for safeguarding local cultural traditions. It is important to note that all regional events of TPC2 were organised in close co-operation with long-term local partners who share a great deal of the success achieved in forming such sustainable local coalitions.

The concluding National Discussion in Svishtov gained its high reputation by fostering active participation of the local partners of TPC: the University in Svishtov and the oldest Cultural Community Centre in the city (*chitalishte*) handled the entire organisation of the National

Discussion and further contributed by providing the necessary human and financial resources. Besides organisational support and resources, local partners also provided academic services. The survey which was conducted for the Second Regional Debate in Plovdiv was independently conducted by the local TPC2 partner organisation *Association Exchange, Culture, Heritage, Local Development* and a group of ethnologists from Plovdiv University.

The project set-up which applied to the implementation of all regional/local activities in TPC2 necessarily required a participatory approach to its organisation. It delegated responsibility to the local TPC partner teams, stimulated local initiative, and is now a viable model for the establishment of future regional structures of the National Civil Forum for Culture and TPC.

5.2. Improving Transparency

As noted earlier, one of the main problems of existing practice in decision-making for culture in Bulgaria is the lack of transparency connected to its public administration. This problem was addressed by the round tables and open debates organised within both TPC1 and TPC2.

Applying this practice resulted in another, even more important, Agreement for Partnership between the MoC, the parliamentary CoC and the NCFC being arranged, only a month after the Third National Round Table on *The Role of Civil Society in Formulating Bulgarian Cultural Policy* (TPC1) had taken place. This Agreement is based on the mutual consent of all parties involved, that matters of national culture should become a set priority of governmental policy. The Agreement for Partnership is based on the conviction that mutual respect between the executive, legislative and civil society levels should lead to sustainable co-operation. Consequently, one NCFC member now regularly attends the weekly meeting of the parliamentary CoC.

This Agreement for Partnership is of unquestionable importance, as it represents the outcome of a strong civic advocacy action for culture, derived from applying the principles of partnership, transparency, mutual provision of information, providing access to information, etc.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'The best project result of all is that on one hand we brought together participants from cultural production which, as a result, formed a strong partnership capable of opposing the governing authorities if necessary. On the other hand, we got the politicians themselves to sit around the table and talk with them. This showed the politicians that we need to create mechanisms to continue the debate.[24] '

LJUBOMIR KUTIN
PhD, Member of the Steering Committee of the City and Culture Foundation
TPC Local Team Member

5.3. Encouraging Dialogue

Dialogue is the key element that was constantly kept in the fore and encouraged throughout the duration of the project. A crucial precondition for this approach is the TPC methodology, which is based on *a shared vision* of cultural policy development

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23 - The Forum's activities are regularly announced on the NCFC website: www.slovo.org/ngfk

24 - About the traditional dilemma, if civil society should operate in strict opposition or partnership with the governing authorities see also next chapter

involving all actors concerned.

The implementation of a Series of Round Tables to resolve cultural policy problems greatly contributed to achieving one of the most important project goals, namely the creation of conditions for a constructive and effective dialogue on Bulgarian cultural policies. Besides the official public debates taking place in the project framework, there were plenty of informal discussions within the TPC project consortium and the NCFC. These discussions served to foster and facilitate dialogue between all interest groups gradually becoming involved in the project.

5.4. Forging Political Will

The Third National Round Table (TPC1) was on 'advocacy and lobbying' in a concrete way and hence represents a practical example of the fourth step of the *Five-Step Technology* (see chapter 4.2.2.). The fifth step of this technology, 'reaching widely shared cultural policy decisions', steadily continued to develop after the first project stage and was especially taken up by the numerous partnerships created by TPC. One of the main merits of the project is that it stimulated and established a very tangible and powerful civil movement. As mentioned before, the first civil initiatives in the field were already about to emerge before the actual start of the project, but the real impact became visible when concrete action began and especially when TPC spread its activities to the regional level in the second phase of the project.

Despite positive developments overall, the Agreement for Partnership (the second official agreement of TPC, completed after the Agreement on Common Will and Common Efforts - see chapter 5.1) still needs to be put into practice more forcefully. This will guarantee active and regular participation of the Ministry on a long-term basis, particularly as regards mutual consultation and the provision of sufficient access to information - an on-going commitment that has been made by the Ministry. Now, the MoC is mostly active on an ad hoc basis. This calls for an even firmer approach within actions and initiatives of the NCFC. Now that the Agreement for Partnership has been signed, the Forum should take full advantage of the possibilities which the

official partnership with the Parliament and the MoC offer.

In contrast to initial expectations, the actual benefits of the finalised Agreement for Partnership between the civil sector and policy level are still discussed as a matter of controversy. To better assess its real value, one needs to take into consideration the actual context of its adoption. Ever since the question of the rights and obligations of the civil sector became a 'hot' issue of debate at the Third National Round Table (TPC1), there was growing public pressure for real change to take place in the *Protection and Development of Culture Act* towards guaranteeing civil participation in political decision-making in the field of culture. This concerned, in particular, Article 16 of the Culture Act, which stipulates the actual mechanisms of political decision-making in culture. In the light of this ongoing debate, it could be concluded that politicians may have been tempted to sign the Agreement for Partnership simply in order to relieve pressure from the increasing public demand to change the *Protection and Development of Culture Act* more fundamentally. This is why, at one point, there was a clear risk of hidden political agendas using the Agreement and actually jeopardising its completion. In the long run, however, the very fact of its existence will probably be seen as one of the most remarkable outcomes of the project, provided that its partners manage to ensure continuity of the established frameworks for co-operation.

One of the shortcomings of the Agreement for Partnership is the design of its actual content, especially the fact that not all the measures previously called for at the Third National Round Table (TPC1) have actually been included. Focusing predominantly on the right of access to information, the Agreement did actually fail to provide the NCFC (as the leading representative entity of the civil sector) with sufficient authority and power to participate fully in cultural policymaking. It is therefore recommended that all contractual parties utilise the opportunities provided by the Agreement in their work in a more fruitful and proactive way. Only if all the three parties (civil society, parliament, MoC) use the Agreement to its full theoretical capacity, will it prove its operational value and benefit well into the future.

It seems that many of the politicians invited to get involved in the project, failed to recognise the central importance of the problems in the peripheral regions of Bulgaria. This is evident from their lack of participation in the concluding National Discussion in Svishtov (The Svishtov event was the first TPC event addressing subjects of national relevance to be organised outside the capital city.)

Developing regional/local dimensions of cultural policy would probably be significantly encouraged by signing a contractual agreement of partnership between the local authorities and the Ministry of Culture. At present, one quite tangible development in the periphery however, is the

establishment of two Local Civil Forums for Culture in Svishtov and Varna - very much the result of the efforts of TPC partners at regional/local level.

During the entire project, civil sector representatives often manifested an ambiguous attitude towards politicians getting involved in the project. There is no clear consensus yet among many cultural operators about the actual use of approaching the policy level. Discussions centre on open questions as to whether civil society should act as a critical corrective and hence be in constant opposition to politicians, or whether it should become a real partner instead, with all the implications that this might entail. One thing, however, became very clear: if the chosen line of action is mutual partnership, long-term co-operation can only be sustained if there is an equal share of obligations, rights and authority between civil society and the policy level. Only in this way will civil society be able to stimulate and guide political initiatives in the field of culture more efficiently.

At present, advocating and lobbying for a white paper on the development of a widely shared long-term national cultural strategy, is the next big step still ahead of civil society organisations operating in the field. This endeavour can only be successful if it achieves the full backing and commitment of all policy makers concerned.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

'As far as the Agreement is concerned its continuity depends on good practice - which we have so far proved - established as a result of our collaboration. Let us hope that the next government and each new political majority will strive to include a wide forum of representatives from the different sectors of Bulgarian public life. Only this way will decisions taken consist of practical conclusions - next to their political expediency - which are then followed by the implementation of legislation that is gradually adopting European standards, while at the same time it will help to preserve positive aspects of the Bulgarian tradition.'

PROF. STEFAN DANAILOV
Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Culture

Project Management Structure

The organisational model of TPC represented a unique form of project management from its very beginning. It comprised an informal and ever growing network of researchers that was built around a hard core of researchers that had already worked together as a team some time before the project.

The project was managed by a project leader, a central coordinator, and a several other team members with consultative functions. The hard core of researchers initially carried out all organisation, coordination and administrative tasks of the project.

During TPC1, a wider team structure was adopted which included two experts (who authored the economic and legislative reports prepared during the project); one PR specialist and one external consultant on advocacy and lobbying. In addition, the main project team set up and managed four additional research teams, which were conducting surveys on Bulgarian cultural infrastructures. Students from the universities involved in the project assisted the work of the research teams. The information which was collected by these surveys played a key role in successfully implementing the First National Round Table of TPC1.

Later, during TPC1, two Initiative Committees were elected to be in charge of the concept, design and organisation of the Second and the Third National Round Tables. The Initiative Committees consisted exclusively of cultural operators and consultants mainly working independently and externally from the TPC core project team. In order to hand over project ownership to newly established cooperation partnerships, the core team chose to withdraw gradually from practical organisational tasks and to keep their role limited to one of guidance and facilitation.

During TPC2 three, additional teams in the regions were set up. The core team in Sofia acted as a coordinating body which provided a pool of expertise and resource centre functions. The three regional teams were based at the universities of the cities where the Regional Round Tables took place (Svishtov, Plovdiv and Varna). This set-up well reflected the organisational principles of TPC, which from the very beginning had been designed to become an informal structure with local spin-off branches in some of the big cities of the country where universities and civil organisations were well-established players in the cultural field. The local teams were extremely valuable and pro-active agents in successfully implementing the project mission.

The TPC team and all experts involved consider slight discrepancies between the planned activities and the actual implementation to be an asset rather than a drawback. From their point of view such discrepancies are, on the contrary, a positive side effect which is characteristic of the

laboratory approach applied to TPC.

Current efforts to transform the informal project oriented structures of TPC into a fully established organisational body and legal entity are a direct result of a very successful process of team building and capacity development manifest throughout the whole project. These capacities should also ensure that the currently emerging organisational body *Technology Park Culture*, like the project structures, will stay a flexible, knowledgeable and fully adaptable civic agent, capable of quick reaction to developments in a challenging cultural policy environment.

CHAPTER 7
Project Sustainability

The partnership which was established between the TPC team and the researchers involved in the project forged real links between theory and practice of Bulgarian cultural policy development for the first time. In the light of current needs and future perspectives connected to the country's cultural sector, this partnership can be regarded as one of the most sustainable achievements of the project.

After completing the project there are a number of additional factors which will guarantee the sustainability of the outcome achieved:

- The established regional structures of the Forum (NSFC);
- The research network connected via TPC;
- The existing Agreement for Partnership between the NSFC, the MoC and the CoC;
- The will and initiative of several public representatives to further multiply results - already announced by additional local governments (Rousse, Shumen, Vrazta);
- The official legal registration of TPC as an organisational structure of continuous monitoring, evaluation, and planning for culture;
- The continuous growth and development of the *www.tpc.cult.bg* online information database;
- The highly motivated and devoted TPC team which believes in future perspectives of the initiated action;
- Concrete steps of follow-up and fundraising that have been already initiated by the TPC team.

Further Steps to Take & Future Perspectives

The project has paved the way for two types of follow-up activities. The first type are activities that were originally planned to take place during TPC, but had to be re-scheduled until after the official end of the project due to lack time. The second type of follow-up, probably more important than the first, is directly connected to the National Civil Forum for Culture or to the establishment of *Technology Park Culture* as an organisation and its official registration as a legal entity. The most essential follow-up activities and/or requirements can be grouped around the following themes:

National Strategy for Culture

Firm steps need to be taken to adopt a National Strategy for Culture. The most recent policy document of TPC, adopted during the concluding session of the National Discussion in Svishtov, urgently requires the development of national cultural strategy framework. This represents a timely, necessary and adequate policy initiative of the civic sector. Its real importance is manifest in the current working programme of the Ministry of Culture, where the development of a National Strategy is set as one of the main priorities. It is therefore a matter of urgency to publicly debate such a strategy and finally to adopt it.

The proposed implementation period of the future strategy - current suggestions speak of about 10 years - needs careful consideration. A long-term strategy would have the advantage of securing continuity during the following legislation periods, but such an approach also carries the risk of retaining outdated strategic frameworks, if no mechanism of regular revision through wider public debates is developed. The greatest momentum for reaching a consensus with the state authorities and for influencing the forthcoming national strategy for culture exists now. The elaboration of the strategy currently is necessary for the state, and TPC is the civic partner most capable of bringing it to a successful completion.

Education

To secure actual participation in culture, the national strategy should be consistent with a national strategy for education.

One urgent requirement for further action in this field is to find a solution for the current lack of interdisciplinary studies in cultural policy and arts management. This is a long-term process. Its realisation is not feasible within short-term projects like TPC, although some initial steps for raising awareness of the need for such a course of study have been already undertaken in TPC1 and TPC2.

TPC as an Organisation

The mission of the TPC team & network from now on is to formulate project objectives that are even more outcome-oriented than they were at the beginning.

As a fully established organisational body and legal entity, TPC would be working in two parallel areas: one would be to sustain what has been achieved up to now and another would be to continue working on areas left undone during the official life span of TPC1 and TPC2. A logical continuation of TPC activities would be to further support policy education for civil organisations and art managers as well as to facilitate advocacy and lobbying activities for sustainable cultural policy improvements.

Lobbying and Advocacy

Both elements are rooted in the final step of the *Five-Step Technology* (Model for Problem Resolution). Consequently TPC will continue to formulate very concrete measures, especially for further lobbying activities. Until now, the TPC team has successfully followed all the steps of a real advocacy process. However, the team might now need to make a more precise distinction between ad-hoc lobbying activities and more general advocacy for the sector. Further concrete lobbying activities and initiatives which react to specific developments or which aim to achieve specific goals and concrete improvements on a short-term basis, will also help to sustain the positive outcome of TPC's advocacy role in facilitating both horizontal and vertical links in the coalition building.

The upcoming amendments to the *Development and Protection of Culture Act* and the adoption of a National Strategy for Culture Challenges are a direct challenge to the advocacy and lobbying issue. Soon after the completion of TPC2, the team elaborated a new project proposal which takes this challenge head on. This proposal aims to establish concrete mechanisms by which civil society will be able to influence the cultural policy decision-making process efficiently. The ultimate goal of this new project initiative would be the introduction of participatory process frameworks for the forthcoming development of a National Strategy for Culture.

Undertaking further small-scale and lobbying actions with attainable goals is an absolute must in order to sustain the TPC results. Furthermore, the initiated coalition building, which is one of the key-factors in every advocacy process, needs to advance further. The existing informal structures within the sector need to be strengthened in order to carry large-scale cultural policy initiatives such as the development of a National Strategy for Culture successfully. Prospective partners of the private business sector may be potentially strong, but this sector has not yet been made fully aware of the possible benefits they could achieve by lobbying for culture. Media is an important variable of lobbying campaigns as well. In order to maintain the established interest of media institutions in TPC however, there could be a more constant flow of information.

National Civil Forum for Culture (NCFC)

A logical step in this field is to maintain the current functions of the NCFC and to make it into a fully sustainable body. The Forum could become one of the few organisational bodies in the country, which is fully capable of seriously contributing to the actual completion of an inventory of Bulgarian culture (the need for such an inventory was one of the project findings during both TPC1 and TPC2)[25].

Despite the fact that the policy/civil society dichotomy is central to the vision of NCFC, a shared vision for an even broader group of potential beneficiaries could also be developed. However, before doing so, and to avoid internal clashes in the future, it is crucial to first gain a complete picture of all the open and hidden interests that the forty or so members of the Forum have between them.

Research

The TPC branch in Sofia has been set up especially to act as a facilitator of and a resource centre for research and concrete issues to do with cultural policy development. One practical feature of this emerging resource centre is the *Cultural Database Bulgaria*, which was published on new media and is available on an electronic 'on-request' basis via the project website: www.tpc.cult.bg

Acting as a resource centre and facilitator means that TPC will stay involved in taking responsibility for maintaining the established researcher networks (and the creation of new interdisciplinary teams) as well as the partnerships between civil organisations in the field of culture, local NGOs, municipalities and the authorities. Bridging the gap between academically oriented researchers and practically oriented experts, and achieving a shared vision on cultural policy will continue to be a permanent goal of the TPC operation and reason for existence.

After completing the project, the advantages of appointing researchers to function as facilitators of cultural policymaking processes, are no longer questionable. However, questions about the actual role and identity of researchers in contemporary society are still to be scrutinised in public debate. In Bulgarian reality, the legitimacy of researchers is often under real threat because their expert opinions often remain unnoticed. In this way, existing capacities capable of making a real impact go unnoticed. This is partly why TPC, alongside the theoretical parts, carried out surveys to get feedback from the practical field. This was a guarantee that project results would have political implications. In future, the project could also publicly voice expert opinions by approaching and involving researchers from outside the universities as well (e.g. by those directly involved in the third sector or the ministerial level, etc.)

Communication

Great efforts to articulate the consensus reached by all stakeholders involved on national, local and regional levels of the TPC1 and TPC2 activity have been made. What is challenging from this point forward is to find the best momentum to communicate this consensus to the public institutions by creating strong lobbies for better access to the actual policymaking process itself.

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25 - c.f. the so-called Seven Problems of Cultural Policy in Bulgaria which were identified in the course of TPC1 and TPC2, see chapter 4.4.

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◭ policies for culture

Policies for Culture is a regional framework programme of the European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam) and the ECUMEST Association (Bucharest), active since 2000. It aims to make cultural policies more effective throughout SEE by encouraging a participative principle in their design, implementation and evaluation.

OBJECTIVES & APPROACH

The programme is structured around the triangular working relationship between civil society, the executive, and the legislature in the policy-making process affecting the cultural sector. It is based on the recognition that public policy in the field of culture can only have a sustainable impact if the civic stakeholders whom it is to affect participate in its formulation. Emphasis is placed on finding channels of communication between these levels (which are not used to interacting),; and also, by encouraging participative policy making in the field of culture, on empowering the independent sector to voice its opinions. To this end, Policies for Culture engages policy makers and the cultural sector of South East Europe in a serious reflection process on local and national cultural policies. It encourages all players involved to translate ongoing policy debates into concrete actions that will contribute to a sustainable bottom-up strengthening of the cultural sector in the region.

KEY AREAS OF ACTION

PRACTICAL ACTION

Since 2000, Policies for Culture has facilitated the development and supported the implementation of a variety of local initiatives aimed at turning theory into concrete action in the form of action projects, respectively:

Albania
• 'Why do Reforms Stop?' - Policies for Theatre & Film Production (2003)

Bulgaria
• Construction of a local cultural strategy of the city of Plovdiv and setting up an effective structure for an active social dialogue (2001)
• Technological Park Culture I & II (2001-2004)
• Cultural Policy and Legislation: A New Approach to Sharing Responsibilities (2003)
• Cultural Policy and Legislation: A New Approach to Sharing Responsibilities (associated project: 2003)

Bosnia and Herzegovina
• 'Together for Culture' - Cultural Strategy of the municipality of Prijedor (2003)

Croatia
• Participative Policy Making: Cultural Strategy of the City of Zagreb (2002-2003)
• Clubture - Policy Forum: Towards a new position for the independent, not-for-profit
  and non-institutional cultural sector in the policy-making process (2003)
• Cultural Strategy of the City of Rijeka (2003-2004)

Moldova
• Launching a process of exploring, identifying and implementing new funding
  mechanisms for cultural institutions and activities in the Republic of Moldova (2003-
  2004)

Macedonia
• Policy Debate Center, Skopje (associated project: 2001-2003)
• Empowering the Independent Cultural Sector & Institutionalising Participation in
  Local Cultural Policy Making in the municipality of Prilep (2002-2004)

Montenegro
• Platform for a New Impact of Culture in Montenegro (2003-2004)

Romania
• A model of social dialogue for the construction of a regional cultural strategy for the
  Timis County (2001) & dissemination of results and methodology (2004)
• ARCult - an expertise and service support agency for the Romanian independent
  cultural organizations and operators (2002-2004)
• Private-Public Partnership. Towards a Cultural Strategy for the Arad County (2002-
  2003)

Serbia
• Cooperation & Dialogue in building effective Local Cultural Policies in the
  municipalities of Kragujevac, Sabac, Sombor and Uzice (2002)
• Cultural Policy in Zlatibor County - a Second Step (2003-2004)
• Strategic Development of Suburban Culture, Obrenovac (Belgrade) (2003-2004).

ANALYSIS & RESEARCH

The need for cultural policy research has been a recurrent topic in the various programme activities in the last four years. There is at present in the region a communication gap between the research sector, on the one hand, and policy makers and public administration, on the other hand. This often leads to decision-making that is arbitrary. Also throughout the region there is an urgent need for independent research to evaluate policies and their actual impact, and to use research results as a basis for good quality decision-making.

Beginning with 2004, Policies for Culture will has started to specifically address this area by the means of a Task Force for Cultural Policy Research. It aims to use and further develop the rich pool of knowledge and expertise represented by the Policies for Culture network in order to respond to the strong need for consistent and professional reflection, analysis and research in the field of cultural policies in the region. The Task Force thus aims to: raise awareness and advocate for the need for independent research, and create stronger links between policy makers and the research community; promote regional networking in the field; develop research capacities in the SEE countries; identify and address key topics and areas, as well as best practices in this field, thus providing a competent and more coherent overview of the region in the area of cultural policy-making.

INFORMATION & DOCUMENTATION

Policies for Culture aims to enhance the flow of cultural policy information and acquired expertise on a regional level (and beyond) by developing and making widely available a variety of reports, publications and other information (re)sources, namely:

• the programme website - www.policiesforculture.org - which aims to become a virtual resource centre in the field of cultural policies in South East Europe;
• electronic periodicals - two complementary publications providing news and information and analysis and opinion on key cultural policy issues throughout the region (the monthly e-bulletin and the bi-monthly InSIGHT, respectively);
• case studies of action projects developed in the framework of the programme;
• other reports and publications.

THE POLICIES FOR CULTURE NETWORK

The programme is based on a broad range of SEE and EU partnerships with cultural operators, professional artists, local and national cultural authorities and administration, parliamentarians, media, university institutions, cultural and policy research centres, cultural policy experts and European policy institutions.

BEYOND SOUTH EAST EUROPE

Starting with 2004, Policies for Culture attempts to promote and facilitate participative policy making initiatives in the cultural sector in other countries outside South East Europe, including Slovakia, Ukraine or Turkey.

In South East Europe the programme is managed by the ECUMEST Association, whereas the initiatives of cooperation outside this region are coordinated by the European Cultural Foundation, which remains the key financial supporter of this framework programme.

To learn more about our approach and programme activities, and how to contribute to Policies for Culture please visit our web page or contact the programme team at the coordinates below.

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