



# p o l i c i e s f o r c u l t u r e

participative policy-making in south east europe

## Report of the workshop

Local cultural strategy development in South-East Europe.  
Building on practice and experience  
Bucharest, Romania; 8-10 May 2003

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## 1. Preliminary remarks

The seminar “Local cultural strategy development in South-East Europe. Building on practice and experience” was organised in the framework of the *Policies for Culture* programme. It was held in Bucharest, Romania on 8-10 May 2003. The seminar gathered over one hundred participants, including cultural operators, arts managers, representatives of cultural departments of national, regional and, specially, local authorities. The main percentage of participants were from South-Eastern Europe, although a number of practitioners from Western European countries also attended and actively participated in the seminar.

*Policies for Culture* is a regional partnership programme. It was jointly initiated and it is jointly managed by the European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam) and the ECUMEST Association (Bucharest). It is implemented in partnership with several organisations in the region of South-East Europe (SEE), a region that is still suffering from the legacy of ancient regimes, whilst it was at the same time bombarded by (often inadaptable) borrowed models from the West. The programme is structured around a triangular working relationships between: civil society, the executive and the legislature in the policy-making process. Culture is inside the triangle: The main aim of the programme lies on strengthening the cultural sector through participative activities with the three corners of the triangle, building bridges between them and breaking through the isolation of the cultural sector within the frameworks of public policy debate, governance and cultural development. The main aim is met by the means of workshops, action projects, training and information dissemination activities. These activities are always initiated and implemented by cultural organisations in the SEE countries, which commit themselves to undertake participative processes at national, regional and local level in the field of cultural policy making. The programme also facilitates the setting up new structures, such as information agencies, lobbying forums and advisory bodies that help to organise citizens and the cultural sector in general, so that their voice can be heard and respected by policy-makers.

By encouraging and supporting initiatives based on the participative policy making principle, *Policies for culture* ensures that the civic voice of culture is heard and respected by policy makers at local, national and also European level. As Laurențiu Tănase, State Secretary at the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs stated, “culture is an important piece of the transition period that SEE countries are experimenting”, as it is deeply related to common challenges such as the re-development of national policies, the preservation and the encouragement of diversity at the European level as well as the importance of creativity and participation has in new societies. The challenge is creating the good frameworks.

The seminar focused on the topic of “local cultural strategy development”. The aim of the workshop was to consolidate the methodologies and practices of the several *Policies for Culture* action projects on local cultural policy/strategy development, which have been taking place in cities and counties throughout South-East Europe (SEE) during the last years. The main challenge of the seminar was to *build on practice and experience*, that is, to translate the experience and results of the projects into theoretical models, backed by the exemplary force of practical action, and to anticipate the future challenges, analysing the shape of new processes and/or structures that could reinforce the main objective: strengthening the cultural sector in South-East Europe and giving culture a stronger role to

play on the local level. The seminar also intended to actively promote the links between action projects. *Policies for Culture* is an action network, and, as emphasised at the IETM research *How networking works*, the existing scientific mechanisms do not fully acknowledge the crucial role that networks have in the mutual enrichment of projects that have similar challenges and approaches.

*All case studies presented at the workshop, as well as a full list of participants are available on the workshop page: [www.ecumest.ro/local.htm](http://www.ecumest.ro/local.htm).*

## **2. Structure of the seminar**

The seminar was structured with three main areas:

1. Challenges of the decentralisation process in SEE and the role of culture in local development;
2. Participative cultural policy development at local level: the *Policies for Culture* approach and experience (*within three comparative working groups*);
3. Instruments for an effective implementation of cultural policies at local level. What role to play for a Regional Task Force for Culture?

The following pages reflect the main points of the presentations, reproduces the discussions held during the plenaries and the workshops, summarises the main conclusions reached and reports the recommendations proposed.

## **3. The challenges of the decentralisation process in SEE and the role of culture in local development**

The session was designed as the background for the main topic of the seminar, bringing together several inputs from experts that are experiencing, from different perspectives (from the academic to policy making), the new position of culture in decentralisation processes in Europe, focusing mainly in SEE countries. Comparative examples and practices provided material for analysing the challenges, advantages and shortcomings of increased responsibility and autonomy of local authorities in the cultural field and the various answers that SEE countries are giving. The following questions were provided to speakers and participants:

- What is the perceived role of culture (or the role attributed/given to culture) in the various local contexts in SEE, as well as in other regions of Europe? How do local politicians, public employees and cultural operators relate to it?
- How did the local policy building and implementing processes respond to this context in the *Policies for Culture* action projects?
- What is the role culture could and should play in local development in SEE, including from the economic and social point of view?
- What changes and developments, if any, have been brought about in this respect by the participative policy-making processes at the local level in SEE?
- Role of the regions and of cross-borders cooperation.

Vjeran Katunarić, professor at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Zagreb University, chaired the session. He had previously provided a model framework (see specially his background paper “Cultural policy decentralisation in South East Europe: objectives, instruments,

practices. Proposing a methodology for research”). Katunarić formulated his three dimensional approach:

- (a) “Decentralisation that leads to a reduction of central competencies in cultural policy, whereby the local cultural administration, cultural institutions and activities remain «uncertain» with regard to their competence and further financing, or are left to the unpredictable outcomes of local policies and budgets or competitive markets, e.g., privatisation.
- (b) “Decentralisation that leads to a «fair-chair» between state protected culture, local levels of government and the *laissez-faire* environment of a private economy”, in an arrangement that may take different proportions.
- (c) A “new public culture” aiming at “culturally sustainable development”, understood as “the recreation of social gathering, meeting and communication in the public space via the arts, popular forms of education or scientific discussions” and through networks.

It must be said that most of action projects participants felt that their countries were somewhere in between models “a” and “b” (from “there is a complete lack of planning” or “our central government does not see any role for culture any more”, to “the government is now moving towards a new situation but they lack good examples and time”). Some of the participants remarked that, in fact, they are “trying to create the conditions so that «model c» can be achieved”, at least at local level, with the partnership of local authorities.

After Katunarić’s exposition it become clear that there are a number of concepts that create a system: culturally sustainable development (or cultural citizenship), local governments and partnerships. These three concepts should go together in any action proposal for cultural development in any territory. This is the direct link between decentralisation and local development. One could add that governance theories advice there should be a close interrelation of the policies that an organisation delivers. A comment arisen from the floor noted that the building of Europe was not a good practice, as it only concentrates on economic development and open markets and forgets culture as a force for unity, community building, knowledge and welfare.

Luckily, some cities and towns have been far faster than the European states and the European Union in acknowledging the importance of culture in development processes; perhaps because they see, as someone said, “day after day, what happens on the streets, how the public policies are connected, what the citizens demand, why narrow approaches fail”.

Several case-studies were brought onto the table as specific references that depict the connection between decentralisation and local development. Some of the critical points that appeared in the session were the following:

- a) The inevitable cyclical appearance of the centripetal forces, almost in any territorial scale, should be accompanied by a constant dialogue between the centre and the peripheries.
  - Phil Wood (Comedia Consultancy) emphasised that, in the United Kingdom the 1990s experienced devolution processes – the well-known examples of Scotland and Wales, but also in England through the analysis of the suitable “regions” and the mission of public regional institutions; nevertheless, a “technocratic re-centralisation” also took place through an analysis of the “performance” that culture was achieving at local level.

- Vesna Čopič (Head of Cultural Policy Department, Ministry of Culture of Slovenia) explained that an emphasis on local identities (measured, in the Slovenian case, by the creation of more municipalities, which more than doubled after the independence in 1991) could prevent the establishment of efficient governance and government networks and structures.
- b) The balance between accountability and technocracy emerges from the fore-mentioned topic. A modern state should create all “cooperation instances” so that the “decentralised” units share principles, can coordinate projects, know more on best practices and are accountable to the citizenry and the other public organisations. The indicators used in the process should be clear. The centre should be careful.
- Phil Wood explained that, in the United Kingdom, the central government (Department of Culture Media and Sport) intended to measure the “best value” of resources put in place by local governments, with (at least) conflictive results: the technocratic best performers did not always match with the places recognised as being cultural (both creative and participative) by the audiences, the academics and/or the cultural practitioners.
  - Cas Smithuijsen (Director, Boekman Foundation, Amsterdam) warned the risk of “bureaucracy” if the systems of funding culture and the arts are that too “strong” or “rational”. He explained how the well organised four-year Dutch cultural planning system (which has been considered a best practice in many European states and cities) could prevent cultural and artistic innovation. External evaluation, emphasised Cas Smithuijsen, is a key element. This evaluation should closely look at the functions that the beneficiaries try to fulfil, an not only to the organisations themselves.
- c) The balance between international exposition or competitiveness and local development. Vesna Čopič, in a provocative exposition, mentioned that territorial centralisation of cultural activities is a coherent policy if the emphasis of national government is external competitiveness. This emphasis, though, is not compatible with locally based cultural development and questions the internal equilibrium that decentralisation should address.
- d) The balance between autonomy and “public” interest of culture.
- Vesna Čopič mentioned that cultural sector always claims for “autonomy” from the political frameworks (be it national or local)... but, could this “organisational autonomy” of cultural institutions prevent the attention and the prioritisation of culture in policy making? Are cultural organisations too far from public interest?
  - Learning how to advocate is very much connected to this topic. Aura Corbeanu (executive director UNITER/ECUMEST) stated that the stronger role that culture has to play in local development has to involve learning how to advocate, how to break the isolation of culture from the “internal circles” of practitioners and cultural managers towards (specially) the policy making and the media.
- e) The implementation of “variable geometry” in decentralisation. Some instances or territories claim for greater degrees of decentralisation than others. Central governments have the challenge to recognise these claims and to arrange “co-operation systems” among the different territorial units.
- Delia Mucică (Councillor to the Romanian Cinema Center, Bucharest) brought to the seminar the territorial inequalities. “Romania has 41 administrative units (counties) plus Bucharest. Their economic development and their cultural resources are different”, as well as their expectations towards decentralisation. Therefore, she wondered if the same “decentralisation” processes should be

applied to the whole country. A very intense debate was generated on the importance of the territorial size of the country and the “variable geometry” of decentralisation. Mucică advised that a policy of cultural decentralisation should always be preceded by a consultation with the “regional” constituencies (including the audiences) and that, after a legal or policy agreement had been reached (clarifying the remits, that is, who is in charge of what), the budget law and the economic transferences should be modified accordingly.

- f) “Research, policy and practice should go together”. This could be the summary of Sanjin Dragojević’s (Faculty of Political Science, University of Zagreb) presentation, given under a critical perspective of the recent Croatian cultural planning experience “excellent in concepts, poor in implementation”. Even though the policy documents (National Report within Council of Europe’s programme of Evaluation of national cultural policies, cultural tourism strategy, National strategy of cultural development) had explicit recommendations, vision and will lacked after the approbation of the documents, when the implementation had to start.
- g) The development of training in cultural management as an accompanying measure of decentralisation processes (this was mentioned by Sanjin Dragojević as a crucial factor), as well as the need to renew its contents in order to fulfil the requirements of local cultural development.

The participants realised, after the first session, that decentralisation processes do not always take place following the same pattern. Western Europe has as many decentralisations as countries. Each country has to find their own way. A way that takes into account history, and geography as much as the experiences of the other.

#### **4. Participative cultural policy development at local level: the *Policies for Culture* approach and experience**

One of the main goals of the seminar was to maximise the opportunities to learning through the exchange of experiences. A number of three parallel workshops was organised in order to present, analyse and compare the approach, methodology and experience of the Action Projects developed and supported in the framework of the *Policies for Culture* programme. The distribution of Action Projects was the following:

- a) Timiș and Arad counties (Romania);
- b) Cities of Plovdiv (Bulgaria) and Zagreb (Croatia);
- c) Cities of Kragujevac, Šabac, Sombor and Užice (Serbia) and Prilep (Macedonia).

A concluding session “The challenge of implementing local policies in South East Europe” was organised in order to sum up all the learning induced from the in-depth debates of the workshops. The summing up session, at its time, focused more on the balance between successes and failures during the implementation of the strategies, as well as an estimated vision of the impact they are going to attain when they are finished. The fact that not all the Action Projects are the same level of development (they started at different moments and each followed specific methodologies applied to different contexts) did not prevent an excellent comparative exercise. The following questions were provided to speakers and participants in order to structure their interventions.

##### 4.1. Concerning the participative processes at local level...

- Who are the key actors on the local level and which is the role of each actor? Which was in practice their response, involvement and ownership of the approach and process?

- How did the dialogue and partnership between the different actors function in practice? How could it be better established and sustained in the future?
  - Methodology of strategy development and adapting it to the local context.
  - How did research provide a base for strategy development?
  - Policy and strategy.
  - The place of the “Centre” in the process.
- 4.2. Concerning the implementation instruments and mechanisms...
- Which were the institutional and organisational issues? Did the strategies set up institutionalised or non-institutionalised platforms for dialogue, development and implementation (e.g. platforms, councils, committees, forums), as an alternative to present decision-making system?
  - How the strategy aimed to raising the efficiency of the use of public funds (e.g. management contracts for the public institutions depending on / under the subordination of local authorities)
  - Beyond the local... Which was the role of the regions and non-institutionalised forms of cooperation between municipalities in order to more effectively address and respond to needs that can be difficultly dealt with at the local level; cross-border cultural cooperation.
- 4.3 Concerning the *financial issues*:
- Was the strategy linked to or did the strategy generate the need for new/dedicated/specialised sources at the local level (from local funds, sponsors, other financial instruments);
  - New ways of allocating the local budget for culture (e.g. open call for projects); co-funding/matching funding/cross-funding between different levels local authorities;
  - The use of regional funds.
- 4.4 Concerning the relation between culture and governance...
- Culture and politics: lobbying methods and techniques in culture at local level;
  - Culture and communities: community development, culture and social changes;
  - Culture and business-linking local industries with cultural development;
  - Culture and media: better visibility and transparency on local level.
- 4.5. Concerning the implementation and the estimated impact...
- How did it work in practice? What functioned and what did not? Which were the main problems faced?
  - Sustainability of the Action Projects and the new structures that were set up: what happens when the elections come and central and local government changes occur?
  - What happens if there are no funds to implement the strategy? What happens to the strategy?
  - Was any accompanying of local functionaries and cultural operators (be they public or private) – ultimately the implementers of the strategy – considered and put in practice?
  - How was it received and what was its impact?

The critical points that emerged from the sessions dedicated to “cultural policy development at local level” were the following:

***Baseline situations, actors and ownership of the development process***

- a) Baseline situations are similar. The Arad county provided an excellent picture, common to most Action Projects: “lack of an institutional partnership between NGOs, cultural public institutions and decision making factors; lack of a potential analysis applied to the actors of Arad County cultural life; absence of a cultural strategy regarding the public fund allocation”. These similar situations make organisations react.
- b) A “successful” local cultural strategy plan takes into account all agents of cultural planning and action at local level and creates a partnership from the beginning. *Policies for Culture* methodology precisely relies on this participative principle and all Action Projects are following it. “Benefits for all”, as Sanjin Dragojević said, is the principle of action.

- The workshop sessions showed that Zagreb city or Timiș county cultural plans are promoted by the local governments (following the pattern of other European big cities such as Manchester, Lille and others). This approach could be identified with top-down. It would be wrong, as top-down is linked to imposing models and both examples clearly showed that local governments can be committed to incorporating all interesting inputs from all kind of cultural agents.
  - Plovdiv, Prilep and Užice, among others initiatives, had a different approach. Here the impulse comes from the civil society, that is, specific cultural associations or NGOs that decide to take the initiative. This is how the third sector (not-for-profit) has always performed (detecting needs, investing time and resources to solve it, influencing the public sphere to put the problems, and the identified solutions, at the centre of the government action). Most of these initiatives obtained immediate support from the local governments to start the project, though it was not always the case, cooperation with and participation of local authorities proving in some situations more difficult to achieve.
- c) Despite its origins, a “successful” local cultural strategy development process guarantees that the initial partnership is maintained through all phases (not only “diagnosis” but also “definition of strategies” and “implementation”).
- The need to widen the coalitions at some moment was remarked by several agents, as Nelly Stoeva (*Technological Park Culture* project coordinator, Bulgaria): “Culture should involve other social agents in the planning process”. This Action Project achieved to create the National Civil Forum Culture (“a wide coalition of civil society structures in different fields of culture. In April 2002, by signing a Partnership Agreement with the Ministry of Culture and the Parliamentary Committee on Culture, the National Civil Forum Culture was acknowledged as a legitimate partner of the public authorities, possessing the respective competences”).
  - As proposed by the Sombor and Uzice initiatives, coalitions for achieving stronger commitment on decision-making level could be established by initiating «supra-local» lobbying partnerships. Pressure groups bundling the experience and interests of several entities on regional level (municipalities in a county, cities in a region, regions in a country, etc.) could eventually achieve greater impact on authority level than merely local initiatives.
  - Someone said “the final product [the contents of the “strategy”] is less important than the process”. The Bulgarian initiative states: “The Forum’s activities allow for the participation of the largest possible circle of stakeholders in making decisions. They also create the right atmosphere for constructive dialogue between the non-governmental sector and the public authorities on the subject of cultural policy”,

***Approach: cultural strategies in urban frameworks***

- d) Most of Action Projects analysed the “legal frameworks” on national cultural policies.
- Most of these frameworks are in evolution, as decentralisation (and especially cultural decentralisation) is still a pending matters of the democracies.
  - In fact, at its turn, some Action Projects are seen as “experimental banks” whose conclusions will be taken into account in elaborating national policies. The “triangular approach” of PfC (civil society, the executive and the legislature) proofs to start producing results at the policy-making process. The case of the Timiș county cultural strategy must be recalled now, as it was

labelled as “good practice” by the Parliament of Romania and a model to be followed by other territories.

- e) The need to link the cultural strategy to the overall urban strategy (if this exists) was remarked as a necessary step to be undertaken. Although it was immediately shared that the “reception” of culture within overall urban strategies is not always easy, there was also a consensus on the idea of the right and the duty of cultural agents to insist.
- As Andrea Zlatar (Zagreb) pointed out: “strategic planning should be flexible enough so that changes in the (cultural, economic, political...) environment are incorporated”.
  - The potential risk that the authorities in charge of the implementation of the local strategy “forget” the civil society and the cultural agents once the plan is approved is not a minor threat. As a participant stated, “real partnership is different from mere dialogue. A real commitment is crucial for keeping arrangements made with decision makers”. The participants agreed that the existence of a permanent platform of dialogue (institutionalised or non-institutionalised) was a good solution so that changes in the environment (not only the changes in the composition of the municipal council) are addressed effectively. More: “without each partner taking over responsibility within the framework of certain rules, the process of dialogue and cooperation becomes an easy victim of manipulation.”

#### ***Methodology: analysing and planning***

- f) A research/analysis (using different methodologies such as Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats - SWOT analysis) was always at the origin of the diagnosis, sometimes done with few resources, some other times through specific questionnaires sent to all cultural organisations in the city (Zagreb, Timiș).
- Most of analysis were both sectorial (visual arts, performing arts, the cultural NGOs, traditional arts and crafts, education etc.) and transversal (the potential of diversity, economy, education, mass-media).
  - Rigorous research was agreed to be a necessary condition (although not sufficient) to start the cultural planning exercise.
- g) Analysing the “needs and interests” of the citizens as a pre-requisite for planning concentrated large attraction in the workshop of the Serbian cities and Prilep. Not surprisingly, as turning citizens into audiences is one of the major topics of cultural management worldwide: culture finds itself “competing” with increasing “individual” cultural participation (TV, internet) and banalisation of contents in collective participation. Moreover, it was estimated that inertia is the driving engine of many cultural institutions in the region, which fail to answer the question that some groups of citizens raise on the utility and relevance of their work for the community.
- Timiș county conducted a survey prior to the strategy development. The pilot project “Investigation of the demand and offer in the cultural sphere, database for setting up the cultural strategy” was used as a baseline audience research of the strategy.
  - An unanimous claim (mainly to public authorities, but also to the academics) arose from the workshop sessions: the support to research in this area is fundamental for strategy development.
  - The very fact of involving the citizenry into the strategy debates is important. As it was heard: “Raising the debate with the Bulgarian population at large will also raise the awareness among cultural «consumers» of their cultural rights”, and it therefore will increase the number of people concerned with the importance of culture.

### ***Implementation and impact***

- h) The apparition of the cultural strategy makes “things start moving”. The initiative assumes a strong responsibility; first, with themselves, immediately with the rest of cultural agents, but also with the rest of urban agents. During the diagnosis phase, each organisation has to ask itself the role played in cultural life in past, present and future. Cultural sector SWOT generates organisations SWOTs.
- The setting up of a cultural strategy is a great opportunity for cultural agents to involve and influence other agents of city life, such as business, urban planning, tourism, social services, education... This phase of the strategy is crucial: it is paramount to create the conditions so that all urban agents clearly see that “culture” is not superfluous but a central dimension of urban life, something they are concerned as important urban agents, a system that is at the core of urban life. If culture is to be sustainable, all urban agents (including the private sector) should be approached.
  - Nevertheless, the answers of several local agents / partners could be a surprise. The strategy can have a range of reactions, from the suspicion to the enthusiasm. The promoters of the cultural strategy should be prepared to receive this range of reactions.
- i) A cultural strategy can unveil resources.
- These can be immaterial such as the creativity potential of the city and each one of their citizens, as modelled by the “creative town” experience in Huddersfield. It must be said that immaterial resources should immediately be accompanied by material resources.
  - Zagreb gave an excellent example. The community centres were recognised as crucial spaces for cultural creation, production and dissemination.
  - Plovdiv provided an unexpected example: local government - owned buildings that were to be used by cultural agents (as agreed at the local strategy plan) were “re-nationalised” by the central government.
- j) The equilibrium between the role of big cultural organisations and small structures (more innovative, more participative, better connected to social agents and the territory...) appears, specially in big cities. The city of Zagreb is a good example, where the some one hundred official cultural organisations are “much less interesting and less innovative” than the more than 400 small cultural organisations.
- One of the challenges of local strategy plans (specially in cities with big “official” cultural organisations) is “opening” them to what is new (generations, artistic waves, international...) and finding an “organisational” solution, by means of institutionalised or non-institutionalised platforms.
  - Furthermore, another challenge is “equalling” possibilities. Small cultural associations cannot participate equally in the competition for funds, basically because they are less articulated and have less “lobby” moments. Official public funded organizations still are a step further (at least in terms of material basis, space, core costs etc.). Training in cultural management is key.
- k) The international dimension appeared as one of the critical points. In several ways. The fact that Policies for Culture is an international programme was key in all cases so that local cultural agents become interested in participating in the process. Furthermore, the local cultural agents that had previously been in touch with international networks or organisations were the best prepared to actively participate in the process.
- l) A strategy should always feed a “creative” tension between the baseline situation and the “vision” at mid-term (5-7 years).

- m) The implementation strategy should be included within the final document of the plan, although the degree of concretion varies according to several factors, among which: the scope of the strategic plan and the level of “consensus” reached.
- The fact that there is a “official” approval of the strategy (such as the Resolution of the County Council of Arad) becomes “s a big resource for further development and implementation ”.
  - Some local cultural strategies (Plovdiv) identified very specific actions and assigned “leaders” to generate the projects.
- n) The sessions did not analyse in depth the contents of each one of the Action Projects (the emphasis was placed in the local methodology). Regenerating heritage, fostering creativity, developing citizenship, “increasing audiences”, “enlarging partnerships with other synergetic areas, such as education, tourism, or social affairs”, coordinating local agents and “harmonizing interests”, increasing international openness, improving the image (to the media and/or by means of town marketing) are the topics that most often appeared.
- o) Funding culture was and is still a major challenge. Participants identified the need to find better coordination between the different administration levels (national, county, local), make transparent the subsidies programmes and boost the interrelation between cultural subsidies and other related sectors (such as tourism, social and educational activities etc.).
- A “relational” public administration is as important as the existence of local resources for culture. Both are pre-requisites to develop a local strategic plan.
  - It is not a pre-requisite, but most of participants felt that a local strategic plan on culture gains ownership if it is successful in identifying new resources available for cultural projects.
  - The evocation of possible new funding sources (grants, loans, lotteries, foundations, sponsorship, in-kind income, risk-capital) is one of the key topics of most of local cultural strategies, but most of them rely on national legislation and stakeholders. Local cultural agents (from several cities in the same country) can go together in order to push the national administration in order to give favourable frameworks.
  - Introducing transparency and competitiveness for funds was one of the main results of Arad or Timiș’s strategies: “reform in the system of funding cultural activities, introduction of project subsidies on open competition basis, requirement of response to the declared strategic priorities and directions, efforts to ensure neutrality of assessment commissions – proposing independent experts, not publicly engaged-, or a better use of the management contracts for a more effective management of public institutions”.
- p) It was discussed during the session that at one point of the strategy (the drafting of the conclusions, the approval of the plan or the first stages of the implementation period are the most risky moments) one of the main actors could withdraw the support. The same situation can be experiences if there is a change in the policy (after the elections).
- Sanjin Dragojević explained the experience of cultural planning in Croatia: despite the official approval of the national cultural strategy, a lack of vision prevented its implementation.
  - After a difficult moment, finding a way “back into the partnership game” is a characteristic fact of (developed and developing) open and democratic societies. Johan Galtung’s words were mentioned: “learning to live with disagreements” is a pre-requisite of open societies.
  - It was argued that a close partnership between local authorities and NGOs is key to the success of the strategy. This close partnership prevents the

“withdrawal” of partners but does not avoid tensions. The partnership needs to be re-born constantly: the tensions within the cultural sector (which is far from having a single voice, discussions between live arts versus heritage are common) or the normal controversies between NGOs and governments are just two examples. One could say this picture is consistent with Katunarić’s concept of “culturally sustainable development”.

- The generation of “ownership” is one of the key questions of governance. It is being discussed at different scales and on diverse topics. It is too soon to evaluate the contribution of *Policies for Culture*, as a programme and each of their Action Projects, to this challenge of democracy, but the seeds are recognisable in some projects (such as Technological Park Culture in Bulgaria or the Serbian cities).
- q) One of the responses to this challenge on the local level is to go beyond it and address the larger regional ("supra-local") level, estimating that broadening the approach and realising coalitions should enhance the platform for lobbying the authorities, as well as more effectively address specific cultural development issues. Thus, depending on the administrative structures existing, different situations have been devised and will be developed in the near future: the process started in Sombor will continue on the higher level of the Vojvodina region which has autonomy and responsibilities in the field of culture, whereas the process launched in the municipality of Uzice will be continued by similar processes in the municipalities around it hoping to lead to a (uninstitutionalised) cooperation of municipalities in the field of culture (in Zlatibor County, which does not have the status of a public authority), as well as hopefully positively influence future adoption and implementation of the strategy with the Uzice authorities.
- r) Strengthening the capacity of the administration was also one of the common achievements of the session. This recommendation concerns all agents: the public administration, as it needs to evolve towards a “relational” or “synergical” model (less “producer” and more “facilitator”, said Lidia Varbanova), introducing participative instruments for administration of public funds and processes but also the local cultural NGOs and associations, which sometimes lack skills in cultural management. National and regional administrations are creating relational frameworks with cities so that the principle of local government and subsidiarity can be fully implemented.
- s) PFC aims to consider the media as “important and appropriate means to lobby for the interests and needs of the cultural sector, and to ensure that innovative practices developed by local initiatives are given the crucial public attention and support they need”.
- Almost all projects used the media (local press and TV) in the projects from the very beginning. Media were informed on the project and its development. Without becoming real stakeholders of the process, the media are covering the Action Projects as they develop.
  - It must be said, also, that, unlike the central/national media, for which culture is hardly a priority (see the abolition of the weekly cultural supplement of *Večernji list* in Croatia), it seems that working with local media has a true impact.

## **5. Instruments for an effective implementation of cultural policies at local level. What role to play for a Regional Task Force for culture?**

The concluding session aimed at consolidating on all the experience and practice, successes and failures, on all problems, questions and answers that were brought into discussion during the workshop. It identified the main challenges and explored recommendations for mechanisms and instruments that should be designed and implemented in order for culture to play a more important role in local development in the countries of South East Europe. One of the focus points for discussion was the feasibility for setting up and develop a Regional Task Force in the cultural field (and particularly in the area of cultural policy), as identified and proposed by the Central European Initiative.

### *Is South East Europe different?*

One could define as “glocalisation” the processes that are experimenting most of European cities (North, West...certainly also South East). This term means that all cultural projects have a local dimension but also a global one. It probably has always been like this, but this “creative tension”, an “identity” tension, in fact, has often been hidden if not neglected. All European cities have international seeds, build over years in a process of overlapping circles of influence following commercial routes, administrative frameworks, artistic careers and cultural waves. Culture is probably the pioneer dimension of international openness and cooperation of any territory. Deconstructing and reconstructing local identity implies recognising that each city is a centre and a periphery, and that citizens have to build this “glocalisation” partnerships.

### *Is international cultural cooperation important?*

International cultural cooperation is crucial in order to complement local processes. It identifies similarities and differences, it helps finding good (and bad) practices, it consolidates methodologies, it fosters the innovation... All in all, international cultural cooperation is about learning, explaining and connecting the global, the European, the national and the local. Furthermore, international cultural cooperation has always a “solidarity” dimension; international fora could be seen as “enlargements of local solidarities”: the European Union, the Nordic Council, the Mediterranean Dialogue process... all have the solidarity seeds in their foundation moment. Solidarity is the result of a vision which recognises that there are benefits for all because of the cooperation. Nevertheless, solidarity is not enough. Solidarity must turn, step by step, into strategic binding programmes and win-win partnerships, mutually beneficial.

### *Is Policies for Culture having an impact?*

The programme *Policies for Culture* is an excellent representation of the network society. It has been conceived and implemented as a regional partnership by two different organisations, one based in Amsterdam (the European Cultural Foundation) and another based in Bucharest (ECUMEST Association). The programme, aiming to strengthen the cultural sector of South East Europe, is structured around a triangular working relationship between the pillars of the policy-making process: the executive (governments), the legislative (the elected bodies) and the citizenry (the civil society). So far, the action projects funded by *Policies for Culture* have already proved that:

- The mutual interaction of the three pillars reinforces the quality of the policy making.
- Partnerships are paramount in order to break the isolation of the cultural sector.
- Local strategic planning reinforces the dynamics of the cultural systems and proves that development cannot take place without a cultural dimension.

### *Is there a role for a Regional Task Force?*

*Policies for Culture* could be seen as the first “baseline” programme aiming at multilateral cultural co-operation in South-East Europe. The following paragraphs collect and order the ideas appeared at the concluding session in order to help identifying objectives and methodologies for a Regional Task Force on culture, building on the experience of *Policies for Culture* and updating it to the new contexts.

#### Framework

- (a) A Regional Task Force on culture could be linked to the overall development process of South East Europe. If culture is to have a central place in the society, it cannot remain isolated but it should be linked to more general strategies (social, economic, inter-urban...), as Mioara Lujanschi (Councillor within the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs and Member of the Working Group for Culture and Education of the CEI) said.
- (b) Following to the same principle, South-East Europe cultural co-operation should consider linking the regional context to the European and even the global one through larger networks, such as Eurocities or United Cities.
- (c) Furthermore, a Regional Task Force on culture could adapt the triangular relationship between the executive, the legislative and the civil society that *Policies for Culture* is implementing. A successful Regional Task Force could involve the Ministries (with Culture, Education and Foreign Affairs being crucial partners) and the civil society, including foundations, cultural organisations and NGOs.

#### Priorities: research, cooperation and monitoring

- (d) On the possible priorities of the Regional Task Force on culture, *research* raised wide consensus. This research should investigate the links between decentralisation, culture, local development and partnerships. This objective should not be “pure” research but induced from the regional context, and focused to be implemented immediately.
  - This research should identify best practices, which well analysed and explained, could become examples for other European or world territories. South East Europe needs more self-confidence. Serious research should help this process, “reading” the territory (past, present and future) and making it understandable to all constituencies (academics, governments, NGOs...).
  - A programme of research should be the basis of policy making in the cultural field in South East Europe.
  - This objective should also involve the binding of the research institutions (universities, documentation centres, foundations, experts...) that are already engaged on these issues.
  - The “new” waves (young managers, interdisciplinary artists, multimedia agents...) should have a special attention.
- (e) A second priority could be *fostering* the cultural co-operation at all levels: internationally, regionally (South East Europe) and nationally. A Regional Task Force should connect similar initiatives that are already taking place, either if they are “funded” or not by specific programmes. This cultural cooperation will find good (and bad) practices, consolidate methodologies, and foster the innovation. Training and professionalisation are specific fields where this cultural cooperation is needed.
  - *Training*, specially on those matters that are relevant to cultural local development, such as sponsorship, cultural tourism, regeneration of heritage, audience development, advocating for culture, involving the media and public administration.

- *Professionalisation*, as Vesna Čopič said, is the solution in order to bridge the “mutual fears gap” between the cultural and the political sectors. Professionalisation is the step to integrate culture in public planning systems.
- (f) The development of projects could be *monitored* by a light team or structure. Monitoring (an internal task) should also be periodically accompanied (following to Cas Smithuijsen recommendations) by external *evaluation*.
- The unit / team should be accountable to the several institutions involved in the Regional Task Force by means of reports, conferences and digital tools (websites, databases, e-magazines, e-publications).
  - Following the actions, already successful, of *Policies for Culture*, the media would also be a priority in the communication / dissemination strategy that should be linked to the Regional Task Force.

#### Advocacy

- (g) *Policies for Culture* has proved that a local strategic plan on culture fully accomplishes its “benefits for all” promise if it is successful in identifying new resources available for cultural projects. By the same token, a Regional Task Force on culture for South East Europe could play a successful step forward if it identified new resources available for cultural cooperation. A system of matched-funding between local, national and international resources could be explored in order to “bind” the different territorial partners.
- (h) South-East Europe is a part of a larger system. The promoters of a Regional Task Force aiming at fostering cultural co-operation should consider linking the regional context to the European and even the global one through intergovernmental organisations (UNESCO, the Council of Europe and, most specially, the European Union), city networks (such as Eurocities or United Cities) and cultural networks. A Regional Task Force could approach these organisations in order to explore possibilities to become partners of the Task Force, not only in order to get funding, but to contribute to the setting of their agenda. *Advocacy* should be included in the agenda of the Regional Task Force.

The *Policies for Culture* platform has attained a solid situation, with a mature network of cities, institutions, experts and cultural agents that are currently turning the exchange activity into strategic leadership in South East Europe. New challenges are emerging, generated by the enlargement of the European Union and the petition that culture plays a stronger role in local development. Decentralisation processes will continue. The winds of history have started blowing to allow international cultural co-operation to become crucial for the well-being of each one of the citizens. The cities and the countries of South East Europe have the conditions to generate strong partnerships and contribute to this process by means of a well-structured platform or Task Force of co-operation.

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 17 July 2003

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# WORKSHOP AGENDA

## Thursday, 8 May

The session shall gather only the representatives of the action projects developed in the framework of the *Policies for Culture* programme in South East Europe since 2000, as well as the initiators of the selected action projects in the 2003 Call for cooperation projects.

**17:30 – 19:00**      **Networking *Policies for Culture* (informal meeting point of action projects participants, PFC experts and team)**

## Friday, 9 May

**9:30 – 10:00**  
*Plenary*

### **OFFICIAL OPENING**

- ▶ Word of welcome from the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs: **Laurențiu Tănase**, State Secretary
- ▶ Word of welcome from the Central European Initiative: **Nicolae Ropotean**, National Co-ordinator for Romania of the Central European Initiative/Director of the Regional Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania
- ▶ PFC welcome: **Corina Șuteu**, President of ECUMEST Association & **Odile Chenal**, Director of Programmes and Grants, European Cultural Foundation

**10:00 – 11:50**  
*Plenary round table*

### **SESSION 1: Challenges of the decentralisation process in SEE and the role of culture in local development**

- ▶ Moderator: **Vjerran Katunarić**, Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb
- ▶ Panel for discussion:
  - **Phil Wood**, Comedia Consultancy, UK
  - **Delia Mucică**, Secretary General of the Romanian Cinema Centre, Bucharest
  - **Sanjin Dragojević**, Faculty of Political Science, Zagreb
  - **Vesna Čopič**, Head of Cultural Policy Department, Ministry of Culture of Slovenia
- ▶ Discussion

**11:50 – 12:00**  
*Plenary*

- ▶ **Short introductory note to the PFC action projects:** Oana Radu, ECUMEST Bucharest

**12:00 – 12:30**

**Coffee break**

**12:30 – 13:30**  
*Parallel working groups*

### **SESSION 2: Cultural policy development at local level: the *Policies for Culture* approach and experience**

#### **Working group 2.1.**

#### **Action projects in Timiș county + Arad county Romania**

- ▶ Moderator: **Virgil Ștefan Nițulescu**, Councillor to the Culture Committee of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies

- ▶ Contributions from AP: **Corina Răceanu, Bodó Barna, Marius Lazurca, Alexa Achim** (RO)
- ▶ Other contributions: **Ștefan Damian**, Director, Directorate for culture, religious affairs and national cultural heritage of the Bucharest municipality; **Aura Corbeanu**, executive director UNITER/ECUMEST; **Lidia Varbanova**, Director of the Arts & Culture Network Program, OSI, Budapest/Sofia
- ▶ Rapporteur: **Tsveta Andreeva**, PFC Local coordinator Bulgaria, ECUMEST/ Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria

### **Working group 2.2**

#### **Action projects in the town of Plovdiv (Bulgaria) + the city of Zagreb (Croatia)**

- ▶ Moderator: **Hanneloes Weeda**, Senior Project Officer, ECF Amsterdam
- ▶ Contributions from AP: **Vessela Ilieva & Yohan Devletyan** (BG); **Andrea Zlatar & Maja Petrić** (HR)
- ▶ Other contributions: **Sanjin Dragojević**, Faculty of Political Sciences, Zagreb; **Marijana Mance**, Advisor, Ministry of Culture of Croatia; **Teodor Celakoski**, Director, MAMA Multimedia Institute, Zagreb; **Jordi Pascual i Ruiz**, Attaché to the chief executive, Institut de Cultura, Barcelona City Council
- ▶ Rapporteur: **Ela Agotić**, PFC Local coordinator Croatia

### **Working group 2.3**

#### **Different answers to more or less similar contexts: the municipalities of Kragujevac, Šabac, Sombor and Užice (Serbia) & Prilep (Macedonia)**

- ▶ Moderator: **Oana Radu**, Regional Coordinator PFC, ECUMEST Bucharest
- ▶ Contributions from AP: **Čedomir Janičić** (Sombor); **Miloš Janković** (Šabac); **Aleksandar Djerić** (Užice); **Ana Mojsić** (Kragujevac); **Tatjana Bokan** (Belgrade) (SR); **Pare Zareska & Sonja Adamceska** (Prilep, MK)
- ▶ Other contributions: **Yuriy Vulkovski**, TPC, Sofia; **Ilda Curti**, Fondazione Fitzcarraldo, Torino
- ▶ Rapporteur: **Philipp Dietachmair**, PFC Central Coordinator, ECF Amsterdam

**13:30 – 15:30**

**Lunch**

**15:30 – 16:45**

*Parallel working groups*

**Continuation of the three working group sessions**

**16:45 – 17:00**

**Coffee break**

**17:00 – 18:00**

*Parallel working groups*

**Continuation of the three working group sessions**

## **Saturday, 10 May**

**9:30 – 10:00**  
*Plenary session*

### **Synthesis of discussions in working groups & Conclusions of Day 1**

- ▶ **Delia Mucică**, Secretary General of the Romanian Cinema Centre, Bucharest
- ▶ **Sanjin Dragojević**, Faculty of Political Science, Zagreb

**10:00 – 11:30**  
*Plenary round table*

### **SESSION 3: The challenge of implementing local policies in South East Europe**

- ▶ Moderators: **Ion Bogdan Lefter**, President, ASPRO (The Association of Romanian Professional Writers); Director of “Observator Cultural” magazine, Bucharest & **Lidia Varbanova**, Director of the Arts & Culture Network Program of OSI, Budapest/Sofia
- ▶ Panel for discussion:
  - **Jordi Pascual i Ruiz**, Attaché to the chief executive, Institut de Cultura, Barcelona City Council
  - **Andrea Zlatar** (AP Croatia)
  - **Mioara Lujanschi**, Councilor, Department for European Integration - International Relations, Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs of Romania
  - **Manuèle Debrinay-Rizos**, Director, French Cultural Centre, Cluj-Napoca
  - **Yavor Koynakov**, Director, Euro-Bulgarian Cultural Center, Sofia
  - **Cas Smithuijsen**, Director, Boekman Foundation, Amsterdam
  - **Contributions from the action projects following the discussion in working groups**

**11:30 – 11:45**

**Coffee break**

**11:45 – 12:30**  
*Plenary round table*

### **Continuation of Session 3**

- ▶ Open questions session: Questions from the floor to the panelists

**12:30 – 14:30**

**Lunch**

**14:30 – 16:00**  
*Plenary round table*

### **SESSION 4: Instruments for an effective implementation of cultural policies at the local level. What role to play for a Regional Task Force for Culture?**

- ▶ Moderator: **Corina Şuteu**, ECUMEST & **Odile Chenal**, ECF
- ▶ Panel for discussion:
  - **Lidia Varbanova**, Director of the A&CNP of OSI, Budapest/Sofia
  - **Vjeran Katunarić**, Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb
  - **Čedomir Janičić** (AP Serbia)
  - **Phil Wood**, Comedia Consultancy, UK
  - **Virgil Ştefan Niţulescu**, Councillor to the Culture Committee of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies
- ▶ Open debate & contributions from all participants
- ▶ **Wrap up and conclusions**

**Working languages:** English & Romanian

## Action Project Participants

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**Andrea ZLATAR**

Action project coordinator

Member of City Government, Zagreb, Croatia/Editor of *Zarez* cultural magazine