

**EUROPEAN
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(EENC)**

***Culture and the Structural Funds
in Hungary***

by Péter Inkei

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The EENC was set up in 2010 at the initiative of Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission (DG EAC), with the aim of contributing to the improvement of policy development in Europe. It provides advice and support to DG EAC in the analysis of cultural policies and their implications at national, regional and European levels. The EENC involves 17 independent experts and is coordinated by Interarts and Culture Action Europe.

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1. Background and Methodology

1.1. Background

In June 2012, the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission (DG EAC) submitted a request for an expert contribution on behalf of the European Expert Network on Culture (EENC), involving the preparation of seven ad-hoc papers to analyse how the cultural and creative sectors could foster regional and local development in seven EU Member States. Following a similar initiative carried out previously for France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain, DG EAC asked for new analyses to focus on Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia.

The request arose in the framework of the design and negotiation of the EU's Cohesion Policy and the Operational Programmes for the funding period 2014-20. In this context, the Commission is preparing internal 'negotiation mandates' that will identify the type of investments that should be prioritised, based on an analysis of the national and regional economic outlook of past and current spending and the identification of potential for development and structural weaknesses to be addressed. The mandates will allow the Commission to discuss 'Partnership contracts' with Member States, which should ultimately set the strategy, priorities and arrangements for using the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) Funds in an effective and efficient way to achieve the EU 2020 objectives of 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'.

Initial documents for the design of the CSF of the Structural Funds 2014-2020¹ have identified a number of areas in which culture can contribute to the achievement of EU objectives in this field, including the role of creative clusters and the cultural and creative industries (CCI) in 'Strengthening Research, Technological Development and Innovation'; the CCI and new forms of tourism in 'Enhancing the Competitiveness of SMEs'; cultural heritage and the rehabilitation of cultural infrastructures in 'Protecting the Environment and Promoting Resource Efficiency'; and the development of creative skills and creativity in 'Investing in Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning.' In any case, it can also be argued that the approach taken by preliminary documents regarding the place of culture in regional development may seem slightly narrow.

¹ European Commission, 'Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020: the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund', Commission Staff Working Document, SWD(2012) 61 final; see also its accompanying Annex.

The main aim of this paper is thus to enable DG EAC to identify the potential for strengthening the role of culture in the Structural Funds' 'Partnership contract' with Hungary, by providing a critical analysis of how 'the unused potential of cultural and creative sectors' can foster regional and local development in this country. The main focus of the research is on the Funds which have an impact at local, regional and national level (particularly the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund). Attention has also been paid to cross-border and interregional funding where this was deemed relevant for the purposes of territorial development, growth and jobs.

From the former Communist Bloc, Hungary was the first, together with Poland, to make use of development assistance of the western democracies. The initials of these two countries are contained in the name of the first such programme: PHARE. Before officially joining the European Union, already in the pre-accession period, together with the other countries in the region, Hungary, too, was recipient of funds from the 2000-2006 Structural Funds. The National Framework Strategy for 2007-2012 (New Hungary Development Plan²) is an organic continuation of the National Development Plan³ prepared for the 2004-2006 period.

Following this introduction and a short description of the methodology used, the paper presents an initial overview of how culture has been integrated in the implementation of the Structural Funds in 2007-2013 (Chapter 2). It then goes on to analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the cultural and creative sectors in the light of local and regional development objectives (Chapter 3). Finally, the paper closes with a section that identifies potential priorities for the European Commission's negotiation mandate with Hungary with a view to the implementation of the Structural Funds in 2014-2020 (Chapter 4).

1.2. Methodology

The author of this paper was involved in the preparation and implementation of the National Strategic Framework of Hungary between 2006-2010 as advisor next to the state secretary in charge, and later the Managing Authority for Human Resource Programmes, lending him familiarity with the objectives, content and techniques of the system.

With very few substantial evaluations, or even descriptions publicly available on the issue, besides using working documents stored on his hard drive, the author's main method was desk research, reading various files harvested with the search engines. A

² New Hungary Development Plan, http://www.nfu.hu/download/16836/80825_UMFT_angol_4_teljes.pdf

³ Hungarian National Development Plan 2004-2006, http://www.nfu.hu/download/703/ndp_hungary.pdf

number of informal interviews completed the search, including with a few key actors of the cultural component of the Structural Funds' operations.

2. Culture and the Structural Funds 2007-2013 in Hungary

2.1. General framework

Tables 1-3 display the percentage share of sections that were labelled as culture in the National Strategic Reference Framework of Hungary (the New Hungary Development Plan), as approved by the European Commission on 7 May, 2007. There is no continuous monitoring along the same categorisation, thus one cannot tell how the intended division between sectors has changed, i.e. what is the actual share of culture in the development projects completed and financially consumed, or in the projects covered with contracts. Some of the appropriations will remain unspent, either due to readjustment of to failure in the implementation.

Another reason to consider the figures in the tables as indicative only, is connected to certain flaws in the categorisation, whereby labels do not fully reflect the content. Hungary illustrates this case with rich cultural content in programmes financed through the European Social Fund, which formally does not target cultural development.

Table 1: Structural Funds 2007-2013 in Hungary

General data, in EUR and %

	Million €	%
Total EU Structural Funds allocation	25,307	100.0
a. Convergence Objective	22,890	90.4
Cohesion Fund	8,642	
ERDF	11,106	
Convergence	11,106	
Phasing-out	-	
ESF	3,142	
Convergence	3,142	
Phasing-out	-	
b. Regional Competitiveness & Employment Objective	2,031	8.0
ERDF	1,544	
Regional Competitiveness & Employment	-	
Phasing-in	1,544	
ESF	487	
Regional Competitiveness & Employment	-	
Phasing-in	487	
c. European Territorial Cooperation Objective	386	1.5
<p>Source: European Commission, <i>Cohesion Policy 2007-13: National Strategic Reference Frameworks</i> (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007), ISBN 978-92-79-07465-3</p> <p>NB: Data presented in this table is based on the initial national and regional programmes and may have varied afterwards.</p>		

Table 2: Culture and the Structural Funds 2007-2013 in Hungary and the EU

General data at national level, in EUR and %

	Hungary		EU	
	Million €	%	Million €	%
SF amount (Convergence + RCE)	24,921	100.0	344,322	100.0
Amount dedicated to culture, of which:	410	1.6	5,966	1.7
Protection & preservation of heritage	163	(39.7)	2,934	(49.2)
Development of cultural infrastructure	204	(49.6)	2,233	(37.4)
Other assistance for cultural services	44	(10.7)	798	(13.4)
<p>Source: European Commission, 'Cohesion Policy 2007-2013: Culture', May 2010.</p> <p>NB: Figures presented on this table do not include funds allocated to the European Territorial Cooperation Objective.</p>				

Table 3: Culture in the ERDF Regional Operational Programmes

Figures per region and topic, in EUR and %

	Million €			% of total funds for the relevant region
	Protection & preservation of cultural heritage	Development of cultural infrastructure	Other assistance to improve cultural services	
Convergence regions				
ROP South Great Plain	12	12	7	4.1%
ROP South Transdanubia	-	27	-	3.8%
ROP North Great Plain	31	7	-	3.9%
ROP North Hungary	34	16	5	6.0%
ROP Central Transdanubia	81	-	-	15.9%
ROP West Pannon	-	45	-	9.7%
NOP Economic Development	-	-	-	0%
NOP Transport	-	-	-	0%
NOP Electronic Public Admin.*	-	-	-	0%
NOP Social Infrastructure	-	72	23	5.3%
NOP Environment & Energy	-	-	-	0%
Phasing-in regions				
ROP Central Hungary	5	25	10	2.7%

Source: information obtained from the individual Operational Programmes, accessible via www.nfu.hu.

NB: Information above is based on the amounts allocated to categories of expenditure 58-60 in the common framework of the ERDF's Regional Operational Programmes 2007-2013, which refer to culture. Other expenditure for cultural activities, services and infrastructure may be included under other categories (e.g. tourism).

Figures given in this table are mostly taken from the initial framework planning in 2007; changes may have been introduced thereafter.

* This National Operational Programme is also valid for the Phasing-in regions.

2.2. General appraisal

A recent report made by the State Audit Office of Hungary⁴ provides an analysis on the use of the Structural Funds in the country. The main criticism contends that effective use is lagging behind time schedule, little more than a third of all available funds have actually reached the beneficiaries and a considerable amount still waits to be covered with contracts. The report was particularly critical about the content of the programme.

⁴ Állami Számvevőszék, Jelentés a 2007-től uniós finanszírozással megvalósuló, kormányzati döntésen alapuló beruházási projektek pályázatási, tervezési és előkészítési tapasztalatainak értékelése ellenőrzéséről, 2012. május, <http://www.asz.hu/jelentes/1281/jelentes-a-2007-tol-unios-finanszirozassal-megvalosulo-kormanyzati-dontesen-alapulo-beruhazasi-projektek-palyaztatasi-tervezesi-es-elokeszitesi-tapasztalatainak-ertekelese-ellenorzeserol/1281j000.pdf> .

'Employment and growth' was the motto of the seven-year National Strategic Framework of Hungary: the New Hungary Development Plan, yet too little of the invested amounts has directly focused on these objectives. The decisive majority of the projects went to the public sector, especially on infrastructure projects. (Not denying the indirect influence of many of these developments on the conditions of economic growth and the creation of jobs.)

The quoted assessment largely coincides with the perception reflected in the media. High ranking politicians are also quoted criticising the many fountains and renovated city halls at the expense of too few investments in the economy. This perception is partly supported by the comparative statistics of the thematic breakdown of the original Strategic Frameworks⁵, whereby the 11.7% on investment in social infrastructure from ERDF is nearly double the European average, also highest among the Visegrad Four (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia). On the other hand, the group of themes where the bulk of money is believed to go, i.e. tourism + transport + urban and rural regeneration, is lower than the European average, and the lowest in the Visegrad group.

Comparing Strategic Framework data of ESF supports official and popular perception namely that 9.1% planned for "improving access to employment" is much less than elsewhere in the region, or the European average. This country spends, on the other hand, much more on "improving human capital" than European or the Visegrad Four average: an important aspect in the cultural uses of Structural Funds in Hungary.

Media often emphasise that in no other country did Structural Funds take over the role of public investment to the same degree as in Hungary. Indeed, one hardly ever comes across any public investment today, small and large, which is not based on the Structural Funds (or its complements, the Norwegian or Swiss contribution). Such an extensive overlap does not really suggest focused use, allows rather for feelings of playing the function of a general substitute source for all kinds of development that the budgets of the central government or the 3300 local administrations cannot finance.

Some of this critical description applies to the cultural projects as well. A considerable part of the investment cannot be entirely justified as being geared to the pivotal aims of the New Hungary Development Plan (or the Lisbon Strategy for a competitive Europe). Much of it followed more general modernisation efforts: the state of affairs cried for funds and nearly the only available funds have been those of the European Union. Screening the entire scope of cultural projects some will exhibit elevated new quality, close to the high aims of the community cohesion policy. Some will represent decent improvements in the spirit of EU cohesion: catching up with more developed regions of

⁵ European Union Regional Policy, Cohesion Policy 2007-13, National Strategic Reference Frameworks, January 2008.

Europe. In some cases the substitution of missing local funds is hardly concealed. Although media from time to time pinpoint projects that are considered wasted money, these in most cases are true in relative terms only, namely that groups of citizens could prefer alternative investment aims.

The roughly 45% of ERDF that goes to the seven Regional OPs (including the Phasing in region of Central Hungary) is administered from one Managing Authority, which lends a relatively high degree of homogeneity to the cultural investments within various objectives, namely tourism or urban regeneration. Geographical position determines conditions of development also in Hungary; in fact the gap between the better-off centre and the north-west of the country on the one hand, and the less developed eastern and southern regions on the other, has in the past twenty years been widening in spite of governmental measures aiming to reverse the trend. Nevertheless neither the size of the country, nor the local specificities of the six convergence regions would justify significantly greater differentiation in the nature of cultural investments in the frame of the Structural Funds.

The government has established a status named 'priority project'⁶. These were exempt from competing in their category. About 30 items of that list are projects that fully or decisively qualify as cultural. Two only go beyond €30 million, although the larger one, the renovation of the monument building of the Liszt Music Academy is formally categorised as higher education investment. The second largest priority project, however, is the only major urban regeneration scheme where former industrial premises are being transformed into a cultural complex: this is the Zsolnay Centre, the flagship project of Pécs European Capital of Culture in 2010.

2.3. Main features of cultural contributions

The main features of the role of culture in the use of the Structural Funds in Hungary are the following.

1. There is a twin pair of National Operational Programmes focusing on social renewal: the Social Infrastructure OP and the Social Renewal OP, administered by the same managing authority. The first is an ERDF, the second an ESF programme. Their Hungarian acronyms TIOP and TAMOP have become household names (SIOP and SROP in English). One of the priority chapters in both programmes is dedicated to the development of education, and both of them contain constructions / interventions that constitute interrelated components of three development strategies in the cultural sector.

⁶ Kormány által javasolt kiemelt projektek http://www.nfu.hu/download/40138/kiemelt_honlap_2012.xls

2. Each of the seven Regional Operational Programmes contains a separate priority chapter (called axis) serving the development of tourism, duly emphasising the role of cultural heritage.
3. Urban development, which has an important place in all regional OPs, usually includes the regeneration of cultural institutions.
4. Towns and smaller settlements below the size of 5000 inhabitants are the competence of the New Hungary Rural Development Programme where the conception of rural development has important cultural components.
5. In the South Transdanubia Operational Programme, in addition to the priority axis on tourism, the European Capital of Culture (Pécs 2010) is a focal point in the axis dedicated to Integrated Urban Development.
6. The creative industries concept is almost entirely absent from the programmes.

The six features will be elaborated at greater detail in the next sections.

2.3.1. Culture in the social renewal programmes

The cultural constructions in the twin social renewal OPs are the most essential prevalence of culture in the actual seven year period, and this is perceived also by the Hungarian public. Giving up the original aspiration for a separate cultural OP, the mid-term development strategies of three cultural sub-sectors were transformed into auxiliary measures for lifelong learning, “innovative solutions and cooperation improving efficiency of public education”. Behind this educational cover-up, carefully prepared cultural development programmes operate for the upgrading of the public library structure, of the pedagogical activities of the museum system, and of the network of local community cultural centres. Up to now in the frame of more than a dozen calls, nearly 600 contracts were signed involving over 1600 cultural institutions.

Several of these calls expect applicants to enter into collaboration with schools (in a few cases kindergartens) by which over 3000 such couplings were realised, which – because of overlaps – affected a somewhat lower number of educational institutions. Projects include cooperation between schools and libraries, museums, artistic organisations or cultural centres. The content of these actions is geared to “improve the efficiency of public education”.

Programmes in the frame of the Social Infrastructure OP tenders were designed in conjunction with the Social Renewal OP. Being beneficiary of the one represents preference in profiting from the other. This works best in case of the library programmes, where public libraries that usually apply in regional consortia, can upgrade their technical, mainly IT devices from SIOP funds, going hand in hand with the upgrading of their operational culture with SROP money. This latter includes

introducing new practices, up-to-date digital cataloguing, establishing cooperation with schools, reaching out to new groups of readers, extending customer services, undergoing total modernisation overhaul, which usually involves training of staff⁷.

In case of museums the main emphasis is on museum pedagogy. Infrastructural development, too, serves this goal, by purchasing display technology, creating rooms for workshops etc.

Establishment of large multi-functional community centres, “agoras”, constituted the SIOP leg in the case of the third cultural field.

Libraries and museums are institutions with established institutional traditions and intensive international professional bonds. Leading professionals had become integrated in European networks and were aware of the latest trends and developments, both in operational practices and up-to-date technologies. Therefore they had rather clear concepts about the ideals and objectives of developments. Within these frames there were of course numerous alternative options about ways of spending the EU funds in the service of upgrading their networks. (Upgrading which is supposed to serve the efficiency of public education, which on its part is supposed to promote future growth and employment in the country...)

The case of the third cultural sub-sector is different. Although equivalents of local cultural centres are to be found elsewhere in Europe too, the local, Hungarian variant: *közművelődés* is the result of endogenous development. Values, models and practices are mainly based on its own traditions. Although deeply rooted in the cultural history of the past 150 years of the country, this vast network of houses of culture has been in a prolonged search for identity since the regime change. It is in this state of art that an important position was bestowed on *közművelődés* in the National Strategic Framework of Hungary, in SROP and SIOP. About a third of the funds is being spent on covering the expenses of upgrading houses of culture into accredited adult training centres.

The irony of this significant feature of the Hungarian use of Structural Funds for culture is that it remains totally hidden from formal categorisation. Since ESF funds do not allow for cultural development, all these cultural project clusters were coded as non-conventional forms of education, with zero amounts against the 59-60 coded themes.

⁷ An interim report on the educational and cultural projects on ESF-based SROP: Értékelő jelentés Nemzeti Fejlesztési Ügynökség számára a TÁMOP 3 prioritás közoktatási és kulturális konstrukciónak értékelése témában, Expanzió, December 2011.

2.3.2. Culture in the tourism priority axes

Development of tourist attractions is a major constituent in all seven ROPs. Relevant tenders are co-ordinated centrally, at the (national) Regional OP managing authority. Preserving and modernising cultural heritage occupies an important share in these calls. The main accent of course is on strengthening the touristic potential and a considerable part of the funds is used for facilities that do not constitute cultural added value in the strict sense.

Besides restoring built heritage, funds help the creation of memorial sites, e.g. homes of past cultural personalities and places of historical events. The usual criterion is to achieve at least 15 000 visitors a year. Upgrading of museums and the modernisation of performing arts facilities and venues also figure among the optional objectives.

The list of priority projects of the government contains investments in museum and also performing arts venues. After lengthy preparations and public debates the €12 million project linked to the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts has been called off, making the €6.9 million expansion of the Szentendre Open Air Museum the most expensive project of this category.

With €18 million the Kodály concert centre in Pécs is the third largest cultural investment. It was part of Pécs 2010 ECOC, and is devised also to host conferences. Behind schedule are works on the two open air venues, one in Tokaj and the other near the Austrian border; both adjacent to World Heritage List landscapes.

The restoration and upgrading of aristocratic mansions is the most prominent part of tourism development objectives. A few of these are in private, typically smaller buildings. The more significant castles are owned by local governments, and the most important network of buildings are state property, managed by the National Trust of Monuments for Hungary. It is they who prepare and execute investment projects on the highest standard.

A peculiar programme is managed by the Environment and Energy OP: the regeneration of historic parks. The five most important such projects are co-ordinated by the National Trust for Monuments, receiving altogether €4.8 million.

2.3.3. Culture in urban development

As a rule, integrated urban regeneration projects include the modernisation of at least one cultural institution: museum, theatre, library, or most often a cultural centre. In case of Hódmezővásárhely the entire programme is labelled “cultural regeneration”,

although indeed only three of the twenty components are connected to the cultural sector.

In a country where past centuries left so little of built heritage, and where the level of urbanisation is also lagging behind European standards, the regeneration of the built environment is of great significance for the appeal of each region and town. Not just for tourists, but attracting or keeping investors and happy inhabitants. Eurostat data do not underline indeed the actual level of emphasis on tourism investment in all regions. The greater part of the country stood at a modest level of tourism intensity (visitors' nights per 1000 inhabitants) in 2006, and by 2011 the West Pannon region was the only one to produce growth in this regard.

2.3.4. Culture in rural development

The seven-year "New Hungary Rural Development Programme" contains a subsection entitled Conservation of Cultural Heritage. External and internal renovation and modernisation of buildings under local or national protection is taking place in hundreds of villages and small towns, with the aim of increasing the touristic attraction of the settlements.

Another section of the same programme envisages the creation of multiple service centres. The hundreds of „Integrated Communal and Service Spaces” set up in settlements with less than 5000 inhabitants are an upgraded variant of local cultural houses. The programme includes the degressive costs of the wages of the personnel, which makes the establishment of these “Spaces” more attractive for local governments. The rapidly expanding network is managed by the Ministry of Rural Development, in loose and ambivalent relationship with the established *közművelődés* supervised by the ministry in charge of culture (this has been the remit of larger ministries with changing names).

The special EU device for enhancing local development strategies, the LEADER Programme for places with less than 10 000 inhabitants is very open with regard to the content of the strategies. Particularly popular is to include community events – local festivals, village days, gastronomy feasts – into the local strategies, which then receive EU funds. In their names and aspirations most of these events are cultural. This often means amateur folklore performances and invited pop music groups. .

2.3.5. Pécs 2010

Already at the 2004-2005 competition for becoming European Capital of Culture in 2010, the culture ministry in charge made it clear that the frontrunner would win much more EU money than the Mercouri Prize. Supporting the Hungarian holder of the title in

2010 with ERDF funds was a clear priority of the government. This is how the South Transdanubia OP allocated a special section to the infrastructure developments included in the ECOC bid.

Implementation was delayed as the projects in the ECOC plan had to be adapted to ERDF criteria one by one. This, among others, resulted in scaling down the original aspirations. One out of the five ECOC “pillars”, the plan to build a new large exhibition hall, was cancelled. The remaining four, however, stand out among the cultural investments in the country. Two have been mentioned above: the transformation of the Zsolnay ceramic works into a multifunctional cultural complex, and the construction of the Kodály concert and conference centre. The other two pillars were a new regional library and the regeneration of squares, parks and other public spaces in the city centre.

Owing to the setback mentioned in the previous paragraph and other personal and local political difficulties not one of the five pillars had been completed by early 2010. The year nevertheless went off bringing pride and satisfaction to the city. Thanks to the successful operation of the Zsolnay and Kodály centres now under joint management, the cultural image of Pécs is much stronger today, although the leap ahead that was expected especially in tourism has not yet taken place.

2.3.6. Creative industries

With the exception of the library, and partly the museum development programmes, the majority of the cultural projects financed from Structural Funds reflect a 20th century mentality – no matter how useful and successful they are. The notion of creative industries as engines of growth and new jobs has not impregnated the National Framework Strategy. The conception of the Zsolnay Centre in Pécs has come closest to realising conditions for a creativity hub.

Owing to the intermediary nature of the creative sector, both culture and the economy can take responsibility for its development. However, notwithstanding clear priorities for supporting small and medium enterprises in the Economic Development OP as well as in the economic axes of the regional OPs, cutting edge creative and innovative enterprises are not prioritised. (This is different from the expansionist moves towards culture seen from the direction of the rural development sector.)

At the phase of planning the seven year National Framework Strategy a complex programme was being prepared for the digitisation of cultural heritage. Based on the model of other centrally co-ordinated cultural components, it was supposed to be linked to the educational objectives of the Social Renewal OP, with some technical backing from SIOP. Library collections were in focus, but other areas of heritage were also

targeted, including the audio-visual fields. This attempt has failed, and no other significant digital content development has been financed from the Structural Funds.

2.4. Selected projects

2.4.1. Eszterháza Central Europe Cultural Centre (Esterhazy Castle at Fertőd), 2009-

Programme under which it was funded

ERDF – West Pannon Operational Programme, Tourism development priority axis – Renewal of Pannon Heritage

ERDF – Environment and Energy OP: the regeneration of historic parks. Esterházy castle park.

Context and objectives

The 18th century baroque castle complex is one of the country's largest heritage objects. It is near the Austrian border and is adjacent to the Fertő / Neusiedler Lake natural landscape on the World Heritage List. During decades in his life, Joseph Haydn spent months each year in the castle, as court musician to Prince Esterhazy.

The castle suffered from various hardships in the 19th and 20th century, including war damages. By the millennium it had been restored to a degree to receive around 100 000 visitors a year. After completing the renovation of the main building and some of the other objects (including a baroque marionette theatre in the park), and with the expansion of the tourist facilities this number is hoped to go over 200 000.

ERDF contribution: 3.45 Bn HUF, cca €12.3Mn; for the park reconstruction 212 Mn HUF, cca €0.7Mn.

Activities and results

Works are going on according to schedule. The completed sections are added to the tourist attractions one after the other. The 2012 summer Haydn concerts are held in the fully-restored music hall and visitors enter through the regenerated decorative courtyard.

Developments can be followed by Facebook or a richly illustrated blog⁸ of the deputy director of the National Trust of Monuments, which is in charge of the real estate and the project.

⁸ See respectively <http://www.facebook.com/esterhazyfertod> and <http://doboagota.hu/>.

Despite austerity, the draft national budget for 2013 includes 350 Mn HUF for extra expenses of the refurbishment of the castle.

Assessment

The development fits into the long-term regeneration plan of the castle complex. Preparations meet demands of both professional and public transparency, and are regularly followed in the media. The National Trust of Monuments treats it as a flagship undertaking. Principles of scientific rigour, touristic benefits and sustainability constitute a sound balance.

Although the Esterhazy princes chose a place near the marshland and far from commercial thoroughfares, the proximity of Austria (10 km to the border, 100 km to Vienna) and the stable tourism statistics of the region underscore the target of doubling visitors' numbers.

2.4.2. Three library projects at the Bródy Library, Eger, 2009-2011

Programme under which it was funded

ERDF – Social Infrastructure OP; Priority axis: Development of the infrastructure of education. Section: Development of Infrastructure Promoting Co-operation between Educational and Cultural Institutions; Intervention: 1.2.3 “Tudásdepó Expressz” Integrated development of library infrastructure.

ESF – Social Renewal OP; Priority axis: Providing quality education and ensuring access for all; Section: Improving efficiency of the public education system; developing innovative solutions and cooperation; Intervention: 3.2.4 “Tudásdepó Expressz” Integrated development of library services.

ESF – Social Renewal OP; Priority axis: Providing quality education and ensuring access for all; Section: Improving efficiency of the public education system; developing innovative solutions and cooperation; Intervention: 3.2.11 Assisting out-of-classroom and free-time activities of educational institutions.

Context and objectives

The Bródy Public Library of Eger⁹ is at the same time county library for Heves county. Besides serving the county as such, this status also implies supervision and coordination of the public library network in Heves county.

The key concept behind the correlated SIOP-SROP programmes under the fantasy name “Tudásdepó Expressz” is the integration of the library service in every aspect. Centrally administered large projects cater for this at the national level, by establishing

⁹ See <http://www.brody.iif.hu/en>.

and upgrading unified cataloguing, lending, retrieval etc. systems. Funds do not allow the thousands of local public libraries to fully adapt to these developments. The various rounds of calls serve the more dynamic libraries, where the necessary municipal backing is also there. In the SROP programme five rounds have been executed since 2008, investing altogether 5.4 Bn HUF (about €18Mn) into 116 winning projects.

The programme expects beneficiaries to run projects in consortia, thus promoting integration at the regional levels too.

Structural Funds contributions in the Bródy-led projects: SROP 95.3 Mn HUF (cca €0.3Mn); SIOP 98 Mn HUF, cca €0.3Mn. For the Infotéka project 49.2 Mn HUF, cca €0.16Mn.

Activities and results

The SROP project helps the Bródy library to modernise its activities so that the entire county network could benefit of it: a unified website was created which integrates all inventory catalogues. Further training was administered for staff of all outlets to enable them to use the common software. Over 100 000 items have been entered into the inventory that can be reached online across the county for lending or downloading. The objective to reach out for new readers and to run activities for children also required the training of staff across the county.

For the other two projects consortia had to be organised, this involved eight libraries for the SIOP project and six for the SROP project. The infrastructure project brought 120 new PCs, archiving equipment, projectors, digital boards etc.

In the third project under the name of *Infotéka* 16 schools were involved. In the 2010/2011 school year 10 500 pupils attended 588 events (trainings, workshops, lectures and presentations) in the libraries.

Assessment

Information technology can bridge geographical differences. It is a realistic aim that citizens in the poorest town in the poorest region of the country could access the same level of library services as at the other end of the geographic and affluence scale. This is the philosophy behind the development strategy of the library system.

The design of the programmes carefully follows these goals and so does the execution, as the strategy is broken down into a few central programmes and several rounds of tenders where groups of the library network compete for the funds.

The three programmes, of which the Bródy Library won three projects, are part of a broader scheme in favour of the efficiency of education. In the logic of the previous

paragraph intensive modernisation of the library network establishes conditions for bridging regional differences in access to good-level education. The ultimate purpose of serving education was present along the execution although treated fairly liberally.

2.4.3. Assisting out-of-classroom and free-time activities of educational institutions, 2009-2011

Programme under which it was funded

ESF – Social Renewal OP; Priority axis: Providing quality education and ensuring access for all; Section: Improving efficiency of the public education system; developing innovative solutions and cooperation. Intervention: SROP 3.2.11.

Context and objectives

This intervention was created when the programmes on the three cultural subsectors (libraries, museums, *közművelődés*) were under way and it was felt that other cultural fields, especially the arts, could as well meet the goal of improving educational efficiency and therefore more direct co-operation with schools is needed. In these projects cultural organisations pledge co-operation with selected schools for at least six consecutive school years. Forms of co-operation range from theme days to series of workshops and talent nurture. Including socially challenged schools is a must and a priority.

ESF contribution: 7.0 Bn HUF (cca €23,3Mn).

Activities and results

The description above is in the present tense because the first call in 2009 was received with such success that a new round had to be designed with larger funds. A slightly modified call was administered in 2012 (SROP 3.2.13) and the great demand is likely to elicit additional rounds.

Beyond the suspicion that in times of shrinking public resources cultural organisations crowd to these funds under the pretext of executing educational activities, the real main explanation is indeed the success of the first round when 234 organisations reached about 224 000 children.

A few of the 234 participating organisations:

- FÜGE, the federation of independent theatre groups held over 100 theatre pedagogy performances, in the majority interactive sessions. Some of these groups belong to the elite of the Hungarian theatre scene.

- The Cultural Centre in the city of Debrecen held 412 sessions of 101 kinds of programme reaching 2470 pupils in 5 schools scaling from kindergarten to secondary vocational school.
- The County Archive in Szolnok held history classes for primary and secondary school pupils.
- The Municipal Art Museum in the city of Győr has entered into co-operation with 10 schools. In two years 2659 children attended 114 sessions.
- The Bródy Library (see above)

Assessment

What we have at hand are output indicators. Measuring the impact of the activities on the efficiency of education exceeds the capacities of the individual projects. Without the means, and indeed the tested methodology of measuring the impact on educational efficiency of these co-operations, the fundamental achievement is that thousands of children living in miserable environments could be involved in activities that are connected to their school but at the same time represent a stimulating difference.

Another important outcome is the establishment of working relationships between schools and cultural organisations, which is of great significance for both sides.

2.4.4. *Agóra* – realisation of the infrastructural conditions for multifunctional community centres and regional counselling service for *közművelődés*

Programme under which it was funded

ERDF – Social Infrastructure OP; Priority axis: Development of the infrastructure of education. Section: Development of infrastructure promoting co-operation between educational and cultural institutions; Intervention: SIOF 1.2.1.

Context and objectives

Cities with the status of county (these have over 50 000 inhabitants) could compete for funds to create multifunctional community centres. They could choose between various options: reconstructing existing buildings with similar function, regenerating unused edifices or constructing new buildings.

The title of the project names two of the three main functions, community centre and regional advisory function, but the third really justifies inclusion into an educational development programme, namely adult education; this also belongs to the criteria.

ERDF contribution: 14.6 Bn HUF, cca €48.7Mn

A parallel programme has also been devised under the name of Agora Plus. A few agoras are built with the involvement of universities and the accent is on the display and popularisation of the research and development activities of the university. Although culture figures also in the agenda of those institutions, we are not covering that programme at present.

Activities and results

Eight cities applied. One agora has been completed and opened, three or four may open in 2012. In one city the design is being downsized to match prospected needs and potential for sustainability, another one has been deleted on the same arguments.

The programme is the most important single development project in *közművelődés*. At some places the agora is considered as key in the urban regeneration of the place, and elected city heads tend to identify with it accordingly. The appeal of the concept is shown by a ninth city adopting the name “agora” to its renewed cultural centre that does not use EU funds. In some places, however, the justification of the investment is questioned, especially in light of the expected operating cost.

Assessment

The importance of the agoras is underlined by the search of new identities for this sphere of activities and type of institutions. This is why the preparation of the project would have deserved more transparency, discussions with professional circles and the public. The initiative was treated instead as a deal to compensate those cities that could not receive investments in the scale of Pécs on the occasion of the 2010 ECOC title.

Although part of an educational programme, and facilities for adult education being part of the tasks, the functions of a modern cultural (arts) centre dominate media communication.

3. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Staff in key positions of the cultural sector has acquired the essential professional skills in managing strategically co-ordinated developments in line with the criteria of Structural Funds. The necessary institutional background is now also in place. This applies best to the library and museum networks as well as to the National Trust of Monuments.
- The very broad scope of beneficiaries from EU funds – especially in the frame of the Social Renewal OP –, and its positive reception in the public offers strong expectations and support for the inclusion of a wide range of cultural projects also after 2013.
- The structural and personal changes executed in the middle of the current governmental term at the top levels of public administration promise that culture could have a strengthened position during the period of planning the next national framework strategy.
- The issue of digitisation of heritage has lately become one of the priorities of the cultural administration. The Hungarian Film Archive has been appointed co-ordinator of the programme called MANDA (Hungarian National Digital Archive), the fundamentals of the strategy of the operations are being prepared, funds are likely to be raised, the MANDA website has been launched.
- Owing to the historically well-established tradition of *közművelődés*, houses of culture (in their various formations) are considered as focal points of community activities especially in provincial cities and villages.
- Culture is a firm component of the conception and practice of rural development, and this is likely to remain in the near future.
- Dynamic and diverse cultural life is regarded as fundamental condition of best quality urban life. This has applied especially to Budapest ever since the beginning of the past century, and the city has fully grown to this expectation. Efforts to achieve similar standards have intensified in major provincial cities.
- Due to the mobile and digitally-skilled young generations, there is an eager public for transnational activities and influences in culture.

Weaknesses

- Both for the general public, and especially so for the cultural sector the main point in involving culture into Structural Funds operations is to strengthen the sector, and not the potentials of culture to contribute to economic and social

development in general. This conception weakens the positions of arguing for more robust presence in the future implementation plans.

- In connection with the above, an exaggerated accent is put on securing funds for the benefit of the sector, to help achieve its self-contained artistic and professional aspirations, as well as providing better conditions for the existential needs of the persons involved, than on identifying the potentials of culture to contribute to more overarching societal and economic goals. Most of the available funds are usually channelled to the improvement of the working conditions of the operations, including the qualifications of the personnel, rather than on actual operations targeting the public, especially at the most deprived segments.
- The concept of creative industries has not yet permeated cultural policies. It has often been applied in misinterpreted form, little more than lobby language in favour of creative occupations of children and youth, including in EU-funded projects. The content of such occupations was often connected rather to traditional crafts than to up-to-date design or technology.
- The alliance between culture and economy has not taken shape at any level, local, regional or government. The efforts in favour of small and medium enterprises miss emphasis on creative industries.
- Little is known whether MANDA, the digitisation programme is geared to have an impact on creative industries, on up-to-date content development. Translation of contents into English has not yet begun and links to Europeana are not emphasised. These processes are too much dominated by the film sector, whereas museums, libraries etc. are little involved. Digitisation as a decisive development factor waits to be exploited for development.
- *Közművelődés* is still in a phase of searching for new identity. The success of conceiving itself as a major player on the adult education market is not yet certain; its image linked to the leisure-time amateur art scene and as a guardian of folkloric traditions, or even less, as the venue for any kind of gathering, is still prevalent. The headway of rural development sector into the issue blurbs conceptual progress rather than facilitating it.
- Democratic consciousness has not yet reached a level to generally experience active citizenship; actions, measures, strategies also about culture are rarely initiated, shared or watched by the civil society; volunteering is also at a low level.

Opportunities

- Culture is mentioned in several of the 11 Thematic Objectives in the Annex of the Commission Staff Working Document on the use of the Common Strategic Framework Funds¹⁰. It is a solid point of reference both in the preparation of the next National Framework Strategy, and in its negotiations with the Commission later on. The sentence under the 6th objective can be quoted also in general contexts: “Cohesion policy resources can be used to maximise the contribution of culture as a tool for local and regional development, urban regeneration, rural development and employability.”
- The concept of creative industries has firmly established itself internationally as a key driver of growth, job creation and decisive about economic competitiveness. This is deemed to root in official thinking also in Hungary.
- The diversification of cultural life continues, blurring borders between producers and consumers, enhanced by recurrent waves of technological innovation. Besides stimulating individuals, this also helps further intensification of the activities of cultural NGOs.
- Culture could play an important role in a variety of ways in tackling the issue of the Roma population, the greatest social challenge of the country.

Threats

- Deliberations in the European Council may result in a relative decrease in cohesion funds available for Hungary, which would threaten chances of strengthening positions of culture as a factor in regional development, particularly in the context of using Structural Funds.
- The public administration system is undergoing restructuring. Competences are being reshuffled between the various levels: local, micro-regional, county, regional and governmental tiers. Before new competences are firmly established, one cannot expect the various actors to make strong plans. Strategic thinking also requires established identities, which is very weak at the two regional levels: neither micro-regions (*járás*) nor the seven NUTS regions have their elected self-governments. The macro-regions have no historical antecedents and little efforts have been taken to develop feelings of new adherence.
- Entering into Structural Funds projects has contributed to the high level of debt of a number of municipalities. Local governments will show a more cautious

¹⁰ European Commission, Commission Staff Working Document, Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020, Annexes, March 2012.

attitude, and many of them will find it very difficult or impossible to raise the necessary own financial contribution.

- Restructuring public administration is coupled with other difficulties in cultural governance. Institutions (museums, theatres etc.) run by counties are being taken over by the central government; structural reforms are still in motion in the performing arts and in the film industry.
- Efforts to keep public debt under control have resulted in repeated budget cuts. The majority of public cultural institutions (museums, theatres etc.), as well as independent or private operations (performing artists, filmmakers etc.) struggle for survival which limits their ability to be efficiently involved in development. Besides their financial vulnerability the necessary professional skills and disposition also suffer from dire times.
- The purchasing power of the populations stagnates, spending on culture declines in a number of categories.
- Failure to improve the situation of the Roma population, and the aggravation of inter-ethnic relations can cause harm to and discredit cultural efforts to contribute to the positive solutions.
- Trends of international and national tourism do not promise to produce upward turn, especially in the Southern and Eastern halves of the country.
- The advances of social media and ever newer technological gadgets turn people (especially youth) into geeks that are difficult to mobilise for more conventional forms of culture like cinema, theatre, exhibitions or concerts.

4. Priorities for Cultural Investment 2014-2020

Upgrading and modernising cultural services and institutions is not a convincing argument in itself in negotiating for a greater position for culture in investment plans. It would be hard to fit the objective of a better and more up-to-date cultural sector among the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Therefore also in Hungary cultural projects must be identified that promise effective contribution to the realisation of more overarching goals of the Common Strategic Framework. The following items were selected in this light.

Some of these entries have been inspired by proposals made in other countries by experts involved in the same exercise on Culture and the Structural Funds, which appear relevant to Hungary as well. A number of items are mentioned under more than one thematic objective with or without modification. This could be a matter of natural course, if similar or the same approaches equally fit to more than one context. The * asterisk before an item indicates that a similar proposal has been included under one or more other thematic objectives.

4.1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

* Supporting enterprises that involve partner organisations into such innovations and developments where culture plays an important role, with emphasis on design. Besides products, developments should target services and marketing (nb: ITC innovations are subject of the next objective). Partners may include organisations of any status (companies, schools, NGOs etc.), even SMEs, because here partners are indirect beneficiaries only. Furthermore culture need not be the partners' main activity, it is the added value that must have cultural nature. (ERDF)

Technological clusters should be encouraged to involve members that bring added cultural value to the performance of the cluster. (ERDF)

4.2. Improvement of access and use of Information and Communication Technologies

* Supporting enterprises that involve partner organisations into ICT innovations and digital content developments where culture plays an important role, with emphasis on design. Besides products, developments should target services and marketing. Partners may include organisations of any status (companies, schools, NGOs etc.). Culture need not be the partners' main activity, it is the added value that must have cultural nature. In this kind of construction larger and established companies are the direct beneficiaries, suggesting greater sustainability. Solid guarantees must be built in favour of the involved partners. (ERDF)

Supporting projects producing digital content of cultural worth that meets nationally determined standards, and is compatible with international commercial and non-profit systems (such as Europeana). (ERDF)

Following up library projects supported in the 2007-2013 period, in function of meeting the objectives set therein: helping upgrade services and technology, and their degree of sustainability. (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD)

Support to the development and improvement of sophisticated tourist services, observing established cultural standards. Services include Internet-based information, marketing, commerce, guidance etc., prioritising multiple language use. Enabling access to existing services should be included. Major heritage projects of the 2007-2013 period should have priority in this context. (ERDF, EAFRD). Support to training to develop skills needed for these services. (ESF).

Support to development and improvement of systems (services, schemes, technologies) in the area of user-generated content, observing established cultural standards. Systems may include structured distribution, standardisation, quality control, exploration of revenue generation, rights protection etc. (ERDF)

E-content development in rural tourism, observing established cultural standards (EAFRD).

Nb: The phrase “observing established cultural standards” may sound clumsy: the proper exact formulation of this distinction may differ from case to case. It implies that tenders for these funding rounds could be distinguished from other industry, tourism and other projects by insisting that the projects should reflect a certain degree of cultural character.

4.3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs

* Supporting enterprises that involve SMEs into ICT innovations and digital content developments where culture plays an important role, with emphasis on design. Besides products, developments should target services and marketing. Culture need not be the SME’s main activity, it is the added value that must have cultural nature. In this kind of construction larger and established companies are the direct beneficiaries, suggesting greater sustainability. Solid guarantees must be built in favour of the involved SMEs. (ERDF)

Devising large (national or regional) scale digitisation schemes where most of the work is outsourced to SMEs. Work should range from the designing and preparatory phases through physical processing till, further processing, editing, distributing, commercialising or storing the digital products. (ERDF)

Operating preferential loans along the logic of venture capital for SMEs active in creative industries. Within this special care is needed for businesses that act as an interface between non-profit culture and the market, especially at international scale, including tourism. Besides the arts, the cultural remit should include various segments of heritage. (ERDF)

Supporting entrepreneurial projects based on the creative combination of traditional crafts and advanced technologies. (ERDF, EAFRD)

4.4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors

* Support to cultural initiatives that inform and sensibilise the public about the necessity of ecological change by taking into account climate and energy particularities in the region. (ERDF)

Promote the overhaul of larger cultural institutions into green mode operations. Besides buildings and venues, this should include large festivals. (ERDF)

4.5. Promoting climate change adaptation and risk prevention and management

* Support to cultural initiatives that inform and sensibilise the public about the necessity of ecological change by taking into account climate particularities in the region – with special regard to the protection of the water base, a key issue for Hungary. (ERDF)

Support to projects that aim at special local negative impacts of climate change and offer guidance in the direction of the creative industries. E.g. zones affected with river regulation, with prolonged draughts etc. (ERDF, EAFRD)

4.6. Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency

Continue the systematic, co-ordinated regeneration of historic parks, gardens and landscapes. (ERDF)

Support environment-friendly green tourism, involving training. (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD)

* Promote grassroots community initiatives with certain cultural bias and exploiting vested local experiences and traditions, aiming at identifying ways of self-sustainability, and alternative sources of energy. (ESF)

Support initiatives based on the protection, revival and popularisation of zoological and botanical legacy, primarily through livestock and horticultural projects. (EAFRD)

4.7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures

Support innovative solutions that make public personal transport more attractive, accessible, user friendly and safer for everyone, including people with special needs, especially when offering significant cultural added value. (ERDF)

4.8. Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility

Programme for local community cultural centres focusing on enhancing the employment of Roma women, particularly in social depression areas. Works should include counselling, job brokering, tackling stereotypes, re-training basic skills, doing eventual non-formal vocational instruction. These centres have better chances for success than distant official adult training institutions. (ESF)

* Promote grassroots community initiatives with certain cultural bias and exploiting vested local experiences and traditions, which aim at enhancing employability. (ESF)

Launching a programme on introduction to creative entrepreneurship for young unemployed graduates and medium- and long-term unemployed. (ESF)

4.9. Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty

* Continue the successful projects of coupling cultural and educational organisations in sustainable co-operation, carried out in the frame of the Social Renewal OP. Focus it even more on population segments and geographical areas characterised by poverty and ethnic diversity. (ESF)

Support classroom theatre projects that address social issues. This approach has developed into a movement in Hungary, cultivated by dozens of engaged teams at high professional standard, with good results. (ESF)

* Promote grassroots community initiatives with certain cultural bias and exploiting vested local experiences and traditions, aiming at identifying ways of self-sustainability, enhancing cohesion and solidarity, with special regard to settlements with Roma population. (ESF)

* Research has repeatedly proven the remarkable transfer impact of drama pedagogy on educational performance in general, and several of the eight key competences for

life long learning in particular, going beyond the competence of cultural awareness and expression. On a broader scale, related occupations requiring concentration, team work and offering gratification e.g. El sistema Abreu, or other forms of cultural group activity should be promoted among children and youth living in socially critical / challenging contexts. (ESF)

Involve creative professionals into projects of urban revitalisation and resettling targeting Roma ghettos in poverty-stricken regions. (ERDF)

Increase and exploit the potential of the local cultural centres to act as hubs of LEADER local action groups, and effective drivers in shaping and implementing local development strategies aiming at improving quality of life and attractiveness of local environment. (EAFRD)

4.10. Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning

* Continue the successful projects of coupling cultural and educational organisations in sustainable co-operation, carried out in the frame of the Social Renewal OP. Focus it even more on specific educational issues and challenges. (ESF)

* Research has repeatedly proven the remarkable transfer impact of drama pedagogy on educational performance in general, and several of the eight key competences for life long learning in particular, going beyond the competence of cultural awareness and expression. On a broader scale, related occupations requiring concentration, team work and offering gratification e.g. El sistema Abreu, or other forms of cultural group activity should be promoted among children and youth living in socially critical / challenging contexts. (ESF)

Continue the successful projects carried out in conjunction between the Social Renewal OP and the Social Infrastructure OP with the aim of unleashing the educational potential in public libraries – with even stricter focus on ITC services for less affluent population. (ESF, ERDF)

Continue the successful projects carried out in conjunction between the Social Renewal OP and the Social Infrastructure OP with the aim of unleashing the educational potential of museums. (ESF, ERDF)

4.11. Enhancing institutional capacity and ensuring an efficient public administration

* Promote grassroots community initiatives with certain cultural bias and exploiting vested local experiences and traditions, which aim at enhancing active citizenship, transparency and accountability of public administration. (ESF)

Promote and support independent forms of professional and citizen journalism for the monitoring of the fair use of public resources, the respect of civil rights, the fight against corruption, and the protection of freedom of expression. (ESF)

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