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EXPERT
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ON CULTURE
(EENC)**

***Culture and the Structural Funds
in Romania***

by Corina Şuteu

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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 analyze 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 Programs for the funding period 2014-2020. In this context, the Commission is preparing internal "negotiation mandates" that will identify the type of investments that should be prioritized, 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 Romania, 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 the job market.

Romania is the second largest country in Eastern Europe and covers an area of 238,500 square kilometres. It borders with Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Ukraine, and the Republic of Moldova. The country suffered much dismemberment on the course of its long history. In the middle ages, the actual territory was divided in three distinct principalities: Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania, of which the first two remained for centuries under the suzerainty of the Turkish Ottoman Empire.

In 1699, the principality of Transylvania became a territory of the Habsburgs' Austrian empire who extended in 1775 its domination to the North-West part of Moldavia (later called Bukovina), while the eastern half of the principality (called Bessarabia) was occupied in 1812 by Russia. At the end of World War I, in 1918, Transylvania and Bessarabia united with the Romanian Old Kingdom, becoming the Greater Romania.

Between the two world wars, Romania was gradually a liberal constitutional monarchy facing the rise of the nationalist parties (i.e. the Iron Guard) and dictatorship under the reign of King Carol II who abdicated in 1940, succeeded by the National Legionary State, in which power was shared by Ion Antonescu and the Iron Guard.

In 1948, a new regime was established under the Soviet influence, the People's Republic, which was progressively placed under the single rule of the Romanian Communist Party. From 1945 until 1989, Romania knows the most dramatic totalitarian regime of its history, with a decades-long rule of Nicolae Ceaușescu who took power in 1965. In this context, culture became one of the most fragile and exposed fields being placed under severe censorship, control and instrumentalization. The fall of communism in 1989 is followed by the approval of the Romania's Constitution in 1991 who proclaims Romania as a democratic country with free market economy. Romania applied in June 1993 for membership in the European Union, becoming a member state on January 1, 2007. The entry into the Eurozone of its official currency (the Leu) is estimated for 2015.

The current population counts 19,043,767 people of which 16,869,816 ethnic Romanians, according to the preliminary data of the last national census conducted in autumn 2011.

Romania's territorial administration is relatively centralized in fairly simple administrative subdivisions. The country is currently divided into 41 counties (*judete*) and the city of Bucharest. Each county is governed by an elected county council. Local councils and elected mayors are the public administration authorities in villages and towns. The county council is the public administration authority that coordinates the activities of all village and town councils in a county.

Eight development regions (specific territorial entities without administrative status, or legal personality) have been created by voluntary association in order to accommodate the EU funding schemes. These regions correspond to the eight NUTS2² regions: North-West, Centre, North-East, South-East, South-Muntenia, South-West Oltenia, West and Bucharest-Ilfov.

Because of a tormented history, with various types of administrative sovereigns and a lack of practice in autonomous management of resources, as well as due to the over centralized type of administration imposed by the authoritarian communist regime, Romanian national and regional administration was confronted after the fall of communism with a variety of challenges. These challenges were brought about by the dynamics of decentralization combined with a lack of solid practice in the vision, meaning, the long term relevance, and the ethics of efficiently administrating the public finance generally and funds for culture more specifically.

In recent times, the economic recession that hit the country in 2009 and resulted in very important cuts among the budgetary system created supplementary institutional stress on the agencies dealing with the EU funds and their role in facilitating large scale absorption by different entities.

Also to be taken into account is that the present study is delivered in the context of the summer of 2012, which brought about a completely unexpected, by its dimension and strength, political crisis. The two months of constant political, social and economic torment were scattered with changes at all levels in the administration of the country. There was a shift of the political focus from managing the austerity measures towards a confrontation between power and opposition and this imposed a the standby situation in whatever aspect related to efficient administration of public funding, with harsh and aggressive measures regarding the public support for cultural activity. Thus, the Romanian Cultural Institute's 2012 budget was diminished by a third in an

² Eurostat, *Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics - NUTS Statistical Regions of Europe*

announcement in August. The only public cultural TV channel is planned to be closed in early September, and the National Cultural Fund subordinated to the Ministry of Culture saw its funding radically cut by an emergency ordinance late August as well. This fund was the leading national fund providing financial support to independent artistic projects from all areas.

At this moment in time it is impossible to identify comprehensive analytical information regarding the absorption of the Structural Funds, other than by desk study. However, the government strategy shows that absorption of the Structural Funds is their Priority Zero³, and one can frequently read in the Romanian press that, as a result of badly managed absorption the assessment results show a high level of mismanagement of these funds. Information regarding issues related to corruption can regularly be found in the Romanian press.⁴

In this context, it becomes even more relevant to take note of the following: “Romania’s profile cannot be fully understood and evaluated without taking into account the mutation process in the field of collective mentalities in general, of culture and cultural policies in particular. Following the dereliction and control of the whole system and political behaviour before 1989, the 1990’s presented a frantic and sometimes incoherent succession of trends.”⁵

The main paradox and the critical challenge of public policies in favour of culture in Romania in the last twenty years consist of the fact that until 2000 the country restaged the role of the Ministry of Culture several times, mainly due to the difficult transition from an ideological and censoring instrument represented by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs during the communist time toward a tool for the efficient administration of funds dedicated to culture in a democratic Romanian state. Also, a difference of vision between the mission of the state as “full provider” or just “enabler” mirrored the two different approaches governments from both left and right political orientation had as they alternated to power in the last two decades. Volatility at administrative levels is not to be neglected, either: between 1990-1996 no less than 7 ministers of culture took office and between 2001-2005 there was ongoing tension between the “closed” way of deciding upon public cultural policies among the administrators and bureaucrats and open, public debate related to key issues impacting the cultural domain.

³ See http://www.gov.ro/absorbtiia-fondurilor-structurale-si-de-coeziune-proritate-zero-a-guvernului-romaniei_11a109210.html

⁴ For example, on August 3rd 2012 newspapers announce that an accountant from the North West Agency for regional development was found to have stolen from the agency 1.8 million EUR during 14 months despite the regular system of verification compulsory in any such agency. <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/afurat-18-milioane-de-euro-din-fonduri-europene-si-a-devenit-un-nabab-imobiliar-994954.html>

⁵ Compendium-Cultural Policies and trends in Europe, update November 2011, p.1.

It was only by 2005 that a Public Policy Unit was established as a separate department within the Ministry of Culture allowing initiation, coordination and evaluation of public policies for culture. Thus, in 2006, the decentralization strategy was drafted as well as priority proposals for policies in the digitization of the national cultural resource, the development of cultural services in small urban areas and rural areas and the institutional reshaping of the performing arts sector.

Also in 2005, by Ordinance G.O. 10/2005 The National Cultural Fund was created as a separate department within the Ministry of Culture, a tool able to deliver arm's length type of financing to all kinds of cultural projects and to encourage a healthy mix between emerging arts, contemporary creation and traditional forms of culture based on competitive selection and open application methodologies.

Between 2007-2009 progress was made for the implementation and compliance with EU law and the procedures related to the financing opportunities existing for Romania as a EU member.

This led to the formulation of a Government Decision in 2009 (G.D. 9/2009) which clarifies the principles, objectives and functions of the Ministry at central and decentralized levels. The same year, a strategy for a better absorption of non-reimbursable external funds was designed and offered to public scrutiny.⁶

The above brief timeline shows the following:

1. There has been a positive but slow evolution for a clarification of the tasks, objectives and long term dynamics that the public policies in favour of culture were following, with the inclusion of EU funding as a strategic line to be pursued at the level of the Ministry of Culture since 2007;
2. There has been a strong drive to decentralize action and give autonomy to the regional initiatives (at least in theory), but the capacity for autonomous regional initiatives has been rather reduced;
3. There has been a strong will to give independence to the necessary expertise for allocating money to artistic projects through an autonomous body and in relation to a group of qualified experts;
4. There has been an enlargement of the understanding of culture, as economic and social tool, but also as creative entertainment and digital content.

In relation to the Structural Funds, the Ministry serving today as the managing authority with the most important allocation of funds is the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, reorganized in 2009 from the fusion of two other ministries, one being the

⁶ Ministry of Culture, Religious Affairs and Cultural Heritage (2009), *Plan Strategic 2009-2013*

ministry that initially designed the Operational Regional Program 2007-2013 (The Ministry of development, public construction and housing).

The Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism is thus partly responsible for the establishment of strategies regarding the inclusion of culture in the use of the Structural Funds. These strategies have been developed mostly independently from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. It is only in April 2011 that operational guidelines were published regarding new programs intending to develop cultural establishments in rural and small urban areas, and only in 2010 was there an inter-ministerial committee established in order to deal on a common base with issues related to architecture and urban planning (setup between the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs – as it was called at the time – and the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism).

Other ministries who have been managing authority for the use of the Structural Funds with a cultural component are: the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment, the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social protection, and the Ministry of European Affairs. [See case studies below and Chapter 2].

Most of the cultural projects where the management authority has been the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism are the cross-border projects or those related to tourism or heritage rehabilitation, while the other Ministries conducted the allocation of the Structural Funds to cultural projects addressing other thematic areas like human resource development, IT and research strengthening for cultural entities.

However, the general trend was a clear endeavour to harmonize and produce efficient interaction between the cultural policy lines established at the level of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the possibilities offered by the Structural Funds to a diversity of cultural operators. As a proof that culture and the Structural Funds were on the priority agenda of the Romanian government in the recent years is the Assessment Study commissioned in 2011 to the Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture.⁷ The study is designed to build an argument for the creation of an Operational Sectorial Program dedicated to culture and of a new Management Authority within the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, capable of assisting cultural operators to better access the Structural Funds.⁸ The study was finished just as the signs of the major political crisis appeared, and the initiative is still to be pursued.

⁷ Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture (2011), *Programul Operațional Sectorial Cultura – Studiu de Fundamentare [Sectorial Operational Program Culture – Assessment Study]*

⁸ idem

The weak point of the positive dynamics of recent years regarding the absorption of the Structural Funds for culture is represented by the fact that, immediately after 2009, precisely when the administrative tools were ready to be implemented and act in favour of the cultural field, the economic crisis impacted Romania fully. This contradiction between a ready to start tool kit and a 'freezing' moment in the positive institutional dynamics provoked a sense of regression and led to a movement in slow motion of measures taken during 2009-2011. Strategies were just born and agendas just established when the budgets were severely cut for the administration, the fusion of the Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture with another entity took place, leading to a decrease in autonomy, and there was a diminished capacity of action of the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism beginning in 2012, due to the radical political shifts.

This allowed for the projects which were already started to develop at their pace but the general situation became hostile to producing improvements in the short and medium term regarding the absorption of the Structural Funds generally and their use for cultural ends more specifically.

In July 2009, the Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture produced the study "The Effects of the Economic Crisis on the Cultural Operators", showing the radical regression of the sector's capacity to function as compared to 2008.⁹ This was mainly the reason to reinforce the decision to work on the assessment study already quoted, dedicated to the creation of an Operational Sectorial Program for Culture. Unfortunately, the economic crisis in 2009 was followed by a political one starting in 2011, whose outcome is yet to be determined.

Another general aspect to be observed is related to the fact that for the moment there are no specific priorities established by region, showing a differentiated agenda specific to the regional needs. This is mainly a result of the fact that the regional strategies are still decided at central level by the ministries who act as managing authorities and are then supposed to be implemented at the decentralized level in collaboration with the regional management agencies. There is no real autonomy for the regions in Romania to decide upon their axis of priority investment according to specific needs identified internally. As a result (see also the examples in Chapter 2) the number of projects and their area of impact (cultural heritage, cultural infrastructure or cultural services) are unevenly spread along the regions in relation to the capacity of absorption and the degree of initiative of the different cultural entities. There is no master plan or agenda established per region and it is therefore difficult to identify coherence of intention when analyzing the projects involving culture as a systemic compound.

⁹ Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture (2009), *The Economic Crisis' Effects on Cultural Operators*

In addition to this, there are the six priority axes as established by the no longer existing Ministry of Development, Public Construction and Housing for 2007-2013¹⁰, later reintegrated by the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism. Their enumeration lacks any reference to culture apart the one related to cultural heritage (which does not show to have been extensively exploited as the analysis further on reveals). The axes are:

Axis 1: Sustainable development of cities as potential growth poles.

1.1 Integrated plans of urban development.

Axis 2: Transportation infrastructure development at regional and local level

2.1 Modernizing and rehabilitation of regional traffic network and urban network as well as the highways neighbouring localities.

Axis 3: Enhancing social services infrastructure

3.1 Health services.

3.2 Social services rehabilitation.

3.3 Equipment modernization and efficient ER operative unit provision.

3.4 Rehabilitation of all educational units, modernization of buildings and facilities dedicated to education of all levels.

Axis 4: Strengthening of the business sector at local and regional dimension

4.1 Sustainable development related to business facilities for the regional and local entrepreneurs.

4.2 Rehabilitation of polluted industrial sites and creative approach for giving them a new scope.

4.3 Supporting the development of micro-enterprises.

Axis 5: Sustainable development and tourism

5.1 Restoration and revaluation of cultural heritage and creation of connected infrastructures.

5.2 Creation of new sites to be exploited and modernization of the already existing ones by creative exploitation of the touristic services.

5.3 Promotion of touristic potential of Romania.

Axis 6: Technical assistance

6.1 Supporting the implementation of the Regional Operational Program.

6.2 Supporting dissemination of information about POR.

¹⁰ Ministry of Development, Public Construction and Housing, *Programul Operațional Regional 2007- 2013* [The Regional Operational Programme 2007-2012].

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 analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the cultural and creative sectors in 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 Romania, with a view about the implementation of the Structural Funds in 2014-2020 (Chapter 4).

1.2. Methodology

This document used the following research tools for completion:

1. National and international research materials, press interviews, data from the EU website and the Council of Europe, research materials produced by ERICarts, statistical data produced by KPMG Romania and other research entities related to the subject (see Bibliography);
2. Full range of documents provided by the Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture (<http://www.culturadata.ro/>); a range of documents published online by the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour in Romania;
3. Interviews with the operators and beneficiaries of the Structural Funds and press material published by the campaign "Bani pentru arte in 2011";
4. Regular sessions of discussion with the two assistant researchers for the study (Andra Catalina Stoica and Anca Dragoi), helping browse the most important data existing on the subject and identify the sensitive issues;
5. Previous studies on the subject realized for other European countries within the same commitment (most helpful for the Romanian case were Poland, Italy and Spain).

In this sense, for Romania, like in the Polish case, the information has to be searched for in many places and it is not always accurate, so that the task of the researcher when doing desk research is difficult. Interviews were hard to obtain given the period when the study was realized and the stress existing at all levels of administration in Romania. Initiatives related to the use of the Structural Funds for culture exist, but operators are generally discouraged by the opacity and labyrinth-like aspect of the applications, as well as by what they feel "being used" before they can really use the finances allocated. Of course, these are very general observations that apply to many of the EU funding schemes. However, given the important potential amount of finance

available, as well as the sustainable development potential embedded in the Structural Funds scheme, it is a situation to be considered. These funds do not reach for the moment, at least in Romania, those who need them the most.

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

Following the previous information and analyzing the priorities deployed by the National Strategic Reference Framework for 2007-2013, this chapter describes the categories of cultural projects that used the Structural Funds and their thematic characteristics.

2.1. Romania: Culture in the Structural Funds 2007-2013

Table 1: EU Structural Funds allocation 2007-2013 for Romania¹¹

General data, in EUR and %

| | Million € | % |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| Total EU Structural Funds allocation | 19,668 | 100.0 |
| a. Convergence Objective | c. 19,213 | 97.7 |
| Cohesion Fund | 6,552 | |
| ERDF | c. 8,977* | |
| Convergence | c. 8,977 | |
| Phasing-out | - | |
| ESF | 3,684 | |
| Convergence | 3,684 | |
| Phasing-out | - | |
| b. Regional Competitiveness & Employment Objective | - | - |
| ERDF | - | |
| Regional Competitiveness & Employment | - | |
| Phasing-in | - | |
| ESF | - | |
| Regional Competitiveness & Employment | - | |
| Phasing-in | - | |
| c. European Territorial Cooperation Objective | 455 | 2.3 |

¹¹ Source: European Commission, *Cohesion Policy 2007-13: National Strategic Reference Frameworks* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007), ISBN 978-92-79-07465-3.

NB: Data presented in this table is based on the initial national and regional programs and may have varied afterwards.

This figure is an estimate based on the grand total provided in the EC publication listed above, where the amount of ERDF funds available for Romania is given as 7,740 m €. Other publications estimate the figure as 'approximately 9 m €', the latter figure seeming more in line with the total EU Structural Funds allocation provided (19,668 m) and the partial figures given for the Cohesion Fund, ESF and the European Territorial Cooperation Objective.

Table 2: Culture and the Structural Funds 2007-2013 in Romania and the EU¹²

General data at national level, in EUR and %

| | Romania | | EU | |
|---|---------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| | Million € | % | Million € | % |
| SF amount (Convergence + RCE) | 19,213 | 100.0 | 344,322 | 100.0 |
| Amount dedicated to culture, of which: | 200 | 1.0 | 5,966 | 1.7 |
| Protection & preservation of heritage | 200 | (100.0) | 2,934 | (49.2) |
| Development of cultural infrastructure | 0 | - | 2,233 | (37.4) |
| Other assistance for cultural services | 0 | - | 798 | (13.4) |

Table 3: Culture in the ERDF Regional Operational Programs¹³

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 | | | | |
| Regional OP | 200 | - | - | 5.4% |
| NOP Increase Econ. Competitiveness | - | - | - | 0% |
| NOP Environment | - | - | - | 0% |
| NOP Transport | - | - | - | 0% |
| NOP Human Resources Devpmt (ESF) | - | - | - | 0% |
| NOP Administrative Capacity Devpt. (ESF) | - | - | - | 0% |

As we see in latter table, data from 2007 shows that Romania is one of only 2 Member States (the other being Ireland) where all funds dedicated to culture are allocated exclusively for cultural heritage. All other 25 Member States have allocated some funds to “development of cultural infrastructure” and most have allocated some resources to “other assistance for cultural services”, even if the latter tends to have the smallest share. This table has to be compared to the following ones (Tables 4-7), produced by the Assessment Study for an Operational Sectorial Program Culture, realized using data until July 2011.¹⁴

¹² Source: European Commission, ‘Cohesion Policy 2007-2013: Culture’, May 2010. NB: Figures presented on this table do not include funds allocated to the European Territorial Cooperation Objective.

¹³ Source: information obtained from the individual Operational Programs, accessible via www.fonduri-ue.ro.

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 Programs 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.

¹⁴ Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture (2011)

We take, for example, the Regional OP:

Table 4: Financial allocation 2007 -2013 for Regional OP

| | EURO | LEI |
|--------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Axis 1 | 1.117.806.517 | 4.561.768.396 |
| Axis 2 | 758.245.428 | 3.094.399.592 |
| Axis 3 | 558.903.264 | 2.280.884.220 |
| Axis 4 | 633.423.700 | 2.585.002.120 |
| Axis 5 | 558.903.264 | 2.280.884.220 |
| Axis 6 | 98.739.589 | 402.956.263 |
| TOTAL | 3.726.021.762 | 15.205.894.811 |

Table 5: Cultural Projects contracted 2009-2010 Regional OP

| Axis | Cultural Projects contracted in 2009 | | Cultural Projects contracted in 2010 | | Total of Cultural Projects contracted in 2009-2010 | | Absorption rate |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------|
| | No. of contracted projects | Total value (LEI) | No. of contracted projects | Total value (LEI) | No. of contracted projects | Total value (LEI) | |
| Axis 1 | | | | | | | |
| Axis 2 | | | | | | | |
| Axis 3 | | | | | | | |
| Axis 4 | | | 11 | 11.011.293 | 11 | 11.011.293 | 0.002% |
| Axis 5 | 16 | 498.072.701 | 32 | 531.321.115 | 48 | 1.029.393.816 | 0.296% |
| Axis 6 | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 16 | 498.072.701 | 43 | 542.332.408 | 59 | 1.040.405.109 | 0.044% |

Table 6: Contracted projects in each development region

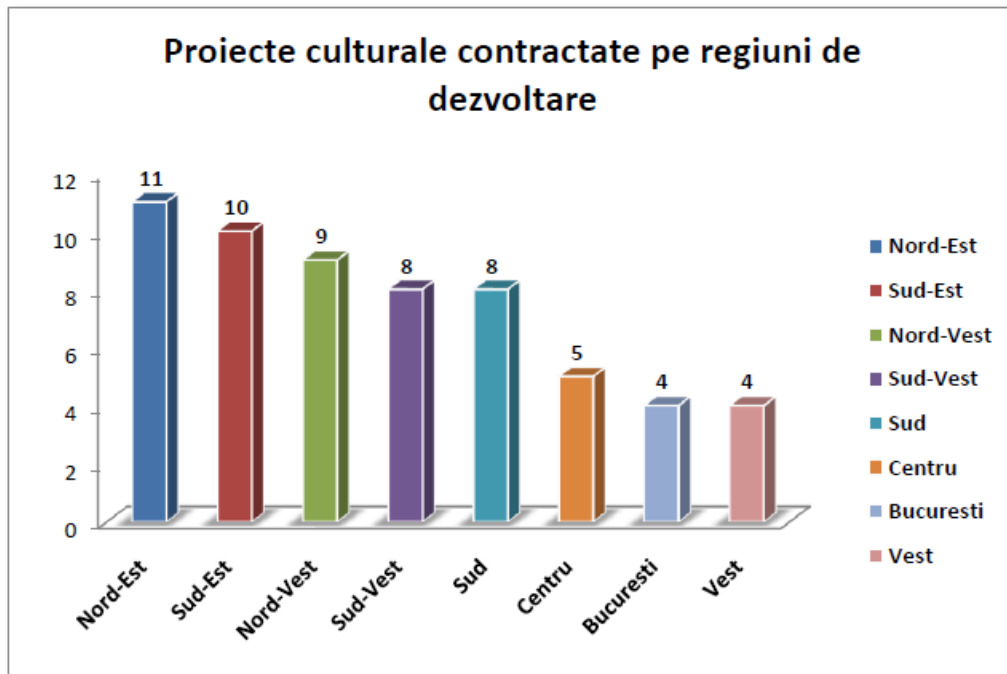
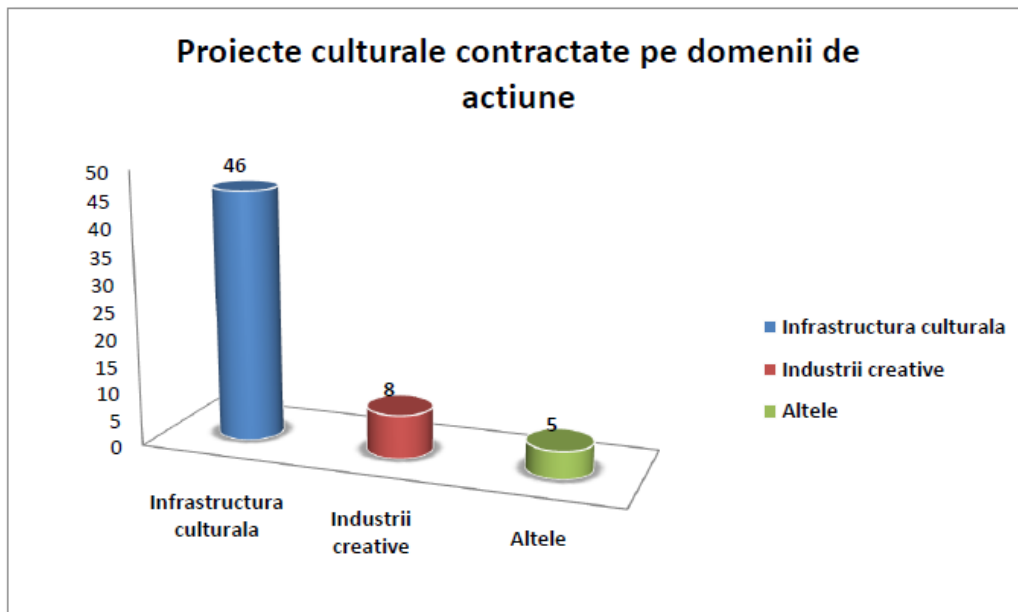


Table 7: Contracted projects per field

[From left to right: Cultural infrastructure; Creative industries; Other]



These 4 synthetic tables from 2011 show on the one hand that most of the structural funding for culture goes through the Regional OP thematically toward cultural infrastructure and the rehabilitation of cultural heritage, serving mainly touristic objectives and, also, that North-East and South-East regions are those who have the biggest number of projects.

The operational program SOP CCE (Development of Economic Competitiveness) is very much directed in favour of creative industries and the study already shows that the capacity of cultural operators to apply for it is extremely reduced in Romania.

The SOP DRU (Development of Human Resource Operational Program), a key program in developing competences for local authorities and regional authorities dealing with cultural issue, is also surprisingly mostly accessed by NGOs (a reduced number, though) and not by the local or regional state subsidized institutions who are unable to put together applications efficiently.

The same weak level of access regards the low capacity of cultural operators to access the Operational Program dedicated to the development of administrative capacity.

A pleasant surprise is represented by the Rural Development Fund, measure 3.2.2 (which can be accessed since March 2008), where an important number of applicants have successfully achieved application on issues related to the renovation, modernization of villages and inclusion of crafts in the rural economy. However, this dimension has still to be encouraged by sustainable assistance on the side of local and regional authorities.¹⁵

In the following, we tried to update the data from 2011 for 2012, mostly in order to clarify the distribution of cultural projects using the Structural Funds at both national and trans-border levels. The conclusion is that the cross-border aspect has an ampler capacity of absorption.

2.2. The NDP and the CSNR

In 2005 the Romanian Government approved the National Development Plan (NDP), a multi-annual strategic planning and financial programming document, the fundamental tool used by Romania in diminishing the economic and social development disparities with the EU as soon as possible. The NDP was the basis for the elaboration of the National Strategic Reference Framework (Cadrul Strategic Național de Referință –

¹⁵ Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture (2011). Full data about these operational programs to be found pp. 40-62.

CSNR), the document that sets “the strategy agreed upon together with the European Union for the use of structural instruments” – European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund. The CSNR has 197 pages. “The CSNR creates the links between the national development priorities, as set out in the National Development Plan 2007-2013 and the priorities at European level – the Community Strategic Guidelines (CSG) on Cohesion 2007-2013 and the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs 2005-2008.”¹⁶

The Regions

Romania is divided in 8 development regions, as follows:

1. North-East: includes the counties of Bacau, Botosani, Iasi, Neamt, Suceava, Vaslui
2. South-East: Braila, Buzau, Galati, Vrancea, Tulcea, Constanta
3. South: Arges, Calarasi, Dambovita, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Prahova, Teleorman
4. South-West: Dolj, Olt, Gorj, Mehedinti, Valcea
5. West: Arad, Caras-Severin, Hunedoara, Timis
6. North-West: Bihor, Bistrita-Nasaud, Cluj, Satu-Mare, Maramures, Salaj
7. Center: Alba, Brasov, Covasna, Harghita, Mures, Sibiu
8. Bucuresti-Ilfov: Bucuresti-Ilfov.

2.3 The place of culture in the CSNR

Culture and creativity are not mentioned anywhere in the SWOT analysis chapter of the CSNR.

Culture appears when referring to Tourism under the subchapter *Thematic Priority “Increasing the Long Term Competitiveness of the Romanian Economy”* in the *Strategy* chapter. Culture here is almost entirely assimilated to cultural and historical heritage and it is seen as a means in boosting tourism in the Regions. “Investments in tourism and culture will allow Regions to use advantages provided by the tourism and cultural heritage in order to improve their competitive advantage in sectors with high added value and high qualitative and cognitive content, both on traditional and new emerging markets.”¹⁷

A reference to culture can be found also under the subchapter *Promoting Balanced Territorial Development – Cross border cooperation*, among the actions envisaged in the *Territorial cooperation strategy*: “to create the social and cultural connection

¹⁶ Government of Romania (2007), *National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013*, p. 1

¹⁷ Ibid. p.109

between the communities and the inhabitants living on both sides of the border (develop the common use of health, cultural and educational infrastructure)¹⁸

The CSNR is implemented through Operational Programs under the *Convergence Objective* and the *European Territorial Cooperation Objective*.

The list of **OPs under Convergence Objective** and the corresponding managing authorities are as follows:

| Operational Program | Managing Authority | Intermediate Bodies | Fund |
|--|---|---|---------|
| SOP Increase of Economic Competitiveness | Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment | Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment (Intermediate Body for SME) Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport (National Authority for Scientific Research) Ministry of Communication and Information Technology Ministry of Economy, Trade and Business Environment (Energy Policy General Directorate) | ERDF |
| SOP Transport | Ministry of Transport | | ERDF+CF |
| SOP Environment | Ministry of Environment and Forests | 8 regional IBs coordinated by MoEF | ERDF+CF |
| Regional OP | Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism | Regional Development Agencies IB for Tourism | ERDF |
| OP Administrative Capacity Development | Ministry of Administration and Interior | | ESF |
| SOP Human Resources Development | Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection | 8 regional IBs coordinated by MoLFSP National Agency for Employment Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sport National Center for Development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training | ESF |
| OP Technical Assistance | Ministry of European Affairs | | ERDF |

¹⁸ Ibid. p.130

The list of **OPs under European Territorial Cooperation Objective** is the following:

| Operational Program | Managing Authority | Intermediate Bodies | Fund |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|
| OP Cross-border Cooperation (CBC) Hungary–Romania | National Development Agency Hungary | Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (Ro) | ERDF |
| OP CBC Romania–Bulgaria | Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism | | ERDF |
| OP CBC Romania – Serbia | Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism | | ERDF – Transfers to IPA |
| OP CBC Romania – Ukraine - Moldova | Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism | | ERDF – Transfers to ENPI |
| OP CBC Hungary – Slovakia – Romania – Ukraine | National Development Agency Hungary | Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (Ro) | ERDF – Transfers to ENPI |
| OP CBC Black Sea Basin | Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism | | ERDF – Transfers to ENPI |
| OP South-East European Space | Ministry of Local Government and Spatial Development (Hungary) | Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (Ro) | ERDF |

The only mention of culture in the Operational Programs under Convergence Objective is to be found in the Regional Operational Program, in Priority Axis 5 “Sustainable Development and Promotion of Tourism”. Projects addressing the valorization and promotion of cultural heritage will receive funding under this axis.¹⁹

Although culture is explicitly referred to only in the Priority Axis 5 of ROP, projects addressing cultural needs have received funding under other Priority Axes of ROP and two other programs: Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development (SOP HRD) and Sectorial Operational Program Increase of Economic Competitiveness (SOP IEC), detailed in the section below.

2.4 Funding for cultural projects

ROP (ERDF)

“The ROP addresses all the five priorities of the NSRF, being connected mainly with the development of transport, social affairs, business, tourism and urban infrastructure.”²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid. p.142

²⁰ Ibid. p.141

The data presented below is taken from the lists of beneficiaries available for the period December 2010 – July 2012.

Priority Axis 1 – Support for sustainable development of urban growth poles

Objective: “This Priority Axis aims to increase the quality of life and to create new jobs in cities, by rehabilitating the urban infrastructure, improving services, including social services, as well as by developing business support structures and entrepreneurship”.²¹

We could identify 7 cultural projects which received funding under this Priority Axis. The objective of these projects is identical to the projects funded under the Priority Axis 5 – rehabilitation of buildings with cultural value, monuments/promotion of cultural heritage. These projects are implemented by the local authorities.

- North West Region: 3 projects
- Center: 1 project
- North East: 1 project
- South East: 1 project
- West: 1 project

Priority Axis 4 – Strengthening the regional and local businesses environment

Objective: “This Priority Axis aims to set up and develop business support structures of regional and local importance, rehabilitate industrial sites and support regional and local entrepreneurial initiatives, in order to facilitate job creation and sustainable economic growth.”²²

Five projects that can be related to culture and cultural activities received funding under this Priority Axis. The beneficiaries are small businesses active in the film/cinema field. All of them applied for funding for acquiring necessary specific equipment for their activities and events.

- South Region: 2 projects
- Bucharest Ilfov Region: 3 projects

²¹ Ibid. p.142

²² Ibid. p.142

Priority Axis 5 – Sustainable development and promotion of tourism

Objective: “This priority axis aims mainly to sustainable valorization and promotion of the cultural heritage and natural resources with tourism potential, as well as to improve the quality of accommodation and leisure tourist infrastructure, in order to increase the regions’ attractiveness, develop the local economies and create new jobs.”²³

Currently, there are 64 cultural projects in different stages of implementation or already finalized, according to the lists of beneficiaries available that we have consulted (the latest list was released July 2012). The beneficiaries are mainly local authorities, monasteries, parishes, an archbishopric and a metropolitan church.

- North East Region: 12 projects
- South East Region: 12 projects
- South Region: 12 projects
- South West Region: 7 projects
- North West Region: 7 projects
- Center Region: 5 projects
- West Region: 4 projects
- Bucharest Ilfov Region: 5 projects

One observes that the most significant number of projects had as objective the restoration and rehabilitation of monasteries and churches (23). Several projects were destined to consolidation, restoration and modernization of museums (7). Other projects consisted in the rehabilitation of medieval fortresses (5) and rehabilitation and conservation of the old centers of cities (3). A number of projects were intended to rehabilitation of buildings with a cultural value (6). The remaining projects had as objective the rehabilitation of the infrastructure for tourism in several cities and resorts.

Table 8: Total Cultural Projects supported by ROP December 2010 – July 2012

| Region | No. of projects |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| North East | 13 |
| South East | 13 |
| South | 14 |
| South West | 7 |
| North West | 10 |
| Center | 6 |
| West | 5 |
| Bucharest Ilfov | 8 |

²³ Ibid. p.142

SOP HRD (ESF)

“The SOP HRD strategic objectives support the fulfilment of the common objectives at the European level, concerning the provisions of an increased participation on the labour market of a highly qualified and adaptable work force, focus on the education system improvement and his adaptability to the labor market demands, to promote lifelong learning, to improve the employees and enterprises adaptability, to ensure the necessary qualifications and knowledge for integration and mobility on the labour market, supporting and facilitating economic development.”²⁴

Although culture is not mentioned at all in the seven Priority Axes of SOP HRD, a significant number of associations, organizations, cultural and educational institutions have applied and received funding through the program. The data presented below was collected from the lists of beneficiaries available for the period December 2008 – January 2012.

Priority Axis 1 – Education and training in support of growth and development of knowledge based society

Objective: “Development of flexible lifelong learning pathways and increasing the access to education and training by delivering modern quality initial and continuous education, including higher education and research.”²⁵

The Romanian Academy and three universities attracted funds for projects in research, doctoral studies, and higher education. The most significant budgets were received by the Romanian Academy for two projects.

- Bucharest Ilfov Region: 4 projects (UNATC – National University of Theatre and Film in Bucharest, The Romanian Academy, The National University of Music Bucharest)
- North East Region: 1 project (The University of Arts George Enescu Iasi)

Priority Axis 2 - Linking lifelong learning and labor market

Objective: “Facilitating access to education and increasing employability and educational attainment of human resources in a life cycle approach in the context of knowledge based society”.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid. p.144

²⁵ Ibid. p.145

²⁶ Ibid. p.145

The ART ACT Cultural Association (NGO) received the most significant funding for their project: Artistic practice – transition of young artist to the labour market. The projects under this axis were concerned with transition from school to active life (3) and professional qualification (2).

- North West Region: 1 project (ART ACT Cluj)
- North East Region: 1 project (Vocational and Arts School Barlad)
- Center and North West Regions: 1 common project (Association “Centrul Multimedia Teatru74”)
- Bucharest Ilfov Region: 1 project (Asociatia Difuzorilor si Editorilor – Patronat al Cartii)
- Center Region: 1 project (Gliga Musical Instruments Reghin)

Priority Axis 3 - Increasing adaptability of workers and enterprises

Objective: Promoting entrepreneurial culture, flexibility and adaptability by supporting skilled, trained and adaptable labour force and enterprises.²⁷

The objective of the three projects which received funding was professional training for employees in specific fields: opera, operetta and national heritage.

- Bucharest Ilfov Region: 2 projects (Bucharest National Opera, Bucharest National Operetta Theatre Ion Dacian)
- South West Region: 1 project (Bishopry of Severin and Strehaia)

Priority Axis 5 - Promoting active employment measures

Objective: “Facilitating the integration on the labour market of young and long-term unemployed, attracting and retaining more people in employment, including in rural areas, and supporting formal employment.”²⁸

Eight projects were carried out under this Priority Axis, out of which seven had as objective the long term sustainability of rural areas (three projects were implemented by Artex Cultural Foundation). These projects aim to revive rural traditions and professions. One project proposed culture as means to fight unemployment.

²⁷ Ibid. p.145

²⁸ Ibid., p.145

- Bucharest Ilfov Region: 4 projects (Art Promo Cultural Foundation, Artex Cultural Foundation)
- Center Region: 1 project (SC Maestra SRL Brasov)
- South West Region: 1 project (Cuvantul care zideste Foundation Craiova)
- North East Region: 1 project (Handicraftsmen Association Piatra Neamt)
- North West Region: 1 project (SC Educons SRL Baia-Mare)

Table 9: Total Cultural Projects supported by SOP HRD December 2008 – January 2012

| Region | No. of projects |
|-----------------|---|
| North East | 3 |
| South East | 0 |
| South | 0 |
| South West | 2 |
| North West | 3 (1 common project with Center Region) |
| Center | 2 |
| West | 0 |
| Bucharest Ilfov | 11 |

SOP IEC (ERDF)

“The general objective of the SOP Competitiveness is to contribute to the increase of the Romanian companies’ productivity, through support for the modernization and expansion the existing companies and setting-up of new businesses, especially SMEs in the productive sectors and in the support services for business.”²⁹

Culture is not mentioned at all in this program either, however we identified projects with a cultural dimension in this field after consulting the lists of beneficiaries available for the period 2008 – January 2012. The funds allocated for culture are much smaller than in the case of SOP HRD.

Priority Axis 1 - An innovative and eco-efficient productive system

Objectives:

- “The revaluation of an environmental-friendly productive equipment, based on its expansion and upgrading, the innovation of productive processes, and the support

²⁹ Ibid. p.139

for the adoption of international standards, foster the increase of the products range.

- Improvement of specialized advisory services and support to internationalization in order to contribute to increasing market share.
- Provision of a favourable framework for sustainable entrepreneurship by reducing the existing constraints in the areas of market failure – access to finance and innovative financial instruments.”³⁰

The following projects with a cultural dimension have been identified:

- West Region: 5 projects (Grafica Plus SRL Deva, SC Grafoprint SRL Timisoara, Millefiori SRL Arad)
- Center Region: 1 project (SC Escurial SRL Aiud)
- North West Region: 1 project (SC Tipografia Arta SRL Cluj)

Priority Axis 2 - Research, Technological Development and Innovation for Competitiveness

Objectives:

- “To increase the research capacity by investing in the development of R&D infrastructure and attracting young researchers and high-level specialists both in R&D institutions (universities and research institutions) and in companies with research departments.
- To stimulate the technology transfer based on the cooperation between R&D institutions and enterprises.
- To support the development of poles of excellence/ competitiveness in R&D and the creation of high-tech firms.
- To promote research and innovation in enterprises.”³¹

Three projects with a cultural dimension received funding under this Priority Axis. One project had as objective the creation of an E-Archive, while the other two aimed at increasing the administrative capacity.

- North West Region: 1 project (Romanian Academy Cluj Napoca)
- Bucharest Ilfov Region: 2 projects (National University of Music Bucharest, Institute of Anthropology “Francisc I Rainer” Bucharest)

³⁰ Ibid. p.139

³¹ Ibid. p.139

Priority Axis 3 - ICT for private and public sectors

Objectives:

- “To improve the infrastructure endowment in market failure areas, especially underserved rural and small urban areas.
- To develop and increase the efficiency of public electronic services (e-government, education and e-health).
- To increase the uptake of ICT by SMEs and development of a dynamic e-business environment.”³²

Projects with a cultural profile were mainly funded under this Priority Axis.

- North East Region: 2 projects (Nicolae Iorga Cultural Association Botosani, Sedcom Libris Iasi)
- North West Region: 2 projects (Tranzit Foundation Cluj Napoca, Association for Achievement and Culture Cluj Napoca)
- Center Region: 2 projects (Artizanat Opait SRL Covasna, The Group for Communicational Anthropology Miercurea Ciuc)
- Bucuresti Ilfov Region: 5 projects (National Museum of the Romanian Peasant, Direct Client Services SRL, SC Art&Craft Design SRL Bucuresti, Niculescu Publishing House, Danimated Studio Bucharest)

Table 10: Total Cultural Projects supported by SOP IEC 2008 – January 2012

| Region | No. of projects |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| North East | 2 |
| South East | 0 |
| South | 0 |
| South West | 0 |
| North West | 4 |
| Center | 3 |
| West | 5 |
| Bucharest Ilfov | 7 |

³² Ibid. p.139

Summing up, a total of 118 projects with a cultural or creative profile have been identified, which can be detailed per field as follows:

- Acquisition film equipment – 5 projects
- Restoration and rehabilitation of monasteries and churches – 23 projects
- Consolidation, restoration and modernization of museums - 7 projects
- Rehabilitation of medieval fortresses – 5 projects
- Rehabilitation and conservation of the old centers of cities – 3 projects
- Rehabilitation of buildings with a cultural value – 19 projects
- Rehabilitation of the infrastructure for tourism in several cities and resorts - 14 projects
- Education and training: 5 projects
- Artistic Practice – Performing Arts: 2 projects
- Transition from school to work in arts: 1 project
- Professional training for employees in publishing: 1 project
- Professional training for workers in the Musical instruments field: 1 project
- Professional training for workers in the opera: 1 project
- Professional training for workers in the operetta: 1 project
- HR development in valorization and promotion of cultural heritage: 1 project
- Sustainability in rural areas – revival of traditions and rural professions: 7 projects
- Culture as an employment measure: 1 project
- Modernization of printing houses: 3 projects
- Participation to fairs and exhibitions: 3 projects
- Fashion and design: 1 project
- E-Archive: 1 project
- Increase of research competitiveness in the artistic field: 1 project
- Reinforcing administrative capacity – anthropology: 1 project
- ICT + Internet: museum on the internet: 1 project
- ICT + Internet: development of the ICT infrastructure and access to internet: 5 projects
- ICT + Internet: Art and Tradition: 1 project
- ICT + Internet: ICT for Publishing Houses, Book Store: 3 projects
- ICT + Internet: E-education: 1 project.

Their regional distribution is:

Table 11: Regional distribution of the 118 projects with a cultural component

| Region | No. of projects |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| North East | 18 |
| South East | 13 |
| South | 14 |
| South West | 9 |
| North West | 17 |
| Center | 11 |
| West | 10 |
| Bucharest Ilfov | 26 |

2.5. Selected best practice cases at national level

The above synthesis allows identifying some best practice cases at national level, four of which are briefly presented below.

PROJECT 1: Artistic Practice – The Transition of Young Artist to Labour Market

The project has started in 2011, February 1st.

Program under which it was funded

ESF – Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development, 2 Priority Axis: Linking lifelong learning and labor market/Major Key Area of Intervention: Transition from school to active life.

Context and objectives

The context of the artistic scene in Cluj-Napoca, similar to other important Romanian cities, shows a severe lack of financial resources for professional training of young people who represent the culture of the city. There are no private or public entities in the fields of choreography, music, drama that could contribute to raising the qualitative standards or inserting the young artists in the cultural scene. This is why sometimes students choose to represent the scene of other countries where the financial involvement in culture is more evolved, more mature than in Romania.

This project aims at integrating the young artists into the active life and correlating their needs with those of employers.

Objectives:

- to facilitate internships with institutions of culture
- to improve the services for professional counseling and orientation
- cooperation between higher education institutions and secondary school, private institutions and specialized institutions
- to organize artistic events in order to show the “good practices”
- to generate innovative solutions (artistic exercise companies, summer schools, workshops)

The costs for these types of activities are very high therefore they cannot be carried out. The students are faced with the difficulty of identifying the jobs that correspond to their training and the hard access to the specialized institutions and organizations. There are a small number of specialized institutions and organizations on the labor market and a limited number of jobs for young graduates.

The organization leading the project is Art Act Cultural Association from Cluj-Napoca (art activities and performances; promotion of young talented people in the performing arts field)

Partners: The Music Academy „Gheorghe Dima” Cluj-Napoca, „Octavian Stroia” Choreography and Performing Arts Secondary School, „Sigismund Toduta” Music Secondary School Cluj-Napoca, „Octav Bancilă” Art Secondary School Iași, „Regina Maria” Art Secondary School, Ballettschule „Dance 2000” from Austria and Tanzwerkstatt Marbach from Germany.

EU funds: 12.573.713 lei ~ 3.000.000 EUR

National Budget: 1.737.365 lei

Contribution applicant: 292.063 lei

Total: 14.603.141 lei

4. Activities and results

The project has three main lines of action and it is developed in three cities in Romania: Cluj-Napoca, Iași and Constanța:

- the organization of internships for practical learning for pupils and students, in partnership through partnerships with professional institutions
- the organization and the orientation coordination along with counseling activities with the scope of facilitating the transition from school to work
- training programs for tutors who will assist the students and pupils in the transition from school to active life

Results:

- 156 students got internships and counseling
- 9 students from the Music Academy Gheorghe Dima participated in the first stage of the project – specialization: Drama
- the second stage of the project gathered 76 students – specialization: Music
- the third stage of the project gathered 71 participants
- 64 tutors were trained for the internships
- 7 agreements for internships were signed with the following institutions: Transylvania State Philharmonic, County Center for Preservation and Promotion of the Traditional Culture, Hungarian Opera, National Theater, Puck Puppets Theater, Municipal Theater of Turda

Until October 31, 2011 the amount of 411.315,89 Lei were spent.

5. Assessment

The project is one of the fewest in Romania targeting young people and their transition to the active professional life on a cultural market that lacks the financial resources and the proper mentoring mechanisms of professional training in the artistic field.

The results of the project speak for themselves: 156 students benefited of internship and counseling into an extensive partnership with 7 highly reputed cultural organizations from Cluj-Napoca: Transylvania State Philharmonic, County Center for Preservation and Promotion of the Traditional Culture, Hungarian Opera, National Theater, Puck Puppets Theater, and the Municipal Theater of Turda.

PROJECT 2: The circuit of the medieval fairs from North Transilvania – Karolyi Castle from Carei, Karolyi Fortress from Ardu

Program under which it was funded: ERDF – Regional Operational Program – 5 Priority Axis – Sustainable development and promotion of tourism/Major Key Area of Intervention:

Context and objectives:

The two historical monuments were deteriorating and needed intervention.

The project was developed by the Carei local authorities (UAT Municipiul Carei).

The objective of the project was to preserve cultural values in Carei and Ardu and to increase the touristic attraction of the area.

EU funds: 15.959.278 lei

Applicant's contribution: 403.676 lei

National contribution: 2.412.667 lei

Ineligible expenses: 4.403.771 lei

Total: 23.179.393 lei

Activities and results

Karolyi Castle

The restoration works included interventions in the supporting structure and architecture - works for the supporting structure and humidity reduction, basements sanitation, interior and exterior plasters, roof restoration, decorative elements restoration, restoration or replacement of joinery – and works for the electrical, plumbing, heating – ventilation – air - conditioning installations.

According to the rehabilitation project of the castle, an exhibition hall with wine products will function in the basement of the building. The chapel and another exhibition hall are located at the ground floor together with a performance hall with several annexes. At the same level, there were created three offices, warehouses, restrooms, a boiler room and a culinary exhibition hall. At the first floor, the County Museum will function as in the past; three other spaces are being transformed into conference halls. In the remaining spaces, a permanent exhibition was organized, focusing on the Karolyi family history.

According to the director of the Department for Culture at the City Hall, Bogdan Georgescu, cultural activities such as book clubs, conferences, photography and painting clubs, theatre clubs in Romanian and English, old music clubs, artisan workshops, evenings dedicated to amateurs theatre, old music, and festivals are planned to take place at the castle.

The furnishing of the castle was continued through a cross-border project of 500.000 euros implemented by Satu Mare (Ro) and Szabolcs-Szatmar-Bereg (HU) County Councils. Tens of rooms have now antique furniture, and in four of the halls there are being presented objects and documents related to the history of Carei.

Ardud Fortress

For the restoration of the Ardud fortress, there were used only new and traditional materials compatible with the existing structures. The deteriorated elements which did not match technically or esthetically were changed or removed from the original and historical structures. They were replaced with historical technologies and materials.

The following works have been executed: consolidation, restoration and putting into function of the South-West tower, consolidation, conservation and protection of the South-East tower ruins, conservation, protection and valorization of the entrance

building. Also, the access road to the fortified premises was improved and an amphitheater in open air was set up in the courtyard.

Assessment

The project is responding to the regional objective of sustainable development and promotion of tourism in the North West region. The interventions on the two historical monuments implied: consolidation, restoration, conservation, protection and valorization of the entrances. The Karolyi Castle will be soon opened to a large series of activities and artistic projects. Exhibitions will also be presented, contributing to the integration of the two monuments in a larger touristic circuit.

PROJECT 3: Increasing the competitiveness of SC Metropolis Film SRL through the acquisition of innovative equipment

The contract was signed in October 7, 2011 and finished in June 22, 2012.

Program under which it was funded

ERDF – Regional Operational Program – 4 Priority Axis: Strengthening the regional and local business environment/Major Key Area of Intervention: support regional and local entrepreneurial initiatives

Context and objectives:

The objective is to increase the competitiveness and the possibilities to have access to a continuously changing market through the acquisition and usage of innovative equipment in SC. Metropolis Film SRL current activity as follows: 35 mm film projector including accessories, digital projector, inflatable projection screen including accessories, optical sound processor, sound amplifier, generator, speaker and subwoofer set, scaler.

The estimated results:

- creation of 5 new jobs that will be kept for 3 years after the implementation of the project
- training of the 5 new employees
- increase in the turnover of the firm and the portfolio of provided services with a minimum of 5% 1 year after the implementation
- increase in the number of technical equipments by 10
- Easing the access of 10.000 persons at cultural events organized with the acquired equipment, in minimum 10 locations.

The total cost: 864.804,19 lei/ 843.117,70 lei (EFRD)

EU funds: 858.000 lei

Contribution applicant: 12.444 lei

Ineligible expenses: 217.044 lei

Assessment

The project is innovative by the domain of activity of the beneficiary proving the flexibility of the cultural organizations to adjust their projects to the priorities of the Structural Funds.

Metropolis Film SRL acquired a complete set of innovative film equipment, which lead to the creation of 5 new positions in the company, ensuring training for the employees and securing their jobs for 3 more years after the completion of the project.

On a broader extent, the project will generate the access of an estimate of 10.000 persons to cultural events organized consequently to the equipment acquisition.

Although not a big scale project, the initiative of the Metropolis Film SRL is a proof of the capacity of Romanian cultural operators and organizations to positively influence the strengthening of the Romanian business environment.

PROJECT 4: Castellum. Organization of interactive exhibitions in the Castle of Carei and the mansion of Szabolcs and promoting them in the context of cross-border tourism

Program under which it was funded

The Hungary-Romanian Cross-border Co-operation Program 2007-2013, Priority no. 2: *Strengthening social and economic development in the border region*; Major Field of intervention no. 2.1: *Supporting cross-border business cooperation* Action no. 2.1.3. *Tourism development*

Context and objectives:

The Municipal Museum of Carei is an architectural monument in the center of Carei that operates since 1958 and became a branch of Satu-Mare County Museum in 1968. The permanent exhibition of the Museum covered 10 rooms located on the first floor of the castle, including two exhibition modules: archeology and natural sciences. In 2008, Carei Town Hall in partnership with Arduș Town Hall initiated a project entitled "The Circuit of Medieval Fairs in Northern Transylvania - Karolyi Castle of Carei, Karolyi Castle (fortress) of Arduș, which aimed at restoring the most significant monuments of the two localities. With the start of restoration work on the castle in Carefree, the

permanent exhibition was ceased and the institutions that operate here, including the museum, were moved to another location during restoration.

Along with the restoration of the monument-castle, the Satu Mare County Museum, in partnership with Josa Andras Museum of Nyiregyhaza (Hungary) initiated the project: "Castellum - Organizing interactive exhibitions in Carei Castle and Szabolcs mansion and promoting them in the context of cross-border tourism" in order to reorganize the permanent exhibition in the castle of Carei. The new exhibition aims to be modern, based on a concept that encompasses the most significant needs and constraints of the local community, having also a long term vision for tourism development in Carei. The exhibition will consist of two distinct parts: re-arranging the historic interiors, to which have been allocated 10 rooms on the first floor of the building and the thematic exhibition which focuses on local history, and will cover three rooms and the hall located on the ground floor of the castle.

The permanent ground floor exhibition will address the following topics: the history of the Carei town, traditional crafts, ecclesiastic history and archaeological remains discovered in Carei area.

Scope: developing and facilitating the cross-border cooperation in order to raise people, communities and economic actors' interest by promoting specific values and benefits of living in the border area.

Partners: the Satu-Mare County Museum, Directorate of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Museums

Activities:

- Installation of several exhibitions of historical interiors and of local history in two buildings: the Mudrány mansion of Szabolcs (Hungary) and the Károlyi Castle of Carei (Romania), both monuments of national value.
- Integration of the two exhibitions and the monument-buildings in the region's tourist circuit.

Budget: 1,010,231 EUR

EU funding through the ERDF: 858,696.35 EUR.

The Romanian partner's contribution (Satu Mare County Museum): 796,731 euros

The promotion and dissemination of the results will be implemented through the project's website a brochure, multimedia and DVD. All these materials are bilingual.

Results:

- Exhibitions in the Karolyi Castle, Carei

- Exhibitions in the Mudranyi mansion, Szabolcs
- Audio-video guide
- Multilingual website
- Virtual Tour and DVD
- Booklet advertising cultural tourism

Assessment

The project responds to the regional and cross-border objectives by bringing together two public institutions for the common goal of increasing the touristic attractiveness of the border area.

The project is a continuation of the regional initiative “The circuit of the medieval fairs from North Transilvania – Karolyi Castle from Carei, Karolyi Fortress from Ardud” consisting in the installation of long term modern exhibition.

The uniqueness of this action consists first of all in its strategic perspective of enlarging the cooperation over the border by focusing on common cultural ground and traditions.

2.6 Romania in the framework of European Territorial Co-operation programs

European cohesion policy encourages regions and cities from different EU Member States to work together and learn from each other through joint programs, projects and networks.

Romania is part of the cross border cooperation programs and transnational cooperation programs developing projects with both EU member states and non-EU countries.

Hungary-Romania Cross-border Co-operation Program

The Hungary-Romanian Cross-border Co-operation Program 2007-2013 aims to bring closer to each other people and communities in a joint effort of better exploitation of the resources of the border area by improving at the same time its attractiveness and competitiveness through various interventions.

In the framework of the program, the resources available for culture can be accessed through the *Priority 2: Strengthen social and economic cohesion of the border area* (Cooperation in the fields of business, RTD, education, labour market, health care and risk management).

The eligible border area covers the South-Eastern and Eastern part of Hungary and the North-Western and Western part of Romania. It consists of four neighbouring counties in Hungary (Hajdú-Bihar, Csongrád, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Békés) and three in Romania (Timis, Arad, Satu-Mare and Bihor), respectively.

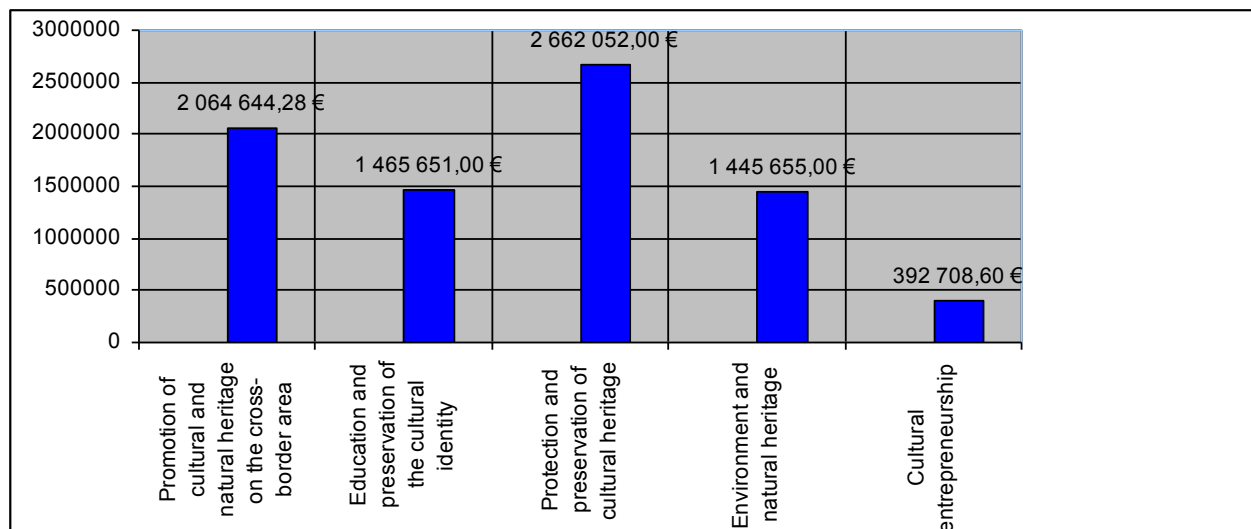
The joint management authority responsible for the management and implementation of the program is the National Development Agency of Hungary.

From 2007 until present, according to the list of awarded projects published on the official website of the program (www.huro-cbc.eu) 50 projects received funding in the field of culture, out of which 26 have been initiated by Hungarian entities while the rest of 24 have a Romanian organization as the project leader. The corresponding budget allocated for these projects is 8.030.710,88 EUR.

For a better understanding of main subjects of interventions in culture, the study uses a subjectively designed classification dividing the projects into 5 general fields:

- 1. Promotion of cultural and natural heritage on the cross-border area**
TOTAL: 15 projects with a total budget of 2.064.644,28 EUR
- 2. Education and preservation of the cultural identity**
TOTAL: 10 projects with a total budget of 1.465.651 EUR
- 3. Protection and preservation of cultural heritage**
TOTAL: 15 projects with total budget of 2.662.052 EUR
- 4. Cultural environment and natural heritage**
TOTAL: 5 projects with a total budget of 1.445.655
- 5. Cultural entrepreneurship**
TOTAL: 5 projects with a total budget of 392.708,6 EUR

Table 12. Cultural projects awarded under the Hungary-Romania Cross-border Co-operation Program 2007-2013³³



With very few exceptions, all the projects can be reunited under a global priority of cross-border promotion of tourism with specific areas of interventions varying from folklore and traditions to cultural and natural heritage.

As shown in the Table 12, the protection and preservation of the cultural heritage still ranks the first position in terms of both number of projects and amount of funding.

It is also interesting to notice the growing importance given to the digitalization of museum's collections and to youth cultural cooperation.

Romania - Bulgaria Cross-border Co-operation Program

The Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Program is an EU-financed Operational Program that supports the development of specific eligible border areas in Romania and Bulgaria. It aims to create a "bridge" between the two countries, in order to help the border areas overcome their similar development problems, by working together and finding common solutions. The total funding for the Romania-Bulgaria Cross Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013 is 262 Million Euro. The program is financed through the ERDF. The EU contribution to the Romania-Bulgaria CBC Program represents 83% (217.8 Million Euro) of the budget. The remaining 17% (44.2

³³ Source: Compiled from information available at www.huro-cbc.eu.

Million Euro) will be covered by national contributions (state budgets and project partners own sources).

The Managing Authority of the program, responsible for managing and implementing the operational program in accordance with EC Regulations and the principles of sound financial management, has been established within the Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism. The Bulgarian counterpart of the Managing Authority is the National Authority and is represented by the Bulgarian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works.

The cooperation area includes 7 Romanian counties – Mehedinti, Dolj, Olt, Teleorman, Giurgiu, Calarasi and Constanta – and 9 Bulgarian districts: Vidin, Vratsa, Montana, Pleven, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse, Silistra, Dobrich and Razgrad.

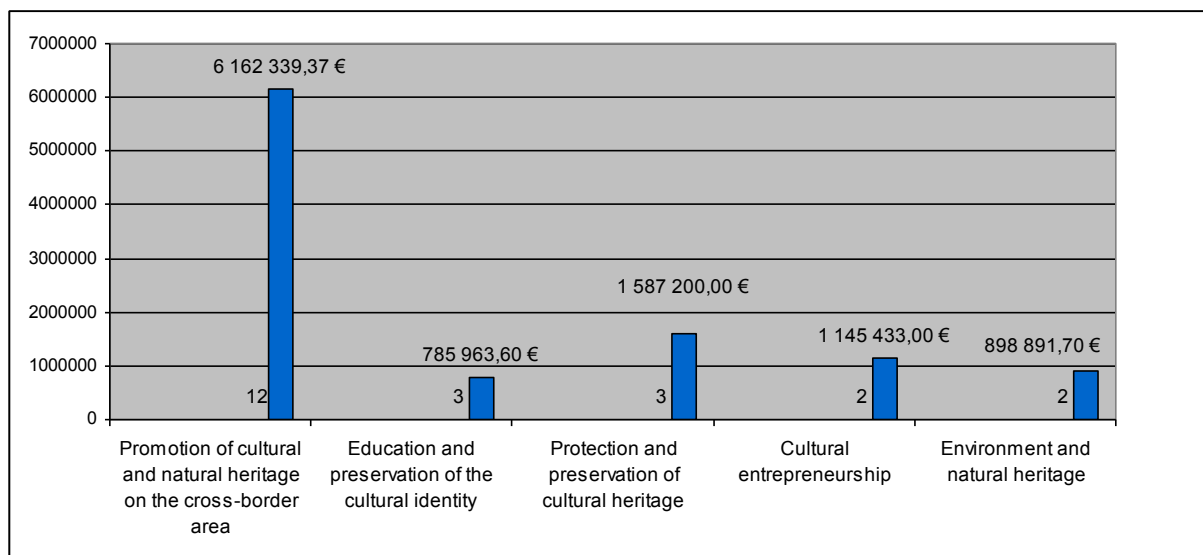
For culture, the most important opportunity of access to resources is *Priority Axis 3: Economic development and social cohesion* by joint identification and enhancement of the area's comparative advantages which aims to facilitate joint initiatives that contribute to economic development and enhancing social and cultural activities between people and communities.

The official data published on the website of the program (www.cbcrromaniabulgaria.eu) show that 42 projects having a cultural dimension have been funded since its launch, out of which 19 do not have financial allocation available. For the rest of 23 projects that have received funding, 16 were initiated by Bulgarian organizations while only 7 of them had a Romanian entity as leader of the project. The budget allocated for these projects is 10.579.827,67 EUR.

They can be classified as follows:

- 1. Promotion of cultural and natural heritage on the cross-border area**
TOTAL: 12 projects with a total budget of 6.162.339,37 EUR
- 2. Education and preservation of the cultural identity**
TOTAL: 3 projects with a total budget of 785.963,6
- 3. Protection and preservation of cultural heritage**
TOTAL: 3 projects with a total budget of 1.587.200 EUR
- 4. Cultural entrepreneurship**
TOTAL: 2 projects with total budget of 1145433 EUR
- 5. Environment and natural heritage**
TOTAL: 2 projects with a total budget of 898891,7 EUR

Table 13: Cultural projects awarded under the Bulgaria-Romania Cross-border Co-operation Program 2007-2013³⁴



3. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- The high potential of the national cultural and natural heritage of which some properties are enlisted on the UNESCO World Heritage List (Danube Delta, Churches of Moldavia, Monastery of Horezu, Villages with Fortified Churches in Transylvania, Dacian Fortresses of the Orastie Mountains, Historic Center of Sighisoara and Wooden Churches of Maramures);
- The high potential of the tourist related sites and regions, their gradual inclusion in the touristic international networks in the last 10 years;
- The organic development of some rural areas in Northern Transylvania, the interest shown by different British entities to restore and re-grow important regional assets;
- High mobility of Romanian creative talent and participation on the international scale at events related to crafts, cinema, visual arts, architecture, urban development;

³⁴ Source: Compiled from information available at www.cbcrromaniabulgaria.eu.

- High potential of cultural and creative industries that are matching with a very important growth of the IT & Communication sector in Romania in the last decade;
- Emergent cultural and creative industries along with a dynamic and fast growing pool of independent trans-disciplinary artists of international renown, allowing to channel communication about the resources existing in Romania regionally;
- The important development of local and regional cultural events (related to gastronomy, arts, entertainment, technology, European languages, global cultures, etc.) in the last 8-10 years;
- The capacity and the adaptability of the cultural operators (broadly speaking) to raise funds through the Structural funds by adjusting their projects to the scope and objectives of these programs. This compensates the lack of a master plan at the regional and national level regarding the cultural dimension of the use of the Structural Funds;
- The high potential and growing reputation of some important universities and academic centers placed in the main regions of Romania (Cluj, Iasi, Timisoara);
- The emergence of cultural power poles: Cluj, Timisoara, Iasi, Sibiu, Danube-Delta, etc. with a very important sustainable development aspect and great openness to perform culturally in a competitive way;
- The intercultural diversity in the regions with strong cultural heritage, which acts as a driving force for cultural projects and regional development;
- The progressive integration of the Romanian cultural products onto international markets;
- The constant development of new tools for transnational and international cultural cooperation between Romania and other countries and for new common initiatives;
- The initiation in 2006 of the Centre of Research and Consultancy on Culture and its constant contribution to the elaboration, supervision and evaluation of public policies in the cultural sector. Most of the studies conducted by the Centre of Research and Consultancy on Culture are dedicated to the cultural consumption, but the Centre also offers a unique tool for cultural policy mapping based on research and applied statistics.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses addressed in the Structural funds investment in the cultural and creative sector in Romania can be analyzed from two points of view: on one hand the administrative capacity of absorption related to the architecture of public bodies responsible with the implementation of the Structural funds, and on the other hand the national perspectives, strategies and the overall understanding of the cultural sector.

Taking these two dimensions into consideration, we will use them as a common ground of analysis of the weaknesses that the Structural funds investments in culture confront with.

Administrative capacity of implementation

Recent studies and reports place Romania among the European countries registering one of the lowest rates of absorption of the Structural funds³⁵. This situation resides into several weaknesses encountered at the administrative level:³⁶

- Limited capacity of local and central public authorities to prioritize attractive projects in terms of their impact and quality;
- Poor quality of technical assistance and poor capacity of the beneficiaries to efficiently manage technical assistance projects;
- Significant difficulties (in terms of financial effort in time) in preparing the application files combined with high rates of project rejections, public contestations and insufficient knowledge and expertise in public procurement processes which lead to huge delays in the grant awarding process;
- Limited expertise of central and local administration in implementing the projects (lack of sufficient and experienced specialized personnel, lack of strategic financial planning doubled by poor budgetary administration);
- Lack of co-financing resources and incapacity of beneficiaries for raising proper co-funding.

Lack of consistence and substantial line of cultural policy at the national and local level (endemic problem)

- Lack of capacity to develop a coherent strategy where culture is seen as an important component of the use of the Structural funds combined with the lack of a balanced global use of these funds;
- National cultural strategy (as per the official position and understanding of the main public body – the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage) is assimilating and is concerning particularly with the cultural heritage without taking into consideration the dynamics and the ascending trend of the performance arts and creative industries;
- Weak capacity to exploit fully the existing cultural infrastructure in a creative and entrepreneurial way;
- Poor capacity of cultural organizations to access EU funding due to the lack of specialized personnel and know how;

³⁵ Zaman and Cristea (2011)

³⁶ The administrative weaknesses are cited from Zaman and Cristea (2011).

- Decrease of the general cultural education in all education curricula as well as the absence of proper cultural administration and cultural management education;
- Weak/absence of networking among stakeholders (policymakers, cultural operators, entrepreneurs, cultural institutions etc.);
- Low level of expertise and specialized personnel in managing the implementation of the Structural Funds in the cultural organizations in comparison to other countries;
- Economic, social and cultural disparities between the development regions leading to the incapacity of a proper redistribution of funds.

Opportunities

- The increasing interest in identifying the cultural dimension of projects in other EU funding programs than the ones dedicated to culture (e.g. the present commissioned study);
- The National Reform Programme of the Government of Romania (2011- 2013) focusing on the cultural and creative industries and digitization³⁷;
- The European Union's growth strategy Europe 2020 for the coming decade where culture is assimilated to innovation;
- The objectives of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 with focus on intellectual property and cultural tourism;
- Increased interest and active participation of young people in the cultural life;
- The strategic geographical position of Romania which borders with both EU and non-EU member states.

Threats

- The recent development of the political situation in Romania;
- The economic and financial crisis which affected many beneficiaries that led to giving up the implementation of ongoing projects;
- The dramatic cuts of several cultural institution's budgets (e.g. Romanian Cultural Institute) and the dismantling of the cultural channel within the public television;
- The slow pace of reform in the cultural state owned sector (also influencing a slow possibility of development of sustainable new cultural endeavours in areas

³⁷ Government of Romania (2011), *National Reform Programme* (2011-2013)

that request important material resources, e.g. museums, opera houses, concert halls etc.);

- The lack of solidarity and networking among independent cultural operators, entrepreneurs, etc.;
- The current fiscal system preserving a sense of inertia in terms of private investments in culture or the possibility to have incentives for cultural start-ups;
- The present reforms operated in the education, health and labour code systems render even more fragile the creative categories.

4. Priorities for Cultural Investment 2014-2020

In formulating suggestions for cultural investment priorities for the Structural Funds in Romania for the period 2014-2020, it is important to stress, using data from the *Assessment Study "The Operational Sectorial Program Culture"* realized by the Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture in 2011 (many times cited already as a source for the present study), some of its key conclusions:

First, 17% of cultural organizations questioned for the study applied for the Structural Funds and from them only 37% were accepted.

Second, the most important obstacles in accessing the Structural Funds for culture are the ones related to the lack of specialized personnel to complete the application and the capacity of organizations to co-finance the project.

Third, the most important measure to be taken at national level in order to facilitate the absorption of Structural Funds for culture is considered to be the increase of specialized technical training, rendering the necessary capability of operators to apply for funds and implement the projects as well as monitor and report about them correctly. This conclusion is in contradiction with the very observation present in the same study regarding the weak capacity of absorption of funds from the Operational Program dedicated to the development of the administrative capacities. On the one hand one observed that the capacity building is a key need, on the other hand, funds for developing this administrative capacity are weakly accessed.

This contradiction stresses the lack of a global strategy existing regarding the possibilities to use the Structural Funds for culture. Cultural operators should become more aware of the totality of the instruments that the Structural Funds put at their disposal.

Also, a series of measures are suggested in the study in order to increase the capacity to access the Structural Funds for the cultural domain in Romania. Most of these measures are supposed to be designed at the level of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. For example: the creation of a specific fund dedicated to the co-financing of cultural projects applying for the Structural Funds; the creation of a consultancy pool related to the technical aspects of writing the projects; the creation of platforms for expertise exchange through seminars, round-tables, etc.; the creation of a specific legal service related exclusively to the accessing of Structural Funds, etc.³⁸

These observations show the very slow pace in which efficient strategies are developing in regard to the absorption of the Structural Funds for culture in Romania and the need for tools to compensate the missing links between the existing the Structural Funds and the potential beneficiaries in the cultural area.

In formulating the priorities for cultural investment related to the Structural Funds, information was derived also from two studies realized in 2008 and 2009: “The economic contribution of creative industries”³⁹ and “The Economic Crisis` Effects on Cultural Operators”⁴⁰, and the priority investment axes as formulated by the *We are more* campaign guide for the negotiation of Structural Funds 2014-2020⁴¹.

It also has to be taken into account the fact that in Romania access to the Structural Funds is recent and there is still a reduced and uncoordinated practical expertise in the domain.

We estimate that the Priority investment axis for Romania should be (according to category of the Structural Funds and thematic objectives):

ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)

A. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation

- a. Product and service development in the cultural and creative sector with a focus on audiovisual, cinema and music (e.g. online dissemination tools for films, visual arts video works, music);
- b. Establishment and implementation of culture related clusters and networks (film festivals, theatre festivals, crafts festivals, emergent music festivals);
- c. Realization of a comprehensive regional mapping (quantitative and qualitative) allowing the cultural operators in different areas to acknowledge the potential of development in their area and the decision makers to draw a plan of investment

³⁸ Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture (2011), pp. 97-102

³⁹ *The economic contribution of creative industries* (2008)

⁴⁰ Centre for Research and Consultancy on Culture (2009)

⁴¹ Culture Action Europe (2012)

coherent with the real needs of each region. It is impressive to see how weak is at the level of the projects initiated by NGOs the cooperation with local and regional authorities or how indifferent local and regional authorities are to the cultural entities which successfully access the Structural Funds;

- d. Offering consultancy at regional level enabling entities to disseminate innovative thinking at local and regional level and produce expertise and knowledge transfer;
- e. Establish networks between universities, creative enterprises and commercial units allowing the channelling of the findings in research and innovation regionally.

B. Enhancing access to use and quality of ICT

- a. Better use of the IT component of existing providers in Romania to enhance access to cultural content and creative potential on the whole territory of Romania;
- b. Improving ICT services for specific target groups (especially those in rural areas);
- c. Modernization of e-services of cultural administration (e.g. electronic application system for funding).

C. Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs

- a. Establishing financial support systems for cultural and creative sector start-up companies;
- b. Build up networks for entrepreneurs in the cultural and creative sectors.

D. Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency

- a. Renovation of cultural buildings and infrastructure;
- b. Systemic promotion of events related to cultural tourism;
- c. New means of reusing historic buildings through social innovation
- d. Revitalization of rural initiatives and family driven initiatives related to regional crafts and linking them to the industrial and IT component of modern life;
- e. Revitalization of the traditional craft culture;
- f. Better use of existing events (film festivals, music festivals) placed in classical touristic regions for reciprocal interaction in favour of regional development;
- g. Better linkage between heritage restoration, understood as passive protection of traditional cultural values, and the dynamic use of it for touristic and cultural ends.

E. Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty

Support for regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities by encouraging cultural participation and facilitating for communities living in these environments to access cultural goods.

F. Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration

Technical assistance measures for cultural administrators involved in ERDF programs.

G. Promotion of a balanced territorial development

- a. Connection with European territorial centers and corridors;
- b. Development of urban planning in relation to the capacity of an area to present cultural events and boost of the intra-regional transportation channels allowing easy travel between diverse localities providing interesting cultural events;
- c. Offering equal opportunity for cultural services to small towns and big cities, with particular attention to restoring the capacities of small localities to create their own cultural hub (an important artistic drain goes constantly to the big Romanian cities);
- d. Development of flagship poles at rural level in a balanced distribution in all the 8 regions;
- e. Creating a strong master plan for each of the important cities of Romania, ensuring the presence of cultural services and institutions both at the center and at the periphery of these cities.

Most of these priorities are also to be considered for the **ESF (European Social Fund)** – points B, D, E, F, G.

Rural Development Fund (EAFRD)

Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty

- a. Investment in small cultural infrastructures in rural areas and villages;
- b. Studies on the potential of cultural heritage in the area;
- c. Creation of inter-sectorial projects having at the core cultural events in the rural area combined with bigger infrastructural projects of modernization.

It is an obvious fact that the degree of absorption of the Structural Funds in favour of culture is at its beginning in Romania and the very eclectic aspect of projects shows a lack of cohesive and strategic thinking despite the creative level of the operators. It is important to note, in conclusion, that the independent cultural entities developed and spread in the last two decades in Romania in an institutional environment where

independent organizations were always understaffed but very performing, very multifunctional and multitasking, while the level of the local and regional authority grew consistently in the last decades by number and not always performed well nor did it acquire sophisticated know how. .

This situation demonstrates an impasse still very present whenever recommendations are made for a better development of the absorption of EU funds, as the accent on administration is very strong.

As a Romanian cultural operator had formulated: “I will no longer apply for the Structural Funds, as I do not want to be again the slave of the state”.

This point of view is shared by many of the capable operators and there should be a way to recalibrate the imbalance between the resources needed to apply and the real creative capacity to implement of certain inventive and energetic operators in culture.

Annex – Update 3rd of September, 2012

On September 3rd, the director general of the Management Authority for the SOP Human Resources Development declared in the Romanian media that Romania had received a letter from the European Commission announcing the pre-suspension of payments. MA SOP Human Resources Development has to remedy the deficiencies found by the European Commission by October 6 in order to avoid the payment suspension. The main problems signaled by the European Commission concern the evaluation and selection process which shows systemic deficiencies and the fact that it does not ensure the selection of qualitative projects, and also the fact that the national eligibility rules are ambiguous. The Minister of Labor declared that until the present moment 29,27% of the SOP HRD payments have been made, but the degree of absorption from the EU is of only 7,73%. The State Secretary of the Ministry of European Affairs declared that the results registered by SOP HRD are the effects of what happened during 2010-2011. The representatives of the Ministry for European Affairs consider that it is almost impossible to remedy these deficiencies in the next months.

At the same time, another declaration from the Ministry of European Affairs states that the funds allocated to Romania during 2014-2020 will increase. The amount that Romania will receive from the EU is expected to be somewhere between 40 and 47 billion Euros.

Source: HotNews.ro

Articles available in Romanian at:

<http://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-eurofonduri-13150344-autoritatea-management-posdru-trebuie-remedieze-deficientele-pana-6-octombrie-pentru-evita-suspendarea-platilor.htm>

<http://economie.hotnews.ro/stiri-eurofonduri-13150398-ministerul-afacerilor-europene-romaniei-putea-aloca-catre-pana-47-miliarde-euro-pentru-perioada-financiara-2014-2020.htm>

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