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***Culture and the Structural Funds  
in Slovakia***

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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. For additional information see [www.eenc.eu](http://www.eenc.eu).

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## **1. Background and Methodology**

### **1.1. Background**

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

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

Initial documents for the design of the CSF of the Structural Funds 2014-2020<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 Slovakia, by providing a critical analysis of how 'the unused potential of cultural and creative sectors' can foster regional and local development in this country. The main focus of the research is on the Funds which have an impact at local, regional and national level (particularly the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund). Attention has also been paid to cross-border and interregional funding where this was deemed relevant for the purposes of territorial development, growth and jobs.

Slovakia has a population of over five million and an area of about 49,000 square kilometres (19,000 sq mi). It was a part of Czechoslovakia until 1993. Nowadays, it is a parliamentary democratic republic with a multi-party system.

The country is a growing economy with one of the fastest growth rates in the European Union and the OECD. The country joined the European Union in 2004 and the Euro zone on 1 January 2009. Slovakia together with Slovenia and Estonia are the only former Communist nations to be part of the European Union, Eurozone, Schengen Area and NATO simultaneously.

As for its administrative division, Slovakia is subdivided into 8 *regions*, each of which is named after its principal city. Regions have enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy since 2002.



#### Slovak regions

1. Bratislava Region
2. Trnava Region
3. Trenčín Region
4. Nitra Region
5. Žilina Region
6. Banská Bystrica Region
7. Prešov Region
8. Košice Region

Slovakia accessed the EU in 2004, so the current programme period of 2007 – 2013 is the first programme period during which the Slovak Republic is able to draw from the

EU funds in its entire duration. More than 20 years after the political changes in 1989 it is still a “country in transition”, rapidly developing in all areas of the society. Several major economic and social reforms undertaken over the last two decades have profoundly changed the face of the country in terms of economic systems, entrepreneurial models, demography, regional differences, cultural habits and mindsets. The transition towards the market economy created new opportunities and social relations; however, it also triggered increase of regional disparities, mainly connected to disproportional investments, uneven work market and not sufficient infrastructure.

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

## **1.2. Methodology**

This analysis is based mainly on desk research and several informal interviews with experts and practitioners in the field of EU funds. The author of this document has been directly involved in the process of the most important interim revision of Structural Funds programming in terms of culture – the creation of a new Priority Axis for Kosice – ECOC 2013 (by then in the position of Director and Artistic Director of Kosice 2013).

The paper offers only a brief overview of the existing documents, their evolvement during the implementation, a few examples from praxis and main conclusions and recommendations, to the extent possible considering the limited time available for this research. However, a deep and detailed analysis of this topic is highly necessary for successful programming in the next financial period, mainly the ex post evaluation of implemented projects, which is not possible at the time being, since most of them are still in the process of implementation.

## **2. Culture and the Structural Funds 2007-2013 in Slovakia**

### **2.1 National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF)<sup>2</sup>**

The baseline for the drawing of EU funds in the programme period 2007-2013 is the document known as the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). This strategic document is based on the new regulations of the European Union (EU) for the Structural Funds (SF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF).

Over the 2007 – 2013 programming period, the EU cohesion policy is implemented by streamlining the fund contributions to three main objectives: “Convergence”, “Regional Competitiveness and Employment” and “European Territorial Cooperation”.

#### **Convergence Objective**

Within the Convergence target, the financial contributions from ERDF and ESF funds are earmarked for the regions whose gross domestic product per capita during the last three years before the adoption of the new regulations was less than 75% of the average of the enlarged EU countries. In case of Slovakia it is the entire territory with the exception of the Bratislava region (covering 88.84 % of Slovakia’s population).

The criteria for financing from the Cohesion Fund (Member States whose gross national product during the last three years before the adoption of the regulations was below 90% of the average of the enlarged EU countries) have been met on the entire territory of the Slovak Republic.

#### **Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective**

Areas not falling within the target of Convergence (Bratislava region with its population of 601 132 (11.16 %)) are eligible to draw financial support within the target of Regional Competitiveness and Employment. This Objective aims at strengthening competitiveness and making Bratislava region more attractive through anticipating economic and social changes and supporting innovations, knowledge-based society, business-spirit, environmental protection and risk prevention, support for employees and companies adaptability and development of the labour markets oriented on the social inclusion.

The strategic target for the period of 2007 – 2013, which has been defined in the NSRF as the “considerable increase of competitiveness and productivity of the regions and of

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<sup>2</sup> [www.nsrr.sk](http://www.nsrr.sk)

the Slovak economy and employment by respecting sustainable development until 2013” is focused on growth of competitiveness of Slovakia and its regions as well as enhancing the quality of life of the citizens of the Slovak Republic.

### **European Territorial Cooperation**

This area of policy is not included in the NSRF. However, under the European Territorial Cooperation objective, Slovakia participates in 4 cross-border cooperation programmes during the 2007 – 2013 programming period: a Slovak – Czech cross-border cooperation programme, a Slovak – Austrian cross-border cooperation programme, a Slovak – Polish cross-border cooperation programme, a Slovak – Hungarian cross-border cooperation programme and a neighbourhood programme of Slovakia – Ukraine – Hungary – Romania. The programmes are financed by the ERDF. Under the supra-national cooperation strand (INTERREG IV B), Slovakia participates in two areas: Central Europe and South-Eastern Europe. Slovakia is involved in the implementation of inter-regional cooperation programme INTERREG IV C.

As for cross-border cooperation, the European territorial cooperation objective applies to NUTS 3 border regions; in the case of supra-national cooperation, supra-national areas are eligible for that objective; in the case of inter-regional cooperation, cooperation networks and information sharing, the entire Community is eligible.

The NSRF strategy defines three strategic priorities and their three targets that should be achieved through the project financing during the program period of 2007 – 2013:

**Table 1. Slovakia NSRF 2007-2013: Strategic priorities and targets**

Strategic priority	Target of the strategic priority
<b>1. Infrastructure and regional availability</b>	Increasing the infrastructure density in the regions and enhancing the effectiveness of the related public services
<b>2. Knowledge-based economy</b>	Development of the sustainable economic growth resources and increase of competitiveness in industry and services
<b>3. Human resources</b>	Enhancing employment, increasing the labour force quality for the needs of the knowledge-based economy and enhancing the social inclusion of risk groups

At the same time, the NSRF strategy also defines the horizontal priorities, which affect the NSRF targets in four areas. Horizontal priorities are defined for those areas in which targets affect all Operational Programmes and require a coordinated approach across several specific priorities or projects.

**Table 2: Horizontal priorities of Slovak NSRF**

Horizontal priority	Horizontal priority target	Application of horizontal policy
<b>A. Marginalised communities (MRC)</b> Roma	Increasing employment and educational level of MRC population and improving their standard of living	Global approach (integration of projects from more OP)
<b>B. Equal opportunities</b>	Providing equal opportunities for everybody and preventing all forms of discrimination	Principle applied for each project
<b>C. Sustainable development</b>	Providing environmental, economic and social sustainability of economic growth	Principle at the level of the NSRF strategic goal
<b>D. Information Society</b>	Development of an inclusive Information Society	Integrated approach (interoperability of public administration information systems and introducing e-services in Operational Programmes)

The strategy, the priorities and the objectives of the NSRF will be implemented through **11 Operational Programmes** covered by the individual EU cohesion policy objectives:

- **six operational programmes for the Convergence objective**, of which:
  - four operational programmes co-financed by the ERDF cover the entire Slovakia except for the Bratislava region (Regional Operational Programme, OP Informatisation of Society, OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth and OP Health);
  - two operational programmes co-financed by the ERDF and the CF cover the entire Slovakia including the Bratislava region (OP Transport and OP Environment);
- **three operational programmes common for both objectives – the Convergence and the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective**, i.e. covering the entire Slovakia including the Bratislava region – one of them is co-financed by the ERDF (OP Research and Development) and two by the ESF (OP Employment and Social Inclusion and OP Education);
- **Operational Programme Technical Assistance** for the Convergence objective covering *horizontal activities*, which fall under the responsibility of the Central Coordinating Authority for NSRF and which are common to all OPs or a group of OPs, i.e. they do not apply to the implementation of a single OP only (preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation and information activities and reinforcing of administrative capacities); activities of financial management under the responsibility of the Certifying Authority and activities related to the verification of management and control systems, issuing of closure declarations

and performance of sample checks under the responsibility of the Audit Authority. Complementary to that, a financial allocation will be made under each Operational Programme for technical assistance relating to *specific activities* of the respective managing authority and intermediate bodies under the managing authority;

- **Operational Programme Bratislava Region** under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective co-financed by the ERDF.

**Table 3: Funding sources for Operational Programmes in Slovakia**

	Operational Programme	Fund
1.	Regional operational programme	ERDF
2.	Environment	ERDF, CF
3.	Transport	ERDF, CF
4.	Informatisation of society	ERDF
5.	Research and development	ERDF
6.	Competitiveness and economic growth	ERDF
7.	Education	ESF
8.	Employment and social inclusion	ESF
9.	Health	ERDF
10.	Technical assistance	ERDF
11.	Bratislava region	ERDF

The binding allocations of financial means for individual EU cohesion policy targets for the Slovak Republic are as follows:

**Table 4: Financial allocations for individual EU cohesion policy targets in Slovakia**

EU Cohesion Policy objectives	EU Funds	Financial allocation for the Slovak Republic for the particular goal of the Cohesion Policy of the EU in EUR
Convergence	SF + CF	10 911 601 421
	SF	7 012 862 858
	CF	3 898 738 563
Regional Competitiveness and Employment	SF	449 018 529 (122 603 156 + transfer from the target Convergence to the research and development 326 415 373)

European Territorial Cooperation	SF	227 284 545
<b>Total</b>	<b>SF + CF</b>	<b>11 587 904 495</b>

The following table defines the allocation of financial means for the period of 2007 – 2013 to individual Operational Programmes:

**Table 5: Financial allocations for individual Operational Programmes in Slovakia**

Financial allocations 2007 – 2013 to Operational Programs (SF and CF) in EUR in current prices			
NSRF		EU (EUR)	Contribution
Operational Programme	Fund		
Regional OP	ERDF	1 445 000 000	
OP Environment	ERDF+CF	1 800 000 000	
	ERDF	230 756 935	
	CF	1 569 243 065	
OP Transportation	ERDF+CF	3 206 904 595	
	ERDF	877 409 097	
	CF	2 329 495 498	
OP Informatisation of Society	ERDF	993 095 405	
OP Research and Development (including transfer to research and development)	ERDF	1 209 415 373	
OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth	ERDF	772 000 000	
OP Health	ERDF	250 000 000	

## 2.2. Culture in the NSRF

The determining fact at the background of the analytical part of NSRF is the structured fragmentation and polarisation of Slovak society and territory:

*“Currently, the Slovak society is relatively fragmented which has an impact on its territory, settlements and socio-economic situation. Polarisation is apparent in its horizontal socio-spatial differentiation and in its vertical socio-economic polarisation. The complexity of the issue lies in the fact that the two problematic dimensions usually meet in the same regions and territories, complicating the development opportunities of those territories and necessitating a systemic and comprehensive approach. There is a number of areas in Slovakia which are typical by their own specific difficulties. Such areas include, for example, structural types with insufficiently diversified and outdated economic structure combined with underdeveloped technical infrastructure and a high share of problematic population, areas affected by the conversion of armament industry and a loss of internal markets, bordering regions and regions orientated primarily on agriculture, regions affected by the decline of mining and construction industry, etc. Other types of problematic areas, based on the level of poverty, socio-demographic problems, socio-spatial problems etc. could be identified as well.”<sup>3</sup>*

Based on this fact, the main focus of the entire NSRF is the building and modernisation of various types of public infrastructure, which are seen (together with knowledge economy and human resources) as the main priorities for development and funding. Infrastructure (mainly its physical part) is seen as the main factor for attractiveness of regions and a tool of convergence.

### 2.2.1 Cultural infrastructure

Following the general analysis, different types of public infrastructure are analysed. The part dedicated to cultural infrastructure is **focused solely on public institutions, which collect, protect or provide access to documents and collections** (galleries, museums, libraries) and cultural heritage buildings. Culture is therefore understood and analysed only in connection to the preservation of cultural heritage. The analysis defines investments into cultural heritage as important for the performance and competitiveness of regions and calls attention to the poor state of monuments in Slovakia (only 6% reconstructed, 25% damaged or in desolate condition).

The cultural and historical heritage is also understood as a potential for tourism development, although the analysis states that at the moment it is not explored enough

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<sup>3</sup> NSRF (2007-2013) of Slovakia, unofficial English translation

and used to a limited extent only due to the lack of comprehensive and integrated policies.

The implementation part of NSRF states under the strategic priority 'Infrastructure and Regional Accessibility' a specific priority '1.1 Regional Infrastructure', focused on increasing the availability and quality of civil infrastructure and facilities in the region. Support is provided to the completion and modernization of infrastructure in the area of education, social services, culture, non-commercial rescue services and other civil infrastructure in towns and municipalities. The aim is also to stimulate the sources of regional growth and to increase attractiveness and competitiveness of regions. Specific attention is paid to the renewal of tourism infrastructure, with the aim of developing comprehensive tourism service packages and discovery tourism, which is connected also to cultural heritage.

## **2.2.2 Informatisation and Innovation**

The important role of national heritage and collecting institutions, as administrators of cultural, scientific and intellectual heritage, is defined in the area of informatisation of society. These institutions are seen as potential sources of digital content, but they need better-quality technical infrastructure for digitalisation and archiving of digital content.

The strategic priority 'Knowledge Economy' includes a specific priority for the 'Informatisation of society', which includes support of digital content creation in repository and national heritage institutions and providing access to it via broadband network connection.

In terms of innovation, Slovakia belongs to the weakest EU countries, therefore needs significant investments into R&D and high-tech sector. The need for innovation is here defined mainly in connection with attracting transnational corporations and has no reference to culture and creative industries, which mirrors also in the implementation part of the NSRF (neither the specific priority 'Research and Development' nor that on the 'Support for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Services through Innovation' do mention culture and the creative industries).

## **2.2.3. Culture in SWOT of NSRF**

The SWOT analysis sees the strengths of the cultural sector in Slovakia mainly in the existence of an extensive network of monuments and buildings and high cultural/historical and development potential of towns and communities. It also highlights the natural and cultural potential for the development of tourism, and sees as

an asset the wide network of repository institutions with accessible, extensive and valuable sources for good-quality digital content and e-services.

The weak part of the cultural infrastructure is mainly its bad technical condition (buildings and technical equipment).

Opportunities are identified in the area of commercial use of important monuments, modern programmes for tourism involving cultural heritage and creation of good quality available public digital cultural content.

These processes can be threatened by degradation and removal of existing historical and cultural monuments and the loss of cultural value in the territory. The same applies to digital content, which is endangered by bad technical condition of repository heritage institutions.

#### **2.2.4. Conclusions - Culture in the NSRF**

- The NSRF of Slovakia (2007-2013) defines culture and the cultural sector in the framework of physical infrastructure and digital content.
- Culture is understood almost exclusively as cultural heritage – monuments, buildings and digitalised archive content.
- The contribution of culture to economic and social development is seen mainly in the field of tourism (attractors).
- The document takes into consideration only the public cultural sector (institutions and activities managed by state, regions or municipalities), there is no reference to any other cultural activity.
- The cultural and creative industries and their specificities are unknown to this document even in the area of innovation or SME support.

#### **2.3. Culture in the Operational Programmes in Slovakia**

According to the indicative breakdown of the distribution of funds into categories of assistance in the respective Operational Programme, an allocation of resources for cultural purposes (code categories 58-60) was included in two OPs – the Regional Operational Program (ROP) and the OP Competitiveness and Economic Growth (OP C&EG). However, the OP Informatisation of Society (OPIS) has a special priority axis dedicated to the development and renewal of the national infrastructure of repository institutions, which is listed under category *11 - Information and communication technologies*. It is important to underline, that the category *60 - Other assistance for cultural services* is not present in structural financing of Slovakia at all, as opposed to

other Member States. This attitude has not changed even in the context of the revisions of some OPs during the implementation period, as described below.

All Operational Programmes in Slovakia are planned and managed centrally with the involvement of regional and local authorities in their implementation.

### **2.3.1 Regional Operational Programme (ROP)<sup>4</sup>**

Using of EU funds through the ROP is aimed at the regional infrastructure, which is seen as one of the most significant determinants of the population's quality of life.

#### **2.3.1.1 Analysis**

The initial ROP document, produced before the implementation period 2007-2013 analyses the cultural infrastructure under the chapter "Infrastructure of repository and heritage fund institutions at the local and regional levels and valorisation of the monument stock in the area", which declares that the repository and heritage fund institutions, and immovable cultural monuments serve a crucial role in strengthening of the cultural potential of the individual regions, but also of the whole country.

It is concerned with three different aspects of cultural infrastructure:

- **Repository and heritage fund institutions**

The repository and heritage fund institutions' (e.g. galleries, libraries and museums) are entities ensuring preservation of collection items, historical, library or archive documents. These items are stored often under inadequate conditions, without sufficient protection, this being one of the reasons why it is not possible to exhibit or make many of them accessible to the public. Under the conditions existing in the Slovak Republic (SR), the repository and heritage fund institutions operate under the jurisdiction of the local and regional self-governments and the state. Only institutions with national importance (e.g. National Library, National Museum, or the facilities with specialised orientation, etc.) are in the direct jurisdiction of state (Ministry of Culture), support for which over the programming period 2007-2013 is channelled through the Operational Programme Informatisation of Society, mainly in relation to their digitalisation and ICT.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.ropka.sk](http://www.ropka.sk)

- **Local cultural infrastructure facilities**

The analysis is solely focused on facilities of the local cultural infrastructure, established and directly funded by state, regional governments or municipalities (e.g., culture houses, community centres, etc.). These facilities carry out, beside their roles in the sphere of culture, also several functions in leisure time and education.

The analysis is based on the premise that those entities conducting activities in the field of culture do not participate directly in reinforcing the economic growth of individual regions, but it still finds them important, mainly in the field of preservation of cultural heritage of their regions, their inclusion in the upbringing and educational process which contributes to increasing the cultural awareness of citizens, and their boosting of competitiveness of the territory through increasing its attractiveness for citizens and visitors.

The transformation process in previous years affected also the institutions in the field of culture. Their number is lower compared to other facilities of civil amenity; however, lack of capital investment also affected this area. As in case of civil infrastructure facilities, also in the field of culture the structural-technical conditions of individual facilities have significant problems. Many of the existing facilities must ensure technical conditions to preserve the collections of books, documents and other items. Concurrently, many structural buildings utilized by the repository and heritage fund institutions are included in the listed immovable cultural heritage monuments.

- **Immovable cultural monuments**

The Central Register of the Heritage Stock maintained by the Ministry of Culture (MC) of the SR registers in total, 11,611 immovable cultural monuments in the SR territory. From this number, mainly such buildings as palaces, castles, mansions, manor houses, technical monument facilities, historical parks, burgher houses are socially and culturally valuable. Drawing on available data about such monuments, it can be stated that 500 cultural monuments of the given type are in private hands, and 707 are owned by public sector bodies. The highest share of selected historic monuments is in the Regions of Prešov (20.28%), Banská Bystrica (15.38%) and Košice (15.16%). From the analysis on the structural-technical conditions of the cultural heritage stock it can be affirmed that 30% of buildings are currently in disturbed, deteriorated and desolated state, or in conditions without finished renovation.

At present, the higher share of selected monuments is owned by the public sector, which has difficulties in obtaining sufficient capital investment to carry out structural renovation of buildings'

Among the most sought historic landmarks are also those monuments which could meet criteria of the World Cultural Heritage, which are subject to an initial, national selection for nomination on the basis of the UNESCO Convention. Culture is one of factors supporting growth of tourism in the regions, in particular in the localities with a more reduced potential for the utilization of natural heritage. The priorities identified from the territorial aspects include the unused or inappropriately utilised monuments, which could be exploited in the context of existing cultural-learning routes. The analysis finds it necessary to reconstruct the selected monuments and to provide access to the items of high cultural, historical and social value for the development of cultural-learning tourism, as well as for support of the upbringing and educational process.

Based on the previous approach and arguments the **main findings** of the analysis in the field of repository and heritage fund institutions infrastructure at the local and regional levels identified the unsatisfactory conditions for preserving and accessing cultural values and library collections.

- The buildings used by the repository and heritage fund institutions at the local and regional levels are in unsatisfactory structural-technical conditions, with unsatisfactory conditions for visitors with disabilities. Moreover, they are characterised by a high index of energy consumption.
- The region of Eastern Slovakia has the most numerous amounts of unused or inappropriately used cultural monuments which could be used in the future for purposes related to the preservation and presentation of cultural heritage.
- The key presumption for successful revitalisation of monuments is the aspect of long-term sustainability. Culture is one of the factors supporting growth of tourism in the region, mainly in the localities with a lower representation of natural curiosities.
- The largest share of immovable cultural monuments identified is in the hands of the public sector. At present, about 30% of monuments are in disrupted, deteriorated or desolated conditions, or have undergone unfinished renovation.

### **2.3.1.2 Implementation - Priority Axis 3**

Based on the previous analysis, the specific goals of the ROP, as established in the Priority Axes, include **3 - Strengthening of the cultural potential of the regions and tourism development**. The area of assistance of this priority axis (PA 3) is limited to selected important repository and heritage fund institutions at the local and regional

levels, immovable cultural monuments with the aim to foster cultural learning and urban tourism, and tourism in general.

The following group activities are eligible in PA 3:

- Reconstruction, extension and modernisation of repository and heritage fund institutions at the local and regional levels (e.g. libraries, museums, galleries, etc.),
- Revitalization of unused or inadequately used immovable cultural monuments within the territory owned by the public sector, the uses of which could allow for extending activities of repository and heritage funds institutions, and their utilization in cultural-cognitive tourism. It is possible to utilize revitalized monuments for cultural-social and community purposes in reasonable and extraordinary cases.
- Procurement of equipment of repository and heritage funds institutions at local and regional level, and cultural-social and community facilities in connection with their reconstruction, extension and modernisation, including ICT equipment.
- Support for non-commercial public infrastructure (public spaces, parking, orientation signs, walkways, rest areas, public toilets, etc.) adjacent to the most important and complex tourist resorts with all year-round utilization in territories of international and national importance,
- Support for the presentation of tourism at regional and local level, creation and support for existing tourist-information offices, creation of partnerships at the level of self-government and private sector and regional clusters.
- Support for comprehensive offer of products of tourism, aimed at the efficient utilisation of natural and cultural potential through the design of cultural-cognitive tourist routes in territories of international and national importance

The inevitable pre-condition for guaranteeing support of the unused or inadequately used cultural monuments in the territory is to demonstrate compliance with existing strategies at the regional and local levels. The monuments have to meet the applicable legislation conditions for putting the concrete type of facility into operation, proving the long-term financial sustainability of the facility, and undertaking commitments to maintain the long-term purposeful use of the intervention. The ROP interventions do not aim at the preservation of the cultural monuments alone, without any subsequent utilization. The aim of the ROP is to support the renovation and protection of immovable cultural monument stock through the sustainable and active use in favour of the respective region.

**Eligible beneficiaries** within the frame of the Priority Axis 3 of the ROP are governmental bodies, as legal founders of the repository and heritage fund institutions,

owners of non-used or inadequately used immovable cultural monuments and tourism stakeholders in the public sector.

### 2.3.1.3 Financial allocations

Financial allocations in the ROP, based on the categories of assistance identified by the EU, are as follows:

**Table 5: Indicative distribution of the contribution from the ERDF to the category of assistance *Priority theme* in EUR in current prices**

Code of category	Indicative sum of financial resources
23 - Regional/local roads	252 000 000
24 - Bike paths	3 000 000
54 - Other measures for maintenance of the environment and preventing from risks	80 000 000
56 - Protection and development of natural heritage	25 000 000
57 - Other assistance for improving services of tourism	29 400 000
<b>58 - Protection and maintenance of cultural heritage</b>	<b>50 000 000</b>
<b>59 - Development of cultural infrastructure</b>	<b>85 000 000</b>
61 - Integrated projects of regeneration of the urban and rural areas	222 000 000
75 - Educational infrastructure	318 500 000
77 - Infrastructure in the field of care of children	60 000 000
78 - Infrastructure of housing	70 000 000
79 - Other social infrastructure	199 500 000
81 - Mechanisms for improvement of designing policy and programmes, monitoring and evaluation at the national, regional and local levels, building up capacities in submitting strategies and programmes	5 371 500
85 - Preparing, implementing, monitoring and control	21 000 000
86 - Evaluation and studies; information and communication	24 228 500
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 445 000 000</b>

**Table 6: Indicative distribution of the contribution from the ERDF of the category of assistance *Priority theme* according to priority axes in EUR in current prices**

Code of category	Indicative amount of financial resources	Indicative amount of financial resources in break down into thematic fields of support within the priority axes (PA)	
23 - Regional/local roads	252 000 000	100 000 000	PA 4 Regeneration of settlements (local communications)
		152 000 000	PA 5 Regional communications ensuring transport serviceability of the regions
24 - Bike paths	3 000 000	1 000 000	PA 3 Strengthening of cultural potential of the regions and development of tourism (public
		1 000 000	PA 4 Regeneration of settlements (component of the tangible infrastructure of settlements)

		1 000 000	PA 5 Regional communications ensuring transport serviceability of the regions (complement.
54 - Other measures for preservation of the environment and prevention of risks	80 000 000	80 000 000	PA 4 Regeneration of settlements (infrastructure of non-commercial rescue services)
56 - Protection and development of natural heritage	25 000 000	25 000 000	PA 3 Strengthening of cultural potential of the regions and development of tourism (support of
57 - Other assistance for improvement of tourism services	29 400 000	29 400 000	PA 3 Strengthening of cultural potential of the regions and development of tourism (support of
58 - Protection and preservation of cultural heritage	50 000 000	50 000 000	PA 3 Strength. of cultural potential of regions and development of tourism (non-used tangible
59 - Development of cultural infrastructure	85 000 000	85 000 000	PA 3 Strength. of cultural potential of regions and development of tourism (infrastr. of mem. and
61 - Integrated projects of regeneration of urban and rural areas	222 000 000	222 000 000	PA 4 Reg. of settlem. - compon. of tang. infr. of settlements a) separate demand-oriented projects b) integrated strategies of development of
75 - Educational infrastructure	318 500 000	318 500 000	PA 1 Infrastructure of education (elementary and secondary schools)
77 - Infrastructure in the field of care of children		30 000 000	PA 1 Infrastructure of education (kindergartens)
	60 000 000	30 000 000	PA 2 Infrastructure of soc. services, soc.-leg. protection a soc. guardianship (soc.
78 - Infrastructure of housing	70 000 000	70 000 000	PA 4 Regeneration of settlements (infrastructure of housing within integrated strategies of
79 - Other social infrastructure	199 500 000	199 500 000	PA 2 Infrastructure of social services, social-legal protection a social guardianship
81 - Mechanisms of improvement of drafting policy and programmes, monitoring and evaluation at the state,	5 371 500	5 371 500	PA 4 Regeneration of settlements (non-investment activities - preparation and updating of development documents at level of NUTS level
85 - Preparation, implementation and control	21 000 000	21 000 000	PA 6 Technical assistance
86 - Evaluation and studies, information and publicity	24 228 500	24 228 500	PA 6 Technical assistance
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 445 000 000</b>	<b>1 445 000 000</b>	

#### 2.3.1.4 Interim revisions of ROP - impact on the use of the funds for culture

During the implementation of the ROP several important events and facts have caused the need to revise the strategy, mainly by reallocating some funds into the most needed areas, adjusting the priority axes and their focuses, and creating one new axis. The most significant revision was approved by EC in 2011, with some small additional changes again in 2012.

As regards culture, two main changes have been introduced in the revised version:

- revision of financial allocations and priorities in PA 3 due to the low interest of potential beneficiaries;

- establishment of a new Priority Axis 7 – Kosice-European Capital of Culture 2013.

#### **2.3.1.4.1 – Revisions in Priority Axis 3**

In contrast with the assumptions made in the preparation of the ROP strategy in 2006-2007, the implementation of this Operational Programme showed a much lower interest of potential beneficiaries in this area than had been expected. The principal cause of this situation can be considered to be the global economic crisis, whose effects were fully manifested in the territory of Slovakia during the year 2009.

In the case of immovable cultural monuments the main obstacles seem to be the high demands for co-financing from the side of beneficiaries (extremely costly technologies and restoration processes, high risk of unforeseen expenses connected to restoration). Concerning the aforementioned facts it was recommended that within the frame of the ROP the support should be directed to supporting repository and heritage fund institutions and/or unused immovable cultural monuments, located on the most important and in the most visited areas, that have the greatest potential to contribute to strengthening tourism development (in particular to cultural-cognitive tourism and to urban tourism).

Based on this analysis, there was a reallocation of funds from PA 3 to other Priority Axes.

#### **2.3.1.4.2 – New Priority Axis 7 – Kosice-European Capital of Culture 2013**

In accordance with the Decision of the European Parliament and the Council No. 1622/2006/EC of October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture for the years from 2007 to 2019, the Ministry of Culture of the SR held a two-round competition for a Slovak town, which would hold this prestigious title. Slovakia, together with France, has been one of the first two countries to follow the full new procedure of selection and monitoring according to the new legal base of ECOs.

Based on the recommendations of the International Selection Committee the SR Government by its Resolution No. 309/2009 of April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2009 approved the nomination of the city of Košice as European Capital of Culture in the year 2013, as well as the design of a supporting system for funding events.

The city of Košice was designated as European Capital of Culture for the year 2013 by the Council Decision No. 8770/09 in Brussels on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009.

The project Kosice INTERFACE 2013 has been primarily focused on the creation of a modern cultural infrastructure, physical and virtual. The main infrastructural projects included the transformation of old industrial complexes and buildings into new type of cultural spaces, creative industries incubators and community centres.

In accordance with the SR Government Resolution No. 309/2009 the Ministry of Culture SR organized in the year 2009 a series of expert negotiations with the participation of representatives nominated by the concerned ministries, the city of Košice and the Košice Region self-government, with the purpose of proposing a procedure that would enable the city of Košice and other participating entities to finance key investment activities of the ECOC project through the Structural Funds through the ROP. The additional allocation of funds into the ROP has been possible due to the fact that the Slovak Republic has been assigned additional funds from EC in accordance with Articles 16 and 17 of the Inter-institutional Agreement among the European Parliament, European Council and European Commission on budgetary discipline and proper financial management. In this context, the SR Government adopted Resolution No. 546/2010 of August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010, approving the increased allocation to the ROP for the programming period 2007 - 2013 with additional financial resources for the SR from the EU funds, to implement partial investment sub-projects of the ECOC project through a new Priority Axis in the ROP, for the amount of € 60 million.

The Priority Axis 7 of the ROP is implemented through the following groups of activities:

- Restoration, reconstruction, expansion and modernization of buildings in connection with the ECOC project, in order to foster their use for cultural and social purposes, development of culture, arts and cultural-cognitive tourism, and related acquisition of equipment, including ICT equipment.
- Arrangement and revitalization of public spaces, elements of small architecture, public greenery, and reconstruction and completion of local transport infrastructure (local roads, footpaths, bicycle lanes, transport subsystems, etc.) in functional connection with the project ECOC - Košice 2013.

The revised version of the ROP states that the project of the city of Košice is based on an innovative approach to culture, its intention being to generate a creative environment, where there will be interaction between traditional art forms with innovative solutions and with the latest trends in this area. The project concerns the modernization and reconstruction of the existing cultural infrastructure, with an emphasis on the multi-functionality, completion of existing tourism infrastructure in the city and its surrounding areas, and valorisation of the territory facilities. The

implementation of the ECOC project, the nature of the scheduled events and activities, and the dissemination of the cultural-social infrastructure also outside the city centre and traditional spaces requires reconstruction, or redevelopment of existing infrastructures.

The Objective of the new Priority Axis 7 of the ROP is “Strengthening of the cultural potential and competitiveness of the region NUTS 2 – East, in connection with the implementation of the project European Capital of Culture - Košice 2013”.

The Priority Axis 7 is implemented through national projects consisting of partial investment projects directly related to the project ECOC - Košice 2013.

#### **2.3.1.5. Conclusions – Culture in the ROP**

- The entire philosophy of the ROP, with its dominant focus on physical infrastructure of Slovak regions, limits also the use of the funds in the field of culture. There are no funds allocated into code category *60. Other assistance for cultural services*, and the entire understanding of cultural infrastructure includes only cultural heritage memorials and various forms of archives. Such a **very traditional and limited understanding** of culture leaves no place for cultural activities, creative industries or physical and virtual infrastructure for contemporary culture.
- Since the analysis **takes into consideration only state-owned infrastructure** (on the level of state, region or municipality) it completely ignores other cultural services, activities and venues. The present state of cultural infrastructure in Slovakia is a result of a not efficiently reformed old Soviet system (cultural houses, state-owned cultural institutions with extensive permanent staff, big inefficient buildings, old-fashioned programming) which coexists with new types of cultural activities and venues, which exist mostly outside the publicly funded system. That is why the largest part of the cultural sector in Slovakia has not been able to take advantage of the funds allocated.
- Based on the above mentioned facts, the priorities and aims set for the Priority Axis 3 did **not correspond to the real needs of the cultural sector**, as shown by the fact that, in the mid-term revision, a large part of unused funds had to be reallocated to other Axes.
- The **case study of Kosice – ECOC 2013** has been very interesting and an important milestone for Slovak policy makers, when it comes to the use of SF for culture. It has shown the gaps in the basic philosophy of SF programming in

Slovakia in the field of culture, cultural infrastructure and their possible contribution to economy and development. Even if the newly-created Priority Axis 7 still lies within the limited boundaries of the broader ROP concept, it has brought to the discussion a very different understanding of culture and its infrastructure, issues of post-industrial regeneration through culture, the contribution of contemporary and live culture to development and well-being and other similar issues. The long and complicated process of negotiations together with changing political ambitions of the politicians in charge could lead to the significant delay in projects connected to Kosice 2013, as well as to many diversions from the original goals of the projects. It has, however, brought an entirely new concept of culture into SF programming, which can be followed up in the next programming period.

### **2.3.2. Operational Programme Competitiveness & Growth (OP CG)<sup>5</sup>**

The global target of this operational programme is to contribute to sustainable economic growth and employment. It is one of the main implementation tools to achieve the priorities of the National Reform Programme in the sector of innovation, and directly contributes to the accomplishment of priorities in the business environment sector.

#### **2.3.2.1 General strategy and its relevance to culture**

Based on fact that the recent fast economic development of Slovakia is based particularly on the advantage of relatively low labour costs, the main issue for the current medium-term period is seen by the analysis of OP CG in the development of the potential of economic growth, based on knowledge, high-quality and accessible infrastructure, and free, educated, and creative people. Innovation in industry and services is the means for the development of the potential concentrated in innovative economic activities, which use sustainable sources and create competitive goods and services on both domestic and foreign markets. Increasing the competitiveness of industry and services as well as the sustainable performance is conditional upon the level of their innovativeness.

The incentives should be focused on addressing the insufficient system of financing for innovative business activities, insufficient support for high-tech transfers, insufficient demand for innovation and for the introduction of high technologies in the business sector, cooperation between universities, research and development institutions on the one hand, and the business sector on the other hand. The analysis declares also a

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<sup>5</sup> [www.opkahr.sk](http://www.opkahr.sk)

need for comprehensive innovation strategies in Slovakia and a comprehensive functioning system that should involve institutions, programmes and tools creating conditions for the support to innovation.

The need for innovation, development of creative human resources and creative services is apparent through the entire document, although creative and cultural industries or creative economy are never mentioned as a specific sector worth addressing. Suggested strategies include support for the creation of business incubators, establishment of business innovation centres, development of clusters and revitalization of existing industrial areas.

Culture is directly included in the part of the programme dedicated to tourism, where cultural and urban tourism is seen as one of the potential areas for development. Rich cultural and historic potential is seen to lie mainly on the cultural monuments and their enhanced accessibility for the public and tourists. The main goal of the strategy for tourism is to provide comprehensive services for tourism that can be used and sold all year round, through new innovative services with greater added value. The principal focus of the strategy is the development of the cultural potential of the regions by better using their natural and cultural heritage (e.g. the area of sightseeing tours may be enriched by the introduction of sightseeing products of tourism such as the gothic path, UNESCO heritage sights, castles and manor houses, caves, wine roads, etc.). Significant attention should also be paid to supporting activities aimed at improving the technical condition of the cultural sights used in the development of tourism and at transforming such sights subsequently into establishments providing high-quality accommodation services.

#### **2.3.2.2 Culture in the implementation part of the programme**

OP CG has 4 Priority Axes:

- Priority Axis 1 “Innovation and Growth of Competitiveness”
- Priority Axis 2 “Energy Sector”
- Priority Axis 3 “Tourism”
- Priority Axis 4 “Technical Assistance”

The Priority Axis 3 “Tourism” includes measure ‘**3.1 Support of business activities in Tourism**’ with the aim to stimulate tourism competitiveness growth in the field of services provided, through supporting investment and non-investment activities in the private sector. Support goes mainly to building comprehensive tourism services used all year round (the use of mineral and geothermal springs for the development of summer and winter tourism with comprehensive services for the customer, creating

recreational centres with the possibility of cultural and educational tours connected with sales of local products such as glass, porcelain, embroidery, wine tasting with sale, etc.).

Among the expected results of this measure is renewed cultural heritage and natural potential and improved access to facilities and centres of tourism and culture. Eligible activities include construction connected to use of industrial heritage locations for tourism, or support to renovation of preservation areas, but also thematic cultural routes and refurbishment of cultural and historic structures and facilities with the objective of using them for tourism purposes; including also UNESCO locations registered, but also proposed for registration in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

This support is provided to private sector (entrepreneurs or associations of legal entities) in the form of a state-aid scheme support or financial engineering (guarantee schemes, schemes for starting entrepreneurs, etc.).

The total sum of funds earmarked in the code categories relevant for culture in OP CG is 82 000 460 EUR (categories 58+59).

### **2.3.2.3 Reality of approved projects**

The first set of calls related to the above mentioned measure 3.1 was published in the years 2008 and 2009 and raised huge interest from the side of applicants. The list of approved projects shows that the majority have been projects aimed at refurbishing existing accommodation spaces in touristic venues, with very little reference to culture or cultural heritage. Out of more than 60 projects supported under this strand, only 5 have been focused on the refurbishment of castles with cultural heritage value to improve their accommodation and tourist services capacities. Most of the other supported activities were merely developmental projects focused on building extension facilities (as rooms, wellness and sport centres, pools, ski resorts etc.) to existing hotels without any cultural added value.

As declared in the Revision of the ROP, the declared interest to achieve significant synergy and complementarity between both operational programmes promoting tourism was not realized in the first half of the programme period due to their different time schedules.

This serves as evidence that very little (if any) of the EU funds allocated to OP CG have been actually used for the cultural sector.

#### **2.3.2.4 Conclusions – Culture in OP Competitiveness and Growth**

- The analysis of the structure of the business sector in Slovakia recognises the need to re-structure the sector towards more innovative, creative businesses and services and the need to support and nurture the creative workforce. It, however, does not recognise the specific sector of the cultural and creative industries and the concept of creative economy. Recent developments promise a change in this attitude, since reference to the creative industries as an important factor for “higher national prosperity, sustainable growth and reinforced competitiveness both at the regional and national level” (together with science, research and innovation) has been included in the Slovak National Program of Reforms 2012.<sup>6</sup>
- Similar to the ROP, the OP Competitiveness and Growth considers the potential of culture only in relation to tourism. Even if there was an intention to support the commercial use of cultural heritage via Measure 3.1, the reality showed that the owners of monuments and protected sites cannot compete with other entrepreneurs mainly due to the more complicated processes and significantly higher financial costs of such projects. Therefore the real impact of this programme on the cultural sector was very limited.

#### **2.3.3 Operational Programme Informatisation of Society (OP IS)<sup>7</sup>**

Despite moderate progress in recent years, Slovakia is one of the least developed countries of the EU with regard to the level of informatisation of society. Slovakia lags behind the countries of the EU-15, as well as behind the majority of the EU’s new members.<sup>8</sup>

The level of informatisation in public administration in Slovakia is very low compared with both the highly-computerized EU members and the EU-15 average. This is shown especially by the limited offer of electronic government and public administration services. Slovakia is one of the last EU Member States without a system of electronic prescription. eLearning services are used by less than 4% employees, which is around three times less than the EU-15 average<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, as a matter of priority, the OP IS

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<sup>6</sup>[http://www.finance.gov.sk/Components/CategoryDocuments/s\\_LoadDocument.aspx?categoryId=8046&documentId=7359](http://www.finance.gov.sk/Components/CategoryDocuments/s_LoadDocument.aspx?categoryId=8046&documentId=7359)

<sup>7</sup> [www.opis.gov.sk](http://www.opis.gov.sk)

<sup>8</sup> Expressed by the composite ICT Opportunity index, published by the ITU, <http://www.itu.int/home/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> Source: Sibis, 2006, <http://www.sibis-eu.org/statistics/data/8-72.htm>

concentrates on the creation and development of information infrastructure and applications that will improve the efficiency of the functioning of public administration and develop eGovernment.

The global objective of the OP IS is to create an inclusive Information Society as a tool for development of a high-performance knowledge-based economy.

### **2.3.3.1 Culture in OP IS**

This is being applied also in the field of culture, focusing on repository institutions, which are seen as the most important source of quality digital content that can significantly increase the dynamics of the development of the whole knowledge sector and eGovernment. The availability and marketing of quality digital content in repository institutions (libraries, museums, galleries, archives and other specialised institutions) is very poor. It is therefore necessary to achieve a high degree of interconnection and accessibility of data and information (in either physical or digital form) and safeguard the long-term storage of data on a variety of carriers and support the broadest possible application of data in the field of research, development, innovation, local and regional development and strategic planning at national or regional levels.

In the context of repository institutions, knowledge means tangible, intangible, immovable and movable valuables administered by repository institutions, as well as collection items and information in the form of image, sound and written or printed documents, or otherwise recorded information which these institutions collect, store and process. The development of repository institutions and the tasks in the field of digitisation, storage and access to information require that the technical infrastructure (buildings, offices, technology) directly related to the processing and protection of information is of a high standard. However, the majority of repository institutions currently lack suitable conditions for the administration and protection of knowledge for which they have been created. They have very limited means and technology for the digitisation and archiving of digital content.

The digitisation of collections will enable repository institutions to provide access to information previously available only to a narrow group of professionals.

To implement this strategy, one of the four Priority Axes of OP IS is dedicated to the **Development and renewal of the national infrastructure of repository institutions (PA 2)**. The specific priority of this axis is the improvement of the system of acquisition, processing, protection and utilisation of knowledge and digital content, as well as modernisation and completion of the infrastructure of repository institutions at the national level.

The supported activities include:

- support for the management of the systems for content acquisition, protection and processing;
- digitisation of repository institutions (provision of the necessary hardware, software, networks and ICT technologies); purchase of information sources (databases, rights to the publication of information, etc.);
- documentation of immaterial cultural heritage renewal of the buildings, offices and facilities of repository institutions at the national level and the creation of specialised units directly related to the digitisation and the information and communication infrastructure of content acquisition, processing and protection; improvement of the technological equipment of laboratories and conservation and preparation organisations for special treatment
- informatisation of public libraries and multifunctional cultural and information centres;
- support of further processing, accessibility and utilisation of data and knowledge of repository institutions in practice, research and creation of innovative projects, as well as in education, training, planning and decision-making processes in schools and offices, as well as by the business sector and the public;
- preparation and reinstallation of permanent exhibitions of registered museums and galleries of national importance – innovation and presentation of content;
- support of increasing public awareness of cultural, scientific and intellectual heritage of Slovakia and support of training, educational, information and professional activities related to the implementation of the measure for the creation of the Slovak Digital Library and a network of specialised digitisation units of repository institutions;
- recording, collection and long-term archiving and protection of digital content, web-harvesting and web-archiving;
- systematic support of the physical digitisation of cultural, scientific and intellectual heritage, including the digitisation of audio-visual resources (film and audio);
- digital restoration of film materials, as well as of audio and audio-visual recordings;
- support for digital content management;
- digitisation and provision of access to the digital content by repository institutions.

This support is available for almost all types of public and private institutions in the form of direct financial support.

The total amount of funds earmarked for Priority Axis 2 is 192 402 304 EUR.

### **2.3.3.2 Reality of implementation**

The ambitious goals of this programme in the field of culture had to undergo several examinations during the implementation phase. The original goal to create the Slovak Digital Library, which was intended to be a roof platform for all the above mentioned activities in various fields of culture, was analysed in an extensive feasibility study in 2009 and it was proposed to split this into several national projects (with specified beneficiaries), which will cover the main areas of digitalisation of cultural content. The national institutions, which hold the majority of cultural content, have been identified as the main beneficiaries (see below), with the aim to create a comprehensive set of digital content, corresponding to the philosophy and structure of the European Digital Library. Several other revisions have been made to the structure of the programme, mainly due to the limited capacity of national repository institutions to meet the criteria of the Structural Funds. Another problematic issue was the fact that the Bratislava region is excluded from participation in this OP, but most of the potential beneficiaries and their operational facilities are in this region. This had to be addressed by increasing the ratio of state co-financing to the EU resources, so the projects in Bratislava can be funded. These were also some of the reasons for the rather significant delay in the actual implementation of projects, which persists until today.

The present set-up of the programme defines 10 national projects (and their beneficiaries):

- Digital Library and Digital Archive (Slovak National Library)
- Digital Gallery (Slovak National Gallery)
- Digital Museum (Museum of Slovak National Uprising)
- Digital Monument Fund (The Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic)
- Digital Audiovisual Fund (Slovak Film Institute)
- Central Registry (National Culture Centre)
- Central Data Archive (University Library Bratislava)
- Harmonisation of Information systems (National Culture Centre)
- Documentation and Information Centre of Roma Culture (State Science Library in Prešov)
- Digitisation of Cultural Heritage in Repository Institutions (open call)

These projects are in various stages of implementation now, some of them being funded also through other resources (e.g. EEA and Norway Grants). However, the process of detailed preparation and approval (national projects) and selection (open

call) is still not finished, so there is a danger that funds will not be fully used before the end of the eligible time period.

### **2.3.3.3 Conclusions – Culture in OP IS**

- Even if this programme does not declare the use of Structural Funds in “cultural” categories 58-60, in reality it brings the broadest framework and quite significant financial resources for substantial investment in the cultural sector. The focus on new technologies could bring a lot of innovation and development into the cultural sector and improve both the cultural infrastructure and cultural practices. Its implementation has involved some narrowing of the focus, again towards big, state-funded institutions, but in this case it is obvious, since those are the main owners of most of the cultural content suitable for digitalisation.
- The programme was initially designed before a significant feasibility study had been conducted, so the process of implementation was difficult and rather disappointing for most of the stakeholders. However, the present delay can still be overcome if the management of the processes increases in quality and speed.
- It is important to mention that this amount of funds available for digitisation has generated a lot of interest, activities and even lobbying of private IT companies, which provide such services. On the one hand this might have delayed some steps, on the other it can serve as an impetus for the creation of new types of jobs and skills even within the cultural sector.

### **2.3.4 European Social Fund<sup>10</sup>**

The resources from ESF are used in two Operational Programmes in Slovak Republic – OP Education and OP Employment and Social Inclusion.

The priority for the OP Education is enhancing the capacities at all levels of the educational system, so that they respond to the demands of a knowledge-based society. Beneficiaries are mainly the schools, universities and educational institutions, with the main aim to facilitate reform in contents, methodology and access to education in Slovakia. A lot of funds are invested into HR development and life-long learning.

The official documents emphasise the need to pay more attention to the development of multicultural education and intercultural competencies. The funds are also accessible to all levels of artistic educational institutions.

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<sup>10</sup> [www.esf.gov.sk](http://www.esf.gov.sk), [www.minedu.sk](http://www.minedu.sk)

The OP Employment and Social Inclusion (OP ESI) is focused on creating better conditions for employment, facilitating social inclusion, and building of capacities and enhancing quality of public services.

To increase employment, funds can be used by public administration bodies or NGOs offering public services for the education of their employees, development of new skills and competences, creation of training centres for innovative entrepreneurship and knowledge transfer and support of corporate social responsibility programmes in companies.

To facilitate social inclusion, among the activities are also activities focused on the prevention and elimination of violence and the prevention of socio-pathologic phenomena. The main area of activities in this strand is the community work in various communities.

The development of capacities of bodies offering public services can be funded via projects of HR development, trainings, workshops, courses etc.

Generally, there is no specific reference for culture in the programming documents for the OP ESI. The area of social inclusion is almost completely covered by organisations offering community and grass-roots work and it is very hard to track if any cultural activities are involved. The strand dedicated to the development of capacities is accessible also to cultural institutions of a certain scale (as per their ability to raise co-financing and their administrative capacity). The reality of implementation has shown that there were few cultural institutions which were successful in getting funding in this strand, which was mainly used for the training and purchase of equipment (computers, presentation technologies etc.).

#### **2.3.4.1 Conclusions – ESF**

- The ESF has a reputation as the most bureaucratic grant source and an “administration nightmare” in Slovakia. The nature of the activities supported (soft projects, hard to make visible) has caused very strict, often absurd rules in the operational manuals drafted by the national steering bodies. Very often the complicated administration of grants would take up all the limited capacities of small and medium-sized organisations. This discourages many organisations from applying for those funds.
- OP ESI is accessible to cultural institutions of a certain size, those which are able to co-finance and administer the projects. Only a few of the beneficiaries of supported projects from the cultural sector have been either private arts schools

or NGOs with significant public support (e.g. Kosice 2013 implementation body).

- There is no notion of culture and arts as a specific tool for increasing intercultural competences in the educational process, to facilitate social inclusion or to combat violence. Cultural organisations are not amongst the intended beneficiaries.

## **2.3.5 European Territorial Cooperation**

### **2.3.5.1 Cross-border cooperation**

There are several programmes of cross-border cooperation financed by ERDF, where Slovakia participates:

- Slovak – Czech cross-border cooperation programme
- Slovak – Austrian cross-border cooperation programme
- Slovak – Polish cross-border cooperation programme
- Slovak – Hungarian cross-border cooperation programme
- Neighbourhood programme between Slovakia – Ukraine – Hungary – Romania

Based on EC regulation 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund, among the aims of the cross-border cooperation is also the development of SMEs, tourism, culture, and cross-border trade“ and developing collaboration, capacity and joint use of infrastructures, in particular in sectors such as health, culture, tourism and education”.

The scope of the supported projects is smaller than in the above-mentioned operational programmes, but that makes it more accessible to various cultural actors. There is quite a significant number of cultural projects among the selected applications, focused mainly on the development of small cultural infrastructure, joint policies, strategies for use of cultural heritage for tourism and other similar projects.

One of the interesting examples is the project supported by the HUSK cross-border cooperation programme, which was aimed to develop cultural tourism products connected to the personality of well-known writer Sandor Marai. As a result of the project, a new permanent exhibition was created and installed in Kosice (Marai's birth place), a film about his life was created and new historical and cultural research in both Hungary and Slovakia was conducted.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> [www.sandormarai.eu](http://www.sandormarai.eu)

### **2.3.5.2 INTERREG IVC<sup>12</sup>**

The overall objective of the INTERREG IVC Programme is to improve the effectiveness of regional policies and instruments. A project builds on the exchange of experiences among partners who are ideally responsible for the development of their local and regional policies.

The areas of support are innovation and the knowledge economy, environment and risk prevention. Thus, the programme aims to contribute to the economic modernisation and competitiveness of Europe.

Typical tools for exchange of experience are networking activities such as thematic workshops, seminars, conferences, surveys, and study visits. Project partners cooperate to identify and transfer good practices. Possible project outcomes include for example case study collections, policy recommendations, strategic guidelines or action plans.

INTERREG IVC supports two thematic priorities:

- Priority 1. Innovation and the knowledge economy
- Priority 2. Environment and risk prevention

There are several sub-themes to those priorities, including “Cultural Heritage and Landscape”.

According to the database of approved projects, Slovak organisations are involved in 28 projects supported from INTERREG IVC so far, although none in which they are the lead partner. The range of the projects is wide and includes also projects with cultural significance, dedicated mainly to ecologically sensitive policies for landscape and cultural heritage.

In the sub-theme “Entrepreneurship and SMEs” are to be found projects dedicated to supporting policies for creative industries (InCompass - Regional Policy Improvement for Financially Sustainable Creative Incubator Units, with the involvement of the Municipality of Bratislava) and to the issue of creative cities (ORGANZA - Network of Medium Sized Creative Cities, with the involvement of the Municipality of Prešov and the Technical University of Kosice).

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.interreg4c.eu/>

### **2.3.5.3 Conclusions – Culture in cross-border cooperation**

- The cross-border cooperation programmes, funded by the EU Structural Funds are a quite effective tool for the cultural sector. They are aimed at supporting of regional cooperation and therefore highly suitable for the development of local cultural actors, activities and events. Their scope and the eligibility criteria of applicants and activities are easier to meet by cultural operators and subjects.
- Support of trans-regional consortia promoting good policies and instruments is of a crucial importance to countries like Slovakia, where the lack of modern, progressive public policies is often one of the main problems for the attraction of European funds. Participation of Slovak organisations in this type of projects can bring more inspiration for the next programming period.

## **3. SWOT Analysis**

### ***Strengths***

- Even if not significantly, culture is present in the programming documents of SF. This brings a lot of practical experiences and examples, and addresses the need for new processes and frameworks, so far unknown in Slovakia. Experiences from this programming period can serve as an exclusive source for future strategies.
- Slovakia has a well-structured network of cultural institutions basically in all areas of arts and culture.
- The cultural sector is ready for change and significant reforms, which will respond to demands of the cultural policy reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The new generation of cultural professionals works in networks, is able to react to new societal demands and is able to formulate principles for modern cultural policies
- Several revisions during the implementation of a programme period bear witness to the authorities' own learning process, which is worth stressing.

### ***Weaknesses***

- The Slovak cultural sector suffers from a few substantial problems. The main issue is the outdated cultural infrastructure inherited from the Soviet era and the lack of progressive cultural policies. Culture was missing in all the reformist policies of the last 20 years. The result is a widening gap between “state”

cultural sector (in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture, regional governments or municipalities) and the so-called “independent” cultural sector, comprising mainly civic associations and small cultural enterprises. The focuses of the present programming of Structural Funds only deepen this division by not taking the non-state cultural sector into consideration.

- A very limited understanding of culture is apparent on the level of general policies, as manifested in existing Operational Programmes. The narrow focus on cultural heritage, monuments and archives (so-called “repository institutions”) excludes the large part of progressive cultural activities and venues from EU structural funding. The only economic benefits of culture are seen in tourism.
- It is significant that the code category (heading) 60 – ‘Other assistance for cultural services’ is not present in the programming of the EU Structural Funds in Slovakia. This leaves very little space for ‘soft’ projects in the cultural sector.
- Cultural and creative industries are unknown to existing programming documents or state policies in Slovakia. Their specific nature as well as their importance for the post-industrial economy is not recognised on the level of programmes or support schemes. Despite the strong emphasis of existing documents on innovation and the knowledge economy the cultural and creative industries are not mentioned.
- The national interpretation of EU financial regulations is often rigid and even in contradiction with the goals and aims of funding itself. For example, the erroneous interpretation of financial rules in revenue-generating projects has resulted into a complete contradiction with the main demand for project sustainability. (The non-accurate translation of the financial rules, confusing income and profit generated by the project, caused the fear that every income would be deducted from the approved grant.) This is causing many difficulties for potential applicants, who are forced to create unrealistic financial plans and expenditure structures.
- Since culture is only a minor part of the Structural Funds, and programmes allowing cultural funding are often managed by other bodies and organs, there is often an insufficient understanding of the sector among the staff responsible for the Structural Funds. Cultural projects are assessed through non-suitable criteria and indicators.
- The state cultural institutions, which can receive the largest part of Structural Funds, still suffer from a low level of management, project management and a limited view of culture and its contribution to society.
- There is still limited training in cultural management and project management in the field of culture available. This causes a low interest of cultural organisation in managerially- and financially-complex European projects.

### **Opportunities**

- The reality of implementation of Operational Programmes has brought a lot of necessary revisions, which can serve as good examples and lessons for the next programming period. One of the most important revisions has been connected to the project Kosice – ECOC 2013, which was based on a completely different understanding of culture than the entire NSRF. Even if the newly-created Priority Axis 7 of ROP did not go very much beyond its “basic infrastructure” logic, it made the responsible authorities think in entirely new perspectives. This can be followed up in the next programming period, using both positive and negative lessons learnt from the process.
- Cultural and creative industries have now more representation and voice than they had before (through the national platform Creative Industry Forum). One of the results is a study, approved by the Slovak government in December 2011, which outlines the basic definition of the sector and calls for more integrated policies in this area.<sup>13</sup> The governmental strategy for the CCIs is to be drafted in the next two years.
- The strong focus of the OP IS on digitisation of culture can bring many new attitudes, opportunities, skills and synergies into the cultural sector. If the present delay in the attraction of funds is caught up and there are some publicly accessible results, this can be used as an example for better policies in this area.
- Several reforms in the cultural sector announced by present government (establishment of the Arts Council, strategy for CCIs, reform of funding) can create better conditions for cultural actors and creative enterprises in the near future.
- High interest of regional and municipal authorities in EU Structural Funds: they are looking for new opportunities to find some comparative advantage, which can be lead to seeing culture and the CCIs as a new field of development.
- A new active generation of cultural operators, who are not paralysed by the current, non-favourable situation and are able to think out of the box, shows a fluent identity on the edge of culture, CCIs, SMEs and innovative enterprises and brings a fresh way of thinking and operation into the cultural sector.
- The upcoming EU negotiations on the Partnership Contract with Slovak Republic are a good opportunity to highlight culture as an important factor for sustainable development.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=20575>

- It is important to provide a detailed analysis and deep impact evaluation on the use of SF for culture in Slovakia in the present programming period, which can serve as the background for new programming.
- The present crisis is a time for brand new, innovative solutions. These could be provided by cultural and artistic creativity, involving the entire creative economy chain.

### **Threats**

- Delays in the absorption of EU Structural Funds in most policy areas can cause that the earmarked amount not be used before the end of the eligible period and the funds for the next programming period decrease.
- The cultural sector still possesses limited skills in advocacy regarding the EU Structural Funds and policy making, let alone the ability to draft documents and programmes. The fragmentation of the cultural sector and the clash of individual interests can be a significant obstacle in the upcoming negotiations.
- The low interest in the ROP for cultural infrastructure refurbishing (and other programmes) can be used as an argument for cutting funds for cultural infrastructure as such. A profound analysis of wrongly-set objectives, criteria and indicators is needed to have good counter-arguments.
- The projects implemented during this programming period will not be finished by the time negotiations for the new programming period take place, nor will their effects (mainly long-term) be visible. Therefore even the few good practice examples will not be ready to demonstrate their impact.
- There is a limited capacity of cultural operators and institutions to manage projects of this scale.
- There are limited resources available on the regional and municipal level for co-financing due to the crisis.
- In the case of Kosice – ECOC 2013 – due to the technical limitations of PA 7, delays in construction and changing attitudes on the local political level, the projects might not be finished or sustainable, which can cause another resistance towards this type of cultural projects.

#### **4. Priorities for Cultural Investment 2014-2020**

Generally, the new programming period is the opportunity to promote culture and creativity not only as a legitimate part of infrastructure, services and well-being, but as an essential component of the economy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, based on innovation, individual creativity and an ability to critically deal with the overflow of information. Culture has to be argued for in this light in order to get significant results in negotiations.

In the situation of Slovakia, culture and the CCIs have to become an integral part of the overall strategies for economic and regional development. This can be reached mainly by:

- Reframing the concept of culture within the Cohesion and Structural Funds strategy in Slovakia from the narrow understanding of cultural heritage and state-owned institutions to a modern, contemporary view of culture as a source of creativity, innovation and development.
- Revising the map of stakeholders (inclusion of civil society actors, NGOs, independent sector).
- Mapping existing and desirable cultural services and activities as a basis for a process of de-institutionalisation (similar to the one in social services and care) – putting more emphasis on community-based creation of cultural offer, services and infrastructure, which will correspond to the cultural situation of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Introducing the concept of the creative economy in the economic development strategy of Slovakia; including the cultural and creative industries in various entrepreneurship and regional development programmes.
- Supporting the transformation and good governance of traditional cultural infrastructure.
- Understanding and extensive promotion of culture as an important factor of urban, rural, post-industrial and post-Soviet regeneration; introducing the cultural component into hard and soft regeneration and transformation projects.

More detailed recommendations, connected to the thematic objectives of the Common Strategic Framework (2014-2020):

#### **4.1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation**

- Support to CCIs and creative enterprises as a part of Smart Specialisation strategies.
- Support to culturally-driven innovation as the added value of product and service development.
- Support of partnerships and clusters, involving entrepreneurial, technological, cultural and socially innovative components and partners (specific support to CCI clusters and networks).
- Support of participative and open innovation processes involving various creative and cultural actors, SMEs, social operators.
- Support of innovative cooperation models between commercial enterprises and cultural and creative actors.

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

- Support to further digitisation of cultural contents (libraries, museums, galleries, but also live art centres and other cultural content producers) – emphasis on wide public access to the digital content and innovative ways of its promotion and distribution to potential users.
- Support to cultural projects with a strong ICT component.
- Support to projects interlinking digital cultural content, public services and tourism.
- Support to interfaces, projects and schemes offering participative processes in innovation (user-generated content).
- Support of educational programmes and curricula in digital and media literacy.

#### **4.3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs**

- Specific support of SMEs within the cultural and creative industries sector (start-ups, capacity building, access to capital, IP protection, seed funding, micro-enterprise schemes).
- Support to SMEs operating in culture-driven innovation environment (media, digital content, games etc.).
- Support to innovation voucher schemes for SMEs with cultural added value (mainly design in all forms).
- Support to networking and clustering of various branches of CCIs.
- Support to project of creation of national governmental platform for CCIs as a part of long-term strategy of CCI development.

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

- Support to development of innovative urbanistic, architectural and design solutions focused on reducing the carbon footprint.
- Support to projects aimed at reducing the energy waste and carbon footprint in old type of cultural infrastructure.
- Support to soft projects involving culture, aimed at awareness-raising of the importance of a low-carbon economy.

#### **4.5. Promoting climate change adaptation and risk prevention and management**

- Support to soft projects involving culture, aimed at awareness raising of climate change and promoting solutions for it.
- Support to projects, assessing the risks and dangers connected to the heritage sites.

#### **4.6. Protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency**

- Support to projects combining cultural, ecological and touristic aspects (eco-tourism)
- Support to projects aimed at development and environmentally sensitive solutions in public spaces (with the involvement of architecture, design, etc.)
- Emphasis on strong contemporary component as a part of the sustainability strategy of cultural infrastructure investments
- Support to projects focused on the innovative and creative re-use of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.
- Support to cultural projects promoting purchase of local products in the area of design, food, etc.

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

- Support to cultural projects promoting cycling, walking and other alternative urban transport.

#### **4.8. Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility**

- Support to projects of creative incubators, co-working spaces and business incubators with CCI focus.
- Support for projects enabling better access of CCIs to international markets.

#### **4.9. Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty**

- Support to artistic projects involving socially and culturally excluded communities (mainly Roma population and low-income communities).
- Support to equal access to cultural schemes – projects focused on better cultural skills development, active participation etc.
- Support to projects of revitalisation of deprived areas and urban regeneration with a strong cultural component.
- Support to socially sensitive cultural and creative industries projects.

#### **4.10. Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning**

- Support of educational projects using cultural creativity as the training method on all levels of education.
- Support to projects enhancing the educational potential of cultural institutions.
- Support to projects of creative and cultural education curricula development on primary and secondary school level.
- Support to projects of intercultural education and competence development.
- Support to educational projects and curricula development linking culture and development.

#### **4.11. Enhancing institutional capacity and ensuring an efficient public administration**

- Support to projects focused on policy synergies between cultural, educational and economy sector.
- Support to projects focused on better governance and management of cultural institutions.
- Support to projects of capacity development (human, managerial, institutional, economic) for non-governmental cultural institutions.
- Support to de-institutionalisation of cultural services (similar to the processes in social services).
- Support to a detailed study on use of EU funds for culture and CCI in financial period 2007-2013.

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