
UNIVERSITY OF ARTS IN BELGRADE
Interdisciplinary postgraduate studies
Cultural management and cultural policy

Master thesis

Reinventing the City: Outlook on Bucharest's Cultural Policy

By: **Bianca Floarea**

Supervisor: **Milena Dragičević-Šešić, PhD**

Belgrade, October 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	3
Abstract.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Methodological Approach. Research Design and Data Analysis.....	7
I. The Evolution of Urban Cultural Policies in Europe.....	9
I.1. Cultural Policies and the City.....	9
I.2. Historical Trajectory of Urban Cultural Policies.....	11
II. The Cultural Policy of Bucharest. Analysis and Diagnosis of the City Government’s Approach to Culture.....	26
II.1. The City: History, Demographics, Economical Indicators, Architecture and the Arts... ..	26
II.1.1. History.....	27
II.1.2. Demographics.....	29
II.1.3. Economical Indicators.....	30
II.1.4. Architecture.....	30
II.1.5. The Arts Scene.....	32
II. 2. The Local Government: History, Functioning and Structure. Overview of the Cultural Administration.....	34
II.2.1. The Local Government: History, Functioning And Structure.....	34
II.2.2. Overview of the Cultural Administration.....	37
II.3 The Official Approach to Culture in the City Cultural Administration. Diagnosis.....	41
II.3.1. Highlights of the Key Elements of the Diagnosis (summary of findings)....	51
III. Policy Recommendations for Enhancing the Role of Culture in Urban Development.....	53
III.1. Development of Each Priority Area. Possible Solution(s).....	55
IV. Conclusion.....	63
V. Résumé du mémoire en français.....	65
References.....	71
Annexes.....	76
VII.1. Agenda 21 for Culture.....	76
VII.2. The Leipzig Charter on European Sustainable Cities.....	89
Author’s Vita.....	97

Acknowledgements

This paper benefited to a large extent from the huge amount of previous research on urban cultural policies (evolution, models, best practice examples, development trends, concepts and policy dilemmas) carried out by Charles Landry, Francois Matarasso and Franco Bianchini from the 1980s onwards. Some of the most influential works that contributed to outlining the history of urban policies, to frameworking the diagnosis on Bucharest's approach to culture and to elaborating the policy recommendations at the end of the thesis were: 'Culture @ the Crossroads: Culture and Cultural Institutions at the Beginning of the 21st Century' (Marc Pachter and Charles Landry, 2001), 'The Art of Regeneration. Urban Renewal through Cultural Activity', (Charles Landry, Lesley Greene, Francois Matarasso, Franco Bianchini, 1996), 'Cultural Policy and Urban Regeneration' (Franco Bianchini, 1991), "Cultural Planning for Urban Sustainability"(Franco Bianchini, 1999).

Abstract

Chapter I provides the broader context of the research paper, dealing with the historical trajectory of city cultural policies in Europe from the late 1940s to the present-day. The chapter outlines the evolution of official approaches to culture in municipal administrations and of various urban cultural policy concepts (e.g. cultural planning, proxemic city, transculturalism etc).

Chapter II contains a description of the cityscape of Bucharest (brief history, economic indicators, cultural scene etc), a presentation of the City Hall (structures, functioning, documents), an overview of the cultural administration (organisation, competences, documents) and, as a third point, an assessment of the existing cultural policy of the city with a diagnosis on the status quo at the end.

Chapter III is a policy proposal addressed to the city authorities of Bucharest, providing solutions to some of the problems identified by the diagnosis in chapter II.

Introduction

The thesis paper addresses the topic area of cultural policy at city level. It dwells on the policy of Bucharest, namely on analysing and assessing the local administration's approach to culture, especially now after the 2007 EU enlargement, in order to eventually substantiate a proposal for tackling the current policy shortages and insufficiencies.

Culture plays a strong strategic role in urban societies and in the governance of European cities. The position paper 'Culture, the engine of the 21st century European cities' (2001) carried out by the Eurocities Network states that '*Culture means City and City means Culture*', since culture is ever more seen as the new urban driver nowadays. It also adds that the process of urban transformation is eminently cultural and that cities will be recognised from now on by the role culture plays in their overall urban development.

The statement of the current research thesis, from its shedding light on the historical trajectory of European urban cultural policies to the diagnosis of Bucharest's approach and the final policy proposal, is that the vitality and health of the cultural sector in the cities of the 21st century, and implicitly in Romania's capital, should be a concern for all those who are interested in urban society and governance.

In order to address this problematic, the thesis will make a case study out of Bucharest, interview public and civil society actors and find answers to questions like:

- Is culture part of some general development plan of the city? Is it taken into account when outlining broader city strategies and when discussing sustainable urban development? Are there any links to other policies of the local administration?
- Is the current cultural policy adjusted to the city identity? Is the city identity seen as the starting point of a developmental strategy?
- What role for the arts in the urban reinvention process?
- What place for the notion of creativity in designing policies? Is Bucharest endeavouring to be a creative city?

As far as the relevance of this subject is concerned, it should be pointed out that the topic in itself is not original by any means. Urban cultural policies are a very commonplace research area and there are a lot of case studies on it, a lot of trends analysis and good practice studies. However, in the present-day context of Bucharest, where there are almost no studies looking at its current cultural policy situation, at possible solutions for improving the policy framework, this initiative could prove to be a useful one, especially since it is intended as a pragmatic policy proposal (last chapter) for city officials in the culture department. Therefore, the importance of this topic is in dealing with a very little investigated field in Romania: cultural policies at micro-level, i.e. the city.

Methodological Approach. Research Design and Data Analysis

The overall methodological strategy consists in making use of qualitative analyses throughout the whole research process, from documents to interview analysis.

The first chapter was entirely based on desk research of existing studies on urban cultural policies. One remark here is that it was rather difficult to generalize about the evolution of urban cultural policies in Europe first of all due to the scarcity of comparative research and standardized data and then to the great diversity of definitions of 'culture' adopted by policy-makers and to other important variations in different national contexts. However, despite these differences both between and within countries, it was possible to outline a common trajectory in the evolution of arguments used to justify expenditure on urban cultural policies from the end of the WW II to the 1990s and to shed light on some common elements that could make up a history of concerns, priorities and concepts of cultural policies at local level.

The data gathering process for the second chapter consisted in analyzing the existing documents / materials related to the official cultural policy of Bucharest and in a series of interviews with officials in the culture department of the city administration, during which the findings from the previously researched official documents were deepened. The interviews evolved around the issues of culture being part or not of some general sustainable development plan of the city, or of broader city strategies, of it being linked or not to other policies of the local administration, 'adjusted' to city identity, of arts role in urban reinvention process, of the current importance of creativity in designing policies etc.

One drawback in the elaboration of the second chapter was that not all materials needed for carrying out a complete thorough assessment were made available. The yearly budget for culture as well as the academic profiles of the employees in the culture department are two examples in this respect. These elements were nevertheless commented upon in the paper as a way of highlighting the lack of institutional transparency of the City Hall.

The series of interviews for chapter II also included representatives of the civil cultural sector in Bucharest (Ecumest Cultural Association, the Association for Urban Transition, 'VaUrma' Project) and a representative of the Centre for Studies and Research in Culture - public institution found under the authority of the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs of Romania. These interviews were meant to complement the speeches of the cultural administration and offer a chance for other actors from the cultural sector to share their views on and experience with the provisions of the existing policy framework in the city, as well as to discover what they consider is missing from the city policy and further on echo their policy recommendations in the final proposal.

On the basis of the two series of interviews (audio-recorded and then transcribed) and of the available official materials of the municipality, a qualitative overview was outlined that then served as essential background information for drafting the policy proposal at the end of the paper.

The developmental strategy for the third chapter consists in concluding upon all the findings of the previous research phases (desk analysis and interviews) and in putting forward suggested courses of action, measures and solutions for improving the city cultural policy in its entirety. The proposal has the form and contents of a first-step attempt of drafting a more thorough and broader study on the overall cultural policy and strategies for Bucharest. It is not an exhaustive one, but rather one that underlines the shortages of the `system` - as identified by the desk research and the interviews with the other actors - and puts forward possible ways to improve the situation, diminish the lacks and draw attention on the importance a well-designed policy has on the general cultural scene in the city.

The Evolution of Urban Cultural Policies in Europe

I.1 Cultural Policies and the City

In ‘Cultural Development: Experiences and Policies’, Augustin Girard defines cultural policy as ‘*a system of ultimate aims, practical objectives and means, pursued by a group and applied by an authority*’. He continues by stating that ‘*cultural policies can be discerned in a trade union, a party, an educational movement, an institution, an enterprise, a town or a government, but regardless of the agent concerned, a policy implies the existence of ultimate purposes (long-term), objectives (medium-term and measurable) and means (men [sic], money and legislation), combined in an explicitly coherent system*¹’.

When applied to the city level, cultural policies are translated into the official approach local administrations have towards culture, as reflected in their documents, strategies, objectives, priorities, legislation and other formal guidelines. This approach can be explicit or implicit, which, in the latter case, means that City Hall administrations do not have a special document of cultural policy or declared priorities in the field. In this situation, analyses of the current state of affairs have to look at what the policy by default is, i.e. what is financed and supported. Cultural policy profiles can thus be done by inferring data from what is implicit.

Before pursuing with the historical trajectory of urban cultural policies in Europe, one has to define the concept of ‘city’, since the variations in its definition have influenced the way policies were constructed, too, as it will be shown further on.

According to Franco Bianchini in ‘Cultural Planning for Urban Sustainability’ (1999), a city is a complex entity consisting of ‘*an area defined by clear geographical boundaries and endowed with certain natural characteristics; an environment shaped by*

¹ 1996, p. 171-172

*human intervention, comprising infrastructures, buildings and a designed layout of streets, squares, public and open spaces; a community of people, with particular social networks and dynamics (a society); a system of economic activities and relationships (an economy); a natural environment, a built form, a society and an economy governed by a set of principles and regulations from the interactions between different political actors*².

This standard all-encompassing objective definition is seldom complemented by less territory-bound definitions that focus on a rather subjective geography and social networking, affirming that cities are *'first and foremost a meeting place for people (which) at its best, operates as a series of interconnected networks of places and spaces devoted to making the most of human interaction'*³. To this, Charles Landry adds that *'to be a city requires more than houses and people. It needs what Benedict Anderson formulated to define a nation: 'imagined community', or the conviction that other inhabitants in distant streets, whom one will never meet or see, share elements of a common culture and react to events as one would react oneself'*⁴.

The present-day tendency is to view the city in these last terms, going beyond descriptions that condition it to physical boundaries, so as to outline a more subjective territoriality based on a special cohesion among its members. The different definitions of the city and their evolutions are also important to the evolution of urban cultural policies and the elements they introduced together with the acknowledgement of the city as an *'imagined community'* (e.g. see further on the introduction of city branding strategies that use concepts like *'emotional economy'*).

² Chapter in Nystrom, L. (ed.), *'City and Culture. Cultural Processes and Urban Sustainability'*, 1999, p.1

³ Richard Rogers, Urban task force, 1990, p. 45

⁴ *'The Art of Regeneration'*, 1996, p. 23

I.2 Historical Trajectory of Urban Cultural Policies

It must be said that it was difficult to generalize about the evolution of urban cultural policies in Europe, due to the fact that there are few comparative researches and standardized data in this respect (especially for cities in Southeastern Europe), due to the great diversity in the definitions of ‘culture’ adopted by policy-makers and to other variations in different national contexts – for instance, in the levels of local political and fiscal autonomy, the size and nature of local markets for cultural activity and the involvement of the private sector in the policy-making process.

Franco Bianchini (1999)⁵ managed, despite these differences both between and within countries, to outline a common trajectory in the evolution of the arguments used to justify expenditure on urban cultural policies from the end of WW II to our times.

He identified three broad phases: ‘the age of reconstruction’ (from the late 1940s to the late 1960s); ‘the age of participation’ (from the 1970s to early 1980s); and ‘the age of city marketing’ (from the mid-1980s to the present day).

It is important to emphasize, however, that these divisions are not absolute, as a policy rationale does not neatly replace the previous one with the passage from the historical period to the next. The process must be understood more as one of accumulation, with the coexistence of old and new rationale.

In policy terms, Bianchini describes the timeframe 1940s - 1960s as being dominated by a focus on economic growth, physical and civic reconstruction and a belief in instrumental rationality. Urban cultural policies were believed to contribute to (re)educating and civilizing people after the horrors of the war. Culture is seen in restricted terms now, as mainly the ‘high arts’, with a strong prejudice against commercial popular culture: *‘More generally, the attitude towards culture prevailing in urban cultural policies during this period was a continuation of the 19th century tradition, which largely viewed appreciation of the classics in the arts as an antidote to the spiritual and even environmental damage wrought by industrialization*⁶.

⁵ ‘Cultural Planning for Urban Sustainability’, 1999

⁶ Bianchini, 1999, p. 3

As a result, city cultural policies were centred on the ennobling and spiritually uplifting, humanistic values of high culture and primarily focused on creating or expanding an infrastructure of traditional, building-based arts institutions located in city centres, such as opera houses, museums and civic theatres and on widening access to them through the provision of public subsidy.

Politicians and policy-makers' approach was mostly to *'define culture as a realm separate from, and actively opposed to, the realm of material production and economic activity and, I would add, somewhat disconnected from other spheres of life and of public policy-making'*⁷.

The 1970s and the 1980s witnessed the 'age of participation' following Bianchini's chronological division of city cultural policies. During this phase the status of cultural policy as an area of local government activity increased considerably: *'The decline in working time and the increase in the proportion of disposable income spent on leisure activity led city governments to expand their expenditure on cultural services, to cater for growing, more sophisticated and differentiated public demand. Urban cultural policy-making bodies were either newly created or separated from larger units, within which cultural affairs had traditionally occupied a minor position. The quality of the political personnel in charge of cultural policy improved and the profile of cultural policy issues grew as witnessed by increasing media coverage and growing interest among politicians and academics'*⁸.

The growing importance of municipal cultural policies is explained by Bianchini as one of the effects of movements like feminism, community action, environmentalism, youth revolts, gay and ethnic minority activism, which were critical of post-war functionalist city planning and were often closely associated with 'alternative' cultural production and distribution circuits comprising experimental theatre groups, rock bands, independent record labels, small publishing houses, radical bookshops, newspaper and magazines and visual arts exhibitions in non-traditional venues. This context raised questions on the traditional distinctions between 'high' and 'low' culture (e.g. between

⁷ Bianchini, 1999, p.3

⁸ Ibid., p.3

classical and popular music) and thus broadened the definition of culture to include new forms.

These tendencies were accompanied by the construction of forms of city identity which could trigger a sense of common city ownership between different neighbourhoods and belonging to different communities of interest. Politicians began to connect cultural policy with what we would now identify as an integrated approach to respond to the emerging urban crisis (following the recession of the early 1970s and the growth in unemployment, especially among young people) and promote sustainable development. This trend will become more prominent starting with the late 1980s and continuing to this day.

Among other characteristics of this timeframe, Bianchini mentions the emergence of the encouragement of individual and group self-expression – and grassroots community-based cultural participation – through both the decentralization of cultural provision at neighbourhood level and initiatives aimed at reasserting the role of city centres as catalysts for public life, sociability and civic identity, in response to growing social differentiation and inequalities within cities.

Cultural policies emphasized the importance of creating more public spaces and of making the city more attractive. Forms of cultural animation, such as arts festivals, were used to encourage participation in the city centre's public life for people of different ages, social classes, genders, lifestyles and ethnic origins and to re-ascribe meaning to the 'dead' time of the elderly and the unemployed and to 'dead' space - such as abandoned industrial buildings becoming useless after the economic shift.

As Bianchini affirms, this phase was primarily characterized by a focus on social and political objectives. Moreover, even if merely emerging, the attempts to link culture to economic sustainability, to the regeneration of city neighbourhoods and the reintegration of marginalized young people (mostly from disadvantaged ethnic and / or racial backgrounds) into the local economy were very important, as they paved the way for their enhancement throughout the 1990s until today.

The third evolution phase after WW II in Europe, according to the same author is that of 'the city marketing', reaching till the present day.

From the mid-1980s, a shift can be noticed away from the socio-political concerns of the 1970s and early 1980s and towards economic development priorities. In policy terms, the emphasis on community development, participation, egalitarianism, neighbourhood, decentralization, the democratization of urban space and the revitalization of public social life prevailing in the previous historical phase started to gradually be replaced with arguments highlighting the potential contribution of culture to economic and physical regeneration.

There is now a growing number of studies on the economic importance of the cultural sector in many cities and of the direct and indirect economic impacts of cultural activities and policies on employment and wealth creation. These studies had a significant influence on raising the profile of cultural policies and advocating for increased public and private sector investment in culture. Culture started to be more and more seen as the engine of the urban economy.

Cultural policies were increasingly viewed as valuable tools to diversify the local economies: *'A lively, cosmopolitan cultural life became a crucial ingredient of city and regional marketing and internationalization strategies, designed to attract mobile international capital and specialized personnel. The focus of cultural policy-making shifted once again to city centres, which were used as showcases for the local economy in the emerging inter-urban and inter-regional competition games'*⁹.

The problem associated with this issue is the assumption that when urban cultural policies are submitted to economic market logic, culture is turned into a mere marketing tool. Problematic consequences of this are already felt in many cities in the form of cultural administrators' troubles caused by cuts in financing and budgets. The neo-liberalist politics of many city governments are manifested as demands for the cultural sector to show financially profitable and above all measurable results in their actions. In many cultural administrations it is felt that the new strategic visions based on the promises of culture and cultural sector as the provider of new economic growth are steering the cultural policy away from itself and towards something completely else than what is its traditional core focus areas.

⁹ Bianchini, 1999, p. 5

Throughout this period, cultural policy for urban and regional economic development brought to light policy dilemmas such as those between cultural provision in the city centre and disadvantaged, peripheral neighbourhoods, between consumption-oriented strategies and support for local cultural production and innovation and between investment in buildings and expenditure on events and activities.

Going beyond the characteristics depicted by Bianchini in ‘Cultural Planning for Urban Sustainability’, we shall now try to convey some other issues that starting from the late 1980s gained ground in many European city administrations.

One of these issues is that of citizen participation in culture-based local development. As Jordi Pascual I Ruiz argues in ‘Guide to Citizen Participation in Local Cultural Policy Development for European Cities’ (2007), with the 1990s *‘the participation of citizenry in elaborating, implementing and evaluating policies is no longer an option but a characteristic of advanced democracies’*¹⁰. Despite a lot of deficiencies, which are actually still existing today, citizen interaction and civil society involvement became important in decision-making processes, especially in Western European cities.

In the 1990s, the formulation of local cultural policies in a ‘participative’ way, gradually also became an essential ambition of civil society based cultural organizations in the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. On a policy level, the collapse of the formerly centralized systems of governance, along with increasing democratization and administrative decentralization, urgently required the reactivation or complete redevelopment of decision-making processes for culture at local level. Local actors developed more and more a sense of taking matters into their own hands and solving problems directly, on the spot, instead of referring to the super-ordinate levels of former decision-making structures. Nevertheless, Jordi Pascual argues that *‘Despite the increasingly significant role civil society organizations played in delivering cultural services to urban communities, they often did not have a sufficient say in the ongoing processes of cultural policy reform in their cities’*¹¹, as cultural city administrations were

¹⁰ p. 47

¹¹ p. 56

still very much occupied with managing the ongoing crises of the public funded cultural institutions under their responsibility to integrate civil society actors in cultural policy reform. Moreover, introducing the requirements of local citizens into decision-making steps was still unknown to post-socialist administrations, which met with certain reluctance this aspect.

But that was the situation at the beginning of the 1990s. Nowadays, we can say that the involvement of civil society in policy-making has grown when compared to previous periods of time and that unilateral policies are starting to slowly disappear (even if even slower in Southeastern Europe).

Another characteristic of this timeframe is cultural policies intervening in the development and rehabilitation of neighbourhoods (prominently from the 1990s). An important number of international, European projects and networks have been dealing with theoretical and practical aspects of this question ever since. From 1993 to 1996, the European project ‘Culture and Neighbourhoods’, involving 11 cities aimed at improving cultural policies at the local level, establishing the neighbourhood as one entity for cultural policies and finding ways for them to intervene for the socio-economic development of deprived urban areas. Also, Banlieues d’Europe, a network of European cities, was created in 1992 in order to bring together associations of officials, towns, experts and researchers, cultural workers and artists, who are familiar with questions of neighbourhood artistic performances aimed at people who are usually excluded.

Urban policies that are planning neighbourhood regeneration via culture-led rehabilitation programs are also the current method of some local government councils in European cities. This practice is still very much used nowadays as many cities base their urban development strategies on cultural projects targeting the revitalization of deprived neighbourhoods, the rehabilitation of abandoned sites of railways, of ports and industries.

In the early 1990s, we see the introduction of the concepts of cultural planning and cultural resources in urban and community development. According to Charles Landry, *‘Cultural resources are embodied in people’s creativity, skills and talents. They are not only ‘things’ like buildings, but also symbols, activities and the repertoire of local*

*products in crafts, manufacturing and services. Urban cultural resources include the historical, industrial and artistic heritage representing assets including architecture, urban landscape or landmarks. Local and indigenous traditions of public life, festivals, rituals or stories as well as hobbies and enthusiasms. Resources like language, food and cooking, leisure activities, clothing and sub-cultures or intellectual traditions that exist everywhere are often neglected but can be used to express the uniqueness of a location. And, of course, cultural resources are the range and quality of skills in the performing and visual arts and the creative industries*¹². Landry thus advocated for culture shaping urban planning and development rather than being seen as a marginal addition that is taken into account only after all the other important planning questions like housing, transport and land-use have been dealt with.

“Guide to Citizen Participation in Local Cultural Policy Development for European Cities’ (2007), puts forward the idea that cultural planning could now be a possible alternative to both cultural policy-led urban regeneration strategies and traditional cultural policies: *‘Unlike traditional cultural policies, which are still mainly based on aesthetic definitions of culture as art, cultural planning adopts as its basis a broad definition of cultural resources, which consists of the arts and media activities and institutions, the cultures of youth, ethnic minorities and other communities of interest, the heritage, including archaeology, gastronomy, local dialects and rituals, local and external perceptions of a place, as expressed in jokes, songs, literature, myths, tourist guides, media coverage and conventional wisdom, the natural and built environment, including public and open spaces, the diversity and quality of leisure, cultural, eating, drinking and entertainment facilities and activities, the repertoire of local products and skills in the crafts, manufacturing and services*¹³.

It is important to clarify that cultural planning is not intended as ‘the planning of culture’, which is actually a rather dangerous approach, but rather as a cultural approach to urban planning and policy. Moreover, while traditional cultural policies tend to take a sectoral focus (e.g. policies for the development of theatre, dance, literature, etc), cultural

¹² ‘The Art of Regeneration. Urban Renewal through Cultural Activity’, 1996, p. 87

¹³ p. 65

planning adopts a territorial remit, investigating how the cultural resources mentioned above can contribute to the development a neighbourhood, a city or a region.

Further in the trajectory of city cultural policies is the issue of city identity and city branding, tackled since the early 1990s. In 'Culture as a Resource of City Development' (2007), Milena Dragičević-Šešić conveys the idea that narratives, myths and stories about contemporary cities in Europe have been used both in cultural policy programs '*for the sake of preserving the cultural heritage or in different forms of cultural tourism*' and in processes of city branding that project the town as a product. The author continues by saying that '*The second part of the 20th century brought us this new type of action: setting up town marketing teams, aiming to renew an idea about a town, its impression on the inhabitants, but also to improve the image of the town in the country and in Europe, for economic prosperity reasons*'¹⁴.

City marketing today creates new or revives old myths in order to propagate new town economic and cultural policy leading to prosperity. The possibilities for towns to develop such cultural policy, which will refine the possible meanings and cultural importance of the towns, are enormous even in the cases of extremely small or completely new cities: '*One of the main tasks of city public policies is to (re)define city identity, based on collective memories of people, cultural heritage (built and intangible) and a vision of future which had succeeded in gathering consensus among main political agents, but also among public opinion makers (intellectuals, educators, media practitioners...)*'¹⁵.

Nowadays, city branding techniques have developed ways of symbolic re-landscaping a place, based on creating a feeling of emotional proximity towards it. According to Richard Brecknock (2006), 'city branding should be based on '*the narrative space*' and '*the need to permit space to become encoded with time*'¹⁶, i.e. with a certain history and meaning behind. In branding strategies, city spaces are therefore seen as

¹⁴ Chapter in 'Cultural Transitions in Southeastern Europe. The Creative City: Crossing Visions and New Realities in the Region', Institute for International Relations Zagreb, 2007, p.40

¹⁵ Ibid. p.42

¹⁶ 'Intercultural City. More than just a Bridge', Comedia Publishing, 2006, p.67

having a soul. This is done so as to avoid distemic reactions of visitors especially that might cause distance and no sense of personal association with the place.

At present, city branding endeavours to generate proxemic space, a sense of belonging and an emotional closeness to the city from both local people and from tourists' side. Brecknock suggests that this can be also done by using the potential of the arts to transform a distemic space into a proxemic one and help a visitor interpret space and absorb meaning.

Policies that play on such concepts could be called '*narrative policies*': the policies that use culture and creativity as a change agent and tell the story of the city's people, style, feel and ways of doing things. City branding is eventually about re-imagining the city by giving it a greater global profile. This re-imagining usually involves a renegotiation of the local identity and not just a marketing exercise. It is about building partnerships, inspiring visions, leadership, about re-inventing a place, telling a different story about what it was and what it could become.

Linked to city identity is also the more and more present concept of the creative city. Towns all over Europe are competing to be recognised as creative cities nowadays, as creativity becomes '*like a rash*' and a '*mantra of our age*'¹⁷.

The history of the creative city concept emerged in the late 1980s. The philosophy behind it is that there is always more potential in any place than any of us would think at first sight, arguing that conditions need to be created for people to think, plan and act with imagination in harnessing opportunities or addressing seemingly intractable urban problems, which might range from addressing homelessness, to creating wealth or enhancing the visual environment.

In the creative city it is not only artists and those involved in the creative economy that are creative, although they play an important role. Creativity can come from any source including anyone who addresses issues in an inventive way, be it a social worker, a business person, a scientist or a public servant. The belief is that by stimulating

¹⁷ Charles Landry in 'Lineages of the Creative City', article in 'Creativity and the City', Netherlands Architecture Institute, 2005, p.18

creativity and legitimizing imagination in the public, private and community spheres, the possibilities and potential solutions to any urban problem will be broadened.

Furthermore, it ought to be added that what cities today seen as creative infrastructure is a combination of the hard and the soft including too the mental infrastructure, the way a city approaches opportunities and problems, the environmental conditions it creates to generate an atmosphere and the enabling devices it fosters generated through its incentives and regulatory structures. London and Amsterdam are probably good practice examples in Europe of cities which are working to identify, nurture, attract and sustain talent.

Today we can speak of a creative city movement, but back in the 1980s, when most of the beginning ideas were developed, the discussions at policy level evolved around culture, the arts, cultural planning, cultural resources, cultural industries. Creativity in its broad understanding only came into being in the mid-1990s. The cultural industries became the creative industries and the creative economy and the notion of the 'creative class'¹⁸ then emerged in 2002.

With almost everything now being labelled as 'creative', the notion is in danger of overuse and of losing its significance, which is essentially about unleashing, harnessing, empowering potential from whatever source: *'The tendency for cities to adopt the term without thinking about its real consequences could mean that the notion becomes hollowed out, chewed up and thrown out until the next big slogan comes along. The creative city notion is about a journey of becoming not a fixed state of affairs. It is a challenge, when taken seriously, to existing organizational structures, habitual ways of doing things and power configurations. It is concerned with enabling potential and creation to unfold so unleashing the ideas, imagination and implementation and delivery capacities of individuals and communities'*¹⁹.

At the end of the 1990s, another frequently found concern of cultural policies at urban level is that of cultural diversity. This was triggered by the fact that cultural diversity became a keyword in international debates on culture at that time. The approval

¹⁸ Syntagm coined by Richard Florida in 'The Rise of the Creative Class: and how it's transforming work, leisure and every day life', 2002.

¹⁹ Charles Landry, 'Lineages of the Creative City', 2005, p 12-13.

of UNESCO's Declaration (2001) and Convention (2005) on Cultural Diversity created the current diversity momentum.

The Report 'Local Policies for Cultural Diversity' (2006) edited by United Cities and Local Governments' Working Group on Culture, classified how cities understand cultural diversity. Thus it was discovered that cultural diversity considerations that are found in municipal departments for culture are related to 'size' (cities have searched for a balance in the size of cultural agents, from small to large) and 'sub-sectors' (from heritage to contemporary creation), to the involvement of a diversity of actors (public, NGO, private) in the local cultural system and to (ethnic) minorities.

With regard to size, many cities explain that cultural life is based on a dynamic system, in which small-scale neighbourhood-based or experimental initiatives, often non-institutional, coexist with large projects conceived for international projection or purposes of pure consumption.

With regard to the sub-sectors, at least three main cultural sub-sectors have been present in local cultural policies: heritage, libraries, the arts. Recent concern for local identity and cultural diversity has led to cities paying attention to 'traditional culture' often referred to as folklore of the city, the region or the nation, New media and information and communication technologies have also become new sub-sectors, or a transversal dimension, of local cultural policies, as these attract the genuine interest of young people.

Secondly, on the involvement of public, private and civil society actors in the local cultural system, the study discovered that many cities have evolved from the direct provision of cultural services to creating partnerships with private and social agents, sometimes leading to the creation of new entities, so as to guarantee a more efficient management of cultural policies. The involvement of non-public agents ensures the elaboration, the monitoring and the evaluation of cultural policies through, for example, local councils for culture.

Finally, cultural diversity understood in anthropological / ethnic terms refers to more attention being paid to the presence of 'minorities' in the cultural eco-system of the city. Local administrations are trying to find a balance between 'native' cultural agents

and ‘national culture’ agents and those agents that are the direct or indirect result of immigration.

Linked to this third way of understanding cultural diversity is the issue of multi-inter- and trans-culturality. According to Bianchini (1999)²⁰, we are now witnessing a transition from multiculturalism to interculturalism and even transculturalism in urban cultural policies.

Multiculturalily is seen as the recognition and the right of cultural or linguistic communities to retain, express and celebrate their cultural difference. According to Landry and Bianchini (1995), ‘*many social and cultural policies have aimed at multiculturalism, which means the strengthening of the separate identities of ethnic minorities, which now have their own arts centres, schools, places of worship and social clubs. But multiculturalism can be programmatic if there is little communication between cultures*’²¹. Multiculturalism limits intercultural communication and understanding and tries to protect community boundaries and traditional identities.

On the other hand, the term intercultural is used in the context of people from different cultural backgrounds coming together in a common desire to build on the cross-cultural potential from a multicultural society within its ethnic and cultural diversity. Interculturalism goes beyond equal opportunities and respect for existing cultural differences, to the pluralist transformations of public space, civic culture and institutions. It does not recognize cultural boundaries as fixed but as in a state of flux and remaking. An intercultural approach aims at facilitating dialogue, exchange and reciprocal understanding between people of different cultural backgrounds.

Urban cultural policies based on this approach prioritise funding for projects where different cultures intersect, contaminate each other and hybridise. This contrasts with the multicultural model, where funding is directed within the well-defined boundaries of recognized cultural communities. In other words, intercultural urban policies are aimed at promoting cross-fertilisation across all cultural boundaries, between ‘majority’ and ‘minority’, ‘dominant’ and ‘sub-cultures’, localities, classes, faiths,

²⁰ ‘Cultural Planning for Urban Sustainability’, p.10-11

²¹ ‘The Creative City’, Demos Publications, 1995, p.25

disciplines and genres, as the source of cultural, social, political and economic innovation.

The intercultural city concept focuses on the need for a pluralist re-thinking of public space and civic culture linked with innovative and creative economic development for all citizens regardless of their ethnic origins. It aims to create city policies and environments that encourage cross-cultural dialogue to promote cultural, social, political and economic innovation. It is seeking to maximize the interaction between cultures and not simply respect and support people's right to diverse cultures.

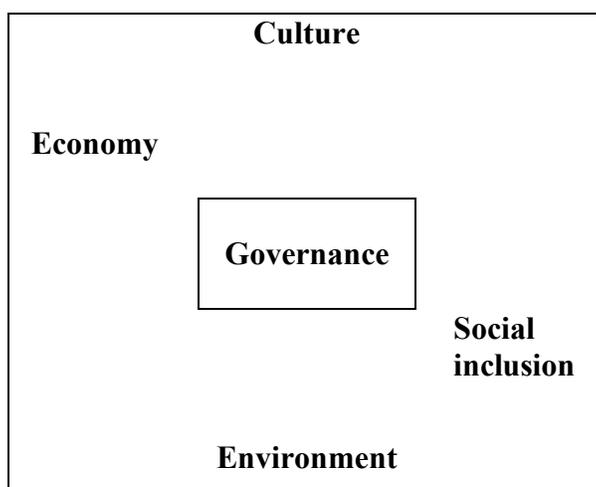
Transculturalism as a new trend today aims to transcend cultural differences through values which define and unify us as a species, i.e. peace, solidarity, human rights and environmental sustainability. These values find embodiment in the symbols of the city centre, flagship buildings, public art, education, transport, library and information services and social policies²².

One of the most prominent approaches nowadays is for city administrations to introduce culture parameters in general urban sustainability plans. The Australian researcher Jon Hawkes has formulated the need to structure a new 'pillar' for sustainability and local development in his book 'The fourth pillar for sustainability. Culture's essential role in public planning' (2001).

According to Hawkes, actions for the development of societies rest on four pillars: the economic pillar, which has to do with wealth creation; the social pillar, which redistributes this wealth; the ecological pillar that watches over responsibility for the environment; the cultural pillar, without which the circle of development cannot be fulfilled.

The framework proposed by Hawkes is extremely powerful. The metaphor it suggests is based on the triangle of sustainable development (economic concern + social inclusion + environment) that was developed in the second half of the 1980s, was successfully consolidated in the 1990s and is used today in local, national and global strategies as a pattern for analysis and public action.

²² Bianchini, 'Cultural Planning for Urban Sustainability', 1999



*Hawkes's new square of development*²³

Hawkes intends to create the conceptual bases for culture to become the fourth axis of local policies: *'If it is accepted that cultural vitality is as essential to a sustainable and healthy society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability and that culture resides in all human endeavour, then we need a way to ensure that all public activity is evaluated from a cultural perspective'*. Hawkes continues, *'rather than the creation of a discrete Cultural Policy, the most effective way forward is the development of a Cultural Framework that can be applied to all policy'*²⁴.

The most recent document also dwelling on this aspect is the 2007 Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (appendix 2), a document of the EU Member States containing common principles and strategies for urban development policies. Cities are in this document *'valuable and irreplaceable economic, social and cultural assets'* (article 1). The Charter acknowledges that *'in the long run, cities cannot fulfil their function as engines of social progress and economic growth as described in the Lisbon Strategy unless we succeed in maintaining the social balance within and among cities, protecting their cultural diversity and establishing high quality in the fields of design, architecture and environment'* (article 3).

²³ In 'Guide to Citizen Participation in Local Cultural Policy Development for European Cities', Pascual i Ruiz and Dragojevic, 2007, p.26

²⁴ Ibid, p.26-27

The Charter also introduces the concept of integrated urban development policy (IUDP), which means ‘*simultaneous and fair consideration of the concerns and interests which are of relevance in urban development*’ (article 8). The preparation of IUDP represents a process in which the coordination of key areas of urban policy, the involvement of sectors, stakeholders and public and the decisions about future development in terms space, subject matter and time are taking place. IUDP involves actors external to the administration and enables the citizens to play an active role in shaping their immediate living environment.

This brief depiction has provided the broad context of developments for the topic of the thesis, looking at the way urban cultural policies shifted in focus since the 1940s, going through the so-called elitist approach to culture seen only as a way of bringing about spiritual uplifting to local cultural administrations gradually embedding culture in cities’ development strategies and giving more and more importance to concepts like cultural planning and cultural resources, culture-led rehabilitation of city neighbourhoods, city branding, citizen participation in policy-making, cultural diversity, creative city, inter- and transculturalism.

This chapter offers a contextualisation of the analysis of Bucharest’s cultural policy, its evolution phase and endeavour to line up with the recent European development strategies, approaches and concepts just outlined here.

The Cultural Policy of Bucharest
Analysis and Diagnosis of the City Government's Approach to Culture

The aim of this chapter is to shed light on the existing cultural policy of Bucharest, on the way in which the local government officially relates to culture, its importance and role in the overall urban development.

A brief description of the cityscape (history, basic facts, arts scene) and an overview of the administration system - with focus on the Culture Department - were carried out to this end. In addition, an insight into available official documents, initiatives and budgets was provided with a view to enabling the drafting of a diagnosis on the current situation, i.e. identifying the main problematic issues and the lacks in the City Hall's approach to culture.

The diagnosis will try to look beyond the cultural administration's formal discourses and wooden language, will confront the content of the documents with the practice and will serve as a basis for the set of recommendations outlined in the following chapter.

II.1 The City: History, Demographics, Economical Indicators, Architecture and the Arts²⁵

Bucharest is the capital city of Romania, its biggest city and the main politico-administrative, financial, economic, academic and cultural centre of the country. It is the residence town of the Parliament, the Government, the ministries and the governmental agencies, the foreign embassies, the largest university and research centres in Romania, the Stock Exchange House and all the other important public institutions.

²⁵ Information taken from the website of the Bucharest City Hall (www.pmb.ro) and the Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia (www.wikipedia.com).

The city is located in the South-East, on the banks of the Dâmbovița River, having a total area of 228 km² (0,8% of the country's surface). It is the ninth largest city in Europe and the fourth in Eastern Europe, after Moscow, St Petersburg and Kiev.

According to the official figures of 2006, the city holds over a tenth of the total population of Romania: 1,930,390 people. The urban area extends beyond the limits of Bucharest and has a population of 2.1 million people. Moreover, with the satellite towns around, the metropolitan area of Bucharest gathers a population of 2.6 million people.

II.1.1 History

Etymologically, tradition links the founding of Bucharest (București in Romanian) with the name of Bucur who, according to local legends, was a shepherd. The word is of Thracian-Geto-Dacian origin and comes from 'bucurie', which means 'joy' or 'happiness'. 'București' would equal, in a free translation, 'the city of Bucur' and, by extension, the 'city of joy'.

The archaeological remains proof that the area where the capital is now situated was inhabited 150.000 years ago. The first recorded mention of the city dates from 1459 and it is a document by which Vlad the Impaler, prince of Walachia, confirms a donation made to some noblemen. During following rules, Bucharest was established as the summer residence of the court, competing with Târgoviște for the status of capital after an increase in the importance of Southern Muntenia brought about by the demands of the suzerain power, the Ottoman Empire.

Burned down by the Ottomans and briefly discarded by princes at the beginning of the 17th century, Bucharest was restored and continued to grow in size and prosperity. Its centre was around the street Ulița Mare, which from 1589 was known as Lipscani (now part of the historical centre of Bucharest). Before the 1700s, the city became the most important trade centre of Walachia and a permanent location of the Walachian court after 1698.

Partly destroyed by natural disasters and rebuilt several times during the following 200 years, hit by Caragea's plague in 1813-1814, the city was wrested from Ottoman control and occupied at several intervals by the Habsburg Monarchy (1716,

1737, 1789) and Imperial Russia (three times between 1768 and 1806). It was placed under Russian administration between 1828 and the Crimean War, with an interlude during the Bucharest-centred 1848 Walachian revolution.

On March 23rd 1847 a fire burned down about 2,000 buildings in Bucharest, destroying a third of it. The social divide between rich and poor was described at the time as making the city "a savage hotchpotch".

In 1861, when Walachia and Moldavia were united to form the Principality of Romania, Bucharest became the new nation's capital. In 1881, it was transformed into the political centre of the newly-proclaimed Kingdom of Romania. During the second half of the 19th century, due to this new status, the city's population increased dramatically and a new period of urban development began. The extravagant architecture and cosmopolitan high culture of this period won Bucharest the nickname of "Little Paris" ('Micul Paris'), with Calea Victoriei as its Champs-Élysées.

Between 1916 and 1918, Bucharest was occupied by German forces, the legitimate capital being moved to Iași. After World War I, the town became the capital of Greater Romania. As the capital of an Axis country, Bucharest suffered heavy losses during World War II, due to Allied bombings, and on August 23rd 1944 saw the royal coup which brought Romania into the anti-German camp, suffering a short but destructive period of Luftwaffe bombings in reprisal.

During Nicolae Ceaușescu's leadership (1965-1989), most of the historic part of the city was destroyed and replaced with communist-style buildings, particularly high-rise apartment blocks. The best example of this is the Civic Centre (Centrul Civic), including the Palace of the Parliament, where an entire historic quarter was razed to make way for Ceaușescu's megalomaniac constructions.

In 1977 a strong 7.4 on the Richter-scale earthquake took 1,500 lives and destroyed many old buildings. Nevertheless, some historic neighbourhoods did survive to this day.

The Romanian Revolution of 1989 began with mass anti-Ceaușescu protests in Timișoara and continued in Bucharest, leading to the overthrow of the communist regime. Dissatisfied with the post-revolutionary leadership of the National Salvation Front, students' leagues and opposition groups organized large-scale protests continued in

1990 (the Golaniad), which were violently stopped by the miners of Valea Jiului (the Mineriad). Several other Mineriads followed, the results of which included a government change and numerous destructions in the town.

After 2000, due to the advent of Romania's economic boom, the city went through a modernisation process. In January 2007, Bucharest became the main development engine of Romania, as new EU Member State, and is currently undergoing a period of urban renewal. Various residential and commercial developments are underway, particularly in the Northern districts, while Bucharest's historic centre is now experiencing significant restoration.

II.1.2 Demographics

Bucharest's population experienced two phases of rapid growth, the first in the late 19th century, when the city grew in importance and size, and the second during the communist period, when a massive urbanisation campaign was launched and many people migrated from rural areas to the capital. At that time, due to Ceaușescu's ban on abortion and contraception, natural increase was also significant. Since the fall of communism, however, the city's population continues to gently fall, due both to emigration and to a declining birth rate.

Approximately 97% of the population of Bucharest are ethnic Romanians, with the second largest ethnic group being the Roma: 1.4% of the population. Other significant ethnic groups are the Hungarians (0.3%), the Jews (0.1%), the Turks (0,1%) and the Germans (0,1%). Some other inhabitants of Bucharest are of Greek, Armenian, Lipovan and Italian descent.

In terms of religion, 96.1% of the population are Orthodox, 1.2% are Roman Catholic, 0.5% are Muslim and 0.4% are Eastern Rite-Catholic.

II.1.3 Economical Indicators

Economically, the city is by far the most prosperous in Romania, producing around 21% of the country's GDP and about one-quarter of its industrial production, while only accounting for 9% of the country's population.

Based on local purchasing power, Bucharest has a per-capita GDP of 64.5% - that of the European Union average (2004) and more than twice the Romanian average: US\$20,057.

In September 2005 Bucharest had an unemployment rate of 2.6%, significantly lower than the national unemployment rate of 5.7%.

Bucharest's economy is mainly centred on industry and services, with services particularly growing in importance in the last ten years. The city is also Romania's largest centre of information technology and communications.

II.1.4 Architecture

Bucharest's architecture is eclectic due to the many influences the city has experienced throughout its history. The centre is a mixture of medieval, neoclassical and art nouveau buildings, as well as 'neo-Romanian' buildings dating from the beginning of the 20th century and modern buildings from the 1930s and 1940s. The current predominant cityscape is, however, that of mostly-utilitarian communist-era architecture.

Of the city's medieval architecture, most of what survived into modern times was destroyed by the communists and replaced by high-rise apartment blocks. Still, some historical precincts remain, the most notable of which is the Lipscani area.

The city centre also retained architecture from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, particularly the interwar period, which is often seen as the "golden age" of Bucharest's architecture. Much of the architecture of the time belongs to a remarkably strong modern (rationalist) architecture current, led by Horia Creanga and Marcel Iancu, which managed to literally change the face of the city.

A major part of Bucharest's architecture is made up of buildings constructed during the communist era replacing the historical architecture with "more efficient" high

density apartment blocks. In Nicolae Ceaușescu's project of systematization many new buildings were built in previously-historical areas, which were razed and then built upon from scratch.

The newest contribution to Bucharest's architecture took place after the fall of communism, and particularly after 2000, when the city went through a period of architectural revitalization. Buildings from this time are mostly made out of glass and steel, and often have more than fifteen storeys.

As of 2005, there is a significant number of office buildings in construction, particularly in the Northern and Eastern parts. Additionally, there has been a trend in recent years to add modern wings and façades to historic buildings, the most prominent example of which is the Bucharest Architects' Association Building, which is a modern glass-and-steel construction built inside a historic stone façade.

Aside from buildings used for business and institutions, various new residential developments are currently underway, many of which consist of modern high-rise constructions with a glass exterior, surrounded by American-style residential communities. These developments are increasingly prominent in the Northern suburbs of the city, which are less densely-populated and are home to middle- and upper-class Bucharesters due to the process of gentrification.

Bucharest has a number of landmarks that are identified with it throughout the world. Perhaps the most prominent of these is the Palace of the Parliament, which was built in the 1980s during the presidency of Ceaușescu. Currently the largest building in Europe and the second largest in the world, the Palace houses the Romanian Parliament, as well as the National Museum of Contemporary Art.

Other well-known landmarks of Bucharest are the Old Town, the Triumphal Arch, built after the model of the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, the Athenaeum as well as various museum buildings.

II.1.5 The Arts Scene

Bucharest's arts scene has, especially in the last 15 years, become more modern and worldly in comparison to other Romanian cities. Traditional Romanian culture, however, continues to have a significant influence in many art fields to this day.

The visual arts scene contains a number of museums featuring both classical and contemporary Romanian art, as well as selected international works. Despite the extensive classical art galleries and museums in the city, there is also a contemporary arts scene that has become increasingly prominent in recent times. The National Museum of Contemporary Art (MNAC), situated in a wing of the Palace of the Parliament, is probably the best known example in this sense. Opened in 2004, it contains a widespread collection of Romanian and international contemporary art, in a number of expressive forms. The MNAC now also manages the Kalinderu MediaLab, which caters specifically to multimedia and experimental art.

The performing arts are also a strong cultural asset of Bucharest, and the city has a number of renowned facilities and institutions. The most prominent is the neoclassical Romanian Athenaeum, which hosts classical music concerts, the George Enescu Festival, and the George Enescu Philharmonic. Bucharest is also home to the Romanian National Opera, and the I.L. Caragiale National Theatre. There is also a large number of smaller, yet nevertheless very important theatres throughout the city that cater to specific genres, such as the Comedy Theatre, the Nottara Theatre, the Bulandra Theatre, the Odeon Theatre, and the Constantin Tănase Revue Theatre. New alternative forms of performances and happenings are more and more appreciated and present in both established theatres and non-conventional spaces (subway, streets, clubs etc).

Although not very prominent at the moment, there are also growing initiatives focusing on video art, design art and graffiti art in the city.

Bucharest is home to several festivals, although again mainly mainstream ones. The National Opera organises the yearly International Opera Festival, which includes ensembles and orchestras from all over the world. The Romanian Athenaeum Society hosts the George Enescu Classical Music Festival at various locations in the city in September every year. The Museum of the Romanian Peasant and the Village Museum

organise a number of events throughout the year showcasing Romanian folk arts and crafts.

In recent years, due to the growing prominence of the Chinese community in Bucharest, several Chinese cultural events have taken place. The first officially-organised Chinese festival was the Chinese New Year's Eve Festival of February 2005. Also in 2005, Bucharest was the first city in Southeastern Europe to host the international CowParade, which resulted in dozens of decorated cow sculptures being placed at various points across the city. Moreover, since 2005 Bucharest has its own contemporary art biennale, the Bucharest Biennale, with the next edition in 2008.

II.2 The Local Government: History, Functioning and Structure. Overview of the Cultural Administration²⁶.

II.2.1 The Local Government: History, Functioning and Structure

Historically, the first documentary recording of a form of governing of Bucharest is in 1563 in a piece of law writing down the tasks and responsibilities of the mayor and his twelve counselors ('pargari').

1831 saw the setting up of the so-called City Advice Council, the local public administration of today, which in 1848 was replaced by the Municipal Advice Council.

In 1926, Bucharest was administratively divided into a central zone and a peripheral one. The former had four sectors, each with their local council. The peripheral zone was the rest of the territory up to the forts (suburban communes). The overall interests of the city and of the suburban communes were managed by the General Council, formed of thirty-six elected councillors, twenty-four named councillors and up to seven co-opted councillors. The management of the Town Hall was ensured by the General Mayor, chosen by the Council.

The city is today administratively known as the Municipality of Bucharest and is subdivided into six sectors. It has a unique status in the Romanian administration, since it is the only municipality that is not part of a county, as all the other cities.

Currently, the city government is headed by a General Mayor. Decisions are approved and discussed by the General Council made up of fifty-five elected councillors. Each of the city's six administrative sectors has their own twenty-seven-seat sectorial council, town hall and mayor. The powers of local government over a certain area are therefore shared by the Bucharest City Hall and the local sectorial councils with little or no overlapping authority. The general rule is that the main City Hall is responsible for citywide utilities such as the water and transport systems and the main boulevards, while

²⁶ Information taken from the Development Programme for the Municipality of Bucharest 2000-2008 and from the Organisation and Functioning Regulations of the City Hall.

sectorial town halls manage the contact between individuals and the local government, secondary streets, parks, schools and cleaning services.

The six sectors of Bucharest are numbered from one to six and are disposed radially so that each one has under its administration an area of the centre. They are numbered clockwise and are further divided into districts without any form of administration.



The six administrative sectors of Bucharest

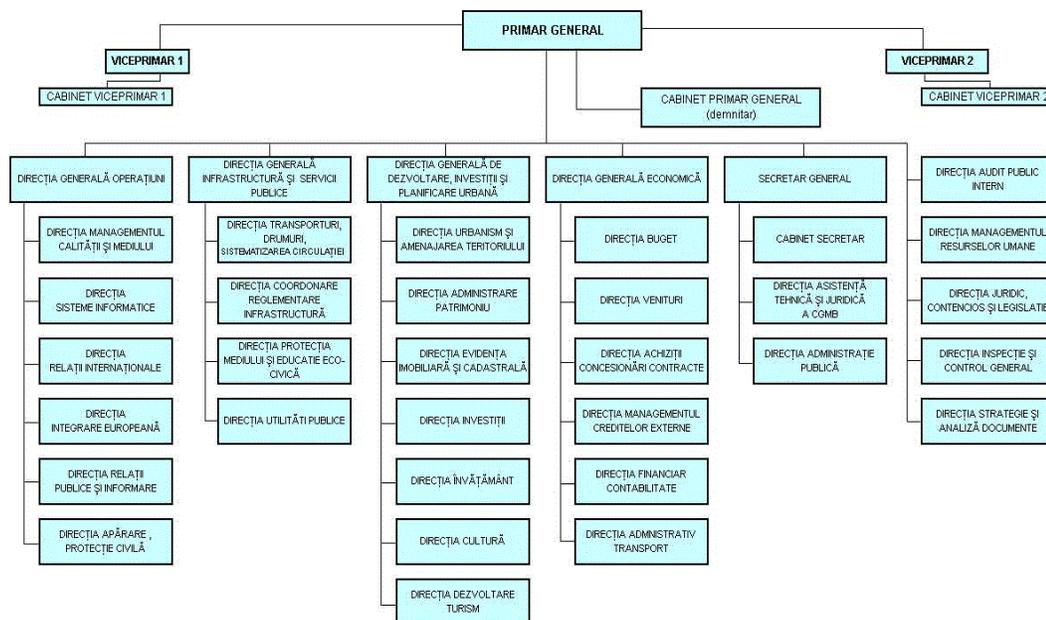
Like all other local councils in Romania, the Bucharest sectorial councils, the city's General Council and the mayors are elected every four years by the local population. Additionally, Bucharest has a Prefect, who is appointed by Romania's central government. The Prefect is not allowed to be a member of a political party. His/her role is to represent the national government at local level, acting as a liaison and facilitating the implementation of National Development Plans and governing programmes at this local level.

The Municipality of Bucharest and the surrounding area form the Bucharest Development Region, which is equivalent to NUTS-II regions in the European Union and is used by it and the Romanian Government for statistical analysis and regional development. The Bucharest Development Region is not, however, an administrative entity.

At municipal level, the General Council of the Municipality of Bucharest has a legislative function, according to which, its members, elected for a period of four years through political vote, decide in all issues of local interest.

The executive function is carried out by the Mayor, elected by direct vote for four years. The Mayor is the chief of the local public administration and of his own specialty apparatus, which he manages and controls. According to the Town Hall's Organisation and Functioning Regulations (ROF), there is no subordination between the General Council, as deliberative power, and the Mayor, as executive power.

Currently, there are 635 employees in the entire administration, out of which 297 young people under 35 years old. Out of the total number of employees, 443 (70%) have higher education (university level).



The Organisational Chart of Bucharest's City Hall²⁷

²⁷ According to the City Hall's web site, www.pmb.ro

II.2.2 Overview of the Cultural Administration

The Culture Department ('Direcția de cultură') is part of the general department for Development, Investments and Urban Planning of the City Hall ('Direcția generală de dezvoltare, investiții și planificare urbană'), being directly subordinated to the cabinet of the Mayor, as seen in the organisational chart above. According to its director, *'this department has existed since the beginning of the 1990s, with very few changes in structure and responsibilities'*²⁸.

The main objective of the Culture Department is *'to contribute to the development and maintenance of the infrastructure of the municipal cultural institutions found under the subordination of the General Council and to identify, promote and coordinate projects aimed at the cultural development of Bucharest'*²⁹. As the department also encompasses faith issues under its competencies, another objective is that of managing the relations with the religious confessions with the view to co-financing their activity.

The Culture Department is made up of the Compartment for Evaluation, Programs, Cultural Strategies and Cultural Institutions and of the Compartment for Cultural Partnership with Legal Bodies and Individuals.

The Compartment for Evaluation, Programs, Cultural Strategies and Cultural Institutions has the main tasks of evaluating the programs and cultural strategies proposed by cultural institutions, and of elaborating development programs and cultural strategies for the public cultural institutions found under its authority.

Other competencies of this Compartment include the promotion of measures for the development of the cultural offer of Bucharest, for ensuring necessary conditions for the carrying out of cultural and artistic activities organised by public city institutions, non-governmental organisations and other legal entities or individuals.

In the Organisation and Functioning Regulations of the City Hall, it is mentioned that this sub-direction of the Culture Department is to establish and maintain cooperation / collaboration relations with other departments of the urban administration (e.g. the

²⁸ Extract from a telephone interview in August 2007

²⁹ From the Organisation and Functioning Regulations (ROF) of the City Hall, on www.pmb.ro

Department for European Integration, the Department for Urbanism, the Department for International Relations and the Department for Tourism Development), with the specialty departments of the six sectorial town halls, with the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Public Finances and with the non-governmental cultural scene, so as to have a more integrative approach in municipal cultural topical issues.

Among other responsibilities of this Compartment:

- to fundament and promote measures regarding the protection and conservation of historical and architectural monuments belonging to the city public domain, as well as measures for the conservation of monuments of public importance;
- to fundament and promote support measures for the activity of the religious confessions in Bucharest;
- to manage and analyse the information concerning the specific legislation in the field of culture, inform the Mayor and the General Council of the evolution of this legislation, with a view to adopting norms regarding the organisation and the activity of public cultural institutions and to substantiating the municipal authorities' attempts to support and develop the cultural offer;
- to analyse the dynamics of the local cultural life, the results of the projects and programs carried out by the municipality in this field and propose fundamental measures for the development of the cultural offer.

The second compartment of the Culture Department, that for Partnerships with Legal Entities and Individuals is firstly meant to offer assistance to all legal entities and individuals interested in contributing to the diversification of the organisation forms of the local cultural life, as well as to those carrying out cultural programs and projects in partnership with municipal authorities and institutions.

Among other duties, the Compartment draws up and proposes collaboration measures with unions of creation and professional associations of public utility and initiates partnership programs with them so as to develop and support the local cultural offer.

Under the authority of the Culture Department there are twenty-six public cultural institutions: fourteen performing arts institutions, three museums (two of national importance), the Culture Centre at the Gates of Bucharest, Mogoșoaia Palace, the

Metropolitan Library, the Monuments and Tourism Patrimony Administration, ARCUB - the Centre of Cultural Projects of the Municipality of Bucharest, the Popular School of Art, the Centre for the Preservation and Valorisation of Tradition and Popular Creation, the Institute of Oriental Studies, Friederich Schiller House of Culture and the Popular University Ioan I. Dalles.

The relationship between these institutions and the Culture Department of the City Hall is described as one of mutual collaboration towards drafting strategies and programmes and of financial and logistic support from the Department towards the institutions.

Of the entities enumerated earlier, ARCUB, the Centre of Cultural Projects, and the Monuments and Tourism Patrimony Administration (MTPA) have important roles in policy recommendations, since they are referred to as the main municipal institution intended to work on outlining recommendations and strategies for the local cultural scene and, respectively, the authority in charge with promoting the image of Bucharest as a tourist destination.

Founded in 1996, ARCUB has the mission *‘to educate the public through the arts and to support young artists who are not included in traditional institutional structures’*³⁰. ARCUB is intended to act as a bridge between the local government and civil society, organizing the cultural programmes of the General City Council, initiating, maintaining and developing links with public institutions, cultural associations and other non-governmental organisations with a view to diversifying the local cultural offer and to promoting the cultural identity of the city. The Centre is meant to propose programmes and strategies for various artistic fields (theatre, music, visual arts, dance) and for publishing production.

The other institution, the Monuments and Tourism Patrimony Administration, was created for carrying out a multitude of activities related to research, specialized assistance and promotion of tourist objectives that give personality to the city. As stated on the webpage³¹, MTPA collaborates with the Culture Department and the cultural institutions of the City Hall, with the Ministry of Tourism, the Department of Tourism

³⁰ ARCUB’s web page, www.arcub.ro

³¹ www.ampt.ro

from the Economic Academy of Bucharest and the Faculty of Geographic Studies of the Bucharest University. It aims at preserving and highlighting the public forum monuments of the capital, by specific activities in collaboration with the Ministry of Cults and Culture, the Union of Fine Artists, Professional Artists and Architects.

II.3 The Official Approach to Culture in the City Cultural Administration. Diagnosis.

There is no official document specifically outlining the cultural policy of Bucharest at the level of the city government. The status quo is that the local cultural administration provides no definition of culture, no vision for what its place is / should be in the city, no other priorities than financing the public cultural institutions and preserving the heritage and no long-term cultural strategy.

Culture is implicitly understood in restrictive terms as the arts and the built cultural heritage and references to its role in urban development are scattered briefly and without prominence in two general documents: *the Development Programme of the Municipality of Bucharest for 2000-2008* and the *Regional Strategic Framework for Bucharest-Ilfov 2007-2013*³², which is a working instrument for all decision-making actors from the public and private sectors concerned with the socio-economic development of this region.

When interviewed, the director of the Culture Department did refer to an existent cultural policy for Bucharest, although never saying the words ‘implicit policy’, as the case actually is: *‘Up until the year 2000, the municipal cultural institutions operated without having a coherent cultural strategy, practicing a financing scheme that meant their mere survival. That situation made difficult the initiation of medium and long-term programmes as well as the outlining of clear objectives and strategies that looked at the importance and role of culture in defining and keeping the urban identity. The cultural policy between 2000-2004 embedded a coherent, unitary and straight-to-the-point approach within a global artistic, cultural and urban vision, stressing the support for traditional values, large-scale cultural projects, the importance of diversifying the cultural offer, the cultural products, and the target audiences. The policy looked at the rehabilitation and re-dimensioning of spaces, in an attempt to thus come up with a new attitude towards the city’s culture and the municipal institutions. The urban cultural policy will continue until 2008 with long-term investments for modernising the existing*

³² Both documents can be downloaded (Romanian version only) from the City Hall’s web site at www.pmb.ro

*cultural spaces and for creating new ones at the standards of a truly European metropolis. Rehabilitation plans are already made for all the existing public cultural institutions and new funds are considered for the new objectives: a children's cultural centre, a pilot project for theatre workshops, and a deposit store for settings, costumes and other equipments needed by performing arts institutions*³³.

A first remark on the above statement is that the city policy in the field of culture is implicit and not explicit, contrary to what the town officials call 'cultural policy'. It was possible to analyse this implicit policy, beyond the wooden language of the documents and the interviewees, from what has been financed and supported so far (budget analysis), from underlying statements of city officials and the overall present-day situation of the cultural scene, as also debated with NGO representatives during telephone interviews.

A look at the Development Programme of the Municipality of Bucharest for 2000-2008 reveals an accent on the concept of general sustainable development, seen as a strategic objective in all policies: *'putting to good use the existent resources and contributing to the overall improvement by creating a cohesive system of economic, social and cultural relations'*.

In cultural terms, the concept of sustainable development is understood in this document as a way of *'preserving the cultural heritage of the previous and present generations and developing the creation capacity of the future generations'*. Furthermore, among *'the most important principles ensuring sustainable development'*, the City Hall mentions here *'economic and socio-cultural development'*, but without further detailing the idea.

The national cultural policy also emphasises that culture is *'not only seen as one of the key factors of sustainable development, but also as a core indicator of the overall quality of life'*³⁴, so, in this respect, the local urban approach follows this guideline. However, setting aside the written principles in the Development Programme, in reality, judging by the lack of research and awareness among local decision-makers on the links

³³ Interview in August 2007

³⁴ Country profile of Romania on the Compendium of Cultural Policies in Europe, www.culturalpolicies.net

between culture and economic growth, there is mostly a view that culture is a source of expenditure, a 'must' that ought to be ticked in budgets.

Culture is seen here as mostly an addition to the development of other fields, as an adornment without a strong potential for bringing about social change, wealth, economic benefits, tourism and a general increase in the quality of citizens' lives.

On the other hand, at national level, documents do suggest that cultural policy should be considered a key component of any other general development strategy. However, the reality of the local administration's approach shows that culture has no prominence in the political discourse at urban level, as it is the case in cities like London, for instance, where all the other policy domains are seen through the cultural perspective: '*Culture is London's heartbeat. It underpins the capital's social, economical and physical dynamism*'³⁵.

Another relevant idea conveyed by the Development Plan is that of rehabilitation, reconstruction and urban revitalization. The Old Historical Centre of Bucharest is one of the main focuses in this sense. The administration endeavours to rehabilitate it and shed light on its unique architectural heritage (520 buildings, with 38% of them registered as being of unique architectural style) so as to emphasize the identity of the town and also further introduce the centre into circuits of tourism and events, although no precise plan of implementation is available yet.

Rehabilitation, reconstruction and investing in institutional infrastructure are actually the key words of the existing initiatives of the cultural administration of Bucharest in the field. From this point of view we cannot call projects what the officials are doing since 2000, but rather an automatism of financing an institutional path in culture. The budget for culture was not available for consultation upon request, but the director of the Culture Department explained while interviewed that the Town Hall's priorities have stayed almost unchanged since 2003: giving subsidies to public cultural institutions (for personnel and infrastructure expenses) and preserving the built cultural heritage. Moreover, for the timeframe 2005-2008, the priorities are again to ensure the good carrying out of activities inside cultural institutions: covering operational,

³⁵ From the 'Cultural Strategy of London', 2004, www.london.gov.uk

production, consolidation and rehabilitation costs. Information about the next timeframe after 2008 were not available either, fact which shows not only a lack of institutional transparency, but also a shortage of clear vision for what the development areas should be in culture on a long-term basis.

The previous remarks trigger the idea that the implicit cultural policy of the city is built on an institutionalist vision, rather traditional, which favours ‘safe’ culture as managed by public institutions. Even though the country cultural policy speaks of the promotion and development of contemporary creations and support for creators, none of the City Hall’s documents mention anything about this topic, which means that the policies at these two levels are not always organically intertwined.

The outdated structure of the cultural city administration is too occupied with managing the ongoing crises of the public funded cultural institutions under its responsibility to think of issues like complementing ‘mainstream’ with ‘alternative’ here. The institutional logic of the administration does not venture into any risk-taking approaches that would bring innovation and contemporary non-traditional creation to the fore. Incoherently enough, ARCUB, the Centre of Cultural Projects of the municipality, includes support for young non-established creation in its mission statement. While interviewed, the director of the Centre confessed that due to the fact that the Culture Department of the City Hall does not echo this element among its objectives, it is actually very difficult for ARCUB to genuinely select these young non-mainstream arts initiatives and offer them financial support (as there is basically no clear ‘chapter’ justifying this).

The city administration is reluctant to funding activities which are seen as ‘marginal’, often aimed at disadvantaged social groups or innovative and experimental in character, than to withdrawing money invested in theatres, concert halls and other building-based, traditional arts institutions. However, one may say that a greater use of public and open spaces, temporary structures and buildings combining culture with other types of activities could free up resources to fund more innovative, participatory and decentralized cultural activities and projects.

Furthermore, the issue of new alternative cultural spaces (in abandoned factories, for instance) seems unknown, for the local administration despite the fact that the Centre for Studies and Research in Culture found under the authority of the Ministry of Culture

and Religious Affairs of Romania carried out a large thorough study³⁶ on the way post-industrial spaces are now used in Bucharest and their potential of being converted into realms of new artistic effervescence contributing to community development.

It is important to point out that the unknown character of this significant research is triggered by another shortage of the local system, i.e. the badly managed collaboration policy with other actors. On paper, the Culture Department is supposed to maintain a close collaboration relationship with other departments of the City Hall (as described by the competencies' section of the Culture Department in the beginning of the paper), with various ministries and their affiliated institutions and with non-governmental organisations in the field, in order to ensure an integrated approach to culture that would give legitimacy to all solutions and strategies traced. Nevertheless, in reality, there is no such thing, although the statute nicely incorporates this integrated approach principle with the actors enumerated above.

In addition, the Regional Strategic Framework also stresses that urban matters should be dealt with in an interdisciplinary way, cutting across sectors and departments of the local administration. However, according to a representative of the Association for Urban Transition, the official approach to culture still suffers to a very large extent from 'sectorialism', as interdisciplinarity in cultural matters, as well as cooperation and participative decision-making with the civil society are completely missing.

Although also mentioned in the national cultural policy and in the Regional Strategic Framework, the principle of community participation of citizens in debates and decision-making issues does not have a strong tradition in the local government's practice. A representative of the Ecumest Cultural Association interviewed on this topic considers that the City Hall functions after a '*please don't touch*' principle³⁷, based on a theoretical and superficial form of respect towards civil society actors which actually prevents a mutual 'touching' of each other's businesses and thus politely refuses

³⁶ 'Barometer of Cultural Consumption' (2006), www.culturamet.ro

³⁷ Coined syntagm after the well known 'please touch' principle, proposed by Eduard Miralles, Head of External Affairs at the Culture Department of Barcelona, which basically calls for a new relationship between culture, policies and citizenship.

cooperation and genuine participation. Moreover, the same interviewee believes that this weak participative decision-making in cultural matters at city level is caused by the rigid procedures the Town Hall has in this respect and the incapacity of the administration to inform the public opinion about the intentions it has with regard to the future of the city. To all these, the representative of the Association for Urban Transition added the lack of trust of citizens and NGOs to involve in debate issues with the slow machinery of the local government.

This weak collaboration with other public and civil society actors has a negative impact on the research and knowledge data base of the Culture Department, as there is no awareness there of the studies and recent developments occurring in the field. As the director of the Department mentions, there is '*no research capacity in the institution*'³⁸. To this, we might add: and to efforts to build on the already existent researches in urban developments. Paradoxically, the statute of the Culture Department as depicted in the beginning of the analysis, does mention the '*diversification of the cultural offer and the audiences*', but without being able to narrow down the direction in which these should be diversified.

Any strategy should have as starting point the mapping of the existing situation and cultural needs. If this is missing, the subsequent strategies have no substance and legitimacy. To give but one example, the clerks in the Culture Department had not heard about the elaboration of the Barometer of Cultural Consumption carried out at national level by the same Centre for Studies and Research in Culture. Important data could have been extracted from there about the cultural consumption in Bucharest, but the institutional inertia of the local administration neglected this valuable tool in writing up guiding principles and policies in the domain. Again the lack of communication between institutions that should in reality be directly linked in such matters and reciprocally motivated to look into the results of such studies.

Continuing the diagnosis, one should bring into discussion the misbalance of cultural coverage between the centre and the margins of the town, despite the concept of '*polycentrism as a way of cancelling the peripheries*' found in the Regional Strategic

³⁸ Interview in August 2007

Framework for 2007-2013. To prove the bad management of this balance, there is actually no need for too much scientific research: the empirical data are enough for shedding light on the inexistence of cultural institutions, organisations, events and initiatives in general in the city's peripheries. This is what the director of the Centre of Studies and Research in Culture referred to as '*unequal cultural development*'³⁹, where the centre swallows up the entire offer and consequently the audiences and thus becomes gentrified, as opposed to the ghettoization of the margins. In an interview with a representative of the Association for Urban Transition (June 2007), the following pertinent phrase is emphasised: '*Bucharest has an acute lack of urban people as all its culture is kept in the centre*'

One explanation of this situation might be the administrative division of the six sectors in the city – like a pie system. This makes each sector deal with both centre-related and periphery-related issues, case in which the centre is always given priority. Ideally, the town should be differently divided in concentric circles, so that the peripheries and its problems be allotted separate special attention, since it is known that the centre and the peripheries are not confronted with the same problems. This is however, a chance that is in the hands of the general administration and not of the cultural administration.

Staying within the 'lacks' chapter, one ought to point out the bad management and exploitation of the city identity, especially when connected to tourism. There are currently no coherent official strategies for emphasising Bucharest's distinctiveness as a source of stimulating community pride and unity or for branding the town. There is, however, a short note on the Town Hall's website saying that collaboration with a promotion agency is underway in this city marketing respect, but without other details.

The current approach to city as a destination is related to mass tourism and not to the niche sector of cultural tourism, which shows again a shortage of keeping the pace with European trends in the field. The old historic centre, presently under construction, is the most frequently mentioned asset of the city identity and tourism related issues.

³⁹ Extract from the interview carried out in July 2007

The Development Plan for 2000-2008 refers to Bucharest in a very flat and static manner: *'metropolis of European importance'*, *'European capital-city'*, *'main engine of European integration'* or *'first gate with Europe and the world'*, attributes which are far from conveying a cultural identity of the town and wrapping an attractive tourism atmosphere around it. Most mentions are about preserving the identity of the city, (understood in material terms – built heritage) without a care to also display the immaterial gems of the city. Building a layer of modernity and an orientation towards the future on the existing cultural heritage is seen as a challenge for the years to come only (the Regional Strategic Framework 2007-2013). Bucharest as an emotional experience is also neglected.

When discussing with the town's officials in the cultural administrations, one notices that there are no preoccupations for the notion of Bucharest as creative city, as a place where innovation, creative industries are given ground to unleash their potential. Awareness of this 'creative city' development in urban cultural policies, as well as of its benefic impact on the economic and cultural tourism sectors seems to lack at local level. The 'official' Bucharest is definitively not an advocate of creativity, despite the fact that the country's cultural policy stresses the importance of fostering the development of the cultural industries sector – yet another incongruence with the national level view.

Linked to the promotion of the city is also the issue of the webpage of the local administration, which is part of the overall image a visitor accessing it makes about the town. Apart from the most obvious striking traits: flat, uninteresting, bad layout and poorly translated in English, the site is rather difficult to navigate, with unclear content and information that is many clicks away.

The navigation menu of the website includes: 'The City', where there are a short and unappealingly presented legend of the city, some snapshots of its history and a few pictures of various landmarks of Bucharest and 'Culture / leisure', where there is a list of public cultural institutions. There is no focus on events, and, when compared to most of the South-East European town hall Internet pages, there is no calendar of artistic events and no recommendations for foreign tourists. The site is therefore not enhancing the visibility of the city. Furthermore, it does not provide visitors the possibility to post their opinions and feedback.

As for the cultural administration's focus on audience categories in the town, we can say that the city is quite children-friendly, as there are currently one theatre for children subsidized by the authorities (Țăndărică Theatre), a Comedy Opera for Children and a new cultural centre for children as a project for the next years. Young people are also taken into account in several institutional initiatives, out of which we mention the Metropolitan Youth Theatre. This care for children and young people shows a good care for the educational part of cultural activities and is more than welcome in the present-day context. On the other hand, there is no attention given to elder and disabled people, which is, however, on the 'to do list' of the Culture Department for the following years, as stated by its director.

The Regional Strategic Framework for 2007-2013 also dwells on the notion of multiculturalism at the level of the capital. Although not really a culturally diverse town (97% of the population is Romanian), this is an issue that might need tackling in the next decades, especially now after the country's European integration. This is the reason why a strategy for dealing with this future challenge has to be kept in mind and the 'multiculturalism' terminology be replaced with 'interculturalism', as all recent developments request it. Interculturalism chances the perspective for approaching minorities, emphasising their dynamic integration and mingling with locals and changing the separate preservation of identities in the same community. The documents' reference to multiculturalism may be here in accordance with the national cultural policy, which also includes the promotion of 'multiculturalism and the protection of the culture of minorities'

The last diagnosis issue refers to the qualification and the expertise of the cultural administration's personnel. Access to their profile was not possible on request, however the director of the Culture Department revealed that all advisers have university degrees in humanities or sociology. On the other hand, one negative aspect is that none of them has a cultural policy academic background and they do not benefit from continuous training in the field. The staff is thus not updated with the developments in urban cultural

issues as they should be and this reflects upon the shortage of quality and pertinent initiatives and cultural leadership at policy level in the city.

At a first analysis of the available documents and information of the City Hall, of the cultural administration's competencies and approaches as both stated in interviews and inferred from other resources, these are the main key areas the diagnosis has identified as needing careful consideration in a first instance. The next chapter will try to provide solutions to some of these problems that could serve as starting point for the eventual elaboration of a city cultural policy official document, with a clear vision, with objectives, priorities and pertinent strategies for enhancing the role of culture in Bucharest.

II.4 Highlights of the Key Elements of the Diagnosis (summary of findings)

- no official document outlining the cultural policy at city level;
- no explicit definition of culture (implicit: the arts and the built heritage);
- no long-term vision of the place of culture in the city, no long-term objectives or strategies;
- no prominence of culture in general plans of urban sustainable development;
- view based on financing public cultural institutions (institutionalist vision) and on the preservation of the built heritage (key words: rehabilitation, reconstruction and material revitalisation);
- no declared support for contemporary non-mainstream creation (support for traditional values and large-scale events);
- no balance of cultural activity between the centre and the peripheries;
- no strategy of enhancing the city identity and of city branding;
- no strong links with cultural tourism, but rather with mass tourism;
- no genuine understanding of the economic impact of culture;
- no role for the creative industries in the city (no concept of creative city);
- no integrated approach to culture based on operational interdisciplinary collaborations with public, private and civil society actors for outlining cultural policies and strategies;
- no stimulation of the participation of civil society actors in decision-making processes (no empowerment or transparency);
- no research commissioning, no close links with research institutes so as to map the cultural needs at city level and draft measures for the enhancement of a diverse cultural offer and of audience development;
- children- and youth-friendly cultural initiatives (good accent on the educational aspect of culture), but no preoccupation for the elderly and the disabled;
- no guidelines for cultural minorities and interculturalism;
- overall incongruent reflection of the national cultural policy;

- no cultural leadership in the Culture Department, insufficient personnel expertise in urban cultural policies, no continuous staff training and keeping up-to-date with trends and development in the domain;
- no membership presence in European and international networks dealing with cultural policy issues (e.g. Eurocities);
- unattractive website.

**Policy Recommendations
for Enhancing the Role of Culture in Urban Development**

- Proposal addressed to the City Hall of Bucharest -

Following the evidence on the status quo of culture in Bucharest's urban policy, we shall now use the findings in the previous chapter to formulate guidelines for improving the local government's cultural framework, by focusing on issues that are missing and / or need further development.

This part is solution-oriented and value-driven, but, it should be kept in mind that it is not exhaustive, as it only focuses on those most neglected aspects of the city's cultural policy that are necessary for ensuring the basic conditions for a normal development. From this point of view, the recommendations below cannot be summed up as a standard policy-proposal, since they do not follow either the all-encompassing perspective of urban cultural matters, or the structure and layout of such a proposal. The recommendations are rather a first critical-thinking attempt to outline a strategic direction where there is none, raise awareness on what is completely ignored and call for further debate with other actors concerned that would then lead to concrete policy action. The paper is therefore a preliminary step towards a more integrated future proposal that should also deal with the implementation strategy of the policy, which is not covered here.

The proposal will not provide a solution to all the shortages identified in the previous pages, but focus on the most urgent priorities that need tackling at the city level now. Once this basis covered, then further enlargement upon other contemporary developments in the field can be looked at and applied to the case of Bucharest (the notion of 'creative city' is one example).

Consequently, the main 'must' issues that were identified by this research paper as requiring immediate action are:

- the need to bring culture ‘in from the margins’ in all urban policy approaches and see it as a source of sustainable development (within a long-term vision and strategy);
- the need to complement the concept of urban cultural regeneration understood solely as rehabilitation of built heritage and improvement of public cultural institutions’ infrastructure and logistics with the concept of regeneration through arts, events and citizen participation in community arts;
- the need to balance the support to mainstream cultural initiatives and to heritage with support to alternative and innovative creation, to non-institutional activities and events;
- the need to shed light to the city’s identity in a creative and attractive way to both local inhabitants and visitors;
- the need to bring culture to the city’s peripheries;
- the need to make genuinely functional the cross-sectoral collaboration relationships between the City Hall, other public institutions and civil society actors and outline an integrated approach to culture in the city;
- the need to rethink the mission, competencies and strategies of the Culture Department of the City Hall (institutional reform), especially its investment in the staff’s continuous professionalising and knowledge in field-related developments.

III.1 Development of Each Priority Area. Possible Solution(s).

The need to bring culture ‘in from the margins’ in all urban policy approaches and see it as a source of sustainable development (within a long-term vision and strategy).

Both the Romanian National Development Plan and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Bucharest-Ilfov Region mention culture as an important aspect of national, respectively local development. The acknowledgements do not go further than this, however, and the policy reality contradicts in both cases even this minimal written principle. Culture has no genuine prominent role within general strategies; moreover one can refer to it as a marginal issue in policy approaches.

The proposal advocates for putting cultural considerations and parameters into the mainstream of long-term planning and decision-making, by raising awareness among actors involved in the city’s design, planning, management and politics on the necessity to think their strategies and policies from a cultural perspective. For this, all actors involved should therefore have a minimal cultural literacy to assist their field of work and decision-making steps.

Jon Hawkes, an Australian cultural analyst, supports a cultural view in public planning and policy, a governmental framework that evaluates the cultural impacts of environmental, economic, and social decisions and plans implemented in cities⁴⁰. This model of sustainability acknowledges the fact that the vitality and quality of life of a community is closely linked to the vitality and quality of its cultural engagement, expression, dialogue, and celebration. This proves that the contribution of culture to creating lively cities and communities where people want to live, work, and visit plays a significant part in supporting social and economic health.

In the case of Bucharest, culture should therefore emerge out of the area of social and economic sustainability and be recognized as having a distinct and integral role in sustainable development.

The importance of introducing a strong cultural perspective in all other policy fields could become an awareness issue by looking at good practice examples of other

⁴⁰ ‘The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture’s Essential Role in Public Planning’, 2001.

city administrations which brought it to the fore, by looking at already existent researches that point out the benefits culture has on economic growth and the quality of urban life and by sharing all these findings during meetings and debates leading to committed and integrated concrete action with other policy fields.

In addition, the municipality could chose to adopt and implement Agenda 21 for culture (appendix 1), a strategic document by United Cities and Local Governments network, assisting cities in creating a long-term vision of culture as a basic pillar in their development. This measure could accompany and advice the cultural administration's work.

→ **Key syntagms:**

- *cultural parameters in general planning and decision-making;*
- *culture as source of sustainable development.*

The need to complement the concept of urban cultural regeneration understood as rehabilitation of built heritage and improvement of public cultural institutions' infrastructure and logistics with the concept of regeneration through arts, events and citizen participation in community arts.

The diagnosis revealed that the main priorities of the city administration are financing investments in reconstructing the damaged monuments and buildings belonging to the local tangible heritage and in equipment and space renovation for municipal cultural institutions. Although necessary, this single direction, unaccompanied by support to dynamic arts projects, immaterial heritage and events and new communication channels opened with citizens, causes if not stagnation, at least an incapacity to fully exploit the creative potential of the city' capital.

Charles Landy, in 'The Art of Regeneration' believes that resources for cultural initiatives should not be sidetracked into building programmes, because, as a consequence, *'an arts-led regeneration initiative actually supports the construction industry rather than people and cultural activity. It can take years to build an opera house, or refurbish a theatre, during which time no cultural benefit is being derived by*

*the local community. There may be inadequate resources to fund a full programme work as resources are eaten up by maintenance and running costs*⁴¹.

Bucharest should not wait for its whole cultural infrastructure to be rehabilitated and institutionally strengthened before also embarking upon a symbolical renewal of the city by bottom-up micro transformations based on a cultural vision that sees the arts and the dynamic cultural events as catalysts for regeneration.

According to the Eurocult 21 Integrated Report, *'community arts are linked with citizen participation and involvement where the process is the aim rather than the artistic product. As such, they are linked with the objective of Empowerment (four E's rationale). Projects can be community-led or initiated from above but they all show an intent to promote social change, social cohesion, diversity, identity and self-realisation'*⁴². For this, it is essential that the local approach develops new quantitative and qualitative indicators of a city where the citizens' opportunities to participate in and express themselves through diverse high-quality experiences are maximized and the potentials of the arts and culture in evolving a dynamic urban environment are sustained.

→ **Key syntagms:**

- *arts, events and citizen participation in community arts as catalysts for regeneration;*
- *symbolical renewal of the city by bottom-up micro transformations.*

The need to balance the support to mainstream cultural initiatives and to heritage with support to alternative and innovative creation, to non-institutional activities and events.

In 'Balancing Act: Twenty-One Strategic Dilemmas in Cultural Policy', Charles Landry and François Matarasso state that the management and exploitation of traditional cultural resources and of what is already well-established is generally easier and safer than encouraging the present-day changeable artistic and cultural environment,

⁴¹ 'The Art of Regeneration, Urban Renewal through Cultural Activity', 1996, p. 67

⁴² Eurocult 21 Integrated report by the Urban Cultural Profile Exchange Project in the 21st Century, 2005, p.13

contemporary, innovative or controversial work. However, this no-risk approach creates the *'danger of a rift between cultural policy and actual cultural development'*⁴³. It is therefore necessary to see culture as a living, changing and developing organism, the role of urban cultural policy being that of ensuring it remains so.

The suggestion would therefore be that the City Hall's cultural policy acknowledge the relevance of non-mainstream creation for the richness of the city's culture and begins to support it in a balanced way with the mainstream and traditional one. Support to new art forms (like digital and video art, comic book graphic, graffiti art etc), to un-established artists, contemporary arts events and new artistic spaces (actually emerging ever more Bucharest in the last years) is highly important.

→ **Key syntagms:**

- *encouraging the present-day changeable artistic and cultural environment, contemporary and innovative work;*
- *support to new art forms, non-mainstream artists, unconventional arts spaces.*

The need to shed light to the city's identity in a creative and attractive way to both local inhabitants and visitors.

As the diagnosis pointed out, there is currently no official vision of what Bucharest is and should be culture-wise, no preoccupation for laying emphasis on its unique identity.

This proposal argues for building on an identity that respects the memory and history of Bucharest, takes something from the bohemian interwar atmosphere, while also looks at its present and future. Revitalising the old historical part of the city (current focus) is not enough for shedding light on this identity that needs to go beyond built heritage and to project the city as an experience, with a distinctive narrative behind.

This narrative should work on the symbolical re-landscaping of the city that triggers community pride, a feeling of common city ownership for local people and emotional proximity for visitors.

⁴³ Matarasso and Landry, 1999, p.56

In addition, a well-branded city, emphasising its distinctiveness, its events etc could (re)introduce Bucharest in the cultural tourism circuit and have important economic benefits for the town.

One suggestion on how to start this process would be for the City Hall to commission a public survey dwelling on identifying what different people both living in Bucharest and outside it see as the town's unique images, metaphors, particular elements.

At this topical issue, the City Hall should also take into account improving the virtual presence of Bucharest on its web site, currently user-unfriendly, flat and without much information on the city's culture and calendar of events.

→ **Key syntagms:**

- *city identity that generates community pride, feelings of common city ownership for local people and emotional proximity for visitors;*
- *well-branded city narrative;*

The need to bring culture to the city's peripheries.

Culture is a right of the city margins just as it is of its centre. The need to have polycentrism as a guiding policy principle is highly important for ensuring an equal cultural development of the peripheries and the core, counteracting the emergence of problematic neighbourhoods and strengthening overall social cohesion.

In the case of Bucharest, documents do mention 'polycentrism', but in reality there is an incapacity to translate this into daily practice. Effort must therefore be made to change this situation and elaborate a pragmatic plan for cancelling the existing gaps between various zones in Bucharest. It is important that the City Hall coordinates the different neighbourhoods of Bucharest, the sectoral plans and policies with each other on this issue and ensure that any planned investment helps promote a well-balanced development of the entire urban area.

One solution would be to take the example of the French system of *'les politiques de la ville'*⁴⁴ and collaborate on polycentrism issues with decision-makers in charge of socio-cultural development, economic revitalization, employment, urban renewal, improvement of the quality of life, security, citizenship and prevention of delinquency, health etc.

The City Hall's cultural administration should come up with measures to decentralise cultural policy and resources, legitimising the creative originality of the peripheries, favouring the vulnerable sectors of society by giving incentives to initiating cultural and artistic activities, events and centres at the city's outskirts, too.

Furthermore, a more long-term change leading to polycentrism would be the modification of the way Bucharest is nowadays administratively divided: like a pie-chart into six sectors. However, this does not depend on the cultural administration, but on the general City Hall. A more suitable division would be maybe the concentric circles that would thus enable the margins and the centre to be dealt with separately and in a more tailor-made manner, since one ought to acknowledge that the problems of the centre and those of the peripheral areas are most of the times not similar.

→ **Key syntagms:**

- *polycentrism as a way of cancelling the city 'peripheries';*
- *balanced cultural development centre-margins.*

The need to make genuinely functional the cross-sectoral collaboration relationships between the City Hall, other public institutions and civil society actors and outline an integrated approach to culture in the city.

Good creative ideas come out of the diversity of perspectives. Cultural matters are no exception to this rule either and approaches that integrate what urban planners, architects, designers, economists, environmentalists, media representatives, academics, researchers, sociologists, politicians, managers, lawyers and artists have to say about

⁴⁴ Initiated in France in the '70s, 'la politique de la ville' is based on a public policy of city authorities that re-values problematic urban zones and reduces inequalities between city neighborhoods.

cultural sustainability in the city are nothing but beneficial and should be turned into an usual practice. After all, sustainable development means integrated development.

One suggestion is for the cultural administration to put together an interdisciplinary consultation platform with public, private and civil society actors committed to city development in order to set the scene for critical debate on cultural issues. This would provide more substance to decisions in the domain, ensure the integrated approach and also empower the local community, as a guarantee of democratic participation in decision-making, while making sure that policies respond to real existent needs and developments. In the end, it ought to be understood that the city is a collective project that requires the civic commitment of all.

Within this platform, a special attention should be paid to the sub-group working on improving the congruence between the national cultural policy and the local one.

→ **Key syntagms:**

- *interdisciplinary collaborations on cultural matters;*
- *a consultation platform with public, private and civil society actors: the city as the civic commitment of all.*

The need to rethink the mission, competencies and strategies of the Culture Department of the City Hall (institutional reform), especially its investment in the staff's continuous professionalising and knowledge in field-related developments.

The institutional reform proposed should start from the need to improve both the work frame and the mental infrastructure of the cultural administration and should have as key priorities:

- a visionary reformulation of the mission, statute and competencies;
- encouraging leadership and initiative among the department's personnel;
- investing in the continuous training of the staff, so that all employees of the department strengthen their knowledge and stay up-to-date with trends and development tendencies in urban cultural policies;
- outlining effective linkage strategies with other departments of the City Hall, as well as with other public, private and civil society actors;

- networking with other European cities (e.g. through networks like Eurocities, United Cities and Local Governments, the Research and Training Network on Urban Europe), for continuous expertise-building.

→ **Key syntagms:**

- *improvement of work contents and metal infrastructures;*
- *permanent expertise-building;*
- *institutional networking.*

As it was stated in the introductory paragraphs of the chapter, the policy guidelines above were intended as a first draft of a more extended future policy proposal. They selected some of the most burning issues for Bucharest at the moment and put forward some recommendations for counteracting the lacks and the insufficiencies.

The implementation strategy for these guidelines will be a challenge for further research on this topic.

IV. Conclusion

Coming a long way, from being seen restrictively as the ‘arts’, with little influence on a city’s actual renewal in the first decades after WW II, to gradually being acknowledged as a source of economic growth, creativity and community cohesion throughout the ‘80s and ‘90s, culture is nowadays very high-placed in policies of urban sustainable development and more and more municipal administrations in Europe put it into the mainstream of their overall decision-making, thus applying a cultural framework to all other policies.

Cities in South-Eastern Europe, as the EU integration is turning into a reality, are also becoming aware of the importance of culture for a city’s growth, although not yet inserting cultural parameters in city development strategies in reality, despite the fact that some administrations have it on paper. In this context, Bucharest was an interesting case study to dwell on. As the capital of the new EU Member State of Romania, the city is blossoming ever more, there are many structural funds invested in its infrastructure, but at the level of the official approach to culture, the terrain is still rather barren and the local cultural administration is far from lining up to new development directions and tendencies in city policy terms.

Although official documents did start mentioning culture more and more frequently, as we saw in chapter II, beyond the documents’ wooden language, one freely notices the shortage of a genuine awareness and of a real implementation plan for cancelling the ‘Cinderella syndrome’ of culture in general policies.

Just as the diagnosis and the proposal highlighted, there is now a need to draw attention on the necessity to give ground to cultural consideration, to outline a policy document specifically for culture and to elaborate a good strategy for turning policy guidelines, objectives and priorities into practice. This is what this research paper tried to present as urgent matters to be tackled for Bucharest.

Although the capital city is still not lined up with all the developments happening in Europe nowadays (as depicted in the commencing chapter), it was however essential to start by presenting those tendencies and concepts and therefore set the present-day

context, bring to the fore the current focuses and thus draw Bucharest close to these developments by raising awareness on their existence. In other words, the theoretical framework of the first chapter should serve as a critical reference point for the city's future evolution, paving the way Bucharest should tend towards, while also making a priority list of what is needed gradually, starting from the most urgent shortages that should be covered to subsequent issues to be dealt with. The policy ought to stay updated with the reality of urban trends, try to apply it, while also tailor-making strategies and adopting various concepts and developments to the real needs and the context of the city.

This paper advocates for a cultural policy of Bucharest where culture is given back its right to re-landscape the city and support the general urban growth. Culture should be more than an aesthetic adornment - should be a way of underpinning the capital's social, economical and physical dynamism.

V. Résumé du mémoire en français

Le mémoire aborde le sujet des politiques culturelles au niveau de la ville. La recherche est axée sur la politique de Bucarest, sur l'analyse et l'évaluation de l'approche officielle vers la culture par l'administration locale, surtout maintenant après l'entrée de la Roumanie dans l'Union Européenne.

Les politiques culturelles urbaines sont un domaine de recherche très commun et il y a beaucoup d'études de cas et de bonnes pratiques à ce sujet-ci en Europe. Cependant, dans le contexte actuel de Bucarest, où les analyses de la politique culturelle actuelle manquent complètement, cette initiative pourrait être utile, notamment puisqu'elle contient des recommandations concrètes adressées à l'administration culturelle de la ville pour améliorer le cadre politique (dernier chapitre). Ce mémoire traite donc un champ peu investigué en Roumanie: les politiques culturelles à micro niveau, c.-à-d. la ville.

La culture joue un rôle stratégique dans les sociétés urbaines et dans le gouvernement des villes européennes. La recherche 'La culture - le moteur du 21^e siècle dans les villes européennes' (2001) déroulée par le réseau Eurocities affirme que 'la Culture c'est la Ville et la Ville c'est la Culture', parce que à nos jours la culture est de plus en plus vue comme le nouveau moteur urbain. L'étude ajoute aussi que le processus de transformation urbaine est éminemment culturel et que les villes seront reconnues à partir du rôle que la culture ait dans le développement urbain général.

L'affirmation de ce mémoire-ci, dès son début avec l'histoire des politiques culturelles en Europe, jusqu'au diagnostic sur le status quo de la politique culturelle de Bucarest et les recommandations politiques à la fin, est que la vitalité du secteur culturel dans les villes du 21^e siècle, et implicitement dans la capitale de la Roumanie, doit être une préoccupation pour tous ceux qui sont intéressés par les problèmes de la société et le gouvernement urbain.

Afin d'adresser ce problématique, le mémoire prend Bucarest comme étude de cas et essaie de trouver les réponses aux questions suivantes: Est-ce que la culture fait partie des plan de développement général de la ville? Est-elle présente dans les stratégies générales de la ville et dans les discussions à propos du développement urbain durable?

Est-ce qu'il y a des liens entre la politique culturelle et d'autres politiques de l'administration locale ? Est-ce que la politique culturelle est adaptée à l'identité de la ville ? Est-ce que cette identité est le point de départ d'une stratégie de développement ? Quel rôle pour les arts dans le processus de réinvention urbain ? Quelle place pour la notion de créativité dans l'élaboration des politiques ? Bucarest essaye-t-il d'être une ville créative ?

Le mémoire est composé par trois chapitres.

Le premier chapitre fait l'histoire des politiques culturelles urbaines en Europe, à partir de 'l'époque de la reconstruction' après le 2^e Guerre Mondiale (la 2^e moitié des années 1940 – la 2^e moitié des années 1960), traversant 'l'époque de la participation' (les années 1970 – la 1^{ère} moitié des années 1980) jusqu'à 'l'époque du marketing de la ville' (la 2^e moitié des années 1980 – à présent). L'évolution de la définition du mot 'culture' utilisée par les décideurs politiques est aussi abordée ici, en soulignant la transition d'un concept plutôt élitiste d' 'haute culture', dont le but était de re-enseigner les gens après les horreurs de la guerre, à une définition plus ouverte et tout entourant qui n'est pas limitée aux arts mais qui établit des connections avec des objectifs sociaux, économiques et politiques.

Ce chapitre offre le contexte général du mémoire afin de mieux approcher l'analyse de la politique culturelle de Bucarest. Bien que la capitale de la Roumanie n'est pas toujours alignée à tous les développements qui se passent en Europe à nos jours, le cadre théorique du premier chapitre doit représenter un point de référence critique pour la future évolution de la ville. Une bonne politique culturelle pour Bucarest doit rester mise à jour avec la réalité des tendances politiques urbaines et en même temps adapter toutes les approches aux vrais besoins et au contexte de la ville.

Pour ce chapitre, on a utilisé seulement la recherche de bureau, en analysant les études déjà existantes sur le sujet des politiques culturelles urbaines en Europe. Une remarque importante à propos de la méthodologie du 1^{er} chapitre se réfère au fait que c'était difficile de généraliser en ce qui concerne l'évolution des politiques culturelles en Europe tout d'abord à cause de la rareté des recherches comparatives et des données standardisées et puis à cause de la grande diversité des définitions du mot 'culture' adoptées par les décideurs politiques et des autres variations dans les différents contextes nationaux. Cependant, malgré ces différences entre et dans les pays, c'était possible

d'esquisser une trajectoire commune dans l'évolution des arguments utilisés pour justifier les dépenses pour la culture de la fin du 2^e Guerre Mondiale aux années 1990 et trouver des éléments communs pour tracer une histoire des problématiques et des priorités dans les politiques culturelles européennes au niveau de la ville.

Le deuxième chapitre présente la politique culturelle de Bucarest, la manière dans laquelle le gouvernement local aborde officiellement la culture, son importance et son rôle dans le développement urbain général. Dans ce sens-ci, on a inclut une brève description de la ville (l'histoire, les faits fondamentaux, la scène d'arts etc.) et un aperçu du système d'administration - avec un accent spécial sur son Département pour la Culture. En plus, on a fait des recherches parmi les documents officiels, les initiatives et les budgets disponibles afin de permettre un meilleur diagnostic de la situation actuelle de la culture dans les politiques et les stratégies de Bucarest.

Le diagnostic essaie de regarder au delà des discours de l'administration culturelle, de confronter la langue de bois des documents avec la pratique quotidienne, pour élaborer une série de recommandations politiques dans le dernier chapitre. Parmi les éléments clés du diagnostic sur la politique culturelle de Bucarest:

- aucun document officiel esquissant la politique culturelle au niveau de la ville;
- aucune définition explicite de la culture (implicite: les arts et l'héritage matériel);
- pas de vision, des objectifs et des stratégies à long terme concernant la place de la culture dans la ville ;
- aucune prééminence de la culture dans les projets de développement urbain durable;
- la priorité actuelle : le financement des institutions culturelles publiques et la préservation de l'héritage matériel (mots clé: réhabilitation et reconstruction);
- pas de soutien pour la création contemporaine (par contre, soutien pour les valeurs traditionnelles et les événements à grande échelle);
- aucun équilibre entre le centre et les périphéries en ce qui concerne les activités culturelles;
- aucune stratégie pour promouvoir l'identité de la ville;
- pas des liens avec le tourisme culturel (plutôt avec le tourisme de masse);
- pas d'importance accordée à l'impact économique de la culture;

- aucun rôle pour les industries créatives dans la ville (aucun concept de ville créative);
- pas des collaborations interdisciplinaires avec les acteurs publics, privés et civils afin d'esquisser une politique et une stratégies culturelles;
- pas des recherches sur les besoins culturels au niveau de la ville et sur les possibilités de diversifier l'offre culturelle ou de développer les publics;
- bon accent sur l'aspect éducatif de la culture (activités et institutions dédiées aux jeunes), mais aucune préoccupation pour les personnes âgées et les personnes avec des handicaps;
- aucune préoccupation pour les minorités et pour le dialogue interculturel;
- beaucoup de non concordances avec la politique culturelle nationale;
- pas assez d'expertise dedans le Département pour la Culture sur les politiques culturelles et sur les développements et tendances dans le domaine;
- pas de mise en réseau avec d'autres acteurs européennes et internationaux qui traitent les problèmes des politiques culturelles urbaines (par ex. le réseau Eurocities).

La méthodologie pour ce deuxième chapitre a consisté dans une analyse des documents officiels disponible de l'administration locale et dans une série d'entretiens avec des représentants des secteurs public et non gouvernemental. Les entretiens avec les représentants des ONG ont complété les discours de l'administration culturelle et ont offert une bonne opportunité aux acteurs du secteur culturel de partager leurs recommandations pour améliorer la situation actuelle et leurs expériences avec le cadre politique dans la ville. A l'aide de ces entretiens et des matériaux officiels disponibles, on a esquissé un aperçu qualitatif général qui a servi à l'élaboration de la proposition politique à la fin du mémoire.

Un inconvénient dans l'élaboration du deuxième chapitre a été le fait que pas tous les matériaux, dont une évaluation complète et minutieuse a besoin, ont été à la disposition de cette recherche. Le budget annuel pour la culture et les profils académiques des employés du Département pour la Culture sont seulement deux exemples à ce titre. Ces éléments ont été néanmoins mentionnés dans l'introduction du mémoire pour souligner le manque de transparence institutionnelle du Hôtel de la ville.

A partir du diagnostic sur le status quo de la politique culturelle de Bucarest, le troisième chapitre cherche des manières de `réinventer` la ville, formulant des indications pour améliorer le cadre du gouvernement culturel local, et pour aborder les problèmes culturels plus urgents.

La méthodologie de cette partie a conclu sur toutes les recherches et les découvertes précédentes (l'analyse de bureau et les entretiens) et a essayé de suggérer des mesures et des solutions pour améliorer la politique culturelle de Bucarest. Ce troisième chapitre n'as pas l'ambition d'être exhaustive, parce qu'il se concentre sur les aspects les plus négligés de cette politique, qui sont nécessaires pour assurer les conditions fondamentales pour un développement normal. De ce point de vue, ces recommandations politiques ne ressemblent pas à une proposition politique standard, puisqu'elles ne suivent pas la perspective tout entourant des questions culturelles urbaines ou la structure d'une telle proposition. Les recommandations sont plutôt une première tentative critique de suggérer une direction stratégique où il n'y a aucune, d'attirer l'attention sur ce qui est complètement ignoré et de souligner l'importance d'organiser un débat plus ample autour de ces questions afin de contourner une politique concrète et pertinente. Le chapitre est donc seulement une étape préliminaire vers une proposition ultérieure plus intégrée, qui doit aborder aussi la stratégie d'implémentation de cette politique.

Les recommandations finales ne fourniront pas des solutions à tous les manques identifiés dans le deuxième chapitre, mais aux priorités les plus urgentes au niveau de la ville maintenant.

Les principaux problèmes qui ont été identifiés et en même temps les suggestions pour une action politique en Bucarest sont :

- le besoin d'introduire des paramètres culturels dans toutes les autres politiques urbaines et de regarder la culture comme une source de développement durable (au sein d'une vision et d'une stratégie à long terme);
- le besoin de compléter le concept de régénération culturelle urbaine – aujourd'hui compris uniquement comme réhabilitation du patrimoine matériel et amélioration de l'infrastructure et de la logistique des institutions culturelles publiques - avec le concept de régénération par l'intermédiaire des arts, des événements et de la participation des citoyens dans les activités culturelles;

- le besoin d'équilibrer le soutien pour les initiatives culturelles provenant des acteurs publics et ceux pour le patrimoine avec le soutien pour l'art contemporaine et la création innovatrice, pour les activités et les événements non institutionnels;
- le besoin de mettre en évidence l'identité de la ville d'une manière créative et attrayante aux habitants et aux touristes;
- le besoin d'amener la culture aux périphéries de la ville;
- le besoin de faire fonctionner les relations de collaboration intersectorielle entre le Hôtel de la ville, les autres institutions publics et les acteurs de la société civile afin d'esquisser une approche intégrée de la culture;
- le besoin de repenser la mission, les compétences et les stratégies du Département pour la Culture du Hôtel de la ville (réforme institutionnelle), surtout son investissement dans l'éducation professionnelle permanente du personnel.

Le mémoire conclut par l'idée qu'il est essentiel d'attirer l'attention sur la nécessité de donner plus d'importance à l'aspect culturel dans la ville de Bucarest, d'élaborer un document spécial de politique culturelle et une bonne stratégie pour mettre en pratique les objectifs et les priorités de cette politique.

Cette recherche soutient la création d'une politique culturelle où le droit de la culture de re-aménager, de re-inventer la ville et le développement urbain général est reconnu de nouveau. La culture doit être plus qu'un ornement esthétique - doit être une façon de consolider le dynamisme sociale, économique et physique de Bucarest.

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www.arcub.ro

Bucharest's City Hall – www.pmb.ro

The Centre for Studies and Research in Culture – www.culturamet.ro

The Compendium of Cultural Policies in Europe - www.culturalpolicies.net

Eurocities Network - www.eurocities.org

European Commission Urban Pilot Projects – www.inforegio.org/urban/upp/frames.htm

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European Urban Forum - www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/urban/forum/

Comedia UK - www.comedia.org.uk

London's City Hall - www.london.gov.uk

Megacities – www.megacities.nl

The Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs of Romania – www.cultura.ro

The Research and Training Network on Urban Europe - www.urban-europe.net

Sustainable Communities Network - www.sustainable.org/casestudies/studiesindex.html

United Cities and Local Governments - www.agenda21culture.net

Appendix 1

Agenda 21 for Culture.

An Undertaking by Cities and Local Governments for Cultural Development

Agenda 21 for Culture. An Undertaking by Cities and Local Governments for Cultural Development⁴⁵

We, cities and local governments of the world, committed to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and the creation of the conditions for peace, assembled in Barcelona on 7 and 8 May 2004, at the IV Porto Alegre Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion, in the framework of the Universal Forum of Cultures – Barcelona 2004, agree on this Agenda 21 for Culture as a guiding document for our public cultural policies and as a contribution to the cultural development of humanity.

I. PRINCIPLES

1. Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. It is the product of thousands of years of history, the fruit of the collective contribution of all peoples through their languages, imaginations, technologies, practices and creations. Culture takes on different forms, responding to dynamic models of relationship between societies and territories. Cultural diversity is “a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence” (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, article 3), and is one of the essential elements in the transformation of urban and social reality.

2. Clear political analogies exist between cultural and ecological questions, as both culture and the environment are common assets of all humanity. The current economic development models, which prey excessively on natural resources and common goods of humanity, are the cause of increasing concern for the environment. Rio de Janeiro 1992, Aalborg 1994, and Johannesburg 2002, have been the milestones in a process of answering one of the most important challenges facing humanity: environmental sustainability. The current situation also provides sufficient evidence that cultural diversity in the world is in danger due to a globalisation that standardises and excludes.

⁴⁵ This is the Word format of the PDF document found on <http://www.agenda21culture.net>

UNESCO says: “A source of exchange, innovation and creativity, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature” (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, article 1).

3. Local governments recognise that cultural rights are an integral part of human rights, taking as their reference the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001). They recognise that the cultural freedom of individuals and communities is an essential condition for democracy. No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon the human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope.

4. Local governments are worldwide agents of prime importance as defenders and promoters of the advance of human rights. They also represent the citizens of the world and speak out in favour of international democratic systems and institutions. Local governments work together in networks, exchanging practices and experiences and coordinating their actions.

5. Cultural development relies on a host of social agents. The main principles of good governance include transparency of information and public participation in the conception of cultural policies, decision-making processes and the assessment of programmes and projects.

6. The indispensable need to create the conditions for peace must go hand in hand with cultural development strategies. War, terrorism, oppression and discrimination are expressions of intolerance which must be condemned and eradicated.

7. Cities and local spaces are a privileged setting for cultural invention which is in constant evolution, and provide the environment for creative diversity, where encounters amongst everything that is different and distinct (origins, visions, ages, genders, ethnic groups and social classes) are what makes full human development possible. Dialogue

between identity and diversity, individual and group, is a vital tool for guaranteeing both a planetary cultural citizenship as well as the survival of linguistic diversity and the development of cultures.

8. Coexistence in cities is a joint responsibility of citizens, civil society and local governments. Laws are fundamental, but cannot be the only way of regulating coexistence in cities. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 29) states: “Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his ...(/her)... personality is possible”.

9. Cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, testifies to human creativity and forms the bedrock underlying the identity of peoples. Cultural life contains both the wealth of being able to appreciate and treasure traditions of all peoples and an opportunity to enable the creation and innovation of endogenous cultural forms. These qualities preclude any imposition of rigid cultural models.

10. The affirmation of cultures, and the policies which support their recognition and viability, are an essential factor in the sustainable development of cities and territories and its human, economic, political and social dimension. The central nature of public cultural policies is a demand of societies in the contemporary world. The quality of local development depends on the interweaving of cultural and other public policies – social, economic, educational, environmental and urban planning.

11. Cultural policies must strike a balance between public and private interest, public functions and the institutionalisation of culture. Excessive institutionalisation or the excessive prevalence of the market as the sole distributor of cultural resources involves risks and hampers the dynamic development of cultural systems. The autonomous initiative of the citizens, individually or in social entities and movements, is the basis of cultural freedom.

12. Proper economic assessment of the creation and distribution of cultural goods – amateur or professional, craft or industrial, individual or collective – becomes, in the contemporary world, a decisive factor in emancipation, a guarantee of diversity and, therefore, an attainment of the democratic right of peoples to affirm their identities in the relations between cultures. Cultural goods and services, as stated in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (article 8), “as vectors of identity, values and meaning, must not be treated as mere commodities or consumer goods”. It is necessary to emphasise the importance of culture as a factor in the creation of wealth and economic development.

13. Access to the cultural and symbolic universe at all stages of life, from childhood to old age, is a fundamental element in the shaping of sensitivity, expressiveness and coexistence and the construction of citizenship. The cultural identity of each individual is dynamic.

14. The appropriation of information and its transformation into knowledge by the citizens is a cultural act. Therefore access without discrimination to expressive, technological and communication resources and the constitution of horizontal networks strengthens and nourishes the collective heritage of a knowledge-based society.

15. Work is one of the principal spheres of human creativity. Its cultural dimension must be recognised and developed. The organisation of work and the involvement of businesses in the city or territory must respect this dimension as one of the basic elements in human dignity and sustainable development.

16. Public spaces are collective goods that belong to all citizens. No individual or group can be deprived of free use of them, providing they respect the rules adopted by each city.

II. UNDERTAKINGS

17. To establish policies that foster cultural diversity in order to guarantee a broad supply and to promote the presence of all cultures especially minority or unprotected cultures, in the media and to support co-productions and exchanges avoiding hegemonic positions.

18. To support and promote, through different means and instruments, the maintenance and expansion of cultural goods and services, ensuring universal access to them, increasing the creative capacity of all citizens, the wealth represented by linguistic diversity, promoting artistic quality, searching new forms of expression and the experimentation with new art languages, as well as the reformulation and the interaction between traditions, and the implementation of mechanisms of cultural management which detect new cultural movements and new artistic talent and encourage them to reach fulfilment. Local governments state their commitment to creating and increasing cultural audiences and encouraging cultural participation as a vital element of citizenship.

19. To implement the appropriate instruments to guarantee the democratic participation of citizens in the formulation, exercise and evaluation of public cultural policies.

20. To guarantee the public funding of culture by means of the necessary instruments. Notable among these are the direct funding of public programmes and services, support for private enterprise activities through subsidies, and newer models such as micro-credits, risk-capital funds, etc. It is also possible to consider establishing legal systems to facilitate tax incentives for companies investing in culture, providing these respect the public interest.

21. To open up spaces for dialogue between different spiritual and religious choices living side by side in the local area, and between these groups and the public authorities to ensure the right to free speech and harmonious coexistence.

22. To promote expression as a basic dimension of human dignity and social inclusion without prejudice by gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, poverty or any other kind of discrimination which hinders the full exercise of freedoms. The struggle against exclusion is a struggle for the dignity of all people.

23. To promote the continuity and the development of indigenous local cultures, which are bearers of a historic and interactive relation with the territory.

24. To guarantee the cultural expression and participation of people with cultures from immigration or originally rooted in other areas. At the same time, local governments undertake to provide the means for immigrants to have access to and participate in the culture of the host community. That reciprocal commitment is the foundation of coexistence and intercultural processes, which in fact, without that name, have contributed to creating the identity of each city.

25. To promote the implementation of forms of “cultural impact assessment” as a mandatory consideration of the public or private initiatives that involve significant changes in the cultural life of cities.

26. To consider cultural parameters in all urban and regional planning, establishing the laws, rules and regulations required to ensure protection of local cultural heritage and the legacy of previous generations.

27. To promote the existence of the public spaces of the city and foster their use as cultural places for interaction and coexistence. To foster concern for the aesthetics of public spaces and collective amenities.

28. To implement measures to decentralise cultural policies and resources, legitimating the creative originality of the so-called peripheries, favouring the vulnerable sectors of society and defending the principle of the right of all citizens to culture and knowledge

without discrimination. That determination does not mean avoiding central responsibilities and, in particular, responsibility for funding any decentralisation project.

29. To particularly promote coordination between the cultural policies of local governments that share a territory, creating a dialogue that values the identity of each authority, their contribution to the whole and the efficiency of the services for citizens.

30. To boost the strategic role of the cultural industries and the local media for their contribution to local identity, creative continuity and job creation.

31. To promote the socialisation of and access to the digital dimension of projects and the local or global cultural heritage. The information and communication technologies should be used as tools for bringing cultural knowledge within the reach of all citizens.

32. To implement policies whose aim is to promote access to local public media and to develop these media in accordance with the interests of the community, following the principles of plurality, transparency and responsibility.

33. To generate the mechanisms, instruments and resources for guaranteeing freedom of speech.

34. To respect and guarantee the moral rights of authors and artists and ensure their fair remuneration.

35. To invite creators and artists to commit themselves to the city and the territory by identifying the problems and conflicts of our society, improving coexistence and quality of life, increasing the creative and critical capacity of all citizens and, especially, cooperating to contribute to the resolution of the challenges faced by the cities.

36. To establish policies and investments to encourage reading and the diffusion of books, as well as full access for all citizens to global and local literary production.

37. To foster the public and collective character of culture, promoting the contact of all sectors of the city with all forms of expression that favour conviviality: live shows, films, festivals, etc.

38. To generate coordination between cultural and education policies, encouraging the promotion of creativity and sensitivity and the relations between cultural expressions of the territory and the education system.

39. To guarantee that people with disabilities can enjoy cultural goods and services, facilitating their access to cultural services and activities.

40. To promote relations between the cultural facilities and other entities working with knowledge, such as universities, research centres and research companies.

41. To promote programmes aimed at popularising scientific and technical culture among all citizens, especially taking into account that the ethical, social, economic and political issues raised by possible applications of new scientific knowledge are of public interest.

42. To establish legal instruments and implement actions to protect the cultural heritage by means of inventories, registers, catalogues and to promote and popularise heritage appreciation through activities such as exhibitions, museums or itineraries.

43. To protect, valorise and popularise the local documentary heritage generated in the public local/regional sphere, on their own initiative or in association with public and private entities, providing incentives for the creation of municipal and regional systems for that purpose.

44. To encourage the free exploration of cultural heritage by all citizens in all parts of the world. To promote, in relation with the professionals in the sector, forms of tourism that respect the cultures and customs of the localities and territories visited.

45. To develop and implement policies that deepen multilateral processes based on the principle of reciprocity. International cultural cooperation is an indispensable tool for the constitution of a supportive human community which promotes the free circulation of artists and cultural operators, especially across the north-south frontier, as an essential contribution to dialogue between peoples to overcome the imbalances brought about by colonialism and for interregional integration.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

46. All local governments are invited to submit this document for the approval of their legislative bodies and to carry out a wider debate with local society.

47. Ensure the central place of culture in local policies and promote the drafting of an Agenda 21 for culture in each city or territory, in close coordination with processes of public participation and strategic planning.

48. Make proposals for agreeing the mechanisms for cultural management with other institutional levels, always respecting the principle of subsidiarity.

49. Fulfil, before 2006, a proposal for a system of cultural indicators that support the deployment of this Agenda 21 for culture, including methods to facilitate monitoring and comparability.

TO STATE AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

50. Establish instruments for public intervention in the cultural field, bearing in mind the increase in citizens' cultural needs, current deficiencies of cultural programmes and resources and the importance of devolving budgetary allocations. Moreover, it is necessary to work to allocate a minimum of 1% of the national budget for culture.

51. Establish mechanisms for consultation and agreement with local governments, directly or through their networks and federations, to make new legislation, rules and systems for funding in the cultural field.

52. Avoid trade agreements that constrain the free development of culture and the exchange of cultural goods and services on equal terms.

53. Approve legal provisions to avoid the concentration of cultural and communication industries and to promote cooperation, particularly in the field of production, with local and regional representatives and agents.

54. Guarantee appropriate mention of the origin of cultural goods exhibited in our territories and adopt measures to prevent illegal trafficking of goods belonging to the historic heritage of other peoples.

55. Implement at state or national level international agreements on cultural diversity, especially the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, approved at the 31st General Conference, in November 2001, and the Plan of Action on Cultural Policies for Development agreed at the Intergovernmental Conference in Stockholm (1998).

TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Organisations of Cities

56. To United Cities and Local Governments: adopt this Agenda 21 for Culture as a reference document for their cultural programmes and also assume their role as coordinators of the process after their adoption.

57. To continental networks of cities and local governments (especially the ones that promoted this Agenda 21 such as Interlocal, Eurocities, Sigma or Mercociudades): consider this document within their technical action and policy programmes.

United Nations Programmes and Agencies

58. To UNESCO: recognise this Agenda 21 for Culture as a reference document in its work preparing the international legal instrument or Convention on Cultural Diversity planned for 2005.

59. To UNESCO: recognise cities as the territories where the principles of cultural diversity are applied, especially those aspects related to coexistence, democracy and participation; and to establish the means for local governments to participate in its programmes.

60. To the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): deepen its analysis of culture and development and incorporate cultural indicators into the calculation of the human development index (HDI).

61. To the Department of Economic and Social Affairs – Sustainable Development Section, which is responsible for the monitoring of Agenda 21: develop the cultural dimension of sustainability following the principles and commitments of this Agenda 21 for Culture.

62. To United Nations – HABITAT: consider this document as a basis for the establishing the importance of the cultural dimension of urban policies.

63. To the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: include the urban dimension in its analysis of the relations between cultural rights and other human rights.

Intergovernmental and Supranational Organisations

64. To the World Trade Organisation: exclude cultural goods and services from their negotiation rounds. The bases for exchanges of cultural goods and services must be established in a new international legal instrument such as the Convention on Cultural Diversity planned for 2005.

65. To the continental organisations (European Union, Mercosur, African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations): incorporate culture as a pillar of their construction. Respecting the national competences and subsidiarity, there is a need for a continental cultural policy based on the principles of the legitimacy of public intervention in culture, diversity, participation, democracy and networking.

66. To the multilateral bodies established on principles of cultural affinity (for example, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States, the Organisation of Iberoamerican States, the International Francophone Organisation, the Commonwealth, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, the Latin Union): promote dialogue and joint projects which lead to a greater understanding between civilisations and the generation of mutual knowledge and trust, the basis of peace.

67. To the International Network for Cultural Policies (states and ministers of culture) and the International Network for Cultural Diversity (artists' associations): consider the cities as fundamental territories of cultural diversity, to establish the mechanisms for the participation of local governments in their work and to include the principles set out in this Agenda 21 for culture in their plans of action.

United Cities and Local Governments
– Working Group on Culture
Barcelona, 8 May 2004

Appendix 2

The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities⁴⁶

⁴⁶ http://www.qec-eran.org/documents/errn/Leipzig_Charter_on_Sustainable_European_Cities_Draft__March_2007.pdf

Author's Vita

My professional development has always been connected to the cultural field.

After graduating from the Faculty of European Cultural Studies in 2005, I began collaborating with a publishing house in Bucharest on developing its editorial strategy for all the local book fairs throughout 2005. This experience developed my strategic thinking and gave me the opportunity to better understand the mechanisms behind a cultural industry player, i.e. a publishing house.

Between December 2005 and May 2006, I had the chance of coordinating a cultural project in the framework of the MA in Cultural Management and Cultural Policies of the University of Arts in Belgrade, where my responsibilities included fundraising, partner research, team management, final reporting and evaluation tasks. The project was a huge learning experience, especially since it benefited from permanent academic guidance and, thanks to its mobile character and multiple events organising, connected me to the cultural scene of Belgrade and the expertise of important professionals in the field.

Starting May 2006 until September the same year, I coordinated two trainings on cultural management for Romanian cultural operators while collaborating with ECUMEST Cultural Association in Bucharest. I also carried out a research on the cultural diplomacy in SEE during that time.

From September 2006 until August 2007 I worked as a project assistant in the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage, a cultural network based in Bruxelles. The main responsibilities in EFAH included: research for its ongoing projects, support for the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue (joint initiative of EFAH and the European Cultural Foundation), monitoring activities of EU programmes, policies and web sites, as well as of European cultural newsletters with a view to preparing various preliminary materials for the EFAH newsletter. The fact that EFAH is an explicitly politically oriented organisation, dealing with lobby and advocacy for the cultural sector, offered me the chance to understand and deconstruct the mechanisms of such processes and observe the way the political dimension of decision-making in culture is carried out. A great learning experience and expertise-building again.