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*Master thesis:*

**CULTURAL EVENTS  
AS MEANS OF BUILDING THE IMAGE OF  
THE BALKAN COUNTRIES**

**CASE STUDY:  
EUROPE XXL - LILLE 2009**

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## Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	11
Arguments for the topic .....	11
<b>I. Theoretical framework</b> .....	14
1. Festivals as means of promoting a country's culture .....	14
1.1. Typologies and functions .....	15
1.2. Implications .....	19
1.2.1. Social implications .....	19
1.2.2. Educational implications .....	20
1.3. The public .....	22
1.4. The space .....	24
2. The image of the other .....	26
3. The image of the Balkan countries in the Western world .....	27
<b>II. Case study - <i>Europe XXL Lille</i></b> .....	30
1. A Brief History of Lille 3000 .....	30
2. <i>Europe XXL</i> .....	35
2.1. The theme and the title .....	35
2.2. The structure of the manifestation .....	36
2.3. The format of the four-month programme: elitist or popular? .....	37
2.4. Selection criteria .....	39
<b>III. Methodology chapter</b> .....	44
1. Issues .....	44
2. Methods .....	44
3. Quantitative survey .....	45
4. The "Palette colorée" painting circle, Vauban district .....	50
5. Report on the number of visitors of the main exhibitions .....	51
<b>IV. Data Analysis - Cultural events selected to represent the Balkan countries</b> .....	53
1. Programme structure .....	53
1.1. Bulgaria .....	54
1.2. Croatia .....	59

1.3. Serbia .....	65
1.4. Romania .....	71
1.5. The (extended) Balkans .....	77
1.6. The Gipsy culture .....	80
2. Visibility .....	83
2.1. Visuals used to promote Balkan countries event .....	83
2.2. Slogans and headlines .....	84
2.3. Media representation of the Balkan countries events .....	85
2.4. <i>Europe XXL</i> publications .....	88
2.5. Bookstore visibility .....	90
2.6. Cultural associations.....	92
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	96
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	102
<b>Annexes</b> .....	105
Annex 1 .....	105
Annex 2 .....	112
Annex 3.....	114
Annex 4 .....	115
Annex 5 .....	116
Annex 6 .....	117
Annex 7 .....	118
Annex 8 .....	119
Annex 9 .....	120
Annex 10 .....	121
Annex 11 .....	122
Annex 12 .....	123
<b>CV</b> .....	124

## Abstract

In an attempt to see how cultural events may create the image of a country abroad, what kind of image they create and how this image is perceived by a foreign public and press, this paper analyses the representation of the Balkan countries in the *Europe XXL* series of manifestations organised in Lille, France, from 14 March to 12 July 2009.

This paper would try to analyse the type of image that is created for the Balkan countries by means of cultural events included in the programme and to see what kind of impact this image has on the audience: has the image of these countries suffered any alterations or not, and if yes, to what extent? Do cultural events improve the image of certain countries; can they break clichés and help change mentalities?

To this purpose, the paper makes an analysis of the goals of the manifestation and tries to evaluate the extent to which they have been achieved. It also investigates the artistic genres chosen to represent each of the Balkan countries, commenting on their efficiency in building those countries' images. In relation to this issue, the paper also examines the criteria of selection used by the organisers and the extent to which they cooperated with art organisations and institutions from the countries represented in Lille. The media impact of the events and the image of the Balkan countries created in the press are also commented upon.

The research is based on the general hypothesis that such a series of manifestations helps building a positive image of the countries they present, but that events organised at such a large scale may fail to project a very clear and easily recognisable image of each of them. As the Balkan countries belong to a geographical area already identified by many common cultural, historical and social characteristics included in their heritage, such festivals will rather highlight the common roots and patterns of their cultures rather than differences and peculiarities.

The conclusions of the study refer to the impact of the events on the image of the Balkan countries.

## Résumé

Généralement, le but principal de la plupart des manifestations culturelles est, d'un côté, la présentation des produits artistiques d'un ou de plusieurs créateurs, action qui en même temps prend le pouls du développement des arts à un certain moment et dans une zone spécifique. D'un autre côté, d'une façon indirecte, leur but est aussi l'éducation du public par le façonnement de son goût artistique et par la satisfaction de ses nécessités culturelles. L'aspect économique est sans doute aussi important dans l'organisation, le développement et la soutenabilité des événements culturels, surtout quand il s'agit de ceux organisés à une large échelle, comme dans le cas des festivals. Bien que dans la plupart des cas ils ne soient pas complètement profitables, les festivals contribuent d'une façon significative à l'essor économique de la ville ou de la zone où ils sont organisés, par le développement des activités collatérales, surtout dans les domaines des services touristiques et d'hospitalité.

Si les festivals locaux représentent une évaluation de l'activité artistique des créateurs locaux et nationaux, les festivals internationaux ont une agenda encore plus généreuse : la présentation et la promotion des artistes étrangers, pour montrer des aspects inconnus de la vie et de la culture des autres communautés.

Comme d'habitude les festivals ont une durée plus longue (d'une semaine à quelques mois) leur impacte sur le public peut être très fort. Des événements uniques ont parfois des conséquences importantes dans la vie quotidienne. Il suffit de mentionner deux exemples récents : l'effet touristique du film *Bienvenue chez les ch'tis* dans une petite ville du Nord de la France choisie comme cadre de l'action. Le film, qui a détrôné le succès de *La grande vadrouille*, a fait venir des centaines de milliers de touristes dans la petite ville de Bergue et a complètement changé l'image sombre que les Français avaient des gens du Nord. Un exemple similaire est le succès politique et économique du film français de 2006, *Indigènes*, qui, à part son succès artistique (nomination aux Oscars pour meilleur film étranger et plusieurs prix français et européens), a eu une contribution décisive au débat national qui a précédé la reconnaissance officielle des mérites des soldats français de provenance nord africaines dans la Seconde Guerre Mondiale. En conséquence, le gouvernement français a décidé de créer des pensions pour les soldats survivants.

Cependant, il est évident que les organisateurs de festivals ne comptent pas sur l'hypothèse qu'ils vont changer l'opinion publique sur certaines réalités de la vie quotidienne et sur certains

pays et communautés. Souvent, quand même, cela peut bien être un des résultats d'une telle manifestation culturelle. Quand ils sont organisés minutieusement et avec sincérité, les événements culturels agissent comme de très efficaces campagnes publicitaires pour les cultures représentées, surtout quand plusieurs genres artistiques sont employés pour donner une image complète de la culture d'un pays ou d'une région. Ce que les organisateurs doivent prendre en considération sont les connaissances initiales (ou leur manque) du pays à être représenté, leur curiosité pour un certain type d'événements culturels, en général leurs habitudes culturelles et leur désir de participer d'une manière active à ce type d'événements. Beaucoup plus que de simples événements artistiques, les festivals sont de plus en plus des manifestations ludiques, récréationnelles, qui essaient d'équilibrer valeur artistique et implication sociale.

La ville de Lille est toujours donnée comme exemple de succès dans l'organisation des manifestations célébrant la Capitale européenne de la culture en 2004. Les 2.500 événements organisés en 193 localités de la région Nord Pas de Calais et en Belgique ont eu un fort impacte économique (neuf millions de touristes venus à Lille, c'est à dire une augmentation de 30% , et une augmentation de 7,5% des postes dans le secteur touristique)<sup>1</sup>. A la suite de ce succès les autorités locales ont décidé de continuer le développement de la vie culturelle de la zone métropolitaine, en organisant des festivals qui allaient promouvoir la culture des différents pays et régions du monde entier. Par conséquent, l'Inde a été célébrée en octobre 2006 – janvier 2007, la Finlande en été 2007 et la Turquie en 2008, en avantpremière des manifestations de 2009 célébrant les pays de l'Europe centrale et orientale. *Europe XXL*, manifestation organisée entre mars – juillet 2009, s'est révélée comme une balade à travers le continent, à partir de l'Allemagne et jusqu'au Pays Baltes, la Russie et la Turquie. Le but de ces manifestations est premièrement artistique : la promotion des cultures inconnues, dites exotiques, comme représentantes de leurs pays respectifs surtout en sachant que beaucoup de ce pays-là ont une image déformée, voire négative, qui est le résultat des événements historiques, des malentendus et souvent d'une simple manque d'information.

Le but de notre ouvrage a été l'analyse des événements organisés à Lille et dans les villes de proximité, afin de voir la façon dont l'image des pays des Balkans a été construite et promue pendant les manifestations. Dans une première partie du mémoire, théorique, (Chapitre I), nous avons présentés les différentes classifications des festivals (du point de vue de la structure, du but,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [http://ijs22.domicile.fr/lille2004/lille3000/sitev2\\_english/lille3000.asp](http://ijs22.domicile.fr/lille2004/lille3000/sitev2_english/lille3000.asp)

des fonctions, des événements artistiques présentés, des participants et du type de publique envisagé etc.) . Ensuite, nous avons aussi analysé les différents points de vue des chercheurs et des historiens concernant l'image des pays balkaniques à travers le temps, surtout avec le développement des études orientalistes et balkaniques au début du XXème siècle, pour voir quelles sont les raisons de l'image plutôt négative de ces pays en France et dans l'ouest de l'Europe en général.

Le deuxième chapitre commence par un historique de Lille 3000, l'équipe qui organise les manifestations culturelles lilloises depuis 2004, et continue avec la présentation des données techniques de *Europe XXL* : analyse du thème et de la titulature, tout comme de la structure. Les questions concernant l'orientation élitiste ou bien populiste des événements inclus trouvent des réponses dans l'analyse de la très intéressante structure des manifestations : des temps forts, avec des expositions qui durent pendant les quatre mois de célébrations, des fins de semaines ( Midi - Midis) dédiées aux capitales, et des activités populaires, courtes, organisées avec l'aide des habitants dans les quartiers lillois et dans les villes de la région.

L'analyse s'est concentrée sur les pays suivants : la Bulgarie, la Croatie , la Serbie, la Roumanie (analyses des événements individuels dédiés à ces pays) et les Balkans en général (la Macédoine, la Slovanie, la Bosnie). Une présentation de la culture romaine a été incluse, vu les superpositions fréquentes faites entre celle-ci et les cultures balkaniques. D'ailleurs cet aspect est traité aussi dans le sous-chapitre dédié à la discussion des critères de sélection des événements culturels choisis à représenter un pays ou autre.

Nous avons aussi essayé de voir à quel point ces événements et les genres artistiques illustrés aident à créer quel type d'image des pays en question, en partant de l'hypothèse générale que, sans aucun doute, ce sera une image positive ou bien qu'ils servent à améliorer une image négative déjà existante. En même temps, à cause des confusions entre les pays de la région, l'image obtenue serait une image de la région plutôt que celle de chaque pays comme entité culturelle individuelle.

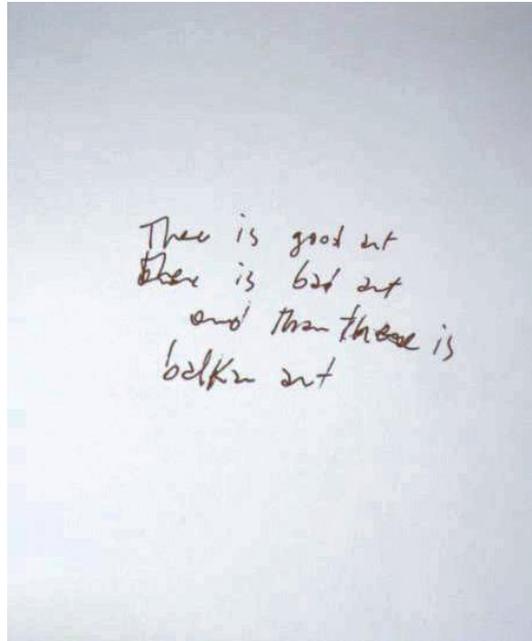
La méthodologie de recherche utilisée (présentée dans le troisième chapitre) a inclus une recueille des données qualitatives et quantitatives sur le festival et sur les manifestations culturelles incluses dans le programme, tout comme sur le feedback médiatique, celui de la communauté locale, des représentants des maisons de quartier qui ont organisés des événements présentant de différents pays et du publique. Elle a inclus aussi:

1. enquête et recueil des données, tout comme analyse des revues de presse des événements culturels présentés dans le programme, analyse de l'image construite pour les pays en question à l'aide des représentations visuelles et textuelles, recueil des données de Lille 3000 et des musées qui ont accueilli les principales expositions.
2. entretiens avec des membres du public qui ont participé d'une façon directe aux événements présentant les pays balkaniques; questionnaire pour analyser et interpréter l'image que le public s'est fait des événements.
3. entretien avec le directeur de programmes du festival; des statistiques concernant le nombre des visiteurs des expositions et des participants aux différents événements (au Palais des Beaux Arts, Palais Rameau, Musée d'Art de Tourcoing, Tri Postal).
4. entretien et statistiques concernant l'impact touristique de événements similaires déjà organisés en 2006 (Office du tourisme, Librairie des voyageurs).

Chapitre IV se constitue comme une analyse détaillée des événements qui ont été choisis pour représenter chacune des pays déjà mentionnés et de leur visibilité dans les médias locaux. Nous avons comparé les genres artistiques utilisés pour chaque pays, tout comme la participation des artistes provenant des pays d'origine et de la France, une des conclusions de cette analyse portant sur l'idée que la participation directe des artistes des pays représentés, (donc l'interaction humaine) est beaucoup plus efficace dans la transmission des valeurs culturelles de ce pays-là que la seule présence des œuvres.

À part cette conclusion, les autres conclusions de notre travail portent sur l'importance de l'activité des associations culturelles locales fondées par les ressortissants des pays balkaniques, qui aident à la construction de l'image de leur pays en France, sur l'importance de la visibilité dans les médias, sur l'équilibre entre l'apport de l'art contemporain et celui des traditions dans la création d'une image positive des pays des Balkans, et surtout sur l'idée que, aux yeux des habitants de l'ouest de l'Europe, cette image est encore une image générale de la région balkanique plutôt qu'une image individuelle de chacun des pays concernés. En ce qui concerne l'impact touristique du festival sur les fréquentations des pays de la région, nous avons conclu qu'il était encore trop tôt pour observer des changements notables et que ces résultats devraient être le sujet d'une analyse à long terme.

Motto:



Dan Perjovschi

## **Introduction**

### **Arguments for the topic**

Irrespective of geographical and temporal delimitations, culture has always been considered to be an important component of identity, at individual, group or societal levels. Especially in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of the creation of the modern European states, when many of them aspired to become nation-states, culture and language were shaped so as to reflect national characteristics.<sup>2</sup> As a result of modern political and social developments, today's emphasis in the presentation of culture is more on variety than on unity, still without neglecting local specificities. Now, as before, one's own identity is defined, in contrast with the others', through culture, among other components.

Along the years, at international level, each country has tried to create its own image making use of its heritage and of symbols chosen to represent national characteristics. These characteristics have led to the creation of clichés, of “tags” associated with those specific countries or larger geographical areas. By comparing and contrasting characteristics, each nation shapes the portrait of “the foreigner”, of “the other” among a large number of portraits with matching qualities and faults, by attributing national characteristics first and foremost to its neighbours. These are fictional classifications, which acquire an almost mythical dimension; at the same time, as a result of a constant exchange of population, they are also a way of acknowledging the fact that all peoples belong to the same larger family (Leveratto, 2006: 276).

Culture and entertainment have always made use of the attraction that everything different, therefore “exotic”, has on people, of the human tendency to exhibit what is antagonistic to one's own nature. Lately, however, rather than making clear-cut distinctions between national characteristics of individual countries, there has been a tendency to underline the common characteristics of wider regions, due precisely to the fact that clusters of countries have common, overlapping specificities, as a result of a shared historical, geographical and cultural past. This makes the task of identifying national characteristics more difficult, and the

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<sup>2</sup> For example, around mid-1800s writers and artists in the newly-formed Romania were urged to find inspiration in local realities that would reflect national specificities and, as it occurred with many other young nations, dictionaries and grammar books were published to norm language.

wished-for situation of having an internationally-recognizable cultural brand of a country very difficult to reach.

Cultural products and activities have turned out to be efficient in representing and advertising a country abroad; consequently, each country, through the cultural service of its embassy or through specially created institutions (cultural centres, institutes and other bodies) has as purpose the promotion of its values through cultural programmes that are sometimes very coherent and very cleverly designed. The advantage of such an initiative is that, through its cultural policy put into practice by means of manifestations organised abroad, the country controls the image it creates and exports this image through partnerships and participations in international manifestations. On the other hand, in many cases international cultural manifestations are organised at the expenses of the host country and are designed to match the aims and wishes of the organiser. The selection of the cultural events, artists, works of art, etc. is therefore made by the organising body and may create an image that sometimes differs from the ones the countries invited wish to promote.

As far as the Balkan countries are concerned, their image in the eyes of the Western world they has evolved from an exotic and mysterious one in the XIX<sup>th</sup> century to one dominated by poverty and interdictions in the Communist era, and by violence, turmoil and chaos in the last decade of the previous century. As a result of several decades of relative isolation and lack of coherent exchanges with the rest of Europe, perhaps with the exception of Yugoslavia of the 1980s, the Balkan region has become almost *terra incognita* to the average Western citizens, to such an extent that even today there is sometimes confusion even between capital cities of the countries in the region. On the other hand, cities that are advertised by important cultural or sports manifestation are immediately placed on the map, which proves the branding force of such events.<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this paper is to investigate to what extent cultural events can shape the image of Balkan countries in an international manifestation such as *Europe XXL*, our case study. To this purpose, the paper analyses the types of events chosen to represent each country, their media visibility and the participation of the audience.

The paper is structured in four chapters:

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<sup>3</sup> Sziget and Exit festivals have placed Budapest and Novi Sad on the cultural map of Europe, while the capital cities of other Eastern countries are still identified with difficulty by the Western people.

- the first chapter contains theoretical considerations about festivals and similar extended cultural manifestations as means of promoting culture;
- the second chapter presents the case study : Europe XXL, Lille 2009;
- the third chapter presents the methodology, the data collection methods and the discussion of the quantitative and qualitative data obtained;
- the fourth chapter includes the analysis of the events that were organised in the case of each of the Balkan countries and of their visibility.

## **I. The Theoretical Framework**

### **1. Festivals as means of promoting a country's culture**

Out of the wide range of cultural events that can be organised in order to present and promote a country's culture especially abroad (exhibitions, theatre tours, film weeks, conferences, book exhibitions and meetings with authors, concerts, workshops with artists, parades, balls, participation in different genre festivals), interdisciplinary festivals and similar manifestations stretched on several months, called "seasons", are the most profitable from the point of view of the impact they have on the audience. The organisation of such manifestation has several advantages:

- they last for a longer time, therefore reach a larger number of people;
- they can afford to include in the programme both free and paying events and to offer price deals which attract people belonging to different social categories;
- they give a more comprehensive image of the culture they focus on, making use of artistic productions and works belonging to different genres;
- they can include in the programme events that present both traditional and contemporary art;
- they can create a mixture of popular and elitist programmes, to everybody's taste, and at the same time attempt to educate the public;
- they have a stronger, long-term impact of the economy of the city or region that organises it;
- due to their longer duration, they offer an opportunity for local artists to develop artistic projects in cooperation with the artists invited, through workshops and master classes, training courses and meetings;
- they satisfy both the public's increasing demand for cultural products and the need of a growing number of artists to present their works;
- they have better visibility in the media, due to a longer presence in the city/ region and to the continuous inauguration of new events.

The drawbacks of such an endeavour are significant, too, the most important being the fact that from a financial point of view the organisation of such a manifestation represents a

considerable effort, which can very seldom be undertaken without a strong support from the local authorities. At the same time, if the duration of the manifestation surpasses a month, this may bring about the discontent of local artists and agents who in that period find it more difficult to organise their own events, due to lack of space and financial support from the same authorities<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, any successful festival should make an important point of its agenda out of the involvement of the local artists in the events organised, this way ensuring its acceptance in the community and giving these artists the chance to show their potential through their art.

Still, as the number of advantages surpasses that of disadvantages, in the next section we shall examine more closely festivals and their role in the promotion of a country's culture.

### **1.1. Typologies and functions**

Among all the cultural manifestations organised around the world, festivals are the most complex, but also the most varied in terms of characteristics. So varied, in fact, that it has become very difficult to distinguish among different manifestations that bear this name and to determine a generally-accepted definition of the term. Usually, three main components are taken into consideration in order to determine whether a cultural event falls or not into the festival category (Benito, 2001: 8): time, place and action or theme. From the point of view of their duration, festivals are generally short (7-10 days) and recurrent at established intervals (usually annual or biennial events); from the point of view of the place, they are organised in one or sometimes several important venues of a city; finally, from the point of view of the theme, they may focus on the presentation of artistic creations produced over a specific period of time, in order to evaluate them and to promote artistic innovation, or they may aim to celebrate "identity", whether at a smaller or larger scale, and in this case they highlight cultural specificities of the area. (Dragičević-Šešić, 2002: 164). Whether the latter type definitely has a festivist characteristic, the former one may take up this approach in order to attract as many people as possible. Commercial and touristic festivals have also become more and more common, this category being also intended to a numerous public.

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<sup>4</sup> One of the complaints of the local artists against Lille 3000 is the fact that on the years a huge manifestation is organised (so far 2004, 2006, 2009) almost the entire budget for culture of the city hall is allotted to this event and other local initiatives can no longer find space and money to develop their projects. A member of the "Collectif de la Girafe" stated for the press: "When Lille 3000 is on, nothing else is possible". The same article mentions the fact that "La Compagnie du Tire-Laine", a promoter of the Gipsy culture in Nord-Pas-de-Calais, received financial help from the organisers of *Europe XXL* only towards the second part of the manifestation, which focused on Eastern Europe. (*La Croix du Nord*, No.2114, 26 June-2 July 2009, p.4)

On the other hand, it has become more and more frequent for different communities to organise pluridisciplinary manifestations that celebrate several arts, manifestations that last for a longer period of time, sometimes stretching over two or three months (these are sometimes baptized ‘seasons’, like the “Autumn season” in Paris, for example), or the different international manifestations organised in order to promote the culture of one country abroad (as in 2009 with the French year in Brazil or the Turkish year in France).

Lately, there has been a significant increase in the number of festivals organised in the world. Specialists in the field and journalist speak of “a proliferation” (Klaić, in Fenton, 2005: 144), of “an explosive growth” (Hunyadi, 2006: 7), of a “jungle” (Ilczuck, 2007). Just for the sake of an example, only in France reports have counted over 1,000 publicly supported international festivals, while in Croatia the number has grown by 100% during the last decade (Ilczuck, 2007: 8).

One of the explanations of this increase is the opening of the cultural field to new genres (jazz, hip hop, street arts, comic strips, fashion, cuisine) in the years 1980 (Benito, 2007: 35), which brought along a diversification of the public. Another one is a change in the type motivation that triggers people’s cultural consumption: free time and curiosity combine with a growing interest in cultural heritage and with the need to strengthen cultural identity.

According to the authors of the European research study *Festival Jungle, Policy Desert?*, festivals are “events of national and international relevance aiming at the promotion and renovation of the respective artistic disciplines(s), organised in the same area and over a limited time span” (Ilczuck, 2007: 6). A shorter, more general definition accepted for the sake of the study was “artistically centered, publicly supported and of international orientation”.

As a result of this proliferation, there are many types of classifications of festivals, most of them taking into account the three above-mentioned characteristics: duration, place and theme or art they focus on. Other classifications (Klaić & all, 2000: 5) take into account the organisers and mention, on the one hand, festivals organised by cities, regions, institutions, etc., which aim at increasing the popularity of the area and at attracting tourists. The other category is that of festivals that start from an idea of one or of a small number of people, with a small budget, to develop later on into a major festival supported by the local budget and by other sponsors. Such an example would be the Gărâna jazz festival in Romania, which started 12 years ago as a weekend gathering of friends and developed into an important international festival that brings every

year between 7,000 and 10,000 people to the village, is now funded by the local administration and has strong national and international sponsors.

Another possible distinction would be that operating at the level of the focus of festivals: on art (promoting one or various genres) and on entertainment, through fairs, crafts and culinary products. Those that fall into the latter category are called “communal festivals” (Hunyadi, 2007: 9) and are very popular in Germany, for example, where almost each city or land organises its *Volksfest*.

Irrespective of their classifications, festivals have proven to be successful cultural manifestations for several reasons. The authors of the Hungarian report on festivals mention not less than 13 reasons for their growing popularity and success (Hunyadi, 2007: 13). They are related to several main aspects of human existence.

Several of them refer to the social implication of festivals, underlining the fact that such manifestations eradicate social differences, as they gather people of different origins, social status and education and make them feel solidary by sharing a communal experience. At the same time, they provide them with a deeper acknowledgement of their feeling of identity, especially in the case of local festivals, which aim at promoting local culture and traditions. On the other hand, international festivals offer their public the opportunity to learn more about other cultures and artistic creations, this way enhancing liberalism and tolerance.

The educational implication is rendered by the presence in the festivals of the best artists and artistic creations, which provide the public with the most recent and innovative forms of art; this way, the people’s artistic taste is shaped. At the same time, their artistic skills are developed through workshops and training sessions included in the programme of most festivals, especially when one of the purposes is audience development in the direction of young people and of social categories that are less familiar with the artistic scene.

The economic implications are not to be neglected, although they are not the main declared concern of festivals. Still, successful festivals have a positive impact on the economic life of the city or of the region that organises them. Especially in the latest years, in many cases festivals have brought about the rediscovery of places of cultural heritage (castles, churches, fortresses) as places of collective memory – *lieux de mémoire* (Klaić, in Hunyadi, 2007: 15), as well as the revitalisation of poor, neglected areas of cities and the introduction in the cultural circuit of old industrial sites rehabilitated and equipped to this purpose. In relation to this aspect,

new job opportunities may arise for the inhabitants of such areas, while the shift of interest on the newly revived zone may also bring further investment in other directions of development. Tourism is another domain that benefits from the existence of a festival; in the case of international festivals usually both local and international tourism are at gain.

Finally, one important aspect that should not be overlooked is the positive impact that festivals and similar manifestations have on the activity of the local artists, who can be in touch with colleagues from other areas and countries (in the case of international festivals), can exchange ideas and can develop partnerships and future cooperation projects. Such events give them the opportunity to compare their works to their peers, to be evaluated by critics and agents and to find new sources of inspiration by investigating trends and techniques displayed by other artists.

All these aspects that determine the creation, the development and ultimately the success of festivals are of course related to, and in fact reiterate their different functions. This is another element that can be taken into consideration when making a classification of festivals, but it is also true that a festival usually fulfills several functions at the same time, the major one being that of entertaining, which comes from the very denomination of the event and highlights its festive nature.

In addition to the already discussed social, educational and economic aspects related to the organisation and functioning of festivals, there is another one that is most of the times on the hidden agenda of the organisers: their political function. While no festival will explicitly state in its mission that it aims at having a political impact in the city or region that hosts it, it is nevertheless very common for them to be created as part of a complex strategy devised by the local government in order to strengthen the position of the city or region and to ensure a coherent development of the local social, economic and cultural vision. In a simplistic equation, this way, local development brings about the population's economic and social security, which reflects on their satisfaction with life in general and on the support offered to local authorities. One drawback of this aspect is the fact that, if not carefully designed after thorough documentation and analysis of the population's cultural tastes and needs, such a plan may backfire. For this reason, the team in charge of the creation and development of a festival has a difficult task, as it has to find a way to merge two apparently contradictory functions of festivals: on the one hand, the educational function, which implies the introduction of new, modern artistic trends to which

the public should become acquainted and which may at times be initially rejected because of their novelty and nonconformism. On the other, the social function, fulfilled by means of a programme that would highlight local identity through cultural events that illustrate traditions and local specificities.

Besides the general festive nature of all manifestations of this type, there are two other common traits that many festivals share: they aim at deviating from a habitual event, by presenting something new, innovative and original, and they are characterized by variation, being complex manifestations (Hunyadi, 2007: 9).

For the sake of our study, it is relevant to take a closer look at two of the above-mentioned aspects related to festivals: their social and educational impact.

## **1.2. Implications**

### **1.2.1. Social implications**

Culture is an important factor in shaping identity. This is evident especially in the case of festivals that have as purpose the presentation of one culture in order to strengthen the feeling of belonging to the same cultural area. On the other hand, some critics argue that this may lead to segregation, exactly because identity is shaped on the basis of group characteristics, therefore of differences from other communities.

In the latest decades there have been numerous efforts to highlight the common European heritage with its similarities and differences; slogans such as “unity in diversity” or terms like “multiculturalism” and “interculturalism” have tried to describe the changes of approach in European politics. While a century ago nation-states had a role in the homogenization of culture, today there is more and more emphasis on regional development and cooperation, beyond frontiers and smaller local identity claims. Several European cultural projects, like those developed by Lille 3000, have addressed these concerns, in an attempt to involve an entire region in the development of programmes that would develop in the citizens a feeling of belonging to a larger and more heterogeneous cultural space.

In its final report on the 2002-2004 period, the European Cultural Foundation has underlined the fact that the multitude of discourses practiced in the public sphere have both a positive and a negative impact, as they reflect plurality, but also fragment and reach limited target groups. Still, “they enable the interaction of citizens beyond national boundaries and help

them to gradually build a sense of belonging to Europe as a larger community, without excluding local, regional and national loyalties, and to gain a sense of empowerment” (*Europe as a Cultural Project*, 2005: 26).

Such projects, especially those developed within international festivals, encourage the meeting and exchange of cultural values; people learn to appreciate unknown and different cultural forms of expression, they train to become more curious and tolerant towards the other’s culture and more eager to promote their own cultural habits and heritage.

At the same time, there is a feeling of communion that is developed between people with different social and educational backgrounds that participate in the same cultural events; this occurs especially in manifestations of the type “Days of the city” or on national holidays, when all the members of the community are invited to participate in the events and celebrate their citizenship. Though this is not a characteristic of art manifestations, it occurs in pluridisciplinary festivals (like those organised in Lille) which mix the format of a popular festivity and of art festivals, in order to attract a various public. However, as argued by Pierre Bourdieu, people’s perception and understanding of the art works is different, depending on their level of training and expertise and on the personality, which he sees as “the quality of each person which is affirmed in the capacity to appropriate an object of quality” (Bourdieu, 1979: 319).

There are many examples of cities that have become known for their festivals, like Bayreuth, Avignon, Cannes, Karlovy Vary, Dubrovnik, where this international fame has enhanced local pride and has strengthened the feeling of solidarity of the inhabitants. In the long run, this fame brings about economic development as well, which has as consequence an improvement in the living conditions of the local population (Hunyadi, 2006: 20). One of the main aims of a city’s administration (especially in the case of developing cities) is therefore to design a cultural development strategy that would shape the city’s identity, brand it and thus raise the investors’ interest and eventually bring about economic growth.

### **1. 2.2. Educational implications**

In the past, cultural institutions focused on a rather coherent and specified target public, whether popular or elitist, operating on the basis of some ideological and cultural beliefs, shaped by dominant cultural values.

As Dragan Klaić explains, cultural organisations have had as main task the education of masses, through programmes that promote both cultural tradition and innovation and artistic excellence, which implied “the existence and perseverance of cultural canons and authorities that order cultural production and products according to some firm hierarchy of values.” (Klaić, 2001:1). The challenges they are facing today are determined not so much by the “social-democratic politics of cultural emancipation of masses as by the theories of postmodernism”. Their target has to be cultural diversity, as this can justify the way public money is distributed: a wider and more varied public in terms of social background is sought for, not just a smaller group already familiar with an elitist programme and the institutions that offer it. To this purpose, festivals have gained in popularity, as they offer a wide range of cultural events that address all groups of age and social and educational backgrounds.

The educational implication of a complex manifestation like a festival or a cultural season operates at two levels. On the one hand, there is a direct, openly declared wish to educate both the artists and the public, through specially designed activities included in the programme:

A) for the artists, workshops and master classes, internships and courses with international guests and peers, which could stimulate their creativity and have a positive impact on artistic evolution.

B) for the audience, workshops and artistic activities developed for the amateur public, for children as well as for adults, sometimes materialized in exhibitions of their own, included in the programme of the manifestations, in order to encourage their creativity and give a real purpose to their artistic involvement.

On the other hand, there is an, indirect, long-term influence that the organisers hope to achieve through the programming of engaging, varied and unusual events: they hope to change the cultural habits of the audience by provoking, by shocking, by raising questions and by making the local public analyse and find answers that will bring them to develop their knowledge and understanding. In the case of international manifestations, their purpose is also to make a conscious investment “in the intercultural competence of the audience, a carefully organised experience that aims to make the public respect, understand and appreciate the cultural difference as embodied in the imported performance” (Klaić & all, 2000: 32).

At the same time, the foreign works of art and projects presented are meant to act as catalysts for the local productions, which might be inspired by their themes and techniques.

Moreover, by becoming producers of new works of art, created by groups of artists brought together by different projects, international festivals reaffirm their purpose of educating through the original cultural products they present and by setting the standards of innovative artistic views.

As one of the main purposes of such manifestations is the presentation of the most recent and artistically significant developments at the international level, the artists selected to represent different countries are not chosen according to criteria imposed by the cultural institutions of the countries they come from, but according to the criteria devised by the organisers in order to achieve the mission of the manifestation: the presentation of high-quality events that would attract a numerous and heterogeneous public. We will discuss more about the selection criteria in the chapter dedicated to the case study analysed in this paper, *Europe XXL*.

### **1.3. The audience**

French statistics show that 13% of the festivals organised in the country are pluridisciplinary, as cities have an increasing tendency of grouping festivals in the same period of time, in order to ensure a continuous local cultural animation and at the same time to limit organisation costs (Benito, 2007:17). At the same time, in the last decade, the number of such festivals that last longer than a month has increased from 15% to 19% of the total number of festivals organised throughout the country. Moreover, such festivals are mainly outdoor manifestations, which bring a larger and more heterogeneous audience.

Pluridisciplinary festivals aim at attracting all sorts of categories, through the varied programme they propose. This ensures an audience for all manifestations, as each event will address a specific profile of the public. They are of course focused especially on the local public, as the manifestations develop on a longer period of time and consequently become part of the inhabitants' everyday life. Through various events, the organisers try to involve the local population in the activities included in the programme. Many foreign artists are invited to develop workshops and training courses with amateurs and professionals from the host city or region, to the purpose of developing the inhabitants' skills and taste for artistic activities, which could later on determine them to continue them in the cultural centres and facilities that function to this purpose in their city.

In the case of festivals organised as a joint project of the local administrations and cultural activists of a number of localities, the target public is wider, encompassing the inhabitants of the entire region. The purpose is to animate the cultural life of smaller towns and villages and to make cultural events more available, in terms of money, time and distance covered, to the population of the entire region. This builds up a sense of regional solidarity, it brings recognition and more visibility to the small towns or villages as cultural venues and creates economic benefits as well.

The foreign public is targeted especially in the case of festivals and seasons that have on their agenda unique manifestations, such as original, one-off exhibitions and concerts which bring important artists from various countries, artists who otherwise very rarely come together in one venue. Well-renowned festivals offering high-quality programmes do attract foreign visitors; nevertheless this segment of the audience seems to be more attracted by festivals focusing on one genre (opera, theatre or dance) rather than by a mixture of artistic genres. In France, for example, in the case of a theatre festival like *Les Chorégies d'Orange*, foreign tourists represent 15% of the total public, while 10% of the public of the International festival of lyric art in Aix-en-Provence comes from abroad<sup>5</sup>. This is also correlated with tourist mobility, as most festivals are organised in the summer, when there is an increased tendency to combine travelling and entertainment.

Statistics also show that from the point of view of the age factor, the public of music and cinema festivals is in general younger than that of opera, ballet, theatre and other more “savant culture” events. This is not a concern in the case of pluridisciplinary festivals which have a varied programme so that each age group should be targeted, and are more and more interested in developing educational activities for the young ages, in order to attract families and also to form their future public.

At the same time, the structure of the public can be explained by the type of programme and the level of prices and deals offered (Benito, 2007: 33). Still, a very important factor is represented by the cultural habits of the people. For example, the stronger representation of the intellectual categories (teachers and students) in France is related to the higher number of free days they have, as well as to their interest in cultural activities, and not so much to their material possibilities, which are weaker than those of other categories. Luc Benito’s conclusion is that the

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<sup>5</sup> Data is taken from Luc Benito’s book (2007) and covers the decade 1991-2001.

level of education is decisive for the cultural consumption, much more than profession and social background: “Culture is reserved to a certain social “elite” , but which is made up of initiated people rather than of materially sufficient persons” (Benito, 2007: 35).

Other factors that determine the choice of one or another type of cultural event to attend is the social and professional background of the audience members. In general, the higher the level of education, the higher the interest in events that are more “elitist” than popular: opera, ballet, classical music and jazz concerts. This made some analysts conclude that the public may be perceived as a sign of artistic quality, as, in the eyes of the professionals of culture, the events that are more representative from the point of view of their quality are appreciated only by educated people (Leveratto, 2000: 88). In this respect, Pierre Bourdieu also noted that the consumers of a cultural event are indicators of the degree of cultural profitability of consumption, through their monthly revenue, profession and age (in Leveratto, 2000: 90). He also made a distinction between the legitimate culture of the dominant classes and popular culture, and between the choice by necessity that operates in the case of popular classes and the choice by liberty that characteristic of the dominant classes (Fleury, 2006 : 86).

Still, there are limitations to the extent to which artistic quality is directly related to the social image of the public, as very often cultural products that are designed for a popular public may also be appreciated by an educated public, and vice versa. In addition to this, there is also the educational purpose of such manifestations that needs to be taken into account: besides the aim to attract the public by offering people what they want to see and hear, the organisers will introduce in the programme some events that are indented to shape the artistic taste of the audience, by making it acquainted with new, original, types of art forms. It is also an occasion to test the audience for future cultural manifestations.

This approach to culture democratisation has developed especially in France, by manifestations that have tried to make cultural events more available to everybody and by taking “high” art out of the official institutions and into the street and other spaces not related to culture.

#### **1.4. The space**

From the beginnings of their modern existence (late XIX<sup>th</sup> century) until today, festivals have grown to be present-day conquistadors of alternative spaces. Even before, as early as the XVI<sup>th</sup> century when the first theatres had been built in Europe (in Spain and England), these had

not been the sole spaces used for performances. With the creation of modern festivals, in Salzburg and then Avignon and in several cities of Italy, the organisers have explored new, unconventional spaces that could bring more significance to the performances, that could, in some cases, renew with the medieval tradition of using public squares and churches for artistic representations, and could revive the architectural heritage, by using it for both an artistic and a tourist purpose (Klaić & all, 2000: 36).

In present times, due to the fact they explore new venues, especially former industrial areas and abandoned buildings at the outskirts of cities, festivals are considered as “scouts” that discover and make use of new artistic infrastructure (Klaić & all, 2000: 37) which later on is included in the circuit of cultural venues. This has a positive impact on the neighbourhood, in terms of prestige, but also in term of economic development, media attention, visitors and vitalization of a large range of activities in the area.

Especially when creations from other cultures are presented, they often lose their original artistic and social context and therefore need to be reinterpreted and relocated in order to be understood by the new public. To this purpose, mediation becomes a major task of the organisers, who take the programmes to new places and new audiences (Hunyadi, 2006: 15). Very often, especially in the latest years, such manifestations have been taken to the peripheries of the cities and to poorer areas, in former industrial sites. In *The Turning World*, Rose de Wend Fenton and Lucy Neal speak of this “cultural recycling” of buildings and of the “gentrification” of cultural events, which have given new artistic, social and economic meanings to these abandoned places (Fenton, 2005: 157). This gives new meaning to the audience itself, as it creates a feeling of belonging to a special group that embarks on the adventure of discovering and making use of inhabital spaces as part of a process that brings about urban and socio-economic regeneration (Klaić & all, 2000: 37). A similar process occurs in the case of conflict areas divided by political turmoil, where festivals have a healing function (as it was the case for Sarajevo or Beirut, for example) (Fenton, 2005: 157).

One of the gains of pluridisciplinary festivals is that they make use of the urban space and create a sense of belonging and of solidarity of the public. By invading the streets of the city (or the roofs, as it was the case of *Europe XXL* in Lille) cultural events become part of daily life and urge people to take an active part in their development. In many cases, people are not just spectators, but become actors in those events.

Urban art and events developed in the streets change the space in which city inhabitants live their life. These artistic forms set the boundaries and redefine public spaces which become the stage of cultural events and they create a specific language which tells the story of the city, of the urban events (Spadone, 2004: 91). The artistic events developed in this space acquire a public dimension, while the space operates as a linking element that makes people of different backgrounds act together and share the same experiences and feelings.

In the latest years, the rethinking and redefinition of the public space have made even important art establishments decide to make good use of it, by taking art out in the streets and parks of the city. It is the case of numerous photography and sculpture exhibitions, of concerts and theatre shows, even of paintings used for promotional reasons (as The National Gallery in London did several years ago).

## **2. The image of the other**

The entertainment industry has had an important influence on the evolution of the way in which the image of the foreigner is perceived by a community. The foreigner is a spectacular being due to characteristics that make him different (physical appearance, behaviour, language, customs, etc.). At the same time, being unknown, he is feared; the first impulse when judging him is to form a negative opinion, as a result of the differences perceived in his appearance and behaviour. By extension, all artistic objects and products associated with his person will be initially misperceived. According to Franz Boas<sup>6</sup>, however, these misperceptions and the consequent negative esthetic judgment of artistic products belonging to other cultures are not the result of their formal difference; on the contrary, this should be a reason to raise the spectators' interest in unusual objects. The factors that influence the esthetic judgment are the spectators' "affective implication in their own culture and their lack of information on the techniques used in the creation of those artistic objects" (Leveratto, 2006: 41). We would also add the lack of information on the symbolism of certain art objects and products, as a result of their decontextualisation.

Along the centuries, the curiosity and initial fear that European communities manifested towards other remote societies have changed into a real pleasure of collecting samples of unusual, eccentric artistic products and manifestations. The curiosity cabinets created centuries

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<sup>6</sup> Franz Boas, *Primitive Art*, Dover Publications, New York, 1955.

ago as a result of voyages and explorations of distant, unknown regions, and later on the presence of exotic people and objects in international exhibitions organised on the Old Continent are proof of this keen interest and pleasure.

Still, as a result of historical, economic, social, political, even cultural differences among them, which have always been noticed and analysed, people have had the tendency to develop clichés and stereotypical images about the others. Some of these clichés start from real events, some others are misconceptions, but they all explain the image that today each community has of the others.

### **3. The Image of the Balkan countries in the Western world**

The dichotomy between the East and the West has been analysed from different points of view. Previously, there had been debates about the differences between the North and the South. Going beyond simple geographical delimitations, these regions have always been compared and contrasted, each of them being usually defined in opposition to the other. This incessant drive to highlight similarities and especially differences between regions and societies comes from an intrinsic human need to define oneself in relation to the others, to everybody else who is “out there”. The social beings that we are try to find our place among our fellows by defining and redefining our position, our image and our relation to the surrounding world. Hence, the concept of *alterity*, of *otherness*, and the realisation of the fact that, in some cases, we are similar to certain people and we differ from others that have *other* mentalities, habits and concepts about life.

Along the history of mankind, such cultural differences have brought about misjudgments and negative attitudes which betray lack of information, education and tolerance, hasty judgment and conclusion about those who are different. This occurred especially in times when contacts between remote groups and societies were scarce and collective opinion was based on individual, subjective observation and labeling of few fortunate travelers.

“Political systems based upon cultural identity are structured very clearly upon the vital importance of the distinction between *us* and *them*. When identities are formed and maintained by emphasizing the difference between groups (as opposed to the differences between individuals), prejudice and intolerance no longer have to be defended” (Fierlbeck, 1996: 20). As Thierry Hentsch was quoted by N. Gavriluță, “the collective imaginary of the West about the

East (especially the Muslim East), expresses much more truth about the subject (he who sees) than about the object (he who is seen)". In other words, it says much more about our deficient tolerance for the Other than we feel inclined to understand and accept, and infinitely less about the object of our tolerance (Thierry Hentsch<sup>7</sup>, in Gavriluță, 2002: 25). When making judgments about the others, we should realise that we are at the same time building a certain image of ourselves, based upon the way we think and express opinions on the world.

According to Edward Wolff (2000:19), in the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century, during Illuminism, Western Europe invented Eastern Europe as its complementary half, together with the concept of 'civilization', whose complement was discovered on the same continent, in the backward, still barbarian countries. As Edward Said noted in his famous study *Orientalism*, the Occident has built in the Orient "its opposite image, idea, personality, experience", an image of alterity, while Orientalism was the "western way of dominating and of reshaping the orient and of imposing its authority on it" (Gavriluță, 2002: 22).

In modern times, such divisions and classifications between regions of the world have been the result of political and religious matters, sometimes inherited from past centuries. In the case of the Balkans, geographical, cultural and linguistic criteria have been taken into consideration in the attempt to draw its borders.

In her book *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova highlights the fact that the West and the East are often presented as "antiworlds", while the Balkans are symbolized by the metaphor of the crossroads or of the bridge between East and West and between the two continents, Europe and Asia. (Todorova, 2000: 34). But this is also typical of the self-image of the Balkan countries themselves: they all acknowledge this quality of "in-betweenness" (Todorova, 2004: 98). Until the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, to the Western world, the East was "an exotic an imaginary land, a place of legends, fairy tales and wonders", which had inspired the Romantic writers. The region acquired a negative connotation after the Balkan Wars and WWI; referring to these events, Paul Scott Mowrer spoke of "the balkanization of Europe" (Todorova, 2004: 192), a term that is a synonym of "fragmentation, disintegration, tendency for conflict and termination of communication or co-operation" (Dragičević-Šešić, 2004: 8), used today describe the political and social situations of countries of other parts of the world. A few decades later, the negative

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<sup>7</sup> Thierry Hentsch, *L'Orient imaginaire: la vision politique occidentale de l'Est méditerranéen*, Ed. de Minuit. Paris, 1988.

image of Eastern Europe has acquired new connotations, as a result of the Iron Curtain drawn by Churchill at the end of WWII.

Still, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the interest of the Western world of the culture and art of the East has grown. Following in the footsteps of the EU programme European City of Culture (started in 1985 to bring citizens of Europe together by means of culture), the series of events entitled European Cultural month was launched in 1990. It focused mainly on the Central and Eastern European countries. As early as 2000, Prague and Krakow were among the nine cities designated European Capitals of Culture, and since 2007, when countries from Central and Eastern Europe had already joined the Union, the programme has had chosen every year a Western and an Eastern country city. Both these programmes have had a big impact on the hosting community and on the visitors, not only from the cultural point of view, but also socially and economically.

Designated to be the European Capital of Culture in 2004, the city of Lille has remained until today one of the few successful examples of communities on which the cultural year has had a huge impact, bringing about the transformation of the image of the city and economic and urban improvement. Inspired by the success of the 2004 event, the organising team has decided to continue the presentation of international art and foreign cultures through manifestations stretched over several months. From the exotic culture of India in 2006 they returned to the Oriental regions of Europe this year, in an attempt to make the Western public more familiar with the culture of European regions which, yet not remote, are just as unknown and exotic as those of the Far East.

## II. Case study - *Europe XXL*, Lille 2009

### 1. A Brief History of Lille 3000

The successful story of Lille's makeover into a cultural city started in 2004 when it was the European Capital of Culture, together with the city of Genoa (Italy). The programme developed throughout the year in the city was eclectic, daring, shocking at times, but established the former industrial city as an avant-garde cultural metropolis, which was not afraid to try out a new model of cultural policies.

*Lille 3000* is the name of the organising team appointed by the City Hall to design the series of cultural manifestations hosted by Lille starting from 2006. Created as an association under the name of *Lille Horizont 2004* to organise and coordinate the one-year programme of the Cultural Capital of Europe, it continued its activity after that huge success.

According to the organisers' reports<sup>8</sup>, the 2004 manifestations included 2,500 cross-border events organised in 193 localities in the Nord-Pas de Calais region of France and nearby Belgium that involved 17,000 artists and 17,800 volunteer ambassadors. The impact on the economy of the region was significant: the number of visitors increased with 30%, while the number of jobs in the tourism sector with 7.5%.

From that point on, the challenge was to rethink the principles of cultural democratisation of which the Ministry of Culture created by Malraux had been founded. In the eyes of the team members of the City Hall, culture should be considered "a key activity for the economic and social development of a city, not an additional one" (Beaux Arts: 92). If many analysts have considered that in France cultural democratisation has been a failure rather than a success, due to the fact that culture is still a privilege of the socially advantaged categories of people, Lille has become an exception. On each occasion, starting with 2004, the huge eccentric festivities organised in the streets, borrowing the format of popular celebrations, have had very high quality standards. This proved that "culture for the masses" can be elitist (in terms of quality) and can fulfill its educative role.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. [http://ijs22.domicile.fr/lille2004/lille3000/sitev2\\_english/lille3000.asp](http://ijs22.domicile.fr/lille2004/lille3000/sitev2_english/lille3000.asp)

With each new edition of the manifestations organised in Lille<sup>9</sup>, the public has become more open to contemporary art and to a direct participation in the events. In 2004 there were four types of participations designed for the public, which later on were reused for the manifestations of 2006 and 2009: ambassadors (agents of communication), participation within local associations (selected on their artistic projects which were included in the programme), participation at district level (for the preparation of the balls), and within the Maisons Folie. These last venues, created in 2004 in the city, in its satellite towns and in the region, on both sides of the border (12 Maisons in 2004, out of which two in Belgium, and two more added in 2009 in the suburbs of Lille), were the result of the efforts of the local administration to make culture accessible to the socially and economically-challenged population. All of these new centers of cultural and entertainment activities are located in disfavoured areas and organise free events throughout the year. The main purpose is to have the local population join the artists in the development of cultural projects of high quality that are nevertheless accessible to everybody.

With each new edition of the manifestations of Lille 3000, the city has had its cultural and architectural heritage enlarged. The Maisons Folie were joined in 2004 by a former warehouse where mail was selected, the Tri Postal building becoming one of the most frequented exhibition and concert halls. In 2009, for *Europe XXL*, the ancient merchandise station of Saint Sauveur was turned into a polyvalent venue, which includes a cinema hall, exhibition halls, indoor and outdoor entertainment areas, cafe and restaurant, tents that can be rented for private parties and anniversaries.

In addition to this, the team of Lille 3000 has had another great managerial idea: to keep some proof of the former successful artistic events organised in the city, by placing works of art of the artists invited in Lille in different significant areas, such as squares, railway stations or public gardens. This way, the city gradually becomes an open-air museum and foreign contemporary works of art become landmarks of the city. To mention just several examples: the huge colourful “*Tulips of Shangri-la*” created by the famous Japanese artist Yayoi Kusam in 2004 are today a symbol of the Lille Europe international railway station; the Chinese tea pavilion built the same year for the Shanghai parade and events adorned the Opera House square

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<sup>9</sup> *Bombaysers de Lille* in 2006, a four-months celebration of Indian culture, followed by two huge exhibitions - *Futurotextiles* in 2006 and *Collection François Pinault* in 2007.

for two more years. In 2009 one of the giant statues of the “*Parade des Anges et des Demons*”<sup>10</sup> remained in Lille and was placed in the Saint Sauveur yard after the closing of the *Europe XXL* manifestations.

Certainly, the economic impact of the manifestations is not to be overlooked. In 2004 80,000 new hotel rooms were created, there was a 30% increase of the number of tourists and since then there has been a 10% increase in frequentation each year<sup>11</sup>. The 958,700 participants in the various cultural events of 2006 and over a million (according to the first July estimations) in 2009 have positively influenced the turnover of the local shops, restaurants and transport companies.

After the 2004 display of artistic events that brought nine million visitors to the former industrial city in the North of France, the local authorities decided to continue the development of the cultural life of the metropolitan area by organising festivals that celebrate and promote the culture of different countries and areas in the world. India was presented in October 2006 - January 2007; Finland was briefly presented in the summer of 2007 and Turkey in 2008, as an avant-premiere of the *Europe XXL* manifestations.

Leaving aside the yet important economic and political reasons that may have determined the choice of certain regions (India’s recent intensive promotion in Europe as a touristic destination, Turkey’s strong cultural media exposure during the process of negotiating its candidature for the EU accession, Central and Eastern Europe EU members and candidate countries), the aim of the manifestations organised in Lille is an artistic one: the promotion of rather unknown, “exotic” cultures that could better represent the countries they belong to; especially as, due to historical reasons, but not only, these countries generally have a negative or at least distorted image, mainly as a result of the lack of accurate information of the Western public. The main idea behind all this being that, in a multicultural city like Lille, placed at the crossroads of important European corridors and at the centre of the triangle formed by Brussels, Paris and London, it is of paramount importance to give the inhabitants of the region the opportunity to discover cultures of Europe and of the world, as part of their initiation to what has become the main purpose of the local administration: the creation of a new way of living in a future Euro-metropolis.

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<sup>10</sup> A work of art created by the Russian team of AEF+S, placed along the Faidherbe Boulevard in the centre of Lille.

<sup>11</sup> According to the reports of the organisers, at <http://www.mairie-lille.fr/fr/Culture/lille-capitale/lille-capitale>

In order to analyse the impact and significance of the manifestations of Lille 3000 we have made use of the series of aspects that the authors of the study *Festivals: Challenges of Growth, Distinction, Support base and Internationalisation* considered relevant for the creation of a new festival (Klaić & all, 2000: 28):

<p>What is the artistic purpose?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to present contemporary art creations from several parts of Europe and of the world;</li> <li>- to make high quality cultural manifestations accessible to everybody through a wide range of events;</li> <li>- to take culture out of its established venues (museums, theatre and music halls, galleries, etc.) and bring it to popular districts (in district town halls, schools, cultural centres, parks, even private homes) in an attempt to make it part of everyday life of disfavoured segments of population;</li> <li>- to educate the local and regional community, by engaging them in cultural activities and offering them the opportunity to participate directly in the events;</li> <li>- to create for the multiethnic and multicultural population of the region a feeling of belonging to the cross-border area whose capital is the future Euro-metropolis Lille.</li> </ul>
<p>Who needs it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the city of Lille and the local community, in order to change the image of a former industrial area;</li> <li>- the local government, in the attempt to gain more local support for the future plans of economic and administrative makeover of the city and of its neighbouring area;</li> <li>- local artists, who may have a long-term indirect benefit from manifestations that will shape local people's artistic taste and will also bring potential foreign customers;</li> </ul>
<p>Who will be the primary audience?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- members of the local community: inhabitants of Lille (with special focus on the mobilisation of the inhabitants of disfavoured districts for which special events are organised), inhabitants of the satellite</li> </ul>

	<p>towns, inhabitants of the region and of towns in Belgium;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- tourists (mainly from Brussels, Paris and London)</li> </ul>
<p>Who will benefit from it and how?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the local community of Lille and of the neighbouring towns;</li> <li>- the inhabitants from the region, including those from the nearby Belgium towns; both categories are being exposed to unknown cultures and have the chance to explore their artistic skills through specially tailored events;</li> <li>- the same inhabitants, by the creation of short-term jobs during the manifestations and of several permanent jobs in the newly created cultural centres;</li> <li>- local economy (especially hotels, restaurants, shops, tourist and transport agencies), through the impact of the increase of tourist numbers;</li> <li>- foreign artists invited to participate, by being promoted in the region and by entering the French artistic circuit;</li> <li>- local cultural associations of different minorities, who are financially helped by the local budget to develop their activities as part of the manifestations</li> <li>- local artists, by establishing connections with foreign artists, associations and institutions;</li> </ul>
<p>How is it different from other similar manifestations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It brings to the audience's attention cultures and cultural manifestations that are less familiar;</li> <li>- It lays strong emphasis on the public's participation in the events and in the educational aspect of the events included in the programme;</li> <li>- It is developed in several parts of the city and in numerous towns in the region;</li> <li>- It has a unique format, with long, medium and short-term events, and a two-level programme, including elitist and popular manifestations.</li> </ul>

## **2. *Europe XXL***

### **2.1. The theme and the title**

Central and Eastern Europe countries were chosen to be represented in the cultural manifestations organised in 2009 in Lille because of several reasons:

1. the need to have an artistic reflection of the European frontiers, trying to see whether the Eastern boundaries are in Russia, in Turkey or beyond, and to find out the artists' opinion on this matter;
2. the need to analyse the inside boundaries of Europe and the message that the Old Continent has to give to the world;
3. to show the Europe's creative diversity and to look for the geographic and intellectual frontiers of the continent;
4. to raise questions about how Europe can reconstruct itself and to investigate the citizens' opinion on Europe and its future;
5. to discover poorly known countries in the Central and Eastern parts of the continent, with their cultural traditions and creativity that is shown in modern capital cities such as Berlin, Budapest, Bucharest, Tallinn, Moscow or Istanbul.

As Martine Aubry, mayor of Lille and president of Lille 3000, declared numerous times during the manifestations, the denomination *Europe XXL (Europe élargie)* was chosen in order to symbolise “a voyage through Europe the continent, which therefore does not include just the European Union” (*Europe XXL*, Programme: 3). She also emphasized the need that Europe should not close down on itself, but should open towards the world.

To this purpose, symbolically, the voyage started from the presentation of Berlin, twenty years after the fall of the Wall, and went on to explore countries that have recently joined the Union, but which are still unknown to the Western world (the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, the Baltic States), crossing others that will probably become members in the future (ex-Yugoslavia and Turkey). The purpose was also” to present Europe with what it has most significant: the multiplicity of its cultures but also the values of a continent that believes in the capacity of its men and women to be masters of their destiny” (*Europe XXL*, Programme: 3). Moreover, it is “an opportunity for views to be crossed: the Western view of the East, sometimes

hindered by the fear of the other, and the view of the Eastern artists on this Europe that they have waited for and dreamed about for so long”.

On this matter, Didier Fusillier, director of the manifestations, pointed out that the purpose was “to upset the geographical poles, to consider the East the new West and to investigate how far the continent stretches to the East” (*Europe XXL*, Programme: 3).

Emmanuel Vinchon, director of programmes, underlined the fact that, because it is still unknown, although more fraternal and geographically closer, Europe seems even more exotic than India (celebrated by *Bombaysers de Lille* in 2006): “The series of manifestations organised between March – July 2009 was initially entitled *Invisible Frontiers* and got a second denomination, later adopted as official - *Europe XXL* - a Europe continuously stretching, not just geographically, but also in our minds. While Europe falls into small pieces and the Union is outgrowing its borders, there is a huge Europe that we always forget about, which stretches far beyond Russia and the Kazak land. For this reason, we thought we would have four months to tell stories about it, to ask questions and to try to find answers” (Vinchon, interview).

## **2.2. The structure of the manifestation**

As the mayor of Lille pointed out on several occasions, the main purpose of the manifestations was to find out whether “twenty after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Europe still had a humanist message to send to the world, as well as an identity and a particular cultural model.” (*Beaux Arts*: 102) *Europe XXL* was conceived as a manifestation the purpose of which was “to know oneself and to build oneself.”

Labelled by the press as “an intelligent celebration”, the model of manifestation adopted by Lille 3000 as far back as 2006 has four main pillars (*Beaux Arts*: 92):

1. a programme that includes a selection of the best examples of contemporary artistic creations (exploring all genres, from music and dance to visual arts, also touching upon architecture, cuisine and fashion);
2. the use of a new type of cultural equipments (the Maisons Folie inaugurated in 2004 in several disfavoured areas of the city and with each new edition other former industrial sites turned into cultural venues);
3. the development of the events both in the city and in the region (including working-class districts, suburbs and nearby Belgian towns);

4. the active participation of the citizens to the development of the events (through activities organised at both city and district levels, by and for the inhabitants).

### **2.3. The format of the four-month programme - elitist or popular?**

The manifestations ranged from more elitist (in the good sense of the term) to more popular events. On the one hand, they included several important exhibitions open throughout the period of the celebration: in Lille, *Miroirs d'Orients* and *Istanbul Traversée* at the Palais des Beaux Arts, *Frontières Invisibles* at Tri Postal, *Hypnos* at Hospice Comtesse; in Tourcoing, *Dada East?* at the Arts Museum. Other shorter exhibitions were opened at different venues, covering a time interval of two weeks to two months. Mini-festivals of music, theatre and cinema were organised and punctual events marked one-off performances (the whirling dervishes, jazz performances, classical music concerts). Six three-day moments (*Midi-Midi*) were dedicated to the capital cities of several countries presented in the manifestations (Berlin, The Baltic capitals, Warsaw, Moscow, Budapest and Bucharest, Istanbul and the Balkans).

On the other hand, each of the districts of Lille focused on the celebration of one country through visual and street art, music and dance, theatre, balls and gastronomy, calling for the participation of the inhabitants in painting exhibitions, dance groups, choirs and costume parades or as movie extras, and I cooperation with the cultural associations activating in Lille and the surrounding towns.

The only paying events were the above-mentioned four exhibitions organised in Lille and the classical music, cinema, dance and theatre events hosted by the city cultural institutions (the Opera House, different theatres and performance halls and the cinema inaugurated at Saint Sauveur station). All the others (smaller exhibitions, concerts, debates, workshops) had free entrance, encouraging the inhabitants of the metropolitan area to spend their time on the venues.

In an attempt to bring the inhabitants of disfavoured areas closer to the artistic world and to the cultural institutions considered more elitist, each district town hall offered free guided visits to the main exhibitions and sometimes even developed related activities dedicated to different age-groups (especially teen-agers and seniors).

Both the opening and the closing ceremonies aimed at gathering large masses of people in the streets of Lille (for the opening) and fields of Courtrai, Belgium (for the closing), where spectacular parades, choirs and fireworks created a joyful atmosphere. The local popular

tradition of giant processions and of street events were used as format for the presentation of the Eastern Europe music and dances (the official hymn of the manifestations was Goran Bregović's "Ederlezi", while the choir made up of 1,000 volunteers interpreted songs from all the Central and Eastern Europe countries in their original language).

Some local newspapers have accused the Lille 3000 team of having devised a programme that proved to be too elitist for the public of the region, supporting their statements with several quotes of less enthusiastic members of the audience<sup>12</sup>. It is rather difficult to establish with accuracy the balance of elitist versus popular programmes, out of the total of 500 events developed during the four months of celebration. A fair thing to say would be that the organisers at least tried to design a programme that could include something for every taste and every type of public, taking into account factors such as age and education.

Moreover, from an artistic point of view, they also carefully selected events that would cover both contemporary art (dominant in the events organised and covering all genres), but also traditional art, to give as much as possible a complete image of the creative potential of each of the countries presented. It is true that, in some cases, one or the other aspect was dominant. There will be more details and comment on this matter in the chapter dedicated to the presentation of each of the Balkan countries.

To conclude, we would say that, due to the highly frequented public spaces where they were organised (streets, squares, parks, roofs, churches and bookstores, pubs and community centres), popular events seemed to have dominated the entire manifestation. In terms of public participation, they took precedence over the more elitist events. If some voices accused the manifestation of being too elitist, it was because of the fact that the major exhibitions opened had a high artistic value and touched upon important contemporary issues by making use of modern means of artistic expression (installations, videos, collage, graffiti, sound and light compositions were dominant) to which a public already trained in contemporary art responds better.

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<sup>12</sup> For example, *La Croix du Nord*, No.2114, 26 juin- 2 juillet 2009, Enquête : *Europe XXL : séduits ou déçus?*, pp.4-5, but also *Lq Voix du Nord* in several articles :

## 2.4. Selection criteria

According to Emmanuel Vinchon, director of programmes of *Europe XXL*, in the case of the major events designed and organised by the team of Lille 3000, the artists and the events included in the programme of the manifestation were not selected through the cultural institutions and cultural services of the countries represented, because Lille 3000 is not “the tourist office of Bulgaria, of Poland, of Romania”. The organiser’s wish was to collaborate as little as possible with these institutions, which are “official services” of the countries, and more directly with the artists. Consequently, the members of the organising team made short visits to each of the countries and contacted artists, viewed projects, shows, workshops, spent some time and discussed with artists and with directors of cultural centres and organisations, in an attempt to get the pulse of the contemporary cultural life of each country and to find a connecting element (See Annex 1, p. 105).

Moreover, Emmanuel Vinchon also acknowledged the fact that the existing clichés about the Central and Eastern European countries would be used to make the presentations as intriguing and attractive as possible: “People do what they want with the information they receive. It is also true that what matters is the way this information is presented to them, when we say: « look, Europe, Romania, Estonia, Poland, is this ». It makes no sense, we are not here to tell the story of a country, to say everything, to give the absolute truth; we are here to tell stories with the artists’ help. [...] When we speak about certain countries, people have certain images, if we speak of Romania, of Poland, of Turkey, there are very strong clichés, because of the past relations with these countries and of the past events, positive or negative. [...] That is why we are not here to say « this is true, this is false », we are going to use everything” (See Annex 1, p. 105).

As far as the popular celebrations are concerned, their aim was to attract a large number of people especially in open spaces (squares, parks, the streets of the cities and towns). To this purpose, the strategy used by the organisers was to involve local communities, through the associations, the cultural centres and others cultural structures that operate in the districts of the city, as well as the local administrations of the smaller towns that participated in the manifestations. This is not an original strategy. Peter Sellars had used the same strategy in the 1990 on the occasion of the Los Angeles International Theatre Festival, when he decided to send the visiting companies perform in the ethnic neighbourhoods of the city. This way, responsibility

is delegated to the local communities and a good cooperation between the centre and the suburbs is built, as well as a relationship of mutual trust. In Lille, this approach was put to practice as early as 2004, when the district were involved in the events organised within the programme of the European Capital of Culture and when modern infrastructure was developed to this purpose in the old, abandoned industrial sites that existed in several districts. A positive outcome of such an approach is the consolidation of “the local civil society through positive engagement and responsibility” which leads to a friendlier and safer neighbourhood. (Klaić & all, 2000: 35).

The following SWOT analysis gives a more comprehensive image of the place that a manifestation like *Europe XXL* filled in the cultural agenda of the Lille metropolitan area:

### *Europe XXL*

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- it is a multidisciplinary manifestation, presenting a wide range of cultural events;</li> <li>- it has an original structure, already tested in previous manifestations: long-term, medium and punctual, one-off events/ exhibitions);</li> <li>- it mixes elite and popular events, “official” and rehabilitated venues, indoor and outdoor events;</li> <li>- it covers the entire area of the city and of the suburbs / region; popular districts are also animated, not just the city centre;</li> <li>- it presents several European countries and offers the possibility of comparison and contrast of their cultures;</li> <li>- it focuses of contemporary artistic creations, promoting well-known artists, but also young ones who have an</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- not too many foreign artists invited at the event to present their creations and represent their countries in direct contact with the audience;</li> <li>- because of the large number of events, many are overlapping and impossible to follow; for the same reason, some events are cancelled because of lack of audience;</li> <li>- the duration of the entire manifestation makes some of the inhabitants unhappy;</li> <li>- some venues are less accessible because crowded;</li> <li>- the strong, sometimes even excessive promotion sometimes lacks coordination and is misleading;</li> <li>- as a result of the presentation of less familiar, sometimes unknown artists, the data included in the promotional materials</li> </ul>

<p>opportunity of expression and of collaboration with peers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- it involves local people in the artistic events (artists, volunteers) and in the organisation of the manifestations (ambassadors, volunteers);</li> <li>- it has an experienced team;</li> <li>- it has good visibility in the local and regional media, also due to the partnership with local TV stations and newspapers;</li> <li>- it has a good partnership with other cultural manifestations organised in the city (<i>Transphotographiques</i> festival, <i>Prix du Marais</i> in Lomme);</li> <li>- it has a good educational side, both for amateurs, artists and specialists in the field of cultural management;</li> <li>- it has an impact on tourism and other branches of the local economy;</li> </ul>	<p>lacks accuracy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the development of some events programmed outdoors is dependent on the weather conditions, very unpredictable in the region;</li> </ul>
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- long-term effect: the development of future significant cultural activities and centres in the popular districts;</li> <li>- development of cooperation between foreign and local artists and agencies;</li> <li>- Central and Eastern European countries as future market for French artists, as a result of links created now;</li> <li>- positive impact on tourism in Lille and to the countries presented (as it was the case with India in 2006);</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the 17% local budget for culture may suffer cuts, as a result of future urbanistic projects developed in the city that may need additional funding;</li> <li>- certain contemporary art projects may be considered too vanguardist by the public;</li> <li>- certain projects may be misinterpreted because of decontextualisation and of insufficient background knowledge;</li> <li>- the format of the manifestation may become obsolete;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- gathering support from the extended region (Belgium as well);</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local artists and associations not involved in the manifestation may protest because it absorbs local funding, media interest and public;</li> <li>- loss of support of the inhabitants, as a result of excessive programming;</li> <li>- parallel programming may disfavour certain events;</li> <li>- inadequate media coverage as a result of excessive programming;</li> <li>- weather conditions;</li> </ul>
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Evidently, the pluses outnumber the minuses: the pluridisciplinary manifestation with an original structure addresses a large, varied public invited to participate in an active manner, to learn and to be entertained at the same time. Local communities are involved, and this includes both artists and amateurs, and also other cultural institutions and programmes present in the region. The extension of the events to neighbouring towns and even to Belgium highlights the wish of the local authorities to continue the ambitious plan of making Lille the capital of a Euro-region that will gain in importance and will improve its cultural, urban and economic life.

Still, the minuses need to be taken into consideration and ironed out if the Lille 3000 team wishes to continue to organise such huge manifestations with the same success. A more significant presence of the foreign artists would benefit both the culture they represent and the public, as direct contact is always more efficient in creating links and in better explaining the significance of artistic creations that are already taken out of their original context.

At the same time, although the organisers have made an extraordinary effort to cover all genres and types of activities, the programme proved to be so complex that it became difficult to follow, especially as sometimes the numerous leaflets and flyers, information sheets and press releases contained contradictory and misleading information. A stricter supervision of the schedule and information release might have prevented this aspect from occurring. Probably due to the same over-agglomeration of events, some of them had a small audience or were even cancelled because of its absence. It seems that the organisers were primarily concerned with the

richness of content of the manifestation and only secondly with the actual success of all the events, in terms of participation. It is also true that at the level of 500 events organised throughout the region, the lack of success of a small number is not too significant.

### III. Methodology of Research

#### 1. Issues

In the analysis of the image created by cultural events, our research is based on the general hypothesis that a series of manifestations like *Europe XXL* helps building a positive image of the countries whose cultural life is generally less known in the Western world, but that events organised at such a large scale may fail to project a very clear and easily recognisable image of each of the represented countries. As far as the Balkan countries are concerned, as they belong to a geographical area already identified by many common cultural, historical and social characteristics included in their heritage, such festivals will rather highlight the common roots and patterns of their cultures rather than differences and peculiarities.

The specific hypotheses are:

1. cultural events and the press campaigns related to them may build a positive, clearer image of cultures otherwise unindividualised in the eye of the Western public, that generally has minimal and often incorrect and confusing knowledge about the Balkan countries as individual cultural entities.
2. the knowledge of the average Western public is marred by stereotypes and prejudices (the result of historical, political and social factors);
3. cultural events build a positive image of the countries they represent, but if we try to assess the outcomes of festivals, we would rather say that they mainly act as promoters of the countries (as touristic destinations for the wide public) rather than as a market for future cultural transactions.

#### 2. Methods

The research methodology used implies gathering quantitative and qualitative data concerning the festival and the cultural manifestations included in the programme, as well as concerning the feedback obtained from the press, the local community, representatives of the “Maisons de quartier” organising country-targeted events and from the audience.

**Desk research** – press releases and reviews of the cultural events presented in the programme, data collection from museums hosting major exhibitions and from Lille 3000, regarding the number of visitors and participants in different events (Palais des Beaux Arts, Palais Rameau,

Musée d'Art de Tourcoing, Tri Postal, Hospice Comtesse) and the analysis of the image constructed for the countries in question through visual and textual representations (slogans of the events, headlines and articles published in the local newspapers – *La Voix du Nord*, *Nord Éclair*, *20 Minutes*, *La Croix du Nord*, programmes and leaflets of the exhibitions);

- on-line reactions to the newspaper articles, on the sites of the local newspapers already mentioned;

**Quantitative survey** – the respondents were members of cultural associations that took part in events included in the programme of the manifestation *Europe XXL* (the members of the French folk group “Le Cotillion Lossois”, members of the organising team (Emmanuel Vinchon, director of programmes) and employees of “Voyageurs du monde” bookstore.

The data was collected by means of interviews, discussions and questionnaires. The number of persons that filled in the questionnaire was not as high as the one expected, as a result of the fact that their stay in Lille was short and during the events there was no possibility of interviewing them.

**Qualitative survey** – the presentation of the events that were organised to represent each of the Balkan countries, with a focus on the genres represented, on the organising team, the attendance (when data is available) and comments on the development of the events and their perception by the public. The study focused on the countries from the Balkan area (ex-Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania), but Turkey was included in the general table illustrating the genres represented in the programme as a term of comparison, considering that it was the major focus of the entire manifestation and was intensely promoted in the media (in anticipation of the Turkish season in France, which started in July and is to continue for nine months all over the country with more than 400 artistic and cultural festivities).

### **3. Quantitative survey**

The following data is the result of a questionnaire administered to 15 members of the French folk group “Le Cotillion Loossois” who participated in the celebration of the Romanian culture organised in the Degeyter square of the district of Fives, Lille, as well as to 16 people that were among the audience and were willing to participate to this brief survey. “Le Cotillion Loossois” is a folk dance group based in the town of Loos, in the immediate vicinity of Lille. The group’s repertoire includes Flemish and international folk dances, especially from the

Balkan countries, but also from Central Europe. It also organises dance workshops run by external animators, folk balls and performances in schools and old people homes in the area. Most of its members are retired, but there are also a few teenagers and several still active employees. They make their own costumes and their own choreography, trying to observe as faithfully as possible the characteristics of the traditional art of the countries they explore through their programmes.

The event organised in the Fives district included folk dancing and music performed by the Romanian group “Arcanu” from Bucovina, as well as workshops and mini-exhibitions of craftwork (wood carving, egg painting, weaving). A Romanian cartoonist was also present and made portraits of the people present at the event. The members of the group “Le Cotillion Loossois” also danced several Romanian dances.

Although the Fives district is one of the socially and ethnically mixed districts of Lille, and the public present in the square included people of both European and African origins, the participants in the survey were all of French nationality, as stated in the personal data section of the questionnaire.

The respondents to the questionnaire were in majority female subjects (28 women and only 3 men). Evidently, the sample is not representative for the entire public that attended the events. It may only indicate the reactions and views of, on the one hand, a group of people that were directly and voluntarily involved in the manifestations, people who already manifested a certain degree of interest in the culture of other countries and already had some information about these countries. On the other hand, there are several people who attended the events as members of the audience, attracted by the programme organised in their district and, as many of them confessed, curious to see some manifestations of the culture represented there.

As it will be seen from the age group table below, the fact that the majority of the respondents were pensioners may explain certain of the answers, especially those related to the sources of information on the country and of the intentions of visiting it in the future. As pensioners, they have more time to watch TV and read the newspapers, and certainly spend less time on the Internet than teenagers would (even if for a third of them it was a source of information, together with the common means like TV and the written press). At the same time, in spite of revenue that is certainly lower than that of employees, they have the disponibility and

the time to consider a future visit to the country whose culture they experience through this event, as it will be seen in the penultimate table.

Age groups:

13-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	over 61
1	-	-	2	13	15

Occupation:

student	librarian	office clerk	teacher	pensioner
1	2	2	2	24

Most of the respondents are retired, which explains their implication in the amateur artistic movement. In the case of the other half of the group that filled in the questionnaire, two thirds of them were also retired. In fact, the majority of the people present at the event were adults and seniors. This is understandable, considering the folkloric dominant of the manifestation. On the other hand, in the evening, about 700 people attended the ball organised in the district entertainment centre, where folk music and a mixture of disco and Gipsy music were played. More of the people present were young people, as in the case of all the other balls organised in the celebration of the other countries.

Type of information they have on the country:

politics	culture	sports	geography	society	none	other
9	19	8	20	4	-	-

Sources of information:

TV	radio	written press	Internet	personal readings	friends' & colleagues' experiences	travelling	contact with foreigners
14	4	14	10	9	8	2	10

Most of the respondents mentioned at least two types of information they had about Romania, mainly concerning the location of the country and its culture. As sources of information selected, most of them are indirect (the media, especially TV and the

newspapers),but also the Internet and other personal readings. Only one third of the total number had direct contact with people from the country, and since just two of them travelled to Romania, this means that the meetings involved Romanians living in Lille, in one case students met at the faculty.

These indirect and fewer direct contacts added to the information gathered from the media and other personal investigations led to the creation of a mostly positive image about Romania, for half of the people in the analysed group. A quarter of the group has a neutral image, while for six the image is rather negative. Two persons gave no answer to this question as it can be seen in the table below:

The image they had of the country before *Europe XXL*

positive	rather positive	neutre	rather negative	negative	no answer
7	8	8	6	-	2

Events they attended:

folk concert + dance	film	debate	ball + snack	exhibition	literary debate	theatre
19	1	1	14	3	1	-

As the films, the important exhibitions and the theatre performances were paying events, there is no doubt that only very few of the respondents attended such events. Most went to the folk concerts and to the ball organised in the evening, where specific Romanian food could also be purchased, for a small amount of money.

Words they associate with the country:

exotic	Balkan	hospitable	dangerous	interesting	culturally rich	un-developed
-	18	12	-	8	4	-
inhospitable	poor	beautiful	unknown	rich in traditions		other (specify)
-	12	3	-	22		warm

Most of the words that the majority of the respondents associated with the country had a positive connotation (*rich in traditions, hospitable, interesting*), although for almost half of them Romanian was also *poor*. For 18 people, the word *Balkan* is also representative, but there is no indication whether it has a purely geographical meaning or the negative connotation that is sometimes associated with it. It is interesting that 12 people selected the word *hospitable*, although only two actually visited the country. If it was not out of a sense of politeness, this impression is based on indirect information obtained from friends and colleagues that had a direct contact with the country or from reports in the media. In consequence, almost all the people questioned would like to visit the country and all would like to find out more about its culture, as seen in the table below.

Would they like to... ?

	yes	no
Visit the country	29	2
Find out more about its culture	31	-

Have the events changed the image they already had?

yes	no	no answer
2	21	8

The former image of Romania did not change after the events witnessed for most of the people (out of those who answered to this question); it is understandable, considering that half of them already had a *positive* or *rather positive* image of this country before the events. Four of them reported they had a different image after the events attended, one of them mentioning that she thought the Romanian people met on this occasion were very “warm and friendly”.

In their case, taking into account all their answers, we can say that the events had a positive impact on the image of Romania: the presentation of the folk music and dances, as well as the organisation of the ball gave the participants the opportunity to meet with native Romanians and to exchange information and learn interesting details about the process of creation of all the objects displayed (translators were present to ease the dialogue). These

exchanges determined all the 31 respondents to admit that they would like to learn more about the culture of the country, 29 of them stating that they would also consider visiting it.

It is true, on the other hand, that by participating in this type of event (promoting folklore and crafts) this group of people got a different image of the culture of Romanian than, let's say, those who visited the Dada exhibition in Tourcoing or those who went to the theatre. Still, as the purpose of the entire *Europe XXL* manifestation was not to specifically promote the countries presented, as the director of programmes pointed out in the interview (see Annex 1, p. 105), it is clear that the organisers aimed at giving the public the chance to select from among the events and genres resented those that best fit their taste and background. In the end, the main purpose of the celebration of European culture was to get to know it and be entertained in the process.

#### **4. The “Palette colorée” painting circle, Vauban district**

The painting club organised by the Vauban district town hall opened an exhibition on the occasion of the celebration of Serbian culture. It included a series of 50 paintings, drawings and graphics inspired by Serbia, its landscapes, traditional costumes and monuments.

In the discussions had with several members of group, they confessed that initially they knew nothing about the country and about its culture, but that the research made for the exhibition made them find out numerous interesting details about its history, customs and natural environment. They developed a positive opinion about the country and had the occasion to learn more about it during the snack organised at the district cultural centre and the folk concert in the Vauban garden.

Just like in the case of the group of readers from the Lomme Médiathèque, who were introduced to Serbian literature and then wished to explore more of its culture, by taking part not only in the debates organised around the *Prix du Marais*, but in other events celebrating Serbia, the painting exhibition in Vauban was for the members of the amateur art group the event that activated their curiosity and interest about a country and a culture that earlier was completely unknown to them.

This was one of the aims of the organisers: to give the public a taste of the culture of other European countries and develop people's wish to explore it in more details afterwards.

If the outcomes of the *Bombaysers 2006* can be taken as a relevant example (the travel division of “Voyageurs du Monde” bookstore reported a 30% increase in the number of tailored

trips to India after the three-month Indian season in Lille), all differences considered, a certain rise in the number of trips to Eastern European countries can also be expected in the next period, but at this time it is too soon to verify this assumption.

### 5. Reports on the number of visitors of the main exhibitions

The table below shows the number of visitors of the main exhibitions opened for four months in Tourcoing and Lille (only the first one was free):

**Table 1: Major exhibitions in the *Europe XXL* programme**

<b>Exhibition</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Visitors</b>
<i>Dada East?</i> (the Romanian origins of Dadaism)	Musé des Beaux Arts, Tourcoing	4 months	12,000
<i>Frontières invisibles</i>	Tri Postal	4 months	40,000
<i>Miroirs d'Orients</i>	Palais des Beaux Arts, Lille	4 months	54,000
<i>Istanbul Traversée</i>	Palais des Beaux Arts, Lille	4 months	85,974
<i>Hypnos images et inconscients en Europe (1900- 1949)</i>	Hospice Comtesse, Lille	4 months	29,588 (24,075 individual visitors)

The total figures reported<sup>13</sup> showed 457,900 visitors for the total number of exhibitions, out of which 85,974 for the *Istanbul Traversée* and 127,980 for the events hosted by Saint Sauveur station (exhibitions, cinema, debates, etc.); 34,010 people attended the Europe Festive events organised in the districts of Lille, while 114,000 were present at the celebrations of the capital cities during the 6 Midi-Midi.

<sup>13</sup> Reports on 7 July 2009, on the site of the Lille City Hall: [http://www.mairie-lille.fr/fr/Culture/Agenda\\_culturel/bilan-europe-xxl](http://www.mairie-lille.fr/fr/Culture/Agenda_culturel/bilan-europe-xxl)

This data shows that the public of the exhibitions organised in the city centre (at the Art Museum, Tri Postal, Saint Sauveur station and many other galleries) was three times higher than that of the public of the popular events organised in the districts (around 148,000 people). In spite of the fact that the major exhibitions were paying events, this affluence can be explained by the interesting topics, by the concentration in space (in the case of the Palais des Beaux Arts, with two major exhibitions, and of Tri Postal) and by the price offers (special fees for the visit of all the exhibitions or for the Palais des Beaux Arts, plus free entrance on each first Sunday of the month).

## IV. Data Analysis - Cultural events selected to represent the Balkan countries

### 1. Programme structure

The chapter is a presentation and analysis of the events that were selected to represent the Balkan countries in the *Europe XXL* manifestation. Without referring in too many details to the already known and extensive debate about the countries that should be considered as belonging to the Balkan region, we shall mention that in this study the focus was on the ex-Yugoslavia countries, Bulgaria and Romania. Turkey is mentioned in the table below only as a term of reference, but no detailed presentation of the events is made further on. Greece, sometimes referred to as a Balkan country, was absent of the manifestations, with the exception of the presence of a local Greek association which joined forces with the Bulgarian students in the organization of the Greek-Bulgarian ball (as shown in the section dedicated to Bulgaria below). Albania was also absent.

**Table 2: Genre representation for the Balkan countries:**

<b>Countries</b>								
<b>Genres</b>	Bulgaria	Croatia	Macedonia	Serbia	Bosnia	Slovenia	Romania	Turkey
music	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
photography exhibition	-	+	-	+	postponed	-	+	+
visual arts exhibitions	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
dance	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+
ball	+	-	-	+	-	-	+	+
theatre	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-
literature	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
cinema	- docum.	+	-	+	+	-	+	+
debates	+	+	+	+	+	+	+ (1 cancelled)	+
cuisine	+	+	-	+	-	-	+	+
crafts	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
fashion	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
comics, cartoons	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	-

As it can be seen from the table, the manifestations covered a very wide range of genres which included events that were meant to address a varied audience. The countries whose cultures were presented in more detail, through individual district celebrations (Croatia, Serbia, Romania, and Turkey) and through Midi-Midi capital cities week-ends (Bucharest and Istanbul) were dedicated events that cover almost all genres. Turkey was included in this table as a term of comparison, as it was by far the most mediated country in the entire manifestation, at both popular and “high art” levels.

Except for Croatia and Serbia, which were celebrated individually in the Europe Festive series of district weekends, all the other ex-Yugoslavia countries were presented together on the Balkan weekend in and during other events organised in various towns in the region. In many cases, the same local French brass bands, dance groups and musicians were invited to present the music of the different Balkan countries.

## 1.1. Bulgaria

Bulgaria was celebrated on 16 May 2009 in the district of Vieux Lille, the old centre of the city, through several events organised in cooperation with the Association of the Bulgarian students in Lille, the Greek association “To Steki mas”, the “Les Dompteurs du papier” association, the “Autour du monde” bookstore, the “Godeleine Petit” district cultural centre, the Lille city library and the university club “Echiquier du Nord”.

The one-day series of events combined Bulgarian and Greek art in a programme based mainly on the presentation of traditional crafts and cuisine.

**Table 3: Presentation of the Bulgarian events organised within *Europe XXL*.**

EVENT	GENRE	VENUE	ORGANISER	DURATION	AUDIENCE
Costumes and icons exhibition	crafts	“Godeleine Petit” district town hall	Association of Bulgarian students, district town hall	1h30	all ages; figures not communicated
book exhibition	literature	“Autour du monde”	“Autour du monde”	one day	not communicated
book exhibition	literature	City Library	City Library	one day	all ages; figures not communicated
projection of a documentary	cinema	“Godeleine Petit” district town hall	Association of Bulgarian students, district town hall	1h30	all ages 20
Greek-Bulgarian ball	folk music and dance, cuisine	Halle aux Sucres	To Steki mas; Association of Bulgarian students	6 hours	all ages; about 150 people at the ball
chess competition	games/sports	Lille University Club	Echiquier du Nord chess club	one day	all ages; figures not communicated
workshop icons	visual arts	Cave des Celestines	Greek association Te Steki mas	3h30	adults, experience in painting 15

Workshop Karagiosis puppets	crafts	Cave des Celestines	Greek association Te Steki mas	3h30	children (booking obligatory)
Workshop: making of “martenitsa”	crafts	“Godeleine Petit” district town hall	Association of Bulgarian students, district town hall	1h30	all ages 20
Workshop Etching + storytelling	crafts; story-telling	public square Vieux Lille	Les Dompteurs du papier	2 session of 2 hours each	adults, number limited by space (15)

The Place des Archives hosted, in 2 two-hour sessions, workshops of traditional stories and etchings, opened to a limited number of people (15), because of the space (tents erected in the square). At exactly the same time slots, the City library offered a presentation of the main Bulgarian authors through the display of their books. The promotional leaflet designed in the colours of the Bulgarian flag (red, white and green) mentioned that this activity addresses a public made up of adolescents and adults.

The Lille University club was the setting of a meeting that aimed at promoting the game of chess, chosen as an illustration of one of the most popular sports in Easter Europe. Simultaneous games were organised against the members of the club “Echiquier du Nord” which functions at the University.

The “Autour du monde” travel bookstore situated in the district celebrated Bulgaria through a special window display of books and travel guides presenting the most interesting sites and attractive travel destinations of the Balkan country.

The morning programme also included an icon workshop organised by the Greek association “To Steki mas” and a Greek iconographer, which addressed an adult public already initiated in painting. The participants had the occasion to paint their own icons, which were then exhibited together with professional works in the exhibition opened in the evening at La Halle aux Sucres, in the same district. The Greek association also organised a workshop of traditional Karagiosis puppets developed by Maria Zafiropoulou, followed by a puppet theatre show for the young audience.

In the afternoon, the Association of the Bulgarian students in Lille organised at the district cultural centre an exhibition of Bulgarian folk costumes and icons and a workshop during which the participants were shown how to make the traditional March garments "martenitsa" specific to Bulgaria and Romania only. This was followed by a projection of the documentary film "*La Bulgarie: le code de l'éternité*". Around 50 people attended the projection.

The evening brought much more participants (around 150 throughout the evening, according to the meal tickets sold) to the Bulgarian-Greek ball organised by "To Steki mas" and by the association of the Bulgarian students. On this occasion, the programme included traditional music, initiation to the dances of the two countries and a buffet meal displaying traditional dishes of both Bulgaria and Greece. The music of the French group "Epsilon" animated the evening.

There were not too many people who attended the workshops programmed in the morning, as a result of the fact that it rained and it was cloudy the entire day. Some of the Bulgarian people living in Lille, mobilised by the students who organised part of the events, had to divide into several groups in order to attend the workshops; this of course diminished the number of participants in each event.

The Bulgarian participation in the major exhibitions included in the programme of *Europe XXL* was reduced to the presence of three artists: Luchezar Boyadjiev, Krassimir Terziev and Nedko Solakov. They were selected to exhibit their works at Tri Postal, the venue that housed for the four months of the events the exhibition entitled *Les Frontières invisibles*. The result of the work of five curators (Iara Boubnova, Elena Sorokina, Filippo Poli, Federico Zanfi, Caroline Naphegyi), this major exhibition included in fact three major projects (*Post It City*, *Scenes Centrales* and *Liquid Frontiers*), to which the installations of the Russian Anatoly Osmolovsky and of the Polish Katarzyna Kozyra were added.

*Liquid Frontiers*, an exhibition curated by Iara Boubnova, explored the main theme of the entire event: which are the frontiers of Europe today? The title was chosen to highlight the fact that today, more than ever, frontiers are in constant movement, are fluid, creating a migratory and touristic flux of the people, as a result of political and financial games: "liquid also, as they are elusive, since the term "frontier" is highly ambiguous: it limitates, therefore protects and identifies, just as much as it excludes" (*Les Frontières Invisibles*, Cahier de documentation: 10).

Through a variety of means of expression, artists from Central and Eastern Europe addressed the question of the mobile geography of a continent with more or less “real” and imaginary borders. Beyond clichés, through multiple artistic and urbanistic points of view, the works of art displayed invited the public to view and analyse new representations of places and of their inhabitants.

Nedko Solakov participated with *Encyclopedia Utopia*, a project which refers to a totalitarian political system, raising questions about the idea of utopia and returning 20 years back in time. The programme of the exhibition underlined the continuous reflection on human nature: “His is an invitation to enter a poetic world presenting sometimes tragicomical situations, absurd and dark memories, based on the keen observation of human faults” (*Les Frontières Invisibles*, Cahier de documentation: 8). On the weekend dedicated to Bulgaria, he was also present with *Some Newly-Born Utopias* in the project room of the association “artconnexion”<sup>14</sup>. This exhibition continued the themes of the works presented at Tri Postal.

In a questionnaire devised by the members of the Polish group of artists the Krasnals, the questions about today’s Eastern Europe and culture got these answers from some of the participants in the Tri Postal exhibition<sup>15</sup>:

Iara Boubnova: „There is not such a thing like culture and art of Eastern Europe. Eastern Europe itself is artificial, bureaucratic, administrative nomination of something in between geography, history, and politics. It’s not so much about people, it’s not so much about us, and not so much about culture.”

Nedko Solakov: “We need Utopias in terms we need to hope for a kind of a better life.”

Lachezar Boyadjiev: “The West was just as affected by the fall of Berlin wall as the East. In the West it was more like a psychological transformation, whereas in the East it was the transformation of the whole society, economy, political structures and so on.”

Another Bulgarian presence in the manifestations was that of the film specialist Dina Iordanova, director of the cinema studies centre of St Andrews University. Her activity focuses on transnational dynamics and the problem of the periphery and the centre in the cinema of the Balkans. During the debates entitled *Les Frontières Invisible*, she underlined the nostalgia for a multicultural past that can be sensed in many Balkan movies.

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<sup>14</sup> “artconnexion” is an independent association in Lille, which aims to develop, produce and mediate contemporary art projects.

<sup>15</sup> [http://thekrasnals.blogspot.com/2009\\_03\\_01\\_archive.html](http://thekrasnals.blogspot.com/2009_03_01_archive.html)

Not too visible in the local press, the presence of Bulgaria in the manifestations of *Europe XXL* was mainly marked by the representation of traditional crafts and music. This underlines the idea that tradition is still very important in the Balkan countries, and constitutes an important part of the image that the countries in the area export. As Iara Boubnova was telling the members of the Krasnals during the interview mentioned, “the East still has tradition, which the West has lost” ([http://thekrasnals.blogspot.com/2009\\_03\\_01\\_archive.html](http://thekrasnals.blogspot.com/2009_03_01_archive.html), video).

If in the case of the other Balkan countries, the presence in the manifestations developed on two levels – the “elitist” one, which included important events hosted by the major venues in the city and organised and coordinated by the Lille 3000 team, and the popular one, which developed in the districts of Lille through events organised by the local associations and town halls – Bulgaria was mainly represented at a popular level and through popular cultural events. The presence of the three artists selected for the Tri Postal exhibition was not enough to give a significant image of the contemporary Bulgarian art. This was perhaps also the result of the subjective opinion on the Bulgarian art scene of the selecting team of Lille 3000. The director of programme of *Europe XXL* had confessed that he regretted “the absence of some cities, among which Sofia, which [he] was unable to understand [...]” (Vinchon, interview).

Moreover, it was perhaps a bit confusing for the audience to understand the intentions of the organisers when, on the Bulgarian weekend, prepared to participate in events celebrating this country, they also discovered the culture of neighbouring Greece, which undoubtedly has a more distinct and representative image in the Western countries than Bulgaria does. A reason for this approach might have been the very geographical nearness; still, we can not suspect the organisers of having intended to clarify possible misunderstandings and confusions (if any, among two such different cultures), as the series of events representing the two countries could not be compared, for lack of common characteristics.

What remains to be concluded is that the purpose of the organisers was to give the local Greek association the opportunity to present their culture (which was the major absent of the manifestations) and give the Bulgarian students a supporting partner in the organisation of the ball.

## 1.2. Croatia

Croatia had a day dedicated to its culture on 4 July, in the district of Saint-Maurice-Pellevoisin. Like all the other district celebrations, it was characterised by a popular atmosphere, in this case rendered more official by the presence of the mayors of two Croatian towns of the Zadar region (Preko and Kali), invited by their French homologue. The festivities opened with the intonation of the Croatian national hymn, "Lijepa naša domovino" and the word of His Excellency Mirko Galić, Ambassador of Croatia to France.

**Table 4: Presentation of the Croatian events organised within *Europe XXL*.**

EVENT	GENRE	VENUE	ORGANISER	DURATION	AUDIENCE
exhibition	visual arts	district town hall	district town hall, “Couleurs d’empreinte”, “Le Chat perché” entertainment centre	all day	adults, number limited by space (15)
exhibition	visual arts	Tri Postal	Elena Sorokina	4 months	40,000
exhibition	photography	district town hall	Croatian Tourist Office, Franco-Croat cultural association	4 hours	all ages
exhibition, workshop	comics	Maison Folie Wazemmes	Maison Folie Wazemmes	1 week	teenagers 15
concert	folk dance	district town hall	French-Croat cultural association, “Udruga Zena Djiran” (HR)	2 sessions of 2h	all ages, 300 people
concert	folk music choir	district town hall	“Digues-Dondaines” choir	3 sessions of 20’	all ages, 300 people
concert	folk music	“Arche” old	“Clef de Soleil”,	1h	all ages,

	(Balkan)	people's home	Raluca Patuleanu		figures not communicated
performance	dance	Le gymnase, Roubaix	Plesni Centar Tara	1h	not communicated
performance	theatre	district town hall	Association of the Croats of St. Amand	20'	all ages, 300 people
performance	theatre	Théâtre du Nord, Tourcoing	Zagreb Youth Theatre	2 performances	all ages, not communicated
debate	theatre	Théâtre du Nord, Tourcoing	Zagreb Youth Theatre	1h	not communicated
Croatian lunch	cuisine	district town hall	French-croat cultural association,	-	adults, number limited by space (15)

The celebration was also marked by the presence of twenty-five dancers of the folk group “Udruga Zena Djiran” from the Croatian island of Uljen, who animated the event with their dances and songs.

Several tents installed in the park of the district town hall advertised the Croatian touristic sites along the Adriatic Sea coast, and gave the audience the possibility to taste traditional Croatian culinary products (cakes, olives, pastry). The around 300 people who attended the celebration also had the opportunity to buy a traditional Croatian lunch which, among other dishes, consisted of the famous spicy minced meat rolls “ćevapčići”, “fritule” doughnuts and “kroštule”.

The folk music programme included the concerts given by the French choir Dignes-Dondaines, from the district of St.Maurice-Pellevoisin, who interpreted folk music from the Balkans, focusing on the Croatian repertoire. As they declared, the group is not specialised just in Balkan folklore, but in the folklore of different countries of the world. Their presence in this event came out of the wish to celebrate the culture of a country which has closer relations with their district, twinned with the region of Zadar. Moreover, the French-Croat association which is

active in the district has been promoting for many years the Croat culture and cultural and tourist exchanges between the two countries.

On this occasion, the association of the Croats of St.Amand, which organises courses of Croat language, prepared a short play performed in Croatian by some of the children who take these courses. The performance of the play “Kuhinjski razgovori” was followed by a cooking workshop.

Another activity, developed by the association “Couleurs d’empreinte” together with the children from “Le Chat perché” entertainment centre of the district, was the painting of a banner representing their version of the Croatian flag, which was hung on the façade of the district town hall on the day of the celebration.

The district town hall opened the photography exhibition *Instantanés de Croatie*, in collaboration with the Croat Tourist Office and the French-Croat cultural association: six French photographers presented their views on Croatia and some of its most beautiful regions and towns: Yan Castanier/ Dalmatia, Eric Legrand / Istria and Kvarnen, Sarah Bouillard / the islands, Gaëlle Gonzalez / around Dubrovnik, Martin LeRoy / continental Croatia. Eric Bouttier was also included, with his photos from Slovenia. These six photographers and their works are in fact part of a larger advertising campaign developed for the second time in France in March-April, which aimed at promoting Croatia in several tourist offices all over the country. With the slogan “La Méditerranée retrouvée”, the campaign underlined the theme of durable tourism and made use of posters that were placed in the Parisian underground stations, in major tourist offices, as well as in several magazines focusing on tourism, interior decoration, art and culture (<http://www.tourmag.com/>).

Within the mini-festival of theatre entitled *Vents d’Est*, organised by Théâtre du Nord between May and July, Zagreb Youth Theatre participated with the show “S Druge Strane”, a text written and directed by Nataša Rajković and Bobo Jelčić. Performed in Croatian, with subtitles, the show presented the life of four people, with its daily habits, questions, automatism and conflicts, by means of the collage technique, “which merges theatre and reality. Theatre is life and life is theatre, there is no copy.” (*Scènes de vie*: 6). One of the two performances was preceded by a debate and a meeting with the four actors and the directors, on which occasion the contemporary Croatian scene was examined in more detail.

Three Croatian artists, David Maljković, Igor Grubić and Igor Eskinja, were selected by the artistic advisor Elena Sorokina to participate in the project *Scènes Centrales*, included in the exhibition *Les Frontières Invisibles* at Tri Postal. Its presentation underlines the theatricality of the exhibits and the strange merge of European and Asian art: “By using astonishingly theatrical works, Elena Sorokina has organised a previously unheard of meeting between artists from Europe and Central Asia for this exhibition entitled *Scènes Centrales* (Central Scenes). Their works evoke the new geography of Europe and the friction between Europe and Asia. Artists in the exhibition use diverse theatrical strategies (they are sometimes the protagonists and sometimes the directors of their works) and use local history and traditions in a strategic manner” ([http://kiem.culture-routes.lu/php/fo\\_index.php?lng=en&dest=bd\\_ev\\_det&id=00003091&PHPSESSID=scevywbnsukbm](http://kiem.culture-routes.lu/php/fo_index.php?lng=en&dest=bd_ev_det&id=00003091&PHPSESSID=scevywbnsukbm)). As underlined by several commentators of the event, the multiple meanings of the notion *scene* provided a pattern for this exhibition: “*Scene* spans from a general *view* -something seen - to a more formal theatrical sense, whereby a scene is a structural unit of a play or a film. But first and foremost, *scene* relates to a constructed experience; it is essentially incomplete, partial, unfinished” (<http://chtodelat.wordpress.com/>).

Another visual artist whose works were present at Lille, both in an exhibition and in a book published by Lille 3000 and a local publishing house was Igor Hofbauer. Together with his Serbian colleague Aleksandar Zograf he held a one-week workshop at the Maison Folie in the district of Wazemmes, where he prepared the *Stripovi*<sup>16</sup> exhibition, which toured Lille, Roubaix and Wattrelos. In the same domain, two other workshops were hosted by the Lasécu gallery in Fives (Lille): Puma 34 (Zagreb, Croatia) worked on a mural painting with Jiem (Lille), while Oko (Zagreb, Croatia) developed etchings together with the French artist Matild Gros (Lille). The result of their collaborations was shown in the exhibition BD 3D in Lasécu in July, also included in the program of Lille 3000.

Also present in the programme of the Croatian celebration were several classical music concerts organised by the association “Clef de soleil” at different venues of the St.Maurice-Pellevoisin district. Though they did not present Croatian, but French musicians, some of them included in the repertoire the Croatian composers Slavenski and Kalinski. The “Arche” old

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<sup>16</sup> "STRIPOVI/СТРИПОВИ" is a collective book of and about comics in Serbia and Croatia. It gathers few short stories and some texts, giving an overview of independent comics scene of the region. Its cover was designed by Igor Hofbauer

people's home hosted the concert of the Romanian panpipe player Ramona Pătuleanu, who played folk music from the Balkan countries.

Other Croatian presences in Lille during the four months of *Europe XXL*, directly or indirectly related to the manifestations dedicated to Central and Eastern Europe, included two modern dance performances. In March-April, in the Lille dance festival *Les Reparages*, Larisa Lipovac et Dražen Šivak presented the show choreographed by Ksenja Zec "Don't be afraid, I'm afraid too", which visually presented the theme of solitude. Another Croatian show selected in the festival was "Out of service" by Karen Levi, which dealt with the theme of "accessibility, at both material and relational levels" (<http://www.dansealille.com/images/>).

The image that Croatia got out of the events organised to celebrate its culture was more comprehensive than that of Bulgaria, already commented upon. On the one hand, Croatia came out as a very picturesque country, with numerous touristic sites, hospitable and attractive for those who enjoy active holidays, but also comfort and luxury, good food and entertainment. It was, in fact, not just the only country (more or less) in the Balkan region which promoted its touristic attractions (as part of the larger campaign, through the photography exhibition, but also by means of a specially set up tent where leaflets, videos, brochures and other visuals provided touristic information), but the only country presented in *Europe XXL* to do this deliberately.

The touristic image was seconded by that of a country still attached to its traditions. The traditional food and drink on sale made people queue (although many of the so-called traditional recipes are in fact considered national dishes everywhere in the Balkan region, from Croatia to Turkey). The 25 dancers from Uljen were proud of the fact that their costumes were made according to the traditional craft in the region, and especially wanted to underline it. They were also a little disappointed by the number of people attending the concert and the lunch (around 300), having hoped to present their dances and music to an even larger audience.

On the other hand, there was a modern image of Croatia that the public could detect. Direct, engaged, ironic artists, making use of contemporary artistic means (installations, videos, comics) showed the dynamic Croatian art scene that is troubled by the same questions on life, creativity, truth and values that are raised anywhere else in Europe.

### 1.3. Serbia

Serbia was celebrated in the district of Vauban, on 13-14 June. Although, as the members of the painting club “Palette colorée” mentioned, the district town hall would have initially preferred the Czech Republic, on which they had more information, in the end the inhabitants of the district were happy to discover a country and a culture that fascinated them.

**Table 5: Presentation of the Serbian events organised within *Europe XXL*.**

EVENT	GENRE	VENUE	ORGANISER	DURATION	AUDIENCE
exhibition	visual arts	Tri Postal	Elena Sorokina	4 months	40,000
exhibition	visual arts	Vauban district town hall	“Palette colorée” group	1 month	all ages; figures not communicated
exhibition	visual arts	Médiatheque Lomme	Lille 3000	2 weeks	all ages; figures not communicated
exhibition + meeting	photography	Maison Folie Le Fort de Mons	Heure Esquise! la Ville de Mons en Baroeul ; Lille 3000	1 month	all ages; 200 people
exhibition	fashion	Jardin de Mode – Lille Sud	Lille 3000	1 month	all ages; figures not communicated
exhibition	comics	Maison Folie Wazemmes; La plus petite gallerie, Roubaix; City library, Wattlelos	Johanna Marcadé Lille 3000	2 months	all ages; figures not communicated
concert	music	Opéra, Lille	Lille 3000	2h	all ages; figures not communicated
concert	music	Vauban district cultural centre	Concerts de Poche	1h	all ages; 100 people
concert	music	Vauban garden	Mme de	1h	all ages;

			Maintenon-Chateaubriand and Bichat schools		50 people
concert; giant parade	folk dance	Vauban garden	Association des Commerçants de la Rue d'Isly ; Sumadija folk group	2h	all ages; 300 people
concert	brass band music	Vauban garden	Métalu A Chahuter	2h	all ages; figures not communicated
debate + literary prize "Prix du Marais"	literature	Médiatheque, Centre régional des arts du cirque, Lomme	Médiatheque Lomme	2 sessions of 4 hours	adults; 100 people
debate	literature	Saint Sauveur	Lille 3000	3 hours	adults; 100 people
projection	cinema	Le Biplan cinema hall; Saint Sauveur	Lille 3000	3h	all ages; figures not communicated
film making	cinema	Vauban garden	Métalu A Chahuter	2 session of 6 hours	all ages; 700 people
Serbian buffet	cuisine	Vauban district town hall	Vauban district town hall	-	all ages; 100 people
workshop	dance	Tri Postal	Lille 3000	1h	all ages; figures not communicated
workshop	comics	Maison Folie Wazemmes	Maison Folie Wazemmes	1 week	teenagers; 15

In anticipation of the celebration that took place on 13 and 14 June in the Vauban district of Lille, the giant Bela Rada toured the schools of the district, while a dance workshop was organised by the French association Sumadija. Bela Rada is the result of the homonymous project started in 2006, which had as purpose the building of a giant (a symbol of the North region of France) dressed in Serbian folk costumes from the regions of Sumadija, Macva,

Bunjevačke and Vlaske<sup>17</sup>. In the same period, the district of Béthune developed a project entitled *Lumières sur...la Pologne et la Serbie*, on which occasion projections of videos about the two countries were presented on the walls of the buildings in the district centre. As early as March, just a few days after the opening ceremony of *Europe XXL*, a concert of Serbian Byzantine songs was given at the Lille Opera hall.

The painting club “Palette colorée” inaugurated at the Vauban district town hall an exhibition inspired by Serbia, its natural sites, cities and folk art. Their paintings and drawings were inspired by photos and published materials found after a thorough research, and the members of the club were enthusiastic about the information and the details they got in the process, being pleasantly surprised to learn interesting facts about a country, about which, according to their confessions, they had not known much.

On 13 and 14 June in the district and in the Vauban garden a popular celebration was organised. The programme included the making of the movie *Il était une fois dans l'Est* (Once Upon a Time in the East), with the participation of the Serbian director Kasimir Kurtturitsa and of his crew. As the director declared - “I can no longer stand moody actors. From now on I work with amateurs”- the large audience had the opportunity to join the cast and experience the making of the movie. The event was part of the festival “400 Clous” organised every year by the company “Métalu A Chahuter”.

At the same venue, Bela Rada the giant and her daughter Ana were brought in front of the public and were present at the folk music dance and concert of the French group “Sumadij”. Another folk music concert was that given by another French band, the “Ziveli” orchestra. In the same park, a children’s choir (the reunited choirs of the Mme de Maintenon-Chateaubriand and Bichat schools) interpreted children’s songs in French and several Eastern Europe languages.

We should notice that, unlike the programmes devised for the celebration of Croatia and Romania, where artists from the two countries were present in Lille at the popular events, in the case of Serbia there were no Serbian artists invited. The entire folk programme was designed and performed by French amateur artists who have a passion for Serbian folk art and who have been promoting it in France for many years. This was a minor setback, since, even if the French group did its best at representing Serbian culture, there was a feeling of lack of authenticity (an eclectic choice of music and in general a too weak representation of the traditional culture). This may be

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<sup>17</sup> For more details on this project, see page 92.

the result of the fact that there is no Serbian cultural association in the area, therefore no direct contact with towns and association in Serbia. Still, as a result of these events, the Vauban district town hall has the intention of developing such links in the future.

The programme organised and hosted by the Vauban cultural centre included a concert of classical and folk music interpreted by the percussionist of Bulgarian origin Vassilena Serafimova and by the French-Serbian cello player Godefroy Vujčić, who played the music of Nebojša Živković and Isidor Bajić, but also Bach, Saint-Saëns and Serbian folk music. The concert was followed by a Serbian buffet.

The series of events organised in the major venues of Lille gave a comprehensive image of the Serbian contemporary artistic creations in the fields of literature, cinema, visual arts and fashion. Unlike the manifestations organised in the Vauban district, these events brought to Lille several important Serbian creators.

A brief view of the Serbian cinema included the projection of Emir Kusturica's *Underground* at Saint Sauveur cinema hall and of two movies directed by Milan Tomić (a Serbian director currently living in Roubaix) at Le Biplan: the documentary *Le dernier Yougoslave* (The Last Yugoslav - an overview of the life in former Yugoslavia through the memories of an old man) and the short movie *L'empreinte* (The Print – an image of the life in the countryside).

In the debate *Les Frontières Invisibles* that took place at Saint Sauveur station, Dušica Parezanović, director of REX centre in Belgrade, participated in the third part, which focused on disunity and fraternity, while the director Želimir Žilnik in the first, entitled "*Les notres*" et les autres, which investigated the changing frontiers that upset people's lives after the Balkan wars. The discussions moderated by Anne Madelain, a specialist in the cultural history of the Balkans, tried to find an answer to the question "Whom do the land, the church, the music, the writer belong to? Where is the border between "ours" and "the others' "? (*Les Frontières invisibles...dessinées en paroles et images* leaflet).

In the field of visual arts, the young artist Miodrag Krkobabić was present at the Maison Folie Fort de Mons and in the streets of Mons en Baroeul town with his photographic project entitled "Nothing personal", a series of ID photos that questions the notion of identity and of perception of others and of oneself. As the exhibition programme stated, "...he transgresses with great humour official documents – passport and identity card – in order to show that identity cannot be defined, established, seized...but just photographed" (*Nothing Personal* leaflet). A

meeting with the artist was organised and at the end of his exhibition a similar one was inaugurated, set up by the children of one of the schools in the district.

In the *Frontières Invisibles* exhibitions opened at Tri Postal two Serbian artists were present with their works: Vladimir Nikolić in *Liquid Frontiers* and Milica Tomić in “Scènes Centrales”. Another young conceptual artist, Veliko Zejak, had an exhibition opened at the Médiathèque de Lomme, which accompanied the Serbian book exhibition organised to complement the debate on the translation of Serbian literature in France. Organised on the occasion of the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the “Prix du Marais” awarded each year by a keen group of readers of the Médiathèque, the debate attracted a numerous public (about 200 persons) who followed the discussions between the editors of several French, Swiss and Canadian publishing houses (*Age d’Homme*, Lausanne – Classiques Slaves collection, *Les Allusifs*, Québec, *Gaïa*, Larbey, France, *Le Serpent à plumes* and *Stock*, Paris) which constantly publish Serbo-Croatian literature. At the demand of the Lille 3000 team, in order to correlate the literary prize with the theme of Europe XXL, this year the selection of the candidates for the prize included only Serbian writers (Svetislav Basara, Goran Petrović, David Albahari, Mirijana Bobić, Velibor Čolić, Vladan Matijević, Branimir Šćepanović) and one young Bosnian writer living in Germany, Saša Stanisić. Some are already known authors, some are young promising writers, but they all share a taste for black humour and the absurd. “In most of the novels, the simple things of everyday life become essential again and are at stake for characters that play with destiny” (Prix du Marais leaflet).

The meeting with the editors and the translators was followed, the next day, by the presentation of the authors and the announcement of the winner: the novel “69 drawers” by Goran Petrović, unanimously appreciated by the members of the jury. Present at the meeting, the authors were asked about the symbolism of titles of their novels, about how they write, what they read, their favourite writers and the books they would have liked to write, out of the world masterpieces. In a humorous but very direct way, they all commented upon Serbian and European literatures today and the role of the writer (and of the translator) in the promotion of culture.

Another event was the comics workshop hosted by the vocational high-school Savary in Wattrelos, where Alexander Zograf, Johanna Marcadé et Jean-Jacques Tachdjian worked with a group of pupils. Their works were then presented in the *Stripovi* exhibition opened at Maison

Folie of the Wazemmes district of Lille, which layer on was also opened in the municipal library of Wattrelos and in Roubaix, at “The smallest gallery in the world (almost)”. This major exhibition on Serbian and Croatian contemporary independent comics displayed original drawings by Aleksandar Zograf, Maja Veselinović, Saša Mihajlovi, Wostok, projections of the work of Lazar Bodroža, Filjio and photos by Mark Schneider. The exhibition was in fact a selection of the works included in the volume “Stripovi” published by Johanna Marcadé, which is a collection of texts, illustrations, fragments of comics that give an image of the activity of Serbian and Croatian comics creators. On this occasion, “Le Bateau Livre” , a bookstore in Lille, proposed copies of the album, but also "Vestiges du monde", a collection of short stories by Aleksandar Zograf, published by “l'Association”, and some issues of “Stripburger” the Slovenian collective fanzine, who publishes regularly authors from Serbia and Croatia.

Another original event was the fashion exhibition hosted by Jardin de Mode – Lille Sud, where the creations of the promising Serbian designers Nataša Sarić, Bata Spasojević, Slavna Martinović, Ana Ljubinković and Aleksandar Nikolić were presented, as well as big format fashion photographs by Miša Obradović, Nebojša Babić, Vladimir Miladinović and Marko Sovilj, in order to illustrate the history of the *FAAR Fashion Art vanguard* Belgrade magazine. Its founder, Nenad Radujević, General Director of Fashion Studio Click, was present at the opening of the exhibition. The clothes designed by Natasa Sarić were sold at the Multimarques Boutique at Jardin de Mode.

To conclude, we would say that the events organised in order to celebrate Serbian culture focused more on the contemporary artistic scene than on folklore and traditions, promoting young artists that explore modern means of expression. Still, some genres that have proven extremely successful in Serbia in the latest period (for example cinema and theatre, but also visual arts) were less represented, or not represented at all. One major plus, though, was the very strong representation in the literary field, as a result of the visibility that Serbian literature has in France, due to a consistent programme of translations.

## 1.4. Romania

Romanian culture was celebrated in the district of Fives, in several towns around Lille (Ronchin, Seclin, Mauberge), while the two capital cities Bucharest and Budapest had a Midi-Midi dedicated to them under the provoking title *Welcome to Tzigania!*. The phonetic resemblance with the name of Romania should be considered as hazardous. Although Gipsy music was an important component of the entire programme devised to present Romania and its culture, all the Balkan countries were in the same situation; we can say that Gipsy music was the leitmotif of the region, and even of a more extended region, as it marked the events organised for the presentation of Hungary, Poland, Russia and Turkey as well. This (and the current situation of the Roma people in Lille) is undoubtedly why the organisers felt it was necessary to organise the debate *La Tziganie, 28<sup>ème</sup> nation européenne?* during the Balkan weekend.

**Table 6: Presentation of the Romanian events organised within *Europe XXL*.**

EVENT	GENRE	VENUE	ORGANISER	DURATION	AUDIENCE
exhibition	visual arts	Hospice Comtesse, Lille	Musée d'art Moderne, Lille	4 months	all ages; not communicated
exhibition	visual arts	Musée des Beaux Arts, Tourcoing	Musée des Beaux Arts, Tourcoing	4 months	all ages ; 12 000 visitors
exhibition	visual arts	Espace Pignon, Bois Blancs	CABB, Lille 3000	2 months	all ages; 150 visitors
exhibition	visual arts	La Galerie Commune, Tourcoing	ERSEP, Tourcoing	1 month	all ages; not communicated
exhibition	visual arts	Library, Tourcoing	ERSEP, Tourcoing	1 month	all ages; not communicated
exhibition	visual arts	Galerie commune, Tourcoing	ERSEP, Tourcoing	1 month	all ages; not communicated
exhibition	visual arts	Ecole régionale supérieure d'expression plastique, Tourcoing	2030 Association, Reims	1 month	all ages; not communicated

exhibition	photography	Distrcet town hall, Hellemmes	Lille 3000	3 weeks	all ages; not communicated
exhibition	photography	Ronchin town hall	Printemps Roumain	1 week	all ages; 50 people
exhibition	photography	Palais Rameau	Transphotographiques	4 months	all ages; not communicated
exhibition	photography	Roger Salengro social centre, Fives	Printemps Roumain	1 week	all ages; 50 people
exhibition	cartoons	Tri Postal	Lille 3000	4 months	all ages; 40,000 people
concert	music	Tri Postal	Lille 3000, Romanian Cultural Institute	2 hours	all ages; 100 people
concert	music	Rosenberg park, Seclin	Seclin town hall	2 hours	all ages; 100 people
concert	folk dance	Degeyter square, Fives	Printemps Roumain	5 hours	all ages; 200 people
Romanian ball	folk music and dance, buffet	Fives entertainment centre	Printemps Roumain, Fives entertainment centre	5 hours	all ages; 700 people
concert	folk dance	Degeyter square, Fives	Le Cotillion Loossois, ARSMELI, Lille	1hour	all ages; 200 people
concert	folk brass band	Rosenberg park, Seclin; main square, Mauberge	Cie du Tire Laine	2 hours	all ages; 200 people
concert	folk music	Lebas park, Moulins	Lille 3000	1h30	all ages; 200 people
debate	literature	Médiatheque, Vieux Lille	Lille 3000	2 hours	adults; 60 people

debate	history	Espace Pignon	Printemps Roumain, CABB	2 hours	adults; 30 people
debate	cinema	Saint Sauveur	Lille 3000	3 hours	adults; 100 people
projection	cinema	Saint Sauveur	Lille 3000	1 week	all ages; 100 viewers
performance	theatre	Theatre de la Verriere; Theatre Massenet; Le Grand Bleu	Theatre de la Verriere, Lille ; La Licorne	6 performances	adults, not communicated
performance	puppet theatre	Le Kursaal, Hellemmes	AVAI, Hellemmes town hall	1 hour	all ages; 70 people
performance	visual arts	Degeyter square, Fives	Collectif de la Giraffe, Lasécu,Lille	4 hours	all ages; 200 people
performance	cartoons	Main square, Seclin	Printemps Roumain	5 hours	all ages; 100 people
workshop	cartoons	Espace Pignon;  Musée des Beaux Arts, Tourcoing	CABB, Lille 3000 ; Musée des Beaux Arts, Tourcoing	1 day ;  1 day	10 children;  20 children
workshop	dance	Rosenberg hall, Seclin	Lille 3000	3 sessions of 2 hour	all ages; 20 people
workshop	crafts	Degeyter square, Fives	Potes en Ciel, ATD Quart Monde, Lille	4 hours	all ages; 50 people
workshop	crafts	Main square, Seclin	Printemps Roumain	4 hours	all ages; 50 people
workshop	fairy tales	Ronchin town hall; Rosenberg park, Seclin	Ronchin town hall; Seclin town hall;	4 hours	children ; figures not communicated

Just like in the case of the other countries, the Romanian festivities developed on two levels: the popular parties and concerts, organised in Fives and the neighbouring towns of Lille by Romanian and local associations, and the major events hosted by important institutions in the city centre.

During the three-day Midi-Midi Budapest-Bucharest, Romania was presented by means of theatre performances: three plays, two Romanian companies invited from Bucharest and “La Licorne” company from Lille who presented a play that had its World premiere in Sibiu, Romania, in April 2009. *The Target Woman and her ten lovers* is the result of the collaboration between “La Licorne” and the “Radu Stanca” theatre in Sibiu, based on a text written by the Romanian poet Matei Vişniec; the performance is a combination of contemporary theatre, visual arts and puppetry that take the public into a House of Horrors populated with fantastic creatures.

The film mini-festival included five contemporary movies that have won different important European awards. In spite of this, the public was scarce, perhaps because of the numerous overlapping events and of insufficient knowledge about the selected movies. The jazz concert of the Bucharest band “Aievea”, run by Vlaicu Golcea, a famous and very talented young musician, was appreciated by the numerous people present at Tri Postal.

A unique event in the series of manifestations was show presented by the Romanian “Luceafărul” puppet theatre, who participated with an adaptation of Andersen’s tale “The Snow Queen”.

Two photo exhibitions, of both professional and amateur Romanian and French photographers, gave the viewers the chance to see various aspects of Romania, through images that showed a mixture of tradition and modernity.

The well-reputed cartoonist Dan Perjovschi was present in three exhibitions: one vide presentation of two of series of drawings on Ljubljana and Paris was hosted by Espace Pignon, an exhibition hall in one of the districts of Lille (where he also had a workshop with children); the *Frontières invisibles* exhibition at Tri Postal, where he drew on the walls, ceiling and poles of a huge space, presenting his views on Europe, borders and politics, economy, clichés and other contemporary issues; the *Dada East?* exhibition at the Art Museum of Tourcoing, where he had several drawings and also organised a workshop with pupils from the local schools, who decorated the walls of the entrance hall with drawings inspired by Dadaism. All three were visited by an enormous number of people during the four months of the manifestations.

Three other exhibitions opened in Tourcoing brought to the public's attention more or less known aspects of the Romanian culture: one presented the life and activity of the poet Gherasim Luca, who was very close to the Surrealist movement, another one the history of the Dacia car, a third one included installations and videos.

Invited by the association "Printemps Roumain", the Romanian cartoonist PIM made the portraits of the people who participated in the events organised at Fives, the district that celebrated Romania in the "Europe Festive" manifestations.

The popular events had two major characteristics. On the one hand, there was the focus on Gipsy music and dance of the shows organised by the French associations and artists (the electro Tzigane concert of DJ Tagada and of the brass band "Fanfare Délkalé" in Seclin, as well as that of "Fanfara lui Crăciun" in Mauberge, the costume exhibition organised at Fives by "Potes en Ciel" and "ATD Quart Monde". The theme was very popular, and was illustrated even by the works of several photographers selected by the festival *Transphotographiques*, which this year joined the *Europe XXL* programme and focused on Central and Eastern Europe.

On the other, there was a focus on traditions, illustrated by the events organised by the association of the Romanians living in Lille, "Printemps Roumain". They invited several people from the North-Eastern part of Romania (a region well-known for its crafts) to present traditional activities of that part of the country: egg painting, wood carving, weaving and pottery making. These impromptu workshops were doubled by the music and dance of the "Arcanu" folk group from the same region, whose members invited the public to join them in the dance. This moment gave the opportunity of a cultural exchange between the Romanian group and the French amateur ensemble "Le Cotillion Loossois", specialised in folk dances from Eastern Europe and France. Its members gave their version of several Romanian dances and animated, together with the Romanian guests, both the open air event and the evening Romanian ball. Just like the other balls organised in other districts on the occasion of the other five Midi-Midis, the Romanian ball was a huge success, due to the presence of the folk group, on the traditional Romanian food served on the occasion and of the French actress and singer of Romanian origin Rona Hartner with her mixture of disco and Gipsy music.

Besides the general debates organised to present and analyse different aspects of life and culture in the entire Balkan region, several others focused on Romania. One was organised by "Printemps Roumain", in the attempt to clarify certain misconceptions about the country.

Another one, which was supposed to analyse the Romania roots of several myths present in other European countries as well, was cancelled, as a result of some miscoordination.

All in all, however, the Romanian programme was complex and from the point of view of the public's participation at least, was a success. Those present showed interesting discovering Romanian traditions and in learning about the implication of Romanian culture in major European currents like Dadaism and Symbolism. There was an obvious lack of knowledge about life in contemporary Romania, and, apart from the several photo exhibitions, the events included in the programme unfortunately did not bring any relevant information about that, either. The efforts of the "Printemps Roumain" association from Lille to promote Romanian culture are laudable, but too weak to make up for the general lack of representation. Moreover, their action, just like those of other Romanian associations activating in Lille and in the region, focus on tradition, but too little on the promotion of contemporary artists. This is also the consequence of the fact that they are part of a wider partnership between French towns around Lille and Romanian towns whose most representative folk groups are invited to tour.

### 1.5. The (extended) Balkans

The Balkan region was celebrated during the Istanbul/ The Balkans Midi-Midi in Lille, and throughout the period of the *Europe XXL* manifestations in many other towns in the region. It is true that, on the one hand, the Midi-Midi mainly focused on Turkey, just as the entire four months programme included numerous events that celebrated this country and its capital city. This was nevertheless due to the imminent opening of the Turkish season in France (and probably also to the strongly debated EU candidature). On the other hand, the Balkans were presented through a mixture of events that often included samples of Polish, Czech or even Hungarian and Ukrainian cultures, with the omnipresent Gipsy touch.

**Table 7: Presentation of the Balkan events organised within *Europe XXL*.**

EVENT	GENRE	VENUE	ORGANISER	DURATION	AUDIENCE
exhibition	visual arts	Fresnoy Art Studio, Tourcoing	Fresnoy Art Studio	1 month	not communicated
exhibition	visual arts	Saint Sauveur station	Lille 3000	4 months	not communicated
exhibition	visual arts	Tri Postal	Elena Sorokina	4 months	40,000
exhibition	crafts	Ferme du Gauquier, Lys-les-Lannoy ; Salomé	Aquarellis, association	4 hours	all ages; not communicated
exhibition	photography	Sebastopol highschool, Lille	MOST	all day	all ages; 70 people
concert	brass band music	Maison Folie Beaulieu, Lomme	Fanfara lui Crăciun, Pôle culture éducation, Lomme	1 hour	all ages; 100 people
concert, ball	folk music	Maison Folie Beaulieu, Lomme	Bortsch Grand orchestra, Pôle culture éducation, Lomme	4 hours	all ages; 400 people
concert	folk music	Dompsin square,	Pôle culture	1h30	all ages;

	competition	Lomme	éducation, Lomme		100 people
concert	disco-folk music	Maison Folie du Fort, Mons en Baroeul	Heure Exquise! Lille 3000	3 heures	all ages; 100 people
debate	literature	bookstores and libraries in Lille	Lille 3000	several sessions of 2 hours	all ages; not communicated
debate	theatre	Théâtre du Nord, Lille	Epsad, Théâtre du Nord, Lille	2 heures	all ages; 50 people
performance	theatre	Théâtre du Nord, Lille	Epsad, Théâtre du Nord, Lille	1h40	all ages; not communicated
performance	folk dance	Parc de Loisirs et de Nature, Loos	Le Cotillion Loossois	2 hours	all ages; 200 people
projection	cinema	Maison Folie du Fort, Mons en Baroeul ; Saint Sauveur cinema	Heure Exquise! Lille 3000	1h30	all ages; 70 people
barbecue	cuisine	Dompsin square, Lomme	Pôle culture éducation, Lomme	3 hours	all ages; 100 people
workshop	fairy tales	Mosaic park, Seclin	Seclin library	2 hours	children; not communicated

The works of three Bosnian artists were selected in the *Frontières invisibles* exhibition that was open for four months at Tri Postal: Danica Dakić and her project consisting of a series of photos showing portraits of Roma people on various backgrounds, which questions people's images of the others and of their difference, Selja Kamerić, with a video installation and Maja Bajević, with a music installation. Just like her Croatian colleague David Maljković, the Slovenian Marjetica Potrč chose architecture to be the main character of the work, in this case

the colourful buildings of Tirana city centre. The same artist created a wall drawing illustrating a huge rain water recycling basin within the Saint Sauveur eco-district project.

At the same venue, in the last month of the manifestations, Pierre Courtin's Sarajevo video gallery entitled *10m<sup>2</sup>* presented a selection of video creations of several young Bosnian artists (Irena Paskali, Damir Radović, Ivo Hasanović, Jasmin Duraković, Boris Stapić).

Several literary debates and readings hosted by the bookstores and libraries of the city of Lille during the event *Three Book Days* had guests from the Balkan region: Drago Jankar (Slovenia), Theorora Dimova, (Bulgaria), Florin Lăzărescu (Romania), Igor Kordey (Croatia), Branimir Šćepanović (Serbia).

The Fresnoy Art Studio in Tourcoing hosted an exhibition which brought together 40 image and video artists from Central and Eastern Europe. The exhibition showed that there is no "typical" Eastern Europe art; the works address the issues of collective memory and identity in relation to international art. Among the artists selected, Veaceslav Drouta (Moldavia), Slavica Ceperković (Serbia) and her installation *The White City* on the reconstruction of Belgrade, destroyed 38 times during its history and again Maja Bajević (Bosnia) with her video performance *Women at Work – Under construction*. In the same series of exhibitions, the Sebastopol highschool in centre Lille hosted a photo exhibition on the Romanian province of Banat, focusing on a Czech village there.

The mini-theatre festival *Vents d'Est* included one Macedonian play by Dejan Dukovski, "Who is the Rascal that Started it First?", a production of Théâtre du Nord and of Epsad<sup>18</sup>, which cast its latest promotion of actors. One of the shows was preceded by a debate attended by the playwright, entitled *Dejan Dukovski: Macedonian theatre, world theatre*.

In the film festival at Saint Sauveur cinema there were two Bosnian movies, *Snow* by Aida Begić and *Armin* by Ognjen Sviličić (a Bosnia, Croatia, Germany coproduction, in fact). In the same field, Saint Sauveur hosted the debate *Les Frontières invisibles...dessinées en paroles et images*, where several film makers, photographers, philosophers from Balkan countries discussed the issues of borders in the Balkan region, disunity and fraternity. Besides the already mentioned guests, there were also Klavdij Sluban, a French photographer of Slovenian origin,

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<sup>18</sup> Ecole Professionnelle Supérieure d'Art Dramatique de Lille

Rusmir Mahmutćehaji, a Bosnian philosopher, and Miloš Lazin, a Serbian director living in France.

Several balls all and popular events were organised in Seclin, Loos, Lys-les-Lannoy et Salomé, small towns around Lille. The concerts given by “La Fanfare P4”, “Trouba Cht’i Orkestra”, “Taraf Dékalé” and “Bortsch Grand Orkestra” mixed Balkan, Gipsy, Polish and disco music, while at Maison Folie de Wazemmes the Balkan ball was animated by “Vetex International Orchestra” and “Kotchani Orkestra” from Macedonia and together with Serbian and Bosnian musicians (Ivan Vicelja and Jelena Milušić)

There was a major focus on Balkan crafts, with exhibitions of works of amateur artists, paintings, sculptures, children’s drawings, Serbian costumes, but also stamps and post cards on the theme of the Balkans, in Salomé and Lys-les-Lannoy. The town of Loos had a more original approach, exploring Balkan clichés, mixing workshops on Dracula, Hungarian cuisine, Gipsy dancing and caravans and Russian ballet, as well as a concert of “Trouba Cht’i Orkestra”, one of the bands that were present almost everywhere during the *Europe XXL* manifestations, adapting its music to the event. A fairy tale workshop and a huge barbecue offering Balkan specialties added to the Balkan programme.

In terms of type of activities, the Balkan series of events was varied, entertaining, colourful and interesting for many categories of people. It was also an occasion to insert in the programme several projects that were not related to the topic, but spiced it with the folk culture of other European countries. They may have been confusing for those who might have wanted to get a feeling of the real Balkan culture, but they certainly got the approval of those in search of a good time.

## **1.6. The Gipsy culture**

The strong representation of the Gipsy culture in the *Europe XXL* programme can be explained by two main reasons:

1. One is its presence throughout the continent and its blending into the cultures of the countries presented in Lille. All the announcements of the Gipsy culture events included in the leaflets underlined the vivacity and energy of its music and dance, sending to the positive stereotypes that the Western world has developed in relation to it: the exotism of a free life lived with no constraints (not the Western ones, anyway), a life full of passion and strong emotions,

energy and carelessness. This almost gave a brighter aura to the Balkan cultures to which Gipsy culture was linked in the *Europe XXL* events, knowing that generally the Balkans have a bleaker image in the eyes of the Westerners. This appreciative image almost gave birth to a trend in the Western parts of Europe as early as the 1990s, especially since the success of several Balkan movies and music concerts of Gipsy bands, starting with Emir Kusturica's movies, Goran Bregovic's band, and the European tours of the Romanian brass bands "10 Prăjini", "Ciocârlia" and "Clejeani Haidouks".

Almost all the Europe Festive events had a touch of Gipsy music or dance, and the Midi-Midi week-ends were animated by concerts of brass bands and orchestras whose repertoire included Gipsy music, besides that of the country celebrated. "Trouba Cht'i Orkestra", "Taraf Dékalé", "Bortsch Grand Orkestra", "Fanfara lui Crăciun" were just four of the orchestras that played throughout the four months of the festivals at most of the events and balls organised in the various districts of Lille and in the neighbouring towns. Actress and singer Rona Hartner, Tony Gatlif's muse in his famous film *Gadjo Dilo*, also had three well-received concerts and was Lille 3000's guest at the Romanian ball, while Gipsy dance workshops were organised at Tri Postal and in the towns around Lille. Extremely well received was the two-day film set organised by the association "Métalu A Chahuter" as part of the *400 Clous* festival, during which a Serbian Gipsy soap-opera was filmed, with the participation of the public.

These popular events, that attracted a numerous public due to the liveliness and caching energy of Gipsy music, were doubled by a series of photo exhibitions which presented a less exciting, optimistic and entertaining side of Roma people's life. Saint Maurice church, in the city centre, hosted a very successful exhibition, both as the artistic endeavour and as an event: a series of portraits and scenes of life shot by Yves Lereche in several Balkan countries, included in the *Transphotographiques* festival, partner of Lille 3000. In the same festival, which this year borrowed the Central and Eastern Europe theme, Palais Rihour hosted other photographers which illustrated several recurrent issues of Roma people's life: emigration, traditions, music and festivities, poverty.

2. Still, we should not forget that Gipsy culture also has a negative string of stereotypes attached to it, as criminality, wildness, illiteracy, poverty, unruliness, etc. Roma people are, as Adrian Marsh noted it, "disenfranchised politically and marginalised economically, socially

excluded and culturally appreciated in a very narrow context”. He was undoubtedly right when he pointed out the fact that, “like beauty, the image of the various peoples described as Gypsies is frequently to be found in the eyes of the beholder” (Marsh: 1).

This is why the second explanation of the strong presence of the Gipsy culture in the programme might be the social issue that developed in Lille especially after 2007, with the arrival of numerous Roma immigrants. Without pretending to solve this issue, but out of the need to clarify certain aspects and especially to try to do away with the negative stereotypes, Lille 3000 decided to organise the debate entitled *La Tziganie, 28<sup>ème</sup> nation européenne?* Several representatives of different organisations defending human rights and Roma integration, representatives of the City hall, and one Bosnian Roma refugee discussed about the realities of the community living in Lille and in other countries, especially in the Balkans. The full Tri Postal cinema hall proved the public’s interest, and so did the numerous questions that were addressed to the speaking guests. The extensive article published in the local newspaper “Nord Éclair” also stands as proof of the community’s concern about the issue of the Roma population living in Lille (see Annexes 10, 11, and 13, pp.21-23.). However, just as it was highlighted in an open letter addressed to the mayor of Lille by the General Union of the General Council staff, the festivities celebrating Gipsy culture and life contradicted somewhat the evacuations and discriminations to which the same people are subjected in Lille and in the region<sup>19</sup>.

The public response, illustrated by the participation in the events that were focused on Gipsy culture, as well as the media echoes of these manifestations definitely helped strengthening the positive image of the Roma community as a whole. Whether this will have a positive impact on the situation of the Roma people living in Lille and on how they are perceived in everyday life remains to be seen.

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<sup>19</sup> The letter was also published on-line at <http://cgt59.over-blog.org>.



## 2. Visibility

### 2.1. Visuals used to promote Balkan countries events

The posters and the flyers used to promote the week-end events organised in different districts for the celebration of the Balkan countries had a standard format, used for all the other Central European countries. In each case, they put on the colours representative for the country they promoted: red, white and green for Bulgaria, red, white and blue for Serbia and Croatia, and red, yellow and blue for Romania, the same colours being used in the leaflet edited in Seclin for the yearly Festival of European cultures, which in 2009 focused on Romania and was entitled *Roumanie et compagnies* (see Annex 2 for the flyers, pp.112-113). A more elaborate design was used for Croatia, where the flyer was adjusted to the image of the Croatian flag, including the white and red checked coat of arms. The Balkan leaflet, designed and published by the town of Lomme, where the three-day celebration took place, had a different format. Very colourful and using images to anticipate the mainly musical programme, it was very inventive in suggesting the Slavic flavour of the area represented through fonts that were a mixture of the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets.

The Use of the Russian Marushka dolls as the main visual symbols of the entire manifestation can be interpreted in at least two ways. On the one hand, they can be seen as a symbol of the heterogeneous character of this Central and Eastern European culture which, like a puzzle, is made up of pieces and fragments of other cultures. The culture of each country, especially its components that relate to traditions and heritage, contains influences and reinterpretations of the cultures of the minority groups that live on its territory, as well as of the neighbouring countries. In an attempt to analyse one, we end up investigating others well, due to many similarities. This is the case with costumes, music and dance, traditional cuisine, even architecture, to give just several relevant examples.

On the other hand, it may be interpreted as a subtle warning against the surprises that lie ahead of those who embark on this journey of discovery represented by the entire Europe XXL manifestation. Those who expect to find just tradition and crafts will be astonished to experience the challenges of sharp, witty, intriguing contemporary creations that may sometimes question their system of values and esthetic criteria and that will definitely make them reflect on a number of burning issues.

## **2.2.Slogans and headlines**

The slogans and titles used for the events that presented the culture and arts of the Eastern European countries underlined aspects already known related to these countries, or the fact that, based on insufficient information, prejudices and clichés create a false image. The most metaphorical were those that invited people to find out more about the Roma people: the debate entitled *La Tziganie, la 28<sup>ème</sup> nation d'Europe?* already had a provoking title, which was accompanied by several slogans and headlines of articles that underlined the vitality, exuberance and energy of the Gipsy music and dance (*Souffle nomade* – Lille Sud, *Tourbillon tzigane*, fête des gens de Loos) and the volatile situation of the people called in France “Les Gens de voyage” (*Ces Roms qui dérangent* – “La Voix du Nord” local newspaper).

Several slogans and titles simply reminded the geographical position of the countries on debate (*D’Est en Ouest* – Armentières, *Précieuses histoires de l’Est* – tales evening in Moulins, *Trans Balkan Express* – *Complètement à l’Est* - Prix du Marais, Lomme), sometimes referring to the duality of the image they have in the West: one made up of myths, clichés and indirect experiences and another one which is the real image, very often unknown and misinterpreted (*L’Europe, rêves ou réalités* – book exhibition in Péronne en Mélançois).

A common slogan for several events announced the total immersion in the culture of a certain country (*Un programme XXL au couleurs de la Serbie; La Place Degeyter se met aux couleurs de la Roumanie; Lille 3000 se met à l’heure de Budapest et Bucarest; Lille à l’heure stambouliote; Lille aux rythmes turcs ce week-end*), sometimes with the literal meaning, as it was the case with the Budapest – Bucharest Midi-Midi on which occasion Hungarian baths were set up in the city centre (*Plongez dans Europe XXL jour et nuit; Midi-Mid : ça baigne!*).

Many of the articles that announced or commented upon the various events did not forget to point out the fact that one of the main purposes of *Europe XXL* was to enable the audience to

meet new cultures of these countries that are at the other end of the same continent (*Au cœur de l'Europe : découvrez les Balkans; La culture de l'autre; Comme un parfum de l'Est sur la fête de la Délivrance* – “Nord Éclair”; *Roumanie et compagnies* – leaflet of the festivities in Seclin; *Lille – Istanbul: la jolie traversée* – “Nord Éclair” – a title which made reference to the exhibition *Istanbul traversée* opened at the Palais de Beaux Arts in Lille, one of the major events of the *Europe XXL* manifestations, which presented a very modern and dynamic image of the Turkish capital; this also inspired the headline of another article: *Istanbul la métissée*). With a touch of irony, some headlines sanctioned the existing prejudices and the mistakes that are the result of poor information and lack of interest about a part of Europe considered too remote and different (*Les Frontières invisibles – Une rencontre pour faire tomber nos préjugés; Budapest, Bucarest ?- “Nord Éclair”*);).

### **2.3. Articles on the Balkan countries events**

There are three types of articles that were published in the local newspapers during the four months of manifestations:

1. articles that simply announced the up-coming events, listing the times, venues and participants and sometimes elaborating on one major event, for example the Hungarian baths organised at Saint Sauveur station during the Budapest-Bucharest Midi-Midi, or the Turkish baths that were the attraction during the Istanbul-Balkan week-end. Some were confusing in establishing the main aim of the event, as for example the Hungarian baths also implied shiatsu massage, the Balkan weekend had as guests Ukrainian and Polish musicians, the Danube/ Deûle festivities were flavored by Ukrainian dancers and cuisine.
2. articles that prepared the public for the events, by giving general or detailed information about the region and the countries represented.

Several of these articles pointed out the fact that geography seems to be a weak point of the Westerners, who often mistake countries and capital cities. One of the hoped for gains of the manifestations is future better orientation in the central and eastern space of the continent, as stated in the article *Budapest, Bucarest?* published in “La Voix du Nord”: “They say geography is not the strength of the French people. For many of them it would be mission impossible to give a precise localization of the Central Europe frontiers. Hungary, where is it, exactly?”

Bucharest, capital of Hungary? Bulgaria? Romania? [...] As an effect of Lille, we will no longer have any excuses: for three months since *Europe XXL* is our guest we have learned (oh, yes, we have) to find our way in this Eastern Europe". (see Annex 9, p.120).

In the case of the countries in the Balkan region, the dossier *Balkans: The invisible frontiers* ("Nord Éclair", Annex 5, 6, 7, 8, pp. 116-119), which introduced the debate hosted by Saint Sauveur station, focused on the political, economic and social realities of the region, and tried to find answers to several questions: Which are the borders of the Balkans? Which is today's political situation? What languages are spoken in the area today? These issues left aside, the article praises the beauties of the landscapes of Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Albania and points out the mixture of Oriental and Western influences that can be noticed in the local architecture and customs. A section of the dossier is dedicated to the Balkan art, with a special focus on theatre, which has exploded in the ex-Yugoslavia countries, due to the numerous authors who "have the courage to ask important questions: where do we live, what is the world around us, who are we?" (Annex 7, p. 118). The interview with Anne Madelain, host of the debate and a specialist in Eastern European culture, tries to break some of the clichés developed around the Balkan peoples, considered "barbarians, non-European, violent" (Annex 8). Tourism, cultural and especially educational exchanges, which already proved effective for the image of Romania and Bulgaria, are seen as means that could break down such prejudices.

The article on a village in Transylvania falls in the same line (Annex 4, p. 115). It presents a traditional village and seems to intend to build a rather positive, but nostalgic image of a simple, archaic life (except for the TV aerials), but does not forget to drop hints at present-day issues (tensions between Romanians and Hungarians living in the area, palinka drinking at breakfast, the clash between modern Bucharest and villages with no electricity and current water, the former dictatorship). The result is, however, an ambiguous image of a place frozen in time and, in spite of the author's regrets for having to return to the XXI<sup>th</sup> century, the reader fails to be attracted by such a place. As no other article presents other regions of Romania, the image of a poor, unmodernised, rural country, already often mentioned in the West, is maintained.

3. reviews of one event, commenting on its realisation and impact on the public.

Several articles referred to the presence in Lille of the Romanian cartoonist Dan Perjovschi, presenting his exhibition and stage at Tri Postal, his *Ljubliana* and *Paris* dioramas at

Espace Pignon, on the themes of post-communist identity of the East-European countries and Pars cultural stereotypes, and the workshop held in the same place with the children of the Bois-Blancs district. Together with the articles on the Dada exhibition in Tourcoing, they presented a less known aspect of the Romanian artistic scene.

Serbian culture was present on several occasions in the local press, due to the literary prize Prix du Marais and to the meeting with the authors invited at the event, to the “Belgrade fashion week exhibition” and to the filming of the movie *Il était une fois dans l’Est* (Once Upon a Time in the East), directed by Kasimir Kurtturitsa. They were an occasion to discover the works of the Serbian writers in the competition for the prize, and especially that of the laureate Goran Petrović, and to get a feeling of Serbian village life through the lively atmosphere created on set by the members of the company “Métalu A Chahuter”.

Several other articles invited the public to participate in the popular festivities organised on the Balkan and Croatian week-ends, underlining the energy and good mood created by the brass bands invited to entertain, and the focus on tradition of the Croatian celebration, in the display of folk costumes and of local dishes.

Interviewed for an article on the Bulgarian weekend, a member of the Bulgarian students association referred to the clichés that exist in France about the Balkan countries: “Ils ne sont pas nombreux, et c'est surtout par ignorance de notre culture, nuance-t-elle, mais c'est vrai que quand je suis venue ici faire mes études, certains ont dit que je venais uniquement pour trouver un garçon, me marier et avoir des papiers”<sup>20</sup>. She mentioned, however, that this situation started to change, especially since the country joined the Union, and that events like Lille 3000 change the image that people have about their neighbours.

The online versions of the newspapers were accompanied by forums where readers were invited to express their opinions about the events. Many of these opinions were negative, because of the costs of the entire manifestation (nine million Euros), considered exaggerated for a series of events and works of art that to some people were esthetically shocking (the Angels and demons parade, especially): “ces espèces "d'anges noir" à queues sont abominables et défigurent la ville. En période de crise, ils ne sont pas de nature à restaurer l'optimisme... Avec ce qu'ils ont dû coûter, on aurait pu dépanner pas mal des miséreux qui font la manche aux abords, dans des rues au demeurant bien sales" (waterpoint - 16/03/2009, on-line edition of “l’Express”).

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<sup>20</sup> [http://www.lille.maville.com/actu/actudet\\_-Bulgare-elle-y-etait...\\_loc-860044\\_actu.Htm](http://www.lille.maville.com/actu/actudet_-Bulgare-elle-y-etait..._loc-860044_actu.Htm)

Others admit the importance of culture in creating a new image of the city: “En ces temps difficiles, ne pas oublier la culture et réunir plusieurs centaines de milliers de personnes autour d'une fête populaire, ouverte sur le thème de l'Europe, sont salutaires et permettent à Lille de rester dynamique, inventive, attractive. Merci d'avoir fait de Lille une ville si agréable à vivre, une ville qui permet à l'image du Nord-pas-de Calais de reprendre des couleurs. De plus, de tels évènements culturels sont toujours positifs pour l'économie d'une grande ville et de sa région - Lille attire de nombreux touristes, français et étrangers, et il faut s'en féliciter" (Eric59000 - 14/03/2009).<sup>21</sup>

The numerous articles that referred to the *Europe XXL* manifestation as a whole underlined on the one hand the huge effort, both financial and artistic, that such a cultural season demands from the organisers and from the city and the region themselves. While the Lille 3000 team congratulated themselves on the impact of the manifestation (around a million people reported to have attended the various events), there were voices who wondered about the efficiency of an agglomeration of activities that present so many different countries and cultures, through genres that differ so much in the public they attract. Among this latter category, there was Christian Paindavoine, president of “Demeures du Nord”<sup>22</sup>, who stated in an article that “culture has to be presented in a simpler way; a too wide diversification of exhibitions and of events during a cultural festival may harm its visibility, its quality and may bring confusion to people’s minds.”<sup>23</sup> In his opinion, such an eclectic manifestation fails to reach all types of public and might be confusing for an amateur who would try to learn more about art and understand a selection of events that address artistic, cultural, social and political topics.

#### **2.4. *Europe XXL* publications**

Following the rule that says that any good manifestation should also become a producer, *Europe XXL* has published several works that can be regarded as summaries of the most important meetings and artistic representations presented during the four-month event.

The volume *En attendant l'Europe* is a collection of interviews gathered by Alexandre Mirelesse in his European journey in search of some of the most representative contemporary

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<sup>21</sup> [http://www.lexpress.fr/culture/lille-passe-a-l-est-avec-europe-xxl\\_746285.html](http://www.lexpress.fr/culture/lille-passe-a-l-est-avec-europe-xxl_746285.html)

<sup>22</sup> Company which set up a cultural foundation that supports contemporary art.

<sup>23</sup> In the article published in ART, entitled *Lille 3000-Europe XXL : un sondage de fin qui s'annonce decevant* 10 juillet 2009, <http://www.connexion-ddn.over-blog.com/article-33664643.html>

voices of the countries visited. The title of the volume is borrowed from the debate that had brought to Lille few of the personalities interviewed: Martine Aubry, mayor of Lille; Lluís Pasqual, Catalan director, founder of Odéon - Théâtre de l'Europe; Ken Loach, British director (*Le vent se lève*, Palme d'Or, Cannes 2006); Adam Globus, Byelorussian poet; father Pierre Riches, theolog; Andreï Pleșu, Romanian philosopher, former Minister of foreign affairs; Bogdan Bogdanović, Serbian architect, former mayor of Belgrade; Adolf Muschg, Swiss essayist, honorary president of the Fine Arts Academy; Ilmar Raag, director, former president of the Estonian television; Claudio Magris, Italian writer and German specialist (*Danube*, 1986); Nilüfer Gole, Turkish anthropologist; Jacques Delors, former president of the European Commission (1985-1995).

Three other publications are more than just mere catalogues of two of the exhibitions opened in Lille: *Frontières invisibles*, edited by Caroline David and the team of curators that organised the exhibition at Tri Postal, presented the works of the over seventy European artists selected to represent a Europe enlarged towards a very dynamic and creative East.

*STRIPOVI/СТРИПОВИ* is a collective work on Serbian and Croatian comics edited by Johanna Marcadé, a volume that presents the independent artists of the two countries. It addresses the people interested in both comics and the history of the Balkans. The artists included are: comics - Igor Hofbauer, Bruno T., Dunja Janković, Ivana Armanini, Filjio, Aleksandar Zograf, Seljak, Aleksandar Opačić, Radovan Popović, Saa Mihajlović, Maja Veselinović, Wostok and Nabor Devolac, Miroslav Lazendić, Anna Ehrelemark (Sweden/Slovenia/Croatia), Lisa Mangum (U.S./Serbia), Johanna Marcadé (France/Serbia); illustrators – Danijel Savović, Saa Mihajlović (Serbia), Bruno T. (Croatia), Katie Woznicki (U.S./Serbia); texts - Aleksandra Sekulić, Radovan Popović, Aleksandar Zograf (Serbia), Lisa Mangum (U.S./Serbia), Anna Ehrelemark (Sweden/Slovenia/Croatia), Johanna Marcadé (France/Serbia).

Finally, *Istanbul, Traversée* is the illustration of the exhibition opened at the Palais des Beaux Arts, which includes the works of numerous Turkish artists from the Turkish capital city and from the country but also from the Diaspora. The exhibition shows the various ways in which the inhabitants of the city face reality and history; showing resistance and participation, according to their cultural, social and political backgrounds.

## 2.5. Bookstore visibility

In an attempt to see what visibility the Balkan countries have in a Lille, we have investigated the literary offer displayed by three bookstores in city: “FNAC”, one of the major French bookstores; “Voyageurs du monde”, which is specialised in publications on continents and countries of the world, and also has a department that organises specially-tailored voyages; and “Tireloy”, a bookstore which was on the list of venues for several cultural manifestations included in the programme of *Europe XXL*.

<b>FNAC</b>	ex-Yougoslavia	Miljenko Jergović – <i>Le Palais en Noyer</i> (Dvor u oraha '03); <i>Freelander</i> Danko Popović – <i>Le livre de Miloutine</i> (Knjigo o Milutine) Predrag Matvejević – <i>Entre asile et exil</i> Branimir Šćepanović – <i>La bouche pleine de terre</i> (Usta puna zemlje) Dubravka Ugresić – <i>Le ministère de la douleur</i> (Ministranstvo boli)
	Romania	Mircea Eliade – <i>Le temps d'un centenaire</i> Panait Istrati – <i>Oeuvres I, II; Nerantsoula</i> Norman Manea – <i>Le retour du hooligan; Le bonheur obligatoire</i> Eugen Uricariu – <i>Ils arrivent, les barbares !</i>
<b>Voyageurs du Monde</b>	Bulgaria	Dimitrina Aslanian – <i>Histoire de la Bulgarie de l'antiquité à nos jours</i> , Ed. Trimontium, Versailles, 2004 Georges Casteleau, Marie Vrinat-Nikolov – <i>Histoire de la Bulgarie. Au pays des roses</i> , Ed. Armeline, 2007 Yordan Yonkov – <i>Legendes des Balkans</i> , Ed. Esprit des péninsules, Paris, 1999
	Croatia	Pierre Josse, Bernard Ponchèle – <i>La Croatie, Grands Voyageurs</i> , Ed du Chêne, Hachette, 2004
	Romania	Lucian Boia – <i>La Roumanie – un pays a la frontière de l'Europe</i> , Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 2007 Radu Anton Roman – <i>Savoureuse Roumanie</i> , Ed.Noir sur Blanc, 2001

		Jean-Yves Guéguénat, Sergio Cozzi – <i>Roumanie</i> (photos) Géorama, Brest, 2007
	the Balkans	Collective – <i>Histoire de l'Europe du Centre-Est</i> Jean-François Gossiaux – <i>Pouvoirs ethniques dans les Balkans</i> , Ethnologies, Puf, Presses universitaires de France, 2003 Claude Magris – <i>Danube</i> , L'Arpenteur, Gallimard, 1986 Francois Maspero – <i>Balkans – Transit</i> (foto Klavdij Sluban) 1997, Seuil Stephane Yerasimos – <i>Le retour des Balkans 1991-2001</i> , coll. Mémoires, Ed. Autrement, 2002 Le courrier des pays de l'Est – <i>Les nouveaux voisins orientaux</i> <i>d'Europe élargie</i> , La documentation française, 2004
<b>Tireloy</b>	ex- Yougoslavia	Saša Stanišić – <i>Le soldat et le gramophone</i> (Wie der Soldat das Grammofon repariert), La Cosmopolite, Stock, 2006
	Romania	Gabriela Adameșteanu – <i>Vienne le jour</i> (Drumul legal al fiecărei zile) Gallimard, 2009-07-08
	All	Al. Mirlesse – <i>En attendant l'Europe</i>

To mark the celebration of the Central and Eastern European countries, the “Tireloy” bookstore has changed the display of its shop window, decorating it with Orthodox icons, Marushka dolls, painted eggs, and presenting books of writers from that region, dictionaries and travel guides (see Annex 3, p. 114). A similar initiative was that of the “Autour du monde” library which organised a one-day book exhibition on the occasion of the presentation of Bulgarian culture in the *Europe festive* series of manifestations.

Except for these two examples, there were no specific initiatives meant to promote the literatures of the Central and Eastern European countries, although the main bookstores in Lille (FNAC, Furet du Nord) were official partners of Lille 3000 during the *Europe XXL* manifestation. They did organise small book exhibitions, meetings, debates and reading during the three-day *Book Days* event in June, but there was no other specific focus on this part of Europe throughout the rest of four months. This is slightly surprising, especially since the Lomme Médiathèque presented a wide display of Serbian literature translated into French,

mainly at the “Actes du Sud” publishing house in Arles, on the occasion of the literary prize awarded by its public, and Polish literature, to take just one other example, is intensely translated in France.

## **2.6. Cultural associations promoting Balkan culture in the North region**

The following list includes some of the most active cultural associations representing the Eastern European minorities living in Lille and in its neighbouring towns. They develop their own activities each year, supported by the city administration, and were partners of Lille 3000 in the *Europe XXL* manifestation, organising events within the Europe festive series of celebrations held in the ten districts of the city.

### **Printemps Roumain**

Mission: Set up in 2005 in Lille, this cultural association aims to be an interface between the Romanian and French societies, contributing to a better reciprocal knowledge of the two cultures. It organises cultural exchanges which include mainly debates, conferences, forums, workshops, exhibitions, shows, meetings, in France and Romania.

Activities: In Lille it organises two main one-week manifestations every year, one in spring around 1<sup>st</sup> March (Mărțișor Day) and 1<sup>st</sup> December (the national day of Romania) and several other shorter events. It also organises classes of Romanian and French languages. In Romania it develops on average three events every year, in Suceava, Fundu Moldovei and Craiova. It also cooperates with other associations from Brașov and Iași (RO) and Brest and Brussels.

Members: Its members are Romanians and French, as well as other people living in Romania, in Lille and its region, who are interested in intercultural dialogue.

### **A.V.A.I. (Association Villeneuve d’Ascq – Iași)**

Mission: Set up in 2003 in Villeneuve d’Ascq, a town in the suburbs of Lille, it promotes the cooperation between the twin communities of Villeneuve d’Ascq (FR) and Iași (RO) in the cultural, educational, economic, social, health and informatics fields.

Activities: It organises meetings, exhibitions, conferences and sports competitions, it mediates partnerships between universities and professionals in the medical field, it assists Romanian students in the Lille metropolitan area, it organises artistic and literary competitions.

Members: People of different ages and cultures who have a common interest: introduce the city of Iași to the inhabitants of Villeneuve d'Ascq and support joint activities.

### **Passages**

Mission: Set up in 2005 in Hellemmes (a suburb of Lille), in order to promote Romania in France and France in Romania, and do away with clichés about both countries. It also aims to develop its activity in francophone countries.

Activities: It organises cultural activities in France, Romania and other francophone countries, in partnership with other organisations and institutions. It mediates cooperation between French and Romanian editors, it organises artist internships, cultural voyages, produces films and has set up a Romanian library in Lille. As a result of some of the activities, it produces and sells art objects, guide books, translations and recordings.

Members: French and Romanian inhabitants of Hellemmes and of Lille interested especially in cinema and literature.

### **Bela Rada**

Mission: Set up in 2006 in Orchies (the suburbs of Lille), its starting mission was to build a giant named Bela Rada, a Serbian dancer, by means of which to highlight the variety of the cultural exchanges between France and Serbia. The giant has four costumes, representing the regions of Sumadija, Macva, Bunjevacke and Vlaske. After its baptism in 2008, it has been promoted throughout the region through various cultural events.

Activities: Participate avec the giant in different parades and cultural events organised in the region.

Membres: The members of the Sumadija association, in Lys-les-Lannoy, who have been teaching and dancing dances of ex-Yugoslavia countries since 1973, also started making costumes from that region. After the visit of the ambassador of Serbia and Montenegro in 2002, they had the idea of building a giant to symbolize the friendship between the inhabitants of the North of France and the Serbian community, by means of two strong traditions: French giants and Serbian traditional dances.

### **Zavod Theatre**

Mission: Set up in 2007 in Lille, its aim is to produce professional theatre and dance performances, to organise artistic meetings between France, Bulgaria, member and non-member states of the European Union, to make research in the field of performing arts, to organise theme voyages, to promote contemporary playwriting, produce shows, edit books, magazines, posters ,multimedia documents related to theatre and playwriting.

Activities: It organises theatre shows and debates in Bethune, Lille and the region.

Membres: The members of the theatre company, French and Bulgarians living in Béthune and in the nearby towns.

### **The association of the Bulgarian students**

Mission: Assist Bulgarian students living and studying in Lille and help them integrate, promote Bulgarian culture, and establish links with students associations from Bulgaria.

Activities: They take part each year in the meeting of all the foreign associations in Lille, of the student associations and of the Language Festival, promoting Bulgarian culture and traditions. They organise cultural events (exhibitions, concerts, meetings) to celebrate the Bulgarian national day.

Members: Students of Bulgarian origin, other students interested in the Bulgarian culture.

### **Y'a du mode aux Balkans**

Mission: Set up in 2006 in Hellemmes, Lille, the association aims to promote the culture of the Balkan countries in France and in the Western countries, where it is still unknown; to give the real image of these countries which is usually marred by stereotypes and negative preconceptions.

Activities: Organises cultural manifestations promoting cinema, art, poetry, music, cuisine and photography.

Members: People of different ages of Balkan and other origins, living in Hellemmes and in the nearby towns.

### **Association franco-croate de St.Maurice-Pellevoisin**

Mission: Set up in 2000 in the district Saint-Maurice–Pellevoisin, Lille, it aims at promoting Croatian culture in France and at developing cultural partnerships between France and Croatia.

Activities: It offers to its members the possibility of taking courses of Croatian and to participate in various manifestations organised in the district. It organises exhibitions, concerts, debates.

Members: Inhabitants of the district of St.Maurice-Pellevoisin, Lille, other people of Croatian origin living in Lille, other persons interesting in discovering the Croatian culture.

### **Digue Dondaines choir**

Mission: Set up in 2005 in Lille, its aim is to gather amateur singers in a choir in order to share the pleasure of singing and transmit this passion to their audience, trying to enhance their vocal performance, in the attempt to come as close as possible to the artistic quality of a professional ensemble. They also wish to promote the music of different countries in the world, in their original language.

Activities: Concerts, music classes, courses, participation in local celebrations and festivals.

Members: Amateur singers and musicians from Lille.

### **To Steki mas**

Mission: Set up in 2008, it aims to promote Greek culture in France, especially in Lille, and to develop cultural exchanges between French, Greek, Cypriot and philhellenic people in Lille.

Activities: It organises courses of Greek dances, of puppeteering (Karagiosis puppets), of Greek cuisine, of initiation in Orthodox iconography, concerts and tours of Greek dance groups in the North of France.

Members: People interested in the Greek culture, inhabitants of Lille of Greek origin.

## Conclusions

The analysis of the cultural events that have been organised within the *Europe XXL* manifestation in order to familiarise the French audience with the art and culture of the Central and Eastern European countries, as well as their reflection in the media and their impact on the public, has brought us to several conclusions.

### **1. Huge cultural manifestations of the type of *Europe XXL*, that focus on more than just one country, fail to create a coherent, accurate and individualised image of the countries and cultures they present.**

By organising *Europe XXL*, the Lille 3000 team aimed to familiarise the French public with the culture and art of a large region of Europe that was still rather unknown, despite the fact that it is only at three hour's journey from the Western border of the continent, as the artistic director of the manifestation pointed out in his interview (Annex 1, p. 105). It also aimed to shape people's artistic taste by offering them a wide range of artistic projects representing almost all genres, displayed and performed in conventional and unconventional spaces. Developed over four months, the manifestation included 500 projects hosted by 50 cities and towns in the region. But this overwhelming cultural offer was put together to entertain an eclectic public and to show the variety of Central and Eastern European culture, not to set the records straight and establish differences among cultures. It may have very well celebrated "identity" and highlighted cultural specificities of the area (Dragičević-Šešić, 2002: 164), but the area represented is in fact the entire Balkan area, not that of the individual countries represented in Lille. Moreover, although it is true that the programme had several major coordinates (weekends dedicated to certain countries, each celebrated in a different district and town, Midi-Midis focusing on capital cities and even targeted exhibitions), on these occasions the art and culture of other countries were presented as well. In the case of the Balkan countries, the similarities between the music, dance, gastronomy, even languages, made it more difficult for the public to make a clear distinction between them. For a better representation, a longer period of time concentrating on this area alone would have been necessary, as the director of programme himself admitted (Annex 1, p.105).

On the other hand, as he also pointed out, the purpose of the manifestation was not to design an advertising campaign for these countries, but to select significant stories to be told with the help of the artists, even if sometimes this meant making use of the already existing clichés. The image created this way is bound to be incomplete and even distorted. Moreover, the artistic projects selected were viewed by the public as individual expressions, not as fragments of a larger image of a culture, especially those that had a strong (positive or negative) impact on the audience: there was not one person out of those who criticised the black baby-demons created by the Russians from AES+F who said “I don’t like Russian art”; they just protested against such an extravagant choice, especially because of the amount of money paid for a work of art that did not match their artistic taste. Those who appreciated Dan Perjovschi’s drawings did not say “Romanian art is witty”, they admired the cartoonist’s particular way of expressing his doubts about contemporary issues. Certainly, this does not mean that such artistic creations do not help build an image of the culture they represent. It is just that a series of artistic presences is needed in order to gradually build up a complete image, by adding names of artists and projects that come together like the pieces of a puzzle. But such an endeavour is more efficient if focused on just one country (as it was the case of India in 2006).

At the same time, the lengthy programme and the heterogeneous nature of the events made the entire manifestation very difficult to classify and contributed to the disorientation of the public. There was a mixture of an artistic festival and of what Hunyadi calls “a communal festival” (2007: 9), which is similar to the common French fairs displaying crafts and culinary products. This, on the one hand, strengthened the popular side of the manifestation, in return tuning down its elitist aura.

## **2. The presence of the foreign artists has a stronger impact on the audience than the simple exhibition of their works or their interpretation by local artists.**

Whether traditional forms of art or contemporary creations are brought in front of the foreign public, the direct dialogue with the artists sends a clearer and more genuine message and helps the public have a better understanding of the characteristics of the culture they explore. *Europe XXL* included debates and meetings with writers, visual artists, directors and actors; on these occasions, the public had the possibility to ask questions and comment upon issues raised

by the presentation of their works, but also about realities of their country of origin. It also included workshops during which photographers, cartoonists and dancers were able to present and explain their creations and to work with the participants. This double artistic and human exchange is much more efficient than any organised campaign for the promotion of a country's image abroad. Moreover, this approach is related to the educational and social implications of such manifestations, which serve the main task of any cultural organisation: the education of the public through programmes promoting cultural tradition, as well as innovation, which, as Klaić noted (2001:1), are shaped by canons and authorities that observe a hierarchy of values already accepted.

On the other hand, many of the events that were included in the programme, especially the folk music and dance performances, were organised by local French associations and groups of amateur artists. It is their merit that they show interest in the culture of the Balkan countries and of other European countries as well; however, their heterogeneous repertoire (Gipsy, klezmer, Balkan) can play against the image of the countries whose art they present, by confusing the public.

**3. Although at times considered elitist and extremely coded, contemporary art is just as successful at attracting the public as popular events and gives an updated image of the culture it belongs to.**

The early July figures reported by Lille 3000<sup>24</sup> showed that 457,000 persons visited the exhibitions opened in the museums and the multifunctional venues (Tri Postal and Saint Sauveur station), while 614,000 attended the opening parade, the various street shows and the Midi-Midis. Considering that the major exhibitions were not free, the turnout is positive. In spite of the fact that according to some newspapers many visitors considered the Tri Postal and the Palais des Beaux Arts exhibitions too “elitist” and “confusing” (*La Croix du Nord*, No.2114, *ART*, <http://www.connexion-ddn.over-blog.com/article-33664643.html>), these events were so successful that the organisers decided to postpone the closing date (12 July, end of *Europe XXL*) until the end of August. A thorough sociological study would be needed to find out the

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<sup>24</sup> Lille City Hall: [http://www.mairie-lille.fr/fr/Culture/Agenda\\_culturel/bilan-europe-xxl](http://www.mairie-lille.fr/fr/Culture/Agenda_culturel/bilan-europe-xxl)

characteristics of the almost half a million people who visited these exhibitions, and to see to what extent this audience overlapped with the audience of the popular festivities. Without such a study, it is difficult to estimate whether the manifestation organised in Lille confirmed or infirmed Leveratto's idea that high quality events are appreciated only by educated people (2000: 88). What we can say is that local cultural association made an effort to infirm this idea by organising numerous museum tours for the inhabitants of the disfavoured districts, statistically less familiar with the centralised cultural institutions.

At any rate, by attending the two distinct types of events, a person unfamiliar with the art and culture of the Balkan countries could get a comprehensive idea about the trends of the contemporary art in the region and about local specificities. It is interesting to notice that the events organised by the local associations representing the culture of the Balkan countries (list available at p. 91) included folk music and dance and the display of traditional costumes, crafts and gastronomy. This proves, on the one hand, the importance given to crafts, traditions and rural culture in the building of these countries' image (although many of the elements that make up the identity of each country are characteristics of the entire Balkan region), and on the other the weak emphasis placed on modern forms of art in the representation of one's culture, perhaps as a result of the assumption that it has lost any connection with tradition and therefore it is not immediately identifiable as representative for the country.

#### **4. Press visibility plays an important role in defining the image of the countries represented.**

In general, most of the articles that referred to the projects representing the Balkan countries underlined the specificities of the culture and the artistic level of the events with the aim of inciting people to attend. There were, however, several reviews, especially of the theatre performances, and articles that presented general information about the Balkan region, information considered needed for the public to understand the messages of the artistic projects included in the manifestations. There was also focus on traditions and on the authenticity of life in some regions of the Balkans, which attract foreign tourists.

From the results of the questionnaire and from the on-line participation in the forums of the local newspapers we were able to see that the printed press was one of the main means that

the public used to get information about the countries presented in the manifestation. The reviewing of the events in the articles both guided the readers in their choice and also helped them build up a positive image of the countries in question. It is even more important to mention the contribution of the press, considering that in the past years the Balkan countries usually made the headlines only when negative event happened.

### **5. Local cultural associations act as ambassadors of the culture of their countries.**

The associations created by the foreign nationals have all made it their mission to promote the culture of their country of origin and to help create a good image abroad. With or without the help of the governmental structures of their countries, they are active throughout the year and organise events to mark the important national celebrations. Out of the Balkan countries, Croatia, Serbia and Romania have in their Ministries of Foreign Affairs special departments for Diaspora, which try to keep contact with and address the needs of their former citizens, now living abroad. In cooperation with these departments and with the Ministries of Culture, the cultural associations that are active in Lille and in the Nord region have become traditional partners of the cultural service of the Lille City Hall. Their activity has good visibility in the local media, which helps create a positive image of the countries they represent. The result of this positive impact of their activity is also the fact that many of these organisations have French members, people who have developed an interest in the culture of these countries and are willing to get involved in the organisation of events that promote it.

In the case of the *Europe XXL* events, the implication of the local cultural associations had several positive outcomes. Firstly, it served the organisers' aim to address the social aspect of such an important cultural manifestation, by involving local inhabitants in a cultural exchange operated beyond local boundaries and by enabling them to "gain a sense of empowerment" (*Europe as a Cultural Project*, 2005: 26). Secondly, it gave "a local flavour" to certain events, as many, though not all of them, were organised by nationals and consequently represented the culture of their countries very accurately. Finally, it took off the shoulders of the Lille 3000 team some of the trouble of organising those events.

## **6. Touristic impact?**

At this point, at least from the responses to the questionnaire and to the data available at the tourist department of “Voyageurs du Monde” bookstore, there is no significant impact on tourism to the Balkan countries, as a result of the *Europe XXL* manifestation. It is, however, too early to draw any conclusions. If we are to take as point of reference the outcome of the *Bombaysers 2006* manifestation, we can say that an increase can be expected in the future months, however less significant than that observed in the case of India, due to the higher degree of exoticism and of tourist promotion of the latter. Still, at this point, this is mere speculation.

On the other hand, a continuation of the cultural cooperation between local organisations and similar bodies in the Balkan countries can be expected, as several town halls in Lille and around have manifested their interest in establishing a stronger link.

### **Limitations of the study**

This study certainly has its limitations, for several reasons. First of all, the small number of persons that participated in the questionnaire does not give a relevant image of the response of the public to the events attended and consequently to the type of image they may have created. The nature of the events, most of them organised in public squares and involving dancing, music and moving around from one stand to another, made it impossible to reach a larger number of persons.

On the other hand, the large volume of manifestations and the overlapping programming made it difficult to attend them all in order to gather information.

At the same time, the statistics gathered by each hosting institution have not all been communicated, as at the time this paper was written, the Lille 3000 team was still in the process of gathering data. Consequently, much of the debate concerning the public’s preference for one or another type of event, as shown by the visiting statistics, has to left for further investigation.

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## Annex 1

### Interview Emmanuel Vinchon, director of programmes *Europe XXL*.

Recorded on 27 May 2009 at Tri Postal, Lille

- *Tout d'abord, pourquoi ce festival?*

Ce n'est pas un festival, on n'utilise jamais ce mot-là. C'est beaucoup plus délicat; depuis la Capitale européenne de la culture on s'est aperçu d'un certain succès, une certaine forme d'organisation qui convient tout à fait à un publique qui nous avait un peu dépassé et on s'est dit qu'il fallait pas s'arrêter; cela ne voulait pas dire reproduire la capitale européenne de la culture, mais imaginer une manifestation qui revienne plus ou moins régulièrement, qui se confronte avec d'autre lieux : c'est-à-dire notre territoire c'est pas la France, c'est la ville de Lille, cette métropole transfrontalière, puisqu'on a dedans un grand nombre de villes belges, entre Courtrai et Tournai, donc sur une métropole de 90 communes à peu près, des deux cotés de la frontière, et on aimerait se confronter à d'autres villes du monde entier. Pour essayer de nous projeter en avant et essayer de fabriquer le Lille des années 2020, 2030, 2040. Ou des années 3000, pour n'arrêter jamais de réfléchir à cet avenir. Il n'y a pas meilleur outil de pouvoir se projeter en avant que d'apprendre d'autres villes du monde entier. A travers le projet culturel, sachant que la culture amène la réflexion, le libéralisme, c'est une façon qui rassemble, etc., mais d'abord en prenant la culture. Donc on a commencé en 2006 avec l'Inde, parce que l'Inde est tout un sous-continent totalement exotique et méconnu, il y a des frontières et d'élucubrations, enfin, ça s'arrange un peu depuis quelques années et depuis les curiosités, mais évidemment un pays tellement lointain qu'on trouvait que ça béquait du sens avec les images et les clichés que véhiculait ce pays dans notre tête. Et ça a fait une grosse manifestation qui a très bien fonctionné et tous les ans on a d'autres manifestations, des expositions notamment, au Tri Postal, qui rythment un petit peu le temps et qui essaient de réfléchir là-dessus : je pense au *Regard des ailes* mais aussi à des métafictionnelles transdisciplinaires dans toutes les villes à l'extérieur et à l'intérieur, mais vraiment la seconde c'est Europe XXL, et là on s'est reposé la question inverse de l'Inde: qu'est-ce que des villes qui pourrait nous apporter quelque chose, qu'est-ce que des villes qu'il y ait moins de force maintenant, et la question de l'Europe Centrale et Orientale est devenue évidente. Puisque là, finalement, on vit à côté de cette Europe-là, en disant qu'elle vient nous rejoindre, alors qu'elle a su de le faire, on a énormément des clichés, et finalement on s'est aperçu de son côté plus exotique que l'Inde, tout en étant beaucoup plus fraternelle et beaucoup plus proche de nous. En partant de ce principe, voilà, on va visiter l'Europe Centrale et Orientale en partant d'Istanbul, qui est sur un point très inconnu, à cheval sur l'Orient et l'Occident, une ville qui représente un pays qui n'est pas apprécié en France, avec notre pays qui se ferme de plus en plus au niveau des frontières, qui se méfie des polonais, qui se méfie des roumains, des roms, enfin, bref, tous les clichés se mélangent, ça c'est génial en même temps pour nous parce qu'on s'est dit qu'on pouvait raconter des histoires en prenant l'axe structurel qui est le plus évident. Donc, naturellement, en quelques mois, visiter l'Europe à Lille avec un premier titre qui s'appelait *Frontières invisibles* et un deuxième qui est devenu le titre officiel, qui est *Europe XXL*, c'est-à-dire une Europe qui est de plus en plus en état de s'étendre, non seulement géographiquement, mais de nos têtes. C'est-à-dire que, alors que l'Europe est en train de se couper en petits morceaux, alors que l'Union Européenne est en train de dépasser les frontières et

d'entrer en d'autres, avec des miradors un peu partout autour, pour se protéger, on a une Europe sur une carte géographique qui est énorme et qu'on oublie tout le temps puisqu'elle va au-delà de la Russie, au-delà du fief kazakh, etc. Voilà, donc, on s'est dit, on a 4 mois pour raconter des histoires, pour se poser des questions, et on essayera d'avoir des réponses.

- *Et Istanbul aussi, parce qu'elle sera la Capitale européenne de la culture ?*

Ça c'est dingue, Istanbul, qui est d'un pays qui n'est déjà pas du tout en Europe, qui sera la Capitale européenne de la culture en 2010. Pour nous, on va spéculer là-dessus.

- *Puisque vous avez mentionné les clichés, la mission de ces manifestations serait aussi d'essayer de changer, ou bien de corriger ces clichés ?*

Les gens font ce qu'ils veulent de ce qu'on leur donne comme information. Puis, certain, c'est comme ça apparaît aux gens, voilà, l'Europe, c'est ça : la Roumanie, l'Estonie, la Bulgarie, c'est ça. Ça n'a aucun sens, on n'est pas là pour raconter un pays, on n'est pas là pour dire tout, ni pour donner une vérité, on est là pour raconter des histoires avec l'aide des artistes. Tout en racontant, en invitant des artistes à travers de spectacles vivants, en montant des expositions comme celle qui a lieu au Tri Postal ou à Saint Sauveur, qui sont des expositions de point fort difficiles, tout en faisant la fête en même temps, en organisant des débats très complexes, et même des événements pour les enfants, comme celui sur la bande dessinée serbe et croate de ce matin, il y a des juxtapositions de niveaux différents, et puis chez nous c'est intéressant comme l'on a été sur l'Inde, parce que la première chose quand on parle de l'Europe centrale ou orientale on dit pays de l'Est; en France on essaie d'éviter ce mot-là, quand on parle de certains pays, les gens ont des images, il n'en ont pas, les pays Baltes ce sont des images totalement inconnus, si on parle de la Roumanie, si on parle de la Pologne, si on parle de la Turquie, il y a des clichés très, très forts, parce que il y a eu des relations fortes avec ces pays, anciennes, et il y a eu des choses qui se sont passées, bien faciles ou difficiles, au niveau de beaucoup des personnes qui sont venus de ce pays-là jusqu'en France, beaucoup moins de France jusqu'en Europe Centrale, et donc forcément créateurs des images, qui sont vraies, qui sont fausses, qui sont décalées, qu'importe, on va jouer avec.

C'est pour ça qu'on n'est pas là pour dire « c'est ça qui est vrai, c'est ça qui est faux », on joue avec tout. Et après, aux habitants de ce territoire de la métropole transfrontalière, il sera construit avec. On n'est pas là pour dire l'Europe c'est beau, on est là pour montrer que l'Europe est dynamique. Et elle a quelque chose d'interne.

- *Et pour la sélection, comment s'est elle passée ? Quels ont été les critères ? Elle a été faite ici, ou bien vous avez collaboré avec les services culturels des ambassades des pays présentés ?*

Très peu avec les services culturels, parce que ce sont des services officiels. On n'est pas l'office du tourisme de la Bulgarie, de la Pologne, de la Roumanie. On est là pour raconter des histoires. Donc la première chose qu'on a faite a été de nous balader dans ces pays ; il y a une compère, deux, qui s'occupent des arts visuels, une d'Istanbul et l'autre du reste de l'Europe, moi je m'occupe des arts vivants ; donc on s'est baladé dans toute l'Europe centrale, à chaque fois sur 4-5 jours, pour essayer de rencontrer de matériel et puis pour trouver un fil rouge, des fois c'étaient des artistes, des fois c'étaient des responsables d'équipements, des gens qui étaient dans des réseaux, et puis des gens qu'on connaissait un petit peu avant, qu'on a découvert par d'autres réseaux, du fil en aiguille on se trouvait à passer des journées entières ensemble à discuter d'un

petit peu tout. Les artistes, tous ne sont pas venus ou ne peuvent pas venir pendant Europe XXL, mais cela nous a permis de choisir en terme de villes et c'est pour ça qu'on a organisé les 4 mois en temps forts. Il y a 4 mois pour les grandes expositions, sur les grands lieux, des expositions qui durent de 3 semaines à deux mois sur d'autres équipements comme d'autres villes, et puis sur les arts vivants, qui étaient des grands festivals, des équipements, qui ont leurs propres rythmes de programmation, on a monté les Midi-Midi : il y a des temps forts qui durent 4 jours, sur lesquels on comporte une ou deux villes ensemble pour voir ce que ça donne ; on a commencé avec Berlin, qui est la porte de l'Europe centrale, sur toute un scène qui passe à tours entre l'Europe occidentale et orientale, on a continué avec les Pays Baltes, les trois, qui veulent surtout pas être rapprochés, donc on a travaillé un peu sur ces trois-là, pour voir ou l'on en vient, justement parce qu'il sont différents, on a continué le weekend dernier sur Varsovie, on va préparer Moscou et tout l'est de Moscou , c'est vraiment une ouverture sur un Est méconnu en France, on va continuer sur Budapest et Bucarest qui sont deux villes tout à fait différentes, qui se reconstruisent tout à fait différemment depuis la chute du Mur, et on terminera sur l'Istanbul et un peu sur les Balkans. On aurait pu en faire beaucoup plus, notamment il y a plusieurs villes qu'on regrette, Sofia, que j'ai pas réussi à comprendre, et Belgrade, parce que c'est un ville très importante...

*...et active du point de vue culturel...*

- ...et le cœur, à mon avis, de tout un axe culturel, de tout un groupe, je regrette ne pas avoir pris les Balkans en général d'une façon forte, mais là il aurait fallu 4 mois entièrement. Il y a la Croatie, la Slovénie, la Bosnie, la Serbie, la Macédoine, toute l'ancienne Yougoslavie, il y a une histoire incroyable à raconter ; on a fait des tirées, pour être sur d'être cohérents et de pouvoir commenter en principe par rapport à nos publics, en espérant évidemment que chacun comprenne bien que ce n'est qu'un début et que chacun va continuer à raconter des histoires, c'est-à-dire que les opérateurs et les responsables d'équipements que nous tenons en partenariat, s'ils ont envie vont continuer à maintenir ces réseaux-là, carrément les artistes, que les habitants font comme avec l'Inde, j'espère qu'ils vont se balader dans ces pays-là, on a eu énormément des voyages après, on a eu le cas en France, j'espère qu'ils seront curieux de ces pays au-delà des clichés, au-delà des questions de l'Union européenne, et inversement on espère que tous nos partenaires qui sont venus ici vont avoir envie d'aller profiter de la relation avec les villes, les associations, les habitants, les structures culturelles qui one été partenaires des projets.

- *Justement, je voulais vous demander s'il y a des conséquences, des résultats, des prolongations de ces évènements ?*

C'est possible, pas obligatoire. Nous, on fait des manifestations éphémères : trois-quatre mois sur un thème. On y va à fond : avec les artistes, à part toute une langue, on a une communication très forte, et puis on s'arrête. Et on prépare un autre sujet. Mais pendant ce temps-là, il y a plein d'opérateurs qui travaillent, qui sont des responsables d'équipements, qui peuvent très bien continuer. Pour l'Inde, on est quelques associations qui continuent à faire d'immense réflexion par rapport à l'Inde. Avec l'Europe centrale, on est beaucoup plus proche ; on a vu, en bus ou en train, on est proche de la plupart des villes. Donc, à part Moscou, qui est beaucoup plus lointaine, même Istanbul, ...rapide. On espère que celà va continuer. On n'oblige personne, ...on espère que les gens vont en profiter.

- *Après Europe XXL, ce sera quoi ? Si ça peut être dévoilé... L'Afrique, l'Amérique Latine ?*

Non, en 2010 et 2011 on prépare une grande exposition, sur des thèmes particuliers, comme on fait pratiquement tous les ans, et puis une opération type Europe XXL se sera pour 2012, parce que 2012 c'est les Jeux Olympiques de Londres. Et quant on vient du continent il faut juste passer par Lille pour aller à Londres. Donc pendant quatre mois, au-delà des trois mois des Jeux Olympiques, on va monter une énorme opération sur l'idée d'écriture contre l'image.

- *Comme public, vous avez pensé au public d'ici, de Lille et des alentours, ou bien aux touristes qui passent par la ville ?*

On veut tout. On veut notre public, les habitants de la métropole transfrontalière. C'est le public avec lequel on vit. C'est là qu'on travaille, c'est là d'où les financements viennent, donc c'est important qu'on travaille avec eux, parce qu'on a énormément de projets en perspective. Je rappelle qu'on a monté des ateliers pendant six mois, pour créer un chœur de mille voix le jour de la fête d'ouverture, avec finalement mille six cents personnes qui ont chanté dans toutes les langues européennes, à l'intérieur de cette parade qui a accueilli 200.000 personnes dans les rues de la ville. Au-delà de ces habitants évidemment on cherche à toucher les touristes; les touristes, ils viennent de Belgique, ils viennent de Paris, ils viennent de Londres, on a eu plein de gens par différence à l'Inde, là encore on a un mois et demi pour terminer cette opération, mais évidemment on cherche à être reconnus de plus en plus même pour ceux qui n'ont eu le temps de venir, qu'ils réfléchissent continuellement sur cette Europe telle qu'on l'imagine, mais il faut que les gens viennent.

- *Il y a comme collaborateurs quelques associations des bulgares, des roumains, des polonais.*

On a sur la métropole quelques associations structurées en esprit communautaire, on a des hongrois, mais ce sont des étudiants, on a beaucoup des roumains, parce que forcément la Roumanie est culturellement assez proche...

-...des polonais...

..surtout la Pologne; on a énormément de turcs, mais ce sont des associations professionnelles, on a réussi à monter une opération avec eux pour l'instant, et on a des tchèques. On a deux associations tchèques. A part ça, le reste ce sont plutôt des individus que des associations, mais à chaque fois ils se sont impliqués dans des projets pour qu'ils puissent montrer aussi leur propres vertus, leurs connaissances. Quand on a monté une opération sur la Hongrie il n'y a pas longtemps, on s'est aperçu qu'il y avait énormément de jeunes étudiants qui étaient bien contents d'être intégrés dans des projets qu'on appelle Europe fictive, des projets qui sont faits dans des quartiers de la ville et pour les 55 communes qui entourent Lille avec des temps forts sur une thématique géographique.

- *Vous êtes content des réactions dans la presse, jusqu'à présent ?*

Oui, on a des retours très, très forts, et vous avez encore une page entière dans *Libération* d'aujourd'hui, sur Mark Raidpere; non, on n'a pas d'inquiétudes, parce qu'il est évident qu'on cherche quand même toujours à monter de temps forts, des expositions très fortes. Il y a 3-4 choses qu'on n'oublie jamais : c'est l'art dans la rue, notamment AES+F avec les Anges et les Démons, toutes les installations avec Perrier on les garde; depuis 2004 on a occupé l'espace public, parce que c'est là où les gens vivent, on n'est pas enfermé là dans des lieux officiels. La

deuxième chose, ce sont les grandes expositions, qui attirent énormément de journalistes, parce que il y a de la puissance à ces temps forts; et puis il y a le spectacle vivant, qui a forcément un côté un peu plus festif, qui nous permet d'allier un peu d'introspection mais aussi de fête, (on n'est pas là pour s'ennuyer non plus) et bien évidemment on complète avec les projets participatifs que j'ai évoqués et tout ce qui est des rencontres et débats, des rencontres littéraires et débats sur les questions européennes en sens très large, depuis 14 mai. Ça permet de rendre les choses plus ludiques, pour les enfants, pour les familles, pour les professionnels, chacun peut scotcher quelque chose à sa manière, tout ce que l'on cherche est que au-delà de ses propres goûts et de ses propres envies on lui fasse découvrir quelque chose de nouveau. S'il a une question, qu'il trouve des réponses qui le mènent à des réflexions.

- *Vous avez mentionné les enfants, j'ai vu qu'il y a aussi un côté éducatif, il y a des ateliers, vous avez tout prévu.*

Oui, la culture c'est bien beau, mais si c'est juste pour concerner d'avoir les artistes sur une scène en lisant de la culture à travers le monde, les gens seraient las au bout de 5 minutes. Ce matin j'étais au vernissage d'une exposition de bande dessinée serbo-croate. C'est une française qui a vécu à Belgrade que j'avais rencontrée quand j'y étais, qui a écrit un bouquin sur la force de cette bande dessinée indépendante. On a coédité son bouquin avec la ville de Saint-Etienne et avec les Actes du Sud, le label; on a fait venir certains des graphistes et des créateurs de bandes dessinées qui étaient dans ce bouquin-là, et ils ont monté des ateliers avec des jeunes et de moins jeunes. Ce matin c'était un lycée professionnel qui a créé de la bande dessinée avec Aleksandar Zograf, le serbe, et Jean-Jacques Tachdjian qui est un graphiste typographe de Lille, et ça a donné lieu à des rencontres assez amusantes et c'est tout ça, c'est pas seulement l'expo, c'est pas seulement le livre, c'est pas simplement les ateliers et les lycées, c'est tout ensemble.

- *Comme l'atelier de Perjovschi à l'espace Pignon au Bois Blancs.*

Evidemment. Qu'il soit ici, avec une grosse exposition importante, parce qu'il le mérite, qu'en même temps on le montre dans l'espace Pignon, qui est un lieu centralisé tenu par une association dans un quartier, et on met en valeur tout ce qu'il a pu faire, et en troisième main, qu'il puisse avoir un atelier dans une école juste à côté, pour nous c'est pas mal. Ça prend du sens.

- *Est-ce que vous avez un événement favori, parmi ceux déjà présentés ?*

Il y en a plusieurs. Mais évident que la fête de l'inauguration, c'est toujours un moment particulier, avec 200.000 personnes qui viennent dans la ville, ça fait un an que vous préparez cette manifestation, et 200.000 personnes qui vous rejoignent, qui ne savent pas que c'est beau, que cette fois-ci c'est bien plus d'intéressant que la manifestation sur l'Inde. On a tous mis de cœur pour être sûr qu'on puisse voir quelque chose, que vous avez préparé pendant 10 mois avec des amateurs pour qu'ils apprennent des langues et des chants qu'ils ne connaissaient pas parce qu'ils étaient vraiment amateurs, et que ça marche, ça, on ne peut pas l'oublier. C'est comme en fin décembre 2003, quand on a lancé la capitale européenne de la culture, avec 600.000 personnes dans la rue, et on ne pouvait plus bouger pendant une demi heure, tellement il y avait du monde ; c'est vraiment ça, il a fallu déclencher le défilé, à bout de forces ; ça, ce sont des moments qui restent. Sinon il y a des moments particuliers, moi j'ai des concerts qui m'ont beaucoup marqué, des concerts sur Berlin, du rock avec un groupe qui s'appelle Mitch & Mitch, un groupe polonais, mais c'est aussi les repas, les Mleczny bar, un bar à lait, typiquement

polonais, avec des artistes de Varsovie qui voulaient conserver toute une culture d'une sorte de cantine polonaise, et se sont installés dans ce bar à Saint Sauveur, et pendant trois jours on a mangé polonais, il fallait faire la queue, il y avait le service qui ne parlait que polonais, et on se trouvait sur des nappes Vichy, enfin, un truc très cantine, et les gens faisaient la queue jusqu'à quatre heures dans l'après-midi pour pouvoir manger ça; et c'était une ambiance incroyable, on a fini en fêtant ça avec tous les polonais, dont très peu parlaient français; c'est ces petits moments qui fonctionnent bien, dont il y en a plein, de petites choses comme ça, dans les quartiers, dans les villes ; et puis de grands concerts à côté, de super-beaux concerts à l'Opéra avec György Ligeti par exemple, et en même temps les derviches tourneurs, qui ont marqué ; tout le public est allé de l'Opéra dans un café pour qu'ils expliquent ce qu'ils étaient. C'est entre la spiritualité et la douceur, la violence, le rock, c'est tout un univers, difficile de les séparer.

## Annex 2 A

Flyers advertising the *Europe festive* celebration of the Balkan countries.



Annex 2 B



Romanian ball flyer, Fives



Midi-Midi leaflet

Seclin leaflet  
"fête roumaine"



Balkan weekend leaflet

Annex 3



*Prix du Marais leaflet*



“Tireloy” bookstore window display



Peuplée majoritairement par la minorité hongroise de la Roumanie, la Transylvanie a pu conserver une partie de ses traditions, malgré la répression subie sous le régime de Ceausescu.

# En Transylvanie, redécouvrez la vie de ferme à l'ancienne

La visite du village de Turea, en Roumanie, a des allures de voyage dans le temps

**ROUMANIE.** Des chaquettes chargées de from fraisement coupé s'alignent sur des routes caillouteuses. Des grands-réaux traient les vaches, borborent le beurre ; elles ont des puits dans l'arrière-cour et savent comment diriger une charrue. S'il n'y avait pas d'anachroniques antennes satellites à l'extérieur des maisons, on pourrait se croire en 1900.

Un grand nombre de gens, ici, n'ont pas l'eau courante ni de plomberie. Mais grâce à la technologie moderne, ils peuvent capter des chaînes comme MTV... Quand on arrive tout juste de Bucarest, une capitale où les rues sont pleines de Ferrari, de cafés branchés et de top-modèles en puissance, on se retrouve propulsé dans la vie la plus

**S'il n'y avait pas des antennes satellites, on pourrait se croire en 1900**

simple. C'est le meilleur moyen de se familiariser avec la danse, la musique et les coutumes de cette région de Transylvanie, si l'on a un guide qui parle sa langue.

Le logement peut être spartiate (ma chambre n'avait pas de porte et la salle de bains avait l'air d'une remise), mais loger chez l'habitant permet d'avoir un regard de l'intérieur.

**Eau-de-vie au petit déj**  
Le dépaysement commence avec le petit déjeuner. Ici, à Turea, les éleveurs mangent

du fromage de buffe locale, du pain blanc en tranche, de la stracissa de porc et un "shot" de Palinka, une eau-de-vie locale qu'on sert à chaque repas et qui aide à partir du bon pied.

Comme il est impoli de refuser, j'ai bu le petit verre d'une gorgée même si je venais de me brosser les dents. Le liquide a brûlé mes entrailles, comme de la fequila bon marché...

Un peu pompette, j'ai commencé ma promenade. Les bergers guident les

troupeaux dans le village pour qu'ils puissent être traités par leur propriétaire. Nous visitons une "good room" traditionnelle. C'est un salon à la déco élaborée, utilisé pour divertir les invités et provoquer des rencontres entre jeunes célibataires. Il y a des couvertures brodées et des nappes faites main, à partir de laine, de coton ou de chanvre.

Les cabinets sont peints à la main, avec des motifs fleur-croix de roses, de tulipes et de branches. Bien que ce soit très joliment

confectionné, cette forme d'artisanat a été abandonnée par les nouvelles générations.

**70% de Hongrois**  
Les meubles sont aussi décorés au pochoir de rouge, blanc et vert, les couleurs du drapeau hongrois, puisque 70% des habitants de cette région sont hongrois. Il reste des tensions entre la Roumanie et la Hongrie, les deux nations se disputant la propriété de la Transylvanie.

La dictature de Ceausescu opprimait les minorités et interdisait la culture hongroise. Des communautés comme Turea venaient dans la peur de la persécution, ce qui a causé la disparition d'une grande partie de la culture locale.



## Carnet pratique

**Y aller :** aéroport de Sibiu, Bucarest et Fierți. Carpathian Tours propose des séjours à la carte dans les campagnes hongroise, slovaque et roumaine. Infos sur [www.carpathiantours.com/ru](http://www.carpathiantours.com/ru).  
**Monnaie :** le lei, les au pluriel (1 euro = 4,18RON)

Le temps d'un week-end, je me suis retrouvée fourchée à la main à récolter le foin, à traire une vache, à me tremousser au son de la musique traditionnelle et à pique-niquer au balcon, sous la pleine lune. Puis je suis retournée, à regret, au CIP sibiu.

**LILIA DIMON**  
[www.thetraveljunkie.ca](http://www.thetraveljunkie.ca)

SPÉCIAL **illes3000**

AUJOURD'HUI, À LA GARE SAINT-SAUVEUR

# Balkans : « Les frontières invisibles »

Les Balkans se définissent sans doute par une multitude de « frontières invisibles », thème du débat aujourd'hui à la gare Saint-Sauveur à Lille. Mais il y a également celles, bien réelles, auxquelles se heurtent les populations de ces pays candidats à l'entrée dans l'Union européenne. Reportage au Monténégro.

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« **L**a France ? C'est Sarkozy, Carla Bruni, et les filles d'attente pour un visa ». Comme de nombreux jeunes Monténégrins, Marija, journaliste, la petite brésilienne, attend avec impatience l'intégration à l'Union européenne parce qu'elle est synonyme de liberté de circulation. Bernard Garancher, ambassadeur de France au Monténégro, le reconnaît d'ailleurs : « les visas sont délivrés au compte goutte ».

Lespold Maurer, représentant de la Commission européenne ajoute que « les problèmes de visas entraînent des histoires douloureuses ». Pour lui, qui accompagne le processus d'harmonisation, la question est en voie de règlement. Monténégro, Serbie et Macédoine pourraient profiter d'une « libéralisation des visas l'année prochaine, au contraire de la Bosnie-Herzégovine et de l'Albanie ». Un signe parmi d'autres, les passeports Monténégrins, tous très neufs, sont biométriques.

Il est par contre beaucoup moins précis lorsqu'il s'agit de définir un calendrier d'intégration. Le processus, long et complexe, laisse le champ libre à tous les reports. Pour l'instant, pour aider le pays à se mettre à niveau et limiter le choc économique et social post-intégration, l'Europe investit 30 millions d'euros par an dans ce petit pays de 650 000 habitants. Parmi les objectifs prioritaires, outre l'adaptation des structures administratives et institutionnelles, la lutte contre la corruption. Un point noir sans cesse pointé par les autorités européennes.

Si l'on s'arrête aux affiches qui ornent les rues de Podgorica, la petite capitale, on serait tenté de penser que les autorités ont pris les choses en main. Des affiches dont le message est d'ailleurs clair : si le Monténégro veut entrer dans l'Union, il faut en finir avec la corruption. Gordana Djurovic, ministre en charge de l'intégration européenne, qui est aussi à la tête



d'une commission gouvernementale de lutte contre la corruption, veut l'illustrer : « Des mesures sont prises, nous avons résolu plusieurs cas ». Milo Djukanovic, Premier ministre, qui juge que « l'intégration à court terme est la garantie d'une stabilisation », affirme, lui aussi, que la lutte contre la corruption est une priorité.

**Corruption endémique**

Sauf qu'après la crise financière, le gouvernement a renfloué les caisses d'une seule banque, la Prva Banka. « Les autres ont bénéficié des fonds d'autres gouvernements », justifie Milo Djukanovic. Detail : lui et son frère détiennent des parts dans la banque en question.

Au lendemain des récentes élections dont sa coalition est sortie une nouvelle fois victorieuse, un magazine a fait sa une sur « Milosovic », parodiant « qui veut gagner des millions ». Un humour que ne goûtent pas les ONG qui enquêtent sur la corruption et tentent de lutter contre un phénomène qui semble endémique. « La moitié des citoyens de ce pays connaissent quelqu'un qui est lié à un phénomène de corruption », assure Ulfarevic Duliborka, du Centre pour l'éducation civique qui affirme l'existence de « liens entre les autorités et la crime organisé ». Des propos qui, assurément, font passer les ONG pour « des ennemis de l'Etat ». Dejan Milovack, de l'ONG MANS, accuse pour sa part les pouvoirs locaux qui « adaptent les plans d'urbanisme aux besoins des investisseurs, notamment sur la côte ». Zarko Radulovic, propriétaire de plusieurs hôtels de luxe sur la côte comme à l'intérieur des terres, jure ses grands dieux que « jamais il n'a été en contact avec la corruption ». Et pour lui, qui rêve de voir un jour « le Monténégro devenir le nouveau Monaco », le Monténégro est loin d'être le seul concerné. « La corruption, c'est aussi un phénomène qui touche les pays de l'Union européenne, non ? »

**PROGRAMME**

**Aujourd'hui à la gare Saint-Sauveur : rencontres entre paroles et images...**

« Les frontières invisibles », c'est une rencontre ille3000, cet après-midi à la Gare Saint-Sauveur à Lille, entre 15 h et 19 h 30, sur le thème de cette Europe de Sud-Est que nous connaissons si mal. Trois débats, rythmés par une « exploration photographique, cinématographique et sonore » autour des Balkans.

- **Passage 1 : « Les nôtres et les autres »**. Les frontières ont bougé suite aux guerres balkaniques, la vie des habitants s'en est trouvée bouleversée. Avec Nicoleta Esinencu, auteure de théâtre, Klavdi Štuban, photographe, Zelimir Zink, cinéaste. Animé par Anne Madelain.
- **Passage 2 : « Balkans empirisés »**. Les Balkans ont été marqués par des dominations successives. Avec Mijlo Lazin, metteur en scène, Bernard Loty, historien. Animé par Bernard Dreano.
- **Passage 3 : « Désunités, Fraternités »**. Entre frontières physiques et culture globalisée, où en sont les Balkans ? Rencontre avec Dina Iordanska, auteure, Rasmir Mahmutcehojic, ancien vice-Premier ministre bosnien, Duzica Parazehovic, programmatrice au centre culturel Rex à Belgrade. Animé par Anne Madelain. ●

# « LES FRONTIÈRES INVISIBLES » Au cœur de l'Europe, de co

**1 LE CONTEXTE**  
Rougi par les guerres nationalistes et religieuses, assés sur le plan économique, mais engagés dans une refondation complète de leurs structures, les pays des Balkans sont aux pas de la porte de l'Union européenne.

**2 LES ENJEUX**  
De l'intégration de l'ensemble de ces pays dépend en grande partie leur stabilité, et donc la stabilité du continent européen. Une intégration attendue tant pour ses aspects économiques, politiques que symboliques.

**3 LA QUESTION**  
Depuis le sommet de Thessalonique, en 2003, la question n'est plus « faut-il intégrer les pays des Balkans ? », mais « Quand et comment seront-ils intégrés ? »

Après les déchirures est venu le temps de l'intégration à l'Union européenne. Un processus parfois difficile et long, mais très attendu par les populations. Tour d'horizon des Balkans d'aujourd'hui.

BERANGÈRE BARRÉ ET MATHIEU MILLECAMPS > mgc@frontrdedit.fr

« Quelles sont les frontières des Balkans ? Encore faut-il savoir s'il faut parler de Balkans ou d'Europe du Sud-Est. Car, comme le souligne l'historien Bernard Lory, « Europe du Sud-Est est plus neutre, tandis que Balkans a une connotation plus péjorative, parce qu'il y a une image noire de violences, de conflits, de sous-développement accolée à cet adjectif ». C'est la raison pour laquelle « la Slovénie, la Croatie ne veulent à aucun prix être considérées comme balkaniques et que la Roumanie a toujours beaucoup hésité à le faire », explique Bernard Lory. Bosnie-Herzégovine, Monténégro, Bulgarie, Serbie, Kosovo et Macédoine, par contre, se revendiquent balkaniques. Quant à la Turquie, dont la langue a donné son nom aux Balkans au moment de l'empire Ottoman, elle aurait tendance aujourd'hui à se déclarer balkanique pour mieux frapper à la porte d'une Europe aux opinions parfois réticentes.

« L'éclatement des Balkans : le réveil des nationalismes. Après la chute du communisme, les nationalismes n'ont pas mis longtemps à reprendre le dessus. « La Yougoslavie s'est retrouvée sans économie, sans idéologie, il a fallu trouver un autre modèle. Ce sont les nationalismes qui ont comblé le vide », analyse Milos Lazari, journaliste originaire de la province de Voïvodine, en Serbie. S'il ne fallait retenir qu'une date, c'est celle du 8 juin 1989, Slobodan Milosevic, jusqu'alors sombre politicien sans envergure qui s'est fait un nom en flattant le nationalisme serbe, fait un discours enflammé sur la plaine de Polje, pour commémorer le 600<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de la bataille de Kosovo. C'est le point de départ, au moins symbolique, de l'escalade de violences qui va plonger cette région d'Europe dans le sang et le chaos. Les premiers combats éclatent en 1990 dans les parties serbes de Croatie. La Slovénie parvient à extirper la première. En décembre, à l'issue d'un référendum, 83 % des Slovènes votent en faveur de l'indépendance.

« Où en est-on aujourd'hui ? Les conflits, amorcés sur les frontières croates, se sont vite étendus à la Bosnie-Herzégovine. Les guerres ont perduré pendant toutes les années 90 et donné lieu à de terribles exactions, de part et d'autre. Le « règlement »

des populations de l'Europe du Sud-Est parle le serbo-croate. Mais si la langue est la même, avec des variantes selon les régions, le nom qui lui est donné est différent. Ainsi, on parle le serbe que l'on écrit en alphabet cyrillique en Serbie, le croate « écrit en alphabet latin en Croa-

**Les tensions nationalistes et religieuses sont loin d'être terminées. Et plusieurs conflits territoriaux restent en suspens.**

des tensions nationalistes et religieuses est loin d'être terminée. Au Kosovo, la situation est complexe entre Albanais, majoritaires, et Serbes. Les Roms qui y vivaient ont pour la plupart quitté le pays. La Bosnie-Herzégovine est quasi ingouvernable. La Fédération de Bosnie et la République serbe de Bosnie, dans le meilleur des cas, s'ignorent. Plusieurs conflits territoriaux restent aussi en suspens sur des questions de frontières bien visibles. La Macédoine, elle, est dénommée « Ancienne république yougoslave de Macédoine » par l'Union européenne pour ne pas froisser les Grecs.

« Le processus d'intégration à l'Union européenne. La Slovénie est entrée la première dans l'Europe, en mars 2004. Pour les autres pays, la situation est contrastée. Croatie, Macédoine et la Turquie sont officiellement « pays candidats », Bosnie-Herzégovine, Serbie, Monténégro, Kosovo et Albanie sont classés « candidats potentiels ». Ce qui suppose cependant que les gouvernements travaillent activement à l'harmonisation de leur législation avec les standards européens. Processus qui ne se fait pas sans difficulté et au même rythme partout. Ce principe d'une « intégration à la carte » a été validé lors du sommet de Thessalonique, en juin 2003.

« Les langues et leur dénomination. C'est un signe des « frontières invisibles ». Si l'on exclut l'albanais, langue indo-européenne dont les racines plongent dans la langue parlée par les Illyriens, la majeure partie

de l'Europe du Sud-Est parle le serbo-croate. Mais si la langue est la même, avec des variantes selon les régions, le nom qui lui est donné est différent. Ainsi, on parle le serbe que l'on écrit en alphabet cyrillique en Serbie, le croate « écrit en alphabet latin en Croa-

te. On parle également le bosnien, le serbe ou le croate en Bosnie-Herzégovine, selon son appartenance. Quant au Monténégro, après moult débats lors de la rédaction de la Constitution, il a été décidé d'appeler la langue officielle « langue maternelle », pour ne porter le flanc à aucune polémique... »

► Pour aller plus loin : Comprendre les Balkans, de J.-A. Dérens et L. Geslin, Ed. Nor Lias, 19 €.



## Là où se mélangent Orient et Occident. L'

**Monastères et mosquées, montagnes louches par la mer, emplacements grecques, romains et ottomans, les Balkans comptent plus d'un paradoxe. De quel ravir les touristes en quête de rencontres hors des sentiers battus.**

Des siècles d'histoire mouvementée ont laissé bien des trésors dans les Balkans. Les youyogistes envoient des touristes par milliers dans les vieilles cités de la côte dalmate. Mais, passé Dubrovnik et les jolies îles de Croatie, il y a bien d'autres découvertes à faire. Des plages de la mer Noire aux montagnes des Rhodopes, on pointe quelques minarets, en passant par le majestueux monastère de Rila, la Jérusalem des orthodoxes bulgares, ou la magnifique cité de Plovdiv, la Philippopolis des Romains, la Bulgarie attire de plus en plus de visiteurs séduits par la cordialité des habitants, dont beaucoup ont des notions de français, et la variété du pays,

Bien qu'escarpée, la côte du Monténégro attire les bétonneurs qui cassent par endroits la falaise pour y construire des hôtels ou rénover les vieux complexes ; certains portent encore les impacts des balles des conflits de l'ancienne Yougoslavie. Mais la topographie les empêchera de tout saccager. Coincée entre les montagnes, la



Orhid (Macédoine), sur le lac du même nom. En face, l'Albanie.

petite république de Macédoine, sans doute le plus grand nombre d'édifices religieux au kilomètre carré des Balkans compte aussi quelques pépites. Les douaniers, trop heureux qu'on s'intéresse au pays, aideront peut-être à tracer votre parcours : Stip et ses nombreuses pentes, Bitola et ses maisons ottomanes, Orhid et son lac aux eaux claires... Sur l'autre rive, c'est l'Albanie, ses routes détrempées, ses usines dégingandées, ses habitants toujours prêts à montrer à l'étranger que ce petit pays ne se résume pas à mafia et à la vendetta. En raison du grand nombre d'Albanais partis tenter leur chance à l'ouest, beaucoup parlent italien ou anglais. Avant de partir, n'oubliez pas de réviser votre alphabet cyrillique pour déchiffrer les panneaux. Dans le cas contraire, reste le langage du corps. Attention : dans plusieurs pays, chercher la tête signifie « non ». On fait des histoires à raconter.

MATHIEU HÉBERT

# Couvrez les Balkans



## Le peka, un incontournable des tables d'ex-Yougoslavie

Entre les cevapci (rouleaux de viandes) qu'on déguste avec une sauce Ajvar (à base de poivrons), le burek (à la viande, au fromage, aux épinards...), le janjetina (agneau à la broche) et le sarma (feuilles de chou farcies)... il y a le peka.

Ce plat, dont le nom désigne à la fois l'ustensile (une sorte de cloche en métal qui recouvre le plat) et le mode de cuisson en plein air qui fait la convivialité des longues soirées d'été - et de toutes les autres saisons d'ailleurs car ici on n'attend pas que le soleil pointe son nez pour faire griller les cevapci, l'agneau ou le porc -, est sans doute l'un des plats les plus simples à réaliser et les plus savoureux. Dans les villages accrochés aux montagnes qui bordent le littoral adriatique, vous trouverez d'ailleurs des restaurants qui ne proposent que ce plat. Ici, réservation obligatoire car il faut compter une à deux heures de préparation.

Le secret de ce délice ? Après avoir allumé un feu de bois (dans lequel on met quelques branches de pin) et attendu qu'il ne reste que des braises et de la cendre, on badigeonne un plat de métal d'un mélange d'herbes (thym, romarin...) et d'huile d'olive. On recouvre le



Le peka donne un résultat sans pareil. PH. S.R.-H.

plat avec le peka et on couvre la cloche de cendre. Après une heure environ, on retire la cendre et la cloche et on pose dans le plat familial les viandes (souvent de l'agneau et du veau), les pommes de terre coupées en quartiers, et on recouvre le tout de poivrons jaunes, divinement doux là-bas. On pose à nouveau la cloche sur le plat et on couvre de cendre brûlante. Là, on ne touche plus, on laisse les parfums et les saveurs s'entremêler durant une heure. Ensuite, on déguste. Un plat tendre, goûteux à souhait. Juteux... Qui ne ressemble à rien d'autre. ● SANDRINE RIMACHENNIEN

### ILS ONT DIT



KLAVDIJ SLUBAN, photographe français d'origine slovène

« Photographier les Balkans, pour moi, c'est toujours un voyage intérieur. Ce sont des pays qui donnent si on se donne soi-même, et où on trouve une philosophie de sagesse de la vie, car les gens savent que tout peut s'arrêter à chaque instant. »



ANNE MADELAIN, spécialiste des cultures du sud-est européen, professeur à Sciences po Lille

« On vit une époque paradoxale dans laquelle on a l'impression que les frontières ont disparu. Mais les guerres en ex-Yougoslavie ont créé une véritable frontière psychologique, une image très négative de cette région. »



NICOLETA ESINENCU, auteur de théâtre moldave

« La Moldavie est le pays le plus pauvre d'Europe. La vie est dure, la situation politique compliquée, c'est tout de même une espèce de dictature, et par conséquent, les gens ont peur de tout. »



MILOS LAZIN, metteur en scène et journaliste, né en Volvodina, en Serbie

« Les auteurs de théâtre qui étaient au lycée pendant la guerre en ex-Yougoslavie ont profité d'une occasion unique, d'un moment zéro de la société. Ils sont arrivés dans un néant où il a fallu tout inventer. »

## L'art dans les Balkans : c'est « un art vital »

Art, social : ces termes reviennent souvent pour définir l'art balkanique. Aujourd'hui, pour les « Frontières invisibles », metteurs en scène, photographes ou cinéastes des Balkans seront présents. Ils nous parlent de leur art.

« Les thèmes sociaux, historiques et politiques sont très présents dans la création artistique balkanique. C'est un art très proche du réel. Il y a eu tellement de problèmes que les artistes ont besoin de parler du social. » Anne Madelain, aujourd'hui enseignante à Lille, connaît bien le sujet pour avoir dirigé le centre culturel français de Podgorica entre 1997 et 1999 et celui de Belgrade en 2000 et 2001. Celle qui est également initiatrice des « Frontières invisibles » évoque aussi « les conditions de production parfois difficiles ». Nicoleta Esinencu est auteure de théâtre, les conditions de production



« Balkans Transit » : une série de photos de Klavdij Sluban, qui sera présentée cet après-midi à la gare Saint-Sauveur à Lille.

dans son pays, en Moldavie, la jeune femme, auteure de la pièce « Fuck You Europa ! », qui sera jouée à Lille ce soir et demain à Lille, connaît. « Il n'y a pas du tout d'effervescence artistique en Moldavie. Les gens essaient, mais les artistes qui réussissent partent travailler à

l'étranger. » Dans des conditions économiques où les structures culturelles sont effondrées, comme en Moldavie, il est effectivement difficile de trouver les moyens de créer. Pourtant, les Balkans inspirent. Le photographe Klavdij Sluban, Français d'origine slovène, l'atteste : « Je me sens issu de cette

région du monde. Je vis au rythme des affaires chaotiques que traversent les Balkans. C'est un espace où il y a une tension permanente, et cette tension est intéressante pour moi. » Ces pays sont « des miroirs de nous-mêmes », dit-il, où l'art devient « un art vital, tout le monde est philosophe ». Une philosophie de la vie, urgente, de celui qui sait « que tout peut s'arrêter », à tout instant.

Milos Lazin est né en Serbie, et s'il vit aujourd'hui en France, il a travaillé comme metteur en scène dans toute l'ex-Yougoslavie. « On a une explosion d'auteurs de théâtre dans les pays d'ex-Yougoslavie. Des auteurs qui ont le courage de poser des questions telles que "où vivons-nous, quel monde nous créature et qui sommes-nous ?" » Questionnement culturel, social, nécessaire pour mieux se connaître et dépasser une situation. « Un conflit douloureux ». ● B.B.

30

EUROPE

## « LES FRONTIÈRES INVISIBLES » Une rencontre pour faire tomber nos préjugés

Anne Madelain, professeur à Sciences Po Lille, spécialiste de l'Europe du Sud-Est, est à l'origine de la rencontre « Les Frontières invisibles ». Pour elle, ces frontières qui nous séparent des Balkans doivent tomber.

PROPOS RECUEILLIS PAR BÉRANGÈRE BARRET - berangere.barret@orange.fr

Vous êtes à l'origine de la rencontre « Les frontières invisibles ». Pourquoi cette manifestation ? » On s'est rencontrés avec Lille3000 parce que j'étais rédactrice en chef d'une revue qui s'appelle *Au sud de l'est*, dont la thématique est la culture dans l'Europe du Sud-Est, qui va de la Moldavie à la Slovaquie, Lille3000 m'a proposé le titre « Les frontières invisibles » dans lequel j'ai mis le contenu : une exploration d'une frontière symbolique, largement fantasmée, imaginée, qui nous sépare du Sud-Est. En effet, la guerre en ex-Yougoslavie a créé une frontière psychologique énorme, liée à l'image négative que nous avons ici de toute cette région. Or, il est intéressant de comprendre que ce qui s'est passé en ex-Yougoslavie, ce n'est pas du tout une guerre archaïque, c'est une guerre occidentale, moderne. Bien sûr là-bas il y a eu un conflit sanglant, mais les problèmes sont les mêmes qu'en France. C'est l'intensité des problèmes qui a créé la guerre.

Pourquoi est-ce important de parler des Balkans ? » La question de l'intégration à l'Union européenne est posée. Il y a un processus en cours. Par ailleurs, un slogan est apparu dans les années 90 : « L'Europe est morte à Sarajevo », qui signifiait l'impuissance européenne à résoudre le conflit. Il a fallu attendre les américains pour le régler. La question des Balkans



En Albanie, sur le port de Durres, un marin prend sa pause avant de repartir sur l'Adriatique. Photo M.M.

nous concerne donc complètement. Et si on tient à ce que l'intégration se passe le mieux possible, il faut qu'on les connaisse et qu'on fasse tomber un certain nombre de préjugés.

Que sont ces préjugés ? » Les Balkans barbares, non européens, violents.

Ressemble-t-elle à une tension dans ces pays ? » Non, plus maintenant. J'y ai vécu à des moments plus difficiles, comme juste avant la guerre au Kosovo, en 1990-99, et là la tension était palpable. Aujourd'hui il peut encore y avoir un peu de tension au Kosovo, dans certaines villes comme Mitrovica, mais les conflits sont terminés.

Tous les problèmes sont-ils résolus ? » Non pas du tout ! Il y a de nombreuses difficultés, notamment en matière économique. Il y a aussi des problèmes, comme en Bosnie, liés aux difficultés d'organiser un pays après la guerre...

L'image négative liée aux Balkans est-elle en train d'évoluer, notamment grâce au tourisme ? » Oui. Je crois beaucoup à l'échange et ça va encore plus évoluer avec les échanges d'étudiants, quand ces pays vont entrer de façon plus massive dans les programmes universitaires européens. C'est déjà le cas de la Roumanie et de la Bulgarie et ça a complètement changé leur image. ●

LE MIDI-MIDI



### De Budapest à Bucarest, via Lille...

Entre Roumanie et Hongrie, ce Midi-Midi Budapest et Bucarest nous plonge dans un univers typique, festif et... bouillonnant de deux pays bien particuliers des Balkans. Voici un aperçu - non exhaustif - du programme des festivités, qui se déroulent parallèlement à la rencontre, cet après-midi à la Gare Saint-Sauveur, des « Frontières invisibles ».

#### ► AUJOURD'HUI

Budapest est la capitale des bains et des eaux thermales (photo). Alors Lille offrira pour ce Midi-Midi quelques occasions de se prélasser, se faire masser, etc...

Première étape Grand-Place, avec de 14 h à 18 h 30, une animation « Bien-être » proposée par Art Point M : masseurs shiatsu vous attendent pour un massage flash et efficace, qui vous donnera des forces pour vous rendre au spa spécialement érigé pour l'occasion Gare Saint-Sauveur. De 14 h 30 à 01 h, vous pourrez y recevoir des soins visage, massages, vous détendre avec les pieds plongés dans un bain bouillonnant.

Fives vous souhaitera la bienvenue en Roumanie, avec, de 14 h à 18 h, place Degeyter, une exposition de l'artisanat roumain, ainsi que des démonstrations de musique et danse. Suivi d'un bal roumain, à 19 h 30, à la salle des fêtes de Fives. Enfin, à 21 h à Seclin, le groupe Taraf Dékalé donnera un concert gratuit.

Côté théâtre, la pièce de Nicoleta Esinencu, également intervenante dans « Les frontières invisibles », dont le titre quelque peu inhabituel - « Fuck You, Eu.ro.pa ! » - Interpelle, sera jouée ce soir à 21 h et demain à 16 h au théâtre de la Verrière, à Lille.

#### ► DEMAIN

À la gare Saint-Sauveur, dernière braderie Lille3000, de 10 h à 17 h. Et de nouveau les Bains de Budapest, avec détente et massages, de 14 h 30 à 18 h 30.

Le quartier de Moulins consacre ses festivités à la Hongrie, avec l'installation, rue d'Arras, d'une tente Magyar, une lecture de contes et des ateliers cuisine, le tout entre 11 h et 18 h. Un concert gratuit de la Palinka sera ensuite donné au parc Jean-Baptiste Lebas, entre 19 h et 23 h.

Lambersart se met aussi à l'heure balkanique, avec, à 14 h 30, un atelier de création de roulettes miniatures, et un conte musical en rouche à 15 h 30.

À Forest-sur-Marque, ce sera, de 15 h à 18 h dans le centre-ville, un cortège-défilé avec pour thème principal les capitales d'Europe de l'Est.

Du 11 juillet au 23 août  
**EUROPE : les routes du retour**



14 | MÉTROPOLE LILLOISE | EUROPE XXL



**Dan Perjovschi, trois traits, deux mots**

Trois traits, deux mots : les dessins de Dan Perjovschi sont d'une efficacité redoutable. Né (en 1961) dans la Roumanie des Ceausescu, il a, comme il l'explique souvent, « été formé au silence, au mensonge, à l'euphémisme, à l'obéissance ». Tableau sinistre d'une société communiste et totalitaire qui consigne – comme toutes les sociétés totalitaires – que l'art n'est dévolu qu'à quelques idéaux supérieurs – la révolution, le chef – mais certainement pas aux humeurs et aux soubresauts de l'actualité comme elle va. A Bucarest où il travaille, Dan

Perjovschi est désormais un acteur parmi d'autres de la démocratie en construction. Invité au Tri Postal pour l'exposition *Les frontières invisibles de Lille3000*, il croque à sa façon, depuis le 14 mars, l'actualité pour *lavoixdunord.fr*. Les deux pages spéciales qui accompagnent exceptionnellement le rendez-vous hebdomadaire de l'Europe XXL sont publiées pour le Midi-Midi Bucarest/Budapest. Dan Perjovschi sera au Tri Postal ce dimanche 28 juin de 17 h à 19 h (gratuit).  
J.-M. D.

**Budapest, Bucarest ?**



La géographie, dit-on, n'est pas le fort des Français. Pour beaucoup – pas seulement les Français d'ailleurs –, localiser avec précision les frontières de cette Europe centrale relève de la mission impossible. La Hongrie, c'est où exactement ? Bucarest, capitale de la Hongrie ? la Bulgarie ? la Roumanie ? (barrier les mentions inutile...) Bien sûr, les changements incessants dans le tracé des frontières et la constitution d'États nouveaux sur les cendres des grands empires au lendemain de la Première Guerre mondiale (empire d'Autriche-Hongrie notamment) n'ont pas toujours été simples à comprendre. Il y avait de quoi perdre son espoir. La chute du Mur de Berlin en 1989, formidable moment dans l'histoire contemporaine, enfin un

heureux événement dans le sinistre XX siècle, n'a pas vraiment contribué à éclaircir la situation géopolitique de l'Europe balkanique notamment (et on ne parle pas de l'éclatement de l'ex-empire soviétique). Il y a quelques années, une célèbre chanteuse américaine, terminant un show devant des dizaines de milliers de fans, s'est amusé joyeusement pris les pieds dans le tapis en lançant un magnifique « Merci Budapest ! » alors qu'elle était à Bucarest... On imagine l'ambiance (et pourquoi pas d'ailleurs, tant qu'on y est, Budapest et Bucarest comme auraient pu dire les Dupontid). Effet Lille3000, on conviendra qu'on ne devrait plus avoir d'excuses : depuis plus de trois mois que l'Europe XXL s'est invitée chez nous, on a appris (si, si) à se repérer

dans cette Europe de l'Est. Et ce Midi-Midi devrait nous permettre de remettre les pendules à l'heure (ou à leur place). Trois jours, vendredi, samedi et dimanche pour : découvrir comment Art Point M a été inspiré par les Bains de Budapest (une institution là-bas) ; passer d'une Europe festive à l'autre (la Hongrie à Moulins, la Roumanie à Fives, mais aussi à Lys-lez-Lannoy, Lambersart, Ronchin, Seclin, Lomme) ; assister à quelques-unes des nuits de l'Aéronet ou de la Gare Saint-Sauveur... Un peu plus de trois jours pour aller découvrir au Théâtre du Nord ce spectacle du Macédonien Dejan Dakovski *Quel est l'enfoiré qui a commencé le premier ?* (jusqu'au 2 juillet) ou pour aller au cinéma (jusqu'au 3 juillet).

**Midi-Midi Budapest et Bucarest du 25 au 28 juin**

Trois jours pour découvrir ces villes-carrefour en pleine mutation, cosmopolites et surprenantes. **Nuit Sziget à l'Aéronet, melting-pot d'images et musiques tziganes, expositions, cinéma, goulasch, contes, bains de minuit avec Art. M...**

**VENDREDI 26**

- 17 h : rencontre avec Viviane Harry et André Lorant *Fort de Nord*, Lille, gratuit
- 17 h 30 : conférence *Hypnos* par Lorand Hegyi *Fac*, Lille, gratuit
- de 19 h à 23 h : théâtre *Tap Sinhaiz* « 1 minute » maison Folie de Moulins, Lille, gratuit (également samedi et dimanche)
- 19 h 30 : conférence *La Roumanie, terre des mythes fondateurs de l'Europe* Librairie Voyageurs du Monde, Lille, gratuit
- 20 h : théâtre, *La Femme cible et ses 10 amants* (aussi le samedi à 20 h) *Le Grand Bleu*, Lille, 10,5 €
- 20 h : théâtre, *Quel est l'enfoiré qui a commencé le premier ?* (aussi samedi à 20 h et dimanche à 16 h) Théâtre du Nord, Lille, de 7 à 23 €

**SAMEDI 27**

- de 14 h à 18 h 30 : Bains de Budapest #1, par Art Point M Grand Place, Lille, gratuit
- de 14 h 30 à 1 h : Bains de Budapest #2, par Art Point M Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, gratuit (le meilleur pas votre meilleur de bien et votre serviette !)



La femme cible et ses 10 amants, 01



Mady-Baby, éd. 11

de 15 h à 19 h : rencontre-débat *Les Frontières invisibles*, dessinées en paroles et images

- Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, gratuit
- 15 h et 17 h : danse, Karine Saporta, *Albane ou les yeux mauves* Parc Jean-Baptiste Lebas, Lille, gratuit
- 18 h 30 : *À l'Est du nouveau...* Budapest - Bucarest Médiathèque de Vieux Lille, gratuit
- 19 h : théâtre, *Mady-Baby*, éd. Théâtre Massenet, Lille, 35/10 €
- de 19 h à 23 h : bal à Fives (Rona Hartner, Dj Gaetano Fabri) Salle des Fêtes de Fives, Lille, gratuit
- 19 h 15 : apéro-jazz (Vlăicu Golcea, Alveas) Tri Postal, Lille, gratuit
- 20 h : concert, *Nuit Sziget l'Aéronet*, Lille, 17/12 €
- 21 h : théâtre, *FUCK YOU, EU, RO, PA* (dimanche à 16 h) Théâtre de la Vierge, Lille, 14/10/7 €
- de 23 h à 1 h : Bains de minuit, par Art Point M et DJ Palota Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, gratuit



FUCK YOU, EU, RO, PA 11

**DIMANCHE 28**

- de 10 h à 17 h : Braderie, la dernière ! Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, gratuit
- 13 h : concert, Rona Hartner Parc Jean-Baptiste Lebas, Lille, gratuit
- de 14 h 30 à 18 h 30 : Bains de Budapest #3, par Art Point M Gare Saint Sauveur, Lille, gratuit (le meilleur pas votre meilleur de bien et votre serviette !)
- 16 h : concert, *Chez Nono* Museo Site archéologique de Beve, gratuit



Nuit Sziget 12

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SPÉCIAL **lille3000**

■ À LA GARE SAINT-SAUVEUR

# « La Tziganie » : 28<sup>e</sup> nation européenne

« La Tsiganie, 28<sup>e</sup> nation européenne ». C'est le thème du colloque d'aujourd'hui, à la Gare Saint-Sauveur. Un débat au cœur de Lille, où la question de l'accueil des Roms se pose avec une acuité toute particulière depuis 2007. Retour sur la « question Rom » dans la métropole.

MATHIEU MILLECAMPS - @3000@lille3000.fr

**D**es Roms, on ne voit souvent qu'un visage, une main tendue. Dans la métropole lilloise, ce sont aussi les bidonvilles qui, au temps installés au cœur de la ville et, depuis quelques mois, éparpillés sur ses périphéries, renvoient une image que l'on souhaiterait ne pas voir. Ne plus voir. La « question Rom » s'est posée avec force dans la métropole lilloise à partir de 2007. L'année de l'entrée dans l'Union européenne de la Roumanie et de la Bulgarie. Fuyant des conditions de vie déplorables et, souvent, des situations d'exclusion quasi institutionnelles, les premières familles ont commencé à arriver à la fin de l'hiver 2007. Il a s'installer, comme elles le pouvaient, dans des squats ou ruelles.

**Hiver 2007-2008**  
Des conditions de vie qui ont conduit à un drame, juste avant Noël 2007. Une jeune femme a trouvé la mort dans l'incendie d'un entrepôt, à Lille, qui servait de refuge à sa famille. L'hiver 2007 a aussi été celui d'un bras de fer entre les associations et l'État. D'un côté, la volonté de répondre à un problème humanitaire avec les moyens adéquats. De l'autre, une politique visant à éviter de créer un « appel d'air ».

Deux ans après, les choses ont évolué. L'Aléji et l'Aréas, associations de soutien social, ont mené un patient travail de recensement et d'identification des populations Roms. En novembre 2008, l'Aléji a remis ses conclusions et, dans la foulée, Martine Aubry, maire de Lille, a lancé un appel aux maires de la métropole pour qu'ils prennent leur part. La proposition de l'Aléji de créer des « villages d'insertion » a été mise en place dans la communauté urbaine.

Ces villages, destinés à être la première marche vers l'insertion, sont au nombre de trois dans la métropole. Outre celui de Lille-Fives, Balkin et Paches-Thamesnil ont chacun le leur. Celui de Roubaix est actuellement en cours de création.



Un accordéon et une main tendue au feu rouge. C'est l'image d'Épinal collée sur les Roms. La réalité est plus complexe. Ph. Jacques Rodé/Act

Les financements attribués à ce dispositif permettent d'y intégrer une centaine de personnes. On est loin des 152 familles de Roms Roumains reconnues par l'Aléji en novembre 2008 et des 220 familles, toutes nationalités confondues, reconnues par l'Aréas. « Il fallait commencer », glisse Stéphanie Lecuyer, responsable du projet, qui insiste sur l'importance des petits succès. « pour favoriser l'intégration avec le voisinage ».

**Villages d'insertion**  
En plus de Stéphanie Lecuyer qui coordonne le projet, deux éducateurs sont mobilisés pour le suivi des familles. Des médiateurs sont également présents, sur le terrain, pour mener des

**Fuyant des conditions de vie déplorables, les premières familles ont commencé à arriver à la fin de l'hiver 2007**

actions plus socio-éducatives. Un projet qui, s'il n'en est encore qu'à sa phase initiale, semble indiquer la bonne voie. Resté les autres familles, non intégrées au dispositif. Elles peuvent prendre aux aides au « retour volontaire » : 300 € pour reprendre le chemin de la Roumanie. Solution choisie par 110 personnes après le démantèlement du bidonville de la Porte de Valenciennes. Les familles qui veulent rester, ont, en théorie, trois mois à compter de leur arrivée sur le territoire pour trouver une source de revenus. Une obligation difficile à remplir dans les faits, les ressortissants roumains, bien que citoyens européens, répondent à des contraintes particulières en France. Si un employeur veut leur donner du travail, il doit d'abord s'acquitter d'une taxe de près de 900 €, après être passé par un parcours du combattant administratif, de la direction du travail à la DDASS en passant par la préfecture. Selon les associations de terrain, aucun ne l'a encore fait. ●

**ÉCLAIRAGE**

**Le programme du jour à Saint-Sauveur**

- > 15 h - Ouverture : Gérard Minet, président de la Fédération Ligue des Droits de l'Homme du Nord ; Zefko, réfugié Roms de Bosnie ; Catherine Cullen, Adjointe au Maire de Lille, à la culture (sous réserve)
- > 15 h 10 - 16 h 30 : table ronde « Amore roma : les Roms entre images et réalités » : Jean-Pierre Duchoux, philosophe politique ; Ujaba Rodman, Présidente de l'association Romani Yag ; Malik Salkicour, Vice président de la LDH ; Hélène Fautou, Présidente de la sous-commission des droits de l'Homme au Parlement européen.
- > 16 h 30 : Extraits du film « Roms, la mémoire oubliée ».
- > 17 h - 18h30 : table ronde « Des Roms ? Oui, mais chez les voisins ? » avec : Bruno Maitel (ATD Quart Monde) ; Marie-Cristine Starin-Wiseman, Adjointe au maire de Lille (sous réserve) ; Joadette Volleart, collectif Roms de Boulogne-sur-Mer ; Malik Ti, conseiller communal à LMCU ; Roseline Tiset, membre du collectif Roms de la métropole lilloise. ●

« LA TZIGANIE » EN DÉBAT

# De Bucarest à Lille, sur le

**1 LE CONTEXTE**  
Les bidonvilles qui se sont créés à l'Épi de Soix, Porte de Valenciennes et autour de Lille ont attiré l'attention sur la précarité des Roms venus d'Europe de l'Est.

**2 LES ENJEUX**  
Il y a souvent amalgame entre les différentes communautés roms. Pourtant, les Roms de l'Est ne peuvent accéder aux aides d'accueil et sont soumis au statut d'étrangers, même pour les Roms roumains ou bulgares, pourtant citoyens européens.

**3 LA QUESTION**  
Quelle est la place des Roms dans une Union européenne qui se veut sans frontière ? Quelle est leur place ici, dans la métropole ? Comment lutter contre les préjugés et favoriser l'intégration ?

**Tandis que certaines familles profitent du dispositif des villages d'insertion, d'autres, nombreuses, continuent de vivre dans le dénuement. Mais qui sont ces Roms devenus soudain si « visibles » ?**

CÉCILE DEBARCE > @cconfecteur

Ils viennent d'Inde, sont installés dans la plupart des pays européens et forment même, selon certains, le 28<sup>e</sup> pays de l'Union européenne.

**« L'Histoire des Roms. »** Au IV<sup>e</sup> et V<sup>e</sup> s., les Roms quittent l'Inde du Nord et se dirigent vers l'Égypte, l'Iran, l'Afghanistan puis vers l'Europe. En 1421, on trouve la première trace écrite de la présence de Roms dans le Nord de la France, à Arras. En 1933, Hitler arrive au pouvoir en Allemagne. Entre 200 000 et 400 000 Roms transitent par des camps d'internement et sont soumis à

ment en Espagne, parfois dans le sud de la France. Enfin, les Tsiganes sont implantés en Europe centrale et de l'Est et une partie d'entre eux a repris les routes depuis quelques années. Ce sont eux qui l'on tend aujourd'hui à appeler les « Roms de l'Est ».

**« Combien sont-ils ? »** D'après les chiffres donnés dans Roms et Tsiganes de Jean-Pierre Liégeois, qui croisent données institutionnelles et données des ONG, les Roms sont entre 8 et 12 millions sur le territoire européen. En France, ils seraient entre 300 000 et 400 000, en considérant la famille Rom au grand

**« Nomades ou sédentaires ? »** « Au démarrage, c'est une population qui est migrante, qui s'installe sur l'ensemble de l'Europe mais aussi en Amérique et en Afrique du Nord car il y a eu des deportations », explique Gérard Minet. Les Roms étaient nomades en grande partie pour des raisons professionnelles puisqu'ils pratiquaient des activités (commerce ambulatoire, récupération, musique) qui nécessitent un déplacement régulier de la clientèle et donc une grande mobilité. Dans les années 1990, ils ont migré suite aux persécutions dont ils ont été victimes dans plusieurs pays d'Europe centrale et d'ex-Yougoslavie. « Ce ne sont pas forcément des Gens du voyage, ils bougent au fur et à mesure des guerres », précise Malik Ifri, conseiller délégué à l'Aire d'accueil des Gens du voyage à la Communauté urbaine (LMCU). ●

**Ils viennent d'Inde, sont installés dans la plupart des pays européens et forment même, selon certains, le 28<sup>e</sup> pays de l'Union européenne.**

des travaux forcés, victimes d'expériences et pour certains, assassinés. Des années 1950 au début des années 1990, en Europe centrale, les régimes communistes tentent d'assimiler les Roms par le travail et un logement sédentaire. À la chute des régimes communistes, ils sont victimes de pogroms, d'agressions et de menaces. Au début des années 1990, les Roms d'ex-Yougoslavie migrent vers l'Europe de l'Ouest. Ils sont rejoints depuis quelques années par des Roms arrivés de Roumanie, de Slovaquie, Hongrie et Bulgarie.

**« Qui est qui ? »** Un Rom c'est un Homme. Le terme fait (presque) l'unanimité et est repris dans le langage courant pour désigner l'ensemble des descendants du peuple indo-européen. Il a été choisi par les Roms eux-mêmes en 1971 à l'ONU. Attention, toutefois, il a désormais tendance à désigner les communautés venant d'Europe centrale. Qu'en est-il alors des Tsiganes, Manouches ou Gitanos, largement employés dans le langage courant ? Les Manouches ou Sinti sont les Roms traditionnellement installés en France, en Allemagne ou en Italie. Les Gitanos sont implantés en majorité dans la péninsule ibérique et plus particulière-

ment en Espagne, parfois dans le sud de la France. Enfin, les Tsiganes sont implantés en Europe centrale et de l'Est et une partie d'entre eux a repris les routes depuis quelques années. Ce sont eux qui l'on tend aujourd'hui à appeler les « Roms de l'Est ».

**« D'où viennent les Roms ? »** À l'origine, les Roms viennent du nord ouest de l'Inde et le quittent pour des raisons indéterminées. Les hypothèses sont nombreuses : certains spécialistes, comme John Sampson, font état d'une parenté avec les Dom, caste des intouchables dans cette région de l'Inde. Elisabeth Claret, chargée de mission au CNED pour la formation des gens du voyage et des publics itinérants, a évoqué récemment l'hypothèse d'une migration d'esclaves. Dès lors, les chemins qu'ils auraient empruntés lors de leurs migrations diffèrent selon les hypothèses initiales mais l'un des itinéraires de migration souvent retenu est celui présenté par Gérard Minet, président de la section de la Ligue des Droits de l'Homme du Nord : « Après avoir fui l'Inde, ils passent ensuite par l'Irak, l'Afghanistan et se retrouvent en Europe centrale. Une partie d'entre eux s'y installe, une autre remonte vers l'Europe occidentale. »

## Roms en France : une réalité disparate

**Des Gens du Voyage aux Roms de l'Est, les confusions sont nombreuses et les raccourcis parfois rapides. Retour sur les principales communautés roms vivant en France et les différences profondes qui existent entre elles.**

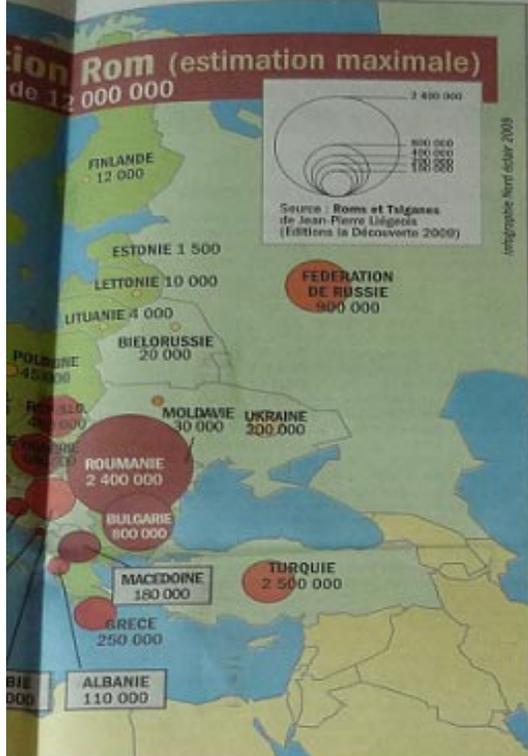
Il ne faut surtout pas croire que les 300 000 à 400 000 Roms présents en France forment une communauté homogène et partagent le même mode de vie. On distingue trois grands types de population rom. Les premiers, ceux qui vivaient en France avant la mort de la nazisme, sont les « Gens du voyage ». Ils possèdent un carnet de circulation, qu'ils doivent faire viser régulièrement et le plus souvent ont la nationalité française. Leur cas est régi par la loi Besson II qui stipule que toutes les communes de plus de 5000 habitants doivent avoir un terrain d'accueil. Une vague de migration importante a eu lieu au début des années



Embarquée avec les Roms de Transylvanie à Moulins (Ph. B. RAJA)

nées 1990. De nombreux Roms sont arrivés en France, en provenance de Yougoslavie et d'Europe centrale. Leur cas est régi par les politiques d'État. En raison des persécutions dont ils ont été victimes dans leur pays d'origine, ils ont d'abord reçu le statut spécial de réfugiés territoriaux. Actuellement, ils sont soumis aux lois Sarkozy ou Hordaneux en matière d'immigration, au même titre que tous les étrangers en provenance de pays tiers (c'est-à-dire qui n'appartiennent pas à l'Union européenne). La vague de migration la plus récente concerne des Roms de Roumanie, d'où ils ont été chassés par la montée des agressions racistes. Depuis deux ans, ils sont rejoints par des Roms de Slovaquie, de Hongrie, de Bulgarie et de Roumanie, qui ont souvent tout perdu après les inondations du Danube. Ceux qui ont le statut de citoyen européen, originaires de Roumanie et de Bulgarie, sont soumis à une mesure transitoire qui leur accorde le même statut que les étrangers d'un pays tiers, avec éventuellement une obligation de quitter le territoire français. Cette mesure devrait prendre fin en 2012, date à laquelle les citoyens roumains et bulgares, donc les Roms originaires de ces pays, jouiront de la citoyenneté européenne pleine et entière. ● C.D.

# Les chemins des Roms



## Tziganie, « idée séduisante »

Jean-Pierre Liégeois est professeur à Paris-VIII où il a fondé en 1979 et dirigé jusqu'en 2003 le Centre de recherches tziganes. Il a écrit de nombreux ouvrages sur la question des Roms en Europe, dont « Roms et Tsiganes » en avril.

**Que répondez-vous à la question « Tziganie, 28<sup>e</sup> nation européenne ? »** >>> C'est une idée séduisante. La revendication d'une idée de « nation européenne » n'est pas nouvelle. Elle existait dans les priorités des organisations politiques roms qui ont émergé dans les années 1960. Un utopiste de l'époque avait d'ailleurs imaginé un passeport tzigane, qui portait en couverture la mention « Droits de l'Homme » à la place du nom de l'Etat. Mais il faut en même temps apporter une précision. L'idée d'une nation rom n'en ferait pas la « 28<sup>e</sup> nation européenne », car les nations sont plus nombreuses en Europe. Il faut se détacher de l'idée, typiquement française, qui rend synonyme « citoyenneté » et « nationalité ».

**L'échéance de 2012, avec l'accession à une citoyenneté européenne pleine et entière pour les Roumains et Bulgares, va-t-elle donner plus d'ampleur à la question rom ?** >>> L'échéance de 2012 sera sans doute française.



Jean-Pierre Liégeois est l'un des spécialistes des Roms en Europe.

**car peu à peu tous les Etats de l'Union européenne, pourtant soumis à cette même échéance, décident de rendre immédiate la libre circulation sans discrimination entre les Etats. Dix seulement maintiennent des restrictions à ce jour.**

**Que faire pour une meilleure intégration des Roms ?** >>> La première thématique est la scolarisation et la formation. L'éducation est un vecteur privilégié : l'éducation, pour la communauté rom, positive l'image stéréotypée que les autres se font d'elle. Elle permet de se dégager du champ de l'assistance pour se situer dans celui du développement. ● PROPOS RECUEILLIS PAR CÉCILE DEBARGE

### ILS ONT DIT



GERARD MINKET, président de la LDH

« Nous avons souhaité coupler deux angles : la politique et la culture. On ne peut pas aimer la musique tzigane tout en ignorant les problèmes des populations à qui on la doit. »



LUIZA RADMAN, de Romani Yag

« Notre organisation, créée à Montréal et qui s'installe en Europe, entend promouvoir et diffuser les images de la diversité culturelle des Roms. Cela peut aider à faire tomber les préjugés. »



JEAN-PIERRE BACHELIN, Philosophe

## Des bidonvilles de l'exclusion au village d'insertion

Viorica et Ilie Pruteanu vivent avec leurs deux enfants dans l'un des bungalows du « village d'insertion » de Lille-Fives. Depuis deux ans en France, ils ont connu les caravanes, le dénuement. Aujourd'hui, ils ont repris espoir.

**E**n Roumanie, il travaillait comme ouvrier agricole. Il gagnait 4 € par jour, pour douze heures de travail. Ilie Pruteanu, 26 ans, a donc décidé, avec sa compagne Viorica, 25 ans, de prendre le chemin de l'exil, avec l'argent qu'il avait économisé, au départ, pour construire sa maison. C'était en 2007. « Nous connaissions des familles qui étaient arrivées à Lille, nous avons suivi », raconte Viorica dans un très beau français appris dans les cours d'alphabétisation du centre social Mosaïque, à Fives. Cette jeune femme, bientôt maman d'un troisième enfant, vivait il y a encore cinq mois dans les bidonvilles de la métropole. « La



Dans le petit salon du bungalow, à Lille-Fives, des familles autrefois ballottées d'un terrain insalubre à un autre reprennent espoir. Ph. L. Mouton

caravane, pas de douches, pas de toilette... ». Du coup « le petit n'allait pas à l'école, il ne pouvait pas changer de vêtements... ». Depuis le 16 février, depuis qu'ils ont emménagé dans un bungalow du village d'insertion de Fives, le couple et les enfants sont entrés dans une autre vie.

Ils accueillent leurs visiteurs autour d'une tasse de café dans un salon lumineux pendant que la petite joue dans sa chambre. Electricité, eau chaude... Lorsque Stéphanie Lecuyer, de l'Aefei, est venue leur dire qu'ils faisaient partie des familles à bénéficier du programme, dire qu'ils étaient heureux est un

euphémisme. « C'était comme un don de Dieu », lâche Ilie. Depuis cinq mois, la famille Pruteanu est comme en convalescence de ces hivers passés dans le dénuement. Viorica, qui affiche un sourire quasi serin, raconte des journées passées entre les courses, les enfants et l'entretien du petit bungalow. Ilie, lui, entre deux cours de français, tente de trouver du travail. Avec sa formation de charpentier et alors que le secteur du BTP crie famine en terme de main d'œuvre, il butte cependant sur un obstacle majeur : la taxe de près de 900 € imposée aux employeurs éventuels. « Un patron était prêt à me prendre, à Roubaix, mais quand il a su que j'étais Roumain, il a refusé... », enrage Ilie. Quand on lui demande à quoi il rêve, il répond : « trouver un travail, avoir une vraie maison... devenir des Français normaux ! ». Une insertion dont la famille semble avoir pris le chemin, parce qu'on leur en a laissé la possibilité. ●

« Un parti tchèque propose « la solution finale » pour les Roms. C'est un appel au meurtre. Si le pays de Vaclav Havel ne lutte pas contre ce poison violent et nous tous avec lui, nous courons au devant d'un drame. »



MALIK IFRIL, élu (Verts) LMCU

« Les Roms, derniers arrivés des vagues de migrations d'Europe de l'Est, sont moins de 10 000 en France. Ce chiffre n'a pas évolué depuis 2007, alors qu'il y a de reconduites à la frontière en permanence. »

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education: 1985-1989 University of Bucharest, Faculty of Modern Languages, a Bachelor's degree in French and English languages and literatures.  
1982-1985 highschool studies at "Elena Cuza" Highschool, Craiova, Dolj.

Training courses: 2007 (2 weeks) summer course in cultural policies, CEU Budapest, Hungary;  
2005 (3 months) PhD scholarship, Lille III Charles de Gaulle University, France;  
1998 (3 months) Multimedia in teaching - Language Center, University of Brighton, Great Britain;  
1995 (3 months) Training Course for Romanian Teachers of ESP - Institute for English Language Education, Lancaster, Great Britain  
1995 (1 week) Teaching Negotiations- British Council, Bucharest  
1994 (1 week) Medical English Course – Cluj, Romania  
1990 (3 weeks) Serbo-Croat summer course – Faculty of philosophy, Zagreb, Croatia

Work experience: 2005 – 2009 – junior lecturer, University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of British and American Studies; (courses in sociolinguistics, translation, business English, English morphology, practical courses of listening, conversation, phonetics)  
2000 - 2005 - lecturer, University of Craiova, Faculty of Letters, Department of British and American Studies; (courses in sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, translation, English morphology, practical courses of listening, conversation, phonetics)  
1991- 2000 - junior lecturer, University of Craiova, Faculty of Philology, Department of British and American Studies (English for Economics, Law, Mechanical Engineering; courses in English morphology, text interpretation, translation);  
1989-1991- teacher of French and English at Highschool no. 2, Calafat, Dolj;

Since 2006: sworn translator of English and French authorised by the Romanian Ministry of Justice.  
- on and off: interpreter and translator for WORLD VISION Romania - Dolj county.  
- courses of English: DAEWOO Automobile, Craiova; AWK Electroputere, the Mining Institute, Craiova, „David Ogilvy” Faculty of Communication and Public Relations, Craiova.

University projects: 1996-1999 ENTRANCE – Changing the entrance examination in Romanian universities English departments.  
1996-1999 TEMPUS – Multimedia in teaching foreign languages at university level.  
1993-1995 PROSPER – Teaching ESP

Membership: ESU; ESSE, RAAS; the *Research centre for the study of cultural and linguistic identities*, Faculty of Letters, University of Craiova; “Dimanche” cultural association - Craiova, co-founder of “Marin Sorescu’s Friends” cultural association, Craiova, “Printemps Roumain” cultural association, Lille, France.

Publications: *Romanian – English Dictionary*, (40,000 words), (co-author), 2000, Ed. Teora, Bucharest;  
*Dictionary of Verbal Constructions*, (co-author), 2002, Ed. Universitaria, Craiova  
*Encyclopedia Britannica Concise*, Romanian version (co-translator), Ed. Litera, Bucharest (to be published), 2009.  
24 articles in the fields of linguistics and culture;  
translations of articles in the field of anthropology and literature.

2006 – Craiova - organiser of the photo exhibition “Un autre Nord” de l’association *Printemps Roumain*, Lille;

- Lille - co-organiser of the Romanian cartoon exhibition “Ridendo castigat mores”  
- speaker at the round table “Romania’s European Adventure”

2007 - Craiova - member of the jury for the Craiova’ Art festival organised by *Dimanche* Cultural Association

- Craiova - organiser of the photo exhibition “Du Mont Noir à la Mer Noire” of *Printemps Roumain* cultural Association – Lille;  
- co-organiser of an informative event on AIDS at the University of Craiova.

2008 – Craiova (February), Calafat (April) - organiser of the photo exhibition “In memoriam Marin Sorescu” of *Printemps Roumain* cultural Association, Lille;

- Craiova (February) - organizer of the “Marin Sorescu” translation competition, Faculty of Letters, University of Craiova  
- producer of the series of weekly meetings “Wednesday Literary Evenings”, started in February at Murphy’s Pub, Craiova  
- co-founder of “Marin Sorescu ‘s Friends” cultural association  
- Craiova - member of the jury for the Craiova’ Art festival organised by *Dimanche* Cultural Association

**Language ability:** English – fluent  
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