



*Traditional houses in
Plovdiv's Old Town*

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For text and pictures we used 99 pages. Additionally we used 10 supplement pages for the artistic programme and 5 supplement pages for the chapter on financing.

I. Basic principles

1) a) Why does the city which you represent wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture?

You would think Plovdiv has everything you can wish for in a city Plovdiv is one of those European cities popular with families who want to raise their children in a large but relaxed city. It is the second largest city in the country with 338,153 inhabitants, favourably located on a modern transport route between Zagreb and the Black Sea. It offers all the services and commodities of big city life along with a peaceful atmosphere. It is Southern Bulgaria's cultural and business centre, with five important museums, a large variety of theatres, cultural institutions, an opera and the only Centre for Contemporary Art of its kind in Bulgaria. Despite all this it lacks the hectic restlessness of other large cities in the country. Plovdiv has the largest number of cafés, restaurants, and clubs per capita in Bulgaria and is known as the city of *Ayliak* – a Turkish word, used to express a relaxed, laissez-faire attitude to life. The city is distinguished by an 8,000 year old history as one of the oldest, still-inhabited cities in the world. We seem to have it all: Thracian, Greek, Roman, Slavic, Byzantine, and Ottoman heritage, a multi-ethnic population and all the richness that cultural diversity holds, a lively arts and culture scene, a beautiful Old Town that looks like straight from a catalogue. Plovdiv Together.

So what's the problem?

Everything we are proud of in Plovdiv is problematic: history, diversity, culture, urban

space... We are proud of the past, but we approach it without relating it to the present. We are proud of the European culture that built Plovdiv over the millennia, but now culture seems dispensable to many citizens and Europe feels far away. We are proud to have a beautiful, unspoiled Old Town – but it is a sleeping beauty, not really filled with life. We have a huge European cultural heritage – Plovdiv is older than Athens and Rome – but like many other historic cities in Europe it lacks the connection with the contemporary. The ancient heritage is perceived as “merely historic”, an attraction for tourists. And yet we dwell on those long past days of glory and are totally surprised when we hear that many of our fellow Europeans have never even heard of Plovdiv. And even when we talk about people and togetherness it is problematic. We are proud of the microcosm of European cultural diversity gathered in our city: of ethnic minorities (Roma, Jews, Armenians, Turks), of new migrants (Ukrainians, Russians, Italians, British), of religious communities (Christian Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jewish) – including all the different social groups and generations. But looking closer, there is no dialogue. One of these groups that makes up around 20% of the population – the Roma minority – even lives in ghettos where the rest of the citizens avoid going at all – Plovdiv Together? This is supposed to be Europe? The diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, ‘together’ Europe that Plovdiv claims to be part of?

Plovdiv needs and wants to ‘re-join’ Europe – but on a much deeper level than the political. The city has to regain its

appeal to its citizens, fellow Bulgarians and Europeans. The people of Plovdiv need to rediscover their identity, sense of ownership, purpose and belonging, to boost their spirit of entrepreneurship and attitude towards the future – in order to be able to contribute to Europe – not only consume it. The ECoC title would be a good start. It would show the citizens that culture is still a huge driving force in Europe and in Plovdiv. This is why we are taking part in the European Capital of Culture competition. Here we are, ready to meet the challenge.

1) b) What, for it, would be the main challenge of this nomination?

The main challenges of the nomination would be:

- attracting a European audience
- long-term capacity building and audience development
- connecting the offers of the cultural institutions with the needs of their audience/visitors
- stimulating diversity and flexibility in the offers of tourism operators
- letting go of the hand-to-mouth mentality and focussing on long-term strategies for culture
- keeping the project clean and straight and avoiding too much political influence

1) c) What are the city's objectives for the year in question? The city's objectives for the year 2019 are:

Blast the ‘ghettos’... by creating long-term projects with excluded social groups using artistic means to involve and create cultural capacity, as well as using social innovation, educational and economic measures to create long-term resilience.

Plug into Europe ... by working on European issues that concern many – together with our European partners including our neighbours in the Balkans.

Stop the brain drain ... by giving space to the ideas of young and innovative people and offering opportunities for education and for building capacities.

Wipe off the dust ... by using artistic interventions to revitalise isolated landmarks and neighbourhoods of the city and reconnect the built heritage to contemporary life.

Open new horizons ... by fostering cultural entrepreneurship and creative industries.

Mobilise resources ... by initializing effective public-private partnerships for successful management of cultural resources and find ways to get Bulgarian businesses acquainted with cultural sponsoring.

Enjoy the city TOGETHER ... by moving events from the city centre into the residential areas in order to revitalise the suburbs and enhance the accessibility to culture for all groups, especially marginalised ones.

2) Explain the concept of the programme which would be launched if the city was nominated European Capital of Culture?

Our whole programme is dedicated to the simple, but very ambitious concept “Together”. The major idea which all our projects and activities are based on is to change our city – making a difference in the way people in the city connect with one another, in the strength and vibrancy of their communities, and their physical and emotional wellbeing are more essential for us than the increasingly tired arguments about economic benefits. Behind our candidacy

simply lies the idealistic aim to make the city a better place for living, and for us culture is the means to achieve this practical but also mental change. At the same time we are aware of one of the most important problems of the city – the lack of togetherness in the Plovdivian context of diversity.

If 'Plovdiv Together' is a vision, how can we find our special Plovdivian path of unity – among the majority and minorities (Roma, Turks, Armenians, Jews, Greeks), different generations (who have different speeds and lifestyles, different upbringings with or without communism), people with disabilities, disadvantaged people, but also unity with our fellow citizens in Bulgaria and in Europe.

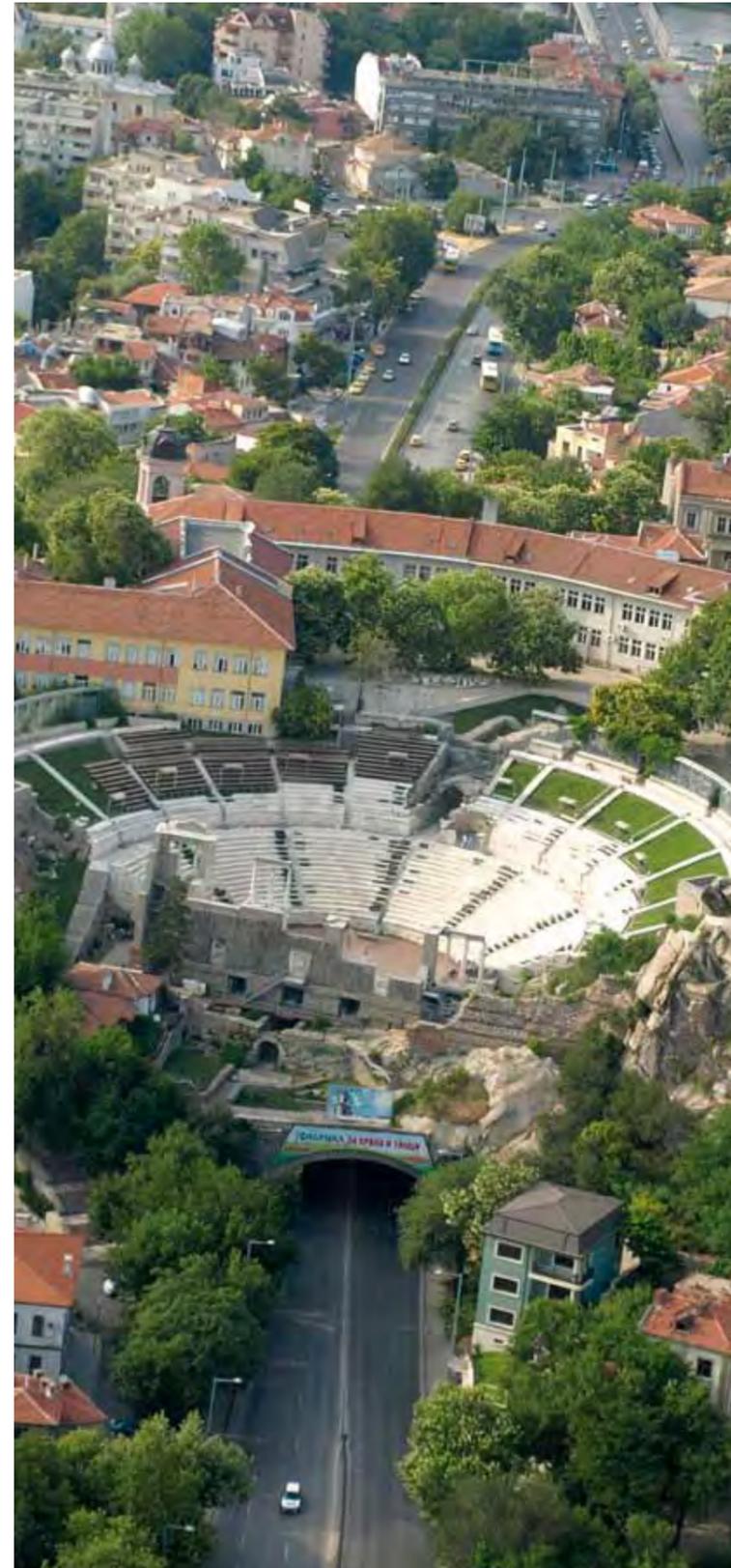
The other question of high importance for us is how do we re-conquer the urban space and make it a city for all citizens – especially considering Plovdiv's background as being one of the oldest still-inhabited cities in the world. In this sense it is our ambition to see how Plovdiv contributed to the model of the European city in the past, how it contributes in the present and particularly how it will in the future: How can a place like Plovdiv (as an example for other cities) find ways of dealing with ancient, modern, communist and post-communist urban development specifically with regard to the functions of the European city?

The World Cities Culture Report 2013 (p. 10) suggests that "culture is the 'no. 2 strategy' in all fields", meaning that it can always play a major support role when addressing an issue. Building on this basic idea, we developed our programme around the concept "Together". This concept is to turn the citizens' attention towards 'Plovdiv Together', towards sharing cultures and spaces, towards involvement and participation, to building models of community learning and building capacity, to flat hierarchies and grass-roots movements, to seeing the city as a common, shared space – a European city of the 21st century with an inclusive, open atmosphere and vertical roots

that keep it connected to its history. 'Plovdiv Together' has local, regional, national, European and international implications. It does not only mean 'Plovdiv Together' locally, but also: Plovdiv together with Bulgaria, Plovdiv together with Europe.

In practical terms this means going far beyond "original ideas" or "cultural events in unusual places". With our concept we want to address real strategic issues in Plovdiv. In our programme we do this for example by taking projects out to areas in the city which seem to have the lowest rates of cultural and civic participation (e.g. Social Innovation Challenge and the Cultural HUB), programmes which build bridges between different communities or groups which are characterised by disconnection and suspicion (e.g. Backyard Stories, the Circus School), and programmes which seek to use participation and engagement as ways to increase physical, mental and emotional well-being (e.g. ART E.R., Animate the City and Ayliak City). To strengthen this approach we have concentrated on finding partners in Europe and Bulgaria who already have some expertise and good practises to share such as the Ideas Factory (Sofia), Soft Touch Arts (Leicester), raumlaborberlin (Germany), SIGNA (Denmark), Community Arts Lab – XL (Utrecht) and < rotor > (Graz) only to name a few here.

To put it simply, the Together concept required of the city and the Plovdiv 2019 team to identify what its major priorities are – using also Plovdiv's Cultural Strategy 2014-2024, the Tourism Strategy and the Municipal Development Plan 2014-2020 – and on this basis we have designed cultural programmes which address and tackle those priorities. By using the strategic framework of the European Capital of Culture as a driver for such projects, there is a greater chance of making major steps towards enduring changes in Plovdiv's communities and civic life. Together.



With our concept we want to **fuse** the ethnic and social groups in Plovdiv to create 'Plovdiv Together', **transforming** the urban space into a cityscape that supports the togetherness, which in turn leads to **reviving** the heritage that gives identity and a sense of ownership and helps us **relax** in these times of pressure in order to create sustainable growth and development on a human scale *with* and *for* the citizens. From this storyline we have developed four programme platforms:

FUSE – breaking down borders between social, ethnic and minority groups to create 'Plovdiv Together'

TRANSFORM – transforming the city and the people through urban development and education

REVIVE – bringing culture and heritage back into everyday contemporary life

RELAX – promoting sustainable lifestyles and an appreciation for culture's and nature's beauty

3) Could this programme be summed up by a slogan?

The programme we have developed can be summed up by the slogan:

'PLOVDIV TOGETHER'

Together is a special word for us. It pops up in the life of our city at crucial moments of change. 'Plovdiv **Together**' wants to unite what is now divided in the city. 'Plovdiv **Together**' means a **togetherness** of minorities and majorities, of generations, of different religious groups, an inclusion of people with special needs, a re-adjustment of urban spaces according to the needs of the citizens, a re-connection of our heritage and contemporary culture, a **together** that makes the city a place where people like to live and feel a sense of ownership. A recent incident showed us that we have

a long way to go if we want to achieve **togetherness**. In February 2014 Plovdiv's main mosque, situated in the very centre of the city, was attacked by a group of protesters following a lawsuit initiated by the Office of the Mufti claiming ownership over multiple buildings from the Ottoman period which are currently used by different cultural institutions, including Plovdiv's Ancient Bath Centre for Contemporary Art. The act of violence against the mosque, however, generated an inspiring response. A group of teenagers organised a flash-mob campaign in front of the mosque a few days later. They were presenting passers-by with flowers, "snowdrops for tolerance" as they called them. "Life is like a mirror. If you smile, you will receive a smile in return", was their message. These events assured us that we have chosen the most appropriate slogan for our bid, because they demonstrate the absolute necessity of finding the true meaning of the word "**together**" and the fact that our citizens are ready and willing to help us on this quest.

But '**Together**' is also a call for action for other European citizens affected by the economic recession and questioning the European future of their states. For Plovdiv and for Europe we want **together** to mean not just a group of people forced to live in the same place. Instead, **together** should turn into a conscious choice made by individuals who celebrate cultural diversity by safeguarding fundamental rights and values we have fought for in our city and in Europe. Plovdiv's **together** is reinforced by two specific historical precedents that touch us deeply to this day: In 1885, the citizens of Plovdiv and the region completed the Bulgarian Unification. This act took away Plovdiv's chance to become the country's Capital, but a unified Bulgaria was a far more important cause for our predecessors. Almost a century later, in 1943, the Metropolitan Bishop of Plovdiv (who would later become Patriarch Kyril of

Bulgaria) personally prevented 50,000 Bulgarian Jews, Roma and other minorities' deportation to the Nazi death camps and inspired Christian Bulgarians to unite in an unprecedented effort of civil society. Our artistic programme picks up this incident within the project Backyard Stories.

We firmly believe that the similarities within us, be it in the different groups in Plovdiv or the different cultures in Europe, are more and stronger than the differences. And after all it is the differences that give our cultural and social life that flavour and spice that makes it worth living... **TOGETHER**.

4) Which geographical area does the city intend to involve in the "European Capital of Culture" event? Explain this choice.

After developing the programme and the objectives for the city further, the team of Plovdiv 2019 decided to limit the actual European Capital of Culture events mainly to the geographical area of the city of Plovdiv. This means that nearly all major events will take place within the city limits. However, we are open to exceptions that might present an opportunity to fulfil our objectives or to include institutions and partners with good project proposals.

As for the core geographical area of the European Capital of Culture event, Plovdiv is the second largest city in Bulgaria and the administrative centre of Plovdiv District. The city is situated on both banks of the Maritsa River, in the central part of the Upper Thracian Plain. Its territory comprises 102 square kilometers and the population is currently 338,153 inhabitants. There is one exception that we have included into our programme from the very beginning: the Regionale. This programme will comprise the geographical area of the South Central Region of Bulgaria presenting

around 80 local small to medium-size festivals, celebrations and projects. We made this choice since the links between Plovdiv and the South Central Region have been established over the centuries, and still today Plovdiv is the most important administrative, academic, economic, commercial and transportation centre for the whole South Central Region (which includes the Regional District of Plovdiv surrounding the city, plus Pazardzhik, Haskovo, Smolyan, and Kardzhali, with a total population of about 1.5 million people). We chose the inclusion of these festivals and this geographical area since the Regionale cluster provides a series of projects that are very close to the citizens, are often citizen initiatives and aim at preserving and presenting a vast variety of traditions, crafts and arts that are essential to the heritage and history of our city and its inhabitants. The whole region of South Central Bulgaria has expressed its support from the very beginning of this application process.

5) Please confirm that you have the support of the local and/or regional political authorities.

Plovdiv 2019 has the unanimous support of the local and regional political authorities. On the local political level this support is expressed by the financial commitment of 7.3 Mil Euro for the years 2014-2020 from the Municipality of Plovdiv. The decision was made unanimously by the City Council on 1 August 2013. The local authorities have also shown their support by developing strategies and tools to foster the capacities of the economic, cultural and touristic fields in order to facilitate the delivery of a European Capital of Culture. The purpose of the Municipal Development Plan 2014-2020, which was adopted by the city council on 23 January 2014 is to set objectives and ensure the target-oriented management of the city's development over the next seven years. One

of the main objectives of the Development Plan is the city's bid for the ECoC title, together with the implementation of the initiatives set in the city's Cultural Strategy (2014-2024) and The Tourism Strategy (2014-2020). The key element of those three documents is the declared aim to raise the cultural and touristic capacity of the city for the benefit of the European Capital of Culture programme as well as for the long-term benefit of the city and its citizens.

The local support of the political authorities has been expressed from the very beginning of the bidding phase by establishing the Municipal Foundation Plovdiv 2019 on 27 September 2011 with an official decision by the City Council Plovdiv. The united political support guarantees continuity in pursuit of the purpose and independence of the organisation's activities from party and political interests. Since 2012 Plovdiv's candidacy for ECoC has been supported by all 18 municipalities in the Regional District of Plovdiv and by the four regional districts constituting the South Central Region of Bulgaria. The emphasis with the wider region will be on cooperation on cultural events in the cities (e.g. 80 festivals within the Regionale project cluster) on an artistic and communication level. The municipalities and cultural initiatives which are involved have expressed their willingness to participate and their support for Plovdiv 2019.

6) How does the event fit into the long-term cultural development of the city and, where appropriate, of the region?

For Plovdiv, bidding for European Capital of Culture is not an end in itself. On the contrary: it is a catalyst for sustainable change, not only in the city's cultural sector, but for its overall development. We have therefore from the very beginning

put our efforts into closely connecting the ECoC event and the city's strategy for cultural development. In the city's strategic documents the event is embedded as an important step and a driving force behind the ambition to focus on culture as a key element of Plovdiv's long-term development. We fully realise what an economic potential the cultural and creative industries hold, representing 2.6 % of Europe's GDP with a higher contribution than that of the food, beverages and tobacco sector, the textile industry, and the chemicals, rubber and plastic products industry. For Bulgaria, this percentage is even higher – 3.97%. For Plovdiv it is 3.05% (all figures according to an independent study by Observatory of Cultural Economics, Sofia). We want to base Plovdiv's sustainable economic development on culture and the 2014-2024 Cultural Strategy adopted in July 2014 lays the foundation for this. It provides a clear SWOT-analysis which identifies our cultural capacity as one of the weaknesses. Furthermore, there are some critical deficits in arts marketing and cultural management (especially in public institutions), lack of cooperative work or communication between institutions of all sectors is visible, outdated infrastructure, a drop in audience interest and a lack of diverse and young audience members to name a few.

Even though there are significant problems in these areas, this is also a chance for the city to open a new page in its cultural life. The adopted Cultural Strategy includes a draft for an action plan. This draft has been worked out by more than 80 cultural operators and people who are working in the cultural scene, cultural institutions and in the municipality of Plovdiv. The strategy ensures that Plovdiv's municipality tackles these deficiencies throughout the strategy's implementation period from 2014 until 2024. A team of experts will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the strategy. These are the structures that will help the Plovdiv 2019 team keep all activities in the field of

capacity building and audience development aligned with the activities of the city.

The main goal of the cultural strategy is to offer a model for sustainable cultural development of the city. There are four intertwined priority areas on which the strategy is focusing which Plovdiv 2019 has integrated into the artistic programme in order to translate the priorities into concrete action:

- **Dynamically enriching cultural identity:** Due to its ethnic and religious diversity, Plovdiv has many identities constantly interacting with one another. Be they local, national, or European, they are all part of the city's multiculturalism and will be additionally reinforced through developing cultural education practices and by using the cultural and creative industries as a force for improving citizens' quality of life and popularising Plovdiv's identity. Plovdiv's ECoC bid already promises to turn 2019 into a year of celebration of the city's multicultural identity, and by extension, European multicultural identity. Key projects like Mahala and Backyard Stories highlight all of these aspects while including many local, national and international stakeholders into the conversation about local and European identities.
- **Culture and education:** New perspectives for the development of the sector, including attracting new audiences, enriching and improving the cultural offering will require improving the quality of educational and cultural projects for children and young people, and implementing mechanisms for lifelong learning. Some of the areas that will need to be further developed include: introducing cross-sector programmes between cultural and educational institutions, more interactive approach to education, improving online access to resources, new marketing strategies

for cultural institutions targeting younger audiences, improving teaching qualifications through a constant process of best-practice and innovative method-exchanges. This is a very important aspect in the ECoC programme as well. Projects like Children City at the Youth Hill and Chitalishta focus on using innovative inter-disciplinary learning methods: learning through play, Suggestopedia, autodidacticism, and self-organised learning environment. Projects like Adventures in the Museum Land and a one-on-one art mentorship programme for schools and universities challenge the way traditional institutions function and change their focus towards the needs of their target group rather than fitting into the existing system.

- **Cultural and creative industries:** Currently, the cultural and creative industries rely on the city's long traditions in the field of art and culture. This is a stable, even if largely underutilised backbone of the artmarket. On the other hand, there are notable representatives in the field of contemporary art and culture in Plovdiv which is a prerequisite for dynamism and modernisation. However, the absence of good marketing significantly narrows growth possibilities. It is also important to note that another challenge for the development of these industries in Plovdiv is the Bulgarian centralised model. About 80% of the companies in the cultural and creative sector are located in the capital although only 17.5% of the country's population lives there. Plovdiv needs to diversify and improve the quality of the offered cultural product, update marketing and advertising strategies, improve the connections between various stakeholders and focus on international exchange across all areas. In its ECoC bid the city has already developed projects to address these goals. For instance the trapApart project about the Kapana neighbourhood

is already attracting creative industries to settle in the area by offering rent-free production spaces for a year. The project Adata Unlimited will become a meeting ground for international artists and experts where they can develop cultural entrepreneurship.

- **Cultural tourism:** Currently, in Plovdiv this sector is almost entirely connected to the rich heritage and its conservation. In terms of the strategy, cultural tourism is viewed as a basis for economic and social prosperity and a tool for the promotion of the city's image and identity. The current tourist packages need to be expanded together with the introduction of new marketing and promotional activities in the field. The establishment of active partnerships between cultural institutions, cultural and tourist operators is essential for any sustainable future development. Plovdiv 2019 contributes to this by launching the Plovdiv Biennial which will give the city that much needed push to develop its promising contemporary art field, improve the quality of the cultural offering and put the city on the map of up-and-coming contemporary culture cities in Europe.

To support progress in all the areas addressed in the Cultural Strategy, we will be launching an extensive capacity building platform – as a process for developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that our



organisations, communities and individuals need to build resilience and knowledge. Having developed the Cultural Strategy 2014-2024 alongside the ECoC goals gives Plovdiv the chance to create synergies at local and European level as well as new sustainable structures and networks.

7) To what extent do you plan to forge links with the other city to be nominated European Capital of Culture? In case your city gets the title, do you plan to cooperate with the other bidding cities in your country which have been pre-selected?

In this second phase we have deepened our relations with the shortlisted cities in Italy, after hosting a Round Table on the Future of Historic Cities in 2013. This year (2014) Plovdiv held personal meetings with the shortlisted cities to discuss ways to work together for the coming years as we found various common aspects between our cultural programmes:

Ravenna

Exhibitions on European propaganda and new populism produced by both cities between 2015 and 2019 will be presented in Ravenna and in the air-raid shelters in Plovdiv (project Plovdiv Underground). In 2019, a joint summary exhibition on propaganda will be organised and presented around Europe. We will cooperate in turning neglected emblematic city spaces (e.g. Kapana District in Plovdiv and the docks area in Ravenna) into creative arts districts by facilitating the exchange of architects, designers and creative industry artists as well as of experience and good practices. In addition, we will organise joint events and festivals in these places. Moreover, Bulgarian and Italian mosaic artists will cooperate in an International Contemporary Mosaics Festival in

Ravenna, also including exchange of know-how in the field of mosaics recovery.

Lecce

“Reinventing EUtopia Together” (a mix of the mottos of the two cities) is the slogan under which Plovdiv and Lecce agreed to cooperate on projects dedicated to developing peoples’ potential, their educational and job opportunities (Capacity Building and Audience Development Plovdiv CABADEPLO) and stimulating the participatory work of local communities, including also minority groups. We will facilitate the exchange of creative industry artists and lecturers for workshops, of best practices in forum theatre and public speaking. Good practices and tools (such as the Network against Poverty in Lecce) will be shared to overcome social and economic disparity in our regions through culture (e.g. project cluster Mahala). There is also a small Roma community in Salento and we will work on building a cultural connection between them and the Roma communities in Plovdiv. We also plan on initiating research into the influence of Roma music on Bulgarian and Salentine music. Another highlight of our cooperation with Lecce is the “Ayliak” and Salento style of life typical for Plovdiv and the Southern Italian region (e.g. Ayliak City and Salentine Way of Life).

Siena

The focus of our cooperation will be on the topic of innovations in art therapy such as for example brain-control technology and the exchange of professionals and tools (e.g. Art E.R. and Siena’s Cultural Emergency Room and Still Dancing). Moreover, we will work together in the field of jazz music by organising joint events in Plovdiv, Siena and also travelling performances with the participation of the Siena Jazz Foundation and the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts in Plovdiv. Other fields of future cooperation include: organising Plovdiv-Siena design workshops for remodeling urban

spaces; exchange of practices and organisation of joint conferences in social innovations. Siennese experts will take part in our project Social Innovation Days within Mahala project cluster.

Perugia Assisi

Plovdiv will join Perugia and the municipalities in the Umbrian region to develop comprehensive European social programmes within the ELCN (European Local Communities Network). We will also cooperate in organising educational, creative, entertaining and formative events, workshops and seminars for children as part of our edYOUcate project cluster. Further, through the means of the puppet theatre, we plan on organising creative labs together, including activities with street artists and live statues, dedicated especially to children. Plovdiv and Perugia plan on organising joint events and projects exploring the cultural heritage and links between the Thracians and the Etruscans (e.g. Thracian Traces and Traci versus Etruschi: Il ritorno del vello d’oro) and cooperate on projects related to the mythical poet and singer Orpheus (e.g. Thracian Traces and Perugian Orpheus 2019).

Matera

With Matera we plan to cooperate on unusual urban transformations and street art projects (part of Urban Dreams) e.g. through game-approach methods tested in Matera in the pilot project Basilicata Border Games. We will also collaborate on new music, arts and digital media events which will be organized in unusual places such as the Plovdiv tunnel (e.g. Digital Tunnel) or abandoned tufa quarries in Matera (e.g. Seeds on the Ground) to demonstrate the importance of music in the life of the cities. In addition, we will cooperate on establishing community platforms (eg. as part of the Ayliak City and Brickstarter in Matera) which will allow citizens to take ownership of their city and public space and contribute with ideas about improving the city and the wellbeing of citizens. Finally, we plan to

work together on a programme of cultural activities that will travel out from the two cities along the Euro-Mediterranean routes and meet in certain cities (the Balkan Caravan from Plovdiv and Micro-Capitals from Matera). Plovdiv will join Matera in their project Mobility Camp from Plovdiv to Matera following the ancient Via Militaris.

Cagliari

As both cities are renowned for their well-preserved ancient Roman theatres, the highlight of the cooperation between Plovdiv and Cagliari will be joint massive multigenre performances, based on Homer’s works, which will combine theatre, music, and dance in a contemporary setting. These performances will be first organised in Plovdiv and Cagliari and then travel and will be presented on the stages of various Ancient Theatres around Europe.

Bulgarian candidate cities

If Plovdiv is awarded the title, it will be a European Capital of Culture for all of Bulgaria. We will definitely need the cultural capacity of our fellow contestants who have also invested a lot of effort and preparation in their bids, and we will endeavour to foster cooperation on all levels. In addition, we can help the other bidding cities to realise their “plan B” programmes and present them in Plovdiv and we can also support them with promoting the events. In turn, we can work together on promoting Plovdiv 2019 events in their cities. Furthermore, we have already established links with cultural institutions and operators in other bidding cities (e.g. Hamalogika from Burgas, Ideas Factory from Sofia, Red House Centre for Culture and Debate in Sofia). As the European Capital of Culture in Plovdiv will be a pan-Bulgarian event, we also plan various events of a national character (e.g. Plovdiv Biennial). The European Capital of Culture presents an opportunity for us to create a lasting network for cultural operators from the whole country who can meet in Plovdiv, establish connections, and find points for further cooperation beyond 2019.

8) Explain how the event could fulfil the criteria listed below. Please substantiate your answer for each of the criteria. As regards “The European Dimension”, how does the city intend to contribute to the following objectives:

a) to strengthen cooperation between the cultural operators, artists and cities of your country and other Member States, in all cultural sectors;

The European Capital of Culture is a way for us to trigger a renaissance of the cultural field, largely ignored during Bulgaria’s two-decade transition period after the fall of communism. European Capital of Culture is an unprecedented opportunity for Plovdiv and Bulgaria’s artists and cultural operators to forge long-lasting connections with European partners in all cultural sectors including education, social services, citizen participation, sports, and tourism along with the more obvious ones such as performing and fine arts and literature. We believe that the European Capital of Culture will give us the opportunity to overcome the widespread attitude of being a passive audience used to traditionally local providers of cultural content. For us the cooperation means active participation in cultural productions, networks, exchange and management. The strengthened cooperation will allow local audiences to be exposed to new forms of artistic expression, increase the cultural capacity of citizens, artists and institutions, allow productions of higher quality through learning and transfer, attract and develop new audiences and broaden their horizons, and, most importantly, help the city make decisive moves towards the long-term goals and sustainable city development set in the Cultural Strategy 2014-2024 and the Municipal Development Plan 2014-2020.

In order for these aspirations to turn into reality and bring about a sustainable change for the city on a large scale, we are looking forward to working with experienced experts in different strategic fields. We will involve Neil Peterson from Liverpool as a strategic community-development adviser and will work with the British Composer Tim Steiner on community-based music events, with theatre-director Brian Michaels (UK/Germany) on artistic programmes with minority communities and with the team of Kulturexperten Dr. Oliver Scheytt and Dr. Patrick Föhl as strategic advisers on the capacity building programme CABADEPLO.

All of the artistic and strategic cooperation partners we have already contacted will undoubtedly add a high level of expertise and will allow for a much wider reach of the planned artistic programme. We have established partnerships with international organisations that will help us raise the artistic excellence of the projects. Some examples include raumlaborberlin for urban and social architecture in minority areas, transmediale (Germany) in digital and contemporary art, Stavanger Jazzforum (Norway) and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (UK) in the field of music, and SIGNA (Denmark) for citizen participation, to name only a few.

We are focusing on developing projects that will allow local and foreign artists to work together side by side and learn from one another. In a project like 2019: A European Odyssey Plovdiv’s Drama and Puppet Theatres will work alongside their colleagues from Teatro Stabile della Sardegna and Cada Die Teatro (both Cagliari, Italy) creating together a contemporary interpretation of Homer’s works. In Lummix local artists from Plovdiv’s Centre for Contemporary Art’s network will collaborate with their Scottish colleagues from NVA. In European Fairy-Tales, Bulgarian artists will partner with their colleagues

from the Centre international pour les théâtres itinérants – personal contacts that will facilitate future cooperations.

Most of our projects aim to trigger long-term developments and events that will continue after 2019. In this way local institutions will be able to build and expand their partner networks, develop their capacity further and offer more and more quality cultural products (e.g. Plovdiv’s museums through the project Museums of Europe).

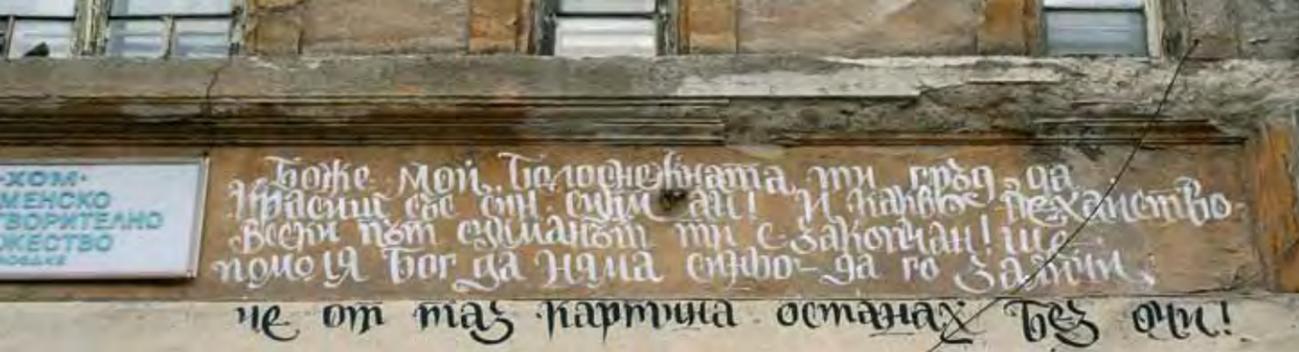
In return, Plovdiv 2019 wants to offer the wider European project a new perspective on Eastern and Balkan art and culture. The platform called Balkan Caravan will strengthen connections between cultural operators and artists from the Balkans. Plovdiv’s geo-strategic position is a great opportunity for the city to act as an agent in changing the view of the Balkan region from a historical and ethnic conflict zone into a culturally diverse and shared one. We have already established strong connections with institutions and organisations such as Belgrade Architecture Week (Serbia), Tirana Architecture Week (Albania), REMONT (Serbia), Skopje Design Week (Rep. Macedonia), Music Biennale Zagreb (Croatia). Balkan Caravan is planned as an event to be hosted by a different Balkan city every year and we will urge the future European Capitals of Culture from Croatia and Serbia to continue the initiative. Cooperating with artists and cultural operators in our own country and in Europe gives us the opportunity to share our experiences with culture as a tool for developing new practices in integrating marginalised groups, decentralising cultural life, and the rethinking of public space. Plovdiv is open to showcasing the use of culture for development in European cities with deep social divisions such as ours. Furthermore, Plovdiv welcomes European artists and cultural organisations to access new audiences as well as our untapped artistic and cultural potential.

b) to highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;

Plovdiv 2019 intends to highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe by focussing on its diverse population of various ethnicities and religions through projects like the Mahala project-cluster and Grand Romani Glasso (with the Roma community) and Backyard Stories (including different formats highlighting our Jewish, Armenian and Turkish heritage). The diversity of 8,000 years of European culture from Thracian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman culture to the recent communist and the current period will be showcased in projects like Crossing Hills, Crossing Centuries (making the traces of heritage and cultures on the six hills of Plovdiv visible), Tobacco City (about the tobacco warehouses from the first half of the 20th century), and 4GET (focusing on architectural heritage from the communist era).

The richness of cultural diversity in Europe is highlighted by the number of languages and dialects – and in Plovdiv we can contribute with an array of colloquial words only used here. The most common one is Ayliak (Айляк) which comes from Turkish and literally means “free of work”. Nowadays Ayliak is a state of mind, a state of freedom, easiness and calmness, a philosophy of enjoying life – a typical feature of Plovdiv and its citizens’ lifestyle. The project-cluster Ayliak City will unite the traditional Plovdivian spirit and European trends and movements such as the slow movement and degrowth in order to develop a new European philosophy towards the EU policy of “living well, within the limits of our planet”.

Our project Chitalishta picks up the very unique Bulgarian model of decentralised cultural infrastructure. In the 19th and early 20th century when Bulgaria was part of the Ottoman Empire these cultural community centres had a crucial role in keeping



Cyrillic calligraphy
on a house in Plovdiv

Bulgarian culture and language alive. Today, the significance of the Chitalishta network is decreasing, mostly due to a lack of funding, but through involving them actively in our programme we aim at revitalising them, emphasising their basic idea of free access to culture and education and presenting them as a good practice that we want to share with Europe to contribute to the current discussion about education and open-source culture policies.

c) to bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore?

For the first time in the history of the European Capital of Culture initiative, a city using the Cyrillic alphabet (azbuka) will be designated with the title. Bulgaria became the first country to use this alphabet when it was developed in the 9th century. Today around 250 million people use the Cyrillic script – about half of them live in Europe. We will bring this common aspect of European culture to the fore with the project Cyrillisation.

Migration has caused European cities and their cultures to become more mixed and we are eager to share best practices, experience and projects in this area with other European cities. Between 10 and 12 million Roma and Sinti are living in Europe today which makes them the biggest pan-European minority group. With our projects together with minority communities we want to contribute to the general minority discourse on a European level.

d) Can you specify how this event could help to strengthen the city's links with Europe?

Plovdiv is still too enclosed in its own small world. Many citizens here think that Plovdiv is a European hub of culture even if that was only true about 2,000 years ago. The European Capital of Culture is an opportunity to strengthen the city's links with Europe:

- By waking up and realising that Europeans are not exactly queuing up to come to Plovdiv – we have to activate all forces of marketing, cultural tourism capacities (as laid out in the Cultural Strategy) and massive cooperation activities (like the Museums of Europe project) in order to reach out to European audiences, partners and link into European policies (e.g. Bulgaria has not adopted the EU School Education Act yet which would help modernise school curricula and teacher qualifications – Plovdiv 2019 can help bring these issues to the top of the agenda).
- By acknowledging that the European Capital of Culture has already had its effects on pushing the European button: a Cultural Strategy and a Municipal Development Plan 2014-2020 have been issued setting the priorities straight: the Cultural Strategy is focussing efforts on cultural tourism from European countries and in prioritising transfer and cooperation with European partners (one step towards this goal has been taken by funding internationally well-connected independent cultural activities like the One Design, One Architecture and One Dance Week and the Night of Museums and Galleries) – whereas the development plan sets the priorities in alignment with the Europe 2020 strategy and objectives for smart,

- sustainable and inclusive growth.
- By increasing youth mobility and capacity through our capacity building programme CABADEPLO.
- By special “exchange points” where artists from Bulgaria and abroad can live and work together (e.g. artists residences), exchange knowledge and experience and connect with the local audience (e.g. the Kapana Creative District and Plovdiv 2019's residence in the Old Town).

These are a few examples of how the European Capital of Culture is going to strengthen the city's links with Europe. We have many more plans and ideas...

9) Explain how the event could meet the criteria listed below. Please substantiate your answer for each of the criteria. As regards “City and Citizens”, how does the city intend to ensure that the programme for the event...

This question gives us the opportunity to demonstrate in practical terms how our concept of Plovdiv Together will enable us to change the way our city (and our country) is seen by the rest of Europe. It also enables us to show how we will make real changes in the way that Plovdiv connects with and provides a vehicle for addressing the concerns of its citizens. This is a huge step change for our model of governance which in the past has been very “top down”. The above two key outcomes which we intend to achieve if successful in our bid are fundamental to the successful long term social and cultural development of our city.

a) ... attracts the interest of the population at European level;

The 2019 European Capital of Culture is an outstanding opportunity for Bulgaria

to reposition itself as a cultural tourism destination. Although Bulgaria is not the first place that comes to mind as a cultural tourism destination, and Plovdiv is not one of its best known destinations, we know that if we can attract people to Plovdiv, they will be both surprised and delighted by what they find in our city, and word will get around.

So, in order to ensure we are successful in bringing new audiences to Plovdiv, we have thought carefully and imaginatively about how we present our programme, making it attractive for the European population at different levels. We have tried to connect our programme to specific groups we think we will succeed in bringing to Plovdiv. For specific groups of “cultural tourists” our programme includes:

- Cultural activities concerning pan-European issues that are interesting to many in Europe for example Roma culture and communities in the Mahala cluster, heritage of minorities such as Jews, Greeks, Armenians and Turks in Backyard Stories, or urban regeneration projects as Tobacco City, Adata Unlimited and Unexpected Urban Transformations.
- Projects of high artistic excellence such as Plovdiv Biennial for Contemporary Art as well as Lummix which will present internationally acknowledged artists and curators. We have also included renowned partners in our projects such as raumlaborberlin (Germany), SIGNA (Denmark), Walk the Plank (UK), NVA (UK) and FACT (UK) who are not only invaluable artists and organisations we can learn from but also magnets for a wider European audience.
- Activities for special interest groups of all cultural sectors one example being the Plovdiv Jazz Nights that will present internationally renowned musicians and exceptional talents. For contemporary dance lovers there is the One Dance



One Design Dinner in the Kapana neighbourhood, 2014

Week, whilst The One Architecture Week will attract architecture experts and aficionados from all over the world, and finally there is One Design Week for design specialists and fans. For people seeking an encounter with genuine Balkan music and art there is the Beauty and the (b)East project which will involve hugely renowned artists such as Fanfare Ciocarlia or Goran Bregovic.

- Activities for people with special needs as well as for special age or interest groups as specified in question 11 about our special target groups – an inclusive approach will help attract members of European networks and associations of children and youth, disabled people, volunteer networks, clubs of elderly people and minority associations.

In addition, and to use the ECoC as an attractor for more general tourists, we will use four key strategic instruments to improve the visibility of the Plovdiv 2019 programme to as many as possible in Europe:

- A broad communication strategy as laid out in chapter V – including a strong digital approach
- A joined up approach to some of the yet untapped tourism potential with our partners from the Tourism Board using tools as the existing annual meeting in Plovdiv of international tour operators and new tailor-made tourist packages
- A strong programme to involve and activate local citizens – which has proven to be a key element in making new international audiences feel welcome and keen to spread the word about our city – a passionate and convinced local population is without doubt the most welcoming face we can show to Europe
- Drawing these elements together to strengthen the new tourism strategy 2014-

2020 for Plovdiv which will also feed key targets into our Evaluation model.

b) ... encourages the participation of artists, stakeholders in the sociocultural scene and the inhabitants of the city, its surroundings and the area involved in the programme.

Plovdiv Together is not just a slogan. It is a genuine framework for the co-creation of the European Capital of Culture programme by the artists and people of our city. This has led to a huge emphasis on participation. Involvement and participation are principles, which the citizens in Plovdiv have had little chance to practice very much in the past. So we should not underestimate the breakthrough effect which the Plovdiv 2019 programme can represent for more active citizen engagement and the ability to set new standards for the following years. A leitmotif in our strategy is to stimulate sustainable citizens' participation through citizen- and artist-run initiatives and projects.

An example for the involvement of a large group of Roma citizens living in Stolipinovo is the project-cluster Mahala where the residents will work with local and international artists such as raumlaborberlin (Germany), Martin Kaltwasser (Germany), the theatre director Brian Michaels (Germany/UK), artists from the Roma community in Plovdiv and Roma organisations from other cities and countries such as the World Roma Festival Khamoro – Slovo 21 (Czech Republic) as well as stakeholders of the sociocultural scene such as Indi-Roma 97 and Youth Club ROMA – Stolipinovo Association (Bulgaria). Together citizens, artist and

stakeholders of the sociocultural scene will be involved in developing the Mobile Education Centres, the social design project for an innovative local economy, the Cultural HUB as well as theatre and music projects.

The project trapApart invites artists and creative workers to turn Kapana into a creative industries district by settling and working in the Kapana, putting their energy and vision into the transformation of the district.

With Tobacco City we plan to activate a civil initiative for the vanishing tobacco warehouses. The decay of these emblematic buildings has been a pressing matter for many years. Local activists supported by Plovdiv 2019 have already proven the strong presence of civil society in the city when the demolishing of the emblematic cinema Kosmos was stopped because of our joint protests in 2012.

The citizens of the city will be involved in revitalizing the typical Bulgarian institution of the Chitalishta (community centres). With the ambition and willingness of all Chitalishta to develop and innovate and under the guidance of artists, designers and sociocultural institutions the population living around the Chitalishta will be invited to re-create the centres and fill them with new life with the artists of Hamalogika.

One of the projects in the cluster RegionalE is the solidarity network Rent-a-Baba in which elderly people in villages from the region will be invited to host artists and young professionals from Bulgaria and abroad. This residence project will not only involve people from the region but will also deal with the demographic problem of depopulation of villages and small towns.

Participation of children will be a part of every project in the cluster edYOUcate, for example in Children City on Youth Hill. In the Children City that we will build with children on the highest hill in Plovdiv,

the kids themselves (age 6-15) will form their own governance structure, elect a mayor and create their own currency.

Through digital communication channels we will encourage young people to take part in projects like Adventures in the Museum Land. In order to involve the citizens into the initiative European Capital of Culture we are working on developing a strong network of volunteers by involving all interest clubs for elderly people, youth organisations, volunteer organisations (such as Time Heroes) and Bulgarian Youth Red Cross.

c) ... is sustainable and an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city?

The fact that the European Capital of Culture Plovdiv 2019 is seen as an integral part of the cultural and social development of Plovdiv is visible when looking at the Cultural Strategy 2014-2024 and the Municipal Development Plan 2014-2020 – in both, Plovdiv 2019 is an important building block in the long-term efforts of the city.

The sustainable effects of the ECoC and the diversification of cultural life in the city are inevitably connected to education and capacity building. If we genuinely want to use the momentum of the ECoC to deliver substantial change to the way Plovdiv works then we have to see culture as a connecting force and “second strategy” through which to find innovative solutions to the priorities and concerns of the city and its citizens. But this is only possible if we increase our cultural capacity.

We intend to introduce a programme for Capacity Building and Audience Development Plovdiv (CABADEPLO). This will function as the sustainable muscles and brain of Plovdiv 2019 - with impacts aiming into the next decade after the event. A capacity building programme in Plovdiv

is a complex response to the complexity of challenges in urban, social and cultural contexts. It is a deeply democratic approach to empower our communities, individuals and institutions to develop resilience to crisis, creativity in finding solutions and independence in thought and action.

The concrete objectives for the capacity building process of Plovdiv 2019 and the city are:

- building skills and knowledge (e.g. acquainting the local audiences with contemporary cultural phenomena in Bulgaria and Europe)
- developing networks and cross-institutional communication/ collaboration
- strengthening individual leadership/ management capacity (e.g. educating cultural and touristic operators and art managers to handle international and large-scale projects)
- supporting institutions to engage with the needs of their audience (changing the traditional top-down approach)
- fostering collective identity and culture
- facilitating access to resources whilst at the same time making the most of existing resources
- creating an enabling environment

The concrete objectives for audience development are:

- increasing the proportion of the population who regularly engage with the arts
- developing an audience which is more representative of society as a whole
- improving depth and quality of experience for all audiences
- facilitating access to culture beyond the city centre

These objectives and outcomes are also built into our evaluation model. Delivering a European Capital of Culture is all about the “power of how”. If we manage the process effectively, it can create the momentum through which the entire

city can take part in an upward spiral of shared learning and knowledge acceleration. The experience of the best European Capitals of Culture shows us that the most meaningful sustainability we can create is the empowerment of our people and the creation of an enabling environment for change, innovation and development. We are totally committed to that in Plovdiv. For as many people as possible. Together.

10) How does the city plan to get involved in or create synergies with the cultural activities supported by the European Institutions?

When we look at our planned activities for 2019 we find them well aligned with the Europe 2020 strategy: We feel our plans are smart, sustainable and inclusive – in line with the three priorities of the Europe 2020 agenda for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Our programme is:

- smart, because it is an effective investment in people and their capacities through education, cultural research and innovation
- sustainable, because it looks ahead into the future with the aim of enhancing human and preserving environmental capacities
- inclusive, because we understand that excluding parts of our community (minorities, young people, children, the elderly) from democratic and policy making issues cuts all of society off from a large part of the potential growth and development

To access funding and create synergies with the cultural activities of the EU institutions we have Plovdiv’s municipal department for European Policies and Cooperation at our side to help us with their experience from the first programming period 2007 -

2013. The activities they are concentrating on now are to align and synergise the EU programmes with the plans laid out in the Cultural Strategy 2014-2024 and the Municipal Development Plan 2014-2020. As both documents have been aligned with the Plovdiv 2019 bid the focus here is on the priority areas of Heritage & Art, Science & Education, Plovdiv Brand Products, Habitat & Mobility, Social Inclusion, and Cooperation in Development. We are convinced that we can closely benefit reciprocally from joining forces in finding synergies with EU activities, applying for funding and working together on projects if we are awarded the title. And the specific focus on the cultural programmes of the EU in the context of the ECoC will also help the European Policies and Cooperation office in return to deliver more support for future cultural development.

As for Plovdiv 2019 specifically we see potential synergies mainly in the new Creative Europe programme. The sub-programme European Cooperation Projects of Creative Europe allows us to apply for funds for example on the level of our One Architecture Week, One Dance Week and One Design Week, for the European theatre project 2019: A European Odyssey or the Balkan cooperation project Balkan Caravan. The European Networks Fund within Creative Europe allows for funding of networks such as the creative industries hot spots that we are planning on the project trapApart and the probable expansion of the ATHENE Mediterranean Ancient Theatres Network. The Creative Europe programme is the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy in the field of culture and therefore supports the strengthening of cross-border cooperations (that we intend to focus on) and to offer audience development, mobility of artists and opening new markets for creative activities so that we can plug into those priorities with our artists residencies and our programme for Capacity Building and Audience Development Plovdiv (CABADEPLO) which aims at a medium-

and long-term development of the cultural “muscles and brains” in Plovdiv and the region. Soon after the ECoC final decision is made in September this year we will contact the Creative Europe Desk in Bulgaria at the Ministry of Culture for the Culture sub-programme and at the Bulgarian National Film Centre in Sofia for the MEDIA sub-programme. In the field of media we intend to apply for funds with our projects Adventure in the Museum Land, Mobile Art Labs, Digital Tunnel and Plovdiv Biennial for Contemporary Art among others.

The new Erasmus+ programme contains several sub-programmes that we can link into with our projects such as the youth capacity building for our capacity programme CABADEPLO, and the European Voluntary Service which allows the exchange of young cultural managers between Plovdiv and the Italian cities we have worked with in the bid, and through the same programme young people (age 17-30) from other countries will be able to come and work with us in the Foundation from 2 weeks up to 12 months. In the context of the European Lifelong Learning programme which is now part of Erasmus+ the EU is currently working on an Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE) which is planned to go online in late 2014. We will tap into this programme to foster the digital technology capacities and training of citizens and specialists. The Erasmus+ Sport Funding allows us to promote our projects in the Animate the City cluster of our programme, especially since we are closely cooperating with the Be Active Association, Bulgaria.

With the financial support of the Employment and Social Innovation Programme (EaSI) we can make our projects in the Mahala cluster for the Roma community happen on a much larger and more sustainable level especially in the field of education and social innovation such as the projects The Mobile Educational Centres in Stolipinovo and



the Innovation in Local Economy through microbusiness models. Within the EaSI there are special microfinancing funds (European Progress Microfinance Facility, The Progress Programme; EURES – still under proposal for the new period 2014-2020) which are not available directly to entrepreneurs but to selected micro-finance providers – in Bulgaria specifically to JOB MFI and Mikrofond AD. Plovdiv also benefits from funding opportunities provided by The European Economic Area Grants oriented towards improving the general situation of the Roma community. Three new projects were submitted in May 2014 – one of which commits to the digitalisation of Plovdiv’s cultural and historical heritage – including the tangible and intangible Roma heritage.

The Environment Action Programme for the EU, newly proposed by the DG Environment called “Living well, within the limits of our planet” has its priorities in the reduction of threats to human health and wellbeing linked to pollution, chemical substances, and the impacts of climate change which in turn, links in with our projects in the cluster Ayliak City (about Slow Food, healthy life, environmental awareness and degrowth) and River of Imagination (creating a sustainable ecological interaction between city and nature).

The programme URBACT III will act as a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. As we are researching solutions for urban challenges together with European partners in projects like Tobacco City (re-utilising the tobacco warehouses from the 1920’s), Adata Unlimited (wasteland turned into a vibrant artistic and environmental area) or 4GET (socialist buildings re-cycled) – the URBACT III programme offers ample opportunity to relate our work in Plovdiv to similar structures in other European cities, to create sharing and knowledge-transfer on a large European scale and rethink urban policies in our city.

Some of the Structural Funds currently negotiated in Brussels are to be used to make our capacity building programme CABADEPLO more relevant in order to provide better job opportunities and education especially to young professionals. Another part of Structural Funds should be used for our project RegionalE in order to provide transportation links for locals and tourists to experience the cultural activities in the South Central Region.

Further synergies will be sought with Europe for Citizens in the European Remembrance sub-programme for the project Plovdiv Underground planned with Ravenna in air-raid shelters built during communist times and using the Council of Europe initiative European Heritage Days to bring the European idea closer to people in Plovdiv.

11) Are some parts of the programme designed for particular target groups (young people, minorities, etc.)? Specify the relevant parts of the programme planned for the event.

We have built and organised each project cluster in our programme in such a way that in 2019 there will be projects catering to each specific target group – children and youngsters, young professionals, elderly people, people with disabilities and disadvantaged people, and marginalised minorities. Moreover, most events in the programme will provide free access to these groups.

Children

Projects for children and youngsters are very important in order to show them new and challenging ways of expressing themselves and reaching their inner potential. Some children, vulnerable to social isolation, need special attention. For them we have designed a special

project (Mobile Art Labs) to help them socialise and overcome their introversion.

With the project Children City on The Youth Hill children age 6 to 15 will have the power to experiment with various crafts and occupations and to govern an entire city. Projects like Slow Science and Slow Education will also be adapted to the needs of children through introducing natural ways of acquiring knowledge and presenting models for alternative slow education, among them self-organised learning environments and Suggestopedia. Children will also be actively involved in a series of scientific and educational projects such as Children’s Festival of Science, which will include science labs and hands-on experiments and a series of workshops. In addition, the planned one-on-one mentorship programme in schools and universities encourages the creativity and activity of young people by working and creating together with European artists.

Young Professionals

A major problem we have defined in the city’s cultural landscape is the necessity of establishing a long-term capacity building platform for cultural operators as well as investing in the further education of young people which will broaden their professional opportunities and reduce the brain drain from the city. The capacity building programme CABADEPLO will not only be an investment in the professional development of young people, it will also contribute additional knowledge and expertise to cultural operators in the city and will provide cultural managers and experts essential for the preparation and implementation of the ECoC projects in 2019.

Senior citizens

Senior citizens in Bulgaria are in a socially unfavourable and disadvantaged position,

in that they do not receive enough social benefits, have very low incomes, and so live on the edge of survival. We have created some projects for this special target group: dance evenings and sports events for elderly people, part of the Animate the City cluster, the project ART E.R. which takes place in hospitals, retirement homes and institutions for the disabled, where the artists involve people in participating in artistic activities, and the project Rent-a-Baba which aims to create a new cultural environment in abandoned villages in the Rhodope region, by inviting young people to engage with the remaining elderly inhabitants in innovative cultural and social projects. Also parts of the projects European Fairy-Tales in the Rhodope Mountains, Bagpiping Gathering in Gela village, The Pepper & Tomato Festival and others from the project clusters RegionalE and Ayliak City will involve senior citizens and intergenerational approaches.

Underprivileged Groups

In the course of preparing our programme for 2019, we are constantly considering the needs of physically disadvantaged people and how to make it easier for them to participate. For this target group we have prepared different open-air sport and socialising activities with projects like Art E.R. and Arouse the Senses. Furthermore, the series of art therapeutic exhibitions in the project After Art are dedicated to people with mental disabilities. Practically all events in our programme will be planned in a way to facilitate the access and participation of people with disabilities. Another target group which is very important to us and which includes a high percentage of residents, is the group of socially disadvantaged people. Art Patronage, part of the Chitalishta project is a social project directed at underprivileged people from different social groups. It is based on artistic interventions in aid of disadvantaged people, trying to foster communication and dialogue with them and to positively influence their self-esteem and social status,

thus enhancing their overall well-being. The project Social Innovation Days provides a think-tank laboratory for creating ideas and solutions for the social and cultural inclusion of socially disadvantaged people.

Minorities

We are aware of the problems we need to solve regarding social exclusion of minority groups, like Roma, Turks, Armenians, as well as the necessity to tell the story of the disappearing communities (Jewish, Italian, Czech) and keep their image in the collective memory of the city.

Backyard Stories is a large-scale project showing the rich cultural diversity of the city and aiming at bringing people from various ethnicities and neighbourhoods **together** by sharing their culture and traditions. Our goal is to encourage them to share their traditions and cultures as well as to facilitate various integration processes. The history of the invisible communities (Jewish, Italian, Czech) will be shown in a series of interactive autobiographical exhibitions, video installations, and performances as part of this project.

The project cluster Mahala (the Neighbourhood) is a programme designed to help encapsulated minority groups in some of the city's neighbourhoods to open up. Preserving and promoting Roma culture and traditions is one of the priorities in our programme for 2019. A project of this type is Grand Romani Glasso, which celebrates the European Roma music tradition.

In order to foster **togetherness** and cultural exchange between different social groups we have created the project cluster Animate the City. It includes projects for children, elderly people, disabled people, disadvantaged groups, and ethnic minorities. For each target group there will be specific training programmes, workshops, seminars, aiming at promoting sports culture and a healthy lifestyle.

12) What contacts has the city or the body responsible for preparing the event established, or what contacts does it intend to establish, with:

- cultural operators in the city?

It is essential for us to work in close co-operation with local cultural operators in order to achieve the **“togetherness”** we are striving for. For example Plovdiv Drama Theatre, the State Puppet Theatre Plovdiv, the State Opera Plovdiv, the Ancient Plovdiv Municipal Institute, the Ivan Vazov National Library, the Regional Natural History Museum of Plovdiv, the Bulgarian Museum of Aviation, and the Regional Ethnographic Museum will be some of the most important partners for projects like 2019: A European Odyssey and Museums of Europe. We also work in close connection with all community centres in the city on the project Chitalishta. Furthermore, we cooperate closely with influential NGOs and the initiatives they organise – for the project 4GET we will co-operate with the Open Arts Foundation, which organises for example, the Night of Museums and Galleries Plovdiv; the One Foundation for Culture and Arts will have special editions of their three big festivals One Design Week, One Architecture Week and One Dance Week in 2019; The Art Today Association which runs the Ancient Bath, the first Centre for Contemporary Art in Bulgaria, will work with us for Plovdiv Biennial and Lummix. These and other institutions and NGOs were closely involved in the development of the artistic programme and all projects mentioned above were initiated by our local partners.

In order to strengthen the cooperation with cultural operators and institutions and to focus on the development of the creative industries in 2014 the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation made an open call in cooperation with the One Foundation for Culture and

Arts for participation in the first creative district of Bulgaria – Kapana (The Trap) – which is a neighbourhood in the centre of Plovdiv. Plovdiv 2019 selected 10 out of 39 candidates and provided them with free studios, ateliers and offices for one year. The open call is a part of our strategy for developing the Kapana neighbourhood by attracting artists and cultural operators to work there. The idea behind the Kapana project is that the first participants will stay there even after the one year grant and that others will join, to turn the district into a lively space for the creative industries.

The Plovdiv 2019 Foundation has established contacts with the three art-schools and the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts as well as with all universities in the city and we will co-operate with them for the cluster edYOUcate and for the project Switch On Plovdiv. Many of these institutions are involved in co-operations all over Europe. Professors and students from the Plovdiv University are working together with the municipal Cultural Department on the cultural mapping of the city, initiated by Plovdiv 2019 as well as on a large-scale historical, ethnographic and architectural research project of the Kapana neighbourhood which is a joint initiative by Plovdiv University, the New Bulgarian University and the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy in Sofia.

- cultural operators based outside the city?

As we are supported by the region around Plovdiv we are going to put a spotlight on the many festivals and celebrations of the rural areas in our project cluster RegionalE and have made contacts with the cultural operators of all festivals in the region, e.g. the Bagpipe Contest in the village of Gela, Beglika Festival in the Rhodope mountains, the Rose Festival in Kazanlak and Karlovo, the KUKOVE International Festival of Kukeri and Masquerade in Rakovski, among

many other cultural operators and activities in the South Central Region of Bulgaria.

On a national level we have contacts with the Association of Festivals in Bulgaria; to the National Cinema Centre which organises the Festival of Bulgarian Documentary Cinema and Animation, Golden Rhyton, traditionally held in Plovdiv; to the International Music Academy Orpheus that organises concerts and master classes with talented children; and to the Foundation Musicartissimo (based outside the city but implementing the festival in Plovdiv) with its festival Balabanov's House Music Days International Festival in the Old Town with the attendance of international participants and guests. Besides our institutional partners we are also working to include prominent Bulgarian artists from other cities in our network. In March 2014 we organized a working session with some of the most famous and influential artists and curators in the country to discuss the concept for Plovdiv Biennial for Contemporary Art which is to become an art event of national value. Naturally as Sofia is also bidding and Bulgaria has a very centralised and Sofia-focused approach in all fields, we will have to wait until we are awarded the title until we set out on making more contacts on the national level.

- cultural operators based outside the country?

In the preparation of the bid we got in contact with institutions, NGOs, international networks, artists and curators from over 35 European countries, among these are the Roma Education Fund (Hungary), the National Institution Museum Kumanovo (Rep. Macedonia), Asociatia Smart for Change (Romania), and TAC Theatre (Malta). We have informed all European embassies in Bulgaria and cultural centres about our intention to work with them in the future and will tap into the existing European and international contacts that most of the cultural operators in the city have – e.g.

Austrian Musical Weeks, the Francophone Songs Competition Golden Key, the project Remarkable Traces – Bulgaria, Indonesia Days in Plovdiv, Year of Russia in Bulgaria, and Days of Japanese Culture.

Another important aspect is our aim to make Plovdiv a member of several international networks. We have built contacts with: Connecting Cities Network (for the project Lummix), ATHENE Mediterranean Ancient Theatres Network (Spain/Italy/Croatia) (for 2019: A European Odyssey), European Association of Folklore Festivals (Plovdiv Calling Balkan Music, RegionALE), World Institute of Slowness (Ayliak cluster), Time to Talk – European Houses of Debate (4GET project), and the Nomad Dance Academy Network (Chitalishta project) to name but a few.

One of the most important goals for us is to stimulate the cultural exchange in the Balkans where we have established contacts with partners like: Balkan Music Square Festival (Rep. Macedonia) for the music project Plovdiv Calling Balkan Music; with Remont (Belgrade) and Apartament project Istanbul for the Plovdiv Biennial; Skopje Design Week and Istanbul Design Week for One Design Week in 2019.

Name some operators with whom cooperation is envisaged and specify the type of exchanges in question.

For the cluster Mahala we have confirmed partners like the Youth Club ROMA – Stolipinovo Association, the Ideas Factory (Bulgaria), LEAD International (UK), the Independent Theatre (Hungary), the studio for art and architecture raumlaborberlin (Germany), Roma Education Fund (Hungary), and Caravan Circus Network (Belgium).

For the projects in the cluster Beauty and the (b)East we will work together with

art.homes (Germany), European Fund for the Balkans, Balkan Traffic Festival (Brussels), One Foundation for Culture and Art (Bulgaria), Istanbul Design Week (Turkey), Tirana Architecture Week (Albania), Belgrade Architecture Week (Serbia), Zeppelin (Bucharest, Romania).

The cluster Urban Dreams on urban development and revitalisation will be developed in a partnership with Stiftung Freizeit (Germany), Studio 8 ½ (Bulgaria), the international network Wasteland Twinning, Ravenna 2019, One Architecture Week (Bulgaria), Belgrade International Architecture Week (Serbia), Tirana Architecture Week (Albania), GeoAIR (Georgia), Art and Cultural Studies Laboratory (Armenia), and also with the Ancient Plovdiv Municipal Institute, Municipal Enterprise for Tourism Plovdiv and the Open Arts Foundation (Plovdiv) among others. In terms of trapApart – Kapana Creative District we have made contact with other creative districts around Europe, with whom we will exchange know-how, projects and good practices. Some of the confirmed partners for the project are: The bRAin (Ravenna), Cultural Kitchen (Helsinki) and Lighthouse (Brighton).

For the projects in the Ayliak cluster we are working with The World Institute of Slowness, and the Research & Degrowth Organisation Barcelona, Slow Food Bulgaria, Lecce 2019, Aware – Studio for Architecture, Za Zemiata/Friends of the Earth Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Association of Sciences. For the clusters Art for a Forgotten Future and Time Machine, dealing with contemporary art and putting our heritage in a contemporary context we have established partnerships with the Sculpture Network (Germany), NVA (UK), Public Art Lab (Germany), < rotor > (Graz), Remont (Serbia), Teatro Stabile della Sardegna (Italy), Apartment Project (Turkey, Germany), Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (UK), Creative Lighting (Greece), Company 14:20 (France), Institute

for Contemporary Art Sofia, and transmediale – Festival for Digital Art and Culture Berlin.

For the cluster EURhythmica about European music we have established contacts with the Balabanov's House Music Days International Festival (Plovdiv), the Chamber Music Festival Plovdiv, Sounds of The Ages – Rock Festival (Plovdiv), Plovdiv Jazz Nights, the Opera Open Festival Plovdiv, the International Folklore Festival Plovdiv, the Vegetable Orchestra (Vienna), Stavanger Jazz Forum, Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli, Compagnie Ghislain Roussel (Luxembourg), Tallinn Music Week (Estonia), and International Atlas Symphony Orchestra (Germany).

All the partnerships we have established and plan to establish are based on the idea that European Capital of Culture is a stimulus for sustainable transformations in the cultural sector of the city. We aspire to use the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation as a networking platform which connects local cultural operators, institutions and artists with organisations working on similar issues from abroad. Establishing these contacts on a long-term basis beyond 2019 is an essential factor for future cultural development and intercultural dialogue in Plovdiv.

13) In what way is the proposed project innovative?

Looking for solutions to overcome the challenges and gaps in the socio-cultural environment of Plovdiv, we came up with different innovative strategic approaches, which will form the basis for creating an enabling environment for change, stimulating civic engagement, generating creative synergies and effective **togetherness** among all social and ethnic groups:

Working Together

In a city like Plovdiv where people often have a difficult time working **together** the ECoC project has turned

into the uniting force, forging the **togetherness** that we strive for.

Breaking down borders

Recognizing culture as a basic instrument for achieving social proximity and dialogue regarding minority groups in the city, is an important step in dealing with problems of integration. The innovation in the project cluster Mahala for example lies in the implementation of a holistic approach, aiming at breaking the vicious cycle of illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and social and cultural isolation by creating innovative solutions in the fields of education and the local economy and by encouraging participation in socio-cultural processes.

Building Capacity

Learning from the experience of other ECoC we are planning to focus on capacity building through the Capacity Building and Audience Development strategy (CABADEPLO), an innovative tool-set to foster skills, abilities, processes and resources of local and regional organisations, communities and individuals. Examples from our artistic programme are Stollywood (Film, theatre, photography academy in Stolipinovo), Circamion Circus School, and a one-on-one mentoring programme in schools as well as art management training programmes and cross-institutional cooperation networks which are essential for the successful development of projects like Plovdiv Biennial and Museums of Europe.

Digital strategy / Developing audiences

Digital innovation offers a new basis for education and capacity building (e.g. in Adventures in the Museum Land) and an innovative approach for audience development. For example, in Digital Tunnel we plan to use augmented reality and tools like Google Glass, which according to experts, will be cutting-edge technology in the next five years.

Cross-cutting

The interdisciplinary interaction between

artists, citizens, business and creative industry representatives, environmentalists, entrepreneurs, and scientists is quite new to our community and will help to find innovative approaches towards cultural and other challenges.

Contemporary mindset

Finally, our efforts at thinking in a contemporary, up-to-date way, instead of, as it was, being wrapped up in routine and backward-looking thoughts of past days of glory, are innovative for Plovdiv.

Our approach to the future, with the project ECoC as a stepping stone, is to apply culture as a strategy to support even seemingly culture-unrelated issues and thus tap into what seems to be a valid approach in other European countries. Through this innovative approach the residents of our city will have the chance to experience new cultural and social activities and values, add new experiences to their lives – and by their united effort and energy put the city back on the map of European cultural cities. It is what we owe to Europe.

14) a) If the city in question is awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, what would be the medium- and long-term effects of the event from a social, cultural and urban point of view?

Our ultimate goal is to use the potential of culture for change. The programme of Plovdiv 2019 should preferably lead to a transformation of people's perception of their city and their own role in cultural life. We believe that this mentality transformation is the key to long-term changes in politics, policies, social issues, education and citizen's participation which are all ways to put Plovdiv on the cultural map of Europe as a vibrant cultural destination. Other sectors which will be influenced by ECoC in the

long run are ecology, tourism, economy and urban infrastructure. With the aim of changing Plovdiv into a desirable place to live we also expect to influence some of the alarming demographic problems such as the brain drain and the departure of young people. We expect the following positive changes in the cultural, urban and social sector, some of which have already begun:

CULTURAL EFFECTS

- The title would be an important step in decentralising cultural life which is traditionally concentrated in the centre. Our programme covers neighbourhoods, towns and villages around Plovdiv and will stimulate culture in the region.
- A keyword in our programme is “access to culture”. Our projects are not only geographically close to people but are also oriented towards diverse groups and communities, their needs and interests, and towards stimulating citizens' participation in cultural life (e.g. the project cluster Mahala or Art E.R.).
- Through offering innovative artistic projects we also strive to approach people who are currently not connected to cultural life. This way we will develop new audiences and new forms of participation (e.g. Chitalishta and Ayliak City).
- Through intercultural dialogue and co-operation at European level we will stimulate the local scene and young artists on the one hand; on the other, we aim at artistic excellence that can attract audiences from all around the world (e.g. Plovdiv Biennial).
- A Cultural Strategy for the next decade has been developed in a parallel and connected process including over 80 representatives from the cultural sector and several public round table discussions. The strategy connects the medium- and long-term objectives of the ECoC with an action plan that will be implemented irrespective of the outcome of this bid.

The medium-term cultural effects of the

title include connecting local, regional and international artists and operators in order to develop an international network that allows co-operation on a European level. The long-term effects will be the increased visibility of local cultural production in Europe and a mentality transformation towards culture.

URBAN EFFECTS

- An important aspect in our programme is the re-thinking of architecture and cultural heritage and putting them into a contemporary context. Abandoned buildings like the tobacco warehouses (project Tobacco City), Bratska Mogila and Kosmos Cinema (project 4GET), the Kapana district (trapApart) will be revived through contemporary art, architecture, dance, and theatre.
- The European Capital of Culture is a chance to re-establish an old but often forgotten relationship between the six remaining hills of Plovdiv and the city (e.g. Crossing Hills, Crossing Centuries). The projects in the cluster River of Imagination aim at re-integrating the Maritsa River and Adata Island into the heart of the city by artistic interventions and urban development.
- In order to create more space for culture, existing art spaces such as the Ancient Bath, the concert hall and the building of the Union of the Plovdivian Artists will be renovated and new ones will be built. We also plan the construction of a mobile multifunctional stage for concerts and contemporary dance which can be moved to different places. The building of two temporary exhibition halls to host, for example, the Plovdiv Biennial is also among the planned infrastructure measures.

The infrastructural projects and urban innovations the city plans will open up space for the large-scale projects of 2019. Moreover, the new structures will not only remain beyond 2019 but also provide a basis for further cultural development. This in turn will attract

investors and visitors and stimulate the economy of the city in the long run. Our projects will increase people's sensibility to urban changes and development.

SOCIAL EFFECTS

- ‘Plovdiv Together’ is about social change. One of its medium- and long-term effects is the change that it can bring about in breaking up the segregation and exclusion of different social groups in Plovdiv: e.g. minorities and underprivileged people with low education (e.g. Mahala project), disabled people (Art E.R.), and different generations (Backyard Stories). The ECoC programme will create more active participation among these groups through involving them in the process of making culture.
- One of our goals is to involve many citizens, provide opportunities for cultural entrepreneurship, and increase the mobility of culture and audiences in the city. Through innovative, participative and international projects such as Lummix, Plovdiv Biennial or the European Fairy-Tales in the Rhodope Mountains we aim to enhance the attractiveness and quality of life in the city which will stimulate young residents to become more active and change the demographic structure of participation in and production of cultural products.
- Plovdiv 2019 will urge and support the development and implementation of important infrastructure projects and foster cultural entrepreneurship to boost the local economy creating new job opportunities for the unemployed, for the educated who need more professional qualifications and for professionals who are needed for new sectors of the creative industries. In order to guarantee the sustainability of the effects of ECoC we have developed a platform for capacity building – CABADEPLO – which is incorporated in all our projects and is oriented towards creating new audiences and stimulating cultural management capacities.

In the long run the European Capital of Culture can have an effect on people's image of their city, their self-confidence and motivation to stay in Plovdiv. This can lead to a decrease of migration from the city and to an increase of people who settle here.

14) b) Do the municipal authorities intend to make a public declaration of intent concerning the period following the year of the event?

The City Council of Plovdiv has unanimously signed a Declaration of Intent, which states the commitment for the period following the year of the event as follows: "We guarantee that we will work for the sustainable development of culture in Plovdiv throughout the candidacy period of the city for European Capital of Culture, both in 2019 and in the subsequent years so that Plovdiv remains one of the most significant European cultural centres."

15) How was this application designed and prepared?

Delivering this bid was anything but a simple task. For a city where 10 people have 11 opinions on the same subject getting this far is a triumph in itself. But this experience showed us that we can work together and that all the goals we have set for ourselves and for our city are attainable as long as we use the right tools to activate Plovdiv's sleeping potential.

It all started in 2010 when a group of Plovdivian artists and intellectuals united their efforts and decided to work for the city's bid for European Capital of Culture. This grassroots movement received the support of the municipal authorities and the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation was established soon after. Several of the artists, writers,

journalists, and activists who initiated this process remain to this day part of the organisation's Board of Directors.

In the first stages of its work the foundation launched an open call for project ideas about the general concept of Plovdiv's ECoC bid. 35 teams and individual authors participated in the contest and the ideas from their proposals were used in the next step of the development of this application. Apart from that, over 120 people took part in public discussions, brainstorming sessions and round tables aimed at determining the bid's focus and objectives. These events were led by professional moderators and the results were incorporated into this book.

All of these public discussions made us realise, however, that it was crucial to start working on what we identified as problems in Plovdiv's cultural sector right away, not through discussions, but by offering opportunities to the cultural operators to increase their cultural capacity. As a result in 2012, the foundation initiated a funding programme for cultural projects aligned with the concept of Plovdiv's bid. This ensured the participation of more cultural operators and helped in the capacity-building process in the cultural sector. Local artists and institutions played a very active role in the preparation of the bid with over half of the projects in the artistic programme coming from them, while the rest were developed by the foundation's artistic team aligned with the objectives of the bid and based on input by local citizens and European partners.

While in the first stage creating the overall frame of the programme by collecting interesting ideas was the priority, during the second stage we invited the local and international artists and institutions to develop their project ideas further in concrete details and involve European partners. In March, April and May 2014 over 50 individual and group meetings took place with representatives of most of the cultural institutions and partners

in the city who are also involved in the proposed artistic programme. Among them were Plovdiv's community centre network (Chitalishta), the national and municipal cultural institutes like State Opera Plovdiv, Drama Theatre Plovdiv, State Puppet Theatre Plovdiv, the Regional Historical, and Ethnographic Museums, the National Aviation Museum, the Museum of Natural History and multiple smaller, privately-funded cultural operators such as the Art Today Association, Kosmos Collective, Studio 8½, Hamalogika, the Open Arts Foundation, the One Foundation for Culture and Arts, and the Ideas Factory Association. They have all contributed to the proposed bid with projects, ideas, and manpower.

The second level of work on this bid involved engaging citizens of all ages and backgrounds: as volunteers, ambassadors and most importantly, participants in the development of the bid. The Foundation took part in the organisation of many local events and festivals thus creating a wide network of volunteers. Additionally, meetings were organised with social and activity clubs for the elderly in Plovdiv and the surrounding region, local student and volunteer organisations like AIESEC, National Alliance for Volunteer Action, and Rotary Club Plovdiv. The Foundation currently works with over 100 volunteers of all ages who participate in events supporting the city's ECoC bid.

We were surprised by the effect the application process has had on Plovdiv's citizens. At first they were cautiously hopeful. After Plovdiv became one of the shortlisted candidates in December 2013, however, they finally allowed themselves to hope that something good could happen in our city. In the past few months, dozens of people have visited the Blue House, sent us emails and Facebook messages simply to wish us luck and to offer assistance in any way they can. Even on the local political scene Plovdiv's candidacy managed to unify political parties from the entire

political spectrum represented in the Municipal Council in support of the cause.

In parallel to the bidding process the Municipality of Plovdiv has developed a cultural strategy for the period 2014-2024 including over 80 representatives of the cultural sector in a series of specialised work groups and public discussions. This highlights the city's willingness to start the long-term process of transforming traditional models in cultural policies in Bulgaria and in Plovdiv and has connected the bid with all major cultural, educational and touristic operators in the city.

On an international level we are thrilled that we have managed to involve numerous artists, artistic collectives and organisations in the development of this application and the artistic programme. Some of our partners like SIGNA, raumlaborberlin, art.homes, and Centre international pour les theatres itinerants are just a few examples of artist groups that have actively participated in the development of project concepts proposed in the artistic programme.

Our connections with the Italian candidates were strengthened as well. During the second stage of the competition cooperation agreements on specific projects were developed with all of the shortlisted Italian cities: Cagliari, Lecce, Matera, Perugia, Ravenna, and Siena. It was decided that projects for 2019 will be developed together and cultural operators from Plovdiv and the Italian cities will be encouraged to cooperate more closely.

This bid is Plovdiv: a celebration of all that it is, and a hope for all that it could be. We are humbled by the overwhelming enthusiasm, and positive support we have found along the way. Every contributor inspired us to be more creative and to aim higher. For this we are profoundly grateful.

II. Structure of the programme

1) What structure does the city intend to give to the year's programme if it is designated "European Capital of Culture" (guidelines, general theme of the event)? How long does the programme last?

The storyline

The programme of Plovdiv 2019 is dedicated to what might seem a banal task at first sight: bringing Plovdiv together – which is not only the slogan but the general theme of the event. All the events and projects in our programme follow the basic storyline: We want to **fuse** the groups in Plovdiv to create 'Plovdiv Together' which leads to a will to **transform** the urban space into a shared place for people, which in turn helps in **reviving** the identity and the sense of ownership of culture and heritage and helps us **relax** in these times of pressure in order to create sustainable growth and development on a human scale *with* and *for* the citizens which again helps to **fuse** the different groups in the city closer together...

The structure

The projects and project ideas are structured in four project platforms (FUSE, TRANSFORM, REVIVE, RELAX), which comprise a total of 12 project clusters including initiatives, events, festivals, framework programmes, and social activities.

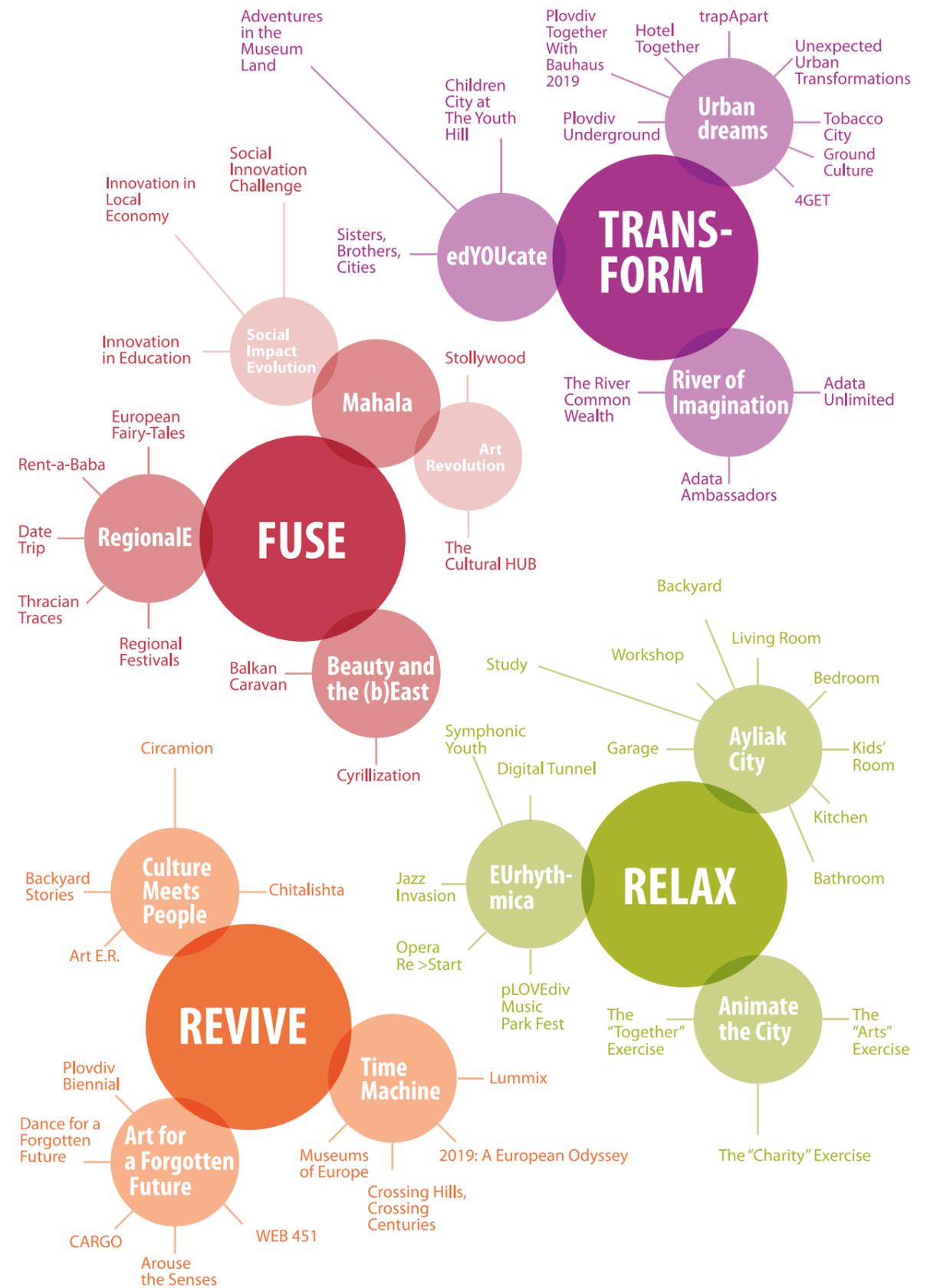
FUSE is the project platform that covers integration between ethnicities, generations, territories, different social groups and religions. Our goal is to bring the communities and generations closer, to overcome inertia and exclusion, to create a more positive perspective and confidence in regards to the city, so that

citizens develop a sense of place and identity, a sense of ownership and community, not only locally, but also with our fellow Europeans. The project clusters are **Mahala – The Neighbourhood, Beauty and the (b)East, and RegionaLE**.

TRANSFORM means the re-thinking and re-cycling of forgotten and unused urban spaces, as well as new ways of perceiving them. Transform is also about new approaches to education and youngsters, transforming citizen's perspectives and opportunities. Project clusters here are: **Urban Dreams, edYOUcate, and River of Imagination**.

REVIVE focuses on finding new ways of preserving and presenting the past and the tangible and intangible heritage in the contemporary context: making it a part of everyday life rather than just a tourist attraction. Revive is aimed at motivating people to participate in culture and at bringing culture to where the people are – thus integrating it more into everyday experience. The project clusters dealing with this issue are: **Culture Meets People, Time Machine, and Art for a Forgotten Future**.

RELAX is dedicated to the necessity of converting Plovdiv into a city with a sustainable development, providing a high well-being index for its inhabitants and visitors, free time for slowing down the tempo, doing sports and attending cultural activities. Why not show how a city on the "edge" of Europe can become a good example through finding lifestyles and production methods in line with the Europe 2020 vision of "sustainable, smart and inclusive" growth? Basic project clusters: **Ayliak City, EURhythmica, Animate the City**.



The setting

Partners: Beneath each of the project clusters we have listed ‘confirmed partners’. This means, all of these partners have been contacted and have agreed to get involved and work with us on the projects if Plovdiv will be ECoC 2019. Many of these partners have given their input and ideas on the projects.

Projects: So far most of the projects we are presenting are at a conceptual stage – we have the idea, the vision and the partners we will organise them with. Some are already up and running, for example Social Innovation Days, trapApart, and some others. We have deliberately avoided mega-events that do not link in with our objectives. However, we will develop our programme further if we are selected and will include ‘missing’ projects.

Basso Continuo: The underlying key note in all of the projects is the strategic approach to the long-term development of capacity and new audiences. The programme for Capacity Building and Audience Development Plovdiv will be developed alongside the projects and integrated into them, facilitated by a CABADEPLO coordinator in the structure of the organisation.

European and Balkan connections: As we were developing our project concepts we were confronted again with the fact that it is much easier to find partners in Western and Central Europe than it is to find partners from Balkan countries. We will continue our efforts to link our projects with partners from Eastern European and Balkan countries. Plovdiv 2019 is a chance to turn around the habit of artists and organisations from the Balkans to ignore cooperation opportunities with their next door neighbours.

Producers: Most of the projects will be produced as either productions from our partners or co-productions between the Foundation and one or more partners. Only a limited number of projects will be produced by the Foundation itself.

European relevance: In the process of transforming the objectives into project concepts we have focussed on themes that are important for Plovdiv but also relate to

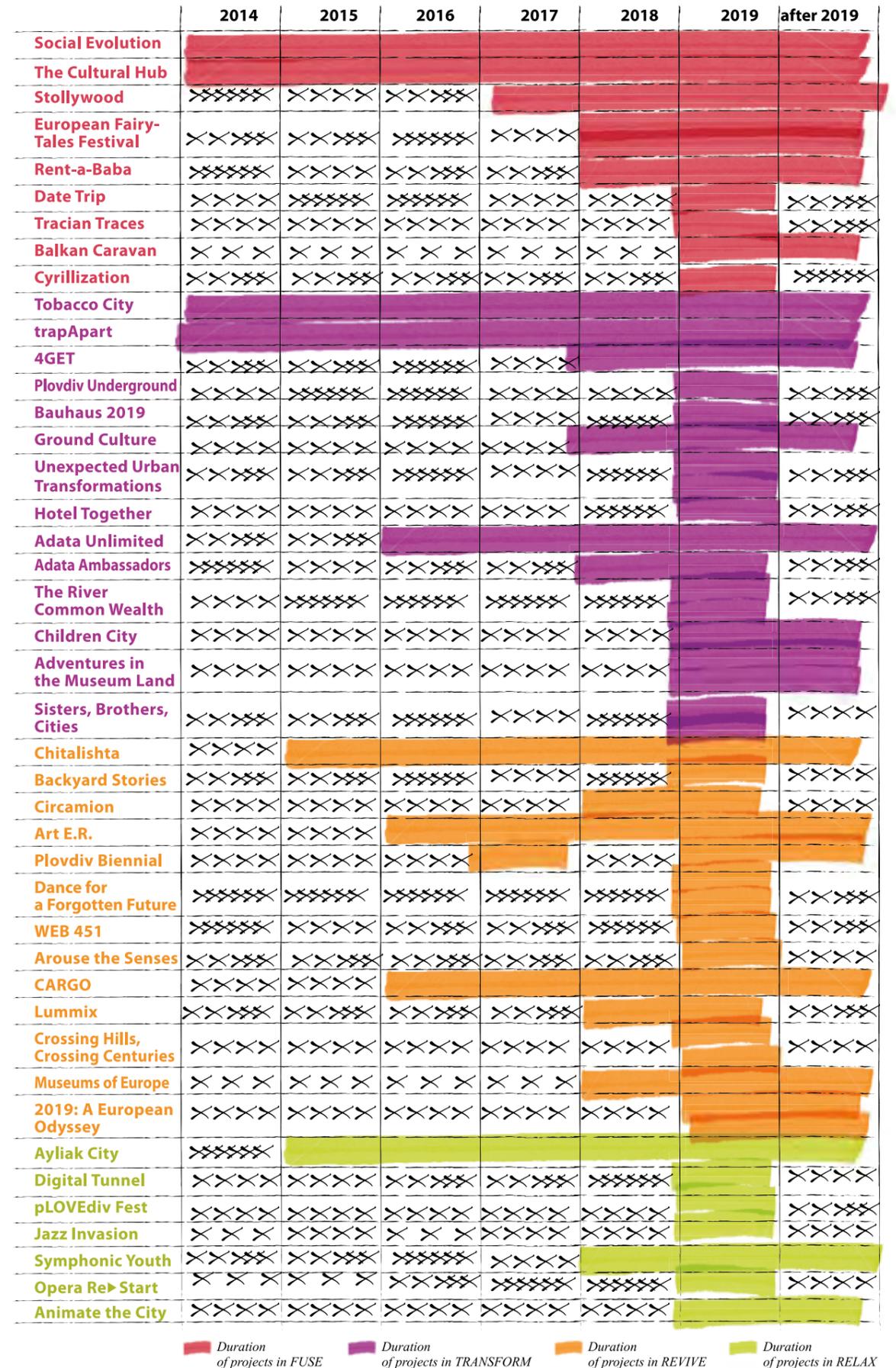
the bigger picture of issues being discussed and tackled in other parts of Europe – this is what made it easy to find partners all over Europe who are eager and enthusiastic to work with us on our themes since, as they often told us, they could easily relate to the subjects or had already worked on similar issues in other countries.

The duration

The programme will start in January 2019 and run through the whole year until the end of 2019. However, sustainable structures need time to grow which is only possible in a long-term approach. Thus some of the projects will start in the period 2015-2018 and will go on beyond 2019 – especially the projects which focus on social issues and urban development, but also networks, cooperations between institutions and structures established during the ECoC phase (see timeline overview). The main focus for the audience-related programme will lie in 2019. We plan to open the programme officially in January 2019 and synchronise it with the opening of the Italian ECoC. The ceremony will include the ritual burying of a time capsule which will be opened in 2032, when Bulgaria will host the ECoC event for the second time. In keeping with our goal to decentralise cultural life, the opening will include parallel events in different districts in the city.

2) What main events will mark the year? For each one, please supply the following information: description of the event / date and place / project partners / financing

The main events that will mark the year are laid out in the overview timeline to the right and on the following pages. Some of the additional projects we propose are to be found on the supplement pages I - X scattered throughout the artistic programme.





breaking down borders between social, ethnic and minority groups to create 'Plovdiv Together'

Mahala

Art and Culture for Togetherness

The inclusion of Sinti and Roma communities with their specific life-style is a pan-European issue. In Plovdiv the Roma population is considered to be close to 80,000 which means about 20% of the city's total population. Many of them claim to be of Turkish or other origin and only a small percentage self-identify as Roma. In Plovdiv these communities are concentrated in four areas: Stolipinovo, Sheker Mahala, Hadji Hassan Mahala and Arman Mahala. With its population of over 45,000 people, Stolipinovo is one of the biggest ghettos on the Balkans. We use the word "ghetto" because few non-Roma ever go there and inhabitants are often 15 or 16 years old before they even set foot outside of the neighbourhood.

There have been many initiatives in the past but with the enormous driving force that the European Capital of Culture title constitutes, we are about to embark on a much more sustainable, integral and coordinated approach towards the inclusion of segregated minorities in Plovdiv that – if successful – will be shared as best-practice example with cities in South-Eastern and Central Europe, where similar problems occur.

Thanks to functioning best-practice examples of Roma integration (e.g. the Health and Educational Mediators Network, the 'Land – Source of Income'-Foundation in Plovdiv working on the rural level) we know that sustainable development can only be achieved using an integrated long-term approach with educational, economic and cultural tools, establishing a trust-based relationship with the community, not looking for quick results, but focusing on the big picture instead.

European Capital of Culture will be a stepping stone in this strategy especially by bringing different actors in the city to work together and combine different approaches. The programme we envisage integrates two essential steps for a sustainable development:

- ▶ Art Revolution: Stolipinovo Cultural HUB + Stollywood (theatre, film and photography academy)
- ▶ Social Impact Evolution: Innovation in education + Innovation of local economy + Social innovation

ART REVOLUTION

THE CULTURAL HUB

Within the last couple of years an abandoned building in Stolipinovo has been cleaned and partially refurbished by local Roma leaders

with the support of Plovdiv's Municipality. Last year Plovdiv 2019 became an active part of this process by signing a cooperation agreement with the local organisation now officially responsible for the building's management. Gradually this place is being recognised as a centre for community life where people can celebrate their rituals and organise community events.

Plovdiv 2019 will develop the building into a socio-cultural centre for the Roma/Turkish community in the city. The process of rebuilding it will actively involve representatives of the local Roma and Turkish communities in cooperation with the Berlin-based architecture studio **raumlaborberlin** and the architect **Martin Kaltwasser**. With the participation of local key players and the **raumlaborberlin** experts a community space and a children's playground will be built from found objects and waste materials. The urban transformation of the Roma neighbourhood will be based on the needs and ideas of the local community (the need for a playground where children can play safely was expressed by many locals during our work visits in the community). The hub's role will be to empower the community and foster civil participation and decision-making through the following elements:

- ▶ A hub for connecting activities in Stolipinovo to others in the city; a place for networking, debates, lectures, conferences, exchange of experience and information – all based on alternative techniques such as Forum Theatre (after Augusto Boal), which turns the audience into active decision-makers capable of solving real social problems, methods including Community Mapping, Open Space Technology, the World Café dialogue methodology, and others;
- ▶ Roma Radio headquarters: with our partners from **Radio Partin Amsterdam** we will create a radio programme, stream news, popularise the ECoC artistic projects in Stolipinovo and establish connections with different Roma communities in Europe;
- ▶ An interactive multimedia exhibition/oral history project celebrating the culture and traditions of the Roma/Turkish communities – an attractive centre for both local people and tourists;
- ▶ A Healthcare centre offering health-education courses and campaigns (on personal hygiene, prevention of unintended pregnancy, drug addiction, STDs, etc.) also for consultants and

multipliers in the community;

- ▶ Space for artist residencies (community and international);
- ▶ A space for community art: Stollywood, Community Theatre, knowledge-transfer workshops between professional artists and amateurs – education for talented young people;
- ▶ A hall for exhibitions and presentations, gallery space and stages for innovative artistic projects: the Hub will be a co-working space for the arts and the creative industries;
- ▶ A café and a restaurant offering traditional Turkish and Roma cuisine.

STOLLYWOOD

Together with our partners from **Independent Theatre Hungary** we will create the Stollywood Academy where Roma youth will get the chance to participate in the production of short films and theatre performances, and learn basic theoretical and practical cinematography and take part in photography workshops. We would like to involve renowned Romani filmmakers like **Emir Kusturica**, **Danis Tanović**, **Tony Gatlif**. The Slovakian Roma Photographer **Artur Čonka** has already expressed his interest in the project. This project will help young people express themselves artistically and share their world, lifestyle and opinions with a broad audience. Through a series of qualification courses in acting, photography, costume design,





Roma family
in Stolipinovo

screenwriting, make-up, editing, etc. young people will develop professional skills. At the final stage of their work the students of the Stollywood Academy will present photography exhibitions, short films and theatre performances – coproductions with students of the Plovdiv Arts Academy, under the co-direction of professional film and theatre directors involved in the project. The films' premieres will take place in their own neighbourhood first and then spread to other parts of the city, the country and Europe through our partners. A selection of Stollywood's artistic products will be presented at the **World Roma Festival Khamo** in the Czech Republic in 2019/2020.

With the **Community Theatre** project director **Brian Michaels**, founder of the first immigrant theatre in Germany, Teatro Siciliano/Gallus-Theater, will create performances throughout the neighbourhood, inviting both visitors and residents to tour the "unknown Roma world" through various forms of expression, including music, song, dance, images, colour, smell, food, and soundscapes. The performance will be a long-duration art work that will take all day or night to perform. **Other community art activities**, part of the Stollywood Academy's programme in cooperation with **Hungary Independent Theatre** include: **Re/Public Art** (fine art made from pre-owned materials); **Community Cinema** (videos about street events involving locals); **Street Art** (mural painting on walls or other outdoor objects to help the locals change and enliven their surroundings); **Community Music** (musical instruments made from used available materials, allowing many people to create music together).

SOCIAL IMPACT EVOLUTION

Together with our partners from the **Ideas Factory**, **LEAD International**, the **Roma**

Education Fund and the **Youth Club ROMA Plovdiv** we have developed a complete set of innovative educational and social solutions since art and culture are proven strategies. However, in this specific community they also have to be accompanied by a social dimension in order to create a more sustainable basis.

Innovation in EDUCATION

The Mobile Educational Centres in Stolipinovo will be co-facilitated and used by students of all ages: children, teens and adults. Shifting the leverage point in education could profoundly change the situation of the Roma population not only in Plovdiv. Stolipinovo's educational centres will facilitate access to education, provide useful and practical skills (such as computer skills or specific crafts, help with writing a CV or preparing for an interview, all depending on the community and the labour market's needs) and include community leaders as part of a peer-to-peer learning process. Within three years we expect a 15% decrease in school drop-outs and an increase of 15% in the rate of literacy and employability among adults. This project will be connected to the Chitalishta project where innovative educational methods such as self-organised learning environments will be implemented.

Innovation in LOCAL ECONOMY

A project platform focused on creating financially-viable microbusiness models to build new community skills. Local small businesses will be marketed with the help of creative entrepreneurs and innovative products through a well-facilitated community decision-making process.

The profit will be partly reinvested back into the community's wellbeing. Another planned project is a micro-financing model for women including basic financial training, thus empowering the most vulnerable groups in the communities. One of the social-enterprise ideas that will be implemented is the BPO – business-process outsourcing, in which people of all ages can gain basic computer skills and literacy while at the same time earning a living. An employment platform will be created in cooperation with our regional partners from the **Indi-Roma 97 Foundation** that will connect jobs in the business sector, municipal and governmental institutions and NGOs, with unemployed people after they have participated in special educational programmes and qualification courses.

SOCIAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE

The project applies a process-oriented approach that will mainstream design-thinking for social change by involving the potential of citizens and communities willing to tackle real challenges for marginalised groups and look for solutions **together**. Volunteer participants from around the country will be challenged to find an innovative solution to a specific problem in Stolipinovo in a 3-day blitz game-like format by analysing the environment. The

best ideas will be presented to and get the support of the local government, business organisations, and NGOs. The first edition of the Social Innovation Challenge took place between 11 and 15 April 2014 and by turning it into an annual event we hope to engage more citizens to become active participants in the process for cultural and social change. This project aims at creating new support microsystems and re-evaluating obsolete social services, as well as generating innovative approaches for involving businesses in project sponsorship.

The **Changemakers Academy** helps young professionals develop personal and interpersonal skills necessary to catalyse social change. The traineeship programme focuses on achieving social change, methods for bottom-up decision-making and networking events while implementing original group projects ideas. Ten of the teams which took part in the Social Innovation Challenge in 2014 received scholarships for the first edition of the **Changemakers Academy** in Plovdiv (6 - 10 June 2014). At the annual **Empatheast** Global Social Innovation Summit, starting in October 2014 in Plovdiv, social-innovation leaders from around the world will present their research at an international conference. They will also mentor local projects, created during the **Social Innovation Challenge Days** and the Changemakers Academy.

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

AMDFA - Academy for Music Dance and Fine Arts (Plovdiv, BG), Artur Conka (SK/UK), Brian Michaels (DE/UK), Bulgarian Network for Civil Dialogue (BG), Caravan Circus Network (Brussels, BE), Centre for Interethnic Dialog and Tolerance Amalipe (Veliko Tarnovo, BG), Ideas Factory (Sofia, BG), Independent Theatre (HU), Indi-Roma 97 (Kuklen, BG), Kemal Ataturk Chitalishte (Plovdiv, BG), Land Source of Income Foundation (Plovdiv BG), LEAD International (London, UK), Martin Kaltwasser (Berlin, DE), Network against poverty – Lecce 2019 (IT), Radio Patrin (Amsterdam, NL), raumlaborberlin (Berlin, DE), Roma Education Fund (HU), Sounds of Minorities - Perugia 2019 (IT), Tolerance Foundation (Plovdiv, BG), World Roma Festival Khamoro - Slovo 21 (Prague, CZ), Youth Club ROMA - Stolipinovo Association (Plovdiv, BG)

Budget:

Programming: 2,050,000 EUR

Infrastructure budget: 500,000 EUR (Investments in Stolipinovo)

RegionaleE

RegionaleE is a platform that will increase the visibility of 80 local festivals, cultural, touristic and social projects from the entire Plovdiv region. It will highlight and celebrate the diversity of European culture, and the positive effects may be able to offer a remedy to European regions with similar problems of depopulation and aging.

Plovdiv is located between two of the most important mountain ranges on the Balkans – the Rhodope Mountains and Stara Planina (also called the Balkans, which gave the entire peninsula its name). Although the villagers in these mountainous areas have preserved their specific traditions to date, their songs, customs and dances are in danger of vanishing when the older generation can no longer pass them on to the younger ones due to depopulation caused by unemployment and poor infrastructure.

The RegionaleE cluster includes a series of projects that will offer innovative strategies to preserve and present this variety of traditions, arts and crafts with the active participation of local people in collaboration with European artists and anthropologists. Plovdiv 2019 will focus on creating mobile apps, touristic routes and transportation methods to promote the events as well as a digital art map of the region providing information about current events.

EUROPEAN FAIRY-TALES IN THE RHODOPE MOUNTAINS

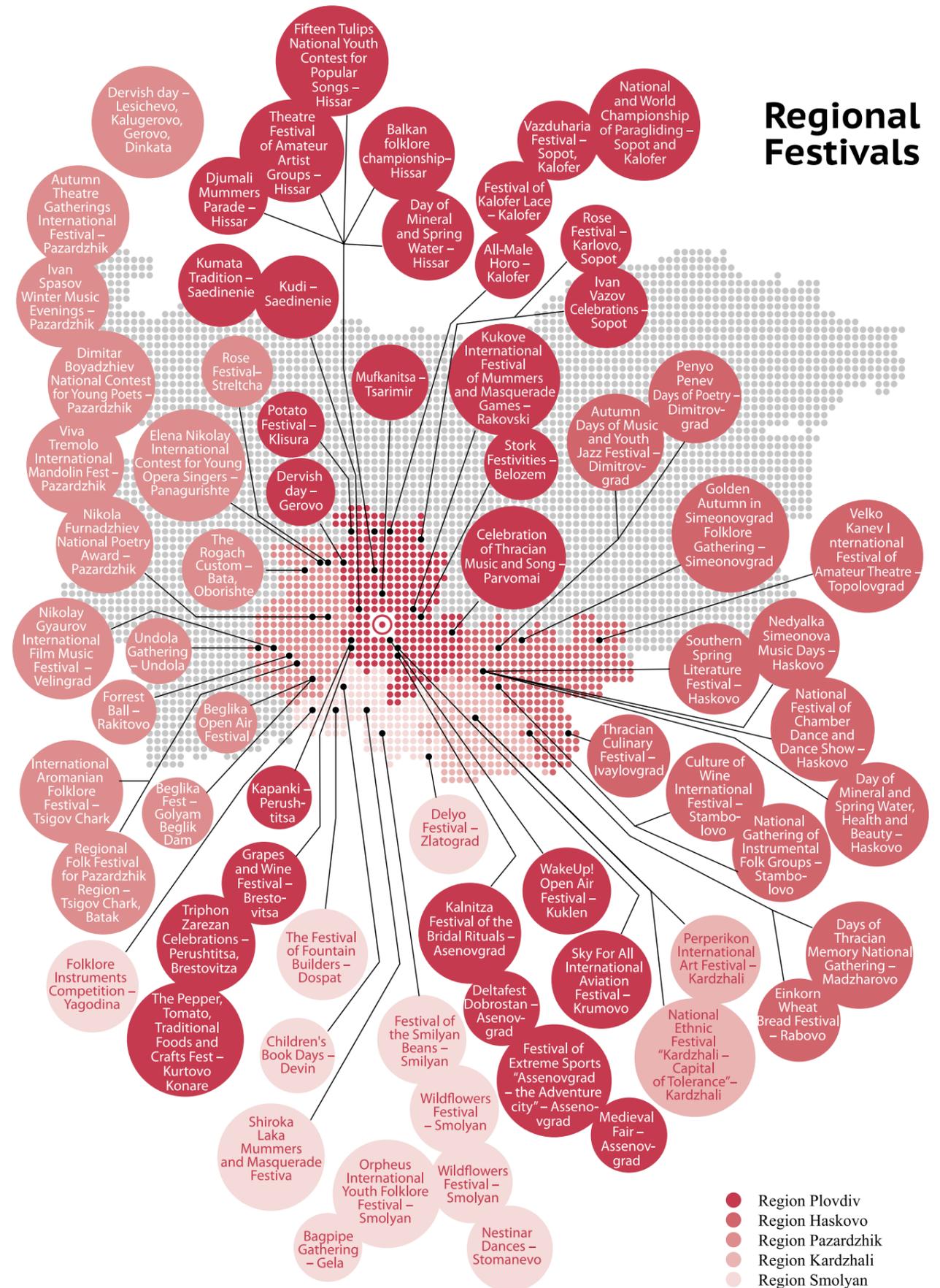
The European Fairy-Tales is a project presenting storytelling traditions from all around Europe as a way to connect people from different generations, ethnicities, countries, and regions. The project aims at preserving the rich narrative tradition of Europe by collecting fairy-tales, fables, myths, and stories from all parts of the continent, and placing them in a contemporary context. Together with our international partners **La maison du conte Bruxelles**, **La maison du conte France**, **Aprika (Latvia)**, **Théâtre de Chemins (France)**, **Fabula Storytelling (Sweden)** we will present the rich diversity of European storytelling and its common origins to locals and tourists in and around different villages in the Rhodope Mountains. Stages of the project development:

- ▶ Local and European artists and anthropologists will compile an archive of rare and unique songs and fairy-tales from

different regions and an interactive website will be created where users can experience the fairy-tales in an interactive format;

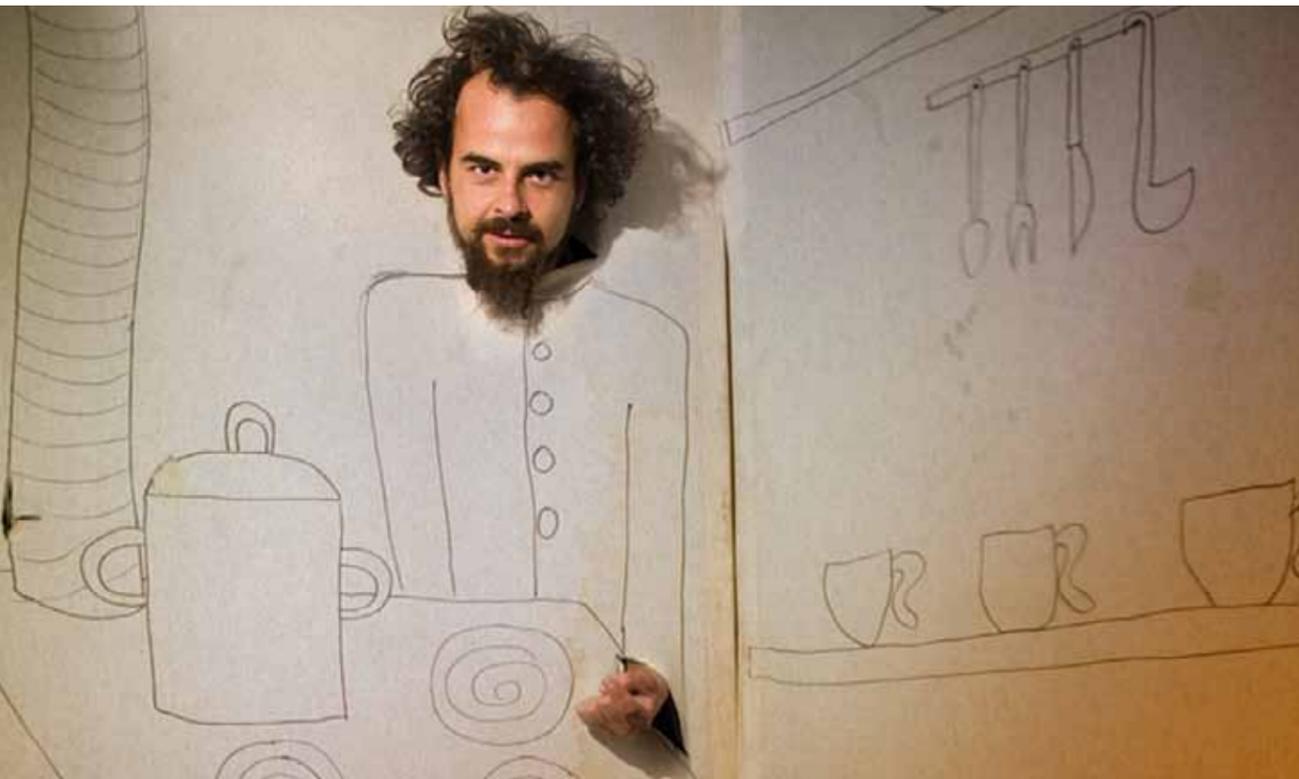
- ▶ Workshops between participating international artists will transform the collected material into a series of artistic interventions in the mountain villages. An example of this will be the **Rhodope Labyrinth** project by the Bulgarian theatre company **4TUNES** in collaboration with international partners such as **FLUXUS 2**, **UNIVERSITUR**, and **Asociatia Smart for Change** which will create interactive sensory-labyrinth performances, based on anthropological studies of the region. An online platform will document and support the organisation of the different stages of the project. The work with local contributors and audiences will build capacities and develop new practices for cultural participation.
- ▶ Processing the collected material into a travelling-theatre programme, storytelling performances and concerts which will be presented on different routes throughout the Rhodope Mountains.
- ▶ The climax of the festival will be in the Rhodope village Gela with intercultural projects such as site-specific installations,

Regional Festivals



puppet shows, shadow theatre, sensory-labyrinth theatre, storytelling performances, concerts, dance performances, exhibitions, and workshops in traditional Rhodope crafts like doll-making and production of traditional musical instruments.

5. Creating a European travelling programme: In partnership with the **CITI network** the artistic production will be presented on the artists' way back from the Rhodope Mountains to other European countries.



Sensory Labyrinth Theatre

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Aprika (Riga, LV), Asociația Smart for Change (Bucharest, RO), Asociația Universitar (Bucharest, RO), Bulgarian Tourist Union, Centrul de Resurse pentru Comunitatea Roma (Cluj-Napoca, RO), Cie du Théâtre des Chemins (FR), CITI - Centre international pour les théâtres itinérants (Paris, FR), Elektrana - Centre for Development of Electronic Art and Culture (Novi Sad, RS), Fabula Storytelling Festival (Stockholm, SE), Fluxus 2 (Hamburg, DE), Ideas Factory (Sofia, BG), La Maison du Conte de Bruxelles (BE), La Maison du Conte (Chevilly-Larue, FR), Municipal Enterprise for Tourism (Plovdiv, BG), Orpheus 2019 - Perugia 2019 (IT), Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" (BG), State Puppet Theatre Plovdiv (BG), Tourism Council (Plovdiv, BG), Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (Sofia, BG), all municipalities and festivals in the region

Budget:

Programming: 1,000,000 EUR

RENT-A-BABA

'Baba' is Bulgarian for elderly lady, grandma

The Rent-a-baba project will invite young creative people and recent graduates from various fields, like design, anthropology, psychology, and architecture to take part in an innovative residency programme at elderly people's homes in the almost abandoned villages in the Rhodope region. The young people will engage in cultural and social projects with the village inhabitants thus improving their living conditions in a sustainable way by generating cultural events, innovative social services or products that could benefit the local community. Through communication in social media and blogging, the participants can also attract other young creatives to the villages. The project will be a great opportunity to preserve and pass on the oral and intangible heritage (songs, fairy-tales, myths) of the depopulated villages in the region.

DATE TRIP

Date Trip is an alternative to traditional tourism – an online portal for those who want to experience a different way of travelling through the region and meet new people. Using the digital platform – Date Trip – people will be able to upload information about the regional festivals they want to visit, when they plan to go, and with what kind of vehicle. In this way they will be able to connect with people with whom to travel or stay overnight. DateTrip is based on the popular ideas of carsharing and couchsurfing, but is designed especially for the Regionale project and will connect people with similar interests from around Europe allowing them to explore our region together.

THRACIAN TRACES

A joint project with the Italian city of Perugia celebrating Italian/Bulgarian ancient heritage by focusing on Etruscan and Thracian cultures. On Bulgaria's side, Thracian sanctuaries throughout the Rhodope Mountains will be used as venues for exhibitions, concerts, and film screenings. Together with local and Italian musicians we will organise a series of musical performances in ancient Thracian shrines, associated with the mystical poet and singer Orpheus. The project will be accompanied by permanent and travelling exhibitions between the two countries, connecting local historical and archaeological museums as well as universities for related research projects.

Pomaks (Muslim ethnic group) in the region of Plovdiv



Beauty and the (b)East

Beauty and the (b)East is a cluster that will present the beauty of the distinct culture and traditions of the Balkans not only to a Western audience, but to Eastern Europeans, who barely know their neighbours. Balkan music, design, crafts, architecture and contemporary art will offer the audience a different point of view on the Balkans and Eastern Europe: as an attractive, culturally and ethnically diverse region. The proposed projects are an opportunity to build a platform for knowledge-exchange between artists, producers and citizens and create much-needed trans-Balkan networks. The Balkans share a common space and history but between the countries there are many unresolved problems. We often forget that there is more to unite than to divide us. Plovdiv stands together with the Balkans, the Balkans together with Europe.

BALKAN CARAVAN

The Balkan Caravan platform has the potential to become a sustainable project that will continue well after 2019. The main goal is to establish a network of Balkan institutions, artists and cultural operators and to stimulate collaborative projects such as travelling exhibitions, performances, dance and theatre events, wine tours, and research projects. Future European Capitals of Culture in the Balkans and the surrounding area can relay the initiative, thus securing the sustainability of this project. The initiatives within Balkan Caravan will be: **TransBalkanExpress** is a project developed in collaboration with **art.homes (Munich)** in which Balkan artists and curators will travel in caravans around all of the countries in the region, live and work together and develop their projects inspired by the different cities they visit. The final stop on their artistic journey will be in Plovdiv where they will share the results of the project and later show the exhibition in other countries to promote both the ECoC and Balkan art. **Spotlight on the Balkans** aims at stimulating local festivals to present Balkan culture and exchange know-how and content with partners from the region. The two big international events in Plovdiv **One Architecture Week and One Design Week** for example will dedicate their programmes on Modernist Architecture

in the Balkans and Traditional Balkan crafts and contemporary design.

Plovdiv Calling Balkan Music is a platform for ethno and Balkan brass music. Additionally, we will organise an online contest for electronic mixes with traditional Balkan elements. We will also publish a music compilation of the selected pieces. We plan to invite famous DJs and musicians some of whom – including **DJ Shantel, Fanfare Ciocarlia and Goran Bregovic** – have already confirmed their interest in the project.

Days of Turboculture will combine subcultural music that emerged in the Balkans after the democratic changes in 1989 – turbo-folk and manele – (called Chalga in Bulgaria), with more “serious” musical genres such as jazz and classical music.



Bulgarian bagpipes called “gayda”

CYRILLIZATION

To highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe and celebrate the Cyrillic script this project will use guerrilla interventions by artists and ordinary citizens in order to “Cyrillise” posters, signs, stickers, banners or even restaurant menus which use Latin script. The signs will include lines from popular song lyrics, film quotes, sayings, or single words that may provoke the viewer’s interest, translated and transcribed into Cyrillic and accompanied by a “Need help?” caption and a QR code leading to a website, specially set up for the project. The signs can be placed on walls, windows, street signs, or on public transport.

The project’s preparation stage will be carried out in cooperation with the Bulgarian Diplomatic Missions abroad and the cultural hubs of Bulgarian communities living abroad. The **Tatkovina Radio** station for Bulgarian expats, and their network will help with the popularisation of the project. We already have the confirmation of Bulgarian schools, newspapers, magazines, websites, and other partners of Tatkovina Radio in Spain, Hungary, France, Greece, Austria, Denmark, Cyprus, and the Czech Republic. On the Cyrillization website and through a specially-designed app people will be able to upload their signs, translate them for those who cannot read Cyrillic, use functions

such as transliteration, translation, search for signs by location, and share pictures and locations of the signs. Additionally, rare Cyrillic fonts from old books and street signs will be digitalised and opened up for public use on the project’s website.

Cyrillic street art in Plovdiv



Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Agricultural University Plovdiv (BG), AMDFA - Academy for Music, Dance and Fine Arts (Plovdiv, BG), art.homes (Munich, DE), Association of Bulgarian Schools Abroad (BG), Balkans Beyond Borders (Athens, GR), Balkan Civil Society Development Network (Skopje, MK), Balkan Trafik Festival (Brussels, BE), Belgrade International Architecture Week (RS), Goran Bregovic (BA), GRAD - European Center for Culture and Debate (Belgrade, RS), DJ Shantel (DE), “Dobrin Petkov” National School of Music and Dance (Plovdiv, BG), Ensemble Trakia (Plovdiv, BG), European Fund for the Balkans (Belgrade, RS), Istanbul Design Week (TR), Micro-Capitals - Matera 2019 (IT), Municipal Enterprise for Tourism (Plovdiv, BG), One Foundation for Culture and Arts (Sofia, BG), Skopje Design Week (MK), Tatkovina Radio and its international network* (Plovdiv, BG), Tirana Architecture Week (AL), Zeppelin (Bucharest, RO)
*Associations of Bulgarians in Tarragona, Castellón de la Plana and Valencia (ES), AIBE Balcan Xativa in Xàtiva (ES), Bulgarian Schools in Nicosia and Moscow (CY, RU), Bulgarian Sunday Schools in Linz, Graz, Athens and Valencia (AT, GR, ES), GRReporter.info in Athens (GR), Hemus Magazine in Budapest (HU), Malko Teatro Bulgarian Theatre in Budapest (HU), Mission Bulgaria Association in Paris (FR)

Budget:

Programming: 1,000,000 EUR

TRANSFORM

transforming the city and the people
through urban development and education

Urban Dreams

Artistic interventions in the public space

Through artistic intervention, the project cluster Urban Dreams will revitalise and open up dysfunctional spaces, buildings and objects as parts of a “parallel abandoned city”. These will be interventions on a local level but there is an undercurrent connected to the narrative of the transformation of public space in European cities and in particular the transformation of cities which carry the mark of 40 years of communism. For the projects in this cluster we will work with local and international partners and artists in order to exchange know-how and best practices as well as to open up a discussion on the European level about problematic architectural heritage in the contemporary context.

Abandoned buildings from the recent past, some of them prominent architectural achievements (e.g. tobacco warehouses, Bratska Mogila monument, Kosmos Cinema, Kapana – The Trap neighbourhood) will become spaces for cultural activity and social interaction. We will build on the experience of the recent citizen’s campaign to save and re-cycle the Kosmos Cinema building – an example of how civic action can turn into a successful model for preserving cultural heritage. Our goal is to re-think and re-cycle new spaces for art and culture.

TOBACCO CITY

In the very heart of Plovdiv there is an area that fascinates with its past beauty and smell of tobacco: the so-called Tobacco City. These tobacco warehouses were built by a local investor as production sites for the Bulgarian tobacco industry. He used the income to fund a nearby hospital also built by him, which is the first example of a social enterprise in Bulgaria. The unique tobacco warehouses from the 1920s, with a few exceptions, are now abandoned, many of them in extremely bad condition. Some have already been demolished and others restored without consideration of restoration standards to become office and luxury

residential buildings. Although they are acknowledged cultural-heritage monuments, all of them are privately owned, which is also the reason for their uncertain future. This is a common problem in most post-communist countries. The project will be looking for artistic mechanisms to not only focus attention on this specific problem, but also to point out the clash between architectural heritage and the economic interests of the city – a relevant topic in many European cities. Tobacco City is a project about the preservation of a vanishing city through multi-genre artistic actions, installations, exhibitions and research. It will consist of the following steps:

► **Stand up for the Tobacco City!** The first step towards re-thinking and preserving

the warehouses is to raise awareness amongst citizens. We plan to organise presentations, lectures and discussions about the history and architecture of the area. The first planned events will take place in July 2014 when the established Bulgarian writer and filmmaker **Penka Kalinkova** will present her documentary *The Tobacco City* and will do a tour in the area. We will also install large-format archive images on the facades of the buildings in order to show what they looked like in the past. We plan to organise discussions about the future of the buildings on a regular basis. The second step will be the launching of a crowdfunding campaign collecting funds for buying at least one of the buildings and transforming it into a centre for culture and arts. For the project **Stand up for the Tobacco City!** we will work with **Workshop for Civic Initiatives Foundation (Sofia)**.

► **Vanishing memories** – We are aware that by 2019 some of the buildings might have undergone an “un-cultural” gentrification process. That is why we plan to start a research project with historians, architects, urbanists and artists which will result in open-air exhibitions in different parts of the city in order to “bring the Tobacco City to the people”. All information and materials from the research will be made available on the interactive online platform “Tobacco City – Vanishing Memories” where people will be able to take virtual tours, submit personal stories, photos and ideas for “re-cycling” the buildings.

► **Window to the World** – This project, developed in collaboration with **Stiftung FREIZEIT** (Berlin), derives from the idea that windows are the eyes of the city. Each window in the Tobacco City will become a small stage or a canvas – for example a musician will play on the first window, the second will be occupied by a light and sound installation, in the third there will be a theatre scene etc.

► **Urban incubator** in the tobacco warehouses – a temporary home of art projects (artists will apply with proposals to realise their short-term projects from

three to six months). The project will aim at transforming the interior, creating temporary installations, sculptures and gardens, preserving the authentic part of the tobacco-production spaces and converting the warehouses into interactive museums.

Artistic intervention Space for Art, occupying the tobacco warehouses and claiming them as spaces for culture





*The Rubber Gallery
in Kapana*

trapApart – KAPANA CREATIVE DISTRICT

Kapana is a neighbourhood in central Plovdiv. A couple of centuries ago it was the trade area of the city. Due to its position close to the pedestrian zone in the city centre, Kapana is congested with cars and its spirit remains invisible. The name Kapana (Bulgarian for “trap”) comes from the tight and meandering streets where it is easy to get lost. The buildings in the Kapana are primarily narrow two or three-floor houses dating from the beginning of the 20th century, often with small shops at street-level. We plan to bring it back to life through art and culture and to establish it as the first creative industries district in Bulgaria. The first step was the open call by Plovdiv 2019 in April 2014. Ten creative entrepreneurs won a studio/office grant for one year. Our goal is to stimulate them to stay after the grant ends and to attract many others to settle in the area. We also plan to connect all “creative inhabitants” and organise different joint events – from open-door days to Kapana Festival which will have its culmination in 2019.

In the development of this project we are working closely with local partners – the **One Foundation for Culture and Art** who brought their activities from the architecture, dance and design weeks to Kapana, and with **Kanape studio** that started the Incubator project – a co-working space for cultural workers, musicians and artists. Furthermore we established contacts with similar projects in other European cities such as **Cultural Kitchen (Helsinki, Finland)**, **Lighthouse (Brighton, UK)** and **The bRAIn, Ravenna 2019 (Italy)**.

PLOVDIV UNDERGROUND

There are air-raid shelters under four of Plovdiv’s hills: Sahat, Nebet, Dzhabaz and Taxim Hills. These are huge spaces, carved in the rocks where hundreds of people could find shelter. They were built in the 1950’s, but nowadays they are empty and only used for occasional emergency trainings. We want to re-discover these spaces by organising interactive performance installations and reality and documentary theatre performances. Visitors will be invited to register for a night underground tour without knowing the exact locations. At each of them there will be performances, exhibitions, music, light, sound and video performances that will be developed to affect the visitor’s fantasy and psyche. A team of artists, curators, directors, stage and light designers under the guidance of our partners from the **Atelie Plastelin Foundation** will create these tours that will evolve throughout the year.

4GET

4GET focuses on four emblematic Socialist buildings that are abandoned and unused today. These are the Bratska Mogila monument, Kosmos Cinema, the Christening House and the former Kishinev Restaurant. The Bratska Mogila monument and the park around it will become a place for public art and sculpture, which we plan to realise with our partners from Sculpture Network e.V. (Germany). In cooperation with **The Red House Centre for Culture and Debate (Sofia)** and the **Time to Talk (European Houses of Debate) network** we want to transform the Christening House into a place for discussions and debates. The Kosmos Cinema will become a centre for independent cinema and video art. The Kishinev Restaurant will be an exhibition hall for contemporary art. The four buildings and their organisational structures in partnership with the **Open Arts Foundation (Plovdiv)** will interact closely in order to create a strong and diverse artistic programme which will guarantee their sustainable transformation from abandoned spaces into places for art.

PLOVDIV TOGETHER WITH BAUHAUS 2019

Bauhaus was an important movement and marked the beginning of classical modernism in Europe. It is unknown to most people that Bauhaus is strongly represented in Plovdiv’s architecture. The city will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Bauhaus movement in 2019 by organising exhibitions, workshops and Bauhaus theatre.

Bratska Mogila monument



GROUND CULTURE

Building on the existing initiative to re-cycle the Kosmos Cinema's building, together with the **Kosmos Collective** (a group of architects who initiated the citizen's campaign to save the building), further steps will be made to address the interests and the needs of the community through architectural methods, particularly oriented towards young people. Apart from being a centre for film and video art, the cinema's halls and the surrounding space will become a place for architecture and art, design, educational courses and literature.

UNEXPECTED URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

This project will turn unused objects like abandoned old cars on the streets of Plovdiv into artistic spaces – mini libraries, children's climbing frames, mini-gardens, mini-street-cafés.

HOTEL TOGETHER

A hotel in Plovdiv will be transformed into an artistic residence and a centre for culture, offering unusual accommodation and involving guests in the cultural events taking place in the city. Hotel Together will be based on our partner's **art.homes** original idea and longstanding experience with the project "Zimmer frei".



Public art in Plovdiv

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Ancient Plovdiv Municipal Institute (BG), Anemic Festival (Prague, CZ), Art Today Association (Plovdiv, BG), Basilicata Border Games - Matera 2019 (IT), Buglarian Network for Civil Dialogue (BG), City Art Gallery Plovdiv (BG), Cultural Kitchen (Helsinki, FI), ECU The European Independent Film Festival (Paris, FR), Estonian Urban Lab (EE), Incubator & Kanape Vibrant Media (Plovdiv, BG), Kosmos Collective (Plovdiv, BG), Lighthouse (Brighton, UK), Linnalabor (Tallin, EE), Martin Kaltwasser (Berlin, DE), Meme Exchange Assotiation (Ravenna IT), On the docks/The bRAin - Ravenna 2019 (IT), Open Arts Foundation (Plovdiv, BG), Reinventing Utopia - Lecce 2019 (IT), Sculpture Network (Munich, DE), Stiftung Freizeit (Berlin, DE), TAC Theatre (Valletta, MT), The Red House Center for Culture and Debate (Sofia, BG), Time to Talk - European Houses of Debate Network (Vienna, AT), Umedalen Skulptur (Umeå, SE)

Budget:

Programming: 1,500,000 EUR
Infrastructure: 100,000 EUR (Refurbishment Kosmos Cinema),
1,000,000 EUR (Refurbishment tobacco warehouses)

River of Imagination

While in most cities the river is usually the backbone on which the city's development is based, in Plovdiv the Maritsa River is not really connected to the cityscape. It is one of the most important elements in Plovdiv's ecosystem, but the citizens have lost their emotional connection to it. In recent years there have been several projects for infrastructural changes, but none of them have been implemented due to various obstacles – among them property issues. This is why we believe it is high time we started a process of revitalisation of the river and the Adata Island, using culture, art and green innovation. River of Imagination is concentrated on converting these areas into an urban oasis: attractive showcases of European re-cycled and green art, inspiring innovation in cutting-edge technologies, sustainable design, architectural strategies, a place for alternative tourism, educational and socialising tools for improving the relationship between nature and city.

The Maritsa River (480 km) is the longest river in the Balkans. It starts from the Rila Mountains and flows through Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece.

ADATA UNLIMITED

The Adata Unlimited project will declare the 90,000 m² Adata Island an autonomous state of unlimited art and green innovation. It will become a sovereign territory within the city, an open space for creativity, green and site-specific art and architecture with its own eco-policies and infrastructure, legislation, currency (barter of ideas, services, goods, and art works) and a financial system, as well as its own art and eco police authorities (protecting the clean environment, artistic freedom and independence). ADATA's citizens will leave no waste and find sustainable, nature-inspired ways to create. Implementation phases of the project:

- In 2015 our partners from **Wasteland Twinning** will start researching and archiving Adata wasteland narratives, focusing on the island's historical past when it used to be a recreational space for Plovdiv's citizens;
- From 2015-2017 the accessibility of the island will be given through boats, rafts, and the construction of eco bridges, all of which will be based on respect for eco-system diversity. Launched in cooperation with the local architecture **studio 8 ½** and the **Association for Building with Natural Materials** a process

- for restoration/creation of cycling and jogging paths, active/residential zones will begin. The ecological footprints will be monitored by nature-conservation NGOs such as **Za Zemiata (Friends of the Earth, Bulgaria) and Green Balkans**.
- From 2017 to 2019 a team of European ecologists, botanists, landscape architects and designers will work on the creation of permanent eco-settlements on the island's territory. Residential spaces, activity and workshop zones (e.g. an eco-library, organic farm, recycle workshop) will be constructed using innovative and sustainable natural building practices, re-using existing wood and waste material and the existing buildings. An open call will be launched for co-creation projects between designers, architects, scientists and environmentalists, focused on developing self-sustaining power and water generators and a zero-waste management system;
- In 2018-2019 in cooperation with various partnering residency, contemporary-art, and architecture platforms (**Nosadella. due Independent Residency for Public Art, < rotor >, reSITE**) European artists from all disciplines will be invited to become citizens of the Adata Island Nation. They will be able to apply for temporary citizenship and their innovative projects will be assessed by an expert jury. A one-

week visa will be issued to all guests and visitors on the island. From April to September 2019 the Adata Island Nation will offer a vibrant artistic programme, attracting Plovdiv's locals and also visitors to (re)discover the island and the river.
 ► After 2019 the island will provide recreational spaces and activities for people from all ages and backgrounds (alternative eco-tourism, water sports, island activities: farming, open-air exhibitions, cinema and theatre) actively engaging the citizens to maintain and develop the island's programme.



Adata Unlimited illustrations

ADATA AMBASSADORS
 The Adata Island Nation will have its very own diplomatic mission along the Maritsa River, popularising the island's eco-friendly policies and artistic creations through official visits, travelling exhibitions and participation in related festivals and events throughout Europe. The **Wasteland Twinning** project will connect Adata with abandoned areas in six different countries, exchanging know-how and databases, and streaming split-screen parallel twinning events and ceremonies through the **Homy Island International Television Network Platform**.

THE RIVER COMMONWEALTH
 Along the Maritsa River natural and artificial art zones will be created as a continuation of the Adata art state to form a "River Commonwealth". They will vary in form and size: from 1-square-metre floating platforms for art installations to an entire stage in the river. Together with our partners **Estuaire Nantes and reSITE** we will use breakthrough technology to design a temporary stage from re-cycled materials – a space that will interact with both the ecology of the river and the urban environment. The stage will be used for performances, film screenings, presentations and discussions while also functioning as a water-purification system for the Maritsa River which will have a zero carbon footprint. Several interdisciplinary workshops reflecting

innovative technologies and artistic approaches, and promoting sustainable development will attract the participation of citizens. Together with the **Architecture Film Festival Rotterdam** we will make a selection of Bulgarian and European themed films, reflecting the topic of the city/nature interaction.

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Architecture Film Festival Rotterdam (NL), Architecture studio 8 ½ (Plovdiv, BG), Art Today Association (Plovdiv, BG), Association for Building with Natural Materials (Sofia, BG), Estuaire Biennale d'Art contemporain (Nantes, FR), Federation of Nature Conservation NGOs Green Balkans (Plovdiv, BG), Greenpeace Bulgaria (Sofia, BG), Linnalabor (Tallinn, EE), Nosadella.due (Bologna, Italy), One Foundation for Culture and Arts (Sofia, BG), Regional Chamber of Architects (Burgas, BG), reSITE (Prague, CZ), < rotor > (Graz, AT), Wasteland Twinning Network (Berlin, DE), Za Zemiata/Friends of the Earth Bulgaria (Sofia, BG)

Budget:

Programming: 1,300,000 EUR

edYOUcate

For us one of the most important target groups is children and young audiences since their participation in the programme will determine the future of the cultural legacy and the artistic platforms in Plovdiv and Europe. The projects included in the edYOUcate platform will give youngsters the means to develop their creative potential and create joint productions with professional artists. Together with all schools in the city we will initiate a programme, where a few hours of the weekly school schedules will be dedicated to ECoC art and cultural events, in which all students can participate. The edYOUcate cluster will encourage partnerships between cultural and educational institutions, foster an interest in arts among young people. Additionally, it will stimulate cultural institutions to adapt and modernise the content of their programmes according to the needs of younger participants.

In parallel to all projects in the cluster we will organise a one-on-one mentorship programme between artists who take part in the artistic programme and students from Plovdiv's schools and universities.

CHILDREN CITY AT THE YOUTH HILL

On the highest of Plovdiv's seven hills, often called the Youth Hill, we plan to create an entire city for children following the model described in Gerd Grüneisl and Wolfgang Zacharias's book "The Child City: A School of Life" and building on the expertise of our partner **Kinderstadt Halle (Saale)**, Germany. Usually children and young people are not encouraged to participate in political and public life. The Children City at The Youth Hill will give them a much-needed opportunity to assume the power of governing a city which will help them learn more about their civic rights regarding participation. Children between 6 and 15 will establish the city governance on their own – they will elect a mayor, create their own currency, vote for a local government, and create radio and TV stations. In contrast to the adults' world, in the Children City they can change their profession on a daily basis – one day a painter, on the next a taxi driver, an artist or something else. In their free time they can attend art performances created by their fellow children citizens. The design of the Children City will be based on the work that German architect **Martin Kaltwasser** will co-create with groups of children. A group of architect

students, guided by him will turn the children's vision of their city from paintings and clay models into reality. The existing children's railway will be used as a means of transportation within the Children City. An important part of the city's life will be the inclusion of creative productions which will be part of Plovdiv 2019's artistic programme. There will be guest performances and programmes for the young audience, artists will be invited for cooperation and production of artistic TV and radio programmes in the Children City. Parallel programme: In the outskirts of the Children City there will be a so-called parentgarten (an alternative to a kindergarten), where parents will have the opportunity to play, communicate with each other, exchange ideas and participate in lectures on different topics. Adults will only be allowed to enter the Children City with a visa valid only for a few hours.



Cardboard train project, Plovdiv

ADVENTURES IN THE MUSEUM LAND

In collaboration with the local museums, galleries and libraries and inspired by collaborative work with our UK-based partner **The Mighty Creatives** this project will create a series of interactive and interdisciplinary installations for the younger audience. Each event will have an informational and educational purpose which corresponds to a certain museum/gallery. With this project we want to inspire and help organisations develop skills that will enable them to adapt their presentations for a young audience. Game developers will create an alternate-reality treasure-hunting game as part of the **Plovdiv Game Jam** event, with hidden clues in the museum exhibits and the library's books. The game will include online and offline elements:

email communication with fictional characters, real-life museum exploration and examination of exact replicas of the exhibits included in the game. Participants will be able to put themselves into Indiana Jones' shoes using various tools of exploration, navigation and communication to solve puzzles and uncover hidden messages – inside the museums and on the Internet.



The Rubber Gallery in Plovdiv

SISTERS, BROTHERS, CITIES

The **Spectra Foundation** of Plovdiv-born composer and conductor **Viktor Ilieff** will use its excellent connections with leading international artists to work with young people from Plovdiv's and the region's European twin cities in the creation of high-quality multimedia performances, attracting a wide spectrum of European audiences. The international artists' cooperation with young Europeans will include art workshops, experimental art labs and residences designed in partnership with leading institutions in the respective countries (for example our partners **Korniag Theatre, Compagnie Ghislain Roussel, Accademia di Napoli**). The final artistic product will be presented in each of the participating European twin cities.

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli (IT), AMDFA - Academy for Music, Dance and Fine Arts (Plovdiv, BG), Atom Theatre (Sofia, BG), Bulgarian Museum of Aviation (Krumovo, BG), Compagnie Ghislain Roussel (LU), Festa dell'Europa - Perugia 2019 (IT), Il Faut Bruler Pour Briller (Paris, FR), Kinderstadt Halle (Halle/Saale, DE), Kleines Thalia Theater (Halle/Saale, DE), Korniag Theatre (Minsk, BY), Martin Kaltwasser (Berlin, DE), Pistamashina (Sofia, BG), Plovdiv Game Jam (BG), Regional Natural History Museum of Plovdiv (BG), Soft Touch Arts (Leicester, UK), Spectra Foundation (Plovdiv, BG), State Puppet Theatre Plovdiv (BG), Student Theatre of Plovdiv University (BG), Theatre Research Laboratory (Istanbul, TR), The Mighty Creatives (Leicester, UK), The Spark Children's Arts Festival (Leicester, UK), all museums in Plovdiv

Budget:

Programming: 750,000 EUR

REVIVE

bringing culture and heritage back
into everyday contemporary life

Culture Meets People

This project cluster will use art and culture as a force for building stronger communities and improving citizen's access to culture. The projects aim at breaking down the boundaries between audience and performers. Artists will find ways to physically involve the audience in performances through innovative approaches and locations. Inhabitants of more distant areas and suburbs and residents of social institutions who have never experienced interactive performances will start dialogues with international artists for the first time in order to highlight and share their social and cultural diversity. The performers will play the part of researchers encouraging citizens to express themselves, to talk to each other, become a living community, celebrate their differences, and increase not only their sense of belonging to the city, and to Europe, but also their sense of individuality.

CHITALISHTA

Chitalishta are small community centres whose network dates back to the second half of the 19th century. They played a crucial role in preserving Bulgarian culture during the Ottoman period. This project is focused on the restoration of the original functions of the Chitalishta network (about 35 in and around Plovdiv) creating a sustainable model through innovative practices. We want to create a network of decentralised cultural centres with an attractive artistic atmosphere, allowing Plovdiv's citizens and visitors free access to art and culture. We will work towards:

Creating a Brand

In order to turn the Chitalishta network into a herald of social change and develop their potential for educational activities, it is necessary to increase their recognition value. We will create a distinct brand that will make them

recognisable in the urban environment as places for culture and community development. Additionally, a radio show "Pulse" and a monthly magazine will draw attention to the cultural programme of the entire Chitalishta network in Bulgaria. We will build on our partners' experience from **Kosice 2013's SPOTs project**. The French architecture team **Encore Heureux** and their Bulgarian colleagues from **Transformatori** will help us work on Plovdiv's Chitalishta network's visual identity and on improving their facilities. In addition, workshops with local citizens will generate creative ideas for their redesign and renovation in cooperation with cultural-management platforms such as, **Kulturexperten** and **ZASTO KULTURA?** (English translation: 'Why culture?') we will also include capacity-building training and educational programmes to create sustainable know-how for project implementation.

Community

Together with our partner **Community Arts Lab XL** and **Soft Touch Arts** we will design a knowledge-and-skill-exchange platform for people from different sectors and generations. For example, the **Art Patronage** project will connect volunteer designers, architects, and artists who will help disadvantaged people change their environment thus increasing their well-being index. With our partner **Smart Kolektiv** we will revive the old Bulgarian custom "sedyanka" in the form of a social enterprise in which young and senior citizens gather to socialise and manufacture products used to support the Chitalishta. We will also organise monthly **Creative-Drink/Dinner** soirées modelled on Detroit Soup and also organise other socialising and fundraising events to encourage local communities to come together and to attract visitors.

Innovation

To meet modern challenges, the Chitalishta network needs to become relevant to people's cultural and artistic needs by introducing new creative practices, residential programmes and innovative methods in education – for example Suggestopedia, Autodidacticism and Self-Organised Learning Environments. Exploring "Avant-garde in the performing arts" in collaboration with the **Nomad Dance Academy**, a residential platform that will bring experimental and borderline forms of contemporary art to spaces inside and outside the Chitalishta, will be established.

BACKYARD STORIES

The goal of this cooperation project between Plovdiv 2019 and **Community Art Lab- XL Utrecht** is to highlight the hidden treasures of the multicultural neighbourhoods of the city. Visitors and locals will explore the city and its (minority) communities on a surprising alternative city tour by visiting areas off the beaten tracks. The tour will be guided by inhabitants of the neighbourhoods

who will take the visitors on a unique journey through different multi-ethnic traditions and historical city memories, fictional and ordinary everyday scenes. However, the alternative city tour will go far beyond storytelling and getting to know the city's current ethnic minorities. It will also explore the traces left by groups that are disappearing or have already disappeared (Jewish, Balkan, Czech, Italian minorities). A series of exhibitions and site-specific installations, based on interviews, short documentaries and pictures presenting the rich cultural background left by these invisible minorities will be placed in some unusual spaces – e.g. a bar in a garage, the backyard of a Turkish family, the Armenian community centre, and many others.

Following the tracks of disappearing minorities visitors will pass by the school-yard, where the Jewish community was rounded up under guard in 1943, when the Nazis issued an order for their deportation. Visitors will "meet" the historical figure of Kyril, Metropolitan Bishop of Plovdiv, climbing over the school fence and promising the Jews that he would find help. This profound act of compassion, which stopped the deportation of all Bulgarian Jews, will be re-enacted in the school where these events took place as a theatrical performance, accompanied by interviews with survivors, who owe their lives to Kyril's bravery. This performance will be developed by **Brian Michaels**, known for his theatre research and performance projects, often featuring non-professional actors from minority and migrant groups.

Next stop for participants in this unusual Plovdiv tour will be a journey through time and space with the artistic group **SIGNA**, who will tell the story of a "parallel" multi-ethnic city, revealed through an Armenian family's story, told on different locations in the city. The family's tale intertwines with the fates of historical figures and regular citizens, familiar or little-known events from Plovdiv's past. By placing its performance

installations in different locations in the city, SIGNA will blur the line between fiction and reality and will create a special atmosphere in which citizens and guests will experience the spirit of the city in an unusual way. The audience will participate actively in the performance and change the storyline – they will be able to visit a Turkish home in the Hadji Hassan neighbourhood, become a part of a Jewish ritual, stop for a break at an Armenian café or celebrate a three-day-long Roma wedding. SIGNA will confront audiences with a radical language that will provoke their emotional

and physical participation. The viewer will have no choice but to concentrate and reflect on their position as a voyeur or an active creator of the performance. The alternative Plovdiv tour will be accessible for people from around the world through an online platform. An interactive 3D map and audio tours will be available for smartphones and will allow a realistic experience for guests, who may never have physically been to the city.

Chitalishta project



Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Community Art Lab XL (NL), Cultural Emergency Room - Siena 2019 (IT), DaDa Fest (Liverpool, UK), Encore Heureux (Paris, FR), Ivan Vazov National Library (Plovdiv, BG), Mainstream Partnership (Leicester, UK), National Institution Museum (Kumanovo, MK), Nomad Dance Academy Network (MK, SI, BA, BG), People's Chitalishte "Budeshte sega" (Gudevica, BG), raumlaborberlin (Berlin, DE), Shape Arts (London, UK), Signa (Copenhagen, DK), Smart Kolektiv (Belgrade, RS), Soft Touch Arts (Leicester, UK), SPOTs (Košice, SK), Transformatori (Sofia, BG), all Chitalishta in and around Plovdiv

Budget:

Programming: 968,000 EUR
Infrastructure: 200,000 EUR (Adaptation of the public spaces underneath the Odeon for cultural activities)

CIRCAMION

From traditional to contemporary, the circus world has a long history and has experienced its own evolution in Europe bringing about various forms of professional and social circus-schools. The Circamion uses the international language of circus to bridge cultural and religious gaps between different ethnic and social groups in the city (and Europe) and to celebrate diversity in a new manner. In 2016 international artists from the **Caravan Circus Network** will be invited as trainers and mentors in the international training programme, aimed at developing teaching skills for social-circus instructors and community workers. In 2017 the **Social Circus School** will open in the Roma neighbourhood Stolipinovo. A specially-designed programme will provide young students of the Social Circus School with training in different circus techniques (basic artistic and presentation skills, acrobatics, clowning, juggling, and puppetry) as well as enhanced career opportunities, solidarity and self-esteem. For the purposes of the Social Circus School a mobile circus building (a van expandable in the back, both sides and the top) will be designed by **raumlaborberlin**, an homage to the nomadic Roma lifestyle and suitable

for the needs of a travelling circus. The temporary circus construction will allow circus performances to take place in different spots in the city and the region, as well as across Europe. In 2019 professional European circus artists from the **Caravan Circus Network** and young trainees from multi-ethnic backgrounds from different neighbourhoods will create and present a series of artistic circus shows. Outdoor circus performances and street parades will be part of the regular circus programme. After presentations in different neighbourhoods in Plovdiv and the region, the circus performances will tour other cities in Europe.

ART E.R. (ART EMERGENCY ROOM)

Art E.R. will create a platform that increases the participation of disabled people in arts and culture in cooperation with our British partner organisations **DaDa Fest** and **Shape Arts**. Another important task of this platform, developed in cooperation with the **Centre for Culture and Debate Red House Sofia**, will be to create art-therapy activities, consistent with the needs of residents at social and health institutions (hospitals, nursing homes, social institutions for people with intellectual disabilities, correctional institutions) through different projects such as **After ART** which will

observe the interaction between art, therapy and art-therapy. Art-therapists will work with people with mental disabilities and psychological problems, and with the help of a curator, an exhibition of therapeutic art will be set up. **Mobile Art Labs for children with disabilities** will provide interactive training methods for therapeutic creative workshops with disabled children and children at risk. Art interventions including music therapy, sound installations in hospitals, therapeutic clowning, laugh and fairy-tale therapy will be part of the project. **Creative connection** will seek partnerships with European online platforms (like **Disability Arts Online**) thereby allowing visionary people with disabilities to generate a digital database of art works, raising awareness and inspiration about the creative potential of people with special needs. Online art therapy courses will additionally encourage the participation of disabled people in art and culture.



Street show Ognia during Theatir Festival, Plovdiv

Art for a Forgotten Future

This project cluster will breathe new life into the affluent past of the city, making it fit for the future through research and the presentation of the newest trends in all art genres and hybrid formats. It will involve the latest achievements of new digital and communication technologies, modern speech forms, experiments, science and psychology and their potential to bring new meaning to the cultural-historical layers of Plovdiv. This cluster demonstrates how innovative practices and creative decisions act as a means of dealing with serious local problems and present-day global challenges for a sustainable and creative city.

PLOVDIV BIENNIAL

One of the things we are most proud of in our city is that it has been a hub for contemporary art since the early 90s. The first centre for contemporary art in Bulgaria (The Ancient Bath run by **Art Today Association**) was founded in Plovdiv and it has been hosting the annual Week of Contemporary Art since 1994. We want to build on this “tradition” and become one of the centres for contemporary art on the Balkans and in Europe. Contemporary art for us is a way to build strong connections with Europe and make up for one of the biggest weaknesses of Bulgarian cultural life: the absence of a biennial and an established museum for contemporary art. In order to develop a concept for a biennial of national importance and to work together with the art scene and organisations from all of Bulgaria we organised a work session in March 2014. Participants in the meeting were internationally established artists, curators, gallerists and art critics with vast experience such as **Nedko Solakov, Iara Boubnova, Luchezar Boyadzhiev, Vessela Nozharova, Svetlana Kuyumdzhieva, Vera Mlechevska, Dessislava Dimova, Vesselina Sarieva, Emil Mirazchiev**. During this work session some important decisions were made that formed our vision for the Plovdiv Biennial. We agreed on a bottom-up approach in

which we will first make the local professional and non-professional audience familiar with the format. Here we are planning some warm-up events such as open discussions, presentations and artist talks. An international conference about the connection between biennials, cultural policies and urban development, and the opportunities and risks for biennials in smaller cities seemed to be a good starting point. In order to establish the Plovdiv Biennial and put it on the international map of biennials we plan to work with the larger biennials for contemporary art in the region – Istanbul, Thessaloniki and Bucharest. The event will also be incorporated in our strategy for capacity building. We will offer different educational and practical courses on art management and art handling as well as trainings for managers at museums and galleries. The large-scale event will include artist residences in order to start an intensive exchange between local and foreign artists. The format of the event will have no pre-fixed profile or frame so that future curators will have the freedom to develop their own concepts and guarantee the diversity of the biennial. We will develop a funding model combining institutional support and sponsorship, always based on the principles of transparency and artistic freedom, securing the sustainability of the event after 2019. Exhibitions, installations, performances and events will take place not only in the traditional exhibition halls

of museums, houses in the Old Town and other institutions but also in public spaces. We are planning the Biennial as a large-scale project that connects to and takes place in venues such as the tobacco

warehouses, the Adata Island, the hills, the socialist monuments in the city as well as the Kapana Creative District.



Exhibition Partida 4, One Design Week, Plovdiv

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

A.lter S.essio (FR), Ancient Plovdiv Municipal Institute (BG), Apartment Project (Istanbul, TR), Art and Cultural Studies Laboratory (Yerevan, AM), Art Today Association (Plovdiv, BG), Autumn Salon of Arts Plovdiv (BG), Center for Visual and Multisensor Art (Plovdiv, BG), Charlotte Auché (FR), City Art Gallery Plovdiv (BG), Dimitre Dinev (Vienna, AT), Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (Liverpool, UK), GeoAIR (Tbilisi, GE), Hermes Publishing House (Plovdiv, BG), Holon Institute of Technology (IL), Institute of Contemporary Art Sofia (BG), International Fair Plovdiv (BG), International Photo Salon Plovdiv (BG), Janet 45 Publishing House (Plovdiv, BG), Klaus Obermaier (AT), Lettera Publishing House (Plovdiv), National School of Stage and Film Design (Plovdiv, BG), Nosadella.due (Bologna, IT), One Foundation for Culture and Arts (Sofia, BG), Open Arts Foundation (Plovdiv, BG), Plovdiv Artists' Association (BG), Public Art Lab (Berlin, DE), Remont (Belgrade, RS), < rotor > (Graz, AT), Rouja Lazarova (FR), Sculpture Network (Munich, DE), transmediale (Berlin, DE), “Tsanko Lavrenov” School of Fine Arts (Plovdiv, BG), private galleries in the city

Budget:

Programming: 1,900,000 EUR
 Infrastructure: 500,000 EUR (Renovation of the Ancient Bath,
 995,000 EUR (Construction of Mobile Contemporary Hall for Culture)

DANCE FOR A FORGOTTEN FUTURE

One of the most important events for contemporary dance and performance in Bulgaria – the **One Dance Week** – will present a special edition in 2019 in order to celebrate the European Capital of Culture year. One Dance Week will be dedicated to new technologies in contemporary dance and the tension between the human body and technology, traditional and experimental dance techniques. Well-known performers such as **Klaus Obermaier** (Austria) and **A.lter S.essio** (France) have confirmed their interest in participating in the event if Plovdiv is selected as European Capital of Culture.

WEB 451

The contemporary world of literature is reshaping the way readers, authors, and publishers interact. It is a new age of “NETworked intelligence”. This creates new opportunities for spreading knowledge and creativity but it also raises questions about how writers, publishers, marketers, distributors, libraries, bookstores and readers will be affected. One of the most important questions is how the digital world will affect language, local traditional thinking, culture, and education. What social consequences will it have in a world where some people are “digital natives” while others are

“digital immigrants”.

This project for an international week-long conference will attempt to answer these and other questions. Renowned contemporary authors from the Balkans and Central Europe who do not write in their native language will discuss whether the digital and interconnected world will preserve multilingualism and how it will do so. Have writers from “small” countries given up writing in their native tongue in order to be accepted, accessible, and globally recognised? Bulgarian-born Austrian writer **Dimitré Dinev** and Bulgarian-born French writer **Rouja Lazarova** have confirmed their participation in the project. To reach a much wider global audience the conference will be broadcast live from Plovdiv with feeds from accompanying events from around Europe. These will include book presentations, public readings, short-story and slam-poetry competitions. Live Q&A sessions with authors on Twitter and Reddit will attract more participants and ensure wider participation. A website will be set up where all the information, talks, lectures, and seminars will be streamed live and afterwards made permanently available for users.

Exhibition at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv

AROUSE THE SENSES

This project aims to create open visual and multisensory experiments thus stimulating new aesthetic experiences through sensory modalities like tactility, sound, balance, taste, and smell. The project will be developed with the **Centre for Visual and Multi-Sensor Art in Plovdiv** and will connect art, medicine, neurology, and psychology.

CARGO

CARGO (Contemporary Art Register) is a project for developing an online database and archive of Bulgarian contemporary art. Portfolios of artists and curators, documentation from exhibitions and festivals will be uploaded to the CARGO platform which will become a network for connecting the local artistic scene with artists and curators from abroad making Bulgarian art more visible.



Time Machine

Although Plovdiv’s cultural heritage is a trademark of the city and is the most attractive feature as regards tourism there are many shortcomings in cultural and touristic offerings: historical sites, museums and institutions which are unpopular or forgotten - or just outdated. Through art in public spaces, light art, theatre, education and dialogue **Time Machine** aims at reviving the cultural heritage and connecting it to the contemporary context, and at “reactivating” it as one of the important resources of cultural potential and capacity of the city.

LUMMIX

Each one of us a little sparkle – all of us together a great light (Jewish proverb)

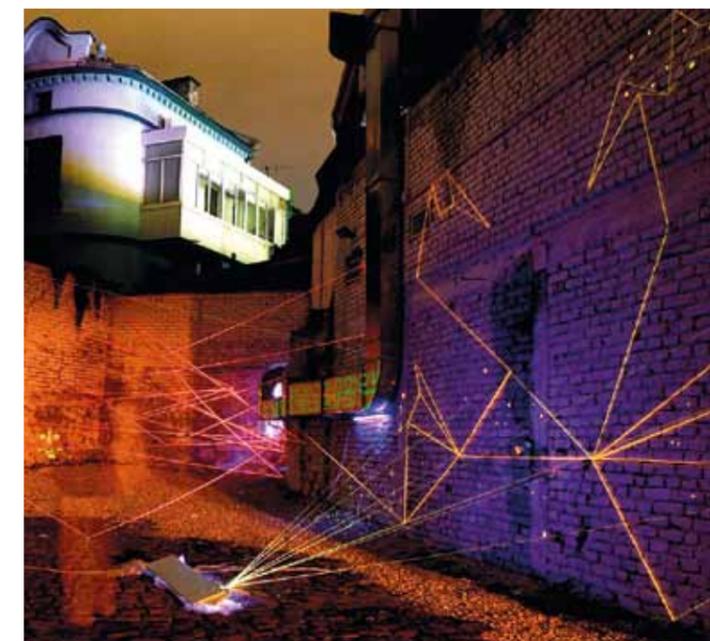
The name Lummix comes from the combination of the words ‘lumen’ (light intensity) and ‘mix’ – a mixture of expressions and art trends. The idea is to create video art in the urban environment, site-specific light and sound installations, and light performances. The Lummix project will stimulate the creative use of innovative technology – LED, OLED screens, lasers, multimedia, and energy-saving technologies. Through a fresh and unconventional approach artefacts will be presented and made accessible to a wider audience.

The project will highlight the rich cultural heritage and diversity of the city. Religious buildings (in Plovdiv there are Orthodox, Catholic and Eastern Catholic churches, a Gothic cathedral, Armenian churches, a Synagogue, multiple Mosques) will be connected through light installations. We will not only emphasise our cultural heritage and the Roman past but also put these historical sites in a contemporary context by turning them into a canvas for experiments with new media and light. Artists from around the world will be invited to create light installations – some temporary, some permanent – inspired by the atmosphere and in direct contact with the citizens.

The accessibility threshold for light art in public spaces is very low so that everybody can enjoy this kind of art on their evening stroll.

Switch On Plovdiv

The project for an open-air festival of light is part of the Lummix platform and will highlight Plovdiv’s unique historical centre for six days in the summer. It will revitalise the city’s Old Town and bring back life and people. Apart from the attractive artistic elements, the world-renowned light-design specialists involved in this project will launch an educational platform for exchange between **Plovdiv’s**



Light installation in Plovdiv

Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, INSA Lyon (France), and NYU Tisch School (USA). The festival will also feature a light and music concert at **The Ancient Bath – Centre for Contemporary**

Art. Switch on Plovdiv will have a strong ecological dimension as well, raising awareness on energy efficiency.



Light installation,
Sensory Labyrinth
Theatre

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Ancient Plovdiv Municipal Institute (BG), ATHENE Mediterranean Ancient Theatres Network (ES/IT/HR), Autumn Salon of Arts Plovdiv (BG), Beforelight (GR), Cada Die Teatro (Pirri, IT), Cagliari 2019 (IT), Caitlin Brown & Wayne Garrett (Calgary, CA), Company 14:20 (FR), Creative Lightning (GR), Cultural Center - Museum Trakart (Plovdiv, BG), Drama Theatre Plovdiv (BG), DesignCurve (NYC, USA), Etienne Guiol (FR), ICOM-Vlaanderen (BE), Kulturexperten (Essen, DE), Mary-Louise Geiger (NYC, USA), National Autumn Exhibitions Plovdiv (BG), Ivan Vazov National Library (Plovdiv, BG), NVA (Glasgow, UK), Open Arts Foundation (Plovdiv, BG), Prokop Bartonicek (CZ), Public Art Lab (Berlin, DE), State Puppet Theatre Plovdiv (BG), Ravenna 2019 (IT), Teatro Stabile della Sardegna (Cagliari, IT), The Small Basilica (Plovdiv, BG), Tomislav Arnaudov & Pavol Rusnák (CZ), Walk the Plank (Salford, UK), all museums in the city

Budget:

Programming: 800,000 EUR
Infrastructure: 500,000 EUR (Refurbishment of pavements and illumination in the Old town), 511,292 EUR (Renovation of Ancient Theatre), 600,000 EUR (Renovation of historical public buildings in the Old Town)

CROSSING HILLS, CROSSING CENTURIES

Plovdiv is a city built on seven hills. They are called *tepes* and carry the „scars“ of the pre-historic, Ancient, Medieval and Ottoman era, of Bulgarian National Revival, communist times and the present. With Crossing Hills, Crossing Centuries we want to involve all citizens of Plovdiv in artistic activities that bring this history to the present of the city. The British artist group **Walk the Plank** will create a history project, involving all seven hills, that points to the present and a sustainable future for the city whilst also not forgetting its roots.

The hills will have a main theme depending on what can be found on site:

For example Nebet Tepe as The Thracian Hill: The emphasis here will be on the remains of the Thracian city Eumolpias and Thracian heritage. Sahat Tepe as The Ottoman Hill: Ottoman heritage will be focused on here and the difficult relationship Bulgarians have with this heritage. Taksim Tepe as The Together Hill: Here we will focus on the different cultures of the city including the disappearing ones of the Jewish, Greek and Armenian communities. The active involvement of the population in the artistic creation is key. The idea is to address the inhabitants on and around the hills and involve them in the creation from the concept to the implementation. Walk the Plank will combine the activities into a final production linking all the

hills and stories into a grand finale. This could become an opening or closing event of the European Capital of Culture year.

MUSEUMS OF EUROPE

The Night of Museums and Galleries in Plovdiv is inspired by the Long Night of Museums which started in Berlin. The model was adapted to Plovdiv's cultural life and it is currently the most popular annual cultural event and involves both local museums and galleries. Every year the event attracts thousands of visitors from the entire country. In 2019 the NoMaG will celebrate its 15th anniversary and to celebrate the ECoC year it will introduce the Museums of Europe project which will consist of three components:

► **Museum Exchange:** a platform for encouraging collaborations between local and foreign museums and establishing a cooperation network by setting up a special fund for joint initiatives between museums with similar profiles and will include exhibitions, conferences, presentations and focus groups. We are already in contact with the Belgian museum association **ICOM Flanders** and we plan to attract other such organisations when we launch the project. The results from the joint initiatives will be presented in Plovdiv during NoMaG 2019.

► **Summer School of Art** is an educational course for young culture and art managers. Participants from Bulgaria and abroad will have the opportunity to

develop their own project (an exhibition, an installation in a public space, a performance or a project with a local museum or a gallery) and present it during NoMaG.

► **Collectors' Night** is an international forum for private and corporate art collectors. The event will connect them with local galleries and artists thus stimulating the local art market. Collectors' Night will include a series of lectures, presentations of Bulgarian private galleries and a curated collectors' tour around the city.

2019: A EUROPEAN ODYSSEY

A stage performance based on Homer's works and combining theatre, music, and dance. This will be a joint initiative between Plovdiv and Cagliari 2019 bringing together **Plovdiv's Drama and State Puppet Theatres** and Cagliari's **Teatro Stabile della Sardegna** and **Cada Die Teatro**. Central to the project is the idea of the wanderer, his travel and return as a metaphor for Balkan and Mediterranean restlessness. Similar to the topics it explores, the project itself will be a wanderer – travelling performances taking place on various European ancient-theatre stages. We have already established contact with the **ATHENE Mediterranean Ancient Theatres Network** which represents ancient theatres from Spain, Italy and Croatia and which could be part of the 2019 tour.

RELAX

promoting sustainable lifestyles
and an appreciation for culture's
and nature's beauty

EURhythmica

Plovdiv is the place where Europe's first ever Chamber Music Festival took place and still exists. Plovdiv is considered the home of jazz in Bulgaria and a number of world-renowned musicians like pianist Milcho Leviev, and kaval player Teodosi Spasov as well as Bulgarian jazz group White Green Red started their careers in Plovdiv. The EURhythmica cluster's ambition is to introduce Plovdiv's rich traditional musical cultures to a European audience. EURhythmica will take on the challenge of presenting innovative elements in already established local festivals and introducing new formats to the city. Music will be a uniting force for children, teenagers, adults and people of different social status and ethnic backgrounds because "where words fail, music speaks".

DIGITAL TUNNEL

In order to change the way people perceive and use urban space and to raise awareness about the amount of vehicles that pass through the city centre on a daily basis thus causing noise and pollution in one of the most beautiful areas in Plovdiv, we will close one of the busiest streets in the centre of Plovdiv for 48 hours and use the tunnel underneath the ancient theatre as a space for electronic music and media art. The artistic part of the project, will be developed in co-operation with **transmediale** (Berlin) and the **Network for Artistic Urban Technologies** (NAUT) which Plovdiv has been asked to join. Different media installations and performances as part of our collaboration with NAUT and transmediale will take place inside the tunnel which is seen as an important symbolic crossing point. Another important partner who

will co-operate with us on the media art programme will be **Foundation for Art and Creative Technology** (Liverpool). The walls of the tunnel can be turned into a canvas for augmented-reality pieces of art accessible through technologies like Google glass or other kinds of optical head-mounted displays, or alternatively through smartphones' digital cameras and specially-designed apps. The unique visual experience will be combined with concerts and DJ sets. On both sides of the tunnel there will be stages and open-air concerts. The music programme which will be developed with our partners from **Creative Universe Ltd.** (UK) and **KeenActs** (Bulgaria) will include electronic music by world-famous artists as well as experimental music showing the infinite possibilities that new technologies offer.

GRAND ROMANI GLASSO

*Glasso (Romani): varieties of
melodies in Roma music*

All over Europe Roma musicians have served as a *repository* of traditional musical and dance styles. In many cases they have become the living memory of a country's musical tradition by keeping alive – and enriching – the folklore in an age of globalising tastes and rapidly changing lifestyles. We have invited world-famous musicians from around Europe who fuse traditional Roma music with various modern musical styles, such as jazz, punk, dub, hip-hop, rap, rumba, flamenco. Some of the musicians who will perform on the Grand Romani Glasso stage are **Goran Bregović and the Weddings and Funerals Orchestra** (Bosnia and Herzegovina), **Lenacay** (Spain), **Fanfara Ciocarlia** (Rumania), and the **Budapest Gypsy Symphony Orchestra** (Hungary). One of our most cherished goals with this

project is to bring those great performers, most of them of Roma origin, inside the ghetto for live performances, as well as for jam sessions and informal meetings with local people. In addition to bringing true role models to the young Roma kids, this aspect of the project will serve as a symbolic demolition of the invisible wall around the ghetto by bringing not only bands and performers, but also various other audiences from Bulgaria and Europe inside the ghetto for a joint celebration of Roma music and culture.



Karandila Junior Roma Band

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

AMDFA - Academy for Music, Dance and Fine Arts (Plovdiv, BG), Artexim (Bucharest, RO), Art Today Association (Plovdiv, BG), Atlas Symphony Orchestra (Berlin, DE), Balabanov's House Music Days International Festival (Plovdiv, BG), Beate I. Mennicken Artist Communication (Berlin, DE), Chamber Music Festival (Plovdiv, BG), Creative Universe Ltd (Liverpool, UK), "Cultural Thessaloniki" Artistic Events (GR), "Dobrin Petkov" National School of Music and Dance (Plovdiv, BG), Evmolpeya Girls Choir (Plovdiv, BG), Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (Liverpool, UK), Holon Institute of Technology (Holon, IL), International Folklore Festival Plovdiv (BG), Keen Acts (Sofia, BG), Kombinart Ltd. (Plovdiv, BG), Plovdiv Jazz Nights (Plovdiv, BG), Polinero Rock Fest (Plovdiv, BG), Professional Development Program for Conductors (Lombard, CA), Ramfis Production (Barcelona, Spain), Ring Ring Festival (Belgrade, RS), Seeds on the Ground - Matera 2019 (IT), Spectra Foundation (Plovdiv, BG), State Opera Plovdiv (BG), Stichting Internationale Opera Producties (Maasland, NL), Tallinn Music Week (EE), The Cavern Club (Liverpool, UK), The Vegetable Orchestra (Vienna, AT), transmediale (Berlin, DE), Verdi Festival (Plovdiv, BG) Musicians and bands: Budapest Gypsy Symphony Orchestra (HU), Fanfara Ciocarlia (RO), Goran Bregović and the Weddings and Funerals Orchestra (BA), Lenacay (ES)

Budget:

Programming: 2,300,000 EUR

Infrastructure: 500,000 EUR (Refurbishment of the Concert Hall)

pLOVEDiv MUSIC PARK FEST

Based on the idea that music unites people, we will use the green areas and parks in the city for open-air concerts and musical performances under the motto pLOVEDiv – Love is in the (open) air. We see music as a way to convey our love for the city and its specific *Ayliak* spirit that means “enjoying life”. We will create a LOVE-map of the music parks in the city: for example the Lauta park in the Trakia district will become a stage for rock, britrock and alternative music. The Tsar Simeon Garden in the centre will be hosting classical-music concerts. The rowing canal is the perfect place for electronic music. Small parks in residential areas, on the hills and along the river can become stages for the so-called “old-time city songs” or *stari gradski pesni*, concerts and sound installations. pLOVEDiv Music Park Fest is about music and about changing the park culture in the city while showing guests the real meaning of *Ayliak*.

JAZZ INVASION/ THE VEGETABLE ORCHESTRA AT THE VEGETABLE MARKET
Jazz is part of the tradition and culture of Plovdiv. Within the frame of the **Plovdiv Jazz Nights Festival** during the ECoC year a parallel programme called Jazz Invasion will take jazz out of the concert

halls and stages and into unusual places: the streets, the mall, public transport, inside trains and stations, and into the vegetable markets. **The Vegetable Orchestra** at the Vegetable Market project will invite the Viennese musicians of the Vegetable Orchestra to demonstrate how it is possible to create instruments from vegetables, taking music into the daily lives of the market shoppers and vendors. The musicians will facilitate a series of music workshops, held at different markets with Roma children, teaching them basic improvisation skills and creating together unique musical instruments.

INTERNATIONAL SYMPHONIC YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Taking the initiative of the **Spectra Foundation** (Plovdiv) we plan to establish the first symphonic orchestra for young musicians in Bulgaria which will continue its work after 2019. The model we will use is well-known in Europe but new in Bulgaria: young musicians from the entire continent will be invited to join the orchestra. They will work with internationally acknowledged mentors (such as artistic director Viktor Ilieff) on concert programs. The Symphonic Youth Orchestra has the potential to become a recognisable symbol of Plovdiv on an international level while stimulating young musicians and attracting new audiences.

OPERA RE▶START

The Opera Re▶Start project will be a parallel programme to the standard opera season in Plovdiv. Its goal will be to change pre-conceived notions of this art form by surprising the audience with new artistic approaches and performance spaces. Performances will be brought into parks, churches, Ottoman buildings, old factories, and abandoned buildings. Creative-laboratory programmes will present rare or first performances of modern works, and a classical and baroque repertoire. To diversify the profile of the audience, projects will be developed specifically addressing the interests of young people. Interactive street music-and-dance-theatre projects will be dedicated to teenagers and young adults. For children between 4 and 14 puppet theatre opera will be developed together with the **State Puppet Theatre** Plovdiv. Finally, **The Bulgarian Footprint** programme is a part of the Opera Re▶Start project focused on celebrating Bulgarian artists active on the international music scene, by inviting them for performances in Plovdiv, organising film screenings, conferences and discussions, and showcasing works by Bulgarian composers.

Animate the City

The concept behind Animate the City is based on the connection between sports and art as a way for people to be together and as an instrument to achieve harmony of the body, mind and spirit. We call this “physical culture”. Art and sports’ common ground is movement: as a momentum for progress, dynamics, and communication skills. It is a basic human need, a permanent bearer of development.

The cluster aims at expanding the overall vision of sports beyond the traditional one-sided perception of it as just mechanical exercise. We will emphasise its potential to become a driving force that stimulates personal and social change, encourages creativity and teamwork. We will also promote non-traditional and less well-known sports in Bulgaria. Together with BG Be Active and Hamalogika Association we will structure the Animate the City cluster as a system of several “exercises”.

THE EXERCISES

The “Together” Exercise

This is a year-round project that presents movement as an instrument for cohesion, happiness and development. The opening event is a parade with the participation of local sports clubs, organisations, schools, and universities. It will be a celebration of all kinds of physical activities and will be followed by organised campaigns promoting physical practices that require minimal resources and appropriate urban spaces such as Paneurhythmy, which is a Bulgarian system of gymnastic exercises combining music, movement, oration, and singing. We will set up think-tank labs that address problems such as obesity and bad nutrition habits. We will engage specific target groups - people with disabilities, the socially disadvantaged, and minorities. As a culmination in the “Together” exercise in cooperation with **International Sport and Culture Association** we will host an international cycling marathon **Velotrip 500** in which 500 participants from Slovakia, Italy, Albania, Romania, Croatia, and Serbia will travel 500 km to Plovdiv. To celebrate the grand final of the cycling marathon the artistic team of **NVA** will create a memorable event with spectacular light effects.

The “Charity” Exercise

In this exercise we will use physical activity in the context of the sustainable development of an active and socially-engaged civil society. As a preparatory step we will identify problematic areas that lack facilities and space for sports or are difficult to access. Together with the **Community Foundation** that will be established in 2015, especially for the purposes of the ECoC candidacy we will organise a series of open calls, design competitions and workshops which will help us select the most innovative projects for sports grounds and other facilities. The funds for these projects will be raised with the help of sports events in 2019: a Charity Regatta at the Rowing Canal and a Charity Marathon. We will also establish sports scholarships for young athletes and children with disabilities. These scholarships will be part of a mentoring programme involving professional athletes from Plovdiv (including world-renowned names as Stefka Kostadinova, Tsvetana Pironkova, Yordan Yovchev and athletes from the **Bulgarian Paralympic Association**).

The “Arts” Exercise

In this exercise we will consider movement as aesthetics and sports as culture that brings spiritual growth and enjoyment.

Most of the events will take place outdoors. For example through street art we will create a ‘Game Square’ in Stolipinovo where tournaments for the local community will be organised. We will also include youth programmes, offering alternatives to at-risk groups of youngsters through various athletic activities. We plan to surprise the audience with events such as: Facade

Dancing; Athletes Art Festival; Dance Nights for Senior Citizens, Sports and Arts Decathlon, Interactive installations with movement and Sports 3D Mapping. The visual artist **Nathaniel Stern**, **KOTKI visuals** and the **Seeper** collective will be some of the stars who will add artistic value to the subject of movement and sports.



Flash mob on Plovdiv's main street

Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Association Sport for All (RO, RS), BG Be Active Association (Plovdiv, BG), Bulgarian Paralympic Association (BG), Hamalogika Association (Burgas, BG), ISCA - International Sport and Culture Association (Copenhagen, DK), KOTKI visuals (RO, AT), Move Malta (Valletta, MT), Move Week Bulgaria (Plovdiv, BG), Nathaniel Stern (USA), NVA (Glasgow, UK), Seeper (London, UK), The Association for International Sport for All (RS, RO, AL, SK), Zdravei Zdrave Festival (Plovdiv, BG)

Budget:

Programming: 550,000 EUR

Infrastructure: 92,028 EUR (Refurbishment of Lauta Park)

Ayliak City

Ayliak, from Turkish: 1. a state of relaxation and comfort; 2. a person who is not occupied with anything, who is free

The state of Ayliak has been recognised as an intrinsic characteristic of Plovdiv's pace and everyday life to such an extent that it has become a common term for locals. That is why we want to expand its meaning in accordance with the way the younger generations use it nowadays and to demonstrate its connection to the Slow and the Degrowth Movements which focus on increasing happiness and prosperity through non-consumerist methods (shared work, reduced consumption), while dedicating more time to culture, family and the community. In order to achieve slow, sustainable, and harmonious development for the city, we decided to use the symbolism of the home, as that is where we naturally slow down and relax. For the purposes of this project together with the Hamalogika Association we will create a map of the city like the blueprint of a home with different “rooms” corresponding to zones in the city and each of them will host projects on a certain Slow theme. After the selection of places within the city to become slow zones, an open call will be launched in 2016 for accompanying projects within the branded locations.

The idea of representing urban space as a home gives us the opportunity to overcome a typical Bulgarian weakness – the idea that responsibility for tidiness, cleanliness and aesthetics around us begins only at the entrance to our home. The platform will create a feeling of belonging and group responsibility in citizens towards the urban environment. After 2020 the “Ayliak” Centre will continue to work, spreading degrowth and slow ideas throughout Bulgaria.

AYLIAK CITY

Zones:

► **Living room** – The Slow life theme will define the projects in the zone of habitation and communication. **The World Institute of Slowness** will present their vision for an entire ‘Slow Planet’ and a need to teach the world the Slow way. We will help people enjoy everyday activities such as communication, playing games, and prolonging a cup of coffee in a special *Ayliak* way. We will celebrate the Slow way of life at the **Ayliak/Take-It-Easy** festival with music, dances, films and fun. Together with **Matera 2019**, **Ravenna 2019** and other Italian cities we will work on the *Dolce far niente vs Ayliak* project, a media campaign popularising the slow, natural and gentle way of life in both countries. A Slow-motion film festival will tour through several Bulgarian and Italian cities.

► **Bedroom** – This is going to be the zone for Relaxation and Slow love. The main project here will be called **Slow Dating** – a love experiment in the city, an antithesis of speed dating. It will make the participants explore the romantic side of Plovdiv. The main idea is to get to know another person and use the city as a tool and inspiration to express yourself.

► **Kids' room** – Along with the **Association Forum Science** and other partners we will introduce the ideas of Slow education that include: learn & play, natural ways of perceiving knowledge, exploring the rhythm of growing up and adapting education to the development and needs of children. We will give children a greater role in creating kids' environments and we will use innovative methods to bring out their creativity.

► **Kitchen** – In this zone we will connect food to many other aspects of life, including culture, politics, agriculture and the environment. Our partners **Slow Food Bulgaria** (and by extension **Slow**

Food International), Lecce 2019 and **Terra Madre Balkans** are dealing with all matters affecting our food system and will help us spread knowledge on these topics by linking the pleasure of good food and environmental care. We will leave all kinds of fast food behind and enjoy the art of slow food – cooking and spending time together.

► **Bathroom** – Water is the main topic of this zone – ecology, the purity of body and soul, nature cycles, the river, mineral waters. We will explore how life runs along the riverside and will create an art area along the Maritsa River, using water as inspiration, philosophy, and necessity.

► **Garden** – The projects in this zone will deal with topics like organic urban farming & gardening, permaculture, sustainable living with a pinch of art. With the help and creative touch of partners like **AWARE Architects** we will explore the relationship between art, architecture, ecology, and landscaping. Another project we are planning will enrich territories for urban farming and gardening with art

installations and actions (digital, kinetic), developed by Bulgarian and Italian artists.

► **Study** – Together with our partners from the **Research & Degrowth Association** we will define this zone as a territory for knowledge, science and research as well as for the **Children’s Festival of Science**. With our partners from the **Copernicus Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies** we will explore ideas like slow science and research and the connection between art and science.

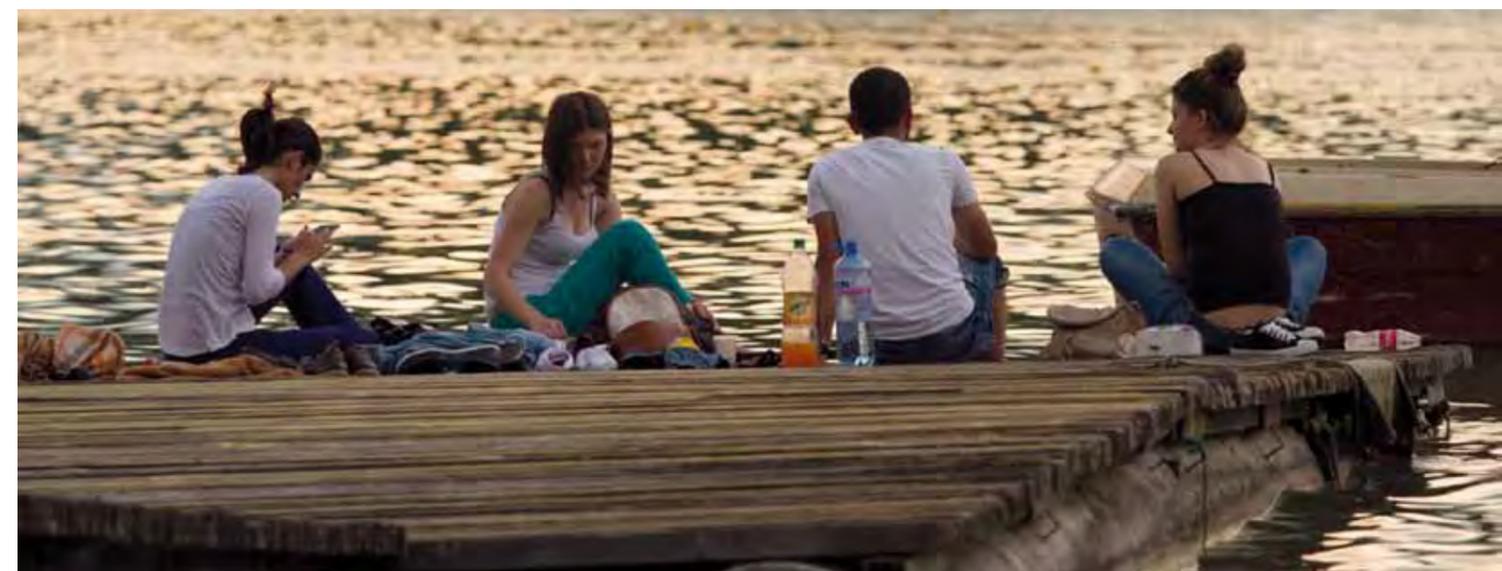
► **Atelier** – We will focus on Slow design and Slow production that share the common values of being holistic, sustainable, elegant, tailored, democratic, adaptable, durable, non-toxic, efficient, and distinctive. In partnership with **Casson Mann** and **Jason Bruges Studio** we will develop Ayliak slow points that include urban furniture, benches, and open-air stages.

► **Garage** – We will try to move faster towards the future by means of slow transportation and slow tourism. Together with **Aha! car**, a carsharing platform and the environmental organisations **Za**

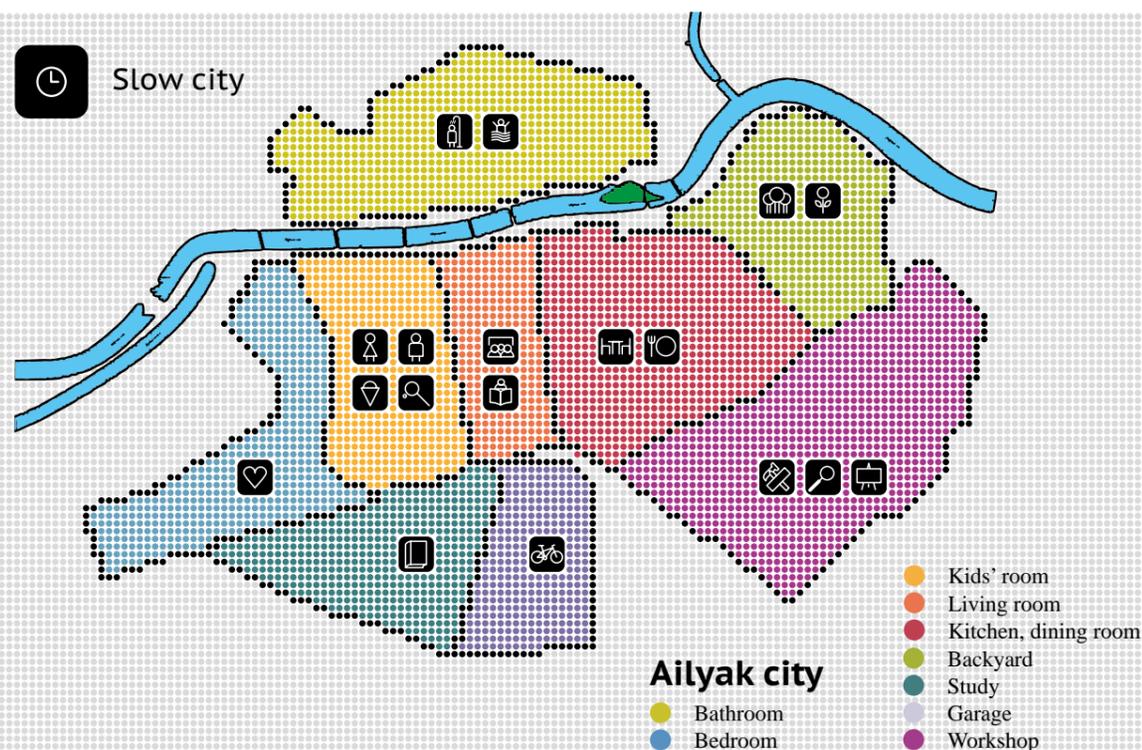
Zemiata (Friends of the Earth Bulgaria), and **Green Balkans** we will promote alternative ways of travel as a common subject for all cities aiming at sustainability.

► **Attic** – The theme handles the memories and dreams that we close in boxes to clear the living space. Here we will return to the memories of the city (stories,

antiques, photos, music) and Europe (in cooperation with our partner organisation **Bublitz** we will organise The European Memory exhibition, which will embark on a search for European Identity – 30 years after the end of the Warsaw Pact and the tearing down of the Berlin Wall).



At the Rowing Canal in Plovdiv



Confirmed partners for the cluster:

Aha!Car (BG), Association for Building with Natural Materials (Sofia, BG), Association Forum Science (Sofia, BG), Aware Studio for Architecture (Frankfurt, DE), Ayliak Fest (Plovdiv, BG), Brickstare - Matera 2019 (IT), Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Sofia, BG), Casson Mann (London, UK), Co-Mixer (Sofia, BG), Copernicus Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (Krakow, PL), Federation of Nature Conservation NGOs Green Balkans (Plovdiv, BG), Greenpeace Bulgaria (Sofia, BG), Hamalogika Association (Burgas, BG), Institute of Archaeology/Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow, RU), Jason Bruges Studio (London, UK), Lecce 2019 (IT), National Institution Museum (Kumanovo, MK), Ravenna Common Ground - Ravenna 2019 (IT), Regional Chamber of Architects (Burgas, BG), Research & Degrowth Association (Barcelona, ES), Slow Food Bulgaria (Sofia, BG), Terra Madre Balkans (AL, BA, BG, HR, GR, KV, ME, MK, RO, RS and TR), The World Institute of Slowness (NO), Za Zemiata/ Friends of the Earth Bulgaria (Sofia, BG)

Budget:

Programming: 600,000 EUR

3) How does the city plan to choose the projects/ events, which will constitute the programme for the year?

The project concepts we are proposing in the artistic programme have been created together with a large number of partners. These projects will remain on the programme and will be developed further with the confirmed European and local partners if we are granted the title. However we will make an open call for projects after the organising structure has been set up and the artistic director has developed a concept that will show what kind of projects are missing in the programme in order to meet the objectives we have set for Plovdiv 2019. We will give clear and specific criteria.

The projects should comply with the first and at least two others of these criteria:

- be aligned with our concept of Plovdiv Together and connect into the four project platforms FUSE, TRANSFORM, REVIVE, RELAX
- connect to the European idea and dimension of an ECoC in Plovdiv
- involve citizens in the creation and implementation
- be of high artistic quality
- be innovative or foster innovation
- develop new audiences or have strong educational value
- make use of digital and advanced technologies
- take an interdisciplinary approach wherever possible

Although there will, and has to be a deadline (six months after the call), we will still keep an open eye for any interesting ideas that might come up later and we will certainly not pass by a chance to implement a good project. The project call will be open for all

artists, individuals, NGOs, cultural and sociocultural operators and institutions in Plovdiv and the South Central Region. A special emphasis will be put on activating the capacity and participation of the local and regional cultural operators and institutions, therefore we plan to initiate a special edition of a local open call in 2015 with minimum bureaucratic requirements and formal aspects in order to assure broad participation. Additionally we plan to organise a series of workshops, seminars and discussions about fundraising, crowdfunding and financial project management, which will encourage local operators to look for additional funding for their project ideas. Proposals from national operators or national institutions that are not based in Plovdiv will increase their chances by seeking partnerships with local entities. Through our existing European and international networks and those of our partners, we intend to make an open call outside Bulgaria for institutions and artists who are interested in contributing to the planned programme we are putting forward. Some of the already-planned projects require open calls for specific ideas or project sections which will have their own specific sets of criteria.

In order to ensure a bottom-up approach prior to the open call, the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation will communicate the open call on a broad basis to ensure wide participation. Citizens including marginalised groups and communities (Roma, other minorities, the disabled, socially disadvantaged groups, senior citizens) will be encouraged to share their ideas in moderated workshops in some of the Chitalishta in the residential areas.

A selection process based on coherent criteria and the existing programme concept will be developed. A jury or artistic advisory group – whose members will have to be neutral and not involved in the proposals themselves – will assist

the artistic director in the selection process. The artistic director and his/her team will be fully responsible for the concept, quality and content of the artistic programme and will have the final decision on artistic matters. Partnership agreements and contracts between the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation and the selected partners will be signed after the projects have been selected. Some of the projects will be managed as cooperation projects, and some will be managed by the project managers of the Plovdiv 2019 team closely collaborating with cultural organisations, networks, NGOs, community groups, independent artists and producers. Many of the projects in the artistic programme concern sustainable issues far beyond a purely artistic approach (e.g. Tobacco City, Adata Unlimited, the Cultural HUB). Therefore it is very important to

us to build project management clusters involving businesses, environmental and educational institutions, cultural operators, and the owners of old buildings in order to unite their potential, capacity, and efforts for the development of sustainable projects for the city.

[CON]Temporary library at the Center for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv



III. Organisation and financing

1) ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

1.1. What kind of structure is envisaged for the organisation responsible for implementing the project? What type of relationship will it have with the city authorities?

The current structure for Plovdiv 2019 is an independent foundation and was set up in September 2011 with a unanimous vote of the City Council. If there is a positive outcome for Plovdiv's candidacy, the foundation will ensure continuity and stability by setting up a slightly different structure than is currently at work.

We know how important it is to reduce political influence on the work of the Foundation in order to guarantee independence of artistic and organisational decision-making for the benefit of transparency and clarity. For the years 2015-2020 we envisage a rather simple and lean organisation with rapid decision-making processes and stable governance.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors is going to be established, consisting of members appointed by the City Council, including representatives of the Roma Foundation and members from public institutions (e.g. university, public organisations).

The Board of Directors will meet four times per year and monitor the work of the executive management (Executive Director and Artistic Director) in terms of legal and financial regulations. They will also monitor the personnel structure and appoint financial audits if they are necessary. Since the region of South Central Bulgaria will not be contributing to the financing of the European Capital of Culture and will not be included in the official area bidding for the title there will be no representatives from the region included in the Board of Directors. However, we will involve Plovdiv District and the region on the level of artistic projects and communication (facilitated by a Regional exchange platform). The relationship of the organisation with the city authorities is reflected in the Board of Directors. It is the body in which the city authorities will be represented without compromising the independence of decision-making within the Foundation. As this will strengthen the connection and information flow as well as the supporting activities of the city towards the Foundation, the Mayor will be one of the representatives in the Board of Directors.

In order to guarantee the highest possible level of artistic independence we have prepared the process for a change in the statutes of the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation. The amendments to the statutes comprise more detailed regulations of the competences of the Board of Directors in appointing and in releasing an Artistic Director. The amendment specifies for example that the release cannot be effected on the grounds

of a simple majority vote of the Board or on the basis of criticism of the artistic programming. The Advisory Board will have to be heard in the matter as well as at least two independent experts who will assess the quality and practicability of the proposed artistic programme. The amended statutes will be voted on by the City Council in the near future.

Managing Level

It is planned that the Executive Director and the Artistic Director will operate at the same level. The exact rules regulating the competences and relationship between the two managing directors will be laid down in a set of internal procedures decided on by the Board of Directors. The artistic team is naturally at the heart of the organisation and will be headed by the Artistic Director who will make all final decisions on the programme. She/he will also coordinate the cooperation partners of the artistic programme and will be responsible for the event management. The artistic team is likely to consist of different sections (probably four, reflecting the four platforms in the artistic programme – Fuse, Transform, Revive, Relax). The Executive Director will have responsibility for Finances & Administration (with a CFO reporting to him/her and managing the administrative department with finances & controlling, human resources, IT etc.). Moreover the Executive Director will be responsible for Marketing & Communication, Fundraising & Sponsoring, the Volunteer's Programme and the Evaluation & Monitoring Process – each headed by managing team members reporting to the Executive Director.

Advisory Board

Furthermore we intend to appoint an advisory body consisting of public figures from Plovdiv, the region, Bulgaria and abroad. Some of their members should be experts from artistic fields. This body will have no decision-

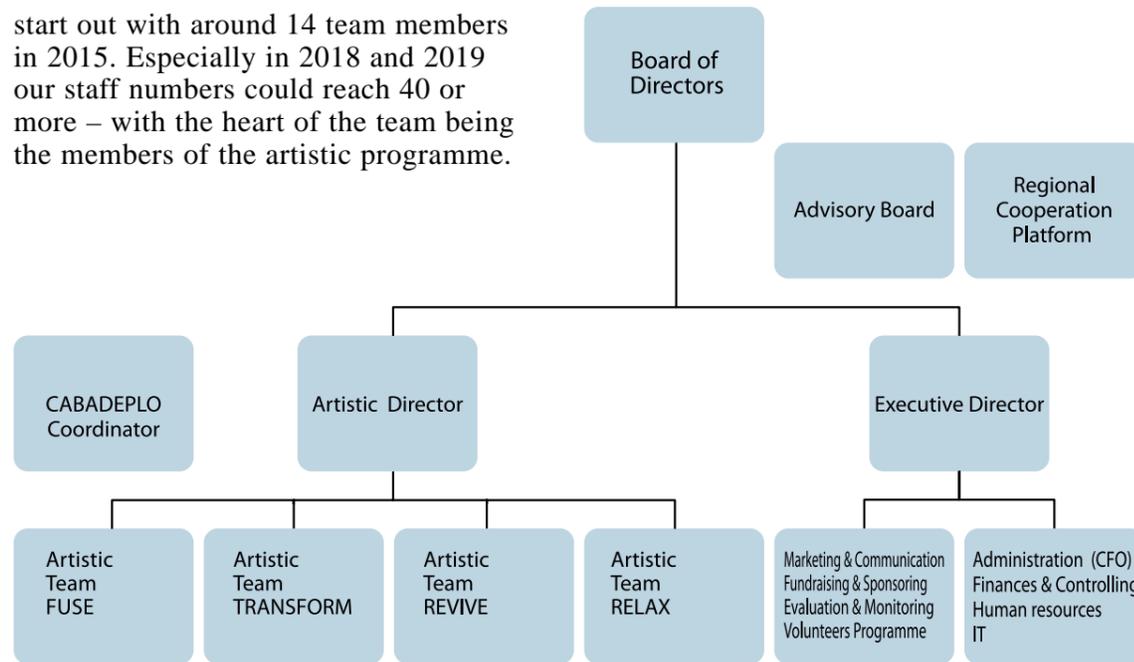
making powers but rather advise the executive management on their work and assist the process by contributing expertise, and access to their networks.

Staff

A new element compared to the first round is the installation of a coordinator for the programme CABADEPLO (Capacity Building and Audience Development Plovdiv). S/he will be responsible for the concept and development of the Capacity Building programme and the direct implementation within the organisation – because capacity building starts from within. Over the years the coordinator will link projects and (especially European) partners in a sustainable way to increase cultural capacity and foster audience development through workshops, summer schools, seminars as well as consultancy & mentorship programmes for children and students, young professionals, local artists, cultural operators of the established institutions and the independent scene, but also for citizens at large. The main objective is to build up a generation that has practical experience in arts & culture management and a population that feels connected to the culture, arts and heritage of their city, their country and their Europe.

As for staff members the numbers will greatly differ over the years as demands grow and the organisation grows with them. For the artistic team we will start with the Artistic Director and a small team of four project managers (one for each platform) – which will grow organically with the needs of the management process. In Marketing, Evaluation, Sponsoring, Volunteers Programme and CABADEPLO coordinator we will start with one project manager each. In the Finance & Administration we will appoint a CFO at an early stage in 2016, starting with the department in 2015 with one person each for HR, controlling/accounting and IT (with external support). The staff will

start out with around 14 team members in 2015. Especially in 2018 and 2019 our staff numbers could reach 40 or more – with the heart of the team being the members of the artistic programme.



1.2. If an area around the city is involved in the event, how will the coordination between the authorities of the relevant local and regional authorities be organised?

Since there has been a clear decision to focus on the city of Plovdiv as the area in which the European Capital of Culture will be implemented, coordination between the authorities of the local level and the regional level will be limited to a level of communication and coordination of artistic projects. We want to be completely honest: Organising a European Capital of Culture is a huge enough challenge for one city alone and the challenge grows with complexity when multiple cities and authorities have to be coordinated. Another factor leading to the decision is the administration structure in Bulgaria. There is no regional overall administration that could make a financial commitment or distribute funds. Every single municipality would have to do this independently. We have realised that

this is almost impossible to achieve and would make administration and control extremely difficult and considerably delay decision-making processes. We would much rather cooperate with the wider region (Plovdiv District and South Central Region) on specific projects and communication – as we are planning to do in the project cluster RegionalE where we can offer the involved festivals PR and communication on a much broader level than they could usually afford and implement themselves (including a special website to present the programmes of each activity, distribution with the Plovdiv 2019 programme and media attention in the wake of Plovdiv 2019). Moreover we plan to make the cities and villages in which the cultural activities take place accessible for Plovdiv locals and visitors by offering special transportation and cultural capacity trainings using structural funds. We are also open for project proposals and suggestions from the authorities and cultural operators in the region and will select the projects or engage in cooperations according to the criteria laid down in the selection process.

In order to allow effective, flexible and speedy communication we will appoint a regional coordinator from the Plovdiv 2019 team. She/He will be the contact person for the regional project partners and will be responsible for good communication and flow of information between the regional partners and the Foundation. Meetings for evaluation and updates will be carried out to allow face-to-face communication and provide a forum for exchange.

1.3. According to which criteria and under which arrangements has or will the artistic director of the event been chosen? What is or will be his/her profile? When will he/she take up the appointment? What will be his/her field of action?

The criteria according to which we will choose the artistic director will include:

- experience in creating artistic concepts on an international level and of high artistic ambition
- competences in the arts and culture as a proven expert
- skills to lead a policy-driven artistic process with focus on the long-term effects including many different interests and partners
- understanding that this is a European Capital of Culture and not a local capital of arts
- experience in managing international artistic projects and exhibitions
- a strategic and sustainable approach to projects
- interest in working on capacity building and audience development
- ability to build on the basic programme that has already been developed with many partners
- connections and networks on an international level, preferably also on national and local levels

- communication skills as a team player
- participatory and interdisciplinary approach to the arts and culture
- has to become a resident in Plovdiv during the years 2016 to 2019.

The arrangements under which the artistic director for the event will be chosen include an open call for applications on a national and international level – also through our networks and our partners' networks – and setting up an expert commission for the selection process. The open call will be started at the latest six months after officially being awarded the title – the artistic director should take up the appointment by the end of 2015.

The artistic director's fields of action will comprise:

- Developing an artistic concept and vision on the basis of the existing work.
- Preparing, coordinating and implementing the programme and projects for the European Capital of Culture as a transparent and artistically sound proposal.
- Selecting proposed projects according to a set of transparent criteria and develop projects with the artistic team.
- Ensuring artistic excellence and a European dimension of the programme that appeals to audiences beyond Plovdiv and Bulgaria.
- Ensuring sustainability of the programming and the involvement of citizens as active participants in cultural activities.
- Fostering cooperation between Plovdiv 2019 and the team that will coordinate the implementation of the city's Cultural Strategy 2014-2024.
- Including the confirmed and further cooperation partners from Plovdiv, Bulgaria and other countries within the programme.
- Seeking out synergies and funding possibilities with EU funded programmes and private sponsors.

- Assisting and fostering communication and promotion of the projects and the overall programme to the local, national and international public.

The artistic director will guide a team of project managers who will have the largest possible operative freedom to manage in a bottom-up approach. The artistic director will have clear leadership and will have the final decision in the artistic conceptual and management process.

The amendments in the statutes of the Foundation Plovdiv 2019 that will be voted on in the City Council in the near future will guarantee the Artistic Director independence in making decisions concerning the concept and organisation of artistic and programmatic activities of the Foundation.

2) FINANCING

2.1. What has been the usual annual budget for culture in the city over the last 5 years (excluding expenditure for the present ECoC application)?

| Year | Usual annual budget for culture in the city (in euros) | Usual annual budget for culture in the city (in % of the total annual budget for the city) |
|------|--|--|
| 2009 | 3,351,918 | 3.79% |
| 2010 | 3,043,432 | 3.27% |
| 2011 | 2,854,661 | 3.24% |
| 2012 | 3,022,306 | 3.43% |
| 2013 | 4,090,443 | 4.05% |
| 2014 | 4,200,000 | 4.2% |

Capital expenditure for cultural infrastructure is not included in these figures. The sums represent the operating expenditure for culture in Plovdiv. The table shows the total costs for culture in different fields: the cultural programme, archaeology, financial support for the cultural institutions in Plovdiv, the museums, the Ivan Vazov library, the network of community centres for culture called “Chitalishta”, the City Art Gallery, the Zoological Garden, the “Trakia” folklore ensemble, and the budget for the regular festivals in the city organised by the municipal cultural department is also included.

During the years 2009-2013 two important buildings were totally renovated: the Archaeological Museum which is now one of the most progressive museums in the Balkans and one of the oldest cultural institutions in Bulgaria, and also the City House of Culture which now has a new concert hall, exhibition areas and spaces for amateur ensembles in the city. Nine million euro have been invested in the reconstruction of this building. Another 12 million euro have been allocated for the multifunctional facility that is currently being finalised in Plovdiv. An expected total of 30 million euro will be invested here.

Some of the largest cultural institutions in the city receive grants from the central government which considerably increase the cultural power of the city and cannot be expressed in the figures above. Some examples (figures in euro):

| Institution | Number of employees | Overall annual budget € | Co-financing from city € (already included in the cultural budget in table 2.1.) | Financing from central government € | Additional information |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| Archaeological museum | 22 | 350,000 | 25,000 | 175,000 | Ca.150,000 € in revenue 150,000 visitors |
| Historical museum | 22 | 90,000 - 115,000 | In kind: refurbishments | 90,000 - 115,000 | Additional income from sponsors |
| Ethnographic museum | 15 | 75,000 | | | 25-30 exhibitions p.a. |
| State Opera Plovdiv and Orchestra | 180 | ca. 730,000 | 30,000 | 600,000 | Ca. 100,000 € in revenue |
| Drama Theatre | 74 | 1,220,000 | Ca. 1,200,000 | 20,000 | Figures include revenue, 320-360 performances p.a. |
| Puppet Theatre | 36 | Ca. 300,000 | 250,000 | 15,000 | 480 performances p.a. |

2.2. Please explain the overall budget for the European Capital of Culture project (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside for the project).

| Total Expenditure (in euros) in the budget | Operating expenditure (in euros) | Operating expenditure (in %) | Capital expenditure (in euros) | Capital expenditure (in %) |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 38,177,638 | 22,300,000 | 58.41% | 15,877,638 | 41.59% |

The calculated operating expenditure does not contain funds from the regular annual budget for culture of the city. Only the money that is labelled exclusively for the ECoC activities has been added. Some projects and initiatives are planned to be organised in partnership with municipal and state cultural institutions and that

means they will be co-financed by these institutions. These costs are not included in the figures mentioned in table 2.1. We do not intend to reduce funding for any cultural institution to generate funds for ECoC projects in the next seven years.

| Total income in the budget (in euros) | From the public sector (in euros) | From the public sector (in %) | From the private sector (in euros) | From the private sector (in %) |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 38,177,638 | 34,677,638 | 90.8% | 3,500,000 | 9.2% |

| Income from the public sector | In euros | % | Amount planned, secured |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------|-------------------------|
| National government | 10,000,000* | 26.1% | planned |
| City | 23,177,638 | 60.7% | secured |
| Region | ** | | |
| EU | 1,500,000*** | 4% | planned |
| Other | | | |

The contribution from the city is composed of a sum of 7,300,00 euros allocated exclusively for the operating expenditure of the ECoC and 15,877,638 euros allocated for capital expenditure. *Plovdiv initiated the sending of a letter signed by all four mayors of the candidate cities in Bulgaria to the Ministers of Culture and of Finances respectively asking for a clarification on the government's contribution until the 8th of July 2014. Unfortunately we have not received an answer before this book went into print.

Regional authorities do not redistribute money for the ECoC project or the municipality. *We are including here the Melina Mercouri Prize if awarded. Other income from the EU are direct funds from Brussels (Creative Europe and others as stated in question I.10) and EU Regional Development Funds that might be used for specific Plovdiv 2019 projects. They are not included in this figure.

2.3. Please explain the operating budget for the ECoC project.

a) Overall operating expenditure:

| Operating expenditure (in euros) | Programme expenditure (in euros) | Programme expenditure (in %) | Promotion and marketing (in euros) | Promotion and marketing (in %) | Wages, overheads, administration (in euros) | Wages, overheads, administration (in %) | Reserve |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|--------------|
| 22,300,000 | 14,718,000 | 66% | 5,352,000 | 24% | 1,784,000 | 8% | 2% (446,000) |

b) Planned timetable for spending operating expenditure:

| Timetable for spending | Programme expenditure (in euros) | Programme expenditure (in %) | Marketing and promotion expenditure (in euros) | Marketing and promotion expenditure (in %) | Wages, overheads, administration (in euros) | Wages, overheads, administration (in %) | Reserve |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---------|
| 2014 | 0 | 0% | 160,560 | 3% | 35,680 | 2% | 0% |
| 2015 | 0 | 0% | 267,600 | 5% | 89,200 | 5% | 0% |
| 2016 | 441,540 | 3% | 267,600 | 5% | 160,560 | 9% | 0% |
| 2017 | 588,720 | 4% | 535,200 | 10% | 214,080 | 12% | 0% |
| 2018 | 2,943,600 | 20% | 1,873,200 | 35% | 356,800 | 20% | 0% |
| 2019 | 7,359,000 | 50% | 1,873,200 | 35% | 713,600 | 40% | 65% |
| 2020 | 2,943,600 | 20% | 267,600 | 5% | 178,400 | 10% | 35% |
| later | 441,540 | 3% | 107,040 | 2% | 35,680 | 2% | 0% |

2.4. Overall capital expenditure:

| Capital expenditure (in euros) | Funding of new cultural infrastructure or upgrading existing facilities (including museums, galleries, theatres, concert halls, arts centres etc.) (in euros) | Urban revitalisation (renovation of squares, gardens, streets, public space development etc.) (in euros) | Infrastructures (investment in the underground, rail stations, dockyards, roads etc.) (in euros) |
|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 15,877,638 | 9,090,047 | 6,787,591 | - |

supplement page II (Financing)

List of infrastructure projects:

| | OBJECT | FORECAST | | | | | | expected total (in euro) |
|---|--|-----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|
| | | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | |
| 1 = Cultural infrastructure 2 = Urban revitalisation | 1 Multifunctional facility (sports and culture) | 3,149,558 | | | | | | 3,149,558 |
| | 1 Regional Museum of Natural History | 265,000 | | | | | | 265,000 |
| | 1 Ancient Theater (renovations of one entrance, stage and multimedia tour) | 171,292 | 170,000 | 170,000 | | | | 511,292 |
| | 1 Contemporary Hall of Culture | | 330,000 | 665,000 | | | | 995,000 |
| | 2 Planning and renovation of Zoological garden | 1,789,522 | 67,490 | | | | | 1,857,012 |
| | 1 Renovations of the Ancient Bath (seat of Contemporary Art Centre) | 80,000 | 160,000 | 130,000 | 130,000 | | | 500,000 |
| | 2 Overall renovation of The Dondukov Park | 255,646 | 76,694 | 51,129 | 76,694 | 76,694 | 76,694 | 613,551 |
| | 1 Kosmos Cinema | | 50,000 | 50,000 | | | | 100,000 |
| | 1 Excavation of remaining parts of Roman Stadium 2nd phase | 153,388 | 51,129 | 51,129 | 51,129 | 51,129 | 51,129 | 409,033 |
| | 1 Excavations of archeological sites | 76,694 | 76,694 | 76,694 | 76,694 | 76,694 | 76,694 | 460,164 |
| | 1 Tobacco warehouses | | | | | 500,000 | 500,000 | 1,000,000 |
| | 2 Improvement of the Sahat Hill and the Bunardzhik Hill as recreational area | 47,176 | 50,565 | 50,565 | 50,564 | 50,565 | 50,565 | 300,000 |
| | 2 On-going renovation of historical houses (public) in the Old town | 80,000 | 90,000 | 100,000 | 100,000 | 80,000 | 150,000 | 600,000 |
| | 2 Refurbishment of historical cobblestone pavements and artistic illumination in the Old town + underground infrastructure | 80,000 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 100,000 | 500,000 |

supplement page III (Financing)

| | OBJECT | FORECAST | | | | | | expected total (in euro) |
|---|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | |
| 1 = Cultural infrastructure 2 = Urban revitalisation | 1 Reconstruction of the Concert Hall in the building on the central square | 100,000 | 300,000 | 100,000 | | | | 500,000 |
| | 1 Adaptation of the public spaces underneath the Odeon for artistic activities | 100,000 | 100,000 | | | | | 200,000 |
| | 1 Reconstruction and refurbishment of the Art Gallery open spaces | | 175,000 | 175,000 | | | | 350,000 |
| | 1 Establishment of Resource Centre for intercultural and touristic activities | 75,000 | 75,000 | | | | | 150,000 |
| | 1 Investments in the area of Roma quarter Stolipinovo | 80,000 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 80,000 | 100,000 | 80,000 | 500,000 |
| | 1 Construction of information and urban orientation points | | | 25,000 | 25,000 | 25,000 | | 75,000 |
| | 2 Plovdiv Central Square area reconstruction and refurbishment | 40,000 | 615,000 | 615,000 | 615,000 | 615,000 | 250,000 | 2,750,000 |
| | 2 Lauta Park - turning into a recreational area | 15,338 | 15,338 | 15,338 | 15,338 | 15,338 | 15,338 | 92,028 |
| | total | 6,558,614 | 2,562,910 | 2,434,855 | 1,300,419 | 1,670,420 | 1,350,420 | 15,877,638 |

The table exclusively contains financial commitments from the city and the government. EU and other co-financing funds are not included. There are some other infrastructural projects ready to be implemented in the period up to 2019 but as the new financial framework 2014-2020 for Bulgaria is still under negotiation with Brussels, we consider it

inappropriate to include them in the list. The operating expenditure is independent of the capital expenditure and neither will be able to cross-finance projects in the other sector.

2.5. Have the public finance authorities (city, region, state) already voted on or made financial commitments? If not, when will they do so?

The City Council of Plovdiv has unanimously voted for guaranteed financial contributions to the operating expenditure of 7,300,000 euros (14,278,00 BGN) on 1st August 2013. This sum is additional to the usual annual cultural budget and exclusively allocated for the European Capital of Culture activities 2014-2020 and beyond. In addition the city will contribute 15,877,638 euros in capital expenditure so that a total contribution of 23,177,638 euros from the city is guaranteed.

The Regional District of Plovdiv comprising 17 municipalities and the five Regional Districts in South Central Bulgaria that support the bid are not allowed by Bulgarian law to redistribute money to municipalities. In the event that we are awarded the title, the supporting municipalities will contribute projects and financing to the programme that is part of the RegionalE cluster. The dedicated amounts are part of their own budgets and are not included in the overall budget of Plovdiv 2019. Unfortunately we have not received an answer to the letter we sent to the responsible ministries before this book went into print. We have made a conservative estimate of a contribution of 10 million euros.

2.6. What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?

The plan for involving sponsors is to be really creative. In other words: We have to be pioneers on a mission.

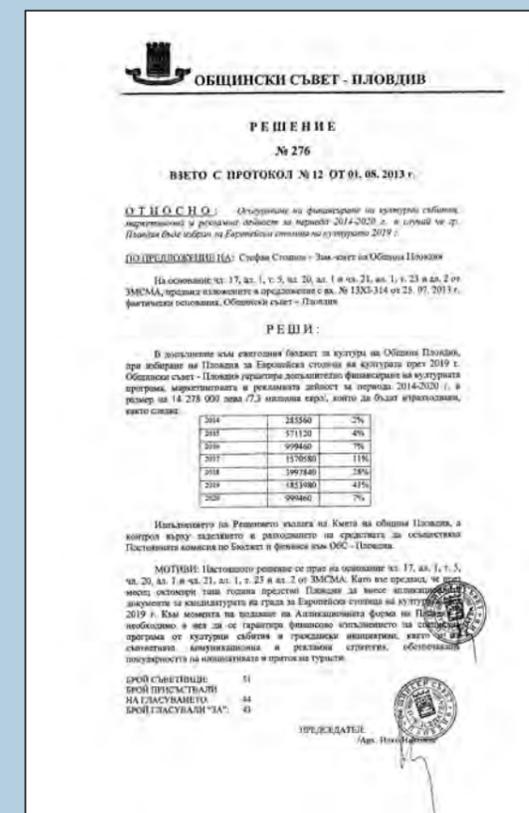
Why? Because there is a profound misunderstanding about sponsoring in Bulgaria. Companies and cultural operators

think that sponsoring is a synonym for charitable donations. Wrong: Sponsoring is a business-to-business partnership. We will have to be pathfinders for Plovdiv 2019 and make our path sustainable to facilitate sponsoring for cultural projects in the future. So we will have to be instrumental in changing the attitude in cultural institutions and companies alike.

How will we do this? By applying our RSA-strategy. The Reverse Surprise Approach. How does it work? The Plovdiv 2019 Foundation will make sponsoring a high priority for its top-level management. We will also make the top-level management of companies our main target group. We will approach them as partners. We will present the Foundation as an opportunity – not as a supplicant. Our Reverse Surprise Approach (RSA) will consist of challenging expectations. Everyone expects a beggar's hat to have some coins thrown in – but what they get is an offer and the access to a project with national and international commercial potential. It is our task to get this fact across to the potential sponsors in a clear and appealing way.

As sponsoring will be a top priority the sponsoring team will be located in the structure of the organisation and responsible directly to and cooperating closely with management. The executive director of the Foundation will be the head of the sponsoring team. In order for the RSA-strategy to work the CEOs of the companies will have to be addressed by the executive management level of the Foundation, since, as a rule, the decision on larger sponsoring commitments usually lie with the board or the owners of an enterprise. If we are awarded the title the Sponsoring & Fundraising department will be one of the first teams to be established. The first phase will require at least one person on the operative level to do the (internal) preparatory work:

- an analysis of the sponsoring goal for the Foundation – to ascertain how



MUNICIPAL COUNCIL PLOVDIV RESOLUTION No 276 ADOPTED WITH PROTOCOL No 12 of 01.08.2013

REGARDING: Providing funding for cultural events, marketing and advertisement activities for the period 2014 – 2020, in case that the City of Plovdiv is chosen for 2019 European Capital of Culture.

UNDER PROPOSAL BY: Stefan Stoyanov, Deputy Mayor of Plovdiv Municipality.

Based on Art. 17, Par. 1, It. 5, Art. 20, Par. 1, and Art. 21, Par. 1, It. 23 and Par. 2 of the Local Government and Administration Act, considering the factual grounds stated in Proposal No 13XI-314 of 25.07.2013, the Municipal Council Plovdiv, hereby

DECIDED
In case that the City of Plovdiv is chosen for 2019 European Capital of Culture, in addition to the annual culture budget of Plovdiv Municipality, the Municipal Council – Plovdiv guarantees additional funding of the culture program, marketing and advertisement activities for the period 2014 – 2020 in the amount of BGN 14,278,000 (EUR 7.3 million), that will be spent as follows (figures in BGN):

| | | |
|------|-----------|-----|
| 2014 | 285,560 | 2% |
| 2015 | 571,120 | 4% |
| 2016 | 999,460 | 7% |
| 2017 | 1,570,580 | 11% |
| 2018 | 3,997,840 | 28% |
| 2019 | 5,853,980 | 41% |
| 2020 | 999,460 | 7% |

The execution of the Resolution is assigned to the Mayor of Plovdiv Municipality and the control of the earmarking and disbursement of funds will be performed by the Budget and Finances Standing Committee with Municipal Council Plovdiv.

GROUND: This Resolution is adopted based on Art. 17, Par. 1, It. 5, Art. 20, Par. 1, and Art. 21, Par. 1, It. 23 and Par. 2 of the Local Government and Administration Act. Whereas in October this year Plovdiv will submit application documents for the city candidacy as 2019 European Capital of Culture. As of the moment of submission of the City of Plovdiv application form it is necessary to financially guarantee the implementation of the special program of cultural events and civil initiatives, and the respective communication and advertisement strategy, thus securing the initiative popularity and attraction of tourists.

Council members: 51 / Attending the vote: 44 / Votes in favour: 43 / Abstentions: 1

Signature and round seal of the Chairman of Municipal Council, Plovdiv
Arch. Ilko Nikolov

much money or in-kind sponsoring the Foundation requires in order to implement the whole programme and also to decide what amounts and in which forms support can be acquired.

- a market analysis for potential sponsors and research into the criteria which could motivate potential sponsors (including research of the relevant contacts for direct access)
- matching (multiple) potential sponsors to specific projects (including analysing the exact requirements for pecuniary, in-kind or media sponsoring of the project)
- designing tailor-made sponsor packages as an incentive and return service for the sponsor (to present at the very first meeting with the sponsor – contents negotiable)

The second phase will comprise the following up of contacts with potential sponsors, arranging meetings between top managers of the enterprise and managers of the Foundation (including at least one person from the operative sponsoring team to ensure that any decisions made are followed up on). The initial meetings will serve to present the cause, the sponsor packages with benefits for the sponsor, the commercial potential of the European Capital of Culture, and to make the sponsor acquainted with one or more projects over a period of time, therefore evoking a sense of ownership, willingness to be part of something big, and pride.

Parallel to the one-on-one meetings potential groups of sponsors will be invited to donator events in close cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce and trade agencies (see point 2 below) – with dinners and presentations, artistic performances and the possibility for sponsorship commitments. Key to successful sponsoring is the long-term bonding and our relationship with the sponsors – so a considerable investment of time and effort from the executive management and all employees of the Foundation will be necessary and with this

in mind, we are ready to be persistent and committed over a long period of time.

The third phase will consist of actually making concrete sponsorship agreements and contracts, controlling the income, documenting the spending and implementing the quid-pro-quo promised in the sponsor packages (including e.g. free-tickets, meetings with artists, advertisements for the sponsor companies in publications, branding venues and projects with the sponsor's logo, offering the Plovdiv 2019 logo for the sponsor's publicity material, offering innovative and creative incentives for the workspace, supporting business events, offering team-building events and workshops with artists, adding the sponsor's name to refurbished buildings and temporary structures etc.).

This would not be a Bulgarian application if it was going to be as easy as it sounds. The described approach is an innovation and not yet learned in this country. There has to be training and the right people to do the job. But we believe that if we can tap into the 6 billion euros of turnover from the companies only within the South Central Region of Bulgaria by just 0.1% we could reach a sponsoring value of 6 million euros for Plovdiv 2019 – and that only includes a part of the country. But as we are Bulgarians we are reluctant to be too optimistic and are sticking to a conservative estimate of 3.5 million euros income from sponsoring.

Some further ideas and plans for the involvement of sponsors and for raising funds:

1. Sponsoring/fundraising from companies

Branding: well-known Plovdiv brands in the FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) sector will be offered the chance to print the logo of Plovdiv 2019 on the labels of their products and an amount from each product sold will be given as financial support for Plovdiv 2019 Sponsoring services and non-cash benefits for partners and guests Providing specialists and experts for projects, legal & financial advice, and staff

2. Sponsoring/fundraising with bilateral trade agencies and industry organisations

There are numerous examples of partners, with whom we have already established contacts e.g. the German-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce, the Italian-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce – Confindustria, the Bulgarian-Russian Business Club, the Bulgarian-Turkish Business Club, the Greek-Bulgarian Business Club, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, The Chamber of Installation Specialists in Bulgaria (CISB), Bulgarian National Association Essential Oils, Perfumery and Cosmetics (BNAEOPC), Bulgarian Construction Chamber – and there are many more to contact on the national level.

3. Sponsoring/fundraising with service clubs

Service clubs such as Rotary, Lions, Round Table, and Soroptimist could be very helpful in giving access to other networks. Possible activities with these clubs could include:

- Organising fundraising / crowdfunding campaigns
- Inviting them to act as patrons and responsible project-partners for specific cultural projects
- Communicating with the entire network of clubs in other cities (within Bulgaria and Europe)

In addition, all potential partners in Plovdiv – service clubs, companies, bilateral trade agencies, and industrial chambers have their own communication channels (websites, newsletters, billboards) and they will be provided with (online) material to share information about Plovdiv 2019.

4. Implementation of Crowdfunding

The Plovdiv 2019 team and the cultural department of the city plan to introduce a crowdfunding platform which will be used as a means to include the general public in the process of funding various projects in the areas of art, sport and culture in general. The website will support projects throughout the period from 2015 to 2019,

and will aim at providing a sustainable tool for sponsoring future projects. It will be implemented in Bulgarian and English and thus able to reach people from all over Europe and beyond – especially Bulgarians living abroad and their friends & families. The European Commission is right now setting up an informal expert group on crowdfunding, the European Crowdfunding Stakeholder Forum (ECSF). Possibly these developments will allow us to apply for funds over the coming years or receive advice and training opportunities in this field.

5. Development of a community foundation for project grants as a long-term strategy

There have been initial talks with the Workshop for Civil Initiatives Foundation (WCIF) which hosts the Mott Community Foundations initiatives in Bulgaria (CSO) and that financially supports the establishment and provides capacity support for the community foundations which have been created in Bulgaria in ten different cities. Plovdiv 2019 will foster the establishment of a community foundation of this kind in Plovdiv by 2015. It can be funded in part from the financial support that the city has allocated for community actions. The funding that is raised by the community foundation from different donation activities will be matched with the same amount by the WCIF. The local foundation will manage resources provided by a number of donators (large companies, SME's, private initiatives and single persons) and grants funding to civil initiatives – from 2015-2019 mainly related to Plovdiv 2019 and after that it will add to the sustainability of initiated ECoC-projects.

The community foundation will:

- work for a specific geographic community
- be a mediator between local donators and civil society organisations, help donators carry out their charitable intentions, create a culture of giving, and provide transparent and efficient use of donated funds
- encourage stakeholders to work together in order to solve community problems

- and develop positive social capital
- be managed by an independent body that is not dominated by a single donator and is not bound to authority structures
- mobilise voluntary labour and manage other forms of non-cash contributions
- contribute to strengthening civil society by increasing awareness and ownership of projects

will be working with and relate the pros & cons and our good and bad experiences. Our partners will also be invited to present their experiences and we will invite keynote speakers and workshop moderators from other EU countries to share their models as inspiration for us and the local cultural field.

After 2020 it will be crucial to make the acquired expertise sustainable, to continue the learning process and to make the structures for sponsoring and crowdfunding enduring. We will build up the community foundation mentioned above into a long-term competence team that will continue working towards an overall coordination of the fundraising activities for artists, the municipality and the local institutions and will serve as a national reference point for sponsoring expertise.

It is important to us that the expertise that we gain on sponsoring will be shared with others in a sustainable way. We will do this by organising a yearly workshop from the end of 2015 until the end of 2020 to which we will invite all the cultural institutions of the city and the private cultural operators we work with at a local level. Plovdiv 2019 will present models of sponsoring that we

2.7. According to what timetable should the income be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture?

a) Income to be used to cover operating expenses (in euro)

| Source of income | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| EU | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,500,000 | - |
| National government | 500,000 | 750,000 | 1,250,000 | 2,500,000 | 2,500,000 | 2,500,000 | - |
| City | 146,005 | 292,009 | 511,016 | 803,025 | 2,044,063 | 2,993,092 | 510,790 |
| Region | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sponsors | 50,000 | 100,000 | 150,000 | 250,000 | 900,000 | 2,050,000 | - |
| other | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

The 510,790 euros (the rest of 7.3 m euros) that we receive from the city in 2020 could be used to establish a Community foundation as described in question 2.6 of

this section (see under 5.) as a sustainable continuation of the Plovdiv 2019 structures.

b) Income to be used to cover capital expenditure

| Source of income | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| EU | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| National government | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| City | 6,558,614 | 2,562,910 | 2,434,855 | 1,300,419 | 1,670,420 | 1,350,420 |
| Region | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Sponsors | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| other | - | - | - | - | - | - |

As for the capital expenditure incomes we have only calculated the actual budgets that we know of now and which we can guarantee. We have no figures yet for funding which might be added by EU programmes which are currently being negotiated. This also applies to table 'a' – there might be funding from the Creative Europe programme and others. The reason why the income figure from

the city in table 'b' is so high for 2014 and lowers over the years is that many important infrastructure projects will be finished in 2014 and the following years to be ready for 2019. These are figures we can now guarantee. However, the city might allocate more funds for infrastructure after negotiations with the EU about structural funds have been settled.

2.8. Which amount of the usual overall annual budget does the city intend to spend for culture after the ECoC year (in euros and in % of the overall annual budget)?

The ambition of the City of Plovdiv is to increase the annual cultural budget after 2019 to 6% of the overall annual budget (assuming it stays at around 100 m euro/p.a. and this will equal 6 m euro).

The surplus is to be spent on maintaining the international cultural exposure of the city and for legacy activities.

IV. City infrastructure

1) What are the city's assets in terms of accessibility (regional, national and international transport)?

The formation of the city's transport system is a result of its historic development and its location on a main international crossroads – a European transport corridor in an east-west direction, as well as the strongly developed regional and national transport links from north to south. The strategic location of Plovdiv has made the city an important transport centre both in the past and nowadays. The Maritsa River, which flows through the city, has been an important factor for urban development, having influenced the transportation services in the whole region.

General Accessibility

Plovdiv is fairly easy to access either on the road or by flight. The most common route for visitors from outside the country is to fly to Sofia which is 130 km away and then drive 1.5 hours by car or public bus (which provides comfortable, fast and cheap travel to the bus station in Plovdiv city centre). In the city itself moving as a tourist is comfortable since sites in the centre and Old Town are within walking distance and taxis (as well as buses) are a cheap means of transportation for sites beyond the city centre.

Road Transport

An international route passing just north of the city in a west-east direction is the E80 (A1) road, which links Sofia with the Black Sea port of Burgas and

which, east of Plovdiv, branches south to Istanbul via Haskovo. This international route will soon be further developed with EU funds in order to make access to the Southern Black Sea even faster. In a north-south direction to the east of Plovdiv, the E85 connects northern Europe across the Danube, with Greece and Turkey.

Rail transport

Plovdiv is an integral part of several national and international rail networks, such as Paris – Milano – Belgrade – Sofia – Istanbul – Ankara. The city is also located on one of the shortest railroads linking the capital Sofia with the Southern Black Sea and Turkey. Because this is part of an international route, it is expected that over the next few years this railroad will become one of the fastest in Bulgaria, through the implementation of various infrastructural projects financed by EU programmes.

Plovdiv Airport

Plovdiv has an international airport that is situated 10 kilometers southwest of the city. There are regular flights from Plovdiv airport to London Stansted and Frankfurt Hahn. The airport also specialises in charter flights to Bulgarian mountain ski resorts during the winter season from December to April. The challenge is to involve the other municipalities in the region in cooperating with the opening of new flight routes.

Public Transport

Plovdiv is served by a high-quality public transport network which

| Synergies between programming and capital expenditure in artistic programme Plovdiv 2019 | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Cluster | budget for artistic programme (in euros) | budget from capital expenditure (infrastructure) in euros | name in the list of infrastructure projects |
| Mahala | 2.05 m | 500,000 | Investments in the area of Roma quarter Stolipinovo |
| RegionalE | 1 m | | |
| Beauty and the (b)East | 1 m | | |
| Urban Dreams | 1.5 m | 100,000 | Kino Kosmos |
| | | 1 m | Tobacco warehouses |
| edYOUcate | 750,000 | | |
| River of Imagination | 1.3 m | | |
| Culture meets people | 968,000 | 200,000 | Adaptation of the public spaces underneath the Odeon for artistic activities |
| Art for a Forgotten Future | 1.9 m | 500,000 | Renovations of Ancient Bath (seat of Contemporary Art Centre) |
| | | 995,000 | Mobile Contemporary Hall of Culture |
| Time Machine | 800,000 | 500,000 | Refurbishment of historical cobblestone pavements and artistic illumination in the Old town + underground infrastructure |
| | | 511,292 | Ancient Theatre (renovations of entrance, stage and multimedia tour) |
| | | 600,000 | On-going renovation of historical houses (public) in the Old town |
| Ayliak City | 600,000 | | |
| EUrhythmica | 2.3 m | 500,000 | Reconstruction of the Concert Hall in the building on the central square |
| Animate the City | 550,000 | 92,028 | Lauta Park - turning into a recreational area |
| total | 14,718,000 | 5,498,320 | Direct benefits from capital expenditure for programme |



consists of well-developed municipal, regional and national transportation systems with sufficient capacity to meet passenger's needs. Public transport includes buses and mini-buses. These mini buses travel along a defined route but are faster than buses because they stop only at

passenger's request. There are regular bus routes which access even the most remote areas in the city and the nearby villages. The city has three main bus stations (North, South and Rhodope) in the city which service both international and domestic destinations.

2) What is the city's absorption capacity in terms of tourist accommodation?

With more than 4,200 beds in the city and around 9,100 in the Regional District, Plovdiv has ample capacity to meet the needs of expected guests and tourists, should Plovdiv be the European Capital of Culture 2019.

By the end of 2013 there were 110 hotels, hostels and guest houses in Plovdiv including two 5-star hotels, seven 4-star, 41 3-star, 24 2-star and 36 1-star accommodation facilities.

| Year | Overnight stays in Plovdiv city | Visitors |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|----------|
| 2001 | 327,270 | 186,262 |
| 2012 | 357,463 | 200,419 |
| 2013 | 350,627 | 206,250 |
| first quarter 2014 | 130,458 | 69,721 |

| For 2013 | Hotels & Accommodation | Beds | Visitors total | Visitors from Bulgaria | Visitors from abroad |
|------------------|------------------------|-------|----------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Plovdiv district | 161 | 9,116 | 387,839 | 298,617 | 89,222 |
| Plovdiv city | 110 | 4,223 | 206,250 | 128,232 | 78,018 |

Our 4,200 beds offer a yearly capacity of 1.4 million overnight stays, which shows a significant surplus in capacity compared to currently around 350,000 realised stays. Currently, overnight visitors from abroad amount to almost 40% and mainly come

from Turkey, Greece, France, Germany, and UK. Primary target markets for Plovdiv's tourism marketing are Austria, Germany, Greece, UK, and Romania. Additionally day tourist numbers have not been monitored and yet we estimate more

than 300,000 tourists per year visit Plovdiv only on a day-trip on the way to and from other destinations such as Sofia, the Black Sea or the ski resorts around Plovdiv. ECoC 2019 provides Plovdiv with a major opportunity to drive growth in our visitor economy. So Plovdiv's Tourism Strategy 2014-2020 puts the European Capital of Culture at the core of our plans to raise tourism numbers. It aims at an increase in overnight stays of 6% per year from Bulgarian visitors and 8% per year from foreign visitors over the next seven years. The absorption capacity can comfortably accommodate the increased numbers of visitors. The Strategy also targets increasing the number of arrivals by 20% per year for Bulgarian visitors and 30% for international. The average stay in the city is targeted to rise from an average of around 1.7 nights to an average of 2.3 nights between now and 2020.

Cultural Tourism

Our primary target groups for cultural tourism are the 14% of Europeans and the 9% of Bulgarians who choose "culture" as a main motive to spend their yearly vacation at a specific destination. Secondary target groups are those that consider culture as something "in addition".

Cultural tourism is a non-seasonal tourism and can generate enormous added value. The numbers above show the huge potential for our cultural tourism especially if looking at those estimated 300,000 day visitors who – with the right marketing implemented in 2016 through to 2018 – will be potential overnight guests for 2019 and the following years. If we can get only 30% of the day tourists to spend one night in Plovdiv, this alone would make an increase of 90,000 overnight stays per year – a 25% increase compared to 2013.

Also, according to our research, only 25% of the tour operators include museums and galleries in their packages and only 9% include concerts, festivals and other

cultural events in the city. This is one of the reasons why the main group of tourists comes to Plovdiv only as day tourists. So in the lead up to 2019 our Municipal Tourism Board will work closely with the European Capital of Culture team to target tour operators much more effectively to include cultural visits to Plovdiv as a key element in their holiday packages.

3) What projects are to be carried out between now and the year for which the city is applying for the title of European Capital of Culture in terms of urban and tourism infrastructure, including, renovation? What is the planned timetable for this?

One of the major infrastructure projects that we plan to implement up to 2019 is the creation of a social-cultural centre (Cultural HUB) in the largest Roma quarter in Europe, situated in the heart of Plovdiv, Stolipinovo. The centre will provide space for the Roma Community to showcase their ethnic identity – through the presentation of Roma songs, dances, and restoration of some of the traditional Roma crafts etc. Moreover, the municipality intends to implement a multi-level infrastructural strategy for the Roma quarters in which renovation of streets and the construction of new housing is planned. The amount of the overall investment including projects that are not directly related to the cultural activities of Plovdiv 2019 is expected to reach 2.5 million euros from the municipality's infrastructure budget.

A multifunctional mobile Contemporary Hall of Culture will be built before 2019 on land provided by the City Hall following the example of Temporary Kunsthalle (Berlin) and the Temporary Straw Theater (Tallinn). Our Contemporary Hall of Culture

will not be temporary but transformable and movable. It will function as cinema, opera, circus, gallery, conference hall, dance hall, and exhibition hall. It will be built as a modular system which will allow it to be easily built and dismantled. It will combine traditional ecological and modern eco-friendly materials with high-tech construction methods and equipment. The modern and lightweight construction will be able to be moved in order to bring culture into the residential areas as well as to nearby cities. It is planned to be built in 2015 – 2016 at a cost of 995,000 euro.

A multifunctional sports and cultural facility has been built. There is still some interior work remaining that will be completed in 2014 and 2015 including an Olympic size cycling track. It will comprise 9,000 seats and 3,000 square metres of combined space for sports or cultural events.

The municipality has allocated funds to finalise the changes on the central city square. The projects include an overhaul of the buildings and their facades so that they fit in with the architectural style in this area. The tallest building on the square currently houses the majority of the municipal administration and includes a concert hall which is planned to be refurbished in 2014 and 2015 at the amount of 500,000 euros.

A new economic cluster – the Food Tech Park Plovdiv – is being planned in the 77 acre underdeveloped area of Gladno Pole. Along with the building of high-tech enterprises, research facilities and laboratories, new residential buildings will also be built.

A third Tourist Information Centre close to the Roman Stadium in the city centre will be completed by the end of 2014 with new tourist routes and information boards that lead to the Ancient Theatre. Additionally a tourist digital guiding system will be set up by the municipality in 2015 and

2016. Another network of information points situated near the railway station, the airport and the outskirts of the Old town will be installed from 2016 to 2018.

The restoration of the visible part of the Roman stadium is planned to be funded by the EEA Grants programme. The larger part of the stadium is situated underneath the main shopping street of the centre. There are plans to excavate it as a new archaeological site and underground museum in the next years – during the new European funds programme period 2014-2020.

A large number of construction, restoration and conservation projects have been included in the Municipal Development Plan for 2014-2020 financial periods: museums, galleries, and different public spaces that can be used for creative purposes. These projects will be implemented between 2014 and 2017. Their cost is calculated at around 5 million euros.

The list of projects is not conclusive. If Plovdiv gets the title some other projects directly connected to the cultural and touristic needs of the city will be developed. However, the municipality guarantees that these will not affect the funding from the city for the artistic programme. We have agreed with the deputy-mayor responsible for infrastructure that four temporary constructions will be built in order to provide spaces for exhibitions, dance performances, and contemporary art installations. Resources from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund will be used for important and sustainable touristic projects. However, we cannot include those funds in the bid book as the National Strategic Reference Framework is still being negotiated in Brussels at the time of writing.

V. Communication strategy

1) What is the city's intended communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture event?

Guidelines

We will make the motto 'Plovdiv Together' a navigation tool and inspiration for our communication strategy. The communication for Plovdiv 2019 aims at actively promoting and contributing to, but not patronising public discourse, dialogue and cooperation between citizens, artists, NGOs, and cultural operators in Plovdiv and specific target areas in Europe.

We want to assess the success of our communication in hard, countable facts as well as soft indicators, evaluating wide media coverage as well as joint activities between local and European artists, assessing numbers of exposures as well as results from meetings between local cultural institutions, monitoring the number of clicks on our online campaigns or „likes“ on Facebook as well as the „mood“ in which our audience and participants discuss specific activities on social media. Our communication policy is devoted to cherishing the values of openness and reciprocity. The process is a multi-lateral one with a sender communicating with a recipient, recipients communicating among each other and speedily interchangeable roles between sender and recipient – meaning we intend to listen as well as „broadcast“.

On a much larger picture than “just” communicating ECoC events we feel it is useful in terms of sustainability to

align our communication strategy with the objectives identified in different strategies which all aim at the medium- and long-term development for Plovdiv:

- the Cultural Strategy 2014-2024
- the Tourism Strategy 2014-2020
- the Municipal Development Plan 2014-2020

From all three of the above we can gain useful insights which the communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture can address in specific areas. For example the Cultural Strategy gives an analysis of the communication deficits on the inside (e.g. between cultural institutions and their audience) as well as on the outside (e.g. inadequate tourist offers). With the communication strategy we will follow this inside/outside approach of the Cultural Strategy – the inside focussing on cultural education oriented towards the needs of the citizens and the outside approach focussing on cultural tourism and on the outward perspective towards potential visitors and other external stakeholders. This is – in a nutshell – the dichotomy in which we operate: on the one hand we want to build up trust and enthusiasm in the local population to see the European Capital of Culture as their very own project and on the other hand we want to communicate with and attract potential visitors from far away. This is a challengingly large target group but it also combines to a synergy: if we can create vibrancy and spirit together with the local population, then this is the best welcoming energy we can communicate to our potential and actual visitors from Bulgaria and Europe. And this spirit can make all the difference.

Target Groups and Stakeholders

Target Groups

Just as Plovdiv is a city of different ethnic and religious groups, different social groups, groups with different tempos and mindsets, our communication will also have to be multi-faceted and varied,

tailored to the language of each of the local target groups and stakeholders. In parallel, the communication on the national and especially at European level has to be focused on specific target areas and target groups since it is impossible for us to reach an audience of more than 500 million people in EU 27 alone.

| Level | Target Groups |
|-----------------|---|
| Local | citizens of Plovdiv at large; specifically young people; families & children; working people; the unemployed; people with disabilities; minorities; senior citizens; people with little or no access to cultural life; institutions, NGOs, sponsors and corporate partners; artists, cultural operators and people interested in art and culture; local media |
| Regional | the citizens of the South Central Region of Bulgaria; regional media; cultural institutions and NGOs in the region; artists and cultural operators; people in remote places with limited access to cultural events (e.g. Rhodope Mountain villages) |
| National | audience and tourists from other Bulgarian cities; national media; business people, scientists, artists, researchers, people who come to Plovdiv for sports events (e.g. rowing canal); artists, cultural operators; national institutions; NGOs; corporate partners and sponsors |
| European | European day- and overnight-tourists in Plovdiv; tourists we need to address abroad or in Sofia/other destinations which they visit; tourists from primary markets (Turkey, Greece, France, Germany, UK, Austria, Romania); business travellers coming to Plovdiv, sportspeople who come for sport-events; Artists, cultural operators; people interested in art and culture; Young Europeans who travel and explore (adventurers, hitchhikers); ethnic and minority communities and their organisations in Europe; Bulgarians who live in other European countries |

Partners and Stakeholders

Our local, national and European partners and stakeholders, a vital part of our communication strategy, will help us amplify and deliver our message to the intended target groups. We have formalised more than 50 partnership agreements with different organisations and networks and we intend to continue expanding our international partnership network. Some of these include:

- The municipality of Plovdiv, municipal, regional and national institutions
- Cultural institutions in Plovdiv and Bulgaria
- Ambassadors, cultural attaches and foreign cultural institutes in Bulgaria and Bulgarian institutions

and embassies abroad

- Individual artists and independent artist groups, the socio-cultural scene
- Tourism organisations, tour operators, logistic companies
- The business community, investors and sponsors (including international companies headquartered in Plovdiv/the region)
- Professional and trade organisations, chambers of commerce, trade unions
- The media (local, national, Italian and European)
- Key opinion leaders (KOLs) such as bloggers and travelling journalists (e.g. Krzysiek Filipiuk writing for travel portal monoloco.pl and oldlongroad.blogspot.com)

- The Italian ECoC 2019; past, current and future ECoC and city candidates
- European partners and networks of the cultural operators in Plovdiv
- European artists, specialists and institutions who participate in our projects
- EU institutions
- Local restaurants, hotels, cafés, bookstores and all service-related businesses
- Public and private transportation companies (including taxi-companies)
- National entities like the Bulgarian National Railway and the national airline Bulgaria Air

At home and abroad

Local and regional level

As a first step of communicating Plovdiv 2019 we aim to gain the support of local citizens by actively involving citizens in becoming part of the ECoC event, to contribute with ideas and feedback, to join as volunteers or to promote and spread their enthusiasm for the event among their friends here and abroad. Our goal must be on the one hand, to spotlight the activities offered by Plovdiv 2019, and on the other, to motivate them to become senders rather than recipients of communication.

As Plovdivians are spontaneous – our Ayliak attitude allows us to enjoy whatever of interest comes our way and it is not difficult to arouse curiosity among those people who are interested in culture with open air activities – people will always find time to enjoy some music or street artists, or have a little chat about the latest events in the city. We will find ways to address the local population according to specific interests of the target groups – young people need a different approach than senior citizens or families, and minorities or people who normally don't participate in culture will need specific attention, too. Info Points in the city are options well received. People also enjoy the direct approach to promote the

ECoC through small happenings especially in the suburbs and places off-the-beaten-track like when German born Sicilian piano artist Davide Martello performed in Plovdiv. Next to direct offline communication, media and advertisement, we will make use of digital tools such as websites and social media like Twitter and Facebook to keep Plovdivians well informed.

National level

The communication of the Plovdiv 2019 programme on the national level is closely connected to the city's Tourism Strategy 2014-2020. The joined-up approach between tourism measures and our communication is especially relevant for the national audience and tourists from Bulgaria. We will focus on partnerships with local touristic businesses and operators to encourage the development of tourist packages tailored to the ECoC programme for Bulgarian tourists. These packages are to be sold through package holiday websites popular in Bulgaria (e.g. grabo.bg; vsichkioferti.bg, etc).

The classic marketing mix approach will be better invested here than on the European level. For promotion on the national level we have also gathered a support group consisting of more than one hundred celebrities, artists, sportsmen, musicians and public figures among whom Petar Stoyanov (former President of Bulgaria), Svetlin Rusev (painter), Valya Balkanska (Bulgarian folk music singer), Tsvetana Pironkova (tennis player), are going to be multipliers and help us attract people from Bulgaria, including the considerable numbers of Bulgarians living abroad, to come and visit Plovdiv 2019. We aim at expanding the support to a European level involving people who can create a link to Plovdiv – like UK Ambassador Jonathan Allen, who lived at the home of a Plovdiv family for three weeks before his official appointment, in order to get acquainted with the Bulgarian way of life.

European level

Communication on the European level in order to attract a European audience to come to Plovdiv is our biggest challenge as Plovdiv is little known outside Bulgaria. Our communication strategy for the European audience rests on 5 pillars:

1) focus on relevant target groups

We will commission a thorough analysis of our most likely potential visitors – e.g. tourists who like city trips; special interest audiences for our projects etc.

2) focus on synergies with tourism offers

This means we will cooperate closely with relevant tourism players such as the municipal tourism agency, the local tourism association, private tour operators, the international tour operator conferences in Plovdiv that take place twice a year; the Ministry of Economy and Energy responsible for tourism to promote Plovdiv 2019 at national and international level and feature Plovdiv at international tourism trade fairs in Berlin, London, Belgrade and Moscow. Aligning with the plans in the Cultural and Tourism Strategy we will foster the development of better tourist products (packages; facilitating visits to cultural events) and create synergies in advertising (e.g. in primary tourist markets).

3) focus on European visitors who are already “close”

There are hundreds of thousands of day-tourists coming to Plovdiv every year – most probably they exceed the number of overnight-tourists by far. Nobody knows the exact figures since they have never been monitored. We will monitor their numbers and do surveys in order to gather more information about the types of people visiting Plovdiv. Our aim is to convince the day-tourists who visit Plovdiv in 2015-2018 to come back for an overnight-stay in 2019. We will also address European visitors in Sofia and at Bulgarian ski/Black Sea resorts and at the relevant border entry points as well as at airports in the country. Close-by target groups will also be citizens and tourists in our

neighbouring countries such as Romania, Turkey, Greece, Serbia and Macedonia.

We will create communication synergies with the Italian ECoC through joint presentations at tourism fairs and conferences, joint facebook groups, live-streaming of events and digital activities – including alternative accommodation (couchsurfing/airbnb-principle) and a city guides programme matching young – not only Italian – visitors and young Plovdivians for alternative tours.

4) emphasise digital communication

By focussing on interactive digital communication tools we can increase the numbers of exposure to an incredible extent – something we could only dream of by using only classical advertising tools. In an already established partnership with Google Bulgaria we will develop an interactive campaign targeting a broad European audience inviting them to take an interactive walk on the streets of Plovdiv. To increase the reach of our communication and raise media coverage, we will invite journalists of digital media and bloggers from all over Europe for a weekend in Plovdiv. Bloggers, key opinion leaders and enthusiastic young travellers (eg. Hitchhiking Europe) will be amplifiers of our communication on the digital level (for more see also Digital strategy further below).

Communication Tools and Channels

Media and Public Relations

In order to appeal to both national and international media, we will have a press team and for the events, especially the opening event, we will set up an international press centre – to deal with journalists, media inquiries, publicity, and the development of content for our own communication channels before, during and after 2019. We will sustain a bi-lingual communication with local, regional, national and European media in order to promote the Plovdiv 2019 event via traditional media, through journalists’ tours to Plovdiv and a digital outreach.

We have excellent cooperation with local and regional media, having their support and good coverage of our activities. We have also negotiated a media partnership with the influential newspaper in Southern Bulgaria “Maritsa”, the most frequented websites for news, lifestyle and culture (plovdiv24.bg, podtepeto.com, kapana.bg), the two national radio stations (regional digital editions) – Radio Plovdiv and Darik Plovdiv, as well as with the local branch of the national TV – BNT 2. Next to the regular coverage of Plovdiv 2019 initiatives, these media will provide space and time for appearances on programmes, interviews, information about events, and announcements etc. Targeting a young audience our media partner is the youth web portal mediacafe.bg with whom we cooperate on various initiatives such as photo, video and an essay competition on the theme of “Freedom without Borders”. Special attention will be paid to the partnerships with national media such as National TV and the Radio with its cultural programme “Hristo Botev”, which we have contacted already. Other broadcasting media with which we will closely cooperate are NOVA TV, bTV, Europa TV and TV7. Live broadcasting of concerts and events, exclusive interviews and daily reportages from the events will be negotiated as part of the partnerships. We have worked together with national daily newspapers such as Trud, 24 Chassa, and Standard and with some national online news agencies: Focus, Cross and BTA, which have regular columns on culture. We are currently trying to strengthen our ties with the other newspapers such as Telegraph, Monitor, Sega and Pressa. A wide range of national internet sites will also be invited for media partnerships such as dnevnik.bg, Capital light, webcafe.bg; kultura.bg, and websites with a focus on culture, art, and lifestyle (e.g. art:box, cult.bg, festivals.bg). To finalise the list of our national media partnerships we will have to wait for the final decision of the jury, as the media landscape in Bulgaria is quite centralised.

If we are nominated for the ECoC title, we will also approach media in other Balkan countries (e.g. Serbian Kurir and Blic newspapers, RTS1 and RTS Culture and Arts TV channels, Macedonian Dnevnik newspaper and the Croatian 24sata), Italian media (e.g. La Stampa, Il Corriere della Sera, La Repubblica, Rai TV and Rai Radio) and specialised media in different European countries according to the projects we want to promote. We will also cooperate with the Ministry of Economy and Energy to use their media partnerships abroad. International journalist tours will be a yearly event between 2016 and 2019 in order to enhance European media coverage.

Digital Communication Strategy

“The Internet is becoming the town square for the global village of tomorrow”, says Bill Gates. Considering that Plovdiv is one of the best connected cities in Europe with cheap, fast and reliable access to the internet, we have decided to make full use of this advantage in our project and include a strong digital element (not only) in our communication strategy. Our digital strategy presents our views as of today, however, we are aware that this is a very dynamic domain, and until 2019 there will be many new developments in the field. Our digital strategy relates to our artistic programme, to the necessary documentation and archive of the ECoC and to the communication strategy. It will include three focus points: digital platforms, social media, and IT innovations.

• Digital platforms

All activities of Plovdiv 2019 will be gathered in a digital format on our website in at least Bulgarian and English. The website will allow visitors to participate by leaving comments, posting photos and will feature interactive tools, for example to allow visitors to make their own ECoC catalogue of highlights. Plovdiv 2019 is a chance to develop the existing cultural calendar platform into an integral sustainable tool for Plovdiv that

unites activities on all levels – municipal, private, free scene and Plovdiv 2019 events – including those of the festivals in the region which will be made visible through a cluster-approach (Regionale) rather than being presented as scattered single events. The Plovdiv 2019 website will include blogs and interactive elements and will showcase what we do to a broad audience in Europe – including for example live streaming from projects such as Adata Island, Digital Tunnel or the activities in the Chitalishta; streaming videos and pictures of all art works, projects and photography that are made for and during the year 2019 and creating a virtual European Capital of Culture – also to serve as an archive after 2019. Modules for carsharing, couchsurfing and alternative guides will make it easy for young visitors to plan their stay and get in contact with the locals.

The capacity building programme CABADEPLO will make extensive use of online tools like webinars and online tutorials – many more people than the live participants can be involved in the CABADEPLO activities for example through live-streamings, webinars and skype discussions – and who knows what other tools will be available in 2019. A centralised ticketing service as well as a “one-stop-shop” for all events and products, linked to tourist offers and packages will allow visitors easy access to our programme.

• Social Networks

Due to limited resources for advertising we plan to reach most of the target groups through social media. Besides our website, our social media groups give us the most direct opportunity to interact and involve followers from Bulgaria and abroad. We will provide a regular information feed there – video and photo content, news, interviews, quizzes, open debates, volunteer blogs, webinars etc. There will be a possibility for people to make personalised online agendas and share it with friends online. We will also make extensive use of the

functionalities of Foursquare, Facebook Places, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr, Youtube, Vimeo, with a series of hashtags (e.g. #plovdivTogether, #plovdiv2019), educational and interactive social gaming campaigns and cutting-edge technologies that will come up in the years between now and 2019.

• IT innovations

Companies and experts from the high-tech sector will collaborate with the municipality and local cultural and tour operators to achieve a wide ranging visibility for Plovdiv 2019’s artistic programme. Together with the business sector, the municipality will ensure that there will be as many as possible public spaces with free wi-fi and with Plovdiv 2019 as landing page – possibly shared with corporate sponsoring partners. Web designers will develop various applications for smartphones and QR codes for different projects and topics. Digital apps will ensure the opportunity of an interactive tour through cultural and touristic sites as well as of online participation in the events from anywhere in the world and especially for people with disabilities, for whom special online platforms and mobile apps will be developed.

These activities will be coordinated with the Google partnership to develop an interactive Google Street View map of Plovdiv. To attract more people to the virtual and to an actual visit we will use targeted online tools such as Google AdWords, Facebook ads, and YouTube pre-roll screens. The overall campaign will be easily accessed from all-over Europe. However, we will specifically target citizens in primary markets based on the Tourism Strategy of countries such as Austria, UK, Germany, Greece, Romania, Turkey, and France. Further, a wide-scale project that we are planning to develop together with web designers is a 3D cultural map of the city containing current artistic events, as well as an option for an audio tour through the daily cultural calendar and the cultural map

of Plovdiv based on the existing cultural map (<http://www.plovdiv2019.eu/mapping/en/index2.html>). The users will be able to interact, ‘like’ and share favorite places and events and post their own pictures and comments about events they have visited or they would like to participate in or make their own agenda, appointments with friends and make use of other interactive options.

In addition, as Plovdiv is largely unknown abroad, if we win the title we need to make people interested in the past and the present of the city. Thus, we will develop with our partners an extensive podcast library containing free download podcasts on topics about Plovdiv’s history, contemporary art and culture, cuisine, lifestyle and trends. We will use open licences for the content where possible to ensure wider reach and distribution of the content created for the ECoC 2019 event. Upon completion of the ECoC programme, a full online audio, visual and text archive will be created leaving an open-source database of knowledge and artefacts which can be built upon further, while maintaining high standards for data and visual identity protection.

Advertising

The classic marketing mix might be outdated in 2019 and the truth is, we will never be able to afford extensive advertising – especially internationally. We will rely mostly on partnerships and innovative online advertising:

- Internet advertising and web marketing – We will apply innovative online marketing as well as social and viral Internet advertising. A team of SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) and online marketing experts will assure that content about Plovdiv 2019 is fed into different international specialised and popular web portals for art and culture as well as social networks. Banners and options for quick links to the Plovdiv 2019 website and social group pages will be published in popular regional and national websites. Further, we will use precisely targeted

online tools such as Google AdWords, Facebook ads, mobile app advertisements, and YouTube pre-roll screens;

- Outdoor Advertising – including branding of taxis and public transport in the city, megaposters on corporate partners’ headquarters, branding in local stores, restaurants, and bookstores
- Advertising in the broadcast media – radio and TV spots and participation in programmes
- Merchandise and give-aways
- Info-points using volunteers in cooperation with the City Tourist Information Board
- Advertisement placement, branding, onboard magazines and promotional material on the Bulgarian National Railway, Bulgaria Air, long-distance bus companies, and ferryboat services along the Danube River and Black Sea.

Workshop Plovdiv, 2014



Communication timeline

| Objectives | Target groups | Tools |
|---|--|---|
| First announcement 2014 – early 2015 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spread the news about Plovdiv as ECoC 2019 - Create awareness among future partners - Social media campaign for local citizens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens of Plovdiv and the region - Local, regional and national media - Partners, institutions, NGOs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Press conference in Plovdiv - Invite national media on tour to Plovdiv - Communicate with project partners - Invite citizens to upload Plovdiv 2019 logo and to post a photo/selfie with their favourite place in Plovdiv on social media - Prepare surveys and start monitoring day-tourist numbers |
| Preparation 2015 – 2017 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create enthusiasm with local population - Set partnerships - Development and improvement of communication channels - Increase national awareness on ECoC and Plovdiv 2019 - Ongoing PR & media relations - Develop a detailed communication programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens of Plovdiv and the region - Artists and cultural operators, sponsors, partners, institutions, NGOs, tour operators, KOLs - Local, regional, national and international media - Bulgarian citizens - Prospective partners from Bulgaria and abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information for locals - Start open calls for involvement - Online polls and discussions - Establish a pool of volunteers - Local events to present the programme - Sponsorship packages - Mobile applications - Set partnerships with Google Street View, Facebook and Youtube - Press releases, interviews - Media trips - Monitoring and Evaluation - Seek synergies with other activities (e.g. the exhibition of the Thracian gold treasure from Panagyurishte in the Louvre in 2015) - Presence at tourism fairs Berlin, London, Belgrade, Moscow |
| Ready to go 2018 | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Involve Plovdivians - Create awareness about Plovdiv 2019 in Europe - Promote particular events in Europe - Sustain regular PR& media relations - Collect feedback from various groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens of Plovdiv and the region - Bulgarian citizens - European target groups - National and international media - Artists, Cultural operators, NGOs - Partners and supporters - Local, regional, international media - Prospective visitors from Bulgaria and from abroad | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project activities - Online polls and discussions - Active involvement of volunteers - Activate all online tools and active content development - Launch social media campaign - Targeted ads in social media - Press releases and interviews, information pitching gaining media coverage - Presence in international cultural magazines and in foreign cultural calendars for 2019 - Media trips - Monitoring and Evaluation - Presence at tourism fairs Berlin, London, Belgrade, Moscow |
| Go live 2019 and beyond | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage active participation and involvement in events - Promote events and initiatives of Plovdiv 2019 - Sustain regular media & PR relations - Effective dealing with information inquiries and requests - Establish sustainable communication and evaluation structures to maintain international outreach | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Citizens of Plovdiv and the region - Local and regional media - Bulgarian citizens - European citizens - Prospective visitors of Plovdiv 2019 - National and international media - Artists, Cultural operators, NGOs - Partners and supporters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project activities - Online polls and discussions - Broader involvement of volunteers - Recognition events for volunteers – certificates, awards, publicity - Opening event for citizens and media - Special information materials, broad distribution locally and nationally - Online campaign in social media promoting particular events - Livestreaming of events - Targeted ads in social media - Press releases and interviews, information pitching - Media trips - Presence in international cultural magazines and in foreign cultural calendars for 2019 - Roll out partnerships with tour operators, media, sponsors, etc. - Monitoring and Evaluation with publish results after 2019 - Survey cultural data and developments 2020-2025 |

2) How does the city plan to ensure the visibility of the European Union, which is awarding the title?

We will comply with the EU regulations concerning the ECoC branding and will include the symbol of the European Union in all of our digital and print publications. We are planning more initiatives which will raise the visibility of the European Union in Plovdiv.

As young people are one of the groups we specifically want to engage in being more aware of the ECoC as an EU initiative, we will organise a sequence of seminars, discussions and practical workshops with high school and university students in Plovdiv involving our partners The Red House Centre for Culture and Debate (Sofia) and the Time to Talk (European Houses of Debate) network. As guest lecturers we will invite renowned researchers from Bulgaria and abroad, who specialise in European politics and culture. During these events the students will discuss and research European culture, the role of the EU within the peace process in Europe, what it means to be a European citizen and how Europe is going to compete with up-and-coming cultural “markets” in other parts of the world. This kind of “EU Focus Group” will also need a digital platform where people can participate in webinars, watch videos of the lectures, take part in quizzes and use other (interactive) material so that the reach towards the community and among similar groups Europe-wide is increased. They will be organised in partnership with our above mentioned partners, the universities and schools in the city and there is a possibility that these events grow into a Jean Monnet Network which typically have a duration of three years and work on topics about building up knowledge, experience

and good practices in the area of European Union Studies. Sources for funding of these activities could be the Europe for Citizens programme (2014-2020) in the field of democratic engagement and civic participation or the DG for Education and Culture.

Another aspect of the programme will be a student essay competition (in different age groups) which will be organised annually up to 2019 when a collection of the best essays will be presented as part of our main literature project WEB451. One of the possible prizes is a trip to the European Parliament in Brussels. In order to make the EU more visible in the city we intend to put QR codes on specific sites and buildings that have been developed through EU funds and connect them to the digital platform of the EU workshops. We will offer a series of events dedicated to the European Union including highlight events within the EU Focus Group activities each May between 2016 and 2020 as a “Month of Europe”. Further, we are planning to organise the European Heritage Days in Plovdiv in September 2019 to make our common European cultural heritage visible and celebrate what Plovdiv has to contribute to the shared European culture.

VI. Evaluation and monitoring

1) Does the city intend to set up a special monitoring and evaluation system:

a) for the impact of the programme and its knock-on effects?

Plovdiv is keen to develop an innovative system of evaluation and monitoring which not only enables us to see the impacts of the European Capital of Culture year, but also offers the city a new approach to analysing and assessing its broader cultural, social and economic situation. Our system combines existing and new methods of assessment and will involve institutions which are able to continue the evaluation process in the crucial years following 2019. In this way we will be able to assess the long-term development of Plovdiv's economic and social health. Developing our evaluation of ECoC impacts requires us to measure aspects of Plovdiv that have not been measured before. This is why we will begin the capturing much of the information in 2015. We will thus construct a strong basis for an innovative system to measure the scope and scale of the ECoC's influence as well as capturing greater citizen engagement. We have used the broad framework set out by the European Policy Group through which several previous ECoCs made recommendations to help guide cities like ours who have more limited experience in this field. We have also incorporated some of the ideas in

the model set out in Leeuwarden's 2018 bid – where they were very clear about using baseline data and setting targets which gave a clear indication of how they intended to make their community stronger economically and socially. This has led us to focus our measurement framework on four key areas we have called 'Assessment Areas'. They are:

- **Culture Sector Transformation** – this covers the key areas of cultural access and participation (essentially growing our audience, particularly from areas which are currently less engaged) and cultural vibrancy – increasing quality, range and internationalism.
- **Image and Identity** – we are looking to see much stronger recognition of Plovdiv as an international cultural centre, and to grow our cultural tourism; we will also measure changes in self-perception – how the confidence and civic pride of local people grows through our ECoC journey.
- **Social Impacts** – here we are keen to target specific issues and concerns – making Plovdiv a happier and more tolerant place and also making a major contribution to reducing school drop-out rates and illiteracy.
- **Economic Growth** – the thing that, in the long term, will ensure that Plovdiv 2019 is seen to have a lasting long-term impact is the impact on the city's economy. We focus particularly on the directly affected areas such as the economic impact of the cultural, creative and tourism sectors, but also look to see more general employment growth and diversification of Plovdiv's business sector.

Plovdiv's monitoring and evaluation process will be managed by an external expert company and facilitated by Plovdiv University Paisii Hilendarski's experts. We have also identified some international experts who can guide our team, especially in the early years, based on their experience of successfully delivering similar programmes. Together they will form our Expert Panel. We

also intend to explore external sources for funding our research given that the European Policy Group's guidance is that a properly resourced evaluation programme could cost around 1% of the total ECoC budget. We have set out some indicative milestones after the table.

| Assessment areas | Indicators and key areas for monitoring | Evaluation and monitoring research tools and sources of information | Time schedule/frequency |
|--|---|--|--|
| Cultural Sector Transformation | | | |
| Cultural access and participation | Total number of ECoC events in 2019 | Data from Plovdiv 2019 and delivery partners | 2019-2020 |
| | 50% of Plovdiv's residents and 30% of regional ones attending ECoC events in 2019 | | |
| | 20% increase in cultural participation between 2015 and 2021 | Data from Plovdiv 2019; Municipal Cultural Department; cultural institutions and operators | Every 2 years starting from 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| | Audience satisfaction of cultural content | Surveys amongst audience members at various events (% scored 5-1, Excellent – Poor) | Every year starting in 2015 |
| | Feedback on event organisation | | |
| | Increased number of events out of the city centre (incl. at the Chitalishta centres) | Data from Chitalishta network; District Municipalities; Municipal Cultural Department; | Every year after setting up a baseline in 2015 |
| | Demographics of event participation and increased access to new audiences | Surveys amongst audience members at various cultural events (% breakdown of audience by nationality, residence, gender, age, ethnic, economic, educational background) | We will set a baseline in 2015, according to which goals will be set. Evaluation period: every 2 years at least until 2021 |
| Percentage of cultural events with free entrance allowing disadvantaged groups access | Data from Municipal Cultural Department | | |
| Cultural vibrancy (Quality of cultural production, regional, national and international collaborations and networks) | Increased number of cultural events in the Roma neighbourhood Stolipinovo | Data from the Stolipinovo Cultural HUB on organised events and audience numbers | Every year starting in 2018 |
| | Number of European cross-border co-productions, guest international artists, exported and imported productions | Data from Plovdiv 2019; Municipal Cultural Department; cultural institutions and operators | Every year starting in 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| | Percentage of positive and negative reviews of ECoC artistic programme events | Media monitoring of national and international media outlets | Throughout 2019 and 2020 |
| | Number of original pieces commissioned by Plovdiv 2019 | Data from Plovdiv 2019 and Municipal Cultural Department | Throughout 2019 |
| | Number of artistic and managerial exchanges taking place in private and public cultural institutions (on a regional, national, and international level) | Municipal Cultural Department; cultural institutions and operators | Every 2 years starting from 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| | Number of memberships in international networks for Plovdiv's cultural institutions and operators (more international links) | Municipal Cultural Department; cultural institutions and operators | Every year after setting up a baseline and goals in 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| Increase of visits to museums/galleries/theatres/concert halls | | | |

| Identity and Image Impacts | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Recognition of Plovdiv as a significant European cultural centre | National/international/social media attention, increased media coverage | Media monitoring of national and international media outlets and social media | Every year starting in 2015 |
| | Development of Plovdiv's cultural tourism reputation | Surveys amongst tourists; Visibility of Plovdiv in cultural tourism media; Increased availability of tourist packages | |
| | Increased references to Plovdiv as a city of culture in media and social media | Analysis of media coverage | In 2017, 2019, and 2021 |
| Sense of identity | Plovdivians identifying with the city and feeling proud to live in it | Survey among citizens | Every 2 years starting from 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| | Sense of belonging to Europe among citizens | | |
| National awareness and perception of the ECoC | Percentage recognition rate of ECoC, likelihood/desire to visit | Online survey among Bulgarians | Every year starting from 2015 and throughout 2019 |
| Social Impacts | | | |
| Social and cultural integration of marginalised groups (ethnic, LGBTI minorities, people with disabilities) | 15% decrease in illiteracy rates and school dropouts in the Stolipinovo neighbourhood | Survey among inhabitants of the neighbourhoods and among participants in Plovdiv 2019's educational projects | Every 2 years starting from 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| | Increased level of tolerance and acceptance of vulnerable groups in society | Survey among all citizens based on the Bogardus social-distance scale | |
| Wider volunteer participation in cultural events | Number of registered volunteers and days of volunteering | Data from Chitalishta network; Municipal Cultural Department; Cultural institutions and operators; Plovdiv 2019 | Every year starting from 2015 |
| Quality of living | Percentage of young professionals who would consider coming back to Plovdiv after they have studied/worked elsewhere | Survey among citizens | Every 2 years starting from 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| | Happiness Index | Survey based on GNH indicators | |
| | Environmental appreciation | Survey among citizens; Environmental measures adopted by local authorities | In 2017, 2019, and 2021 |
| Economic Impacts | | | |
| Growth in tourism | 20% increase in national and 30% increase in international visitors to Plovdiv | Data from Municipal Tourism Enterprise; Private tourist operators; Tourism Council | Every year starting in 2015 |
| | 6% yearly increase in overnight stays | | |
| | Demographic profile: % breakdown of visitors from Bulgaria, the Balkans, the EU, non-EU countries | | Every year after setting up a baseline and a goal in 2015 |
| | Increased number of flights to and from Plovdiv airport | Data from Plovdiv Airport | Every 2 years starting from 2015 |
| | Increase in regional tourism | Number of visitors to regional festivals and events | Every 2 years starting from 2015 |
| New business and employment opportunities | New jobs created in the tourism sector | Data from Municipal Tourism Board; Private tourist operators; Tourism Council | |
| | Overall decrease in unemployment rates in the city to under 10% | Plovdiv Municipality; National Statistical Institute | Every year starting from 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| | Number of new businesses in the city | | |
| | Decrease in unemployment rates among vulnerable minorities (Roma/Turkish) to under 20% | Bulgarian National Employment Agency; National Statistical Institute; | |
| Increase in the number of small businesses operating in the Roma neighbourhoods | Plovdiv 2019's project managers in Stolipinovo, survey among Stolipinovo residents | | |
| Economic vibrancy of the cultural sector | Increase in private sponsorship by 5% | Chitalishta network; Municipal Cultural Department; Cultural institutions and operators | Every year after setting up a baseline in 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |
| | Employment growth in the cultural sector to 5% | National Statistical Institute | Every year starting in 2015 and continuing at least until 2021 |

Key milestones

2014 Review targets and strategy documents. Appoint independent experts. Hold workshop with International Panel. Agree on resources and timetable. Connect with 2019 Italian City.

2015 Set baseline indicators. Recruit volunteers to undertake qualitative evaluation and begin with existing events. Secure funding. Produce and publish baseline analysis and targets.

2016 Continue to review targets against ECoC progress. Review approach against other ECoC models.

2017 Second baseline measurement. Review continued relevance of indicators and targets. Revise if needed. Analyse developments in media coverage.

2018 Ensure resources and systems available to measure 2019 activities and outcomes. Produce analysis of progress against baseline around time of programme launch.

2019 Undertake major measurement exercise throughout ECoC year. Look to produce interim report on first six months around September. Use data to inform post-2019 planning.

2020 Publish main analysis around May/June. Link to new strategy documents and build key post-2019 objectives and targets. Hold conference to announce and share outcomes.

b) Does the city intend to set up a special monitoring and evaluation system for financial management?

The monitoring and evaluation for financial management 2014-2020 will be executed on a first level through the supervisory function of the Board of Directors who may also commission financial audits by external experts if they deem it necessary. In addition the rules and regulations provided by Bulgarian law help to guarantee that the financial management is supervised:

- Through an internal financial management system – already established in the current Foundation via a number of internal procedures aiming at guaranteeing the legality and efficiency of each expenditure. In general the system requires a “triple signature procedure”.
- By audits performed by the internal auditing body of the Municipality which can be requested by the mayor at any given time.
- Through a mandatory annual financial audit performed by an independent auditor by the 31st of March each year. The auditor will be selected by the City Council. The audit report will be made public via the register for non-governmental organisations established by the Ministry of Justice.
- External audit by the Court of Auditors – financial control carried out by the State Court of Auditors aimed at examining the efficiency and legality of the expenditures. The Court of Auditors may also refer to the state financial inspections agency in cases of irregularities discovered during the audit. In order to create maximum transparency and go further than mere monitoring we will commission the same independent experts who evaluate the programme with a final evaluation of the financial management at the end of 2020.

VII.

Additional information

1) What, in your opinion, are the strong points of the city's application and the parameters of its success as European Capital of Culture and what, on the other hand, are its weak points?

We are ready and eager to tackle our deficits and build on our strengths. We have the courage to name what is lacking, but can see our opportunities and are willing to put energy into them. Plovdiv needs this title and is determined to make good use of it.

Strengths

- Cultural infrastructure (eight universities, art galleries, cultural institutions, rich cultural calendar, festival scene, historical sites, traditions, individual creative artists)
- Geographic location (trans-European transport corridor, nature, archaeology, green spaces, situated between two mountains)
- Audiences (multi-ethnic environment, youth)

Weaknesses

- Deficits in Art Management (museums close for lunch, poor city marketing/branding, lack of cultural managers, centralisation of cultural processes, lack of business skills in culture organisations, little individual initiative of other cultural players, no strategic plan)
- Lack in Audience Development (low public interest in art and culture, bad presentation in some

- museums and art galleries)
- Social issues (largest Roma-ghetto in Europe, lowest wages in Bulgaria and the EU, socialist heritage, exaggerated self-esteem, over-reliance on past glories)
- Lack of communication/cooperation (lack of unity in cultural groups, no communication between groups)

Opportunities

- Marketing (broader media representation, vast tourism potential yet untapped, adding Ancient Plovdiv to the UNESCO heritage list, Plovdiv's heritage as being Europe's oldest living city)
- Cultural projects (tackling deficits and lack of togetherness through arts and culture, involvement of citizens)
- New links in the cultural infrastructure (establishing creative industries, 100 year history of cultural institutions, international fair, local arts education institutions)
- Channelling new resources (nature, new sport sites for cultural venues, European funds, revival of crafts, converting cultural resources into industries)

Threats

- Communication (dialogue between cultural institutions amongst themselves and with civil society/potential audience)
- Social structure (brain drain, demographic change, inertia/laziness, negativism)
- Resources (monuments falling apart, global economic crisis and special hardships in Plovdiv region)
- Audiences (lack of interest in culture, proximity of Sofia causes a drain of people, exclusion of ethnicities)

- Politics (previous Bulgarian government ignored Plovdiv, creation of artificial regions around Plovdiv)

2) Does the city intend to develop particular cultural projects in the coming years, irrespective of the outcome of its application for the title of European Capital of Culture?

The ECoC bid has already had a great effect on Plovdiv. The city is more committed than ever to focus on culture and creativity as driving forces for social and economic change. Thanks to this candidacy, irrespective of the outcome of the competition in September 2014, Plovdiv will have adopted its first Cultural Strategy for the 2014-2024 period. The strategy is closely aligned with the goals and values of the ECoC project. In recent years the financial crisis and the drain of young people from the city has considerably harmed its cultural life, making it hard for organisers to attract sponsors and financial support. Plovdiv's candidacy has boosted enthusiasm and hope. This is one of the reasons why not being awarded the title would be a hard blow on the self-esteem and on the positive attitude towards culture that has been triggered over the past three years. It is almost certain that enthusiasm and active participation would not be easily kept at a high level without the European Capital of Culture title. But we are also aware that certain projects and processes that have started will continue because we want to boost the cultural vibrancy of the city. If we are not awarded the title, we will concentrate on strategic goals and continue working on projects that have already been launched. For example the Social Innovation Challenge and the Changemakers Academy already took place in April and June this year, while the Empatheat Global Social Innovation Summit is planned for October 2014. We hope to turn these events into annual ones. Initiatives like these help us

utilise the potential of our citizens and involve them actively in the problem-solving and decision-making process in our city. This is of the utmost importance, especially in terms of a significant European issue like the recognition of Roma and Sinti in European societies.

The trapApart project is already galvanising the city's cultural potential and bringing a true European dimension to cultural events in Plovdiv by inviting young artists and creative people from all parts of Europe for events and residency projects. As decentralisation is a very important topic for us we will focus our efforts on re-establishing the role the Chitalishta network used to play in the lives of Bulgarians, as centres for the community's social and cultural life, creating a sense of togetherness. We will continue working in these areas, because they represent essential goals for our city: starting a dialogue with marginalised ethnic groups (Social Innovation Days etc.), giving young people the opportunity to work and create while establishing strong connections with Europe (trapApart), and making sure that everyone has equal access to culture (Chitalishta).

It goes without saying that without the ECoC title these projects will take longer to produce results and the said results will be limited in their scope and scale. Being able to take advantage of the work that has already been done and the connections that have been forged is of great importance for us, but we believe there should be a stronger incentive for bidding cities to plan their 'plan B' strategies carefully and realistically. In May 2014 Plovdiv took part in a workshop organised by the Italian city of Siena, titled 'In Culture Everybody Wins' which focused on the bidding cities' strategies if they lose. It was decided that the results from the workshop will be presented as a paper to political representatives and the European Commission. One of the recommendations in this paper, suggested by Plovdiv, will be

to expand the Melina Mercouri fund in order to include an award for the best implemented 'plan B' strategy by a losing candidate. In this way, we believe, the positive effects we have seen in our and many other cities will not be lost, but multiplied thus emphasising the importance of the ECoC project on a European level and guaranteeing that indeed, in culture everybody wins.

3) Please add below any further comments which you deem necessary on the subject of this application.

We would like to express our gratitude to all citizens, volunteers, artists, cultural operators and cultural institutions in the city and the region who have contributed ideas, time and passion to this bid. A big 'thank you' to our international partners in Europe who have embarked on a journey with us without being guaranteed a positive outcome and yet they contributed greatly and shared our enthusiasm. Together we have made this work possible!



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