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Article

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Amfiteatru Economic Journal

Provided in Cooperation with:

The Bucharest University of Economic Studies

Suggested Citation: Šebová, Miriam; Peter Džupka, Oto Hudec; Urbancíková, Nataša (2014) : Promoting and Financing Cultural Tourism in Europe through European Capitals of Culture: A Case Study of Košice, European Capital of Culture 2013, Amfiteatru Economic Journal, ISSN 2247-9104, The Bucharest University of Economic Studies, Bucharest, Vol. 16, Iss. 36, pp. 655-671

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/168849>

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PROMOTING AND FINANCING CULTURAL TOURISM IN EUROPE THROUGH EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE: A CASE STUDY OF KOŠICE, EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2013

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Abstract

The paper highlights the link between the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) designation and the development of cultural tourism in Europe. Cultural tourism is the fastest growing segment of tourism in the world and is the desirable objective of new defined cultural policies in European cities. According to the European Commission (2012), it is estimated that cultural tourism accounts for around 40% of all European tourism. In general, the European Commission confirms the significant role of cultural tourism in the development of tourism in Europe and one of the most visible tools of this strategy is the designation of the ECoC. Cultural policy has also become an important tool of urban regeneration and in the rebranding of European cities.

The case study of Košice ECoC 2013 presents part of the results from the Košice ECoC evaluation project. The Košice ECoC 2013 project was designed as a community led project which was targeted at increasing the cultural consumption of residents rather than the number of foreign cultural tourists. However, the biggest events such as White night attracted a lot of tourists from the wider region.

More than 70 million EUR was dedicated to investments, which have significantly improved the culture infrastructure in Košice. The ECoC designation supported the local cultural buzz and led to new local production of modern culture, art and the creative industries. Other visible effects have already been seen in the advantages gained by the decentralization of the cultural infrastructure and events in the neighbourhoods. The involvement of people outside the city centre has avoided gentrification in the city. From this point of view the project Košice ECoC 2013 has had the prerequisite to sustainable cultural tourism in Košice.

Keywords: Cultural tourism, European Capital of cultural, urban regeneration, city development, financing of cultural tourism

JEL Classification: R 1, R 58, O 18

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Introduction

The European capitals of culture (ECoC) will have formed a group of almost 50 European cities by the year 2014. The programme has inherently changed from the primary concept of highlighting already existing diamonds of European cultural heritage (Florence, Amsterdam, Paris, Athens) to discovering new and often smaller cultural places in Europe (Turku, Sibiu, Stavanger) which has allocated the programme evenly to all European countries.[†] The concept has moved forward a steady and balanced model of drawing attention to a pair of cities in two different countries every year, giving the selected cities an opportunity to change their image and raise their visibility. In addition, the rather “EXPO/Olympic Games-type” cultural tourism content has become very different these days with the programme largely dealing with culture-led regeneration, giving the cities an opportunity to transform and regenerate through cultural activities as well as generating considerable cultural, social and economic benefits. The conjunction between culture and economics in the urban context has been accentuated since the late 1990s with the expansion of city marketing techniques and their progressive transformation into city branding strategies (Garcia, 2004). The examples of Glasgow (ECoC 1990) or Liverpool (ECoC 2008) present a new model of formerly industrially perceived cities which have been able to develop their cultural scene in order to move forward substantial culture-led urban regeneration.

Nevertheless, the title European capital of culture still evokes the image of immense cultural events and high numbers of tourists in the year of the project, which is in contradiction to the mid- or even long-term process of urban regeneration objectives. The expectation of citizens and the media often does not meet the reality of the culture-led regeneration of ECoC cities neither in the spectacular culture nor in the rapid short-term tourism increase. There are several important questions to be answered: What is the impact of the ECoC projects on the tourism in the cities in the context of the present understanding as urban regeneration projects? What is the follow up tourism in the cities after the year of culture, i.e. the sustainability of the sudden shift of the trajectories to the cultural destination? How important in this respect is the city size, previous image and other factors on tourism?

The paper highlights the link between the European Capital of Culture designation and the development of cultural tourism in Europe. It is focused on the role of ECoC concept in promoting culture-led regeneration in European cities. The case study of Košice ECoC 2013 analyses the visitors to cultural events in the city and evaluate the subsequent tourism effects in Košice. The primary research data on the city consists of evaluation project in the city before and during the ECoC year conducted by the authors.

1. The evolution of the concept of the European Capital of Culture

The concept of the “European City of Culture” and later the “European Capital of Culture (ECoC)” was launched as the main focus of EU cultural policy in 1985. Although it started as a short-term cultural festival, it has developed into a year-long event aimed not only at strengthening the cultural dimension of a city but also to regenerate the urban space. Since 2009, the EU has annually celebrated at least two ECoCs. While one is chosen from an old

[†] For full list of ECoC cities see EC (2009)

Member State, the other is from a country that joined the European Union after 2004. There is a common opinion that the ECoC is much more than merely a tool of European cultural policy. Various ECoCs have used the designation as a way to revive the city space. The regenerated urban environment in the recently designated ECoCs in Central and Eastern European countries have manifested the ideals of current urban planning, urban design, and city development. One of the major components in these ideals is the humane point of view of the city. By this, the transformations in the inner city space obey the planning principles conceptualized as New Urbanism which stress aspects such as the rediscovery of the city centre and its activities, pedestrian-friendly urban design, diversity and openness of public space, urban aesthetics, quality of design, and sustainability and good quality of life (Lähdesmäki, 2012).

However, the promotion of European Cities of Culture and the investment of substantial regional development aid into cultural projects has acted as an effective “Trojan horse”. The structural economic adjustment policies and funding have been diverted into culture - led regeneration and rural development through crafts, heritage and tourism based projects. This has generally bypassed national and even city cultural and economic development policy and preferences. (Evans, 2003) The successful stories of former ECoC have inspired cultural policies throughout the world. The city of culture concept has also been adopted across the Atlantic where a competition for Cultural City of the Americas started in 2000. Merida, capital of the Yucatan province in Mexico started the first festival. (Evans, 2003)

There have been several famous examples of successful culturally led city regenerations over the decades. Glasgow is considered the first city to have used the ECoC status as a catalyst to accelerate urban regeneration. (Garcia, 2004, Doucet, 2007) Its design and implementation of cultural policy led to the rebranding of the city as well as huge development in design, engineering, architecture, religion and sports activities. Notwithstanding the urban renewal, there have been several failures noted in the Glasgow model. It has been criticized because of the economic rather than cultural perspective that was taken (Booth, 1996 in Garcia, 2004). Doucet (2007) has pointed out that the flagship projects such as the Burrell Collection, the Scottish Exhibition and Convention Centre were done to attract tourists rather than serving the needs of the local population. The link between the flagship model of cultural policy and gentrification is well established within the literature (e.g. Doucet, 2007, Jones, Wilks-Heeg, 2004, MacLeod, 2002) Tourism is a key issue of the flagship approach although while tourism can increase the amount of visitors and bring additional income to the local economy, these positive impacts can be accompanied by the isolation and deprivation in peripheral city zones. In Glasgow, the selection of the city centre as the site for much of the regeneration was controversial as it was accompanied by increasing poverty and deprivation in peripheral housing estates (MacLeod, 2002). These problems in balance of cultural provision between elite and grassroots and problems in spatial distribution between centre and periphery were mainly reasoned by the radical transformation of the governing structures in the city associated with the reformulation of the cultural policies between 1995 and 1996. (Garcia, 2004) Even shinier holders of the ECoC title have been the Spanish representatives of Barcelona and Bilbao. Bilbao is the city that has acted as a pioneer of city-rebranding. (Evans, 2003) The significant investment into large scaled urban projects, avant-garde physical design of public open spaces and buildings and especially into the cultural icon of the Guggenheim museum of Modern Arts by Frank O. Gehry, transformed Bilbao into an international tourist place. The benefits were seen immediately and Plaza (1999 in Gospodini, 2001)

announced that foreign travellers increased 43% in 1998 compared to non-Basque Spain which saw a 20.4% growth.

In the history of the ECoC, there have been different approaches to celebrating the ECoC year. On one hand, there has been the building of cultural icons through investment which have become extraordinary and visible flagships of the project (e.g. Glasgow, Bilbao) and can attract a multitude of visitors. On the other hand, there are the frequent and smaller projects of physical infrastructure across the city which enable it to be equipped with cultural infrastructure and also in the peripheral parts of the city (e.g. Košice).

The evolutionary trajectory of the ECoC concept has been strongly touched by tendencies in urban policy, city marketing and the development of the creative industries. The problem with the ECoCs has been the lack of evaluation of the long-term impacts of the designation. Existing reports have often had a promotional character rather than an analytical contribution. The significant change to the assessment of the ECoC project was brought by the designation of Liverpool 2008. The ECoC impacts in the city and broader region were carefully analyzed (Impact 08). The developed methodology was adopted in general and incorporated into "An international framework of good practice in research and delivery of the European Capital of Culture program" summarized by the European Capitals of Culture Policy Group. This was the recommendation for titled cities as to how to practice comprehensive and comparable research. The precise scope of the research could highlight opportunities and risks of culture led regeneration and the impacts on cultural tourism development in Europe.

Table no. 1: The Evolution of the ECoC Designation

Time period	Designated cities	Main characteristics
1985 – 1989	Athens, Florence, Amsterdam, West Berlin, Paris	Big traditional cultural cities
Since 1990	Glasgow, Dublin, Madrid, Antwerp, Lisbon, Luxembourg city, Copenhagen, Thessaloniki, Stockholm, Weimar	ECoC as a catalyst of urban regeneration in old industrial cities Shift from national capitals to regional cities
Since 2000	Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, Cracow, Helsinki, Prague, Reykjavik, Santiago de Compostela Rotterdam, Porto, Bruges, Salamanca, Graz, Genoa, Lille, Cork, Patras	Millenium Year – Development of cross-border cultural cooperation Designation of ECoC outside EU More than one ECoC designation in the year
Since 2007	Luxembourg City and Greater Region, Sibiu, Liverpool, Stavanger	Regional dimension of ECoC Comprehensive assessment of ECoC impacts
Since 2009	Vilnius, Linz, Ruhr, Istanbul, Pécs, Turku, Tallinn, Maribor, Guimarães, Košice, Marseille, Umeå, Riga	One ECoC from old and one ECoC from new member states Europeanization of new member States by ECoC

Source: own compilation

2. The scope of cultural tourism

Tourism, including transportation, is the largest industry in the world at 4.4 trillion US dollars and far surpasses the expenditure of the world military (Assis, 2004 in Liu, 2005). The development of sustainable tourism demands a clear understanding of the complex nature of tourism and of its position and relationship within the broader economy and society (Bakucz, 2011). Tourism as an industry has undergone significant transformations in line with the rise of the knowledge based economy. Whereas mass tourism was once characterized by democratization and standardization in travel, today's sophisticated traveller is seeking customization for individualized tastes, giving rise to a new cultural elite who seeks the authentic, aesthetic, and even ascetic. (Liu, 2005)

Culture and tourism are undeniably linked together. Culture is the essence of the regional potential to revitalize the region and community. The complexity of the relationship between tourism and culture underlines the problems of the definition "cultural tourism". The World Trade Organisation (WTO) has proposed a "narrow" definition, which covers the "movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments, travel to study nature, folklore or art, and pilgrimages". The key phrase in this definition is that cultural tourism involves essentially cultural motivations. (Richards, 2004)

Although culture is a major motivator for tourism, relatively few countries or regions collect specific data on the volume or patterns of tourism consumption related to culture. The only specific international survey of cultural tourists is the ATLAS Cultural Tourism Survey which has been running since 1992 (Richards, 2007 in OECD, 2009). ATLAS surveys (covering those people travelling for specific cultural motivations) indicate that cultural tourism accounts for about 5-8% of the total tourism market, or around 60 million international trips worldwide (Richards, 2004).

Cultural led generation of tourists has become of significant importance and cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets. Cultural tourism is viewed as a "higher form" of tourism because of the assumption that visitors are with higher education and better behavior. (OECD, 2009) This kind of tourism avoids some of the negative impacts of mass tourism such as environmental problems and enables the maintenance of cultural heritage.

The following summarizes the main findings about cultural tourism based on the ATLAS Surveys in 2004 and 2007 (Richard, 2004, Richard, 2007, Richard, 2011). These will be tested in our Košice case study.

- Domestic tourists are of vital importance for most cultural tourism attraction. About 40% of the 2004 ATLAS survey respondents lived in the local area. Less than 20% were foreign tourists.
- In contrast with the traditional view of cultural tourism, younger people are a very important segment of the total audience. The largest single age group was 20-29, which accounted for over 30% of visitors in the 2007 survey.
- There was a strong link found between cultural consumption and education. Highly educated people tend to consume more culture in all forms, popular culture as well. The proportion of respondents with some form of higher education continues to grow with

almost 70% having a degree or higher degree in 2007. There is a tendency for more highly educated people with higher levels of cultural capital to visit more cultural sites.

- The 'traditional' attractions, such as museums, galleries and monuments are still the most important sites visited by tourists. However, there is evidence of a trend towards greater dispersion of visitors among different cultural attraction types in the destination. In particular a shift from 'heritage' attractions towards 'arts' attractions. Hand art galleries, performing arts attractions and festivals have all increased their share of visitors in recent years although they are still visited by fewer tourists.

Such changes in society and the economy continue to transform tourism patterns. A new paradigm connected with innovative approaches to tourism has been labeled as creative tourism (Richard, 2013) or the broader concept of EXCITE Complex (Liu, 2005).

3. The role of the ECoC in boosting cultural tourism

According to the European Commission (2012), it is estimated that cultural tourism accounts for around 40% of all European tourism. Transnational cultural tourism products are represented by common European shared values and heritage. They contribute to presenting and promoting Europe as a "unique tourism destination". Therefore the European Commission has implemented a number of activities to support transnational tourism products based on specific themes which still have a great potential for growth (European Commission, 2012). Not only is value sharing the main point of increasing attractiveness of cultural tourism across Europe but the previously mentioned advantages of cultural tourism are making it the desirable object of regional and local development policies. In general, the European Commission confirms the significant role of cultural tourism in the development of tourism in Europe and one of the most visible tools of this strategy is the designation of the ECoC. (European Communities, 2009) The opportunities, topics and events connected with the ECoC could be a catalyst for cultural rebranding and positioning of a city on the map of cultural tourism. This can also be in cities that are not typically cultural centres. The examination of urban landscape transformation, built heritage and provision of innovative design of space are critical parameters and challenges for the titled cities. (Beriatis, Gospodini, 2004)

The expectations of the hosted cities have often been connected with the notable improvement of their position in cultural tourism markets and significant increase of tourists. The reviews indicate that the influence on tourism depends on the specific situation of the considered city. One of reviews of the ECoC programme which has been published by the EU shows that the programme has been relatively successful in attracting cultural visitors to the host cities with an average increase of 12% in overnights in each city. Graz was particularly successful in this regard, attracting 25% more visitors in 2003. (Richards, 2004)

The impact on tourism development varies according to the city. Glasgow has been cited as one of the best practices of city regeneration where the effect of the ECoC on tourism development was undeniable. The increased attractiveness of the city also had economic effects. Between 1994 and 1998, the city's economy grew by 15.9% compared to 10.3% in Scotland and 11.4% for the UK as a whole. Some 29 640 people were employed in tourism-related activities in Glasgow in 2005, accounting for 7.6% of all jobs in Glasgow. In 1995, 1.49 million trips were made by visitors to Glasgow, generating GBP 263 million in

expenditure. By 2005, this had increased to 2.8 million trips with the expenditure of GBP 700 million. Glasgow is now the fourth most popular U.K. city destination for foreign tourists (excluding London). (OECD, 2009) Other statistics are from Luxembourg and Greater Region ECoC in 2007. The year-long event generated more than 3.3 million visits and 6% growth in hotel occupancy while the event injected over EUR 56 million of visitor expenditure into the local economy. (OECD, 2009)

The key issue in evaluating the impact of the ECoC is the sustainability of the process started by the ECoC status. The attractiveness of the city in the year covered by media and marketing agencies is fleeting. There are several crucial points to be considered in the sustainability of cultural tourism governance in the ECoCs.

The funding after the ECoC's year and professional management of local heritage and cultural activities are more complicated in smaller cities. Small and medium-sized localities generally lack the financial and strategic resources to implement good urban governance for sustainable cultural tourism. (Paskaleva-Shapira et al., 2004 in OECD, 2009)

In addition to the EU funding which plays a key role in boosting the supply of cultural facilities in the ECoC, private investment is also crucial. The sufficiency and efficiency of public spending could strengthen the willingness of the private sector to participate in local development. This multiplier effect was especially evident in the cases of Glasgow, Barcelona and Liverpool. In Košice the contributions received from private sector have been very low.

Another increasingly important issue in product development for successful cultural tourism is the involvement of the local community. Research on cultural consumption by tourists has consistently shown that involvement with local communities is important as a motivating factor and as a major source of visitor satisfaction. (OECD, 2009)

4. European Capital of Culture Košice 2013 – Ambitions and Reality

Research methodology

The gathering of primary data was based on the methodology developed by the European policy group for the ECoC projects evaluation. The authors of this paper are directly involved in the evaluating process of the ECoC which started in 2012 (one year before the ECoC year) with data collection for a base line description. The evaluation is going to continue until the end of 2014. The main preliminary findings of the evaluation process have been summarized in the report published by Hudec, Džupka, Šebová (2013).

Two types of questionnaires were used in the primary research: event questionnaires and stationary questionnaires. The event questionnaires were collected at selected cultural events organized under the Košice ECoC project during 2012 and 2013. The aim of these questionnaires was to estimate the socio-economic structure of the event audience, to evaluate the visitors' satisfaction and also to collect information about visitors' expenditure to evaluate the economic impact of the event. The stationary questionnaires were collected in 10 different places within the city (including city suburbs) every month in 2013. Passers-by were asked to fill in the detailed questionnaire about their interests, satisfaction, opinions and expectations related to the ECoC, cultural transformation of the city and city image. In 2013 were collected in total 2130 questionnaires.

The scope of the European Capital of Culture Košice 2013

Košice, the second largest city in Slovakia with around 250 thousand inhabitants, was designated for the title ECoC in 2008. The message of the winning project was named "Interface" and was based on the idea of using "the city as an interface" (communication platform) between new forms of culture and its citizens and visitors. The main objectives of the project had a strong European dimension to its events and intercultural communication. These were defined as:

- A city which will be a modern, dynamic and creative European metropolis. The project strives to transform an industrial city into a post-industrial city with creative potential, a university background and a new cultural infrastructure;
- A new model of cultural institutions in Košice – Kasarne/Kulturpark as a multigenre cultural centre and Kunsthalle/Hall of Art as a new exhibition hall with international programmes;
- Artistic residencies with opportunities for domestic and foreign artists;
- Conditions for a creative economy and a base for other cultural operators, civic associations and artistic groups;
- Community development enhanced by involving citizens from suburbs in the SPOTs programme, to support diversity of cultures of various social and religious groups and minority cultures;
- A new cultural metropolis of the 21st century in this central European area, with sustainable development and an improving environment and developing tourism.

Following these objectives, the programme for the ECoC year 2013 was developed. The Košice ECoC project was designed as a broader culture-led city regeneration project in a former industrial city. The target, to start a long-term transformation of the city based on the support of cultural activities and creative industries, was prioritized before the short-term, ephemeral activities. This approach has been visible in the Košice ECoC 2013 events programme as well as in the investment in the city. While there were no massive cultural events (such as the Rolling-stones or Madonna), the project was based on numerous small art and cultural events, bringing modern forms of European culture to Košice. These events were developed and performed by local artists together with artists from different EU countries. This European dimension of the project was crucial for linking local artists into European cultural networks.

The programme in Košice was designed towards the needs of the citizens. The participation of all groups of local inhabitants was an important leitmotif for organisers of the cultural activities. Moreover, the attraction of non-residents who bring additional income to the local economy was the often declared desire of city-politicians. The cultural policy was targeted mainly on supporting local production of culture, supporting cultural heritage, strengthening the cultural infrastructure in the city and building new innovative public spaces. The most visible and popular activities of the ECoC became the open space city festivals which achieved supporting cultural tourism in the city as well.

Among the hundreds of small cultural events in Košice during 2013, there were two big local festivals. The most visited cultural event was "White night/ Nuit Blanche". This event is a special cultural project which originally started in Paris and has been celebrated in Rome and other European capital cities. The event involves street performers and various artists performing throughout the whole night. Košice is the only city in Slovakia and

neighbouring V4 countries that has the licence from Paris to organize this prestigious international arts project. The White night was organized for the third time in Košice in 2013. Typically the White night take place on the same day in each city which is the first Saturday in October. By coincidence, this is always the night before the Peace marathon in Košice. This combination of culture and sport during a single October weekend has started to be very popular in Košice among tourists. Local tourist providers have named it the "Golden Weekend" in Košice and all hotels are usually fully booked one month in advance. According to this current research which explored the local economic impact of this event, the qualified estimate about the number of visitors during White night in 2013 was around 21, 000. This event has additional significance for the support of local artists who participate with creative performances.

The direct local economic impact was around 353 000 eur mainly spent by foreign tourists. (Hudec, Džupka, Šebová, 2013)

The other popular ECoC summer festival is "Imagination" which has been happening in the city since 2010. This event is a multi-genre performance which combines elements of circus, theatre and acrobatics and takes place in the reconstructed parks. It is well attended by citizens as well as by tourists. The "Imagination" festival was developed as a popular project for local artists and gives them opportunities to cooperate with artists from other EU countries as well as achieving a high level, modern, original, open air festival.



Figure no. 1: White Night in Košice 2013

Source: European Capital of Culture, n.o. <http://www.kosice2013.sk/>

These city festivals are a new product of cultural tourism developed in connection with the ECoC. They play an important role in starting the process of city rebranding from an industrial historic city to a modern cultural city. The networks and management bodies established within the ECoC projects are still working and producing new "products" for cultural tourism related to the succeeded projects. The ambitious plan is to continue with this previously started cultural policy. One of the not answered questions is the long-term financing of these non- profit cultural zones which haven't yet been able to gain the support of private investors.

Regeneration of public spaces in Košice

The encouragement of cultural tourists and local culture providers should ensure the projects based on the regeneration of public spaces. More than 70 million EUR was dedicated to 18 infrastructural projects focused on the reconstruction or development of

new cultural infrastructure. The core investments were spent on building new cultural infrastructure in the KulturPark, Kunsthalle and reconstruction of parks. The biggest investment, more than 20 million EUR, was dedicated to the reconstruction of an old army barracks into a new modern laboratory of living culture program (KulturPark). The main role of this flagship Košice ECoC programme was the creation of a centre for supporting modern culture and creativity. It offers innovative spaces near the city centre for the production of culture (recording, video studios, pods for young artists, exhibition rooms etc.). This infrastructure has no specialization on particular creative sector, but it aims to support the creative industry as a whole. This approach can be applied only in the cities with existing diversified specialization (Slach, Koutský, Novotný, Ženka, 2013.) Another big project was the rebuilding of the old, deteriorating swimming pool into a modern exhibition place "Kunsthalle". The reconstruction has kept the old body of the swimming pool in the centre of the exhibition hall. This opens opportunities for creative exhibitions in the context of water. While, the Kulturpark and Kunsthalle are situated at the edge of the city centre they are still accessible for tourists.

Finally, there has been the reconstruction of the three city parks around the city centre. The main idea was to create open air public spaces for culture presentations. The street art activities have been the category with high audience participation and respondents have expressed interest in this kind of art rather than traditional cultural genres (Hudec, Džupka, Šebová, 2013)

There has been a marked decrease in the visitor attendance to museums in general since 2008 in Slovakia (Mixtaj et al, 2011). However, the attendance to galleries and museums in Košice increased in 2012 (there are no available data for 2013) while theatre performance decreased. Yet, the most popular cultural performance for local residents in Košice remains to be the cinema (Hudec, Džupka, Šebová, 2013).

Beriatos and Gospodiny (2004) classified the projects organised in Athens into projects related to the built heritage, projects based on innovative design of space and non-competitive projects. The projects related to the built heritage were mainly managed by Košice self governing region and implemented in the surrounding rural areas of the Košice region. In the city center, the galleries, theatres and museums were reconstructed and modernized.

The popular project which used an innovative design of public space was the SPOTS (acronym for cultural points in the neighbourhoods) project (figure no. 2).

The aim of the project was the decentralization of culture from the city centre to suburban areas. It entailed the reconstruction of former heat exchange stations, built in the 60s and 70s, into small local cultural centres in residential areas of the city. In Košice suburban areas are situated more than 200 of these old unused small buildings. Five of these in different residential areas have been reconstructed into cultural and community centres. The SPOTS project was able to involve local inhabitants from different parts of the city. It also has the potential to motivate cultural tourists to visit suburban areas of the city due to their unconventional designs with climbing walls, graffiti and skate tracks.



Figure no.2: Reconstructed heat exchange stations as community cultural centres

Source: European Capital of Culture, n.o. <http://www.kosice2013.sk/>

According to the survey carried out for this study (figure no. 3), the inhabitants from different neighbourhoods have increased their cultural consumption and have registered the increased opportunity to participate in cultural activities in their living areas. The target to balance the spatial distribution of cultural activities between centre and periphery seems to be filled. From this point of view, there is an assumption that this kind of small community based project will stay sustainable also after the ECoC year.

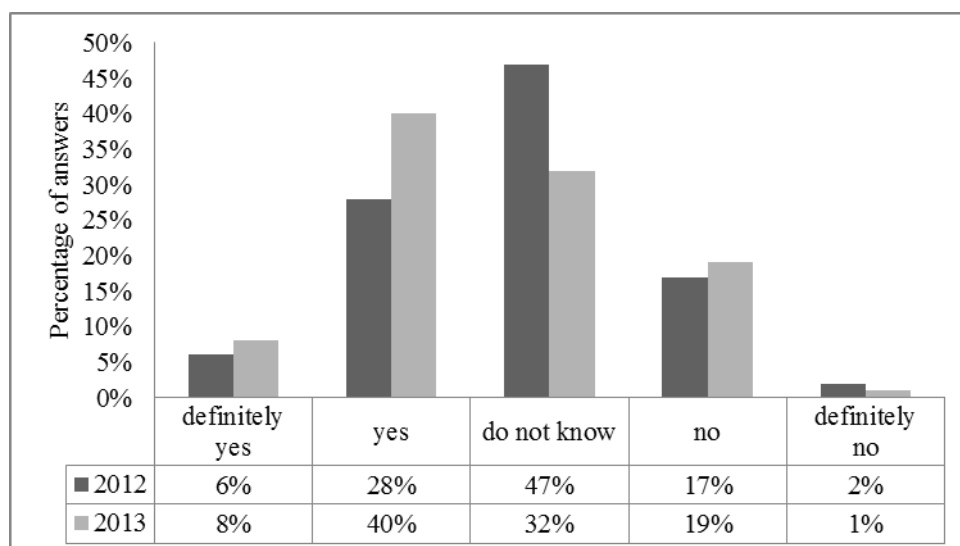


Figure no. 3: Has the opportunity to be involved in culture increased in your neighbourhood?

Source: own research

5. Who are the visitors of cultural events in Košice?

The accommodation capacity has more than doubled in last decade in Košice. The biggest impetus for investors to build hotels, guest houses and other types of accommodation in Košice was the organization of the World Ice hockey Championship in 2011 and the title of Košice ECoC 2013. Yet in spite of this, there hasn't been a significant number of tourists

coming to the city. Figure (no. 4) compares the growth index of tourists in the two biggest cities in Slovakia; Bratislava which is the capital city and Košice. The graphic shows that the growth of tourists is more stable in Bratislava.

Around 220 000 tourists were accommodated in Košice in 2012 as well as in 2013 (according the city accommodation tax). Thus, the ECoC year did not increase the number of tourist staying in accommodation in Košice as dramatically as was expected with only a slight increase of tourists and overnight stays.

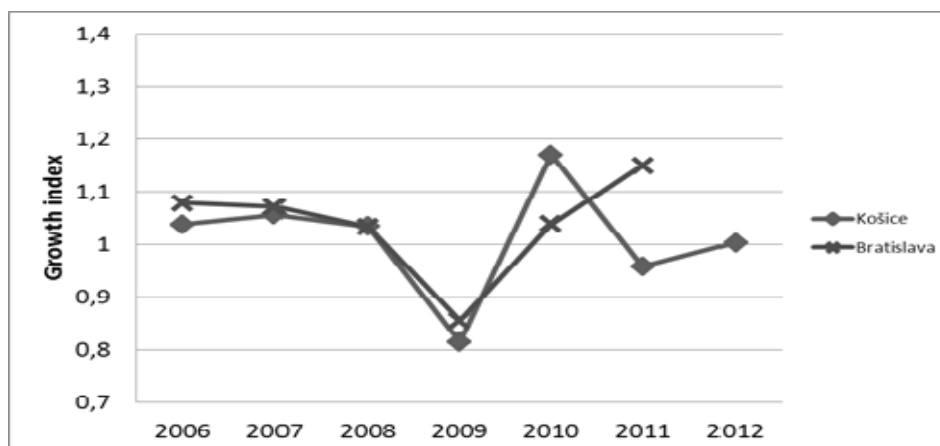


Figure no. 4: Number of tourists - growth index in Košice and Bratislava

Source: Statistical Office of Slovakia

This relatively small impact of tourism in the city stimulates the questions: Who were the visitors of the cultural events of the ECoC 2013? What is the socio-demographic profile of the cultural visitors? The findings from this study are close to the general observations made about cultural tourism in the ATLAS survey (part 2).

The biggest group of visitors to the ECoC events were Slovak tourists and local inhabitants from Košice itself. In 2013 only 12% of visitors were foreign tourists while 88% were visitors from Slovakia and mainly from Košice or the broader region. The foreign tourists came mainly from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Austria, Germany and Ukraine which make up the geographically closest nations.

The age structure confirmed that younger people are an important segment of the total audience. The largest age group was 21-30 which accounted for over 53% of visitors in 2013 (figure 5). While the project involved all age categories, their participation varied in different kinds of events.

In Košice it was possible to confirm the link between cultural consumption and education. The proportion of respondents with some form of higher education was 48% in 2013. This confirms the general trend towards an increasing ratio of highly educated people in the Slovak population in general.

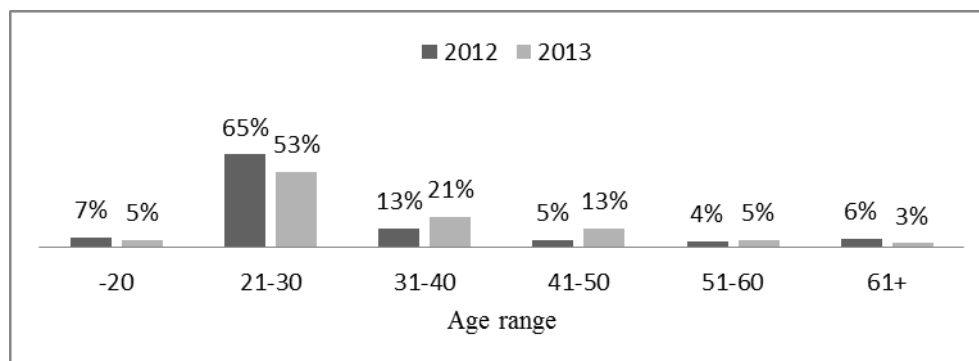


Figure no. 5: Tourists at ECoC events according to age

Source: own research

According to the preliminary evaluation findings, the project has captured primarily local residents and national tourists. They will probably be the main consumers of the created products of cultural tourism in Košice in the near future too. In terms of what is important for cultural policy implications, it vital to take into account the information about the increasing interest in street art culture and also the dominant participation of young people. Their current experience in culture could influence their cultural taste in the future. With regard to the cultural branding of the city there are some unanswered questions. Košice is too small a city for the global market, but it has bigger historical, cultural and economic importance than just local interest. In previous research, the concept “glocalised” has been discussed (e.g. Okano, Samson, 2010, Beriatos, Gospodini, 2004). Glocalising urban landscapes combines traditionally built heritage and innovative design of public space competitive with other global cities. (Beriatos, Gospodini, 2004). Some researchers in the city have mentioned this as a desired concept for Košice. However, the findings from this study have highlighted that while Košice has the potential to be a cultural point in the broader region of V4 countries it is unlikely to extend much further.

Conclusion

European Capitals of Culture play a vital role in promoting cultural tourism across Europe. The designation is linked to creating sufficient cultural infrastructure within the scope of urban regeneration in the selected cities. Nevertheless, the title European capital of culture still evokes the image of immense cultural events and high numbers of tourists in the year of the project, which is in contradiction to the mid- or even long-term process of urban regeneration objectives. The expectation of citizens and the media often does not meet the reality of the culture-led regeneration of ECoC cities neither in the spectacular culture nor in the rapid short-term tourism increase.

In Košice, there was a great effort made to set tourism on a new development route, not only based on traditional cultural tourism such as museums and galleries but also towards new modern experimental forms of culture such as street art and festivals. More than 70 million EUR was dedicated to 18 infrastructural projects focused on improvement of cultural infrastructure. The renovated public open spaces in Košice are expected to enhance the city identity and encourage the social and cultural dimension of the city.

There was no cultural icon built in Košice for the ECoC like that of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao. Rather, the focus was on lots of smaller investments which were targeted on the development of new cultural infrastructure as well as supporting local artists and community based forms of culture. The importance of the ECoC seems to have been more about city culture renewal rather than increasing the number of tourists, which has been so far limited.

The projects of the ECoC have been designed to take a bottom up approach which could have a positive impact on their sustainability. Despite the involvement of the local community in Košice ECoC 2013, there have been few private investors with a relatively small amount of money (e.g. biggest company in the city US Steel). The lack of private sponsors could be a risk in the future sustainability of the cultural policy.

The significant impacts of the ECoC can be seen in the relatively even distribution of cultural activities in the city. The involvement of neighbourhoods as well as the increased participation of people outside the city centre has avoided gentrification. This approach of even spatial distribution of culture is especially important in the titled cities from Central and Eastern Europe which have lower incomes and where the risk of gentrification is more than possible.

The evaluation of the short and medium term financial outcomes of the project can be expected one or two years after the ECoC year, when the minimum data set for such an evaluation will be available. In order to estimate the impact it is planned to use the regional multiplier effects as an indicator of the impact on the local economy (see e.g. Macháček, Silovská, Říhová, Jílek, 2013). The sustainability of the designed cultural policy will be notable in Košice within the next 10 or 20 years. The most successful cities launched their cultural renewal in the last years of the 20th century (Glasgow, Barcelona). The long term effects in Košice remain to be seen and will be examined in future research.

Note:

This article was supported by the Slovak Research and Development Agency under the contract No. APVV-0101-10.

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