



CULTURE

for Cities and Regions

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Study visit report

Study Visit in
Sofia, 20-22 April 2016



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1. Executive Summary

The objective of the study visit was to consider public/private partnership to support culture and creative entrepreneurs. Sofia municipality has developed a fund for innovation and culture which is funded by private operators for which the municipality undertake to provide matching fund.

Sofia Public-Private Fund for Innovations in Culture was established in 2013 and is the first instrument of this kind in Bulgaria (<http://fond.sofia-da.eu/en/>). It proposes a public private partnership model to provide access to funding for more innovative and risky cultural and creative projects: all private funding collected annually is doubled by the Sofia municipality. Private and corporate donors can become Members of the Board of Trustees and participate in decision-making.

The mission of the fund is to improve the effective management of financial resources and the development of local philanthropy. It aims at supporting cultural and creative enterprises in Sofia, encouraging citizens' (particularly young artists') participation and creating cross-sector partnerships. Areas which are least developed are a specific focus. The Fund has announced two calls for applications so far, with over 30 individual art projects funded and over 100,000 EUR distributed to artists and artistic organisations.

Additionally, the Fund initiates and manages other initiatives and projects with financial business support that offer opportunities for young creators. One of these initiatives implemented currently is the competition for design of urban furniture (benches, mailboxes, garbage bins, water fountains, signs, etc.) for a newly constructed residential area. The competition is organized by the property developer (Garitage Investment Management) and the Fund, involving an independent jury and community outreach, while all designs and prototypes will be included in a catalogue to be distributed to property developers and construction investors.

Other aspects of the study were to:

- Explore sustainable business models and governance structures for cultural organisations and identify good practice for municipalities in developing the enabling conditions for cultural organisations and creative industries to thrive;
- Consider strategic approaches to help local cultural operators to network internationally;
- Visit various cultural institutions and operators to consider their activities, challenges and successes across Sofia's cultural and creative ecosystem;
- Explore transferable outcomes for Public-Private partnership and develop policy recommendations for the Members of Sofia's municipal council.

Sofia is in the top 10 cities in Europe in terms of CCI generated income, with 7.3% added value created by CCIs; 11.6% of total employment in the CCIs; and with an annual increase of 0.7%.

Sofia cultural policy is guided by the Cultural Development Strategy 2013-2023, and Sofia Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization, one of the two priority areas of which is the development of the CClIs.

Sofia has quite a young population, with over 1/3 of the citizens aged 15-34, and 16% over 65.

Bulgaria is confronted with a talent drain, with 50 000 citizens leaving the country every year. The Challenge is to retain and re-attract young people. The country has a high rate of start-ups in the IT sector and policy is driven to build on IT competence. For Innovation and CClIs, the city is:

- Establishing a Centre for Excellence, a Centre for Competence and several centres for transfer of technologies and know-how and co-creation in CClIs;
- Developing new instruments for support of marketing and export activities and opening up access to international markets and a single digital market;
- Enhancing clusters, with targeted support for software development, video-gaming, audio-visual products and services.

Bulgaria is an attractive location for its cheap labour force and low income tax rates (10%); plus for its location on major trade routes between Turkey and Europe.

Sofia Municipality is among the greatest donors for arts and culture in Bulgaria and its funding exceeds over three times the national funding provided by the Ministry of Culture. Approximately 5.5 million lev (2.25 million EUR) is distributed annually via open calls for proposals through several funding programmes: Culture Programme, Cultural Calendar, Europe Programme, Sports and Youth Initiatives.

The Sofia Culture Programme is the biggest financial instrument for financing art and culture in Bulgaria. Since its establishment in 2007, it has applied the so called "Arm's-Length-Principle" and has been managed by an Expert Council, while 20 of its members form the Creative Council, which sets the annual priorities and criteria of the programme, appoints the selection committees, and is responsible for the project funding distribution in order to distance the arts from politics and bureaucracy and to reform the system of state support inherited from the previous regime. This way Sofia also recognised that within the arts community there is a desire and readiness to participate in the decision-making and peer-evaluation.

Currently the Creative Council includes six city representatives (Sofia deputy mayor and five local councillors), and 14 representatives of the CClIs (artists, academics and researchers, media representatives, community NGO representatives), among whom the chairperson of the Creative Council is elected.

Official site of the Culture Programme in Bulgarian:

<https://kultura.sofia.bg/section-2-pravila.html>

In 2014 Sofia was awarded by UNESCO the title creative city of film. Sofia was also a candidate city for European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2019. Although the award was

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given to Plovdiv, the ECoC process is widely recognised as a catalyst for sector development and partnership which has enabled the city to prioritise culture and the CCIs as major drivers in their social and economic agendas.

The study visit was organized by Sofia Development Association (www.sofia-da.eu). SDA is a municipally owned NGO tasked by the council with three major responsibilities: participatory development of strategic and operative documents; outreach, coordination and partnership based on a Quadruple Helix Model (government, industry, academia and civil participants); and participating in European projects on behalf of the city. SDA has coordinated the development of the first Sofia Cultural Development Strategy 2013-2023, the Innovative Strategy for Smart Specialisation of Sofia 2016-2020, among others.

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2. Programme

April 19, Tuesday

19.00 Get together cocktail

Venue: National Archaeological Museum, 2 Saborna Str.

April 20, Wednesday

Themes:

- PPP in funding for culture
- PPP in capacity-building for cultural operators and audiences

9:00 - 10:30 Introduction session

Venue: Best Western City Hotel Hall

10:30 - 11:15 Transfer to the next location and coffee break

11:15 - 12:45 Public-private Fund for Innovations in Culture

Venue: Derida Dance Centre, 245 Slivnitsa blvd.

13:00 - 14:00 Lunch and transfer to the next location

Venue: Spaghetti Company, TZUM, 2 Maria Luiza blvd.

14:00 - 15:30 PPP in funding art projects and initiatives

A. Sofia Creative Council - Sofia Museum, 1 Banski sq.

B. Sofia Film Committee - House of Cinema, 37 Ekzarh Yosif str.

15:30 - 16:00 Coffee break at each location and transfer to the next one

16:15 - 17:45 Cultural Management Academy

Venue: Sofia Municipality, 1 Paris str.

18:00 Joint cocktail with the Academy for Cultural Management and EUNIC

Venue: Marble Foyer, Sofia Municipality, 33 Moskovska str.

April 21, Thursday

Themes:

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- PPP in renovating spaces for culture and the arts
- Private and state investments in culture and city support to these investments

9:00 - 10:00 **Workshop: previous day debrief**

Venue: Sofia Municipality, 1 Paris str.

10:00 - 10:30 Coffee break and transfer to locations

Venue: Sofia Municipality, 1 Paris str.

10:30 - 12:30 **PPP in renovating spaces for culture and arts**

A. Site visit to House for Literature and Translation - Venue: Sofia City Gallery, 1 Gurko str.

B. Site visit to Urban Reading Room - Venue: Sofia City Garden, 12 Latinka str.

12:45 - 13:45 Lunch and transfer to locations

Venue: Pri Orлите, 11 Dyakon Ignatij str.

14:00 - 16:00 **Private and state investments in culture and city support**

A. Site visit to the National Palace of Culture (NDK), 1 Bulgaria sq.

B. Site visit to Muzeiko, 3 Prof. Boyan Kamenov str.

16:15 - 16:45 Coffee break

Venue: Peroto, NDK, 1 Bulgaria sq.

17:00 - 18:30 Sofia Walking Tour offered by 365 Association

19:00 Dinner

Venue: Hadzhi Draganovite Izbi, 18 Hristo Belchev str.

April 22, Friday

Feedback and conclusions

9:00 - 10:00 **Workshop: good practices identified, transferability, recommendations**

Venue: Sofia Municipality, 1 Paris str.

10:00 - 10:30 Coffee break

Venue: Sofia Municipality, 1 Paris str.

10:45 - 11:45 Study visit feedback meeting with Sofia leadership

Venue: Hall 2, Sofia Municipality, 33 Moskovska str.

12:00 Lunch

Venue: VinoVino, 121 Rakovski str.

3. Methodology and tools used

The study visit involved a series of in situ presentations and meetings - e.g. with private Dance Company - Derida Dance Center, House of Cinema , Literature and Translation House, Sofia Academy for Cultural Management, Urban Reading Room, National Palace of Culture, and Muzeiko (Science Centre).

Workshop meetings and dialogue was held in smaller groups - the overall group of participants was often split in two, allowing for more visits and for different members of the city delegations to explore a diversity of organisations and perspectives.

Each morning began with a debrief to extract learning points and exchange on the experience of the respective working groups. The debrief was managed by Sofia Development Association with support from experts.

A workshop competition was held (involving three teams) to develop recommendations together with local operators on forging international partnerships. Identification of challenges / opportunities linked to the internationalisation of cultural institutions led to a step by step agreement on priority solutions for effective international partnership. This workshop was managed by Sofia Development Agency with support from Goethe Institute.

A final debrief session was held at Sofia Municipality to extract the main learning points and describe transferable policy actions (as well as those more difficult to transfer). Participants also reflected on key recommendations to local policy makers to build on existing policies. The final debrief was managed by experts.

4. Key topics presented and learning points

Key Topics:

1. Private Public partnership to fund CCIs

Key learning points:

- Willingness for private sector to get involved (trust)
- The development of a dedicated fund to support innovation and risk taking, with matching fund from Sofia government. This has a small budget with a strong impact, but is still in testing phase.
- Artists are positioned as part of innovation policy and seen as source of innovation (both social and economic)
- The importance of an intermediary capable of brokering relations between business and government, micro CCIs and larger cultural organisations etc.
- A governance model involving businesses, authorities and culture institutions, with cross-cutting activities, flexible implementation and budgeting; plus strong political will and leadership in the absence of cultural strategy at national level. The status given to projects gives high profile to initiatives (independently of funding made available).

Emergent questions - is it the role of public bodies to raise private funding or compete for private funding? How to ensure artists are not marginalised or typecast into the purely sphere? How to ensure that the bidding processes for large-scale and high profile platforms such as ECoC can have positive legacy outcomes?

2. Academy for Cultural Management

This Goethe Institute-led programme supports emergent (mostly young) cultural managers to develop skills, confidence, share best practice and develop international connections. It is supported in-kind by the Sofia municipality through the provision of space (In a beautiful old house), by providing Bulgarian trainers/lecturers and developing case studies and by connecting participants to wider processes of culture-led change in the city. Key learning points include:

- The importance of building the competencies of a new generation of cultural managers - so that investment in the CCIs is not just for projects and short-term activities
- The need to build a new professional community which is not part of the historically state-funded cultural sector - i.e. NGOs and creative businesses. This is the first step toward establishing a creative ecology of internationally-facing managers and cultural entrepreneurs
- The value of peer-review and shared learning, inclusive of international networks - to plug Sofia into wider CCI agendas and peer-relationships.

Emergent questions: How to ensure this new generation is given opportunities to steer the main state-funded cultural organisations toward reform and a more mixed economy approach? How to connect cultural managers to the wider commercial CCIs? What are the missing skillsets which will need to be addressed in addition to the work of the Academy?

3. Literature and translation house

Key learning points:

Small cultural institution is given the house of famous visual artist Nenko Balkanski to manage for translator residency. The question is how to concentrate on a mission whilst not given the means to manage a property you do not own and for which there is commercial development pressure? The issue is constraint of public rules that makes the management of the house more of a constraint than an opportunity. Rules might be relaxed to enable the cultural operator the freedom to manage the house in such a way that it will help it fulfil its role. Models of good practice in asset transfer or culture-led management of public assets were discussed.

More info on: www.npage.org

4. Urban Reading Room

This is a small library / book exchange housed in a small refurbished kiosk in a central park. This kiosk had fallen into disrepair before it was taken over by a young and visionary team of local creatives keen to develop a culture of reading and exchange in the heart of the city while at the same time regenerating a derelict but distinctive space.

Key learning points:

- The importance of cultural activism in driving physical and cultural change in the city
- The value of culture-led approaches to renewal - and giving young people the opportunity to lead this process. This is a matter of trust and confidence.
- The power of committed entrepreneurial young creatives in re-imagining the possibility of their city in a way that is both contemporary and respectful of cultural distinctiveness (e.g. via their championing of the Cyrillic alphabet).

More info on: <http://www.artsofia.bg/en/pub/reading-room-chitalniata-in-city-garden-in-sofia>

5. National Palace of Culture

Key learning points:

This enormous conference centre (123 000 sq.) built in 1981 has been restructured as a commercial company managing a State property. The Cultural Centre hosts concerts, exhibitions, congresses, theatres, cinema, library and a book shop / cafe. It is the largest concert hall in town and thus a key draw for international artists. The commercial risk is

also offset by the fact that the centre welcomes large congresses (for instance the Bulgaria EU Presidency event) and is renting a large part of the property to the national broadcasting organisation. The risk is that this Palace of Culture unfairly competes with other cultural organisations which do not benefit from the same attention and financial resources. The Palace is also very expensive to upkeep - with ongoing maintenance costs and a growing need for modernisation.

6. Muzeiko

Muzeiko is a major new attraction for Bulgaria. It is a newly built centre for science and creativity aimed at young (primary school age) children. Its construction was core-funded by the America for Bulgaria Foundation. Its business model is based on a blend of tickets/commercial revenue (60%), grants from the America for Bulgaria Foundation and other sponsors.

Key learning points:

- The importance of a mixed economy approach to investment, with a range of investment partners and different revenue and funding streams enhancing sustainability.
- A focus on local procurement - most of the installations and attractions were provided by local firms - thus enhancing the CCIs of Sofia.
- A move toward interactive, interdisciplinary cultural infrastructure - where learning and enjoyment are fused and where creativity and play are encouraged. This is a relatively new agenda in Bulgaria and partnerships with schools will play a vital role in embedding creative learning into the wider education landscape.
- The challenge of creating a visitor destination in a suburban location which lacks natural foot-fall. The municipality has been an important partner here - improving on-foot connection to the metro station. However, the organisation will need to work hard to attract visitors and especially second and third return visits.

Muzeiko's webpage: www.muzeiko.bg

5. Initiatives presented

Title	Sofia private-public fund for innovation and culture
Description, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context - Objectives - Implementation - Key actors involved - Budget 	<p>Fund to provide support to innovation / risky cultural projects. Encourage local philanthropy. Help young creative and artist entrepreneurs. Organisation of private competition to select innovative projects.</p> <p>Funding: 100 000 Euro over 3 years - beneficiaries around 30 local artists.</p> <p>Private donors can become member of the board of trustees and participate in decision making.</p>
Results	The programme was set up in 2013. There are no measurements of the results achieved but beneficiaries, businesses involved and policy makers are happy with the impact so far.
Lessons learnt & Key success factors	See above.

Title	Sofia UNESCO City of Film
Description, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Context - Objectives - Implementation - Key actors involved - Budget 	With the Sofia international film festival, the Sofia Film Committee and the Boyona Film Studio, plus attractive tax incentives, Sofia has become an attractive place for film making.
Results	Sofia attracts European and Hollywood film production contributing to help the development of local skills in cinematography (artistic as well as technical).
Lessons learnt & Key success factors	The city and the Ministry should make efforts to support awareness on independent cinema - only 5 art house movies throughout the Country. Independent cinema is losing its audience. In turn, this will diminish the capacity of the local production sector -

	especially in terms of its cultural film offer.
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Title	New independent cultural infrastructure - Urban Reading Room and Muzeiko
Description, including - Context - Objectives - Implementation - Key actors involved - Budget	<p>These are two examples of a new generation of cultural infrastructure being developed in the city - as a departure from the traditional state-led and top-down approach to cultural investment and management. Although different in scale and scope, both combine some similar attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They are independent and NGO-led. - They embrace contemporary architecture and design to generate a new and fresh energy for the city's cultural life - They require a blend of funding sources for their sustainability - including donor support, in-kind support from the municipality, grants, sponsorship and self-generated revenue - Their teams are benefitting from capacity-building from the Academy for Cultural Management - building a peer community of cultural professionals - They both embrace the convergence of creative learning, practice and participation.
Results	Two new, distinctive and exciting cultural organisations and spaces which are making important interventions in creative and cultural practice as well as helping to diversify and grow the overall cultural economy of Sofia.
Lessons learnt & Key success factors	See above.

6. Lessons learnt

Visiting Cities\Regions

This part was prepared on the basis of 13 evaluation forms received after the visit from 9 participating cities and regions.

Participant	Lessons learnt in Sofia	How will you use the new ideas and knowledge gained to improve your working and organisational methods?
Alytus	<p>University involvement - lectures, practical experiments, coaching</p> <p>Not to be afraid to make mistakes. Culture is a never-ending process and we must try again and again.</p> <p>The importance of cooperation (private and business sectors, government).</p> <p>City government approach to culture and the involvement of culture workers.</p> <p>Community (youth) inclusion into the projects.</p> <p>The importance of international cooperation.</p>	<p>I'm Deputy Mayor of Alytus City Municipality. I'll try to create a working group containing culture, art, education and urban development specialists, which will create the city's cultural vision and then generated an action plan.</p> <p>With a vision and concrete ideas, we will try to sell it to the business partners. I hope to create a Culture Foundation.</p> <p>It was a valuable variety of experiences, how problems can be solved through a variety of tools (Sofia Cultural Centre premises, Film Festival organization etc.).</p> <p>Our cities are different, but this experience was very important for me.</p> <p>Alytus City Theatre is also establishing a theatre strengthening and support Fund. Because of this I think some of the work methods with the private sector, working with policy makers, program preparation principles, can be fully used in my work.</p> <p>I hope that the active urban leaders will set up a similar organisation as the Sofia Cultural Foundation in our city. We are thinking about such fund for some time. I will try to initiate public and working groups, generating ideas about urban development and the structure of such a Fund.</p>
Banja Luka	It is necessary to cooperate with young people and students in order for them to stay in our country and	First of all, I will present what I saw to my head chief. As we want to create a new cultural event in Banja Luka, I will

	<p>do something useful and innovative;</p> <p>It is important to find ways to spend more money for culture - to found a fund for culture or something like that.</p> <p>Public private partnership - to organize more events by PPP. It would be a great way to promote artists;</p> <p>To apply for projects that could help financing the culture;</p> <p>Creation of funds for culture and innovations in projects related to culture and grants for contemporary art in order to make that field of culture independent and to make sure that domestic artists stay in Banja Luka;</p> <p>Public private partnership - in addition to make relationship between private sector in culture and municipal institutions of culture, we can create an event to define possibilities of their networking and collaboration.</p>	<p>show how events in public places are organized in Sofia (underground concerts), we will have to work more to bring private partners, we will try to organize a meeting with students in order to link them with organizations presented in Sofia.</p> <p>The best possible way to use the new ideas is to make meeting in municipality head office about projects in culture, pointing of Sofia study visit experiences, so we could make some changes to approach to artists, cultural businesses and impact of PPP in our city.</p>
<p>Belfast</p>	<p>Funds like this provide valuable face to face interaction between arts organisations and private businesses. It is true that it is quite rare for business and arts organisations to interact so this gives a very good reason to enable arts organisations to showcase their work and talent to businesses. This also engenders further relationships between the two, and hopefully more collaborative work.</p> <p>It is important for a municipality to work in collaboration with an organisation such as a Development Association, who already has an established relationship with businesses and the private sector.</p> <p>Local government financial and</p>	<p>We are now aiming to develop a new fund in collaboration with Arts and Business NI and hopefully Arts Council NI (Central Government) which will allow us to try to access additional financial contribution from private businesses, whilst also enhancing relationships between public / private / arts bodies.</p>

	<p>strategic contribution adds credibility and intangible 'added value', above and beyond the actual amount they contribute.</p>	
Budapest	<p>The projects can fail. Officials like success stories but without taking the risk of the failure of some projects, there won't be really innovative projects supported.</p> <p>To reach out to the private sector the best combination is to have an independent organization (e.g. an association) that has the support of the municipality as a guarantee seal.</p> <p>To combine cultural projects creatively. Sometimes seemingly distant topics can work together exceedingly, e. g. tourist information and library.</p> <p>Culture is a source of development; it was good to see in Sofia that municipality regards that area as an important field to improve.</p> <p>The structure of subsidies organized in a clear and transparent system, the main proportion of sources and funds is distributed at local level and supplies not only the traditional institutions but new innovative projects as well.</p> <p>The municipality makes lots of efforts to involve private and corporate donors and started to run a public private partnership model to provide funding to creative and innovative projects.</p>	<p>Besides sharing the information gained during the study visit with my colleagues, I will present some of the initiatives to the decision-makers in Budapest.</p> <p>I will foster networking and partnerships with Sofia as our twin city.</p> <p>It would be fruitful to deepen the partnership with Sofia municipality, because the two capitals are twin cities, and there are a lot of similarities in our cultural traditions.</p> <p>International partnership and networking is substantial to develop new projects in our city.</p>
Folkestone	<p>Small pots of money can work as well as large</p> <p>Artists are facing similar challenges all over Europe</p> <p>Funding and belief in cultural benefit seem to be key issues everywhere</p>	<p>Look to work with the private sector more</p> <p>Having support from European partners is as important as local support - connections will be followed up and conversations continued to improve working methods</p>

	<p>Example: film industry, a city can make anything happen if enough people get behind it, with or without government support</p> <p>Urban reading rooms can be extremely successful</p> <p>Partnerships are key to moving forward</p>	<p>Ideas swapped will be implemented</p> <p>Will consider new partnerships and new stakeholders</p>
<p>Lincoln</p>	<p>The small scale Innovations Fund was a good idea and demonstrated that for small sums of money a lot can be achieved.</p> <p>Sofia had achieved a lot by concentrating on Film and the Film industry, the way that they had positioned the Film Festival to exploit this and be a marketplace for trade was good, I loved the ticket in a can bought from a supermarket shelf !</p> <p>Definitions of the Private Sector vary, for the UK this means businesses but for many this included charities, non-profit and NGOs</p> <p>Trust amongst all parties is essential to good working practice, there were sometimes rules that were put in place for good reason to regulate the commercial sector that were being applied to the cultural sector with a negative consequence. Rules need to be adaptable to take account of cultural sector needs</p> <p>Small amounts of money can go a long way - the Innovations Fund demonstrated that grant schemes don't necessarily have to be for large sums of money or sustainable - the sums of money can be small and the projects can be for one-off initiatives. This small scheme was particularly successful in nurturing innovative and creative projects which clearly had a greater impact than the total amount of grant awarded.</p> <p>One size doesn't fit all - each city is unique, in terms of a different</p>	<p>I would like to consider ways that we could introduce an innovation fund in Lincoln - providing small grants to the creative sector. It was also interesting to see if there are currently empty buildings in Lincoln city centre as a base for cultural projects similar to the Reading Room / info point.</p>

	<p>history, experience and at a different stage of development. It is therefore not always possible to take a project and make it fit in your city. It will need to be adapted and shaped to make it relevant and workable. However, it is possible to take good practice examples from other cities as a source of inspiration to shape projects in your city.</p> <p>Trust is central to successful public / private collaboration - the relationship and dynamics between Sofia Development Association and the public / private sector agencies seemed to be strong and well established, with mutual respect between organisations. The intermediary role of the SDA worked well as an arm's length body when dealing with the private sector. This was good to see this as our role at Lincoln BIG is similar in terms of operating between the public and private sector and establishing trust amongst all parties is essential to good working practices.</p>	
Nantes	<p>No need for "tax" incentives for private commitment on the fund</p> <p>Interest of a label like ECOC for making strategy</p> <p>Agility in public / private policy making</p>	<p>Trying to create a closer network with other cities (Birmingham, etc.) in an "URBACT" framework</p>
Šilute	<p>Cultural events still need more innovations and creative thinking;</p> <p>Good ideas can be implemented only with good dedicated management team and within cooperation together with partners (i.e. educational institutions, municipality, companies from the private sector, volunteers, someone who have personal interest etc.)</p> <p>Small budget is not an threat to realize the great ideas for the short run projects;</p> <p>Add more extra values to the main idea concept in order to achieve awareness and benefits for more people than has been targeted (e.g.</p>	<p>Making presentation and introducing for the library colleagues (approx. 30 people) about the Culture for the Cities and Regions project, the main idea and purpose, at the same time share experience about the study visit in Sofia, i.e. projects and different success stories from the visited places, i.e. Derida Dance Centre, Sofia Film Committee, Urban Reading Room, and the National Place of Culture, outcome from the discussion workshops;</p> <p>Present several ideas for the library decisions makers team, which can be possibly brought for discussions and real actions to be used for the Šilute city community needs and benefits e.g. Urban Reading Room.</p> <p>Fund for Innovations in Culture is one of</p>

	<p>visit to Information center - Urban Reading Room, extremely unique, great combined idea, where not only tourists of the city could search for the relevant city guide information, but the local Sofia citizens as well can use the offered service by Information center - borrow the books);</p> <p>Be pro-active, create new network of right people, find new ways to realize good ideas, don't wait and be dependent from public sector</p> <p>Private/individuals possibilities to apply for Fund for Innovations in Culture. No need to have a legal entity. Individuals/artists can also be innovation source. And funding a project becomes funding an idea. Private sector can fund individuals and ensure developing next generation focusing on the future.</p> <p>Relationship with private sector. It is really hard to get the trust of private sector for culture sustainability. Culture is always risky because it concerns some personal. But funding human capital is very important. Private sector can ensure work force for theirs businesses by funding private and public initiatives and creating nice living environment, building audience of the future, developing new culture management professionals.</p> <p>Free spaces for experimenting. It is very important to let free spaces for experiment despite failures. Experimenting (including success and failures) is the best way to learn.</p> <p>The way municipality supports projects with promotion (in metro, buses and the whole city).</p>	<p>the best instruments of this kind in Bulgaria. Due to same problems in all Europe (especially post-soviet countries) with emigration, society aging, cities shrinking etc. public and private sectors cooperation is essential. The approach of municipality's trust to private investments in culture is highly welcome. We have some different experience: municipality should invest or fund cultural projects and ideas first before private sector get involved. Private sector understands the investment in human capital demand.</p> <p>Šilutė is a small city, but any fund for innovations could be useful creating cross-sector partnerships and involving private sector into decision making.</p> <p>I think Šilutė could experiment and establish pilot fund with private and public money for culture innovations. It could be not so huge amount, but just for launching and testing the main principles of public-private sector cooperation.</p> <p>One of the main experiences I gained during the study visit is to try and support individual initiatives. So far our artist and operators with no legal entity have no possibility to apply for funding.</p>
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Suggestions to improve organisation and logistics of the study visit:

The meeting where we were presented with projects which received grants through the fund was perhaps the most useful and inspiring one. It was really great to hear from the business sponsors too. It would be useful to visit a couple of the projects and speak to the artists and participants, such as the subway example.

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The programme was well-balanced between theory and practice. I would like to highlight the visit to Derida Central where we had the chance to meet the operational board of the Innovation Fund and the beneficiaries at the same time.

I was very satisfied with the performance of the organising team, so it is difficult to add anything. The only thing I would recommend is to go through the daily agenda in the morning and at the start of each programme too, to tell everyone where they go and when, e.g. what time the lunch finishes, where they go and with whom after.

Participants were is of different sizes and what fits in a city with one million inhabitants is not always transferrable to smaller cities or provinces. It was sometimes a little bit embarrassing to have no suggestions or recommendations because our culture policy is different, with smaller capacity, less initiatives and support (not only financial).

Participants could share and present (10 min.) one of success stories (projects) successfully implemented in the own city from where they come.

Make sure that those visiting are aware of what the host city is aiming to achieve from the visit, ensure a good cross section of representatives from different disciplines and countries at different stages in the development process, and maybe cover a few more similar questions issues/subjects within a visit.

Networking interaction was very good and a highlight of the study visit - sharing knowledge and experience was very interesting. The informal networking opportunities were an added bonus!

There was something for everyone, we were all from different backgrounds and organisations but this seemed considered and the study visit responded well to this.

Comment from the host - Sofia

The study visit was a great opportunity for Sofia and its cultural sector to come together to reflect on our own challenges, achievements and goals, as well as designing background information and program to allow us present those to our European counterparts in an open and discussion-provoking mode.

The visiting group was quite diverse, which in itself is an asset. The participants came with an open mind and we are greatly impressed by their desire to understand the context of Sofia, to explore the presented practices, to engage in formal and informal exchanges and interactions and to offer their relevant experience, good practices and success stories. The study visit and its recommendations served as a driver to further discuss with broad participation how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our cultural processes, practices and instruments. In addition, the study visit helped us establish new contacts and partnerships at both city and personal expert level, which no doubt will bear fruit in the near future.

We are delighted by the support received by EURO CITIES and the experts in all phases of the process: from planning through logistics to reporting.

7. Conclusions

Philippe Kern: An impressive, interactive and well organised study visit. The hosts demonstrated a very good understanding of the challenges linked to the development of a creative ecosystem and an impressive implementation of a vision that associates artists in innovation policy and involves businesses in risky creative initiatives. Young population, political will, Smart Specialisation Strategy and strong ICT sector should support the development of CCIs in Sofia. Limited financial resources and the absence of a national strategy are hindering progress. I was impressed by the energy, ambition and goodwill of cultural institutions' managers. Sofia deserves more attention, the city is bubbling with creative initiatives and the stay in Sofia allowed me to encounter people as well as place that would be the envy of many metropolises in Europe. Sofia is bound to become the creative hot spots of South East Europe and set examples for neighbouring countries through clever networking. Sofia is to make more efforts to internationalise and build European partnerships through EU funded initiatives. It is important that Sofia develops measurement tools to be able to understand the impact of its policy measures.

We did not feel the involvement of university in the policy making and felt that businesses contribution should go further than funding but also include mentoring. The lack of strong legacy is the opportunity for Sofia to be bold and develop an innovative cultural policy that gives equal opportunities to projects and people on the basis of their merits and innovation potential independently of institutional status. Sofia should explore stronger links between ICT and the artists/creative entrepreneurs.

Tom Fleming: Sofia is undergoing a process of rapid change - from the ongoing revitalisation of its heritage assets to a flourishing contemporary CCI sector. The municipality and its partners in business and culture appear to be capitalising on this energy and embracing the role of CCIs in playing a leading role in the ongoing transformation. This is demonstrated in their strategic plans but more significantly in what they do - such as via the innovation funding and by positioning artists to the heart of the innovation ecology. The city should be given credit here for leveraging the ECoC candidature process as a positive opportunity for a new approach to culture.

The study visit, which was very well organised, rich and diverse, helped to demonstrate the energy and joint sense of purpose of the city. It also introduced a new generation of cultural managers and creative entrepreneurs, who have been given a platform to develop their careers in the city. The visit also enabled participants to explore a set of strategic issues which have a relevance to their diverse contexts. These include:

- The importance of working collaboratively, including genuinely open public / private partnership and inter-departmental activities. Sofia is delivering on the former but not yet on the latter, with culture not positioned as an agent of change across all of the key municipal departments.
- The importance of experimental practice, risk and trust - with artists and a new generation of cultural managers taking centre stage. Sofia is delivering on this, but more could be done to develop an evidence base which demonstrates the outcomes

of interventions and which embed independent evaluation as an integral part of the strategic landscape.

- The importance of international positioning - with local actors connected to their peers across Europe and beyond. Sofia has made good progress here, but there is significant scope to build partnerships and drive agendas which situate Sofia as a genuinely international and therefore intercultural creative city.

Annex 1: List of participants

Name	Surname	City / Region	Position
Inesa	Pilvelyte	Alytus	Director of Alytus city theatre
Vale	Gibiene	Alytus	Deputy Mayor
Ana	Beader	Banja Luka	Independent expert
Natalija	Bucic	Banja Luka	Senior expert associate
Christine	O'Toole	Belfast	Tourism Culture Arts and Heritage development officer
Tania	Carlisle	Belfast	Development manager
Val	Birchall	Birmingham	Assistant director - culture and visitor economy
Ian	Ward	Birmingham	Deputy Leader
Judit	Varadi-Bor	Budapest	Head of department
Aniko	Radacsi	Budapest	Councillor for cultural affairs
Adrian	Lockwood	Folkestone	Creative Quarter Manager
Jo	Cowdrey	Folkestone	Folkestone Triennial project
Sue	Bell	Lincoln	Project Consultant
Matthew	Corrigan	Lincoln	Chief executive
Dominique	David	Nantes	Senior Policy Officer
Erwan	Hetet	Nantes	Director cultural development
Dalia	Pupsyte	Silute	Head Librarian
Jurgita	Skobiene	Silute	Head specialist for culture department

The team in Sofia

Sevdalina Voynova

Director of Programmes, Sofia Development Association

Denitsa Lozanova

Research and Development Director, Sofia Development Association

Experts

Philippe Kern, KEA European Affairs Director

Role during the visit: Lead expert

Tom Fleming, TF Creative Consultancy

Role during the visit: External expert

Support

Cécile Houpert

EUROCITIES Project support officer - Culture for cities and regions

Guest

Inna Garkova

Policy officer, Cultural Diversity and Innovation

European Commission, Directorate General Culture and Education

Annex 2: Presentations

Presentations and supporting documents can be found here:

<http://www.cultureforcitiesandregions.eu/culture/resources/Study-visit-10-Sofia-20-22-April-2016-WSWE-A8RL9X>

Further exchanges between participants have been made on the Culture for cities and regions online forum.

Pictures of the visit:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/135418594@N05/albums>