



The overall aim of the Forum Belgrade – “A Soul for Europe” initiative is to improve the position of (local) civil society in the relationship with local, national and European authorities and political decision-makers. This has to be specified in relation with the 3 themes discussed during the 2011 edition and the resulting recommendations.

FORUM BELGRADE - A SOUL FOR EUROPE 2011 RECOMMENDATIONS

Session 1: CULTURE AND BUSINESS - NEW HORIZONS

To the Belgrade and Serbian businesses and civil society, we propose to:

- 1) Create a Serbian Working Group to feed the “A Soul for Europe” European Culture and Economy Platform and organise regular meetings in partnership with the centre GRAD to develop its structure and content.
- 2) Identify topics of common interest to invest in terms of research, lobby actions and recommendations underlying the strategic partnership and role of business and culture in Europe as a region of the world we would like it to be.
- 3) Develop concrete implementations and actions deriving from business and culture sectors, including work practices which could develop the inter-sector dialogue and result in the constitution of the Platform.

To the European policy makers and institutions, we propose to:

- 1) Give culture a prominent place in the Europe 2020 strategy, with a special focus on interconnectedness between economic and cultural development.
- 2) Raise awareness concerning the close interdependence between culture, economic development and social cohesion among decision makers, the media and the general public.
- 3) Support the inclusion of the Serbian Working Group in the European Platform.
- 4) Gather a group of high-level representatives from industry, culture, policy and civil society to act as its ambassadors and take part in periodic meetings in Brussels, Berlin and elsewhere. The next meeting is envisaged in Spring or early Summer 2012. For this group to act as a high-level think & action tank that comments on and influences European and national policy making in relation to European integration, economic development, trade, cultural and creative development, civil society and information rights.
- 5) Initiate cross sector collaborations and experimental projects between companies, trade associations, artists, cultural institutions and individual citizens which challenge the current economic and societal trajectory of Europe and put forward an ambitious, more sustainable and inclusive vision for a future Union that challenges the status quo.
- 6) Organize informal and experimental “get-togethers” between the members of the platform and other high-level decision makers to discuss and approach contemporary, societal and political challenges with an interdisciplinary, open and bottom-up approach. By fostering out-of-the box thinking, the platform can contribute to finding solutions in diverse fields in a more creative way.



SESSION 2: ARM'S LENGTH GOVERNANCE – CITIZENS' PARTICIPATION

To the Belgrade City council and other local and national public institutions, we propose to:

1) Enhance the transparency of the decision making process which should be based on merits within the current regulatory system.

2) Consult and involve civil society within the current regulatory system. At the beginning this can also be done in an informal way.

To the national policy makers and legislators, we propose to:

1) Produce a Parliamentary legislation which introduces a major change: the top positions in (cultural) public institution shall be appointed on the basis of professional competence and expertise. For example: creating independent committees composed by policy-makers, independent experts and professionals from the specific sector.

To the Serbian and European civil society, we propose to:

1) Map potential and existing solutions and best practices in Europe and the world; to be proposed to local and National authorities for implementation.

To both public authorities and civil society, we propose to:

1) Create long term formal and informal educational programs of various kinds to foster active and responsible citizenship among the younger generation, who will be the leaders of tomorrow

Session 3: EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE – 2020 AND BEYOND

To the Belgrade City council, Belgrade 2020 and other local and national institutions, we propose:

1) The process towards Belgrade 2020 must include civil society and businesses in all actions, from the very beginning, with the aim to work together during the year and afterwards. For example, establishing an advisory board including all sectors of Belgrade society. Only in this way sustainability can be foreseen for the future development of the city.

2) The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) needs to be a process where local citizens are developed not only as audiences but also as participants and co-producers. This should be achieved through educational programmes, participatory actions and through raised awareness on local and European issues.

3) The ECoC is not only about showing art, but rather about offering people the chance to express, interact, participate, articulate, get (more) ownership of their city, region and of Europe; in preparation to present it to Europe

4) A sustainable ECoC process can only be imagined as an investment in people. The local cultural scene is the only stable (and also self-generating) base of continuity of the programme. The specificity of the programme will make it interesting to international audiences and partners. The resulting mixture of local and international presence enhance the city's European value.

5) Access to culture is a major key to increased responsibility and citizenship, individual and collective welfare, social mobility, solidarity etc. Bearing this in mind, the ECoC programme (which is, in most cases, the biggest investment in culture that cities/countries make) must have the citizen and civil society at its core. This is especially important for the development of long term processes even after the ECoC year has concluded. The ECoC has to relate specifically to the special cultural potential of the respective city and its opportunities for development. Furthermore, it has to rely on the achievements and contribution of its citizens.

6) Citizens and NGOs should be able to propose their own initiatives, and to participate in the designing, implementing and monitoring of the ECOC programme.

To the European Union and Member states governments, we propose:

1) Independent decentralized assessment mechanism:

All too often, the final project differs a lot from what was included in the application bid. The title, however, has been awarded based on the bid, and has to be developed in continuous cooperation with civil society to make it specific and sustainable. The complex preparation process and implementation of the year must be controlled after the title is awarded. We propose an independent self-controlled and decentralised assessment mechanism; a body different from the implementing body. We suggest that control and decisive competency be left with the communal level and civic actors, under criteria jointly set up by the Commission and the cities. This includes participation of independent experts, not from the top down, but instead from the bottom-up.

The assessment will ensure that the programme submitted for the application as well as the organization of the ECoC year is truly adhered to in the implementation of the ECoC. The implementation of the ECoC has to be controlled after the "title" is awarded. A self-management and self-monitoring process that is co-designed and developed by respective cities and regions is eligible. This does not mean disempowering the EU-Commission of its general responsibility for ECoC. However, it should be composed of an independent monitoring authority, different from the implementing agency that is built. It should include local civil society (including businesses), representatives of the cities and regions as well as independent experts.

2) Improved jury insight in selection process:

Cities, and their appointed responsible persons and teams, normally work intensively and for a long period on the application, based on the special situation of the city or region, especially when they base their programme on their specific uniqueness. The international experts in the current programme come only for a short time, which does not give them the needed chance for a real insight and understanding. Therefore we suggest giving the jury extra opportunities to get to know the project better. The Jury must be enabled to research more information within the formats proposed by them.

3) The programme set up:

We propose to set up **three types of the titles:**

- a. **European Capital of Culture:** this will remain a unique initiative and an exceptional title given by the EU based on an improved programme and set of rules. This exclusiveness makes the excellence of the project; this should not be changed.
- b. **European City of Culture:** a new type of the program set up on the national level. The EU, European Commission and the Member States will jointly work out this idea.
- c. **Honorary European Capital of Culture:** the European Parliament has the power to exceptionally award the title 'Honorary Capital of Culture' for very specific reasons (the first example is Sarajevo 2014).

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