

Mobility of Artists and Cultural Professionals in South Eastern Europe¹

By Dimitrije Vujadinovic

In my opinion, the key words for mobility of artists are tolerance, understanding, freedom of self-expression. Every trip I take is a new inspiration, a chance to travel and write. Because, writing itself is traveling, but in mind... Besides inspiration and encounters on trips, it is getting out of routine, everyday life, that is important for writers, and it stimulates writing a lot.

Morelle Smith , Scottish writer and translator

Introduction

Political, economical and cultural processes in the individual states of the South Eastern Europe as well as inside the region in recent fifteen years have remained rather complex, dynamic and opaque for the majority of citizens.

Causes of these processes can be identified both in the need for radical changes of the individual societies and in the interests and influences of the international factors outside the region. In all these processes culture is missing as one of priority questions. Cultural production has not been treated yet as a part of strategic development plans, nor a significant subject in the international cooperation.²

Contexts of changes, internally as well as internationally, which are connected issues, can be divided into two periods:

- from the Dayton peace agreement (1995) up to beginning of the 21st century; and
- period of the last seven years.

The general social conditions, in the individual states as well as inside the region, are affected after all by the international political and economic agreements, contracts and declarations that have been signed by the governments in recent fifteen years.

¹ The research included the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Romania, Turkey.

² First, it is hard to realize and therefore comprehend the exact process that, more or less, influenced the last 14 years of cultural policy in SEE. Some of the factors are internal and inherent to the region's history and geography; some are purely administrative legacies of a former regime. Others are related to the logic of change i.e. too many cultural ministries were brought in; Romania had ten ministers of culture, Bulgaria eight and Albania eleven, between 1990 and 2003. The cultural administration could not immediately be replaced, therefore culture was - shortly after 1990 - put in a secondary position on all governmental agendas; economic and social priorities took precedence over cultural ones that were too closely associated with ideology. Milena Dragicevic Šešić, Corina SUTEU: Challenges of Cultural Cooperation in Southeastern Europe: the Internationalization of Cultural Policies and Practices.

PERIOD BETWEEN 1995 AND 2001

During this period general political and economic situation in the states within the region is characterized by:

- a cessation of the conflicts and gradual stabilization of internal and international positions of the newly formed states, the former Yugoslavian republics (Croatia, The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, partly Macedonia);
- the reduction of internal tensions in Albania;
- rapid break with the former socialistic state policy principles and introduction of the multiparty system in the Balkan states, as well as the new economic values of the market policy, which is particularly the case of Romania and Bulgaria;
- Turkish approach to Europe and increased ambitions to access the EU

The most significant contracted international political documents were:

- the Dayton peace agreement (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dayton_Agreement)
- Stability Pact (<http://www.stabilitypact.org>)
- EU Association agreement - Romania and Bulgaria³

Characteristically, regardless of their differences in subject matter and their signers' diversities, all of all these documents do not take issues such as culture, international cultural cooperation, mobility of artists and cultural professionals, into consideration, either directly or indirectly.

Political factors did not recognize the role culture and cultural production may have in the processes of political and economic reconstruction and rapid inclusion of the Balkan states in the broader European processes.

Culture was not mentioned in the inaugural declaration of the Stability Pact of the South Eastern Europe (may 1999). Later, although having been prepared, projects in the field of cultural production were not considered in the process of organizing donor conferences (Brussels, Bucharest, Belgrade...) within the Third Roundtable Discussion on Democratization and Human Rights.⁴

No significant bilateral or multilateral international agreements on culture and cultural production were signed, that might have influenced cultural policy in the period, that is to say they were only concluded in a formal manner. This fact immediately effected capabilities of the mobility of artists and cultural professionals.

It is these reasons around which over seventeen artists and cultural professionals from the region and Europe gathered in Conference on Reconstructing Cultural Productivity in the region of South Eastern Europe, held in Sarajevo in december of 1999. This was occasion on which clear attitudes and suggestions of artists and cultural professionals were presented.⁵

³ Since 1998, Bulgaria and Romania have been fully involved in the process of enlargement.

⁴ A new phase started only after the Dayton treaty (1995), when the Stability Pact imposed regional cooperation in the Balkans as a precondition for financing. It was again a topdown measure aimed to re-launch regional cooperation, but, unfortunately, culture did not have its "table" within it - so the projects were analyzed through "educational", "youth" or "civil society" lenses. /Milena Dragicevic Šešic, Corina Suteu: Challenges of Cultural Cooperation in Southeastern Europe: the internationalization of Cultural Policies and Practices.

⁵ Re-establishing and re-vitalizing transborder artistic and cultural ties within the Balkans, between its nations and with other European countries, is not only important for the return of mutual trust between different peoples. It is, as well, a precondition for the moral and economic reconstruction of this Region and for upholding cultural diversity in all parts of Europe. It is therefore imperative to initiate concrete projects which can lead to mutual understanding, tolerance and pluralism. Interregional co-operation among independent practitioners in the arts and media as well as through the culture industries are key to help to fulfill these goals.

Possibilities of the mobility of artists and cultural professionals

The basic characteristics that determined possibilities of the mobility of artists and cultural professionals in the period were:

Public sector and national foundations

- Governments and parliaments of the states in the South Eastern Europe neither sufficiently considered the matters of cultural policy, new legislation on the law, fiscal and tax regulatory rules in the cultural production sector, nor the matters of support for the mobility of artists and cultural professionals. Exceptions were the efforts made in Croatia to define a new model of cultural policy, but the mobility issues were not included by this model.
- International cultural cooperation was primarily related to the bilateral connecting, mainly with the countries outside the region, while multilateral and regional cooperations were neglected.
- *In the Ministries of Culture's and other governmental and para-governmental institutions' policies there were no mobility schemes which clearly define support for the mobility of artists and cultural professionals. Mobility grants were provided on the ad hock basis, from case to case, that is to say as a budget item in funding particular projects.*
- Countries in the South Eastern Europe did not have clearly profiled and purpose-oriented cultural diplomacy.
- *Local and regional communities did not considerably finance mobility of artists and cultural professionals (to certain extent, this was done sporadically by big cities, after all the capitals).*
- National foundations neither had mobility schemes nor clearly defined policy of assigning mobility grants.⁶

International institutions, foundations and cultural centers

- Particularly active in supporting international cultural cooperation were international institutions and foundations such as: The Open Society Fund, Pro Helvetia, European Cultural Foundation, KulturKontakt Austria etc. Mobility of artists and cultural professionals was supported primarily within the international programmes and projects.
- *The factor of "political engagement" may be said to have been temporary criterion for cultural, or artistic production, supported by the international non-governmental sector, foundations and other institutions in that period, the proof of which are results of this production supported by the Open Society Fund, Pro Helvetia and other institutions that were guided by the value criteria typical of the Open Society Fund.*
- In majority of states in the region the Open Society Fund directly supported foundation and work of the Contemporary Art Centers, which provided some artists and cultural professionals with mobility incentives for the purpose of exchange. Since 2001 activities of these Centers have gradually decreased after the Fund ceased financing them further.

⁶ About the role of the funds, endowments and foundations see the materials from the meetings held in Belgrade. *The present and future role of foundations in cultural funding and policymaking in the Balkans* - Report of the roundtable organised by BalkanKult in cooperation with ERICarts, (*Creative Europe - On Governance and Management of artistic Creativity in Europe*, AR CULT Media, Boon, 2002.); and *Funding the future – The role of cultural foundations, funds and endowments in the South East Europe region* - Report of the conference organised by BalkanKult (Belgrade, December 2002)

- Through its programmes the Council of Europe funded projects which dealt with cultural policy and cultural diversity phenomena. UNESCO directly aided projects in the field of cultural heritage protection.
- Cultural Centers (Goethe Institute, French Cultural Center, British Council) referred their activities primarily to organizing cultural events, more exactly to the presentation of their cultural production. The mobility of artists and cultural theorists, that is to say touring, were funded for that purpose. This was the purpose for which the Goethe Institute used to acquire somewhat limited amounts of money from the Fund of Stability Pact of South Eastern Europe.
- The mobility of the cultural professionals was supported by various European cultural networks, but mainly the members of the networks were provided with the mobility incentives for the purpose of artistic or cultural production. Within the European networks there had not been developed yet any particular funds or mobility schemes for artists and cultural professionals in the South Eastern Europe.⁷

The programmes supported or organized by the international institutions certainly contributed more to the cultural life and professional training of cultural practitioners in the countries within the region, but much less influenced possibilities of the mobility of artists and cultural professionals from the countries in the South Eastern Europe.

There were still no corporative funds in this period, nor were the corporations in Europe interested in supporting mobility in the cultural sector.

In the context like this possibilities of the mobility for the majority of artists and cultural professionals were very few. This was also contributed by the following reasons:

- Extremely rigid visa regime;
- Lack of the governmental financial support (low budgets for culture, lower than 1% of GNP in average);
- Insufficient knowledge of the possibilities;
- Lack of stimulating cultural policy of the national administrations;
- Reservation of the EU countries about the South East Europe region

Few artists and cultural professionals from the countries in the region had opportunity to present themselves on the international scene, due to the support of international organizations, foundations and NGOs. These were mostly the Open Society Fund, Pro

⁷ In the beginning, the European networks created during the mid-1980s had few members from SEE (mostly from Yugoslavia - in the Informal European Theatre Meetings (IETM), pre-European network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC) phase, etc.). However from 1989 onwards, they approached this area quite actively (IETM, the European League of Institutes of Arts (ELIA)). Some organizations even created specific networks or subdivisions within themselves or during their general assemblies: ENCATC Balkan platform, Banlieues d'Europe Romanian antenna for the SE European region, IETM and Relais CULTURE Europe "Balkan express" in cooperation with PAC Multimedia in Macedonia, Trans Europe Halles (TEH) integrating new SE European members, Cultural Information and Research Centres in Europe (CIRCLE) asking Eastern European members to join the executive committee, the Forum of Cultural European Networks dedicating three specific platforms between 1998 and 2001 to the Balkan region, the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) integrating more and more the accompanying solutions for future EU accession countries. Specific networks for SEE were created (Apollonia, the South East European Contemporary Art Network (SEECAN), etc.). Some networks have developed specific fundraising activities to secure and enable participation of the members from Central and Eastern Europe in network projects (Thomassen Fund in ENCATC).

Helveia, as well as some other funds and foundations (primarily those supported in the USA, for example artists in residence programmes - CEC ArtsLink between 1993-2000) whose clearly profiled policy strove to create a closed circle of "**artistic elite**".

On the other hand, a selected number of artists and cultural professionals had the mobility supported from the budgets of the Ministries of Culture. The real criteria for support giving were not clearly defined nor the grants were equally available to all the interested. Decision on the support used to be influenced by the factors outside culture.

In this context mobility was in the function of political aspirations at the level of internal processes and through running "cultural diplomacy" and supporting the presentation of predetermined desirable artistic production. The aim was to shape western European artistic and public opinion of the social processes in the Balkan countries.

Support for the mobility coming from the both sources was not available to the majority of artists and cultural professionals, so they were forced to finance their presence on the international scene by themselves.

For all these reasons trend of emigrating artists and cultural professionals, in spite of all the obstacles, was much more developed than the mobility itself, in other words the brain-drain significantly reduced creative potentials of the societies in the South Eastern Europe.⁸

Arts and culture certainly need stability, but above all they need mobility. At the moment irrational visa requirements within the region and from the region to its neighbouring countries limit the mobility and exchange of artists, managers, cultural workers and experts. Effects of the Schengen agreement on mobility are notorious, but due to the "Schengen sprit" new restrictions on mobility have been implemented practically everywhere in West Europe.⁹

Regional cultural cooperation

The cultural policy models in the newly formed countries do not make a special mention of support for regional cooperation. On the contrary, by implication, many solutions provided by these cultural models and official political decisions (the visa system, duty, etc.) actually limit the cooperation.

According to the information obtained by the consulted organizations and cultural institutions, problems as to establishing regional connections are following:

- Still present prejudices and reflections of recent conflicts
- Difficult communication and exchange of information, as the result of inability to access trade journals or organize study trips.
- Absence of the regional cultural policy strategy for regional cultural development and the lack of official institutions' adequate interest in supporting production of activities at the regional level.
- Financial difficulties, especially with cooperation in terms of joint production (visits, work and education of artists and cultural practitioners).

Of course, cultural cooperation continued in spite of these limitations, as it is impossible to put a complete stop to it, but it was made very difficult to maintain (as the information obtained through the questionnaire demonstrated) between individual artists, NGOs and cultural industries.

⁸ Details about this subject can be seen in the paper: One-way Ticket - The Brain Drain and Trans-border mobility in the arts and culture of the Western Balkans, Dimitrije Vujadinovic. www.ericarts.org / www.balkankult.org.

⁹ The final document of the Conference on Reconstructing Cultural Productivity in the region of South Eastern Europe; Sarajevo December 2-4, 1999. www.balkankult.org

THE SECOND PERIOD AFTER 2001

International circumstances

Since 2001 the political and economical situation in the region, as well as in the individual states in the region, has completely stabilized (except in the AP Kosovo and the Republic of Macedonia), which was prerequisite for the development of international cultural cooperation policy.

International cooperation at the bilateral and multilateral levels is boosted both inside the region and Europe-wide. Within particular programmes, primarily the EU programmes, numerous international and regional conferences have been held, agreements on the international and regional cooperation have been signed: **CARDS**, **CEI** - Central European Initiative, **ESI** - European Stability Initiative, Policy for Culture, Culture 2000.

All the regional and European conferences, as well as the documents from the meetings, differ in the width and depth of the treated subjects. They aim at achieving particular political, economic and legal standards, mainly those applied by the EU members, as well as the development of the regional and international cooperation. Their significance in this respect is positive.¹⁰

It is particularly significant that all the states in the region signed the *Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)* with the EU, as well as the *Central European Free Trade Agreement - CEFTA* (Bucharest, 2006).

Unfortunately, cooperation in the field of culture and cultural production, including cultural industries, have not been included in the contents of a single document.

¹⁰ The most important political documents:

- Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) - Since 1998, **Bulgaria and Romania** have joined the European Union in January 2007; In February 2003; **Croatia** officially requested EU accession; in June 2004, it was officially granted the status of candidate country for accession; **Albania** has, since 2003, been involved in negotiations with the EU towards closing a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA); **Bosnia and Herzegovina** will be invited to negotiate a SAA in the future; is the only Western Balkan country already to have achieved candidate status (in June 2004); **Macedonia** signed a SAA with the EU in 2001, which entered into force in April 2004. An application for membership, submitted by Macedonia in March 2004, is being examined by the European Commission, which will decide whether or not the country is ready to begin entry negotiations; **Serbia and Montenegro** has been invited on October 4, 2005 to start negotiating a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (which will not apply to Kosovo).
- Declaration of the EU-Western Balkans Summit, - 21 June 2003 in Thessaloniki, Greece - http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/76279.pdf
- Message from Ohrid Adopted by the regional Forum on the Dialogue Among Civilizations - Ohrid, 29 and 30 August 2003. <http://www0.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/pfii/documents/other%20docs/UNESCO%2032%20session%20reso-eng.pdf>
- Preparing for the participation of the Western Balkan countries in Community programmes and agencies - Brussels, 3.12.2003 http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/balkans_communication/western_balkans_communication_050308_en.pdf
- The Balkans in Europe's Future - International Commission on the Balkans - April 2005 <http://www.balkan-commission.org/activities/Report.pdf>
- Breaking out of the Balkan Ghetto: Why Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) - should be changed, European Stability Initiative - 1 June 2005 http://www.esiweb.org/pdf/esi_document_id_66.pdf
- Agriment on Amendment of and accession to the central European Free Trade CEFTA - Bukurest, 2006 [/http://www.worldtradelaw.net/fta/agreements/ceftaromfta.pdf](http://www.worldtradelaw.net/fta/agreements/ceftaromfta.pdf)
- IPA Cross-border Programmes between CC/PCC, Zagre, 2007
- IPA Adriatic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme http://www.espa.gr/media/documents/Adriatic_2007_2013_en.pdf

Regional international programmes, primarily initiated by the **EU - Phare**, the neighbor programme, **CARDS - Intereg III**, **Tempus III** - have not considerably supported cultural cooperation. Immediate support for the mobility of artists and cultural professionals has not been provided by these programmes either, as well as by other activities taken by the EU in the region (for example, through European agency for reconstruction).

Majority of the regional programmes, initiated by the international institutions, with the purpose of stimulating the regional cooperation, do not actually deal with the cultural cooperation. A good example for this conclusion is presented by the activities of the **CBIB** (*Cross-border Institution Building*) - *The European Union's CARDS Regional Programme*. Supporting the development of the interregional cooperation at the multilateral level, this programme contains no projects in culture, nor supports regional mobility of artists and cultural professionals

The role and significance of the **Council of Europe's** programmes in the field of cultural production and support for the mobility has permanently weakened since 2001, to the extent that today it practically seems insignificant.

Besides, due to the general social development, and consequently to the greater openness of the countries in the region, social conditions of the cultural production are improving, though not at the pace artists and cultural professionals would be satisfied with, and not by the power of creative potentials of the countries in the South Eastern Europe. However, potentials for the international cooperation certainly increase.

*The reality of the South-Eastern European region is in the lack of contact and real collaboration, reinforced by political and economic problems that the region has been facing, as well as the new situation created by the enlargement of Europe, creating new boundaries but also new opportunities for collaboration.*¹¹

International cultural agreements

Since 2001 the efforts in the field of international cultural cooperation have been intensified in all the countries of the region.

Representatives of the Ministries of Culture in the countries within the region, as well as the ministers themselves, held several regional conferences, on which occasions many declarations and protocols were signed.¹²

The last summit on "*The Intercultural Meeting on the Sea, River and Lake Ways of the South Eastern Europe*" was held in Athens on the 13th April 2008, in the presence of all the prime

¹¹ BALKAN EXPRESS (BE) - IETM Project of creation of a Balkan performing arts network.

¹² The most important international and regional documents and meetings in the field of the international cultural cooperation:

- Working material of the workshop "Plea for culture", Zagreb, 22. – 24. January 2001. http://www.policiesforculture.org/dld/PfC_HR2001_Workshop_dossier_HR.pdf
- Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the Member States of the Central European Initiative "*State and Prospects of CEI Cultural Co-operation*" - Skopje, 27 June 2002. http://www.ceinet.org/download/2002_MinCulture_FD.pdf
- Charter of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe (SEE) - Copenhagen 31 March 2005 <http://www.norden.org/internationalt/sk/charterfinal310305.pdf>
- Declaration on Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe - Zagreb, 14 March 2008. <http://www.min-kulture.hr/userdocsimages/nove%20novosti/Declaration%20opca.pdf>
- The role of cultural diplomacy in the integration process - an Eastern European perspective http://www.ecumest.ro/pdf/background_cultural_diplomacy.pdf
- Presentation of the Second Interim Report and Follow up Activities: 3rd Steering Committee Meeting, Podgorica 2007.

ministers of the states in the South Eastern Europe. However, even this meeting, just like many previously held, mostly had a political character.

Majority of the meetings, as well as the acts of signing the documents on international cultural cooperation were initiated outside the region.¹³

The regional conference held in Copenhagen and initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers - *Charter of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South East Europe (SEE)*, Copenhagen 31 March 2005, is especially worth noting.

Mobility of artists is underlined as the priority instrument in the final document: **Creating joint programmes to facilitate mobility for artists and cultural professionals, as well as the exchange of cultural artifacts and art works in the region.**

The importance of all these official events is positive, but from the practical point of view it must be noted that, as for the mobility of artists and cultural professionals, there has been no significant progress.

Cultural policies of all the countries in the region show obvious tendency towards creation or reconstruction of the bilateral agreements in contrast to the multilateral connecting. A good example for this conclusion represents Croatia:

In 2006 eight bilateral agreements on the cooperation in the field of culture and science were signed. The cooperation programme for the next four years period was signed with Albania and Austria, and the other for the next three years was signed with the Czech Republic. There are also agreements on cooperation in the field of education signed with India, and the agreements on the cultural cooperation signed with Turkey, Iran and Cyprus.

In recent years, some governments, after all Romanian and Croatian, have been paying much more attention to the development of the cultural diplomacy.

Through the joint efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European integration and the Ministry of Culture, and with the cooperation of the entire consular network of the Republic of Croatia abroad, Croatian culture was presented at an international level through 407 different cultural programmes and events during 2006.

International governmental and non-governmental institutions and foundations

Foreign cultural centers (French Cultural Center, Goethe Institute, Italian Cultural Institute, British Council, Cervantes Institute) have continued their programmes of cultural cooperation and support for particular projects, but the mobility of artists and cultural professionals in the region very rarely gets supported. The scope of this cooperation depends on the financial support coming from home countries, but a general conclusion may be drawn that these **funds are gradually decreasing**.

In recent years there has been an evident activity of the British Council on the projects in cultural policy, or the issues of creative industries development.

¹³ Complementing previous observations, we can now return and see the extent to which cultural cooperation dynamics in SEE have mostly been initiated in the last 14 years by “outside actors” – European institutions such as the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the European states (especially through the Stability Pact), but also independently through bodies such as KulturKontakt (Austria), French cultural centers and the Goethe Institute, or Pro Helvetia. These bodies have launched programs not only of bilateral, but also of regional character. (Milena Dragicevic Šešić, Corina Suteu: Challenges of Cultural Cooperation in Southeastern Europe: the Internationalization of Cultural Policies and Practices)

British Council Romania has no fund whatsoever set up for the mobility of artists and cultural practitioners for artists. British Council Romania does not provide artists with grants for travel, accommodation, event participation etc.

Embassies of the foreign countries have their own funds for the cultural cooperation that can be used for granting mobility, mostly covering travel or accommodation costs of the artists and cultural professionals coming to the countries in the region (touring), but the mobility costs for traveling to their countries are rare. Some permanent activities in this respect are present in the Nordic countries, Austria (KulturKontakt) and France.¹⁴

The Open Society Fund, some programmes of support in the USA, as well as those that have been delivered by Pro Helvetia since 2001, reduce their activities in the region in order to achieve set goals.

Most of **the international governmental and non-governmental institutions and foundations** that are active in the South Eastern Europe announce their programmes of support for the cultural production under the same conditions for all the countries in the region, regardless of the differences between the individual countries.

Analysis of the programme of support, amount of the grants and conditions of the contests in general prove that even these institutions have not developed particular funds or schemes of the support for the mobility of artists and cultural professionals.

Mobility is supported only as being a part of the project production and is marked as a special budget item. (See the Attachments 1 and 9)

With the clear aims in mind **the European Cultural Foundation** has been supporting mobility in the region for many years. In this context the mobility fund "Step Beyond" was founded, open to the artists and cultural professionals coming from the region.¹⁵

Attempting to improve the mobility of artists in the region **IETM** initiated a project in 2002, that is informal platform - BALKAN EXPRESS (BE). Its purpose is *(Re)Establishment of the mobility of art in the Balkans with the aim to improve the exchange with the rest of Europe.*¹⁶

¹⁴ Every year the department for the international cooperation of the French Embassy assigns intership bursaries to a number of custodians, restaurators and conservators, for professional training in French museums, laboratories for the conservation etc. The amount of the grants is up to 770 EUR per month. This money is provided to cover accomodation and per diem costs, while the grantees are expected to cover travel costs on their own. The bursaries are not assigned by means of the contest or application, but "agreement on the cooperation" with the host museum. KulturKontakt Austria does not have a special fund for mobility but run the Gulliver's Connect Programme: A mobility programme through work placements for young and up-coming artists, art managers and cultural operators in Europe and beyond. (<http://www.gulliverconnect.org/en/>). KulturKontakt Austria has a Small Project Fund from which individual grants are covered (travel, accommodation, participation in an event, per diem). Grant programmes with partner institutions: Danceweb, International Salzburg Summer Academy for Fine Arts, Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra, International Summer cademy Prague –Vienna – Budapest. But there is no grant scheme. The grant depends on the project.

¹⁵ However, it is precisely to these challenges that arts and culture in general and cultural cooperation projects in particular can effectively respond: in bridging gaps and facilitating communication, mutual knowledge and understanding; in developing cultural dialogue and intercultural exchange – both within SEE and East-West, as well as North-South, etc.; in turning culture from a negative force of nationalistic drives to a resource for social development; in understanding and supporting culture as an agent of change, of democratisation, which accompanies, promotes and strengthens the processes of transformation in post-communist societies through the support it lends to creativity and critical thinking. If arts and culture are acknowledged, this role and support provided, then the support must also adequately respond to the challenges addressed. If there is a need for systemic change, then long-term investment is required in order for it to be effective. / Funding opportunities for international cultural cooperation in and with South East Europe, European Cultural Foundation - ECF, Amsterdam/Bucharest October 2005

¹⁶ This mission is to be carried out through different actions that would allow the opening of the Balkan region and improve communication within the region itself but also with other European or non-European regions and countries. The reality of the south-eastern European region is in the lack of contact and real

An analysis of the legibility of information delivered on the web sites of the international foundations and other institutions supporting mobility at various levels was done especially for this paper. Examination of over twenty web presentations result in general conclusions that may qualitatively point to the motivation of the artists and cultural professionals deciding to apply for the funding. Some conclusions may also be drawn on the basis of interviews conducted with artists (See Attachments 8):

- Information on the possibilities of getting support for the mobility (travel and accommodation grants) are not sufficiently clear nor visible enough, except for the residence centers,
- In most cases the criteria are too generally set (which makes them obscure), and in some cases they do not even seem to exist at all,
- Application methodology, including extensive forms, seems rather complicated, especially to the artists who do not have experience in these matters, however many showed to be experienced (concluded from the interviews) but have strong dislike of such application methods. (See the Attachments 2 and 3)

Corporative and political foundations

A great number of corporative foundations supporting cultural production or international cultural exchange has been active up to today (Bosch Foundation, Siemens Arts Programme, Volkswagen, Telenor Foundation, Erste group etc.). However, on their web presentations it is impossible to find any relevant information on the goals and activity priorities these foundations claim to have. Concerning support for the mobility of artists and cultural professionals there are no such information.

International funds, behind which there are political actors (Friedrich Ebert Fund, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Mott Foundation and others), have not had so far any activities in the field of culture and cultural production, or mobility.

Comparative analysis of the mobility in the countries in the South Eastern Europe

Possibilities of the mobility of artists and cultural professionals are different between various countries in the South Eastern Europe. The differences are obvious, for example between Albania and Bulgaria.

After all, it depends on cultural policies of the individual governments, as well as both on the position the country holds in the international relations (EU membership) and other internal and external factors (visa regime, real approach to EU funds, information availability, working standards, professionalism of the cultural operators, etc.).

In the course of this research, Ministries of Culture, except for the case of Montenegro, did not show to be interested in the issue of mobility of artists and cultural professionals, at least when it comes to the participation in the MEAC project.

collaboration, reinforced by political and economic problems that the region has been facing, as well as the new situation created by the enlargement of Europe, creating new boundaries but also new opportunities for collaboration. Aware of these difficulties, but dedicated and enthusiastic, on the occasion of an IETM meeting held in April 2002 in Trieste, a few members from this region presented the idea of organizing a meeting that would discuss their mutual problems and lead to a better understanding of each other and possible cooperation. As a result, the BE project was created, eventually growing into a networking, meeting on regular basis. / BALKAN EXPRESS (BE) - IETM Project of creation of a Balkan performing arts network.

Culture Contact Points themselves, whose extremely important basic mission is to help mobility of artists and cultural professionals (by providing information and professional help in dealing with the conditions of the contests) neither have any relevant information on possibilities of the mobility nor make a considerable impact on the development of the international cultural cooperation and mobility.

In this context the Culture Contact Point Serbia, founded as a branch office of the Ministry of Culture, gave an indicative reply to the questionnaire:

Our office was established four months ago, so we have not researched issues connected to artists.

Mobility as a part of the cultural policy

You have to do everything on your own, to search for information, to ask to apply etc.

There should be a global internet database on these funds. There should also be a kind of department in European institution where you could get information on these possibilities. And, yes, this database should be updated regularly. So, that you wouldn't mistakenly ask foundation that doesn't exist any more.

Sandro Weltin, French photographer

Possibilities of the mobility are different between various countries in the region. However, conclusions of the completed research, done by means of the questionnaire and brief telephone interviews for the sake of this project, show that there are coincidences in some questions about mobility as to most or even all the countries in the region.¹⁷

All the similarities and differences can be easily noticed in the comparative tables. (See the Attachments 4, 5, 6, 7)

- Pattern of cultural policies in all the countries within the region kept **etatistic character** and sectoral approach. No country has come yet to the model of "arms lenght" by founding Arts Councils and para-governmental foundations. Predominant means of financing culture and cultural production still come from the Ministries of Culture.

¹⁷ Number of the inquired individuals and institutions: Serbia 22; Croatia 28; BIH 16; Montenegro 3; Macedonia 14; Albania 1; Bulgaria 29; Romania 25; Turkey 13; International foundations, foreign cultural centers, NGO: 43.

Persons/institutions that replied to the questionnaire:

Srbija: Nebojša Milikic (Cultural Center Rex, Belgrade); Slavko Matic (Secretariat for Education and Culture of Vojvodina Province); Smiljka Isakovic (musician); ULUS (Association of Fine Artists of Serbia); Prof.dr Milena Dragicevic-Šešić (University professor and international expert on cultural management and policy); Zoran Hamovic (editor of the publishing house CLIO)

Hrvatska: Biserka Cvijeticanin (Institute for International Relations / Department for Culture and Communication)

Crna Gora: Prof.dr Janko Ljumovic (Producer - professor at the Faculty of dramatic arts in Cetinje); Tamara Jokovic (Ministry of Culture of Montenegro)

Makedonija: NGO Art Studio

Bugarska: Sofia Jazz Festival; National Culture Fund

Rumunija: Eurocult Romania; Writers Union of Romania; Romanian Cultural Institute

Turska: IKSIV; Prof.dr Aysu Erden (Cankaya University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences); Pera Fine Arts; Turkish Ministry of Culture

Interviewees on mobility that gave answers to the questionnaire by the telephone: Writers Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Musicologists Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Museum of Contemporary Art of Republic of Srpska; Jazz Fest Sarajevo; Association of Fine Artists of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatian Union of composers; Croatia Union of film artists; Institute of contemporary art of Bulgaria

- **Budgets of the Ministries** of Culture or other Ministries (primarily the Ministries of Foreign Affairs) are the source of financing culture production, or granting the mobility, both for travels of local artists abroad and the residence for artists and cultural professionals from abroad (etatistic model).
- The other source of financing are **budgets of the cities**, primarily the capitals.
- Most artists and cultural professionals considered themselves **incompetent** (insufficiently informed) to give right answers to the questionnaire.
- Answers to the questionnaire and those given in the interviews showed that the knowledge, perception and awareness of the possibilities of mobility depend on the **position** and the **function** an artist or a cultural professional holds. That is why the answers to the same question given by the correspondents coming from the same country (Turkey, Serbia, Romania) prove to be different, even opposite in some cases. (See Attachment 4, 5,6, 7)
- Mobility of artists and cultural professionals is still financed as a part of the costs of producing projects approved by the governmental and para-governmental institutions (national museums, national theatres etc.) in the field of cultural exchange.
- At the fairs of the Ministries there are no clearly defined information on criteria, priorities and methodology of applying for grant supports for individual mobility, if there are any.¹⁸
- Institutional schemes and funds for the mobility at the level of the Ministries and the cities have not been distinguished in one single country in the region. In other words, the mobility is treated as the international cultural cooperation.
- Expert and independent **monitoring and evaluation** of the international cultural cooperation, as well as the assignement of the mobility grants in most countries in the region still have not become practice.
- The mobility is mostly conditioned by a residence programme for artists and cultural professionals. The phenomenon of **the centralization of the information** and availability of the contacts in big cities, especially the capitals, where cultural life is more intensive with activities of the embassies, foreign cultural centers, Ministries and company agencies, can easily be noticed.
- **Artists associations'** representatives gave some information, but only those referring to their domains, which means that they do not dispose with reliable information about situation in other arts disciplines.
- *A great number of artists showed ignorance and indifference to this issue as a result of suspicion that the situation may improve.*
- The possibilities of mobility also depend on **the art discipline (field)**, which is proved by different answers given to the same question from the questionnaire.

¹⁸ Analysing information comprised in the official documents, as well as presented in the web sites, by the ministries of culture and other ministries, it is impossible to tell whether the support is given for the realization of a more general cultural exchange project (within which the travel and accomodation costs are included) or it is referred to a direct support for the mobility. The system of support is set on an ad hoc basis, from case to case! "the Ministry is also very active in initiating and designing new models of bilateral agreements of cultural co-operation. A special attention has been paid to stimulate institutions to enter regional and international co-operation projects or networking (information distribution), but there are no special mobility funds or funding for network fees or international projects" (Serbia) or "set up of a think tank to define a new image of Romania abroad and the role that culture can play in this regard" (Romania, international experts report, Council of Europe, English version, 2000, p. 30). Milena Dragicevic Šešić, Corina Suteu: Challenges of Cultural Cooperation in Southeastern Europe: the Internationalization of Cultural Policies and Practices)

- The best knowledge was showed by **the cultural practitioners** whose object of research is cultural policy. However, no researcher-cultural professional answered to the question 6 (examples of the mobility incentives), which suggests that they might not have reliable information on the supports for mobility provided by the local and international foundations and programmes.
- The international institutions and foundations kept **the regional approach** to the policy of support for cultural production. In other words, they deliver their programmes of support for cultural production to all the countries in the region under the same conditions, regardless of the differences between the individual countries.
- The role and position of the **local foundations** are still completely neglected. There exist no adequate stimulating instruments (fiscal and tax) in a single country in the region, which could make establishing foundations easier, and thus enable them finance cultural production and the mobility of artists.¹⁹

Travels of artists and cultural professionals abroad

- Annual programmes of **the Ministries of Culture** and big cities are predominated by support for the mobility of the institutions' representatives and members of the international non-governmental organizations, companies, particularly if provided by the cultural exchange programmes, while the mobility grants for individual artists (especially freelance artists) and cultural professionals remains a negligible budget item.²⁰
- **Information** on the cultural exchange programmes, and possibilities of the mobility are not generally available to broader groups of professionals. It is interesting that the information at the disposal of NGO remain within the NGO groups.
- **Financial barriers** are one of the main limiting factors regarding the mobility. In most cases individual expert trips depend on artists and cultural professionals' financial situation, or his/her personal contacts to the institutions and colleagues abroad.
- **Administrative barriers**, for artists and cultural professionals coming from particular countries in the region (Albania, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro), indispensable visas or necessity of having the official invitation letter is an unsurpassable impediment to the individual trips, such as visits to the exhibitions, festivals and similar.
- Impossibility to find out or experience **life and work conditions** (including social rights and tax duties) in other countries, in the case of longer stays, which causes heavy resourcefulness in a new environment.
- The mobility is also conditioned by **the generation status**. There are programmes of support for students and the others for renown artists (most contests request CV). The

¹⁹ There are very few independent foundations based in the countries of South East Europe that provide support in the field of culture. Of these, there is almost no SEE-originated independent private founder in the field of cultural cooperation, except for the recently set up BalkanKult Foundation. / Funding opportunities for international cultural cooperation in and with South East Europe, European Cultural Foundation - ECF, Amsterdam/Bucharest October 2005

²⁰ One small analysis that I made several years ago showed a paradox in that the largest amount of money for cultural cooperation was spent on overseas cooperation – that year, I think it was 2002 or 2003, the Yugoslav Drama Theatre and Atelier 212 travelled to Columbia and Mexico, and some choirs went to China and South Korea. With several trips by smaller theatre groups to Australia and Canada...it is clear that the money was wasted on something that is definitely not a priority, and objectively, it is not even important for artists themselves (except perhaps as an award trip to compensate for modest fees and salaries.). The personal experience of Professor Dr. Milena Dragicevic Sestic on how much the ruling administration in Serbia is understanding mobility.

support for artists and cultural professionals who finished their studies but have not become renowned yet is missing (these are generations aged between 25 and 35)

- Not a single country in the region, except for Serbia, has studios or other kinds of residence centers abroad placed at disposal of artists and cultural professionals.

Travels of artists and cultural professionals to the countries in the region

- Predominant sources of financing travels for artists to the countries in the region are the **budgets** of the Ministries of Culture and big cities.
- A great number of cases shows that the participation in the local **festivals** (film, theater, music) is primarily supported and gets planned as an item of a more general cultural exchange programme, that is to say a support for a cultural event to take place.
- *There are no pre-established contests, neither there are planned budget items for supporting the travels of individual artists and cultural professionals.*
- Grants for the individual tours of artists and cultural professionals are delivered by the governmental institutions on an *ad hoc* basis.
- **Foreign cultural centers** have an outstanding role in supporting the tours of artists and cultural professionals coming from their home countries, whereby they directly contribute to the cultural life in the region. However, these activities mostly take place in the capital cities, where these are situated.
- Travels of artists and cultural professionals to the countries in the region are mostly financed from the different sources provided by participants **themselves**. /See the Attachments 2 and 3/
- The main impediment to these travels is **insufficient availability of the information** on possible partners in the countries - hosts. /See the Attachments 1 and 2/
- In the countries within the region there is no developed **network** of the residence centers.
- The most developed form of the individual mobility in the region are **artists colonies**, which mostly take place in the summer and last for ten to twenty days. Organizers bear the accommodation and production expenses (support from the local community and the Ministry of Culture), while artists cover travel costs themselves.

Regional cooperation

Cultural cooperation in the Balkans represents a unique opportunity for stimulation of creative potentials in the region and provides a favorable environment for building “cultural bridges” through increased mobility of artists and cultural practitioners.

Regional ties have great influence on the quality of sensibility and artistic style, and the awareness of cultural, traditional, sociological, intermedial and other aspects of the influences present in the region. (Director of Erg Status, Boris Cakširan)

In recent years possibilities of the regional mobility of artists and cultural professionals have increased and the most impediments dominant in the previous period have been surpassed. However, the general conclusion of the participants in this research is:

- The regional cooperation is as important (for many it is even more important) as the one taking place outside the region
- The mobility is not developed enough
- Grants for support lack
- Relevant information lack
- Regional residence centers lack

In the context of the actual regional mobility the experience of prof. dr Milena Dragicevic Šešić is rather illustrative:

Unfortunately, it is still a rather phenomena here and is seen as a heroism. That is how I am seen in my environment for taking young producers on educational trips to the Balkan countries every year - but no one else does it. Theatre play tours - but it is always the same arrangement - "Atelje 212" perform its plays in Rijeka, JDP (Yugoslavian Drama Theatre) perform its plays in Zagreb. However, this is not regional cooperation, but play tours based on nostalgia and former popularity of some actors. There are no new work projects nor ideas or initiatives.

A great need for establishing regional mobility connections was also expressed by numerous artists, institutions, NGOs and festivals. There are three main practical reasons motivating the mobility in the region:

- Decades-long cultural recognition,
- Economic reasons (enlarging the artistic market and increasing the number of consumers),
- A common approach which makes it easier to win the position for creative work in terms of wider European global processes.

There are mental obstacles to regional mobility as well. Many artists don't realize that it would be much better to expand the market in their own region to change what is lacking, such as quality, competitiveness etc. and then it would be easier to enter the Western market and sell your products there. Small markets are insignificant for the critical development of society, culture, and the quality of life. That is why I think that the opening of the region and exchange of creativity and information in that direction is imperative. (Biljana Tanurovska, Lokomotiva NGO from Skopje)

CONCLUSION

Residence programmes or even short time traveling ongoing projects have great potential for exchanging experience with unknown places and environments, with their local people. It is inspirational experience with lots of challenges at stake, which certainly influence your future work. In this respect, it is very important that a budget intended for covering residence programme or travel costs be used in the best possible way. Concerning your question, this help should go to people who don't have enough money to travel or go to another country to explore new environments for the needs of their work. When an artist exhibits in another country it is important that he is present there, so that he can talk to local people about his work. In this way he has opportunity to meet local artists and exchange experience with them.

Sandro Weltin, French photographer

All the inquired correspondents, individual artists and cultural professionals, as well as the institutions participating in this research agree on the fact that the mobility of artists and cultural professionals is one of the preconditions for the development of the creative potentials in every contemporary society, that is to say it is the precondition for the establishment of creative societies (Creative Europe).²¹

In this context it is necessary that the following is done:

- **Administrative impediments** to the mobility of artists and cultural professionals should be removed, such as visa regime, customs barriers etc.;
- **Financial support** for the mobility should be directly reinforced (as distinguished part of the international cultural cooperation) at the level of national budgets for culture, budgets of the local communities, as well as the international regional and European programmes.
- Support for the **individual mobility** of artists and cultural professionals should be considerably reinforced and distinguished as a budget item intended for the international cultural cooperation
- Delivery of the **information** on possibilities of the mobility should be considerably improved by establishing special portals and publishing directories with the information about residence centers, artists colonies, institutions, funds and schemes financially supporting the mobility, especially individual mobility. The system of information should be supplemented with the national and international associations and networks (such as: PEN centers, international association of the residence centers for translators, national unions of fine artists, unions of composers etc.)
- Delivery of the information on the **conditions** for the longer stays and work in different environment or foreign countries;
- **Procedures** of the grant giving should be simplified, and the clear criteria for grant giving and transparent decision-making should be introduced;

²¹ Creative Europe - On Governance and Management of artistic Creativity in Europe, AR Cult Media, Bonn, 2002.

- Decision-making on the grant giving should be **decentralized**. Institutions and foundations should be given the role of "implementing agencies" (by the EU, the Council of Europe, the European Cultural Foundation) at the regional and national levels, for the functions of grant giving, monitoring and evaluation of the grant usefulness;
- **Socially responsible corporations** should be more actively included in the support for artists and cultural professionals in cooperation with the institutions and foundations "implementing agencies";
- Founding and more effective **networking** of the residence centers (especially in the countries that do not have any residence centers, which are majority of the countries in the SEE) and artists colonies.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES

The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Majority of the inquired artists and representatives of the artists' unions showed indifference as the result of suspicion that the actual problems may be surpassed. The attitude of the Bosnian Fine Artists' Union's representative is rather indicative:

Suspicion towards foundations, the result of distrust as to overcoming impediments to the mobility. Artists and Union's members cover the mobility costs themselves. There is no institutional support for overcoming the obstacles, nor funds or foundations offering solution.

The same attitude was showed by the representatives of other artists unions (The Writers' Union, The Musicologists Union), as well as the organizers of the Jazz Festival Sarajevo.

The same situation can be recognized in the Republic of Srpska. The director of the Museum of Contemporary Art of the Republic of Srpska, who certainly holds a responsible position and has knowledge of cultural policy issues, did not have sufficient information to answer to the questions from the questionnaire. Her answers, given in the brief interview, may be summarized in a sentence:

It is worth noting that most often artists face a very cruel reality, "condemned" to deal with the mobility costs on their own.

This attitude showed by a relevant person certainly explains causes of the suspicion artists have as to the question whether their social position is going to change.

However, the justified skepticism has not destroyed their desires for changes, so typical for artistic vocation, which was expressed in the conclusion of the interview with the director of the Museum:

Artists in the Republic of Srpska are in a very unenviable position, so we totally and unreservedly support every initiative bearing the hope that they would step forward!

Croatia

Croatia is the only country in the region to have issued an official government paper: *Croatia in the 21st Century • Strategy of Cultural Development*.²²

However, in this strategic document creating particular funds and schemes for the mobility is not provided.

Analysis of another, equally important document - *International cultural cooperation - Overview of the programmes in the subprogramme activity for 2007 (Zagreb, 08/02/2008)* - is a good example of how the mobility can be structured within the international cultural cooperation.

Along with the Ministry of Culture, it is also the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of the Republic of Croatia that support the projects comprising mobility.

Very indicative answer to the question on mobility is given by the Croation Union of film artists:

We forwarded your questionnaire to our Union's Administrative Committee, so the conclusion is that we do not have sufficient knowledge of the mobility of our members and possible information that we may have are not factual.

Residence center in Groždan!!

Serbia

Serbia is one of the rare countries in the region which has not issued one single law in the field of culture and cultural production in the recent transitional period of eight years. Culture is neither a part of the documents on strategic development of Serbia.²³

In the official document of the Serbian Ministry of Culture - *Priorities of the Ministry of Culture for the period between 2008 and 2011*, the mobility of artists and cultural professionals, as well as the issues of the cultural diplomacy, are not taken into consideration at all!

Serbia is the only country in the region that possesses residence facilities for the painters outside its boundaries, these are the painters' studios in Paris.

²² Strategija kulturnog razvitka, Nakladnik Ministarstvo kulture za nakladnika, Tiskara Kriaevci, Zagreb, 2003.

²³ Culture and arts are not mentioned at all in the *Memorandum on the budget and economic and fiscal policy for 2006, with the projection for 2007 and 2008*, containing 134 densely typed pages. Especially indicative are two tables in the Supplement to the document, with 34 pages concretizing the intentions of the author. The first is *the Matrix of the basic goals and provisions of the economic and fiscal policy in the period between 2006 and 2008*. In this table culture and cultural production are not considered as field of the regulation through economic and fiscal policy. The latter table - *the Matrix of the basic laws for structural reforms in the real, financial and public sector*, offers inventory of the laws within the competence of the individual ministries that are to be issued in 2005 and 2006. The only ministry that was not mentioned is the Ministry of Culture and Media. In other words, not a single new law in the field of culture, in the context of the structural reforms, was provided to be issued in years to come!