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Culture

Overview of developments in Central and Eastern Europe between 1990/2003¹

by Corina Şuteu, President of the ECUMEST Association

1. UNDERSTANDING CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

" We are at the beginning of a new era, characterized by great insecurity, permanent crisis and the absence of any kind of status quo (...) There are no victors and no defeated powers today, not even in Eastern Europe"- "In from the margins", Council of Europe report, 1997, quote at the beginning of chapter "The geopolitics of culture"

The exercise that we are proposing in the following policy paper is an «anatomic» one. It will offer both a descriptive photography of a socio-political landscape and a conceptual framework for cultural policy evolution. We are convinced that without a correct reading of the attitude towards culture and cultural administration of the past communist regimes, no understanding is possible of the often contradictory logic of the transition period regarding the cultural policy design within the region. To make this approach effective, a number of empirical criteria of classification will be considered and several issues will be tackled; their importance in the interpretation of facts will hopefully bring added value to the analysis provided.

A. Typologies

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) is still seen as a homogenous territory in terms of development dynamics and transition processes launched in 1989. This situation is due, undoubtedly, to the legacy of strong stereotypes vehiculated about the region before the collapse of the Berlin wall, as well as to the fact that the communist ideology and, stronger than that, communist propaganda, was an ideal melting pot for countries and communities with very diverse cultures and religions. After a short and intense period of curious excitement and some rhetorical inflammation regarding the accompanying of the transition processes, Western Europe lost interest in the reality of the transitional troublesome situation and comfortably drew back to a quasi total passivity about the different nations and cultures composing the former communist block.

Nevertheless, if we admit that the ideological mark imposed upon the Soviet area of influence of the iron curtain was a potential «harmonizing factor», the reality of the «behavior» of communist countries was in itself extremely different all during the communist regime. And, according to a different range of criteria, even more

¹ Report produced initially for UNESCO, also available in the Publications section at www.ecumest.ro.

different after (see following chapter). But comparative research and reliable updated materials are missing, despite the existence of important gathering of stock information and of some important expertise that has emerged from the region. Under communism, we can group the Eastern countries into the following categories:

1/ Albania and Romania, with totalitarian systems; their populations finally submitted and largely even committed themselves to a self censored order of the socio-economical life. This was a subtle and alienating process of **total ideological contamination**, so difficult to dismantle after the regimes collapsed.

2/ At the opposite end, Yugoslavia was the happy case of the communist region, preserving freedom of expression and mobility of people until the end of the regime. In order to keep ethnic tension low and to offer a sense of belonging to a historically scattered and traumatized group of communities, the communist leadership astutely built up there an oasis of what one might call **emancipated communism** and thus preserved an envied status quo vis a vis the rest of the region. It was only when the end of communism was identified to the collapse of Yugoslavia² that situation turned back to the much cherished stereotypes that, for example, the report realized in 2002 on behalf of the EU by Wim van Meurs and Alexandros Yannis calls as "widely associated historically with the term of Balkans: fragmentation, violent conflict, backwardness and misery"³.

3/ In a different framework, Baltic countries (Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania) and Moldavia supported directly Soviet invasion and the process of «russification»/ **cultural colonization**, despite very often tragic resistance; the consequences of this, among others were: de-culturation and violation of community rights. Like the Bassarabian poet Leo Bodeianu's lines go: "the Russians again./ Our liberators and occupiers/(...)the Russians that grew up clutching guns/ the Russians who pulled down the wool of lies/ the Russians who were not satisfied/ with victory..."⁴.

4/ Poland recovered with difficulty after the second world war dismantling trauma by building a conservative communism as a guarantee to reunify an atomized society, and relied structurally on it until very late (as a proof, even Solidarity was a «workers movement», a trade union); Poland is the place where so called "real socialism" sees the day and where the ideal society is supposed to be a "closed society"⁵. The spiritual resistance opposed to the Stalinist ideology via the Catholic Church was, in itself, as **conservative** as the communist power, therefore the alternative cultural forms as ways to unleash new creativity were not welcome. Bulgaria enters the same category, as it had also undergone a very conservative communist order. Interestingly enough, Bulgaria is the only country in the region that explicitly affirms that the priorities in cultural cooperation (after 1989) are both with Western Europe and the Balkan region: "bilateral cultural relations with Balkan countries have a particular significance for the republic of Bulgaria", stressing however that the "foreign policy aim of Bulgaria today is to be a stabilizing factor in turbulent Balkans and insisting upon the fact that it is developing relations with

² Rupnik (1993), pg. 30.

³ Report produced in 2002 by ELIAMEP, the Bertelsmann Foundation and the Center for Applied Policy Research at the University of Munich ("The European Union and the Balkans/From stabilisation Process to Southeastern Enlargement"). Source: ECF/Amsterdam www.eurocult.org.

⁴ Leo Bodeianu, "The Russians again", poem, volume "Singular destinies", contemporary poets from Bassarabia, Cartier, Chisinau, 2003, translation by Cristina Cirstea.

⁵ Ilczuk (2001), pp. 75-77.

Greece, Turkey, Romania, and particularly actively with Albania", links which are only "threatened by the big financial challenges we face"⁶.

5/ In Hungary and Czechoslovakia the rise of a strong opposition to the Soviet ideological pressure was early very early, but this opposition was dearly paid. In exchange, countries gained some un-diminishing self-esteem and a **sense of resistance** to the diktats of the former Stalinist order¹.

6/ Last, but not least, Eastern Germany, which is rarely taken into consideration when usually discussing about the group of former Eastern "countries" had to deal not only with the Stalinist order, but also with the ghosts of fascism, war defeat, American and Russian occupation, tragic split in the heart of a Capital city... There was the "everlasting scar", witnessing of **the aching limit of the iron curtain**.

B. The importance of the institutional cultural system

Former exposed difference, not very visible from outside, translated between the 60s and the end of the 90s into real infrastructure variety and a different approach and attitude as far as the cultural goods and institutions of the former communist block were concerned.

What was common, though, was that art and culture (via institutions, people and art content) were the key ideological and propaganda instruments. Hence, all communist governments had a strong cultural agenda and the artistic and cultural community was regarded with attention and was given a high degree of legitimacy. Researchers like Polish Jaromir Jedlinski argue that the Polish communist regime had even an "open" attitude to cultural matters after 1956 and that Poland accordingly benefited of a "relative lack of isolation" from cultural events taking place in democratic states⁷. In an early report realized by the Council of Europe in 1993 as a result of a seminar concerning the transition in Central and Eastern Europe, all former communist countries share the image of a strongly developed institutional reality for culture by the just ended regimes. We can even observe that the importance of this institutional legacy is one of the key obstacles in the restructuring and rebuilding of new artistic and cultural enterprises in the region after 1989. To support this, in an interview realized by Adam Michnik with Vaclav Havel in 1991, the latter says: "the huge problem facing all former communist states is the legacy of gigantic public institutions, centralized and monolithic and a state administration apparatus filled with former regime's public functionaries"⁸.

The fact that intellectual and artistic dissidence was given an important place stands also as a proof of the conviction shared by all communist regimes that intelligentsia is capable to influence and break the ideological dogmas and, therefore, it has to be on one hand provided with means and, on the other, closely and attentively contained and controlled. The complicity and strong links between the secret services and the cultural and religious community in the former communist countries, the attentive and impressive quantity of "files" that

⁶ Bulgarian national report, English version, CoE, 1997, pg. 224.

⁷ Hungary in 1956 and the «Spring of Prague», in 1968.

⁸ "The strange post communist age", interview, published in "Restauratia de catifea" (The Velvet Restoration), Adam Michnik articles, Polirom Publishing House, Iasi, Romania, 2001.

artistic personalities had are equally witnessing of this truth. Timothy Garton Ash's⁹ publications about Poland, Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany or Romanian publication of the "White Securitate book" in 1998, as well as the French publication of "Le livre noir du communisme" and "Du communisme faisons table rase"(Courtois, ed Laffont, Paris) in 1999 and 2002 are only some of the written confessions on the issue.

C. How culture "functioned"

From an institutional point of view, the former communist regime parallels in a way Western European evolution after Second World War. While democratic Europe was «booming» with cultural equipment creation and pop culture was emerging together with the alternative culture movements of the 60s and the liberation and democratization movements of the seventies, central Europe also builds important cultural centers: theaters, museums, cultural centers for the young, arenas for artistic galas, exclusive houses for writers and painters or congress houses for multidisciplinary artistic activities to keep people busy.

A real industry of the cultural animators is born in order to take over these new spaces and administrate them in the name of the state, the state being the main executive arm of the communist party's ideology. A high level «cultural nomenclature» appears; ready to enjoy privileges usually reserved to the happy few of the political nomenclature. Theater and museum directors are often high level communist party activists and politically engaged artists benefit of a very special status in exchange of an ideologically correct behavior.

Appropriate education systems are also provided. The administrators of the cultural centers and all artistic animators and mediators are attentively chosen from the "healthy elements" of the young party administration and their level of competence has to join a level of political correctness to the party's rules. Specialization in cultural mediation starts to be introduced from early stages of primary and secondary education and in former Yugoslavia¹⁰ for example, real manuals of cultural mediation are realized for high schools or specialized technical professional colleges. Starting from the early eighties, the same in Romania or Poland, where the specialization for cultural activities was only accessible if it provided well "trained" and also politically apt graduates.

Cultural markets do not exist and the cultural consumption is the prisoner of the centralized system. What a theater would produce is automatically sold to the factory workers, students, pupils, etc; in the same time, tickets are at very low prices, because the artistic institutions are all public, state subsidized.

However, this situation will change at the beginning of the eighties. The economic collapse of over- centralized administration gives its first signs. Communist economies are blocked by the falsification of the economic results, over industrialization and the complete lack of any liberal market oriented, competitive, regulation. Non productive activities, like arts and education, suffer a radical dilution of their important subsidies. At the same moment, the rest of the industrialized world faces intense market liberalization, touching all economical systems, and producing the first important mutation from the status quo of the

⁹ Ash, Timothy, Garton, "The File", Romanian version published by ed Humanitas, Bucharest, 1999, pg. 25 ("what did the 345 pages of my file look as compared to the 40000 pages of the singer Wolf Bierman").

¹⁰ Dragicevic-Sesic (2001).

post second world war economical model of growth. It is the moment when the consequences of the transition from the “welfare state” (protecting and ensuring existence of cultural goods) to the “enabling state” (producing opportunities for cultural goods to develop autonomously)¹¹ are becoming obvious. Art will have to bring income, the money issue becoming a crucial one for the survival of the cultural institution. The eighties are the years of Thatcherism in Britain and of the Meyerscough study about the “economic impact of the arts” (1988). Culture has to be market accountable and this approach gains large legitimacy even beyond the borders of the Western block.

In URSS, the end of the eighties is the starting point of “glasnost” and “perestroika”. Countries under soviet influence respond directly to the strong reformatory vague, touching largely, of course, to the media and the cultural goods. For reasons formerly analyzed, this state of facts is approached differently by each of the central and eastern European communist states: while Hungary and Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia develop quickly a mixed system of flexible small organizations dedicated to artistic activities and functioning in parallel to the public ones, Poland and Romania, as well as Albania or Bulgaria have problems in redistributing the roles of cultural operators and render their functioning financially more fluid and less bureaucratic.

The result is, however, in both cases, a global picture with more and more economical misbalance dedicated to the artistic good as such. In some situations (Albania, Romania, Baltic States, Moldavia), only ideological art benefits by the end of the communist regime of correct production and distribution material conditions, because this is the art that one can easily present as a necessity, while cultural goods have to find ways and means to be produced. On the other hand, this aspect of reduced or redirected public subsidy parallels in this same case the emergence of a highly double meaning kind of artistic forms and an age of ‘interpretation’ and hidden “artistic message” sees the light. Artistic value becomes synonymous with “secret meaning with political dimension” and no playwright or writer or musician who would not be a producer of socialist realist works creates anything else but parables about the communist order and its traumatic touch on human behavior.

In Poland, expenditure for culture raises between 1982 and 1989 from 1.25% to 1.81% as the result of the creation of a public “Fund of development for culture”, so necessary in order to continue keep it under control¹². This country represents an exception as compared to the rest of the communist block.

In other cases (Hungary, Yugoslavia), cultural expenditure remains high from either public or private (!) sources (We find from the 2002 updated version of the “Compendium of cultural policies in Europe” that “up to 1989, in Hungary, “as a consequence of the weakening of the communist system, public resources are gradually depleted and parallel to the withdrawal of the political control, the state pulled out of subsidizing culture as well. In the 1980s the commercialization of culture moved ahead, and the Soros Foundation of Hungary obtained an important role in the emerging vacuum of finances”)¹³.

¹¹ Ilczuk, idem, pg. 93.

¹² Cultural policies in Europe, a compendium of basic facts and trends, ERICarts, Council of Europe, www.culturalpolicies.net/profiles/poland.

¹³ Compendium, idem, Hungary.

D. Profile and characteristics of communist cultural administration: The heavy past of future transformations

Previously exposed observations bring us to formulate the following synthetic map of characteristics describing the former communist states cultural administrative landscape; their listing might help us interpret the post communist attitude versus cultural institutions, the cultural administration and to the design of cultural policy in the region:

- **Administrative CENTRALIZATION and UNIQUE FUNDING SOURCE**

The fact that all cultural infrastructures are public (state subsidized and administrated) and the fact that the state administration is not only the implementer of cultural measures, but the promoter and implementers of communist policy, undermines all kind of autonomously determined artistic or cultural initiatives. The consequences follow:

- ⇒ Artists and cultural operators get used to a totally subsidized institutional system, but also to a very conservative kind of cultural production, geared to praise the legitimated patriotic values and well established artistic forms. They get used to be totally assisted. And content wise, conservative and nationalistic.
- ⇒ The emergence of contemporary artistic creativity is weak or isolated no young artists with original but catalyzing ideas and no art which is not politically acceptable is produced or, if produced, is not promoted. Cultural exchange and artistic cooperation are also all politically controlled, so that foreign Western influences are only accessible clandestinely. Or, if accessible, they have to come from countries within the communist block.
- ⇒ The institutional aspect of cultural equipment suffers generally of gigantism and infrastructure overweight. Theaters are state theaters and insure production, promotion, distribution... all is done in house; the same with museums, opera houses, public television, national cinema industry. The cultural infrastructures created are massive, numerous and stiff, genuine «black holes» of cost effectiveness and even, as proved very soon, of any kind of effectiveness.

- **EXTREME CONSERVATISM of forms and contents AND IDEOLOGICAL CONTROL**

A strong dependence links the political and the artistic life and culture is the instrument of ideological propaganda via its institutions, mediators and artistic manifestations. The state is power, the power is communist power and the communist power creates its club of commanded praise givers. Culture and ideology and culture and media are included in the same institutional framework and the same administration censures the ideological content of both.

Nothing is left at random and in the rare dissident voices raised are easy to stop or contain as no state facility is open to them and therefore their voice remains isolated and weak. The secret service apparatus takes care that some uncontrolled "voices" do not become too loud. Examples: In Bulgaria, "starting with early 50s, the system of state cultural institutions is fully established each element of this system is hierarchically subordinated and subject to dual State and Communist party control".

In Poland "the principles of cultural policy are created by both the Ministry of Culture and Arts and the cultural division of the central committee of the Polish

communist party”¹⁴. The same is true for Albania and Romania, more so for Moldavia, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania. Yugoslavia, Hungary and Czechoslovakia support a milder regime from this point of view, which seems in itself a paradox. It is also true that in the post communist period these are the spots of quicker innovation at institutional and artistic level.

As direct consequences of the above analyzed aspect:

- ⇒ The development of a vicious relation between the artist and the power. Used to be assisted and accepted or not but also needful to express himself, the artist is the first prisoner of the regime’s ideological dogmatism and becomes, without even knowing, the promoter and protector of ideological values he is contaminated with.
- ⇒ Notions like copyright or sponsorship are absent from the cultural vocabulary and from cultural legislation, even in what cultural industries are concerned. Everything is dealt with at an obscure and high political level, these notions remain a terra incognita for the medium cultural operators in communist countries.
- ⇒ The relationship between the artist and the public is alienated; creators create for institutional, ideological or personal needs, they are not responding to any challenge audience-wise and therefore artists gradually forget whom they are really producing art for.
- ⇒ Artistic sectors only generally accept the traditional art forms; contemporary visual art, contemporary dance or music do not have specific institutional infrastructures to encourage creation. On the other hand, becoming aware of a risk of frustration from the young, the communist power allows strong “folk” movements and autochthonous rock groups - this being the only kind of nontraditional form of artistic expression.

This apparently free spot is in reality fulfilling a very important socio-educative role. Young were persuaded they are given a space of expression and were not aware that this illusion even better contained all their potential dissident energies and canalized in a controlled way, again, any genuinely creative or innovative potential tendencies; this was an ideal way for the system to create its own counterbalance and dissolve any sense of opposition.

One could comment, of course, that some of the above listed situations might occur also in democratic Western states with centralized systems, where culture and politics are interrelated and often culture and media become a key political instrument. The very important difference is, however, that the economical control provided by exclusive public subsidy was doubled in the case of former communist states by ideological censorship of the cultural offer itself (only politically correct cultural projects saw the light and could be presented to the audience). Thus, the market basic logic of “offer and demand” was twice distorted. Once, by the existence of an exclusive public subsidy (no liberal market logic possible for institutions or artists/no free arbiter operating), second, by the censorship applied to cultural offer (the criteria of personal choice was not accorded spontaneously to the consumer, his cultural consumption was in itself controlled).

¹⁴ Compendium, idem, ibidem.

● **ISOLATION and EMERGENCE OF THE “ARTIFICIAL” cultural VALUES**

Because of the conservative and unilateral approach on one hand and as a direct result of the melting boundaries between ideology and culture and culture and media, the former socialist states were completely isolated “from world trends in both artistic and managerial sense”¹⁵:

- ⇒ No values or artistic forms that came from the outer world were considered as acceptable (African, Asian, Mediterranean, Arab... art are still today completely unknown to the large community of Eastern Europe intellectuals and therefore their initiation in artistic and cultural diversity as a valuable enrichment of forms is extremely reduced).
- ⇒ A concept of “good culture” as opposed to “bad culture” slowly emerged, relevant to what can be or not accepted by the ideological structures and by censorship. This legacy will be one of the hardest to efface after 1989, as no new value referential comes to replace communist ideology ones and the use of this kind of mentality in judging upon aesthetic value engenders misleading attitudes, narrow minded strategies and distorted value judgment artistic movements. Examples of contemporary dance or contemporary art movements in Romania, Albania, Poland or Bulgaria and Croatia driven in order to gain Ministry of culture recognition are very telling from this perspective. It took 13 years since 1989 until respective Ministries accepted these new categories at the same level as classical theatre, Opera or Museum support¹⁶.
- ⇒ Related to this, a sense of artistic stagnation, a consolidation of “petrified cultural values” characterizes the creative spheres in all sectors of the artistic and cultural life. This status quo pattern will unfortunately prolong and block the process of transformation of mentality after communism ends; one will still find as generalized today within the intellectual communities a sense of outdated dissident attitude toward something that disappeared. Thus, established generations of intellectuals accept with difficulty to put the past behind and consider that this fight is over and that new generation will come with new values, which might be different than theirs, and therefore unacceptable.
- ⇒ In parallel, an artificially created category of so called traditional art sees the light; In Bulgaria and Romania, as well as in communist countries under Russian occupation (Baltic States, Moldova) so called genuine folklore products are, in fact, artificially “invented”. Communism had erased all individual rural property and replaced it with community farms. This new reality needed new artistic expression; folklore ensembles and singers wearing a mix of bad taste reconstituted “genuine” costumes start appearing with great regularity in all cultural manifestations and numerous broadcast are dedicated to the “new peasant”. The notion itself of “new man” is an interesting invention of former communist regimes. This legacy still haunts the image of the Balkans. It is very rarely known how much of it was one of the former regimes obsessions, aiming to induce to the population a sense of reinvented national roots, which only the communist regime revealed. This tendency went, of course, hand in hand

¹⁵ Dragicevic-Sesic, Milena, “Cultural Policy in Central and Eastern Europe”, Belgrade, 1997.

¹⁶ Consult the publications section, periodicals at www.policiesforculture.org, 2001- 2003.

with a total neglecting of the authentic traditional values and the ignorance or mistreat of all inherited community possessions¹⁷.

The previous observation shows to what extent isolation had two dimensions in the Eastern communist states: first from the Western world and the Western values and second from the inner genuine values and traditions. Both these types of isolation being replaced by propaganda: media propaganda, against capitalism (isolation from modern Western evolution) and cultural propaganda, against inherited old values (interior isolation by replacement with artificially created cultural “genuine”, “good”, traditional products).

It is no wonder why, after the collapse of communism, both these value categories were so needed by the social layers and why the drive to recuperate them took quickly the form of violent inner identity claim or, externally, the form of obsessive quick fix “internationalization” (only what Western cultures accepted and appreciated was considered valuable). It is also why the radical reshaping of the cultural framework should play a key role in the recovering process these communities are traversing today. Identity dilemmas can only be solved by cultural empowerment of communities, by rendering them their memory, but also the right to innovation and restoring thus the very central reference point that collapsed together with the communist order, rendering them confidence in their own capacity to resurrect¹⁸.

- **THE LACK OF REGULATORS/ THE ABSENCE OF THE BOTTOM UP APPROACH / The third sector Gap**

The unilaterality of the situation described above (over centralized, state subsidized exclusively, ideological censorship, isolation from informal exchange) brings us to one of the most important characteristics of cultural administration during communism: its lack of regulators and, consequently, of a bottom up, autonomous third sector approach.

Liberal competition of cultural goods via the market is non existent. Pure competition between spontaneous creative entities is censored and controlled via the state. These results in a space of cultural existence where there is no counterbalance and a “hegemonic” approach to creation takes over (see the paternalistic refusal of the new forms, the cultural stagnation, and the lack of innovative spaces). Consequences will prove dramatic:

- ⇒ The idea of a third sector or of small legal bodies managing cultural goods is absent from the cultural community vocabulary.
- ⇒ Legislation for the funding and the creation of thirds sector juridical entities does not exist. Public bodies do not imagine support for autonomous cultural operators and difficultly imagine they can be allowed without state permission and validation of content of activities. Artists themselves from older generations despise as petty and irrelevant for the “good culture” the third sector potential operators.
- ⇒ Young and more flexible cultural mediators do not understand how to use NGOs and what are the legal instruments capable to make this work; last but

¹⁷ Dragicevic-Sesic, M. Dragoevic, Sanjin, Nada Svob-Docic, Pavicevic, Borka, various Policies for Culture papers commissioned in 2003. Gabriel Liiceanu, lecture to MA students in inter-Balkan mediation from the University of Arts in Belgrade, Bucharest, 2003.

¹⁸ Suteu, Corina, “La ruine doctrinaire”, in the volume “La pierre angulaire”, ed, Universitaire Fribourg, 2001

not least, they do not understand the real space of empowerment of these civil society structures, because they have not learnt to deal with autonomy.

⇒ Liberal market regulation is understood in absolute terms, thing which will engender after the fall of communism a misuse of the market logic and the installment of a "savage" liberal attitude, the complete opposite of centralized, state regulated cultural reality.

⇒ Huge inertia, so characteristic for all top down post communist societies, finds its root in this aspect.

In her comprehensive study about "Cultural Citizenship"¹⁹, Polish researcher Dorothea Ilczuk shows that it is only gradually and starting between 1995 and 1998 that countries in Central and Eastern Europe take concrete administrative measures proving that government started to understand the importance of the civil society in what researcher calls "the democratization of cultural policies in the region". Researcher's comparative examples are extensive and use countries from all Eastern typologies (Hungary, Poland, Latvia), but also from Western Europe (UK, Germany, Finland).

2. AFTER THE FALL:

CULTURAL STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF POST COMMUNIST REALITY

If we insisted to list the previous characteristics this is because they largely illuminate the understanding of the difficult and contradictory processes that determine the present state of cultural policy design in Central and Eastern Europe. Or, to put it otherwise, it was in order to reveal that the reason for the post communist difficult transition in reshaping the cultural institutional, administrative and legislative framework lies very much not only in the violence and radicalism of the change, as well as in its speed, but in the persistent and inertial solidity of the former systemic organization of culture that communism has created and installed for forty years. Post communist immediate reality added supplementary criteria. They are:

Position of country between Western Europe and Russia/ Tutoring resilience

From this point of view, we consider what can be called two "bridging countries": Poland and Romania. Territorially and population wise they are the biggest. Romania is Latin, orthodox and neighbours the Balkans. Poland is catholic, Slavic and neighbors Northern Europe. The in-between position of these countries reveals their significance if we regard the great importance of the "tutoring aspects" related to transition. If we were to parallel Boris Cyrulnik's²⁰ theory about how the human psyche needs what he calls resilience tutors ("tutors de resilience" in French original) in order to gain back the generic shape and normality, this could be translated to the post communist countries reality by the existence or not of these tutors identified, able to accompany and assist the transition phenomenon and help democratic values to develop. The more Western Europe will be close, the quickest the resiliency process will take place. The closest to the Russians and

¹⁹ Ilczuk (2001).

²⁰ Boris Cyrulnik is the author of the «theory of resilience». Recent publications on the subject: "Le vilain petit canard", "Le murmure des fantômes", Odile Jacob ed., Paris, 2000 & 2003.

the Balkan tensions, the slowest the recovering. We will observe the different speed of reforms and of their efficiency in Hungary as compared to Bulgaria, of the Moldavian part of Romania (close to Russia) as compared to the Banat region of the same country (neighbouring Hungary and close to Austria). We will notice the important tutoring process applied to Baltic States by the Nordic countries and, to Croatia and Slovenia, by their neighbouring to Austria and Italy. We can conclude by saying the Eastern Europe is still today in the resilience process, but the accompanying methods are not always adapted, despite the real wish of the «patient» to recover completely.

Size of territory and population/ Radical versus gradual reform

From this point of view, the territorially big countries (bridging ones/ Romania, Poland) will have more difficulties in translating their policies in the territory, therefore the radical measures that Slovenia (small) or Hungary (medium small) could take for reforms have to be more gradual for Romania (medium big) or Poland (big). Hence, while the former started to implement rather effectively the privatization and decentralization processes (already starting 1991) the latter had a first radical attempt (1991-1993), formalized in legislation measures, but the reality drew them back to a gradual and step by step approach (revised legislation starting with 1998 up to 2003)²¹.

Historical and local factors

Religion

We will observe that the religious split between Catholic and Orthodox had a subtle, but strong effect immediately after the fall of communism, approaching almost immediately the catholic countries from the former communist regime to their natural cultural community: the catholic countries from the West. In the case of Romania, its Latinity and strong cultural affinity to France plays more or less the same role, but impact is much less important. Muslim population in Albania and former Yugoslavia, because of their isolation, suffer also more of a slowed down recovery to a Western type of democratic order²².

Border changes/ Rebuilding on moving sands

The Eastern Germany and the Yugoslav case are particular. Re-composition of societies in the first case joining the “Western brother”, in the latter, by explosion of borders and ethnic chaos did not help to the ease administrative stabilization if not, in the case of Germany, via a “forced” reconciliation that left many frustrations unsolved and, in the Yugoslav case, by UN war that only formally put order and engaged stabilization processes at a political and administrative level.

Culturally, these societies did not yet recover and were belated in solving their post communist identity crisis. It is still the case. Moldova could also be considered inside this category - its no-man-land syndrome (wish to join Romania and impossibility to do so) the inherent Russian already installed “spirit” engendered a strong inertial nostalgia; the country remained stuck between a foreign administration and a desperate need to spiritually regain its roots.

²¹ Sources: Compendium, Policies for Culture, Evaluations by Council of Europe, national and international reports.

²² In her book, “Imagining the Balkans” (1997), researcher Maria Todorova is extensively developing an explanation about the importance of the coexistence of the different religions within the region and how this influences the relation with Western Europe.

Time/ TIME OF ARTISTS versus “Bureaucratic Time”

Making a recapitulation of the aims of cultural cooperation, Raymond Weber is naming five: “reconciliation, reciprocal recognition, creation of a common discourse, imagining common solutions, awareness awaking of multicultural challenges”. He is underlining that “while in Western Europe these values had the time to develop and install during half a century, the Western community is waiting from Central and Eastern Europe to acquire them in only some years”²³. In the same spirit, researcher Milena Dragicevic quotes Ralph Dahrendorf saying that while political change of post communist countries can be achieved in six months, economical change in six years, cultural change²⁴ needs 60 years to be achieved. The researcher adds: “this is because the cultural change implies change in the scale of values”.

Director of the alternative space *La belle de mai* in France is speaking about the “time of artists” as compared to the “bureaucratic time” and Milan Kundera ponders in his “Intimate journal” that the only thing that will remain from Europe will not be its “repetitive factual history”, which has no value in itself, but the history of its arts”, because art is not the “Orpheum, accompanying History’s March” but art creates its own history, at its own pace, and this is the only history that counts”²⁵.

These largely shared opinions stress to what extent the time factor has to be taken into account in the impressive mutation taking place culturally during the post communist period. The measure of a successful transformation being not as much the political reforms and their bureaucratic shape, but the genuine reinvention of artistic forms. To put it otherwise, the reconstruction of cultural identities of post communist societies has to be identified in the rhythm of artistic resurrection.

To conclude this part, the generic characteristic traits of cultural administration, and accordingly, the policy measures dedicated to culture in the region will accordingly deal with societies that are:

On the negative:

- Not prepared to the free market logic, the third sector logic and modernity or alternative art forms.
- Free market applies savagely, not always being accompanied with an understanding of democratic values that have to complete it for the social welfare and balance.
- The socio-economical order of communism once broken, new socio-economical links are hastily and chaotically rebuilt, and this hurried drive makes them unreliable and misbalanced.
- Civil society, weak and ideologically contaminated, is fragile to other forms of propaganda (be it ultra liberal or ultra nationalistic) because all reference points disappeared.
- Used to lack of information, passive attitude remains present in looking for data or getting informed.

²³ Weber (2000).

²⁴ Dragicevic-Sesic (1999).

²⁵ Milan Kundera, “Intimate journal”, excerpts in *Le monde*, 4 July, 2001.

On the positive:

- Societies ready for growth, their attitude is immediate response.
- International exchange is a deep need; cultural cooperation grows naturally and almost in geometric progression.

An all potentiality dimension is very present at a social level (Romanian philosopher Gabriel Liiceanu explained that post communist societies have the luck to still live in a "potential" world, so different from the "saturated" Western reality)²⁶. The preservation of universal traditional values via a profoundly multilateral, although conservative education and the absence of other leisure possibilities than reading, listening to classical music, consuming theatre and opera.

3. THE WAY FORWARD

*Evolution and perspectives of Cultural policy in Central and Eastern Europe /
Between "wishful thinking and realpolitik"*

It is hard to regularize and therefore comprehensibly formalize the exact behavior of processes that influenced more or less directly the last 14 years cultural policy design in the region. Some of the factors are internal and inherent to the region history and geography (we had significantly insisted upon them previously). Some other factors are purely administrative legacies of former regime, related to the logic of change (too many cultural governments were relayed in eastern Europe), the cultural administration could not be immediately replaced and culture was immediately after 1990 put in a secondary position on all governmental agendas, the rest of the economic and social immediate priorities seeming more important and culture being too much assimilated to power. Also, the state was in crisis and the degree of it being representative and legitimate authorities took years to recover in the eyes of the community. One would still consider the Ministries of culture are THE guilty bodies for everything lacking in the cultural sector (going from legislation to salaries and from institutional disorder to degree of funding; very few cultural operators consider the finance ministry or the social affairs ministry responsible, or the lack of civil initiatives, or the incompetence of the cultural commissions in the parliament, etc).

We observe that the effort provided by all Eastern European countries cultural communities at political and civil level was immense, in spite of time lack and difficulties, the wish for recuperation, rebuilding, and rejoining democratic values was immense. From this perspective, Western Europe often failed to give the right long term awaited response and to prove, accordingly, the understanding of the real significance of this effort.

Let us look now into group of characteristics that have shaped the phases of Central European transition and remodeling of cultural institutions during the past fourteen years²⁷.

²⁶ Gabriel Liiceanu, idem.

²⁷ Part of these remarks were reproduced from the material prepared for the Salzburg Seminar "Cultural institutions in transition", April 2002, available online at http://www.ecumest.ro/sem_publ.htm.

The cultural institution

The primary phase characteristics could be described as:

1. Chaotic and sudden shift from cultural existence to cultural production. Artists and intellectuals, librarians and museum curators in Eastern Europe discovered the "cultural product" they could provide and, more importantly, sell. Of the private publishing houses, music companies, small theater companies, journals, and audiovisual studios that emerged immediately after 1990, 80% of them no longer exist today.²⁸
2. A look toward Western Europe for approval and legitimacy of cultural projects, rather than from within the region. Between 1990 and 1994, no tours of theater companies or exchanges of exhibitions took place bilaterally East-East, unless initiated from the West. Even now, exclusive East-East artistic exchange is rare.
3. Search for new ready-made managerial models, capable of solving the complicated problems transition started to put forward, and unlimited *trust* in a sort of utopian, "holistic," "Western managerial model," which didn't take into account the fundamental differences between arts and culture administration in, for example, France with its strong state subsidies and central funding, and Great Britain with its arm's length principle, scarce state subsidy, liberal accountancy, and assessment-oriented cultural policy.
4. Need for basic competence in management know-how techniques, capacity to respond to the new marketing and cost efficient approaches toward culture, which were supposed to be radically promoted after 1990.

This "alphabetization" with managerial challenges of culture-in-transition lasted for three to five years, but developed at different rhythms in each country, according to the criteria and historical contexts mentioned above.

The second phase could be described as a repercussion of the first: a market for culture was appearing, but was far from providing self-sustainability as ensured by state support, and also far from enabling the preservation and development of "mammoth like" cultural infrastructures that communism created and fully supported financially. Even if managerial solutions were found, legislative and infrastructure re-organization was a must, together with more sophisticated management and communication skills of cultural leaders, who were obliged to "function" within a dysfunctional system and to face recurrent crisis management situations.

Last but not least, this second phase brought about awareness of the fact that creating new institutions is easier than transforming the old inherited ones. But solutions had to be devised for these as well, and whatever these solutions would be, the "delicate" issue of excess human resources had to be dealt with eventually.

Two examples: "Arch Theater" in Prague was created out of a transformation of a repertory theater of the City Municipality. The transformation took place between 1994-1997. When the new theater opened, the Municipality took over the responsibility of disposing of the inherited artistic personnel and gave *carte blanche* to the new director to create and program for an international venue.

²⁸ Cf. National Report of Cultural Policy Evaluation Program, Council of Europe; Policies for Culture documents, ECF/ECUMEST (1998-2002).

Still, this remained a unique and courageous example of institutional transformation never repeated, neither in the Czech Republic nor elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

In another case, the late Minister of Culture in Romania, who was an actor, after having militated for the change of repertory theaters when he was an independent Union Leader, decided to preserve the old structural organization when arriving in power in 1996; a national inquiry resulted in the impossibility to change the system before any social security legislation was implemented for the protection of artists. Which of these two options was the best? This is a difficult question, but one is tempted to say both and neither. The conclusions that emerge for this second phase include:

a) The ambiguous character of the decision-making process regarding the cultural institution and the status of the artist within Eastern European societies. If transformation has to be done, then responsibility has to be borne at the political level. This transformation requires, however, existing social assistance measures, without which any radical change, done with maximum efficiency for the institution as such, can provoke dramatic human consequence. There are few success stories about institutional conversion.

b) State-subsidized cultural infrastructures in most Eastern European countries have employees for whom professional re conversion is impossible. For example, in 1997, "there were still more than 680 repertory theater companies of all disciplines in Eastern and Central Europe, employing more than 55,000 artistic, technical and administrative staff"²⁹. The situation is more or less the same for museums and state galleries, concert halls or regional cultural centers.

The current and third phase is, one could say, the least entertaining. The image of a "golden Western solution" fades away, and a keen awareness emerges about the impossibility of conducting efficient management without reliable institutional infrastructures, a long-term perspective of development, and competent local and national policy-makers and legislators who understand these constraints on cultural institutions. After having implemented, for example, the Dutch cultural policy model in Hungary and having been inspired by a number of French laws on cultural heritage and decentralization in Romania and Poland, the organizations that were functioning within these borrowed patterns still had to adapt to the local context and to the economic limitations of transition, quite different from their potentials for efficiency in a Western context. The democratic change in governments brought about a simple but dramatic issue: no important institutional measure or orientation outlived the mandate of a Minister. In Romania, Ministries changed 10 times in 14 years, in Bulgaria 8 times, and in Poland 16 times over the same period. The ongoing changes of public servants in charge of the cultural sector weakened even more the capacity for developing diverse and stable cultural institutional profiles.

● **Cultural policies after 1990: a "logic of paradoxes"**

Emergent cultural policies immediately after 1990 are subject to a contradictory logic from an administrative, legislative and strategic point of view. It generally seems that the very notion of "cultural policy" looks complicated and blurry to the post communist cultural administration. The only thing that used to be done was to implement measures that were coherent with the communist party political will and give them cultural existence. There was no "cultural policy" as such. Now,

²⁹ Klaic (1997).

there had to be one. This might partly explain the deep contradictory climate that the first endeavors to design policies for culture had to face.

First paradox: administrative

The legacy of mammoth like cultural equipment (theater, opera houses and museums) are to continue to be state administrated but have to answer a liberal market logic and become cost efficient. The role of the state is dismissed and suspect, but it has to go on providing for heavy and unproductive institutions.

The result is that, still in 1997, there are 680 repertory theaters in Eastern Europe, employing 55 000 people, for example³⁰. The state preferred preserving survival and does not invest in restructuring. Or, at the opposite pole, in Czech Republic, considers that "cultural policy is a communist invention" and radically privatizes all state equipment without really attentively considering the good and bad consequences of this³¹.

Second paradox: legislative

The legislation of former regime has to be redone (which takes years and is dependent on parliament vote), but implementation of new legislation has to be quick and effective.

This will result in rapid legislative measures related to the audiovisual sector (the only one taken into consideration for as chapter for EU accession process) and neglecting of Performing arts or fine arts legislation. But also endless discussion about the needfulness of a theater law (Romania, Poland, Bulgaria) heritage legislation, sponsorship law, etc – the dramatic aspect being that each new government wanted to contradict the former and also that today the reality moves so fast that laws need to be adapted even before they finished their approval way via all the legitimated instances³².

Third paradox: strategic / order of priorities

Two different groups of dominant values compose the Eastern European social body³³ - a drive for modernity as opposed to preservation of national traditions, but eastern societies also differ according to the type of socio-cultural-historical legacy of the respective country, if it was the result of a more urban, industrialized type or of a more rural, traditional, one: "The burden of conservative social values such as authoritarianism, egalitarianism have been much more heavy among Slovak and Serbs than among Czechs and Slovenians, for example"³⁴. To this adds the contradictory post communist drive, on one hand to restore and preserve national identity, on the other to open to European, multilateral, modern international values.

These results in the range of a large choice of options and priority actions in what cultural policies are concerned. The Council of Europe international expert evaluations will show thus that in Romania, Bulgaria or Albania strong support will be given by governments to heritage and weak to contemporary art. Less conservative, Hungary and Slovenia will encourage emergence of new artistic forms. Poland will dedicate special attention to rebuilding bilateral cultural

³⁰ Klaic, idem.

³¹ Dragicevic, idem, pg. 7.

³² Virgil Nitulescu, "Cultural policies in Romania – an inside view", 2002, available online at www.policiesforculture.org under e-library.

³³ Dragicevic, idem.

³⁴ Dragicevic, idem.

cooperation links with specific Western countries and Croatia will encourage strongly cultural tourism. All these strategic choices are rooted in the subtle but deep socio cultural legacy (older than the communist ideological one). What is however to be observed is that this kind of cultural and social heritage can and will very often take also conservative and closed forms in spite of the declared aim of modernization and openness.

Former listed categories of contradictions (paradoxes) could be regarded also as a positive duality and as productive challenges in the design of an “inclusive” kind of cultural policy paradigm in the region, very much resembling to a laboratory, where not all experiments succeed, but they are essential steps to further successful and gratifying ones³⁵.

Key orientations in the coming years

The Compendium of basic facts and trends helps us compare the different ways central and eastern European countries define their future action in cultural policy. We find out, for example, that Hungary affirms not to have any specific official definition for culture and that cultural policy in Hungary is described as **pragmatic** (« absence of basic official documents ») and **dual** (« ideological divide characterizing the post communist period and incapacity to « shelter culture » from political and ideological influences)³⁶.

For Bulgaria, the description of culture and its domain is more quantitative and the main orientations of cultural policy are listed more under the form of long term scopes than organized around two or three focused action principles.

For Poland, «the official definition for culture is still under debate and cultural policy orientations are clearly designed more in a sense of response to dominating models, than in the «pragmatic», Hungarian one: «Poland has the ambition to find its own policy model rather than merely replicating established models and solutions from Western European countries». These three quoted examples are emblematic for the understanding of the main orientations of cultural policy regionally. Some countries chose the pragmatic, some the linear, quantitative, some the conservative way. But all three categories had to engage in the policy measures we will list bellow:

Privatization and Decentralization

If we treat these two cultural policy measures together it is because their aim was similar. The state crisis of the post communist period translated in two dynamics towards « lesser state »: *decentralizing dynamic*, thus « empowering » the margins and *privatizing dynamic*, thus « des-empowering » the state economically. But this drive proved to be more of a « wishful thinking » than of a pragmatic solution for the too numerous and too heavy cultural organization in the region as well as for the not yet stabilized and reliable new order of economic transition.

The Croatian researcher Vjeran Katunaric develops a highly interesting three dimensional approach to the **decentralization** process and its link to the **privatization of culture**³⁷. He assumes there are: a titanic model (reduction of central competencies and delegation to local authority of these competencies concerning some of the cultural operators, while the national ones remain protected), the « balancing burdens model », which encourages, via the local

³⁵ See the “potential world” Liiceanu is speaking about.

³⁶ Source: Compendium, Hungary.

³⁷ Katunaric, research paper commissioned by Policies for Culture, 2003, “Methodology for comparative research on cultural policy decentralization in SEEurope: objectives, instruments, practices”, available online at www.policiesforculture.org under e-library.

responsibility a split financing private/public for the cultural institution and the « new public culture » model, that encourages local partnership between culture and other sectors at local level. Katunaric theory has the great merit to underline to what extent the decentralization logic is , for central Europe, a way to modern cultural governance, but also represents the risk, as he says « of an instrument(policy instrument n.r.) that turn culture back to pre national past, or a channel through which public culture disappears into the black hole of global trade and market, in which, nevertheless, the old democracies and their culture, unlike new democracies and their cultures, still gain more than they loose. »³⁸

Both processes were initiated largely and immediately by cultural governments in the Central and Eastern block and could be better implemented by Hungary, The Czeck Republic, Slovenia and Croatia (even though at different time intervals). Of course that structural resistance existed everywhere.

For **decentralization**, as already showed before, the same policy initiatives were launched by Romania and Poland in a first phase(election of local councils in Poland in 1990, but decentralization reforms passed in Parliament only in 1998/1999³⁹ - Romania started decentralization first in 1990, knew are centralizing tendency in 1994 and completed the decentralization process starting with year 2001 to our days⁴⁰ , but the process had to become a gradual one, because delegation of decision making at regional level or privatization of heavy cultural infrastructures implied legislation and competent leadership management, which was totally lacking in 1991, 1993. The transition from bureaucratic administration to autonomous leadership and cost effective management could not be done overnight when all infra structural or human capital was lacking. Poland and Romania had also to engage a process at bigger size and deal with the degree of capacity and will of local and regional public authorities to support existing cultural infrastructures. Because of the general lack of local and regional know how in strategic thinking, it is only starting with the 2000 that these notions earned visibility and understanding at local levels. European Cultural Foundation and ECUMEST project Policies for culture had an important role in it (see local strategy of Timisoara, Arad, Plovdiv), but also Council of Europe projects (Mozaic training on decentralization and local cultural policy in Croatia and Bulgaria) or French and British agencies initiatives dedicated to the revitalization of regional and municipal cultural centers⁴¹. Slovenian case shows that despite successful implementation, too small territorial entities are today unable to support their cultural infrastructures and see themselves obliged to find a survival compromise (Vesna Copic).

Baltic countries, inspired by the local autonomy model of Nordic countries but also driven by a self mobilized modernization need succeeded better in this reorganization, given, as underlined before, also their territorial small or medium size and a will to oppose all decentralizing model. (Still, the process of complete delegation of autonomy to the local authority is not today completely achieved)

Also, in Romania, Albania, Poland, Bulgaria and the Baltic States no mixed, or at least half autonomous structural entities existed before 1989. Therefore, the force

³⁸ Katunaric, idem.

³⁹ Ilczuck (2000), pg 77.

⁴⁰ Nitulescu, idem.

⁴¹ EUCLID in Bulgaria/ 2000, Cultural French Institute in Serbia 2000, Pro Helvetia in Romania 2001.

of example of some municipalities was important to show the way in developing strong local cultural policies, but their strategic vision only came very lately.⁴²

Even though **privatization** was better achieved in Hungary or Czech Republic, many private cultural enterprises were done with foreign capital, which had positive, but also negative consequence. The privatization of the Timisoara opera house, proposed by an American Foundation, did not succeed because the Romanian government was reluctant to entrust completely this institution to a foreign American funded foundation. An example of successful privatization could be the Humanitas publishing House in Romania, or the « Van Kraal » theater in Estonia ⁴³. On one hand, these cases are isolated, on the other they also witness today (after 13 years of what one can consider as very successful) of lack of public support to evolve and grow and huge difficulties to keep going financially and ensuring in the same time the quality of the activity.

A Romanian daily journal like Cotidianul in Romania or Gazette Wyborcza in Poland can afford independent opinions precisely because the supporting capital is entirely foreigner and because they are private. The reality is more complex than a superficial overview would like to accept.

Seen as the two pillars of state authority disempowerment and, consequently, as the dynamic vectors for the reshape of a multi centric system of cultural policy, relying on regional and local authorities, decentralization and privatization remain, as we see, highly controversial. It seems, though, that if implemented by taking into account the necessary complementary administrative measures and by correctly communicating at the level of cultural operators and local civil servants this aim as well as by respecting the long time needed for a gradual implementation, these two processes, regulated by the central authority, can be the issue from a permanentization of the institutional crisis in culture.

A sector by sector perspective- priority spots and legislation euphoria

A cursory reading of the cultural sector legislation during the post communist period will show that the audiovisual had priority, together with heritage and the gradual creation of what we will call with a generic term « national cultural funds » (1993 in Hungary, 1994 in Estonia, 1998 in Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and 1999 in Bulgaria...), usually complemented by laws on sponsorship and copyright (source: Policies for Culture, Nitulescu, Varbanova). Some sectors, like heritage are more privileged and protected by law also in the decentralization or privatization process than others (ex: performing arts, book selling). Some countries took more adapted legislative measures than others (Croatia abolished the value added taxes for books and the book industry exploded⁴⁴, Romania added taxes and created immense problems to the book industry⁴⁵).

We have to observe that eastern European cultural community discovered « the power » of legislation and immediately idealized it, strongly believing that reforms are going to be forced if laws are going to be created. But the long period of time that the passing of the law requested, completed by a generalized tendency to avoid their implementation (even when they were passed finally) by making profit of the general chaotic and unstable post communist situation rendered cultural legislation a tough and controversial item of concern for legislators, public

⁴² Consult the action projects section at www.policiesforculture.org.

⁴³ Klaic (1997).

⁴⁴ Lidia Varbanova, PfC research on "Financing Cultural Practices in South East Europe", 2003, available online under e-library at www.policiesforculture.org.

⁴⁵ Liiceanu, idem.

administrators and common operators. What generally was not understood was that legislation is not enough as such and it has to be accompanied by other administrative reformatory measures as well as by a sense of understanding the role and place of the legislation process by the civil society cultural levels. In Bulgaria, during the last ten years, there are 10 cultural laws adopted, among which, law for copyright, law for cultural community centers, law for preservation and development of culture, but « because of absence of public debate, consulting and advises on the practical use of legislation, majority of cultural managers and artists in the country do not use it in their practical work. Most cultural operators still believe that the lack of laws is stopping administrative changes and even though this is in a certain measure true, laws can only be instrumental to human reformatory action.

A second important observation in this respect would be that many governments initiated cultural legislation that was immediately dismantled by successors, with no regard and respect of the process of stability and organicity, so necessary to the gradual recovering of the institutional cultural landscape. The need for an intelligent and pragmatic cultural administration and its capacity to put political pragmatism before ideological conflict is more than ever reflected in this kind of internal fragilisation by continual restructuring of engaged long term administrative recovering processes.

Funding for the independent cultural sector/ strengthening the cultural civil society

The independent sector appeared slowly and, according to Dorothea Ilczuk's study quoting American comparative findings, civil sector in post communist Eastern Europe was pro-cultural⁴⁶. Still, funding this sector proves problematic (see the « lack of civil regulators in communist societies ») and also the late adoption of the almost generalized « fund for culture » by the governments in the region.

This will leave the finances of the cultural NGOs mainly at the mercy of foreign funding sources for a very long time. The main negative consequence resulting is that no coherent and complementary, balanced, civil sector develops for all cultural categories. Evolution takes place at random and is usually driven by the leadership and networking capacities, as well as by the foreign contacts of the NGOs initiators.

The Soros foundation had the fundamental role in the growth of the civil cultural sector in central Europe, together with the European cultural Foundation in Amsterdam, KulturKontakt, IETM network, AFAA, British Council or independent training courses like the Marcel Hicter certificate, Felix Meritis AMSU, ICCA, Salzburg, etc. Council of Europe Mozaic program dedicated a whole number of events to civil society development in partnership with public bodies (but it was only in 1998), UNESCO helped to the creation of independent entities and antennas related to heritage and the Bulgarian and Romanian EU Phare had a component of independent institutional strengthening (1998/2000). Thus, slowly appeared self sustainable important cultural NGOs, like Romanian UNITER, ECUMEST, PROIECT DCM, Transit Foundation, Euro Bulgarian center and Redhouse, Croatian MAMA, Serbian Balkankult and Rex, Macedonian debate center PAC multimedia, Polish Lublin cultural center, Hungarian « Trafo » or the Budapest Observatory .

⁴⁶ Ilczuk, idem , ibidem, quoting Toepler, Stefan "From Communism to Civil Society? The Arts and the Nonprofit Sector in Central and Eastern Europe." Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2000.

But a strong national public policy orientation to strengthen the independent sector lacked until the apparition of the national « cultural funds » and until some private sources (banks, commercial companies) started considering this as a priority for a more general social welfare.

The difficulty is that the moment comes when the central cultural policy makers understand the usefulness and importance of the NGO sector, the important foreign funding sources for culture disappear or redirect their funds to social projects (Steward Mott, Soros, Foundation Roi Baudouin are just some examples).

This makes necessary a serious reorientation of the central government, but also local government, towards the strengthening from internal sources of the cultural civil sector and the understanding that such a cultural policy direction will finally bring about easier sustainability, more mobility, new models of leadership and management and partnership between culture and other sectors. But as long as the cultural policy orientations will still encourage survival logic for big state institution and quick fix privatization logic for what is unmanageable, the cultural infrastructure in Eastern Europe will continue to decay.

It is imperative today that state administration in central and eastern Europe and cultural policy measures play a role of: a/ of regulators of savage liberalization of the cultural production and b/ of supporters for the civil cultural sector, as the main agent of healthy change and as best intermediary solution of structural transformation during the transitional crisis.

The challenge of diversity

So used to unilateralism and cultural-ideological hegemony, former communist societies had difficulties in culturally integrating the notion of diversity. Even more so, when having to translate it in policy measures, they limit, as the Cultural policy compendium data shows to the policy versus minorities. But the existence of representative cultural entities that prove the respect and protection of minority rights are much rhetoric and sometimes much European funding, but almost no social tangible result. The strong ethnic tensions within many states in SE Europe (which are not limited to former Yugoslavia), the important problems encountered by the Roma community in the region, the revival of past ghosts of anti-semitism in countries like Poland and Romania are undoubtedly linked to a deep lack of efficient visionary strategic measures about this hot issue.

In trying to define what kind of orientation should take more efficient long term cultural policy design on the matter, researcher Nada Svob-Dokic⁴⁷ is proposing:

- 1/ Objective mapping of the different ethnic and national communities and acceptance of language indicators and the distinctiveness of communities (this mapping is still non transparent in the region for political reasons).
- 2/ Coordination of cultural diversity policy with language, media and education policy, in order to build consciousness of cultural diversity in the general public.
- 3/ Introduction of cultural diversity as an issue of human rights.
- 4/ Support for minority policies and minority activities (the use of language, specific education, specific publishing and leisure...).

⁴⁷ Svob-Dokic (2001) and "Comparative cultural policy issues related to cultural diversity in South East Europe" research commissioned by Policies for Culture, available online at www.policiesforculture.org under e-library section.

But this kind of approach is up-to-date still far from being considered seriously by the governments in the region and this represents an impediment to oppose the post communist strong nationalistic tendencies and their dramatic consequence (extreme right conservative parties took over large majorities of the population in Poland, Romania, Hungary or Slovenia).

The international dimension of cultural policy

- *Cultural cooperation*

Last but not least, the dimension of international cultural cooperation is the one that really gathers unanimity at a high political level in all post communist countries.

The number of cultural bilateral conventions that were signed by all post communist countries is very impressive between 1990 and 2003. But beyond a very affirmative need and wish for cultural exchange, usually done with Western funds and eastern human resources and beyond impressive operations like the «dance en voyage», «courant d'est» or «seeding a network», Central European Book Fund initiative (ECF/ Amsterdam), participation to the Frankfurt book fair or the Avignon Festival, the international cultural cooperation policies in Central and Eastern Europe did not succeed in creating a necessary framework for administrative and financial inclusion of national institutions in the rich network of European and world cultural and artistic organizations.

Initiatives for exchange always came from outside. The « American suitcase fund », the THEOREM programme of Avignon Festival, the Arts Council and British Council and so on created and recreated in the last 15 years the framework for Central European east-West cooperation policies. In the same time, national policy measures for international cultural cooperation were translated very often in the creation, encouragement and organization of « symbolical » and expensive international events: Enescu festival in Romania, Cracow European capital, Budapest fair, Ljubljana contemporary art exhibition, BITEF festival, etc.

Also, governments in Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, The Baltic states created real administrative services charged to restore the « cultural image » of the countries. And some of them real ministerial entities for the accession process (from where the cultural dimension was, of course, excluded).

Still prisoners of an iconic way to approach the cultural cooperation aspects, used to an assisted and inferiority marked attitude to the Western partnership, unaware about the cooperation potential with countries and cultures beyond Europe, cultural governments remained stuck in rhetoric of *international cultural cooperation* policies, but did not engage real reflection on its potentiality and perspectives.

On a short term basis, the importance of, on one hand Council of Europe, UNESCO, French agencies like AFAA, British ones like Arts Council and British Council and of Goethe Institute was great in order to empower the cultural political levels in the region. UNESCO's actions directed to the heritage rebuilding, The Council of Europe programme of evaluation of cultural policies, the Mozaic programme, the mobility bursaries for cultural manager, but also the bilateral programs ran by French institutes, British Council and Goethe Institute were of great "tutoring" importance in the revival of a sense of common values and

mobility opportunities. For the civil sector, the Soros Foundation and the cultural networks played this accompanying role and played it successfully as much as the artistic exchange, mobility and modernization of taste or emergence of contemporary forms goes.

- *Cultural policy international inspiration*

A positive aspect has to be remarked. The lottery model, inspired by UK and Netherlands to the Hungarians and Romanians, unsuccessfully drew respective governments to try innovative models for the funding of culture. French laws on heritage and taxation or copyright were used by many eastern European countries, sometimes successfully. The problem of this foreign expertise was that it had many missing links and was never done in the necessary time lapse for a process to mature and all its components to become accomplished. We have numerous examples of using foreign expertise for completely un-adapted situations, but also of good potential expertise that had to be implemented in too short a time or with missing data. This created in the long run a sense of distrust in Central European Ministries of culture and among cultural operators about the reliability of the « Western models ». We have to insist that both immediate post communist euphoria regarding these models and post-wakening rejection of them are as wrong and as superficial. Inspiration for cultural policy and legislation can be reliable, but has to be necessary and allow reciprocal understanding and questioning. For the time being this was more of an approach for cultural operators, but not for the policy levels.

On the other hand, if we put our comprehensive analytical exercise in a general European context of cultural policy evolution in the last decades we will observe that the key issues listed before correspond to present preoccupation in Western Europe cultural policy reshaping. Challenges engendered by enlargement, globalization, the technological advancement and the explosion of the traditional set of reference points touched to the very heart of the east-west opposition and relativised it. Late Euro-Atlantic evolution have accelerated the pace of a more integrative and less patronizing approach from West to east, but also among Eastern countries themselves.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Two important sets of questions remain challenging and open for the cultural decision makers east and west; they are well expressed in the following: “Who is shaping now the values, social discourse, cultural debate: is it the governmental institutions, cultural institutions, the artists or the media”⁴⁸ and “Sustainable development, cultural diversity and conflict prevention must be reformulated in a way that young arts practitioners and tired veteran net workers can relate to their new agendas. Perhaps the idiom of human rights (and cultural rights) can still sustain some mileage but it will also need updating soon. So, what are the new mobilizing items?”⁴⁹ To this, the new borders engendered by the enlargement process might add unexpected challenges. Some prospective measures should therefore become urgent for the region. They are:

1/ Initiation of cultural policies that are *creative* instead of *normative*, thus including the successful practices and giving them as immediate as possible

⁴⁸ Dragicevic (1999).

⁴⁹Delgado (1998).

space to develop, ensuring communication between top-down and bottom up and permitting fluidity of the strategic processes. This aspect approaches Katunaric theories about the rethinking of local cultural policies in the region as boosters for a new life quality more than of a creation of new symbolical metropolis.

New competence is needed at the management level of cultural institutions in order to undertake the reform of cultural public administration. Without ensuring such competence, management is ill-equipped to cope correctly with the temporary dislocations in implementing decentralization measures and other unfamiliar procedures. The leadership vocabulary must change gradually and engage in the logic of long-term planning and of creativity, rather than survival.

Changing from a mentality of "crisis management" springs forth as the main challenge of the eastern European cultural institution today.

2/ Shaping the state's role as regulator and implement its capacities as «enabling state» for the cultural sector.

During the last 14 years, numerous non governmental organizations have been established, performing innovative activities. Along with the development of democratic institutions and the introduction of a market logic, new aspects have to be taken into account by the design of new cultural policies. However, the state level seems to generally ignore all these developments and mainly focus on the survival of old structures. It is time to make the case for the following priority areas:

- partnership between the independent and state sector, entered into with awareness and timeliness;
- including the work of upcoming generations within the legitimate cultural institution;
- learning to address both traditional and new audiences;
- capacity of the cultural institution to accept innovation as a part of ensuring sustainability.

3/ Encourage partnership public private for the cultural organizations, strengthen the civil sector and allow internal resource for cultural development and cultural cooperation. Central and Eastern Europe might find accordingly via the cultural development supported from internal resources its inner « tutor of resilience ». Solve the dilemma of traditional/modern, national/international and conservative/ innovative by introducing as much young generations as possible in the decision making process; this will give new generation not only the right to decide about their own future and their community future, but also bear the weight of responsibility and find their place.

4/ Break the illusory border of international reduced to European and engage in cultural cooperation with other continents and other, less known, cultures. Initiate measures for cultural diversity (diversity within and diversity between) and implement them in due time and with organic means (by large civil sector participation and bottom up initiatives-see measures suggested by Nada Svob Docic, part 3, cultural diversity)⁵⁰.

5/ Reestablish links between culture and education, culture and media, culture and economics and culture and politics. Today, culture can no longer be

⁵⁰ Svob-Dokic, idem.

regarded as an isolated domain, this narrow perception shakens it even more. A global, larger perspective of the cultural sphere, interrelated with area based, community interaction and economic requirements and adapted to the local needs is to be designed. Interdisciplinary work and interdisciplinary training methodologies have to be shaped and implemented, more regional comparative approaches have to be applied by the policy makers and methodologies from other sectors should come in nourishing the systemic nature of the cultural field. Nevertheless, the sense of protecting the existing cultural capital of each community and preserving its specificity has to prevail.

We end here this very incomplete, but transversal overview, aimed to be useful in feeding further comments and provoking a useful consciousness awakening about the large parameters within which central and eastern European cultural policies exist today. We strongly believe that a shared, active responsibility for the promotion of a central place for cultural development in societies which are dealing constantly with heavy pasts and uncertain futures is a guarantee for sustainability and stability in these regions.

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