



ECUMEST Association

**Annual Report
2002**

Introduction

Our mission

The ECUMEST Association aims to respond to the need of encouraging managerial autonomy, the responsibility in designing and implementing cultural policies and in mediating the artistic and cultural production, as well as creativity and creative artists. Its action strives to promote a continuous reflection on the alternatives available and the decisions taken by the politicians in the cultural field, as well as to intermediate a large dissemination of European experience and values in the cultural arena.

The long-term objectives of the ECUMEST Association are to set up a regional pole (in Eastern Europe) for analysis and expertise in the field of cultural policy and to initiate pilot programmes promoting and facilitating the cooperation of young artists and cultural operators throughout the region, in response to an existing need of dialogue and mobility at European level.

Whom we address

ECUMEST Association functions as an interface organisation, offering professional accompanying to and mediating three main types of cultural actors:

- the creative sector, and particularly young artists;
- mediators, within which cultural magazines are at present the priority target;
- political decision-makers and cultural administrators and managers at all levels.

ECUMEST Association's activities in 2002

Following its set objectives as well as its expertise, ECUMEST Association's activity focused in the year 2002 in four main directions:

- **cultural policy:** continuing and developing the *Policies for Culture* programme, initiated and developed in partnership with the European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam) and launching a new programme, ARcult – the Romanian Cultural Agency;
- **professional development in the areas of cultural management and cultural policies:** launching a partnership with the Arts University in Belgrade for the establishment of a postgraduate programme in cultural management; exploring the possibility of re-launching a postgraduate programme in cultural policy and management in South East Europe; continuing contact mediation with various European cultural networks;
- **support to cultural press:** establishing a working group (entitled “Press Stress Group”) together with the well-known Romanian magazines *Dilema*, *Observator Cultural*, *22* and *Litere, arte, idei*; initiating, with the financial support of Pro Helvetia Foundation, a free subscriptions programme addressed to local opinion leaders.
- **supporting the mobility of young artists and cultural mediators.**

• Cultural policy



The Policies for Culture programme

Undertitled “Participative policy-making in South-East Europe”, the *Policies for Culture* programme is a regional (SEE) partnership programme launched in the year 2000, at the joint initiative of the European Cultural Foundation (Amsterdam) and the ECUMEST Association (Bucharest). The programme is structured around the triangular working relationship between the civil society, the executive (public authority level), and the legislature (parliament) in the policy-making process addressing the cultural sector. It is based on the recognition that public policy in the field of culture can only have a sustainable impact if the civic stakeholders whom it is to affect participate in its formulation.

In 2002, the *Policies for Culture* activities consisted in:

□ *Continuing local action*

The principles and approach promoted by *Policies for Culture* are implemented at local, regional or national level through the means of **action projects**. Action projects are the result of local initiatives proposed by individuals and organisations from the cultural field from the targeted countries, as responses to calls for projects launched by *Policies for Culture*.

Several action projects such as *Technological Park Culture* (Sofia, Bulgaria) and *Developing a Local Cultural Strategy for the Timis County* (Timis county, Romania) were initiated in 2001 and continued in 2002. Following calls for projects in Croatia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia, new action projects were initiated in 2002. PFC local coordinators monitored the development and implementation of these projects and offered their support and expertise where needed. Below is a complete list of the projects launched in 2002:

- Setting Up and Launching AR CULT – The Romanian Cultural Agency, Bucharest, Romania, 2002 – 2003;
- Mirror Supplement to “Kultura” and “22” magazines dedicated to Cultural Policies, Bulgaria and Romania, 2002;
- Towards a Cultural Strategy for the Arad County, Romania, 2002 – 2003;
- Participative Policy Making: Cultural Strategy of the City of Zagreb, Croatia, 2002 – 2003;
- CLUBTURE – Policy Forum: Towards a New Position of the independent, not-for-profit and non-institutional cultural sector in Policy-Making, Croatia 2002-2003;
- Cooperation and Dialogue in Building Effective Local Cultural Policies: Sombor – Užice - Kragujevac – Šabac, Serbia, 2002;
- Cultural Policy Making in Macedonia – Empowering the Independent Cultural Sector in Prilep, Macedonia, 2002 – 2003;
- Technological Park Culture II, Sofia, Bulgaria 2002 – 2003.

□ ***Support to advocacy and lobbying initiatives***

The support to ad-hoc lobbying and advocacy initiatives developed by individuals and organisations in all targeted countries envisaged the provision of expertise, useful contacts, as well as limited financial support.

In this respect, *Policies for Culture* offered its support to the Romanian Dance sector, who managed to organise the first ever official meeting between representatives of Romanian dancers and choreographers and of the central authorities. This first meeting was held in June 2002 and was hosted by the Romanian Parliament. It represented a major step towards the recognition of the Romanian dance sector, a sector almost completely ignored by Romanian cultural policies until then.

This type of support shall continue to be available in 2003 as well.

□ ***Developing stronger cooperation with the media in SEE***

Following a recurrent idea expressed in PfC activities and in response to a need present in all of the programme's activities, *Policies for Culture* decided to work more closely with the media and to develop specific activities in this direction in 2002.

Therefore, in May 2002 *Policies for Culture* realised the publication of a mirror supplement to *Kultura* magazine (Bulgaria) and *22* magazine (Romania) dedicated to cultural policies (following the first such supplement published in *22* magazine in 2001). The two supplements provided a series of articles on cultural policies in Bulgaria during the last 12 years as well as a presentation of the action projects developed in the framework of *Policies for Culture* in Romania and Bulgaria.

At the end of 2002, in a step towards extending the partnership with media throughout the region, *Policies for Culture* initiated a cooperation with eleven publications (daily newspapers and cultural magazines) from countries in South East Europe in which the programme already is, or will be present. The aim of this cooperation is to bring the subject of cultural policy to the attention of a wider audience in all of these countries and, at the same time, to establish a closer partnership with key representatives of the media sector in South East Europe. Each of these publications (namely *Kultura* and *Kapital* – Bulgaria, *Danas* – Serbia, *Margina* – Macedonia, *Zarez* – Croatia, *Perpjekja* – Albania, *Contrafort* – Moldova, *Observator Cultural*, *LAI* and *Cotidianul* – Romania) will publish during the first part of 2003 a dossier on cultural policy, which shall include their own selection of articles from those already published in the framework of *Policies for Culture*.

□ ***Publications***

The year 2002 marked the “upgrading” of the programme's publication from *newsletter* to ***Journal***. This change means more consistency, more depth in addressing a larger variety of issues. Each of the four issues of the *Journal* in 2002 focused on a different topic: “1 ¾ years of Policies for Culture”, “Cultural policy in Croatia”, “Decentralisation” and “Advocacy for culture in South East Europe”.

Besides the electronic *Journal, Policies for Culture* launched in 2002 an electronic *Info Bulletin* - an online cultural policy information service, designed to provide information on conferences and other events, financing opportunities, research initiatives and other useful news in the field of cultural policy. Two issues of the *Info Bulletin* appeared in 2002.

2002 also marked the launch of a new publication series – the “Force of Example” – which shall include relevant case studies of the successful action projects developed in the framework of *Policies for Culture*. The first case study, “Local Cultural Strategy Development for the City of Plovdiv - Bulgaria” was published in November 2002. A comparative study on the cultural strategies of the Timis and Arad counties (Romania) will follow in Spring 2003.

□ *Cultural policy research*

During the first two years of activity, *Policies for Culture* has been very practice-oriented, a feature that was visible also in 2002. Nevertheless, it was felt the need to combine practical action with an academic analysis and research component. To this end, *Policies for Culture* commissioned a number of 6 methodological papers to several highly renowned cultural policy professionals in South East Europe. These papers, designed as comparative, regional analyses of cultural policy issues will fundament the programme’s training and research activities in 2003.

□ *Other programme development activities*

The year 2002 started with three meetings of the national Steering Committees of *Policies for Culture*:

- in Romania and Bulgaria, to assess the programme’s development and its planned future activities;
- in Serbia, to launch the programme in this country, by the means of a national call for projects (organised in March 2002).

Between 8 and 9 May, *Policies for Culture* also organized in Bucharest its Regional Steering Committee meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the programme’s future orientation and its regional development activities. Representatives of the three levels addressed by the programme (members of Parliament, high officials from the Ministries of Culture, representatives of the cultural sector) as well as foreign observers from organizations which support cultural activities and civil society development attended the meeting.

In 2002, the *Policies for Culture* programme enjoyed financial support from the European Cultural Foundation in Amsterdam and the Royal Dutch Embassy in Bucharest.



ARCult – the Romanian Cultural Agency

The ARCult (Romanian Cultural Agency) programme was launched by the ECUMEST Association in 2002, as an action project in the framework of the *Policies for Culture* programme, receiving subsequent support from the *Arts & Culture Network Program* of the Open Society Institute in Budapest through Concept Foundation. The programme aimed to provide the Romanian cultural sector with specialized assistance (information, consultancy, research) in the field of cultural policy and legislation, to facilitate communication and cooperation within the cultural sector and to contribute to the general improvement of the framework in which the sector functions.

The development of the Romanian Cultural Agency (ARCult) as a resource center which shall stimulate structural changes on the long term in the field of cultural policies in Romania as well as in the region has taken the form of three main complementary activities, implemented in parallel, respectively:

□ **Dissemination of information to the cultural sector**

The dissemination of information to the cultural sector was done through the **INFO ARCult electronic messages**, sent to an important (and continuously enlarging) mailing list from throughout Romania – first and foremost to cultural operators, but including also representatives of all cultural actors. This service will continue to develop in 2003 in order to disseminate useful information but also to analyse various cultural policy trends.

□ **Action research and involvement of the independent sector in cultural policy-making**

by realising an action research which would lead to public policy recommendations, to be promoted and debated with cultural policy-makers in view of improving the current situation. The first research study of ARCult, currently being developed, addresses “Access to public funding for cultural NGOs in Romania”. This applied research study will be the starting point for a future roundtable meeting, in which representatives of the three sectors which are essential in adopting cultural policy – the executive, the legislature and the cultural sector – shall address this issue together.

□ **Legal framework for culture in Romania – online resource**

Responding to the need of information regarding the legislation affecting, directly or indirectly, the cultural field, ARCult has initiated the set up of an online resource which provides a database of relevant legislation as well as legal guides on various topics of interest (free access database; legal guides made available in English also for a regional use). The database was conceived and developed throughout the second half of 2002; it shall be finalised and made available (at www.ecumest.ro/lege.php) at the beginning of 2003.

- **Professional development**
in the areas of cultural management and cultural policies

After the MA Program in Cultural Management (*Mastère Spécialisé Européen en Management des Entreprises Culturelles*) in Dijon ended its activity, the ECUMEST Association sought new ways of involvement in the field of professional development, in order to make use of its traditional expertise and extensive network. Thus, in 2002 a partnership has been initiated with the University of Arts in Belgrade for the set up of a postgraduate programme entitled "Studies of Interculturalism, Art Management and Mediation in the Balkans". The programme targets both graduates and young professionals in the Balkan region.

ECUMEST Association has also been exploring, together with the Institute of Political Studies in Lyon, the possibility of setting up a postgraduate programme in cultural policies and cultural management, based in Romania but having regional (South East European) relevance, which will take shape in 2003 and shall probably be launched in autumn 2004.

Finally, ECUMEST Association continued its activity of mediating contacts with European cultural networks and supporting the development of international cooperation projects at the request of Romanian organisations which do not hold international contacts in artistic fields or other cultural areas.

- **Support to cultural press**

Attempting to tackle the numerous problems which threaten the very existence of cultural magazines in nowadays Romania, ECUMEST Association had the initiative of founding the **Press Stress Group** (PSG). PSG is an open working group which seeks to better identify the common problems cultural magazines are facing and to seek feasible solutions for supporting and contributing to the development of cultural press. So far, the following magazines joined ECUMEST Association inside PSG: *Dilema*, *22*, *Observator Cultural*, *LA&I*.

A pilot project of free subscriptions to these cultural magazines for local opinion leaders in the Romanian provinces has been initiated and developed in 2002 and received the financial support of Pro Helvetia/ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The project aims at facilitating access to relevant cultural information and debate, especially for persons living in areas of the country that cultural publications have difficulties reaching. By providing a direct support for potential readers and, indirectly, support for the publications, this pilot project aims at sustainably supporting and developing the audience for cultural magazines throughout the country. The project shall become operational in March 2003.

Another initiative in this field was represented by exploring and initiating a cooperation between the PSG Platform and the Goethe Institut in Bucharest for organizing in 2003 a working meeting addressed to cultural publications in the region covered by the Stability Pact. The details of this cooperation will be established in 2003.

• **Promoting the mobility of young artists and cultural mediators**

This initiative, launched in 2002, represents a new area of involvement of ECUMEST Association, aimed at responding to the increasing need of mobility of young creators, cultural managers and journalists.

ECUMEST Association aims at building up, on the long term, a creativity and mobility fund addressed to young creators and cultural mediators, with the purpose of allowing them a confrontation (during professional study visits throughout Europe) with the current artistic trends in Europe as well as worldwide.

Until the launching of the mobility fund, estimated to occur in 2004, the ECUMEST Association has initiated and developed two pilot projects in the field of promoting mobility:

□ **Facilitating the participation of 12 young artists, cultural managers and journalists from Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia to the seminar "Cultural rights and cultural policies" in Fribourg (28 March – 2 April 2002)**

12 young artists, cultural managers and journalists from Romania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have participated in the "Cultural policies and cultural rights" seminar in Fribourg, in the framework of a project initiated by the ECUMEST Association and the Interdisciplinary Institute of Ethics and Human Rights (IIEDH) in Fribourg, with the support of PRO HELVETIA Réseaux Est-Ouest.

Apart from promoting mobility, the project was designed to respond to ECUMEST Association's objectives of contributing to the development and professionalisation of the cultural sector and, at the same time, of introducing new topics and issues of research and action which are present in the intellectual debate at the European level. Specifically in this case - the topic of cultural rights, little debated in the Western European countries and almost not at all addressed in the Central and Eastern European ones.

As a follow-up to this seminar, "Dilema" magazine featured a series of articles and interviews (entitled "Who needs cultural rights?") connected to the seminar.

□ **Organizing and supporting the professional visit of four young Romanian actors, winners of the 2001 edition of the Young Actors Gala, to the Avignon Festival (between 19-27 July 2002)**

Within this project, Clara FLORES, Marius RIZEA, Ada SIMIONICA and Mihai ARSENE – awarded with the first, respectively the second place at the 2001 edition of the HOP Young Actors Gala (Mangalia) organized by the Theatre Union of Romania – had the opportunity to attend some of the most interesting performances in the festival, to take part in conferences and debates, to meet artists from all over the world and to discover new forms of contemporary theatre.

The project was initiated and implemented by the ECUMEST Association in partnership with Avignon Festival and with the support of Eurolines Romania. This represented a first collaboration with the Avignon Festival in view of launching, on the medium term, the Fund for mobility and creativity.

Following this project, the "Observator Cultural" magazine published an extensive article based upon the discussions with two of the participating young actors.

□ **Participation to the development of the Balkan Express network**

It should also be pointed out that in December 2002 the association has been represented at a small development meeting of the "in-creation" Balkan Express Network, which aims to promote information exchange, communication and mobility for the performing arts professionals in the Balkans. ECUMEST has taken over the role of contact point of the network for Romania.

• **Development activities in 2002**

The expansion of activities was necessarily followed by the hiring of two new employees in the ECUMEST team, initially as part-time project assistants, between March and May 2002. Since June 2002, Dan Ghita works on a full-time basis, currently as programmes coordinator.

In accordance with the expansion of activities and the enlargement of the team, ECUMEST Association acquired a new office in the ARCUB building, in April 2002.

ECUMEST Association's developing activity is also reflected by the Association's web page www.ecumest.ro, on line since April 2002, providing two versions, in Romanian and English.

Executive Board and Staff, 2002

Executive Board

Corina SUTEU, president
Aura CORBEANU, executive director
Oana RADU, programs director

Staff

Dan GHITA, project coordinator (since March 2002)
Silvana GLIGA, project assistant (March – May 2002)
Tsveta ANDREEVA, local coordinator of the *Policies for Culture* programme in Bulgaria and Macedonia (based in Sofia)
Ela AGOTIC, local coordinator of the *Policies for Culture* programme in Croatia (based in Zagreb)
Carmen MARINESCU, accountant (till March 2002)
Elena IACOB, accountant (since April 2002)

On specific projects and activities the ECUMEST Association has also been working with a variety of *collaborators* throughout the region of South East Europe (collaboration in terms of information provision, expertise, organisation and logistics).

Members of the Association as of 31 December 2002

Mario D'ANGELO
Dan BARTHA - LAZAR
Dragos BUHAGIAR
Eugen COJOCARIU
Claudia CONSTANTINESCU
Aura CORBEANU
Carmen CROITORU
Alexandru DABIJA
Nicoleta DASCALU
Mercedes GIOVINAZZO
Mihai IANCU
Georgeta Maria IUGA
Virgiliu MARGINEANU
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