

SUMMARY

Plovdiv Cultural Development Strategy provides a common framework and guidelines for development of the culture and creativity sectors in a period of dynamic cultural renewal of the city. The approach in drafting this document is based on **transparency, democracy, active dialog, expert knowledge, and access to information.**

The **mission** of Plovdiv Municipality with this document is to provide a strategically planned, financially sound, politically coherent, innovative administrative and legal environment, where the cultural identity of the city is to be further established within a European context and will allow for the development of accessible, high-quality cultural products, which will serve the economic and social prosperity of the region.

Along with activities and institutions in the field of culture, education and tourism, the strategic parameters cover different aspects of everyday life and urban space in Plovdiv, non-professional and amateur events, religious and ethnic communities, and subcultures.

The main Strategy objectives are to improve the level of education, management, cooperation and partnership in the area of culture, to outline directions and sustainable policies for successful positioning and promotion of the city on the European cultural map; to create a favorable basis for the preservation and promotion of the city's rich cultural heritage, for the development of cultural and creative industries and the cultural tourism as a basis for economic and social prosperity.

The Plovdiv Cultural Development Strategy was developed based on a **series of public hearings and expert developments** by the KULTUREXPERTEN/ ACULTOS advisory team – Prof. Dr. Oliver Scheytt and Dr. Patrick Föhl.

For almost two years and in a series of meetings and workshops with the participation of over 80 representatives of the cultural sector and the municipal administration of Plovdiv, four strategic areas of development in the cultural sector were specified – **local and regional cultural identity, art education, cultural industries and cultural tourism.**

In the beginning of the process were placed several key questions that the Strategy should address:

- How can the rich cultural resources of the city be fully activated and mobilized for cooperation in the field of culture and overall public life?
- How can the existing cultural infrastructure be preserved and enhanced?
- How can space for the realization of innovative cultural solutions be provided, considering the available resources?

The **key strategic priorities** were defined on the basis of the working groups' elaborations on the four areas of development:

- **Dynamically changing cultural identity**
- **Culture and education**
- **Cultural and creative industries and cultural tourism**

The Vision of Plovdiv in 2024, set by the Strategy, is for a city which is recognizable with a prominent identity, based on a sustainably maintained balance between cultural diversity, rich historical heritage and advanced modern stage, a model of successful overlay of young and active contemporary trends over layers of antiquity, a center of partnership and exchange, developing the cultural potential of the city and the region into a high-tech, diverse social environment and competitive European context, as a catalyst for economic and social prosperity and a basis for unique cultural experiences.

The content of the document is structured in two sections – analytical and strategic. The analytical part presents the main parameters of the cultural infrastructure of Plovdiv with a SWOT analysis, which identifies several **key challenges** in the field of culture, which apply not only at local, but at European level: Valorization of the Past, Understanding the Present, Development of Cultural Infrastructure, Attracting Audiences, Development of Long-term Policies in the Cultural Sector, Creation of Partnerships.

The objectives and measures on the strategic priorities included in the second part of the document have been formulated so as to directly address these challenges and **three key action principles set as horizontal policies**, which are emerging as leading in the context of the expert analyses on the current status and the needs of the city cultural sector, in regard with the candidacy of the city for 2019 European Capital of Culture:

- Communication
- Inclusion
- Renewal

According to these principles, the objectives of the strategic priorities are allocated as follows:

Communication

Dynamically changing cultural identity – Binding the socialization of cultural heritage with the contemporary cultural forms through a balanced interaction in favor of the implementation of sustainable cultural projects, improving the quality of life and creating a resource for economic growth.

Culture and education – Improvement of the dialogue between the culture and education sectors in the processes of social cohesion and mutual understanding of different ethnic groups, incl. in the context of their integration into the important social values and increasing the quality of life of the social communities.

Cultural and creative industries and cultural tourism – Activation and update of marketing and promotional activities in the field of cultural industries and tourism; intensification of international exchange in the field of development and promotion of cultural products, introduction of working models.

Inclusion

Dynamically changing cultural identity – Exposure of the culture of collective identities living in Plovdiv in the context of their right to socialize through their cultural heritage; Improvement of programs in the field of arts education as a foundation to build on and enrich the identity from an early age.

Culture and education – Culture and creativity to be promoted to the rank of key competence in the process of personal and professional development from an early age; Increase of the level of awareness and involvement of different age and social groups to cultural and educational initiatives; Use of the potential of arts education for the creation and

enrichment of the needs of culture and creativity in young people, which can stimulate the development of audiences and trends for active participation in the creation of cultural products.

Cultural and creative industries and cultural tourism – Establishment of working partnerships between cultural institutions, cultural operators and tourism; cultural events, routes and products diversification and decentralization, expansion of their geographic range; Introduction of cultural activities into urban space.

Renewal

Dynamically changing cultural identity – Restoration and socialization of rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage as a guarantor for the protection of cultural diversity and continuity of significant values kept in the memory of the city and its people; development of the cultural and creative industries sector, and the cultural tourism as an engine of sustainable urban development promotion of the city identity and image.

Culture and education – Introduction of new approaches, tools and technologies in school cultural and educational projects.

Cultural and creative industries and cultural tourism – Expansion of existing markets and activation of cultural and tourism resources; Improvement of the quality of cultural industries products and services and encouragement of the creation and promotion of new products; Improvement of the management of the creative sector with a clear differentiation of responsibilities in the cultural sites management.

The Measures provided for the implementation of the strategic priorities include:

Improvement of cultural management and marketing

- Promotion of innovative and experimental concepts and strategies in the creation and presentation of a cultural or tourist product, which includes digitization of cultural heritage.
- Establishment of a system for the management and conservation of the cultural heritage of Plovdiv.
- An increase in the mobility of museum collections and improvement of different audiences' access to the heritage.
- Development of museums and community centers innovative marketing programs, targeting new audiences and more intensive involvement of children and young audiences to a variety of cultural and educational spaces. Active introduction of the “Open Doors” approach and/or planning of educational initiatives outside the territories of cultural and educational institutions.
- Synchronization and crossing information flows in culture, arts and education.
- Help for the process of professional training of teachers in line with the dynamics of the education sector and the rapid penetration of digital technologies.
- Development of cultural institutions joint marketing programs targeting new audiences and more intensive involvement of children and young audiences to alternative cultural and educational spaces.
- Promotion of projects aimed at specific audiences, as well as opportunities to involve the audience as a participant in the creation of the cultural product.
- Use of the integrated conservation method in traditional crafts as a tool to promote children and adolescents interest in local history and tradition, and in the creative tourism.
- Establishment and support of clusters in the field of art and culture.

Infrastructure improvements and changes

- Improvements in urban infrastructure and environment aesthetics set out in the Municipal Development Plan 2020
- Utilization of new spaces and possibilities, organizing zones in urban areas for the purpose of cultural industries
- Heritage socialization by improving infrastructure, facilities and integrated environment development in museums and community centers, incl. technological innovation and modernization of their activities, and collections digitization
- An increase in the access to online libraries with specific dedicated by improving facilities and infrastructure in schools, community centers and libraries
- Improvement of sites accessibility

Financial tools

- Provision of increased funding of the cultural program, marketing and cultural activities from the general budget of the Municipality of Plovdiv from 4.2% in 2014 to 6.3% in 2020
- Improvement of the local approaches and policies on municipal financing of museums and community centers, incl. applying for European funding and the creation of public-private partnerships with their participation.
- Stimulation of projects and initiatives that contribute to the establishment of Plovdiv as a brand, both nationally and globally and expanding the financial support of the Municipality, and its inclusion as a partner in applying for EU projects

Monitoring and analysis

- Research, study, collection and sharing of know-how and international experience in joint projects in the field of culture and education – conferences, round tables, researches
- Establishment of a system of measurement of data from the market of cultural industries and tourism in order to introduce quality standards in this area
- Establishment of a public register of cultural and tourist sites
- Promoting research and studies in the field of cultural management in order to create operating indicators for analysis, evaluation and control
- Strengthen monitoring in the application of the Ordinance on Tourism

Partnerships

- Introduction of flexible entrepreneurial forms and joint long-term programs between cultural operators, NGOs, Municipality, sponsors and volunteer organizations in the context of heritage conservation and enhancement of the city identity
- Improvement of the financial and administrative mechanisms for the realization of long-term joint initiatives between educational institutions, cultural operators, museums and community centers.
- An increase of the level of interactivity in cultural and educational process and maintain a state of constant exchange of best practices and innovative approaches
- Development of inter-institutional programs to reduce the levels of unemployment

The Strategy monitoring and implementation includes

- Development of analysis, evaluation and control indicators
- Regular review of progress and preparation of annual reports

- Report of the achievement of the Strategy objectives in terms of the key principles underlying the Strategy horizontal policies
- Identification of obstacles and problems of particular importance and development prospects
- Observation of the principles of partnership, information, openness and transparency
- Consideration of change proposals and redefinition of priorities

The Cultural Development Strategy includes strategic objectives and priorities of the 2020 Platform. The document is consistent with the 2014-2020 Municipal Development Plan of the Municipality of Plovdiv, 2014-2020 SCR Regional Development Plan, Integrated Plan for Urban Reconstruction and Development of Plovdiv, 2014-2020 Plovdiv Tourism Development Strategy, 2005-2015 Plovdiv Regional Development Strategy.