

together

CANDIDATE FOR
EUROPEAN
CAPITAL OF
CULTURE

plovdiv
together
2019

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I. Basic principles

1) a) Why does the city which you represent wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture?

Everything we are proud of in Plovdiv is problematic: history, diversity, culture, urban space, the sense of **togetherness**. Like many other medium-sized cities in Europe, specifically in Eastern Europe, Plovdiv needs and wants to revive the citizen's trust in the city as a space to live **together**. That is why we want to take part in the competition.

There are some shortfalls connected with life in the city, but let's start with Plovdiv's qualities: With 347,000 inhabitants it is the second largest city in the country and is located in a favourable geostrategic position along an old trade route and modern motorway that leads from Zagreb via Belgrade and Sofia through Plovdiv and onwards with one branch going to the Black Sea and the other to Turkey. Plovdiv is one of those European cities popular with families who want to raise their children in a large but relaxed city. It offers all the services and commodities of a central city paired with a tranquil atmosphere. It is a culture and business centre for the whole of Southern Bulgaria, with five important museums, a large variety of theatres, cultural institutions and an opera. Although it is a central hub in Bulgaria it lacks the hectic restlessness of other large cities in the country. The population

comprises many young people creating a lively and active art scene. There are more cafés, restaurants and clubs per capita in Plovdiv than anywhere else in the country. In Bulgaria Plovdiv has the negative image of being the city of Ayliak – a Turkish word, which is used to express the relaxed, laissez-faire attitude to life. But people actually come to live in Plovdiv, because it is a real alternative if you want big city life combined with an “enjoy life” atmosphere. The city is distinguished by an 8,000 year old history as one of the oldest, still-inhabited cities in the world. This rich heritage is characterized by ancient monuments in the city originating from Thracian, Greek, Roman, Slavic, Byzantine, and Ottoman cultures.

And yet – there is something missing. Everything we are proud of seems to have serious drawbacks behind it. With the European Capital of Culture we want to question ourselves: where do we come from, where are we now and where do we want to be in the future?

We have chosen the motto ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ because we are proud – and that is part of our problem: too proud to cooperate with others, too proud to accept critical thinking, too proud to rethink ourselves in the relationship with the rest of the world, too proud to really see what needs to be done.

We are proud of our past, but the way we approach it does not inspire us today. We are proud of the cultures that built Plovdiv over the millennia, but now culture seems dispensable to many citizens today.

We are proud to have a beautiful, unspoiled Old Town – but it is a sleeping beauty, not really filled with life. We have a huge cultural heritage – Plovdiv is older than Athens and Rome, but we have the same problems as many other historic cities in Europe in that many cultural and historical sites lack life, the vision and the opportunity to include the contemporary needs of the city and its citizens. They are perceived as “merely historic”, an attraction for tourists. Plovdivians are proud that the city is a cradle of European culture – but we are also stuck looking back to distant days of glory. We are extremely proud that Plovdiv is a world-famous site of ancient culture – but are totally surprised when we hear that many of our fellow Europeans have never even heard of Plovdiv.

We are proud that we are deeply rooted in European culture, of our connections to Europe over these millennia, but today we feel distant from the democratic, dynamic and cultural Europe of the past 60 years and we are striving to find our place on Europe's cultural map.

Plovdiv has a lively art and culture scene with many young people interested in the historical dimension and in artistic activities – but they want a voice, they ask for space for new approaches, they want solidarity and the city has to encourage them to do *what* they do *for* the community. Too many of them don't see any prospects for themselves and leave the city. Plovdiv has the only Centre for Contemporary Art of its kind in Bulgaria, and festivals like the Plovdiv Jazz Nights or The Night of Museums and Galleries attract visitors from all over the country. Nevertheless these cultural events remain strangely isolated because too many in the city are cut off from access and too many think of culture as something from the past, which cannot help in the present or future.

We are proud of the microcosm of European cultural diversity gathered in

our city: of ethnic minorities (Roma, Jews, Armenians, Turks), of new migrants (Ukrainians, Russians, Italians, British), of religious communities (Christian Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Jewish) – including all the different social groups and generations. But looking closer, there is no dialogue: every group in the city keeps to itself, refusing to mix and mingle. Some of these groups - for instance the Roma minority - even live in ghettos where the rest of the population avoids going at all. And specifically, dealing with the Roma community, which makes up around 1/5 of the population in Plovdiv, is a pan-European issue that we share with numerous neighbouring, but also Western European countries. In fact most members of this community are Bulgarian according to their documents, but many of them claim to be of Turkish or other origin and only a small percentage identify themselves as Roma.

All of our citizens have real potential, but there is also an alarming lack of unity and solidarity among people. People struggle to survive on their own, without regard to the community, and there is a lack of trust in cooperation. Alienation and remoteness prevent people participating in social processes and making them their own, as is the case in many other post-communist societies in Europe.

Not only the things we are proud of, even our pride itself stands in our way. Instead of cooperation, we often end up with confrontation. When 10 people come **together** in Plovdiv they often end up arguing with 11 opinions on one issue.

We lack this unifying thread, which binds **together** people of different social and ethnic groups, of different interests. The public space where different groups could meet is not only not inviting interaction, it actually promotes segregation because different groups move in different spaces – including the digital space that by far not everyone participates in. The social

bubbles and consequently the urban bubbles necessarily meet and overlap in specific places (public transport, traffic, public buildings etc.) but without inspiration, exchange or learning processes. Instead of acting as a synchronising function, cultural activities in the city – mainly concentrated within the borders of the central urban area and the Old Town – additionally deepen the problem by excluding large communities (of the suburban areas) from these activities. There is a lack of approach to socio-cultural inclusion regarding not only the peripheral parts of the city and the small villages in the region but also the inclusion of the marginalized groups; many social and cultural events are still inaccessible for people who have specific needs. In addition, these groups are also discriminated against in the labour market.

Plovdiv is proud of its position as an important economic centre for the whole of South-Central Bulgaria, but a lot of nationally significant industrial centres in the city have lost their former meaning due to the industrial decline in the last two decades, and the fall in restitutions and sales. On the other hand there is a clear disruption of functional connections between education, culture, science and industry. This is an indirect reason for the low share of innovative solutions, such as new industries, businesses and technology parks, and incubators. The difficulties in professional development and personal growth are the reason for a brain drain to the capital city and abroad. Although Plovdiv is the second largest city in the country, it lags behind other regional centres in terms of income. The lack of consumers and the manpower shortage stop investors who are interested in the city. This creates a vicious circle.

All this makes our motto ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ more than a motto – it is a condensation of what the city needs and what it could be if the potential was turned into reality. If we can learn to see Plovdiv as a typical European city where ‘villages’ overlap and

provide different forms of city lifestyles but are open and ‘shared property’ by anyone who wants to access them – then we really can turn ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ from a concept into a reality. And this also constitutes what makes a concept like ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ interesting for Europe: we are striving to learn to see and accept diversity and the European city as a space of overlap of different social and urban models and as an asset and a chance for social cohesion.

All this is why the candidacy as European Capital of Culture is so important. Plovdiv needs and wants an energy boost. The city has to regain its appeal to its citizens, fellow Bulgarians and people abroad. The people of Plovdiv need to rediscover their identity, sense of ownership, purpose and belonging, to boost their self-esteem, trigger their exploratory spirit and rediscover their creativity.

The ECoC title would be a good start. It would show the citizens that culture is still a huge driving force in Europe and in Plovdiv. It could help us get over what we have lost on the way and start afresh.

This is why we want to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture. So here we are, ready to take the challenge.

1) b) What, for it, would be the main challenge of this nomination?

The main challenges of the nomination would be:

- Gaining the trust and participation of the minorities, especially the Roma/Turks. Gaining the trust and participation of the majority of Plovdivians in understanding that the European Capital of Culture is the chance to change attitudes towards minorities and that the time has come to stop the exclusion of almost one third of the city’s population.

- Attracting a European audience by highlighting Plovdiv’s cultural heritage and promoting the sense of **togetherness** in Plovdiv and across Europe.
- Changing the structure of the cultural audiences in the city. There is no traditional middle-class in Plovdiv. This can only change if we manage to attract new high tech industries. They in turn attract specialists and a qualified labour force with their families, who form new social strata.
- Improving communication and cooperation between local administration, academic institutions, businesses and citizens of Plovdiv and the region.
- Improving communication and cooperation with European partners and citizens. ECoC is a precious opportunity to establish a best practice for the coming decades.
- Reviving a positive belief in the citizens that they can change things **together**. The reluctance of citizens to cooperate has often led to initiatives being abused by the media, by political or other interest groups for their own purposes.
- Keeping the project clean and straight and avoiding too much political influence.

1) c) What are the city’s objectives for the year in question?

The city’s objectives for the year 2019 are:

Blast the ‘ghettos’

... by removing social division and breaking up the “borders” between the groups. By creating dialogue, acceptance and understanding for cultures and traditions of different ethnic groups in the city and

connecting them with other representatives of their ethnicity in Europe. By encouraging citizens’ participation and involvement. By making culture a key factor for development.

Plug into Europe

... by positioning Plovdiv on the cultural map of Europe. By focusing on the assets of the past for its European future. By sharing contemporary European horizons on arts, ethics and aesthetics adding our own style and approach to the diversity of European culture. By changing the view of the Balkan region as being notorious for ethnic conflicts into one of it being a culturally diverse and shared region.

Stop the brain drain

... by giving space to young people and providing them with an opportunity to realize ideas. By recognizing culture as a multifunctional force in development (social, economic, cultural, environmental). Consequently creating a good environment for living, business and investments, improving the quality of the educational system, institutions and enterprises in Plovdiv.

Wipe off the dust

... by revitalizing the isolated landmarks of the city such as the Seven Hills and the Maritsa River through artistic intervention. By bringing back to life some emblematic buildings with prominent architecture such as the famous tobacco warehouses.

Open new horizons

... by engaging businesses and entrepreneurs in the cultural processes and spreading the idea of business through culture. By introducing new technologies (e.g. Technology Park “Gladno Pole” – a new high tech park combining the most up-to-date achievements of agricultural technology and education and also providing a physical space for a business park that the city is missing. The project will help in recovering the essential bonds between education,

high tech and business.). By promoting the perception of culture as a driving force and (creative) industry. By initializing effective public-private partnerships for successful management of cultural resources. By creating conditions for on-going education and additional qualification of tourist and cultural managers introducing best-practice European/ECOC strategies and models.

Mobilize resources

... by integrating cultural and tourist development as parts of the long-term city development. By upgrading both the cultural and touristic infrastructure. By resolving long-lasting uncertainty concerning the ownership of the cultural and historical sites which currently blocks development. By promoting the sustainable long-term integration of natural and cultural resources.

Share the city

... by decentralizing the places for culture and events from the city centre into the residential areas in order to revitalize the suburbs and enhance accessibility to these events. By improving access to culture for all groups, especially marginalized ones.

2) Explain the concept of the programme which would be launched if the city was nominated European Capital of Culture?

The concept of our programme is based on what we think can still be improved in our city and has direct connections to European issues. Two main focus points emerged during the preparation phase of the bid:

If 'Plovdiv **Together**' is a vision, how can we find our special Plovdivian way of unity – among the majority and minorities (Roma, Turks, Armenians, Jews, Greeks), among different generations (who have different speeds and lifestyles, different

upbringing with or without communism) people with disabilities, disadvantaged people, but also unity with our fellow citizens in Bulgaria and in Europe.

The other question that came up is: how do we re-conquer the urban space and make it a city for all citizens – especially considering the background of Plovdiv being one of the oldest still-inhabited cities in the world. In this sense it is our ambition to see how Plovdiv contributed to the model of the European city in the past, how it contributes in the present and particularly how it will in the future: How can a place like Plovdiv (as an example for other cities) find ways of dealing with ancient, modern, communist and post-communist urban development specifically with regard to the functions of the European city?

The trust in notions of “public” and “**Togetherness**” is widely lost in Plovdiv and Bulgaria. The people and the public space have been abused and violated by a totalitarian regime and are partly still subject to mismanagement and a considerable lack of citizen involvement. It is the loss of trust in the public space as the “agora” that has caused Plovdiv to lose its identity, its unity, and its connection to the European model of the city. We share this with many other cities especially in Eastern Europe where the public space has been abused by politics, and is still by consumerism.

The European Capital of Culture gives us the chance to turn this situation around by using culture and re-positioning it as the focus of our development – not only in Plovdiv, but in other cities in Europe that deal with similar issues as well. We will put our shoulders to the wheel in order to make culture the very basis of development, its driving force and compass. We understand that only cultural vitality and citizens who identify with their city will be able to put Plovdiv and Bulgaria back on the mental map of our fellow European citizens. So far our citizens have been focusing

on the past – the focus is on the city built on cities, the historical layers of the city as a palimpsest: Evmolpia, Philippopolis, Pulpudeva, Trimontium, Filibe, Ploudin, Palden, Plovdiv – the older sister of Troy and Mycenae. It focuses on hierarchies, on vertical structures in decision-making and communication. The concept of the programme for Plovdiv 2019 is to turn the citizens’ attention towards ‘Plovdiv **Together**’, towards sharing cultures and spaces, towards involvement and participation, to flat hierarchies and grass-root movements, to seeing the city as a common, shared space – a European city of the 21st century with an inclusive, open atmosphere and vertical roots that keep it connected to its history. ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ has local, regional, national, European and international implications. It does not only mean ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ locally, but also: Plovdiv **Together** with Bulgaria, Plovdiv **together** with Europe.

Based on this background we want to **fuse** the ethnic and social groups in Plovdiv to create ‘Plovdiv **Together**’, **transforming** the urban space into a cityscape that supports the **togetherness**, which in turn leads to **reviving** the heritage that gives identity and a sense of ownership and helps us **relax** in these times of pressure in order to create sustainable growth and development on a human scale with and for the citizens.

From this storyline we have developed four programme platforms:

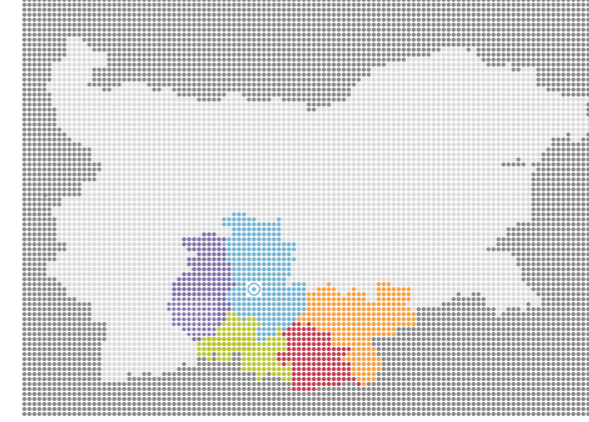
FUSE – includes the concepts and ideas about uniting the groups in Plovdiv: Our goal is to bring the communities and generations closer, to overcome inertia and exclusion, to create a more positive perspective and confidence in regards to the city, so that citizens develop a sense of place and identity, a sense of ownership (sharing and participating in city life), and a sense of community, not only locally, but also with our fellow Europeans. It’s about weaving Plovdiv into the collective

identity of European cities by tying Plovdiv into European networks, co-operations, exchanges, joint ventures, individuals making friends across borders, building good connections between institutions, learning from and with fellow Bulgarians and Europeans.

TRANSFORM – putting the urban and rural landscape back into a social and cultural context by revitalizing isolated landmarks – the hills, the parks, the rowing canal, the Old Town, the abandoned, the ugly and the troubled areas, the quarter called The Trap, the main street, the international fair area, the ghettos, the tobacco warehouses, and innovation and skills, new technologies and education. It’s about transforming perspectives and opportunities, so that young people find a reason to stay and see that they can contribute to change.

REVIVE – reviving the tangible and intangible heritage and putting it into context with the contemporary: making it a part of everyday life rather than just a tourist attraction. Revive is aimed at motivating people to participate in culture and at bringing culture to where the people are – making it thus an everyday experience.

RELAX – striving for high marks in the Gross National Happiness or the Happy Planet Index rather than only achieving good economic results. It’s about wiping off the dust and returning, after decades of communism and transition, to fundamental European values (respect, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, responsibility) while remaining true to our traditions. Relax is about well-being, about the joie de vivre, about slow food and the slow life movement, about our tradition of Ayliak (the relaxed ways that Plovdiv is famous for) and seeing it as a gift in these hurried times. Why not show how a city on the “edge” of Europe can become a good example through finding lifestyles and production methods in line with the Europe 2020 vision of “sustainable, smart and inclusive” growth?



We understand culture as a binding element, which turns people into communities. With its programme for 2019 Plovdiv wants to become a modern European city in Bulgaria sharing European issues of the future: joining in on questions of innovation and sustainable development; ecology and urban environment; social policies and education; synergies in culture and business; children's programmes and life-long learning. So that Plovdiv not only takes pride in its city motto "ancient and eternal" but looks ahead to be "together and sustainable" as well.

3) Could this programme be summed up by a slogan?

The programme we are planning can be summed up by the slogan:

'PLOVDIV TOGETHER'

Together is a special word for us. It pops up in the life of our city at crucial moments of change.

'Plovdiv **Together**' wants to include what is now separated in the city. 'Plovdiv **Together**' means a **together** of minorities and majorities, of generations, of different religious groups, an inclusion of people with special needs, a re-unification of urban spaces with the needs of the citizens, a re-connection of our heritage and contemporary culture, a **together** that makes the city a place where people like to live and feel a sense of ownership.

A recent event showed us that we have a long way to go to reach 'Plovdiv **Together**': After Plovdiv 2019 expressed its support for a Gay Film Festival and offered its headquarters, a historical house in the Old Town, as a venue for one of the film presentations, the fans of the two local A-league football clubs withdrew their formerly expressed support for the Plovdiv candidacy. 'Plovdiv **Together**' is a motto that we have chosen out of bare necessity.

But 'Plovdiv **Together**' also has a European dimension and necessity. Today, in 2013, the economic recession has brought to the forefront long forgotten reasons for how different and incompatible people in Europe are. In Europe and in Plovdiv we have to give **together** a magical meaning and turn it into a password. The password that will grant us access to our common future as a united cultural space. For Plovdiv and for Europe we want to make our **together** not a simple combination of people forced to live in the same place, but **together** should turn into a conscious choice made by individuals who know why: sharing cultural diversity, while safeguarding fundamental rights and values that we have fought for in our city and in Europe. And our **together** has two specific historical precedents that are important inspirations for us and touch us deeply:

In 1885, the citizens of Plovdiv and the region completed the Bulgarian Unification. This move took away Plovdiv's status as the Capital, but the cause of a unified Bulgaria stood above the mere interests of the city and its leaders and paved the way for the Bulgaria we know today.

Almost a century later, in 1943, the Metropolitan of Plovdiv (the Head of the ecclesiastical region of Plovdiv, who later became Patriarch Cyril of the whole Bulgarian Church) positioned himself firmly on the railway tracks stopping the trains literally packed with Bulgarian Jews being deported to the death camps. **Together**, we Bulgarians saved our Jews. 50,000 Bulgarian citizens, mostly Jews but including also Roma and members of other local minorities were rescued from death and despair. We firmly believe that the similarities within us, be it in the different groups in Plovdiv or the different cultures in Europe, are more and stronger than the differences. And the differences after all give our cultural and social life that flavour and spice that makes it worth living... **TOGETHER!**

4) Which geographical area does the city intend to involve in the "European Capital of Culture" event? Explain this choice.

The geographical area to be involved in the European Capital of Culture 2019 event in Plovdiv will be the Thracian plain (around Plovdiv) and the Rhodope mountains to the South of the city – the landscape involved is economically, historically and psychologically associated with Plovdiv and its area.

Plovdiv as a candidate city is supported by five Regional Districts of South-Central Bulgaria (the Regional District of Plovdiv surrounding the city, Pazardzhik, Haskovo, Smolyan, and Kardzhali) with a total population of about 1.5 million people. The first three districts are situated in the Thracian Plain and the last two in the Rhodope Mountains. The links between Plovdiv and the supporting region have been established over the centuries. Plovdiv was the administrative, economic, and cultural centre at the crossroads between these territories and at different times in its history, has been the capital (e.g. as the former capital of the Roman Province of Thrace and later of the Bulgarian State of Eastern Rumelia). Plovdiv (with a current population of over 347,000) owes its past glory to the area and the surrounding towns, and they in turn, owed their prosperity to Plovdiv.

The former, antique name of Thrace was "Europe" (see the Antique Greek geographers, e.g. Strabo) and from this area the name was given as a gift to the continent. It is now recognized as the cradle of all Indo-European tribes and peoples, the homeland of the first European culture in

the Neolithic times (7,000-5,000 B.C). So the common roots of all European cultures can be traced here – not only in the city of Plovdiv, the capital of Thrace, but in the whole region. The common pre-European language emerged here and traces of the inhabitants are still visible in more than 400 'kurgan' (artificial mounds raised over graves in the Neolithic settlements). Some astonishing sights are located in the area involved in our bid, like the greatest antique tomb in South Eastern Europe in Starosel, the unique Medieval mountain monastery in Bachkovo, the Assenovgrad churches and chapels and the biggest archaeological complex in the Balkans – the ancient Thracian city of Perperikon, which encompasses settlements not only from Antiquity, but also the Medieval era, from the Bronze and even Neolithic Ages.

Including this diverse area creates mutual benefits for the region and the city on the level of implementing programmes and joint tourism activities. It is important to attract visitors and develop long-term strategies for the entire region, which is culturally inseparable from Plovdiv.

5) Please confirm that you have the support of the local and/or regional political authorities.

The Municipal Foundation "Plovdiv 2019" was established on 27 September 2011 with the official decision of the City Council Plovdiv, with unanimous political support, which guarantees continuity in the pursuit of the purpose and independence of the organisation's activities from party and political interests. The support is unchanged in spite of the political changes in the same year.

A financial commitment of 7,3 Mil Euro for the years 2014-2020 was given by the City Council on August 1st 2013. Even before this decision, the City Council

confirmed its unconditional commitment to the city's candidacy by voting on a declaration with a full majority. In this declaration it is pointed out that the local authority is planning to work after 2019 in the direction of supporting the development of culture in the city and the region and the unification of the creative energy of local, national and European cultural operators. The aim is to emphasize and strengthen the common aspects of European cultures and the more adequate sharing and recognition of cultural diversity on the continent.

Since 2012 Plovdiv's candidacy for European Capital of Culture has been supported by the 17 municipalities in the Regional District Plovdiv, of which our city is the administrative centre. The candidacy is also supported by the other four Regional Districts constituting the South-Central Region in Bulgaria. The signed declarations do not only show institutional support, the municipalities and the cultural operators from the whole region will submit their project proposals to be included in the programme for 2019. In the signed documents a priority is given to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage, as well as to the development of tourism and culture in the strategic development plans of the South-Central region. The main purpose is the realization of cultural exchange, the decentralization of cultural life, as well as the involvement of new audiences.

6) How does the event fit into the long-term cultural development of the city and, where appropriate, of the region?

The European Capital of Culture event and the city's strategic moves for culture are closely inter-connected. In the strategic documents of the city, the event is embedded as an important step and driving force within a serious ambition

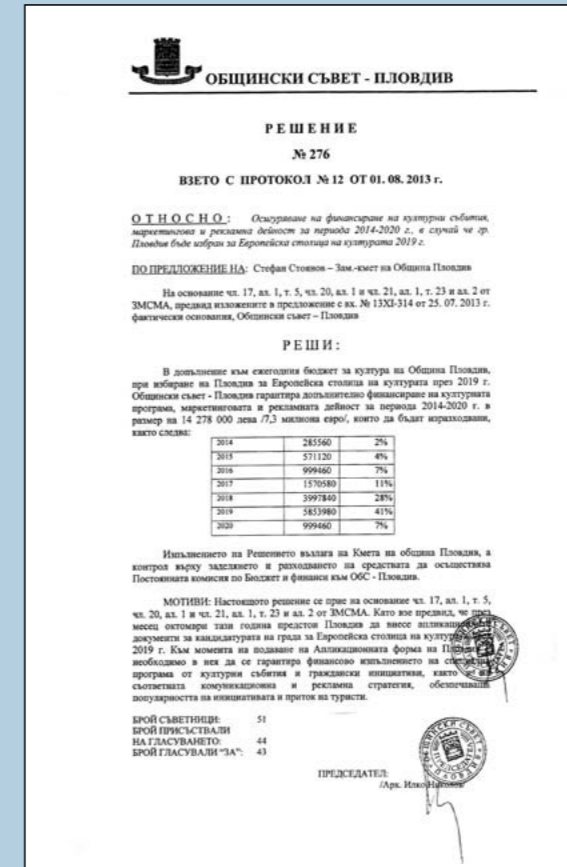
to focus on culture as a key element of Plovdiv's long-term development. This has been made obvious in the Management Programme 2011-2015 by Plovdiv Municipality where it is stated that one of the objectives and priorities is to support the bid for European Capital of Culture and that the candidacy in turn, is key in the further cultural development of the city. In the charter of the Foundation Plovdiv 2019, laid down on 14 July 2011, the City Council even defined the development of the new long term Cultural Strategy as one of the tasks to be carried out by the Foundation – foreseeing that the candidacy for Plovdiv 2019 and the Cultural Strategy will be best aligned if in the hands of the same institution. The new Cultural Strategy is going to be presented at the end of the year. The leading themes that are being outlined in the new Cultural Strategy integrate the concept of 'Plovdiv **Together**' and formulate a great deal of intersecting themes with the European Capital of Culture Candidacy, e.g. Creative City, Slow City, Human development, **together** (as an expression of better integration between different groups and communities), the fusion of old & new – tradition & innovation.

The Cultural Strategy foresees four main development areas:

- 1.) Cultural tourism
- 2.) Cultural education
- 3.) Creative industries
- 4.) Local/regional cultural identity

They are significant for a large number of the cultural participants from the public and private sectors and have therefore the potential to bring material and immaterial resources **together** for joint projects.

- "Cultural tourism" stands for the strong outside orientation, which could be the second field of development. Cultural tourism needs committed and connected citizens and the counterbalancing force of cultural education.



MUNICIPAL COUNCIL PLOVDIV RESOLUTION No 276 ADOPTED WITH PROTOCOL No 12 of 01.08.2013

REGARDING: Providing funding for cultural events, marketing and advertisement activities for the period 2014 – 2020, in case that the City of Plovdiv is chosen for 2019 European Capital of Culture.

UNDER PROPOSAL BY: Stefan Stoyanov, Deputy Mayor of Plovdiv Municipality.

Based on Art. 17, Par. 1, It. 5, Art. 20, Par. 1, and Art. 21, Par. 1, It. 23 and Par. 2 of the Local Government and Administration Act, considering the factual grounds stated in Proposal No 13XI-314 of 25.07.2013, the Municipal Council Plovdiv, hereby

DECIDED
In case that the City of Plovdiv is chosen for 2019 European Capital of Culture, in addition to the annual culture budget of Plovdiv Municipality, the Municipal Council – Plovdiv guarantees additional funding of the culture program, marketing and advertisement activities for the period 2014 – 2020 in the amount of BGN 14,278,000 (EUR 7.3 million), that will be spent as follows (figures in BGN):

2014	285,560	2%
2015	571,120	4%
2016	999,460	7%
2017	1,570,580	11%
2018	3,997,840	28%
2019	5,853,980	41%
2020	999,460	7%

The execution of the Resolution is assigned to the Mayor of Plovdiv Municipality and the control of the earmarking and disbursement of funds will be performed by the Budget and Finances Standing Committee with Municipal Council Plovdiv.

GROUND: This Resolution is adopted based on Art. 17, Par. 1, It. 5, Art. 20, Par. 1, and Art. 21, Par. 1, It. 23 and Par. 2 of the Local Government and Administration Act. Whereas in October this year Plovdiv will submit application documents for the city candidacy as 2019 European Capital of Culture. As of the moment of submission of the City of Plovdiv application form it is necessary to financially guarantee the implementation of the special program of cultural events and civil initiatives, and the respective communication and advertisement strategy, thus securing the initiative popularity and attraction of tourists.

Council members: 51 / Attending the vote: 44 / Votes in favour: 43 / Abstentions: 1

Signature and round seal of the Chairman of Municipal Council, Plovdiv
Arch. Ilko Nikolov

- “Cultural education” stands in this case for a strong inside orientation of cultural policy and the questions of how to involve the inhabitants of Plovdiv in cultural reception and production. This is fundamental for building a strong identity and connection to the city – especially in these days of big global changes.
- “Cultural industries” will be another leading key development area in the cultural sector (how to become the centre for cultural industries in Bulgaria?), next to the role of culture in the city’s general development.
- “Local/regional cultural identity” stands for goals like defining the identities of Plovdiv and their manifestations in for example, infrastructure, tangible and intangible cultural heritage; the ethnic and religious minorities and their specific culture, and consequently to adapt the different cultural events to the different audiences – ethnicities, religious groups, and people with special needs.

With the European Capital of Culture concept Plovdiv 2019 bid putting the principles of the cultural strategy into action, the event is clearly an important stepping-stone in the long-term cultural development of the city. For example:

The goals for “cultural tourism” are embedded in the revitalization of cultural heritage and the neglected urban spaces, capacity building and opportunity management.

The goals for “cultural education” are embedded in the ECoC themes of better social inclusion for marginalized groups, improved access to culture for all citizens, citizen involvement in cultural activities, better integration of young people’s initiatives, and an independent art scene.

The goals for “creative industries” are

largely enclosed in the ECoC goals of presenting new cultural products, enhancing the profile and position of festivals and cultural operators, positioning the city as a brand, and improving financing capacities in the field of fundraising.

The goals for “local/regional cultural identity” are reflected in the ECoC bid through a focus on the vitalization of the Old Town, involving the art schools of the Old Town as places for culture, improving the landscape architecture, and attracting new audiences and new inhabitants / keeping the young.

On the level of the strategic goal of Europeanization and internationalization of the city, the title can act as a decisive step towards proactively creating European and international networks (like the Historic cities network with Italian and Bulgarian cities, ‘Creative Cities’, ‘Slow Cities’) or strengthening bonds to existing networks (like ASSITEJ, MitOst, ATLANTIS, Twin Cities) which are vital to the cultural and economic life of the city as well as to the successful beyond-local and beyond-national aims of the ECoC.

The Plovdiv 2019 bid is actually affecting our agenda for the future cultural and green policy, as well as the education policy and the policy for SMEs (Small and medium enterprises) in the creative sector – the candidacy has proved to raise the level of ambition and to set higher aims in all these fields, to open up the perspective towards Europe.

One of the contributions that Plovdiv 2019 can make to the strategic goals that are being developed in the future Cultural Strategy (better coordination, pooling of funding, elimination of competition between cultural initiatives, strengthening joint projects) is to establish an unprecedented strong cooperation and communication between the Foundation, the Municipality, public and cultural institutions, the established and

the independent cultural scene, and Plovdiv University and the citizens, encouraging their active participation – the latter being, as stated above, one of the basic factors to develop a cultural identity of the citizens and consequently successful cultural tourism.

The municipality intends to develop a cultural neighbourhood in the central area of the city – the so-called “Trap”: a territory rich in little streets with small handicraft shops, galleries, cafes and houses with distinctive architecture. The area will be closed to traffic and will be developed into a creative industries hub. Designers from Europe and Bulgaria will be attracted to Plovdiv to form a designers’ cluster by being offered attractive living and working conditions such as cheap apartments and offices. The aim is to connect designers with companies in the region (both domestic and international) which have well-developed businesses but lack good design. The ECoC year will constitute a huge driving force and synergies for this kind of long-term cultural and urban development.

The city’s aim to improve and create a healthy urban environment is reflected in the Plovdiv 2019 programme platform RELAX, with projects on health, environment and the ‘slow movement’. The city’s membership in the European environment network EuroNatur shows that the focus on healthy living and environmental sustainability is a focus of both the city’s and the ECoC’s. In 2011 the City of Plovdiv reinstated Tourism as one of the priorities in its long-term development. The strategies include capacity building for operators and facilities, and the build-up of an effective network initiated by the municipality combining sectoral tourism associations and operators to achieve a high-quality range of services and develop a joint marketing and advertising strategy – to which the ECoC communication will be closely connected. In the development of new target groups, the title – if awarded – will play a significant role. The European Capital of Culture candidacy is already triggering some

vital improvements, from better marketing in international contexts, to new tourist products, and down to improvement and the creation of infrastructure and skills.

7) To what extent do you plan to forge links with the other city to be nominated European Capital of Culture? In case your city gets the title, do you plan to cooperate with the other bidding cities in your country which have been pre-selected?

Plovdiv hosted a Round table about The Future of Historic Cities for both the Italian and Bulgarian candidate cities on 19 June 2013 in order to make personal contacts between the candidate cities and agree on cooperation. The main topics of the conference covered innovative and contemporary cultural and social trends in the Historic cities’ sustainable development until and beyond 2019-2020. The theme of ‘the contemporary’ in ancient cities is equally relevant to Plovdiv as it is for most of our fellow Italian candidate cities.

We negotiated joint projects with Italian candidates like Siena, Bergamo and Ravenna, some of which will be executed even before 2019. For example Bulgarian and Italian mosaic artists will cooperate in an International Contemporary Mosaics Festival in Ravenna, also including exchange of know-how in the field of mosaics recovery. In Plovdiv there will be a huge opera performance featuring nearly 100 children from different minorities who will attend a special workshop for a joint project with Bergamo. Educational and research projects are also being discussed with our partners from Siena.

With the round table we also aim at installing a permanent European city network where

learning and best practice can be shared between Bulgarian and Italian cities, gradually expanding to include other countries as well. The forum was organized with the cooperation of Italian citizens and businesspeople who live in Plovdiv.

On a concrete level, sharing a part of the activities with the Italian Capital of Culture and other European cultures will focus on priority fields such as:

Innovative joint programmes with the Universities and Academy of Fine Arts in Plovdiv in the field of contemporary art and science (incl. the food industry) will be developed with Perugia according to the agreement signed at the round table on 19 June 2013. The emphasis is on the wide range of initiatives in the fields of science, arts, digital technologies and higher education, as well as research and exchange related to the ancient Etruscan and Thracian cultures. Furthermore, Plovdiv will join Perugia and the municipalities in the Umbrian region to develop comprehensive European social programmes within the ELCN (European Local Communities Network).

Our motto ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ has a very close relation to some of the social projects of Ravenna. On 19 June 2013 during the discussions at the Bulgarian-Italian meeting, Plovdiv and Ravenna agreed on projects and direct cooperation between the art and cultural institutions of the two cities in the areas of literature, performing arts, fine arts, music and traditional culture, archaeology, museum management, restoration of cultural heritage, and the promotion of architecture and contemporary art. Other important areas of future collaboration will support the education and learning activities and European programmes supporting the exchange of students in the field of higher education, as well as cooperation between universities (Erasmus programme), vocational education and training (Leonardo da Vinci programme),

adult education (Grundtvig programme), activities for schools from pre-primary to upper secondary or equivalent (Comenius programme), institutions and activities to promote European integration (Jean Monnet programme).

Bulgaria and Italy shared a similar history during the Unification Period, and here we can exchange knowledge and experience with Bergamo. Another peculiarity of Italy and the region of Plovdiv is connected with the unique geo-strategic location between the three continents – Europe, Africa and Asia. This is a perfect prerequisite for a closer study of the different ethnicities and religious denominations that share life and territory. Plovdiv is looking forward to planning on-going meetings with Matera, Bergamo and Palermo in youth and sports activities, digital technologies, as well as within research programmes on multiculturalism in the Historic Cities.

Further options for cooperation are e.g. staff exchange and the possibility for young people from Plovdiv and Italy to share experience working **together** e.g. as interns for the parallel ECoC. This cooperation will create conditions for sustainable development through long-lasting partnerships between the cultural institutions, creative artists and programmes of Plovdiv and Italy in the two main areas of the project ‘European Capital of Culture’, “European dimension” and “City and Citizens” – with special focus on creating networks between Bulgarian and Italian non-governmental, youth and creative organisations for future exchange in the fields of education and culture beyond 2019/2020.

With the Italian fellow ECoC and the Italian-Bulgarian chamber of commerce in Plovdiv we will cooperate on fundraising, incl. developing project clusters and sponsorship agreements with the Italian businesses in our region.

If Plovdiv wins the title, we will go for a second Re-Unification with the other Bulgarian candidate cities after the

first one that took place in 1885. This time it will happen not on a political but on a cultural level. We will offer to the different cities a real possibility to present their strongest cultural projects developed for the bid in Plovdiv in 2019.

8) Explain how the event could fulfil the criteria listed below. Please substantiate your answer for each of the criteria. As regards “The European Dimension”, how does the city intend to contribute to the following objectives:

a) to strengthen cooperation between the cultural operators, artists and cities of your country and other Member States, in all cultural sectors;

We will include partners, artists, producers and cultural operators from other cities and other countries into all our activities and projects, since even when we focus on local themes, they will always be enlivened by the diversity of contributions from outside the city and country.

For cooperation we focus on our partners within Bulgaria first. Traditionally Bulgaria has been a centralized country and culture has been mainly focussed in Sofia. The network of candidate cities in Bulgaria will be an ideal starting point to initiate cooperation between our cultural operators and artists – especially on the basis of what the cities are planning for 2019. At this point our neighbours in Bulgaria will already be aligned in their endeavours to strengthen cooperation. Should Plovdiv be distinguished with the title, the work that the other candidates have done will be a fruitful basis for cooperation between us.

Moreover we will also concentrate on our neighbours beyond the Bulgarian borders. Plovdiv’s geo-strategic position at the crossroads of the Balkans is a great chance for the town to act as a strong agent for changing the view of the Balkan region from a historically and ethnically conflict-notorious one to a culturally diverse and shared one. With our cooperations we want to counterbalance a disturbing tendency: the financial resources, coming from big Western European funds traditionally flow from the West to the East, which has naturally inhibited the collaborative capacities within the Balkan countries. This confronts our countries with the curious situation that partnerships and networks are much more likely to be developed with partners from Western Europe, rather than with our Balkan neighbours. Cooperation will include the music festival Plovdiv Calling Balkan Music, but also focus on our common multi-ethnic and minority issues, residencies and involvement in our activities by musicians, actors, performance artists, writers, poetry slammers, bloggers, painters, photographers, sculptors, video artists, and film-makers. In the context of our project-cluster about contemporary art including the creative industries, the development of local economy solutions in the Roma quarters, and the project Handmade Day we would also like to connect on the level of small fashion, arts & crafts and architecture enterprises, which often offer interesting new products but have few possibilities to connect with markets outside their local context. Along with the above-mentioned aims, connections with cultural operators from non-EU-member states like Serbia, Macedonia, Russia, Moldova, Turkey and Georgia are also of interest to us and a part of our EU Eastern partnership strategy.

Plovdiv wants to tie in more to European networks – on an institutional level as well as on the personal level of cultural operators and artists being in direct contact with each other. Our programme offers a wide range



The “Suvremennik” chitalishte in one of Plovdiv’s neighbourhoods with its public eco-library

of possibilities to link into existing networks of our Plovdivian and Bulgarian cultural institutions and NGOs. Next to the more traditional art forms strongly represented in the programme, we are especially interested in working on themes like historical and contemporary issues in urban spaces (for example with the Italian candidate cities), but also on architecture, urban development, business, ecology, and tourism.

b) to highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;

The richness of cultural diversity in Plovdiv is highlighted in its buildings, monuments and traditions from over 8,000 years of European culture: the ancient theatres and archaeological spaces of Thracian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman culture, the churches and prayer houses of Christian-orthodox, Muslim, Jewish and other religions, a more recent communist and now a contemporary architecture and Bulgarian-European lifestyle.

Ayliak – the Culture of Slowness

Plovdiv is famous in Bulgaria for Ayliak (Айляк). It is a common slang word, used and loved by all Plovdivians (from different ages and cultures). Ayliak is a state of mind, state of freedom, easiness and calmness. This attitude towards life is a typical feature of Plovdiv and its citizens. Of course it doesn't mean that Plovdiv is a slow city with lazy inhabitants, it just seems that people here haven't lost their ability to enjoy life and beauty, walking slowly along the main street, despite the stress of daily life. Plovdiv could be a city-showcase for slow and harmonious existence versus the fast culture, the hectic and stressed lifestyle of the large European cities. Since 2010 there has been an Ayliak

(I LIKE) Fest in Plovdiv, which synchronizes and harmonizes the speeds of the city and its citizens by providing more space for street art and dance, workshops and young Bulgarian music bands. Building on this festival and expanding the Ayliak concept for the European Capital of Culture programme is the Slow City Fest.

Sharing the beauty of rose fragrance

About 60 km north of Plovdiv is the Valley of Roses famous for its rose-growing industry. Roses have been cultivated there for centuries, and produce 2/3 of the world's rose oil. The reason for this can be found in the high quality of the Bulgarian Kazanluk Rose (Kazanlushka roza), a special variety of rose that has been developed in our country. The rose oil is called “the liquid gold” of Bulgaria and in fact rose oil is three times more expensive than gold. From 3,000 kg of roses only one Kilogram of rose oil can be extracted. An annual Rose Festival is held in the towns of Kazanluk, Karlovo and Sopot with the election of a Rose Queen, the harvesting ritual in the rose gardens and a parade along the streets of the town.

Red Hot (Chili) Peppers

The Pepper, Tomato, Traditional Foods and Crafts Fest in Kurtovo Konare (35 km from Plovdiv) reflects the laid-back lifestyle and how much people of the Region care about good food and good music. The village cultivates a very rare, special type of red pepper. The product of the special peppers – lyutenitsa, a special sauce – is already being patented, and people from Kurtovo Konare are officially part of the International Slow Food Movement. The festival has taken place annually since 2009 with the help of the European Regional Development Fund. It is evolving from a local into a regional event using new technologies and digital information channels, attracting new

audiences, establishing new partnerships, uniting artists, professionals and amateurs, resulting in social change and creating a cultural brand for the region.

CHITALISHTA – the Bulgarian model of decentralized cultural infrastructure

The Chitalishta (community culture centres) of the 19th and early 20th century during the occupation by the Ottomans had a crucial role in preserving and developing Bulgarian culture and language and thus made the Bulgarian National Revival possible. More than 35 Chitalishta still exist in Plovdiv. These typical Bulgarian centres usually have libraries, hobby clubs (workshops for knitting or singing for example), music, and dance and literature clubs. Today, the significance of these Chitalishta is decreasing, mostly due to a lack of funding. The city intends to develop specific Chitalishta projects, because they are the main hubs for cultural and educational life in these neighbourhoods. The Bulgarian Chitalishta are unique cultural institutions in Europe and strengthen the process of decentralization of culture – which is necessary for our city.

The harmony in asymmetrical rhythms

Bulgarian folk music is famous for its “asymmetrical” rhythms, where the musical time is not split in even beats. Other than in Bulgarian music, such asymmetrical rhythms exist only in the traditional music of some Scandinavian countries. Brilliant in their originality are the Evmolpeya Choir and Trakia Folklore Ensemble who act as ambassadors for Plovdiv around the world. The Plovdiv region is also famous for another music genre – a mixture between Gypsy and Turkish instrumental music and jazz interpretations – the Gypsy Wedding Music Formations – rooted in the culture of Bulgarian minorities. The wedding orchestras consist predominantly of (as they call themselves) Roma and Turkish-Muslim minorities. This music features simple lyrics, and is usually played by talented

clarinetists and accordionists, and their performances are frequently accompanied by kyuchek, the Turkish belly dance.

c) to bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore?

The city intends to contribute to bringing the common aspects of European cultures to the fore by tackling or celebrating the following issues which Plovdiv shares with other European cities or societies:

The Alphabetic connection

For the first time in the history of the European Capital of Culture initiative, a city using the Cyrillic alphabet (azbuka) will be designated with the title. The letters were developed in the First Bulgarian Empire during the 9th century AD. On 11 May 1851, the two saints Cyril and Methodius, who invented the alphabet, were celebrated in Plovdiv for the first time. Since then this day has been celebrated as our most prominent expression of national identity and reflects the Bulgarian admiration for Education, Science and Culture. Pope John Paul II declared the brothers “patrons of Europe”. Now the 11th (sometimes the 24th) of May is celebrated in many countries – Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In fact around 250 million people use the Cyrillic alphabet. Cyrilizia “КИРИЛИЦА” will be a co-production cross-border project, connecting different countries, using and celebrating the Cyrillic alphabet. We are proud to have retained the traditions of our language and culture beyond the Ottoman occupation.

Minorities, mixed ethnicities and Roma

Plovdiv, like many other cities in Europe, is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious city and has had experience of dealing with this diversity for many centuries. Migration has caused European cities and their cultures to become more mixed and we

are eager to share and exchange best practice, experience and projects in this area, with other European cities. Roma and Sinti are ethnic groups present in many European countries and it is not an easy task to reconcile their needs and lifestyles with that of the majority of the European population. A specific phenomenon of Plovdiv is that a part of the members of the Roma population here consider themselves to be Turkish and are Muslims. Plovdiv is looking forward to connecting its efforts to integrate these groups into the wider community, with other cities in Europe and to contribute to the general discourse on a European level. Further common aspects of European culture that we could propose are e.g. the Thracian, Greek and Roman heritage; the aspects related to post-communist societies in Eastern Europe; and the issues around European cities between ancient heritage and contemporary urban development.

d) Can you specify how this event could help to strengthen the city's links with Europe?

The European added value of our project lies in connecting Plovdivian and European cultural operators, artists, students, and citizens, strengthening existing European networks and fostering new ones, getting involved in European discourse and contributing to solving pan-European issues. The motivation for this is already high for a city that tries to strategize culture and sees a clear necessity for internationalization – but the event of European Capital of Culture would be a key element in breaking these ambitions and strategies down, to make them concrete and participatory for the citizens. Moreover the event is a key motivator for the city to raise the level of ambition and drive the development of the city from a European perspective. The European Capital of Culture is an event that would help to strengthen the city's links with Europe almost “by force”

since it already now induces everyone who gets involved, whether it is politicians, civil servants, teachers, artists, citizens, cultural operators or businesses to look further than their immediate local context, to question their own or their institution's relationship and attitude towards Europe. At the very least it will create raised awareness for Europe in people who communicate about the European Capital of Culture.

The city's links to Europe will be strengthened by initiating projects for young people and thus building a foundation for a future stable connection to Europe – since the experiences, the level of capacity and the level of mobility of the young people will rise and draw them even closer to Europe.

The city of Plovdiv sees the engagement in the event as an investment in strengthening the city's links to Europe and makes a strong commitment to ensure that the European Dimension will be a solid basis for the event.

9) Explain how the event could meet the criteria listed below. Please substantiate your answer for each of the criteria. As regards “City and Citizens”, how does the city intend to ensure that the programme for the event

a) attracts the interest of the population at European level;

The programme for Plovdiv 2019 will aim at broad local and European audiences. We want to attract cultural experts and artists, but also the wider public, local visitors and tourists from all over Europe, the young and the young at heart, general and specialist audiences. Special interest groups will be addressed by projects focussing on urban development

and architecture (like the Tobacco City) or those projects with a focus on special themes like the Roma culture. We will strive to attract the more generally interested cultural audience with projects like the Contemporary Art Biennale and visual arts projects like Digital Age, both featuring well-known artists who attract an international audience. Jazz lovers will be invited to explore the Bulgarian Jazz scene as well as internationally renowned musicians including Grammy award winners, and many other exceptional talents at the Plovdiv Jazz Nights, which will take on a special format in 2019. For lovers of classical music we will present the many Bulgarian artists who are often internationally acclaimed but not perceived as Bulgarian artists, like mezzo-soprano Vesselina Kazarova.

A great challenge will be to create an attractive programme that encourages visitors to come to the city, especially from European countries in which most people have never heard of Plovdiv before. So next to artistic excellence and a strong international dimension of specific projects we have to focus especially on communication, marketing and tourism strategies to create travel incentives on the one hand – and on the other hand to attract foreign travellers who come for other international and European events, which are often hosted in Plovdiv like rowing, chess, and other sports events and trade fairs.

b) encourages the participation of artists, stakeholders in the socio-cultural scene and the inhabitants of the city, its surroundings and the area involved in the programme.

The programme includes many projects that put a strong emphasis on participation, because the motto ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ also means to create the European Capital of Culture programme **Together**. Involvement

and participation are principles, which the citizens in Plovdiv have not had the chance to practice so much in the past, so the Plovdiv 2019 programme can represent a breakthrough for more active citizen engagement and set new standards for the following years.

The citizens of the city but also of the villages and municipalities around Plovdiv which are included in the bid will be involved in revitalizing the typical Bulgarian institution of the Chitalishta (community centres). Under the guidance of artists, designers and socio-cultural institutions the population living around the 35 Chitalishta will be invited to re-create the centres and fill them with new life according to their own needs and ideas.

The project-cluster RegionalE is a platform to make artistic and community activities in the included region visible and create a special programme for the regional festivals. Traditionally, people living in rural areas participate avidly in the organisation of these festivals, like the Tomato & Pepper Festival or the Rose Festival. For the new Rhodope Fairy Tales Festival (which will be started in 2019) villagers of the Rhodope Mountains will compile an archive of songs, legends, stories and fairy-tales, which are in danger of being forgotten soon. French and Bulgarian artists will develop forms of orally recounting these stories in the villages and create a fairy tale route that visitors can follow.

Participation of children will be a part of almost every project in the cluster edYOUcate, for example in Children City on Youth Hill. In the Children City that we will build with children on the highest hill in Plovdiv, the kids themselves (age 7-12) will form their own governance structure, elect a mayor and create their own currency.

For the project Art Residencies in Schools and Universities, children will have the chance to work with professional, even famous artists and choose the art form they want to learn about. An example for the involvement of artists

is the project-cluster around the Roma theme where local artists, artists from the Roma community in Plovdiv, other cities and countries, stakeholders of the socio-cultural scene (including NGOs) and Roma residents will be involved in developing the Mobile Education Centres, the social design project for both an innovative local economy and the Community HUB.

The project cluster Urban Dreams will see active artists' participation for example in the development of workshops, exhibitions and interventions in the decaying tobacco warehouses and for the creation of the project Hotel **Together**, where disused hotels and hotel sections will be transformed into artistic spaces by painters, writers, actors, directors and producers of radio plays. The project ADATA Unlimited Art Island will involve ecologists, botanists, landscape-architects and designers in creating temporary settlements for resident artists to live in for 3-6 months and create art works for the island.

c) is sustainable and an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city?

The programme of Plovdiv 2019 is being developed alongside the new cultural strategy of the city, which will be presented at the end of this year. The cultural strategy has been initiated by the municipal Foundation Plovdiv 2019 as a part of its long-term mission. After the expiry of the previous strategic period our efforts in the current document are aiming at:

- Fostering citizen ownership in cultural processes and creating identity;
- Providing more transparent funding and better distribution of funding, including NGOs and projects of the free culture scene;
- Facilitating better cultural education and enhancing cultural tourism.

For all these efforts the European Capital of Culture will be a testing ground and a learning field for the above-

mentioned cultural practices as they will be implemented during the preparatory years and also the year of the event.

A cornerstone of the sustainability of the programme in the long-term is the encouragement that it will provide for various institutions:

- the business sector,
- non-governmental organisations,
- artists
- and the educational system

to communicate, cooperate and create sustainable partnerships. This guarantees an increase in the potential for collaboration between these structures, as well as helping to foster local networks. Our aim is to stimulate the united participation of various city departments in more community projects in order to initiate a learning process in citizens, politicians, businesses and civil servants about the relevance of culture – not only from the past, but for the present and future.

For Plovdiv 2019 a very important task is preparing sustainable structures that can carry a project of this size. This will include those traditionally working for the socio-cultural environment of the city (Cultural department of the Municipality Plovdiv, Foundation Plovdiv 2019) but also the many private non-profit and for-profit organisations or groups that exist in Plovdiv, but are not well tied into an overall strategy yet. Investments in developing the competence of not only cultural managers, artists and producers, but also cultural tourism operators – in short: capacity building – is key to the new Cultural strategy and in our efforts for the preparation of the programme Plovdiv 2019.

Plovdiv 2019 has already started this process with the financing of projects focusing on citizen involvement and European partnerships in order to raise awareness and practice levels, in order to strengthen the cultural management skills, the project development capacity of the non-governmental sector in Plovdiv, the individual ability of networking with

European partners and fostering 'out of the box' thinking for artists, producers, tourist and cultural operators.

10) How does the city plan to get involved in or create synergies with the cultural activities supported by the European institutions?

There is vast expertise on EU funding in the municipal department of European Policies and Cooperation. The department is dealing exclusively with the preparation and the management of projects financially supported by European institutions. Since 2003, when this department was created, it has developed more than 300 projects financed by European institutions. Members of the team Plovdiv 2019, the EPC-department and the culture department meet on a weekly basis to keep each other updated on various opportunities for funding from the European institutions. Until 2013 the implemented projects received funding mainly from the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (Education and Training Programme, Youth in Action Programme, Culture Programme, Europe for Citizens Programme, Media Programme), while after 2014 we will concentrate on the new 2014-2020 programme period that includes the Creative Europe

Programme, the Erasmus for All Programme, and the Europe for Citizens Programme. The project-clusters edYOUcate and Animate the City, and also projects from EURhythmica and others are mainly aimed at young people and at involving them in long-term projects that will make the city more attractive and encourage them not to leave. To support these projects, our team is prepared to apply for funding to the Education, Training, Youth and Sport Programme, Erasmus for All Programme and Creative Europe Programme (especially

with regard to young artists and their possibilities to explore new markets abroad).

In order to tackle the minority issues and to foster more exchange between the ethnic minorities and the other population groups who live in Plovdiv and to connect with other European countries we have developed projects such as the Mobile Education Centres in Stolipinovo, The Community Hub, Balkan Fair, Backyards stories, Plovdiv calling Balkan Music and Turbo Cultures. They can be implemented by using the support from the European Social Fund (ESF), the PROGRESS Programme, the Creative Europe Programme, and the Youth in Action Programme.

Within the ESF there are special micro-financing funds (The European Progress Microfinance Facility) which are not available directly to entrepreneurs but to selected micro-finance providers – in Bulgaria specifically to JOB MFI and Mikrofond AD – which are potential funding partners for our activities in the Roma quarters, specifically for the part 'Innovation: Local Economy' in the project cluster Mahala - The Neighbourhood.

The Environment Action Programme for the EU, newly proposed by the DG Environment called "Living well, within the limits of our planet" is a potential source of funding for some of the projects in the project-cluster Ayliak City which deals with Slow Living and sustainable environmental activities.

Working with the Italian and Bulgarian candidate cities we can make use of the Europe for Citizens Programme especially when dealing with projects about identity and citizenship, youth and staff exchanges and the different viewpoints of our countries on certain themes, like the approach to Historic Cities and their contemporary implications.

Plovdiv 2019 also plans to connect with local cultural partners, organisations and NGOs, working with European institutions and their partners from different European countries.

11) Are some parts of the programme designed for particular target groups (young people, minorities, etc.)? Specify the relevant parts of the programme planned for the event.

We have built and organized each project-cluster in our programme so that in 2019 there will be projects for each specific target group – children and youngsters, elderly people, people with disabilities and disadvantaged people, and minorities. Moreover, most events in the programme will provide free entrance for these groups. Projects for children and youngsters are very important in order to show them new and challenging ways of expressing themselves and their inner potential. Some children, apt to social isolation, need special attention. For them we have designed special projects with an incentive effect, which can help them socialize and overcome their introversion. Such a project is Children City on The Youth Hill, where kids will have the power to experiment with various crafts and occupations and to govern a whole city. Another amusing place for children is called the Park of Adventures, which will be an attraction both for kids and their parents, a place where the whole family can have fun, relax and be involved in various sports, creative and recreation activities. Children will also be actively involved in a series of scientific and educational projects such as Children's Festival of Science, including science labs and hands-on experiments. The projects Slow Science and Slow Education are adapted to the needs of children, presenting models for alternative slow education. In Artist Residence in Schools and Universities artists and children/young people will work and create **together**. For youngsters we have projects encouraging their activity and creativity, such as free open-air practice and training sessions in

different fields of sports, dances, martial arts and also sports competitions between different schools and different universities.

Elderly people in Bulgaria are in a socially unfavourable and disadvantaged position, having not enough social privileges, with very low incomes, living on the edge of survival. We will try to provide a change to what are sometimes monotonous everyday lives and share with them a number of fresh and exciting projects, thus giving them the sparkle they need to feel noticed and involved in social life. Dance evenings and sports events for elderly people is one of the projects which is designed to rejuvenate the spirit of each person who is advanced in years. Another project targeted at seniors as well as at people with disabilities is the project ART E.R. (ART Emergency Room) which is planned to take place in hospitals, old people's homes and houses for people with mental and physical disabilities, where the artists will not only show art performances but will also actively involve the people, sharing with them ideas and experiences and encouraging and assisting them to participate in the programme.

We deeply value our rituals and traditions and we are willing to pass them on in an innovative way from older to younger generations. For this reason part of our projects for 2019 are inspired by our folklore traditions and will be implemented with the active participation of elderly people. Such projects are Rhodope Fairy-Tales, Village of Gela – Bagpiping Contest, The Pepper & Tomato Festival on traditional foods and crafts and many other projects from the project clusters RegionalE and Ayliak City.

People with disabilities in Bulgaria have the lowest social status in Europe. They need to receive more attention from society and to be more involved in public activities, which will help them feel active and independent. In the course of preparing our programme for 2019, we are constantly considering the needs of physically disadvantaged

people and how to make it easier for them to participate and get involved. For this target group we have prepared chess and backgammon open air competitions, hand wrestling and the projects ART E.R. and Arousing the Senses while Mobile Art Lab for Children is a project which is mainly targeted at children with specific needs. Practically all events in our programme will be planned and implemented in a way to facilitate the access and participation of people with disabilities.

Another target group which is very important to us and which includes a high percentage of residents is the group of poor people. Art Patronage is a social project directed at disadvantaged people from different social groups. It is based on artistic interventions in aid of poor people, aiming to foster communication and dialogue with them, inviting them to share their life stories, and to positively influence their self-esteem related to social status, and enhance their overall well-being.

We are aware of the problems we need to solve regarding social exclusion of minority groups, especially Roma, in the city. Our aim is to encourage them to share their traditions and cultures as well as to facilitate integration processes. Backyard Stories is a large-scale project, showing the rich cultural diversity of the city and aiming at bringing people from various ethnicities and neighbourhoods **together** by sharing their culture and traditions. Most of the problems in Roma communities arise from the high level of illiteracy. We will design special innovative educational programmes, adapted to meet the needs of the Roma. The project Mahala - The Neighbourhood is a programme designed to help capsulated minority groups in some of the city's neighbourhoods open up. Through the Community HUB we aim to foster creative interactions between minority and other communities and facilitate their participation in joint cultural activities. Preserving and promoting Roma culture and

traditions is another important priority in our programme for 2019. A project of this type is Plovdiv Calling Balkan Music, which is a festival mainly for gypsy Balkan music.

In order to foster togetherness and proximity between different social groups we have created the project cluster Animate the City. It includes projects for children, elderly people, disabled people, poor people, and ethnic minorities. For each target group there will be specific training programmes, workshops, seminars, aiming to promote health and sports culture and a healthy lifestyle among the population.

12) What contacts has the city or the body responsible for preparing the event established, or what contacts does it intend to establish, with:

- cultural operators in the city?

The Plovdiv 2019 Foundation is closely connected to and working **together** with the cultural operators of Plovdiv Drama Theatre, the State Puppet Theatre Plovdiv, the State Opera Plovdiv, the "Ancient Plovdiv" Municipal Institute, the Ivan Vazov Public Library, the Natural History Museum, the City Gallery of Fine Arts (Plovdiv) and Plovdiv's Centre for Contemporary Art, which is the only one in the country. Furthermore, we are in contact with the Interartfest Association which organizes the International Theatre Festival "Stage on crossroads", with the Open Arts Foundation (which e.g. organizes the Night of Museums and Galleries Plovdiv), with The Black Box Foundation that organizes a Chamber Theatre and Dance Festival with many international participants, and innovative ways of interaction with the public, and with the Plovdiv Photographic Centre Foundation which holds the International Festival of

Photography. These and other institutions and NGOs will be our partners for projects like the EURhythmica-cluster, the Art for a Forgotten Future-cluster on the arts, and on the cluster Culture meets People.

In order to strengthen the cooperation with cultural operators and institutions and to focus on the efforts of the creative sector in the joint preparations of the city's candidacy for European Capital of Culture, the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation created a programme for funding, which supports projects' realization in the directions Creative Plovdiv and Europe-Plovdiv-Citizens in keeping with the two main criteria for ECoC as outlined by the European Commission. Throughout the candidacy period the foundation will be permanently evaluating, funding and promoting cultural and citizen's projects with the help of experts from different areas such as education, architecture, infrastructure and communications. Some of these projects are expected to be developed with the participation of European partners in their respective fields and they might be developed into projects for the programme of 2019. The Plovdiv 2019 Foundation has established contacts and co-operations with the three art-schools and the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts, and the colleges and universities in Plovdiv. Many of these institutions are involved in co-operations all over Europe. For example professors and students from the Plovdiv University are working **together** with the municipal Cultural Department on the cultural mapping of the city, initiated by Plovdiv 2019. **Together** with the students' councils of seven universities in Plovdiv we also have joint initiatives, e.g. the Open Student Fest.

We have contacts with the three large publishing houses in the city – Hermes, Lettera and Janet 45 which take turns in organizing the yearly festival “Plovdiv is reading” with lots of foreign guests, publishers, authors and readers from

different countries. The festival has become the largest event in this field in Bulgaria.

Very important to Plovdiv 2019 is the process of involving the local networks of The Union of Plovdiv artists, the Association of Plovdiv Writers, the Association of Plovdiv Translators, the Association of Plovdiv Architects, the Association of Plovdiv Photographers, the Association of Plovdiv actors, and private art galleries in Plovdiv.

In the business sector of the city and the region, we cooperate with companies like KCM AD, Rosa Impex, EVN, Techem, Onduline and many others, which not only sponsor individual festivals and events but also actively participate in organizing them. Plovdiv Municipality has set up an award “Plovdiv” for sponsors and donators and the aforementioned companies have received the award over the past years. We also include amateur groups in our contacts. There are 25 amateur groups – for music, theatre and ballet – that the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation has good access to via Plovdiv Municipality who funds their activities and lends methodological and logistical support.

- cultural operators based outside the city?

As we are supported by the region around Plovdiv we are going to put a spotlight on the many festivals and celebrations of the rural areas in our project cluster RegionIE and have made contacts with the cultural operators of the Bagpipe Playing Contest in the village of Gela, the Wake up and Beglika environmental festivals in the Rhodope mountains, the Rose Festival in Kazanlak, Karlovo, Sopot, the Water festival (mineral springs and spa festival) in Hissar, the Sopot Vuzduhariya Festival of Flying Objects, the KUKOVE International Festival of Kukeri and Masquerade in Rakovski, the Festival of Medieval Art Asenovgrad, the Wild

Flower Festival in Smolyan, the Festival of Wine and Grapes in Breztovitz Village, the Secrets of Grandma's Drawers Art Festival in the village of Yagodovo and there are many other cultural operators and activities we would like to present as folkloristic and traditional cultural events of our region.

On a national level we have contacts with the Association of Festivals in Bulgaria; to the National Cinema Centre which organizes the Festival of Bulgarian Documentary Cinema and Animation Golden Rhyton, traditionally held in Plovdiv; to the International Music Academy Orpheus that organizes concerts and master classes with talented children; and to the Foundation Musicartissimo (based outside the city but implementing the festival in Plovdiv) with its festival Music Days in Balabanov's House in the Old Town with the attendance of international participants and guests. With the Sofia Foundation for Culture and art we already negotiated a Plovdiv edition of their contemporary design festival. We intend to make contacts with Sofia Arsenal – Museum for Contemporary Art, the Institute for Contemporary Art Bulgaria, the National Academy for Performing and Media Arts, and many other cultural operators on the national level. This will also be facilitated by the network of cooperations between the Bulgarian candidate cities.

- cultural operators based outside the country?

The Plovdiv 2019 Foundation has established contacts with the CIOFF - International Organisation of Folklore Festivals; with the Organisation of Folk Art (IOV); with the International Association of Chamber Music Festivals; with the ATLANTIS network HEICO building on an already existing Atlantis Network of European art institutions. The project Heritage, Identity and Communication in European Contemporary Art Practices (HEICO) fosters cross-border cultural exchange as well as the examination of their own identity in addition to the identity of partner countries

and their political and cultural heritage. Furthermore, we have established contacts with MitOst – the International Network for Cultural Exchange and Active Citizenship as well as the embassies and the consulates in Plovdiv, and the Honorary Consuls of France, Germany, Ukraine, Russia, and Italy. Working within the framework of the EU funded ‘Europe for citizens’ programme, Plovdiv became a partner in a joint European project of 12 European organisations: Atarfe City Council (Spain), Eurocultura (Italy), Hellenic Regional Development (Greece), The Geminaire Group (Malta), Autokreacja Foundation (Poland), Maison de la Promotion Sociale (France), Instituto de Desenvolvimento Social (Portugal), University of Pitesti (Romania), Betriebs GmbH-Stadtjugendring Pforzheim (Germany), Municipality of Plovdiv (Bulgaria), School of Technology and Management of Lamego (Portugal) and SEEDS (United Kingdom).

The Plovdiv Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts (closely connected to us by its vice-president who is the president of our Board of Directors) is a part of the CEEPUS network - The Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies and has signed contracts for student and teacher exchanges with partner universities and colleges from Romania, Lithuania, Poland, Italy, Greece, Austria, and Turkey. Most of the universities in Plovdiv are actively participating in The Erasmus Programme. With the following international partners there are already joint projects, for example: Austrian Musical Weeks, the Francophone Songs Competition Golden Key, the project Remarkable Traces – Bulgaria, Indonesia Days in Plovdiv, Year of Russia in Bulgaria, Morocco Club (meetings of Bulgarian and Moroccan art), days of Japanese culture (organized with the support of the Japanese embassy).

Many of the local, regional and national partners have already established networks of European and international cooperation

partners. Plovdiv 2019 will find ample opportunity to tap into this pool for the artistic programme. Some examples:

The Drama Theatre Plovdiv is connected with the International Institute for Mediterranean Theatre network. The Puppet Theatre Plovdiv is a part of the network of the International Puppet Festival, UNIMA – Union Internationale de la Marionnette and of the ASSIETEJ network. The Art Today Association in Plovdiv realizes large-scale international projects establishing a solid net of partnerships with European and international operators. For the last 10 years Art Today has been hosting an international artistic residency programme. Some of the major partners and networks of the Art Today Association are The Robert Bosch Foundation, the MITOST network, Werkleitz – Centre for Media Art Halle/Germany, ROTOR - Centre for Contemporary Art (Graz), ICCA - International Centre for Contemporary Art (Bucharest), The Ana Lindt Foundation, Alliance Francaise (Plovdiv), KUDA - New Media Art Centre (Novi Sad, Serbia, Montenegro), FOURNOS - Centre for Digital Culture (Athens)

In addition most of the museums in Plovdiv are part of the ICON network, coordinating significant international museum events like the International Museum Day. The Ivan Vazov Public Library in Plovdiv took part in the Europeana Network via a project presenting the cultural and historical heritage and also contemporary publishing and they achieved this by converting it into digital media. The Green Balkans Environmental Organisation is working closely with the International environmental network CEE Web for Biodiversity (a network of nature conservation NGOs from the Central and Eastern European region) and Plovdiv is a member of EuroNatur (The European Nature Heritage Fund).

As a further step we intend to set up contacts with the Czech Cultural Centre; the Hungarian Cultural Centre; the Polish

Institute; the Vienna Club in Sofia; and the German-Bulgarian Centre for Meetings of the Saxony-Anhalt Province.

Name some operators with whom cooperation is envisaged and specify the type of exchanges in question.

For the cluster Mahala - The Neighbourhood we will work for example with the Roma Plovdiv Foundation, the Youth Roma Club Foundation, the Creative Factory Foundation Plovdiv, and LEAD international.

The cluster Urban Dreams on urban development and revitalization will see cooperations with the ATLANTIS network including the Heinrich Böll Foundation Brandenburg, Germany, Rohkunstbau (Brandenburg, Germany), SPACE gallery projects (Bratislava, Slovakia), KSA:K Centre for contemporary art (Chisinau, Republic of Moldova), Art Box.gr (Athens), GOEAIR Tbilisi, Georgia, Art & Culture Studies Laboratory (Yerevan, Armenia), and also with the Old Town Association Plovdiv, Tourism Plovdiv, the Open Arts Foundation, the Robert Bosch Foundation and others.

For the projects in the Ayliak cluster we intend to cooperate with the Ayliak Festival, the Handmade Day Festival Plovdiv, the Festival of Happiness, potentially with the Credo Bonum Foundation Sofia (for now associated with the Sofia candidacy), The World Institute of Slowness, and the Research & Degrowth Organisation Barcelona.

For the cluster Art for a Forgotten Future, dealing with contemporary art of all genres along with the operators mentioned in the section on our contacts within the city, we intend to contact the New Media Centre KUDA Serbia, V2 lab Rotterdam, The Werkleitz centre for media art Germany, The New Media Centre Scotland, Plovdiv International Fair, the Biennales in Istanbul, Venice, Bucharest, Berlin, Youth Voice

Plovdiv, the Sofia Arsenal – Museum for Contemporary Art, Institute for Contemporary Art Bulgaria, KW Institute for Contemporary Art Berlin, Nuit Blanche Europe, The French Embassy in Bulgaria, and the French Cultural Institute.

On the cluster about European Music we have or will establish contacts with the Classic Music Festival in Balabanov's House Plovdiv, the Chamber Music Festival Plovdiv, Sounds of The Ages – Rock Festival (Plovdiv), Plovdiv Jazz Nights, the Opera Festival, the International Folklore Festival Plovdiv, the London Philharmonic, Wiener Symphoniker, the Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, and the European Union Youth Orchestra.

13) In what way is the proposed project innovative?

Innovation means different things in different places. For us – as a city where 10 people may have 11 different opinions and have a difficult time working **together** – the project ECoC has turned into the leading force, which is serving to forge the **togetherness** that we need. This is in fact innovative to our community. This **togetherness** is the state-of-the-art achievement that can revive the sleeping potential of all our citizens – the potential for generating new, original ideas. Working **together**, establishing contacts, dialogues and cooperation – all this is an innovative way for Plovdiv and its residents to rehabilitate the cultural infrastructure and improve the social life of the city.

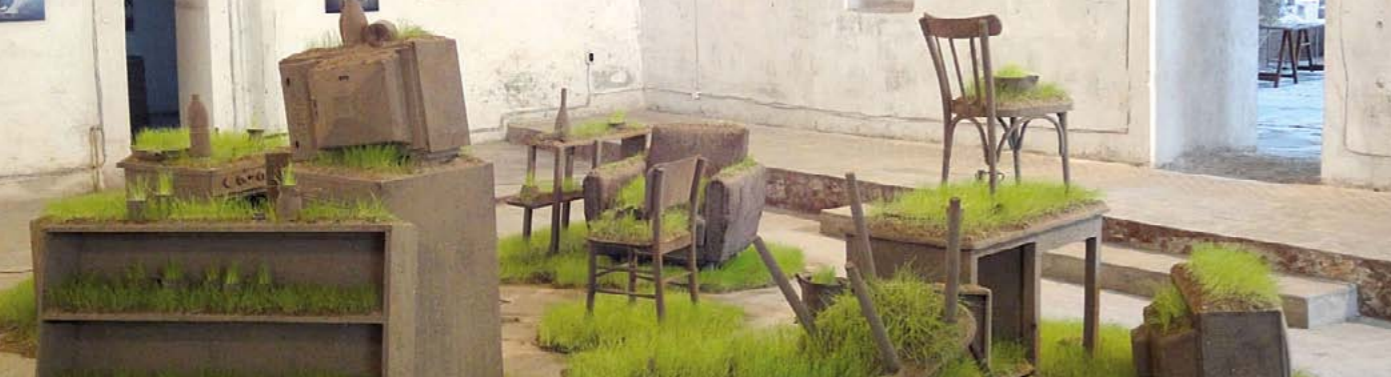
Recognizing culture as a basic instrument for achieving social proximity and dialogue regarding minority groups in the city, is an important step in dealing with problems of integration. It is important and innovative for Bulgarians and Roma to come **together** through culture. Our

aim is to ensure equal access for Roma and other minority groups to socio-cultural life. An important project in this direction is the forthcoming construction of a new cultural centre in Stolipinovo (the largest Roma quarter in Plovdiv) **together** with the Roma Community and the Roma Plovdiv Foundation, which will help the process of culture decentralization and will gradually increase the number of participants in cultural events, at the same time fostering young talents and creative artists from minority communities.

Preserving and promoting Roma culture and traditions is another important priority, as Roma culture is to a large extent unknown to the rest of the residents of the city. For this reason, some of our future projects are being prepared in this direction.

Businesses, even those with headquarters in Plovdiv, often have their sponsorship and communication departments in Sofia and are little concerned with local activities. Indeed, sponsorship so far has been far more focused on social welfare than on culture. We will change this. An innovative approach is how we will address and involve businesses and entrepreneurs in our sponsorship concept.

Innovation to us means that we want to attract new audiences through the ECoC programme and change their status from passive spectators into active participants. This can only be achieved by eliminating all forms of exclusion, by creating mutual initiatives and new cultural strategies and transforming them into generous fields for growing new ideas. This does not come naturally since we have decades of communism behind us. Our goal is to light the sparkle of creativity in all citizens, awakening their passion for *making* new culture, rather than simply *watching*. We are striving to originate new, up-to-date cultural techniques, including and, where necessary, transforming the customary ones. Our aim is to unleash the hidden



*Innovation has different meanings.
"War is over" - installation by Isabelle
Krieg within the Contemporary
Art Week 2011 in Plovdiv*

creativity and the inner potential of various social groups. We want to encourage active, creative and joint projects, which, for all Plovdivians, will be something new, something exciting and challenging.

Innovation is the way we can transform and breathe life into neglected areas of natural beauty. The project ECoC inspires us to give a new look to urban nature, transforming unutilized urban beauty spots like our river, the hills and the rowing canal into active and lived in places with social meaning, places that are reconnected to the city and the citizens.

Moreover, we have been elaborating a new way of preserving and exposing the past, having a clear vision towards the future. The ECoC initiative is the driving force for us to revive and rehabilitate museums, art galleries, archaeological sites and the cultural community clubs (Chitalishta), to renovate their old-fashioned looks and structure, to transform them into appealing places for all citizens.

Finally, our efforts at thinking in a contemporary, up-to-date way, instead of, as it was, being wrapped up in routine and backward-looking thoughts of past days of glory, are innovative. The residents of our city have the chance to experience new cultural and social activities and values and add new impulses to their lives. Our ideal for the future, with the project ECoC as a stepping stone, is to bring to light the bravest dreams of all Plovdivians and to make them creators of their own future – then also our fellow Europeans will feel that Plovdiv is back on the map of Europe.

14) a) If the city in question is awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, what would be the medium- and long-term effects of the event from a social, cultural and urban point of view?

We expect that all the processes inspired by the ECoC initiative will visibly transform our city and will make it a better place for living, working and investing in, through artistic projects that directly influence the social and cultural life and also the urban structure of the city. As we are setting up projects that involve the citizens and aim to have an impact “on the street”, Plovdiv will become more appealing, both for its residents and for tourists.

The competition for European Capital of Culture has already triggered many initiatives which will lead to important changes and improvements within the cultural and social sector, ecology, tourism, urban infrastructure and other areas of development in Plovdiv and the region. The effects are expected to have a favourable influence on demographic indicators in the region, with brain-drain and the departure of young people being a problematic issue in the whole country.

We expect the following positive changes in the cultural, urban and social sector, some of which have already begun:

CULTURAL EFFECTS

- The title would be an important step in decentralizing cultural life and enhancing its influence in the region.

The projects we are preparing will make art and culture more accessible, bring culture not only into the centre, but into the areas where people live, and aim at stimulating citizen’s activity as well as attracting new audiences.

- Many citizens, who are currently not connected to cultural life and activities (and our analyses indicate that the percentage is very high), will have the opportunity to discover new forms of participation.
- Artists, cultural formations and young talents will have more opportunities to engage in their activities, make more international connections and participate in exchange.
- The European Capital of Culture would help to reinstate Plovdiv’s position as the Cultural capital of Bulgaria, which it traditionally was, but which is now old fame. In this respect we have the unique opportunity to transform the city into an important cultural hub, clearly recognizable on the European cultural map.

URBAN EFFECTS

- Abandoned buildings like the tobacco warehouses, Bratska Mogila, Kosmos Cinema, The Trap district, and the Old Railway station will be revived through contemporary art, architecture, dance, and theatre. Empty and unattractive urban sites will be turned into appealing spaces for cultural activity and create new access to the otherwise lost historical heritage of our recent past.
- The above mentioned interventions will also enhance the development of secondary centres within the city in order to break up the existing model of functions in the city – the

powerful concentration of events in the centre – and restore the broken line between the central city area and the adjoining outskirts.

- The European Capital of Culture is a chance to re-establish an old but often forgotten relationship between the seven hills of Plovdiv and the city. Two of the hills are already planned for renovation and landscaping so that the links between these encapsulated places and the residents of the city will be restored and offer space for walks, sports and leisure activities. The Maritsa river and the Adata Island will be re-integrated into the heart of the city by artistic interventions and urban development.
- Our aspirations to bring citizens **together** has given birth to some very ambitious green projects, one of which is the formation of a 650-acre park near the rowing canal with areas for recreation, a green school for children, street fitness, picnic areas and bike lanes. The zoo, which is situated in close proximity, will be completely renovated too.

SOCIAL EFFECTS

- ‘Plovdiv **Together**’ is especially about social change. A medium- and long-term effect of the European Capital of Culture is the change that it can bring about in breaking up the segregation and exclusion of different social groups in Plovdiv: e.g. minorities, disabled people, underprivileged people with low education, and different generations. The ECoC programme will create more active participation among these groups. There are initiatives in the city, but the title constitutes a strong driving force for these processes and offers cultural and artistic methods to achieve them.

- All the above mentioned processes and initiatives will involve many citizens, create new entrepreneurial opportunities, and will increase mobility in the city. Enhancing the attractiveness and quality of life in the city will attract young residents and improve demographic structures.
- Plovdiv's bid for European Capital of Culture will urge and support the development and the implementation of important infrastructural projects and foster cultural entrepreneurship to tackle unemployment. One example is the transformation of an economically underdeveloped area in the city, "Gladno Pole", which will be turned into a high-tech zone dedicated to the food industry, biotechnology and healthy lifestyles. There will be research centres, enterprises and laboratories.
- Plovdivians suffer from the loss of importance that their city has had over the millennia. A medium and long-term social effect of the European Capital of Culture is that it will trigger more visits from Bulgaria and other European countries, which would boost the current low self-esteem of the Plovdivians and restore a common feeling of well-being.

14) b) Do the municipal authorities intend to make a public declaration of intent concerning the period following the year of the event?

The City Council of Plovdiv has unanimously signed a Declaration of Intent, which states the commitment for the period following the year of the event as follows: "We guarantee that we will work for the sustainable development of culture in Plovdiv throughout the candidacy period of the city for European Capital of Culture,

both in 2019 and in the subsequent years so that Plovdiv remains one of the most significant European cultural centres."

15) How was this application designed and prepared?

The bid of Plovdiv for the title European Capital of Culture 2019 was initiated by a group of representatives of the civil society. In 2010, a group of Plovdivian artists, writers, journalists and cultural activists (some of them are now represented in our Board of Directors) declared in front of the mayor and the municipal administration their wish for Plovdiv to join the competition for European Capital of Culture 2019. Soon after that, Plovdiv's nomination was officially announced while at the same time the initiators of the idea, additional cultural operators, the management of Plovdiv Municipality and the leaders of all political parties in the city signed a memorandum in full support of the cause.

Several months later the City Council established an efficient working structure – the Municipal Foundation Plovdiv 2019. The organisation is responsible for preparing the city's application documents, for promoting the initiative European Capital of Culture and for involving a large number of residents in participating in the preparation process. The foundation has also started to fund cultural projects that are in line with the concept of the bid and has engaged in open calls for cultural and civic projects that relate to broad citizen's participation, attracting new audiences and encouraging the sharing of cultures and traditions between artists and audiences from different countries. Despite the political changes in the city's management, Plovdiv's candidacy for the title remains a strong and unifying cause, as evidenced by the fact that decisions concerning the activities of Plovdiv 2019 are taken with a large majority in the city council.

From the very beginning our team's work with our partners and the different social groups has been based on cultural and social dialogue and partnership, transparency and freedom of opinions and ideas. We firmly believe that only a free and creative imagination will lead to innovative, effective and significant results. That is why we include citizens from different groups: artists, representatives of cultural institutions, promoters, NGOs, academics and students.

Immediately after its foundation Plovdiv 2019 launched an open call for project ideas about the general concept of our ECoC bid. 35 teams and individual authors have participated in the contest. The ideas from these proposals were used in the next step of our concept work. Meanwhile discussions, round tables and brainstorming sessions with the participation of about 120 people took place in the office of Plovdiv 2019, situated in a house from the era of the Bulgarian Revival in the heart of the Old Town. These forums were led by professional moderators and the results were used in the next steps of the preparation of the application form. So an interdisciplinary team for the preparation of the application, composed of staff members and representatives of cultural operators was established. In order to align the focus of the ECoC with the focus of the overall city long-term strategy, the city council commissioned the Foundation Plovdiv 2019 with the task of initiating a cultural strategy for the city for the period 2014-2025 after the expiry of the current strategy in 2013.

Furthermore, Plovdiv is being supported by the municipalities of five Regional Districts in South-Central Bulgaria that signed a declaration. This led to a process of discussing ideas for partnership projects in the framework of the 2019 programme. Not only will specific local festivals be included, they will also be upgraded in order to meet the criteria for citizen inclusion and European dimension and also fulfil

our goal to unite people, generations, territories, and cultural and historic layers in an interesting and effective way. Meanwhile our artistic director is in charge of the selection of project proposals in order for the programme to be compliant with our concept, regional participation and vision for the sustainable future development of the city and the whole region. The artistic director created small artistic teams of artists and cultural operators from different fields and with their help the programme is being developed. Very important to us is the support we receive from our volunteers and interns, not only during our daily activities and public events, but also for communication and separate projects. We had interns who are Bulgarian, but lived and studied abroad and also interns from the universities in Plovdiv. The foundation helped with the organisation of many local festivals and thus created a wide network of volunteers. Plovdiv 2019 participates in an internship programme for students which has been implemented by the Ministry of Education after successfully applying for EU funds.

In 2012 and 2013, meetings with foreign experts on ECoC were held. For example members of the Plovdiv 2019 team participated in the meeting initiated by the European Commission on the occasion of presenting the new ECoC strategy for 2020-2033 in October 2012. Best practices were exchanged with the experts from other European Capitals of Culture, such as Essen, Liverpool, and Mons. On 19 June 2013 Plovdiv 2019 organized a round table and invited all Bulgarian and Italian candidate cities for a conference to establish personal contacts and first agreements on cooperations.



II. Structure of the programme

1) What structure does the city intend to give to the year's programme if it is designated "European Capital of Culture" (guidelines, general theme of the event)? How long does the programme last?

The programme of Plovdiv 2019 is dedicated to what might seem a banal task at first sight: bringing Plovdiv **together** – which is not only the slogan but the general theme of the event. All the events and projects in our programme follow this concept which is of high importance to us, since authentic integrity and identity for Plovdiv are at stake.

The structure

The projects and project ideas are structured in four project platforms, which comprise a total of 11 project clusters including project initiatives, events, festivals, frame programmes, conferences, and social activities.

FUSE is the project platform that covers integration between ethnicities, generations, territories, different social groups and regional sites. The project clusters are **Mahala – The Neighbourhood, Beauty and the (b)East, and RegionalE.**

TRANSFORM means reintegration and revitalization of abandoned city spaces, as well as new ways of perceiving them. Transform is also about new approaches to

education and youngsters, aiming at raising a generation holding shared European values. Project clusters here: **Urban Dreams, edYOUcate, and River of Imagination.**

REVIVE focuses on finding new ways of preserving and presenting the past and the heritage in the contemporary context. Revive will use culture as the basic tool for transforming communities in the attempt to achieve a better identity. The project clusters dealing with this issue are: **Culture Meets People and Art for a Forgotten Future.**

RELAX is dedicated to the necessity of converting Plovdiv into a city with a sustainable development, providing a high well-being index for its inhabitants and visitors, free time for slowing down the tempo, doing sports, attending cultural activities and contemplation of beauty in everyday life. Basic project clusters: **Ayliak City, EURhythmica, Animate the City**

The duration

The programme will start in January 2019 and run through the whole year until the end of 2019. Some of the projects will already start during the preparation phase and intermediate steps and activities will involve citizens and be presented to audiences between 2015 and the actual year. The main focus for the audience-related programme will lie in 2019.

2) What main events will mark the year? For each one, please supply the following information: description of the event/ date and place/project partners/financing.

The main events in the programme will be:

FUSE

breaking down borders between social, ethnic and minority groups to create 'Plovdiv Together'

Mahala – The Neighbourhood

Art and Culture for Togetherness

The inclusion of Sinti and Roma communities in European societies that have their own, very particular life-style is a pan-European issue. In Plovdiv the Roma population is considered to be close to 80,000, which makes up around 20% of the total population of the city. Many of them claim to be of Turkish or other origin and only a small percentage identify themselves as Roma. The Roma/Turks in Plovdiv live in four areas: Stolipinovo, Sheker Mahala (neighbourhood), Hadji Mahala and Arman Mahala. With its population of 45,000 people Stolipinovo is the biggest ghetto in Plovdiv and in the country, and among the biggest in Europe. We may say it is a ghetto because few non-Roma ever go there and often Roma are 15 or 16 years old before they even set foot outside the neighbourhood. The population of the four Roma neighbourhoods is a mixture of different small ethnic groups, geographically and culturally largely segregated from the rest of the population in Plovdiv.

There have been many initiatives in the past but with the enormous driving force that the title of European Capital of Culture constitutes, we are about to embark on a much more sustainable, integral and coordinated approach towards the inclusion of segregated minorities in Plovdiv with a perspective on the European level of the issue. With the power of the ECoC we will build a long-term concept (working with an art based integrated approach) turning into a complex set of solutions to be used across marginalized Roma/Turkish townships not only in Plovdiv but also in South East and Central Europe, where similar problems apply.

From functioning best practice examples for Roma integration (e.g. the 'Land – Source of Income'-Foundation in Plovdiv working on the rural level) we know that sustainable development can only be reached using a long-term approach establishing trust with the community, not expecting quick results, but thinking far ahead into the future. The European Capital of Culture can be a significant stepping-stone in this development, especially by bringing different players in the city to work together and create synergies.

The programme we envisage integrates three essential steps for a sustainable development:

1. Innovation in education: adequate educational programmes
2. Innovation of local economy: Social entrepreneurship
3. Innovation in participation: the Stolipinovo cultural hub

1. Innovation in Education: Mobile educational centres in Stolipinovo
The main challenge in underprivileged Roma and Turkish communities all over



Davide Martello during a performance in Stolipinovo in summer 2013. Some of the Roma had never seen a piano before.

Kukeri – a traditional masquerade in the town of Rakovski



Bulgaria and South East Europe is a static knowledge oriented educational system that puts Roma in a narrative blaming them for not participating in the existing system. The problems of illiteracy, unemployment and poverty are closely linked.

The approach of mobile educational centres in Stolipinovo picks up an idea already practiced by Plovdiv municipality (children from Stolipinovo being integrated into school classes outside the neighbourhood) – and turns it around: the community co-facilitated mobile education centres come to the students of all ages: children, youth and adults. Shifting the leverage point in education could profoundly change the situation of the Roma population not only in Plovdiv. The project aims at facilitating access to education, providing useful and practical skills (to be decided on the basis of community needs and the labour market) and including community leaders as part of a peer-to-peer learning process. Within three years the anticipated result is a 15% decrease in school drop-outs, an increase of 15% in the rate of literacy and employability among adults.

Partners: Roma Foundation Plovdiv, Creative Factory Foundation; Municipality of Plovdiv, Education Ministry of Bulgaria
Budget: 3 mobile centres and training of artist and pedagogical staff – 350,000 EUR
Duration: Small pilot project during 2015 with constant broadening up to full scale in 2019

2. Innovation of Local Economy: Social and creative enterprises

There are two main approaches to the urgent need of tackling poverty in the segregated urban areas: Firstly: a) creating financially viable micro business models to build new community skills, b) use the ones that are in place and c) market with the help of creative

entrepreneurs innovative products through a well facilitated community decision-making process – with profit partly reinvested in community wellbeing. Secondly, a micro-financing model for women including basic financial training thus empowering the most vulnerable groups in the communities. The approach based on ‘challenge design’ will bring leaders in innovation from around the world in the fields of social and creative enterprises to work with the community through the means of creative thinking and practical business skills. One of the social enterprise ideas that could be implemented is the BPO – business process outsourcing, where people from all ages can gain basic computer skills and literacy while at the same time earning their living. Another approach is a platform connecting jobs in the local business sector, the municipal enterprises and governmental and private institutions/departments with unemployed people after they have participated in special educational programmes and qualification courses.

Partners: Roma Plovdiv Foundation, Youth Roma Club Foundation, Municipality Plovdiv, Creative Factory Foundation, LEAD international, Social Ministry of Bulgaria, Land – Source of Income Foundation
Budget: 280,000 EUR
Duration: June 2015 – 2019

3. Innovation in participation: The Cultural HUB

Within the last couple of years an abandoned building in Stolipinovo has been cleaned and partially refurbished with the support of Plovdiv municipality, the process being initiated by local Roma leaders and representatives of the minority in the municipal council. Gradually people are beginning to recognize this place as a centre for their

community life where they can celebrate their rituals and organize local feasts. As a next step Plovdiv 2019 wants to open up the concept and gradually develop it into a multifunctional socio-cultural centre for all communities in the city. The whole process of rebuilding the centre will be constantly appraised with the active involvement of representatives of the local Roma and Turkish communities. The hub will be hosting a palette of creative tools empowering civil participation, ownership in decision-making through the means of arts and creative practices and will contain the following elements:

- A place for discussions, debates, lectures, presentations, exchange of experience and information – all based on alternative techniques like “Forum Theatre”, community mapping, open space approach etc. – a central hub for connecting activities of minority communities in the city and relate them to the other communities in the city.
- An interactive multimedia exposition representing the culture and traditions of the Roma/Turkish communities – an attractive centre for both local people and tourists – focussing on exchange with, and involvement of other Roma communities in Europe.
- A Healthcare centre offering healthcare education workshops and courses (e.g. hygiene, teenage pregnancy, drug addiction, HIV etc.) also for consultants and multipliers in the community.
- Providing space for artistic residences (community and international). Artists are of crucial importance to translate shared visions into visual material that can be discussed and judged.
- A space for creative workshops, conferences, work meetings and community art, with a focus on creative transfer between professional artists

- and amateurs – education for talented young people from the Roma and Turkish minorities and the majority population, especially in music.
- A hall for exhibitions and presentations, gallery space and stages for innovative artistic projects in Plovdiv. The Centre will give opportunities for creative experimentation and will be a co-working space on the borderline between arts and the creative industries.
- A café for art production. A restaurant offering traditional Turkish and Roma cuisine.

Partners: Association for Building with Natural Materials, Roma Foundation Plovdiv, Youth Roma Club Foundation, Municipality Plovdiv, Creative Factory Foundation, LEAD international
Budget: 1 mil. EUR
Duration: June 2014-October 2018 – design and development/construction; April 2019: Official opening of the hub; from 2020 on the hub will be running as part of the social and art infrastructure of Plovdiv

Regionale

The Regionale is a platform that will make a wide selection of more than 100 local festivals, cultural, touristic and social projects from the entire Plovdiv region visible. The diversity of European culture and its common aspects will be presented to residents and tourists alike. Plovdiv is located between two of the most enticing mountain ranges in the Balkans – the Rhodope Mountains and the Balkan Mountains themselves. The villagers maintain their specific traditions, songs, customs and ritual dances, some of them going as far back as the Thracians. Depopulation due to a lack of employment and facilities, endanger cultures and



Bulgarian bagpipes called "gayda"

traditions. Songs and crafts vanish with the elderly people who can no longer pass them on to the younger generation. The RegionaLE platform provides a series of projects, aiming at preserving and presenting this vast variety of traditions, crafts and arts, thus enlivening the whole region – keeping in mind accessibility by public transport and modern communication applications.

RHODOPE FAIRY-TALES FESTIVAL

This festival will be organized in 2019 for the first time.

It will be implemented by the residents of the Rhodope villages and will be carried out with the aid of the artistic interventions of travelling artists from Bulgaria and France. Its purpose is to preserve traditions and put them into a contemporary context, to enliven the Rhodope villages and to acquaint the visitors with the rich folklore tradition of the Rhodope region. The festival will consist of several parts:

- 1.) Compiling an archive of songs, legends, stories and fairy-tales provided by the residents of the Rhodope villages.
- 2.) French artists passing on their experience for the creative transformation of the collected material and the concrete artistic intervention in the mountain villages.
- 3.) Processing the collected material into a travelling theatre programme which will be presented in different routes throughout the Rhodope mountains.
- 4.) The climax of the festival will be in a Rhodope village with puppet shows, concerts, local Rhodope cuisine and workshops in traditional Rhodope crafts, manufacture of music instruments, doll-making, etc.).

Further project examples for **RegionaLE** are: **Orpheus Music Traces** (initiating a series of musical performances in an unusual environment – ancient Thracian shrines which have been the

stages on which the mythical poet and singer Orpheus was celebrated); **The Pepper, Tomato, Traditional Foods and Crafts Fest** in Kurtovo Konare; **KUKOVE** (International festival of kukeri and the masquerade games in Rakovski); **Festival of Medieval Art Asenovgrad**; **Festival of Wine and Grapes** in Breztovitza; **Bicycle Theatre of the Senses** (art intervention on a forest trail); **Beglika festival/ Wake up festival** (Two festivals combining art, sport in the nature, with the mission to create a model for festival behaviour in harmony with nature); **Rose Festival** in Kazanlak, Karlovo, Sopot; **The Secrets of Grandma's Drawers** (Art Festival in Yagodovo); **International Air Festival ,Sky For All'** (an air show with a flying programme / exhibition of aviation technology); **Day of the Dervish** in Vinogradets; **Smolyan Jazz festival**.

Partners of this cluster: the above mentioned festivals, The French Culture Institute, Centre International Pour les Theatres Itinerants, Cumbo Circus, regional structures of the Ministry of Agriculture, Agricultural University Plovdiv, Plovdiv Municipality, and the Ministry of Tourism Bulgaria
Budget: 800,000 EUR
Duration: all year round

Beauty and the (b)East

Beauty and the (b)East is a platform which will offer projects presenting the beauty of the distinctive culture and traditions of the Balkans not only to the Western European public, but to the Eastern Europe representatives themselves, who barely know their neighbours. Projects incorporating an interesting

mix of Balkan music, dance, crafts and contemporary art will offer the audience a different point of view on Eastern Europe – as an attractive culturally and ethnically diverse region. The projects involved provide the opportunity of building a platform for gatherings, exchange of experience and knowledge between artists, producers and citizens, for creating co-productions, activating trans-Balkan networks and the exchange of different artistic productions and artefacts within the boundaries of Eastern Europe.

Plovdiv calling Balkan music...

is ambitiously designed to provide the largest forum for Balkan 'gypsy' music in Europe. The project includes plans for a major music festival from traditional Bulgarian forms (such as wedding music), to Serbian brass music (trubatsi) and Turkish belly-dance, to contemporary DJ mixes with gypsy rhythms. World-renowned musicians, music groups and DJs will be invited. A festival city will be built at a specific place near the Maritsa River with several stages and a festival camp-site in gypsy style, with tents and caravans. A special music application for smart-phones will be designed, collecting the best of different Balkan music genres for the users to mix favourite songs or compose their own gypsy rhythms and share them on popular web-based music platforms (such as soundcloud.com). The festival's closing event: **100 bagpipes and 100 gypsy violins**, will enliven different city open air stages and a **Giant Horo** (the traditional Bulgarian dance) will wind along the 2 km long rowing canal. This traditional dance symbolizes a united collective energy, where people from different ethnic groups, religions and countries dance hand in hand, synchronizing rhythms and dance steps.

Mobile art studios (the Cyrillic version)

A resident programme will invite prominent European artists in the field of visual, audio-visual, and digital arts, design and architecture as well as street-art (graffiti, installations). Through several stages the European artists in residence will develop a mobile studio and methods for its inclusion in the socio-cultural life of different Eastern European cities – exploring and interacting with the context of the specific environment/ city, neighbourhood/ghetto, to capture and store (in a digital archive) the unique local character of the city and citizens – their language, their writing, and their daily routines. Through artistic interventions, games and sound installations, the Slavic languages and the Cyrillic alphabet will be introduced to different European cities. Artists will explore the way in which the Cyrillic alphabet is accepted in the context of other writing, its future in Slavic countries and its chances to be preserved or replaced by the Latin alphabet.

Further projects in **Beauty and the (b)East** are:

Balkan Fair (A fair, based on an old Balkan tradition, re-creating all the flavours, colours and atmosphere of old Balkan cities including workshops, the Balkan Festival of Short Films, the Cinema school with Emir Kusturica (tbc) in Stolipinovo, conferences and discussions on key topics for the future of the Balkans.) **Days of Turboculture** (combining subcultural music that emerged during the transition period in the Balkans – pop-folk, turbo-folk – called Chalga in Bulgaria, and other musical genres such as jazz and classical music.)

Partners for this cluster: Plovdiv Municipality, "Old Plovdiv" Municipal Institute, Tourism Plovdiv, Academy for



Contemporary art project Space for Art, occupying the tobacco warehouses and claiming them as cultural spaces



Adata island in the Maritsa River

Music, Dance and Fine Arts Plovdiv, Gutcha Balkan Brass Bands Festival (Serbia), Balkan Music Square Festival, Macedonia, Balkan Traffic Festival (Brussels), Balkan Choir Forum, Organisation of Folk Art (IOV), Youth Society for peace and development of the Balkans (Plovdiv), European Association of Folklore Festivals

Budget: 800,000 EUR

Duration: (mobile art labs: 1 month in each city, starting from March 2019 in Plovdiv); Plovdiv calling Balkan music & Balkan Fair (March - September 2019), Days of Turboculture (October - December 2019)

TRANSFORM

transforming the city and the people through urban development and education

Urban Dreams

Artistic interventions in the public space

The project cluster Urban Dreams aims at revitalizing and opening up dysfunctional spaces, buildings and objects as parts of a “parallel abandoned city” through artistic intervention. These are interventions on a local level but there is an undercurrent connected to the narrative of the transformation of the public space in European cities and in particular the transformation of cities which carry the mark of 40 years of communism.

In its first stage the project will create a think-tank in which citizens and a multi-genre team of artists, architects, businesses, and designers develop concepts for the sustainable and inclusive future of the abandoned urban areas. Local and European artists will be invited to explore the map of the parallel city as a space full of opportunities to interact with the

environment and its social, historical, cultural, and economic contexts.

Abandoned buildings from the recent past, some of them prominent achievements of architecture (e.g. tobacco warehouses, Bratska Mogila War Memorial, Kosmos Cinema, The Trap district, the old railway station) will gain new meaning if reformulated into appealing spaces for cultural activity or social interaction. These interventions will also seek to shatter the existing model of functions in the city – the powerful concentration of events in the centre and lack of communication with the outskirts. Some example projects:

Tobacco City

Iconic buildings in an area of the centre, reminders of the once large tobacco processing industry. Only a few are still functioning and most are neglected and decaying. These cultural monuments lack an institution responsible for their management because of they are shared property between private owners, municipal authorities and the government – a common problem in most post-communist countries. The project aims at looking for mechanisms of an artistic nature in order to transform and to return these formative buildings to the city and its citizens. The project will consist of four steps:

1. Spontaneous occupation of the buildings with artistic actions – an invitation to meet with owners, politicians, investors and citizens

2. Creating a model for restoration with architects, designers and citizens and donating the model/concept to the city.

3. Urban incubator in the tobacco warehouses, temporary home of art projects (artists will apply with proposals

to realize their short-term projects within three to six months). The project will aim at transforming the interior, creating temporary installations, sculptures, gardens, preserving the authentic part of the tobacco production spaces and converting the warehouses into interactive museums.

4. Development of a mobile library – an archive of the tobacco warehouses, a bank of memories, photos, historical data and documents.

Chitalishta (Community Centres)

Chitalishta are small community centres in the residential areas of Plovdiv, founded during the time of the Ottoman occupation to safeguard Bulgarian language and culture. This project is focused on restoring the function of community centres (about 35 in Plovdiv and the region) as decentralized cultural centres with an attractive artistic environment that provides free and low-threshold access to art and culture for the people from the different neighbourhoods. - Refurbishing Chitalishta facades (e.g. by involving graffiti artists) and the equipment of their buildings by installing non-standard equipment (stages, new seats, libraries) – strongly involving the community that lives around the centres.

- Cultural activities: open reading rooms; exhibitions of local initiatives; free workshops, amateur and professional music and theatre performances, literature readings, discussions, community cinema and more.

Further projects in **URBAN DREAMS** are: **Unexpected urban transformations** (turning unused objects – e.g. abandoned old cars parked in the streets into artistic spaces – mini libraries, children’s climbing frames, sound installations, mini-gardens, mini-street-cafés) **HOTEL TOGETHER** (transforming a hotel in Plovdiv into an artistic residence

and centre for culture, offering unusual accommodation and drawing visitors into the artistic activities during their stay); **STREET STYLE** (large international forum for street art interventions in public spaces to combat the tendency for visual pollution of the urban environment); **RE:HOME** (restoring the broken connection between the central city area and the adjoining outskirts), **Master Urban** (competition for young architects for urban space transformations).

Partners for this project cluster: The ATLANTIS network Partners (Heinrich Böll Foundation (Brandenburg, Germany), KSA:K Centre for contemporary art (Chisinau, Republic of Moldova), GOE AIR (Tbilisi, Georgia), Art & Culture Studies Laboratory (Yerevan, Armenia), IDEA arts + society (Cluj, Romania), Plovdiv Municipality, Sacred places (Belgium), Robert Bosch Foundation, Architecture studio 8½, Lazareti Art Workshop, Dubrovnik, Youth Voice Plovdiv, Architecture group Shtepsel, Union of Bulgarian Architects, Art Today Association - Centre for Contemporary Art Plovdiv, Plovdiv Photography Centre **Budget:** 750,000 EUR

Duration: March - September 2019

River of Imagination

There is a difference between Plovdiv and other main European cities that are situated on a river. While normally the river is the backbone upon which the development of such a city rests, in Plovdiv the river Maritsa is still not fully part of the cityscape. One of the desolate places on the river is the deserted island of Adata, which has turned into a jungle in the very heart of the city – wild and inaccessible, the place has capsulated its beauty and hidden secrets. The project aims at reflecting the



Possible future vision of the Pedestrian bridge over the Maritza river (model by arch. Antoaneta Topalova)

importance of returning the river and the island to the city and its citizens, by implementing aesthetic research and a debate about the creation of a concept for the future of these two sites. Moreover this platform is concentrated on converting these areas into an attractive showcase of European recycled and green art, as well as a place for alternative tourism, which is close to nature. Example projects:

ADATA – Unlimited Island

The project ADATA – Unlimited Island plans to declare the Adata Island as an independent state of unlimited art. It will become a parallel state within the city – an open space for creativity, green and site specific art and environmentally friendly life with its own eco-politics and infrastructure, legislation, currency (ideas, services, barter of goods and art works) and bank system as well as its own art and eco-police authorities (regulating the clean environment, artistic freedom and independence).

- 1) Accessibility of the island will be increased in the period of 2015-2017 (restoration/creation of paths, active/living zones, the re-establishment of connections to the city and river-construction of bridges, boat docks etc., and also making the island accessible through various means of transportation – boats, water ski, rafts, para-gliders).
- 2) From 2017 to 2019 a team of European ecologists, botanists, landscape architects and designers will be working on the creation of permanent eco-settlements on the territory of the island. Living spaces, for artistic and everyday activity will be constructed using sustainable natural building material. Innovative ecological facilities will be built for self-sustaining power and water supply and waste management.
- 3) During the period 2018-2019 European artists of all art forms will be invited

to become citizens of the Adata Island Nation. They can apply as “temporary citizens” of the island with the approval of their innovative projects with social, ecological or artistic significance from an expert jury. A visa will be issued for all guest and visitors to the island. Starting from April 2019 and continuing to September 2019 the Island Nation will offer a colourful art programme, tempting the citizens and the visitors of Plovdiv to rediscover the island and the river.

4) After 2019, the island’s camp site, built by the artists will be open for all citizens and guests of the city, offering an alternative eco-tourism and adventure in the big city.

Further projects in **RIVER**

OF IMAGINATION:

The River, Hills, Ports travelling River Ship Fete (connecting seven Bulgarian, Turkish and Greek harbour-cities along the river in a travelling River Ship Fete cultural programme). **Literature of the River** (involving writers and Slam Poetry Artists from different riverside European cities and encompassing three day-long literary readings and writing workshops along the River Maritsa); **Remodelling the Pedestrian Bridge over Maritsa River** (the bridge completely blocks the pedestrians view of the river – bypass platforms on the outside would open a new space on the river).

Partners for this project cluster:

Plovdiv Municipality, Association for building with natural materials, Union of landscape architects, Architecture studio 8½, Union of Bulgarian architects, Visionary Society Sarajevo, EURONATUR (European Nature Heritage Fund), Federation of nature-conservation NGOs Green Balkans, Ministry of Environment and Waters, Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, WWF International, Art Today

left: Exhibition at the Contemporary art department of the Historical Museum, Plovdiv
right: Interactive art installation “Analogue”, initiated by the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation



Association - Centre for Contemporary Art Plovdiv, Union of Plovdiv Writers
Duration: March - September 2019
Budget: 1,5 Mil. EUR

edYOUcate

To us, one of the most important target groups of Plovdiv 2019 is the children and the young audience since its participation in the programme will determine the future of the cultural legacy and artistic platforms in Plovdiv and Europe. The projects included in the edYOUcate platform will give the young the means to develop their creative potential, to exchange experience and create joint productions with professional artists. All schools in the city will dedicate a few hours of their weekly schedules to art and culture in the city. The students will have the chance to participate and experience different events, workshops, discussions, performances, lectures etc. about Plovdiv 2019.

The edYOUcate project cluster will encourage partnerships between cultural and educational institutions, and create an interest in arts and the cultural legacy among young people. At the same time this approach will stimulate cultural institutions to adapt and modernize the content of their programmes depending on the needs of the younger participants.

Children City at The Youth Hill

On the highest tepe (hill) in Plovdiv, The Youth Hill, a special city for children will be created, following the model, described in Gerd Grüneisl’s and Wolfgang Zacharias’ book “The child city. A school of life”. Following years of neglecting the infrastructure of the Youth Hill, finally in 2012, a project was initiated for the creation of a youth centre for education and various cultural events. Nearby there

will be eco paths, climbing walls, survival paths and other attractive equipment. The existing children’s railway, dating back from the communist time, and the newly created Sport and Educational Centre make the place the perfect spot for building a Children City, following the model of Grüneisl and Zacharias. Children aged 7 to 12 will lead this city – they will elect a mayor, create their own currency, vote for the government of the city, create radio and TV stations. In their spare time, the kids would be able to participate in art performances – theatres, art exhibitions, concerts and movie projections. An important part of the children city’s life will be the entwining of creative productions, which are part of the artistic programme of Plovdiv in 2019. There will be guest performances and programmes for the young audience of the city, artists will be invited for cooperation and realization of artistic TV and radio programmes in the Children City.

Interactive Children’s Museum/ Revitalisation of the museum

In collaboration with the local museums, galleries and libraries, the project will realize a series of interactive and interdisciplinary installations, targeted at the younger audience. Each event has an informational and educational purpose which corresponds with a certain museum/gallery, and will be presented in a manner involving the viewer using the ‘education through experience’ method. The artists will work in multi-genre groups, **together** with specialists from different spheres of science, history, literature, etc. The resulting installations’ goal is to attract the young audience back to the cultural organisations and institutions. Another goal of the projects is to inspire and offer skills to the organisations which will enable them to adapt their presentations for a young audience.



At the Archaeological Museum, Plovdiv

A concert at the Roman Amphitheatre in Plovdiv



Example project for interactive learning programme: Adventures in the Museum Land An internet based platform for online museum exploration. The visitor will be able to navigate through history and art by following clues, searching for locations and objects and solving riddles. There will be different versions, designed for adults, children (6-11) and teenagers (12-18). A free application for smartphone will be available, allowing users to share and create their own Plovdiv Museum Treasure Hunt anywhere in the world. In 2012 the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation financed a project for a 3D website presenting museums, galleries and many sites from the urban environment (www.plovdivbg.info) which can be upgraded to such a platform.

Further projects in **edYOUcate** are: **ciTeen** (virtual youth city, using new technologies and media-art like iPad-painting to foster the creativity of youth); **Mobile art lab for children** (mobile art studios and interactive training methods for therapeutic creative workshops with disabled children, as well as with hospitalised and children at risk); **Sisters, brothers, cities** (high quality multimedia spectacles in which young artists from selected sister cities will take part); **Artist residence in schools and universities** (broaden the students' knowledge and skills by sharing European artistic practises).

Partners for this cluster: Plovdiv Municipality, Ministry of Science and Education, Youth bank Association Plovdiv, ICON network, Youth Roma Club Foundation, Centre for development of the youth zones Plovdiv, Youth voice Plovdiv, Youth Society for peace and development of the Balkans, Plovdiv, Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski, Learning Theatre, Academy for Music and Fine Arts Plovdiv, Regional

Ethnographic, History and Natural History Museums Plovdiv, youth and educational centres and institutions in Plovdiv
Budget: 900,000 EUR
Duration: all year round 2019

REVIVE bringing culture and heritage back into everyday contemporary life

Culture meets People

This is an artistic platform which will use art and culture as a powerful force for building better communities and improving lives. The projects included in this cluster will break down the boundaries between audience and performers and help the citizens express themselves. Artists will find ways to physically involve the audience in performances and activities with unique approaches and locations. Inhabitants of the more distant regions and the suburbs and those who are residents of social institutions, who have never experienced interactive performances, will start a dialogue with international artists and celebrate the diversity of the city in a new manner. They will take part in a process, in which their short local stories will resonate on a European and international level. The performers will play the part of researchers, who help the city to express itself, urge its citizens to talk to each other, to become a living community, celebrating their differences, and raising the common index of their welfare and identification with their city, Europe and themselves.

Backyard Stories

Visitors will be able to explore the city on this surprise alternative city tour – and visit zones off the beaten tracks a tourist would probably never find. The audience of this mini festival will use unusual

modes of public transportation (horse carts, mini-busses, boats) to reach a selection of locations in the multicultural districts of the city. Their route will pass by some unusual destinations – an Armenian coffee shop, a bar in a garage, the backyard of someone's home, a Roma library, a gathering of pensioners out in the street and will provide unexpected surprises – life stories in pictures, a dinner in the garden of a Turkish or Greeks family, a three-day-long Roma wedding, an autobiographical musical, and theatrical and dance performances. The neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city will get a chance to show off their secrets and charm. This project will be developed by a European team of artists and the main performers will be the inhabitants of the neighbourhoods themselves. The alternative Plovdiv tour will be accessible for visitors, located all around the world through an online version. An interactive 3D map and audio tours will be available for smartphones and will allow a realistic and exotic city experience for guests, who have never physically entered the city.

Further projects in CULTURE MEETS PEOPLE:

100% Plovdiv (uniting representatives of all social groups and generations who will create a living portrait of the city through telling their stories in a special theatrical form, developed by the performance group Rimini Protokoll); **ART E.R. (Art Emergency Room)** (art interventions by local and European artists and therapists applying artistic therapy activities in selected social and health institutions – hospitals, nursing homes, prisons, retirement homes), **Art Patronage** (bringing together disadvantaged people with designers, architects and painters to increase their index of well-being by helping them change their

environment – adding more beauty and comfort to their everyday life); **Utopic Flights** (a special site-specific project especially created for Plovdiv airport); **After ART** (observing the interaction between art, therapy and art-therapy by creating an exhibition of artistic and therapeutic art projects by people with mental disabilities and psychological problems).

Partners for this cluster: Drama Theatre Plovdiv, State Puppet Theatre Plovdiv, Black box Festival, Inter-art-festival Association, State Opera – Plovdiv, AMDFA (Academy for music, dance and fine arts) Plovdiv, Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski, Learning Theatre, Theatre A'part, Hand Theatre, National High School for Performing and Screen Arts Bulgaria, Arttherapy Association Bulgaria, Rimini Protokoll (Germany), Airport Plovdiv, local Hospitals and social institutions, Association Youth Club Roma – Stolipinovo, Roma and Armenian Community centres, UNIMA network, International Institute for Mediterranean Theatre Network, ASSIETEJ network, Werkleitz – Centre for Media Art (Halle, Germany), Inter media art institute (Düsseldorf, Germany), Union of Plovdiv Artists, Plovdiv Photography Centre, Union of Plovdiv Writers
Budget: 800,000 EUR
Duration: all year long

Art for a Forgotten Future

This project cluster will breathe new life into the affluent past of the city, making it fit for the future through research and presentation of the newest trends in all genres of art, hybrid formats, and actively involving the latest achievements of science, psychology and new digital and communication technologies. This platform is concerned with modern speech forms, experiments,



Enjoying Ayliak in one of Plovdiv's residential neighbourhoods

Street show "Ognia" during Theatrain festival supported by the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation



new technologies and their potential to bring a new meaning to the cultural-historical layers of a city. This cluster demonstrates how the innovative practices and creative decisions, modern forms of art and creative industries act as a means of dealing with serious local problems and global challenges of present day society and develop future mapping for a sustainable and creative city.

PLOVDIV Biennale

The PLOVDIV Biennale will have two editions before 2019 – in 2015 and 2017. PLOVDIV Biennale 2019 will be focused on how ALL ARTS **TOGETHER** are making the city fit for the future. PLOVDIV Biennale's ambition is to turn into an international art forum which will investigate the possibilities of the transforming power of contemporary art. The citizens' opportunities to meet international art and culture will expand, offering places for performances, workshops, discussions, parallel programmes, and concerts. The PLOVDIV Biennale will help transform the city into a cultural hub in the Balkans and into an attractive tourist destination for a European audience.

LUMMIX – Light Festival in the neighbourhoods

Each one of us a little sparkle – all of us together a great light (Jewish proverb)
LUMMIX is a name that comes from the combination of the word 'lumen' (light intensity) and the word 'mix' – a mixture of expressions and art trends – video art in an urban environment, light and sound installations specific for the space, light performances and photography.

The Festival of Light LUMMIX aims at stimulating the creative use of innovative technology – LED, OLED screens, lasers, multimedia, energy-saving sources in the field of art and life, with

a fresh and unconventional approach of presenting artefacts and making them accessible to a wider audience. LUMMIX will consist of a series of specific art interventions in various neighbourhoods of the city and a programme of events, an exhibition of light art from around the world and performances at the Contemporary Art Centre in Plovdiv – the Ancient Bath. Famous artists from around the world will be invited to create their own light installations inspired by the atmosphere and the messages of the city in direct contact with the citizens. Some light installations will remain throughout the year, only changing their environment – a year-round attraction in the city, an attractive place for night walks.

Further projects in ART FOR A FORGOTTEN FUTURE:

GO Digital (exploring new territories of digital and new media artistic expression); **CARGO** (designing a substantial archive/database of contemporary art in Bulgaria and Europe); **International Fair of Innovation in the Cultural and Creative industries** (A platform showcasing best practice initiatives implemented in cities that aim to unlock the potential of cultural and creative industries.); **Literature in the contemporary context** (Big international conference with popular contemporary authors and publishers); **White Nights in Plovdiv** (opening up the city to an interactive artistic night playground); **AROUSE THE SENSES** (creating "open visual and multisensory experiments", thus stimulating new aesthetic experience through sensory modalities like tactility, sound, balance, taste, smell).

Partners for this cluster: Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, Institute of Tirana Biennale, Venice Biennale, ROTOR Centre for Contemporary Art (Graz), REMONT - Independent Artistic Association (Belgrade), Art Today

Association - Centre for Contemporary Art Plovdiv, Berlin Biennale - KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Ministry of Culture Bulgaria, Institute for contemporary art Bulgaria, French Culture Institute, Goethe Institute, O.K. Centre for contemporary art (Linz), Institute for contemporary art (Dunajvaros Hungary), Plovdiv International Fair, Open arts Foundation, Union of Plovdiv artists, Architecture studio 8 ½, Union of Bulgarian architects, Israeli Centre for Digital Art (Holon), Cultural centre of Belgrade, New media centre KUDA (Serbia), Ministry of science and education
Budget: 3 Mil. EUR
Duration: projects will take place all year round.

RELAX promoting sustainable lifestyles and an appreciation for culture's and nature's beauty

Ayliak City

Eternal cities seem to generate more time for actual living without too much of the hustle and bustle of the 21st century. Eternal cities are not slow-paced. Eternal cities do not hurry, either. They recognize, appreciate and protect their own pace in history. The project-cluster is searching for the fundamental mission of the city to offer humane existence based on the different tempos of living of varying age, social, ethnic and cultural groups. The ultimate goal is not to achieve a city with a total dominating speed, but a city with well-balanced speeds, which can develop through life in interconnected urban, environmental, cultural and social activities. Many believe Plovdiv is a city with a slow pace and should be able to preserve this spirit, the sense of calm (Ayliak) for silent contemplation of beauty and

timelessness. By using speed as an instrument, AYLIK CITY wishes to develop Plovdiv's potential to be a model of a balanced slow city that achieves better quality of life, via shared values.

Projects in AYLIK CITY:

The projects seek to provoke innovations and exchange of knowledge through artistic interventions, and gain experience in different slow themes as for example: **Slow food** and organic farming/gardening; **Slow science**, working for the benefit of the people, not for material gain or anyone's economic interests; **Slow education** – a rhythm adapted to the natural development and needs of children; **Slow design + Slow production** – increasing the time for creativity despite the rapid pace of industrial and commercial activity; **Rag Fest, Handmade Day** – festivals aimed at the prolonged use of personal belongings, recycling and conversion of their use, and the use of sustainable materials; **Slow LOVE** is about taking time getting to know the people around you; **Slow Life** is about living at a slow pace without hurrying, and keeping stress at bay in a sustainable, green and healthy environment (activities: **Festival of Happiness, The Ayliak-/Take-It-Easy-Festival, Children's International Science Festival); Strategic meetings and debates** involving municipal officials and architects, business entrepreneurs lobbying for more sustainable solutions in construction, energy, transport; **International conferences** on a degrowth movement - green & slow development.

Partners for this cluster: Salve – Centre for experience and ideas, Ayliak Festival, Handmade Day Festival Plovdiv, Festival of Happiness, Credo Bonum (at the moment involved in Sofia's bid), The World Institute of Slowness, Research & Degrowth Organisation Barcelona, Union



At the Plovdiv
Jazz Nights Festival



of Scientists in Bulgaria, British Council, Ministry of Science and Education
Budget: 200,000 EUR
Duration: all year round.

EURhythmica

Plovdiv is a city with a rich music history. This is where Europe's first ever Chamber Music Festival took place and exists until today. Plovdiv is called the home of jazz and has helped the first and one of the most famous and popular Bulgarian jazz groups, White Green Red, find its way to the grand music stage, as well as a number of world-renowned musicians (e.g. jazz musician Milcho Leviev, and kaval player Teodosi Spasov). The EURhythmica cluster's ambition is to introduce Plovdiv's rich traditional musical cultures to a European audience, featuring an exciting programme with the participation of world famous musicians. EURhythmica will involve and mobilize local and European audience via the presentation of a variety of professional, amateur and experimental music bands from different genres. EURhythmica will take on the challenge to present innovative elements in already-established local festivals with a long history, and turn them into an attraction for the public from abroad. Children, teenagers, adults and people of different social status and ethnic background will all be wrapped up in the diverse spell of European music taking place in the whole city.

DIGITAL TUNNEL

To demonstrate the importance of music in the life of a city and the potential to recreate city spaces, we will close a big thoroughfare – the tunnel on the main city boulevard that passes underneath the ancient theatre – and will turn it into an electronic art zone. World famous DJs, electronic music composers and performers,

VJ stenographers and visual artists will be invited to transform this unusual city location into an unforgettable musical and visual experience. The ICEM (Institute for Computer Music and Electronic Media) at the renowned Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen (Germany) will be partners in developing and implementing this project.

Crossing Arts, crossing Hills

The realization of a series of large-scale cross-over performances, for example of world-renowned musicians like Jean-Michel Jarre, and choreographers like Alain Platel will resurrect an old tradition from the times of communism, turning Bunardzhika Hill into an open-air stage with an exciting night view over the city.

Jazz Invasion/The Vegetable Orchestra at the Vegetable Market

Jazz is part of the tradition and culture of Plovdiv. Within the frame of the Plovdiv Jazz Nights Festival during the ECoC year a parallel programme called Jazz Invasion will take jazz from the concert halls and stages to unusual places – to the streets, the mall, the city transport, inside trains and stations, and into the Vegetable Market. The **Vegetable Orchestra at the Vegetable Market** project will invite the Viennese musicians of the Vegetable Orchestra to demonstrate how to invent instruments from vegetables, taking the music into the daily lives of the market shoppers and vendors.

Further projects in **EURhythmica**: **UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT** (multi-media large-scale spectacle, aiming to draw a wide spectrum of European audiences by creating a new music scene from all the social and ethnic groups in Plovdiv); **Verdi Revisited** (aiming at advancing and modernizing the classical opera performances by initiating a programme for young European opera directors); **Symphonic Youth** (initiating a

multinational orchestra in Plovdiv, in which the members of the European Union Youth Orchestra will take part); **Festival of the Church Choirs; World symphonic music: The Bulgarian Footprint** (tracing Bulgarian Artists in the worldwide music scene).

Partners for this cluster: Municipality Plovdiv, Ministry of Culture Bulgaria, Academy for Music, Dance and Fine Arts Plovdiv, Classic Music Festival in Balabanov House, Chamber Music Festival, Sounds of The Ages – Rock festival, Plovdiv Jazz Nights, Verdi Festival, ICEM of the Folkwang University of the Arts Essen (Germany), International Folklore Festival, London Philharmonic, Wiener Symphoniker, Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, European Union Youth Orchestra, The European Choral Association – Europa Cantat, European Association of Folklore Festivals, Spectra Foundation, Foundation MusicArtisimo
Budget: 3 Mil. EUR
Duration: all year round

Animate the City

Animate the City is a comprehensive cross-sector platform that will expand our vision of sports: as a way of life, as a means to achieve physical and mental health, harmony and beauty, of body, mind and spirit. The project will combine the efforts of various sectors – business, education, health, transport, urban infrastructure, and NGOs – to weave sport into the everyday lives of citizens beyond our traditional one-sided view of sport as a mechanical physical activity. Through the project we will emphasize the potential of sports to become a driving force, stimulating personal and social change, fostering creativity, uniting the citizens and their

involvement in community processes. The project idea for Animate the City stems from the autumn of 2012, when Plovdiv hosted, for the first time in Bulgaria, the Week of Movement, which is part of the EU initiative European Week of Movement.

1. Sport and infrastructure

... is the first phase in 2014 to create favourable conditions for sports in the city and will involve:

- Recycle workshops: turning waste materials into material for sports facilities and equipment in cooperation with experts and businesses.
- Creating Paths of Health in the less frequented parks and territories of the hills: e.g. a historical path of health passing through zones of Thracian and Roman motifs.
- Expansion of bicycle lanes. In accordance with the programme of Plovdiv Municipality, expanding them also outside the city.
- Facilities: Eco-trails (e.g. routes in the Rhodope Mountains), areas for beach volleyball, mountaineering routes in the city, accessibility for people with disabilities; cleaning parks and facilities.

2. Concept phase

... is the development phase starting in 2015 which will involve:

- Think tanks for ideas with a focus on specific target groups – children, the elderly, the disabled, the poor, minorities. Including experts from Eastern European countries
- Connecting to volunteer organisations and recruiting volunteers
- Training programmes for young people to become trainers for their communities in healthy living, sports, and youth work

3. Culture Meets Sport in 2019 Events

- Festival of health and beauty
- Cycling events – Festival on two wheels

- Free open-air training in different fields of sports, dances, martial arts etc.
- Sports events for disadvantaged people
- Park of Adventures – rope garden, workshops on acrobatic and circus skills
- Dance evenings and sports events for elderly people
- Representation of traditional Bulgarian, Turkish and Armenian games
- International cycling marathon. 500 participants from Slovenia, Italy, Romania, Croatia, Serbia cycle 500 km to Plovdiv.
- Framework programme: sports and arts

Partners for this cluster: Plovdiv Municipality, ISCA (International sport and culture association) – works with 130 member organisations, NGOs, public and private sector; PTPI Smiles, NAVA – National Alliance of Volunteers, WOW SPORT Plovdiv, Cycling Club Kriva Spitsa, Bikearea Association, Union of Landscape Architects, Zagreb, Slovenian and Serbian Organisation Sport for All, Unione Italiana Sport per Tutti (UISP), Unió Barcelonina d'Associacions Esportives (UBAE)

Budget: 650,000 EUR

Location: throughout the city, mostly outdoors in urban environments, priority areas (the river, the hills, the rowing canal, the Rhodope mountains).

Duration: Initiatives throughout the year. Culmination – Week of movement – and welcoming the finishing cyclists in the first week of October.

Overall estimated budget all projects: 14,030,000 EUR



3) How does the city plan to choose the projects/events, which will constitute the programme for the year?

If we are granted the title we will make an open call for projects after the organizing structure has been set up. We will give clear and specific criteria (with emphasis on the European dimension and citizen involvement) and a deadline of six months after the call. Although there will, and has to be a deadline, we will still keep an open eye for any interesting ideas that might come up later and will certainly not pass by a chance to implement a good project.

The project call will be open for all artists, individuals, NGOs, cultural and socio-cultural operators and institutions in Plovdiv and the South-Central Region. Proposals from national operators or national institutions that are not based in Plovdiv will have to seek partnerships with local and regional entities. Through our existing European and international networks and those of our partners we intend to make an open call outside Bulgaria for institutions and artists who are interested in contributing to the programme we are putting forward. Prior to the open call, the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation will start a communication campaign to ensure the participation of cultural operators in the city and region, as well as encouraging and supporting marginalized groups and communities (Roma, other minorities, the disabled, socially disadvantaged groups, the elderly) by moderated workshops in some of the Chitalishta in the residential areas.

A selection process based on coherent criteria and the existing programme

concept will be developed. A jury or artistic advisory group – whose members will have to be neutral and not involved in the proposals themselves – will assist the artistic director in the selection process. The artistic director will be fully responsible for the concept, quality and content of the artistic programme and will have the final decision in all matters.

Partnership agreements and contracts between the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation and the selected partners will be signed after the projects have been selected. The majority of the projects will be put forward and managed externally i.e. by cultural organisations, networks, NGOs, community groups, independent artists and producers. Many of the projects in the artistic programme concern sustainable solutions far beyond a purely artistic approach (e.g. Tobacco City, Adata Island, the Community HUB). Therefore it is very important to us to build project management clusters involving businesses, environmental and educational institutions, cultural operators, and the owners of old buildings etc. in order to unite their potential, capacity, and efforts for the development of sustainable projects for the city and the region.

III. Organisation and financing of the event

1) ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

1.1 What kind of structure is envisaged for the organisation responsible for implementing the project? What type of relationship will it have with the city authorities?

The current structure for Plovdiv 2019 is an independent foundation and was set up in September 2011 with a unanimous vote of the City Council. In the event of a positive outcome for the candidacy of Plovdiv, the foundation will ensure continuity and stability in setting up a slightly different structure than is currently at work.

We know how important it is to reduce political influence on the work of the foundation in order to guarantee independence of artistic and organisational decision-making for the benefit of transparency and clarity. For the years 2015-2020 we envisage a rather simple and lean organisation with short decision-making processes and stable governance.

A Board of Directors (Supervisory Board) is going to be established, consisting of members appointed by the City Council, including representatives of the Roma Foundation, representatives of the Regional District of Plovdiv, and members from public institutions (e.g. university, public organisations). The Board of Directors will

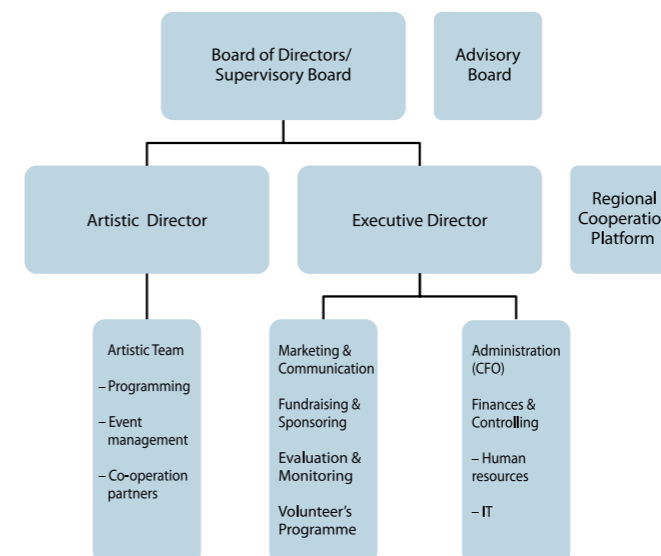
meet four times per year and monitor the work of the executive management in terms of legal and financial regulations. They will also monitor the personnel structure and request financial audits if they deem them necessary. The Board of Directors will choose a Chairman/Chairwoman.

The relationship between the organisation and the city authorities is reflected in the Board of Directors. It is the body in which the city authorities will be represented without compromising the independence of decision-making within the foundation.

The Executive Director and the Artistic Director are planned to operate on the same level and will have to agree on all major issues concerning the organisation. If there is disagreement the Board of Directors will have the final decision. The Artistic Director and Executive Director will however have different points of emphasis in their work. The artistic team is naturally at the heart of the organisation and will be headed by the Artistic Director who will make all final decisions on the programme. He/She will also coordinate the cooperation partners of the artistic programme and will be responsible for the event management. The artistic team is likely to consist of different sections (probably two or three, e.g. on urban projects, traditional & contemporary arts, and social innovation) according to the focus we set in our programming. The Executive Director is planned to have the responsibility for Finances & Administration (with a Chief Financial Officer reporting to him and managing the administrative section with finances and controlling, human resources, IT

etc.). Moreover the Executive Director will be responsible for Marketing & Communication, Fundraising & Sponsorship, the Volunteer's Programme and the Evaluation & Monitoring Process – each headed by managing team members reporting to the Executive Director.

As we intend to seek exchange and cooperation with the five Regional Districts in South-Central Bulgaria (including the Regional District around Plovdiv) we plan to set up an exchange and cooperation platform of regional representatives from these municipalities. One of the team members of Plovdiv 2019 will be responsible for the communication and coordination of this platform. Meetings should take place on a regular basis and ensure the communication about cooperation projects, co-financing and co-organizing projects and events in the region. Furthermore we intend to appoint an advisory body consisting of public figures from Plovdiv, the region, Bulgaria and abroad. This body will have no decision-making powers but rather will advise the executive management on their work and assist the process by contributing expertise, and access to their networks.



1.2 If an area around the city is involved in the event, how will the coordination between the authorities of the relevant local and regional authorities be organised?

For now the Regional District of Plovdiv and the four other Regional Districts of South-Central Bulgaria have stated their support but have made no financial commitments so far. The coordination is therefore for now described on the level of communication with a perspective towards future cooperation.

The coordination between the supporting partners from the region involved in this bid and the authorities on the local level will be mainly organized through the Foundation Plovdiv 2019. One person in the team will act as a 'regional coordinator' and will ensure communication between the involved entities happens.

The first step towards consistent communication was initiated on 5 December 2012 during a meeting between the representatives of the Regional Districts from the South-Central Region of Bulgaria (Kardzhali, Plovdiv (District), Pazardzhik, Smolyan and Haskovo) on which occasion the participants signed a declaration in support of Plovdiv 2019. Plovdiv will also sign an agreement for cooperation in all areas of economy and culture with the city of Stara Zagora, which is outside of the involved territory.

In this mutual declaration our partners confirmed the willingness of the five regions to include innovative and long-term inter-municipal cultural and civil projects in the Strategic Development Plan of the South-Central Region – with the 2019 event calendar as a stepping stone.

During this meeting the representatives of the South-Central Region proposed a more sustainable cooperation by designating a responsible person from each region to be in permanent contact with the future regional coordinator from Plovdiv's ECoC team. These people **together** will form a team which will be responsible for the interregional and inter-municipal relations up to 2019 and through the events in the years to come. The representatives from all five Regional Districts (which in time can be expanded to include the representatives of the villages and towns who contribute projects to the ECoC programme) will also regularly receive newsletters and invitations to important events happening in connection with the preparation of Plovdiv's bid. Moreover they will be invited at regular intervals for meetings and updates. These meetings will allow face-to-face communication and especially be a forum for exchange and a mutual forum for information. We intend to continue this network beyond 2019.

1.3 According to which criteria and under which arrangements has or will the artistic director of the event been chosen? What is or will be his/her profile? When will he/she take up the appointment? What will be his/her field of action?

The criteria according to which we have chosen the artistic director included his experience in managing international artistic projects and exhibitions, his connections and networks on the local, national and international level, his communication skills as a team player and his participatory approach to the arts and culture.

The current artistic director, Emil Mirazchiev, appointed in March 2013, is an artist and curator educated at the Academy of Fine Arts, Sofia. He is the founder and director of the Centre for Contemporary Art, Plovdiv (Ancient Bath and Corridor Gallery) – the only centre for contemporary art in Bulgaria. He is one of the founders of “Edge”, an art group that has been emblematic for the development of contemporary art in Bulgaria. Furthermore he is President of the Art Today Association and initiated the open air video art festival Façade in Plovdiv. He has realized numerous exhibitions with international artists as a curator and as an artist has participated in exhibitions in Hungary, the Netherlands, Greece, Poland, Canada, Great Britain, USA, Portugal, India, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, Macedonia, and Serbia. He has been awarded various national and international prizes and grants. As a member of the Union of Bulgarian Artists and a member of the Association of Plovdiv Artists he is well connected to the local and national art scene and has a vast European and international network. His focus is clearly on contemporary visual arts, but the programme for Plovdiv 2019 clearly indicates his interdisciplinary and open approach to other forms of art.

The artistic director's fields of action for 2015-2019 will comprise:

- Prepare, coordinate and implement the programme and projects for the European Capital of Culture as a transparent and artistically sound proposal.
- Select proposed projects according to a set of transparent criteria and develop projects with the artistic team(s).
- Ensure artistic excellence and a European dimension of the programme that appeals to audiences beyond Plovdiv and Bulgaria.
- Coordinate and include cooperation

- partners from Plovdiv, Bulgaria and other European countries into the programme.
- Seek out synergies and funding possibilities with EU funded programmes.
- Assist and foster communication and promotion of the projects and the overall programme to the local, national and international public.

- Ensure sustainability of the programming and involve citizens as active participants in the cultural activities. The profile set out by the Foundation Plovdiv 2019 clearly states that the artistic director is to take independent decisions concerning the organisation of artistic and programmatic activities of the foundation.

2) FINANCING OF THE EVENT

2.1 What has been the usual annual budget for culture in the city over the last 5 years (excluding expenditure for the present ECoC application)?

Year	Usual annual budget for culture in the city (in euros)	Usual annual budget for culture in the city (in % of the total annual budget for the city)
2009	3,351,918	3.79%
2010	3,043,432	3.27%
2011	2,854,661	3.24%
2012	3,022,306	3.43%
2013	4,090,443	4.05%

Capital expenditure for cultural infrastructure is not included in these figures. The sums represent the operating expenditure for culture in Plovdiv. The table shows the total costs for culture in different fields: cultural programme, archaeology, financial support for the cultural institutions in Plovdiv, the museums, the Ivan Vazov Public Library, the network of community centres for culture called Chitalishta, the City Art Gallery, the Zoological Garden, the “Trakia” folklore ensemble, and also included is the budget for the regular festivals in the city organized by the municipal Culture Department. The over 1 mil. euro difference in the budget between 2012 and 2013 is a direct effect of the municipality's clear

will to raise its efforts and budgets for culture to a higher level over the next years (see also question 2.8). In this context we would like to mention that Standard & Poor's Ratings Services (S&P) on 30. August 2013 raised the long-term issuer credit rating on the city of Plovdiv to 'BBB-' from 'BB+' on strong financials, moderate debt and an overall positive outlook.

Apart from the above, there are some of the largest cultural institutions in the city that receive grants from the central government which raises the cultural power of the city considerably and cannot be expressed in the figures above. Some examples (figures in euro):

2.2 Please explain the overall budget for the European Capital of Culture project (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside for the project).

Institution	Number of employees	Overall annual budget €	Co-financing from city € (already included in the cultural budget in table 2.1.)	Financing from central government €	Other info
Archaeological museum	22	350,000	25,000	175,000	Ca.150,000 € revenues; 150,000 visitors
Historical museum	22	90,000 - 115,000	In kind: facility management	90,000 - 115,000	Additional income from sponsors
Ethnographic museum	15	75,000		75,000	25-30 exhibitions p.a.
State Opera Plovdiv and Orchestra	180	ca. 730,000	30,000	600,000	Ca. 100,000 € revenues
Drama Theatre	74	1,220,000	20,000	Ca. 1,200,000	Figures include revenues, 320-360 performances p.a.
Puppet Theatre	36	Ca. 300,000	15,000	250,000	480 performances p.a.
"Trakia" Folklore Ensemble	76	350,000 +	350,000	Project grants	Performances around Europe and worldwide

We did not include any capital expenditures for cultural infrastructure, however, during the years 2009-2013 two important buildings were totally renovated: the Archaeological museum which is now one of the most progressive museums on the Balkans and one of the oldest cultural institutions in Bulgaria, and also the City House of Culture which has a new concert hall, exhibition spaces and places for amateur ensembles in the city. Nine million euros have been invested in the

reconstruction of this building. Another 12 million euros have been allocated for the Multifunctional facility that is currently being constructed in Plovdiv. An expected total of 30 million euros will be invested in this structure before the year 2015. In 2012 part of the Ancient Theatre in the city was refurbished including new lighting.

Total Expenditure (in euros) in the budget	Operating expenditure (in euros)	Operating expenditure (in %)	Capital expenditure (in euros)	Capital expenditure (in %)
36,912,863	22,300,000	60.41%	14,612,863	39.59%

The calculated operating expenditure does not contain funds from the city's regular annual budget for culture. Only the money that is labelled exclusively for the ECoC activities has been added. Some projects and initiatives are planned to be organized in partnership with municipal and state cultural institutions and that means they will be co-financed by these institutions. These costs are not included in the figures mentioned in table 2.2. We

do not intend to reduce funding for any cultural institution to generate funds for ECoC projects in the next seven years.

[In case the city is planning to use funds from the usual annual budget for culture to co-finance the ECoC project, please indicate the amount which will be taken from the usual annual budget for culture from the year of the submission of the bid to 2019 included: 0 Euros]

Total income in the budget (in euros)	From the public sector (in euros)	From the public sector (in %)	From the private sector (in euros)	From the private sector (in %)
36,912,863	33,412,863	90.52%	3,500,000	9.48%

Income from the public sector	In euros	%	Please specify: amount planned, secured,
National government	10,000,000	29.92%	planned
City	21,912,863	65.58%	secured
Region	.*		
EU	1,500,000**	4.48%	planned
Other			

The contribution from the city is composed of a sum of 7,300,000 euros allocated exclusively for the operating expenditure of the ECoC and 14,612,863 euros allocated for capital expenditure. *Regional authorities do not redistribute money for the ECoC project or the municipality. However, because Plovdiv is supported by many municipalities from the South-Central Region of Bulgaria, they will

participate in the process with their own funds through joint initiatives but at this stage this figure cannot be calculated exactly. **We calculate here the Melina Mercouri Prize if awarded. Other income from the EU are direct funds from Brussels (Creative Europe and others as stated in question I.10) and EU Regional Development Funds that might be used for specific Plovdiv 2019 projects. They are not included in this figure.

2.3. Please explain the operating budget for the ECoC project.

Operating expenditure (in euros)	Programme expenditure (in euros)	Programme expenditure (in %)	Promotion and marketing (in euros)	Promotion and marketing (in %)	Wages, overheads, administration (in euros)	Wages, overheads, administration (in %)	Other (please specify) reserve
22,300,000	14,718,000	66%	5,352,000	24%	1,784,000	8%	2% (446,000)

a) Overall operating expenditure:

Timetable for spending	Programme expenditure (in euros)	Programme expenditure (in %)	Marketing and promotion expenditure (in euros)	Marketing and promotion expenditure (in %)	Wages, overheads, administration (in euros)	Wages, overheads, administration (in %)	Other (please specify) reserve
2014	0	0%	160,560	3%	35,680	2%	0%
2015	0	0%	267,600	5%	89,200	5%	0%
2016	441,540	3%	267,600	5%	160,560	9%	0%
2017	588,720	4%	535,200	10%	214,080	12%	0%
2018	2,943,600	20%	1,873,200	35%	356,800	20%	0%
2019	7,359,000	50%	1,873,200	35%	713,600	40%	65%
2020	2,943,600	20%	267,600	5%	178,400	10%	35%
later	441,540	3%	107,040	2%	35,680	2%	0%

b) Planned timetable for spending operating expenditure:

2.4. Overall capital expenditure:

Capital expenditures (in euros)	Funding of new cultural infrastructure or upgrading existing facilities (including museums, galleries, theatres, concert halls, arts centres etc.) (in euros)	Urban revitalisation (renovation of squares, gardens, streets, public space development etc.) (in euros)	Infrastructures (investment in the underground, rail stations, dockyards, roads etc.) (in euros)
14,612,863	4,456,418	10,156,445	-

If appropriate, please insert a table here that specifies which amounts will be spent for

what type of capital expenditure over the years from the application to the ECoC year.

	OBJECT	FORECAST						expected total (in euro)
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
1 = Cultural infrastructure 2 = Urban revitalization	1 Multifunctional facility (sports and culture)	3,149,558						3,149,558
	1 Ancient Theater (renovations of one entrance, stage and multimedia tour)	67,490						67,490
	2 Planning and renovation of Zoological garden	1,789,522	511,292					2,300,814
	1 Renovations of The Old Turkish Bath (seat of Contemporary Art Centre)	6,135		6,135				12,270
	2 Overall renovation of The Dondukov Park	255,646	76,694	51,129	76,694	76,694	76,694	613,551
	2 Construction of Second Rowing Canal	1,942,909	2,045,167	1,022,583	511,292			5,521,951
	1 Excavation of remaining parts of Roman Stadium 2nd phase	153,388	51,129	51,129	51,129	51,129	51,129	409,033
	2 Excavations of archeological sites	76,694	76,694	76,694	76,694	76,694	76,694	460,164
	2 Lift at the Bunardzhik Hill recreational area	766,938						766,938
	2 Improvement of the Sahat Hill and the Bunardzhik Hill as recreational area	25,565	25,565	25,565	25,564	25,565	25,565	153,389
	2 On-going renovation of historical houses (public) in the Old town	132,000	94,000	87,000	63,000	25,000		401,000
	2 Refurbishment of historical cobblestone pavements and artistic illumination in the Old town + underground infrastructure	51,129	51,129	51,129	51,129	51,129	51,129	306,774
	1 Reconstruction of a building for Ceremonies and Festivities in Roma quarter Stolipinovo	51,129	51,129	102,258	51,129	51,129	51,129	357,903
	2 Lauta Park - turning into a recreational area	15,338	15,338	15,338	15,338	15,338	15,338	92,028
			8,483,441	2,998,137	1,488,960	921,969	372,678	347,678

The table exclusively contains financial commitment from the city and the government. EU and other co-financing is not included. The operating expenditure

is independent of the capital expenditure and neither will be able to cross-finance projects in the other section.

2.5 Have the public finance authorities (city, region, state) already voted on or made financial commitments? If not, when will they do so?

The City Council of Plovdiv has unanimously voted for guaranteed financial contributions to the operating expenditure of 7.3 Mil. EUR (14,278,00 BGN) for the years 2014-2020 on 1st August 2013. This sum is additional to the usual annual cultural budget and exclusively allocated for the European Capital of Culture activities. In addition the city will contribute 14,612,863 EUR in capital expenditure so that a total contribution of 21,912,863 EUR from the city is guaranteed. The Regional District of Plovdiv comprising 17 municipalities and the five Regional Districts in South-Central Bulgaria that support the bid are not allowed to redistribute money to municipalities by Bulgarian law. In the event that we are awarded the title, the supporting municipalities can contribute projects and financing to the programme. In a possible 2nd round these contributions will be clarified. The National Government has not made a clear statement about their contribution yet. We have made a conservative estimate of a contribution of 10 Mil. EUR.

2.6 What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?

The process of the implementation of the programme for Plovdiv's bid for European Capital of Culture implies a campaign for overcoming the inertness of private business regarding its support for Plovdiv's culture in general and the bid for ECoC in particular. The reasons for this are related to the PR and advertising departments of large companies from Plovdiv, which are not located in Plovdiv but in Sofia. Consequently they are not sensitive to local initiatives, and often

lack the understanding that their funds for culture would add a surplus value to their activities. In this sense, the attraction of companies in Plovdiv for the ECoC and the motto 'Plovdiv **Together**' will also present an opportunity to change their own funding policies from a social to a more cultural focus. Through the European Capital of Culture programme we aim at presenting a cultural cause with a European dimension. We want to animate companies to connect to our European cultural projects and at the same time make their product more recognizable and desirable for a European market. Recent analyses show that the cultural operators so far have been basically passive recipients of funds from the business instead of using the projects for long-term relationships with the business and offering new ideas – for aestheticizing the working environment, fostering innovations, elaborating new ways of carrying out business holidays and events, stimulating creativity on the working floor. We will change this passive attitude and launch the European Capital of Culture as a stepping-stone to convince sponsors of fundraising with a long-term perspective, and to convince the sponsored institutions and cultural operators to become more pro-active in seeking funding from private entities.

The plan for raising funds for the initiative European Capital of Culture will be implemented on the basis of active partnerships with businesses, service clubs and other partners. On the basis of reciprocal benefits we will exploit all forms of sponsoring and fundraising. Some examples of strategies that we will work on:

1. Sponsoring/fundraising from companies

Synergies and support can be created with companies on the level of business, education, culture, and innovations. Possible supportive actions from the companies will be:

- 1.1. Branding – well-known Plovdiv brands in the FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) sector will be offered the chance to print on the labels of their products the information

that an amount, specified by the manufacturer, of each product sold serves as financial support of the project Plovdiv 2019 – and at the same time publicize their support for the initiative through their product.

- 1.2. Providing funds (in return the companies have the opportunity to reduce their taxable profit by 10%).
- 1.3. Sponsoring special services for partners and guests artists – accommodation, food and transportation, taking on the expenses for advertising and promotional products etc.
- 1.4. Providing specialists and experts for projects, legal advice, finances.
- 1.5. Organising campaigns for cleaning and landscaping the city.

2. Sponsoring/fundraising with bilateral trade agencies and industry organisations based in Plovdiv

There are numerous examples for partners, which in part, we have already established contacts with. For example: the German-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce, the Italian-Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce – Confindustria, the Bulgarian-Russian Business Club, the Bulgarian-Turkish Business Club, the Greek-Bulgarian Business Club, the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, The Chamber of Installation Specialists in Bulgaria (CISB), Bulgarian National Association Essential Oils, Perfumery and Cosmetics (BNAEOPC), Bulgarian Construction Chamber. Possible activities:

- 2.1. Organizing mailing activities directed at members – keeping them informed through newsletters, flyers, direct contacts.
- 2.2. Organizing sponsorship/fundraising events with the member companies.
- 2.3. Connecting member companies with specific projects where in-kind sponsoring is useful with the products the company offers.

3. Sponsoring/fundraising with service clubs

Service clubs like Rotary, Lions, Round Table, Soroptimist and others can be very helpful and give access to other networks. Possible activities:

- 3.1. Organizing fundraising campaigns

3.2. Acting as patrons and responsible project-partners for specific cultural projects of the programme.

3.3. Communicating with the entire network of clubs in other cities (within Bulgaria and Europe). All potential partners in Plovdiv – companies, bilateral trade agencies, industrial chambers and service clubs have their own communication channels (websites, newsletters, billboards) where they will be asked to upload the logo of Plovdiv 2019 as well as share information related to the candidacy.

4. Implementation of Crowdfunding

The Plovdiv ECoC team and the city administration, particularly the Culture department, plan to introduce a crowdfunding platform which could be used as a means to include the general public in the process of funding various projects in the area of art, sport and culture in general. The website will be used to support projects throughout the period between 2015 and 2019, and it could become a permanent tool for sponsoring numerous projects. There are several advantages in using a crowdfunding platform as a fundraising instrument such as: it includes the general public of all ages and social status, it proves the concept to be inclusive, it provides free PR for the city events, it serves as a marketing tool, it provides access to capital, it can be implemented in several languages and thus will reach people from all over Europe and beyond.

5. Development of a public fund for project grants as a long-term strategy

– possibly as an outcome of the ECoC and as a sustainable structure for the years after the event. The public fund will manage resources provided by a number of donators and will grant funding to civil initiatives.

The public fund could be installed with the funding that the city has allocated for the ECoC for 2020 to create a sustainable structure that continues the cultural work of the Plovdiv 2019 Foundation.

2.7 According to what timetable should the income be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture?

a) Income to be used to cover operating expenses

Source of income	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU	0	0	0	0	0	1,500,000
National government	500,000	750,000	1,250,000	2,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000
City	146,005	292,009	511,016	803,025	2,044,063	2,993,092
Region	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sponsors	50,000	100,000	150,000	250,000	900,000	2,050,000
other	-	-	-	-	-	-

The table does not include the year 2020 and beyond, when we will receive 510,790 EUR (the rest of 7.3 million EUR) that could be used to establish a public foundation as

described in question 2.6 of this section (see under 5.) as a sustainable continuation of the Plovdiv 2019 structures.

b) Income to be used to cover capital expenditure

Source of income	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
EU	0	0	0	0	0	0
National government	0	0	0	0	0	0
City	8,483,441	2,998,137	1,488,960	921,969	372,678	347,678
Region	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sponsors	0	0	0	0	0	0
other	-	-	-	-	-	-

As for the capital expenditure incomes, we have only calculated the actual budgets that we know of now, and which we can guarantee. We have no figures yet, about which funding might be added by projects implemented under the EU structural funds framework which are currently being negotiated. This also applies to table a) – there might be funding from the Creative Europe programme and others. In a possible second round we will specify these figures.

The reason why the income figure from the city in table b) is so high for 2014 and lowers over the years is that many important infrastructure projects will be finished in 2014 and the following years to be ready for 2019. These are figures we can now guarantee. However, the city might allocate more funds for infrastructure depending on the priorities identified for the new programme period 2014-2020.

2.8 Which amount of the usual overall annual budget does the city intend to spend for culture after the ECoC year (in euros and in % of the overall annual budget)?

The ambition of the City of Plovdiv is to increase the annual cultural budget after 2019 to 6% of the overall annual budget (assuming it stays at around 100 mil./p.a.

this equals 6 mil. euro). The surplus is to be spent on keeping the international cultural exposure of the city and for legacy activities.

IV. City infrastructure

1) What are the city's assets in terms of accessibility (regional, national and international transport)?

The formation of the city's transport system is a result of its historic development and its location on a main international crossroads – a European transport corridor in an east-west direction, as well as the strongly developed regional and national transport links from north to south. The strategic location of Plovdiv has made the city an important transport centre both in the past and nowadays. The Maritza River, which flows through the city, has been an important factor for urban development, having influenced the transportation services in the whole region.

Road Transport

An international route passing just north of the city in a west-east direction is the E80 (A1) road, which links Sofia with the Black Sea port of Burgas and which, east of Plovdiv, branches south to Istanbul via Haskovo. This international route will soon be further developed with EU funds in order to make access to the Southern Black Sea even faster. In a north-south direction to the east of Plovdiv, the E85 connects northern Europe across the Danube, with Greece and Turkey. There are three main bus stations in the city which utilise these routes to service both international

and domestic locations; bus stations North, South and Rhodope.

Bicycle

There is a two-way bicycle lane on one of the main boulevards in the city – Bulgaria blvd. There is one more bicycle lane in Plovdiv – along Iztochen blvd., which is also a main thoroughfare. In recent years the building of bicycle lanes has been included, where possible, in all projects concerning the reconstruction of Plovdiv's streets. A large EU-project, concerning public transport, won by Plovdiv Municipality, envisages new 48 km long bicycle lanes in the city. Although it is hard to design a constant bicycle traffic system, there are new roads linking the city centre with the sport, recreation and labour zones and with the educational institutions. The proposed bicycle lanes will pass along parks and the broad dividing lines of several more central boulevards as well as toward the rowing canal where the longest bicycle lane in the city is located.

Rail transport

Plovdiv is an integral part of several national and international rail networks, such as Paris – Milano – Belgrade – Sofia – Istanbul – Ankara, along which passengers and goods are transported. The city is also located on one of the shortest railroads linking the capital Sofia with the Southern Black Sea and Turkey. Because this is part of an international route, it is expected that over the next few years this railroad will become one of the fastest in Bulgaria, through the implementation of various infrastructural

projects financed by EU programmes. The rail transport serves the citizens of Plovdiv through four railway stations. The rail network is very well developed reaching more remote settlements in the whole region - a priceless resource for further developments in public transport.

Plovdiv Airport

Plovdiv has an international airport that is situated 10 kilometers southwest of the city. The distance to the capital Sofia is 130 km, which takes around an hour and a half by road. Around a kilometer away from the airport terminal there is a railway station on the Plovdiv-Asenovgrad line. The popular Bulgarian resorts Pamporovo, Borovetz and Bansko are situated respectively 60, 90 and 140 km away from the airport. There are regular flights from Plovdiv airport to London, and until recently there were also flights to Milan and Frankfurt, and this is one of the main challenges of the city – to involve the other municipalities in the region in cooperating with the restoration of old and opening of new flight routes. The airport also specializes in charter flights to Bulgarian mountain ski resorts during the winter season from December to April. Plovdiv airport has a modern and functional airline terminal and provides

a shuttle bus for the passengers of all international airlines, in cases when Plovdiv is used as a back-up airport for the capital Sofia or for any other airport in the country.

Public Transport

Plovdiv is served by a high-quality public transport network which consists of well-developed municipal, regional and national transportation systems with sufficient capacity to meet passenger's needs. Public transport includes buses and mini-buses. These mini buses travel along a defined route but are faster than buses because they don't stop at each bus-stop but only at a passenger's request. There are regular bus routes which access even the most remote areas in the city and the nearby villages.

A part of Plovdiv's transport network



2) What is the city's absorption capacity in terms of tourist accommodation?

With 4,000 beds in the city and more than 9,000 in the Regional District, Plovdiv has the capacity to meet the needs of all guests and tourists should it become a

European Capital of Culture in 2019. In the city there are 101 hotels and hostels including private rooms, guest houses, as well as two 5-star hotels, six 4-star, 39 3-star, 20 2-star and 24 1-star hotels.

For 2012	Hotels, Hostels & Accommodation	Beds	Visitors total	Visitors from Bulgaria	Visitors from abroad	Total income	Income from foreign visitors
Plovdiv (region incl. city)	230	9,207	789,634	560,677	228,957	€ 17,764,277	€ 6,242,351
Plovdiv (only city)	101	4,000	389,100	198,848	190,252	€ 9,058,630	€ 4,678,638

Year	Total overnight stays in Plovdiv City	Income from overnight stays for hotels – Plovdiv City
2011	336,114	€ 8,256,384
2012	389,100	€ 9,058,630
Increase in %	13.6%	8.8%

Plovdiv and the surrounding area have a huge touristic potential to promote themselves as a vibrant, young, contemporary artistic region with plenty of space for leisure and relaxation and on top of that, with a huge historical heritage. Plovdiv can attract new target groups and position itself and the region as an attractive culture and leisure destination with affordable offers – if we can stop relying on the age-old fame of being one of the oldest living cities in the world. Plovdiv can be self-confident and strengthen its position as the Heart of

the Thracian tourist area. This would offer new opportunities for inclusion in different tourist packages, since so far it has been undervalued as a location, and considered suitable only for day visits with little to encourage visitors to stay overnight.

So the large potential remains somewhat untapped due to the lack of a broader strategic approach, lack of marketing strategies, underdeveloped infrastructure (mainly low quality of roads to historical and touristic sites, some of which are

important and famous, but are not easily accessible) and lack of a joint effort by the local authorities and tourist operators for the protection, promotion and revitalization of the historic and natural landmarks in the South Central region of Bulgaria. We have received support from the local authorities in the entire region for the sustainable development of tourism and culture, which is currently being integrated in the regional development plan for 2020.

This shows that the process of overcoming this lack of communication has begun, thanks to the ECoC bid. We plan to establish additional communication channels between the local authorities in the region and the tourist operators to initiate their further cooperation. For us this is crucial and winning the ECoC title will undoubtedly facilitate the process through increased pressure.

An objective for Plovdiv is to increase the duration of tourist visits to more than a day. One of the main problems for Plovdiv is that the visitors do not stay overnight due to lack of promotion, information and organisation by the tourist operators whose services they use. According to recent research undertaken by the Plovdiv Municipality many visitors do not plan a longer stay beforehand because they are not informed about Plovdiv's interesting sights and cultural events. This is already changing through efforts to make information more easily available for tourists and tourist operators alike. Plovdiv is also a suitable destination especially for religious tourism as the city and its region are rich in religious sites. An example is the town of Asenovgrad, situated only 18 km South of Plovdiv, which boasts the incredible number of 5 monasteries, 15 churches and 58 chapels. When it comes to the entire region there is an abundance of historical, cultural, archaeological, religious and natural sites, some of which are rarely visited as a result of poor infrastructure and weak promotion. However, according to Eurostat,

tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the region and the ECoC bid will serve as a catalyst for this process. The fact that Plovdiv has excess accommodation capacity and the highest number of restaurants and clubs per capita in the whole country shows that we could easily be ready for the ECoC crowds in 2019.

The city's current standard touristic products consist mainly of cultural tourism however, people also come to visit the religious sites, business conventions, spas and vineyards. As a tourist destination Plovdiv is still not popular on the European touristic market, although it could become a city that builds up an image of hospitality and calmness, being a place filled with artistic atmosphere and suitable for a longer stay, because it combines the features of big city life and the tranquility of a countryside oasis.

With many of the events in our 2019 programme, which will be connected to sites in Plovdiv and the South-Central Region of Bulgaria, we will initiate sustainable tourism marketing, so that 2019 will be seen as a breakthrough year for tourist activities in the years after the event. Plovdiv has hosted the first international meetings of travel agencies and tour operators in Bulgaria, which promote the city's possibilities and attractions as a tourist destination directly to the relevant people. Thus the city is consolidating its image as a favourable destination for tour operators in Bulgaria and abroad. The "Tourism" municipal enterprise is responsible for the promotion of the city and its region, taking part in different tourism forums all over the world, representing Plovdiv at tourism trade shows and fairs, increasing the number of publications and PR-materials about Plovdiv in the most significant tourism related media. If we want to attract new audiences and a new tourist clientele we will have to talk about imagery, texts and translations of the PR-material. And we will.

3) What projects are to be carried out between now and the year for which the city is applying for the title of European Capital of Culture in terms of urban and tourism infrastructure, including renovation? What is the planned timetable for this work?

One of the major infrastructure projects that we plan to implement in 2019 is the creation of a social-cultural centre (Community HUB) in the largest Roma quarter in Europe, situated in the heart of Plovdiv, Stolipinovo. The centre will be based on an existing structure, which is currently being refurbished and turned into a community centre. In the years up to 2019 we want to develop a Community HUB which serves not only as a service and gathering place for the Roma/Turk population but becomes a cultural centre for all groups in the city. Our vision for this centre is on the one hand decentralizing cultural life of the city and focusing this intellectual and artistic centre in the heart of Roma community, and on the other hand preserving the cultural identity of this ethnic group without interrupting the process of its integration. The centre will provide space to live the ethnic identity of the Roma community – presentation of Roma songs, dances, restoring some of the traditional Roma crafts etc. Moreover, the municipality intends to implement a multi-level infrastructural strategy for the Roma quarters in which renovation of streets and the construction of new housing is planned.

At present, a unique multifunctional sports and cultural facility is being built. It was designed under the guidance of the renowned Dutch architect Sander Dauman and will comprise 9,000 seats and 3,000 square metres of combined sports space

for volleyball, handball, basketball and many other sports. An Olympic size cycling track will be built and the unit will also be suitable for cultural events. The construction of the hall will be finished by the end of 2013.

A major reconstruction of the City House of Culture, which is also the home of Plovdiv Opera, has been recently completed. The main hall has been provided with special acoustics and lighting and in the building there is a modern showroom, a ballet hall, rehearsal rooms for amateur ensembles and many other conveniences. The City House of Culture is fully accessible to people with disabilities. One of the tallest buildings in the city centre, which currently houses the majority of the municipal administration, is considered by many Plovdivians and foreign guests to be a symbol of socialism. The concert hall, which is located in this building, has a relatively small capacity and needs reconstruction. The municipality has already allocated funds to finalize the changes in the vision of the central city square. The projects include an overhaul of the buildings and their facades so that they correspond to the architectural style of the rest of the buildings in this central city area.

A new economic cluster in the sphere of Food Technology is being planned in a 77 acre underdeveloped area (former military premises) in Plovdiv near one of the Roma quarters – the Food Tech Park Plovdiv. Along with the building of high-tech enterprises, research facilities and laboratories in this territory between two districts of Plovdiv, new residential buildings will be built. Many of the architects in the city see this area as a potential secondary urban centre where new cultural venues should be developed along with the economic use.

Plovdiv has traditionally been the host of European and world rowing championships

and many Plovdivians are famous all over the world for their achievements in this sport. The city is well-known for its modern rowing canal, recently renovated according to the highest standards applicable for such large-scale events. The facility is to be duplicated by constructing a parallel canal, which will further enhance its reputation and will establish the sports complex in Plovdiv as one of the best facilities in Europe. The project is worth around 6 million euro and is scheduled to start in early 2014.

At the time of writing, designs for a third Tourist Information Centre are being completed and the building will be situated in close proximity to the Roman Stadium in the city centre. New Tourist routes will lead from various sights to the Ancient Theatre, located in the heart of the Old Town. A project for elaborating and placing more than 70 information boards at the most important tourist sites in the city will be completed by the end of 2013.

Plovdiv is known as ‘the city on seven hills’. Some of these territories, however, are neglected and hidden. In order to change this, the municipality is preparing a project under a Norwegian programme for rehabilitation of Nebet Tepe Hill, which is part of the old town. The ancient remains of a Thracian fortress were revealed there many years ago and were left unprotected. Revitalization processes on two other city hills are currently being executed – planting trees, installing new lighting, more alleys, children’s playgrounds and street fitness facilities.

The restoration of the visible part of the Roman stadium, located in the city centre, is also part of the same Norwegian programme. The larger part of the stadium is situated under the main street of the city. There are plans to reveal and expose it as a new archaeological site and underground museum in the forthcoming

years – during the new European funds programme period 2014-2020.

The largest urban park in the city centre was created in 1892 by landscape specialist Lucien Schevallas. Now, more than one hundred years later, a refurbishment project worth over 4.5 million euro has been started. It includes the restoration of the ‘Singing fountains’ and an underground parking lot. Several other parks in the city are currently refurbished and six more have been restored under a project of the European Economic Area.

A large-scale European transport project, won in 2012 by Plovdiv Municipality, is being implemented. It includes centralized management of public transport, electronic fare payment, placing timetables at the bus-stops and the changing of traffic-lights. The project, which is worth around 22 million euros, also envisages the construction of 48 km of bicycle lanes.

V. Communication strategy

1) What is the city’s intended communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture event?

Setting

We will make the motto ‘Plovdiv Together’ a guideline and inspiration for our communication strategy. The communication for Plovdiv 2019 wants to actively promote and contribute to, but not patronize public discourse, dialogue and cooperation between citizens in Plovdiv and the South-Central Region, artists and NGOs, cultural operators, municipal, regional and national institutions and last but not least – the European public.

Our communication policy is devoted to cherishing the values of openness and reciprocity. Communication for us includes a ‘fifth element’ as one of the most important: the feedback from those we communicate with. We find the fifth element essential in our attempt to foster citizen participation.

Strategic approach

The short- and medium-term goals of the communication must obviously be to communicate the activities and programme of the European Capital of Culture – but there is a deeper and longer-term goal in our communication for us as well:

The new Cultural Strategy (as well as some objectives of Plovdiv 2019) will focus on the one hand on the outward orientation of ‘cultural tourism’ and on the inward orientation

of ‘cultural education’ on the other. By cultural education we mean the strong inward orientation of cultural policy and the question of how to involve the inhabitants of Plovdiv in cultural reception and production. This is fundamental for building a strong identity and connection to the city – especially in these days of major global changes. The inward orientation is also essential for further activities in ‘cultural tourism’, for which committed and connected inhabitants are needed. The inward orientation of cultural education will also balance the strong outside orientation of ‘cultural tourism’, which in the long run can lead to a feeling of local identity combined with a global mindset and with a feeling of a shared European added value. We do not want to overload our communication with too many tasks, but we would like to make an approach that lays the foundations for future communication efforts beyond the European Capital of Culture, and which can also be of use in case we do not get shortlisted.

Grassroots principle

For us all this means that we have to communicate with the citizens of Plovdiv and the surrounding region first and gain their trust, their enthusiasm and their participation in order to make the communication with our fellow European citizens a shared cause of all Plovdivians.

Just as Plovdiv is a city of different ethnic and religious groups, different social groups, groups with different tempos and mindsets, our communication will also have to be multi-faceted and varied,

speaking in the right language to each of the target groups and stakeholders.

Some underlying guidelines that will help us navigate:

- Actively involve specific groups: young people, minority groups, the unemployed, disabled people;
- Attract new audiences to events and thus lower the percentage of people who are not involved in the cultural life at all;
- Provide access to information and broad participation in the suburbs and the surrounding towns and not only in the city centre; decentralizing culture means decentralizing communication.

Target Groups and Stakeholders

Target Groups

Next to the *special* target groups defined in I.11, our communication target groups comprise the local, regional, national and European level and consequently need target-group-specific messages and approaches. The target groups are:

- The citizens of Plovdiv
- The citizens of the Regional Districts across South-Central Bulgaria
- Specific target groups – minorities, young people, the unemployed, people with disabilities (see also question I.11)
- Audience from other Bulgarian cities / national tourists
- Special interest groups from Bulgaria and abroad (business people, scientists, artists, researchers, sportsmen who come to Plovdiv for other reasons than ECoC or tourism)
- European tourists
- Special interest groups like ethnic and minority communities in Europe and their organisations
- Bulgarians who live in other European countries

Partners and Stakeholders

With our partners and stakeholders we want to become allies in a cause that will benefit our citizens, the city and region and strengthen our links with Europe. The Foundation Plovdiv 2019 has been working closely with partners from the city and region already during the past and present phases of the candidacy. We have signed more than 50 partnership agreements with different organisations and networks and intend to expand our contacts further. Our partners and stakeholders will be:

- The municipality of Plovdiv, municipal, regional and national authorities and institutions
- Cultural institutions in Plovdiv and Bulgaria – museums, galleries, libraries, theatres, opera houses, publishing houses, the community centres (Chitalishta), NGOs, socio-cultural institutions, youth organisations, universities, religious and ethnic communities in the city
- Individual artists and free artist groups/companies
- Tourism organisations, tour operators, hoteliers, restaurateurs, logistic companies
- The business community, investors and sponsors (local, regional and national – also international companies located in Plovdiv/the region)
- Professional and trade organisations, chambers of commerce, trade unions
- The media (local, national and European)
- The Italian European Capital of Culture 2019
- European partners and networks of the cultural operators in Plovdiv
- European citizens, artists, specialists and institutions who participate in our projects
- European institutions
- Past, current and future European Capitals of Culture and candidates

At home and abroad

Local and regional level

Plovdivians are spontaneous – our Ayliak attitude allows us to enjoy whatever of interest comes our way and it is not difficult to arouse curiosity among those people who are interested in culture by open air activities – people will always find time to enjoy some music or street artists, or have a little chat about the latest events in the city. We will use this way of direct communication with people and expand it to the neighbourhoods and residential areas where people normally do not get into contact with culture easily.

We have had good experiences with our communication activities so far – Plovdivians and people in southern Bulgaria like the direct and personal approach – small artistic interventions like an installation of old record players along the main street turned into a favourite initiative of Plovdivians, who organized themselves through social networks, brought their old record players and LPs and made this their art and communication event.

We have seen that this kind of hands-on approach works in the suburbs as well: we took the German born Sicilian piano artist Davide Martello (travelling through Europe in his bus and trailer with his pianoforte on wheels) to places where culture normally does not reach – on one of the hills of Plovdiv, to the busiest traffic intersection, to a pedestrian bridge near the rowing canal and to the largest Roma ghetto in Europe, Stolipinovo – where many of the people had never seen a pianoforte before in their whole life and asked him whether he could take up gypsy tunes into his more classic repertoire... Thousands of Plovdivians attended the concerts and Davide Martello's over 22,000 Facebook-fans could follow his enthusiastic reports about Plovdiv. His fans certainly know about our candidacy now. We will keep up this kind of direct communication with the Plovdivian

population and the indirect one with communities connected through the Internet and expand our efforts more into the suburbs, into the towns and villages around Plovdiv.

National and European level

Communication on the European level in order to attract a European audience to come to Plovdiv is our biggest challenge. Therefore a main focus of communication must be on tourism communication. As mentioned before, the cultural strategy will comprise the development of a “cultural tourism” and a new positioning of Plovdiv on the map of tourist destinations. We will work closely **together** with the municipal tourism agency and private tour operators for synergies and aligned development and communication of products in print and digital media, representations at tourism trade shows and other activities – for example special tours for European travel journalists to Plovdiv and the region in 2018 and 2019, or the already existing international tour operator conferences in Plovdiv.

The good contacts and cooperation plans we have made with the Italian candidate cities at the conference in Plovdiv in June this year will be kept up if we get the title. We can surely create communication synergies with the Italian ECoC – through joint presentations at tourism fairs and conferences. Joint Facebook groups and other digital activities can grow into important communication tools and even create independent project initiatives among young people – including alternative accommodation (couch surfing principle) and many other ideas.

‘Diaspora’ is our special programme on how to approach Plovdivians living elsewhere in Bulgaria and elsewhere in Europe and to make them ambassadors for Plovdiv. There are thousands of Plovdivians living across the world who we can reach through

expanding the links of the recently set up Association of Plovdivians Living Abroad, starting different campaigns (e.g. through social media) for uniting and activating the participation of Plovdiv migrants abroad. We can ask them to make their friends and networks aware of Plovdiv as a European Capital of Culture and help promote interest in and travel to Plovdiv. Another aim is also finding artists and talented Bulgarians living abroad and stimulating them to participate in our productions and perhaps even to come back to stay. For now we have already gathered a support group consisting of more than a hundred celebrities, artists, sportsmen, musicians and public figures who are going to be multipliers and attract more people to join from the Diaspora.

Our aim is to communicate in an Ayliak way, to show a relaxed, joyful and artistic atmosphere of the city in a way to create enthusiasm and curiosity to explore Plovdiv for as many of our Bulgarian and European co-citizens as possible – if we can spark the fire and energy that Plovdiv and many citizens here, especially young and creative people have we can really make people visit Plovdiv, tell their friends and – once they have fallen in love with Plovdiv – make them come again.

Further measures and ideas:

- Promotion material about Plovdiv 2019 to be distributed by business people travelling to other European countries, scientists from universities who visit international conferences, Bulgarian diplomats and embassies abroad
- A PR and communication campaign visiting Bulgarian embassies and organisations in other European countries and inviting press and networks to presentations for Plovdiv 2019.
- Organizing press tours to Plovdiv: inviting journalists from all over Europe for a weekend in Plovdiv, and the cities

- in the region, to increase media coverage
- Initiation of partnership projects with foreign cultural organisations based in Bulgaria and foreign diplomatic services and cultural attachés
 - Plovdiv 2019 is in contact with a Belgian project (www.hello-europe.org), which aims to connect people in Europe by video streaming from various cities across Europe. 24 hours and 7 days a week on a huge screen, citizens in Plovdiv will be able to see live footage of many European cities, while cameras will send live streaming from Plovdiv. People will be able to communicate directly via the screen; concerts, flash-mobs and street-art can be streamed. A perfect means of direct communication with other citizens in Europe!

Communication Tools and Channels

Website

Our website is the most important communication tool. All activities of Plovdiv 2019 will be gathered here in Bulgarian and English. After the final selection we will expand it by using an open source tool so that artists, citizens, cultural operators, hoteliers, and tour operators will be able to contribute.

At the moment there is no website that unites all cultural activities in the city and at the same time integrates the towns and villages in the region. Plovdiv 2019 is a chance to develop the existing platform into an integral tool that unites not only municipal activities, but all other NGO and free scene activities as well – and those of the ECoC in 2019.

To make our website more interesting and a project in itself, we will ask writers, journalists, local artists, European artists in residence, ‘Diaspora’-Bulgarians and other interesting and interested partners

to blog on our website about their experiences in and around Plovdiv.

We will integrate elements from our projects on our website as a window to show Europe what is going on – e.g. live streaming of the radio programmes that the children broadcast in the project Children City on the Youth Hill; putting pictures of the art works that are made for and during the year 2019 and creating a virtual museum – with a tool that allows users to create their own, personal collection (like on the website of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam).

Social Networks

Our Facebook group and site give us the most direct opportunity to discuss and interact with our friends, partners and followers and turn them into an active and vigorous group with participation in the activities that Plovdiv 2019 organizes.

PR and Media

Activities in the field of PR and media that we envisage are:

- Negotiating media partnerships throughout the entire campaign, as well as for individual events and projects in the programme
- Hosting regular press conferences on the initiatives for 2019
- Providing festivals and cultural forums with advertising material on 2019
- Open Door Days at the Foundation in the beautiful Old Town – already during the bid we frequently organize meetings with artists, musicians, architects, etc. and host focus groups and discussion clubs in different areas of art and science
- Promoting the logo and the slogan of Plovdiv 2019 in all cultural activities of the city and region in the run-up to 2019
- Regularly updating the partners and stakeholders about aspects of the foundation’s activities and about opportunities for collaboration.
- **Together** with the municipality,

the Old Town Plovdiv Institute, the two tourist information centres and all private tour operators directly inform domestic and foreign tourists about ECoC in the run-up to 2019

- Creating synergies and alignment between the communication strategies of the cultural institutes and organisations with the foundation’s communication strategy

Media Partnerships

We have excellent cooperation with local and regional media, having their support and good coverage of our activities. We have also negotiated a media partnership with the most influential newspaper in Southern Bulgaria “Maritza”, the most frequented websites for news, lifestyle and culture, plovdiv24.bg, podtepeto.com, and marica.bg, and the regional editions of the digital versions of the two national radio stations – Radio Plovdiv and Darik Plovdiv, as well as with the local branch of the national TV – BNT 2. Next to the regular coverage of Plovdiv 2019 initiatives, these media provide space and time for appearances on programmes, interviews, regular columns with information about events, announcements, etc. The regional branches of national media supply their central offices with information and footage from our events. Another media partner in Plovdiv is mediacafe.bg.

As Bulgaria has a very centralized media system we will have to be patient with negotiating partnerships with nationwide broadcasters until such time as we are appointed European Capital of Culture. We are currently trying to strengthen our ties with the national newspapers Trud, 24 Chasa, Telegraph, Standard and Pressa, broadcasters NOVA TV, bTV, Europa TV and TV7, we have also been closely cooperating with the 24-hour cultural programme of the Bulgarian National Radio – Hristo Botev. Recently we have started working with some national online

news agencies: Focus, Cross and BTA, which have regular columns on culture. From a wide range of national internet sites we are counting on dnevnik.bg, with its valuable articles and analysis on economics, social and cultural life; kultura.bg, timeart.bg and Bulgarian-art.com that are specialized on culture; kafene.bg, dnes.bg and cult.bg which focus on lifestyle, events and entertainment to provide coverage of our activities, space for advertisement and to publish our events. Also important to us is the platform art:box – a postal catalogue dedicated to art events and artists in Bulgaria which is being edited by different institutions, leading to abundant and independent information. News on contests, open calls and projects are also available there. Festivals.bg is another online medium that we count on for two-way communication. We will then also approach media in other countries like the Balkan countries, Italian media and specialized media in different European countries according to the projects or tourism activities we want to promote. The already mentioned journalist tours for foreign media and news agencies are often a successful tool to achieve coverage abroad.

In addition to the classic media partnerships we will seek cooperation with the national railway and national airline Bulgaria Air for advertisement placement, branding and coverage in their onboard magazines and promotional material, also, with long-distance bus companies and logistic companies for the distribution of such material.

IT innovations promoting Plovdiv ECoC 2019

Companies and experts from the high tech sector will collaborate with the municipality as well as local cultural and tour operators, institutions and artists to achieve a wide-ranging visibility for Plovdiv 2019's artistic programme. **Together** with the business sector the municipality has given assurances

that there will be as many as possible public spaces with free wi-fi. Meanwhile web designers will develop various applications for smartphones on different topics such as, important urban environment sites, monuments, clubs, galleries and museums, and cultural events. Besides better and faster conversance of places and events, this will ensure the opportunity of an interactive tour through these cultural and touristic sites as well as of online participation in the events and initiatives part of the artistic programme, from all over the world. A wide-scale project that we are planning to develop **together** with web designers is a 3D cultural map of the city containing current artistic events, as well as an option for an audio tour through the daily cultural calendar and city sites. The users will be able to like and share favourite places and events and post their own pictures and comments about happenings and initiatives they have visited or they would like to participate in.

Advertising

To ensure visibility of Plovdiv 2019 as a European Capital of Culture we will make use of numerous advertising measures:

- Printed publications – for distribution in cultural institutions, restaurants, hotels, public transport, airports, airlines, trains
- Internet advertising and web marketing – one of the basic steps in our communication is the implementation of the innovative online marketing approaches, social and viral internet advertising. A team of SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and online marketing experts is assuring that regular, interesting and useful information on the current European Capital of Culture is flowing into different international specialized and popular web portals for art and culture as well as social networks with millions of followers from all around the world. Banners and options for quick links to the Plovdiv 2019 website and social

- groups pages will be published in popular regional and national websites.
- Advertising in the broadcast media – radio and TV spots and participation in programmes, themed shows and formats in cooperation with regional and national media
- Outdoor Advertising – incl. branding of taxis and public transport in the city – we already have the support of the transportation companies
- Merchandise and give-aways – currently our Facebook followers post photos of themselves wearing our T-Shirts, they send T-Shirts to their family and friends around the world who send back photos of themselves wearing the T-Shirt in front of famous sites.
- Info-points will be placed in Plovdiv and in significant tourist flow sites in the region. The programme with cultural events, city maps of the region, advertising and promotional materials will be offered at these points. Meanwhile we are going to work with volunteers who will help Plovdiv 2019 as cultural guides informing visitors of the artistic programme highlights and city sites.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will integrate the 'fifth element' of communication, the feedback, into the creation process of our communication tools. To that end we will make an open call for people who want to be our feedback-group for advertising measures and who are willing to give us their honest opinion. Participation will be limited to a period of six months.

We will also make regular surveys on the impact of the different stages of the campaign. Currently we are discussing methods and paradigms of evaluation **together** with our Italian partners and a working group that has been set up the development of the Cultural strategy. Media monitoring of local and national

media, later also of European media is an on-going process, so that at the end of 2019/beginning of 2020 we can evaluate communication performance and marketing impact.

2) How does the city plan to ensure the visibility of the European Union, which is awarding the title?

We will comply with the EU regulations concerning the ECoC branding of all publications and include the symbol of the European Union in all of our publications. Additionally we are planning more initiatives which will raise the profile of the European Union in Plovdiv and among all tourists and guests visiting the city in 2019 and the years leading up to it.

As young people are a particular group we want to engage, we plan to organize seminars and discussions with high-school and university students in Plovdiv. As guests lecturers we will invite well-known political scientists from Bulgaria and abroad, who specialize in studying the European Union. During the lectures and seminars the students will discuss European culture, the role of the EU in the peace process in Europe, what it means to be a European citizen and many more related topics. Such an event will be organized annually and grow beyond the borders of Plovdiv should it be successful. It will be organized in partnership with some of the universities in the city and one of the options for funding could be the DG for Education and Culture. There are already organisations of this type in the city, working in other areas like the environment, whose infrastructure and network we can use as a basis. This kind of “EU School” will also need an online platform where videos of the lectures and other material will be made available. In this way the reach of the programme will be extended and many more people will participate in it. Another aspect of the programme will be an essay competition among students (in different age groups). The

winners will win a trip to Brussels and visit the European Parliament. We will organise a series of events dedicated to the European Union, for example in May, which we plan to call the “Month of Europe”. The events will include (but are not limited to) “dressing” (wrapping) buildings in the flags of the European Union and the member states. The lectures and seminars already mentioned can also be organised in May as part of the “EU School”.

We intend to put informational posters/signs with interesting and/or historical facts about the EU on facades of buildings, fences (especially of schools and universities in the city) and bus stops. Such posters/signs will also include information on what the EU has done for Plovdiv and the region.

The best way to draw attention to the European project is by creating a tourist site through European cooperation. There is already a project idea for a “Park of the Nations” on the territory of Plovdiv, where each embassy from European countries in Bulgaria will be invited to design and maintain a garden of their own choice, which would present their country. Such a botanical garden would be a tourist attraction for Bulgarians and foreign visitors alike and has the potential of becoming a new landmark in the city.

VI. Evaluation and monitoring of the event

a) Does the city intend to set up a special monitoring and evaluation system for the impact of the programme and its knock-on effects?

The city intends to set up a special monitoring and evaluation system that will help us learn from best practices and possible mistakes, improve the quality of our work and allow citizens and visitors to have their opinions heard. There will be transparency during the course of the monitoring and the outcomes of the evaluation will be made public and accessible digitally (on our website) and in print (copies in public institutions and libraries).

The objectives of evaluation will be:
a) to secure quality of activities and implementation of improvements, dissemination of good practices, and systematisation of experience gained;
b) to make evaluation and systemized experience from a large cultural project with a specific Bulgarian background and involving many different fields (urban development, social innovation, artistic excellence, citizen participation etc.) available to other cultural operators in Bulgaria and the Balkans.

Process, indicators and research tools

The on-going monitoring process will be executed using these steps:

1. Data gathering and analysis for assessment of task implementation.
2. Comparing results with the plan, and

forecasting the future course of the project.
3. Developing and implementing actions to correct the course if needed.

On the level of organisation and implementation the main indicators will be:

1. Do the carried-out activities achieve the objectives of the project?
2. Will the allocated budget meet with the planned activities?
3. Are the deadlines for each step of the project met?
4. Are the quality standards met in terms of programme but also team efficiency?
5. Are all other resources utilized properly?

On the level of programming and short-, medium- and long-term effects the main indicators for evaluation will be:

- 1) Cultural vibrancy and sustainability
 - 2) Cultural access and participation
 - 3) Identity, image and place
 - 4) The philosophy and management of the process
 - 5) European dimension
 - 6) Economic impacts
- In order to facilitate comparability between different ECoCs we have decided to choose the indicators recommended in the report “An international framework of good practice in research and delivery of the European Capital of Culture programme” by The European Capitals of Culture Policy Group (2009-2010).

In more detail, indicators should also address or fit the aesthetic qualities that are important to the community; the community’s human capital; the community’s social capital; to provide a long-term view of the community; to

address the issue of fairness and equity – either between current community residents (intra-generational equity) or between current and future residents (inter-generational equity); in the final analysis the indicators should be understandable to and usable by its intended audience.

The main research tools:

- questionnaire surveys among residents (city and the region)
- stakeholder interviews
- questionnaire surveys of tourists and visitors from abroad
- surveys of cultural events (and audiences)
- reports of ‘mystery clients’ (see below)
- quantitative analyses (e.g. tickets sold, accommodation booked, flights)
- analyses of documents
- monitoring of the European media (Internet, print media, TV, radio)
- monitoring of the Bulgarian media
- unconventional research methods (e.g. qualitative research done by artists)
- analysis of social media
- reports of independent experts

The reports of “mystery clients” or “mystery shoppers” (customers who are normal clients but at the same time survey the services of the companies they come into contact with) are well-developed instruments in business, but not in the field of culture. We experimented with this method successfully last year during the “Autumn Arts Saloon” in Plovdiv and some other fests. The results offer a good method to involve citizens and deliver authentic insights. There are also some unconventional research methods, that could allow us to estimate not only the official statistical data, but also get feedback on changes in the city’s spirit, in the creative atmosphere and about the level of enthusiasm and inspiration among the city residents and the guests of the city. Examples can be artist concepts about machines that produce musical tunes

depending on which buttons are pushed by citizens to evaluate the atmosphere in the city or specifically evaluate certain projects or events. Interactive visual art works, including screens that change colour according to people’s input on a connected website and streaming the comments people leave in virtual and paper guest books are other possible ideas.

Organizing the monitoring and evaluation

We propose the monitoring to be done mainly by experts from an external research agency (possibly from an agency elsewhere in the country to ensure more transparency and objectivity) and by experts from the Department of Sociology of P. Hilendarski University in Plovdiv. The monitoring and evaluating entities will be constantly in touch with Plovdiv 2019 Foundation, keeping them updated on and consulting about their activities. The resulting monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be available for subsequent use by Plovdiv Municipality and by different cultural operators.

- The monitoring and analyses will be made with a different emphasis in each of the four periods:
- preliminary period (2013-2014, when actions are mainly limited to assessing the status quo before the start of the European Capital of Culture preparations)
- preparatory period (2015-2018)
- year of the event (2019)
- post-event period (2020-2025)

A member from the team designated as evaluation coordinator will be responsible for the coordination of the evaluation with the external research team. The project will be monitored and evaluated mainly by external partners as mentioned above. Close cooperation will be sought with the Statistical Office in Bulgaria and with the evaluation coordinator of the nominated Italian city for possible exchange of

experience and joint evaluation activities especially in the more creative areas.

Research scope

Destination A: the GOALS of the Plovdiv 2019 project that we intend to fulfil – they constitute the principal axes organizing the core of the Plovdiv 2019 project. The monitoring and evaluation of their realization will be a key component of the assessment of the entire project.

Destination B: LONG-TERM IMPACT AND EFFECTS, such as: a) partnerships and networks (growth in partnerships established and their sustainability) b) long-term social effects (stronger social cohesion; growth in ethical and aesthetic awareness; growth in civic awareness; development of attitudes to culture), c) development of European cultural networks, d) impact on other sectors (impact on employment in the region, on municipal infrastructure and transport etc.)

Destination C: EVALUATION OF THE GOVERNANCE PROCESS of Plovdiv 2019 (transparency and openness; fulfilment of Plovdiv 2019 programme objectives; effectiveness and sustainability of undertaken actions; fulfilment of adopted communication strategy etc.). This will be useful especially in the preparatory period (2015-2018), because the lessons learned will help us to improve effectiveness for the actual Plovdiv 2019 event.

Destination D: LONG-TERM IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY OF THE CITY AND REGION; (involvement of the private sector and growth in support for cultural initiatives; development of cultural tourism; growth in involvement and employment of professionals.)

b) Does the city intend to set up a special monitoring and evaluation system for financial management?

The monitoring and evaluation for financial management 2014-2020 will be executed on a first level through the supervisory function of the Board of Directors who may also commission financial audits by external experts if they deem it necessary. In addition the rules and regulations provided by Bulgarian law help to guarantee that the financial management is supervised:

- Through an internal financial management system – already established in the current Foundation via a number of internal procedures aiming at guaranteeing the legality and efficiency of each expenditure. In general the system requires a “triple signature procedure”.
- By audits performed by the internal auditing body of the Municipality which can be requested by the mayor at any given time.
- Through a mandatory annual financial audit performed by an independent auditor by the 31st of March each year. The auditor will be selected by the city council. The audit report will be made public via the register for non-governmental organisations established by the Ministry of Justice.
- External audit by the Court of Auditors – financial control carried out by the State Court of Auditors aimed at examining the efficiency and legality of the expenditures. The Court of Auditors may also refer to the state financial inspections agency in cases of irregularities discovered during the audit.

In order to create maximum transparency and go further than mere monitoring we will commission the same independent experts who evaluate the programme with a final evaluation of the financial management at the end of 2020.

VII.

Additional information

1) What, in your opinion, are the strong points of the city's application and the parameters of its success as European Capital of Culture and what, on the other hand, are its weak points?

STRENGTHS

- We are ready and eager to tackle our deficits. We have the courage to name what is lacking. We need this title and we are determined to make good use of it.
- There is a strong will and support to push this bid and make it successful, especially from a group of very enthusiastic representatives of the civil society – some of whom we have gained as members for our board of directors.
- The city is one of the oldest European cities and offers rich cultural heritage that can be attractive for a European audience. Moreover, Plovdiv is located in proximity to a number of impressive tourist sites and the Rhodope mountain range with its unique caves, numerous ski and spa resorts and unspoiled nature.
- The European Capital of Culture in Plovdiv will be based on an innovative concept (at least by Plovdiv standards) that fosters contacts, dialogues and cooperation among all Plovdiv's residents. Already now, we can see that many people feel motivated by this concept and that they want to participate in the change.

- We have an interesting tradition in being multicultural – with all the problems involved. Whereas Europe is experiencing a phenomenon of more and more influence from Muslim cultures – we have had a long tradition in living side by side for centuries.
- We have a strong Folkloric tradition and connections with the surrounding agricultural countryside – which is expressed in our love of singing, dancing, good food and wine and of the beautiful landscape between two mountain ranges, the river and the fertile Thracian plains.
- Plovdiv has well-developed transport links, connecting the city with other regions and municipalities.
- Plovdiv is positioned at an interesting geostrategic location – at the crossroads of the cultures of Turkey, Greece and the Balkans and our neighbours are close enough for day visits.
- Plovdiv is at the centre of the South Central region and traditionally a cultural hub for the whole area. Moreover it is renowned as a city of numerous art events, a city full of art lovers and talented creative artists with a taste for beauty. For these reasons Plovdiv was awarded the title of 'Art City of Bulgaria 2012'.
- We undertake intensive efforts to upgrade our cultural infrastructure – taking steps to revive community centres, monuments, museums and other cultural sites in our city.

WEAKNESSES

- Cultural events are concentrated in the centre of the city and are not easy to access due to the lack of links with the suburbs.
- Plovdiv has one of the largest Roma quarters in Europe and it is more what visitors call a "ghetto" with a shocking resemblance to what you would rather expect in developing countries or megalopolises.
- Roma lack opportunities for education and jobs. This leads to poverty which in turn, encourages crime in the city.
- In Plovdiv we often have more different opinions than people discussing them. Perhaps this is a general phenomenon in Bulgaria but it is certainly not helpful.
- There is a shortage of eco-cultural awareness among the citizens. We don't have the necessary respect for natural resources and don't pay enough attention to protection and preservation of the natural environment. There are problems related to air-pollution and keeping urban spaces clean.
- There is a lack of large multifunctional halls, concert halls and an opera house, the city feels the need for more spaces and buildings for carrying out cultural events.
- Tourist services do not entirely meet European standards, tourist business lacks certification systems and the staff in a number of tourist companies don't have the required qualifications. This has negative effects on the quality and diversity of the offered products.
- There is low interest in cultural events among the citizens, mainly because they are not financially affordable

for most people. Businesses and entrepreneurs are not used to sponsoring culture yet. Culture is not seen as an industry and a driving force for social innovation – just as an entertainment for specific groups of people.

- Modernization processes are very slow, some areas in the city are in bad infrastructural condition and we are still suffering the negative effects from decades of communism: e.g. the old tobacco warehouses are decaying because ownership is unclear and/or shared between many.
- Plovdiv is not a well-known tourist destination in Europe. There isn't enough promotion of Plovdivian tourist sites and attractions as well as of Plovdivian artists. We need a broader media presence.
- There aren't enough attractions in the city for the citizens (apart from the archaeological ones). We need more areas for sport and recreation and for free time activities as well as more family and children's entertainment centres, which would enhance cultural and social vibrancy.

2) Does the city intend to develop particular cultural projects in the coming years, irrespective of the outcome of its application for the title of European Capital of Culture?

Considering the energy that the candidacy is bringing to the city the municipality has committed to focus more and more on culture and cultural life. One of the steps inspired by the candidacy that will be pursued irrespective of the outcome is the development of a Cultural

Strategy for Plovdiv 2014-2020 which is being aligned in close connection with the candidacy and will be presented by the end of the year 2013. In terms of strategies, the candidacy has helped turn the perspective of cultural institutions even more towards Europe. Should we not be awarded the title we would still try to keep this focus.

In recent years the financial crisis and the drain of young people from the city has done considerable harm to the cultural life of the city, making it hard for organizers to attract sponsors and financial support. Plovdiv's candidacy has boosted enthusiasm and hopes. The citizens and everyone involved in culture need an assurance that the city administration is working in multiple directions to stabilize the decreasing cultural life and the candidacy turns out to be boosting activities and refreshing prospects. This is one of the reasons why not being awarded the title would be a hard blow on the self-esteem and on the positive attitude towards culture that has been triggered by the bid over the past two years. It is almost certain that the enthusiasm and active participation would not easily be kept at a high level without the European Capital of Culture title. On the contrary – chances are that many projects would painfully lack the driving force and enthusiasm that the ECoC title can bring. But we are also aware that certain things that have started will continue and have to continue in order to maintain the cultural vibrancy of the city. If we are not awarded the title we will concentrate on the strategic goals we have and try to pursue projects that strongly represent these goals. We will try to keep mainly the projects from the project cluster Urban Dreams that focusses on urban and social change. For example for the decentralization of culture into the suburbs and to foster stronger participation and easier access to culture we will try to keep the project about the Chitalishta (community cultural centres) and try to revive them into 35 decentralized centres

for cultural activities in the suburbs as they used to be in the 19th century. Another project we will further develop irrespective of the outcome – but with less money and thus more slowly – is the development of a Community HUB in what is considered the largest Roma ghetto in Europe, Stolipinovo. Initiatives for smaller scale projects have always been put forward, but the title of European Capital of Culture is a chance to approach this issue with an integral strategy, to unite and enhance all these initiatives and take them some steps further. If we are not awarded the title we would still try to take the community centre that is being worked on in Stolipinovo a step further in order to make it a cultural centre for all the citizen groups in Plovdiv. Plovdiv's candidacy for ECoC has widened the perspective of cultural institutions to look towards our neighbour countries and towards other countries in Europe. By its participation in the initiative of the European Capital of Culture the municipality of Plovdiv shows its support for the idea that culture must play a vital role in the city renaissance. Awarding Plovdiv with the title of European Capital of Culture will not only strengthen the possibility of achieving the set goals by the Municipal Development Plan and The Cultural Strategy, but will also lay a foundation of cultural practice for decades ahead.

3) Please add below any further comments which you deem necessary on the subject of this application.

“This is the greatest and loveliest of all cities! Its beauty radiates from afar.”
Lucian of Samosata about Trimontium (Plovdiv's Roman name)

Credits

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