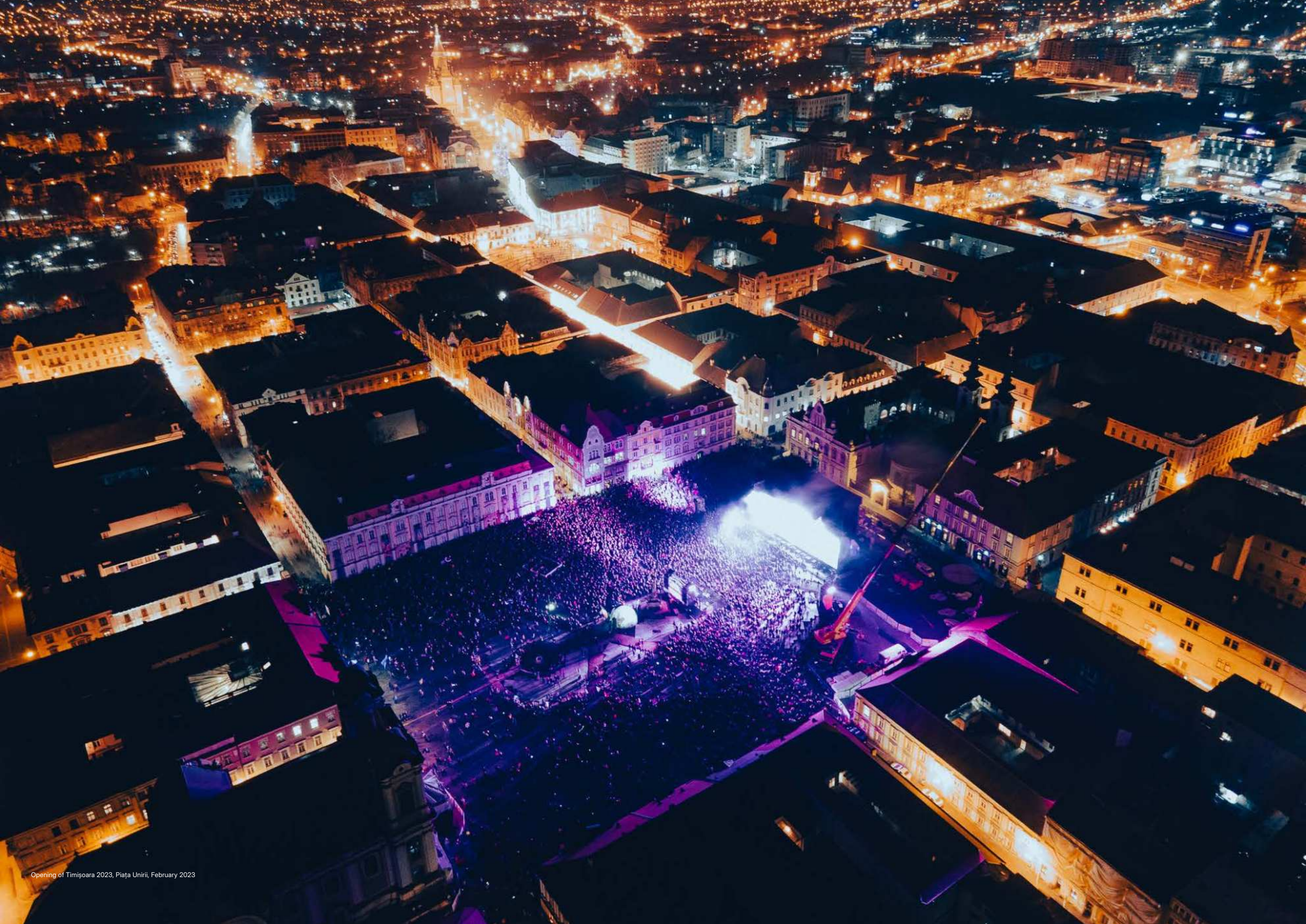




Evaluation report

Timișoara 2023 Programme European Capital of Culture



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Governance structure and main public funders



City of
Timișoara



TIMIS COUNTY
COUNCIL



MINISTRY OF CULTURE



Center for
Projects
Timișoara

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Published by: Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara
— March 2025

Editor: Raluca Iacob
Associated editor: Ramona Laczko David
Design and layout: Flavia Țună

The present report is the result of the Evaluation and Monitoring Programme of Timișoara 2023 European Capital of Culture Programme, coordinated by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara and financed by the Municipality of Timișoara. Most content in this report draws from the studies and planning reports conducted in 2024. To enhance readability, clarity and to meet the purpose of this report to address both a professional and general audience, direct quotations and references are omitted, except for chapter-specific studies or publications.

The Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara is a public institution under the authority of Timișoara's City Council. The Centre for Projects facilitates the access of the community to resources and funding for projects in culture, education, youth, civic involvement, sport and environment, from the city's local budget, enabling the development of a creative, dynamic and inclusive city. Between 2021-2024, the Centre for Projects has been acting as the main implementing body of the Municipality of Timișoara for the National Cultural Programme "Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023".



The year Timișoara held the title of European Capital of Culture stands as a powerful testament to culture's ability to transform, connect, and inspire. It was a success not only for our city but also on a national and international scale.

Through this program, we pursued two ambitious goals: to redefine culture as a driving force for development and community cohesion, and to place Timișoara and Romania firmly on Europe's cultural map and beyond. I am proud to say that we have succeeded. This report captures the journey of a single capital brought to life by hundreds of organizations, companies, artists, volunteers, and countless passionate individuals whose dedication has made all the difference.

The results speak for themselves: over 1.5 million participants engaged in 2,331 events throughout the year. More importantly, we expanded our reach, bringing culture to new audiences and unexpected places. Encouraging cultural operators to aim higher and create events that attract new audiences or take place in neighborhood spaces was a challenge, but one we embraced. This is the path we are committed to continuing.

The European Capital of Culture program transcended local boundaries; it became an act of cultural diplomacy that carried Timișoara's name far beyond Romania's borders. We have learned to invest in how we present our culture and to build genuine connections between Timișoara, Romania, and Europe.

I am profoundly grateful for the remarkable mobilization and dedication demonstrated by the entire Timișoara community—efforts that extended well beyond the cultural sphere. The values and ideas of Timișoara - about innovation, diversity, creativity and respect - are principles that all Europe needs.

Timișoara's mission as a European Capital of Culture did not end in 2023. We have laid the foundations for a vibrant and prosperous future, proving that Romania is not merely a country people leave behind but a place where creativity and resilience thrive.

2023 was only the beginning of a journey we will continue to walk together. Neverending Timișoara.

With deepest gratitude and unwavering confidence,

— **Dominic Fritz**
Mayor of Timișoara

Overview

1

“Specific” presents the vision and the objectives of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, highlighting its unique features in the more general context of the purpose and the expectations of an ECoC. Apart from broad quantitative data, the focus is on the cultural ecosystem developed through the process, its impact on the people and their perception, specific themes and ways of addressing the European dimension, cultural diversity and other issues of general relevance to the Programme.

2

“Chronos” presents the Timișoara 2023 Programme from the perspective of the evolution of the Timișoara 2023 Programme in the preparation years, the Title year and the first Legacy year. Which institutions made the strategic decisions for the development of the Programme, what was the relationship between them, what was the impact of their way of working and their solutions? This chapter addresses those questions.

7

“The People” explores the impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme on tourists and community members, highlighting how art and culture have been integrated into the daily lives of Timișoara and Banat region residents. Regional data is presented to support the conclusion that through the Timișoara 2023 Programme, art and culture have been brought more to the heart of community life through a variety of participatory, educational and inclusive initiatives. The Timișoara 2023 Programme has succeeded in activating civic energy, engaging diverse audiences and strengthening the city’s cultural identity, leaving a lasting legacy for the local and international community.

8

“The Cultural Scene” highlights Timișoara’s transformation into a dynamic cultural centre, where art, technology and community have come together to develop a cultural scene with diverse skills and enhanced capacities for effective, inclusive and impactful public action and promotion of arts and heritage. The final section is a presentation of the cultural scene through the eyes of the residents, with a focus on the evolution of overall cultural participation and their perceptions of the city’s landmarks.

3

“The Governance” analyzes the coordinating structure, the roles and responsibilities, the decision-making mechanisms and the relation among the actors involved in managing the Timișoara 2023 Programme. It provides a detailed insight into the decision-making and cooperation processes essential for the success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, highlighting both the achievements and challenges of the complex management of the Programme between 2021-2024.

4

“Generator” talks about the important things that made the Timișoara 2023 Programme such a success. It shows how the Programme worked and what results and effects this had. It also looks at communication processes, management of private funding, grant-making, volunteering and improvements to the spaces used for cultural activities.

9

“The Legacy” analyses the impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and the measures adopted to ensure the continuity of the cultural development of the city, based on the results obtained, including the continuation of the organisation of City Celebration, a city-led platform-event, the launch of specific funding Programs and the formulation of a Legacy Plan, which will be integrated into the future cultural strategy of the city, starting from 2025.

10

“The Methodology” explains the process of data collection, analysis and interpretation used for the evaluation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The evaluation of the Programme was a complex and structured process, which focused on ensuring the accuracy and relevance of the results, mainly in terms of their potential to support learning and improve future projects and public policies of the city, but also of other European Capitals of Culture. The evaluation combines quantitative and qualitative methods and network analysis and provides a picture of the cultural, financial, managerial and administrative outcomes and impacts of the Programme.

5

“International Relations” looks at how the Timișoara 2023 Programme tried to increase the city’s visibility around the world and to make better cultural connections with other countries. It presents actions and approaches in public and cultural diplomacy. It also highlights the city’s relations with twin cities, European networks and other international actors.

6

“The Ecosystem” looks at the structure, dynamics and actors who helped develop and strengthen Timișoara’s 2023 Cultural Programme. It shows how working together has created a resilient web. This network was very important for the Programmes’s success in 2023, and for making sure that the local community benefits from culture in the long term.

1

Specific

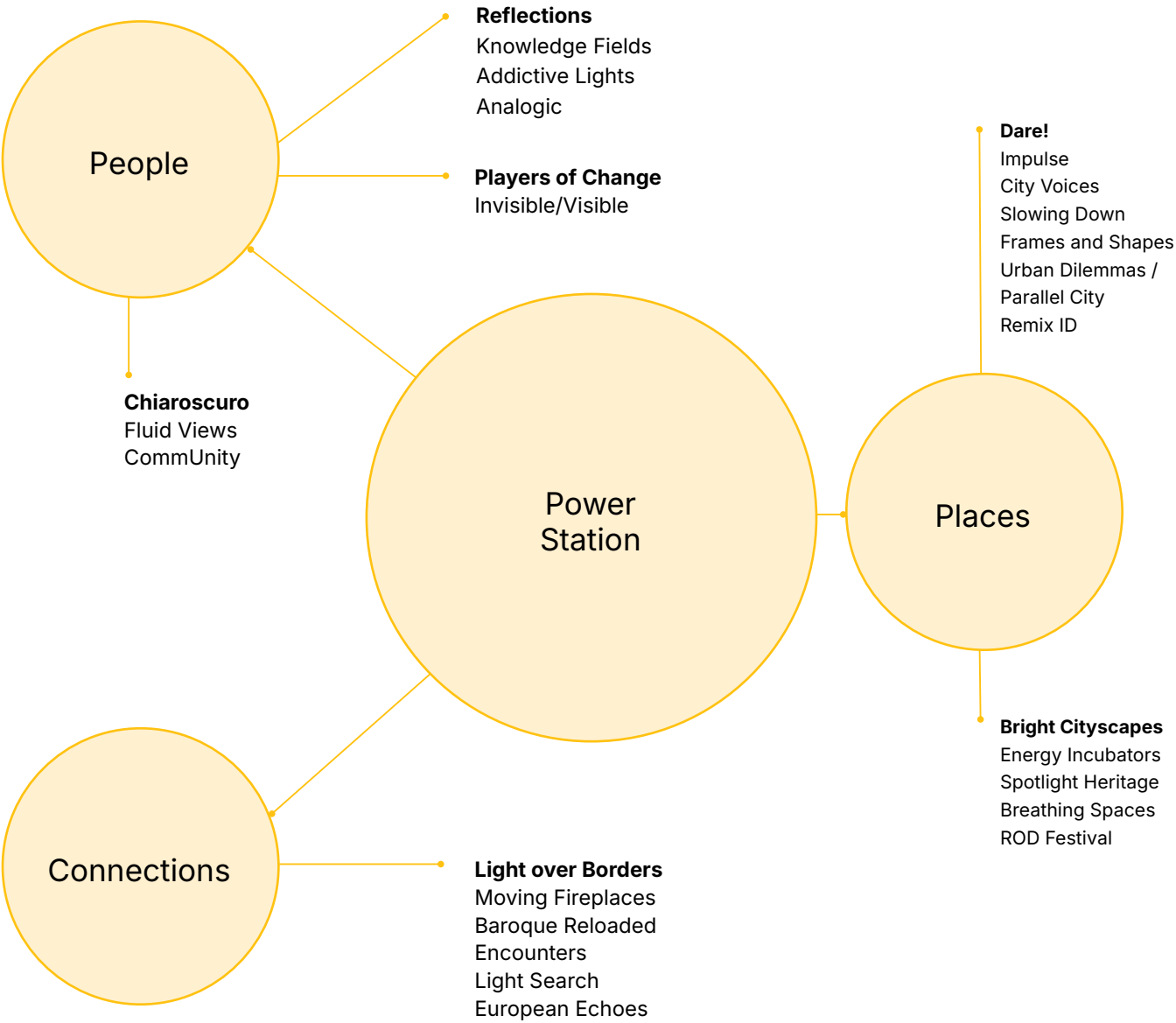


The unique features of the Timișoara 2023 Programme

The city's transformative project through culture and inclusion

From the moment Timișoara won the title of European Capital of Culture (ECOC), the city began a journey to write “a contemporary destiny and to play a leading role in the region once again, this time through culture” (Bidbook, 2016). Timișoara 2023 was a vector of change, a celebration of freedom of artistic expression and cultural diversity.

At the end of 2024, the Timișoara 2023 Programme remains an important and ambitious project for the city. It was conceived from the outset as a whole transformative process, not just as a cultural event culminating in 2023, for which the legacy, its concrete results and positive effects were the final destination.



Conceived as a journey, a map with 3 territories - **People**, **Places** and **Connections** - united by very diverse cultural experiences and events and with the **Power Station** programme at its core, a generator for increasing the capacities of the cultural scene, the city opened itself for exploration and became an urban laboratory.

People	People, the essence of community, included projects that contributed to the activation of civic energy, the promotion of critical thinking, and freedom of artistic expression.
Places	Places saw the city as a common good and promoted a culture of coexistence and solidarity. It focused on the revitalization of public spaces through transparent and participatory working processes for balanced and equitable urban development, involving residents.
Connections	Connections united people - both Timișoara's own citizens and those from Europe and around the world - and places. It gave the city the opportunity to share experiences regionally and transnationally, with the aim of raising Timișoara's international profile and highlighting territorial interdependence.
Power Station	Power Station was a transversal programme in the Timișoara 2023 Programme architecture. The events and projects contributed to the increase of the capacities of the local scene through the stimulation of partnerships and the development of the capacities and skills of creators, organizations and institutions. Power Station was under the management of the Centre for Projects and is a legacy component of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

Timișoara demonstrated its commitment to contribute to its long-term cultural strategy, to strengthen the EU dimension of cultural projects and its global visibility, to create high quality art events, to attract and involve new and varied target groups, and to allocate financial resources appropriate to the complexity of proposed Cultural Programme.

Timișoara 2023 was not just the sum of cultural projects and events in 2023: it was primarily the result of the efforts and vision of hundreds of professionals involved in developing a convincing and competitive bid, and thousands of others who contributed to its implementation.

Timișoara 2023 Programme Profile

Timișoara 2023 considered culture as a factor for city and community activation, and local culture as an ecosystem and a platform for activity. The objectives focused on the sustainability of the expected positive changes in terms of the capacities of cultural actors, people’s attitudes towards culture, the image of the city at the national and international levels, and the conditions of resource management for the community.

„Our concept is to create conditions for the courage needed to generate a new sense of community. (...) It is our intention to reawaken the discourse on the future of our city, now in a European context. (...) The destination is the legacy. At the end of our Journey, the people of Timișoara will benefit from increased civic energy and will be able to confront problems as active European citizens, in cooperation with others. Our understanding of active European citizenship is inclusive, caring, responsible and also technologically competent and confident. Through culture and cultivated creativity, individuals rediscover their connection with communities and regain the will to take the future into their own hands.” (Bidbook, 2016)



General objectives of the Timișoara 2023 Program

Bidbook (2016)

To put civic energy in motion in order to overcome passivity and activate society through audience development

To inspire lives based on values of entrepreneurship, civic society, multi confessionality, and interculturality

To increase the international profile of the city by means of a more intensive interaction with other European cultures, in terms of artistic excellence and cultural interdependence

Revalidation of the objectives (2022)*

To widen the civic participation in local communities through audience development and an awareness of the European citizenship

To inspire the values of active citizenship, social entrepreneurship, solidarity, interculturality and the importance of democratic practices in the lives of residents from a wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds

To increase the international profile of the city by means of a more intensive interaction with other European cultures, in terms of artistic excellence and cultural interdependence

Strategic objectives of the Timișoara 2023 Program

Bidbook (2016)

To create a common platform for cultural advocacy, which facilitates a reinvention of the social system on the role of cultural and civic engagement

To increase and to make better use of resources for cultural activities

To generate a real European breakthrough in the development of CCI in the cross-border territory of Banat, especially in areas such as computer gaming and digital application development, architecture, design, and crafts

Revalidation of the objectives (2022)*

To create the conditions that build resilient networks, structures and institutions that facilitate citizen engagement, enable the dialogue within and across communities and support a stronger role of cultural participation in the social system

To increase and to improve the scopes and the uses of resources for cultural activities

To contribute to the building of capacities for collaboration, resilience and sustainability of CCS practices in the cross-border Banat region

* by the Curatorial Team

The organizers' perception of the objectives achieved by the Timișoara 2023 Programme illustrate its destinations (Encore Research SRL, 2024):

● **Active participation and community activation:**

The aim of the Programme was to encourage the active participation of residents in the life of the city, community activation and the use of culture as a vehicle for public engagement. Including and reaching out to all social groups was essential to ensure broad access to cultural activities.

● **Strengthening of the independent cultural sector:**

The aim of the Programme was to strengthen the independent cultural sector by increasing the capacity of local organisations to become sustainable and able to produce relevant content beyond the city boundaries.

● **Transforming the city through culture:**

The Programme was seen as an opportunity to use culture as a catalyst for change and to define a new identity in order to rebrand the city, revitalise it and bring it out of its slumber.

● **Bringing public spaces into the public awareness:**

By transforming public spaces into meeting places and venues for cultural activities, the Programme brought public spaces into the public consciousness.

● **Involving cultural operators, in particular local ones:**

the Programme was structured to involve cultural operators of all kinds, from small associations to large organisations and broad partnerships, with an emphasis on local creativity and avoiding a top-down approach.

● **Drawing international attention to the city:**

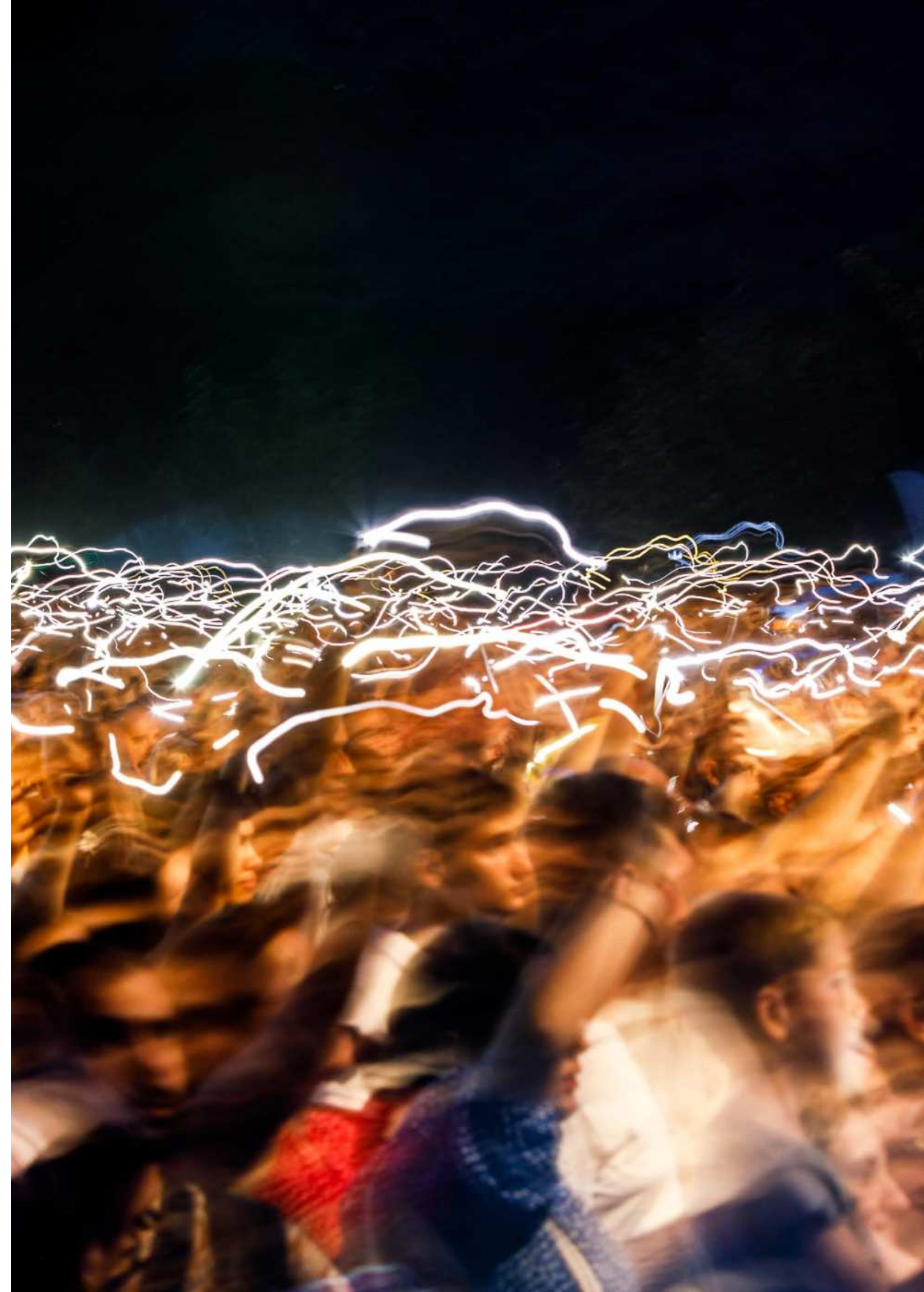
The Programme drew international attention to the city through the use of culture as a means of promoting the city on the global stage.

● **The socio-economic development of the city:**

The Programme was also recognised for its impact on the city's socio-economic development, focusing on culture and tourism as drivers of local economic growth and social cohesion.

● **Development of skills in the cultural sector:**

The Programme has increased the skills and number of professionals working in the cultural sector in Timișoara.



The Cultural Programme in 2023

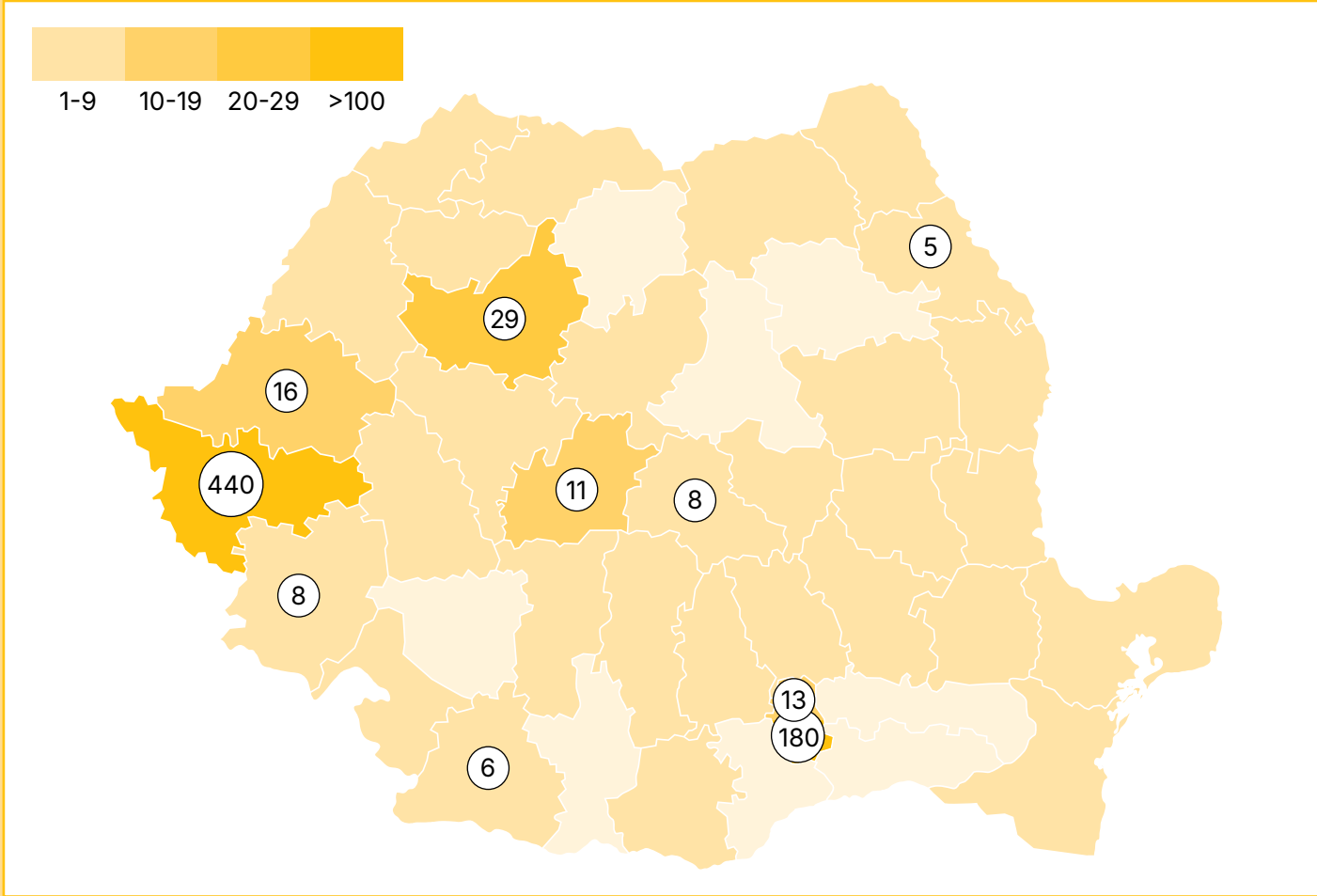
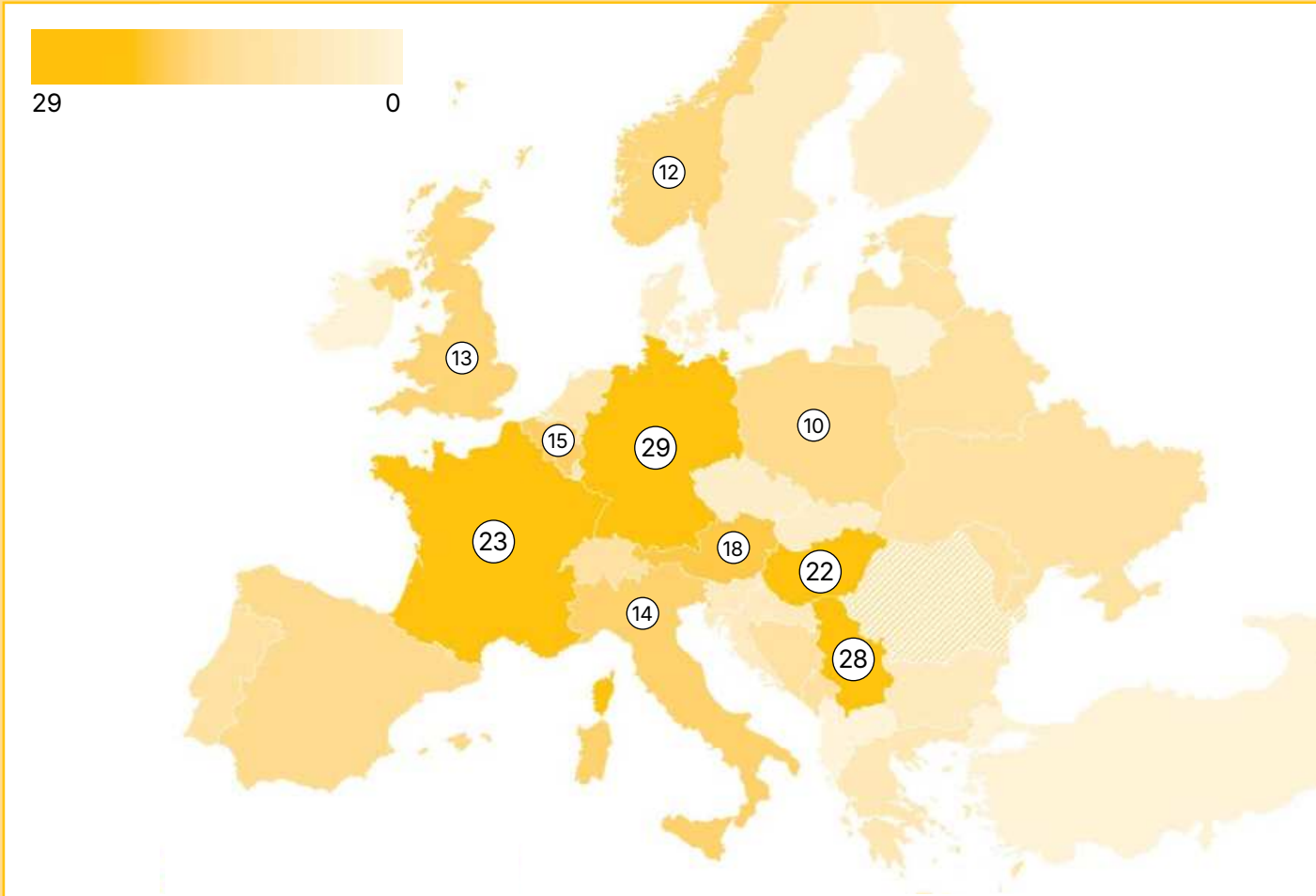
Geographical distribution of European and national organisers and partners

#	Top 10 countries	Organisers & Partners
1	Germany	29
2	Serbia	28
3	France	23
4	Hungary	22
5	Austria	18
6	Belgium	15
7	Italy	14
8	United Kingdom	13
9	Norway	12
10	Poland	10

#	Top 10 Romanian counties	Organisers & Partners
1	Timiș	440
2	București	180
3	Cluj	29
4	Arad	16
5	Ilfov	13
6	Sibiu	11
7	Brașov	8
8	Caraș-Severin	6
9	Dolj	6
10	Iași	5

→
Data analysis of the cultural ecosystem of the Timișoara 2023 Programme carried out by Dr. Silvia Fierăscu, senior analyst and data consultant and research methods, and Ianis Rușitoru, junior analyst, for the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara.

Other international partners in the United States of America (5), Japan (2), Tunisia (1), India (1).



Spaces activated in the Cultural Programme in 2023

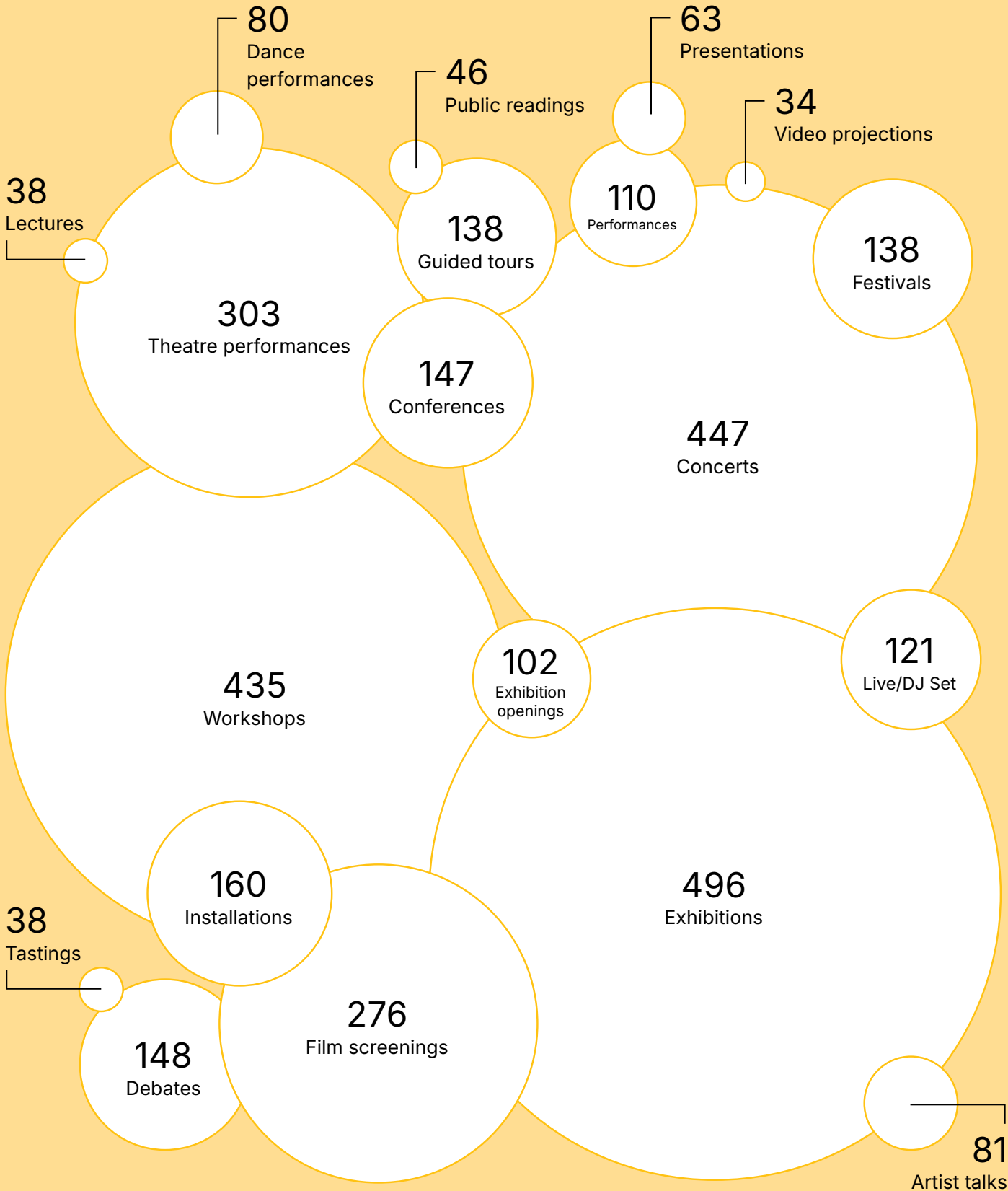
Distribution of the events by the venues that hosted them and a graphic of their distribution on the map of Timișoara. We distinguish a few emerging central locations (e.g. MX - Corneliu Miklosi Museum, Cinema Victoria, U Barracks, FABER), together with the traditional/convential cultural public spaces (Libertății Square, Unirii Square, Victory Square), which also hosted many events.

Space	Number of events		
MX - Corneliu Miklosi Museum	114	Water Museum	45
UPT Campus	114	Banatul Philharmonic	37
Cinema Victoria	106	Basca Theatre	37
The Youth House	91	Minitremu (un) learning centre	36
FABER	82	Cinema Timiș	34
Bastion Galleries	76	Centre for Projects	33
U Barracks	60	"Mihai Eminescu" National State Threatre Timișoara	32
West University Timișoara	59	Victoria Square	29
Liberty Square	51	ISHO	28
"Csiki Gergely" Hungarian State Theatre	48		



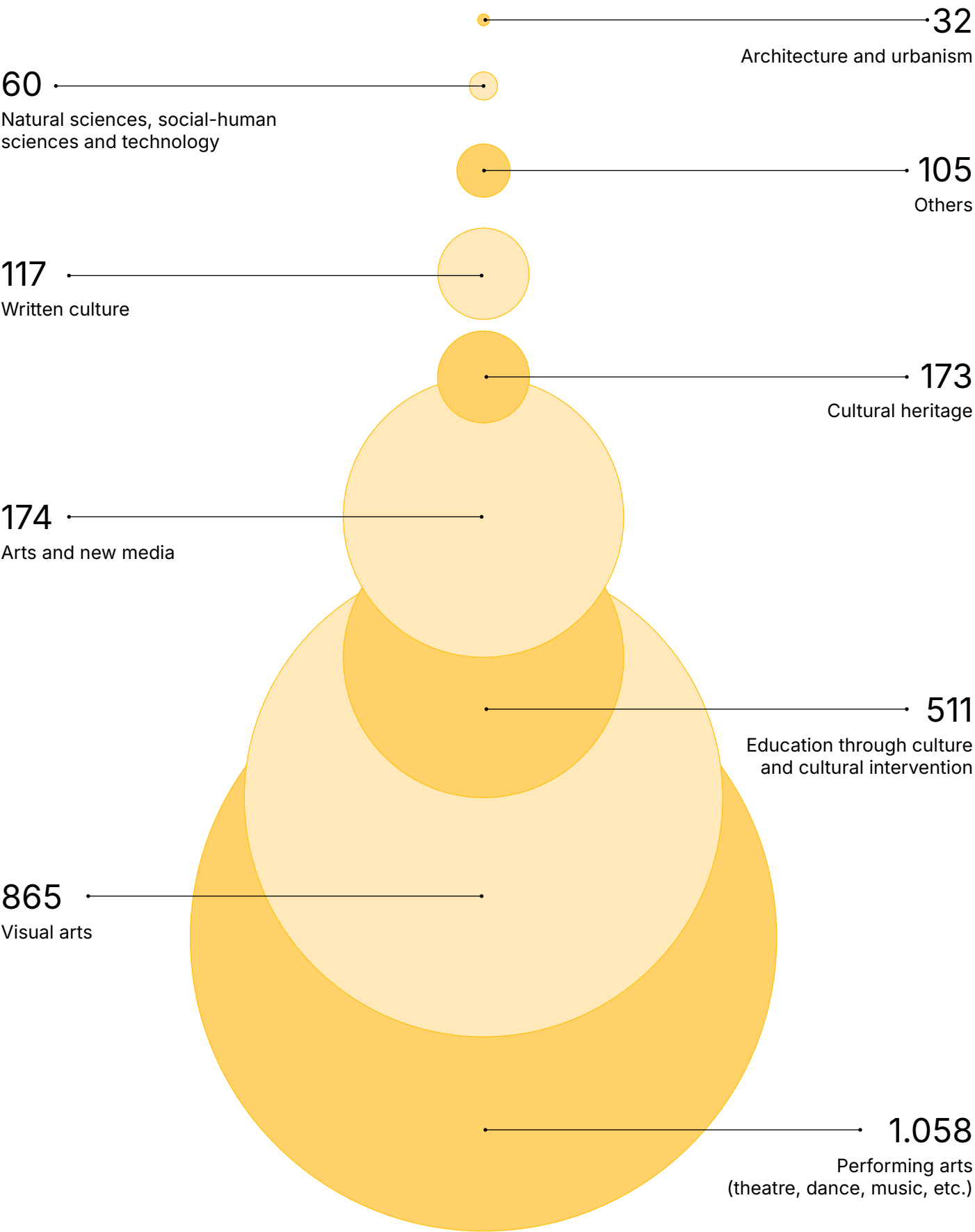
What were the most popular types of events held in 2023?*

2.331
Unique events



* An event can be classified in several categories

What were the most popular cultural domains in Timișoara 2023?

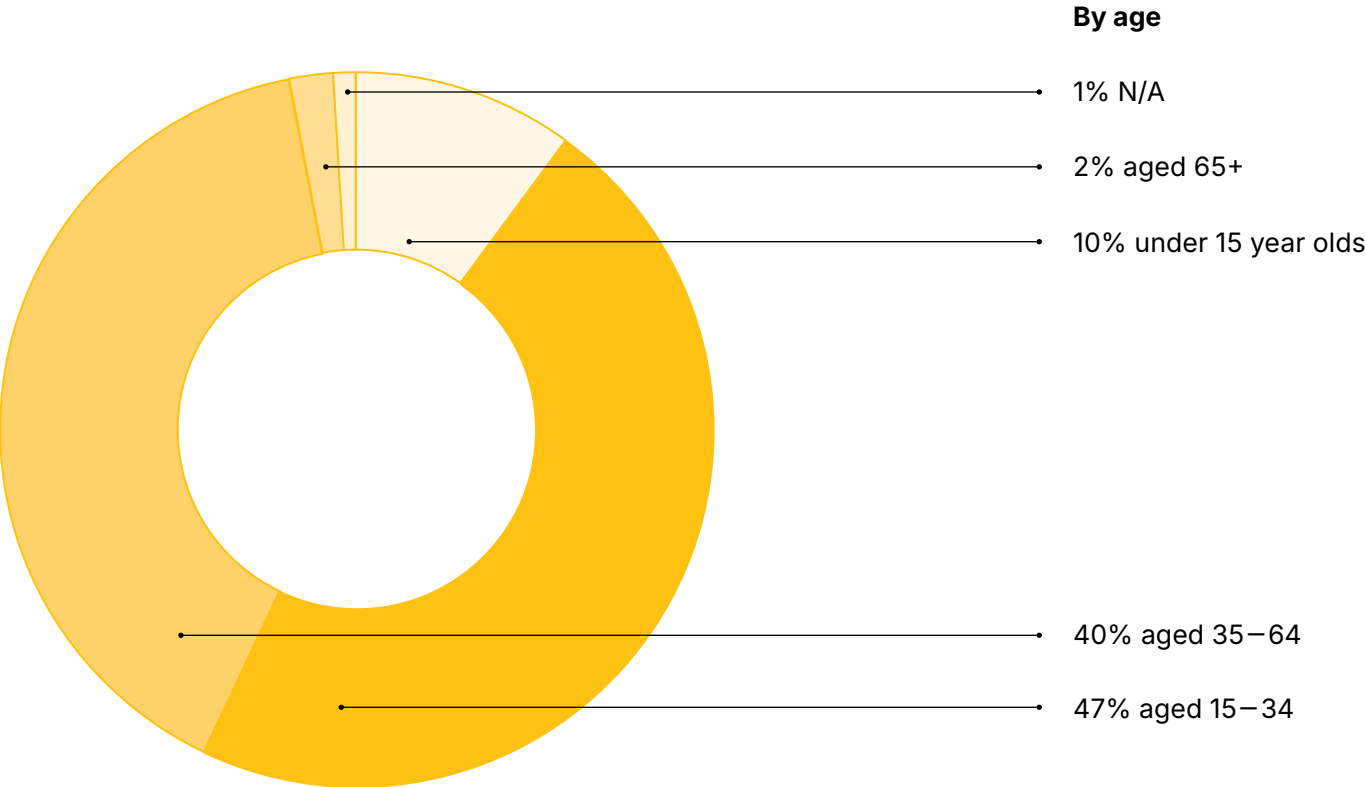


→ Opening Timișoara 2023, photo: Petru Cojocaru



Portrait of the audience

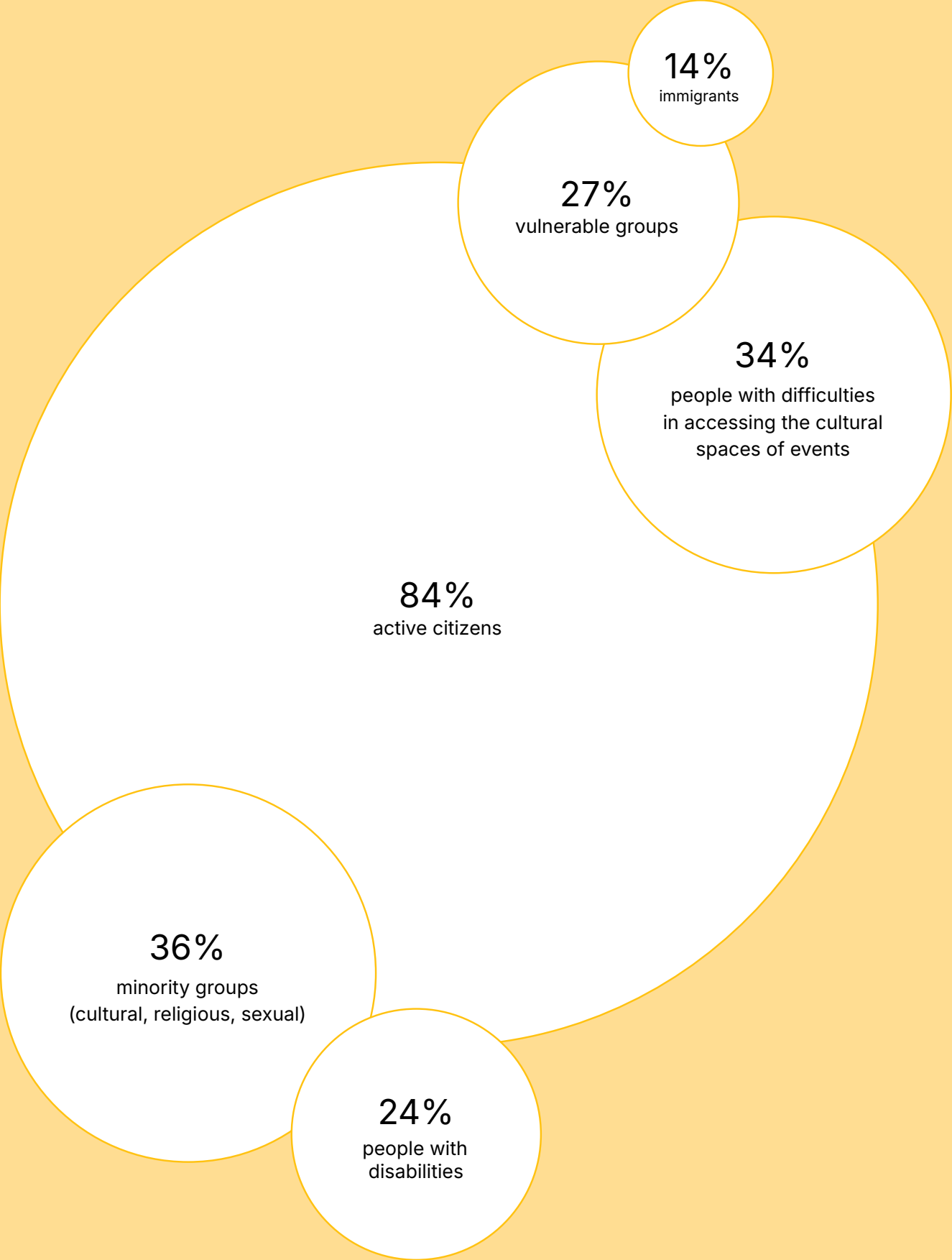
— over 1.5 million participants in 2023



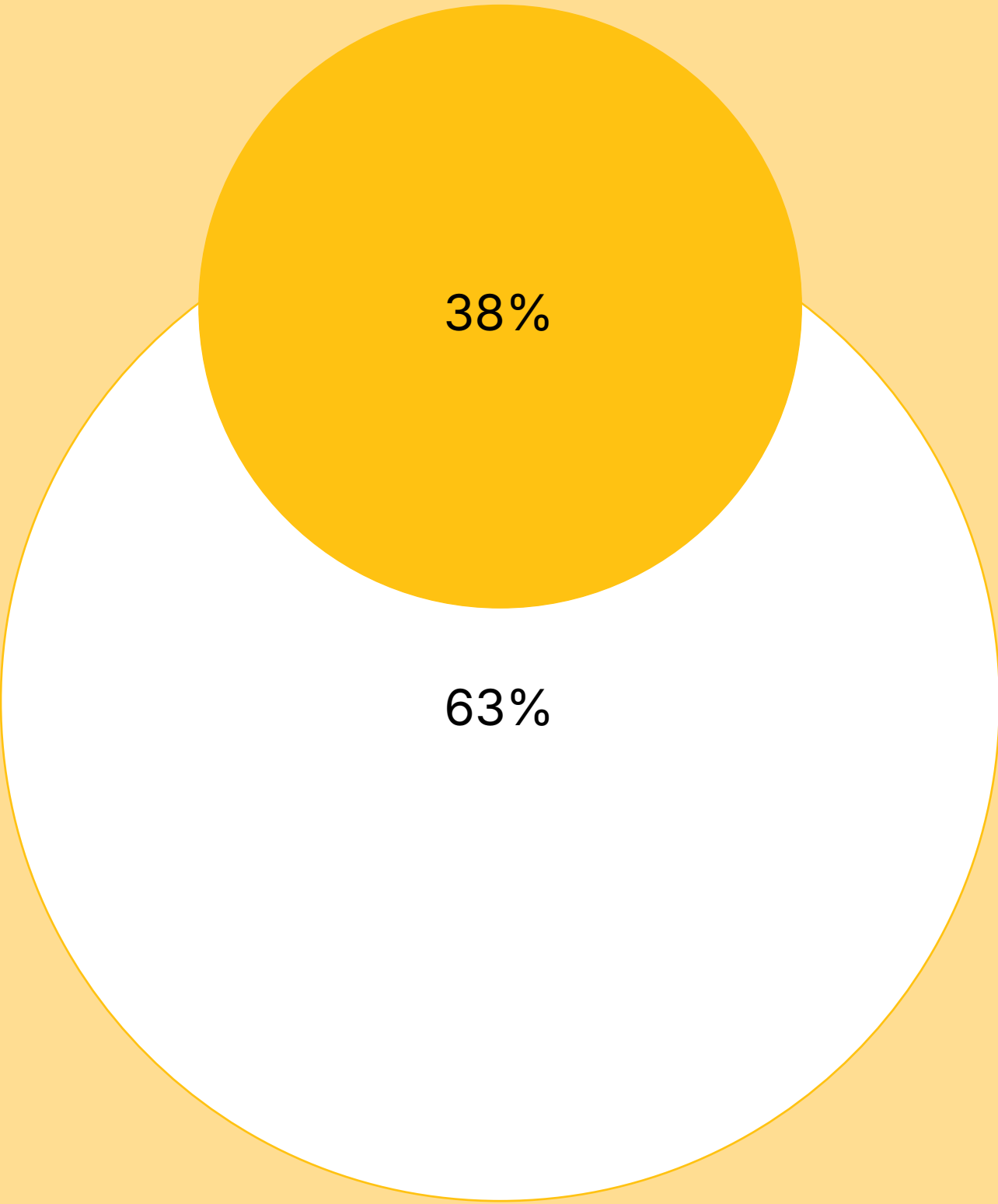
↓ Opening Timișoara 2023, photo: Cătălin Anghel



The **types of audiences** reflected the diversity of themes and objectives of the projects, and the participation was high.



38% of the organizers consider that the events and projects were accessible to several types of social groups, including vulnerable groups, people with disabilities and people from minority communities.



Of those who have taken action to encourage the involvement of vulnerable, minority or hard-to-reach audiences, 63% consider that their approaches have been overall effective.

The events with a representative role of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, organized under the coordination of the Centre for Projects, explored the European profile of the city, attracted a large and diverse audience and brought different communities together.

Event	Participants
Opening Timișoara 2023	60,000
Timișoara 2023. City Celebration	80,000
Neverending Timișoara 2023	115,800

The *Opening* of Timișoara 2023 (February 17-19, 2023) attracted 60,000 participants to concerts, shows, exhibitions and conferences. The opening show at Union Square brought together 17,000 people, and the streets were alive with locals and tourists. The atmosphere was also broadcasted nationally by the Romanian National Television.

More than 130 events took place as part of *Timișoara 2023. City Celebration* (October 6-8, 2023) in Uszoda and 67 other venues along the Bega Canal. These attracted over 80,000 participants, Timișoara locals and tourists alike. From open-air concerts to theatrical performances, from classical music to electronic music, from guided tours to events dedicated to the visually impaired and the mobility-impaired, from walks along the banks of the Bega in a journey of discovery of the city and its light installations, to walks on the Bega, from concerts in churches to street events, *Timișoara 2023. City Celebration* was one of the most complex events of the year in Timișoara.

Neverending Timișoara 2023 (December 7-10, 2023) was the event that symbolically concluded the Timișoara 2023 Programme. It brought together the entire community in an unprecedented celebration of the city. More than 115,800 spectators attended the more than 100 events organized at Union Square, Cinema Timiș, Cinema Victoria, MX - Corneliu Mikloși Museum, Palace of Culture and dozens of other venues throughout the city.

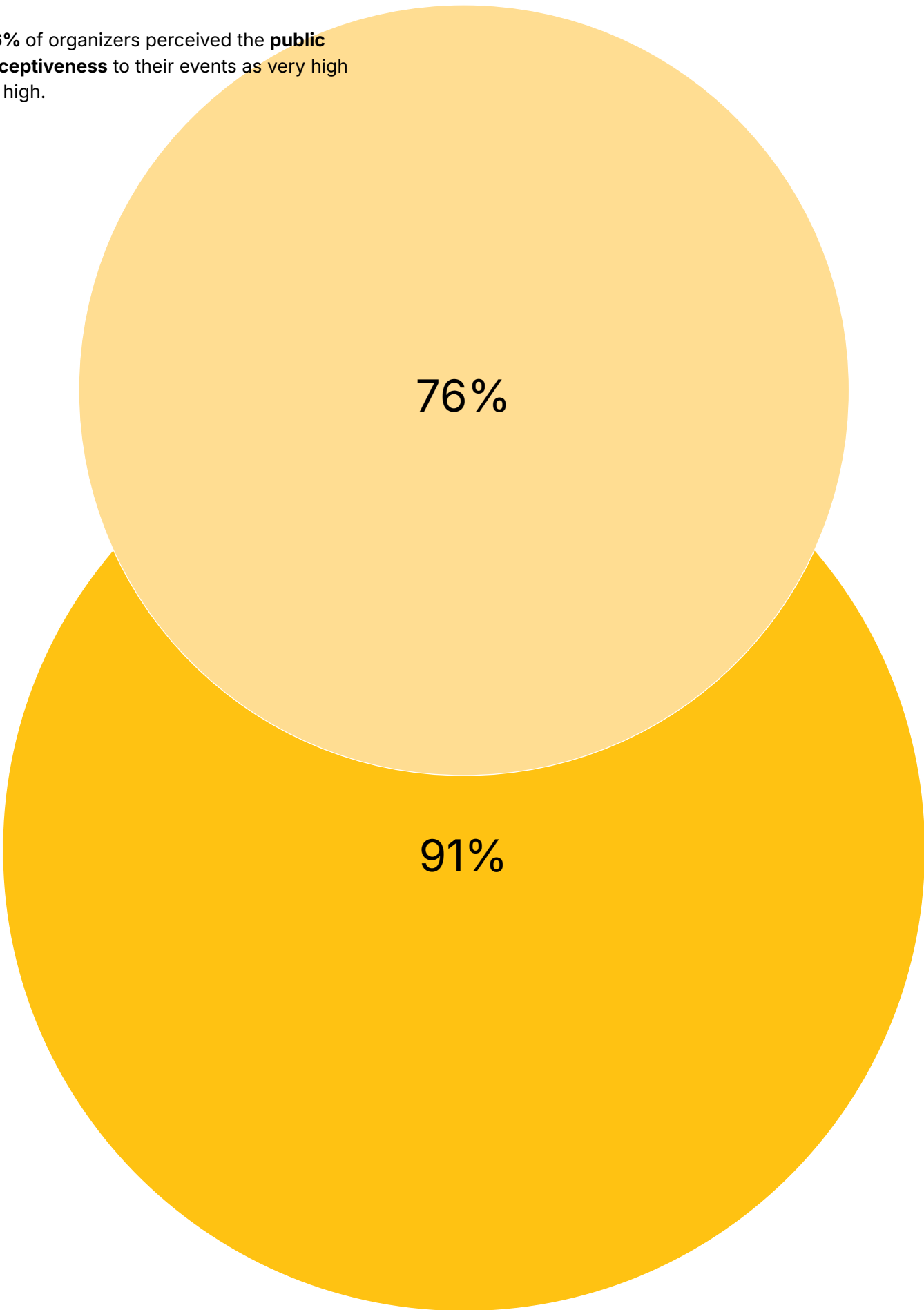
The actions organized under the Timișoara 2023 Programme, including the exhibition *Brâncuși: Romanian Sources and Universal Perspectives*, were appreciated by Romanians as “the event of the year 2023 in Romania” (IRES, 2023).

Event	Visitors	
<i>Brâncuși: Romanian Sources and Universal Perspectives</i>	130,000	The exhibition <i>Brâncuși: Romanian Sources and Universal Perspectives</i> (30 September 2023 - 28 January 2024) was organized by the Timișoara National Museum of Art, the Art Encounters Foundation and the French Institute of Romania. It attracted a record number of over 130,000 visitors and was widely covered in the national media, with over 1.000 appearances on major TV, radio, print and online media, and was reviewed in over 70 articles in international publications, including prestigious newspapers such as The New York Times, Financial Times, Le Monde, Le Figaro or Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, and was praised in the pages of major art magazines such as The Art Newspaper, Artribune, Il Giornale dell'Arte, Artension or Le Journal des Arts.

↓ Brâncuși: Romanian Sources and Universal Perspectives © Timișoara National Museum of Art

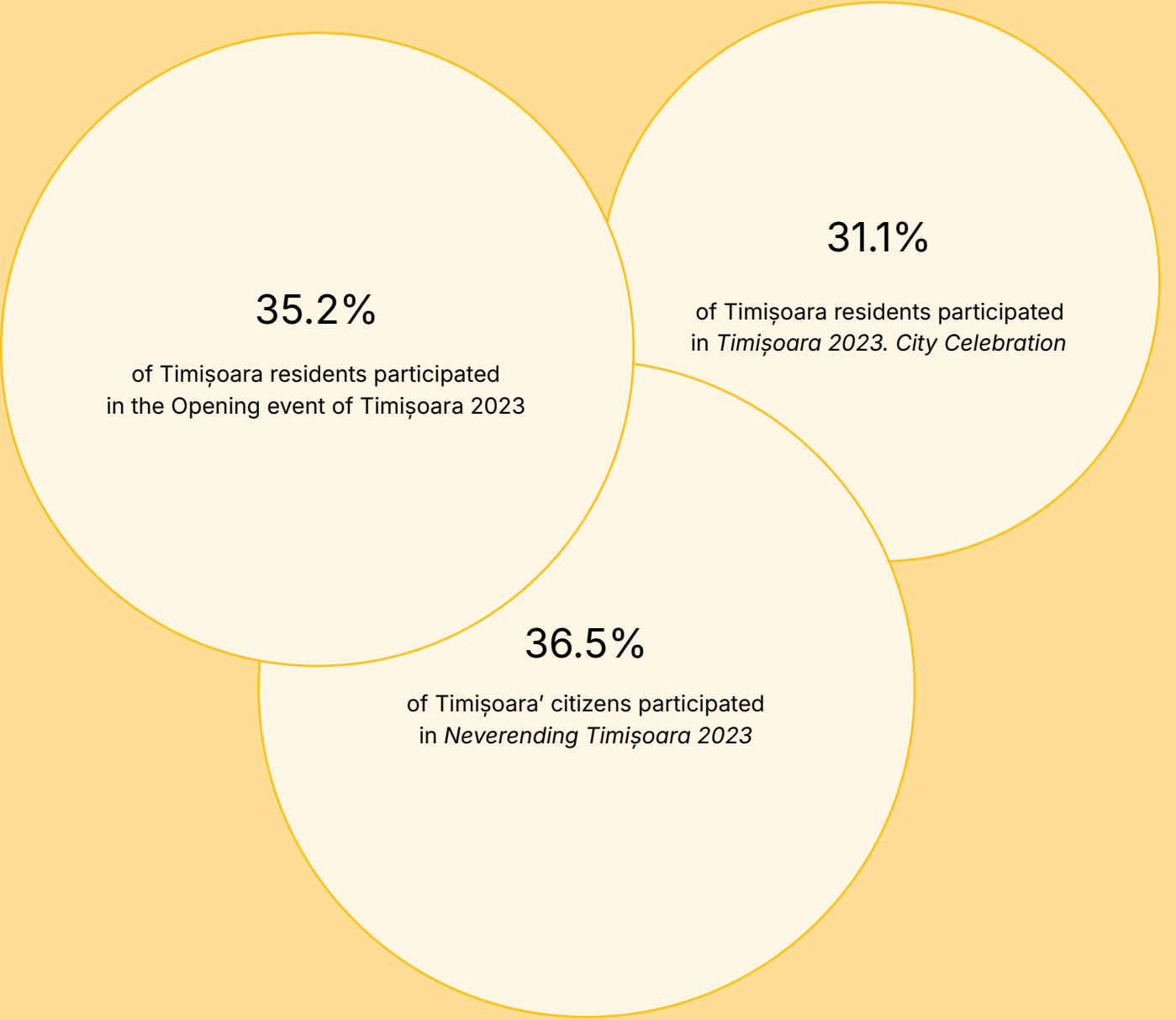


76% of organizers perceived the **public receptiveness** to their events as very high or high.

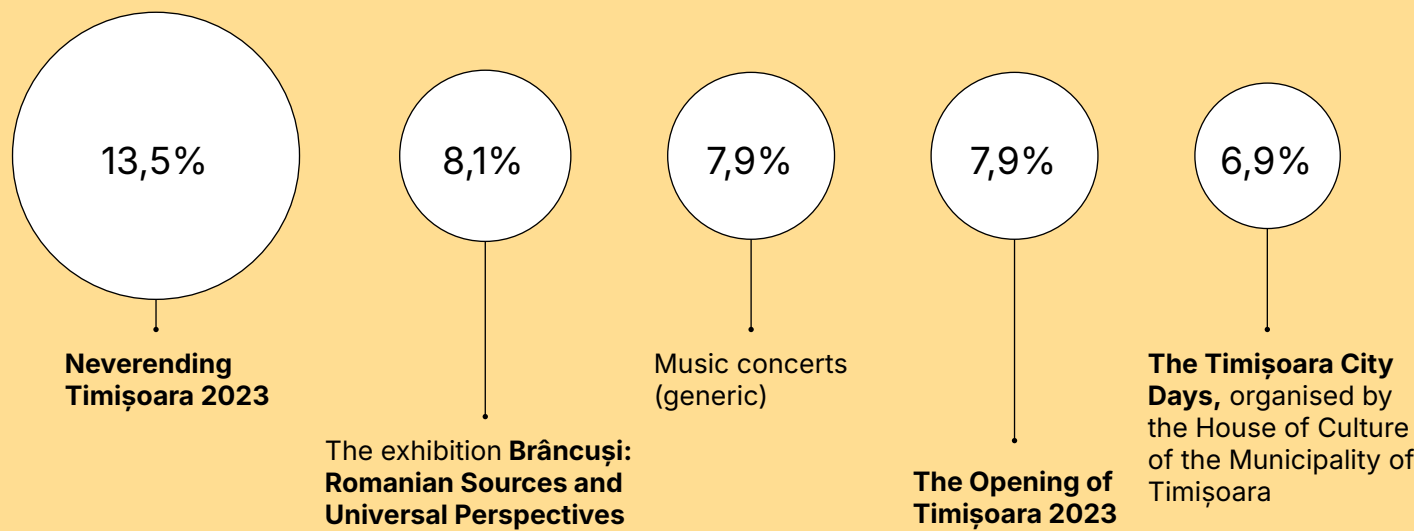


91% of organizers considered that their Timișoara 2023 events **were successful or satisfactory for the public.**

Locals



The most appreciated local cultural events of 2023:



Participation in the Timișoara 2023 Program	2022	2023	
Locals who did not attend any events	31,7%	24,3%	⬇️
Locals who attended 1-5 events	48,7%	53%	⬆️
Locals who attended 5+ events	9,6%	16,1%	⬆️⬆️⬆️

69.1% of locals participated in at least one event within the Timișoara 2023 Programme*

Locals' appreciation of the Timișoara 2023 Programm**	2021	2022	2023	
Residents believe that the Timișoara 2023 Programme contributed to the quality of life in the city	54,7%	73,4%	71,5%	⬆️⬇️
Residents consider the Timișoara 2023 Programme in 2023 to be an event that Timișoara can be proud of		81,5%	78,5%	⬇️

71.4% of the residents considered the Timișoara 2023 Programme a success

The vast majority of Timișoara's inhabitants consider that the Timișoara 2023 Programme was relevant both for them and for people from outside the city.

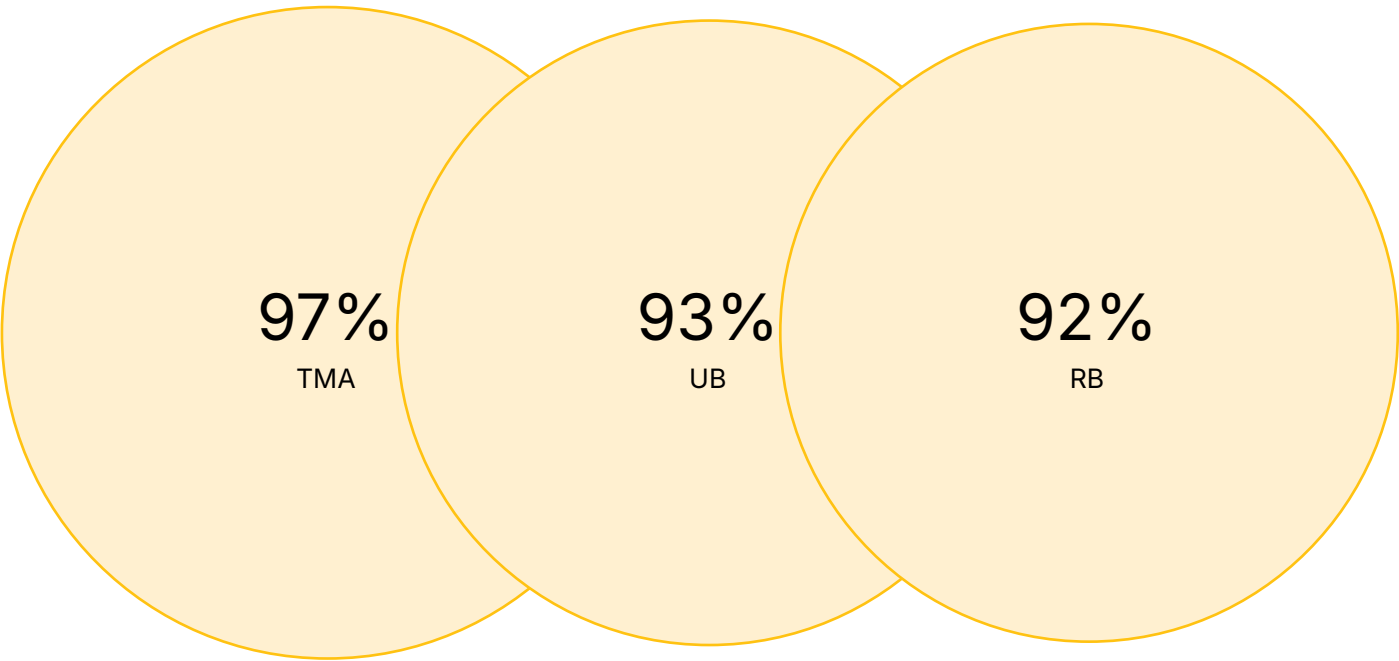
Approximately 80% considered both in 2022 and in 2023 that the Cultural Programme was addressed to locals and tourists alike, in the following order:

Foreign tourists	86,4%
Romanian tourists	85,5%
Timișoara residents	80,3%
Banat residents	76,3%

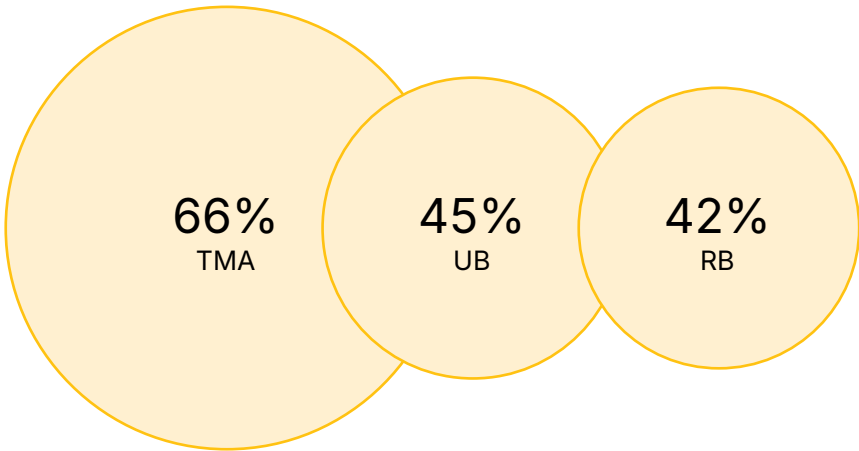
* Nadolu și Nadolu, 2024 | ** Matichescu, 2024

Metropolitan Area and the Banat region

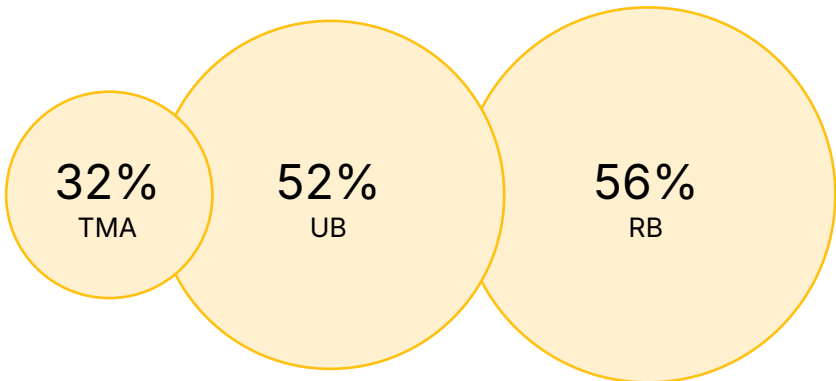
Are aware that Timișoara was European Capital of Culture in 2023:



Took part in at least one event in the Cultural Programme:



Did not attend any cultural event in the Cultural Programme:



Information about
the Timișoara 2023
Programme



The online environment, mainly social media, and the recommendations of friends / acquaintances were the main sources of information about the Cultural Programme (TMA, UB, RB). 95% of the respondents considered that it was easy or very easy for them to get information about the Timișoara 2023 Programme (TMA, UB, RB).

Accessibility of the
Timișoara 2023
Programme

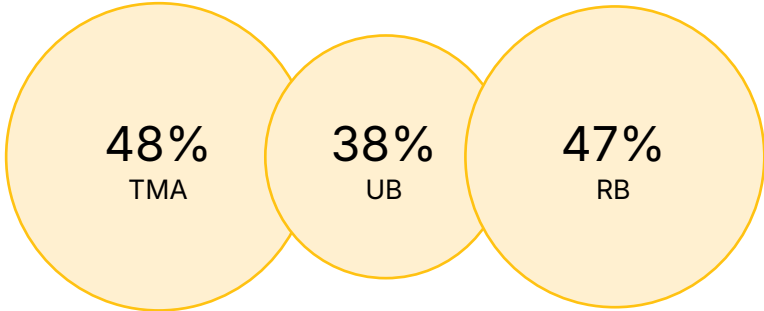


The access to 60% of events in 2023 was free of charge (1418 events). The majority of respondents consider that the events of the Cultural Programme were accessible from the perspectives of the distance from home, for the participation of children, the availability of public transport and the existence of the needed facilities for people with disabilities and special needs. 45% (TMA), 55% (UB), 56% (RB) of respondents found it financially difficult or very difficult to participate.

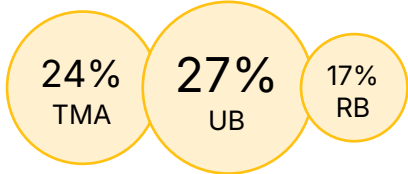
Satisfaction with the Timișoara 2023 Programme

Those who attended at least one event enjoyed the Cultural Programme:

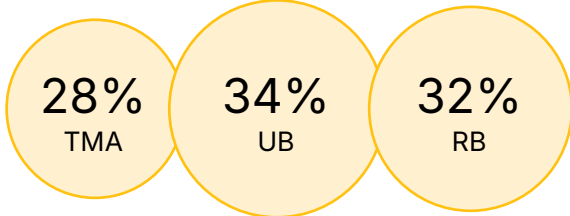
Concerts/ festivals/ performances:



Exhibitions/artistic and cultural performances:

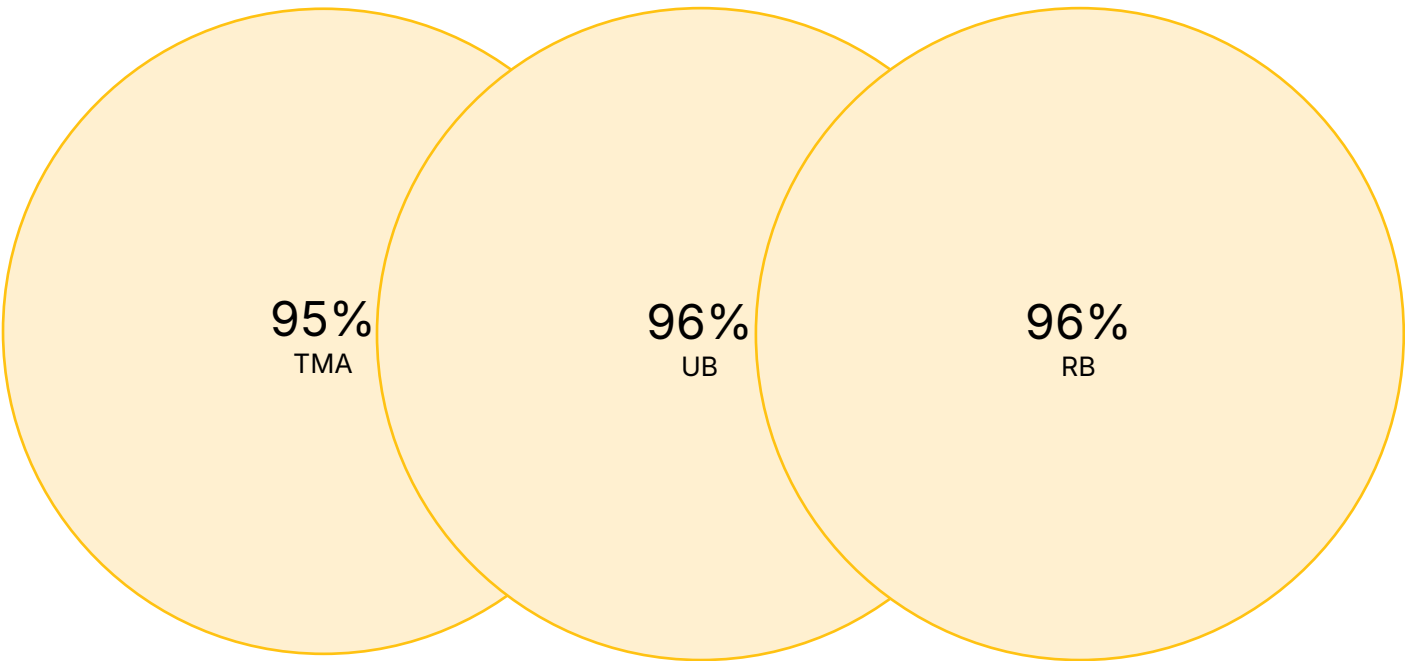


Other cultural activities:

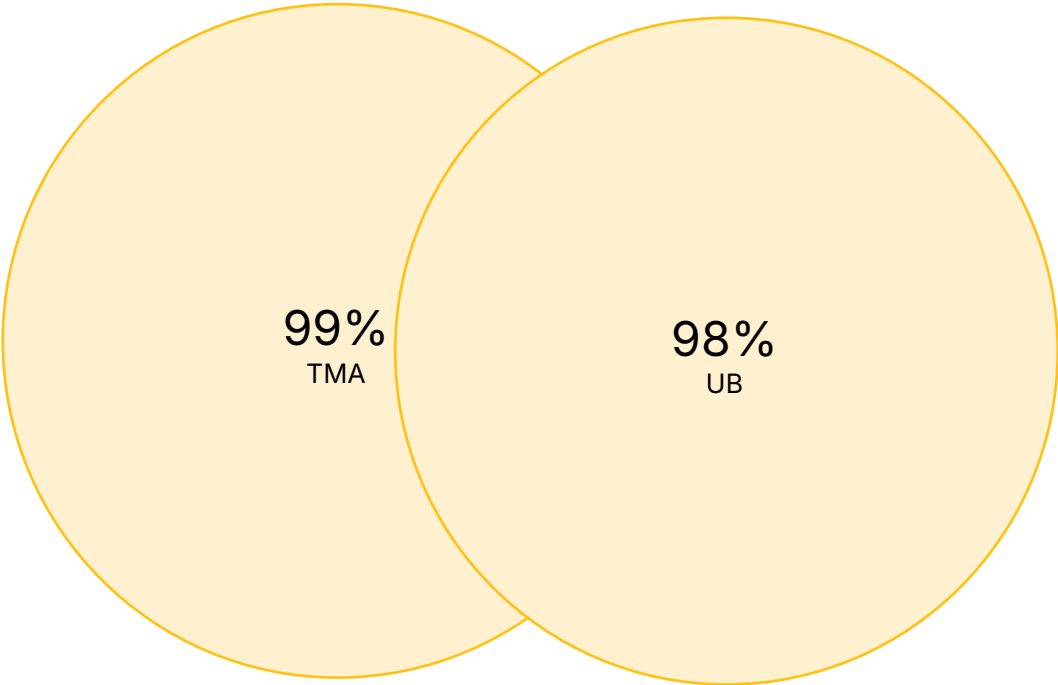


The cultural offer and the experiences lived by the participants within the Timișoara 2023 Programme were satisfactory for:

Young people and young adults were the most satisfied (26%) (TMA), females and those aged 36-50 (BU), females and those aged 18-35 (RB).



Audience engagement in the Timișoara 2023 Program



Of the event participants, those aged 51-65 and over 65 (TMA) and those aged 36 and over (UB) participated in most activities where the audience was actively involved in the artistic activity.

Events which included co-creation practices attracted audience appreciation, with 99% (TMA), 98% (UB) finding the experience itself very enjoyable and enjoyable. In the BR, only 4% of event participants said that the audience was actively involved in the artistic approach.

→ Unirii Square, photo: Adrian Anghel



European dimension

In 2021, more than 50% of the residents of Timișoara considered that the European Union had contributed to Romania’s development in the previous 5 years, and about 34% were satisfied or very satisfied.

(Rus and Nadolu, 2021)

At that time, the inhabitants of Timișoara perceived themselves to be more attached to the Romanian identity, followed by the European identity and in fewer cases to the local identity (that of the Banat region or as local of the city of Timișoara). At the same time, the residents of Timișoara’s relationship to cultural diversity and European values revealed a high percentage of the population analyzed (59%) who considered to a large and very large extent that “it is important for all Europeans to put common European values first” and that “it is important to promote a common European culture” (56%).

According to qualitative research conducted in 2024 (IRES, Evolution of the Cultural Scene, 2024), the Timișoara 2023 Programme addressed local cultural diversity and European multiculturalism through:

- Projects that have made use of a common regional, transnational heritage and have promoted European ideals of unity and common cultural identity.
- Projects carried out with the aim of fostering cultural exchanges and social interactions between diverse local and European communities and cultures.
- International partnerships, which facilitated the development of dynamic and evolving relationships between organizers, including intercultural exchange and dialogue.
- Artistic residency schemes involving international artists, international artistic moments (concerts, dance performances), as well as bilingual or multilingual content, which have contributed to enriching the intercultural experience in Timișoara.

promote local gastronomic cultural heritage and the rediscovery of ancient recipes for food preparation. Projects also focused on reconsidering abandoned industrial heritage as a resource for the city and using architectural heritage to strengthen local identity.

- **Cohesion and well-being** were addressed in projects that took place in the city’s neighbourhoods and aimed at improving residents’ access to quality public infrastructure and cultural infrastructure and developing the cultural offer by organizing cultural events in the neighbourhood.
- **The objective of creating an ecosystem that supports artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content** was achieved through all the projects organized which included collaborations both between local or international NGOs, public institutions and the private sector and the involvement of interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral teams.
- **The promotion of European creators** was achieved through the inclusion of renowned personalities such as: Peter Sloterdijk, Olga Nawoja Tokarczuk, Jean-Pierre Sauvage, Jean-Marie Lehn, Jean Christian Tirat, Patrick Chauvel, Martina Menegon, Gian Maria Tosatti, José Alberto Ribeiro, etc.
- **The cooperation with organizations or cities from different countries, including cities that have held the title of European Capital of Culture**, has been realized through partnerships with organizations from Serbia, Hungary, UK, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Norway, Cyprus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Albania, Moldova. Noteworthy are the partnerships with organizations from Novi Sad ECoC 2022 and Elefsina ECoC 2023.
- **Involvement of local artists and cultural organizations in the conception** was achieved through the participation of a large number of local cultural organizations as partners of the curatorial team, which subsequently developed the programme on the basis of numerous partnerships.
- **The combination of local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions** was realized in projects that included mediation activities, the use of new pedagogical techniques and new technologies in the promotion of cultural heritage, or for the promotion of immersive theater through mobile applications. The stories of migrant communities were also conveyed through different media forms and

adapted to contemporary audiences.

- **Ensuring a wide and diversified range of activities and generally high artistic quality** was realized through projects that included discursive and artistic activities, from various scientific and cultural fields. The discursive activities were themed around topics in the socio-humanities, natural sciences or technical sciences and took place in a wide range of events, from workshops, reading groups, conferences, to seminars and summer schools. Artistic projects included performances, exhibitions, workshops, working groups, screenings, in diverse cultural fields ranging from visual arts and new media to performing arts and cinema, with an emphasis on interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary.

According to the qualitative analysis for the preparation of the Timișoara 2023 Legacy Plan of the Timișoara 2023 Programme of the Municipality of Timișoara (Fierăscu, Qualitative Analysis, 2024), the **European dimension** was visible in several ways:

- “the city’s relevance as an international cultural scene has increased. Also, international collaborations have brought a new cultural offer to the city and have brought together local professionals with specialists from other countries, facilitating the exchange of experiences and learning. The local scene has opened up to Europe, both in terms of visibility and as a place for cultural operators to work and present their work”.
- The European dimension was also highlighted through collaborations between artists and organizations from Timișoara and their partners, but also “from a number of aspects and initiatives aimed at promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and cross-border cooperation within Europe”.

Most local organizers also consider that **they have taken up and adapted international models of good practice**. Models from the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway were praised for their elements of interactivity and accessibility, as they were considered easy to adapt to the local context. Some examples: integrating technology in cultural production - innovative digital solutions to attract and diversify audiences; integrating audiences through co-creation and interaction to create a sense of community. The openness of the local audiences to European and international productions has supported these adaptations and innovations.

Themes of projects and events in the Cultural Programme

The complexity of the Timișoara 2023 Programme is reflected in the multitude of themes addressed, centered around realizing and sustaining the connections between people, culture and places. The proposed events offered a diverse mosaic of artistic fields and event types.

The content analysis of over 400 projects included in the programme shows that **the majority of the projects and events addressed more than one European dimension**. In addition to artistic, cultural or cultural heritage valorisation, the values and priorities specific to the European Agenda for Culture and the European Union in general were strongly present, through the concern for solidarity, inclusion, accessibility, social dialogue, cultural diversity, social and environmental responsibility, combating discrimination, promoting gender equality, etc.

According to the qualitative analysis for the preparation of the Timișoara 2023 Legacy Plan, “Timișoara was seen as a port of international

dialogue, a platform for a European agenda that includes, through themes such as concern for the status of the artist and the rights of the creator, *copyright*, sustainability of cultural events, from festivals to small events and conferences, to zones, very clear themes that are on the European agenda: gender equality, vulnerable communities, more inclusive cultural programmes, attracting young people to the cultural act, etc” (Fierăscu. Qualitative analysis, 2024).

According to the 2024 survey on the evolution of the local scene (IRES, 2024), the organizers had thematically diverse **objectives**, most of them focused on creating links between different types of art and the community, promoting social inclusion, regenerating urban spaces and improving the quality of social life (improving knowledge about the arts, heritage and other communities, shaping a sense of belonging to the community, sharing values with the wider city community or very different groups, etc.).

Main Themes	Reflect a wide range of contemporary issues, from multiculturalism, education and accessibility, to promoting the rights of marginalized communities and developing sustainable cultural consumption.
Secondary Themes	Promotion of <i>underground</i> culture and artistic diversity, revitalization and transformation of the use of spaces with enhancement of cultural heritage, social inclusion, bringing culture and cultural products to the city peripheries, accessibility, empowerment of people with special needs, promotion of LGBTQIA+ rights and visibility, etc. Some projects also combined modern technologies with contemporary art and intercultural dialogue to enhance and make local cultural heritage accessible to a wide audience, both national and international. One example is the Spotlight heritage project organized by the Politehnica University Timișoara with the National Museum of Banat, which used augmented reality, 3D scanning and holography to provide an interactive experience while protecting the integrity of the objects on display and allowing digital access to cultural heritage without geographical limitations. Other organizers have used digital technology to showcase architecture in the city’s historic neighborhoods.

According to the survey carried out in 2024 among the population of the metropolitan and regional area that participated in the Timișoara 2023 Programme (IRES. Public Involvement, 2024), the **themes perceived as priorities** in the Timișoara 2023 Programme were to a large and very large extent the following:

Themes percieved as priorities	Banat area	Metropolitan area
Cultural diversity and inclusion	65%	69%
Local histories and traditions	56%	63%
Innovation and technology in art and culture	52%	53%

97% of the organizers are in favor of addressing social issues in cultural projects.

The events organized within the Timișoara 2023 Programme addressed **current social issues** such as combating stigmatization, promoting inclusion and visibility of vulnerable groups. They aimed at raising public awareness on interculturality, environmental sustainability and civic citizenship. Culture was seen as a tool for social reconciliation and the promotion of diversity, with the aim of preserving and valorizing different forms of artistic expression. When dealing with such topics, organizers felt the need to create a safe (primarily emotional) space for participants.

Audience reactions to the social topics presented in the Timișoara 2023 Programme varied according to the theme and size of the events: environmental, sustainability or integration of people with special needs themes were received positively, with openness and enthusiasm. However, events that portrayed the LGBTQIA+ community generated negative reactions from some people, including insults and hostile messages, affecting participants, organizers and funders alike.

2

Chronos

Timișoara 2023 Programme Roadmap



The Timișoara 2023 Programme marked a transformation in a context that was not always favorable politically, socially or economically. The principles that guided this route to the intended destination were resilience, flexibility, adaptability, readiness to reimagine the present, to look critically and to rebuild.

The following timeline complements the report presented by the Centre for Projects in March 2024, which was written from the perspective of those involved in the governance of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. Through their voices, it outlined the profile of the most important institutions involved, their relationship in decision making, their impact, their challenges and the solutions they found.



2011—2016

The pre-selection period was marked by intense preparations to ensure that Timișoara met all the necessary criteria to be awarded the title of ECoC. The Association Timișoara 2021 - European Capital of Culture (Association Timișoara 2023 throughout this document, due to the change of the year of the Title from 2021 to 2023) played a central role, coordinating efforts and preparing the necessary documentation,

and the Municipality of Timișoara played a key role in supporting the application.

One of the major challenges was to clarify the governance and the financial management of the Programme, as well as to establish a clear staffing structure, aspects which were also noted by the selection panel.

In October 2016, the Order of the Minister of Culture no. 3867/25.10.2016 was issued, by which the city of Timișoara was nominated as ECoC in 2021.

2017—2020

Winning the title generated a major local enthusiasm. However, this enthusiasm started to dissipate in 2017, due to internal conflicts in the city’s cultural and civic environment. The lack of clarity in staff planning and organizational governance, the difficulty of decision making at the Association level, and the blurring of roles were weaknesses noted by the jury, leading to the need for further clarification of these issues. The recommendation to involve the Ministry of Culture more in strategic decisions was one of the proposed steps to improve the governance of the Programme.

The Timișoara 2023 Association continued to coordinate efforts, with the involvement of the Ministry of Culture, the Municipality of Timișoara and the Timiș County. The Ministry of Culture was recommended to appoint a full representative to the Board of Directors of the Association.

During this period, the Timișoara 2023 Association was responsible for coordinating the program, implementing projects and events directly or through partnerships with partners, which it funded directly through programs developed within some of the stations or trails, according to the architecture of the cultural program proposed in the application. The governance of the Timisoara 2023 Programme has been marked by financial and social crises, contested management and political conflicts that have severely affected the ability of the Timisoara 2023 Association to fulfill its mission.

Relations with other actors in the governance structure have been difficult. The solutions found by the central administration to finance the Cultural Programme through the Timișoara 2023 Association, through the Priority Cultural Programme of the

Ministry of Culture and through the Centenary Program, based on projects proposed by the Association, only partially worked, because the Association was unable to fully use the contracted or available amounts.

The lessons learned from the actions and results of this period underline the need for good strategic planning, clear governance and effective coordination between all actors involved in such large-scale projects.

Main challenges:

● **Underfunding, heightened by the difficulty to access the available financial resources due to differing visions on the evolving nature of the preparation of the Cultural Programme:** one of the biggest challenges faced by the Timișoara 2023 Association in the period 2017-2020 was underfunding. The project, conceived as a multi-year and inter-institutional effort, was affected by the existence of different visions regarding the necessary conditions for the development of the Cultural Programme. On the one hand, there was the expectation that the funders would recognize an organic and long-term perspective-focused nature of the Cultural Programme, with a multi-year construction and a generous space for adaptation and creativity in relation to the Bidbook. On the other hand, one of the conditions for funding the Cultural Programme from the state budget, regardless of the funding program, was the submission of a list of viable projects for the funding of their preparation, in accordance with the Bidbook, under a clear artistic direction, ensuring the artistic coherence and strategic coordination of the programme. The conflict between the two visions and different expectations affected the implementation of the preparation of the Cultural Programme.

● **Governance problems and political control:** another critical factor was related to the political control exercised over the Association, in contradiction with its original purpose of being an independent body, exclusively dedicated to the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. Instead of functioning as a neutral facilitator, the Association came to be influenced by diverging political interests, which affected its coherence and efficiency.

● **Ineffective internal management and loss of team:** beginning with 2020, the Association went through a severe internal management crisis, exacerbated by the pandemic, which considerably weakened the organization’s ability to meet its objectives.

The initial excitement following the official announcement of the title gradually turned to disappointment and resignation as problems with governance and collaboration between key stakeholders became increasingly evident.

● **The relationship between the Timișoara 2023 Association and local authorities.** Between 2017 and 2020, relations among the Timișoara 2023 Association, the Municipality of Timișoara, and Timiș County were strained due to alleged political interference and funding allocation transparency issues. The Association faced accusations of lacking transparency in its operations and failing to provide clear accountability for received funds, resulting in public mistrust.

● **Relationship with the Ministry of Culture:** During this period, the Ministry of Culture was perceived as the actor that had the lesser contribution to the preparation of the program, towards the financial proposals submitted through the Bidbook for the Cultural Programme and the Investment Programme. In August 2016, at the time of Timișoara’s nomination as an ECoC for 2021, these were neither proposed by nor approved by the Ministry of Culture, and it was only in 2019 that the legal steps were first taken to materialize the financing of the Timișoara 2023 Programme from the state budget, which was to come into effect in 2021. Also, until 2022, the lack of a coherent Cultural Programme and a strategy in the preparatory period of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, assumed by an artistic coordination structure and in accordance with the Bidbook, could not meet the conditions for the granting of funding from the state budget. These conditions were met only after the follow-up meeting with the international jury on November 10, 2022 and their positive assessment, after which the first transfers for the Programme from the Ministry of Culture were made.

● **Relationship with the cultural operators:** the organizers were largely affected by these problems, without having the leverage to change the situation due to the lack of coordination and transparency on the part of the Association. Although it should have

acted as an effective intermediary between them and the funders, the Association encountered significant difficulties in securing the necessary funding in a timely manner and in clarifying its role, creating confusion.

All these challenges and strained relationships created a number of obvious problems in the preparation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme ahead of 2021, when the ECoC title was expected:

- **Lack of confidence** in the ability of the Timișoara 2023 Association to deliver a successful programme.
- **Lack of transparency** in the allocation of funds for the Cultural Programme to partners and unclear funding mechanisms.

In December 2020, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU approved the postponement of the title to 2023 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a decision that was retrospectively seen as a chance for Timișoara to achieve a successful ECoC programme.

2021—2022

In the period 2021-2022, the Timișoara 2023 Programme underwent a series of significant transformations, both in terms of its governance and the content of the projects of the Cultural Programme. This phase was marked by major challenges, but also by achievements that succeeded in putting the Programme back on a good track.

This period highlighted the many structural and management challenges that Timișoara faced in preparing for the title of ECoC. The decision to postpone the title and the legislative measures subsequently adopted provided the necessary breathing space and support to restructure the Programme and better prepare for 2023.

- **Failure to adapt the legal framework**, both at local and national level, to the multi-year funding needs and particularities of the programme.
- **Delayed investments in infrastructure.**
- **Unclear and unbalanced artistic content of the Cultural Programme in** relation to the aspirations of the Bidbook and its lack of correlation with the current and planned cultural infrastructure.
- **Insufficient and discouraging communication of the Timișoara 2023 Programme**, its development directions and its situation, both internally - among the various stakeholders, and externally - to the residents of Timișoara and the general public at national and international level.

These decisions were also supported by the recommendations made by the European Union's ECoC Programme Monitoring Committee, which in its penultimate monitoring report made a series of recommendations following its analysis of the years of preparation of the title between 2016 and 2020. The Committee appreciated the strong commitment of the main stakeholders in the implementation of the programme and recognized the efforts made in this respect. However, it reiterated its concerns regarding the management capacity and the ability to deliver the program, noting in particular a number of legal obstacles at national level regarding the allocation of public funds to support the programme.

Negotiations and important decisions during these years managed to establish a consensus among the main actors on the governance and the management of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. This consensus allowed the Programme to move forward, even in the context of financial uncertainties and political challenges.

The beginning of 2021 was marked by a deep mistrust on the part of cultural operators that the Timișoara 2023 Programme would run smoothly, amplified by uncertainty about when funding from the Ministry of Culture would become available. This perception was amplified by the impossibility of funding the Cultural Programme in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis and the interdiction to host and organize events with a public during the state of alert.

The change of local administration in December 2020 at the level of the Municipality of Timișoara marked a turning point in the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

The new administration adopted a different vision, and the Programme was restarted on multiple levels in order to make up for the lost time and to ensure the success of the project. Representatives of the Municipality of Timișoara identified a number of major challenges at that time which had to be addressed for the Programme to reach its goals.

- **Ensuring the functioning of essential processes for the successful delivery of the project:** one of the main objectives was to guarantee the functioning of processes essential to the successful delivery of the Program, without creating conflicts with other important stakeholders, such as the Timiș County and the Ministry of Culture.
- **Project stability and integrity:** The Municipality of Timișoara found it essential to stabilize the project and adopt measures to mitigate local institutional conflicts, thus ensuring the stability necessary for an efficient implementation.
- **Regaining trust in the project:** it was necessary to regain trust in the Programme, both from the artistic perspective and from the point of view of the residents and cultural operators.
- **Compliance with the proposals in the Bidbook:** Compliance with the initial proposals in the Bidbook was seen as an important obligation for the long-term

- impact of the Programme.
- To address these challenges, measures that were taken in 2021 included:
- **Creating a partnership and agreement among all stakeholders** to work together for the success of the Program;
 - **Assigning to the Centre for Projects a central role** in supporting the implementation of the Culture Programme; this was a crucial strategic move aimed at ensuring transparency and professionalization of the cultural funding process.
 - **Attracting capable human resources:** there was a strong focus on recruiting new talent, including the involvement of freelancers and young professionals, to complement the teams tasked with implementing the Programme in a very short timeframe.
 - **The Municipality of Timișoara initiated the mandate of the Curatorial Team**, selected following an international call. The Curatorial Team became responsible for the artistic coherence and strategic coordination of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.
 - **The Centre for Projects launched TM2023 RESTART as a transparent and competitive funding mechanism of the Timișoara 2023 Programme:** This programme aimed at the flexible development of cultural projects in line with the concept guidelines in the Bidbook, providing a basis for the qualitative and pragmatic selection of projects.
- In the spring of 2022, the situation was still uncertain and a climate of mistrust and frustration was prevalent. Cultural operators faced unpredictability and funding challenges, which affected their motivation and confidence in the success of the programme. At this stage it was necessary to adopt a network-like governance model, which involved all key actors in a system based on co-dependencies and complementarities. This model was recognized and accepted by the European Commission as an essential step to ensure transparency and efficiency in the implementation of the programme.
- One of the important strategic moves was **the redefinition of the governance of the Timișoara 2023 Programme** towards a structure based on complementarities and decentralization, a process completed in June 2022. This included redefining the

role of the Timișoara 2023 Association. The decision was taken to narrow the role of the Association to the activities of managing funds from sponsorships, developing a volunteering programme and developing the communication and promotion of the Programme, along with monitoring the compliance of the evolution of the Programme with the initial vision and guidelines from the Bidbook (by checking how funds from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture, were being channelled through funding programmes that contained quality criteria related to the ECoC Program), while the responsibility for most of the roles that were related to supporting the implementation of the Cultural Programme was transferred to the Centre for Projects. Timiș County, through CECART, following the model developed by the Centre for Projects, also launched transparent and competitive funding mechanisms with funds from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture, thus ensuring continuity and consistency in the way resources were allocated and managed.

As things started to become clearer and a better sense of direction for the Programme began to emerge, the **local community became more and more engaged**. There were clear signs that the local community was beginning to act, feeling that they could actively contribute to the project’s success. This involvement was crucial.

Also, until 2022, the lack of a coherent Cultural Programme and of a strategy recognized by a curatorial team, as stated in the Bidbook, could not meet the conditions for the granting of funding from the state budget. The main conditions for funding by GEO 42/2019 with amendments and additions of June 2022, were according to art. VI:

(6) The update of the Bidbook may take place under the conditions of compliance with the basic criteria of the European Commission on artistic independence.

(7) Amendments agreed by the parties under the conditions of para. (6) shall be subject to consultation of the ECoC monitoring panel in accordance with the applicable procedures.

(8) After consultation with the ECoC monitoring panel, the updated Bibdook shall be approved by order of the Minister of Culture.

These conditions were met only after the monitoring meeting with the International Jury on November

10, 2022, and shortly after the first transfers for the Timișoara 2023 Programme from the Ministry of Culture were made. After this date, the Ministry of Culture fully transferred the allocations for the ECoC Investments Programme to the Municipality of Timișoara and the Timiș County for projects that had an immediate budget execution, because they were settled retroactively, as required by law.

The period 2021-2022 is, in the perception of the organizers (IRES. Evolution of the cultural scene, 2024), an important success for the cultural scene in Timișoara and Romania. The possibilities for audience development, the use of spaces, especially unconventional ones, the creation of sustainable partnerships, as well as the access to funding opportunities were the main elements through which the organizers were able to carry out large-scale projects and events and improve the cultural offer of the city. Moreover, in terms of audience development and engagement, the organizers claim to have implemented strategies to attract and develop the audience to a greater extent than in the period 2017-2020 (IRES. Audience Engagement, 2024).

The climate of mistrust and the financial challenges were countered by a strong commitment to transparency, collaboration and adherence to the principles set out in the Bidbook which allowed the Programme to develop at an accelerated pace to produce a strengthened Cultural Programme in 2023.

These two years were decisive for the Timișoara 2023 Programme. Through the decisions taken, the Programme was relaunched and restructured, preparing the city for the year in which it would exercise the title of ECoC; the organizers were given the resources and the freedom to manage their projects, along with the responsibility to ensure their quality and their smooth running.

The period 2021-2022 was one of transition and adaptation, in which the Timișoara 2023 Programme managed to overcome the initial obstacles and propose a functional working model, which in some aspects can even be considered a model of good practice.

2023

The dynamics of governance in 2023 was characterized by a de-escalation of institutional conflicts and competition, respectively by a focus on cultural production, communication and the securing of the functioning of the processes necessary for the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

The Municipality of Timișoara consolidated the implementation of the Core Cultural Programme beginning in 2021, and then in 2022. The launch of the Onboard funding programme at the end of 2022, with multiannual financing from the local budget of the city, gave the organizers the opportunity to prepare a consistent programme of activities for 2023, starting from the first months of the year. During 2023, several funding programmes were launched and implemented by the Centre for Projects, CECART and Timiș County, programmes that complemented, expanded and further strengthened the Cultural Programme, mainly with funds from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture.

In spite of all the financial and implementation efforts made, the Cultural Programme had to face the effects of the financial difficulties of the previous years, especially due to the delays in ensuring an adequate legal framework and in meeting all the

conditions required for contracting and using funds from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture. This has created difficulties for the organizers in the preparation of large-scale events (exhibitions, festivals) in a very short period of time, or of complex projects that require clear successive stages in order to develop towards a valuable goal. Moreover, the work of designing new projects and applying for grants in a period of intensive cultural production put organizational teams under pressure.

At the end of the year, in order to ensure a strategically capitalized legacy, Timiș County adopted the Timiș County Cultural Strategy for the period 2023-2027. The aim of this strategy is to enable the continuity and sustainability of cultural initiatives beyond the end of 2023, with a focus on the long-term development of the cultural sector in the county.

The Municipality of Timișoara has also initiated the preparation of a Timișoara 2023 Legacy Plan, which will be integrated into the city’s future cultural strategy from 2025 onwards, reinforcing the positive impact of the programme on the city and reaffirming the vision around the values of access, identity, engagement and connection.

2024

The support of the local authorities, appreciated by most of the organizers, is an expression of their commitment to the development of the local cultural scene and to the promotion of the European dimension. They valued the support for the continuation of the completed projects, the efficient management of the funding sources by the Centre for Projects, the improvement of the communication with the Municipality of Timișoara and the Timiș County.

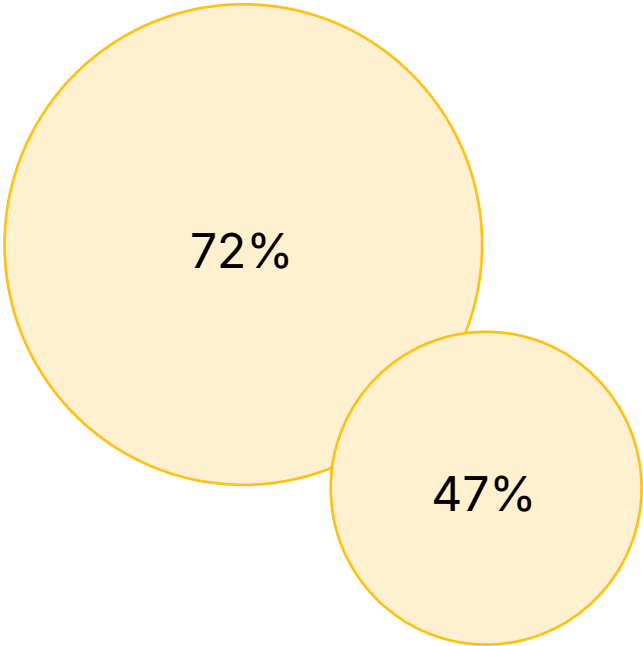
Also, the possibility of using funds from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture, for the implementation of cultural projects in the framework of the Timișoara 2023 Legacy Program, and by the Timișoara 2023 Association for the communication of the Timișoara 2023 Programme in 2024, made this post-title year one with a consistent volume of events and an important public promotion for the ECoC.

According to the organizers, the commitment of the authorities, adequate resources and a greater openness on their part to the diversity of themes addressed in the development/conceptualization of cultural products are necessary to ensure the long-term continuity of the projects.

To this end, in 2024, the drafting of the Legacy Plan of the city for the Timișoara 2023 Programme continued, proposing a list of the necessary measures in the area of responsibility of the Municipality of Timișoara and the local cultural institutions, in order to ensure the continuity of the positive effects of the Programme on the city and its cultural life. Through the Legacy Plan, the Municipality of Timișoara, the local scene and other stakeholders will ensure the continuity of positive results and actions, in line with the vision of the Bidbook, for which the legacy of the Programme was essential.

The vast majority of the organizers (90%) consider that the Timișoara 2023 Programme has had a positive impact on the Timișoara community, for its cultural scene in general, the independent cultural scene in particular, on the development of the city and the increase of an access to culture for its local inhabitants (IRES. Evolution of the Cultural Scene,

2024). The most frequently mentioned positive effects were the **diversification of the cultural offer** and the **audience engagement** (72% each), the **development of the scene and cultural resources** (47%).



Some of the organisers made a commitment to continue in 2024 to address some of the issues that were important throughout the programme, such as social inclusion and access to culture for vulnerable groups (e.g. disabled people or people on low incomes), as key missions of their events.

Moreover, in 2024 there were dedicated funding programmes for projects that in different ways continued or amplified the positive effects of the program: the Legacy funding program, managed by the Centre for Projects, and the Timișoara.Next funding program, managed by CECART, both with funds from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture. In addition, a number of other funding programmes launched in 2023 continued in 2024, such as the projects funded by the Creative Schools program, creative scholarships, mobilities, as well as the activities related to the Power Station component and the organization of the *City Celebration* platform-event.

90% of the organizers consider that the Timișoara 2023 Programme has had a positive impact on the Timișoara community.

↓ Neverending Timișoara 2023, photo: Florin Gherasim



3

Governance



Collaborative decision-making,
coordination and management

Strategic principles and directions

Since 2022, the Timișoara 2023 Programme has been managed collaboratively, in a network formed by the local public administrations of the city and county of Timișoara, the Centre for Projects and CECART (public institutions subordinated to the Municipality of Timișoara and Timiș County, respectively), the Ministry of Culture, the Timișoara 2023 Association and the Curatorial Team.

Within the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the 2022-2024 period was defined by a governance system divided into three main structures: the artistic governance structure, the administrative and political governance structure and the implementation structure. The three structures functioned in a complementary way, intersecting in those situations where decisions to be taken involved the adaptation of the specific legal framework or the creation of funding mechanisms for the Cultural Programme.

● **The artistic governance structure** was responsible for shaping and implementing the artistic vision of the Programme. Its main role was to ensure the coherence and artistic quality of the projects included in the program, while maintaining the initial commitment to create a sustainable cultural framework with developed capacities and a significant impact on the local community. The Curatorial Team had the artistic leadership and freedom to define the strategic directions of the Cultural Programme, in line with the vision of the Timișoara 2023 Programme in the Bidbook. The Municipality of Timișoara insisted that this artistic leadership be officially recognized by law, thus giving it a guarantee of legitimacy and recognition from all actors involved, including the Timiș County and the Ministry of Culture. This was essential in order to ensure that the artistic vision of the Programme is maintained and respected at all decision-making levels and by all actors.

● **The administrative and political governance structure** was responsible for securing the financial resources and establishing the regulatory framework necessary to implement the Programme. This involved the political will of local and county councillors and members of the Romanian Parliament, together with representatives of the local administrations of the

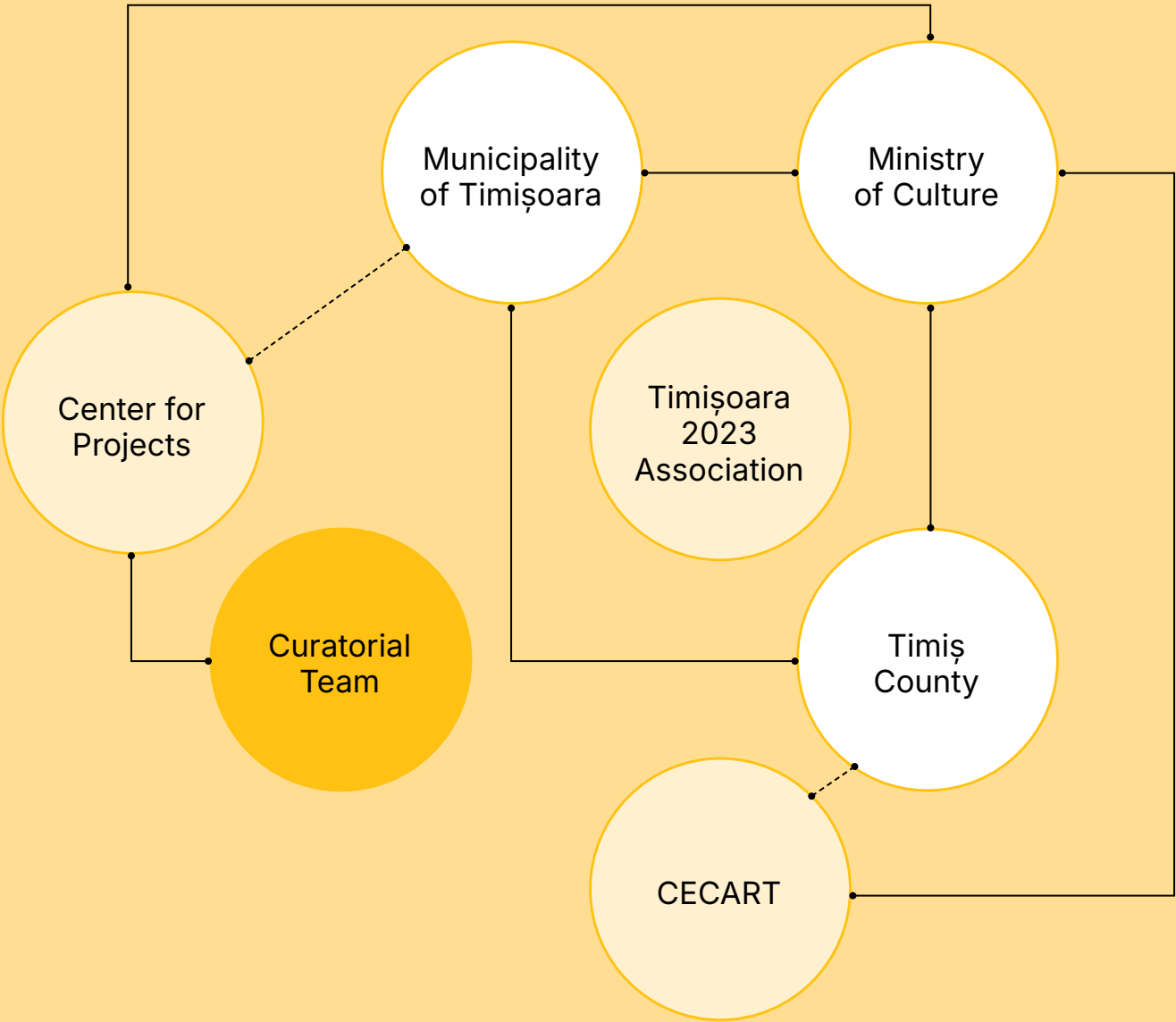
city and county of Timiș and the Ministry of Culture. An essential aspect of this structure was to maintain the financial commitment and to create the legal framework for access to resources in a responsible and transparent way. This framework was essential to ensure coherence and efficiency in the allocation of funds from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture.

● **The implementation structure** was responsible for transposing the decisions taken by the artistic, administrative and political governance structures in order to ensure that the Programme was implemented in line with the objectives. This primarily involved the Centre for Projects, with multiple key roles, from managing the vast majority of public resources for the Cultural Programme, to organizing events with a representative role, monitoring and evaluating the results and impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and others. Then, on behalf of Timiș County, CECART, had the role of managing some of the funding programmes with funds from the state budget, to complement and expand the Cultural Programme. Last but not least, the Timișoara 2023 Association played an important role in the implementation of the Program, carrying out the communication and promotion of the Programme, volunteer management, private fundraising and monitoring the compliance with the initial vision of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

The relationship between them was crucial to the success of the Programme: the artistic structure was responsible for maintaining artistic coherence, while the administrative and political structure ensured the funding, the legal framework and the compliance with the use of resources according to the Bidbook, confirming that they were responsibly and strategically allocated according to the specific criteria of the ECoC Programmes and to the objectives of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The implementing structures found practical solutions to transpose the decisions taken by the artistic, administrative and political structures and made them effective, also providing feedback on the progress of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and recommendations for new decisions.

Actors of the governance structure

- The artistic governance structure
- The implementation structure
- The administrative and political governance structure



Lessons learned in the relation between artistic and administrative governance structures in a European Capital of Culture:

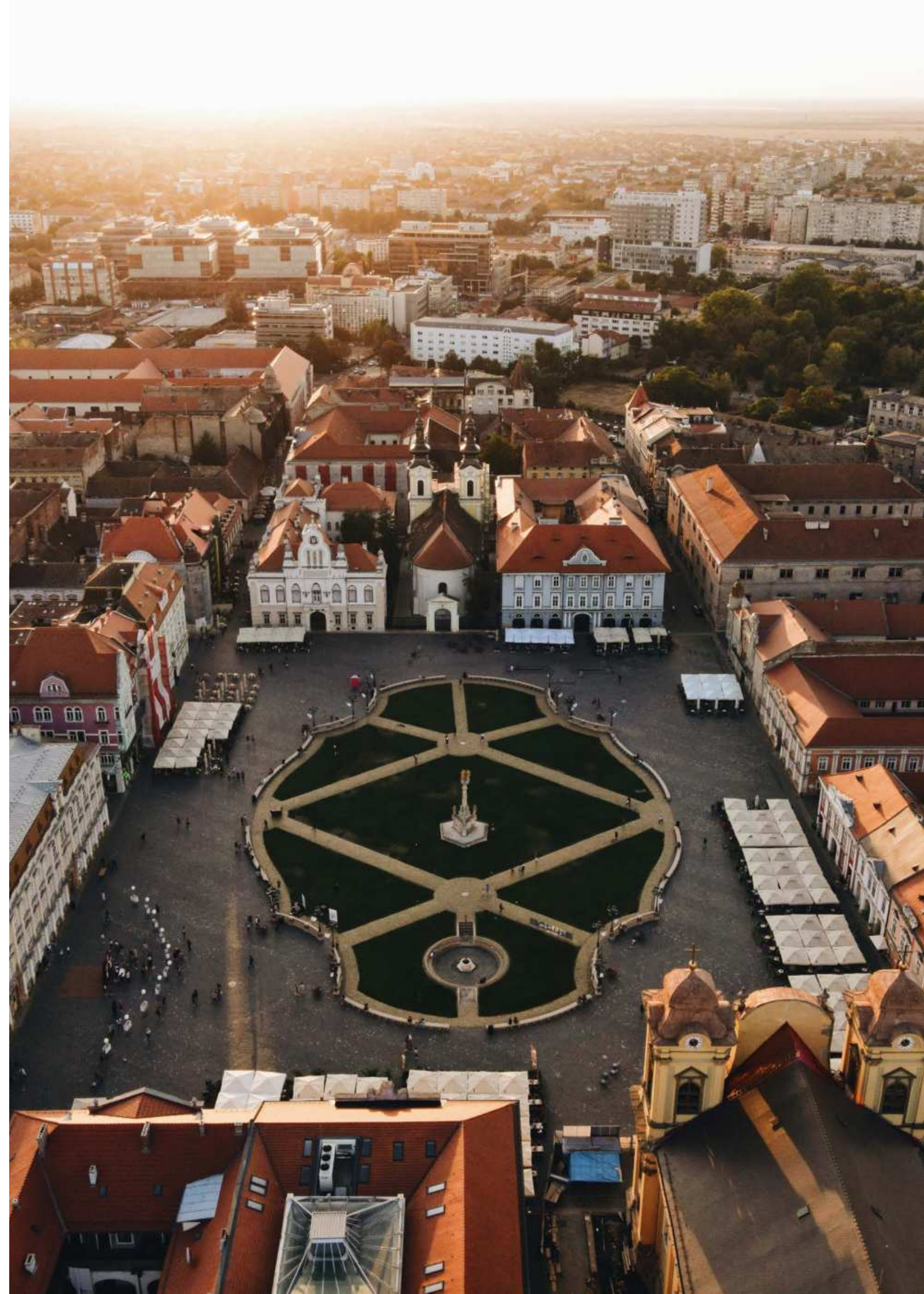
● The local presence of the Curatorial Team:

although the team included recognized and appreciated professionals, who managed to ensure the artistic coherence and direction of the initial vision of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the scarcity of their physical presence in the city created certain difficulties in the communication and collaboration with local organizers. The case of those members of the Curatorial Team who managed to be more frequently present in the city showed that this facilitated more effective interactions and increased the impact of their presence.

● **Avoiding the concentration of power:** The results highlighted the need to implement governance systems that prevent the concentration of power in one place, one institution, or a small group of people. Democratic collaborative structures with clearly defined roles and transparency in decision-making processes are essential to maintain balance and avoid the risks of power grabbing in the management of the Programme. Such a structure and way of working also has the advantage of reducing the overall impact, at Programme level, of problematic management of one of the implementing entities.

● **The importance of consolidated governance:** The members of the Curatorial Team worked coherently and were supported in the proposed directions by the specialists who have technically designed the documentation for the funding mechanisms for cultural projects, as well as by the production teams of the events with a representative role, on behalf of the Centre for Projects. The stability of such relationships between curators and managers, as well as a clear and logical funding timetable, which is geared towards the construction of a Cultural Programme with a well-defined impact, are crucial for the success of ECoC Programmes.

● In the relationship with the organizers, **the implementation structures were also relying on a decentralized governance model**, giving each of them degrees of freedom in the development of artistic and cultural content. Organizers were able to define their own projects and seek partnerships, although there were suggestions and guidance from the strategic level. This decentralized approach led to the development of a network and specialized expertise within the network, increased a sense of ownership, allowed for a diversity of cultural initiatives and a greater responsiveness to local and international needs and aspirations.



Structure and key roles

In the period 2021-2024, the governance of the Timișoara 2023 Programme required the strengthening of different roles, carried out by distinct institutions. The successful coordination among them, in order to achieve the Program's objectives, was the approach pursued in practice.

- The **Municipality of Timișoara**, the **Timiș County** and the **Ministry of Culture** were the three main actors involved in the discussions and decision-making that led to the design of the national and local level regulatory frame. These institutions worked together to define the legal conditions that shaped the programme, by ensuring that all decisions were made jointly and that there was consensus on the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. These institutions also secured the vast majority of the public funds needed to implement the Cultural Programme and to make the needed investments in infrastructure.
- An important aspect of the change in governance in the last years of the preparation for 2023 was the redefinition of the role of the **Timișoara 2023**

↓ Opening Timișoara 2023. Chronic Desire - Sete Cronică. RomaMoMA – Sead Kazanxhiu, Small house, home sweet home (2014), photo: Alex Todirică, 2023



Association. From 2022 onwards, its responsibilities were oriented towards cross-cutting components: communication and promotion, volunteering, raising private funds for the Cultural Programme and directing them mainly to the organizers, formally monitoring the compliance with the vision and criteria on an ECoC and from the Bidbook.

- The **Centre for Projects** had key responsibilities such as coordinating the Programme, hosting the Curatorial Team, designing and managing the vast majority of the Cultural Programme's funding programmes and some of the essential venues for the events.
- **CECART** also managed some of the funding programmes for the Cultural Programme.
- The cultural actions of hundreds of **local, national and international organizers** have made the Timișoara 2023 Programme a reality for residents, tourists and creators.

From the public policy documents and from the analysis of the complete lists of tasks of the authorities, institutions and organizations included in the governance structure of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, a comprehensive list of general and specific tasks resulted. The review of these tasks did not identify any roles and responsibilities necessary for the management of the Timișoara 2023 Programme that were not assigned.

Each entity had clearly defined responsibilities and overlapping of roles was generally avoided, which helped to streamline the processes and implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. However, there were some similar responsibilities that in practice became complementary.

- For example, both the Curatorial Team and the Timișoara 2023 Association, as well as the representative(s) of the Ministry of Culture, had responsibilities related to **ensuring that the main commitments in the 2016 Bidbook were met**. Although the tasks related to compliance with the various elements of the Bidbook were somewhat different, they resulted in similar concrete tasks for the three entities. While the Curatorial Team was consulted in the elaboration of the broad themes and objectives of the open calls related to the open calls for projects, since it was responsible for the “artistic coherence” of the program, the Timișoara 2023 Association had the task of approving these documents, since it was responsible to ensure the compliance with the “main vision/concepts of the bid”. The Ministry of Culture had to approve the same documents, as it was responsible for the overall monitoring of the implementation of the Cultural Programme and the Investment Programme and their correlation (overlapping with the responsibility for coherence of the Curatorial Team), and for the compliance with the criteria in the Bidbook (overlapping with the tasks of the Timișoara 2023 Association).

Other tasks of the governance structures of the Timișoara 2023 Programme that overlap, either in terms of legal attribution or in practice, are related to: communication and promotion, monitoring, international relations:

- The **communication** of the Cultural Programme was one of the main areas of responsibility assigned

to the Timișoara 2023 Association following the legal changes of 2022. For the representative events such as the *Opening of Timișoara 2023*, *Timișoara 2023. City Celebration* and the Closing Event (*Neverending Timișoara 2023*), the communication efforts of the Association were complemented by those of the Centre for Projects, which was also responsible for their organization. Moreover, the cultural operators supported by the Centre for Projects and CECART had specific contractual obligations related to the promotion of their projects in the context of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. To conclude, the communication and promotion activities were carried out by almost all the structures involved in the management of the Program, and did not remain the exclusive responsibility of the Timișoara 2023 Association.

- The **monitoring** of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was the responsibility of many actors. The representative of the Ministry of Culture monitored the internal and international promotion of the Program, as did also the Timișoara 2023 Association. Also, the Centre for Projects and CECART had a legitimate interest in monitoring all the activities financed through the calls for projects. Moreover, the Municipality of Timișoara, through the Centre for Projects, undertook the monitoring and evaluation of the entire program, in accordance with the recommendations of the European Commission, while the Timișoara 2023 Association aimed exclusively at “ensuring the compliance of the implementing structures with the main vision/concepts of the Candidature”. The preparation of the last progress report to the European Commission, which was sent in October 2022, was also coordinated by the Centre for Projects.

The main challenges in ensuring a coherent and effective governance of the Timișoara 2023 Programme were:

- **Achieving political consensus:** one of the biggest challenges was to avoid political deadlocks that could have hindered the ultimate outcome of the Programme. There was constant tension between different political forces, and this tension generated many conflicts at the local level. Achieving a political consensus was considered a major success and crucial for the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

● **The delay of the funds from the Ministry of Culture**, which came in installments from November 2022 until December 2023, had a major impact on the practice of the organizers of the Cultural Programme, primarily difficulties in implementing projects in a very short time and the dealing with the pressure of disbursements and application processes in a period of cultural production. The late deadlines for these transfers have multiple causes, starting with the creation of a first clear commitment for funds from the state budget for the Cultural Programme and the Investment Programme only in 2019. In the case of the funds for cultural infrastructure, the short period available for the realization of works required the modification of the initial list, which contained large infrastructure projects that could not be realized in time. In this regard, the list of objectives in the Investment Programme fluctuated and was adapted depending on the specific needs of the Cultural Programme, at the proposal of the Municipality of Timișoara and the Timiș County, while the Ministry of Culture set as the only requirement to use these assets in the context of the Cultural Programme.

● **Infrastructure investments** were also affected by the late allocation of funds. Infrastructure projects require complex procedures, such as the preparation of technical projects and public procurements, which cannot be completed efficiently in a single budget year. Regarding the implementation of infrastructure investments, the Timiș County, together with the Municipality of Timișoara and the Ministry of Culture, managed to make legal amendments that allowed the extension of the deadlines for the implementation of investments until December 31, 2024, in order to mitigate the effects of the delays in the preparatory period.

Governance. Collaborative decision-making, coordination and management Strategic principles and directions

● **Development of a legal framework appropriate to the needs of the Timișoara 2023 Programme:** a notable case in point is the long process of establishing a multi-year budgeting system and a clear flow of funds from the state budget to the local budget and further on to cultural operators, which took four years to complete. On the other hand, although finalized late, the creation of the first multiannual public budgeting system for cultural projects in Romania was an essential step to ensure the stability and predictability of cultural financing and is a legacy of this Programme at national level for all cultural funding processes.

● **Respecting the fidelity of the Cultural Programme in relation to the vision in the Bidbook against the need for flexibility in updating and expanding it:** fidelity to the Bidbook has been a constant dilemma as the City was experiencing a cultural effervescence, ideas, projects and new organizers. It was necessary to maintain a balance between programme coherence and convergence and flexibility to incorporate new initiatives.

● **Attracting the right professionals for key roles:** securing the human capacity to implement the programme was another major challenge. It was essential to create a sense of trust and emulation among the community to ensure the success of the programme. The involvement of experienced professionals and the creation of a collaborative environment were essential to overcome this challenge.

→ The Nursery. 1306 Plants for Timișoara, photo: Flavius Neamciuc



Responsibilities of key actors

The performance of these roles and an assessment of the challenges, results and lessons learned by each stakeholder are presented below from their perspective as results of the qualitative evaluation that was conducted in 2024.

(Encore Research SRL, 2024)

Municipality of Timișoara

Since 2017, the Municipality of Timișoara has been the main funder and supporter of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, and through the City's Long Term Cultural Strategy 2014-2024, it has provided the public policy framework needed for the evolution of the Programme.

Since 2021, the Municipality of Timișoara has played a central role not only in funding, but also in finding solutions to a number of challenges that have affected the management of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. These challenges have had an impact both on the strategic direction of the Programme and on the way it was perceived. In addition to the general challenges outlined at the beginning of the chapter, the specific major challenges faced in 2021 were the following:

● **Funding of the Timișoara 2023 Programme:** the Municipality of Timișoara had to manage the financing of the Programme in a difficult economic context marked by inherited debts. Moreover, the process of revision and adoption of the new legal framework for the financing, which was to be realized by means of a transfer from the state budget to the local budgets, was long and complex and was only completed in November 2022. Up until the end of 2024, technical details were still updated (deadlines,

new programmes for the efficient use of the whole budget for the Cultural Programme, etc.), which showed the readiness and flexibility necessary for the smooth running of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The transfer of the funds from the state budget to the local budgets and their management mainly by the Centre for Projects was considered the most efficient solution to ensure the smooth flow of funding and implementation of the programme.

● **Ensuring the balance between artistic independence and the responsibility for the implementation of the Programme with public funds:** There have been constant tensions between the need to ensure artistic independence and the responsibility of the Municipality of Timișoara for the management of public funds. Public criticism and controversy surrounding certain artistic events put additional pressure on the local administration. The Municipality of Timișoara had to find a balance between granting artistic freedom and managing the expectations of the local cultural scene and residents regarding the ECoC Programme.

The main achievements of this period for the activities of the Municipality of Timișoara were:

● **Developing a public institution, based on a strong professional ecosystem,** to take on an important part of the tasks needed to develop the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The reformulation of the role of the Centre for Projects involved not only the attraction of professionals from various cultural and artistic fields, but also the creation of a team capable of managing the complexity of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The team formed within the Centre for Projects has become one of the most competent and capable cultural promotion institutions in Romania. It has attracted professionals both from Timișoara and from other parts of the country, contributing to the quality of cultural programmes in the city.

● After a period marked by conflict and mistrust, **Timișoara has managed to regain the trust of both the general public and the local scene.** This was essential for the success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and has contributed to a general mobilization around the project. The increased involvement of the community and the local scene led to a diverse and high quality Cultural Programme, which also gained the trust of the private sector, which contributed with important sponsorships.

● **The creation and operationalization of the Centre for Projects** was a crucial step in the decentralization of the management of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The Centre became the main mechanism through which grants were awarded to cultural projects, ensuring transparency and fairness in the allocation of resources to the organizers who created and developed the Cultural Programme. This decentralization has contributed to the professionalization of the management of public funds for culture.

● **Hosting a Curatorial Team:** this was a strategic decision of the Municipality of Timișoara, which enabled the management of the artistic complexity of the Programme. The Curatorial Team, selected through a competitive process, involved local and international professionals. It ensured the artistic coherence of the Programme and contributed to the realization of valuable cultural projects. The team also ensured the strategic coordination of the Cultural Programme, by identifying measures that targeted cross-cutting objectives, such as making cultural events accessible to people with disabilities, strengthening cultural education and mediation across the Program, and increasing the communication and promotion capacities.

● **The modernization of the network of public cinemas in Timișoara** was one of the concrete objectives of the Municipality of Timișoara within the Programme. This infrastructure project, largely completed, contributed to expanding the city's cultural spaces. The newly opened cinemas attracted an audience which exceeded all expectations and has continued to do so since the Programme ended.

● **Organizing and carrying out the representative events of the Timișoara 2023 Programme** (the *Opening, Timișoara 2023: City Celebration, Neverending Timișoara 2023*) by the Centre for Projects was a success. These events demonstrated the capacity of Timișoara to host major cultural events and strengthened its reputation as a cultural reference in Romania.

● **The contribution of the local budget of the City of Timișoara played a pivotal role,** accounting for the largest share of the financing of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. This significant contribution of the Municipality of Timișoara was essential to ensure the needed resources for the successful implementation of the core program, which represented the essential commitment of the City to the European Union through the Bidbook.

● **The opening of several spaces for the community,** managed by the Centre for Projects, for the benefit of organizations and individuals in the city and elsewhere, on the basis of a simple application procedure, free of charge, amplified the cultural offer. Spaces with different profiles, located across the city, hosted an impressive number of events with large and diverse audiences in 2023 and 2024, in the context of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. Beyond the number of participants, however, the most important aspect of the *Spaces for the Community* approach is their capacity to strengthen the local cultural scene by hosting events that otherwise would not meet a local audience. The access to these spaces is one of the most important elements of the legacy of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

● **Investing in thorough evaluation studies of the Timișoara 2023 Programme,** focusing on the lessons learned from the city's experience with the ECoC, and in developing a **Legacy Plan** that clarifies and identifies the actions needed to capitalize on the positive outcomes and impacts of the Timișoara 2023 Programme towards its core principles and values: access, inclusion, identity, diversity and connection.

Timiș County

The Timiș County has committed itself to support the Timișoara 2023 Programme by ensuring the financing of a part of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme and of the Investment Programme in the Cultural Infrastructure. Like the Municipality of Timișoara, the Timiș County managed through CECART, a subordinate institution, a part of the funds allocated by the Ministry of Culture for the Cultural Programme, through grant schemes. It was also in charge, directly or through subordinate institutions, of the management of the funds for investments in the related cultural infrastructure from the same source. The role of cultural institutions was important, as they provided, directly or through partnerships, part of the necessary resources for the projects proposed in the Cultural Programme, and they managed the budget for infrastructure investments, especially for improved facilities.

The main specific challenges of the 2021-2023 preparatory period, in addition to the general ones identified at the beginning of the chapter, were

- **Attracting sufficient qualified staff for the needs derived from the role in the governance of the Timișoara 2023 Programme:** One of the biggest challenges for the Timiș County was the insufficient number of qualified professionals, as it did not manage to hire enough specialized personnel for CECART, which was responsible for managing some of the funding programmes dedicated to the Timișoara 2023 Programme, and it had to rely solely on the existing staff, with only a small number of collaborators. This lack of staff put pressure on their ability to effectively implement the funding programmes.
- **Growing the capacity of subordinate institutions to implement large-scale projects:** The pressure was particularly high on the Timișoara National Museum of Art (MNArt), which had to manage large-scale events without having the necessary capacity in all the roles required to organize exhibitions. This created challenges for both Timiș County and the MNArt. The difficulties were overcome through partnerships with competent private organizations, such as Art Encounters Foundation or Salonul de Proiecte, which

took on some of the implementation challenges, but also through a high willingness of the existing teams to learn and develop their skills, which was seen as a long-term investment for the institution.

Key achievements:

- **Strategic financial contribution to major events:** Timiș County fulfilled the commitment made in the Bidbook by allocating a large part of its funds to the organization of major cultural events, such as the exhibitions organized by the Timișoara National Museum of Art.
- **Investments in facilities and equipment:** Faced with the challenges of time and the regulatory framework, Timiș County chose to direct the funds allocated for infrastructure to investments in facilities and equipment necessary for the cultural institutions under its subordination, which allowed the Cultural Programme to be carried out in good conditions, demonstrating flexibility and the ability to adapt to difficult conditions.
- With the elaboration of the Cultural Strategy for Timiș County 2023-2027, **Timiș County has assumed the responsibility of supporting the continuation of cultural initiatives and the legacy of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.** This involves not only maintaining the financial support for major cultural events, such as festivals and exhibitions at the National Museum of Art Timișoara, but also ensuring the continuity in the rhythm of these events, thus contributing to the consolidation of the city's cultural offer.

Ministry of Culture

During the period 2017-2024, the Ministry of Culture played several key roles in the development and implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme:

- **Financing and monitoring:** the Ministry of Culture had the role of funding the Programme, with funds from the state budget: in the period 2017-2020 directly to the Timișoara 2023 Association, and later by transfer to the local budgets of the Municipality of Timișoara and Timiș County. Between 2022-2024, the Timișoara 2023 Association monitored the allocation of these in accordance with the Bidbook. In particular, the Ministry ensured that the criteria set out in the Bidbook and in the specific legislation on the funding of cultural projects were respected.
- **Facilitation:** The Ministry sought to facilitate the collaboration between local authorities and to solve possible administrative obstacles.
- **Legislation and implementation:** The Ministry had the mandate to develop and amend, in cooperation with the local authorities, the required legal framework for the implementation of the Programme. This process encountered numerous difficulties, including some reluctance from other ministries such as the Ministry of Finance, which significantly delayed the transfer of funds and jeopardized the implementation of the Programme.
- **Institutional support:** the transfer of responsibilities and funds from the Ministry to the local authorities was a complex process, marked by delays and administrative difficulties, but for which considerable efforts were made, leading to a positive outcome in the end for the realization of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

The funds from the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture, could effectively be used for the Cultural Programme and the Investment Programme only from November 2022 onwards and, through the funding programmes launched, reached the organizers only in the first part of 2023.

The main challenge faced by the Ministry of Culture prior to 2019 was the unclear and inadequate

legislative framework for the funding of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, which at that time prevented the development of the Programme according to the stages set out in the Bidbook and required negotiations and adjustments. Later on, the delays were due both to the direct effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and to the difficulties in meeting all the conditions required by law for contracting and using the funds for the Cultural Programme or operationalizing the provisions concerning the implementation of infrastructure investments.

The Ministry of Culture played an essential role in securing state budget funding and monitoring its use for the Cultural Programme, the Investment Programme, the Timișoara Programme communication, the directing of private funds attracted by the Timișoara 2023 Association to the organizers of the Programme, the volunteer and communication programmes. It has also been formally the guarantor of compliance with the criteria in the Bidbook and the actor responsible for communicating with other public, local, national or international authorities in support of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

Through the efforts made since 2021 to adjust the legislation and facilitate the transfer of responsibilities to local authorities, the Programme received the needed support, complementary to local efforts, and was able to fully move towards a positive end. Also, the flexibility of the Ministry of Culture to adapt the governance structure and the periods of spending of funds for the Timișoara 2023 Programme in relation to the needs resulting from the implementation between 2022-2024 led to a good outcome. For example, the extension of the period for the use of funds for the implementation of the Cultural Programme until December 2024 allowed the launch of two funding programmes dedicated to the legacy of the Programme, and the implementation of the Creative Schools and the Mobility programmes in this important year for the consolidation of positive effects. Also, the communication of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, carried out by the Timișoara 2023 Association mainly with funds from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture, was carried out throughout 2024.

The open and supportive attitude of the Ministry of Culture in this time-frame made the Programme generate a stronger emulation in the national cultural scene, reinforced positive local results and ensured the promotion of the Cultural Programme to a local, national and international audience. In addition, the work of the Ministry of Culture, together with

Timișoara 2023 Association - European Capital of Culture

Timișoara 2023 Association was founded in 2011 by a group of 63 people, prominent representatives of the public and independent cultural scene, academics, journalists, business professionals, public opinion leaders and citizens. It is a non-governmental, non-profit, apolitical and independent organization of public utility, with a cultural and educational purpose.

Since its establishment, the Association has aimed to prepare the City's Bidbook for the ECoC title and subsequently to carry out the Programme.

The Association's governance model presented major challenges in the first years after winning the Title, and with a loss of credibility and internal tensions culminating in 2021, its attributions were reduced in 2022.

● Between 2017 and 2020, amid a funding crisis, caused by the delay of public funding necessary for the development of the Cultural Programme and the inadequate legal framework for carrying out a project of such a scale through a non-governmental organization, the organizational capacity of the Association was affected. In addition, these years were marked by conflicts and tensions, difficulties in attracting and retaining qualified staff, lack of transparency in artistic and managerial direction and decisions, and, finally, the loss of trust of the local scene.

the teams of local authorities, to change the legal framework for public funding for cultural projects, which was necessary for the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, has been a real contribution to improving the framework for cultural projects in Romania.

● From 2022 onwards, the Timișoara 2023 Association was given fewer responsibilities and became accountable for some of the cross-cutting components of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, such as communication, attracting private funds and directing them to the organizers, the volunteer programme, and monitoring the compliance with the vision in the Bidbook and the correlation between the Cultural Programme and the Investment Programme.

The significant achievements of the Timișoara 2023 Association in the period 2022-2024, reported in the qualitative research, relate to the development of a robust volunteer programme that has contributed to the overall success of the Timișoara 2023 events and is now an example and model of good practice for other European Capitals of Culture, the attraction of significant private funding and the development of the communication platform Timisoara2023.eu with bilingual content (Romanian and English). Moreover, the way in which the cultural offer of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was promoted was a strong point in the visibility of the events: 81% of the organizers described the promotion of the Cultural Programme to the public as good and very good.

Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara

In July 2020, the Centre for Cultural Projects and Administration of the Legacy of the European Capital of Culture of the Municipality of Timișoara was formally established under the Municipality of Timișoara. The institution was reorganized and effectively started its activity in March 2021 as the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara.

Initially, the role of the Centre for Projects was **limited to the grant-management component for the Cultural Programme**, but it later transposed the vision of the local administration and became the main driving force behind the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, by taking on multiple roles.

A crucial step in the development of the Centre for Projects was the **construction of competitive funding mechanisms**. These mechanisms included the development of the documentation for the funding programmes and the selection of independent evaluators, specialists in the field, other than the staff of the institution or the local administration, thus ensuring a fair, transparent and competency-based process.

The governance model and the rigors implemented by the Centre for Projects had a *spillover* effect on other local government institutions, such as CECART, which in turn adopted these standards in the funding programmes they launched with funds from the state budget for the benefit of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

Another important role was that of organizing events with a representative role (the *Opening* Event of the Cultural Programme, the platform-event *Timișoara 2023.City Celebration* and the closing event, *Neverending Timișoara 2023*), which put the Centre for Projects in this dual position, on the one hand as an institution that builds funding mechanisms and transposes public policies for culture at the local government level and, at the same time, as an organizer of large-scale cultural events.

The establishment and hosting of the Curatorial Team was another crucial task of the Centre for Projects.

Its role was to restructure the program, to make an assessment of the status, to analyze at the beginning of its mandate the commitment of the organizers and the stage of the projects compared to what was programmed in the Bidbook. The analysis report drafted by the Curatorial Team was the basis on which the development of the Cultural Programme in the period 2022-2024 was built, including the funding schemes to realise, consolidate and expand it.

Beyond hosting the Curatorial Team, organising the representative events of the Programme and being the main funding agency, with budgets from the local and state budget through the Ministry of Culture, the Centre for Projects has also taken on the following roles:

● **Coordination of the Power Station component**, cultural sector capacity building program, networking, training, scholarships.

● **Active involvement in amending the legal framework** for the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and project-based cultural funding in general.

● Strengthening and expanding the Cultural Programme through selection sessions, whose objectives, thematic areas and funding mechanisms were developed **in collaboration with the Curatorial Team**.

● **Monitoring and evaluation of results and impact** across the Programme.

● **Engage in relevant international relations, especially with other European Capitals of Culture.**

● **Coordinate the valorization and strengthening of the Program's legacy.**

● **Report to the European Commission**, on behalf of the City, in relation to the Programme Timișoara 2023.

The legal changes needed to support the Timișoara 2023 Programme were proactively addressed by the Centre for Projects, which worked closely

with the organizers and the local authorities. This collective effort led to amendments and constructive discussions with the Ministry of Culture, resulting in changes that enabled the effective implementation of the Cultural Programme. The acceptance of the majority of the proposals by the Ministry of Culture points to the significant impact of the Centre for Projects in shaping the legal framework needed for the success of the Programme.

As of 2021, the Centre for Projects also manages other grants for projects in areas such as youth, sports, community and social inclusion, and the use of several spaces for the community, among which the city's public cinemas stand out.

The Centre of Projects has assumed, on behalf of the City, the responsibility to monitor and evaluate the results and impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, and to prepare the report to the European Commission. This monitoring and evaluation activity was complementary to the one carried out by the Timișoara 2023 Association on the strategic targeting of the grants associated with the Program, and was essential to ensure the transparency and awareness of the outcomes of the Programme.

Challenges encountered:

- **The coordination and the management of a Cultural Programme with an extremely dense calendar**, with more than 2000 events organized during a single year, as well as the coordination of a large budget. The major challenge was to avoid duplication of events, which could have led to a dispersion of the audience and a diminishing cultural impact of each event. The fact that many of the events funded by the Ministry of Culture were concentrated in the second half of the year increased this challenge, creating an imbalance between the two parts of the year. The lack of early information about the events required additional effort in coordinating and adjusting the calendar to minimize scheduling overlaps.
- **The sizing of the team, the identification and hiring of experienced people** “jumping on the bandwagon from one day to the next” in order to quickly build a solid and professional team responsible for the implementation of the Cultural Programme on the one hand, and on the other hand, attracting people for the long term to help strengthen the team of the Centre for Projects and its activities

in relation to its overall role in the architecture of the local cultural scene.

Main achievements

The Centre for Projects has played a key role in making the Timișoara 2023 Programme a success. Through efficient management and strategic collaboration with other key actors at local, regional, national and international level, the institution has successfully fulfilled its responsibilities, managing approximately 80% of the funds dedicated to the Cultural Programme, its beneficiaries being mainly non-governmental organizations. These achievements reflect not only the significant impact on the local cultural scene, but also the Centre's ability to become a model in strategic funding management at national level. The main achievements were:

- **The good management of a consistent budget for the Cultural Programme.** The Centre for Projects benefited from a clear commitment from the municipality and managed efficiently and responsibly the vast majority of the local and state budget funds for the Cultural Programme.
- Development of a **transparent and competitive funding mechanism** to access the funding, including providing assistance to applicants in the submission phase. The experience gained from managing grant programmes for cultural professionals and organizations is valuable and relevant at national level, for other local authorities and public institutions.
- The programme was characterized by an impressive variety of cultural projects, ranging from projects with budgets of 2 million RON to creative scholarships for artists and cultural journalists, demonstrating the **Centre's ability to manage multiple funding programmes and create significant impact through thematic diversity and scaling** at the level of budgets, at the level of project implementation, at the level of partnerships, and at the level of themes.
- The management, **for the benefit of the community, of spaces of the City that were previously unused or inefficiently used**, supporting their valorisation through cultural, social, civic, youth, cultural activities, as part of the Cultural Programme and beyond.

The Curatorial Team

The Curatorial Team was mandated to preserve the artistic integrity of the Program, to build trust relationships with the organisers and to ensure a sustainable cultural impact, in line with the Timișoara 2023 Programme perspective, for which its legacy was a main objective.

Hosted by the Centre for Projects, it played a key role in ensuring the artistic coherence and, in collaboration with the Centre for Projects staff, in the strategic coordination of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. Team members were appointed following a public selection process, with the support of an independent panel of cultural sector professionals from Romania and Europe, in November 2021.

The Curatorial Team was responsible for the ongoing analysis and adaptation of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme, having a significant impact on the design of the funding programmes and the way they were implemented. The team also ensured the involvement of a large number of organizations, public and private, informal groups and creators in shaping the programme and its implementation, and contributed to curatorial and production decisions in the organization of the Timișoara 2023 Programme's representative events: the *Opening, Timișoara 2023. City Celebration (2023)* and the Closing event (*Neverending Timișoara 2023*).

The team consisted of professionals with the following roles: three Territory Curators and four specialists in communication, cultural production, cultural mediation and community relations and social inclusion.

From August 2022 to March 2024, the Curatorial Team was integrated into the Coordination Council of the Centre for Projects, which also included three specialists responsible for monitoring and evaluating the results and impact of the Programme, the coordination of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and the Curatorial Team, and the coordination of large events.

Between November and December 2021, the Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team held a series of

meetings with the organizers mentioned as hosts in the Bidbook. The purpose of these meetings was to review the state of implementation of the Cultural Programme as proposed in the Bidbook and to update the projects presented, taking into account the time perspective and the effects of the pandemic on the local cultural scene. This resulted in an Analysis Report which was submitted as an internal working document to the Municipality of Timișoara, the Ministry of Culture, the Timiș County and the European Commission.

In January 2022, the first such revision of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was finalized, integrating its revised narrative and the overall city-wide objectives to activate as many cultural operators as possible to develop, grow and connect the local cultural ecosystem. This step was appreciated by the European Jury, responsible for monitoring the preparation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, and gave confidence and support for the continuation. In terms of finalizing the content of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the Curatorial Team focused on the key criteria of the Bidbook: artistic excellence, European dimension, audience development, capacity building and venue strategy.

Achievements of the Curatorial Team:

- **Respecting and revitalizing the vision of the Bidbook:** Preserving and reviving the original concept and vision of the Bidbook, which was central to winning the ECoC title, involved a careful attention to the values and principles that underpinned it.
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** The Curatorial Team demonstrated great flexibility in adapting the Programme to local realities and challenges. This included adjusting the Programme to include new culturally relevant projects that emerged over time and managing the necessary changes in the implementation of the Programme.
- **Transparent and collaborative decision making:** The Curatorial Team was involved in all aspects of the Program, from grant programme design to

project selection, and worked closely with the Centre for Projects and other partners to ensure effective coordination and an open and clear process.

- **Building trust and strengthening relationships:** The Curatorial Team was able to build and strengthen trusting relationships with local organizers, enabling closer and more effective collaboration between all actors involved.
- **Cultural diversity and the inclusion of different communities and artistic manifestations** in the

The Culture and Arts Centre of Timiș County

From 2022, the Culture and Arts Centre of Timiș County (CECART) has been appointed as one of the funding authorities and implementation structures of the Cultural Programme, on behalf of Timiș County. CECART was made responsible for the administration and operationalization of some of the funding programmes for the extension of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, with funds from the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture.

Challenges encountered:

- **Lack of sufficient qualified staff**, as the institution faced significant difficulties in attracting skilled personnel. The available positions were fixed-term and with low salaries, which discouraged potential candidates. Although advertised several times, the posts were not filled. With only three team members (two experts and a chief accountant) and few collaborators, CECART had to manage the majority of the work related to the funding, including checking documents, coordinating activities, monitoring projects and administering project calls.
- **Lack of previous experience** in organizing and managing calls for projects or creating funding guidelines. Up to that point, the main activity of

Governance. Collaborative decision-making, coordination and management Strategic principles and directions

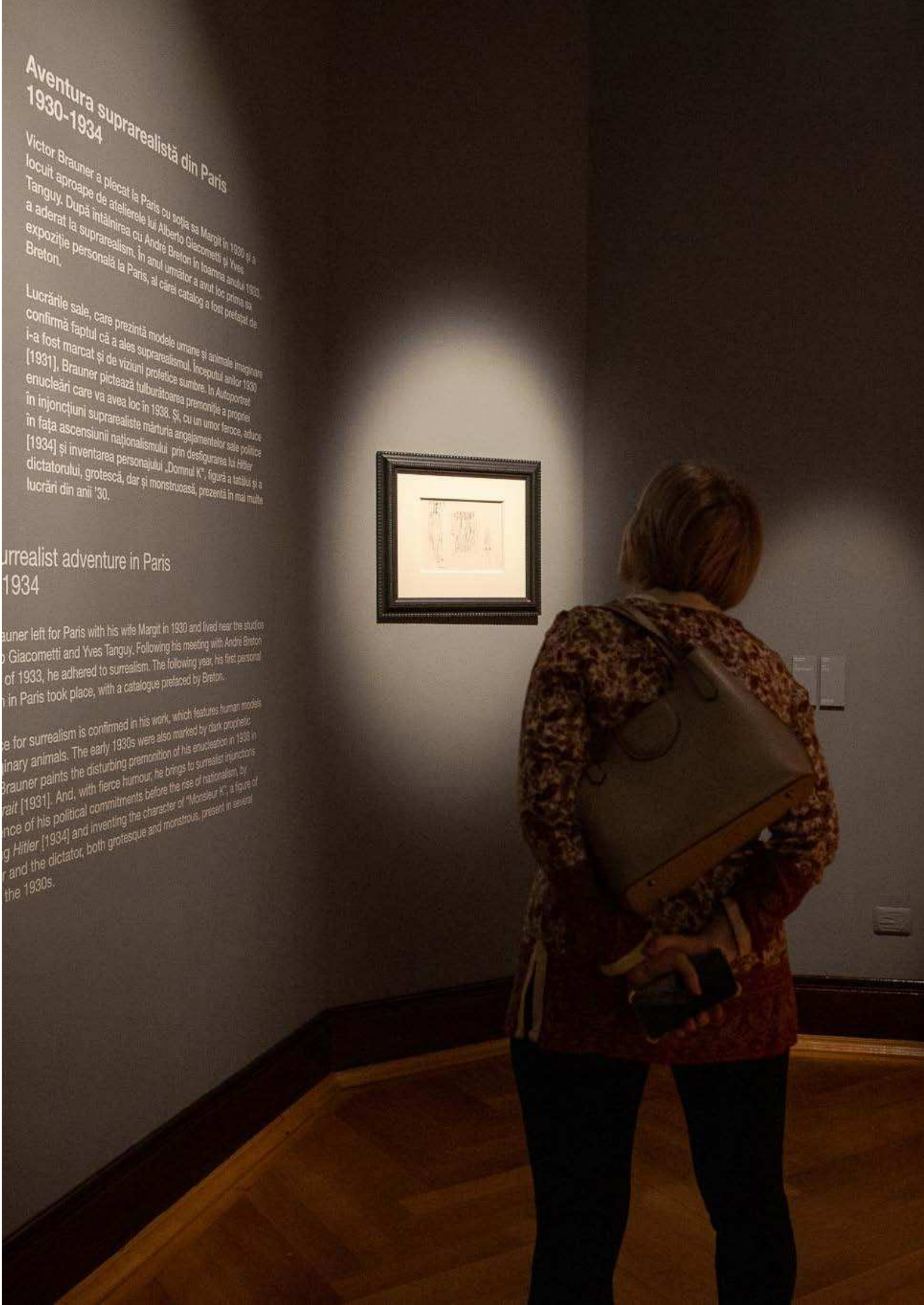
Programme was an objective, and the Curatorial Team supported the participation of different profiles of organizers, from local to international, and of different art forms and approaches.

- **Supporting the development of the local cultural sector:** The Curatorial Team contributed significantly to the development of the local cultural sector, both by encouraging international collaborations and by sustaining local initiatives. This has increased the capacities of the local scene and ensured a sustainable cultural legacy for Timișoara.

the institution was focused on the organization of performances, similar to other cultural institutions such as theatres or philharmonics, which made the transition to an administrative and operational role more difficult.

- **Short time for preparation:** the nomination of CECART as one of the structures responsible for implementing the Programme came late, towards the end of 2022 (September-October), leaving very little time for preparations.

The positive impact of CECART’s involvement in the realization of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was first of all the increased capacity to manage grants. This was also due to a good collaboration with the Centre for Projects, which meant learning and picking up models of approaches to grant making, from evaluation with the involvement of independent specialists to the monitoring procedure. This collaboration has enabled CECART to address some of the needs related to the management of funding programmes and to streamline their implementation.



Financial management

The main sources of income for funding the Timișoara 2023 Programme were the public budgets, mainly local, followed by the transfers from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture.

The expenditure associated with the Timișoara 2023 Programme is composed of the **expenditure associated with the Cultural Programme** (including the components of administration, communication, administrative expenses, volunteer management and others) and the **expenditure associated with the Infrastructure Investment Programme**.

The situation of the expenditure associated with the Cultural Programme is presented below and the situation of the expenditure associated with the Investment Programme is analyzed in the section GENERATOR. Processes with results and effects, subchapter New and improved spaces for culture.

Public funds were the source for approximately 88% of the total expenditures for the Cultural Programme (realized in the time frame 2017-30.06.2024).

Total expenditure for the Cultural Programme in the time frame 2017-30.06.2024 (in RON)	Total (RON)	%
State Budget	48,252,389.11	23.90%
Local Budget of the City of Timișoara	105,771,779.90	52.39%
Local Budget of the Timiș County	23,520,727.72	11.65%
Other sources	24,330,581.71	12.05%
	201,875,478.44	100%

Total expenditure from public budgets for the Cultural Programme in the time frame 2017-30.06.2024 (in RON)	Total (RON)	%
State Budget	48,252,389.11	27.18%
Local Budget of the City of Timișoara	105,771,779.90	59.57%
Local Budget of the Timiș County	23,520,727.72	13.25%
	177,544,896.73	100%

The total amount of expenditure reported for the implementation of the Cultural Programme by the Municipality of Timișoara, including the cultural institutions subordinated to the City Council of Timișoara and the Centre for Projects, by the County of Timis, including the cultural institutions subordinated to it and CECART, by the Ministry of Culture and the Timișoara 2023 Association, plus the matching funds of projects with grants, declared by organisers, totals over 201 million lei, of which more than 177 million lei public funds.

More than half (52,39%) of the total expenditure was supported by the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara, also accounting for approximately 60% of the funding of all public expenditure associated with the Cultural Programme for the period 2017-30.06.2024.

The state budget provided almost a quarter of the total expenditure and over 27% of the funding of all public expenditure, while the Timiș County budget accounted for approximately 11.5% of the total expenditure and almost 13% of the funding of all public expenditure.

The largest part of this amount (about 80%) is represented by the expenses for the realization of cultural projects and artistic events, i.e. the Cultural Programme itself.

Expenditure for the communication of the Cultural Programme (as a whole) represents more than 8,61% of the total reported expenditure by the institutions involved. To the amount explicitly dedicated to communication must be added the amounts contained in all the projects funded under the Cultural Programme through the funding programmes and the cultural institutions subordinated to the Municipality

of Timișoara and Timiș County. They had their own communication expenses, which could not be estimated.

The administrative expenses for the implementation of the Cultural Programme represent approximately 5,71% of the total expenses reported for the implementation of the Cultural Programme.

The expenses spent by the Association for the management of volunteers represent less than 0.5% of the total expenses reported for the implementation of the Cultural Programme, according to the available data.

Destination of expenditures for the Cultural Programme in the timeframe 2017-30.06.2024	%
Cultural activities	80.45%
Administration*	5.71%
Communication	8.61%
Volunteering	0.48%
Others	4.75%
* including monitoring and evaluation expenses	100%

In the time frame 2017 - June 2024, the total expenditure for the Cultural Programme has increased up until 2019, then dropped significantly in 2020 and grew afterwards, culminating in over 100 million lei spent in 2023, the year of the ECoC title. The total does not include complementary sources (co-funding) attracted by the organizers for projects carried out with grants.

Distribution of Cultural Programme expenditure, by year, in the time-frame 2017-30.06.2024 excluding complementary sources attracted by organizers for projects implemented with grants (in RON)	Total (RON)
2017	2,886,222.00
2018	4,019,562.06
2019	11,421,782.61
2020	3,668,299.65
2021	5,650,453.97
2022	22,454,605.24
2023	100,662,059.61
2024 (until 30.06.2024)	38,265,758.50
	189,028,743.64

Grants for the Timișoara 2023 Programme accounted for about half of the total expenditure (52.39%), subsidies for the Cultural Programme of Timișoara's cultural institutions involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme, accounted for 29,29%, contributions from local budgets for the activity of the Timișoara 2023 Association, accounted for 6,27%, and the individual efforts to attract and generate funds for the Program, about 12,05%.

In addition to these expenditures, there are also those required to carry out projects connected, but not part of the official Cultural Programme, which have been publicly communicated by important stakeholders as part of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. These are in the following categories:

- *TM2023+* component projects, respectively *TM2023+ Legacy* (for 2024 events). The *TM2023+* component, active in the period 2023-2024, expanded the Cultural Programme by including cultural projects that fell within the main vision and concepts of the Bidbook, based on a selection procedure. This component was managed by the Timișoara 2023 Association, and did not aim

Distribution of Cultural Programme expenditure by funding sources and main types of expenditure (in RON)

#	Grants	Subsidies*	Membership Fees**	Other***	Total (RON)	%
State Budget	47,752,389.11	500,000.00			48,252,389.11	23.90%
Local Budget of the City of Timișoara	52,007,890.34	45,763,889.56	8,000,000.00		105,771,779.90	52.39%
Local Budget of the Timiș County	5,997,522.87	12,873,204.85	4,650,000.00		23,520,727.72	11.65%
Other sources of the public institutions and of the Timișoara 2023 Association				11,483,847.95	11,483,847.95	5.69%
Matching funds in projects with grants				12,846,733.76	12,846,733.76	6.36%
Total	105,757,802.32	59,137,094.41	12,650,000.00	24,330,581.71	201,875,478.44	
%	52.39%	29.29%	6.27%	12.05%	100.00%	

* To public cultural institutions | ** Timișoara 2023 Association | ***Sponsorship, fundraising, non-economic revenue

to provide funding for the implementation of the selected projects, but only for their promotion. In total, 50 projects entered the Cultural Programme in this way, and the value of the budgets of these projects could not be quantified.

- Projects carried out with funding accessed under the *Call for Bilateral Initiatives - Timișoara European Capital of Culture 2023*, managed by the Ministry of European Investments and Projects, with funds from EEA and Norwegian Grants - Fund for Bilateral Relations. Through this funding program, 24 projects have been completed, all carried out by local cultural operators in partnership with a Norwegian organization. The main aim of the initiatives was to develop cooperation, improve knowledge and mutual understanding between Romania and Norway, and the total accessed budget of the funding programme was 9,213,105 lei, out of the 2 million euro allocated (approximately 10,000,000 lei). These projects were not included in the Cultural Programme automatically, but only to the extent that the organizers proposed the initiative as part of the extended programme, through the *TM2023+* component.

For the end of 2024, the total expenditure associated with the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme is estimated to reach approximately RON 228 million, of which approximately RON 201 million from public sources, keeping approximately the weights between the budgetary sources presented on 30.06.2024

Total estimated expenditure for the Cultural Programme in the time frame 2017-2024 (in RON)

#	Total (RON)	%
State Budget	53,449,015.24	23.45%
Local Budget of the City of Timișoara	124,567,099.90	54.64%
Local Budget of the Timiș County	23,520,727.72	10.32%
Other sources	26,436,162.01	11.60%
	227,973,004.87	100.00%

Total estimated expenditure from public budgets for the Cultural Programme in the time frame 2017-2024 (in RON)

#	Total (RON)	%
State Budget	53,449,015.24	26.52%
Local Budget of the City of Timișoara	124,567,099.90	61.81%
Local Budget of the Timiș County	23,520,727.72	11.67%
	201,536,842.86	100.00%

4

Generator

Processes with results and effects



The Timișoara 2023 Programme has managed to generate results and impact by setting in motion institutions and work processes adapted to the local situation and the objectives of the European Capitals of Culture Programme. The governance system rethought in 2021 succeeded in guaranteeing three essential conditions of the development of the Timișoara 2023 Programme:

● **Implementation of democratic, decentralized governance with shared objectives:** Good governance practices were introduced, such as the rotation of mandates within decision-making structures and the separation of artistic governance from political and managerial governance. Also, the inclusion of several players in decision-making processes, but with well-defined responsibilities towards common goals, can prevent the concentration of power and ensure transparency and balance in achieving shared objectives.

● **Transparency and clarity in the funding process:** The design of funding programmes was clear, transparent and included effective evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the funds were properly used and that the projects chosen were in line with the objectives and the criteria of the programmes.

● **Promoting cooperation between the public and private sectors:** Public-private partnerships and the cooperation between different sectors have been

essential to harness the cultural potential of the city and to ensure the sustainability of learning and of effects.

On the back of these principles that set an enabling framework, effective generative processes were able to act to sustain and develop the Timișoara 2023 Programme: communication and promotion, volunteering, attracting and targeting private funding and developing an infrastructure capable of sustainably supporting the development of relevant and quality cultural events for the public. The following observations and conclusions refer to the period 2022-2023, with some data also referring to the first half of 2024, because for the Timișoara 2023 Programme a consistent part of the activities, projects and dedicated events continued in this first post-Title year.



Communication and promotion

The communication and the promotion of the Timișoara 2023 Programme were mainly the responsibility of the Timișoara 2023 Association, while the Centre for Projects coordinated the communication and the promotion of the events with a representative role for the Programme. Also, the organizers funded by the Centre of Projects and CECART had specific contractual obligations related to the promotion of their projects within the context of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, and the cultural institutions involved in the Cultural Programme also had their own communication activities. In conclusion, communication and promotion activities were carried out by all those involved in the Programme.

The Communication Department of the Timișoara 2023 Association had the essential role of developing and implementing communication and marketing strategies aimed at promoting the Timișoara 2023 Programme among the general public and various stakeholders, thus contributing to strengthening the impact and recognition of the Programme. Activities ranged from generating content for online platforms, developing advertising campaigns, managing media relations, promoting events and creating marketing materials:

- Print and branding materials (photo/video), including brochures presenting projects and events in various artistic fields (music, performing arts, visual arts) and general brochures about the Timișoara 2023 Programme, with quarterly edition - published every 3 months, branding gift materials about the Cultural Programme and the city. The main target audience of these activities were the residents of Timișoara, those who do not have a regular cultural participation habit, who go to 2-3 events per year, mainly free of charge, people without well-defined cultural preferences. The publications also addressed the information needs of those who knew only a small part of what the Timișoara 2023 Programme meant, be they residents, cultural operators or other organizations.
- Public relations activity, including special radio and content projects (the Timișoara 2023 Yearbook in collaboration with the Curatorial Team and a special

edition of the programme Jurnalul de seară with Cosmin Prelipceanu from Digi24 television, visits by journalists on the occasion of the events with a representative role for the Programme, the exhibition dedicated to the artist Constantin Brâncuși, the Art Encounters biennale, etc.

- Organization of official visits, including the visit of the CULT Committee of the European Parliament (3-5 April 2023), the ambassadors of Bulgaria, Austria and Germany (21 May 2023).
- Communication with and for the cultural operators in the Timișoara 2023 Programme: providing advertising space, mediating relations with interested journalists and forwarding information to the radio stations invited to Timișoara, consultancy on the general communication plan.
- Coordination of the implementation of the Ogilvy communication strategy according to the implementation plan provided by the agency.
- Project “Timișoara - ECoC 2023 Timișoara Programme Communication”, which aimed to strengthen and promote the Cultural Programme, both nationally and internationally, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Culture to ensure effective communication and adequate promotion of cultural events held within this programme.

The team of the Centre for Projects, in direct relation with its Coordination Council, also complemented the communication efforts of the Timișoara 2023 Programme by developing online and offline communication platforms and campaigns for the events with a representative role produced and organized by the Centre for Projects: the Official *Opening* (17-19 February 2023), *Timișoara 2023. City Celebration* (October 6-8, 2023) and Symbolic Closing of the program: *Neverending Timișoara 2023* (December 7-10, 2023)

The Opening of Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture programme benefited from a comprehensive and well-coordinated multi-

channel communication strategy. A bilingual subsite (Romanian-English) was created, managed by the Centre for Projects and hosted on the official domain Timișoara2023.eu. The event had a distinct identity, reflected in digital and printed promotional materials.

The media campaign included Google Ads, Meta Ads, YouTube Ads, TikTok, Pinterest, Reddit and programmatic media, with 70% of the budget allocated to Google and Meta platforms. Digital campaigns generated:

Views	18.8 million
Clicks	250,000
Video views	2.3 million

Media

Accredited journalists	180
Media mentions*	8223
Total audience	101 million people
Unique users on the official website	244,000
Social media reach	2 million people

Neverending Timișoara 2023, which marked the symbolic closing of the Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture Program, benefited from an extensive communication and promotion campaign, carried out through multiple channels, both from the Centre for Project's own ecosystem (website, social media) and through external partnerships (national OOH, radio, online, press).

A bilingual subsite (Romanian-English) dedicated to the event was developed and managed in collaboration with the Timișoara 2023 Association, providing international visibility. The digital campaign included Google Ads Display and Meta Ads, generating over 10 million views, 115,000 clicks, 2.7 million video views and 90,000 interactions. Traffic on the dedicated website reached 148,800 unique visitors and more than 281,600 visits, with significant traffic from Romania, USA, Germany, France and Serbia.

* As per MediaTrust

The distinct visual identity of the event was reflected in a wide range of promotional materials (digital graphics, banners, flyers, badges, bags, etc.). The press center, active for five days, accredited 156 journalists from local, national and international press.

According to MediaTrust, from November 16 to December 31, 2023, the event has:

Media and social media mentions	5362
Cumulative audience	45.2 million people
Advertising equivalent	14,9 million RON (€2,98 million)
Social media reach	1.94 million poeople

The effort of the Centre for Projects team in communicating the events with a representative role was doubled and supported by a number of commercial partners. They provided their own communication ecosystem - LED screens, digital displays, radio and various indoor and outdoor, online and offline channels - to promote and disseminate information about the events.

In defining the calendar of events within the official communication platform of the Cultural Programme, the Timișoara2023.eu website, the Centre for Projects team contributed to the consolidation of the information structure about the cultural projects and events developed by each cultural operator, supplemented by the technical development process of the Directus platform in collaboration with the Timișoara 2023 Association team. In addition, for each funding call, the communication team of the Centre for Projects provided cultural operators with visual identity guides and monitored their correct implementation.

The cultural organisers

The organizers **also independently promoted their projects**, most frequently on their own websites or social media pages, live streaming of their events, involving partners in the promotion of events, etc. Moreover, in the case of the funding programmes launched in 2023 with funds from the state budget and managed by the Centre for Projects, a minimum of 15% of the non-reimbursable funding had to be considered by the applicants for cultural communication and mediation activities.

The period of restrictions brought by the COVID-19 pandemic empowered cultural operators to develop online tools and resources to keep in touch with the public and widen their audience. Thus, various materials have been digitized, calls for projects have been launched and events have been reshaped so that they can be held online. On the other hand, the lifting of restrictions from the 2020-2021 period has meant an increase in public attendance at cultural events with physical participation.

The promotion carried out by organizers used both conventional methods (posters, flyers, etc.) and digital communication tools (campaigns, events, postings, *reels*, but also social media advertisements and live communication). Depending on the size, event and capacities, some organizers relied on unstructured approaches to promotion without dedicated resources, but others used communication techniques, methods and tools, as well as dedicated budgets for such campaigns. Those who targeted non-initiated audiences, people from marginalized or vulnerable communities, presented their cultural offer face to face, in their communities, in a language understandable to the intended audience, thus demonstrating that they had tailored their content, offer and communication to the community to which the cultural offer was addressed.

According to the research conducted by IRES (IRES. Evolution of the cultural scene, 2024), social networks were the most frequently used digital medium by the cultural operators participating in the quantitative phase of the study, both for communication, dialogue with the public (93%)

and promotion (95%). Online media and their own websites were also used in a proportion of about 70% for communication and 83% and 79% respectively - for promoting online content.

The main challenge identified was the delay in public communication across the Timișoara 2023 Programme as a whole, caused, in fact, by the delay in funding from the Ministry of Culture and the governance and management issues of the Association before 2021.

Results

81% of the organizers rate the communication and promotion of the cultural offer to the public as good and very good in order to make it known and attractive.

From the perspective of many interviewees, the communication of the cultural offer to the public by the Timișoara 2023 Association was **effective**, especially through the use of multiple tools, both offline (such as the cubes set up in the city, presenting the programme of the month) and online (especially the website www.Timișoara2023.eu and the sending of a weekly newsletter).

The online presence of Timișoara 2023 events is generally evaluated in positive terms by the organizers, especially in terms of the centralization of events on the website www.Timișoara2023.eu. The involvement of Centre for Projects in continuing and improving the Timișoara 2023 Association's efforts to promote online (by centralizing information on the website www.centruldeproiecte.ro, but also by sending Conector, a newsletter addressed mainly to culture professionals, and building visual the newsletter for organizers and building distinct visual identities and communication channels for events with a representative role, as well as the activity on social networks), were also appreciated.

Top digital tools for communication: 88% of organizers consider social media as one of the most effective channels to increase the visibility of cultural

events or projects and to engage with the public (86%). Online media and the website are the second and third most popular digital channels for promotion, respectively, with the places reversing when it comes to engaging with the public.

Impact

● **Increased participation of local audiences in a wider variety of cultural activities**, who have become more aware of the city's cultural offer and their cultural consumption has increased. The programme managed to revitalize public interest in cultural activities, including various segments such as cultural mediation and education through culture.

● **Professionalization of communication specialists**. Exposure to the challenges associated with the organization and promotion of events within the Programme led to significant professional development for the specialists involved. They were placed in situations which required them to adapt quickly and manage large volumes of diverse activities.

● **Professionalization of cultural operators**. The Programme has stimulated cultural operators to improve their skills in organizing, promoting and managing events, thus strengthening their long-term competences. 73% of organizers confirm that their participation in the Timișoara 2023 Programme has had an influence in developing their competences in cultural communication and marketing.

● **Improved cultural community cohesion**. Communication fostered intense collaboration between cultural operators and helped to strengthen relations between them and local authorities. This

cohesion has enabled the development of a more cohesive and interactive cultural ecosystem.

Lessons learned

● **The importance of effective coordination and collaboration between multiple entities** to ensure the success of a complex programme, as part of a coherent communication strategy at the Cultural Programme level and to ensure more effective and less fragmented communication.

● **The need for adequate planning and human resources for communication teams** to meet the challenges of such a large programme.

● **The benefits of ensuring the widest possible variety of cultural content**, centralized through appropriate methods and tools to reduce dispersion and therefore confusion among the public.

● **Establishment of clear communication procedures** for organizers, including strict deadlines and predefined forms for providing information and clarification of roles and responsibilities.

● **Investment in the development of mass communication tools** that “explain to every person in Timișoara what has been prepared for them, where, why this is important”.

● **Investment in the design of data management platforms** to ensure a streamlined process for updating and collecting information about the organizers' projects and events, supporting both communication, monitoring and evaluation and generic management processes.

Volunteering

Process

The Timișoara 2023 Association has developed and coordinated an extensive network of volunteers, who have played a key role in the realization of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and have sought to build a diverse and dynamic community, involving people from all segments of society, including students, parents, seniors, NGO members, corporations and international volunteers. The organizers also involved, through the Timișoara 2023 Association or on their own, volunteers in projects and events within the Timisoara 2023 Programme.

The main activities in which volunteers were involved were, in the order given by the organizers: guiding and assisting visitors, organizing events, providing support for participants and artists, technical support, carrying out educational programs or workshops, promotion and marketing, and other activities.

The Timișoara 2023 Association ensured the training of the volunteers they attracted, through several types of actions (both trainings and research, “learning by doing”, field actions, etc.); in this process, they maximized and mobilized the intrinsic motivation of the volunteer trainers, as well as the capacity of volunteers with certain skills to transmit knowledge to their peers.

In the qualitative research evaluating the work processes for the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the volunteer coordinators brought up the variability in the ages of the people involved as a cohesive factor, as well as their dedication. Another motivating factor was the system of providing feedback from volunteers to organizers: some of them made rigorous

30% of organizers resorted to partnerships with the universities and 27% resorted to partnerships with schools in Timișoara in order to encourage volunteering.

(IRES. Evolution of the cultural scene, 2024).

analysis of the feedback they received and, based on it, improved their organized events.

The volunteer management practices that have been successfully used in the Timișoara 2023 Programme were:

- **Careful recruitment and selection of volunteers**, so that they fit the roles and responsibilities for which they were selected.

- Providing multi-skilled and experienced **coordinators** who managed the volunteers, within each project.

- **Training and development** sessions, which were tailored to the needs of the projects and organizers, as well as the volunteers.

- **Respect** towards volunteers, **recognition of their merits, their involvement in decisions** were elements promoted by Timișoara 2023 Association. These encouraged professional relations between organizers and volunteers by providing decent working conditions, giving them the possibility to choose for themselves the departments and projects to get involved in (if volunteers were experienced), etc.

- Building a **community of volunteers**; this was designed to strengthen relationships and mutual support between volunteers, building on the diversity of participants (especially in terms of age) and their varied skills.

- **The monitoring and evaluation of** the volunteers also allowed for a close knowledge of the evolution of the projects, the opinion of the organizers and volunteers and the development of local civic spirit.

At the end of 2023, the Volunteering Department of the Timișoara 2023 Association proposed to implement new initiatives and strategies, including:

- **“VolunTIM” platform**: Launch and expansion of the YouTube platform dedicated to cultural and educational content.

Results

In 2023, VolunTIM recorded:

Hours of volunteering in the service of the Timișoara 2023 Programme community	33,481
Cultural and social initiatives that benefited from volunteering	299
Active volunteers	250
People registered in the Volunteering Platform	>3000

55% of the organizers consider that by participating in the Timișoara 2023 Programme they have developed their skills on volunteer engagement.

According to the research carried out by IRES (IRES. Audience engagement, 2024), 56% of organizers claim to have heard of VolunTIM, the volunteer management app, of which 45% say they have used it and 37% say it has been effective.

61% of the organizers claim that they have involved volunteers in the work of the organization for events or projects within the Timișoara 2023 Programme, and as reasons for not doing so, 55% answered that this was not needed.

33% of those who involved volunteers engaged between:

1-10 volunteers	33%
11-20 volunteers	23%
21-50 volunteers	23%
>50 volunteers	21%

- **VolunTIM HUB**: Creation of a space dedicated to courses and workshops for the personal and professional development of volunteers.

- **Impactful projects**: Continuing the development of innovative cultural projects that bring a positive impact on the community.

85% say that the number of volunteers involved in running the events was sufficient and 78% say that there was a volunteer coordinator in the project team.

The contribution of actions to attract and manage volunteers towards the success of events or projects was as follows:

Actions/strategies to train volunteers	41%
Actions/strategies to motivate volunteers	39%
Partnerships with universities	31%
Partnerships with schools	29%

Best practices in volunteer management of the Timișoara 2023 Programme volunteers by the Timișoara 2023 Association:

- Volunteer Recruitment Platform.
- Pilot project to set up a team of social volunteers.

- System of coordination, recruitment, training and management of volunteers.
- System for collecting feedback from the collaboration with the organizers.

Impact

● **Efficient logistical support for major cultural events:** Volunteers played a crucial role in the organization and running of large cultural events, such as the Opening and Closing events of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. They provided logistical support, orientation for participants, distribution of promotional materials and guiding the public, contributing significantly to the success of these events.

● **Enhancing public access and experience:** Through their roles as cultural guides, exhibition space assistants and activity coordinators, the volunteers facilitated public access to various cultural events. They helped create a more enjoyable experience for participants by providing information and direct support during events.

● **Creating a model of collaboration between the local scene and the community:** Volunteers were able to build bridges between organizers, local authorities and the wider community. This collaboration led to a better integration of the community in cultural activities and the development of a network of active and dedicated local supporters.

● **Professionalization and personal development of volunteers:** By participating in diverse and challenging activities, volunteers have developed valuable skills such as project management, effective communication, teamwork and adaptability. This experience gave them opportunities for professional and personal growth, strengthening their skills for future involvement in cultural projects.

● **Promoting the values of civic and cultural engagement:** Volunteers were active ambassadors of the values of civic and cultural engagement, helping to educate and mobilize the community to support and participate in the programme events. Their actions had a positive effect on the public's perception of cultural and volunteering initiatives in general.

● **Adaptability and resilience in the face of challenges:** Volunteers demonstrated the ability to adapt quickly to unforeseen circumstances and to find creative solutions to overcome difficulties

encountered, such as programme changes or resource limitations. This flexibility has been essential in maintaining the continuity and success of volunteering activities.

● **Increased community cohesion:** Volunteers helped to strengthen social ties within the local community, creating a sense of belonging and pride in Timișoara and the cultural events organized. They succeeded in mobilizing people from different backgrounds to actively participate in the cultural life of the city, becoming the city's volunteer team.

Lessons learned

● **Flexibility and adaptability to the evolution of the Cultural Programme are key:** Efforts to adapt to the diverse needs of projects and organizers have been essential to the success of the volunteering programme.

● **The importance of an efficient coordination platform:** The use of a centralized platform for recruiting and managing volunteers was crucial to ensure a coherent and efficient process.

● **Constant and open communication** with volunteers is essential to maintain their long-term commitment.

● The importance of creating **ongoing training and personal development programmes for volunteers** to maximize their contribution and ensure sustainable impact.

● **The importance of effective recruitment mechanisms,** represented by a dedicated coordination team, connected and permanently available to volunteers for questions and guidance.

● **The importance of collecting feedback from organizers of cultural projects and events and from volunteers in order to continuously improve.**

● **To reward collaborative success stories means to appreciate the positive work-processes.**

● The organization of **events to recognize the efforts of volunteers,** giving certificates and recommendations to those involved, increases their motivation and commitment.





Timișoara 2023 Volunteers, Piața Unirii, 17 February 2023, photo: Andrei Marina

Attracting private funding

Process

In the period 2022-2024, the Timișoara 2023 Association was in charge of attracting private funding and directing it towards: the communication of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the Cultural Programme projects implementation and the development of the volunteer programme.

This activity implied the creation of a procedure for the distribution of the funds attracted from sponsors, according to which they had the possibility to analyze and choose from the official Programme the projects they will support in order to raise the artistic level and increase the notoriety among the general public, depending on the source of the funds they make available (brand awareness, social responsibility, etc.). Cultural operators were also given the opportunity to apply for funding from Timișoara 2023's sponsors, who were recognized as partners by the Association, and were invited to participate in two presentation sessions.

The Timișoara 2023 Association was responsible for ensuring the visibility of the partnerships throughout the communication of the entire Cultural Programme, as well as for a good collaboration with the cultural operators supported during the year of the European Capital of Culture. The reporting and evaluation of fundraising activities involved the preparation of quarterly activity reports as well as centralized statements on the status of partnerships with sponsors, relevant impact indicators for sponsors and other data.

According to the qualitative research in the study dedicated to the governance of the Timișoara 2023 Programme (Encore Research SRL, 2024), corporate sponsorship and participation in the Timișoara 2023 Programme was positively influenced by a number of strategic factors and decisions made by the governance institutions. These gave sponsors confidence and helped to minimize perceived risks:

- **The perception of an institutional agreement and collaboration among the main stakeholders:**

Sponsors mentioned that it was very important for them to sense that there was a coherent collaboration and communication between the relevant stakeholders. This proved that there was a joint effort and an understanding of the importance of the success of the Programme.

- **The setup of the Centre for Projects and the allocation of grants through this institution:** the involvement of the Centre for the management of the grants was seen by the sponsors as a positive decision, as it ensured a higher degree of transparency and professionalism in the allocation of funds. The transparent way in which grants were managed through the Centre of Projects has given trust and confidence to sponsors and has contributed to an image of integrity and fairness.

- **The involvement of experienced event organizers from outside Timișoara** was an appreciated decision, as it brought additional expertise in organizing major events. The transfer of knowledge from the entrepreneurial area and the exchange of experience with public authorities in planning and organizing events with large crowds of people led to increased competences on both sides by prototyping events with complex plans of organization in different public spaces in the city not previously exploited.

- **The high level of quality of the funded projects** was a key factor that attracted sponsors. The presence of renowned artists and exhibitions generated interest and stimulated participation.

- **The experience of the Timișoara 2023 Association's fundraising team**, made up of professionals with previous experience, allowed for a strategic and efficient approach to fundraising.

- **The initial support from major sponsors** had an "anchoring" effect that attracted other companies to the project.

- **The success of the Cultural Capital Opening Event** in February 2023 provided evidence that the

programme would be implemented well, which gave confidence to companies that were hesitant to join.

- **Networking and presentation events:** organizing formal meetings with potential business partners gave donor companies a clearer understanding of the directions of the programme and the role of the private sector.

Results

The Timișoara 2023 Programme has benefited from the support of an extensive network of sponsors who have contributed to the success and impact of this large-scale cultural project. These include sponsors considered as main partners, who have played an essential role in supporting major initiatives, official partners and supporting partners, who have provided diversified support for the realization and implementation of the programme. These sponsors, perceived and communicated as partners, brought together their expertise, resources and dedication, reflecting their commitment to the cultural and community development of Timișoara.

Main partners:
Banca Transilvania, Catena, Cramele Recaș, Iulius Town, Linde Gaz, Profi

Official Partners:
Atos & EVIDEN, Auchan, Bioclinica, Bosch, Coca-Cola, Continental, Draexlmaier, EY, Flex, Forvia Hella, Hamilton, Honeywell, KPMG, MEWI, Nokia, OutBrain, Sabrini, Transgaz, Timișoreana, Vista Bank, Vitas IFN, ZF, 5 to go.

Value of partnerships concluded by the Fundraising and Partnerships Department of the Timișoara 2023 Association (in EUR)

Results	Value €
Partnerships financial value (<i>funds allocated to the Cultural Programme by sponsors</i>)	€2,598,400.00
Partnerships barter value (<i>amounts that would represent the financial value of the products/services offered by sponsors for the Cultural Programme</i>)	€1,178,433.00
Total partnerships value (financial & barter)	€3,776,833.00
Other private funding attracted by the cultural operators	€247,500.00
	€4,024,333.00

The amounts in this section are expressed in euro because the sponsorship packages have been set in this currency. Many of the companies involved are multinationals, which set their corporate social responsibility (CSR) budgets in euros, thus taking a common approach.

Supporter partners:
Casa Calfelor Timișoara, Corratec, Decathlon, DM, EGERIA, Everiance, Exim, Banca Românească, Fornetti, GreenForest, Hype Culture, Narativ Coffee, Prospero, SIGNAL IDUNA, STPT, Vineri15

Mobility partners:
Automobile Bavaria, MAN

Official Air Carrier:
TAROM

Connectivity partner:
Vodafone

Official Broadcaster:
TVR

During 2023, a total of 50 partners were attracted, including 6 lead partners (with a contribution of more than EUR 200,000), 2 mobility partners, 1 connectivity partner, 1 official broadcaster partner, 1 official carrier, 24 official partners (with a contribution between EUR 20,000 and EUR 200,000) and 15 supporter partners (with a contribution of less than EUR 20,000). The total value of partnerships concluded reached the threshold of 4,024,333 EUR, of which the financial value is 2,598,400 EUR and the barter value is 1,178,433 EUR. Partners also directly supported cultural projects within the Timișoara 2023 Programme, such as exhibitions, performances, festivals and other cultural events, thus contributing to their artistic quality and visibility.

The situation of the amounts distributed from the main partners to the projects of cultural operators, both through the Timișoara 2023 Association and directly by the partners shows a total amount of 1,309,400.00 EUR, and a similar statement on the involvement of official partners in supporting the Timișoara 2023 Programme shows a total amount of 427,630 EUR.

In addition to the contracts concluded directly between the Association and the partners, following discussions initiated by the Association, other economic agents have also chosen to get involved in projects of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, directly supporting the organizers: UniCredit, Raiffeisen Bank, Tazz, Kaufland. The value of the sums granted directly by partners is estimated by the Timișoara 2023 Association at 247,500 EUR.

Impact

The overall impact of the sponsorships within the Timișoara 2023 Programme has been significant, leading to increased visibility of the events, strengthening ties with the local community and supporting long-term sustainable cultural initiatives. The high level of satisfaction of the sponsors, both in terms of the organization and staging of the events, as well as the collaboration with institutional actors, underlines the success of this public-private partnership model in supporting local culture.

- **Increased audience participation:** the use of the sponsors' own promotional channels has allowed reaching a wider audience, both local and national.

- **Strengthening links with the community:** sponsorships have contributed to the development of a civic spirit and active involvement of the local community in cultural events.

- **Long-term sustainability:** sponsors have expressed a desire to see the projects continue beyond the end of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

- **High level of satisfaction with how the events they sponsored turned out:** the feedback received from participants, staff and organizers was extremely satisfactory, exceeding sponsors' expectations in terms of event success and overall satisfaction.

- **High degree of satisfaction with the collaboration with institutional actors:** sponsors appreciated the collaboration with institutional actors and the

support provided by the Timișoara 2023 Association, appreciating that the relationship was open and transparent.

Lessons learned

- **The importance of advance planning:** sponsorship decisions should be made well in advance to allow for better planning and implementation of activities.

- **Dedicated human resources,** a dedicated team with clear competences in planning, organization, operationalization, coordination and control is vital for the success of such a programme. The active involvement and experience of the team has a direct impact on the results achieved.

- **The need for an adequate cultural infrastructure:** improving the infrastructure to support large-scale events is essential for the success of future cultural initiatives when it comes to attracting private funds.

- **The value of collaboration and transparency:** better communication and transparency between all actors involved facilitates more effective collaborations and reduced potential areas of tension between partners. Clarity in communication and transparency in decision-making processes are fundamental to building trust between partners.

- **The importance of creativity and community involvement:** the lesson learned is that sometimes extraordinary results do not only require large financial resources, but also creativity, active involvement and collaboration. These can generate significant results even when budgets are limited.

- **Involving employees** in cultural events and initiatives has been an effective strategy for increasing employee engagement and satisfaction. Many companies have made sponsorship decisions based on employee interests, which has contributed to team building and more active participation.



Grant-making

The main form of distribution of public funds for the realization of the Cultural Programme was the allocation of non-reimbursable funds through dedicated funding programmes for cultural projects in the period 2017-2024.

Process

This grant-making process was sustained from funds from the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara, from the local budget of Timiș County and from funds from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture.

In total, **37 funding programmes** were launched in the period **2017-2024**, of which 25 funding programmes in the period 2021 - June 2024, which is the main period of analysis, because it has primarily contributed to the preparation, realization and consolidation of a legacy of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

In the period 2017-2020, the non-reimbursable grants awarded have been to the Timișoara 2023 Association and its partners, with the Association acting primarily as an intermediary for the granting of funds to partners for the implementation of the Cultural Programme. The funding authorities were during this period the Municipality of Timișoara (through the Timișoara House of Culture), the Ministry of Culture and the Timiș County.

In relation to the Cultural Programme included in the Bidbook, the funding programmes launched between 2021 and June 2024 fall into three main categories:

- **Funding programmes for the implementation of the Cultural Programme**, that supported the realisation of projects that were explicitly mentioned in the Bidbook. In this regard:
 - The Centre for Projects implemented in 2021 and in 2022 the programmes: *TM2023 RESTART* (2021), *Timișoara 2023 / Boarding Station* (2022) and

Onboard Timișoara 2023 (2022, the first programme with multi-annual funding) through which only cultural operators who had projects explicitly mentioned in the Cultural Programme and with whom the curators of the Curatorial Team worked to develop the project, ensure the coherence and the artistic excellency were funded on the basis of non-competitive calls. In 2023, the Centre for Projects ran the funding programme *Inside Timișoara 2023*, with an open call (similar to the consolidation calls) as a funding mechanism. The *Inside Timișoara 2023* funding programme encouraged project proposals that developed key active components, as well as projects that addressed cultural themes and content previously developed in the various phases of the Cultural Programme (in the period 2017-2021), with potential for continuity and growth.

- The Timiș County funded projects that were explicitly included in the Bidbook, on the basis of restricted calls (one call each in TimCultura 2021, 2022 and 2023). In these calls, the framing of projects within the Cultural Programme was an eligibility criterion. The restricted calls were integrated into broader calls in which other cultural projects as well as youth projects were funded.
- **Funding programmes to consolidate the Cultural Programme**, that supported the implementation of the Stations and the Trails for which the Bidbook stated that they would be realized by multiple projects. In these cases, the elements explicitly mentioned in the Cultural Programme for the respective Stations and Trails became the objectives and priorities of the subsequently launched funding programmes, which were open, competitive, with evaluation committees

composed of representatives of the funding institutions (in minority) and external experts (in majority). The consolidation programmes are:

- The *European Echoes* funding program, managed by the Centre for Projects, which provided funding for projects under the European Echoes Trail, part of the Bidbook.
- The programmes awarding creative fellowships in 2023 and 2024, mobilities for cultural professionals and the *Creative Schools* funding programme - which contributed to the objectives of the Power Station component of the Bidbook, managed by the Centre for Projects.
- The funding programmes managed by CECART: *BEGA*, *LightFest+ (1+2)*, *LoB2023+*, *OverBorder Culture +*, *Theatre Artistic Excellence* - which provided funding for projects under the *Lights over Borders* Station in the Bidbook.
- **Funding programmes to expand the Cultural Programme**, that have supported the implementation of projects that have showcased local cultural diversity, have developed audiences and have made cultural content accessible, amplifying European themes and cultural partnerships at local, national and regional level. The projects funded were in line with the principles and criteria of the Culture Programme, but were not foreseen as such in the Bidbook. This category also includes funding programmes to ensure the sustainability of the Cultural Programme. Thus, this category includes:
 - The funding programmes managed by the Centre for Projects: *Opening+*, launched in 2022 to support small-scale projects to complement the events that made up the Opening moment of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, from February 17-19, 2023; *Grow Timișoara 2023* (launched in 2023) and *Legacy Timișoara 2023* (launched in 2024);
 - *Timișoara.Next* funding program, managed by CECART, launched in 2024.

The grant-making programmes were legally shaped taking into account several regulations, among which the legal framework dedicated to the financing of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was essential for the proper implementation of the Cultural Programme.

- **Generic legislation for the granting of non-reimbursable funding from public funds:** Law no. 350/2005 on the regime of non-reimbursable funding from public funds allocated for non-profit activities of general interest, with subsequent amendments and additions.
- **Specific legislation for the granting of non-reimbursable funding from public funds for cultural projects:** GO no. 51/1998 on the improvement of the system of non-reimbursable funding for cultural projects, as amended and supplemented.
- **Legislation dedicated to the Timișoara 2023 Programme:** GEO no. 42/2019 on the establishment of financial measures to support the development of the National Programme "Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023", with subsequent amendments and additions, in subsidiary for all funding granted.
- **Copyright Law:** Law no. 8/1996 on copyright and related rights, republished, in addition to OG no. 51/1998, for the funding of creative scholarships by the Centre for Projects, scholarships for which copyright assignment contracts have been concluded.

Unfortunately, the legislation dedicated to the Timișoara 2023 Programme was approved in 2019, but it became operational only in June 2022, with the clarification of the governance structure of the Timișoara 2023 Programme after the management crisis of the Association and the harmonization of the points of view between the local administrations of the municipality and the county, respectively the Ministry of Culture. This situation meant that an important part of the funds, those from the state budget, were transferred only at the end of 2022, and the programmes from the state budget funds were launched in 2023 (with the exception of the Opening+ program, dedicated to the production of the events within the Opening of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme, from 17-19 February 2023). This situation also led to an extension of the actual activities dedicated to the Cultural Programme and its communication in 2024, with a higher intensity than expected.

However, this challenging dynamic also had positive consequences: it made 2024 a year full of cultural and communication activities for the Timișoara 2023 Cultural and Communication Program, and in doing so, it reinforced the results and impacts of the Programme and led to a more lasting legacy.

Results

Through all these programmes, more than 520 projects were funded (including creative scholarships and mobilities), of which only 4 were terminated.

The funded projects are distributed as follows:

Projects funded through funding programmes managed by the Centre for Projects*	431
Projects funded by funding programmes managed by Timiș County	30
Projects funded through funding programmes managed by CECART	53
Projects funded directly by the Ministry of Culture, which supported the Timișoara 2023 Association	9
Other projects of the Timișoara 2023 Association and its partners, funded in the period 2017-2020 by the House of Culture of the Municipality of Timișoara	

* including 119 creation grants and 36 mobilities for cultural professionals

The non-reimbursable grants awarded through funding programmes for the preparation, implementation, completion and extension of the Cultural Programme had a total allocated amount of 126,223,727 RON, of which 120,050,294 RON were contracted and 104,612,952,21 RON were spent/ executed until 30.06.2024.

Overall, the financial analysis of the funding programmes related to the Cultural Programme shows that:

The average contracting rate	93%
The average rate of utilization of funds	87%
The average absorption rate	83%

Of the amount disbursed to the beneficiaries of

grants, approximately 49% came from the budget of the Municipality of Timișoara, 46% from the state budget and 6% from the local budget of Timiș County.

To the amounts allocated for the funding programmes administered by the Centre for Projects (2021-2024), the House of Culture of the Municipality of Timișoara (2017-2020), Timiș County and CECART (2017-2024), which financed the implementation, consolidation and extension of the Cultural Programme, must be added the amounts allocated and used within the Cultural Programme during the preparatory period: 2017-2020 by (1) the Ministry of Culture for the preparation of the title and in 2023-2024 for the implementation of some activities within the multi-year priority programme “Communication of the Timișoara - European Capital of Culture 2023 Program, including monitoring and evaluation of communication”, and (2) Timiș County, for the Priority Cultural Programme Timișoara European Capital of Culture in 2021 (later Timișoara ECoC 2023).

Overview of allocations, contracting and execution for the grant-making programmes funded from public budgets between 2017 and June 2024 (in RON)

Source of funding	Allocated Grants	Contracted Grants	Spent Grants*	%
State budget, from the budget of the Ministry of Culture	54.490.227,00	53.283.835,00	47.684.294,38	45.58%
Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	64.563.000,00	60.598.959,00	50.931.134,96	48.69%
Local budget of the Timiș County	7.170.500,00	6.167.500,00	5.997.522,87	5.73%
*2017-30.06.2024	126.223.727,00	120.050.294,00	104.612.952,21	100%

The expenditure from the grants pertaining to funding programmes launched in the period 2017-2020 amounted to **almost 20 million RON**, i.e. about 18% of the total for the period 2017-30.06.2024. More than half of this amount was awarded in **2019**, followed by a significant drop in 2020, the year of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of these amounts, the main budget source was the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara, with about 84% of the total, and the state budget and the local budget of Timiș County with about 8% each. The expenses incurred from the grants awarded from funding programmes launched in the period 2021-2024 amounted to

more than 85 million RON, i.e. approximately 81% of the total grants for the period 2017-30.06.2024. Nearly half of this amount is associated with funding programmes launched in **2023**, which confirms the extension of the Cultural Programme also in 2024, in order to capitalize on the existing resources, which came late for the actual year of the Title. In the period 2021-2024 the main budgetary source was the state budget, with more than half of the funding spent (54.17%), followed by the local budget of the municipality of Timișoara approximately 40% and the local budget of Timiș County with just over 5%.

Situation of non-reimbursable funding spent, by year of launching of the funding programmes, regardless of the funding authority, and by funding source (in RON)

Year*	Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	State budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture	Local budget of the Timiș County	Total	% from the total amount of the time-frame 2017-2020
2017	1,520,533.00	59,627.00	0.00	1,580,160.00	8.12%
2018	3,632,650.00	255,180.00	403,000.00	4,290,830.00	22.06%
2019	8,516,712.00	1,235,296.00	1,241,000.00	10,993,008.00	56.52%
2020	2,584,894.00	0.00	0.00	2,584,894.00	13.29%
Total	16,254,789.00	1,550,103.00	1,644,000.00	19,448,892.00	100.00%
	83.58%	7.97%	8.45%	100.00%	
2021	3,056,314.96	0.00	1,270,000.00	4,326,314.96	5.08%
2022	30,794,857.00	773,274.08	1,310,000.00	32,878,131.08	38.61%
2023	719,874.00	39,449,663.30	1,773,522.87	41,943,060.17	49.25%
2024	105,300.00	5,911,254.00		6,016,554.00	7.06%
Total	34,676,345.96	46,134,191.38	4,353,522.87	85,164,060.21	100.00%
	40.72%	54.17%	5.11%	100.00%	
Total 2017-2024	50,931,134.96	47,684,294.38	5,997,522.87	104,612,952.21	
	48.69%	45.58%	5.73%	100.00%	

* Year of launch of the funding programmes for the Culture Program, regardless of the funding authority

Positive aspects of the grant management in the period 2021-2024 reported in the qualitative research:

- **The general adoption of the evaluation model for cultural projects based on competition and clear criteria, the involvement of evaluators** with competences in the cultural field and the specifics of the funding program, and the evaluation grid with reasoned scores, considered a standard in the field of cultural project funding in Romania.
- **Constant feedback and process adjustment:** a highly appreciated aspect was the openness of the Centre for Projects to feedback and process adjustment based on it. Evaluators noted that their feedback was taken into account and that there were visible improvements in the subsequent evaluation grids.
- **Digitization of the evaluation process:** the evaluation process was facilitated by the digitization of procedures, which made access to information and documents much easier and more efficient. This was considered particularly important for the smooth running of the evaluations.
- **Sufficient time to discuss contestations:** in the contestation process, evaluators appreciated that they were given sufficient time to discuss and analyze the contestations in detail, which contributed to a fairer and more informed evaluation.
- **Evaluation panels** with relevant persons on specific programmes (e.g. on the Energy! or Creative Schools Grants); evaluation panels included, in most cases, relevant specialists for the specific programmes, which ensured a proper evaluation.
- **Careful monitoring and support to applicants:** another positive aspect was the monitoring of projects by the Centre for Projects, which was seen as a way of supporting applicants and ensuring that they learn and develop for the future.
- **Effective interaction and support provided by the Centre for Projects to evaluators:** the working relationship with the Centre for Projects was praised for its timeliness and clarity, including in the way information and evaluation grids were provided.
- **Rigorous but flexible project selection process,** allowing adaptation to the specific context of each funding programme.

- **Recommendations provided to beneficiaries** whose projects were selected for funding following the evaluation to support them in implementation, feedback which has been taken on board and has led to improvements in project practice and management.
 - **Good cooperation of monitors with the Centre for Projects:** monitors appreciated the openness and professionalism of the Centre for Projects team. Communication was effective, both directly and by electronic correspondence. The monitors emphasized that the Centre for Projects was responsive to the feedback received and acted promptly to resolve any problems identified during the monitoring process. It also provided the necessary interview spaces and organized interviews online when necessary. This logistical support simplified and streamlined the monitoring process.
 - **Collaborative approach with cultural operators in the monitoring process:** Another positive aspect was the focus on collaboration with cultural operators. The monitors did not just check the compliance of the projects with the monitoring grid, but entered into dialog and tried to understand the context in which the projects were implemented. This attitude contributed to an atmosphere of support and trust between stakeholders.
- Impact**
- Overall, the way in which the funding programmes have been designed and the related funding mechanism represent good practice. The mechanism described leads to results that are reflected in the quality of the projects, their ability to be effective and to attract diverse audiences.
- Thus, in the case of projects financed by the Centre for Projects and by the Timiș County for the implementation of the core Cultural Programme in 2021-2023, on the basis of the funding programmes open to cultural operators mentioned in the updated application file, it was ensured:
- **Transparency regarding the financial allocations,** both in terms of amount and in terms of decision-making on funding.
 - A framework **that allowed the documentation of the dialog between cultural operators and the Curatorial Team, ensuring transparency in terms of the support received by cultural operators for their**

- projects** and equal treatment of the projects in the application file submitted for funding.
- **A framework that allowed the documentation of how the consistency of the projects with the application file was ensured, together with their quality,** based on the evaluations made by the cultural bids/projects evaluation committees, applying clear scoring grids.
 - **A post-award project management and monitoring framework** with stable rules and procedures.
- In the case of projects funded by the Centre for Projects and CECART on the basis of open, competitive calls, both for the consolidation and expansion of the Cultural Programme, the approach ensured:
- **Diversifying beneficiaries and encouraging innovation,** as funding more projects, usually smaller than those funded through non-competitive calls, increased the diversity of cultural ideas and initiatives, supporting innovation and increased creativity. Each competitive call attracted operators with different perspectives, offering greater opportunities to discover and support new and original projects.
 - **Audience development and flexibility,** as competitive calls have enabled the funding of a very wide range of projects, and have had a greater capacity to adapt to the needs and preferences of diverse audiences, thus being able to reach and engage audiences relatively less targeted by other projects.
 - **Accessibility and inclusiveness,** as the competitive calls opened up opportunities for collaborations between a mix of cultural and non-cultural operators, encouraging cross-disciplinary approaches, mixed project teams, lesser-known organizations alongside locally established organizations, with the implicit participation of a more diverse audience.
 - **Efficiency and accountability in the allocation of funds,** through a competitive selection process involving panels comprising experts in the field of the funded projects and independent evaluators, based on clear and transparent criteria. The Centre for Projects and CECART managed the Culture Programme grants in this way, which ensured a more efficient and transparent use of funds. As a

result, cultural operators were motivated to submit quality projects and take responsibility for their implementation.

- **Reduced risks for funding authorities** by ensuring an adequate and stable funding framework and democratization of cultural production, together with the creation of funding ceilings in the calls to reduce the risk associated with the realization of a large project with a large budget versus a small project with a smaller budget.

Focus

Beyond the good practice of funding programmes for cultural operators, a particular situation is that of the funding programmes for individuals: artists and other professionals in the cultural sector, organized within the Power Station component of the Cultural Programme, namely the funding programmes for artistic creation, journalism and mobility grants. These funding programmes were organized and managed by the Centre for Projects.

- **The programme *Energie! Artistic Creation Grants*** supported, in 2022, from the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara, the creation of artists in the fields of visual arts, literature, music and sound arts, theater, dance, performance, digital arts and new media.
- **The programme *Energie! Creation Grants*** in 2023, and re-launched in 2024, funded creation and cultural journalism from the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara.
- **The programme *Power Station++ / Mobilities for professionals in the cultural sector*** funded training internships and travel grants for professionals working in the cultural field, run by the Centre for Projects, from amounts allocated from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture.

Given their character of supporting individuals, as well as the less bureaucratic context, in terms of administrative costs, of accessing funding, these funding programmes are excellent for supporting creators and other professionals in the cultural sector, especially young/emerging ones.

Energy!

The objectives of the Creative scholarships programmes were: to support contemporary artistic creation, to develop professionals in the cultural and creative sectors by supporting the continuity of artistic activity, to increase citizens’ access to culture by exposing them to new cultural creations and familiarizing them with specific research and creative processes, as well as to generate contributions to the implementation of the Cultural Programme (*Power Station* component) and to the Cultural Strategy of the Municipality of Timișoara 2014-2024 (Timișoara Creativa).

In terms of the funding mechanism, the creative scholarships amounted to 11,280 RON (2022 edition) or 12,500 RON (2023 and 2024 editions), for the conceptualization and development of a new artistic project, the production of art works, the support of current activity and for the public presentation of creations.

Beyond achieving the set objectives (supporting contemporary artistic creation, developing professionals, increasing citizens’ access to culture, contributing to the implementation of strategic cultural objectives in Timișoara) the awarding of

Power Station++ Programme | Mobilities for cultural professionals

The programme was unique in Romania, in terms of its funding mechanism, representing a good practice from a number of reasons:

- **The programme stands for funding for individuals, based on GO no 51/1998.** GO no 51/1998 allows funding, through a competitive mechanism similar to the one dedicated to cultural operators,

grants for creation and artistic creation also allowed:

- **The activation of spaces of the Municipality of Timișoara,** given that a large number of artists organized events of various sizes and typologies for which they needed spaces. They were suitable for the organization of cultural events by the fellows and were enhanced and developed a profile through their use.
- **The opportunity to carry out small-scale cultural projects that would have had little chance of competing with larger projects if they had been submitted to other funding programmes.** The ideas, creativity and energy of independent creators, especially emerging ones, but with less administrative experience in preparing more complex funding applications and organizing cultural projects of larger size and complexity, were not lost. They received adequate funding in the form of creative scholarships. Moreover, these types of funding opened up the possibility for artists and cultural journalists to gain experience in accessing funds, in organizing small projects for which they were responsible, and for some of them it was a first step to access funding for cultural projects.

also to individuals, on the basis of a funding contract between the contracting authority and an artist/creator or cultural professional. But this type of funding is less frequently used by funding bodies, both Romanian and foreign, which as a rule avoid contracting individuals, as they are reluctant about how to impose contractual conditions and responsibilities to natural persons. The decision of

the Centre for Projects to finance individuals for the realization of mobilities is a pioneering initiative in Romania. It has contributed to the development of the capacity of cultural professionals to be present on the European scene and of international professionals to be present in Timișoara.

- **The funding was granted in a simplified manner,** covering accommodation and meals/daily expenses in the form of lump sums, indirect expenses (maximum 5% of the total grant), also in the form of lump sums,

and only transportation expenses on the basis of a statement of actual expenses (based on supporting documents).

- **The programme provided essential opportunities for skills development and international networking** for its beneficiaries. It supports the strengthening of cultural links and facilitates the exchange of knowledge between artists and experts from different backgrounds, encouraging innovation and diversity in the European cultural landscape.

↓ Scales, Cristina Varga - Energie! Burse de Creație, Timișoara, 17 august 2024



Bune practici

- **Utilizarea programelor de finanțare cu apeluri necompetitive pentru creșterea calității proiectelor din programul de bază** al Capitalei Europene a Culturii și pentru asigurarea unui cadru de monitorizare a proiectelor obiectiv și care asigură excelența artistică.
- **Încurajarea excelenței artistice, a inovației și a incluziunii prin dezvoltarea și implementarea de Programe de finanțare competitive,** care au completat și extins programul de bază al Programului Timișoara 2023.

- **Asigurarea transparenței privind alocările financiare,** atât în ceea ce privește cuantumul, cât și în ceea ce privește luarea deciziilor privind finanțarea proiectelor culturale.
- **Utilizarea finanțărilor destinate persoanelor fizice** pentru a încuraja și creatorii, artiștii și operatorii culturali mai mici, nu doar pe cei cu o capacitate ridicată de accesare și gestiune a fondurilor.
- **Susținerea conexiunilor pentru profesioniștii din domeniul cultural** din Timișoara cu alți profesioniști și cu inițiative similare, precum și a complementarităților cu finanțările naționale și internaționale.

New and improved spaces for culture

Infrastructure investments were an important part of the processes that moved the Timișoara 2023 Programme forward, supporting the realization of the Cultural Programme and contributing to its sustainability.

These investments were made from sums earmarked for this purpose in the local budgets of the Municipality of Timișoara and of Timiș County, as well as from the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture, by transfer to local budgets. In addition, the Municipality of Timișoara has attracted European funds to carry out some of the planned investments.

For various reasons, the needed investments in the cultural infrastructure encountered difficulties and stagnation over the years, and in relation to the plan in the Bidbook, the investment objectives were (re)defined and prioritized in order to be able to accommodate the time span of the exercise of the title of Cultural Capital, to support the implementation of the Cultural Programme and to represent a lasting legacy for the city.

EO no. 42/2019 established the needed financial measures to support the implementation of the Program, including funding from the local municipal and county budgets, as well as transfers from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture. In addition, the Ministry of Culture has planned direct investments, such as those in Hall 2 of the National Theatre in Timișoara. The list of infrastructure objectives related to the Timișoara 2023 Programme was modified during the preparation and implementation period, being part of the (re)updated Cultural Programme, approved by the Minister of Culture, based on proposals from local authorities.

The main objectives of the investments made into the development of spaces and facilities were to increase the visibility of the city through the use and promotion

of existing and new cultural spaces, to develop the local capacity to support a variety of cultural events and to ensure the accessibility of these spaces for all audiences, including vulnerable groups. There have been significant challenges in implementing these objectives. Some infrastructure projects have been completed and developed, contributing to the success of the Programme, while others have remained unrealized due to various difficulties, such as lack of financial resources or funding delays.

The **Municipality of Timișoara** has had a crucial role in the management of the space for culture. Notable achievements include the renovation of the Victoria and Timiș cinemas, which were opened near the beginning of Timișoara's ECoC year.

The Victoria Cinema was reopened in September 2022 and the Timiș Cinema in October 2023, bringing new and modernized spaces for cultural events to the city. These cinemas played a key role in supporting the Cultural Programme, attracting large audiences. In 2024, the Studio Cinema and the Freidorf neighborhood cinema also opened in the context of the European Capital of Culture, with a different cultural profile, complementing the city's artistic offer. All these cinemas are managed by the Centre for Projects, which has also rehabilitated the Bastion Galleries, with funds from the local budget, which were then made available to organizations and individuals part of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and not only.

The investments made by the Municipality of Timișoara aimed to develop spaces dedicated to art and culture, to transform historic buildings into

multipurpose cultural venues, to support initiatives at the intersection of art and technology, and to reintroduce previously unused spaces into the public circuit, all contributing to the creation of a vibrant and attractive cultural ecosystem for locals and tourists alike. The objectives have been selected to ensure a positive impact on the quality of life of residents by creating opportunities for recreation, cultural education and social inclusion.

One of the biggest challenges faced by the Municipality of Timișoara was related to the funding from the state budget, which was reduced compared to the initial estimate and whose legal framework was delayed. This prevented the realization of major projects, such as the development of a large events hall or the MX- Multiplexity project. The Municipality of Timișoara had to prioritize other projects according to the available funds and the ability to complete them by the end of 2023. In addition to funding issues, the Municipality of Timișoara also had difficulties related to its administrative capacity and its relations with the construction market, experiencing difficulties in attracting and working with large and reliable builders. This was a significant problem that took time to remedy, affecting the implementation of infrastructure projects. Due to these delays and uncertainties, the planning and implementation of cultural infrastructure has been marked by constant time pressure, leading to a series of compromises. In the context of a European Capital of Culture, where preparations and executions had to be very rigorous and well scheduled, this lack of predictability was particularly problematic.

The **Timiș County** managed directly or through subordinated institutions the investments needed for the Timișoara 2023 Programme: the National Museum of Banat, the Timișoara National Museum of Art, the Banat Village Museum, the Merlin Theatre, CECART, the Timiș County Library. According to the institutional representatives, only a part of Timiș County's investment proposals were approved, while the main infrastructure investment objectives were determined based on the proposals and the needs that the institutions of culture subordinated to the County have presented.

Investments have primarily focused on improving the quality and capacity of existing cultural spaces, such as those of the National Museum of Art in Timișoara, in order to be able to host world-class art exhibitions like the one dedicated to the sculptor

Constantin Brâncuși. In the Banat Village Museum, the construction of a new visitable restoration laboratory took place. In other cases, investments were directed towards technical equipment and other facilities needed for cultural events.

The challenges faced by the Timiș County were primarily related to the late allocation of funds, which shortened the implementation period, putting great pressure on the team to complete the investments on time and affecting the ability to carry out the major investments initially planned, leading to a reorientation towards temporary and more rapid investments, that would ensure good conditions for the Cultural Programme. At the same time, some investment projects, such as the rehabilitation of the Timiș County Library, were abandoned. The representatives of the Timiș County also mentioned the negative impact of the clarification of the legal framework for the realization of investments, which affected the efficient implementation. According to the legislation in place, the Timiș County could not start the procurement procedures without the confirmation of financial resources, which caused administrative bottlenecks. Thus, until the funds were officially allocated in the budget through transfers from the Ministry of Culture, the team did not have the necessary budgetary certainty to initiate the investments.

One of the **Ministry of Culture's** own investment objectives was the project "Extension of the Studio Hall of the Mihai Eminescu National Theatre, rehabilitation of facades and equipping with stage mechanisms", which is still in progress at the time of writing this report.

In terms of public budgetary sources, the estimate (understood as the estimated value of the investment at the time of approval of the technical project), project contracting and budget execution as on 30.06.2024 is as follows:

- from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture, including transfers to local budgets, RON 114,659,000 were allocated, of which RON 113,913,234 (99.35%) were contracted and of which RON 77,102,205 (67.69%) were spent by 30.06.2024.
- from the budget of the Municipality of Timișoara (separately from the amounts transferred from the Ministry of Culture), the estimated budget for investments in infrastructure objectives amounted

to RON 361,922,945, of which RON 100,836,561 (27.86%) was contracted and, of which RON 94,317,341 (93.53%) were spent by 30.06.2024.

- from the budget of Timiș County (separately from the amounts transferred from the Ministry of Culture), RON 1,256,081 were allocated, of which RON 1,075,988 (85.66%) were contracted and of which RON 1,075,988 (100%) were spent by 30.06.2024.

Funds estimated, contracted and executed* (RON), in the period 2019-2024 (30.06.2024) for the investment objectives, according to GEO 42/2019 with subsequent amendments and additions and based on the list of cultural infrastructure related to the Timișoara 2023 Programme according to the Cultural Programme updated by OMC 3365/25.10.2024.

*The execution of the investment objectives is possible until 31.12.2024 for the investment objectives managed by the Municipality of Timișoara and Timiș County, respectively until 30.06.2024 for the investment objectives managed by the National Theatre of Timișoara for the Ministry of Culture.

● **Municipality of Timișoara**

Source of funds	Estimated budget	Contracted budget	Spent budget
State budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture*	52,926,000	52,926,000	48,997,734
Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	360,597,956	99,118,387	92,599,167
Local budget of the Timiș County	0,00	0,00	0,00
Other sources	17,106,621	14,110,729	4,866,647
	430,630,577	166,155,116	146,463,549

● **Centre for Projects (for the Bastion Galleries)**

Source of funds	Estimated budget	Contracted budget	Spent budget
State budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture*	0,00	0,00	0,00
Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	1,325,000	1,325,000	1,325,000
Local budget of the Timiș County	0,00	0,00	0,00
Other sources	0,00	0,00	0,00
	1,325,000	1,325,000	1,325,000

● **Timiș County and subordinated institutions**

Source of funds	Estimated budget	Contracted budget	Spent budget
State budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture*	32,033,000	32,009,105	27,825,096
Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	0,00	0,00	0,00
Local budget of the Timiș County	1,256,081	1,075,988	1,075,988
Other sources	0,00	0,00	0,00
	33,289,081	33,085,093	28,901,083

● **Ministry of Culture**

Source of funds	Estimated budget	Contracted budget	Spent budget
State budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture*	29,700,000	28,978,129	279,375
Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	0,00	0,00	0,00
Local budget of the Timiș County	0,00	0,00	0,00
Other sources	0,00	0,00	0,00
* GEO 42/2019	29,700,000	28,978,129	279,375

In total, the budget for the Investment Programme had an estimated value of almost RON 500 million, out of which about RON 230 million was contracted and about RON 177 million was spent.

As a percentage, approximately 46% of the estimated budgets were contracted and approximately 77% of the contracted funds were executed as at 30.06.2024,

but the percentage will increase until mid-2025, when the investment objective related to Hall 2 of the National Theatre Timișoara (Ministry of Culture) must be completed. Moreover, at 31.12.2024 the contracted amounts related to Cinema Timiș (funds from the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture) have been also spent, and the investment objective was completed during the period of writing this report.

Budgets related to the Investment Programme from 2017-30.06.2024 and their contracting, absorption and utilization rates (in RON)

Source of funds	Estimated budget	Contracted budget	Spent budget
State budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture*	114,659,000	113,913,234	77,102,205
Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	361,922,956	100,443,387	93,924,167
Local budget of the Timiș County	1,256,081	1,075,988	1,075,988
Other sources	17,106,621	14,110,729	4,866,647
	494,944,658	229,543,338	176,969,007

Absorption rate and rate of fund utilisation per funding source and from the total budgets

Source of funds	Contracted budget from estimated budget	Spent budget from contracted budget	Spent budget of each funding source from total spent budget	Contracted budget from total contracted budget
State budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture*	99.35%	67.69%	43.57%	49.63%
Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	27.75%	93.51%	53.07%	43.76%
Local budget of the Timiș County	85.66%	100.00%	0.61%	0.47%
Other sources	82.49%	34.49%	2.75%	6.15%
	46.38%	77.10%	100.00%	100.00%

The contribution to the budget of the Investment Programme in terms of the sources of funding spent shows that the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture, had the most important contribution (approx. 49%), followed by the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara (approx. 44%), funds from other

Proportion of each source of funding for the Investment Programme budgets in the period 2017-30.06.2024

Source of funds	Estimated budget	Contracted budget	Spent budget
State budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture*	23.17%	49.63%	43.57%
Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	73.12%	43.76%	53.07%
Local budget of the Timiș County	0.25%	0.47%	0.61%
Other sources	3.46%	6.15%	2.75%
	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

The impact of the challenges related to the financial flows dedicated to investments in cultural infrastructure that supported the realization of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was generally negative in the opinion of the organisers, who highlighted the following problems:

- **Lack of consistent action to carry out major infrastructure investments in the 2017-2020 period:** infrastructure investments were delayed and faced multiple difficulties, ranging from the regulatory framework for funding to the implementation of the procedures for making them. Only a limited number of important objectives for the city have finally been completed or are close to completion, thanks to the mobilization since 2021 of all parties responsible and decision-makers. This reprioritization and acceleration to complete the work on several key spaces for the city in the ECoC context from 2021 onwards has somewhat mitigated the general perception that the city has missed an important opportunity overall in terms of infrastructure goals.
- **Lack of adequate infrastructure for large-scale events:** respondents highlighted the lack of essential facilities such as a functional stadium, a multi-purpose hall or a modern concert hall, which would have allowed the organization of large-scale cultural events. This deficiency severely limited the potential

sources, attracted exclusively by the Municipality of Timișoara (approx. 6%), and the local budget of Timiș County accounted for only approx. 0.5% of the total funds contracted. The order is also maintained when it comes to the ratio of allocated and contracted amounts.

of the Programme to leave a lasting legacy and to position Timișoara as a cultural hub of European importance. A large proportion of respondents emphasized that due to delays and lack of sufficient funding, no significant investments have been made to leave a lasting legacy of Timișoara's year as European Capital of Culture.

- **Insufficient predictability and prioritization in infrastructure investments:** participants mentioned that more predictability in the allocation of funds for infrastructure would have been needed. Also, a higher percentage of the Cultural Programme budget should have been directed towards infrastructure development, as this would have had a sustainable impact and would have contributed to the continued development of the city. Investments in infrastructure would have created a physical backbone that would have continued to serve the city beyond the end of the Cultural Programme.

Results

The main drivers behind the Municipality of Timișoara's decision decision to include the investment objectives in the funding list for the Timișoara 2023 Programme were focused on revitalizing and modernizing the city's cultural infrastructure, protecting and enhancing the historical

heritage, increasing access to culture and promoting community participation in cultural activities, taking into account the challenges outlined above.

The final selection of Timiș County's investment objectives was also marked by time and funding constraints. Mainly due to these considerations, the final list of these objectives did not focus on the creation of new infrastructure, but on improving the quality and capacity of the already existing facilities. The selection was based on the need to improve the cultural infrastructure and to provide optimal conditions for the organization of events and exhibitions, thus contributing to the success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The main arguments included the creation and modernization of multifunctional spaces to ensure the staging of cultural and artistic events, the provision of high-performance equipment to increase the value and quality of events, the fulfillment of museum standards necessary for the protection and presentation of

heritage, and the identification of new spaces for cultural activities.

Out of the 45 infrastructure objectives mentioned in GEO 42/2019 with subsequent amendments and additions, 34 objectives were completed as of 30.06.2024, 8 objectives were in progress (of which 4 objectives were in the process of completion, with a degree of completion of over 60%). For the investment objectives of large cultural infrastructure types (cinemas, exhibition spaces) that were completed, to be put into use, the investment also involved all the necessary equipment, without being mentioned in detail in this report.

In the case of the Municipality of Timișoara, other infrastructure objectives were also completed and included in the cultural circuit of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, such as the courtyard and the ground floor of the Centre for Projects, Gallery 5 or the Ștefania Palace.

The situation of infrastructure objectives in the official Investment Programme as follows at 30.06.2024:

● Municipality of Timișoara

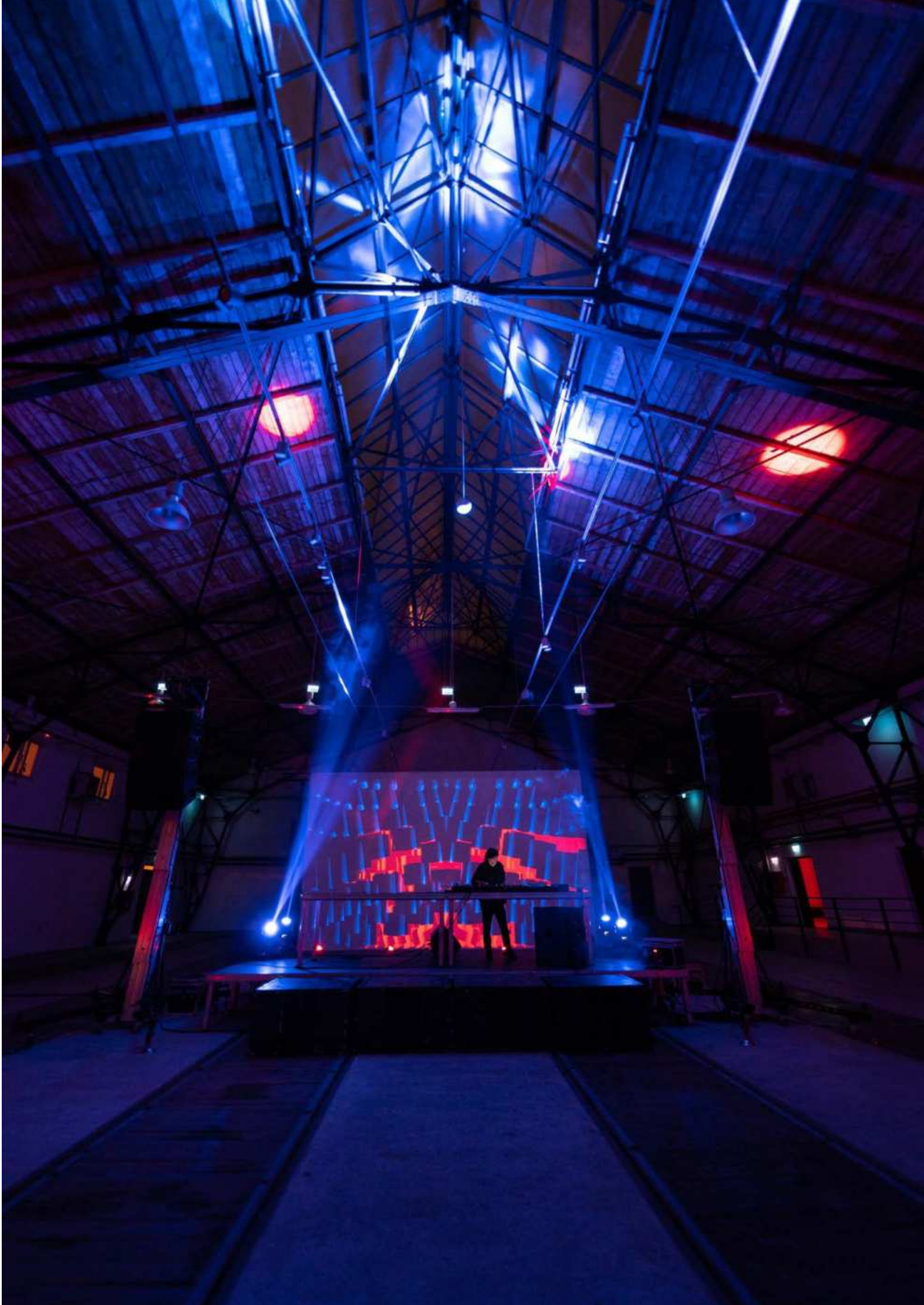
Investment objectives that were completed	Revitalization of the MultipleXity North Area (the urban space was enriched by redevelopment of green spaces and placement of street furniture elements)
	Cinema Timiș
	Kuncz Cultural and Educational Centre
	Cinema Victoria
	Palace of Culture - facade project
Investment objectives that are in progress	Bastion Galleries
	Cinema Studio (90% completion)
	Cinema Dacia (60% completion)
	Refunctionalization of the Multicultural Centre Mărășești (38% completion)
	Cinema Freidorf (60% completion)
Investment objectives that have not been started or are at the stage of obtaining the necessary authorizations	Refunctionalization of the building for the Cultural Centre - Iosefin Water Tower (25% completion)
	The Banat Philharmonic
	MultipleXity Zona Sud (it is envisaged to obtain a grant)
	Corneliu Mikloși Memorial House (in the process of submission for obtaining the necessary authorizations)
	Art Gallery - Calea Aradului

● Timiș County

Completed purchases	Bastion Info Centre	furniture and audio - video/ IT equipment.
	Timiș County	design project for the refurbishment of the Multifunctional Hall of the Administrative Palace, equipment and facilities.
	National Museum of Banat	air-conditioning system for the exhibition space; fixtures and fittings and equipment for the "Children's Laboratory - Museum Pedagogy"; street panels for exhibitions; metal showcases with integrated environmental control installation; metal display cases; interactive table; DOM 6M for 360 degree video projection.
	Timișoara National Museum of Art	video surveillance and anti-theft system; fire safety facilities; air-conditioning system rehabilitation; outdoor generator; lighting fixtures and accessories for permanent exhibitions; façade lighting installation; LED spotlights and accessories for exhibition halls; other equipment and fittings.
	Banat Village Museum	outdoor LED panels; multifunctional building for immersive exhibition of restoration/conservation processes; other equipment and facilities for restoration/conservation processes; other equipment and facilities.
	CECART	roof repairs and development of an exhibition space; audio amplification system; music score equipment; furniture and electronic equipment.
Purchases in progress	Timiș County Library "Sorin Titel"	customized meshes; interior design and equipment of spaces.
	Service Delivery Directorate	stage with sound system; equipment and facilities needed to organize events with 15,000 - 20,000 spectators.
	Banat Village Museum	geodesic tent with fittings, equipment and accessories.

● Ministry of Culture

Investment objectives in progress	Expansion of the Studio Hall of the Mihai Eminescu National Theater, rehabilitation of the facade and equipping with stage mechanisms (100% completed the design phase and about 11.1% degree of completion in the execution phase).
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The degree of completion of the various cultural infrastructure objectives within the Timișoara 2023 Programme was significantly influenced by the complexity of the projects, their scale and the capacity of the institutions responsible for their implementation. Larger scale projects, such as the rehabilitation of the Banat Philharmonic, the MultipleXity South Zone and the Iosefin Water Tower, were delayed or not started due to lack or delay of funding, but also due to administrative challenges, stringent requirements for permits and authorizations, and the complexity of the tendering and execution processes. In some cases, such as the

Organisers perception of the infrastructure available for the Timișoara 2023 Programme

In the period 2021-2023 a number of important investments have been made in the infrastructure for culture, more spaces have been made available to the community for the organization of activities and events with the public, and important investments have been made in the needed facilities for the organization of large-scale performances and exhibitions by flagship cultural institutions.

Despite these efforts, the survey among the cultural operators involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme shows divided opinions on the sufficiency and quality of the city’s cultural infrastructure. In fact, the qualitative phase of the research revealed a general perception that Timișoara’s cultural infrastructure was **insufficient** for the scale of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme, but that existing resources were **used creatively** to meet the challenges; this involved both adapting cultural productions to existing spaces and using unconventional spaces for the organized events (industrial halls, parks, public squares, courtyards, etc.).

Other interviewees appreciate the improvements made by the local authorities in terms of infrastructure and organization of public transport, arguing that people with mobility difficulties had better access to cultural events during the programme than in the

”Corneliu Mikloși” Memorial House, projects are at the authorization stage.

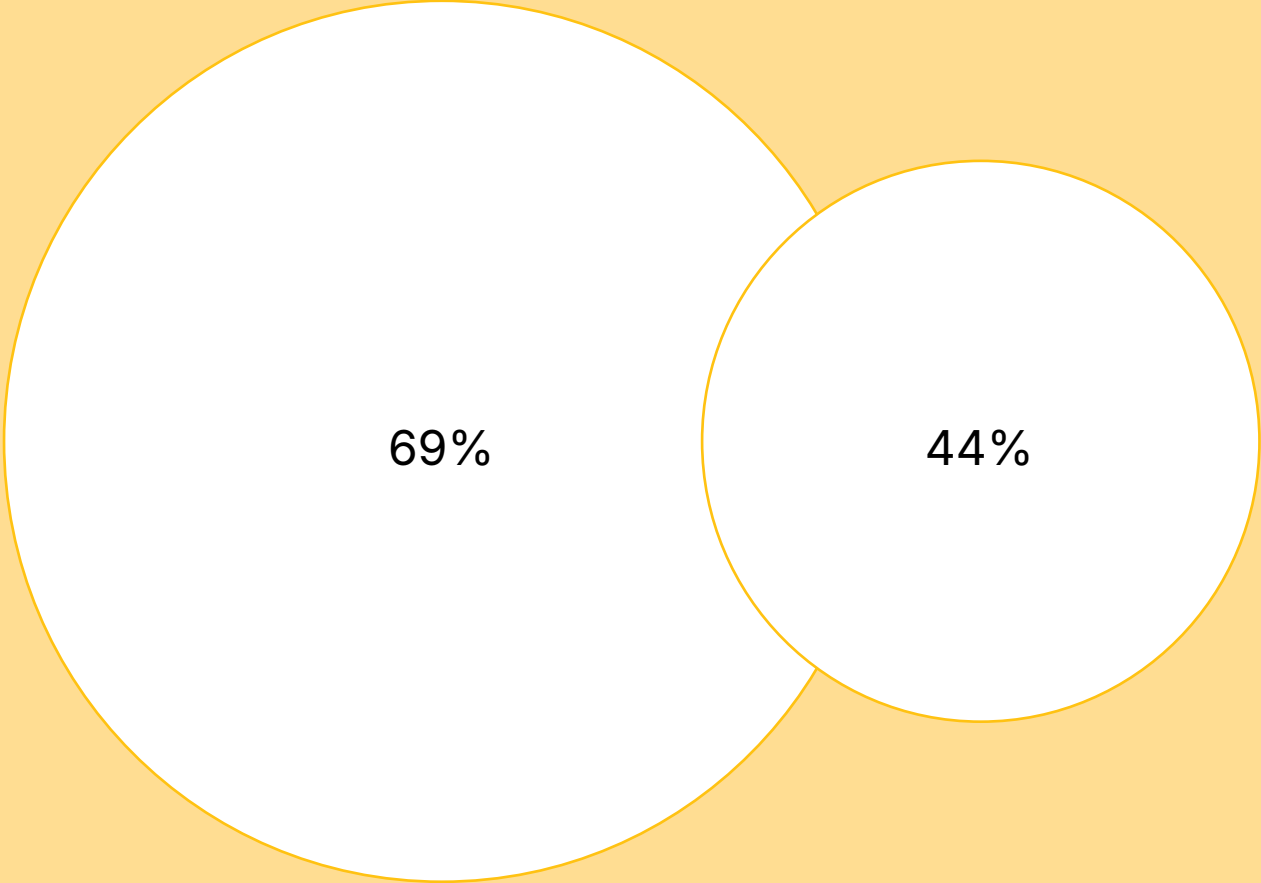
On the other hand, smaller projects or those not involving large-scale infrastructure works, such as the endowments for the National Museum of Banat, the Timișoara National Museum of Art or CECART, have been fully completed, mainly due to a lower degree of complexity, shorter execution time or simpler procurement procedures. These projects involve fewer complex administrative steps such as authorizations or major construction works.

previous period, as a result of the actions taken by the Timișoara Social Welfare Department and the Timișoara Public Transport Company. On the other hand, the lack of large venues is repeatedly pointed out by the interviewees, who express the need for large, technically equipped halls that can host large-scale events for several thousand people, such as a concert hall.

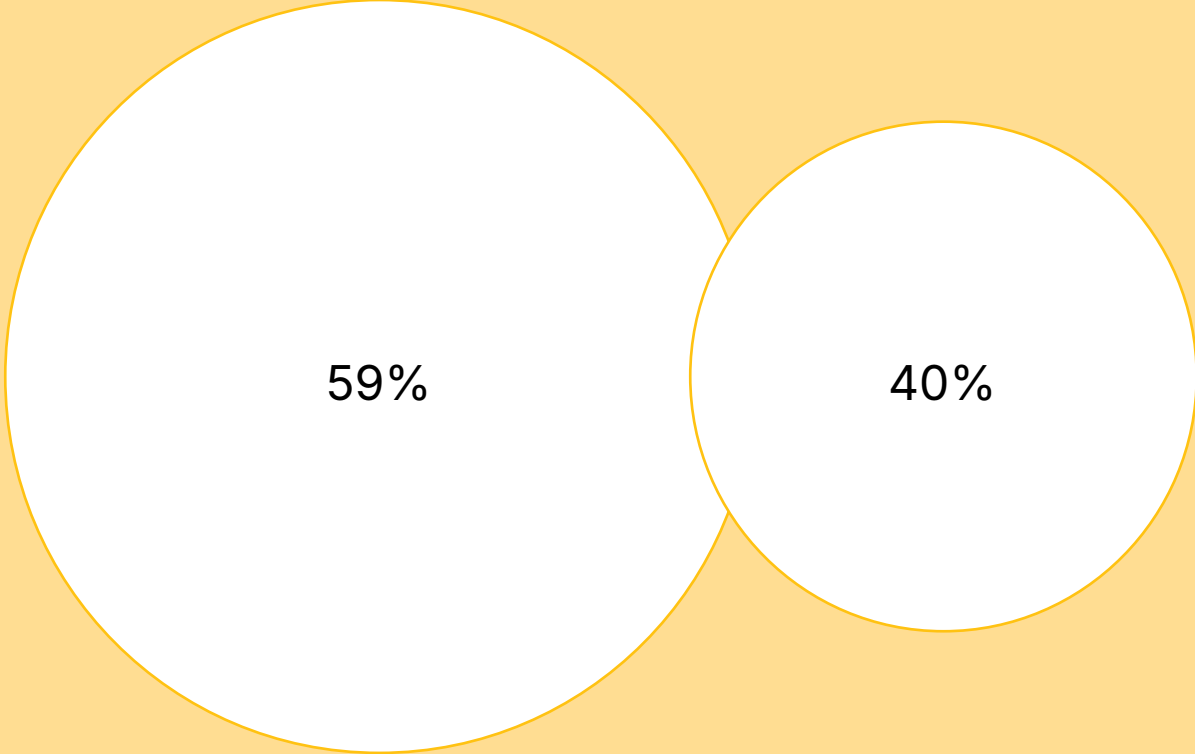
The cultural projects organized under the Timișoara 2023 Programme required **adaptability and innovative approaches** from the cultural operators in attracting a diverse audience, including occasional or non-participants in former cultural activities. Given that one of the major challenges of Timișoara’s cultural scene is the limited presence of adequate cultural spaces in relation to the needs of the cultural ecosystem, **organisers have harnessed and activated unconventional spaces**, adapting them to the particular initiatives they envisioned. This effort has contributed to urban regeneration in various parts of the city and to the integration of cultural activities into the life of the community, with a significant impact on public participation.

To this end, unconventional spaces were used, both from a **logistical** perspective (e.g. industrial halls, historical monuments such as the U Cazarme, parks,

69% of the cultural operators who participated in the quantitative phase of the survey **have a very good and good opinion of the infrastructure in Timișoara**, but only **44% considered it sufficient** in the 2021-2023 period to engage the public in cultural activities.



59% of the organisers had a very good and good opinion about the facilities and equipment available in the city, but only **40% considered them sufficient** for public participation in the activities of the Programme.



streets, squares in marginal neighborhoods, university campus, the Water Museum, inner courtyards, clubs, spaces around and on the Bega, etc.) and from a **conceptual** perspective (e.g. the 1306 Nursery, the Parallel City). Some cultural projects also included the **revitalization of peripheral areas of the city**. These projects have also contributed to improving social cohesion and quality of life in often neglected communities, in particular by attracting local audiences.

In addition, effective management of cultural spaces where events are not constantly taking place can involve **using them for additional activities**, such as workshops, educational projects or cultural mediation programmes, without changing their objectives. These spaces have often acted as incubators for strengthening the relationship between cultural operators and the public, cultural education and access to culture. Cultural content has also been designed and tailored in relation to the communities they have addressed. Benefits include building audience loyalty, reducing cultural barriers and turning occasional visitors into regular audiences.

This creativity may be what led to the positive assessment of cultural infrastructure in general in the quantitative phase.

Looking to the future, the current situation and limitations of the cultural infrastructure in Timișoara highlighted several significant challenges for the Timișoara 2023 Programme, according to the focus group discussions:

- **Lack of adequate spaces for large events:** Timișoara lacks the necessary infrastructure to host large-scale performances and events, such as large concerts or complex choreographies. The lack of a functional stadium or an adequate multi-purpose arena was a major obstacle.
- **Limitations of existing venues:** Even renovated cultural venues, such as cinemas, do not have the spatial capacity to support large-scale events. Organizers have had to use makeshift spaces, such as industrial halls, which do not meet the technical requirements of the events.
- **Lack of qualified technical staff:** The city suffers from a shortage of local specialists in key areas such as stage set, sound, lighting and projection. This has

forced organizers to bring in qualified staff from other cities, further complicating event logistics.

- **Problems with basic infrastructure:** Some public spaces did not have the necessary facilities to hold the events, such as adequate electricity supply, street lighting or accessibility for people with disabilities.
- **Pressure on spaces managed by the Centre for Projects:** The high demand for spaces for cultural events exceeded the capacity of the Centre for Projects to accommodate all requests. This has created tensions between organizers and authorities, especially among NGOs and smaller cultural operators.
- **Problems with the communication infrastructure:** The lack of effective communication platforms in the preparatory years and in the first part of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, combined with the low interest of the local press in cultural events, made it difficult to promote them. In addition, competition for street publicity resources was fierce, limiting the visibility of the events.

Impact

One of the legacy elements of the Timișoara 2023 Programme is the city's infrastructure, and organizers who are positive about the local infrastructure note that the Programme has played an important role in revitalizing several production, exhibition and film screening spaces.

Investments in the cultural infrastructure were essential to ensure the success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and to ensure a sustainable legacy to support the city's long-term cultural development.

Although there was criticism that a major infrastructure objective, such as a multi-purpose hall, was not developed, a positive effect of this choice was the **revitalization of existing spaces in the city**. Rather than focusing on one large project, investments were distributed to multiple cultural infrastructure objectives, such as the rehabilitation of cinemas, the modernization of museums, and the creation of cultural centers in various locations. This has led to **an increase in the number of functional cultural spaces and improved access to culture for city residents**, revitalizing historic areas and promoting community development. Thus, a diversified network of cultural facilities has

been created, contributing to the revitalization and enhancement of different parts of the city, providing a cultural infrastructure adapted to local needs and tourism potential.

Another positive aspect related to the cultural infrastructure within the Timișoara 2023 Programme was the creative use of spaces that were not previously considered part of the city's cultural landscape. In the absence of adequate and sufficient infrastructure, numerous *"pop up events"* were organized that activated and mobilized unconventional spaces, including bridges, squares, closed boulevards or parks. These temporary interventions demonstrated that the **cultural act does not have to be limited to classical institutions, but can also take place in other contexts**. This openness and mobilization of diverse spaces has left an imprint on the city and has helped to change people's perceptions of culture, showing them that it can take place in unconventional places, thus providing a more varied and accessible cultural offer.

The new cultural spaces and modernized infrastructure have allowed more cultural events, exhibitions and performances. This has helped to increase the city's cultural capacity, attracting both local and international cultural operators.

The investments made have ensured wider access to culture for different audiences, including vulnerable groups. Multifunctional spaces, rehabilitated cinemas and community spaces provided opportunities for the organization of social and cultural activities in areas where such facilities were limited or non-existent.

Investments in cultural infrastructure related to the Timișoara 2023 Programme managed by the Municipality of Timișoara have mainly resulted in the **revitalization of the city's cinema infrastructure**. Timișoara lacked adequate cinema infrastructure for film festivals, and public cinemas had been closed for almost 10 years. With the Timișoara 2023 Programme, these cinemas have been modernized and equipped to the highest standards, allowing the city to host large-scale events. As an indication, more than 20 film festivals took place in 2023, many of them part of the ECoC programme. This revitalization brought back audiences, who were large and enthusiastic, and gave the city back a vital cultural component, transforming cinemas into active spaces for events and cultural film programming.

Cinema Victoria reopened in September 2022 and Cinema Timiș in October 2023. The two cinemas, rehabilitated by the Municipality of Timișoara and managed by a dedicated team from the Centre for Projects, had a constant weekly program, which totaled until May 2024 over 1300 film screenings and events, of which almost 10% were followed by discussions with directors, actors or other guests, the selection focusing on auteur cinema, mainly European and Romanian.

Since their reopening and through May 2024, the two art-house cinemas have together recorded 109,504 admissions to film screenings, including numerous previews, exclusive screenings and festivals, as well as concerts, plays, lectures and other community events hosted in the two theaters.

According to annual statistics published by the National Centre of Cinematography, in 2023, Cinema Victoria ranked third in Romania in terms of the number of spectators in the top of single-screen cinemas, with the first places being occupied by two traditional cinemas that have been operating for decades, in Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca.

According to a press release dated May 30, 2024, in 2023 the average attendance of movie theaters nationwide was 19 spectators per screening, while the average number of spectators per screening was 60 at Cinema Victoria and 170 at Cinema Timiș. Average movie ticket prices at these cinemas were also lower compared to the average price of a movie ticket nationwide

At the same time, according to a press release from Cinema Victoria on September 4, 2024, nearly **36,000 moviegoers** of all ages attended the **601 film screenings and other events - concerts, dance and theater performances, lectures and debates** - held at Cinema Victoria over the past 12 months, bringing the total number of moviegoers to over 73,000 in the two years since its reopening.

In addition to events in cinemas, there have also been events in the venues managed by the Centre for Projects for the benefit of the community. More than 150 exhibitions, workshops, shows, performances, debates and other types of activities organized at Gallery 5, Bastion Galleries (Bastion 1, Bastion 2, Bastion 3), MX- Corneliu Miklosi Museum and Ștefania Palace, attracted in 2023 over 48,000 participants. Beyond the number of attendees, however, the most

important aspect of the *Spaces for the Community initiative* remains their ability to empower the local cultural scene by hosting events and programming of cultural, social, educational or civic activities organized by them and other organizations or individuals from elsewhere in Romania or internationally, which have been more visible in Timișoara in this way. In 2023, 75 cultural operators, including artists and informal groups, accessed these spaces and organized events with an audience, for local audiences and tourists.

The investments managed by the Timiș County have had a significant positive impact on the development of cultural infrastructure in the region, improving access to culture, creating optimal conditions for the organization of cultural and educational events, and contributing to the revitalization of the county's cultural heritage. These efforts have been instrumental in creating a diverse and accessible cultural environment for the local community and visitors to Timișoara.

The analysis of the benefits of investments in cultural infrastructure managed by the Timiș County highlights a number of positive contributions that have enriched the cultural scene and increased public access to quality events: diversification of types of cultural events and increased public access; increased capacity and quality of exhibitions; optimal conditions for organizing large-scale exhibitions; enhancement of existing spaces and creation of new cultural opportunities; promotion of local culture and heritage through modern communication equipment; improved safety and infrastructure for visitors; increased professionalism in performances and cultural productions.

The impact of the cultural infrastructure related to the Timișoara 2023 Programme has also manifested at international level, contributing to the introduction of the city and the county in the international tourist circuit. A remarkable example was the exhibition dedicated to the artist Constantin Brâncuși, which attracted tourists from various countries, who were willing to wait in long queues and make reservations to visit it. Thus, investments in cultural infrastructure and the organization of prestigious events have had a beneficial effect in increasing the visibility and attractiveness of Timișoara as a cultural destination.

Positive aspects of infrastructure management for culture and community in the context of the Timișoara 2023 Programme are:

- **Learning from experience and process improvement:** the experiences and problems encountered in 2023 led to process improvements to avoid overlapping of events and to reduce noise interference issues. The Municipality of Timișoara has also initiated a project to digitize the event authorization process, which is expected to simplify and streamline the organization of future events.
- **Revitalization of the cinema infrastructure:** the reopening of the Victoria and Timiș cinemas were considered a major achievement. They successfully modernized and revived cinema culture in Timișoara. The large number of film festivals organized in these locations and the large number of audiences, proved the success of this initiative and confirmed the municipality's decision to manage them for the benefit of culture and the community.
- The Centre for Projects has gained extensive experience in managing community spaces, which have hosted numerous cultural events within the Timișoara 2023 Programme. Among the **most active of these spaces were MultipleXity (MX) and the Bastion Galleries**, each playing an important role in diversifying the cultural offer and facilitating public access to artistic events. MultipleXity, a multi-purpose cultural venue, was designed as a meeting place for art, technology and education, allowing for exhibitions, workshops, conferences and interactive events. This flexibility has allowed cultural operators to experiment with new forms of expression and attract a diverse audience, including youth groups and diverse local communities. The Bastion Galleries provided a venue for exhibition events, performances and cultural activities that showcased local identity and international collaborations. The management of these spaces required the Center for Projects to adopt an efficient management structure, maintain a constant flow of activities and actively involve the community, which contributed substantially to the success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and to the long-term development of the cultural infrastructure in the city.

- **Consultation and accessibility:** an example of good practice is the collaboration of some festival organizers with representatives of people with disabilities to ensure full accessibility of the events. This was seen as a good practice approach, suggesting that such consultations should become standard practice.
- **Improvement of the public spaces:** following the experiences of 2023, efforts were made to improve the public infrastructure, such as the installation of ramps, street lighting, water fountains, and other necessary amenities to support the organization of cultural events in public spaces.
- **New venue development and adaptation:** from the experience of managing new spaces that opened in 2023, infrastructure and budgetary needs for maintenance were identified. The local administration became more aware of the directions of development needed to support future cultural events.
- **Mobilizing unconventional spaces:** a notable achievement was the activation of spaces that had not previously been used for cultural activities. Events organized in unconventional locations have shown that cultural work can take place in a variety of spaces, not only in traditional cultural venues. This has left a positive mark on the way Timișoara's residents view culture.
- **Support and openness from the administration:** the local administration has shown openness and support in mobilizing and activating these unconventional spaces, contributing to the diversification of the city's cultural offer.
- **Positive impact of the investments made by Timiș County:** the investments made by Timiș County in relevant equipment and facilities have had a significant impact on the capacities of the institutions to organise better and more diverse events and activities. The mobile stages purchased now allow the organization of large festivals.

The challenges and shortages associated with the infrastructure for culture and the services associated with its management have also had a number of

negative effects on the Timișoara 2023 Programme, identified as follows:

- **Decrease in the quality of the artistic act:** the lack of adequate spaces and qualified technical staff required organizers of cultural events to make significant compromises. For example, the complexity of the scenography was reduced or performances were adapted to take place in inappropriate venues, which affected the overall quality of some of the events.
- **Limited audience participation:** the city's insufficient infrastructure limited its ability to attract international audiences and organize large-scale events. In addition, limited accommodation capacity and the lack of large venues such as a stadium or multi-purpose arena reduced the number of external participants, diminishing the potential impact of the programme.
- **Overburdening of technical staff:** overburdening of existing staff, especially technical staff, was a major problem. Due to the large number of events and the lack of qualified staff, those involved were overworked, leading to burnout and even resignations. This adversely affected the ability to maintain high standards in running events.

5

International Relations



Visibility and new strategic connections

The Title of Timișoara as the European Capital of Culture had a significant impact on the city’s international image, reinforcing old connections, fostering new strategic connections and enhancing its visibility on the European stage. Through a series of cultural, diplomatic, and promotional activities, Timișoara was able to strengthen its global reputation while building long-term relationships that will likely benefit the city in the future.

The efforts reflecting these results have been built on three main guiding principles at the level of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme.

Interconnection	Opening up the local scene to Europe, both in terms of visibility and as a place for cultural operators to work and showcase their initiatives.
Adopting a European agenda	Promoting the city as a platform for international dialogue, prioritizing a European agenda. This included addressing: artist status and copyright, sustainability of cultural events, gender equality, vulnerable communities, inclusive cultural programs, and youth engagement.
Recognizing the European character of Timișoara	The Cultural Programme aimed to recognize and enhance the value of Europe at home.

On the other hand, one of the clearest outcomes of Timișoara’s ECoC year was the enhanced diplomatic relations the city cultivated. Numerous high-profile visits, such as those from the President of Germany, from the President of the Republic of Moldova, European Commission officials, ministers from other countries, and delegations from Timișoara’s twin cities, showcased Timișoara’s role as a European

cultural hub. These visits were not only symbolic but facilitated long-lasting international relationships. For example, Timișoara’s cooperation with Germany, particularly through joint cultural projects like the symphonic concerts with the city of Gera, demonstrated a deepening of ties on cultural and diplomatic level.



Public diplomacy

Strengthening twin cities relations

The designation of Timișoara as the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2023 provided a significant impetus for deepening the city's relationships with its twin cities. The title not only enhanced Timișoara's cultural profile but also fostered closer ties and collaborative projects with its sister cities, showcasing the city's commitment to cultural exchange and mutual growth.

Throughout the ECoC year, Timișoara engaged in various cooperative initiatives with its twin cities, reinforcing its European character and promoting diversity as a driver of innovation and prosperity. Notable examples include:

Rueil Malmaison, France

Celebrating 30 years of partnership, Timișoara and Rueil Malmaison engaged in an artistic exchange where two painters created frescoes in both cities. This project highlighted the strong cultural ties and mutual appreciation between the two cities.

Gera, Germany

The extraordinary concert in September 2023 featuring the Timișoara Philharmonic and the Gera Philharmonic showcased Arnold Schoenberg's "Gurre-Lieder" with over 400 musicians and vocalists. This event underscored the deep cultural connections between Germany and Romania. The same concert took place in Gera earlier during the year.

Karlsruhe, Germany

The "Ballet of the Cities" video installation, presented in collaboration with Karlsruhe UNESCO City of New Media Arts, was a highlight of the ECoC Programme opening ceremony. This impressive video installation by media artist Jonas Denzel showcased choreographed dance scenes projected onto buildings, symbolizing the dynamic relationship between the two cities.

These initiatives not only strengthened Timișoara's ties with its twin cities but also highlighted the city's role as a vibrant cultural hub within Europe. The ECoC title served as a catalyst for these collaborations, fostering a spirit of unity and shared cultural heritage.

Strengthening diplomatic recognition

The European Capital of Culture title in 2023 significantly bolstered Timișoara's diplomatic profile, attracting numerous high-level visits and enhancing its international relations. This chapter highlights the key diplomatic engagements and the presence of ambassadors that underscored Timișoara's increasing image on the European scene.

High-Profile Visits

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier

In May 2023, President Steinmeier visited Timișoara as part of a state visit to Romania. During his visit, he attended a concert at the Philharmonic Hall, celebrating the city's status as the European Capital of Culture. He also toured the city with Mayor Dominic Fritz, learning about Timișoara's historical, economic, and cultural significance.



↑ Vizit of the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Timișoara, 26 May 2023

→ Opening Timișoara 2023, February 2023, Video mapping „Ballet of the City”, Jonas Denzel, photo Alex Robciuc



Moldovan President Maia Sandu

In January 2024, President Sandu visited Timișoara at the invitation of Mayor Dominic Fritz. She participated in the “Timișoara for European Values” award gala, where she was honored as the first laureate of this prize. The foundation of this award was a decision taken in 2023 to further underline Timișoara’s European commitment, and it will be continued every year.



↑ Visit of the Moldovan President Maia Sandu, Timișoara, 12 January 2024

Hungarian Minister of Regional Development Tibor Navracsics

In October 2023, Tibor Navracsics visited Timișoara and met with Mayor Dominic Fritz. The discussions focused on the ECoC program, given that both Timișoara and the Hungarian city of Veszprém held the title in 2023. The meeting also addressed regional development, multiculturalism, and the importance of Romania’s entry into the Schengen Area.



↑ Visit of the Hungarian Minister of Regional Development, Tibor Navracsics, Timișoara, 20 October 2023

Vice President of the Bundestag

The extraordinary concert in September 2023 featuring the Timișoara Philharmonic and the Gera Philharmonic was graced by the presence of the Vice President of the Bundestag, highlighting the strong cultural ties between Germany and Romania.



↑ Visit of the Vice President of the Bundestag, Timișoara, photo: Ervin Boer

Ministers of Culture and European Commissioner

The opening ceremony in February 2023 was attended by Adina Vălean, the European Commissioner for Transport, alongside Natália Milanová, the Minister of Culture of Slovakia, and Maša Vlaović, the Minister of Culture and Media of Montenegro, as well as other Secretaries of State for Culture from various countries. The closing ceremony in December 2023 was attended by Tamara Vujović, the new Minister of Culture and Media of Montenegro.



↑ Adina Vălean, European Commissioner for Transport, Timișoara, 12 January 2024

Diplomatic Corps

Opening Ceremony

The ECoC opening ceremony in February 2023 attracted over 50 ambassadors, demonstrating Timișoara’s growing competence in hosting international events with substantial diplomatic presence. This event marked the beginning of a year filled with cultural and diplomatic activities.

Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony of the ECoC year also saw significant diplomatic representation, with 30 embassies present. This high level of participation underscored the international recognition and support Timișoara garnered throughout its year as the European Capital of Culture.

Traditional Visit by the Diplomatic Corps

In 2023, Timișoara was designated as the host for the traditional visit organized by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the diplomatic corps in Bucharest. This annual event, held in different locations across the country, was brought to Timișoara in recognition

of its ECoC status. Diplomats had the opportunity to experience the city’s cultural and historical significance firsthand, including tours of key cultural sites and participation in various ECoC events, further enhancing Timișoara’s international profile.

Outside of these major events, Timișoara also welcomed numerous bilateral ambassador visits throughout the year. These visits focused on exploring bilateral opportunities for future cultural exchanges, further strengthening Timișoara’s international relationships and fostering long-term collaborations.

The Timișoara 2023 Programme also received the recognition of the Presidential Administration by granting the High Patronage of the President of Romania for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2023. This distinction is awarded every year by the President of Romania for a series of cultural events of high artistic expression and which contribute to the promotion of culture, the protection of cultural heritage and the encouragement of intercultural and interfaith dialogue.

↓ Closing Ceremony. Neverending Timișoara 2023, photo: Remus Dăescu



European Engagement and Institutional Relations

In strengthening connections with European Institutions, Timișoara had direct contact with the cabinets of six European Commissioners, including those overseeing culture, digitalization, and transparency. This enhanced interaction underscored Timișoara's proactive role within the European Union and its commitment to fostering strong institutional relationships.

A delegation of the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) of the European Parliament visited Timișoara in April 2023, meeting with local authorities, representatives of Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture, cultural operators and participating in various study visits at cultural institutions and organisation actively involved in the Cultural Programme.

Enhanced Interaction: The meeting with European Parliament President Roberta Metsola and video messages from European officials during key ceremonies symbolized the recognition Timișoara earned on the continental stage. The ceremony for the Timișoara Award for European Values, where President Maia Sandu was honored, also featured video messages from Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of Portugal, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, and the European Commissioner for Values and Transparency, Věra Jourová. These messages highlighted the broad support and recognition Timișoara received from high-ranking European officials.

Generators for Hope Campaign and support for Ukrainian Refugees: Timișoara's involvement in the "Generators for Hope" campaign, aimed at supporting Ukraine, further reinforced its European identity. This initiative, launched by the European Parliament and Eurocities, was designed to help Ukraine maintain essential services like hospitals, schools, and water supply systems by providing power generators. Timișoara contributed by sending four large generators, demonstrating solidarity with Ukraine and positioning itself as an active participant in the continent's social and political discourse.

In addition to this campaign, Timișoara played a significant role in **supporting Ukrainian refugees**. The city not only provided essential aid but also integrated refugees into the community, where they became more than just recipients of help. Many Ukrainian refugees actively contributed to the cultural life of Timișoara, participating in various cultural events and initiatives. This integration highlighted Timișoara's commitment to inclusivity and its role as a forward-thinking, responsible city.

These efforts have positioned Timișoara as a proactive and engaged member of the European community, committed to fostering cultural diplomacy and international cooperation. The ECoC title served as a catalyst for these initiatives, enhancing Timișoara's visibility and influence on the European a

Cultural Diplomacy

The year 2023 saw an unprecedented wave of cultural diplomacy actions, where the European Capital of Culture title became a platform for promoting Timișoara's values. The city used its rich multicultural heritage—built on diversity, tolerance, and freedom—as a central theme for its interactions with foreign delegations and international media. For example, Timișoara's positioning as a model of peaceful coexistence was highlighted through events that emphasized its history of ethnic and cultural integration, as well as its role in European innovation.

Collaborations with international networks, organizations and professionals

A highly active network within the European Capitals of Culture Programme has been the EU-Japan Fest, an organization that has consistently fostered cooperation with ECoC cities since 1983, facilitating cultural exchanges between Japan and European cities. The collaboration between the EU-Japan Fest and the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme began in 2022 and featured a series of activities in 2023.

Specifically, an EU-Japan Fest delegation, including Secretary General Shuji Kogi, participated in the Opening of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme from February 17-19, 2023, in Timișoara. The cooperation continued in July 2023 with an exchange program between the Béla Bartók Theoretical High School and the Senda Pan flute Children's Choir from Hiroshima, supported by the EU-Japan Fest and the Centre for Projects through the Power Station Programme, including a joint concert in Timișoara with members of the Bokréta Dance and Citera Ensemble of the Béla Bartók Theoretical High School, organized in september 2023.

Part of the efforts to attract international networks to Timișoara, has been also the hosting of the **General Assembly of the European Dancehouse Network (EDN)** within the D.A.N.C.E.TM– Dance. Artists. Network. Conference event organized between the 26-30 June 2023 in Timișoara by AREAL - Space for Choreographic Development, in partnership with the Centre for Projects. The purpose of the event

was to activate the Romanian contemporary dance scene and to develop connections between Romanian and international artists, producers and cultural organizations. It also brought to the attention of the community topics such as mental health and equity in the practice of contemporary dance.

The city of Timișoara is a Pilot City member in the **United Cities Local Governments** network. In this role, the representatives of the ECoC implementation team, upon the invitation of the Committee on culture of UCLG, participated in the annual conference of the **Culture Action Europe** organized in Elefsina in June 2023, Beyond the Obvious, as well as in the 9th annual conference of the **Culture Next** network held on the same occasion.

In October, for a week, Timișoara was host and learning space for a delegation from the Republic of Moldova, as part of an **exchange of experience** organized by the Centre for Projects, in partnership with the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GIZ GmbH in the Republic of Moldova** and the **Representation of the Solidarity Fund Foundation from Poland in the Republic of Moldova**. The exchange of experience "*Better cities, with the contribution of culture*" connected representatives of the local and central administration and Regional Development Agencies from the Republic of Moldova, with representatives of the Municipality of Timișoara, the Centre for Projects and cultural actors from Timișoara.

At the end of October 2023, the forum "Grantmaking for Culture and International Connection", organised by the Centre for Projects and the **Creative Europe Desk Romania**, within the **Project Management Unit - Ministry of Culture**, was hosted in Timișoara. The debates and presentations at the event brought together over 100 participants from Romania and abroad: independent cultural operators, representatives of public cultural institutions, the Ministry of Culture and the Romanian Cultural Institute, the Municipality of Timișoara, as well as the representatives of the European Capitals of

Culture in 2023 Veszprém-Balaton and Elefsina who participated in a panel on International relations through mobility and cultural cooperation.

During the closing event of the year of the European Capital of Culture, in the efforts to connect some of the main themes of the Cultural Programme to the international scene and discuss how the general practices generated by hosting the ECoC title can be sustained to lead to profound transformations in society and the city, the Centre for Projects hosted the **international seminar “Vector TM. Culture as urban practice”**. The two days event brought the local audience into dialogue with architects, curators, cultural operators, creators of public policies and urban strategies, consultants, and decision-makers from public administration, gathering **23 speakers from 7 different countries**.

The relationship with other European Capitals of Culture within the ECoC family was an important pursuit as well during the preparation and during the title year. The **ECoC Family Meetings** were an excellent opportunity to address and share relevant aspects for the activities of each city in the implementation of the cultural year through the participation of the representatives of the implementation teams. Starting in 2022, the taking over of the title by the following cities was marked by a **Handover Ceremony** that brought together representatives of the European Commission with political representatives and the teams implementing the cultural programmes. Timișoara participated in this regard in the Handover Ceremonies organized in Athens during January 2022 and 2024.

Strategic partnership with the Romanian Cultural Institute

During the second half of the year, the Timișoara 2023 Association launched a series of international cultural activities, in collaboration with branches of the Romanian Cultural Institute in different European countries. A total of 17 events were organized in major European capitals, including Rome, Madrid and Berlin. These events promoted 20 Romanian artists, including emerging artists, and strengthened cultural relations between Timișoara and Europe. The objective of these events, including concerts (jazz, symphonic, electronic), exhibitions (painting, sculpture, photography, new media art), film screenings and literary readings, theater and dance performances, was to promote to international

audiences the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme as well as Romanian culture in general, targeting in particular Romanian Diaspora communities, culture lovers, diplomats and artists from host countries.

Funding programmes designed to attract international presence and participation

Within the funding programmes managed by the Centre for Projects, both for the consolidation of the Cultural Programme and for its expansion, two of them were particularly aimed at developing international cultural relations between Timișoara and the rest of the world, supporting the exchange of experience and best practices between cultural organizations and professionals from Timișoara and organizations and professionals from outside the city and the country.

The **Power Station++ | Mobility Programme for Cultural Professionals**, disseminated internationally in English, funded professional internships or travel grants in other countries and from other countries to Timișoara, and included a call for host organizations abroad, mainly encouraging mobilities related to organizations active in European Capitals of Culture cities in 2023 or later: 2023 Veszprém-Hungary and Elefsina-Greece; 2024 Bad Ischl Salzkammergut-Austria, Tartu-Estonia and Bodø-Norway; 2025 Chemnitz-Germany and Nova Gorica&Gorizia-Slovenia; 2026 Oulu-Finland and Trenčín-Slovakia; 2027 Liepāja-Lithuania and Évora-Portugal.

Within its Bidbook, Timișoara sought a broader international cultural profile. Professional innovation and international partnerships for co-production, exchanges and dialogue were essential for a coherent and long-lasting path for the city, organizations, artists and professionals.

The **European Echoes** funding programme, implemented with funds from the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture’s budget, had the mission to support small, medium and large scale co-productions and artistic creations or productions relevant to or emerging from within the Cultural Programme. The overall aim was to develop audiences and cultivate people-to-people connections as a creative force.

An important objective of the European Echoes programme was also the transfer of know-how to encourage learning and reflection, not just the

European Echoes thus represented the platform for international cooperation and exchanges of the Cultural Programme and was built on two main directions:

As an outbound platform (from Timișoara to Europe)	The grants aimed to increase the international impact and outreach of the cultural productions developed in the context of Timișoara 2023, with projects ranging from exhibitions, performances and performance acts to artistic research, residencies and co-productions.
As an inbound platform (from Europe to Timișoara)	The grants aimed to strengthen European and international collaborations with local and Romanian operators. In this sense, the programme served as a vital extension of the Cultural Programme towards excellence and international vision.

presentation of imported cultural products. This programme has created opportunities for interaction, points of contact and transfer of practices from the European context to the local one.

High profile international artists present in Timișoara

Under the slogan *One weekend for a year!*, the Opening event brought together more than 130 events distributed throughout the city and included memorable performances, contemporary art, world-opening ideas, visitors from all over Europe, and open communities. Three days of fantastic energy officially kicked off the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme and proved, through the variety, abundance, and wide coverage of events in the program, that the title of European Capital of Culture belongs to the whole community.

Both the opening and closing events of the Cultural Programme have been important platforms to engage with the international music scene, bringing to Timișoara for the first time internationally renowned artists like Jessie J., Katie Melua, Róisín Murphy, José González, Jay Jay Johanson, with the support of the Municipality of Timișoara and through the efforts of the Centre for Projects in implementing these high profile concerts in emblematic venues and public spaces in the city.

Multicultural events and meetings

In 2023 and 2024, Timișoara hosted the **House of European Institutes (HEI)**, which featured a curatorial programme of socially engaged art that reflected on themes such as diversity, sustainability, equality, human rights, organizing exhibitions, workshops, multimedia performances, discussions and programmes for the development of local cultural operators. In June 2023, HEI has been the host of the **7th Cultural Management Academy**, a joint project of **EUNIC Romania** in partnership with **EUNIC Greece**, **EUNIC Hungary** and the European Capitals of Culture 2023: Timișoara (Romania), Elefsina/Eleusis (Greece) and Veszprém-Balaton (Hungary). The thematic focus of the Academy was the continuity and transformation of cultural practices beyond the European Capital of Culture year - resource awareness and networked-creativity as Legacy generators.

At the same time, the two cinemas, “Victoria” and “Timiș”, (managed and activated by the Centre for Projects), have developed in a very short time a very competitive film audience, hosting a number of international film festivals like *Les Films de Cannes* and *Transylvania International Film Festival*. In addition, starting in 2023, Cinema Victoria is a member of **Europa Cinemas**, the most important network of cinemas dedicated to European film in the world.

A lasting impact on Timișoara's international image

Timișoara's designation as the European Capital of Culture had a profound and multifaceted impact on its international image. By hosting high-profile events, forging new partnerships, and promoting its values, the city significantly boosted its visibility and reputation on the European stage. The connections made during this period, from European Commissioners' cabinets to twin cities and cultural institutions, have positioned Timișoara as a key player in Europe's cultural and diplomatic networks.

Looking forward, the potential for sustained growth is strong. The increased attention from European institutions and foreign governments, along with the city's strategic use of digital communication, sets the stage for Timișoara to maintain and expand its international profile.

Thus, in 2024, the Centre for Projects has organized the international conference **The Impact and Legacy of the European Capitals of Culture Programme**, in collaboration with the **University Network of European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC)** and the **Alliance of Timișoara Universities**. The conference has reunited researchers, cultural practitioners and public policy makers into a dialogue on solutions leading to a positive impact and sustainable results of the European Capitals of Culture Programme. The academic conference, to which more than 60 researchers from Romania and other European countries (Hungary, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Latvia, United Kingdom, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia) have registered, were accompanied by two public events which put the

spotlight on how cities achieve long lasting effects after the title year and how their stories can inspire through its challenges and positive outcomes, other Romanian and international cities to place culture at the heart of its positive transformation.

The city of Timișoara was also present at the **13th Conference of the Culture Next** network which has brought together in Cluj-Napoca representatives of 50 European cities and most important European cultural networks, together with representatives of the European Commission, artists and cultural institutions and organizations.

Furthermore, in collaboration with the **European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC)**, the Centre for Projects has facilitated the organization of the workshop **Democratization of culture. Building bridges to tackle underrepresentation in the arts and culture**, as part of the **Closing the Gap** programme coordinated by ENCC, aiming to identify practices and solutions to spaces, projects and funding programmes which could address the underrepresentation of vulnerable categories of public in cultural production and participation.

To continue to affirm Timișoara on the international scene, one key area for growth in the coming years is the development of a strategic framework for international cooperation post-2023, which would leverage the city's strengthened diplomatic network, its increased organizational capacity, and its established reputation as a European cultural capital.





6

Timișoara 2023 Programme Ecosystem

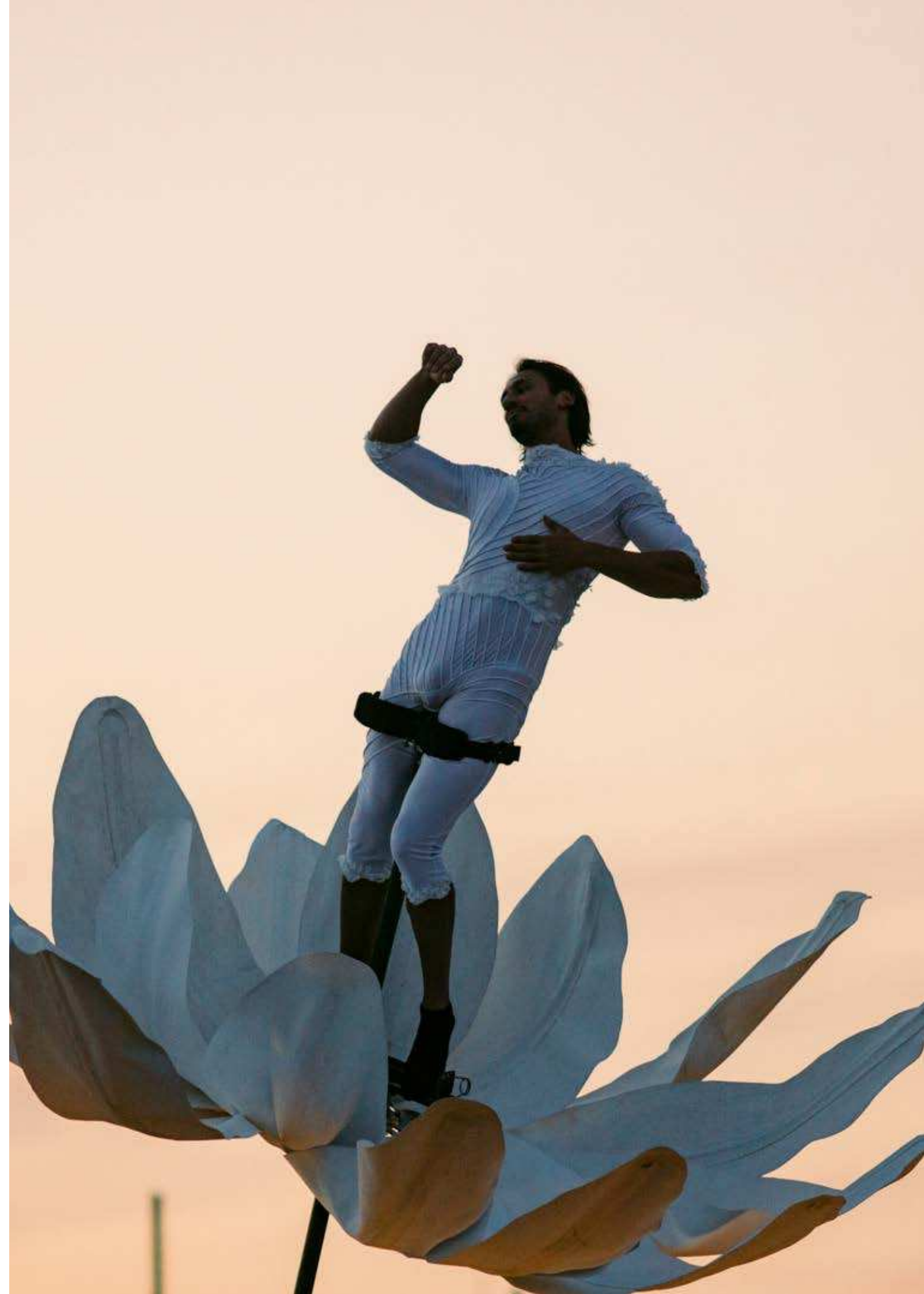
The connected perspective

The Timișoara 2023 Programme sought to change the dynamics of the local cultural ecosystem, by engaging a greater diversity of actors, more interconnected, and relying on the partnerships between them to reach a more diverse and engaged public.

This chapter explores this objective and examines Timișoara's cultural ecosystem through the lenses of **network science**, providing an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of the collaborations and relationships that have been built through the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The analysis focuses on the complexity of this ecosystem, from individual relationships between actors to system-level emergent phenomena such as resilience and innovation. This analysis provides valuable tools for understanding the dynamics of the cultural ecosystem and for developing strategies to support its growth and sustainability. Also, from a more

generic perspective of the European Capitals of Culture Programme, this approach can point to a type of convergent effect to its overall objectives, which can contribute to the improvement of the self-assessment evaluation framework recommended by the European Commission to cities holding the title.

Timișoara's ecosystem is seen as a living, dynamic system, in which the interdependence between actors can amplify resilience and adaptive capacity or, under certain conditions, can expose vulnerabilities and fragment collaboration.



The evolution of the ecosystem

An overview of the evolution of the cultural partnerships within the Timișoara 2023 Programme highlights significant changes in the structure and dynamics of the network between 2017 and 2024.

Period 2017—2020. Excessive centralization and vulnerability: Between 2017-2020, the ecosystem is characterized by a centralized structure, with the Timișoara 2023 Association being at the centre of the network. This top-down coordination model limits the participation of diverse organizations and concentrates resources and visibility in a single point of influence. The dominant mechanism, preferential attachment, leads to connecting smaller organizations only through the central actor. While this model is effective in signaling clear leadership, it introduces significant vulnerabilities to the ecosystem: the network is fragile, and the loss of the central actor could destabilize the entire system.

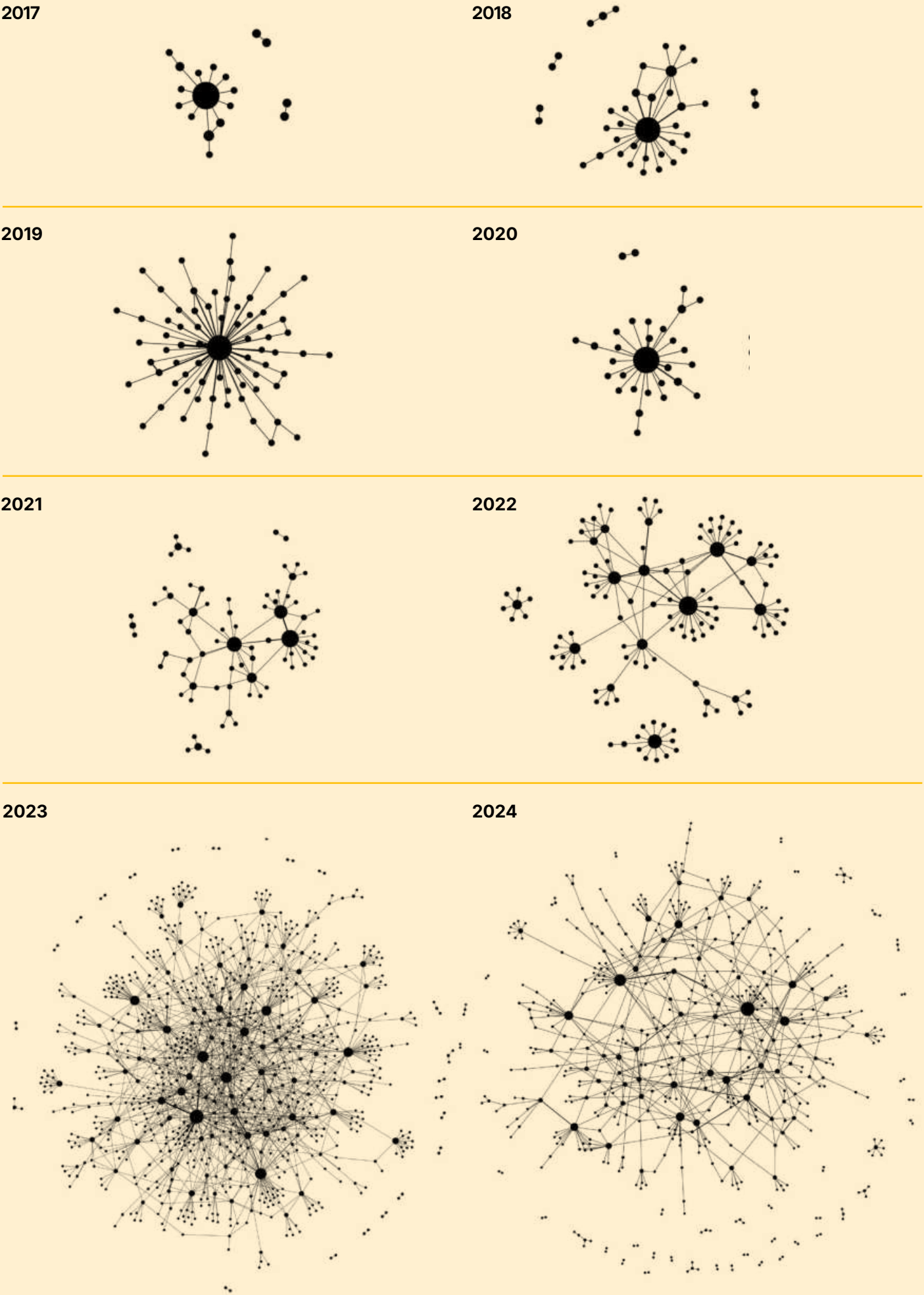
Period 2021—2023. Decentralization, Diversity and Inclusion: The new approach decentralizes power and promotes collaboration, diversity and inclusion. It enables more widespread connections and a better interconnected ecosystem. Between 2021-2023, the network becomes denser and more cohesive, with several larger nodes, indicating the active involvement of several key organizations. A transfer of trust becomes the primary mechanism, creating more resilient and sustainable relationships within the ecosystem.

2024. Stabilization and Adaptability: In 2024, the network demonstrates a capacity to maintain diversity and decentralization, even with a decreasing number of organizations and projects. The high level of collaboration and connectivity indicates that the ecosystem has developed trusting relationships and mechanisms that can sustain cultural activity in the long term. It is important to note, however, that the resilience of the ecosystem will only be confirmed by the test of time, and further strengthening of relationships and diversity of actors is essential.

The evolution of the Timișoara 2023 ecosystem of cultural partnerships reflects a transition from a centralized, vulnerable model to a decentralized, diversified, and cohesive one that promotes innovation, transfer of trust, and resilience. This evolution highlights the potential of the cultural ecosystem to adapt and sustain relevant and inclusive cultural initiatives in the future.

The data resulting from the partnership analysis provide empirical support for the fundamental transformations observed in the structure and functioning of the cultural ecosystem. The numerical indicators reflect a story of growth, diversification, and adaptation, but also the challenges inherent in a complex process of maturation.

→
Evolution of the cultural partnerships for the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Program. The nodes represent the organizations funded to implement projects under the Timișoara 2023 Programme between 2017-2024. Two organizations are connected if they have signed a partnership agreement within a funding contract to implement a cultural project. The size of nodes (organizations) is given by the influence of those nodes in the whole ecosystem. The more influential an organization is in the ecosystem, the larger the node size.



Early Years

In its early years, the cultural ecosystem was defined by a modest network of only 18 organizations in 2017, with a limited number of partnerships (16 connections). This period of heightened centralization, with a single dominant actor, limited the ability to build resilient relationships or expand the network significantly. Average annual growth during this period was slow, suggesting a process of building underlying infrastructure and a high reliance on a top-down coordination mechanism.

Indicators	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Organizers (nodes)	18	39	73	33	74	123	851	511
Partnerships (edges)	16	39	80	30	81	142	1306	615
Average # partners	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3
Gigantic Component	78%	77%	100%	85%	82%	83%	94%	79%
Average distance	2	2	2	2	3	4	4	5
Diameter (max. distance)	4	4	4	4	6	7	11	11
Modularity	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.7
# of communities	5	7	11	6	10	11	43	57
Cohesion empirical network	0.3	0.3	0.4	0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.03
Cohesion random network	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.003	0.007	0.002	0.002

Consolidation and Expansion

The Curatorial Team has been key to the success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme ecosystem, serving as a central point of artistic coordination within a complex and diverse environment. The Curatorial Team played a vital role in maintaining cohesion within an environment with many actors from different sectors, including NGOs, public institutions, commercial entities, and individuals. The team facilitated open dialogue and the exchange of ideas by organizing regular meetings, feedback sessions, and thematic collaborations, reducing potential conflicts and promoting trust between actors. This approach enabled actors to collaborate more effectively and develop projects that organically

Transition Phase

The fundamental shift in leadership and coordination strategy that began in 2021 has had a transformative impact. The Municipality of Timișoara, through its Centre for Projects, has decentralized decision-making and encouraged the participation of a wider range of stakeholders, from NGOs to informal arts groups and educational institutions, through strategies aimed at collaboration, diversity, and inclusion. Modularity (from 0.3 in 2020 to 0.7 in 2021 and maintained thereafter) reflects the formation of diverse and well-defined communities.

aligned with the main themes and objectives of Timișoara 2023. Additionally, the curatorial team acted as a catalyst for innovation, promoting cross-sector collaborations and encouraging new forms of cultural expression.

Legacy

In 2024, during the transition to the post-Title phase, the network saw a natural decrease in size, with 511 organizations and 615 partnerships. While these numbers may seem like a decline, they represent a necessary recalibration. The 2024 network retains a high level of decentralization, illustrated by the maintenance of a large number of communities (57) and the expansion in mean distance and diameter,

suggesting more dispersed but strategic connectivity. The cohesion indicator, which decreased from 0.1 in 2023 to 0.03 in 2024, should be interpreted carefully. Although seemingly a decrease, this cohesion remains significantly higher than in a random network, indicating that the relational mechanisms developed during the peak period continue to function.

In other words, the Timișoara 2023 Programme has succeeded in creating a cultural ecosystem with a remarkable degree of cohesion, far beyond what would be possible without the relational and collaborative mechanisms activated. This observation highlights the Programme's significant impact on building trust and relationships between actors. It is important to emphasize that resilience is not only measured by absolute numbers, but by the network's ability to maintain diversity and collaboration, even with reduced resources and activities.

The Timișoara 2023 Programme's ecosystem is the result of dynamic collaboration between the program's main actors and NGOs, public institutions, local authorities, private actors, and community groups. This interdependent network of actors has been key to the program's success and the consolidation of its cultural legacy.

In retrospect, this evolution shows how the Timișoara 2023 Programme's ecosystem has broadened its stakeholder base, created more robust relationships, and transitioned from fragility to cohesion and diversity. The story is not just one of growth or decline, but one of learning and adaptation, with valuable lessons on fostering decentralization, encouraging trust, and promoting diversity through inclusion to build a sustainable model for the future of a cultural ecosystem. This is a key element of the Timișoara 2023 Programme's legacy: a cultural ecosystem that, even after a peak year, demonstrates the potential to support collaboration, long-term innovation, and cohesion.

Key actors in the ecosystem

A healthy and sustainable cultural ecosystem is defined not only by the number of actors involved, but more importantly by **how they interact, collaborate, and assume strategic roles in the network.**

In the case of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the key actors—popular, influential, or connector organizations (see Glossary for definitions from a network analysis perspective)—had a decisive impact on mobilizing resources, facilitating knowledge exchange, and catalyzing innovation. Each organization and partner contributed to

strengthening the ecosystem. However, these organizations’ positions in the network and how they activated specific interaction mechanisms played a fundamental role in defining the network’s structure and functioning in engagement, resilience, and innovation.

These three categories of key actors specifically contribute to the dynamics and cohesion of the network in a unique way, as follows:

Popular organizations
— hubs for passing on information

Popular organizations function as information hubs, distributing quickly and efficiently resources and knowledge to multiple interested stakeholders. **Their strength** lies in their large organizational capacity, enabling them to maintain multiple partnerships simultaneously, and their ability to facilitate the exchange of essential information, reducing barriers to accessing resources or initiating collaborations. These organizations **attract increased visibility and influence**, often becoming reference points within the network. Perceived as trusted actors, they hold a strategic position in engaging other entities. Their visibility not only legitimizes their position but also increases the ecosystem’s attractiveness for external partners, who are more inclined to collaborate with well-connected actors. **As catalysts**, popular organizations support the rapid circulation of ideas and opportunities.

They can act as “gateways” for smaller or less connected organizations, providing access to resources and the wider network. For example, they can facilitate the dissemination of good practices, the organization of joint projects, or the attraction of funding, contributing to increased cohesion and diversification of the ecosystem. However, the central role of popular organizations also presents **challenges**. Overburdening these actors or focusing too much attention and resources on them can lead to an unhealthy dependence on a few major actors. This centralization can limit diversity and innovation in the ecosystem, especially if smaller or less visible organizations fail to find their place in the network.

Influential organizations
— amplifying impact in a common direction

Influential organizations play a strategic role in the cultural ecosystem due to their central position and strong connections with other well-connected organizations. Through their extensive and robust relationships, **these organizations function as “amplifiers”** of the ecosystem’s capacity to mobilize resources and coordinate complex initiatives. They not only facilitate collaboration but also significantly contribute to setting a common direction, aligning diverse interests around strategic objectives. By connecting with other well-networked organizations, **they become pillars of national and international cooperation.** This networking capacity helps attract the financial resources, expertise, and visibility essential for high-impact projects.

For example, they can facilitate cross-border partnerships, broker relationships with international funders, or support the transfer of know-how between different parts of the ecosystem. **Their role in coordinating complex initiatives is valuable**, especially in cultural contexts involving multiple stakeholders and diverse objectives. Influential organizations can guide the structure and direction of projects, ensuring resources are distributed efficiently and activities align with the ecosystem’s overall vision. They help maintain a balance between stability and innovation, supporting both established and emerging initiatives.

Connector organizations
— building bridges between sectors

Connector organizations bring distinct value by creating links between otherwise isolated or less connected parts of the network. By connecting actors that would otherwise not interact, **these organizations reduce network fragmentation, promote integration, and catalyze collaboration and innovation.** They facilitate the transfer of ideas and best practices between diverse communities, building bridges across sectors and disciplines to foster innovative solutions and culturally relevant initiatives. The strategic importance of these organizations is evident in their contribution to **interdisciplinary collaboration**, enabling the integration of diverse perspectives and resources to generate adaptive and relevant solutions.

They also play an important role in promoting inclusion by connecting less visible or marginalized actors and ensuring equitable access to collaborative opportunities. Through this function, connector organizations are essential for developing a dynamic, integrated cultural ecosystem focused on innovation and sustainability.

From 2017 to 2024, the Timișoara 2023 Programme’s network presents a clear core-periphery structure, with a stable group of organizations at its center. **These top 1% organizations, identified by network analysis scores, include influential, popular, and connector organizations.** These organizations include: Timișoara 2023 Association, West University of Timișoara, Politehnica University of Timișoara, Romanian Order of Architects - Timiș Branch, Centre for Projects, Hungarian State Theater “Csiky Gergely,” French Institute of Romania in Timișoara, Interart

TRIADE Foundation, Youth Timiș County Foundation, Minitremu Association, and the National Art Museum Timișoara.

As one moves down the rankings, there is greater diversity: some organizations excel in popularity, others in influence or connectivity, each fulfilling a specific role within the ecosystem. This analysis and ranking also provide a roadmap for strategic partnerships tailored to different roles within the ecosystem.

Network potential

Popular, influential, and connector organizations **built bridges between communities, facilitated access to information and resources**, and catalyzed collaborations **that amplified the program's impact**. Through these roles and mechanisms, actors transformed a diverse set of cultural initiatives into a cohesive and dynamic ecosystem capable of generating long-term value. This ecosystem's evolution highlights a **transition from a fragile and centralized network centered around a single actor (2017-2020) to a diversified and decentralized network (2021-2024)**. While centralization was useful for establishing clear leadership in the early phases, it created vulnerabilities, such as over-reliance on a single actor. However, subsequent decentralization has allowed diversification and increased the network's resilience, a positive sign for long-term sustainability.

In 2023, the network peaked in complexity and connectivity. In 2024, it adapted to maintain integration and collaboration, with a structure characterized by decentralization and diversity. This transition reflects a fundamental shift in coordination and engagement mechanisms, fostering participation and inclusion. The Timișoara 2023 Programme has created a cultural ecosystem that has evolved from a fragile one to one focused on **cohesion** and **diversity**.

The network's structure reflects the prevailing logic of interactions—either quantity- or quality-oriented. If the emphasis has been on rapid expansion and multiplication of partnerships, cohesion might have been sacrificed. However, the 2024 analysis indicates a **trend towards quality by strengthening relationships and diversifying actors**, suggesting a more sustainable balance between these dimensions.

Another strength of the Timișoara 2023 ecosystem has been the use of public and unconventional spaces, contributing to the **democratisation access to culture**. However, greater involvement of private actors in managing and supporting these spaces remains an important strategic objective. Although some **fragmentation of the network** is visible in periods of transition, this should not be interpreted exclusively negatively. Fragmentation can reflect the inclusion of new actors and the diversification of the ecosystem, opening new opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

The network's evolution, supported by mechanisms such as trust transfer and interdisciplinary collaboration, reflects Timișoara's capacity to create an innovative and inclusive cultural environment. However, the dynamics of the relationships and the challenges associated with fragmentation, awareness of strategic positions, and the involvement of private actors highlight the need for well-planned interventions in the future.



7

The People

Art and culture are part of life and dependent on it



The success of an ECoC Programme is not only determined by cultural activities, public decisions making and the state of the art of the city. Lifestyle, personal creative practices, leisure activities, including cultural ones, and perceptions of the quality of life in general, as well as attitudes of acceptance,

tolerance and social inclusion, all matter. This is the foundation against which the Timișoara 2023 Programme has been built and has made an impact, being reinforced by the cultural action and support for the project.

With a historically multicultural background, a population with a strong European orientation and a high level of civic engagement, the Timișoara 2023 Programme has grown new audiences, a stronger community and a positive perception of quality of life.

The Timișoara 2023 Programme was also discovered and has reached regional, national and international audiences. The area of proximity favored the participation of residents from the metropolitan area of the city as well as from the region, territories which are relevant for the city's development and for the

consolidation of its status as a cultural pole in the Banat region. Romanian and foreign tourists also visited the city during the Timișoara 2023 Programme and appreciated the richness of its cultural and recreational offers.



Timișoara population

Average income	~3.690 RON/month
Multiculturality (INS, 2001)	<div>21 ethnic groups</div> <div>Romanians, Hungarians, Roma, Ukrainians, Germans, Turks, Russians-Lipovians, Tatars, Serbs, Slovaks, Bulgarians, Croats, Greeks, Italians, Jews, Czechs, Poles, Ruthenians, Armenians, Albanians, Macedonians.</div> <div>Most represented</div> <div>Hungarians (8,313), Serbs (2,776), Germans (2,189), Roma (745), Bulgarians (643) and Ukrainians (400)</div>
Religious diversity	Christian Orthodox, Catholic, Greek-Catholic, Neo-Protestant, Mosaic and Muslim

Mobility

About half of the population of Timiș county (327,990) declared at the last census that they had changed their place of residence, most people coming from the counties of Caraș-Severin, Mehedinți, Hunedoara or even Timiș, but from a different town than the one they are currently living in.

A significant number of people (18,388) had previously lived abroad, most of them in Italy, Germany, the Republic of Moldova and France. Most have lived abroad in the recent period (2019-2021), but also in the period (2007-2016).

In 2021, Timișoara residents stated that in the pre-pandemic period:

Used to spend their holidays or visit other european countries for tourism or relaxation	75%
Communicated frequently with relatives or friends living in another european country	74%
Worked or lived for a while in another european country	25%
Were planning to move to another EU country	25%

(Rus and Nadolu, 2021)

International cultural tourism in the pre-pandemic period:

Used to go to public places with historical monuments	84%
Used to visit museums or exhibitions	76%
Used to visit churches, cathedrals, monasteries	67%

(Rus and Nadolu, 2021)

Perceptions of the city in 2022:

Their city is an example of cultural diversity	88.6%
It is easy to find a job	83.6%
Everyone’s involvement can contribute to the city’s well-being	81.5%
Foreign citizens living in timișoara are well integrated	81.4%

(Matichescu, 2023)

Free Time

The number of hours of free time has increased between 2013-2018 by almost 4 hours on average, both during the week and at weekends. Although we do not have available data showing how people’s

free time allocation has evolved after 2018, we can nevertheless estimate that, similar to the national level, it has continued to increase.

Perceptions of the Timișoara 2023 Programme

2013	> 60%	stated they that would voluntarily get involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme and believed that the ECoC Programme could have a significant impact on the city and could contribute to local development. (Gavreliuc and Nadolu, 2013)
2016	90.4%	declared that they support Timișoara’s candidacy for the European Capital of Culture. (Gavreliuc and Nadolu, 2016)
2021	77%	considered that the impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme on the city would be high and very high and that it would help local development. (Rus and Nadolu, 2021)
2023	78.6%	considered that the Programme showed the cultural diversity of Timișoara.
2023	78.4%	thought that the Timișoara 2023 Programme has changed the city for the better.
2023	74.8%	thought that the Timișoara 2023 Programme has involved the population by the projects and events organized. (Nadolu and Nadolu, 2024)

The proportion of those who considered that the Timisoara 2023 Program contributes to the quality of life in the city increased from 54.7% in 2021 to 71.5% in 2023.

(Matichescu, 2024)

Cultural consumption

The cultural consumption of the inhabitants of Timișoara fluctuated between 2016 and 2023, primarily due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused a contraction between 2020-2021 and then an increase, under the effect of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, which proposed a generous local cultural offer between 2022-2023.

Cultural consumption increased between 2022 and 2023, with the exception of TV and radio cultural programmes. The most significant increases were recorded for cinema-going (by 7.2%, with the opening of the new Timiș cinema in 2023), concert-going

(by 6.1%, in direct connection with the busy agenda of events organized within the Timișoara 2023 Programme) and theatre-going (5.6%, also in the context of an extended specific offer).

Cultural consumption increased substantially between 2016 and 2023 for all activities assessed, with the exception of watching cultural TV and radio programmes (where it decreased by 4.5%). The largest increases in cultural consumption in 2023 compared to 2016 were recorded for cinema-going (+26.7%), historical monuments visiting (+19.1%), concerts-going (+17.8%) and books reading (+17.5%).

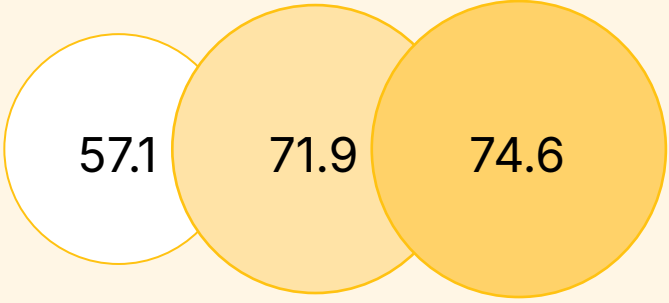
Cultural activities practiced at least once in the last 12 months (%) — studies made in March 2024, June 2023 and June 2016

2016 2022 2023

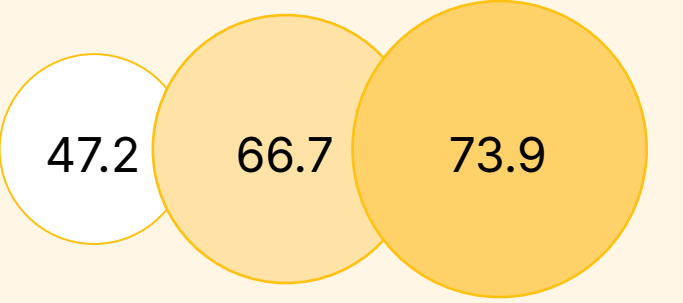
Did you visit a historic monument (palaces, castles, churches, gardens, etc.)?



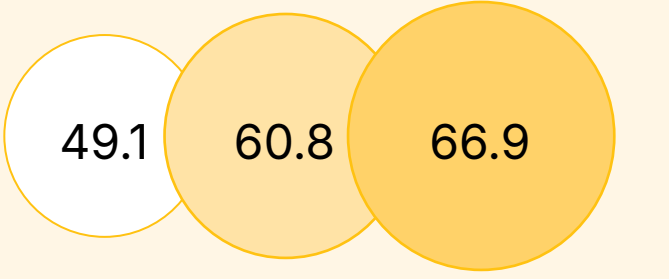
Did you read a book?



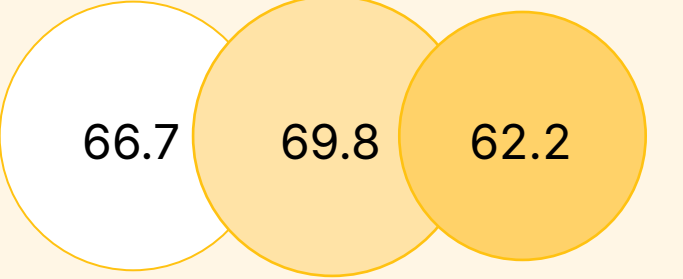
Have you been to the cinema?



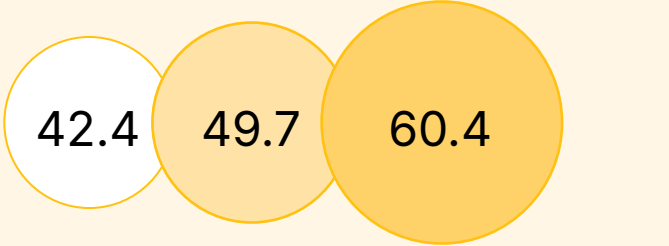
Have you been to a concert?



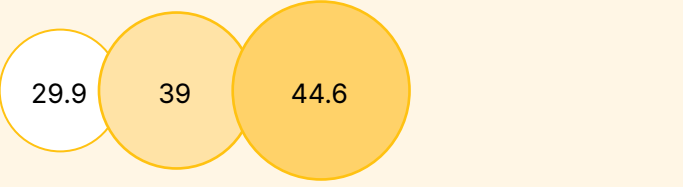
Have you followed a cultural programme on tv or radio?



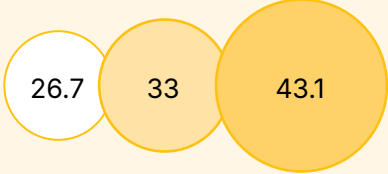
Have you visited a museum or an arts gallery?



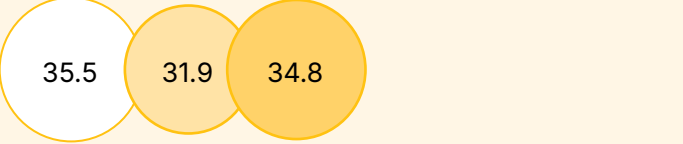
Have you been to the theatre?



Have you been to the library?



Have you been to a ballet, dance or opera performance?



Details on cultural consumption related
to the cultural activities surveyed

Ballet, dance or opera	<div><div>○</div><div>2022-2023: constant</div><div>In spite of the fact that the regular audience fell consistently from 7% in June 2023 to 3.3% in March 2024, the occasional audience increased by 6.6%.</div></div> <div><div>⬇️</div><div>2016-2023: slight decrease</div><div>Non-consumers increased in 2023 compared to 2016 (62.1% in 2016 and 64.8% in 2023). However, the evolution of the participation of all types of public shows differences below the margin of error: constant public at 4.2% in 2016 and at 3.3% in 2024, occasional public at 31.3% in 2016 and at 31.5% in 2024.</div></div>
Cinema	<div><div><div>⬆️⬆️⬆️</div><div>2022-2023: significant increase</div><div>73.9% of Timișoara residents in 2023, up from 66.7% in 2022.</div></div><div><div><div>⬆️⬆️⬆️⬆️⬆️</div><div>2016-2023: remarkable increase</div><div>A doubling of movie-goers: regular movie-goers increased from 12.4% in 2016 to 24.5% in 2024, occasional movie-goers from 34.8% in 2016 to 49.4% in 2024, and non-consumers fell from 51.4% in 2016 to 25.6% in 2024.</div></div></div></div>
Theater	<div><div><div>⬆️⬆️</div><div>2022-2023: growth</div><div>39% of Timișoara residents in 2022 to 44.6% in 2023.</div></div><div><div><div>⬆️⬆️⬆️</div><div>2016-2023: significant growth</div><div>Regular audiences increased from 4.4% in 2016 to 7.3% in 2024, occasional audiences from 25.5% in 2016 to 37.3% in 2024, while non-consumers decreased from 67.6% in 2016 to 54.6% in 2024.</div></div></div></div>
Concerts	<div><div><div>⬆️⬆️⬆️</div><div>2022-2023: significant growth</div><div>66.9% of Timișoara residents in 2023, up from 60.8% in 2022.</div></div><div><div><div>⬆️⬆️⬆️</div><div>2016-2023: significant growth</div><div>Regular audiences increased from 9.2% in 2016 to 14.1% in 2024, occasional audience from 39.9% in 2016 to 52.8% in 2024 and non-consumers fell from 49.3% in 2016 to 31.8% in 2024.</div></div></div></div>

Libraries	<div><div><div>⬆️⬆️</div><div>2022-2023: growth</div><div>43.1% of Timișoara residents in 2023, up from 33% in 2022.</div></div><div><div><div>⬆️⬆️</div><div>2016-2023: growth</div><div>Conservation of the regular audience (10.5% in 2016 and 11.5% in 2024) but almost a doubling of the occasional audience from 16.2% to 31.6% in 2024 with a corresponding reduction in non-consumers (from 68.5% in 2016 to 55% in 2024)</div></div></div></div>
Historic monuments	<div><div><div>⬆️⬆️</div><div>2022-2023: growth</div><div>74.7% visits to historic monuments in 2023, up from 70.1% in 2022.</div></div><div><div><div>⬆️⬆️⬆️⬆️⬆️</div><div>2016-2023: remarkable growth</div><div>Almost a doubling of the visits to historic monuments: the regular public increased from 13.8% in 2016 to 22.7% in 2024, the occasional public from 41.8% in 2016 to 52% in 2024, while non-consumers decreased from 41.5% in 2016 to 23.5% in 2024.</div></div></div></div>
Museums and art galleries	<div><div><div>⬆️⬆️⬆️</div><div>2022-2023: significant growth</div><div>60.4% of Timișoara residents in 2023, up from 49.7% in 2022.</div></div><div><div><div>⬆️⬆️</div><div>2016-2023: growth</div><div>Regular audience increased from 7.5% in 2016 to 10.8% in 2024, occasional ones from 34.9% in 2016 to 49.6% in 2024, while non-consumers decreased from 54.9% in 2016 to 38.8% in 2024.</div></div></div></div>
Reading	<div><div><div>⬆️</div><div>2022-2023: positive growth</div><div>74.6% in 2023 compared to 71.9% in 2022.</div></div><div><div><div>⬆️⬆️⬆️</div><div>2016-2023: significant growth</div><div>Regular audiences increased from 22.5% in 2016 to 31.3% in 2023, occasional audiences from 34.6% in 2016 to 43.3% in 2023, while non-consumers declined from 40.5% in 2016 to 24.1% in 2024.</div></div></div></div>
TV or radio cultural programmes	<div><div><div>⬇️⬇️⬇️</div><div>2016, 2022-2023: significant decrease</div><div>66.7% of Timișoara residents in 2022, up from 69.8% in 2016, and 62.2% in 2023.</div></div></div>
Global participation in these cultural activities	<div><div><div>⬆️</div><div>2022-2023: slight growth</div><div>49.1% of Timișoara residents in 2022, up from 52.02% in 2023.</div></div></div>

	<div>⬆️⬆️⬆️⬆️</div> <div>2016-2023: significant growth 44.91% of Timișoara residents in 2016, compared to 52.02% in 2023.</div>
Cultural activities practiced by people from Timișoara	<div>◯</div> <div>2016-2023: constant The same distribution is maintained, the most practiced being dancing (28.3%) and singing (19.4%).</div>
Interest in cultural events organized in unconventional venues	<div>◯⬆️</div> <div>2018, 2022, 2023: highly constant after a low score post COVID-19 pandemic 54% of Timișoara residents were interested in 2023 to a great or very great extent, compared to 44.6% in 2022 and 52.1% in 2018. 46% of Timișoara residents declared in 2023 that they attended cultural events in public squares or on the streets in 2023.</div>
Interest in attending cultural events of ethnic communities in Timișoara	<div>⬇️</div> <div>2018-2022-2023: decrease 70.2% of Timișoara's residents stated that in 2023 they did not attend any cultural events of ethnic communities in Timișoara, compared to 64.3% in 2022 and 64.8% in 2018, although the Festival of Hearts, organized by the House of Culture Timișoara, was among the respondents' favourite events in both 2022 and 2023 (3.2%). The most popular events were those of the Hungarian (2.8%) and Serbian (1.2%) minorities in 2023, and those of the Hungarian (3.3%) and German (2.9%) minorities in 2022. In the 2018 cultural consumption survey, those who said they attend such events more frequently identified popular, prayer-type events as their favorite.</div>

Reasons for no or low participation in 2023

The main reason was **lack of free time**, cited for 7 out of 9 activities. Lack of interest was indicated for attending ballet, dance or opera performances and for watching cultural TV/radio programmes. The reason for the **high cost of access** was cited highest for concerts (21.7%), **lack of information** for ballet, dance or opera (14.3%) and **limited choice** or **low quality** for cinemas (9%).

The maximum price ever paid by Timișoara residents for an event or cultural content averaged 211 RON. More than half of the respondents (54.5%) did not exceed the threshold of 100 RON as the maximum amount spent for the purchase of a cultural product or service. On the other hand, 2.6% of respondents purchased cultural services or objects worth more than 1000 RON.

The most popular cultural activities practiced within the EU countries or with EU origin, in 2023 were:

Reading books by authors from EU countries	51.7%
Visiting historic monuments	47.5%

Sources of information about the local cultural offer in 2023:

Internet	65.6%
TV	24.3%

Accessing cultural content online at least once a week in 2023: 44% in total, out of which

Primarily for watching online video content	68.8%
Listening to music, podcasts and audiobooks	67.4%
Looking for information about cultural products and events	47%

People with very low income tend not to consume culture (statistically significant strong correlation between income and participation for those with monthly income below 3000 RON/household member), while higher income has weaker statistical association with cultural consumption. People with an average monthly income per family member above 3001 RON per month register higher values compared to those with income below 3000 RON: 19.41 compared to 18.32, but higher income has weaker statistical association with cultural consumption.

Those who attend cultural events more frequently tend to spend more money on these activities.

Those who paid in the last year (as a maximum amount) less than 300 RON, obtained a cultural consumption score of 19.21, significantly lower

in comparison to those who spent more than 301 RON for such content and who obtained a cultural consumption score of 23.07.

Those who attend cultural events more often tend to appreciate local cultural life significantly more.

Women tend to participate more than men in cultural activities: 19.06 compared to 18.4, the differences are not statistically significant.

People under 29 are the most involved and senior people participate the least: people under 29=20.29, people between 30-59=19.1, people over 60=16.79.

People with tertiary education have a significantly higher statistical score than those with secondary education: 19.59 compared to 18.21.

Banat region inhabitants

Cultural participation	TMA	UB	RB
Participate in cultural events a few times a year	40%	48%	38%
Do not participate at all	25%	21%	28%

Most of those with elementary and secondary education say they have not participated in any cultural activities in the last 12 months. Reasons for not attending cultural events are mainly lack of time and lack of interest in the existing cultural offer (TMA, UB, RB).

Favorite cultural activities mentioned were watching a cultural Programme on TV or radio, reading a book (TMA, UB, RB) and visiting a historical monument (RB). Compared to the last 5 years, the percentage of people engaging in such activities has fallen.

Average expenditure on attending cultural events in 2023	TMA	UB	RB
Transport, accommodation - if applicable, entry fees and consumption during the event	2.474 RON	2.160 RON	1.195 RON
This amount is higher than what they used to spend in previous years	37%	37%	31%
This amount is lower than in previous years	25%	20%	20%
Did not spend at all	20%	17%	28%
Spent more than 3000 RON	13%	15%	9%
Most survey participants spent between 1 and 500 RON			

Reason for attending cultural events	TMA	UB	RB
Personal interest in the topic/artists	52%	53%	33%
The need for relaxation/entertainment	45%	55%	66%
Development of own general knowledge and culture	19%	18%	17%

Prefer to go to a cultural event	TMA	UB	RB
With their partner/spouse	61%	61%	58%
With friends	28%	28%	20%
Alone	6%	6%	7%

The best day to go to a cultural event	TMA	UB	RB
Saturday	78%	78%	79%
Sunday	58%	64%	64%
Friday	28%	28%	21%

Perception of Timișoara’s cultural offer	TMA	UB	RB
Participants note that there have been more events organized in 2023-2024 than in previous years	69%	58%	56%

Reasons to visit Timișoara	TMA	UB	RB
Personal reasons	53%	47%	48%
Professional reason	48%	25%	29%
Medical reasons	47%	39%	43%
Touristic purposes			
Cultural purposes	27%	18%	15%

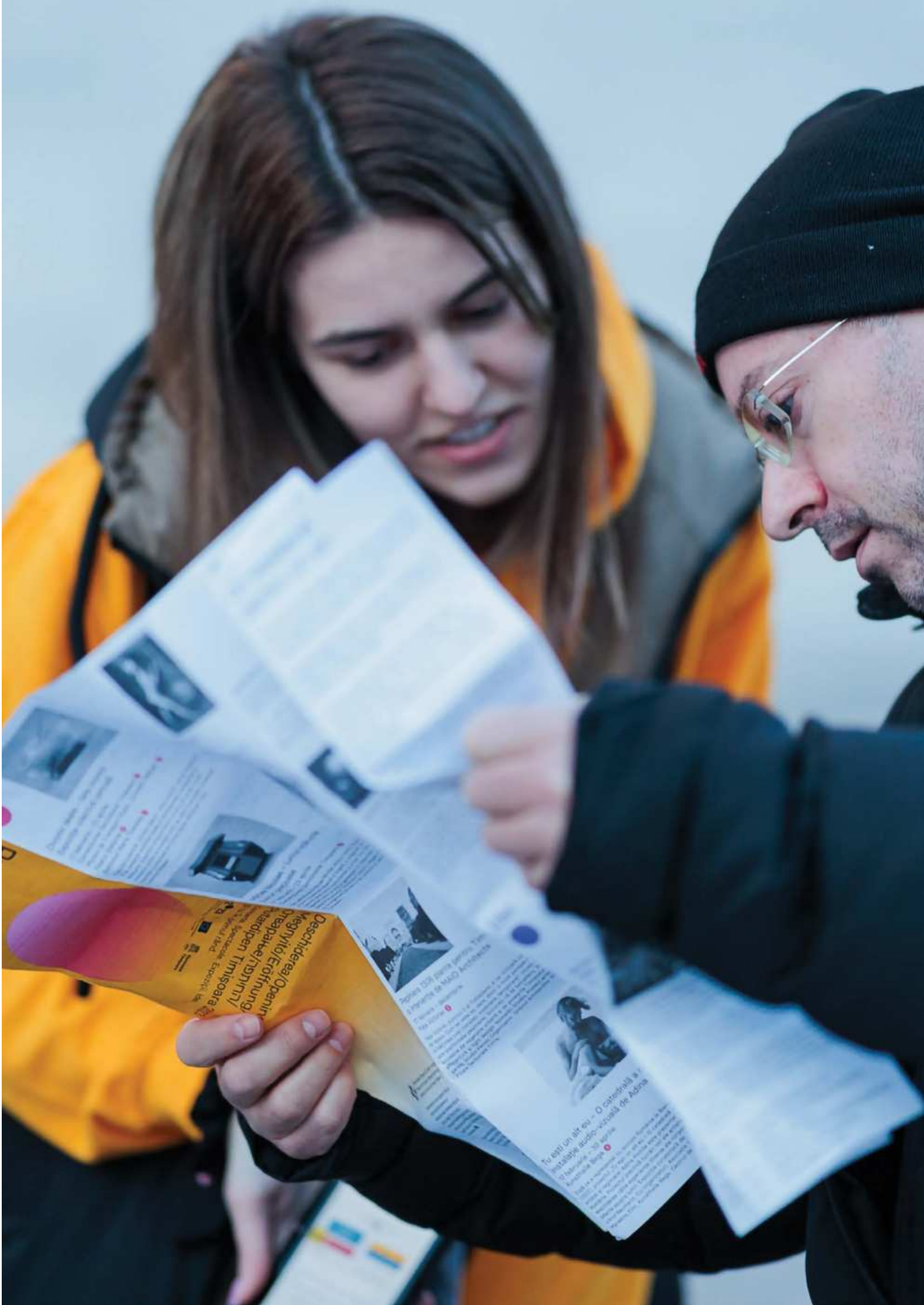
↓ Opening Timișoara 2023, 18 February 2023



Tourists

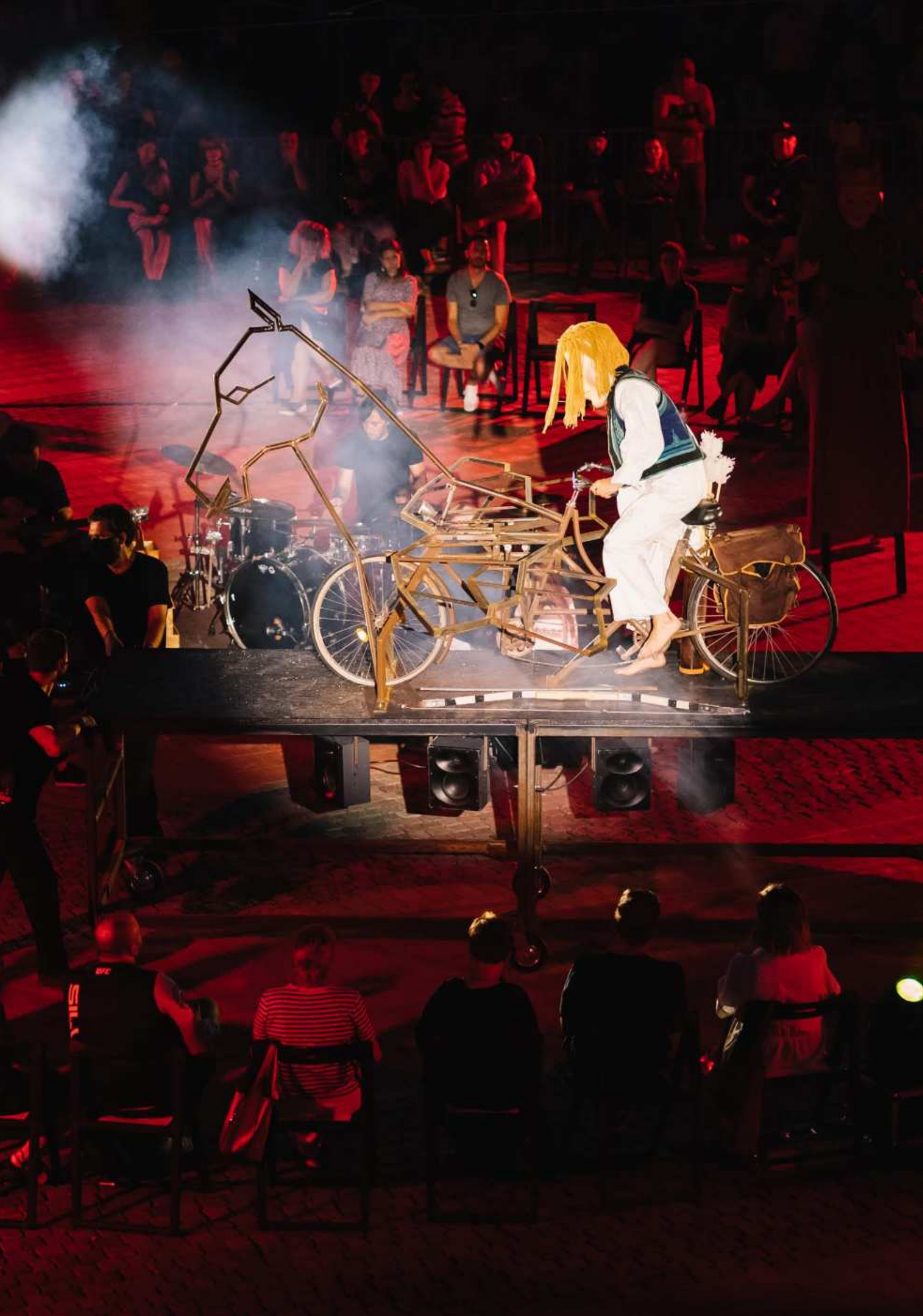
Visits in downtown Timișoara in 2023		15 million
Interest in learning more about Timișoara	⬆️⬆️⬆️⬆️	Increased significantly from 2022 to 2023 28% more views on Wikipedia in general and 50% more views on Wikipedia in Romanian. Timișoara's popularity relative to countrywide trends shows a 33% increase from 2022 to 2023.
Overnight stays in Timiș County	⬆️⬆️⬆️	<p>Compared to 2022, there is a notable tourist increase of 27,04%, from 566.049 to 719.101 overnight stays in Timiș County, of which approximately 76% of this activity is due to accommodation in Timișoara. In contrast, the neighboring counties recorded an average increase of only 5.4% in the number of overnight stays/bookings over the same period of time.</p> <p>In 2023, there were 115.399 more overnight stays by Romanians in Timiș County than in 2022, while stays by tourists from outside the country increased by 37.653 in overnight stays, about 27% more than in 2022. A quarter of all 2023 overnight stays in Timiș County were by foreign tourists.</p>
The level of tourist interest places Timiș County among the top 10 counties in the country in 2023, after counties that are typically notable vacation destinations for Romanians and foreigners (Constanța, Brașov, Suceava, Prahova, Bihor and Bucharest). In fact, Timiș has the fifth highest tourism growth between 2022 and 2023 in the country, while the tourism capacity of Timiș County in relation to		<p>population is actually below average and median at the country level.</p> <p>Urban mobility data shows that the top three countries of origin of the visitors are Serbia, Italy and Germany, and a comparison between December 2022 and December 2023 indicates that the relative frequency of German visits has doubled.</p>
Cultural landmarks representative for Timișoara in 2023:		
The Opera and Opera Square		31.7%
The Metropolitan Cathedral		13.3%
Unirii Square		6.9%

25% more tourists visited Timișoara in 2023 compared to 2022.



8

The Cultural Scene



Timișoara grows as a city of
arts and cultural democracy

The revitalization of the city's cultural scene and its connection to the national and international level was possible through the initiatives of cultural organizations and the actions of the public administration to ensure the management of the Programme and the governance of the city, which continues to shape the ecosystem of Timișoara.

The efforts of all those involved - artists, cultural mediators, producers and managers, non-governmental organizations and cultural and public institutions in general - focused on the following objectives:

- **Promoting local values and creators.**
- **Activation, development and modernization of infrastructure** (by adapting conventional spaces for artistic and community use).
- **Audience engagement and inclusive practices.**
- **Creating a legacy of education and skills and capacity building** (educational programmes - workshops, internships, mentorship programmes - focused on young and emerging artists with the goal of developing skills that would empower the next generation of creators).

Timișoara is today a more vibrant cultural city, more open and aware of the value of collective action towards a common goal, more ready to continue to develop for the benefit of the local community and to act as a source of inspiration and impact at regional and national level.

In 2019 (Croitoru and Becuț-Marinescu, 2021), Timișoara was below the national average in terms of cultural vitality, but ranked 3rd out of 46 cities analyzed in terms of creative industries. The city's weak points at the time were libraries and museums, which were not as numerous compared to other big cities. Timișoara also had at that time the lowest public spending on culture per capita of all the 46 cities analyzed. Timișoara also had a negative

score, but relatively close to the national average in professional human resources. The city had a positive score and close to the national average for the cultural participation indicator, with the best score for the cultural and creative sectors, placing the city in 3rd place nationally.

The vitality of the cultural and creative sectors in Timișoara municipality was due to the increase in the number of cultural and creative sector companies, CSCs in 2017-2019, which almost doubled from 2,062 companies to 3,890 companies (Croitoru and Becuț-Marinescu, 2021). The number of employees also saw an increase over that period.

A similar study, showing Timișoara's position in comparison to other cities in Romania, has not been carried out closer to the present time, but the impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme on the local cultural scene and on the city in terms of investment in culture and in the city's cultural infrastructure is evident from the evaluation studies carried out at the request of the Municipality of Timișoara through the Centre for Projects. In addition, in this section of the chapter, positive developments concerning the activities of local cultural operators are identified which point to a more in-depth development of their organizational capacity as an effect of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

Between 2018 and 2023, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, among other things, causing a sharp contraction in cultural consumption behavior, which continues to be felt in the behavior of the Timișoara public. According to the analysis carried out by UVT-Nadolu in 2024, "the analysis of official data provided by INSSE, between 2018 and 2022 (the year for which the last



relevant datasets on tickets sold are available) finds a significant contraction of cultural consumption in the Municipality of Timișoara for the main activities analyzed, a general trend at national level. Although data for 2023 were not yet available at the time of writing this research report, the situation recorded in 2022 may represent a relevant predictor for 2023. Thus, for the performing arts domain, the number of registered auditors and spectators for theater, opera, philharmonic institutions in Timișoara decreased from 237,553 (in 2018) to 119,108 (in 2022), i.e. a decrease of 49.8%. In other words, in terms of tickets sold by the performing arts institutions in 2022, there was a halving of the volume reached in 2018, and this

contraction in cultural consumption is also reflected in the present study. Similarly, visitors to Timișoara's museums have shrunk by 66% falling (in terms of tickets sold) from 181,935 in 2018 to 61,184 in 2022. Only active readers at Timișoara's libraries remained relatively constant with a 12% decrease (from 85,667 in 2018 to 75,214 in 2022).

This contraction in cultural consumption was also recorded in the *Cultural Consumption Barometer 2022. Cultural Participation and Democratic Perspectives* developed by the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training at the national level.

Although the moment of holding the title of ECoC overlapped with a severe contraction of cultural consumption felt at the national level and reflected both in official statistics and in other similar studies, cultural consumption in Timișoara was well above the national level:

	in Timișoara	at national level
Attending shows	45%	20%
Going to the cinema	74%	26%
Library use	43%	17%
Visiting historic monuments	75%	59%

We can consider that these behaviors are also due to the actions that prepared the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

More than half of the organizers say they **were much better prepared and had more opportunities** between 2021-2023 to organize large events.

Compared to the period 2017-2020, the period 2021-2023 was a catalyst for economic activities/ticket sales, attracting sponsorships, focusing actions on public benefits and carrying out activities based on regular evaluations.

Among the positive effects of the Timișoara 2023 Programme that were mentioned by organisers:

Diversification of the cultural offer and increased public participation	82%
Development of the cultural scene and resources	47%
Access of the public to culture	32%

90% of the organizers consider that the Timișoara 2023 Programme has had a positive impact on the cultural scene of the city.

At the end of the Timișoara 2023 Program, the organizers considered that the impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme has been manifested on:

The local public	The cultural events between 2017-2023 increased the interest of locals in neglected areas of the city, such as the Bega riverfront and unused historic buildings. These activities attracted diverse audiences, including people who previously did not participate in the city's cultural life.
International audiences	Communication, promotion, partnerships with artists and organizations in Europe, and the adaptation of cultural content have brought international visibility to Timișoara.
The local economy	Access to funds for equipment, access to spaces and funds for staff cost, impacted Timișoara's economy in the period 2017-2023, but also led to price increases, which had a negative impact on the budgets of some cultural operators.
Urban development	In the outskirts and underdeveloped areas of the city, several cultural operators have organized events that have revitalized the areas, attracting the attention of investors and local businesses.

The majority of the organizers felt a very high positive impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme on organizational skills and capacities:

Developing skills for co-creation	75%
Developing skills for cultural communication and marketing	73%
Developing skills for artistic and cultural co-production	71%
Developing skills in cultural heritage valorization, curating exhibitions and events, promoting volunteer participation, but also skills in managing participation in projects with international partners	>50%

Collective action for common goals

A city project succeeds only to the extent that it leads organizations to act together towards a common goal. In the same way, collective action for a public good creates more sustainable and resilient ecosystems that are able to empower each other and respond to each other's needs, looking to each other for resources and opportunities, ideas and valuable people. How the city's key actors interacted, collaborated and assumed strategic roles in the Timișoara 2023 Programme is detailed in the Governance chapter, and how the organizers connected and created the specific cultural ecosystem is detailed in the Connected Perspective chapter.

The value of partnerships

The contribution of partners to the implementation of the projects was rated as good or very good by 92% of the organizers, with the sharing of good practices being the most important contribution.

The perception of cultural operators on collaboration and sharing of resources between partners is mainly positive. The majority of respondents see the sharing of resources between organizations as an opportunity to create synergies and strengthen their capacities for the development of larger cultural

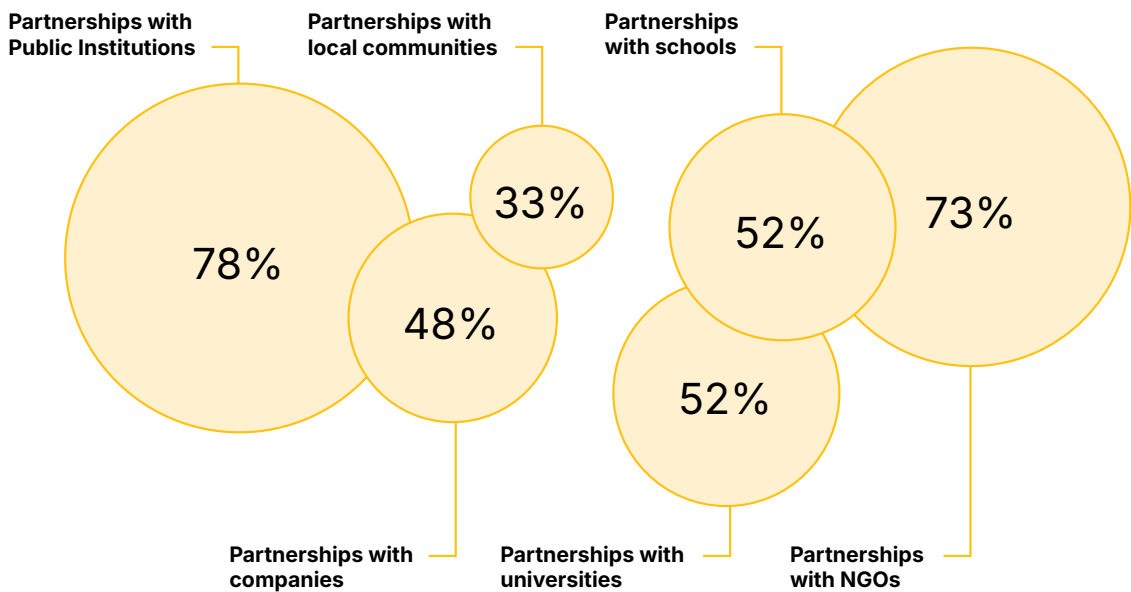
projects. By jointly accessing financial resources with other organizations and sharing human and material resources, organizers have been able to carry out more successful projects than if they had done it alone.

Organizers found that organizing events at the same time or within a short period of time, as was the case in 2023, made it difficult to access and share production spaces, audio-visual equipment for concerts and screenings, with other organizations.

From the qualitative phase of the study, it emerged that organizers from other cities in Romania were pleasantly surprised by how quickly they were able to network with artists, professionals and other organizations in Timișoara to share resources.

In order to **develop sustainable partnerships**, the following points are essential:

common values and principles between partners	28%
financial resources	22%
multi-annual/predictable funding	17%
a networking base	19%
good communication with partners/funders	15%



European partnerships (90%)

90% of the organizers appreciated that European partnerships were important for the implementation of the events and projects they carried out within the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

The most consistent benefits were sharing know-how/good practices (83%), sharing resources (44%) and developing skills among members of their own organization to help them implement and carry out projects (39%).

The majority of organizers replied that they are not affiliated to an international network (67%). Those who are affiliated consider that it allows them to access valuable information/resources/good practices (96%), to develop their networks and partnerships (38%), but also to become more visible in the national and European scene (25%).

Partnerships with Public Institutions (78%)

These partnerships have allowed access to various resources (financial, material, production spaces) and to the expertise of professionals in culture or in other areas, which have been beneficial for the following objectives:

- **Attract a larger and diverse audience.**
- Staging productions aimed at **promoting multiculturalism in the city.**
- **Expanding capacities to organize** cultural and artistic events.
- **Attract international audiences** - investors, researchers, artists, cultural professionals - in the case of partnerships with institutions in Europe.
- **Facilitating access to funds** for events and activities both locally and in other countries.

Partnerships with NGOs (73%)

Organizers believe that NGOs have the experience and knowledge to respond in a flexible and quick manner to community needs: they support access to new audiences, increase social integration and impact, are more accustomed to sharing resources, and help strengthen community involvement in cultural and artistic activities.

Projects carried out in partnership with local, national and international NGOs are appreciated for supporting:

- **A better understanding of the needs of the vulnerable or disadvantaged audiences** that their projects address
- **Extending knowledge and expertise** by sharing best practices.
- **Level of community involvement** in the local cultural scene and in society in general.
- The **degree of inclusion** of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.
- **Dialogue and cultural exchange**, with most events and activities based on co-creation.

Partnerships with schools (52%)

The collaborations between organizers and schools have demonstrated the potential to create projects and events that support the development of artistic skills and understanding of cultural content among pupils, especially for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Projects carried out in collaboration with schools have contributed both to strengthening the cultural education infrastructure in schools and to creating an

inclusive educational environment for teachers, parents and children.

The organizers believe that cultural operators in general (artists, mediators and other cultural professionals) and the traditional education system (schools, teachers) can work together to make cultural content accessible to children and young people from diverse backgrounds.

Moreover, in 2024 there was a funding programme dedicated to collaboration between cultural organizations and schools. Creative Schools | Power Station+ was managed by the Centre for Projects, from money allocated from the state budget through the budget of the Ministry of Culture, and it funded 28 projects that developed the skills of education professionals to integrate art in schools and adapted school space to stimulate creativity. In total, 22.000 people took part in the 226 proposed activities between February and November 2024.

Partnerships with
local communities
(33%)

Organizers say they have partnered with local communities, and they believe it has had a beneficial effect on the local cultural scene because:

- **They champion a more democratized approach to culture** in which city residents, particularly those from underrepresented communities, have become participants in cultural projects and have helped to highlight local issues and issues of their respective groups.
- **They draw attention to neglected spaces and their potential** for culture and investment that can revitalize those areas.

Partnerships with
companies
(48%)

Organizers say that they have entered into partnerships with companies, which have helped to develop cultural projects beyond the limits of public funding and to access logistical and technological resources for the development of innovative cultural products.

Organizers who have not entered into such partnerships talk about the following factors that have blocked or limited them from doing so:

- **Discrepancy between the objectives, criteria and values of the parties involved.** While organizers were motivated by the arts, community involvement and cultural heritage preservation, private companies were often motivated by financial returns, community visibility and other marketing objectives.
- **Bureaucratic and administrative challenges.** For some cultural operators interviewed, particularly emerging artists and organizations, the time and resources required to manage relationships with private companies were overwhelming. For the most part, respondents wanted other institutions to broker the relationship for these partnerships. While this was possible in some cases, organizers express the need for local authorities to place more emphasis on this intermediation and/or private sector involvement component in the cultural scene.
- **Low level of involvement of private companies in public cultural life.** According to some of the interviewees, the private sector should be more involved in the city's cultural scene; however, this is not happening because of the desire for visibility of the companies (which is impossible to achieve in the case of small-scale projects).

Partnerships with
universities
(48%)

Organizers say that they have collaborated with universities in the city, in particular with the West University and the Polytechnic University, mainly to receive **material and financial support, to exchange best practices and to attract volunteers**. In addition, partnerships with universities in other cities supported audience diversification and collaboration with young artists.

In turn, Timișoara's universities have set up partnerships with other universities to exchange skills, to establish intercultural dialogue and to make cultural content more accessible.

↓ Timișoara, photo: Silviu Năstase



Cultural practices oriented towards the public

Timișoara 2023 Programme sought to be accessible to all and not to create new social barriers for cultural participation.

Attracting, developing and involving the public have been important objectives of the events and projects of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, through the establishment of partnerships, the use of public and unconventional spaces, interactive or immersive events, the interweaving of different domains and themes, adaptive communication and accessibility practices. In particular, it focused on diversifying the categories of audiences, promoting the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable communities, even through their direct involvement in the creative process.

The Timișoara 2023 Programme aimed to be a platform for free expression and social interaction, contributing to social cohesion.

Festivals, biennales and other major events, such as the *City Celebration* or the Closing and Opening events of the Timișoara 2023 Programme were held in public spaces, with free access, and are examples of formats of collective public cultural experiences that represented opportunities to actively engage diverse communities and provided a framework for the general public to experience culture together, creating a sense of identity and belonging. As a format, they have fostered connections and dialogue between participants and promoted inclusivity and accessibility even among vulnerable or disadvantaged people who have limited access or do not consume cultural products in general.

90% of the organizers consider that the strategies for attracting and developing the audience have had a very high and high positive impact on the cultural scene, on the Municipality of Timișoara (visibility on the European scene, facilities, infrastructure) and on the wider community.

Accessibility is also a concern for the future, and in the Legacy Plan, one of the important strategic objectives is to “ensure access to culture for the most diverse and numerous audiences in order to increase inclusion in the cultural life of the city”.

In general, audience-focused actions show the willingness of cultural operators to adapt to the needs of the public and to the goal of inclusion of all citizens in the cultural life of the city.

Audience knowledge

Audience engagement was for some of the respondents based on anticipated, premeditated actions, based on studies and audience strategies, but for the majority it involved rather spontaneous actions, based on needs (both operators’ and audience’s) identified during the course of the projects in running from 2017 to 2023. Most cultural operators consider that they were able to meet the needs of the public due to actions prior to the events and by evaluating past activities to understand how future ones can be improved.

Organizers have paid particular attention to consulting the public, rather informally, and shaping cultural products in such a way as to incorporate the expectations and opinions of the groups they target. Only in a few cases did event organizers collect feedback through structured methods and precise measurements to allow further analysis. More precise measurements were obtained in particular in the case of promotion campaigns coordinated by specialized teams, usually external to cultural operators.

The approaches cited with regard to audience insights were: collection of socio-demographic and economic data, monitoring of participation, involvement of volunteers, collaboration with partners, direct observation and analysis of data collected during previous events. The result was a better understanding of the specificities of communities and their needs, beyond the official information or statistics available.

32% of the organizers used discussions and direct feedback from the public to find out their opinion on their cultural experience, while 22% claim to have

obtained such information through questionnaires. Other tools used were analyzing statistics (such as the number of participants) - 17% or analyzing social media reactions - 13%. The same information was confirmed in the qualitative phase of the research.

Through **adapting the cultural offer to the needs of the audience**, once these were understood, the organizers managed to attract and involve people with diverse typologies, giving them the opportunity

to experience new forms of cultural expression or to familiarize themselves with cultural practices.

Audience development

91% of the organizers believe that the cultural offer of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was created in such a way as to allow access and participation of different types of audiences, while 84% believe that it was accessible to different types of social groups.

The challenges in attracting a larger or diverse audience and actively involving them in events were:

insufficient resources on the part of organizations	47%
low motivation of the public to take part in certain activities	41%
public reluctance and passivity	37%
inclusion of all audiences	26%

84% of the participants in the survey were committed to developing their audiences (in numbers or as a diversity of profiles) between 2021-2023 as part of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, which brought some important benefits: diversifying the cultural experience (45%), building a sense of trust and community (44%) and an amplified, enriched audience experience (35%). The methods used to this end, beyond conventional and digital promotion, were: making the cultural offer more diverse and accessible, making culture accessible through educational and interactive activities, using transparent communication in simple, concise language, and using new technologies. Strategies of cross-promotion, cross-audience development and grass-root work (organizers working closely

with each target group they were addressing) were also used. Collaborations and partnerships were also developed with various specific target groups, as well as with NGOs with vulnerable target groups; activities focusing on cultural and artistic education, especially for children, also contributed to the accessibility of cultural products. Locations in the outskirts of the city, as well as unconventional spaces used for events, have also made an important contribution.

These practices increased in the last preparatory period and in the year of the title, with data indicating that between 2017-2020 and 2021-2023, the intention of cultural operators to develop their audience (in numbers or in terms of diversity of profiles) increased by 30% percent, from 49% percent to 84% percent.

The most common types of participation proposed to the public were:

artistic creation and expression	68%
cultural education	61%
passive cultural participation as a visitor, spectator	55%
immersive and participative performances and events	45%
involvement in voluntary activities or donations to the project or action	15%

In the quantitative analysis, the practice of digitizing cultural content to attract and actively involve more target groups, in particular young people and people with disabilities, is also frequently encountered.

The interviewees mention the difficulty of attracting and involving vulnerable groups in particular, while recommending a number of solutions for future projects: constant dialogue with vulnerable and disadvantaged groups and collaboration with specialized entities such as NGOs.

More than half of the cultural operators have implemented measures to encourage the participation of vulnerable groups, people from minority communities and people with access difficulties or low interest in cultural events.

In the individual interviews, the organizers mention a number of factors that helped them to attract, engage and diversify audiences during the Timișoara 2023 Programme:

The **high profile** of artists, organizations and public institutions involved in the projects.

The **partnerships** with other local, regional or international cultural organizations and institutions, especially those with members of vulnerable groups as direct beneficiaries.

The **extension of spaces for culture**, in particular through the transformation of public spaces into unconventional spaces for artistic production and exhibition and the organization of events in peripheral and/or underdeveloped areas of Timișoara.

Audience engagement

69% of the organizers consider that the events and projects of the Timișoara 2023 Programme have engaged the public directly, beyond the quality of spectator/visitor, through interactive formats. Cultural operators consider that the most important benefits of active audience involvement are the diversification of the audience's cultural experience (45%) and building a sense of trust and community (44%). 81% also consider that audience involvement supports the understanding and appreciation of artistic acts and cultural productions to a great and very great extent.

74% of the organizers consider that they focused to a very great extent and to a great extent on the active involvement of the public in the events/projects carried out during the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

63% of the organizers consider that the measures they have put in place to encourage participation of audiences with reduced access/interest in cultural activities have been effective and only 7% consider that these were ineffective. One fifth of organizers say that they have not implemented such measures and 12% do not answer the question.

For events and projects taking place between 2021-2023, digital media has been an effective channel to reach and interact/communicate with the widest, most diverse audience in an easy way. In this case, cultural content was promoted mainly through social media, online media, but also through the websites of both the Timișoara 2023 Programme and each individual organization.

The methods that were most supportive of audience engagement, from the cultural operators' perspective, were the post-event debates/discussions, the interactive cultural formats/content and the co-creation events/creative alliances.

In the qualitative phase, the perspectives highlighted in the quantitative study are confirmed, with the interviewed organizers highlighting that interactive projects contributed to:

- **Engaging the audience.**
- **Strengthening a deeper relationship between the audience and the creative processes** of cultural acts, through two-way exchanges and, in particular, by developing interpersonal

relationships over a longer period of time.
→ **Offering the opportunity to experience the role of the artist** and to express their perspectives on relevant issues such as climate change, racism or gender inequality.

Education, mediation and cultural intervention

The Timișoara 2023 Programme has focused on developing cultural mediation, education and accessibility practices to make content available to

groups that are often left out of cultural activities, taking cultural events to neighbourhoods outside the central area, involving people and organizations representing the profile and interests of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. 91% of the organizers evaluate positively their own organizational capacity to address audience development, cultural education or mediation practices and accessibility of cultural content in the projects organized within the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

In the case of events and activities that combined social and cultural themes, targeting vulnerable or disadvantaged audiences, the organizers:

Involved professionals, i.e. Social workers, psychologists, educational psychologists from the organizations that were in direct contact with them.

Cooperated with organizations focusing on the social and cultural integration of disadvantaged communities and those from vulnerable backgrounds, which is considered a good way to create a link with these types of audiences and involve them in the cultural and artistic programmes carried out.

↓ Zona 8, Closing Timișoara 2023, photo Petru Cojocaru





The effects of the education, mediation and cultural intervention actions, as well as of those of outreach to the public, according to the cultural operators, were: enthusiasm and positive feedback from the audience, awareness of certain social problems, development of critical and creative skills, sustainability, as well as higher consumption of the cultural products proposed, according to the organizers.

Cultural education is a complex process of familiarizing individuals with cultural products and events in order to develop a deep understanding and appreciation of these; it includes not only the transfer of knowledge, but also the active involvement of the audience, stimulating reflection on social values and respect for culture.

In the projects they have organized, the organizers have included cultural education components, which aimed to:

- **Familiarization with art and culture** and creating affinity for cultural consumption.
- **Teaching social values** (such as intercultural dialog, mutual understanding, etc.).
- **Raising awareness** on some current issues for society (e.g. water crisis, migration, etc.).

Different types of workshops, debates, creative expression in various forms, reproduction and interpretation of artworks from one's own perspective were organized. In addition, some organizers have taken steps to make the public more aware of the work they are doing and understand the usefulness of paying for low-cost tickets as opposed to free admission to an event, for example.

Increasing the level of understanding of cultural content leads to greater openness of the public and increased interest in events and the offer of cultural operators.

Cultural intervention refers to the role of cultural practices and evidence as tools to address social problems and create positive change in communities, often bringing cultural experiences to unexplored places and engaging audiences in collective actions that reinforce or redefine shared identity and values.

Cultural interventions have enabled the empowerment of organizations and communities around proximity, neighbourhood cultural assets, such as the creation

and development of a programme of activities at the Water Museum, managed by the Aquatim Foundation, which involved the development and revitalization of a museum and cultural space in a suburban area of the city, with the aim of rebuilding identity links between people and emblematic places in the evolution of the city. Also, the activities associated with ROD Festival, produced by the DocuMentor Association, which, through artistic actions, proposes interactions on themes of social, past and current affairs in unconventional, outdoor spaces for communities or people from vulnerable groups, trying to repair the fracture between the center and the peripheries.

Cultural mediation is a set of methods to facilitate access to and understanding of cultural products, tailoring messages to the audience and creating interactive experiences that stimulate curiosity and self-expression.

The elements of cultural mediation in the Timișoara 2023 Programme were carried out both intuitively and through intentional and coordinated actions. They aimed at facilitating interaction with cultural products, adapting messages to the target audience and stimulating curiosity. These methods included discussions, guided tours, interactive games, social spaces and materials written by young people, which were then transformed into creations exhibited to the public.

In addition, many cultural operators had ongoing open discussions with target groups before generating cultural mediation methods and tools, which meant better adaptation to the real needs and interests of the audience.

Some cultural operators mention the need for professionals in cultural mediation, especially in music, by integrating this profession in the COR code (Classification of Occupations in Romania), as cultural professionals consider that there is no common understanding about this profession.

Accessibility and inclusion

The participation of audiences with special needs or of vulnerable groups is seen as having beneficial effects both for the community as a whole and for themselves, both through the cultural experiences and in terms of integration and strengthening of social relations.

Most event organizers interviewed in the qualitative phase expressed the desire to better identify the requirements of people with special needs and vulnerable groups in the future.

Organizers consider that information about these potential audiences is limited and have compensated for the lack of information by partnering with organizations that directly address people with special needs or vulnerable groups.

The development of tools for communicating and consulting with audiences with special needs or disabilities is crucial, as the initial assumptions they had about the accessibility needs of these people often differed from the actual needs observed in practice.

A good practice was adapting on the go and incorporating direct feedback from people with disabilities at the post-production or staging phase, such as addressing vulnerabilities discovered through a dialog after a performance in the public space.

From the perspective of the respondents in the qualitative phase of the evaluation, accessibility for people with disabilities to cultural events is a challenge, primarily in terms of poor infrastructure. However, the organizers consider that an improvement can be observed in the efforts of local authorities and civil society in the period 2017-2023 to make cultural infrastructure accessible for people with disabilities, especially with regards to transport (there is a large number of public transport vehicles that are properly equipped; adapted transport for people with disabilities is also mentioned).

Organizers also found that the venues in which cultural events are held generally lack or have poor access ramps, do not have adequate access paths or toilets, etc. In the case of events held in non-conventional venues, some organizers who have ensured access for the participation of people with disabilities have created adapted facilities (raised viewing platform, secluded space, etc.), while others have focused on making the content rather more accessible.

The accessibility practices for cultural content and cultural infrastructure that were mentioned by the organizers, were the following:

Going inside the targeted communities and carrying out events and activities close to them .
Adapting content (language, artistic expression) to the level of understanding of the audience, by simplifying the cultural message and the way cultural codes and symbols are conveyed.
Translating or subtitling cultural content in several languages within the same event to support multiculturality, interculturality and accessibility for an ethnically and linguistically diverse audience.
Using interactive and co-creative elements to engage with the target audience (workshops).
Using special equipment or features for the participation and involvement of the disabled public, such as technological vests that transmit sound vibrations at the body level to the hearing impaired, AUDARA (Accessibility Audit) app for assessing venues for accessibility for people with disabilities, Artec app which is an audio-guide platform for exploring exhibitions.
Approaching the space differently , e.g. by arranging some exhibits in such a way that they can be touched and explored other than visually by wheelchair users, hearing impaired etc., use of NFC codes to access information for exhibits (as opposed to QR codes).



↑ Denis Blidariu, Romanian sign language interpreter, Katie Melua Concert, Unirii Square, December 8 2023, foto: Ovidiu Constantin

Noteworthy initiatives and projects that have contributed to making culture accessible to diverse audiences not only in tastes, but also in sensory experiences and abilities, despite the challenges faced, have included:

Exploring the city’s heritage, from symbolic monuments to trails of the 1989 Revolution using 3D models and tactile maps , developed as part of the Timișoara4all and the Interactive Revolution Memorial projects , targeting blind tourists or locals, as well as special education students.
Providing some cultural sites with accessibility facilities, such as barrier-free paths and adapted toilets at the Victoria Cinema, Timiș Cinema, Bastion 3 Gallery, the Water Museum or FABER.
Hosting its in-house or guest theatre performances from across the country that are also accessible to visually or hearing impaired audiences , organized for example by the Basca Theatre.
Documenting the year of the European Capital of Culture from four unique perspectives , carried out by the Kabaitan Culture Association, involving people with special needs, their experiences providing cultural event organizers with invaluable inspiration for adapting the content and the cultural spaces in which they operate.
Assessing the accessibility of local cultural sites , becoming a valuable source for designing new investments, procedures and procurement processes that are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the audience and the arts community.

When organizing the events with a representative role, the Centre for Projects has taken multiple **measures to increase the accessibility of the sites** and events included in the Programme, such as the installation of mobile ramps, the provision of adapted toilets, the creation of barrier-free routes to certain exhibitions, films or concerts. For the first time in Timișoara, hearing-impaired people in the audience benefited from the artistic interpretation of the concerts in Unirii Square, with the support of Lavinia Chițu, one of the few Romanian sign language interpreters. **The Power Station programme** facilitated the participation of various valuable resource persons and organizations who provided the organizers with their experience in organizing accessible events as well as the development and organization of **training programmes for volunteers registered in the Timișoara 2023 Volunteering platform**.

All these initiatives helped to create connections between organizers of cultural events and organizations actively involved in representing marginalized groups, **testing new ways of working together**.

Integrating new technologies

The integration of new technologies have sought to engage the public and create new cultural experiences and to promote cultural heritage:

- Integrating new technologies into cultural offerings through: digital art exhibitions, use of NFT and NFC technologies, tours and exhibitions using augmented reality and virtual reality.
- Facilitating online participation of the public through: broadcasting fragments or live streams of events on social networks, international collaborations, active dialog with the public, creation of educational guides or online platforms, experimental performances, immersive installations.
- The collaboration of cultural operators with organizations dedicated to supporting vulnerable people has led to the development of inclusive digital products that have facilitated access to technology for social groups less familiar with it.

In fact, 55% of the organizers consider that the Timișoara 2023 Programme has helped them to develop their skills in the promotion of cultural heritage.

The public’s interaction with online content demonstrated their openness to the integration of new technologies into cultural products, especially when it comes to initiatives creating hybrid cultural experiences, linking physical and online encounters. Personalized messages that addressed community needs and live-streamed events were those that most attracted audiences.

Digital formats available online or accessible to an international audience not only improve accessibility across the wider public, but also transform Timișoara’s cultural scene into a benchmark for innovation and international outreach.

Attracting an international audience

The organizers mention that, especially between 2021-2023, they have taken the initiative to attract international audiences and promote the city as a European cultural hub, through strategies such as:

- Establishing international partnerships and developing co-productions programmes.
- Developing multilingual platforms, translating cultural programmes.
- Participation in international cultural fairs.
- Widespread use of mobile applications for translation and making cultural content accessible to international audiences.
- Promoting cultural heritage through augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) formats.

Good practices

Successful solutions and practices adopted by organizers with regards to audience engagement and development:

- Research and evaluation:** the programme has seen cultural operators paying attention to measuring the impact of their productions on audiences, and the feedback collected has been essential for the continuous improvement of the cultural offer.
- Creative freedom and audience engagement:** the funders of the projects under the Programme encouraged a high degree of autonomy for the organizers, thus encouraging more direct and creative interaction with the audience; the reduction of bureaucracy (e.g. by simplifying the payments) was particularly appreciated by the artists, beneficiaries of the creative grants, for whom the administrative management aspects were kept to a minimum.
- Partnerships:** partnerships have helped audience involvement and development, as well as the development of Timișoara’s cultural offer; cultural maps and itineraries have been created, making it easier for locals and tourists to navigate the city’s cultural landscape.
- Cultural education and mediation:** the organizers carried out various activities (both ad-hoc, informal and formal, specifically outlined as cultural education/mediation actions) to provide the public with information and context to better understand and approach cultural productions. Discussion workshops, open dialogues, post-event talks, guided tours, etc. were organized, thus facilitating a deeper interaction with the audience.
- Promotion of European values:** projects that emphasized European values such as tolerance and inclusion resonated strongly with the public; also, by developing cultural activities in the outskirts, the feeling of isolation was reduced and inclusion

promoted. Tailoring cultural content, language, formats and themes to the particularities of each community facilitated understanding and appreciation of cultural events.

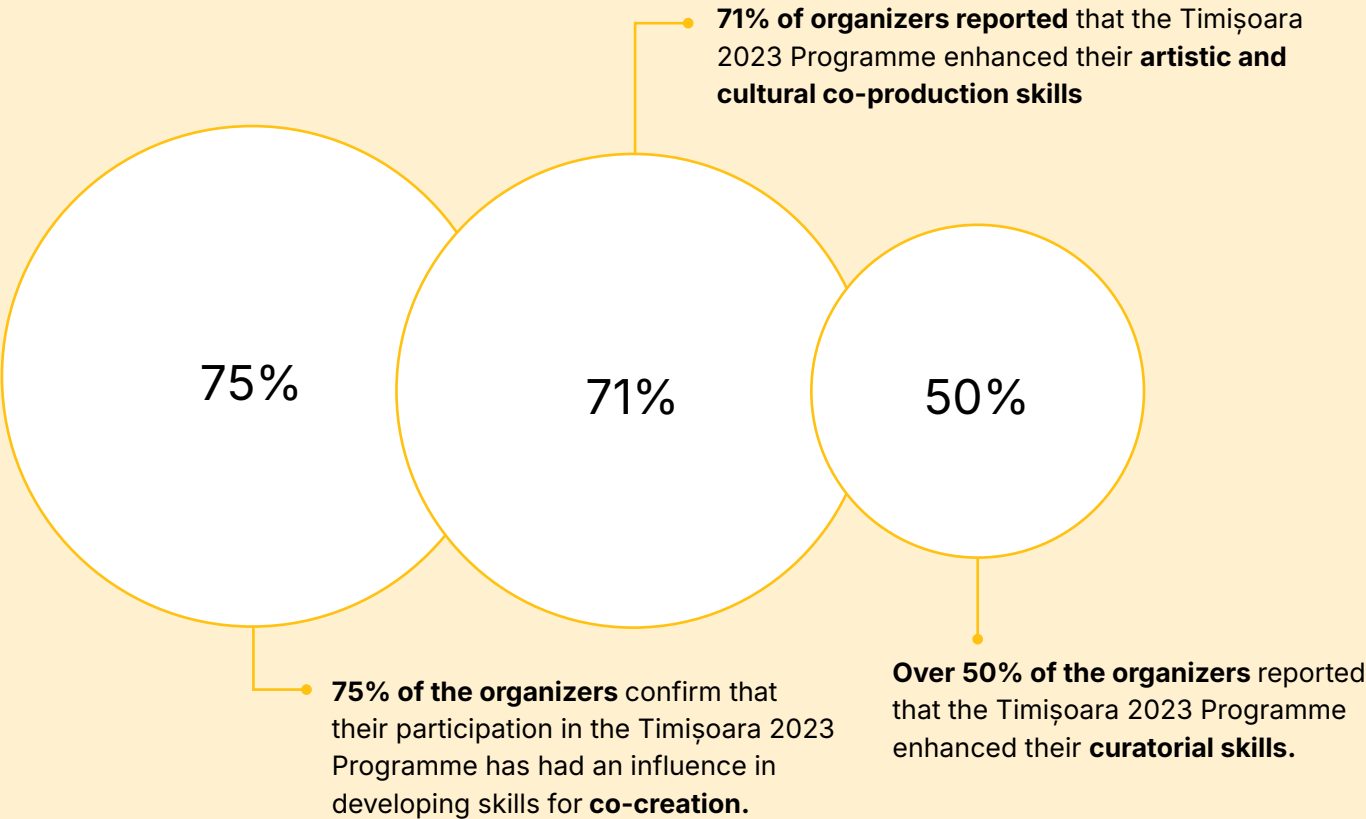
- Collaboration and active involvement of communities:** the active involvement of communities in the process of creating cultural events increased their sense of belonging and facilitated access to culture, in particular through the understanding of their needs by the organizers; cultural projects were thus tailored to meet the needs and interests of communities, be they marginalized, ethnic, social or geographical communities. In addition, maintaining links with these communities after the completion of the projects reinforced the sense of relevance and created long-term impact.
- Collaboration with vulnerable and/or special needs groups and with organizations targeting such groups:** these types of collaborations involved both understanding the real needs of these groups, adapting locations and content, co-creation, and audience involvement and development, which led to the capitalization of specific experiences, a sense of belonging, cultural education, and new cultural products tailored to the target audience.
- Creative use of spaces:** starting from the challenge of the limited number of spaces for the production and delivery of cultural projects, the existing spaces in the city were used creatively, adapted to the projects they hosted and to the needs of cultural operators. This, combined with the local authorities’ efforts to provide additional spaces, has resulted in maximizing the use of the spaces dedicated to the Timișoara’s cultural scene.

Relevant work with sustainable results

The majority of the organizers consider that the Timișoara 2023 Programme was the encouragement they needed to better carry out their activities in the future.

The lessons learned, including accumulated know-how, urban infrastructure changes that supported the local cultural production, as well as the multi-year and individual grants provided by the Centre for Projects underpin relevant work with sustainable results.

Obstacles and challenges mentioned: insufficient sources of funding, themes that may be inconsistent with contemporary public interest, poor cultural infrastructure and scarcity of specialized human resources - cultural professionals or support for them.



Co-creation

According to respondents to individual interviews, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, museums and art galleries were producing and organizing exhibition programmes in order to capture the attention of the public and to showcase cultural products to as many visitors or audiences as possible, but practices during the Timișoara 2023 Programme period have moved towards a different goal, namely enhancing the audience experience.

In the period 2021 to 2023, some organizations and institutions involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme have been advocating for a shift in the traditional purposes of cultural exhibiting spaces, like museums and art galleries, moving away from simple attendance numbers towards enhancing audience experience. Consequently, these spaces are evolving to incorporate participatory art practices and public co-creation.

Curatorial processes

Additionally, cultural operators shared their expertise through capacity-building workshops, aimed at developing curatorial and critical thinking skills among emerging curators, mediators, and arts-focused high school students. While 55% of organizers acknowledged improved curatorial skills, they also identified a local shortage of mediation and curatorial professionals to meet the city's needs.

Coproduction

Direct collaboration with artists, NGOs, and national and international institutions facilitated the exchange of ideas, skills, and best practices, leading to the development of competences in:

- **Managing collaborations:** facilitating discussions, mediating conflicts, and ensuring inclusive participation in co-production.
- **Intercultural skills:** adapting communication and navigating diverse perspectives in co-production.
- **Monitoring and evaluation:** implementing frameworks to assess production quality, audience engagement, and social or cultural impact.

(Positive) change in communities

Most organizers aimed to educate and engage diverse audiences, particularly those from vulnerable and disadvantaged communities, through arts and culture. Consequently, they reported developing skills in:

- **Facilitating audience participation in cultural production.** Organizers found that participatory approaches, workshops and open discussions, were the most effective methods for fostering a sense of belonging, particularly among marginalized communities.
- **The mediation of the cultural programmes.** Over half of the organizers reported enhanced curatorial and mediation skills, attributed to partnerships and workshops on cultural project communication.
- **Integration of digital tools in cultural projects.** Qualitative analysis revealed the growing importance of digital media in cultural accessibility, including multilingual content, interactive experiences, and feedback collection. Consequently, operators integrated digital tools like interactive platforms, augmented reality, and 3D scanning.

The range and diversity of social themes and topics, as presented in the dedicated chapter, demonstrate the cultural operators' effective action and acquired knowledge.

Cultural entrepreneurship

Organizers expressed varied perspectives on cultural entrepreneurship, acknowledging its importance for project sustainability and income generation, while also noting challenges in securing funding and resources. Many organizers cited a lack of resources and skills as barriers to implementing business models. They agreed that entrepreneurship is crucial for a thriving cultural scene.

Quantitative data analysis shows a significant shift in operators’ approach to cultural entrepreneurship over the period 2017-2024, including:

Economic activities and ticket sales	⬆️⬆️	The number of operators confirming that they have undertaken such practices increased from 18% (2017-2020) to 33% (2021-2023), but declined to 26% in 2024, indicating potential structural or attitudinal barriers to market integration.
Sponsorship	⬆️⬆️⬆️⬆️	While only 38% of organizations or individuals turned to sponsors, between 2017 and 2022, this rises to 55% between 2021 and 2023 and remains at a high of 48% in 2024.
Public benefit focus	⬆️⬆️⬆️	Emphasis on public benefits increased from 55% (2017-2020) to 84% (2021-2023), then decreased to 76% in 2024, reflecting shifting priorities.
Performance-driven activities	⬆️⬆️⬆️	Implementation of planned and evaluated activities rose from 38% (2017-2020) to 63% (2021-2023), stabilizing at 61% in 2024, indicating a growing professionalization of the sector, where there is a growing interest of cultural operators in organizing activities in line with performance standards essential in a competitive environment.

Some organizers felt that setting up a business required efforts and resources that they did not have, and that they needed new skills and support.

Support for the local cultural scene

90% of organizers reported that cultural support programmes, including scholarships, mobilities, and traineeships, significantly enhanced skill development. Key programmes included the Energy! Creative Arts Fellowships (2022), Energy! Creative Fellowships (2023, 2024), and Power Station++ | Mobilities for cultural professionals (2023-2024), all managed by the Centre for Projects. 50% of organizers reported providing artistic scholarships, residencies, or training programmes:

- **Artistic scholarships:** Cultural associations supported artists impacted by income loss, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Artist residencies:** Respondents provided workspaces for artists and cultural organizations, fostering collaboration, community engagement, and intercultural exchange.

- **Creative support:** Workshops and training sessions focused on cultural communication, audience development, and grant writing enhanced cultural operators’ professional skills.

Financial management

An analysis of local cultural operators’ income and expenditure (2021-2023), defined as those having their registered office in Timiș County, reveals the impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme on the local cultural scene. The study tracked the evolution of their general income and expenditure, the evolution of the non-reimbursable funds accessed and the ratio between the two, as well as employment changes during this period. The analysis focused on:

- non-reimbursable funding granted by the Centre for Projects, Timiș County, and Timiș County Centre for Arts and Culture, sourced from local and state budgets (through the Ministry of Culture).
- balance sheets and profit/loss accounts from consolidated financial statements, with a focus on expenses as an indicator of total annual budgets.

→ Cultural milestones, JAZZx 2023, photo: Seba Tătaru



The table below details the total project budgets (2021-2023) funded with non-reimbursable local public funds from Timișoara Municipality and state budget funds granted through the Ministry of Culture, including non-reimbursable funding amounts and complementary sources. The executed budget data is current as of June 30, 2024.

Total approved budget	Non-reimbursable fund	Complementary sources	Total executed budget	Non-reimbursable fund	Complementary sources
NGO					
56.554.021,44	46.758.115,69	9.795.905,75	53.996.668,59	45.826.775,51	8.636.278,62
Companies in the cultural sector / creative industries					
493.830,00	377.425,00	116.405,00	491.945,95	374.412,32	117.533,63
Other commercial entities (LLC, ANP)*					
23.476,00	22.551,00	925,00	23.654,01	22.449,48	1.204,53
Other institutions (churches, professional associations, etc.)					
4.638.547,00	3.441.056,00	1.197.491,00	4.183.606,66	3.326.826,95	856.779,71
Cultural public institutions**					
832.450,00	705.000,00	127.450,00	769.892,88	559.140,67	210.763,41
Universities and research centres					
5.513.883,71	4.715.804,86	798.078,85	5.458.206,23	4.701.305,88	756.900,35
Authorities of national or local public administration					
1.071.384,86	944.438,62	126.946,24	1.083.715,98	941.433,32	142.282,66
69.127.593,01	56.964.391,17	12.163.201,84	66.007.690,30	55.752.344,13	10.721.742,91

*This category consists of only two entities, which is why the figures are very small compared to the other categories. | **The amounts in this table refer only to funding received for cultural projects during the reporting period, from the sources mentioned. Total amounts allocated to public cultural institutions will be treated separately in another section of the financial analysis.

The total approved budgets for local organizers participating in the Timișoara 2023 Programme for the period 2021-2023 was 69.1 million RON, of which executed budgets represent 78.1 million RON. This represents a 95.5% execution, equivalent to a very high degree of absorption of the funds available. As expected, the largest share was accounted for by NGOs with 81%, followed by other institutions (professional associations, etc.) with 7%. NGOs had a share of 82% of the executed budget in the approved budget.

In terms of sources of funding, non-reimbursable funding accounted for 82.4% of the total approved budget and own or external sources (co-financing) for 17.6%. The highest co-financing was in the category Other institutions (churches, professional associations, etc.) with 25.8%.

Some of the projects are still under implementation and the executed budget in the above table is referenced to 30.06.2024. As such, the absorption rate is expected to be close to 100% at the end of the programme.

The total budget approved for the period 2021-2023 through the funding programmes has been executed at 95.5% of the total budget, which means a high degree of absorption.

The actually spent non-reimbursable funds amounted to RON 55.7 million for the organizers, which represents 97.8% of the approved amount, which means a high degree of absorption. Co-financing (i.e. complementary sources of funding: external or own sources) amounted to 16% of the total funds spent on the respective projects.

The following is a ranking of the organizations that received the largest budget from the available grants between 2021-2023.

Top local cultural operators that have received a budget of at least 1 million lei in non-reimbursable funding approved and executed in the period 2021-2023, within the funding programmes associated with the Cultural Programme, regardless of the funding authority

#	Entity name	Total Allocated Funding (RON)	Total Executed Funding (RON)
1	Art Encounters Foundation	3.248.608,78	3.124.778,31
2	Prin Banat Association	3.049.868,00	2.999.982,46
3	Order of Architects Romania - Timiș branch	2.872.070,00	2.773.976,14
4	West University of Timișoara Foundation	2.650.760,00	2.644.094,36
5	Documentor Association	2.271.180,00	2.071.293,89
6	Politehnic University Timișoara	2.196.180,07	2.181.682,60
7	Solidart Association	1.779.545,00	1.699.352,10
8	CRIES - Resource Centre for Ethical and Solidarity Initiatives	1.669.863,12	1.585.951,34
9	Identity.Education Association	1.624.415,00	1.623.693,12
10	Simulation Association	1.584.700,00	1.456.165,76
11	FLIGHT Foundation	1.398.430,00	1.387.430,00
12	La Figurat Association	1.325.000,00	1.325.000,00
13	Students' League of the Faculty of Automation and Computer Science*	1.320.027,00	1.303.312,90
14	Interart TRIADE Foundation	1.316.770,00	1.316.763,77
15	Aquatim Foundation	1.301.505,00	1.300.036,49
16	META Space Association	1.268.000,00	1.268.000,00
17	Unfold Motion Association	1.259.013,00	1.237.953,77
18	Trib`Art Association	1.189.040,00	1.182.782,79
19	We Re-Create Association	1.083.678,00	1.080.285,40
20	Diogene Cultural Association	1.000.000,00	1.000.000,00
21	Politehnica Foundation**	759.957,00	714.778,09
22	West University of Timișoara**	448.452,00	448.452,00
		36.617.061,97	35.725.765,29

* AC League | Although these entities have not accessed over 1 million RON, their association with other entities in the list which have accessed such amounts makes relevant their inclusion in the total (UVT Foundation, respectively UPT)**

The 22 entities have a total of 35.725.765,29 RON of executed grants, which represents 64,08% of the total executed funds.

Evolution of the financial situation of local
organizers in the period 2021-2023

The initial database contained 319 organizers who coordinated projects under the Timișoara 2023 Programme (2017-2024). After excluding non-Romanian, national, and individual organizers, the analysis focused on 103 Timiș County-based organizers to assess the program’s financial impact.

NGOs comprised 75.7% of local organizers, with only two entities categorized as ‘Other commercial entities’ (LLC, NAP, etc.). Annual income and expenditure data were collected for Timiș County organizers, including NGOs, cultural/creative commercial entities, ‘Other commercial entities’ (LLC, NAP, etc.), and other institutions (churches, professional associations, etc.). The following table presents the evolution of their income and expenditure.

Evolution of total revenues and expenditures of local organizers, according to the data from the consolidated financial statements reported by them to the Ministry of Public Finance. (RON)

Total income 2021	2022	2023	Total spent 2021	2022	2023
NGO					
55.665.657	63.507.892	96.298.205	35.621.866	56.594.959	97.357.337
Companies in the cultural sector / creative industries					
518.345	842.606	1.116.789	354.714	610.618	969.314
Alte entități comerciale (SRL, PFA etc.)					
274.513	702.195	274.513	194.805	471.482	195.805
Other institutions (churches, professional associations, etc.)					
2.483.953	3.548.484	6.443.617	1.962.134	3.482.075	5.777.758
58.942.468	68.601.177	104.133.124	38.133.519	61.159.134	104.300.214

Revenues increased annually, from 58.9 million RON in 2021 to 104.1 million RON in 2023, a 177% rise (nearly doubling). NGOs held the largest revenue share, reflecting the sample’s composition. All categories showed annual increases, except ‘Other commercial entities,’ influenced by a single trading company within a small sample. Expenditure followed a similar trend, rising from 38.1 million RON in 2021

to 104.3 million RON in 2023, a 273% increase. Consolidated financial statements indicate a positive trend, with revenues and expenditures doubling between 2021 and 2023. NGO expenditures, which constitute the largest segment, increased by 173%. Staffing rose from 189 in 2021 to 284 in 2023. NGOs saw a 41% increase, while ‘Other Institutions’ experienced a doubling of staff.

The evolution of the total number of employees of local organizers part of the Cultural Programme, who submitted statements to ANAF.

Categories	2021	2022	2023
NGOs	168	212	237
Commercial entities in the cultural sector / creative industries	4	6	5
Other commercial entities (LLC, NAP, etc.)	1	1	1
Other institutions (professional associations, etc.)	16	9	41
	189	228	284

*based on the average number of employees indicator

The average employee count in the sampled entities increased from 417 to 663. NGOs experienced a 40% employee increase. In 2023, 47 entities (45.6% of the sample) accessed funding for the first time. The share of funding in the annual expenditure: this analysis assesses the Timișoara 2023 Programme’s financial impact by examining funded project expenditures within local cultural operators’ total annual budgets, as reported in ANAF financial statements. The following table details the analysis

period. Overall, grants part of the Timișoara 2023 Programme constituted 24.34% of cultural operators’ total expenditure, indicating significant financial impact. This result was primarily influenced by NGOs (24.17%). ‘Other institutions’ (29.65%) and cultural/creative commercial entities (19.35%) showed higher and lower shares, respectively. **These results confirm the Timișoara 2023 Programme’s significant financial impact on local cultural operators.**

Share of executed grants in total expenditure of local cultural operators in the period 2021-2023

Categories	Spent non-reimbursable funds Timisoara 2023 Programme	Total budget entity	%
NGOs	45.826.776	189.574.162	24,17%
Commercial entities in the cultural sector / creative industries	374.412	1.934.646	19,35%
Other commercial entities (LLC, NAP, etc.)	22.449	862.092	2,60%
Other institutions (professional associations, etc.)	3.326.827	11.221.967	29,65%
	49.550.464	203.592.867	24,34%

Since the average is not always the most representative indicator, a different type of calculation was made. More specifically, the weighting was calculated at the level of the local cultural operator and those for which it was less than 20% were removed from the sample. The reason is that many entities had very large budgets compared to the funding received in the Timișoara 2023 Programme and as such pulled the average down. As a result, the total amount of grant funding recalculated in the total expenditure reported to ANAF in 2021-2023 was 36.2%. This better reflects the economic reality at the TM23 Programme level.

The Timișoara 2023 Programme had a considerable positive financial impact on the cultural operators analyzed. The total non-reimbursable funds executed in the total expenditure of these entities was 24.3%, the share for the NGO sector being 24.1%. However, after excluding cultural operators with a share of less than 20% from the sample, the resulting average share was 36.2%, considered more representative of the impact of the Programme.

Good practices

Organizers successfully developed skills and increased organizational capacity through the following methods:

Volunteer management	Effective coordination of diverse teams fostered collaboration and efficiency. Consistent communication and feedback built trust and engagement. Rigorous planning and personalized training ensured well-structured activities and volunteer retention.
Cultural production in new communities	Organizers adapted formats for new audiences by utilizing unconventional spaces, open-air events, and interactive experiences, resulting in increased participation.
Cultural production in unconventional spaces	Organizers innovatively used abandoned or underutilized spaces (former industrial areas, peripheral areas), attracting community interest.
Project team management	Effective teams demonstrated strategic planning, flexibility, long-term thinking and risk management.
Audience diversification	Effective communication strategies, including multilingual online content, local or international artist collaborations, and diverse events, expanded audience reach.
Partnership development	Open communication and academic collaborations fostered sustainable partnerships and expanded audience reach. Interdisciplinary collaborations also attracted sponsors.
Public authority communication	Transparent communication and collective advocacy facilitated access to resources and support.
Event calendar management	Coordinated event calendars minimized overlap and optimized audience participation.
Heritage showcasing	Technology and storytelling, via apps, connected heritage sites with the community, enhancing audience engagement.
Ecological sustainability	Organizers promoted eco-friendly practices, reducing waste and encouraging public responsibility.



Making local cultural life interesting and meaningful for citizens

2018-2023

An evaluation of audience engagement with Timișoara’s cultural offerings reveals varied consumption patterns. The COVID-19 pandemic’s lingering effects and the Timișoara 2023 Programme’s extensive events significantly influenced these trends. Non-consumers participation in cultural events slightly increased (49.5% to 52.8%) across the 19 evaluated institutions and activities. Moreover, regular visitors (2-3 times annually) significantly increased from 21.9% to 33.9%. This 12% rise suggests audience migration between the available local offers (from theatre, bookshops, NGO activities, etc. to art galleries or activities organized in unconventional spaces), and increased engagement due to the 2023 cultural agenda.

Most frequented types of cultural institutions/ spaces and top preferences in terms of the type of cultural activity, reported by Timișoara residents in 2023 (% - attended at least once in the last 12 months):

Bookstores	70.5%
Cultural events organized in non-conventional	67.6%
Cinema halls in shopping malls	66.9%

Cultural institutions and activities with an increase of the regular audience attendance in 2023 (% attending at least 2-3 times per year), compared to 2018:

Art galleries and exhibitions	8.1%
National Art Museum	7.2%
Memorial of the 1989 Revolution	4.1%
House of Culture of Timișoara	3%
National Romanian Opera House	2.9%
Events organized in unconventional venues	2.1%

Institutions and organizations that saw a decrease in regular audience attendance in 2023 compared to 2018:

Mihai Eminescu National Theater Timișoara	-12.7%
Bookstores	-7.4%
Cultural activities organized by NGOs	-5%
Cinemas in shopping malls	-3.8%
Merlin Children and Youth Theater	-1.8%

In general, we can talk about a relative preservation of the regular audience of institutions and cultural activities in Timișoara.

Timișoara’s citizens consider that the local cultural offer should be enriched first of all with *music and dance performances* (7.6%), especially with foreign artists (4.7%), as well as the organization of various free exhibitions, including in public spaces and on the streets (4%). About 3% of respondents said that the local cultural offer is sufficiently diversified and there is practically nothing missing.



9

The Legacy

Effects and actions for the continuous
development of Timișoara's cultural scene



2024 — consolidating positive results

The year 2024 marks the transition from the cultural effervescence typical of an ECoC year to a period of consolidation and sustainability of the Timișoara 2023 legacy. Despite fewer events and entities, ongoing initiatives demonstrate efforts to democratize culture, integrate new actors and innovate in the use of public spaces. Increased local involvement and sustained international partnerships highlight a focus on community and Timișoara’s regional role. The Programme’s legacy is defined by the cultural ecosystem’s ability to drive value, collaboration, and innovation, not only by the volume of events.

Data comparison reveals a shift from a broad, international programme in 2023 to a localized,

legacy-focused programme in 2024. 2023 featured 1,143 entities, 339 projects, and 2,331 events, showcasing a wide cultural scope. In 2024, the Timișoara 2023 Legacy Programme involved 511 entities, 246 projects, and 1,098 events, indicating a focus on local support and key collaborations.

The evolution of these figures should be interpreted in the context of the transition of several projects and events from the Cultural Programme in 2023 to the generic local cultural offer in 2024. In other words, the situation in 2024 does not illustrate the complete situation of Timișoara’s cultural offer, but strictly the situation of that segment in the continuation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

Evolution of the number of organizers, projects and events in the Cultural Programme between 2023 and 2024

Key indicators	2023	2024	Evolution 2023-2024
Organizers	1,143	511	-55%
Projects	339	246	-27%
Events	2,331	1,098	-53%

In terms of geographic scope, the share of local entities increased significantly from 42% in 2023 to 65% in 2024, indicating a strengthening of the local segment of the ecosystem. At the same time, the contribution of international and national

entities decreased (from 25% to 16% and from 33% to 19%, respectively), reflecting a greater focus on strengthening local resources and regional collaborations.

Typology and share of organizers involved in the Cultural Programme in 2023 and 2024

Type of entity	2023	2024
Non-governmental organizations	39%	41%
Natural person	9%	15%
Other educational institution	4%	11%
Commercial entities in the cultural sector / creative industries	12%	7%
Other public institutions	4%	5%

Public cultural institutions	8%	5%
Universities and research centres	7%	5%
Authorities of local or national public administration	3%	4%
Other commercial entities (LLC, NAP, etc.)	10%	3%
Other institutions (churches, professional associations, etc.)	3%	2%
Informal artistic groups	1%	2%

In the transition from 2023 to 2024, the cultural ecosystem has seen significant changes in the distribution of the actors involved.

● **NGOs** have strengthened their central role (41% in 2024 compared to 39% in 2023). This development underlines the importance of non-governmental organizations as the main driver of cultural initiatives, able to attract resources, facilitate collaborations and contribute to the cultural legacy of the Programme. Their strengthening also reflects a strategic trend to support actors that can respond to community needs and support cultural diversity, contributing to the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem.

● **The involvement of individuals** has increased significantly, from 9% in 2023 to 15% in 2024, highlighting an important direction in the dynamics of the cultural ecosystem. This growth reflects the openness towards independent initiatives and individual contributions, encouraging the direct participation of artists and creators. By supporting individuals, the programme has stimulated individual creativity and enabled the emergence of more personal and authentic projects that respond to the needs of the specific local audiences. At the same time, this growth underlines the importance of strengthening an adequate support framework for individuals, including access to funding, mentoring and collaboration opportunities, to ensure the sustainability and impact of these contributions in the cultural ecosystem.

● **The involvement of educational institutions** through the programme *Creative Schools* reflects a greater openness to independent and educational initiatives. This development is extremely important as it underlines a deeper integration of education into the cultural ecosystem and a strategic approach in training new generations of creators and consumers of culture. By including educational institutions in the program, culture becomes an educational tool,

contributing to the development of creativity, critical thinking and interdisciplinary collaboration among pupils and students. This collaboration also fosters the relationship between education and the cultural sector, encouraging both the formation of a local talent base and connecting younger generations to the cultural values and legacy of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. In addition, the *Creative Schools* programme can generate projects with long-term impact, strengthening the link between education, culture and community. This growth signals a strategic step towards the sustainability of Timișoara’s cultural ecosystem.

● **The decrease in the participation of commercial entities belonging to the creative industries** and other commercial organizations (from 12% to 7% and from 10% to 3%) reflects both changes in the priorities of the 2024 Programme and broader dynamics in the cultural ecosystem. On the one hand, this decrease can be interpreted positively, indicating a strategic recalibration of the mechanisms for delivering a cultural programme in the first year of the Timișoara 2023 Legacy Program, which favored the strengthening of local actors, non-profit initiatives and emerging groups.

● **The role of public cultural institutions and universities has been smaller.** It is essential that this decrease is seen in the overall context of the 2024 programme. If public institutions and universities have reduced their role in order to allow other actors to take the lead, this transition may be beneficial in the long run. However, if this downsizing reflects an unplanned withdrawal or an insufficient allocation of resources, the cultural ecosystem could suffer. A balance between the continuity offered by traditional institutions and the flexibility of new actors is essential for the sustainability of the ecosystem.

● **The increased participation of informal arts groups suggests a diversification and stronger**

support for creativity at local level. Increased participation from informal arts groups indicates diversified local creativity support. This active involvement recognizes local creative potential and supports innovative, independent initiatives. Their agility and community connection enable rapid responses to local needs, fostering the democratization of culture. They broaden audience reach by including those outside traditional cultural spheres, promoting inclusion. Unconstrained by formal structures, they catalyze artistic innovation, enriching Timișoara’s cultural life.

Spaces for culture

In 2024, the top 20 cultural event venues demonstrated a balanced citywide distribution, continuing 2023’s trend of democratizing cultural

The Timișoara 2023 Programme successfully integrated diverse venues and initiatives, creating an inclusive model for community connection and cultural ecosystem resilience. This approach can be replicated for sustained audience engagement and social cohesion.

The Legacy. Effects and actions for the continuous development of Timișoara’s cultural scene

spaces and expanding access beyond Timișoara’s center. Using parks, squares, and unconventional public areas effectively democratizes culture and revitalizes urban life, embodying the concept of ‘returning public space to the people’ for social interaction and artistic expression. Outdoor events in public spaces broaden audience reach beyond traditional venues, integrating art into daily urban life. Unconventional spaces revitalize underused areas, fostering community participation and social cohesion. Private cultural spaces, like FABER, Kunsthalle Bega, and ISHO, have demonstrated their ability to attract new audiences, support innovation, and diversify the city’s cultural offerings.



The Legacy Plan of the city

The Timișoara 2023 Programme aimed to have a long-term impact, leaving the city and the community with a new attitude and new resources for growth and development.

According to the report “Neverending Timișoara 2023” (Centre for Projects, 2024), by the end of 2023 the effects could be seen at the level of the public, but also in terms of the state and capacities of the cultural scene, the competences of the local administration to initiate policies and manage cultural programmes and funding, along with new or improved cultural infrastructure, urban design or tourism development strategies, all boosted by the development and implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

In order not to dissipate or waste these effects, it was emphasized the need for a set of measures for the coming years, to consolidate these new resources

and positive effects in the benefit of the inhabitants. Thus, Timișoara’s Legacy Plan for the Timișoara 2023 Programme ensures the continuity of the development of the cultural sector and ecosystem in Timișoara in the coming years, in line with the 2016 vision of the original Bidbook.

Planning for a sustainable Legacy involved reaffirming the vision of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and identifying measures that will be integrated into the city’s future long-term cultural strategy, beyond 2024. The drafting of the plan involved qualitative and quantitative research, a network analysis and a participatory planning process, which all took place between November 2023 and July 2024.

General objectives for a sustainable legacy of the Timișoara 2023 Programme

Access	Ensure access to culture for a wide and diverse audience.
Engagement	Foster active participation in creative arts to integrate culture into community identity and cohesion.
Connection	Strengthen connections within local, regional (metropolitan, county, West Region, Banat), national, and international cultural networks and partners.
Identity	Responsibly promote cultural heritage and support local artistic creation, emphasizing Timișoara’s European identity.

→ Timișoara 2023 Platform, second edition, photo: Adrian Anghel



Perspectives for the new cultural strategy of the city

The new cultural strategy of the Municipality of Timișoara will integrate the conclusions on the results and effects of the Timișoara 2023 Programme on the city, in terms of successful working methods, as well as the new competences and structures, infrastructural or organizational, which have been created and are functional.

In order to contribute to the development of a sustainable cultural ecosystem capable of innovating and demonstrating inclusive practices beyond 2024, the recommendations resulting from the network analysis process are the following:

1. Activating key roles	<div>→ Support popular organizations to facilitate rapid information dissemination through dedicated funding, communication workshops and cultural PR.</div> <div>→ Encouraging influential organizations to mobilize resources and connect fragmented groups through grants for large projects and networking sessions.</div> <div>→ Engaging connector organizations to foster cross-sector collaboration by organizing cross-sector events and mentoring programmes.</div>
2. Strengthening the core and expanding the peripheries	<div>→ Support trusted organizations through long-term non-reimbursable funding and by organizing recurring events that become cultural legacies.</div> <div>→ Integrating new actors and supporting underrepresented groups through inclusion programmes and dedicated funding.</div>
3. Building trust through local clusters	<div>→ Facilitating collaboration between regional organizations through joint projects and community events.</div> <div>→ Connecting local clusters to international networks to encourage the sharing of best practice and resources.</div>
4. Supporting key cultural hubs	<div>→ Investment in the infrastructure of cultural spaces to modernize and make them multifunctional.</div> <div>→ Development of public-private partnerships to attract additional resources and support cultural initiatives.</div>
5. Building bridges between sectors	<div>→ Promote collaborations between arts, technology and science through innovative projects and interactive exhibitions.</div> <div>→ Develop educational programmes connecting academia, artists and cultural entrepreneurs.</div>
6. Promote a culture of partnerships	<div>→ Create digital platforms to facilitate collaborations and resource sharing.</div> <div>→ Organize annual sessions to evaluate and plan future partnerships.</div>

Specifically, in respect to the three categories of key actors in the network, the recommendations are as follows:

- While *popular organizations* bring significant benefits, it is essential that the ecosystem encourages a balance. Diversifying resources and spreading responsibilities across multiple actors can reduce the risk of over-centralization, increasing the resilience of the network. Through strategies that support collaboration between organizations of varying sizes and types, the network can harness the potential of *popular organizations* without becoming dependent on them. This ensures not only the immediate efficiency but also the long-term sustainability of the cultural ecosystem.
- In order to maximize the benefits of *influential organizations* and reduce the risks of over-centralization around them, it is essential for the ecosystem to promote the sharing of responsibilities and the diversification of influence. By supporting collaborations between influential actors and smaller or emerging organizations, the network can ensure a more equitable distribution of resources and opportunities.

Popular, influential and connecting organizations play important roles in the network, but many of them may

not be aware of their strategic position. Lack of self-awareness often limits their potential to be a catalyst for action, innovation and cohesion in the ecosystem. This finding underlines the value of network analysis, not only as a retrospective but also as a prospective tool, offering to key actors insights to enhance their impact.

Trust transfer has been identified as a central mechanism for network cohesion, but it is also fragile and requires constant and quality interactions between actors. Without the support of **additional mechanisms to strengthen relationships**, the network risks becoming fragmented in the long term. For example, in 2023, the Curatorial Team played a fundamental role in maintaining cohesion and aligning initiatives in a highly complex context. This coordination has been essential to manage the diversity of actors and build an ecosystem that is both inclusive and effective.

In addition, the conclusions and recommendations from the quantitative and qualitative studies conducted in the evaluation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, point to several aspects that are essential for an increased vitality of the cultural scene in the city, capable of further developing Timișoara through culture:

1. Strategic action, based on clear and shared principles	<div>→ Greater clarity on the city's strategic cultural direction.</div> <div>→ Integration of environmental sustainability concerns in the production of cultural events, programmes and projects supported by the Municipality of Timișoara or in which the local public administration of Timișoara is a partner.</div> <div>→ Compliance with the standards defined by good governance: transparency of decision-making, an open and inclusive environment for dialog and participation, promotion of values of diversity and equity within the cultural community, and the development of mechanisms and policies that facilitate access and involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making processes.</div>
2. Predictable financial support	<div>→ Continuity of funding processes that have proven successful, with a focus on direct support for creatives (creative fellowships, mobilities).</div> <div>→ Setting up long-term funding mechanisms with clear eligibility for operators.</div> <div>→ Reducing bureaucracy in the process of accessing funds.</div> <div>→ Adaptation of funding mechanisms to support greater complementarities between public and independent institutions.</div>

3. Defined city communication and promotion strategies	<div>→ Consolidation of a centralized digital platform to promote events.</div> <div>→ Coordination between cultural actors and authorities to avoid duplication of events.</div> <div>→ Implementation of communication tools to inform and educate the local public and tourists about the cultural offer.</div>
4. Development and maintenance of cultural infrastructure	<div>→ Establishment of cultural venues suitable for large-scale events.</div> <div>→ Refurbishment and maintenance of existing infrastructure (e.g. Ștefania Palace, Multiplexity, Bastion Galleries).</div> <div>→ Continued management of community spaces, with attention to public interest benefits in respect to evolving trends in cultural entrepreneurship and private cultural spaces.</div> <div>→ Extension of public transport infrastructure to facilitate public access to cultural events.</div>
5. Training and professionalization of human resources	<div>→ Recognition of the skills acquired within the Timișoara 2023 Programme and fostering a pool of specialists in cultural management, communication and digital technologies, accessibility, mediation, cultural production.</div> <div>→ Organizing trainings and workshops for artists and cultural operators in areas such as digital marketing, cultural management and artistic production.</div> <div>→ Stimulating international exchanges to develop intercultural competencies and professionalization.</div>
6. Strengthening partnerships and collaborations	<div>→ Increase collaboration between cultural operators, local authorities and academia in the city.</div> <div>→ Create mentoring networks to provide support to new cultural actors.</div> <div>→ Encourage partnerships and participation of local cultural operators and creatives in national and international networks.</div>
7. Integration of digital technologies in cultural management, communication and evaluation	<div>→ Foster the integration of digital technologies for shared city-wide cultural communication, management and production.</div> <div>→ The use of technologies such as virtual reality, 3D scanning and holograms to promote cultural heritage.</div> <div>→ Development of interactive platforms to attract young audiences.</div> <div>→ Consolidation of data management platforms on cultural dynamics at city level for evaluation and communication.</div>
8. Making culture accessible to vulnerable groups	<div>→ Adapting cultural infrastructure and events for people with disabilities.</div> <div>→ Developing projects for people with special needs.</div> <div>→ Creating multilingual content to support the city's ethnic diversity.</div> <div>→ Organizing cultural activities for marginalized communities.</div>

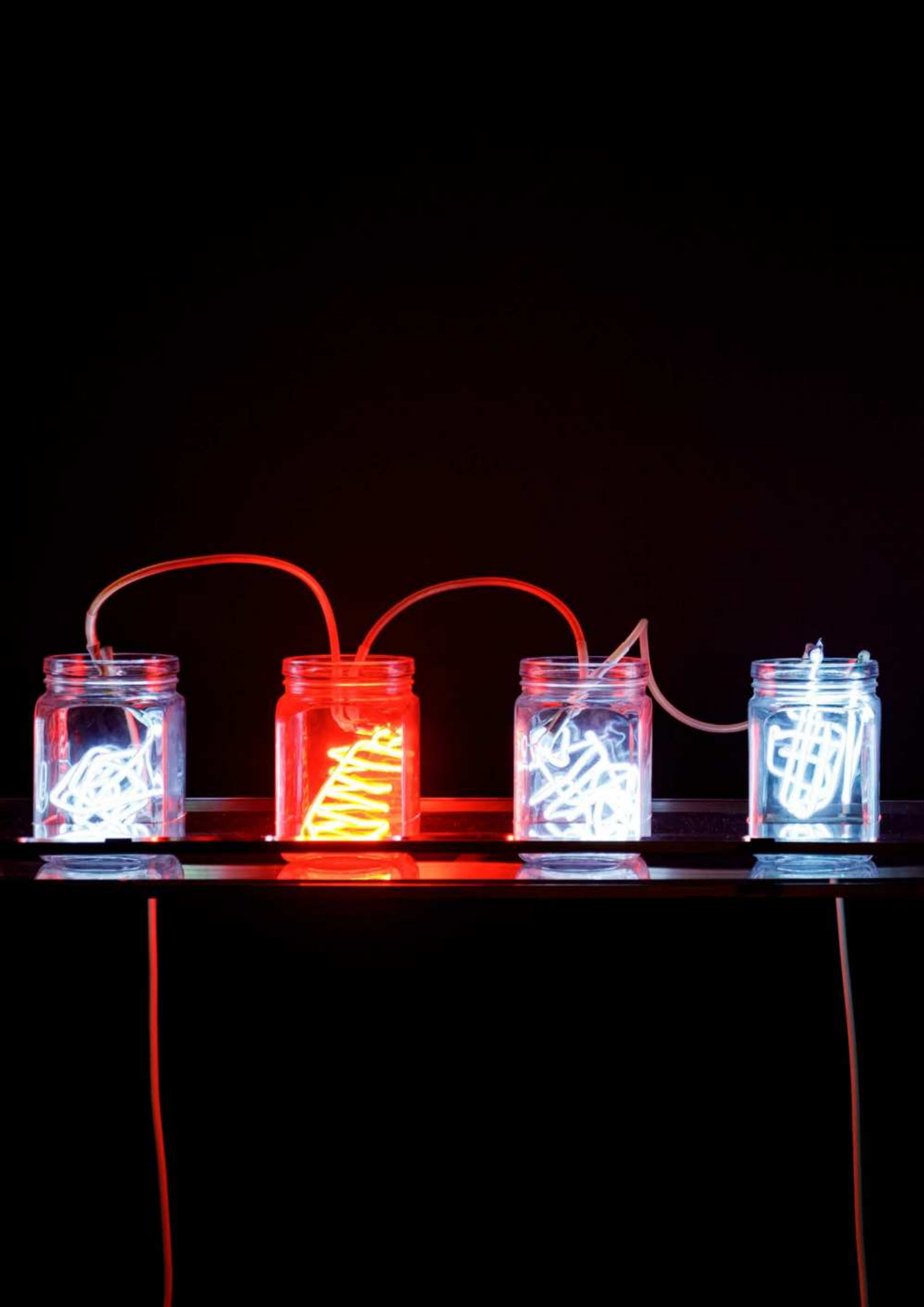
9. Monitoring public participation and results of cultural projects	<div>→ Establishment of structured mechanisms to collect data on audience participation.</div> <div>→ Analysing cultural consumer behaviours in order to adapt the event offer and organizational strategies of the city's main public and private cultural actors.</div> <div>→ Conduct regular sociological studies to adapt cultural strategies.</div>
10. Increasing private sector involvement	<div>→ Providing tax and reputational benefits for businesses investing in culture.</div> <div>→ Organizing awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of cultural sponsorship.</div> <div>→ Encouraging collaboration between cultural operators and the private sector.</div>

↓ Legacy Plan public consultancy meeting, photo: Adrian Anghel



10

The Methodology



The evaluation report was drafted mainly based on the observations and conclusions of studies carried out by independent research institutions in 2024, based on the *Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of the Timișoara 2023 Programme*, at the request of the Centre for Projects, for the Municipality of Timișoara.

At the conceptual level, the plan took into account the recommendations of the *Guidelines for the cities’ own evaluations of the results of their ECoC*, published by the European Commission in 2018. The guidelines and Timișoara’s Bidbook stood at the basis of defining the relevant indicators, as well as the evaluation objectives and framework which shaped the focus and structure of the contracted studies and analyses, representing the city’s self-evaluation process following the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

These studies and assessments sought to **understand** and **communicate** as clearly and coherently as possible what the process and governance system was, what the outcomes and impacts of the Timișoara 2023 Programme were in terms of public engagement, the evolution of the local cultural scene, governance, tourism developments and the profile of the Cultural Programme. In addition, several studies and surveys carried out in the period between 2014-2023 contributed to the

Being aware of good practices and challenges, reflecting on and integrating participatory processes into programme evaluation processes, are a solid basis for the public policy making of a city which recognizes the importance of continuously learning how to be better and more efficient for its citizens.

Related to this purpose, the added value of the findings is to inform the European Commission and aspiring European Capitals of Culture on their individual contribution to the European-level objectives of the Programme.

establishment of baseline values and the identification of intermediate thresholds, which are essential to track the evolution of the results and impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

For Timișoara, the process of evaluating the results and impacts of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was primarily aimed at **supporting the city to continue to make informed decisions about enhancing the role of culture in relation to public interest objectives**.

Our evaluation does this primarily through **increased awareness**: how to work effectively and what are the challenges, what are the gained competences, what are the further needs and expectations of the local scene and what is, locally, the transformative power of culture in terms of the profile of the audience and the values that permeate the local ecosystem. In terms of methodology, the emphasis on qualitative methods, through the inclusion of over 200 people, representatives of organizers and implementing structures, in the 2024 evaluation and planning process, indicates the value placed on **reflection and dialogue**, in order to give the chance to express individual perspectives and to jointly shape meaningful narratives about the journey of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, its legacy and expectations for the future.

Most content in this report draws from the studies and planning reports of 2024. To enhance readability, direct quotations and references are omitted, except for chapter-specific studies or publications.

The correspondence between the chapters of this report and the results and conclusions of the main evaluation studies is:

The study on <i>The evolution of Timișoara’s cultural scene in the context of the National Cultural Programme “Timișoara - ECoC in 2023”</i> (IRES, 2024)
CULTURAL SCENE. Timișoara grows as a city of arts and cultural democracy. Relevant work with sustainable results
SPECIFIC. The unique features of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. European dimension. Themes of projects and events in the Cultural Programme
GOVERNANCE. Decision making, coordination and collaborative management. Financial management
The study on <i>Audience engagement in the National Cultural Programme “Timișoara - ECoC in 2023</i> (IRES, 2024)
THE PEOPLE. Art and culture are a part of life and dependent on it. Timișoara population. Banat region inhabitants
SPECIFIC. The unique features of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. European dimension. Timișoara 2023 Programme Profile. Portrait of the audiencet
THE CULTURAL SCENE. Timișoara grows as a city of arts and cultural democracy. Cultural practices oriented towards the public
The study on <i>The governance of the National Cultural Programme “Timișoara - ECoC in 2023” - managing complexity in a turbulent context and the role of culture for local development</i> (Encore Research LLC, 2024)
GOVERNANCE. Collaborative decision-making, coordination and management
SPECIFIC. The unique features of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The city’s transformative project through culture and inclusion
CHRONOS. Timișoara 2023 Programme Roadmap
GENERATOR. Processes with results and effects

The studies on *Access and cultural participation in the Municipality of Timișoara in 2022 in the context of the National Programme Timișoara - ECoC in 2023*, respectively *Access and cultural participation in the Municipality of Timișoara in 2023 in the context of the National Programme Timișoara - ECoC in 2023* (UVT - Nadolu, 2023 and 2024)

SPECIFIC. The unique features of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. Timișoara 2023 Programme profile

THE PEOPLE. Art and culture are a part of life and dependent on it. Timișoara population. The inhabitants.

CULTURAL SCENE. Timișoara grows as a city of arts and cultural democracy. Making local cultural life interesting and meaningful for citizens

Processing and analysis of quantitative data on projects, organizations and network data for each of the years between 2017-2024 (Fierăscu, 2024)

SPECIFIC. The unique features of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. Timișoara 2023 Programme profile

LEGACY 2024 - a year that consolidated positive results

Data analysis for estimating the number of visitors in 2023 in the Municipality of Timișoara in the context of the National Cultural Programme “Timișoara - ECoC in 2023” (Janosov, 2024)

PEOPLE. Art and culture are a part of life and dependent on it. Tourists

Legacy Plan of the Timișoara 2023 Programme of the Municipality of Timișoara (Marin, 2024)

LEGACY. Actions for the continuity of Timișoara’s cultural development. The Legacy Plan of the city

The cultural ecosystem of Timișoara - ECoC, 2017-2024. Connected perspective (Fierăscu, 2024):

TIMIȘOARA 2023 PROGRAMME ECOSYSTEM. The connected perspective

LEGACY. Perspectives for the new cultural strategy

Methodological details on each of these studies are provided below.

1. **Analysis of quantitative data on projects, organizations and networks data for each of the years 2017-2024**, carried out by Silvia Fierăscu (for the year 2023 together with Ianis Rușitoru) for the Centre for Projects. The analysis was conducted between November 2023 and March 2024, in the context of the elaboration of the Legacy Plan for the Timișoara 2023 Programme, i.e. between August and December 2024. The processed data came from the data management platform used for the purpose of communicating and evaluating the results of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, based on information provided by organizers, with regards to the events and projects they carried out. This analysis materialized in the document *THE ECOSYSTEM OF Timișoara 2023 Programme. Connected perspective*, elaborated for the Centre for Projects.

The network analysis was based on the entire community of organizations involved in the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, between 2017-2024, so it does not include other organizations and projects and certainly does not reflect the entire cultural ecosystem of Timișoara. The classifications offered thus reflect not only what is the current state, but also how it could be, indicating roles and opportunities that actors can better assume in the future. Above all, the analysis functions as an awareness-raising tool to highlight opportunities and inspire greater ownership within the cultural ecosystem.

2. **Qualitative analysis for the elaboration of the Legacy Plan of the Timișoara 2023 Programme for the Municipality of Timișoara**, carried out by Silvia Fierăscu for the Centre for Projects, during February-March 2024.

The analysis involved taking interviews and organizing 3 focus-groups, which were attended by a total of 41 people, including cultural operators involved in the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, members of the Curatorial Team and employees or collaborators of the Centre for Projects with the role of coordinating some essential processes of the Programme.

The analytical structure of the interviews followed the link between the cultural operators and their grass-root experiences, the strategic dimensions of the Cultural Programme, the main outcomes of the ECoC title, and potential areas of further action for the Municipality of Timișoara to build on the impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

3. The studies **Access and cultural participation in the Municipality of Timișoara in 2022 in the context of the National Programme Timișoara - ECoC in 2023, respectively Access and cultural participation in the Municipality of Timișoara in 2023 in the context of the National Programme Timișoara - ECoC in 2023**, conducted by the West University of Timișoara for the Centre for Projects under the coordination of Prof. Bogdan Nadolu in 2023 and respectively 2024.

Studies were conducted on a representative sample of Timișoara residents aged 15 and over. The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with the Project Center (the study's beneficiary). A stratified sample, based on gender, age, and education level, was designed to include 1,152 participants, ensuring each sub-sample's representativeness within Timișoara's population. For the June 2022 to June 2023 perception study, a +/-5% representation was ensured for each stratum. Data collection occurred from June 20 to July 20, 2023. For the 2023 perception study, a +/-2.85% representation was ensured for Timișoara residents aged 15 and over, with a +/-3% representation for each stratum (gender, age, education). Data collection occurred from February 29 to March 12, 2024.

4. **Barometer of the quality of life in the Municipality of Timișoara in 2022 and respectively Barometer of the quality of life in the Municipality of Timișoara in 2023**, conducted by the West University of Timișoara for Municipality of Timișoara, under the coordination of Prof. Marius Matichescu, 2023 and 2024

The surveys aimed to be representative for Timișoara's residents aged 18 and over, with samples stratified by gender and age across 36 neighborhoods. The 2022 perception survey included 2,191 respondents, with a ±2.1% margin of error at a 95% confidence level. Data collection occurred from

November 2022 to March 2023. The 2023 perception survey included 2,715 respondents, with data collected from November 2023 to February 2024.

5. **Data analysis for estimating the number of visitors in 2023 in the Municipality of Timișoara in the context of the National Cultural Programme “Timișoara - ECoC in 2023”**, by Dr. Milan Janosov (GEOSPATIAL DATA CONSULTING Kft.) for the Centre for Projects , 2024

The analysis represented a comprehensive analytical effort by combining sources of data covering various domains interconnected with tourism. Specifically, monthly historical data on bookings and accommodation capacity (National Institute of Statistics) from 2015 onwards, as well as monthly credit card spending trends from 2021 to 2023 (Mastercard) were considered. In addition, urban mobility data covering December 2022, October 2023 and December 2023 (Orange) were analyzed, together with online metrics of popularity dating back to 2021 at a weekly resolution (Wikipedia, Google Trends). Furthermore, geospatial data were obtained which identify urban attributes that represent tourist attractions such as theaters, museums and historical landmarks (OpenStreetMap), along with levels of population and administrative boundaries of Romanian counties. While the last two layers focused on the geospatial aspects of tourist visits, the remaining data sources provided temporal information in time series of different lengths and resolutions.

The study also capitalized on data from the following surveys:

Statistics on population mobility in the Municipality of Timișoara between October 1-31, 2023, respectively December 1-31, 2023, produced by Orange Romania for the Centre for Projects. Using fully anonymized data provided by Orange based on general mobile traffic monitoring, Flux Vision allows a better assessment of the population flow in the surveyed areas, discovering where visitors are coming from to transit an area, so as to anticipate traffic peaks and needs in organizing future events such as: transport sizing, protection and security services, utilities, catering services, etc. Flux Vision from Orange Business is a solution dedicated to smart cities, which analyzes population mobility by aggregating large datasets from the use of Orange's mobile voice and data network. All information related to the identity of the mobile user is anonymized and

used strictly for statistical purposes, in compliance with GDPR regulations in force. The municipality of Timișoara was analyzed from the perspective of population mobility analysis in five areas: Timișoara Centre, Timișoara North-West, Timișoara North-East, Timișoara South-East and Timișoara South-West.

Study on the transactional and customary tourism model in Timișoara in 2023, which aimed to define a strategy to promote and attract foreign tourists and a joint campaign to promote cross-border incoming expenditure in Timișoara, conducted by Mastercard Europe SA for the Destination Management Organization Timișoara.

6. The study **“Audience engagement in the National Cultural Programme “Timișoara - ECoC in 2023”**, carried out between February and October 2024 by the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy, for the Municipality of Timișoara, through the Centre for Projects. Authors: Ionuț-Sorin BAGEAC, Issoré-Măimounata BOLY, Ioana CEOBANU, Adriana-Aurelia DÎNCU, Patricia-Alexandra GÎVAN, Sergiu-Ionică RUSU

The research methodology comprised: a documentation component (consultation and analysis of relevant information on the Timișoara 2023 Programme, in particular); questionnaire surveys (among cultural actors involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme and the public in the Banat region - consumers of cultural events to a greater or lesser extent, or non-consumers); individual and group interviews (with operators involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme); identification of best practices; a meta-analysis on cultural consumption from the perspective of the profile and participation behavior of the public in Timișoara.

The survey among the participating cultural operators was conducted between June and July 2024. The data collection was carried out through a sociological survey based on a self-applied, online questionnaire (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing - CAWI). The sampling frame was represented by 319 organizations/individuals, i.e. all cultural actors involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme as (co-) organizers (except for 5 foreign organizers who did not speak Romanian and thus could not fill in the questionnaires), in the period 2017-2023 or with projects selected following funding calls launched in 2023, with projects running in 2024. An exhaustive approach was used, in which all those included in

the sample were contacted by phone or by e-mail, and after presenting the aim and objectives of the research, they were sent a link to complete the online questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by 165 cultural operators participating in the Timișoara 2023 Programme, both representatives of NGOs, public cultural institutions, universities, educational institutions, as well as commercial entities in the cultural sector, individuals or other entities and institutions. The profile of the respondents is similar to the profile of the investigated population, so that, taking into account the inherent limitations of such a research approach, we consider the sample to be representative of the target population.

The general population survey was conducted between May and June 2024 and used three sub-samples of the general population: the Timișoara metropolitan area (TMA - except the municipality of Timișoara - 402 respondents), the Urban Banat area (Arad, Caraș-Severin and Timiș counties - 553 respondents) and the Rural Banat area - (414 respondents). Data collection was carried out through a sociological survey based on a questionnaire, applied by phone (Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing - CATI).

The qualitative analysis entailed taking interviews and organizing focus groups: a total of 21 semi-structured interviews and 7 focus groups (33 participants) with cultural operators were conducted between July and September 2024, online, through the Zoom platform.

A compendium of good practices in terms of approaches, methods and tools used by organizers to attract and diversify the profile of the cultural audience was compiled to highlight examples of good practices. It used the insights from semi-structured interviews and focus groups to identify and document the most effective practices, approaches and tools used by organizers (focus on 2021-2023) to increase their institutional capacity and attract the largest and most diverse audience.

The meta-analysis aimed to analyze the cultural consumption and the profile of consumers and non-consumers of cultural events in Timișoara, as well as to identify shortcomings in the cultural sector. The analysis uses data from surveys and official statistics, comparing time series (2016, 2022 and 2023) for a detailed evaluation of the Programme. These include sociological research representative for the population of Timișoara (quantitative studies,

questionnaire-based sociological surveys), carried out in different periods between 2016 and 2024 by specialists such as Delia and Bogdan Nadolu or Marius Matichescu and Alin Gavreliuc. IRES surveys were also used, conducted between 2014 and 2024, which assessed cultural engagement at national level and in Timișoara. Other sources include studies and research carried out by the National Institute for Cultural Research and Training, as well as data from the National Institute of Statistics, as well as the Timișoara 2023 Bidbook and reports from the Romanian Airports Association.

7. The study *The Evolution of Timișoara's cultural scene in the context of the National Cultural Programme "Timișoara - ECoC in 2023"*, conducted between February and October 2024 by the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy for the Municipality of Timișoara, through the Centre for Projects. Authors: Ionuț-Sorin BAGEAC, Ioana CEOBANU, Cătălin-Cristian DĂRĂȘTEANU, Adriana-Aurelia DÎNCU, Bianca-Ioana DOBRE, George-Valentin NEAGOE, Sergiu-Ionică RUSU

The research methodology comprised: a documentation component (consultation and analysis of relevant information on the Timișoara 2023 Programme, in particular); questionnaire surveys (among cultural actors involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme); individual and group interviews (with operators involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme); identification of good practices; a financial analysis (which followed the evolution of budgets for culture in the activity of cultural operators involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme, in particular).

The survey among the participating cultural operators was conducted between June and July 2024. The data collection was carried out through a sociological survey based on a self-applied, online questionnaire (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing - CAWI). The sampling frame was 319 organizations/individuals, i.e. all cultural actors involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme as (co-)organizers (except for 5 foreign organizers who did not speak Romanian and thus could not fill in the questionnaires), in the period 2017-2023 or with projects selected following funding calls launched in 2023, with projects running in 2024. An exhaustive approach was used, in which all those included in the sample were contacted by phone or by e-mail, and after presenting the aim and objectives

of the research, they were sent a link to complete the online questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by 165 cultural operators participating in the Timișoara 2023 Programme, both representatives of NGOs, public cultural institutions, universities, educational institutions, as well as commercial entities in the cultural sector, individuals or other entities and institutions. The profile of the respondents is similar to the profile of the investigated population, so that, taking into account the inherent limitations of such a research approach, we consider the sample to be representative of the target population.

The qualitative analysis involved taking interviews and organizing focus groups: a total of 20 semi-structured interviews and 5 focus groups (22 participants) were conducted with cultural operators between July and September 2024, online, through the Zoom platform.

A compendium of good practices in terms of approaches, methods and tools used by organizers to increase their institutional capacity was produced to highlight examples of good practices. It used the insights from semi-structured interviews and focus groups to identify and document the most effective practices, approaches and tools used by organizers (focus on 2021-2023) to increase their institutional capacity and attract the largest and most diverse audience.

A financial analysis was carried out to track the evolution in time of the cultural budgets in the activity of local cultural operators involved in the Timișoara 2023 Programme. This is based on data from 2021-2023, taken from various sources (Centre for Projects, Ministry of Public Finance - National Agency for Tax Administration) and includes aspects related to the budgets contracted and spent, types of funding (with a breakdown by types of economic operators), as well as other specific information.

8. The study *"The Governance of the National Cultural Programme - managing complexity in a turbulent context and the role of culture for local development"* was carried out between February and September 2024 by ENCORE RESEARCH LLC for the Municipality of Timișoara, through the Centre for Projects.

The research methodology included: documentary analysis, public policy analysis, financial analysis, interviews and focus groups conducted across

stakeholders, complemented with case studies highlighting examples of good practice.

The methodology of public policy analysis and analysis of funding programmes included the analysis of strategic public policy documents of the local public administration, implementation structures of the Timișoara 2023 Programme and cultural operators, for example: legislation analysis - local, national, European framework; cultural programming documents, Bidbook (different versions); project briefs; monitoring/evaluation data on the implementation of projects within the Timișoara 2023 Programme; management projects and organizational strategies (in the case of public cultural institutions); activity reports; strategies, other planning documents of public administration authorities; progress reports sent to the European Commission in the run-up to the Title Year (2023). The documents were analyzed in order to identify the objectives, measures, and expected results of public policies, as well as to assess their coherence and congruence with the objectives and requirements of the ECoC Title and the Timișoara 2023 Programme. In addition, the analysis includes a presentation of the evolving objectives, measures and expected results and coherence between national and local policies in order to identify synergies and better understand how these have influenced the implementation and success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

The qualitative research methodology involved data collection and analysis of opinions expressed through 7 focus groups (42 participants) and 34 individual interviews. The characteristics of the target groups to be analyzed were: local and central public authorities, Timișoara 2023 Association - ECoC and other key local and international actors, including from the private sector, who were involved in the governance of the Programme in the 2016-2023 timeframe, individuals and legal entities that were significant for the governance of the Program, in all stages of its development and consolidation, in the 2016-2023 period. Focus groups aimed to cover some thematic areas or to approach the governance of the Programme from the perspective of cross-cutting themes. Themes such as communication, artistic coordination, volunteering, the fundraising component, project evaluation and monitoring, infrastructure were addressed. The methodology of the financial analysis used quantitative analysis, descriptive, static and dynamic analysis, as well as the analysis of financial indicators.

The financial analysis by expenditure and funding categories has a number of important particularities and limitations, as follows:

- The analysis is based on data reported by the Centre for Projects, the Municipality of Timișoara, the Timiș County, the Ministry of Culture, and the Association Timișoara ECoC. Given the way in which the budgets of public institutions are organized by budget chapters and titles, it was impossible to carry out the financial analysis on the basis of the documents representing the budgets and budget execution reports, which do not consistently highlight the expenditure related to the ECoC.
- The Municipality of Timișoara has communicated, for the public cultural institutions reporting to the City Council, both the amounts representing subsidies from the local budget related to the Cultural Programme expenses, as well as the amounts representing the income of these institutions from other sources (ticket sales, sponsorships and grants) obtained in the context of the implementation of the Cultural Programme Timișoara 2023. Also, for these institutions, the Municipality of Timișoara also communicated the expenses incurred for the activities, the organization of events and the implementation of cultural projects related to the ECoC Programme. The same data categories are also

available for the Mihai Eminescu National Theatre Timișoara, under the Ministry of Culture. On the other hand, with regard to public cultural institutions reporting to the Timiș County, only the amounts representing subsidy from the county budget related to the Cultural Programme expenses were available for analysis.

- No clear data on the income and expenditure of the Timișoara 2023 Association are available for analysis except for the period 2021-2024. Although there are records made by the Association, both in its own activity reports and in those submitted to the European Commission for the period 2017-2020, they do not show a clear breakdown between the amounts representing income and expenditure of the Association and those representing revenues attracted (also due to the Association) and expenditure realized and for/by partners: cultural operators, public institutions.
- Expenditures for the year 2024 are incomplete, and where they exist they refer to the first semester (until 30.06.2024).
- Not all expenditure can be correctly categorized. For example, the communication of the Cultural Programme and ECoC title is separately reflected in the Association's reports for 2023 and 2024. But all the projects funded under the Cultural Programme through the funding programmes and the cultural institutions under the City and County Council had their own communication expenses, included either in the expenses for the implementation of the Cultural Programme or in the operating expenses.



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The Centre for Projects and the operators who carried out the evaluation research of the Timișoara 2023 Programme have relied on the contributions and good collaboration with all the organizations, institutions and individuals involved in the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, together with the agreement and support in collecting and providing data, attending and facilitating participation in research activities on behalf of the County Council of Timiș, the Centre for Arts and Culture of Timiș County, and the Timișoara 2023 Association - ECoC. We would like to express our gratitude to all those who contributed to revealing the results and impact of the Timisoara 2023 Program.

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<i>Cultural Strategy of the Municipality of Timișoara for the period 2014-2024</i>

Glossary (in alphabetical order)

Absorption rate

The ratio between the amounts allocated and the amounts actually executed, i.e. justified payments presented by the beneficiaries of non reimbursable funding at the time of the financial report and approved by the financing authority.

Bidbook

The document submitted by a candidate city applying for the title of European Capital of Culture in response to a call organized by a public authority, e.g. the Ministry of Culture, which sets out the mission, objectives, program, partnerships, implementation mechanisms, estimated budget required, etc., in relation to the selection criteria established at European level. In the case of the present report, the Bidbook referred to is that of the city of Timișoara.

Connector organizations

In the network analysis, they are defined as creating links between isolated groups, reducing fragmentation and catalyzing interdisciplinary collaboration.

Contracting rate

The ratio between the amounts allocated and the amounts foreseen in the grant contracts, in the framework of the grant programmes.

Core Cultural Programme

The core of the main Cultural Programme is the totality of the programmes and projects designed through the European Capital of Culture Bidbook, a process initiated since the national pre-selection period and updated during the years of preparation, especially between 2021-2022, as a result of revisions and updates made by the Curatorial Team hosted by the Centre for Projects, in terms of priorities, objectives, thematic areas and partnerships in its implementation.

Cultural operators

Entities that develop and provide goods and services that contribute to the cultural, heritage, identity and emotional experiences of a community. They may be public, private or not-for-profit and may have different forms of legal organization, including informal groups or individuals.

Cultural programme

The central part of the Cultural Programme is represented by all the programmes and projects of the main Cultural Programme and those that joined them through the funding programmes managed by the Centre for Projects and the Timiș County Centre for Arts and Culture.

European Capital of Culture

A European Capital of Culture is a city designated by the European Union (EU) for a period of one calendar year, during which it organizes a series of cultural events with a strong pan-European dimension. The European Capital of Culture status can be an opportunity for a city to generate considerable cultural, social and economic benefits and can help to promote urban regeneration, change the city’s image and raise its visibility and profile internationally. Several cities can be ECoC at the same time.

Events with a representative role

These are the official moments of a European Capital of Culture programme, coordinated and carried out by the implementing organizations of the Cultural Programme, and include mainly the organization of the opening and closing ceremonies of the Capital of Culture year. In the case of Timișoara, these are complemented by the City Celebration platform event, which is also one of the legacy elements of the Cultural Programme.

Expenditure rate

The ratio between the amounts contracted and the amounts actually executed, i.e. justified payments presented by the beneficiaries of non reimbursable funding at the time of the financial report and approved by the financing authority.

Funding programme(s)

In the context of this report, it refers to calls for projects organized and carried out by funding authorities, with public funds, to contribute to the implementation of the Cultural Programme in the period between 2017-2024.

Influential organizations

In the network analysis, they are defined by the

connections they have with other strong actors and are instrumental in mobilizing resources and coordinating complex initiatives.

Investment Program

The National Programme”Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023” implied, in relation to the Cultural Programme and as a long-term support for it and for the cultural sector, a series of investments in cultural infrastructure, financed both from the amounts provided for this purpose in the local budgets of the municipality of Timișoara and Timiș County, as well as from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture, by transfers to local budgets.

Hiring rate

The ratio between the amounts allocated and the amounts stipulated in the grant contracts, within the framework of the funding programmes with non-reimbursable funds.

Organizers

In the case of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, organizers refer to those cultural operators who participated in the implementation of the Cultural Programme through the projects developed. In the case of the statistics presented, the percentages of organizers refer to the respondents to the surveys conducted.

Popular organizations

In the network analysis, they are defined by the large number of direct connections. They rapidly distribute information and resources, facilitating access to the ecosystem to other actors.

Rural Banat

For the purpose of this report and in the context of the study of cultural participation of the population, the term refers to rural localities in Arad, Caraș-Severin and Timiș counties.

Structure of the Cultural Programme

The Cultural Programme was imagined as a map with Territories, Stations and Trails to be tracked by the people, offering possibilities of exploration according to their own interests.

Territory: the Territory brings together the components of the Cultural Programme under a specific theme, which define a strategic direction at the level of artistic content and which have been

developed in collaboration with the curators of the respective territory and the cultural operators included in the Core Cultural Programme.

Station: Stations bring together large-scale programmes with the aim of broadening and diversifying the audiences by designating a host organization that ensures artistic coherence and correlation with the other components of the Cultural Programme.

Trail: Trails are smaller programmes that deepen the relationship between cultural operators and their engaged audiences and connect stations and territories through themes and artistic content.

Timișoara Metropolitan Area

The Timișoara metropolitan area is an administrative territorial unit in Timiș county, consisting of the municipality of Timișoara, the city of Recaș, and 26 other peri-urban communes (Becicherecu Mic, Bucovăț, Biled, Chevereșu Mare, Dudeștii Noi, Dudeștii Vechi, Dumbrăvița, Ghiroda, Giarmata, Giroc, Jebel, Liebling, Moșnița Nouă, Mașloc, Orțișoara, Parța, Pădureni, Pișchia, Peciu Nou, Remetea Mare, Sacoșu Turcesc, Șag, Săcălaz, Sânnandrei, Sânmihaiu Român. Satchinez). The area has a surface of 2,439.19 km², and a population of 468,162 inhabitants, formed by means of an association based on a convention, establishing economic, social and cultural cooperation, spatial planning, technical and infrastructural equipment and environmental protection, each locality maintaining its autonomy.

Urban Banat

For the purpose of this report and in the context of the study of cultural participation of the population, the term refers to urban settlements in Arad, Caraș-Severin and Timiș counties, but excluding the municipality of Timișoara.

Utilisation rate

The ratio between the amounts contracted and the amounts actually executed, i.e. payments justified by the beneficiaries of the grant on the statement of account and approved by the financing authority.

List of abbreviations (in alphabetical order)

Centre for Projects	Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara
ECoC	European Capital of Culture
EU	European Union
GEO 42/2019	Government Emergency Ordinance no.42 of June 12, 2019 on the establishment of financial measures to support the implementation of the National Programme“Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023”
GO 51/1998	Government Ordinance no. 51 of August 11, 1998 on the improvement of non-reimbursable financing system for cultural projects
LLC	Limited liability company
ANP	Authorized natural person
Municipality of Timișoara	Timișoara City Hall and Local Council of Timișoara
NATA (ANAF)	National Agency for Tax Administration
RB	Rural Banat
TCACC (CECART)	The Culture and Arts Centre of Timiș County
Timiș County	Timiș County Council
Timișoara 2023 Association	Association Timișoara 2023 European Capital of Culture, previously Association Timișoara 2021 - European Capital of Culture
Timișoara 2023 Programme	The national programme “Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023”, previously in 2021
TMA	Timișoara Metropolitan Area
UB	Urban Banat

Teams

The administrative and political governance structure

We would like to express our gratitude to the extended teams of the Municipality of Timisoara, the Ministry of Culture and Timiș County.

The implementation structures

Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara*

Alexandra Maria Rigler Director	
Programmes and projects	Programming & administration of community spaces
Raluca Calițoiu Partnerships and projects	Ioana Dragomirescu Head of spaces programming and management
Simona Nanu Programmes and projects	Nicoleta Ciocov Spaces programming
Adriana Rovo Horje Programmes and projects	Mihai Crîznic Administrator
Ștefan Mihai Iancu Monitoring and evaluation	Gyöngyi Takács Infrastructure management
Marcel Bajka Monitoring	Teodora Achim Audience development
Communication and public relations	Minodora Luca Programming and spaces administration
Anderka-Maria Iancea Communication and public relations	Daniela Rațiu Web content editing
Anca Nistor Communication and content design	Maria Salomia Projectionist
Adrian Anghel Foto-video	
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Cristian Balea Public procurement
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Robert Fulda Legal advisor
Alina Wyhnalek Legal advisor
Coordination Council
Ramona Laczko David Coordinator of the Timișoara 2023 - European Capital ofCulture Cultural Programme
Raluca Iacob Power Station coordinator and monitoring of evaluation results and impact
Codruța Vulcu Timișoara 2023 representative events coordinator
Mihai Zugravu Communication and international relations coordinator

*valid during the preparation and/or implementation of the cultural year

Former members of the Centre for Projects team
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Loredana Drăghici Finance accountant
Alex Iliescu Design
Florentina Fekete-Müller Programmes and projects
Sebastian Hamburgerher Projectionist
Steluța Lionte Cashier
Iulian Manea Programmes and projects
Lucian Pană Infrastructure management
Alexandru Vărzaru Cultural diplomacy, by secondment from Timișoara City Hall

The artistic governance structure (between 2021-2024)*

Curatorial Team Timișoara 2023
Teodora Borghoff Community relations and social inclusion (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – March 2024</i>)
Cosmina Goagea "Places" curator (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – March 2024</i>)
Corina Oprea "People" curator (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – March 2024</i>)
Silviu Scrob Cultural production management (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – March 2024</i>)
Magda Radu "Connections" curator (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, August 2023 – March 2024</i>)

*hosted by the Centre for Projects

The Culture and Arts Centre of Timiș County*

Liliana Dorina Laichici Manager
Casian Adrian Scrorobete Deputy General Director
Măriuța Baștea Chief Accountant

*valid during the preparation and/or implementation of the cultural year

Association Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture*

Ovidiu Megan Executive director
Alexandru Suciu Operations manager
Andreea Lutz Econimic Director
Anca Săsăran Collaborating Lawyer
Antoniou Sicra Cultural projects responsible

Other members of the Curatorial Team
Corina Bucea Expert in education and mediation and Power Station strategy (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – June 2023</i>)
Vlad Tăușance Expert in communication and marketing (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, May 2022 - June 2023</i>)
Brîndușa Tudor Curator „Conexiuni" (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, August 2022 - May 2023</i>)
Matevž Čelik Vidmar „Conexiuni" curator (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 - May 2022</i>)
Oana Boca Stănescu Communication and marketing strategies (<i>part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 - May 2022</i>)

Flavia Antal Non-reimbursable Funds Settlement Office
Marinela Olar Non-reimbursable Funds Settlement Office

Communication
Oltea Zambori Communications director
Elena Aronoaie-Adorian Creative director
Mara Diniş Communication Assistant
Silviu Barbul Social media expert
Ştefan Lucuţ Art director
Vlad Brasneanu Graphic designer
Ionela Barbu Copywriter
Andrei Marina Expert foto-video
Otilia Ghitescu Copywriter

Former members or collaborators of the Association Timișoara 2023:

Corina Răceanu, Teodora Borghoff, Simona Neumann, Chris Torch, Mattijs Maussen, Martin Heller, Ioana Ghiran-Băla, Cosmin Pleșa, George Baron, Bogdan Cotîrță, Radu Călin Horia Ionescu, Ion Bobu, Mariana Mîtar, Mădălina Pleșu, Alin Ambruș, Astrid Bajcsi, Daniel Kozak, Alina Pintilie, Nicoleta Trifan, Daniela Rațiu, Raluca Hatmanu, Edi Mureșan, Costin Bleotu, Andrei Drăcea, Maria Vulcan, Mayumi Taniguchi, Liliana Cîra-Niculescu, Ovidiu Dajbog-Miron, Anca Berloghea, Ionuț Suci, Ioana Anghel, Odette Pârvulescu, Mateia Marin, Melinda Terek, Daniela Maria Stoica , Simona Fiț, Loredana Gaiță, Bianca Băilă, Elsa Soro, Jiri Sulzenko, Nicolae Bâlc, Roland Zarzycki, Amalia Matei, Doina Gogan, Cristina Stan, Cosmina Suba, Mărioara Vasilescu, Oana Doboși, Raluca Seleşan, Iulia Ban, Robert Tari, Alina Mazilu, Oana Romocea, Andras Demeter, Norbert Tako, Claudiu Arieșan, Flavia Dârvă, Alin Grecu, Nicoleta-Iozefina Tudor, Oana Grimačovschi, Andreea Medinschi, Gabriela Glăvan, Lucian Sava, Simion Giurcă.

*valid during the preparation and/or implementation of the cultural year

We would like to express our special thanks to the over 3.000 volunteers who have contributed with their incredible energy and commitment to the success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

→ Neverending Timișoara 2023, photo: Eva Hertzeg

Fundraising
Madalina Herban Fundraising expert
Volunteering
Cristina Pop Volunteering programme coordinator
Denisa Abrudan Volunteering programme expert
Aurelia Elena Volunteering programme assistant
Alexandru Meca IT Expert volunteering programme
Roxana Precup Volunteer programme logistic coordinator
Denisa Angheloni Volunteer programme logistics assistant
Monitoring
Daniel Brîndescu Monitoring coordinator
Adrian Jigovan Monitoring expert

