



Neverending Timișoara 2023.
The journey continues.

Neverending Timișoara 2023.
The journey continues.



2023 is a successful year. The year Timișoara changed the perception of Romania through culture.

We managed to show those who visited us or participated in the cultural programmes we developed in other cities how much their prejudices differ from our realities. Timișoara is a European city.

Our strategy of changing the community by investing in culture will continue for years. 2023 is just the beginning of a journey during which we highlight the culture that respects Timișoara's diversity. It is our responsibility to demonstrate that when you invest in culture, you bring prosperity to the entire community.

I'd like to express my sincere thanks to all who contributed to Timișoara's success story.

Dominic Fritz,
Mayor of Timișoara

Photo credit:
Mihai Toth

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THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

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Introduction

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 once again play a leading role in the region, this time through culture. This journey meant a dynamic transformation driven by a not always favourable political, social, or economic context. The cultural programme is not only the sum of the cultural projects and events hosted in 2023; it is primarily the result of the efforts and vision of hundreds of professionals who participated in the development of a convincing and competitive bid book, as well as thousands more who contributed to the implementation of this visionary programme. The principles that guided this route to a successful destination were resilience, flexibility, adaptability, reimagining the present, a critical look, and restoration.

The cultural programme has been a constant vector of change, a celebration of artistic freedom of expression and cultural diversity.

Conceived as a journey, a map with three territories—People, Places, and Connections, united by very diverse cultural experiences and events, the city opened up for exploration and became an urban laboratory of both niche areas and effervescent spaces of cultural life.

This document tells the story of this journey through the lens of those actively involved in the strategic development and implementation of the cultural programme, namely the Curatorial Team and the members of the Coordination Council, hosted by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara.

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THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

Neverending Timișoara 2023. The journey continues. Foremost, with you.

Timișoara 2023. Vision

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The “European Capital of Culture” programme ¹, initiated in 1985 by the European Commission, highlights the richness and cultural diversity in Europe, celebrates the common cultural elements of European citizens, contributes to increasing their sense of belonging to a shared cultural space, and promotes the contribution of culture to the development of cities.

The programme is also an important pillar in transforming cities and understanding how **culture is a driving force** for cities to remain alive, relevant, and attractive in an increasingly difficult global political context and in the context of environmental challenges surrounding them.

The “Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture” Programme (Timișoara 2023 Programme) remains an important and ambitious city project. The city conceived it as a **comprehensive, transformative process**, not just a cultural event culminating in 2023. The city mapped out a journey around three main territories and a complementary circuit to increase the capacity of the cultural sector through the innovative cultural programme for 2023:

- **People Territory** is the essence of community, including projects that have helped activate civic energy, encourage critical thinking, and promote freedom of expression.
- **Places Territory** emphasizes the revitalization of public space, values a transparent decision-making process for a balanced and fair urban development with the participation of the inhabitants, and views the city as a common good, a culture of living together and solidarity.
- **Connections Territory** united People - both citizens of Timișoara as well as those from Europe and the whole world—and Places, providing the opportunity for the city to share experiences from a regional and transnational dimension to redefine the international profile of Timișoara in terms of the theme of territorial interdependence.
- **Power Station** is a central and transversal point in the architecture of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. As a legacy component of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, Power Station stimulates cooperation and the development of skills and competencies of individuals, organisations, institutions, and the local cultural ecosystem. It comprises programmes of funding managed by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality and from events and projects that strategically contribute to increasing the capacities of the cultural sector.

Timișoara's bid book for the title of European Capital of Culture won the trust of the jury through the firm commitment demonstrated to contribute to the city long-term cultural strategy, to strengthen the European dimension of cultural projects and the image of the city at the European level, to generate high-quality artistic content, to attract and engage a new and diverse audience, as well as through a financial commitment scaled to the complexity of the proposed cultural programme.

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Preselection years:

2010

the first debates and statements
of civic groups

For us, the European Capital of Culture is a process, not an event. Our cultural programme TM2021 is built around people, the places where they live and meet, and how they form connections with each other, their surroundings, and the continent they are on. Through the metaphorically named concept “ Shine your light! Light up your city!” we create relevant cultural interventions both for Europeans, who can rediscover their identities from new angles and for our fellow citizens. Together, we embark on a fascinating journey guided by a new generation of engaged social artists with whom we analyse these emergencies.

We poured our heart and soul into the bid book, which remained the reference text. It's about the city, about values, about feeling alive in yourself through the experience of culture.



Teodora Borghoff,
Member of the Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team, expert in community relations and social inclusion, coordinator of the Cultural Programme in the bid book, December 2023

Preselection years:

March 2011

The Municipality of Timișoara decides to support Timișoara's candidacy for the title of European Capital of Culture after 2019 through the *Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara* No. 82/29.03.2011

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NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

Denis Blidariu, Romanian sign language interpreter,
Katie Melua Concert, Piața Unirii, Timișoara, 8 December
2023

Photo credit:
Ovidiu Constantin



2,331

Unique events

These thousands of events exist because the incredible people of the cultural sector work enormously for them, with a persistence that speaks volumes for the spirit of this city. We are inspired and honoured to support their projects, and we are convinced that many of them will remain in the life of the city as a legacy of the European Capital of Culture.



Alexandra Rigler,
Director of the Centre for Projects
of the Municipality of Timișoara,
October 2023



From vision to programme. Timișoara model

Aware of the challenges and with great responsibility towards the future, the city of Timișoara and its key actors have worked for a global vision that will be translated into a sustainable process based on an open cultural and social dialogue. The ultimate goal is to preserve the values stated in the bid book and maintain active contact with the citizens of Timișoara, all of Romania, and Europe.

Internationally, starting from the moment Timișoara won the title of European Capital of Culture and until the city actually hosts the title, ECoC cities are obliged to submit a series of progress reports to the Expert Panel ² of the European Union's ECoC programmes in the years of preparation for the title.

In its penultimate monitoring report in 2021, the Panel made **a series of recommendations following the analysis of the preparation years of the title between 2016 and 2020**. The Panel appreciated the strong commitment of the main stakeholders in implementing the programme and recognized the efforts made in this respect. However, it reiterated its concerns about the management capacity and the ability to deliver the programme, noting in particular several legislative obstacles at the national level regarding the allocation of public funds to support the programme. Thus, the recommendations of the Panel ³ targeted a series of essential key points to be addressed at the level of stakeholders directly involved in the governance of the cultural Programme:

- **achieving a successful European Capital of Culture year** in 2023 through the active participation of all interested actors to achieve this objective;
- **continuing of the legislative reform process at the governmental level** to ensure the multi-year funding of the cultural programme;
- **creating a climate of trust** between public authorities and the institutions responsible for delivering the cultural Programme, an essential condition for its success;
- **creating an organisational model** that strengthens the local ownership of the cultural programme and that ensures the development and implementation of a coherent programme in accordance with the vision and main aspirations of the bid book;
- **securing the core cultural programme** formed by the projects already included in the bid book and extending the core programme only after the financial support for them has been guaranteed;
- **ensuring a balance between the diverse local cultural potential and the leading international scene** by prioritizing European partnerships and a high artistic content.

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Preselection years:

2011

the legal establishment of the civic initiative "Timișoara – European Capital of Culture 2021 Association", sustained by the Municipality of Timișoara and the Timiș County Council

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Governance and the capacity to deliver the cultural programme

In the context described above, the Municipality of Timișoara made important choices to support the development of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. These decisions positively impacted the cultural life of the city, **unifying the vision** at the general level of the cultural programme and **creating a climate of trust** in its success and the **allocation of resources necessary** for its implementation.

The principles that were the basis of these decisions, fully assumed and integrated by the Municipality of Timișoara since the **establishment of the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara in March 2021** as the implementation structure of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, were:

- **Assuming the continuity of the cultural programme** as a whole and on the initial principles of the bid book;
- **Transparent and predictable funding** of the cultural programme;
- **Ensuring the coherence** of the cultural programme and the **development of international partnerships** by establishing the Curatorial Team;
- **Decentralizing the cultural programme and empowering operators** to assume artistic independence at the level of artistic ideas and concepts, types of cultural projects and events, and cultural domains;
- **Supporting the Power Station component** – dedicated to increasing the capacity of the cultural sector;
- Coordinating and **implementing the monitoring and evaluation process of the results and impact** of the entire cultural programme;
- **Coordinating and implementing of the representative events** of the Timișoara 2023 Programme (Opening Timișoara 2023, City Celebration and Neverending Timișoara 2023) to create unique moments of celebration during the cultural year;
- **Capitalising and consolidating the Legacy of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.**

The decisive steps in strengthening the cultural programme were reflected in several key moments which, together with the actions started immediately after winning the title in 2016, configured the entire journey of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, contributing to the establishment of the funding model, of the governance one, of the artistic coherence and strategic development, along with the consolidation of the role each key actor plays in its implementation.

Thus, from the very beginning of applying to the title of European Capital of Culture until the year of the actual title in 2023, the changes that concerned the funding and governance model and the role of each key actor in the development of the programme were driven by the social, political and economic situation at European level, as well as the need to reform cultural public policies and the funding system of the cultural sector at the national and local level, in order to support the implementation of a complex cultural Programme, with essential stakes for the city and its citizens:

Preselection years:

- **2010** – the first debates and statements by civic groups ⁴;
- **March 2011** – The Municipality of Timișoara decides to support Timișoara's candidacy for the title of European Capital of Culture after 2019 through the *Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 82/29.03.2011* ⁵;
- **2011** – the legal establishment of the civic initiative *Timișoara 2021 Association – European Capital of Culture* ⁶ supported by the Municipality of Timișoara and the Timiș County Council;
- **2012** – consultations, pilot activities to widen the public and the launch of the first concept ("*Revolutionary*")⁷ take place;
- **October 2014** – The Municipality of Timișoara adopts the Cultural Strategy of the Municipality of Timișoara for the period 2014-2024 through the *Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 535/31.10.2014* ⁸;
- **September 2015** – The Municipality of Timișoara approves the candidacy of Timișoara and the commitment of financial support during 2017-2022 for the participation of Timișoara in the action of the European Union "European Capital of Culture" for 2021, in Romania, if the Municipality of Timișoara is declared the winning city, by the *Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 395/22.09.2015*⁹
- **2015** – Intensive consultations with the public, debates on access to culture for vulnerable people with disabilities and minority communities and the launch of the final concept of the application file "*Shine your light*" and its preselection¹⁰.

Winning the title:

- **October 2016** – issuance of Order of the Minister of Culture No. 3867/25.10.2016 ¹¹, by which the city of Timișoara is nominated European Capital of Culture in 2021.

Preparation years for the CEaC title:

- **2017-2021** – coordinating the Timișoara 2023 Programme by the *Timișoara 2021 Association – European Capital of Culture* through the direct implementation of projects and events
- **November 2019** – The Romanian Parliament adopted *Law No. 198 of 7 November 2019* ¹² for the approval of the *Government Emergency Ordinance No. 42/2019 regarding the establishment of financial measures to support the implementation of the "Timișoara - European Capital of Culture" National Cultural Programme in 2021*
- **December 2020** – the postponement for 2023 of the title of European Capital of Culture for the city of Timișoara is approved, based on Decision (EU) 2020/2229/2020 ¹³ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 December 2020 amending Decision No. 445/2014/

EU establishing a Union action in favour of the "European Capitals of Culture" event for the years 2020-2033;

- **March 2021** – the establishment of the *Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara*, under the authority of the Timișoara Local Council, which integrates the vision and commitment of the Municipality of Timișoara to the process of reforming the funding mechanisms of culture and other areas of local interest, by ensuring the transparency of the framework and non-reimbursable funding mechanism, *Decision of the Local Council No. 270/2020* ¹⁴;
- **June 2021** – launch of the priority funding programme *TM2023 RESTART* ¹⁵, which aimed at the flexible running of the Timișoara 2023 Programme during 2021, based on the principles, values and guidelines of the concept presented in the bid book, with a financial contribution from the local budget towards projects that were developed up to that point and went through a qualitative and pragmatic selection process.
- **September 2021** – the drafting of the *Action Plan of the Municipality of Timișoara* ¹⁶ and its submission to the European Commission, through which the central role of the Municipality of Timișoara at the level of strategic governance of the cultural programme was assumed, and the basic principles listed above were integrated into the development of the cultural programme;
- **November 2021** – the beginning of the mandate of the *Curatorial Team Timișoara 2023* ¹⁷ (Curatorial Team), selected following an open, international call, based on a rigorous selection process carried out by a committee gathering well known independent experts with relevant professional experience and expertise to each position within the curatorial team. . The latter becomes responsible for the artistic coherence and strategic coordination of the "Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture" Cultural Programme.
- **January 2022** – the first revision of the Timișoara 2023 Programme by the Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team, integrating the general objectives at the city level to activate as many cultural operators as possible to develop, grow and connect the local cultural ecosystem.
- **February – March 2022** – the endorsement by the European Commission of the new governance structure of the cultural programme through two letters¹⁸ that acknowledge the important steps taken by the local administration in the establishment of the Curatorial Team, the role the team takes in carrying out an analysis and review of the cultural programme, along with ensuring the continuity of the projects from the Timișoara 2023 Programme by funding them from the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara and collaborating with the Curatorial Team in the strategic and artistic coordination of the cultural programme;
- **February 2022** – reaffirming the financial support by the Timiș County Council established for 2017-2022 for the "European Capital of Culture" project developed by the European Union, by the *Decision of the Timiș County Council No. 51/23.02.2022 regarding the amendment and completion of Decision of the Timiș County Council No. 168/30.09.2015* ¹⁹;

Preselection years:**2012**

consultations, pilot outreach activities and the launch of the first concept ("*Revolutionary*");

121

LIVE Sets & DJ Mixes

138

Festivals

- **March 2022** – reaffirming the financial support to the Timișoara 2023- European Capital of Culture Programme by the Municipality of Timișoara, for 2022-2023, by *Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 83 / 15.03.2022* ²⁰
- **August 2022** – a new review of the Timișoara 2023 Programme by the Curatorial Team;
- **October 2022** – The Romanian Parliament adopts *Law No. 286 of 31 October 2022 regarding the approval of the Government's Emergency Ordinance No. 83/2022 for the amendment and completion of OG 51/1998, as well as for the amendment of GEO 42/2019* ²¹
- **December 2022** – approval by Ministerial Order, OMC 3560, of the reviewed Timișoara 2023 Programme by the Curatorial Team
- **February 2023** – Opening of Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture

At the end of 2022, **the leading roles in respect to the implementation and consolidation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme** and maintained throughout 2023 were:

- **Independent cultural operators, public cultural institutions, and professionals from the cultural sector** - responsible for the development of the Timișoara 2023 Programme in accordance with the objectives, concepts and principles assumed in the bid book;
- **The Curatorial Team**, hosted by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara - responsible for the artistic coherence and strategic coordination of the Timișoara 2023 Programme;
- **The Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara**, as the main organisation implementing the Timișoara 2023 Programme - with multiple responsibilities, such as:
 - » priority funding of the updated cultural programme;
 - » strengthening and extending the cultural programme through open calls , of which the objectives, thematic areas and funding mechanisms were developed in collaboration with the Curatorial Team;
 - » organising events with a representative role during the cultural year;
 - » the development of the Power Station platform, dedicated to increasing the capacity of the cultural sector;
 - » monitoring and evaluating the results and impact at the level of the entire cultural programme;
 - » capitalizing on and consolidating the legacy of the cultural programme;
 - » reporting to the European Commission and developing international relations within the European Capitals of Culture Family (ECOC Family) network;
- The **Culture and Art Centre of the Timiș County** - responsible for operationalizing the funding programmes intended to expand the programme designed and launched by the Timiș County Council.
- The **Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture – Association** - responsible for the transversal components at the level of the Timișoara 2023 Programme regarding communication, attracting private funds, and the volunteering programme.

Preselection years:

October 2014

The Municipality of Timișoara adopts the Cultural Strategy of the Municipality of Timișoara for the period 2014-2024 through the *Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 535/31.10.2014*;

Regarding the **funding of the cultural programme, the Municipality of Timișoara reaffirmed its financial commitment for the remaining period 2022-2023 and maintained it at the same level as at the time of candidacy** through the *Decision No. 83 of 15.03.2022* of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara regarding the continuation of the financial support commitment of the Municipality for the implementation of the national Programme “Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023”, respectively 6 million euros for 2022 and 9 million euros for 2023. These amounts are topped by those spent until 2021, equivalent to 5 million euros, which were part of the initial 20 million euros, committed for implementing the programme since 2015, through HCL 395/22.09.2015. The financial contribution of the Municipality of Timișoara for the Timișoara Cultural Programme 2023 didn't affect the general budget for supporting public cultural institutions subordinated to the Municipality; On the contrary, the budget allocated for them increased during 2023 in order to ensure the competitiveness of the cultural projects programmed by them for the European Capital of Culture year.

Almost 80% of the total funding allocated for the development of the cultural programme between 2023-2024 from the local and from the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture,, were managed by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara. The organisation also managed approximately 75% of the amount granted from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture to extend the core cultural programme. This responsibility and experience have contributed to the capacity of the Centre for Projects to fund the cultural sector, a consequence of the wide range of beneficiaries of funding on one hand (Romanian and international individuals, public or private entities, etc.) , legal entities under public and private law) and of the types of projects and objectives funded, on the other hand (small, medium and large projects, creative scholarships, national and international mobilities).

Non-refundable funding 2022-2024 Grants 2022-2024

Funder (Implementation Structure)	Local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara	State budget, through the Ministry of Culture	Local budget of Timiș County	Total	%
The Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara	22.720.000 lei	33.300.000 lei		56.020.000 lei	79%
The Culture and Art Centre of Timiș County		11.300.000 lei		11.300.000 lei	16%
Timiș County Council			3.500.000 lei	3.500.000 lei	5%
			Total	70.820.000 lei	100%

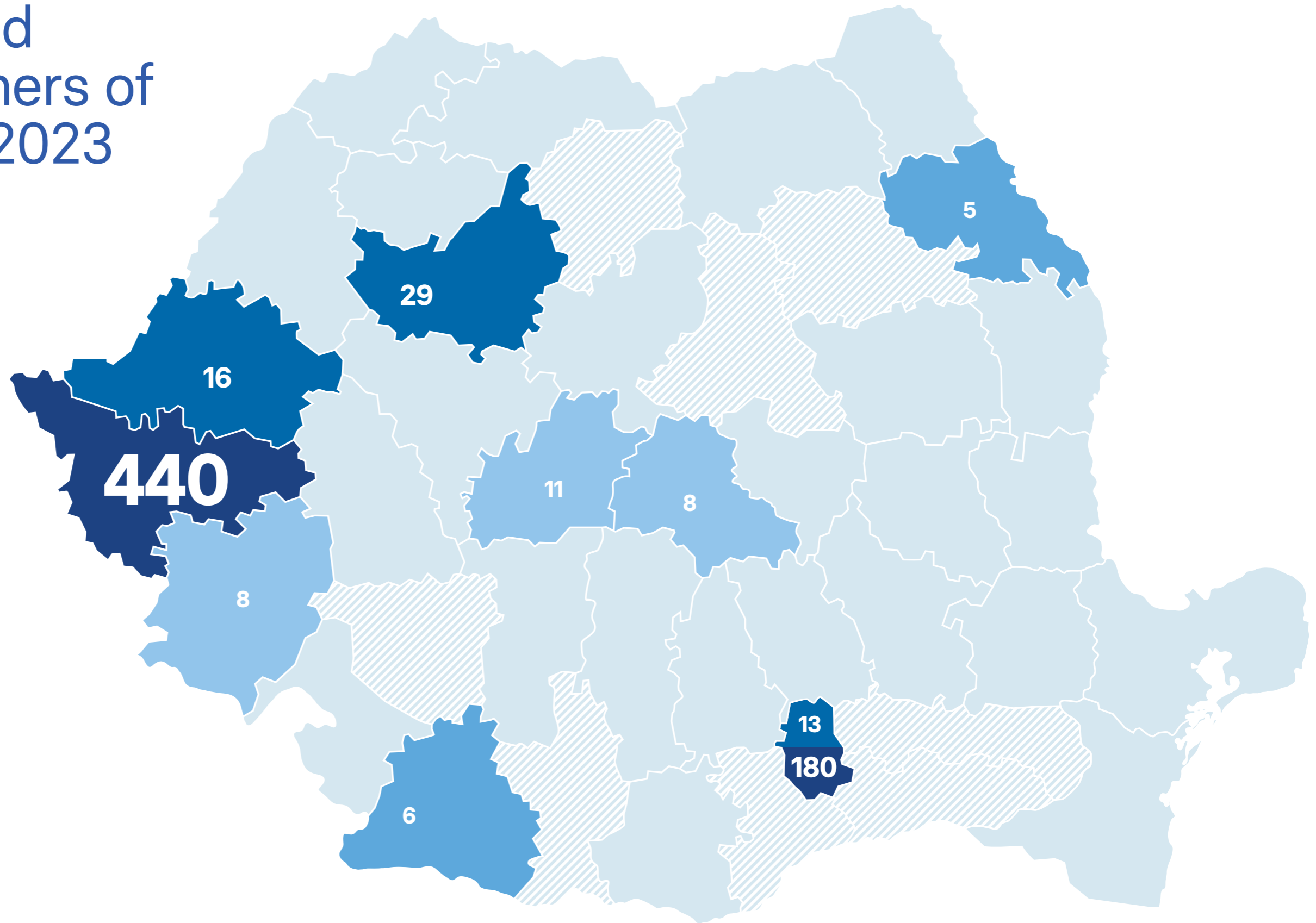
1,058

Performing art events

110

Performances

Geographical distribution of organisers and national partners of Timișoara in 2023



No.	Top 10 Counties	#
1	Timiș	440
2	București	180
3	Cluj	29
4	Arad	16
5	Ilfov	13
6	Sibiu	11
7	Brașov	8
8	Caraș-Severin	8
9	Dolj	6
10	Iași	5
	Other counties	< 5

Artistic coherence and strategic coordination

Establishment of the Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team

In the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara assumed both the objective of designing the public funding mechanisms, of the local and state budgets as well as strengthening the cultural programme in relation to the key concepts and strategic directions of the bid book, by hosting the Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team, along with maintaining the relationship with the European Commission by submitting progress reports to the Expert Panel, coordinating the programme for monitoring and evaluation of the results and impact of the cultural Programme, as well as assuming the organisation of events with representational role during the cultural year.

A strategic moment in strengthening the cultural programme and ensuring artistic coherence was the **establishment of the curatorial team at the level of the Timișoara 2023 Programme** in November 2021, at the initiative of the Municipality of Timișoara and through a public selection process²³, with the support of an independent committee gathering professionals from the cultural sector in Romania and Europe.

The competencies sought for creating the curatorial team aimed at the following objectives at the cultural programme level:

- **active and open communication** with the community, with the cultural operators included in the core cultural programme and with new ones joining the programme, with the organisations, institutions and public authorities concerned;
- **ensuring a thematic coherence at the level of the entire programme** by supporting the development of projects in the spirit of the bid book;
- **strengthening and extending the cultural programme** by contributing to the design of open calls developed by the Centre for Projects as the main funder of the local cultural sector; involvement of the curatorial team in the selection processes as a guarantee of the quality of the cultural and artistic content;
- **collaborating with artists, organisations and active involvement in the co-design of the cultural projects** to increase the capacity to generate high quality artistic productions, events that celebrate and share the interest of the community and visitors to the city, consolidating one of the central strategies of the bid book, namely audience development;
- **encouraging the process of innovation in the public space** and stepping out of the comfort zone of both cultural operators and the participating audiences;
- **developing international partnerships** by facilitating access to networks and organisations relevant to the strategic directions of the bid book.

Preselection years:

September 2015

The Municipality of Timișoara approves the candidacy of Timișoara and the commitment of financial support in 2017-2022 for the participation of Timișoara in the action of the European Union "European Capital of Culture" for 2021 in Romania if the Municipality of Timișoara is declared the winning city, by the *Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 395/22.09.2015*

Following the organisation in June 2021 of the first funding Programme, called *TM2023 RESTART*, to recognize the importance of each cultural project for the coherence and quality of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, in November–December 2021, the Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team held a series of meetings with the cultural operators mentioned as hosts in the bid book from 2016. The purpose of these meetings was to analyse the status of implementation of the cultural Programme, in reference to the bid book, and to review and update the projects, taking into account the long timeframe and the effects of the pandemic on the local cultural scene. The result was an Analysis Report sent as an internal working document to the Municipality of Timișoara, the Timiș City Council, the Ministry of Culture and the European Commission.

Hence, the first review of the Timișoara 2023 Programme was completed in January 2022, integrating the general objective at the city level to activate as many cultural operators as possible to develop, grow, and connect the local cultural ecosystem.

For this purpose, the curatorial team focused on the **key criterias** of the bid book: **artistic excellence, European dimension, audience development, capacity building and spaces for culture strategy**.

In terms of expected results, the Curatorial Team managed to deliver the following:

- the reviewed and updated **Timișoara 2023 Programme**, adapted to the pandemic context and the new title year, 2023;
- **the characteristics of the second funding programme**, called **BOARDING STATION, developed in** collaboration with the Centre for Projects team and launched in 2022 for the development of the cultural Timișoara 2023 Programme. 2022.
- **the characteristics of the third funding programme**, called **ONBOARD**, developed in collaboration with the Centre for Projects team and launched in 2023 to consolidate the cultural Programme,
- **the evaluation of projects** submitted within the funding programmes launched by the Centre for Projects to develop the cultural programme.

Boarding Station and *Onboard* funding programmes recognized the importance of each project for its coherence and quality in relation to the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The Centre for Projects and the Curatorial Team supported the participating cultural operators through a selection process based on analysis and recommendations to ensure better coherence and correlation with the updated cultural Programme, with a view to its strategic development until 2023 and its legacy for the years to come.

Beyond the selection process, the curators of territories maintained a constant dialogue with the cultural operators, following closely the evolution of the projects, starting with the themes and key concepts.

The degree to which each curator got involved in the content of each project, was different from one case to another, ranging from discussing concepts and formats, offering suggestions or references, to proposing new, complementary themes or contents.

They also contributed to the selection of or invitations to artists, finding the appropriate venue or public space, co-designing the concepts of

specific project components or guidance in the creative process. The quality and depth of these collaborations were mainly dependent on the needs of the operators. Among the most fertile ones for the development of a complex and nuanced curatorial dialogue proved to be the following projects: *Living Spaces (The Nursery – 1306 Plants for Timișoara)*, *DARE (participatory component We meet where we want)*, *Impulse*, *Parallel City*, *Bright Cityscapes*, *ROD Festival*, *The Secret Map*, *Simultan Festival*, *Moving Fireplaces*, *RemixID*, *Slowing Down*.

In parallel, **between July and August 2022, a new update of the Timișoara 2023 Programme** was completed, one that took into account the need to integrate through a consensus mechanism, following the approval of the curatorial team, a new list of projects that have been distributed in the structure of the programme.

Meeting the cultural operators brought many pleasant surprises: events which seemed to be unrelated in the public space turned out to be part of processes that kept alive the features of the bid book programme lines.



Teodora Borghoff,
Expert in community relations and social inclusion within the Curatorial Team TM2023, in the interview *Timișoara 2023: the plans of the Curatorial Team for the "European Capital of Culture"*, *Observator cultural* ²⁴

The general criteria on the basis of which these new projects were included in the programme, were the following: the relevance of the projects for a wider audience, including the metropolitan area and the prior selection of the proposed projects within other funding calls dedicated to the European Capital of Culture programme.. As part of this approach, a consortium formed by cultural institutions belonging to the Timiș County Council (The National Museum of Banat, The Timișoara National Museum of Art, "Merlin" Theatre for Children and Youth, The Culture and Arts Centre of Timiș County) assumed the role of host and implementation of projects from the *Light over Borders* station.

Furthermore, other updates consisted of merging the *Bright City Station* in the *Places Territory* with the *Lightscares Station* in the *Connections Territory*, forming a new station. The Politehnica University Timișoara, the leading partner of the *Bright City Station*, thus assumed the role of host of the *Bright Cityscapes Station*, identifying and strengthening its formula of local partners and specific international ones, on various programme components. Finally, the concepts for the three representative events organised directly by the Centre for Projects, were defined, namely the *Opening of Timișoara 2023*, *City Celebration*, and *Neverending Timișoara 2023*. **The updated Timișoara 2023 Programme was approved by order of the minister OMC 3560 on 15 December 2022.**

The efforts of the Curatorial Team in updating ²⁵ the bid book by connecting it to the new post-pandemic cultural, social and political context and the new themes of the European agenda for culture (such as climate change and reducing the carbon footprint, empowering people to use a new generation of digital technologies, social equity and prosperity, strengthening democratic processes in Europe, sustainability in cultural heritage, cohesion and well-being, creating an ecosystem to support artists, cultural and creative professionals, culture as an engine of sustainable development), alongside participatory review processes of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, together with the declared support of the members of the Expert Panel, contributed decisively to the recognition of the independence of the Curatorial Team by the other main actors with a role in the development of the cultural programme – respectively the Timiș County Council and the Ministry of Culture ²⁶.

Consolidation of work processes

The Centre for Projects played an essential role in providing access to the resources necessary to create a creative, dynamic, and inclusive cultural year in preparation for and during its implementation.

In 2022, for the preparation of the cultural year, through the Power Station platform, the Centre for Projects organised a series of events, meetings and workshops gathering cultural operators who contributed to the Timișoara 2023 Programme to strengthen exchanges, collaborations and learning. These events focused on topics relevant to the needs of local organisations and institutions in implementing the Timișoara 2023 Programme while providing an opportunity for networking. Some of the topics addressed were the monitoring and evaluation of cultural projects, the improvement of cultural production practices in organising cultural events, the communication of cultural projects and the mapping of service providers in the cultural sector. Next, in 2023, the Power Station platform adapted to the complex needs of the cultural programme, assuming a central role in strengthening the capacities of the local cultural scene, creating platforms of discussion and communities of practice, building bridges with the local community on various transversal themes relevant to cultural programme and promoting Timișoara as an example of governance for the benefit of the community and urban development through culture.

In **communicating the cultural programme**, the Centre for Projects, through the funding agreements, has required cultural operators to allocate **15% of the total funding budget for communication and mediation programmes of the cultural events**. In support of this measure came the consolidation of the required information structure to communicate them on a common platform, completed by the technical development process of the Directus platform in collaboration with the team of the Timișoara 2023 Association. The two teams collaborated as well in the design of the workflow to obtain the relevant information from the cultural operators, all these processes standing behind the calendar of events hosted by the official communication platform of the cultural programme, the *Timișoara2023.eu* website. These were complemented by permanent communication with cultural operators to ensure the quality and relevance of the information submitted. Furthermore, for each open call, the communication team of the Centre for Projects made visual identity guidelines available to cultural operators and monitored their correct implementation.

Preselection years:

2015

Extensive consultations with the public, debates on access to culture for vulnerable people, disabled people and minority communities and the launch of the final concept of the application file "Shine your light" and its preselection.

865

Visual arts
events

34

35

102

Exhibition openings

81

Artist talks

496

Exhibitions

NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

Adina Pintilie, "You are another me –
A cathedral of the body",
Kunsthalle Bega, 17 February-30 April 2023

Photo credit:
Sebastian Tătaru

For the events produced and organised by the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara, *Opening of Timișoara 2023, City Celebration and Neverending Timișoara 2023* - the event that symbolically marked the closing of the cultural year 2023, **the Centre for Projects** had a vital role in **creating extensive communication and promotion campaigns** that included both online components (digital campaigns, landing pages dedicated to each of the three events, activation of all online communication channels in the communication ecosystem of the Centre for Projects), but also offline components (street display campaigns, billboards, etc.), production of promotional materials (t-shirts, bags, raincoats, badges, stickers, pens, etc.). The constant communication with the local, regional and central mass media (sending of press releases, organisation of press conferences), the radio promotion campaigns carried out both at the regional level (Timișoara and the Banat Region), but also at the national level, played an essential role in the promotion of these events.

In order to facilitate the endorsement of cultural events by the local public authorities, the Centre for Projects requested to participate with an **advisory role in the endorsement meetings of public assemblies and events organised by the Timișoara City Hall** in 2023. The Directus database, developed for the construction of the calendar of events and their overview was an essential tool that came in support of the meetings of the Committee in order to avoid overlaps of major cultural events. Due to the large number of organisers outside the Municipality of Timișoara, as well as the unique projects held in 2023, the Centre for Projects has established a consultation system and, in some cases, had a mediator role between cultural operators and local public authorities for obtaining endorsements in various cultural projects with high complexity. In the organisation of events with a representative role (*Opening of Timișoara 2023, City Celebration and Neverending Timișoara 2023*), the Centre for Projects was instrumental in coordinating the workflow between the various entities involved in the event and law enforcement authorities, both by managing the exchange of information and by communicating with them on an ongoing basis regarding the security and safety measures for the smooth running of each programme.

The Centre for Projects also managed **eight different sites within the city**²⁷(Ștefania Palace, Bastion 1, 2 and 3, MX - "Corneliu Miklosi" Museum, the Centre for Projects - Ground Floor Gallery and The Courtyard, Gallery 5, Victoria Cinema, Timiș Cinema), which became important resources and locations for various events and activities included in the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

The successful fulfilment of its role in relation to the consolidation and implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme also required the establishment of a **Coordination Council of the Centre for Projects**, which included an expert for monitoring and evaluating the results and impact of the cultural programme, coordinator of the Power Station platform, manager of large scale events, communication and marketing expert, the international relations coordinator within the ECOC family and other European and international networks connected with the European Capital of Culture Programme of the European Commission, along with the overall coordinator of the cultural programme.

Winning the title:

October 2016

issuance of Order of the Minister of Culture No. 3867/25.10.2016 through which Timișoara is nominated European Capital

Collaboration among the key actors in the programme

Regarding the communication of **the Timișoara 2023 Programme and the collaboration with Association Timișoara 2023**, the Centre for Projects contributed to the management of the Directus platform, dedicated to hosting the cultural operators' database and the cultural program's calendar of events. The main website of the cultural programme, www.Timișoara2023.eu, hosted as well the landing pages built for the large scale events organised by the Centre for Projects, all of them contributing to create a common archive of the impact of the ECOC title, raising the profile of the cultural events, making them attractive for national and international journalist who participated in the press trips organised by the Association Timișoara 2023, national radio station residencies in the city or to other cultural programme partners. In terms of the fundraising strategy, the Centre for Projects contributed to mapping sponsors and establishing a few ethical filters in their selection to become programme partners. Thematic packages which highlighted cultural content of possible areas of interest to different business partners have created bridges between the cultural and private sector: Inclusion (identity, periphery, minorities), Identity (diversity, gender, fluidity), Cross-border (multicultural, mobility, borders), Educational (education, complementary, alternative), Sustainable (sustainable, local), Innovative (interdisciplinary, experimental, technology meets culture), Recent history, Dynamic (dance), Classical (classical music, built heritage). **The volunteering platform** hosted by the Association Timișoara 2023 has been an invaluable resource in the organisation of the events coordinated by the Centre for Projects, the volunteers gaining unprecedented experience and transfer of know-how in the production of cultural events with a high degree of complexity, diversity of artistic forms and target audience.

Following the establishment of the governance model, the Centre for Projects and the Centre for Arts and Culture of Timiș Council, exchanged tools and best practices to build common, standardised funding practices for the launch of open calls to consolidate and extend the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

The Municipality of Timișoara, through the Centre for Projects, and the Timiș County Council have worked together and submitted the jointly agreed amendments, with the support of the secretary of state responsible for the ECOC and the team of the European Cultural Capital Department within the Ministry of Culture, **to amend the specific legislation**, respectively the Ordinance of Emergency No. 42/2019 regarding the establishment of financial measures to support the implementation of the cultural programme. Among the proposed and agreed upon amendments, the most important ones focused on the **multi-annual funding and financing tools of the Timișoara 2023 Programme**.

The decentralized governance model, together with the working principles and processes designed at the content and implementation level of the Programme described above, were presented in the third progress report submitted by the Centre for Projects to the Expert Panel of the cultural programme. The latter recognized the efforts made to secure the ECOC title and proposed the Melina Mercouri award for fulfilling all the conditions, namely the independence of the artistic (curatorial) team, the public funding that ensured the quality of the Programme, the European dimension of the content, the start of monitoring and evaluation processes, but also the clear reflection that the programme is an action of the European Union.

2,331

Unique events

110

Performances

81

Artist talks

80

Dance performances

435

Workshops

303

Theatre performances

102

Exhibition openings

63

Presentations

160

Installations

34

Screenings

496

Exhibitions

138

Guided tours

38

Lectures

447

Concerts

121

LIVE Sets & DJ Mixes

138

Festivals

276

Film screenings

38

Tastings

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

* An event can be classified in several categories.



The panel appreciates the excellent progress achieved by the T2023 team against major challenges. It was pleased to see a united team that has matured and found solutions to complex structural and legislative requirements, while protecting their original bid vision. The clear support provided at all government levels is also greatly reassuring.

Based on the report submitted by Timișoara 2023 as well as the hearing with the team, the panel considers that the conditions regarding the payment of the Melina Mercouri Prize, as specified in Article 14 of Decision No 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, are met. Consequently, the panel is pleased to propose to the European Commission that Timișoara receives the Melina Mercouri prize.



1,5 million

participants in the events of
the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme -
European Capital of Culture in 2023

Data communicated by the
organisers of the projects within
the Timișoara 2023
Programme in 2023.

Neverending Timișoara 2023, concert Jessie J,
December 2023

Photo credit:
Florin Gherasim

Extension. Implementation of the principles and the strategic objectives of the bid book into the new funding programmes.

The 2016 bid book envisaged that the cultural programme should represent at that stage 70% of the Timișoara 2023 Programme in the actual year of the title, with the extension and final consolidation to be carried out through open calls.

Hence, between 2022-2024, the cultural programme was extended through multiple open calls with amounts allocated from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture, and being carried out by the Centre for Projects of Timișoara Municipality and the Culture and Art Centre of Timiș County.

The main goal in the use of the public funds from the state budget, from the perspective of the Centre of Projects, was to reaffirm, to the greatest extent possible, the concept, themes and values of the bid book. This was primarily reflected in design and focus of each open call: – *Grow, European Echoes, Inside, Opening+, Power Station+ | Creative schools, Energy! | Creative Grants, Power Station ++ | Mobility for professionals in the cultural sector, Legacy Timișoara 2023*, and primarily through the predictable and transparent processes that were the basis of the selection and evaluation processes.

The public open calls organised by the Centre for Projects were accompanied by Q&A sessions to respond to the need of cultural operators to understand their funding criteria better. The evaluation of the submitted projects was carried out by an expert panel made up of professionals in the field of culture, selected following a public call, together with representatives of the Centre for Projects - especially members of the Curatorial Team, but also members of the Coordination Board and other representatives appointed by the Centre for Projects, with responsibilities in the cultural field.

The response of the cultural operators who presented ambitious and innovative projects often exceeded the expectations of the Curatorial Team and the Coordinating Board. Most of the projects selected and implemented during 2023 developed and further elaborated on the concepts of the bid book, often succeeding to leverage each other's impact by overlapping and connecting within the cultural ecosystem.

Thus, the main themes and priorities of the projects part of the extended programme can be grouped into several thematic clusters as follows:

- The city develops through a multitude of layers accumulated over time, loaded with **histories, stories and meanings that all make up the identity of a place**. Projects that aimed precisely at intensifying this specific, rich and culturally nuanced local identity, validating good placemaking practices and reconnecting people with their city are *UPT Creative Campus, Water Museum, Fabricultura, Video Art Garden, Social Fabric, HerCity, and Our Europe*.
- **Reclaiming unused spaces** to their full potential and activating them by turning them into temporary or permanent cultural infrastructure drives regeneration, enriching the urban experience and strengthening residents' sense of belonging to their city. Among the projects that have opened spaces for the community are the *Water Museum, Encounters for Sculpture - Cazarma "U", LightsOn - The Night-Art Festival and The Lighthouse, Timișoara Jazz Festival, Sound Narrations, The Echo of Synagogues, TimOrgel Fest and Organs of the Citadel*.
- **The contemporary city is a common good**, an accessible and inclusive space where various ideas and discourses find their place, and which belongs to its inhabitants equally - as demonstrated by projects such as *Our stories, cultural Timișoara - European City, city of all, Perspectives - Timișoara 2023 for all, Seniors' Timișoara, Vice versa, Reminder: Art*.
- The creative capital of Timișoara was set in motion by involvement in projects in the area of creative and cultural industries, which interconnect art and science within co-productions or trans-disciplinary teams. Examples and practices in this category can be *BioArt Revolution, Sci-Art Your Life (META Forum), Bolyai 200, Simultan Festival 2023, Post-Digital Intersections, and Galactic Tick Festival*.
- **The theme of revolution and protest**, through which people stand in solidarity and fight together for some values in which they strongly believe, but also how we assume the traumas of recent history were discussed in projects *TM on Screen, TM on Scene, Interactive Memorial of the 1989 Revolution, Triaj*.
- The city is also about the **culture of meeting the extended community to celebrate the values that bring us together**. A series of programmes have contributed to expanding the audience, often inviting the public to get involved in various interactive formats or participatory processes: *Hungarian Cultural Days, Timișoara Guitar Friendly City, LightsOn, Embargo Fest, Flight Hidden Treasures, District Sonor Soundscape, Sunlight Theater - Performative Dialogues, Opera Reloaded, Romanian and African fairy tales*.
- The cultural programme also created an **opportunity to experiment with different partnership formulas**, enriching the culture of working together in multidisciplinary teams and international collaborations. A reflection on the cultural ecosystem and how alliances are built offered projects such as *Common Ground, F-Sides, Esprit de Roumanie, Artist Run Team Building, Strada Fără Nume, and Muzicon Summer Camp*.

Preparing the ECoC title:

2017-2021

Coordination of the Timișoara 2023 Programme by the Timișoara 2021 European Capital of Culture Association by directly implementing projects and events

Preparing the ECoC title:

November 2019

The Government of Romania promulgated Law No. 198 of 7 November 2019 for the approval of the Government Emergency Ordinance No. 42/2019 regarding the establishment of financial measures to support the implementation of the National Cultural Programme "Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2021"

- **The contribution of culture in the educational process** was targeted through *Culture Space, Story Seed, and What is Art. Urban and Emotional Junctions, ReVerse Poetry, and the entire Creative Schools funding call.*
- A series of projects explored the concepts of **natural heritage, coexistence, biodiversity, protecting the health of the ecosystem** and how urban life relates to the natural environment in the most sustainable ways possible: *Locks on Bega, Circumeuropa, One man's trash is another man's treasure, Symbioze.*
- Among the programmes that emphasized the **richness and diversity of cultures in Europe**, celebrating the sense of belonging of citizens to a common cultural area with shared values, can be listed *HEI – House of European Institutes, Ceau Cinema, Gender Equality in Cinema, HerCity, Our Europe, Nocturnalias, as well as the Theatre Artistic Excellence call.*
- **The heritage of the historical Banat area and the extended region**, as a resource for knowledge and reaffirmation of cultural identity relevant to contemporary life, was brought into the spotlight through programmes such as *Common Heritage – The Tale of Four Cities, Răsucirea. 5 levels for enlightening about the eternal Banat, Wooden mirror, Culinaria Banatica, TAI FAS – Film, Balkan Art and Culture Festival, Rescued Literature, Heritage First!, Happenings and Performances for Timișoara's Heritage, Live Sound Archive @ TM.*

Most of the above themes were also taken up at the level of the artistic projects proposed by individual artists for the Energy!| Creative grants programme, through the Power Station platform, which have enriched the cultural programme with local perspectives and exploratory processes of artists who are still at the beginning of artistic creation.

By integrating the principles and objectives from the bidbook into the new funding programmes, the coherent and multidimensional approach to promoting and supporting cultural and artistic initiatives is emphasized. This highlights the deep connection between the diversity of ideas and their support within the cultural community.





Legacy. Consolidation of positive effects and new perspectives

50

Timișoara is today a very alive city, full of creativity and depth, which has to offer Romania and Europe precisely the image of this dynamic balance, well anchored and precious, between light and shadow, between being open and being assumed identity, between curiosity, appetite for new ideas and the need for anchors, for reminders, for the past. This process and this relationship can be essential keys to our assumed life in an open world, where we still want to know who we are.



Raluca Iacob,
Power Station Coordinator and
monitoring-evaluation of results and
impact

51

The Timișoara 2023 Programme proposed a long-term impact, leaving the city and the community with a new attitude and new resources for growth and development. At the end of 2023, the effects are at the level of the public and the citizens of the city and bring to the fore the following elements: the cultural scene and the capacity of the local administration to deliver cultural policies and programmes alongside new or improved cultural infrastructure, urban design or strategies of tourist development, all boosted by the development and implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The Municipality of Timișoara, through the Centre for Projects, is working on elaborating a plan of measures for the coming years, which will consolidate these new resources and positive effects for the benefit of the inhabitants.

Several important investment objectives have been completed or are in various stages of work thanks to the opportunity offered by the Timișoara 2023 Programme and the amounts allocated in this regard from the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara, from the regional budget of the Timiș County Council and the budget state, through the Ministry of Culture. Cinema Victoria, Cinema Timiș, and Bastion Galleries are some of the objectives managed by the Municipality of Timișoara that have already been returned to the community and increase the access and cultural participation of the people of Timișoara, offering them new spaces for consumption and artistic expression. Also, a series of facilities absolutely necessary for the organisation of valuable exhibitions in good conditions have been made at the Timișoara National Art Museum, at the National Museum of Banat, public cultural institutions subordinated to the Timiș County Council, steps that position the city as a place for large-scale cultural events, to present valuable works of art to the Timișoara public and tourists.

Preparing the ECoC title:

December 2020

the postponement for 2023 of the title of European Capital of Culture for the city of Timișoara is approved, based on Decision (EU) 2020/2229/2020 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 December 2020 amending Decision No. 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action in favour of the "European Capitals of Culture" event for the years 2020-2033;

Looking to the future, the *Plan of the Municipality of Timișoara for the Legacy of the Timișoara 2023 Programme* is a local cultural planning approach that will propose a list of necessary measures within the area of responsibility and attributions of the Municipality of Timișoara and subordinate institutions, to ensure a continuity of the programme's positive effects on the city and its cultural life.

The plan will formulate objectives, directions of action and the profile of the essential types of results that deserve to be consolidated and continued, together with the kind of support they need to sustain a valuable cultural offer and to contribute to the priorities of the Municipality of Timișoara. Its formulation takes into account the opportunities and risks of the local, national and international context, which frames an analysis of data about projects and key actors of the community involved in the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the relationships between them and the perception of the results, their current situation, needs for the future and the role of the Municipality of Timișoara to address them.

The plan will be achieved between November 2023 and May 2024. It will take into account all parties' perspectives and contributions to the Timișoara 2023 Programme through data analysis, interviews, focus groups, consultation, and participatory planning processes.

The Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara coordinates the development of this plan for the Municipality of Timișoara in a team that includes external collaborators with relevant national and international experience: Dr Silvia Fierăscu, senior analyst and data and research methods consultant, and Dr Vera Marin, a specialist in participatory planning, an architect specialised in integrated urban development and project management.

435

Workshops

63

Presentations

511

Educational events
through culture
and cultural
interventions

Universe Timișoara 2023

54

1,143

Organisers and partners

The scope of the TM2023 ecosystem has grown, involving in 2023 more than twice as many organisations as estimated in 2016. In 2016, 262 organisations were involved in the Cultural Programme. In 2022, 349 were included, and towards the end of 2023, 835 organisations were formally in partnership. Their number will increase as new data is included in the platform in 2024. In 2023, the ecosystem has grown more than 2.4 times since 2016, and the number of partnerships has doubled (from approximately 600 to over 1,300).

The TM2023 universe has grown, but the organisations have consolidated partnership relationships. Although the ecosystem has more than doubled in size, its degree of cohesion has increased. Between 2022 and 2023, we notice that the level of cohesion between organisations has increased 4.5 times, and the distance between the communities formed in the ecosystem also slightly decreased. Cohesion, in this case, is seen in the network by grouping organisations into collaborative triangles, which occurs through the transfer of trust.

The institutional design of the consolidation and expansion of the Timișoara Programme 2023 contributed to increased community cohesion. What generated this expanding cohesion in the cultural ecosystem? Three factors could have strongly influenced this indicator: (1) the fact that there was a diverse series of actors, key locals, well positioned in the pre-title ecosystem, that generated a transfer of trust and resources between old and new organisations and mobilised other organisations around them to propose new ideas and formats. (2) Local policy for funding, reflected by the requirements included in the funding applications, encouraging and supporting co-creation processes between organisations. (3) Alignment on the objectives assumed at the city and community level (Cultural Program), but focus also on the contribution of each project.

55

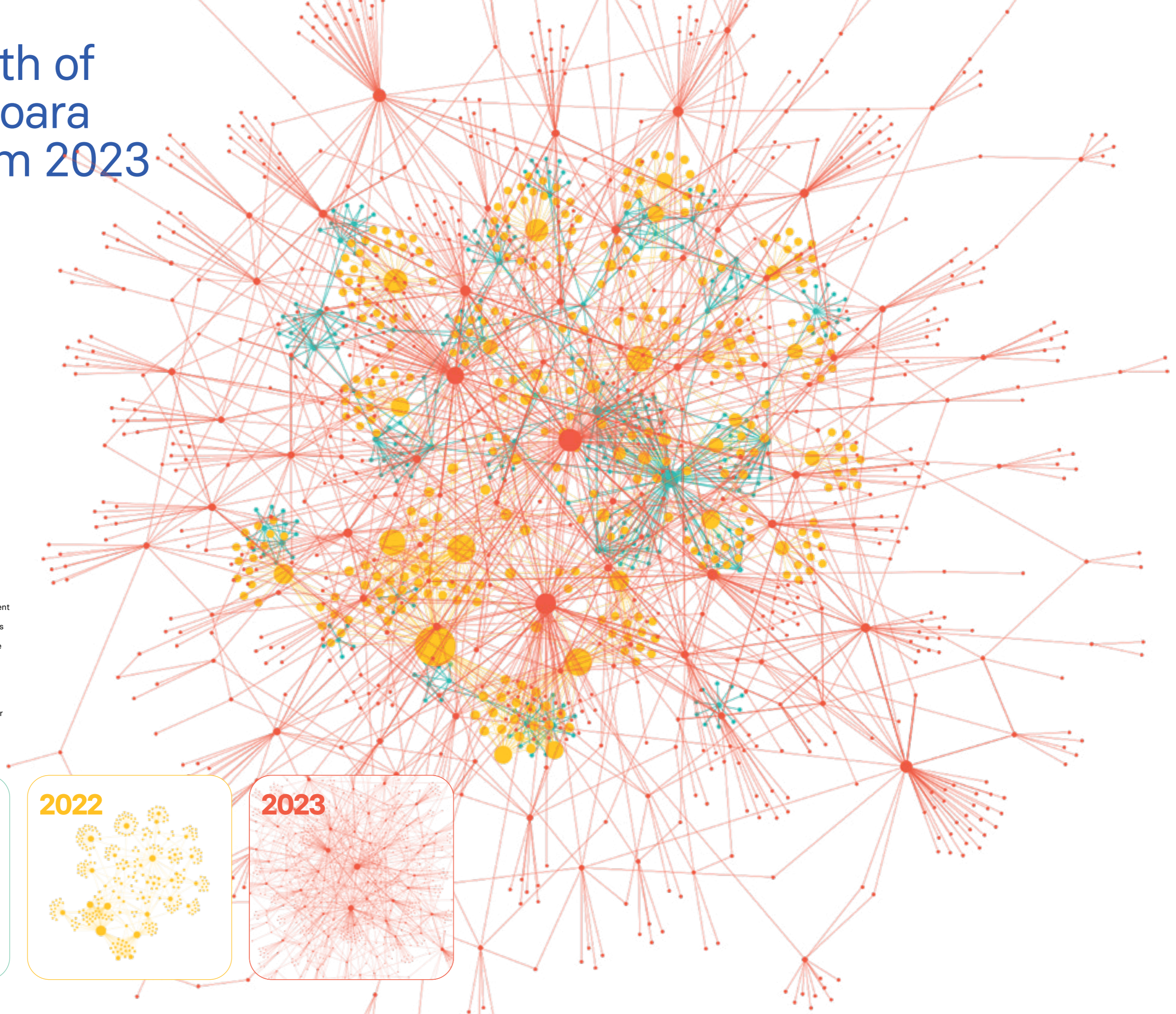
Partnerships between organisations signal relationships that reflect their potential for long-term cooperation, mobilisation, alignment and influence in the ecosystem. Although community projects depend on each of us, teams and organisations increase consistency and sustainability of impact. As researchers, we are interested in understanding the dynamics in the local scene to support public policymakers in maintaining and improving the support mechanisms that will further grow the ecosystem through trust, cohesion, and connection.

What we observe in Timișoara is all the more impressive because network theory tells us that when the ecosystem increases so drastically in such a short time, the level of cohesion and the proximity of nodes in the network should be significantly lower.



dr. Silvia Fierăscu,
senior analyst and data and
research methods consultant

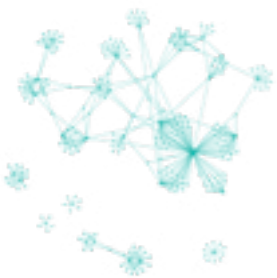
The growth of the Timișoara ecosystem 2023



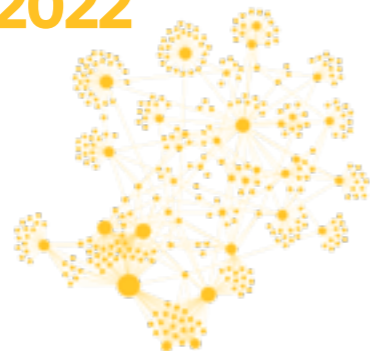
Note: For the situation at the end of 2023, two organisations are connected if there is an agreement of a formal partnership between them. For the situation in years 2016 and 2022, two organisations are connected, if they appear as partners in the Timișoara Cultural Program 2023 – Application file (2016), respectively Updated cultural programme (approved by OMC 3560 / 15.12.2022).

Analysis of data on the cultural ecosystem of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, carried out during the period November 2023 – March 2024 by Dr. Silvia Fierescu and Ianis Rușitoru for the Centre for Project.

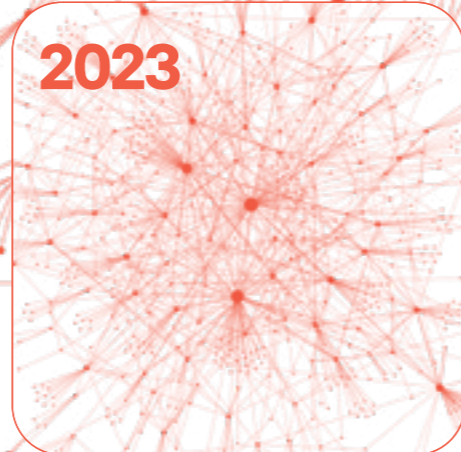
2016



2022



2023



174

Digital art and
new media events

160

Installations



Unique characteristics of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme

60

Our concept is to create the conditions to stimulate the courage to generate a new sense of community. It is the appropriate cultural response to the deep crisis of confidence and insecurity that Timișoara and the entire Europe are facing in the 21st century. The "Spirit of Timișoara" will be rekindled - this time, through culture. Twenty-seven years ago, the city citizens took to the streets to free themselves from the clutches of a totalitarian regime. At the time, the alternative view was not clear. Things were left unfinished. We intend to reopen the discussion about the future of our city, this time in a European context.

61

Culture as a practice of sustainable city and community creation. Places Territory

The transformations generated by the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme at the urban level represent an ongoing phenomenon. Several changes are already concrete and visible within the city and communities. Still, many of them are intangible – changes in vision and mindsets, which will continue to have significant effects in the future.

Preparing the ECoC title:

March 2021

the establishment of the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara, under the authority of the Timișoara Local Council, which integrates the vision and commitment of the Municipality of Timișoara towards the process of reforming the method of funding culture and other areas of local interest, respectively by ensuring the transparency of the framework and the non-reimbursable funding mechanism, Local Council Decision No. 270/2020;

The projects in the PLACES territory have contributed, through various practices, intervention areas, target audience categories and degrees of involvement of this audience, to a **reevaluation of the city as a common good, to new ways of perceiving, conceiving and using the city and to a clearer understanding of its development resources** for a better future quality of life.

Contemporary urban communities are formed around shared values, which they emerge and cultivate together. Awareness of heritage values and the overlapping layers of memory and meaning is crucial to how people relate to the city, to the quality of their relationships with the place they live in, and to **creating a sense of belonging to that place**.

Among others, a series of projects had precisely this role in **mobilising people around genuine, authentic, local values and needs**. They have contributed to re-discovering stories and histories, intensifying urban identity in the eyes of its inhabitants and reconnecting them with the city. More connection means more awareness and care. This category includes guided tours and the series of documentary films *The Secret Map* (co-produced by the West University of Timișoara and the House of Culture of the Municipality of Timișoara), *Spotlight Heritage* programme (Politehnica University Timișoara Foundation), *Parallel City* (Diogene Association and the Hungarian Theatre) through the complex programme of immersive theatrical routes in the historical districts of *Iosefin*, *Fabric*, *Elisabetin*, the series of *City Talks*, and the visual and performative shows *RemixID* (META Spațiu Association), which revitalises in a contemporary key the universal archaic multi-ethnic values of Banat.

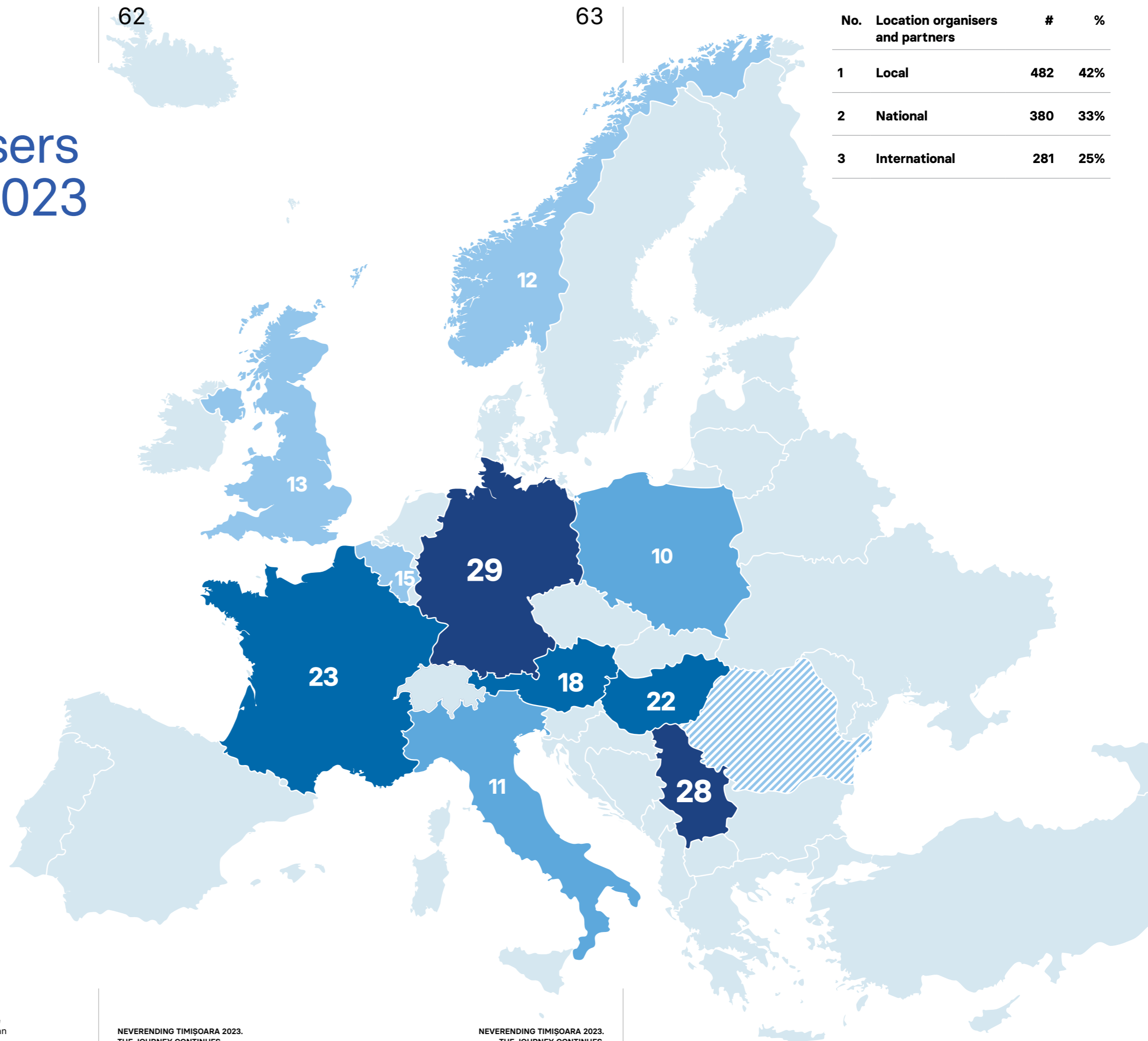
The European Capital of Culture title was also for Timișoara **a chance for reinvention and regeneration** by testing new scenarios for sustainable activation of the built fund and new ways of using public space. The temporary transformation of former industrial or military buildings into cultural infrastructure has opened up new possibilities for the cultural sector and validated partnerships and professional networks that have every chance of being continued and developed through programmes like *Energy Incubators* (La Figurat Association), *Bright Cityscapes* (FABER and Politehnica University Timișoara), *Parallel City*, *Chronic Desire*, *City Celebration*.

Geographical distribution of European organisers and partners in 2023

No.	Top 10 countries	#
1	Germany	29
2	Serbia	28
3	France	23
4	Hungary	22
5	Austria	18
6	Belgium	15
7	UK	13
8	Norway	12
9	Italy	11
10	Poland	10
	Other countries	< 10

"Data analysis of the cultural ecosystem of the Timișoara 2023 Program" 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).



62

63

No.	Location organisers and partners	#	%
1	Local	482	42%
2	National	380	33%
3	International	281	25%



138
Guided tours

Public space is universally accessible and inclusive, a good shared with others, and its quality measures the quality of democracy in that place. The city also means peripheral neighbourhoods, not just central markets - and the Timișoara 2023 Programme aimed at **decentralising opportunities and reducing the gap between the centre and the periphery**. Markets, parks, streets, the banks of the Bega canal, courtyards and gardens have become safe spaces for meeting and dialogue, contributing to strengthening the sense of belonging and social cohesion by:

- **organising performative shows and workshops within the Dare programme** (House of Culture), a theatre workshop for children with mobility disabilities entitled *The Future of Kids* (National State Theatre Timișoara).
- **recovering public space in the periphery** and conviviality events that include various marginal communities through the Impulse programme (French Institute, Unfold Motion, Le Plus Petite Cirque du Monde).
- film screenings, photography exhibitions, theatre performances and **cultural interventions in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and for a vulnerable, isolated, often institutionalised public**, within the *ROD Festival* (Documentor Association) or the *FAPT* (German Cultural Centre) workshops.
- organising events in the public space in other cities or the countryside in the cross-border region of Banat, thus contributing to the *development of the audience by promoting and growing the local contemporary dance scene in the Frames & Shapes* programme (Noi Re-Creăm Association and Unfold Motion Association) or *Dans Nomad* and through *RemixID* multimedia performances.

The Timișoara 2023 programme explored **how urban life relates to the cultural landscape and nature** in the most sustainable ways possible, that is, through **responsible production and consumption practices that stimulate regeneration**. The *Slowing Down* Programme (CRIES Association) promotes gastronomic heritage and local production, advocates for water rights, proposes sustainable solutions for organising cultural events and tourism ones, to be taken up in public policies. It practices social entrepreneurship - supporting a culture of solidarity and sustainability among citizens. Within the same programme, through participatory interventions, a best practices guide and a communication campaign, the *green-blue Timișoara* component, increases **public awareness of the value of watercourses** in Timișoara and the peri-urban area, whose transformation into green-blue corridors brings multiple benefits: it stimulates green mobility, offers new recreational spaces and social interaction, brings nature into the city, regulates temperatures, increases air quality (dust, noxae), improves the quality of urban life. The entire Timișoara 2023. *City Celebration programme* was dedicated to **reconnecting people with the Bega Canal**, the lifeline that runs through their city.

The installation *The Nursery. 1306 plants for Timișoara* (Order of Architects-Timiș branch) within the Living Spaces Programme started as a general reflection on the decision-making policies related to public space management and its administration through a particular element, greenery. The Nursery allowed people to experience the **importance of vegetation in the city**, especially in the context of current climate change, and a first-hand knowledge of the local botanical heritage. Its presence in the city centre for ten months spoke to the people of Timișoara about nature which requires patience and care, bringing relaxation and well-being. Through the unique perspectives on Victoriei Square and on the

My interaction with the people implementing the projects in the Programme, in the Places territory, was very good. We found passionate professionals who know their city well and love it. For my part, I also learned a lot, it was an urban laboratory for me and I leave with a deeper understanding of Timișoara and the way I practice. It also seems to me that we have reached a change in the attitude of the inhabitants towards their city. Maybe they understand it a little better now and relate to it differently, with more attention and care. I believe that the cultural programme succeeded in creating communities and making visible new scenarios for the use of spaces and the city, thus new possibilities for life. I see vectors of change and a vitality that, if supported smartly and consistently, can take things in a very good direction in the future.



Cosmina Goagea,
member of the Curatorial Team
Timișoara 2023, curator of Places
Territory

architectural and urban heritage, the Nursery **has expanded the knowledge of the place, functioning at the same time as infrastructure for cultural events, exhibitions, concerts, workshops, light design installations, and debates**. Finally, through open dialogues, the Nursery was as a valuable **tool for negotiating disagreement in public space and as a dialogue platform for a human-centred public architecture policy for Timișoara**. Not by chance, the footprint of the Nursery was preserved in the winning solution of the competition for the remodelling of Piața Victoriei, in the form of a stage for civic debates.

The Order of Architects has developed other participatory tools and

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Dance performances

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Events dedicated to the cultural heritage

practices within the *We meet where we want* component of the *Dare* programme, which transformed public spaces in the vicinity of three neighbourhood schools, with the involvement of students, teachers, neighbours, the entire local community, **stimulating a culture of active citizenship**. The partnership model, established with the local administration, validated within this project, provides real opportunities for multiplying this type of intervention also at other schools in other countries' neighbourhoods as a **democratic practice of co-creating the city**.

The cultural programme was also aimed at **activating the local creative capital and strengthening the scene for the cultural and creative sector** by stabilising a production and consumption system that will keep talents in Timișoara and attract other professionals too. *Bright Cityscapes* programme (Timișoara Politehnica University in partnership with FABER) aimed to **create an urban laboratory** involving the field of design, architecture and digital culture and to enable a **dynamic environment for international interdisciplinary collaboration** to explore possibilities in urban design and development.

Culture as a process of integration, diversity and sustainability. People Territory

Promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, and mutual understanding are essential pillars of a harmonious society in a constantly changing Europe.

The *Fluid Perspectives.Identity.Education* programme within PEOPLE Territory has established itself as an influential voice addressing the **rights of the LGBTQIA+ community** through high-quality artistic formats. It has included exhibitions, lectures, and workshops, creating maps of safe spaces in Timișoara, and establishing intelligent communication with the community and its allies.

Within the same territory, the Timișoara Intercultural Institute has collaborated significantly with the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture, emphasizing the importance of cultural inclusion. At the same time, Solidart, through its *ComUnitate* Programme, has become a central player in **immersive theatre, performance and cultural mediation**, consolidating its position with ambitious partnerships and extensive festivals.

Climate change and reducing the carbon footprint are becoming prominent topics within the territory. Educational programmes within Reflections discuss current European topics, from the European Green Deal to social inclusion and the protection of European cultural heritage.

Also, the territory responded to the **challenge of digital technologies** through *Knowledge Fields—Culture Quest*. This programme combined science with art, bringing events, workshops, and multimedia installations to the forefront and contributing to reducing the gap between the Romanian system and the European media.

The social goal and prosperity are embedded in the long-term actions of the Horizons of Knowledge station, which emphasizes science and art through technology. Reflections programme focused on strengthening Europe's democratic processes, brought to the fore activities promoting intercultural and interethnic dialogue, contributing to strengthening European identity.

Timișoara 2023 represented a moment of enlightenment regarding the cultural and artistic potential of the city. During this period, culture and the arts were placed at the urban life centre, initiating artistic and educational processes for children, young people and diverse communities in various city neighbourhoods. We witnessed a metamorphosis of the city, which came to life through various cultural events, including contemporary art exhibitions in museums and unexpected spaces, theater performances on stage, in a converted truck or on the banks of the Bega river, concerts, creative workshops, conferences and many others. This prestigious title has created a platform for local and international artists to share their creations and highlight fundamental cultural aspects: the right to identity, free expression and solidarity.



Corina Oprea,
member of the Curatorial Team
Timișoara 2023, Curator of
People Territory

Preparing the ECoC title:

June 2021

launch of the priority cultural programme TM2023 RESTART which aimed at the flexible running of the Timișoara 2023 Programme for 2021, in accordance with the principles, values and guidelines of the bidbook concept, sustained by a financial allocation from the local budget and based on a qualitative and pragmatic selection of the cultural projects that have been developed up to that moment;

Sustainability in cultural heritage is essential in the PEOPLE territory, where the *Reflections* programme – *Timișoara, the secret map. People and Places* highlights both tangible heritage through guided tours and cultural conferences and the intangible through artistic events that put in value the traditional and artistic expressions specific to the European space.

Coherence and social well-being were addressed within the PEOPLE Territory through the *Players of Change* programme, facilitating interaction between various age and professional groups and contributing to discussions and periodic cultural events. This cluster has become a barometer of the audience, scanning their needs and reactions to the ECoC programme. **The cultural ecosystem and the support for artists, cultural professionals and European content** were emphasized in the territory of PEOPLE by involving the various independent cultural organisations and spaces. *Players of Change* programme collaborated with local actors and organisations, bringing cultural artists and personalities together in varied programmes, contributing to interculturality and international dialogue.

Culture as an engine for sustainable development was highlighted in the PEOPLE Territory through the *Invisible/Visible* programme, which supported Roma local communities and promoted the recognition of their culture as an integral part of the European culture. Within *Knowledge Fields*, the Minitremu Association contribute to developing new audiences and generating an intercultural and intergenerational dialogue involving pupils, students, teachers and researchers.

The involvement of local artists and cultural organisations in designing and implementing the cultural programme completes the vision in the PEOPLE Territory. Programmes such as *Chiaroscuro* and *Post-Education* brought together the local community and guests from the region and Europe, exploring the crises of the Western world and strategies for a sustainable future.

Combining local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions was an essential aspect of PEOPLE Territory. The organisations that led the *Knowledge Fields* programme brought together youth communities in various activities, from summer camps to workshops and local and international appeals, helping to transform heritage and archives into forms relevant to contemporary audiences.

To conclude, the cultural projects developed within PEOPLE Territory within the Timișoara 2023 Programme represented an integrated effort to combine cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and sustainability, considering the specific needs of the local community and the European public. Through the projects and collaborations achieved, the programme has provided a comprehensive perspective on its evolution and contribution to a constant transformation of a cultural and social Europe.

Culture as a stage for large-scale events and international collaborations. Connections Territory

How CONNECTIONS Territory developed, its main mission being to establish collaborations and institutional partnerships at the international level, has been dependent, perhaps more than in the other territories,

It has always seemed important to me for Timișoara to cultivate its outward orientation, to have a European profile and be aware that it can generate valuable cultural content by itself, entering into dialogue with other contexts, neighbouring ones or more distant, in a spirit connected to the demands, emergencies and dilemmas of the present. These are the frameworks that build the meaning of the Connections territory.



Magda Radu, curator of the Connections Territory, member of the Curatorial Team Timișoara 2023, December 2023

Preparing the ECoC title:

September 2021

drafting the Action Plan of the Municipality of Timișoara and its submission to the European Commission, through which the central role of the Municipality of Timișoara was assumed at the level of strategic governance of the cultural programme and the basic principles listed earlier were integrated into the development of the cultural programme;

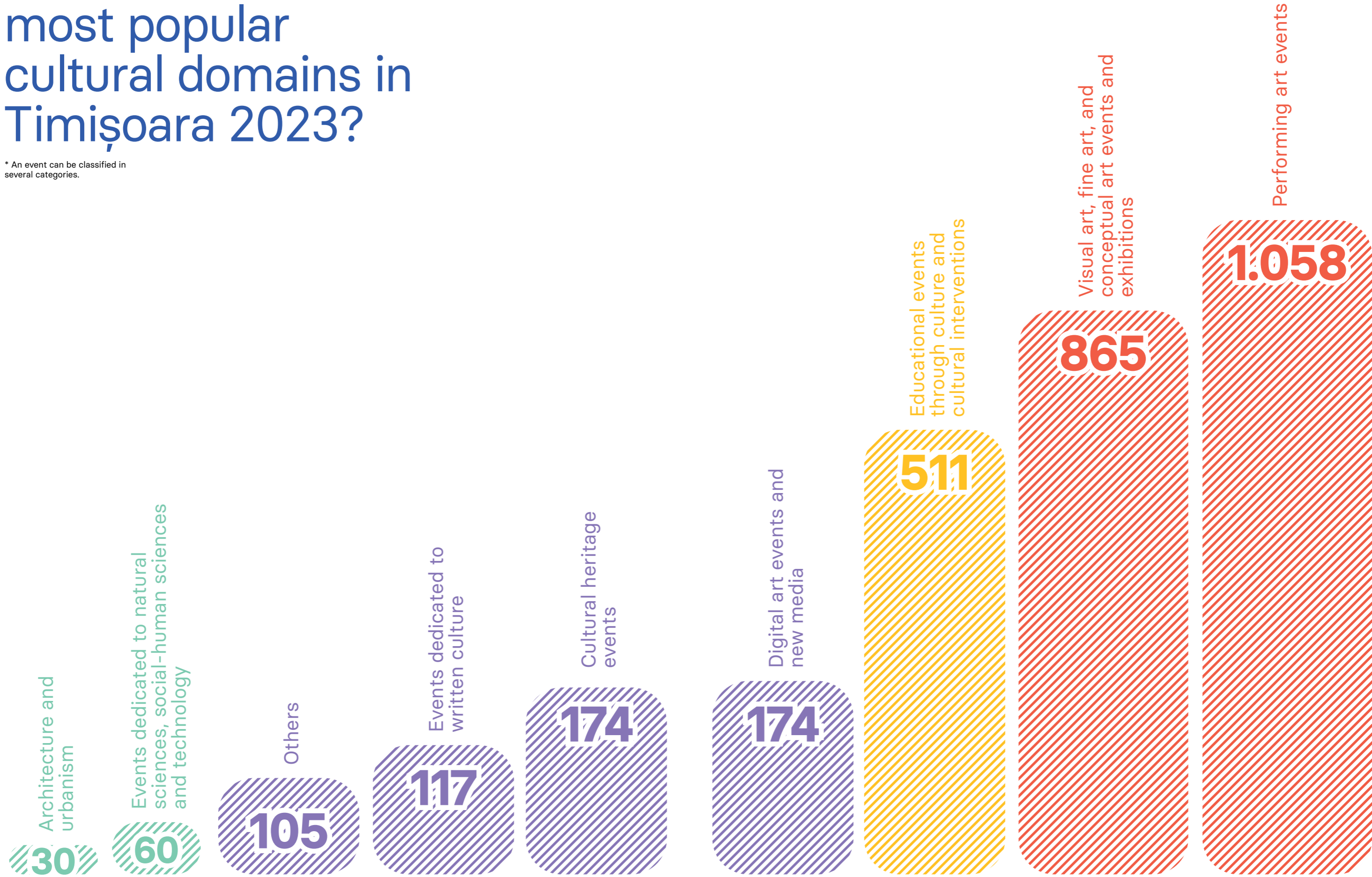
on the evolution of funding mechanisms and predictability as in the possibility of planning cultural events long in advance. Valuable, organic collaborations, in which all involved parties contribute to the definition of projects, are not easy to achieve, as there is always the danger of imbalance situations, in which the tendency to import cultural content produced elsewhere prevails at the expense of collaboration between partners on equal footing.

The large-scale events surrounding the CONNECTIONS Territory were carried out considering the recalibration of some roles within the funding equation of the Timișoara 2023 cultural programme. This readjustment was done quickly so that exhibitions such as *Victor Brauner: Inventions and Magic* or *Brâncuși: Romanian Sources and Universal Perspectives* could be achieved through a complex mobilisation from public and private institutions. The respective events, intensely promoted, have established themselves as two of the image vectors of the European Capital of Culture for the general public and local and international media. It is highly desirable that in the future, the National Art Museum in Timișoara produces, through its own efforts, exhibitions and programmes of good quality, mobilising its resources and gaining experience.

In an interdisciplinary manner, combining the artistic content with anthropological and heritage research, the *Moving Fireplaces* trail highlighted in an exceptional way the international features of the

What were the most popular cultural domains in Timișoara 2023?

* An event can be classified in several categories.





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Tastings

38
Lectures

Timișoara 2023 Programme. The sustained work dedicated to the exploration of Banat architecture, viewed through the lenses of an intercultural matrix which explores issues of identity, has been combined with the organisation of the exceptional theatre performance *Youth Everlasting and Life Without End* (the result of a European cooperation initiated by Auăleu Theatre) and with the visual research dedicated to the vernacular expressions of naive art from Romania and Serbia in the exhibition *I Started to See the Colours*, also organised by the Prin Banat Association at the Ștefania Palace.

Within this territory, which mainly highlighted the international dimension of the cultural programme, the *Art Encounters Biennale* should be mentioned, which once again demonstrated the ability to manage a large-scale event in the sphere of contemporary art, the only one of this kind from Romania. The 2023 edition, titled *My Rhino Is Not a Myth*, benefited from the involvement of a curatorial team coordinated by Adrian Notz and brought to the fore themes that link post-humanism to scientific reflection, proposing speculative fiction for the future. Betting on a rich selection of artists from diverse cultural contexts, the biennale also highlighted, as always, the versatile way in which it enters the urban fabric of the city, activating new and unexpected spaces for contemporary art.

The cultural operators who expanded the cultural programme in its international dimension, primarily through the *European Echoes* funding programme, have made valuable contributions. Highly diverse in their concerns and ways of acting, the proposals of the operators have shaped in exciting ways the reflection on neighbourhood and cultural affinities in Central and Southeast Europe (*Taifas Festival* and the *Common Heritage – The Tale of Four Cities* project) or acted as common platforms of discourse and exchange of experience, highlighting the challenges encountered by the spaces and the entities managed by artist collectives, which are so important as well for the cultural ecosystem of Timișoara (*Artist Run Team Building* project).

Culture as an engine of long-term positive change. Power Station

Power-Station / Electro-culture represented, according to the bid book, is a central point in the development process of the Timișoara 2023 Program, a set of strategic actions to strengthen the capacities of the local cultural ecosystem in essential areas, still insufficiently developed to be able to support the objectives of the cultural program. Institutionally, Power Station was, from the beginning, thought of as the main legacy of the European Capital of Culture, assumed and developed starting from 2022 by the team of the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara, collaborators and partners.

In 2016, the priority was on the capacity building of cultural operators to carry out wide-range European projects, with the involvement of various segments of the public and the engagement of the entire community within collaborations with regional and international experts and organisations. Some years later, due to changes in governance and cultural participation during the coronavirus pandemic, the objectives of the Power Station have adapted. Some of the initially identified needs were addressed directly by the members of the Curatorial Team in their work with the cultural operators, some were addressed through the design of the funding programmes, which emphasized the development of the public and international collaborations of the local cultural scene, while others were taken as the foundation for direct initiatives pursued by the Centre

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Preparing the ECoC title:

November 2021

Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team (Curatorial Team) starts its mandate, following an international open call, based on a rigorous selection process carried out by a selection committee gathering independent experts with professional training and expertise in the field of action for each curator position. The Curatorial Team becomes responsible for the artistic coherence and strategic coordination of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

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for Projects, such as actions dedicated to the accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities within events with the role of representation for the program and the city: Opening Ceremony, City Celebration and Neverending Timișoara 2023.

In 2021, a year that marked a turning point in the evolution of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, Power Station was redesigned based on its initial principles. Hence, it has encouraged, among other things, the development and strengthening of skills to attract non-reimbursable funds, better event production and communication skills, partnerships with schools and cultural mediation, accessibility and social inclusion, funding of creative scholarships and mobility of cultural professionals, cultural journalism for the promotion of Timișoara and its cultural scene, and last but not least, cultural practices within the Timișoara 2023 Programme as benchmarks for urban development through culture at the national and international level.

Following this new direction, the Power Station Programme in 2022-2023 was built on:

- **Strengthening the capacities of the local cultural scene** - training, information and funding to operate in a resilient and sustainable way, based on diversifying funding sources and addressing community needs for all types of cultural entities – creators/cultural professionals, start-up organisations, medium-sized organisations and organisations with a strategic role in the cultural life of the city. Examples of actions: *Forum Grantmaking for Culture and International Connection*, organised in partnership with Creative Europe Romania, within the Project Management Unit - Ministry of Culture; funding programmes *Power Station++ | Mobility programme for cultural professionals*, *Power Station+ | Creative schools* and the two editions of *Energy! Creative grants*;
- **Developing dialogue platforms and communities of practice** – representation, dialogue and reflection on local practices and policies, creating alliances and partnerships, and developing collaborations and partnerships beyond the local level. Examples of actions: collaboration between the *EU-Japan Fest Committee and the European Capital of Culture Programme*, the organisation of the conference, collective performances and choreographic networking event *D.A.N.C.E.™ – Dance. Artists. Network. Conference. Encounter*, developed in partnership with *AREAL | space for choreographic development*; the networking event *Timișoara 2023 Platform* – information and networking meeting for cultural operators developing projects within the TM2023 Programme.
- **Enhancing community outreach** – connections with the local community: extensive participation of different categories of public, access to culture for disadvantaged categories of public, visibility given to education and cultural mediation within the Timișoara 2023 Programme, creation of a learning environment through culture, facilitation of partnerships between the local schools and the cultural scene in the framework of social intervention and cultural practice. Examples of actions: *the Power Station interview series*, hosted by the Timișoara 2023 platform, with the aim to highlight organisations and events in the Timișoara 2023 programme aimed at the young audience; *The Cultural Mediation Forum*, organised by the Cluj Cultural Centre, a programme of debates in physical and hybrid format, an economic sustainability workshop for heritage projects, as well as an itinerant exploration route of heritage-related projects implemented by local organisations, the *actions dedicated to accessibility* (see dedicated section).
- **Promoting Timișoara as an example of governance for the benefit of**

NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

the community and urban development through culture. Examples of actions: The exchange project *Better cities, with culture*, which brought together representatives of the cultural scene, the local and central administration and the Regional Development Agencies of the Republic of Moldova, with representatives of the Timișoara City Hall, the Centre for Projects and other cultural actors from Timișoara; international seminar *Vector TM.Culture as urban practice* brought the public of Timișoara into dialogue with architects, curators, cultural operators, creators of public policies and urban strategies, consultants, and decision-makers from the public administration of seven European countries.

Power Station continues under the umbrella of the Centre for Projects. It has the potential to become a long-term capacity-building programme for the local cultural sector, providing resources and support to professionals, organisations and institutions.

Culture as a witness to the evolution of the cultural ecosystem and its impact on society. Evaluation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme

The postponement of the title year from 2021 to 2023, in the context of the global coronavirus pandemic, had set relatively different expectations from those in 2016, when Timișoara won the national competition for the European Capital of Culture award. The original objectives have been partly reshaped by the changing forms and patterns of cultural participation, by the challenges faced in the governance of the Programme, by the increased vulnerability of the stakeholders in the cultural and creative sectors and by the new economic, political and social conditions post-pandemic. Therefore, in 2021, the expected positive effects of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, beyond the title year, were centred around a better connectivity of the cultural scene with the rest of Europe, an even greater and more diverse cultural participation to feed the civic energy of the city, and a more consistent and smarter support for culture from the public and private sectors. The expectation was that the programme will contribute to increasing the capacities of action, collaboration, resilience and sustainability of the cultural scene. For all those involved, the Timișoara 2023 Programme was seen as an experience of growth through learning: becoming better at reaching out to a more diverse and larger audience and jointly developing a complex cultural programme to contribute to the intended change in society.

Given this new mission, the Municipality of Timișoara, through the Centre for Projects, has undertaken the monitoring and evaluation of the results and impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme based on a plan sent to the European Commission in October 2022 as part of the Progress Report, a document which was endorsed by the Timișoara City Hall, the Timiș County Council, the Ministry of Culture and the Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture Association.

In addition, the Timișoara 2023 Association had the responsibility to monitor the indicators corresponding to the communication of the Timișoara 2023 Programme – that is the media coverage, the communication activities implemented and the responsiveness of the different categories of the public to them, the highlight topics in the public communication towards the general public, in relation to the cultural programme, and so on. Furthermore, it was responsible for monitoring adherence to the vision and concept of the Timișoara 2023 bid book, in

relation to funding received from the state budget, through the budget of the Ministry of Culture.

On the other hand, the evaluation and monitoring programme, coordinated by the Centre for Projects, has been focusing on the following areas of interest:

- **Outcomes and impact:** understanding how objectives were met, targeting the indicators recommended by the European Commission and those derived from the individual objectives of the Timișoara 2023 Programme. The aim is to map the specific and global effects at the level of the cultural scene, the population and the city. Examples of actions:
 - » The Centre for Projects has developed a **framework, methodology, and work processes for collecting data from different entities**, natural and legal persons, which organise the projects and events that represent the Timișoara 2023 Programme, based on a list of indicators that refer to the profile of the project, the extended implementation team, the management of the project, including financial data, and the targeted audience;
 - » The Centre for Projects contracted Orange Romania on behalf of the Municipality of Timișoara, **to deliver urban mobility statistics for October and December 2023**, data that are used to know by approximation the visits to the city centre of municipality of Timișoara during the respective period, the typology and the understanding of the mobility behaviour of the population, based on the Flux Vision methodology;
 - » The Centre for Projects contracted, following public competitions, the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy for the most consistent evaluation component of the results of the Timișoara 2023 Programme: the study *Evolution of the cultural scene of Timișoara in the context of the national cultural programme "Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023" and the study Public Participation in the National Cultural Programme "Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023"*;
 - » Also, in 2023 and 2024, the Centre for Projects contracted the West University of Timișoara to carry out **new editions of the cultural consumption barometer**, a long-standing sociological research for the city;
 - » The economic and touristic impact will be monitored starting with 2024 and will complement the analysis of the impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme on the quality of life of the people of Timișoara, a perception study carried out annually by the West University for the Municipality of Timișoara, in its eighth edition in 2024.
- **Governance:** how the programme is managed at all levels - from grassroots producers to implementation organisations, together with local and national governing bodies – is an important source of learning and an essential component of reliable monitoring and evaluation of the results and impact. In addition, the institutional design and work processes established for the programme are a resource for any future complex project. Examples of actions: The Centre for Projects contracted, following a public competition, Encore Research company to carry out the study *Governance of the National Cultural Programme "Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023" - managing complexity in a turbulent climate and the role of culture for local development*.
- **Observation, reflection, dialogue:** the production of the Timișoara 2023

Preparing the ECoC title:

January 2021

first revision of the Timișoara 2023 Programme by the Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team, integrating the general objectives at city level to activate as many cultural operators as possible to develop, grow and connect the local cultural ecosystem.



276
 Film screenings

34
 Video projections



In Timișoara, we are now harvesting the results of the hard work of people who are passionate about their work. The effervescence of 2023 in Timișoara, the richness of its heritage and the dedication of interdisciplinary teams have resulted in the creation of outstanding cultural experiences for both ordinary visitors and for those with special needs. Involvement of the local community of people with diverse abilities is essential, bringing value to the city. The cultural projects implemented by multidisciplinary teams with different perspectives and abilities have resulted in experiences beyond expectations, which we can proudly be presented at European level.



Teodora Borghoff,
Member of the Timișoara 2023
Curatorial Team, expert in
community relations and social
inclusion, coordinator of the
Cultural Programme in the bid book,
December 2023

Through collaboration, made easier by the openness of the local authorities and the empathy of Timișoara's civic organisations, Ukrainians who settled in the city fleeing the war, have actively co-created several dozens of cultural projects in the period 2022-2023. The videomapping "Sensitive Content", presented in cooperation with the Association Prin Banat, the series of culinary events within the La Pas festival, the participation of Ukrainian artisans in all local festivals with products and workshops, the documentary film "When Borders Get Indistinct", the concerts of Jamala and Druga Rika (connected with Flight Festival), are just some of the projects that completed the European Capital of Culture program and showed Timișoara's solidarity and cultural dialogue between the local and the new Ukrainian communities.



Evgenia (Jane) Rozbitskaya,
Representative of the Ukrainian
Community Timișoara.



Programme was accompanied by processes of observation, monitoring, reflection and dialogue. The cultural practices were accompanied by the voices of those interested in learning and sharing their opinion about the cultural experiences that are part of Timișoara 2023, and the analysis, reflection and dialogue also fed into the city's future plan. Examples of actions:

- » **involving monitors with an observer profile**, who provide implementation support, an approach centred on learning and understanding of the funded projects and events. The Centre for Projects developed an internal procedure for monitoring the funded projects and events, and brought together external monitors with the Centre for Projects team to carry out this process. Involvement of monitors, procedures and the associated documents were also disseminated to the Centre for Arts and Culture of Timiș County Council (CECART), as implementation structure for Timișoara 2023 Programme, which also managed funds from the state budget through the Ministry of Culture.
- » The Municipality of Timișoara, through the Centre for Projects, is coordinating the drafting of the **Legacy Plan of the Timișoara 2023 Programme**. The activities for developing this plan started in November 2023 through a network analysis of the ecosystem created by the Timișoara 2023 Programme and the interpretation of some descriptive statistics based on partial data about the cultural programme. The Plan aims to formulate a medium and long-term vision, as well as objectives addressing the role it should have in the development of the city the results of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, associated with necessary measures to ensure a continuity of the positive effects of the programme on the city and its cultural life.

For all monitoring and evaluation activities of the results and impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the Centre for Projects relies and depends on the contributions and close collaboration with all organisations, institutions and individuals involved in its implementation, together with the understanding and support in data collection and submission, participation and research facilitation from the Timiș County Council, the Timiș County Centre for Culture and Art and the Association Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture.

Culture as a process of social inclusion and accessibility

The Timișoara 2023 Programme meant not only the shine and glamour of the cultural events, but also a diversity of experiences for the public that attracted diverse audiences at the same time.

The efforts put under the hashtag of social inclusion targeted beyond the disabled or otherwise disadvantaged audience. They were initiated not only with the desire to take action for the benefit of marginalised groups, to show generosity and inclusion, but with **the firm intention to open spaces for encounters and learning between cultural operators and audiences with diverse abilities and life experiences**.

The audience development efforts in the context of the programme carried out in 2023 were equivalent to **the transformation of the cultural act, to the growth from the superficial meaning of "high culture"** experienced in a ritualised way (we participate in the community in cultural activities,

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Preparing the ECoC title:

February – March 2022

The European Commission's support for the new governance structure of the cultural program expressed in two letters acknowledging the important steps taken by the local administration to set up an open and transparent Curatorial Team, its role in carrying out an analysis of the cultural program and its subsequent revision, as well as ensuring the continuity of the projects of the Timișoara 2023 Program by funding from the local budget of the Municipality of Timișoara and working with the Curatorial Team in the strategic and artistic coordination of the cultural program;

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we dress up nicely and go to the theatre, we go to an exhibition where we behave in a certain way), **to a culture that is alive and relevant to contemporary audiences**.

Furthermore, the audience development within the Timișoara 2023 Programme was primarily a transformation of the cultural operators, to create and be themselves, make art, and **talk about culture in new ways**. This included interacting with people who are fundamentally different from the ordinary public in various ways, including people with different ways of perceiving the world and participating in the community. These were the values and foundation on which those co-creation initiatives were built, and they were fostered into teams with diverse skills and abilities, combined with cultural operators open to experimentation.

Thus, the Timișoara 2023 Programme included projects that contributed to the accessibility of culture for a diverse public, not only in likes and dislikes, but also in **sensory experiences and abilities**. Visually impaired tourists and students from special education schools explored the city's heritage, both buildings and symbolic monuments and trails of the 1989 Revolution, in the form of 3D models and tactile maps, with the help of the *Timișoara4all* and *the Interactive Revolution Memorial* projects.

With the support of community volunteers, visually-impaired tourists can experience the city and the locals' favourite places at the speed of tandem bicycles provided by the *Timișoara through My Eyes* project. Recently restored to the community, *Cinema Victoria*, *Cinema Timiș*, and *Galeria Bastion 3* are spaces equipped with **accessibility facilities**. Likewise, the *Water Museum*, *FABER*, and *Hall 2 of the National Theatre* are adapted to the needs of people with disabilities, with barrier-free paths and adapted toilets.

Basca Theatre is an independent space that has specialized in organising its own or inviting theatre performances from elsewhere, that are also accessible to persons with visual or hearing impairments. Furthermore, Kabaitan Cultural Association documented the year of the European Capital of Culture from four unique perspectives, documenting the cultural journey of four protagonists, representatives of vulnerable groups: visually impaired, hearing impaired, wheelchair users and people who use simplified language, with an emphasis on self-representation and empowerment in each activity

The *Opening of Timișoara 2023 and Timișoara 2023. City Celebration* were also two inclusive celebratory events. Multiple measures have been taken to increase the degree of accessibility of the spaces and events included in the programme. During the two events, several spaces were equipped to be accessible to people with disabilities: mobile ramps, adapted toilets, and barrier-free routes at specific exhibitions, films or concerts.

One example is a reinforced steel podium set up at the official *Opening Ceremony*, equipped with support bars and an access ramp to facilitate the visibility to the stage for people using a wheelchair, as well as a safe space for people with other types of disabilities. And, for the first time in Timișoara, the hearing-impaired people in the audience benefited from the artistic interpretation of the concerts in Unirii Square, performed by Lavinia Chițu, one of the few Romanian sign language concert interpreters.

For organising *Neverending Timișoara 2023*, accessibility facilities were provided as well, including a raised podium which increased the level of visibility at the concerts in Unirii Square, together with **interpretation in Romanian sign language**, adapted toilets, silent room and adapted

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Architecture and urbanism

60

Events dedicated to natural sciences, social-human sciences and technology.

transportation in collaboration with the Social Assistance Department of the Municipality of Timișoara.

Moreover, the Power Station programme made it possible to invite people and resource organisations to help cultural operators in their efforts to organise accessible events, as well as to conduct training programmes for volunteers registered on the *Timișoara 2023 Volunteering* platform.

All these initiatives have contributed to **creating connections between organisers of cultural projects or events on one hand, and organisations actively involved in representing marginalised groups on the other**, thus testing new ways of working together. The establishment of these practices is also visible at the level of representative events for the local cultural scene, such as the *IN:VZBL Theatre Festival*, experienced in social themes, developing national and international productions that contribute to the debate of these issues through the concepts of performances brought to life. Moreover, accessibility assessments of local cultural spaces are a valuable source for designing new investments, procedures, and procurement processes that are more inclusive and attuned to the needs of the public and the artistic community. At the local community level, the emphasis on the process of social inclusion and accessibility has trained volunteers and cultural mediators alike, with experience in accompanying people with disabilities or persons in the audience who do not speak the Romanian language or have had traumatic experiences.

Culture as a reflection of the city and European values

In the context of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara organised **key events, with a symbolic and representative role for the programme and the city**, which marked the following:

- [The Opening of Timișoara 2023](#) – the start of the Timișoara 2023–European Capital of Culture Programme, organised between 17-19 February 2023.
- [City Celebration](#) – an event dedicated to the community and diversity of the city, organised between 6-8 October 2023.
- [Neverending Timișoara 2023](#) - a moment of reflection on the cultural and calendar year, organised between 07-10 December 2023.

These events, organised by the Centre for Projects, highlighted the strong connectivity between local and international dynamics, not only through the presence in the programme of well-known names, but also through questioning, revisiting, and research deeply tied to the current moment, connecting the local space with the European and global one. In this logic, exhibitions and programmes such as *Chronic Desire* or *ZONA &*, as well as the international seminar *VectorTM.Culture as an Urban Practice*, inspired collaborations between the members of the curatorial team and brought forward artistic and curatorial methodologies that relied on attention to contexts, on an ethic of engagement and empowerment through culture.



Opening of Timișoara 2023

The concept of the Opening event aimed to address and interrogate through the proposed cultural events the crisis of values shared by all Europeans, which requires *“the restoration of the art of dialogue and a constructive and critical attitude to create the Europe we dream of”* (Bidbook for the title of European Capital of Culture).

The mission of the Opening programme was to highlight the distinct multicultural heritage of the city of Timișoara and functioned as a platform for the important topics of the current times. This approach was based on three broad strategic rationales:

- **Profiling as a European Cultural Destination:**
 - » Planning events outside the “traditional” calendar to create essential, not-to-be-missed moments, profiling the city as a cultural tourism destination at regional, European and international level.
 - » Providing visibility and context to the events included in the cultural programme, many of them being developed directly or in collaboration with operators and cultural institutions.
- **Innovation and Artistic Quality:**
 - » Organising pilot events with large audiences and unprecedented production complexity, resulting in positive signals for the events industry nationally and internationally.
 - » Confirming the presence of Timișoara as an essential actor in the cultural-music scene and the introduction of the city in the booking circuit of big music agencies.
 - » Inaugurating spaces and strategic partnerships to promote artistic quality and facilitate international collaborations.
- **Development of the Artistic Ecosystem:**
 - » Using the context of the European Capital of Culture to prototype production models that will inspire and encourage cultural operators
 - » Supporting experimentation, interdisciplinarity and topics relevant to European identity in cultural events, thus strengthening a dynamic and sustainable artistic ecosystem.
- **Challenging residents, but also visitors, to new ways, rhythms and times to experience the city**
 - » revitalizing the public spaces, organising daytime cultural events, supporting new collaborative contexts and showcases for local and international operators. All these events helped develop audiences and boosted guest participation or interest.

The Opening event included an extensive programme of contemporary art, culminating in the inaugural exhibition entitled *Sete cronică - Chronic Desire - Central Group Exhibition*. Curated by Cosmina Goagea, Corina Oprea and Brîndușa Tudor, the exhibition brought to the fore the creations of 34 artists, taking place in four distinct locations: Ștefania Palace in Piața Traian, Garrison Command in Piața Libertății, MX - “Corneliu Miklosi” Transport Museum and Maria Theresia Bastion - Gallery 3. Encompassing 22 works newly commissioned for Timișoara and five works commissioned for the public space, the exhibition proposed a complex exploration of various forms of contemporary artistic expression.

Contrasens Association organised an extensive mediation Programme, with guided tours in Hungarian, German, Serbian, English, Romanian and Romani languages, guided tours for children, people with various psychomotor skills or hearing impaired, mediation programmes and discussions on architecture, ecology, poetry reading, thus amplifying

Preparing the ECoC title:

February 2022

Renewal by the Timiș County Council of the financial support commitment to the “European Capital of Culture” project carried out by the European Union, for 2017-2022, through the Decision No. 51/23.02.2022 of the Timiș County Council regarding the modification and addition of Decision No. 168/30.09.2015 of the Timiș County Council;

If you look at the Timișoara cultural scene today, you see growth and a healthy level of confidence that comes from experience. Timișoara is leaving 2023 behind and is going forward with a very valuable cultural ecosystem.



Silviu Scrob,
Member of the Curatorial Team
Timișoara 2023, cultural production
management expert

the experience of the visiting public. A special moment was the unique performance created by the artist Tarek Atoui at the Cetății Synagogue in Timișoara, on February 18, 2023, based on field recordings from his *Water's Witness* project. Also, the audio-visual installation *You are another me - A cathedral of the body* by Adina Pintilie, organised in partnership with the Manekino Cultural Association and Manekino Film at Kunsthalle Bega, curated by Cosmin Costinaș and Viktor Neumann, was a premiere for Timișoara, being the first time that the project that represented Romania in the Venice Art Biennale was also presented in Romania. The exhibition *Mircea Nicolae - Small Things, Precious Things*, curated by Salonul de proiecte (Alexandra Croitoru, Magda Radu, Ștefan Sava), brought a unique perspective on a complex artistic universe, which traces stories and emotions through careful observation of its environment and contexts. This contemporary art manifestation infused vitality and relevant content into the Opening Timișoara 2023 event, and also represented a significant reference point in the context of the European cultural landscape. Furthermore, the large scale concert organized in the closing of the event, marked the inclusion in the collective consciousness, both local and national/international, of the Union Square, as a space fit for events with a large audience.

The curation of the music programme was not guided by a specific style or direction, but by **diversity as an expression of creativity**. From the electronic music culture of Berlin represented by Fritz Kalkbrenner to the aerial performance with Iberian influences of Duchamp Pilot, from the traditional violin music of the Roma minority—Taraf de Caliu—to the rock sound of the people of Timișoara from Implant for Refuz, Timișoara celebrated the nuances.

The community of cultural operators and the Timișoara public were also actively involved during the three days of celebration, with the official program of the event including showcases from the cultural operators of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Program and over 50 events in neighborhoods and informal cultural hubs - from DJ parties or concerts to exhibitions and theatre performances, funded by the call launched by the Centre for Projects, called *Opening+*, from the state budget, through the Ministry of Culture.

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Projects

The event proposes an exploration route of the Timișoara 2023 cultural programme along the Bega Canal, restoring the water and shore connections between Timișoara's neighbourhoods. Bega is a fantastic resource for urban transformation and, at the same time, a silent witness to all the changes that have happened over time. Timișoara's urban identity is given mainly by Bega in various ways: navigable canals and natural and cultural landscapes. "Timișoara 2023. City Celebration" aims to rediscover some lost links between the inhabitants of Timișoara and their natural world, understanding the river as a value for the city, and experiencing the changes brought by cultural events.



Cosmina Goagea,
member of the Timișoara 2023
Curatorial Team, Curator of Places
Territory

The official Opening of the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme, funded by the Municipality of Timișoara, coordinated and organised by the Centre for Projects, with a total budget of 7.5 million lei given by the Municipality, and 800.000 lei from the Ministry of Culture, was a long-awaited cultural moment by both the people of Timișoara and the consumers of cultural events from the rest of the country. The more than 130 cultural events that were part of the opening weekend created many opportunities for the people of Timișoara and for the general public to get to know the city better through exhibitions, concerts, community events or performances distributed in all the neighbourhoods of city, bringing together over 60,000 people, Romanian and international guests.

City Celebration Timișoara 2023

On the weekend of 6-8 October 2023, the [Timișoara 2023. City Celebration](#) event proposed an **exploration route of the Timișoara 2023 cultural programme along the Bega canal**, reconnecting the water and shore connections between Timișoara's neighbourhoods. Bega is a fantastic resource for urban transformation and, at the same time, a silent witness to all the changes that have happened over time. For three days, from Friday, October 6 to Sunday, October 8, 2023, the public was invited to enjoy a rich and complex program, on the riverbanks that unite the entire city, from Uszoda, upstream and downstream: concerts, theatre performances, exhibitions, sports competitions, art and light installations, cultural and urban design interventions, guided tours, but above all an event to rediscover the city and the joy of being together in the unique year that Timișoara was European Capital of Culture.

This curated approach was based on three strategic directions:

- **Creating a sense of community, a large ecosystem of organisations and events**, essential in celebrating freedom of artistic expression and cultural diversity, the proliferation of a city open for exploration, both niche areas and effervescent spaces of cultural life.
- **Highlighting the living corridor of Timișoara, the Bega canal and the effervescence of the city neighbourhoods.**
- **Curating a programme with over 100 cultural, educational and sports events**, organised by public and private, local and international operators, in over 50 locations, outdoor or indoor, on the water, on the river banks and near the Bega canal, in Fabric, Iosefin, Cetate neighbourhoods, the Student Complex or Elisabetin, following the axis of the bidbook, respectively that of people-places-connections.

The programme was an invitation addressed to residents to explore the river banks by foot, from vaporetto Harbour in Iosefin neighbourhood in the east to beyond the Hydroelectric Power Plant on Bega river, all the way to the Șubuleasa canal in the west of the city. A series of guided tours followed the theme of water as a factor of identity and urban transformation over time, as an element of biodiversity, a leisure space, a sustainable transport corridor, and a creative theme for art. In addition to the discussions during the guided tours, the open doors events of some the emblematic spaces and buildings, usually inaccessible (Neptun Public Bath, Iosefin Synagogue, etc.) contributed to reconnecting the inhabitants with the city and its stories, strengthening emotional connections and the feeling of belonging, pride and care for places, knowing their history and



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Concerts

NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
 THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
 THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

Closing Timișoara 2023,
 December 2023, Concert Róisín Murphy

Photo credit:
 Cătălin Anghel



significance.

All these unique features, recommend the *City Celebration* event as a legacy project of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, with an annual recurrence, to be organised by the Centre for Projects, contributing to the consolidation of the strategic objectives stated in the bidbook and to the long-term construction of the city. The event has the potential to become a platform for activating the creative community of Timișoara around these sustainable values and connects the city, through the proposed artistic programme, to the latest trends in the European and international music scene, in particular.

The success of the event translates in incredibly rich numbers: 47 concerts, 22 exhibitions, 3 festivals, 10 art installations, 12 DJ sets, 13 performing arts shows, 15 guided tours, 11 workshops, 6 debates, 2 conferences, 6 film screenings and 6 sports events are just some of the more than 130 events that animated the city, the river banks of the Bega canal and 50 other locations in Timișoara, from morning and until late at night, with more than 80.000 people participating spectators participated in the event.

Neverending Timișoara 2023

Timișoara's year of transformation ended with a spectacular event, organized between the 7th and 10th of December 2023: [Neverending Timișoara 2023](#) This multifaceted celebration aimed to **encapsulate the richness and impact of the cultural journey undertaken throughout the year**.

During the four days event, the practices and working principles cultivated through the entire cultural year were highlighted. Curated performances, intellectual discourse, and musical acts collectively articulated the fundamental principles that defined the cultural identity of Timișoara: **resilience and an open and future-oriented spirit**. This retrospective was not just a simple look back but an anticipation of how these principles will continue to shape the city's future trajectory.

The curatorial concept was built on four strategic directions:

- Exploring five emblematic places of Timișoara and the cultural programme: Piața Unirii, Palatul Culturii, Cinema Timiș, Cinema Victoria and MX - Public Transport Museum "Corneliu Mikloși" through tailor-made cultural events that highlighted the characteristics of these spaces and their versatility in hosting different cultural events, from concerts, performances to seminars, artist talks or conferences, all with free access.
- Re-affirming the cultural and artistic potential of the city through the courage to experiment in unconventional spaces, adopting or re-establishing innovative forms of cultural manifestation.
- Anchoring the city in the circuit of international artists belonging to the cultural-musical scene, whose communities and audiences amount to more than several million people worldwide and who celebrate the free, creative and dynamic spirit of the city, mirrored by female voices of relevance both locally, nationally and internationally, and belonging to different cultural and musical backgrounds, whose artistic work is able to create a dialog with the attending audience.
- Debating some themes central to the transformation of the city in hosting the title of European Capital of Culture and highlighting some

vectors of urban transformation generated by the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Programme and exploring how they can be integrated into public policies for the coming years.

Thus, the official programme included the event ZONA & at MX - "Corneliu Mikloși" Public Transport Museum, a two-day performance based event, complemented by an archive exhibition with an outstanding exhibition design bringing into focus the *Zona Festival*. This significant cultural event revived the avant-garde spirit of Timișoara of the 1990s. Initiated by curator and art historian Ileana Pintilie, *Zona Festival* gained momentum during the period of freedom that followed the political change in 1989, also highlighting the disillusionment brought by the new democracy in a social and political space marked by numerous conflicts and the rapid reconfiguration of the categories of winners and losers in the first days of the "transition". The ambition of the festival was originally to establish interregional contacts in a Europe that was trying to escape the isolation imposed by the Cold War.

In this respect, ZONA &, curated by Corina Oprea and Magda Radu, invited artists from various cultural spaces who work with their own bodies. These artists felt the same urgency and vital need to articulate fundamental questions through this expressive tool, questions that disturb human communities everywhere. As an artistic genre, performance also functions as a mode of resistance through which the body acquires freedom against the disciplinary pressures of social construction and the limits of knowledge, formulating new propositions, fictions and liberating utopias. These aspects were visible through the Performances made by SERAFINE1369, ILYICH (Anton Kats), Elvisey Pisică, Quarto (Anna Mesquita & Leandro Zappala), Manuel Pelmuş in collaboration with Anton Skaaning

Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture is the engine of a profound and unprecedented transformation of people, communities, places and the city, and all these transformations will have a strong positive impact on the long term, bringing Timișoara closer to the European values that define the city: freedom, democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, human dignity, equality, respect for human rights, i.e. those values that I believe every Romanian, from any corner of the country, wants and for which the people of Timișoara fought.



Ramona Laczko David,
Coordinator of the Timișoara 2023
Programme

Thomsen. Dan Perjovschi, Lia Perjovschi, Teodor Graur, and Ion Grigorescu revisited their contributions in collaboration with the curators Zdenka Badovinac and Edit Andras.

The live acts lineup of the closing event was marked by a celebration of the creative capacity of national and international artists, such as Jessie J, Roisin Murphy, Katie Melua, Delia or Emaa. The lineup of the event in Piața Unirii proved that gender balance in artistic programming can be achieved, strengthening the artistic quality of the programme. The strength of these voices is essential to create a spirit of solidarity between diverse creative, social and cultural communities.

The space of reflection on the transformation of the city through the European Capital of Culture programme took the form of the international seminar *VECTOR TM. Culture as urban practice*. For two days, at Cinema Victoria, 23 speakers from 7 countries debated, together with the local community, how the cultural practices generated by Timișoara's experience as the European Capital of Culture can be strengthened to lead to profound transformations in society and at the city level. The seminar brought the audience into dialogue with architects, curators, cultural operators, creators of public policies and urban strategies, consultants and decision-makers from the local public administration. The central question to which answers were sought was: *what are the vectors of urban transformation generated by the Timișoara 2023 Programme, and how can they be integrated into the public agenda for the coming years?* Guests like Jorge Bonito Santos - head of the Public Space Interventions Department within the Lisbon City Hall, Eugen Pănescu - delegate of Romania to the Architects' Council of Europe, Ivan Blasi - architect and programme director of the Mies van der Rohe Foundation in Barcelona or Maria Charneco Llanos - MAIO Architects were just some of the speakers present at the event. VECTOR TM has shown how culture and art are very powerful tools in the process of continuous city creation, bringing to light new dimensions that have not been considered before. Timișoara showed courage, confidence, and risk-taking to create, under time pressure, an organised support system for cultural production and consumption, which had already visible impacts on urban development. The *VECTOR TM* seminar spotlighted this complex system, intending to raise awareness of the advantages the city holds and harness them through action supported by the political will to maintain this momentum.

The closing Gala event, *Neverending Timișoara 2023*, held in the Great Hall of the "Mihai Eminescu" National Theatre Timișoara and at the Romanian National Opera Timișoara, took the shape of a retrospective of the events and activities carried out within the Timișoara 2023 Cultural Capital. The event was filled with artistic moments mirroring the diversity of the cultural programme throughout the year, the artistic coherence being overseen by director Bobi Pricop. The short films presented at the Gala, invited the audience on a captivating journey through the significant moments of the cultural year 2023, zooming in on the years of preparation for the title and exploring the perspectives of each cultural operator or member of the cultural programme implementation team. The Gala also represented an opportunity to reflect on the role and essential contribution of key stakeholders in embracing the programme at the city and regional level.

Ever since 2016, when Timișoara won the title of European Capital of Culture, the work of the cultural operators and their projects have been the core of the cultural programme. As part of *Neverending Timișoara 2023*, the relentless commitment and continuous passion for the development of the programme were marked by another Gala event dedicated to the local cultural scene, by commissioning artistic moments produced by local

artists recognized for their contribution to the local music scene, such as *West Brass Quintet - Banatul Philharmonic*, *Lucian Nagy Trio* and a cine-concert entitled *The Invisible Revolution*, performed by Cristian Văduva - visual artist and Petre Ionuțescu - musician.

The processes followed, and the working principles that underpinned the organisation of these representative events focused on the following key points:

- **Scaling:** the three events organised by the Centre for Projects were the largest with regards to the number of events and participants. It was the first time that access to a public square, in the city centre, was restricted to avoid overcrowding, due to the high number of people who flooded the streets of the central area, coming from all the neighbourhoods, other regions of the country or different corners of Europe. The presence of artists with international musical references, such as Jessie J, Roisin Murphy and Katie Melua, opened the city to a vast music-loving audience, covering a broad sphere of the musical styles. These events also translate the interest at city level and of the community for high profile musical and performative events and a commitment to become a host for these types of events in the region.
- **Introducing new spaces in the cultural circuit/activating emblematic or strategic spaces:** the potential of a new space for large scale events was highlighted, with a capacity of over 25,000 people and a major historical significance for the city – Piața Unirii. The location has proven its ability to safely accommodate large audiences, with free access, providing the perfect backdrop of architectural excellence, best location as a central point in the city and the possibility to conduct effective crowd management and control measures.
- **Model of good practices and know-how transfer:** the events organised by the Centre for Projects have demonstrated the ability of local public institutions to align with and collaborate for the management of these large scale events, as well as to co-design their format with specialists from the national and international private sector. An example that is particularly worth mentioning is the crowd management plan for the Piața Unirii location, which was later presented as an example of good practice at international security and crowd control training events. (e.g. Interpol-Crowd Control Management Challenges for International Sports Courses / Naiff Arab University for Security Services). The transfer of knowledge from the entrepreneurial area and the exchange of experience with the public authorities in planning and organising events with large audiences led to increased skills on both sides. In this regard, the Opening and Closing events had probably the most complex plans for organising cultural events in the public space of Timișoara.
- **Reaching out to different categories of public, ensuring broad participation with free access:** all the three major events organised in public spaces by the Centre for Projects were designed with a broad audience in mind, presenting artists with various musical backgrounds. The events had diversity, multiculturalism, and accessibility as a curatorial line in order to reach the widest possible audience.
- **Expanding and strengthening the cultural programme:** the events organised by the Centre for Projects generated a feeling of community and belonging, by managing to engage the largest number of people at the same time. They marked points of reflection in the cultural year, moments in which the community of Timișoara, with various cultural and social backgrounds and with sometimes divergent points of view, coagulated.



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Theatre performances

NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

NEVERENDING TIMIȘOARA 2023.
THE JOURNEY CONTINUES.

Theatre performance "The Dragon", directed by Yuri
Kordonsky, German State Theatre Timișoara,
December 2023

Photo credit:
Andrada Ușvat

Reflections. Valorisation, activation, mobilisation

The contribution of the members of the Curatorial Team and the Coordination Council of the Centre for Projects to the development of the Timișoara 2023 Programme in 2021-2023 offers them a unique perspective of the programme itself, reflecting the role they played in ensuring the artistic coherence and its strategic coordination. The opinions expressed below illustrate this experience and seek to communicate the understanding of the working processes, the elements of curatorial, managerial and public policy decision making that contributed to the restart of the Timișoara 2023 Programme in 2021, to the results and its specific configuration until the end.

This reflective process contributes to a better understanding of what the development of such a programme entails, through the experience of Timișoara, shedding light on relevant ideas for cultural operators, public policy makers, ECoC programme coordinators at European Commission level and other ECoC organising teams.

The culture scene was receptive, open to new opportunities, and able to adapt itself. Public and private cultural organisations have demonstrated that a valuable programme can be developed through an open and constructive attitude that prioritised adaptation to opportunities and the work context.

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Adaptation

- » Adapting to existing or emerging situations in the development of the cultural programme, leading to innovation in: identifying, activating, transforming cultural spaces, together with finding solutions to solve the challenges caused by the dimensioning of existing human and material resources to realize cultural projects and events.

Responsiveness

- » An open attitude, receptive to new directions in the development of practices and professional skills, in particular participatory practices, audience development and co-generation of cultural content, international partnerships development and atypical collaborations.

Constructive attitude

- » Perceiving competition in the cultural scene as an impetus for growth, when there were fair conditions of access to resources, suitable for everyone;
- » Focus on seizing the opportunities that emerged even if they came late, and the pressure was very high;
- » Developing original cultural content, involving local professionals;
- » Local public policies making empowered the organic, professional development of the Programme, with a long-term impact.

Local and central public administration and subordinate institutions were responsible for ensuring access to culture and a suitable framework for carrying out a programme of the scope and complexity of the European Capital of Culture.

The Municipality of Timișoara, starting with 2021, has invested in creating a climate of trust and consensus between the key actors of the cultural programme and in empowering the cultural scene, the local community, cultural management and policy specialists and professionals on a large scale to design and develop the cultural program. It also assumed, through the Centre for Projects, the organisation of events with a role of representation for the Timișoara 2023 Programme: Opening, City Celebration and Neverending Timișoara 2023, along with the coordination of the monitoring and evaluation programme of results and impact, the development of the Power Station platform and the outline of a Legacy Plan.

The Timiș County Council has contributed as well to the programme, by encouraging partnerships between subordinate public cultural institutions and private cultural operators, and the production of large-

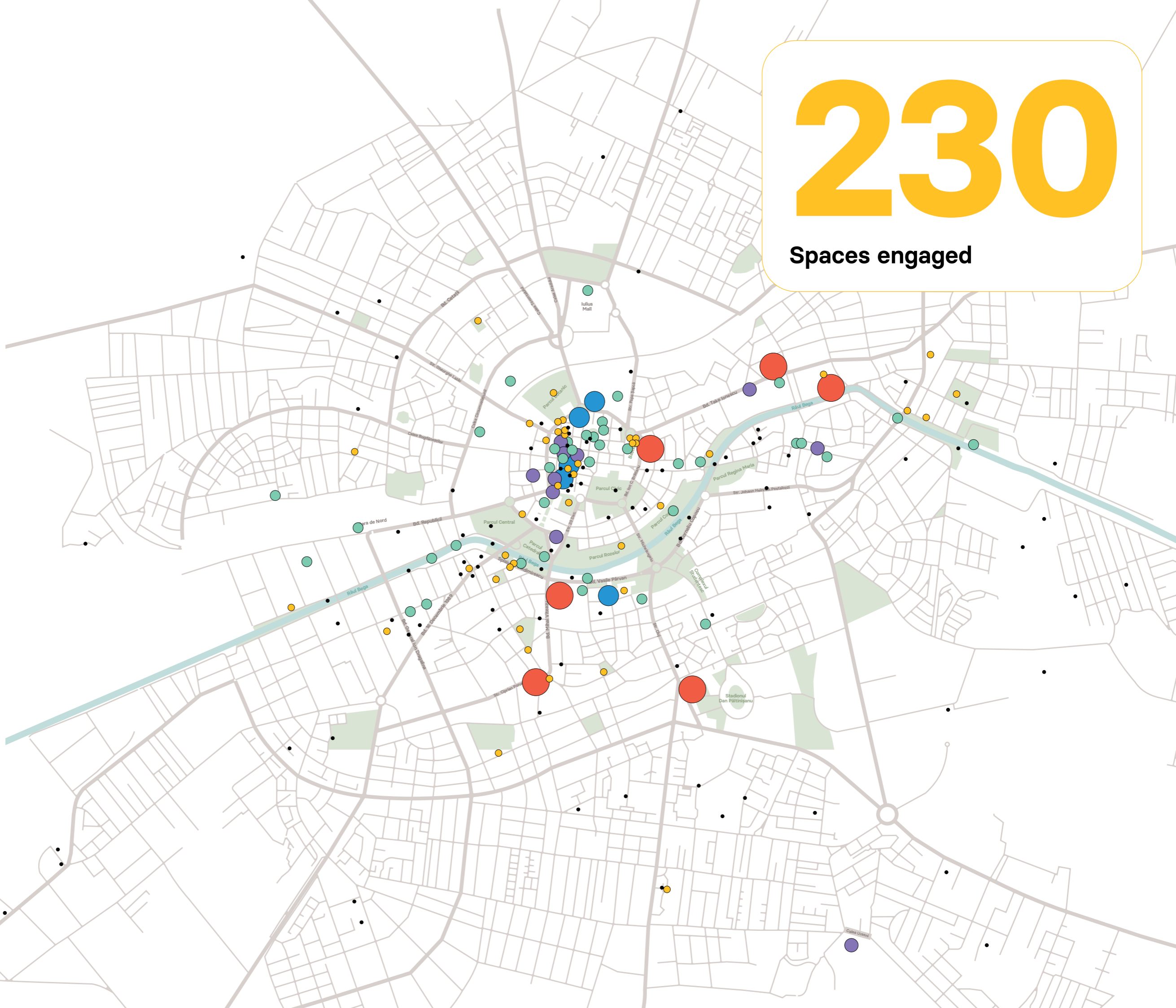
Preparing the ECoC title:

March 2022

resumption by the Municipality of Timișoara of the financial support commitment for the Timișoara Programme 2023-European Capital of Culture, for 2022-2023, by Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 83 / 15.03.2022

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2300
Spaces engaged



Distribution of events in the venues & spaces that hosted them and their location on the map of Timișoara

Newemerging centres distinguish themselves (e.g., MX, Cinema Victoria, Cazarma U, FABER) and the traditional public spaces (Libertății Square, Unirii Square, Victory Square) where many events took place.

TM.
e as Urban
e.

Cultural practices as policy shapers and city-creators

Moderator - Eugen Pănescu



Saša
Randić



Jak
Spencer



Oana
Simionescu



Maria
Charneco
Llanos

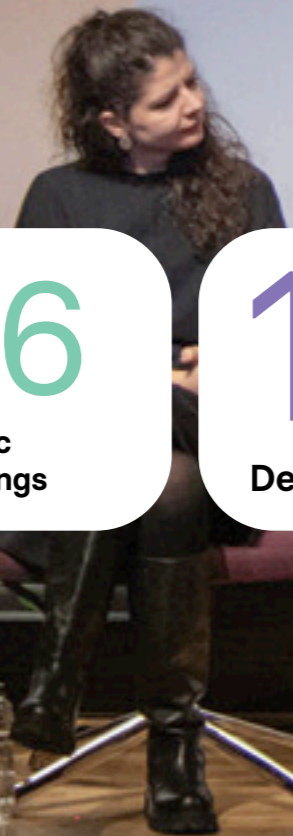


Bogdan
Demetrescu



46
Public readings

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Debates



scale artistic events for the Timișoara public. It also funded a series of cultural operators, including public cultural institutions and private entities, adhering to the general and strategic objectives of the bidbook, in collaboration with the Timișoara 2023 Programme Curatorial Team.

The Ministry of Culture on the other hand, validated the governance model defined by the key actors of the cultural programme, by adopting a series of regulations and procedures that ensured the national legislative framework for managing the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, between the local public authorities and the Timișoara 2023 Association. It has also enabled the allocation of funds from the state in order to extend the Cultural Programme and consolidate its effects after 2023. These funds were further distributed to the cultural operators through the funding programmes managed by the Centre for Projects of Timișoara Municipality and the Culture and Art Centre of Timiș County.

At the level of the Timișoara 2023 Programme as a whole, the final goal was, from the beginning, the long-term impact of all actions, for which consistency was needed in connection with the efforts, consultations, dialogue, coordination through collaborations, partnerships, awareness of common objectives and a more visible presence internationally. For this scope, the recognition of value, whether in terms of professionalism, city spaces, work processes, or results that can become good practices, was a key element that contributed to the smooth functioning of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

Trust and empowerment

The cultural scene: enable independent cultural production

- » Taking risks, supporting and granting credit and freedom in artistic content;
- » Keeping a distance between political power and the administration of resources for projects with an impact on the community, which does not instrumentalize their management;
- » Realizing, at the public policy level, the fact that in the arts and culture sector, the discourse is not only easy and comfortable but is also about questioning reality, or a status quo that must be interrogated and sometimes even changed;
- » Evaluating projects and events proposed by the creative community of the city community, with non-refundable funds, with the help of independent experts and specialists in the field.

The local community: to bring forward valuable cultural content

- » Developing local content, rather than simply importing cultural content from abroad, understanding that the European dimension means recognizing and boosting the Europeanness of the local spirit;
- » Building up a model of funding the cultural programme customized to the needs of the cultural actors, coupled with their responsibility to produce it;
- » Encouraging public-private partnerships, between public cultural institutions and private operators, for the organisation of broad artistic events;
- » Opening up the cultural programme to the ideas coming from the local cultural scene, who developed the cultural contents, rather than limiting this role to the designated implementation structures.

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Preparing the ECoC title:

August 2022

a new update of the Timișoara 2023 Programme by the Curatorial Team;

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Cultural management professionals and policy makers: management of resources across the community

- » Creating structures that have a professional approach, based on professional principles, to develop the Programme;
- » Empowering an institution that people know what to expect of, in a positive sense: transparency in the granting process, enabling spaces for the community and for its own activity, good communication, and to be a generator of stability and predictability.

Connecting

Consultation

- » Constant and open dialogue with community representatives to give them courage and confidence, to know their needs, interests and goals
- » Concrete and constructive management of the feedback received from the beneficiaries regarding the aspects that need improvement.

Partnership with the community

- » Management of spaces for the community in terms of access to culture and public interest, so that unused spaces are included in the cultural infrastructure, based on suitable criteria, for production of cultural and community events;
- » Community growth by allocating financial and logistical resources that facilitate cross-sectoral collaborations of cultural operators, such as with educational institutions.

Coordination through collaboration

- » Effective coordination between the institution in charge of managing resources for the community on one hand and the municipality, on the other hand, in alignment with the city's objectives, preserving at the same time the independence of decision-making and freedom of artistic decisions;
- » Encouraging the development of capacities of cultural professionals and operators towards openness and a functional culture, open to collaborations.

Capacity through partnership

- » The production of large events across the city by encouraging local public institutions to align and collaborate to manage events with large audiences, as well as to design events through collaboration with national and international private sector specialists

Convergence through awareness of common causes

- » The development of a shared vision between public institutions, private institutions, and the independent sector was based on the understanding that despite the differences, there are common causes out of which the whole city benefits.

International presence

- » Increasing the relevance of the city as a cultural scene at an international level through the presence of valuable artists and through collaborations with the agencies that represent them.

Recognition

Rediscovered spaces

- » Activating emblematic or strategic spaces in the city and highlighting their potential for certain types of events (for example, Piața Unirii, a space with a capacity of over 25,000 people and with major historical significance for the city)..

Professionalism

- » Empowering competent and well-connected professionals, present in national and international networks, who are able to work with diverse partners, in an international environment, with the local administration or other types of funders or with varying funding requirements.

Generating good practices

- » Transforming work processes and positive results into examples and models that can be transferred further, for example, the crowd management plan for the Piața Unirii location, which were later presented as an example of good practice at security training and international crowd-control events.

Long-term impact

Sufficient and properly allocated resources

- » Provide sufficient and appropriate financial resources and spaces in order to act with the desired impact and effectiveness, which are professionally managed by institutions at arm's length from direct political decision making, based on clear rules and procedures, fairly applied, so that different stakeholders can meet in the space and within the idea of action in the public interest.

Investment in cultural infrastructure dedicated to the community

- » Cultural spaces and the need for appropriate cultural infrastructure remain a constant focus, even after the completion of the programme, the availability of which and continuous enhancement will contribute to the growth of the community and serve the public interest of the municipality.

Continuity and consistency

- » Agreement between different local and national political forces to ensure the development of the cultural program by relying on the continuity of relevant projects in the run-up to the title year and the strengthening of their organizers;
- » Legislation and a multi-year fiscal policy to ensure the proper framework for planning in an international context.





Increasing the vibrancy of the local ecosystem

- » Attention and support for artists and professionals in the field of culture, not only for associative forms and legal entities;
- » Supporting cross-sectoral collaborations, for example, between cultural operators and educational institutions, for accessing new audience categories, for learning and the transfer of skills.

The experience of the Timișoara 2023 Programme indicates new perspectives on curatorship at the Programme level and a constructive role of monitoring and evaluation

The European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) programme has evolved since its launch in 1983, based, among other things, on experience and on changing perceptions on the role of culture for cities and regions.

The experience of the Timișoara 2023 Programme has drawn to a number of conclusions regarding the type of curatorship that functioned in respect to the artistic programme, the emphasis being placed on results and assessment towards the impact and legacy of the Programme, to the detriment, for example, of broader and more popular cultural experiences, but with ephemeral effects.

Preparing the ECoC title:

October 2022

The Government of Romania promulgates Law No. 286 of 31 October 2022 regarding the approval of the Government Emergency Ordinance No. 83/2022 for the amendment and completion of OG 51/1998, as well as for the amendment of GEO 42/2019

Artistic curatorship, a process of co-creation and empowerment

- » Understanding the role of a curatorial process at the level of the artistic program of the ECoC in a specific sense, wherein there is already a vision and pathway for strengthening and extending the cultural program, to be pursued and driven during the preparation period and the year of the Title. The degree to which curators are closely involved in the content of the projects may vary, depending on the openness of the cultural operators and personal or organizational priorities and working style. It ranges from discussing concepts and formats, offering suggestions or references, to proposing new, complementary themes or content, collaborating in the selection and invitation of artists, in the choice of venues or even co-designing concepts for certain components or creative briefs. Consequently, the role of curators at the level of the Program fluctuates between a direct and consistent intervention, and a moderating function, a hub between certain entities, certain contents, which the curator connects and the potential of which he or she makes relevant.

ECoC programmes, opportunities for change or growth

- » Harnessing the European Capital of Culture context to steer the city in new positive directions, such as that of participation and international collaboration in an organic way, i.e. what naturally comes to the city and what the local cultural scene aims to achieve in relation to the international scene. These kinds of connections are sustainable and are the main quality feature when we talk about international partnerships and sustainable urban development

Evaluation, a process and learning resource

- » Encouraging a type of monitoring and evaluation process that helps the city see its good sides and become aware of the things that still need to be strengthened. It is centred on learning, support for the beneficiaries, and knowledge of the cultural scene and of the actual situation of the work processes and the operators in the ecosystem.

The framework for delivering the Programme aimed to have a long-term impact on the city and connect the diversity of approaches

The Centre for Projects, together with the key actors behind the cultural programme, has been working following the principles that prioritized critical thinking, openness, and curiosity about new proposals. At the operational level, the management team of the cultural programme followed as well these principles, coupled with the construction of a clear and predictable framework for managing the resources necessary to its implementation.

Working principles

Openness

- » The development of a dynamic and unconstrained way of working, enabling creativity and flexibility within clear frameworks and structures and leaving the door open for newcomers, if their proposals are convergent with the concept and values of the proposed Cultural Program

Critical thinking

- » Fostering interventions that encourage critical thinking, imagining alternatives, in order to increase the audience not by surprise, but by a conscious and committed effort to value difference and diversity.

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Curiosity

- » Approaching the cultural scene from a perspective of learning and openness: listening and asking questions, being curious about what projects are already being developed, what is in the planning, to identify ingredients to work with.

Management

Diversity, under a clear concept

- » Encouraging a diversity of artistic approaches, but converging towards a clear concept and direction, by outlining appropriate guidelines for action, design and institutional curatorship

Multiannual planning

- » Funding mechanisms to allow sufficient time for the development of large or in-depth worthwhile projects, including research and audience-building stages, which are necessary for a European Capital of Culture program.

Adequate financial support

- » Providing support to develop and mentor local organizations in the preparation and implementation of the projects and events of the cultural programme, with a substantial share of financial and human resources dedicated to this process.

Dialogue

- » Organization of technical support and networking meetings for the cultural operators in order to maintain a constant dialogue and to keep up-to-date with the pulse in order to create common spaces in the ecosystem.

Europe, at home

Common concerns

- » Taking the European dimension into account not only in terms of the international partnerships of the projects or events realized or the cultural products that circulate, but also through the themes addressed within them.

Adopting a European agenda

- » Looking at the city as a port for 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 areas, themes that are very clearly on the European agenda: gender equality, vulnerable communities, more inclusive cultural programs, attracting young people to the cultural scene, etc.

Preparing the ECoC title:

December 2022

approval by Ministerial Order, OMC 3560, of the Timișoara 2023 Programme updated by the Curatorial Team

Recognizing the European character of Timișoara

- » The way of interpreting the European dimension, boosted in the consistency of the cultural program, aimed, in addition to a better connection with the international scene, to recognize and enhance the value of Europe at home.

Legacy

Institutions - a resource for the city

- » The creation and strengthening of institutions that remain as resources for the city, with various functions, such as the Project Center, to harness local public resources for the benefit of the community.

Relevant cultural program

- » The embedding in the cultural program of artistic offerings that are coherent and in the spirit of the program and contribute to the development of the cultural scene and audiences, against mainstream and easily tradable cultural products.

A common story

- » Dialogue, reflection and a post-title communication plan to support a common understanding of the working processes and outcomes among the implementing structures, the cultural scene and the public, the city residents.

Increasing quality of life

- » Approaching the title of European Capital of Culture as an opportunity to operate changes and produce results that will have a structural and strategic spill-over effect for the city in the medium and long term, to generate development through culture or cultural sector development, to generate a certain impact beyond mere cultural consumption.

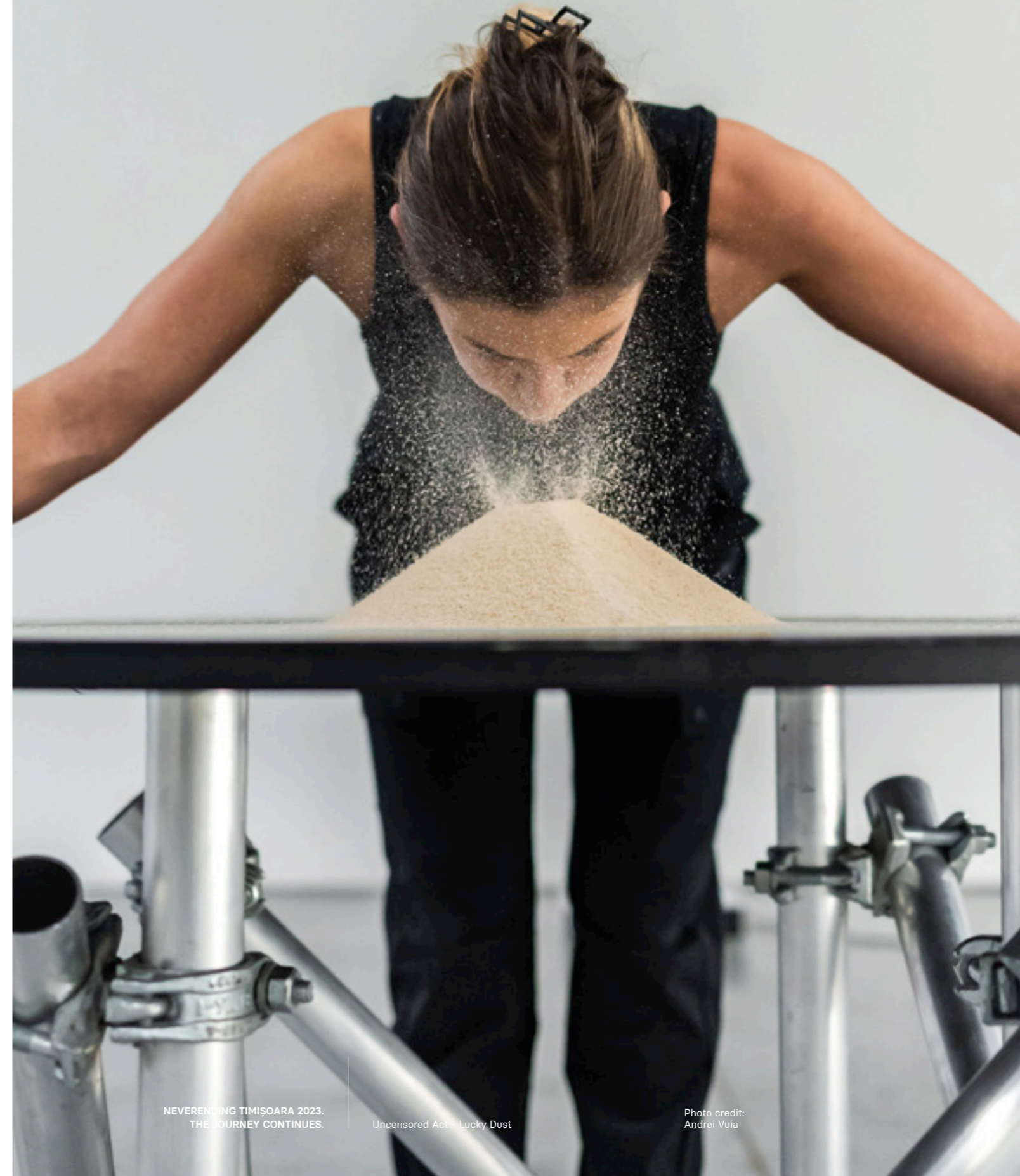
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Preparing the ECoC title:

February 2023

Opening of Timișoara 2023 –
European Capital of Culture

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Annexes

Director
Partnerships and projects Programmes and projects Programmes and projects Monitoring Monitoring and evaluatio
Head of spaces programming and management Spaces programming Administrator Infrastructure management Public development Spaces programing and management Web content editing Projectionist
Communication and public relations Communication and content design Photo-video
Chief accountant Finance and public procurement Finance Finance accountant Finance Cashier Public procurement Accounting Economist
Human resources Legal advisor Legal advisor
Programmes and projects Programmes and projects Finance accountant Design Programmes and projects Projectionist Cashier Programmes and projects Infrastructure management Cultural diplomacy, by secondment from Timișoara City Hall

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Coordination Council*

Ramona Laczko David

Raluca Iacob

Codruța Vulcu

Mihai Zugravu

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Cosmina Goagea

Corina Oprea

Silviu Scrob

Magda Radu

Other members of the Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team

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Matevž Čelik

Oana Boca Stănescu

Vlad Tăușance

Brîndușa Tudor

Coordinator of the Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture Cultural Programme
Power Station coordinator and monitoring of evaluation results and impact
Timișoara 2023 representative events coordinator
Communication and international relations coordinator

Community relations and social inclusion
(part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – March 2024)
"Places" curator
(part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – March 2024)
"People" curator
(part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – March 2024)
Cultural production management
(part of the Curatorial Team, November 2021 – March 2024)
"Connections" curator
(part of the Curatorial Team during August 2023 – March 2024)

Expert in education and mediation and Power Station strategy
"Connections" curator
Expert in communication and marketing strategy
Expert in communication and marketing strategy
"Connections" curator

Special thanks to the extended teams from the Timișoara City Hall, the Ministry of Culture, the Timiș County Council, the Centre for Arts and Culture of Timiș County, the Timișoara 2023 Association and the more than 3,000 volunteers who contributed to the success of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

Evaluation of the preliminary results of the Timișoara 2023 Programme

Coordination: Raluca Iacob, Results and Impact Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, member of the Coordination Council, and Ștefan Iancu, Monitoring and Evaluation Expert | Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara

Development of the database from the Directus platform for monitoring and evaluating the results and impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme: Costi Bleotu and Alex Iliescu

Webmaster www.Timișoara2023.eu: Tibor Novak

Collection, processing and cleaning of data about the Timișoara 2023 Programme (in alphabetical order): Gabriel Acostachioaei, Marcel Bajka, Costi Bleotu, Teodora Borghoff, Silvia Fierăscu, Alexandra Florea, Andreea Hayos, Raluca Iacob, Ștefan Iancu, Minodora Luca, Liana Matei, Anca Nistor, Tibor Novak, Daria Pau, Daniela Rațiu, Ianis Rusitoru, Antoniu Sicra, Gyöngyi Takács

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

Analysis of the conclusions regarding the principles, work processes and approaches that were part of the development of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, 2021-2023: Raluca Iacob, based on the interviews and focus groups conducted by Silvia Fierăscu with the members of the Curatorial Team and the Coordination Council of the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara as part of the analysis for the drafting of the Legacy Plan of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, on behalf of the Municipality of Timișoara

Studies "Access and cultural participation in the Municipality of Timișoara in 2022 in the context of the Timișoara - European Capital of Culture in 2023 National Programme" respectively "Access and cultural participation in the Municipality of Timișoara in 2023 in the context of the Timișoara - European Capital of

Culture in 2023 National Programme", carried out by the West University of Timișoara for the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara under the coordination of Associate Professor Bogdan Nadolu

Studies "Barometer of life quality in Timișoara in 2022", respectively "Barometer of life quality in Timișoara in 2023", carried out by the West University of Timișoara for the Timișoara City Hall under the coordination of Univ. Dr. Marius Matichescu

Data analysis for estimating the number of visitors in 2023 in the Municipality of Timișoara in the context of the "Timișoara - European Capital of Culture 2023" National Cultural Programme, carried out by Dr. Milan Janosov (Geospatial Data Consulting Kft.) for the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara

Statistics on the mobility of the population in Timișoara during 1-31 October 2023, respectively 1-31 December 2023, made by Orange Romania for the Centre for Projects of the Timișoara Municipality

Study on the transactional and usual tourism model in 2023 in Timișoara, which proposed to define a promotion and attraction strategy for foreign tourists and a joint campaign to promote incoming cross-border spending in Timișoara, made by "Mastercard Europe SA" for Timișoara Destination Management Organisation.

Data provided by the project organisers from within the Timișoara 2023 Programme regarding the number of participants in the completed projects

The Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara relies and depends on the contributions and good collaboration with all the organisations, institutions and individuals involved in the implementation of the Timișoara 2023 Programme, along with the understanding and support in the collection and provision of data, participation and facilitation of participation in research activities from part of the Timiș County Council, the Timiș County Culture and Art Centre and the Timișoara 2023 Association – European Capital of Culture. We thank all those who contributed to revealing the results and impact of the Timișoara 2023 Programme.

Footnotes

¹ European Capital of Culture Programme, <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/culture-in-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-of-culture>

² Pre-selection, selection and monitoring reports of the TM2023 Cultural Programme: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/elefsina-Timișoara-and-veszprem#Timișoara>

³ The second report of the Monitoring Commission in 2021: https://culture.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-07/Timișoara-2nd-monitoring-report-June-2021_en.pdf

⁴ Timișoara 2023 Bidbook, Shine your light, 2016, p. 73, accessed 14 March 2024

⁵ Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 82/29.03.2011, https://hcl.civicul.ro/view-hcl/hcl_82_29.03.2011, accessed 14 March 2024

⁶ Timișoara 2023 Bidbook, Shine your light, 2016, p. 73, https://Timișoara2023.eu/document/view/42/Bidbook_RO_Timișoara2021.pdf, accessed 14 March 2024

⁷ Timișoara 2023 Bidbook, Shine your light, 2016, p. 733, https://Timișoara2023.eu/document/view/42/Bidbook_RO_Timișoara2021.pdf, accessed 14 March 2024

⁸ Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 535/31.10.2014, <https://www.primariatm.ro/hc/2014/535>, accessed 14 March 2024

⁹ Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 395/22.09.2015 <https://www.primariatm.ro/hcl/2015/395>, accessed 6 March 2024.

¹⁰ Timișoara 2023 Bidbook, Shine your light, 2016, p. 73, https://Timișoara2023.eu/document/view/42/Bidbook_RO_Timișoara2021.pdf, accessed 14 March 2024

¹¹ Order of the Minister of Culture No. 3867/25.10.2016, http://www.cultura.ro/sites/default/files/inline-files/OMC%20nr.%203560_15.12.2022_O.pdf, accessed 14 March 2024.

¹² Law No. 198 of 7 November 2019, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/219564>, accessed 14 March 2024.

¹³ Law No. 198 of 7 November 2019, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/219564>, accessed 14 March 2024.

¹⁴ Local Council Decision No. 270/2020, <https://www.primariatm.ro/hcl/2020/270>, accessed 14 March 2024.

¹⁵ Regulations of non-refundable funding culture_ APEL 3 TM2023 RESTART, https://centruldeproiecte.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Regulament-finantari-nerambursabile-cultura_Apel-3_22-06.pdf, accessed 14 March 2024.

¹⁶ Timișoara 2023 Project Plan, https://centruldeproiecte.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Timișoara-2023-Project-Plan_1.9.2021-1.pdf, accessed 14 March 2024.

¹⁷ Timișoara 2023 Curatorial Team, <https://centruldeproiecte.ro/echipa-Timișoara-2023/>, accessed 14 March 2024.

¹⁸ The letter of support sent by the Monitoring Commission to Alexandra Rigler, the director of the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara: https://centruldeproiecte.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022-03_29-Scrisoare-catre-Alexandra-Rigler.pdf

¹⁹ The letter of support sent by the Monitoring Commission to Alexandra Rigler, the director of the Centre for Projects of the Municipality of Timișoara https://centruldeproiecte.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022-03_29-Scrisoare-catre-Alexandra-Rigler.pdf

²⁰ Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 83 / 15.03.2022, <https://www.primariatm.ro/hcl/2022/83>, accessed 14 March 2024.

²¹ Decision of the Local Council of the Municipality of Timișoara No. 83 / 15.03.2022, <https://www.primariatm.ro/hcl/2022/83>, accessed 14 March 2024.

²² Updated Cultural Programme Timișoara 2023 European Capital of Culture, https://centruldeproiecte.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Program-Cultural-TM23_reactualizat_aprobat-print-OMC-3637-2023-Limba-romana.pdf

²³ Call for applications for the Timișoara Curatorial Team 2023: <https://centruldeproiecte.ro/apel-de-candidaturi-pentru-echipa-curatoriala-Timișoara-2023/>

²⁴ Timișoara 2023: the plans of the Curatorial Team for the "European Capital of Culture", <https://www.observatorcultural.ro/articol/Timișoara-2023-planurile-echipei-curatoriale-pentru-capitala-europeana-a-culturii/>, accessed 14 March 2024.

²⁵ History of the updating process of the Cultural Programme Timișoara 2023 – European Capital of Culture, together with the members of the Curatorial Team and its duties in relation to the cultural Programme: <https://centruldeproiecte.ro/echipa-Timișoara-2023/>

²⁶ By Law 286 of Oct. 31 2022, this curatorial collective benefited from a legal recognition of its role: --Art. 1 par. (8) Ensuring the artistic coherence and the integrated and correlated implementation of the Cultural Programme is the responsibility of a curatorial collective agreed between the executive authorities of the local public administration of the Municipality of Timișoara, respectively the Timiș County.

²⁷ Spaces for the community, Centre for Projects, <https://centruldeproiecte.ro/spatii/>





**Neverending Timișoara 2023.
The journey continues.**