

2021: HOW DO WE PROMOTE A ROMANIAN CULTURAL CAPITAL IN EUROPE?

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***Abstract:** Turning into a European cultural capital is a mighty prestigious event for a city. Striving to achieve this goal entails leveling up the city inhabitants - as some of them have roots elsewhere, maybe even in rival cities that have the same ambition, aiming to reach the same goal. The question is, how does Timisoara strive to become a European cultural capital in 2021?*

***Key words:** European cultural capital, culture, promoting*

***JEL Classification:** M3*

INTRODUCTION

When a city aims to become a European cultural capital, its struggle to reach this goal is one of the toughest. In 2007, in Romania there was a winning city of this competition: Sibiu. The balance for 2007 is impressive: 337 projects, meaning 2062 events. The slogan used by Sibiu in its victory was: "A city of culture – a city of cultures" (Bilanțul Programului Sibiu Capitală Culturală Europeană 2007, 2007). Another advantage was the partnership with the Duchy of Luxembourg. This partnership has resulted in 40 joint projects Sibiu-Luxembourg.

The mayor of Sibiu, Mr. Klaus Werner Iohannis, began the demarches in 2004, when Romania was not a member of the European Union. Sibiu city benefits from all the necessary tools to attract tourists: a historical center, a real live document about the evolution of the city throughout eight centuries of history, museums, cultural institutions and recreation area, and in the surrounding area mountain resorts, fortified citadels and a charming natural landscape (Vladacenco, F., 2013). The investments required to rehabilitate the city's infrastructure had the largest share. Tourism marketing was intense and took into account not only the city Sibiu, but also facilitating access to the places of touristic interest and monuments in the region, promoting and market reintegration of the mountain resort Păltiniș, links between Ocna Sibiului and Bâlea, planning and organizing local, regional and inter-regional events, as well as national and international, the development of the gastronomy and hotel industry completed by an attractive calendar with cultural and artistic events.

Actually, six categories of criteria must be met, without which a city has no chance to obtain the European capital title: long-term strategies, clear cultural and artistic concepts, European dimension, growing involvement of citizens, ability to work together and good management.

Given this successful experience, the question that arises is what should be taken into account by the cities that want to participate now to the competition for the title of European cultural capital in 2021. In this paper the discussion will be about two cities in Western Romania: Arad and Timisoara.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The materials used in the research for this paper are research articles, interviews and web pages. The study began approximately three months ago, pursuing the activity of two municipal administrations, Timisoara and Arad, and the activities of the communities of the two cities, reflected by Facebook.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A first step in the research for this paper was to compare the web sites of the municipalities Arad and Timisoara. How much they reflect the mayor's concerns regarding the European Cultural Capital?

On the first page of Timisoara City Hall's web site, in the section Ads, is found the following situation: out of 38 ads (during the period 15.11.2013-04.04.2014), the ads with cultural impact are 9: Eb-Dietzsch Artistic award for painting 2014 (from 15.11.2013), The largest international Catalan festival in Timisoara (from 14.02.2014), 4.5 million lei financial support for owners for historic buildings (from 28.02.2014), As of today tickets can be purchased at JazzTM (from 20.03.2014), Projection of the movie "Die Farbe des Ozeans" (from 28.03.2014), the Ideas Workshop at the Theresia Bastion (from 01.04.2014), Investments in facilities for Theaters subordinated to the City Council (from 01.04.2014), Kulturkalender April 2014/ Cultural calendar April 2014 at the German Cultural Center (for 01.04.2014), the International Musical Festival in Timisoara (from 04.04.2014). These ads have a share of 23.68%.

The web site of Arad City Hall welcomes us with two communications from 06.04.2014: "Arad and challenges of the European Capital of Culture - 5 March 2014" and "Balance of the International Conference Resources and cultural policies". Following the ads from the same period we find that from a number of 66, 10 may be associated with the idea of culture. These ads have a share of 15.15%.

Taking into consideration the ads regarding infrastructure rehabilitation (historic buildings, sewerage networks, access roads, etc.), the weights increase as follows: 34.21% for Timisoara, and 30.30% for Arad. in addition, the ads of Arad City Hall include titles that use the phrase "European Cultural Capital": "Cultural Association, for the program of the event Arad European Cultural Capital in 2021" (27.02.2014), Arad and challenges of the European Cultural Capital (06.03.2014).

1. Long-term strategies

The long-term strategy of Timisoara (the documentation is public and available at <http://www.primariatm.ro/ik/index.php>) takes into consideration the history of the city, its peculiarities, and a significant feature being the ring road traffic networks formed around the fortress. We quote from public documentation: "The main role in the unification and organization of urban agglomeration is owned by the traffic routes, build in radial system - concentrically since previous periods. The first ring road was made around the Fortress (1971). Following approximately the inner contour of old fortifications, it marks a natural continuity between the historical and contemporary evolution, and in terms of the spatial organization if the historic district, it has the same ordination role once owned by the fortification ring road. From the center ring start radial, towards other neighborhoods, several arteries connected to the extremities of the urban territory, with interurban road network." The citadel is the center of gravity of the city. Historical monuments are grouped around this natural center of gravity. Timisoara presents historical areas declared protected architecture reserves. These areas reflect the evolution of the Baroque period to the period of the cubist interwar current.

The web site of Arad City Hall presents to the public both a long-term strategy (2007 – 2013/2014 – 2020) and the cultural strategy for the period 2009-2013. The

document which presents the long-term strategy is consistent, an important part being dedicated to culture. The document contains the projects developed by the authorities of Arad, as well as the projects of foundations that operate in the city. Such an example is the project "Education and Intercultural Training for Children and Young people - CURCUBEU" which is funded by the Kinderdorf Pestalozzi Foundation (Switzerland) in 2003 and was implemented in 2003-2005 in Arad municipality. This project resulted in the establishment of a Social Intercultural Center and editing of a manual for cultural education (F.T., 2011).

The cultural policy from the documents of Arad City Hall considers:

- EU cultural mission "The European union has a double purpose: to preserve and support diversity and to make it accessible to others;
- the cultural principles of the European Council: promoting cultural identity, respecting cultural diversity, supporting creativity and stimulating participation.

At the same time, like a red thread of the entire document, the community is the initiator and the incentive of the entire strategy.

<u>EVENIMENTE CULTURALE ANUALE ÎN TIMIȘOARA</u>	
Ianuarie:	- Spectacol de Ziua Marii Uniri a Țărilor Române –24 ian.
Martie:	- Ziua Internațională a Femeii - Târg de măștișor
Aprilie:	- Festivalul studentesc „StudentFest” - Cafekultour – săptămâna cafenelelor - cafes week - Zilele Cartierului Cetate
Mai:	- Ziua Europei – 9 mai - Festivalul internațional „Timișoara Muzicală” - Zilele DKMT - Festivalul „Timișoara – Mica Vienă” (perioada mai – septembrie) - Festival de muzică veche

Figure no. 1. Cultural events of Timisoara city

Source: http://www.primariatm.ro/uploads/files/evenimente_culturale_tm.pdf

It can be considered that this document is completed by the document "Integrated plan to revitalize the protected area of Arad municipality 2012". This document is the result of the project: "VITo-Development of Vital Historic Towns in Central and Eastern Europe", a transnational cooperation project funded through the Transnational Cooperation Program in Southeastern Europe. It is a documents that presents the evolution of the historic center, the current situation (of green areas, heritage building inhabited) and suggests directions for future actions. One direction would be attracting the interest of residents and informing them about the benefits of compliant rehabilitation. A chapter of this document is dedicated to tourism and culture, after the presentation of a SWOT analysis; courses of action are proposed to maximize the opportunities.

2. Cultural events

The cultural events of Timisoara city for 2014 are presented in electronic form in a PDF file (Document available at http://www.primariatm.ro/uploads/files/eveniment_culturale_tm.pdf) document reviewing as a list cultural events (see Figure 1).

The advantage of this document is that it can be easily read and it can be reused from one year to another without too many changes. The disadvantage is that it seems to be made hastily, only to exist.



Figure no. 2. Calendar type instrument

Source: <http://www.primariaarad.ro>

Arad City hall's web site uses a calendar type instrument (see Figure 2), the user can select the day he is interested in and obtain a list of events (see Figure 3). A trick of this calendar is that the days that have an attachment with cultural events glimmer (change the color with a frequency that attracts the eye of the visitor).

Data eveniment : 17.04.2014

- orele 18.00 și 20.00 Teatrul Clasic Arad, sala Studio - **VIAȚA CA UN JOC UȘOR**, după o idee din „Leichtes Spiel”, de Botho Strauß. Regia – Alexandra Gandi – Ossau. Decorul – Onisim Colta
Costumele – Meda Pădurean (www.teatrulclasic.ro)
- la Complexul muzeal Arad – Muzeul de Artă – Expoziție desene (ilustrație carte). Autor: Călin Mureșan. Organizator: CMA, Ioan Paul Colta Biblioteca Județeană A.D. *Xenopol* Arad (www.museumarad.ro)
- la Complexul muzeal Arad – Muzeul de Artă – kinema ikon: serial / sezonul 1 episodul 8: Mihai Păcurar. Organizator: CMA/ki, Calin Man (www.museumarad.ro)
- la Complexul muzeal Arad – Sala *Clio*– Expoziție de fotografie - Virgil Jireghie. Organizator: UVVG Arad (www.museumarad.ro)
- la Complexul muzeal Arad – Palat Cultural Sala expoziții – Expoziție de fotografie *Bienala Natura*, Ediția IX. Organizator: Foto Club Arad, Condor Club Arad, Speowest Arad (www.museumarad.ro)

Figure no. 3. List of cultural events for 17.04.2014

Source: <http://www.primariaarad.ro>

The weakness of this calendar is that it can be accessed and visualized only in the current month.

3. Community contribution

An important factor in the "European Capital of Culture" competition is the community, the ones who feel that they belong to a community and have to be involved in the demarche.

3.1. Approaches of the officials

For Timisoara, was founded the Association Timisoara-European Cultural Capital, with site <http://timisoara2021.ro>, non-patrimonial organization, non-governmental, apolitical and independent, among the members of this association being

the City Hall of Timisoara, the Prefect Institution of Timiș County, Timiș County Council, other local and county authorities, representatives of the business environment, universities, cultural institutions, organizations and artistic, cultural and social associations and representatives of the media. The Association's Facebook page has almost 27000 thousand likes. A second Facebook page used is Timisoara European Cultural Capital Association, with almost 1400 likes.

The City Hall of Arad will participate, as a founding member, to the establishment of the Association "Arad- European Cultural Capital in 2021", according to a decision project approved at the meeting of the Local Municipal Council in 31.03.2014 (Mladin, Stefana, 2014).

At first sight we can say that Timisoara "has stolen" the start of the competition.

3.2. Approaches of volunteers

In this group of volunteers we will include all those persons who through web sites and Facebook pages promote the city they live in or have lived in. We have not included the Facebook pages automatically generated or the pages that do not have information regarding the person that created them.

Table no. 1 - Facebook pages of volunteers for Timisoara

Current no.	Address/IDs (likes)
1.	Timisoara - approximately 23.400 likes - created on 12.11.2011
2.	Piața Unirii (Unirii Square) - with link to http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piața_Unirii_din_Timișoara - 6500 likes (56.000 viewers)
3.	Piața Operei (Opera Square) - created on 2011 - 1455 likes (21.000 viewers)
4.	Piața Unirii Timisoara (Timisoara Unirii Square) - created on 21.02.2009 - nearly 17.000 likes
5.	Timisoara Romania - created on 01.12.2013 - approximately 1200 friends

The table does not contain pages with identic ID or with a small number of likes (less than 1000), such as: Temešvár; Temeșvar; Temesvarinum, Timiș, Romania; Unirii Square of Timisoara. Also the table does not include groups.

Table no. 2 - Facebook pages of volunteers for Arad

Current no.	Address/IDs (likes)
1.	Arad Free Tours - with link to http://www.aradfreetours.com - created on 05.05.2013 - approximately 1.000 likes
2.	Arad 2021 - created on 25.02.2014 - approximately 2.300 likes
3.	ARAD- Arhitectura/ Responsabilitate/ Apartenenta/ Daruire (ARAD- Architecture/ Responsibility/ Ownership/ Dedication) - created on 16.06.2013

	- approximately 1.000 likes
4.	Arad Capitală Culturală Europeană 2021 (Arad European Cultural Capital 2021) - created on 04.01.2013 - approximately 5.500 likes
5.	Arad Romania - created on 31.01.2012 - approximately 2.900 friends
6.	Arad Varos - created on 08.03.2013 - approximately 2.600 friends
7.	Asociația "Cetatea Voluntarilor" Arad ("Volunteers Citadel" Association Arad) - created on 15.01.2014 - approximately 2.200 friends
8.	Aradul de Altădată (Arad in Olden times) - created on 10.11.2012 - link to http://aradul-vechi.blogspot.ro/ - approximately 5.300 friends

From Table 2 were excluded pages with few likes, such as: Arad Culture, Arad in Old times, Arad City, Arad Guide, I love Arad, Arad Romania. Groups were also excluded.

4. Dynamics of messages

The promotion of achieving such a prestigious goal is difficult to put into practice. Facebook is a useful tool in sending messages that can be easily re-distributed.

In this section we considered both messages of officials as well as volunteers.

CONCLUSIONS

At first sight, just by following the messages posted on the web sites of municipalities, we can conclude that the interest of citizens in Arad is higher, at this moment, than the interest of the citizens in Timisoara for the European Capital competition in 2021.

The development stages presented to the public differ between the two cities. Arad's documents are consistent, given the mission and European principles, presented rigorously and given the community.

The benefits of winning the Cultural Capital competition can be considered at three levels:

- Marketing for the area where the city is found: regeneration of public spaces, renewal of cultural spaces, improving the city's image with the major cultural component, long-term impact on tourism development, attracting investors, sustainable promotion of local products and facilities;
- Tourism development – the city is included in the specialized guides and thus becomes an international destination for tourists with opportunities to attract millions of visitors;
- Social cohesion - strengthening of social and institutional issues by increasing the feeling of confidence and local pride, developing cooperation between professionals from different cultural disciplines. This can result in the emergence of new cultural suppliers, meaning a wider offer of cultural events.

Winners of the past have said that the community had the most important role in winning the title. From this point of view, the major difference between the two cities is the following:

- Timisoara is the city where the demarches began from city officials towards citizens;
- Arad is the city in which the demarches were initiated by citizens, representing in time a force that has put pressure on city officials (in an article reviewing the cities that have announced their participation in the competition, Arad was not mentioned , Mihăilescu, 2013).

In Timisoara, at this point, efforts seem to be made in the direction of congealing the community around the idea of participation in the competition "European Cultural Capital 2021".

In Arad, the community has already demonstrated that it is not just about those who live there. It is a large community that also includes people from Arad that have left and kept an alive and vibrant attachment to the city.

In the next period, both cities can get a disadvantage given by the current political situation in Romania, so, given the fact that both mayors are part of the current opposition, the chances that the Romanian Government participates to this demarche decrease considerably.

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