

RIJEKA – EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2020

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN
UNION - EUROPE, THE WORLD, CROATIA

30 – 31 May 2019, Rijeka, Croatia

Conference Report

The conference on *International Cultural Relations of the European Union – Europe, the World, Croatia* was held in Rijeka on 30 and 31 May 2019, within the framework of the Rijeka - European Capital of Culture 2020 activities. The Conference was organized by the Centre for Democracy and Law Miko Tripalo, Rijeka 2020 and the University of Rijeka, in cooperation with Culturelink / IRMO and the Observatoire des politiques culturelles, France, bringing together researchers, professionals, artists, and other participants. The event assembled about 200 participants from European, African, Arab and Asian countries.

The **Programme** of the conference included panels and discussions on the following issues:

- The Role of Cultural Policies in Fostering International Cultural Cooperation,
- Culture-Powered City Diplomacy,
- Cultural Networks – the Expression of Cultural Change in International Relations,
- The Future of the Intercontinental Cultural Cooperation Between Europe and Africa,
- Croatia in International Cultural Cooperation,
- Models of the Self-sustainable Cultural Collaboration in Southeast Europe, and
- Cultural Diplomacy: Strengthening External Relations in a Globalized World

1. The Role of Cultural Policies in Fostering International Cultural Cooperation

Chaired by Jean Pierre Deru, this panel included four contributions.

An analysis of *Traditional and New Affinities: A Comparison of Cultural and Economic Relations of the EU Countries* was presented by **Vjeran Katunarić**. The author analyzed cooperation links among four EU countries (France, Spain, Slovakia and Croatia), concluding that economic ties are more widespread than cultural ones. However, cultural ties are more stable and focused on historical continuities. In this respect, cultural links appear to be less innovative and more adaptable to economic and political crises. **Jean-Pierre Saez** discussed the *Creation of Cultural Relation Policies from Local to Global Level*, aiming to point out the relevance of territories, spaces and identities. **Nada Švob-Dokić** discussed the role, operation and reconceptualization of cultural policies to point out that the *Soft Power Approach through Cultural Policies* is gradually finding its place on the level of the cultural sector, cultural exchange and cultural integration within specific areas and industries. **Joost Smiers** discussed *Cultural Policy in a So-called Populist Era*, pointing out that cultural diversity needs to be supported and not suppressed.

2. The City Diplomacy Based on Culture (Round Table Discussion)

Irena Kregar Šegota moderated the presentations and the discussion about city diplomacy. The presentations on *Big Cultural Events and Their Role in Cultural Cooperation* by **Françoise Taliano-Des Garets** and *Linkages Among Cultural Communities Through Sciences* by **Wieger Bakker** served as background for a discussion of the mayors of the cities of Rijeka, Dubrovnik, Kaunas and Ljubljana. Together with **Paul Dujardin** from the Bozar organization they discussed the development of tourism, international projects of their cities and an ever wider international cooperation on the city level.

3. Cultural Networks – the Expression of Cultural Change in International Relations

Moderated by Lupwishi Mbuyamba, this session included speeches by **Jean-Pierre Deru, Mercedes Giovinazzo, Anne-Marie Autissier, Cristina Farinha, Rachel Laynay, Gitte Zschoch and Laetitia Brion**.

The presenters affirmed the importance of cultural networks and discussed the need for networks to adapt to ever stronger processes of international cooperation and cultural exchange. The new strategic approach of the EU and

its implementation on the level of networks and cultures was discussed as well as their influence on the flexible formats and the horizontal approach to cultural cooperation.

4. The Future of the Intercontinental Cultural Cooperation Between Europe and Africa (Round Table Discussion)

Moderated by Sylvia Amann, the discussion included a presentation of cooperation practices between African countries and the Republic of Slovenia by **Smiljana Knez** and talks by **Lupwishi Mbuyamba, Ismail Mahomed, Sylvain Pasqua, Jan Gossens, Irena Kregar Šegota, Liman Kane and Valeria Markolin**. The issues discussed included networking and the role of cultural policy in establishing cooperative links, cooperation in the areas of theatre, festivals and large EU projects such as the ‘European Capital of Culture’, issues concerning communication and the need to understand different cultural practices, as well as aspects of the financing of cultural cooperation and other issues.

5. Croatia in International Cultural Cooperation

Vjeran Katunarić moderated the session that included presentations on *Similarities and Differences Between the French and the Croatian Model of Cultural Management* (**Nansi Ivanišević**); *Esthetics of the City: Artistic Practices in the Development of Local Democracy* (**Goran Sunajko**); *Croatian International Cultural Relations: Opportunities to Cooperate with the ASEF, Anna Lindt and EU-LAC Foundations* (**Aleksandra Uzelac**); *The European Contribution to World Cultures* (**Radovan Lorković**); and *International Cultural Relations of the EU and the Role of Foreign Cultural Institutes in Croatia* (**Biserka Cvjetičanin and Barbara Lovrinić**).

Different aspects of these presentations pointed to some models and areas that are included in the overall cultural communication of the country.

6. Models of the Self-sustainable Cultural Cooperation in Southeast Europe (Round Table Discussion)

Sonja Bojanić moderated the discussion with **Ares Shporta, Milica Pekić, Davor Mišković, Andre Wilkens and Davor Bunjac** concerning cultural and artistic NGOs active in Southeast European countries. Some of these have

successfully developed self-sustainable cultural cooperation among countries from the region and within the EU. However, they face difficulties that spring from an inadequate infrastructural support of their activities within the countries and societies in which they operate.

7. Cultural Diplomacy: Strengthening External Relations in a Globalized World

The introductory speeches were delivered by **Yudhishthir Raj Isar**, who stressed the ever growing importance and strengthening of cultural diplomacy in the context of a globalized world, and by **Aidan O'Malley**, who stressed the question of language in the establishment of cultural dialogues between two flanks of Europe.

Moderator Diego Marani organized a discussion on key practical aspects of external cultural relations and cultural diplomacy: communication, the support of projects of mutual importance, the role of the EU in cultural cooperation, etc.

Ambassadors **Hrvoje Marušić** (Embassy of the Republic of Croatia to the Kingdom of Norway), **Philippe Meunier** (Embassy of the French Republic to the Republic of Croatia), **Olive Hempenastall** (Embassy of the Republic of Ireland to the Republic of Croatia), **Christian Grotnes Halvorsen** (Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway to the Republic of Croatia) and **Hendrik Jan Voskamp** (Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands to the Republic of Croatia) presented their efforts invested in the cultural cooperation and the cultural projects that they aim to promote and run.

During the two conference days, the discussions and presentations offered different insights into goals, modalities and challenges that researchers and cultural operators face when trying to develop more intense cultural cooperation relations, especially between partners in the European Union and other regions of the world. The need to reconceptualize and decentralize cultural policies has been strongly stressed. Discussions pointed towards a stronger orientation of cultural cooperation to the regional and city levels, which may demand an increase in partnerships and the inclusion of various cultural organizations and individuals, often through international and intercultural projects. This implies the strengthening of civic notions of arts, culture and creativity, which introduces soft power strategies that draw on organic cultural and human resources. In this respect, the Closing Remarks of **Snježana Prijić Samaržija**,

Rector of the University of Rijeka, focused on a potential programme of cultural cooperation and cultural studies, and on their inclusion in University curricula. She announced the possibility to elaborate proposals for such programmes and envisage a wider international cooperation in their implementation, and invited the conference participants to come forward with their ideas and proposals.