

# CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND THEIR ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE COMPETITION

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## **Abstract**

In the last few years the creative industries had a very important influence in defining the cultural offer of a lot of European cities candidates for the Competition of the European Capital of Culture. In this case the creative industries became subject of interest to reach various policy objectives: city marketing, city branding, urban sociology, urban regeneration etc. In the same time the creative industries have a strong relation with social media and the development of digital economy. Using a statistical and documentary analysis, the purpose of this article is to reveal the unsatisfactory standards of the programs for the cultural capitals in using the creative industries. Another purpose is to evaluate some specific resources and activities involved by the Romanian competitors (cities) engaged in the competition of the European capital of culture between local cultural strategies and the perspective of cultural creative contribution.

**Keywords:** creative industries, cultural strategies, European Capital of Culture, urban regeneration

## **Résumé**

Au cours des dernières années, les industries créatives ont eu une influence très importante dans la définition de l'offre culturelle d'un grand nombre de villes européennes candidats pour le concours de la Capitale européenne de la culture. Dans ce cas, les industries créatives sont devenues sujet d'intérêt pour atteindre divers objectifs de politique: le marketing de la ville, l'image de marque de la ville, de la sociologie urbaine, la régénération urbaine, etc. Dans le même temps, les industries créatives ont une relation forte avec les médias sociaux et le développement de l'économie numérique. En utilisant une analyse statistique et documentaire, le but de cet article est de révéler les normes insatisfaisants des programmes pour les capitales culturelles en utilisant les industries créatives. Un autre objectif est d'évaluer certaines ressources et des activités spécifiques impliqués par les concurrents roumains (villes) engagés dans la compétition de la capitale européenne de la culture entre les stratégies culturelles locales et la perspective de la contribution créative et culturelle.

**Mots-clés:** industries créatives, stratégies culturelles, Capitale Européenne de la Culture, régénération urbaine

## **Rezumat**

În ultimii ani, industriile creative au avut o influență importantă în definirea ofertei culturale a unui lot de candidați (orașe europene) pentru Concursul de Capitală Europeană a

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Culturii. În acest caz, industriile creative au devenit subiect de interes pentru a fi atinse diverse obiective: marketing-ul unui oraș, branding-ul unui oraș, sociologie urbană, regenerare urbană, etc. În același timp, industriile creative au o relație strânsă cu social media și cu dezvoltarea economiei digitale. Folosind o analiză statistică și documentară, scopul acestui articol este de a releva nivelul nesatisfăcător de utilizare a industriilor creative în cadrul al programelor vizând capitalele culturale. Un alt scop este de a evalua unele resurse specifice și activități implicate de către concurenții români (orașe) angajați în competiția de Capitală Europeană a Culturii, între strategiile culturale locale și perspectiva contribuției culturale creative.

**Cuvinte cheie:** industrii creative, strategii culturale, Capitala Europeană a Culturii, regenerare urbană

## 1. Introduction: on creative industries

The methodology used in this article was based on a statistical and documentary analysis. The steps of the research were:

- reviewing of the main findings of the theoretical framework in the area of creative industries;
- reviewing of the national projects studying the level of creative industries in Romania;
- evaluation of the local cultural strategies of the Romanian competitors (cities) proposed by the local administrations;
- emphasizing the role of creative industries in the core local cultural strategies;
- exemplification of the events connected with creative industries already organized by the local actors designed as activities that can entry in the public dossier.

Over the last couple of years, there has been a growth in the number of specialized works which deal with a series of related aspects: cultural and creative sector [see COM (2012) 537 final], cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh 2002), creative economy (Howkins 2001), and creative industries (Kroes 2006). In all these cases, there are however certain specific differences; nevertheless, beyond these, creative industries (CI) group a series of well-defined economic fields.

In 1998, the United Kingdom's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) defined creative industries as those industries originating in individual creativity, skill and talent, and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. This includes advertising, architecture, arts, crafts, design, fashion design, film and video, interactive software for leisure activities, music, publishing, editing, software and computer games, television and radio (Urechchio 2004, p. 79; Deuze 2007, p. 249).

R. Caves does not fully agree with the definition provided by DCMS, arguing that “creative industries comprise music, publishing, visual art, film, television, and radio, but none of the newer features of the network economy, such as the Internet.” (Caves 2002, pp. 81-82)

J. Hartley identifies the term by describing the conceptual and practical convergence of creative arts as individual talent, and cultural industries, at a broader scale, in the context of the new media technologies in a knowledge-based economy available for the interactive citizen - consumer (2005). The same author adds that the field of creative industries is actually comparable to an arena in which several cultural models develop, since they encompass and align “artistic expression and global markets, for instance; or critical thought and entertainment; amateurs and experts; everyday life and global technologies; slum and suburbia; daytime and night-life; work and leisure; story (text) and reality (action); individual and society; structure and agency; power and freedom; object (element, particle) and operation (process, wave)” (2015). At the same time, however, T. Flew *et al.* describe the phenomenon as a sort of “transition fantasy whereby such areas are deemed able to draw upon organic community resources to establish creative industries as an alternative to the lived experience of manufacturing decline”. (Flew 2012, p. 202)

Terry Flew sees creative industries as a key concept underlying the definition of the new media field, originating in the political initiatives of the Labor Government in the United Kingdom led by Tony Blair, in order to include the arts, the media, and the ICT in development and economic strategies, fructifying thus the emerging trend which increases opportunities, and connects the young generation’s creativity and health through the new products and services developed and distributed by means of the ICT. (Flew 2008, p. 23)

Creative industries are characterized both by their role in preserving traditions through art, and through the stimulation of media production by means of the latest conventional or unconventional communication means, in which the cultural public sphere and the citizens involvement play the most important parts. The concept builds and preserves identities within a formal or informal space, due to the cultural factors, but equally due to the transmission medium which – as it is the case of the Web – can build communication communities, or develop Peer-to-Peer communication (P2P – from one person to the other).

The concepts of “creative industries”, “cultural industries” are subject to debates, since some authors consider that creative industries represent in fact a political re-branding of cultural industries, and the artists, people involved – through their activity – in the new media, as well as those concerned with the field of culture, generally creative industries, represent the new entrepreneurial models (Gil and Pratt 2008, p. 2). The emergence of creative industries highlights the artistic value of each individual, focusing less on the mass cultural production.

Creative industry accomplishes a cultural convergence through which “consumers are learning how to use these different media technologies in order to master the flow of media and interact with other users”. (Deuze 2007, pp. 243-263). Starting from the previous quotation, we notice that Deuze moves towards the essential idea promoted by Marshal McLuhan in *Understanding Media* (1977), presented in Toronto, in 1964, “the media is the message”, certifying the fact that, more than the message transmitted, the key element of communication is communication itself, as

well as the communication medium of the message (language, television, cybernetics, etc.). Basically, fact is that the message, i.e. the content of communication, is an accessory, the real message being represented by the media, which delivers it – beautifully packed “liberating us” from its subtle action upon us. Media technologies address our senses and thus, through them, the radio of hearing, the television of sight, etc. reach the receptors' consciousness. “The content of a film is a novel, a play, or a piece of work. In fact, a film has nothing to do with its content”. Starting from this idea, McLuhan argues that the development of electronic technologies will impose a new type of media – the audio-visual – which takes the advantage of being able to foster the production of cultural objects in unlimited quantities, and which will be rapidly spread to wider audiences, developing thus a new creative industry. As far as receptors are concerned, people will take over more easily the audio-visual messages, turning them in cultural perceptions, empathizing with the experiences presented and creating a network of interdependence at global level, which McLuhan calls “world tribalism”, “champ global” or “global village”.

## 2. Creative industries: from urban regeneration to economic development

The term CI was associated, in sociology, with the evolution of post-industrialized cities. Therefore, significant economic changes which focused on the tertiary and quaternary sectors have led to major changes of the surplus labor force towards formerly marginal areas: entertainment, tourism, cultural programs, arts, media and new media, etc. This time, it is not training that is valued, but creativity (Hubbard 2006). All these mutations can lead to the recovery of industrial vestiges. L. Chelcea provides a few examples: several friends arranged a photography and recording studio on the premises of an old factory in Bucharest; three energetic young adults working in the field of creative industries (web design, photography) bought an old mill near Sighișoara-Odorheiul Secuiesc and turned into an inn; three architects re-functionalised a heritage building (an old bread factory) in the capital city in a true cultural entrepreneurial effort within a process of urban regeneration (Chelcea 2008, p. 382 et seq.). These initiatives are joined by a series of companies which are very active in recovering the former industrial space in order to render it functional for plays, sound and light shows, etc. These examples, together with many others, confirm the emergence of a new *social class* with social players from various fields and who are bound by *creativity*. (Florida 2005). Even though these players lack the consciousness of their belonging to a social class, R. Florida considers that the new class defined as such may have the skills to revive the world and change it in depth. Similarly to CI, the creative class relies upon a typology: super creative core (which brings together specialists in informatics, architecture, natural sciences, social sciences, education, arts, sports, etc.) and creative professionals (management, business, health practitioners, luxury sales, etc.). Beyond Florida, now major work concerns the relation between creative industries and innovation (KEA 2009).

In Romania, CI made the object of a European program (POSDRU/92/3.1/S/61490) called “Entrepreneurial promotion in the field of creative industries”. Partners in this project were: Fundația Post-Privatizare, Asociația ORICUM, S.C. GEA Strategy & Consulting SA, Centrul de Cercetare și Consultanță în Domeniul Culturii, MPP Relații Publice SRL, the University of Bucharest and “George Enescu” Arts University of Iași. Within this project, S.C. GEA Strategy & Consulting SA conducted a significant study called “Economic importance of creative industries: a territorial perspective” (for further information see <http://www.crestetalente.ro>). The present study identifies a significant increase in CI of up to 3.55% of the GNP in 2005, although analyses continued for the years 2008-2009. At regional level, the authors noticed a major imbalance in 2009, with over 51% of the CI employees located in Bucharest. In what follows, we will present a series of data regarding the number of employees involved in creative industries only for the counties which include cities running for the title of *European Cultural Capital 2021*. The candidate cities and the counties they belong to are the following: Bucharest-B, Timișoara-TM. Iași-IS, Cluj Napoca-CJ, Craiova-DJ, Arad-AD, Alba Iulia-AB, Sfântu Gheorghe - CV, Brașov-BV. In the *Table 1*, we will use the abbreviations for these counties in order to show the number of employees in the various branches of creative industries (some examples).

*Table 1. Employees in CI in Romania, 2009*

<b>Number employees/ counties</b>	<b>CAEN CODE</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>TM</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>CJ</b>	<b>DJ</b>	<b>AR</b>	<b>BV</b>	<b>AB</b>	<b>CV</b>
<b>CI field (examples)</b>										
Editing of other software products	5629	5969	-	233	737	263	-	271	-	-
Cinematographic, video and television programmes production	5911	2677	39	29	-	-	-	77	-	-
Television programmes broadcasting	6020	4348	-	-	-	103	54	58	-	-
Custom software production	6201	11136	1582	939	2615	467	-	1358	-	-
Information technology consulting activities	6202	4590	470	219	379	123	-	462	-	-
Other activities and services involving information technology	6209	3552	256	392	272	124	-	109	-	-
Architecture activities	7111	4707	599	324	818	334	-	394	-	-
Activities of the advertising agencies	7311	2705	742	277	1636			622	-	-
Media services	7312	1962	62	35	56	-	-	81	-	-
Management of monuments, historical buildings, and other tourist attractions	9103	905	-	-	38	22	-	30	135	-

Source: Report by S.C. GEA Strategy & Consulting SA (<http://www.crestetalente.ro>). Data available only for the counties occupying the first ten positions.

Regarding the importance of creative industries in the competing counties some comparatives data in *Table 2*.

*Table 2. Dimensions of CI in Romania (2009)*

Position	County	Number of CI companies	No. of employees	Turnover (RON)
1	BUCHAREST	12.955	78.338	18.409.548.827
2	CLUJ	2.137	9.720	1.156.796.573
3	BRASOV	1322	5.081	550.215.178
4	TIMIS	1.417	6.234	609.096.600
5	IASI	1.093	4.489	489.843.358
6	DOLJ	615	2.848	243.427.646
7	SIBIU	631	2.301	243.280.626
8	ARAD	503	1.402	117.976.649
9	COVASNA	214	1.143	71.110.964
10	ALBA	362	946	92.804.569

Source: Report of S.C. GEA Strategy & Consulting SA (<http://www.crestetalente.ro>)

As it can be noticed from the table, we also introduced the case of the county of Sibiu, because the municipality of Sibiu has already been a European Capital of Culture in 2007; this case shows lower statistical data compared to other counties. The authors of the report above draw attention to the fact that these figures should be read carefully, since it is possible that a series of agents (e.g. freelancers) were excluded from the statistics. Moreover, a comparison of the statistical data includes counties such as Bucharest, Cluj, Timiș, Brașov and Iași within the European average figures regarding the economic importance of creative industries. Another analysis, this time related to the profit of the CI activities motivated the authors to identify, for some counties, their creative specificity, according to true branding definition criteria: Bucharest – “capital of the radio”, Iași – “web creativity”, Timiș – “best gamer”, Cluj – “county of show”, Brașov – “cradle of museums”, Ilfov – “city of film”.

Within the same project - POSDRU/92/3.1/S/61490 - The Centre for Research and Consultancy in the field of Culture (C.C.C.D.C.) elaborated another research report entitled *Contribution of creative industries to national economy*. This report brought in additional clarification with respect to the status of CI in our country (see the report on the website <http://www.culturadata.ro>.) According to the report, the most productive branch, which has the greatest contribution to the Romanian GNP, is the software industry. To this branch are added activities in the field of tourism, the book industry, etc. Creative industries have undergone a steady increase in Romania; however, starting with 2008, they were inevitably affected by the generalised economic crisis. Following numerous theoretical and practical

classifications, the authors of the report draw attention to the fact that CI are closely connected with the new informational society, the enormous expression opportunities – direct or virtual, the new configurations of the classical circuit: creation, production, distribution. The artistic/ cultural message becomes visible through the new types of contents manifested preponderantly in the on-line environment, which results in a certain ubiquity of the finite product, often subject to piracy and counterfeit. Quoting the OMPI Treaty regarding copyright, authors draw attention to a typology of creative industries: core industries (CORE) [creating specific works]; independent industries [facilitating the production of works], partial industries [only partially related to the respective creations] and non-dedicated industries [specifically dedicated to disseminating the works] (see WIPO 2003). The category of core industries comprises the following fields: software, book industry, advertising, film, television and radio, the musical industry, performing arts, design, others. The share of these four types of CI of the total national turnover in 2009 was of 4.73%; according to other estimates, this share reached in 2012 the value of approximately 7%, a value identical with the figures for 2008. It could be inferred from the above that attention should be paid to any national or county program involving CI. At national level, it should be recalled that C.C.C.D.C. elaborated the *Sectoral strategy in the field of culture and national heritage for 2014-2020* (available on the website [www.cultura.ro](http://www.cultura.ro)). The strategy draws attention to the fact that culture “is not a secondary dimension of the social-economic development”, but “an important factor for sustainable development (...) an important instrument for social cohesion (...) the expression of identity (...) an important instrument in the urban regeneration and revitalisation processes (...) an instrument likely to provide education services, etc.” On the other hand, it is an acknowledged fact that within the CI, products can fall into two categories: commercialised on the market (just like any other good), or considered to be non-profit and distributed for free or at lower prices. This state of affairs accounts for the lively debates currently underwent at European level on the subject of copyright. Why are the debates around CI such an important stake? The answer could not be more revealing. CI constitutes the engine of modern economy due to the strong emphasis placed on innovation, ICT, digitalisation, interactivity, diversification of support and, thus, access to culture. Moreover, creativity is “the inexhaustible richness of every nation” (C.C.C.D.C. 2013, p. 122).

### **3. Creative industries and local cultural strategies**

The cultural strategies at stake at local level are usually reserved to city halls, which act through associations/ local organisations. We tried to identify the extent to which these development strategies exist, first on the Internet websites of local City Halls and then, to what extent they refer explicitly to creative industries. The internet research revealed the following results (for four candidates – *Table 3*).

Table 3. Examples regarding cultural strategies:

City	Name of the strategy	Authors	General remarks or observations regarding IC
<b>Timișoara</b>	The cultural strategy of the municipality of Timișoara (2014-2024)	MetruCub Association – resources for culture, Association for Urban Transition	- The strategy also points to the cross-border cooperation Romania - Serbia - Emphasis on the CI and urban regeneration (recovery of the former industrial area)
<b>Iași</b>	Proposal for a Cultural strategy for the Municipality of Iasi (2015-2025)	Florin Cântic	- The idea of a partnership Iași-Chișinău-Cernăuți - Proposal for an International Centre for Creativity “Braunstein Palace”.
<b>Cluj Napoca</b>	Strategy for the development of the municipality of Cluj-Napoca (2014-2020)	CI Section Rarița Zbranca, Florin Moroșanu, István Szakáts (As. Cluj European Capital of Culture)	- Establishment of the CREIC – Regional Centre for Creative Industries - CI and <i>smart city</i> - Attention drawn to the lack of expertise regarding CI
<b>Arad</b>	Strategy for the development of the municipality of Arad (2007-2013/ 2014-2020)	Non-specified	Acknowledgement of the modest development of creative industries, as well as their growth capacity (p. 618-620)

We selected these four examples since the City Halls in those respective cities elaborated medium and long term cultural strategies and, thus, data can be easily accessed on the internet. In other cases, we did not identify the strategies used, since they were difficult to find or they were simply fragmentarily integrated in the urban development plans. The city hall in Alba Iulia proposes a *Brand Manual* focused around the Fortress Alba Carolina. As it can be noticed in Table no.1, we followed the extent to which the CI themes are evoked by these strategies. The amplest description can be found in the *Cultural Strategy of the Municipality of Cluj* which comprises a series of concrete proposals. We also notice the emphasis, in the case of the *municipality of Timișoara*, placed on urban regeneration and the restoration of abandoned industrial areas. A series of concrete proposals can also be noticed in the strategy of the municipality of Iași.

For projects related to the *cultural capital*, in most cases, the City Halls/ Local Councils designated organisations/ associations to implement the respective strategies through the creation of an organisational framework. In *Table 4* are a few details regarding these structures (accessed in March/April 2015).

*Table 4. Organisations in charge of cultural strategies*

<b>Candidate City</b>	<b>Association</b>	<b>Date of set-up/ founder</b>	<b>CCE website</b>	<b>Remarks regarding the site/ Facebook</b>
<b>Timisoara</b>	Association <i>Timișoara European Capital of Culture</i>	June 2011	<a href="http://www.timisoara2021.ro/">http://www.timisoara2021.ro/</a>	-The City Hall of Timișoara is a member, not a founder - There is a Facebook account opposed to the association! - The option of an English language version is available
<b>Iași</b>	Foundation <i>Iași – European Capital of Culture</i>	September 2013 (Iași City Hall)	<a href="http://iasi2021.ro/">http://iasi2021.ro/</a> and <a href="https://www.facebook.com/iasi2021">https://www.facebook.com/iasi2021</a>	- no reading options available in other foreign languages
<b>Cluj Napoca</b>	Association <i>Cluj European Capital of Culture</i>	August 2010	<a href="http://www.clujnapoca2021.ro">http://www.clujnapoca2021.ro</a> și <a href="https://www.facebook.com/Cluj2021">https://www.facebook.com/Cluj2021</a>	Versions in English, Magyar, German, and French are functional
<b>Craiova</b>	Association <i>Craiova European Capital of Culture 2021</i>	June 2013 (Local Council)	<a href="http://www.craiovaculturala.ro">http://www.craiovaculturala.ro</a> și <a href="https://www.facebook.com/craiovaculturala">https://www.facebook.com/craiovaculturala</a>	Version for English is functional
<b>Arad</b>	Association <i>Arad European Capital of Culture 2021</i>	March 2014 (Local Council)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Aradcity2021">https://www.facebook.com/Aradcity2021</a>	The Association has only a Facebook page Without foreign language versions
<b>Alba Iulia</b>	“2020 - Alba Iulia <i>European Capital of Culture</i> ”	2011 (civil society)	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/SustineAlbaIulia">https://www.facebook.com/SustineAlbaIulia</a> și <a href="https://albaiulia2020.wordpress.com/">https://albaiulia2020.wordpress.com/</a>	Action furthered by the Association <i>Pakiv Romania</i> Without foreign language versions On the Internet the version is 2020 not 2021
<b>Brașov</b>	estimated application	2013	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bra%C5%9Fov-Capitala-Cultural%C4%83-European%C4%83-2021/219665611510421">https://www.facebook.com/pages/Bra%C5%9Fov-Capitala-Cultural%C4%83-European%C4%83-2021/219665611510421</a>	The Facebook page recalls the visitors that this is a project made by (for) the people in Brașov!

Remarks: The table includes only the organisations for which we identified a personal Internet page or a Facebook account dedicated to the competition *European Capital of Culture* !

It should be mentioned that in most cases, numerous articles can be found in the local press regarding the activity of these organisations/ associations. Debates were

stirred on various subjects: budgets spending, inconsistency of the proposed strategies, lack of transparency, etc. In their turn, the associations involved had frequent appearances in the media, presenting their activities or budget strategies.

The table above shows that only four of the associations have a personal internet page! We compared these websites with the help of [www.siteanalyser.com](http://www.siteanalyser.com)<sup>1</sup> according to a series of dimensions which are broadly explained on the website and we intend to describe briefly as follows: *Accessibility* - assesses the user's access to the entire content, without any compatibility restrictions, as well as the technical accessibility; *Design* - technical assessment of the website structure (source code) which allows quick access of search engines; it also follows some elements that are invisible to the user and which are useful for the execution of the web page; *Texts* - assessment of the quality of the texts, starting from keywords density, text semantics, text formatting, etc.; *Multimedia* - assessment of the mass-media elements used, and which are likely to affect the loading speed, the ways in which the search engines are read; *Networking* - assessment of the internal and external links, statistics and technical details for the search engines (if internal networking is good, then browsing is comfortable also). The assessments obtained on 07.03.2015 are given in the table below:

*Table 5. Assessment by means of the website [www.siteanalyser.com](http://www.siteanalyser.com) of competing websites*

Candidate City	Analysed site	Accessibility	Design	Texts	Multi media	Networking	Global score
Cluj Napoca	<a href="http://www.clujnapoca2021.ro">http://www.clujnapoca2021.ro</a>	80.2%	76.5%	55.76%	55.88%	35.25%	63.39%
Iași	<a href="http://iasi2021.ro/">http://iasi2021.ro/</a>	60.2%	73.77%	55.74%	38.23%	27.87%	54.30%
Craiova	<a href="http://www.craiovaculturala.ro">http://www.craiovaculturala.ro</a>	62.16%	66.67%	43.43%	50%	27.05%	52.09%
Timișoara	<a href="http://www.timisoara2021.ro/">http://www.timisoara2021.ro/</a>	46.42%	59.29%	41.24%	42.35%	42.62%	47.96%

The tables above point to the last column, *Global score*, which also provides a ranking of the websites quality, while the values below 50% point to critical situations which could be remedied!

#### **4. Promotion of creative industries in the competition among capitals of culture. Examples**

As previously mentioned, the issue of creative industries is tackled by the listed cultural strategies, but, more often than not, without any suggestions about how

<sup>1</sup> Accessed march, 7, 2015

they can be valorised or supported. In this context, we expect sites dedicated to the competition among cities to be more actively involved in the co-optation and promotion of those contributing to creative industries. To this end, we will briefly review these sites<sup>2</sup> (belonging to foundations/associations created for this purpose), but we will only analyse the events that we considered relevant or examples of best practices in terms of creative industries.

In February 2015, the *Timișoara – European Capital of Culture* Association (ATCCE) announces on its site an important event hosted by the former Paltim Factory, namely the AMBASADA project, which represents a centre for creative industries and NGOs. From the creative industries' perspective, creativity plays a major part in the promotion of the city of Timișoara: the team [ghiduri-turistice.info](http://ghiduri-turistice.info) and ATCCE proposed a contest in which local people and tourists were invited to share with the audience the reasons why they would fall in love with Timișoara. We should also mention here the “Dunărea ART” International Painting Symposium that gathered artists from Austria, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania. They initially worked inside a guesthouse located in Eselnița, with the end goal of reaching “international communication through visual arts”. The exhibition “Between Tactile and Intangible” (authors: art photographer Florin Ianăș and graphic designer Andreea Măran) dedicated to violoncellist Alexandra Guțu is also worth mentioning. A previous exhibition was dedicated to conductor Misha Katz. An important European breakthrough was the Rembrandt exhibition – Culmination of engraving art. The organisers' motivation was as follows: “the occasion to rediscover, reread and understand the Netherlands', humanism's and Western Europe's vocation and cultural identity!” The list of examples may continue over and over again, but their exhaustive mentioning is difficult. We wish to draw attention to a workshop dating back to April 10-11, 2014, entitled *Creative Industries and Citizens' Cultural Participation in Rural Multicultural Communities* as part of the *Creative Cooperation in Cultural Heritage* European project. Equally important here was M. Giura's presentation, *Revitalisation of a disappearing rural community through a jazz festival*. It regards the international jazz festival of Gărâna, the village of Brebu Nou – an example of “rural regeneration” through music.

In February 2015, the Association “Iași – European Capital of Culture” organised a debate suggestively entitled *Creative Industries and the “Iași – European Capital of Culture 2021” project*. This event and others related with this has the role to popularize the main themes involved in competition. There were also various previous events grouped under *Ideator Iași 2021* – a project aimed at stimulating creative initiatives and the local people's involvement in the city's cultural life<sup>3</sup>. Relevant in 2013 were the experiences shared by Oana Ioniță Năsui –

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<sup>2</sup> Accesed february, 25-28, 2015

<sup>3</sup> About the diverse ONG from Iasi see D. Stan et alii (2011)

communication coordinator of the “Sibiu – European Capital of Culture 2007” program. In March 2014, Valentina Montalto, representative of the Brussels-based research and advisory KEA European Affairs, presented the main contents of a study on the cultural/creator sector potential of the city of Iași, entitled *A Mapping of the cultural and creative offer in Iasi* – finalised in September 2014 (see KEA, 2014). That report laid emphasis on attracting and supporting the young generations’ creations (the preservation of the existing heritage being equally encouraged). In addition to this the conclusions of the report are about the creative and cultural potential identified in the city in preparation to the cultural strategy and ECoC bid and other important advice (next steps) following some important dimensions: sociocultural, economic/image, economic etc. Other important events: Festival of Independent Theatre and Performing Arts, Street Delivery, Bulz and Blues etc.

In March 2015, the Association *Cluj-Napoca - European Capital of Culture* uploaded to its own site the nine project themes resulted from the centralization of 60 new ideas, 15 major projects and hundreds of individual projects received in response to a creativity call. It is important to mention that creative industries are tackled by most of the 9 themes: Transylvanian village, social creativity, interculturality, the Someș River from West to East, Youth Legacy, performing arts, European Centre for Contemporary Art, Cluj Media City, and Treasure City. Looking forward to learning more about the experience of other European cities, this association received the visit of C. Martins, president of the Creative Industries Agency, from Porto, Portugal. In an interview for *Transilvania Reporter*<sup>4</sup>, C. Martins highlighted the strategies any candidate city should follow by presenting the success story of the city of Guimarães, designated European capital of culture in 2012: “We began the project with the help of the Government and Local Council. The University of Guimarães and the cultural system soon offered their support, consisting mainly of NGOs and non-profit organisations. We created special programs so that every party could participate in our project and produce content. Then, we included both the educational system and the business environment to obtain investments and financing. These partnerships were gradually built and the main idea was to find the right part for every institution”. The Portuguese specialist draws attention to the fact that even if nowadays culture consumption seems to be fragmented/ inconsistent, cultural contents have become increasingly familiar and the number of books, photographs, movies or songs has augmented also due to the new technical developments. An advantage of the city of Cluj-Napoca is its status of *European Youth Capital 2015*, gained to the detriment of Vilnius (Lithuania), Varna (Bulgaria) and Ivaovo (Russia). Mayor E. Boc even

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<sup>4</sup> See <http://transilvaniareporter.ro/cultura/directorul-de-programe-al-fostei-capitale-culturale-europene-clujul-are-capacitatea-de-a-fi-o-excelenta-capitala-culturala>, accessed march, 6, 2014.

considers that this status is “the passport towards winning the title of European Capital of Culture in 2021”. We finally mention the quality of the association’s site, with a visible logo that can be downloaded by clicking on the dedicated button and an address where it is explained in more detail<sup>5</sup>.

The Association *Craiova – European Capital of Culture 2021* presents on its site, <http://www.craiovaculturala.ro>, a wide range of festivals organised where culture industries play a key role. Some examples: Shakespeare International Festival, the *Puppets occupy streets* Festival, the International Festival of Sound & Slam Poetry, the “In the Palilula garden” Festival of Electronic Music, etc. They were accompanied by a series of workshops, exhibitions, conferences and traditional symposiums. Other innovative events: a scrapbooking workshop, technical and photographic art courses, an international drama competition, the Eurovision national final, a project contest for young directors and production designers etc.

In April 2014, the Association *Arad – European Capital of Culture 2021* launched the contest for winning a logo and a mascot. Sorin Neamțu won the logo competition (a 6-point star, symbol of the citadel of Arad, multiplied until it becomes a circle) and donated the money to the Association. Although it lacks a website, the association’s Facebook page is linked to another page suggestively called *ARAD - Architecture/Responsibility/Affiliation/Dedication*. The organisation’s slogan is “Proud to come from Arad”, and it fights for heritage conservation. Their message can be emblematic for other Romanian cities as well: “Arad lives through us! We die little by little with every fallen brick, forgotten story, and with every gesture of carelessness towards our city!” In this respect, Andrei Ando (quoted on the site), executive director of the association, published an article on the precarious condition of Arad’s architectural heritage, comparing it with the Spanish city of Valencia. The author says that “in Valencia, a river was deviated and a park of... eight kilometres was built! The park hosts a zoo, an aquarium, the city of arts and sciences (with museums and laboratories), three stadiums with nocturne lightening (each of them larger than our UTA), playgrounds, a music hall, a museum, artificial lakes, tennis courts, a running track, a bicycle track and an area for fireworks”. Another Facebook link sends us to Adrian Nicolae Sereș, who proposes the strategy of “cultural diplomacy”. The association’s site contains various links to cultural events but without any explicit references to culture industries.

The *Alba Iulia – European Capital of Culture 2020* initiative is described on its Facebook page as a civil society initiative without any connections to the public or political institutions. In a predictable manner, among the first things mentioned on the site is the Carolina White Citadel, which has been selected, together with other companies, to represent Romania at the Berlin International Tourism Fair. The

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<sup>5</sup> See [http://www.clujnapoca2021.ro/fileadmin/documente/prezentare\\_logo.pdf](http://www.clujnapoca2021.ro/fileadmin/documente/prezentare_logo.pdf)

association's Facebook page seems to rather be a city news page and does not explicitly focus on cultural events. Nevertheless, we are invited to appreciate a series of diverse events clearly related to culture industries: Alba Fest, Music Holiday, Feeric Fashion Days, the Symphony of Fire, Rowmania, the Dilema Veche Festival, the Alba Iulia Music & Film Festival etc. The *Alba Iulia - European Capital of Culture 2020* initiative also has a blog abandoned since 2011. Until the month of March 2015, its Facebook page focused on the year 2020 and not 2021, unlike its competitors!

On the Facebook page *Brasov - European Capital of Culture 2021* we can find various links to cultural activities and events hosted by Brasov starting with 2013, including a large list of events: Open Park Festival (which promotes games, arts and sports) etc. Worth mentioning here is the “Corona” Cultural Consortium, a group of public and non-governmental institutions, willing to complete the Brasov's contest application file. The same consortium sponsors the Year's Awards Gala where different cultural project and personalities can receive a distinction.

## 5. Conclusions

At present, creative industries represent an essential field of cultural consumption and a powerful tool of the urban regeneration processes. Also, based on the background experience of the already designated cities, creative industries seem to play a key role in the contests dedicated to designating the European capitals of culture. We would have expected the Romanian cities to insist more on the topic of culture industries, either explicitly (in their cultural strategies) or implicitly (in different cultural events that involve the use of culture industries). Unfortunately, they barely begin to reflect their actions in public strategies or through assumed events, the main explanation being their weak presence both in the local economies and at national level, as compared to Bucharest. Also, the question remains as to whether anyone is really interested in supporting the young creators, those who are the most aligned with new technologies, social media, and unconventional artistic trends. We can also point to certain stagnation when it comes down to spending public money, given the disputes emerging at local level. Finally, the necessity of hiring efficient teams specialised in cultural marketing should be clearly put forward.

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