**Festivals Cities Conversations: report**

## Festivals, cities and sustainable cultural tourism

**Friday, 5 June 2020 – 13.00 PM - Online**

***This session is co-organised with:*** KEA European Affairs

***With presentations by:*** Clementine Daubeuf (KEA) and Iulia Niculica (European Travel Commission)

***Followed by a moderated conversation with:*** James McVeigh (Festivals Edinburgh), Stefano Dominioni (Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe), Miguel Ángel Martín Ramos (Yuste Foundation & Cultural Routes of Charles Fifth), Jelena Cvijovic (Belgrade Fortress), Dace Melbārde (MEP)

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Corona hit the arts and tourism most of all sectors. After gaining health, we now face a common challenge: re-gain trust of travellers and audiences people again to share spaces and cross borders.

Cities are motors of Europe's tourism. Festivals as well: they contribute to the attraction and the spirit of a place. And to the economy with not less than 4 % culture of Europe's GDP. Funding is needed to make both sectors survive as well as new visions for their future.

## 1. What is the future of sustainable tourism?

- Demographic targeting is obsolete (age, gender, location). We should rather focus on behavior and attitudes (psychographics, behaviours, interests and attitudes). The European Travel Commission has published a research titled "Tourism Passion Communities" presenting different group profiles (E.g. gastronomy lovers, city life enthusiasts… See 'Link' section below).
- Focus promotional activities and European experiences on quality rather than quantity or price. Visitors will be open to the message that Europe offers high value activities.
- The current situation will have an impact on the places we visit and celebrate local places. This is an opportunity for small and medium-sized cities that connect to their local cultural resources. This involves new themes and marketing strategies.
- In the area of sustainable management, culture and sustainability are relatively new on the agenda but gaining momentum. Sector-specific sustainable practices are developing in the festival sector, in the heritage sector, to learn how to thrive in a low carbon consuming way (waste management, use solar energy…).
- Connect to heritage, connect to communities: tangible and intangible heritage are attractive for visitors and powerful resources for local cultural and creative communities, which in turn engage various audiences. It is important to increase the discovery of heritage and arts by locals

themselves, deepening understanding. (E.g. Foundations of a creative hub in Prizren/Kosovo with 6 local cultural initiatives. See 'Link' section below).

- Aim for responsible tourism and 'deep travel': citizens want tourists to be more responsible, stay longer, explore further. The idea is to try to move away from the one nightstand to falling in love with the city, try to find a balance between the ones visiting quickly and the ones going deeper. People want more relationships and festivals are about social interaction and relationships.
- The Discover.eu initiative helps young people to travel across Europe to discover new routes and new sites in Europe for themselves. It is a way to educate them to be responsible tourists (see 'Link' section below).
- In the post COVID-19 world, it's time to consider tourist health security:
  - Monitoring tourist flows in popular city centres is important both for information and for ensuring a good experience for the visitor. Too many spoils it for everyone, too few does not allow businesses to benefit.
  - Taking cultural tourism to less crowded areas to experience more local and authentic.

## 2. How is arts and culture linked to tourism?

- Culture and tourism are often seen as separated sectors. We use a different a vocabulary when we are actually speaking about the same thing: audience (culture) vs visitor (tourism). Both are also trying to create experiences. It is a two-way relationship.
- Festivals themselves constantly reinvent the character of a city in an innovative way: they allow people to return to a city (returning visitors).
- Festivals need to have a local reason to exist, which needs to be reaffirmed constantly. Reconnection with local population and audiences happens when the festival is true to its roots. It is about reconnecting to the authentic (e.g. In Edinburgh, two third of the locals goes to festivals).
- The Belgrade Fortress is very active in the cultural and creative sector. The fortress is hosting festivals, exhibitions, events and it offers its public space to the film and theatre industry. The pandemic is a real opportunity for the fortress and this year should be even better than the last one, because many festivals' organisers are asking to organise their events in the open air.
- The Cultural Routes (crossing more than 45 countries) are an invitation to travel to experience the beautiful heritage of Europe and the different periods of our civilisation. They are promoting the cultural concept and lead to a new form of tourism. The routes go through capital cities but they mainly pass by rural areas, local and authentic places to put the local heritage and local sites in the spotlight. They are also more sustainable because they include cycling paths, hiking paths, and train itineraries. The routes are a voyage across time, landscapes and ideas.
- The European Capital of Culture is an EU initiative linking the two sectors: it does not only increase the number of tourists in a city, it also has a positive impact in initiating new projects, entrepreneurship to create new products and new spaces.
- Creative hubs can kick-start local tourist economies.

## 3. How can we make sure that cultural life takes a strong part in the future of local, national and EU's tourism policy and is as such financially sustained?

- There is no sustainable tourism without sustainable culture.
- Culture is Europe's main resource for tourism and economic development. Europe risks losing its main advantage in the international tourist market if these sectors are not funded.
- Add sustainable culture to UN SDGs.
- Arts and culture should be at the centre of educational and economic planning.
- We need to remind that culture and tourism are strongly related. It is important to build new stronger partnerships between the cultural heritage sector, the cultural sector and the tourism sector and think about new models. The cultural sector can find creative solutions so working more together and instrumentalising one another is the direction to take.

## 4. Conclusions

1. Two words came all the way through: authenticity and sustainability.
2. Visiting big cities and capitals will remain but a new market is now emerging for small and medium size cities such as rural areas.
3. There is a tendency to move from one-night stays to 'deep travel'.
4. Open spaces are gaining in popularity.
5. Festivals need to reinvent the cities.
6. Europe's main advantage is its culture.
7. Educate young people and get them engaged to be responsible tourists and citizens.
8. Build stronger partnerships between our sectors.

## 5. Links

- European Travel Commission' study - Tourism Passion Communities: https://etc-corporate.org/reports/tourism-passion-communities/
- KEA European Affairs: https://keanet.eu/prizren-from-historic-town-to-creative-city-in-the-western-balkans/
- Research for CULT Committee - Culture and creative sectors in the European Union – Key future developments, challenges and opportunities: https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/IPOL_STU2019629203_EN.pdf
- The 2020 Rome Charter: http://www.2020romecharter.org
- Agenda 21 for Culture - Culture, cities and the COVID-19 pandemic: http://www.agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/report_culture-covid-19_-_draft_1.pdf
- Eurocities: https://covidnews.eurocities.eu
- The Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor (2019 Edition): https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/cultural-and-creative-cities-monitor-2019-edition
- Festivals Edinburgh: https://www.edinburghfestivalcity.com/

- Yuste Foundation: https://www.fundacionyuste.org/en/
- Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes
- Fortress of Belgrade: http://www.serbia.com/visit-serbia/cultural-attractions/palaces-and-fortresses/belgrade-fortress-follow-the-paths-of-history/
- European Capitals of Culture: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en
- Smart Cities Smart Europe: https://ec.europa.eu/environment/europeangreencapital/news/events/smart-cities-smart-europe/
- DiscoverEU: https://europa.eu/youth/discovereu_en
- European Year of Rail: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/FS_20_363
- FestivalFinder.eu: https://www.festivalfinder.eu/