

October 2013 newsletter of the CEXP Project

Common borders. Common solutions.



Partners

On Project

CULTUR-EXP partners have already begun cataloguing contacts from festivals, local authorities and cultural actors in different countries in order to create a first e-directory. The directory will be used to contact and encourage culture providers to advertise on the CULTUR-EXP platform and to explain to them how they can provide and promote their own cultural content.

The project in brief:

The CULTUR-EXP project is implemented under the European Union's Black Sea Basin Joint Operational Programme <http://www.blacksea-cbc.net>. The project started on 1 July 2013. It involves organisations from five countries: Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece and Moldova. The project duration is 24 months, the EU funding is 295 KEUR.

The overall objective of the project is to enable the cross-border exchange of culture by providing an innovative, multi-lingual IT platform, based on available open source social platform solutions and adapted for culture producers (artists), culture operators (museums, festivals, etc.) and other actors of the culture market. The platform will be an online tool, where all entities related to the culture will be able to advertise, discuss and organise cultural assets and events in the region. The platform will also be an important source of information about the culture and related cultural events (artists, operators, events) for the culture consumers. There are three specific objectives:



Project funded by the
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Yerevan city view

Traditional folk dance in the town of Malko Turnovo in Bulgaria



1. To provide the platform with the following functionalities:

❖ **User presentation module** - will be used to create and store platform users' own profile, the user presentation module will be able to support:

I. **Artists:** allow digitized samples of own art, express interest in types and geographical locations of performance events, interest in particular arts or culture areas.

II. **Culture infrastructure owners:** inventory of performance sites operated and available to artists, timetable of the events and availability.

III. **Culture operators:** description of activities, schedule of planned events.

❖ **Event scheduler** - a sort of thematic calendar, where platform participants will be able to locate and advertise their events.



Project team

Thessaloniki
Documentary
Festival
poster



❖ **Culture browser** - this module will provide a catalogue and search facility for any type of content on the platform. It will be tailor-made to enable searching the content (e.g. events) by art, region, operator, artist, etc. It is assumed that there will be a possibility to interface with 3rd party systems to provide the schedule for other important 3rd party events.

❖ **Collaborative tools** - the popular collaboration tools (conference, chat) will be integrated so the platform users will be able to work online for preparation of common events.

❖ **Announcement boards** - a functionality allowing for posting messages, announcements related to culture.

❖ **Thematic discussion/reflection spaces** - where users from different areas, cultures may freely participate and express their opinions on events, art, tradition.



2. To provide rich content on the platform - by attracting, encouraging and training culture providers to advertise on the platform and to provide own cultural content.
3. To ensure the uptake of the platform by the users - by disseminating, advertising, training activities.

View of the partners

- **Ramaz Kvatadze, Georgian Research and Educational Networking Association (GRENA)**

GRENA is the project coordinator. EU projects like this one are very important for Black Sea regional development. The CULTUR-EXP project is opportunity to develop an IT service to serve the Black Sea region, but which is at the same time connected to the EU.

The added value and benefits to the culture sector from this project comes from the fact that culture sectors in the Black Sea region work mainly in isolation. Each country is a world unto itself with cultural professionals working specifically in their own countries. The project will assist them to work in the whole Black Sea region. Plus, the culture community is shy of IT, and this project will introduce to them in a user friendly way electronic networking. From a sustainability point of view, quite simply, culture is part of economy. For example tourism, education and entertainment and projects like this one will bring economic development through more artistic and cultural creations and products. Lastly, this is a good chance to co-operate with different organisations from different countries. These organisations are all different and have experience in working in different fields. So in this way GRENA is learning and expanding its horizons and competencies. It is also developing its international contacts.

- **Nikos Petropoulos, European Regional Framework for Co-operation (ERFC)**

ERFC together with the partners is responsible for visibility, communication and to promote the platform to stakeholder. The strategy

to achieve this is first of all to make the platform recognised by the stakeholder in the sector. A way of doing this is for a few select but important festivals and major artists to be briefed and through them the platform will be introduced to the artists and cultural professionals. Once the platform is online, we can then do crowd sourcing and in this way artists would upload content. This strategy is under development. Communication also involves interaction with arts associations, arts schools, social media and artist meeting points. Regarding added value, art and culture is the best passport for economic development and the flourishing of creative enterprises. The Black Sea is fragmented due to historic rivalries and conflicts and thus the region never opened up to communications. Performing arts with the participation of art originating from different Black Sea countries would serve as a corner stone for co-operation in the area. As for sustainability, performing arts wants as larger audience as is potentially possible. Audiences would increase to see artists coming from Black Sea countries or elsewhere. In this way boosting the entertainment sector, tourism and supporting services including handicrafts and food and all related tourist industries. My final remark is to say that it is important to highlight that this project strengthens peaceful co-operation and brings prosperity. Artist performances that include artists from all over the Black Sea region help resolve misunderstandings.

- **Richard Ney, Armenian Monuments Awareness Project Cultural NGO (AMAP)**

AMAP aims to raise awareness of Armenia's cultural sites and historic monuments. We are a cultural NGO and this project, CULTUR-EXP is perfectly suited for AMAP. As a theatre director, I find this project interesting because it brings together diverse artistic groups: acting, music, design, literature and other directions. This project is developing a "Facebook" for artists, which will allow artists in the Black Sea region to contact each other to create new art projects. Culture is hugely diverse and strangely there is not that much contact between the artist and heritage. This project is a way of bringing this diverse culture together. Contemporary artists in the Black Sea region creating new music, dance routine, literature, architecture would find that, thanks to the platform, much easier to connect with traditional music, traditional dance,

architecture and classic literature. Because the project is bringing together so many diverse groups it will grow and grow. The Internet is one of the most cost effective ways of doing business. Hopefully this interaction will create deals and agreements to organise events and actions between artists and culture organisations. Who knows, we could have another Biennial or Festival on Black Sea culture. My final remark is that one of the characteristics of this region is its diversity. Historically the people have not got along and this project addresses that issue because it actually brings people together to produce yet more art and culture, while respecting the diversity. Indeed, this project is building bridges by respecting the diversity while promoting a common Black Sea identity.

- **Borislava Jordanova, District Government of Burgas**

Regional government of Burgas is a partner in the CULTUR-EXP project and is responsible together with AMAP for the following project activities: 1. Drawing of the platform requirements; 2. Migration of the content and training activities. Taking into account that content migration is one of the critical tasks of the project, two "content workshop" is planned in Burgas. Workshop will be attended by the representatives of AMAP, BURGAS, GRENA and ERFC. IT expert from GRENA will explain platform functionalities to the representatives of partners and train them in usage of the platform ("train the trainers" activity to educate the platform specialists in each country, able to further support culture producers and operators). The main result deriving from the implementation of the culture platform will be the improvement of the relations between the different operators on the culture market, leading to added value to the culture sector itself. Culture producers, culture operators and other actors on the culture market will be able to advertise, discuss and organize cultural assets and events in the Black Sea region. The project will deliver online tool for social collaboration in culture area, its impact is not only social (ability to access the culture of



neighboring countries and initiate social relations between culture actors), but also economical (the culture actors may benefit from cross-border relations, by promoting themselves, participating in common events, etc).

We have a special interest in the successful implementation of the project as Burgas is a candidate for the European capital of culture 2019. The platform is an online tool available for anyone with the access to the Internet and will not be limited by the borders; therefore we may state that it will be implemented in all ENPI regions covered by this call and beyond. The online culture platform will be elaborated jointly by the partners from Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece and Moldova. But once it is implemented, it could be exported to other regions and expanded to a larger extent.

- **Petru Bogatencov, Research and Educational Networking Association of Moldova (RENAM)**

The main contribution of RENAM in the project CULTUR-EXP is platform operation and maintenance. RENAM will also participate in the Group of Activities "Selection of existing open source platform"; "Platform adaptation and implementation" and "Visibility of the Action".

From an added value point of view, culture producers, culture operators, indeed all persons involved in creation and operation of culture, would benefit from the portal for searching and tracking particular arts or artists. Cultural policy is the competence of the Ministry of Culture. Nonetheless, RENAM can contribute to direct or indirect sponsorship of events. Regarding sustainability, the operational multi-lingual IT platform for culture exchange would make available the rich cultural content and cross-border influences, international dimension, better advertisement and exchange of information about cultural offers of individuals/regions/countries; giving a wide uptake of cultural products and services. Finally, due to high demand for consulting services on content digitization, accumulation, and for operational support, RENAM staff has established preliminary contacts and conduct negotiations with culture providers, for the subsequent training and support for the platform.

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The Georgian Research and Educational Networking Association - GRENA was founded for the development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education and research field. The founders of GRENA are five major state universities, Georgian National Academy of Sciences and Open Society - Georgia Foundation. GRENA's activities focus on:

1. Providing Information and Communication Technology services to users and implementation of new, innovative services.
2. ICT education (Cisco Networking Academy, Linux Professional Institute Learning Center, Juniper Academy, Distance Learning Center and Pearson VUE Authorized Certification Center).
3. Preparation and implementation of international and local R&D projects; promoting and supporting ICT development in Georgia.

ERFC is a civilian routed NGO aiming at European integration to benefit citizens and to develop inter regional competitiveness. It was established towards the end of 2009. It has a strong presence in Aegion, Corfu and Brussels. To accomplish its mission, ever since its inception, ERFC has been involved in a number of cross-border projects. These projects relate to culture, agriculture, social and integrated regional development. However, all of them share a common goal which is to enhance cross-border co-operation for mutual economic benefit, peace and understanding and to exchange and promote better practices that are sustainable and environmentally friendly.

The Armenian Monuments Awareness Project (AMAP) was founded in February 2008. It employs 10 people. It is a non-profit organization with the aim of raising awareness at an international level Armenia's historic sites and monuments. To fulfill this mission, AMAP started to work with like-minded organizations in Armenia and also from other countries in the Caucasus and Black Sea region, specifically to enhance and promote Armenia's cultural heritage in a sustainable way, and this includes developing sustainable tourist strategies. Not just promoting conservation and restoration.

The Governor of District Burgas provides the state policy on regional level in all aspects of management, as well as the coordination of the national and regional interests. 13 municipalities are included in the territory of district Burgas. The Governor organizes the elaboration and implementation of strategy for regional development and of the regional development plan; coordinates the plans and investment projects of the technical infrastructure with regional importance; coordinates his work with the local authorities and performs the international contacts of the region - conducting of different official meetings, exchange of business delegations and business forums, and other diverse activities and European funded projects.

The Research and Educational Networking Association of Moldova (RENAM), is a non-governmental, non-commercial and non-profit organisation, established to promote and support the development of communication and information infrastructure for the scientific and educational community (especially higher and secondary education, research institutions, libraries and public collections, medical establishments), as well as to governmental organisations in Moldova. The RENAM network offers connectivity to about 5000 scientists and professors (75% of all researchers), over 1000 Ph.D. students and more than 80,000 university and college students (85% of all students). All Institutes of Academy of Sciences, leading universities of Moldova, colleges, some hospitals and governmental establishments are connected to RENAM network access nodes. RENAM provides with wide range of services such as optical, leased line and wireless connectivity; websites and databases creation and hosting; issuing digital certificates; access to specialized computational resources; certificated education and community members training.

