



Eastern Partnership Ministerial Conference on Culture

June 27th-28th 2013

Tbilisi - Georgia

Report by Natasa Bodrozcic



Eastern Partnership Ministerial Conference on Culture that was held in Tbilisi, Georgia, on June 27-28 in the venue of Radisson Blue, (former Iveria hotel by the renown architect Otar Kalandarishvili), hosted several ministers of culture from the EU countries (Poland, Finland, Lithuania), as well as EaP countries (Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaidzan), representatives of the EU administration (Mrs Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Ms Falkenberg- DG Education and Culture, EU comission-EaP programme presentation, Mr Troussard- DG Education and Culture EU comission- Creative Europe programme presentation) international cultural organizations such is UNESCO, as well as representatives of arts and civil society (Philipp Dietachmair- coordinator of Sub-Group Culture EaP Civil Society Forum) and many others.

Among more-less standardized presentations by the pannelists representing governmental institutions, speaking more-less about ideal(ized) new developments in their sector, not paying attention to details or layering, there was a chance to establish a dialogue between the representatives of arts/civil society and of the govermental sector. This was enabled through very good mediation by Mr Pavol Demesh, leaving 15 minutes time slots for the audience questions and answers. During this time, a lot of interesting questions were posed in relation to effective mechanisms for historical heritage protection, improvement of communication channels, but also questions related to concrete results achieved through EaP culture programme, its future and further possibilities of collaboration between the countries in question.

While government representatives were repeating the need for new "concepts" of culture as a drive for social and economic development, as a "possible solution for social crisis", the enhancement of quality of services and technology and the need to "facilitate cultural activities without interfering", the importance of councils for culture as places of decision making and active engagement of civil society, very often the representatives of the third sector were emphasizing the same need, that is often only declaratory and lacks in practice.

What was important for this Ministerial conference is also moment of presentation of the new EU programme for culture called "Creative Europe" that will replace the current "Culture 2007-2013 programme", in which the EaP countries will have chance to join and participate, under certain conditions, among which is the payment of the membership fee by each of the respective governments. The "Creative Europe" programme is announced to be more competitive than the previous one (or EaP culture programme), and being very economy oriented, stressing the need of making the field of culture the territory for creating work places and enhancing employment.

EU countries Minister representatives were presenting some examples of good practices from their countries in relation to culture (Finland, Lithuania) and Georgian film director Zaza Rusadze presented a succesful example of Georgian cinematography, that happened recently.

Philipp Detachmair, as representative of Civil society group stressed the need for participation and transparency in culture (very much based on SPACES partners reccomendations that were sent to him previously). His whole speech is available at the OBERLIHT web site:

<http://www.oberliht.com/eap-ministerial-conference/>.

In relation to his speach, the participants of the sub-group for culture EaP made a small "flash mob action" during the reception at the National Museum in Tbilisi wearing T-shirts with a slogan: **PARTICIPATION & TRANSPARENCY 4 CULTURE** (a mini campaign was very much triggered by the efforts of Vladimir Us- SPACES partner from Moldova)! The images are available at OBERLIHT web site and attached here, in addition to this report. Apart from participating in events related to the Ministerial conference, I took the opportunity of being in Tbilisi to meet several cultural actors and discuss some matters related to the cultural policy document in progress, done in collaboration with other partners of the SPACES project (Lali Petrenava, Tamara Janashia, Tamta Shavgulidze, Katharina Stadler, Data Chigholashvili.

