

*Visegrad Insight**2. 2012. 76-81.*

Several cities of the region have already held a title of the European Capital of Culture. The title itself has been awarded since 1985 to cities designated by the European Union for a period of one calendar year during which they organize a series of cultural events with a strong European dimension. Since 2000 Central and Eastern European countries have joined the initiative. This change entangled a new political process that had to take place. While a country's capital would be the obvious choice this was not usually the case. Former Minister of Culture of Hungary gives his account of the political decision making process when selecting the city of Pécs to hold the title in 2010.

# THE CHANCES OF CULTURAL RENEWAL IN HUNGARY

ANDRÁS BOZÓKI

Experts say that Hungary, and especially its capital, Budapest, is in a good situation to define its cultural identity within Europe. In addition to a new generation of talented artists, a whole new wave of cultural managers with a fresh attitude has sprung up in Hungarian cultural life. Their co-operation can potentially lead to a long-expected cultural renewal. Success is not the result of a zero-sum game. The players in Hungarian cultural life have been wasting their energy on competing for the patronage and resources of the state. The time has come for them to join forces. If the key figures of a new, or renewed, emblematic cultural institutes, such as KÉK, Sziget Festival, Museum of Fine Arts, WAMP, Ludwig Museum, A38 Music Ship, Impex Lumen, Millenáris Theatre, Mücsarnok (Arts Hall), Tüzzraktér (Alternative Cultural Center), VAM Design Center, Trafó (Theatre for Contemporary Dance), Merlin Theatre, Palace of Arts, MU Theatre, Gödör Club and many others, co-operate, they will reach the critical mass that might bring an appreciable change.

What makes a country culturally attractive? According to Jan Kennis (cultural attaché of the Netherlands to Hungary), there are three preconditions to renewal: 1.) economic development, 2.) the ability to attract and integrate foreign influence, and 3.) the "artistic atmosphere" of the place<sup>1</sup>

The first precondition remains lacking in Hungary as it is not a rich country, and it cannot afford to pay competitive fees for big international names who could direct cultural institutes. If internationally competitive salaries were offered, it would trigger tensions regarding internal salary rates, and it would upset the public. This would mean obstacles to the very aim, namely, to provide a more active presence of foreign artists and cultural managers. In spite of the cultural pillar system in the Netherlands, it has been an open country, a sailing nation for centuries, and their everyday life has included interaction with foreign cultures – not to mention that their economy greatly benefited from colonialization policies. By the 1960s, most everyone spoke English in the Netherlands, while in Hungary a few decades shall pass before we can achieve widespread fluency. Hungary was an occupied, isolated and under-recognized country until the regime change of 1989. Its citizens did not travel, speak foreign languages or listen to Western radio programmes, and they saw people with different skin color only in films. The cultural revolution of 1968 was muted behind the Iron Curtain.

Although the first condition is lacking, the situation is not hopeless, as the third condition is present. The "artistic atmosphere" of Budapest, and some other towns as Pécs, Szeged, Eger and Sopron is a gift, and we must take the advantage of it more actively. Budapest maintains far more theatres than the av-

erage European capital, and has a sparkling cultural life.

If the first condition is missing then we still have the third, and the hope for change lies in the second, in other words, the ability to attract foreign influence. This is the field where a change in the view of cultural policy could contribute most to success. I would like to address this issue a bit more closely.

The regime change in 1989 created the opportunity for a fundamental change in Hungarian culture and cultural policy. Several new fora of public discourse came to life, new weeklies and periodicals, which could herald the newly gained freedom of speech and the press. However, in the beginning, change was detectable primarily in re-evaluating the withheld or falsified past, as it was the case in the rehabilitation made by the conservative-nationalist culture minister, Kunó Klebelsberg's cultural policy of the 1920s. The state played an exclusive role in financing culture, and the gaps were filled by the generous support from the Soros Foundation, which was active up to the mid-1990s. As a result, and also due to the outstanding role that the intellectuals played in the change of regime, the old culture financing scheme seemed sustainable for a long time. The new pluralist system enabled certain circles of intellectuals to gain a leading policy-making role. The media war over the control of public radio and television occurred between 1991 and 1993, it was a Kulturkampf between the intellectuals who had entered politics, and the two opposing blocs of their heartland.<sup>2</sup> Following the cultural homogenization by the dictatorship, the struggle now turned to establishing sub-cultural foundations. At that time, the chance of the institutionalization of this subcultural pluralism meant the guarantee of freedom. This determined the first years of the struggle to define the new republic's culture, public discourse, symbols, and policy. The first four years of the Parliament was the era of symbolic politics, in which the old cultural pillars of "populists" and "urbanists" were represented by the defining parties of the time: the Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Alliance of Free Democrats.

The concept of a modern republic means that we know what the minimum basis of understanding is, which can still shape us into one political community, in spite of the differences between us. This community is maintained by legal prin-

ciples, and the democratic principles of mutual restrictions for the sake of our common freedom. A few years after the regime change of 1989, it became important to rescue cultural financing from the labyrinth of party politics. The most significant measure to reconfigure the old structure was to establish the National Cultural Fund (NKA) in 1993. This provided the opportunity for cultural products to be evaluated by independent professional juries, so that the players in cultural life could have a share in the state support based on their professional/artistic merits, and not their political nexus. After 1994, the liberal cultural administration brought the Digital Literary Academy (DIA) and the Széchenyi scholarship to life, which meant gestures to certain groups of elite intellectuals. At the same time, 10% of the NKA budget was turned into a vis maior fund, which became the "minister's budget".

When the media act entered into force in 1996, the rise of commercial TV channels brought a significant cultural change to Hungary. The sole rule of state TV thus ended, and the previous media war lost its target, as the viewers now could "vote" with their remote controls. Also, in 1997, the Soros Foundation began to withdraw from Hungary, where they had been supporting the cultural and scientific scenes: some parts of which were changed (books, periodicals, cultural events, scientific scholarships, etc.), and some were gradually terminated. No similar private sponsor has since taken their place.

When Fidesz gained power in 1998, there were already new circumstances. The conservative government, with the millennium approaching, increased the role of symbolic politics, and attributed a unique, strategic importance to culture. The former 10% of the minister's budget was raised to 50%, in order to have a closer link between the government and the groups of the cultural elite that favored them. NKA was merged into the cultural budget, and was operated as the National Cultural Base Programme. The Orbán administration regarded culture primarily from the aspect of national-historical identity – this way following the 19th century concept of culture – and supported mainly the institutes that enforced this line. That was the time when the National Theatre – conveying vague aesthetic values – was built, when the National Philharmonic Orchestra was given extra

support, thus becoming a world-class orchestra, and when the support for the State Opera was tripled. The construction of the Palace of Arts was also started then. The right-wing political parties had a straightforward idea of what culture was: primarily the carrier of a coherent national identity that was shaped by history. They knew exactly what aim the national cultural institutes should serve: to strengthen national unity based on traditional values and symbols. The Orbán administration handled culture as a state matter instead of a social one, and placed it as a focal point, stressing the thousand-year-old concept of the state, that of Saint Stephen I – the first King of Hungary.

The cultural policy of the MSZP-SZDSZ coalition in power between 2002 and 2006 was characterised by the clashes between different configurations of the Socialist and Liberal circles: 1.) those representing the old Kádarian elite positions, 2.) the technocrats favoring modernization and a breakaway from the current situation, and finally, 3.) the groups emphasizing the renewal of the leftist-liberal identity. The "Kádárists" were unable to enter actual debates, as they were occupied with maintaining their own positions in the institutions. Others saw culture from a defensive aspect, avoiding making any reference to it, as they basically accepted the content of culture defined by the conservative side. For them, culture was subordinate to the needs of experts, pragmatists and to the requirements of modernization. They were the ones who treated culture as a "burden", a mental reserve standing in the way of the country's development and competitiveness. Finally, others urged that the Left should renew the concept of culture, and become more active in the field of cultural democracy, creating opportunities, nurturing talents, as well as cultural and regional development. They argued that the Left could not be intellectually empty, and should not continue without an identity.

The cultural policy of the Medgyessy administration (2002–2004) primarily represented the interests of circles still stuck to the nexus that had developed during the Kádár era. However, the first Gyurcsány administration (2004–2006) opened doors for the new cultural groups and genres, under the aegis of renewal. More money was given to the curatoria of NKA, as the minister's budget was decreased from 50% to 25%. The act on

## EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE 2000-2016

NKA in 2005 restored the name and autonomy of the fund, and restricted the rules of incompatibility. Between 2006 and 2009 the socialist cultural policy returned to a more traditional understanding of culture and favored different segments within high culture.

The last ten years saw fundamental changes in reproducing culture, the access to cultural goods, and in general, the attitude to culture. The impact of the traditional, textual and narrative genres dropped significantly, and certain visual and musical genres gained greater value. The Internet generation appeared, whose members were raised in a free country, and thus they had only a cursory knowledge of the years of the dictatorship. Our children read less printed material than we did, the developed world has switched to the Internet, online networks, and mobile phones. We do not send our letters in envelopes anymore.

Since 2004, Hungary has been a EU member state. Some of the old problems are still with us, while new challenges have also come up. We may close our eyes, but that will not chase away the fundamental cultural change that is taking place in Hungary, in the form of digital revolution. The country is in the global race, the new technologies, visual forms of art, and new cultural forms are here. The significance of audio-visual culture – mainly film and pop music – has increased. The technological development enables more and more of us to have a say in public matters (e-democracy, blog culture), and to become creators ourselves (computer music). Multi-disciplinary festivals are also on the rise, and the formerly rigid boundaries between elite and public culture are disappearing, and what is more, differentiation itself is becoming problematic. Any combination of genres is conceivable in today's experimental mix and remix of culture, as the acceptance of the different forms of creativity has broadened on a wide scale. Now punk operas, rap poetry, ray painting, and symphonic video clips are real options. The opportunities presented by new links

### PRAGUE 2000

*The story of the city  
City of open gates  
City to live in*

Three major themes were developed: the 1st focusing on the cultural heritage of Prague, the 2nd on Prague as the crossroads of different cultures and international links, and the 3rd on a developed cultural life in a modern metropolis.

**BUDGET € 18,800,000**

**TOURISM** Specific objectives relating to visitors? An increase in visitors but no concrete strategy was developed and it was not a high priority. Expectations and assumptions about the number of people who would come to Prague and see the City of Culture were not significant. Václav Novotný, who headed the Prague Information Service, said: "I expect approximately the same number of tourists next year (as this year), so Prague 2000 won't induce an increase. We already host some 2.5 million tourists a year who, altogether, stayed 8 million nights. That's about the maximum we can hope to get. The key question now is not how to increase the number of visitors, but how to keep it this high."

### CRACOW 2000

*Thought,  
Spirituality,  
Creativity*

The tagline reflects both the history and the daily life of today's city, which openness has always attracted individuality, and which gates have always been open for people of different nationalities, religions, or ways of thinking.

**BUDGET € 12,700,000**

Polling by the Cracow branch of the Institute for Tourism suggests the city saw a 20% increase in tourists in 2000. Foreign guests were 56% of visitors (up from 45% in 1999). 13% gave cultural events as the reason for their visits and 8% gave their interest in local folklore.

### GRAZ 2003

*Culture is more  
than art.*

There was a specific desire to include people and citizens who were not "art consumers" and involve the inhabitants of Graz in the creation of projects. Culture was given a wide definition to include aspects of daily life and the use of public space was a priority.

**BUDGET € 59,200,000**

Total number of people attending events in the programme: 2,755,271. Visitor numbers far exceeded expectations. An increase of almost 23% in total overnight stays in 2003 compared to 2002 was way over the pre-2003 forecast of a 10-15% increase. The increase of overnight stays by foreign visitors was almost 29%.

### SIBIU 2007

*of Culture-City of Cultures*

The tagline embodied Sibiu's mixing of different cultures: e.g. Romanian and Germanic.

**BUDGET € 18,900,000**

It would appear that Sibiu achieved its aim of increasing the city's visibility at the European level.

Number of tourists in accommodation units during the first semester: 2006 = 60,197; 2007 = 75,545; that is, an increase of 125,5%.

### VILNIUS 2009

*Culture Live*

The vision of a "European capital of the future that is open to people, cultures and innovation".

**BUDGET € 64,120,000**

Statistics Lithuania informs that, based on the data of the inbound tourism survey, the number of overnight trips of foreigners in 2009, compared to 2008, decreased by 16.8 percent (from 1.6 million in 2008 to 1.3 million in 2009), that of same day trips – by 6.6 percent (from 2.8 million in 2008 to 2.7 million in 2009). (Note: decrease due to the deep economic crisis.)

**LINZ 2009***Say Linz, Say Change*

As the European Capital of Culture, Linz is all about differences: differences compared to the rest of Austria, but also to the dark times, to the Linz of yesterday, and to other cultural events. Its new motto consists of two words that automatically co-opt all Linzers as co-organisers. That build expectations and suspense in the minds of visitors with regard to Linz 2009. And that self-confidently signal the energetic development of the city: "Linz verändert." (Say Linz, Say Change).

**BUDGET € 68,700,000**

Audiences of nearly 3.5m people. Linz09 is a success story in terms of tourism: more than two million day visits and an increase of 9.5% in the number of overnight stays.

**PÉCS 2010***Borderless city*

It underlined the city's ambition to re-establish international relations with neighboring countries and regions, which were damaged during the war in the former Yugoslavia. In its proposal, Pécs thus presented itself as a "gateway to the Balkans".

**BUDGET € 35,300,000**

The number of nights spent in Pécs by Hungarian tourists has gone up by 13% (totaling 150,389) compared with the previous year. An increase about 7.5% was noticed in the number of nights spent in the city by foreigners (totaling 77,758). This average 28% increase in the number of visitors wouldn't be possible in a time of crisis without the title of Cultural Capital. The Managing Centre claims that in all of the events in Pécs2010 about million visitors participated.

**TALLIN 2011***Stories of the Seashore*

The main theme of Tallinn 2011 is "Stories of the Seashore" and its citing of its importance as both the sea and storytelling were to play a major role in many of the planned events.

**BUDGET € 15,300,000**

The year as the Capital of Culture had a positive influence on tourism, and most of all cultural tourism. By the end of September, the number of overnight stays by foreign tourists rose by 23% compared to the year before resulting in 494,909 added hotel nights.

**MARIBOR 2012***Pure Energy*

The theme for Maribor's European Capital of Culture is "Pure Energy", referring to the fact that the region covers most of Slovenia's energy resources and is linked to Maribor's aim to build up energy in the coming years leading to a "cultural explosion" in 2012.

**BUDGET € 28,000,000,**

Touristic Information Centre in Maribor documented an increase in the number of visitors by 65% in the first three weeks of 2012.

**KOSICE 2013***Use the City*

The slogan of the nomination campaign - reading as USE THE CITY! - calls the USERS to use the city, go out and take an active part in the public life, enter the INTERFACE created for them and begin to communicate with culture, art, and - above all - with each other.

**BUDGET € 31,500,000**

The general aim is the branding of Slovakia as a tourist destination in general by the national tourism board. Košice would be one of the strongest focuses in the tourism board's strategy.

**RIGA 2014***Force Majeure*

The programme for the project of the European Capital of Culture 2014 is based on the ideological key principles of Kultura. After several months of creative discussion with the participation of a diverse circle of experts from different fields, Riga's programme for 2014 has acquired the title "force majeure".

**BUDGET € 24,000,000**

**SARAJEVO 2014***Peace, Art., Freedom*

The conceptuality of the programme is reflected in the correlation of notions: Peace, Art, and Freedom with freedom of creativity and human rights; and the commitment to all and especially to younger generations.

**PILSEN 2015***Pilsen Open Up!*

Pilsen open up! The name of the project for Pilsen's candidacy for the ECoC (the characterizes the 2015 programme. The city needs to and wants to open up. This has been a permanent theme of Pilsen's cultural vision since the 1990s.

**WROCLAW 2016***Spaces for beauty*

Presslaw, Vratislav, Wroclia, Borszilo, Breslau - these are only a few examples of the 90 names that have been given to Wrocław throughout the centuries. Its complex history and transformations that it underwent are symbolized by a butterfly - the emblem of Wrocław's candidacy for the title as the European Capital of Culture. The city's names can be seen on the application's cover. Inside the document we will find the reasons for Wrocław's candidacy for the title of ECoC. There are nine of them. The application also includes the programmes that, if Wrocław receives the title of European Capital of Culture, will be used to build spaces for beauty in the city and in Lower Silesia.

between genres are unprecedented. It is no exaggeration to say that, as a result of the inspiration derived from global mixtures, slowly all new music will become "world music". The movement of creative common goods has appeared (Creative Commons), which delegates the interpretation and definition of copyright to the authors themselves. Without overestimating the role of technology, I believe that the cultural policy-makers had to, and still have to, face this fact.

There was a need for a new cultural policy, partly in contrast to the compensative culture of Kunó Klebelsberg, which, after the shock of Trianon, was built upon the cultural superiority of "Mutilated Hungary". State subsidies for artists followed after policy based on a Hungarian communist idea of György Aczél: "To forbid, to abide, to support", which, after 1956, was based on the pacification and compromising of a rebellious society. Today, none of the 20th century models can be followed, and not only because these were products of anti-democratic regimes. The culture of the free republic cannot be built upon privileges gained and maintained without achievements and the narrow concept of culture itself.

In 2005, Hungary supported the UNESCO resolution on protecting cultural diversity, which partly opposed the purely free market-based concept of culture. The document declares that national cultures must be protected, as culture is a product, but a special one. A Hungarian, an Italian, or a Czech film, or a piece of writing is valuable in itself. Small, isolated languages must also be protected. Thus, the state has a role in cultural financing, and this role must be maintained. For the same reason, in 2006, the Hungarian cultural administration initiated, and their European partners accepted, the new concept of European cultural heritage, which emphasizes intellectual heritage in addition to built heritage.

If we think that culture is a pluralist concept because it is diverse, colorful and is built of several elements, then the same is true for national culture, as it is also made up of identities and subcultures, constantly interacting with its environment, and thus is always changing. Certainly, there exists a traditional reference of values, but it is not the politicians' task to rank values. It is the task of the professionals, the audiences, and the society, but they do not set up the rankings "till the end of time", but

rather rethink them in a continuous exchange.

State cultural policy must "clear the way" in order to allow those to speak who have been previously silenced, as well as provide the conditions for cultural diversity. Forty years ago, jazz in Hungary was said not to be part of culture, and that it did not deserve support. Later it was accepted. And there is Tengertánc, the program supporting living folk culture, or PANKKK, supporting music clubs in the country and upcoming talents, in order to revitalize small town clubs. Although the introduction of these programs triggered heated debates, now they have proven successful, as they were born of the initiative of, and in cooperation with artists. Alfa and Közkincs (Public Treasure) programs, that serve cultural regional development, can be supported from EU sources as well. When the Sziget Festival receives 60,000 visitors a day, and has become one of the biggest European events, no one can say that it is not a part of Hungarian culture. Nowadays, it is even part of the Hungarian image.

There was also a significant change in Hungarian public radio, when the Petöfi channel, listened to by only a few people, became a hub of quality pop music. PANKKK was the first to formulate the need for Hungarian musicians to have more time on public radio. A paradoxical situation then developed, as the new management of Hungarian Radio, not fully intentionally, began to implement this cultural policy. This is a sign of our common awareness that we need a much broader, more flexible, and more open concept of culture. We should not leave unnoticed the changes in the culture of our everyday life, and the social-intellectual phenomena that turn up outside the circle of regularly supported traditional cultural institutions. Besides "court culture", public culture is also part of culture. Next to the aristocracy of culture, the republic of culture has also come to life.

Representing the republic of culture cannot mean maintaining the cultural institutions in an unchanged form forever. But what viewpoints should be taken into consideration when evaluating these institutions? One of the hottest political questions is that of fair procedures. The world of cultural lobbies is more fluid than the world of science: scientists have gotten used to entering international competitions to acquire support, and publishing in foreign arenas to gain professional

prestige. Applications must be submitted, budgets must be calculated in advance, and later; in many cases they have to account for the expenditures during the process. However, in the cultural scene we often bump into an often invisible and closed nexus, the one-dimensional operation of which has been publicly criticised by the State Audit Office on several occasions. Appointments for certain periods are often on paper only, but as "personal consignment" they might be valid forever. This is not the rule of law, but the culture of direct political control. In a democracy it is natural that a cultural position is filled for a specified period. With this in mind, the world of Hungarian cultural institutions makes it seem like the regime change did not take place.

The success of the European Cultural Capital program shows that culture now has greater value in Europe, as has cultural diplomacy. There are no serious political conflicts between the countries of Europe, and the role of traditional diplomacy has been shrinking as a result. Now, who or what can a country come up with? With Botticelli, Bergman, Bartók, Mozart, Almodóvar, with painters, film directors and performers – its art, its culture. It is important to have Korean, American or Indian investors in Hungary, as they create thousands of jobs, and they thus have an economic and social role, but they will not add anything to our image and our cultural presence abroad. It requires a great effort for a city or a country to represent itself. The question that is all the more important is whether there is a development concept, and how the creative industries may be included in it. Let us not forget that culture can make a profit as well, and has a function in revitalizing the economy, which takes place via the creative industries, music, films, and marketing.

The European Commission announced 2008 as the year of intercultural dialogue, having realized that cultural diversity is a fundamental value in Europe. It is impractical and insufficient to maintain an isolated society that lives in multicultural "ghettos", so encouraging such a dialogue has become important. Those who communicate with each other will try to understand one another better. As the French and the Germans have published coursebooks on World War II together, there could be similar joint programs for Romania and Hungary, or Serbia and Hungary. The National Cultural Fund

should establish a college of intercultural cooperation. If we desire an open world and culture, then the borders must stay open as well, so that people and thoughts can travel back and forth. We must not quarantine the national tradition, national or ethnic culture, or even subculture. For many, favoring the national culture against the harmful effects of globalization is like closing off, "national self-defence"; as if culture was a military concept. Our culture is strong only when it has the ability to be in dialogue.

Any real, provocative and attractive culture will step over boundaries. It is not by accident that the European Commission has established a cultural prize with the name Border Breakers Award. It is a fact that Hungarian cultural diplomacy and the society of artists have become much more open in the past few years, and Hungary's geocultural position has changed a lot, and is now more balanced. Now we have the chance to enjoy the spaces of our regained cultural independence, and to get rid of the extremes that used to bind our intellect during most of the 20th century: both that fake "cultural superiority" and the sense of inferiority, which triggers frustrations.

What do we need for success? Firstly, we have to revitalize and keep improving our mood in regards to work and creation. Secondly, we have to keep our views fresh, our procedures fair, maintain a policy of creating opportunities, and the necessity of having alternatives. We must support common creation, free access to different fields, engender the entrepreneurial attitude, and value mediating. The age of one-dimensional, one-channel, "great national representation" is over. Long-term results can be expected only from cultural actions that are based on common creation, partnership, and co-operative projects. The success of cultural seasons cannot be measured by the quantity of the artists, the productions, and the press releases, but by the number, durability and intensity of partnerships and joint projects established between the Hungarian and foreign cultural players. Co-production and joint financing is not an external obligation anymore, but an internal principal starting point in forming cultural contacts.

As a consequence, besides the traditional means of diplomacy, the importance of contact management, network building and project initiatives are becoming more relevant. The creators and operators of cultural productions, instead of individual performances, now tend to look for partners to present their programs in multiple countries simultaneously, and in order to increase the efficiency of their reception, involve the locals. That cannot be only the effects of globalization, and the trend will not damage or sweep away national cultures, on the contrary, it may encourage a discovery of new characteristics and features unknown thus far.

It is already enough for Hungarian cultural diplomacy to pay extra attention to common cultural creations, and to encourage intercultural dialogue. Responsiveness to foreign influences is not exclusively a question of diplomacy, but a question of "artistic atmosphere" as it was mentioned above. Common creation is a task for civil players, the state authorities must only provide spaces for that, be it a physical venue or a virtual one on the Internet. One of the most exciting developments of today's cultural life is the realization of the fact that national cultures, thought to be homogenous in the past, are built upon numerous subcultures. A country's culture consists of these colorful islands, and this diversity is what makes it so attractive, dynamic, and interesting. Representing this diverse world abroad requires cultural diplomacy, and for each player to have a new view of their roles. As a result of the development of subcultures, the concept of national culture has become much broader, and we have to deal with this new cultural concept. What is more, there are often no direct paths between these subcultures, even within a country, and these may even refuse to communicate, for different reasons like taste or technical difficulties. Cultural diplomacy cannot afford to create the missing unit artificially, or to pretend to have it, referring to the objectives of foreign representation. It must bring the players of Hungarian and analogous foreign subcultures together, and establish direct access between them. Such "creative passages" will release new energies, new capacities will emerge,

and dialogues of new content will begin. If everything goes well, these cultures, when in a new environment of reception, will draw much more and broader attention than in their place of origin. Sometimes we witness that Hungarian "subcultural" acts, which are left unnoticed locally, gain international success.

Institutional and civil contacts, artist dialogues, and establishing access among subcultures, and having a cultural entrepreneurial attitude, all require a new strategy and a new set of means. That sort of culture that the older generations grew up with seems to be losing some of its more appealing characteristics. In the age of computers, commercial television, discount airlines and the explosive development of communication technologies, we are not that old, isolated, barracked country that we used to be, which would find satisfaction only in football, chess, narrow elite culture, and gold medals at the Olympics. Today's talents can emerge outside these fields. The structure of culture is changing continuously, and thus we need to renew its concepts, and to have a fresh, supportive cultural policy. We must demonstrate strong gestures to gain attention, to reveal that the situation has changed.

Today, twenty years after the regime change of 1989, the historical period of post-communism is over, including the change of the political and economic regime, unchecked capitalism, the accumulation of capital, and rapid privatization. In spite of the relative poverty of Hungary, the time has come for us to realize the importance of cultural values. The age of the "last giant state-socialist companies" (which could operate and spend irresponsibly and were not transparent in the early years of capitalism) is over as well. As it seems, Hungary is, slowly but surely, entering a world of cultural diversity that is more similar to the Western European model, where the role of culture can be brought into focus again. The culture of the republic will resemble us. /

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#### REFERENCES

1. Jan Kennis, "A Paprika-hadművelet" ["The Paprika Operation"] *Élet és Irodalom*, August 29, 2008.
2. These two opposing groups were the right-conservative forces and the left-liberal ones. The former was represented by the intellectuals around the governing party, Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), while the latter by the intellectuals around the opposition party, Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ).