

Culture

The culture of the programme cooperation area is very rich and diverse. The area is attractive for its varied cultural landscape and architecture. The cultural **heritage**, both movable and immovable, represents one of the important potentials in regional cross-border development from the social, economic and environmental aspect. Cultural heritage as such is understood as one of the key elements of building the region's identity and its valorisation through cultural tourism development, which has generally become one of the fastest growing industries. It can also provide employment possibilities in various fields, such as ICT, traditional handicrafts and trade, though special focus should be placed on the development of market oriented products and services to ensure sustainability of such initiatives.

The programme area is located at the crossroads of **languages**; Italian in the west and Hungarian and Croatian in the east. There is a Slovene minority in Kärnten, Croatian and Roma minority in Burgenland, and Hungarian minority in Pomursko. The awareness about the importance of knowing the culture of one's neighbour is growing and can lead to a more intensive cultural diversity exchange.

The potential for cooperation also lies in the field of **arts and creative industries** (including services related to cultural heritage, theatre and dance, music and opera, production of CDs, publishing, visual arts, cultural tourism, education in the field of arts, design, architecture etc.). Moreover, the use of modern technologies provides potential for the creation of innovative products and services.

Both sides regularly hold important and partly famous **culture festivals**, organised in a wide range of different cultural fields, such as music, literature, film or theatre. Among others, there are the Steirischer Herbst festival, Styriarte, the Carinthian Summer, music weeks at the Millstätter See, comedies at the Porcia castle in Spittal, games at the castle arena Finkenstein, the historic castle games in Güssing, Festival Lent, Ljubljana Summer Festival, Ljubljana Jazz Festival, the theatre festival Borštnikov prstan in Maribor, the festival of youth culture Kunigunda in Velenje, the film festival LIFFE, the medieval festival Venerina pot in Škofja Loka, Carniola, and many more.

It is thus proved that the area indeed has a lot of cultural potential, which can consequently offer a great number of opportunities regarding cross-border cooperation.

The **institutional base** for cooperation in the field of culture is very strong in the whole programme area. To mention the key aspects:

In 2003, Graz was the European cultural capital, which brought a lot of additional cultural infrastructure, such as the Kunsthaus. In 2012, the European cultural capital will be a Slovenian city. Should the ECC be in the programme area, the exchange of knowledge and experience could take place in the field of event development and management, institutional cooperation, etc.

In Austria, there are theatres as well as opera houses in major towns. Cultural centres were also established in regional centres, offering a wide range of cultural activities mostly to the regional people. There are more than 300 museums in the entire programme area, together covering a wide range of themes (history, arts, technology, nature, music, local traditions and mining), some of them at higher or even national levels.

In Slovenia, there are 9 public theatres (including 2 opera houses) and a wide range of amateur theatre groups, 121 major galleries, as well as a great number of museums. There is a widespread network of 153 libraries, which are visited most frequently and are likewise active in organising various exhibitions and cultural events. On the other hand, the network of libraries presents an important potential for informing the public.

Cross-border cooperation in the field of **media** (radio, TV, other audio-visual media, including printed media and electronic media), which has so far only partly exploited its cooperation potential, can contribute to broadening perspectives for cross-border cooperation, to better understanding of cultural

differences and similarities in the programme area, and to presenting the diverse cultural richness to the wider European audiences.

Moreover, in Slovenia there is a large number of organisations in the non-government sector. The cultural offer is best developed in the Osrednjeslovensko and Podravsko regions, especially in the field of opera, theatre and galleries. In addition, the share of active population employed in culture in the Osrednjeslovensko region is far above average.

A great potential is on the part of **cultural associations**. Numerous organisation and individuals have already established cross-border linkages and started joint initiatives, such as forming mixed ensembles and introducing joint film co-productions. The implementation of the Small Project Fund contributed to diminishing cultural differences and overcoming fears and reservations in the previous programme period. The cooperation of youth is one of the aspects of the cultural exchange that deserves special attention.

Culture thus presents an important potential of the programme area, which can contribute to the development of the areas' identity and to fostering good neighbourhood relations. On the other hand, culture should also be understood as a potential generator of new products and employment possibilities in connection to other sectors.

Social affairs and healthcare

The infrastructure is well-established on both sides of the border, particularly so in the fields of medicine and public healthcare (hospitals, experts, organisations, administration, etc.). These experts, personnel staff and facilities offer good preconditions for cooperation in dealing with joint problems in the field of cross-border health protection, pest protection, control of epidemics and public healthcare.