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REPORT ON THE DEVELOPING PERFORMING ARTS SECTOR IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

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“Mihai Eminescu” National Theater in Chisinau

(Mihai Potârniche)

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In the whole Central and East-European region, the system of performing arts was designed, after WWII, according to the Soviet model: a large network of state-run repertory theatres, operas, philharmonics, etc., with permanent venues and permanent companies, and a tight control over the arts school and institutions that were to provide the work force for these institutions. More than two decades after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the institution-directed approach – public performing arts institutions as the main actor in the sector, absorbing majority of public funds, and a legislative and fiscal framework generally designed for subsidized, permanent institutions – remains dominant in the region, but is also considered to foster artistic continuity, creativity, and professionalization, and provide a consistent public service. After an initial enthusiasm for market-oriented strategies (that went, sometimes, up to the idea of a general privatization of performing arts institutions), the states in the region settled for supporting and regulating a Keynesian three sector model: a public sector (public institutions, subsidized according to different strategies), an intermediary sector (the so-called civil society; not-for-profit organizations with mixed funding – private sponsorship and public grants or subsidies), and a private one (the creative and cultural industries, for-profit companies). In all three countries in the region (Estonia, Poland, and Romania) that will serve as comparative models in the following analysis, the private sector in the field of performing arts is underdeveloped, while the public one is dominant, with a growing intermediary sector supported by a diversity of public financing programmes.

The high level of public (state) involvement in the performing arts is not specific to Eastern Europe, but to the European Union countries in general, following an approach developed after WWII. The aims of the state support for performing arts in Europe are related to: affordability/economic accessibility (classical music, opera, operetta, dance and theatre are the most expensive art forms); artistic diversity (the existence of a large variety of artistic approaches and languages, irrespective of their immediate market success); higher production standards; and higher employability (a socioeconomic factor that takes into consideration the irregular nature of work in performing arts). Additionally, financial support in the form of subsidies guarantees predictability of the artistic offer and professional stability.

Direct financial support – through subsidies and/or grants – is only one of the tools used by European states for creating opportunities of development and accessibility for both creators and participants. Other tools comprise fiscal breaks and deductions (both for producers, investors, sponsors, and for cultural workers), regulating working conditions and frameworks for mobility, education and training, and spot-on public policies. Throughout the years, European states and the European Commission have worked towards designing cultural policies oriented towards accessibility and inclusion, promotion of cultural diversity, cooperation and mobility, decentralization, and trans-sectorial approaches. Cultural policy per se is oriented towards the development conditions of cultural production and participation, in accordance to public set objectives – including cross-sectorial ones, such as social cohesion, sustainable development, economic growth, employment, training and professional reconversion –, which are aimed at understanding culture not as a consumer of public funds, but as a producer of added value and a factor of economic and social development. It has to be mentioned that generally the public policy documents at national and EU level recommend caution in the mechanical enforcement of the strict economic logic to the cultural field (see the Romanian National Strategy on Sustainable Development 2013-2020-2030), since culture is considered to have value beyond its own realm as part of cross-sectorial dynamics. An approach to culture that became mainstream in Eastern Europe after an initial enthusiasm for liberal-

ization and privatization, which swept the region (including the Russian Federation), also affected this field.

The cultural system – and the performing arts system even more – is, in fact, in a constant process of reshaping along lines taking into consideration, on the one hand, the changes in social practices and technology, and on the other, the balancing between state involvement and private initiative, social needs and market demands.

There are different typologies of cultural policies, according to the form of state involvement in culture functioning within post-war Europe and North America, and according to how different types of welfare states (liberal/laissez-faire, conservative, and social-democratic) emphasize the various levels of decommodification (individual and collective freedom from market forces).

Before the fall of the Iron Curtain, Chartrand and McCaughey (1989) proposed four models for the state involvement: the facilitator state, the patron state, the architect state, and the engineer state. The facilitator state model (USA) means little direct state support and the encouragement of private support through tax incentives and grants. The patron state model (UK) implies direct financing, but not in the form of subsidy, with policymakers not involved in the allocation of funds, that being decided by independent bodies on the arm's length principle. The architect state (France) develops by itself the cultural field, without however making it dependent on political ends, while the engineer state (USSR and the Soviet bloc) takes culture as an instrument in the state's hands. The typology of state involvement is oriented towards the cultural producers, while the welfare state politics model follows the beneficiaries of culture, but none of these typologies are applicable as such in the case of the states of the former Socialist Block. Neither of them fully transitioned from the condition of engineer states with an apparent social-democratic stance, but all passed through the laissez-faire phase within a mixed architect/engineer state model. By our times, these models face the challenge of a declining participation.

According to the survey commissioned by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture in 2013¹, the first done after the outbreak of the economic crisis, since 2007, "there has been a general decline in participation in most cultural activities". An important reason for not participating in cultural activity in Southern (Italy, Greece) and Eastern countries (Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria) is identified as being the cost. On the other hand, the "Special Eurobarometer 399" mentions that for Romania, the main reason for not attending a ballet, dance, opera or theatre performance is the lack of choice, with the lack of interest rating first among the motivations for non-attending within the rest of Europe. Northern countries have the highest rate of cultural activity among their citizens, which is correlated to the place of arts in the social culture, the access to artistic practices at early ages (use of arts in education practices), and socio-demographic factors such as education and personal income. At the European level, "age, education, occupation and ability to pay bills are all linked to some degree with participation in cultural activities", according to the 2013 survey, a conclusion that also reflects the participation to performing arts events in Estonia, Romania and Poland, with Estonia having higher living standards, a lower level of social inequality and a higher percentage of college-educated (38.9% compared to 32.7% in Poland and 19.6% in Romania, with a EU-28 average of 32.6%, within the population aged 25 to 54, the age group most likely to attend to or get involved in live performances). While Estonia has a very high level of participation – 53% –, both Romania and Poland are below the European average: 35% in Poland, 26% in Romania. Since in 2015 in Estonia there were 1.3 million

1 "Special Eurobarometer 399. Cultural access and participation", http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_399_en.pdf.

visits (tickets sold) at performing arts events for a population of 1.2 million, the difference between the three countries regards also the frequency of participation.

Decentralization – generally defined as the central government relinquishing direct management of the (cultural) sector and handing over to the lower/local and regional administrative levels the planning, decision-making, legal (within the limits of their mandate) and management powers – took different forms for Poland and Romania (as it was for other larger countries in the region) and for Estonia (which is mostly only geographically and culturally decentralized). The main reason appears to be a question of size – for obvious reasons, small countries tend to be more politically and fiscally centralized, and the level of decentralization also depends on the level of urbanization and economic development.

The academic approach (see Kawashima 2004) discusses the decentralization in the cultural field in terms of cultural (policies deriving from local cultural and socioeconomic differences), political (local decision-making powers) and fiscal terms (allocation of public expenditure), cultural decentralization being potentially independent on the political and fiscal, which is the case with Romania.

Romania's culture is highly fiscally and politically decentralized (a process that began in the mid-1990), but still has six drama theatres (five national, out of which one performing in both Romanian and Hungarian, and one state theatre performing in Hungarian; one theatre is national in title – as a form of recognition of its artistic value – but depends on the local authorities), five operas, one operetta, the Bucharest Philharmonics, one chamber choir and the Bucharest National Dance Center (the only institution dedicated to contemporary dance) under the authority of the Ministry of Culture. An attempt to pass all performing arts institutions, except for the Bucharest National Theatre and the Bucharest National Opera, under the administration of local authority failed because of the opposition of both the managers and the local authorities, the former warning about the risk of local political interference and the latter invoking the excessive financial burden, especially in the case of operas (since all the concerned authorities were already in charge of a number of other performing arts institutions). The perception of a politicization risk relates to a constantly discussed issue in the field of Romanian public institutions – political and fiscal decentralization in a country prone to unfair practices and nepotism, and with varying degrees of socioeconomic development hasn't lead to the automatic thrive of culture (local authorities are able to directly control the activity of an institution through the subsidy – having the possibility to defund a theatre run by a "rogue" manager – and through controlling the management competitions).

On the other hand, the autonomy of the management in public institutions in Romania (see below the chapter on management models in Romania, Estonia, and Poland) made it possible for them to design their artistic strategy in accordance to the local culture (a cultural decentralization most visible in the multi-ethnic cities), which is the direct result of a cultural policy where subsidy doesn't lead to standardization (Estonia and Poland have similar policies).

In Poland, the decentralization officially ended in 1999, after a long and tormented process that went through various stages and models, in the first phase, mainly ill-equipped, artistically deficient institutions being transferred under the supervision of local authorities. In the end, only three institutions remained under the authority of the Ministry of Culture (The National Theatre in Warsaw, the National Stary Teatr in Krakow, and the Grand Theatre-National Opera in Warsaw) (see *Compendium: Poland; EEPAP Report: Poland, p. 246-247*).



**The National Opera and Ballet Theatre of Moldova,
Chisinau**

(image source)

One of the ideas that the Polish Ministry of Culture put on the table at the beginning of the 1990s, before administrative decentralization became a EU pre-requisite, was the classification of performing arts institutions, into three groups: some theatres would have got 100% of the state subsidy they were getting at the moment of the classification, others would have got 50-70% of the said subsidy, and the rest of them (institutions under local government) would mostly rely on local funding. This classification would have taken into consideration the artistic potential, the localization (with the State supporting theatres in areas sensitive according to the national policy, such as the Eastern part of Poland, or culturally underprivileged regions), and the social and financial situation of the institution. The aims of the classification was to relieve the burden on the state budget, to engage local authorities into the management and financing of local culture, and to better focus the state-level subsidy on objectives of national cultural policy, such as supporting the classical grand repertory. The Polish Government abandoned the idea after protests in the media and among theatre managers and it is largely considered that the aims of classification were better achieved through decentralization (see *EEPAP Report: Poland*, p. 250).

A number of performing arts institutions in Poland are currently under dual authority – either local and regional or local/regional and national, after the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage signed an agreement, in 2005, on co-financing nationally relevant institutions, a model that is legally impossible, for the moment, in Romania, due to the decentralization model applied there.

From the geographical standpoint, Estonia has a decentralized performing arts system: in addition to theatres in the capital Tallinn, five county centers out of 14 also have state-subsidized theatres, and all citizens have access to performing arts events within a range of 50 km (which is due to both the small size of the country and the state support for regular touring in rural areas).

Public Estonian performing arts institutions (except for the National Opera, that functions under its own dedicated legal frame) usually operate as foundations founded by the state or with the participation of the state or the local government, the main reason for this form of legal organization being that it allows the performing arts institutions to manage their real estate properties. The law concerning performing arts institutions (Performing Arts Institutions Act, 2003, latest version into effect since 2015) leaves open the possibility of organization into foundations, locally-run or state-run institutions (there are eight public foundations and two municipal theatres). The model of performing arts institutions as state-founded foundations is far from unique to Estonia within the European Union (it is the general model for Italy, too), but it is not common to Poland and Romania: in the first case, there is the legal possibility for the state or local government to enter a permanent partnership with a non-profit organization and subsidize it (the situation of the Gdansk Shakespeare Festival), in the second one, it is legally prohibited.

Also contrary to Romania or Poland, the subsidy system in Estonia in the field of performing arts is generally based on audience numbers, but the legal provisions have changed over time. In the first stage (prior to 2003), the only criterion additional to the audience numbers was the “artistic and national-cultural value”, assessed by administrative officials of the Ministry of Culture (together with the fact that directors of state foundations were not and are not subject to a management plan and set management objectives, this lead to largely subjective evaluations of theatre functioning).

Until 2014 (when a new National Cultural Strategy was adopted for the years 2014-

2020), the main aims of performing arts policy were to keep the audience numbers at least 800.000 tickets per year, to subsidize all performing arts institutions irrespective of their legal status, keep the ticket prices at 1% of the national average salary, and securing 1-1.5% of the budget for performing arts to touring in rural areas (Fundamentals of the Estonian national cultural policy, 1998). This focus on “objective”, quantitative aspects left away the reality that subsidy was calculated in relation to the available fraction of the state budget allocated for this purpose, not to the actual needs of the institutions (no matter how well an institution performed above the audience threshold, the subsidy was limited by the available public money).

The 2003 amendments to the Performing Arts Institutions Act introduced the variables of allocations for renown guest collaborators and other expenses related to salaries and venue maintenance, and introduced a formula for calculating an estimated ticket price (based on the location of the institution, the average income of the spectators as presented by Statistics Estonia, and main target groups).

Currently, subsidies are granted annually, through three-year funding agreements, “on the basis of the number of visitors and the number of new productions or concert programmes ordered by the Ministry of Culture and the costs incurred for the servicing thereof arising from the remuneration of the employees and the management of property”, with special attention given to the “national cultural and regional importance” of municipal and non-public institutions that demand a state subsidy (Performing Arts Institutions Act, 2014). The committee that decides on the subsidy has nine members, representatives of different ministries, performing arts employees, the performing arts administration and representatives of the community (civil society). The current subsidy system is still based on the so-called “reverse calculation”: subsidy depends on the budget pre-allocated to the Ministry of Culture, which is not calculated depending on the performance and needs of performing arts institutions. This method makes the level of subsidy generally constant, even if the audience numbers increases: in 2010, there were 907.243 theatre visits, and the total subsidies divided between 11 public institutions (plus the Estonian National Opera) and 16 non-public organizations amounted to 27.092.773 euro, the average subsidy being 69.89% of the budget of each subsidy recipient. In 2015, there were 1.170.642 visits (an increase in audience numbers of roughly 28%), 10 public institutions (plus the Estonian National Opera) and 16 private organizations to share a total subsidy budget of 31.820.001 euro (an increase of just 14%), representing an average of 64% of their respective budgets (statistika.teater.ee).

Estonia is the only one among the three countries which allows for multiannual subsidy agreements for public institutions – for Poland and Romania, the subsidy is annual, while there is a variety of annual and multiannual granting schemes for non-public organizations and one-time projects. In Romania, public performing arts institutions function according to the Law on Performing Arts and Concert Institutions (2001) and are financed through subsidies according to the Law on Public Finances. Thus, their commercial activities are limited to the ones directly related to their specific artistic status, and are VAT-exempt. The budget of an institution comprises the annual subsidy – meant to cover 100% of the salaries, utilities, maintenance of the premises, capital investments, and the expenses for goods and services for the “minimal plan” (a number of productions proposed by the manager and approved by the authority on an annual basis) – and the intakes of the institution, that are used for activities additional to the minimal plan. As in Estonia, in principal, the subsidy is meant to “compensate the performing arts institution for the difference between the actual cost of servicing a visitor and the estimated ticket

price" (the Estonian Performing Arts Institutions Act), but while Estonia offers a prospective *subsidy per spectator*, Romania calculates a retrospective *cost per spectator* (the financing authority evaluates a posteriori the actual money spent on each theatre visit, as the ratio between the subsidy and the audience numbers).

Thus, in Romania, the subsidy for performing arts institutions varies from roughly 70% of the budget to 90% (with higher percentages of revenues in the case of puppet and youth theatres, which have lower production expenses, higher numbers of performances per year and longer rates of exploitation of each production). In Poland, where performing arts institutions function according to the Act on Organizing and Running Cultural Activity (1991, latest revision 2011), the subsidy makes roughly 70% of the total budget and it's also decided by the funding authority. Initially, the activities of these institutions were considered commercial and subject to a number of taxes for all their activities; their status was changed later, but are not VAT-exempt.

Neither Estonia, Romania nor Poland has a legally established formula for calculating ticket prices, which are the exclusive attribute of the manager. In Romania, ticket prices vary dramatically among public institutions even within the same city, sometimes making public theatre performances less financially accessible than the non-subsidized productions. Different policies regarding the ticket prices are also one of the reasons for the variations in the level of subsidy, taking into consideration that most of the costs paid by the performing arts institutions are comparable (salaries; utilities; production fees and remunerations) and the occupancy rates are also similar (between 75 and 90%). The cost per spectator is equally comparable among institutions with similar profile (for example, drama theatres), raging in 2014-2015 between 35 and 50 euro. (It should be also mentioned that, facing the acknowledged limited possibilities for increasing the revenues and diversifying their sources, performing arts institutions haven't however been asked to reconsidered their production practices in order to reduce the costs, which reflects on a huge gap between the production conditions and costs in public institutions and those on the non-public sector.)

It has to be said that, as it was mentioned previously and contrary to the situation in Romania, in Estonia, state subsidy is also open to non-public theatres, which are called private, but are not commercial; musical projects and the so-called summer productions – a practice specific to Estonia among the three states analyzed here – may be lucrative/for-profit, but there is considered that there are no stable commercial performing arts organizations in the country (see Saro, 2009; ENL, 2015). The ratio between the subsidy available to non-public theatres and the one offered to public institutions favors the public sector: in 2014, 50% of all subsidized theatres were non-public, they gave 27% of the performances and sold 13% of all tickets, but received 8% of the state subsidies allocated by the Ministry of Culture (Statistics Estonia, quoted in Toome, 2015, p. 22). According to the statistics of the Estonian Theatre Agency (statistika.teater.ee), between 12 and 16 non-public performing arts organizations have received subsidy in the period 2010-2015. In fact, the percentage of subsidy within the annual budget of these organizations is comparable to that of public institutions (in 2015, 9 out of 16 received more than 50% subsidy).

In order to make performing arts accessible to theatregoers outside the urban centers, the Estonian Ministry of Culture finances a special program called "Theatre to Rural Areas", that makes a certain amount of funds available to every county, and performing arts institutions apply for a grant covering cost of transportation and rent in order to perform in the countryside. In fact, besides offering performing arts events to visitors in

regions with no permanent theatre, Estonia has a steady touring system, meant to keep audience figures high for small town institutions (touring is less current for theatres in Tallinn), and all state-subsidized theatres agreed on conditions and fees to use each other's venues within this touring system. The touring practice is considered to at least partially influence the aesthetics of productions (see Karulin, 2009), since a section of the repertory is created in order to satisfy travelling conditions and to be performed in technically deficient venues. An alternative approach within EU to offering theatre or dance events to audiences in rural/small town areas are project-based grant programmes that support a variety of artistic endeavours especially created for this context (such as community-based productions, performances created with the specific aim of being presented to these audiences, etc.).

Neither Romania nor Poland has a touring system (generally, touring, a common practice in the East-European block during the Communist times, is now less encountered within repertory systems in bigger countries, with bigger distances – see also Germany), which was replaced by festivals. In both countries, a large number of public theatres organize their own festival, with presenting their audience with a diversified offer as the main aim, but mobility in culturally deprived areas remains a problem.

The situation of operas and philharmonics is a special one within all three countries, due to the higher costs they generate and the general condition of an internationalized sector. The Estonian National Opera, for instance, functions according to a specific legal document – the National Opera Act (1998) –, it is a public institution, and it's the only one deemed "national" (its aims are to "advance Estonian national theatrical and musical culture, promote and introduce it in Estonia and abroad and to make the world's achievements of musical and theatrical culture accessible in Estonia"). Therefore, the National Opera is not subsidized based on audience numbers, but on the needs advanced by its manager in the annual budget. Similarly, in Romania, opera houses have subsidies considerably larger than national theatres, usually reaching 90% of the budget.

As we could see, all three states in question invest resources in supporting the public performing arts institutions through subsidies, which represent as a rule more than 50% of all costs – with special provisions for opera houses. The decentralization followed different paths, but it was considered instrumental to the sustainability of an audience-oriented system.



Fragment from the ballet "Spartacus"

(Mihai Potârniche)

THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The differences in the legal organization of performing arts institutions in the three countries generate similar differences in the appointment of the directors/managers, with variable approaches of managerial accountability, but the common element is the fixed-term management contract.

In Romania, since 2008, the managers of cultural public institutions are subject of a managerial contract, following a competition organized by the funding/governing authority according to the Law on the Management of Public Cultural Institutions. The competition includes a management project, based on a description of objectives set by the authority. These objectives follow public policy principles and a vision on the needs of the institution in a specific moment of development. The managerial contract is three to five year long, it is unlimitedly renewable, and the management is subject to annual evaluations, plus a final one; a poor evaluation may lead to the termination of the contract. The unlimited successive contracts of the current managers (some of whom have been running the institution for decades) are subject to criticism within the Romanian cultural milieu, even if the management of performing arts institutions also has a collegial dimension (as in Estonia, a management board and an artistic counsel accompany the manager in the process).

Among the three systems described here, Estonia is the only one with dual directorship – the responsibilities being shared between a manager and an artistic director. In both Romania and Poland, the law allows for such a position – of artistic director – but it is not required by law, few institutions actually have it, and even in those cases, in Romania, the legal frame doesn't allow for dual management (where the artistic director does exist, his/her role is limited to proposing artistic approaches on which the manager has the final decision; the one-person management concentrates both the financial and the artistic decision into one pair of hands).

In the Estonian performing arts institutions operating as foundations, the functions of the director are undertaken by the management board of the foundation; the artistic director may be a member of the management board or an outside person. A competition is legally required in the case of directors of public performing arts institutions that are not foundations (such as the two municipal theatres), and the managerial contract cannot exceed five years. Unlike in Romania, where the Law on Management requires the managers to have university degrees in the specialty of the institution, in Estonia there are no professional limitations for directors.

According to the Polish Act on Organizing and Running Cultural Activity, directors may be appointed via a competition, but the non-compulsory nature of this competition makes it, in fact, an exception. Directors are appointed by the funding authority, with the approval of the Ministry of Culture and following, at least in theory, the recommendations of artists' professional bodies, and since 2011 there is a seven-year cap to the term of office in directorial positions.

In 2012, the regional government of Lower Silesia (its capital is the city of Wrocław) made a move releasing the theatre managers from their contracts and changing the form of

administration of its theatres, in an attempt to put business managers in charge of them. The reason was a desire of the regional government to “make theatre profitable” on the model of private musicals producers, irrespective of the impact it might have had on the affordability of the tickets.

The move triggered a protest movement, under the slogan “Theatre is not a product/ The public is not a client”, demanding the preservation of the public service, and not for-profit, nature of performing arts institutions subsidized by the state, and the initiative was dropped. Lately, the legal freedom the funding authority has in naming the managers has led to a number of situations in which these nominations were strongly contested by the professional milieu.

Thus, how managers are appointed, their powers and the forms of management evaluation vary from country to country depending on the legal organization of public institutions and on different public policies regarding the principles of free competition, transparency and managerial accountability. While professional expertise in the field is more or less explicitly required, and the appointment through competition is the general rule only in Romania, some form of managerial experience and/or training is legally mandatory for directors in both Romania and Poland. While only Romania has a system of annual evaluations (that applies to all public cultural institutions), managers/directors in all three states are subject to a time-limited contract (even if renewable) with targets and objectives set by the funding authority, and the move in Poland is also towards higher degrees of managerial accountability (due to their legal organization as foundations, the supervision and evaluation of directors in public performing arts institutions in Estonia is the attribution of the management board, where the State or local funding authority has its own representatives).



Soroca fortress

(image source)

ARTISTIC PERSONNEL

The public performing arts institutions in all three countries discussed here have the permanent company of actors and technicians as the main form of organization, even if Romania has a number of theatres functioning as hosting or project-based institutions. The principle of the permanent company applies to all theatres, operas, philharmonics, and, in Poland, also to contemporary and modern dance institutions (an institutionally underdevelopment field in Romania, where the National Dance Center is the only dedicated institution, functioning as a promoting and funding body, and as project-based producer with no artistic personnel).

The artistic, technical and administrative personnel of public performing arts institutions in Romania is hired according to the Law on Performing Arts and Concert Institutions and is subject to the Law on the Unitary Pay of public employees (2010), which allows for rather similar employment conditions within the whole system (the personnel of the Bucharest institutions and those financed by the Ministry of Culture have a 25% supplement). Until 2016, the standard form of employment imposed by law was the permanent (open-ended) contract, but the law was amended to leave to the manager the power to opt for permanent or fixed-term contracts. The reason was the lack of dynamics of the permanent ensembles with actors employed "for life", the closing of the public theatres for young artists (public institutions have a fixed number of employees approved by the funding authority) and the difficulty to meet high artistic standards with a non-renewable ensemble. The situation was problematic (and still is) especially for operas and philharmonics, which are forced to work with non-permanent artistic staff in order to stay competitive on an international market. Fixed-term contracts don't have a recommended length, which raises the possibility for the managers to condition artists through contracts made on very short terms. (Also, the open-ended positions are legally subject to open competition, while the fixed-terms one are not, which gives serious leeway to managers in hiring actors on fixed-term contracts.)

There are a number of other contracting forms available for artistic collaborators, not regulated in terms of working conditions and level of pay, such as services contracts and author's rights contracts. The author's rights contracts are extremely used in Romania as the exclusive form of contracting (not additional to a services or working contract) even in the case of artists subject to neighboring rights – actors, directors, set-designers, singers... – because they carry less taxes and contributions, but they are offering very little protection, which leads to a high level of inequality between categories of artists and between those employed and freelancers.

In Estonia, according to the Performing Arts Institutions Act, the regular form of employment for artists is the fixed-term contract for a period not exceeding five years; the contract is renewable, but cannot exceed a regulated period and number of renewed contracts (in which case the law requires it to be transformed into a permanent one). Since Estonia is one of a handful of European states where artists and technicians have their own trade unions, this allows for the bargaining of collective contracts and minimum wages for the sector. The minimum wage for cultural workers employed in the public sector (and recommended for the non-public one) was set at 942 euro per month starting with 2017, in an effort to raise the wages in the cultural field closer to the national average.

Poland has a specific policy in the case of public performing arts institutions, especially theatres: only graduates of public arts universities or artists who pass a paid exam managed by the Association of Polish Stage Artists (ZASP) may be hired within public institutions. Similar to Romania, the wages are state-regulated according to the payment scheme for public servants and are below the national average (3,000 PLN/750 euro, with a national average in 2016 of 4,000 PLN/1.000 euro). The performing arts institutions in Poland have a high number of employees, whose salaries count for 65% of the budget, and the general form of employment is on full-time, open-ended contracts. A similar percentage of the salaries in the total budget is to be found in Romania. In both countries, artists represent roughly one-quarter of the personnel. In all the three countries, the wages in the cultural sector are below the national average, but the difference is kept at around 25%, with the State making efforts to reduce the gap (increasing the minimum wage in culture in Estonia, a 50% wage increase in the performing arts sector in Romania starting with 2017).

Organ Hall, Chisinau

(Mihai Potârniche)



NON-PUBLIC PERFORMING ARTS SYSTEMS

Estonia doesn't have a commercial performing arts system, and neither does Romania (it should be mentioned that Romania also lacks a musical theatre tradition, which serves as a reason on why it largely doesn't have a niche of project-based commercial productions, as Estonia has). Among the 150-180 non-public theatre venues and organizations in Poland, only a handful – in Warsaw – are self-sustained for-profit ones, usually associated to film and TV stars (the case of Krystyna Janda's Polonia Theatre, Janda being Andrzej Wajda's preferred leading actress in the 1970s and 1980s).

Estonia, Poland and Romania all have project-based public funding programmes (at the level of the Ministry of Culture – in Poland –, under the form of cultural endowments – in Estonia and Romania –, fed through special taxes on gambling, etc., as well as at local level, and at the level of various other institutions and authorities). A 1998 Romanian law makes it mandatory for all local and regional authorities to fund cultural projects through an annual open call (which is also open to projects of public institutions, outside of their minimal plan), whereas the National Endowment for Culture (financed through taxes on gambling, erotic publications, etc., the main contributor being the National Lottery, with 2% of its annual revenue) has two calls per year and is now allowing for multiannual grants. In 2012, however, the funds for the non-public sector represented 10% of the total allocations for culture, the public institutions receiving 90%. In the last three years, however, there was an increasing tendency of public institutions, especially theatres, to co-produce and share resources with non-public organizations, through project partnerships or dedicated programmes. Poland has the most sustained practice of supporting the non-public sector, through a multiannual grants programme managed by the Ministry of Culture, and local and regional authorities supporting performing arts organizations both through project-based and structural funding, but financial support in the form of subsidy is only available for non-public organizations in Estonia.

Because of a deregulated university system that allows for enrollment figures in performing arts (mainly acting) well above the labor market needs, Romania has the most extensive non-public theatre sector. While in the case of musicians, there is a growing international market, which absorbs part of the Romanian graduates, and musical university training is reasonably competitive professionally and less expensive than in most developed countries, the freezing imposed on new hires in the public system (since 2010 and partially still in force) and the economic crisis that has affected the TV and advertising industry have put a pressure on independent artists, the result being a growing number of independent initiatives, a diversification of funding methods, and a growing pressure on the State to regulate further the statute of professional artists because of the equally growing precarisation.

WORKING CONDITIONS FOR INDEPENDENT CULTURAL WORKERS

Until 2013, in Poland cultural workers benefited from a “50% income tax-free for artists” provision – limited starting with that year to workers earning less than (roughly) 22,000 euro annually (taxable income – after the deduction of social and health contributions), approximately the average annual wage in the country, and changing the qualification conditions. The deduction actually works as a tax allowance – it is subject to the annual tax return, and not deducted at the moment of the tax income payment (*Compendium: Poland*). The system of income taxation is progressive – 18% for an annual income of less than 22,000 euro, 32% for a higher income –, artists usually qualifying for the lower tax. There are no specific provisions for independent cultural workers.

Related (neighboring) rights, as copyright-type rights not covered by the Berne Convention, are recognized in a smaller number of countries (signatories of the Rome Convention) than the author’s rights, and it is notorious the United States situation, where related rights and especially performers’ rights for unfixed works are largely unrecognized (the relationship between artists and producers making the object of the Labor Code). In Romania, related (neighboring) rights have equal fiscal status with author’s rights and all contracts made on the basis of the Copyright and Author’s Rights Law benefit from a 40% tax deduction. Since 2017, social and health contributions are due on all such contracts; the social contribution doesn’t cover unemployment, accident benefits or medical leave, and it represents only one-third of the legally standard contribution towards pension, the same as the compulsory contribution for self-employed individuals (who have however the option to pay the contributions towards the full pension). For the time being, there isn’t any prediction on the calculation of the pension for artists who contributed mainly or exclusively from author’s rights contracts, which is the case for the vast majority of freelancers. Romania has a very high taxation of labor, which makes working contracts unappealing for non-public organizations.

According to the Creative Persons and Artistic Associations Act (passed in 2004), which recognizes performing as a liberal profession (it is not legally considered as such in Romania), the artistic associations recognized by the Estonian Ministry of Culture grant financial support, in the amount of the minimum wage, for performing artists in the condition of unemployment for at least one month. The support may be granted, by a designated commission, for a period of six months, the artists may apply again only after two years, and the funds for these allowances are covered by the Ministry of Culture.

None of the three countries concerned has a fully developed social and health protection scheme dedicated to cultural workers that recognize the unique nature of artistic activity, but all of them offer, in various forms and degrees, tax breaks and/or deductions, specific types of contracts (especially the preference for fixed-terms working contracts in Estonia) and minimal insurance plans that don’t place additional burden on those concerned.



The Candle of Gratitude, Soroca, Moldova

[\[image source\]](#)

PRIVATE FUNDING. SPONSORSHIP AND DONATIONS

In Poland, the Income Tax Act (1993, amended in 2003) allows for deductions of up to 10% on donations made by legal persons for “public good purposes”, and up to 6% of income in the case of individuals. Additionally, individuals may deduct 1% of their income tax as donation for a chosen public organization (the donation is paid through the tax revenue offices). A similar law exists in Romania, allowing for the deduction of 2% of the income tax due by individuals and 20% of the income tax due by companies. Both in Poland and Romania, the beneficiary of these donations (a form of redirecting a certain percent of the due income tax) may be any registered non-profit organization (NGO), while in Estonia an income tax deduction not exceeding 3% of total payments subject to social tax (except fringe benefits), or 10% of the profit of companies, and 5% of individuals’ taxable income is available only for registered NGOs given a special status by the Ministry of Finance.

While the system is not very efficient for culture in Romania because of the lack of general information about this facility, the lack of promotion know-how and resources in the cultural independent sector, and the extremely large number of eligible organizations², in Estonia it is considered that the lack of awareness and the lack of criteria for granting the required specific status to the NGOs are preventing the use of this fiscal tool for financing culture (see *Compendium: Estonia*).

Additionally, the Romanian Sponsorship Law (1994; most recently amended in 2015) and the Tax Code allow for a tax break on corporate sponsorship and donations for up to 0.5% of the annual turnover but not exceeding 20% of the profit tax, in the form of a fiscal credit (the donation is directly subtracted from the due tax, not from the taxable profit).

Generally, since public institutions are also eligible for corporate sponsorship (but cannot be the recipients of income tax deductions or fiscal credits), on the long term, they have attracted most of the private support for cultural activity, both in Poland and in Romania. In the performing arts sector, his support went towards organization of festivals or specific high-profile productions.

The universal practice of corporate sponsorship is based on mainly supporting large-scale events and/or high-visibility projects (in some cases, new, original ones, which could single out the sponsor and strengthen its market profile), and in both Romania and Poland this form of private support goes mostly for charities (in Poland, only 7% of total sponsorship funds are directed to culture). This trend has however been reversed in Romania recently with a number of corporations (especially banks) getting committed in supporting new performing arts initiatives (both productions and the opening of venues), and brands funding their own cultural online publications. The move has come in the context of an expanding independent performing arts sector that was already addressing a middle-class audience highly educated and with financial possibilities above average, and it remains to be seen if this investment is a long-term one.

² It does work for big-scale charities.

In other words, all three countries have taken measures for encouraging sponsorship and donations, through a variety of tax mechanism (deductions, tax breaks, redirecting a percentage of the due income tax), but this hasn't necessary lead to a consistent contribution for culture, irrespective of the economic development of each country. The decision to make relevant investment in culture remains incidental, related to specific brand policies, and impossible to be taken into consideration as a factor for cultural growth.

"Mihai Eminescu" National Theater in Chisinau

(Mihai Potârniche)



REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Legislation

The performing arts sector is regulated through a series of laws: the Law on Culture (1999), the Law of Theatre and Concert Institutions (TCIs), generally known as the Law of Theatres, the Copyright Law, the Law on philanthropy and sponsorship. Generally, the legislation regulates almost exclusively the public sector, and some of these provisions are difficult to reinforce (for lack of funding and legislative coordination, as in the case of the Law on Culture and the Law on Theatres). There is little legislation regarding the non-public sector, and there aren't significant provisions concerning performing arts companies and artists (or cultural workers in general) neither in the Tax Code, the Civil Code, or the Social and Health Insurance Codes.

Audience participation and audience-oriented strategies

In terms of audience, performing arts in Moldova have a low participation rate (14.5% of the population, the last available statistics in 2011, half of the EU average). At the same time, the Theatre and Concert Institutions (TCIs) don't offer the minimal conditions for the access of persons with disabilities and might be considered ethnically-segregated: among the non-musical theatres, only the Licurici Republican Theatre (one of the only two puppet theatres in the country, both in Chişinău) offers performances in both Russian and Romanian and none of the Moldovan theatres surtitles performances in either Russian nor Romanian. The repertory of the performing arts institutions replicates this segregated approach, and there are no active collaborations between the Russian-speaking and the Romanian-speaking artistic communities, which is likely to limit the participation potential of the audience. This appreciation concerns institutional collaboration (co-productions, exchanges, co-organization of events, or other forms of sharing/putting together resources), not situations in which individual artists (Russian-speaking and Romanian-speaking directors) work in different institutions, exercising their right to work³.

In addition to the lack of interest and means for audience development policies, the educational component is also missing (a challenge identified in documents of national cultural policy such as the "Culture 2020" Strategy): arts (drama) are not included in schools curricula and there are no programmes concerning arts in education or audience development.

In what concerns music, Moldova has a consistent number of primary and secondary arts schools with musical profiles, and music is part of the national curriculum (with a focus on developing musical abilities, but the policy is now slowly tilting towards musical education, at least in primary schools). The focus on professional training instead of musical education also affects participation.

³ (Institutional/organizational) collaboration supposes shared leadership and accountability for planning, implementation, and evaluation of a joint effort, and is a „mutually beneficial and well defined relationship between two or more organizations to achieve common goals” (see Mattessich, P. W. & Monsey, B. R. (1992). *Collaboration: What makes it work*. St. Paul, MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation). Individual artists and institutions that employ/commission them enter a working relationship, not a collaborative one.

Financing and management of Theatre and Concert Institutions (TCIs). The model of state enterprises.

All performing arts institutions in Moldova are legally organized as state enterprises – for-profit entities, which the State (generally, through the Ministry of Culture) partially subsidizes. According to Law on Theatres, the State subsidizes 60% of the expenses of the local/regional such institutions, and 80% in the case of national/republican institutions. The extremely centralized system in the country makes that almost all TCIs are national or republican. In fact, what the subsidy regularly covers are the salaries, and the state enterprises are expected to self-finance the rest of the expenses (production, artistic equipment, utilities, etc., including the costs related to the venue, in many cases, heritage buildings for which usually no capital expenses are covered). Most of the self-financing comes from the leasing of additional spaces owned by the TCI/state enterprise, the total income depending on the nature and number of these spaces⁴. Also, the way in which the subsidy for salaries is allocated allows for the rerouting of funds for other types of expenses: the subsidy is based on a list of personnel that in the vast majority of cases exceeds the actual number of employees:

- In 2015, the “Mihai Eminescu” National Theatre had 237 “planned” employees and 155 “real” ones;
- the Luceafărul Theatre had 129 to 96;
- the “Eugene Ionescu” Theatre had 123 to 48,5 (including part-time contracts)⁵.

The theatres and the opera have preserved their own workshops (woodwork, upholstery, costumes, etc., which also work on private orders, more or less unofficially, providing additional income for the workers), keeping the sets and costumes production at lower costs, and part of the building maintenance, marketing and promotion expenses is covered through partnership and sponsorship (depending on personal connections, since the system of corporate tax deductions doesn't make donations and sponsorship necessarily attractive, and many times the support is offered in kind). The rerouting of salaries budgets usually covers heating expenses, an important issue since the country depends on Russian gas, that puts forward the long-term challenge of reconsidering the heating system of public institutions and the use of the vast, Soviet-type, spaces. There is a special situation with the Jocul (Play) dance ensemble, a large professional folk dance company with an impressive international CV from the Soviet times, for which the Ministry of Culture subsidizes full-time salaries (the subsidy is set at 80% of total expenditure) but which doesn't have a performing venue, only a rehearsing space, and performs extremely rarely in Moldova or abroad, for most of the year, the members of the ensemble carrying on independent activities. According to the Ministry of Culture, the institution is currently under the special administration of the Ministry in connection with its situation.

Since the funding authority and the legal framework allow for this scheme of financing, the form of organization as for-profit state enterprise has been preferred over the years to that of the “public institution”.

According to the Moldovan legal and budgetary system, which is a mixt one (with a still

⁴ They may be distinct of the performance venue/the premises – former workshops or storage buildings (“Mihai Eminescu” National Theatre in Chişinău), the inner court or the garden (Chişinău Opera) – or not (the “Mihai Eminescu” Theatre has a casino in its own building and a adjoining café; the theatre in Bălţi rents offices to a travel agency and other businesses, etc.).

⁵ “Analysis of TCIs activity in 2015”, Ministry of Culture.

relevant component of planned economy), a “public institution” (the form of organization of museums, for instance) has 100% subsidy and by consequence, cannot retain any revenue (through ticket selling, partnership, sponsorship or donations); such revenues – called “special means” – go directly to the state budget, from which they may or may not be reallocated to the said institution. Being, at least in theory, for-profit, commercial enterprises, TCIs can directly use their own revenues, these “special means”, but a 20% VAT is levied on this extra-budgetary income (except for ticket revenues), while public institutions are income tax-exempt (mainly, because they don’t have revenues). This fiscal statute is similar to the one of performing arts institutions in Poland (VAT from the sale of goods and services and on advertising), and contrary to the one in Romania (where public institutions are VAT-exempt⁶).

State enterprises also give a borderline discretionary power to the directors. Since there are no set objectives for the TCIs, no management plans (also, there are no unions) and no performance evaluation, they have total freedom over the exploitation of the TCIs assets, the use of the subsidy, the actual size of the staff, and the repertory.

According to the Law on Theatres and its accompanying Regulations on TCIs (2003)⁷, in national TCIs, the director proposes an artistic director and an economic director, then appointed by the Ministry of Culture, who are both directly subordinated to the director (he can also end their contracts). (Legally, the Regulations appear to contradict the provisions of the Law on Theatres, which states, in the article 22, paragraph 4, that „the artistic leader of the TCI is appointed through competition, with the approval of the founder, by the director“.) Each TCI also has an artistic council, with consultative powers, composed of the director (directors, in the case of national institutions), other employees and 40% experts and representatives of creative guilds. The members of the council are, again, proposed by the director and appointed by the financing authority. In fact, both the artistic director and the members of the artistic council being proposed by the director, and the council having only consultative powers, this management structure⁸ doesn’t really lead to a balance/distribution of decision-making powers, or to collegial leadership. The powers of the artistic director and the artistic council are limited to proposing, while the full power of decision rests with the director. According to the chapter XI of the Regulations, the activity reports of the institution are addressed to and assessed only by the funding authority (the only authority of control in this case).

The lack of coordination between different provisions in the Moldovan legislation makes it for the TCIs to function simultaneously according to different, not openly interconnected, sometimes-contradictory laws. Hence, according to the Law on State Enterprises (1994, latest revision 2016), TCIs, being themselves state enterprises, also have management boards. Their powers are partially in conflict with the special law (the Law on Theatres) – according to the Law on State Enterprises, it’s the management board that proposes the director (the same with their assessment powers, which overlaps with those of the funding authority in the case of TCIs). The management board is generally composed of representatives of the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Finances, and the employees (the structure is designed for for-profit commercial state companies), and its role is one of financial/economic supervision. It has to be noticed that the powers and functioning of these management boards, as legally stipulated, are structurally inadequate and inefficient for performing arts institutions, since their activity is not an economic, for-profit one, and such boards don’t have the expertise or the powers to assess

6 Excepted for some commercial activities where the VAT exemption “could lead to a distortion of the market”.

7 lex.justice.md/index.php?action=view&view=doc&lang=1&id=298375

8 Which partially mirrors elements of the Romanian management structure in performing arts institutions.

the said activity in its specifics (including the indicators for management performance/success).

There are also no restrictions or regulations about the artistic activity and the respective financial compensation of the directors (including artistic directors) themselves. In certain situations (like the fees for international touring), there is no control on the use of the revenues (which may go mostly directly to the artists⁹). The funding authorities don't set any priorities or cultural policy objectives to the subsidized bodies, in terms of the public service they are required to provide.

The network of local/regional theatres is almost non-existent and works in precarious conditions. Only five theatres exist outside Chişinău¹⁰ and only three are under local administration – one theatre in Ceadâr-Lunga, one in Comrat (both in the Gagăuzia Autonomous Region), and one in Soroca. The theatre in Ceadâr-Lunga doesn't have its own venue, and the one in Soroca doesn't have a permanent company. The other two theatres outside Chişinău are in Bălţi (the second largest city in the country) and Cahul, both under the administration of the Ministry of Culture, as there are two Russian-speaking drama theatres in Chişinău – the Chekhov Theatre and the „Rose Street” („Pe strada Trandafirilor”) – a studio institution – Theatre. The poor level of fiscal and political decentralization is due to the very reduced financial resources of the local authorities, which depend on transfers from the state budget (85% of their budgets come from the national budget, according to the National Strategy on Decentralization, 2012). The cultural decentralization is also very relative, with little attention paid to the specifics of different communities and with directors making the repertory according to unclear policies. This is the most obvious in the case of Bălţi, a city with 43% of Russian-speakers where the only theatre performs only in Romanian, with no translation available and with a repertory comprising exclusively of traditional Romanian and Moldovan texts. The locally governed theatre in Ceadâr-Lunga, instead, performs in Gagauzian and Russian, the population in the city being 72% Gagauzian, almost 10% Russian and only 3% Moldovan (again, as an autonomous region, the area is as culturally decentralized as possible in the country).

The Chişinău Culture Department is responsible for a number of 40 cultural entities, most of them being public libraries but also six art schools (three focused on music, one on visual arts and two on arts in general), one puppet theatre and one drama/comedy theatre („Satiricus”, which is also a “national theatre”, having an ambiguous administrative status), one formerly independent small theatre, with no venue, company or repertory, and a significant number of dance companies (including one for children), music bands (pop and jazz) and a folk music orchestra, for which the City Hall covers the salaries. The situation is entirely atypical in terms of cultural policy and efficiency in the public expenditure, since none of these music bands is a public institution and all have an independent activity. The other performing arts institutions in Chişinău are under the authority of the Ministry of Culture, and their total number is 2/3 that of public performing arts institutions in Warsaw (Poland), a city six times larger.

Generally speaking, taking into consideration the vast number of diverse performing arts institutions receiving annual subsidies (including privately founded theatres and other organizations taken over by the State or the Chişinău City Hall) and the total lack of control or public policy objectives set to them, combined with the lack of regulation for independent cultural activity and the inadequacy between the large number of employed artists, administrative and technical staff, the public service the TCIs provide, and the

⁹ The same was happening in Romania also, until a recent change in the respective legal provisions.

¹⁰ Tiraspol, the capital of the safe-proclaimed republic of Transnistria, has its own theatre but the region is not under de-facto Moldovan administration.



Cucuteni-Trypillian culture Neolithic and Stone Age Collection, National Museum of History of Moldova

[Image source](#)

level of the salaries (less than half the national average, sometimes below the minimum living wage), it may be considered that in the Republic of Moldova, the subsidy serves primarily in order to offer a form of social protection for cultural workers while they earn most of their income independently. According to the law, both the artistic and the technical staff have, in theory, full-time, fixed-term (up to five years) contracts according to the Law on TCIs, which allows for an exception to the general rule of contracting in the public sector, and mostly full-time, open-ended contract with very low wages, supplemented through various mechanisms in the hands of the director alone. The director has discretionary power over the hiring, termination of contracts and much of the artistic activity of the personnel.

Artistic education

The Music, Visual Arts and Theatre Academy in Chişinău is the only institution providing university training in the field of theatre and dance, while the Bălţi University offers training in music and musical pedagogy.

Officially, the Moldovan universities follow the Bologna system, with 4-year BA programmes and 1.5-years MA programmes. It is however questionable how autonomous universities really are, since the number of students is decided through state order, and universities don't decide independently on the level of student taxes. Officially, the enrolment of acting students is decided upon the request of one or another state-run theatre, and the educational process takes the form of master classes run by one state theatre director or another, which doesn't allow the professionalization of the teaching staff. Admission for acting and dance/ choreography classes is partially conditioned by gender, the politics of the Academy being to admit a larger number of men than women, following the norms of classical repertoire, but against the contemporary trend in the region (the "feminization" of the arts is a acknowledged tendency associated with the precarization of artistic professions).

The Chişinău Academy doesn't offer training in stage directing, and except for a number of artists who graduated from various programmes in USSR or the Russian Federation, it is fairly to consider that Moldova doesn't have the institution of formally trained directors, directing being a side activity of actors. In fact, the Law on TCIs doesn't count stage directors and conductors among the artistic personnel; they are considered "creative staff", alongside choreographers, set-designers, literary managers, stage managers, sound designers. The Academy does offer formation for "estrade" (variété, vaudeville, musical) theatre directing, a Soviet reminiscence that basically trains directors for TV entertainment programs. Except for acting, formations are usually offered once every two, three or four years, the participation in admissions is declining, and the MA programmes have huge difficulties in finding students (as in Romania, the Bologna system is not correlated with the labor market, and a MA diploma doesn't mean anything in terms of employability or level of pay).

Except for theatre studies, the education is vocational, organized in the form of passing on a tradition from masters to pupils and following Soviet-era curricula. Students are not offered formal possibilities to work in professional environments during their studies¹¹, and the range of techniques they are introduced to is limited. The low attractiveness of acting or dance/choreography programmes is due not only to their actual quality but

¹¹ Students are not prohibited to work in professional institutions (they have a free right to work), and they do auditions and castings or are invited by the directors of theatres to take part in different productions. This doesn't mean that the universities per se offer this possibility, as part of their professional training, for *all* students, on a regular, predictable and/or institutionalized manner, through partnerships or other forms of institutional collaboration with performing arts institutions.

also to the availability of similar programmes on a much larger market for graduates, which is Romania (that offers tuition-free admission in all its universities and scholarships for citizens of the Republic of Moldova, not to mention the number of Moldovans with dual citizenship).

The situation of the Bălți University is interesting since it appears to offer high-level training in music and music pedagogy and to maintain constant admission figures, while not appearing to be interested in expanding and reaching international studentship. It attracts students mainly from the Northern part of the country, but the interest in university-level musical training is also high in Chişinău, due to the large number of arts schools and colleges focused on music and the post-graduation opportunities on an international labor market.

Both in Chişinău and Bălți, the infrastructure of the universities is rather poor and in need of urgent intervention.

The condition of independent cultural workers, non-public organizations and the fiscal context

Since Moldova doesn't use the common European terminology in the field, it should be mentioned that the local (fiscal/tax) legislation understands by "independent activity" all forms of commercial activities run by individuals, artistic activity by non-employed individuals being defined as "professional services" (which include all types of professional work except for legal services). Self-employment is defined in Moldova as "individual entrepreneurship", it makes the subject of state registration and doesn't have any limitation in terms of the type of activity the individual entrepreneur is allowed to practice, as long as (s)he can do it "in his or her own name and on his or her risk". The individual entrepreneur is not considered a legal person, but may employ other people and conduct commercial activities. In fact, the legal form of individual entrepreneurship is mostly used by small-sized businesses (cafés, minimarkets, or repair shops, for instance), since it is easier to manage.

The income tax for individuals (including individual entrepreneurs) is progressive – 7% for an annual income up to 1,470 euro and 18% for an income exceeding this threshold¹², with a personal tax break of 501 euro for each taxpayer, while the social and health contributions vary according to the working status of the taxpayer.

Basically, within the Moldovan system (which is entirely based on the presumption of full-time employment as the norm), the employers and the employees owe health insurance contributions in the amount of 8% of the monthly salary, while unemployed individuals owe a flat contribution of 191 euro annually (95.5 if paid before March 31st of the current year, for individual entrepreneurs and a number of other categories, workers in the cultural field excluded). The social contribution for individuals is, again, flat – 331 euro annually, and goes toward the minimum pension for age limit, with no possibility for higher voluntary contributions¹³. The annual social and health contributions for an unemployed worker who is not registered as an individual entrepreneur at the level of the year 2016 would have been of 522 euro (426.5 euro if registered), which amounted to ca 33% of the average annual income (in fact, salary) in the field of performing arts in Moldova (1,655 euro)¹⁴, part of which is payable in one instalment, plus 7% in income

¹² Tax Code, art. 15.

¹³ Data valid for the year 2016; art. 6, Law for the state social insurance budget for the year 2016.

¹⁴ Calculated for the first 10 months of 2016, according to the National Bureau of Statistics, <http://statbank.statistica.md>.

tax (after applying the personal tax break, the income doesn't exceed the threshold for the lower tax). At the same time, the financial burden for one employee raises to 37% of the paid salary in contributions, plus 7%-18% in income tax. Moldova legally allows short-term working contracts for creative workers but not for technicians, producers, PR specialists, etc., short-term contracting being tightly regulated and limited to "temporary works and services". In between short-term contracts, workers are offered no social benefits or health insurance.

The bureaucratic procedures for registering as an unemployed (independent, according to the European legislation) worker, the flat (but otherwise rather high, compared to the economic level of the cultural field) contributions irrespective of the actual income, the payment of contributions in one instalment and the limited benefits offered by this social insurance (pension only) make the condition of independence rather unattractive for performing artists in Moldova and doesn't have the potential to help develop the sector.

The flat tax on author's rights and related rights income is higher than the minimum income tax – 12%, with no tax due by beneficiaries over 60 years old. This tax exemption is most likely related to the general policy of not taxing the retirees, irrespective of the level and/or sources of their income. The Moldovan Copyright Law (the current version, adopted in 2010) makes it possible for the fiscal legislation to conflate the rights on intellectual property and copyright with author's rights and related (neighbouring) rights. The tax itself is called "royalty tax"¹⁵, it also includes revenues from the exploitation of natural resources and the use of non-material actives, and there are no social or health contributions due for it. Thus, Moldova treats fiscally any copyright-type income as being generated by the licensing or transfer of rights. Even if the legal definition of the "performer" refers to the "actor, singer, musician, dancer, conductor or any other person who presents, recites, sings, play, dance or perform in any way a creative work, folkloric expressions or any type of performance, including variété, folkloric, circus, or puppetry shows" (it should be noted that the definition doesn't explicitly include the stage directors and directing), the chapter concerning the related rights only mentions audiovisual (i.e. fixed) works.

Hence, the legal options for independent artists to work in the field of performing arts are either as individual entrepreneurs or as providers of professional services (service contracts under the Civil Code), with limited social protection and no professional tax facility. Under the current legislation, the subjects of copyright-type rights are overtaxed, and the available forms of contracts are not offering a real protection of performing artists' rights.

As for commercial or non-profit performing arts initiatives, there are no specific regulations for them. Only the Ministry of Culture and the City of Chişinău offer project grants for non-public organizations. In 2014, the Government passed a Decision legislating an annual competition for project-based cultural grants. The total sum granted for projects in all artistic and cultural fields for the year 2017 was cca 94.000 euro. The Chişinău City Hall has a year-round grant programme also open to public institutions and a non-transparent procedure to allocate the funds. In 2015, the Ministry of Culture signed an agreement to join the Creative Europe Programme, the EU programme for the cultural, creative and audiovisual sectors, allowing Moldovan creative and cultural organizations to participate in joined projects. For the time being, the Government hasn't established a form of financially supporting the co-funding of such projects, which makes it difficult

¹⁵ Tax Code, art. 12, definition of royalty.

for local operators to find the required resources for their contribution in such projects as partners.

The law on philanthropy and sponsorship (2002) was unworkable for a number of years, since the country had no profit or income tax for companies and a significant personal tax break (contrary to the 16% income/profit flat tax in Romania, with specific deductions and breaks for sponsoring and personal donations). Currently, the income tax for companies is 12% (15% under certain conditions). The tax deduction for donations and sponsorship is included into the Tax Code and is applied to a maximum of 5% of the annual taxable income. There are no directly available (if any) data on the impact of philanthropy on the cultural sector.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A subsidized system of performing arts institutions; • A repertorial system with permanent venues and permanent ensembles; • A professional body of artistic and technical personnel; • A potentially good network of performing arts venues; • A well-represented amateur movement; • An established network of arts schools; • High-standard professional education in the music field; • Affordable ticket prices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdated infrastructure and technical equipment; • Untargeted subsidy; • Very low salaries; • Poor management skills and administration capabilities; • Lack of management accountability; • Lack of promotion and communication tools; • Lack of opportunities for professional life long training; • Lack of opportunities for emerging artists; • Excessive centralization; • Lack of interest in developing educational projects (arts in education, life long learning) and supporting participation within the professional institutions; • Lack of interest in audience development and lack of information about the existing audience; • Lack of repertorial diversity, leading to a limited artistic offer.

<i>Opportunities</i>	<i>Threats</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest of international donors in supporting projects on the independent performing arts scene; • International collaboration, touring and co-production potential; • Strong cultural and language connections to neighboring Romania; • Access (in partnership) to European project-based funding; • Engagement of performing arts in other sectors (social, educational); • International potential for the Moldovan musical education (especially at university level); • A rural/small town old infrastructure that could provide potential for touring, residencies, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of specific legal/fiscal framework for independent and/or private performing arts companies; • Lack of legal/fiscal recognition of independent cultural workers; • Limited access to sponsorship; • Generally deficient legislation; • High rate of professional migration (brain/skill drain, especially in the music field); • Limited engagement and resources of local/regional authorities in supporting performing arts; • Pressure on public institutions for immediate market success.

A number of local reports¹⁶, authored by experts in public policies, are suggesting, as a solution for the current situation of culture in general, the introduction of a free market system, based on the free competition between public institutions and between them and private companies. The only impediment identified is the lack of know-how/expertise in the field of “designing truly attractive cultural products”. Different strategy meetings with stakeholders (TCI directors, experts, representatives of the Ministry of Culture) came up with similar propositions: the liberalization of the TCIs, financing based on market competitiveness, supporting entrepreneurship “mentality”, limiting the subsidy, for some TCIs, to utilities expenses and maintenance of the premises.

It should be noticed that the Strategy on the Development of Culture “Culture 2020” (adopted in 2014), which lay out the State vision on this issue (the reform of the system through marketization), focuses exclusively on liberalization and market-oriented reforms, a move similarly undertaken by the Central and East European current members of the EU in the early 1990s, which proved to be inefficient and was abandoned afterwards. The Strategy also uses references to creative and cultural industries that are not attached to a definition and don’t take into consideration the divisions within the three sector model (creative and cultural industries belong to the private, for-profit sector exclusively). Unfortunately, this model of the free market generally proposed doesn’t take into consideration the mere conditions of existence of the performing arts current landscape in the Republic of Moldova:

- *The private/non-public (for-profit or non-profit) sector is non-existent.*

Even if the law allows, as a general rule, private cultural operators to have similar rights, protection and access to public funding and resources as the TCIs, in fact, no such initia-

¹⁶ Analytical note on the Law of the state budget 2013: advocacy for a better financing of priority sectors”, Expert-Grup, Chişinău 2012.

tive has ever benefited of any facility or support. All independent productions or venues (the only one surviving on the long term is the Laundry Theatre/Teatru Spălătorie) has existed with the support of international donors, international institutions, international touring and on irregular forms of self-financing through non-cultural activities (the Laundry Theatre is also a bar), because in fact there isn't any legal framework for such initiatives.

One aspect identified by the artists working on this kind of (rare) private initiatives is the impossibility to attract teams of actors and technicians on constant terms of collaboration, since they cannot be offered a predictable income or any social protection.

- *Due to the lack of private initiatives and the general approach of directly subsidizing TCIs as a form of social protection of artists, any liberalization within the present systemic and legislative framework is likely to generate a social crisis and to increase the precarisation of cultural workers.*

Moldova doesn't have a law for self-employed artists/cultural workers, it offers no tax deductions/breaks, unemployment benefits nor other forms of social protection that take into consideration the discontinued nature of artistic activity, and the non-public sector is dramatically underdeveloped. The public institutions are not the main employers in the field but the only ones, and all form of reorganization has to take into consideration the impact on the current employees. This impact is known to be higher under a "shock therapy" approach.

- *In fact, TCIs act as privately run organizations with steady public support unaccounted for, and with full financial and artistic decision powers in the hand of politically backed directors.*

Basically, for the last decade, the survival of performing arts institutions has already depended on a form of entrepreneurship specific for countries in transition: personal connections with the business community and direct political support for the directors. Since the state subsidy only covers half of the real expenditure of TCIs, and the institutions are unable to offer motivating salaries from the subsidy, TCIs directors are using the lack of regulation, the imprecise legal framework and the general tolerance for financial improvisation to keep their staff in place.

Example: *The musical institutions, especially the Chişinău Opera, supplement their revenues through international touring – but, unlike in the case of similar national-level operas in Romania, for instance, they do it outside the system of festivals, galas or special events. According to the general manager, the performances in Western Europe or Asia are contracted through impresario agencies, and the fees are regularly meant to supplement the artists' income. Due to the recognized high level of musical education in Moldova, there is a strong potential of international mobility for artists, and keeping them in the ensemble on longer terms requires constant financial acrobatics, and a large part of the artistic activity is oriented towards increasing the wages and not the Moldovan audience.*

- *The citizens of the Republic of Moldova spend ca 1% of their income on cultural activities, less than any EU country, which correlates with a very low participation in such activities.*

In the absence of any relevant and consistent survey on Moldovan practices of cultural consumption, it is difficult to estimate the ratio between price, cultural education and

interest in the current landscape of low consumption and low participation. However, it is contrary to basic notions of cultural strategy to believe that a pure marketing effort would be able to make Moldovans spend more money and more time in performing arts events.



TEATRUL NAȚIONAL "Vasile Alecsandri"

Casa

Vasile Alecsandri National Theatre, Bălți, Moldova

[\(image source\)](#)

NECESSARY BASIC REFORMS

As a starting point, which influences the long-term effects of any reform, we should notice the specifics of culture, and especially performing arts, in Moldova, which have to be taken into account in the national (or, more accurate, state) cultural strategy, even if the current one circumvents them. For the last two decades, the Republic of Moldova has been “haunted” by an identity problem – unlike Estonia (that focuses its cultural policy around the question of language and ethnicity), Moldova shares its linguistic and ethnic identity, and most of its cultural one, with Romania, with which, however, it has lost administrative unity almost a century ago. The culture produced during Soviet times is rejected and under-considered because of unresolved post-colonial resentment, while the post-Soviet one struggles to find its form in the shadow of the contemporary Romanian arts. The professional training in the performing arts, the production modes, the acting and directing, the repertorial choices are all touched by this ambiguity between a culture that is an accessory of the larger Romanian one and a culture that acknowledge the influence of several decades of Soviet, Russian-speaking occupation, including on the social fabric and social practices. The unpredictable reversing of two contradictory national policies (the “pro-Romania/EU” option and the “pro-Russia” one) that also reflect on identity issues such as the language (considered either Romanian or Moldovan, according to political interests) makes it difficult for the State to assume clear cultural policies, leaving the public field of culture at the mercy of competing party politics. This affects creativity, the professionalization of the artistic field, and sustainability. The development of the performing arts sector is hindered by identity issue fights (Moldova hasn’t managed yet to find a strategy of coexistence between the Romanian-speaking and the Russian-speaking communities), lack of resources, lack of connection with the contemporary society, and institutionalized corruption (which makes very unlikely that the authorities actually implement public policies and exercise financial control over public institutions).

The following measures are interconnected and interdependent and they should be taken as such – the random selection of only one measure or another will not result in effective change. The order of the proposed reforms follows the urgency of the intervention but also its time feasibility and complexity, and their positive result depends on the cooperation between regulating authorities and the professional sector, but also on a different approach of the inherent close connections between the most relevant actors in the sector and the responsible authorities.

- 1. A clear definition (through specific legislation) of public performing arts institutions, their purposes and minimal conditions of existence, irrespective of their subordination, and clear conditions for the founding/ taking over of new ones (also taking into consideration the urgent need to eliminate the legislative overlapping).***

The types and forms of institutions and organizations that the Chişinău City Hall subsidizes, for instance, don’t follow any clear public policy principle. They are underfinanced, and their activity is not subject to quantitative and qualitative objectives, nor to the as-

assessment of the funding authority. Such situations lead to the conclusion that decisions on supporting a certain artistic initiative or another are purely subjective and susceptible of corruption. The state (and the local authorities) should limit the type of institutions it subsidizes and offer to the rest of the cultural organizations it is willing to support alternative financial schemes.

2. The reconsideration of the financing, organization and management system of TCIs, cultural institutions and artistic activity at large.

Generally, the Moldovan system of subsidy and financial support for performing arts is highly inefficient by design, therefore an increase in the budget of the Ministry of Culture and the budgetary allocations for culture at the level of local authorities, even if desirable, is not an absolute condition and would in no way guarantee any automatic positive effect on the institutions or the artistic landscape in general. The solution advanced and supported by a number of stakeholders – the subsidy per spectator – cannot be implemented automatically (see the Estonian example) and without a deep analysis of the relationship with the audience, a comprehensive approach of the funding needs of TCIs and additional systemic provisions. It has to be taken into consideration that the Estonian system of subsidy per spectator is not focused on market/financial success but on increasing participation.

While easing the financial burden on state and local budgets is always taken into consideration when reforming the performing arts system, this cannot be the primary or sole purpose for a state that commits to maintaining a public network of performing arts institutions. The social impact on the cultural workers should be taken into consideration, and so are the social, educational and cultural objectives set up in the form of public policies. For the time being, any dramatic measures might have the result of weakening an already fragile fabric of already demotivated, precarious employees and a captive audience.

The reform should take into consideration as necessary steps (*complementary to legislative changes as further mentioned*):

- 2.1.** a management system for the administration of TCIs, with performance indicators and responsibilities clearly shared between the manager, the artistic director, the artistic council, and a management board. The management board should include representatives of the funding authority and representatives of the employees, and the artistic activity, as actor or director, of the manager within the theatre he/she runs, should be regulated/limited;
- 2.2.** a system of subsidy allocations based on actual, realistic, accountable needs concerning the functioning of the TCIs in general;
- 2.3.** a re-evaluation of cost efficiency, followed by reorganization. For instance, a process of centralization of most if not all set and costumes workshops in Chişinău, and, if possible, further privatization of it, with the obligation of taking over the existing employees (a measure taken in Bucharest) should cover the contemporary production needs in a more financially viable manner. Outsourcing of certain services (such as security, fire protection, cleaning, repairs) should also prove efficient;
- 2.4.** a performance rewarding system for artists and the technical staff, and a system of continuous training for them. Also, the payment of festival/touring fees should be

regulated, and the hiring of artists should be competition-based or decided upon by a committee;

- 2.5. the clarification of the current retiring conditions for singers and ballet dancers, which would also offer professional retraining options for them, would ease the burden on concert institutions.

3. Decentralization.

As in the case of Estonia, a classical model of decentralization, with local administration taking charge of permanent institutions, doesn't appear to be functional for Moldova on a general scale. The current centralization of almost all performing arts institutions in Chişinău and under the authority of the Ministry of Culture is inefficient and it constitutes one of the factors for the very low percentage of audience participation. A more feasible model would be a dual-government one, with public institutions under the supervision of and subsidized by both the Ministry and the local authority, possibly with city-based institutions opening local branches (which the current law allows for), organizing temporary seasons and/or regular performances.

4. A long-term programme of modernization for the existing performing arts venues and the culture houses in the rural areas, and fiscal facilities for the opening of new cultural spaces.

As in the case of Estonia, a classical model of decentralization, with local administration taking charge of permanent institutions, doesn't appear to be functional for Moldova on a general scale. The current centralization of almost all performing arts institutions in Chişinău and under the authority of the Ministry of Culture is inefficient and it constitutes one of the factors for the very low percentage of audience participation. A more feasible model would be a dual-government one, with public institutions under the supervision of and subsidized by both the Ministry and the local authority, possibly with city-based institutions opening local branches (which the current law allows for), organizing temporary seasons and/or regular performances.

5. A state-level programme making available a financing scheme for touring in rural and small towns areas, with compulsory participation from public institutions.

The programme should be associated with audience development and educational objectives, in order not only to meet potential market demands but also to meet long-term objectives of increasing audience participation in all forms.

6. Long-term and thorough sets of analysis of both systemic practices and audience/participation practices.

Any systemic transformation should be based on facts, and currently there are no large-scale audience surveys able to offer a view on the needs and expectations of the public and about cultural consumption practices. Also, the body of knowledge about the performing arts sector is based exclusively on consultations with TCIs directors and experts, and on very limited statistics on the field (almost entirely based on data on state-governed TCIs).

7. The creation of a (National) Cultural Fund/Endowment, financed through the National Lottery, taxes on gambling and other extra-budgetary direct sources, managed on the arm's length principle by independent committees of experts¹⁷.

Currently, in Moldova, the State is the only player in the field of performing arts, and the country lacks the elementary tools necessary for a diversification of the production modes and the development of alternatives to the public sector. Funds should be allocated for targeted projects, should not be open to public institutions if they are the sole producers of the project, and should be multiannual (if the fiscal legislation can be amended to allow it).

The arm's length principle is a fundamental one for separating powers between the executive, the legislative and the judiciary, and in the field of culture it assumes the political relinquishing all direct involvement in allocation decision-making, to experts transparently appointed for their expertise rather than their political or institutional affiliations (they are also not civil servants). For example, in the case of the Romanian Cultural Fund, the decisions on funding priorities, the funded cultural fields, the sums allocated for each such field (to be granted upon an open competition), etc. are taken by the Management Board (Board of Trustees) of the Fund. Its 11 members are appointed every two years by the minister of Culture, seven of them at the proposal of the non-public cultural sector (following an open call), one of them at the proposal of the Romanian Cultural Institute, one at the proposal of the Department for Interethnic Relations and two, at the proposal of the Ministry of Culture. The experts proposed by the Ministry are not employees of the Ministry or civil servants, they are appointed based on their expertise and cultural profile. The activity of cultural endowments is usually at the intersection between the government public policies (especially, as coded in the cultural endowment legal framework of functioning) and the needs of the cultural field, but it should never be influenced by the political or the administrative, that's why civil servants or political representatives are not to be involved in it as experts or decision-makers. Cultural endowments are not financed through subsidies – which might require a different form of state supervision – but through direct taxation (on gambling, on the revenues of the National Lottery – in UK, Romania, Estonia, also on alcohol sales – in Estonia).

Such cultural endowments function according to a set of principles:

- **transparency**

The organization Transparency International defines transparency as „A principle that allows those affected... to know not only the basic facts and figures but also the mechanisms and processes. It is the duty of civil servants, managers and trustees to act visibly, predictably and understandably“. In the case of cultural endowments, it's about its way of functioning being known and predictable, all information about the granting being available and predictable, and the money being granted through a transparent process.

- **openness (free competition)**

Access to grants, once a cultural operator/ artist/ project is declared eligible according to general and transparent rules, shouldn't be limited by any criterion other than professional/artistic ones.

¹⁷ For more information about models of Cultural Endowments, see the Estonian Cultural Endowment (www.kulka.ee/about-us), founded through the Estonian Cultural Endowment Act (1994) (www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/521122013003/consolide) or the Romanian Cultural Fund (www.afcn.ro).

- *peer evaluation*

Artists can be judged only by their peers, not by politicians or administrators: granting decisions are based upon professional assessments made by experts with proven knowledge of the field.

8. A national programme for cultural education and arts in education, in partnership with other relevant bodies (Ministry of Education, local authorities). Educational and audience development projects should be mandatory for all TCIs.

Cultural education should be included in the national curriculum from an early age, and cultural participation should be supported including through partnerships between kindergartens/schools and youth theatres. The state should support, financially and through specific regulations, the development of educational and audience development programmes and projects at the level of TCIs and independently.

Moldova has a mainly dysfunctional approach to long-term audience participation – the artistic primary education is overdeveloped in relation to the real possibilities for young people to pursue artistic careers, while arts are ignored within the general education, and the offer of performing arts events addressed to adults is disproportionally developed compared to that addressed to young audiences. The approach of the Music Department of the Bălți University concerning the devising of schoolbooks (for classes of music¹⁸), focused on understanding music (elementary musical education), not performing, should be extended to the whole music curricula and taken as an example for optional courses in theatre and dance. It has to be emphasized that stakeholders and decision-makers in Moldova are not familiar with concepts such as arts in education and audience development.

9. Partnerships and collaborations with various other authorities and institutions for a cross-disciplinary approach of performing arts in the social field – the use of arts in fighting discrimination, ethnic divisions, domestic violence, human trafficking, etc., in supporting social integration, etc.

Performing arts are seen in Moldova either as forms of high culture (usually, by the artistic milieu), or as entertainment, and are confined to conventional forms and spaces. Authorities should, however, see and use their instrumental potential in order to tackle the vast social issues the country is confronting with. A series of theatre projects, financed by international donors, have already proved their potential in addressing human trafficking, domestic violence and the situation of inmates in Moldovan prisons.

10. A reshuffling of the legislative framework, through a comprehensive legislative package regulating public institutions, artistic/cultural activity, the condition of the artists and the access to funding.

An important impediment in the developing of the performing arts field in Moldova is the deficient legislation in the field of culture, and the dysfunctions of an incomplete passage from a planned economy to a free market one.

¹⁸ For the time being, the schoolbooks follow reformed curricula for primary schools only.

- *A law of management of public institutions*, with clear, concrete objectives, periodical performance evaluation/assessment of the management, and time-limited contracts. The appointment of managers following an open competition would be preferable, but the local context (limited options among professionals, corrupt practices, direct political interventions) would make necessary enforced measures in order to ensure transparency and fairness in running such competitions.
- *Changes in the Law on Culture and its reconciliation with the Law on TCIs*, allowing a coherent system for public institutions between the various legislative frameworks, irrespective of their object of activity.
- *Changes in the Tax Code* – regarding the qualification of author's rights fees as royalties, the specific recognition of neighbouring rights (with subsequent changes in the Copyright Law), the level of taxation for such forms of income, and specific tax breaks for (independent) cultural workers.
- *Changes in the Social and Health Insurance Codes*, at least for changing the system of flat rates in one payment with a system based on real income, with minimum and maximum thresholds, and optional contributions towards pension benefits.
- *Tax deductions for sponsorship and donations should be rethought as tax credits*, with increased thresholds for support given to artistic projects, since the current provisions are not able to attract private funding to culture.
- Additionally, the State should take into consideration a *legal, specifically regulated form of existence of private performing arts companies*, with a dedicated system of taxation and access to professional resources.

11. The overhauling of the university-training system according to the labour market demands and the public policy objectives, especially in the field of theatre and dance.

The Moldovan decision-makers should fully acknowledge the disturbing effect the Romanian policy regarding university admission for Moldovan citizens has on its own educational system, specifically in the performing arts (for language reasons), already affected by demography and emigration, move towards creating more appealing and competitive training conditions (partnerships, exchanges, a consistent policy for guest professors), and reconsider the current offer. The university curricula and programmes should also move towards including arts in education (a specific form of pedagogy) training, production, management, marketing and communication formation, and technical professions at least at MA level (from stage management to light designing), possibly in collaboration with other universities.

12. Opening and promoting of Moldovan university training in music (at least) towards international students.

Moldova should try to internationalize its music university programmes, opening them to potential students in the region and promoting itself as a financially affordable educational destination.

13. Regulated support for international mobility and participation in international/EU projects (co-financing).

Moldova should make efforts to consistently promote its culture internationally, take advantage of opportunities available through various European programmes, and put together the necessary expertise and financial support in order to gain access to the international scene.



Triumphal Arch, Chisinau, Moldova.

[\(image source\)](#)

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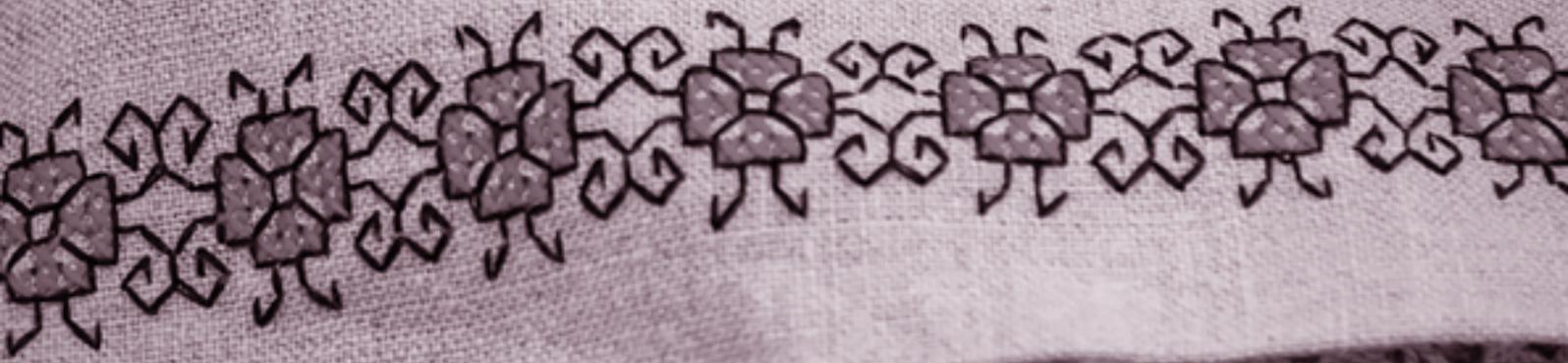
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MOLDOVA



The National Carpet Fair

[\(image source\)](#)

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Butuceni Cave Monastery

[\[image source\]](#)