

Summary of HerO Expert Workshop in Lublin, 8th - 11th September 2010

The Expert Workshop in Lublin was organised together with "Forum for Revitalisation", the Polish association of professionals and cities involved in urban rehabilitation. The participants formed the representation of historic cities: Regensburg (D), Graz (A), Liverpool (UK), Lodz (PL), Poznań (PL), Sighisoara (RO), Szczecin (PL), Valletta (MT), Vilnius (LT), Warszawa (PL), Zamość (PL) and Lublin (PL).

The presentation of HerO project and "Forum for Revitalisation" activities was and introduction between the two groups of participants. The Managing Authority of Lubelskie Region presented mayor project for culture implemented within the current programming period: the Centre of Encounter of Cultures and the outlines of the regional policy for urban rehabilitation within the Regional Operational Program of Lubelskie Voivodship.

The review of cultural activities in historic cities brought a wide range of issues important for their development. Some of them seem obvious, but when seen in the wider context they reveal large potential of more complex approaches to integrated management in historic sites. The conclusions from the presented cases are:

1. Historic sites, due to their scale, uniqueness, variety and even constraints deriving from preservation requirements, offer a special quality for cultural activities; they encourage creativity and inspire reflection on local traditions and intangible heritage, offer a context of history to contemporary artefacts, even when the site is before or during renovation process. That leads to conclusion that arts and culture can profit from settling in historic site, while many other activities (business, commerce, or even housing) too often consider that settling as an obstacle or limitation.
2. Cultural activities attract people, and when settled in historic venues, they create condition to deeper understanding of culture, allow to give a sense of continuity in time and space, recover from the fragmented vision of civilisation caused by predominating short term goals orientation. That allows to conclude, that cultural activities in historic sites help local communities to experience their past and present and thus face the future. Tourists receive a chance for deeper understanding of the visited place and opportunity of contacts with its life.
3. From these reasons public participation in urban rehabilitation can be treated as a lasting cultural event, inclusive for local community, integrating, recovering sense of responsibility for place and history, and ability to co-operate. It allows to overcome many negative social aspects and stimulate positive changes in unexpected areas of intervention. People involved in shaping their place of living are capable to generate immense creativity and involvement, also beyond the areas of competence of managing bodies, thus very often underestimated or overlooked by officials and experts.
4. The effort of renovation of historic sites of past or reduced use, still obvious in terms of obligation to future generations, receives immediate reasons when strengthened by new cultural offer. The increasing access to culture creates opportunities for economic viability of preservation of historic sites. However, it requires creative solutions in devising renovation projects and managing structures, to give the guarantees for attractiveness of the place.
5. The challenge to prove the viability of cultural offer in the historic city requires complex methods of monitoring. Great deal of the outputs (such as quality of life or good image of place) is difficult to measure by quantitative indicators, which have an immense role in decision making process. It's even more important for large international projects, such as European Capital of Culture, involving a range of public and private partners.

The site visits included:

- Tour around the historic centre of Lublin, as a general presentation of the project area, its assets and challenges;
- Palace in Kozlowka – 20 km north from Lublin. This XVIII century residence of Zamoyski, one of mightiest families of Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania is one of very few remaining complexes of that kind, with very well preserved interiors and equipment. After WWII it was used as a magazine of the National Museum – therefore there is also a significant collection of art of "socialism-realism" of 1950ties. The Museum is one of the main attractions of Lubelskie region. The agreement between the ancestors of former owners and the Voivodship has been devised, which passes the ownership to the state to continue the present use of residence, but allows the members of family to visit the place as they please.
- Visit of Dominican convent – the complex of large historic value, for many years neglected, where the project of renovation is combined with wide social, educational and cultural activity.
- Visit to Rynek 8 building – presenting the complexity of renovation, when the layers of construction come from different period. The galleries combined with promotion office of the city allow to present the historic assets of the building (XV cent. polychromy) along the contemporary activities
- Visit to Castle chapel built in XIV cent. with interior covered by XV cent. Ruthenian - Byzantine wall paintings is a perfect example of mingling of cultures.
- Tour of sites managed by Centre of "Grodzka Gate – NN Theatre" with detailed description on their activities, such as remembrance of Jewish heritage and history (Grodzka Gate), history of Lublin (unreground route with exhibit in cellars), history of printing and editing (including underground printing activities since 1970ties in House of Words)
- Visit to Trinitarian Tower – museum of Lublin archdiocese, with opportunity to see the urban complex from the top.

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