

# CLUJ EUROPEAN YOUTH CAPITAL 2015 – A TAKE OFF FOR EUROPEAN RECOGNITION AND THRIVING URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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**ABSTRACT** – *As cities became vital factors in the global economy, the compulsive competition among territories became inevitable. The change from managerial governance to urban entrepreneurialism triggered new strategic approaches. Therefore, the continues need of cities to differentiate themselves and create a unique and attractive image has become indispensable in their strategic approaches. One of the ways to showcase their local distinctiveness and urban creativity is for example to give ground to serious of events. However, the effectiveness of these strategic approaches in many cases remains unanswered. Therefore, the present paper aims at giving a preview about the importance of a title as the European Youth Capital to the urban development of a city like Cluj-Napoca, a title won by the city in 2015. The main question however is to what extent has the EYC title helped Cluj-Napoca to get better recognition on international level and what was the impact of the title? From a methodological perspective the literature review of the study is based on primary sources such as scientific articles, shorter studies and professional journals. Our empiric research is based on information collected and analysed from policy documents, programme guidelines, project descriptions. The results show that even if Cluj-Napoca did achieve a success in making itself more visible on international level and encouraged tourist visits, it strenghtned the creation of networks between different stakeholders, there is more to be done in terms of infrastructure development and the assessment and evaluation process of such major events must be strenghtned and maintained.*

**Keywords:** European Youth Capital, culture, city promotion, urban development

## 1. Introduction

Cluj-Napoca is a city rich in its historical background and heritage but then with a rapidly changing present. It has a special role to play in every dimension defining Romania and Transylvania and encouraging chances in gaining international reputation by promoting its cultural diversity an element that is also key to the European Union's tourism development concept. Most countries in Europe have recognized that one of the ways to achieve progress in tourism development is through preservating the cultural heritage and by promoting cultural diversity. At the same time, the financial support towards

the cultural sphere as well as the cultural policy, play gained increasing important in the strategic actions of the recently acceding countries wishing to catch up with other EU Member States. For many regions, this presents the only breakthrough option in achieving economic growth and international recognition. Culture must be accessible to as many people as possible but for that, communication and cooperation between local and regional culture related institutions is a must. On the other hand, administrative and financial support from the state is also needed. Romania has already benefited from the Culture 2000 program prior to its accession to the EU which had as its aim to promote artistic

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and cultural cooperation, promote cultural mobility and access to culture, and support the organization of European cultural projects. After the accession, the EU's Culture Program 2007-2013 has provided a solid background for the preservation of cultural diversity by encouraging intercultural communication.

In addition, the European Capital of Culture (later ECF) initiative served as a gateway for many European countries since 1985. In Romania, this honorable title was received by Sibiu in 2007, and in 2021 Timișoara will be the next Romanian city to hold this designation. Nonetheless, in 2015 Cluj-Napoca was the front-runner in gaining the European Youth Capital (later EIF) designation which helped the city to become a popular western city and strengthen its regional and national position. According to the international trends (Hughes and Allen, 2005; Hall, 2011), interest in tourism in Central and Eastern Europe has increased. This is mainly directed towards areas related to the Cultural Heritage. Compared to other European countries, in Romania, the world heritage offer is low and the tourist infrastructure is underdeveloped. Consequently, the programs initiated by the European Union are able to assist the country in becoming a better-known tourist destination. Even if the European Youth Capital program did not project the European Capital of Culture (2021) title, it greatly contributed to the international recognition of the city and proved to be an effective tool for boosting the city's tourism industry. In order to reflect on the importance and effects of the EYC title we organized our empirical research around concepts and evidences that defined this title in the case of Cluj-Napoca. Nonetheless, the clarification of basic concepts and theoretical conclusions drawn up and accepted by the literature and linking them with the empirical findings was also an important objective of the research.

### **City marketing and urban entrepreneurialism**

The purpose of using marketing techniques especially in the tourism industry and more specifically in the process of resort promotion existed already in the 19th century (Ward, 1998)

which allows us to think that it is definitely not a new approach but a response to the growing competition between the places experiencing the effects of globalization (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). However, it was not until the 1970s and 1980s when cities suffered the harsh consequences of deindustrialization (MacLeod, 2002; Ward, 2005; Paddison, 1993) that the concept of marketing and its approaches has started to be applied to the spatial planning process as an instrument (van den Berg, Klaassen and Meer, 1990; Ashworth, 2005).

According to Ashworth (2005) marketing was developed during the inter-war period and served as a method for economic agents to sell products. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1970s the decline of the manufacturing sector and the need for restructuring of economic activities drifted away from the importance of what it is produced and placed the focus on where it is produced (Paddison, 1993). As a consequence, the local authorities in Britain for example started to take an active part in the development of economic activities with regard to the process of production and investment (Boddy, 1984 and Cochrane, 1987 cited in Harvey, 1989). Thus, the local as well as the regional development organizations recognized the need for regenerating the economic base of the cities which have lost their traditional, manufacturing industries and started to focus on attracting inward investment (Paddison, 1993). The transformations occurring especially in the former industrial cities and the continuous struggle of cities engaging in investment attraction (Nagy, 2015) pressed the urge of making use of promotion in order to raise attention and create positive image.

On the other hand, according to Ashworth and Voogd (1994) not the promotional activity used by cities or regions is the one which can be considered as a new approach but "the conscious application of marketing approaches by public planning agencies not just as an additional instrument for the solution of intractable planning problems but, increasingly as a philosophy of place management" (Ashworth and Voogd 1994, p. 39 cited in Kavaratzis 2004, p. 59). Therefore, place

marketing emerged to be a strategy (Eshuis et al., 2013) of the local and regional authorities as well as an essential part of planning and development process of places (Bradley et al., 2002). It involves the use of marketing instruments applied to geographic locations. Nevertheless, the fact that place marketing involves various activities and approaches proves that the promotional activity alone is not effective if the product and the management around it is not completed (Eshuis et al., 2013) especially in the process of making the city attractive for locals but also in attracting tourists or investors hence, in increasing its competitiveness. According to Paddison (1993) the concept of city marketing gained a new dimension with the economic restructuring from the 1970s which as it has been pointed out before, has led to a growing competition among cities in attracting inward investments which by the end of the 1980s resulted in the rise of the urban entrepreneurialism.

Furthermore, van den Berg and Braun (1999) consider that it is not enough for a city to be more attractive than its competitors in terms of better place for locate a business in but it also needs to be attractive for its residents, for existing and potential companies as well as for tourists. Nevertheless, this requires an entrepreneurial approach of the local urban management and entrepreneurial spirit from the city administrators. This entrepreneurial orientation was a shift from the Keynesian welfare state (Hospers, 2006; Griffiths, 1995) towards a more “businesslike” approach (Kavaratzis, 2004, p. 59) where cities can profit not only from traditional welfare measures or land-use planning but also by using local resources in their competition activity (Hall and Hubbard, 1996). On the other hand, one of the issues accompanying the new urban entrepreneurialism is that several successful projects cover severe social and economic problems which gain geographical shape through a dual part of the inner-city development driving to growing impoverishment in the surrounding vicinity (Harvey, 1989). Yet, within this new upcoming framework of urban policy which increasingly emphasizes on public-private

partnerships a significant importance is given to the cultural policies (Griffiths, 1995) which indeed in the following decades started to play and even nowadays have a major role in the evolution and regeneration of the urban areas. Subsequently, more direct forms of marketing started to rise which aimed at specific types of markets and target groups within the field of tourism and the services sector and focusing on “hallmark” events (Paddison, 1993), arts, culture or creativity.

### **The rise of the cultural industries and attracting the creative class**

As a response to the declining image of the industrial city (Paddison, 1993) and with the aim of creating physically attractive and economically, socially viable places, culture became a major element of the local economic strategies (Paddison and Miles 2005; Zukin, 1995) also serving as a means of increasing tourism and communication of the new post-industrial city image. Nevertheless, Hall and Hubbard (1996) postulate that the constant endeavor to promote the city through its local traditions and through myths-telling methods with the aim of enhancing their uniqueness might be a conscious manipulation of their image or even misuse of the local culture. Even so the evolution of the service-oriented economy changed the traditional notions of the culture which consisted in art and heritage to a perspective which considers culture to be an economic asset (Garcia, 2004), a creator of marketable urban spaces. Moreover, culture has become a key element in the development approaches of the European Union which encourage places to implement such strategies which recognize and preserve their cultural values and identity (Ray, 1998). As a consequence, within the last thirty years, culture oriented regeneration projects developed into constant efforts of cities and occupy a fundamental role in the new urban entrepreneurialism. Yet, this culture oriented development requires such a labor force or “cultural producers” (Zukin, 1995) that have ideas for creating cultural events, are capable of cultivating cultural exchange,

facilitating social interaction and communication, are able to prepare and shape the “scene” for the consumption of the cultural product.

As a response, the new entrepreneurial strategies led to investments and created job opportunities not only in the cultural industry but also in tourism, retail and leisure industries (MacKinnon and Cumbers, 2007). The rise of these industries and the need for enhancing the economic development therefore, enforced the urban governments to produce such initiatives which aimed at attracting creative individuals. The notion of the “creative class” was first introduced by Florida (2002), where he raises the attention that nowadays, the capability of achieving economic growth through the use of traditional instruments is not enough.

There is a need for capacity to attract, retain and indulge the creative capital (Peck, 2005), basically the “arsenal of creative thinkers whose ideas can be turned into valuable products and services (Florida and Goodnight 2005, p. 124) or in other words the highly-skilled, university-educated individuals with a drip of entrepreneurial spirit. As a consequence, cities in the emerging service economies need to prepare themselves for welcoming the creative class which according the Richards and Wilson (2005) can be achieved by developing creative spaces, events and tourism in order to serve both, the supply and demand as well. Moreover, according to Florida (2005) in order to raise the attention and interest of these individuals, these places need to be innovative, diverse and tolerant, to show authenticity and uniqueness. The challenge for cities is however to offer a realistic scene for the idea of the creative city not only through their physical appearance such as stadiums, shopping malls or tourist sights but through high-quality experiences by offering possibilities for active participation in outdoor activities, at live music and film performances, vibrant nightlife or artistic, cultural manifestations.

### **The young members of the creative class**

Florida (2005) points out that in order to sustain an advantage of a region in the process of creative economy, next to the economic factors

there is also a significant need for sociological elements which rely on the ability of the urban management to create such an environment which acts as a magnet for talent. As a consequence, the ability of a place to create such conditions under which the young and creative people feel attracted to the specific location is a prerequisite for achieving regional competitiveness. However, this requires a certain level of creative flexibility in the process of place development from the decision makers, urban planners or place marketers when they involve the place users or residents in the decisions about how the city is represented (Warnaby and Medway, 2013).

As a result, in the last decade we witness an increased involvement of young professionals in creating social networks (Zimmermann, 2008) which aim to promote a young and creative, dynamic image of a city. Therefore, more and more cities are creating conditions and serve as festival sites (Burgers, 2000) they increasingly use events in their endeavour to create positive image and develop event-based strategies in order to facilitate regeneration (Richards and Wilson, 2004). These strategies become an aspect of several urban governments but next to their economic motivations they also have socio-economic implications (Hiller, 2010). At European level an example for such a youth-related event is the European Youth Capital which since its debut in 2009 not only encourages young people to take active part in society but also promotes youth related cultural, social, economic activities and programmes.

## **2. Methods**

The analysis is based on mixed-methods. The theoretical background is primarily concerned with the relationship between the cultural industry, the creative class and city marketing. Our primary sources consist of scientific articles, shorter studies and professional journals. For our empiric research, we collected information from policy documents, case studies, programme guidelines, project descriptions that served as important basis for official local and national development bodies.

Further, in order to observe the city's diverse everyday life, analysis that integrate information from internet resources, the media and newspaper articles.

The central issue that our study deals with is whether we can talk about future culture and events-based tourism and urban modernization that is able to boost Cluj-Napoca's tourism industry? How did the EYC 2015 title contribute to achieve this vision? Therefore, the analysis shows that in order to achieve such aims Cluj-Napoca has to prove that possesses enough potential that it can take advantage of entering the horizon of the western member states of European Union and to pull through the raising competitiveness for tourist destinations on local, regional, national and international level.

### **3. Results and discussion**

#### **The European Youth Capital initiative**

As it was previously pointed out by Florida (2005) the advantage of a region in sustaining its competitiveness requires such an urban environment which attracts talent and creativity. Therefore, there are several ways that a city can use in order to accomplish this endeavour as for example promoting volunteering activities, offering subsidies for culture and arts oriented projects, educational programmes, facilitating diverse entertainment possibilities. However, in a university city where the community is largely dominated by students, one of the key elements for this end is the conscious education. Consequently, the Youth Capital initiative is an important platform which creates an opportunity to address the young public and involve them in a process that on long-term is able to support what Richards and Wilson (2004) previously suggested, such event-based strategies that contribute to the regeneration of the city.

The European Youth Capital title was introduced in 2009 by the European Youth Forum. The title changes its holder each year and gives the opportunity to European cities to present their cultural, political and economic life

from a youth perspective. But then again, what does the European Youth Capital title stand for? According to Turk (2013) it is an "opportunity". An opportunity to develop a coherent and collaborative environment at local and international level by strengthening the European identity of young citizens. It supports on one hand the implementation of new ideas and innovative projects shaped by the active involvement of young people and enhances youth-policy cooperation from a local to international level on the other. In contrast, because the initiative itself is a rather new one, it evolves rapidly fact which occasionally does not allow enough time for the elaboration of comprehensive studies. Therefore, in the case of several cities even proper online sources regarding the portrayal and introduction of their programmes is difficult to be found. Nevertheless, the actual implementation of the schemes evolving around the Youth Capital title give ground to innovative ideas and initiatives with long-term positive effects on the European community as a whole (Olt, 2010).

The first Youth Capital title was given in 2009 to Rotterdam having the slogan „Your World”. In the following years, the Dutch city was followed by Torino, Antwerpen, Braga, Maribor, and Thessaloniki. In the year 2015, the honourable title was received by the Romanian city of Cluj, which defined itself by stating that “Only with a common European vision and the joint effort of the different generations can we become stronger than the crisis, faster to accommodate, to change and turn the EU into a smart, sustainable and inclusive society” (Turk, 2013). Considering the large academic community that the city accommodates it is not surprising that Cluj joined the competition for successfully winning the title of European Youth Capital.

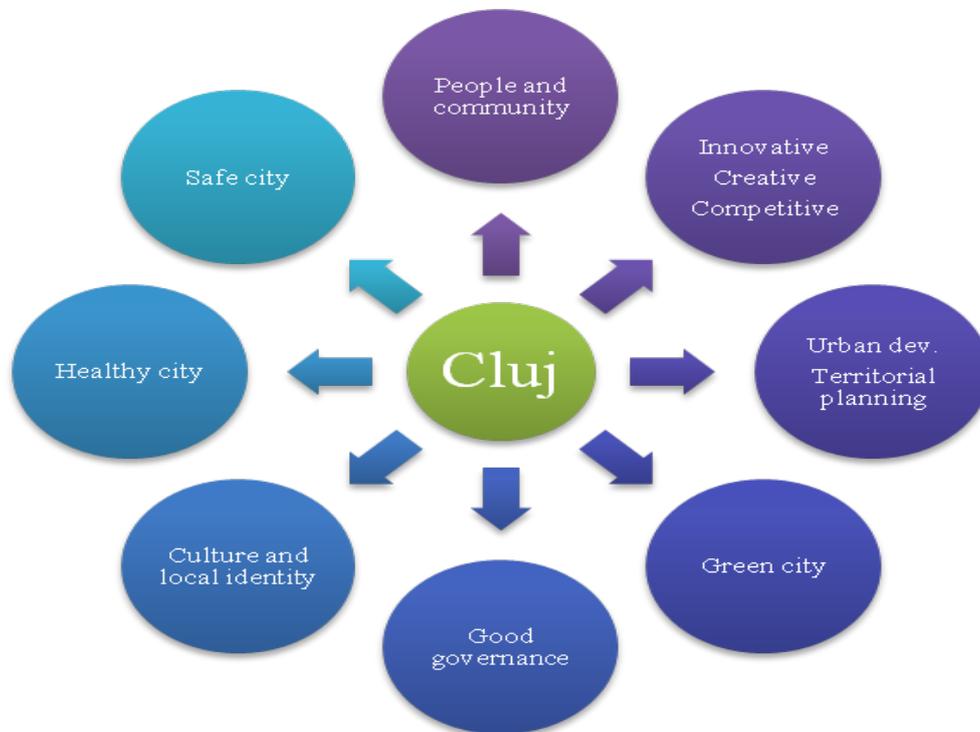
#### **Current situation and future strategic orientation and programmes of Cluj-Napoca**

The urban development strategy of Cluj-Napoca valid for the 2014-2020 period was completed by 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2014. A total of 25 experts and specialists worked together in order to formulate the future objectives of Cluj, to

identify its development priorities and to develop a strategy that covers a large array of areas. One of the main elements of this strategy refers to the tourism-related development priorities. In order to consider such priorities it has been argued by Paddison and Miles (2005) as well as Zukin (1995) that culture becomes a major element of the local urban development strategies. This fact is also supported by the discussions between the above-mentioned experts and specialist who addressed such cultural aspects that present a lack of comprehensive appearance and approaches. Many stressed on the importance of certain invisible values such as multiculturalism or legends formed throughout the history. However according to Hall and Hubbard (1996) special attention must be focused on the promotion of city image through myths, legends and traditions because we might fall in the trap of striving so hard towards expressing our uniqueness that our efforts will result in a manipulated and distortional image. The most frequently mentioned attributes

that the city was described with are: Roman city, medieval town, a free-city or a treasure city. Nevertheless, several other characteristics were also mentioned and the most common ones are illustrated in the figure (Figure 1) below.

It is also worth mentioning that there also exist several unexploited elements of the city which could highly contribute to the expansion of the touristic offer and in overall they can serve as promotable elements reflecting not only on the identity of the city but also the richness in offering places of interest. Such elements include the stories related to the pathways underneath the city or legends related to the iconic historical figure born in Cluj, Mathias Corvinus. Next to this, the strategy integrates the values of the city and its community nonetheless, culture, local identity and multiculturalism are also key factors which define the city of Cluj.



**Figure 1.** Words describing the city

Source: own drawing, based on the UDP of Cluj 2014-2020

Therefore, from a city promotion perspective the focus on the existing well-known and rich cultural heritage and the rapidly growing event tourism presents a viable approach and according to Garcia (2004) an economic asset. Therefore, as Hall and Hubbard (1996) previously suggested the city must use its local resources as competitive opportunities. The interest for but also the variety of cultural events has significantly changed and increased over the years and led Cluj to be the cultural centre of the region. The cultural offer however is largely influenced by and depends on the presence of students, the young community. Therefore, as Cluj successfully managed what Peck (2005) suggested above, to retain the creative capital and through its educational possibilities the large number of the creative thinkers (Florida and Goodnight, 2005), unlike in many other Romanian cities, culture became an indispensable factor that defines the quality of life. The cultural life in Cluj is centered upon the downtown area which is the place for various multicultural and multilingual events. However, very few of such occasions take into consideration and mobilize the disadvantaged community. Thus, through an analysis of the technological environment we can conclude that the development of the cultural infrastructure is an indispensable necessity. As technology is advancing continuously it changes the attitude of the residents towards the contemporary modern culture. As a consequence, the adaptation of a place's cultural offer becomes a must. The Cultural Development Strategy which situates culture at its main focus as well as the Creative Industries Strategy were developed by the PONT Group<sup>4</sup>. In both strategies, Cluj is recognized as a centre of excellence in Art and a place for cultural participation and involvement. Hence, in order to promote the cultural assets of Cluj several strategic priorities and development guidelines were established in its Cultural Strategy valid for 2014-2020 period. These priorities are presented in the table (Table 1) below.

**Table 1.** Culture related strategic priorities of Cluj-Napoca

Strategic priorities:
Providing access to culture and enhancing its audience
Ensure the sustainability of the cultural sector
Creativity, new forms and values
Expansion of international cooperation and the European dimension of Cluj's cultural sector
To promote intra- and inter-sector cooperation; increase the quality of cultural actions; enhance the know-how of cultural actors
Reinterpretation of the concept of culture as a tool for social transformation
Infrastructure development; enhancing the use of public spaces; improvement of cultural communication

*Source: Strategia Culturală 2014-2020, 2013*

From the priorities mentioned above, we would like to point out the facilitation of intra- and inter- sectoral cooperation which in our perspective can only be achieved by the integration of the cultural and in the same time by the appropriate allocation of funding to different cultural settings or culture related fields, activities. Moreover, harmonization of the entrepreneurial sector with the cultural sphere based on creative industries is also considered to be a prerequisite and basic element of the successful urban development process. This supports the ideas laid down in the literature review by MacKinnon and Cumbers (2007) who presented that new entrepreneurial strategies can bring investments and development in various areas such as tourism, leisure or tourism. This can only be achieved through the engagement and cooperation between the stakeholders of cultural sphere expected to be cohesive on a local level as well.

One tool that could help the creation of this dialog between the actors of cultural sphere and those representing the city administration, is the cooperation platform project. This confirms the approach of the urban policy framework

<sup>4</sup> The PONT Group is a civic association based in Cluj-Napoca that works in areas of local and regional development, it is interested in culture related topics, it aims to increase the participation and open-mindedness of the young community and in creating networks in several areas ([http://www.pontweb.ro/intro\\_english.php](http://www.pontweb.ro/intro_english.php), Accessed on 16 December 2016)

mentioned by Griffiths (1995) in the previous section where significant importance is given to the public-private partnerships including the field of cultural policy as well.

On the other hand, it is imperative to realize that not only the programmes managed by the city's administration are the ones with a superior importance. In fact, the implementation of and harmonization with other sectoral programmes or strategic domains is of an equal importance. Initiatives that could serve as example for creation of a link between such programmes are the ENJOY Cluj European Capital of Culture Fund, the Cluj European Youth Capital 2015 programme but also some other programs dealing with cultural diversity and cultural tourism, urbanism, the integration of scientific research or the involvement of the IT sector.

### **European Youth Capital 2015: Cluj - 'Youth@ Cluj-Napoca 2015'**

By 2015 there were a total of 12 cities competing for the title of European Youth Capital. From these cities Cluj-Napoca managed to get into the finals next to Ivanovo (Russia), Varna (Bulgaria) and Vilnius (Lithuania). The Cluj European Youth Capital 2015 project was coordinated by the PONT Group nevertheless, next to the local authority there were more than thirty youth organizations involved in the preparatory process.

An important factor that contributes to the articulation of the city's youth community is that Cluj-Napoca provides to more than 80.000 students appropriate quality training taught on six state and five privately owned universities. At the same time, it accommodates 23 high schools where teaching is performed in Romanian, Hungarian and German. Therefore, not only education at university level is seen of high quality but the undergraduate programs also have a diverse educational offer. The universities are continuously hosting research centres where it is possible to take part in professional training and scientific research in various fields.

Within the Urban Development Strategy of Cluj, there is a separate section which presents

the strategic directions of the universities in Cluj-Napoca, nevertheless the detailed version of this can be found in the Higher Education Strategy (Strategie învățământ universitar, 2014) which we cannot describe in this study because of the limited space. The city's youth life is represented by students and student unions who give a vibrant and dynamic rhythm to the city. Next to this there exist a high variety of volunteer programs for university students which give the chance to form a different perspective and shape their mindset regarding various real-life questions and problems different from what they find in their university text-books. According to the EYC jury, one of the important elements that played a huge role in their decision-making process was that the local authorities closely cooperate with the universities and the civil societies.

*"The most appreciated element by the European Youth Forum regarding the title of EYC was the concept itself: the motto of the event was called „Share” which stood on seven pillars. In the view of the specialist critics two pillars were favored, the vision and the share of space” (András Farkas, executive manager Pont Group, 2015).*

As a result, the Transylvanian city has been given the opportunity to showcase in full, not only during 2015 but also afterwards its cultural, social, political and economic life values connected to the younger generations. Therefore, Cluj became part of the European Youth Capitals network holding the title for 363 days from 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2014 to 28<sup>th</sup> December 2015. Its main focus was set on public events and festivities. One of its most important aims was to showcase the atmosphere of the city, to harmonize the activities of cafés, restaurants and community spaces and exploit the opportunities offered by these.

*"It has been proposed to us to focus on multicultural projects therefore, these are the directions that our projects will follow now and in the future as well. We would like to manage projects that connect the Romanian, Hungarian and German youth community. Further we would like to create international relations with other youth organizations which will also strengthen our work.” (Hanna Ugron, expert in tendering EYC, 2015).*

Cluj had to prove that it is able to plan and implement a series of programs throughout the whole year. Therefore, the proposal encapsulated 97 programmes that covered not only the city of Cluj but also the Transylvanian Region. This objective was achieved through the initiative called SHARE Region which is a subordinate of EYC Cluj programme. The projects were organized within the framework of Europeanization and focused on the organization of French, German, English and Hungarian events as well. The online platform ensuring information about the events was called SHARE CLOUD. The priorities of these events included themes around: SHARE

Space, SHARE Culture, SHARE Work, SHARE Power, SHARE Joy, SHARE Vision (the sharing of space, culture, work, strength, pleasure and vision). The horizontal priorities were called SHARE European and SHARE Responsibly directions focusing on the promotion of a European dimension and responsibility. Among the events there was a special focus on public proceedings many of which have been already tested in recent years (New Year's Eve, Longest Friday, School Start Date, QR Code etc.). Table 2 presents some of the planned and subsequently realized events within the Cluj EYC programme.

**Table 2.** *Planned/realized events in 2015*

Name of the Event	Short description	Project duration
Road to Cluj, Official opening	Workshops, conferences, parties; Welcoming of General Assembly of the European Youth Forum Estimates: 2.500 direct visitors, 6.000 participants on the event	23-29 Nov. 2014
New Year Parties	New Year's celebration Estimates: 30.000 participants	31 Dec.-1 Jan. 2015
Architecture Day	Share Space – project of students from the University of Architecture	14 May-17 May 2015
KIDS Island	Activities organized for 150 children	11-13 June 2015
Cluj Never Sleeps	400-500 events in 24 hours, 48 events on the same day	19-20 June 2015
SHARE Summer School	Exchange of experience between 1.200-1.400 students	01-10 July 2015
SHARE SUMMER @Cluj-Napoca	Open Days and programmes for leisure Estimates: 5.000 from all over the country, 15.000 local residents	15-25 August 2015
Volunteers' Summer School	Association of 2.000 volunteers in one place	20-20 August 2015
International Week of Culture	Events organized with the support of the event called Pécs Cultural Week Estimates: 300 participants	15-25 August 2015
KNOCK-KNOCK	Events organized in private homes and courtyards - 300 mini events Estimates: 4.500 participants	11-12 Sept. 2015
QR Code live	5.000- 15.000 participants, objective: setting up a Guinness World Record	02 Oct. 2015
Transylvania International Music and Art Festival	Organized by TiMAF <a href="http://www.timaf.com">http://www.timaf.com</a>	5-20 Oct. 2015
VISION Cluj-Napoca	Workshops, conferences, discussions with 5 000 participants	22-28 Nov. 2015
SHARE and FAREWELL	Closing programme – ceremony: Cluj gained visibility on the map of Europe; Concerts, events Estimates: 40.000 participants	28 Dec. 2015

Source: Concept note on Strategic Aspects, Cluj EYC 2015

In addition to this, professional events such as Cluj Never Sleeps, Knock-knock, and Share Summer Concept were also integrated. At the same time events organized through 250 small initiatives took place within this period and were promoted through guerilla marketing activities as for example distribution of 250.000 smiley faces, flowering actions on courtyards, terraces and streets on 15<sup>th</sup> of April, mobilization of the entire city to dress up in a single color on the same day. The events can be divided into various themes and were held on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of each month (the number of participants is estimated). Below (Table 3) we present a list of the most important events held in every 15<sup>th</sup> of the month in 2015.

According to the table below, the firstly and thirdly mentioned events reconfirm the achievement of a certain level of flexibility from the organizing stakeholders mentioned by Warnaby and Medway (2013) which involves local residents in the promotional activity.

A number of partner events contributing to the expansion of the framework of mega-events were also organized throughout the respective year such as: Cluj Days (21-28 May); Youth@TIFF (28 May-06 June); Youth@Peninsula (15-17 July); Youth@Electric Castle (19-21 June); Hungarian Cultural Days (17-23 August); European Youth Week Events (23-25 October).

**Table 3.** *The most important events organized in every 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month throughout 2015*

<i>Month</i>	<b>Name of the event</b>	<b>Description of the event</b>	<b>Participants</b>
<i>15<sup>th</sup> January</i>	Whishes	Local residents can get information about the events on 10 public spaces	10.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> March</i>	Happiness	“What makes you happy” slogan – distribution of smiley faces	16.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> April</i>	Colors	Site location around 10 colours	22.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> May</i>	Flower time	Reviving green space, houses, courtyards	26.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> June</i>	Drawing	Designating 10 locations for street drawing, paper drawing and face painting	20.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> July</i>	Badge Day	Writing messages on cloths and accessories about things that people are proud of	16.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> August</i>	Water Day	Water games, water taps, water balls	16.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> September</i>	No Cars	Promotion of alternative, green traffic (bike-day)	20.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> October</i>	Hats	Hats and caps with interesting coulours and shapes	14.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> November</i>	Feelings	Stickers, leaflets that promote city related emotions	12.000
<i>15<sup>th</sup> December</i>	Gifts	Collecting gifts for orphanages and those in need	15.000

Source: based on Concept Note on Strategic Aspects and Key Moments and Events of the Year 2015, 2013

### **The impact of the Cluj Youth Capital title**

The European Youth Capital title does not come with financial remuneration nevertheless, in November 2012 The Pont Group received a 10.000 lei funding from the local budget in order to organize the finals for the competition. The executive manager of the PONT Group, in the summer of 2012 requested 18.600 lei from the Mayor’s Office to cover the 3.500 lei

delegation costs, 2.000 lei for web design, 3.000 lei for Facebook campaigns, 6000 lei to organize the Youth@Cluj conference, 2.100 lei for the Sharepress magazine published in 3 languages and 2000 lei for the Baloon campaign (Consiliul Local al Municipiului Cluj-Napoca, 2012). As the table (Table 4) below shows there was a large array of specific and quantifiable planned outcomes. These outcomes mostly refer to

the number of participants, effects on budget lines, economic benefits such as initiation of new companies, maintaining the existing and extending the number of similar events, bringing youth related matters into the focus of policy formulation and last but not least becoming a

visible player on European level. As visualized in table below, based on preliminary research, more than half of these planned outcomes have been achieved fact which certifies the presently achieved effects of the programme.

**Table 4.** *Planned and achieved outcomes of the Cluj EYC title*

<b>Planned outcomes</b>	<b>Achieved outcomes</b>
Following the EYC title 150% increase in the budget of youth organizations from Cluj (derived from various sources)	Fivefold increase in the support scheme of the city's local government
20% increase in the number of visiting tourists in 2015, in Cluj	On average, 28% increase
80% of the population under the age of 35 participates in at least one event or project	
50% of the total population of the city will attend at least one event or project	1.106.000 participants at events organized under the Cluj-Napoca program
150% increase in the number of foreign young people participating in the projects and events of local youth organizations. At least 25.000 foreign students attend at least one event or project	100.000 international participants
2.000 volunteers participate at the EYC and create the Cluj Volunteer Group	5.400 volunteers involved
75 new initiatives (youth organizations, innovative companies) will be set up with the help of the European Youth Capital	
A model is created that uses horizontal priorities in order to implement long lasting programs	The partnership between the mayor's office of Cluj-Napoca and the Share Federation serves as a model within the European Youth Capitals Network
An implementation method is established that can be used for organizing annual events in Cluj	
A new priority will emerge for youth policies and activities within the framework of the 2014-2020 General Development Plan for Cluj	Cluj-Napoca's Development Strategy has a Youth Chapter
The creation and maintenance of an Incubator Club by youth organizations	
Become a European center for youth events, meetings and conferences for a full year	Cluj-Napoca hosts 300 international events and is the meeting point of 20 European organizations

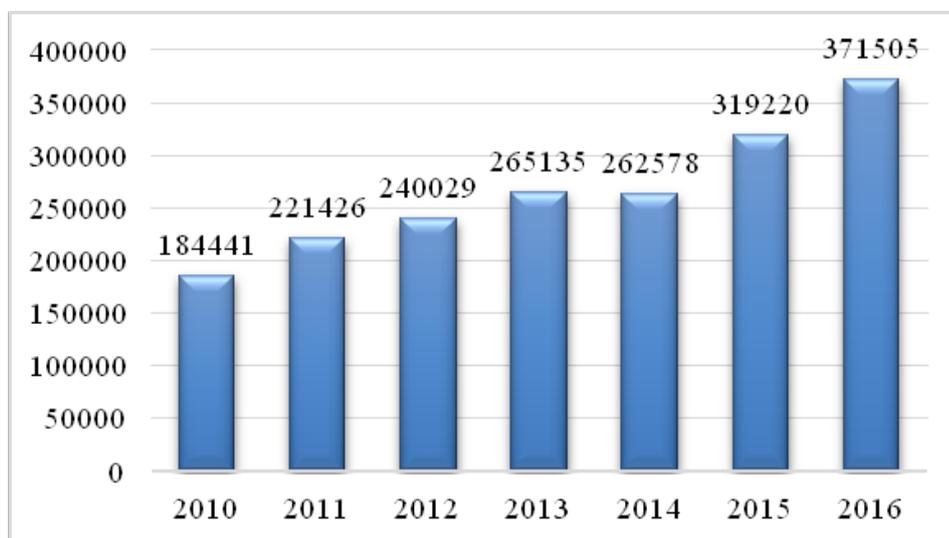
Source: Deák, 2016

In addition to this, as it has been previously presented the title itself did have a great influence on the the urban tourism sector of Cluj. With the emergence of the creative industries and due to the notable development if the IT companies especially within the last decade the business tourism became a rapidly growing segment.

Nevertheless, a look at the evolution and development of tourism in Cluj-Napoca and its sustainability would be incomplete without an overlook on other types of tourists who are visiting the city for more than one day. The strenghtened cultural facilities, the strong involvement of the young community in culture dominated areas

have claimed for the enhancement of city's image on international scale. The wide range of cultural events and festivals attract not only young people to live in the city but also tourists who otherwise might not visit the city. As the figure below

(Figure 2) illustrates according to the registered figures since 2010 with the exception of 2014, there was a continuous increase in arrivals at tourist accommodations in Cluj.



**Figure 2.** Tourist arrivals at accommodations in Cluj in the period 2010-2016

Source: INSSE, 2017

The most extensive increase (21.57%) of tourist arrivals was experienced in the year when Cluj was the European Youth Capital. This has slightly decreased with 5% in the following year (2016) but is still being the highest within the last seven years. This leads us to conclude that the EYC title did have a positive effect and helped the city in not only promoting itself on international scale but also in enhancing its tourism. The fact that following the EYC year, the tourist arrivals kept increasing compared to 2015 also indicates that at least for now the positive effects persist and are sustained. Therefore, in many respects the EYC title is a foundation for the further development and expansion of event tourism in Cluj. Hence, these are the events through which the city is able to promote itself abroad, on the international platform. According to Mayor Emil Boc „the title of the Youth Capital is equal to a passport” and “We believe that all our work is valid if we do it not just *for* young people, but together *with* them” (European Youth Capital, 2017). It is certainly an advantage that the EYC title is only given to one city per year which gives the respective city a higher visibility and enhances its attractiveness.

#### 4. Conclusions

In conclusion, we can state that culture plays an important role in our life even though the meaning of culture has been rephrased in recent years. The analysis show that there is an increased interest coming from the young community in participating at a large spectrum of events and cultural programmes. This might be due to the fact that in the last couple of years volunteering activities that form the foundation of young civil initiatives, have increased. Through creativity and innovation these initiatives form new perspectives that guide Cluj-Napoca towards a sustainable development of tourism. Moreover, the presence of the vocational training courses in higher education such as tourism geography, economics and business sciences, communication studies and tour guide certificate programmes provide valuable professionals for the tourism industry.

Next to this, implementing long-term strategies can bring maximum benefits not only to the economy but also for tourism. At national level, in 2014, Cluj-Napoca was on the fifth place

in terms of tourist traffic in regional centres. The transit tourists and weekend city-breaks remain one of the most popular gateways. Nevertheless, titles such the European Youth Capital have the influence to encourage longer stays, significantly increase the number of visitors to the city fact which in the longer term will contribute to the sustainability of tourism. Therefore, Cluj-Napoca must constantly work and prepare itself to receive larger number of tourist. Even if it keeps succeeding in offering a high number and variety of events and cultural attractions, the tourism infrastructure as well as the assessment and evaluation process of similar events leaves much to be desired. As it has been pointed out in the literature review by van den Berg and Braun (1999), for a city being more attractive than its competitors in terms of business location is only half the way to success. It must fulfil the expectations of the residents and tourist as well. Following the program framework and outcomes of the Cluj EYC 2015 it is noticeable that it managed to respect the programme plan, achieve positive results and with its high-level commitment to face the strong competition with similar national (Timișoara, Brașov, Sibiu) as well as Eastern European competitors such as Krakow or Bratislava.

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