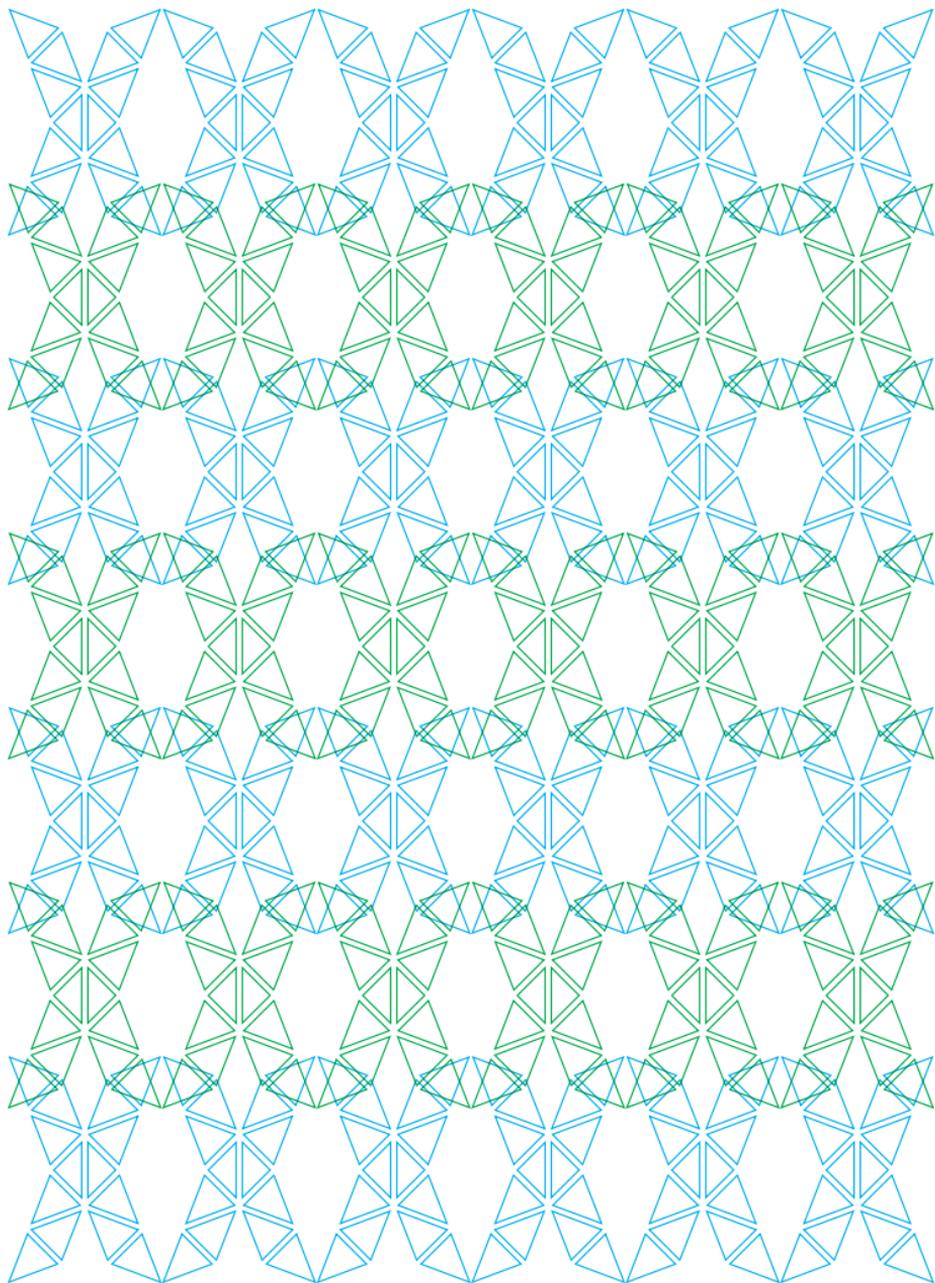




# Istrian Cultural Strategy



PULA-POREČ  
2009



# Istria – the region of culture

Is it possible to pour the everyday small and large Istrian cultural microcosms, with all their particularities and aspirations, into a document that will lead us to common objectives?

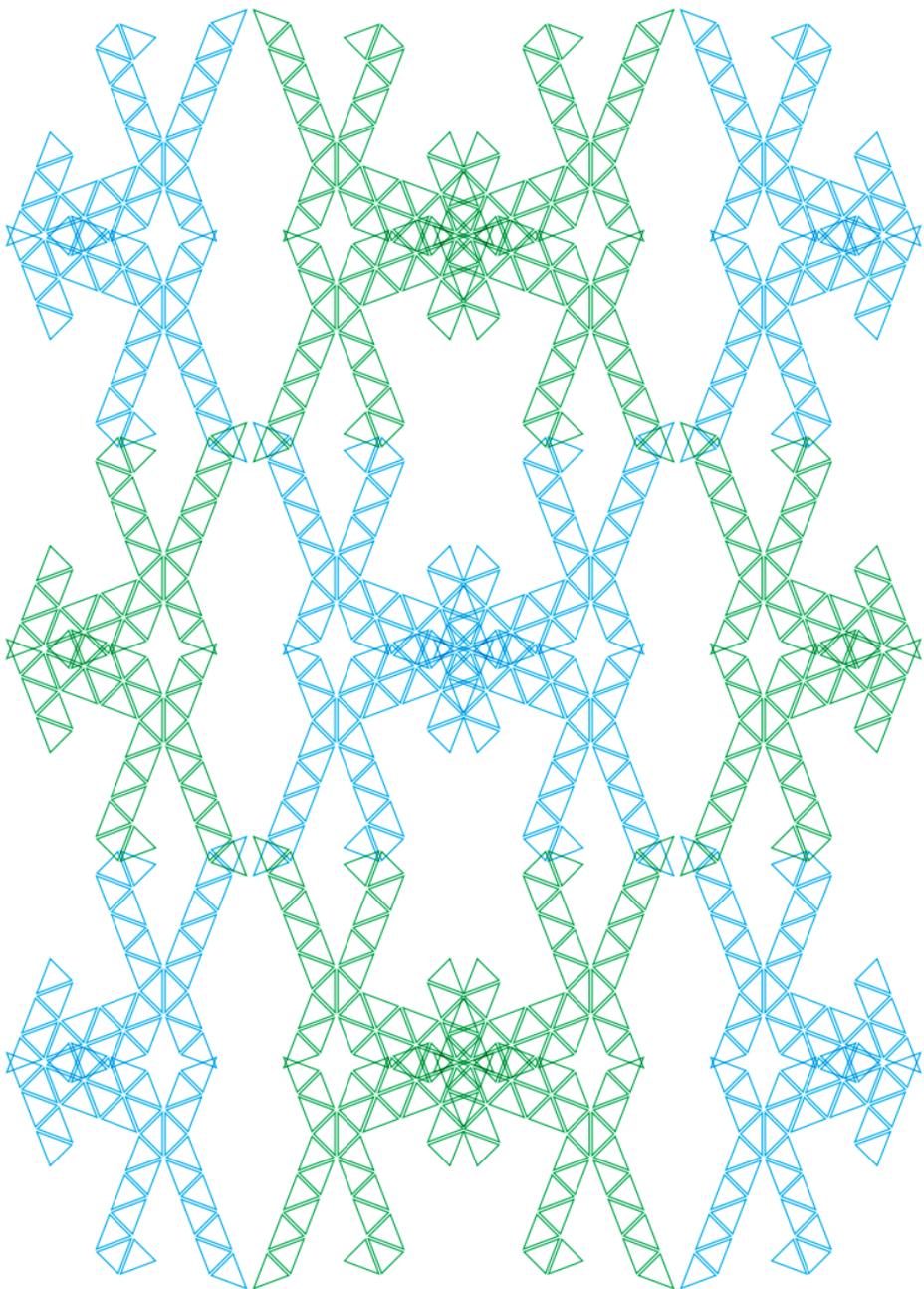
Although it may be extremely difficult to answer the question that contains both vision and operativity, a variety of aspirations, often opposite and at first glance irreconcilable perceptions, I believe this is possible.

I am convinced that cultural workers and artists of Istria County will have enough inner strength and succeed to agree objectives that we can achieve together for the benefit of all our citizens, ensuring a more comfortable and higher quality life.

Sometimes the word vision has a negative connotation, but I know that we are aware of the fact that progress is possible only with clear ideas, defined objectives and above all experts who can realize everything agreed on.

I am certain that the Istrian Cultural Strategy - ICS will be a collective vision that will contribute to the realization of our common objective - Istria as the region of culture.

PRESIDENT OF ISTRIA COUNTY  
Ivan Jakovčić



# Living the culture of Istria

The Istrian Cultural Strategy, commonly referred to as ICS, certainly is not unknown anymore, after a hundred or so cultural workers, artists and cultural heritage devotees presented their views, comments, proposals and ideas written and outlined in the document that will determine the development of culture in Istria County over the next years. The county that aims to be the leading region in artistic creativity, preservation of material and intangible cultural heritage, organized institutions, activities of associations, contemporary art ... surely cannot realize its aspirations without a key document that gives an answer to a series of questions: what are the objectives in culture and art?; how to achieve the set objectives?; who will realize everything agreed on?...

Thanks to the activities of work teams, public debate, comments and confrontation of opinions and arguments, the Draft of the Strategy was outlined before the 2nd Convention on Culture in Poreč. Although it may not satisfy all cultural workers and artists, it will certainly give a clearer image of culture and art that we all wish to create in and about Istria; a clearly defined image that we want to send off to the general cultural public from our peninsula.

The Istrian Cultural Strategy - ICS is an image of culture and art that will be extended and modified over time, so this certainly represents the first in a series of steps that will respond to the vital aspiration of the culture of Istria - living the culture in order to live for ourselves our present, our past and our vision of the future.



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# Introduction

The Istrian Cultural Strategy defines priorities and key directions for activities of Istria County in the field of culture over a five-year period. The Draft of the Istrian Cultural Strategy was outlined by a group of cultural workers who determined the situation in existing activities and the needs in the field of culture, and based on this defined the priorities, key directions of activities and the distribution of basic resources of Istria County.

Owing to the multiplicity of its meaning, the field of culture is extremely difficult to define precisely. Raymond Williams condensed the various interpretations of the concept of culture into three basic meanings: (1) general process of civilization in terms of self-development and education; (2) belief, practice and way of life that differentiates one group (ethnic, subculture, professional...) or society from another; (3) works and practice of intellectual, particularly artistic activity. When referring to the cultural sector, we usually have in mind the last meaning and identify it with cultural activity. This logic of subdivision is also applied in authorities, the Ministry of Culture and the Department of Culture, as an area covering institutions and activities that have a memory or creativity function in the field of culture. Naturally, this subdivision is not clearly defined, so that in such authorities there are elements of

the anthropological concept of culture and the most general level of culture as a civilization process.

In practice, administrative authority is of utmost importance for defining the cultural sector, and consequently all measures relating to the management of this sector, primarily cultural policy measures. On the other hand, due to the fact that there are no defined boundaries of the cultural sector, cultural policy becomes very unstable. Most often separated from media (and communication in general) policy and physical planning (architecture and urban planning), cultural policy is reduced to artistic policy, which means that the primary interest is directed towards the esthetic dimension, taste and symbolic values. This is unsatisfactory, both from the theoretical and practical point of view since the efficient cultural policy should develop a relation towards media and spatial policy, as well as education and economy. Therefore, it is extremely important for every cultural policy to be turned towards inter-sector cooperation. In the Istrian Cultural Strategy considerable attention has been devoted to this issue, and activities with the objective of connecting the development of Istria with other sectors, especially education and tourism, have been defined.

Apart from defining the concept of culture, it is also important to define the method of organizing the cultural sector. There are two basic methods of organizing social relations: through market or hierarchy. A third method is joined, network, which sufficiently differs from the two basic forms. Relations regulated through the market, for which the normative basis is represented by property rights, develop through prices, actors most often do not commit to a long-term relation and such relations are exceptionally flexible. In Croatia, the market regulates only part of the cultural relations, mostly those related to cultural industries; even here extremely large interventions of state or other hierarchical levels of administration are present. A considerably greater part of

relations is regulated through hierarchical forms of administrative management, where the normative base is represented by work relations; communication among cultural actors is characterized by routine and they are mostly committed to a long-term relation, whereas all relations are marked by formalism and absence of flexibility. An excellent example of the hierarchical form of organizing social relations is the Law on institutions that sets long-term obligations of the founder towards institution and defines a routine method of administration. In Croatian culture, most relations are regulated by hierarchical form: all museums, libraries, archives, theaters, cultural centers, public open universities, conservation and restoration centers whose founders are the State, counties, towns and municipalities. The hierarchical form transfers into other, much more flexible relations such as public funding of needs of the cultural sector. The network organization of social relations is not as flexible as the market one and is based on defined long-term relations; however it is not as strictly defined as the hierarchical form. In Croatia networks are characteristic for cooperation among cultural associations.

In the hierarchical structure, Istria County is relatively independent in performing activities within its competence, without greater possibilities of action outside this scope. In the cultural sector, Istria County is responsible for the functioning of institutions it founded (Historical Museum of Istria, Ethnographic Museum of Istria, Museum of Contemporary Art of Istria) and financing public needs in the cultural sector. The functioning of the majority of other cultural institutions in Istria is within the competence of municipalities and towns, and in some cases, the Ministry of Culture. Despite the limited legal and political instruments (eg. through legislative-normative regulation) Istria County, through financial (eg. financing artistic projects, scholarships, purchase...) and organizational instruments (planning, networking...)

develops the cultural policy which has a great influence on the cultural life of Istria, much more than it may derive from its administrative position. The pro-active role of the cultural policy in Istria results from the decentralization of cultural infrastructure and dispersion of cultural contents in Istria, as well as the connection between culture and tourism covering most of the Istrian territory. In view of all this, the measures that Istria County undertakes through the Istrian Cultural Strategy are first of all financial and organizational, and are without exception stimulating and encouraging. In this respect, the Istrian Cultural Strategy presents a plan of maximizing achievements in the cultural sector of Istria through available instruments of cultural policy and within the outlined competence of Istria County over a period of five years.

Very often, in the cultural sector, the very topic of cultural policy or strategy of cultural development is regarded as the instrumentalization of culture. The discourse of cultural policy is such that it simplifies the complexity of culture, reducing it to something it actually is not. Regardless of the prevalent organization form of social relations, in the context of cultural policy development, it is bound to be instrumentalized or simplified, and most often both of these. So, on the market, culture will be reduced to its exchange value, where market principles will be applied, whereas the hierarchical form sees in culture a symbolic element that stimulates the creation of social cohesion. Today, according to Andrew Gamble, managerization has become an ideological discourse with management being the major force in creating a successful society; it equally dominates in all organization forms of society. Cultural strategy is part of a managerial ideological discourse and as such represents the plan of cultural development which should be based on market analysis and competitiveness. The question to which extent it will accept the instrumentalization of culture, its simplification or subordination to economic rationality

is something that will be answered differently by every cultural worker: some artists will absolutely refuse even to think about cultural strategy, whereas others will wholeheartedly embrace all management principles and strategic planning just as well. The Istrian Cultural Strategy is part of a managerial discourse and it certainly presents a specific instrumentalization of culture. In this case the cultural sector is instrumentalized in such a way that it is expected to improve the quality of life, as well as stimulate social and economic development. Moreover, cultural development is expected from the cultural sector, yet the real question is what the concept of development can mean in culture. The Cultural Strategy of the Republic of Croatia has offered a vision of sustainable cultural development according to which "sustainable cultural development is regarded as the development of human interests and activities which to a lesser extent burdens the reserves of the country's national resources and existing capacities of infrastructure and inhabited areas, at the same time encouraging the enjoyment of values (old and new, material and intangible), which through art, science, education, cultural games and customs, increase the appeal among people." By accepting such a vision of cultural development, we can make a diversification of the economic concept of development, based on increase (consumption and production) and culturalize the very instrumentalization of culture, so as to comprehend the quality of life, social and economic development in accordance with this very definition of sustainable cultural development. Cultural workers who have worked on the Istrian Cultural Strategy mostly perceive their work in the cultural sector in such a way.

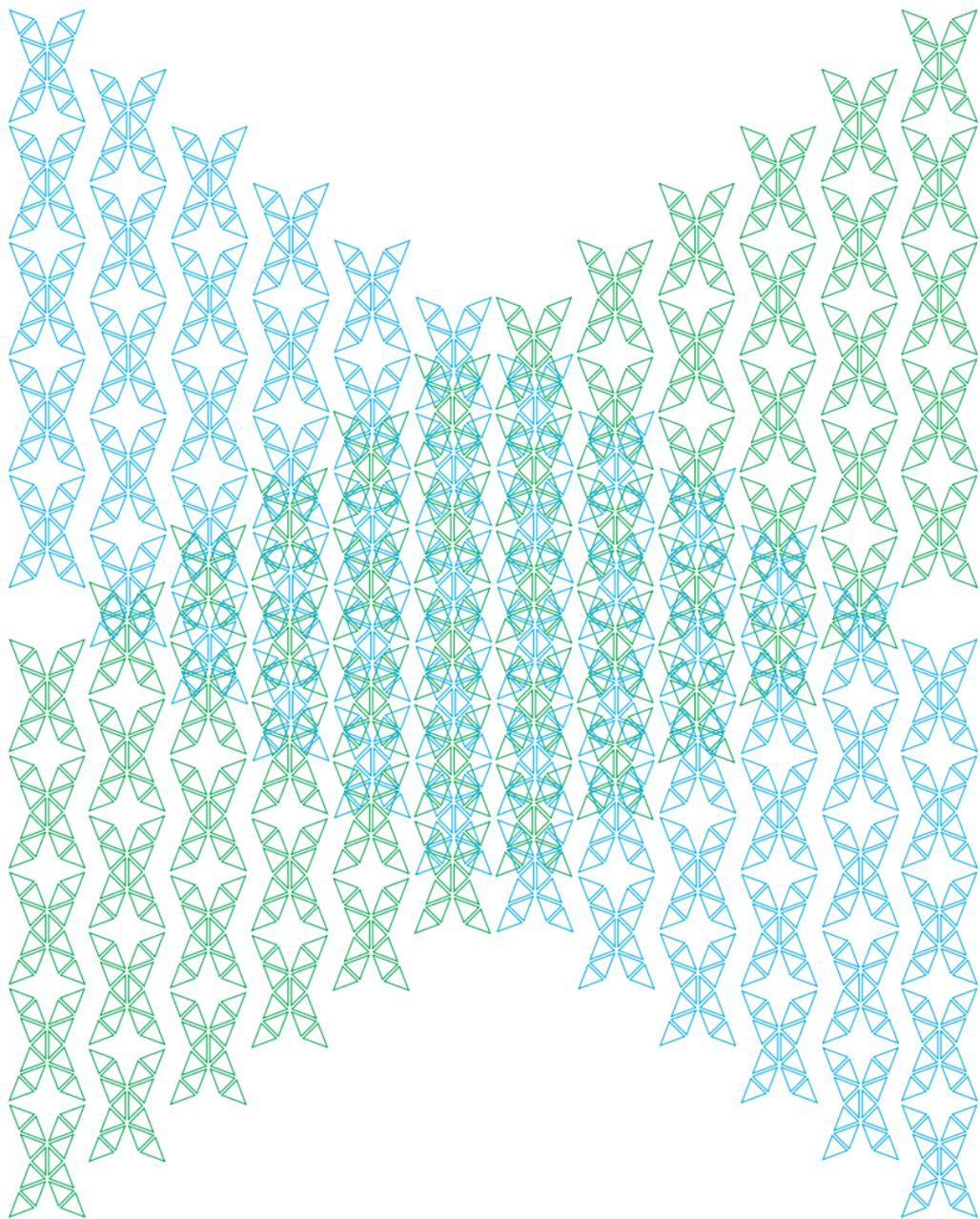
## Methodology

The Istrian Cultural Strategy was adopted at the 53rd Assembly of Istria County held on April 6, 2009, with all the corrections and amendments adopted at the 2nd Convention on Culture in Poreč. The Istrian Cultural Strategy is the result of the work of cultural workers divided into 18 work teams who analyzed the existing situation, determined the key problems and possible directions of development, and finally determined the priorities and key directions for actions of Istria County over the next five-year period. Work teams, consisting of 5 members, who demonstrated both a high level of expertise so far and the ability to perceive the complete cultural development, were divided according to specialization into the following areas: music, film, theater, museums, material cultural heritage, intangible cultural heritage, cultural amateurism, literature, publishing, culture of the Italian national minority, visual arts, galleries, new media culture, cultural institutions, libraries, international cooperation, sponsorship in culture and media promotion of culture. In addition to these, a work team consisting of Istria County representatives was also appointed. This division is not precise - work teams overlapped in the fields of their professional interest (the intention was not to form narrow-specialized teams that would define the priorities only for their own area of expertise) to create the entire cultural development of Istria County. The lack of precision in determining an area of expertise is almost inevitable; this is something we wanted to turn into an advantage by creating a large number of work teams who, by entering each other's sectors, would give a new view on the possibilities and threats confronting cultural development in Istria, as well as encourage the discussion on culture. Work teams were, first of all, engaged in the mapping of the existing situation, defining the needs and possible problems, planning future development and indicators that would enable evaluation

of the Istrian Cultural Strategy. Work teams also focused on the analysis of inner strengths and weaknesses of the cultural sector in Istria County. Naturally, the analysis of political, economic, social, ecological and technological factors of the environment of the cultural sector was not left out. This particularly revealed the possibilities of international cooperation, but also the danger of reduced interest of the general public for certain cultural programs. Besides, work teams were invited to express their opinions on all sectors (joint meetings) in order to define the key activities for Istria County over the next period.

The entire process of elaboration of the Draft of the Istrian Cultural Strategy was available to the public on the Istria County website, with all the minutes of the most important meetings and the synthesis of the Istrian Cultural Strategy. Citizens were able to express their opinions on the cultural development, which they did. Finally, the Istrian Convention on Culture was the meeting place of cultural workers in a much larger number who, with their proposals, contributed to make the Istrian Cultural Strategy the complete plan of cultural development.

The agreement of adopting the Istrian Cultural Strategy depended on the capacity of mutual understanding of all those involved in the process of its elaboration, as well as everyone the strategy refers to. The work passed in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust and respect. Only in such conditions can an agreement be reached, considering the different views and opinions. The lack of a homogeneous comprehension of culture, cultural strategy, objectives and activities that are to be defined, is completely understandable and predictable; in such conditions, the process of creating a unique draft of the cultural strategy, with a large number of cultural workers being involved, demands a great deal of mutual understanding from everyone. **X**



# Istrian Cultural Strategy

The Istrian Cultural Strategy is a document that defines the priorities and main directions of activities of Istria County in the cultural sector over the next five-year period. Istria County does not have at its disposal all instruments of cultural policy and only partially manages the cultural sector within its administrative and territorial competence. This means that the Istrian Cultural Strategy is defined by the legislative-normative regulation at the national level, and is mostly limited to the financial and organizational instruments of implementing cultural policy. This is not at all insignificant. On the contrary, there are great possibilities for achieving objectives through organizational and financial instruments.

The Istrian Cultural Strategy and how it originated reflect the tendencies of Istria County to divide the influence among administration, cultural workers and cultural public in defining the priorities and major directions of activities. This tendency has already been formed through the Cultural Councils that have autonomously defined the priorities and criteria for evaluating culture programs, and now such a process of defining priorities continues on the level of strategic planning.



The Istrian Cultural Strategy is to a great extent an expression of the continuity present in the cultural sector and a reflection of the needs for improving the existing situation in culture. For this reason, most of the objectives and measures are based on past achievements and the perceived possibilities of promoting present activities. This brings to light two guidelines present in all cultural activities: insisting on modern-day approach, i.e. correspondence of cultural activities in Istria with European ones; and insisting on quality, since professionalism and exceptional selection in choosing cultural programs are necessary prerequisites for cultural development in all sectors. It is understood that quality and contemporariness are present in artistic and cultural activities, but they should be specially emphasized since defining priorities implies selection based on these two guidelines.

Following is a presentation of proposed priorities and key guidelines for activities in each cultural sector.

## **Cinematography**

In the sector of cinematography there are three fields of activities: film production, projection activities and film education. Film production in Istria is still in its infancy. In Istria there is still not a single production company that is able to realize the complete film production. There are companies that can offer various services needed for producing a film and they present the possible embryo of future production companies. Despite minimum production conditions, a generation of film authors who have achieved outstanding results in experimental, documentary, animated and purpose films has appeared over the past few years.

A regular projection activity exists only in Pula, in the newly-opened cinema Valli. Apart from this cinema, the projection



activity in Istria is related to public open universities with occasional projections and film festivals, the most significant being Pula Film Festival and Motovun Film Festival. In Croatia there is an initiative for founding a Cinema Art network: cinema Valli plays a prominent role in this initiative. Such a network would permanently guarantee the presence of high-quality films. The potential members of such a network are also public open universities, which are already realizing cooperation in the exchange of film programs.

Education is especially problematic; film culture is systematically neglected in schools, although according to the school curriculum it is part of the basic education. A fact that is especially tragic in such a context is that not even the School of Applied Arts in Pula has a subject connected with film. Informal education is inadequately and only sporadically connected with film events. Film education should be started as early as possible, because only in such a way can the perception of film as art be developed.

In order to promote the sector of cinematography, it is necessary to develop production conditions and make considerable progress in the growth of audience over the next five-year period. In order to realize these objectives, it is necessary to invest in human resources through scholarships of workers in the sector of cinematography, in cooperation with municipalities and towns offer financial support for the purchase of equipment needed to diversify services in the sector of cinematography according to existing needs, create a county cinema network (facilitate the existing cooperation and exchange of contents), influence schools to implement programs related to film culture (establish cooperation with the Croatian Film Clubs' Association and competent administrative authorities) and develop the model of encouraging school



teachers to introduce film to children by organizing visits to the cinema.

## **Music**

The situation in the music sector in terms of concerts, conditions of artistic creation and education is not satisfactory. The low level of musical culture is partly a result of the reduced number of lessons in musical education in schools, lack of encouragement of engaging in music, loss of criteria at public events (music kitsch), equalizing musical amateurism and professionalism, which all together contributes to the disintegration of the system of values in this sector.

The organization of concert life in Istria County is realized mainly through musical events, which are mostly organized without the consent of the local artistic organization. It is necessary to make additional efforts to organize musical events that leave a deeper trace in Istrian culture, enabling correlations between national musical creativity and the foreign one. In the organization of concert life there is a great disproportion in the number of cultural events in summer and winter months, which should be solved in cooperation with the organizers of musical events.

The support offered to orchestras in Istria is not satisfactory.

The Symphony and Accordion Orchestras active at the Center for orchestral activities of the University of Pula rely in fact on outside collaborators. It is difficult to develop orchestral musical activity without continuous work together; therefore, in cooperation with the University of Pula, which is currently opening new studies (string department), it is necessary to find the way for supporting continuous orchestral activities.

To promote musical activities over the next five-year period, it is necessary to raise the general level of musical culture, develop



production conditions for musical activities and institutional support for orchestral activities.

To realize these objectives, it is necessary to determine clear and precise criteria for the distribution of public funds, define their purpose precisely (e.g. for music, cultural amateurism...), support the development of human resources in musical activities, in cooperation with municipalities and towns open work spaces for musicians, and in cooperation with the University of Pula encourage the work of the Center for orchestral activities, Symphony orchestra and Accordion orchestra.

## **Visual arts**

In Croatia visual arts function within a fragmentary organizational and value system. This situation generates a series of problems for artistic production, works of art market, public funding and naturally for museum and gallery activities. In this respect, it is necessary to create a coherent system of contemporary visual arts that will correspond with similar established systems in other European countries.

The general level of visual culture is extremely low, especially in architecture, public area design (including sculptures set on public areas without criteria) in relation to visibility in schools, media... In general, a disastrous context for visual arts. Basic standards of visual culture should be met during all interventions in public areas.

In the first place, in Istria we are faced with the problem of disproportion between the number of artists and that of galleries and exhibition areas in general. The fact is that there is a small number of galleries in Istria, whereas the private ones have a difficulty surviving because of the non-existence of the works of art market, since there is no established system of



buying from public institutions or private (and corporative) collectors. There are no institutions of the legal market of works of art that would include artists, galleries, experts, specialists and collectors. The lack of the contemporary visual arts market is a special problem for artists for whom this is a question of survival. The absence of a national market is reflected on the status of artists at the international level because in Istria, as well as in Croatia, there are no serious galleries that would launch artists on the international market through fairs or in cooperation with international galleries. A special problem is the development of market based on the diversity of needs of artists in this sector. A great problem is also the lack of qualified staff who would engage in gallery work or visual arts in general. An additional problem is that of exhibition areas, which are mostly inadequate. In Istria there is not a single exhibition area for displaying larger thematic or retrospective exhibitions. There is also a lack of reflection on artistic work. Media poorly and (or) inadequately cover events related to contemporary visual arts, whereas critical texts are completely lacking.

The described situation points to the urgency of creating a system for promoting visual arts. It is of utmost importance to create an information system, information service that would update all data continuously, connect existing elements into a coherent whole to gain insight into the existing situation, and to facilitate communication and cooperation among actors. The issue of chronic lack of qualified staff in the sector of visual arts may be solved only by developing a system of scholarships for specialized studies and opening new jobs. Publishing in the sector of visual arts is relatively good; although there are also possibilities for improvements, since presently the financial support for publishers of monographs



is insufficient, resulting in a long process of monograph preparation, therefore publishing at a slow pace. In Istria 25 visual artists' monographs have been published, however there are no historic syntheses and research from the 1950s on.

The founding of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Istria attempts to solve some of the fundamental issues of the sector of contemporary visual arts scene. In the first place this refers to production, because the Museum is conceived as a center of production that will offer artists a possibility to produce works. Also, the Museum will open up possibilities for the research of contemporary visual arts and publication of works on this theme. Naturally, the Museum's primary activity is related to exhibitions, so it will have an important role in filling the gap in exhibition activities by organizing thematic, problematic and one-man exhibitions.

To promote the situation in the sector of visual arts, it is necessary to raise the general level of visual culture over the next five-year period, develop production conditions needed for visual arts, increase the visibility of contemporary arts production and encourage the creation of contemporary visual arts market.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to support the development of human resources through a system of scholarships, in cooperation with municipalities and towns open work spaces for visual artists, encourage artists to hold international one-man or collective exhibitions, in cooperation with municipalities and towns create a system of buying works of art from visual artists through independent evaluation bodies, encourage the presentation of galleries at renowned international contemporary art fairs and forming of a respectable event in the field of visual arts, founding independent centers for the production and promotion of visual arts, as



well as promotion of contemporary Istrian art through media and tourist promotion. Since the Museum of Contemporary Art is an important factor in realizing the set objectives, it is necessary to activate its production, research and exhibition activity as soon as possible; to achieve this it is necessary to support the forming of qualified and specialized staff in the Museum, through employment and specialization, and support the formation of museum holdings.

### **Literature and publishing**

The production of books in Istria is respectable, in terms of both quality of titles and their number. There is a lack of major publishing projects with an important culturological dimension that surpasses the boundaries of individual cultural or artistic activities. In Istria there are excellent writers, numerous important literary events and a number of eminent organizers of literary meetings, so we can rightfully speak of the satisfactory level of literary promotion.

In financing publishing and literary projects it is important to direct the funds at disposal at the county level into projects of the highest quality, instead of dividing them into a number of smaller projects, often of questionable quality. Sometimes the County funding legitimizes projects that have no artistic or cultural value. Therefore, it is necessary to raise the standards and change the method of work of the Cultural Council that would have to evaluate the texts before deciding about the subsidy.

In the field of literature in Istria, it is extremely important to develop cooperation with the University of Pula as a potential focal point of future literary and cultural life in general. University life is completely separated from cultural life and such a situation should be overcome; it is important to encourage



projects that will create contacts with academic citizens, primarily students and include them in the cultural life. Support in publishing has two forms: financial support of the edition and purchasing books. This refers to different models of co-financing that have different objectives and levels, and should remain as such. It is necessary to resist the attempts to equate them. The subsidy for editions is granted for a period of one year, which is often too short for more complex publishing projects and in such cases should be extended to several-years financial support. Subsidies for editions are generally too small with a tendency of assisting with very small, equal amounts various publishing projects, in terms of both size and quality; this indicates the lack of selection when deciding about the subsidy. When speaking about purchasing books, it is necessary to increase its funding, since this is a way of expanding public library holdings.

The problem Istrian publishers are confronted with is the situation in accompanying sectors - pre-printing, printing and post-printing of books. There are not many business entities of this type and they do not meet today's standards of publishing. Such a situation generates numerous problems for publishers, raises the price of editions and prolongs deadlines. In all forms of subsidies for literature and publishing, the most important criteria must be the quality of edition. Quality and esthetic value are immanent in cultural activity; therefore these criteria should be above all. Only after this can we speak of the specific regional qualities and other criteria. For this reason it is extremely important to take measures that will encourage excellence in literature and publishing. This can be achieved by a more restricted selection of projects that will receive subsidies, as well as by developing decision-making mechanisms that will give priority to the professional



evaluation and prevent a conflict of interest in decision-making bodies.

To promote literature and publishing over the next five-year period, it is necessary to develop production conditions in literature and publishing, raise awareness of cultural value and increase the level of autonomy of the cultural sector.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to support the development of human resources in literature and publishing through a system of scholarships, define publishing priorities (so-called major editions) and direct human and financial resources towards realizing these priorities; it is necessary to introduce authors scholarships for writers (in accordance with the Ministry of Culture), encourage the international exchange of writers and establish a residence center for writers in Istria. Furthermore, it is necessary to define precisely the purpose of funds granted through public competitions in the cultural sector and elaborate measures for preventing the conflict of interest of decision-making bodies. It is necessary to establish multi-annual subsidies for complex publishing projects.

## **Theater arts**

The basis of every cultural activity is production, and this production is a crucial problem in theater arts in Istria. Apart from the Istrian National Theater, only Dr. Inat and Ulysses Theater have their very own continuous production. Occasionally, a group of individuals form an artistic company that produces a few dance or drama performances, but without a continuous theater production. Reasons for such a problem are the insufficient resources at the disposal of theater activity: work spaces are inadequate, technical equipment is unsatisfactory. In Pula there is a sufficient number



of artistic and technical staff that are able to produce quality performances, but in other parts of Istria this is not the case. A special problem is the lack of criteria for the evaluation of theater production; usually the representative quality of an institution is valued, thus creating unnecessary differences between institutional and extra-institutional production. All together, funds are to a greater degree directed towards events than production which is not at all stimulating and over the long term may present a problem in the development of dance and drama theater in Istria.

The forming of a theater company within the Istrian National Theater is a matter of dispute, since it is neither justified by artistic nor economic reasons, but is supported by legislative regulations. A contemporary theater needs the mobility of artistic staff and project-organized activities in order to better exploit all human resources in the field of dance and drama theater in Istria. Especially today, when some twenty performers and authors from Pula and Istria play an important role in both Croatian and Slovene dance and drama theater.

The theater offer, apart from the Istrian National Theater that has the role of repertory theater, and the above-mentioned theaters Dr. Inat and Ulysses Theater, is filled out with festivals in Pula, Umag, Poreč and Svetvinčenat. The shortcoming of these theaters is their insufficient communication with the local artistic community which is not contextualized and promoted, so these festivals remain isolated events without a long-term influence on the theater life of Istria. Festivals are the possible focal points of cultural cooperation, places that connect artists that can have their own production which later continues to exist, independent of such a festival.

Guest theater performances in Istrian towns are generally spontaneous and without any concept, due to the insufficient



communication between the organizers and mobility of audience. By developing a network of guest performances based on quality communication between organizers, this offer can be improved considerably.

The absence of theater criticism in Istria has a negative influence on theater workers and expectations of audience. Journalists are not qualified enough for theater programs, whereas media do not favor the promotion of theater events.

The neglect of theaters in the school curriculum is evident. Schools do not convey to their pupils the main rules of behavior in theaters, whereas pupils are not offered adequate programs, which additionally moves them away from the theater. A positive example is the Pazin theater camp, an event that contributes to the development of sensibility and love towards the theater, possible activities in the education of audience and future theater workers. Informal theater education is also provided in a series of workshops and seminars, however without adequate continuity.

To realize these objectives, it is necessary to develop production conditions in dance and drama theater, in cooperation with municipalities and towns invest in infrastructure for theater production (space, technical equipment, mobile stage and seating area), increase funding for theater production, support festivals as focal points of cultural cooperation, avoid their overlapping and motivate their reciprocal cooperation, encourage festival productions and cooperation of guest and local artists, in cooperation with municipalities and towns develop a model of motivating and encouraging teachers to introduce pupils to theater performances.



## **New media culture**

This field of culture, which should be defined again and again, covers those practices where the influence of technology on artistic creation is evident, where social and cultural activities are imbued in a contemporary context of subculture and counterculture (non-profit clubs, interdisciplinary events, platforms, Internet, networks...). In today's cultural activities festival culture and new media expression predominate. The functioning of organizations (and accompanying spaces, clubs) that are the bearers of this culture is extremely unstable because of financial, spatial and organizational problems: clubs close down because relations between culture and catering activities are not regulated, financing of annual programs is not developed, spaces where programs are held do not meet technical conditions, there is a lack of qualified staff who would constantly engage in new media culture... Activities in the field of new media culture have an extremely low status in society and are faced with huge material problems.

Despite all the mentioned problems and lack of resources, the existing programs are good and this field of culture is a source of new ideas. Programming in new media culture is based on friendly terms, which over the long term is unsustainable because of the possible drastic decline in program quality. Connections with other towns and abroad, which is extremely important for maintaining the program quality, are minimal because of the lack of money, space and equipment.

To maintain the situation in new media culture and at least improve partly, it is necessary to develop production conditions, ensure institutional support and increase the social status of new media culture.

To realize these objectives it is necessary to invest, in cooperation with municipalities and towns, in infrastructure needed



for activities within the framework of new media culture (non-profit clubs, work spaces and equipment), start offering serious institutional support to new media organizations, encourage investment in public relations for individual projects and programs, as well as the entire field of new media culture. It is also extremely important to offer support to cross-sector cooperation.

## **Tangible Cultural Heritage**

Istria is an area of extremely rich tangible cultural heritage which is why a number of institutions have been founded with the aim of its preservation, but which have for long been neglected both materially and financially. Only in the last fifteen years has the heritage been inventoried, leaving however, still a series of issues such as maintenance and preservation of monuments, archives, library and museum holdings, while its keeping does not meet professional standards. Heritage information access is rather modest, because the data on material have not yet been united, the registers are incomplete and only nominally made publicly available (in practice their accessibility is materially difficult, and the digitalization process is only at its beginnings.

A great challenge to conservationists is the protection of urban settings that is impossible without wider social action, the activities of a series of institutions and raising awareness on the values of cultural heritage. Significant investment in the protection of certain heritage segments, priorities in the protection of cultural assets is an inevitable strategy, but with the loss of urban complexes or landscapes, the setting of living and culture is lost irretrievably. Since the preservation of urban complexes, villages and landscapes mainly depends on the inhabitants of these areas, it is necessary to work out a system



of incentives (free of charge case studies and subsidizing interest rates on renovation loans) so that these places become more desirable for living. It is important to raise awareness on the values of the cultural heritage and all forms of protection. It is important to educate people on the value of local setting and cultural heritage. The mediating role of museums, and all those involved in cultural heritage is very important here.

In the preservation of cultural heritage craftsmen play an important role, with skills and experience to appropriately restore artifacts or buildings. Apart from supporting conservation professions (in cooperation with the Croatian Conservation Institute), it is therefore necessary to create a system of economic incentives for the preservation and development of traditional trades and crafts.

The presentation of cultural heritage is not satisfactory: museums do not have appropriate exhibition halls; there is no information system that could provide basic information or signposts to the numerous sites. Many sites remain inaccessible to the public due to lack of organization. The current presentation level of cultural heritage needs to be improved in accordance with professional standards of international convention: support distant collections and *in situ* exhibiting as opposed to representative institutions where the holdings are gathered in one place, and to provide an exhibition area where complex theme and problematic exhibitions could take place. Dispersed heritage presentation (archaeological sites, churches, collections ...) should be an accessible location to the interested public (including tourists). It is a complex issue whose solving requires the involvement of a number of participants, a network of professional and technical staff as well as information services. For instance, the Arena could be the place where information on all sites scattered throughout



Istria could be obtained, along with explanations on their contents and instructions on how they can be reached, working hours.

To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to support programs of cultural heritage presentation by means of exhibitions, complex exhibitions (and accompanying educational programs) and publishing projects, digitalize archive, library and museum holdings, found an information center in Pula where information on Istrian cultural heritage will be available, create a system of stimulating measures for cultural property owners and craftsmen possessing traditional and conservation skills and knowledge, open a multi-purpose exhibition area, in cooperation with municipalities and towns support dislocated museum collections and build a unique depot for keeping museum holdings following professional standards.

## **Museums**

Museums in Istria have mostly completed the basic inventory tasks and cataloging their holdings. They are now facing a decisive step towards the public that is both the museum consumer and owner. Most museums are introducing new displays that will be attractive for the public and at the same time fulfill their educational role. Nearly all Istrian museums are located in buildings that due to their historic value, count as cultural assets. Since in these buildings it is impossible to carry out any interventions that would put these buildings in the service of museum activities, the majority of Istrian museums does not have the basic conditions for displaying quality exhibitions or necessary conditions in their depots where temperature and humidity oscillations cannot be regulated. Shortly, the buildings where museums are located present an obstacle for the development of museum activities.



Seven regional museums in Istria are facing problems due to extreme complexity of their holdings. Apart from the historic and ethnographic, regional collections, they often possess material from the Antiquity to objects belonging to the contemporary visual art, which is extremely demanding for museum staff that are very often unable to process such complex holdings. This problem could be solved by making museum work more flexible. However, there is no legal basis for such change. One way of solving this problem could be by detaching galleries of modern art or taking over the art holdings from another institution which would enable these works of art to remain a possession intended for the benefit of the inhabitants of Istria. A positive fact is that even smaller municipalities are beginning to create their own collections. In such a way, museums will be relieved and at the same time, municipalities are gaining interesting and important attractions. Creating collections in smaller towns reflects the increasing interest for identity that was jeopardized due to political, social and economic changes and is now being rebuilt again.

Insufficient cooperation among Istrian museums, an important fact when considering their development strategy, results from structural reasons - different founders with very different financial opportunities, different programs and size of their holdings and finally, different public function. However, there are many fields of possible cooperation in spite of structural conditions: staff education, development of educational obligations, exhibition activities, investment in common infrastructure (depots, exhibition areas), and staff, international cooperation and development of joint programs with other sectors. Apart from the meager cooperation among museums, there is presently hardly any cooperation between



museums and other institutions such as archives and libraries in programs that would raise interest of the professional public and citizens.

In order to improve the situation in museum work, the next five years should be dedicated to networking Istrian museums and their adjustment to the professional standards.

To achieve these objectives, in cooperation with the municipalities and towns, support should be given to the cooperation of Istrian museums in research, exhibition and publishing activity. Further, development of new services and projects should be provided, the founding of new dislocated museum collections should be encouraged and finally, in cooperation with municipalities, towns and the Ministry of Culture investing in joint infrastructure should be started (unique Istrian museum depot for keeping museum holdings in accordance with professional standards and multi-purpose exhibition area).

## **Libraries**

Library work is extremely standardized, even at the state level.

In view of space, human and financial resources, most national libraries in Istria have not yet achieved the standards regarding staff, space (except the library in Umag, Novigrad and Pula), equipment, financing and scope of inhabitants (around 15 percent).

When considering school libraries through the same standards, the situation is much worse: libraries do not have appropriate space, the holdings are not renewed in a satisfactory way, they have insufficient professional staff ... The situation in schools is somewhat compensated by public libraries assuming the role of school libraries, but creating new problems for public libraries. Conditions in school libraries should be improved, such as the complex situation due to the competence of



various administrative bodies (ministries, counties, towns and municipalities).

Public libraries are opening new departments suited to the needs of citizens: children, youth, senior department, as well as regional and audiovisual departments... Their development requires specialized staff, equipment and separate premises. Since Istria is a multi-ethnic area, meeting requirements of the national minorities (Italian, Slovene, Serbian, Bosnian ...) in their native languages is a delicate issue. There is also the recently increasing need for foreign language books (English, German, French ...) mainly because of development of tourism. This also requires a pro-active role.

Istrian public libraries have made an important step forward in developing animation and mediation programs which is reflected in the organization of symposiums, trade fairs, presentations... Besides, libraries tend to expand their activities (teaching foreign languages) and connecting with other activities, which opens new opportunities, but at the same time, demands new resources.

Introducing information technology is a special issue in Croatia. Unfortunately, there is no unique computer program for libraries that would facilitate inter-library exchange of information, programs and books. Various incompatible programs are used; therefore there is a need for compatibility.

To improve the situation in library activities, the next five years should be focused on networking between Istrian libraries and harmonizing with professional standards in this sector.

To achieve these objectives, in cooperation with municipalities and towns, as well as the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, it is necessary to build a central depository library for all libraries (university, public and school), unite the library offer, improve library services,



open new departments, encourage the extension of book collections in regional collections, in languages of national minorities and in foreign languages, encourage the digitalization of particularly valuable book collections and make them available to the public.

## **Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Intangible cultural heritage is reflected through oral expression and tradition, oral literature (including the language as part of this heritage), performing arts (music, dance, theater...), social habits, customs, rituals, celebrations, knowledge (and acts related to it) about nature, and knowledge and skills of traditional handicrafts. As intangible heritage may be referred to as living heritage, engagement in it is extremely focused on people (and communities) and the overall cultural context, and less on isolated events, types or genres.

Istria is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural area that, due to the many migrations of the population, intensive cultural diffusion and transformation of life has an extremely rich intangible cultural heritage. Unfortunately, this wealth is insufficiently studied, documented and presented. In spite of Istria's highly evaluated intangible cultural heritage at a declarative level, not much has been done on its evaluation, which is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the last systematic research of Istria's intangible cultural heritage was done in the period from 1948-1952. As opposed to the professional and scientific work that is deeply insufficient, a number of activities based on intangible cultural heritage, often in a distorting way, are used out of context and superficially interpreted, which leads to incorrect conclusions and definitions of certain phenomena, neglect of other and promotion of incorrect knowledge about heritage. Cultural heritage is often regarded



only in the representative way (folklore performances), while an entire group of forms and phenomena of intangible creation are completely neglected (dialects, understanding of the world, skills and knowledge about treatment of material ...). There are no systematic programs on collecting material and documents on intangible cultural heritage. The existing ones are scattered, while a large part is not documented at all. Due to unorganized access and preservation of the existing material, copies of documented forms and phenomena of the existing material are not easily available to the people of Istria. It is necessary to create as soon as possible a County register of intangible heritage, start new research and collect new documentations and create an information service that will be available to the public. It is of utmost importance that these jobs are carried out by professionals (ethnologists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, social anthropologists, sociologists ...). Namely, in the field of intangible cultural heritage, a number of tasks are performed by people who are not professional and who, in spite of their willingness and enthusiasm, contribute to the simplification, deformation, impoverishment and finally, the disappearance of numerous phenomena of intangible culture.

The tasks of Istria County, that result from the program of protection of cultural assets, refer to professional research and analyses of phenomena that are in Croatia registered as cultural assets, and are intended to be recommended for UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List (*bitinade*, two-part singing with narrow intervals, etc.).

To improve the situation regarding intangible cultural heritage, the next five years should focus on developing extra-institutional support in all activities related to intangible cultural heritage in following the highest professional standards.



To achieve this objective, it is necessary to establish a Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage of Istria (within the Ethnographic Museum of Istria) that would carry out systematic fieldwork and research in all forms and ways of modern registering (audio and video recording *in loco*, interviews with inheritors and other tellers), archiving material on traditional knowledge and skills of all peoples and ethnical groups in Istria, collecting and cataloging all relevant material beyond Istria and its scientific processing and digitization, offer professional assistance and consulting (to communities and groups inheriting the material) in identification, defining, preservation, performing and conveying material (this could contribute to increasing self-consciousness of communities and awareness on the value of cultural heritage), carry out educational activities (educating professional staff for conveying knowledge and skills; organizing workshops for the interested public; consulting folklore and other amateur groups), public activity by organizing conferences and supporting publishing activities and establishing cooperation with similar institutions and professionals in the country and abroad. Apart from establishing the Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage, it is also necessary to establish the Istria County Council for Intangible Cultural Heritage that would be responsible for the programs, supported by the County, being carried out following professional standards, and initiate proposals and prepare documents for listing in the register of cultural assets.

### **Culture of the Italian national minority**

Rights of national minorities in Croatia are regulated at the national level (Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities and Law on the use of language and script of national minorities). In these laws, provisions on minorities



are elaborated in detail and favorably judged by the national minorities. Istria consistently implements all these provisions and the situation of the Italian national minority is satisfactory from the legislative-normative point of view. There is space for improving cultural relations, socialization of Italian language, literature, visual arts and other arts as well. This socialization is possible through an interaction of cultures and their reciprocal familiarization. The question of socialization of language is inseparable from schools and the organization of school system. This reaches out of the framework of the Istrian Cultural Strategy, but there is a possibility for cooperation between the cultural sector and the educational one on the issues of socialization of Italian culture (e.g. including the Italian national minority in developing programs and textbooks connected with regional studies).

An important issue for the Italian community is also the presentation of the contribution of Italian minority to Istrian culture and history (in guidebooks, as well as textbooks) because there is still a stereotype presentation of such contribution. Naturally, such an ahistorical approach is not reserved only for the Italian community, but the Croatian and Slovene as well, so it is necessary to carry out scientific research to show that these communities are distinguished in textbooks and other publications. Istria County should encourage such research since, over the long term, it is extremely useful for the development of cultural relations.

Furthermore, it is necessary to include the Italian community, as well as other minorities, into all activities that are covered by the Istrian Cultural Strategy, naturally, depending on the resources and needs. However, it is important to take into account the fact that a specific feature of the Italian community is the dispersion of its institutions outside Istria; important



institutions for the Italian community are located in Rijeka and Kopar.

To realize this objective, it is necessary to develop multiculturalism and cross-cultural communication in Istria, promote the socialization of Italian culture through the participation of Italian national minority institutions in the implementation of the Istrian Cultural Strategy (especially the segment that refers to developing programs and textbooks on regional studies); by supporting cultural exchange programs expand the holdings Italian language books in all libraries in Istria, encourage the programs of socialization of the Italian language and publishing translations of Istrian writers writing in Italian or Croatian language.

### **International cultural cooperation**

Today, international cultural cooperation is developing in different orientations and forms, through cultural exchange, international projects and long-term programs, platforms and networks, but also through simple guest visits of artists and other cultural workers. International cultural cooperation in Istria relies on foreign guest artist visits mostly at summer festivals. It is satisfactory in quantity, but not in quality, since visiting artists do not leave a strong trace on the Istrian cultural scene and rarely collaborate with national artists. International cooperation in which Istrian artists participate is very modest and follows the same paths year after year, with the same artists appearing. There is no systematic plan of guest visits, so this is mostly limited to the countries of ex-Yugoslavia. Reasons for the small number of Istrian guest artist visits are connected with the poor cultural production in Istria, but also partly with the opinion that guest visits of artists and cultural workers abroad is under-evaluated, in



contrast to the over-evaluation of foreign artists appearing in Istria.

In Istria there is a great interest for participation in international projects, especially programs financed with European Union funds. Although Istrian organizations and Istria County participate in several such projects, this type of international cooperation can be developed through an information system of a higher quality, educational and consulting services for realizing these projects. In Istria there are already institutions that can take over these functions, such as the Istrian Development Agency, Foundation for Civil Society, EU Info Center...

For international cultural cooperation, the existence of a framework within which this can be realized, is essential. Such a framework should facilitate and encourage cultural exchange as opposed to unilateral guest visits, international project cooperation, development component that will be based primarily on international festival production, mobility on an individual level through scholarships, specializations and residence projects, priority areas of international cooperation...

To promote international cultural cooperation in Istria, it is necessary to create a framework for this over the next five-year period, which will be based on international projects and cultural exchange.

To achieve this objective, it is necessary to establish the Istria County Council for International Cultural Cooperation, which will create a framework for international cultural cooperation, define the priorities and evaluate concrete proposals of international cultural cooperation. In the next period, through the work of the Council, it is necessary to support the individual mobility of artists and cultural workers, encourage cooperation in international projects, cultural exchange, develop an



information service for participation in international cultural projects and find a model for education in the field of international cooperation and consulting services.

## **Inter-sector cooperation**

In Croatia inter-sector cooperation is not a common occurrence at any level. The division of various sectors, present for a long time, into strictly defined departments does not meet the requirements of contemporary life. This absurd principle is still valid, according to which these needs should be adapted to the administrative division, not vice versa, that the administrative division is adapted to the existing needs. On the other hand, the very profession does not favor interdisciplinary approach and inter-sector cooperation. In this country, each field of study is much more engaged in the status and protection of its own profession from other disciplines than reciprocal cooperation. In such conditions it is difficult to encourage inter-sector cooperation, the result of such efforts is completely uncertain and it is almost impossible to realize cultural progress without the cooperation of cultural sector with other sectors. For this reason, it is necessary to open up the cultural sector towards others and encourage inter-sector cooperation for the mutual benefit. Because of the present unfavorable conditions towards inter-sector cooperation, a lot of time will be needed to initiate it.

Depending on the point of view, cooperation between the educational and cultural sector may or may not be regarded as inter-sector cooperation. In the existing division into departments, the educational system defies the direct influence of cultural sector; therefore it is necessary to establish immediate communication between these sectors. Educational workers, who constitute by far the greatest and most important part of the



educational system, in principle, favor cultural activities and such a fact should be exploited for establishing cooperation. Vital subjects for culture, such as music or art education are marginalized, the number of lessons has been reduced, whereas parts of the curriculum which are extremely important for culture, such as film and theater culture, are realized only in a small number of schools. Schools rarely organize visits to cultural institutions or events, school children are not stimulated to engage in art. The student population is almost completely uninterested in cultural events. The image of such a situation, over the long-term, is disastrous for culture, because without basic information about cultural activities and a developed interest in culture from the earliest age, culture loses its substantial element, people, both as creators of culture and audience. For this reason it is necessary, in cooperation with educational workers, schools and competent administrative bodies, to include, as much as possible, cultural contents into obligatory and optional parts of the school curriculum through visits to the cinema, theater, museums and galleries. As regards acquiring knowledge about regional culture, it is necessary to introduce courses in regional studies in schools; an interdisciplinary subject which would also include the cultural sector.

Cooperation with institutions of higher education, as well as scientific institutions is immanent to the cultural sector. The University of Pula presents the basis, in terms of professional and expert staff, for the development of cultural life in Istria, and in this sense it is necessary to intensify the existing cooperation of the University and the cultural sector by developing joint research, educational and artistic projects.

Tourism is an important branch of economy in Croatia where culture plays an important role in its development. Although



culture is not the primary motive for attracting tourists to Croatia, their interest for cultural events, discovering regional culture and history, as well as participating in cultural activities is increasing every year. Of the five areas for which tourists in Croatia express the lowest level of satisfaction, three of them refer to culture: the presentation of cultural heritage, the quality of signposts for cultural and historic sites and diversity of cultural events. Cultural tourism is still underdeveloped, although in Istria there are a number of positive examples like Motovun Film Festival, Histria Festival, Festival of dance and non-verbal theater in Svetvinčenat, that attract a large number of culture-oriented tourists. The cooperation between the tourist and cultural sector should have two foundations: development of cultural tourism and including culture in the regular tourist offer. When referring to the development of cultural tourism, positive experiences of the mentioned events should be used to develop the offer. In financing events and the offer in general that attracts a large number of tourists, it is important to include the tourist sector to a greater degree. When it comes to including culture in the regular tourist offer, it is necessary to improve significantly the quality of signposts to heritage sites and increase the accessibility of information on all events, heritage sites, collections, museums. There are a number of possible meeting points of the tourist and cultural sectors and this is where mutual understanding and presence should be developed. What would surely be harmful is the withdrawal of one sector before the other, usually the cultural sector in favor of the tourist one.

Building and construction, architecture and urban planning create the space we live in and in this respect are an important part of the cultural sector. The size of domain and way of



regulation have separated architecture and urban planning from cultural activities and given them a special status, which is primarily reflected in their social position. Without architecture and urban planning it is difficult to build a coherent cultural policy, especially in the segment relating to visual arts activities and those connected with the protection of cultural heritage. Today, architecture is perceived mostly through the function of building and investment, whereas the perception of architecture as part of visual and spatial culture is completely missing. For this reason, within the cultural sector, it is necessary to develop critical thinking on architecture and urban planning, encourage debate on architecture as a form of artistic creation and increase the esthetic level of physical planning. In this respect, it is necessary to encourage the presentation of contemporary architectural creativity by publishing books and through public debates, as well as encourage the realization of contemporary architectural solutions in all public investments.

If we want to maintain the original setting of urban complexes, villages and landscape, it is necessary to preserve traditional building knowledge and skills, as well as develop new knowledge regarding restoration work. In construction companies and trade, it is necessary to encourage the conservation and/or acquisition of such knowledge through subsidies and investing in restoration of houses and urban complexes. These incentives can be realized in the form of free feasibility studies or subsidizing of interest rates on renovation loans. On the other hand, it is necessary to establish a connection with the building sector and develop a system of licensing and promotion of those construction companies and tradesmen who possess and apply traditional building techniques or have restoration knowledge and skills. In this way, in cooperation with the



building sector, it is also necessary to influence investors and the construction branch to renovate houses in an adequate way, in accordance with tradition and conservation standards. There are also a number of sectors with which the cultural sector frequently collaborates on various projects and such collaboration should be supported, naturally, while meeting the highest esthetic and other criteria (such as autochthonism), which are important for culture. Culture must reach into inter-sector cooperation, but without losing its specific and characteristic values. This very fear of losing such values and lack of understanding has often marginalized culture in terms of inter-sector cooperation. To overcome inter-sector misunderstanding, it is necessary to develop mutual communication and trust.

## **Culture and media**

In Istria there are a number of electronic media, two local televisions, several local radio stations, radio and television branch office of the Croatian Radio Television, print media “Glas Istre” and “La Voce del Popolo” and Internet portals that can be defined as Istrian. All these media have their own sections, columns or programs dedicated to culture and it may be rightfully said that every cultural event has media coverage - from local ones to those whose importance reaches beyond local boundaries. Since the nature of these media is to cover daily events, it is quite understandable that they are also oriented to covering cultural events. The thematic and problematic approach is not evident, whereas each turbulence in the cultural system is covered. Cultural events are generally covered in a descriptive way. However, to have quality coverage of these themes, the contextualization of activity and critical reflection on the very activity are necessary. Since the



existing media do not satisfy these requirements, it is necessary to initiate a media project that would offer this very type of content, together with coverage on the most important cultural events in Istria, interviews and reportages, whereas special emphasis would be given to art criticism and problem-oriented texts.

### **Information service**

Istrian culture lacks a specialized data base, such as the one on monuments, museum and archive material. Data bases are the result of long-term research, collecting data and digitalization. Some of them are already emerging; some have been made in detail, but for small areas. All these efforts should be united into a complex information system that would give the public insight into specialized data bases and all future research, but would also give the interested public quick and quality insight into monumental heritage, archive, library and museum material.

Specialized data bases are not the only things lacking, but these are also information on the organizations in culture, cultural events and projects, media, etc. There is also a need for a data base that would facilitate communication among cultural workers and connect scattered cultural events into one whole. In the opinion of numerous cultural workers, such an information service should also offer information on possibilities of employment in culture, funding announcements, scholarships, awards...

### **Cultural amateurism**

Cultural amateurism refers to cultural practice that is performed on a hobbyist level. It is important for the development of cultural participation and audience, and very often artistic-



cultural societies in smaller environments represent the backbone of cultural life.

When speaking of folklore and all practice based on intangible heritage of Istria, particularly dance and music, the key problem is that it is completely unexplored, there are no institutions offering professional help and this allows for possibilities for distorting tradition which is falsely presented as authentic. For the development of folklore amateurism, it is necessary to study intangible heritage and ensure the transfer of knowledge to new generations, especially in conditions where the family, generation transfer of knowledge has almost completely disappeared. Furthermore, it is specially important that all bodies engaged in intangible heritage and cultural amateurism recognize autochthonism as extremely valuable. Speaking of the presentation of folklore in Istria, it is necessary to reorganize the existing Istrian folklore festival, modernize and enrich it with contents of Istrian intangible heritage, by giving priority to autochthonism and quality of performance. The majority of resources should be directed towards organizing such an event, and it should not only consist of the presentation part, but the educational one as well (organization of seminars and workshops).

The majority of cultural-artistic societies work in extremely modest conditions, with insufficient funds for continuing their present activities, so this results in schematic work which is repeated year after year, without a dimension of development. In this respect, it is necessary to encourage municipalities and towns to finance a regular activity of cultural-artistic societies.

To promote cultural amateurism as an important form of cultural participation, it is necessary to raise awareness of the value of cultural heritage and culture over the next five-year period.



To achieve this objective, it is necessary to support, in cooperation with towns and municipalities, the activities of cultural-artistic societies, reorganize the Istrian folklore festival (respectable place for presenting autochthonous cultural practice) and especially encourage the transfer of knowledge on intangible heritage to the interested public and offer professional help to representatives of cultural-artistic societies.

## **Funding**

Culture funding in Istria lies mostly on the means of municipalities and towns, Istria County and the Ministry of Culture. The share of other budget means is minimal. The income of culture is small and insufficient for cultural activities. This also refers to sponsorships and donations. But, since the budget means are insufficient for carrying out cultural activities, many cultural organizations are forced to search for additional sources of funding. Among them two are the most important – sponsorship money and the money acquired through financial programs of the European Union.

Currently, sponsorship money makes up a minimal part of the cultural sector budget, but it seems that this sector still does not benefit enough from the potential sponsorship money. Sponsors' means are now dispersed onto a series of minor festivals, events and projects that alone do not have enough potential for attracting greater sponsor means. When choosing the project sponsors mainly take into consideration advertising because sponsorship is a way of creating the company's public image, its name and logo. That is why the sponsors' main interest is the access to their target group and should it overlap with the one of the cultural projects or events, a quality relationship develops. If these target groups do not overlap, a frustrating relation that is not a reflection of business interest will occur.



In order to attract greater sponsor financing, the position of the most quality cultural actors should be reinforced. A possible way of strengthening the negotiating position of cultural actors is creating the Istrian Package that can be composed of several major cultural events and projects whose gathering will result in a specific cultural product of Istria County with significant media promotion (mainly on a national level) that will act jointly towards sponsors. The Istrian Package should be a years-long project, that would on a long-term basis link several events and projects. This long-term relation should also be coupled by long-term media promotion and signing of long-term sponsorship agreements. The key to success of the Istrian Package is the selection of cultural events and projects that will become part of such efforts.

The cultural sector has several opportunities with regard to benefits of funding by the European Union programs. Those are Community funds that offer considerable co-funding of projects in the amount of 50% of the project budget (e.g. Culture program 2007), funds intended for audiovisual activities (MEDIA) and territorial funds where co-funding of projects in a certain field is possible up to 85% of the project budget (Interreg and Med programs). As the process of joining the European Union evolves, culture funding should open new opportunities through pre-accession funds, and also through operational funds. Istria County, directly or through its agencies, is experienced particularly in using territorial funds, and other cultural workers also have certain experiences in using some of them. In the following period it is necessary to direct cultural workers towards using these funds mainly through education and early information on announced competitions. **X**



# Synthetic presentation of the Istrian Cultural Strategy

The preparation of the Istrian Cultural Strategy has shown that in determining the priorities and key guidelines of the activities of Istria County, there are several dominant theme areas in which the aims of cultural development in the next five-year period may be grouped. These theme areas refer to support in artistic production, valorization of culture, networking and institutionalization, establishment of new institutions or institutionalized ways of behavior (relations) in the field of culture. Theme areas are determined by objectives, and objectives are coupled with tasks, i.e. activities that should be carried out in the next five-year period in order to achieve these goals. Further, objectives are related to implementation bodies that will coordinate activities and be responsible for implementing the mentioned tasks. Implementation bodies primarily act as coordination bodies delegated by Istria County, responsible for the implementation of the Istrian Cultural Strategy and in the implementation of most tasks it has the role of an implementation body. The implementation bodies will coordinate the activity of all actors involved in the implementation of certain activities or will implement these activities by themselves, depending on their nature. The success of implementation of the

Istrian Cultural Strategy largely depends on the cooperation of Istria County with municipalities and towns on the territory of Istria County, but also with the Ministry of Culture and all other administrative bodies. As said before, in implementing the Istrian Cultural Strategy, Istria County will have at its disposal firstly the financial and organizational instruments of cultural policy. This is why it will be extremely important to coordinate the activities of Istria County and the activities of municipalities and towns, either through a permanent coordination body or through an *ad hoc* coordination body.

Along with the objectives are expected results and indicators that have an important role in the evaluation of the cultural strategy. Namely, the indicators are very specifically defined in order to indicate the measure up to which the objectives have been realized, that is to indicate the level of success of the implementation of the Istrian Cultural Strategy. Quantification indicators were chosen as indicators of realization of objectives. Although quantification in culture is a great risk because cultural values lie on inter-subjective determination, instead of objective measurable values, in order to facilitate further evaluation and following of the implementation of the Istrian Cultural Strategy, we have decided to risk and quantify the indicators relating to simple growth (e.g. cultural productions) or to more complex measurement of inter-subjective acceptability (e.g. artists' participation in relevant exhibitions) that will serve to us as a term of reference of quality. It is certainly possible to determine better indicators, but in choosing them, we tried to select those available without complex research, all with the aim of a more simple evaluation.

## **Support of artistic production**

The support of artistic production is a topic that covers two objectives, such as support of production conditions in art, and

development of public and understanding artistic work. What is identified as a problem in Istria is insufficient investment in artistic production, which refers to insufficient investment in all resources necessary for its development. Insufficient production causes a number of negative trends in Istrian culture, from the incapability of keeping quality staff to excessive orientation towards import of programs from other regions and countries and insufficient international cooperation. Creating better production conditions is therefore one of the most important objectives of the Istrian Cultural Strategy because it is a multiplying factor that negatively determines a number of characteristics of the cultural sector in Istria. The key tasks that should be fulfilled refer to staff development, investment in premises and equipment, developing cooperation of the local art community and guest artists in Istria, and opening independent production centers. Besides, in visual arts it is necessary to act proactively in creating a system that would respond to the current situation in which the relations between cultural manufacturers and consumers are unorganized because mediating relations are not developed (system of galleries), and neither is the system of acquisition of artists' works from the public sector. Artistic production certainly favors the participation of all minority cultures in the production act. However, due to symbolic reasons, but real needs as well, an exchange of cultural programs should be encouraged among Istrian artists expressing themselves in Italian and those expressing themselves in Croatian. Besides direct production support, the theme area we named Support of Artistic Production, is planned to involve the development of public, critical reflections and understanding works of art. This objective refers to the need of continuous development of public, mainly through encouraging the interest of the school population and students for cultural programs. It seems that the decrease of interest of this population potentially

creates a big problem for the functioning of cultural sector in the future. In order to raise interest for culture with school children, it is necessary to develop cooperation with the educational sector in such a way that children learn about artistic and cultural programs through the school system. As for the lack of critical reflection and the need to increase understanding of a work of art, it is a complex problem that cannot be solved by several measures. Namely, on the one hand, it is a matter of a global phenomenon of the absence of reflection point, i.e. absence of the imaginary individual the work of art is addressed to. On the other hand, it is a matter of a very local phenomenon of absence of professional critic that is missing mainly because there is no one to write it. The tasks that should be fulfilled in order to reduce this problem refer to opening areas for critical reflection in widely distributed media, areas for publishing critical and problem-oriented texts and mediating these texts to the widest public possible, e.g. by means of daily newspaper distribution. It is also necessary to improve the communication between the actors in culture and media workers (journalists and editors) in order to minimize the loss resulting from misunderstandings in this relation.

## **Valorization of culture**

Valorization of culture refers to the need of raising awareness of cultural values and cultural heritage and increasing the visibility of the cultural sector, particularly the contemporary art production. Activities that refer to raising awareness of the value of culture usually refer to representative presentation activities that attract the attention of the community and indicate general or specific presented values. Namely, to raise awareness of the population for the inherited and living cultural values, it is necessary to develop in them a feeling of pride for tangible and intangible culture that creates the setting in which they live. It is only after raising

awareness for the value of culture and cultural heritage that it is possible to internalize the standards that apply to the protection of cultural heritage. In this sense, the tasks that are before us in order to achieve this objective refer to the presentation of cultural heritage by means of complex exhibitions that will be accompanied by appropriate educational material, and also by means of developing a mediating role of all cultural institutions and special, major, publishing projects (monographs, encyclopedic editions). Apart from this, the valuable heritage must be made available, meaning that archives, books and museum collections have to be researched and digitalized. Since the Italian national community has been giving significant support to Istrian culture, it is necessary to support all programs of socialization of Italian culture in Istria, primarily of the Italian language. Increasing the visibility of contemporary artistic creation is possible through the media, tourist and other ways of promotion. However, such visibility refers more to recognizing its existence than to the true support in reinforcing the status of contemporary art. To achieve this, the local contemporary art should be put in the context of world art and in such a way contribute to the visibility of contemporary art as something that is involved in world trends.

This theme area also includes the increase of the cultural system's autonomy which is an objective directly connected with the valorization of culture and its ability of autonomous and independent decision-making. Although the level of autonomy of the cultural sector in Istria is satisfactory, there is however, room for improvement. This mainly refers to founding of two Cultural Councils that are identified as necessary in order to carry out the decision-making autonomy regarding issues of international cultural cooperation and intangible cultural heritage. Apart from that, the autonomy of cultural sectors may be improved by a precisely determined use of funds allocated through competitions of public

needs. In such a way a clear relation between the intention of financial support and its realization is established, increasing the transparency of financial instruments of cultural policy. Because of the extreme necessity in the cultural sector to carry out certain projects over a period longer than a year, it is necessary to introduce years-long support. This need is particularly present in complex publishing projects that involve research, a greater number of associates, a long period of collecting material, etc.

## **Networking**

Networking has been mentioned as one of the forms of organizing social relations. Characteristic for this is establishing relations based on one or more variables that encourage interdependence. These variables can be values, ideas, visions, business interest, etc. Networks are based on actors and their relations. Actors may be regarded as hubs, and the relations they develop as links. This is a way of establishing a structure that enables utilization of complementary forces of individual actors. In Istria networking of cultural actors – public open universities showing films and theater performances, libraries, museums, associations... - can achieve a lot in improving the cultural offer, but also in a more rational exploitation of resources. The logic of network dominates the theme area we named Networking, but also the following area we named Institutionalization. Networking here refers to the cooperation among actors in culture, who by creating network organizational forms can approach various programs more easily and share them; they can jointly organize program activities (research, production, promotion), strengthen the negotiating position towards other sectors, sponsors and the media, and greatly improve the cultural offer in areas of their activity. Networking also refers to networking of products by cultural actors, research results and collecting data organized in databases, whether these

are special databases that should facilitate research, or services that should facilitate communication and in such a way contribute to the improvement of cultural activities. In the theme area named Networking we also included the objective that refers to the international and inter-sector area. International cooperation, in all its forms, is necessary for the cultural development, while the cooperation of the cultural sector with other sectors is in many ways a precondition of the cultural sector's survival, which has already been considered. Networking is an important organization instrument of the cultural policy. However, it must be noted that implementing the Istrian Cultural Strategy creates a great challenge for Istria County because the majority of its actors that should be networked is not used to networking conditions and is not stimulated to act by means of networks. Therefore, in order to make it successful, Istria County will have to develop mechanisms by means of which it will stimulate the actors to take part in the network. Namely, although cultural actors will certainly recognize the value of networking, they will not decide on their own to step out of the routine-way of performing their tasks unless they will directly benefit from networking, i.e. achieve an added value that will have an encouraging effect. Coordinating this activity will be particularly complex because it involves actors of various institutional forms (institutions, associations, local government) that each have completely different interests.

## **Institutionalization**

Institutionalization is considered a process by which a certain concept, social role, value, standard or behavior becomes part of the social system or society as a custom or standard of the system. It is not very important whether it is a matter of intangible or tangible institutionalization (e.g. through the founding of an institution). Institutionalization as a theme area in the Istrian Cultural

Strategy consists of objectives that refer to offering institutionalized support to activities related to new media culture, intangible culture, literature, music and visual arts. The other objective refers to harmonizing with professional standards in library, gallery and museum activities. This refers to the need of raising these fields to a higher level so that their activity is in accordance with all professional standards. In the library work this refers to increasing funds necessary for the purchase of books, development of new services and opening new job posts and increasing the premises of libraries. One of the ideas is to build a central depositary library for all Istrian libraries which would in the long run solve the problem of depositing books. A similar idea is present also in museum work where a common depot for keeping museum holdings should be built. Both ideas are based on networking, and should they be realized successfully, in spite of the many challenges, this will mean a new approach to organizing and managing cultural infrastructure in Croatia. It is evident that it would mean a great saving of resources, because instead of seven or more depots, only one will have to be built. We can only hope that in the end the dominating solution will not be the cynical one – to save more by not building any depot at all. Furthermore, there is an intention to open a series of dislocated collections that, by their symbolic reasons, are extremely valuable to places where they are opened, and also represent a potential tourist resource. Presentation of cultural heritage *in situ* and opening dislocated collections is in accordance with the contemporary presentation approach to heritage and conservationists fully support this approach. In several Istrian towns, within public open universities or town and regional museums, there are collections of modern and contemporary art and galleries. These collections and galleries have to be separated from these institutions because there is no professional staff that could look after them properly. This is why the collections would

have to be ceded to institutions that can provide appropriate care or turn them into specialized galleries of contemporary art.

Institutionalized support refers to the stabilization of certain forms of activity through the organization structure. What is referred to as new media culture in Croatia is related to associations as a form of organization. Associations in culture do not have great financing opportunities because the entire cultural system is adapted to institutions founded by the towns, municipalities or the state. The survival of associations and activities they engage in deeply depends on equal or similar conditions as for any other cultural activity and that is why it is necessary to compensate the de-privileged position of new media culture by means of institutionalized support (that can finance workers' salaries, rental costs and overhead expenses, investment in equipment). However, institutionalized support also has to be given to other activities that are at the beginning of their life cycle, such as the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art of Istria, Center for Music and Orchestra Activities of the University of Pula, Symphony and Accordion Orchestra, residence center "Hiža ud besid" in Pazin and institutions that are being planned such as the Museum of Glagolitic script and the Center for Intangible Culture. The Center for Intangible Culture appears as a necessity in Istria, which on a relatively small territory, gathers a large variety of language, music, folklore, trade and other traditions that are insufficiently studied and the studying of which is extremely important for the very communities inheriting this tradition. Of course, the activity of this Center is also important for the development of ethnography, ethnomusicology and other similar professions, whose valuable, but presently dispersed work, will through this center become institutionalized in every sense of this complex term. **X**

# Istrian Cultural Strategy

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