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"CULTURAL E-COMPETENCIES IN OPEN AIR"



JOINT REPORT
SUMMARY REPORT OF THE FEEDBACK OBTAINED FROM THE INTERVIEWS
(managed to the target groups of Italy, the Czech Republic and Slovakia)

WP2_Investigation



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1. INTRODUCTION

The cultural context of each country is a rich fabric of traditions, values and practices that contribute in a unique way to its identity. The project "Cultural e-Competencies in open air" aims to develop creative and interdisciplinary skills among adults in a changing cultural context. By using the digitisation of cultural heritage, it aims to preserve and promote Europe's cultural wealth.

The four cultural areas focus on include languages, cultural awareness, soft skills, and personal competencies. The aim is to equip people with the necessary skills to actively participate in cultural innovation, promoting effective communication, intercultural dialogue and active participation in society. Transforming urban and rural spaces into interactive open-air museums, the project uses technologies such as augmented and virtual reality to offer a unique cultural experience. The digitalization of the territory also promotes learning and discovery, making the territory itself a means of cultural interaction in people's daily experiences.

By promoting respect for the environment and society, the idea of an open-air museum aims to develop various cultural, artistic, professional and transversal skills, creating a network of relationships for greater knowledge sharing. By taking advantage of this new model of skills development, citizens will be able to contribute to building a better future where they live, work, cultivate hobbies and interact.

This paper offers an in-depth analysis of the perceptions and perspectives of Italian, Slovak and Czech citizens towards their culture. The ultimate goal is to overcome the traditional barriers of culture and the consequent creation of an environment in which different skills blend harmoniously. It is hoped that interaction and sharing among participants will lead not only to individual growth, but also to collective prosperity.



Through a series of interviews with the target groups, it was possible to bring out the common aspirations and peculiarities of each nation; thus contributing to a deeper understanding of how culture is experienced and perceived in the everyday environment. Proceeding with a comparative analysis, differences and similarities in cultural perceptions emerged and, from the study of these data, it was possible to outline strategies aimed at promoting a more inclusive, participatory and sustainable culture in each context.

The questionnaire, reflecting the importance and significant impact that culture has in the daily lives of adults between 30 and 45 years old, explored various aspects including: the personal definition of culture, its role in the lives of the participants, the importance attributed to it in society, the active involvement in cultural events, the perception of the use of artificial intelligence in the cultural sphere, the cultural areas of greatest interest and the willingness to organize cultural events.

The main topics covered can be divided into several categories:

- Definition and Role of Culture
- Involvement in cultural events
- Use of Digital Technologies and Artificial Intelligence
- Interest in Different Cultural Areas
- Investments in Culture
- Impact of the Pandemic on Culture
- Inclusivity and Cultural Sustainability
- Active Citizenship and Community Involvement
- Cultural Competencies and Lifelong Learning
- Cultural Fruition in the Digital Context



The diversity of cultural perspectives between Italy, Slovakia and the Czech Republic contributes to an enriching dialogue and the promotion of a more aware and interconnected society.



2. INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY

The conduct of the interviews, in the cultural contexts under examination, was guided by a structured method, aimed at capturing the nuances of the participants' cultural perceptions.

Below is a detailed explanation of the data collection and analysis method used:

- **Design of the Questionnaire:**

The first step was the design of the questionnaire, adapted to the cultural specificities of each country. The questions were clearly worded addressing topics such as cultural interest, perception of culture, and involvement in cultural activities.

- **Sampling of target groups:**

The selection of participants was carried out in such a way as to ensure a significant representativeness of the young population of each country. Individuals of different ages, geographical backgrounds, and cultural experiences were included to ensure diversity of responses and an in-depth understanding of various perspectives.

- **Data Collection:**

The interviews, while structured with a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions, were conducted providing a space for responses aimed at sharing personal perspectives on culture.

- **Data Analysis:**



The data analysis was multi-phased. Initially, quantitative analyses were performed to synthesize demographics and answers to closed questions. Subsequently, the answers to the open-ended questions were subjected to a qualitative analysis to identify patterns, emerging themes and cultural nuances.

- **Cultural Contextualization:**

Each response was contextualized within the specific cultural context of the participant's country of origin. This involved understanding the cultural peculiarities, traditions, values, and practices that may have influenced the responses.



3. CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE INTERVIEWS IN THE CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED

Contextualizing the delivery of the questionnaire to the broad cultural framework of the countries involved (Italy, the Czech Republic and Slovakia), it is appropriate to underline that in contexts such as these, characterized by a constant evolution on a cultural level, the interview provided an interesting vision of culture itself, highlighting both its positive aspects and the challenges it will have to face in the future.

In Italy, if on the one hand culture contributes to the formation of individual identities and the strengthening of the national social fabric, on the other hand it is little aware of the impact it can have in promoting inclusivity and sustainability. In this regard, it has been observed that culture itself cannot exist in isolation from the environment in which it develops.

Another interesting element concerns the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the cultural field; The reduction in social and cultural activities was directly proportional to the fear of contagion.

Following the processing of the data obtained, the project should focus on promoting culture by actively involving people, stimulating participation and sharing; It should also use digital technologies to make culture more accessible to a wider audience.

The creation of an "open-air museum" could serve as a place of meeting and cultural education, where cultural competences go beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge, including the ability to consider and respect the ideas and values expressed in different cultures.



In Slovakia, it is important to remember that it is a relatively young country, which gained independence in 1993 and for this reason, Slovak culture has been influenced by German, Austrian and Hungarian culture which have made it a multiethnic and multicultural reality. Only in the light of these considerations was it possible to understand the nuances of the different experiences, interpreting the answers given.

It was also possible to identify some themes and trends that characterize the contemporary perception:

- a strong sense of national identity, which is reflected in language, literature, art and music;
- significant interest in culture, with a particular preference for visual arts, music and literature;
- a vision of culture that goes beyond the traditional aspect, also including social and historical aspects;
- recognition of the important role of culture in daily life and society;
- potential for active involvement in the implementation of cultural projects;
- openness to new forms of cultural fruition, such as digital technologies;
- desire to promote local cultural resources and raise awareness of cultural inclusivity and environmental sustainability.

Some suggestions aimed at promoting the culture itself also emerged, such as:

- support from the Slovak Government of Culture through the provision of public funding and the promotion of cultural education in schools;
- encouraging citizens to participate in cultural events and to engage in the activities of cultural institutions.

Some concrete examples of how these suggestions could be put into practice include the creation of a network of museums that offer programs and activities accessible to all citizens, regardless of their income or place of residence, as well as the development of



culture education programs that promote knowledge of the different cultures present in the country.

In the Czech Republic, culture is a fundamental element of its society; It encompasses a wide range of artistic expressions, including music, literature, art, film, theatre, dance and gastronomy.

As with the Italian and Slovak cultures, the Czech culture also helps to define the identity of its people by contributing to social cohesion.

The recent interview found that the majority of citizens believe that culture is important to society. 77% of respondents said they were interested in culture, and 68% said culture is important to the functioning of society as a whole. However, there are still some spheres where culture could be further promoted, among which we find accessibility and diversity. In this regard, initiatives promoting knowledge and understanding of the different cultures present in the country should be supported.

In a scenario of artistic growth, the Czech Republic is witnessing the exploration of new artistic forms and ideas, with the increase of initiatives aimed at promoting local culture.

Italians' significant enthusiasm for culture can be interpreted as a result of the country's rich artistic history, pandering to Bourdieu's critique of the concept of "cultural capitalism." According to Bourdieu, culture should be a common good, accessible to all, regardless of their economic resources.

In Slovakia, the high interest in culture may stem from the perception of culture as a means of identity after periods of political change, indicating a connection between culture itself and the construction of national identity. However, the connection to national cultural identity, quoting scholar Stuart Hall, suggests an awareness of culture as a means of collective and individual expression.



According to Stuart Hall, national cultural identity is a social construct that is formed through a process of negotiation between different groups and individuals. It is made up of a set of shared meanings and values, which are continually reformulated and negotiated over time. It is a dynamic and complex process that is constantly poised between unity and diversity.

In the Czech Republic, moderate interest may be rooted in the country's complex history, through the various cultural phases it has gone through. In this regard, the perception of culture as a "way to build bridges between people" recalls the idea of culture as a unifying and inclusive element, in line with the theories of "social cohesion" in cultural sociology.

While Czechs and Italians show some similarity in direct participation in cultural events, Slovakia reveals a greater diversity of experiences. This could be explored further through studies on the variety of cultural offerings in the respective countries.

Music emerges as a universally popular art form among the three groups, establishing a common cultural bond. Similarly, theatre, cinema and historical monuments are considered significant, albeit with minor differences in specific preferences, reflecting the cultural traditions and historical influences specific to each context.

The desire for more investment in culture is shared among the groups, so much so that the majority of respondents, in all three countries, expressed concern about the lack of adequate funding for cultural development; This suggests the need to review funding policies at the national level.



4. SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The definitions of culture provided by the participants reflect the vastness of cultural facets. While the responses from the Czech and Slovak participants emphasize the importance of historical heritage and human connections, the Italian ones embrace a wider range of definitions, with a particular emphasis on art and knowledge. An aspect of considerable interest is the perception of the importance of culture for society as a whole.

While the Czech and Slovak groups express lower ratings, the majority of Italian respondents believe that culture is crucial for the functioning of society, suggesting a greater focus on the social dimension.

Participation in the creation of cultural events shows a certain similarity between Czechs and Italians, while among Slovaks a greater diversity of experiences has been revealed.

Direct and active participation in cultural events varies, with Czech participants showing relatively low participation.

The desire for greater investment in culture is an element shared by all groups, although Italians stand out for a particularly high interest (83%). In addition, the perception of culturally interesting but under-publicized places is shared between Slovaks and Italians, suggesting an area of potential intervention to promote lesser-known but valuable cultural activities. A majority of respondents from all target groups expressed concern about the lack of adequate funding for cultural development. This could indicate the need to revise funding policies.

The diversity of perspectives that emerged from this analysis offers a rich and articulated picture of the relationships between culture and society in the three contexts involved, therefore, to make what has been described above even clearer, we can summarize the interviews with a scheme of similarities and differences:



Level of cultural interest:

All three nations show an interest in culture. In Italy and the Czech Republic, the majority of respondents expressed a high interest (70% and 69% respectively), while in Slovakia the variety of responses is wider, with a greater dispersion of evaluations.

Culture Vision:

Participants from all three nations show a broad view of culture, encompassing traditional and broader aspects such as human behaviour, group identity, communication, and family customs.

The Czech Republic presented a greater variety of responses to the broad view of culture, including the perception of culture as a 'way of thinking' or a 'way of life'.

Personal role of culture:

The analysis of the personal role of culture highlights a variety of perspectives among the participants of the three target groups. Most of them associated culture predominantly with relaxation and leisure activities. However, it is interesting to note how, in Italy and the Czech Republic, some individuals have established a deeper connection between culture and their identity, integrating it as an integral part of their lifestyle.

In Slovakia, a different dynamic emerges, with only two participants expressing a personal connection between culture and individual identity. The latter could be seen in a more detached or less influential way. These differences in perception underscore the importance of examining cultural nuances within specific contexts and recognizing how the relationship with culture can vary greatly between individuals and communities.



Satisfaction with the funds invested in culture:

The responses revealed a widespread dissatisfaction with investment in culture. This dissatisfaction manifests itself in different shades and reflects a range of motivations that vary between the nations involved. In fact, negative perceptions emerge regarding the priority assigned by the government to the cultural sectors. In many cases, the reasons for this dissatisfaction seem to be intertwined with the perception that culture is not sufficiently considered a priority in government policy.

It should be noted that divergences in national perspectives lead to different assessments of government support for culture within different communities.

These views provide an insight into the complexity of managing public resources in the cultural context, underlining the importance of considering citizens' expectations and perceptions when formulating cultural funding policies. The discussion around this theme reflects the need for a balanced approach that takes into account both practical needs and cultural relevance, seeking to meet societal expectations in a more appropriate way.

Active participation and volunteering:

In Italy and the Czech Republic, there is a vibrant participation landscape, with a substantial number of respondents actively participating in or contributing to cultural events. This suggests a strong link between the population and the local cultural scene, with a considerable interest in contributing to the creation and promotion of cultural experiences. In contrast, in Slovakia, a slightly different picture emerges, with a higher percentage of participants admitting that they have never organised a cultural event. This could reflect a specific cultural dynamic where opportunities or motivations to actively contribute to



cultural events might be perceived differently than in the other two countries. It might be useful to delve deeper into the reasons behind this discrepancy by exploring the social and cultural dynamics that contribute to such differences in attitudes towards active participation.

Interest in digital technologies in the cultural field:

The use of digital technologies in the cultural field is more widespread in Italy and the Czech Republic, compared to Slovakia.

The benefits offered by the digital sphere are clear, with multiple respondents pointing out that new technologies open up new opportunities for active participation in culture. Through online platforms, social media, and digital resources, people can access a wide range of cultural content in a more immediate and interactive way. This transformation allows people not only to passively enjoy culture, but also to actively contribute to the creation and sharing of unique cultural experiences.

Digitalization makes it possible to overcome physical and socio-economic barriers, opening the door to a variety of cultural content for a wider audience. This phenomenon represents a form of cultural democratization. However, it is interesting to note that despite the wide adoption of digital technologies in the cultural experience, many respondents reported that they had never had a cultural experience using artificial intelligence (AI). This suggests that, while digitalization has certainly expanded cultural access, the specific use of advanced technologies such as AI may not yet be widespread or pervasive in the common cultural perception according to participants.



Environmental Concerns and Sustainability:

A variety of perceptions and attitudes emerge from the interviews regarding concern for sustainability and environmental issues. Specific answers about solutions may vary; for example, Slovakia highlights the need for sustainable practices in cultural events and the reduction of plastic use.

In Italy, sustainability and environmental issues seem to be relevant issues. However, from interviews, it may not emerge as a central priority compared to other cultural and economic topics. The focus is mainly on the preservation of cultural heritage and investment in culture as an element of national identity.

In the Czech Republic, concern about sustainability seems to be present, but it could be addressed in a more peripheral way than other cultural and economic aspects. In Slovakia, on the other hand, the interest in sustainability seems to be clearly evident.

Impact of the pandemic on culture:

The pandemic has highlighted the fragility of cultural resources and the need to develop resilient strategies to ensure the continuity of cultural activities in crisis situations. In addition to representing a significant challenge for culture in the three countries, it also highlighted the strength of the community and the determination to preserve cultural heritage even under difficult conditions.

The interviews showed that in Italy, the impact of the pandemic is evident in financial concerns about culture. Many participants expressed the perception that culture has been put on the back burner compared to other sectors during the pandemic period.



In the Czech Republic, respondents also expressed a perception of insufficient funding and a suboptimal distribution of resources, accentuated by the decrease in funding and cultural activities.

Finally, in Slovakia, the impact of the pandemic is also evident in financial concerns and the reduction of cultural activities. The decrease in funding and cultural initiatives has created a challenge for the country.

In general, participants expressed uncertainty and concern about the future, indicating potential changes in cultural perspectives. The changes identified include a reduction in social and cultural activities, an increase in fear of contagion, and the emergence of new forms of communication and interaction.

Desire to participate in the organization of cultural events:

The data collection reveals an exciting and participatory picture, with the vast majority of participants expressing a strong interest in being involved in the organisation of cultural events. This positive impulse towards the organizational activity highlights a widespread desire to actively contribute to the local cultural scene, suggesting a high level of engagement and connection with cultural events.

Particularly noteworthy is the fact that, among the participants, only a single person in the Czech Republic declared a lack of interest in the organisation of cultural events.

Overall, the widespread interest in active participation reflects a positive energy and willingness to contribute to cultural life, suggesting that many people see their active involvement as a meaningful way to shape and enrich the cultural environment around them.



Skills and volunteering:

In Italy, interest in culture not only suggests a strong link with the country's cultural richness but also indicates the presence of a solid base of culturally motivated individuals, ready to actively contribute to the cultural scene through volunteering. Widespread awareness and involvement in Italian cultural life can, therefore, constitute a fertile ground for cultural volunteering initiatives.

In the context of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, more nuanced nuances of opinions emerge about the relevance of culture in personal life. This diversity could be reflected in attitudes towards cultural volunteering, as individual perceptions of culture could influence their willingness to devote time and energy to volunteering in this specific area.

Understanding how people interpret the role of culture in their lives could be crucial to developing more effective and targeted engagement strategies, which take into account cultural and individual perspectives.



5. EXPLORATION OF FINANCIAL PERCEPTIONS ON INVESTMENTS IN CULTURE

Investment in culture should not only be seen as supporting the arts and artistic events, but as a significant contribution to building a richer and more inclusive society.

Analyzing the financial situation in the cultural sectors of Italy, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, it emerged that in Italy, investment in culture emerges as an issue of primary importance. The funding gap, highlighted by multiple respondents, is seen as a challenge, especially with the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The financial situation in the Czech Republic is characterised by widespread mistrust of adequate funding for the cultural sector. Many respondents express concern about the unequal distribution of resources and believe that the government could direct funds more equitably and effectively.

In Slovakia, financial perceptions suggest insufficient funding and a sub-optimal distribution of resources in the cultural sector. However, similar to the situation in Italy and the Czech Republic, respondents express a willingness to actively participate in cultural initiatives.

The interesting aspect that emerged was the interconnection between funding and the active involvement of citizens. Even if there is a financial concern, the desire to participate in the organization of cultural events is high. This suggests that, despite the financial challenges, there is a willingness to actively contribute to the preservation and promotion of culture.



6. CONCLUSIONS

The e-Competencies project is a powerful source of change for the promotion of heterogeneous cultural competences, underlining the importance of embracing cultural diversity as a fundamental asset for society.

Through this interview, a shared vision clearly emerged: that of building a more inclusive, sustainable and participatory culture, which goes beyond traditional limits to shape a future in which the cultural sphere is a central element in the life of every individual. The reflections that emerged from the definitions of culture offer a solid and inspiring basis for the development of the project.

It is clear that culture cannot be limited to mere superficial traits, but expands into multiple facets, embracing human behavior, group identity, communication, and family dynamics. Beyond that, the concept of belonging emerges, which translates into a deep bond with a group or community.

This project aims to overcome traditional cultural boundaries, encouraging an open and enriching dialogue. The ultimate goal is the creation of a social fabric in which diversity is not only accepted but is also celebrated as a fundamental pillar of our collective identity. In this sense, the definitions provided by the participants serve as a guide to achieve a culture in which each individual feels recognized and valued.

Only by embracing and understanding the richness of the multiple cultures around us can we build a future in which diversity becomes a hallmark and not a barrier.



7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

The data presented in this Report were extracted from the individual *Questionnaire Feedback Reports* prepared by three Project Partners, based on the questionnaires administered to the respective target groups. These documents, internal to the "Cultural E-Competencies in open air" project, collected and analyzed, constitute the empirical basis on which this analysis is based.