

HOW A TOURIST DESTINATION MAY BECOME A BRAND BY MEANS OF EVENTS – A CASE STUDY ON IASI AS A CANDIDATE FOR EUROPEAN CULTURAL CAPITAL 2021

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Abstract: *This paper presents an analysis on the impact generated by hosting the International Festival of Education, 2013 edition, on Iasi's image and its contribution in the competition for winning the title "European Capital of Culture 2021". The article reviews aspects related to culture, events and city branding, the strategy and the effects of hosting a cultural event on the host city. Cultural event was discussed as a tool used for urban regeneration and branding a tourist destination. Moreover, statistics show how the event contributed to increase tourism in Iasi.*

Keywords: destination image; city branding; cultural events

Introduction

The information provided by researchers in the field of archaeology, history, culturology and art confirms the theory that festivals are the oldest form of culture. According to the well-known Russian culturologist Bakhtin, "the festival is the first form of human culture". Another Russian scientist, Genkinthought, states that "the deep roots of the festivals disappeared in the human childhood" and the Polish scientist Ghigulevskiy states that "festivals have been held since the ancient times."

1. Literature Review

1.1. Culture and events

According to Philip Kotler, events are manifestations that are intended to convey specific messages to target audiences. Depending on the audience participating and objectives set, events can be classified into direct events

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(exhibitions, fairs, conferences) and indirect events (Femina Miss India and Wills World Cup).

Regarding the indirect events, participants are not necessarily the target audience, but the media coverage and *word of mouth* advertising helps the event to reach a much larger audience. Such events have a role in building the brand image and can be classified into corporate events, public relations events and entertainment events.

According to researchers McCartney and Osti, organising cultural events has seen a rapid development in the last decade, becoming the attributes of tourists' attraction destinations. Many cultural events are, in fact, adopting the ancient rituals and traditional forms created by destination managers in order to improve the development of tourism in that region.

Culture as a dimension of an event, is one of the strongest attractions in terms of facilitating a genuine experience of place (Hinch and Barr, 2005, p 260). However, organising cultural events comes with the risk of mitigating the importance of intrinsic meanings behind it. This can lead to a situation where the event becomes an entertainment or show, thus destroying cultural authenticity (Getz, 1998), which was probably the main initial attraction of the event. Such cultural events are also leading to crowded destinations to replicate successful themed festivals, motivating more and more the destinations to examine their own histories and cultures in order to create their own distinct and indigenous themed events.

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1.2. Events and city branding

The simplest definition of the brand, according to Simon Anholt, characterises it as "the garment that is clothed by the identity of a company, of a product or service in order to be recognised." A summary of the brand is presented based on combining elements: logo, symbol, colours, font, slogan, sometimes sounds or music, but the fundamental idea of the brand is that by its entire business, a company must create a clear picture about itself and its goals.

Stephen Liute defines the brand as "a unique combination of competitive sustainable advantages (associations, characteristics, experiences, expectations) specific to an organisation or product." The branding activity is characterised by keywords such as "differentiation", "innovation", "creativity", "uniqueness", "interest / attraction".

The branding has become one of the most powerful tools of marketing strategies. Following the studies and researches conducted by experts in the field, academics and practitioners, an agreement was reached according to each the

places (tourist destinations, in this case) can benefit from a branding process in same way as consumer goods or services. Thus, the concept of branding has been expanding beyond the commercial zones, migrating from the original scope of consumer goods to services, lately including the social events, representing the artistic, sporting or academic brands. Branding has recently expanded to the nations, communities, regions or cities, and unlike product branding, the place one is much more different. Destination branding is a relatively new concept, which is why there is a lack of empirical academic research on this subject.

As Ruxandra Popescu states in “Rolul strategiei de brand in promovarea si dezvoltarea oraselor” (*Role of brand strategy in promoting and developing the cities*), a successful brand has recently been defined as a product, service, place or person easily identified, developed in a way for the buyer or user to perceive as having relevant unique values that best fit their needs and desires. The importance of destination branding is clarified by Morgan and Pritchard: the battle for customers in the tourism industry will be won not by price competition, but by the competition between the consumer's mind and heart; essentially branding will be the key to success. Moreover, Cai argues that marketing agencies have a major interest in building strong and positive images for their tourist destinations.

City brand is defined as “the sum of all perceptions and associations that people have about a particular city.” Therefore, the perceived tourist destination image will be formed by the promoted image of the destination and of the person's own needs, motivations, prior knowledge, preferences and other personal characteristics. So branding involves actions of managing the city's image as a result of its components: tourism, culture, history, lifestyle, fashion etc.

Due to changes in the tourism sector, competition for tourist products and destinations, change of the demands and behaviour of tourists, tourist destinations need to be created as brands and managed strategically. From this perspective, brand image plays a key role in the success of a tourist destination as the destination image, seen as a mental image formed by a set of attributes that defines its destination and size, has a strong influence on the consumer's behaviour.

The most famous cities are known due to the quality or stories that differentiate them from other cities in the world and motivate people to visit them. City Branding involves identifying a competitive advantage and building a brand by reference to the six elements considered most relevant, according to the method proposed by Simon Anholt. “The City brand hexagon” is built according to the following criteria:

- 1) The presence of the city internationally
 - awareness and familiarity of the city among the population of foreign countries
 - City contribution in terms of culture, science and global governing
- 2) Physical Aspects
 - climate
 - physical aspects of the city; green spaces; architecture
- 3) Pulse
 - degree of urbanisation, lifestyle of the inhabitants
 - opportunities for recreation, entertainment, leisure and fun



4) Premises

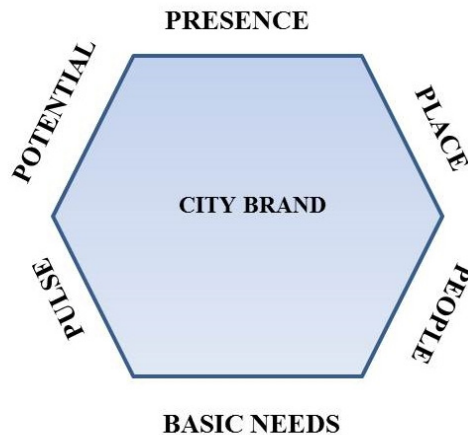
- willingness and capacity of accommodation, housing, and their quality level
- hospitals, schools, sports facilities, transport

5) People

- The character and behaviour of residents towards foreigners: warm, open, welcoming and friendly people
- Integration of foreigners taking into account the language and culture of the host region

6) Potential

- Economic Opportunities
- Employment opportunities in the local market
- The opportunity to study in the city.

Figure 1. City brand hexagon

Source: Simon Anholt, The Anholt City Brands Index, 2005, p. 12

Building a city brand is based on an urban identity and image as well as local values. City Branding involves conducting extensive programs strategically developed economically, politically, socially and culturally and it is not limited to logos, slogans and advertising campaigns.

Kavaratzis mentions three different methods by which it can be communicated the image of a city: *primary communication*; *secondary communication*; *tertiary communication*. As for the primary communication, there are undertaken activities classified into four categories: “*landscape strategies*” – there are targeted the urban design and architecture; “*Infrastructure projects*” – there are considered measures to improve the city's infrastructure; “*Organisational and administrative structure*” - concerns the governance structure of the city and its improvement; “*City behaviour*” - includes events and activities organised in the city, the services available to citizens and tourists etc. In making the “secondary communication”, it helps the advertising, public relations, use of the logo and

graphic design. The third way of communication is possible through the “word of mouth” and media communication.

For a long time, cities have organised grand events such as world fairs and sporting events as a means to revitalise their economy, to create the infrastructure and improve their image (Getz, 1991). Recent studies in the tourism market have highlighted the use of a growing number of events as a means of promoting large cities (Law, 1993; Robertson and Guerrier, 1998; Waitt, 1999, 2003; Schuster, 2001). This phenomenon may be related to a general increase in competition between cities for the attention of key stakeholders, including consumers, investors and policymakers. As a result of integration into the global economy, an increasing number of places are attracted to this competitive and at the same time constructive environment, the infrastructure and facilities tend to be similar. Therefore, cities must find new ways to distinguish themselves from their competitors.

In some climates, cultural events, in particular, have emerged as an element to improve the image of cities, giving life to the streets and citizens’ renewed pride in their home town. Large-scale events have become a valued particular cultural value form in terms of their image effects. The cities use increasingly more cultural events to enhance their image, to stimulate urban development and attract visitors and investors. These events aim to attract visitors in a large number and stimulating cultural consumption among residents, as long as the host city is regarded as an ideal tourist destination.

It is obvious that major events can have the effect of shaping the image of a country or of a host community which may be perceived as a potential travel destination (Hall, 1992, p. 14). This potential was a reason for the events to be used as an image tool, especially for large cities (Law, 1993; Holcomb, 1999; Sassen and Roost, 1999; Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Selby, 2003).

1.3. Impact of events’ organisation on the host city

The event is a technique to promote urban culture and identity and its impact increases the visibility of the city nationally and even internationally. In this way, the event becomes a powerful tool in cultural development; it provides the opportunity and also supports the changing city.

The impact of the event on the host city can be measured by identifying the two large categories of effects, *hard effects* and *soft effects* that it produces. The first category of effects, the hard ones, is characterised by measurability and tangibility, they include the development of urban infrastructure, the development of the tourism sector and of the labour market etc. *Soft effects*, intangible and difficult to measure, are represented by the improvement of urban image, forming a festive atmosphere, fostering a sense of pride and confidence relating to the tourist destination and to its residents.

Regarding the impact of the event on the image, the effects consist either in a changed image or in its improvement, which will result in increased interest in tourist destination. Urban image changes are felt physically relating to the



infrastructure and the advertising image, the one promoted through various channels.

Host cities of an event benefit from a presentation in a different manner, which helps them to differentiate themselves from other tourist destinations. In the context of hosting a cultural event, it is made an affiliation between the location and the event that will result in a transfer of the image between the event and the city. Thus, the city will position by culture, the city brand will be distinguished by the cultural dimension.

The brand of a tourist destination is “the sum of all perceptions and associations that people have in relation to that region.” A brand distinguishes itself from the competition through an attribute, a quality, and thus the creation of place brands has the aim to highlight the specific features of a specific city, a specific region or country. Simon Anholt mentions some city brands that were made on a scale related to the history, geography or territory everyday life: Paris signifies love, Milan is style, New York is a symbol of energy, Washington is represented by power, Tokyo is an icon of modernity, Lagos is assigned corruption, Barcelona is culture, Rio is fun. In the context of successively hosting various events and manifestations, the tourist destination may become a brand of festivals.

If city marketing is built around the city selling action and involves measurable and tangible assets such as nature, physical infrastructure, services provided, fees, branding ranks as an important tool to promote the territory. City Branding involves, as noted by Popescu, the addition of an emotional level of the city’s image, as well as the promotion of intangible qualities such as the “soul” or values of the city, as well as the feelings that a person experiences when visiting a particular urban space”.

As not all the products can be brands, not all tourist destinations can be tourist brands. Beside the functional benefits, the brands offer added value to consumers, characterised by non-functionality. A strong brand in consumers' minds will create added value, most times, being manifested as non-functional and emotional form. Popescu lists only four of the added values, which are necessary for a brand to become a success: the experience of people connected to the city; perception: how is perceived the population of the city?; confidence in the city: does the city symbolise anything?; aspect: what is the city like?

Mostly, the branding of tourism destinations is based on experiences of tourists, regardless of the high level of technology in communication. Favourable experiences and pleasant memories that tourists have following the journey will be communicated further. The events organised show attraction because of the atmosphere and surrounding environment, people, organisation and management system, including design and program elements. The charm of these events is due to the fact they are different, and the public has the opportunity to fully enjoy a unique experience.

The conducting of events and various manifestations in a city or region / country will have the effect of attracting a large number of tourists, the increase of the location visibility and its international recognition. By the experience gained in organising events, the municipal administration may sign partnerships involving



international events and their hosting. The city is positioned as a tourist destination organising events.

The city brand builds an image based on the organisation of events combining the two techniques “pull” and “push”. The first one, “pull”, involves attracting international, sporting or cultural events, to be hosted by the city in question, and the “push” technique consists of the sale of local, national or international tourist events. Thus, there is a diversity of events hosted and, ultimately, it is developed the tourism of events, which brings added value to the tourist destination.

The event held is demonstrated to be a valuable promoter of tourism destination in the competitive market. According to Dimanche, events depend on the role of “managers and marketers” in the process of building a tourist destination image and in the branding one.

In tourism, destinations are naturally and spontaneously associated with the events they host. In particular, in the context of experiential tourism consumption, events play an important role in branding, positioning and promotion of tourist destinations.

According to Frederic Dimanche, the events are a marketing tool used to position the tourist destination together with specific products and services (events and portfolio of activities), which can be tailored to meet the needs of the target market. Events evolve from being the cultural expression of a region and become an important marketing tool used in establishing an image and positioning a tourism destination among its competitors.

The events are proved to be effective tools for a destination by their contribution in creating brand equity. Festivals and special events are key tourism marketing tools and have the potential to be extremely effective in the training process of the destination brand equity, for Dimanche being relevant the following:

1) Creating experiences

By their specificity, events have the ability to relate to experiential needs of a market segment. Events can be developed to create excitement and provide a memorable experience, uniquely associated with the host tourist destination. This can be achieved by establishing a match between product, event and specific target markets that will result in optimising the ability to satisfy the visitors. For example, an event such as “Air and Style Contest” in Innsbruck was organised to meet the needs of the target market of young snowboarders and became in a few years a leader in organising the snowboarding events. The product created, the event, met the needs of the target market, provided a unique, dynamic and alternative atmosphere of festival with music, snowboard competitions and parties. The fact that “Air and Style Contest” was held in Innsbruck is not coincidental. Innsbruck is known in Europe as the capital of snowboarding and also has an international reputation as a winter sports destination, image built after hosting several ski contests and the Winter Olympic Games twice.

2) Event as development strategy

An event can be seen as a development strategy of a tourist destination. The purpose of the development strategy is to establish a connection between the brand



image of a tourist destination and the hosted events. More tourism products that have similar images can reinforce each other, so that each benefits from the other. Such a brand development strategy can have the following benefits to a destination: low communication costs through event promotion campaigns, there is also created or reinforced the brand awareness of the destination; destination can exploit the knowledge of the visitors about the brand by adding new features and visitors' information.

3) *Contribution to the building of destination brand awareness*

Events clearly contribute to the raising awareness of the tourist destination. For example, a host city of a mega-event such as the Olympic Games, the World Cup, Super Bowl can expect a high media coverage and to awareness results. Smaller events may not lead to a global awareness, but a cultural festival aimed properly can bring strong regional and national benefits for the associated destination. The event acts as an advertising strategy for the tourist destination and helps create or maintain the awareness of the destination. In addition, events can benefit from public relations, efforts that will generate widespread publicity in the media.

4) *Contribution to perceived quality*

Hosting a mega-successful event is a window to a company and its business. Olympic Games can support the achievement of a country's broad expertise in several sectors and demonstrate that a city can achieve high quality products. Both large and small events in smaller cities contribute to some extent to the perceived quality of the destination. The professionalism of managers and organisers of the event, the superiority of a trade show or festival will reflect on the image of the host city. In France, a small town like Cannes has benefited greatly over the years from the image and associated attributes (luxury, quality) of the International Film Festival. The festival hosting was proved to be successful, helping to position Cannes as the second most loved and wanted French city after Paris.

5) *Contribution to brand associations*

Brand associations can be anything connecting the visitor to the tourist destination. They can include pictures, destination attributes, brand personality or symbols. The destination brand management firstly involves the determination of the appropriate associations, and then their creation and development. For many Europeans, New Orleans is known for its music and Jazz & Heritage Festival, and all Americans associate Mardi Gras celebrations (Carnival) with New Orleans. The reputation enjoyed by New Orleans has been greatly enhanced through these events; the city of New Orleans is a leader in hosting the biggest sporting event in America, the Super Bowl. New Orleans successfully bid several times to draw this great event, and this has led to, in addition to short-term publicity generated every time a lasting reputation as the ideal destination for events, knowing how to entertain the visitors with food, music and parties.

6) *Contribution to brand loyalty*

Destination loyalty is at the heart of the destination brand equity. Loyalty to the destination may be defined as a conscious or unconscious decision of the tourist, expressed through intention or behaviour in revisiting a destination. It appears as visitor perceives the destination having the adequate characteristics, attributes, the



image, the quality at the right price. In tourism, the price paid may include the actual cost, but also the difficulty to reach the destination (travel time and length of stay). In other words, brand loyalty occurs when the destination offers value. The reputation of a tourist destination can be measured in part by the repeated visits of tourists. The events provide an opportunity to create and support the visitors' loyalty towards the tourist destination. Initially, an attractive event will be the reason for visitors to discover a destination, and the experience delivered, the uniqueness of the event will lure them back. Recurring events may determine visitors to return year after year, they must offer diversity from year to year to keep visitors' interest. For example, the Salzburg Festival attracts new and older visitors over the years, with careful changes of the program.

7) *Contribution in positioning a destination*

Positioning involves identifying the perceptions of potential visitors across the key attributes of a destination and its comparing with the perceptions of competing destinations, as well as selecting those that differentiate the destination from its competitors. These characteristics or attributes can be highlighted and they are the foundation of the destination marketing strategy. These attributes can have a huge imprint on the destination (history, culture, physical features) or tourism entrepreneurs can create and enhance new ones. The classification of an event as unique associated with the tourist destination in tourists or intermediaries' mind may become a key attribute used in positioning the destination. An example of an event in the U.S. is Mardi Gras. In addition to its traditional cultural function, Mardi Gras serves positioning New Orleans as the destination of parties, a city where "everything goes". Thus, it enhances some of the existing images and attributes that tourists have about the tourist destination. New Orleans brand is perceived by visitors and travel intermediaries as an urban destination. The development of tourism in New Orleans is supported by developing the area of hospitality, the number of passengers of the airport and the tax revenues in the last decade. The major reason of this growth and of the creation of a strong tourism brand was the staging, over the years, of special cultural events such as Mardi Gras, Jazz & Heritage Festival, major sporting events like the Sugar Bowl and Super Bowl.

2. Study on the impact on the image of a city hosting an event

Tourism destinations have greatly developed after practicing the form of cultural tourism, with cultural heritage as a primary resource, a means of attracting and improving the visitor experience. Moreover, cultural and heritage tourism is used as a tool to stimulate the local economy and has the potential to help spread the seasonal and geographical tourism. Cultural festivals, a category of cultural heritage goods attract viable tourists groups and determine repeated visits among tourists, proving over time to be a development catalyst of the state.

The image of a place is a major factor in attracting tourists so that research on the image of a place is rather used in tourism. Most events have become a particular form of cultural value especially in terms of their image effects on the



venue. This consequence was a reason for events to be used as an image tool, especially in the large cities.

In the research process, the focus is to FIE - the International Festival of Education, 2013 edition held in Iasi and its impact on the image of the host city, candidate for the title of the “European Capital of Culture 2021”. FIE summed events, conferences, exhibitions and festivals, concerts in educational and cultural sphere, events designed to boost the social life of Iasi, the capital of Moldova.

This research was undertaken in order to highlight the effects generated by the hosting of FIE event on the image of the city of Iasi. Thus, it is envisaged to highlight the contribution of hosting FIE in positioning Iasi as a cultural centre, the “European Cultural Capital”.

2.1. Research methodology

In order to obtain data and necessary information, it was decided to use a qualitative research method of documentary study, a primary and nonreactive method. This research method was chosen taking into account the certainty and validity of the information that can be obtained, but also the in-depth and thorough investigation that it involves.

2.2. Interpretation of research results

Praised for historical, cultural, scientific and academic potential, the city of Iasi involved responsibly in national cultural events, but at the same time it initiated local cultural projects to strengthen an identity worthy of European recognition. Among the local events organised, we may mention the “The International Festival of Education” (FIE), editions 2013 and 2014, The “International Festival of Literature and Translation” in 2013, the “National Operas Awards” “UNITER Awards”, the “International Theatre Festival for the Young Audience”. The organisation of these events is actually a beginning of the steps taken by the municipality of Iasi to obtain the title of the ECC for 2021.

Thus, the city of Iasi by launching a cultural program that will be implemented in the context of ECC, can choose one of two development possibilities of the European identity: “the host city is already a powerful cultural brand and through various projects it only emphasises its existing positioning, as did Liverpool, or the cities become cultural brands in the context of ECC, in such a case the cultural event being used as a “tool of the urban identity regeneration”, a method selected by the cities of Rotterdam and Essen.

2.3. Effects generated by hosting FIE

The International Festival of Education broadened the cultural horizon of Iasi and positioned the city amongst the most creative European destinations through the concept of “education, culture and outdoor art”. The educational side of the event was nuanced both by the concept and structure of the event and by the



program and the manner of organisation. As mentioned by the organisers of the event, FIE is the beginning of a recovery action of the educational and cultural potential of Iasi that will support the city to obtain the title of “European Capital of Culture 2021”.

A major event of Iasi, it had a considerable impact on the host, putting the city in the position of facilitating the access to culture. The cultural impact of this festival is accomplished by the interaction of both residents and tourists with different cultural experiences.

The International Festival of Education is by far the largest and most complex cultural event organised by the municipality of Iasi yet. The festival programme was not focused on a single cultural area but included all categories of cultural and artistic forms: music, dance, theatre, books, conferences and motivational lectures, film, plastic arts, attended by national and international guests. FIE 2013 edition amounted to a total of 303 cultural events designed to strengthen the relationship between culture and public. According to statistical information provided by the organisers of the event, the audience of FIE was estimated at 100,267 of direct participants. The number of guests and participating artists was impressive, of 1056 people, and children and young performers in the shows were numbered to 1120.

The cultural impact of the event is highlighted also by the support provided in the professional development of young performers in the country. Fringe Festival brought to Iasi 212 talented young artists, including actors, directors, dancers, choreographers from Romania. The event was attended by 50 independent theatre troupes that performed to the public 75 performances.

The “Kaas chante Piaf” concert was part of the FIE and drew a crowd of 6,000 spectators. At the same time, this concert was a premiere for Iasi, being the first concert of an international artist organised at Iasi.

The festival supported the infrastructure for the city events, involving a large number of locations to achieve the events, indoor and outdoor distributed. A total of 27 locations, including conventional event halls, unconventional event halls and partner locations, were used to organize performances in this cultural program.

The cultural institutions of Iasi received support and promotion by involvement in the organisation and development of this festival. Partnerships with cultural institutions in Iasi were a premiere for an event of Iasi because a large number of cultural workers have expressed their willingness to participate, about 30 entities, including: the Romanian Academy - Iasi Branch, the “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University, the “George Enescu” University of Arts, the “Gheorghe Asachi” Technical University of Iasi, Iasi County School Inspectorate, the State Philharmonic of Moldova Iasi, the Romanian National Opera of Iasi, Palatul Copiilor (Children's Palace) of Iasi, Iasi Students' Culture House, Luceafarul Theatre of Iasi, etc.

The cultural impact of FIE was a remarkable one by the impressive number of spectators of the festival, but also by the large number of events summed by the FIE agenda. To highlight the size of the festival at Iasi, we conducted a research on cultural events conducted in 2009-2013 in Iasi and the number of participants in



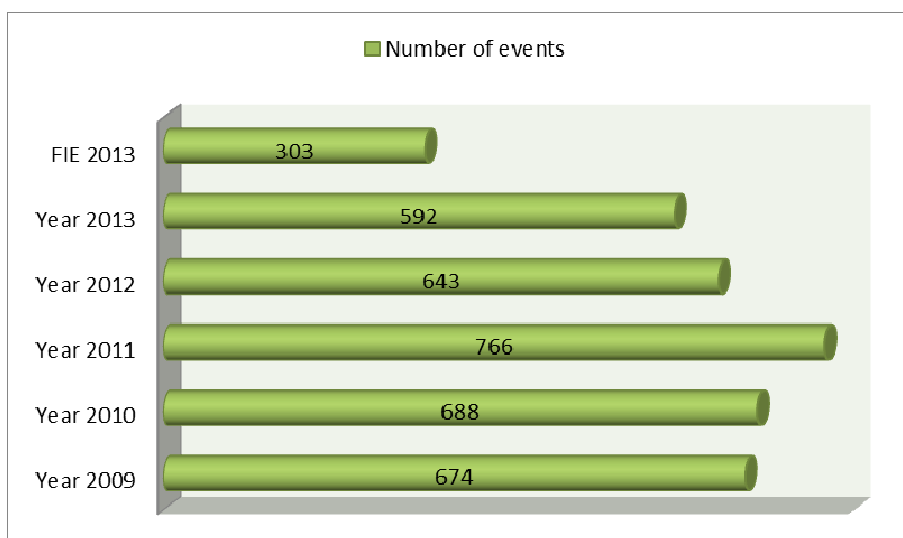
these events. We used the information provided by the National Institute of Statistics, which we have centred in the table below:

Table 1. Statistic indicators on the cultural and artistic activity performed during the period 2009-2013 at Iasi

Ref. no.	Activities	Year 2009	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012	Year 2013	FIE 2013
1	Cultural events	674	688	766	643	592	303
2	Spectators and auditors of the artistic performances	78,155	82,397	79,826	114,371	113,588	100,267

Source: National Institute of Statistics

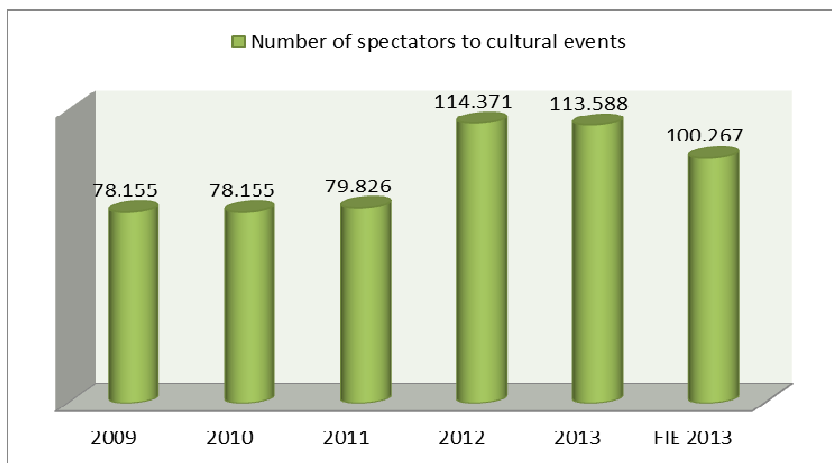
Figure 2. Cultural events at Iasi from 2009 to 2012



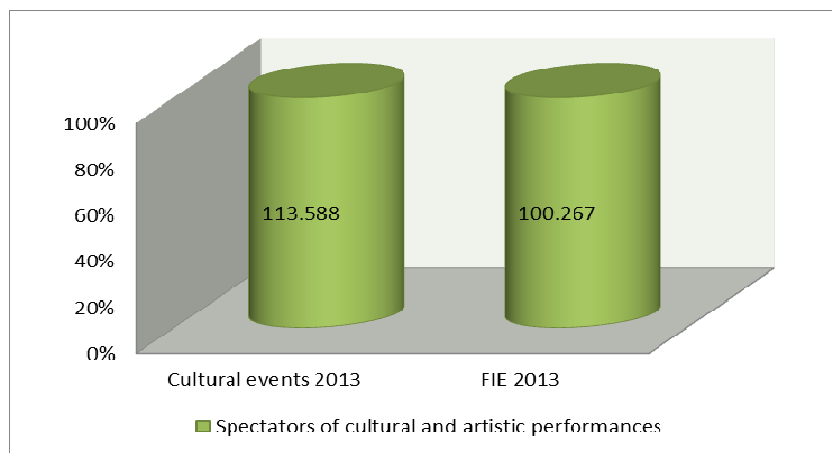
Source: National Institute of Statistics

Figure 2 highlights the scale of the International Festival of Education, the multicultural programme summing an impressive number of events, about 47% of the total number of cultural events organised in Iasi in 2012.

According to the schedule, the International Festival of Education, the 2013 edition, was of a large scale, having an impressive number of participants compared to the total number of spectators of all cultural events in 2012, approximately 90% of the total number of spectators. Also, compared with the previous years, FIE strikes by the public it conquered, FIE audience being larger than the number of spectators who attended the events organised from 2009 to 2011.

Figure 3. Spectators at the cultural events of Iasi from 2009 to 2013

Source: National Institute of Statistics

Figure 4. Spectators of cultural events of Iasi organised in 2013

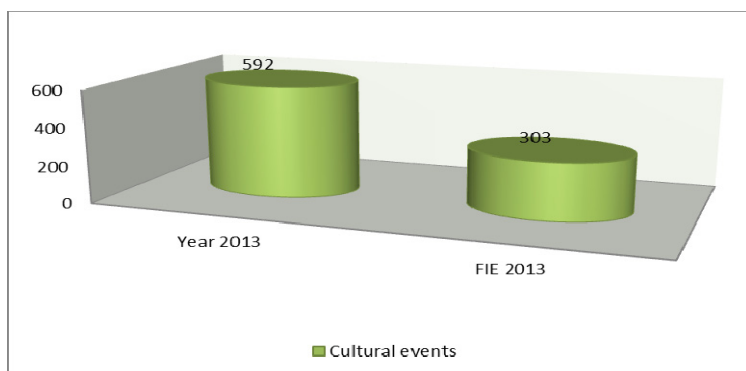
Source: National Institute of Statistics

According to schedule 4, the International Festival of Education, 2013 edition, gathered a large public, about 88.2% of the number of spectators gathered at the other cultural events organised in 2013 in Iasi.

FIE 2013 agenda totalled an impressive number of events compared to the total number of the other cultural events that were held in the city of Iasi, in 2013. The FIE events accounted for about 51.2% of all other cultural and artistic performances taking place in 2013.

In confirmation of the second secondary hypothesis, we used a comparison of the number of participants in the largest cultural events in 2013 hosted in Iasi. Thus, we considered the events of the “Night of Museums” and FILIT, the most representative events of the cultural activity in Iasi.

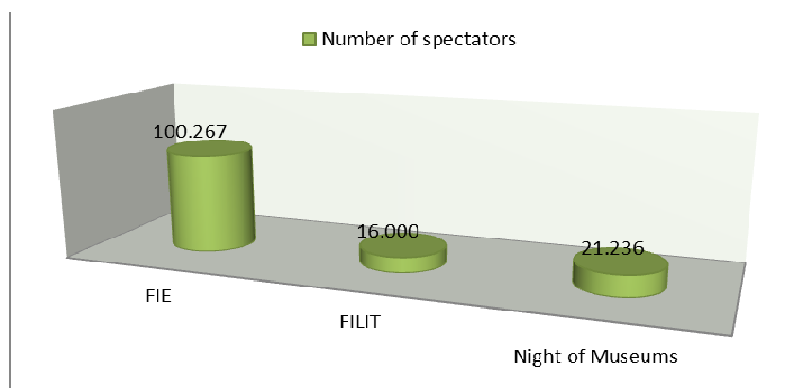


Figure 5. Cultural events in 2013 in Iasi

Source: National Institute of Statistics

In 2013, Iasi was rated on the first places nationally according to the number of visitors, with a great success in terms of culture, the second place in the country after Bucharest, with a total of 21,236 people. (The second place was occupied by Sibiu, with 19,607 visitors, followed by Cluj-Napoca with 15,000 visitors).

Another major event held in Iasi in 2013, was the "International Festival of Literature and Translation ", held in the period 23-27 October 2013. At this festival, there were held 80 events attended by 12,000 people.

Figure 6. The number of spectators at the cultural events organised in Iasi in 2013Source: National Institute of Statistics; www.mediafax.ro

According to the schedule, the International Festival of Education attracted the most numerous audience, and the over 100,000 spectators ranked the event as the largest cultural manifestation held in Iasi in 2013.

The impact of FIE was also relevant from the tourism point of view, because the cultural and artistic manifestation boosted the development of the tourism sector, increasing the number of tourists who chose the city of Iasi as a tourist destination in the month of June of 2013. This effect is highlighted by comparing the number of arrivals of the tourists in the month of June of 2013 with the months of June of the years 2010 – 2012.

Table 2. Arrivals of tourists at Iasi in the month of June of the years 2010-2013

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013
Arrivals of tourists	14,419	14,057	14,772	15,962
Nights spent in structures of tourist accommodation	30,233	29,031	30,401	31,790

Source: National Institute of Statistics

Figure 7. Arrivals of tourists at Iasi in the month of June of the years 2010-2013

Source: National Institute of Statistics

The schedule above highlights a significant increase of the arrivals of tourists in Iasi compared to the previous years, in the month of June of 2013, on the occasion of FIE festival generated positive changes for the tourism of Iasi.

Figure 8. Nights spent in structures of tourist accommodation in the months of June of the years 2010-2013

Source: National Institute of Statistics



The number of nights spent by the tourists in Iasi between 2010 and 2013, in the month of June, varied, and the schedule 6 follows the oscillating evolution. The year 2013 places the indicator at the value of 31,790 nights spent, the largest one of this period. The increase of the number of tourists is very important from the economic point of view, because by the expenditures they make, they increase the tourism revenues, and consequently the tourism sector contribution at the value of the gross domestic product increases.

Conclusions

The event the “European Capital of Culture” has proven over the years, since 1985, the most important tool for urban regeneration through the beneficial effects generated, both economic and social, and especially cultural. The title assigned to a country is the help and support from the European Union in the development process, maybe the single chance to settle the conflicts and of social and cultural inclusion of disadvantaged populations.

In the context of “ECC”, cities such as Rotterdam, Essen and Liverpool were built as a cultural brand, enhancing their cultural dimension by establishing a multicultural programme based on the organisation of events. The image of these cities has improved, moving from the status of industrial or trade city to that of the capital of culture, or from the positioning as a city of sports to that as a city of cultural festivals, remarkable by the impressive number of events aiming at culture through socialisation.

By organising the “International Festival of Education”, Iasi has taken a first step to enrol in the competition for the “European Capital of Culture 2021”. This cultural event was an opportunity for Iasi to remark itself nationally and internationally by diversifying the cultural life and by exploring new horizons.

The “International Festival of Education”, 2013 edition, aimed at strengthening and developing the cultural dimension, and by the events summarized in the programme, there was promoted all forms of culture: music, dance, theatre, books, film and plastic arts. Thus, “FIE” respects the EU principle based on unity and diversity within the cultural context, while promoting cultural diversity and supporting the achievement of unity in diversity. On the occasion of FIE, the citizens of Iasi had the opportunity to attend the first concert of an international artist held in the city of Iasi. “Kaas chante Piaf”, part of the homonymous world tour, gathered a great public and brought a new life to Iasi.

FIE can be considered a representative event of Iasi, it differs from other cultural events organised over time, and its size is demonstrated by numerous diverse events and by the large public. Moreover, the impressive number of artists who have entertained the audience and the rich infrastructure contributes equally to the position of the festival as unique and special.

The “International Festival of Education” has designed a new world of the city, combining the culture and the entertainment and providing to the people education through entertainment. By organising this event, it was made a transition

of Iasi from a city of pure education to a strong cultural, creative and educational European centre.

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