

EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT PILSEN – EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2015

Jiří Ježek

Associate Professor

University of West Bohemia

Faculty of Economics, Centre for Regional Development Research

Univerzitní 22, CZ - 306 14 Plzeň, Czech Republic

e-mail: jezekji@kge.zcu.cz

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Abstract

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The paper deals with the evaluation of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015. It is based on a few empiric research studies that were implemented after the project was finished. It presents the city of Pilsen and the project of the European Capital of Culture from its initiation to implementation. It deals with the benefits of the project from the point of view of attendance, investment, tourism, and impacts on the economic development. It also brings the evaluation of the project Pilsen - European Capital of Culture 2015 as seen by the city's residents.

Key words

European Capital of Culture, Pilsen, evaluation research

1. Introduction

Large cultural and artistic projects (megaprojects) and their significance for the development of cities and regions have been paid considerable attention over the last decade, both in theory and practice. (Campbell 2011). The evaluation of cultural projects has become the object of interest of many applied and academic research studies (Evans 2005). In the field of evaluation of the projects of European Capitals of Culture, at least as measured by the quotation response, the key role is played by the Palmer reports (Palmer 2004, Palmer 2007) which roughly summarize the findings of the host cities. Their weakness consists in the fact that they do not offer any framework procedure how to monitor and evaluate such large cultural projects in all their complexities. Even the European Commission, the initiator of the projects of European Capitals of Culture (ECOC), has not yet offered any elaborate methodology that would enable serious comparison of the results of the individual cities.

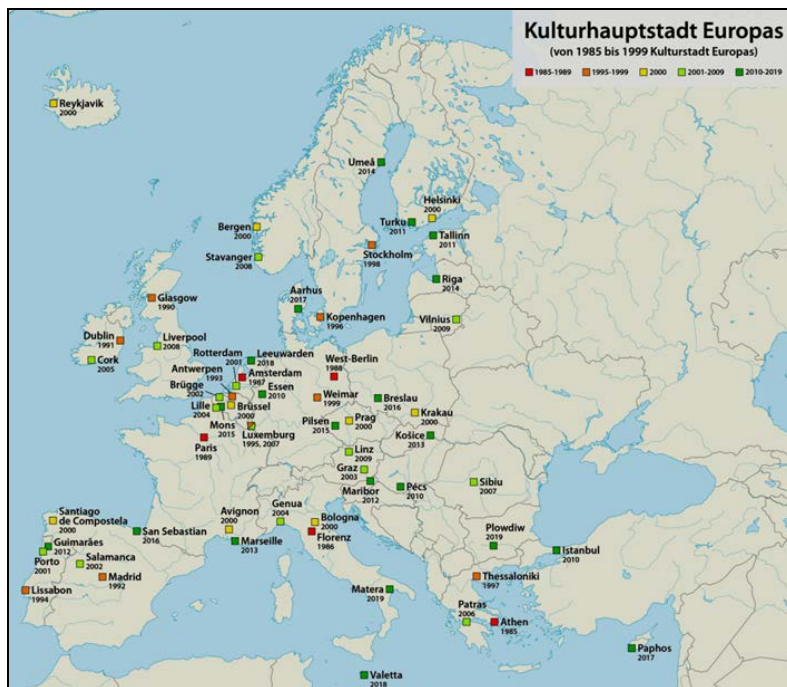


Fig. 1: A survey of European Capitals of Culture.
Source: Wikipedia (2016).

As stated, for example, by Kunzmann (2002), Lähdesmäki (2014) or Liu (2014) and confirmed by representatives of many cities contacted by us, monitoring and evaluation of large cultural projects represent a considerable problem as it is difficult to find suitable indicators of the rate of success on which all the parties involved would be able to agree. And what is more, representatives of the hosting cities often worry that evaluation studies and applied indicators show unsuccessfulness rather than positive effects, which leads to casting doubt on the effectiveness of such large and financially demanding investment projects (Impacts 2008). On the other hand, in reality we often see uncritical exaltation of economic benefits, not only of large

cultural and artistic projects, but of culture as such. Let us give a practical example from the Czech Republic when the cultural authorities uncritically welcomed the model offered by Ministry of Culture which enabled them to calculate economic benefits of cultural events as if they were the only indicators reasoning beneficial effects of cultural projects (Raabová 2010).

Evaluation studies on impacts of large cultural projects use attendance (primarily attendance in accommodation facilities), investment into cultural infrastructure or the number of newly created jobs as the most significant indicators of their economic benefit. Their authors are often criticised because they ignore the long-term and multiplication effects (Fox, Rampton 2015). The development of effective monitoring and evaluation systems and research methodologies for the determination of not only the economic impacts of large cultural projects can be seen as a big challenge, both for practice and also for practical and theoretical research. It is therefore surprising how, on the one hand, the projects of the European Capitals of Culture are emphasised because of their unquestionable economic benefit, while, on the other hand, any credible monitoring and evaluation systems which could verify the above hypothesis are missing (Ježek et al., 2015).

2. The aim and methodology

The aim of this paper is to analyse the benefits of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015 and to try and compare some selected parameters of the project with other European cities. Our sources were partial analyses carried out for the purpose of the complex evaluation of this project for the needs of the city of Pilsen, Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic and the European Commission (Bartoš 2016; Ježek et al. 2016a; Ježek et al. 2016b; Nosková 2016; Raabová 2016) served as our sources.

3. Presentation of the city of Pilsen: on the way from the industrial to post-industrial development

The city of Pilsen (approximately 175,000 inhabitants) is a regional city with a rich history, situated in West Bohemia, approximately 90 km west of Prague. It is the fourth largest city in the Czech Republic and lies on the confluence of four rivers. The first mentions of the city date back to the year 1295 when the city was founded by the Czech king Václav II (regular square ground plan). Since then the city has gradually developed and its importance has grown. In 19th century the city experienced a dynamic growth in connection with the development of mechanical engineering (Škoda Pilsen) and brewing industry (Pilsner Urquell brewery). At that time Pilsen became also a significant cultural centre and one of the centres of the Czech national revival (the development of dramatics and the like). During 20th century the industry became the most significant factor of the city development. This applies to the interwar, war (Škoda Pilsen belonged to the significant arms factories supplying the German army) and also post-war period when it became one of the most significant economic centres of the Czech Republic, just after Prague, Brno, and Ostrava. At the beginning of the 1990s there were far-reaching political and economic changes. Pilsen, thanks to its geographical location, became a gate to Western Europe. It experienced an influx of a great number of foreign investors. The modern development of the city is connected with industry, mainly with the traditional mechanical engineering and food industry (brewing industry). Over the last thirty years other fields have arrived as well, mainly electronics, electrical

engineering and optics. The competitive advantage of the city can be seen in the above mentioned geographical location but also in the cheap and qualified workforce and, last but not least, in the readiness of the city administration to provide investors with fully equipped business areas. The first industrial park in the Czech Republic was established in Pilsen (1995) and Pilsen was also one of the first cities which started using municipal marketing to support the communal economy.

4. From the initiative to the implementation of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture

At the beginning of the Pilsen 2015 initiative there was a discussion about how to increase the attractiveness of the city both for the local residents and visitors of the city as well as for investors. The participating parties agreed that this could only be achieved by increasing the investment into the field of culture, sport and the environment. What became the strategic goal of the development of the city of Pilsen was the shaping of the portfolio of what Pilsen could offer in order not to be perceived by the public only as a city of industry and beer (or recently ever more often as a city of sport, thanks to the European success of the local football club) but also as a European cultural centre with a positive image, well-known not only in the Czech Republic but also in Europe. In this connection the project Pilsen 2015 was understood to be a flag project.

The initiative to enter the European Capital of Culture competition came into being in the year 2003. It originated in the Department of Culture of the Municipal Authority of Pilsen which in that time cooperated on a partial project with the Austrian city Graz and in this connection the Austrian partner was seen as a model. In September 2007 the Municipal Council formally agreed on Pilsen participating in the competition. The organization of the entire project was entrusted to the Department of Coordination of European Projects. A team of workers emerged who were in charge of the entire event. An integrated plan of the development of the city was created consisting of two main documents under the names "Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015" and "Programme of the Development of Culture 2009 – 2019". Both the documents formed a strategic framework for the implementation of the project of the European Capital of Culture. Not only the political and administrative management of the city but also the expert public (representatives of culture and art) and local residents were involved in the project. A significant role was played by the Centre of Community Planning West Bohemia which initiated the creativity of the local residents (especially the youth) to identify the problems of the city and the possibilities to solve them in a group game ("future city game"). By means of this participative method the participants of the game were invited to discover the problems of the city, namely economic, ecological but also social and cultural ones, and to suggest how to solve them. In October 2009 both the strategic documents were approved and the competition entry application was sent to the organizers. Out of three cities two were selected, Ostrava and Pilsen (Hradec Králové was the third applicant) and they qualified into the second round. Finally, on 8th September 2010, the selection committee chose Pilsen as the capital of European culture for the year 2015. In what aspect was Pilsen better than the competitor, Ostrava which was fancied by the media? The committee especially appreciated that Pilsen showed a professional attitude and achieved "an excellent balance between the cultural projects planned for the year 2015 and the regeneration of the city" (see the Final report of the selection committee). A significant role was also played by a strong political commitment from the mayor of

the city and the city management in general, the existing European contacts and relationships (according to some people this was the key factor of the success) and the openness of the overall project strategy.

5. Monitoring and evaluation system of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture

The drafting of the monitoring and evaluation systems was based on the findings of the foreign cities which had been participating in the project in the past. The so called Liverpool model (2008) is mostly considered to be the most elaborate study of the impacts of large cultural and artistic projects ECOC. The image of just a mechanical takeover of the Liverpool model was excluded from the very beginning. The reason was not only the dissimilarity of both the cities (Liverpool and Pilsen) but also the volume of funds that the city of Pilsen was prepared to invest into the implementation of the project and its evaluation, especially in the time of the global financial and economic crisis. Although systematic monitoring and evaluation of the ECOC project is a precondition for the hosting city to be granted the European subsidy (Melina Mercouri prize), it is also necessary to state (we have been dealing with this issue since the year 2012) that the monitoring and evaluation questions were only paid marginal attention in case of Pilsen. Some of the main reasons were multiple changes in the project management that influenced both the programme and its implementation but also the monitoring and evaluation of the project. The selection of the evaluators was decided on as late as in autumn 2014, only a few months before the entire project started. Therefore, the possibilities of comparing the results of the project with the situation two or three years before the project initiation, as recommended by many authors, were considerably limited (ECOTEC, 2009). Lack of time as well as lack of funds led to the fact that in the end not only one organization was chosen to be responsible for the complex evaluation of the project (University of West Bohemia) as had been originally planned, but the individual evaluation areas were entrusted to more organizations (calculations of the economic impacts, change of the cultural behaviour of the city residents, attitude of residents towards the project, attendance of the city, city image, response to the project in the media, satisfaction with the individual events, etc.) between which, because of the reasons related to time and other issues, the coordination of the research events did not work smoothly, and therefore some of them overlapped or they didn't fit.

On the basis of the experience from abroad and the recommendations of the expert committee the following evaluation fields were finally selected in May 2015 (Ježek et al. 2015):

- Sustainability of cultural life in the city;
- Participation in cultural and artistic programmes;
- City identity and image;
- Project philosophy and management;
- European dimension;
- Economic impacts (growth of job opportunities, expenses of visitors, investment and the like).

6. Economic impacts of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture

The research methodology of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015 is explained in detail in the paper of Nosková (2016). The implementation of the

project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture showed that culture does not only contribute to the development of creativity but it is also an important catalyst of the economic development. The overall attendance of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture was calculated at 1.23 million visitors (number of entries to the organized events). Out of this 60% were local residents, 20% inhabitants of the Pilsen region and 15% inhabitants of other regions of the Czech Republic. Approximately 5% visitors were tourist from abroad.

In connection with the project European Capital of Culture the visitors of the city spent a total of €20.9 million. According to our calculations the overall impact on the Czech economy (direct and indirect effects) accounted for €26.3 million. Out of this €12.7 million were impacts linked with foreign tourists. Thanks to the expenses of visitors of the ECOC programme approximately 388 new jobs were created in the whole Czech Republic (affecting both contractors and subcontractors).

According to our findings the investment expenditures of the project European Capital of Culture 2015 accounted for €50.9 million. The most significant investment transaction was the construction of the New Theatre whose cost finally climbed to €40.2 million. Other investment concerned the rebuilding of the former garage of the local transport company into a creative zone DEPO 2015 (www.depo2015.cz), Relax Centrum Štruncovy sady, Greenways and adjustments of the public open spaces. Apart from that the University of West Bohemia founded a new institution, Faculty of Art and Design. In connection with the investment construction 139 jobs were created.

7. Tourism

According to the data of the Czech Statistical Office the number of overnight stays in hotels and boarding houses grew, as opposed to a current year (2013), by 31.1% to 493,000 overnight stays in the year 2015. PPM factum company was commissioned to carry out the research of tourists and during the year (in four waves) a total of 2091 respondents were inquired (Bartoš 2016).

Most tourists visited Pilsen in the year 2015 for the first time (53%). More than one quarter of tourists visited the city more than once (26%). The largest share of new visitors arrived from Germany (69%), Slovakia and non-European countries (87%). Most often people came by car (61%) or by coach (31%). Coach as a means of transport was chosen predominantly by foreign tourists (mostly from Slovakia and Germany). Visitors moved about Pilsen using their own means of transport (64%) or on foot. The city transportation system (12%) and taxi service were used by only a small share of visitors.

Approximately one half of visitors spent in Pilsen only a few hours up to one day (51%). The other half spent in the city usually 2 – 3 days. Most often they stayed overnight in hotels and boarding houses (68%), the rest used the hospitality of their friends or relatives. Most visitors came to the city on their own (73%), mostly they came in smaller groups, with family, spouse, friends or acquaintances. The average daily spending on a visit to Pilsen was Czk 2107. Most money was spent on accommodation (Czk 1017) and shopping (Czk 561), a bit less was spent on meals (Czk 299) and entrance fees (Czk 230).

The most often quoted associations with the city of Pilsen (answers to the question "What comes to your mind if you hear the word Pilsen?" - multiple choice out of three possibilities) were as follows: five most quoted associations – beer and beer festival (66%), European Capital of Culture (11%), Škoda Plzeň (8%), architecture and sights (7%), and sport (6%). 63% visitors expressed their awareness of Pilsen being the European Capital of Culture. 45% respondents noticed a trailer related to Pilsen and/or ECOC before their journey. The Internet, outdoor advertising, radio, press and leaflets belonged to the most significant communication channels. Approximately 11% tourists stated that the main reason why they visited Pilsen was the visit of the European Capital of Culture. Other 32% visitors stated ECOC as one of other reasons why they visited the city.

Generally, the tourists expressed considerable satisfaction with the visit of the city. As the results of the questionnaire survey show, 50% visitors were very satisfied and 49% were rather satisfied. In all the attributes of the evaluation positive views prevailed. Visitors were most satisfied with accommodation services, cultural and leisure possibilities and, last but not least, with the level of catering. They were most dissatisfied with the city transportation system and the insufficient city cleanliness.

8. The programme of the project of the European Capital of Culture

Approximately 43 thousand visitors took part in the opening ceremony of the programme of the European Capital of Culture. The biggest attendance was recorded at the annually held Liberation Festival (219 thousand visitors), an event celebrating the liberation of the city by the US army in the year 1945. Big attendance was also recorded during the event called Giant Puppets in Pilsen – Skupa´s Pilsen Festival (73 thousand). Other significant events were as follows: Manége Cané Senárt (60 thousand), Lively Street Festival (47 thousand), Exhibitions: Jiří Trnka Studio and Trnka´s Garden 2 (44 thousand), The Light Festival (40 thousand), Fresh Festival Pilsen 2015 (33 thousand), The Historical Weekend or Pilsen´s Ghosts and Mummery (30 thousand) and Bavarian Days (25 thousand). Ten of the biggest cultural events were visited by nearly 541 thousand visitors, which amounted for 44% of the overall attendance of all 580 events organized under the heading of the European Capital of Culture.

The programme of ECOC was evaluated mostly positively both by the residents and visitors of the city. The selection of the key events was the subject of public discussions. Some events held annually were also included in the programme, such as The Liberation Festival. Another disputed issue was the event called The New Circus Season, i.e. a few performances of the world´s top level modern circus art which, however, has no tradition in Pilsen and therefore according to some experts it may be difficult for the city to make use of the gained contacts in the future.

9. Project Pilsen ECOC 2015 as seen by its residents

In this part the data are based on the results of our own questionnaire survey which was carried out at the turn of the years 2015 and 2016 (November 2015 up to February 2016) and it aimed at an overall evaluation of the project Pilsen – the European Capital of Culture 2015 by the residents of the city of Pilsen. In total, 1,000 respondents were enquired. The method of quota selection was chosen.

Respondents were chosen according to age and gender so the individual groups of respondents reflected the demographic structure of Pilsen.

More than one half of the respondents (56%) stated that they were sufficiently informed about the project Pilsen ECOC 2015. The most used source of information (the respondents were able to state more answers) about the ECOC project was the Internet (54.9% respondents). More than one half of respondents stated they had participated in at least three events organized under the heading of the project Pilsen – ECOC 2015. Only 15% residents stated they had not visited any of the organized events. The survey showed that 4% residents were somehow involved in the preparations or implementation of the cultural programme of ECOC. Most often they participated as volunteers.

Approximately two thirds of the respondents stated that the ECOC project had been implemented successfully and had been well promoted. In their view the programme was varied enough and everybody was given a chance to choose whichever option he/she wanted. More than one half of the respondents expressed their hope that thanks to the gained experience and established contacts the city will be able to pick up the threads of the positive results even in the future. The most serious criticism concerned the funding of the project (high costs of the construction of the New Theatre and of some cultural events) and the balance of the programmes from the point of view of the representation of the local and foreign artists. Some respondents criticised the weak support of the local cultural scene.

The respondents see the biggest benefit of the project Pilsen ECOC in widening and improving the offerings of culture and art in the city (60.7%). The proof of that is not only the construction of the New Theatre but also a rich cultural programme throughout all the year. Further on more than a half of the respondents noticed the development of tourism (increase in the number of visitors and overnight stays), increase in the prestige of the city at home and abroad and, last but not least, increased public investment into the sphere of culture. The change of the city image, new opportunities for jobs and enterprising, increased feelings of togetherness with the city or increase in the quality of life in the city has been perceived by approximately one quarter or one third of the respondents.

10. Comparison of Pilsen with other European Capitals of Culture

As has already been stated in the introduction, the comparison of the ECOC projects is very difficult as there are no framework procedures for their evaluation. On the basis of publicly accessible information we can only compare the overall attendance, programme expenses and infrastructure expenses. But even here it is necessary to take all the compared information with a pinch of salt.

As far as the size of the cities which hosted the European Capital of Culture is concerned, they range from relatively small towns (Guimarães, Weimar and others) up to large metropolises (Copenhagen, Istanbul and others). The comparison of the individual European Capitals of Culture according to the population, implemented projects, reported attendance and expenses can be seen as an overview in Tab. 1. The expenses are stated for all the years of preparation and implementation of the programme (with the exception of the data for Luxembourg, Sibiu, Essen and Guimarães, where the space of time was not specified).

Tab. 1: Comparison of some selected parameters of the projects of the European Capitals of Culture.

	Population in thousands	Number of projects/ events	Overall attendance	Programme expenses (million €)	Infrastructure expenses (million €)
Luxembourg 1995	77	500	1,170,000	22	16
Copenhagen 1996	1,362	670	6,920,000	155	220
Thessalonica 1997	1,084	1,271	1,500,000	67	233
Stockholm 1998	113	1,218	N/A	55	N/A
Weimar 1999	62	N/A	7,000,000	46	411
Avignon 2000	86	200	1,500,000	21	8
Santiago de Compostela 2000	94	1,210	N/A	N/A	N/A
Reykjavik 2000	111	284	1,473,724	8	N/A
Brussels 2000	134	350	7,000,000	33	82
Bergen 2000	231	500	N/A	13	N/A
Bologna 2000	380	551	2,150,000	34	8
Helsinki 2000	555	503	5,400,000	33	N/A
Cracow 2000	738	121	N/A	N/A	N/A
Prague 2000	1,181	380	N/A	29	N/A
Porto 2001	258	350	1,246,545	59	169
Rotterdam 2001	595	524	2,250,000	34	N/A
Bruges 2002	117	165	1,600,000	27	69
Salamanca 2002	156	1,100	1,927,444	39	47
Graz 2003	226	108	2,755, 271	59	56
Lille 2004	180	N/A	N/A	74	70
Genova 2004	904	N/A	N/A	30	200
Sibiu 2007	185	867	N/A	17	137
Luxembourg 2007	480	584	3,327,678	57	N/A
Stavanger 2008	133	1,118	2,000,000	39	Negligible
Liverpool 2008	436	7,000	9,700,000	122	N/A
Linz 2009	190	200/7700	3,500,000	69	323
Vilnius 2009	550	100/1500	1,500, 000	20	44
Pécs 2010	160	650/4675	1,000,000	35	140
Essen/Ruhr 2010	2,000	5,500	3,400,000	81	N/A
Istanbul 2010	12,000	586	12,000,000	193	64
Turku 2011	177	8,000	2,000,000	56	N/A
Tallinn 2011	400	7,000	2,000,000	14	195
Guimaraes 2012	53	2,000	2,000,000	42	42
Maribor 2012	120	405/5264	3,100,000	28	Negligible
Kosice 2013	240	600/3000	N/A	23	78
Marseille 2013	850	950	11,000,000	99	665
Umea 2014	119	N/A	N/A	19	393
Riga 2014	700	488	1,600,000	27	N/A
Pilsen 2015	170	580	1,230,000	14	51

Sources: Ecotec, 2009; Fox and Rampton, 2015; Hudec et al., 2015; Impacts, 2008; Ježek et al., 2016a; Ježek et al., 2016b; McAtter et. al., 2013; McAtter et al., 2014; McCoshan et al., 2010; Palmer et al., 2004; Palmer et al., 2007; Rampton et al., 2011; Rampton et al., 2012.

According to the total sum of the applied funds the largest project was Istanbul (€193 million), Copenhagen (€155 million), and Liverpool (€122 million). On the contrary, the cities with the smallest budgets were Reykjavik (€8 million), Bergen (€13 million), and Tallinn (€14 million). As far as the infrastructure investments are concerned, in some cases we could not find their exact size or our only information stated that no larger investments had been implemented (Maribor, Stavanger). The biggest known infrastructure investments were implemented in Marseilles (€665 million), Weimar (€411 million), and Linz (€323 million), and, on the contrary, the least investment demanding projects were in Bologna and Avignon (both €8 million) or in Luxembourg (€16 million). The average overall expenses for the programme, calculated from accessible data (Tab. 1) amount for €49 million (middle value is €35 million). The average expenses for cultural infrastructure amount for €160 million (middle value is €82 million).

As is obvious from the table, it is not possible to find any unambiguous dependency between the size of the city and the extent of expenses (for project preparation or infrastructure). Projects with both a small budget (Reykjavik, Umea) and also with a large one (Guimarães, Weimar) can be found among the smaller cities, and therefore it is not possible to claim that the budget would grow in proportion to the size of the city. Even large cities could have small budgets, as can be proved by, for example, Riga or Genova (both cities with budget of up to €30 million).

The data concerning the infrastructure expenses are also very varied where very high amounts can be found in case of small cities (Weimar), as well as small amounts in case of large cities (Istanbul). We can therefore conclude that the size of any of these expenses is not related to the size of the city but rather to its ability to gain subsidies and the preparedness of the programme.

The number of programmes or events gives evidence of the size (extent) of the entire project but these data are not all that important as they are often just estimates and, apart from that, with some projects it is not obvious whether the numbers relate to events or projects.

Attracting visitors and economic benefits connected with them are often one of the main goals of the individual ECOC projects. Apart from the absolute numbers of visitors, which are mostly educated guesses, it is important to analyse also the changes in the number of visitors. For example, in Linz 2009 there was an increase in overnight stays by 10% in comparison with the preceding year, despite the ongoing economic crisis. At the same time, other Austrian cities reported a decrease in the number of overnight stays – Graz by 1.8% and Vienna by 4.6% (McCoshan et al. 2010). In Essen 2010 there was an increase in the number of visitors by 13.4%, and the total number of overnight stays jumped to 6.5 million, which generated an increase in revenues/sales by more than €90 million (Rampton et al. 2011). In Tallinn 2011 there was an increase of 22% in the number of overnight stays of tourists from abroad, which was much more than an increase of 8% in the rest of the country (Rampton et al. 2012). In Marseille 2013 the number of overnight stays increased by 9% (€5.7 million) (McAtter et al. 2014). A year-on-year increase by 21% was recorded even in Umea 2014 (Fox and Rampton, 2015). It is thus obvious that the ECOC brand helps its holders start up tourism, which can bring about very positive economic effects. By comparing the analysed parameters of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015 with other European cities (see Tab. 1) we can state that it was a project comparable with other cities, such as Kosice, Vilnius,

Riga, Riga or Turku. From the point of view of the basic parameters the above project was rather one of the smaller projects the focus of which consisted mainly in the field of the programme offerings.

11. Conclusion

The results of the empiric research studies implemented in the year 2015 and at the beginning of the year 2016, i.e. immediately after the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015 was finished, show that the project brought about a number of positive changes, both in the field of attendance and in the field of investment and economic benefits. The basic parameters are comparable with other European cities, mainly with those from Central and Eastern Europe.

As the existing findings show, the key question remains how the city of Pilsen can make good use of all the above facts in the future. The expectations are high and it will be interesting to see what impact on the development of the city the project will have from the point of view of the medium-term and long-term perspective. If Pilsen can make use of the contacts made with the European cultural scene (the art of circus), if the awareness of the city and its image really increase, or whether the centre of creative enterprising DEPO 2015 can be given a good start etc. These are all challenges we want to focus on in our future research.

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EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT PILSEN – EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2015

Summary

The article deals with the evaluation of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture 2015. In the introductory part the authors dealt with the existing experience in evaluating similar projects. They arrive at the conclusion that there is no generally accepted methodology how to monitor and evaluate the projects of the European Capitals of Culture. There are only general principles enabling varied approaches. The existing situation thus enables making only simple comparisons between the individual cities according to such criteria as the number of visitors, expenses concerning the programme and investment.

According to the authors of the paper the evaluation research was not paid sufficient attention because only a few months before the start of the programme it had been decided what external subject were supposed to evaluate the project. This means that the data collected in the year 2015 were difficult to compare with the data before the implementation of the project as such data are missing.

The implementation of the project Pilsen – European Capital of Culture showed that culture does not only contribute to the development of creativity but it is also an important catalyst of the economic development. The overall attendance of Pilsen – European Capital of Culture was calculated at 1.23 million visitors (number of entries to the organized events). Out of this 60% were local residents and 5% visitors were tourists from abroad. In connection with the project European Capital of Culture the visitors of the city spent a total of €20.9 million. According to our calculations the overall impact on the Czech economy (direct and indirect effects) accounted for €26.3 million. Thanks to the expenses of visitors of the ECOC programme approximately 388 new jobs were created in the whole Czech Republic (related to both contractors and subcontractors). According to our findings the investment expenditures of the project European Capital of Culture 2015 accounted for €50.9 million. According to the data of the Czech Statistical Office the number of overnight stays in hotels and boarding houses grew, as opposed to a current year (2013), by 31.1%, to 493,000 overnight stays in the year 2015. Most tourists visited Pilsen in the year 2015 for the first time (53%). Approximately one half of visitors spent in Pilsen only a few hours up to one day (51%). The other half most often spent there 2 – 3 days. The average daily spending on a visit to Pilsen was Czk 2107. Approximately 11% tourists stated that the main reason why they visited Pilsen was the visit of the European Capital of Culture. Other 32% visitors stated ECOC as one of other reasons why they visited the city. Overall the tourists expressed considerable satisfaction with the visit of the city.

Ten of the biggest cultural events were visited by nearly 541 thousand visitors, which amounted for 44% of the overall attendance of all 580 events organized under the heading of the European Capital of Culture. The programme of ECOC was evaluated mostly positively both by the residents and visitors of the city. The selection of the key events was the subject of public discussions.

According to the residents of the city of Pilsen the ECOC project was implemented successfully. In their view the programme was varied enough and everybody was given a chance to choose whichever option he/she wanted. More than a half of the respondents expressed their hope that thanks to the gained experience and

established contacts the city will be able to pick up the threads of the positive results even in the future. The most serious criticism concerned the funding of the project (high costs of the construction of the New Theatre and of some cultural events) and the balance of the programmes from the point of view of the representation of the local and foreign artists. Some respondents criticised the weak support of the local cultural scene. The respondents see the biggest benefit of the project in widening and improving the offerings of culture and art in the city.