



# ESTABLISHING THE INSTITUTION OF “CULTURAL PORT”



**PASSPARTOUT Team**

Thessaloniki, 2015

Common borders. Common solutions.

# **Establishing the Institution of the “Cultural Port” of the Black Sea**

\*The publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The content of this publication are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way reflect the views of the European Union.

## Executive Summary

---

The Black Sea basin can be regarded as a “strategic bridge” connecting to the Mediterranean Sea via the Marmara and Aegean Sea, and Europe with Asia to the Caspian Sea, Central Asia the Middle East and with south-east Asia and China. The region is also an expanding market and a major energy production and transmission area, enhancing significantly, its global geopolitical role in the sector of energy and transportation sectors. Culturally, it is characterized by close national ties, but also by diversities and rivalries between the existing nations. It comprises three EU Member States (Bulgaria, Greece, and Romania), one EU candidate country (Turkey), five European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) partners (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine), as well as the Russian Federation as a strategic partner for the EU.

The objective of the study has a twofold orientation. The first one is to strengthen the ties between nations by establishing the cultural institution of “Cultural Ports”; an institution that aims to develop a vital cultural, financial and tourism connection between city ports. The second objective the study aims to fulfill is to develop an action plan towards the establishment and the promotion of the institution.

The feasibility study has two distinctive parts. In the first part, the ports of Thessaloniki, Kavala, Istanbul, Batumi, Odessa, Constanta and Varna are briefly described, revealing in thick lines, the similarities but also the differences among them. Thereafter, structured questionnaires were addressed to regional organizations and bodies, aiming to justify the existence of common ground, in the fields of economy, tourism, transportation and culture. Moreover, a secondary research was also contacted, based on existing academic literature, European directives and decisions in order to acknowledge the European policies, strategies and financial/ funding instruments, used to establish or to enhance the connection between the “City- Ports”. The statistical process of acquired data, support the initial hypothesis that Black Sea ports remain a cradle of cultural development and an incubator of economic welfare. Towards this direction, the establishment of the “CULTURAL PORTS” foundation could facilitate cohesion, co operation, mainly through the exchange of heritage and cultural elements.

In the second part the main characteristics of the suggested foundations were described, the points of convergence we also discussed, while, a thorough and detailed “step by step” action plan was provided, in order to promote accurately and effectively. The promotional directions which have been developed include, the appropriate dissemination methods and techniques, such press releases, social media, websites, meetings, exhibitions, networking with specific regional/ national authorities and lobbying directions. Finally and in parallel with the establishment of the “CULTURAL PORTS” foundation, the establishment of “Cultural Port Label” was also introduced, in order not only to efficiently (and effectively) promote the institution but also to achieve a durable accordingly high quality of the proposed foundation implementation.

The summary is part of the feasibility study conducted by the PASSPARTOUT Team:

- Ms Sofia Bournatzi, Tourism Marketing expert, owner of the “Passpartout”;
- Dr. Spyros Avdimiotis, Researcher on Tourism Research and Methodology, Technical University of Thessaloniki, Technical University of Cyprus.
- Chryssa Kopra, Communication and Urban policy expert, MSc
- Dr. Sofia-Natalia Boemi, Environmental management, research on sustainable tourism
- Mr Pyrrhus Mercouris, Researcher and Consultant on EU matters.

in the framework of “LIMEN: Cultural ports from Aegean to the Black Sea”. “LIMEN” is co-financed by European Union through the “Joint Operational Programme “BLACK SEA BASIN 2007-2013” and national resources and it is coordinated by EKBMM.

## Introduction

---

The proposing of this Institution is a highly ambitious scheme. Inspired from the prestigious E.U. Institution of the European Capital of Culture that was envisioned and initiated 30 years ago by the Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri, the “Cultural Port” will try to re-imagine the connections between the city ports and the urban creativity.

The proposed Institution will be developed in order:

- to establish an institutionalized and permanent cooperation between the city-ports,
- to develop a cultural-tourist-economic-social network,
- to improve the management capacity at local level and
- to promote and support the Small and Medium Enterprises that are involved in the tourism and cultural sectors.

Monuments reflect the historic, social, cultural and economic conditions around which a common cultural heritage has been developed in the area of the Black Sea and beyond. They are the living testimonies of the contacts developed throughout time between the peoples of this area and through the maritime routes of the Aegean and the Black Sea. These routes were the direct way of transporting goods, ideas, values, principals and cultural styles. The Institution “Cultural Port of the Black Sea” aims to revive this historic networking.

The establishment of this new and promising Institution has been the main objective of the project “LIMEN” and it is proposed as an innovated tool in order to promote the city-ports and their cultural treasures.

The expected results and advantages according to the initial proposal of the LIMEN project will be:

- Development of a common strategy for the protection and promotion of the common cultural heritage and of good practices and models of excellence in the management and promotion of the common cultural heritage
- Detailed knowledge of the main cultural resources of the city-ports
- New opportunities for socio-economic growth and diversification of cultural tourism offer through the sustainable management of the cultural resources
- Sustainable new cultural routes for tourism development

- Stable partnerships among Public authorities, Universities, Organizations, N.G.Os., Companies and tourist operators of the involved regions
- Coordination and improvement of the managerial capacity of organisations at local and regional level.
- Creation of special tourism – cultural products of high quality standards and international recognition of the cross-border area.

The Institution of the “Cultural Port of the Black Sea” will ultimately pursue to become the “umbrella” action for development initiatives at cross-border and transnational level within the Black Sea Basin and in particular, through the active ports of the area. The Institution will also create a platform that in terms of economy and culture will ensure equitable and sustainable cooperation to serve the contemporary needs of the local communities and economies.

The Institution of the “Cultural Port” will draw attention to the values, diversity and common features of a new European tourist destination. It will create a platform for sharing good practices across the city-ports and will promote networking between cultural destinations. The key feature of the selected destinations should be their commitment to social, cultural and environmental sustainability. The initiative would be developed around an annual theme.

The initiative will promote new European cultural itineraries and raise awareness about their potential for tourism among stakeholders and businesses, destination managers, national and local authorities.

## General scope

To enhance the cultural area shared, based on a common cultural heritage through the development of cultural cooperation between creators, cultural players and cultural institutions with a view to encouraging cultural diversity and connections with the European cultural citizenship. Additionally, as a transnational institution, it will introduce more intensive and concrete cooperation in the region among public and private stakeholders.

Links to local, regional and national policy-areas	Main priorities	Main Benefits	Multidimensional advances
Innovation	Enhance tourism – culture synergies	Raised profile of the Black Sea and development of a regional identity	“Contribution to long-term strategy”
Social cohesion and Inclusion	Encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy	Increased competitiveness of the region	“European dimension”
Tourism development		Improved ways of working together through a joint cultural agenda and specifically through cultural cohesion and integration.	“Cultural and artistic content”
Branding strategy	Raising the profile of urban locations and of developing the identity of locations for residents and visitors	Development of a cohesive cultural tourism proposition for the region.	“Implementation capability”
Branding strategy			
Integration and cultural diversity	improving the attractiveness of the city-ports and of the region	Substantial enhancement of local community programmes	“Access”
Regional – Sustainable development			“Management”
Economic diversification			

Apart from partnership between tourism and culture, it is also important to build other forms of partnership, for example between the public and private sectors, with other regions, and

between a region and its citizens. Working with the private sector is essential for attracting investment and continuing to improve the quality of both the cultural and tourism offer.

The platform proposed through the establishment of the Institution and the events that will take place can become a process of development through which creative ideas will be formed and take shape, including the creation of new partnerships and alliances between different groups.

The opportunities, topics and events connected with the “Cultural Port” could be a catalyst for cultural rebranding and positioning of the city-ports on the map of cultural tourism. This can also be the case in cities that are not typical cultural centres.

The “Cultural Port” should be a factor to contribute to a long-term strategy of the city-ports. It should not be considered as just a one-off one-year event. Its sustainability will be measured on terms of becoming a catalyst for a change in the city-ports’ cultural and general development producing sustainable cultural, social and economic impact by developing links between culture, education, tourism, territorial planning, social services etc.

The Institution of the Cultural Port can be a unique opportunity for the organizing city-ports in the area to differentiate themselves in terms of international visibility, status and prestige, reinforcing their cultural identity and positioning them as cultural destinations on the international scene.

The creation of the proposed institution will offer a multidimensional opportunity to improve development prospects of the city pots. The domains that will significantly advance are expected to be the following:

- "Contribution to long-term strategy",
- “European dimension”,
- "Cultural and artistic content",
- "Implementation capability",
- "Access" and
- "Management"



## Action Plan

---

If the project is to be promoted and before searching for a funding-scheme, there are crucial steps to be put forward:

### **Building the Network of the “Cultural Port”**

This Agreement is to be supported by major transnational organisations such as the BSEC, the International Black Sea Club, etc.

The **Agreement** needs to be promoted at E.U. level. Besides the European Parliament that has been already informed through promotion activities, the European Commission and the most relevant Directorates need also to be approached. The most relevant Directorate Generals are the Regional and Urban Policy, (DG REGIO), the International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), the Education and Culture (DG EAC) and the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs responsible for the tourism sector. The approach of the respective DGs is crucial since this is the place where the major funding comes from.

If the pilot phase is to be succeeded, then the funding scheme is to be found –or searched at the same time.

When the “Cultural Port” will become a pilot project -and besides the first steps to be taken through the official proposal- networking needs to be promoted with cities and city-networks that are of high creative added value.

### **Scenario A: short-term Actions**

The proposed Institution, at first stage would be a pilot project (for example, a three-year project targeting decision-makers and executives in local governments as well as creative industry stakeholders, with a core focus on the exchange of experiences existing in the partnership and the development of cultural-tourism products).

Within this framework the support of the BSEC will be essential. Having an organization such as the BSEC to act as the major contributor to the promotion of this scheme within the Black

Sea and towards the E.U. decision makers will add credibility and additionally, will draw the attention of other major stakeholders -public and private- and will become a national priority through the representatives of the organization that are ministers of the participating countries. Within this scenario the role of the European Centre for Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Monuments (EKBBM) –as the Lead Partner of the project “LIMEN” that proposes the Institution- will be of high importance and significance in the management of the procedure.

Within this framework a central administrative committee should be formed that will be consisted –not restrictively – by one representative from each city-port, one representative by the EKBBM, a secretariat/consultant and the participation of the BSEC.

The Committee’s mandate will be of one year and the president is proposed to be each time the representative of the city-port that is nominated as the Cultural Port.

### **Scenario B – Mid-term**

As a pilot initiative the “Cultural Port” could be launched as a short-term cultural festival with the view of becoming it a year-long event. However, in order to be better integrated into existing policies and actions and thus secure its sustainability it should be proposed within contexts that are already successful. An idea that could be promoted is that after the first implementation of the pilot project, the “Cultural Port” to be extended within other basins – the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, the Baltic, etc) for the interconnection of these maritime routes. Accordingly and as already proposed by the Preparatory Action “Culture in EU External Relations”, if the ECoC is to be extended to include countries from the Eastern Partnership of the E.U., the “Cultural Port” could become the initial phase of such a development.

### **Long-term Proposal**

Another proposal for the sustainability of the scheme, could be the introduction of the “Cultural Port” – besides its annual implementation- in the new initiative of the ECoC from 2021 which will have every third year a third ECoC nominated. This city will be selected through an open competition for cities in eligible candidate countries and potential candidates to EU membership. This city could be a port-city where the principles of the “Cultural Port” would be applied, and thus to be extended in other regions too.

## **Networking**

Synergy and cooperation are the only two ways of making things happen. The project LIMEN itself is an idea based in connecting different countries by using the ports and the culture as links. Based on that strategy, the Institution can be established by the coordinated efforts of the LIMEN partners. The suggested networking strategy has two directions:

- a) Networking for the establishment of the institution.
- b) Networking for the tourism promotion of the city-ports which first will create the need to the future customers and second will contribute to the growth of the arrivals' number, the increase the local economy and the GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

### *Establishment of the Institution of the Cultural Ports*

As it has been analyzed in the previous chapters of this study, the establishment of an institution activates a serious number of productive units that are willing to participate. As an example, the Institution of European Capitals of Culture has opened new ways of presenting the cities by strengthening arts, culture and local mentality.

The Institution is proposed to begin as a pilot project which will seek to maximize the synergies between Culture, Tourism and Creative Industries by funding the development and promotion of a new European cultural route around a high-end product.

The initiative will present a shared vision of the port-cities with creative potentials as the key driving forces behind city and regional development.

The steps that need to be followed by each partner in that direction are:

#### *1. Local Authorities*

First of all is to secure an Agreement between public and –major- private organisations of the city-ports of the Black Sea. The participation of the local governments of the cities is of highest importance. This initiative is a city-centred one, and the obvious step is to secure the consensus of the local Authorities.

There are several reasons for that:

- Shows the official support and agreement of the city.
- Ensures the help of the local authorities concerning the materialization of the project.
- The local governments are firstly, responsible for the administration of the city-ports.

- They are the authority closest to the local communities, and thus as such they can ensure the consensus of the local communities.
- This will also secure a bottom-up lobbying from local cultural professionals as well.
- Engaging in the project the organizations supported by the Municipality or the Prefecture.
- Gets advantage from their previous experience in similar projects.
- Combines the project with other cultural, tourism or developing projects run by the local authorities.

The authorization for a project is provided by the following councils:

- The Mayor and the city’s council
- Governor and prefectural council
- The Management of the Port

## *2. Productive Associations*

Additionally, the participation in the Agreement of the tourism sector is also important. The major local Tourism Associations need to be included, not just because the proposed Institution aims at promoting tourism initiatives as well as the cultural ones, but also because the tourism sector involves mainly private sector the consensus of which will further promote the Institution.

Ensuring the support of the associations is not as much officially required as it is necessary for getting the real statistics, goals and needs from the professionals. Those are the ones who know the market and develop marketing strategy for it. Those are also the ones who will measure in numbers the results. The productive unions are:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Tourism Associations.

## *3. European Parliament*

The Agreement needs to be promoted at E.U. level.

The Members of the European Parliament are elected congressmen by various parties who represent their country and take duties in specific fields such as culture, tourism, development, sustainability etc. They are the ones responsible for introducing a new

institution to their colleagues in European Union and ensure their support for it. After getting the support of the local and national authorities, the procedure is:

- Getting a list of each MEP (name, contact details, party, specialty)
- Sending them an introduction letter asking for an appointment
- Arranging meeting with the manager of their office in EU
- Presenting the proposal for the institution Cultural Ports
- Requesting for the introduction of the institution by them to their colleagues
- Setting the terms and criteria of establishing the institution
- Besides the European Parliament, the European Commission and the most relevant Directorates need also to be approached. The most relevant Directorate Generals are the Regional and Urban Policy, (DG REGIO), the International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), the Education and Culture (DG EAC) and the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs responsible for the tourism sector. The approach of the respective DGs is crucial since this is the place where the major funding comes from.

#### 4. Other Major Organisations and Stakeholders

a) This Agreement is to be supported by major transnational organisations such as the BSEC.

##### b) *Tourism promotion of the city-ports*

Tourism is a wide open field that includes every section of each region so a study that refers to ports and culture is very much involved with the tourism business. Lots of parts of this study include tourism or apply to it. Starting by the local associations and reaching the national ones as they are described at the table below.

Country	Association	Website
Batoumi – Georgia	Batumi official tourism portal	<a href="http://gobatumi.com/">http://gobatumi.com/</a>
	Georgian Tourism Association (GTA)	<a href="http://www.tourism-association.ge/index.php">http://www.tourism-association.ge/index.php</a>
Constanta – Romania	Romania Tourism official site	<a href="http://www.romaniatourism.net/where-to-go/towns-cities/constantina-romania/">http://www.romaniatourism.net/where-to-go/towns-cities/constantina-romania/</a>
	National Association of Romanian Travel Agencies (ANAT):	<a href="http://www.anat.ro/">http://www.anat.ro/</a>
Istanbul – Turkey	Istanbul Convention & Visitors Bureau (ICVB)	<a href="http://icvb.org.tr/">http://icvb.org.tr/</a>

	Turkish Hotel Association (TUROB)	<a href="http://www.turob.com/">http://www.turob.com/</a>
	Association of Turkish Travel Agents (TURSAB)	<a href="http://www.tursab.org.tr/">http://www.tursab.org.tr/</a>
Kavala – Greece	Kavala Hotel Association	<a href="http://www.kavala-hotels.gr/">http://www.kavala-hotels.gr/</a>
	Association of Travel Agents Northern Greece	<a href="http://www.etgmth.gr/">http://www.etgmth.gr/</a>
	Hellenic Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies (HATTA)	<a href="http://www.hatta.gr/">http://www.hatta.gr/</a>
Odessa – Ukraine	Odessa city tourism portal	<a href="http://omr.gov.ua/en/tourist/">http://omr.gov.ua/en/tourist/</a>
	Ukraine Tourism Organization	<a href="http://www.traveltoukraine.org/">http://www.traveltoukraine.org/</a>
Thessaloniki – Greece	Thessaloniki Hotel Association	<a href="http://www.tha.gr/">http://www.tha.gr/</a>
	Thessaloniki Convention Bureau (TCB)	<a href="http://www.tcvb.gr/">http://www.tcvb.gr/</a>
	Association of Travel Agents Northern Greece	<a href="http://www.etgmth.gr/">http://www.etgmth.gr/</a>
	Hellenic Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies (HATTA)	<a href="http://www.hatta.gr/">http://www.hatta.gr/</a>
Varna - Bulgaria	Varna Municipality	<a href="http://www.varna.bg/en/index.html">http://www.varna.bg/en/index.html</a>
	Bulgarian Hotel & Restaurant Association	<a href="http://www.bhra-bg.org/">http://www.bhra-bg.org/</a>
	Bulgarian Association of Travel Agents (BATA)	<a href="http://en.batabg.org/">http://en.batabg.org/</a>

What is further needed for the Institution to be successful is a series of **management issues**: Many institutional initiatives fail due to a lack of tools to identify potential problems and wrong turnings. In other words, systems of monitoring and evaluation should be developed. The need for them would be particularly strong in the case of any newly launched strategy for culture hence its design and elaboration must be made part of the process.

The proposed development of collaborations with the EU and major networks can provide valuable input to future policies and well-structured knowledge management to allow the city-ports to replicate successful management approaches and with their turn to provide inputs. Together, they will combine professional know-how and suitable structures to improve

framework conditions for the sustainable promotion of creative and cultural industries and tourism.

The key issue in evaluating the impact of the “Cultural Port” will be the sustainability of the process. There are several crucial points to be considered in the sustainability of cultural tourism governance in the “Cultural Ports”.

Other challenges include:

- An understanding from the start that such an initiative requires a high standard of management, at all levels. These may already exist in the city-ports, they may be brought in and they may be acquired through aimed training.
- A sustainable long-term commitment to the project by all stakeholders and mostly by the political players of the city-ports.
- Close working relationships between the city-ports and of their stakeholders to better prepare the first phase of the Institution. Along this procedure the above mentioned networking with other successful cities in the creative sectors need be found
- That the tourist and visitor capacity of the city-ports can cope with the targets set out in the first plan (hotel capacity, transport links, quality of hospitality and welcome programmes of both the public and the private sectors, etc)
- the commitment that the local population and civil society will be actively engaged in the preparation stage of the Institution, so that it can include and a bottom-up approach (especially of the young people who are the driving forces of the creative procedure, without excluding the needs of the disadvantaged).
- A major managerial issue is the designing of a strategy for audience development, especially for the cultural activities to be implemented.
- Of course there is also the issue of marketing the Institution and of the annual activities. Joint marketing and communication material and activities need to be jointly decided and implemented.
- Brand management: Of course, the city-ports will have their own branding strategy. However, in order to secure the sustainability of the initiative the “Cultural Port” would become a brand of its own supporting the city-ports in their strategies.

Besides the above, a true and horizontal partnership between different countries, city authorities, public and private sectors, culture and tourism sectors and different levels of administration (local, regional, transnational, EU-external needs to be established and work.

If this is not to be achieved, then the future of the Institution, beyond project time will not be secured.



## Promotion Procedure

---

### Promotional Material

Each partner of the LIMEN project can proceed according to the following suggested action plan as it describes step by step how the project can be materialized and how the partner can promote its own activity:

The LIMEN partners are getting a full package of promotional material which includes:

- A 4page flyer in English about the ‘Cultural Port’ Institution.
- A video (1 min) which can be used to the presentations of the project.
- A power point file used for presentations.

All the above will be uploaded in a USB package. The LIMEN partners are given the opportunity to order directly from the manufacturer the exact amount of pieces required for their own use.

Concerning the social media promotion of the Cultural Port Institution it is suggested that the partners could use the existed channels as they connect all countries and apply to a higher number of followers. Those channels are:

**Facebook Page:** <https://www.facebook.com/CulturalPorts?fref=ts>

**Twitter:** Cultural\_Ports

**Google Plus:** <https://plus.google.com/u/0/102714020307781266740/posts>

**Youtube:** Cultural Ports

The social media channels have been created by the ‘Passpartout’ Team of experts in constant collaboration with the LIMEN Lead Partner, EKBMM, in order to promote, apart from the project itself, the city-ports from the cultural and tourism aspect, as well. The important issue of creating those channels is that they will not be shut down after the official project is over but will continue to upload useful content. Therefore, the material that can be uploaded on them refers to:

- Beautiful photos of the cities and the ports (please make sure that the comments are all in English).

- Videos produced by the official Regional or National Tourism Organizations and the Convention Bureaus.
- Articles about the city-port that have been published by bloggers and journalists (links).
- Comments of the travelers that have visited the city-port.
- Programs of upcoming events (in English).

The ‘LIMEN’ team encourages the partners to be highly engaged with the social media channels by:

- Participating frequently and actively (like, share, re-tweet, post, follow).
- Inviting their FB friends, followers and promotional admin teams to participate.
- Providing the LIMEN admin team interesting updated news and info.

The presentation in an event arranged by a local partner needs to be reinforced by the city’s promotional material and info such as:

- Brochures
- Promotional gifts
- Contact details of the marketing manager of the tourism authorities for further information if required.

## **Application of the Study in Tourism**

### ***a. Institution as a certification***

An established institution can be part of the tourism marketing strategies. An institution is an asset to a city or a region since it is used as a certification of:

- Sustainability
- Preservation of cultural heritage
- Improvement of quality in services and infrastructures

Following the trends of the tourism industry that sets criteria in each destination, the cultural ports can be promoted to the Tour Operators and Cruise companies not only to be included in their programs but also to claim a better rank in competition.

### ***b. The ports (and airports) as arrival gates***

Contemporary infrastructures in ports and airports insure the quantity of tourism arrivals. The destinations which are closer to airports and have ports are the ones that originally attract the visitors.

The first time that a city’s name is appeared is actually in the online systems of the airline companies and the ports. In marketing terms, this is the first branding position that brings the city one step ahead than another one without airports and ports.

From this point, if a city is well promoted then it will keep the visitors. If it is less branded than a nearby region, then it will just have the advantage of the arrival gates but without the income. This fact creates a demand for full marketing support of the city, which of course can maximize the use of the cultural ports institution.

### **c. Cruises and ports**

Cruising brings an important income in a city. It has been calculated by the tourism institutions that the average revenue per passenger in each port is 61 Euros. A medium ship of 700 passenger’s capacity if 2/3 of them visit a port will spend approximately 28.000 Euros.

If the pilot phase is to be succeeded, then the funding scheme is to be found –or searched at the same time-.

When the “Cultural Port” will become a pilot project -and besides the first steps to be taken through the official proposal- networking needs to be promoted with cities and city-networks that are of high creative added value.

It becomes quite clear that tourism and culture are the sections within which the “cultural ports” fit the most. The conclusions that come up from this study are:

- The “Cultural Port” is an institution that can be multiply used in destination management.
- The institution will help the branding of a new network that will combine culture and tourism.
- The “Cultural Port” can mark out the individual characteristics of the ports allowing them to develop a strategy that will apply to the upper class visitors.

The Institution and its initiatives offer potential added value of a concerted strategic approach to cultural relations between the EU, its Member States and European civil society stakeholders and the Black Sea countries and the respective stakeholders.

The “Cultural Port” can be a pilot project that will enhance the establishment of creativity in a new emerging market. Accordingly, through the “Cultural Port” the international position of the European cultural and creative industries would be strengthened and new, long-lasting international partnerships focusing on local demand would be built. The “Cultural Port” would also be a platform for discussion, dialogue and shared learning with local stakeholders, aiming at the facilitating of trade missions and the organisation of matchmaking events.

To better exploit the potential of cities as cultural actors this new city-to-city programme is essential to be established.

The pilot project at first stage can be designed to better involve the creative sectors in the development of the region and its city-ports.

It can involve awareness-raising about the potential of Cultural-Creative Industries in boosting socio-economic development as a continuous process that is essential both in the start-up phase of policy and strategy development and also in fostering partnerships among different actors of different sectors at different levels. The target group for these activities will be wide – starting from the policymakers, cultural operators, creative entrepreneurs, tourism stakeholders and other industries as well as the general public.

The best results can be achieved when all the above mentioned activities are coordinated and branded in a distinctive way. This way is the “Cultural Port” which will act as an umbrella for all the activities.

The initiatives supported by other culture based projects supported by the EU or other funding can unite around a theme, an idea, a project, which is the “Cultural Port”.

It will be a promising initiative for the area and for its aspirations especially in terms of its impact potentials. Most of all, during the current new conflicts emerging in the Black Sea area, a cultural transnational Institution can bring the peoples, the local and regional communities together and thus have an actual impact on the resolution of these tensions. Culture and creativity are the vehicles towards peace relationships.