

Interview guide Czech Centre

1. How is the future of Culture developing in Hungary?

a. Under the current development?

it is a question for one hour, I have been in Hungary already two times before and I have studied Hungarian philosophy so I see more from the inside than the outside, and this is maybe not that typical and you mean from the political point of view or the structural? From the Eunic view I think there is from a point of view the Hungarian society is more closed than the average of the EU maybe or western countries but also the Polish for example societies.

the whole central European region, and those which are beyond these regions are less interesting, it's even maybe in general in Hungarian culture and foreign policy, given through that you are used to have the structure of the Hungarian society which is homogenous like the Czech society for example, and so you have somehow to find the contact to the audience the Hungarian related issues. in the Czech society the minorities is the Germans like in Hungary, but also the Slovaks off course and among the exotic there is the Vietnamese, here the more exotic is more the Chinese, but not so visible and the multicultural correctable of the society is not so visible as it is the case of the rest of Europe and Scandinavia.

2. Is Eunic an important part of this development?

well I think it is too early to talk about it because EUNIC is still not a phenomenon it's not something which would be perceived of the society or even the institutions, they see the particular national cultures, the French Dutch Danish English cultures more or less this way, I personally don't think that there is a sense of substance and topics that there should be some special Eunic perception, you would be perceived as a framework for different activities which have a special European umbrella but hardly to make an distinction between fx. Eunic and the Europapont then you know which is the representation of the European commission and which is very active and have a special profile, I don't have any experience in that somebody would make this difference, if Eunic would develop in this way it is a question about a pragmatic way of creating some frameworks in special cases to reach the domestic audience

3. How do you see Eunic's role in Hungary?

a. Especially in the time being

4. What is the best feature of EUNIC?

well in genre, which kind of programs and where does it make the best effect in Hungary, here we have maybe three kind of experiences until now, I suppose Brindusa have talked with you about it, that there was a very interesting feature which was linked to the language as such, this is a good way to address the Hungarian public because of the special kind of the Hungarian where they have a good sponce too things related to languages and it doesn't mean that they would speak languages at all, but there is some sensibility for topic of the subject and features, we had this language cocktail it was a good idea and will developed in the future, it's a place where and a feature where each culture institute may introduce itself and to present something, and it is made by one and there is one event, one Eunic event, but off course this is again the framework but the particular institutes are represented there as the individual institutes. The other kind of event was last year where the Czech centre initiated the literature night, something related to the literature are a good topic as well because we have here in Hungary more events more

festivals related to literature, this is a very literature minded nation and you have given by this small exotic language they are very sensitive on the translations, where they have very high traditions of translations it is not special for Hungary but a feature of very small nations that we are very proud of the translation culture and one thing we put into our languages, in Hungary as well, so it is a good way to address the public, to present books or texts of European literatures in Hungarian performed by Hungarian actors and performers and what the special feature of this event is all this readings are presented are performed at unusual places, places usually no literature readings are being organized,, so this is the core idea of the literature night, it was after the first arrangement last year we selected to follow up on this event and the third kind of event was a special with the night of cultural institutes which is more or less a really Eunic event, it was made in a very clever way and it has off course a special audience which is interested in European issues and European cultural issues and yes it is a good event not for the broad public but for the intellectuals, most of these events are made for the elites and the intellectual public which is our main problem of Eunic, how to deal with programs on the best level, on a more wide level but at the same time we are asked by our sponsors to make programs which are open for the wide public, and this are two criteria which are not always to put together.

- And the worst?
- What do you think is the main assignments for Eunic?

5. What are your preferences towards EUNIC

The approach is based on two main ideas

1. it should be a framework an group/grow which should be able to bring in some plus into the addition of those members of Eunic, and one of the important issues is to help to bring services from a European level it is becoming an institution which is okay because if you are not an institution you can't gain anything in the EU, and so if there is a possibility to for this institution to raise some funds, European funds it would a big success for the activities, this is one thing.
2. the other thing is the possibility to focus on bigger topics to seek priorities and to give things like which are special for some of the members for example the Multilingualism is a topic of the British Council here as they started to put this idea that all this language cocktail so there is some priorities already, you see some Scandinavian institutes are focused on design or furniture's or strong things related to this, the issue which have been created in Prag for example is now to get boarder public or boarder audience, that is the idea with the literature night, but there is the problem of translating the literature and presenting the literature to the domestic public, and I think these topics could become to bigger priorities and we could also select bigger subjects which could raise funds for some events if Eunic in such are able to concentrate on them and agreeing on a bigger strategy.

- a. Active suggesting programs?
- b. Passive partner?

6. Is the current status of Eunic sufficient developed?

Well I have to say in the beginning that I have no real inside internal level of Eunic, it is a little bit different from different countries and for us the Hungarian cluster and here we have only dealt with it in practice, so I have no knowledge about It in other countries, the English or German Eunic, I think this question is relevant all over where Eunic is developing and should we focus more on more countries, legislation or should It expand, well I think it have no sense this question, there would be more sense in talking about the

criteria, yes I think that in this case you have omitted if I may you have put it here my point, I remember there was a discussion about which criteria should be met by the institutes or branches who are approaching Eunic and want to become members of the Eunic origination and there was one criteria which is better in the legislations or documents of the EUNIC, it is the relation between the subject (institute or branch) and the government, and this is an interesting criteria which should be kept I think in the future as well. To the question should it expand, it should expand but it should keep this interesting feature of being at arm's length from the countries government, I think this is one of the most interesting criteria of what I have seen in the documents because it makes it possible to deal with cultural issues on the one hand as an official representative or country representing a national culture and on the same time to have the liberty the freedom to not to be directly dependent on the government, I can see from both sides, because in my past life some years ago I was in the foreign service at the Czech Embassy and now I can see the same situation from the other side, it is of course quite different the way of work, the methods, the whole work, it is a completely other job. You have the same goals at the embassy but you go quite different ways, and this is very important to keep it this way I think, so it shouldn't become (Eunic) an association of cultural branches or another format of the European council, because it could if you go in the direction of more legislation more structure, it could become a new format of the council of Europe, the format of the ministers of culture. It would be another topic, if we want to keep it, it should keep the criteria having the members as institutes or entities which are not directly dependent of the governments of the particular countries, then it can play a special role, because otherwise it will only be another way of the European integration without having the legislation, because we have no common cultural policy in Europe, so it would be a little bit controversial, so I think it should be kept in this way.

- a. Should it expand
- i. More countries
- ii. Legislation?
- iii. Strategy?
- iv. Do money play a big role in the development? And how to get these?

7. What can the Eunic cooperation do better than you can alone?

8. Could a legislative administration be a part of the solution of the cooperation?

9. Could a single independent structure within Eunic make the expansion of culture stronger?

Well I am afraid that I don't have any answer, because it is hard to decide, because really on the one hand you have this view that we would lose the enthusiasm, the spirit which exist now if we build more structures, more strategic topics or some kinds of legislation, but on the other hand we would of course need a possibility to raise the European funds, it is about money, if you have the possibility as a Eunic member to get money for your programs it is a plus value which we should take into account, and of course if there is such a possibility in a logical way there would be some structure of values, some strategy of topics, some features, some features of topics it is quite logically, I could imagine that we have a sort of many strategic programs or more programs with more content, more worked through ideas, priority for a period of time and if we have the possibility to meet the criteria then you would be able to get/achieve money from the EU funds, from the culture, this makes sense, but we have to find the good compromise

between having a more open/lose and creative atmosphere, rather to have an open structure on the one hand, than to raise money from Brussels on the other hand. But off course to combine these could be the best solution boost for EU and for the cultural institutes. And there is off course another topic that it could be important to have in some concentrated or in a structured way services, so one is the lobbying form for the possibility to reach the funds, but the other thing is services for getting the access to databases and to features, because the field of culture is really a huge economic area and this is actually the way EU in the culture programs are going in the last years, so in the beginning there should be founded a possible role for the culture institutes as well for this Eunic, so services in the sense of information's service and contact service and to have some constructed in this way, It could be interesting. In terms of expanding with countries is think it is more or so the question only if we keep it as Eunic as a European framework, I don't know the situation in other clusters, but we have here the way you already have experienced, that we have the European members and there are invited observers which are not members but are branches of embassies or there are those very active non-European actors which are interested, and which want to follow some common goals and some common interest, for example there is the Japanese institute (Japanese foundation) which is very active and very focused on our work and there is the new institute of Israel, which is not a governmental one, but more or less a special institution in Budapest, and well there is off course Switzerland which have a special position among the European countries, and which is in this moment not a member but the Swiss embassy is off course represented and there is then special situations in Belgium with the Flemish representation as a very active member of Eunic, so there are various kinds of memberships or some different cooperation, there is no more than the one criteria to pay the fee of 200 euro a year in a common found and that is all, so I hope it could keep this open structure, it shouldn't be more closed, it is impossible in terms of culture to be more closed.

Legislation I think it is a question to another body not to Eunic, we could make some internal rules for creating cluster in particular countries, well there is a centre now in Eunic where they should make some criteria's for us to have a function and to create a straight development.

10. Who do you think would prefer a strong Eunic?

I think that all prefer, but if it depends on what you mean about a strong Eunic, if it is to have thigh criteria for common activities? Not in the sense to have a more tight structure or more tight and difficult rules and criteria's to be meet, in this case no one would have a stronger Eunic. But if you mean a more active and with more common actions, then yes off course, but it is something which is very different if you prepare this interviews in particular countries, there will be quite different experiences and different ideas, because the clusters as I know them are really quite different in each country, even the corrector of the cultural life is quite different. A really interesting idea to have for Eunic in the future is to have this kind of cooperation beyond Europe, this is maybe one of the questions about the strategy which I feel could be much more interesting, much more important than the cooperation inside of Europe. Is to do it outside of Europe and if I am the position to prepare the study concerning EUNIC the half of the study would be about activities of Eunic outside of Europe, because the only field if you are outside of Europe you can feel the common European sense. I was four years in Iran and when you are in this kind of position you start to feel things that you in Europe don't perceive, outside you feel some common things which are normally only said in slogans as a reality of things, the Christian spirit and things like this, and you can do things like this outside Europe more significant for the foreign projection of European values, but off course we have to know it internally as well, outside Europe the topics are given, the subjects are given and the European institutes are more closed and want to work with each other.

If you approach it in terms of European Eunic it is really complex, but if you approach it in the traditional way how culture works, it means in national terms, because culture is still something national area which makes Europe different and various and interesting, so this is not so hard to imagine, because you only have to find the common points how the Danish experience for example is fitted to the Hungarian experience on how you can find public for some topics, yes it is always about the dialogue, this notion of culture institutes like promoter of culture of its own country is still working, but it couldn't be the only criteria, not the only way, as you told in the beginning we should be seeking the common points to seek the dialogue, it is not only to bring in the foreign content inside of this cultural life here. Sometimes it could work, but you have to find the public for it, this is the most important thing to find the public for it, and my first experience here is that it is so different from traditional diplomatic traditions, you don't just have to prepare the programs, but the main task is to find the public and this is new, because I think that cultural management is about this subject, you have to find the audience, 95 % is to seek for the audience and to promote, this means to have the partners here, for example I switched from own programs of Czech centre to programs which British council is doing right now here without any special premises of the institute and only in contact with existing Hungarian institutions, having known no other dimensions and acceptance of the language barrier is only a separate dimension of this activity, but all the programs, all the features are only made in cooperation with the Hungarian domestic public, of course this is a little bit execrated but we are going in this direction too. They have to omit their own programs, then the separated programs are made by us, and then we are moving towards a more interaction with the Hungarian public and Hungarian institutions, and this is very good for me in the sense of Eunic to make closer cooperation with Hungarian institutions which could be partners of us. This could be a big personal benefit for me that I have the opportunity to meet people which I normally never would have the chance to meet, this is the possibility to invite them to Eunic which would be benefit Eunic as such and for every institute as well.

a. Who do you think would have the most benefit of it?

11. Is the cooperation in the organization filled with prejudices?

a. Are there any institutes which you prefer?

b. Why?

Frankly speaking I was not thinking about it in these terms but thinking about it, I think there is something which exists, of course you see the different way of the different methods of work, there are different status of the institutes which is maybe makes the significant difference, not only the big countries or big cultures versus small nations, but rather whether how their relevance is to each other, for example the French institute is a institute which is very committed and very supported by their state (not by the government of course because they have a special modal) but it the preference of culture in France is very different of the preference of culture in Czech Republic. Especially in my country there is still the idea that culture is something which should be completely liberal, and without any boundaries, and any support, and financing, it should be very open like the situation on the market, this is an situation which is given by the communist past, the reaction of this ideological approach in the culture, where the culture was used to be the only real service of the ruling part, the reaction was under the liberation the quite opposite going in the other extreme, having this free market of ideas, culture, art and everything is a business, so this is the extreme and well we are not in the nineties where this kind of attitude was very visible but anyway is still plays a role, but I can't gain big support which some other institutes gain. This is the difference the position

of the culture inside of the political system or the political priorities of the state, then the kind of the way the institutes works in terms of presenting and promoting their own culture, you have this traditional way of promoting, showing in a very explicit way to bring to the Hungarian marked the Czech art, design and ideas, or working in a more sophisticated way like we were speaking about before, to seek partners and to build a dialogue between the most countries, I think this is a process which each of us (institutes) is in a different phase of this process, you have some very traditional attitudes towards promoting approach and the others are more build to support and to create dialogue, the polish are very interesting, the polish way have changed and are investing very much in promoting aboard, but in a very modern way the last years, not by promoting but by building the contacts and building the bridges .

There is off course also some things which push you to a cooperation with particular countries , for example we have the visegrad cooperation which has a found which can be used by partners if they approach the supervisors and criteria's, then they can get the finances. This is again about a simple issue makes it necessary and possible to have a closer cooperation among these countries like Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and the Czech Republic, so this is a similar situation like some of the Scandinavian countries, and off course the money are deciding a lot. And then in other terms it is rather depending on topics, you know for example that the GOETHE institute is literature minded and is developed in the sense of literature and language, and the British are very strong in modern music and performance arts, and the Scandinavian is in design, so if I have ideas concerning these subjects then I would for sure call the relevant institutions and contacts, so it is depending on issues.

12. What about the non European partners, do they contribute to the internal European construction?
13. How do you see the future of eunic?
 - a. Development?