1. Twenty Seven Neighbourhoods

27 + Rijeka = Europe

Through the years, the European Union has expanded rapidly, with now 28 Member States and Croatia the latest. The pains and challenges of integration are obvious. Developing a presumed European identity has proven more difficult than imagined.

Europe faces a declining capacity to cope with diverse cultures, traditions and habits. The European Union is the most complex political eco-system in the world. Has the EU grown to its limits, unable to cope with differences? Can neighbourhoods, as basic social units of urban and rural areas, bridge these limits by engaging in a network of relationships and cultural encounters with other European neighbourhoods? We challenge ourselves, our neighbourhoods, and our neighbours throughout Europe.

Europe can re-identify itself as a cooperative effort, based in local and regional initiatives. The place one lives and works is the natural beginning point for each citizen. The neighbourhood is where cultural participation is most intensely negotiated. To cultivate both transnational and local identities is the true meaning of *inter//local*.

Petar Fabijan,
Beaufort scale,
courtesy of Trafik

IMPULSE

Neighbourhoods throughout Rijeka and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County lack local cultural centres and developed models of citizens. They are not yet equipped to open to unexpected impulses, to share with other European neighbourhoods, distant but facing similar challenges.

27 Neighbourhoods provides multiple opportunities for practicing exchange, stretching across the entire EU, forming an informal network of inter-neighbourhood cultural actions, stretching beyond 2020. The impulse is to develop community skills that both Rijeka and Europe need. Shared space.

PLACES

27 chosen neighbourhoods – quarters, towns, villages, islands – in Rijeka and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County. In the mountains, on the seaside or at the edges of the city.

They are matched with 27 neighbourhoods, each from a different EU country. The choices are made together with 27 partner organisations identified in each country. In some countries, we will cooperate with ECOC cities from 2019–2021. In others, community organisations or art centres who are invited to participate.

The neighbourhoods will be matched based on concrete criteria – organisational capacity, a local group that takes ownership of the project, a dynamic local culture – but not always because of similarity. Differences and contrasts will be encouraged.

Some Rijeka 2020 neighbourhoods have already been identified and sensitised to the mission.

Pehlin, with an active Roma community; **Turnić,** with its high-rise apartment buildings from the 60s-70s; the **Student Campus** (University of Rijeka), newly developed and constantly growing; **Baredice;** the islands of **Unije** and **Susak.** Together they already manifest the diversity of people and place that makes Rijeka/Kvarner what it is today.

The remaining neighbourhoods are chosen by an open call, where neighbourhoods must manifest their will and engagement to engage transnationally. They nominate themselves and participate in a cultural mapping. The effects of this process spill over to other communities, giving the project further impact and sustainability.

TIMING

[ri:map] September 2016 – December 2017

‣ identifying all 27 Host neighbourhoods in Rijeka and Primorje-Gorski Kotar County; experts are introduced, cultural competence is in focus.
‣ identifying all Guest neighbourhoods, one in each of the other 27 EU countries, facilitated by our European partners: networks of local governments, community arts associations, other European Capitals of Culture, embassies/consulates.
‣ shaping and realising the Neighbourhood Web, with advanced interactive functions.

[ri:learn] and [ri:invent] 2017–2019

‣ building capacities of neighbourhoods; support to local organisations, internships, workshops.
‣ renovation and cultural recycling of small cultural centres. Staff development.
‣ expeditions by neighbourhood teams, travelling across Europe to meet their counterparts

[ri:build] 2019–2021

‣ *Festival of Neighbourhoods* – annually for three years (2019, 2020, 2021)

ACTION

27 Neighbourhoods starts with community self-reflection, assisted by both experts and artists. In a complex web of meetings, encounters and interviews, the community defines its needs and imaginations.

The **Neighbourhood Web,** a community media website with state-of-the-art interactive functions, is designed and carried out. The website is used for promotion of course but more importantly for presentation of different aspects of neighbourhood life, "home movies", video chats and virtual encounters. It is an essential tool for such a complex grid, with 28 countries × 2 neighbourhoods × 15 associations/schools/groups = **more than 840 ongoing relations.**

In the period 2017–19 a whole spectrum of local events, residencies, workshops, exhibitions, surveys take place: **3 years × 27 places × 4 events/cooperation = at least 324 live encounters.**

Neighbourhood teams will make expeditions to their partners across Europe, a targeted and well prepared mobility scheme with local roots. By bus and train, Rijekans step outside their comfort zones and meet other realities.

And finally we arrive at a series of *large-scale public* presentations, the **Festival of Neighbourhoods**. Each year, results from 9 of the ongoing exchanges are manifested. Invitations are extended to the European Guest neighbourhoods, to artists, activists and associations, who are then hosted in Rijeka during the 10-day festival periods, each Spring, 2019–2021. The Festival is a gastronomic, visitor-friendly chain of activities in the 9 highlighted neighbourhoods, crossing experiences, performances, concerts, exhibitions and debates.

Each Festival of Neighbourhoods takes one of the Cluster themes: Water, Work or Migrations. When the three year festival cycle is complete, all 27 partnerships have been spotlighted.

FLEET – SOME EXAMPLES

Displaced Histories (Baredice)

Two neighbourhoods enriched through artistic interventions. It features two teams: **Creative Cluster Kombinat** (CRO) and **Fundacija Sonda** (SLO). The Rijeka team visits Maribor and the Maribor team visits Rijeka, several times, for up to a week each visit. They explore with local residents "small heroic" episodes from neighbourhood history, stories they carry back to their home neighbourhoods.

Islands (Unije & Susak)

A partnership will be explored with island communities of Greece, Cyprus or Malta, as well as islands from the Baltic and North Seas. Emigrated communities, naturally limited infrastructure, seasonal tourism, new technologies to break isolation, local food and production.

High Rise (Čandekova)

Čandekova street, chosen as an example of typical Rijeka's social housing – highrise buildings from the 60s, is mainly inhabited by the working class. The street is also well known for its engaged community that continuously gathers around artistic actions. A partnership is explored between local artistic association *Movi se* and a similar community from Marseille.

Eco-Hood (Drenova)

One of the largest Rijeka's neighbourhoods actively gathers around several local initiatives to preserve the natural heritage and biodiversity of the neighbourhood, to sustain the "*green lungs of the city*". A partnership with a similar neighbourhood from Göttingen (DE), involving a special

form of community/intercultural gardens. **Partners:** Dobrovoljno vatrogasno društvo Drenova, Mješoviti pjevački zbor DVD Drenova, Udruga Bez granica, Udruga Dren, Aktiv žena, Klub umirovljenika "Drenova", Ri rock climbing club, etc.

Wanderers (Pehlin)

Rijeka's Roma neighbourhood connects with Roma residents from Usti nad Labem through collaborations between schools, associations and artists. **Partners:** Association Oaza, Elementary school Pehlin.

Campus (student's campus, University of Rijeka)

Rijeka's new campus is still somewhat isolated. A partnership with a successful example of an integrated urban university campus from another European country explores ways of fusing with the surrounding city. **Partners:** The University of Rijeka and the City of Rijeka.

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

The central goal of the project is increased engagement by local communities. They map themselves, present themselves and choose partners. They improve local cultural centres, they communicate and coordinate on the **Neighbourhood Web**. Local businesses are engaged both as sponsors, hosts and for services, improving the visitor reception capacity on the ground.

POTENTIAL IMPACT

27 quarters/towns/villages, by the end of 2020, will have well operating local cultural community centres, run by trained staff (volunteer or professional) and supported by **Rijeka Resource**.

The **Neighbourhood Web** is developed and maintained. A functional platform for cross-cooperation and continued exchange, neighbourhood to neighbourhood directly.

Communities not chosen in the 5 year programme are sensitised through other programmes initiated by the Regional cultural authorities, following the practice of **27 Neighbourhoods**, conceived as a model and a laboratory for community cultural action.

Rijeka Resource, is already at the initial stages engaged and continues to support the exchanges, especially the audience development and tech/space capacities.