

Detailed Summary Report on Bilateral Activity

Bilateral Activity Title: National Theatre of Iceland at Eurokontex.sk 2017

Applicant: the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, represented by the director general, Mgr. art. Marián Chudovský

Partner (with no financial participation): the National Theatre of Iceland, Reykjavík, Iceland, represented by the director general, Ari Matthiasson

Description of the Bilateral Activity

The bilateral activity included the National Theatre of Iceland (NTI) in Eurokontex.sk 2017, an annual international theatre festival which takes place at the Slovak National Theatre (SNT). The festival was organized by the Drama Theatre (‘Činohra’) for the third time and presented theme-based performances which gained significant directing achievements. The bilateral activity ensured **the historic first performance** by the NTI in the Slovak Republic through offering **two reprises** of the new adaptation of **the play Othello** by William Shakespeare to the Slovak audience, a production of Vesturport and the NTI, directed by Gísli Örn Gardarsson. **A Masterclass** led by Gísli Örn Gardarsson, the director of the play was organised. **An artistic translation** of the play was completed. Moreover, the involvement of the NTI in the festival provided for the foundation of new ties and opportunities for long-lasting and sustainable cooperation through increasing the knowledge and mutual understanding of Icelandic and Slovak culture.

Evaluation of the Bilateral Activity

The bilateral activity achieved the objective of the Bilateral Fund at National Level; it enhanced the process of strengthening bilateral relations between an institution in Slovakia (SNT) and Iceland (NTI). Furthermore, the bilateral activity created new ties and opportunities for bilateral cooperation with regard to sustainable cooperation. Additionally, the bilateral activity achieved all the target values set for all the indicators within the group of results specified in the submitted Grant Application for Bilateral Fund at National Level 2016 (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Grant Application’). Moreover, set target values of multiple indicators were exceeded.

Detailed Description of the Bilateral Activity

The project initiation phase and the project planning phase took place over February, March and April 2017. The Drama Theatre of the SNT, as the applicant communicated with the artistic and technical-administrative personnel of the NTI. Additionally, contractual terms and conditions, logistics and production details for the hosting of the NTI in Bratislava were discussed. The communication with the activity’s partner was intensified in May 2017 and a contract on artistic hosting was signed. At the same time, **a translation of the play** from the original language was completed in order to provide subtitles for the event. The translation of the text from Icelandic language was custom-made by the Czech translator Lucie Korecká. Czech translation, as the closest understandable translation, was chosen due to excessive workload of the only known literary translator from Icelandic into Slovak language, Zuzana Stankovitsová. The translation of the play Othello adapted by Gísli Örn Gardarsson and Vesturport was added into the library of stage texts of the SNT Archive; further adjustments to the text are planned for future purposes. **Target value of the result indicator - number of artistic translations: 1, has been achieved (Appendix No.1).**

The sale of tickets increased and further production activities took place in May. Additionally, the implementation of the publicity plan and communication with the activity's target groups started, both according to the specifications defined in the Grant Application. The communication with the project partner has been intensified and publicity plan implemented over the course of the implementation phase of the project which started on June 1, 2017. The artists together with technical and administrative staff of the NTI came to Bratislava on June 17, 2017, according to the time schedule set in the Grant Application. **The target value of the result indicator– number of Icelandic artists and technical and administrative staff participating in events in Slovakia: 23, has been achieved (Appendix No.2).**

A framework for cooperation was discussed over the duration of the whole bilateral activity. Moreover, the director of SNT Drama Roman Polák and director of the National Theatre of Iceland Ari Matthiasson had an informal meeting on June 18, 2017 and discussed the current cooperation, possibilities for an upcoming sustainable cooperation in institutional, expert and artistic fields. Additionally, the directors discussed the possibility for a SNT's hosting on the NTI's stage, a potential for exchange and reciprocal hosting of authors (directors and dramaturges), drama (plays and adaptations) and co-productions. The stage at the Drama Hall of the SNT was inspected and technical department of the NTI and the SNT assembled the stage set together on Sunday, June 18, 2017. Rehearsal on the stage and a preview of Othello took place the same day in the afternoon.

The Masterclass was led by Gísli Örn Gardarsson, the director of the play Othello; and it took place on June 18, 2017 from 4.00 p. m. to 6.30 p.m. in the SNT's Blue Room. Gísli Örn Gardarsson, a director and an actor, and one of Vesturport's founders has had the great honour of being awarded the Order of the Falcon, the Knight's Cross, by the President of Iceland for his accomplishments and benefaction to Icelandic culture, especially his contribution and expansion of Icelandic Theatre in Iceland and around the world. The master class focused on stage direction, contemporary approaches to interpreting classical texts by the younger generation of drama authors while also presented the Icelandic theatre scene and significant Icelandic artists. Masterclass was conducted in English language and it was consecutively interpreted into Slovak. The Masterclass was attended by students of art schools, Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava, Academy of Arts in Banská Bystrica, Freie Universität Berlin, representatives of Slovak Academy of Sciences, experts in the field of theatre, performing arts, professional institutions such as the Theatre Institute, AICT Slovak Centre, editors of professional and social journals, theatre professionals and general public. **The target value of the result indicator – number of Masterclasses organized: 1, has been achieved. The target value of the result indicator – number of participants at the Masterclass: 50, was exceeded and the achieved value amounts to 53 participants (Appendix No.3).**

The new adaptation of **the play Othello** by William Shakespeare to the Slovak audience, a production of Vesturport and the NTI, directed by Gísli Örn Gardarsson, opened a new perspective on contemporary interpretation of classical plays through using powerful visual images and embodying pop cultural features while retaining a deeply reflective nature. The Slovak audience was exposed to the Icelandic culture through one of the most distinctive plays which resonated among the Icelandic theatre experts' circles. **The target value of the result indicator– number of plays performed by the NTI: 1, has been achieved (Appendix No.4).**

Two reprises of the play were offered to the Slovak audience at the Drama Hall of the SNT on June 19, 2017 at 10 a. m. and 7 p. m. The very first scheduled performance of the play Othello took place on June 19, 2017 from 10.00 a. m. to 12:30 p. m. (one break including). The appearance at the morning performance of the play amounts to at least **520 spectators**. The performance was followed by a public discussion with the play's director

and actors. The discussion was hosted by Miriam Kičínová and a consecutive interpretation was provided. The discussion took approximately 40 minutes. Evening performance which started at 7.00 p. m. was attended by at least **615 spectators**. The performance was also followed by a public discussion and took approximately one hour. It remains necessary to emphasize that the chance to discuss with the artists was warmly received by the audience. Othello was performed in original Icelandic language. English and Czech subtitles were projected for the audience. **The target value of the result indicator - audience exposure to the NTI's play: 1000, was exceeded and the achieved value amounts to 1135 spectators (Appendix No.5).** The achieved exposure to the play, which represents an Icelandic contemporary adaptation of a classical play and an Icelandic theatrical treasure, remains highly significant. **The target value of the result indicator – number of performances: 2, has been achieved (Appendix No.6).**

A reception took place at the Theatre Club of the SNT after the evening performance. Invited guests and artists networked while discussing further possibilities within the bilateral cooperation and transferred know-how informally. Moreover, the director general of the SNT, the SNT Drama Theatre director and director of the NTI signed solemnly the **Memorandum of Cooperation**. The document summarizes their will to deepen and create long-lasting and sustainable bilateral cooperation between the two. The representatives of the theatre institutions emphasized the value of performing arts as one of the key components of creative industry while calling for their international presentation, intensification of cultural values exchange, enhancement of mutual understanding, and the importance of understanding of cultural diversity. The memorandum will serve as a crucial platform for the future ongoing and sustainable artistic, professional and political cooperation between the partners aiming at presenting cultural values, cultural diversity, and specific cultural environments. **The target value of the indicator of result–Memorandum of Cooperation between the SNT and the NTI concluded: 1, has been achieved (Appendix No.7).**

Disassembly of the stage setting and transport of the technical equipment was done in compliance with the time schedule proposed in the Grant Application; thus, on 19 and 20 June, 2017. The members of the NTI, technical and administrative staff including, departed on 20 June, 2017. The project closure phase followed, whereby a detailed evaluation, report elaboration and financial settlements took place.

The bilateral activity was implemented in compliance with the time schedule as proposed in section 5.3. of the Grant Application and it included the target group as defined in section 5.8. of the Grant Application. More international exposure and participation, increased level of knowledge about the other institution (structure, work programme, policies etc.) and increased understanding of other country's cultural, political and socio-economic situation was achieved within the selected group of result 'knowledge and mutual understanding'.

Regarding the horizontal objective: 'support of multicultural/ intercultural understanding', the bilateral activity encouraged a better mutual understanding of diversity between people from different cultural milieu, promoted cultural awareness and multiculturalism among the participants, strengthened the intercultural learning process and deeper understanding of the other's world perception, created a platform for sharing best practices and responsibilities among the participants, and brought together different experience and working methods.

The activity implementation created an opportunity to establish a long-lasting and sustainable cooperation between the SNT and the NTI which remains the potential to be developed continually in the future. The bilateral activity created a platform to establish a joint initiative which will bring people and institutions together in the area of art and culture. Moreover, the implementation of the activity improved and increased the level

of knowledge and mutual understanding between individuals and institutions from Iceland and the Slovak Republic.

Indicators Regarding Awareness and Publicity

Hosting of the NTI and the presence of the director Gísli Örn Gardarsson were sufficiently covered and publicised by the SNT, NTI and the media during the preparation and implementation phase of the activity. The promotion of Eurokontext.sk Festival paid special attention to the advertisement of the bilateral activity. The Marketing Department of the SNT prepared a PR campaign including offline (A1-poster, city light poster, leaflet, bulletin, big size banner, roll-up banner), online (web banners, PR articles, video-invitations, campaigns in social media, newsletter, direct e-mails) and other conventional and special media instruments. The information on the bilateral activity was also presented to the representatives of the media who attended the press conference on Eurokontext.sk festival which took place on June 1, 2017 in the SNT.

The information on the bilateral activity was covered by the most prominent Slovak media and news agencies. The project was subedited by print, online, broadcasting and television media; mostly Slovak ones, but also by some international media. The information on the NTI hosting appeared on 14 June, 2017 in print of Fréttablaðið, the most read newspaper in Iceland and on the newspaper's website. Further media outputs are expected by guests invited from other countries such as the Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. Reviews and expert outputs of Slovak reviewers are expected in the beginning of 2017/2018 season, i.e. in September – October 2017.

The target values of indicators related to outputs of awareness and publicity as defined in the publicity plan and adjusted based on the expert assessment have been achieved as set in the decision on the approval of the Grant Application.

Specified output	Target value	Achieved value
Press release and contact list	1	1
PR articles	4	8
PR interview	1	1
Press conference	1	1
Facebook posts – SND	5	5
Facebook posts – NTI-Vesturport	2	4
Released reports – NTI- Vesturport website	1	1
Released reports – SND	2	2

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