

U 1: Management and Entrepreneurship in CCIs

Theme 1.3. Cultural Policies and Institutions. Intellectual Property. Author(s): Prof. Dr. Ira Prodanov

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Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project number: 2020-1-BG01-KA203-07919.

This material is a part of the training content for the syllabus "Management and Entrepreneurship in Cultural and Creative Industries". It has been developed within the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership "*FENICE* - *Fostering Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Cultural and Creative Industries through Interdisciplinary Education*".

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# 1 CASE STUDY

## Cultural Policy of the City of Novi Sad: The China Quarter

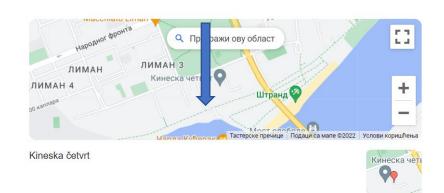
https://birn.rs/novi-sad-2021-nevolje-u-kineskoj-cetvrti/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rK4EyEvFcHI&t=42s

- Country/region of operation: Creative District, the China Quarter Novi Sad, Serbia
- **CCI area:** Music, Visual Arts, Intermedia Research



Description







The China Quarter occupies an area of the city of Novi Sad called Liman. Liman stretches along the coast of the Danube, and the China Quarter is just one of its parts. It used to be the industrial zone of Novi Sad, where craftsmen and workers who were employed in several factories there, lived and worked. A journalist, Mirko Sebić, recently wrote about the China Quarter and its transformation, emphasizing that "perhaps at the beginning of every transformation there is a story of catastrophe, suffering and cataclysm". Namely, this area was bombed in 1944, during the Second World War; some buildings were demolished, while others were left empty. Since then, the buildings that were livable were settled by craftsmen who paid rent to the city. In recent decades, however, a significant number of those who have rented the space have been artists - mostly young, non-established enthusiasts, very active in a kind of collective experiment that has yielded very significant results (although it could not be described as mainstream art and culture). When Novi Sad won the title of European Youth Capital in 2019, the youth support programme included the restoration and renovation of the China Quarter. Previously, there were a lot of negotiations with the artists who were most present in the Quarter, in order to, allegedly, determine the dynamics with which they will return when the reconstruction is done. The year of the title has passed, the reconstruction has been done to some extent (it was mostly evident from the outside; by no means can we say it was completely renovated!). When artists started asking about re-renting the space, no negotiations were possible. The artists were indignant, not only because what was promised was never fulfilled, but also, they were evicted in a brutal way - the teams for clearing the terrain simply threw their instruments and furniture out on the street.

There were several TV coverages done on this topic, and the status of artists from the China Quarter has not been resolved yet. It seems that the Creative District – how

they call the China Quarter now – will become a market-oriented space more adequate for shopping malls and objects of similar purposes.

The cultural policy of the city of Novi Sad, especially in the year when it bears the title of European Capital of Culture, seems to represent one facet in theory (independent work of artists, encouraging the creativity of young people), and the other in practice.