



# CITY PROFILE

# TIMIȘOARA

MARCH 2017





# DESCRIPTION OF THE CITY

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**County:** Timiș (capital)

**Region:** Banat, Western Romania

**Country:** Romania

**Size:** 130.5 km<sup>2</sup>

**Estimated population:** 333,162 (3<sup>rd</sup> city of the country) including 50,000 students.

Timișoara is the main social, economic, transport, cultural and educational centre in western Romania. In September 2016, it was elected as the European Capital of Culture for 2021.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

**Mayor:** Nicolae Robu

**Web page:** [www.primariatm.ro](http://www.primariatm.ro)

## CONTEXT

At least eight centuries ago, the first fortress was built in the Cetate District, the initial nucleus from where the development of Timișoara started. Timișoara's centre is the descendant of the Austrian military fortress built in the 18th century. Numerous Baroque style buildings dating back to that century are still preserved in the Cetate district. At the beginning of the 20th century, together with the demolition of the fortress, numerous buildings in the style of the 1900s were constructed. Timișoara boasts an impressive heritage of such buildings, which can be seen in the heart of the city.

Thus, Timișoara is a rich cultural city with a particular architectural heritage, which gathers in a relatively small space an impressive heritage from different epochs and cultures, traces of different ethnic communities who have left their identity marks there.

In that same direction, multi-culturalism and interculturalism are key concepts to understand the city's character, since it lies at the crossroads of East and West, bordering Hungary and Serbia. In consequence, more than 20 ethnic, religious and linguistic groups have coexisted peacefully in Timișoara over several centuries, offering the city multiple advantages. The civic spirit, open mindedness, residents' pragmatism coupled with a special sensitivity for the development of any otherness are elements that entail constant interest in education, media and theatre, industry and trade, as well as in arts, music and architecture.

Timișoara's multicultural background comes from its past. Especially in the 18th century, colonists from the Habsburg Empire were encouraged to settle down in Timișoara in order to encourage economic development.

Other aspects are also critical when considering the cultural heritage of Timișoara. The city boasts traces of several historical periods: from Neolithic archaeological vestiges to its undeniable Baroque historical legacy, a period that marked a cultural renaissance in the city's history.



# CULTURAL PROFILE DE TIMIȘOARA

## MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE

Urban expansion through culture is a development priority for the local public administration in Timișoara. Public investments of the local budget for cultural projects have tripled in the last three years. Some years ago, the city started to put into motion financial, cultural and human resources in order to build a competitive candidacy for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2021 and to benefit from the economic, social and educational impact associated with higher cultural vitality.

Timișoara aspires to an increased presence of art and culture in everyday life as experience and cultural consumption. Respect for work well done is complemented with an assumed independence, which maintains itself through responsibility and entrepreneurship. Culturally, the city embraces experiment, aspires to intercultural understanding respecting democratic rights and values. Timișoara is a proud city and its citizens consider that there is a distinct identity of the place, which is positively appreciated and which has to be preserved and promoted.

## CULTURAL STRATEGY

The Timișoara Cultural Strategy has been clearly affected by its candidature to the European Capital of Culture 2021.

The cultural vision has been presented extensively in The Cultural Strategy of Timișoara 2014-2024, which establishes the necessary steps to be taken within the cultural sector in order to achieve the proposed common vision. This document was issued following a broad process of consultation and participatory planning and based on the potential, needs and capacity of Timișoara's cultural operators.

In The Cultural Strategy of Municipality of Timișoara for 2014-2024, culture is approached as a form of creative expression, but also as an important increasing factor of the social, economic and democratic capital of Timișoara.

With its cultural strategy, the municipality of Timișoara relates to the local cultural phenomenon, connected to the importance of the city (for the country and for the West region) as one of the eight growth poles of Romania and in correspondence with the cross-border Euro-regional space, its collaboration potential and its presence at the international level.

The cultural strategy meets the development needs of the city through culture, it supports its project as a future European Capital of Culture in 2021 and it sustains the common efforts of artists, cultural operators and public administration to bring quality culture into people's lives.

The stake, when it comes to The Cultural Strategy of the Municipality of Timișoara for 2014-2024, is the long-term development of the city through culture and of the cultural sector itself, in cooperation with other cities from the country, the region and abroad. The measures included in the strategy shall stimulate the city's cultural development



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for the next ten years, integrating 2021, when Timișoara could develop the program dedicated to the title of European Capital of Culture. Supporting the city's candidacy, the strategy acts as an integrated vision and planning, before and after 2021.

## STRATEGIC AIMS

The measures included in the strategy shall stimulate the city's cultural development for the next ten years, including 2021, when Timișoara will implement its program as European Capital of Culture.

The strategic aims entail working on several thematic axes, as described below:

- 1. Creative Timișoara**
  - Encourage contemporary creation, with particular interest in the experimental and interdisciplinary approach.
  - Give public access to innovative spaces and encourage the cultural operators to develop relevant projects locally, regionally and internationally.
- 2. Involved Timișoara**
  - Mobilize and involve the entire community by linking tradition and innovation in culture, art, science and technology.
  - Create a city whose identity is defined continuously and anchored in the multicultural profile of Timișoara and in the present linguistic and religious diversity.
- 3. Connected Timișoara**
  - Connect with the national and international cultural dynamics and networks.
  - Enable cultural exchanges and partnerships that can be attractive for tourists.
- 4. Responsible Timișoara**
  - Protect and improve the quality of natural and built heritage.
  - Provide a favourable environment for citizens within the cultural and artistic offer in the city centre, its districts and adjacent towns.
- 5. Open Timișoara**
  - Endorse a participatory democracy for cultural governance where efficient public services create the necessary framework for a quality cultural act.
  - Impulse a culture based on the creator's right to freedom of expression
  - Recognise the role of culture for individual and community development.



# CULTURAL ACTORS AND OFFER

## CULTURAL INITIATIVES

Timișoara-European Capital of Culture project grows; numerous institutions and organizations in the city, as well as the people from Timișoara who love their city are joining this ambitious endeavour that began in the spring of 2011.

Timișoara's candidature is supported by both the cultural, non-governmental, independent sector, the cultural and artistic personalities, and the representatives of the political and academic environment who undertook the mission to collaborate with and within Timișoara European Capital of Culture Association to win the title.

Therefore, citizens are invited to join as volunteers, partners, sponsors and supporters of this project meant to transform the city and reinvent it for future generations.

In the context of its bid to become an European Capital of Culture, Timișoara's European Capital of Culture Association (ATCCE) launched campaigns such as Culture unites community!, Timișoara in every corner of Romania, and Give your face to Timișoara and the debate over the Channel of Cultures candidature concept, which reflects the geography, values and spirit of Timișoara and combines cultural diversity, as well as the idea of connecting the European values and international cooperation.

A good example from Timișoara's lively cultural scene is the big amount of music, theatre, and film festivals and other culture-related activities such as: Cafékultor, Fest FDR, musical Timișoara international festival, Fete de la Musique, Interdesign, Festivalul AccesArt, TESZT – Euro Regional Theatre Festival, KAMO blues-Jazz Gala (one of the oldest festivals in Romania and in this part of Europe), StudentFest (the most important artistic and cultural festival dedicated to students from Romania, with 23 years' tradition, Folk Festival of Hearts (when Timișoara becomes the capital of the international traditional art, this being one of the most prestigious Romanian and international folklore festivals, and the first event of this kind included in the UNESCO calendar), the International Literature Festival in Timișoara (the first international literature festival in Romania that takes place outside the capital) and other initiatives such as the Orizont Magazine.

Thus, Timișoara has various projects that provide a basis for its title of European Capital of Culture 2021, attractive events for the inhabitants of Timișoara and tourists as well. More actions will also be organized in the coming years, to encourage cultural tourism thorough the promotion of historical areas and the organization of events and cultural-artistic activities of high calibre with artists and institutions from the country and abroad.

## CULTURAL AGENTS

Today Timișoara is the only European city to have three state theatres in three languages – The National Theatre "Mihai Eminescu", the German State Theatre and the Hungarian State Theatres "CsikyGergely". The Romanian Opera House Timișoara and the Banatul Philharmonic are also outstanding cultural institutions, presenting high-class artistic performances and concerts. The museums and art galleries, the cultural centres and libraries, as well as many cultural organizations and foundations such as the French Institute of Timișoara, the Metropolis Cultural Association and the Municipality of Timișoara itself contribute to the effervescent life of the city. Fairs, national and international festivals are organized every year.



# CONTACTS

For additional information about this exercise, please contact:



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