

CULTURAL CLIMATE BAROMETER 2015

CONCISE REPORT

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The nature of the project

The Cultural Climate Barometer seeks to judge the cultural climate in a place. Clearly, each word in this phrase requires exploration.

- 1) *Judge*: assess, but not measure; compare, but not rank. Perception of a variety of stakeholders is the basis;
- 2) *Cultural*: without entering into awkward delineation procedure a plain conventional understanding of the sector is applied, letting the answers suggest the prevailing semantic domain of culture in a given place;
- 3) *Climate*: this lies closest to the metaphor of barometer. It is supposed to express something similar to other prevailing metaphors like “health”, “vitality” or “vibrancy”;
- 4) *Place*: countries, to begin with, for sake of convenience. The Barometer may be applied both to larger and smaller geographic units: continents, regions or cities.

Being a pioneer exercise, the aim is also to develop and test an instrument. A need is felt for fairly standardised, usable tools for the comparative assessment and analysis of the environment for culture in and between places. The Barometer may serve this purpose.

Why opinions? Why not facts, “evidence”? The increasing sophistication as well as the growing amount of data in cultural statistics has indeed allowed for comparing, even ranking the cultural performance of places from a number of aspects. The statistical reports nevertheless offer fragmented pictures and remain short of providing overall profiles about countries (cities, regions).

Confronted with the difficulties and meagre results of the search for generally accepted and practical comparative tools for culture, or for the more elusive concept of climate of culture, attention is directed to the field of stakeholders’ perceptions – which are also a kind of evidence.

The design of the Barometer

The Barometer has been directly inspired by, and modelled upon a similar survey on the business climate of countries. That quiz was a minor part of the large and sophisticated machinery of the Global Competitiveness Index of the World Economic Forum (WEF). Tens of thousands of businessmen are asked to choose from the same list of problematic factors to business year after year.

Following a number of trial and error stages, 27 problematic factors to culture were selected for the Barometer. The starting point was to find statements that cover the field evenly and systematically. Items selected by too many or too few respondents during the pilot phases were rephrased, separated, fused or eliminated. The list of 27 therefore reflects surveying requirements more than any logic of taxonomic construction.

As a further step, the Barometer deviated from the WEF model and was complemented with a set of favourable factors for culture.

The latest round of the survey took place in November-December 2015. The majority of the 170 respondents to the online questionnaire are subscribers to the monthly newsletter of the Budapest Observatory. This pool of cultural operators and stakeholders is characterised by an international orientation (they all read English) and an interest about cultural developments in Europe. Their task was to mark five out of the 27 problematic factors that they find most relevant to their environment, and optionally to mark up to five out of the 27 favourable aspects. For both lists go to [Annex 1](#).

Main findings of the 2015 Barometer

The 2015 edition of the Cultural Climate Barometer has confirmed the worth of such an instrument in the area of cultural policies and studies. The survey can help explore the hierarchy of factors that determine the health (vitality, competitiveness etc.) of cultural ecosystems. Furthermore, the Barometer helps to communicate the complexity of the issue instead of simplified explanations or illusions. Bearing in mind that listing problems and positive features does not necessarily fully correspond to hard facts which remain to be explored via statistics, stakeholders' perception and judgment also represents a kind of objective reality.

The answers from 170 cultural stakeholders produced a relatively balanced spread in the two lists of problems and strengths, which confirms that the state of cultural life is subject to a multiplicity of internal and external factors. The scores allow nevertheless to point out characteristic differences between countries and regions, as well as between differing professional communities.

The analysis of the data convinced us that the most obvious dividing line continues to exist between countries with established democratic capitalism and the post-communist world, naming them for sake of convenience as west and east.

The position of culture among the priorities of the government appears to be the leading concern in almost every place and community. Factors in the remit of cultural policies receive greater emphasis among eastern stakeholders, while external aspects – like education, above all – are positioned higher on western lists of opinions. Strangely, resources for local culture turned out to be one of the most dividing items, emphasised strongly in the west (especially by western performing artists). The issue of the presence of politics in culture was felt as a nuisance in the east, particularly in the Visegrad countries where this item is on top of the list of problematic factors. Furthermore, western contributors to the survey showed greater affinity to social aspects like inclusion, equality, or the material condition of the public. On the other hand, the deteriorating financial position of the public was identified as a major problem by only 6% of respondents from the east.

Stakeholders were asked about the 27 problematic factors also in 2014. This allows for checking the consistency of the patterns both on regional levels and in total but the samples are too small to reliably establish tendencies. Future rounds of the Barometer will increase the basis to detect trends, involving the newly introduced features of positive aspects and the professional categories of the respondents.

A high proportion of the 170 contributors added comments to the questionnaire, providing a valuable pool of thoughts about defining and exploring the climate of culture. This vitality is at odds with difficulties to recruit respondents from a number of places. The real value of the Barometer is manifested at a concentration of expert opinions which happened on the fortunate opportunity of running the survey at a conference in Dnipropetrovsk. This has showed the potential in applying the instrument on the spot, offering instant feedback and input for professional deliberations.

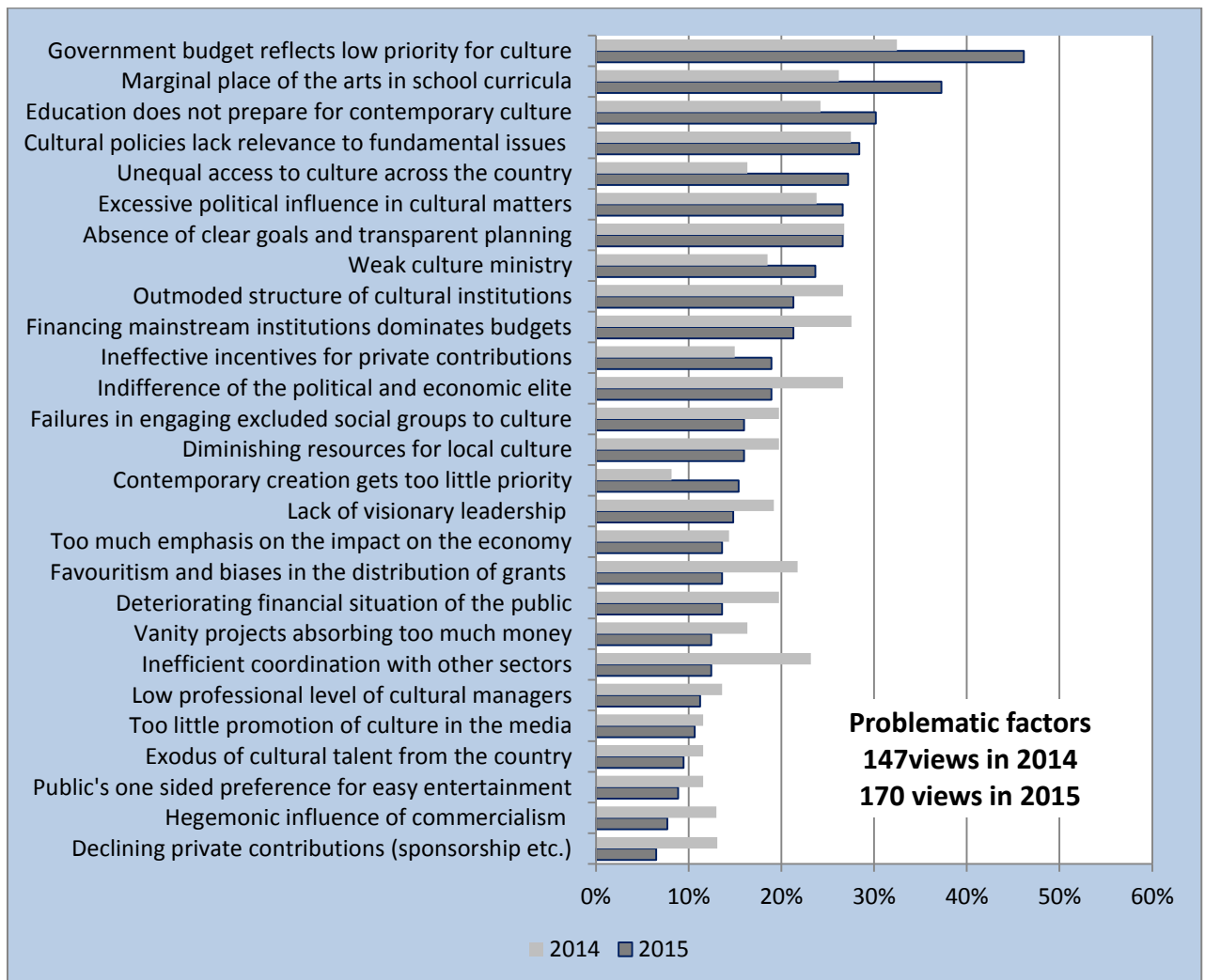
Problematic factors to culture

The first diagram contains the cumulated score of 170 responses to the online survey about the problematic factors affecting the climate of culture across Europe (and a bit beyond) in 2015. The numbers indicate the percentage of responding experts that included the item among the five most important problematic factors to culture in their environment.

Participants in the survey conducted a year earlier made choices from practically the same set of problematic issues. Despite a number of differences in the samples, the basic pattern of the two scores is similar. Nevertheless the curve of the score became sharper: in 2014 only one item was chosen by less than 10% against four in 2015; also at the other end, against one instance in 2014 a year later three statements were selected by 30% or more. This change is more likely to due to the composition of the respondents rather than a shift towards the extremes in the conditions of culture. In 2014 “western” answers were in minority while in 2015 they constitute the greater part. The 2015 total score therefore corresponds more to western patterns than was the case on the former occasion. (For the explanation of “western” answers read on to the next chapter.)

Therefore, by stating that in 2015 the issue of governmental priority was identified as number one by 46% against 32% in 2015 we do not claim the attention *grew*, nevertheless acknowledge that it has been the number one concern on both occasions.

Diagram 1 Problematic factors to culture in 2014 and 2015 (147 and 170 answers)



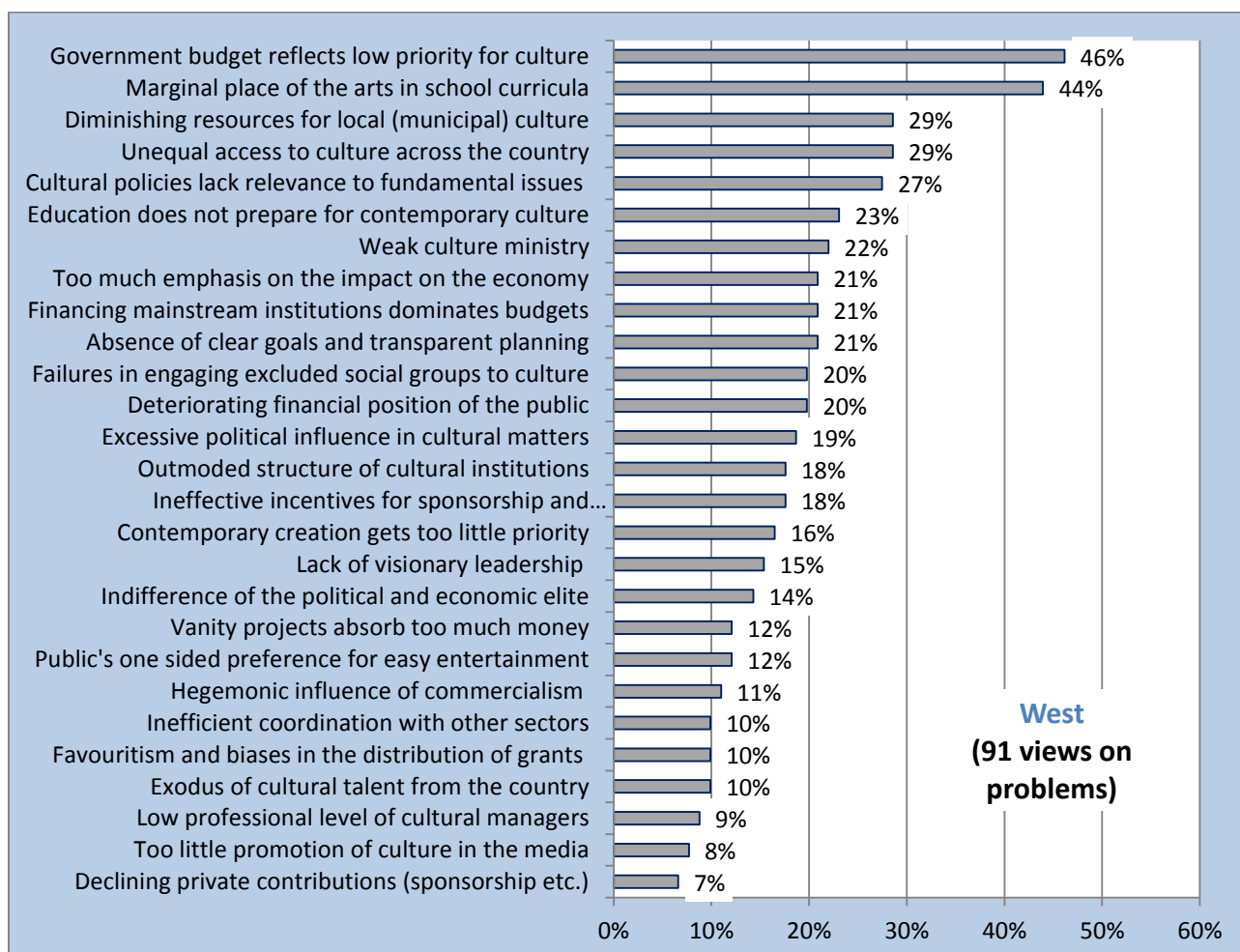
Comparing east and west

The analysis of the data confirms that the primary dividing line can still be drawn between “east” and “west”. 91 answers came from countries with a relatively longer record of capitalism and democracy, labelled as *West*. The remaining 79 participants in the survey live in former communist countries, the political *East*.

Table 1 Countries represented by the greatest number of respondents

West 91		East 79	
United Kingdom	17	Romania	12
Ireland	8	Hungary	11
Italy	8	Serbia	10
Greece	7	Poland	8
Belgium	6	Slovakia	6
Finland	6	16 countries with less than 5	33
Germany	6		
Spain	5		
13 countries with less than 5	25		

Diagram 2 Problematic factors to culture according to “western” respondents

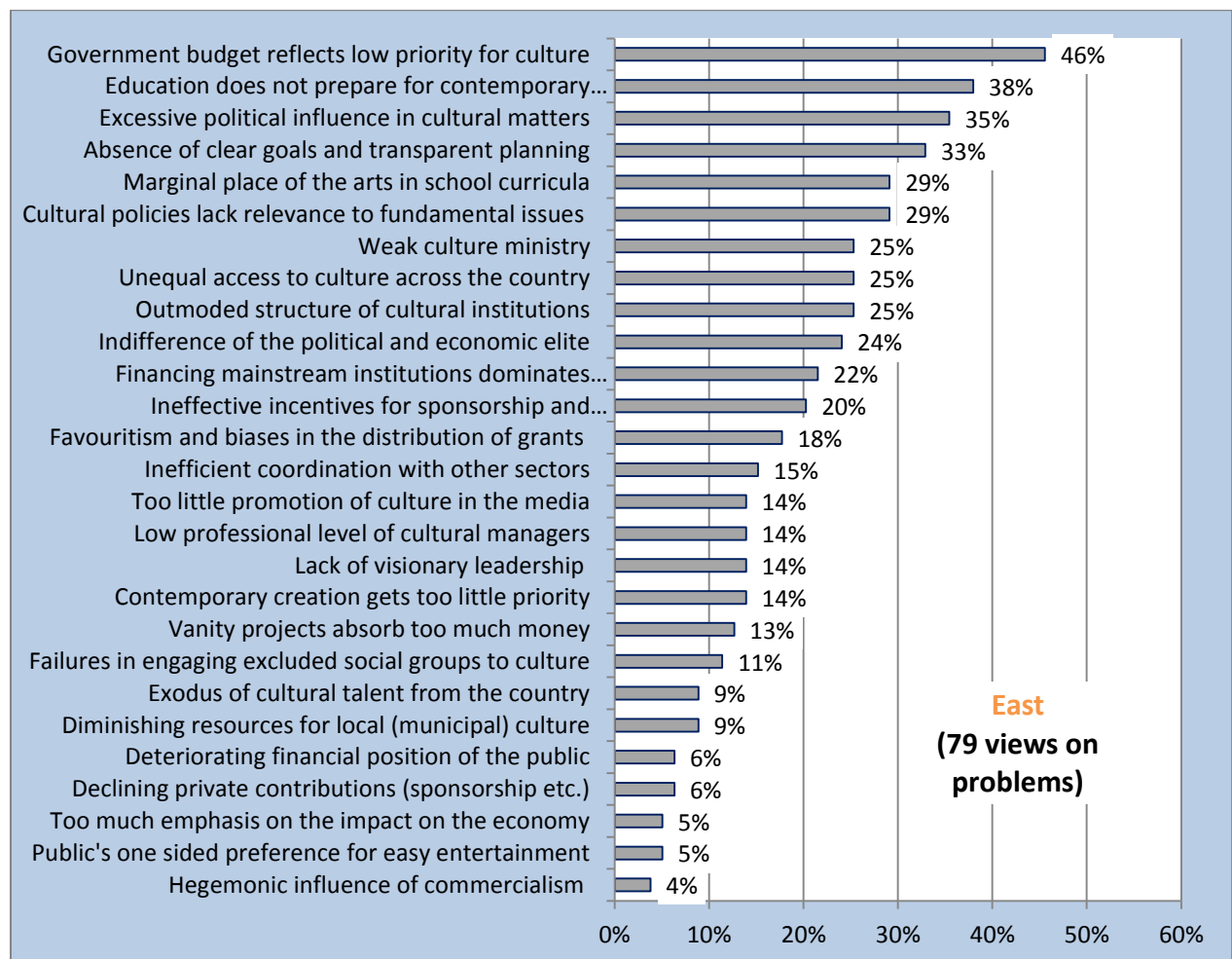


Complaint about the government is on top of the western list, similarly to the total consensus. What is, however, a western feature, just like at the previous 2014 survey, is dissatisfaction about the state of arts education, bemoaned by almost every second respondent.

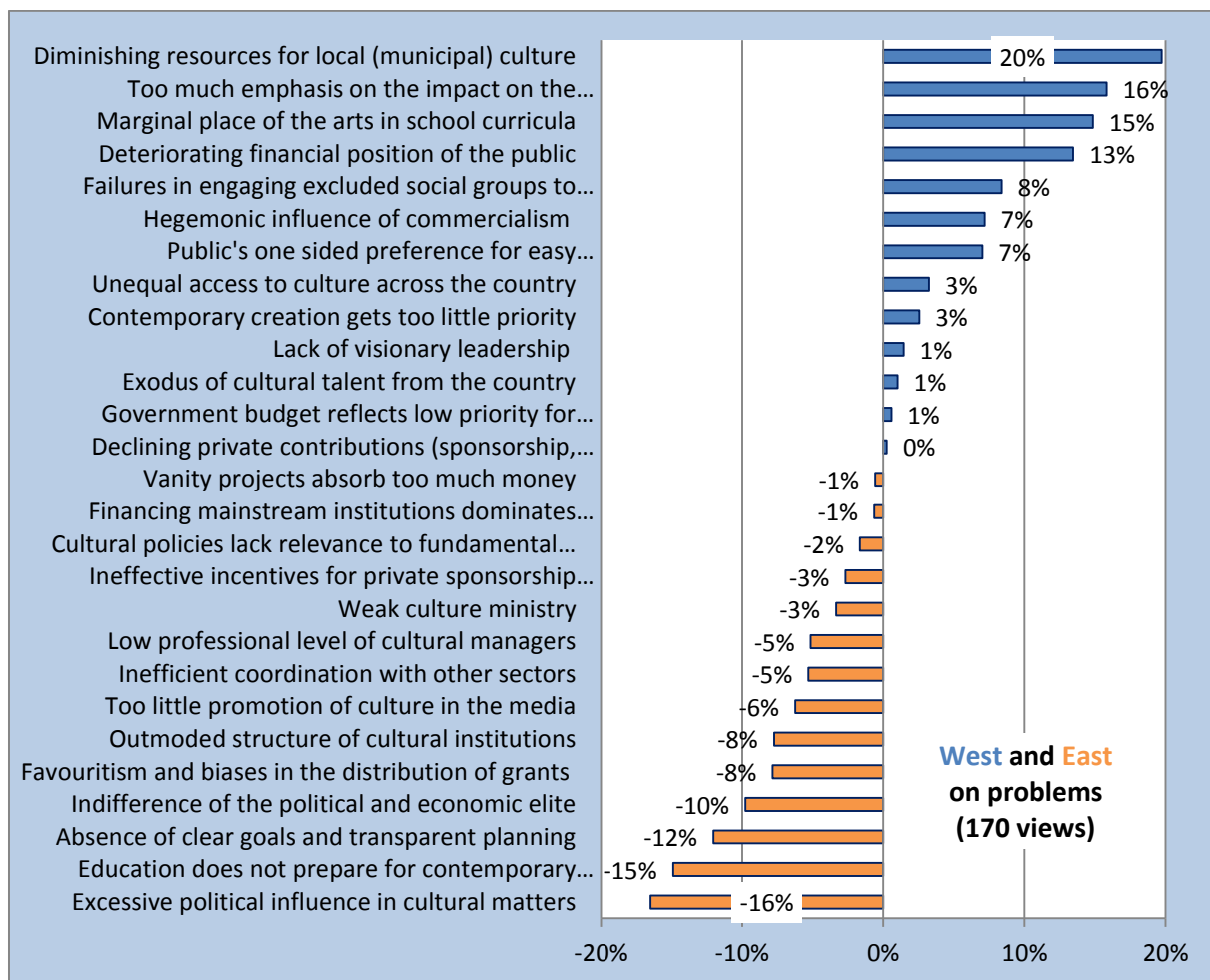
The next three items, mentioned by 27-29% each, witness about the engagement of most western colleagues towards the equality of chances and supply. Contradicting clichés, they complain the least about shrinking sponsorship. Maybe it does not shrink?

Turning to the east, [Diagram3](#) reveals that the same statement is on top there, too. With the same (46%) proportion as in the west but without rivals do eastern government budgets carry the greatest blame for the woes of the cultural climate.

[Diagram 3](#) Problematic factors according to “eastern” respondents



Another important difference is that every third eastern expert complains about political influences against only 19% in the west. Characteristic divisions like this are best displayed by contrasting views from the east and west – go to [Diagram 4](#).

Diagram 4 Contrasting eastern and western views about problematic factors

Contrasting was done by distracting eastern answers from western ones (because the latter were more numerous, 91 against only 79 from the post-communist “east”). Taking the first item, in the west 29% complain about the diminishing resources for local culture, which is 20% more than the 9% mentions in the east. Signalling concern about local culture appears thus to be a western feature.

At the other extreme of the scale we find a problematic factor where the west is in great minus: 16% fewer western experts suffer from political interference into culture than their eastern colleagues (19% versus 35%), proving this to be the most typical eastern woe.

Fourteen items in orange to the left of the axis bother western respondents less than eastern ones.

The apparent diversion in the perception of the two items on education is still open to exploration. *Marginal place of the arts in school curricula* and *Education does not prepare for contemporary culture* are situated at opposite ends on this chart. The former is best emphasised in the west while the latter in the east. The answer may be connected to the connotations of the words *arts* and *contemporary* in the statements. (In fact *Education does not prepare ...* was tenth with 26% on the eastern list of grievances last year against the second position with 38% this time.)

Observed with a broader focus we can establish that westerners select items that relate to the public (its purchasing power, exposure to commercialism and entertainment) in higher numbers than easterners, who are more concerned about internal aspects of the sector like professionalism in management and governance, as well as the institutions, intersectoral cooperation etc.

Besides highlighting differences, the middle of the graph displays the items on which eastern and western perceptions largely or fully coincide. E.g. disagreement on sponsorship level is zero.

Positive aspects with regard to cultural life

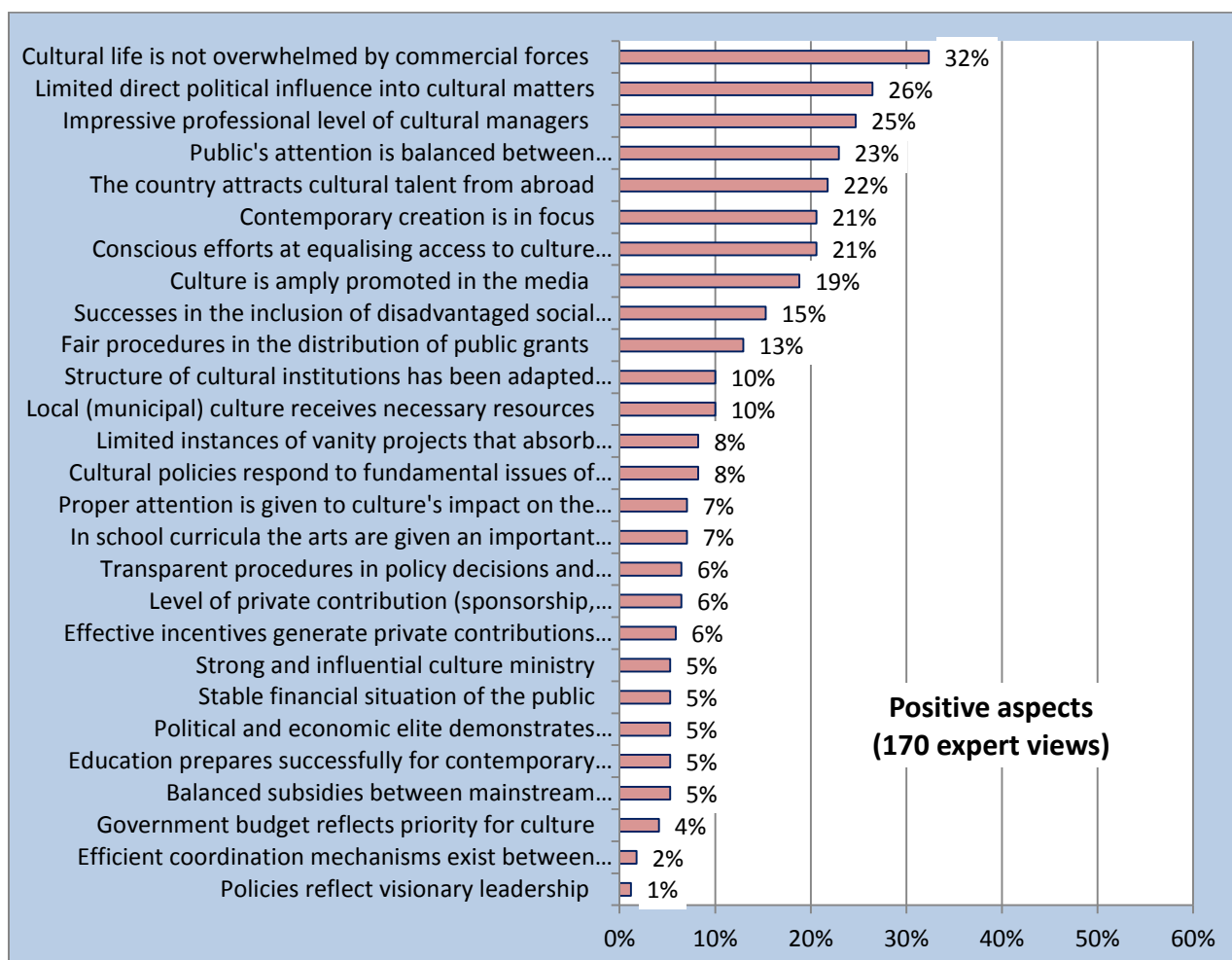
The first editions of the Barometer in 2013-2014 were limited to the problematic aspects, along the WEF model. In no time this met with the criticism of a one sided approach and with a claim for examining factors that have a positive effect on the climate of culture.

At first, variations of a sliding scale were considered where the answerer is asked to choose a position on a scale. For this endeavour there was an indirect precedent. In *Balancing Act*, published by the Council of Europe in 1999, François Matarasso and Charles Landry identified *twenty-one strategic dilemmas in cultural policy*. Similarly to the Barometer, *Balancing Act* sought to dissect the complex concept into individually assessable components. The twenty-one dilemmas served for inspiration also in the selection of the 27 statements although our Barometer covers external aspects as well. Furthermore, the Barometer lists forthright problematic factors while several of the twenty-one dilemmas are indeed dilemmas, open questions.

Having designed and tested a sliding scale barometer, we nevertheless came to the conclusion that the re-formulation of the list of problematic factors into scales, as well as the processing and interpretation posed challenges that seemed out of proportion with the advantages to be gained. This is why we returned to the simpler task of selecting five out of a list of 27 problematic factors, duplicated with the addition of a complementary list of 27 positive statements. *Annex 1* contains the two sets matched the corresponding items to one another.

Selecting factors that one is happy about proved to be a greater challenge than to share one's dissatisfaction about conditions. The survey therefore allowed the respondents to choose less than five positive statements. On the average the 170 respondents chose 3.2 positive items (instead of 5).

Diagram 5 Positive factors affecting culture according to 170 views



The outstanding popularity of the statement about the indemnity from commercialism is a surprise. Dominant in most eastern countries but holding strong also in the west, this might be a lukewarm default choice when respondents are at a loss for the right praise. At least business has not fully overcome... Also, politics has not run over everything, according to the second most popular item. Thus, two statements about absences are on top of the victory list.

This is a moment to muse about the significance of the choices. Whether they report about facts (really existing positive or negative factors) or they express value preferences rather. Also, wording can play an important role. For example, in the earliest version *Lack of cultural policy vision* was a popular choice among respondents, while the current formula of *visionary leadership* resonates to the least of all.

Matching problems and successes

Although the 27 positive statements were each worded upon a negative counterpart, the 170 responses contain sporadic instances of choosing both sides. E.g. *Failures in engaging excluded social groups to culture* was listed among the five plagues but *Successes in the inclusion of disadvantaged social groups into culture* was identified by the same person as a positive aspect. Sometimes one finds a logical explanation, in other cases careless responding is the answer.

Due to the smaller number of positive items figuring in the answers (3.2 against 5.0 on the average) there are only six aspects about which the overall consensus of 170 contributors was in favour of a positive assessment rather than complaining:

- *Cultural life is not overwhelmed by commercial forces (vs hegemonic influence of commercialism)*
- *Public's attention is balanced between entertainment and deeper cultural challenges (vs one sided preference for easy entertainment)*
- *Impressive professional level of cultural managers (vs low level of the same)*
- *Culture is amply promoted in the media (vs too little promotion)*
- *The country attracts cultural talent from abroad (vs exodus of talent)*
- *Contemporary creation is in focus (vs too little priority for contemporary creation)*

The case about commercialism was mentioned before. Only 7% of all respondents complained about hegemonic influence of business and 32% selecting the indemnity from commercialism as a positive aspect. This item is related to the one that pays tribute to the public. The issue is second in terms of dominating the problematic counterpart (27% vs 13%), being fourth only on [Diagram 5](#).

Considerations about the 54 statements on the cultural climate

Controversial choices like the above suggest the re-edition of the 54 statements. Free comments, an important component of the Barometer survey, also advised a number of improvements. The following additions were proposed: creative industries as a priority; training for cultural practitioners; economic security for those engaged in culture; generational gaps in the value of culture; cultural infrastructure available to the youth; local markets on home made art, etc.

These suggestions can be formulated both as problems (challenges) and achievements. The following, on the other hand, were signalled in the comments clearly as concerns on top of the 27 problematic factors: self-censorship practiced by artists; fragile status of intangible cultural heritage; unemployment of youth in the cultural sector; great majority of funds taken up by salaries of employees.

Conversely, quite a few comments articulate outright positive aspects. Some respondents tell us that a strong civil sector has been dynamising cultural life. Independent NGOs and grass root movements are portrayed as the saviour of wrong or failed cultural policies. Eighteen participants – a considerable number – are happy to communicate about a lively cultural scene based on individual

talent and enthusiasm. Here, too, national specificities play a role, which eminently applies to the particular example connected to the competition for the European Capital of Culture (in Bulgaria, to be precise).

The abundance of suggestions signalled that 27 negative and 27 positive factors are not enough to convey the complexity of cultural climate. Increasing, however, the items in the survey would make it even more difficult to handle for the respondents and the researchers alike. Reduction would be more advisable, or replacements of less successful items. Nevertheless the 2015 survey shows a fairly even distribution in the choices of the 54 factors. Furthermore, at closer look even the least often selected items proved to carry significance for certain environments. We came to the conclusion not to administer important changes in the instrument.

Eastern and western perceptions of the positive aspects

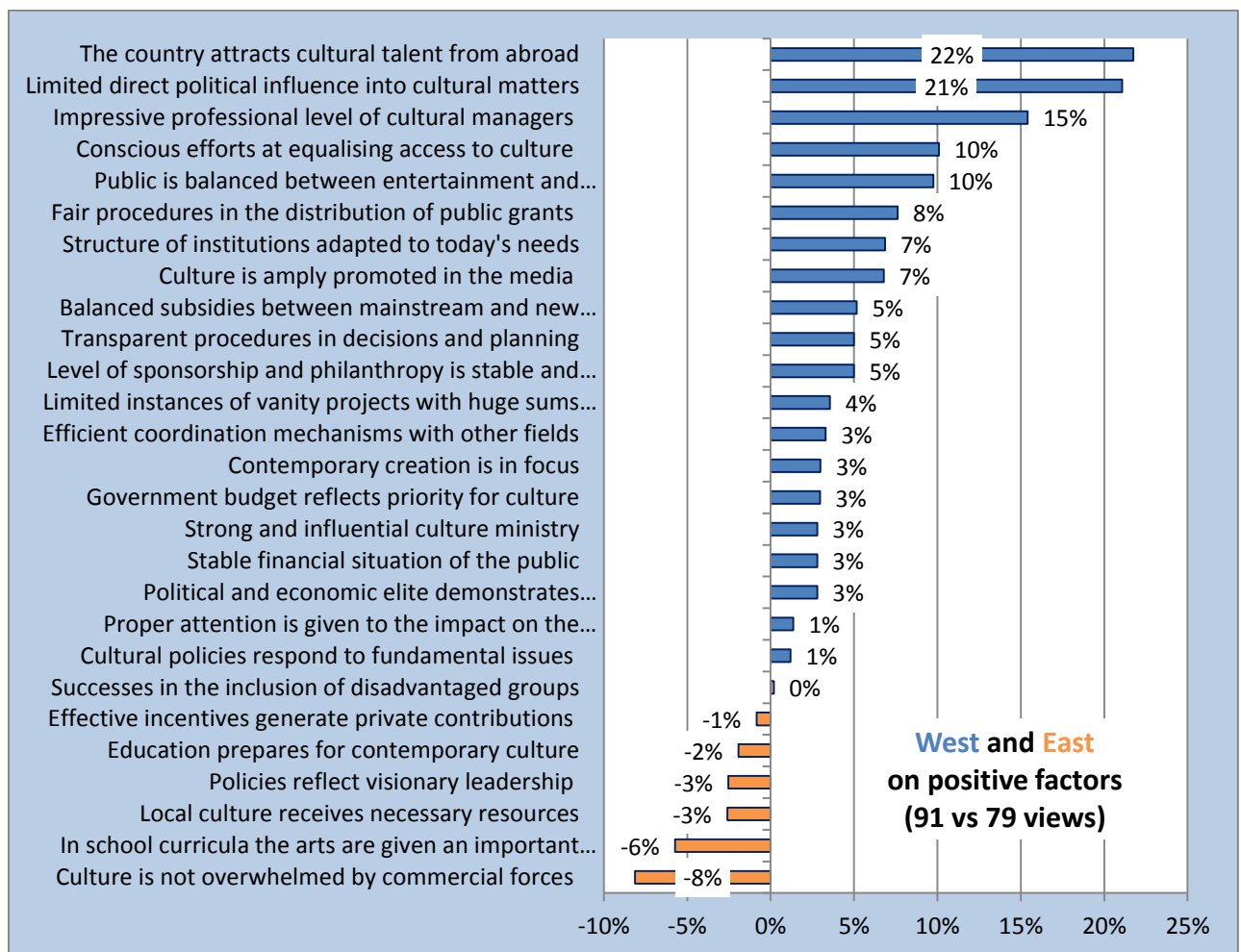
Returning to the east-west divide, accounts about the favourable aspects – strengths of the cultural ecosystems – have also produced certain characteristic differences. First of all the 91 contributors from established capitalist democracies see things brighter: as many as eight positive aspects were selected by more than 20% of western respondents. Experts and operators in post-communist countries found only one! The averages were 3.7 choices in the west and 2.6 in the east against the possible 5 in both cases.

Comments from eastern contributors also reflect the difficulties about finding or saying nice things in the new democracies. Some of them reported that they could not help reading ironically the positive items of the questionnaire. Also, consider the high proportion of „forced choices” among the eastern positive answers. This signals high degree of disappointment in the climate, probably of the political situation in general, not just in culture. Unease at identifying positive aspects may at the same time be a symptom of lack of experiences in the new democracies to be involved in constructive thinking about the political and social environment.

Characteristics of the responses are best revealed by direct contrasting between east and west. Diagram 6 follows the logic of Diagram 4: the typically lower numbers of eastern percentages are distracted from the western figures.

Let us take a look at the two items on top. *The country attracts cultural talent from abroad* was marked by 32% in the west and 10% in the east resulting 22%; while *Limited direct political influence into cultural matters* collected 36% in the west and 15% in the east, hence the 21%. Both items are the positive inverse of challenges that one would associate with the eastern half of Europe: brain drain and over-politicised cultural life. Without trying to interpret each figure, the combined highs indicate that both issues are on the top of people’s mind everywhere, including in the west.

The few items at the bottom stand for positive factors that the eastern participants selected in greater numbers than their western colleagues. Art education appears to have more stable positions in east and central Europe, very few western respondents identified the respective two statements as strengths of their ecosystem.

Diagram 6 Combining eastern and western views about positive aspects of the cultural climate

Distances between eastern and western views by matching problems and strengths

More complete profiles can be gained by combining the problematic and favourable aspects. This happens by matching each pair of statements as shown earlier separately in the eastern and western answers, fusing in fact [Diagrams 4](#) and [6](#). This technique reveals the distances between the two groups.

Leaving the details to the fuller version of the report, here is the top of the list of issues by the east-west distance upon matching positive and negative statements on the respective item:

1. *Political interference in cultural matters (E)*
2. *Financing of local culture (W)*
3. *Place of the arts in school curricula (W)*
4. *Professional level of cultural managers (E)*
5. *Mobility of cultural talent (E)*

The issue of political interference divides the 79 eastern stakeholders from the 91 western ones by far the most. Respondents from the east complained about it in great numbers and very few boasted about the absence of political influences, while in the east the balance was the opposite.

The second greatest gap is a surprise, especially its direction. Easterners cited the financing of local culture with satisfaction in high numbers while [Diagram 2](#) displays the high position of the issue on

the list of western grievances. This raises once more the dilemma whether responses represent objective diagnostic worth or value preferences rather. Perhaps the claims for better resources for culture in western cities are stronger than real deficits out there. Anyhow, this is an unexpected finding of the Barometer.

The second and third more distant issues were bemoaned more in the west, the rest were predominantly eastern complaints (and western prides).

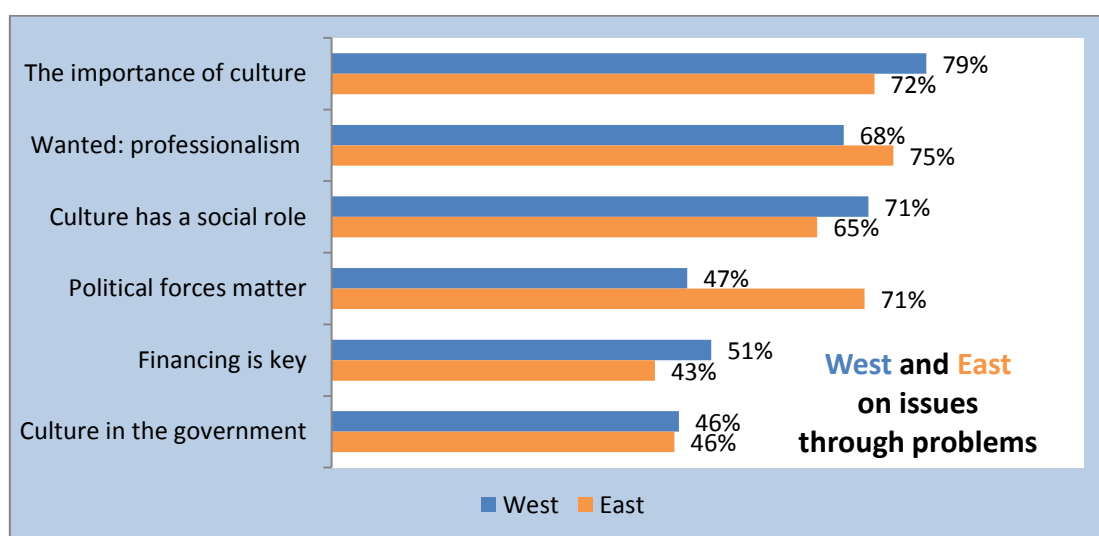
Such an accent on the east-west division may appear artificial, out of time or even irritating to many. Nevertheless we found this approach rather helpful in analysing the findings. Indeed, we are confident that after a while our Barometer will be more sensitive about other basic dividing lines in Europe. Already today there are striking similarities (apparent also on [Diagram 6](#)). Full concord is found in much of the free comments with which participants complemented their answers. For instance, Danish and Belgian colleagues complain about financial or legal problems just as much as Bulgarians or Hungarians do.

Comparing perceptions by thematic clusters

The 27 issues were grouped into six thematic clusters. The largest one consists of seven statements both on the problematic and positive sides relating to the importance of culture. The smallest cluster contains one variable, the most popular statement about the position of culture in the budget of the government. (More details in the forthcoming full report.)

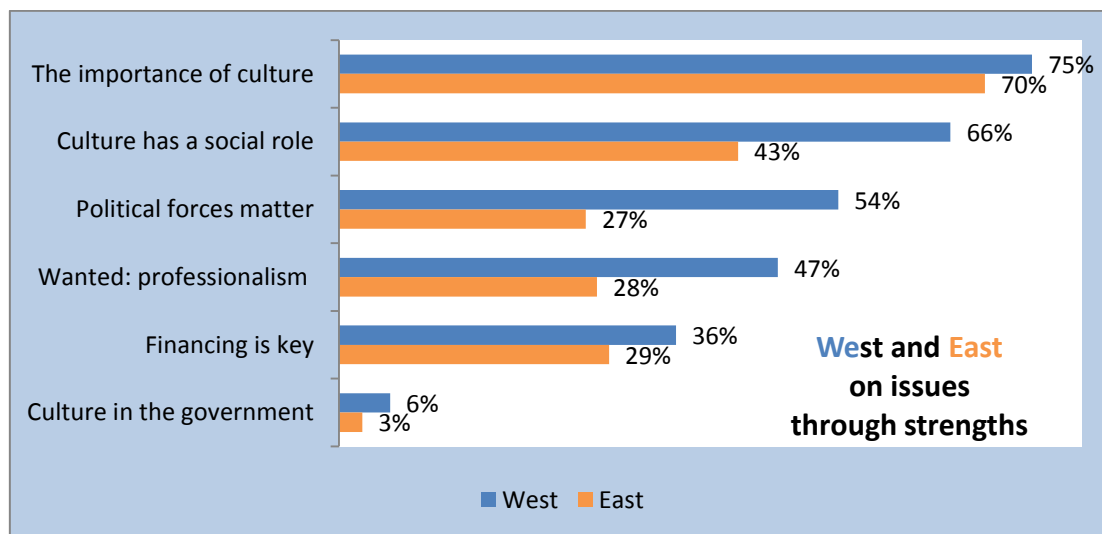
The lines in [Diagram 7](#) and [8](#) show the percentages of respondents that chose at least one item of the respective cluster. The length of course depends on the number of statements in the cluster which on the other hand does not explain the division between the 79 eastern and 91 western answers.

[Diagram 7](#) Comparing eastern and western views along thematic clusters upon problematic factors



Based on the selection of problematic factors, the only major difference is in the perception of political interference.

The real distinction gets displayed on [Diagram 8](#), showing the choices of positive aspects. In the matter of the importance of culture and about its financing the eastern opinion is on a par with the west. In the three other thematic areas eastern stakeholders have much less to say than their western colleagues.

Diagram 8 Comparing eastern and western views along thematic clusters upon positive aspects

Perceptions about the climate of culture in four geographic regions

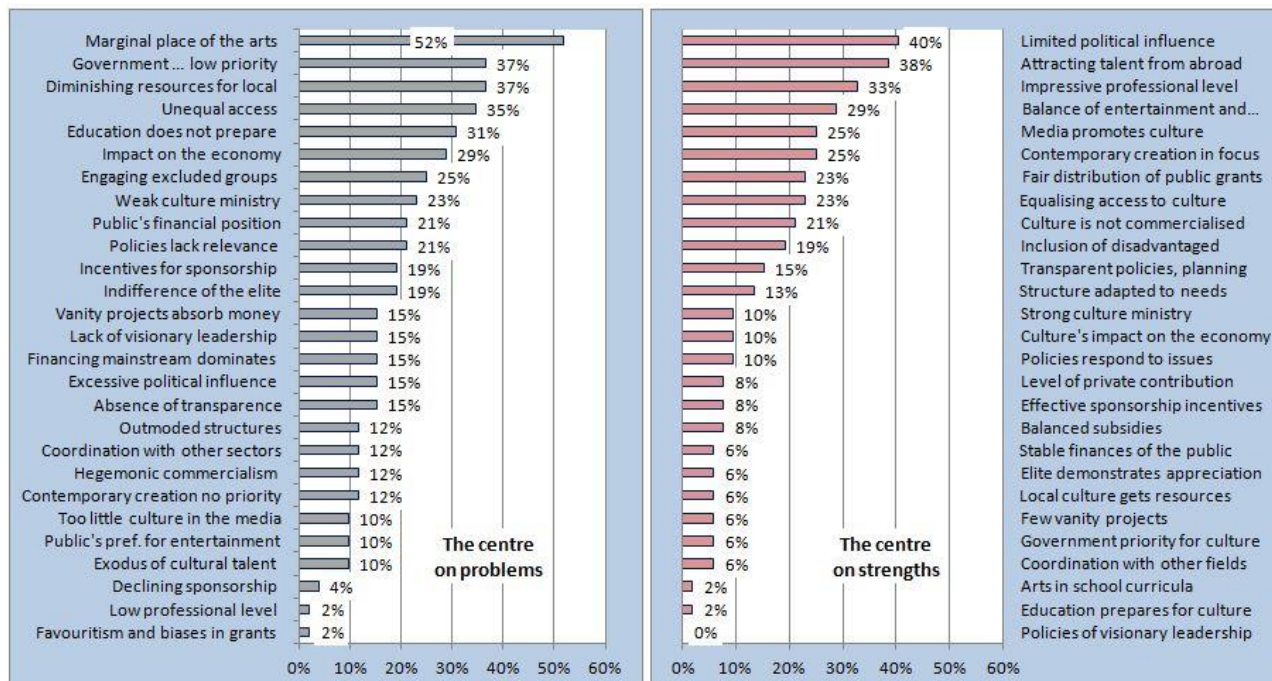
The number of responses allowed for shaping the following four geographic clusters (in order of size):

- 1) The largest group is labelled the Centre. The majority of the 52 contributors in the group are from the old member states of the EU. The sporadic answers from Switzerland, Canada and Australia were also added to the centre in a cultural sense.
- 2) Countries on the South-East of Europe, 33 answers.
- 3) The Visegrad four include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, 28 answers.
- 4) The Mediterranean countries, including for cultural reasons Portugal, 26 answers.

As seen on [Diagram 8](#), the “Centre” demonstrates the essence of the west, among others by boasting one of the largest number of positive aspects, the average being 4.0 choices by respondent. The Centre stands apart from the rest by a number of features. The strong disappointment with the role of the school is corroborated by the almost total absence of the two relevant statements from the positive factors mentioned in the Centre. Also, aspects of equality (accompanied by the financing of local culture) are most stressed in the Centre, matched by no other region.

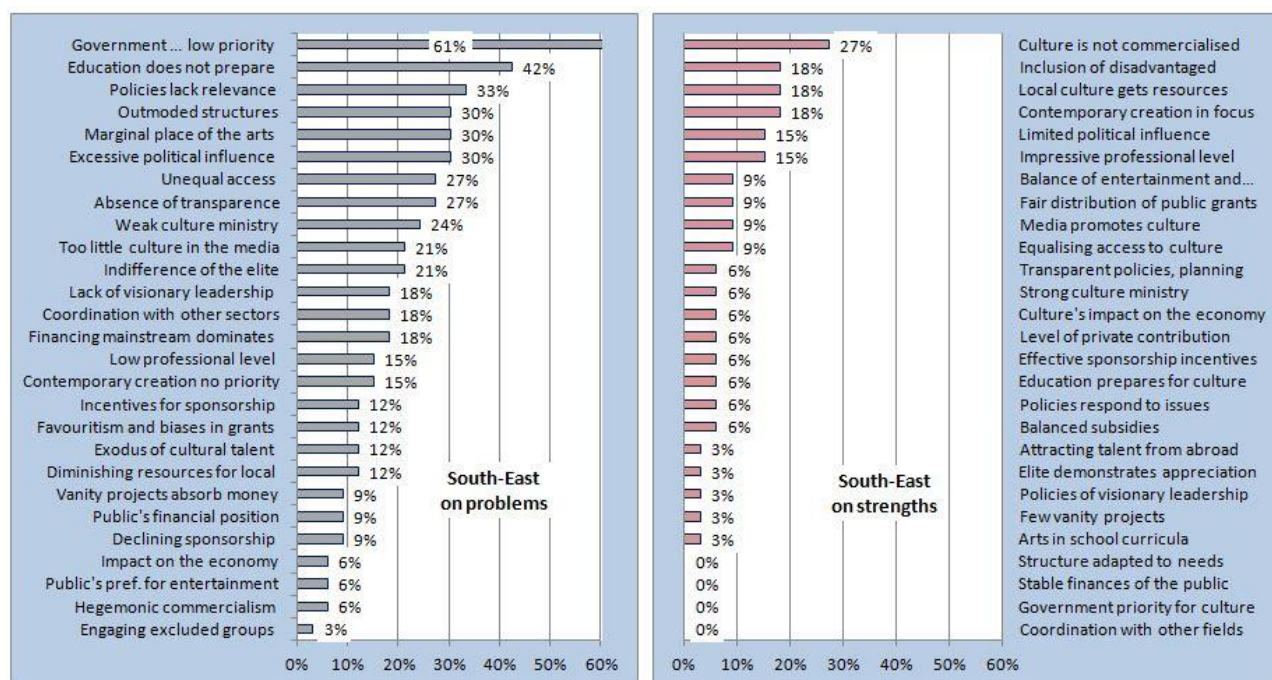
In the double diagrams below shortened versions of the statements are applied in order to fit to the narrow space.

Diagram 9 Perceptions of the cultural climate in the centre (UK, Ireland, Benelux, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, 52 responses)



Answers from the group of South-East are displayed on **Diagram 10**. In contrast to the Centre, these people find precious little to be proud of: the 33 contributions include 70 mentions of positive features, an average of 2.1. Romanians are to blame most, with an extra low average of 1.8 positive aspects in the 12 expert views from that country.

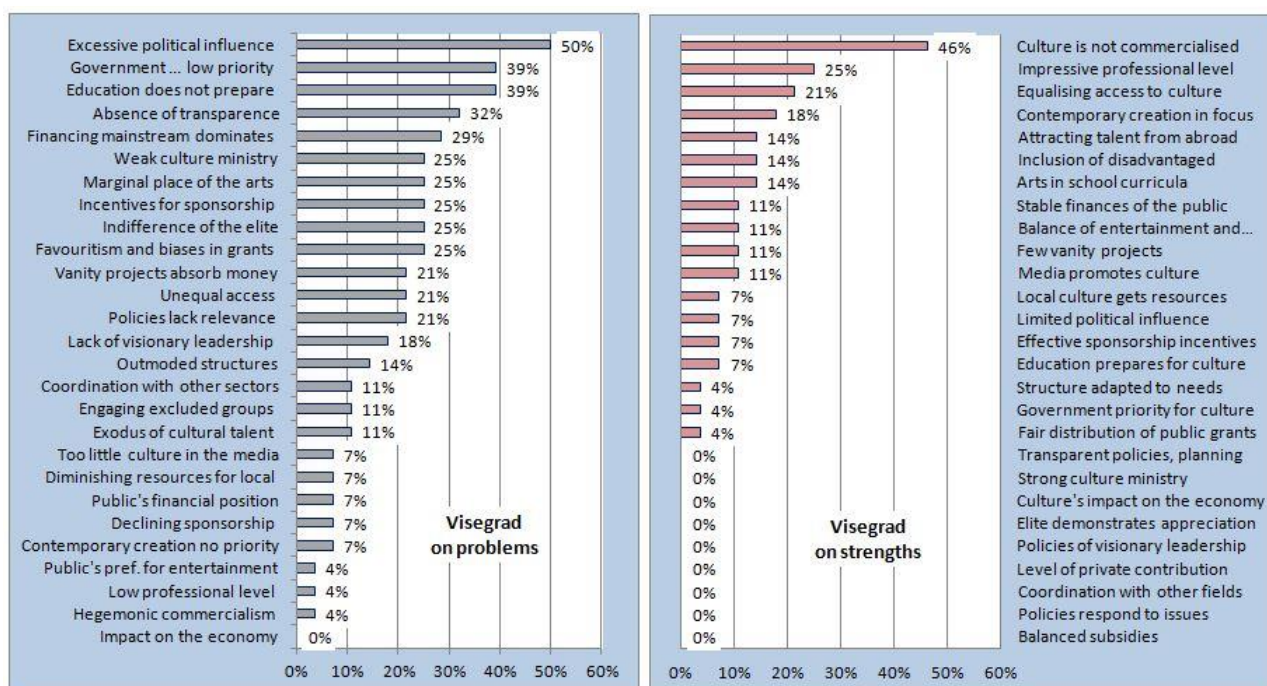
Diagram 10 Perceptions of the cultural climate in the south-east (Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, ex-Yugoslav countries, Turkey, 33 responses)



Local culture receives necessary resources and *Successes in the inclusion of disadvantaged groups* were both mentioned by 18% of the south-eastern contributors among the positive aspects, way higher than the rest, especially from the Centre. The latter choice was confirmed by putting its negative counterpart *Failures in engaging excluded social groups to culture* to the bottom of the list of problems.

The Visegrad countries ([Diagram 11](#)) represent an opposite to the Centre in three areas, with an eye on both negative and positive sides: the issues of political interference, of equality in supply and access, as well as of the impact of culture on the economy. This latter is fully absent from the Visegrad score: questions of spillover have hardly reached the perception threshold of cultural operators in these four countries.

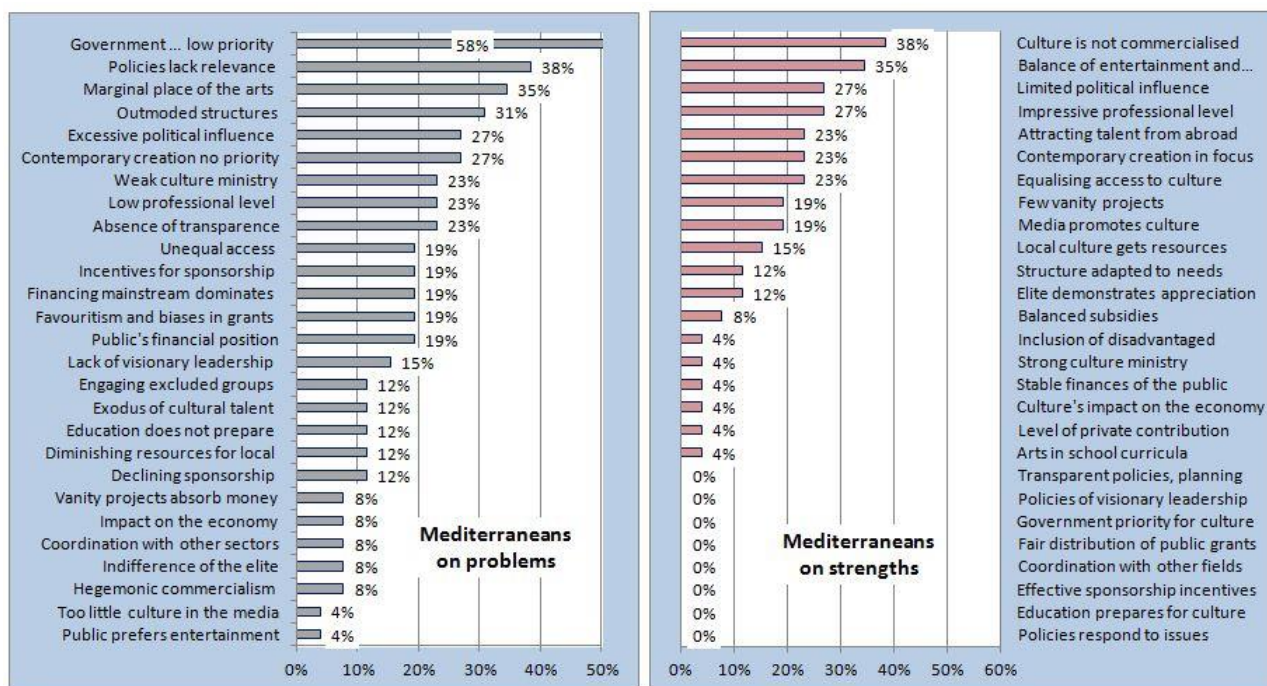
Diagram 11 Perceptions of the cultural climate in the Visegrad countries (Czech Rep., Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, 28 responses)



Peculiar is the lopsided distribution of positive aspects on [Diagram 10](#) upon the choices of the Mediterranean respondents: nearly as many items were mentioned by over 20% as in the Centre, while on the other hand eight positive factors did not deserve one mention even.

The list of complains suggests a yearning for modernity, expressed by several problems rated the highest by the Mediterranean contributors, concerning relevant policies, the structure of institutions, the place of contemporary culture and professional standards, coupled with strong stresses on the standing of the cultural budget and the culture ministry.

Diagram 12 Perceptions of the cultural climate in the Mediterranean countries (Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain, 26 responses)



Regional climates, 2015 versus 2014

Comparing the 2015 results with those received a year earlier we find fundamental consistencies with regard to the regions, in spite of the fact that the low numbers of respondents on both occasions fall far from being representative of the respective countries. See the problematic factors that received a considerably stronger emphasis in 2015 than a year earlier (**UP**), and those that were mentioned less often in 2015 than a year earlier (**DOWN**):

- a) In the Centre:
 - UP** - *Unequal access to culture, Weak culture ministry and Public's one sided preference for easy entertainment,*
 - DOWN** - *Financing mainstream institutions dominates budgets;*
- b) In the South-East:
 - UP** - *Marginal place of the arts in school curricula and Unequal access to culture,*
 - DOWN** - *Deteriorating financial position of the public;*
- c) In the Visegrad four:
 - UP** - *Ineffective incentives for private sponsorship and philanthropy,*
 - DOWN** - *Declining private contributions (sponsorship, philanthropy) and Deteriorating financial position of the public;*
- a) In the Mediterranean region:
 - UP** - *Excessive political influence in cultural matters and Low professional level of cultural managers,*
 - DOWN** - *Too little promotion of culture in the media.*

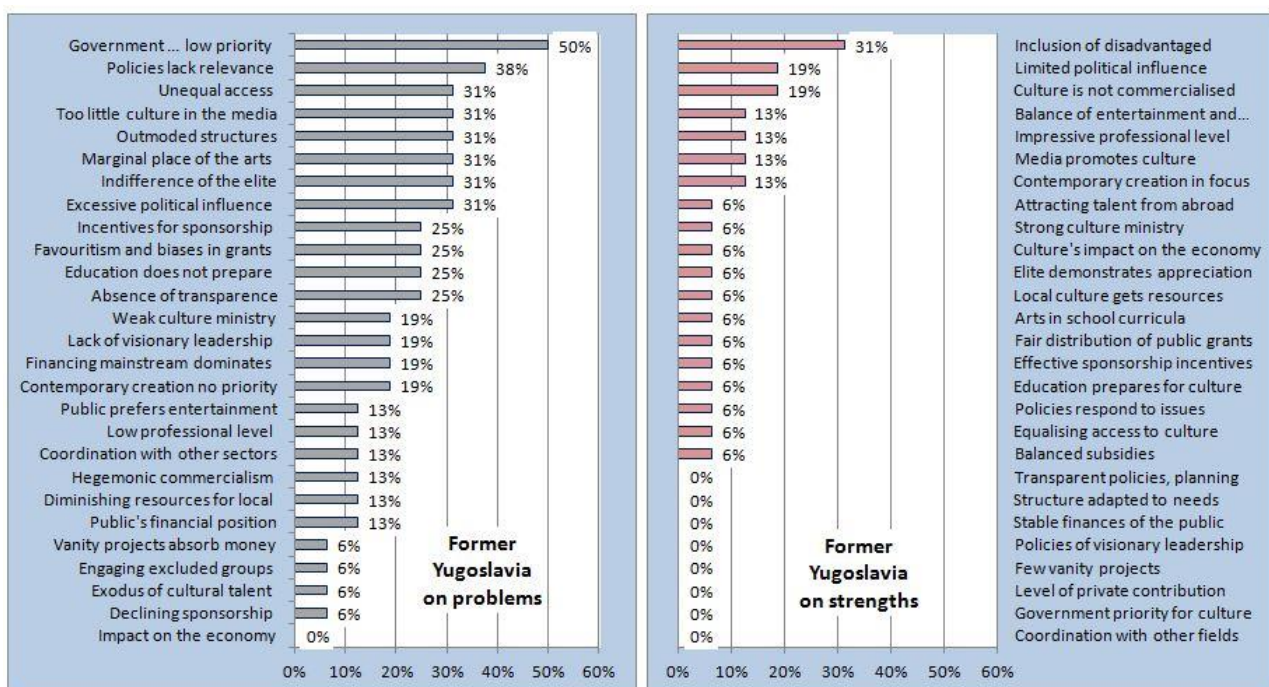
While some of these changes appear to reflect shifts in the general attention (e.g. smaller accent on financial aspects), others may be due to the difference in the composition of the respondents.

Seeking specificities at lower geographic levels

The four geographic groups discussed in the preceding chapters comprise a little more than 80% of the responses to the online survey. The rest belong to smaller areas. An attempt was made to combine the 11 Nordic and 7 Baltic responses in an acknowledgement of the tendencies of political, social and cultural conversion between the two groups of countries. Nevertheless in this respect the Barometer performed much against expectations or hopes. Strangely, the Baltic views appear more “western” than the other set of perceptions: problem areas connected to equality and education concern the contributors from the three post-soviet republics much more than their colleagues to the north. Furthermore, the Baltic pride over the balanced cultural preferences of their public is in contrast with the Nordic chagrin about the same. The customary East-West pattern emerges at a few items like the Baltic grievance over political interference and the exodus of talent. Summing up: we need more time for substantial homogenisation in the area and we received too few responses to arrive at reliable conclusions. (Further details in the forthcoming full report.)

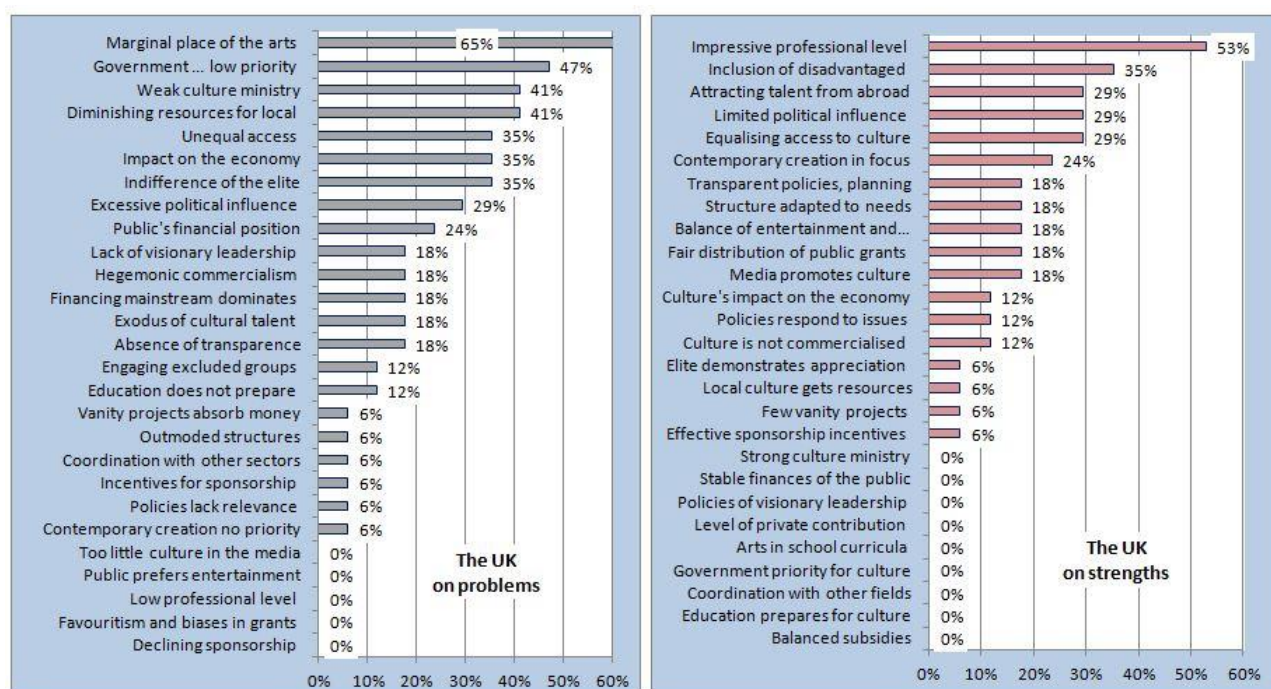
In another part of Europe 16 answers came from what used to be the federation of Yugoslavia. Notwithstanding the obvious differences in – among others – the climate of culture, they were collected into [Diagram 13](#). The 1.9 positive mark per contributor is one of the lowest. The graph helps find two remarkable deviations from the larger set of South East: *Successes in the inclusion of disadvantaged social groups into culture* was marked as a leading strength and not one of the 16 respondents lamented about *Too much emphasis on culture’s impact on the economy*.

Diagram 13 Perceptions on the cultural climate in the former Yugoslav republics (Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia, 16 responses)



A federation that is withstanding the centrifugal forces of our age: the United Kingdom is represented in the survey with 17 answers, including those that focus on Scotland or Northern Ireland. The UK is thus the only country with sufficient input to the Barometer for a (federated) national profile. Despite constituting a large part of the 52 strong Centre, there are important differences. Still high, 3.5 per answer is the rate of positive choices, yet lagging behind the 4.0 average in the Centre. The score is uneven, with 53% British satisfaction with the professional level in the sector is the highest of all, just like the 35% claiming *Successes in the inclusion of disadvantaged social groups* and the 65% grumble over the position of the arts in school curricula.

Diagram 14 Perceptions of the climate of culture in the United Kingdom (17 responses)



Transversal display of problems perceived in various places

Beyond matching regions in couples, each aspect of the cultural climate may be compared across several groups of respondents – or thematic clusters like the ones discussed earlier for that matter. This chapter is about such endeavours.

The next graph offers visual clues for the comparison of perceptions about political interference that appeared to be a most divisive issue. It dominates the list of problematic factors in the Visegrad countries and is a major concern in the South-East too.

The diagram contains a new rank list, labelled as post-soviet (Ex SU). [Annex 2](#) provides the explanation about its composition. As to why political interference is mentioned in such a low number in those places is open to considerations.

Choosing the variable on the resources of local culture is also due to the divisive nature of this issue in the mirror of the Barometer – as is well demonstrated in [Diagram 16](#).

Diagram 15 The position of *Excessive political influence in cultural matters* on rank lists in various places

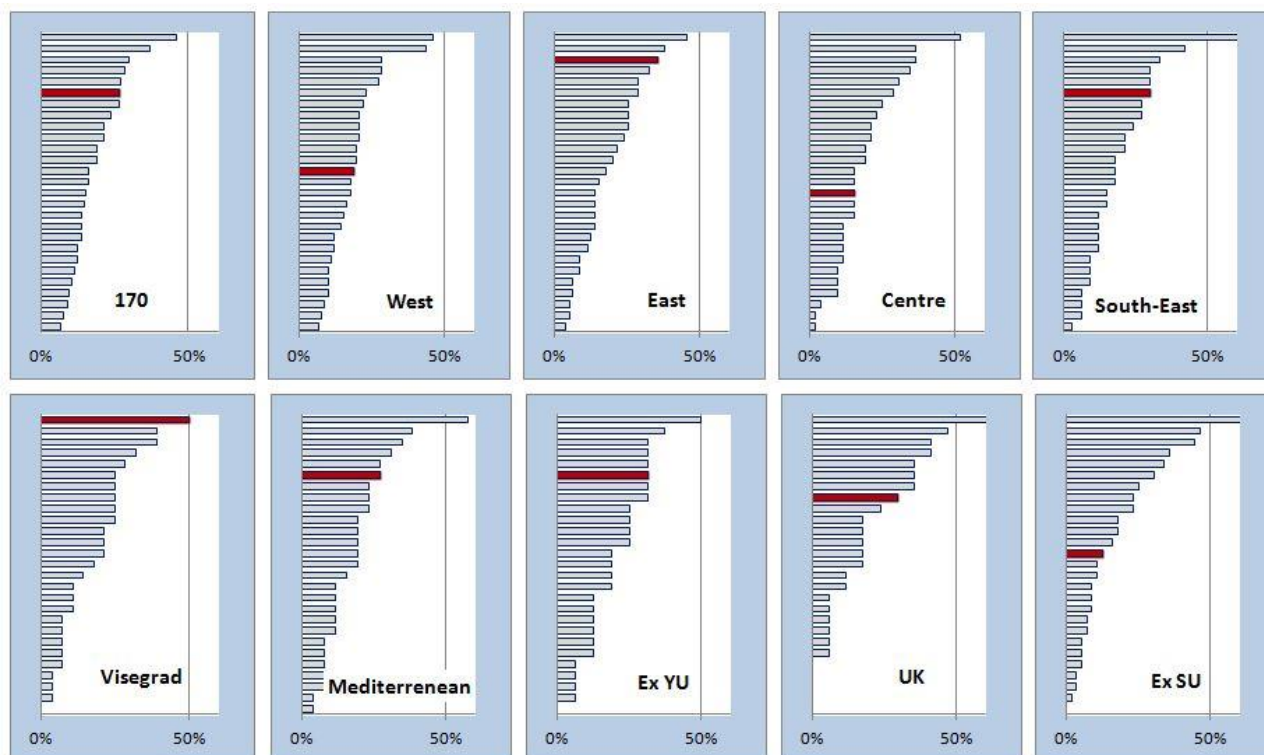
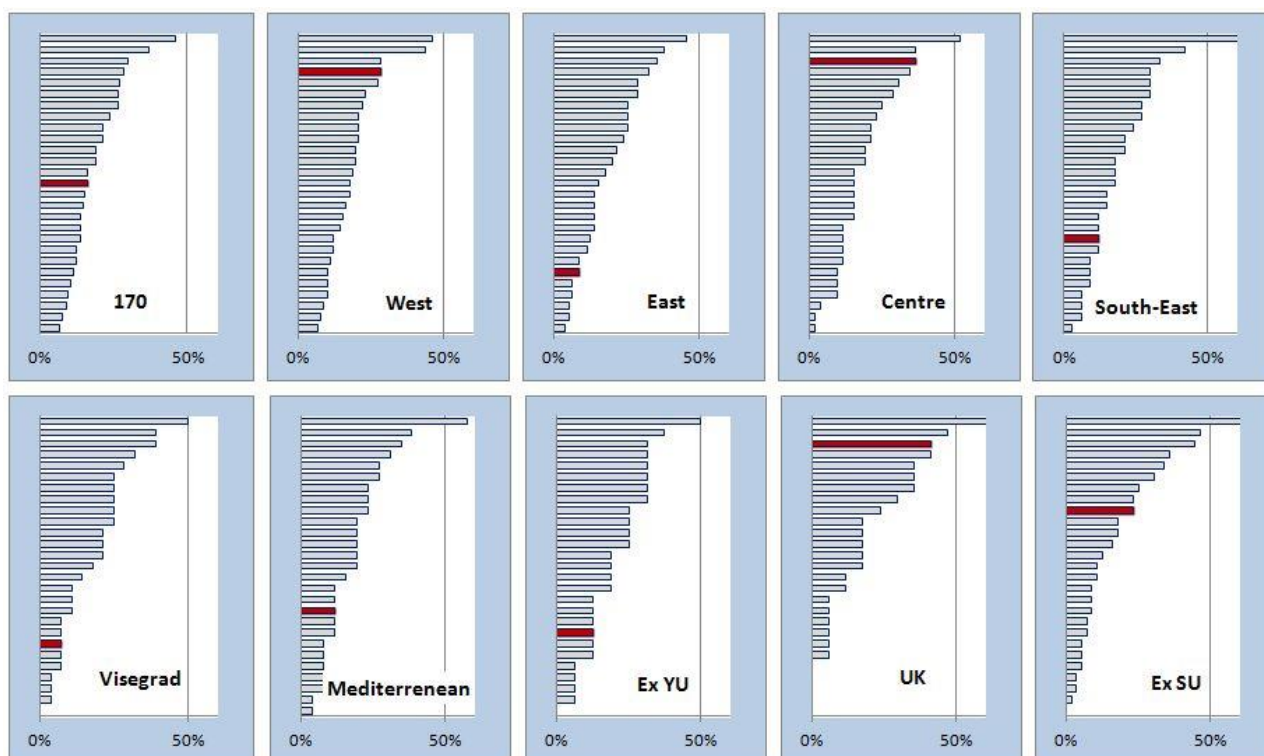


Diagram 16 The position of *Diminishing resources for local (municipal) culture* on rank lists in various places



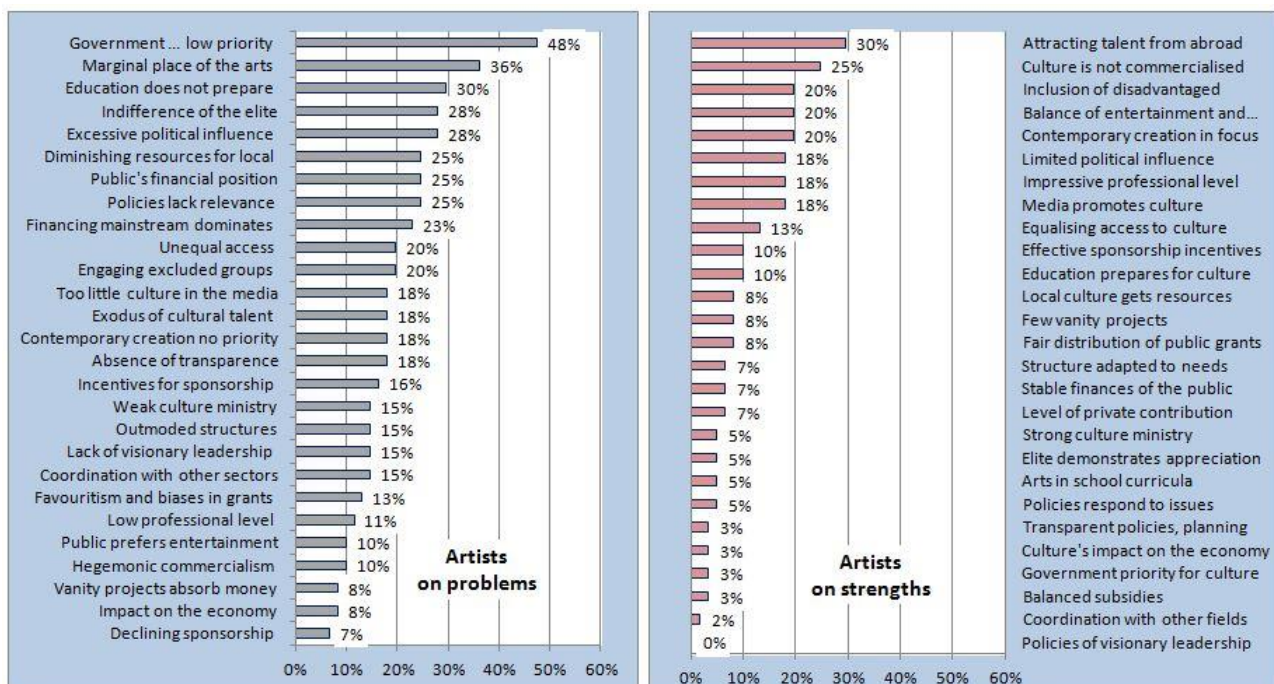
Differences in the perceptions of various professional groups

Respondents were asked to identify their professional backgrounds which allows for examining perceptions of the various professional communities. Where there was a possibility (e.g. at answering off-line on a sheet) most people marked multiple identities or chose “other” with or without specifying their atypical position, which has reduced clear cases to an unfortunate small share. With all that the largest group of artists contains 61 answers from 45 performing and 16 visual artists. 35 contributors marked “academia”, identifying themselves as lecturers or researchers. “Administration” was chosen by 13 respondents. The remaining categories were even fewer: media, creative industries, literature and heritage, although they (especially the last one) appear very often in combinations like “administration and heritage” which we did not dare to enrol into one or other clean category. Librarians admitted their dilemmas of choosing between heritage and “books, literature” as it was worded. The scheme for professional identification needs to be more rigid and more flexible at the same time in the future, allowing for clear and adaptable categorisation.

The single most remarkable point about artists’ rating of problematic and favourable aspects of the cultural climate ([Diagram 17](#)) is the clear contentment about the attraction of talent from abroad – the famous mobility of artists.

A caution is due here. Participants were required to mark the climate of which country their remarks refer to. Mobility has turned it increasingly customary that this may not be the same as citizenship or residence. Some of the 24 views on western countries from a performing art background might in fact be citizens of “eastern” or “third” countries. This, anyhow, has no relevance to the result.

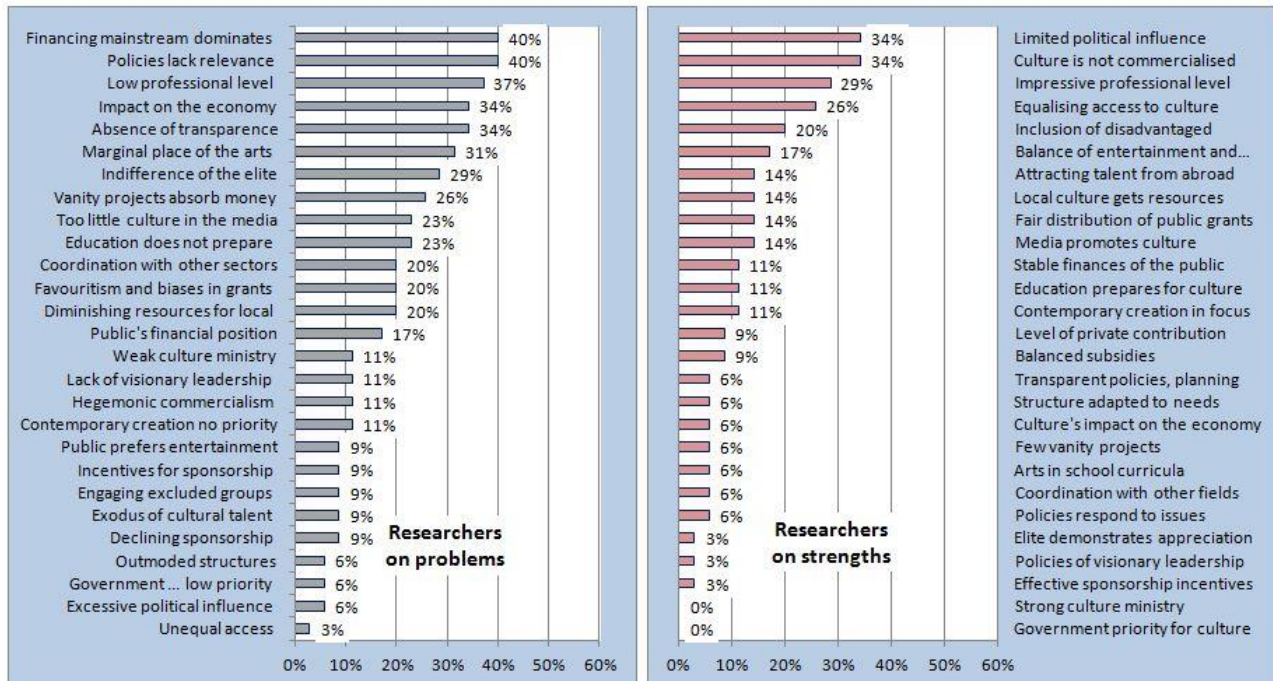
Diagram 17 Artists’ perception on the climate of culture (61 responses)



With regard to artists’ positive choices the internal tension needs to be remarked. The 16 visual artists proved reluctant to name positive aspects, which they did by 1.7 times on average. On the other hand, performing artists selected more strength, especially the 24 performing artists from the west with an average of 3.7 positive marks. The right side of [Diagram 17](#) thus largely reflects the perceptions of that group.

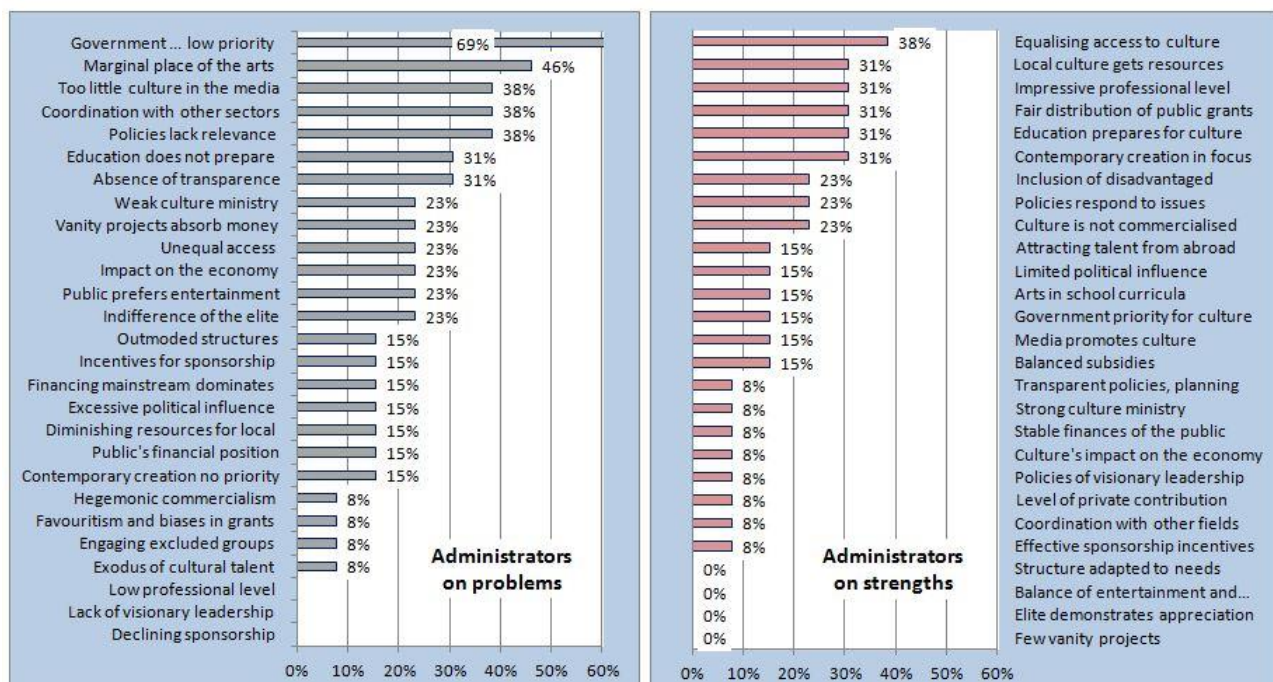
The pattern of the answers of 35 academics in the survey is more unbalanced than that of the artists. While nine problems were marked by less than 10% of researchers, artists neglected three issues at that low degree. Two of them, *Too much emphasis on the impact of culture on the economy* and *Vanity projects absorb too much money* were rated fairly high by researchers. Interestingly a third of academics hailed *Limited direct political influence into cultural matters* in their environment.

Diagram 18 Researchers' perception on the climate of culture (35 responses)



On **Diagram 19** the small number of administrators' contributions is counterbalanced by a high frequency of positive choices, 4.2 per response. Attention is drawn to their contentment about the issues connected to equality.

Diagram 19 Administrators' perception on the climate of culture (13 responses)



Transversal display of problems perceived by various professional groups

The last two sets of graphs show the position of the same two problematic factors on the rank lists of groups of respondents with various professional background which were presented on [Diagrams 15](#) and [16](#).

The size of the group of professional artists allows for a division to 24 “western” and 21 “eastern” artists along the lines as west and east were defined above. The division of the 35 academics into 17 eastern and 18 western researchers is one step more questionable although both are bigger than the 13 administrators.

The two diagrams tell the most when matched to [Diagrams 15-16](#). We can see for example the astonishing resemblance of visual artists to the eastern patterns in these two cases, they are most sensitive about the presence of politics and are concerned little about local financing.

[Diagram 20](#) The position of *Excessive political influence in cultural matters* on rank lists of various professional groups

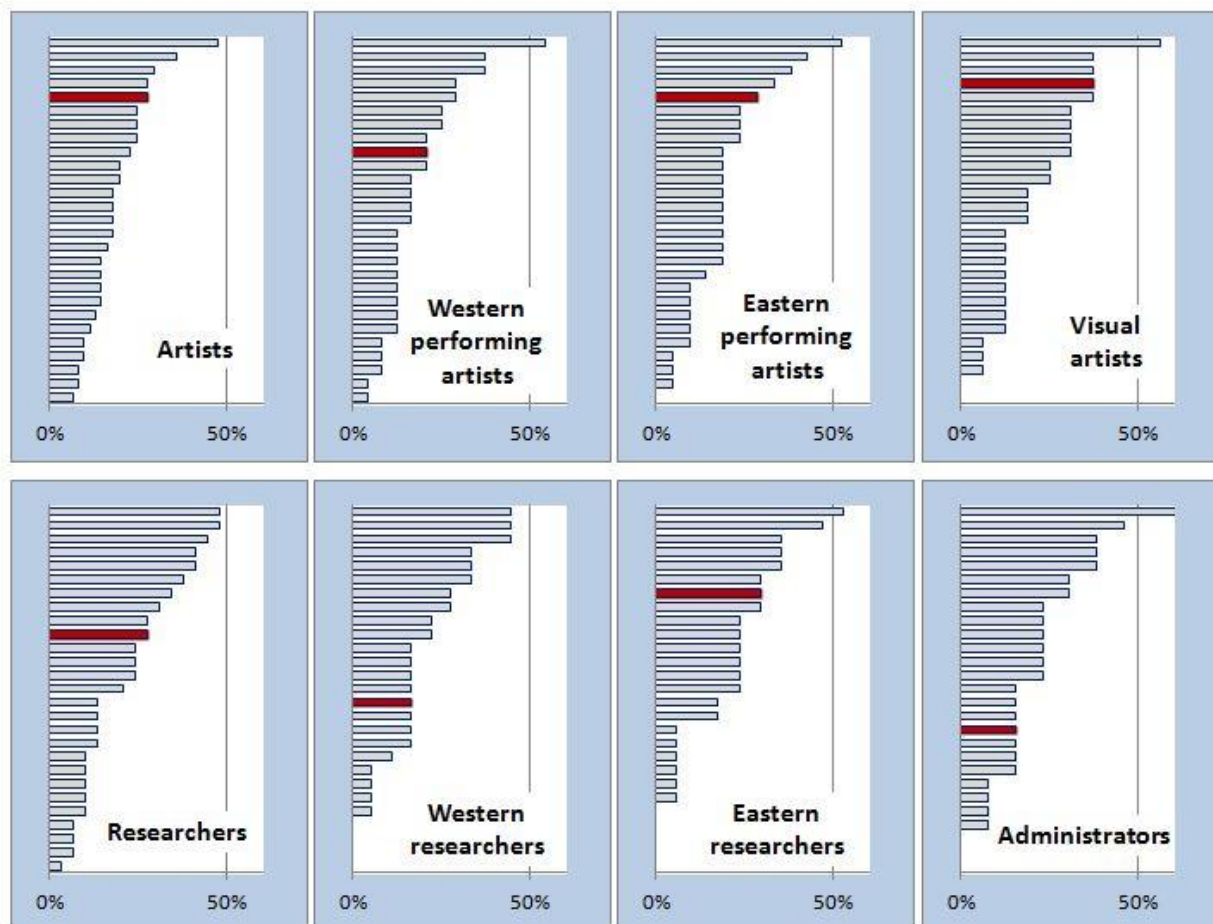
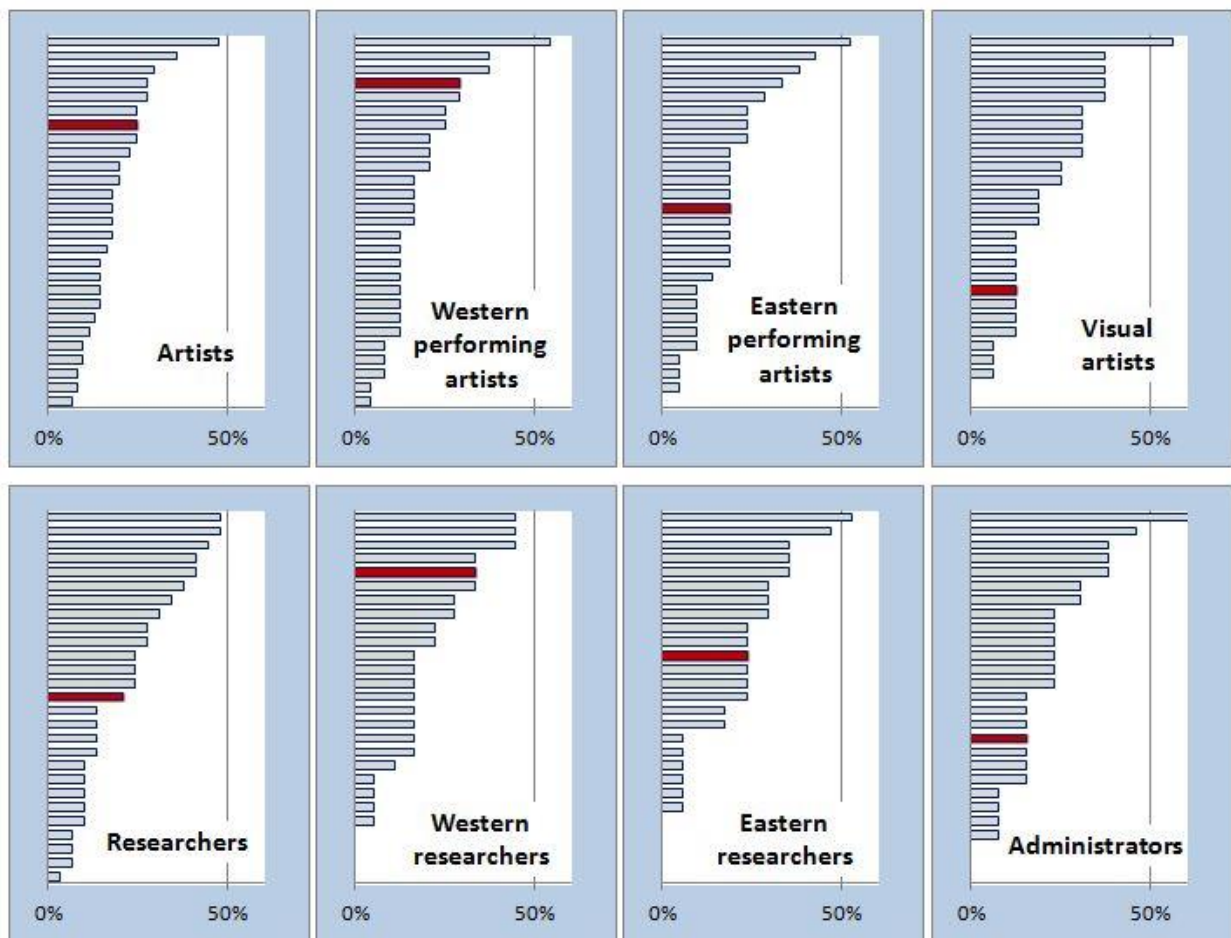


Diagram 21 The position of *Diminishing resources for local (municipal) culture* on rank lists of various professional groups



Further considerations

The full version of the report will contain methodological details and further analysis of the data which do not burden this concise report.

Connexions to related initiatives will be discussed. These will affect domains of ranking nations or places from various points of view, the quests for other instruments to describe, assess or rank cultural ecosystems, the relation of the Barometer to the various cultural policy models etc.

The road that led to the actual format of the Barometer and its future prospects will also be reviewed and considered.

We are nevertheless confident that this concise report succeeds in conveying the most important findings of the Barometer about the basic nature and the diverse features of the climate of culture in 2015. We are looking forward to further opportunities of appraising the climate of various culture ecosystems with the help of the Barometer.

Annex 1 The list of problematic factors with their positive counterparts

What are the most problematic factors for culture in your country?

Absence of clear goals and transparent planning
Contemporary creation gets too little priority
Cultural policies lack relevance to fundamental issues of society
Declining private contributions (sponsorship, philanthropy)
Diminishing resources for local (municipal) culture
Education does not prepare for contemporary culture
Excessive political influence in cultural matters
Exodus of cultural talent from the country
Failures in engaging excluded social groups to culture
Favouritism and biases in the distribution of public grants
Financing mainstream institutions dominates government budgets
Government budget reflects low priority for culture
Hegemonic influence of commercialism
Indifference of the political and economic elite
Ineffective incentives for private sponsorship and philanthropy
Inefficient coordination with other sectors
Lack of visionary leadership
Low professional level of cultural managers
Marginal place of the arts in school curricula
Outmoded structure of cultural institutions
Public's one sided preference for easy entertainment
Too little promotion of culture in the media
Too much emphasis on culture's impact on the economy
Unequal access to culture across the country
Vanity projects absorb too much money
Weak culture ministry
Deteriorating financial position of the public

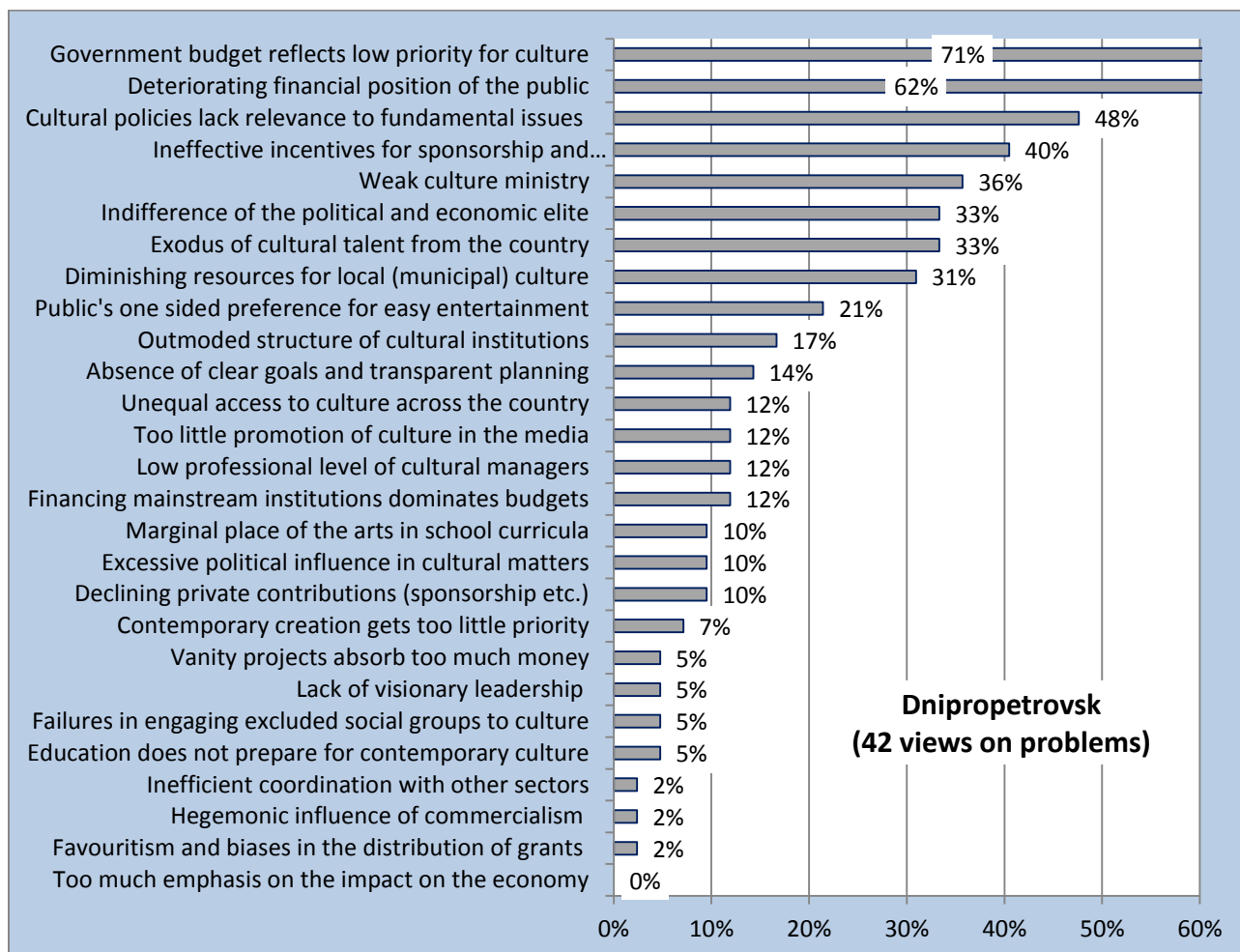
What are the most positive factors that affect culture in your country?

Transparent procedures in policy decisions and planning
Contemporary creation is in focus
Cultural policies respond to fundamental issues of society
Level of private contribution (sponsorship, philanthropy) is stable and important
Local (municipal) culture receives necessary resources
Education prepares successfully for contemporary culture
Limited direct political influence into cultural matters
The country attracts cultural talent from abroad
Successes in the inclusion of disadvantaged social groups into culture
Fair procedures in the distribution of public grants
Balanced subsidies between mainstream institutions and new or small-scale initiatives
Government budget reflects priority for culture
Cultural life is not overwhelmed by commercial forces
Political and economic elite demonstrates appreciation for culture
Effective incentives generate private contributions (sponsorship, philanthropy)
Efficient coordination mechanisms exist between culture and other policy fields
Policies reflect visionary leadership
Impressive professional level of cultural managers
In school curricula the arts are given an important place
Structure of cultural institutions has been adapted to today's needs
Public's attention is balanced between entertainment and deeper cultural challenges
Culture is amply promoted in the media
Proper attention is given to culture's impact on the economy
Conscious efforts at equalising access to culture across the country
Limited instances of vanity projects that absorb huge sums of money
Strong and influential culture ministry
Stable financial situation of the public

Annex 2 The Dnipropetrovsk case

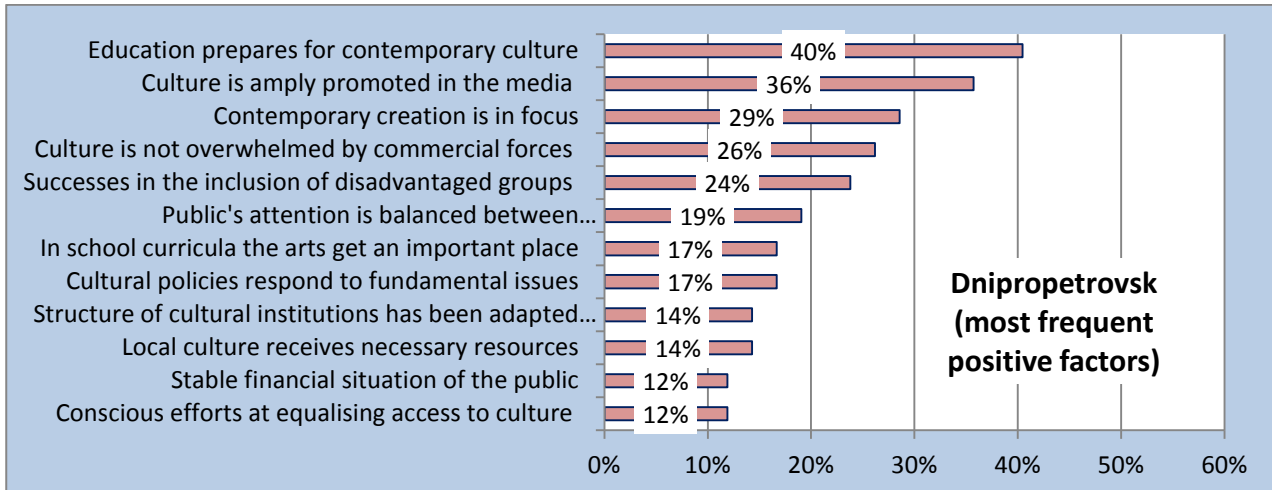
In the early piloting period of the questionnaire ad hoc small groups (like a class in a course) were asked to fill in but the instrument was applied in combat for the first time in December 2015 in the Ukrainian city of Dnipropetrovsk. The participants of [a conference](#) on regional cultural policies filled in the questionnaire. The answers were processed and presented the following day, including comparisons with findings elsewhere. The exercise is warmly recommended to be repeated on other occasions.

Diagram 22 Answers received in Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine, about problematic factors



The highly dominant position of the complaint about the government budget (and 36% wishing for a strong ministry) is symptomatic of a place with strong legacies of centralised power also in matters of culture. In a country with so many hardships it is no surprise that nearly two thirds refer to the precarious conditions of the population. Hopes are pinned to sponsorship and altruism, as over 40% expect more effective incentives in those directions.

With 3.3 choices per participant, the conference in Dnipropetrovsk provided abundant information about the perceived strengths of the climate of culture. The 40% positive opinion about the role of education is a striking difference from the 5% of the 170 respondents to the online survey.

Diagram 23 The ten most often selected positive factors in Dnipropetrovsk.

The abundance of information contained in the responses received in Dnipropetrovsk prompted their combination with ten more answers received from eastern post-soviet countries on [Diagram 24](#).

Diagram 24 Perceptions of the climate of culture in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine (52 responses).