

ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF THE AVAILABLE EUROPEAN STUDIES OF
FESTIVALS

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Summary in English

The report is divided into seven basic parts. The first one elucidates the general theoretical aspects which are at the basis of the in-depth analysis of festivals. They get their resources out of the rich heritage of philosophers, cultural anthropologists, semioticians, economists... The second part is dedicated to contemporary inter-disciplinary studies of festivals, more specifically the project “European Art Festivals and the European Public Culture”, carried out in the period 2008 – 2010. Arguments are stated defending the conception that festivals are part of parallel on-going processes of democratization and national identity as internally contradictory tendencies in Europe during the last century. There is a presentation of the connection of festivals with the ritual chronotope dimensions (Alessandro Falassi) and the stages they go through in the 20th century (Franco Bianchini). A special place is also allocated to the authors who explicate the specific features of festival events in comparison with traditional museums and art galleries. (Ivan Karp and Steven Levene). The third part deals with some concrete issues related to the contemporary picture of festivals. In modern times they are becoming much more numerous and entering the public space much more actively. The widely spread practice is for festivals to express specific forms of civil activity (Alessandro Bolo). They, similar to human life, also have their life phases. (Christopher Maughan). The fourth part is dedicated to issues which are most frequently in the focus of public policies toward festivals. The recurrent ones are the complicated relations of festivals with the local cultural institutes and the fragile balance between state interference and self-regulation (Bruno Fry). The analysis leads to the conclusion that the basic advantage of festivals is their chance to exist as flexible and open instruments which create activities in an international context. The fifth part views festivals as a result of economic activity. Three types of effects originate from this process: direct, indirect and induced (Luis César Herrero). The sixth and seventh parts are focused on the most recent European initiatives, aiming to achieve proper selection and assessment of the qualities of festivals in Europe. Among them, there stands out the project for festival research as an international inter-disciplinary consortium, focused on the dynamism of arts festivals today. Its natural continuation is the pilot project of the European Festivals association “Europe for Festivals, Festivals for Europe”. The system of selection and assessment of European festivals is based on three basic criteria: artistic dedication, participation in the life of the local communities and the European and global perspective. In this connection, the issue of how to evaluate culture and arts is

illustrated with many examples. The basic attention is given to the Hungarian rating scale, inspired by the Regional Observatory for financing culture in central and eastern Europe.