

Moldovan cultural professionals seek inspiration in Yorkshire

A group of Moldovans working to develop their country's local cultural scene will visit **West Yorkshire** from the **10–16 May** to be inspired by its rural artistic and cultural scene.

Guided by Yorkshire-born cultural policy expert Phil Wood, the Moldovans will spend a week visiting some of Yorkshire's cultural highlights, including the industrial village of **Saltaire** that's home to David Hockney's gallery, the Bronte sisters' windswept village of **Haworth**, **Leeds Art Gallery** and an accountant-turned-blacksmith who will demonstrate her skills in **Malham**. They will also be interviewed on a local community-run radio station, Two Valleys Radio in **Slaithwaite**, as well as giving a musical performance at the **Holmfirth** Festival of Folk.

The group is visiting the UK as part of a two-year development programme called **Trio** organised by the Amsterdam-based **European Cultural Foundation** (ECF). Trio brings together a local authority representative, a local non-governmental organisation and an individual from a 'House of Culture' – key players in the country's rural arts scene – and supports them in strengthening the rural artistic and cultural sector in Moldova.

The **cultural sector in rural Moldova** has to fight hard for its existence and still has a very traditional approach to the arts. This trip is designed to bring inspiration to the group, some of whom are leaving their country for the first time. They are currently applying for project funding to roll out their ideas in Moldova, which they hope will bring some social and economic renewal to neglected rural communities.

Trio is part of ECF's European Neighbourhood programme, which works across the EU, Arab-Med region, Moldova, Turkey and Ukraine and has been running for 10 years. The programme specifically aims to support the development of local cultural policies to enable people to access services that will improve the quality of their lives. Trio is delivered in partnership with the Soros Foundation Moldova.

Editor's notes:

- For more information about the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), go to www.culturalfoundation.eu. For press enquiries, email Nicola Mullenger on nmullenger@culturalfoundation.eu or call 0031 20 573 3868.
- [ECF](#) is an independent foundation based in the Netherlands and has been operating for 60 years.
- Some members of the visiting group from Moldova are available for interview, as well as change agent and author [Phil Wood](#) and other ECF representatives.
- A '[House of Culture](#)' is a building that was built in the Soviet era as a place for 'housing' cultural events and often includes a library. Trio aims to connect key local cultural players in reversing the decline of the rural cultural scene in Moldova.
- The Trio group will be visiting amongst other places: **Brighouse, Gargrave, Leeds, Haworth, Huddersfield, Malham, Mirfield, Saltaire, Slaithwaite and Wakefield**. For more details on where the Trio group will be and when, email nmullenger@culturalfoundation.eu.
- Another ECF European Neighbourhood programme, Tandem, facilitated Berlin-based fashion designer Isabell de Hillerin to work with Moldavian textile makers last year, inspiring a fashion line that has appeared in German *Vogue* and she has just launched her own online shop. For more details, visit ECF's [website](#).