



25.1.2024

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS

**Subject: Petition No 0591/2023 by E.P. (Polish) on the merger of three cultural institutions in Lubelskie Voivodeship (Poland)**

### 1. Summary of petition

The petitioner states that the board of the Lubelskie Voivodeship has decided to merge three cultural institutions in the region, namely the Center for the Meeting of Cultures (Centrum Spotkania Kultur, CSK) in Lublin, the Lublin Philharmonic (Filharmonia Lubelska, FL) and the Musical Theater (Teatr Muzyczny, TM) in order to create one new establishment on 01.01.2024, the future Opera and Philharmonic of Henryk Wieniawski. The decision is reported to be taken without previous consultation or justification. Supposedly, the institution, which is going to benefit the most from this merger, is the TM while up to 20% of current employees of CSK is going to lose their jobs. The CSK is a key project of Regional Operational Program and the total value of the project was PLN 171,939,500.00, with the amount of co-financing granted from the European Regional Development Fund under the Regional Operational Program amounting to PLN 128,892,799.76. The formal completion of construction took place in November 2015. The petitioner states that the main mission of CSK is to promote European values and that the institution succeeds in doing so, as last year it held 1600 events, which gathered 700 thousands of visitors from Poland and elsewhere. The petitioner asks for interest and informs that independent experts are currently investigating the possible misuse of the European funding.

### 2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 13 October 2023. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

### 3. Commission reply, received on 25 January 2024

The Center for the Meeting of Cultures in Lublin was co-financed by European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) within the Operational Programme for Lubelskie Voivodship 2007-2013, within Culture and Tourism priority axis (title of the project: Construction of the Center for the Meeting of Cultures in Lublin). The project value was PLN 170 982 371,82 (circa EUR 42 million) with PLN 126 325 916,86 (circa EUR 31,5 million) EU contribution.

The main purpose of the investment project called “Construction of the Center for the Meeting of Cultures in Lublin” was the construction of a cultural infrastructure of regional importance and increased access to culture through an undertaking related to the construction of the most important and largest cultural institution in the Lublin region. Centrum Spotkania Kultur is a multi-functional building, which serves also cultural education.

The effect of the project implementation is the creation of a new facility on the cultural map of the Lublin region. As a result of implemented investment activities, the quality of the cultural offer and the possibilities of its implementation have significantly improved. This aspect of the investment also improved the working conditions of artists and technical support staff for musical and theatre performances in the region.

The Commission was informed by the Managing Authority for the Regional Operational Programme in Lubelskie, that the idea of the merger was finally withdrawn by the board of the Lubelskie Voivodship and that the institutions is thriving, fulfilling its initial goal.

From the legal perspective (in terms of not compliance with regulations regarding the structural funds), judging only on the basis of the brief and incomplete information provided, the European Commission does not see any legal breach. The investment was completed in 2015 and no irregularities were identified during the so-called durability period.

### Conclusion

Since the merger is not happening anymore, the European Commission does not see the need for further intervention and welcomes the efforts to make the cultural institution funded by the ERDF thriving and fulfilling its mission.