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## A model of development strategy encompassing creative industries to reduce visual pollution - Case study: Strada Franceză, Bucharest's Old City

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### Abstract

The study is presenting a model of strategic approach of creative industries development in the Old City of Bucharest and more specifically, in the street called Strada Franceză (the French Street), having as purpose the diminution of visual pollution in the area. Among a wide range of parameters used in the interpretation of visual pollution, the analysis focuses on the condition of the abandoned buildings, as a whole or just partially. By using a complex methodology including various analysis criteria in relation with the history of the area, the legislative context, the spatial planning policies and the current socio-economic profile, two potential areas that hold resources for the development of creative industries are proposed for intervention. Forwards, a model of development strategy was shaped, together with the project stages that should be considered in order to achieve the objective of changing Strada Franceză into an important creative area of Bucharest's Old City, thus leading to a reduction of the visual pollution.

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## 1. Introduction

The visual pollution [1, 2] has a significant impact on residential areas evolution and it is related to different sources, from which the abandoned buildings represent an important element generating negative effects on the living environment. In general, the sources of visual pollution are connected to various fields, such as: commerce [3], industry [4, 5, 6], transports [7] or advertising [8] and they may conduct to land use conflicts [9].

The creative industries, carried out in abandoned buildings, may represent an important share of the creative economy and contribute to the visual pollution blur: such an example is the Republic of Užupis, a district in the vicinity of Vilnius Old City. This became, little by little, an important creative area of the city; inside this, the creative industries started their evolution after 1990, relying on the historical past of the city: the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War period and the abandoned dwellings belonging to the Jewish population; the communist era and the housing degradation due to the takeover of the abandoned dwellings by vulnerable categories of population; the economic transition process started in 1990, conducting to the ruin of the constructions from the communist industry - represented particularly by the knitting factory and the electric power station.

The creative industries represent the overlap area between culture, technology, science and commerce, involving the supply of goods and services represented by a substantial element of artistic and intellectual activities associated with an important role in social and human development [10]. Thus, the benefits of the creative industries are various: they have an important potential in the development of social and economic changes; they contribute to the diminishing of squatting areas; they make possible an increase in the creative employment; they may become a new source of competitive advantage because creativity means innovation; and last, but not least, they develop the possibilities to reassess the notion of culture, an important theme to modernity.

The aesthetic production has become more integrated into commodity production [11]. The creative industries may be defined as a set of knowledge-based activities focused on the production of meaning, contents and aesthetic attributes by means of creativity, skill and talent [12]. These qualities make the creative industries to be appreciated by all the segments of the population, but noting that the cultural involvement and spending are affected by the age structure of the population [13], reflected in their options in terms of the most desired creative industries.

The activities included in the structure of the creative industries category differ from one approach to the next, partly because of the meaning and complex phrasing used in order to define that concept. The creative industries include the category of cultural industries [14] or, on the contrary, may mean a nucleus typically represented by traditional creative arts (music, dance, theatre, literature, the visual arts, the crafts, video art, performance art, computer and multimedia art), around which develop a first layer of cultural industries (media, cinematography, book and magazine publishing, television and radio, newspapers, film and digital media) and a second layer of activities outside the cultural sphere but with some products having some degree of cultural content (advertising, tourism and architectural services) [15].

The creative industries may be divided into heavily industrialized and commodified industries [16, 17]. The former category refers to enterprises such as advertising and marketing, broadcasting, film industries, internet industry (including website creation and portal providers), mobile content industry, music industries (recording, publishing and live performance), print and electronic publishing (including books, CD-ROMs, on-line databases, information services, magazines and newspapers), video and computer games. The commodified industrialized cultural and creative activities include traditional cultural activities (visual arts - painting, sculpture), performing arts (theatre, opera, concerts and dance), museums and library services and other creative activities: crafts, fashion, design industry, household objects, architecture, cultural tourism and sport.

Another approach [18] considers a particular category of the cultural industries as an activity within the field of creative enterprises, described as a complex of activities that give birth to non-material products, mainly or even entirely sold under copyright. This refers to: publishing books, daily newspapers, magazines, periodicals, audio recordings; other publications; the creation and distribution of software; marketing; exhibitions, fairs, congresses; design; cinema and video production; radio and television; art creation; market research and mass-media; internet data services.

The development of creative industries in Bucharest is linked to an urban economic process, the tertiarization, interpreted as the natural course in the economic evolution of the cities and characterized by a permanent dynamic of enterprises. Moreover, there emerge and develop creative cities, which involve a mobilization of the “creativity”, inherent in art and culture, to create new industries and employment opportunities [19]. The trend that has emerged in the past few years, together with the increasing number of creative-industry companies that open offices in

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