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## Cultural Policy Research Award 2009

### Interview with Dr. Sophia Labadi, winner of the CPR Award 2008

Since its creation in 2004, the CPR Award has widened the map of young cultural policy researchers across Europe. For the winners, and for many applicants, the award represented an opportunity to carry out research in an area of their interest and to gain visibility and recognition at European level. This is confirmed by Dr. Sophia Labadi, a young French expert on cultural heritage and cultural diversity, winner of the CPR Award 2008.

#### **You have won the Cultural Policy Research Award last year. What was your research project ?**

My research project aims, first of all, to analyse and measure the socio-economic impacts of the regeneration of cultural heritage sites characterised by a high degree of cultural diversity. A second is to highlight sound practices that maximize the social and economic impacts of regeneration projects, in particular those that protect and enhance cultural diversity efficiently. These sound practices would be identified through in-depth European transnational quantitative and qualitative comparative analyses. The third aim of this project is to make recommendations for improving the potential social and economic impacts of regenerated sites and for enhancing cultural diversity and social cohesion. These recommendations will be based on the transnational comparative analyses.

#### **What training have you received, and which further qualifications do you have?**

In March 2006 I was awarded my PhD which focused on World Cultural Heritage issues from University College London (England). Prior to that I obtained an MA in



Cultural Heritage Studies from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London in September 1999 and graduated from the Institute of Political Sciences (Grenoble, France) in September 1998.

#### **Supposedly, the CPR Award has given you publicity and media exposure. How has this affected your academic and professional career?**

Thanks to this award, I have been able to get a job at UNESCO working on issues related to culture and development. Whilst this work at UNESCO concentrates on project management, this award has provided me with the financial means to take some time off to continue undertaking (and indulging in) practical research.

#### **Coming back to your research, it is based on a comparative approach, which is one of the key criteria for the award. How do you access your sources of information? Is this an easy task?**

I made contacts and identified case studies and sources of information at conferences. The 2008 annual conference of ENCATC, for instance, was the perfect

place for networking and gathering information on case studies. Of course, the World Wide Web is nowadays one of the main tools for accessing sources of information. My colleagues working in the field of cultural heritage provided further guidance and sources of information on case studies.

Needless to say, information on Western Europe tends to be easier to find than on Eastern Europe.

**What are your plans for the future?**

I would like to find a suitable solution for my research to be published. This would ensure that my results can be widely disseminated. Indeed, at the moment, the report that I am writing is unpublished. At present, my research only focuses on European case studies. I would be interested in widening the scope

of this research to non-European countries. Such a new research would be essential since it would improve the potential social and economic impacts of regenerated sites in non-European countries.

**Looking back to your experiences since last year, what advice would you give young researchers applying for the award?**

This award is a great opportunity to undertake innovative and challenging research. I would encourage any young researcher to apply for it. Nonetheless, interested applicants should not underestimate that good research takes time!

Interview: Claudia Ritter De Decker,  
ENCATC Director for Projects &  
Communication