

To whom it may concern

24.03.2022

I write in support of the Gallery Matica Srpska's nomination for the 2021 ICOM Serbia Awards. The opinion I express here is based and informed by the regular exchanges I have had with the gallery's team working on the European Capital of Culture title Novi Sad 2022.

May I start by confirming that Gallery Matica Srpska continues to be consistently acknowledged within international circles as one of the leading museums in the Balkans? This acknowledgment comes in response to its forward-looking innovative and human-centered vision informing its extensive outreach and programming, including exhibitions.

The gallery has embraced the latest trends in museum practice with ease and enthusiasm, also going beyond by developing its bespoke human-centered programming and outreach. The thinking that informs the gallery's ethos goes beyond the restrictions of place and location, particularly with regards to participatory practice and accessibility. The Gallery of Matica Srpska has also invested heavily in its international vocation not only through its exchanges and collaboration with international peers but also through its educational program developed as a tool with which to learn a foreign language and engage with European culture.

I can comfortably cite the project *Novi Sad Citizens Choose* as a good example of the museum's forward-looking vision. By comparison, the human-centered approach that this project stands for is still far from being implemented by peer national art museums in Germany, Austria, and the European continent at large. The museum has also expanded beyond its walls into the square right in front thus creating an interim zone of creative expression and activity to serve the purpose of a transition space between the outside and the gallery spaces within the building. These initiatives are, nonetheless, well balanced by the extensively researched exhibitions that are a most commendable contribution to knowledge and academia.

The Gallery deserves all the recognition due and that would also, by consequence, acknowledge best practices spearheaded by the gallery for other museums and galleries to emulate.



Sandro Debono PhD
Museum Thinker | Consultant & Curator

Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres (France)

Consultant, Culture, Office of the President of the Republic (Malta)
Associate lecturer at University of Malta

International Advisory Board Member at Anchorage Museum, Alaska
Registered Expert at European Capital of Cultures Capacity Building Platform