A full-day programme of the opening of the European Capital of Culture is underway in Rijeka. Ahead of the ceremony at the Croatian National Theatre, statements were delivered to journalists by organizers and artists
**Head of the City of Rijeka Culture Department: „Tonight we are celebrating the birth of a new city!“**

Saturday, 1 February 2020, is a great day for Rijeka, and the mood on the streets is joyful despite the drizzling rain. Prior to the beginning of the ceremony at the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka, representatives of the City of Rijeka, Rijeka 2020, artists and directors arrived at the Press Center located on the Marina boat at the Port of Rijeka to share their impressions with journalists and respond to numerous requests for their statements.

The mayor of the City of Rijeka, **Vojko Obersnel**, also enjoyed the cheerful mood in the city this morning: *“This morning I* *was hanging out* *with citizens* *and attended most of the events. We can already be very satisfied. The streets and squares are full of Rijeka inhabitants but also guests, and I believe that everything will culminate tonight, during the performance of the Opera Industriale.”*

Head of the City of Rijeka Culture Department, **Ivan Šarar**, said that tonight we are celebrating a birth of a new city because, as he claims, nothing will be the same as of today. He also referred to the location, the Rijeka Port, chosen for the central event, the "Opera Industriale". *“That, what is going to take place in the Rijeka Port, which could not take place anywhere else – among all that roughness and mechanical forces that have created this city - is unique. I am really happy that we did not organize a cultural and orderly event, but instead we will demonstrate the true Rijeka.“*

Director of Rijeka 2020, **Emina Višnić**, confirmed that it really is so and pointed out that Rijeka is burning and buzzing today. She also reminded everyone that today is only the beginning of a year that will be abundant in numerous culture events.

**Irena Kregar Šegota**, the director of partnership and communication of Rijeka2020, pointed out that uniqueness of Rijeka2020 is the cooperation between the citizens, their initiatives and civil organizations which contributed to the entire programme. *“This programme is the result of the collaboration of over 120 organizations from 40 countries. We have truly brought the slogan “Active citizens in the active city” to life - the citizens are taking part in the programme throughout the day, and entrepreneurs who support this project have joined as well. We have shown what the word ‘participation’ means. That is the greatest legacy of this project - the citizens who will continue to create and build this city".*

The artistic team which created Opera Industriale also shared their impressions. The director, **Dalibor Matanić,** pointed out: "*After the last night's final rehearsal, I can say that the opening is erasing the limits - the limits between the city and the stage, the musicians and citizens, between the actual event and the TV broadcast. Opera Industriale honours the workers, which is a truly special moment. I would like the rain to fall this evening during the crescendo of the Opera - that would be a real opening."*

**Zoran Medved**, part of the JMZM duo which came up with the musical framework of this piece, explained that the idea was to depict the sounds the city itself produces. He pointed out that the most demanding par was to incorporate such a large number of musicians into one piece, which is something the conductor, maestro **Frano Đurović,** gave a great contribution to. *“130 performers are taking part in the performance of the piece, but thousands of spectators as well, who will join in by cheering and ringing. The speciality are grinders, drums on the rooftop, and about 25 guitar players from various bands from Rijeka*”, he concluded.

The urban Rijeka's Opera Industriale is starting at 7.30 p.m. in Rijeka Port.