

The European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) Post-2019 Online consultation

Analysis of the results



Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Purpose of the report.....	1
1.2	Presentation of the data	1
1.3	Structure of the report	2
2.0	Profile of respondents.....	3
2.1	Overall respondent profile.....	3
2.2	Private individuals	5
2.3	Organisations	5
2.4	Public authorities	6
3.0	Main findings.....	7
3.1	Objective of the ECoC	7
3.2	Criteria to become an ECoC.....	11
3.3	Selection procedure.....	15
3.4	Duration of the event	18
3.5	Territory covered.....	19
3.6	Participation of European third countries.....	22
3.7	Implementing measures	23
3.8	Visibility	27
	Annex One: Profile of respondents	A1

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the report

As part of the preparations for a new legal basis for the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) after 2019, the European Commission launched an online consultation on 27 October 2010, which remained open until 12 January 2011. This consultation was accessible in 5 languages: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Through the consultation, the Commission invited individuals, organisations and public authorities to express their view on the future of the ECoC. In particular, respondents were asked to give their opinion on the objectives, rules and procedures of the ECoC Action. This report presents the main findings which emerged from the consultation. In addition to the online consultation and in order to further inform the consultation process, the European Commission organised a public meeting in Brussels on 2 March 2011, which was open to all interested individuals and organisations. The present report focuses solely on the results of the online consultation.

1.2 Presentation of the data

A total of 212 people participated in the consultation: 205 people answered the online questionnaire, 4 sent back the answers to the questionnaire in another format, and 3 organisations submitted written contributions in the form of position papers. It should be noted that participation in the online consultation was voluntary and spontaneous, so the sample is a self-selected one and not necessarily representative of the overall European population. The results presented in this paper cannot be interpreted as those of a survey, but rather as the expression of the opinion of a number of stakeholders and citizens with an interest in cultural issues and in European policy. It should be noted that a significant number of responses from non-EU respondents contained significant repetition, suggesting a co-ordinated response.

The online questionnaire consisted of both open and closed questions. The statistics stemming from the closed questions are presented here in the forms of tables and charts. The answers to the open questions have been analysed thoroughly and used to complement a number of quantitative answers. However, since open questions were optional and only a minority of respondents answered them, the responses to open questions have been used exclusively in a qualitative way (with no statistics derived), in order to illustrate certain phenomena with more detail or to exemplify suggestions for improvement. Some quoted comments have been translated from the source language or edited for reasons of grammar or spelling.

1.3 Structure of the report

The structure of this report follows the structure of the questionnaire: after presenting the profile of respondents (section 2), we present the main findings for each of the following areas:

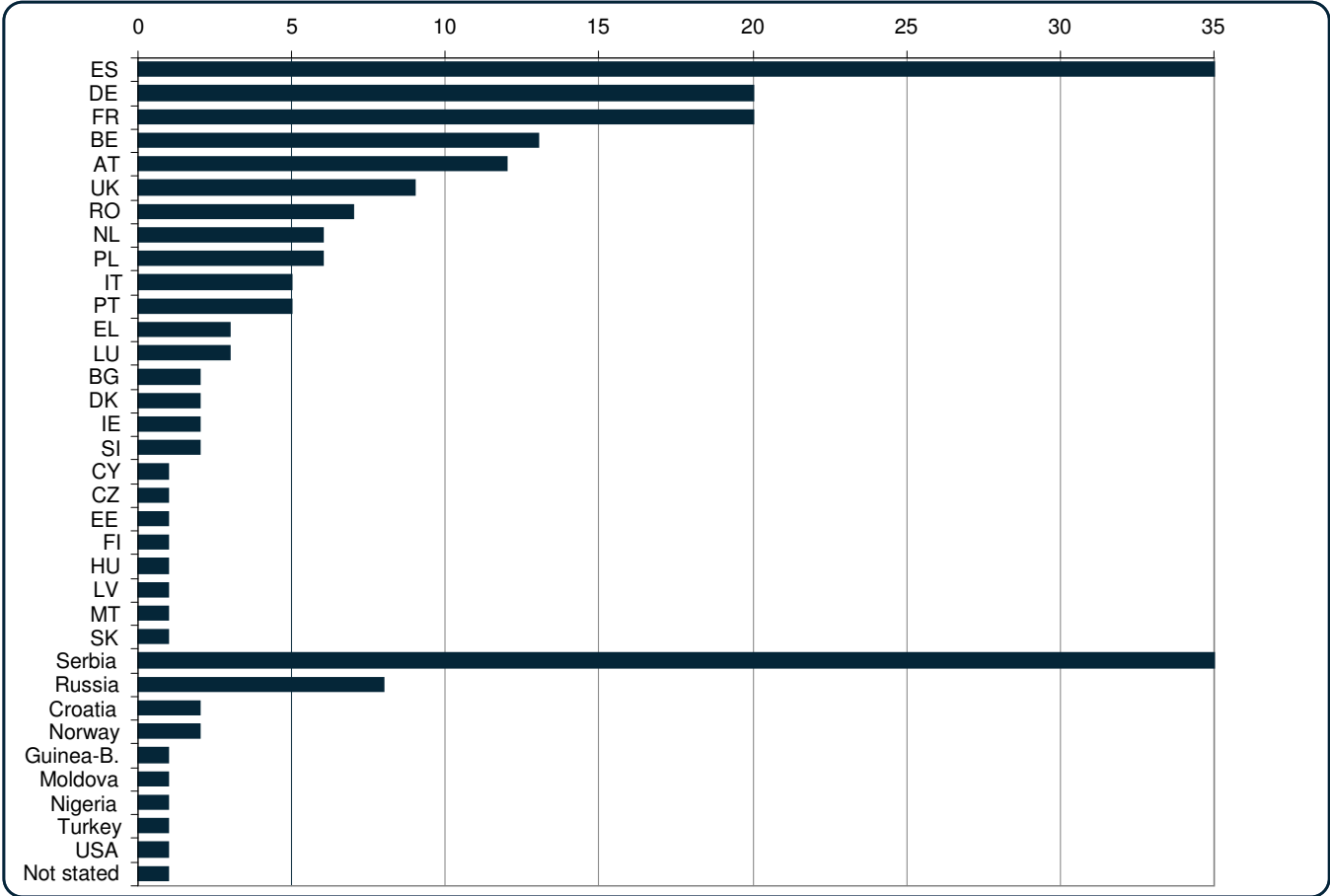
- Objective of the ECoC;
- Criteria to become an ECoC;
- Selection procedure;
- Duration of the event;
- Territory covered;
- Participation of European third countries;
- Implementing measures; and
- Visibility.

2.0 Profile of respondents

2.1 Overall respondent profile

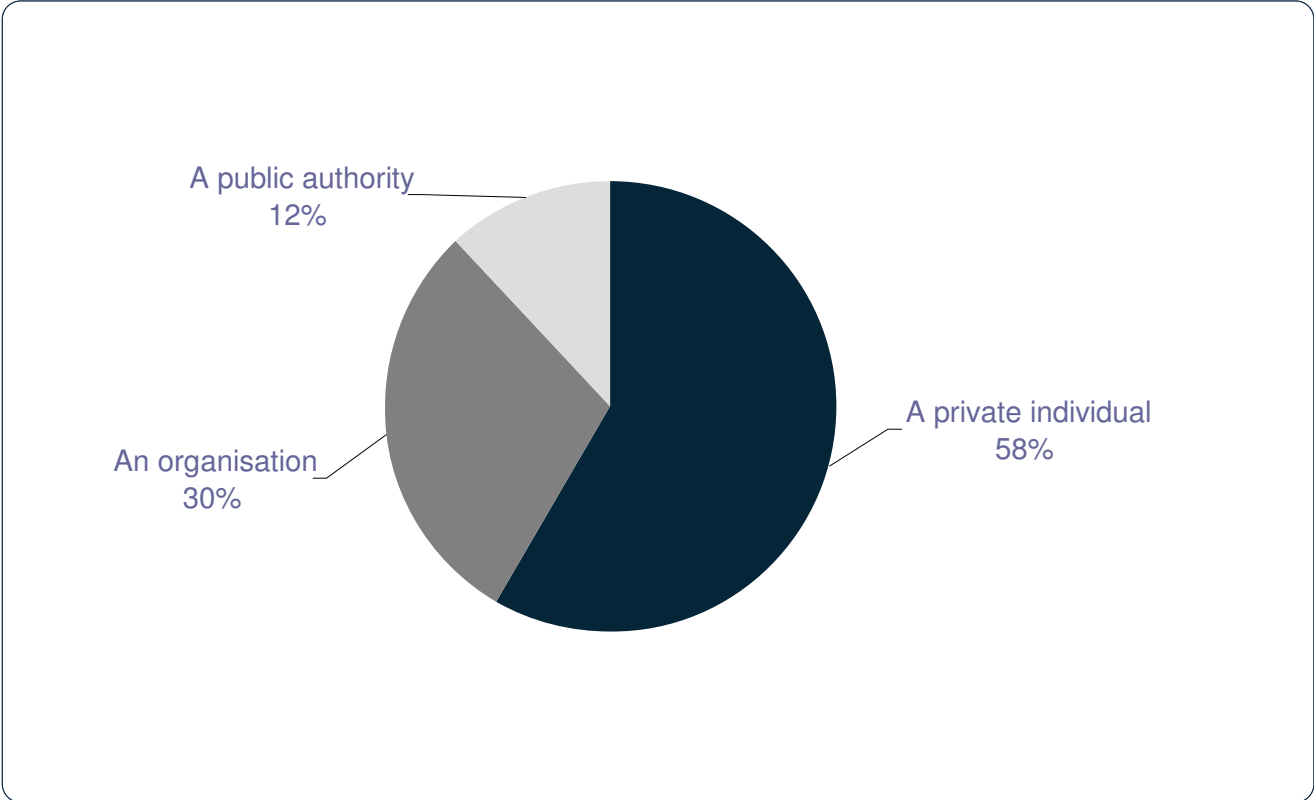
The 209 respondents to the questionnaire come from 34 countries, including most EU Member States. Lithuania and Sweden are the only Member States not represented amongst the respondents. Some 25% of respondents were from outside the EU, 17% (of the total) from Serbia alone and 4% from the Russian Federation. Indeed, Serbia is the most represented country in the sample, along with Spain. This high representation is directly linked to the wish expressed by Belgrade to participate in the competition for the title after 2019 and to the strong mobilisation around this idea. Similarly, the current competition in Spain for the 2016 title has stimulated great interest in the ECoC concept from across the country. Other well-represented countries (i.e. featuring more than 10 respondents) are Austria, Belgium, France and Germany, although the last two are actually under-represented when population size is taken into account. Other under-represented countries include Italy, Poland and the UK. A table with the exact number of respondents per country can be found in the annex.

Figure 2.1 Country of origin of respondents



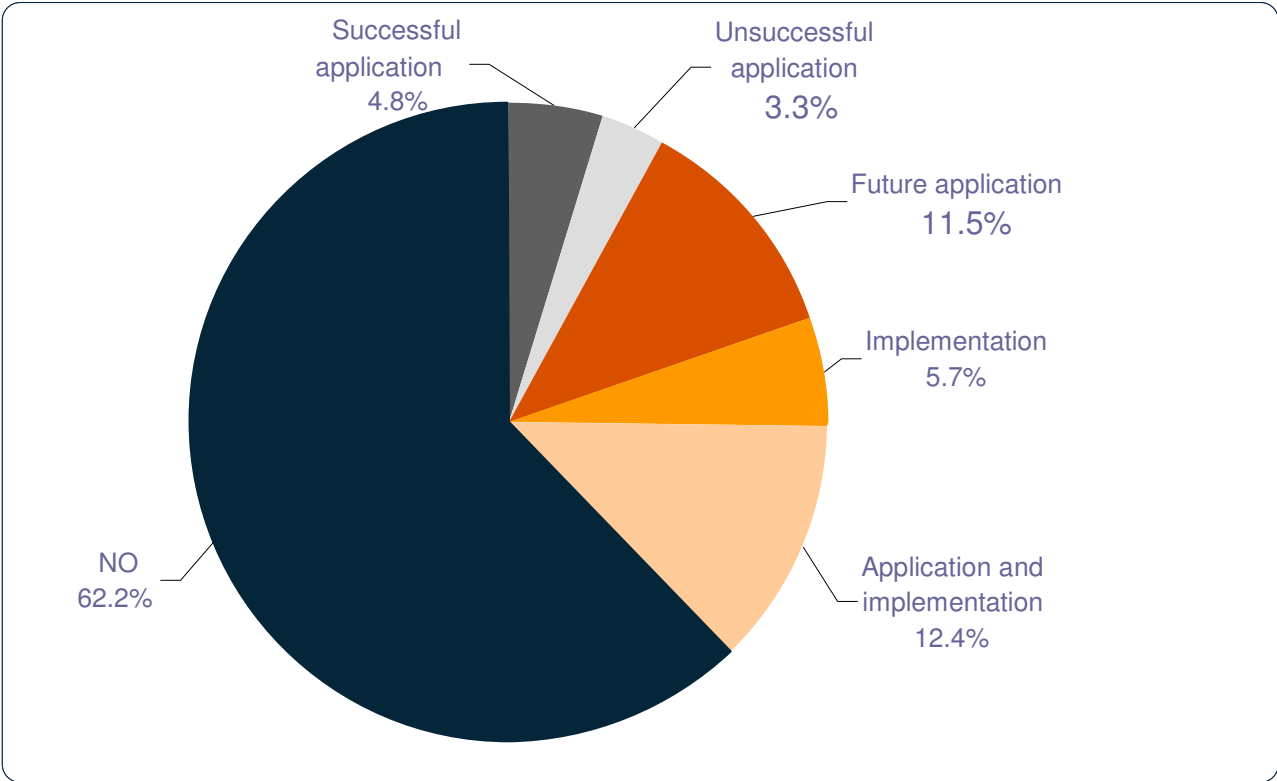
The online consultation was open to individuals, organisations and public authorities. As shown in Figure 2.2, the majority of respondents participated in the consultation as private individuals. In the rest of the analysis, we detail the breakdown of opinions by each of these three groups when there are significant differences between them or where it is necessary to avoid the data being skewed towards private individuals' responses.

Figure 2.2 Capacity in which respondents participate



Overall, 62% of respondents have not been involved in the application or implementation of an ECoC. A higher proportion of organisation and public authority representatives have experience in ECoC (52% and 60% respectively). This is significantly higher than the levels of involvement for individuals (26%).

Figure 2.3 Prior or existing involvement in ECoC



2.2 Private individuals

Some 122 private individuals participated in the online consultation (58% of the total). They come from a variety of backgrounds, with 41% from cultural sectors (heritage, visual and performing arts, audio-visual, literature, architecture, design, applied arts and other cultural activities). Notably, 24% work in education, research and training sector. A detailed breakdown can be found in the annex.

2.3 Organisations

Responses were received from 62 representatives of organisations (30% of the total). Of these, 50% are from the not-for-profit sector (34% from cultural associations, 16% from other not-for-profits), 29% from public organisations (21% from cultural public organisations), 8% from the private sector and 13% from 'other' organisations. Amongst the respondents operating in the cultural sector (60%), the performing arts and the heritage sub-sectors were well represented (respectively 16% and 11%).

Most of these organisations are very small: 58% of respondents come from organisations which have less than 11 employees, while only 3% represent large organisations (over 250 employees).

52% of the respondents from organisations are or have been involved in an ECoC, evenly spread among the different possibilities (unsuccessful application, successful application, implementation, etc.). Tables with exact figures can be found in the annex.

2.4 Public authorities

In total, 25 responses (12%) were submitted by public authorities, mostly local authorities (60% of this subgroup). Regional and national authorities are also represented in the sample (respectively 12% and 24%), but no international organisation participated in the consultation. The remaining 4% were 'other' kinds of public authorities.

60% of responding public authorities are or have been involved in the preparation or implementation of an ECoC. 32% are of have been involved in both the application and the implementation of an ECoC and 24% are currently involved in an application.

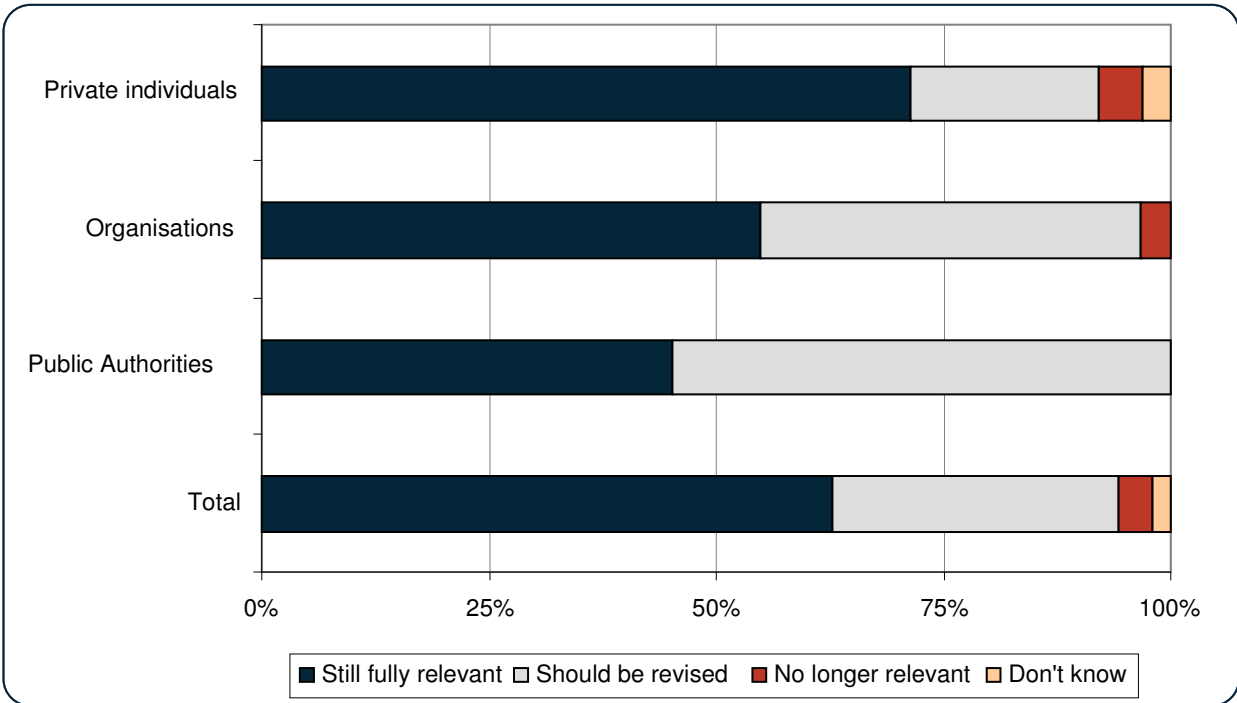
3.0 Main findings

3.1 Objective of the ECoC

3.1.1 Overall objective

Under the current legal basis for the ECoC, the objective of the action is: "to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens".¹ Some 63% of the respondents believed that this objective was still fully relevant. 32% argued that it should be revised 'in light of the evolution of the ECoC'. Analysis shows that organisations and public authorities were more likely to suggest revising the objective than private individuals (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Satisfaction with ECoC objective



¹ Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019.

Over the 26 years of the ECoC, this overall objective has broadly been interpreted within the legal basis for ECoC as two specific objectives relating to "developing cultural activities" and "promoting the European dimension of and through culture"; these two objectives have generally been at the heart of the individual ECoC themselves. Over the years, some cities holding the title have adopted a third main objective – that of supporting their social and economic development through culture. This has reflected broader trends in cultural policy that has emphasised the possibility of putting culture at the service of non-cultural objectives. However, there remains opposition to the view that cultural policy should be justified in this way, since it risks skewing policy and practice towards those activities that have maximum wider impacts, which arguably militates against the funding of 'risky' and/or avant garde cultural activities. This tension was equally reflected in the qualitative comments supplied by respondents to the consultation. Some suggested that the overall objective should feature an explicit reference to the potential long-term economic and social benefits or the Europe 2020 Strategy:

- *"The objective and criteria need to be revised in light of the evolution of the ECoC, which has seen some Capitals of Culture enjoy significant long-term socio-economic benefits, which are not, at present, part of the stated objective. If cultural investment is to be linked to wider agendas, it is important to determine what those agendas are. Related to this is the need to determine what the balance should be between the short-term aim to stage a successful year-long programme of cultural activities with an intangible legacy, and the long-term aim of investing in infrastructure and creating a lasting and durable legacy."*
- *"The objective of the former legislative framework is still relevant, but it should be tinkered with in light of the evolution of the ECoC, the implementation of the EU 2020 Strategy, the three objectives of the European Agenda for culture in a globalising world, the objectives of the cohesion policy and other new evolutions and trends. Therefore, we should also take into account the role of culture in local and regional development, the promotion of creativity and innovation, as well as the expression of the European common values of an extended European Union."*

A few, however, strongly disagreed, for example:

- *"(There is) dissatisfaction with cities benefiting from attention and investment, as opposed to celebrating European culture and values."*

Overall, there was little consensus on the specific nature of any revision to the overall objective. Given the general satisfaction with the current overall objective, it would seem appropriate to retain the essence of this objective whilst continuing to allow individual ECoC the "space" to interpret it in their own way.

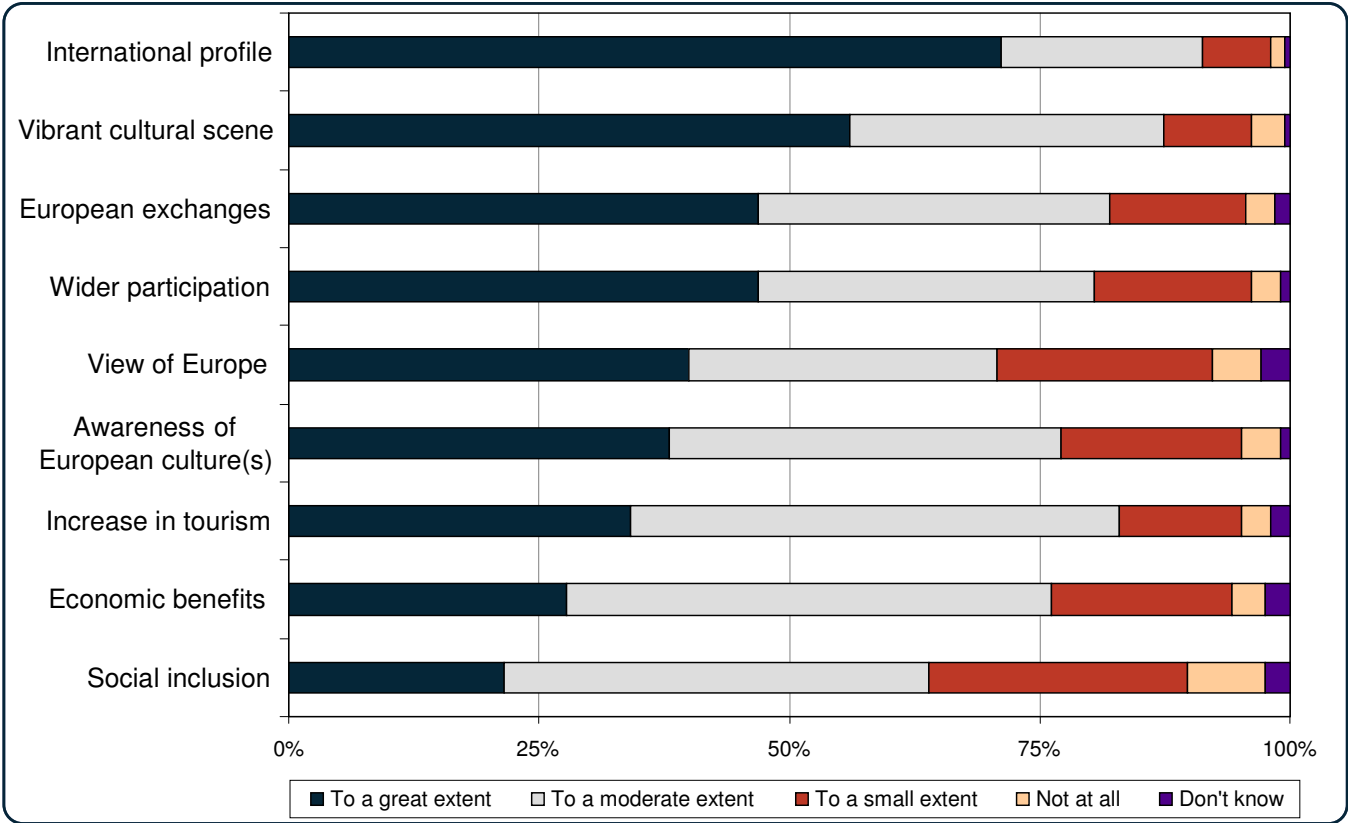
- *"The new objective should be a broad one, in order to allow each city to define its key mission."*

3.1.2 Long-term benefits

Previous research into the 1995-2004 ECoC found that they had a positive impact in terms of media resonance, the development of culture and tourism and the recognition by inhabitants of the importance of their city having been designated.² Evaluations of the 2007-09 ECoC have found that they had made the cultural scene of the cities more vibrant and more recognised internationally and increased the professionalism and capacity of cultural operators. Some, but not all, have also generated significant economic and urban development benefits.³

Respondents were asked about the extent to which the ECoC title creates specific benefits for holders. As shown in Figure 3.2, the **most tangible impacts** of being a Capital of Culture are believed to be a **'better international profile and image for the city'** and **'a more vibrant cultural scene'**.

Figure 3.2 Long term benefits of holding the ECoC title



² European Cities and Capitals of Culture; Study Prepared for the European Commission; Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004.

³ Ex-Post Evaluation of 2007 and 2008 European Capitals of Culture; ECOTEC Research & Consulting 2009; Ex-Post Evaluation of 2009 European Capitals of Culture; ECOTEC Research & Consulting 2010

Overall, the majority of respondents (total of those responding "to a great extent" and "to a moderate extent") felt that the title offered all of the possible benefits suggested. However, a **'more favourable view of Europe and the EU'** and **'social inclusion through culture'** were reported to be the **least tangible benefits** of being an ECoC. These findings suggest that the ECoC remains very much a cultural event in its essence and in terms of the legacy that it leaves. Economic and social benefits have nonetheless been very significant, though the evidence of recent evaluations demonstrate that these and other long-term benefits vary widely between the individual title-holders. This variation featured in the qualitative comments, for example:

- *"There is a big difference among the results of the ECoC in all of these fields. For example, tourism has been sustainably increased since 2003 in Graz, jobs in culture have been created and still exist in Lille after 2004, some cities got a lot of cultural venues and improved the cultural scene, some cities increased social inclusion through culture participating to other relevant EU-projects by the occasion of their ECoC year."*
- *"Research results suggest that this [long-term outcome] depends considerably on the initiatives and also the capital development work the particular ECoC has instigated. If the ECoC year is primarily focussed on building high-profile venues, especially for the performing arts, there is a tendency that post-ECoC, the budgets allocated for those venues eat up a significant portion of the city's funding capacities for culture and the arts, arguably effectively diminishing the vibrancy of the cultural scene. In many other cases, the ECoC year has led to a short-term rise of people engaging in cultural and creative consumption activities but not to more people engaging in cultural and creative production activities, resulting in having virtually no effect on the vibrancy of the cultural scene."*
- *"The results vary significantly from city to city, and so would my answers to the questions above. In some ECoC, the answers to some would clearly be 'to a small extent' or 'not at all'. Much rigour needs to be applied to independent evaluation tools and techniques, and lessons learned."*

In the qualitative comments supplied, there was consensus, however, that capturing the long-term benefits of ECoC (whether cultural, economic or social in nature), required effective legacy planning and associated governance arrangements to be put in place. For example:

- *"The way in which and the extent to which cities being/having been ECoC generate these benefits widely differs from one city to the other. This depends on various determinants both at the political/administrative level and the level of the institution that implements the capital year."*
- *"The benefits can be long-term but there is a need to help cities to put in place long-term mechanisms for local cultural governance joined to planning, economic development, tourism, education and community development."*

3.1.3 The ECoC after 2019

The current legal basis for the ECoC (Decision 1622/2006/EC) defines a chronological list of Member States entitled to nominate ECoC up to and including 2019. In the absence of any action by the EU, Decision 1622/2006/EC would lapse and the ECoC title would not be awarded beyond 2019.

Respondents were therefore asked whether **the ECoC should continue after 2019**, to which a massive majority (91% of those who answered the question) answered "Yes".

Of those who believe that ECoC should not continue after 2019 (6%) or who did not express an opinion (4%), most are individuals. Very few provided a justification why they opposed the continuation of the ECoC action through the space for open comments. The few comments that were offered here tended to relate to much wider issues, with the single exception quoted below:

- *"There appears to be a resistance to full, frank, independent evaluation of failed governance models, poor programming strategies, ineffective communication, inadequate planning, and weak management, as well as the difficulties caused through the inadequacy of current selection procedures, the over-politicisation of the event in many cities, and the absence of a longer-term framework for sustained cultural development. This indicates to me that the programme is flawed and that the basic concept needs to be reviewed (independently) in the light of past experience".*

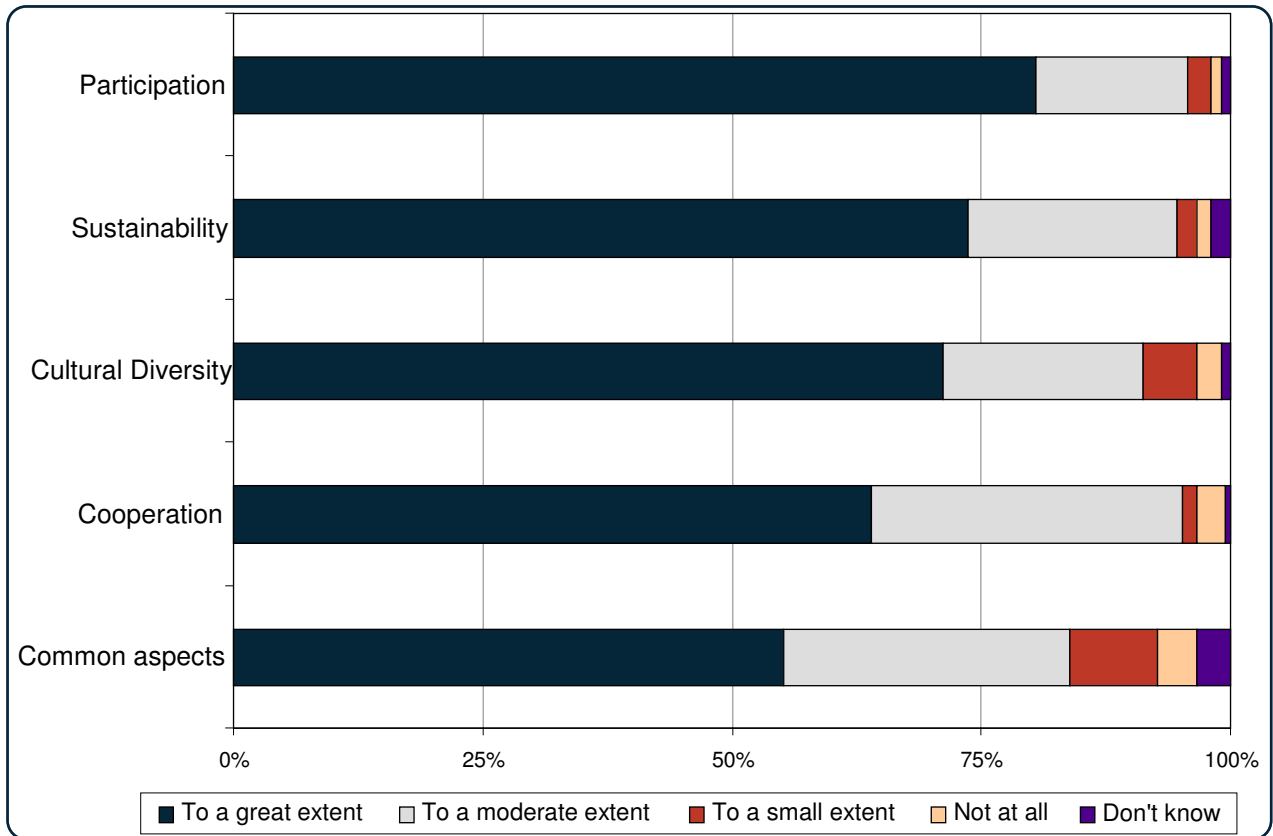
3.2 Criteria to become an ECoC

The current legal basis for the ECoC requires their cultural programmes to satisfy two broad categories of criteria relating to "the European Dimension" and "City and Citizens". The respondents were presented with the five current criteria to become an ECoC and asked whether each criterion was relevant and whether it required more emphasis in the future ECoC.

- European dimension: foster **co-operation** between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector;
- European dimension: highlight the richness of **cultural diversity** in Europe;
- European dimension: bring the **common aspects** of European cultures to the fore;
- City and citizens: foster the **participation** of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad.
- City and citizens: be **sustainable** and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

As can be seen from Figure 3.3, all five criteria were deemed relevant 'to a great extent' by at least 55% of the respondents. Significantly, respondents felt that the two criteria relating to 'City and Citizens' were most relevant, particularly that of **participation of citizens**, which was found by 81% of respondents to be relevant 'to a great extent'.

Figure 3.3 Relevance of criteria to become an ECoC

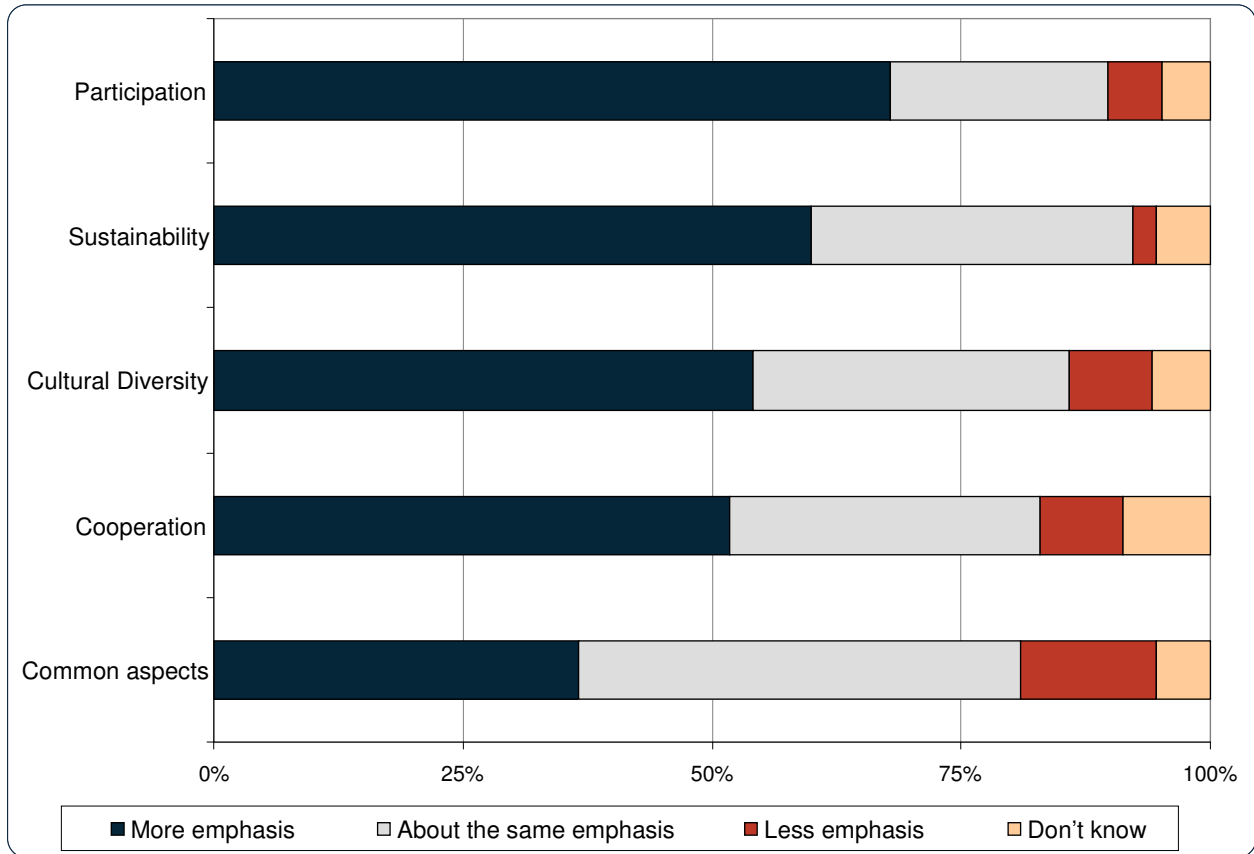


There is therefore little doubt that interested **stakeholders support the criteria** already present in the current legal basis for the ECoC. This reflects recent research which has found that cities use the ECoC to pursue their own local policy objectives (which typically relate to local development and social inclusion) but recognise the potential for the European dimension to reinforce their own developmental and cultural objectives.⁴

The views on whether each criterion should be given more or less emphasis in future mirror the opinions on their relevance. Generally, respondents thought they should be given **at least the same if not more emphasis in the future**: 81% think so for the 'common aspects' criterion (the one which received less support), which goes up to 92% in the case of 'participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings'. Again, this perhaps reflects the fact that cities recognise the potential for the European dimension to reinforce their own developmental and cultural objectives.

⁴ Ex-Post Evaluation of 2009 European Capitals of Culture; ECOTEC Research & Consulting 2010.

Figure 3.4 Future emphasis on criteria to become an ECoC



The strong support for the **"city and citizens" criteria** was also reflected in the open comments, which supported greater involvement of citizens, in particular young people:

- *"The meaning of participation should be transformed into active participation, so that the indicators and the evaluation of the projects shall consider a new dimension of this criterion. Citizens should be involved in the projects as their creators not audience only. Such an approach would strengthen the integration of the citizens among themselves, as well as with the city itself."*
- *"It is crucial to encourage the participation of citizens who do not have the habit or the means (financial and others) to travel and discover other cultures."*
- *"...identify clear target groups, like young people, and even among those again identify some specific targets, i.e. young professionals, non-intellectuals"*
- *"It is important to have the involvement of educational institutions: universities, secondary schools, primary schools."*

Although long-term impact already features in the criteria, many felt that the **legacy** dimension merited reinforcement. Several respondents suggested giving more explicit encouragement in the criteria to cities which have already developed a long-term cultural development strategy that predates the application and goes beyond the title year. Some respondents considered that the implementation of a medium-term to long-term cultural strategy could even be a prerequisite for candidates.

- *"Obliging the candidate cities to articulate a mid-term cultural development strategy that would go 4 years beyond the ECoC year".*

- *"Cities must be obliged to set their plans in a longer-term framework of development and have clear delivery strategies in place".*
- *"Sustainability: if a culture strategy does not have the sustainability and legacy of projects in mind as part of the concept, it is not sustainable. To achieve these ends it is advisable to budget for some reserves."*
- *"Each ECoC needs a vision for their future. The aim should be that the investments in culture after the Cultural Capital year are at a higher level than before."*
- *"[A legacy] is not only a matter of resources. It is a matter of planning commitment... At the same time, it seems relevant to the cultural and as well as social, economic and educational aspects of a Capital of Culture year to think medium and long term. Certainly the complete structure of the organisation responsible for the Capital of Culture cannot be continued as a whole beyond the duration of the Capital of Culture year. However, even at the application stage, suggestions should be included about how to formulate a sustainable strategy from the positive developments and the structures that are created."*

Many respondents thought the **European dimension** of ECoC could be strengthened, as well as the co-operation dimension of the action (including **co-operation between ECoC**). For example:

- *"In difficult economic and political times, the risk is that solidarity and mutual understanding are not sustained. For that reason, the main aim of the ECoC Action must continue to be that of raising awareness of the richness of cultural diversity in Europe and the shared characteristics of European cultures."*
- *"Generally, the European element should be at the fore, otherwise ECoC loses its Unique Selling Point".*
- *"Many cities tend to see their role as ECoC as a mega-festival lasting throughout the festive year, or as a big showing-off/promotional operation, forcing an expensive and often ineffective destination marketing campaign. Instead, the programming components should privilege international co-operative ties and complex, preferably multilateral projects, involving local cultural resources and those from other European countries and even those beyond Europe."*
- *"Candidates should be invited to write a bid based on the co-operation with cultural operators, artists and cities in other European countries. This aspect is rather narrow in the 2005-2016 bids. In fact, this co-operation is not essential to win. This criterion must be emphasised to make ECoC a real engine of cultural co-operation. Now, ECoC bids are designed to improve the "national" image of the city and to improve international profile of the city."*
- *"In order to make the ECoC programme more sustainable, cities (or preferably clusters of cities, either regional or transnational) should link their programmes, not only within one year, but also from year to year. This will help to prevent the event from being a one-off and to create a real movement/network, in which expertise and know-how will be passed on."*

Some participants also suggested that existing criteria could be clarified, which reflect the lessons learnt through the **selection and implementation** of past ECoC. The clarification of the criteria and of the way bids are assessed would benefit candidate cities and the panel of experts responsible for the selection

and monitoring of ECoC. This applies, for example, to the candidate cities' budgets or to the way the European dimension is measured.

- *"The selection process needs to include a thorough assessment of candidate cities' plans for raising the funding they need. Where they are looking to national, regional and local governments and other public bodies for funding, candidate cities should be asked to prove that their plans are based on firm commitments."*
- *"As noted in the ex-post evaluation of the cultural capitals of Europe in 2009, these criteria are still vague and allow considerable room for interpretation. We suggest, therefore, to define more specific criteria for implementing a European dimension (e.g. minimum number of European co-operation projects, "European" theme implemented throughout the program, common European values and history)."*

3.3 Selection procedure

Until 2004, the ECoC were selected according to an inter-governmental process. Decision 1419/1999/EC then introduced a chronological list of Member States entitled to nominate candidates for ECoC from 2005-2019.⁵ The 1999 Decision was amended in 2005 in order to integrate the ten countries that acceded to the EU in 2004.⁶ A 2006 Decision retained the chronological list, whilst adding the two countries that had acceded in 2007.⁷ The 2006 Decision also introduced a competitive selection process which applied as of the 2013 ECoC, with transitional provisions for 2011 and 2012. Whilst the number of bids submitted under this new process has varied - from one (Belgium 2015) to fifteen (Spain 2016) – successful and unsuccessful candidates have nonetheless reported benefits from the application process itself.

Respondents were asked how future European Capitals of Culture should be selected.⁸ The options offered were 'using chronological ordering to ensure equal opportunity for each Member State', 'having an open competition', 'finding an alternative solution', or 'don't know'.

Overall, an open competition was most favoured, with 37% of respondents choosing this option. This was not an overwhelming level of support, and 34% believed selection should be based on an alternative solution, whilst 25% agreed with the idea of using a chronological order of Member States (Figure 3.5).

Respondents from outside the EU held a different perspective to Member States, with heavier support for an, as yet undefined, alternative solution to selection. This reflects an appreciation that the two defined options do not allow for applicants in non-Member States, and contrasts with Member States' support for open competition or chronological ordering. However, these results must be treated with caution as many non-EU responses were marked by significant repetition.

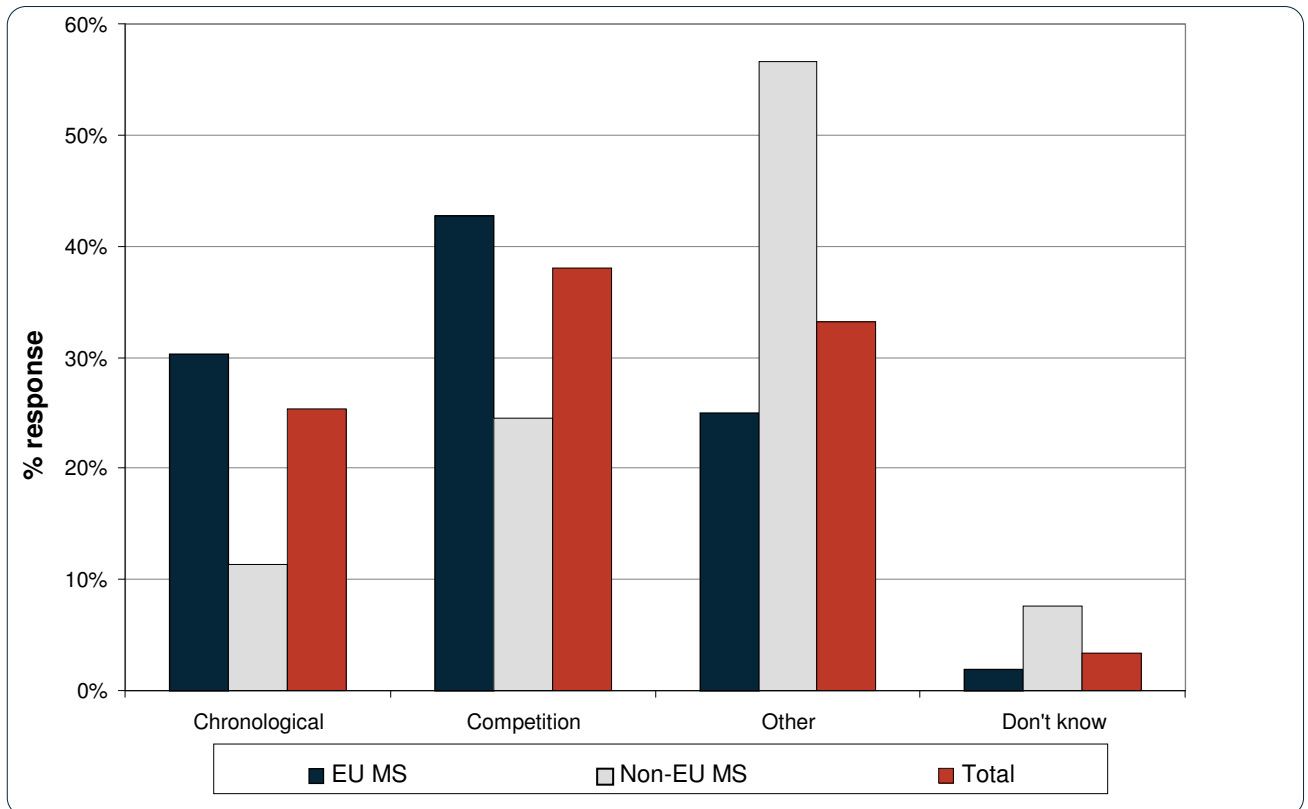
⁵ Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019.

⁶ Decision No 649/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2005 amending Decision No 1419/1999/EC establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019.

⁷ Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019.

⁸ It must be stated here that any option must respect the Treaty principle of equality between Member States.

Figure 3.5 Selection procedure



The experience of recent years suggests that the knowledge that a competition would be held in a particular Member State has stimulated cities to apply that might not otherwise have done so; many are cities that would not be traditionally considered as cultural centres. The list of Member States – and the subsequent national competitions – has raised awareness of and interest in the ECoC on the part of the media and of citizens in all of the Member States involved to date. Perhaps reflecting this positive experience, the qualitative comments clearly emphasised the importance of **ensuring continuing wide coverage** for the award across all Member States but also highlighted the risk of not generating credible candidates in some Member States. For example:

- *“The selection post-2019 should be based on a competition in order to select only the very best candidate each year.”*
- *“The very small numbers of bidders for a number of ECoC and the dearth of major city candidates in some countries shows that the pattern needs to change.”*
- *“If cities would compete individually there is the danger of smaller Member States being over-looked.”*
- *“...a “Champions League-isation” of the process that potentially leads to the same countries being chosen over and over again does not reflect the rich diversity of the cultural landscape in Europe.”*

For that reason, some participants favoured either some sort of restricted form of **open competition** (either geographical or in time) **or a combination of open competition and chronological list** with, for example, one city being chosen from the list of Member States and another city chosen through a European-wide open competition. Respondents also highlighted some of the pros and cons of different approaches, for example, the risk that cities selected via an open competition would not come from a diversity of Member States. Comments included:

- *"Open competition is a good approach. However, this might lead to a big number of candidate cities every year whose selection process can't be handled by the Commission anymore. Hence, a combination of open competition and geographical restrictions might be advisable."*
- *"An open competition has the advantage that not every State must make a nomination. However, the large Member States would certainly have an advantage which might produce an imbalance in the distribution of the Capitals. [...] It is suggested to consider a variant of the selection process including two elements – the possibility not to participate and respect for the territorial balance in the selection of the Capitals. For example, a waiting period could be introduced whereby a Member State may not nominate candidates during a number of years after holding the ECoC title, while the States which have not held the title for a long time would have priority."*
- *"The Commission could publish a list of Member States from 2020 to 2046 (one year for each of the 27 Member States). The current approach would be followed for these countries (i.e. an internal competition and a European jury). Each year, another title would be awarded on the basis of an open call for proposals, with a maximum of 5 or 6 cities per Member State, excluding the country on the chronological list, which could not present any candidates through the open competition."*

The number of cities holding the title each year has varied since the inception of the ECoC: from 1985 to 1999, only one city held the title each year; in 2000, as an exception, nine cities were awarded the title; from 2001 to 2010 between one and three cities held the title each year; from 2011 to 2019, the intention is for two cities to hold the title each year. Those who favoured the option of a new chronological list of Member States offered **strong support for a list featuring more than one Member State each year**. Some 49% supported a list featuring two Member States each year, whilst 25% supported three or more.

3.4 Duration of the event

Under the current legal basis, the cultural programmes of ECoC are required to last one year. There was overwhelming agreement among respondents (77%) that **one year is the correct duration for a European Capital of Culture event**. This strength of feeling was shared across private individuals, organisations and public authorities. However, a few participants did argue that a year was too long for practical reasons facing candidates and the system at large. For example:

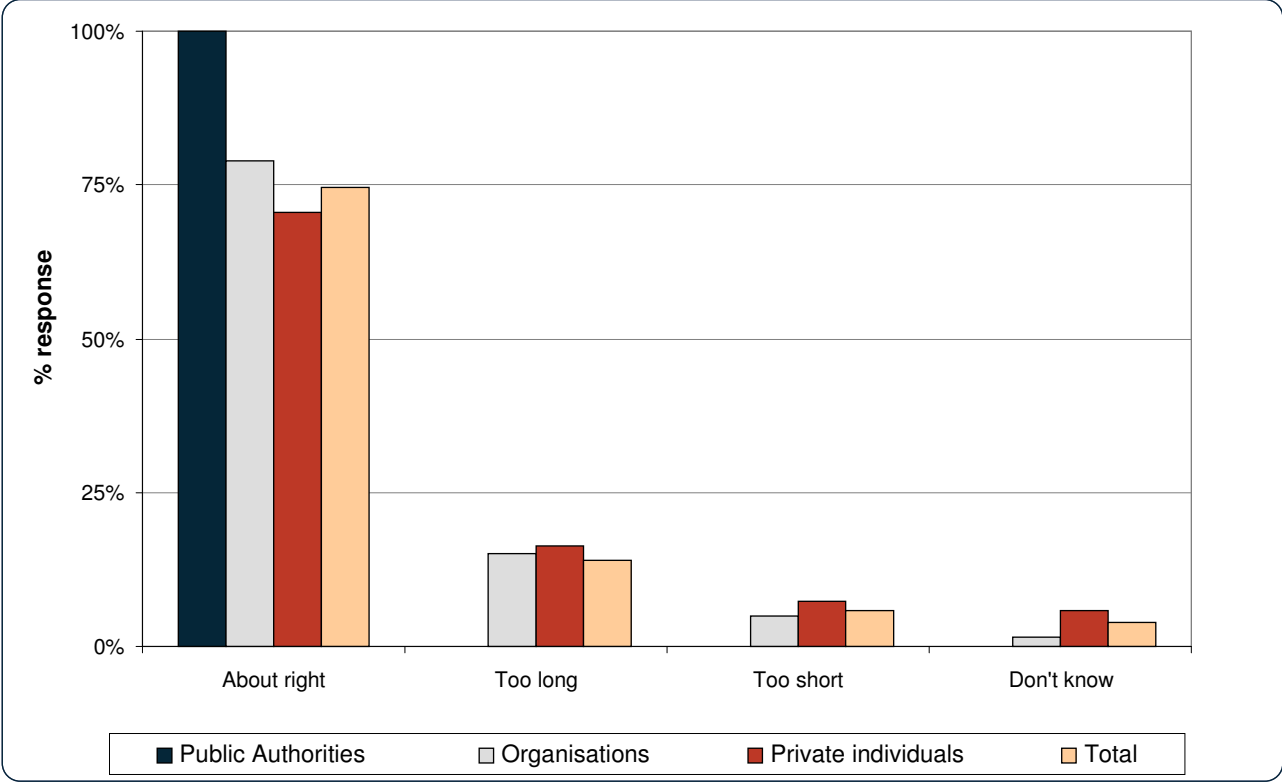
- *“There are many more cities waiting for the title, taking into account future enlargement also. Therefore the six-month presidency terms could be used as a model after 2019.”*
- *“Maybe a three-month period would work better. It would involve less investment of resources and would showcase the city throughout different seasons and times of year. One could have a ‘Spring’ capital of culture, a summer, autumn and winter...”*

Whilst the view of stakeholders largely supports the current duration of the ECoC, the difficulties of sustaining a cultural programme for a full year must be acknowledged. Previous research has identified that many ECoC overcome such difficulties by developing a rhythm to the year to make the programme more comprehensible and to retain public attention, either through dividing the year into seasons and/or carefully planning when events would take place.⁹ Many respondents went in a similar direction:

- *“Overall, a calendar year is the obvious choice and perhaps the easiest to market. That said, successful delivery of a 12-month programme can put pressure on cities’ budgets, even with careful management of highlights/milestones throughout the year. To alleviate this pressure, perhaps consideration could be given to a core programme from March to September, with the city having the option of utilising the entire calendar year, which would allow cities to provide a concentrated high-quality programme if they are in danger of spreading it too thinly.”*
- *“Depending on the geographic location of the city, choose a strong season, like April-October, for the vast majority of the events (of course preparation still will be much in advance). The public gets tired in a one-year marathon!”*
- *“It can last one year, but the cities should not feel obliged to cover the whole period with events. In many cities this obligation had as result an exaggerated programme that they could not manage and promote over the whole period.”*

⁹ European Cities and Capitals of Culture; Study Prepared for the European Commission; Palmer-Rae Associates; August 2004; Part I, p.15.

Figure 3.6 Duration of the event

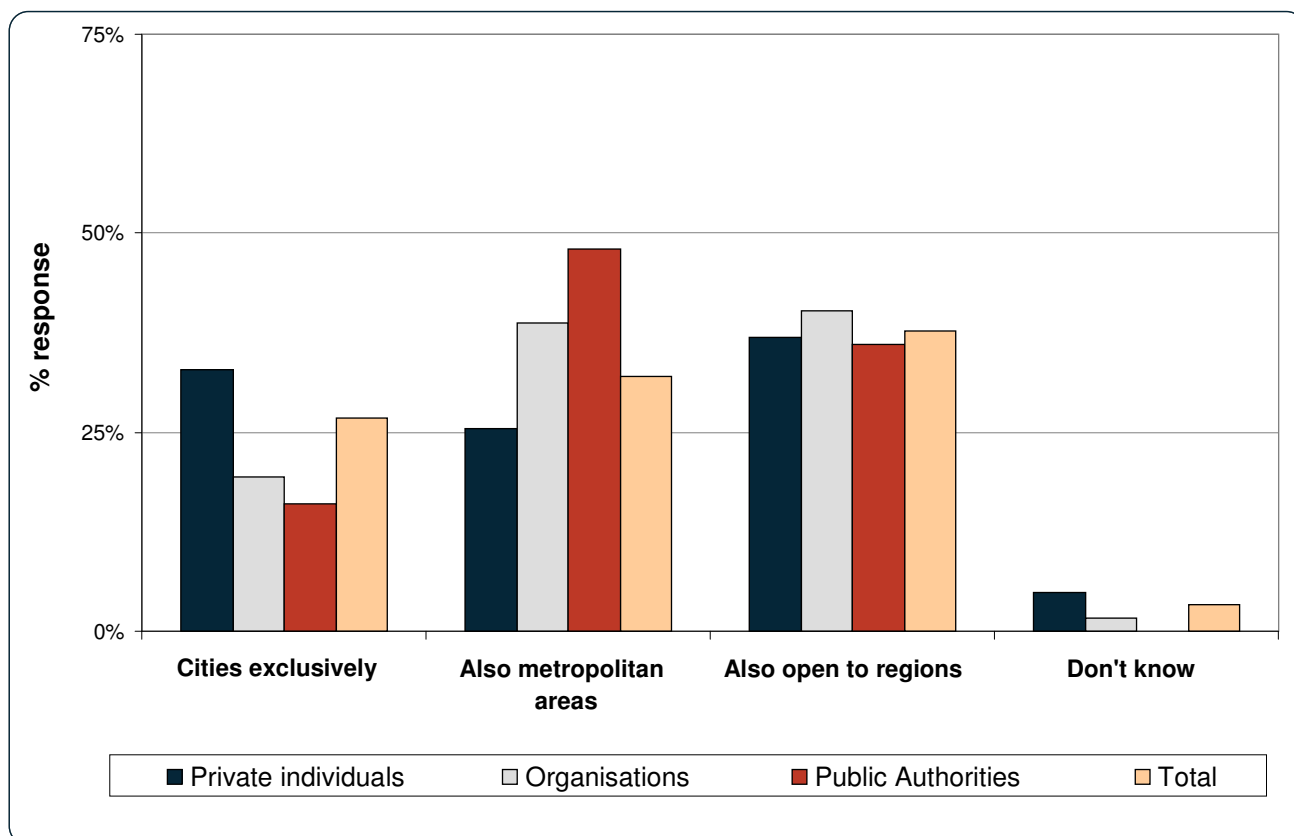


3.5 Territory covered

The current legal basis states that the title will be awarded to cities, though it offers no specific definition of what constitutes a city. It also allows cities to involve their surrounding region in order to reach a wider public and amplify the impact. Most ECoC in recent years have involved their hinterland or wider region in some way though the extent has varied. Some have even gone so far as to involve the region in a very explicit way, notably Luxembourg and Greater Region (2007) and Essen for the Ruhr (2010).

There were mixed responses regarding the preferred territorial coverage of European Capital of Culture title-holders. **Only 27% said that cities should continue to be the only recipients of the title**, whilst 32% said that metropolitan areas should be eligible and 38% said regions should be able to be European Capitals of Culture.

Figure 3.7 Territory covered



Organisations gave much stronger support to regions as recipients of the title compared to keeping cities as sole recipients. This strength of feeling was shared by public authority respondents who favoured including regions rather than keeping a city-only focus (only 16% of public authority respondents believe cities should continue to be the only recipients of the ECoC title).

Several qualitative comments tended to support the possibility of involving a territory beyond the immediate confines of the city. But above all, they emphasised the importance of retaining the flexibility for cities to involve a wider area, rather than specifying that ECoC must be narrowly defined by the administrative borders of the municipality:

- *“...most people simply believe that culture only happens in cities. This limits the growth of the cultural sector in rural isolated and peripheral regions, its ability to be connected to the rest of Europe and its ability to contribute positively to social and economic prosperity. Since 25% of Europe’s population and 80% of its landmass is rural, it seems important to include rural culture in Europe’s key culture action.”*
- *“It should be left open to the applicants how to define their particular boundary, not to the competition to impose an unduly restrictive definition of the likely area to be involved.”*
- *“Since the ECoC action is meant to be sustainable from a local development perspective, it is essential to respect local geo-political features and to include urban areas, beyond administrative borders.”*

While many participants thought it was interesting to cover wider territories, a number of potential difficulties were highlighted in the open comments. These included the difficulty in precisely defining regions or metropolitan areas, as well as the challenge in providing practical co-ordination across a large area that may lack clear leadership.

- *"It also raises the question of how a region can be defined. It is important to avoid regions being artificially created to suit the needs of the competition. Rather, the action should encourage the overall development of already existing cultural areas. In principle, we are still advocating in favour of designating cities, because of the clearer definition and easier delimitation, as well as the experience acquired through practice. Nevertheless, it appears reasonable to allow expansion to the regional level. However, some concrete added value should be demonstrated, i.e. if it is impossible to implement a specific Capital of Culture year meaningfully without extension to the region. Specific criteria need to be defined to outline under what circumstances a (metropol) region can apply."*
- *Regions are defined in our opinion through a common history and identity. They should not be created "artificially" only for the purpose of the ECoC. The shape and size should not matter."*
- *"The area involved in the project is the metropolitan area – it does not correspond to any administrative level (region, Département or urban district). For this reason it means that we have to deal on daily basis with various local authorities. First, it is really time-consuming (regular co-ordination meetings); second, it is difficult to keep a clear line for the artistic direction. The metropolitan (large area) dimension only increases the difficulties of such a project, and it is quite well known that an ECoC is already a difficult exercise (balance between art, local involvement, politics, governance, funding difficulties, etc)."*

Because of these difficulties, many respondents, even amongst those supporting the opening of the action to regions, favoured in the end an approach which is quite similar to the current one, whereby the title is awarded to a city but that city has the possibility to involve its surrounding area in its programme:

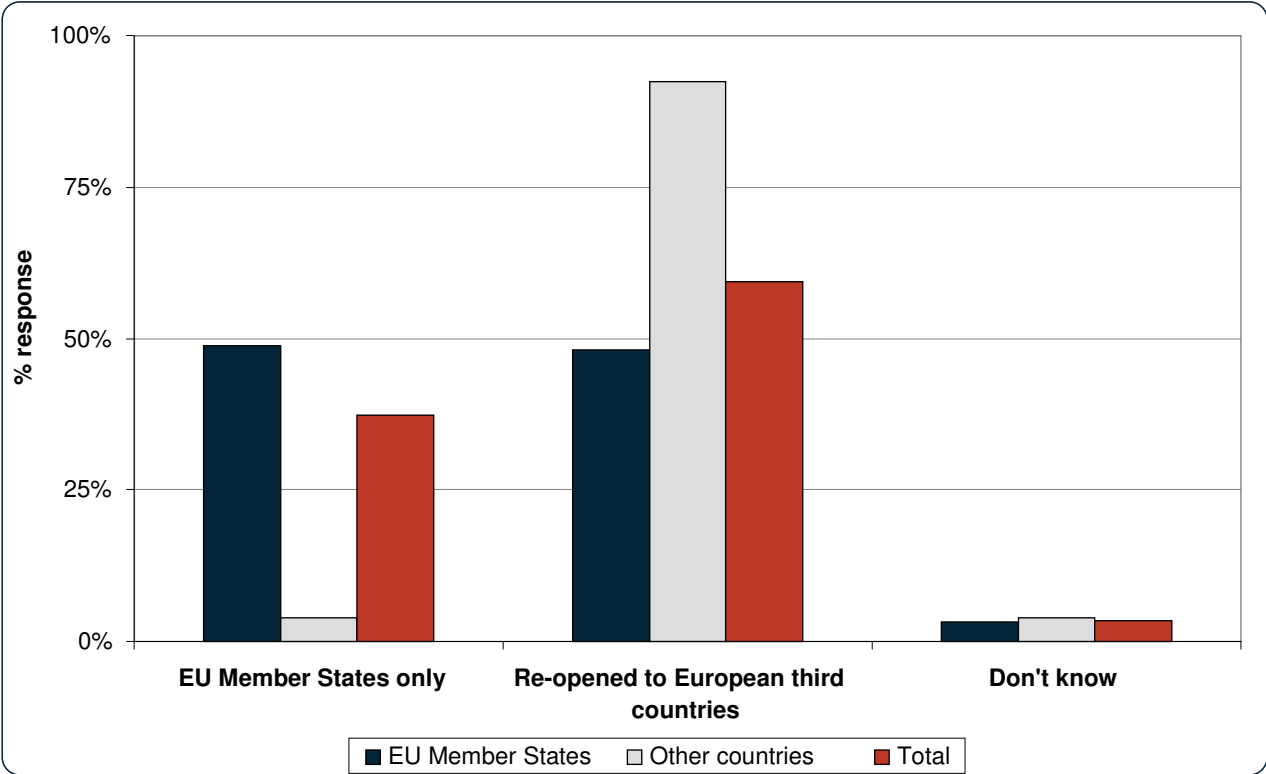
- *"Only cities should be able to obtain the title of ECoC, but they should be offered the possibility to involve local and regional actors in the organisation of the event. Opening the title to metropolitan areas or regions would be too important a change to the action."*
- *"We should open the competition to regions as well, but under specific circumstances: the application form will be submitted by a city within that region. We should bear in mind that a region by itself, with no salient city, could not justify the title European Capital of Culture."*

3.6 Participation of European third countries

Under the inter-governmental process of selecting ECoC, four cities from non-Member States were for the first time designated as ECoC for the year 2000: Bergen (Norway), Cracow (Poland), Prague (Czech Republic) and Reykjavik (Iceland).¹⁰ The 1999 Decision also maintained the possibility for non-Member States to nominate candidates for the ECoC title. As a result, three further cities in non-Member States were awarded the title: Sibiu 2007 (Romania),¹¹ Stavanger 2008 (Norway) and Istanbul 2010 (Turkey). However, the 2006 Decision then removed the possibility of further nominations in non-Member States. The main reason for closing this option was the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and 2007, which had reduced the number of potential candidate cities outside the EU and increased the number within; the risk was that cities in non-Member States would enjoy a much greater chance of hosting the title than would those within Member States.

When asked whether ECoC should be **re-opened to European third countries**, there was strong positivity with almost 60% saying "Yes". This did not vary dramatically across type of organisation. As would be expected, the overwhelming majority (92%) of non-EU respondents thought the ECoC should be re-opened to third countries. Opinion amongst EU respondents was evenly divided between those in favour of restricting it to Member States and those in favour of widening it to European third countries; this result would appear to support a view of European culture that transcends the current borders of the EU.

Figure 3.8 Participation of European third countries



¹⁰ The Czech Republic and Poland later acceded to the EU in 2004.

¹¹ In fact, the start of Sibiu's title year also coincided with the accession of Romania to the EU on 1 January 2007.

Many of those in favour of the opening to third countries were, however, not in favour of the 'full' participation of non-Member States. Some suggested the designation of ECoC in non-Member States (in addition to the two ECoC in Member States) only every three to five years. Others proposed the reintroduction of the European Cultural Months which existed until 2003 as an intergovernmental initiative specifically designed for non-Member States. A link was also made to the co-operation principle mentioned above, whereby ECoC from EU Member States could be encouraged to establish some kind of partnership with a city from a European or non European third country.

- *"It should therefore be examined whether in addition, similarly to Istanbul in 2010, one city from a candidate country or a country of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) could also regularly be awarded the title, for example every 3 to 5 years. In case of an opening of the action to metropolitan areas, transnational applications could also involve a third country (such as for example the triangle of Baden-Alsace-Switzerland), although the "lead" city should belong to an EU Member State."*
- *"It should be compulsory for a Member State to take part in the European Capital of Culture event every year. An optional European Cultural Month should be re-introduced for third countries."*
- *"The EU should introduce European Cultural Months as the Community Action addressed to third countries (candidate or applicant states). It would not only foster European integration and improve cultural co-operation but also be a channel for dissemination of democracy and promotion of human and cultural rights."*
- *"ECoC could consider suggesting bidding cities to elaborate within the bid a programme of co-operation with a city in another continent, preferably, a city in a developing country. Future ECoC could be based on a competition of projects written by two or three cities which would have jointly elaborated the bid. Two cities should be within the EU, and the third could be from another continent or (preferably) from a "developing country". A global Europe! These cities would be truly connected by the unified project from the very beginning."*

3.7 Implementing measures

As well as introducing a competitive selection process, Decision 1622/2006/EC also introduced a monitoring system for designated ECoC during their development phase. The monitoring process is designed to identify difficulties at the development stage and ensure that the stakeholders at local and national level put sufficient effort into addressing those difficulties. It also provides a number of fixed points, at which the city needs to demonstrate effective progress both to the monitoring panel and to a wider public in preparing for the title year. The monitoring system is also linked to the award of EU co-financing. At the time of the consultation, five ECoC had passed through the full monitoring process, i.e. the 2010 and 2011 titles. Another four, i.e. the 2012 and 2013 titles, had passed through the first monitoring stage.

Respondents were asked to comment on the monitoring procedure in place for ECoC, currently involving two meetings in the six years between selection and the title year. More than **80% of respondents felt this was a useful procedure**, which rises up to 92% amongst those who are or have been involved in the implementation of an ECoC. This was reinforced by the qualitative comments: none of them questioned the need for monitoring and none suggested that monitoring requirements had been unduly onerous. Despite the overall positivity to the monitoring arrangements in place, over 60%, and 75% of those involved in the implementation of an ECoC argued that it should still be reinforced; however given

the small number of ECoC having been subject to the current monitoring process, it is likely that opinions in favour of reinforcing monitoring reflect experience of the previous process.¹²

Many of the qualitative comments suggested a need for **more monitoring meeting processes** and for a greater provision of **expert independent advice** through the monitoring process. They also suggested a need for the Commission or the panel to have sanctions at their disposal in the case of ECoC that are not fulfilling the commitments made in their applications. For example:

- *"...More frequent meetings (yearly, at least). The monitoring body should have the capacity to spend some time in the city..."*
- *"Organising committees should submit regular reports on the preparation and eventual problems."*
- *"[There is a need for] more "mentoring" provided by experienced operators from previous and successful ECoC. As experience shows, ECoC that operate in a difficult political/economic environment would often need more support. However, this would translate both into more financial input by the European Commission (for an increased involvement of the monitoring panel) and more power of the Commission in cases in which cities do not fulfil their engagements."*
- *"Maybe it ought to change its title from a monitoring committee to a support and enablement group. It really can help a team resolve its dilemmas and help support the implementation of the winning ideas that a city proposed in their bid. It is vital that ECoC continue to maintain their priorities, ambitions and declarations throughout the implementation period. This is very important as people in the ECoC team may change their mind. Realistically, often cities may have to lower their expectations but the monitoring/support committee can help them navigate their way through these changes. External support during the implementation period is vital."*
- *"[Merely] issuing recommendations can potentially be weak and toothless. While I do not promote over-regulation, there should be a possibility for the Commission to revoke the ECoC title in time in cases where there are clear signs of mismanagement."*
- *"[The panel] should have the power to make strong corrections whenever the city gets too much off the track."*

The European Commission already publishes a Guide for cities applying for the title of European Capital of Culture which describes the various steps of the selection procedure, explains the selection criteria and offers a list of good practices taken from past capitals.¹³ Support was also strong for proposals to continue and strengthen efforts to provide materials such as the Guide. Indeed, more than 92% of respondents (and 95% of those who are or have been involved in the implementation of an ECoC) felt this was a useful tool, and 75% felt it should be further developed (78% of those who are or have been involved in the implementation of an ECoC).

¹² The experiences of ECoC that have been subject to the current monitoring process are being considered in more detail by a separate evaluation of the selection and monitoring procedures shortly to be published by the European Commission.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc633_en.pdf

Respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring that such tools do not remain static however. Indeed, they highlighted the continued importance of making resources available online and updating them regularly with good practice examples:

- *“It is always positive to have access to other cities’ applications and to know how its programme has been developed. But it has to be in a digital format, as in paper version it would not be widely used.”*
- *“A live on-line resource/tool-kit which provides information, case studies etc. would be useful as changes happen very quickly.”*
- *“...has to be updated regularly, to include new experiences and development.”*
- *“New examples added each year from Capitals of Culture who have just finished their process - for example, the economic crises of 2008-09 created a new context for the cities which brought out some weaknesses of the current system.”*

A recent evaluation of the procedures for selecting and monitoring the ECoC has found that the application form does not allow applicants to present their bids in the clearest and most attractive format. The same evaluation recommended developing separate forms for pre-selection and final selection, simplification of the form and structuring it more closely with the Guide for cities. Some of the open comments reinforced the need for such improvements. For example:

- *“Improve the questionnaire for candidate cities, so it is based more on the standard project logic and structure.”*
- *“The Commission needs to develop a much better questionnaire for the candidate cities. The present one is rigid, unimaginative, repetitive and obscure. It treats ECoC as an event and not as a process.”*

Since 2009, the European Commission has organised several meetings enabling the **exchange of experience** between past, present and future capitals, as well as with candidate cities. Almost 90% agreed such meetings were useful and almost 80% argued that they should be further developed – higher even than for a guide. Again, responses from those who are or have been involved in the implementation of an ECoC are even more positive: 92% felt that these meetings are useful and 86% thought they should be further developed. This indicates that not only the concepts of the exchanges and guides are valid, but that they make a real difference to those working in the field.

The qualitative comments underlined the value of peer-learning in the development of good ECoC:

- *“If lessons learned meetings/networks etc. can be facilitated in a low cost way, this exchange of experiences would be valuable.”*
- *“Go in-depth into the challenges cities encountered (those who were ECoC in the past) and in particular discuss the difficulties involved in legacy and sustainability of the local cultural ecology; maybe use case studies of ‘failures’ if that’s possible.”*
- *“...the best written document cannot replace personal contact.”*
- *“There should also be workshops on various topics (concept and strategy development, marketing, advertising, communication, evaluation, etc.).”*

Between 2007 and 2009, each ECoC could apply for a grant of up to €1.5m from the EU's Culture Programme 2007-13 for specific projects within their cultural programme. Since the designation of the 2010 ECoC, the EU funding mechanism has changed. The "Melina Mercouri Prize" was introduced, a conditional prize of €1.5m to be awarded to designated cities three months before the start of the year, provided that they meet the criteria relating to the "European Dimension" and "City and Citizens" and have implemented the recommendations made by the selection and the monitoring and advisory panels. This prize has to date been awarded to five ECoC, i.e. those holding the title in 2010 and 2011 and, of these, only the 2010 title-holders have completed their title year. In addition to this funding, many cities holding the title have also received EU funding from other sources, notably ERDF which has supported associated infrastructure developments.

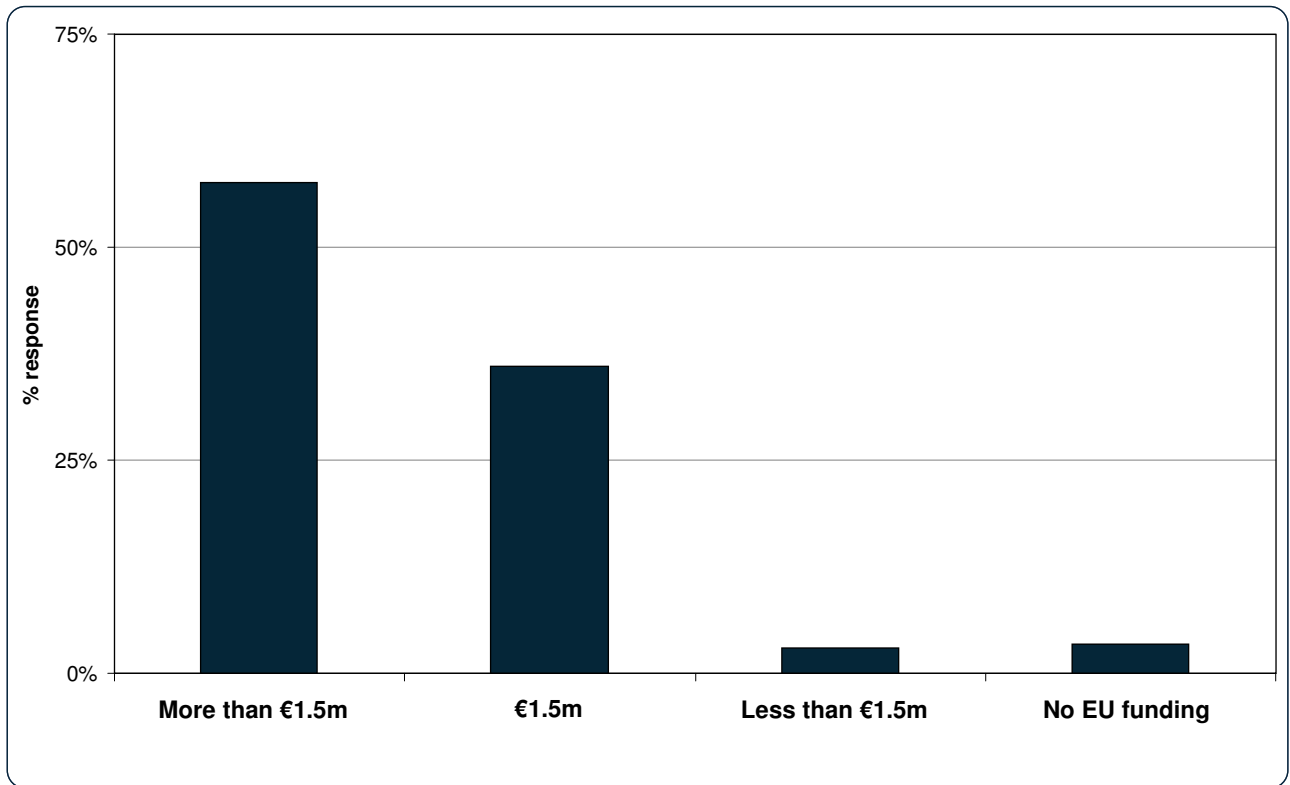
Respondents were asked how much money a city should receive for implementing expert recommendations and progressing their candidature prior to the title year. Respondents were very keen to have money awarded, with only 3% saying there shouldn't be a Prize. Some respondents highlighted the strong symbolic value of the Prize. The majority (Figure 3.9) agreed that **each ECoC should receive more than €1.5m** in EU co-financing. However, this response, whilst understandable, must be balanced by the fact that cities already compete fiercely for the ECoC title and usually secure substantial funding for their cultural programmes from other sources.

A recent evaluation has found that the Melina Mercouri Prize represents a considerable improvement compared to the previous system of allocating EU funding to ECoC, in terms of a lower administrative burden and increased flexibility in the use of the funding. The same evaluation found that the possibility of awarding (or the threat of withholding) the Prize can be used to motivate ECoC to make effective preparations for the title year. However, it also highlighted the need for more prescriptive guidance for cities in respect of the criteria applying to the award of the Prize.

Some respondents suggested further improvements to the implementation procedures of the Prize. These concerned in particular the timing of the award of the prize, as well as the need for more clarity in the criteria.. For example:

- *"Funding "ex ante" is not useful. A prize is an award for a merit in the past. The EU-money should go into the future projects."*
- *"The Mercouri Prize is ill-defined. EU financing should be awarded with the purpose of meeting very specific priorities that need to be more clearly understood. Has the Prize ever not been awarded? What is its real point? EU financing should not be directed towards city development but only towards European cultural development (to be defined)."*

Figure 3.9 Proposed amount of prize money for cities performing well



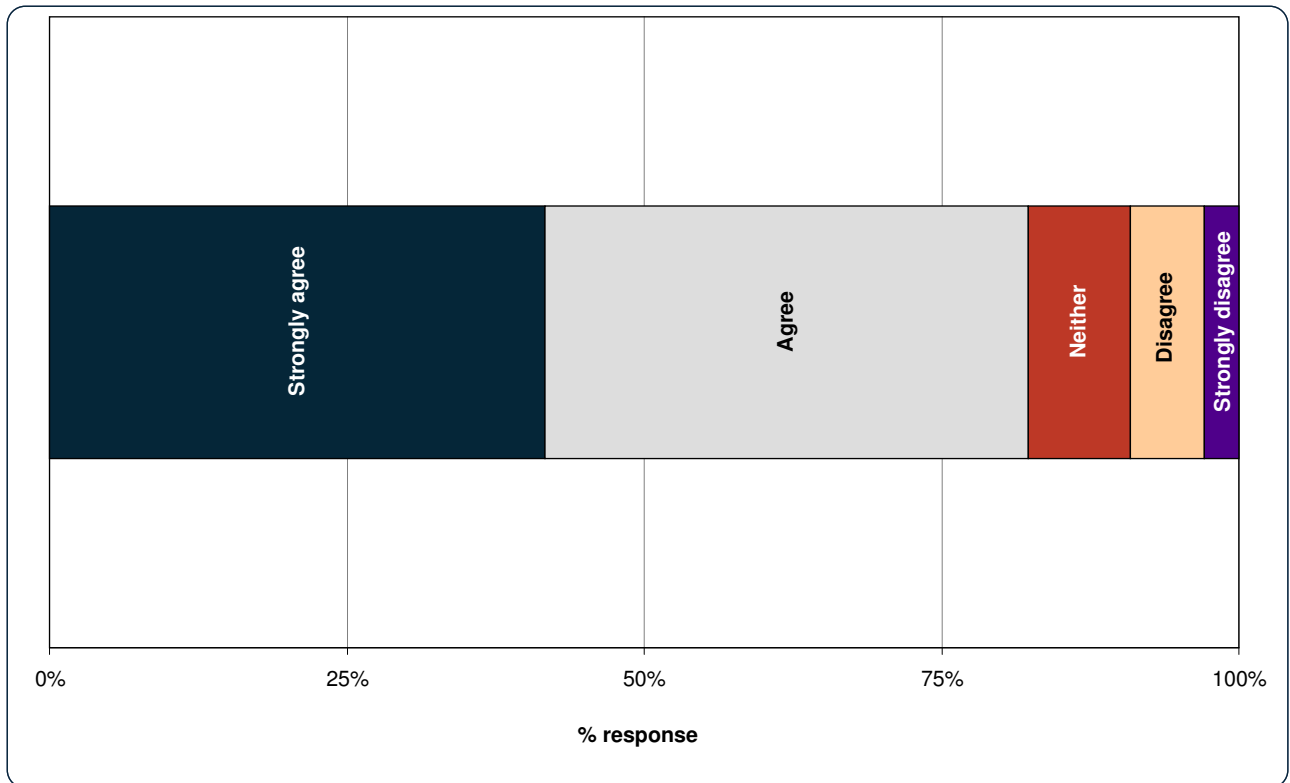
As well as this general preference for more funding for the individual ECoC, one respondent also made an suggestion as to how greater investment of EU resources could increase the impact of the ECoC Action as a whole:

- *“The EU should invest a substantial budget for communication with a broader public in Europe, like the sponsoring of UEFA or Olympics corporate communication by private sports sponsors. Since you won't find any private sponsor investing comparable amounts for culture like for sports, the EU should promote the ECoC to a mainstream audience in Europe, mostly TV, radio, internet and newspaper advertisements, in order to create public awareness comparable to the big European sports events.”*

3.8 Visibility

Those answering the questionnaire overwhelmingly agreed that the ECoC was **‘one of the most visible and prestigious initiatives of the European Union and one of the most appreciated by the European citizens’**. Indeed, more than 80% in total agreed either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statement. There was slightly less enthusiasm towards the visibility of ECoC across Europe however, with 39% saying they are very visible, almost 52% fairly visible, and almost 10% saying they aren't visible at all.

Figure 3.10 "The ECoC is one of the most visible and prestigious initiatives of the European Union and one of the most appreciated by the European citizens."



Some respondents put forward suggestions to reinforce the visibility of the ECoC:

- *"Some of the activities should be promoted and communicated through the Commission and the Delegation of the EC in each country."*
- *"Official ECoC websites translated in more, if not all, EU official languages."*
- *"The use of a common logo (see the Olympics for an external example) could help to simplify marketing and promotion actions."*

Annex One: Profile of respondents

Country of origin

	Number of requested records	% Requested records(209)
EU Member States		
ES Spain	35	16.43%
DE Germany	20	9.39%
FR France	20	9.39%
BE Belgium	13	6.10%
AT Austria	12	5.63%
UK United Kingdom	9	4.23%
RO Romania	7	3.29%
NL the Netherlands	6	2.82%
PL Poland	6	2.82%
IT Italy	5	2.35%
PT Portugal	5	2.35%
EL Greece	3	1.41%
LU Luxembourg	3	1.41%
BG Bulgaria	2	0.94%
DK Denmark	2	0.94%
IE Ireland	2	0.94%
SI Slovenia	2	0.94%
CY Cyprus	1	0.47%
CZ Czech Republic	1	0.47%
EE Estonia	1	0.47%
FI Finland	1	0.47%
HU Hungary	1	0.47%
LV Latvia	1	0.47%
MT Malta	1	0.47%
SK Slovakia	1	0.47%
LT Lithuania	-	-
SE Sweden	-	-
Non – EU Member States		
Serbia	35	16.43%
Russia	8	3.76%
Croatia	2	0.94%
Norway	2	0.94%
Guinea-Bissau	1	0.47%
Moldavia	1	0.47%
Nigeria	1	0.47%
Turkey	1	0.47%
USA	1	0.47%
Prefer not to say	1	0.47%

In which sector do you operate?

	Number of requested records	% Requested records	% of total number records
Private individuals			
Cultural Heritage	7	5.74%	3.35%
Visual arts	7	5.74%	3.35%
Performing Arts	12	9.84%	5.74%
Audio-visual	2	1.64%	0.96%
Literature, Books and Reading	1	0.82%	0.48%
Architecture	5	4.10%	2.39%
Design, Applied Arts	4	3.28%	1.91%
Other cultural sector	12	9.84%	5.74%
Education, training or research	29	23.77%	13.88%
Youth	5	4.10%	2.39%
Tourism	1	0.82%	0.48%
Media	8	6.56%	3.83%
Marketing	7	5.74%	3.35%
Other	21	17.21%	10.05%
Don't know	1	0.82%	0.48%
Organisations			
Cultural Heritage	7	11.29%	3.35%
Visual arts	3	4.84%	1.44%
Performing Arts	10	16.13%	4.78%
Audio-visual	0	0.00%	0.00%
Literature, Books and Reading	2	3.23%	0.96%
Architecture	0	0.00%	0.00%
Design, Applied Arts	0	0.00%	0.00%
Other cultural sector	15	24.19%	7.18%
Education, training or research	8	12.90%	3.83%
Youth	1	1.61%	0.48%
Tourism	0	0.00%	0.00%
Media	0	0.00%	0.00%
Marketing	2	3.23%	0.96%
Other	14	22.58%	6.70%
Don't know	0	0.00%	0.00%

Were/are you involved in the preparation or implementation of an ECoC? (Private individuals)

	Number of requested records	% Requested records	% of total number records
Private individuals			
Yes – involved in a successful application for the ECoC title	3	2.46%	1.44%
Yes – involved in an unsuccessful application for the ECoC title	1	0.82%	0.48%
Yes- currently involved in the application for a future ECoC title	12	9.84%	5.74%
Yes – involved in the implementation of an ECoC	4	3.28%	1.91%
Yes – involved in both the application and the implementation of an ECoC	12	9.84%	5.74%
No	90	73.77%	43.06%
Organisations			
Yes – involved in a successful application for the ECoC title	7	11.29%	3.35%
Yes – involved in an unsuccessful application for the ECoC title	5	8.06%	2.39%
Yes- currently involved in the application for a future ECoC title	6	9.68%	2.87%
Yes – involved in the implementation of an ECoC	8	12.90%	3.83%
Yes – involved in both the application and the implementation of an ECoC	6	9.68%	2.87%
No	30	48.39%	14.35%
Public authorities			
Yes – involved in a successful application for the ECoC title	0	0.00%	0.00%
Yes – involved in an unsuccessful application for the ECoC title	1	4.00%	0.48%
Yes- currently involved in the application for a future ECoC title	6	24.00%	2.87%
Yes – involved in the implementation of an ECoC	0	0.00%	0.00%
Yes – involved in both the application and the implementation of an ECoC	8	32.00%	3.83%
No	10	40.00%	4.78%

Type and size of respondent organisations

	Number of requested records	% Requested records	% of total number records
Type of organisation			
Public cultural organisation	13	20.97%	6.22%
Other public organisation	5	8.06%	2.39%
Non-profit-making cultural association	21	33.87%	10.05%
Other non-profit-making association	10	16.13%	4.78%
Private company in the cultural sector	4	6.45%	1.91%
Other private company	1	1.61%	0.48%
Other	8	12.90%	3.83%
Size of organisation			
Less than 11 employees	36	58.06%	17.22%
11-50 employees	12	19.35%	5.74%
51-250 employees	12	19.35%	5.74%
251-500 employees	1	1.61%	0.48%
More than 500 employees	1	1.61%	0.48%

Type of public authority

	Number of requested records	% Requested records	% of total number records
Local authority	15	60.00%	7.18%
Regional authority	3	12.00%	1.44%
National authority	6	24.00%	2.87%
International organisation	0	0.00%	0.00%
Other	1	4.00%	0.48%
Not applicable	0	0.00%	0.00%