



# Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) 2010-2016

Final Report



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Final report for the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture

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# Executive Summary

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## Context of the evaluation

The special role that cities play in culture has been recognised since the “European City of Culture” concept was introduced in 1985 – a year-long event during which a city would operate a programme of events to highlight its contribution to the common cultural heritage and welcome people and performers from other Member States. A 1999 Decision of the European Parliament and of the European Council later transformed the concept into the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) and sought to create a more predictable, consistent and transparent rotational system for the designation of the title.<sup>1</sup> However, the 1999 Decision made no provision for monitoring ECoC either during their development phase or during the title year, though the European Commission took informal steps to support the development of ECoC.

A 2006 Decision of the Parliament and of the Council introduced the current competitive selection process, as well as a monitoring system linked to the EU co-financing.<sup>2</sup> The selection process includes a pre-selection stage, which comprises a call for applications and a pre-selection meeting, followed by the selection stage, which includes a final selection meeting and designation of the ECoC. Calls for submission of applications at national level and a European selection panel (comprising thirteen independent experts, of whom seven are nominated by the European institutions and six by the Member State concerned) have been organised for the 2013-16 titles, with transitional provisions for 2011 and 2012. The new monitoring provisions have applied as of the 2010 ECoC and include first and second monitoring meetings and reports. EU co-financing now consists of the "Melina Mercouri Prize" worth €1.5m and awarded to designated cities before the start of the title year, provided that they have implemented the recommendations made by the monitoring and advisory panel. The European Commission also implements a range of informal accompanying measures for cities and Member States as they move through the processes of selection, award, preparation and delivery.

## Purpose and methodology of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the implementation of the selection and monitoring procedures introduced by the 2006 Decision. The evaluation had been recommended by independent evaluations of the ECoC and was important for two main reasons: first it is important to see how effective the current processes have been, given that those operating within the context of the 1999 Decision were found to be insufficient to identify problems systematically and prescribe remedial action;<sup>3</sup> second, there is the need to draw lessons from the current system in order to inform a Commission proposal for the

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> Decision 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

<sup>3</sup> Ex-post evaluation of the 2009 ECoC; ECOTEC Research & Consulting on behalf of the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission; 2010.

continuation of the ECoC beyond 2019; such a proposal needs to be adopted in the first semester of 2012.

The methodology for this evaluation featured three main stages namely desk research, consultation, and analysis and reporting. Desk research involved a review of reports of selection panels and monitoring and advisory panels. Consultation involved interviews with the European Commission, members of the selection and monitoring panels, ECoC host cities and unsuccessful bidders. It also involved a focus group with panel members and an e-mail survey of the candidate cities for 2016. Analysis involved considering all the evidence gathered against the evaluation questions set in the Terms of Reference, whilst reporting involved answering those questions, providing illustrative examples and making recommendations to be taken into account in the operation of the current processes and in any new legal basis for the ECoC.

## **Main findings – application and selection**

The 2006 Decision retained a chronological “order of entitlement” whereby each year two Member States would be entitled to nominate one or more cities, whilst also adding Bulgaria and Romania who were about to accede to the EU. The order of entitlement has ensured an equitable distribution of ECoC across all 27 Member States in the 2005-19 period and helped generate a high number of credible applications. There is, though, a need to explore whether repetition of the order of entitlement in its current format beyond 2019 will create the risk that applications in some years will be fewer in number and/or lower in quality, thus damaging the overall credibility of the ECoC.

The European Commission provides information about the ECoC through a Guide for cities applying for the title,<sup>4</sup> the Culture pages on the Europa website<sup>5</sup> and events in Brussels. Member States are also encouraged to organise information sessions for potential applicants. Overall, the provision of information and the way the application process is designed is regarded by stakeholders as satisfactory and support provided by EAC is rated highly. Many would like to see more detailed guidance, but it is not clear if more written material would necessarily improve outcomes. The strongest bidders obtain information, advice and guidance from a range of sources (including meetings with DG EAC) and providing more opportunities for contact (via briefings, seminars etc.) is more likely to improve results.

Under the 2006 Decision, a two-stage process was introduced; the pre-selection stage features a call for applications issued by the relevant Member State no later than six years before the title year, whilst the second stage features the submission of full applications and the convening of the selection panel no more than nine months after the pre-selection meeting. The two-stage process is welcomed by applicants and enables them to strengthen the quality of their applications.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission: Guide for cities applying for the title of European Capital of Culture, [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc633\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc633_en.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm).

In submitting an application to the Member State authority responsible (in response to the call for applications), candidate cities must complete an information sheet (the "Proposed Application Form") and may also provide a supporting file. The application form has enabled applicants to provide the information needed by panel members in order to make an effective selection. However, the use of the same form for pre-selection and final selection stages does not help applicants to present their applications in the clearest and simplest form and hinders the effectiveness of the Panel in its assessment. There may also be an argument for separating out the requirement for basic, factual, objective information about cities from the application form, allowing candidates to focus on the key aspects of their proposals.

The timing of the selection process (six years before the title year) is appropriate to the needs of applicant cities and of Ministries; lengthening the six-year period would provide few benefits and risk a loss of momentum; shortening the period would increase the difficulties faced by ECoC in developing robust delivery arrangements and high quality cultural programmes. Whilst the task of organising the competition was challenging for some Ministries, problems have largely been overcome and have not prevented the selection of credible candidates for ECoC. There would be benefit in encouraging the exchange of experience between Ministries involved in organising the selection process in different Member States.

The level of competition among cities has varied widely between Member States, both under the previous application procedure and the current one, where the number of applications per Member State has ranged from one (Belgium 2015) to fifteen (Spain 2016). The introduction of a competition has had a positive effect, in terms of strengthening the quality of bids and generating publicity and interest, though a large number of applications can create challenges for Ministries in some Member States where there is a lack of capacity and/or experience.

The 2006 Decision requires the Panel to assess applications according to the formal "criteria for the cultural programme" described in Article 4. These are subdivided into two categories: "the European dimension" and "City and Citizens". The criteria are clear in principle, although a significant number of candidate cities find the European dimension challenging to manifest in their applications and implement during the title year. This reflects the wider challenge of balancing local socio-economic goals with wider European goals, rather than a fundamental flaw in the way the criteria are presented.

The role of the Panel has been reinforced by the new selection procedure which ensures that all cities in the relevant Member State can apply and that all applications are considered by the Panel. It has also been strengthened by bringing together complementary expertise from the national and European levels. However, the credibility of the Panel has been adversely affected by a small number of experts either failing to attend meetings or giving the impression of being ill-prepared. The preparation of a new legal basis offers the possibility of introducing an open call for applications of the role of panel member, which may help to ensure that all panel members have a proper understanding of their role.

The Panel has generally applied the ECoC criteria very explicitly in the selection process, though some selected ECoC have not performed particularly well against one or other of the categories of criteria. The Panel has also intelligently applied a set of "implicit" criteria many of which are more practical in nature and that reflect the "key success factors" in the Guide for cities; there is a need to make these criteria more explicit at all stages of the selection procedure. Overall, the selection process is considered fair and

transparent by Ministries and by successful applicants; the limited evidence from unsuccessful applicants is more mixed but highlights the need to make explicit those criteria that the Panel currently applies implicitly. The reports of the selection panel have mostly been of high quality and pre-selection reports have helped applicants to improve their application at final selection stage; there is, though, a need to apply a more standardised format to the reports.

### **Main findings – monitoring**

The system of monitoring introduced by the 2006 Decision has been found to be a very important and useful process for the cities to go through. It provides deadlines for the development of the ECoC, creates momentum and attracts the attention of decision-makers, core funders, media and the wider public. The monitoring process also contributes to improving the European dimension of ECoC, through the formal assessment of compliance against these criteria and through the informal advice and support offered by the Panel. The monitoring meetings and reports have both practical and symbolical importance as the only formal means by which the EU communicates its opinions on the development of ECoC. Monitoring meetings could be strengthened by increasing the time available for discussions between the ECoC and the panel members. It may also be useful to consider appropriate ways to increase the involvement of national Ministries in the monitoring process.

The legal base does not state any requirement for informal support during the monitoring phase. But the ECoC were unanimous in highlighting the value of such support, notably the informal meetings with the panel six months after designation and the visits by panel members. In general, the ECoC would welcome more support during the development phase (including from DG EAC) and so there is perhaps merit in making visits by the panel members to the cities a routine part of the preparation phase for all ECoC.

### **Main findings – finance**

The possibility of receiving the Melina Mercouri Prize does not have a significant influence on the decision to apply for ECoC and the funding, when received, forms a very modest proportion of total expenditure. However, the possibility of awarding (or the threat of withholding) the Prize can be used to motivate ECoC and their stakeholders to make effective preparations for the title year. It may be possible to strengthen the "motivational effect" of the Prize, through requiring cities to develop their applications and cultural programmes without reference to the Prize, developing and applying an explicit set of criteria for the award of the Prize.

## Conclusions

1. The overall efficiency of the application and selection process is satisfactory. There are inevitable variations between the experiences in different countries, but no significant problems or delays were identified. There may be ways to improve the efficiency of Member States by encouraging informal networking between Ministries organising the selection process.
2. The documentary guidance provided to candidate cities, Member States and panel members is thorough and strong on administrative process.
3. The application form, whilst enabling the ECoC to provide the necessary information for the selection panel to make its decision, does not allow applicants to present their bids in the clearest and most attractive format and leads to the submission of an unnecessarily large volume of material.
4. The ECoC criteria are clear in principle and have generally been understood and applied by applicants and the Panel, though some selected ECoC have not performed particularly well at application stage against one or other of the categories of criteria and many cities still struggle to achieve an appropriate balance between local and European components; there is a need to ensure a more consistent presentation of the criteria in application forms, guidance documents and reports of the selection and monitoring panels.
5. The Panel has also intelligently applied a set of “implicit” criteria which are more practical in nature and reflect the “key success factors” in the Guide for cities; there is a need to make these criteria more explicit at all stages of the application and selection procedure and in relevant documents (guidance, reports, etc.) and also to link the award of the Prize to the satisfaction of these criteria.
6. The Panel is mostly operating effectively and has been strengthened by the mixture of national and European appointees and by the fact that the European appointees hold a majority, with the chair being one of the European members; its role has also been reinforced by virtue of the fact that it considers all applications.<sup>6</sup> However, its credibility has been weakened by a small number of EU members either failing to attend meetings or giving the impression of being ill-prepared.
7. Providing EU funding in the form of a prize rather than a traditional grant has been welcomed by ECoC due to the reduced administrative burden and increased flexibility in the use of the funding. The “motivational effect” of the Prize could be increased by requiring cities to develop their applications and cultural programmes (up to the second monitoring point) without reference to the Prize.

<sup>6</sup> compared to the previous procedure under which it considered only those applications nominated by the Member State in question – usually only one from each Member State.

### *Effect on the quality of ECoC*

8. Candidate cities value the ECoC brand highly and recognise the benefits of applying as well as winning. As a result they are prepared to invest significant resources in their applications.
9. The open competition (within Member States listed in the Order of Entitlement) has increased interest in the ECoC, ensured an equitable distribution of ECoC across Member States and helped generate a high number of credible applications. However, the sustainability of the process beyond 2019 in its current format needs to be given careful thought.
10. The selection process is generally held to be fair and transparent and has enabled the selection of credible candidates in every Member State, in part due to the two-stage process which enables applicants to improve their applications on the basis of expert advice received from the Panel.
11. DG EAC provides guidance, advice and support that is highly valued by panel members, Ministries and designated ECoC. Ministries and cities would welcome additional informal support and there may be practical ways by which this can be provided without posing a substantial additional burden on DG EAC.
12. The monitoring process has played a key part in strengthening the ECoC, in particular their focus on the European dimension. The new informal "post-designation meeting" and informal visits by panel members have proved a valuable complement to the formal monitoring meetings and reports.

### **Recommendations**

1. The application form should be improved in its design and structure. This could include developing separate forms for pre-selection and final selection stages, simplifying the form and structuring it more closely with the Guide for cities, requiring applicants to present basic factual information about the cities separately from the description of their proposed ECoC, providing clearer instructions on the primary focus of the pre-selection stage, and limiting the word-count and/or file-size of applications. The recently introduced budget grids in the application form should be continued in order to facilitate understanding and comparison of the financial aspects.
2. Candidates should be required to submit an electronic version of their applications (in addition to the current paper format).
3. The Guide for cities should be restructured to reflect more closely the structure of the (revised) application form.
4. Information currently available for applicants could be strengthened by featuring the applications (where available in electronic format) and contact details (where permission is given) of past, present and designated ECoC on the Europa webpages and by repeating the "Info Days" and exchanges of good practice at appropriate intervals.

5. The Commission should consider ways to encourage the exchange of experience and networking between Ministries involved in the selection of ECoC.
6. In designing any new legal basis for the ECoC, the Commission should consider the possibility of introducing an open call for applications for the role of panel member.
7. Consideration should be given to introducing a requirement in the future for Member States to indicate clearly from the outset of the process in their country the amount of funding, if any, which they will make available for the winning city.
8. Selection and monitoring reports should be presented in a more standardised format, allowing a clearer indication of the criteria applied (both formal and implicit).
9. The amount of face-to-face contact between designated ECoC and panel members should be increased during the monitoring phase, through increasing the time available for discussion during monitoring meetings and through making visits a routine rather than an optional part of the monitoring phase.
10. The implicit “practical” criteria for selecting ECoC that have been applied in practice should be developed into a more formal set of criteria. Once crystallised, these criteria should be included in the Guide for cities, the guidance for Member States organising calls for applications and the guidance for panel members. They should also be reflected in the structure of selection and monitoring reports, with a clear link also made to the award of the Prize.
11. The Commission should consider further developing the Guide for cities concerning the development phase of designated ECoC, including through the provision of good practice principles and examples relating to finance, the governance, selection of projects etc.
12. The Commission should require cities to develop their applications and cultural programmes without reference to the Prize (until the second monitoring point) and consider appropriate ways to increase the involvement of national Ministries in the monitoring process.

# 1.0 Introduction

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## 1.1 Background to the study

“Throughout its history, Europe has been the site of exceptionally prolific and varied artistic variety; whereas urban life has played a major role in the growth and influence of the European cultures”.<sup>7</sup>

Since the earliest days of European integration, European policy has recognised the existence within Europe of both a “common cultural heritage” and a diversity of national and regional cultures. Indeed, under the terms of Article 167 of the Treaty Establishing the European Union<sup>8</sup>, the EU has sought to bring that heritage to the fore and to respect such diversity, by encouraging co-operation between Member States and by taking cultural aspects into account in its other actions.

Within that context, the special role that cities play in culture was recognised by a 1985 Resolution<sup>9</sup> that introduced the “European City of Culture” concept – a year-long event during which a city would operate a programme of events to highlight its contribution to the common cultural heritage and welcome people and performers from other Member States.

Since Athens in 1985, the European City of Culture has 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 chosen”.<sup>10</sup> In recognition of this success, a 1999 Decision of the Parliament and of the Council transformed the concept into the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) and sought to create a more predictable, consistent and transparent rotational system for the designation of the title. The 1999 Decision was amended in 2005 in order to integrate the ten Member States that acceded to the EU in 2004.<sup>11</sup>

Under the process introduced by the 1999 Decision, three cities were designated for 2010 – Essen for the Ruhr (Germany), Pécs (Hungary) and Istanbul (Turkey) - this last city being designated under the terms of Article 4 which allowed for the participation of cities from non-Member States. Whilst a further Decision was made in 2006, this specifically stated that for the 2010, 2011 and 2012 titles, the 1999 Decision would apply in respect of the criteria relating to the cultural programmes, unless the cities chose to base their programmes on the criteria in the 2006 Decision. However, the 2010 ECoC would be co-financed and monitored according to new processes set out in the 2006 Decision. Future ECoC will be designated, co-financed and monitored according to new processes set out in the 2006 Decision (although the

<sup>7</sup> 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.

<sup>8</sup> Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing The European Community (2007/C 306/01).

<sup>9</sup> European Commission (1985) Resolution of the Ministers Responsible for Cultural Affairs Concerning the Annual Event European City of Culture (7081/84).

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Decision 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.

transitional provisions that applied to the selection and designation of the 2011 and 2012 titles were those established by the 1999 Decision). For example, calls for submission of applications at national level and a European selection panel (comprising thirteen independent experts, of whom seven are nominated by the European institutions and six by the Member State concerned) have been organised for the 2013-16 titles.

The EU co-financing of each ECoC until 2009 consisted of a grant for specific projects within their cultural programme: €500k for each ECoC until 2006 and €1.5m for each of the 2007-09 ECoC. In the case of the latter, the grants were provided by the EU's Culture Programme 2007-13 for a project to "help implement activities stressing European visibility and trans-European cultural co-operation."<sup>12</sup> Since the designation of the 2010 ECoC, the Commission has reviewed the EU funding mechanism. As a result, the 2006 Decision introduced the "Melina Mercouri Prize": a conditional prize of €1.5m to be awarded to designated cities before the start of the year, on the basis of a recommendation delivered by the monitoring panel. This prize has been awarded for the 2010 and 2011 titles.

In addition to the formal activities mandated in the ECoC Decision, DG EAC implements a range of informal accompanying measures, which provide ongoing support to cities and Member States as they move through the processes of selection, award, preparation and delivery. These include the provision of a 39-page Guide for candidate cities<sup>13</sup>, studies, progress meetings held between the panel and cities six months after designation, info days, and the opportunity for cities to contact and discuss any issues or questions that may have with DG EAC and receive assistance and advice. In the case of the latter type of support, the level of day-to-day interaction between cities and the Commission varies according to need, but nevertheless is available as and when it is required.

At the same time that the ECoC has been in operation, two other important policy developments have taken place: first, the introduction of the EU's Culture Programme 2007-13, which co-finances cultural actions with a European dimension across the whole range of artistic and cultural fields, including transnational co-operation projects, literary translations, European prizes and organisations active at European and international level in the field of culture and which also provides the EU co-financing of ECoC during the current programming period; second, the adoption by the Commission in 2007 of a European agenda for culture in a globalising world<sup>14</sup> which defines three broad objectives for the EU's interventions in the field of culture:

- promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;
- promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs; and
- promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations

<sup>12</sup> Decision No 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 establishing the Culture Programme (2007 to 2013).

<sup>13</sup> European Commission: Guide for cities applying for the title of European Capital of Culture, [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc633\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc633_en.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world; COM(2007) 242 final.

Although the European Agenda was adopted only after the 2006 Decision establishing the ECoC Action in its current form, it forms a vital part of the political context within which the ECoC Action has been implemented. In particular, the Agenda reinforces the overall objective of the ECoC Action, with its focus on cultural diversity and mutual acquaintance between European citizens (intercultural dialogue). It also gives explicit recognition to a dimension of culture that the ECoC have increasingly emphasised over the years, i.e. the wider social and economic benefits that culture can generate.

## 1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures introduced by the 2006 Decision<sup>15</sup> has been recommended by independent evaluations of the ECoC undertaken to date and is important for two main reasons.

**First**, it is important to see how effective the current processes have been, given that those operating within the context of the 1999 Decision were found to be insufficient to identify problems systematically and prescribe remedial action.<sup>16</sup> Whilst processes enabled applications of sufficient quality to be selected, the evaluation of the 2009 ECoC found that they did not in themselves ensure that the ECoC went on to develop effective cultural programmes. Indeed, the European Commission was not able to play a significant support and monitoring role in relation to the 2007 and 2008 ECoC although the predominant view from those ECoC was that such a function would have brought benefits. Similarly, in the case of Vilnius (2009), whilst the Commission took informal steps to support the development of the ECoC, it had no formal means at its disposal with which to address its concerns during the development phase. The evaluation of the 2009 ECoC thus concluded that the formal processes operating at the time were insufficient to identify problems systematically and prescribe remedial action.

**Second**, this evaluation perhaps offers the only opportunity for the experience of the current selection and monitoring procedures to be taken into account in the design of any future ECoC Action. Given the long preparation time of ECoC, 2010 marks the first titles that have been subject to *any* of the requirements of the 2006 Decision, whilst 2013 features the first ECoC that have been subject to *all* the requirements of the Decision. But with the selection procedure for any 2020 titles needing to be launched in 2013, there is a very short window of opportunity for lessons from the experience to date to be identified and fed into the process of preparing a new legal basis.

<sup>15</sup> Decision 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

<sup>16</sup> Ex-post evaluation of the 2009 ECoC; ECOTEC Research & Consulting on behalf of the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission; 2010.

### 1.3 Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions as set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR) for this evaluation are presented in the table below. Following the standard evaluation model of the European Commission,<sup>17</sup> the questions are structured here according to the headings of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. However, this evaluation – with its specific focus on procedures – is essentially considering part of the "efficiency" question of the overall ECoC Action; indeed, the procedures are only relevant, efficient, effective or sustainable within the context of the Action as a whole. For that reason and for the sake of clarity, the main body of the report is structured according to the broad chronological process in which the procedures are followed in practice, i.e. application and selection, monitoring and development, finance.

**Table 1.1 Evaluation questions**

Relevance	Question
EQ1.	To what extent has the new selection procedure fostered competition among bidding cities?
EQ2.	To what extent does the selection procedure help the cities to prepare a programme relevant to the objectives and criteria laid down for the action?
EQ3.	To what extent does the selection procedure foster the European dimension of the ECoC event? Where relevant, are there differences between MS involved?
EQ4.	Has the chronological list of MS entitled to host the event affected (positively or negatively) the implementation of the ECoC objectives? Has it been adapted to the potential of any MS in terms of number of cities with the capacity of hosting such an event?
EQ5.	To what extent are the criteria laid down in the 2006 Decision clearer than former Decision 1419? Do the cities understand the criteria? Are they adapted to the objectives of the ECoC event? Are they compatible with the local stakes?
EQ6.	To what extent do cities take into account the ECoC criteria (European dimension/the city and citizens) in their bids? Which balance do they strike between these criteria and the socio-economic objectives of the cities? Does this balance change after designation?
EQ7.	Does the ECoC planned cultural programme last the entire year?
EQ8.	To what extent does the ECoC planned cultural programme cover only the city or a broader region? Are there different degrees of relevance in covering an area broader than a city?
EQ9.	To what extent is the ECoC brand visible? Do ECoC use the title in a relevant way (during the selection process and after their designation)? Which actions do the designated cities implement to make clear that the event is an EU initiative? Do people understand that it is an EU initiative?

<sup>17</sup> See: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat\\_general/evaluation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/secretariat_general/evaluation/index_en.htm)

Relevance	Question
<b>Efficiency</b>	
<b>EQ10.</b>	To what extent is the selection procedure considered fair and transparent by the cities?
<b>EQ11.a</b>	How efficient is the selection process (timing) to prepare the ECoC event?
<b>EQ11.b</b>	How efficient is the selection process (guiding documents) to prepare the ECoC event?
<b>EQ11.c</b>	How efficient is the selection process (organisation) to prepare the ECoC event?
<b>EQ11.d</b>	How efficient is the selection process (reports) to prepare the ECoC event?
<b>EQ12.</b>	To what extent has the overall quality of the bids improved with the new selection procedure? Are there remarkable differences between years/MS?
<b>EQ13.</b>	To what extent has the selection panel been efficient and delivered a quality output? Has the Panel assessed the bids against the ECoC criteria (European dimension / the city and citizens)? Are there other elements the Panel has taken into account? On the quality of panel reports: are they clear and precise enough? Are they useful for the cities concerned, notably the parts on assessment and recommendation?
<b>EQ14.</b>	To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel take stock of the preparations for the event? To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel check that the criteria are fulfilled? Are there other elements the Panel has taken into account? On the quality of panel reports: are they clear and consistent enough? Are they useful for the cities concerned, notably the parts on assessment and recommendation?
<b>EQ15.</b>	To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel deliver assistance and advice in the preparations for the event?
<b>EQ16.a</b>	Is the use of the Melina Mercouri Prize planned in advance in the budget of a Capital?
<b>EQ16.b</b>	To what extent is the scheme of co-funding through the Melina Mercouri Prize adapted to the ECoC preparation, in particular regarding the time schedule for delivering the Prize?
<b>EQ16.c</b>	Has the scheme of co-funding through the Melina Mercouri Prize been an efficient way of improving the quality of the preparation phase in general and, more specifically, to make the cities fulfil the criteria (notably the European dimension) and respect the commitments made at selection stage?
<b>EQ17.a</b>	To what extent has the Commission been efficient in facilitating and supporting the application process? To what extent does the Commission set up and update regularly the ECoC website? To what extent are documents prepared by the Commission to inform the bidding cities about the application process and explain and illustrate the objectives and criteria helpful? To what extent are documents and actions implemented by the Commission to guide the bidding cities in the preparation of a bid helpful?

Relevance	Question
EQ17.b	To what extent are the documents and actions prepared by the Commission to guide the Ministries in the management of the competition helpful?
EQ17.c	To what extent does the Commission foster the exchange of good practices? Which initiatives has it taken to that purpose? How could the Commission go further to support the preparations of the Capitals?
EQ17.d	To what extent do cities benefit from networking and the exchange of good practice during the development phase?
Effectiveness	
EQ18.	To what extent has the role of the selection panel been reinforced during the selection phase? To what extent is the mixed composition of the panel an added value for the assessment of the bids? Are the appointed panel members relevant to the criteria requested in Article 6.3 of Decision 1622?
EQ19.	To what extent is the monitoring process adapted to the preparation of an event like the ECoC event (in particular concerning the timing)? Does it help the cities in achieving a successful event? Does it foster the European dimension of the ECoC event?
EQ20.	To what extent do ECoC benefit from the European monitoring support during their preparation phase?
EQ21.	What are the main problems faced by the bidding cities during their preparation phase? What are the specific problems that the ECoCs have to manage regarding: governance, budget, relationships with local and national authorities? How politics interfere with artistic choices and funding guarantees? Has this disrupted the preparation of the cities?
EQ22.	What are the main problems faced by appointed ECoC during the preparation of the event? What are the specific problems that the ECoCs have to manage regarding: governance, budget, relationships with local and national authorities? How politics interfere with artistic choices and funding guarantees? Has this disrupted the preparation of the cities?
Sustainability	
EQ23.	How could the selection procedure be improved?
EQ24.	How could the monitoring procedure be improved?
EQ25.	To what extent bidding cities devise and prepare the ECoC event as part of their long term development?
EQ26.	To what extent ECoC cities pay attention to the legacy of the ECoC event during its preparation?
EQ27.	To what extent is the selection procedure sustainable over time, in particular in smaller MS?

## 1.4 Methodology

The methodology for this evaluation was structured into three main stages namely desk research, consultation and analysis and reporting.

### *Desk research*

In terms of desk research, the key tasks were:

- Refinement of the evaluation framework;
- Review of reports of selection panels and monitoring and advisory panels, extracting of evidence into the analysis grid;
- Analysis of the grid;
- Identification of issues specific to each ECoC to inform the interviews.

### *Consultation*

The following tasks have been conducted:

- Some 35 interviews with stakeholders such as representatives of the European Commission, expert panel members, ECoC host cities and unsuccessful bidders. The table below shows the numbers of interviews conducted by stakeholder group.

**Table 1.2 Consultees by stakeholder group**

Interview group	No. of interviews
European Commission DG Education and Culture	2
Expert Panel Members (telephone)	7
National ministries or other national bodies (telephone)	7
ECoC host cities 2010-2015 (telephone)	13
ECoC unsuccessful applicants 2013-2015	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

- A focus group with panel members nominated by the European institutions took place on 14 December 2010 in Brussels. Some seven panel members and three representatives of the DG EAC participated in the workshop.
- An email survey of the candidate cities in Spain and Poland was conducted; twelve responses were received: four from Poland and eight from Spain; consultees were asked a selection of closed questions which required them to provide a score for their level of satisfaction with various elements of the procedures – ranging from 1 (low) to 5 (high); they were also given the opportunity to supply qualitative comments on the procedures as a whole.

### *Analysis and reporting*

This stage aimed at analysing evidence gathered and preparing of the draft final report. Key elements include:

- Reporting on the evaluation questions;
- Provision of illustrative examples;
- Recommendations for selection and monitoring within the context of Decision 1622/2006/EC; and
- Recommendations to be taken into account in the Commission Staff Working Document and in any legal basis.

The evaluation team consulted a wide range of stakeholders at European, national and city level. Importantly, each ECoC reported on their experience related to its own stage of development, but the cities selected according to the new procedures will only host ECoC title in 2013. Similarly regarding monitoring we were able to consult a modest number of ECoC, most of which are still at the development stage. Therefore, many cities are only able to report on their experience to date and were unable to talk about the detail of their eventual cultural programmes.

## 2.0 Description

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### 2.1 Objectives of the ECoC

The starting point for this evaluation has been the legal basis for the 2010-16 ECoC, which is Decision 1622/2006/EC<sup>18</sup> (although the 2010 ECoC were selected under the terms of the previous legal basis, Decision 1419/1999/EC, and the 2011-2012 titles on the basis of the same scheme as established by Decision 1419). The 2006 Decision sets out a general objective for the ECoC which reiterates the overall objective of the 1999 Decision,<sup>19</sup> whilst the specific objectives consist of criteria relating to “the European Dimension” and “City and Citizens”.

#### General objective

The overall aim 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 acquaintance between European citizens.

#### Specific objectives

I. As regards ‘the European Dimension’, the Action shall:

- foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector;
- highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;
- bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore

II. As regards ‘City and Citizens’ the Action shall:

- 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;
- be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

<sup>18</sup> Decision 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.

<sup>19</sup> Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019.

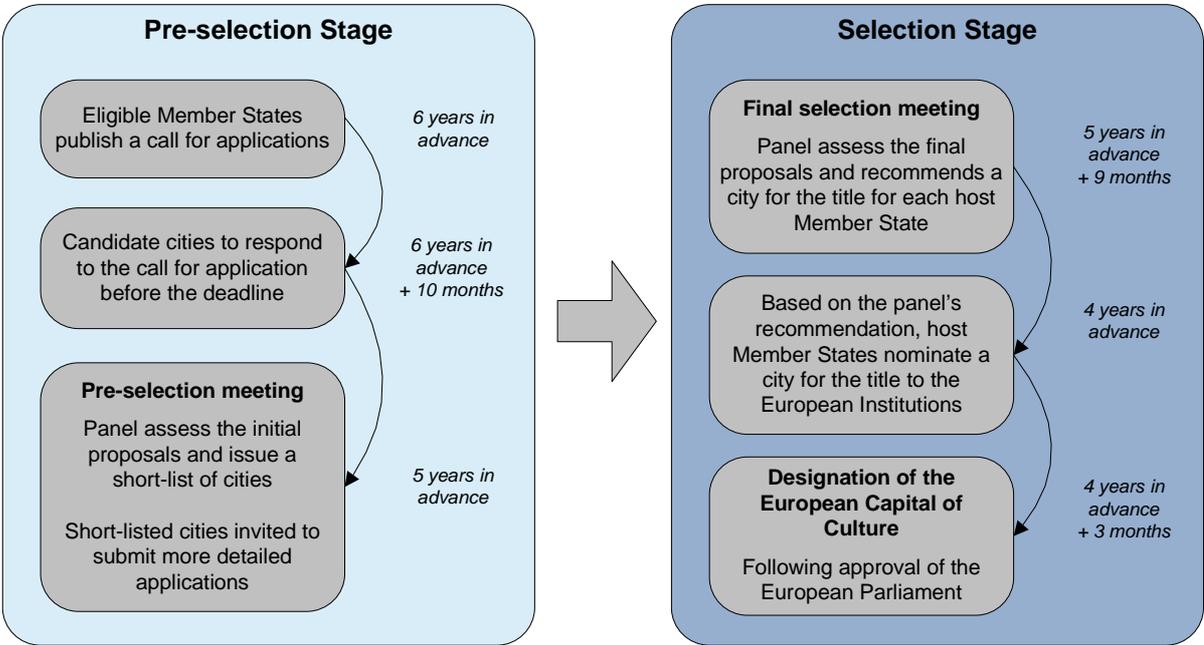
## 2.2 Selection and monitoring processes

ECoC up to and including 2010 were selected according to the process set out in the 1999 Decision. Whilst the Decision specified an order of entitlement for Member States to nominate candidates for ECoC, it did not specify the basis on which Member States would make that nomination. As a consequence, approaches have differed between Member States with some, such as the UK (2008) and Germany (2010), operating open calls for proposals and others, such as Luxembourg (2007) and Lithuania (2009), simply nominating a preferred candidate. All nominations from Member States have then been considered by a selection panel operating at European level. However, the 1999 Decision made no provision for monitoring ECoC either during their development phase or during the title year, though the European Commission took informal steps to support the development of ECoC.

The current system has been devised by Decision 1622/2006/EC which introduced a competitive selection process and a monitoring system linked to the EU co-financing, now called the "Melina Mercouri" prize. As ECoC preparations start six years in advance, these new provisions were gradually phased in: monitoring provisions have applied as of the 2010 ECoC, while the competitive selection process has applied as of the 2013 ECoC, with transitional provisions for 2011 and 2012.

The following diagram sets out the selection process for ECoC. It includes a pre-selection stage, which comprises a call for applications and a pre-selection meeting, followed by the selection stage, which includes a final selection meeting and designation of the ECoC.

**Figure 2.1 Selection process**



The diagram below sets out the monitoring process for ECoC, which includes an informal and optional post-designation meeting (with the view of helping the cities in their preparations), followed by first and second monitoring meetings (laid down by the legal basis) and reports. A year after the event, an evaluation is also undertaken.

**Figure 2.2 Monitoring process**



# 3.0 Application and selection

## 3.1 Order of entitlement (list of Member States)

EQ4.	Has the chronological list of MS entitled to host the event affected (positively or negatively) the implementation of the ECoC objectives? Has it been adapted to the potential of any MS in terms of number of cities with the capacity of hosting such an event?
EQ27.	To what extent is the selection procedure sustainable over time, in particular in smaller MS?

In order to create a more predictable, consistent and transparent rotational system for the designation of the ECoC title, the 1999 Decision of the Parliament and of the Council introduced an “order of entitlement”, whereby each year one Member State would be entitled to nominate one or more cities. The order of entitlement was established for the years 2005 to 2019, with each of the EU15 Member States listed once. A 2005 amendment to the Decision<sup>20</sup> integrated the ten states that acceded to the EU in 2004, whilst the 2006 Decision added Bulgaria and Romania.<sup>21</sup>

The chronological “order of entitlement” was intended to create a more predictable, balanced and transparent rotational system for the designation of the ECoC. Member States listed against the years 2005-12 were free to choose how to nominate a city (or cities), whilst for the years 2013 onwards, they have been required to hold an open competition. The list has not been adapted and all Member States have been treated equally in that respect, regardless of the number of cities with the capacity to host the ECoC.

Looking back, it can be said that the order of entitlement in its current format has, for the years 2005-19, been an appropriate replacement for the previous inter-governmental method of allocating the title, through its contribution to equity and effectiveness.

In terms of equity, the list has ensured an “equitable” distribution of title-holders across the 27 Member States over the years 2005-19 (assuming that the title is awarded for the years 2016-19); by 2019, all 27 Member States (and a number of non-Member States) will thus have hosted the ECoC at least once. In that sense, the list help the ECoC to make a positive contribution to the global objective of the 2006 Decision to “highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures” and to the objective of Article 167 of the Treaty to “contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States”.

In the years covered by the 2006 Decision (i.e. 2013 onwards), the list has also contributed to the effectiveness of the ECoC action through generating a high or reasonable number of applications from

<sup>20</sup> Decision 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.

<sup>21</sup> The Romanian city of Sibiu had already been designated ECoC for the year 2007 under the terms of the Article 4 of the 1999 Decision, which allowed the possibility for cities in non-Member States to be designated ECoC. In fact, the first day of Sibiu’s title year coincided with Romania’s accession to the EU.

most of the Member States listed.<sup>22</sup> 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 and that would not be traditionally considered as cultural centres. Having the year of entitlement determined well in advance has also given a focus to potential applicants' preparations. For example, Mons, having witnessed the experience of its close neighbour Lille (2004), made an early start to its preparations in the knowledge that a Belgian city would be nominated in 2015. Similarly, the conception of Lund's application (for the year 2014) began in 1999.

There is also evidence that 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. Media and public opinion has generally been favourable in each country, though there have been more sceptical voices in the public debate. For example, some press coverage in Sweden was said to be negative (though most was positive), reflecting a degree of scepticism towards the EU in that country.

Looking ahead, whilst the continuation of the order of entitlement beyond 2019 would ensure equity between Member States, members of the selection panel (amongst others) have highlighted the risk that the contribution to effectiveness would not endure. In some of the smaller Member States, there exist fewer cities that have not yet hosted the title and that have the capacity and ambition necessary to hosting a cultural programme of European significance; for example, three of the first four Member States that would be feature in a repeated order of entitlement (Ireland, Greece and Luxembourg) are small or medium-sized countries that have between them already hosted the ECoC seven times.<sup>23</sup> Of course, credible candidates could emerge from these countries (including past holders), but competition would be less intense and the returns from a third or fourth ECoC within any Member State may begin to diminish. As the Commission considers a new legal basis for the ECoC beyond 2019, it will be necessary to consider carefully the merits of repeating the list in its current format relative to the merits of other approaches, such as an open competition..

**Main finding 1: The order of entitlement has ensured an equitable distribution of ECoC across all 27 Member States in the 2005-19 period and helped generate a high number of credible applications.**

**Main finding 2: There is a need to explore whether repetition of the order of entitlement in its current format beyond 2019 will create the risk that applications in some years will be fewer in number and/or lower in quality, thus damaging the overall credibility of the ECoC.**

<sup>22</sup> Belgium (2015) is the exception here, having generated only one applicant (Mons). A possible explanation may be the fact that Belgium has already hosted the title three times (Antwerp 1993, Brussels 2000, Bruges 2002). The same is also true of France (Paris 1989, Avignon 2000, Lille 2004) and Spain (Madrid 1992, Santiago de Compostela 2000, Salamanca 2002), but the much larger size of these countries means they contain far more cities that have not yet held the title.

<sup>23</sup> Athens 1985, Dublin 1991, Luxembourg 1995, Thessaloniki 1997, Cork 2005, Patras 2006, Luxembourg 2007.

### 3.2 Guidance for applicants

<b>EQ11.b</b>	How efficient is the selection process (guiding documents) to prepare the ECoC event?
<b>EQ17.a</b>	To what extent has the Commission been efficient in facilitating and supporting the application process? To what extent does the Commission set up and update regularly the ECoC website? To what extent are documents prepared by the Commission to inform the bidding cities about the application process and explain and illustrate the objectives and criteria helpful? To what extent are documents and actions implemented by the Commission to guide the bidding cities in the preparation of a bid helpful?
<b>EQ23.</b>	How could the selection procedure be improved?

The ECoC webpages hosted on DG EAC's Culture pages provide an overview of the initiative, information on the specific criteria (European dimension and cities and citizens), as well as other significant criteria (for example governance, financing and communications strategy). The selection process is described and links provided to material on past ECoC, good practice (which includes "tips for a successful application"), and the history of the initiative. Member States are also encouraged to organise information sessions around the time of the call for applications for the benefit of potential applicants; DG EAC has routinely been invited to such events to present an overview of the ECoC Action (i.e. selection process, objectives, criteria, potential benefits, risks, keys to success). In addition, the Commission has also organised its own events in Brussels, most recently an "Info Day" in 2009 and a second one in 2010 accompanied by an event to mark the 25th anniversary of the ECoC in 2010.<sup>24</sup> Those ECoC that attended these events have reported their general satisfaction.

The applicants for 2016 were reasonably satisfied with the ECoC webpages, giving an average score of 3.27 out of 5 (and none giving a score of less than 2). None of the designated cities suggested any particular lack of information and only a few interviewees felt the need to comment on the quality of the information on the ECoC website: one expressed the view that it could set ECoC more firmly in the wider context of cultural policy, could be written in a more accessible style and present the benefits of ECoC more positively. Another noted that the information the website provided on the experiences of past ECoC was especially useful; several candidates for 2016 even suggested that the webpages should host the applications of previous ECoC and provide the relevant contact details, in order for potential applicants to learn the lessons from these past experiences. On the wider question of information dissemination, one interviewee suggested there may be value in DG EAC holding a series of seminars (information sessions) with the candidate cities. As indicated above, DG EAC has already begun to do this.

<sup>24</sup> European Commission Conference "Celebrating 25 years of European Capitals of Culture" Brussels, 23-24 March 2010"; [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/conclusions\\_ecoc.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/conclusions_ecoc.pdf).

The cities designated as ECoC and the national ministries were generally satisfied with the Guide for cities provided by DG EAC. Similarly, the applicants for 2016 were reasonably satisfied, giving an average score of 3.83 out of 5 (and none giving a score of less than 3). This Guide is well structured and provides useful examples to help candidates decide how to address the ECoC dimensions. It sets out the process in detail but does not follow the same structure as the Proposed Application Form (the main document required at pre-selection and full selection stage). To improve clarity of the Guide, there may be value in applying the same general structure and headings to both the Guide and to the application form. It would then be possible to cross-reference between the two documents. For example, the Guide emphasises a range of key elements of a strong proposal but these do not necessarily and naturally map onto the questions posed in the application form. It would also be worthwhile to combine the frequently-asked questions (FAQs) in Annex G with the main Guide.

The views of panel members on the quality and extent of guidance provided to candidate cities and national Ministries offer a different perspective, where it is suggested that the strongest candidates will understand and respond to the ECoC requirements without a significant amount of detailed guidance; and that a great deal of relevant information is already available in the public domain. Concerning the challenge of obtaining detailed advice and guidance beyond the scope of the written documentation, one panel member pointed out that the onus was on applicants to establish contact with previous and/or current ECoC; reflecting the view that the guidance materials were the starting point and were not intended as sufficient in themselves. In this sense, it may be argued that additional guidance would not necessarily address the issue of clarity for some candidates, whereas more contacts with other cities might.

In submitting an application to the Member State authority responsible in response to the call for applications, candidate cities must complete an information sheet ("Proposed Application Form") and may also provide a supporting file. The Guide states these should provide an overview of the proposed ECoC programme. A Proposed Application Form is provided and is used for both pre-selection and selection stages of the competition. The difference is that at pre-selection stage answering some of the questions is optional, whereas for final selection all questions must be completed; and those already answered should be expanded upon. There are around forty questions in total, twelve of which need only be answered fully at final selection stage. The full list of questions covers the following headings:

- basic principles;
- structure of the programme for the event;
- organising and financing the event;
- city infrastructure;
- communication strategy;
- evaluation and monitoring; and
- additional information.

The application form has enabled applicants to provide the information needed by panel members in order to make an effective selection. However, the representatives of the successful candidate cities who were interviewed presented a mixture of views concerning the application forms. Most found completing the application a challenging, but largely satisfying, experience and in general welcomed the relative lack of "bureaucracy" compared with other application procedures.

The information required in the proposal form was generally considered relevant, although mixed views were recorded in terms of the detailed requirements. For example, the layout of the proposal form did attract some criticism from several city representatives for being unclear and poorly designed (specifically due to instances of repetition), as well as tending to stifle creativity (for example it could be explicitly stated that it is permitted to answer questions in a different order). However, several interviewees also recognised that although initially the questions posed by the proposal form were not always easy to understand (for example in the way they are phrased and the use of "jargon"), the requirements became clearer as candidates worked their way through the process. It is also clear from the feedback that candidates and Ministries in the smaller New Member States in particular found the process more challenging than their equivalents in larger, EU15 countries, given their relative inexperience and more limited capacity.

The applicants also expressed frustration with the difficulty they faced in offering a coherent, integrated and holistic presentation of their application given the long list of questions featuring in the information sheet. They also reported that this difficulty was aggravated by duplication or overlap in the questions. Reflecting this difficulty many applicants had tended to submit a considerable amount of supporting information and marketing material in support of their applications. As a result, some panel members complained about the volume of material supplied, much of which they believed to be unnecessary.

Taking these views into account and having reviewed the documents, our view is that there is indeed scope to improve the quality and utility of applications, which should assist the work of the Panel and the ability of the applicants to convey the key messages and information relating to their bid:

- the use of the same form for pre-selection and final selection stages does not help applicants to present their applications in the clearest and simplest form and hinders the effectiveness of the Panel in its assessment. Two separate forms would reduce the risk of confusion and make it easier for cities to understand what information is required and when.
- the information sheet could be improved by reducing the number of questions (this will be the case if there are two separate forms for the two stages in any case) and focusing more on the key points. For example in the "Basic principles" section the focus might be on the overarching concept. Some questions are probably superfluous at the pre-selection stage or are addressed elsewhere in the form. The style could be changed to include fewer, bigger headings, with prompts or advice to guide responses, and word limits. An example might be: under "City infrastructure" – "the Panel needs to be sure that the city can successfully host an event of ECoC's scale. Please tell us about the city's infrastructure, including for example accommodation capacity, any planned works and international links".
- The questions could be rationalised to remove duplication and/or overlap and some questions removed (e.g. Q14 "How is the proposed project innovative?" and Q16 "How was your application

designed and prepared?"). The issues these questions are apparently designed to address should be covered by other sections (for example through the innovative nature of the overall concept or a question about how the bidding organisation is structured and which actors are involved).

To assist the Panel in its decision-making, the focus at the pre-selection stage should perhaps be on the strength of the overall ECoC concept (especially the ECoC criteria) and on the practical baseline information. We would also suggest that if the application forms are re-designed (with word limits) the accompanying file that candidates may submit should be more narrowly defined or perhaps even disallowed completely. These changes would improve consistency, comparability and focus, and reduce the volume of material that panel members are expected to consider in advance of selection meetings. Candidates should also be required to submit an electronic version of their applications (in addition to the current paper format), in order to assist the Commission in its task of communicating information about the ECoC.

There may also be an argument for separating out the requirement for basic, factual, objective information about cities from the application form, allowing candidates to focus on the key aspects of their proposals. Such a standard background dossier (compiled either by cities or the national Ministries) would provide the information the Panel needs to make informed judgments and also to engage in an informed dialogue with national panel members.

**Main finding 3: Overall, the provision of information and the way the application process is designed is regarded by stakeholders as satisfactory and individual support provided by EAC is rated highly. It may be beneficial for the Europa webpages to feature the applications of past, present and future ECoC (where these are available in electronic format) as well as relevant contact details (where permission is given by the applicant city).**

**Main finding 4: Many would like to see more detailed guidance, but it is not clear if more written material would necessarily improve outcomes. The strongest bidders obtain information, advice and guidance from a range of sources (including meetings with DG EAC) and providing more opportunities for contact (via briefings, seminars etc.) is more likely to improve results.**

**Main finding 5: There is scope to revisit, update and perhaps rationalise the proposal form and elements of the guidance; and ensure it is reviewed regularly so any new lessons learned can be incorporated.**

### 3.3 Timing of the application and selection process

EQ11.a

How efficient is the selection process (timing) to prepare the ECoC event?

As noted in section 2.2, ECoC up to 2012 were selected according to the process set out in the 1999 Decision. Member States submitted their nomination no later than four years before the year in question and these nominations were then considered by a selection panel operating at European level. Under the 2006 Decision, the two-stage process was introduced; the pre-selection stage features a call for applications issued no later than six years before the title year, whilst the second stage features the submission of full applications and the convening of the selection panel no more than nine months after the pre-selection meeting.

The two-stage process appears to be broadly welcomed by applicants and other stakeholders and has enabled applicants to strengthen their applications at the full stage. Although individual bidding cities reported a range of different experiences relating to their specific circumstances, the experience has mostly been positive. For example, Lund chose to rewrite its application following the first selection meeting, when they were given feedback and advised to review Marseille's application and amend some aspects of their bid. At the first selection meeting, Lund focused on the city's and the region's offer and not so much on the detail of the application (administration, monitoring, budgets, etc). At the second meeting however, the focus was on the detail provided in the application. Mons reported that at the first stage, they realised that the main task was to provide answers to the 38 questions on the questionnaire, but that at the second stage, they realised that they had to make the ECoC underlying concept clearer, ("where technology meets culture").

The majority of stakeholders consulted felt that the timetable was appropriate; the existence of the order of entitlement has meant that some cities have been able to start their preparations long in advance of the formal call for applications; the nine-month period between pre-selection and final selection appears to be sufficient. Clearly different countries face different contextual circumstances – for example in Belgium instead of allowing ten months (from the publication of the call) for the submission of applications, the Government allowed only six months so the process could be completed before an election (Decision 1622 allows up to ten months). Since Mons had been working on the bid for many years (since 2004), this was just sufficient.

Overall, the majority of stakeholders agreed that a six-year timescale for the application and development process is about right, given the amount of planning and preparation needed to deliver a successful ECoC. None felt it should be longer, though two Ministries recognised the potential disadvantages of such a long period; the Spanish Ministry felt the overall selection and development process is too long, since it runs the risk of building expectations in the country and the cities and of the process becoming very political and complicated. In this context, it was suggested that the overall preparation period could be three years, including one year for selection and two years for the development of the programme. The Czech Ministry also recognised the possibility that over a six-year period, momentum could be lost, though on balance felt that six years was about right.

Drawing on the ex-post evaluations of the 2007-09 ECoC, there is no evidence that the ECoC that faced great difficulties, such as Vilnius, would have been particularly strengthened by a shorter timescale. Moreover, had the preparation period been shorter, some of the stronger ECoC, such as Linz, might not have been able to offer such a strong “warm-up programme” in the two years before the title year. Given this experience and the views of those consulted by this evaluation, there would appear to be no merit in adjusting the timescale. However, there is a need to continue to make designated ECoC aware of the potential pitfalls that can arise during the development phase.

**Main finding 6:** The timing of the selection process (six years before the title year) is appropriate to the needs of applicant cities and of Ministries; lengthening the six-year period would provide few benefits and risk a loss of momentum; shortening the period would increase the difficulties faced by ECoC in developing robust delivery arrangements and high quality cultural programmes.

**Main finding 7:** The two-stage process is welcomed by applicants and enables them to strengthen the quality of their applications.

### 3.4 Organisation of the application and selection process

EQ11.c	How efficient is the selection process (organisation) to prepare the ECoC event?
EQ17.b	To what extent are the documents and actions prepared by the Commission to guide the Ministries in the management of the competition helpful?
EQ24.	How could the selection procedure be improved?

The application processes organised by Member States under the terms of the 2006 Decision (i.e. for the 2013 titles onwards) have, in most cases, been successful in generating a good number of applications and (as we discuss in the next sub-section) have led to the selection of credible ECoC in every Member State. This positive outcome notwithstanding, the efficiency of the organisation (and thus the satisfaction of the applicants and the European panel members) has varied from Member State to Member State. Some such as France and Sweden were reported by the European panel members to have made the necessary expertise available – both in terms of organisational capacity, as well as independent, experienced and knowledgeable national panel members. In other countries, it was reported by applicants and European panel members alike that the lack of experience in organising processes of this type was a hindering factor; all Member States were of course operating the competition for the first time. Problems reported by applicants included poor publicity and a lack of preparatory discussions and a late start to the process. The application process in Belgium received some criticism from European panel members for its failure to generate more than one application. Moreover, there is evidence that this outcome did not merely reflect a lack of interest on the part of other cities; a group of citizens from Liège felt frustrated by the decision of their city not to submit an application and therefore staged a protest outside the venue for the selection panel meeting. In Poland and Spain, the calls for applications attracted a high number of applications which imposed a relatively large workload on the Ministries organising the process. Perhaps as a result of this burden, respondents to the email questionnaire in these countries were least positive about this aspect of the application process (compared to other aspects such as the

Guide for cities, application form and criteria), with the average rating being 3.25 in Poland and 2.75 and in Spain.

Whilst many Ministries coped well with the “logistics” of the application and selection procedure, the main difficulty experienced by Member States (and reported both by Ministries and by applicants) was the lack of expert knowledge about the ECoC itself. Member States, being responsible for the publication of the call for applications and for organising the selection process, provide the first point of contact for applicants; moreover, they are required to operate a website with links to the Commission’s website for culture. However, at least two Ministries reported that they would have welcomed more guidance or support from DG EAC in handling queries from applicants, such as those relating to eligibility to apply (e.g. the possibility of applications led by regions or civil society organisations). Indeed, the Spanish Ministry’s view was that the pre-selection stage can be confusing and there is doubt about where responsibility lies for the process and where cities should seek support and guidance. It was felt that this situation becomes much clearer at the selection stage, when the Panel assumes greater responsibility.<sup>25</sup>

Ministries were unanimous in expressing satisfaction with the support provided by DG EAC. Indeed, such support was seen as essential given that DG EAC possesses a knowledge and experience of the ECoC lacking in the Member States. For example, one Ministry stated that “support from DG EAC was excellent. Officials were the cornerstone of the whole process. They were accessible and helpful”. In addition to this direct support, DG EAC has since mid-2008 provided Member States with a set of detailed practical information about the timing, logistics and protocols of running the ECoC competition in Member States.<sup>26</sup> This information was not available to those Ministries organising the selection processes for 2013 (France, Slovakia), since these processes had to be launched very soon after the 2006 Decision.<sup>27</sup> The Ministries of both countries reported how useful such guidance would have been given that they were the first to organise selection under the new process. Some of the other Ministries consulted expressed a need for clearer and more detailed guidance concerning several aspects of the ECoC procedure; including information on organising the competition (most appear to have managed the process successfully although several found it “stressful”), on budgeting, and on briefing and remunerating members of the selection panels. One suggested a rationalisation of the suite of documents, templates and annexes into one concise and integrated document.

The guidance should, of course, continue to be updated over time and in the light of continuing experience of the application and selection process. But most of the elements mentioned by Ministries which relate to the process appear to be covered in the existing information provided by DG EAC. Moreover, the guidance should not become overly prescriptive; the very different contexts of each Member State (and the likelihood that each Ministry will want to customise its approach to that context) mean that the guidance cannot be expected to cover every eventuality. However, there would appear to be two main areas where the process could be strengthened.

<sup>25</sup> No contact between the Panel and any candidate city is allowed before the pre-selection meeting; Guide for Implementation of the European Capital of Culture Competition (for the attention of the Member States).

<sup>26</sup> Guide for implementation of the European Capital of Culture Competition (for the attention of Member States).

<sup>27</sup> Given the requirement to publish a call for applications no later than six years before the title year, the calls for 2013 were launched in the first half of 2007, whilst Decision 1622/2006/EC was not adopted until 24.10.2006.

First, some Ministries have struggled to respond to "technical" questions from candidate cities (and others) that relate to the criteria, nature and content of the ECoC, rather than the selection process itself. From the Ministries' perspective, ECoC candidate cities require significant support and often require detailed answers to a raft of practical queries, many of which are directed towards the national government, but which they are not necessarily in a position to address. For example, in Spain there appears to have been an issue concerning whether applications could only be submitted by municipalities or whether regional authorities or civil society organisations could apply. As we discuss later in the report (in section 3.9), there is a need for clarity on a number of "implicit criteria" which are applied in practice but not stated in the legal basis or the current guidance. To help strengthen the quality of applications even further, it may therefore be useful for DG EAC to provide for the Member States a further guidance note focussed more explicitly on such issues so that they can in turn advise applicants.

Second, the Commission should consider ways to encourage exchanges of practice and networking between Ministries responsible for organising the selection process in different countries. Some Ministry representatives indicated that they had benefitted from the opportunity to share experiences with Ministries in other countries and learn from each other. For example, Slovakia, as one of the first Member States to implement the new procedure had been pro-active in passing on the lessons learned to other Member States. However, other Ministries reported that they had had more limited opportunities for such cooperation.

**Main finding 8: Whilst the task of organisation the competition was challenging for some Ministries, problems have largely been overcome and have not prevented the selection of credible candidates for ECoC.**

**Main finding 9: The support offered by DG EAC to Ministries is highly valued; there may be opportunities to strengthen the support offered to Ministries by the provision of guidance regarding the questions from candidate cities that relate to the criteria, nature and content of the ECoC (described later in this report as "implicit criteria").**

**Main finding 10: There may be scope to encourage the exchange of experience and networking among national Ministries involved in the selection of the ECoC in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the selection process.**

### 3.5 Outcome of the application procedure

EQ1.	To what extent has the new selection procedure fostered competition among bidding cities?
EQ12.	To what extent has the overall quality of the bids improved with the new application procedure? Are there remarkable differences between years/MS?
EQ10.	To what extent is the selection procedure considered fair and transparent by the cities?

The level of competition among cities has varied widely between Member States, both under the current and the previous application procedures. Prior to the 2006 Decision, Member States listed in the order of entitlement were free to choose how many cities to nominate; most nominated just one, which limited the Panel’s choice to the acceptance or rejection of that one bid; however, Germany (2010) chose to nominate two cities and Ireland (2005) four cities, which allowed the Panel a choice between competing bids. Member States were also free to determine the basis on which they would nominate a city (or cities) for the ECoC title. Whilst some simply nominated a preferred candidate (e.g. Luxembourg 2007, Vilnius 2009), others chose to hold an open competition. Member States were free to determine their own criteria and arrangements for such competitions and were not required to involve the Commission; indeed, none did. Competitions in two of the larger Member States generated a very high number of applications: the UK received twelve applications for the 2008 title, whilst Germany received seventeen for the 2010 title. In contrast, just one city responded to the call for applications in Austria for the 2009 (Linz); Graz had held the title as recently as 2003, whilst the more established cultural centres of Salzburg and Vienna chose not to apply.

Overall, there was broad agreement among the stakeholders consulted that the competitive approach introduced by the 2006 Decision had a number of significant benefits. Most reported positive effects in terms of increasing the quality of bids, generating increased public and press interest and helping to mobilise human and financial resources (including private sector funding). In the Czech Republic, for example, it was reported that the competition generated significant media interest and the candidate cities devoted significant efforts to developing their bids. The competition raised the public profile of ECoC and this was seen a very positive feature. TV interviews with candidate cities were one manifestation of the level of interest.

Competition was high in Spain (fifteen applicants), Poland (eleven) and Slovakia (nine). In contrast, in Sweden and Belgium the level of competition was less than expected (four candidates in Sweden and one in Belgium). It is perhaps no coincidence that these Member States are medium-sized countries that have already hosted the ECoC – once before in the case of Sweden (Stockholm 1998) and three times in case of Belgium (Antwerp 1993, Brussels 2000, Bruges 2000). The Czech Republic generated three applications. Regardless of the lack of competition in Belgium, it has been reported by the successful applicant (Mons) and by the European panel members that the selection procedure was applied just as rigorously as elsewhere. As a result, the European panel members, DG EAC and the national Ministries were satisfied that the application process had led to the selection of credible ECoC in every Member State.

**Main finding 11:** The introduction of a competition is widely regarded as having had a positive effect on ECoC, in terms of strengthening the quality of bids and generating publicity and interest.

**Main finding 12:** A large number of applications can create challenges for some national Ministries in Member States where there is a lack of capacity and/or experience.

### 3.6 Understanding and application of the criteria

EQ5.	To what extent are the criteria laid down in the 2006 Decision clearer than former Decision 1419? Do the cities understand the criteria? Are they adapted to the objectives of the ECoC event? Are they compatible with the local stakes?
EQ2.	To what extent does the selection procedure help the cities to prepare a programme relevant to the objectives and criteria laid down for the action?
EQ6.	To what extent do cities take into account the ECoC criteria (European dimension/the city and citizens) in their bids? Which balance do they strike between these criteria and the socio-economic objectives of the cities? Does this balance change after designation?
EQ3.	To what extent does the selection procedure foster the European dimension of the ECoC event? Where relevant, are there differences between MS involved?
EQ9.	To what extent is the ECoC brand visible? Do ECoC use the title in a relevant way (during the selection process and after their designation)? Which actions do the designated cities implement to make clear that the event is an EU initiative? Do people understand that it is an EU initiative?
EQ25.	To what extent bidding cities devise and prepare the ECoC event as part of their long term development?

The 2006 Decision requires the Panel to assess applications according to the formal “criteria for the cultural programme” described in Article 4. These are subdivided into two categories, “the European dimension” and “City and Citizens”. One of the key issues explored during the consultations with stakeholders concerned the extent to which applicants and others understood and were able to address both the formal criteria effectively in their applications.

Looking at the formal criteria, the feedback shows that these are considered to be appropriate and understandable at a strategic level. They are regarded as largely satisfactory by national Ministries and candidate cities alike, although there is also demand for greater clarity, especially in the case of the European dimension (while recognising the usefulness of the examples from previous ECoC, provided in the Guide for cities). For example, applicants for the 2016 title rated the clarity of the "European dimension" criteria as 3.55 out of 5, compared to 3.82 for the clarity of the "City and citizens" criteria.<sup>28</sup> There may also be scope to link the two categories of criteria together more closely, rather than present them separately.

<sup>28</sup> It is not known whether the respondents had read the Guide to applicants which offers a more developed explanation of the criteria than does the 2006 Decision

The “city and citizens” criterion appears to present less difficulty to potential bidders at the application stage, while the European dimension appears to present more of a challenge, not in an overall sense (since the ECoC is clearly a European event and there was general consensus regarding the value of the ECoC brand), but rather in terms of balancing local versus wider objectives in developing a guiding concept for an ECoC and designing the detail of the activities that will flow from it. For example, in the case of several countries, concerns were expressed over the need to address a lack of understanding of the European dimension in general on the part of local politicians. From the Panel’s perspective, there is also recognition that in general the European dimension is less well understood by applicants. It was noted for example by one member that applicants also tend not to understand the need for balance between the “city and citizens” dimension and the European dimension, and that the balance in many applications sometimes leans too much towards urban regeneration.

The need to balance local and European dimensions appears to present a particular challenge for some cities; for example, applicants for 2016 rated their ability to provide such a balance as 3.83 out of 5 on average but with scores ranging from 2 to 5. Based on the interviews, this need appears to be most challenging for smaller, provincial cities in some new Member States, but also for cities such as Umeå, which by the applicant’s own admission is by virtue of its northerly location on the periphery of the EU. These features can of course be turned to a city’s advantage and provide an opportunity for innovation and bring a valuable diversity of approaches to ECoC. There is certainly evidence that in making bidders consider thoroughly how they might address this criteria, winning applications are strengthened considerably; for example in the case of both Košice and Umeå, which faced a challenging task in addressing the European dimension, but in fact turned this into a positive factor in their winning applications. In general, the evidence suggests that applicants value the ECoC “brand” and draw attention to it at application stage and (where selected) during the development and implementation of the ECoC; all the 2010-15 ECoC feature websites that prominently display logos featuring the name of the city, the title year and the designation of “European Capital of Culture”; similarly, most, if not all candidates take the same approach, albeit adding the words “candidate city” to their logo.

**Main finding 13: The criteria are clear in principle, although there is evidence that a significant number of candidate cities find the European dimension challenging to manifest in their applications. This reflects the wider challenge of balancing local socio-economic goals with wider European goals, rather than a fundamental flaw in the way the criteria are presented.**

**Main finding 14: The European dimension criterion serves to foster greater awareness of this key requirement, although some of those cities that manage to address it in their successful bids still face a significant challenge to implement it during the ECoC itself. Applicants and designated cities value the ECoC “brand” and draw attention to it in their publicity materials, notably in their logos.**

### 3.7 Preparation of applications

EQ21.	What are the main problems faced by the bidding cities during their preparation phase? What are the specific problems that the ECoC have to manage regarding: governance, budget, relationships with local and national authorities? How politics interfere with artistic choices and funding guarantees? Has this disrupted the preparation of the cities?
EQ25.	To what extent bidding cities devise and prepare the ECoC event as part of their long term development?

The challenges faced in preparing an ECoC application differ from city to city, reflecting the broader context of the Member State, the specific situation of the city, and its cultural life, experience in organising large-scale events and the individuals involved. As we have noted in section 3.6, the need to balance local and European dimensions appears to present a particular challenge for some cities. In addition, the research identified two further challenges commonly faced at application stage.

First, there is the challenge of motivating local stakeholders to commit to a shared vision. Typically, this vision needs to reflect both the particular cultural, economic and social context of the city but also its aspirations. Whilst the context is obviously known to the local stakeholders, the task of moulding the aspirations of a diverse set of partners into a vision can prove more challenging. A first key success factor here is the presence of highly-motivated individuals who witness the experiences of other title-holders and then begin to consider - long before the formal call for applications - how the ECoC concept could be applied in their own city; for example, Lund began its preparations for 2014 in 1999 having witnessed the experience of Stockholm 1998; similarly, Mons began its preparations for 2015 in 2004, inspired in part by the experience of Lille 2004 (and recruiting the head of its delivery agency from amongst the staff of that ECoC); the application of Istanbul, for its part, although led by the city was originally initiated by civil society operators that had observed the experience of ECoC across Europe more generally. A second key success factor is the existence of a broad strategy for local development, to which the ECoC concept can add value and from which it can draw inspiration. For example, the overall concept of the Mons ECoC ("Where technology meets culture") reflects the local economic development strategy pursued in recent years and which has facilitated the attraction of hi-technology employers, such as Google, Microsoft, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Cisco. Similarly, the application of Maribor reflected broader efforts to diversify the local economy of an area that remains reliant on the energy industry and that has suffered a degree of industrial decline.

Second, there is the challenge of securing the commitments of likely core funders. Whilst the applicants are required to put in place a credible funding package, the local partners by themselves are typically unable to confirm the availability of all the necessary funding. Most ECoC, particularly those in Member States with more centralised systems of governance will be heavily reliant on funding from the national Ministry of Culture (or equivalent). In practice, some Ministries are unwilling to commit resources prior to designation, i.e. up to six-years in advance of the title year (partly reflecting their budgetary processes). This creates the risk that the necessary funding is not ultimately received or that the event is later taken hostage by political considerations. This contrasts with the experience of applicants under the previous selection process, such as Stavanger (2008) and Istanbul (2010), which were able to gain strong support

for their applications from their respective national Ministries. If the current selection system is continued, consideration should be given to introducing a requirement in the future for Member States to indicate clearly from the outset of the process in their country the amount of funding, if any, which they will make available for the winning city.

Other problems faced by applicants tended to revolve around general lack of experience and/or lack of broader knowledge of the ECoC concept. However, the evidence suggests that successful applicants are able to overcome these problems through their own efforts and initiative, for example, by making links with previous or current title-holders. Beyond these challenges, ECoC tended to report fewer difficulties at application stage than during the post-designation phase, when harder choices have to be made regarding artistic freedom, governance, budget and relationships with local and national authorities.

**Main finding 15:** The development of a coherent and shared vision for the ECoC is facilitated by the presence of highly-motivated individuals with first-hand experience of previous ECoC and by the existence of a local development strategy, to which the ECoC concept can add value and from which it can draw inspiration.

**Main finding 16:** Whilst applicants are likely to be heavily reliant on funding from their respective Ministries, the Ministries for their part are often unwilling to commit resources prior to designation.

### 3.8 Organisation of the Panel

EQ18.	To what extent has the role of the Panel been reinforced during the selection phase? To what extent is the mixed composition of the Panel an added value for the assessment of the bids? Are the appointed Panel members relevant to the criteria requested in Article 6.3 of Decision 1622?
EQ23.	How could the selection procedure be improved?

Under the terms of the 1999 Decision, cities were nominated by the Member States to a European selection panel. Most nominated only one candidate to the European panel, although Germany nominated two cities for the 2010 title thus allowing the Panel to make the final choice. In contrast, under the current process any city is free to apply and all applications are considered by the selection panel. In that sense, the role of the Panel has been reinforced compared to the procedures operating under the 1999 Decision.

The 1999 Decision specified that the Panel should be comprised of seven independent experts: two appointed by the Commission, two by the Parliament, two by the Council and one by the Committee of the Regions. The 2006 Decision introduced a selection panel with thirteen experts, of which seven appointed by the EU institutions (as previously) and six appointed by the Member State concerned. All panel members were to be “independent experts with no conflicts of interest with regard to the cities... and with substantial experience and expertise in the cultural sector”.<sup>29</sup> The Panel was tasked with

<sup>29</sup> 2006 Decision, Article 6.

assessing applications made in response to the open call published by the Member State, against the criteria set in the 2006 Decision.

Those interviewees offering a view expressed satisfaction with the choice of European panel members in terms of their expertise, experience and impartiality and the research identified no direct conflicts of interest facing panel members with regard to the applicant cities. However, it was reported by applicants and by some of the European panel members that the performance of a minority of panel members has weakened the effectiveness and credibility of the selection process. Two main complaints were raised; first, some panel members have been absent from selection meetings; second, some panel members appeared ill-prepared, for example, giving the impression that they had not properly read the cities' application documents or had not made any particular effort to know the context of the cities.

Two underlying causes were suggested by the panel members interviewed:

The first related to the process of appointing panel members and, specifically, the extent of information that they receive about the role in advance of their appointment. In line with the 2006 Decision, the Commission currently writes formally to the Council, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions to request their nominations. Informally, DG EAC also makes the relevant officials in those institutions aware of the possibility to receive further information or advice concerning the role of panel member if they so wish. One panel member, whilst welcoming the Parliament's invitation to join the Panel, lamented the lack of consultation by the Parliament in advance of appointment. This created the risk of false expectations on behalf of panel members; as one said: "some panel members think that they can get the prestige of being on the Panel without having to do anything. But they do: it's hard work!". Given the right of the EU institutions to appoint panel members of their choice, there would seem to be no simple way for the Commission to make the expectations clearer both to the institutions and to potential appointees.

The risk of false expectations does not appear to be the result of any lack of guidance. The panel members receive from DG EAC an eleven-page written guidance document<sup>30</sup> which includes an annex specifically focussing on information for the attention of the European Capital of Culture panel on the organisation of the competition.<sup>31</sup> This document sets out the role of the panel members as well as practical provisions such as claiming expenses. Expectations regarding preparation (reading applications carefully), appointing the chair and voting are included. None of the panel members suggested that they lacked guidance from DG EAC, once they had accepted the appointment offered by the relevant EU institution and all were generally satisfied.

In preparing any new legal basis for the ECoC Action, it would be worthwhile to consider the possibility of open calls for applications for the role of panel member by the Commission. Given that there have been 44 ECoC (up to and including 2011), there is now a large pool of highly-experienced independent experts that have previously been involved in implementing an ECoC and that might consider be interested in this role. Moreover, such a competition would change the very nature of appointments, i.e. from what risks

<sup>30</sup> Rules for the European Capital of Culture Panel; European Commission DG EAC.

<sup>31</sup> Annex 3: Information for the attention of the European Capital of Culture Panel on the organisation of the competition for the [year] European Capital of Culture title in [Member State].

being seen as an honorary or political appointment to one that clearly involves serious work. Such an arrangement might ensure that all panel members were both informed and motivated. It could also involve the possibility of removing panel members that do not perform satisfactorily. In designing such an approach, the Commission would need to consider the merits and possibilities of a continued role for the other EU institutions in appointments.

The second possible cause was reported by panel members to be the limited (paid) preparation time allowed to them within the contractual arrangements agreed with DG EAC, relative to the volume of material contained within applications. Those panel members interviewed were generally content to give time over and above the contracted number of days and did not seek additional paid time to prepare; instead, the solution proposed by those panel members was to find a way to reduce the volume of unnecessary material provided by applicants, particularly at pre-selection stage. The suggestions presented above in relation to the revision of application documents (section 3.1), if acted on, could help in that respect.

The identification of credible, independent expert panel members has been challenging in some Member States, reflecting in part the level of experience of some countries in organising events such as ECoC. Applicants, European panel members and national Ministries reported a high level of satisfaction in some cases, notably in relation to the experts appointed in France and Sweden. In other cases, difficulties were reported. For example, in Slovakia (a small country that generated a large number of applications) the Ministry struggled to identify many experts with the required knowledge and experience that were not already aligned with one application or another. In Poland, though panel members were independent of the applicant cities, they were not seen to be independent of the Ministry; for example, they included employees of the Ministry or of cultural institutions reliant on national government funding. Clearly in countries without a long tradition of civil society and an independent cultural sector, the appointment of independent experts will remain challenging.

These considerations notwithstanding, the mixed composition of the Panel is reported to have strengthened the selection process. The panel members are considered to bring complementary expertise, European members offering recognised international expertise and national members offering a better understanding of the local and national context. In addition, having a majority of European members is reported to have been successful in ensuring that ECoC are only selected on the basis of their fit with the European criteria and not on the basis of national political considerations.

**Main finding 17: The role of the Panel has been reinforced by the new selection procedure which ensures that all cities in the relevant Member State can apply and that all applications are considered by the Panel.**

**Main finding 18: The credibility of the Panel has been adversely affected by a small number of experts either failing to attend meetings or giving the impression of being ill-prepared; under the current legal basis, there is potential to address these difficulties through improving the format of applications (as discussed in section 3.2); the preparation of a new legal basis also offers the possibility of introducing an open call for applications of the role of panel member, which may help to ensure that all panel members have a proper understanding of their role.**

**Main finding 19:** The mixed composition of the Panel has strengthened the selection process by bringing together complementary expertise from national and European level.

### 3.9 Selection panel meetings and reports

<b>EQ13.</b>	To what extent has the selection panel been efficient and delivered a quality output? Has the Panel assessed the bids against the ECoC criteria (European dimension / city and citizens)? Are there other elements the panel has taken into account? On the quality of panel reports: are they clear and precise enough? Are they useful for the cities concerned, notably the parts on assessment and recommendation?
<b>EQ11.d</b>	How efficient is the selection process (reports) to prepare the ECoC event?
<b>EQ10.</b>	To what extent is the selection procedure considered fair and transparent by the cities?
<b>EQ24.</b>	How could the selection procedure be improved?

Perhaps reflecting the benefits of its mixed composition and despite the difficulties noted in the previous sub-section, the Panel was generally reported to have delivered a fair, efficient and transparent assessment of applications, though the process has not been without its difficulties and steps could be taken to improve its efficiency.

Under the current procedure, there is now a single set of criteria against which all applications are assessed; this contrasts with the situation prevailing under the 1999 Decision, in which Member States were free to determine the basis on which they nominated cities to the selection panel. Where competitions were held (e.g. UK 2008, Germany 2010) Member States employed their own criteria whilst the European selection panels were intended to use those stated in the 1999 Decision.

Based on the review of pre-selection and final selection reports for the 2013-15 titles (i.e. the years covered by the new selection procedure),<sup>32</sup> there is strong evidence that the Panel has assessed the bids against the ECoC criteria (European dimension / city and citizens). Final selection reports for all the 2013-15 titles<sup>33</sup> (except Latvia 2014) make explicit reference to the existence of the ECoC criteria and their application by the Panel. Moreover, it is clear from the final selection reports that the Panel has, in most cases, assessed the applications against the ECoC criteria. For example, the final selection reports for France 2013 and Sweden 2014 include feedback on the successful applicants (respectively, Marseille and Umeå) that is very explicitly structured against the ECoC criteria. Feedback on Košice 2013 and Mons 2015 also gave good consideration to the criteria, albeit not structured so clearly around both sets of criteria. However, feedback on Riga 2014 and Plzeň 2015 gave clear consideration to the European dimension but was less clear on “City and Citizens”.

In practice, the panel members – drawing on their experience and expertise in the cultural sector or in the cultural development of cities – have also applied other, implicit, criteria, such as those relating to the

<sup>32</sup> See Annex One for a summary of the review of Panel reports.

<sup>33</sup> The 2015 final selection report for the Czech Republic was not available at the time of writing. Comments in the report are therefore based on the pre-selection report.

innovative nature of the programme, the capacity of the city to organise an event, the selection of partners, etc. Based on the review of pre-selection and final selection reports, it appears that the Panel has made sensible judgements about practical matters, such as the capacity of cities to host the ECoC. But it also appears that these implicit criteria have carried equal, if not greater, weight in the final selection decisions taken by the Panel, since several of the designated ECoC performed poorly on one or other of the two categories of criteria (though their competitors may have performed even more poorly<sup>34</sup>). For example, the panel reports request four of the five ECoC designated for 2013-2015 (for which selection reports are available) to strengthen the European dimension of their programmes. In the case of Marseille 2013, the final selection report states that “the European dimension requires greater emphasis”, whilst in the cases of Riga 2014 and Umeå 2014, the final selection reports state the wish of the Panel to “see more detail and more substance developed to meet the key criterion of “the European dimension”.

The Guide for cities does offer a reasonable indication of the “implicit criteria” that cities should take into account, in its section on “Keys to success”. Based on the experience of previous ECoC, these include thorough preparation, proposed delivery structure, selection of partners, mobilisation of socio-economic partners, innovation, communication and artistic independence. However, there is perhaps also a need to develop these into a more formal set of criteria that will be explicitly applied, alongside the existing criteria relating to the cultural programme (i.e. “European dimension” and “City and Citizens”), albeit without the same “authority” afforded to these criteria by their inclusion in the Decision. Indeed, several applicants for the 2016 title complained about the lack of clarity of assessment criteria. Making these practical criteria more explicit will offer potential benefits in terms of helping cities to strengthen their applications, providing a framework for the Panel’s deliberations on these issues, and demonstrating fairness in selection decisions.

Turning to the selection meetings themselves, we have already stated that some interviewees expressed frustration that some panel members have failed to attend all meetings or appeared not to have read application documents in advance of selection meetings. For their part, panel members have reported that applications tend to include a large volume of material, much of it unnecessary, which tends to hinder their effectiveness in preparing for meetings. Another commonly-expressed concern related to the time available and thus also the depth of discussion. The pre-selection meetings in Poland and Spain created the very practical difficulty of fitting a large number of applicants’ presentations into the few days available, with the result that less time was available for each city. In two of the other six countries that have also held pre-selection meetings, Sweden and Latvia, the applicants and the ministries felt that the limit of 30 minutes for the presentation and 30 minutes for questions was insufficient. Two panel members also expressed concern at the short time available (none contradicted that view); one stated that whilst 30 minutes was sufficient for the presentation, it would be beneficial to have 60 minutes available for questions at pre-selection stage.

These comments notwithstanding, the majority of applicants and all the Ministries considered that the selection procedure – and the decisions taken by the Panel had been ultimately been fair and transparent, and based on the ECoC criteria. For example, applicants for 2016 rated their satisfaction with the interaction with the Panel as 4.09 out of 5 on average. Similarly the same applicants rated the

<sup>34</sup> Selection reports do not always offer specific feedback on unsuccessful applicants.

fairness and transparency of the process as 3.5 out of 5 on average; moreover, the independence of the Panel was praised by many of those applicants in their open comments.

Applicants and Ministries were mostly satisfied with the quality of the selection reports. Of the five Ministries offering an opinion, four were broadly positive whilst one was not. All four applicants (including an unsuccessful one) offering an opinion on the reports during the interviews were satisfied; two expressed appreciation for the specific comments which would help them at full selection stage and/or in their cultural development more generally. Applicants for 2016 demonstrated a modest degree of satisfaction with the reports, rating their quality and utility as 3.08 out of 5 on average; open comments from these applicants highlighted the value in receiving detailed feedback about the strengths and weaknesses of their applications but also frustration at the limited justification of why some cities were selected and others not. Across all years, suggestions for improving the reports included the use of a more standardised format, allowing a clearer indication of the criteria applied (both formal and implicit). Interviewees also highlighted the importance of informal verbal feedback going beyond the written comments.

**Main finding 20:** The Panel has generally applied the ECoC criteria very explicitly in the selection process, though some selected ECoC have not performed particularly well against one or other of the categories of criteria.

**Main finding 21:** The Panel has also intelligently applied a set of “implicit” criteria many of which are more practical in nature and that reflect the “key success factors” in the Guide for cities; there is a need to make these criteria more explicit at all stages of the selection procedure.

**Main finding 22:** The application procedure is considered fair and transparent by Ministries and by successful applicants; the limited evidence from unsuccessful applicants is more mixed but highlights the need to make explicit those criteria that the Panel currently applies implicitly.

**Main finding 23:** Selection reports have mostly been of high quality; pre-selection reports have helped applicants to improve their application at final selection stage; the clarity of the reports could be improved further by the use of a more standardised format.

## 4.0 Monitoring and Development

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### 4.1 Development phase

EQ22.	What are the main problems faced by appointed ECoC during the preparation of the event? What are the specific problems that the ECoCs have to manage regarding: governance, budget, relationships with local and national authorities? How politics interfere with artistic choices and funding guarantees? Has this disrupted the preparation of the cities?
EQ7.	Does the ECoC planned cultural programme last the entire year?
EQ8.	To what extent does the ECoC planned cultural programme cover only the city or a broader region? Are there different degrees of relevance in covering an area broader than a city?
EQ25.	To what extent bidding cities devise and prepare the ECoC event as part of their long term development?
EQ26.	To what extent ECoC cities pay attention to the legacy of the ECoC event during its preparation?

As highlighted by the evaluation of the 2007-08 ECoC, the development phase is a critical and also challenging time for any ECoC. Promises made in the application need to be turned into reality – an efficient delivery structure, an exciting cultural programme, real participation of stakeholders and residents, and effective communication. The precise development trajectory and the challenges faced will be unique to each ECoC and will depend on the specific context of each city. However, a number of challenges are common to all or most ECoC; the interviews showed that most of the cities designated as ECoC for 2010-15 have indeed faced or are facing those challenges, including:

- securing financial commitments from public funders and corporate sponsors;
- communicating effectively with decision-makers at municipal and national levels;
- putting in place sound governance and management arrangements;
- generating a high level of media interest, as well as handling negative coverage; and
- developing the cultural programme, including operating calls for projects
- planning a legacy as part of the city's long-term development.

For example, at least two ECoC from the 2010-15 cohort (Istanbul, Maribor) have suffered the departure of key staff members, e.g. artistic director, in the year before the title year. Another (Essen for the Ruhr) faced the challenge of assessing some 2,600 applications submitted in response to call for projects. Relationships with national government have proved particularly challenging in countries where governance has traditionally been more centralised. In these cases (e.g. Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia), national Ministries control more of the funding and expect to play a more central role than in other, less centralised countries, e.g. Germany.

Despite any difficulties encountered during the development phase, all three of the 2010 title-holders went on to implement cultural programmes lasting twelve months. The two title-holders in 2011 had planned programmes lasting the same length of time. None of the designated ECoC for 2012-2015 that were interviewed specifically reported that they were planning programmes of less than one year.

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 involve 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 Essen for the Ruhr (2010) and Marseille-Provence (2013). Involving a wider region can increase the scope, scale and support for the ECoC in some cases, but risks making the governance arrangements more problematic and the impact more dispersed. The experience of the 2010-16 ECoC would seem to highlight 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.

One of the "City and Citizens" criteria for the selection of ECoC is that their cultural programmes should "be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city"; this reiterated the emphasis given by the 1999 Decision to the need to "integrate the cultural project into a dynamic medium-term process. Of the 2010-15 ECoC, four were specifically praised by the selection panel for the sustainable character of their proposed programme and/or its potential to offer a legacy; at the same time, the selection panel made specific recommendations to five of the 2010-15 ECoC in respect of the need to strengthen their focus on long-term development and legacy.

Within the current climate, the planning of a long-term legacy is proving particularly difficult, given the pressures on public budgets and the risk that cultural activities are seen as more expendable than activities that have a more immediate effect on welfare (e.g. unemployment support) or on social well-being (e.g. healthcare). Despite these difficulties, there is some evidence from 2010 that ECoC are paying attention to their legacy. In the case of Essen for the Ruhr, many of the functions of the delivery agency are being transferred to a specific legacy body "Kulturmetropole Ruhr GmbH" which is funded by the municipalities and has recently published a masterplan for the future cultural development in the Ruhr. The legacy of Pécs is strongly linked to the infrastructure projects and restored facilities which are being managed by newly-created legacy bodies, though there are uncertainties around ongoing funding and the new cultural strategy for the city remains to be developed. In the case of Istanbul no specific plan was put in place for the continuation of cultural activities initiated by the ECoC, though some will continue and the ECoC will leave a very significant legacy in terms of the many cultural heritage sites that have been restored or renovated.

**Main finding 24: The ECoC designated for 2010-15 have faced many of the challenges experienced by previous title-holders, including those relating to finance, communication, governance, media coverage, development of the cultural programme and planning a legacy.**

**Main finding 25: All the 2010-15 ECoC are planning to implement cultural programmes lasting twelve months. Most are involving their hinterland and some are involving their wider region in a very explicit way.**

**Main finding 26:** Planning a long-term legacy is proving particularly difficult under the current economic circumstances. The strength of each ECoC varies against this respect, though some are proving successful in sustaining cultural activities or in developing improved long-term arrangements for cultural governance.

**4.2 Utility of the panel – monitoring reports and formal meetings**

<b>EQ14.</b>	To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel take stock of the preparations for the event? To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel check that the criteria are fulfilled?)? Are there other elements the Panel has taken into account? On the quality of panel reports: are they clear and consistent enough? Are they useful for the cities concerned, notably the parts on assessment and recommendation?
<b>EQ19.</b>	To what extent is the monitoring process adapted to the preparation of an event like the ECoC event (in particular concerning the timing)? Does it help the cities in achieving a successful event? Does it foster the European dimension of the ECoC event?
<b>EQ20.</b>	To what extent do ECoC benefit from the European monitoring support during their preparation phase?
<b>EQ24.</b>	How could the monitoring procedure be improved?

The monitoring process introduced by the 2006 Decision 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 the preparing for the title year.

At the time of writing, 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. All the ECoC interviewed welcomed the monitoring process and highlighted a number of important benefits; the motivation to make demonstrable progress by a particular point in time; the receipt of constructive feedback on their development; the opportunity to ask questions, most notably in respect of the European dimension of the ECoC; the leverage offered by the findings of the panel report in their negotiations with national and local decision-makers; the chance to reflect on and celebrate progress to date. In short, the monitoring process allows the cities to reflect on their achievements, their priorities and the main challenges to be addressed.

The monitoring process has also helped to clarify and discuss how the European dimension (which ECoC are typically find more difficult to understand and address than the "City and Citizenship" dimension) can be best addressed in the ECoC programmes. For example, the representative of Turku identified that the discussions during the monitoring meeting focused attention on the need to promote the European dimension in their programme and to include more large events. Similarly in Essen for the Ruhr, the monitoring process helped the team to reflect on how to incorporate issues such as migration and inclusion in their cultural programme.

An additional benefit of the process has been the positive media attention that has been generated; this attention comes during a period when cities often face either a lack of or negative media coverage. Importantly, the monitoring panel report allows the ECoC to demonstrate to the wider public and to decision-makers the achievements and the progress to date. However, in some cases there is the risk of the media focussing on any negative aspects in the monitoring report. For that reason, the ECoC have reported that the verbal and informal feedback offered by the Panel – which can be more open and honest – is a very complement to the formal reports.

Looking more specifically at the formal meetings and reports, we can draw a number of findings.

### *Monitoring meetings*

Those ECoC that had passed through the process and that were interviewed agreed that the monitoring meeting had been helpful; discussions had been constructive and the Panel had offered useful insights. The main frustration expressed by the ECoC was that the meetings were too short (i.e. involving a one-hour presentation followed by a 45-minute discussion) and allowed too little time firstly for the monitoring panel to grasp the full complexity of each ECoC and secondly for more in-depth discussions; the main request of the ECoC was thus for longer meetings, allowing deeper consideration of the issues at stake. For their part, the panel members expressed some frustration at having to take some statements made by the ECoC "at face value" and not having sufficient opportunity to probe in more depth. To address this issue, panel members' knowledge of the designated ECoC could be reinforced by making the visits a routine rather than an optional part of the monitoring phase.

The interviews also highlighted the importance of flexibility in the way that the monitoring process operates. Whilst the fixed timescale and the common criteria are essential, the ECoC called for a degree of adaptation within these parameters. For example, the ECoC suggested that more attention be devoted to the specific situation of each ECoC, in addition to the common criteria applied to all ECoC. Indeed, since the situation and national context of each city is very different, the need to respond to common criteria risks limiting the value offered by the monitoring meetings. One ECoC questioned whether the timing of the monitoring reports and meetings should be applied more flexibly, i.e. taking place when the cities are confident that they have reached a certain stage of development. Whilst a small amount of flexibility within the parameters set by the 2006 Decision is desirable (e.g. to reflect the timing of local or national elections), any significant delay in holding monitoring meetings would unnecessarily raise the risk that significant weaknesses are not addressed early enough. Given the general desire expressed by the ECoC for more rather than less interaction with the Panel, it would seem preferable to supplement the formal meetings with additional informal meetings if necessary, rather than delay the formal meetings.

### *Monitoring reports*

The monitoring reports gain particular significance from being the only formal communication from the EU to the ECoC during their preparation phase. Cities refer to the Panel's report in order to highlight their achievements, attract media attention and in some cases inform discussions with the decision-makers regarding issues such as financial commitments. Most of the cities identified that the first report was especially important for them and allowed improvements to be made; the second report, whilst useful, tended to be too late for significant changes to be introduced.

Perhaps reflecting the short time available during the monitoring meetings (and thus the limited opportunity to discuss some issues in sufficient depth), some ECoC indicated that the monitoring reports did not fully reflect the most important challenges that they faced. Whilst the reports in themselves were reported to be useful, there remains the possibility to strengthen them in two ways – indirectly through lengthening the monitoring meetings (and thus allowing deeper discussion, which can then be captured in the report); and directly, through providing a template for the panel reports.

#### *Strengthening the formal monitoring process*

As noted above, the formal monitoring process is broadly welcomed by designated ECoC and panel members alike. It is seen as especially relevant for these cities that have less experience in implementing cultural events of European significance. In order to increase further the value added by the monitoring process, there is perhaps scope for changes to the current processes. First, the formal processes could be strengthened by allowing more time for the meetings and perhaps also more preparation time for panel member; it may also be possible to improve the structure of the questions posed in the monitoring reports and also offer guidance on the consistent format required in monitoring reports. Second, the formal processes can be complemented by a more stable format for the ongoing and informal support given by panel members during the preparation phase, notably through visits to the cities.

**Main finding 27: The monitoring process is a very important and useful process for the cities to go through. It provides deadlines for the development of the ECoC, creates momentum and attracts the attention of decision-makers, media and the wider public.**

**Main finding 28: The monitoring process contributes to improving the European dimension of ECoC, through the formal assessment of compliance against these criteria and through the informal advice and support offered by the Panel.**

**Main finding 29: Monitoring meetings and reports have both practical and symbolical importance as the only formal means by which there is communication on the development of ECoC from the European level.**

**Main finding 30: The meetings of the monitoring panel could be strengthened by increasing the time available for discussions between the ECoC and the panel members.**

### 4.3 Informal assistance offered by the Panel (including visits)

EQ15.	To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel deliver assistance and advice in the preparations for the event?
EQ24.	How could the monitoring procedure be improved?

As noted in the rules applying to the Panel,<sup>35</sup> the legal base does not state any requirement for visits during the monitoring phase but it can prove useful and sometimes necessary for visits to be made during this period. In practice, the ECoC were unanimous in reporting that visits by panel members (where they had taken place) were useful. The ECoC view the visits as a very important part of the monitoring process; they help create momentum for the development of ECoC, attract attention from media and wider society and encourages the stakeholders (including national government where appropriate) to take responsibility for delivering what was promised in the application.

Most of the cities consulted mentioned that they would appreciate more visits. It would allow for the panel members to better understand the national and local context, meet key stakeholders involved, see the progress made, better understand key challenges and see the commitment to deliver what was promised in the original application. Some ECoC suggested that all the panel members should participate in the visit and have the opportunity themselves to see the development of the ECoC. Some ECoC would also like panel members to visit during the title year.

The panel members indicate that the timing of the informal post-designation meeting could be more flexible. For example, it was mentioned that the timing of the first informal meeting in Marseille went very well. However, Marseille now faces problems that were not known about at the outset. The importance of who from the monitoring panel is visiting the city was identified during the interviews. Contradictory to the cities responses monitoring panel representatives mentioned that there is no need for all the panel members to participate in the visit. However, the panel member visiting the city should ideally have practical experience of actually delivering an ECoC. The panel members also highlighted the importance of the visitor having a clear mandate from the Chairman of the Panel as well as from DG EAC (as foreseen in the rules).

Given the benefits of the visits (as reported by the ECoC and the panel members), there is perhaps a case for making the visits a more routine part of the monitoring phase for all ECoC, rather than an as option to be exercised only when deemed necessary. Further additional visits would continue to be undertaken where specific problems arise (as already happens and as foreseen in the rules).

**Main finding 31:** The informal assistance of the monitoring panel is perceived by the ECoC to be very important and useful There is perhaps merit in making the visits to the cities a routine part of the preparation phase for all ECoC.

<sup>35</sup> Rules For The European Capital Of Culture Panel; DG EAC.

#### 4.4 Assistance offered by DG EAC during the development phase

EQ17.b	To what extent are documents and actions implemented by the Commission to guide the cities in the preparation of an ECoC helpful?
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The informal support offered by DG EAC during the development phase was welcomed by the ECoC. This support is strongly linked to the meetings and workshops organised in Brussels and communication with the representatives of DG EAC regarding the questions that arise during the development stage. Cities indicate that this support is important for them. Meetings organised by DG EAC help them to meet wider groups of stakeholders, understand what is expected from them, what ECoC is about etc. Importantly, the designated ECoC indicate that the representatives of DG EAC are approachable and offer them opportunities for regular informal contact.

A number of cities included in the consultation mention that it would be beneficial to have more support from DG EAC during the development stage, a point supported by some members of the monitoring panel (who also recognised the relatively limited resources available to DG EAC for this purpose). Whilst the development of the ECoC is the responsibility of the delivery agencies (and their stakeholders, e.g. local and national government), some have very limited experience of hosting an event of such scale. In these cases, the ECoC would welcome more guidance on issues such as when the funding should be secured, how the calls for applications should be implemented, what organisational structures should be put in place. This is especially the case for ECoC in Member States that have less experience of hosting cultural events of European significance. However, it is important to take into account the situation of each ECoC and the universal requirements for all are not welcomed by some of the cities.

**Main finding 32:** The informal assistance provided by DG EAC is also perceived by the ECoC to be very important and useful; in general, the ECoC would welcome more opportunities to receive support from DG EAC during the development phase.

#### 4.5 Networking between ECoC (including the role of DG EAC)

EQ17.d	To what extent do cities benefit from networking and the exchange of good practice during the development phase?
EQ17.c	To what extent does the Commission foster the exchange of good practices? Which initiatives has it taken to that purpose? How could the Commission go further to support the preparations of the Capitals?

The networking between cities is being reported as being of significant importance during the development and preparation for the ECoC title year. Each of the successful and unsuccessful applicants interviewed reported that they had developed relationships and received very important support from the other past, present and future ECoC. Similarly, applicants for 2016 rated the utility of such networking as 4.45 out of 5 on average – higher than for any other element of the application and selection process.

Each city develops its own links ranging from formal visits and co-operation agreements to more informal networking. All of the designated ECoC indicated that they valued visits to the other cities hosting the ECoC title and contacts made during events or workshops organised by the DG EAC in Brussels; the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ECoC in 2010 was particularly well received. Cities also develop comprehensive forms of exchange of experience and co-operation. For example, one member of the delivery team from Tallinn participated in a traineeship in Linz, and Essen and Košice had put in place a formal co-operation agreement to provide help and support. This proved to be successful and the interview with the representative of Košice highlighted that this cooperation helped them to strengthen the European dimension of their cultural programme.

In addition to the bilateral co-operation, cities strongly appreciate their participation in the informal ECoC networks that have developed over the years. The networks of past, present and future ECoC title-holders provide the platform for an exchange of experience and discussion of the problems in a very informal setting. Cities indicate that the possibility to share problems and experience on how to overcome them is among the most significant benefits of the network. One other initiative, outside of the immediate ECoC networks, that was also reported to be of value has been the British Council Creative Cities initiative, which has helped some cities planning to apply for ECoC title to meet and develop their networks.

Whilst the networking between the ECoC has been immensely valuable, a very important feature of that networking has been the (discreet) role played by the Commission. The real value of the networks has come from the fact that they have been initiated and "owned" by the ECoC themselves rather than by DG EAC. Indeed, ECoC welcome the opportunity for open and honest discussion of the challenges that they face. As and when the Commission has been invited to attend meetings, the ECoC have generally welcomed the informed contributions that the representatives of DG EAC have made.

**Main finding 33: All the ECoC make efforts to establish contacts and participate in networks with other cities designated as ECoC during the development stage.**

# 5.0 Finance

In the years 2007-09, 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. The basis on which the EU funding was allocated to the cities was not mentioned in the legal basis for the ECoC but was defined in the legal basis of the Culture Programme. This funding was available for activities intended to "help implement activities stressing European visibility and trans-European cultural co-operation."<sup>36</sup> Such funding could constitute no more than 60% of the budget of the specific projects.

Since the designation of the 2010 ECoC, the Commission has reviewed the EU funding mechanism. As a result, the 2006 Decision introduced the "Melina Mercouri Prize", a conditional prize of €1.5m to be awarded to designated cities 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. On that basis, the findings presented here are based on a limited sample, although they are consistent with the opinions expressed by future title holders who anticipate receiving the Prize in due course.

## 5.1 Use of prize money by the cities

<b>EQ16.a</b>	Is the use of the Melina Mercouri Prize planned in advance in the budget of a Capital?
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EU funding specifically for the ECoC cultural programmes has tended to form a very modest part of total expenditure.<sup>37</sup> In the years 1995-2004, it accounted for 1.5% on average (and ranged from 0.3% to 16% across all ECoC in those years),<sup>38</sup> whilst in the years 2007-2009 it accounted for 2.3% on average (and ranged from 0.7% to 8.3%).<sup>39</sup> For the 2010-16 ECoC, the possibility of receiving the Melina Mercouri Prize did not have a significant influence on the decision to apply for ECoC and none of the applicants reported that they had particularly planned the use of the funding in their applications; in practice the funding, when received, forms a very modest proportion of the total expenditure on the ECoC as was the case in previous ECoC.

<sup>36</sup> Decision No 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 establishing the Culture Programme (2007 to 2013).

<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>38</sup> European Cities and Capitals of Culture; study prepared for the European Commission; Palmer-Rae Associates; August 2004

<sup>39</sup> Ex-post Evaluation of 2007 & 2008 European Capitals of Culture; ECOTEC Research & Consulting; Ex-post Evaluation of 2009 European Capitals of Culture; ECOTEC Research & Consulting.

The cities that have received Melina Mercouri Prize report that they have spent it on specific projects within their culture programmes, added it to their general budget or used it for marketing and communication activities. For example, in Istanbul, some of the funding contributed to the civil society dimension of the cultural programme whilst Essen for the Ruhr treated the funds as an addition to the overall budget for the ECoC. In Pécs, the Prize has financed a wide variety of cultural projects, e.g. exhibitions of fine arts; film, theatre or music festivals and concerts, and also for international meetings of scientists or minors. These included, for example:

- Pécs Spring Festival 2010 organised by the Pécs Cultural Centre;
- International Conference on Regional Sciences, Regional Sciences Association organized by the Regional Research Centre of the Hungarian Academy of Science;
- Hungarian Wind Music Grand Prix, International Music Competition and Festival organised by the Art Department of the University of Pécs;
- 15th International Adult Puppet Theatre Festival organised by the Bóbita Puppet Theatre;
- Open Opus Festival organised to open the Pécs Conference and Concert Centre by the Pannon Philharmonic Orchestra;
- ‘East-West Passage’ Balkan World Music Festival organised by the Pécs Cultural Centre; and
- 2nd CinePécs International Film Festival organised by the Cultural Innovation and Competence Centre, etc.

**Main finding 34:** The possibility of receiving the Melina Mercouri Prize does not have a significant influence on the decision to apply for ECoC and the funding, when received, forms a very modest proportion of the total expenditure on the ECoC.

**Main finding 35:** Cities allocate (or intend to allocate) the Melina Mercouri Prize money to specific projects within the cultural programme, to marketing and communications activities or to the overall budget of the ECoC.

**5.2 Adaptation of the process to the ECoC preparation**

<b>EQ16.b</b>	To what extent is the scheme of co-funding through the Melina Mercouri Prize adapted to the ECoC preparation, in particular regarding the time schedule for delivering the Prize? Has it been an efficient way of improving the quality of the preparation phase in general and, more specifically, to make the cities fulfil the criteria (notably the European dimension) and respect the commitments made at selection stage?
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Overall, there is agreement among the ECoC cities that the changes introduced in the 2006 Decision have improved the allocation of the EU funding (based on their experience of receiving grant funding from other EU sources). The allocation of EU funding as a prize is reported to have created a significantly lower administrative burden than did the grant from the Culture Programme. Importantly, the ECoC have more freedom to decide how they will spend this money and it can therefore be tailored to the needs of each city. Given the very different contexts and needs of each city holding the title, the new funding

procedures are perceived as being a significant improvement compared to the grants offered by the Culture Programme.

Different opinions have been expressed by the ECoC designated for 2010-15 and the national Ministries regarding the timing of the allocation of the prize. Some cities indicated that it would be good to receive the prize earlier, whilst two of the three 2010 titles others mentioned that they received it at an appropriate time. The third reported that the EU funding reached them relatively late, meaning that the projects that received it only started during the second half of the title year.

**Main finding 36: The changes introduced in 2006 Decision represent 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.**

### 5.3 Efficiency of the process

EQ16.c	Has the scheme of co-funding through the Melina Mercouri Prize been an efficient way of improving the quality of the preparation phase in general and, more specifically, to make the cities fulfil the criteria (notably the European dimension) and respect the commitments made at selection stage?
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Even though the amount of funding awarded constitutes only small proportion of the overall budget of ECoC, those that had received it highlighted its symbolic value; it allows the ECoC to demonstrate to decision-makers at national and local levels, other stakeholders and the wider public its achievements in preparing to host the ECoC title; it also offers the ECoC delivery agencies a degree of leverage in negotiations with the local and national authorities.

The fact that the Prize is not awarded automatically is intended to provide a spur to the ECoC to make good progress in their preparations and in fulfilling the commitments made in the original application. Applicant cities usually make very explicit commitments at application stage regarding financial resources but the fulfilment of those commitments can be challenging, particularly where they are reliant on other bodies to provide funding (e.g. Ministries) and as public budgets in general come under increasing pressure. There are very few sanctions that DG EAC or the Panel can impose if a city or its core funders are not fulfilling their commitments or if the cultural programme is not of sufficient quality. Whilst the Panel could apply the conditions more stringently, withholding the Prize may risk damaging further an ECoC that has already seen its core budget reduced, as well as weakening its European dimension.

It is too early to draw firm conclusions regarding the "motivational effect" of the Prize, since to date it has only been awarded to the 2010 and 2011 title-holders. However, building on the broader findings of this evaluation, we can suggest three ways in which the operation of the Prize could strengthen its contribution to the ECoC Action as a whole.

First, there may be a need to rebalance the expectations of applicant cities and designated ECoC; cities should be encouraged to develop an application and then (if selected) a cultural programme without any expectation of receiving the Prize money. To that end, the Guide for cities should disallow cities from including the Prize money in their budgets at application stage; the merits of competing applications

would then be assessed on the basis of cultural programmes funded entirely from other sources. Similarly, the Guide should disallow cities from including the Prize money in their budgets in their first progress report. Designated ECoC would present their plans for spending the Prize money only in the second monitoring report, thus strengthening the link between progress made and the award of the Prize. The Prize money would then fund specific activity over and above the cultural programme proposed at the outset, thus ensuring clear European added value. The risk of damaging weak ECoC further by withholding the Prize would be reduced since their cultural programmes would have been developed without reference to the Prize money. Alongside these steps, the Commission and the Panel should also communicate a clear message to the ECoC and to Member States (e.g. in the Guide for cities and during Info Days) that the conditions will be applied very stringently, in the expectation that this will encourage commitments to be respected.

Second, there may be a need to clarify and give greater prominence to the conditions under which the Prize will be awarded or withheld. As we have noted above, the Panel has applied a set of implicit criteria at application stage many of which are more practical in nature and reflect the "key success factors" in the Guide for cities. There is a need to make these criteria more explicit at all stages of the selection and monitoring process and also to link them very specifically to the award of the Prize. To that end, an appropriate statement should feature in the Guide for cities referring to the possibility of receiving the Prize and the conditions under which it will be awarded or withheld. Selection and monitoring reports should then repeat the standard statement. The first monitoring report of the Panel should routinely comment on the likelihood of the ECoC receiving the Prize given progress to date - in particular, making clear the link between the fulfilment of commitments and the award of the Prize. The link between satisfactory progress and the award of the Prize could also be reiterated by DG EAC in the informal post-designation meetings and by the Panel in its monitoring visits.

Third, it may be beneficial to encourage a greater involvement of national Ministries in the monitoring process. Whilst Ministries organise the selection process and often constitute the main source of funding for ECoC, their formal role ends at the point of designation (though they do attend the monitoring meetings as observers). The risk is that Ministries become unaware of any difficulties facing the ECoC and/or unable to meet the expectations of the ECoC regarding their support. There is a balance to be struck here, since strong ECoC do not necessarily require a greater involvement of their national Ministries, particularly in Member States with a relatively decentralised system of governance. With the consent of each ECoC, DG EAC could consider inviting the respective Ministries to comment on the monitoring reports submitted by the ECoC. Where the Panel has concerns at the first monitoring phase about the commitment of core funders, it could consider writing formally to the Ministry to express concerns and perhaps even request a meeting.

In designing the functioning of the Prize in any future legal basis of the ECoC, DG EAC should consider how to manage the expectations of applicants, apply clear criteria and involve Member States. Given the timescales over which the ECoC operate, the legal basis should be clear but not overly prescriptive regarding the functioning of the Prize. The formal text of the new Decision could then be supplemented by more prescriptive Guide for cities and for the Panel, developed in light of experience and adapted over time where necessary.

**Main finding 37:** Awarding the Prize provides recognition of achievements in preparing for the title year; the possibility of awarding (or the threat of withholding) the Prize can be used to motivate ECoC - and, crucially, their core funders and stakeholders in local or national government – to make effective preparations for the title year.

**Main finding 38:** It may be possible to strengthen the "motivational effect" of the Prize, through requiring cities to develop their applications and cultural programmes without reference to the Prize (until the second monitoring point), developing and applying an explicit set of criteria for the award of the Prize and increasing the involvement of national Ministries in the monitoring process.

**Main finding 39:** The future legal basis should be clear but not overly prescriptive regarding the functioning of the Prize and then supplemented in due course by more prescriptive guidance for applicants.

## 6.0 Conclusions and recommendations

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### 6.1 Conclusions

Overall, the purpose of the selection and monitoring procedures can be seen as being, first, to enable the selection of ECoC in an efficient manner and, second, to strengthen the quality of the applications and of the eventual cultural programmes. We therefore present our conclusions against two main headings relating to the “efficiency of the processes” and the “effect on the quality of ECoC”.

#### *Efficiency of the processes*

1. The overall efficiency of the application and selection process is satisfactory. There are inevitable variations between the experiences in different countries, but no significant problems or delays were identified. There may be ways to improve the efficiency of Member States by encouraging informal networking between Ministries organising the selection process.
2. The documentary guidance provided to candidate cities, Member States and panel members is thorough and strong on administrative process.
3. The application form, whilst enabling the ECoC to provide the necessary information for the selection Panel to make its decision, does not allow applicants to present their bids in the clearest and most attractive format and leads to the submission of an unnecessarily large volume of material.
4. The ECoC criteria are clear in principle and have generally been understood and applied by applicants and the Panel, though some selected ECoC have not performed particularly well at application stage against one or other of the categories of criteria and many cities still struggle to achieve an appropriate balance between local and European components; there is a need to ensure a more consistent presentation of the criteria in application forms, guidance documents and reports of the selection and monitoring panels.
5. The Panel has also intelligently applied a set of “implicit” criteria which are more practical in nature and reflect the “key success factors” in the Guide for cities; there is a need to make these criteria more explicit at all stages of the application and selection procedure and in relevant documents (guidance, reports, etc.) and also to link the award of the Prize to the satisfaction of these criteria.
6. The Panel is mostly operating effectively and has been strengthened by the mixture of national and European appointees and by the fact that the European appointees hold a majority, with the chair being one of the European members; its role has also been reinforced by virtue of the fact that it considers all applications.<sup>40</sup> However, its credibility has been weakened by a small number of EU members either failing to attend meetings or giving the impression of being ill-prepared.

<sup>40</sup> compared to the previous procedure under which it considered only those applications nominated by the Member State in question – usually only one from each Member State.

7. Providing EU funding in the form of a prize rather than a traditional grant has been welcomed by ECoC due to the reduced administrative burden and increased flexibility in the use of the funding. The "motivational effect" of the Prize could be increased by requiring cities to develop their applications and cultural programmes (up to the second monitoring point) without reference to the Prize.

#### *Effect on the quality of ECoC*

8. Candidate cities value the ECoC brand highly and recognise the benefits of applying as well as winning. As a result they are prepared to invest significant resources in their applications.
9. The open competition (within Member States listed in the Order of Entitlement) has increased interest in the ECoC, ensured an equitable distribution of ECoC across Member States and helped generate a high number of credible applications. However, the sustainability of the process beyond 2019 in its current format needs to be given careful thought.
10. The selection process is generally held to be fair and transparent and has enabled the selection of credible candidates in every Member State, in part due to the two-stage process which enables applicants to improve their applications on the basis of expert advice received from the Panel.
11. DG EAC provides guidance, advice and support that is highly valued by panel members, Ministries and designated ECoC. Ministries and cities would welcome additional informal support and there may be practical ways by which this can be provided without posing a substantial additional burden on DG EAC.
12. The monitoring process has played a key part in strengthening the ECoC, in particular their focus on the European dimension. The new informal "post-designation meeting" and informal visits by panel members have proved a valuable complement to the formal monitoring meetings and reports.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

1. The application form should be improved in its design and structure. This could include developing separate forms for pre-selection and final selection stages, simplifying the form and structuring it more closely with the Guide for cities, requiring applicants to present basic factual information about the cities separately from the description of their proposed ECoC, providing clearer instructions on the primary focus of the pre-selection stage, and limiting the word-count and/or file-size of applications. The recently introduced budget grids in the application form should be continued in order to facilitate understanding and comparison of the financial aspects.
2. Candidates should be required to submit an electronic version of their applications (in addition to the current paper format).
3. The Guide for cities should be restructured to reflect more closely the structure of the (revised) application form.

4. Information currently available for applicants could be strengthened by featuring the applications (where available in electronic format) and contact details (where permission is given) of past, present and designated ECoC on the Europa webpages and by repeating the "Info Days" and exchanges of good practice at appropriate intervals.
5. The Commission should consider ways to encourage the exchange of experience and networking between Ministries involved in the selection of ECoC.
6. In designing any new legal basis for the ECoC, the Commission should consider the possibility of introducing an open call for applications for the role of panel member.
7. Consideration should be given to introducing a requirement in the future for Member States to indicate clearly from the outset of the process in their country the amount of funding, if any, which they will make available for the winning city.
8. Selection and monitoring reports should be presented in a more standardised format, allowing a clearer indication of the criteria applied (both formal and implicit).
9. The amount of face-to-face contact between designated ECoC and panel members should be increased during the monitoring phase, through increasing the time available for discussion during monitoring meetings and through making visits a routine rather than an optional part of the monitoring phase.
10. The implicit "practical" criteria for selecting ECoC that have been applied in practice should be developed into a more formal set of criteria. Once crystallised, these criteria should be included in the Guide for cities, the guidance for Member States organising calls for applications and the guidance for panel members. They should also be reflected in the structure of selection and monitoring reports, with a clear link also made to the award of the Prize.
11. The Commission should consider further developing the Guide for cities concerning the development phase of designated ECoC, including through the provision of good practice principles and examples relating to finance, the governance, selection of projects etc.
12. The Commission should require cities to develop their applications and cultural programmes without reference to the Prize (until the second monitoring point) and consider appropriate ways to increase the involvement of national Ministries in the monitoring process.

## **Annex One: Summary of panel reports**

## Summary of panel reports

Successful City, Country (date)	Status	Strengths of the Successful City	Recommendations to the Successful City	Documents
Essen, Germany (2010)	Underway	<p>Innovative character.</p> <p>Integration of increasing number of children and teenagers from immigrant families.</p> <p>Variety of projects and approaches.</p> <p>Ability to attract a large number of visitors, whilst mobilising important parts of the local population to take part actively in the event.</p> <p>Transformation of what was once one of Europe's biggest industrial regions.</p>	<p>A balance between content, scope and budget needs to be met.</p> <p>A form of governance covering the cultural diversity of the metropolis is required.</p> <p>Meeting budgetary ambitions.</p> <p>Needs to be consistent branding of the ECoc.</p> <p>The European dimension in the cultural programme needs to be highlighted.</p> <p>Sustainability and relevance of cultural activities needs to be taken into account in the event of budget cuts.</p>	<p>Selection Panel's Report</p> <p>First Monitoring and Advisory Report</p> <p>Second Monitoring and Advisory Report</p>
Istanbul, Turkey (2010)	Underway	<p>Innovative character of the programme.</p> <p>Strong European dimension of the project.</p> <p>The focus around four elements – it was innovative and built upon the roots of the city.</p> <p>The bottom up process and active role of the civil society.</p> <p>Sustainable character of the programme.</p>	<p>Management structure needs to guarantee the autonomy of the arts as well as the principles of openness, transparency and accountability.</p> <p>Governance structure seems rather elaborate.</p> <p>A guarantee for the public funding of core activities is essential for the success of the project.</p> <p>Maintain stable governance.</p> <p>Keep the programme clear and focussed</p>	<p>Selection Panel's Report</p> <p>First Monitoring and Advisory Report</p> <p>Second Monitoring and Advisory Report</p>

Successful City, Country (date)	Status	Strengths of the Successful City	Recommendations to the Successful City	Documents
		<p>The intention to reach out to parts of the local population which would not normally be the primary target groups for cultural events.</p> <p>The communication strategy was developed as an integral part of the proposal.</p>	<p>and concentrate on implementation.</p> <p>Put in place a communication campaign able to brand such a complex programme.</p>	
Pécs, Hungary (2010)	Underway	<p>Positioning of Pécs as the "gateway" to the South East of Europe, which reflects its historic role.</p> <p>International contacts built on historic ties that it has developed over centuries.</p> <p>47 neighbouring municipalities working together.</p> <p>Well balanced in terms of history and tradition.</p> <p>New and innovative ideas, particularly the multicultural aspects.</p> <p>A need to develop the artistic content of the programme and an artistic director should be appointed.</p>	<p>For sustainability, a focus on content and international cultural developments is needed.</p> <p>The conceptual, long term focus needs greater clarity.</p> <p>Communication strategy needs to be developed further.</p> <p>There needs to be greater clarity of funding commitments.</p> <p>A balanced approach is needed where the content of projects and the involvement of cultural organisations and the community in general is concerned.</p> <p>Public involvement in developing the infrastructure is important.</p> <p>The city should take advantage of the European agenda on culture in the coming years.</p> <p>Strengthen the global legacy of the event.</p>	<p>Selection Panel's Report</p> <p>First Monitoring and Advisory Report</p> <p>Second Monitoring and Advisory Report</p>

Successful City, Country (date)	Status	Strengths of the Successful City	Recommendations to the Successful City	Documents
Turku, Finland (2011)	Second monitoring and advisory report submitted May 2010	<p>Bottom up approach is vivid and it's very clear it has truly involved citizens.</p> <p>Partnership approaches that can lead to cultural exchange.</p> <p>Strong and well balanced governance scheme.</p> <p>Government's commitment to the event.</p> <p>Integrated in the long term cultural development plan of the city.</p> <p>Geographical location in relation to Tallinn provides an opportunity for them to help each other.</p>	<p>Incorporate cutting edge ideas into the process in order to develop an event with real artistic energy.</p> <p>Need to more clearly and explicitly bring out the European dimension in the event.</p>	<p>Selection Panel's Report</p> <p>First Monitoring and Advisory Report</p> <p>Second Monitoring and Advisory Report</p>
Tallinn, Estonia (2011)	Second monitoring and advisory report submitted May 2010	<p>Geographical location in relation to Turku provides an opportunity for them to help each other.</p> <p>Strong focus on the long term improvement of the urban space.</p> <p>Focuses on civil society and citizenship education.</p> <p>Volunteer programme fostered the participation of people in the event.</p>	<p>Need to develop a programme that is not only broad and inclusive, but also cutting edge in its artistic choices.</p> <p>Need to reinforce the leadership of the Foundation.</p> <p>Need to secure the financial participation of the state as soon as possible.</p> <p>Need clearer information on the development of the content of the programme – particularly concerning its European dimension.</p> <p>Welcomed the involvement of the city's minorities and urged it to do more.</p>	<p>Selection Panel's Report</p> <p>First Monitoring and Advisory Report</p> <p>Second Monitoring and Advisory Report</p>

Successful City, Country (date)	Status	Strengths of the Successful City	Recommendations to the Successful City	Documents
Guimarães, Portugal (2012)	First monitoring and advisory report submitted May 2010	Quality of the partnership. Strong concept of the event.	Constant commitment of the state and municipal governments throughout the process is essential.	Selection Panel's Report First Monitoring and Advisory Report
Maribor, Slovenia (2012)	First monitoring and advisory report submitted May 2010	Commitment, enthusiasm and ambition of the team.	Concerns about the high number of projects and the capacity of the city to implement them all, the city would benefit from giving priority to a more restricted number of demanding but realistic projects.  The city might benefit from involving external advisors for the further development of the project.  Constant commitment of the state and municipal governments throughout the process is essential.	Selection Panel's Report First Monitoring and Advisory Report
Marseille, France (2013)	Designated by the Council May 2009	High quality, coherent cultural and artistic programme based on a concept of interest to both the city and Europe.  Highly professional project director supported by a solid team.  Strong political engagement.  Solid financial support from local authorities and business with a carefully considered funding plan.  Combining high artistic requirements with a desire to reach disadvantaged	All partners should maintain a strong political and financial commitment to the project.  Greater emphasis on the European dimension.  Contacts with other countries in the union should be more developed and lasting partnerships established.  Major work should be done to ensure that activities can be sustained.	Final Selection Report

Successful City, Country (date)	Status	Strengths of the Successful City	Recommendations to the Successful City	Documents
		<p>audiences.</p> <p>Innovation.</p>		
Košice, Slovakia (2013)	Designated by the Council May 2009	<p>High involvement of citizens and independent artists in the design of the project.</p> <p>Well developed European cultural cooperation and intense good practice sharing.</p> <p>Good baseline cultural, transport and technical infrastructure.</p> <p>Personnel and expert capacities to manage the project.</p> <p>Clear institutional provision for the project.</p> <p>High degree of innovation and a well thought through added value of the multi-cultural and European dimensions.</p>	Consider the sustainability of its cultural strategy.	Pre-Selection Report Final Selection Report
Umeå, Sweden (2014)	Designated by the Council May 2010	<p>Clear ambition to make the city and the North of Sweden more visible in Europe.</p> <p>Good ambition for using culture as a major element in regional development.</p> <p>Strong political engagement.</p> <p>Solid governance with all</p>	<p>More detail and substance to meet the key criterion of the European Dimension.</p> <p>More detail on the inclusion of the Sami people and Sami culture.</p> <p>Participation of citizens as more than audience members must be strengthened.</p> <p>Strong communication and marketing</p>	Pre-Selection Report Final Selection Report

Successful City, Country (date)	Status	Strengths of the Successful City	Recommendations to the Successful City	Documents
		<p>management structures related to each other.</p> <p>A high quality programme.</p> <p>Solid financial support from local authorities.</p>	<p>will be needed given Umeå's remoteness and size.</p> <p>Continue to demonstrate that culture is at the heart of the development of the city and region.</p> <p>Events should be made accessible to young people from other European countries.</p>	
Riga, Latvia (2014)	Designated by the Council May 2010	<p>Commitment of political leaders in the city.</p> <p>Culture is at the heart of the city and region.</p> <p>City's cultural infrastructure and the importance of the city to Latvia.</p>	<p>More detail and substance developed to demonstrate the European dimension.</p> <p>Participation of citizens as more than audience members must be strengthened.</p> <p>Welcomes the involvement of the wider region but the city of Riga should stay at the centre of the planning and programme.</p> <p>Consider involving Cēsis and Lepaja as partners.</p> <p>Events should be made accessible to young people from other European countries.</p> <p>Greater involvement of the private sector.</p>	<p>Pre-Selection Report</p> <p>Final Selection Report</p>
Mons, Belgium (2015)	Officially nominated by MS November 2009	<p>Special emphasis on the multi-cultural dimension, the participation of socially disadvantaged groups</p>	<p>The links with the local SHAPE community should be better developed.</p> <p>All of the artistic dimensions should be</p>	<p>Pre-Selection Report</p> <p>Final Selection Report</p>

Successful City, Country (date)	Status	Strengths of the Successful City	Recommendations to the Successful City	Documents
	Expected to be confirmed by the European Council in November 2010	<p>and the environmental impact.</p> <p>High quality cultural and artistic programme based on a very innovative concept.</p> <p>Highly professional and motivated team.</p> <p>Strong political commitment.</p> <p>Very solid governmental financial support.</p> <p>Strong involvement of its inhabitants.</p>	<p>as visible as possible.</p> <p>The autonomy of the artistic choices should be guaranteed.</p> <p>The European dimension should go beyond networking and be further developed.</p> <p>Contacts with other countries of the Union will have to be developed and long lasting partnerships established.</p>	
Pízeň, Czech Republic (2015)	<p>Recommended by the panel December 2009</p> <p>Final selection meeting held in September 2010</p>	Strong regional ties.	No information to date.	Pre-Selection Report
(2016)	<p>Calls for applications late 2009</p> <p>Pre-selection meetings will take place in Sep/Oct 2010; final selection meeting in 2011</p>	No information to date.	No information to date.	

## **Annex Two: List of Interviews**

## List of interviewees

European Commission	
Ann Branch	European Commission DG Education and Culture
Jacqueline Pacaud	European Commission DG Education and Culture
Members of the Selection and Monitoring Panels	
Constantin Chiriac	Independent expert
Manfred Gaulhofer	Independent expert
Danuta Glondys	Independent expert
Jordi Pascual	Independent expert
Bob Scott	Independent expert
Elisabeth Vitouch	Independent expert
Andreas Wiesand	Independent expert
National ministries (or other national bodies) for host countries 2013-16	
Clara Nieden	Ministry of Culture and Communication (France)
Ivana Gubova	Ministry of Culture (Slovak Republic)
Monica Lindqvist	Cultural Contact Point Sweden, Swedish Arts Council
Dace Vilsone	Ministry of Culture (Latvia)
Kristina Magdolenova	Ministry of Culture (Czech Republic)
Hanna Jedras	Ministry of Culture (Poland)
Jorge Sobredo	Ministry of Culture (Spain)
European Capitals of Culture 2010-15	
Hanns-Dietrich Schmidt	Ruhr 2010
Tamás Szalay	Management Authority of ECoC in Pécs (2010)
Esra Nilgun Mirze	Istanbul 2010
Cay Sevón	Turku 2011 Foundation
Triin Mannick	Tallinn 2011 Foundation
Carlos Martins	Fundação Cidade de Guimarães (2012)
Peter Tomas Dobrila	Maribor 2012 Public Institute
Zora Jaurova	Košice 2013
Julie Chenot	Marseille 2013
Aiva Rosenberga	Riga City Council (2014)
Fredrik Lindegren	Umeå City Council and Umeå 2014
Yves Vasseur	Fondation Mons 2015
Yvona Kreuzmannová	Plzeň 2015

Unsuccessful applicants	
Monika Bujnakova	City of Prešov (2013)
Ilona Asare	Cēsis Culture and Tourism Centre (2014)
Ieva Hmielevska	Municipality of Liepāja, Culture Department (2014)
Hans-Martin Hansen	Lund City Council (2015)
Dita Eibenova	Ostrava 2015
Joan Cavallé	City of Tarragona (2016)

## **Annex Three: Topic guides**

## Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of European Cities of Culture (ECOC) 2010-16

### Topic Guide: Interviews with ECOC cities

#### About the interviewee

- Please describe your involvement in the ECOC action.

#### Application

- Did you make direct contact with DG EAC at any stage? How useful was it? Please describe
- How useful was the information and guidance provided to cities by the European commission? (including information on the website?)
- Is there anything more that DG EAC could do to improve information and guidance to potential applicants?
- How/how well was the call for applications promoted by your national government?
- Was the application process clear to you?
- Were the ECOC criteria (“European Dimension” and “City and Citizens”) clear to you? How easy is it to understand and respond to them?
- How did you understand/interpret the criteria and take them into account?
- How did you strike a balance between EU criteria/objectives and local (often socio-economic) objectives?
- What consideration did you give to the long-term legacy of the ECOC? How was it to be part of the long-term development of the city?
- Did your application cover just the city or a broader territory, e.g. region?
- Would your programme last a full 12 months (or less)?
- What problems did you face in preparing your application? (Explore issues of governance, funding guarantees, role of local/national public authorities, political interference in artistic choices)

#### Selection

- What was your experience of the first selection meeting?
- How useful and appropriate was the first report of the selection panel?
- What was your experience of the second selection meeting?
- How useful and appropriate was the second report of the selection panel?
- To what extent do you think the selection procedures are fair and transparent?
- Did all the panel members attend the selection meetings (7 EU and 6 national)?
- Did they make an intelligent and impartial assessment of your application? (differentiate if necessary between EU and national members)
- How efficiently do you think the selection procedure works? What are its strengths and weaknesses (at national and EU level)?
- How does the selection system compare with any other similar systems for EU or national programmes (or competitions) with which you may be familiar?
- How could the selection process be improved?

## Development and monitoring phase

- What problems have you faced during the development phase? How have you tried to resolve them?
- Did you have an informal post-designation meeting with DG EAC (6 months after being selected)? If so, how useful was it?
- What was your experience of the first monitoring meeting? How useful was it?
- How useful and appropriate was the first report of the monitoring panel?
- What was your experience of the second monitoring meeting? How useful was it?
- How useful and appropriate was the second report of the monitoring panel?
- In what other ways did DG EAC and/or the selection panel support you during the preparation phase?
- What benefits has the monitoring process provided to you during the preparation phase? (provide examples if possible)
- Have the selection and monitoring processes helped you to overcome issues concerning governance, budget, and relationships with national and local authorities etc?
- In what ways has the monitoring process helped you to think about and plan for the long-term development benefits of the ECoC (e.g. an enduring legacy)?
- Is there anything more that DG EAC or the selection panel could do to support cities in the preparation phase for ECOC?
- How could the monitoring process be improved?

## Finance

- Did you plan the Melina Mercouri prize money in your budget at application stage?
- How are you planning to use (or have you used) the EU funding provided via the Melina Mercouri prize?
- How efficient and practicable have been the processes related to application and reporting in respect of this money? How do the processes compare to other EU and national grant funding?
- How could the allocation of EU funding be improved

## Activity

- Will your programme last a full 12 months (or less)?
- How have you/will you publicise the fact that the ECoC is an EU initiative?
- In what ways have you networked with other ECoC (past, present, future)? In what ways has this been helpful?

## Conclusions and close

Any other comments to add? Any other recommendations to make?

## Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of European Cities of Culture 2010-16

### Interviews with EU experts on the selection and monitoring panel

#### The interviewee

1. Please describe how you were appointed to the selection and monitoring panel
2. How was the role explained to you in advance of your appointment?
3. Were you satisfied with the information given to you about your role?

#### Application and selection

4. To what extent does the current application process increase competition amongst cities and help raise the quality of applications?
5. What effect does the established chronological list of countries entitled to host the European Capital of Culture have on the processes?
6. How well do the Member States organise the call of applications?
7. How effective is the pre-selection process?
8. How effective is the full selection process?
9. Do the cities consider the selection procedures fair and transparent?
10. Does the panel need to make more visits to applicants? If so, how many and when?
11. How could the selection process be improved?
12. How could the European Commission provide better support to support cities in the application process?

#### The panel

13. Are the experts appointed by the Member States competent (i.e. knowledge about the field of culture) and independent (i.e. not employed or directly financed by the Ministry of Culture)?
14. Are the experts appointed by the European institutions competent and independent?
15. Are you satisfied by the performance of the selection panel and its members? How could the panel be strengthened?
16. Are you satisfied with the support provided by DG EAC to the selection panel? Can any improvements be made?

## Monitoring

17. What was the quality of the first and second monitoring reports that were submitted by the cities?
18. How effective were the first and second monitoring meetings?
19. How useful do you think that the cities found the reports prepared by the monitoring panel? In what ways did they respond to the opinions of the panel?
20. Do the panel members need to undertake more visits to cities that have received the title?
21. How could the monitoring process be improved?
22. Is there anything more that DG EAC or the selection panel could do to support cities in the development phase?

## Finance

23. How efficient have been the processes related to application and reporting in respect of the EU funding (Melina Mercouri Prize)? How do the processes compare to other EU and national funding?
24. How could the allocation of EU funding (Melina Mercouri Prize) be improved?

## Conclusions and close

25. Do you have any other comments or recommendations?

## Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of European Cities of Culture (ECOC) 2010-16

### Topic Guide: Interviews with unsuccessful applicants

#### About the interviewee

- Please describe your involvement in the ECOC action.

#### Application

- Did you make direct contact with the European Commission at any stage? How useful was it? Please describe
- How useful was the information and guidance provided by the European Commission? (including information on the website?)
- Is there anything more that DG EAC could do to improve information and guidance to potential applicants?
- How/how well was the call for applications promoted by your national government?
- Was the application process clear to you?
- Were the ECOC criteria (“European Dimension” and “City and Citizens”) clear to you? How easy is it to understand and respond to them?
- How did you understand/interpret the criteria and take them into account?
- How did you strike a balance between EU criteria/objectives and local (often socio-economic) objectives?
- What consideration did you give to the long-term legacy of the ECOC? How was it to be part of the long-term development of the city?
- Did your application cover just the city or a broader territory, e.g. region?
- Would your programme last a full 12 months (or less)?
- What problems did you face in preparing your application? (Explore issues of governance, funding guarantees, role of local/national public authorities, political interference in artistic choices)

#### Selection

- What was your experience of the first selection meeting?
- How useful and appropriate was the first report of the selection panel?
- What was your experience of the second selection meeting?
- How useful and appropriate was the second report of the selection panel?
- To what extent do you think the selection procedures are fair and transparent?
- Did all the panel members attend the selection meetings (7 x EU and 6 x national members)?
- Did the panel members make an intelligent and impartial assessment of your application? (differentiate if necessary between EU and national members)
- How efficiently do you think the selection procedure works? What are its strengths and weaknesses?
- How does the selection system compare with any other similar systems for EU or national programmes (or competitions) with which you may be familiar?

- How could the selection process be improved?

## Finance

- Did you plan the Melina Mercouri EU prize money in your budget at application stage?
- How were you planning to use the EU funding provided via the Melina Mercouri prize?

## Activity

- Was your programme planned to last a full 12 months (or less)?
- In what ways have you networked with other ECoC (past, present, future)? In what ways has this been helpful?

## Conclusions and close

Any other comments to add? Any other recommendations to make?

**Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of  
European Cities of Culture (ECOC) 2010-16**

**Questionnaire: ECOC candidate cities, Spain and Poland 2016**

**Background information**

Name:

Organisation:

Country:

**Application**

How well was the call for applications promoted by your national government?						
1 = Poorly 5 = Extensively	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How clear was the application process in your view?						
1 = Very unclear 5 = Very clear	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How satisfied are you with the way the European Commission provides information and guidance to candidate cities and makes reports available?						
1 = Very unsatisfied 5 = Very satisfied	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How useful did you find the information and guidance provided by the European Commission?						
What about the information on the website?						
1 = Not at all useful 5 = Very useful	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How appropriate (in terms of the <u>questions asked</u> ) do you consider the "Proposed Application" proforma that cities are required to complete?						
How appropriate (in terms of <u>format and structure</u> ) do you						

consider the "Proposed Application" proforma that cities are required to complete?						
1 = Completely inappropriate 5 = Very appropriate	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

Is there anything more that the European Commission could do to improve the information and guidance to potential applicants?	
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In the bidding process, how clear to you were the ECOC criteria in terms of...?						
The "European Dimension"?						
"Cities and citizens"?						
1 = Very unclear 5 = Very clear	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How easy or difficult did you find it to understand and respond to them?						
The "European Dimension"?						
"Cities and citizens"?						
1 = Very difficult 5 = Very easy	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How well do you think you were able to strike a balance in your application between EU criteria/objectives and local (often socio-economic) objectives?						
1 = Not at all well 5 = Very well	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

## Selection

How would you rate your experience of the <u>first</u> selection meeting...?						
In terms of practical organisation?						
Interaction with the Selection Panel?						
1 = Very negative 5 = Very positive	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How would you rate the quality and usefulness of the feedback contained in the First Report?						
1 = Poor, not useful at all 5 = Excellent, very useful	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

To what extent would you say the selection processes are fair and transparent?						
1 = Not at all 5 = Very	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How efficiently do you think the selection procedure works?						
1 = Not at all 5 = Very	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know
In your view what are the main strengths and weaknesses of the process?						

How would you say the ECOC selection process compares with other similar systems in the EU and elsewhere?						
1 = Much less effective 5 = Much more effective	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How might the selection process be improved?						
--	--	--	--	--	--	--

To what extent have you networked with other ECOOC (previous, current and/or future)?						
1 = Not at all 5 = extensively	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

How helpful has this been?						
1 = Not at all helpful 5 = Very helpful	1	2	3	4	5	Don't know

## Conclusion

Any other comments or recommendations you would like to make?	
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## **Annex Four: Terms of Reference**



## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Interim evaluation of selection and monitoring procedures of ECOC 2010-2016

**Contracting authority: European Commission**

<b>CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
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1.2.2. Specific objectives .....	5
1.3. Description of the Action .....	5
1.3.1. Selection and designation procedures.....	5
1.3.1.1. Pre-selection phase: .....	6
1.3.1.2. Selection phase: .....	6
1.3.1.3. Designation:.....	6
1.3.2. Monitoring Provisions .....	6
1.3.2.1. Mid-term monitoring .....	7
1.3.2.2. Final monitoring: .....	7
1.3.2.3. The "Melina Mercouri "Prize: .....	8
1.3.3. Budget and duration of the Action.....	8
1.3.4. Eligible countries .....	8
1.4. Implementation of the Action.....	9
1.4.1. European Capitals of Culture 2010 .....	9
1.4.1.1. Istanbul: .....	9
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1.4.3.	European Capitals of Culture 2012 .....	10
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## CONTEXT

### 1.1. Introduction

The initial scheme of 'The European City of Culture' was launched at an intergovernmental level in 1985.<sup>1</sup> In 1992 a new event of 'European Cultural Month' was established.<sup>2</sup> In 1999 by Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and the Council the European City of Culture event was given the status of a Community Action and was renamed 'European Capital of Culture',<sup>3</sup> hereafter referred as "the Action". The Decision outlined new selection procedures and evaluation criteria for the 2005 title onward. The Decision was amended by Decision 649/2005/EC (in order to integrate the 10 Member States which joined the EU in 2004) and later replaced by the Decision 1622/2006/EC,<sup>4</sup> which has repealed the earlier decisions. Decision 1622/2006/EC specifies the objectives of the action and the designation process for the 2013 title onward. Given the time-scale of ECOCs implementation, whose preparation starts 6 years before the title year, the Decision maintains the application of 1999 Decision to European Capitals of Culture for 2007, 2008 and 2009 and foresees transitional provisions for titles 2010-2012.

The Council of Ministers of the EU is the only institution which can award the title of European Capital of Culture. The title can be awarded to a city only. The European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture recommends the designation of the cities to the Council of Ministries on the basis of a report provided by a selection panel.<sup>5</sup> The selection panel assesses applications of the cities in comparison with the criteria laid down in Art. 3<sup>6</sup> and Annex II<sup>7</sup> of the Decision 1419/1999/EC.

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<sup>1</sup> The title "European Capital of Culture" was designed to help bring European citizens closer together. This was the idea underlying its launch in June 1985 by the Council of Ministers of the European Union on the initiative of Melina Mercouri. For more details see Resolution of the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs regarding the annual organization of the 'European City of Culture' of 13.06.1985

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/Notice.do?mode=dbl&lang=en&lng1=en,en&lng2=da,de,el,en,es,fr,it,nl,&val=117538:cs&page=1&hword=s=>

<sup>2</sup> Conclusions of the Ministers of Culture meeting within the Council of 18 May 1992 concerning the choice of European Cities of Culture after 1996 and the 'Cultural Month'

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:41992X0616:EN:HTML>

<sup>3</sup> 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 (OJ L 166 of 1.7.1999, p. 1). Decision amended by Decision 649/2005/EC (OJ L 117 of 4.5.2005, p. 20).

[http://www.europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1999/1\\_166/1\\_16619990701en00010005.pdf](http://www.europa.eu/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1999/1_166/1_16619990701en00010005.pdf)

[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/1\\_117/1\\_11720050504en00200021.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/1_117/1_11720050504en00200021.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Decision 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 (OJ L 304 of 3.11.2006, p. 1). <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOHtml.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:304:SOM:EN:HTML>

<sup>5</sup> Art. 2 of Decision 1419/1999/EC.

<sup>6</sup> "The submission shall specify how the nominated city intends:

- to highlight artistic movements and styles shared by Europeans which it has inspired or to which it has made a significant contribution,
- to promote events involving people active in culture from other cities in Member States and leading to lasting cultural cooperation, and to foster their movement within the European Union,
- to support and develop creative work, which is an essential element in any cultural policy,
- to ensure the mobilisation and participation of large sections of the population and, as a consequence, the social impact of the action and its continuity beyond the year of the events,
- to encourage the reception of citizens of the Union and the widest possible dissemination of the various events by employing all forms of multimedia, to promote dialogue between European cultures and those from other parts of the world and, in that spirit, to optimise the opening up to, and understanding of others, which are fundamental cultural values,

The European Capitals of Culture are expected to implement the programme of activities they put forward for the designation process during the year when they bear the title.

The 2010 European Capitals of Culture, namely Essen for the Ruhr, Pécs and Istanbul, were awarded the title by the Council of Ministers in 2006. These cities were designated following the selection process laid down by the Decision 1419/1999/EC and implemented the ECOC event.

## **1.2. Objectives of the Action**

Decision 1419/1999/EC contained a list of criteria, while general and specific objectives were less clearly enunciated. For the sake of consistency and comparability, we refer here to the general and specific objectives laid down by the current Decision 1622/2006/EC, which has articulated themes and criteria already contained in former Decision 1419/1999/EC.

### *1.2.1. General objectives*

The overall aim 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.

- 
- to exploit the historic heritage, urban architecture and quality of life in the city."

<sup>7</sup>"Possible elements of designated cities' programmes:

- promotion of shared artistic movements and styles in the development of which the city has played a particular role,
- organisation of artistic events (music, dance, theatre, visual arts, cinema, etc.) and improvement of the promotion and management of the arts,
- promotion of European public awareness of the figures and events which have marked the history and culture of the city,
- organisation of specific activities designed to encourage artistic innovation and to generate new forms of cultural action and dialogue,
- organisation of measures to increase access to and awareness of fixed and movable artistic assets and artistic productions specific to the city,
- organisation of specific cultural projects designed to bring young people to the arts,
- organisation of specific cultural projects designed to increase social cohesion,
- taking the planned activities to a wider public, particularly through the use of multimedia and audiovisual means and a multilingual approach,
- contribution to the development of economic activity, particularly in terms of employment and tourism,
- need to develop high-quality and innovative cultural tourism with due allowance being made for the importance in this connection of managing the cultural heritage on a sustainable basis and reconciling the wishes of visitors with those of the local population,
- organisation of projects designed to encourage the development of links between the architectural heritage and strategies for new urban development,
- joint organisation of initiatives designed to promote dialogue between the cultures of Europe and the cultures of other parts of the world."

### 1.2.2. *Specific objectives*

In accordance with Art. 4 of the current Decision 1622/2006/EC, the cultural Action should fulfil the following criteria, subdivided into two categories, 'the European Dimension' and 'City and Citizens'.

I. As regards '*the European Dimension*', the Action shall:

- foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector;
- highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;
- bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore.

II. As regards '*City and Citizens*' the Action shall:

- 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;
- be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

Ecotec's ECOC 2007-2008 evaluation found out that cities holding the ECOC title had adopted over the years a third broad objective, that could be defined as "*supporting social and economic development through culture*". In this context "culture" covers both cultural programmes and relevant infra-structural interventions, as well as interventions developing human and social capital. This objective brings to the fore elements already contained in other parts of the ECOCs decisions. It is considered highly relevant to ECOCs implementation and should be taken into account as a specific objective.

## **1.3. Description of the Action**

### 1.3.1. *Selection and designation procedures*

Under the legal basis valid for the designation of the 2010 European Capitals of Culture (i.e. Decision 1419/1999/EC), the MS concerned by a given year proposed one or several cities for the title to the Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions. The applications of candidate cities were assessed by a panel of 7 independent experts in comparison with the criteria laid down for the Action. The panel had to achieve a report regarding its assessment and mentioning its recommendation for the cities to be designated as European Capitals of Culture. The European Parliament had 3 months to issue an opinion. On the basis of the panel's recommendation and the opinion of the EP, the Commission made a recommendation to the Council of Ministers and the Council designated officially the cities as ECOCs.

Decision 1622/2006/EC replaced Decision 1419/1999/EC in early 2007 ; it establishes a new selection scheme for the titles in 2013 onwards and put in place a monitoring phase between the designation and the event.

Legally speaking, the 2011 and 2012 designations were submitted to Decision 1622. However, due to the necessary period of time to select the ECOCs under the new scheme (6 years), Decision 1622 established transitional measures for these 2 years. According to these measures, the selection process established by Decision 1419 applied for the 2011 and 2012 ECOCs.

The selection process applied as of the 2013 title is organised in two phases and lasts 6 years. It can be broken down as follows:

#### 1.3.1.1. Pre-selection phase:

Six years before the event, each of the Member States concerned publishes a call for submission of applications addressed to cities which might be interested in the title.

A panel meets in each of the Member States concerned to assess the bids once received approximately 5 years before the event. This panel – referred to as the selection panel – is composed of thirteen people: six experts appointed by the country in question and seven appointed by the European Institutions.

The selection panel draws up a short list of cities which are to be considered further, and issues recommendations on progress and developments.

#### 1.3.1.2. Selection phase:

Pre-selected cities go further to elaborate their programme. The panel meets again for a final selection meeting nine months after the pre selection meeting to recommend a city for the title in each country concerned and gives advice on the next stage in the preparations.

#### 1.3.1.3. Designation:

On the basis of the reports from the selection panel concerned, each of the two Member States submits a city nomination to the European Institutions. The EU Council of Ministers then officially designates the two cities to hold the title four years later.

### 1.3.2. *Monitoring Provisions*

The current legal basis (1622/2006/EC) lays down a monitoring process, applying from 2010 title onwards. This monitoring phase aims at ensuring that the cities concerned fulfil the commitments undertaken at selection stage, in particular concerning the criteria of the action, and to provide them with guidance on the implementation of the event.

During this phase, the progress in the city's preparations is monitored and guided by a committee of international experts (known as the monitoring and advisory panel), composed of seven independent experts appointed by the Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the Committee of the Regions.

The involvement of this committee of experts makes it possible to:

- assess the progress made in the preparations;
- give guidance;
- check compliance with the programme and the commitments on the basis of which the cities were selected (particularly as regards meeting the "European Dimension" and "City and Citizens" criteria).

For this purpose, representatives from the cities are convened to meet the monitoring and advisory panel twice between the designation and the start of the event.

In addition to these two official meetings, ECOC 2013 asked to meet the panel shortly after their designation. This meeting – known as "post-designation meeting" - seems to have helped the cities to get the preparation quickly on track after the euphoria of the designation. The Commission and the Panel are willing to continue with this informal meeting if future ECOC agree.

The managers of current and future Capitals benefit from the exchange of experience for the preparation of the event. Some of them are part of an informal network which provides an opportunity to meet and to debate about the design and the management of the event. The Commission seeks to foster the sharing of best practices since it is one of the keys to success. The Culture Programme has supported a policy grouping on the sharing of evaluation methodologies and practices among past, present and future European Capitals of Culture.<sup>8</sup>

#### 1.3.2.1. Mid-term monitoring

Two years before the event, the monitoring and advisory panel meets the structures responsible for implementing the programmes and the authorities of the two designated Capitals of Culture, on the initiative of the Commission.

At the latest three months before this meeting, the structures responsible for implementing the programmes of the two Capitals of Culture present a progress report to the Commission relating to the programmes presented at the selection stage and the commitments made at that time. The report to be submitted by each of the cities is based on the themes covered on the "Proposed Application" sheet. It deals with the progress achieved in relation to the answers given on this sheet at the selection stage.

The monitoring panel uses this document and the contacts established with the cities at the time of the meeting in order to draw up a mid-term monitoring report on the preparations for the event and on the arrangements which still need to be made.

#### 1.3.2.2. Final monitoring:

At the latest eight months before the event, the monitoring panel again meets the structures responsible for implementing the programmes and the authorities of the two designated Capitals of Culture in order to evaluate the preparatory work so far and the arrangements which still need to be made.

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<sup>8</sup> IMPACTS 08 - European Capital of Culture Research Programme <http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/impacts08/>

At the latest three months before this meeting, the structures responsible for implementing the programmes submit a progress report to the Commission, drafted according to the same principles as those outlined above. This report deals also with the progress achieved in relation to the recommendations made by the panel during the mid-term monitoring phase.

The award of the prize in honour of Melina Mercouri (cf. below) and the allocation of the prize money to the budget of the event's programme are also discussed.

The monitoring panel uses this document and the contacts it established with the cities at the time of the meeting to draft a final monitoring report on the preparations for the event and on the arrangements which still need to be made. The report recommends to the Commission whether to award the Melina Mercouri prize.

#### 1.3.2.3. The "Melina Mercouri "Prize:

On the basis of the Panel's report, the Commission awards a prize "in honour of Melina Mercouri" to the designated cities, provided that they have honoured the commitments made in the selection phase and acted on the recommendations of the panels during the selection and monitoring phases. This prize, to be awarded no later than three months before the event, rewards the quality preparation of the event. It consists of 1,5 million EUR and has a great symbolic value often triggering complementary sponsoring.

#### 1.3.3. *Budget and duration of the Action*

The Decision 1622/2006/EC does not have financial aspects. However, the European Capital of Culture Action is one of the 'special actions' included under Strand 1.3 of the Culture Programme (2007-13). The latter is established by the Decision 1855/2006/EC. Each year, 1.5 million euro per European Capital of Culture is made available in the budget of the Culture programme for each European Capital of Culture.<sup>9</sup>

#### 1.3.4. *Eligible countries*

Member States are ranked in a chronological order of entitlement to host the event. Each year, two Member States may host the event. The chronological order was decided by common agreement with the Member States and has been annexed to the ECOC legal basis since Decision 1419/1999/EC. It has been amended to take into account the accession of new Member States by Decision 649/2005/EC. The 2006 Decision lists the countries entitled to host the title until 2019.

It has to be noted that, contrary to the current 2006 Decision, Article 4 of Decision 1419/1999/EC made it possible for European non-EU member countries to host the event as well, with no pre-defined chronological order. The last year of application of this article is ECOC 2010.

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<sup>9</sup> Decision 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 the Culture Programme (2007-2013) (OJ L 372 of 27.12.2006, p. 1).

## **1.4. Implementation of the Action**

### *1.4.1. European Capitals of Culture 2010*

According to Decision 1419/1999/EC, Member States entitled to host the European Capital of Culture in 2010 were Germany and Hungary. Late in 2005 Germany proposed for the title the city of Essen, Hungary proposed Pécs and Turkey proposed Istanbul in accordance with article 4 of Decision 1419 allowing third countries to participate in the Action.

The applications for the 2010 title, putting forward a programme for the year in question, were received in March 2005 and were assessed by a panel of independent experts designated by the Institutions in April 2006. A delegation of each of the candidate cities was invited to present their bid and to answer questions from the panel members. The outlines of the programme as presented during the selection meetings were as follow:

#### 1.4.1.1. Istanbul:

As a European Capital of Culture, “Istanbul, a city of the four elements” would function as a bridge, connecting Europe to its East.

The programme of the year was built around the four elements of the universe, which had a special meaning to Istanbul: “Earth” referred to tradition and transformation; “Air - heaven sent” would bring local and foreign musicians together. “Water - the city and the sea” would focus on a multitude of activities on the Bosphorus and “Fire - forging the future” would focus on modern arts and events for large parts of its population.

#### 1.4.1.2. Pécs:

Pécs' authorities presented the central idea of the programme for the year: creating a “borderless city” (as the slogan for the year says). The city would like to become one of the cultural centres of an international region at the border of Western and South–Eastern Europe. The Pecs' authorities in charge of this project devised the event as a “Cultural gateway to the Balkans”.

The concept of the proposal was focused on three main themes: rediscovering urbanity/ cultural shift in urban development/ changes in urban cultural policy.

#### 1.4.1.3. Essen for the Ruhr:

The central idea of the concept was to regenerate through culture the vast space devoted to and despoiled by industrial development and to create a metropolis – the Ruhr metropolis- resulting from bringing together the smaller cities of the region. To win the title of the European Capital of Culture would help the region in its quest for a new identity through a unity – a unity not imposed from above but achieved from its roots – “bottom up” – with culture as the driving force.

Regeneration and redevelopment of the region was the core of the project for 2010. “Transformation through culture, culture through transformation” was the slogan for this operation. The authorities would like to transform the region into a European cultural metropolis and to transform the “black image” of Essen (corresponding to the industrial past) into an image of dynamism.

In its report, the panel recommended Essen for the Ruhr, Pécs and Istanbul for the 2010 title, and made a few recommendations regarding the progress to be achieved until the ECOC event.

#### *1.4.2. European Capitals of Culture 2011*

The outlines of the programme as presented during the selection meetings were as follows.

##### *1.4.2.1. Tallinn:*

Tallinn's mission as a European Capital of Culture was to create a cultural centre that was supported on every level by its urban community.

Tallinn's aims as a European Capital of Culture in 2011 were:

1. to create a more creative and culture centred city environment;
2. to accentuate the maritime past, for example by opening up the sea front;
3. to create a supportive environment for individual creative development;
4. to make the city more attractive for cultural tourism;
5. to have vibrant international co-operation, especially Estonia and Europe.

##### *1.4.2.2. Turku:*

The theme for Turku's European Capital of Culture was Turku on Fire, meaning that Turku was hot with creative activity, and referring in the same time to huge fires which happened in Turku's history.

Turku 2011 was designed as a step to the global plan for the city up to 2016.

Turku aimed to draw Europe's (and international) attention to the Baltic Sea region. In its application it underlined the common European goals of increasing the well-being and cooperation between Europeans, promoting the creative industries and contributing to sustainable development.

#### *1.4.3. European Capitals of Culture 2012*

The outlines of the programme as presented during the selection meetings were as follow:

##### *1.4.3.1. Maribor:*

The theme for Maribor's European Capital of Culture was "Pure Energy", referring to the fact that the region covered most of Slovenia's energy resources and is linked to Maribor's aim to build up energy in the coming years leading to a "cultural explosion" in 2012.

The ECOC should bring some events already existing to the next level and therefore enhance their potential to attract a larger number of visitors. The programme was largely open to the world and the various projects involved the different continents.

##### *1.4.3.2. Guimarães:*

Guimarães designed the event keeping in mind a 2020 objective for the city's development. The expected impacts of the 2012 event were:

- urban regeneration of the city, together with social and economic regeneration (transforming the city's economy from a model of industrial economy into a creative economy) through culture
- the city as a model for cultural leadership
- cooperation and co-creation with other European cities.

#### 1.4.4. *European Capitals of Culture 2013*

##### 1.4.4.1. Marseille:

Marseille designed the event keeping in mind the cultural geopolitics of Europe with an emphasis on those EU strategies and programmes to which Marseilles can make the most effective contribution. The project is made up of two main strategies:

- International Strategy: that corresponds to enriching cultural elements by creating a permanent hub for intercultural, Euro-Mediterranean dialogue in Marseilles. Four themes are to be employed:
  - Migrations and Memories
  - Values and Beliefs
  - Genders and Genres
  - The Sharing of Water
- Local Strategy: that corresponds to developing artistic and cultural activity as a force for the renewal of the city. Four themes are employed:
  - Art in the Public Space
  - Walkers – Nomads – Territories
  - One Thousand and One Nights
  - Everyone is Involved.

##### 1.4.4.2. Kosice:

The slogan for Kosice was "Kosice – INTERFACE 2013", referring to the desire to create an environment in which people are engaged in "an intensive creative conversation leading to inspiring and innovative conclusions. This environment shall draw no line between creators and viewers and lets all participants become active actors in the INTERFACE.

Four main programme families represent differing sides of the INTERFACE:

- Transformation Interface: the redevelopment and redefining of existing infrastructural structures and buildings.
- Open Interface: projects based on community participation, social inclusion, and expansion in an effort to decentralize culture from institutional centres.

- Dialogue Interface: focuses on connections and cooperation so that the city may be a platform for cultures of East and West, old and new, and differing religions.
- Environmental Interface: focuses on sustainable development for the cultural sector with regard to environmental issues.

#### 1.4.5. *European Capitals of Culture 2014*

##### 1.4.5.1. Riga:

Riga chose "Force Majeure" as its theme for 2014 to highlight the "unconquerable power" that acts as a catalyst and provoker for cultural events. The main programme of events is based on the ideological principles of Kult[rix]:

- Creative Abilities.
- Expansion of borders – in broadening the understanding of the notion of culture through close interaction with other fields.
- New forms of interaction.

The guidelines for the programme were structured into six areas: Thirst for the Ocean; Freedom Street; Survival Kit; Road Map; Riga Carnival; and Amber Vein.

##### 1.4.5.2. Umeå:

In the bidding document, Umeå presented eight key themes inspired by the eight seasons of the Sami calendar as part of the programme for 2014:

- Northern Light: Northern cultural traditions of film, dance, drama, music, and literature.
- Sami Invitation: Aims to emphasise the northern dimension by focusing on the Sápmi and its indigenous minority population, the Sami.
- Stories of the North – Ears for Europe: Aims to use Västerbotten's unique narrative tradition as a starting point when focusing on the common European cultural heritage of storytelling.
- Burning Snow – Melting Ice: This theme is for projects that emphasise contrasts, the unexpected, and the innovative that characterise Umeå.
- The Growth of Identities: Aims at giving a voice to diversity as different groups will participate in identity-forming dialogues within the framework of popular adult education.
- She's Got a Beat – The Gendered City: Aims to emphasize a female perspective in a number of local and regional events.
- Talking Architecture - Speaking Design: Aims to create a new Art Campus and other buildings as part of the belief in culture as a driving force behind urban planning.

- Treasures in Leisure: Focuses on the basic values of outdoor life and sport, with exercise, leisure, joy, quality of life, entertainment and social development all targeted under this theme.

#### 1.4.6. *European Capitals of Culture 2015*

##### 1.4.6.1. Mons:

Mons chose "Where Technology meets Culture" as the slogan for the 2015 title. The themes for event planned are derived from new advances and changes in technology. Between "technology" and "culture" lies a meeting place where contemporary art resides. The slogan concentrates projects that act as bridges leading to this point and Mons has planned to make this the focal point of the year.

The broad structure for the event consists of four elements: images, sounds, words, and memories. 2015 in Mons will:

- Be an open and welcoming place for all forms of artistic expression,
- Act as a forum for artistic experimentation,
- Stir the entire public into artistic action, regardless of age, condition, origin, or otherwise.

#### 1.4.7. *European Capitals of Culture 2016*

Spain and Poland are the 2 Member States entitled to host the event in 2016. The selection process started late 2009 with the publication of the calls for applications in each of these 2 Member States. The pre selection meetings will take place by autumn 2010 and the final selection ones by summer 2011. The formal designation of the two 2016 ECOCs would take place by May 2012.

## 2. **TASK SPECIFICATION FOR THE ASSIGNMENT**

This interim evaluation is launched in order to assess the implementation of new selection and monitoring procedures introduced by the current Decision.

The current system has been devised by Decision 1622/2006/EC which has introduced a competitive selection process and a monitoring system linked to the EC grant, now called the "Melina Mercouri" prize. As ECOC preparations start six years in advance, these new provisions have been gradually phased in: monitoring provisions have applied as of the 2010 ECOC, while the competitive selection process has applied as of the 2013 ECOC.

The 2006 Decision does not legally include provisions for the continuation of the action, neither for its evaluation, except for the yearly ex-post evaluations of ECOC. Nevertheless in order not to discontinue the action and ensure a smooth transition in 2020, a Commission proposal for the ECOC continuation should be adopted in the second semester of 2011, in view of the time needed for negotiations in the Council and EP. This way the selection procedure for ECOC 2020 could be launched at the end of 2013

Although we will see a whole ECOC cycle governed by the 2006 Decision only by the end of 2013, the new monitoring provisions have already been applied to ECOC 2010-2013 and the new competitive selection procedure to ECOC 2013-2016. It is therefore advisable to launch an interim evaluation to assess the way selection and monitoring procedures have been applied and draw lessons for the future legal basis.

#### *2.1.1. Description of Action implementation*

The contractor must provide in its report:

- a brief description of the selection and monitoring procedure under the current legal basis, as well as the accompanying measures,
- the conceptual framework that guided the study,
- the evaluation questions that the research aimed to answer and the methodology followed;
- lessons in delivery from across the ECOC procedures examined;
- overall conclusions and recommendations for the ECOC Action.

The description should provide the necessary background and reference points for responding to the evaluation questions in the next sub-section.

#### *2.1.2. Evaluation questions*

The contractor must provide answers to the evaluation questions listed below. The contractor will nonetheless be called upon to use their knowledge and experience to refine and elaborate these questions and, where appropriate, propose others to the Commission with the aim of improving the focus of this evaluation. The contractor should note that the sub-questions proposed under some of the evaluation questions do not necessarily cover the entire aspect of the questions concerned. The sub-questions deal with issues the Commission is particularly interested in and which the contractor therefore should address, in addition to any other issues which the evaluator may see as requiring attention in the case of each evaluation question.

With respect to each of the evaluation questions, the evaluation is expected to provide concrete recommendations on how current selection and monitoring procedures can address any deficiencies and/or gaps identified by the evaluator and - if appropriate – propose improvements for the future design of the Action.

The questions proposed are based on the items put forward as the main innovative elements of Decision 1622 in the explanatory memorandum of the Commission proposal as well as in the introduction of the Decision itself. These new elements introduced by Decision 1622 were expected to address the main weaknesses of the previous Decision (Decision 1419/1999/EC). A few questions have been added specifically to explore points that the experience of the previous selections and monitoring phases have revealed to be problematic. Some questions also aims at evaluating the flanking measures implemented in parallel to Decision 1622.

<b>Relevance</b>	
<b>EQ1.</b>	To what extent has the new selection procedure fostered competition among bidding cities?
<b>EQ2.</b>	To what extent does the selection procedure help the cities to prepare a programme relevant to the objectives and criteria laid down for the action?
<b>EQ3.</b>	To what extent does the selection procedure foster the European dimension of the ECOC event? Where relevant, are there differences between MS involved?
<b>EQ4.</b>	Has the chronological list of MS entitled to host the event affected (positively or negatively) the implementation of the ECOC objectives? Has it been adapted to the potential of any MS in terms of number of cities with the capacity of hosting such an event?
<b>EQ5.</b>	To what extent are the criteria laid down in the 2006 Decision clearer than former Decision 1419? Do the cities understand the criteria? Are they adapted to the objectives of the ECOC event? Are they compatible with the local stakes?
<b>EQ6.</b>	To what extent do cities take into account the ECOC criteria (European dimension/the city and citizens) in their bids? Which balance do they strike between these criteria and the socio-economic objectives of the cities? Does this balance change after designation?
<b>EQ7.</b>	Does the ECOC planned cultural programme last the entire year?
<b>EQ8.</b>	To what extent does the ECOC planned cultural programme cover only the city or a broader region? Are there different degrees of relevance in covering an area broader than a city?
<b>EQ9.</b>	To what extent is the ECOC brand visible? Do ECOC use the title in a relevant way (during the selection process and after their designation)? Which actions do the designated cities implement to make clear that the event is an EU initiative? Do people understand that it is an EU initiative?
<b>Efficiency</b>	
<b>EQ10.</b>	To what extent is the selection procedure considered fair and transparent by the cities?
<b>EQ11.</b>	How efficient is the selection process (timing, guiding documents and reports) to prepare the ECOC event?
<b>EQ12.</b>	To what extent has the overall quality of the bids improved with the new selection procedure? Are there remarkable differences between years/MS?
<b>EQ13.</b>	To what extent has the selection panel been efficient and delivered a quality output? Has the Panel assessed the bids against the ECOC criteria (European dimension / the city and citizens)? Are there other elements the Panel has taken into account? On the quality of panel reports: are they clear and precise enough? Are they useful for the cities concerned, notably the parts on assessment and recommendation?
<b>EQ14.</b>	To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel take stock of the preparations for the event? To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel check that the criteria are fulfilled? Are there other elements the Panel has taken into account? On the quality of panel reports: are they clear and consistent enough? Are they useful for the cities concerned, notably the parts on assessment and recommendation?
<b>EQ15.</b>	To what extent does the monitoring and advisory panel deliver assistance and advice in the preparations for the event?
<b>EQ16.</b>	To what extent is the scheme of co-funding through the Melina Mercouri Prize adapted to the ECOC preparation, in particular regarding the time schedule for delivering the Prize? Has it been an efficient way of improving the quality of the preparation phase in general and, more specifically, to make the cities fulfil the criteria (notably the European dimension) and respect the commitments made at selection stage? Is the use of the Melina Mercouri Prize planned in advance in the budget of a Capital?

<b>EQ17.</b>	To what extent has the Commission been efficient in facilitating and supporting the selection process? To what extent does the Commission set up and update regularly the ECOC website? To what extent are documents prepared by the Commission to inform the bidding cities about the selection process and explain and illustrate the objectives and criteria helpful? To what extent are documents and actions implemented by the Commission to guide the bidding cities in the preparation of a bid helpful? To what extent are the documents and actions prepared by the Commission to guide the Ministries in the management of the competition helpful? To what extent does the Commission foster the exchange of good practices? Which initiatives has it taken to that purpose? How could the Commission go further to support the preparations of the Capitals?
<b>Effectiveness</b>	
<b>EQ18.</b>	To what extent has the role of the selection panel been reinforced during the selection phase? To what extent is the mixed composition of the panel an added value for the assessment of the bids? Are the appointed panel members relevant to the criteria requested in Article 6.3 of Decision 1622?
<b>EQ19.</b>	To what extent is the monitoring process adapted to the preparation of an event like the ECOC event (in particular concerning the timing)? Does it help the cities in achieving a successful event? Does it foster the European dimension of the ECOC event?
<b>EQ20.</b>	To what extent do ECOC benefit from the European monitoring support during their preparation phase?
<b>EQ21.</b>	What are the main problems faced by the bidding cities during their preparation phase? What are the specific problems that the ECOCs have to manage regarding: governance, budget, relationships with local and national authorities? How politics interfere with artistic choices and funding guarantees? Has this disrupted the preparation of the cities?
<b>EQ22.</b>	What are the main problems faced by appointed ECOC during the preparation of the event? What are the specific problems that the ECOCs have to manage regarding: governance, budget, relationships with local and national authorities? How politics interfere with artistic choices and funding guarantees? Has this disrupted the preparation of the cities?
<b>Sustainability</b>	
<b>EQ23.</b>	How could the selection procedure be improved?
<b>EQ24.</b>	How could the monitoring procedure be improved?
<b>EQ25.</b>	To what extent bidding cities devise and prepare the ECOC event as part of their long term development?
<b>EQ26.</b>	To what extent ECOC cities pay attention to the legacy of the ECOC event during its preparation?
<b>EQ27.</b>	To what extent is the selection procedure sustainable over time, in particular in smaller MS?

### 2.1.3. *Other tasks under the assignment*

#### 2.1.3.1. Monitoring arrangements

On the basis of the experience gained from the analysis of selection and monitoring procedures, the Contractor should propose ways of improving procedures under the current legal basis and beyond. Consideration should be given to the information needs of the Commission to support the execution of their main tasks. The existing and foreseen monitoring arrangements and the needs of future evaluations should be built on. The fact that each European Capital of Culture bears the title for only one year should be also reflected by the proposal.

The proposed approach must be realistic, e.g. it could basically not require additional human resources in the Commission, and it should bear in mind the short duration of the action. It is expected that a trade-off will have to be made between perfection and feasibility. If the proposed approach would have to leave any open issues, concrete advice must be provided to the Commission on how to deal with these issues.

#### 2.1.3.2. Evaluation follow-up

The Contractor should:

Provide a one-page statement about the validity of the evaluation results, i.e. to what extent it has been possible to provide reliable statements on all essential aspects of the Community Action examined. Issues to be referred to may include scoping of the evaluation exercise, availability of data, unexpected problems encountered in the evaluation process, proportionality between budget and objectives of the assignment, etc.

Make a proposal for the dissemination of the evaluation results, on the basis of the draft Dissemination Plan annexed to these Terms of Reference.

### 3. REPORTING AND DELIVERABLES

#### 3.1.1. *General reporting requirements*

Each report (except the final version of the Final Report) should have an **introductory page** providing an overview and orientation of the report. It should describe what parts of the document, on the one hand, have been carried over from previous reports or been recycled from other documents, and on the other hand, represent progress of the evaluation work with reference to the work plan.

All reports must be drafted in English and submitted according to the timetable below to the responsible body. The Executive Summary should be translated into French and German. Electronic files must be provided in Microsoft ® Word for Windows format. Additionally, besides Word, the Final Report must be delivered in Adobe ® Acrobat pdf format and in 5 hard copies.

#### 3.1.2. *Inception Report*

The report should detail how the methodology proposed by the Contractor is going to be implemented in the light of an examination of the quality and appropriateness of existing data.

#### 3.1.3. *Draft Final Report*

This document should deliver the results of all tasks covered by these Terms of Reference, and must be clear enough for any potential reader to understand.

The structure of the report should follow a broad classification into two main parts:

- **Main report:** The main report must be limited to a maximum of **70** pages and present, in full, the results of the analyses, conclusions and recommendations arising from the evaluation. It must also contain a description of the subject evaluated, the

context of the evaluation, and the methodology used (with an analysis of the latter's strengths and weaknesses).

- **Annexes:** These must collate the technical details of the evaluation, and must include the Terms of Reference, questionnaire templates, interview guides, full transcript of case studies, any additional tables or graphics, and references and sources.

#### 3.1.4. *Final Report*

The Final Report follows the same format as the draft Final Report. On top of that, it will be accompanied by an executive summary. .

- **Executive summary:** It sets out, in no more than 7 pages, a summary of the evaluation's main conclusions, the main evidence supporting them and the recommendations arising from them. These last two sections – conclusions and recommendations – must be written in a maximum of 4000 characters, including spaces. Furthermore, the Executive Summary should be translated into French and German by a professional translation agency, once it has been approved by the responsible body.

The document must take into account the results of the quality assessment of the draft Final Report and discussions with the Steering Group about the draft Final Report insofar as these do not interfere with the autonomy of the Contractor in respect of the conclusions they have reached and the recommendations made.

The contracting authority will publish the Final Report, the Executive Summary and the annexes on the World-Wide Web.

## 4. ORGANISATION, TIMETABLE AND BUDGET

### 4.1. Organisation

The contract will be managed by Unit C.2 of the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture.

A Steering Group will be involved in the management of the evaluation. The responsibilities of the Steering Group will include:

- preparing the Terms of Reference;
- ensuring that the monitoring and supervision of the Contractor does not compromise the Contractor's independence;
- providing the external evaluator with access to information;
- supporting and monitoring the work of the external evaluator;
- assessing the quality of the reports submitted by the external evaluator.

## 4.2. Meetings

It is expected that the contractor participate in the following meetings in Brussels with the evaluation Steering Group:

- A kick off meeting
- Assignment 2: 2 meetings (inception and final report stage)

For these meetings, minutes should be drafted by the contractor within 5 working days after the SG meeting, to be agreed among the participants and approved and signed by the chair person, who will be appointed from Unit EAC/R2.

## 4.3. Timetable

The following outline work plan and indicative timetable are envisaged:

<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Task</b>
<i>15 July 2010</i>	A <b>kick-off meeting</b> may be held after the signature of the contract.
<i>1 September 2010</i>	Contractor submits the <b>inception report</b> to Steering Group. At least one <b>Steering Group meeting</b> will be held in Brussels within <b>two weeks</b> after the submission.
<i>1 December 2010</i>	Desk and field research completed. Analysis and drafting completed. Contractor submits the <b>draft final report</b> , to Steering Group. At least one <b>Steering Group meeting</b> will be held in Brussels within <b>two weeks</b> after the submission.
<i>15 December 2010</i>	Taking account of the Commission's comments contractor submits the <b>final report and executive summary</b> to Steering Group.

## 5. REFERENCES

### 5.1. Action documents

The following information will be made available to the contractor in the inception phase:

- The bids of the ECOC 2010-2015 candidate cities
- The monitoring forms of ECOC 2010-2013.

### 5.2. Background and reference documents

Knowledge of the following documents is required for the tender. Unless differently specified, they are available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm) :

- 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;
- Decision 649/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 April 2005 amending Decision 1419/1999/EC establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019;
- Decision 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;
- Decision 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 the Culture Programme (2007-2013)
- Conclusions of the Ministers of Culture meeting within the Council of 18 May 1992 concerning the choice of European Cities of Culture after 1996 and the 'Cultural Month'
- Resolution of the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs regarding the annual organization of the 'European City of Culture';
- Study about the European Cities and Capitals of Culture, and the European cultural months (1995-2004) achieved by palmer/RAE Associates;
- Ex-post Evaluation of 2007 & 2008 European Capitals of Culture, Ecotec, 2009 [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/evalreports/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/index_en.htm)
- IMPACTS 08 - European Capital of Culture Research Programme <http://www.liverpool.ac.uk/impacts08/>
- The panel's report concerning the 2010 titles [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc672\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc672_en.pdf)

## **6. REQUIREMENTS**

### **6.1. Methodology**

The contractor will have a free choice as to the methods used to gather and analyse information and for making the assessment, but must take account of the following:

- The evaluation must be based on recognised evaluation techniques.
- The choice and a detailed description of the methodology must form part of the offer submitted. There should be a clear link between the evaluation questions addressed and the corresponding methodology proposed. The evaluation questions can be further elaborated, e.g. by providing operational sub-questions under each question.
- Considerable emphasis should be placed on the analysis phase of the evaluation. In addressing the evaluation questions, quantitative indicators should be sought and used as far as possible. The contractor must support findings and recommendations by explaining the degree to which these are based on opinion, analysis and objectively verifiable evidence. Where opinion is the main source, the degree of consensus and the steps taken to test the opinion should be given.

In addition to the above-mentioned general requirements the assignment must take account of the following:

- It is expected that most of the findings are gathered through desk research and interviews of key stakeholders. It is therefore strongly recommended to plan:
  - a. A focus group with the current selection and monitoring panel<sup>10</sup>
  - b. At least 5 interviews with key ECOC experts who had been former members of the Panel
  - c. 5 interviews (or a focus group) with the Commission ECOC team
  - d. At least 8 interviews with contact persons in the 8 national ministries in charge of the ECOC selection 2013-2016
  - e. At least 13 interviews with contact persons within the ECOC 2010-2015
  - f. At least 6 interviews with unsuccessful bidders to ECOC 2013-2015 (one per each selection round)
  - g. A survey of ECOC 2016 bidding cities in Spain and Poland

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<sup>10</sup> This could take to place back to back with an already scheduled meeting of the panel, in September 2010

## **6.2. Resources**

The Contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular, sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting resources, as well as junior experts, must be available to enable senior experts to concentrate on their core evaluation tasks.

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Annex:     Dissemination Plan ex-post evaluation ECOC 2010  
           Dissemination Plan interim evaluation ECOC 2010-2016

## **Annex Five: Bibliography**

## Bibliography

### Policy documents

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.

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.

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.

DECISION No 1855/2006/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 12 December 2006 establishing the Culture Programme (2007 to 2013).

### Selection reports

Essen for the Ruhr 2010: Selection Panel's Report; First Monitoring and Advisory Report; Second Monitoring and Advisory Report.

Istanbul 2010: Application, Selection Panel's Report; First Monitoring and Advisory Report; Second Monitoring and Advisory Report.

Pécs 2010: Application, Selection Panel's Report; First Monitoring and Advisory Report; Second Monitoring and Advisory Report.

Turku 2011: Selection Panel's Report; First Monitoring and Advisory Report; Second Monitoring and Advisory Report.

Tallinn 2011: Selection Panel's Report; First Monitoring and Advisory Report; Second Monitoring and Advisory Report.

Guimarães 2012: Selection Panel's Report; First Monitoring and Advisory Report.

Maribor 2012: Selection Panel's Report; First Monitoring and Advisory Report.

Marseille 2013: Pre-selection Report, Final Selection Report

Košice 2013: Pre-selection Report; Final Selection Report

Umeå 2014: Pre-selection Report; Final Selection Report

Riga 2014: Pre-selection Report; Final Selection Report

Mons 2015: Pre-selection Report; Final Selection Report

Ostrava 2015: Pre-selection Report

Plzeň 2015: Pre-selection Report

Poland 2016: Pre-selection Report

## Guidance material

Proposed application for the title of European Capital of Culture (to be completed by cities applying for the title)

Guide for cities applying for the title of European Capital of Culture

Guide for implementation of the European Capital of Culture Competition (for the attention of Member States) (six pages) including Annex 4: Road Map for management of the ECoC competition by Member States

Annex 1: Framework call for applications to be published by the Member States for the "European Capital of Culture" and

Annex 2: Rules of Procedure, competition for the [year] European Capital of Culture title in [Member State]  
Rules for the European Capital of Culture Panel

Annex 3: Information for the attention of the European Capital of Culture Panel on the organisation of the competition for the [year] European Capital of Culture title in [Member State]

Annex 5: Template agendas and check list regarding the European Capital of Culture selection meetings and visits.

Annex F: Official graphic form to be used in any communication material

Annex G: Frequently asked questions (on application procedures, governance, the relationship between the city and region involved, the contribution of the Commission and the logo).