European Capital of Culture – 2017 Ex-post Evaluation

Executive Summary

November 2018
European Capital of Culture – 2017 Ex-post Evaluation
Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.

Freephone number (*):

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).


doi: 10.2766/629848

© European Union, 2018
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

*Printed in Belgium*
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Aarhus</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Pafos</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Conclusions</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Relevance</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Effectiveness</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Efficiency</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Coherence</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 EU added value</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Recommendations</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1 Introduction

The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) is a European Union Action to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share and foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities. It consists of a title awarded each year to two cities in different EU Member States, which are selected through a two-stage open application process in each country. The designated cities implement a year-long cultural programme of European dimension and involving local citizens. The two 2017 ECoC cities were Aarhus in Denmark and Pafos in Cyprus. In 2014, a new legal basis for the ECoC was introduced through Decision 445/2014/EU, which will apply to title-holders from 2020 onwards.

This final report presents the findings of the ex-post evaluation of the ECoC Action for 2017, which was undertaken by Ecorys and the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES). The evaluation focussed on the two 2017 hosts of Aarhus and Pafos. It assessed the ways in which each city implemented their ECoC and the effects that have resulted. The report explains how Aarhus and Pafos developed their application, designed their cultural programmes and organised themselves to deliver their activities. The report also focusses on the benefits of hosting the title, as well as on legacy and lessons learned.

This evaluation is designed to satisfy the requirement of Decision 1622/2006/EC for an “external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capital of Culture event of the previous year”. The evaluation has established an understanding of the lifecycle of the ECoC, from its early inception through to its sustainability and legacy. In particular, the evaluation highlights lessons and offers recommendations based on the experiences of the host cities. Primary data sources include interviews conducted during two visits to each city and also by telephone. Interviews have gathered a variety of perspectives on each ECoC, including those of the management teams, decision-makers at local and national level, key cultural operators, partners involved in the delivery of ECoC and a sample of organisations participating in projects. Secondary data sources include the ECoC applications, studies and reports produced or commissioned by the ECoC, events programmes, promotional materials and websites, statistical data on culture and tourism and quantitative data supplied by the ECoC on finance, activities, audiences, outputs and results. An EU-wide public consultation undertaken through the European Commission’s website attracted a total of 76 responses.

1.1 Aarhus

Aarhus was founded in the 8th century as a fortified Viking settlement in a natural harbour at the mouth of a fjord. For centuries, the primary driver for growth was seaborne trade in agricultural products and by the 1200s it was significant enough for a large cathedral to be built. Today Aarhus is Denmark’s second-largest city with a population of 335,684 inhabitants and is the cultural and economic centre of the Central Denmark Region (Region Midtjylland). In the past ten years, Aarhus has added more than 15,000 new residents to its population and created 20,000 new jobs, mostly within the knowledge, service and innovation industries with many important companies
having their headquarters there. It is also an important centre of research and home to Scandinavia’s largest university, Aarhus University Hospital and the INCUBA Science Park.

Aarhus is notable for its post-war musical history of jazz and rock music and is home to several annual music festivals. The city hosts the ARoS Aarhus Museum of Art, the Moesgaard Museum dedicated to archaeology and ethnography, the Aarhus Theatre and the Concert Hall amongst other venues. During one week in summer, the city centre and parts of the harbour are turned into one large festival (Aarhus Festuge) that attracts visitors from all over the country.

Aarhus’s ECoC application emerged as part of a bigger plan for the development of the city, which focussed on construction and infrastructure developments around the seafront, including “Dokk1”: a new public library and culture centre featuring artistic installations, which was eventually to house the offices of the Aarhus 2017 Foundation. The application also aimed to promote more cohesive governance within the Central Denmark Region (CDR), one of five regions created in 2007 and encompassing 19 municipalities.

Since Denmark was entitled to propose a European Capital of Culture for 2017, two cities, Aarhus and Sønderborg, submitted applications and both were short-listed for the final selection phase. At the final selection meeting in August 2012, the panel reached the decision to select Aarhus for the title on the basis that Aarhus provided the best potential and capacity for a successful ECoC.

Aarhus 2017 presented itself under the narrative “Let’s Rethink”. The overall aim was to change mind-sets through cultural experiences and to highlight three core values of sustainability, diversity and democracy. The cultural programme was structured around four seasons, each of which opened with an outdoor, large-scale MEGA event, such as the Opening event on 21 January 2017. Each season also featured three Full Moon events, on a smaller scale than the MEGA events. Aside from these events, the programme presented more than 350 artistic and cultural projects, conferences and festivals.

Regarding the European dimension, the programme featured performances and residencies by a diversity of international artists, exhibitions of international works, European co-productions and events that addressed contemporary issues, such as the European migration crisis and Brexit. Numerous European networks and connections were strengthened and developed during 2017 and there were collaborations with Pafos 2017.

Regarding the City and Citizens dimension, the programme used spaces across the region in new ways, including a “light procession” through the city to the waterfront area. Opportunities were created for citizens to participate in culture, including the
5,000 participants in the light procession or the “Lightlens” project which involved 200 local people of different ages and diverse backgrounds in a site-specific participatory dance work. There was a specific “Children’s Opening” created for and by children and young adults, plus another 39 events, shows and projects for young audiences. There was an important regional dimension with 200 events taking place throughout the CDR, including opening events in several different municipalities and Full Moon Events, such as the “Silkeborg Fireworks Regatta”.

The ECoC was implemented by an autonomous foundation: Fonden Aarhus 2017 (“Aarhus 2017 Foundation”), overseen by a Board comprised of representatives of municipalities and the CDR, as well as civil society experts with strong links to cultural institutions and major businesses in the area. Under the management of the Chief Executive and the Executive Management Team, the Foundation was composed of a Secretariat that dealt with planning and coordination of the programme, budget, communication and partnerships.

The eventual budget of Aarhus 2017 was €61.9m, which was 93% of the total proposed in the application. The shortfall arose due to national government funding being €9m less than hoped at the application stage, although some of the shortfall was made good by increased funding from Aarhus Municipality, the CDR and foundations and sponsors. By the end of 2016, the group of sponsors consisted of 28 foundations and 116 companies. EU funding was received in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize, as well as funding for specific projects from the Culture and MEDIA sub-programmes within Creative Europe.

The cultural programme during the title-year was of high-quality and more extensive compared to the region’s cultural offering in previous years. A total of 442 core projects were implemented, which featured 13,708 “event days”. The overall programme received a “citizens’ success rating” of 66%, whilst the MEGA and Full Moon Events received positive audience scores of 92%. Several new works were created and then performed or exhibited for the first time. A total of 1,200 international artists contributed to the programme. Some 79% of projects featured an international partner and/or a cultural exchange within Europe.

Aarhus 2017 increased the audiences for culture in the CDR in 2017 compared to previous years. The total audience for all events was 3.3m, whilst the average audience for the four MEGA events was 196,722 and the average audience for the 12 Full Moon Events was 46,847. There was an increase in attendance at all but one of the main museums in 2017 compared to 2016, although there may have been some displacement, with attendances down at some museums in the CDR that were not extensively involved in the ECoC. Some 40% of citizens in the CDR attended at least one event out of a population of 1.3m. The ECoC also increased the number of citizens involved as creators, performers and audiences, including children and young people. The “Rethinkers” volunteer programme involved 4,535 volunteers, all of whom were
involved in new roles and most of whom were volunteering in the cultural sector for the first time.

There is evidence of a positive impact on the capacity of the cultural and creative sector in the CDR. Some 48% of projects aimed directly at developing skills and competences and there were 100 small-scale cultural projects implemented by project managers aged under 35 years and with limited experience. The ECoC has increased sponsorship of culture in the CDR by businesses and foundations and there has been an increase in business involvement through the collaboration with the Aarhus Business Network. Data from Statistics Denmark shows that creative businesses in the CDR are now more optimistic regarding an improved business situation, increasing turnover and increasing employment.

Aarhus 2017 helped raise the national and international profile of Aarhus and the CDR. There were 27,723 media mentions in 2017, of which 2,528 were international. The Aarhus 2017 website received 1.2m visits from more than 769,000 visitors. The number of visits to the Visit Aarhus website increased by nearly 60% in 2017 and the number of visits to the Aarhus page on Wikipedia on the day after the opening event was the highest for six months. The number of overnight stays in the CDR increased by 4% in 2017, which was more than twice the national rate of increase that year. The number of overnight stays by foreign visitors to the CDR also increased by 4%, which was also twice the national rate of increase in 2017. Within Aarhus, the number of hotel bednights increased by 90,000 in 2017, an increase of 11% compared to 2016, whilst the number of hotel bednights accounted for by foreign visitors increased by more than 21,000, an increase of more than 8%. The number of visits to Aarhus and the CDR then fell in the first half of 2018 compared to the equivalent period of 2017, which suggests that the ECoC made a significant contribution to tourism during the title-year, although the long-term impact is uncertain.

The Foundation has made grants to several projects to enable them to continue or repeat in 2018 and there are plans to continue projects or events that were new or enhanced in 2017. Most notably, the ARoS Museum is working on the second edition of the ARoS Triennial, which will take place in 2020. VisitAarhus has taken over the management of the volunteering programme with funding confirmed from Aarhus Municipality and the Salling Foundation. The Aarhus 2017 Foundation will cease operation in 2018, as proposed in the original ECoC application and there will be no specific legacy body. Legacy planning and activities will be carried on by the municipalities, CDR and other stakeholders. There will be some retention of experience and expertise, as the 30% of Foundation staff that were seconded from the municipalities or the CDR will return to their employers. The structures put in place for regional governance of culture in CDR will continue. In the autumn of 2017, all 19 municipalities restated their political support and committed ongoing, albeit modest, funding in support of the new partnership entitled “European Region of Culture”. 
1.2 Pafos

Pafos in Western Cyprus dates back to the Neolithic Period. The city and the country as a whole are at the crossroads of the Eastern Mediterranean making it a multicultural melting pot. Its geographical proximity to Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, Egypt, Palestine and Israel, as well as continental Europe characterises its culture. As a consequence, Pafos aspired to become the first European Capital of Culture that linked East and West.

With a population of only 35,000, Pafos is one of the smallest ECoC hosts with its size being a significant factor affecting how the ECoC was funded, delivered and benefitted the city. Another defining feature of Pafos is the number of tourists, with 3.9 million tourists visiting in and around the city in 2017. Linked to the city’s size, the cultural sector in Pafos is relatively small and is generally less developed than in most ECoC host cities. The city (particularly prior to the ECoC year) also lacks key cultural buildings of any major size - such as a major theatre, ballet or concert hall. Instead, the cultural sector in Pafos often relates to the city’s past. The city’s architecture is often seen as its main cultural ‘offer’ including the Tomb of the Kings, Mosaics, Castle and numerous Churches.

Applications for the host city from within Cyprus came from three cities: Pafos, Limassol and Nicosia. For many, Pafos was an unlikely ECoC candidate in that it lacked the capacity and infrastructure to deliver a large ECoC. Limassol was eliminated in the first round of the process mainly because the original application was comparatively weaker (in terms of content and ambition). At the final selection meeting in September 2012, the panel decided to recommend the selection of Pafos for the ECoC 2017 title in Cyprus due to the coherence of the whole project as well as the quality of the artistic and cultural programme proposed.

The central idea of the Pafos2017 Programme was based on the ancient tradition, when culture developed in open spaces. The ‘Open Culture Factory’ (a term featuring heavily in the bid) that formed an important part of the cultural programme promised to travel to all areas and communities in Pafos, to display the activities of the Pafos2017 programme and to create a common space of communication and cooperation for everyone. This central idea was not only about open spaces but also about openness in terms of tolerance, acceptance, encouragement and integration of different cultures, ideas and beliefs.

The aim of the ECoC in Pafos was expressed in its motto “Linking Continents – Bridging Cultures”. The motto expressed the need for interconnection and bridging the separated inhabitants of Pafos including permanent residents, visitors and immigrants. It also highlighted how important it was to interconnect the scattered areas of the city and to turn the entire province of Pafos into a common space shared by all its citizens, both
literally and metaphorically. Finally, it stressed the need to bridge the differences between the Greek Cypriot and the Turkish Cypriot community through various projects.

Evidence from the local evaluation shows that the ECoC has helped audiences learn more about Cypriot culture and also become more familiar with other cultures and traditions. 43.7% of respondents who attended ECoC activities said that they felt a common European identity compared to 24.1% of those who did not attend ECoC activities. Further evidence from the same survey also shows that ECoC activities stimulated a greater interest in interacting with people from other European cultures as a consequence of attending ECoC cultural events. Those respondents attending cultural ECoC events were twice as likely to want to interact with other European cultures compared to the control group. The open public consultation also gives further and very positive insight on people’s opinions around the European Dimension. Some 52% of respondents felt that the ECoC had a “high” or “very high” impact on promoting European cultures. In addition, 59% of respondents felt that the ECoC had helped promote local cultures from the host city. Finally, the open public consultation also found that 52% of respondents felt the ECoC in Pafos had helped people to become more aware of other European cultures outside of their country.

The lack of cultural infrastructure in Pafos in terms of theatres, museums and galleries forced the city to look for alternative ways to organise and host the ECoC. The favourable climate of Cyprus allowed the city to organise most activities and events outside, hence placing the city of Pafos and its cultural heritage at the heart of the programme as an ‘Open Air Factory’ of and for culture. According to the Cultural Programme of Events documentation, around 70% of projects were delivered outside.

In terms of governance and funding, the programme was implemented with a very small budget and administrative secretariat compared to other ECoC. A weakness of the ECoC was the severe drop in funding from €23m at the application stage to just €8.5m in practice. Coupled with the effects of the financial crisis and difficulties in hiring the necessary people for a stable governance structure, this led to capacity issues at various levels. Pafos was therefore forced to be innovative when it came to the delivery of its ECoC and overcame the small budget by:

- Savings on the labour budget through the promotion of individual volunteering: important savings were made through the employment of the Board of Directors working on a volunteer basis. In addition, the Pafos2017 Secretariat was very successful in motivating the citizens of Pafos to take up a high degree of responsibility, as evidenced through the volunteer programme, which enabled it to make significant savings on the labour budget.

- Bid-book revisions: the projects included in the original bid-book were thoroughly revised in terms of their budget and scope. On average, up to 80% of the projects’
budget was cut if the estimated budgets from the bid-book are compared with the actual ones indicated in the delivery plan.

Prior to the ECoC, Pafos was not particularly well-known (even in Cyprus) for its cultural scene, as the amount of cultural activity in the city was relatively low before the ECoC year. The survey done as part of the local evaluation showed that 58.9% of ECoC participants felt that cultural activity in the city had increased significantly as a consequence of the ECoC status. Further evidence from the open public consultation shows that 73% of respondents felt that the ECoC year had seen an increase in the number and distribution of the cultural projects. 84% of respondents to the same survey state that the ECoC had encouraged them to attend more and a wider type of culture in 2017 than before. Finally, evidence from a mapping exercise done locally showed that cultural activity in the city was ten times greater in 2017 than in 2016.

Actual audience participation numbers do not exist for the ECoC and were not collected by the delivery team. Results from the public consultation show that the ECoC had a positive effect on encouraging people to attend more cultural events in 2017. 80% of respondents said that the ECoC encouraged them to attend more culture. In addition, 84% of respondents said that the ECoC encouraged them to attend a wider type or genre of cultural events in 2017 and 76% said that the ECoC encouraged them to visit the city more often. Finally, 59% of respondents to the open survey said that the ECoC in Pafos had increased the number of people accessing culture (by a “very high” or “high” impact).

Pafos2017 was not so much about increasing the international profile of the city (the city had already many visitors coming from abroad ahead of the ECoC year) as it was about changing it. The local evaluation shows that almost 40% of the audiences were not from Cyprus. This is significantly higher than other ECoC, where foreign visits often make up less than 10% (Aarhus, Pilsen and Riga all reported that around 5-7% of their audiences were from abroad). The high number of foreign audiences can mainly be put down to the large number of UK expatriates already living in Pafos, which amounts to approximately 15,000 people, and large numbers of visitors from Greece. Prior to the ECoC, Pafos also already benefited from a large number of international visitors, coming to the city for beach tourism. As such, the goal of increasing the international profile of Pafos and attracting more overseas visitors was not a priority.

The main finding of the evaluation in terms of legacy and sustainability is that there has been a lack of planning in this respect. This is evidenced, firstly, by the fact that no formal legacy planning in the form of a formal document or strategy setting out plans for the continuation of activities or structures was developed. Secondly no concrete formal structure has been put in place yet to ensure the sustainability of the cultural activities beyond 2017 (e.g. to operate the cultural venues that have been developed or refurbished as a result of the ECoC). Further evidence demonstrating a lack of legacy planning is that only two of the seventeen Pafos2017 staff members remained in office.
in 2018 to largely close down the programme, or to finalise the monitoring activities. Most Pafos2017 structures have now either been closed or not been updated since early 2018 (e.g. the website, the volunteer programme and various communication publications).

1.3 Conclusions

Conclusions are offered in the form of responses to the twelve evaluation questions stated in the terms of reference under the themes of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and EU added value.

1.4 Relevance

EQ1: To what extent were the objectives of each title city relevant to the objectives of the Action?

The objectives of both Aarhus 2017 and Pafos 2017 were relevant to the general and specific objectives of the ECoC Action, as set out in Decision 445/2014/EU. The objectives of both cities also encompassed the “European dimension” and the “City and Citizens dimension” in line with Decision 1622/2006/EC.

EQ2: To what extent were the title cities’ cultural programmes and associated activities relevant to their own objectives?

The cultural programmes of both Aarhus 2017 and Pafos 2017 were relevant to their own objectives and broadly consistent with the programmes proposed in their applications.

1.5 Effectiveness

EQ3: To what extent were the EU-level objectives achieved?

The 2017 ECoC made a significant contribution to the achievement of the four specific objectives of Decision 445/2014/EU and thus to the two general objectives of the Decision. Both ECoC enhanced the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in their respective cities during 2017. Both presented cultural programmes that were more extensive, diverse, innovative and international compared to the cultural baseline offering in previous years. Whilst some projects featured the development or repeat of activities and events in previous years, the majority of each cultural programme was genuinely additional. More European and other international artists were involved compared to previous years, some new works were created and performed or exhibited and spaces in both cities were used in new ways to host cultural events. Both ECoC widened access to and participation in culture during 2017, although the evidence is stronger in Aarhus than in Pafos. Both ECoC have helped strengthen the cultural capacity of the local cultural and creative sectors and their links with other...
sectors. The ECoC has raised the international profile of Aarhus through culture, whilst in both cities the ECoC has helped make audiences for culture more international.

**EQ4: To what extent were the title cities’ own objectives achieved?**

Overall, Aarhus 2017 generally achieved the objectives set for it. The cultural programme was of the scale and quality proposed in the original application and had a genuine European dimension. The city space was used in new ways, new works were created and more citizens (including children) were involved as creators, performers and audiences. The performance of Pafos against its objectives was limited by the large reduction in its budget compared to the figure proposed in the application. Reflecting this, the size of the cultural programme was far less than originally proposed. Pafos tried to promote togetherness in order to bring north and south Cypriots together but the cultural programme was perhaps too small to effectively deal with this complex issue. It did “start a conversation” about coexisting at the individual level but did not make a significant impression at a higher level.

**EQ5: To what extent has the Action resulted in unintended effects?**

Like most ECoC, the two 2017 titles made bold promises and set high expectations for themselves. Both promised a diversity of activities and aspired to achieve a diversity of cultural, economic and social impacts. In that context, it is difficult to categorise any positive effects as “unintended”, since most would relate to one or other of the intended effects set out in their applications. In the case of Pafos, the very severe reduction in the budget compared to that proposed in the application has served to limit the fulfilment of expectations.

**EQ6: To what extent can the positive effects of the ECoC Action be considered to be sustainable?**

Aarhus has generated potential for long-term impact through the skills and experience gained by cultural operators, the involvement of citizens, increased audiences and greater international profile. Pafos will see some long-term benefits but little has been done to ensure these benefits are maximised. Whilst some of those effects might endure – and funding has been provided in both cities for legacy/continuation projects – this will rely on continued partnership working by the various stakeholders, since neither city is planning a specific legacy body.

### 1.6 Efficiency

**EQ7: How did the management arrangements of each title city contribute to the achievement of outputs, results and impacts?**

In Aarhus, the arrangements for governance and implementation proved efficient, drawing on the strong political support both in the city and across the region and despite difficulties arising from the departure of senior staff during the development phase. The working arrangement of the Pafos2017 team was efficient and seen as a strong point of
the programme. All staff members tended to have multiple responsibilities and roles and the team was successful in generating a lot of interest from volunteers who played a critical role in the programme’s delivery.

**EQ8: To what extent were the selection, monitoring and EU co-financing procedures, introduced by Decision 2006/1622/2006/EC efficient?**

The selection and monitoring procedures, as well as the informal meetings with the panel, have proved valuable in giving impartial advice and support to the ECoC from highly experienced experts. Moreover, the formal meetings provide an opportunity for the panel to hold the cities to account, in terms of respecting the promises made in their respective applications. At the same time, the procedures have not proved sufficiently robust to prevent a severe reduction in the funding committed to the Pafos ECoC. For that reason, the changes introduced by the 2014 Decision (to be applied to the 2020-33 titles) are to be welcomed.

**EQ9: To what extent did the title cities manage to raise the necessary resources? EQ10: To what extent were the financial and human resources secured by each title city appropriate and proportionate?**

Aarhus proved broadly successful in raising the resources promised in the application, which proved sufficient to implement a programme of the intended scope and scale. In contrast, Pafos proved far from successful in raising the resources promised in the application. With hindsight, it was over-ambitious for a city of 35,000 people to propose a total budget of €62.5m. Notwithstanding this, Pafos made best use of a very small budget and implemented a cultural programme that was well received by local residents, international visitors and expatriates.

### 1.7 Coherence

**EQ11: To what extent was the ECOC Action coherent and complementary to other EU initiatives?**

The ECoC Action is coherent and complementary to the Creative Europe Programme in that it promotes the objectives of Creative Europe and is distinct from the other activities supported by the programme. Aarhus and Pafos also made use of funding from Creative Europe to support projects in their cultural programmes. The ECoC Action is also coherent with and complementary to the European Structural and Investment Funds, depending on the context of each city holding the title. For example, Pafos used ERDF to co-finance essential investments in the refurbishment of the city centre and renovation of key venues, such as a theatre and a cinema.

### 1.8 EU added value

**EQ12: What is the EU added value and the visibility of the ECOC Action?**

Given the modest EU funding associated with the Melina Mercouri Prize, both the 2017 title-holders could have attempted to implement cultural programmes of broadly similar
scale, even in the absence of the ECoC title. However, it is highly uncertain that local, regional and national stakeholders - including corporate sponsors and independent foundations - would have been stimulated to invest the same level of resources and effort without the prestige and profile awarded by the title. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the ECoC, as an EU initiative, provides the stimulus for stakeholders to commit resources and effort to a shared vision and collaborative programme at a much greater scale than would otherwise happen. Regarding the visibility of the EU, both title-holders gave full prominence to the title of “European Capital of Culture” in their communication and promotional materials. Aarhus also made extensive use of the EU logo and gave prominence to the fact that the ECoC is an EU Action.

1.9 Recommendations

1. The Commission should consider a review of the long-term impacts of the ECoC. Whilst this evaluation has captured the “story” of the 2017 ECoC and identified evidence of short-term effects, the scope and length of the evaluation does not allow consideration of the long-term impact. Indeed, it has only proved possible to consider the potential for legacy impact. There is therefore merit in reviewing the long-term impact of ECoC over the last 5 or 10 years. Such a review would generate evidence on the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the ECoC Action and provide lessons for future ECoC applicants and title-holders.

2. The Commission should review the different approaches to evaluation taken by previous and designated ECoC. The 2014 Decision requires the Commission to establish evaluation common guidelines and indicators for the cities holding the title. The EU-level evaluations of the 2007-17 ECoC have described the approaches by the ECoC to their own local evaluations and have drawn on any early evidence from those evaluations. However, the EU-level evaluations have usually been concluded before the local evaluations have completed their full programmes.

3. The Commission should incorporate guidance on using big data in its common guidelines on evaluation of ECoC. Both cities made limited use of big data in their research and evaluation activities. By providing advice and good practice examples, the Commission could then encourage future title-holders to use big data more extensively.

4. The Commission should discuss with the panel how best to ensure that future ECoC honour commitments made in their applications, particularly financial commitments. Given the severe reduction in the budget of Pafos, there is a need to use the new procedures for selection, monitoring and EU co-financing set out in Decision 445/2014/EU to best effect. This will be particularly important in the period up to March 2020 when a decision regarding the award of the Melina Mercouri Prize is due to be made to the first titles designated under Decision 445/2014/EU.
5. The Commission should improve the visibility of the ECoC pages on Europa. In particular, there is a need for the ECoC to be visible on the Culture page, for example, as one of the options on the “Initiatives” tab. By providing such a link, the ECoC will become more visible to casual browsers who are otherwise unaware of the ECoC.