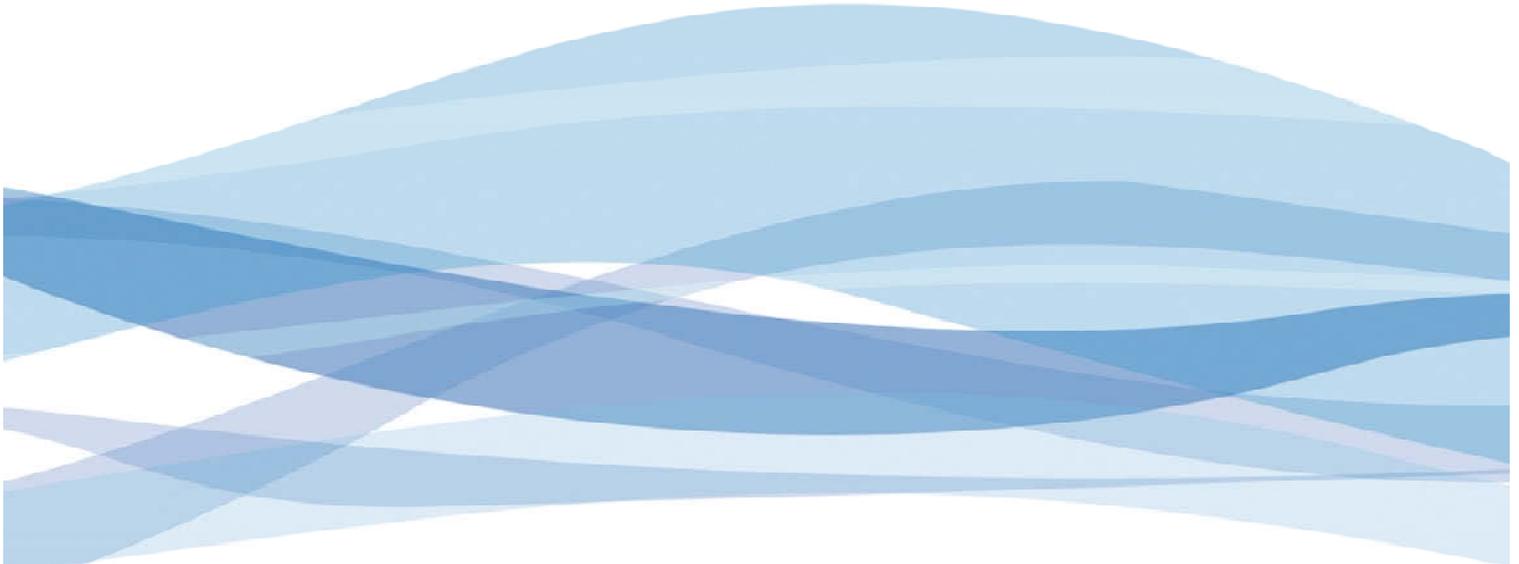
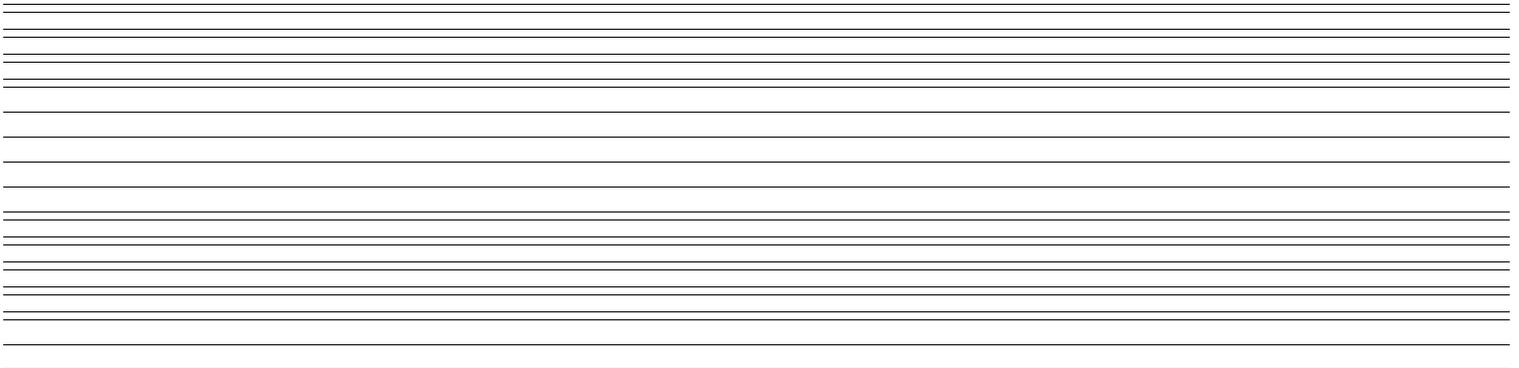


Ex-Post Evaluation of 2009 European Capitals of Culture

Final Report to DG Education and Culture of the European Commission in the context of the Framework Contract for Evaluation Related Services and Support for Impact Assessment (EAC/03/06)



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Executive Summary

Introduction

This evaluation report considers the European Capital of Culture Action in the year 2009 including the cultural programmes of the two cities designated as European Capital of Culture (ECOC) for that year: Linz (Austria) and Vilnius (Lithuania). The evaluation supports the Commission in meeting the requirement of Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council each year to “ensure the external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capital of Culture event of the previous year in accordance with the objectives and criteria of the action”.¹

Origins and political context of the ECOC Action

The special role that cities play in culture has been recognised by European policy since at least the 1985 Resolution 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. Culture was fully incorporated into the body of EU policy by Article 151 of the 1993 Maastricht Treaty² which stated that the EU “shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common heritage to the fore”.³ Article 151 formed the political context for the successor to the European City of Culture – the European Capital of Culture Action, which was introduced by Decision 1419/1999/EC.⁴ This Decision created a specific Action, whose global objective was to “highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote the greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens”. This objective was to be pursued by the designation of cities as ECOC and the implementation by each of those cities of “a cultural project of European dimension, based principally on cultural co-operation”. The 1999 Decision was amended in 2005 in order to integrate the ten Member States that acceded to the EU in 2004.⁵ In 2006, Decision 1622/2006/EC revised the objectives of the ECOC Action and set new criteria for the cultural programmes of ECOC. Whilst the 2006 Decision also introduced new procedures for application, designation, monitoring and financing, this Decision specifically stated that the requirements of the 1999 Decision would apply in the case of the ECOC up to 2009.

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

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

² Following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, Article 151 was renumbered as Article 167.

³ Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing The European Community (2007/C 306/01)

⁴ Decision No 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.

⁵ 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.

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 co-financing for the ECOC during the current programming period; second, the adoption by the Commission in 2007 of a *European agenda for culture in a globalising world*⁶ 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

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.

Programme description

As noted above, the objective of the ECOC is to "highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote the greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens" and this objective is pursued by the designation of cities as ECOC and the implementation by each of those cities of a cultural programme of European dimension. These cultural programmes must fulfil the criteria set by the 2006 Decision and which are subdivided into two categories:

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

- Foster co-operation 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 programme 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.

⁶ 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.

For the year 2009, the ECOC were designated according to the process set by the 1999 Decision and based upon an Order of Entitlement for Member States to nominate a city for the title (which was amended in 2005 to include the ten countries that had acceded to the EU in 2004). This process was used to designate the two cities that form the subject of this evaluation – Linz (Austria) and Vilnius (Lithuania). Both cities were recommended for designation by a selection panel organised by the Commission in April 2005. As well as being awarded the title, each ECOC was also eligible to receive EU funding of up to €1.5m for specific projects within their cultural programme.

Future ECOC have been formally designated for the years up to 2013 and those for 2014 are expected to be formally designated by the European Council later in 2010. The current Order of Entitlement lists Member States up to the year 2019.

Purpose and scope of the evaluation

This evaluation report considers the European Capital of Culture Action in the year 2009 including the cultural programmes of the two cities designated as European Capital of Culture (ECOC) for that year: Linz (Austria) and Vilnius (Lithuania). It is intended that the results of the evaluation will be used to draw lessons for the future development of the initiative and help to improve understanding of the impact of the initiative with a view to feeding into the policy-making process at European level in the field of culture.

Whilst the 2006 Decision forms the current legal basis for the Action, the Decision specifically stated that the 1999 Decision would apply in the case of the cities designated as ECOC for 2007, 2008 and 2009. The evaluation thus considers the ECOC Action in 2009 against the requirements of the 1999 Decision. However, the evaluation also takes account of the general and specific objectives of the 2006 Decision, as well as the criteria for the cultural programmes of the cities set out therein and which reflect themes already contained in the 1999 Decision. The evaluation considers the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the 2009 ECOC throughout their “life-cycle”, i.e. from the preparation of their application, through the designation and development phase and up to the completion of their cultural programmes at the end of the title year. Consideration is also given to their likely sustainability and legacy. The evaluation also considers the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the ECOC Action as a whole.

In drawing conclusions and offering recommendations, the evaluation builds on the evaluation of the 2007 & 2008 ECOC Action.⁷ Conclusions are offered for the Action as a whole but drawing on the experiences of the 2009 ECOC as well as those of previous years. In light of the one-off nature of the ECOC, recommendations are offered for the European Commission that relate to future implementation of the ECOC Action as a whole. A post-script offers reflections on the European dimension of ECOC drawing on the experiences of ECOC to date and particularly those of 2007, 2008 and 2009.

Evaluation framework and methodology

As required by the Terms of Reference, the approach taken by the evaluation closely followed that taken by the 2007/08 evaluation in order to ensure comparability of data. The Action was thus evaluated

⁷ Ex-post Evaluation of 2007 & 2008 European Capitals of Culture; study prepared for the European Commission; ECOTEC Research & Consulting; 2009.

against the global objective of the 1999 Decision (noted above) and the three specific objectives set out in the intervention logic of the 2007/08 evaluation (and derived from the 1999 and 2006 Decisions):

- "Developing cultural activities";
- "Promoting the European dimension of and through culture"; and
- "Supporting the social and economic development of the city through culture",

In terms of the methodology, the two ECOC were first evaluated individually, with data gathered at two levels: a small amount of data at EU-level; and more extensive data from the ECOC themselves. The key sources included the policy and academic literature at the European level; the original ECOC applications, studies and reports commissioned by the ECOC, events programmes, promotional materials and websites; quantitative data supplied by the ECOC on finance, activities, outputs and results; interviews of managing teams for each ECOC; a telephone survey of key stakeholders in each ECOC; and two visits to each city. A comparative review and meta-evaluation exercise considered the conclusions emerging from both ECOC, compared and contrasted approaches, and verified the quality of the research.

This research informed individual reports for each of the two ECOC (sections 3 and 4 of this report). Conclusions relating to the ECOC Action more generally were drawn from considering the evidence and conclusions emerging from both ECOC, whilst also taking account of the findings of the 2007/08 evaluation.

Main findings

We describe the 2009 ECOC here before presenting the findings relating to the ECOC Action as a whole.

Linz European Capital of Culture 2009

Linz is an industrial city on the Danube and home to a population of 190,000. After the steel crisis of the 1970s/1980s, the city has enjoyed economic growth and is now relatively prosperous with a low rate of unemployment. In recent decades, the city has enjoyed a steady improvement in its cultural offering through developments such as the Ars Electronica Center (1996) and the Lentos Museum of Modern Art (2003). This cultural offering has included a particular focus on modern, contemporary and digital/electronic arts and media. Cultural development in recent years has been guided by the city's Cultural Development Plan (2000), which included the aim of achieving ECOC status and also helped build a partnership and develop both consensus and a vision for 2009 across the different levels of government and cultural stakeholders in the city.

Linz was successful in achieving the ECOC designation in April 2005 at which point the arrangements for governing and managing the cultural programme began to be put in place. A first key feature of these arrangements was the strong and co-operative partnership between the three public authorities, as well as the generally cooperative and constructive approach adopted by the broader set of partners. A second key feature was the establishment of a separate company to develop and deliver the cultural programme: Linz09 Kulturhauptstadt Europas GmbH. A third key feature was the recruitment of an experienced artistic team with extensive international experience. The Artistic Director, an international cultural entrepreneur from Switzerland, was granted full artistic autonomy and discretion over the use of

funds, with the Supervisory Board of Linz 09 concerned mainly with broad cultural concepts and issues of governance and financial accountability

The three public authorities - the City of Linz, Land of Upper Austria and the Federal Ministry of Culture each made an early and explicit commitment to provide funding of €20m for the ECOC. This funding was complemented by €8.7m from other sources, of which €4m from commercial sponsorship and €1.5m from the EU's Culture Programme. Total expenditure was €68.7m over the period 2005-10, of which €42.4m was spent on the cultural programme, €13.3m on marketing and €8.4m on personnel.

Linz's ECOC application had highlighted innovative and contemporary culture as both an existing strength of the city and a means to promote a broader process of urban, social and cultural development. Following the award of the title, a re-shaped set of objectives was drawn up, informing a new 'vision' for the programme centred on the themes of "industry, culture and nature". The essence of the original objectives was retained but they were developed, extended and made more practical. Greater emphasis was placed on the quality of cultural events as well as on the international dimension, seeking to make the city more international in outlook, more open and welcoming (especially to tourists), address the city's poor external image and deal more comprehensively with the legacy of Nazism. There was also a strong emphasis on providing a "365-day offer", the idea being that people would come to Linz when it suited them and still find something of interest within the cultural programme. The programme sought to address weak points in the city's cultural offering, such as activities for young people and children, neighbourhood-level projects and those dealing with the city's contemporary history.

Linz implemented one of the largest ECOC cultural programmes to date, undertaking 200 projects involving 7,700 events and 5,000 artists and attracting audiences of nearly 3.5m people. The programme featured a number of European festivals/events, as well as performances, commissions, collaborations and residencies featuring artists from 66 nations, many of whom were operators of international significance. Activities took place across the city and on all 365 days of the title year. Highlights included a range of projects dealing with Linz's Nazi past (such as an exhibition exploring the difficult subject of the "Führermuseum")⁸, "80+1: Eine Weltreise" (a virtual journey round the world hosted), "Kulturhauptstadtteil des Monats" (a series of community arts events in areas of the city designated as 'cultural capital neighbourhood of the month') and "Akustikon" ("World of Hearing", an exhibition promoting the understanding of better acoustics).

The Linz ECOC was successful in achieving a number of longer-term benefits for the city. There is evidence of a significant economic impact as well as an improvement in the city's tourist offer, in part through the improvement of partnership working, which contributed to a marked increase in tourist visits during the title year. Key stakeholders also reported that the ECOC had a very positive effect on the opinions held by Linzers regarding their own city. The ECOC was also successful in raising the participation of local people (particularly young people) in cultural activities, both as performers and as audiences. Many of the cultural activities initiated in 2009 will continue and stakeholders report an increase in the capacity of Linz's cultural sector, in terms of greater experience, better collaboration, more positive attitudes and greater professionalism. Whilst there will be no specific legacy body to continue the

⁸ Linz was the location proposed by Hitler for his "Führermuseum" which would display much of the art plundered or purchased by the Nazis from across Europe.

work of the delivery agency (as is the case with most ECOC), Linz now has the cultural infrastructure to match its aspirations and a partnership between the key stakeholders that remains strong.

The overall objectives of the ECOC were generally met, in terms of positioning Linz as a *contemporary* cultural city (with a cultural offering that is very different to other Austrian cities such as Salzburg and Vienna), strengthening the local cultural sector, raising the city's profile, improving the tourist "offer" and thus attracting more tourists, boosting local civic pride and building the networks and alliances to sustain momentum. As such, Linz can be considered a successful ECOC.

Vilnius European Capital of Culture 2009

Vilnius is the capital city of Lithuania with a population of 550,000. The city's long history is reflected in the diversity of architecture of its Old Town, which has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1994. Vilnius has always been home to a variety of ethnic and religious groups and has strong Polish, Russian, Jewish (Litvak), German and Karaite communities. At the time of the ECOC, Vilnius already enjoyed a rich cultural offering and was home to the most significant cultural institutions in Lithuania. The rapid transformations of the 1990s and 2000s have been reflected in a growing contemporary and alternative cultural scene – featuring the many private and non-governmental cultural operators that have come into existence since the end of communism.

Following the award of the 2009 title to Vilnius in 2005, the Ministry of Culture founded the delivery agency for the ECOC in the form of a public institution "Vilnius – Europos kultūros sostinė 2009" ("Vilnius – European Capital of Culture 2009"), although this was not until September 2006 and with most activities of the agency not beginning until 2007. Two government resolutions of February 2008 then gave formal approval to the objectives of the ECOC, as well as confirming funding of 65m LTL (€18.825m)⁹ for the period 2008-2010 and arrangements for implementation and monitoring of the cultural programme. However, the ECOC was subject to a number of changes before 2009 and in the first half of the title year. First, the new government that took office after the general election at the end of 2008 faced a very large budget deficit and consequently reduced the budget for the cultural programme by about 40%. Secondly, the total number of staff employed by the delivery agency was reduced by about one-half early in 2009. Thirdly, there were two changes of director of the delivery agency – the first in 2007 and the second early in 2009. The result of these changes was that some projects started much later than planned and a significant number (previously selected following the calls for proposals) did not take place at all. It was not until the second and third months of 2009 that the situation began to be resolved, when a clear and simple governance structure was established, a new director took over at the agency and procedures were established for determining which projects would be cut from the programme.

The eventual programme implemented in 2009 stated its vision as being to make Vilnius 2009 a "European capital of the future that is open to people, cultures and innovation". This vision was to be achieved through pursuing the ECOC's mission, stated as being "to create a new European cultural experience in which culture is a part of modern life and each individual is its creator". The aim of the cultural programme was also stated as being to "promote dialogue and tolerance in Europe and other parts of the world, as well as to elevate culture as a virtue in modern society and as the driving force in city development". This would "distinguish Vilnius as one of the most modern and dynamic cities in

⁹ At €1 = 3.4528 LTL, European Central Bank rate on 6.2.2008.

Central and Eastern Europe, known in the world as a contemporary cultural centre of attraction, and one with a unique and apparent identity that is open to new ideas and investments".¹⁰

Notwithstanding the difficulties faced in the development phase and first few months of the title year, this overall vision was pursued as far as possible and some 100 projects and approximately 1500 events were implemented in Vilnius in 2009 under the broad heading of *Culture Live*. Whilst the objectives were not formally revised, the reduction in the budget of the cultural programme had an impact on the balance of activities; most of the European Art Programme (featuring projects implemented in partnership with cultural organisations and artists from other European countries) was retained, whilst much of the People Programme (featuring projects initiated by different communities, different generations and different social groups within the city and aimed at promoting integration and mutual understanding between residents and "guests" of Vilnius) was cut. To a certain extent, this reflected a pragmatic choice: binding contracts had more often been entered into in the case of projects within the European Art Programme, since such projects tended to be larger and feature international artists. In contrast, the People Programme mostly featured small, local projects where binding commitments had not yet been made. Nearly all the funding for the ECOC came from the national government, with the municipality providing most of the additional funding, some of it in kind. As well as cuts to projects within the cultural programme, the entire budget for communication and marketing in 2009 was cut.

In the opinion of stakeholders, most of the cultural activities and culture projects that did take place were of high quality and contributed to the development of Vilnius's cultural sector. Of particular significance was the European Art Programme which included projects implemented in partnership with cultural organisations and artists from other European countries, such as *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970*, a major exhibition transferred from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and re-set in the context of the National Art Gallery; *Dialogues of Colour and Sound. Works by Mikalojus Konstantinas Čiurlionis and his Contemporaries*, another exhibition in the National Art Gallery; and a performance of the London Symphony Orchestra. The European Art Programme also included the EU-funded "European School of Arts", which supported creative workshops and residencies for young artists and cooperation between schools of art. Other events which targeted the wider public like "Art in Unexpected Spaces", "Street Music Day" and "Let There be Night" were also mentioned as being of high quality.

Whilst some cultural activities initiated by the ECOC will continue beyond 2009, the potential of the ECOC and its possible benefits were not fully realised. There have been examples of new and sustainable approaches to co-operation between different cultural operators, but these are relatively few in number and culture has not moved up the political agenda. Overall, the problems with governance have been damaging to relationships between cultural operators and the machinery of government. There is also no evidence that the ECOC caused a step change in levels of public participation in culture or a shift in public understanding of it – indeed the evidence from the interviews is that the on-going political controversies may have had a negative effect in this regard. Similarly, the ECOC is likely to have delivered fewer and smaller-scale economic benefits to Vilnius than had been intended at the outset. Whilst this is a reflection of the "internal" difficulties facing the ECOC (i.e. related to finance and governance), these were compounded by a number of unfortunate external factors, notably the global recession and the collapse of the main airline serving the country in January 2009 that served to depress visitor numbers, which provided a particularly difficult backdrop for organising an ECOC.

¹⁰ Source: website of Vilnius 2009: www.vilnius2009.lt

Relevance of the ECOC Action

Overall, the ECOC Action remains consistent with and relevant to the objectives of Article 167 of the Treaty, particularly the broad objectives of "developing cultural activities" and "promoting the European dimension of and through culture", although this latter objective is implied by rather than explicitly stated in the Treaty. The European dimension is typically incorporated through the inclusion of activities whose content, delivery mechanism and/or audiences or participants are European in essence. Cities holding the ECOC title have adopted a third dimension over the years, i.e. the economic and social dimension. This reflects broader trends of cultural policy that have emphasised the possibility of putting culture at the service of non-cultural objectives. Whilst the 1999 and 2006 Decisions reflect this dimension they have, to a certain extent, "lagged behind" the situation on the ground, i.e. within the ECOC themselves.

Both the 2009 ECOC embraced the objectives of the ECOC Action and customised them in line with their own particular contexts and priorities. Indeed, both planned diverse cultural programmes and associated activities (e.g. communications, volunteering, etc.) that would support the objectives of "developing cultural activities", "promoting the European dimension of and through culture" and "supporting the social and economic dimension of the city through culture". The objectives and the activities of Linz were very relevant to all three specific objectives and particularly relevant to the objective of developing cultural activities. For practical reasons, Vilnius was unable to pursue this third objective to any great extent, though it always retained the aspiration to do so.

Efficiency of the ECOC Action

The experience of both ECOC reinforces the conclusions of the 2007/08 evaluation: it is essential but can be challenging to establish an appropriate organisational structure and build a team with the appropriate skills to implement the cultural programme; this requires a wider set of skills and thus a different structure from the team that had prepared the successful application – with the right mix of existing and seconded staff as well as new talent; there is also the need to balance artistic and political interests and to ensure that any new delivery mechanism is welcomed by the existing stakeholders as a co-operative partner; a new and independent structure is usually advisable, one that is carefully customised to the political and cultural context of the city. But the 2009 ECOC reinforced these conclusions in very different ways.

Linz developed an efficient and effective governance structure and thus demonstrated how the main challenges can be met. Vilnius, in contrast, highlights the potential of consequences of failing to meet these challenges. It struggled to establish stable and effective arrangements, leading to major negative effects on the cultural programme and thus the overall impacts of the ECOC.

These difficulties notwithstanding, the ECOC title remains highly valued by ECOC, generates extensive cultural programmes and achieves significant impacts. Cities make great efforts to secure the nomination, and also make very explicit commitments at application stage regarding financial resources. Resources available to ECOC (including those from the EU) are therefore sufficient in principle. But there is a need to ensure that ECOC fulfil their own commitments made at application stage. Indeed, the risk is that in very difficult economic circumstances and where political consensus may be lacking, the ECOC may struggle to compete against the other demands made on public budgets.

The ECOC Action remains very complementary to the rest of the EU's Culture Programme (2007-13) through the symbolic value it adds at European level. The 2009 ECOC were also complementary to the aims and objectives of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation in 2009, although they did not explicitly link their cultural programmes to the Year. The ECOC Action also has the potential to be reinforced by and add value to investments in cultural heritage and cultural infrastructure made by European Structural Funds, although the extent to which that potential is realised may depend on the extent to which the respective delivery bodies co-ordinate their activities.

In terms of the mechanisms applied at EU level, the 1999 Decision did not specify sufficiently robust monitoring processes to be applied during the development phase of the ECOC; indeed, the experience of Vilnius demonstrates that the operation of a formal process might have allowed remedial action to be taken at an earlier stage. The new processes for application, selection, finance and monitoring introduced by the 2006 Decision are thus necessary and merit consideration by future evaluations.

Effectiveness of the ECOC Action

Both ECOC were successful in implementing a more extensive cultural programme than would have taken place in the absence of ECOC designation, though in Vilnius this was much smaller than had been intended. The European dimension was relatively prominent in the cultural programme of both cities, consisting of events featuring artists of European significance, collaborations, co-productions and exchanges with operators in other countries. Both also emphasised aspects of European history, identity and heritage already present in the city but in very different ways: Vilnius emphasising its long European history and cultural heritage and Linz exploring its role in a darker chapter in European history, i.e. the Nazi era. In both cities, the cultural programme complemented a programme of infrastructure investment, albeit funded from other sources (notably the structural funds in the case of Vilnius), but in the case of Linz given greater impetus by the ECOC. The Linz ECOC generated significant economic benefits for the cities, as well as an increase in tourism, improvements in its internal and external image and wider participation in cultural activities. In contrast, Vilnius is much less likely to have secured significant economic or social impacts as a result of the ECOC.

Sustainability of the ECOC Action

In one sense, the ECOC per se are intended not to be sustained; cities hold the title for a year before being replaced by a new set of title holders. So consideration of sustainability has to take into account the one-off nature of the cities' cultural programmes; some activities cannot (and perhaps should not) be expected to continue. In fact, both the 2009 ECOC have generated cultural activities that will be sustained beyond the title year as well as capacity for undertaking better, more ambitious events and for undertaking international co-operation. However in Vilnius, these positive impacts tend to be limited to a relatively small number of activities and operators, whereas in Linz they are more widespread. Governance and partnership working in Linz has been strengthened as a result of the ECOC, offering the potential for further positive development of that city's cultural sector.

Recommendations

Whilst the conclusions of this evaluation are drawn from the experiences of the 2009 ECOC, recommendations are not offered for the cities themselves as they no longer hold the title – though

current and future ECOC may well learn lessons from the conclusions presented here. We therefore present recommendations for the European Commission that relate to the ongoing implementation of the ECOC Action as a whole. These take into account the recommendations made in the 2007/08 evaluation (and which were summarised into three main recommendations taken forward by the Commission), as well as the fact that new arrangements for application, selection, monitoring and award of EU funding have already been introduced since the designation of the 2009 titles (i.e. by the 2006 Decision and applying to the 2010 titles onwards).

Recommendation 1: The first main recommendation of the 2007/08 evaluation remains valid: the Commission should (continue to) recommend all ECOC to commission evaluations of the impact of their cultural programmes and associated activities.

Recommendation 2: The second main recommendation of the 2007/08 evaluation remains valid: future evaluations should consider:

- the efficiency, effectiveness and impartiality of the selection and monitoring processes introduced by the 2006 Decision;
- the continued value of the ECOC “brand”, as viewed both by the title holders and by the wider world (media, cultural sector bodies and the general public); in the event that the value of the brand is perceived to be diminishing, the Commission should explore alternative approaches and compare their relative merits with those of the ECOC.

Recommendation 3: The third main recommendation of the 2007/08 evaluation remains valid: in forthcoming debates, the European Commission should explore the extent to which the ECOC concept (and culture more generally) can (continue to) and should be used to stimulate :

- urban regeneration and economic development or whether to return to an approach that is more about culture as an end in itself;
- the genuine social renewal of cities and outreach to all citizens, as opposed to merely widening opportunities for culture for existing audiences;
- or whether to retain the flexibility for cities to strike their own balance.

Recommendation 4: The European Commission should continue to find ways to promote the sustainability of the impact of ECOC, based on the experience to date. This might include, for example, more explicit guidance in the text of section IV of the Guide to Cities, presenting examples of good practice in sustainability in an annex to the Guide and presentations to meetings of ECOC stakeholders.

1.0 Introduction

ECOTEC is pleased to present this final report for the *Ex-post Evaluation of 2009 European Capitals of Culture* undertaken on behalf of the European Commission DG Education and Culture. The evaluation is intended to support the Commission in meeting its requirement each year to “ensure the external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capital of Culture event of the previous year in accordance with the objectives and criteria of the action”.¹¹ It is also intended that the results of the evaluation will be used to draw lessons for the future development of the initiative and help to improve understanding of the impact of the initiative with a view to feeding into the policy-making process at European level in the field of culture.

As recommended by the Terms of Reference (ToR), our approach has applied the intervention logic and indicators of the evaluation of the 2007/08 European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) as well as following as much as possible the methodology and reporting structure used in that study.¹² Both evaluations have sought to fulfil the functions of accountability and learning and be subject to the rigour of the application of the DG Budget evaluation model now firmly embedded within European Commission custom and practice. They are also significant for a very important reason. The 1999 Decision did not foresee any formal monitoring by the Commission of the ECOC in 2007 and 2008, although a monitoring process was introduced by the 2006 Decision for the 2010 title onwards. The two ECOC that are the subject of this evaluation were therefore not monitored to any significant degree outside of the formal procedures applied to the activities funded by the Commission, which, as we shall see, constituted only a small part of the activity carried out. The evaluation is therefore important in that it fills a 'gap' in the Commission's knowledge of the 2009 ECOC, including the four-year development phase, between the point of designation and the start of the title year. This evaluation thus provides an opportunity to see for the first time through the lens of a common evaluation framework and through the application of a common set of evaluation criteria what the 2009 ECOC achieved.

Whilst the 2007/08 evaluation was the first formal independent external evaluation of ECOC carried out since they became a Community Action in 1999, an extensive study was previously produced by Palmer/Rae Associates in 2004 on behalf of the European Commission and covering the 1995-2004 ECOC.¹³ This study was not, as the authors point out, an evaluation but was designed to 'document', 'make observations' and 'offer a factual analysis', although it also refers to the longer term impacts of the 1985-94 cohort of cities, and offers many useful insights. In the absence of formal external evaluations of the ECOC prior to 2007, the Palmer/Rae Associates study has thus served as an important source documenting the experience of previous ECOC.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Ex-post Evaluation of 2007 & 2008 European Capitals of Culture; study prepared for the European Commission; ECOTEC Research & Consulting; 2009.

¹³ European Cities and Capitals of Culture; Study Prepared for the European Commission; Palmer-Rae Associates; August 2004.

1.1 Structure of this report

This report responds to the requirements of the Terms of Reference for the study. As such, it presents the following:

- In **Section 2**, a brief description of the ECOC Action, the conceptual framework that guided the study, the evaluation questions that the research aimed to answer and the methodology followed;
- In **Section 3**, the report for Linz
- In **Section 4**, the report for Vilnius
- In **Section 5**, overall conclusions and recommendations for the ECOC Action
- In **Section 6**, a postscript offers reflections on delivering the European dimension, drawn from the 2009 ECOC and secondary research on previous ECOC.

2.0 Evaluating European Capitals of Culture

2.1 The European Capitals of Culture Action

2.1.1 Origins and context of the Action

*“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”.*¹⁴

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 Union¹⁵, 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 Resolution¹⁶ 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 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”.¹⁷ 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 introduced an “order of entitlement”, whereby each year one Member State would be entitled to nominate one or more cities to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions. The 1999 Decision also maintained the possibility for non-Member States to nominate candidates for the ECOC title. Those nominations (from both Member States and non-Member States) received each year were to be considered by a selection panel composed of seven leading independent experts in the cultural sector, which would then issue a report on the nomination or nominations judged against the objectives and characteristics of the ECOC Action. On the basis of this report, the Parliament would then issue an opinion to the Commission, which would then make a recommendation to the Council. The Council, acting on this recommendation would then officially designate the city (or cities) in question as European Capital of Culture for the year for which it was

¹⁴ Decision No 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.

¹⁵ Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing The European Community (2007/C 306/01).

¹⁶ European Commission (1985) Resolution of the Ministers Responsible for Cultural Affairs Concerning the Annual Event European City of Culture (7081/84).

¹⁷ Decision No 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.

nominated. The 1999 Decision was amended in 2005 in order to integrate the ten Member States that acceded to the EU in 2004.¹⁸

Under the process introduced by the 1999 Decision, two cities were designated for 2009 – Linz (Austria) and Vilnius (Lithuania). Whilst a further Decision was made in 2006, this Decision specifically stated that the requirements of the 1999 Decision would apply up to and including the 2009 titles. Future ECOC will be designated, co-financed and monitored according to new processes set out in the 2006 Decision (although transitional provisions were applied in the case of the 2010, 2011 and 2012 titles). For example, calls for submission of applications at national level and a European selection panel have been organised for the 2013 and 2014 titles.

As well as being awarded the title, each ECOC could receive funding of up to €1.5m for specific projects within their cultural programme. This funding was available for activities intended to "help implement activities stressing European visibility and trans-European cultural co-operation."¹⁹ Such funding could constitute no more than 60% of the budget of the specific projects. Since the designation of the 2009 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 the reports delivered by the monitoring panel. This prize will be awarded for the 2010 titles onwards.

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*²⁰ 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

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

¹⁸ 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.

¹⁹ Decision No 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 establishing the Culture Programme (2007 to 2013).

²⁰ 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.

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.

2.1.2 Objectives of the Action

In approaching the evaluation, the starting point for this evaluation has therefore been the legal basis for the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) in 2009. This is Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and the Council. Amongst other things, the Decision sets out the overall objective of the Action (Article 1) and a set of objectives that each city must address (Article 3), as set out in the table below.²¹

Table 2.1 Articles 1 and 3 of the 1999 Decision

Article 1
‘...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’
Article 3
<p>The nomination shall include a cultural project of European dimension, based principally on cultural cooperation, in accordance with the objectives and action provided for by Article 151 of the Treaty. The submission shall specify how the nominated city intends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 to exploit the historic heritage, urban architecture and quality of life in the city.

2.2 Conceptual framework

In developing our approach to the evaluation, we have taken as our starting point the DG Budget model that is the basis for all evaluations carried out at the present time for DG EAC. Under this model, clear links are established between high-level global and intermediate objectives (generally reflecting wider

²¹ The 1999 Decision refers to Article 151 of the Treaty. However, following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, Article 151 was subsequently renumbered as Article 167.

policy goals) and specific and operational objectives at the level of the intervention itself. This 'hierarchy of objectives' is directly linked to the typology of effects used in EU evaluation theory, whereby:

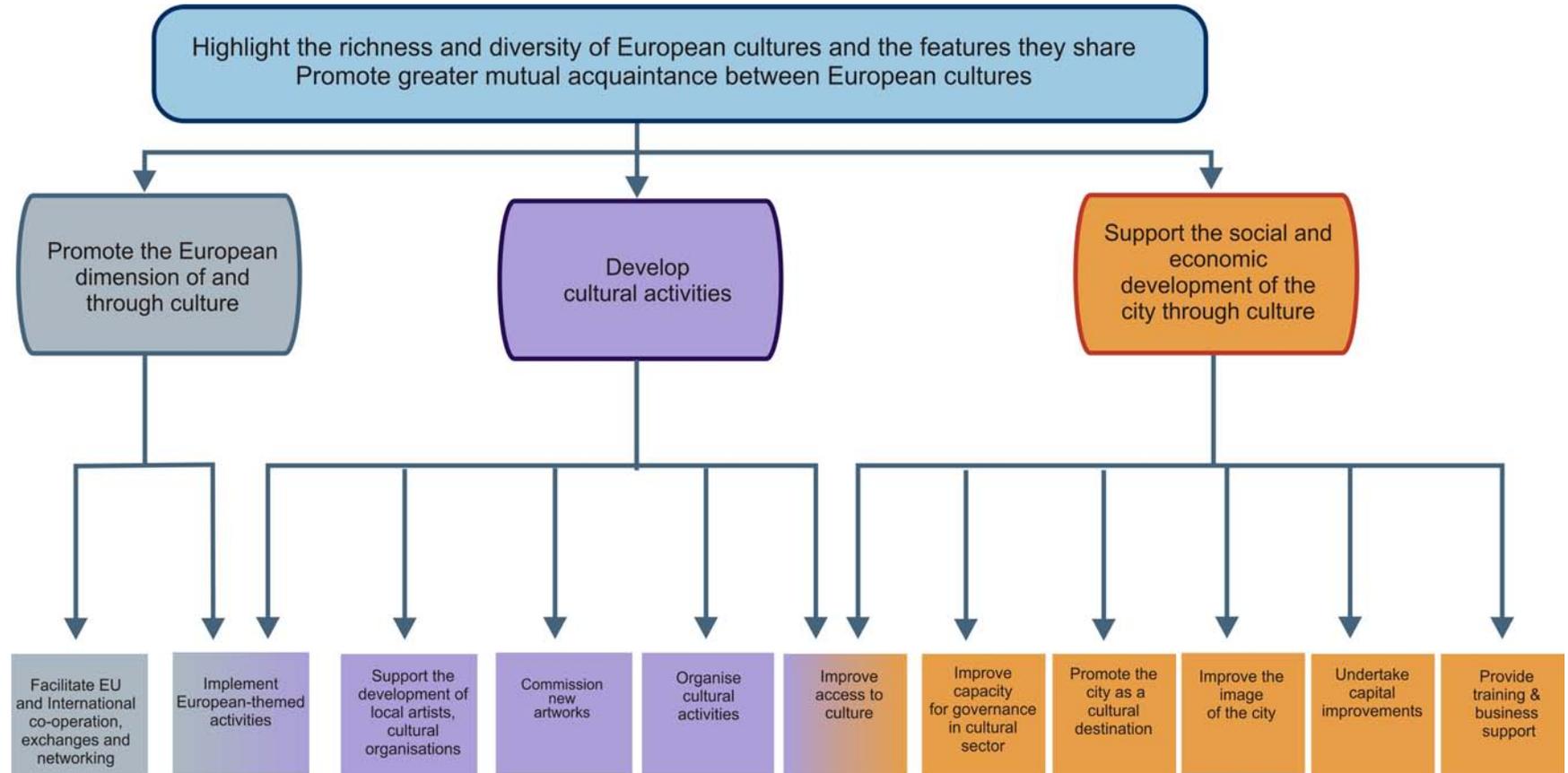
- Operational objectives specify outputs directly produced/supplied through the implementation process;
- Specific objectives specify the short-term results that occur at the level of direct beneficiaries/recipients of assistance;
- Intermediate objectives specify short to medium-term effects (or intermediate impacts) on both direct and indirect beneficiaries/recipients of assistance; and
- Global objectives specify longer term and more diffuse effects (or general impacts).

As recommended by the Terms of Reference (ToR), the intervention logic and indicators of the 2007/08 evaluation were applied to this evaluation. The experience of the 2007/08 evaluation suggested that the somewhat rigid DG Budget model needed to be applied flexibly in the context of the ECOC, in which an EU-level hierarchy of objectives was not fully developed and in which each ECOC was given considerable freedom to define their own objectives and implement their programme of activities. Our approach was thus to derive common sets of specific and operational objectives using the elements of Article 3 and a detailed examination of the objectives of the ECOC in question. Although each ECOC has a different set of objectives, it becomes clear from an inspection of the objectives that they (not surprisingly) cover similar territory: differences between them are a question of emphasis within a more or less common set of objectives rather than fundamental differences, although this clearly results in a very different 'spin' placed on the ECOC and what it might achieve within very different contexts.²²

The intervention logic is shown in summary form in Figure 2.1 below. We identified three main specific objectives and nine operational ones, reflecting the breadth of actions taken by the ECOC. The diagram indicates the main logical connections between these objectives, and it should be noticed that each specific objective does not have a separate set of operational objectives through which they were designed to be achieved - there is overlap. In particular, we have indicated that the operational objective of implementing European-themed activities relates strongly to the specific objectives of both developing cultural activities and promoting the European dimension; and improving access to culture to both developing cultural activities and supporting social and economic development.

²² It should be stressed that we are seeing this very much from the point of view of carrying out an evaluation using a pre-set model (albeit applied flexibly) and a set of criteria that – as always – have to be laid over the subject matter of the evaluation. Clearly there is enormous variety across the ECOC whose complexity and multiple objectives and outcomes, some have argued, 'makes judgements of overall success and the merits of one city against another superficial and misleading' (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004, p39). Clearly our task here is not to compare cities in this way, but it is to try to judge overall success in order that the accountability function can be fulfilled.

Figure 2.1 Generic ECOC Intervention Logic



Having defined the objectives and set out the connections between them, the next task was to determine a logical set of intended effects that would have flowed from them. Table 2.2 provides this, identifying for each specific objective the relevant operational objectives and sets of corresponding outputs, results and impacts. It should be noted that for the purpose of this table we assigned an operational objective to only one specific objective, so it needs to be seen together with the intervention logic diagram. Similarly, the table also simplifies the linkages that would exist in reality between the operational objectives and their outputs, results and impacts; again, the table is schematic and shows the main links.

Table 2.2 Table of objectives and intended effects

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	RESULTS	IMPACTS
Develop cultural activities	Support the development of local artists and cultural organisations	Individuals/organisations receiving support	Larger/stronger/more skilled sector	International/national profile and importance of city's cultural sector
	Commission new artworks and encourage new forms of cultural expression	New artworks New forms of cultural expression	Ongoing process/trend for stimulating new artworks / forms of cultural expression	Recognised & ongoing contribution to artistic innovation
	Organise cultural events, activities and projects	Cultural events, activities and projects Individuals accessing events, activities and projects	Positive effects on participants	More cultural activity taking place on on-going basis / Step change in vibrancy of cultural scene
Promote the European dimension of and through culture	Implement activities with a specific European theme (diversity and commonalities)	Events with European themes	Effects on participants – more aware of European diversity and common cultural heritage	More cultural activities taking place with a European theme More European outlook of city residents
	Facilitate international exchanges and create international networking structures	Individuals and organisations on exchanges Transnational activities	Effects on participants – more likely to participate in exchanges in future	Sustainable platform for international cooperation established

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES	OUTPUTS	RESULTS	IMPACTS
Support the social and economic development of the city through culture	Improve access to culture	Events, activities and projects to widen participation and improve access to culture Individuals from target groups accessing activities, events and projects New approaches to participation Volunteering activities	Positive effects on participants More people from target groups accessing culture	Step change in cultural participation
	Improve the capacity for governance in the culture sector	Effective delivery mechanisms	Greater engagement with the cultural sector	Sustainable platform for cultural activities established
	Promote the city as a cultural destination nationally and internationally (especially in the EU)	Marketing campaigns to promote the city and its cultural programme to visitors and tourists (including those specifically stressing the European dimension) and activities to improve the visitor experience	Increase in visitors and tourism (from within country, EU and outside EU)	City recognised internationally (and especially in the EU) as a cultural destination
	Improve image of the city	Information/promotion activities focussed on improving image of the city (including city branding)	Residents' perceptions and media coverage more positive	Improved civic pride and image (internally and externally)
	Undertake capital improvements to cultural infrastructure	New and refurbished facilities	Increased physical capacity for cultural events	Improved cultural and tourist offering
	Provide training and business support in the cultural field	Individuals and businesses trained, supported	Stronger businesses, higher skills levels	Greater economic success of cultural sector

2.3 Evaluation Questions

The Terms of Reference (ToR) recommended that the evaluation should provide answers to the questions also addressed by the 2007/08 evaluation, as shown in Table 2.3. The questions are grouped under the headings of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in line with the DG Budget model.

As in the 2007/08 evaluation, in considering the evaluation questions, it was clear that some apply more to ECOC and others to the EU level. We have thus indicated for each question in Table 2.3 the level at which the conclusions drawn will mainly apply. Table 2.3 also indicates the main source of data for each question. As can be seen, this is most significant in relation to the EU level questions where conclusions were drawn from a mix of evidence drawn from the ECOC, from a "meta-evaluation" exercise (see Section 2.4 Methodology) which enabled us to draw generalised conclusions in some cases from across both ECOC, and from additional research at EU level. An important consideration throughout has been that of *timing*; in answering questions at ECOC level, we have had to take into account potential changes in each ECOC's objectives between those set out in the application and those pursued in practice during the title year. Moreover, whilst the 1999 Decision forms the reference point for the ECOC under consideration, we have had to note a number of changes already introduced into the implementation of the ECOC Action by the 2006 Decision and applicable to the 2010 ECOC onwards.

Table 2.3 Evaluation questions (EQ)

	Evaluation Question	Level	Data sources		
			ECOC	Meta-level evaluation	EU-level research
Relevance					
EQ1	What was the main motivation behind the city bidding to become a European Capital of Culture?	ECOC	X		
EQ2	What was the process of determining objectives? Was there a process of consultation in each city to define aims and objectives?	ECOC	X		
EQ3	What were the objectives of the city in being an ECOC? (refer to list in intervention logic) What was the relative importance of each objective?	ECOC	X		
EQ4	Have any specific objectives of the cultural year been related to social impacts?	ECOC	X		
EQ5	In this connection, did the objectives of the year include reaching out to all sectors of society, including the excluded, disadvantaged, disabled people and minorities?	ECOC	X		
EQ6	To what extent have the specific themes/orientations of the cultural programme proved to be relevant to the objectives defined?	ECOC	X		
EQ7	To what extent were the objectives consistent with the Decision and with the ECOC's own application? (special focus on the European dimension)	ECOC	X		
EQ8	To what extent were the activities consistent with the ECOC's own objectives, with the ECOC's application and with the Decision? (special focus on the European dimension)	ECOC	X		

	Evaluation Question	Level	Data sources		
			ECOC	Meta-level evaluation	EU-level research
EQ9	How was the European dimension reflected by the themes put forward by the events and in terms of cooperation at European level? How did the Capitals of Culture seek to make the European dimension visible?	ECOC	X		
EQ10	As far as the conclusions made for the two cities allow it, to what extent have the general, specific and operational objectives of the Community Action for the European Capital of Culture have been proved relevant to Article 167 of the EC Treaty?	EU	X	X	X
EQ11	To what extent have the general, specific and operational objectives of the 2009 European Capital of Culture events proved relevant to the Community Action for the European Capital of Culture?	EU	X	X	X
EQ12	As far as the conclusions made for the two cities allows it, to what extent has the European Capital of Culture action proved to be complementary to other EU initiatives in the field of culture?	EU	X	X	X
Efficiency					
EQ13	How have the organisational models of the formal governing Board and operational structures played a role in the European Capital of Culture? What role have the Board and operational structures played in the European Capital of Culture's implementation? At what stage were these structures established?	ECOC	X		
EQ14	Who chaired the Board and what was his/her experience? What were the key success and failure elements related to the work of the Board and operational structure used and personnel involved?	ECOC	X		

	Evaluation Question	Level	Data sources		
			ECOC	Meta-level evaluation	EU-level research
EQ15	Has an artistic director been included into the operational structure and how was he/she appointed? What were the key success and failure elements related to the work of the artistic director and personnel involved?	ECOC	X		
EQ16	What was the process of designing the programme?	ECOC	X		
EQ17	How were activities selected and implemented?	ECOC	X		
EQ18	How did the delivery mechanism contribute to the achievement of outputs?	ECOC	X		
EQ19	To what extent has the communication and promotion strategy been successful in/contributed to the promotion of city image/profile, promotion of Capital of Culture programme, awareness raising of the European dimension, promotion of all events and attractions in the city?	ECOC	X		
EQ20	To what extent has the communication and promotion strategy successfully reached the communication's target groups at local, regional, national, European and international levels?	ECOC	X		
EQ21	What was the process of securing the financial inputs?	ECOC	X		
EQ22	What was the total amount of resources used for each European Capital of Culture? What was the final financial out-turn of the year?	ECOC	X		
EQ23	What were the sources of financing and the respective importance of their contribution to the total?	ECOC	X		
EQ24	To what extent were the inputs consistent with the Action and with the application? (special focus on the European dimension)	ECOC	X		

	Evaluation Question	Level	Data sources		
			ECOC	Meta-level evaluation	EU-level research
EQ25	What was the total expenditure strictly for the programme of events?	ECOC	X		
EQ26	What proportion of expenditure was used for infrastructure (cultural and tourism infrastructure, including renovation)?	ECOC	X		
EQ27	Was the total size of the budget sufficient for reaching a critical mass in terms of impacts? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding? Could the same results have been achieved if the structure of resources and their respective importance was different?	ECOC EU	X	X	X
EQ28	To what extent have the human resources deployed for preparation and implementation of the action been commensurate with its intended outputs and outcomes?	ECOC EU	X	X	X
EQ29	Could the use of other policy instruments or mechanisms have provided greater cost-effectiveness? As a result, could the total budget for the action be considered appropriate and proportional to what the action set out to achieve?	ECOC EU	X	X	X
EQ30	To what extent have the mechanisms applied by the Commission for selecting the European Capital of Culture and the subsequent implementation and monitoring mechanisms influenced the results of the action?	EU	X	X	X
Effectiveness					
EQ31	Provide typology of outputs, results and possible impacts of the action at different levels (European, national, regional etc.)	-			

	Evaluation Question	Level	Data sources		
			ECOC	Meta-level evaluation	EU-level research
EQ32	How did the delivery mechanism improve management of culture in the city during the title year? (explore role of Board, Chair, Artistic Director, decision-making, political challenges, etc.)	ECOC	X		
EQ33	What quantitative indicators (number of visitors, overnight stays, cultural participation of people, etc.) of the social and tourist impact of the event have been gathered by the ECOC?	ECOC	X		
EQ34	To what extent did the ECOC achieve the outputs hoped for by the city and as set out in the application (refer to list in the intervention logic)?	ECOC	X		
EQ35	To what extent have the events been successful in attaining the objectives set (general, specific and operational) and in achieving the intended results as set out in the application or others (refer to list in the intervention logic)?	ECOC	X		
EQ36	To what extent have the ECOC been successful in achieving the intended impacts as set out in the application or others (refer to list in the intervention logic)?	ECOC	X		
EQ37	To what extent have specific objectives related to social impacts been met?	ECOC	X		
EQ38	To what extent were the objectives related to reaching out to all sectors of society, including the excluded, disadvantaged, disabled and minorities, met?	ECOC	X		
EQ39	What were the most significant economic outcomes of the Capital of Culture experience?	ECOC	X		
EQ40	What have been the impacts of the event on regional development?	ECOC	X		

	Evaluation Question	Level	Data sources		
			ECOC	Meta-level evaluation	EU-level research
EQ41	Can impacts on tourism be identified? What was the total number of visitors (from abroad and from the country) to the Capital: before the cultural year during the cultural year, after the cultural year?	ECOC	X		
EQ42	Are there any instances where the events have exceeded initial expectations? What positive effects has this had?	ECOC EU	X	X	X
EQ43	Where expectations have not been met, what factors have hindered the development of the action?	ECOC EU	X	X	X
EQ44	To what extent has the implementation of the action contributed to the achievement of the objectives of Article 167 of the EC Treaty?	EU		X	X
EQ45	As far as the conclusions made for the two cities allow, what is the Community added value of the European Capital of Culture?	EU		X	X
EQ46	What lessons can be learnt in terms of how to deliver ECOC effectively which might have wider applicability to future ECOC?	EU	X	X	
Sustainability					
EQ47	Which of the current activities or elements of the action are likely to continue and in which form after the Community support is withdrawn?	ECOC	X		
EQ48	Has any provision been made to continue and follow up the cultural programme of the year after the closure?	ECOC	X		
EQ49	How will the city continue to manage its long-term cultural development following the title year?	ECOC	X		

	Evaluation Question	Level	Data sources		
			ECOC	Meta-level evaluation	EU-level research
EQ50	What will be the role of the operational structure after the end of the European Capital of Culture year and how will the organisational structure change?	ECOC	X		
EQ51	What has been the contribution of the ECOC to improved management of cultural development in the city? (in the long-term)	ECOC	X		
EQ52	What are the likely impacts of the action on the long term cultural development of the city?	ECOC	X		
EQ53	What are the likely impacts of the action on the long term social development of the city?	ECOC	X		
EQ54	What are the likely impacts of the action on the long term urban development of the city?	ECOC	X		
EQ55	What lessons have been learnt from the ECOC in terms of achieving sustainable effects that might be of general applicability to future ECOC?	EU	X	X	

2.4 Methodology

The evaluation methodology was developed in light of our assertion that the evaluation should primarily consider the ECOC *discretely and in their own particular context* in the first instance, before going on to draw generalised conclusions (illustrated by reference to the cities) and that the evaluation will contribute to the debate about a new legal basis after 2019 which will take place over the coming years.

2.4.1 Data sources

Data was gathered at two levels: a small amount of data at EU-level; and more extensive data from the ECOC themselves. The key sources were as follows:

- *Background literature at European level*; this included key EU policy and legislative documents relating to ECOC, which were essential in determining the evaluation questions and the criteria against which to evaluate the ECOC; the reports of the selection panels; previous research into ECOC at European level, most notably, the Palmer/Rae Associates study produced in 2004 on behalf of the European Commission, as well as ECOTEC's evaluation of the 2007/08 ECOC; academic literature relating to ECOC and the role of culture in cities more generally.
- *Background literature at ECOC-level*; this included the original applications and grant agreements covering the EU co-financing, as well as studies and reports commissioned or produced by the ECOC, events programmes, promotional materials and websites; of particular significance were the results of surveys undertaken in the cities and the final report of the delivery agency of Linz;
- *ECOC quantitative data*: in both cases, data relating to number and type of cultural events, income and expenditure, visitor numbers and profile, etc. was recovered from either the ECOC's own reports or the ECOC co-ordination teams; surveys of audiences and/or residents, which provided valuable evidence; these were treated as key data sources and provided evidence to 'populate' our own evaluation model, for example, in terms of basic data on outputs and results, as well as on the views of visitors and residents, which we were not able to gather as primary data within the scope of this evaluation.
- *Interviews of managing teams*; the delivery agencies in both cities were still in operation at the time of the evaluation and we were able to interview the key individuals whilst still in post; in most cases, the individuals involved, once identified and contacted, proved co-operative indeed were keen to share openly their experiences of planning and implementing the cultural programmes; it should be noted, however, that some individuals involved in the early years of the development phase of Vilnius were no longer contactable.
- *Consultation of key stakeholders and cultural operators*; interviews with key stakeholders were essential in that they offered an alternative and in-depth perspective on the ECOC to that offered by the delivery agencies; they allowed us to explore particular issues in more depth, for example, relating to the effectiveness of the governance structure, or the strength of artistic direction; key interviewees included municipalities, chambers of commerce, tourist offices, national ministries and cultural operators.

The full list of data sources is presented as a bibliography in annex 6 of this report. It is important to note that, as part of the interim reporting stage, ECOTEC requested from each ECOC a check on the data being used to address each evaluation topic. A template was sent to each ECOC showing the data sources used (covering reports, data sets, interviewees, etc.) asking for confirmation that the dataset was complete and/or for any gaps to be filled.

2.4.2 Key research tasks

Drawing on these sources of data, the research involved the following key stages:

- Inception and background research, including the refinement of the conceptual framework and methodology, as well as the review of policy documents and academic literature;
- Desk research on both ECOC; the purpose here was to gather basic factual information about the activity undertaken, in order for the research team to become familiar with the cultural programme in each city but also to serve as a source of evidence to inform the later analysis and underpin any conclusions.
- Fieldwork in both cities; this stage of the evaluation took the form of telephone interviews, consultation of local, regional and national stakeholders and two visits to each city. Interview questions focused less on *what* activities took place (this information had been gathered by the desk research) and more on the *results and impact* of that activity, in the view of the stakeholders. In short, the interviews aimed to answer key questions related to the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of each city's programme.
- Analysis and final reporting, including a comparative review and meta-evaluation, which considered the conclusions emerging from both ECOC, compared and contrasted approaches, and verified the quality of our own research; both ECOC were invited to comment on matters of factual accuracy before the report was finalised.

Having followed this methodology, we now present the findings of the research in the form of a discrete report for each ECOC, lessons in delivery from across the ECOC in general (including the 2007/08 ECOC), and final conclusions and recommendations.

3.0 Linz

In this section, we offer a description of Linz and its cultural programme, before presenting findings against the headings of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. We also offer conclusions and lessons learnt, which have informed our overall conclusions in section 5. Our findings are based on the research tasks described in section 2.4, i.e. review of literature and data relating to the Linz ECOC, interviews of the managing teams and consultation of key stakeholders and cultural operators.

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The city

Linz is the capital of the Province of Upper Austria and Austria's third largest city with a population of 190,000 (271,000 across the wider conurbation). It was first established in Roman times, and its position on the Danube helped it to become an important trading post in medieval times. The city then experienced important change during the twentieth century. From being a quiet commercial town on the banks of the Danube, Linz became a capital of heavy industry, hosting much of the armaments industry serving the Third Reich. Hitler, having spent part of his youth in Linz, intended the city to become a significant industrial, administrative and cultural centre. Indeed, "Greater Linz" was to become one of five 'Cities of the Führer' in the Greater German Empire and the location of the "Führermuseum" to display much of the art purchased or plundered across Europe by the Nazis. Whilst the plans for this museum did not come to fruition, this episode has proved one of the darker chapters in Linz's history. More celebrated famous inhabitants of Linz include the astronomer and mathematician Johannes Kepler, after whom the city's University is named, and the composer Anton Bruckner, who worked as a church organist in the city.

Today, Linz is one of Austria's main economic centres with a strong business base and low unemployment. Around 80,000 commuters travel into the city for work each day. Whilst the steel industry remains a significant source of income and employment for Linz, since the steel crisis of the 1970s and 1980s the city has been undergoing a gradual transformation away from heavy, traditional industries and towards high-technology sectors, including digital media and acoustic science. Despite its economic success and global commercial links, Linz has been generally perceived – both locally and across Austria – as a provincial, industrial city with few of the attractions of other Austrian cities

3.1.2 Cultural sector

Linz has seen a gradual increase in its cultural and educational offer over the past forty years, through developments such as:

- Johannes Kepler University (1966);
- Brucknerhaus (1974) a concert hall named after Anton Bruckner and home to the Bruckner Orchestra;
- OK Offenes Kulturhaus (1989) a centre for contemporary arts, or "art laboratory";

- Ars Electronica Center (1996) is a museum and research facility with global significance in the new media arts field. It hosts large gatherings of technologically-oriented artists every year for the festival of the same name (since 1979); and
- Lentos Kunstmuseum (2003) a modern art gallery, presenting art from the 20th and 21st centuries.

Through this, the city has developed a strong focus on modern, contemporary arts and digital/electronic media, driven in part by a wish to capitalise on the growing reputation and reach of the Ars Electronica festival and links with industry, but also by a desire to differentiate Linz from Vienna & Salzburg. Linz has shown a strong civic commitment to culture in recent years, through the hosting of the European Cultural Month²³ in 1998 and the development of a Cultural Development Plan in 2000 (the first Austrian city to do so). The plan sought to develop the city's cultural infrastructure and included the specific objective of achieving the title of European Capital of Culture in 2009. Linz was to become a city of "culture for everyone" with a cultural-political emphasis on technology, new media, open spaces, and the independent/alternative scene. At the same time, the plan sought to develop the economic contribution of culture, leisure and tourism, as local tourism and the visitor economy were very much focussed on business travellers.

3.2 Cultural programme

3.2.1 Original aims and objectives

The review of documentation and consultations have highlighted a range of motivating factors behind Linz' decision to bid for the ECOC title. Certainly ECOC was seen as prestige project, for the city of Linz and the region of Upper Austria, but also for Austria itself, as a relatively new member of the European Union. ECOC was not generally seen as a way of fundamentally changing the city, as the transformation from a heavy industrial base to high-technology, or creative industries had been under way for some time. Of more significance was the wish to update the image of the city and the way Linz was perceived externally, especially within Austria. Certainly ECOC was seen as a way of developing the city's cultural and tourist offer, but also in more general terms as an opportunity to develop cultural and civic life in the city, as well as the confidence and openness of residents and their quality of life.

The decision to apply was made relatively early, with the city council as the initial driving force. The decision was informed by the city's experiences under the European Cultural Month in 1998, and a press conference was held in 2000 to announce Linz's candidature. The city's Cultural Development Plan (2000) included the specific aim of achieving ECOC status, and was partly intended to prepare the way for the bid. This was followed by a steady process of building a partnership, and developing both consensus and a vision for 2009 across the different levels of government and cultural stakeholders in the city. After Graz's year as ECOC in 2003, Linz was able to learn from that experience and was well-prepared for the Austrian Government's official call for bids in 2004. Although there was some interest from other Austrian cities at a relatively late stage of the process (from Innsbruck, St.Pölten and Salzburg)

²³ A resolution adopted in 1990 (Conclusions of the Ministers of Culture meeting within the Council of 18 May 1990 on future eligibility for the 'European City of Culture' and on a special European Cultural Month event (90/C 162/01)) established the "European month of culture". This new cultural event was to take place each year in a city "of a European country based on democracy, pluralism and State law principles" and which was called "Europe in [city's name], 199..". See: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc443_en.htm.

Linz was the only city to submit a formal bid. A major facet of this bid was the collaboration between city, regional and national government and their explicit financial commitment to each provide €20m for Linz's bid.

3.2.2 Application

Linz's application, considered by the selection panel in April 2005, set out the city's cultural and economic attributes, its long-term development objectives and the key cultural themes for the year. The city's main objectives were to become:

- a metropolis of modern media culture and digital arts;
- a powerhouse in global networking and communication; and a
- a city embracing new technologies and visions of transboundary artistic activities.

The underlying vision was for Linz to become a laboratory of the future, exploring and combining media, art in public spaces, networking, communication, public participation, integration and open borders.

Linz's application thus reflected its industrial heritage but also sought to reflect and build on its position as a centre for contemporary arts and digital media. Similarly, the application also maintained the emphasis in the years since 2000 on raising access to and participation in cultural activities. The selection panel also noted the emphasis given to broader issues such as "rapidly changing work environment", "worldwide networking capabilities", "social and economic justice" and "natural resources and ecology". Overall, then, Linz's application highlighted innovative and contemporary culture as both an existing strength of the city and a means to promote a broader process of urban, social and cultural development.

Linz's application also set out a number of priority areas and guidelines, although these do not appear to flow from the three objectives and the relationships between objectives and priority areas are not very clearly set out. Furthermore, the list of priority areas does not provide details of specific cultural activities, but rather a general flavour of themes and approaches. These priorities are set out below.

Priority Areas and Guidelines
Culture is our Everyday Life: applying the principle of "Culture for All", this priority emphasised the commitment to a humane and participatory approach to working life, easy and free access to urban knowledge and educational institutions, as well as efforts to integrate migrants.
Avant-garde Now and Forever: emphasised Linz as a centre of media art and referred to digitally-supported performances and means of expression; analysis of documentation related to digital art; an interactive documentation centre for media art, research and projects; and an artist-in-residence programme.
Connectedness as an Asset of Democracy: focussed on the new media as a means of empowerment; computer literacy as a basic skill; and the internet as a communication tool without societal or social restrictions
Culture Knows No Bounds: rested on a commitment to migrants' active participation in cultural life and in decision-making; the emphasis was to be on intercultural activities, traditional events, exhibitions, concerts and theatre for children in various languages.

Priority Areas and Guidelines

Art Happens around the Corner: which would encourage an independent artistic life based on the “Volkshaus” model of “neighbourhood culture”.

Buildings, halls and spaces: developments would include the construction of a new theatre, developments involving the major steel manufacturer Voestalpine and its premises, and art in public spaces.

Architecture is a Question of Character: emphasised good architecture as a factor in civic identity; this priority reflected the policy of the City Council adopted in 1994, to apply art to its own building projects, e.g. through requiring co-operation between architects and artists in the planning phase of construction developments.

Linz and far beyond committed Linz to cultural co-operation across the city, across the central area of Upper Austria, and across the Land; with the regions of Mühlviertel, the Bavarian Forest and Southern Bohemia; with partners in the rest of Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic; with the three World Heritage Sites: Hallstatt, • eský Krumlov, Wachau; as well as with Vilnius.

Gender Partnership in the Arts: would make the creative potential of and contribution from women in culture and the arts more transparent to the general public, in order to ensure that the equality of cultural and artistic performance would become accepted.

The Mad and the Maecenaes: focussed on encouraging art creation by groups as well as by individuals, as well as taking into account the polarity of “pure” and applied art.

The Passion of Amateur Artists: committed the ECOC to providing a range of opportunities for amateur artists to present their work, thus giving amateur art the space and respect it deserves.

At the End is Renewal: intended to make the impact of the year permanent, in terms of sustaining major events and cultural activities in the city’s neighbourhoods, and maintaining a commitment to cultural and artistic quality, equal acceptance of the artistic visions of both sexes, promotion of cultural diversity and the artistic expression of migrant citizens, a commitment to strengthening a humane and culture-oriented workplace and support for the involvement of children and young people in culture.

3.2.3 Changes to the objectives and themes

Although the objectives and priorities for Linz 09 were not very clearly defined in the original application and while there were few tangible projects in evidence, the bid was considered of sufficient quality to pass the selection process. Experience of previous ECOC rounds suggests that this was not uncommon before the open competition procedure was introduced by the 2006 Decision, as once the title has been won a much more focussed and detailed programme needs to be elaborated. The bid can be seen as a good start in the process of developing an ECOC programme, reflecting the fact that progress over the previous ten-year period had been driven by public authorities and local cultural partners, such as Ars Electronica, rather than people with experience of designing or managing such high-profile cultural events. Furthermore, the application clearly stated that the full cultural programme would be developed by a new delivery agency along the guidelines set out in the original document.

Nevertheless as the new artistic direction was appointed they formed the opinion that the original bid was weak in a number of areas. They felt that it was not a particularly objective assessment of the city's strengths and weaknesses, and was too heavily focused on the Ars Electronica festival and centre. In addition Linz's recent history and Nazi legacy were also neglected (a key observation of the ECOC selection panel). They therefore decided to fundamentally re-work the aims and objectives, drawing on their experience from Bremen. The guiding principle for this was the question of what the city actually is, rather than what it wanted to be or how it wished to be promoted. After a process of consultation and reflection a re-shaped set of objectives were drawn up, reflecting Linz' status as an industrial city and informing a new 'vision' for the programme centred on the three themes of industry, culture and nature.

In 2006, the artistic team published a mission statement with seven broad propositions for the development of a detailed cultural programme.

Mission Statement
1. Linz09 represents Austria on the European stage. This is why it must be open both to international artists and to visitors from across Europe.
2. The people involved in Linz's cultural life are asked to redouble their efforts in 2009.
3. Linz09's programme is to take into account the dimensions, issues and topics of cultural development in Europe to broaden Linz's horizon.
4. It is of great importance not to lose sight of the characteristic features of Linz and the regions surrounding it: Linz in its present incarnation is a technology and knowledge based industrial city located in the heart of Europe, which takes culture and the culture industries equally serious.
5. In terms of thematic content the programme of Culture Capital Year will embrace the greatest possible degree of openness.
6. The programme must be given the chance to develop at its own pace, step by step, in a process open to suggestions of all kinds, against the background of a clearly perceptible framework that allows a great deal of manoeuvring room.
7. The City of Linz and the Province of Upper Austria have tackled intensely the National Socialist era over the past years, have come to terms with their part in this past and have accepted responsibility for it. In view of the significance of that period of history and of the role that Linz played in it, the Nazi era will be a thematic focus of the Culture Capital Year.

Source: *Final summary report for Linz Kulturhauptstadt Europas GmbH*²⁴

This was then translated into a specific set of objectives for Linz 2009, and the table below compares the original objectives with those drawn up by the artistic direction. This shows that the essence of the original objectives was retained but they were developed, extended and made more practical. This final,

²⁴ www.linz09.at

more comprehensive set is much more consistent with the objectives set at European level in the 1999 and 2006 Decisions.

Table 3.1 Comparing objectives

Objectives proposed in the original application	Objectives pursued during the title year (2009)
A metropolis of modern media culture and digital arts	Positioning Linz as a modern and dynamic city of industry and technology featuring an attractive cultural programme that enabled it to compete on its own terms with Austria’s traditional bastions of culture tourism, Salzburg and Vienna; strengthening its identity as Culture Capital
	Developing and promoting a programme that takes into consideration both the characteristics of Linz and its region and European and/or global dimensions
A city embracing new technologies and visions of trans-boundary artistic activities	Persuading Linz’s artistic scene to focus on competition, quality and international perspectives
	Creating the necessary preconditions for Linz to acquit itself well of its role as host of the European Capital of Culture; encouraging enthusiasm and a sense of motivation in all parts of the service industry, most notably but by no means exclusively in all branches of the hospitality, tourist and leisure industries
	Boosting the recognition factor and the public image of Linz both across and outside of Austria
	Boosting the pride that Linzers take in their city
	Boosting the numbers of day visits and overnight stays by offering a varied programme of outstanding quality on 365 out of 365 days
	A powerhouse in global networking and communication

Source: Final summary report for Linz Kulturhauptstadt Europas GmbH

In summary, the definitive programme would place more emphasis on quality of cultural events as well as on the international dimension, seeking to make the city more international in outlook, more open and welcoming (especially to tourists), address the city's poor external image and deal more comprehensively

with the city's Nazi legacy. The programme sought to address weak points in the city's cultural offering, such as activities for young people and children, neighbourhood-level projects and those dealing with the city's contemporary history.

3.2.4 Activities during the development phase

At the time that the artistic team was first established, some 200 project ideas were already in different stages of development following an open call for proposals in 2005. This call was successful in that it attracted around 2,000 bids, although it did create a significant administrative burden for the agency and a degree of disappointment amongst those whose bids were not funded. Regardless of these difficulties, the artistic team wanted to maximise the opportunities for new ideas to emerge and thus continued to accept project proposals until May 2008.

The development and implementation of the ECOC was seen by the delivery agency as a three- to four-year process, with a "warm-up" period forming an important prelude to the eventual cultural programme implemented during the title year. Within this warm-up period (2006-08), some 147 "pre-projects" took place which served to test the feasibility of some of the key concepts and themes of the ECOC. These pre-projects included:

- Kopfstand, a series of discussions on topics relevant to the year and Seitensprünge, assessments of formats and events that were likely to play a role.
- Linz Europa Tour, musical tours along the Danube to the Black Sea and North Sea
- Linz Texas exhibition, a showcase for the city in Vienna, Graz and Berlin
- Kunst in die Stadt, a series of public art exhibitions in the city in collaboration with the Offenes Kulturhaus, including Schaurausch (shop windows), Tiefenrausch (subterranean spaces) and culminating in Höhenrausch (rooftops) in 2009

Other major events began before 2009, including

- Kulturhauptstadt des Führers (Culture Capital of the Führer) exhibition at the Schlossmuseum and Politische Skulptur at the Landesgalerie, beginning in Autumn 2008 (continuing until March 2009)
- Turnhermit (The hermit in the tower) and Turmmusik (Tower music) from advent 2008 (continuing throughout 2009)

3.2.5 Activities during the title year

The final cultural programme incorporated a mix of directly commissioned projects, co-productions with international and local operators, guest performances of existing works and projects from the open call for proposals. It was structured into three thematic sections, music, performing arts and projects.

The music programme was centred on acoustics, one of Linz's existing strengths as evidenced by the Linz Klangwolke ('cloud of sound' – an open air music festival) and the existence of local companies specialising in technical acoustics. The Hörstadt ('acoustic city') concept interpreted the entire city as an acoustic space, with initiatives such as the Linz Charter and 'Beschallungsfrei' addressing issues of noise pollution, and the Akustikon, a research institute dealing with the development of urban 'acoustic spaces'.

The selection of activities under performing arts was informed by the need to develop international standard productions (through commissions of or collaborations with international artists), co-operate with local institutions and the independent scene, and get the local population involved. The year was organised into four festival periods, Schneesturm ('Snowstorm'), Sonnenbrand ('Sunburn'), Doppelgänger and 'Wo, Wenn, Nicht Alle Da' ('That's the way to do it')²⁵; with a strong focus on contemporary arts, but also events exploring the international roots of theatre. Events took place in unusual venues across the city, with some of the highlights including Flut ('the flood') where local volunteers and students built 900 polythene animals, and a series of school workshops across Upper Austria called I Like to Move It, Move It. Events included collaborations with Vilnius, such as "Linz vs Vilnius" a series of mimed performances involving cultural experts from both cities.

In terms of individual projects, while the eventual cultural programme did feature a number of high-profile events, it placed as much emphasis on providing a "365-day offer", i.e. offering activity throughout the year, the idea being that people would come to Linz when it suited them. On balance, most of the interviewees felt that the programme managed to balance large, high-profile events, and small, local or neighbourhood-level events. Any negative comments reflected the role or interests of the interviewee, for example those most concerned with the development of the local economy felt there should perhaps have been more high-profile or landmark events, while those concerned with the development of the local cultural scene felt that local cultural operators could have played a greater role.

The following were mentioned as highlights of the programme:

- A range of projects dealing with Linz' Nazi past, in addition to Kulturhauptstadt des Führers, there was Das Unsichtbare Lager ('the invisible camp') in Mauthausen, In Situ, Unter Uns ('amongst us') and Bibliothek der geretteten Erinnerungen ('library of rescued memories')
- 80+1: Eine Weltreise. This Ars Electronica's principle contribution to Linz 09, a virtual journey round the world hosted in the main square and new Ars Electronica Centre.
- Kulturhauptstadtteil des Monats ('cultural capital neighbourhood of the month'), with 12 neighbourhoods across the city provided with between €10k and €15k each to provide a variety of cultural events. Also Bellevue, the yellow house that hosted neighbourhood projects
- Best of Austria exhibition at the Lentos Kunstmuseum
- Scientific debate and discussions in the Keplersalon, Johannes Kepler's former home
- Kranker Hase ('sick hare'), who travelled round the city visiting events and prompting discussions
- Haus der Geschichten ('house of stories') a vacant house in the city centre that hosted small-scale art projects.

3.2.6 Financing

Although Linz's written application did not state the intended budget for the ECOC, the presentation to the Selection Panel committed Linz to investing €67m over the period 2005-10. The majority of this sum was to be provided by the three main public authorities: €20m each from the city, regional and national governments. The balance of €7m was intended to come from sponsorship, commercial revenue, EU co-

²⁵ Translation used by the ECOC in the context of a puppet theatre festival.

financing and other sources. In practice, these commitments were fulfilled (or exceeded in the case of commercial revenue and sponsorship), as shown in Table 3.2 below. Whilst the total budget of Linz was not the largest of any ECOC to date²⁶, it was certainly one of the better-financed ECOC.²⁷

A key success factor was the fact that not only did the three public authorities make an explicit (and equal) commitment to provide funding, but that they also committed such funding to the delivery agency itself (Linz Kulturhauptstadt Europas GmbH) - as opposed to merely committing themselves to expending that sum of money on culture over the 2005-10 period. Contracts were signed between the agency and the public authorities as early as 2005/06. This commitment enabled the delivery agency to be established on a very stable basis from the outset and to focus its fundraising activities on securing corporate and other sponsorship.

Linz09 was successful in securing slightly more funding from other sources (€8.7m) than expected (€7m). Of the other funding, around half was from sponsorship. According to the interviews, the Linz09's approach to corporate sponsorship demonstrated three key success factors. First, companies were carefully targeted and selected that were not only able to provide finance but whose image and standing would add value to that of Linz09. Second, sponsors were, in some cases, linked to specific projects and activities within the cultural programme. For example, an international (but locally-based) steelmaker was the sponsor of the "80+1" exhibition at the Ars Electronica and a major regional bank was the sponsor of the Höhenrausch (art on the rooftops exhibition). This approach was reported by the delivery agency to be successful in that it enabled not only more sponsors to be engaged, but also to give greater prominence to those sponsors and to give them a very specific sense of ownership of specific cultural activities. Third, different categories of sponsorship were offered, which enabled businesses of different sizes to contribute. The categories were:

- Linz09 Top Club: for sponsors contributing €1.5m
- Linz09 Premium Club: for sponsors contributing between €100k and €500k
- Linz09 Club: for sponsors contributing between €50k and €100k
- Linz09 Member: for sponsors contributing up to €50k

Table 3.2 Actual funding of Linz 2005-10

Financing sources	Euro (m)	%
Bund	20.0	29.1
Land of Upper Austria	20.0	29.1
City of Linz	20.0	29.1
Sponsorship	4.0	5.9
European Union	1.5	2.1

²⁶ Expenditure exceeded €100m in Liverpool (2008) and €70m in Lille (2004).

²⁷ Palmer/Rae Associates report that five of the twenty 1995-2004 ECOC expended €45m-59m and two expended in excess of €60m. Average expenditure across all twenty was €36.9m. See: European Cities and Capitals of Culture; Study Prepared for the European Commission; Palmer/Rae Associates; August 2004. Expenditure exceeded €100m in Liverpool (2008) and €70m in Lille (2004).

Ticket sales	1.1	1.7
Project funding	0.9	1.3
Merchandise	0.5	0.7
Other	0.4	0.6
Sale of rights, assets, etc.	0.2	0.3
Total	68.7	100%
In-kind income	6.5	

The breakdown of expenditure by Linz09 was broadly similar to the average for ECOC in general as shown in the table below. Of this expenditure, a very small proportion (3%) was expended in the first half of the development phase (2005-06), some 31% was spent in the two-year pre-programme (2007-08), 59% during the title year (2009) and 6% in the closure period (2010).

The EU funding of €1.5m specifically for the cultural programme co-financed (at the rate of 50%) a cluster of projects entitled "Linz 09 dialogue" which focussed on young people in particular. Specific projects within this cluster included "Acoustic City" / "Akustikon", the Kepler Salon (a showcase for the sciences and the interface between research and daily working life), "Extra Europa" (a set of events concerning perceptions of cultural identity, jointly organised with partners in Norway, Switzerland and Turkey), "Linz 09 School Book" (projects for schools), "Teaching Contemporary History" (a how-to manual for confronting a difficult chapter of history), "I like to move it, move it" (involving 2,000 pupils in dance/performance) and communication / dissemination activities (€400k).

Table 3.3 Actual expenditure of Linz 2005-10

Expenditure	Euro (m)	%	ECOC AVERAGE ²⁸
Cultural Programme	42.4	61.7	62.6
Marketing	13.3	19.4	14.3
Personnel	8.4	12.2	15.1
Operating expenditure	3.1	4.6	8.1
Reserve	0.8	1.2	
Investment	0.6	0.9	
Total	68.7	100%	100%

3.3 Relevance

Having described the Linz ECOC and its cultural programme, we can consider the relevance of its objectives and activities in relation to the three specific objectives of the European Capitals of Culture

²⁸ European Cities and Capitals of Culture; Study Prepared for the European Commission; Palmer/Rae Associates; August 2004

Promoting the European dimension of and through culture

The European dimension of the objectives of Linz09 was perhaps more implicitly than explicitly expressed, but nonetheless features in a number of objectives. First, the European dimension features in the objective of developing a programme that "takes into consideration the characteristics of Linz and (its) European dimensions". This objective was reflected in a programme that was strongly international in outlook and which reflected the city's global economic linkages through direct commissions of and collaborations with artists and performers from across the world. It was also reflected in the exploration (through culture) of one specific aspect of Linz which can be considered of European significance – the city's Nazi legacy. To this end, Linz's mission statement noted an explicit thematic focus on the exploration of the Nazi era and a diverse clusters of projects were implemented that focussed on this theme.

Second, Linz's objectives featured an implicit focus on promoting European tourism to the city and international recognition as a tourist destination. Linz09 sought to boost the numbers of visitors from a number of target markets, especially southern Germany, the Czech Republic and Switzerland. As part of this, a specific strand of the programme with a strongly 'European' aspect was the activity around the Danube, with music tours both to the Black Sea and North Sea taking place in the lead-up period (2007 & 2008). These served to promote the ECOC more widely and highlight Linz's position at the heart of Europe and on historic trading routes.

Developing cultural activities

Linz ECOC had a very clear focus on quality and innovation in cultural activities, with objectives specifically mentioning the need to persuade Linz's artistic scene to focus on competition, quality and international standards. A large proportion of the programme was devoted to modern or contemporary cultural forms, many such as '80+1: Eine Weltreise' exploring the linkages between culture, technology and the economy. This was partly to differentiate Linz's offer from the more traditional forms of culture available in Vienna or Salzburg, but also to reflect the city's economic and cultural strengths.

Co-productions between international artists and performers and local cultural operators were used to raise the quality of local productions, while operators were encouraged to approach new themes and formats (such as foreign language productions). Consultations support this view, suggesting that ECOC encouraged local operators to become more ambitious in their choice of project and more professional in their methods. The programme also placed significant emphasis on innovative ideas, such as the development of new formats (such as the Keplersalon or Akustikon) and methods or venues (such as the three exhibitions of art in public places) that managed to bring contemporary and experimental arts to a wider audience.

Supporting the social and economic development of the city

Linz was already an economically successful city, and the objectives show that ECOC was not designed to provide a transformation in the city's economic fortunes, but rather to cement a process that was already under way and address some of the city's weaker points. This focused on both internal and external phenomena. Externally, there was a desire to make the city's image more current and accurate, using ECOC and accompanying communications activity to position the city as a dynamic and interesting

place, boosting recognition and improving its image. This was designed to increase the numbers of visits and overnight stays.

Linked to this issue is a more internal issue, in that the artistic direction felt that everyday Linz was a not particularly outward-looking or welcoming city for international visitors. While it was important to develop a general sense of civic pride and openness, the team also felt that the local service sector was not up to international standards and prioritised improvements in the city's hotel, restaurant and transport industry. While it could be argued that they needed to improve local services in order to make the ECOC more successful, it was also felt that this would have longer-term benefits for the local economy.

Similarly, the objectives of the Linz ECOC did not include any specifically related to social development through culture, though a social dimension was implied in two objectives. First, there was the objective of boosting Linzers' pride in their city. Linz was not a city suffering the acute social problems that some other recent/future ECOC have, yet the perception was that Linzers still had a negative perception of their city. So this objective was not about getting the residents of Linz to buy in to a new vision of what Linz could become but was more about encouraging them to take pride in their city as it already was. Second – and related to this first objective - an objective of the ECOC was to take into consideration the characteristics of Linz in the development of the cultural programme. In practice, these two objectives played out through activities to change the image that Linzers held of their city through/as well as encouraging them to be more involved in cultural activities – both as participants and as audiences.

Linz09 also addressed a number of issues relating to social and urban development in a wider sense, including the focus on acoustic technology and noise pollution, as well as the use of cultural projects to promote intercultural dialogue and interaction at neighbourhood level

3.4 Efficiency

3.4.1 Governance and management

Overall, the governance and management arrangements of Linz09 have been efficient and successful in enabling the cultural programme to be implemented. A first key to success reported by most stakeholders (and contradicted by none) was the strong and co-operative partnership between the three public authorities, as well as the generally cooperative and constructive approach adopted by the broader set of partners.

A second key success factor was that establishment of a separate company to develop and deliver the cultural programme, as proposed in Linz's application. Such a company, Linz09 Kulturhauptstadt Europas GmbH, was formed in due course, with the City of Linz holding 100% ownership. This approach was agreed upon by the partners on the basis of previous experience: that of the Graz ECOC (2003) whose stakeholders were consulted by Linz; that of the Ars Electronica Center, a company fully-owned by the City of Linz and regarded as both a commercial and artistic success. Linz09 was overseen by a Supervisory Board of twelve members: six from the City of Linz, four from the Land, one from the Republic of Austria and one representative of the tourist industry. The Supervisory Board was to consult a Board of Curators on all important issues and to be advised by an Honorary Committee of high-level representatives from cultural, economic, scientific and other institutions.

A third key success factor was the recruitment of an experienced artistic team with extensive international experience – and the granting to that team of artistic autonomy and full discretion over funds. Once the title had been secured and the delivery agency set up, the decision was made to recruit an artistic director to lead the development of the cultural programme. The evidence from the interviews suggests that there was a strong consensus amongst the main stakeholders that the artistic director should be both a highly experienced player in the international cultural sector, but also be an "outsider" to Linz/Upper Austria. The rationale for such a choice was that, in the opinion of the stakeholders, an outsider would bring a fresh perspective to Linz – being able to see things differently and ask difficult questions and being less tied to any particular set of local interests. In spring 2005, a cultural entrepreneur from Switzerland and a cultural academic from Germany, were recruited as Artistic Director and Deputy Artistic Director respectively, who had together been responsible for a well-respected, but ultimately unsuccessful, ECOC bid for Bremen 2010. Both remained in post from 2005 to 2010. Other key members of staff were recruited nationally or internationally, including the Musical Director and the Performing Arts Director. A Managing Director was recruited to oversee the managerial and financial operations of Linz09, leaving the Artistic Director free to focus on the cultural programme.

The Artistic Director was granted full artistic autonomy and discretion over the use of funds, with the Supervisory Board of Linz 09 concerned mainly with broad cultural concepts and issues of governance and financial accountability.

This approach – of recruiting key staff from outside Linz and granting full artistic autonomy – provided a number of benefits but also posed a number of risks. The key members of staff recruited were indeed experienced operators on the international cultural scene. They offered expertise and experience that was not likely to be otherwise available to Linz (at least not without severely impoverishing the existing cultural institutions). As intended (and confirmed by the key stakeholders interviewed), the artistic leadership of Linz09 brought a fresh perspective, asked difficult questions and ultimately developed an approach that the local partners alone could not/would have done. In general, the key stakeholders welcomed this approach and reported that it worked well.

Recruiting the key staff from outside Linz and allowing them artistic autonomy and full discretion over expenditure had a number of, perhaps natural, consequences. The artistic leadership took a broader view of the ECOC and the city than the partners perhaps expected or intended, seeking to bring about a more general change in the governance of culture and tourism across the city. This approach certainly provoked much debate; for example, a critical opinion of the state of the city's hotel sector offered by the Artistic Director was perhaps necessary but not well received – though the city's hotel provision did ultimately improve (both quantitatively and qualitatively) over the 2005-10 period, in part through the impetus and support offered by the ECOC. Whilst the Artistic Director worked hard to maintain the formal and informal support of Board members, the public authorities were, at times, uneasy about their limited influence, particularly given the political risks and the large sums of public funding involved. With hindsight, the public authorities perhaps would have liked to retain more control, but this might have made it more difficult to attract a high-profile Artistic Director. Some key stakeholders reported that the Board of Curators should have enjoyed more influence over artistic direction, whilst some local cultural institutions did not always feel sufficiently involved or consulted. Indeed, at the point of designation (2005) many local cultural institutions had very high (perhaps unrealistic) expectations of their own role and funding within the ECOC might be. These could not always be fulfilled. For example, one local theatre eventually chose not to collaborate with Linz09 and thus did not host any ECOC events. But overall, the main

stakeholders were broadly satisfied with their decision to recruit key staff externally, with the decision to allow artistic autonomy – and also with the overall outcome of these decisions.

3.4.2 Communication and marketing

The communication activities of Linz aimed to fulfil four inter-related aims: to help change the image of Linz, to promote Linz as a tourist destination, to promote the ECOC and its cultural programme, and to strengthen local civic pride. The perception of the Linz09 team was that, although the city had transformed itself politically and economically over the preceding 25 years, its image remained essentially negative – that of an uninteresting industrial city, with a shameful Nazi past. There was also, it was felt, a need to promote Linz as a tourist destination that was distinct from Vienna and Salzburg. On that basis, the overall slogan adopted was that of "Linz.Verändert" (Say Linz. Say Change.). The intention was to create an inspiring but unconventional image of Linz that reflected its current reality - a youthful modern city based on modern media/communications – and that emphasised Linz's three key facets: "Culture, industry, nature".

The communication and marketing activities were overseen by Linz09 but many were delivered by an external agency appointed in February 2007 after a Europe-wide call for tenders. These activities were undertaken in four main phases over 2007-09:

- Logo Launch Campaign (start of 2007 to mid-2008), which aimed to establish Linz09 as a brand and make the logo prominent across the city and at key locations in Upper Austria and Austria; it also included the first edition of the "Programme Book", a publication setting out details of the cultural programme;
- Positioning campaign (mid-2008 to late-2008), which aimed to set Linz apart from other ECOC and other Austrian cities, particularly through promotions to the international tourist market; it introduced the "Linz.Verändert" slogan for the first time and also included the second edition of the "Programme Book", providing details of the bulk of the cultural programme for 2009;
- Big Bang (late-2008 to end-2008): a short but intense period of publicity building up to the launch of the title year; it involved extensive advertising in the printed media and via social networking sites.
- Programme campaign (end-2008 to end-2009), which involved communication of the eventual cultural programme for 2009 through, amongst other things, the publication of the third and final edition of the "Programme Book" and the introduction of *Neuner*, a fortnightly newsletter.

The communication activities of Linz09 were complemented by activities to promote Linz as a tourist destination and attract visitors and audiences undertaken by Linz09 in partnership with the tourist board (TVL). This partnership involved the development of a joint marketing plan and use of the common slogan "Linz.Verändert" – which continues to be used by the tourist board in its ongoing activities. A key success factor mentioned by the relevant stakeholders was the fact that Linz09 brought together the main local and regional tourist bodies with the key cultural institutions – two sectors that had previously operated somewhat in isolation to each other.

The collaboration with the tourist board also involved the provision of information and sales of tickets. Information about the cultural programme was disseminated across the city through three main mechanisms:

- Linz09 Infocenter: serving tourists and local residents from its central location on the Hauptplatz;
- Linz09 Infopoints: mostly the key public transport interchanges as well as some of the key cultural institutions, where staff had been specifically trained to provide information and Linz09 passes and merchandise were on sale;
- Linz09 Infos: cultural venues, public institutions, shops and businesses across the city that stocked information about the cultural programme and made it freely available to visitors.

Linz09 faced some of the difficulties common to many ECOC in respect of its communication and marketing activities. As with other ECOC, it proved difficult at times to provide the optimum flow of information; during the early part of the development phase when few concrete projects were announced, the local media became sceptical at the apparent lack of activity; in the second half of 2008 as the start of the title year approached, Linz09 perhaps needed more capacity to manage the sudden increase in national and international media interest; and once the cultural programme was finalised, it was (quite rightly) extensive and diverse, but perhaps hard to communicate clearly to the media and the public. Indeed, a number of stakeholders were critical of the quality and clarity of the communication. Relationships with the national media - more used to covering the cultural life of Vienna and Salzburg - were difficult at times, though there were eventually many instances of favourable coverage. The fact that Linz09 both purchased extensive advertising and sought corporate sponsorship from the local and national media also meant that some media bodies were never merely impartial observers.

These difficulties notwithstanding, there is evidence that the communications activities were successful in creating a positive image of Linz09 and in attracting visitors (as shown in Section 2.5.4) Indeed, Linz achieved some notable successes in its communication and marketing activities in terms of both the volume and nature of press coverage. Some 300 journalists visited Linz in the run-up to the opening and the ECOC was mentioned around +25,000 in the press and +2,600 times in other media. Linz09 also received 13 national or international awards for its communications and marketing activities.

3.5 Effectiveness

3.5.1 Developing cultural activities

Linz's objectives included three that particularly related to its cultural activities. These broadly related to:

- scale: "an attractive cultural programme that enabled it to compete on its own terms with Austria's traditional bastions of culture";
- character: "a programme that takes into consideration both the characteristics of Linz and its region and European and/or global dimensions"; and
- quality: "focus on competition, quality and international perspectives"

In terms of scale, it can be said that Linz achieved its objective of implementing a cultural programme that would be sizeable enough to compete with other cities. Linz implemented one of the largest ECOC cultural programmes to date, investing €42.4m, undertaking 200 projects involving 7,700 events and 5000 artists and attracting audiences of nearly 3.5m people. Activities took place across the city and on all 365 days of the title year. The best-attended events were as follows.

Table 3.4 Best attended events of Linz ECOC

Event		Visitors
Höhenrausch (Exhibition)	“Art on the Rooftops of Linz” – a walkway system above the city centre combining viewing points, stairways, plateaux and bridges and featuring exhibits of new artistic works	272 860
Pflasterspektakel inkl. “Das unbeschriebene Blatt” (Festival)	International Linz street art festival featuring 1,000 different acts including music, theatre, circus arts, etc.	210 000
80+1 Eine Weltreise (Project)	“A journey around the world” hosted at the Ars Electronica Center and linking Linz to 20 places around the world via optical cables and satellite links	170 000
Eröffnung09 (Festival)	Opening event (31.12.2008)	130 000
Klangwolke (Festival)	Festival featuring a procession of 900 polythene animals through the city to the river followed by an evening spectacle	105 000

Whilst Linz’s cultural programme was extensive in scale it did not primarily consist of blockbuster attractions and international stars (though some of the invited artists were of international significance). Indeed, some of the media and commercial stakeholders would have preferred more events that they could easily “sell” to an international audience. Linz09 did not thus compete head-to-head with Salzburg and Vienna by providing an international arts festival that would attract foreign tourists. It is doubtful that many such tourists travelled to Linz for specific events (other than existing festivals, such as the Ars Electronica Festivals). But having made the decision to visit Linz (as many did²⁹), those tourists were sure to find something of interest at any point of the title year.

In terms of character, it can be said that Linz achieved its objective of implementing a cultural programme that reflected the characteristics of Linz as well as wider regional, European and global dimensions. Linz’s cultural programme took place in many diverse and unusual venues and locations across the city. They included a trilogy of artistic exhibitions on the rooftops (Höhenrausch), in the shop-windows (Schaurausch) and in tunnels in the city (Tiefenrausch). Other venues included parks, gardens, courtyards, squares, the banks of the Danube and even a bus route. The cultural themes reflected positive characteristics of the city, such as technology, media and digital arts. But it also reflected characteristics that were perhaps less “palatable”, most notably Nazism, or less or “marketable” such as the steel industry. The images used to communicate the cultural programme were also grounded in a realistic rather than idealised vision of Linz – again, featuring the steel industry prominently, as well as different neighbourhoods and daily life more generally.

In terms of quality, it can be said that Linz achieved its objective of implementing a cultural programme of high quality and with an international perspective. The cultural programme featured a good number of “conventional” cultural events of international significance, such as the Ars Electronic Festival, the Brucknerfest, a visit of the Vienna Philharmonic and the Best of Austria exhibition of existing works from museums across Austria. But it also placed a strong emphasis on innovation, the creation of new works and the development of new forms of cultural expression:

²⁹ See Section 2.5.4 “Supporting economic development through culture”.

- Innovation was demonstrated through the use of venues (as described above), new concepts (such as the Hörstadt/Acoustic City cluster of activities focussed on acoustics) and new formats (such as short lunchtime readings of literature and daily organ recitals in Linz's churches).
- Many new works were performed/exhibited that would not otherwise have been created, including those directly developed by Linz09, direct commissions, co-productions with international artists and works solicited by open invitation / call for tender. For example, Linz09 commissioned historians to research Linz's contemporary history and develop materials and content for the "Kulturhauptstadt des Führers" exhibition; the "In Situ" exhibition featured inscriptions at key sites across the city commemorating sites of Nazi terror; greater prominence was given to the existing Heimspiel and Tanztagelabor events that support young local artists and choreographers respectively.
- New forms of cultural expression included those developed within the "Capital of Culture Neighbourhood of the Month" programme, such as a caravan serving as a platform for local residents to exhibit their works or a films documenting those using a particular bench in the Ebelsberg neighbourhood; another example was the written and photographic reflections of the 52 citizens that took turns to live for one week as a hermit in the tower of the cathedral.

3.5.2 Promoting the European dimension

The objective of promoting the European dimension was not the most prominent feature of Linz's objectives and of its cultural programme. Moreover, this European dimension very often featured as part of a more general international dimension. This point notwithstanding, Linz09 made a very significant contribution to the objective of promoting the European dimension of and through culture.

Many of the cultural activities featured a genuine international dimension. There were performances, commissions, collaborations and residencies featuring artists from 66 nations, many of whom were operators of international significance. The cultural programme also incorporated a number of European festivals/events, including some which already took place in the city such as the Ars Electronica Festival and the Crossing Europe film festival and others that took place in Linz for just one edition, such as the 10th European Youth Music Festival. Overall, although a minority of stakeholders stated that they would have preferred the cultural programme to have had a stronger international perspective, it can be said that Linz featured many more performers and works of international significance and/or from other countries in 2009 than would have been the case in the absence of ECOC designation.

Many of the activities also featured the exploration of European themes and issues as well as the celebration of European heritage or personalities related to the city. Most notably, Linz made a significant contribution to the exploration of the Nazi period and arguably more than any other Austrian city has done to date. This was not without its risks: the exploration of this issue did not sit comfortably with all stakeholders and local residents; the Kulturhauptstadt des Führers exhibition, in particular, was heavily criticised by some sections of the media, though it did receive broad international acclaim. But the evidence from the stakeholder interviews is that the exploration of this difficult topic helped Linz to come to terms with this difficult period in its history. Other, less controversial, themes also featured prominently such as the celebration of Johannes Kepler, (the seventeenth-century mathematician and astronomer), and Anton Bruckner (the nineteenth-century composer) both residents of Linz and figures of European significance.

Linz was also successful in fulfilling its second objective relating to the European dimension – that of promoting European tourism to the city. Much consideration was given as to *how* to promote Linz in the European tourism market and extensive efforts were made to undertake such promotion including “conventional” activities such as presenting at international trade and tourist fairs, but also the very unconventional medium of the “Linz Europa Tours” promoting Linz09 at cities eastwards along the Danube in 2008 and westwards along the Danube and the Rhine in 2009. As seen in Section 2.5.4, such efforts proved effective in increasing European tourism to Linz. Linz also received more than 100 international delegations, undertook 17 collaborations with the Vilnius ECOC and hosted an art symposium for past, present and future ECOC.

3.5.3 Supporting social development through culture

As noted earlier, the objectives of Linz09 implied a social dimension that related to changing the image of Linz held by its citizens through promoting a truer image that reflected and celebrated the city as it actually was. This social dimension also encompassed raising participation in and widening access to culture for local people. It also involved the promotion of intercultural dialogue and interaction at neighbourhood level.

The key stakeholders all reported that the ECOC had had a very positive effect on the opinions held by Linzers regarding their own city. In the absence of any survey of residents specifically considering this topic, it is impossible to verify and quantify the extent of any change in public opinion. However, evidence emerging from the cultural programme would appear to support the assertions of the stakeholders.

Linz has been successful in raising the participation of people in cultural activities in general. As noted earlier, total attendance at the various Linz09 events amounted to 3.5m. Whilst this figure includes the many visitors from other parts of Austria and other countries, it suggests that a large number of local people witnessed many more cultural events than in previous years. For example, the Linz09 team reported record attendances at venues during the first quarter of 2009 whilst the visitor data records a modest number of tourist visits during the same period – suggesting that local people accounted for the majority of the increase. Moreover, a survey undertaken in August 2009 reported that 50% of people in Linz (equivalent to 95,000 individuals), 30% of people in Upper Austria (equivalent to 420,000) and 7.5% of people in Austria (equivalent to 625,000) had visited a Linz09 event.³⁰

³⁰ Spectra, August 2009; quoted in Final summary report for Linz Kulturhauptstadt Europas GmbH

There was also large participation in many of the small events that would be unlikely to attract many tourists, such as the 13,000 people who attended the daily organ concerts in churches across the city.

Linz has also been successful in widening access to and participation in culture, through drawing in many people who would not usually be involved in cultural activities and/or through involving people in new ways. Of particular significance in this respect were:

- Activities involving young people: most notably “I like to move it, move it”, an extensive theatre project that involved 90 artists from across Austria and other countries in providing tuition to +2000 pupils and +700 teachers in around 100 schools across Upper Austria; each school received about two hours tuition per week over seven weeks, followed by a full week of tuition and culminating in a theatrical performance; one key success factor for this project was reported to be the fact that tuition took place in normal teaching periods, rather than out-of-school hours; another was the better rate of pay offered to the artists than would usually be the case for activity of this type (being based on teaching rather than artistic rates); other important activities included a choral event in the Hauptplatz involving 8,000 young people and the “Sunburn” theatre festival that attracted many young people.
- Participation of volunteers: around 1,000 people participated as volunteers in the “Flood” element of the Klangwolke (Cloud of Sound) festival; this involved them working over several weeks to create polythene animals for a procession through the town to the riverside park hosting the festival; around 200 volunteers were also involved in other projects (though this is significantly less than some other recent ECOC, such as Liverpool or Sibiu each of which featured +1000 volunteers)
- Activities that widened the cultural participation in/for different communities and neighbourhoods; most notably, the Capital of Culture Neighbourhoods of the Month attracted 15,250 visitors over nine months; also the Festival of Regions, which involved events in Linz’s southern suburbs (those furthest from the old city and thus most of the cultural institutions), with a focus on the participation of residents and performances in public spaces.
- Activities related to intercultural dialogue; Linz was successful in enabling some of the less prominent “cultures” of the city’s communities to be recognised and celebrated and also in creating concrete opportunities for people of different cultures or communities to interact. Again, the Neighbourhoods of the Month were particularly significant in this respect; for example, the Völkergarten (People’s Park) hosted events celebrating the different ethnic communities of the Neustadtviertel area of the city and the Neue Heimat neighbourhood hosted an artistic event that involved different ethnic communities as well as schools, youth centres and local businesses. Similarly, the Culture Pilots featured guided tours of the Wiener Straße conducted by members of the twelve different local ethnic communities. Another significant project was Bellevue (The Yellow House) located in a suburban park which enabled 33,000 residents of two neighbourhoods bisected by an urban motorway to attend events and interact with each other.

3.5.4 Supporting economic development through culture

In economic terms, Linz 09 sought to use the opportunity provided by the ECOC in order to support the city’s economic development in a number of key areas. Firstly it offered the possibility to re-think the city’s image and communicate a more accurate up-to-date brand to potential visitors. The delivery agency also sought to bring stakeholders together to improve the city’s tourist offering and develop the local hospitality industry (especially hotels, restaurants and travel companies). These would serve to

increase the number of day visits and overnight stays, moving the local visitor economy away from its traditional reliance on business travellers. This was augmented by a longer-term aim to support economic development by promoting projects that dealt with the interface between culture, technology and commerce, an area of major economic significance for Linz, with the hope that some of these activities would have commercial applications in the future.

The delivery agency allocated 19% of the total budget to marketing and communications, with significant efforts put into branding, merchandising and other creative products. As noted above, a total of 25,000 media reports mentioned Linz 09 – in 2,600 national and international media channels, with the web site reaching 855,650 users and 3.9m page impressions in 2009. A survey of residents of Linz concerning their perceptions of tourism commissioned in 2006 by the Linz Convention and Visitors Bureau found that 91% of the city's residents were aware that Linz would be ECOC and 88% rated the proposed ECOC as "good" or "very good".³¹ Another survey in August 2009, reported that 97% of people in Linz, 90% in Upper Austria and 60% in Austria considered themselves "very well informed" or "well informed" about the ECOC³² and Linz 09 won 12 communication or marketing prizes. Although not all interviewees felt the branding or media relations work were as good as they might have been, the consultations did provide a substantial amount of anecdotal evidence to support the assertion that ECOC had a major impact on visitor experiences and external perceptions of the city. The ECOC also served to promote partnership working, firstly between the city and regional governments (and the services or attractions they each manage), but arguably more significant were the new collaborations between tourism and culture functions of the city council. ECOC provided a powerful illustration of the economic value of culture, and the joint-working continues to promote the development of new packages for visitors.

Linz 09 had a major impact on the numbers of visitors from elsewhere in Austria and neighbouring countries. Linz 09's monitoring data lists 2,895,000 visitors in 2009 and 600,000 in 2006-2008. Data on overnight stays provided by the Tourism directorate shows that there was a 10% increase in stays compared to 2008, including a 24% increase in May, 20% in June and 8% in July. Domestic visitors were up by 20%, from Switzerland and the Czech Republic by 28% and from Germany by 16%. However there were large reductions in the number of visits from further afield, with Russia down 38.5%, USA down 32%, UK down 30% and Arab states down 27%. This is likely to be associated with the economic crisis, and a number of interviewees asserted that ECOC helped to minimise the impact of the crisis on Linz. Other Austrian cities reported a fall in overnight stays during 2009, Graz with 1.8%, Salzburg 3.2% and Vienna 4.6%. Linz's traditional reliance on business tourism suggests that without ECOC in 2009, the city could have seen an even larger reduction than these cities in 2009. In addition, Linz airport saw a 15% fall in overall passenger numbers between 2008 and 2009.³³

The work on improving the local hospitality industry has had tangible benefits, with three new hotels built and numerous others improved or extended. This equates to additional investment in the city of €67m and €6.5m respectively, and while it is hard to say that this is entirely due to ECOC, the year certainly provided a significant impetus.

³¹ www.linz09.at/en/detailseite/news/archiv/artikel/855348.html

³² Spectra Marktforschungsinstitut August 2009

³³ www.linz-airport.at/www/cm/system/galleries/download/documents/statistik.pdf

An important source of quantitative information on the economic impact of Linz 09 is an economic study of the impact of ECOC on the regional economy of Upper Austria. This was carried out by the economics department of Johannes Kepler University in Linz, using an established econometric modelling system, constructed on a sector-by-sector basis and with inputs provided by the city council, regional government from external sources. The entry parameters are the levels of investment in new infrastructure associated with ECOC (17 cultural and urban projects with combined total €323m), and details of high profile cultural events, when they took place, ticket prices and numbers of visitors attracted.

The model has been used to calculate both direct and indirect benefits to the region, in terms of income and employment over the period from 2005 to 2010. It calculates additional regional GDP of €426m (of which regional income of €302.5m) and 4,625 jobs created or secured. The vast majority of these effects stem from physical infrastructure projects, many (such as the upgraded and extended Postlingberg railway) funded by the city and region over and above the €61.5m allocated to Linz 2009 GmbH. The researchers suggest that if the tax remittances to national Government could also be taken into account, Linz09 and its associated infrastructure developments approach break-even point. The analysis also calculates the impact of purely cultural projects taking place in 2009, calculating that these led to additional regional GDP of €8.4m (including additional regional income of €5.9m) and 93 jobs created or secured.

The University also carried out a study on the economic impacts associated with the increased numbers of tourists and visitors visiting Linz during 2009 as well as of the improvements to the hotel infrastructure (taking place between 2006 and 2008). While the study explores the total contribution of the tourist economy to Linz, it also compares the data for 2008 and 2009. The study calculates year on year increases of between €3.5m and €7.2m in additional regional GDP, between €2.5m and €5.1m in additional regional income, and between 39 and 78 additional jobs³⁴. For the €67m spent on new hotel projects and €6.5m on improving or extending existing hotels, the study calculates additional regional GDP of between €64m and €78m (additional regional income of between €45m and €55m) and between 664 and 806 jobs created or secured.

3.6 Sustainability

3.6.1 . Cultural activities

Whilst the cultural programme of Linz09 was, of course, a one-off for the city, many of the activities initiated in 2009 will continue. These include, most notably, the Kepler Salon (a series of scientific dialogues hosted in the former home of the seventeenth-century astronomer), Turmeremit (Hermit of the Tower), the Next Comic (interdisciplinary festival for comics and cartoon art) and the Pixel Hotel (a network of newly-created of “hotel” rooms in unusual locations across the city). Of particular significance is the suite of activities related to the Hörstadt (Acoustic City). This saw the testing of new approaches to urban development issues such as noise pollution, which are currently being applied elsewhere. It is also reported that the Akustikon attraction is intended to continue under the ownership of the City of Linz, fulfilling both a research and exhibition role; moreover, the City of Linz and the Land of Upper Austria will continue a more general policy to promote good acoustics and noise abatement.

³⁴ The ranges stem from the estimates used in the study, i.e. spend per night at either €150 or €250, with between 70% and 85% of the additional investment remaining in the region. .

Several stakeholders felt that the main legacy of Linz 09 was connected more with the physical infrastructure created than with impact of continuing cultural activities. This consisted of new assets for the cultural sector, but also more general improvements to the urban form and local environment completed in the run-up to 2009. A number of additional developments are still in the pipeline, including the new Musiktheater and Tabakwerke development for creative industries. Some also stated that greater involvement of local cultural operators, the independent scene and institutions such as universities could have helped to create a longer-lasting legacy.

3.6.2 Cultural governance

The main stakeholders interviewed were unanimous in reporting that the ECOC had increased Linz's capacity for cultural governance in the future. The main benefits were in the form of greater experience (both of individuals and institutions), better collaboration, more positive attitudes and greater professionalism. One specific impact on cultural governance mentioned was the closer partnership between the cultural institutions and tourism bodies, forged in the context of the ECOC and enduring beyond 2009. Future working would continue to include shared strategic objectives and close collaboration and some of the ECOC marketing tools and concepts would continue to be used, for example, the "Linz.Verändert" slogan, the focus on "Culture, Industry, Nature" and the fortnightly "Neuner" publication featuring cultural and other events. Moreover, it was intended by the main stakeholders that culture and contemporary history would remain at the heart of Linz's tourist offer (in a way that it had not been before the ECOC). It is also reported that some of the innovations and new collaborations approaches within the tourism and hospitality sector – stimulated by the ECOC, if not all directly initiated by the Linz09 agency – are continuing, for example, "hotspots", a network of businesses in the hotel and catering sector.

As intended, Linz Kulturhauptstadt Europas GmbH, the delivery agency for the ECOC will cease all operations during 2010, with most staff expected to depart by mid-2010. Whilst some staff will take up posts in other cultural or public institutions in the city, many of the key individuals will depart Linz to take undertaken new ventures elsewhere. This of course represents a significant loss of expertise and it will thus be dependent on the main stakeholders to capitalise on the experience gained from the ECOC.

At the time of writing, there were no plans for any specific formalised partnership platform for ongoing cultural governance, though the partnership relations remained strong. "Leadership" of cultural governance has thus reverted to the two main public authorities – the City and the Land – that also happen to own most of the major cultural institutions, such as the Ars Electronica Center and the OK Offenes Kulturhaus. There is common agreement that Linz now has the cultural infrastructure to match its cultural aspirations, due to recent new developments (given impetus by the ECOC and completed in the years leading up to the title year), as well as a new Music Theatre under construction and due to open in 2013. The challenge now, as reported by some stakeholders is thus to develop a new vision for the next few years. Indeed, in one sense, the central aim of the City's Cultural Development Plan has been achieved with the completion of the ECOC.

The two public authorities thus report that they are in the process of reflecting on the title year, considering the recommendations made by the departing artistic director of Linz09 and drawing up new strategic guidelines.

3.7 Conclusions

3.7.1 Success of the ECOC

The Linz09 ECOC was based on a solid partnership amongst the key players, working to a plan developed several years earlier and that was already committed to extensive investment in cultural infrastructure across the city. Of fundamental importance was the commitment of the three public authorities to commit a very significant sum of money at an early stage, but also the attention devoted to the building of consensus across different levels of government and political support across political party lines. This partnership enabled not only the ECOC title to be secured, but also the delivery team to be given every opportunity to make the ECOC a success. The partners in Linz, particularly the three main public authorities took a very bold approach in granting to the newly-recruited artistic director complete artistic autonomy and full discretion over expenditure. Granting such freedom was not certain to lead to a cultural programme that was successful *and* that satisfied the political priorities of the three public bodies – representing a very significant risk, given the sums of public money involved. But the boldness of the partners appears to have been rewarded: the cultural programme itself was one of the largest and most innovative ECOC programmes to date. It fulfilled the stated intention of reflecting the contemporary reality of Linz, providing a 365-day offer and widening access to and participation in high quality cultural activities. Moreover, each of the three public authorities (and the majority of other stakeholders) was broadly satisfied with the eventual cultural programme.

It could be argued that granting such freedom to the artistic direction is the price that any city must pay if it is to convince operators of proven international calibre to commit up to five years of their career to an ECOC. Linz did succeed in attracting individuals with extensive expertise and experience of the international cultural sector. This entailed the risk that such "outsiders" would develop a cultural programme based on their own pre-conceived ideas rather one that was appropriate to the specific context of Linz. In practice, the Linz09 team did bring its own ideas, but it adapted those ideas to the specific context of Linz and was also open to ideas emerging from Linz itself. The Linz09 team also brought a fresh perspective on the city and committed itself to developing a cultural programme that both reflected Linz as it was but also sought to take it in a new direction – perhaps going beyond what the existing partners had imagined. An important balance was thus struck, that of setting clear and bold artistic direction but maintaining sufficient consensus with the partners and existing cultural institutions to keep them enthused and co-operative. Not everything worked perfectly in that respect: the public authorities were at times nervous about their lack of control, most partners disagreed with at least some of the projects implemented and the economic and media partners would have preferred something they could have "sold" more easily, e.g. to the international tourist market. But these concerns should not be seen as detracting from the generally very positive assessment of the artistic direction by the partners. Indeed, overall, there is a strong consensus that the artistic direction of Linz09 was effective.

The overall objectives of the ECOC were generally met, in terms of positioning Linz as a *contemporary* cultural city (with a cultural offering that is very different to other Austrian cities such as Salzburg and Vienna), strengthening the local cultural sector, raising the city's profile, improving the tourist "offer" and thus attracting more tourists, boosting local civic pride and building the networks and alliances to sustain momentum. As such, Linz can be considered a successful ECOC.

3.7.2 Lessons learnt

- Strong artistic direction and effective programme implementation is likely to require the delivery agency to be given very significant freedom to operate, in terms of artistic autonomy and discretion over expenditure. This loss of control poses very significant risks, particularly for public bodies that invest significant financial and political “capital” and thus requires those bodies to have confidence in the team appointed.
- Such freedom is likely to be a pre-requisite for attracting the very best international talent to commit themselves to taking responsibility for an ECOC.
- Early commitment of financial resources by the main public authorities lays the basis for an effective ECOC. It reduces risk, enables a strong team to be recruited and leaves that team to free to focus on raising additional funding from other sources such as corporate sponsorship.
- Creating an effective “welcome” for tourists and visitors requires a comprehensive approach that considers hospitality across the city – not just the catering and hotel sectors, but all institutions and businesses that may have contact with visitors, e.g. public transport operators, shops, taxis, etc. This requires a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach that enables not only the necessary skills to be acquired, but also an *attitude* of hospitality.
- Communicating effectively with/through the media requires careful consideration to be given to the nature and timing of information provided and to the interests of each type of media. Local media will give coverage throughout the life of an ECOC (from nomination through the development phase to the end of the title year) but requires a continuous flow of news to communicate. National media may prove problematic where they are not accustomed to giving extensive coverage to the cultural life of a provincial city; their interest may take longer to awaken. The international cultural media is used to covering different ECOC each year and will typically aim to start gathering information about the title holder and its cultural programme around 3-6 months before the start of the title year. Media interest in general may be slow in the development phase but intensifies during this period and then can prove difficult to manage.
- The sheer size of an ECOC programme can prove hard to communicate and difficult for the media and public to absorb; it may be best to emphasise different events in different media, different formats, etc.

4.0 Vilnius

In this section, we offer a description of Vilnius and its cultural programme, before presenting findings against the headings of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. We also offer conclusions and lessons learnt, which have informed our overall conclusions in section 5. Our findings are based on the research tasks described in section 2.4, i.e. review of literature and data relating to the Vilnius ECOC, interviews of the managing teams and consultation of key stakeholders and cultural operators.

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The city

Vilnius is the capital city of Lithuania and the administrative, cultural, economic and political centre of the country. It is also Lithuania's biggest city, with more than 550,000 inhabitants. The city's long history is reflected in the diversity of architecture of its Old Town which features a mix of gothic, renaissance, baroque, neoclassical and Jugendstil³⁵ architecture and which has also been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1994. For over five centuries, until the 18th century, Vilnius had been the political and cultural centre of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Vilnius also hosts one of the oldest universities in Eastern Europe. In recent years Vilnius was the fastest growing city in Lithuania.

The city presents itself as having been hospitable, open and tolerant throughout the ages. Throughout the course of its history three faiths merged: paganism and both western and eastern Christianity. Vilnius has always been home to a variety of ethnic and religious groups and has strong Polish, Russian, Jewish (Litvak), German and Karaite communities. The city played a special role in the history of Jewish community and culture; indeed, perhaps 45% of its population before the Second World War was Jewish. Vilnius has also had a major impact on Poland's cultural history.

4.1.2 Cultural sector

At the time of the ECOC, Vilnius was already the centre of Lithuania's cultural life, enjoying a rich cultural offering from its 20 theatres, 24 museums, 20 art galleries and annual festivals devoted to music, fine arts, theatre, dance and literature. It is also home to the most significant cultural institutions in Lithuania, including the Lithuanian National Philharmonic, the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Lithuanian Art Museum, the National Drama Theatre, the Lithuanian National Museum and the M.Mazvydas National Library (named after the author of the first book printed in Lithuanian).

The rapid transformations of the 1990s and 2000s are also reflected in a growing contemporary and alternative cultural scene – featuring the many private and non-governmental cultural operators that have come into existence since the end of communism. Vilnius is both the current home of the avant-garde Jonas Mekas Visual Arts Center (which hosts part of the Fluxus collection) and also the future home of the Guggenheim Hermitage Museum. Vilnius's Contemporary Arts Centre gave birth to the Baltic contemporary art triennial, which is gaining increasing international recognition and vogue festivals are very popular especially the avant-garde Mados Infekcija (Fashion Infection) and Baltijos Mada (Baltic

³⁵ Also known as *art nouveau*.

Fashion). Jazz plays a significant role through annual festivals like Vilnius Jazz, Mama Jazz and Jumbo Concerts in the Philharmonic Society at Vilnius Festival. Vilnius has also made an important contribution to the modern dance movement, not least through the New Baltic Dance contemporary dance festival. Finally, venues, such as the Kultflux and the Vilnius Triennale programme, exhibit works by young artists from Lithuania and across Europe, often using diverse venues such as public spaces and vacant buildings within the city centre.

4.2 Cultural programme

4.2.1 Aims and objectives

The initiative to host the ECOC was taken in anticipation of Lithuania's accession to the EU when, in 2001, the Minister of Culture discussed with the European Commission the possibility of Vilnius hosting the 2009 ECOC.³⁶ Following the accession of ten new Member States (including Lithuania) in 2004, an informal selection process was started for the 2009 title and on that basis the Minister of Culture submitted the nomination of Vilnius for the 2009 title in his letter of 27 December 2004 to the President of the Commission. In anticipation of the entry into force of an amended Decision of the Parliament and of the Council, the European selection panel was content to consider the proposal. In the event, the situation was formalised by an amendment to the legal basis (Decision 649/2005/EC), which added the ten new Member States to the "Order of Entitlement" in Annex One of the 1999 Decision.

The rationale for hosting the ECOC title in 2009 was very closely linked to the strategy for the celebration of the Millennium of Lithuania in the same year. Interviewees indicated that it was hoped this linkage would enable the provision of a wider cultural programme – and not just for the city but for the country as a whole. In addition interviewees stated that hosting an ECOC was perceived as an opportunity to increase the visibility of the city and its culture in Europe. Strengthening the identity of the city abroad was seen as important aspect of the ECOC.

The application for Vilnius states that the mission of the programme was the actualisation of European cultural experience and its vigorous and versatile interpretation, making this experience an essential property of the modern life of the community and enriching it with new energy and creation.

The application went on to set a broad list of overall objectives, relating to the European dimension and to social issues, as reproduced below in Table 4.1. The original application and its objectives was a basis for the development of the concept of the programme in 2007.

Table 4.1 Objectives of Vilnius ECOC at application stage

Application
Overall goals and objectives
Consolidating the position and international recognition of the city, as an ambitious, vigorous and creative cultural centre, thus contributing to the recognition of the international significance of the city
Defining a new cultural identity for Vilnius, where culture is the driving force of communication, an

³⁶ Had Lithuania not acceded to the EU, it would still have been possible for Vilnius to hold the ECOC title under the terms of Article 4 of the 1999 Decision, which allows non-Member States to participate in the Action.

Application
important part of everyday life, and the source of pride and self-respect
Assistance to foreign visitors to discover Vilnius – a city of vitality and culture
Promotion of the involvement of local residents in the cultural life of the city – increasing the audience for cultural events both in the city and in the country
Significant improvement of the cultural infrastructure of the city
Celebration of Lithuania's millennium and presentation of this jubilee of the state at international scale
Development of high-quality new, advanced and sustainable cultural projects of international scale in Vilnius; injection of more life into the existing cultural institutions
Focus on the new European generation born in the independent Lithuania, communication of common European values and promotion of involvement in creation of the future Europe's culture
European dimension
Openness to cultural influences and creative ideas from all over the world.
Key projects will cover the whole of Europe and as many European countries as possible be involved in them
Co-operation between different partners at the national and international level
European co-production projects of more than one year and long-term cultural co-operation focussing on the talents of European artists
The main events in European history and heritage will be actualised as well as their significance for contemporary life (firstly, baroque and its impact on cultural development)
Active cooperation with other European cities and development of joint projects with foreign twin cities.
Special joint cultural projects with other ECOC. Special projects in co-operation with the Nordic Council of Ministers and Baltic Assembly.
Promotion of tourism in European countries
Social goals and objectives
Strengthening national pride
Strengthening the feeling of being European
Strengthening the international competitiveness of Vilnius
Actualisation and new interpretation of cultural traditions of the country and the city
Incentives for the general public to participate more actively in the cultural activities of the city and the development of its future capacities
Inclusion of the different national communities in the ECOC events
Involving the younger generation in the development and implementation of the cultural programme
Combination of high, elite and pop culture
Providing free events to attract people who usually do not participate in culture
Broadening cultural outlook of society by new ideas and works of art
Improvement of the city's quality of life, creation of new infrastructure for the use of the community
Promotion of tourism
Employment creation
Development of a favourable environment for investment

Application

Strengthening the motivation of local residents to learn foreign languages

Source: Vilnius ECOC Application

The table above shows that the original application included a wide range of objectives which cover different aspects of culture sector development, the European dimension, increasing the image of the country, increasing tourism and cultural infrastructure development. The objectives are very broad and they do not provide the focus for the ECOC but rather a framework for the development of more specific goals and objectives.

4.2.2 Changes to the objectives and themes

The broad objectives presented in the original application were the basis for the creation of the concept *Culture Live* which was also the main theme of the cultural programme. This concept contains the vision of a "European capital of the future that is open to people, cultures and innovation". This vision was to be achieved through pursuing the ECOC's mission "to create a new European cultural experience in which culture is a part of modern life and each individual is its creator". The aim of the cultural programme was also stated as being to "promote dialogue and tolerance in Europe and other parts of the world, as well as to elevate culture as a virtue in modern society and as the driving force in city development". This would "distinguish Vilnius as one of the most modern and dynamic cities in Central and Eastern Europe, known in the world as a contemporary cultural centre of attraction, and one with a unique and apparent identity that is open to new ideas and investments".³⁷

At the same time as the concept for the ECOC was developed, more specific objectives were identified. The objectives contained in the original application did not change per se but were consolidated into just three in Government Resolution no. 150 of 6 February 2008, covering the involvement of citizens in cultural activities, increasing the visibility of Vilnius abroad - including the development of cultural tourism in the country - and developing the cultural infrastructure of the city (Table 4.2). As shown in the table, the Government Resolution also specified the intended results of the ECOC.

However, whilst these remained the stated objectives of the ECOC, the extent to which they were pursued in practice is less certain. Early in the title year, the budget for the ECOC was cut by approximately 40%, as described below³⁸. In the light of this difficult situation, the final selection of projects was reported by stakeholders to have been determined on the basis of pragmatism (e.g. where binding contracts had already been entered into) rather than on the basis of any defined set of criteria or on the intended objectives.

Table 4.2 Final objectives and intended results of Vilnius ECOC

Government Resolution No.150 (6 February 2008)
Overall objectives
Cultural, artistic and social projects – to promote the cultural and civic activities of residents in the culture of today's contemporary European society in order to create conditions for all to become authors and participants in the cultural programme

³⁷ Source: website of Vilnius 2009: www.vilnius2009.lt

³⁸ See section 4.2.3.

Marketing and communications activities in Lithuania and abroad – to increase the contribution of cultural initiatives towards the expansion of tourism in Vilnius and the country, investment opportunities, and economic development

Development of cultural infrastructure – to implement the development of cultural structures by renovating them, making them suitable for the disabled and utilising new forms of construction, and to develop and reconstruct transportation and information systems in Vilnius

Results

At least three million people will visit and participate in events

At least 300 cultural, artistic and social, as well as marketing and communications projects will be implemented

At least 3-4 new cultural events will become an ongoing tradition in the city of Vilnius

Tourism will grow by at least 15% in Vilnius and in Lithuania

In major countries abroad, awareness of Lithuania and Vilnius (and a positive opinion of both) will increase by at least 3%

in major countries abroad 50% of Lithuania's residents will give the Programme a positive evaluation

At least 18 cultural venues with disabled access will be built or renovated, as well as at least 11 new and renovated public venues

Source: Government Resolution no.150 (6 February 2008) ³⁹

4.2.3 Activity during the development phase

On 28 September 2006, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania founded the delivery agency in the form of a public institution "Vilnius – Europos kultūros sostinė 2009" ("Vilnius – European Capital of Culture 2009"). The agency was assigned the task of implementing the "National Programme" entitled "Vilnius - European Capital of Culture 2009". It came into operation in October 2006, but with most of its activities beginning in 2007. During the first year, most attention was given to the preparation of the culture programme and its promotion in Lithuania and abroad.

The concept of the culture programme was prepared at the beginning of the 2007, as well as the structure and the main parts of the programme. The following elements were included at that stage: special events, conferences and meetings, European Art Programme, Culture (Re)Discovering Programme, Living History Programme and People Programme.

The selection of the projects to be included in the culture programme took place in different stages:

- Vilnius city municipality in 2006 initiated a call for proposals entitled "bank of ideas". Some 57 projects were selected for further development;
- Further calls for proposals were organised by the delivery agency every quarter in 2007;
- In addition, separate calls for proposals were organised for the large scale events i.e. "LUX Show of Lights", "Art in Unexpected Spaces" and "Street Music Day".

The call for proposals organised in 2007 by the delivery agency used the following criteria for selecting projects (in no particular order):

³⁹ www.vilnius2009.lt/images/naujienos/vyriausybes_nutarimas_nr%20_150.doc

- European dimension – the relevance of the theme at the European level, participation of international partners;
- Innovation;
- Potential for international dissemination;
- Relevance to the objectives of the Vilnius European Capital of Culture;
- The experience and the qualifications of the project promoter;
- Relevance of the project to wider society;
- Sustainability of the project; and
- Appropriate budget and the potential to attract other finance.

Following the development work in 2007, two government resolutions on 6 February 2008 approved the objectives, financing and implementation of the cultural programme, as well as the monitoring arrangements. First, Government Resolution no.150 (6 February 2008) confirmed the budget for the cultural programme for the period 2008-2010 as 65m LTL (€19m)⁴⁰. It also appointed the Ministry of Culture (in co-operation with Vilnius City Municipality) as the overall co-ordinator of the ECOC. The same resolution also approved the objectives and intended results of the ECOC, as presented in Table 4.2 above. Secondly, Government Resolution No.119 (6 February 2008) appointed a monitoring commission headed by the Prime Minister. The commission was intended to monitor the implementation of the ECOC and of the "Millennium of Lithuania Programme". Its 34 members included representatives of public institutions and organisation, such as the Ministry of Culture, Vilnius City Municipality, the delivery agency (Vilnius – Europos kultūros sostinė 2009) and Vilnius Academy of Arts.

However, the ECOC was subject to a number of changes before 2009 and in the first half of the title year. First, the new government that took office after the general election at the end of 2008 faced a very large budget deficit and reduced the budget for the cultural programme by about 40%. Secondly, the total number of staff employed by the delivery agency was reduced by about one-half early in 2009. Thirdly, there were two changes of director of the delivery agency – the first in 2007 and the second early in 2009. The result of these changes was that some projects started much later than planned and a significant number of projects (previously selected following the calls for proposals) did not take place at all.⁴¹

4.2.4 Activity during the title year

The eventual programme implemented in 2009 stated its vision as being to make Vilnius 2009 a "European capital of the future that is open to people, cultures and innovation". This vision was to be achieved through pursuing the ECOC's mission, stated as being "to create a new European cultural experience in which culture is a part of modern life and each individual is its creator". The aim of the cultural programme was also stated as being to "promote dialogue and tolerance in Europe and other parts of the world, as well as to elevate culture as a virtue in modern society and as the driving force in city development". This would "distinguish Vilnius as one of the most modern and dynamic cities in Central and Eastern Europe, known in the world as a contemporary cultural centre of attraction, and one with a unique and apparent identity that is open to new ideas and investments".⁴²

⁴⁰ At €1 = 3.4654 LTL, average interbank rate on 6.2.2008 (www.oanda.com).

⁴¹ See section 3.4.1.

⁴² Source: website of Vilnius 2009: www.vilnius2009.lt

However, due to the reduced budget of the cultural programme at the beginning of the year 2009 many of the proposed activities, as we have noted, were not implemented. Interviewees indicated that, whilst the objectives were not formally revised, the reduction of the budget of the cultural programme had an impact on the balance of activities: most of the *European Art Programme* was retained, whilst much of the *People Programme* was cut. To a certain extent, this reflected a pragmatic choice: binding contracts had more often been entered into in the case of projects within the European Art Programme, since such projects tended to be larger and feature international artists. In contrast, the People Programme mostly featured small, local projects where binding commitments had not yet been made.

Notwithstanding the difficulties faced in the development phase and first few months of the title year, this overall vision was pursued as far as possible and some 100 projects and approximately 1500 events were implemented in Vilnius in 2009, attracting around 1.5m visitors. These projects and events were implemented under the broad heading of *Culture Live*, which offered a strong emphasis on involving society in creative processes and enabling people to be active participants in cultural life. The programme consisted of seven parts which are presented in the text box overleaf.

- *Special events*, including the opening ceremony other events creating new cultural traditions in Vilnius i.e. Street Musician Day, Let There be Night!, LUX - Festival of Lights, Art in Unusual Places.
- *Conferences and meetings*, including those hosted by international cultural organisations, conferences on issues of cultural development, etc. such as the European Festival Association (EFA) general assembly, and the 22nd European Meeting of Cultural Journals.
- *European Art Programme* which included projects implemented in partnership with cultural organisations and artists from other European countries, as well as the "European School of Arts" project. Highlights of the programme included exhibitions such as Dialogue of Colour and Sound, Works by Mikalojus Konstantinas Ciurlionis and his Contemporaries, Cold War Modern and Design 1945-1970. The London Symphony Orchestra prepared the programme that was performed during the opening of the international festival "Vilnius Festivals". The orchestra, led by one of the world's leading conductors, the Russian, Valery Gergiev, performed "Lithuanian Saga" created by Rodion Shchedrin specifically for Vilnius. The special cinema programme "Crossing Borders" was presented in the framework of the Scanorama festival.
- *Culture (Re)Discovery Programme*, which comprised events designed to reveal the multi-cultural aspects of Vilnius (Rediscovery) and to highlight Lithuania's ties with the cultures of other countries in Europe and worldwide. Some of the events were Klezmers' festival, the Niko Pirosmeni exhibition, and the first international "Vilniukai" congress.
- *Living History Programme*, which consisted of reminiscences of various historical periods and a glimpse at the history of Vilnius as a European city in order to understand the present day and the future. One of the projects included in this part of the programme is "24 hours USSR - 1984. Drama of Survival in Soviet Bunker".
- *People Programme*, comprising projects and events initiated by different communities, different generations and different social groups aimed at promoting integration and mutual understanding between residents and "guests" of Vilnius. One of the highlights of this programme was the Haiku for Vilnius initiative.

4.2.5 Financing

The original application envisaged total government funding for the ECOC of more than €467m over the period 2004-2009. Of this, the majority was to be devoted to infrastructure development (€443m). The original budget for the cultural programme was €23m over this period, with €12.9m (44m litas) devoted to the title year itself. The cultural programme of Vilnius was thus intended to be one of the smaller ECOC programmes, even before the budget cut.⁴³

The breakdown of the budget at application stage is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Proposed expenditure for Vilnius ECOC in the original application for 2009 and its preparatory years starting from 2004

Proposed Expenditure	Euro (m)
Application preparation/remunerations, translations, layout, printing, expert consultations, organisational trips etc.	0.021
Remunerations	0.489
Business trips, administrative expenses	0.093
Programme expenses	23.057
Information and marketing	0.978
Documentation and assessment	0.044
Infrastructure development	442.829
Other	0.144
Total	467.657

Source: Vilnius application for ECOC title

The actual funding received for the implementation of ECOC by source of funding and expenditures during 2007-2010 is presented in the tables 4.4 and 4.5 below.

Table 4.4 Sources of finance, 2007-2010

Financing sources	Euro (m)
Ministry of Culture / state budget	51.25
Vilnius City Municipality	11.40
European Union	1.32
Other	0.15
Total	64.12

⁴³ As noted in section 2.2.6, Palmer/Rae Associates report that average expenditure per ECOC across the 1995-2004 period was €36.9m.

Table 4.5 Main types of expenditure, 2007-2010

Expenditure	Euro (m)
Cultural Programme	12.42
Marketing	4.17
Administration	2.89
Infrastructure	44.36
Other	0.28
Total	64.12

As noted earlier, the budget for the cultural programme in the title year was cut by around 40%. As it is provided in the tables above nearly all the funding for ECOC came from the national government, with the municipality providing a modest amount of additional funding, some of it in kind. The government funding was in practice administered by the Ministry of Culture (60%) and Vilnius city municipality (40%). As well as cuts to projects within the cultural programme (as discussed in section 3.2.4), the entire budget for communication and marketing in 2009 was cut.

In addition to the public funding, a strategy to attract private funding was developed in 2007. Four groups of partner organisations were developed:

- *Official culture partners* who supported the whole ECOC cultural programme and were required to provide support of at least €435,000 (1.5m litas) in funding or €1.3m (4.5m litas) in-kind. It was decided that up to 6 organisations could be official culture partners;⁴⁴
- *Culture project partners* who supported a project with at least €3,000 (10,000 litas) in funding or €8,700 (30,000 litas) in-kind;
- *Culture project friends* who provided support of up to €3,000 (10,000 litas) in funding or up to €8,700 (30,000 litas) in-kind;
- *Information partners* who provided 80% to 100% discount on their production or services.

Stakeholders indicated that most of the private funding was attracted through in-kind support. Starting in 2007 the advertising firm JCDecaux became an important official culture partner, providing billboard space for promoting the ECOC. FlyLAL was an official culture partner in 2008. The telecommunications company Omnitel also joined the ECOC as a partner organisation. In 2008 the total amount received from private funding in kind and as financial support was €1.8m (6.2m litas). Overall, over 300 different private companies supported various ECOC events.

The EU funding of €1.5m specifically for the cultural programme co-financed a project called "European School of Arts". This project provided support to young artists and to higher education schools of art. Two types of activities were implemented:

- creative workshops and residencies for young artists; and

⁴⁴ The exchange rate is 3.4528 litas to 1 euro. This exchange rate has been fixed since 2002.

- cooperation projects between higher schools of art.

In total, 13 sub-projects were implemented which supported 800 foreign and Lithuanian art students and young artists, with the results of these activities being disseminated to a wider audience.⁴⁵

Vilnius's application included significant planned expenditure for the development of new cultural facilities. In practice, some €44.36m were spent on the infrastructure development in 2007-2010 as indicated in Table 4.5 above. Some of the infrastructure developments were co-financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). These included venues such as the Arts Printing House and the Design Innovation Centre of Arts Academy that went on to host events within the cultural programme of the ECOC. ERDF also co-financed other investments in the more general infrastructure of Vilnius, which helped improve its attractiveness to visitors and its accessibility, although these investments were not explicitly linked to the ECOC.

4.3 Relevance

As noted, the overall motivation for Vilnius to host the ECOC title was linked to the provision of a wider cultural programme for the celebration of the Millennium of Lithuania in 2009 and to increase the visibility and improve the image of the city in Europe as well as outside. The revised objectives do not specifically mention the links with the Millennium of Lithuania but it includes the objective of developing cultural and civic activities which are in line with the provision of a wider cultural programme for both ECOC and the Millennium of Lithuania. However, during the title year there were no links between the two. Moreover, stakeholders identified that these two programmes had very different foci and eventually it was concluded that it was not a good idea to link these two programmes together. Promotion of the city abroad and increasing cultural tourism are explicitly mentioned in the objectives of the ECOC and are in line with the city's motivation to host the ECOC title.

Vilnius's objectives included in the original application, as mentioned above, were very broad and more specific objectives were developed in 2008.⁴⁶ Analysis of the relevance of this revised set of objectives and of the activities in the cultural programme to the objectives set at European level (which constitute the three specific objectives in the intervention logic for this evaluation) is presented below. This analysis must, of course, be considered in the context of the severe cut in the ECOC's budget which substantially reduced its potential impact on these objectives.

First of all, *promotion of the European dimension of and through culture* is not specifically highlighted in the objectives of the ECOC. However, the interviews of stakeholders identified that the European dimension was strongly embedded in the activities of the eventual culture programme (albeit a programme that was much reduced in size). The overall aim of the ECOC was to increase the visibility of Lithuanian cultural life in Europe and this was emphasised in the development stage of the cultural programme since the European dimension was included in the project selection criteria. Most of the cultural operators consulted highlighted that opportunities to cooperate with their international partners and include thematic aspects stressing the links with the cultural traditions in other European countries

⁴⁵ See section 3.5.2 for more information regarding this element of the cultural programme.

⁴⁶ Government Resolution no.150 (6 February 2008).

were very important for their projects. It was the rationale and the motivator for them to be involved in the cultural programme.

Second, the EU-level objective of *developing cultural activities* was specifically mentioned within the revised Vilnius objectives. It emphasised the promotion of cultural and civic activities as a means to enable everyone to become active participants in the culture programme. This was embedded in the *Culture Live* concept and the activities undertaken within the cultural programme were relevant to both the national and the EU-wide objective. However, as noted, stakeholders indicated that due to the budget cuts most of the projects involving local communities which would have been aimed at enabling them to become active participants of the cultural programme were lost. Most of the projects from the *People Programme* were not implemented after the budget cuts.

Third, two of Vilnius's objectives are in line with the EU-wide objective to *support social and economic development of the city through culture*. The activities addressing this objective were linked to promoting the city as a cultural destination and improving the image of the city. A number of communication and marketing activities were undertaken in 2007 and 2008 to promote the ECOC and cultural tourism to Vilnius, although in 2009 the budget was reduced to zero.⁴⁷ As noted, the activities that would have implemented the social development objectives bore the brunt of the cuts that were imposed.

Overall, Vilnius's stated objectives and many of the activities were relevant to the EU-level objectives. The stakeholder consultations identified that pursuing these objectives was also strongly relevant to the culture sector in the country. Importantly most of the stakeholders indicated that the cultural projects which were undertaken were relevant for both achieving the objectives of ECOC and development of the culture sector in Vilnius. Unfortunately, as we have seen, the budget for activities within the culture programme was significantly reduced and therefore the full potential of the ECOC to achieve impact on these objectives was very much reduced. Whilst more of the activity related to the European dimension was retained, the eventual cultural programme was less relevant to the objective of supporting the social and economic development of the city.

4.4 Efficiency

4.4.1 Governance and management

Governance and management were significantly problematic features of the Vilnius ECOC. Indeed, the governance and management were so problematic that they had major negative effects on the programme of events and ultimately on the overall impacts of the year.

The timeline is long and complex but in brief, it runs as follows. The EC selection panel approved Vilnius's application in April 2005, but the delivery agency (a public institution) that was to develop and implement the programme was not inaugurated until September 2006 and was not physically established until February 2007. A team of three directors was put in place mid-way through 2007 (a programme director with overall responsibility including artistic direction, an executive director responsible for developing and then running the administration, and organising tendering procedures, and a communications director). Already behind schedule, the delivery agency had to take on several tasks

⁴⁷ See section 3.4.2 for a more detailed discussion of the communication activities of the ECOC.

during 2007 and 2008, simultaneously building a team (the staffing complement grew to 27 by the end of 2007), establishing itself as a coherent organisation, as well as starting to implement activities, including a communications strategy.

The governance arrangements were not satisfactorily bedded down during the period in the run up to 2009, and were subject to change. Although there was a board, an Advisory Council and a 'founders' meeting' in place at various times the balance of interests within these bodies and the ways in which they interacted with one another was unstable. They were considerably affected by the shifting national and local political scene. The question of funding was also not satisfactorily resolved. So acute did these related issues of governance and finance become that the European Commission itself became involved, sending an expert on a fact-finding mission to Vilnius during the middle of 2008.

In the latter half of 2008 national elections caused further – and major – uncertainties, and late in the year and early into title year itself the financial situation worsened, with the risk of substantial budget cuts emerging, and leading the European Commission to initiate high level meetings between the Commissioner and the Minister of Culture in early 2009. The perception within Vilnius (as reported by some stakeholders) was that the ECOC was on the brink of a major crisis; cultural operators considered complete withdrawal and engaged in political lobbying in parliament in their attempts to ensure the ECOC went ahead. The common view amongst interviewees was that the budget crisis was poorly handled, with many operators finding out about the difficulties by rumour.

It was not until the second and third months of 2009 that the situation began to be resolved. A clear and simple structure was put in place for governance, a new director was put in place at the agency, and procedures were established for determining which projects would be cut from the programme. Staffing levels at the agency were also cut. Although budget cuts were indeed made early in 2009, a programme of events did take place, although, as shown in other parts of this chapter, it was adversely affected in a number of significant ways.

There were a number of factors which led to these difficulties, and we discuss them in the 'Lessons learnt' section at the end of the chapter.

4.4.2 Communication

The marketing and communication activities in Vilnius were implemented by the delivery agency together with outsourced specialist agencies. The communication strategy comprises two elements:

- promotion of ECOC abroad; and
- presenting the programme for residents of Vilnius and Lithuania.

Marketing and communication abroad

The presentation of *Vilnius – European Capital of Culture* for tourism and media operators abroad started after the title was allocated to Vilnius in 2005. Vilnius City Municipality highlighted that Vilnius would host the title in 2009 at international tourism fairs as well as in its publications for tourism operators. After the delivery agency was established in 2006, it took the lead in developing and implementing the communication and marketing strategies for Vilnius. The most intensive marketing and communication campaign abroad was implemented in 2008.

The following goals were identified for the promotion and communication strategy abroad in 2008:

- To disseminate information to key target countries about Lithuania's millennium celebrations and ECOC title in 2009;
- To inform target groups about the ECOC programme;
- To disseminate information about Vilnius and Lithuania through foreign media channels;
- To contribute to improving the image and increasing the visibility of Vilnius and Lithuania; and
- To contribute to increasing tourist numbers in Lithuania.

Eleven target countries were identified, namely Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Russia, UK and Ukraine. The marketing campaign included TV and billboard ads, press articles about ECOC and the Millennium of Lithuania. Cooperation with the Tourism Information Centres and Embassies of Lithuania in the relative countries was ensured to increase the effectiveness of the campaign. Overall, Vilnius was presented in most of the biggest publications in Europe such as the *Financial Times*. There were 211 publications/media reports initiated in the media abroad between October and December 2008.

A number of other activities were undertaken to increase the visibility of and attract attention to the ECOC and Millennium of Lithuania. For instance, the delivery agency in cooperation with Embassies and Tourism Information Centres initiated a campaign to give the sculpture "Angel" by Vaidas Ramoska as a present to target cities during presentations of the Vilnius programme. Importantly the marketing campaign with the slogan "Hello, We Discovered You – You Discover Us" was implemented in eight countries in spring 2008. Links with journalists in various countries were established and a number of visits for international journalists were initiated.

The stakeholder consultation indicated that the communication campaign abroad was very successful and was the biggest coordinated communication and marketing campaign promoting the city and the country since independence. Although the budget difficulties meant that no communication activities abroad took place in 2009 with the exception of presenting sculpture "Angel" in Stockholm together with the information on the programme, stakeholders argued that this did not have a significant impact since most were scheduled to take place in 2008. In cooperation with Tourism Information Centres, Lithuanian embassies and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs the ECOC was also presented to more than 400 foreign journalists from the international media and foreign public broadcasters in 2009. Nonetheless, it was not possible to keep providing information to neighbouring countries and the opportunity was lost to build on the existing work and to capture the attention of the foreign media during the year itself.

Marketing and communication in Lithuania

The communication campaign in Lithuania focused on presenting the ECOC programme to national and local stakeholders. In 2007 and 2008 the main attention was given to developing the programme's identity, creating websites and marketing the specific events. Some 258 press releases were prepared and distributed to the media in Lithuania in 2008. According to media monitoring data in 2008 most of the press coverage was neutral (66.6%), 25.4% was positive and 8% negative. However, it is important to note that even though the amount of the negative information was not high however it was consistent and attracted most of the attention and the debates before and during the title year. Majority of the stakeholders mentioned that the negative media coverage had significant importance for the ECOC. Moreover, cultural operators mentioned that due to the negative information the celebratory aspect of the

ECOC was lost. Therefore, the negative information on ECOC had significant implications for the whole programme.

The 2009 budget cuts had a strong impact on the communication of ECOC in the country; corporate communication was not possible. Whilst ECOC was communicated through the project "European School of Arts" and using sponsors' support, and whilst projects supported through ECOC had to meet certain publicity requirements, they too tended to cut their marketing budgets in order to preserve cultural activities. Furthermore, negative media coverage continued during 2009 (with a focus on the way that scarce funds had been allocated, amongst other things) and a website disseminating negative information regarding ECOC was set up. Even though during the title year negative media coverage constituted 9.4% (neutral 86.5% and positive 4.1%)⁴⁸ of all coverage, interviewees believed that it had a disproportionate impact, not least because it was reported that positive reviews of ECOC events were often not actually identified with the ECOC designation as such. Without a marketing budget, the ECOC was clearly handicapped in being able to counter negative reporting.

In summary, then, a combination of budget cuts, a difficult start to the year and continuing negative coverage had a significant negative impact on the communication of positive messages about the ECOC in Lithuania.

4.5 Effectiveness

4.5.1 Developing cultural activities

As noted earlier, due to a severe reduction in the ECOC budget and difficulties in the governance of the ECOC, the eventual cultural programme was very much smaller than that originally envisaged in the application, although in the end it comprised some 100 projects and 1,500 events. In the opinion of stakeholders most of the cultural activities and culture projects that did take place were of high quality and contributed to the development of the culture sector.⁴⁹

Many stakeholders highlighted as key exemplars of successful activity two exhibitions organised in the National Art Gallery: (i) *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970*, a major exhibition transferred from the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and re-set in the context of the gallery; and (ii) *Dialogues of Colour and Sound. Works by Mikalojus Konstantinas • iurlionis and his Contemporaries*. The exhibitions attracted over 25,000 visitors each, reported to be a high level of attendance, and received positive reviews.

The performance of the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) in Vilnius was also highlighted as one of the most successful events. The LSO prepared a special programme for Vilnius which was performed during the opening of the international festival "Vilnius Festivals". Conducted by Valery Gergiev, the orchestra performed "Lithuanian Saga" created by Rodion Shchedrin.

⁴⁸ The data is based on the survey conducted by "TNS Gallup"

⁴⁹ The extent to which the ECOC attracted visitors and audiences is difficult to evaluate as the relevant data was not provided to the evaluator.

Stakeholders highlighted that some of the events which targeted the wider public like "Art in Unexpected Spaces", "Street Music Day" and "Let There be Night" were successful and attracted much attention. Some of the events mentioned above are likely to become part of the cultural activities in Vilnius.

The sculpture "Embankment Arch" by V.Urbanavicius received extensive media coverage and attention from the wider society. The sculpture initiated a vivid debate about the role of contemporary art in the city and its role to everyone personally. Much of the media coverage and public debate was rather negative but interviewees reported that such a wide discussion on contemporary art would be very difficult to initiate otherwise.

The common opinion amongst interviewees was that ECOC provided an opportunity to implement larger projects and more ambitious ideas than would otherwise have been possible. It provided opportunities to increase cooperation with partner organisations abroad as well as to establish new partnerships. The prospect of working with European partners was one of the strong motivators for participation in the ECOC. The experience gained in implementing the projects is reported to be important for the future development of the culture sector in Lithuania. However, a number of difficulties were encountered during the title year which had a strong impact on the culture sector in the city.

The stakeholder consultation identified that most of the activities which were implemented in 2009 were large scale niche projects. The budget reduction process gave priority to projects of a larger scale which had been developing before the title year and which had therefore already made commitments to international partner organisations. For this reason, the balance of activities within the programme was not ensured.

Overall, the reduction of the budget for ECOC had impact on all the cultural operators involved in the programme. The parts of the programme which have been reduced the most are the ones which typically had smaller size projects including less of the international partners and requiring less time for the preparation. The projects which had less existing commitments have been reduced the most. The *People Programme* was significantly affected by the reduction of the budget. Some examples of the projects which have not received funding are *Fashion Weekend*, projects involving local communities like contest *My Yard/Art Yard*.

All projects have been asked to reduce their budgets at the very late stage of the project development. The existing projects did not receive the full funding which was initially allocated and therefore, typically the marketing and communication as well as artists payments have been reduced for most of the projects. However, some cultural operators even if they did not receive the full funding have implemented all the activities foreseen and some implemented only part of the activities. It strongly depended on individual projects and the decisions of each cultural operator on how to move forward.

The difficulties at the beginning of the year had a strong impact on the cultural programme of ECOC and the development of the culture sector. Cultural operators had to take significant risks in the development stage of projects due to uncertainties regarding funding, and these uncertainties continued into the implementation phase. The difficulties also led to the emergence of some divisions between operators (some being funded and some not), although interviewees also reported that the financial crisis initiated joint lobbying activities. Overall, the ECOC has led to further cooperation amongst some of the cultural operators involved.

4.5.2 Promoting the European dimension

The European dimension was an essential element in Vilnius and particularly significant for many of the larger projects, such as those within the *European Arts Programme*. It was incorporated into cultural activities through cooperation with international partners, by including European themes and by highlighting the links among different cultural traditions.

Interviewees indicated that cooperation with European and other international partners was one of the strong motivators to develop and implement projects. ECOC provided an opportunity not only to increase cooperation with existing international partners but also to start cooperation with very well known artists and organisations which would otherwise have been difficult. For example, the exhibition of Belgian painter Hans Op De Beeck was shown in Vilnius in the framework of the ARTscape project, and the collaboration with the Victoria and Albert Museum has already been mentioned.

Importantly, European themes were highlighted in some projects. For example, links to both modernity and classicism as well as to different cultural traditions were embedded in the performance of the silent film by Carl Theodor Dreyer "The Passion of Joan of Arc". The music for the film was specially written by Lithuanian composer B.Kutavicius and performed live in the National Opera and Ballet Theatre.

The "European School of Arts" project which was co-financed by the European Commission had a strong European dimension. The focus of the project was on the education process of arts and it targeted higher education institutions and art students through 13 individual projects. The main activities of the projects were organised through creative workshops. An international group of professors and students worked together in order to present the results in a variety of ways: as a theatre performance, through literature texts, or as a TV show which was shown to a broad public. In the opinion of interviewees the projects were very successful, and outcomes can be further used and activities continued.

Another example of the "European School of Arts" projects with the strong European dimension is provided by the festival Neu Now Vilnius'09. The project for the first time presented a festival of the work of art school graduates in Vilnius in cooperation with the European League of Institutes of Arts. This project is being planned to be implemented in the other European Capitals of Culture as well.

The European dimension was included not only in cultural projects but also in the other programmes initiated by the delivery agency. In particular, an international volunteers programme was initiated in order to involve young people from different European countries in events, which would increase the feeling of being part of European tradition in the city. A small scale volunteers project was implemented in 2008, but due to budget cuts the full scale version could not be implemented.

4.5.3 Supporting social and economic development through culture

Social and economic development were important objectives of the Vilnius ECOC, comprising two of the three objectives consolidated into the Government Resolution of 2008. Unfortunately, the absence of quantitative data hampers to a degree the evaluation of the extent to which these objectives were achieved, but there are a number of indicators which suggests that there has been underachievement⁵⁰.

⁵⁰ This will be investigated further in the remaining part of the evaluation.

First of all, though, it should be pointed out that the common view amongst interviewees was that culture was – and is – not generally seen as a means of achieving wider social and economic goals. At the same time, it was generally felt that culture was not highly valued, as culture for culture's sake, and that levels of public/community participation in the production of culture were not high. Interviewees were of the opinion that this was a legacy of the communist era, when culture was produced under the auspices of the state and provided free to the general public, and community involvement in the production of culture was not encouraged. Some interviewees regarded the general position of culture in society and politics as therefore lagging considerably behind parts of western Europe where it has become an instrument for economic and social development – and especially urban regeneration. This might explain in part the failure of a political consensus to emerge to support the ECOC, as discussed above. It also helps to explain the emphasis placed upon it within the objectives, and also the considerable distance to be travelled if they were to be achieved.

With regard to social development then, the ECOC faced a significant challenge. Unfortunately, in the event a number of factors also conspired to undermine the achievement of its objectives. First, interviewees reported little involvement of the wider community in the overall design of the programme. As discussed above, the ECOC suffered delays and this meant that the programme had to be developed in a short period of time, when community consultation is normally a time-consuming process. The EC selection panel had drawn attention to the opportunity presented by the four-year development phase to encourage citizens to 'dare to create'; four years were in the event not made available. Secondly, the budget cuts of 2009 fell disproportionately on smaller local projects. These projects, unlike the large international ones, had not had to commit to contracts and so were not prioritised.

In terms of economic development, the ECOC also faced problems. The economic crisis led to the collapse of the main airline serving the country, flyLAL: operations were suspended on 17 January 2009, halving the number of direct flights from Vilnius from 28 to 14 destinations and leading to a 43% fall in the number of passengers using Vilnius airport⁵¹. Clearly, the timing could not have been worse. Not only did it affect the general tourist trade but also had an affect since flyLAL was a major partner in the ECOC and deals had been struck with some cultural operators to offer discounted fares. Of course the financial crisis is also likely to have depressed visitor numbers even if the airline had not collapsed. Unfortunately, it is not possible to quantify these effects, but clearly the ECOC is likely to have delivered fewer and smaller scale economic effects in these difficult economic circumstances. In addition, not all the major infrastructure projects planned to coincide with the ECOC were delivered. The evidence thus points to a number of factors indicating that economic development achievements were less than intended.

4.6 Sustainability

4.6.1 Cultural activities

Stakeholder interviews identified that some of the activities will continue after the end of the ECOC. Some of the events for the wider society are likely to become regular events in the culture life of the city like *Street Music Day* and *Let There be Night*. Cooperation with partner organisations is likely to lead to further projects in the future. For example, based on the experience of the exhibition *Cold War Modern: Design 1945-1970* a new cooperation project with neighbour countries is being initiated.

⁵¹ Civilin•s aviacijos kryžkelė <http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=24136279>

4.6.2 Cultural governance

The evaluation of the 2007 and 2008 ECOC showed the extent to which involvement in ECOC can bring benefits in terms of improved governance of cultural institutions. A well-run ECOC can, indeed, cause a step change in cultural governance capacity, providing a new platform for cooperation. Such benefits were not generally realised in Vilnius. Overall, the problems with governance have been damaging to relationships between cultural operators and the machinery of government. Whilst there have been examples of new and sustainable approaches to co-operation between different cultural operators, these have been relatively few in number and culture has not moved up the political agenda.

Indeed, there is evidence that it is proving difficult to enlist cultural operators to participate in major international events with a Vilnius focus. There is also no evidence that the ECOC caused a step change in levels of public participation in culture or a shift in public understanding of it – indeed the evidence from the interviews is that the on-going political controversies may have had a negative effect in this regard.

That said, most cultural operators generally spoke about having 'learnt lessons' from the process (admittedly somewhat wryly on occasion). Cultural operators now know much better how to organise international events of this type and, on a sector-by-sector basis, many operators spoke in terms of significant successes in putting Vilnius 'on the map'. At municipality level there was also a feeling that staff were better equipped to host forthcoming events such as the 2011 European Basketball Championship and the 2013 EU Presidency. A cultural strategy for Vilnius is also under development.

4.7 Conclusions

4.7.1 Success of the ECOC

The Vilnius ECOC experienced considerable problems in getting to the point where it could deliver a programme of events in 2009. Indeed, so acute were the problems in governance and finance that for a time there were doubts that it would take place at all. This was a question of inter-related structural and contingent factors. Structurally, appropriate mechanisms had not put in place for governing and managing the ECOC until the title year itself. Related to this, a particular set of contingent political factors in which the ECOC became an on-going matter for political debate meant that it was almost impossible to find a solution to these structural issues.

The ECOC also had the misfortune to be struck by a major external problem: the 2008 financial crisis which caused problems in government budgets and the collapse of the country's main airline. However, it is clear that the weak management mechanisms were not able to respond adequately to such a major shock. Thus whilst the financial problems were arguably not of the country's making, its response was. In this respect the contrast with Linz could not be clearer.

This is not to say that the ECOC as a set of cultural activities was a failure. As we have shown, there were some successes. Individually, cultural operators who were interviewed spoke very positively about their own activities. Typically the ECOC enabled them to undertake activities that were on an unprecedented scale, either in terms of audience size and/or international platform. Operators who were able to carry through their events learnt many lessons about how to organise international events and gained international profile in their sectors.

But as a cultural community in Vilnius, few benefits were reported by interviewees, and the lasting legacy for Vilnius as a *whole* is likely to have fallen far short of what was hoped for at the application stage. The budget cuts meant that some of the celebratory aspects of the year were lost, and the objective of involving the community appears to have been the major casualty of Vilnius's difficulties. Overall, it was a missed opportunity, with many potential benefits not being realised and some adverse effects generated, e.g. loss of trust between some stakeholders.

Vilnius did not deliver more than the sum of its parts in the way some other ECOC have, for example by building momentum behind the idea that culture could be a vehicle for change (whether within the cultural sector, or in social and economic domains), or by achieving a step change in capacity to do cultural activities.

In terms of why successes were registered in the face of the substantial difficulties we have mapped out, an important part of the answer seems to lie in the commitment of the individual cultural operators. When probed, most operators revealed that they had been able to implement their activities largely through their own efforts. Importantly over 300 different private companies supported various programme events which also was strong factor in implementation of the ECOC programme. Despite the management and finance problems, operators persisted through a mixture of obligation (partly contractual commitments already entered into), concerns for reputational damage on the international scene (e.g. by having to cancel the participation of leading international figures), and simply determination to realise the planned cultural activity. This often involved the major risk of proceeding with an event despite not having secured the funding for it (a factor related to on-going uncertainty with funding and not simply to the externally triggered financial crisis). Although it is not possible to quantify, many gaps seem to have been filled by the personal efforts of cultural operators who wanted their events to succeed. Without the commitment and efforts of cultural operators, there would have been no Vilnius ECOC.

4.7.2 Lessons learnt

The experience of the Vilnius ECOC provides some valuable lessons in relation in particular to governance and management issues. In the following sections, we discuss these in more detail before providing a list of lessons that other ECOC might bear in mind in future.

National-local government relationships and the role of politics

As noted above, the Vilnius ECOC was notable both for the fact that it was a capital city and also for the strong involvement of national government in its early (pre-application and application) stages. Since the ECOC was originally integrally linked to Lithuanian national celebrations, it was perhaps inevitable that there would be a strong involvement of national as well as local government in the governance and management processes. The fact of Vilnius's status as capital also meant that the city's largest and most significant cultural institutions were national ones, whose funding is provided by the state and whose day-to-day contact with government is with the Ministry of Culture rather than the municipality (a stark contrast with some of the other ECOC we have examined such as Liverpool). At the same time the local municipality did not have a strong involvement in the cultural sphere – partly owing to the strong relationship between most of its most important local cultural institutions and national government.

The governance mechanisms did not resolve the tensions between the different tiers of government. Furthermore, as interviewees consistently reported, the roles and responsibilities of the different elements of governance during the development phase were ambiguous. Clarity of ownership and leadership were never established, leading to indecision and delays from the start. It is possible that the fact that there was no competition within Lithuania for hosting the ECOC contributed to the emergence of this situation.

An additional dimension to this situation was the manner in which, from its inception, the Vilnius ECOC became closely tied into party politics. There was unanimity amongst interviewees that a major difficulty for the ECOC was that it became associated with one political party in a context where there was – and remains - a lack of consensus as to the role of culture in society. The result was that the ECOC was subject to criticism on a scale and of a type that was not seen in any of the five other ECOC covered by ECOTEC evaluations⁵², made worse by the fact that the when one party was in the ascendancy at national level, its rival tended to occupy the same position within the municipality. As a consequence there appears to have been no political consensus to try to sort out the ambiguities in the governance structures.

The criticism of the ECOC never abated, unlike in Liverpool for example, where 'bad press' in the media was largely confined to the local level and for the development phase. Indeed, even after the title year, and at the time of fieldwork for this evaluation, the controversy surrounding the ECOC was still newsworthy enough to prompt a televised debate on the subject. The risks from politicisation had been flagged up in the EC selection panel's recommendations which stated that Vilnius would have a smooth development and implementation period if it was wary of tying the programme planning commission too closely to civic politics⁵³. Unfortunately, it is clear that this was never avoided. Indeed, many interviewees spoke in highly negative terms, speaking, for example, of 'political games'.

Whilst the criticism has continued, a resolution of the problem of lack of ownership was reached, as noted above. It was, though, a very late fix, taking place in February 2009. The solution was to establish a five member board, comprising the Deputy Mayor of Vilnius City Municipality as chair, three members from the municipality and two from the ministry. This structure seems finally and decisively to have ensured some strong local leadership, at least for the actual implementation process itself.

Structure, roles and responsibilities of the delivery agency

In this context it is perhaps not surprising that the delivery agency set up to implement the ECOC also suffered from a lack of clarity about its roles and responsibilities. As we have noted, the delivery agency only began to get up and running part way through 2007, which left about only 18 months to organise and launch the title year. Lessons from the 2007 and 2008 ECOC suggest that such a length of time is inadequate; a late start such as this would - and appears - to have put the delivery agency under considerable pressure. But in addition to the late start, the delivery agency found itself operating in a highly ambiguous environment in which it appeared to have some form responsibility for the ECOC but in reality lacked the full range of powers to develop and implement it properly.

⁵² In addition to Linz (2009), ECOTEC has previously evaluated the 2007 & 2008 ECOC: Luxembourg and the Greater Region (2007), Sibiu (2007), Liverpool (2008), Stavanger (2008); see: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc485_en.htm

⁵³ Report on the Nominations from Austria and Lithuania for the European Capital of Culture 2009. Issued by the Selection Panel for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2009, April 2005.

Along with the general environment we have already described above, the reason for these difficulties lay in the fact that the delivery agency in the form it had been set up was, as many interviewees stated, the 'wrong instrument'. The agency had been set up as a public institution under Lithuanian law which meant that it was not independent of the political scene: it had no legally binding decision-making powers and could not have responsibility for funding activities.

Thus what should have been a technical body charged with implementing an agreed programme of activities, with certain flexibilities built in to enable it to act quickly and decisively when circumstances dictate, instead became what one interviewee called 'hostage to the political process.' The top appointments in the agency perhaps inevitably became associated with the politicians making the appointments and this heightened the difficulties, and ultimately meant that a new director had to be brought in early in the title year to implement the programme, an event which inevitably interrupted what ought to have been a seamless flow from development into implementation.

As far as funding was concerned, the structures through which the delivery agency had to work were very cumbersome. The ministry retained control of its funding to national cultural institutions. As a consequence, the latter had to apply for funding to the ministry rather than to - or via - the delivery agency. Furthermore, the delivery agency itself had to submit applications for funding for projects, rather than being the body which could release funds. In short the delivery agency had to use existing financial procedures designed for the regular funding of bodies which were not suited to the task of delivering a set of activities under an ECOC.

The evaluation of the 2007 and 2008 ECOC highlighted as one of the key lessons the need for an independent delivery agency. Vilnius might be considered as an example that illustrates the likely dangers involved in not having - until very late on - an independent delivery agency.

In light of these issues, we can identify the following lessons for other ECOC:

- Political decision-making is an essential ingredient of any ECOC. However, the political process needs to take place early on in the development process so that an agreed set of activities can then be implemented. Getting caught up in party politics on an on-going basis can be severely damaging for the prospects of an effective ECOC.
- Governance arrangements need to be clear and transparent. Ambiguity leads to lack of clarity of ownership and leadership and provides a very difficult environment within which officials and cultural operators have to work, leading to reduced efficiency and effectiveness.
- Delivery agencies need to be provided with the right mechanisms for taking decisions and for funding activities; since ECOC are time-limited, project-based events, such mechanisms are likely to be different to those used for normal 'mainstream' funding of cultural bodies. These mechanisms need to provide sufficient flexibility and discretion to take decisions without recourse to the political machinery of local or national government.
- Delivery agencies also need to be insulated – through strong boards - from over-exposure to party political debates in order that they can get on with the technical tasks of implementing a programme of cultural activities.

5.0 Conclusions and recommendations

Sections 3 and 4 have presented findings relating to the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of each of the 2009 ECOC. This section presents conclusions and recommendations relating to the ECOC Action in 2009 more generally. Attempting to draw general conclusions from just two ECOC would be a difficult task in any year since ECOC are discrete entities featuring different activities undertaken in very different contexts. This is all the more true in 2009, given that the experiences of the Linz and Vilnius ECOC were so contrasting.

Previous research has already drawn generalised conclusions across a larger number of ECOC: four ECOC in the case of ECOTEC's evaluation of 2007/08; and twenty ECOC in the case of Palmer/Rae Associates (2004). Rather than duplicating this previous research and in order to provide conclusions that are more meaningful, we present conclusions that should be seen more as an update to the 2007/08 evaluation and as an addition to Palmer/Rae. For that reason, and where necessary, we compare and contrast the experiences of the 2009 ECOC with those of previous years. Whilst conclusions are drawn from the experiences of the ECOC, we do not offer recommendations for the cities themselves as they no longer hold the title – though current and future ECOC may well learn lessons from the conclusions presented here. Instead in section 5.5, we present recommendations for the European Commission that relate to future implementation of the ECOC Action as a whole.

As noted earlier, the legal basis for the 2009 ECOC was Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and the Council. The 1999 Decision set out the overall objective of the Action (Article 1) and a set of objectives that each city must address (Article 3). It also included a requirement for 'a report evaluating the results of the previous year's events'. The 1999 Decision thus serves as the reference point for this evaluation and it has been against the aims and objectives of the 1999 Decision that the success of the 2009 ECOC has been formally evaluated. The evaluation also gives some consideration to the relevance of the 2009 ECOC to objectives of the 2006 Decision, as these objectives are articulated in a more concise way than those of the 1999 Decision and better reflect trends in cultural policy in the years leading up to 2009.

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Relevance of the Action to the Treaty

EQ10: As far as the conclusions made for the two cities allow it, to what extent have the general, specific and operational objectives of the Community Action for the European Capital of Culture proved relevant to Article 167 of the EC Treaty?

The 2007/08 evaluation found that the objectives of the Action were consistent with and relevant to the objectives of the Treaty, particularly the broad objectives of "developing cultural activities" and "promoting the European dimension of and through culture" although this latter objective is implied by rather than explicitly stated in the Treaty. The 2007/08 evaluation also found that cities holding the ECOC title have adopted a third dimension over the years, i.e. the economic and social dimension. This reflected broader trends of cultural policy that have emphasised the possibility of putting culture at the service of non-cultural objectives.

Whilst the 1999 and 2006 Decisions reflected this dimension they had, to a certain extent, "lagged behind" the situation on the ground, i.e. within the ECOC themselves.

As we have seen in sections 3 and 4, both the 2009 ECOC embraced the objectives of the ECOC Action and customised them in line with their own particular contexts and priorities. Indeed, both planned diverse cultural programmes and associated activities (e.g. communications, volunteering, etc.) that would support the objectives of "developing cultural activities", "promoting the European dimension of and through culture" and "supporting the social and economic dimension of the city through culture". For practical reasons, Vilnius was unable to pursue this third objective to any great extent, though it always retained the aspiration to do so. The experience of future ECOC may help determine whether Vilnius is an exception in that respect or whether the social and economic dimension of the ECOC Action is in fact becoming less relevant.

Key conclusion: The ECOC Action remains consistent with and relevant to the objectives of Article 167 of the Treaty, particularly the broad objectives of "developing cultural activities" and "promoting the European dimension of and through culture". The European dimension is typically incorporated through the inclusion of activities whose content, delivery mechanism and/or audiences or participants are European in essence.

5.1.2 Relevance of the 2009 ECOC

EQ11: To what extent have the general, specific and operational objectives of the 2009 ECOC events proved relevant to the Action?

The 1999 Decision sets out a number of broad objectives that ECOC should address and the 2006 Decision defines five criteria for the cultural programme. These objectives and criteria are not specifically defined in the Decisions; indeed, an important feature of the ECOC Action is that each city develops its own understanding of the objectives and criteria and applies them in a way that is most relevant to its particular context. The 2007/08 evaluation and Palmer/Rae Associates (2004) noted that most of the previous ECOC did indeed adopt multiple objectives that were broadly consistent with Article 3 of the 1999 Decision. However, Palmer/Rae Associates went on to note that whilst the process of agreeing and defining objectives can be fraught with tension, it is vitally important that any ECOC formulates its expectations precisely.

With this in mind, this evaluation has considered the overall motivation of the 2009 ECOC and the process by which that motivation was converted into a set of workable objectives and the changes to those objectives during the development phase. Whilst these objectives are different for each ECOC, they can be broadly grouped under the three specific objectives set out in the intervention logic, i.e. "developing cultural activities", "promoting the European dimension of and through culture" and "social and economic development through culture". These three specific objectives closely reflect the objectives and criteria of the 1999 and 2006 Decisions.

In both ECOC, the objectives changed significantly between the application and the start of the title year. In the case of Linz, the objectives in its application were not clearly defined, beyond a broad focus on modern media, digital arts and new technologies. They were, however, reworked after the nomination into a clearer vision statement and a more coherent set of objectives. Linz ultimately adopted multiple objectives that were broadly consistent with Article 3 of the 1999 Decision and Article 167 of the Treaty.

In the case of Vilnius, its application featured multiple "Overall goals and objectives" that related very clearly to the Action. The application also featured a number of additional objectives grouped under the themes of "European dimension" and "Social goals and objectives". Vilnius's original objectives thus mapped well on to the three specific objectives identified in the intervention logic of the evaluation and on to the five criteria of the 2006 Decision. A revised set of objectives was introduced by the 2008 Government Resolution but this set remained relevant to the objectives of the ECOC Action. But whilst the objectives in the Government Resolution remained the stated objectives of the ECOC, the extent to which they were pursued in practice was much less certain. To evaluate the relevance of the Vilnius ECOC, it is therefore necessary to look at the activities that were eventually implemented rather than the stated objectives.

Relevance of the 2009 ECOC: developing cultural activities

Both the 2009 ECOC were very relevant to the objective of developing cultural activities - indeed, this was perhaps the most prominent dimension of both - though for very different reasons.

In the case of Linz, this objective was at the forefront from the application stage onwards. It remained prominent in the cultural programme, although interpreted in a very particular way – through a focus on i) contemporary culture; and ii) "competition, quality and the international perspective". As with Stavanger (2008), the fact that Linz had a high-profile artistic director in place throughout the development and implementation phases meant that strong and consistent artistic themes could be developed. Culture was treated very much as an end in itself as well as a means of achieving other objectives.

Vilnius also gave high prominence to the objective of developing cultural activities. Indeed, *Culture Live* was the overall leitmotif of the ECOC. Whilst all elements of Vilnius's programme were reduced in scale due to the budget cut, more of the "purely" cultural activities survived and were thus most prominent in the eventual programme. These were typically the larger events of high artistic quality and featuring international artists. Smaller projects that perhaps related more to the development of local cultural organisations and/or the access of local people to culture were more likely to be cut from the programme. Vilnius thus gave most prominence to the objective of developing cultural activities almost by default because so many activities related to social or tourism objectives were cancelled.

Relevance of the 2009 ECOC: promoting the European dimension of and through culture

As noted in the 07/08 evaluation, the 1999 Decision gives no explicit definition of the European dimension, whilst the 2006 Decision sets out three different criteria that are open to wide interpretation. As with the 07/08 ECOC, both the 2009 ECOC were relevant to this objective but interpreted it in different ways – very strongly reflecting the particular context of each city.

The European dimension featured perhaps more implicitly than explicitly in the objectives of Linz. Moreover, as in the case of Liverpool (2008) and Stavanger (2008), this was part of a more general international dimension – reflecting the city's global economic linkages and its desire to make its own cultural sector more international. In contrast, the European dimension featured very explicitly in the case of Vilnius. Here, the ECOC was intended to be a means by which Vilnius could highlight its long European heritage as well as its re-emergence as a European city following the end of communism and the accession of Lithuania to the EU. As a consequence, the original intention of Vilnius gave strong prominence (within its reduced cultural programme) to all three criterion of the 2006 Decision that related to the European dimension.

Relevance of the 2009 ECOC: social and economic development through culture

According to Palmer/Rae Associates (2004), most ECOC between 1995 and 2004 stated as priorities the development of tourism, enhancement of the city's image, urban revitalisation and an expansion of creative industries and jobs. Similarly, both the 2009 ECOC stated social and economic objectives, though these were most prominent in Vilnius. Indeed, Vilnius's original application stated all-encompassing objectives, including strengthening competitiveness, promotion of tourism, employment creation, encouraging investment, widening participation in culture. Although these objectives were made more focussed by the 2008 Government Resolution, they were perhaps – and with hindsight – over-ambitious and did not reflect the (lack of) political consensus behind the ECOC. Ultimately, they were not pursued to any significant degree as we have seen.

In the case of Linz, the ECOC was not seen as some kind of catalyst for broader regional and urban development. It was intended to widen participation in culture through changing the mindset of local residents, to make them more open to culture. It was also seen as a means of helping to change the image of the city in the minds of tourists and local residents alike. In that sense, the overall objective of Linz reflected that of Stavanger (2008) – a relatively wealthy city seeking to enhance its image and raise its profile as well as develop its cultural sector as part of a process of economic diversification. In this sense, it is interesting to contrast Linz with Glasgow (1990). For Glasgow, the new image promoted by the ECOC was intended to help kick-start the city's development - an attempt to change the reality by changing the image. Whilst the Glasgow ECOC achieved a degree of success in that respect, it was also criticised for not reflecting the realities of everyday life for most people in the city. In Linz, however, the ECOC arguably represented the culmination of 25 years' development, which had been successful in improving the socio-economic position of the city but not its image.⁵⁴ The new image presented by the

⁵⁴ As discussed in Section 3, Linz had been undergoing a gradual transformation since the steel crisis of the 1970s and 1980s.

ECOC was intended to reflect the city as it already was – a successful player in the global economy. In short, the ECOC attempted to change the image to fit the reality.

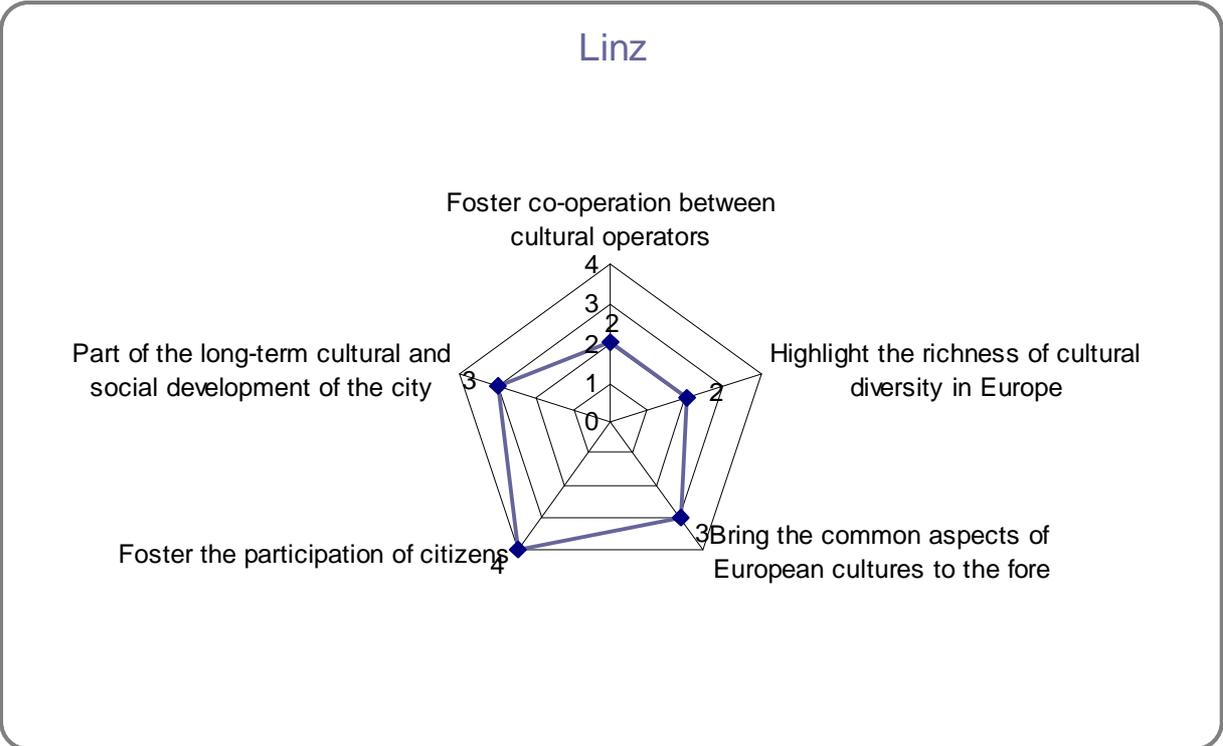
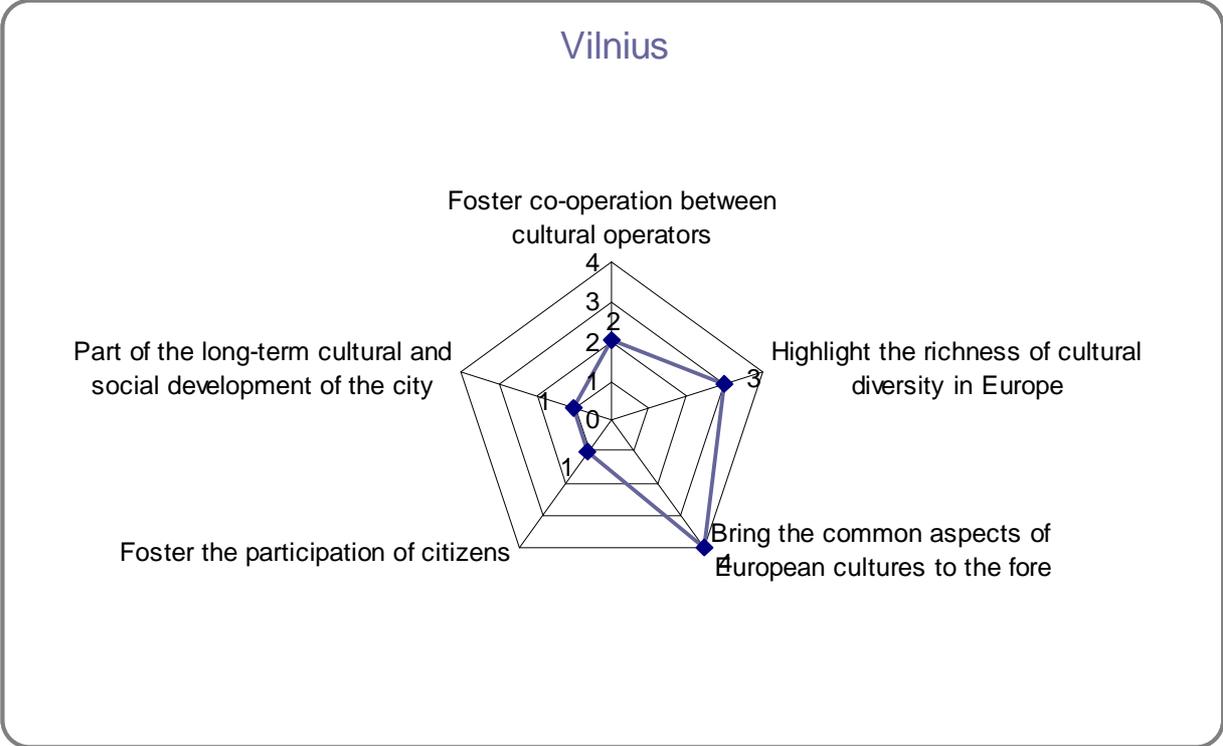
The diagrams below illustrate the relative prominence of the characteristics of the 2009 ECOC. For the sake of consistency and simplicity, the characteristics are based on the criteria for cultural programmes set out in Article 4 of the 2006 Decision. For each characteristic an overall judgement has been made - based on all the available evidence - as to the relative scale and scope of activity. The scale used ranges from 'least prominent' (1) to 'most prominent' (4) and has been designed to capture the similarities and differences between the ECOC; for this reason a score of '1' does not necessarily mean that a certain characteristic was not significant. Moreover, these scores are not measures of effectiveness.

Overall, the charts highlight the considerable diversity between the 2009 ECOC.

The Linz ECOC was very much tied into the city, its development (most notably the efforts to change its image) and its citizens. Indeed, activity to involve local residents in culture (as audiences and participants) featured very prominently. Linz also featured some of the very best of European culture, for example through performances by artists of European significance. Cultural diversity did feature in the cultural programme (though perhaps more focussed on diversity in the city rather than in Europe more generally) and co-operation was fostered between cultural operators, though these characteristics were perhaps less prominent than the other three.

In contrast, the Vilnius ECOC was perhaps more characteristic of an international arts festival, with the European Arts Programme forming perhaps the most prominent part of Vilnius's ECOC cultural programme – meaning that the common aspects and diversity of European culture were most prominent in Vilnius. Much less prominence for activities focussed on the development of the city and the participation of citizens; indeed, as discussed in section 4, activities to involve citizens (such as the People Programme) and to attract tourists (such as communication and marketing activities) were much reduced in scale during the title year. Also some of the bigger events that were related to develop the access of local people to culture stayed in the programme. Some of the examples of such events are Street Music Day, Culture Night, Children Creativity Festival and Lithuanian Culture Capital.

Figure 5.1 Comparison of characteristics of the ECOC



Key conclusion: The 07/08 evaluation found that all four ECOC in those years were strongly relevant to at least one of the three specific objectives and demonstrated some relevance to all of them. Of the 2009 ECOC, the same can be said only of Linz. The objectives and the activities of Linz were very relevant to all three specific objectives and particularly relevant to the objective of developing cultural activities. Of the six 2007-09 ECOC, Linz was arguably the ECOC that came closest to giving broadly equal prominence to each of these three objectives (and indeed also to the five criteria of the 2006 Decision).⁵⁵ The objectives of Vilnius were very relevant to all three specific objectives. However, due to the severe reduction in its budget, in practice Vilnius pursued activity that was principally relevant to the objectives of “promoting the European dimension” and of “developing cultural activities”, with comparatively little focus in the areas of economic and social development.

5.1.3 Relevance to other EU initiatives

EQ12: As far as the conclusions made for the two cities allows it, to what extent has the Action proved to be complementary to other EU initiatives in the field of culture?

The ECOC Action is part of the EU's Culture Programme (2007-13), with each of the 2009 ECOC receiving earmarked funding from the programme of €1.5m. This funding supports cultural activities that must, according to Decision 1855/2006/EC, meet at least two of the three specific objectives of the Culture Programme: promoting transnational mobility of cultural players, encouraging the transnational circulation of works and cultural and artistic products, and encouraging intercultural dialogue. In Vilnius, the EU-funded “European School of Arts” proved most relevant to the mobility of artists and the circulation of works, whereas in Linz, the EU-funded “Linz09 dialogue” proved most relevant to intercultural dialogue.

In addition, there is evidence that ECOC status is a spur for cultural operators in the title cities to participate in other activities supported by the Culture Programme. For example, the City of Linz received funding from Strand 1.2.1 of the Culture Programme to operate the Urban Interventions: Artistic Perspectives (UIAP) project. This project enabled artists from recent/current/future ECOC to undertake residencies at one of the project partner cities – Liverpool (2008), Linz (2009), Essen for the Ruhr (2010), Istanbul (2010) and Tallinn (2011).⁵⁶

Of course, these specific activities represent just a small addition to the very significant volume of cultural activities co-financed by the Culture Programme. The relevance of the ECOC to the Culture Programme therefore lies less in the volume and scope of these activities (which are significant in the cities holding the title but not in European terms) and more in their symbolic value, i.e. through the positive representation it offers of the common European cultural heritage and also of the different national or regional cultures of the EU's Member States.

⁵⁵ This is not to suggest that Linz was necessarily a “better” ECOC. In other contexts, ECOC would be (indeed have been) justified in giving greater prominence to one objective over another.

⁵⁶ See: <http://platformgarantilinks.blogspot.com/2009/05/urban-interventions-artistic.html>; similarly, the University of Liverpool, which undertook the evaluation of Liverpool (2008), has received funding from the Culture Programme to create the European Capitals of Culture Policy Analysis Grouping. The main aim of the grouping is to exchange good practice in the evaluation of the impact of ECOC and agree a set of research frameworks which can be used by future ECOC; see: <http://ecocpolicygroup.wordpress.com>

In that sense, the ECOC complement the high volume of lower-profile activities, for example, the hundreds of transnational co-operation projects and thousands of literary translations supported by the Culture Programme, and merits its status as one of the Programme's "Special Actions" alongside European prizes and other high-profile activities.

The objectives and activities of both the 2009 ECOC also demonstrated complementarity with the European Years operating in the year before the title year and the title year itself: the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 and the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009. Linz, in particular, implemented many projects that were relevant to the objectives of these years. However, neither ECOC explicitly linked its cultural programmes to the European Years and there is no evidence that they displayed the logos of the Years in any prominent way.

The ECOC Action is also complementary to investments in culture and in more general infrastructure made through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Investment in the preservation or enhancement of cultural heritage and cultural infrastructure features as an explicit objective of ERDF under both the Convergence and the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objectives. In the case of Vilnius, ERDF co-financed the development of new cultural facilities – notably, the Arts Printing House and the Design Innovation Centre of Arts Academy - that then hosted events within the cultural programme of the ECOC. ERDF also co-financed other investments in the more general infrastructure of Vilnius, which helped improve its attractiveness to visitors and its accessibility, although these investments were not explicitly linked to the ECOC.

Key conclusion: the ECOC Action is very complementary to the rest of the Culture Programme through the symbolic value it adds at European level. The ECOC Action was complementary to the aims and objectives of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation in 2009, although the 2009 ECOC did not explicitly link their cultural programmes to the Year. The ECOC Action also has the potential to be reinforced by and add value to investments in cultural heritage and cultural infrastructure made by European Structural Funds, although the extent to which that potential is realised may depend on the extent to which the respective delivery bodies co-ordinate their activities.

5.2 Efficiency

5.2.1 Governance

EQ11: How have the organisational models of the formal governing Board and operational structures played a role in the European Capital of Culture?

In considering the question of efficiency, the specific nature of the ECOC Action must be borne in mind. As we have seen above, ECOC are not simply sets of (time-limited) cultural activities, they are also the organisational entities set up to develop and run those activities. Hence, we have not only looked at two separate cultural programmes but also two separate sets of institutional arrangements through which they have been delivered. However, these institutional arrangements are not responsible for receiving and expending significant amounts of EU funding, as would be the case in a conventional funding programme. In that sense, our consideration of efficiency is less about accountability and more about learning lessons from which future ECOC can benefit.

The nature of ECOC is that most cities do not have direct prior experience of running such a programme. The need to implement an extensive but one-off cultural programme poses challenges for the existing organisations within any city. As a result, common problems reported in the operations and management of the 1995-2004 ECOC include changes in key staff such as the directors, artistic directors or managers, personality clashes, communication problems, inappropriate experience, unclear responsibilities, excessive workload and weak management/leadership.⁵⁷ Similarly, the 2007/08 ECOC all faced difficulties in establishing efficient governance arrangements, particularly during the development phase.

ECOC have typically chosen to establish special management structures dedicated to co-ordinating day-to-day operations of the cultural programme and associated activity. This approach was also taken by the 2009 ECOC, which devolved (some of) the implementation of its cultural programmes to newly-created delivery agencies, though the public authorities remained important players on the Boards of both. However, as we have seen above, the arrangements in Linz proved much more successful than in Vilnius. Indeed, to a certain extent Linz can be considered an example of good practice in the governance of its ECOC, whilst the governance of Vilnius was very problematic.

Palmer/Rae Associates (2004) note the priority given to political balance and representation when delivery arrangements are determined for ECOC. Indeed, public authorities at different levels are typically the main players in any ECOC and their different, perhaps even conflicting, interests usually need to be accommodated in a structure that is seen to be representative but which is also workable. There is no standard model for arriving at such an accommodation: in Liverpool (2008), the municipality was the main player with the regional development agency playing a secondary role and the national government having very limited involvement, whilst in Luxembourg (2007) and in Sibiu (2007), the respective national ministries were dominant, with the municipalities also important.

As with other ECOC, the 2009 ECOC were overseen by a partnership of key stakeholders that were represented on the Board of the delivery agency, in which the public authorities were the main players. Each had to accommodate political interests at different levels: in the case of Linz, the national, regional and local governments; in the case of Vilnius, only national and local governments. However, their success in doing so varied markedly. The three public authorities in Linz were able to come to an agreement at a very early stage regarding finance, with each committing €20m, and decision-making power with each represented on the Board of the delivery agency, though the municipality was the dominant player. From this point on, the governance worked relatively effectively. However, in Vilnius, the tensions between the different layers were never resolved, political consensus was never achieved and, as a consequence, the governance remained unstable throughout.

The evaluation of 2007/08 found that an independent structure, carefully customised to reflect the context of the city, is usually advisable. Such a structure was established in Linz at a very early stage and given considerably autonomy. Indeed, whilst the public authorities took a great risk in granting such freedom and at times felt nervous at their lack of control, the granting of such autonomy facilitated effective governance in a number of ways. First, it allowed the recruitment of an artistic director of proven international calibre, who might not have accepted the post in the absence of such autonomy.

⁵⁷ Palmer/Rae Associates (2004)

Secondly, the day-to-day operation of the ECOC was decoupled from broader issues of party politics. In contrast, in Vilnius, the agency was not granted operational and artistic independence (indeed, much of the funding of the ECOC was not even administered by the agency), but remained closely tied to party politics. As a consequence, the leadership was unstable (there were two changes in the director of the agency) and the funding was uncertain - even into the title year.

The experience of 2009 also illustrates the importance of delivery structures and finance being agreed at an early stage. Palmer/Rae Associates (2004) reported that on average the governing structures of ECOC are established 3-4 years before the title year. The delivery agency for Linz was established very soon after the designation in April 2005, with the artistic director recruited within a few weeks. As we have already noted, the core funding of the ECOC was also committed at an early stage. This early start enabled the delivery agency not only to secure corporate sponsorship at a relatively early stage, but also to implement an extensive “warm-up” programme in the years 2007 and 2008. In contrast, the delivery agency for Vilnius was not created until some 18 months after the designation (September 2006) and not physically established until February 2007 – less than two years before the start of the title year. Even without the later problems of a reduction in the budget, the experience from other ECOC suggests that Vilnius would probably have struggled to develop an extensive and coherent cultural programme within such a short period. Early establishment of structures and confirmation of funding is thus important in providing *certainty*, which allows the agency to focus on securing additional corporate sponsorship and on developing the cultural programme.

In 2009, as in other years, communication remained an important challenge for the ECOC - in terms of volume, content and timing. Both ECOC followed the pattern common to many ECOC: after the initial euphoria of securing the nomination, the media demanded a steady stream of news. But in the early stages of the development phase, there were often few concrete announcements to make, creating a “media vacuum” before the full cultural programme was announced. This led the media, particularly the local media in the case of Linz, to focus on negative issues around the management of the ECOC. In the case of Vilnius, negative media coverage had a disproportionate impact, not least because positive reviews of ECOC events were often not actually identified with the ECOC designation as such and because, in the absence of a marketing budget, the ECOC was handicapped in being able to counter such negative reporting.

Communicating the ECOC internationally posed a different set of challenges. To a certain extent, the ECOC is already an important fixture on the calendar of the international cultural media, who will routinely give coverage to the ECOC. These media typically become interested from about the middle of the year preceding the title year and many will visit at that time. Interest then builds, becoming particularly intense in the months leading up to the start of the title year. In terms of reaching international tourist operators, the experience of 2009 highlights the importance of undertaking activities 2-3 years before the title year, i.e. at the point when operators are beginning to design tour packages. A key challenge for ECOC is both to integrate its cultural offering into the wider tourist offering of the city, but also to offer something (at an early stage, when the cultural programme may yet be in the early stages of its development) that operators can “sell” to tourists – typically, blockbusters and events of high artistic quality or international significance.

The 2009 ECOC also shows that monitoring and self-evaluation by the ECOC themselves can vary. Linz collected good data relating to audiences whilst such data was not consistently gathered in Vilnius.

Surveys of residents or visitors were undertaken in both cities at various points, but did not allow comparison of opinions before, during and after the title year. Linz produced a final report offering a degree of honest reflection and Vilnius is expected to do likewise. But neither ECOC commissioned a full and independent evaluation (though a study of the likely economic impact of Linz was undertaken). The evaluation of 2007/08 recommended that the European Commission require all ECOC to commission evaluations of the impact of their cultural programmes and associated activities. While the European Commission encourages the ECOC to commission independent evaluations, this is not currently a formal requirement.

Whilst the different circumstances and context of each ECOC call for customised approaches to monitoring and evaluation, there is perhaps a need for a broad framework and a set of common tools for evaluating each ECOC against the objectives of “developing cultural activities”, “promoting the European dimension of and through culture” and “supporting social and economic development through culture”. Such an approach would need to be customised to the circumstances of each ECOC, but might help them to establish good systems at an early stage (saving time and money) and that draw on the cumulative experience of previous years. The new policy grouping set up for this purpose by the University of Liverpool is therefore to be welcomed, drawing as it does on the Liverpool’s Impacts08 research programme with its strong focus on themes such as “economy and tourism”, “cultural vibrancy” and “access and participation”.

Key conclusion: the experience of both ECOC reinforces the conclusions of the 2007/08 evaluation: it is essential but can be challenging to establish an appropriate organisational structure and build a team with the appropriate skills to implement the cultural programme; this requires a wider set of skills and thus a different structure from the team that had prepared the successful application – with the right mix of existing and seconded staff as well as new talent; there is also the need to balance artistic and political interests and to ensure that any new delivery mechanism is welcomed by the existing stakeholders as a co-operative partner; a new and independent structure is usually advisable, one that is carefully customised to the political and cultural context of the city.

But the 2009 ECOC reinforced these conclusions in very different ways. Linz developed an efficient and effective governance structure and thus demonstrated how the main challenges can be met. Vilnius, in contrast, highlights the potential of consequences of failing to meet these challenges. It struggled to establish stable and effective arrangements, leading to major negative effects on the cultural programme and thus the overall impacts of the ECOC.

5.2.2 Sufficiency of resources / potential for other policy mechanisms

EQ27: Was the total size of the budget sufficient for reaching a critical mass in terms of impacts? Could the same results have been achieved with less funding? Could the same results have been achieved if the structure of resources and their respective importance was different?

EQ28: To what extent have the human resources deployed for the preparation and implementation of the ECOC event been commensurate with its intended outputs and outcomes? Could the use of other policy

instruments or mechanisms have provided greater cost-effectiveness? As a result could the total budget for the ECOC event be considered appropriate and proportional to what the action set out to achieve?

The diversity of the ECOC means that any conclusions about the sufficiency of resources need to be offered firmly within the context of each particular city. In the case of Linz, the resources devoted by the partners made its cultural programme one of the largest of all ECOC and certainly the largest event of its kind in Linz to date. It is, of course, hard to define what constitutes a “critical mass” in terms of impacts in this context. But the fact that 7,700 events were witnessed by 3.5m people over 365 days, suggests that the resources (both human and financial) were sufficient for achieving a “critical mass” in Linz. It is debatable whether the same impact would have been achieved with less funding, although Linz would probably still have implemented a successful ECOC, albeit at reduced scale. In the case of Vilnius, the original budget was relatively modest compared to previous ECOC and the subsequent reduction made the eventual budget one of the lowest to date. As described earlier, the original objectives of Vilnius were very broad and ambitious and the size of the budget (particularly after its reduction) was not sufficient to achieve them; indeed, several key objectives (e.g. communication, social dimension) were not pursued in any significant way as we have seen. Moreover, the difficulty of limited resources was compounded by the great uncertainty attached to those resources.

The 2007/08 evaluation found that the ECOC title remains highly valued by ECOC, generates extensive cultural programmes and achieves significant impacts. Cities make great efforts to secure the nomination and also make very explicit commitments at application stage regarding financial resources. Given the popularity of the title and the promises made by applicants, it does not appear that there is any lack of resources for ECOC per se. Instead, the challenge is to ensure that the cities, once designated as future ECOC, fulfil their own commitments made at application stage. Vilnius illustrates well the consequences of financial commitments not being fulfilled. In the current economic climate with public budgets coming under increasing pressure, there is the risk that other ECOC may face the risk of budget cuts.

The European Commission, as well as the monitoring and advisory panel, are of course fully aware of this situation and attentive to it and seek to ensure that the cities respect the commitments they made at application stage. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, at selection stage, the selection panels are attentive to whether the budgets proposed by bidding cities are realistic against this backdrop. Regarding cities which received the designation before the financial crisis and which have had to make cuts as a consequence, the panel is also attentive during the monitoring phase to any evolutions in the budget. Here it has to be pragmatic in accepting some budget cuts while seeking to ensure the utmost is done to deliver a high quality event.

Key conclusion: the ECOC title remains highly valued by ECOC, generates extensive cultural programmes and achieves significant impacts. Cities make great efforts to secure the nomination and also make very explicit commitments at application stage regarding financial resources. Resources available to ECOC (including those from the EU) are therefore sufficient in principle. But there is a need to ensure that ECOC fulfil their own commitments made at application stage. Indeed, the risk is that in very difficult economic circumstances and where political consensus may be lacking, the ECOC title may struggle to compete against the other demands made on public budgets.

5.2.3 Efficiency of mechanisms at EU level

The 2009 ECOC were selected by the process set out in the 1999 Decision which specifies an order of entitlement for Member States to nominate candidates for ECOC. At the time of the designation of the 2009 ECOC, Member States were free to determine the basis on which they selected the nominated candidates. In the case of Austria, an open call for proposals was launched, although Linz was the only city to apply. In the case of Lithuania, the government chose to nominate Vilnius without an open call. The applications from both cities were then considered by a selection panel at European level.

Whilst these mechanisms enabled applications of sufficient quality to be selected, they did not in themselves ensure that the ECOC went on to develop effective cultural programmes. As the 2009 and other ECOC have shown, the development phase can be challenging, when the aspirations of the application need to be converted into a set of workable institutional arrangements and a credible cultural programme. Whilst Linz was able to convert its application into an effective ECOC, Vilnius was not. With the 1999 Decision not allowing for any monitoring process, the European Commission had no formal means at its disposal with which to address its concerns about the development of Vilnius. Whilst the Commission took informal steps to support Vilnius, for example by sending an expert mission in 2008, and by organising a meeting between the Commissioner and the Lithuanian Culture Minister early in 2009, it is clear that the formal processes operating at the time were insufficient to identify problems systematically and prescribe remedial action.

A formal monitoring process has since been introduced by the 2006 Decision and has been applied to the 2010 ECOC onwards. This process is based on the submission by the ECOC of a first progress report two years before the start of the title year and a second report eight months before. These reports are to be considered by an expert panel that then issues a report on the state of preparations and any steps to be taken.

In addition, the European Commission has introduced an informal "post-designation" meeting for the 2013 titles onwards, roughly six months after the designation. The idea is to ensure that the link with cities is not lost during such a long period, and to enable the cities to seek advice and guidance from the advisory and monitoring panel. This initiative has been welcomed by the cities concerned so far, and has already helped to resolve some problems at an early stage. However, the Decision does not grant the Commission or the panel any powers beyond this process of "naming and shaming" and is not explicit about the steps to be taken in the event of non-compliance by the ECOC.

In the case of Vilnius, the monitoring process (had it been in operation) might have enabled potential problems to be identified and acted upon at an earlier stage. However, the cut in the budget was made at such a very late stage that it would have occurred after the final progress report (i.e. eight months before the start of the title year).

Key conclusion: the 1999 Decision did not specify sufficiently robust monitoring processes to be applied during the development phase of the ECOC; indeed, the experience of Vilnius demonstrates that the operation of a formal process might have allowed remedial action to be taken at an earlier stage. The monitoring process introduced by the 2006 Decision is thus necessary.

5.3 Effectiveness

5.3.1 Developing cultural activities

The 2007/08 evaluation noted that the first five ECOC (1985 Athens, Florence 1986, Amsterdam 1987, Berlin 1988, Paris 1989) were already established cultural centres of European significance in their own right but that the trend in recent years had been for smaller, often provincial cities to hold the title – cities that would not be recognised as being amongst the “first tier” of European cultural destinations, even after a successful title year. In the case of the 2009 ECOC, neither could be said to be amongst this first tier and both hoped to use the opportunity of the ECOC to raise their profile through culture and as cultural cities. Linz already enjoyed international profile as an industrial city but hoped for greater recognition (nationally and internationally) as a cultural city – and one that could compete with Salzburg and Vienna, albeit on a different terrain (i.e. in contemporary rather than classical culture); Vilnius was already the established cultural centre of Lithuania, but sought *international* recognition as a cultural destination.

Both ECOC were certainly successful in implementing a more extensive cultural programme than would have taken place in the absence of ECOC designation. As we have noted above, this programme was very extensive in Linz but more modest in Vilnius (and smaller than had originally been intended). For both, the ECOC enabled them to implement larger and more ambitious events, more genuinely innovative projects and new commissions across a range of cultural genres than would have been possible in the absence of ECOC designation. Both succeeded in attracting more international artists to their respective cities. Whilst cultural operators in both cities reported increased capacity and better co-operation with partners in other cities and countries, it is perhaps only in Linz where the ECOC can be said to have made the cultural scene more vibrant on a longer-term basis.

5.3.2 Promoting the European dimension of and through culture

The 1999 Decision offers no explicit definition of the “European dimension” and the criteria of the “European dimension” as set out in the 2006 Decision are open to very different interpretations. Indeed, as noted above, the European dimension of the ECOC Action was interpreted in very different ways by the two ECOC in 2009. Drawing on the six categories highlighted by Palmer/Rae Associates (2004), we draw some conclusions about the effectiveness of the 2009 ECOC in “promoting the European dimension of and through culture”.

Both ECOC were successful in undertaking activities that feature artists of European significance. Although both already featured a significant number of international artists in their regular cultural offering - particularly Linz through, for example, the Brucknerfest and the Ars Electronica Festival – more such artists were attracted to the cities as a result of the ECOC. Whilst Vilnius had fewer events featuring artists of European significance than did Linz, they perhaps constituted a relatively larger proportion of its cultural programme. In contrast, events featuring artists of European significance were more numerous in Linz but less prominent in relation to the rest of its very extensive programme; indeed, the overall ethos of Linz was not to organise a large number of blockbusters aimed at international audiences but instead to provide a 365-day offer.

The cultural programmes of both ECOC featured a larger number of collaborations, co-productions and exchanges than would have been the case in the absence of ECOC designation. In the case of Linz, this was facilitated by the fact that the key staff in the delivery agency were already recognised operators in

the international cultural sector and thus well connected to potential collaborators. But neither of the 2009 ECOC developed specific partnerships with cities in other countries to the extent undertaken, for example, by Luxembourg Greater Region (2007), Liverpool (2008) or Stavanger (2008), though both did network with each other and with past and future ECOC.

As with the 2007/08 ECOC, neither of the 2009 ECOC gave very high prominence to specific European themes and issues. Linz did feature some, such as a focus on non-Member States of the EU – Iceland, Switzerland and Turkey. But as in Luxembourg (2007), these were mostly restricted to specific projects and did not permeate the majority of the cultural programme; indeed, they were always secondary to the main themes of “Industry, Culture, Nature”.

Both ECOC emphasised aspects of European history, identity and heritage already present in the city – but in very different ways. Vilnius, like Sibiu (2007), a city in a country that had recently acceded to the EU, put a strong emphasis on its long European history and cultural heritage. Linz, meanwhile, chose to explore its role in a darker chapter in European history: the Nazi era and, alongside that, the city’s (now much diminished) Jewish heritage. This was perhaps the first time that any ECOC has explored such a difficult issue in such an explicit way and it attracted some criticism. However, the experience of Linz perhaps offers some useful learning for future ECOC also considering the exploration of such difficult issues: the importance of thorough, impartial historical research to underpin exhibitions; addressing the issues in an open, honest and self-critical way; avoiding sensationalism; exploring the issues at an early stage in the title year (perhaps even in the year before) in order to get negative coverage out of the way and create a different mindset. Comparing the experience of Linz with that of Sibiu and Vilnius, it is interesting to note that the latter two ECOC, whilst emphasising their long European heritage, did not give extensive consideration to the communist period of the 20th century.

Of course, that period is perhaps so recent that its exploration might have proved very contentious and risked overshadowing the rest of the cultural programme. But at some point in the future, it may be that cities in the former communist bloc may be able to draw on the experiences of Linz in explorations of the cultural legacy of that period.

5.3.3 Social and economic development

As noted in the 2007/08 evaluation, a feature of cultural policy in Europe in recent decades has been the emphasis on cultural expenditure delivering tangible, quantifiable returns on investment, as well as social renewal “from the bottom-up”. The 2009 ECOC, like most ECOC, defined objectives relating to social, economic and tourism development. As noted earlier, those objectives were not pursued to any great extent in Vilnius due to the reduction in the budget. In Linz, already an economically successful city, the ECOC was not designed to transform its economic fortunes but to change the city’s image – in part to increase the number of tourist visits, but also to change the perception that Linzer held of their city. The social dimension of Linz thus featured widening access to and participation in culture. This aim was not new to ECOC, but the specific emphasis of Linz is perhaps worth noting for future ECOC: that of *high quality* culture for all, not just culture for all.

In both cities, the cultural programme complemented a programme of infrastructure investment, albeit funded from other sources. As with other ECOC, we thus see that the 2009 ECOC, by themselves, tend not to stimulate entirely new infrastructure development programmes that would not otherwise happen.

But they do provide greater impetus and focus to those programmes – not least the incentive for new venues and facilities to be operational in time for the title year.

In terms of direct impacts on the local economy, the evidence presented above suggests that the Linz ECOC provided significant economic benefits for Linz, in terms of higher turnover in key sectors, new investment and increased tourist visits. In a context of global recession, the example of Linz thus demonstrates the economic potential of a successful ECOC. However, Vilnius is much less likely to have secured significant economic impact as a result of the ECOC, as explained above.

The 2007/08 evaluation in fact considered the risk that the economic, tourism and urban development impacts of ECOC would diminish in the context of a global recession and reductions in public expenditure and private investment. Within such a context, the evaluation suggested that “future ECOC will find it harder to finance their cultural programmes and associated infrastructure development. They may also find it harder to generate an increase in tourism and in cultural audiences.” Based on the example of Vilnius, it is clear that ECOC are not necessarily a catalyst for urban regeneration and do not automatically generate sufficient returns to justify the investment of public funding on purely economic grounds. The example of Linz proves that the ECOC concept has not yet exhausted its potential to generate economic impacts. But very real questions have been raised by the experience of Vilnius: as policymakers in many countries face tough budgetary choices over the next few years, will some see investment in culture – including ECOC – as a “soft target” that can be cut less painfully than, say health or education spending, in spite of the potential economic benefits of such investment? To the extent that that is true, it may therefore be the case, ironically perhaps, that cultural expenditure is once more justified by cultural rather than economic imperatives.

Key Conclusion:

Both ECOC were successful in implementing a more extensive cultural programme than would have taken place in the absence of ECOC designation, though in Vilnius this was much smaller than had been intended. The European dimension was relatively prominent in the cultural programme of both cities, consisting of events featuring artists of European significance, collaborations, co-productions and exchanges with operators in other countries. Both also emphasised aspects of European history, identity and heritage already present in the city but in very different ways: Vilnius emphasising its long European history and cultural heritage and Linz exploring its role in a darker chapter in European history, i.e. the Nazi era. In both cities, the cultural programme complemented a programme of infrastructure investment, albeit funded from other sources (notably the structural funds in the case of Vilnius), but in the case of Linz given greater impetus by the ECOC. The Linz ECOC generated significant economic benefits for the cities, as well as an increase in tourism, improvements in its internal and external image and wider participation in cultural activities. In contrast, Vilnius is much less likely to have secured significant economic or social impacts as a result of the ECOC.

5.4 Sustainability

In one sense, ECOC are intended not to be sustained; cities hold the title for a year before being replaced by a new set of title holders. So consideration of sustainability has to take into account the one-off nature of the cities' cultural programmes; some activities cannot (and perhaps should not) be expected to continue. We would therefore expect the level of activity (cultural, transnational, etc.) to be lower in the year following designation than in the year itself. At the same time, the 1999 Decision refers to the need to "integrate the cultural project into a dynamic medium-term process". It is therefore necessary to consider not simply whether impacts are sustained but also the effects on governance in the long-term.

Both cities offer examples of cultural activities newly-initiated in the title year that are continuing beyond the life of the title year. In Linz, these are numerous but, quite understandably, not of the scale of the €40m or so invested during the title year. Nonetheless, the cultural scene of Linz can be said to be more extensive and vibrant as a result of the ECOC. In Vilnius, the examples of continuing activity are relatively few in number and there is limited evidence of the cultural scene being more extensive and vibrant than it would otherwise have been.⁵⁸

The cultural sectors of both cities also gained valuable experience and learned lessons from the experience of 2009, although in Vilnius this learning emerged from a much more difficult set of circumstances. Individual cultural operators in both cities developed their capacity for undertaking better, more ambitious events and for undertaking international co-operation. But in Vilnius these impacts were perhaps offset, at least in part, by many missed opportunities, for example, to increase the capacity for community involvement in culture.

⁵⁸ These comments, of course, have to be seen in the context of the economic and cultural transformation of Vilnius over the last two decades.

In both cities, the arrangements for governing the ECOC are being dismantled, with the delivery agencies ceasing operations and most staff departing – mostly for jobs elsewhere in the case of Linz. This is, of course, the typical pattern for ECOC with few leaving specific legacy bodies (Luxembourg Greater Region (2007) being an exception in that respect). Neither city has established a specific formalised partnership platform for ongoing cultural governance, although partnership relations and partnership working remains strong in Linz. Indeed, the governance of culture in Linz is stronger as a result of the ECOC.

With the end of the ECOC, both cities perhaps need a new vision for the next stage in their cultural development, though for very different reasons: Linz has fulfilled much of the vision set out in the 1990s, has the cultural infrastructure and experience in place to match its aspirations and has, in that sense, reached the end of an era; the challenge will now be to determine “what next?”; Vilnius, in contrast, will perhaps need a new vision to guide it through what looks likely to be a difficult period in its cultural development – when trust needs to be rebuilt between key players, public expenditure on culture is unlikely to increase significantly and growth in international tourism may remain limited.

Key Conclusion:

Both the 2009 ECOC have generated cultural activities that will be sustained beyond the title year as well as capacity for undertaking better, more ambitious events and for undertaking international co-operation. However in Vilnius, these positive impacts tend to be limited to a relatively small number of activities and operators, whereas in Linz they are more widespread. Governance and partnership working in Linz has been strengthened as a result of the ECOC, offering the potential for further positive development of that city’s cultural sector.

5.5 Recommendations

As noted above, our conclusions are drawn from the experiences of the ECOC, but we do not offer recommendations for the cities themselves as they no longer hold the title – though current and future ECOC may well learn lessons from the conclusions presented here. We now, therefore, present recommendations for the European Commission that relate to future implementation of the ECOC Action as a whole. In presenting these recommendations we must take note of three factors; first, the recommendations made in the 2007/08 evaluation and which were summarised into three main recommendations taken forward by the Commission; second, the fact that new arrangements for application, selection, monitoring and award of EU funding have already been introduced since the designation of the 2009 titles (i.e. by the 2006 Decision and applying to the 2010 titles onwards; third, the likely timescale for the debate leading up to any new Decision regarding the ECOC Action

We present our recommendations against the three main headings used by the Commission in its report to the European Council, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions on the 2007/08 evaluation,⁵⁹ as well as an additional heading of “sustainability”.

⁵⁹ Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions: Ex Post evaluation of the European Capital of Culture event 2007 (Luxembourg and Sibiu) and 2008 (Liverpool and Stavanger).

5.5.1 Efficiency of governance

The 2007/08 evaluation suggested that the Commission should recommend all ECOC to commission evaluations of the impact of their cultural programmes and associated activities.⁶⁰ The recommendation has already been added in the Commission's guide for applications and cities are urged to do this in all relevant information briefings. The Commission reports that future ECOC will be asked to report on their progress in this regard at the two monitoring meetings held respectively three years and nine months before the event. In order to promote the circulation of good practice, the Commission has supported a policy grouping where the comprehensive evaluation model developed by Liverpool 2008 is being further adapted to the needs of future ECOC. Whilst this activity has been, quite naturally, more focussed on future titles, the experience of 2009 suggests that such activity is necessary and thus the recommendation of the 2007/08 evaluation remains valid.

Recommendation 1: The first main recommendation of the 2007/08 evaluation remains valid: the Commission should (continue to) recommend all ECOC to commission evaluations of the impact of their cultural programmes and associated activities.

5.5.2 Efficiency of ECOC mechanisms at EU level

The 2007/08 evaluation recommended that future evaluations should consider the efficiency, effectiveness and impartiality of the selection and monitoring processes introduced by the 2006 Decision. These processes did not apply to the 2009 titles and have not therefore been considered by this evaluation. However, the experience of 2009 again suggests that the recommendation of the 2007/08 evaluation remains valid.

This evaluation has found that the development phase remains a difficult time with many potential pitfalls facing all ECOC, for example, around the timing of establishing a delivery agency, securing financial commitments, etc. The important themes and issues are largely covered de facto by the monitoring panel, but there is a wealth of experience from previous ECOC that could perhaps be made more easily available to cities during their application and development phases – for example, through the guidance for cities.

The 2007/08 evaluation also recommended that future evaluations should consider the continued value of the ECOC “brand”, as viewed both by the title holders and by the wider world. This evaluation has found that the ECOC brand remains highly valued by cities, but that in very difficult economic circumstances and where political consensus may be lacking, it may struggle to compete against the other demands made on public budgets; where funding is cut and cultural programmes scaled back, there is a risk of damage to the ECOC brand. For designated titles, the priority is for the Commission to hold cities to the financial commitments made in their applications – and thus for future evaluations to consider the effectiveness of the new monitoring processes introduced by the 2006 Decision. For future titles, it will be important to know the intensity and effect of competition between cities generated by the move to mandatory open calls for submissions – including the extent to which competition encourages them to commit substantial financial resources.

⁶⁰ Recommendation 3 of the 2007/08 evaluation.

In both cases (designated and future titles), the continued value of the ECOC brand to cities will be a key determinant of their keenness to commit resources.

Recommendation 2: The second main recommendation of the 2007/08 evaluation remains valid: future evaluations should consider:

- the efficiency, effectiveness and impartiality of the selection and monitoring processes introduced by the 2006 Decision;
- the continued value of the ECOC “brand”, as viewed both by the title holders and by the wider world (media, cultural sector bodies and the general public); in the event that the value of the brand is perceived to be diminishing, the Commission should explore alternative approaches and compare their relative merits with those of the ECOC.

5.5.3 Effectiveness in achieving economic, urban development and tourism impacts and in supporting social development through culture

The 2007/08 evaluation recommended that the Commission should explore the extent to which the ECOC concept could continue to pursue economic and social objectives in addition to specifically cultural objectives – or whether to retain the flexibility for cities to strike their own balance. It considered the risk that the economic impacts of future ECOC may diminish in the context of a global recession and reductions in public funding, private investment and consumer expenditure. This evaluation has found that ECOC are not necessarily a catalyst for urban regeneration and do not automatically generate sufficient returns to justify the investment of public funding on economic grounds alone. For that reason, continued consideration will need to be given to the extent to which policymakers continue to view cultural expenditure as an investment with the potential to generate tangible social and economic returns – and thus the extent to which they are content to make such investments in a context of downward pressure on public expenditure; it will also be useful to focus on the extent to which ECOC (and the ECOC brand in general) still demonstrate the potential to secure increases in tourism for the host cities.

Recommendation 3: The third main recommendation of the 2007/08 evaluation remains valid: in forthcoming debates, the European Commission should explore the extent to which the ECOC concept (and culture more generally) can (continue to) and should be used to stimulate :

- urban regeneration and economic development or whether to return to an approach that is more about culture as an end in itself;
- the genuine social renewal of cities and outreach to all citizens, as opposed to merely widening opportunities for culture to already existing audiences;
- or whether to retain the flexibility for cities to strike their own balance.

5.5.4 Sustainability

This evaluation has found that the 2009 ECOC have generated cultural activities that will be sustained beyond the title year, as well as capacity for undertaking better, more ambitious events and for

undertaking international co-operation. Given this experience and that of previous years, as well as the need for ECOC to “integrate the cultural project into a dynamic medium-term process”, it would perhaps be useful to ensure the dissemination of best practice more widely.

Recommendation 4: The European Commission should continue to find ways to promote the sustainability of the impact of ECOC, based on the experience to date. This might include, for example, more explicit guidance in the text of section IV of the Guide to Cities, presenting examples of good practice in sustainability in an annex to the Guide and presentations to meetings of ECOC stakeholders.

6.0 Post-script: Reflections on the European dimension

6.1 Introduction

A requirement of the Terms of Reference for this evaluation was to identify lessons from the 2009 ECOC that might be of value to future ECOC. In sections 3 and 4 we have looked at Linz and Vilnius in turn and examined them in detail against the evaluation questions, principally focusing on the accountability function of the evaluation, i.e. to determine the extent to which the opportunity afforded by the title year was put to good use. In section 5, we then pulled together these findings in order to draw conclusions from across both ECOC against the evaluation criteria. There are, however, a number of lessons that warrant separate discussion as they provide valuable lessons for future ECOC but whose full exploration requires us to depart a little from the formality of the evaluation criteria. Not surprisingly these issues focus more on the 'how to' question of effective delivery rather than on what was achieved.

The 2007/08 evaluation considered lessons in delivery relating to “defining a European Capital of Culture” and “putting in place an effective delivery body”. Building on those lessons, we offer here some reflections on lessons in delivering the European dimension of the ECOC – looking first to understand that dimension, then to explore how it can be interpreted into a cultural programme and last to offer lessons in the practical delivery of the European dimension. These lessons have been drawn both from the experiences not only of the 2009 ECOC but also of the 2007 & 2008 ECOC.

6.2 Understanding the European dimension

At first glance, the ECOC Action might seem to be paradoxical in nature. It is a European initiative - but located in just two or three specific localities each year. It aims to address European-level objectives – but is almost entirely financed and implemented by a specific set of partners based in those localities. Who, then, “owns” the ECOC and what are they intending to achieve?

In the first instance, the ECOC is 'owned' by the EU which designates the cities as ECOC. The European Commission, as the EU body overseeing the implementation of the ECOC Action, sets out to lever the resources and efforts of a set of local partnerships to undertake something of European significance – and thus add value, especially, and importantly, *symbolic value*, at the European level. Through this process, the European Commission ultimately intends the ECOC to contribute progress towards a number of goals of European cultural policy as set out in Article 167 of the Treaty - bringing the common European cultural heritage to the fore and contributing to the flowering of national cultures - and in the European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World – cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; creativity for growth and jobs; the role of culture within international relations. But from the European Commission's point of view, the ECOC Action is not primarily intended as a mechanism for promoting urban development and social inclusion, though it welcomes the contribution that the ECOC has made in that respect.

The EU could and does achieve the kind of symbolic value of the ECOC Action in other ways, for example, through supporting European prizes in the field of culture or other high-profile initiatives. But

few other mechanisms succeed in enticing other stakeholders to invest so much funding into an EU initiative offering so little EU co-financing – as low as 2% in the case of Linz. Moreover, the EU has come to recognise the necessity of “the City & Citizens” dimension⁶¹ of the ECOC because: i) of criticism that the cultural programmes of some ECOC were too elitist, did not involve local people sufficiently and did not reflect the realities of daily life in the host cities; ii) of the recognition that the potential for sustaining the (cultural and other) benefits of ECOC lies in making the ECOC an integral part of the development of the city; iii) the cities themselves have increasingly taken the initiative to incorporate it.

In the second instance, the ECOC is 'owned' by the cities that hold the title. Through the application of their own resources, efforts and ingenuity, the cities are attempting to acquire the prestige and profile that is associated with a European title, such as the ECOC. They are, quite naturally, pursuing their own local policy objectives which typically relate to local development and social inclusion within the city (the “City and Citizens” dimension). Indeed, as identified in the 2007/08 evaluation, the social and economic development dimension of the ECOC was adopted first by the ECOC themselves and only later by the relevant (European) legal bases⁶² of the ECOC Action.

Of course, any city is free to invest its own resources in a one-off, year-long cultural programme in the absence of ECOC designation. Indeed, many do invest heavily in culture, whether in the pursuit of cultural or developmental goals (or both). So why do cities seek ECOC designation which requires them to adopt (what might be seen as primarily) European policy goals? The cities value, of course, the prestige and profile associated with a European title. But many have also recognised the potential for the European dimension to reinforce their own developmental and cultural objectives, e.g. by strengthening their cultural sector through co-operation with international artists, by bringing the very best of European culture to their cities, or by enriching their local cultural offering scene with a diversity of cultural influences from elsewhere.

We see, then, that the European dimension can be put at the service of local policy objectives and the pursuit of those local policy objectives can, in turn, reinforce European policy objectives. Herein lies the attraction of the ECOC Action for European policymakers and local stakeholders alike and perhaps also, one of the reasons for its success. There remains, though, the question of how the European dimension can be interpreted into a locally-based cultural programme. We consider that question next.

6.3 Interpreting the European dimension into the cultural programme

Palmer/Rae Associates (2004) suggested six main categories for definitions of the European Dimension used by the 1995-2004 ECOC:

- Presenting events that focus on the talents of European artists

⁶¹ Article 4 of the 2006 Decision.

⁶² The preamble to the 1999 Decision featured some reference to the development of culture and tourism, but it was only in the 2006 Decision that “long-term development” became an explicit criterion – even here, economic objectives were not explicitly mentioned. Similarly, the 1999 Decision referred to the need to mobilise large sections of the population, but it was only in the 2006 Decision, that “social development” became an explicit criterion.

- Collaboration, co-productions, exchanges and other means of developing co-operation between artists, cultural organisations and groups who are based in different European countries
- Developing European themes and issues
- Identifying and celebrating aspects of European history, identity and heritage that are present already in the city
- Very specific partnerships between two or more cities
- Promoting European tourism.

We present these categories against three main groups in the table below and contrast them with a purely local or national cultural programme.

	European cultural programme	Local or national cultural programme
Content of cultural activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European themes and issues • European history, identity and heritage present in the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local or national themes
Mechanism for undertaking cultural activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events featuring European artists • Collaboration, co-productions, exchanges between operators in different countries • Partnerships between cities in different countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events featuring local or national artists • Collaboration, co-productions, exchanges between operators in the same country • Partnerships between cities in the same country
Audiences and participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European tourists • European audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local/national audiences • Local/national residents

What makes a cultural programme “European” is the inclusion of activities whose content, delivery mechanism or audiences or participants are European in essence. The cultural programmes of ECOC typically include a mix of some activities that have a European dimension and others that do not. In extreme cases, the European activities can constitute a discrete sub-programme of projects that is merely added to a main cultural programme which has no particular European dimension. But the (perhaps unstated) intention of the ECOC Action is that European and local/national activities should not be discrete sub-programmes but instead form a single coherent programme. Indeed, it could be argued that for the full potential of any ECOC to be realised, the European dimension should permeate the entire cultural programme and fuse with the city and citizens dimension.

In practice, the European dimension is reflected in the content, the mechanisms and the audiences of most ECOC, although to very different degrees. Moreover, the European dimension is often combined with the local/national dimension in different ways in different projects within the same cultural programme, for example, by exploring European themes through events only featuring national artists and/or targeted at local people. There exists, then, a wealth of experience in the ECOC in respect of the European dimension and it is from that experience that we attempt to attract some more practical lessons in the delivery of ECOC.

6.4 Delivering the European dimension in practice

The first way in which the European dimension can serve an ECOC is thus through the implementation of cultural activities featuring a European theme. Such themes may have a specific relevance to the city or none at all. They may represent a celebration of, for example a significant European personality or artistic movement, or the exploration of a difficult issue or period in history. The potential benefits of exploring such themes can include the attraction of international audiences (for example, the Constantine exhibition that featured in Luxembourg Greater Region (2007)), the opportunity to change the image of a city (Vilnius's focus on its Millennium), or the chance for a city to put itself on the "European map" (Sibiu (2007) a small Romanian city whose title year coincided with Romania's accession to the EU).

In implementing activities with a European theme, we can identify three potentially effective approaches. First, European themes, particularly those already present and/or celebrated in the city, may need to be reinterpreted in new, fresh ways. For example, Vilnius featured an exhibition of Cold War-era art organised by London's Victoria & Albert Museum and hosted in a Soviet-era building. Second, ECOC can bring to the fore "hidden" European aspects present in the city. Indeed, several have celebrated the different European heritages and communities present, but perhaps not prominent in the city, for example Vilnius emphasised the heritage of its centuries-old Polish and Jewish communities; looking at previous years, Sibiu (2007) emphasised its long Germanic heritage which had become much less prominent during the communist period, whilst Luxembourg drew attention to the more recently-established European minorities: Portuguese, Italian, ex-Yugoslavian. Last, it can be useful to explore difficult and challenging European themes, but this requires thorough preparation, careful presentation and an acceptance that criticism may be inevitable. Linz's suite of projects addressing its Nazi past was based on robust academic research and sensitive delivery, but still faced criticism at times.

The second way in which the European dimension can serve an ECOC is through co-operation with cultural operators and artists from other countries. Such co-operation can take many diverse forms – in performances, co-productions, exchanges and partnerships between cities and at different levels – from concerts given by high-profile international artists to exchange activities featuring schoolchildren. Again, such co-operation can present benefits in terms of increased audience numbers, higher international profile, a stronger local cultural sector and a richer local cultural scene. But again, European co-operation can pose risks. First, co-operation may lack a strong rationale, beyond the broad aim of "being European". Second, for many ECOC there is a stronger rationale for taking a broader international perspective (incorporating the European dimension) given their context or history – for example, Liverpool with its long history as a port of global significance. Third, there can be many practical obstacles to overcome, for example, relating to the mobility of artists (e.g. work permits, visas, language barriers, health or social security cover, etc.) and the circulation of artistic works (e.g. related to issues of indemnity, insurance or transportation).

The experience of recent ECOC offers a number of lessons that can help guide the effective delivery of this element of the European dimension:

- The first lesson is that the right infrastructure and capacity must be in place to facilitate European co-operation. This, of course, includes having venues appropriate to host artists of European significance. For example, the first Luxembourg ECOC of 1995 made the key stakeholders aware of the need for a programme of investment in cultural infrastructure over the next decade. But it also

includes the capacity for the local cultural sector to initiate, participate and sustain co-operation. Such capacity might consist of: a commitment on the part of the main public or cultural institutions to attract and negotiate with key players abroad; the existence of experienced individuals that are well-connected in the international cultural scene and that can engage with operators in other countries and persuade them to co-operate with the ECOC; and the ability to address the practical obstacles described above.

- The second lesson is that European co-operation needs to be embedded as far as possible into the ECOC's cultural programme. This can be achieved through the application of specific selection criteria in the process of selecting projects; such criteria would require co-operation with cultural operators in other countries as a condition of funding. However, the use of selection criteria may in fact deter smaller, less experienced cultural operators from being involved in the ECOC, so the delivery agency may need to provide additional support, for example, in signposting smaller organisations to larger ones that may be able to help them overcome barriers to European co-operation.
- A third lesson is the importance of linking international operators to local artists and cultural operators in the city, for example, in the context of co-productions and residencies. This not only enables the programme to have more of a local "flavour" and seem less "imported", but it also serves to build the capacity of the local sector. Again, the delivery agency may need to be a key role in linking local organisations to international artists and cultural operators visiting the city.

As noted above, the third element in the European dimension of an ECOC is the attraction of European audiences and tourists. Of course, this highlights one of the potential tensions in any ECOC – between the extremes of being an international arts festival on the one hand and a local cultural development programme on the other. The first perhaps calls for events of high artistic quality and/or blockbusters that will "sell" in an international market. The second perhaps calls for small, locally-based, activities that foster the participation of residents. As noted in the 2007/08 evaluation, it is important for the city to determine for itself how it intends to interpret the ECOC concept and in a way that is best suited to that city. Looking at the more practical issue of attracting and serving European tourists, we can identify some lessons from the delivery of recent ECOC:

- First, the city needs as far as possible to draw together the various partners involved, in order to develop a coherent and clear cultural tourist offer. In some ECOC, it has been the case that co-ordination between the tourist and cultural sectors was limited leading to the cultural tourist offer being fragmented. The delivery agency may thus have an important facilitation and brokering role to play in that respect.
- Second, the necessary marketing and publicity activities need to be undertaken at an early stage – perhaps 2 or 3 years before the title year, when tourist operators are putting together tours and packages for that year.
- Third, it can be most effective for an ECOC to consider how to help make the city as a whole more "visitor-friendly" in time for the title year. This may include efforts to persuade the hotel and catering sector to address issues of quality or capacity, but can go beyond that to encompass the broader "visitor welcome" offered. Ensuring such a welcome might include several approaches including: a

prominent and centrally-located ECOC information centre and box office; wide availability of information about the ECOC (and for visitors more generally) not just at the usual tourist locations, but in shops, businesses and public transport hubs across the city; and training and information for the staff of relevant local businesses and public services – giving them the information, practical skills and “mindset” to offer the best welcome and effective “signposting” for the visitors that they make encounter in their everyday work.

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