

**REPORT
OF THE SELECTION MEETING
FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF
CULTURE 2012**

**Issued by
The Selection Panel for the European Capital of
Culture (ECOC) 2012**

5 November 2008

This is the report of the meeting of the 2012 European capital of Culture Selection Panel on 5 November 2008. The report is addressed to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions.

I Background

The European Capitals of Culture (ECOC), a major European Union initiative, is a way of bringing together European citizens through culture. The objective is to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual knowledge and understanding among Europe's citizens.

“The European City of Culture” project was launched in 1985 by the Member States meeting in the Council on the initiative of Mrs Melina Mercouri. Since then, the event has grown in popularity every year, and is now well known to European citizens.

Until 2004, the European Capitals of Culture were designated by the Council on the basis of intergovernmental cooperation. Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council established a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019. By this decision, a new nomination procedure was introduced whereby each year, one city of a Member State is designated as European Capital of Culture, following the order listed in the annex to the decision.

A modified Decision was adopted in February 2005, in order to integrate the ten Member States which joined the EU in 2004. The modification means that for each year from 2009 to 2019, two Member States will be entitled to make proposals to the EU: one from the Member States which joined the EU in 2004, and one from the others.

The scheme of designating the European Capitals of Culture was modified in 2006, following recommendations from stakeholders, in order to bring about a more efficient, transparent, and European designation. Consequently, Decision 1622/2006/EC is now the only applicable Decision.

Since the new cycle to have cities designated as European Capitals of culture takes six years, Article 14 of Decision 1622/2006/EC lays down transitional provisions for the 2011 and 2012 title.

The nomination for European Capitals of Culture concerning the years 2011 and 2012 are governed by the following procedure:

- The national authorities of the relevant countries (Estonia and Finland for the 2011 title, in accordance with the Annex of Decision 1622/2006/EC) nominate one or several cities, four years before the event is due to begin. The nominations are notified to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions.

- A selection panel meets and issues a report on the nominations judged against the objectives of the action and criteria specified in Decision 1419/1999/EC (unless the city decides to base its programme on the criteria set out in Decision 1622/2006/EC). The report is submitted to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council.
- The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the Commission on the nominations within three months after the receipt of the report.
- The Commission gives a recommendation on the designation of the Capitals of Culture to the Council. The recommendation takes the opinion of the Parliament and the selection panel's report into consideration.
- The Council officially designates the cities in question (one from each Member State entitled to make proposals) as the European Capitals of Culture for the year in which they have been nominated.

The selection panel is composed of seven leading independent figures who are experts on the cultural sector, of whom two shall be appointed by the European Parliament, two by the Council, two by the Commission and one by the Committee of the Regions.

II The selection panel and the candidate cities for 2012

1. The selection panel

On 17 April 2008, the Commission appointed Sir Robert Scott and Mr Manfred Gaulhofer. Their mandates end in late 2010.

The European Parliament decided, during its Conference of Presidents of 24 May 2007, to nominate Ms Danuta Glondys and Mr Gottfried Wagner. Their mandates last until end 2008.

The Culture Council appointed Ms Mary Mac Carthy and Ms Mary Michailidou in September 2007. Their mandates last until end 2009.

The Committee of the Regions presented their choice of member, Mr Jyrki Myllyvirta, in its letter of 3 April 2007 from President Delebarre to Commissioner Figel'. His mandate lasts until end 2009.

2. Candidates for 2012

Portugal and Slovenia are the two Member States entitled to make proposals for the 2012 European Capital of culture title.

By letter dated 18 December 2007 to Commissioner Figel', the Head of the Permanent Representation of Portugal to the EU submitted the nomination of Guimarães for the title of European Capital of Culture.

By letter dated 18 December 2007, the Slovenian Minister of Culture Dr. Vasko Simoniti submitted the nomination of Maribor for the title of European Capital of Culture.

On 23 April 2008, the European Commission hosted a first meeting of the selection panel appointed to assess applications for the European Capitals of Culture in 2012. The panel assessed the proposals against the criteria laid down for the event. The panel invited the cities concerned to develop their plans further, to focus more strongly on the main objectives and characteristics of the action as defined in Decision 1622/2006/EC, including cultural programmes that have a long term impact for the city and the region, and to complete their application accordingly. The panel expected a more costed programme detail, especially for artistic events with a major European dimension¹.

The completed applications were received by the Commission by 30 September 2008 and forwarded to the panel.

III Meeting of the selection panel in Brussels, 5 November 2008

1. Organisation of the meeting and the Panel's role

On the initiative of the Commission, the Selection Panel members were invited to a second meeting on 5 November 2008 in Brussels.

The applicant cities were invited to present their completed applications and to answer questions from the panel members. The panel had received copies of both completed applications prior to the meeting.

In accordance with Decision 1622/2006/EC the role of the selection panel is to assess the proposals judged against the objectives of the action and to give advice on how to improve the project if necessary.

The criteria the 2012 candidate cities must take into consideration are those set out in Decision 1419/1999/EC (article 3 and Annex II) unless the city decided to base its programme on the criteria set out in Article 4 of Decision 1622/2006/EC. In its application, Guimarães mentioned that it had chosen the criteria established in Article 4 of this Decision. Maribor did not refer to this point in its first application, but has now indicated that it has completed it in accordance with the criteria mentioned in Article 4 of Decision 1622/2006/EC.

The following were present from the European Commission as observers (Culture Programme and Actions unit, DG Education and Culture): Ann Branch (Head of Unit), Jacqueline Pacaud, Jean-Philippe Gammel, Sheamus Cassidy.

¹ See the document called "Information about the selection meeting for the European Capital of Culture 2012" sent to the cities concerned following the meeting.

Representatives of each nominated city gave a presentation of their candidature and answered questions from the selection panel.

2. Summary of the presentation of the nominated cities

A) Maribor

The Slovenian delegation was led by Mr Vladimir Rukavina, President of the project team.

Maribor attended with a very large delegation, including the project managers of several of the main events of the year. Slovenia's candidature involves close cooperation with the surrounding and much wider ('Eastern Cohesion') region, including Murska Sobota, Novo mesto, Ptuj, Slovenj Gradec and Velenje. The theme for Maribor's European Capital of Culture is "Pure Energy", referring to the fact that the region covers most of Slovenia's energy resources and is linked to Maribor's aim to build up energy in the coming years leading to a "cultural explosion" in 2012.

A large part of the presentation was dedicated to the presentation of these events. Several of them have existed for many years already and are well known in Europe. The ECoC should bring these events to the next level and therefore enhance their potential to attract a larger number of visitors. . The programme is largely open to the world and the various projects involve the different continents.

The total budget including operational and capital expenditures is estimated at approximately 200 million euros (approximately 57 million for operational expenses and 143,000 for investments). The delegation indicated that the new government had informally confirmed its support for Maribor.

B) Guimarães

The Guimarães delegation was led by Francisca Maria da Costa Abreu, from the City Council. Thomas Michael Fleming, a consultant, was part of the delegation.

Guimarães presented the vision of its application, with a 2020 objective for the city's development. The expected impacts of the 2012 event will be:

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

The programme will be composed of numerous projects designed by cultural institutions of Guimarães as well as the ECOC team.

The delegation highlighted several projects to illustrate the plans for 2012 including the advanced training centre of Campurbis, the artistic creativity platform in the area of Couros, the Fura del Baus project .

The governance structure for the event, designed as a matrix model (themes/management) was presented, as well as the sources of the budget (structural funds, city, ministry, own resources). The total budget including operational and capital expenditures is estimated at 111 million euros.

An artistic director was appointed but couldn't join.

II. The panel's assessment

The recommendations of the jury are based on the extent to which the received bids meet the criteria and objectives of the action.

1) Maribor

The panel was impressed by the commitment, enthusiasm and ambition of the new team and was happy to see that the city had improved the bid in comparison with the application presented in April by taking into account the advice delivered at that time. It stressed the very high number of projects comprising the programme and expressed its doubts about the capacity of the City to implement them all. In priority, it would like to see events specifically designed for the year in the programme. It therefore underlined that in order to be successful, Maribor would need to be selective. The panel members advised that the programme would be more easily manageable if the team succeeded in giving priority to a more restricted number of demanding, but realistic projects. In this regard, the panel requested a list of 5 to 7 priorities for the event. The panel also reflected on the added value which external expertise could bring in helping to acquire the added value needed for the preparation of this kind of European project. In this context the panel suggested that the city might benefit from involving external advisors for the further development of the project, in particular with regards to artistic excellence.

2) Guimarães

The panel has welcomed the vast progress made by the city in comparison with its first application. The panel was impressed by the commitment of the team and the cultural sector to this project, which greatly relies on the quality of the partnership. The concept of the event was strong, and the University was highly motivated to participate in the event. The panel was impressed by the team and its presentation and stressed the importance of now translating the vision and the concept into concrete projects. The success of progress made by Guimarães would greatly depend on continuity of the working method and the new team now put together. The panel recommended continuing along the lines which have now been set for the entire preparation phase, stressing the importance of staff stability. It regretted that the newly appointed director did not participate in the presentation and would like to see the whole team formally appointed as soon as possible.

3) The panel's recommendation

On the basis of an overall evaluation of the applications, the panel reached a consensus to recommend to the Institutions of the European Union that Guimarães and Maribor host the European Capital of Culture in 2012. However, the panel would recommend Maribor to involve external advice for the further preparations in order to ensure the success of the event and to safeguard the prestige of the title.

The panel underlined that the recommendation for a designation of a European Capital of Culture is not the end, but the beginning of a process leading to the ECOC event 2012.

A constant commitment of the state and municipal governments throughout the process right up to the year itself is essential and crucial for the success, in particular regarding financial undertakings.

4) Monitoring phase

In accordance with Decision 1622/2006/EC, the 2012 European Capitals of Culture will be submitted to a monitoring phase between their formal designation and the beginning of the event.

The monitoring will be carried out by the seven members designated by the European Institutions. This panel is called the monitoring and advisory panel. It shall be convened on two occasions between the designation and the beginning of the event to give advice on, and to take stock of the preparations for the event with a view to helping the cities to develop a high quality programme with a strong European dimension. The first monitoring meeting will take place by late 2009 and the final one by spring 2011.

On the basis of the report issued by the monitoring and advisory panel after its second meeting, a prize "in honour of Melina Mercouri" shall be awarded to the designated cities by the Commission provided that they meet the criteria of the action and have implemented the recommendations made by the selection as well as the monitoring and advisory panels. The prize shall be monetary and shall be awarded in full at the latest three months before the start of the relevant year. It will be financed from the European Union's Culture Programme.

The panel felt that the monitoring and advisory process to be implemented by the Commission will be a useful tool to assist the preparatory work to be achieved by Guimarães and Maribor 2012. It will issue recommendations concerning the award of the prize by the Commission at the second monitoring meeting with the 2012 European Capitals of culture.

The Panel also reminded the two cities that the Melina Mercouri Prize is not automatic, and that further to their formal designation, they would still need to deserve the prize, namely to meet the criteria laid down in the legal base and follow the recommendations of the monitoring panel in order to be entitled to it.

Sir Robert Scott (Commission designation)	signed
Manfred Gaulhofer (Commission designation)	signed
Mary Michailidou (Council designation)	signed
Mary Mac Carthy (Council designation)	signed
Danuta Glondys (Parliament nomination)	signed
Gottfried Wagner (Parliament nomination)	signed
Jyrki Myllyvirta (Committee of the Regions nomination)	signed