

REPORT
FOR THE SECOND MONITORING AND
ADVISORY MEETING
FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF
CULTURE 2014

Issued by

**The monitoring and advisory Panel for the European
Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2014**

April 2013

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This is the report of the monitoring and advisory Panel following the second monitoring and advisory meeting for the 2014 European Capitals of Culture, namely Riga (Latvia) and Umeå (Sweden), which took place in Brussels on 17 April 2013.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The European Capital of Culture initiative: monitoring process and Melina Mercouri Prize

The European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) initiative is a major European Union action aimed at highlighting the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as promoting greater mutual knowledge and understanding among Europe's citizens. It is governed by Decision 1622/2006/EC¹ (hereafter, "the Decision").

In accordance with the Decision, all the cities having held the European Capitals of Culture since 2010 have followed a monitoring process from the moment of their designation to the beginning of the title-year.

The monitoring is carried out under the responsibility of a monitoring and advisory Panel (hereafter, "the Panel"), consisting of seven members designated by the European Institutions. This Panel is convened on two occasions to give advice on, and to take stock of the preparations for the event with a view to helping the cities develop a high quality programme with a strong European dimension.

For the 2014 title, the first monitoring meeting took place on 8 November 2011 and the second, on 17 April 2013.

According to Article 11 of the Decision, on the basis of the report issued by the 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 amount to 1.5 million Euros for each city. It shall be awarded at the latest three months before the start of the relevant year. It is financed under the European Union's Culture Programme. The requirements for the award of the prize are mentioned in paragraph 5 below.

1.2. Riga and Umeå as 2014 European Capitals of Culture

In accordance with the Decision, Latvia and Sweden were the two Member States entitled to host a European Capital of Culture in 2014.

The Ministries of Culture of Latvia and Sweden were responsible for the organisation of their respective competition at national level.

¹ OJ L 304 of 3.11.2006, p. 1.

The final selection meetings in Latvia and Sweden took place in September 2009 and the Panel recommended respectively Riga and Umeå for the 2014 title.

The final selection reports are available at the following website:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc483_en.htm.

Following the recommendation by the selection Panel, Latvia and Sweden nominated Riga and Umeå and notified the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions in the autumn 2009.

On the basis of a Commission Recommendation, the EU Council of Ministers of 10 and 11 May 2010 officially designated Riga and Umeå as the 2014 European Capitals of Culture.

1.3. Remarks made by the Panel about the European Capitals of Culture 2014 during the first monitoring meeting

This section summarizes remarks made by the Panel during the first monitoring meeting *in November 2011*.

1.3.1. Riga

The Panel was impressed by the efficient work carried out by a very small team and acknowledged the progress achieved at that time. It however advised to increase quickly the size of the team to cope with the ambitious programme.

Regarding the budget, the Panel was pleased to see that part of the co-funding of the State was confirmed and urged the authorities to make the remaining part and co-financing by the city available step by step up to 2014. The Panel however expressed its concern regarding the relatively low budget and the uncertainties of securing funding from the private sector including AirBaltic.

Regarding the programme, the Panel asked to see more precise and detailed information on on-going projects in the next report.

The Panel also recommended developing the "European dimension".

It also asked to know more about the view of the team and its strategy for the sustainability of the event beyond 2014.

Concerning the Riga's communication strategy, the Panel emphasised the need to further explain to the city inhabitants how great the opportunity of Riga 2014 could be.

The Panel also stressed the importance of using the ECOC logo in a highly visible manner on all communication material regarding the event.

It also expressed some concerns regarding the use of the name of the town of Sigulda in a misleading way which could generate confusion about the fact that there are only two European Capitals of Culture in 2014, namely Riga and Umeå.

1.3.2. Umeå

The Panel acknowledged the excellent programme and preparations, and commended the quality and stability of the team.

The Panel was pleased with the role of open source to increase citizen participation and highly appreciated the significant involvement of Sami people.

Regarding the "European dimension", the Panel recommended developing stronger links with Southern and Central Europe. It particularly stressed the importance of finding simple messages capable of tempting visitors to Northern Europe and the event in Umeå and recommended reinforcing and speeding up its media activities.

The Panel had some concerns about funding and asked to be updated on the outcome of the negotiations on regional and national funding.

The Panel also urged the 2014 team to strengthen the marketing strategy of the city so as to convince non-local visitors to come.

The Panel considered it necessary to develop the vision of the sustainability of the event, and asked to be updated on this aspect of the project at the second monitoring meeting.

The Panel also recalled the importance of employing the ECOC logo in a highly visible manner on all communication material regarding the event.

2. SECOND MEETING OF THE MONITORING AND ADVISORY PANEL IN BRUSSELS, 17 APRIL 2013

2.1. The Panel

For the meeting, the Panel was composed of the following members:

- Mr Manfred Gaulhofer and Sir Jeremy Isaacs, appointed by the Commission for the 2011-2013 period;
- Mr Jordi Pardo and Mr Steve Green, appointed by the European Parliament for the 2012-2014 period;
- Ms Anu Kivilo and Mr Norbert Riedl, appointed by the Council for the 2013-2015 period;
- Ms Elisabeth Vitouch, appointed by the Committee of the Regions for the 2013-2015 period.

The Panel was chaired by Mr Gaulhofer.

2.2. Organisation of the meeting

The 2014 European Capitals of Culture had been invited by the Panel to answer some questions listed in a "monitoring questionnaire" prior to the meeting. During the meeting,

the cities were given the opportunity to present the progress achieved, their expectations and any risks for the year, and to answer questions from the Panel members.

The meeting was structured around the following sessions:

- Presentation by representatives from Riga 2014 and question/answer session;
- Presentation by representatives from Umeå 2014 and question/answer session;
- Panel discussion, outlines of the report and conclusions (restricted to Panel members and the Commission as observer)

The following were present from the European Commission, as observers: Ann Branch, Sylvain Pasqua, Vincent Lagarre and Antonio Farrauto (Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Creative Europe – Culture Unit).

The delegations of the 2014 European Capitals of Culture were composed as follows:

2.2.1. The Riga 2014 delegation

- Mr Nils Ušakovs, Mayor of Riga
- Ms Iveta Strautiņa, Head of the Mayor's Office
- Ms Diāna Čivle, Director of Riga 2014
- Ms Aiva Rozenberga, Programme Director of Riga 2014
- Ms Dace Vilsons, Head of the Programme Implementation Unit, Riga 2014
- Ms Vita Timermane-Moora, member of the Artistic Council, Riga 2014 and Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr Jānis Dripe, Adviser to the Minister of Culture, as observer, in accordance with Article 10.2 of the Decision.

2.2.2. The Umeå 2014 delegation

- Ms Marie-Louise Rönnmark, Mayor of Umeå, Chair of Umeå 2014 Committee
- Mr Sven-Olov Edvinsson, Vice Chair of Umeå 2014 Committee
- Mr Jan Björinge, General Director, Umeå2014
- Mr Fredrik Lindgren, Artistic Director, Umeå 2014
- Ms Helene Brewer, Head of Administration, Umeå 2014

Mr Benny Marcel, Deputy Director General of the Swedish Arts Council on behalf of the Swedish Ministry of Culture, as observer, in accordance with Article 10.2 of the Decision.

3. SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE 2014 ECOCS AND QUESTION/ANSWER SESSIONS

3.1. Riga 2014

The Programme Director of the Foundation Riga 2014 introduced the members of the delegation and took this opportunity to underline the stability of the governance and management structures of the project since the bidding stage. She also highlighted the

increase in the number of staff members up to 16 full time equivalents at the time of the meeting.

The delegation said that the Riga 2014 artistic programme had been released in April with an extensive communication campaign. It is largely in line with the initial bid although minor changes were introduced in order to adapt to the latest trends in Latvian and European cultural life. Under the motto "Force majeure", the programme aims at presenting culture as a major positive force to "change the city and the people for the better and to help us out of a difficult situation". It is divided in six thematic chapters comprising more than two hundred projects, such as concerts, exhibitions, festivals, conferences etc.

The delegation highlighted some flagship projects which they expected to be of particular interest for people from all over Europe and beyond, such as the World Choir Games, the European Film Awards, the "Born in Riga" concert to be broadcasted by the European Broadcasting Union and an exhibition celebrating 500 years of printed books in Europe.

The opening will take place on 17-19 January 2014. The official ceremony will be organised in the Latvian National Opera with the première of Wagner's "Rienzi". One of the key opening events will be a chain of people who will transfer books from the old National Library to the new Library building. The Central Market will also host cultural and artistic celebrations and performances that will bring together people from various social backgrounds who rarely mingle with one another.

As regards the European dimension, the delegation stressed that more than 90% of the artistic programme had a clear European dimension either by bringing common features to the fore such as the "Summer Solstices" project, by treating European themes such as WW1 or by highlighting cultural diversity, for example with a Sami and Liv exhibition or the "Amber Road" project. To develop these and other projects, many partnerships with organisations from other European countries have been set up.

The delegation explained that the Esplanade 2014 was at the heart of its strategy to address the "city and citizens" dimension. This creative information space which opened in 2012 in central Riga's esplanade park will provide citizens with the possibility to engage with and be involved in cultural events. The delegation also mentioned several cultural and social activities involving young people such as a chess competition or the "potatoes opera". The delegation also highlighted the "Yard Working Bees" project where students would be asked to come up with an artistic vision to transform yards in their neighbourhoods and try to implement it with the inhabitants' help. Another aspect regarding the participation of citizens is the volunteering programme which has attracted interest from more than eight hundred people so far.

As regards legacy, the delegation said the Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2015 would offer a short-term opportunity to continue some of the projects initiated in 2014. It also mentioned the further development of "Creative Districts" all across the city as well as some major infrastructure projects such as some brownfield regeneration projects. Finally, the Mayor stated that culture was the corner stone of the city strategy to develop tourism in Riga and reinforce its branding at international level. The observer from the Ministry indicated the Latvian target was for the cultural and creative industries to account for 7% of GDP in the future and that the Creative Districts were a key step towards that target.

Concerning the budget, the delegation highlighted that the city and the State had stuck to their initial commitment. The delegation also indicated that several ministries had committed money to secure additional 3.7 million Euros to cover expenditure related to Riga 2014. The operating budget will amount to 27 million Euros comprising 93% of public funding and 7% coming from the private sector. At the time of the monitoring meeting 85% of the budget was secured. The more important uncertainty is related to private sponsorship as the economic crisis makes it difficult to mobilize businesses. However, the Mayor said the Council was committed to fully compensating Riga 2014 if the sponsorship target was not reached.

As far as communication was concerned, the delegation informed that a new website was being launched, presenting the programme of the year in a highly interactive way and providing visitors with the possibility to create their own personal agenda. Riga also highlighted the role and the good cooperation with the Latvian National Tourism Development Agency as well as with Umeå to promote Riga 2014 at national and international levels.

The delegation also provided the Panel with a reassuring update on the progress of the works on the major cultural infrastructures, in particular the new building of the National Library, the Culture Palace Ziemeļblāzma, the Centre "Wooden Riga Architecture" and the Mikhail Chekhov Riga Russian Theatre.

3.2. Umeå 2014

The Chair of Umeå 2014 Committee introduced the members of the delegation and explained that the presentation was to be seen in the wider culture-driven development strategy of the city until 2050.

In this regard, the delegation pointed out the tremendous amount of work that has been done and important milestones achieved so far with the drafting of two successive bid books for the 2014 title-year in 2009, the adoption of a cultural policy programme for the Umeå municipality in 2010 and the recent release of the "programme in the making" document providing insight into the cultural activities to be expected in 2014.

The programme – which is all about "curiosity and passion" – is based on the eight seasons of the Sami calendar, starting with the "Season of Caring" end of January. All along the year, festivals, concerts, sports events and exhibitions will be organised.

The delegation recalled that in accordance with the initial bid the artistic programme for Umeå 2014 paid a special attention to the Northern region of Sweden and especially the Sami culture. Overall, there are around 258 projects planned for 2014, among which 54 are clearly marked as Sami-projects. In this respect, the delegation highlighted that the main objective of this focus was to raise awareness about the Sami people in Sweden and all over Europe and – by extension – reflect on the common challenges local and migrant minorities are going through across Europe.

The delegation also insisted on the open source approach which had been the driving force for the development of the artistic programme since bidding stage. Co-creation is at the centre of this process and allows cultural players and ordinary citizens to contribute and fully participate in the elaboration of the artistic programme. This is a challenging

and difficult concept to work with, but also a very rewarding one, as it is the best way to increase ownership of the 2014 event among all city inhabitants.

As a concrete output of this approach, the delegation highlighted the so-called "UxU Festival" which will take place during the summer season. Originally this project was awarded a "Cultural Boost" consisting of a relatively small lump sum to further develop promising artistic ideas. In the end it will become one of the flagship initiatives of Umeå 2014. It is a unique example of how the open source process may lead to co-creation both in financial terms and ownership.

The delegation recognized that all the events could not have been implemented in such a collaborative way but insisted that the entire artistic programme would rely on open source to some extent.

The delegation also stressed that the use of the open source approach would be a unique way to ensure the legacy of Umeå 2014 as the co-creation experience created so much enthusiasm that Umeå inhabitants were now willing to sustain this effort far beyond 2014. The delegation added that the title year was planned as an integral part of the development strategy of the city, and would therefore be sustainable from an economic, ecological, cultural and managerial point of view. Another tangible legacy will be a new multi-purpose culture house, "Väven", which will be inaugurated at the end of 2014.

Being asked by the Panel to elaborate on the European dimension of the Umeå 2014 programme, the delegation emphasized the "Caught by [Umeå]" project. This project consists in a road-show through Europe in order to trigger curiosity and interest in Umeå 2014, during which creative people from the cities visited will be invited to reflect on and interpret Umeå and Northern Sweden. The touring event will visit several cities across Europe and will be a unique opportunity to communicate on the event in a very attractive and innovative way. More generally, the open source approach is also a way for the whole of Europe to contribute shaping the cultural programme of Umeå2014.

Other projects such as "Mirror Europe" and "Corners" will also highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, which will in turn facilitate greater mutual acquaintance between European Union citizens.

The delegation also underlined the strong cooperation with the other European Capital of Culture 2014, Riga, on a wide range of aspects from artistic cooperation including in the framework of the "survival kit" project or projects on the Sami and Livonian minorities, to marketing and evaluation.

Regarding the budget, the delegation reported that 78% - as opposed to 29% at the time of the first monitoring 2011 - were now secured for the upcoming year. Therefore, the operating budget already secured would be around 37,2 million Euros compared to a total of 45 million Euro planned for the year.

Finally, the delegation said that it had strengthened its communication and marketing strategy, in particular in partnership with the network of VisitSweden and the ICEHOTEL, and developed a new web site that would function as a hub for communication.

As an overall comment on the state of play of the preparation in Umeå for 2014, the Mayor underlined that right now everybody wanted to be in and was proud of the whole development the city is going through. The delegation added that according to a recent

Eurostat survey, Umeå was one of the three most rapidly growing cities in Europe and they indicated culture as a driver behind this trend.

4. THE PANEL'S ASSESSMENT

4.1. Riga 2014

The Panel congratulates Riga 2014 for the work that has been accomplished so far. The Panel particularly appreciates the stability of the governance and management structures of the project since the bidding stage.

The Panel also commends the constant support of the public authorities, especially from the city, which steadily backed up Riga 2014 without calling into question at any time the independence of the team in charge of the artistic programme. The Panel particularly appreciates that the public authorities stuck to their financial commitment and welcomes the Mayor's announcement that the city will compensate any gap in case of a shortage in private sponsorship.

The Panel is therefore confident that Riga 2014 has the potential to be a real success for the city and for Latvia as a whole.

However, the Panel would like to stress the fundamental need to ensure a strong legacy and sustainability based on the momentum created by the 2014 European Capital of Culture and going beyond an increased number of tourists, an improved image or new infrastructures. The Panel recommends that the sustainability (or not) of the enhanced cultural engagement by citizens be included in the evaluation process.

To that effect, the Panel recommends that the city should plan sufficient resources for covering the running costs of the new cultural infrastructures and services as after the ECOC celebration.

In the same way the Panel reminds the city of one of the most appreciated aspects of its initial bid, namely the embedding of Riga 2014 in the "Riga's Cultural strategy 2008-2025". The Panel notes the welcome link with the one-off events of the Latvian EU Presidency in 2015 but urges the city to keep on implementing this strategy along the lines defined in the bid book, which should result in a sustainable vibrant cultural life and "the development of a quality cultural environment" for the citizens going beyond a succession of one-off large scale cultural events.

4.2. Umeå 2014

The Panel congratulates the constant involvement of stakeholders in the development of Umeå 2014 since bidding stage. It also particularly appreciates the stability in the governance and the management structures of the project.

The Panel fully recognizes the potential benefit of the "open source" approach in particular in terms of citizens' active participation in the creative process as well as sustainability. The Panel notes that this is similar to several other approaches to cultural

programming being adopted by European Capitals of Culture. This is innovative and Umeå has taken it further than other European Capitals of Culture. The Panel encourages Umeå to disseminate and share their practical experiences of the “open source” method by organizing conferences and seminars in 2014 and successive years, as this form of co-creation could be an interesting legacy of Umeå 2014 for future European Capitals of Culture and cities using culture as part of their long term development.

The Panel highly appreciates the commitment of the city to legacy and sustainability in general and is convinced that the city has adopted a very forward looking approach regarding the potential of culture in the long run.

The Panel noted the Cultural Policy for Umeå and the Umeå 2014 marketing plan and considered both as “best practices” example for other cities and European Capitals of Culture.

The Panel welcomes the "Caught by [Umeå]" initiative which might - at least partially - address the concerns it raised during the first monitoring meeting as regards the European dimension, and especially the need to reinforce the cooperation with Southern countries and to raise awareness about what will be going on in Umeå 2014 beyond Northern Sweden.

While believing in the potential of the tour organised in the framework of the "Caught by [Umeå]" project in kindling the interest of citizens from all over Europe, the Panel encourages the city to continue working in that direction and intensifying its communication efforts up to 2014 in order to make Umeå 2014 more than just a local success.

On top of its strong focus on northern Swedish thematic lines, the Panel considers that Umeå 2014 should also better highlight the European features of Umeå being the European Capital of Culture 2014 and the European aspects of its programme.

Regarding funding, the Panel notes that a substantial part of the initial planned budget is not secured yet. This should be a priority for the management team and City authorities.

As a conclusion the Panel is confident that Umeå 2014 has the potential to be a successful European Capital of Culture of a very innovative type.

5. THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDING THE MELINA MERCOURI PRIZE

On the basis of the report issued by the Panel after its second meeting, a prize in honour of Melina Mercouri shall be awarded to the designated cities by the Commission, on the condition that they meet the criteria laid down in article 4 of the Decision (see below), have fulfilled their commitments and have implemented the recommendations made by the selection as well as the monitoring and advisory Panels. The prize consists of a payment of 1.5 million Euros and shall be awarded in principle three months before the start of the relevant year. It is financed by the European Union's Culture Programme.

Article 4 of the Decision specifies the criteria that the cultural programme shall fulfil. They are subdivided into two categories (the "European dimension" and the "City and citizens").

As regards the "European Dimension", the programme shall:

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

As regards the "City and citizens", the programme shall:

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

6. THE PANEL'S RECOMMENDATION REGARDING THE MELINA MERCOURI PRIZE

The Panel, in the light of the criteria specified by article 4 of the Decision and on the basis of the information contained in the progress reports it received from Riga and Umeå and of the exchange of views with the delegations during the meeting held on 17 April 2013, recommends the European Commission to award the Melina Mercouri Prize to Riga 2014 and Umeå 2014.

The Panel recommends that both 2014 European Capitals of Culture organise a high profile event when the Melina Mercouri prize is awarded and link the prize to specific elements in their programmes to further enhance the recognition of this programme of the European Union,

In order to further improve the quality and the success of the Capital event, the Panel invites Riga and Umeå to make use of the assessments and recommendations contained in chapter 4 of this report.

Manfred Gaulhofer (chair) signed

(Commission designation)

Sir Jeremy Isaacs signed

(Commission designation)

Jordi Pardo signed

(Parliament nomination)

Steve Green signed

(Parliament nomination)

Anu Kivilo signed

(Council designation)

Norbert Riedl signed

(Council designation)

Elizabeth Vitouch signed

(Committee of the Regions nomination)