

REPORT
ON THE SECOND MONITORING AND
ADVISORY MEETING
FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF
CULTURE 2016

Issued by
The Monitoring and Advisory Panel for
the European Capital of Culture

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This is the report of the monitoring and advisory Panel following the second monitoring and advisory meeting concerning the 2016 European Capitals of Culture, namely Donostia San Sebastián (Spain) and Wrocław (Poland), which took place in Brussels on 24th March 2015.

1. Background

1.1. Designation of Donostia San Sebastián and Wrocław as 2016 European Capitals of Culture

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

In accordance with the Decision, Spain and Poland are the two Member States entitled to host a European Capital of Culture in 2016.

Spain and Poland were responsible for the management of their respective competitions. The final selection meetings in Madrid and Warsaw took place in June 2011 and the Panel recommended Donostia San Sebastián and Wrocław for the 2016 title.

The final selection reports are available on the following website:

- http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm

Consequently, Spain and Poland nominated Donostia San Sebastián and Wrocław respectively and notified the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions in October 2011.

Acting on a recommendation from the Commission, the EU Council of Ministers then officially designated Donostia San Sebastián and Wrocław as the 2016 European Capitals of Culture on 10th May 2012.

1.2. Monitoring process and Melina Mercouri Prize

In accordance with the Decision, cities designated as European Capitals of Culture are submitted to a monitoring process between the moment of their designation and the beginning of the title-year.

The monitoring is 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 by the Commission 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. The Panel may also seek ad hoc reports and visit the cities during this phase.

For the 2016 title, the first monitoring meeting took place on 15th October 2013, and the second on 24th March 2015.

¹ OJ L 304 of 3.11.2006, p.1.

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 may be awarded by the Commission to the cities designated, provided that they meet the criteria of the action and have implemented the recommendations made by the selection as well as by the monitoring and advisory Panels. The prize shall be monetary and amounts to €1.5 million for each city. In principle, it shall be paid in full no later than three months before the start of the relevant year. It is financed by the European Union's Creative Europe Programme. The requirements for the award of the prize are in section 5 below.

1.3 Remarks made by the Panel about the European Capitals of Culture 2016 during the first monitoring meeting

This section summarises the remarks made by the Panel during the first monitoring meeting held on 15th October 2013.

1.3.1. Donostia San Sebastián

The Panel was impressed by the progress made since the post-designation meeting. They felt that the issue of shared governance between the City, Province of Gipuzkoa and the Basque Region had settled down as demonstrated by their respective firm financial commitments. There was however some concern about the contribution of the National Government, which at the bidding stage, had promised up to €11 million. This had not been secured. The Panel suggested that Donostia San Sebastián could seek funding from other ministries than the Ministry for Education, Culture and Sport.

The Panel also felt that too large a proportion of the budget was allocated to communication, wages, overheads and administration to the potential detriment of the programme.

Concerning governance issues, the Panel recommended that an extension of the governing board might jeopardise its decision-making abilities, and suggested instead that the extra partners requested by the mayor (universities, business partners, artists, etc.) come together in an advisory body to the board.

The Panel expressed some concerns about the European dimension of the programme. They felt it should include more than just "big names" from other countries to avoid the year turning into a celebration of Basque culture. The Panel recommended exploring cooperation with Leeuwarden or Irish cities regarding minority languages and cultures. There was an agreement that the Donostia San Sebastián Foundation 2016 should rely as much as possible on those members of their team who had been involved since the beginning.

By the end of March 2014, the Panel expected to be updated on the amount of money secured from the National Government, as well as an outline of the artistic programme, particularly its European dimension.

1.3.2. Wrocław

The Panel was convinced that the project was going in the right direction.

However, there were serious concerns that only 37% of the funds had been secured so far, as neither the National Government nor the Region had committed to their part of the funding yet. This was accompanied by a fear that financial issues would jeopardise the timely organisation of the title-year.

The Panel was pleased that the delegation intended to appoint an artistic director. They felt that the very complex and challenging intellectual concept of the programme required strong artistic direction so as not to be misused for ideological ends.

There was confusion among the Panel about the role of the Impart 2016 Festival Office in Warsaw in contributing to the title-year.

The delegation's plans to reach out to minority audiences were not fully understood by the Panel. There was a concern that the delegation was only focussing on the concept of minorities within the programme.

The Panel asked to be updated by the end of March 2014 on the amount of money secured; the impact of the updated budget on the artistic programme; the appointment of an artistic director; information regarding the relationship between the Warsaw office and the delegation; and initiatives to reach out to Wrocław minority audiences.

2. Second meeting of the monitoring and advisory panel

2.1. The Panel

The Panel members for the meeting were:

- Ms Suzana Žilič Fišer and Mr Ulrich Fuchs, appointed by the Commission for the 2014-2016 period;
- Ms Cristina Farinha and Ms Sylvia Amann, appointed by the European Parliament for the 2015-2017 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 Ms Gloria Lorenzo Leronés of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Unit D2.

2.2. Organisation of the meeting

Donostia San Sebastián 2016 and Wrocław 2016 submitted progress reports in advance of the meeting. They included responses to a questionnaire from the Commission asking, inter alia, for a follow-up of the issues raised by the monitoring and advisory Panel during the first monitoring meeting.

Each city in turn, first Donostia San Sebastián and then Wrocław, gave a presentation to the Panel and then answered questions. The Panel then, in a closed session, discussed the progress and agreed to this report.

The delegations of the 2016 European Capitals of Culture were:

Donostia San Sebastián 2016:

- Mr Pablo Berástegui Lozano, CEO DSS2016EU
- Mr Xabier Paya Ruiz, Cultural Director DSS2016EU
- Mr Fernando Alvarez Busca, Communication Director DSS2016EU
- Ms Garbiñe Muñoa Hospital, Economic and Financial Director DSS2016EU

- Ms Enara García García, Participation Manager DSS2016EU
- Mr Eneko Garate Iturralde, Internationalisation Manager DSS2016EU
- Mr Juan Carlos Izagirre Hortelano, Mayor of Donostia San Sebastián
- Ms Garazi Lopez de Etxezarreta Auzmendi, Director for Culture, Regional Council Gipuzkoa
- Ms Ikerne Badiola Garcandia, Deputy for Culture, Regional Council Gipuzkoa
- Mr José Angel María Muñoz Otaegi, Vice Councillor for Culture, Basque Government

- Ms Lourdes Pérez Munilla, Interpreter

Ms Mercedes del Palacio, representative of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, attended the meeting as an observer, in accordance with Article 10.2 of the Decision.

Wrocław 2016:

- Mr Rafał Dutkiewicz, Mayor of Wrocław
- Mr Jan Wais, Deputy Director, Foreign Relations Office, Municipality of Wrocław
- Mr Krzysztof Maj, General Director
- Ms Olga Nowakowska, Deputy General Director
- Mr Jarosław Obremski, Head of ECOC Board of Advisors
- Mr Jarosław Fret, Artistic Director and Curator (Theatre)
- Mr Chris Baldwin, Curator (Performance)
- Ms Katarzyna Młyńak-Sachs, International Relations Coordinator
- Ms Dominika Kawalerowicz, Coordinator for National Programmes
- Mr Marcin Jasiński, Head of Communications and Marketing

Ms Agnieszka Horak, 1st Secretary for Culture, Audio-Visual Affairs and Copyright in the Permanent Representation of Poland to the EU, attended the meeting as an observer, in accordance with Article 10.2 of the Decision.

The following were present from the European Commission as observers: Sylvain Pasqua, Gloria Lorenzo Leronés and Lauren Mason (from the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Unit D2). Director for Culture and Creativity, Michel Magnier, gave an introductory speech to welcome each of the delegations.

3. Summary of the presentation of the 2016 ecoc and question/answer sessions

3.1. Donostia San Sebastián

The delegation was led by the mayor of Donostia San Sebastián, who presented his team. He made references to political controversies and terrorism in the Basque region and stressed the importance of the ECOC title in fostering dialogue, respect, diversity and peace in and around Donostia San Sebastián. He underlined that despite the many challenges encountered during the preparatory phase of the project, the ECOC would be built on those values presented in the bid-book. He also thanked the Panel for their previous recommendations.

The delegation then showed a video with short interviews from former members of DSS2016EU and local inhabitants.

The CEO of DSS2016EU stressed that culture could serve as a common language for citizens in areas that had gone through a period of conflict. He hoped that the title-year would be a chance to create mutual understanding through dialogue. He added that this was relevant not only for the Basque country but also for other parts in Europe. The delegation then addressed the criteria of the cultural programme: the European dimension and City and Citizens. They highlighted key elements of the programme fulfilling these criteria, such as the travelling embassies and the cooperation with 240 partners, more than 500 associated partners (from all over Europe) and hundreds of collectives.

The delegation addressed some weaknesses identified at earlier stages. They said that governance had been improved but that there was still a problem to be solved regarding the production team and a general coordinator still needed to be appointed. Marketing and communication had been reinforced, and the staff would more or less double in the weeks to follow. Regarding the budget, this had now been approved at €48.7 million, reduced from the original €63.6 million. The delegation assured the Panel that 80% of the budget would be spent in 2015 and 2016 and expressed confidence that the programme could be carried out as initially foreseen with the available budget. The legacy of the ECOC title was also mentioned, including examples such as the Olatu Talka Festival as well as some infrastructural projects. The team would also work with existing public and artistic institutions so that the skills and knowledge acquired would stay in the city after 2016.

The delegation reminded the Panel of the structure of the programme, based on 3 "Lighthouses" (Lighthouse of Peace, Lighthouse of Life and Lighthouse of Voices) and 5 "Quays" (replacing the initial "Systems") as transversal lines focusing on a laboratory for local decision making, new technologies, audience development, linguistic diversity and a tool for critical thought. Each lighthouse would have one production manager, one communication manager and one creative manager. The programme would include 93 projects (representing 80 % of the bid-book) linked to three thematic "Lighthouses", while a special programme called "Waves of Energy" would support projects organised by members of the public and non-profit organisations.

The floor was then given to the Panel to ask their questions. The Panel enquired about personnel issues and the appointment of the coordination for production.

The Panel expressed a few concerns about how much of the budget was secured and the impact of forthcoming elections, both local (May 2015) and national (autumn 2015). The delegation stated that financial commitments were being respected by the regional, provincial and local authorities but had not as of yet been confirmed by the national authorities. Regional funding would not be affected by the outcome of the elections as all parties wholly supported the ECOC project and the funding was fixed. In total, the delegation confirmed that 83% of the budget was now secured.

In response to questions about sponsorship, the delegation outlined their agreement with four companies for "help in kind". They explained that sponsors were tentative due to the uncertain political climate and were likely to be more willing to make decisions about sponsorship after the results of the election were known.

Apropos the programme, the Panel asked for clarification regarding the "Conversations"/"Waves of Energy" and who would be responsible for these. The "Waves of Energy" would be produced by local operators; they would receive advice and funding from the ECOC team. There was a question about how pre-existing festivals would be adapted so that they were something special for the title-year. When asked about the legacy, the delegation explained that into 2017, DSS2016EU would keep a core team of eight people and would put aside some of the budget to deal with this. However, the end date of the ECOC action had been shortened from 2020 to 2018 due to budgetary constraints.

The Panel praised the participation of DSS2016EU in a larger European partnership, funded by Creative Europe and to be continued until 2018, namely "Corners of Europe," which links different cities, artists and researchers.

The question of evaluation was raised. The delegation explained that they would be collaborating with the university and an independent monitoring company. As DSS2016EU aimed above all to create an emotional impact and to help understanding through dialogue, its success would be difficult to measure. DSS2016EU was following the example of Liverpool and was also looking at a way to create a kind of "Emotionometer".

3.2. Wrocław

The delegation from Wrocław was introduced by Mr Krzysztof Maj, the general director of Wrocław 2016, who presented the team.

The delegation underlined the horizontal and vertical nature of the programme and recalled the programme concept of "Spaces of Beauty" incorporating the ideas of metamorphosis and diversity and drawing on the city's unique history of transformation, with its three main foci: the European dimension; City and Citizens; and economic development for Wrocław. The programme had been designed by eight curators in eight different domains: theatre, film, music, opera, visual arts, literature and reading, performance, and architecture.

The delegation then explained some of their key programme events with the help of a visual presentation. The first event, "Bridges", will invite up to 5000 participants to create a performance on 26 bridges in Wrocław in June 2015.

In June 2016, the major project "Flow" will take place. This will be a performance along the banks of the river Oder, telling the story of the city through its buildings and spaces. Another event will be an orchestral symphony involving young composers from four "diaspora countries" (Israel, Germany, Czech Republic and Ukraine). Wrocław 2016 would also combine the title year with its UNESCO "World Book Capital" title. A number of other interesting elements of the programme were also presented.

The delegation described cooperation with other European cities, including the other Polish candidate cities and Görlitz (DE), Hradec-Králové (CZ), and Donostia San Sebastián (ES). International cooperation had already been confirmed with the Biennale in Venice. Furthermore, local artists and NGOs would also be offered training to develop connections with European partners. The delegation estimated that two-thirds of projects would have an international link. The team hoped that Wrocław would become an incubator for European identity-building, dealing with themes such as trauma, restructuring the present and reflection.

The delegation also explained that the city of Wrocław saw culture and the ECOC project as a tool for social change and a way to have citizens becoming co-creators. It mentioned educational projects, including schoolchildren visiting the educational centres. A project called "MikroGRANTY" was also being developed to offer funding (€1,200 per project) as well as advice and administrative support to local projects following a competition. In addition, a volunteer programme would be established, creating 3,500 ambassadors for the ECOC projects. This would be launched in 2015 and sought to aid social mobilisation within Wrocław. Inclusivity and audience development were also mentioned in terms of adaptations for disabled visitors or those with hearing or vision impairments (e.g. audio descriptions for theatre premieres as standard).

In terms of structural and economic investment, Wrocław 2016 planned to build four new cultural centres, a concert hall, a centre for the identity of Wrocław, New Horizons Cinema, a National Forum for Music and an aquarium. An additional ten hotels would be built and the airport would be renovated. From an economic perspective, the city should become a meeting place for science, business and culture. The delegation explained that Impart 2016 would continue to exist after the title year, and would focus on the development of cultural and creative industries in the region. Regarding the legacy, the delegation added that a new cultural strategy would be defined in mid-2016.

The chair then gave the floor to the Panel to pose any questions they had.

In response to a query about the Warsaw/Wrocław divide of the office, and the role of the Impart 2016 Festival Office, the delegation answered that the Warsaw office had been set up as a more convenient base for negotiating with the National Government, but now that these negotiations had been concluded, the office had been closed. A point was raised about Wrocław 2016 starting its first event in June 2015 and whether this might not be confusing for citizens and detract from the main event of 2016. The delegation replied that levels of participation in cultural events in Wrocław were worryingly low and the team wanted an exciting anticipatory event to inspire participation in 2016, and to create ambassadors for the project. They also pointed out that the "Bridges" event in June 2015 would be good stress-testing for the team and the curators, and a chance to launch some of the programme.

The Panel asked about the budget and how much of it was secured. The delegation confirmed that 95% of the budget was confirmed, following recent negotiations with the national government. Only 3% of the budget so far was coming from private sources. The delegation explained that this low percentage was mostly due to Polish law which made it difficult for companies to invest in culture. There was also no tradition in Poland of companies sponsoring the cultural sector. Nevertheless, Wrocław 2016 had created an elite 'Brand Club' which was limited to four places costing €1.5 million each. Further potential sponsors had been identified.

Cooperation with Ukraine would still be going ahead, as this had already been planned in 2012 and, if anything, it was more relevant now than before.

The subject of evaluation was broached. The delegation mentioned regular media monitoring to track the reception of the year as it progressed. The Panel warned that media reporting should not be considered as a fully accurate description of public feeling.

4. The panel's assessment

In accordance with article 10 of the Decision, the role of the Panel consists in monitoring the implementation of the objectives and criteria of the action and to provide the European Capitals of Culture with support and guidance. In this context, the assessments and recommendations of the Panel are as follows.

4.1. Donostia San Sebastián

The Panel recalls that the journey since selection has been difficult for Donostia San Sebastián. In general however, the Panel felt more reassured about the progress of the Donostia San Sebastián team since the last meeting and congratulates them on the work completed. The Panel insists that the success of the title-year depends on all cultural, economic and social stakeholders, as well as all political forces from all relevant levels of territorial governance working in unison. They should cooperate on the basis of the programme developed by DSS2016 under the motto "Culture for co-existence". The Panel also has a number of recommendations for improvement.

4.1.1. Governance and structure

Regarding governance and structure, the Panel believes the composition of the new team to be strong, but stresses that the appointment of personnel to oversee production should be a top priority.

The Panel is reassured that the outcome of the local elections should not affect the implementation of the programme, as all parties have pledged full support for the ECOC project.

The Panel praises the use of four languages in the project's communication strategy, as well as the use of interviews with previous directors in video communication. It is felt that this is a good strategy for overcoming the slightly negative press image, and it also links to the theme of reconciliation.

4.1.2. Finance

In terms of funding from the National Government, the Panel expresses concerns that this has not yet been secured, as there are only eight months left before the start of the title-year. The decision of the National Government to only award funding for specific projects rather than awarding a lump sum to the ECOC project is seen as potentially very problematic. This decision by the Spanish government is unprecedented as far as the Panel is aware, and it could be said to be bad practice. Insofar as it can take a considerable amount of time to assess projects, the selection process may also constitute a risk for the timely implementation of the programme. In addition, the national contribution will be much lower than initially expected, i.e. €4.2 million and not €11 million.

The Panel is slightly concerned that no contracts have as of yet been signed with sponsors from the business sector. The Panel members would recommend that DSS2016EU focus its sponsorship appeals on funding for the legacy as it may be too late to secure for funds for the title-year at this stage.

4.1.3. Programme

In terms of the programme, the Panel is pleased to see a clearer European dimension and greater citizen involvement. That said, cross-border cooperation is felt to be still at the level of intention and not at the level of execution.

The Panel feels that the general shift from own production into co-production of projects is a positive move.

Although the Panel is pleased with the content and themes of the programme, it remains aware of the fact that a worryingly high number of projects are still in a definition stage (75%) and not yet in a production stage. The Panel suggests that DSS2016EU should aim to have projects agreed upon and ready by May or June 2015. There is a general feeling that the team should have more confidence in finalising projects and hurry up signing contracts.

As far as evaluation is concerned, the Panel acknowledges the difficulties of evaluating a project that is immaterial, theoretical, idealist, communicative in nature rather than structural or economic. It supports the philosophy of the project in terms of investing in tools for measuring the qualitative impact and appreciates the extensive evaluation process. However, the Panel feels that the estimate for the evaluation is very expensive. A suggestion would be to focus on a few case studies rather than evaluating every single project.

Finally, regarding communication, the Panel encourages DSS2016EU to accelerate its negotiations with media partners.

4.2. Wrocław

The Panel was generally very impressed by the organisation, teamwork and precise vision of the Wrocław delegation. They felt that the team showed a positive commitment to the ECOC title and showed good long-term perspective.

4.2.1. Governance and Structure

The Panel was pleased that a strong artistic director had been appointed. It was also encouraged by the decision to make use of the skills developed during the ECOC project to promote cultural and creative industries after the title-year.

4.2.2. Finance

The Panel wishes to congratulate the Wrocław 2016 team for securing the budget from the Polish National Government. The Panel also praises the sponsor strategy of a 'Brand Club', which is clear and well-defined. With only 3% of the budget coming from private sources, the Panel feels that the team should not have any inhibitions about going ahead with this Brand Club strategy to try to secure more support.

Wrocław 2016 may wish to consider a separation of the city culture budget and ECOC budget in order to prevent other cultural organisations not involved in the ECOC project from feeling disadvantaged.

In terms of the legacy funding, the Panel recommends that Wrocław 2016 rethink the division of funds for 2017 and beyond, in order to allocate more money to the programme. It is important for the local population that traces of the programme are left behind. Finally, the Panel notes with interest the city's intention to further promote the development of its cultural and creative industries and to revise its cultural strategy by mid-2016 using the insights gained from the ECOC experience.

4.2.3. Programme

The Panel congratulates the team for the fact that 80% of the original projects from the proposal will be carried out.

The Panel is also pleased that Wrocław 2016 has elaborated on the European element following previous recommendations. In particular, they praise the team for their cooperation with Ukraine. The Panel wonders however if Wrocław might extend its partner countries to include some of the Balkan States as these do not seem to be represented.

Vis-à-vis the content of the programme, the "MikroGRANTY" project in particular is seen favourably by the Panel, which believes it to be an interesting project that will leave a good legacy. The Panel advises Wrocław 2016 to take more risks on innovative approaches to art. The title-year is a good chance for Wrocław to establish itself as an innovative, creative and experimental city. This can provide long-term benefits for Wrocław, especially in halting the exodus of young people to larger cities such as Warsaw.

Lastly, the Panel would like to see Wrocław 2016 actively encouraging local residents to stay in Wrocław for their holidays this year to profit from the wide range of activities on offer.

5. The requirements for awarding the melina mercouri prize

The Decision states that on the basis of a report issued by the Panel after its second monitoring meeting, a prize in honour of Melina Mercouri may be awarded by the Commission to the cities designated, provided 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 and shall be awarded in principle three months before the start of the relevant year. It is financed from the EU's Creative Europe Programme.

Article 4 of the Decision specified the criteria that the cultural programme must fulfil. They are subdivided into two categories, "the European Dimension" and "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 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 Donostia San Sebastián and Wrocław, of interim reports and visits, and of the exchange of views with the delegations during the meeting held on 24th March 2015, **recommends** that:

the European Commission award the Melina Mercouri prize to Donostia San Sebastián 2016 and Wrocław 2016.

If the Commission – on the basis of the Panel's recommendation – decides to award the prize to both 2016 European Capitals of Culture, the Panel encourages the two cities to allocate this money to legacy activities. It recommends that both 2016 European Capitals of Culture organise a high profile event when the Melina Mercouri prize is awarded.

To further improve the quality and the success of their respective European Capital of Culture projects, the Panel invites Donostia San Sebastián and Wrocław to make use of the assessments and recommendations contained in section 4 of this report.

In conclusion, the Panel would like to thank the two delegations for their reports and discussions since their formal designations in 2012. It wishes both cities a successful ECOC year and a lasting legacy.

Sylvia Amann	(signed)
Cristina Farinha	(signed)
Ulrich Fuchs	(signed)
Anu Kivilo	(signed)
Norbert Riedl	(signed)
Elisabeth Vitouch	(signed)
Suzana Žilič Fišer	(signed)