



**EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE**

Pafos

European Capital of Culture 2017

First Monitoring Meeting

Report by the Monitoring and Advisory Panel

Brussels

November 2014

Introduction

This report follows the meeting¹ in Brussels on 19 November 2014 between Pafos, one of the two European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) in 2017, and the monitoring and advisory panel (the “panel”). Pafos was selected in September 2012²; its bidbook is available on the Pafos2017 website³. There was an informal meeting between Pafos and the panel in October 2013.

The report is addressed to the Pafos 2017 Organisation and will be published on the European Commission’s website⁴.

Attendance

The panel members:

Steve Green (chair) and Jordi Pardo, appointed by the European Parliament 2012-14

Anu Kivilo and Norbert Riedl, appointed by the Council of the EU 2013-15

Dr Ulrich Fuchs and Dr Suzana Žilič Fišer, appointed by the European Commission 2014-2016

Dr Elisabeth Vitouch, nominated by the Committee of the Regions 2013-2015

For Pafos 2017:

Dr Christos Patsalides Chairman of the Board of Directors

Savvas Geogiades Member of the Board of Directors

Marina Vryonidou Chief Operating Officer

Dr Marios Joannou Elia Artistic Director

Georgia Doetzer Artistic Consultant

Also in attendance were observers from the European Commission (DG EAC).

Report from Pafos2017

The Organisation submitted a detailed and comprehensive written report in advance of the meeting. The report outlined the activities of the Organisation since October 2013.

¹ European Capitals of Culture are governed by Decision 1622/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32006D1622>

² http://ec.europa.eu/culture/tools/actions/documents/ecoc/2017/panel-report-cyprus_en.pdf

³ <http://www.pafos2017.eu/en/pafos2017-bid-books/>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/tools/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm

At the meeting they made a presentation which included these points:

- The Organisation kept a low public profile in the first half of the year and concentrated on acquiring support from government and key stakeholders. This was successful. The government finalised its direct financial contribution of €5m. Strong support was given by the Speaker of Parliament and the national President. The Culture Ministry has indicated that projects organised by cultural institutions within the Pafos2017 programme will be prioritised in its funding. The Organisation benefits from a significant amount of pro-bono and volunteer engagement.
- The Organisation started its more public activities in early summer. It faces a task of operating in a country with reduced confidence where the enthusiasm of the bid and its success raised high expectations.
- The Board is fully functioning and enjoys strong relations with the relevant city authorities.
- Infrastructure projects are underway including the Othello cinema and the Open Khan.
- The senior staff have been recruited. The CEO and the Artistic Director are in place. Other key appointments are due to be made before the end of the year.
- Eight projects have been submitted for EU structural funding. The budget is being squeezed to ensure as much as possible is available for programme activity.
- Of the 31 projects in the bidbook, 19 are developing as planned. 5 have been redefined, 2 merged into 1 and 6 cancelled. In addition the Organisation plans three major events. After the summer open call for smaller projects there are 59 under development, 42 small under review and 22 in partnerships.
- Two teachers have been seconded to the Organisation to assist in developing community projects in schools.
- By 2016 the Organisation is planning to have 17 full time staff equivalents.
- The overall vision for the long term impact remains to facilitate a shift in mind-set (a behavioural change objective) including with the mixed ethnic communities in the region.
- The Organisation invited the panel to visit Pafos in 2015.

Discussion

During the subsequent discussion the panel sought clarification on a number of issues and offered experience and advice. Topics included:

- The panel was encouraged by the development of the ECOC in the last year in obviously trying circumstances. The Organisation has established strong and positive relationships with key stakeholders and partners. Considerable progress has been made in a “rescue” situation following the banking crisis of 2013. Governance and senior staffing are both in place and functioning well.
- The forecast budget is now reasonably secure and gives the management the confidence to plan ahead for the ramp up years to 2017. It is realistic in the

circumstances and the efforts to contain costs are commendable. The panel supports the efforts of the Organisation to secure and increase the private sector contribution, in-kind or in cash.

- **Recommendation 1:** the EU structural funds may finance programme projects as well as infrastructure; several ECOCs, notably in Portugal and Italy, have used or plan to use structural funds in this way. The panel recommends this potential funding source is explored.
- The panel was re-assured on a number of points including the current issues surrounding the Mayor of Pafos, the unlikelihood that there would be adverse criticism of Pafos2017 over bird hunting in Cyprus, the eco-related projects in the Akamas region and the relatively strong state of the tourist market.
- The panel welcomed the appointments of the senior staff and the staffing plans in the near future including volunteers.
 - **Recommendation 2:** experience from other ECOCs indicates that the Artistic Director should have a close oversight of the marketing function to ensure the cultural nature of the ECOC is not overwhelmed by the more targeted and often narrower focus of the tourist sector.
- The panel welcomed the development of the Open Khan and the Othello/Attikon cinema which were key parts of the bid.
 - **Recommendation 3:** Plovdiv2019 also has a historic cinema restoration project and could form a useful partner.
- The panel welcomed the projects engaging with the Middle East, North Africa and with the Turkish Cypriot community outlined in the advance report. The inter-religious dialogue projects could have a wide attraction to other ECOCs.
- The panel felt the evaluation was potentially taking on too broad a scope, for example Marseilles-Provence focussed on just three key questions. The evaluation focus should be on those areas of importance to the ECOC rather than those, for example, which are of relevance to the academic or tourist sectors.
 - **Recommendation 4:** to review the evaluation plans in the light of the objectives set out in the bidbook. The “success criteria” could be prioritised. The evaluation should include the three elements of the European Dimension.
- The Panel welcomes the start of the main programme development and the attempts to maintain as many projects from the bidbook and the engagement with cultural operators across the island. These were extensively documented in the advance report.

The panel notes the active steps the Organisation has made to enhance the European Dimension (a recommendation from the selection meeting). The need to maintain the European Dimension (in all three of its elements) is important as this differentiates the ECOOC from other festivals and it should remain a core part of any criteria for project bids and financing. The panel welcomed the projected partnerships with other ECOOCs as well as the formal partner ECOOC in Aarhus.

- **Recommendation 5:** the artistic team review the prospective programme for 2017 in the light of the budget, keeping the European Dimension to the fore. The medium term legacy in Pafos of the ECOOC has also to be kept in mind, beyond the concurrent cultural and urban infrastructure developments.
- **Recommendation 6:** experience from other ECOOCs shows it is better to leave some funding to assist projects which arise in early months of the ECOOC year.
- The panel noted and supported the opening up of the Organisation to citizens with the aim of earning trust. Citizens' participation is a key feature of an ECOOC (embedded in the city and citizen's criteria); this extends beyond audiences and volunteers into facilitating cultural organisations to engage with citizens in planning their programmes for the ECOOC.
 - **Recommendation 7:** the Organisation progressively increases its efforts to seek citizens' views and ideas at an early stage, and encourages cultural partners to do the same in return for ECOOC partnerships and financing.

Next Steps

The panel accepted the invitation to visit Pafos in early 2015 (the panel now makes regular visits to ECOOCs); the timing to be agreed later. The prime focus will be to review with the artistic team the development of the programme for 2017 and to review an interim update on the recommendations in this report.

The European Commission will invite the Organisation to a second meeting of the panel in March/April 2016. There will be an advance report (details from the European Commission will be issued in late 2015); it is expected that the report, and the meeting, will focus on the programme for 2017 which should be virtually fully planned by the time of the meeting. At that meeting the panel will decide whether to recommend to the European Commission that the Melina Mercouri prize be awarded.

The panel thanks the Organisation's delegation for their report and the open discussion and looks forward to another successful year in the development of Pafos 2017.