

**Selection
of the European Capital of Culture
for 2018**

Malta

Selection Panel

Final Selection Report

Valletta, 11 November 2012

1. Introduction

In accordance with the Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019 (hereinafter referred to as “the Decision”), a competition was established and a call for submission of applications was launched to nominate a Maltese city for the title of European Capital of Culture for the year 2018.

The managing authority of the ECOC competition in Malta is the Maltese Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Environment (hereinafter referred to as “the Ministry of Culture”). The procedure for implementing this Decision in Malta was set out in the document “Rules of Procedure – Competition for the 2018 European Capital of Culture title in Malta” signed by the (then) Parliamentary Secretary responsible for Culture and published on the Managing Authority website on the 18th of December 2010 (hereinafter referred to as “the Rules”).

In accordance with the Decision and the Rules, the Maltese Ministry of Culture is responsible for the organisation of the competition, the appointment of the national experts to the selection panel, the organisation of the pre-selection and final selection meetings and coordination of visits of the representatives of the Selection Panel to the pre-selected candidate cities. The European Commission provides guidance to the Ministry when necessary.

The Selection Panel was appointed by the Maltese Minister for Culture in December 2011. According to Article 7 of the Decision establishing the first phase of the competition called “Pre-selection”, the Selection Panel met in Valletta on the 17 and 18 January 2012 and assessed the applications in accordance with the criteria set out in Article 4 of the Decision. Valletta was shortlisted for the selection process.

In accordance with Article 6 of the Decision, the selection panel unanimously elected Mr. Manfred Gaulhofer as the Chairman, Prof. Joe Friggieri as the Vice-Chairman, and Prof. Vicki Ann Cremona as the Rapporteur at the beginning of its first meeting at the pre-selection stage. The three members of the Selection Panel were elected to these functions for the entire selection process (pre-selection and selection stages).

2. Pre-selection

Valletta was the only Maltese city which submitted an application for the title of European Capital of Culture for the year 2018 by the set deadline.

The pre-selection was held in Valletta on 17 and 18 January 2012 and Valletta was pre-selected for the second round.

The results of the pre-selection session were recorded in the Pre-Selection Report, which included recommendations concerning the application. The report was submitted to the Ministry of Culture and the European Commission by the set deadline.

3. Final Selection

Valletta submitted its completed bid for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2018 by the set deadline.

A delegation of four panel members participated in a one-day visit to Valletta on the 11 October 2012, the day preceding the final selection. It consisted of the following members: Manfred Gaulhofer, Steve Green, Cynthia de Giorgio and Vicki Ann Cremona. The panel was accompanied by representatives of the European Commission, Ann Branch and Antonio Farrauto and a representative of the Ministry of Culture, Caldon Mercieca.

The final selection meeting was held in Valletta, at the Ministry of Culture on the 12 October 2012. All the panel members participated in the meeting, except one nominated by the European institutions. Representatives of the European Commission and the Ministry of Culture were present as observers.

Before the meeting with the candidate city, the four delegates who participated in the visit extensively reported back to the other panel members.

The final selection meeting was attended by the candidate city, represented by its Mayor, Alexei Dingli, and by the Chair and Project Coordinator of the Valletta 2018 Foundation, the CEO of the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts, the Artistic Programme Directors for V.18 and representatives of cultural institutions, cultural and non-governmental organisations, festivals, artists, experts, private enterprises and representatives of institutions who would be participating in the city's cultural programme for the European Capital of Culture 2018. A satellite link with the artistic director, Maestro Wayne Marshall, was also established. The final selection meeting consisted of a thirty-minute presentation by Valletta's bidding team, followed by a sixty-minute question and answer sessions.

The announcement of the Panel's recommendation took place at 3.00 p.m. on the 12 October, in the Oratory of St. John's Co-Cathedral, which houses two masterpieces by Caravaggio, in the presence of the Minister of Culture.

4. The Panel's assessment

The Panel noted the fact that the city had worked hard to fulfil the Panel's recommendations following the pre-selection stage. It commented on the quality of the website, and on the excellence of the innovative online programme for the visit, which was well organised.

The panel highlighted the following positive elements in the final bid:

- The logo and title of the bid: "Imagine 18" were very suggestive, and brought out the importance of providing a much-needed boost to the cultural sector and environment which was defined in the presentation as an 'inward-looking' cultural milieu that needed to emerge from its cultural isolation.

- The project had been further developed, it displayed the idea of celebration, and the title had been well connected with a strategic development plan for the city and the country. The bid book provides an admirable statement of plans and aspirations.
- The unanimous support of all the Local Councils, as well as the support of both political parties represented in Parliament was clearly reiterated.
- The key structure, the artistic director and his team were already in place.
- The emphasis on the younger generation was appreciated.

During the final closed-door discussion, each panel member openly expressed his/her opinion. The debate focused on the criteria as laid out in Article 4 of the Decision (the “European Dimension” and the “City and Citizens Dimension”) and the quality and sustainability of the cultural programme presented by the city. The panel members unanimously agreed to recommend that Valletta be designated as the Maltese European Capital of Culture for 2018.

The panel’s recommendation was announced by the Chairman at the press conference held immediately after the closing session of the Selection Panel.

5. Recommendations of the Selection Panel to the nominated city

In accordance with Article 8, paragraph 4 of the Decision, the panel wishes to make the following recommendations to Valletta, concerning the progress to be made, and the work to be carried out in advance of 2018:

The Selection panel underlines that Valletta has been recommended for the title due to the huge potential in cultural development that having such a title could unleash for the country as a whole. Accordingly, the Monitoring and Advisory Panel will be paying great attention to ensuring that the scope, the content and the quality of the programme be developed much further.

The Selection panel highlights that the **European dimension** of the project requires much improvement, both through the themes put forward in the projects proposed, and through a committed and intensified co-operation with European artists and cultural operators, which should leave a lasting effect well beyond 2018. It also underlines the fact that the European dimension must not only incorporate the idea of making European citizens more aware of Malta, but also making Maltese citizens more aware of Europe, also by reflecting about the ways they view and are part of Europe, as well as how they wish to be perceived by the rest of Europe. European issues need to be made more evident, by exhibiting both cultural communality and diversity. The four themes of the programme should be developed further to enhance issues of common European concern in all cultural areas, interpreting culture in its widest sense. The Monitoring and Advisory Panel will monitor this issue and check whether the actual programme sticks more closely to this criterion.

More awareness of, and interest in and commitment to the European Capital of Culture by the **citizens** of Valletta needs to be better developed. This criterion needs to be spread across the whole population especially due to the welcome involvement of the wider region. Citizens from all spheres should be seen not simply as potential

spectators and receivers, but as participants in the European Capital of Culture. In view of this, the Foundation needs to plan and focus more clearly on the build-up programme to the actual 2018 celebrations, focusing on managing demand, as well as raising the level of what is on offer. Access to culture, pro-active audience development, increase of practice and level of improvement are key issues that need to be addressed more coherently. The recent Eurobarometer polls indicated that Malta has a relatively low participation in the arts. Improving this provides the ECOC team with a clear objective over the period of the project.

The Selection Panel feels that the cultural ambition of the bid needs to be raised, and international attraction should be added to the community projects proposed. The standard of the projects may also be raised by further combining disciplines and artists from different backgrounds. The artistic programme should show more clearly in what way 2018 is going to be different and stand out from the cultural programmes in Valletta of other years (including the programmes associated with the EU Presidency and forthcoming anniversaries of Maltese history).

The Selection Panel encourages more co-operation with North African countries, in keeping with the European Neighbourhood policy, which would also contribute to enhancing the European dimension.

The Selection Panel wishes to emphasize that ECoC/EU logos must be present in all communications, posters, website, all PR material and all material connected in any way to Valletta European Capital of Culture.

The availability of finance allocated not only for the proposed projects for 2018, but for the proposed infrastructural and building projects, must be stated more clearly and explicitly.

Valletta's existing successful events, such as its international festivals and their links with the 2018 programme, should be highlighted, as they do not feature prominently in the bid book.

The Selection Panel suggests that the potential of cultural capabilities and artefacts that are well-known to the Maltese population, but not enough beyond Malta, should be exploited. The panel suggests that it might be useful to use the millennial layers of Malta's rich pre-history and history as stepping stones for new and future-looking interpretations, which will serve as a re-interpretative reading of Malta within Europe, also by making use of new technologies to transmit this mnemonic wealth, rich ethnic vocabulary and foreign recollections.

The contemporary arts dimension is currently a weak element in the programme, and needs to be enhanced. The way new artistic networks are being planned and set up in order to create a legacy of projects, engagement and lifelong education should be made more apparent. It is not clear how the University and other educational bodies intend to contribute to supporting this dimension, or how programmes may provide a European dimension in this sector. The support and integration of traditional arts, such as folk singing or bands, also needs to be worked out in more detail and their links with common traditions in other European countries should be brought out more clearly.

The bid document sets out the outcomes of the V.18 programme. To assist management during the next 5 years and to facilitate evaluation, it is recommended that the V.18 team determine their expected, specific outputs. These will be both quantitative and qualitative. Examples include:

- * increase in tourism and tourists attending cultural activities;
- * employment in cultural and creative sectors;
- * attendance by Maltese and non Maltese at cultural events, museums, galleries etc.;
- * by market research: perceptions of diversity of European cultures, languages;
- * students studying cultural subjects at vocational and academic subjects and in school examinations.

The Monitoring and Advisory Committee will be interested to see this at the first informal meeting in late 2013.

The V.18 bid's legacy outcomes would be helped by advances in the education system especially at primary and secondary level. Changes in the role of creativity in teaching culture - not just in arts subjects – would be important. To assist in the delivery of the legacy outcome, the Panel recommends recruiting someone with expertise in school education who can work with the APDs, with the Ministry of Education and within the education system including pre-service and in-service teaching training.

The structure of the artistic directorship should be reconsidered, ensuring full-time commitment. Experience from other ECOCs has clearly demonstrated that the role of artistic director, as well as the general management function, is a full time commitment. The Panel would seek a full review of the staffing of the project, from 2013 to 2017, at the 1st monitoring meeting.

6. Next Steps towards the designation:

- The present report, submitted to the Maltese Ministry of Culture, is to be published on its website and the Commission's website;
- The Government of Malta will formally nominate one city for the “European Capital of Culture” title for 2018 in Malta on the basis of this report and will notify the European Parliament, Council, Commission and the Committee of Regions by the end of the year at the latest. The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the European Commission within three months after it receives the nomination;
- The EU Council of Ministers, upon a recommendation of the European Commission drawn up in the light of the opinion of the European Parliament and the justification based on the Selection Panel's Report, will formally designate the European Capital of Culture for 2018 in Malta, probably at its meeting in May 2013.

7. The Monitoring Phase

In accordance with Decision 1622/2006/EC, once the 2018 European Capitals of Culture are designated by the EU Council of Ministers, they will be submitted to a monitoring phase until the beginning of the event.

The monitoring and advisory panel will be comprised of seven members designated by the European institutions. The first monitoring meeting will take place late 2015, and the final one by spring 2017.

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 by 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 2018.

The panel wishes to stress that much work must still be done by Valletta to make the event a success, notably with regard to its breadth, scope, European dimension and citizen involvement. The panel expects Valletta to follow its recommendations. It wishes to underline the fact that acquiring the title is only the first step; the impact of the event will depend highly upon the cultural programme, and the preparations leading up to the event such as funding, governance, communications strategy, etc. The panel reminds Valletta that it will be expected to provide detailed reports about its progress and react in writing to the panel’s and the monitoring panel’s recommendations.

Most importantly, the support and commitment of the state and local authorities needs to be clearly and explicitly guaranteed throughout the preparatory process and during 2018 itself.

The panel encourages Valletta to take advantage of the experience of other cities which will be hosting the event in the coming years.

The panel reminds Valletta that the Melina Mercouri prize is not automatic, and that the city needs to deserve it by meeting the criteria laid down in the legal base and following the recommendations of the monitoring committee.

Valletta, 12 October 2012

Dr. Manfred Gaulhofer – Chairman

Prof. Joe Friggieri – Vice Chairman

H.E. Vicki Ann Cremona – rapporteur

Ms Elisabeth Vitouch

Prof. Richard England

Sir Jeremy Isaacs

Ms. Cynthia de Giorgio

Mr. Steve Green

Mr. Sandro Zerafa

Mr. Jordi Pardo

Mr. Constantin Chiriac

The Hon. Minister Erna Hennicot-Schoepges (excused)