



**EUROPEAN CAPITAL  
OF CULTURE**

**Selection of the European Capital of Culture 2018 in the Netherlands**

**THE SELECTION PANEL**

**FINAL SELECTION REPORT**

**Amsterdam,  
September 2013**

## **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 has been organised to nominate a Dutch city to the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) title for the year 2018. The Council of the European Union has already nominated Valetta in Malta as the companion ECOC for 2018.

The managing authority of the ECOC competition in the Netherlands is the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. The procedure for implementing this Decision in the Netherlands was set out in the document “Rules of Procedure – Competition for the 2018 European Capital of Culture title in the Netherlands” signed by the State-Secretary for Education, Culture and Science in September 2012 (hereinafter referred to as “the Rules”). The Ministry has assigned DutchCulture, centre for international cooperation (then SICA Dutch Centre for International Cultural Activities) with the organisation of the meetings of the Selection Panel.

In accordance with the Decision and the Rules, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for the organisation of the ECOC competition including the nomination of national experts for the Selection Panel, organisation of pre-selection and final selection meetings and coordination of visits of the representatives of the Selection Panel to the pre-selected cities.

In accordance with Article 6 of the Decision, the Selection Panel was appointed by the Dutch State Secretary for Culture on 25 September 2012. It was composed of 7 independent experts nominated by the European institutions (2 by the European Parliament, 2 by the Council of the European Union, 2 by the European Commission and 1 by the Committee of the Regions) and 6 independent experts nominated by the Dutch State Secretary for Culture. The Panel elected Manfred Gaulhofer as the Chair and Nynke Stellingma as the Vice-Chair. All members of the Selection Panel have signed declarations of non-conflict of interest concerning their evaluation of the applications made by the candidate cities.

On 31 December 2012 the mandates of Erna Hennicot-Schoepges and Constantin Chiriac (both members who participated in the pre-selection stage) expired, and Anu Kivilo and Norbert Riedl were nominated by the Council of the European Union to replace them.

## **2. Pre-selection**

Five Dutch cities responded to the call of applications published in December 2011 by the Ministry for the title of European Capital of Culture 2018 in the Netherlands by submitting an application by the deadline:

## **The Hague, Eindhoven, Leeuwarden, Maastricht and Utrecht.**

Under Article 7 of the Decision, which deals with the pre-selection stage, the Panel assessed these applications against the criteria stated in Article 4 of the Decision. The pre-selection meeting took place in Amsterdam on 29 and 30 November 2012, and the Panel recommended to short-listing the following three cities for the final selection phase:

### **Eindhoven, Leeuwarden and Maastricht.**

Following the pre-selection meeting, the Panel submitted a report to the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the European Commission with recommendations concerning the applications made by the short-listed cities. ([http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/competing-cities\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/competing-cities_en.htm))

### **3. Final selection**

All three cities submitted their completed applications for the title of European Capital of Culture 2018 by the final closing date on 12 July 2013.

A delegation of four Panel members visited the three short-listed cities in preparation of the final selection meeting: Leeuwarden (2 September 2013), Eindhoven (3 September 2013) and Maastricht (4 September 2013).

The delegation consisted of the following members of the Selection Panel: Mrs Nynke Stellingma, Mr Dingeman Kuilman (replaced by Mrs Janneke van der Wijk in Maastricht), Sir Jeremy Isaacs and Mr Jordi Pardo. The delegation was accompanied by a representative of the European Commission (Mr Sylvain Pasqua), a representative of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Mr Henk Heikamp) and two representatives of DutchCulture (Ms Christine van Blitterswijk and Ms Sophie Logothetis).

The final selection meeting took place in Amsterdam on 5 September and 6 September 2013. All 13 Panel members participated in the meeting. Representatives of the European Commission (Mr Karel Bartak, Head of the Creative Europe Programme - Culture Unit and Mr Sylvain Pasqua, manager of the European Capital of Culture action) and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Mr Henk Heikamp) were present as observers. DutchCulture was present for the organisation of the meeting.

Before the meetings with the candidate cities, the five delegates who participated in the visits to the cities extensively reported back to the other Panel members about their findings and experience made on location.

Then, Eindhoven, Leeuwarden (on 5th September) and Maastricht (on 6th September) presented their completed bids to the Panel. All three cities were represented by local authorities at the level of Mayor, accompanied by each of the artistic teams as well as representatives of cultural institutions and the business sector, artists and young people. The final selection meeting consisted of a 30-minutes presentation by the representatives of each pre-selected city, followed by a 90-minutes question and answer session which focused on all aspects of the proposals. (This schedule differed from the initial 60 minutes for the questions and answers session as stated in the Rules. The Panel requested to extend this to 90 minutes and all three pre-selected cities approved).

In its internal debate that followed the presentations, the Panel carried out an in-depth assessment of the information provided by the candidate cities in their bidbooks, the feedback on the visits, their oral presentations and answers provided to the experts' questions during the hearings. It was clear to the Panel that considerable effort had been made by all three cities to update their applications and to take account of the recommendations put forward by the Panel in the pre-selection report. To evaluate the bids, the Panel:

- thoroughly evaluated the extent to which the candidate cities met the objectives of the European Capital of Culture initiative, as set out in Article 3 of the Decision, and the criteria defined in Article 4 of the Decision, namely “the European Dimension” and the “City and Citizens” dimension;
- assessed the quality of the responses provided by the cities to the questions included in the application form;
- considered the overall capacity of the cities to ensure the implementation of the event, notably the governance, the budget, the support of local and regional authorities and the business sector.

Following the final selection meeting (at 4.30 p.m. on 6 September 2013), a press conference was held at Felix Meritis in Amsterdam to announce the result of the selection process. At the press conference, the Dutch Minister for Education, Culture and Science, Mrs Jet Bussemaker, was handed over the recommendation by the Chair of the Panel, Mr Manfred Gaulhofer.

#### **4. The Evaluation by the Selection Panel**

The Panel noted that the selection of the Dutch European Capital of Culture 2018 was a difficult choice due to the intensive and tough competition between the three excellent candidate cities. All three cities, while proposing very different approaches for the ECOC event, provided the Panel with three very convincing and well prepared bid documents that showed evidence of a thorough planning taking into account the multitude of aspects needed to be considered when hosting such an important event.

The Panel emphasised that the great efforts invested by all three cities would be beneficial to each one, whatever the final result of the competition would eventually be, as they would contribute to strengthening the role of culture in the cities' development strategies and stimulating and enriching their cultural life. The Panel further noted the careful work undertaken by each candidate city to take into account the recommendations formulated in its pre-selection report. The texts of the bid documents were, of course, further tested during the panel's city visits and at the Question and Answer sessions.

The Panel highlighted the following characteristics of Eindhoven's, Leeuwarden's and Maastricht's bids.

### **Eindhoven**

Under the slogan "Imagination designs Europe" the city of Eindhoven presented itself together with the four other cities of BrabantStad and the province of Brabant, addressing and developing further the questions raised in the pre-selecting phase. Eindhoven's bid was built around three main themes:

- We Explore the Future
- We Connect People
- We Make the City

The Panel understood from the presentation that the city of Eindhoven and its surrounding area have been awarded titles like the one of being the Intelligent Community of the Year 2011 or the one of being the most inventive city in the world in 2013, but the ECOC bid provided for the opportunity to reinforce the still insufficient role of art and culture in the city as well as to further connect art and culture with creativity, innovation, technology and science that are synonymous for the life in the city. The Eindhoven delegation pointed out the need for the city to redefine itself as a cultural hub, supported by the artists, citizens and scientific centres present in the region.

The core of the Eindhoven approach is the concept of "Proeftuinen" (best to be translated by "experimental gardens") that would act as creative laboratories - based on a "multiple helix" model mixing all types of stakeholders including the art community, the business sector, science and the citizens – and would give ample room for experimentation and for the generation of cultural and societal innovation. The Proeftuin concept was illustrated by a short presentation on the Proeftuin Experience Centre: a central place to visit the method, process and outcomes of the Proeftuinen. "Proeftuinen" generated projects would contribute about a third of the total programme, a significant proportion. Anchor projects, developed in a more traditional management approach, would fill the rest of the programme.

The Panel praised the combination of arts, design, technology and science as presented by Eindhoven. The Panel was also very positively impressed by the high level of

commitment of the city, knowledge institutes and the business sector to engage with art and culture. It was also evident for the Panel that the bid was an excellent outcome of the huge efforts and investments made in, and the success experienced by, the region over the past years, and was clearly rooted in the city's long-term development strategy. The Panel was also impressed with the strong will of the city to become a showcase of how to live in a difficult post-industrial time using culture to change the city and improve living conditions.

The Panel noted that the bidbook was very well structured and offered a clear and well-prepared plan for the years leading to 2018 as well as the year of the title, demonstrating thereby a large potential. It welcomed the idea of pilot editions of large anchor projects from 2014 onward as well as the concept interim presentations in the form of biennales.

While praising the Proeftuin concept as a potentially very interesting experimental method with high creative potential, the Panel felt that the way it would produce innovative results based on a truly innovative approach had not been presented convincingly enough either in the bid-book nor during the hearing. The Panel's impression was that the Proeftuinen would not be as explorative as one could have expected, due to the adaptation of what seemed a linear innovation process lacking room for fuzziness. It also remained unclear how the quality and coherence of the projects would be directed. The Panel was therefore sceptical about the Proeftuin method's ability to fully deliver its claimed potential.

The "City and Citizens" dimension of the Eindhoven bid that was connected to a large extent to the Proeftuin method was not as convincing as one could have wished either. The Panel acknowledged that the programme was largely focused on professional innovation especially in design, but it felt at the same time that it lacked a bottom-up approach, deeply rooted in the city's population.

As for the European dimension, it seemed to the Panel it was underexplored. The link between innovation and the European Dimension was not made sufficiently clear and there was no strong reference in the programme to other European cities or regions facing the same challenges Eindhoven currently is. The Panel was given the impression that Eindhoven wished to profile itself rather as a global city than a European city. Although it was made clear what Europe can learn from Eindhoven, presented as a "test city" for the rest of the continent, the other way around should have been highlighted more.

As a whole, the programme outside of the Proeftuinen, albeit of high quality, struck the Panel as not being the most innovative the city of Eindhoven could bring forward as the European Capital of Culture.

### **Leeuwarden**

Leeuwarden's central motto had been shifted from "Mienskip" to "Iepen Mienskip" at final selection stage, with "Mienskip" being a collective Frisian term for values such as

mutual respect, equality and responsibility in the community. The Leeuwarden team pointed out that these are the values that inspire Europeans every day and consequently, Mienskip had inspired the entire bid as a vehicle of behavioural change and improved cooperation in the whole of Europe.

Leeuwarden considered three thematic domains to be of highest relevance both to Europe as a whole and to Leeuwarden and Frisia:

- Nature and Culture
- City and Countryside
- Community and Diversity

Leeuwarden's presentation was supported by a video featuring young people from several European countries backing their bid. They also showed the willingness of the public to (actively) participate in the build-up to 2018.

The Panel was impressed by the progress made by the city in further developing many aspects of the initial bid in line with the recommendations offered in the pre-selection phase.

In particular, the Panel praised the innovative and authentic way the Leeuwarden bid tried to address some of the most pressing issues that are both common to local, mainly rural, communities all over Europe and European in their essence through culture. The focus on issues such as the re-evaluation and re-definition of the relationship between city and the countryside, the need to further promote and foster cultural and environmental sustainability, and the opening-up of historically very cohesive and inward-looking communities was welcomed by the Panel as being an authentic and desirable objective.

The bid also directed the Panel's attention to the problem of living with rising sea-levels in an era of climate change.

The European Dimension was well covered by the basic approach of focusing on issues important to communities and people in all European countries and by the additional motto of "criss-crossing communities", a concept that was well reflected in a number of projects presented. Moreover, Leeuwarden convincingly expressed the urge to redefine Europe as a social network of diverse communities.

The inspiration of nature on mankind transpired throughout the bid and the presentation and was a strong point of the Leeuwarden bid, especially the connection with other wetlands in Europe and similar 'Mienships' across the continent. The Panel also appreciated the prominent position of the role of lesser-used and minority languages in Europe and the connection the programme intends to build with other minority cultures speaking their respective minority languages in other European countries.

The Panel also was impressed by the focus of the holistic and intelligent concept of the Leeuwarden bid on the future, innovation and young people rather by doing than by talking about these issues. Young people are at the core of the bid, in the organisation of the event as well as communication. The programme targets local communities all over Europe using innovative methods and technologies. It is concentrated on issues important for the future of people living in Europe more than in the past and even the present. The Panel was impressed by the scope and ambition set out in the evaluation and monitoring objectives, presented in a SMART format.

The Panel also thought that through the many European and international partnerships developed in the last few months, the bid had now reached a critical mass in terms of projects and potential audiences.

The "City and Citizens" dimension was well caught not only by the Mienskip motto, but also by the evident enthusiasm throughout the project of engaging with citizens. Participation and inclusion are key to the Leeuwarden approach (including an impressive use of volunteers) and inspires all parts of the project; the Leeuwarden programme shows many plans to connect the citizens, in particular young people and migrant communities, both to the ECOC project and to each other within the region and across borders to the whole of Europe. The Panel noted the specific programmes to integrate and engage the Polish workers now in the Leeuwarden community.

The Panel pointed out that a lot of progress had been made in the structuring of the organisation of Leeuwarden 2018 since pre-selection stage, evidencing the team's commitment and openness to learn from the outer world. However, more work was needed to set up a strong delivery foundation for the implementation of a programme of the scale of a European Capital of Culture. The Panel also noted that the peripheral location of Leeuwarden (both geographical and cultural) would prove to be a challenge to making the programme a success throughout Europe.

### **Maastricht**

Maastricht's mission was "Europe Revisited", writing the "lost chapter" on culture in the 1992 EU Treaty of Maastricht. Maastricht applied for the title with the support of the entire Euregion Meuse-Rhine which covers 10.500 km<sup>2</sup> in three countries with three different languages, three different political and administrative systems), and comprises a population of 3,9 million inhabitants. The bid was supported by the joint statement signed by the 13 authorities representing the Euregion,

The bid aimed at building on the tight cultural and historical relations between the cities of the cross-border area to make this region become one heart in Europe, where ordinary citizens would enjoy "Europe" in their daily lives. The ECOC title would be the living proof of this ambition.

The following four programme lines were used as themes of "Europe Revisited":

- Speaking in Tongues



- Remembering the Future
- Mirroring Europe
- Living Europe.

In order to prepare the ground for the programme based on these four themes in the years before the event, Maastricht introduced the concept of a “European Spring Journey” in the second bid book. This should act as a central hub for the programme and at the same time help setting sails “to conquer Europe in a fresh new way”. It was also made clear in the second bid book that the programme should rather be read as a method than as a collection of single activities.

The Panel was impressed by the special importance that was laid by Maastricht on “Génération Maastricht”, young people born in 1992 and who would be the symbol and the face of Maastricht 2018. Génération Maastricht was also reflected in the team presenting the bid to the Panel and youth unemployment was one of the focal issues raised by the Maastricht bid.

The European Dimension was best reflected by Maastricht’s cooperation within the Euregion. The Panel applauded the ambition, the willingness and the strong commitment of the entire cross-border region and of its cities to work together, collect ideas and contribute to the budget of the ECOC event.

The cross-border cooperation, addressing local as well as European issues with the intention to add a cultural dimension to the Treaty of Maastricht and the determination to give culture a more prominent place in European policy was greatly welcomed by the Panel.

However the Panel felt that the project as a whole lacked a clear, concrete and well-constructed artistic vision about how culture may help making Europe a better place to live in, and especially in creating employment for the youth. Therefore it remained also unclear how the various elements of the programme would be shaped to a common European perspective. The idea that the outcomes of the "European Spring Journey" core project – to be realised in the running-up years – would feed many different projects was felt as a way to outsource the artistic vision. As a result, the Panel felt there was a mismatch between the bid's very ambitious aspirations and the many (rather small scale) projects included in the bid.

As with regard to the "City and Citizens" dimension, the bid highlighted ample participation, but mostly related with a top-down approach. The concept of involving Génération Maastricht both in programme development and the organisation of Maastricht 2018 showed great potential and the Panel appreciated that the involvement of young people was meant to give the region a boost which it - demonstrably - needs. However, it was not clear to the Panel what its actual role in the organisation would exactly be nor a continuing legacy of the Panel in subsequent decision making across the region.

Although the Maastricht bid is about living in Europe, the Panel felt the bid lacked a focus on minorities and their role in a diversified Europe. The bid indeed raised the question if the participating cities and the region could be taken as a pars pro toto of Europe.

Although the representatives of Maastricht 2018 were well prepared to explain how they would manage the complexity of the Maastricht bid in geographical, administrative and institutional terms, the Panel was not fully convinced that all artistic and organisational challenges of this multidimensional approach would finally support the quality of the programme.

### **Decision**

All members of the Panel praised all three cities for their work to provide compelling final bids for the ECOC 2018 competition and thanked them for their efforts to provide it with extensive information about their projects at the selection phase, also during the visits.

During the final deliberations of the Panel, the strengths and weaknesses of the applications as viewed by the Panel members were assessed very carefully. The discussion focused on the criteria laid down in Article 4 of the Decision, on the quality and sustainability of the cultural programmes as well as on the capacity of each pre-selected city to deliver a successful event in line with the high standard requirements and visibility of the ECOC title.

Following debate the Panel voted unanimously that one candidate city best met the objectives and criteria of the ECOC event, and that it provided the best potential and capacity for the organization of an impactful programme. The Panel therefore recommends that the following city in the Netherlands be designated as the European Capital of Culture 2018

### **Leeuwarden.**

In addition to the translation of Europe into communities of values and people and the clearly demonstrated involvement of citizens, the Panel particularly appreciated Leeuwarden's holistic bottom-up approach and the unity in the management of the programme.

The Panel recommended Eindhoven and Maastricht to take maximum advantage of the work already undertaken in preparation of and during the competition by continuing the cooperation with the cultural sector and considering it as an important actor in the city's and the region's development.

## **5. Recommendations of the Selection Panel to the nominated city**

In accordance with Article 8, Paragraph 4 of the Decision, the Panel makes the following recommendations to Leeuwarden regarding the progress to be made and the work to be carried out in advance of 2018. These issues will be taken up at the informal post designation meeting in autumn 2014. Leeuwarden is reminded that the programme in the bidbook now forms their commitment for 2018.

- Leeuwarden 2018 is recommended to use the momentum created by its nomination to start focusing its efforts on actually turning Mienskip into Iepen Mienskip- a task which will take years to be successfully achieved;
- Although much progress was made in the final selection stage, additional work will need to be done to further reinforce the management structure of the organisation of Leeuwarden 2018;
- Efforts will have to be made to put Leeuwarden more on the European map as such and as a region that is having very much in common with many other European regions when it comes to shape the future of Europe;
- The level of high involvement and participation should be scaled up from the local to a European level;
- The Panel recommends Leeuwarden 2018 to link up with Umea 2014 regarding the co-creation aspect of its programme development in order to learn from Umea's experience;
- Leeuwarden has chosen to put a young generation at front that is used to organise events and processes in line with current state of information and communication technology and in which offline and online reality are fully integrated. The Panel recommends Leeuwarden to give the young generation also a core place in the further organisation of the ECoC in order to stay up to its promises made at selection stage;
- The digital aspect that is intended to be a focal part of each and every project should become visible and tangible from the start of actual project development;
- The budget should be clarified in a way that answers the few questions left open.

## **6. Next steps towards the designation**

In accordance with Article 8 of the Decision, the present report has been submitted to the Commission and to the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and shall be published on the Commission's website.

The Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science will formally nominate one city for the European Capital of Culture title for 2018 in the Netherlands on the basis of this report and will notify the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions by the end of the year 2013 at the latest. The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the European Commission within three months after it receives the nomination.

The Council of the European Union, upon a recommendation of the European Commission drawn up based on the opinion of the European Parliament and the justification based on the Selection Panel's report, will formally designate the European Capital of Culture 2018 in the Netherlands.

## **7. Monitoring phase**

In accordance with Article 10 of the Decision, the European Capital of Culture 2018, once designated by the EU Council of Ministers, will be submitted to a monitoring phase until the beginning of the event.

The Monitoring and advisory Panel will be comprised of the seven members nominated by the European institutions. Leeuwarden shall be invited to an informal post-designation meeting in late 2014. The first formal monitoring meeting will take place by 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 formal monitoring meeting, a Prize "in honour of Melina Mercouri" shall be awarded by the Commission provided that the city meets the criteria of the action and has implemented the recommendations made by the Selection and the Monitoring and advisory Panels. The award of the Melina Mercouri Prize by the European Commission is not automatic.

The Prize shall be monetary and shall be awarded in principle – if all necessary conditions are met – three months before the start of the relevant year, that is, by September 2017 for the 2018 title.

Amsterdam, September 2013.

### **The Selection Panel**

Manfred Gaulhofer, Chair  
Nynke Stellingma, Vice-Chair  
Christine de Baan  
Margot Gerené  
Steve Green  
Sir Jeremy Isaacs  
Anu Kivilo  
Dingeman Kuilman

Jordi Pardo  
Norbert Riedl  
Elisabeth Vitouch  
Janneke van der Wijk  
Rutger Wolfson