



EUROPEAN CAPITAL  
OF CULTURE

# **Selection of the European Capital of Culture In 2020 in Croatia**

**The Selection Panel's report  
Pre-Selection Stage**

**Zagreb  
June 2015**

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## Introduction

This is the report of the selection panel (the "panel") for the pre-selection phase for the competition for the European Capital of Culture in Croatia in 2020.

The Croatian Ministry of Culture (the "ministry") is the managing authority of the competition.

The competition is governed by:

- Decision 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 16 April 2014 (the "Decision")<sup>1</sup> and
- Rules of procedure – Competition of the European Capital of Culture in Croatia in 2020 – (the "Rules") signed by the Croatian Minister of Culture on 5 June 2014 and published on the Ministry's website<sup>2</sup>.

In line with the Decision (Article 6) a panel of 12 independent experts was established for the selection process. Ten members were appointed by the European Union institutions and bodies (European Parliament, Council, Commission and the Committee of Regions) and two, after a public call, by the Ministry in consultation with the Commission.

The competition is in two phases: pre-selection (shortlisting) and selection. The Ministry issued a call for applications on 11 June 2014. There were 9 applications submitted by the closing date of 17 April 2015:

**Dubrovnik, Đakovo, Osijek, Pula, Rijeka, Split, Varaždin, Zadar and Zagreb.**

## Panel Meeting

The panel met in Zagreb on 27-29 May 2015. The panel elected Mr Steve Green as its chair and Ms Ivana Katuri<sup>ć</sup> as vice-chair. All panel members signed a declaration of no conflict of interest and confidentiality. Representatives of the European Commission and the Ministry attended as observers. These observers took no part in the panel's deliberations or decision.

Each candidate city had submitted its application (the bidbook) by the closing date. At the meeting it presented its case (in 30 minutes) and answered questions from the panel members (in 45 minutes). Each city's delegation was led by either the mayor or deputy mayor and consisted of up to ten members.

The panel noted the general and specific objectives in article 2 of the Decision and the requirement for the application to be based on a cultural programme with a strong European dimension created specifically for the title (article 4).

The panel assessed each bid against the six criteria for assessment in Article 5:

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<sup>1</sup>[http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L\\_.2014.132.01.0001.01.ENG](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.132.01.0001.01.ENG)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=11703>

- contribution to the long term strategy of the city
- European dimension
- cultural and artistic content
- capacity to deliver
- outreach
- management

At a press conference at the end of the meeting the chair of the panel announced the **panel's unanimous recommendation that the Minister invite the following cities to submit revised bids for final selection (in alphabetical order):**

**Dubrovnik, Osijek, Pula, Rijeka.**

### Next Steps

The Ministry will arrange for the formal approval of the shortlist based on this report (Article 8 of the Decision). The Ministry will then issue an invitation to the four cities to submit revised applications for the final selection. The shortlisted cities should take into account the assessments and recommendations of the panel in this report.

The deadline for submission of revised applications is 1700hrs on 11 December 2015.

The final selection meeting will be held in Zagreb in 28-29 January 2016.

Two to four members of the panel will pay a visit to the four shortlisted cities shortly before the meeting to obtain more complete information. During the visits, the members of the panel will be accompanied by representatives of the European Commission and the Ministry as observers.

### Thanks

The panel members would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in the pre-selection phase of the competition; the first time Croatia has hosted a European Capital of Culture.

In particular the panel noted that this is the first time cities in Croatia have developed specific cultural strategies. This is already a significant potential legacy of the ECOC competition. The panel encourages all cities, not just those short-listed, to continue with the development and implementation of their strategy.

The panel thanks all nine bidding cities and everyone who contributed to their bids; to the European Commission for their advice and to the Minister of Culture and his staff for their excellent administration.

## Assessments of the candidates

### Dakovo

The bid was presented under **the title "The Heart of Europe"**. **The city's cultural strategy** builds heavily on heritage, notably the 19th century Bishop Strossmayer, religious culture in general, folklore and classical music. **The strategy's specific goals are to support artistic creation, entrepreneurship and participation in culture and the**

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development of the independent sector. The overall goal is to protect and preserve cultural heritage. The strategy aims to increase tourism, create jobs and better protect the traditions of the city and region.

The ECOC bid is seen as an integral part of this strategy. The operating budget is **forecast at €7m.**

During the presentation the bid team suggested that within the European dimension, **Đakovo would offer Europe Panonism, a mixture of different cultures and religions, an important centre of chamber music, the Lipizzaner horses and Strossmayer's legacy** in relation to the diversity of European cultural expressions. The panel recognised these as important elements within the criteria but did not see them explored in the context of contemporary Europe and in relation to other countries. The bidbook recognises that most of the international cooperation is related to folklore. There was little evidence in **the bid of the way in which Đakovo's own** residents would increase their understanding of the diversity of cultures in Europe. The panel did not consider that, within the programme, there were projects which may attract a wider European audience beyond the tourist attractions (e.g. of the Lipizzaner horse farm and the Baroque architecture). The range of proposed partners in the illustrative programme from other European countries was limited to the immediate region. It was less widespread than what would be expected at this stage. At the European level of an ECOC the panel would expect partnerships with many EU member states as well as with neighbouring non-members.

The proposed ECOC was sketched out with an illustrative monthly programme which was compatible with the cultural strategy. The bidbook indicates that the proposal to bid **came from the mayor's office. There was a consultation with the relatively small cultural and heritage sector.**

The programme has a strong emphasis on heritage and traditional art forms, with many high quality events. However the programme lacked, according to the panel, a clear artistic vision as well as an attractive European dimension mentioned above. The programme appeared more as a series of disconnected events stretched through the year. For an ECOC the panel would have expected more contemporary projects (including those in a multi-year format) and an innovative approach to topics such as inter-religious dialogue and in the arts and heritage management.

The bidbook mentions contacts with schools, youth groups and those who tend not to participate in cultural activity. The panel felt that this section did not clearly delineate the actual programmes and projects which will engage these target audiences. Minorities were referred as a target audience but no strategy on how to involve them, or integrate them into the management team, during the whole process was outlined. At this stage of the competition the panel expected a more concrete proposal. There was little awareness of the need to foster a more comprehensive audience development strategy as part of the sustainable legacy.

It appears that all political parties support the bid in the city and the region.

**The panel noted the information on the area's tourist accommodation and has serious doubts whether they are sufficient for hosting the visitors of an ECOC which has an international appeal.**

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The proposed budget for the operational programme is very low for an ECOC. There is a limited commitment from the city compared to the contribution expected from the national government. The panel was concerned that a project of this size would not be able to provide a clear cultural European programme to make the international impact expected of an ECOC. It appeared that there was a greater emphasis on capital projects, which were in line with the longer term broader cultural strategy of the city.

The panel considered the marketing strategy limited in approach and scope. As presented, it underplayed the need to operate at a European wide level.

The proposed organisational structure gives the impression that there is limited separation of the ECOC management from the political authorities. The bidbook indicated, for example, that the city council would approve the final programme. It is best practice for an ECOC to be managed by an independent organisation to separate the cultural and artistic programming from the political arena.

In many ECOCs the mayor may chair the board of directors but the majority on the board tend not to come from the politics or be political appointees.

The panel had concerns over the capacity to deliver a complex project as an ECOC. There was little in the bidbook on the professional development of cultural managers to mitigate this apparent weakness.

Overall the panel appreciated the candidacy from a small city and the strategy to overcome the challenges the city is facing. The city has an undoubted strong heritage offer for tourists and its strategy of bringing this up to modern standards is to be commended. An ECOC, however, should be crucially a development project at a European level to bring citizens closer together through culture. The panel felt that **Đakovo did not present in its bid book enough strategic goals and objectives** which would ensure an effective change in the city as a result of the ECOC and the new cultural strategy. The programme outlined in the bidbook was underdeveloped for an ECOC with a strong emphasis on heritage rather than forward looking and innovative. Most of the elements contained in the bidbook can, (and, the panel hope) should be, realised without the ECOC title.

## Dubrovnik

Dubrovnik's candidature is on the theme of "City in the Making". The city's cultural strategy is focussed on four strategic aims: sustainable heritage; developing cultural creativity and production; audience development and improving the management of cultural policy.

The proposed ECOC programme has four pillars: "Reclaiming the public space", "Releasing Creative Energy", "Redefining Identity" and "Connecting Europe". The proposed operating budget is €31m of which €23.5m is for programme expenditure.

The panel appreciated the open analysis, in both the bidbook and the presentation, of the city with its historic heritage core becoming increasingly gentrified and dominated by tourists (and tourist related businesses) and a weaker cultural offer in the outer areas and the islands.

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The panel welcomed the statement that the ECOC was not a goal in itself but a driver of the necessary changes in the city, within the cultural strategy, which is seeking a **“radical departure from the current model”**.

The European dimension was discussed at length in the bidbook with some interesting topics including cultural citizenship, the alienation of the city from its citizens and the impact of the mass tourist market on a small area. These topics have a resonance across many European cities and form a strong basis for partnerships in projects. The bidbook listed contacts with a large number of international partners. The panel appreciated the emphasis on co-creation and co-production. This indicated a promising start to meeting part of the European dimension criteria (of engaging with artists from across Europe). The panel considered that the aspect of the European dimension, to increase the awareness of the **city’s citizens of the diversity of cultures in Europe, was underplayed**. The panel felt that the proposed programme in its outline did not yet have the artistic vision needed to make it attractive to an international audience.

The panel appreciated the transnational approach with projects being developed with partners in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. It supports the candidacy to explore further its neighbouring position to link to other non EU-countries notably in Southeast Europe and in the Mediterranean.

The panel welcomed the interesting partnership with Osijek; it promises much with both cities described as sharing comparable problems despite their different circumstances. The panel noted the intention to develop joint projects.

The panel noted the proposed changes, within the ECOC, to the tourist offer; notably counteracting the extreme seasonality. This has a wider European resonance within the European dimension.

The panel noted the intention not to create new cultural buildings or festivals but to use the existing institutions and cultural infrastructure. The current Dubrovnik Summer Festival is taking the lead in coordinating the bid. This has many advantages; however the panel has concerns that this approach may not sufficiently differentiate the **programme in the ECOC year from either enhanced “business as usual” or have a coherent vision**. The panel was also not convinced that this approach will lead to the objective of radical change. This is important in a city with such a strong existing tourist attraction. The programme lacks some of the more experimental and innovative elements expected in an ECOC.

The panel noted the awareness of the bid team of the processes of the gentrification and depopulation of the historic centre. The panel welcomed the intention to avoid the city **being just the “stage”** for an ECOC, but to explore how the ECOC could reverse these obvious structural processes through concrete programmes and projects.

The panel was not fully convinced that the programme would not be overshadowed by the normal tourism related events and offers in the city; its visibility and impact both being reduced. The panel did not see strong cooperation within the programme development of the tourism operators, port authority and other parties involved in tourism industry for an inclusive city project.

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The panel noted in particular the plans for capacity building in the cultural and tourism sectors.

The monitoring and evaluation plans have been developed in outline. The panel felt that they could be developed beyond the academic focus of the university to include a more managerial type of evaluation.

The panel did not see a consistent approach between the objective of engaging with new target groups for cultural and artistic development, or changing the tourism offer for short term visitors. Neither category appeared in the co-creation process.

The project has the support of the city council.

**The programme had been put together by a “programme incubator” team which had held a considerable number of meetings, workshops etc with a wide range of people; indeed 30% of the programme emerged directly from this process. This was a clear indication of the engagement with citizens as well as with the cultural sector. The panel however did note little mention of projects in schools. The panel noted the proposed increase in the participants in the “Programme Incubator” during the next phase and the plan to set up a separate agency for the ECOC’s implementation.**

The panel also noted the debate in the bidbook on the function of an artistic director. The clarity and vision of the eventual bidbook needs to be maintained.

The financial forecasts are adequate at this stage.

The outline marketing strategy with objectives, segmentation, communication, engagement, actions and time framed with different objectives is well prepared for this stage.

Overall the panel was impressed with the comprehensive nature of the bid at this stage. **The ambitions to enhance the cultural offer outside the city’s heritage** and tourist core to the islands and hinterland are positive. The outline programme indicates the potential to achieve those ambitions. The European dimension especially in its two-way element needs improving. The panel has concerns over the proposed management structure which will need addressing in the next phase.

## **Osijek**

The bid from Osijek was presented under the theme of “Oxygen2020”. The city’s cultural strategy has three strategic goals: “to work together”, “to learn together” and “to live together”. This is an innovative approach to cultural strategy looking beyond the sectoral approach; it prioritises collaboration and multi-sector activity.

The bidbook gave an open assessment of the current cultural life and indicated the challenges facing the city and region. Osijek seeks to re-examine the models of governance in the field of culture, economy and administration. At this stage the methods to achieve this are not yet determined. The longer term impacts of the cultural strategy were defined, in outline, in the cultural, social and economic areas.

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The ECOC programme is based on four themes: “Culture Park”; “Living Fields”; “Hacking the Future” and “Bridges over Water” which resonate with the city’s cultural strategy.

The proposed operational budget for the ECOC is €36.5m of which €27.5m is for programme expenditure.

The ECOC has a well-defined set of indicators for monitoring change as a consequence of the ECOC. The panel appreciated the inclusion of environmental impacts as one of the areas. These indicators become the objectives of the ECOC and will inform the monitoring and evaluation over the life of the project.

The bid puts forward a sound initial foundation for the European dimension by showing a partnership with cities in three countries (Pecs, Novi Sad and Tuzla). This transnational linkage can be built on as one aspect (and only one of many) of the European dimension. The different levels of cooperation on European level are a good starting point for a systematic wider European strategy.

The illustrative projects in the bidbook indicated a wide engagement with artists across Europe appropriate to this stage of the competition.

The panel whilst noting these developing partnerships with artists felt that the other elements of the European dimension are less developed. As currently presented the programme does not appear to have, in the view of the panel, sufficient impact to attract a wider European audience. There was little indication in the bidbook, or presentation, on the two-way aspect of **the criteria: of how Osijek’s citizens can increase their awareness of the diversity of European cultures as well as presenting their own attributes.** There is a potential to expand even more in cross-sectoral elaboration and European dimension of projects with environmental impact narrative.

The panel considered that the four themes of the programme demonstrated a coherent and clear artistic vision. The illustrative projects in the bidbook and their intended target audiences were consistent with the themes.

The panel noted an innovative approach in several of the themes, notably in the “Hacking the Future” theme with its marrying of digital technologies and heritage. For example, **the “Simulating and Gaming” project uses archaeological sites and heritage capacities outside Osijek for experimental cultural expressions.**

The panel especially appreciated demonstrated willingness to fight the difficult legacy of war by enabling the culture of dialogue to overcome the discourse of conflict as one of the social impacts.

The panel notes the need to invest in a long-term development of the right entrepreneurial competences and conditions so to ensure the critical links between the different programme elements.

The bidbook outlines the engagement that the bid team had with artists and cultural operators in the region both in meetings and through an online portal. The bid preparation involved extensive interviews coupled with feedback and interaction on social media.

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The bidbook indicated the range of involvement of civil society in the preparation of the bid and plans to extend this in a next stage. The panel felt the engagement of citizens was underplayed in the preparation stage; this is a weakness of the bid. The need to engage citizens (and not just cultural operators, artists and other institutional managers) is a fundamental element of an ECOC. The programme needs to be co-designed and not **just presented and explained in a “top-down” manner.**

The panel appreciated to potential of the city with 22 minorities and the programme section dedicated to reconciliation and dialogue and to the setting up of a new platform for a non-conflict society.

**The emphasis on children and young people in the planned “Pannonian Challenges”** theme is an innovative way to foster audience development combined with behavioural change.

The panel welcomed the interesting partnership with Dubrovnik; it promises much with both cities described as sharing comparable problems despite their different circumstances. The panel noted the intention to develop joint projects.

**The panel had two concerns over the proposed budget. The “city” contribution of 55%** includes contributions from many other public sector organisations. It was not clear in the bidbook or in the presentation how much exactly is planned directly from the city and how much from these other organisations. The allocation for staffing and staff related expenditure was well below that expected for an ECOC.

The panel appreciates the staffing budgets planned for 2021 and 2022 to ensure a legacy and handover. There is also a clear financial commitment in the bidbook for the city to maintain a higher level of expenditure, compared to recent years, on culture after 2020.

The marketing strategy was well presented in outline; at this stage it is limited to the city and the region with less analysis on a broader European approach. A challenge in **the next phase will be to determine how the concept of a “new city” will be structured** in the marketing.

The panel has several concerns over the proposed organisational structure. It is unusual for an ECOC managing agency to also have the responsibility for managing capital projects and the cultural sector of the city administration. Managing an ECOC is a highly complex task (as the impressive SWOT and risk analysis demonstrates). A dedicated management team is required; this is of especial importance in Osijek as the bid book indicates that the regional cultural sector is inexperienced in managing large scale projects. Capital projects require equally complex management. The panel is also **concerned about the agency managing the city’s current cultural sector. Whilst there** should be close co-operation the ECOC management need a single focus. The panel does not consider a shared management structure is appropriate.

The proposed timing of the management agency also concerned the panel. For an ECOC in 2020 the majority of projects need to be finalised by late 2018 for logistics, international partnerships and marketing reasons. The plan to create the proposed agency in 2017 is too late.

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Overall the panel felt the bid showed promise. It was based on a sound and authentic analysis of the city and region. The panel acknowledged the commitment to modernizing culture and the social landscape in a city burdened by economic stagnation and with a **history of recent conflict. It recognized the ECOC's potentially positive contribution.** The bid proposes a fresh approach to the programme, rooted in the regional culture and environment.

## Pula

**Pula presented their bid under the theme of "De-militarise; From Fortress to Forum" as an irreversible process of cultural and socio-political transformation.**

The cultural strategy of the city, from 2013, is well set out. It openly identifies the current weaknesses of the cultural sector in the city. The panel welcomed the four phases of the action plan for its implementation. The panel noted with concern, **however, that city's culture budget is only expected to rise from current levels by €0.4m to €0.9m after 2020; this may affect the sustainability of the legacy of the ECOC.**

The ECOC bid has six strong ambitions: to influence long term policies, transform cultural institutions, integrate the former military buildings into the modern city, give the local economy a strong cultural push, change daily life and jointly open new scenarios of the possible.

The aim is to move from a military minded attitude to new civic tactics and to overcome fear and social passivity, the lack of desire to take any **action, called "tapija". The panel appreciated the direct scope and concreteness of the aims and the innovative way it is attached to the city's cultural identity.**

**The proposed operational budget is €33.25 m of which €23.25m is for programme expenditure.**

The panel appreciated the commitment of the presentation team and their evident enthusiasm for the project; this complemented the bidbook.

The ECOC fits within the strategy and does not attempt to tackle all of its strategic aims. The bidbook sets out a very well argued list of targets for the intended impact of the ECOC on the city; many of these are in SMART form which will facilitate the monitoring during the ECOC implementation period. The panel appreciated that many overlap with the criteria for an ECOC, including audience development and the capacity of the cultural sector. The panel noted the plans for the open call for universities to tender for the evaluation; in the light of the impact targets it may be that management consultancy companies may be more appropriate.

The bid team gave considerable emphasis to behavioural change objectives notably to **change the "tapija" mentality. The panel noted this ambitious challenge (to overcome social and civic passivity), which is not unique to Pula, it exists in many European cities, but did not feel that the projects and approaches outlined in the bidbook were yet based on evidence of how to achieve this change.** Empowering residents with small scale, frequent community-led projects over a continuous period is an avenue to explore in this trust-earning direction. This strand of the bid needs a deeper analysis and consideration.

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The European dimension was expressed as “bringing Pula to Europe” and the bidbook made frequent references to co-operating with European artists. The references to partners in indicative projects were towards the low end of the scale at this stage in the competition and need considerable expansion in the next stage.

The bidbook was clear that other aspects of the European dimension, expressed as **“How to bring Europe to Pula” and how to attract international visitors represents a major challenge still to be addressed.** The panel concurs; the European dimension is two-way and the application as it stands does not set out how the citizens of Pula, and region, will increase their understanding of the cultural diversity in Europe beyond as audiences at events with international artists. The panel was not certain that there were adequate events or projects to attract a wider European audience (beyond the 3m tourists who visit the region annually). The panel noted the bilingual and multi-national nature of the **city; this could be a strong factor.** The use of Herman Potočnik Noordung, the space pioneer, into the concept is potentially interesting; the panel was less certain of the connexion with the ECOC narrative and objectives.

The panel was impressed with the active engagement with candidate cities in Ireland and the emerging project ideas. This level of engagement is expected at this stage of the competition.

The indicative programme of the ECOC is built around four strands: **“RE-MAP”, “COM-PASS” “UNI-FORMS” and “HORI-ZON”.** The panel questioned whether these titles, rather than content, would translate into a sound PR and marketing campaign in Croatian.

The bidbook gave details of projects within the four strands. The panel noted that these were consistent with the objectives and included several innovative approaches to heritage and traditional artforms. The panel appreciated the references to **“fun” and “playfulness” as a counterpart to the military mindset.**

The artistic content of the programme appears to be heavily weighted, at least in financial terms, towards the five flagship projects. The panel felt this might lead to an overbalanced programme.

The bid, and the city cultural strategy, seeks to use many of the former military sites and the panel learned in the presentation that access to these should be possible for cultural activity. This intention to use the former military zones was welcomed by the panel who saw that the ECOC could work as a laboratory for the new urban transformation strategies, relying on the processes that are already taking place in Pula (Rojc centre). The panel felt that the bid underplayed the potential for partnerships with similar former military sites which are no longer in use across Europe. This illustrated a weakness in the approach to the European dimension.

The panel noted with approval the aim in the programme to engage with children, disabled the elderly and with sub-cultures without setting them apart.

This bid has the full support of the city and regional political parties. That some 35% of the current programme ideas came from the wide consultation process is a positive step (although there was no indication of the type of project). The panel pointed out that whilst this demonstrates a positive outreach with citizens, in previous ECOCs this approach has limited the European dimension aspect.

The bidbook indicated that the current contemporary artistic and cultural scene of Pula is vigorous and interesting, yet relatively small. This could become a weakness unless there is a much wider engagement and participation of cultural operators and artists in the programme development and implementation than so far demonstrated.

The financial plans are adequate. The panel would expect a far more detailed analysis in the next stage. This should make clear ongoing existing projects and new ones developed for the ECOC. The full capital expenditure programme presented in the bidbook is considerable; the private sector is planned to contribute a very high 59% of the budget. It was difficult to identify those capital projects which are directly related to the ECOC cultural programme, rather than to concurrent urban and regional development.

The proposed organisational and senior staffing structure follows best practice for recent ECOCs.

Overall the panel was impressed with the vitality and energy of the bid. The ambition to change a deep rooted cultural behaviour is in line with the ambitions of recent ECOCs and presents a contemporary, innovative, challenge to the cultural and social sectors. The proposed programme whilst well-structured and thought through is weaker on the European dimension and the possible over-reliance on the flagship events.

## Rijeka

**The Rijeka application is based on the theme of "Port of Diversity". The city seeks to breathe new life into itself. The cultural strategy aims to strengthen the cultural identity of the city, to make its cultural activities more accessible to citizens and more attractive for tourists, businesses and investors. It has 13 strategic goals.**

The ECOC programme, embedded in the strategy, seeks to accelerate the launch of **modernization of the cultural and creative sector and to present Rijeka's heritage and contemporary artistic scene** to a wider European public. The ECOC intends to function as a bridge for the city to reach a European and international dimension, strengthening its cosmopolitan nature as well as self-esteem and confidence.

**Under the umbrella of "port" the programme has three thematic areas: Water, Work and Diversities.**

**The proposed operating budget is €26m of which €18.5m is for programme expenditure.**

The bid includes the neighbouring region and its towns.

The panel appreciated the contextual analysis of the city and the challenges it is facing. **It noted that Rijeka is "the Croatian synonym for non-standard, liberal, anti-nationalist and tolerant". The cultural strategy sets ambitious goals which are matched by those of the ECOC.** The panel noted that the cultural strategies of the region (and the university) also include the ECOC. The city strategy makes clear it will continue to support artistic and other projects that are the most successful after 2020. This adds a demanding challenge to operators within the ECOC programme.

The objectives of the ECOC appear in the evaluation section which outlines the process and briefly covers the impacts desired. The panel considers these need formalising. **The panel noted this important comment "the success of Rijeka ECOC2020 largely depends**

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**on its contribution to the improvement of interpersonal relations and social cohesion".** This introduction of behavioural change brings a new dimension to ECOCs; the panel will be alert to the means by which Rijeka seek to achieve it.

The bidbook explains how Rijeka through its history as a port and through the wide experience of its cultural workers is already a strongly European city with many existing international cultural activities. This is a common feature of cities in Europe. In these circumstances an ECOC needs to show how it will develop in new ways, bringing forward Rijeka's cultural identity but also linking and exploring common features and profiles with other European cities and regions, perhaps less active in the city at the moment. Consequently the panel felt that the European dimension shown in the bidbook needs further innovative development. In particular the panel did not understand the need to **have a section in the outline programme called "international programme proposals";** it expects most projects in an ECOC to have an international partnership of one form or another (as noted in the programme intentions). The panel also noted the rather limited geographic range of proposed partners. The bidbook indicates that several events will have a special attraction for European, and wider, visitors; the panel will seek further elaboration in the next stage.

The preliminary programme is outlined in the bidbook. The three themes, of Water, Work and Diversity are easy to follow (a positive advantage in the marketing of an ECOC) and have an authentic resonance with the city. The bidbook graphically illustrates the wide range of local cultural operators and artists who were involved in the discussions leading to the bid. The illustrative projects encompass a wide range from the cultural sector, to education, to the digital space, LGBT, the continuation of the dissolution of the traditional concept of a national theatre and to the modernising of the industrial heritage. There is the potential, not yet developed, for an innovative programme. As noted above the panel will need to see how the behavioural change aims will be realised. The Klimt exhibition has the potential to attract a wide audience. Some elements of the programme, for example Subversive Diversities, are provocative and marked by strong critical edge.

The bid book states that the artistic programme is already now quite ready – the panel thinks that this is too early phase for such complacency.

The ECOC project has the support of the relevant political authorities. The presentation team included the mayor of Opatija and the prefect of the county of Primorje and Gorski Kotar as well as the mayor of Rijeka who gave their full support. Notwithstanding this support the panel is less clear on the role within the programme of the surrounding towns and the benefits may achieve.

The bidbook in its analysis of its cultural profile indicates it has the cultural and managerial infrastructure to undertake a complex ECOC.

The bid has been prepared after consultation with a wide cross section of society and a commitment made to continue this engagement. The bidbook gives a special emphasis on the outreach to citizens who are not normally active in cultural activity. Although polls show that over 60% of citizens are satisfied with the cultural offer, evidence indicates that cultural institutions have been losing their audiences. The panel would want to see how they are changing their programmes to meet the new situation. There is a strategy to attract volunteers and linking this with education.

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The panel noted the steps planned with the various minorities. At times these appeared to be in conflict with each other (a positive programme to bring classical music training to Roma children offset by rather traditional folkloric presentations by minorities).

**The proposed budget of €26m with €18.5, for programme expenditure is on the low side** for an ECOC with European ambitions. The panel was surprised at the relatively low contribution from the city at 26% with 43% from central government.

The capital expenditure proposals for the ECOC include a wide range of renovation projects dependent from timely implementation of EU-ESI-funds projects. The panel was not clear on the relationship of many of these projects with the proposed operational programme.

The proposed organisational structure did not convince the panel that it would be appropriate for an ECOC. The proposed organisation to manage the ECOC has a wide set of responsibilities including many elements of the city cultural strategy as well as operational management of a major cultural complex. The panel consider that the experience of successful ECOCs shows that running a complex activity such as an ECOC requires a dedicated agency, independent of direct operational management of the city authorities and one which is not encumbered with other responsibilities.

The proposed senior staffing structure was not clear to the panel; the role of Chief Programme Co-ordinator with a group of independent artistic directors did not appear to **have the authority in the management line that an ECOC's Artistic Director requires** to maintain a coherent artistic vision. There is a strong risk that the programme may become a series of parallel programmes.

Overall the panel appreciated the authenticity of the proposed programme and the direction proposed. It considers that the bidbook shows a strong proposal which can be developed. As a basis for that development there are clear links between bottom-up initiatives and political consensus and support for those. There was clear progressive **thinking and the 'openness to diversity' image** of the city that could be beneficial for other (EU) cities too. The proposed thematic areas demonstrate potential for developing a programme relevant not just to Rijeka but also to EU citizens. The panel, however, has considerable concerns over the European dimension and the proposed organisational plans.

## Split

**The Split candidature is based on the theme of "Splitting the Cultural Atom".** The bid also includes a number of neighbouring cities and islands. The cultural strategy of the city is based on five main themes, emerging from **wide consultations. These are "the development of a shared city narrative; a stronger cultural heritage model, the urban and cultural development of the city, promoting Split as a major centre of creativity and cultural tourism and insisting on the creativity of people not just as passive consumers"**.

**The ECOC programme is seen as integral part of the city's strategy. It will systematically challenge the culture of closed institutions.** It is structured along eight programme lines based primarily on artform categories (heritage, literature, music and dance etc). **The proposed budget is €32.1m of which €20.8m is for programme expenditure.**

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The panel appreciated the analysis of the city, simplified as a “blocked city” being inward looking and defensive. It also welcomed the inclusion in the bid of the hinterland of Split and the islands which are currently lacking cultural opportunities. The conclusion of the analysis, that the city needs “unblocking” was well argued and consistent with the city’s cultural strategy.

The analysis led to an impressive set of impact objectives which could form the basis for delivering an ECOC. Many of these were measurable and in SMART format. The panel noted however that none related to the key elements of the European dimension including how Split’s own citizens will increase their understanding and awareness of the diversity of culture in Europe.

The European dimension was characterised as “giving”, “learning” and “sharing”. This forms a sound platform for development. The proposed programme touches on some of these. The panel felt it needed more explicit examples to be convinced that these aims were being translated into projects and were a fundamental driver of the programme. The panel expects most projects in an ECOC to have international partnerships. There was a focus on the common themes (e.g. **other “choked cities”**) with these being addressed through artistic co-operations but less on the cultural diversity of Europe.

The panel did not identify highlights, or the intention to develop highlights, which would attract the attention of local audiences and the international media and visitors. In this respect the outline programme lacked a European level ambition to attract visitors over and above the normal day and short stay visitors attracted by the heritage of the city.

The preliminary artistic programme outlined in the bidbook did not convince the panel of the degree of European artistic partnerships planned; there was a lack of depth of explanation linking the theoretical analysis and practical examples of programmes and projects which would give the panel an assurance of an effective programme. For **example the aim of “unblocking” the mainstream cultural institutions did not progress to training and recruitment programmes in those institutions.**

The bid has been put together by a team of local artists, cultural operators and curator who have had extensive consultation with the cultural sector (especially the independent sector). The bidbook indicated they would involve wider participation and engagement with citizens in the second stage. The panel was disappointed that this critical activity was not started in this preparatory phase. This is a key element of the outreach criteria and was not met. The task ahead of engaging with more people (not just the cultural community) is considerable, for ideas, for actively influencing the cultural sector, for audience development and for gaining public support for the ECOC itself. The panel is not certain this can be achieved. It would have been valuable if, for example, the proposed Youth Advisory Group had been up and running and visibly contributing to the programme. There was little in the bidbook to indicate projects involving schools and youth groups, a key element of the outreach objectives of an ECOC.

The bid envisions a “studentification”, a much needed process in a city with a large university student population. The key drivers are two schemes: the Student Centre and the Dom Mladih. The panel welcomed these proposed developments but would have expected at this stage a more innovative approach to complement these conventional cultural production hubs. There was little evidence in the bidbook on how students at the university had been involved in these proposals and how much came top down.

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During the presentation more information was given about how the programme would be taken to the islands and the hinterland.

The programme itself, as outlined at this stage, is organised primarily around artform categories. This gives the impression that it is more a set of autonomous projects rather than a themed, objective focussed, programme. This often, in the view of the panel, indicates a lack of artistic oversight at a strategic level and leads to an institutional (formal or independent) wish list. For example there was little to enable the panel to understand how the programme was being developed in the low tourist seasons, one of the main aims of the strategy. Within the programme there were specific projects which the panel appreciated, for example, the Museums of Everyone, which splits the museum collections into smaller dispersed elements, as a step to decentralize culture in the county.

The bid has the support of the city council.

The proposed organisation and senior staffing structure is outlined in the bidbook. Creating an independent legal organisation is the standard ECOC practice.

The proposed governance and management structures did not indicate the responsibility and engagement of the various political, cultural and economic sectors of society. The **staffing structure would need greater explanation with a "three artistic director"** structure. It was particularly concerned that the Board of Directors may be drawn into artistic decisions.

The financial information at this stage is adequate. The marketing and communication plans were underdeveloped at this stage. In particular they lacked a coherent concept to reach out to a wider audience across Europe based on the programme (rather than the existing cultural and heritage appeal of the city).

Overall the panel felt the bid fell short on key aspects of an ECOC. The strategic analysis and aims were sound in a local context but were not translated enough into a European context. The European dimension, including its two-way aspect, was not adequately covered and there was a major weakness in not engaging with citizens beyond the cultural sector during this stage. The impression given to the panel was an undue emphasis on a city re-branding and tourist orientated project rather than a strategy to improve on a sustainable basis the very diverse cultural sector of the city. The bid fell short on convincing the panel on the programme itself and whether this would meet the stated objectives and be of a high enough artistic standard.

## **Varaždin**

**The Varaždin bid, in association with nine partnering towns in North Croatia, is based on the theme of "Matching Mis-matching". The cultural strategy 2015-2030 is briefly outlined in the bidbook. The strategy aims to strengthen cultural capacities, the creative sector and international cultural relations.**

The ECOC programme is in line with the strategy. The six ECOC criteria are also contained in the strategy. The proposed programme of the ECOC is structured around seven main themes. These are principally based on artform groupings (for example, performing arts, visual arts, the culture of living and sport, audio-visual etc). The

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proposed budget is between €18.4m and €19.0m of which €15.117m is for programme expenditure.

The panel acknowledge the positive step that has been taken to develop a cultural strategy with neighbouring cities which have a shared cultural history even if they are now in different administrative counties. This makes operational sense for a cultural project and it is to the credit of the politicians that they agreed to work together.

The strategy of the ECOC was only briefly described in the bidbook and presentation. The panel was not able to gain a clear understanding of it, and what it seeks to achieve in the medium term. It was a strong point that the public consultations have elicited enough programme ideas that could be sustainable to 2027. This is commendable but the panel did not see linkages between these individual ideas and the strategic objectives set out. The strategy also appears to have ideas for infrastructure projects until 2045.

The intention to attract and retain critical mass around certain infrastructure projects to host and support creative industries in the area was relevant but no evidence was shown that a strategy was in place to develop capacity building to connect and facilitate cultural entrepreneurs to develop a sustainable business sector.

The European dimension outlined in the bidbook introduced some interesting pan European concepts such as the impact of digital technologies but these were limited. The bidbook mentioned that artists from Austria, Hungary and Ireland will be invited; the panel would have expected a fuller coverage of international partners and a listing of the cultural organisations and artists who will partner projects in the programme. The panel could not discern how citizens of the region would gain a greater awareness of the cultural diversity in Europe. The programme outline of indicative projects did not, in the view of the panel, contain the seeds of events and projects which would attract a wider European audience. This is a major weakness of the bid. As it stands the European dimension is not developed sufficiently at this stage of the competition.

The bidbook contains an outline of projects in a programme. These are grouped by artform area (e.g. performing arts, audio-visual, film etc). Individually the panel noted several which could be developed and be of a high standard. Overall however the programme lacked a coherent artistic vision and appeared as a collection of separate events and projects under a single ECOC umbrella. During the presentation the panel learnt of the relatively small cultural sector in the region and this is perhaps reflected in the programme proposal. The programme did indeed connect heritage and traditional artforms but the panel felt without the degree of innovation, experimentalism and risk that ECOCs command.

The ECOC programme seeks to increase cultural participation through creating content for culture, envisages a higher mobility for artists and plans to increase the international dimension. It also seeks to bring people back to the city cores. These are demanding objectives and well within the objectives of an ECOC.

The panel felt that the translation of the strategy and analysis, encapsulated in the **“Matching Mismatching”** concept was less visible in the programme outline.

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The evaluation and monitoring programme outlined in the bidbook was adequate at this stage but needs deepening to be effective.

Despite the conceptual starting point of the proposal (a productive tension between tradition and modernity) the panel felt that traditional and heritage-orientated comprehension of culture prevailed over contemporary cultural interests.

The ECOC project has the full support of the political authorities in the city and associated region. The panel were not convinced that the area had sufficient cultural and tourist infrastructure to implement a capital of culture project on a European scale. The panel was concerned that the city and region may not have the managerial capacity to implement a complex project; they would have expected mobility programmes and training to feature.

The bidbook indicated an impressive list of those consulted in the preparation of the bid. Both the number and the range are to be commended. This section was also of interest to the panel with its comments on minorities, especially the aim of integrating the Roma into society; there was a clear opportunity for a project at school level. The panel was less convinced on the seemingly parallel projects for other minorities rather than a clearer integration policy. There was limited engagement with people with disabilities (for example seeking to increase their participation in all cultural activities).

**The proposed budget of €18m is on the** very low side for an ECOC and would require very careful management to ensure a European wide impact. The financial plan projects only 22% contribution from the city (and 58% from central government): this does not indicate a strong priority from the city. At this stage the marketing plans are adequate.

The bidbook did not give clear approach to the implementation, governance and staffing of the proposed programme

Overall the panel was impressed with the regional planning and cohesion of the bid; it made sense in the context of the cities. The proposed programme however lacked the artistic and European vision associated with a European Capital of Culture.

## Zadar

**Zadar's bid was presented under the title "It's time".**

The bidbook indicates that a specific cultural strategy has not yet been developed by the **city authorities. The strategic aspects of the ECOC bid are based on the "City of Zadar Development Strategy 2013-2020."**

**The city's** emerging cultural strategy is based on five strategic areas: improving the quality of cultural infrastructure; strengthening the cultural heritage; developing creative industries, tourism and the independent cultural scene. The ECOC strategy seeks to add **"creativity" to this strategy.**

**The ECOC programme is based around five themes: "Urban re-loading"; "co-work and co-create"; "in-cloud and respect"; "Zadar4Young" and "Share". The proposed budget is €21.3m of which €14.9m is for programme expenditure.**

The panel appreciated the honest and self-critical analysis in the bidbook of the recent history of Croatia and the current situation in the city. This was well argued and very

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informative to understand the context of the bid. The phrase “pizza-cut tourism” was especially memorable as was the assessment “that the cultural scene in Zadar is dominated by institutions managed by the public sector mainly orientated to a regular public representing a small percentage of the whole city population”.

The European dimension was only sketched out briefly in the bidbook and much was in the future tense. The panel felt this core criteria deserved a deeper treatment. Despite references to the promotion of international mobility in the bidbook there was little specific reflection of programmes or projects involving artists and cultural operators in other countries, or to transnational co-operation in the near region. The outline programme did not indicate, in the view of the panel, an adequate approach to enabling **Zadar’s** citizens to gain an increased awareness of other cultures in Europe; nor was there an indication that the programme would contain projects or events to attract a wider European audience (beyond the normal tourist offer).

The bidbook presented an analysis of the programme. The five strands were clearly articulated and set into the context of Zadar; the panel appreciated this linkage. Included in this context were challenging aims to fight discrimination and xenophobia in the sensitive socio-political context of the county that was significantly affected by the recent war. The Share programme strand gives a comprehensive overview of areas of focus and can act as a good starting point for project development.

The bidbook indicated the cultural strategy and the ECOC had emerged from consultations with the independent cultural sector, with more than 150 stakeholders consulted. The panel was disappointed to see that a wider consultation, with citizens, schools etc, was planned to be undertaken only at a later stage. The proposals for this were well set out but the panel felt that this was too late. Gaining the involvement of the wider community is an area expected before the pre-selection stage especially as the context setting had indicated that for example high school students do not participate in cultural life and there is a lack of generalized trust amongst the young. Both issues appeared in the table of impact targets.

The proposed programme seeks to strengthen the capacity of the currently underdeveloped **independent sector (a clear link to the city’s strategic plan)**. **It sets itself an ambitious target “to make deep and meaningful changes in the cultural and social scene of the city”**. The panel acknowledged this ambition but felt the proposed programme did not, at this stage, measure up to this ambition. The analysis was well thought through and convincingly presented in the bidbook. The panel could not see, however, the link between ambition, analysis and the outline of the programme and its project contents. The bidbook and presentation did not convince the panel that the necessary development could be achieved in the time available.

For example the analysis acknowledged the imbalance between the cultural offer in the city and the other parts of the county. The panel, however, could not see how the proposed programme and subsequent actions would resolve this imbalance. The overall **concept of “Time” is general and all-encompassing**; it does not give the ECOC a clear understandable focus.

It was not clear from the bidbook that the city council (and all political parties) had formally approved the bid.

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The bidbook and presentation did not give the panel a confidence that the city had the necessary cultural infrastructure and people to implement a demanding ECOC. Comments that the challenge of the ECOC was to provoke traditional institutions out of their comfort zone are laudable but need backing up with the means to do it. The bidbook did not indicate how this was to be achieved.

The financial projections indicated that the city would contribute 13% of the operational budget compared to 58% from the national budget. This did not give the panel a strong indication of commitment from the city.

The panel considered that the proposed organisational structure and senior personnel roles were not adequately defined for this stage. The line of authority, responsibility and decision taking were unclear. The monitoring and evaluations proposals were adequate at this stage.

Overall the panel considered that the bid was well set into the local context and cultural strategy. Its analysis was sound and evidence based. The weakness came in translating that into an innovative and challenging cultural programme with a strong European dimension including the ability to attract international visitors. The panel would have expected a stronger sense of an artistic vision and far more detail in the programme and project elaboration at this stage of the competition. The panel was unable to see the programme in a European context.

## Zagreb

Zagreb presented its **bid under the title of "Reconciling our contradictions: do it yourself"**. **The city's cultural strategy, outlined in the bidbook, has seven strategic goals** (heritage and diversity of creativity; enhancing the participation of citizens; creative industries; inter-sectoral collaboration; strengthening capacity of the city's cultural office; upgrading arts and cultural organisations and enabling financial sustainability).

The ECOC programme has its own aims and seeks impact in four areas: **urban development, cultural, economic and social. The proposed operating budget is €49.7m of which €36.3 is for programme expenditure.**

The panel noted the comprehensive nature of the city strategy. In its entirety it proposes a considerable overhaul of the existing cultural offer in the city including its management. As set out in the bid book there are no clear specific objectives and the panel noted with concern that the strategy would be implemented through annual Action Plans. These are short term. The panel is concerned that such short term approach may impinge on the ECOC management which requires a long term and consistent approach from designation to delivery and subsequently.

The ECOC sees itself as both a tool and a goal of the strategy. The panel is concerned **that the ECOC sees itself as goal rather than a "tool"**. **Normally an ECOC would be only** an element within a strategy so it does not run the risks of overstressing or becoming too shallow in its approach. The panel felt that the bidbook with its emphasis on contradictions was not clear in its relationship to the city strategy. The indicative list of strategic objectives of the ECOC, to be monitored during the ECOC as well as evaluated afterwards, included improving the management of cultural institutions through training programmes and enhancing the cross sectoral approach of the cultural sector; an

approach which the panel supported. The evaluation approach was sketched out and needs further elaboration.

The European dimension of the proposed programme for 2020 was outlined in the bidbook, which was stronger than the presentation on this topic. The illustrative programme listed a considerable number of artists from other EU Member States who have indicated their willingness to participate. However the panel felt that the information on the projects was too sketchy for this phase of the competition for a clear view on how the European dimension will be realised. The panel noted that Zagreb already has a high quality cultural programme every year. This could form a foundation for an ECOC programme but an ECOC needs to be considerably more than this normal cultural programme of a city, however good that is. The panel was less re-assured that the draft programme would contain enough activities of at the highest standard to attract an international audience (over and above the normal cultural and tourist offer).

**The proposed programme based around the "Reconciling our Contradictions" concept was outlined. There were "fifteen areas of contradiction" which in the view of the panel diluted the coherence and probable impact of the programme.** It was not clear at all how these thematic areas translated into objectives set out in the evaluation section. The panel recognised that cultural organisations (both in the formal and independent sectors) had been consulted and that plans were in place to continue this approach. However, as with the European Dimension, the panel felt the plans were underdeveloped at this time; a factor no doubt of the short period of the project gestation in Zagreb.

The bid had the strong support of the city council. It did not plan to involve a region in its programme. The city has a vibrant cultural infrastructure to support an ECOC, although less so in the south of the city.

The presentation highlighted the range of consultations which had taken place with a wide section of the city. The bidbook was less clear on the plans to broaden the engagement of those who normally do not partake of culture in the city. The panel was disappointed to see few references to working with schools.

One of the principal aims, according to the presentation, was the drive to help citizens south of the river to engage in culture. The panel considered that the outline approach in the bidbook, of using neighbourhood cultural councils, was less developed in relation to the importance attached to the aim.

The proposed financial plans were adequate at this stage. The mayor specifically highlighted that the cultural strategy would be implemented regardless of the outcome of the competition and that the city could underwrite any shortfall in contributions from other financial stakeholders.

The planned list of cultural, touristic and urban infrastructure projects did not have a clear link with the ECOC programme. It was not clear that they were all taken into account when calculating the capital expenditure.

**The bid proposes to establish a "Cultural Cluster" to manage the ECOC programme. This introduces an innovative element and is potentially a strong participative approach.** However the bidbook was less clear on fundamental points including the selection and responsibility of members. The panel was not convinced that the operational authority of

the General and Artistic Directors would be separated from the strategic nature of the cluster assembly and board of directors. The complexity of managing a complex programme such as an ECOC appeared to have been underestimated. The panel also had concerns on the degree of independence of the management structure from the political process.

At this stage the outline marketing and staffing plans are adequate. The panel had concerns over the robustness of the communication plans in the bidbook; these were not convincingly elaborated on in the presentation.

Overall the panel appreciated the change programme inherent in the ECOC strategy but did not feel the bid was developed sufficiently at this stage of the competition.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations apply to all four shortlisted candidates. The panel will expect significant changes in the final bidbooks reflecting these recommendations.

After a careful assessment of the bidding documents, the presentation and discussions during the question-and-answer session, the selection panel consider that the short-listed bids need to be worked on intensely to reach the required level of quality of such a demanding event as an ECOC.

There is a considerable step-change between proposals at pre-selection stage and those at final selection.

The shortlisted candidates are advised to study carefully the criteria in the Decision (translated into Croatian in the call for applications) and the comments in the assessments above.

A study of the evaluations of recent ECOCs may also be of value.

In the final selection bidbook candidates must cover all the questions in Annex 1 (the **"application form"**) in the call for applications. There are extended questions, compared to pre-selection, on the proposed programme and the financial plans. Shortlisted cities do not need to repeat in so much detail the contextual and historical opening sections of their bidbooks. This was invaluable for the pre-selection phase. The focus will be more on the proposals for the ECOC.

The pre-selection bidbooks tended to set out in general terms the **objectives** of why a city is seeking the title. The panel would expect a more focussed (and shorter) explanation which can link to the programme themes, the programme and through to the outcomes in the subsequent legacy.

All cities have recently developed cultural strategies. This is a positive step forward for culture in the city development. In the bidbooks the strategies often appeared general. There was limited information on priorities, with few expressions of outcomes or targets and how resources are to be changed in the city over the next five years within the city's **budget for culture**. A city's cultural strategy will normally be wider in scope than the objectives of an ECOC. Bidbooks should indicate more clearly which priorities of the broader cultural strategy the ECOC is seeking to contribute to.

Candidates who involve **neighbouring municipalities and regions** should indicate how the artistic programme in each meets the European dimension and the cultural and artistic criteria as well as contribute to the long term cultural strategy of each municipality and region. The role of these regional stakeholders in the governance and management structures should also be made clear.

At this stage the proposals are too inward looking in their local context in the city, Croatia and the near region. The panel would wish to see a greater deepening and widening of programmes to ensure **the European dimension** was met. That a city is in Croatia, in Europe and has a vibrant existing cultural offer (and attracts tourists) is not in itself a strong interpretation of the European dimension. The European dimension has a two-way direction. An equal focus is on seeking to broaden the understanding and

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awareness of the city's own citizens on the diversity of cultures in Europe and linking through cultural and other projects with citizens in other countries. An ECOC offers the opportunity for a city and its citizens to learn from others in an open way.

The unusual timing of the competitions for the 2020 titles has meant that contacts between candidates **in Ireland** and Croatia have been less than usual at this stage of the 2020 competitions. The panel expects the shortlisted cities to have established working links with the Irish candidates and to be able to present outline partnerships and projects in the final bidbooks. The panel would also expect to see further collaborations between ECOCs already designated for 2016-2019 as appropriate to each candidate.

One of the elements of the criteria for the ECOC title is the ability to attract **visitors from the rest of Europe**. The panel would expect to see proposed ideas in the ECOC programme in 2020 (i.e. distinct from the normal tourist offers of the city and region) which meet this criterion.

The focus of the final selection is the **operating programme** between 2016, when the ECOC will be formally designated and, in particular, the ECOC year of 2020. A city's previous cultural history and heritage and its current cultural offer, may form a basis for this programme but plays no part in the decision. The panel will expect to see considerably more detail on the programme and its projects. The four cities should work out their artistic programme and projects more clearly; indicating partners who have signed up and those who are still only potential partners. If projects are planned to be funded from competitive programmes (e.g. Creative Europe) this should be indicated. Cities may wish to highlight their approach to digital cultural content (not just social media promotions and inter-actions) as integral parts of their programme.

Information on urban development and infrastructure programmes, cultural heritage restoration projects and new cultural premises is useful as background and context at pre-selection. The final selection will focus on **the capital projects which directly impact on the programme activities** (e.g. a new cultural centre in a restored building which becomes a focal point for community arts projects contained in the programme).

The **audience development** programme is expected to be much further developed in the final bidbooks including online and offline measures for all identified target groups. Special focus should be dedicated to those audiences which are more difficult to reach **but being crucial for a new "cultural climate" in an ECOC city (e. g. minorities, people temporarily in the city)**. The bidbooks should cover the participation of schools, youth groups, volunteers etc in the city.

The **membership of governing boards** should be explained, with post holders (or positions) and the method of appointment.

The **General and Artistic Directors** play a key role in all ECOCs. The selection, preferably though an open call, of these posts before the **candidates' appearance at the final selection meeting**, will be to their advantage. This is especially important for the Artistic Director as, unlike many such appointments, the artistic vision is already set out in the bidbook. The same applies if a candidate proposes a collective artistic leadership. It is acknowledged that the appointments may be conditional on the outcome of the competition.

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Candidates should indicate how their proposed structure is **independent of any possible party political** changes between 2016 and 2020 and enjoys the support of all political parties in the participating municipalities and regions. The panel would expect that the relevant city and regional councils would have re-asserted their support for the candidature by formally agreeing the final bidbook including the financial forecasts and commitments.

The final bidbooks should clearly indicate how potential **capital investments crucial for the ECOC** (those mentioned in the capacity to deliver criteria above) will be managed (management structures, state-of-play related to the EU-ESI-Funds such as the connection with the relevant Operational Programme, time line and public procurement).

The panel expects the four cities **to publish their final bidbooks** on their websites both for public accountability and engagement. The bidbooks should be online shortly before the final selection meeting.

### **Signed**

Steve Green (Chair)

Ivana Katurić (Vice-Chair)

Sylvia Amann

Cristina Farinha

Ulrich Fuchs

Maroje Mrduljas

Jordi Pardo

Anton Rombouts

Aiva Rozenberga

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Agnieska Wlazel

Suzana Žilič Fišer

### **Zagreb**

**June 2015**