



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

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

**The Selection Panel's
Final Report**

Zagreb

April 2016

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Introduction

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

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"¹)
- Rules of Procedure – "Competition for the 2020 European Capital of Culture title in Croatia" (the "Rules") signed by the Croatian Minister of Culture on 5 June 2014 and published on the ministry's website on 11 June 2014².

Selection Panel

The selection panel consists of 12 members. In line with the Decision (article 6) ten were appointed by institutions and bodies of the European Union (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, European Commission and Committee of the Regions). Two were appointed by the ministry in consultation with the European Commission.

The panel appointed Steve Green as chair and Ivana Katurić as vice-chair. All members of the panel signed a declaration of non-conflict of interest and confidentiality at both meetings of the panel.

Pre-Selection

The competition is in two phases: pre-selection (shortlisting) and final selection. The ministry issued a call for applications to all Croatian cities on 11 June 2014. There were 9 applications submitted by the deadline of 17 April 2015.

The panel met in Zagreb on 27-29 May 2015 for the pre-selection meeting. The panel recommended that the ministry invite four cities (Dubrovnik, Osijek, Pula and Rijeka) to progress to the final selection. The panels' report is published on the website of the European Commission³.

The Croatian Minister of Culture accepted the panel's recommendation and the ministry invited the four cities to submit revised applications with a deadline of 10 February 2016.

All four cities submitted their revised applications ("bidbooks") by the deadline.

The following steps took place between the pre-selection and final selection meetings:

¹ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.132.01.0001.01.ENG

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

³ http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2020/croatia-preselection_en.pdf

- The mandate of panel member Anton Rombouts expired on 31 December 2015 and he was replaced by Alain Hutchinson.
- All four cities met with the panel's chair in London to seek clarification of the recommendations in the pre-selection report.
- A delegation of the panel (Ulrich Fuchs, Maroje Mrduljas and Agnieszka Wlazel) visited all four cities in March 2016, spending one day in each. They were accompanied by observers from the ministry and the European Commission. The delegation reported back to the full panel at the selection meeting.

Selection Meeting

The final selection meeting took place in Zagreb on 23-24 March 2016. One panel member (Alain Hutchinson) was absent. Representatives of the ministry and the European Commission attended as observers. The observers took no part in the panel's deliberations or decision.

The candidates appeared before the panel in alphabetical order. Each city made a 45 minute presentation followed by 75 minutes in a Question & Answer session. Delegations had up to ten members and all were led by their Mayor.

The chair of the panel announced the panel's recommendation at a press conference after the meeting in the presence of the deputy Minister of Culture.

Assessments of the candidates

The panel assessed each candidate against the objectives of the ECOC programme (article 2 of the Decision) and the six specific criteria in article 5:

- Contribution to the long term cultural strategy of the city
- European dimension
- Cultural and artistic content
- Capacity to deliver
- Outreach
- Management

Dubrovnik

Context

Dubrovnik introduced their city as one endowed with high cultural visibility and substantial resources for culture, "there is little or no alternative to culture in Dubrovnik". There are 403 cultural heritage resources in the area and inscriptions in both the UNESCO World Heritage and Intangible Heritage Lists. It has the highest per capita spend on culture and cultural heritage in the country. In the bidbook, however, it notes it has a deficit in artistic creation. The bidbook recognises that the main economic sector, tourism, has a negative effect on urban dynamics and everyday life. The ECOC is

seen as an opportunity to challenge the current mono-functionality of the city. An aim is to change the seasonality of the tourism towards a more diverse and sustainable attractive offer.

The bidbook is available at <http://dubrovnik2020.hr/en/portfolio/programme-2/>

The bid is based on the concept of "City in the Making". This is further supported by theme of "City as Commons". This idea stresses the fundamental role citizens can play as creators of an actively shared city. The proposed programme has three streams. "Future Tense" deals with the lack of contemporary artistic production; "Common Sense" tackles shortcomings in communication and co-curation amongst various social groups and parts of the city and "Common Histories" challenges fixed images of the city's history and heritage.

Cultural Strategy

The city has a long term cultural strategy; its most recent revised Action Plan was adopted by the City Council in December 2015. The panel noted that the ECOC is integrated into this longer term cultural strategy. During the presentation it learnt that the management plan for the historic centre is still in preparation. Its completion will add to the overall urban development of the city. Without it, given the importance of the urban centre to the city, the panel considered the cultural strategy, and hence the ECOC, only partially covered the future needs of the city.

The panel appreciated the statements made in the presentation that an important part (possibly 30%) of the ECOC programme will be implemented regardless of the outcome of the competition. This "Plan B" is to be commended as it illustrates the commitment to change in the cultural sector and its offer. (During the writing of this report the panel noted, and welcomed, the mayor's commitment to implement this "Plan B").

The bid recognised the shortcomings in the cultural management in the city. It envisaged a major training and development programme. It aims to both deliver the ECOC and to change the future cultural direction of the city. The panel considered this was a significant element in the bid although would have appreciated a more detailed programme outline. It would have liked to see greater engagement with the main institutions, the heritage and urban planning sectors.

The panel noted the plans for evaluation. It felt that the plans for monitoring progress in the ramp years were too late to be effective for the ECOC management to alter direction. The indicators went wider than the ECOC itself and covered many aspects of the cultural strategy of the city. The use of biometric tools and GPS in the evaluation process is innovative.

European Dimension

There were good ideas for the cooperation with the co-ECOC in 2020 in Ireland. There was a good strategy for the ECOCs in 2021 in Greece and Romania but less so with the co-ECOC from the candidate countries/potential candidates (Novi Sad or Herceg Novi).

The panel appreciated the idea behind the Consularts network building on a network of mainly existing contacts. The panel was unsure of the specific activities and role the network members would take.

The panel was disappointed to see a reduced role for partnerships with neighbouring countries and Mediterranean in the indicative projects, excluding the Mostar project. This had been a positive element in the pre-selection bid-book. It had expected this aspect of the programme to be enhanced including partnerships in the eastern and southern Mediterranean.

The focus on a European cultural citizenship was also a feature of the pre-selection bid. The panel noted that rather than being a key focus the final bid spreads it across the programme. The panel considered that this has the effect of diminishing the impact of what was a strong point.

Overall the panel considered the depth and scope of international partners had not increased as much as expected from the preselection phase.

Artistic programme

The panel noted the intention not to have major flagship events but three “openings” spread through the year. Each opened a new phase of the ECOC. During the presentation the panel learnt of plans to time public, “visible” events in the tourist low periods and the “invisible” activities in the main summer period. The former plan matched the city objective to widen the tourist offer; the plan is to develop more activities/festivals in this period. Since the pre-selection stage the city has hosted a range of performances, exhibitions and events as a pre-cursor to the second bidbook.

Many proposed projects were aimed at the cultural and artistic community and their competencies. The proposed programme contained events of high quality, especially in the visual arts, dance and theatre but a coherent artistic vision was not fully visible. It would have been improved by counter-balancing this strong focus on high-level international artists with a greater involvement and support for regional and local early career artists. The panel felt the focus on social entrepreneurship for the local crafts sector was interesting as a trial rather than as the prime option.

During the presentation the panel learnt that most of the projected programme budget has been allocated to the three streams. About a third of the budget has not yet been allocated; it will accommodate future projects. The panel was disappointed that the outline financial projections for projects in the programme were not in the bidbook. Although these were briefly shown during the presentation the panel was not able to review and understand the balance between streams and projects. It was not clear whether the ECOC would finance projects in other countries.

The panel was concerned that the creative industries did not feature in the proposed programme. This is an element in the criterion.

The cooperation with Osijek, a feature of the preselection, had not been developed as the panel expected (as was less than put forward by Osijek).

The panel noted the flexibility built into the programme planning. This raised concerns as the priority of the criteria for the selection of projects was not clear. As each project proposal needed to meet any three of the twelve key criteria it was very possible that important aspects of the criterion could be overlooked (eg those working with international partners).

The prime focus on social development was one neighbourhood. This was heavily reliant on the renovation of heritage premises into a civic and cultural centre (unlikely to complete before 2020) but came with a limited Plan B in case the building was not ready.

The panel had expected a greater emphasis on, and inclusion of, the islands after the pre-selection.

The panel was not convinced that the proposed programme had sufficient attraction to attract a wider European public, over and above the strong existing tourist attractions of the city.

Capacity

The bid has the full support of all political parties on the council.

The panel noted the potential of the Lazareti cultural centre in its newly renovated premises. It plays a key role in many of the projects. The "Hidden City" project explores the micro-spaces in Dubrovnik to create a new network of public spaces. The panel felt that more could be included in the programme to develop alternative cultural and creative industries spaces and facilities, in the city, the islands and neighbourhoods. This could have further enhanced the aim of the region as a centre for artistic creation.

Outreach

The panel noted the efforts made to reach out to citizens during the bid preparation. The panel did not see this as a strong engagement. It appeared over-balanced on events and participation at the Lazareti complex. Seeking support for an ECOC is not the same as seeking an active contribution to the design, objectives and implementation.

The panel noted the outline plans for audience development. Although the division into "visible" and "invisible" elements was a positive approach the panel felt the plans outlined in the bidbook, and during the presentation, were very limited. The role of the main cultural institutions (including the heritage and tourism sectors) in developing their own audiences was not developed.

The interaction with schools, a requirement of the criterion, was only briefly mentioned.

Management

The proposed budget for operating activities is €33m of which the main allocations are (assuming the city achieves the Melina Mercouri prize) €26.4m for programmes, €4m for marketing and €3,8m for salaries and overheads. The city intends to provide €16m and the county €1m (not yet secured). The aim is for €1m from various EU programmes. Private sector income is forecast at €4m. In common with the other three candidates the bid assumes €10m from the national government. The panel felt the allocations for expenditure and the forecast income streams to be reasonable. In particular it noted the lower than ECOC average for marketing. However each project budget included 15% for marketing and the Dubrovnik Tourist Board was taking responsibility for promoting the ECOC as part of their normal PR and marketing activities worldwide. An adequate allocation was reserved for evaluation in 2021. The city intends to increase its own cultural budget by up to 10% in the years after the ECOC to sustain a legacy.

Summary

The panel was not convinced that the theme “City in the making” was reflected in aims of the programme. It felt that the twin objectives of a new cultural tourism offer (both in timing and content) and developing the artistic strength of the city were running in parallel. This weakened the impact of both. The concept of “City in the Making” was stronger in the first bidbook. The panel felt what might have been the strongest element of the bid, placing Dubrovnik in a wider European context of heritage cities facing a tourist overload, has been lost in a proposed programme of singular artistic projects. At times there were comments saying “this is not about an off season programme” which were countered by placing visible projects in the off season and managing 10 projects for direct legacy. The European Dimension felt weakened from the preselection book especially with projects in the SEE Europe area. The strong capacity building emphasis was not enough to counter balance these weaker areas.

Osijek

Context

Osijek presented the city as a beacon of reconciliation. It has strong sense of duty towards its 22 minorities. It has developed strong and active partnerships with Pecs (Hungary), Tuzla (Bosnia and Hercegovina), Sombor and Novi Sad (Serbia). The bidbook gives an honest appraisal of the city, a former industrial city now in decline and its need to reconstruct its development path. It seeks to regain the cultural dynamics it had before the war and needs to enhance the self-esteem of its citizens. It states it is the greenest city in the country.

The bidbook is available at http://osijek2020.eu/index_en.html.

The programme is presented under the theme of “Oxygen”. Its vision is that “culture becomes the software for the sustainable development of the city of tomorrow”. It has four thematic pillars: Hacking the Future (potential in the fields of natural science, technology and innovation), Bridges over Waters (between the Danube and the Drava), the Culture Park (where citizens spend most of their spare time) and Living Fields (the natural environment).

Cultural Strategy

The city has a Cultural Development Strategy 2014-2020. It has three strategic objectives: “To Work Together” (creating a positive and entrepreneurial attitude in the cultural sector), “To Learn Together” (to develop creativity), and “To Live Together” (to develop inter-sectoral co-operation). The ECOC is an integral part of the strategy. Some of the ECOC projects are designed to continue after 2020. The bidbook sets out clearly the interrelationship of the strategy and the ECOC.

The ECOC bid is designed with a cross-border regional approach. The panel found this a laudable and ambitious policy.

The evaluation indicators are comprehensive. They cover elements directly from the cultural strategy as well as from the ECOC and may result in an overload of data collection. The listing in the bidbook was less clear on the specific targets the ECOC was

aiming for, and there was a lack of prioritisation. Given the strong engagement of the region the evaluation process did not appear to include benefits attaining to it.

European Dimension

The panel appreciated the strong political partnerships being developed with cities in neighbouring countries (Pecs, Sombor, Novi Sad, Tuzla). This is a clear element of the European Dimension with a high potential in intercultural dialogue and in the value of reconciliation. The transnational approach put the Osijek bid firmly in the arena of a Europe of regions. The programme was less clear on how these partnerships would result in cultural projects in the programme.

The post conflict theme was taken further with plans to develop relationships with Donostia San Sebastian. The panel would also expect partnerships with Derry/Londonderry and other European cities dealing with a range of post conflict scenarios in due course.

The panel welcomed the approach taken to study other European cities with a similar post-industrial experience, both successfully and less successfully, to aid the reflection on Osijek's future.

However the panel felt that the proposed programme was less well developed for partnerships, co-productions and collaborations with other European countries. There was little evidence in the bid-book or during the presentation. It would have expected at this stage of the competition more information on the international partners for most of the indicative projects in the bid book. The contacts with other ECOCs have been limited and are set out as future possibilities only.

The panel was not convinced that the proposed programme had the potential to attract visitors from the rest of Europe.

Artistic programme

The bid interprets culture in a wide sense not just the artistic sectors. The panel appreciated this wider than normal approach to an ECOC. It includes, inter alia, cycling, lesser used languages, food, the decline of bees, storytelling, digital platforms and art in public spaces. This approach aims to raise citizen's awareness and spark creativity in a city with a declining industrial base. Culture is understood as "oxygen" fuel that can activate hidden and latent potentials.

The panel welcomed the manner in which the bid takes into account the assets of the city, local parks nature and its agricultural hinterland. This gives the bid a strong ecological basis. The "Living Fields" pillar engages the broader region, erasing, by inter-linking, the divisions between urban and rural, between high culture and everyday life. The panel felt this was a logical move in a predominantly agricultural region. It is a valuable approach to active engagement in peripheral and marginal themes.

Many of the projects in the proposed programme draw on the city's history and reposition it for the future. For example "Big Spark" draws on the industrial heritage of the city to look forward to its knowledge based future. The panel appreciated the "Culture Park" pillar which focusses on a broad range of environmental issues facing

Europe today. The panel felt that the strategic approach in the proposed programme was commendable but the bid lacked enough details on the specific projects.

The panel considered the plans to enhance the creative industry sector to be strong. The planned renovation of the railway station would form a new location for a cluster. A sustainable critical mass can be achieved by drawing in the university and the BIOS (Business Incubator Osijek). Its focus on IT based CCIs (eg gaming) fits fully with the strategic outcome of the ECOC, of moving the city towards a knowledge-based city.

The panel noted the intention to create a major new Land Art Biennial. This seemed to fit with the bid's overall concept. The panel was not certain that the curatorial aspects had been fully addressed to ensure the Pannonian Biennial would find a niche among the existing land art events in Europe.

The panel welcomed the information in the presentation that the bid team is working with Đakovo from the first round of bids as well as projects with Dubrovnik.

Capacity

The bid has the full support of the city council. The panel learnt during the presentation that this is the first time all parties have united on a single issue. This should form a sound basis for progressing with many of the projects.

The panel shared doubts, recognised in the bidbook, on the capacity of the city's arts and cultural sector to manage such a demanding event as an ECOC. It noted that cultural and educational institutions in the city had started to work together. This is a positive step which could be further supported with a strong capacity building programme drawing, in part, on the University. This active engagement of the University could be extended to its participation in more of the cultural projects in the proposed programme.

Outreach

The bidbook, and the presentation, recognised that the programme had been put together "top down" with limited engagement with citizens. The focus had been more on information sharing and gaining support rather than seeking a collaborative design of the bid: valuable elements but lacking the input to programme ideas. This is a weakness of the bid and it does not meet the requirement of the criterion.

The Club Connect approach to audience development, working with schools and engaging with those who are not usually the participants of culture, appeared to the panel to be an interesting concept. The bid book outlined the general approaches. The panel felt this analysis needed more concrete development. It was not clear on the plans for sustainability after the ECOC year.

Management

The proposed budget for operational activities is €39.6m. The main allocations are €27.5m for programmes, €6.75m for marketing and €5.1m for salaries and overheads. The city intends to provide €19.2m, the county €1m and partner cities €1m. The aim is for an additional €3.7m from various EU programmes and €4.7m from private sources.

In common with the other three candidates the bid assumes €10m from the national government. The panel felt the overall budget was good.

It had concerns over the planned timing of the expenditure with a larger than normal spend during the first two years after designation and consequently a lower spend in the year before the ECOC and the ECOC year itself. The private sector income target was ambitious. Adequate funds were allocated for 2021 for evaluation. After the ECOC year the city intends to invest 8.5% of its budget in culture. The funds allocated to infrastructure development seemed reasonable.

The panel considered the plans for the governance and management to be less developed. It would expect an ECOC management agency to be up and running within a few months of selection rather than in 2017. The panel noted the advisory sectoral “think tanks”. These have provided good support to the management team in other ECOCs but the bidbook was less informative on their role and authority.

Summary

The panel appreciated the considerable development of the bid following the preselection stage. The city has the twin challenges of post-industrial and post-conflict. The partnerships with neighbouring cities in different countries in the post conflict environment are commendable and the panel hopes they will develop in the cultural sector. There are many individual elements of the proposed programme which are attractive. The programme as a whole has a strong grasp on the urban and economic development challenges facing the city and recognises the regional context. It lacks a coherent over-arching cultural vision and comes across as four parallel actions (each viable in its own right). The artistic element was less well developed than the positive social and environmental aspects. Whilst commending this strategy at a city level the panel felt the shortcomings in the broader European Dimension and outreach meant the bid lacked sufficient concurrence with the specific ECOC criteria.

Pula

Context

Pula presented itself as a post-military city, with over a third of the city inaccessible because of former military areas and the shipyard facilities. Alongside this physical aspect of the city the tradition of “tapija” at a personal level weakens both civic and entrepreneurial behaviours. The Pula bid seeks to demilitarize a mindset now prevalent in Europe where terrorist attacks are encouraging more xenophobia, populism and creating a “spectacle of fear” leading to increased surveillance and control. The city is bilingual and an industrial centre in a region heavily dependent on tourism.

The bidbook is available at <http://www.pula2020.eu/en/news/pula2020-bidbook/>

Cultural Strategy

The city has a formal cultural strategy 2014-2020 with six priorities: cohesion between different cultural institutions; increasing their social involvement, more frequent contact between the city administration and the cultural sector; linking the cultural sector with

the tourist and urban planning functions, audience development through PR and marketing and stabilising the independent sector through long term financial support. The panel learnt less about the cultural strategies of the partnering region.

The ECOC programme was presented under the banner "Demilitarize –From Fortress to Forum". The programme has three thematic areas: "Border Games" (breaking down barriers), "Playing It Fair" (establishing culture as a cross sectoral development) and "Your Turn!/Tocca A Te!/Tvoj Red!" (helping and empowering citizens).

The panel appreciated the clear approach to setting out the ECOC's cultural, economic and social targets for impact, and sustainable legacy. These read across to the evaluation impacts with a clarity between objectives, indicators and outcomes for legacy. The approach meant it was clear to see the role the ECOC has within the overall city cultural strategy. Several of the indicators appeared rather broad for an ECOC and not within its control or influence. Others would be more effective if they sought change rather than only contact. The targets for job creation appeared optimistic. There was a plausible plan to report on outcomes and milestones at the end of each year.

European Dimension

The bid book pointed out a weakness in the international partnerships in the city's cultural sector. In an attempt to overcome this weakness the bid intends for at least 50% of the cultural programme to be co-produced with European partners. This laudable aim could form a sound foundation for the European dimension criteria. The bid was less forthcoming on plans to manage a sustainable international future.

There are impressive details of contacts and partnerships with current and future ECOCs.

Many cities across Europe are also in a post military position, either through the post-Cold War or changing military strategies. The same could be said for the "tapija" mentality: citizen's passivity is not unique to Pula. Although the bidbook outlines some connections with other similar cities, the panel felt these themes could have been explored further and deeper on a European level.

Artistic programme

The panel was uncertain about the underlying concept of "play". During the presentation the bid team put forward the example of the recent volleyball "match" over the razor-wire fence between Croatia and Slovenia. Designed as a marketing event (in which it was successful) the bid-team felt this illustrated their approach to tackling serious topics in their programme. A playful approach was seen as encouraging citizens to overcome "tapija". The panel's concerns rested on the potential risk to artistic quality on this emphasis on "play". The selection of symbols for play and demilitarise should have been chosen more carefully. "Fights of Robots" does little to appeal to demilitarisation.

The panel appreciated many of the individual projects presented in the bidbook. However it felt the programme was over-planned at this stage, several years in advance. It appeared there was limited scope for new ideas emerging or replacing existing plans if they dropped by the wayside.

The panel appreciated the considerable and wide use of digital technologies in the programme. The panel noted that around 50% of the proposed programme was digital.

This is a high proportion for an ECOC, fit for purpose in 2020. The panel appreciated the “I was in Pula” current project as a means of engaging with those who served in the military in Pula, establishing a regional, post Yugoslavia, dialogue and exchange.

Although there is a lack of keynote projects with enough depth or international appeal the panel felt that the main concepts themselves may be attractive to attract a wider audience.

The panel noted the strong support from the county for the ECOC. The proposed programme outside the city however was less strong with Istrian towns being used mainly for venues rather than active participation.

The programme is more dependent on the development for cultural purposes of more buildings than is usual in an ECOC. The bidbook contained a list of 21 infrastructure projects which would feature in the programme in 2020. Some may be for temporary purposes only but this still poses a risk. As an example the panel learnt during the presentation that the 200 hectare site on the Musil peninsula has been zoned in a master plan by the city council. The fort area is reserved for cultural purposes. It is the location for part of the opening event and subsequent events. The national government is about to issue the second stage of the tender process. The panel welcomed this information but felt that the programmes reliance of the fort in Musil being ready in time was overambitious. The bid envisages debates on the uses of other former fortress buildings. Five of the 21 former military premises are currently allocated for unspecified cultural purposes.

The panel appreciated the strong approach taken to residencies with over 40% of projects having a residency element. There was a specific aim of 250 incoming residencies and an equal number of local artists taking up residences abroad. The panel underlines the importance of the engagement and participation of the independent artistic sectors and individual artists with the further design and implementation of the ECOC.

Capacity

The bid has the full all-party support of the city and regional councils.

The panel recognised the important influence of the Rojc cultural and social centre. Situated in a former military academy it demonstrates the potential of the de-militarise aspirations. Self-managed with a wide range of cultural and social partners it forms a key part of the ECOC programme.

The panel welcomed the proposed collaboration with the Uljanik shipyard, including the conversion of an industrial hall into a multi-purpose cultural and production space. It is another example of good use of industrial properties and private/public collaboration.

The panel was less clear on the role, if any, of much of the more established cultural sector in the city. There is no necessity for all of a city’s cultural festivals and institutions to be involved in an ECOC programme but the reasons for their low visibility were not explained.

Outreach

The panel welcomed the information that the bid team is in contact with “Istrians in New York City” and intends to engage with the Croatian diaspora in the USA.

The bid team has invested time and effort into developing a concept of “usership” to challenge the traditional divide between spectator and artwork. Several programmes are planned to bridge the gap between culture and everyday life. These points emerged from a sound “bottom-up” approach. However this approach was less evident in the selection process for projects and in the capacity building projects. The aim and content was sound but it did not appear to have been based on research into the cultural sectors needs.

The audience development programme outlined in the bidbook was in the panel’s view rather general and underdeveloped. There are ambitious targets set for schools activity but less information on how these would be met.

Management

The proposed budget for operational activities is €34.4m. The main allocations are €20m for programmes, €9m for marketing and €3.4m for salaries and overheads. The city intends to provide €10m, the region €5m and other cities in Istria €2.4m. The aim is for an additional €3m from various EU programmes and €4m from private sources. In common with the other three candidates the bid assumes €10m from the national government. The panel felt the overall budget was reasonable although had concerns over the size of the marketing budget. It is appreciably higher than normal in ECOCs. This puts a squeeze on programme funds. The panel appreciated the intention to have both a board member with fund-raising experience and a senior manager for fund raising. The bid includes adequate funding for evaluation in 2021. The bidbook states that the city could increase its annual cultural budget to nearly €6m, from the current €3,8m, after the ECOC year to sustain its legacy.

The panel noted the changes since the preselection bidbook in the management structure; it is simpler and more likely to be successful. It appreciated the plan for a board member with fund raising expertise (as well as a senior director post). The panel felt the timetable for appointing the two senior posts (General and Artistic Directors) by May 2017 too slow. To lose a year before the key posts are filled adds a risk factor.

Summary

The panel appreciated many of the proposals in the bidbook and the dynamism and enthusiasm of the bid team. The bid had a strong European Dimension with a particular strength in relations with other ECOCs. There was a strong, forward-looking, innovative approach to digital in the cultural programme. A weakness came in the panel’s view from an awkward mixing of the two core themes: demilitarising and overcoming “tapija”. Each was strong in its own right; together they tended to weaken the focus. The Rojc cultural centre provides a good role model but the bidbook was unclear on its role in the ECOC. The proposed programme was not clear on the engagement of the established cultural sector: it appeared a weak engagement which was not explained. The related infrastructure plan was both ambitious and a risk to the programme. Overall the panel considered many of the projects were worthy of implementation in the coming years.

Rijeka

Context

Rijeka presented itself as a post-industrial city, a coastal city and a city rich in artistic quality but a somewhat tired city. It has one of the highest rates of unemployment in Europe. The bid is under the title of "Port of Diversity". Its objectives are to act as a challenge to throw the city out of its comfort zone. The cultural sector must outgrow its basic local function to become a serious driver in the city's ambitions. The bid notes that cities are in competition for investments, visitors, students and Rijeka's cultural potential has barely been tested.

The bidbook is available at <http://www.rijeka2020.eu/en/>

The planned artistic programme is grouped under main clusters: Water, Work and Migration. There are seven flagship project areas: 27 Neighbourhoods, Brick House, Seasons of Power, Coast Lines, Dopolavoro, Kitchen and Sweet and Salt.

Cultural Strategy

The city has a cultural strategy, 2013-2020. Its core values include increasing the accessibility to culture for all, in particular vulnerable groups. It has 13 general strategic objectives and 8 priorities. These include strengthening the capacity and modernising cultural institutions; increasing the quality of cultural produces, promoting cross sector networking, especially with the education sector and establishing Rijeka as a city of "culture and creativity". The ECOC is the third of the eight priorities. The ECOC is also part of the cultural strategies of the country and university. Rijeka seeks to fuel the development of the more remote parts of the region.

The indicators in the evaluation section are perhaps too many. Some refer to the objectives directly of the cultural strategy or the tourism intentions rather than the ECOC. There is a risk of over data collection and too many indicators, with targets become too difficult to manage. The panel recommends a reduction and sharper prioritisation of the indicators. The panel felt the target ("70% of indicators to show an improvement") to be unambitious and weak. It needs a re-think.

European Dimension

The panel felt this criterion was addressed in a strong manner, in the strategy, the evaluation and in the artistic programme: "Nearly every project has clear and essential links to major partners from other European countries". The bid book noted that they have already made firm agreements with cultural and learning institutions across Europe.

The panel appreciated that the seven main programme streams (flagships) each address a current European issue.

Migration is a contemporary and important European theme and the panel appreciated the focus on migrations both as a cluster and a flagship area. Rijeka's past history of accommodating migrants should stand it in good stead for future migrations. There are an increasing number of art projects across Europe now working with the recent migrants to Europe. Engaging with them could enhance Rijeka's ambitions.

The panel was less convinced with the plans to attract wider European audiences. There was a risk that the programme would appear more relevant to a smaller regional audience. The lack of core high visibility projects was a weakness; the proposed Klimt exhibition could be enhanced to draw attention in the way the Van Gogh exhibition did successfully for Mons in 2015.

The panel welcomed the intention in the bidbook to work closely with many European cultural networks. The intention is to host 8-10 network conferences as well as use the networks for partnership searches, experience and advice. It would expect a clearer and more concrete report at the first monitoring meeting of the details of this use of networks.

The panel noted the pivotal role of the programme director especially in driving the European Dimension as well as in management of the programme.

Artistic programme

The programme is well laid out. It is easy to understand (essential for marketing and the public's understanding of the ECOC) and tackles issues which are relevant not just to Rijeka but to Europe and the wider world.

The panel appreciated the four phases of the project starting after designation with a clear focus on project development and capacity building in the ramp years.

The panel appreciated the "27 neighbourhoods" project as engaging with communities, especially those in Istria, with communities in the other 27 Member States. The panel was concerned that the communities may not have the managerial capacity but was reassured that this was part of the capacity building programme.

The panel noted that the bid intends to tackle one of the "blocked memory" issues from Rijeka's past. This is ambitious and potentially controversial. It needs to be handled sensitively. The panel considered the various projects need to be seen in a wider context than that of the former Yugoslavia and focus on the value of reconciliation. This could widen to historic Italian issues as well (in the manner of Wroclaw2016).

The panel welcomed the plans to slowly change and modernise the image of Karneval. This is an area where considerable sustainable partnerships across Europe can be made.

The panel would expect a stronger inclusion of projects and programmes aimed at the creative and cultural industries, especially give the comments about high unemployment and the need for the city to move beyond its industrial past. This would fit in the Dopolavoro flagship dealing with work.

Capacity

The mayor confirmed in the presentation that the bid, including the city's financial contribution, has the unanimous support of the city council. The panel noted the statement in the bidbook that the local elections in 2017 will not compromise the ECOC project. The county has also approved its financial contribution.

The bidbook acknowledged that the city has a limited capacity to manage a demanding project such as an ECOC. The panel appreciated this honesty and welcomed the formation of the Rijeka Resource. This agency, initially inside the ECOC's own agency is

intended to continue beyond 2020 as a key element of the legacy. The analysis of target groups and capacities to be built was generally good. The panel noted there was little on entrepreneurial development both for the cultural organisations and for the creative industries. The panel felt this weakness needs to be further developed. The panel appreciated the plan to second staff from the city administration into Rijeka Resource (an action being pioneered in Aarhus2017) as training and assisting the sustainability of the legacy.

The panel appreciated the clear involvement and collaboration between the cultural institutions, NGOs, the tourism sector and the university. This degree of partnership is essential for a successful ECOC.

The ECOC programme includes projects in renovated buildings and on the Galeb yacht. The panel noted the risk of these not being finished in time but that alternative options are available. In Opatija the new Cultural and Tourist Centre is important for one of the flagship projects. It is under construction and due to be completed in 2016.

Outreach

The panel noted the outline plans for audience development. They are audience-centric. Inclusion and participation are present as a *fil rouge* throughout the project. Audiences are seen as co-curators with an emphasis on citizenship rather than developing artists, in line with the overall mission. The strategy is clear. The panel would expect more detailed plans in due course.

The formation of the Benčić Youth Council and its proposed engagement with project selection is welcomed.

The bidbook acknowledges the weakness of engaging with the elderly and states that more needs to be done. The panel reinforces this (and would include other groupings) especially given the strong statement of the core value of the city strategy.

Management

The proposed budget for operational activities is €30.327m. The main allocations are €22,227m for programmes, €4m for marketing and €3.6m for salaries and overheads. The city intends to provide €10,327m, the region €3m. The aim is for an additional €3m from various EU programmes and €1m from private sources. In common with the other three candidates the bid assumes €10m from the national government. The panel noted that the city had increased its contribution from the pre-selection bid as recommended by the panel. This has enabled the programme allocation to be acceptable. The monitoring panel will expect a more detailed analysis of the project funding (as distinct from the cluster distribution).

The marketing budget is contained as the regional tourist boards will include promotion of the ECOC from their own budgets. The private sector forecast is prudent at this stage. The panel notes the intention to devise a detailed fund-raising strategy but would expect a national focus as well as the regional elements referred to in the bid-book. The proposed budget has an adequate allocation for evaluation and legacy transition after the ECOC year. The city plans to increase its annual cultural budget to €13m, 12% of the city budget, after the ECOC year. A sustainable approach is seen throughout the programme and finances.

The investment programme looks more realistic than at pre-selection. The monitoring panel would need updates especially on the Rikard Benčić Complex.

The ECOC will be managed by an independent agency which will start work, if Rijeka is designated, in July 2016. The proposed staffing build-up to 45 FTEs is reasonable at this stage.

Summary

The panel felt this was a strong bid. The programme emerges from a shared vision for the city administration, the cultural institutions and the independent sector.

It has particular strengths in its European Dimension intentions, with its interactions with cultural networks and in addressing European themes. The capacity training programme is strong and will provide a sustainable legacy in improved cultural management. The proposed artistic programme has several strengths. The weaknesses, mentioned above, include its outreach with a much broader range of citizens and the downplaying of the creative industries. The panel appreciated the plan to run a significant number of projects between from building to 2020. This will not only create momentum but be more likely to result in a sustainable longer term legacy in line with the cultural strategy.

The Panel's Decision

The panel was presented with four different bids from four different cities facing their own challenges and each with its own interpretations of the criteria. All of the bids had many strong points as well as weaknesses. The panel was looking, according to the Decision, at the programme specifically designed for the ECOC year. The strength of four candidates presented the panel with a challenging task. The panel hopes that all cities seek to implement their cultural strategies and as much of their bids as possible.

After the presentations the panel debated the merits of each city against the criteria and then in the final discussion the applications were weighed up against each other.

Each panel member weighed their own interpretation of the criteria against the four bids with their bidbooks, presentations and answers, augmented by the feedback from the visits.

The panel did not reach unanimity on a single candidate. The Rules of the competition therefore required a secret ballot. Each panel member had one vote. All four candidates were on the ballot paper. The rules stated that a candidate needed a simple majority to be selected. In the event of no candidate achieving a majority on that first ballot then a subsequent ballot would take place.

In the first ballot eight members, a majority, voted for one candidate.

Accordingly the panel recommends that the ministry designates, as a European Capital of Culture in 2020, the city of

Rijeka Designation

This report has been sent to the ministry and the European Commission. Both will publish it on their websites. In accordance with article 11 the ministry will designate Rijeka to hold the title of ECOC in Croatia in 2020 based on this report. It will then inform the European Parliament, Council, Commission and Committee of the Regions. This formal designation enables Rijeka to use the title “European Capital of Culture 2020”.

The panel recommends that the ministry take the opportunity of designation to indicate to Rijeka the likely financial contribution it will make to the ECOC. An early decision will enable advance planning and commitments to be made.

Melina Mercouri Prize

The panel recommends that the European Commission awards the Melina Mercouri Prize to the designated city. The payment of the €1.5m prize is deferred until 2020. It is conditional.

The conditions are (article 14 of the Decision):

- The ECOC honours its commitments made in the application;
- It complies with the criteria;
- It takes into account the recommendations of this selection panel report and the reports of the monitoring panel;
- There has been no substantial change to the programme and strategy set out in the bidbook; this includes plans for the legacies after the ECOC year:
 - The budget has been maintained at a level capable of delivering a high level programme and at a level consistent with the bidbook;
 - The independence of the artistic team has been respected;
 - The European Dimension has remained sufficiently strong in the final programme;
 - Marketing and communications have clearly shown it is a European Union action;
 - Plans for monitoring and evaluation are in place.

In late 2019 the monitoring panel will make a further recommendation to the European Commission on whether to make the payment based on these conditions.

Reputation of an ECOC

A city awarded the ECOC title receives considerable international attention from the selection recommendation and extending well beyond the ECOC year. It has a responsibility to uphold the reputation of the ECOC brand for the benefit of previous and future title holders. City administrations should be aware that decisions taken (and not just in the cultural sector) may attract formal national and international media and social media attention far beyond they are used to handling. This adds a special and new aspect to decision taking in the city over the full range of issues.

The monitoring phase

Once an ECOC has been designated it enters the “Monitoring Phase” (article 13 of the Decision). The monitoring panel will work with the ECOC to ensure the quality of the ECOC brand and to offer advice and experience.

The bidbook at final selection becomes the *de facto* contract between the designated city and the other candidates, the monitoring panel, the ministry and the European Commission as well to its citizens. It has an important role in the payment of the Melina Mercouri Prize. The monitoring panel will expect a close alignment with the bidbook during the preparation phase and during the ECOC year. Significant variations from the bidbook should be discussed with the panel, through the Commission, in advance of decisions being made.

There are three formal monitoring checkpoints (spring 2017, mid 2018 and autumn 2019) when the ECOC will meet with the panel in Brussels. Prior to each meeting the European Commission, on behalf of the monitoring panel, will invite the ECOC to provide a progress report. The Commission, after consultation with the panel, will issue areas which specifically need to be addressed in the reports.

In addition the panel may decide to visit the city to observe progress.

The panel's reports of all three meetings will be published on the Commission's website. The ECOC may decide to publish its own progress reports. The panel recommends publication in the interests of transparency.

The panel's recommendations

The monitoring panel will expect the first progress report in spring 2017 to take into account the recommendation and comments in the assessment of the bid as well as the recommendations below. The bidbook sets out several actions to be taken in 2016 and 2017. These timetables should be met.

The panel expects Rijeka to develop co-operation with the other three cities. This will be Croatia's first European Capital of Culture. It provides a national opportunity which will reflect internationally not only on Rijeka but on the country as a whole.

The panel recommends that discussions start in 2016 on the contribution the national government will make to the ECOC. This should cover not only the financial contribution but also the role other national organisations may take to support the ECOC (eg Croatian Embassies, the national tourist organisation, other ministries etc).

Experience has shown that successful ECOCs use the first year after selection to establish all **the governance, management, legal and administration structures and systems**. This essential role needs to run concurrently with the first stage of the project in 2016-17.

The panel would expect (page references are to the bidbook):

- The agency to be established (page 91) and fully operational with its Council and Supervision Committee (page 93)
- The relationship between the Council, the Supervision Committee and the staff of the agency to be clearly delineated and made public.
- Council members to understand their role as strategic and not executive. As well as holding the agency staff accountable, Council members have roles of facilitators and ambassadors. The expectation is that politicians and political appointees will be in the minority of the Council (and possibly not in the position of chair). Council members have a special responsibility to focus on the legacy objectives.

- The Chief Executive Officer is in place before 1 July 2016 after an international open recruitment process (page 93).
- The senior staff of the Agency (in addition to the already appointed Artistic Director) are recruited through open competitions and contracted to be in place by summer 2016. This includes the Programme Director, Communications, Development and Administration/Finance managers and the Evaluation Co-ordinator. Consideration should be made of appointing a senior staff member, and Council member, as lead fund-raiser as in Pula's bid.
- The CEO issues, with the approval of the Council, financial regulations for the agency.
 - An external organisation is appointed to undertake annual audits and to approve the Annual Accounts of the Agency.
 - Arrangements are made for the publication of the Annual Accounts and the Annual Report to ensure transparency and public accountability.
- Internal management and administrative processes are in place. These will include human resources, legal (e.g. project contract arrangements), data privacy, intellectual property rights, the criteria and systems for calls for projects, the marketing and branding strategy.
- The panel draws the ECOC's attention to the external evaluation of the 2014 ECOCs (on the European Commission's website) and in particular the importance of an early direct control of marketing and communication.
- To develop and implement an internal communications strategy. This covers communications within the agency, between the agency and the city administration, between the agency and the ministry of Culture and between the agency and the European Commission.
- To prepare a more detailed staffing plan up to 2021 including the use of volunteers.
- The Agency ensures that in all its marketing and (on and offline) and external communications there is recognition that the ECOC is a European Union programme.

Thanks

The panel wishes to place on record its thanks to the Minister, the staff of the ministry, ably supported by DG EAC of the European Commission, for their efficient management of the competition.

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