



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

Leeuwarden- Fryslân 2018
European Capital of Culture 2018

Second Monitoring Meeting

Report by the Monitoring and Advisory Panel

Brussels

March 2017

Introduction

This report follows the meeting in Brussels on 7 March 2017 between Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018, one of the two European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) in 2018, and the monitoring and advisory panel (the “panel”)¹. It is the second formal monitoring meeting since the selection meeting in September 2013² and the formal designation of Leeuwarden as an ECOC in May 2014. The panel met Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 for an informal post-designation meeting in November 2014³ and for the first monitoring meeting in September 2015⁴.

The report is addressed to the Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 Foundation (LF2018) and will be published on the European Commission's website.⁵

Attendance

The panel members:

Sylvia Amann and Cristina Farinha, appointed by the European Parliament 2015-17

Jiří Suchánek, appointed by the Council of the EU 2016-18

Ulrich Fuchs (Chair) and Dr Suzana Žilič Fišer (absent), appointed by the European Commission 2017-2019

Dr Elisabeth Vitouch, nominated by the Committee of the Regions 2016-2018

For Lwd2018:

John Bonnema	Business Director
Jelle Burggraaff	Head of European Affairs
Oeds Westerhof	Network and Legacy Director
Marije Jansen	Head of Marketing and Communication
Antsje van der Zee	Programme coördinator
Lieven Bertels	CEO a.i. / Cultural Director

¹ The European Capitals of Culture action is governed by Decision 1662/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council for the titles 2007 to 2019, which provides for two formal monitoring meetings between designated cities and the panel. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006D1622>

² Report at: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/tools/actions/documents/ecoc/2018/panel-report-netherlands_en.pdf

³ The post-designation report is not official and therefore is not made public.

⁴ Report at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/files/ecoc-2018-leeuwarden-monitoring_en.pdf

⁵ See: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm

Also in attendance were observers from the European Commission (DG EAC) and the Ministry of Culture of the Netherlands.

Report from LF2018 and presentation

The LF2018 Foundation submitted a comprehensive written report in advance of the meeting. The report outlined the activities of LF2018 since the first monitoring meeting in September 2015.

At the meeting LF2018 made a presentation which included these points:

- Lieven Bertels made a short presentation of the highlights of the project report. The Foundation currently counts with a staff of approximately 35 people. The marketing plans are in place and so are the monitoring plans, including cultural benchmarking and legacy benchmarking. As a new element, the project now includes the development of a programme for professionals, including several international meetings in Leeuwarden in 2018 such as the ISPA conference, the World Trade Centre General Assembly, the EBU regional TV sub-network, as well as an international conference on religious heritage as part of the 2018 - European Year of Cultural Heritage. The 2018 programme has already started with a first exhibition (on Alma Tadema) which attracted a record number of visitors and was covered by relevant international magazines in the field.
- John Bonnema explained the current budgetary situation. 91 per cent of the total budget is already in the Foundation's hands. In 2016 a mid-term review of the programme budget was done, including costs and revenues, to verify the matching between the budget and the draft programme. The budget allocation to the different bid-book projects was done in cooperation with the City Council and the region, with a public consultation afterwards to ensure transparency. Some projects were downsized or cancelled, or merged with other projects, with the corresponding transfer of funds. Also, the regional funding has been downsized, as the regional contribution was devoted mainly to local projects linked to the ECoC but not to the bid-book projects.
- The sponsorship is on a high level (expected 18 million euros, 25% of the total budget). The strategy has been inspired from the Mons and Aarhus experiences. The SME Club for sponsorship is expected to raise 1 million euros. Main sponsors are ING and the LOF. The requests for EU financing have been less successful and have led to positive results mainly for small projects, while large scale events are not really suitable for this type of funding.
- On the programme side, Antsje van der Zee explained that almost all the projects in the original bid-book remained in the final programme, some of them adjusted. The programme has furthermore been enriched with the open programme that includes

proposals from very different backgrounds with some big and high quality projects and some more community-based and lower profile projects. These projects can apply for subsidy and are offered the option to participate in a capacity building programme.

- The programme includes three thematic domains and three story lines representing the transition from Mienskip into Iepen Mienskip, in line with the original bid-book: "Dare to Dream", including the highlights of the programme and the main children's projects; "Dare to Act", about the transformation to a more sustainable planet, with the overarching theme of biodiversity, protection of the environment and artistic interventions linked to nature and the environment; "Dare to be different", about cultural diversity, the power of local community and how communities can embrace the world and other cultures and welcome the others through arts.
- Currently the focus is on completing the programme and setting the dates for next year, with the idea that every citizen and every visitor can choose from multiple events every week.
- Jelle Burggraaff spoke about the European Dimension of the ECoC. Following the example of Umea, the Foundation takes a coordination role for the overall organisation of LF 2018 but will not be responsible for the delivery of all individual projects.
- The team continues to visit the other ECOCs for an exchange of best practises, also meeting with political stakeholders. As an example, a visit is planned in the coming weeks to Liverpool to explore about legacy.
- Three levels of involvement at European level can be highlighted: huge improvement in the involvement of European artists who take part in projects such as the flagship "Eleven Fountains" or "Lan fan Taal" that includes two Creative Europe cooperation projects ("Tosta" and "Other Words"); strengthening of the aim to connect communities around Europe with projects like "Under the Tower"; and finally the collaboration with Valletta 2018 in several projects, such as "Opera Spanga", that will perform the Aida opera with students in Leeuwarden and Valletta or In Transit, a travelling exhibition with Maltese artists.
- The Foundation has also worked on the visibility of LF2018. An ambassadors' programme has been put in place that gives tools to other organisations to promote the ECoC abroad. The ECOc has been presented in international conferences, during the EU presidency of the Netherlands, the European Cultural Forum and the Open Days in Brussels. LF2018 has also participated in several travel trade fairs, and will be in ITB Berlin in March. Collaboration with the European Broadcasting Union is also being developed.

- On monitoring and evaluation, details were given about the two lines of research followed: the monitoring of the operational objectives with measurement of the indicators in the bid-book, and in depth research and evaluation on effectiveness on actions set in place to achieve the indicators. Monthly meetings are held with the theme producers to monitor the European Dimension, which will be also secured in the contracts signed with the many project managers.
- The Foundation has also brought forward the European Dimension in its projects with refugees. For example, for the project "The Journey", a pilot project was run ending with a festival co-organised by locals and asylum seekers in a centre in a small village nearby. This festival allowed the participants to know more about each other and establish contact and communication among them. A project at European level (INTERREG A) is currently under development to bring together and exchange best practices on cultural projects with refugees.
- Marije Jansen, Head of Marketing and Communication, explained the current communication strategy of LF2018. It focuses on six target groups, from inhabitants of Leeuwarden and Fryslân to international tourists.
- At this moment, several campaigns are on-going. Now it is the season for the travel operators developing their packages for next year and these are being addressed as mentioned in the introduction. A hospitality programme for tourism enterprises has been developed. In May 2017, a campaign for overnight tourists will be implemented. The final programme of Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 will be presented during a press conference in early October.
- The LF2018 programme comprises four seasons with a blockbuster opening each season: i.e. first the opening in January, then the Escher Exhibition in April , Giant Steps in August opening the fall season while the last highlight will focus on what comes after 2018.
- Partnerships for marketing and communication have been agreed. Among the sponsors there are media companies. Also the educational partners contribute to the communication of the year.
- Finally, on legacy, Oeds Westerhof explained that Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 was working with several networks in search of support. The focus is on connecting with organisations professionally working in the different sectors., Part of the legacy goals belong more to the City and Province/ Regional Government than to the foundation as they are in search of exploring new ways for the society with a time horizon exceeding 2018. . For the Key Performance Indicators of the foundation, specific action plans are developed, to meet the goals. An annual monitoring is in place from 2014, and the KPI will be updated for the period 2019 to 2030.

- The updated goals will be established along the lines of global goals for sustainable development, the 17 UN goals that have similar intentions as the KPI's in the bid-book. The organisation has looked at other ECoCs, but it needs a different framework since it has a broader scope than culture and tourism.

Discussion

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

- The panel welcomed, as done in the past, the Iepen Mienskip concept of the ECoC but wonders how it could be explained to a wider audience, in particular international, as it seems to be a local concept with different understanding even within the region. Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 agreed that it was a concept specific to the region, and a dramaturge had been already contracted to translate the concept into other cultures and other languages.
- On the communication at international level, Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 explained that the messages to be used would be simple, and that Valletta was used as a test-bed for the communication of the concept.
- The panel inquired about the management of new projects that might come up during the year and that were not currently included in the programme, and whether there was a budget reserved for these. Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 explained that the open programme would still be in operation in 2018 and 70% of the total budget of this funding stream was still available for allocation at the time of the monitoring meeting.
- The panel requested more details on how the opening ceremony would reflect the Iepen Mienskip concept. Leeuwarden acknowledged that the ceremony was still being developed and took note of the comment of the members of the panel about the risks connected with it.
- The panel also asked about the mitigating measures for the risk of not reaching the foreseen sponsoring budget or other funds. Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 is trying to ensure support and funding for some of big and costly projects, for which a decision will have to be taken in April. If the budget is not sufficient, some projects may be cancelled, downscaled or produced in-house. But most of the budget is already secured, only 9% remaining to be secured.. The Foundation acknowledged that some of the costs had been underestimated in the bid-book given the ambitions as laid down in the indicators in the bidbook, such as marketing, and these had been covered by the city and Province. Also some of the projects have been delivered to other entities for implementation. As the artistic element of an project has been delivered by the Foundation, it is now to be considered more as an infrastructure project, which other

partners such as various cities concerned should take over. In this respect, Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 pointed out that ERDF funds could not be used for this project for timing reasons, as such an application can be made only once the necessary permits have been obtained.

- The panel asked about the communication towards the general public and why people should come to Leeuwarden-Fryslân in 2018. LF2018 insisted on the uniqueness of the sense of community represented by the Iepen Mienskip concept, which is a very topical issue in today's Europe. Further to this, the flagship exhibitions (such as the one on Escher and Mata Hari) will be very instrumental to kindle the interest of the international press. More targeted messages linked with connected projects of the title-year will also be used towards specific groups, like bird lovers. Embassies are being used for communication on the international scene and there is an on-going collaboration with the National Tourism Board, Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 being the main communication item of Board campaign in 2018.
- The panel also asked about digital communication, in particular about the communication in the social media in foreign languages, in particular English. LF2018 explained that their main focus was now on the Friesland region, but understood the advantages of using these channels for communication towards the international public at a later stage.
- On legacy, the panel mentioned that the goals set in the bid-book relating to sustainable development might be too abstract and wondered how this would link to the people. LF2018 explained that these goals were more a political direction and that through various projects citizens and cultural operators were encouraged to provide solutions to everyday problems that would ultimately contribute to these overarching goals. The example of a fish migration river was used to illustrate how small projects can have a long term global impact. This is helped by the innovation policies of the city and the region. A strong element for the involvement of the citizens is that these themes are brought back to the citizens on regular debates.

The Panel's assessment and recommendations

The panel praises the preparation work carried out by Leeuwarden- Fryslân 2018 Foundation in the last four years and the effort made by the Foundation staff as well as the policy makers to bring the project forward. The panel concludes that the project is on the right track and that the programme developed by Leeuwarden- Fryslân 2018 has in particular a strong European Dimension and a high degree of involvement of citizens, looking at issues of global and European reach closely linked to today's challenges.

However, the panel would like to make the following recommendations to Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018:

- Enhance the marketing and (digital) communication efforts in particular towards the international public to attract international attendance to Leeuwarden-Fryslân in 2018. In this respect, reflect on the relevance to have multilingual or different Facebook pages par languages.
- As a way to increase the international visibility of Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018, there is a need to strengthen the ongoing cooperation with national authorities as well as national cultural institutions.
- Simplify the overall message of Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 in a few sentences that can be broadly understood by various communities and stakeholders.
- Discuss the various legacy options with the relevant stakeholders, from institutions to civil society at regional and local levels, which are responsible and concerned of developing a sustainable legacy strategy. In this respect, it may prove extremely useful to set up a task force to open up a discussion with diverse multisectorial relevant stakeholders.
- The implementation of some projects, after the artistic element has been delivered by the artist and Foundation, should be seen as sustainable infrastructure projects with an important legacy dimension for the whole region and funded accordingly by the relevant public authorities and/or other partners/organizations.
- Keep the budget balanced and agree on a short term (April) on the programme within the available budgets and cancel or downscale events if necessary.

In view of the compliance with the criteria of strong European Dimension and City and the Citizens involvement, and the take up of most of the recommendations of the panel during the preparation phase, the panel recommends the Commission to award the Melina Mercouri prize to Leeuwarden- Fryslân 2018.

The panel thanks the Leeuwarden- Fryslân 2018 delegation for their report and the open discussion and wishes the city and the region all success for 2018.