



Ex-post Evaluation of the 2017 European Capitals of Culture

Synopsis

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1 Methodology used

The consultation activities described in this synopsis report were conducted in the context of the evaluation of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2017. The consultations sought to collate information and stakeholders' views on the evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, coherence and EU added value). The relevant stakeholders were mapped at the early stage of the evaluation and are described below.

1.1 Overview of consultation methods and consultees

The stakeholder consultation methods used consisted of in-depth interviews and an open public consultation (OPC). Evidence from the consultations was triangulated evidence from other sources, including documentation and data linked to the ECoC, as well as data from other sources, such as tourist bodies and national statistics. The table below provides an overview of the types of stakeholders concluded via each method.

Type of consultation	Type of consultee	Timing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In-depth interviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National authorities ▪ Regional authorities ▪ Local authorities ▪ Foundations ▪ NGOs ▪ Companies (including SMEs) ▪ Cultural bodies & institutions ▪ Tourism bodies & agencies ▪ Media ▪ Academic experts ▪ Other 	Q4/2017 – Q2/2018
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Open public consultation 	The online consultation was open to any interested party or individual over a period of 12 weeks, available in English.	Q1/2018 - Q2/2018

1.2 In-depth interviews

Two main types of in-depth interviews were undertaken:

- Interviews with managing teams: those responsible for the day-to-day design and delivery of the ECoC were interviewed in each city during city visits in late 2016 (i.e. during the host year) and in Spring 2017. Almost all of the key individuals within the delivery agencies were interviewed including those linked to strategic development, marketing and communication, project implementation and financial management.
- Interviews with key stakeholders: mainly face-to-face interviews were undertaken with stakeholders both directly and indirectly involved in either the planning or

delivery of the ECoC along with those more widely linked to the cultural, social, economic or political agenda of the host cities. Stakeholders included those working in cultural organisations, city/regional/national administrations, tourism and visitor agencies, media organisations as well as voluntary and community organisations. Managers of individual projects and activities supported through the ECoC Action that made up the cultural programme of each city were also interviewed.

The table below specifies the number of each type of interview.

Type of in-depth interview	Number of each type	Timing
▪ Aarhus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECoC managing team: 12 ▪ Stakeholders: 18 	Q4/2017 – Q2/2018
▪ Pafos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECoC managing team: 11 ▪ Stakeholders: 26 	Q1/2018 – Q2/2018

1.3 Open Public Consultation

The OPC was launched on 11 March 2018 and closed on 21 July 2018. It was open to all people and organisations. However, some questions ideally required the respondent to have visited the ECoC city in order to give a response. The OPC received a total of 76 responses from across Europe. A number of respondents attended both ECoC.

The public consultation gathered a large number of responses from individuals, responding in their own personal capacity 84% (N=64), whilst 16% (N=12) responded in their professional capacity on behalf of an organisation.

The largest group of respondents were local residents living in Pafos, 36% (N=23), whilst less than half of this number, 16% (N=10), were local residents living in Aarhus. A relatively high number were citizens responding from elsewhere in Cyprus: 22% (N=14), in comparison to those responding from elsewhere in Denmark: 2% (N=1). People outside of Denmark and Cyprus constituted 25% (N=16) of those who responded.

Among the respondents who replied in their professional capacity, the largest number of respondents (N=4) represented their local/regional or national government in Denmark, whilst no one from Cyprus responded in this capacity. Representatives from a national organisation in Cyprus and a local organisation in Pafos were both the second most common type of respondent (N=2 for both).

A large number of respondents (N=32) had heard of the ECoC Action, as well as Pafos 2017 and Aarhus 2017. Some 15% (N=11) had only heard of the ECoC Action.

Most respondents (N=38) attended a cultural activity in Pafos during the 2017 ECoC, whilst 22% (N=17) attended an event in Aarhus. A number of respondents attended an activity both in Pafos and in Aarhus (N=11), whilst only 13% (N=10) of respondents had not attended a cultural event in either city. The majority of respondents (N=38) attended

more than 12 activities during 2017, whilst only 17% (N=11) only attended 1-3 activities.

2 Main topics and viewpoints emerging

2.1 Relevance

Neither the OPC nor the in-depth interviews directly requested consultees to provide an opinion on questions of relevance.

2.2 Effectiveness

Both the OPC and the in-depth interviews gathered views on the effectiveness of the ECoC against the four specific objectives (SO) of the ECoC Action.

2.2.1 Aarhus

The results of both types of consultation activity were broadly similar regarding the effectiveness of Aarhus ECoC, although the in-depth interviewees tended to be slightly more positive than the respondents to the OPC.

SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation

In Aarhus, the interviewees generally agreed that the ECoC cultural programme was of high quality and that it was of greater scale and had more of a European dimension compared to the city's baseline offering in previous years. This finding was supported by the OPC respondents. Some 73% felt that the quality of the cultural programme was very strong or strong and only 3% felt it was weak or very weak. Some 66% reported that the number and distribution of cultural projects was strong or very strong, whilst only 3% felt it was weak. Some 64% stated that the type and scope of cultural projects was strong or very strong in Aarhus and only 6% reported it was weak or very weak.

There was a consensus amongst the in-depth interviewees that the cultural offer of the city and the region would be better in future years as a result the ECoC. This was supported by a majority of respondents to the OPC; some 52% reported that the ECoC had a high or very high impact on Aarhus in terms of increasing the range and diversity of the cultural offered by the city. Only 3% of OPC respondents stated that there was no impact.

SO2: Widen access to and participation in culture

In Aarhus, the consultees agreed that the ECoC involved more citizens (including children) as creators, performers and audiences. They tended to report that the ECoC had expanded existing audiences and created new ones. This finding was supported by the OPC respondents in terms of their own attendance at cultural events, with 68% reporting that the ECoC encouraged them to attend more cultural events in 2017. A

similar proportion of OPC respondents 65% also reported that the ECoC encouraged them to attend a wider type or genre of culture in 2017 than in previous years.

However, the OPC respondents were slightly less positive about the effectiveness of the Aarhus ECoC in increasing access to culture for people in general. Some 45% reported that the ECoC had a high or very high impact on the number of people accessing culture, whilst another 26% reported a moderate impact. Similarly, 36% believed the ECoC had a high or very high impact on introducing more people in the city to culture who do not normally access it, with another 32% reporting a moderate impact.

SO3: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sector and its links with other sectors

There was a consensus amongst consultees that the ECoC helped strengthen the cultural capacity of the local cultural and creative sectors and their links with other sectors. This was broadly supported by the OPC respondents: 55% reported that the ECoC had a high or very high impact in terms of strengthening the city's capacity in the cultural sector, whilst another 19% reported a moderate impact. Similarly, 63% of OPC respondents reported that the ECoC had a high impact on helping local cultural operators to co-operate with European partners and only 3% felt it had no impact.

SO4: Raise the international profile of cities through culture

In Aarhus, consultees also reported that the ECoC raised the international profile of the city through culture. They tended to highlight the increase in international tourist visits, the attention given by the international media and the response from social media users.

This finding was supported by the majority of respondents to the OPC consultation. In total, 80% of respondents believed that the ECoC had a moderate to a very high impact on the number of international visitors (of which 29% reported a very high impact). Similarly, 71% of respondents saw the ECoC as having a moderate to very high impact on increasing the number of Danish visitors to the city. Only 6% believed that the ECoC did not increase the number of visitors.

The OPC provided a slightly contradictory finding on the question of whether the ECoC had encouraged them to visit Aarhus more often in 2017: only 48% reported that it had. However, this finding is perhaps not reliable as includes local residents as well as residents of other parts of Denmark and of other countries.

2.2.2 Pafos

The results of Pafos were similar across the different consultation methods although the results of the OPC were more positive.

SO1: Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation

Stakeholders in Pafos general felt that their ECoC increased the range and diversity of the cultural offer mainly because the cultural offer in the city was comparatively limited prior to the ECoC year. Stakeholders felt that the quality of the offer was particularly limited as there were very few high profile artists, venues or other infrastructure in place pre- 2017. Through additional funding, larger audiences and the introduction of new producers and artists (often from Nicosia and elsewhere in Cyprus) the artistic quality increased during the ECoC year. The OPC survey backed this up by saying that 58.9% of ECoC participants felt that cultural activity in the city had increased significantly as a consequence of the ECoC status. Further evidence from the open public consultation shows that 73% of respondents felt that the ECoC year had seen an increase in the number and distribution of the cultural projects. 84% of respondents to the same survey state that the ECoC had encouraged them to attend more and a wider type of culture in 2017 than before.

Both interviews and the OPC results generally supported the view that Pafos had a strong European dimension although the OPC results were generally more positive in this respect. Stakeholders highlighted a number of examples of projects that promoted a European dimension (e.g. the International Sculpture Symposium) and also highlighted ways in which the Foundation promoted the importance of projects having a European dimension. The OPC also gave further and very positive insight on people's opinions around the European Dimension. 52% of respondents stated that they felt the ECoC had either had a very high or high impact on promoting European cultures compared to 20% for Aarhus. In addition, 59% of respondents felt that the ECoC had helped promote local cultures from the host city compared to 37% in Aarhus.

S02: Widen access to and participation in culture

Stakeholders and the OPC were generally positive about the ECoC widening participation in culture although they showed little knowledge of the ECoC specifically targeting harder to reach groups who traditionally did not access culture. Some of the culture took place in the open air which helped to open up access to all of the communities as there was no ticketing nor many event taking place 'behind closed doors'.

Results from the public consultation show that the ECoC had a more positive effect on encouraging people to attend more cultural events in 2017. 80% of respondents said that the ECoC encouraged them to attend more culture (compared to 68% in Aarhus). In addition, 84% of respondents said that the ECoC encouraged them to attend a wider type or genre of cultural events in 2017 and 76% said that the ECoC encouraged them to visit the city more often. Finally, 59% of respondents to the open survey said that the ECoC in Pafos had increased the number of people accessing culture (by a 'very high' or 'high' impact).

S03: Strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sector and its links with other sectors

There was a consensus amongst all consultees that the capacity of the sector had benefitted greatly from the ECoC. Developing skills and capacity came out strongly as a

direct benefit of the ECoC. The ECoC open public consultation shows that 87% of respondents felt that ECoC had had some positive effect on building the cultural capacity of the sector in the city with 60% stating that the impact was either very high or high. Around three quarters of stakeholders' interviews revealed that, for most local artists and project coordinators, the ECoC was their first opportunity to get involved in projects at such a large scale, and to have such a large and international audience for their artistic products.

SO4: Raise the international profile of cities through culture

There was less agreement on the level to which the ECoC raised the international profile of Pafos. Stakeholders were generally in agreement with one another by saying that the focus of Pafos2017 was more about encouraging the local population and tourists already in the city to take part in the ECoC. They said that one of the key objectives of the "Open Air Factory" was to reconnect the local citizens with the cultural and historical heritage of Pafos, in particular in the old city centre. According to all stakeholders linked to the visitor economy interviewed as part of this evaluation, the wider purpose of attracting more visitors to the old city centre was to increase its potential as a 'cultural vector' for tourism, in addition to the more 'traditional beach tourism' which Pafos has always been known for. Therefore they felt that actual foreign visitor numbers had not increased due to the ECoC.

Despite the above, the open public consultation shows that a city having ECoC status does sometimes affect the likelihood of a person wanting to visit the city. The survey showed that 42% of respondents said that Pafos having ECoC status would mean they would be 'much more' likely to visit the city and a further 45% said that they would be 'slightly more' likely to visit the city. Only 13% said that having ECoC status would make no difference in their decision to visit Pafos. The public consultation also found that 58% of respondents thought that the ECoC had either a very high or high impact on increasing international visitors to the city. The respondents to the public consultation were generally from the local city or region of Pafos which suggests why their responses were generally positive in this respect. The results from the public consultation also show that a city having ECoC status can influence tourism numbers in a city as it becomes a contributing factor in their decision on which destination to choose.

2.3 Efficiency

The in-depth interviewees and the OPC respondents were asked to comment on various efficiency aspects of the ECoC. The in-depth interviewees were generally very knowledgeable about the implementation arrangements, given that they included the main stakeholders, including several that were independent of the bodies responsible for implementing the ECoC (e.g. media). It is not known how familiar the OPC respondents were regarding the implementation arrangements.

2.3.1 Aarhus

There was a consensus amongst the in-depth interviewees that the arrangements for governance and implementation proved efficient, drawing on the strong political support both in Aarhus and across the region and despite difficulties arising from the departure of senior staff during the development phase. This positive finding was supported by the OPC, with 57% of respondents for Aarhus stating that it performed strongly or very strongly. Only 15% responded negatively to this question. Similarly, the marketing information for Aarhus was well received with 57% of respondents stating that the information shared was strong or very strong, although 16% felt it was weak or very weak.

Representatives of the Aarhus ECoC reported that the EU-level selection and monitoring procedures and the informal meetings with the panel proved valuable in giving impartial advice and support to the ECoC from highly experienced experts. (OPC consultees were not asked to comment on this question).

2.3.2 Pafos

The interviewees and OPC respondents both felt that the Pafos ECoC was very efficient mainly because it delivered what they felt was a positive ECoC on a very small budget. They felt that the number of cultural activities, the quality of the cultural programme and the various benefits that were identified showed a very efficient ECoC when the size of the limited budget was considered. High levels of efficiency included activities being delivered outside (meaning now venue costs), the use of volunteers and also having limited high profile artists all added up to an efficiently run ECoC.

2.4 Sustainability

2.4.1 Aarhus

In Aarhus, consultees supported the view that the ECoC had generated potential for long-term impact through the skills and experience gained by cultural operators, involvement of citizens, increased audiences and greater international profile. It was also felt that the continuation of key projects offers the potential for long-term impact. The OPC respondents were also positive on this point, with 57% reporting that efforts to make the benefits and activities sustainable were strong or very strong and only 6% reporting them as weak or very weak. However, 20% did not know.

Some in-depth interviewees felt that the lack of a specific legacy body and an overall continuation strategy risks a loss of momentum. However, there was a consensus that the proposal for continued regional collaboration in the field of culture looks promising. (OPC respondents were not asked to comment on these questions).

2.4.2 Pafos

This issue is where the largest disagreement took place between the OPC and stakeholders, with the OPC being much more positive about sustainability. In general, around 40% of OPC respondents were positive about legacy arrangements whereas very few stakeholders (less than 10%) were generally positive about ECoC sustainability. The

stakeholders pointed to a range of evidence including no sustainability plan, no contracts of ECoC staff running into 2018 and no planned projects in following years as the reasons why sustainability was poor. It is not known why respondents to the OPC were much more positive about this issue.

2.5 Coherence

Neither the OPC nor the in-depth interviews directly requested consultees to provide an opinion on questions of coherence.

2.6 EU added value

The OPC included some specific questions on the impact of the ECoC regarding awareness of other European cultures, European sentiment and the Commission's oversight of the ECoC Action. The in-depth interviews did not require the consultees to comment on these issues meaning this sub-section is focussed on the OPC only.

Across all OPC respondents, 41% felt that the ECoC had a high or very impact on helping local people to be more aware of other European cultures outside their country, whilst another 37% felt it had a moderate impact. Fewer than 3% felt it had no impact. More respondents in Pafos (52%) than in Aarhus (20%) felt this impact was high or very high.

The majority (51%) of OPC respondents perceived the ECoC to have had high or very impact on helping promote local cultures to European visitors, whilst nearly a third (31%) reported a moderate impact. Only 1% reported no impact. Again, more respondents in Pafos (59%) than in Aarhus (37%) felt this impact was high or very high.

Only a minority of respondents (43%) felt that the ECoC had a high or very impact on helping local people feel more European, although another 30% reported a moderate impact. Only 7% reported no impact. Once again, more respondents in Pafos (49%) than in Aarhus (31%) felt this impact was high or very high.

Across the OPC, 93% of respondents were aware that the ECoC is an EU action overseen by the European Commission. This is perhaps unsurprising, as the OPC was hosted on the European Commission's survey tool.¹ Some 86% of OPC respondents also believed that there is a benefit for the European Commission overseeing the ECoC action, whilst only 8% did not see such a benefit. The in-depth interviewees were not specifically asked to comment on this question, though none reported any particular dissatisfaction regarding the Commission's oversight of the ECoC Action.

3 Use of the results of the consultations

The evidence from the OPC and in-depth interviews has been fully taken into account in the preparation of the final report. The in-depth interviews have helped provide the narrative for each ECoC by describing the activities that took place. The in-depth interviews have also provided evidence against the evaluation questions. This evidence

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/>

has been triangulated against evidence from other sources, including the OPC, documentation and data linked to the ECoC and data from other sources, such as tourist bodies and national statistics.

The OPC has provided some useful quantitative data regarding the opinions of individuals and organisations on a range of questions. This data has helped confirm some of the findings supported by evidence from other sources. However, the results of the OPC have had relatively limited usefulness, as first, the consultation was self-selective, and, second, only 76 responses were received. For this reason, the OPC results of the survey have mostly been used as supportive and sometimes contextual and have only been used in conjunction with other sources of evidence.

