

Wolfgang Schneider, Kristina Jacobsen (eds.)

# TRANSFORMING CITIES

Paradigms and Potentials of Urban Development  
Within the „European Capital of Culture“

Transforming Cities

edited by

Wolfgang Schneider and Kristina Jacobsen

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# Foreword

Wolfgang Schneider and Kristina Jacobsen

All of those who talk about the initiative “European Capital of Culture” rave about a comprehensive, profitable transformation that stimulates positive effects—be it during the application phase for the coveted title itself, or after the presentation of the award, of a city that is allowed to design the label for one year. The European Capital of Culture (hereinafter referred to as ECoC) has meanwhile become an engine for culturally influenced urban development. This is shown by the instrument’s success story of EU cultural promotion, which began in 1985. While the initiative originally had more of a festival character, a programme of practice has emerged over the years. One in which the participating cities have succeeded in repositioning themselves with their individual challenges through a cultural-political and interdisciplinary strategy. In fact, the ECoC initiative even exceeds the expectations of the European Commission, which recognises that the initiative has evolved further than was previously thought possible, even without its involvement.

In recent years, more and more publications have been published on the transformational potential of cultural policy. The reflections are based on an understanding of a transformation that brings about comprehensive changes and new alignments of structures. Generally speaking, most cities have faced various and far-reaching challenges in recent years that require a transformational cultural policy. These include general societal changes such as digitisation, globalisation and demographic change, as well as the diversity and pluralisation of society (which is partly connected with it). With regard to culture, we are dealing with a changed communication and participation behaviour of culture recipients on the one hand, and new, often invisible cultural key players on the other. In this way, parallel offers with similar content are created, sometimes even to an oversupply. This is also due to a lack of network structures in the cultural sector, i.e. due to deficient governance structures. The term “governance”, used in the ECoC context (Cultural Governance, Regional Governance, Urban Governance or Multilevel Governance), refers to the cooperation between the various players from civil society, the public sector and the private sector—not only in the execution of the Capital of Culture, but throughout the entire process, from initial planning to final evaluation. The far-reaching transformation of a city would never have a chance if it were to be attempted only by cultural institutions alone.

Since the ECoC initiative became so ambitious in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many cities have been embarking on a year-long application process to receive the title. A large number of the respective municipal fields of action (culture, economy, social affairs, education, tourism, etc.) are approached with great ambition. Questions about the need for transformation are at the forefront here; they must be answered, when an application is prepared. With the exception of the city of Donostia-San Sebastián (ECoC 2016), whose entire Capital of Culture programme was focused on the theme of peace, the other cities opted primarily for the programme to initiate a general upswing that would reach far beyond that, which was previously intended to be improved with “cultural funding”.

Already in the preliminary considerations for the application for ECoC, the participating cities have to deal with the central questions of a controlled transformation process: What should be changed for what? Why is change necessary and who will shape it? These questions are inescapable, not only to legitimise the undertaking, vis-à-vis the relevant political decision-makers and citizens; they are also part of the questionnaire in the application. The examination of these questions touches on the self-image and identity of the participating cities in Europe. Thus, for the “European dimension” in a city—an important criterion in the application requirements for ECoCs—it is not enough to involve various European artists in the ECoC programme. Rather, references must be made to the history—current and future situations of the city—which do not stop at national borders.

Although the EU’s legal basis of the ECoC initiative applies equally to all participating cities, the design of the ECoC programme is not uniform because the diversity of its locations—geographical position, population, social structure, financial strength, etc.—make them very unique. This volume presents numerous examples of ECoCs from 18 countries inside and outside the EU. How are the different actors brought together within the ECoC? How can synergies between politics, administration, society, culture and economy be developed and maintained in order to achieve common goals? Finding concrete and sustainable answers to such fundamental questions of local, regional and ultimately European cultural policy is the starting point for a controlled transformation process in the participating cities of the ECoC initiative.

In the first chapter, various projects are presented, in which the initiative was scientifically observed through accompaniment (ECoC LAB, CECCUT, UNeECC and kulturhauptstadt.at). This is followed by general assessments from experts, who have been closely associated with the ECoC initiative for many years, some in the form of interviews. The third chapter deals with the “application process” and highlights the ambitions of different candidate

## FOREWORD

cities for the ECoC title. The analysis by Thomas Schmitt and Jonas Lendl is in this chapter because of its thematic focus; however, they could also be attributed to the scientific observations of the process in the first chapter. A description of the importance of the regions within the Capital of Culture initiative supplements this chapter, in relation to the cities applying.

The cities presented in the fourth chapter have already received the award. The focus here is on the preparations of the designated cities for the ECoC year. The fifth chapter consists of shorter portraits of the ECoCs in the past five years, which deal in particular with questions from the field of Cultural Policy. The sixth and final chapter deals only with the question of legacy: what remains of the Capital of Culture? This important question in the follow-up to an ECoC is pursued by scientists at eleven locations that were awarded the ECoC title between 2004 and 2018.

We would like to thank all authors for their multifaceted and insightful contributions, and look forward to intensifying academic cooperation in the field of ECoC research in the future.



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# ECoC Research Projects and Scholarly Accompaniment



# On the Way to European Capital of Culture

## Research at the ECoC LAB as Process-Accompaniment

Stephanie Koch

When German cities embark on the road to the title of “European Capital of Culture 2025”, a process of development begins, on which all the key players in cultural policy set their focus and which can have an effect on local and regional cultural policy.

The topic “European Capital of Culture” has been a thematic component of the academic discourse for years at the Department of Cultural Policy (Institut für Kulturpolitik) at the University of Hildesheim, and has been established at the UNESCO-Chair Cultural Policy for the Arts in Development. Within this context, the European Capital of Culture Laboratory (ECoC LAB) at the Department of Cultural Policy was founded in the summer of 2017. The ECoC LAB sees itself as a scientific observatory, as an accompaniment of the process, discourse moderator and cooperation partner in the application process of the German cities for the title “European Capital of Culture 2025”. Consulted will be the analysis of cultural policy developments and strategies of cultural management and cultural education that are to be observed in the environment of “European Capitals of Culture”. It will therefore be possible to fall back on long-term, acquired expertise in the field of European cultural policy.

The ECoC LAB facilitates the exchange amongst candidate cities through research work and discursive events. A look beyond the borders of the Federal Republic of Germany into the respective European Capitals of Culture and the localized investigations, enhance the spectrum of activities from the ECoC LAB.

## Platform of Exchange and Inspiration

Since the founding of the LAB, a total of five conferences have taken place in Germany, the core theme of each being the application process of Ger-

man cities for the title “European Capital of Culture 2025”. The aim was the mutual exchange amongst the people responsible from the respective local cultural departments or the already established application offices in the German cities, as well as the key players in the independent arts scene (Freie Szene) and interested citizens. Reports by invited experts from other Capitals of Culture in other EU countries and the presentation of best-practice examples served as a source of information and inspiration for the application’s design.

The forum “On the Way to European Capital of Culture 2025”, on June 22 to 23, 2017 on the Cultural Campus of the University of Hildesheim, was initiated by the Department of Cultural Policy of the University of Hildesheim in cooperation with the Cultural Policy Society (Kulturpolitischen Gesellschaft e.V.). Over 100 experts and makers from Germany and other EU countries accepted the invitation and used the platform for a mutual, field-oriented dialogue about cultural urban development processes, networking and stimulating debates about the long-term application process for the title “European Capital of Culture”. In a “Who is Who in Competition?”, the representatives of the potential candidate cities first presented themselves and their early concept ideas. A total of nine cities presented themselves: Chemnitz, Dresden, Hanover, Hildesheim, Kassel, Koblenz, Magdeburg, Mannheim und Nuremberg. By September 2018, some cities had ended their ambitions to apply for various reasons and other cities were added.

The Capital of Culture Forum in Hildesheim was a successful start of the conference series, which was to continue in the candidate cities Dresden (21 to 22 September 2017), Chemnitz (13 to 15 November 2017) and Magdeburg (22 to 24 March 2018) with their own focal points.

It became clear already at the first meeting of representatives from the potential candidate cities that (a) all would profit from a joint exchange of experiences and questions, (b) despite the pursuit of the same goal, each city would have to find its individual way due to the varying circumstances, and in the end, no application would be the same as the others and (c) the decision to apply is an advantage already for each individual city and its future urban development.

### “Conference of Competitors”

The next meeting of the candidate cities was the “Conference of Competitors” in Dresden. Together with the Network Culture (Netzwerk Kultur), the Dresden Office of Capital of Culture under the direction of Stephan Hoffmann, sent an invitation from September 21 to 22, 2017 at the Kulturpalast of the Saxon capital.

The deliberately provocative event title should have referred to the invigorating power of fair competition and collegiality, without concealing the fact that the good will to network amongst one another is nevertheless a competitive situation for all the candidate cities. Only one city will be deemed “European Capital of Culture 2025” in 2010 by the European selection jury.

Discussed were diverse aspects such as sustainability, the city as a space of European identification and design, positive effects of the application process for the rural regions, dealing with Euroscepticism and possible consequences of Brexit for the ECoC initiative.

International experts shared their experiences from the ECoC field. Jean-François Chougnat (Head of Marseille-Provence 2013), Else Christensen-Redzepovic (Head of Sønderborg 2017), Ektor Tsatsoulis (Head of Kalamata 2021) and Cluny Macpherson (Senior Officer Leeds 2023) spoke about the meaning of a sustainable, process-oriented concept design that should also contain a Plan B, and about the political involvement and support in the application process, which are essential for a successful application process.

The squad of German cities, which had already presented themselves as potential candidates in Hildesheim, expanded at the “Conference of Competitors” to include the two cities Gera and Pforzheim.

An important innovation of the meeting was the realisation of a parallel discussion forum of the Independent Arts Scene (Freie Szene) from the German candidate cities. The representatives of the Independent Arts Scene met in order to discuss their role and the active, artistic engagement in the design of the application process. Since then, the network of German candidate cities has expanded considerably in the area of the Independent Arts Scene as well.

## European Impulses and Cultural Strategies

A third conference was organised by the Chemnitz Capital of Culture Office, under the direction of Ferenc Csák, from November 13 to 15, 2017 in the Civic Centre there. With the title “Stat(d)t Kultur” (Instead of (City) Culture), the conference focussed on the development of a targeted cultural strategy as a prerequisite for a European Capital of Culture. It was about structured processes that can or should be set in motion by the award “European Capital of Culture”. The cities’ understanding of cultural policy was discussed so that a culturally influenced urban development can be built upon. Experts from Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Croatia and Austria contributed their knowledge and experiences on cultural policy strategies

in connection with current issues such as migration and digitalisation, privatisation of public space, cooperation between culture and tourism.

Among the invited experts were Dr. Manfred Gaulhofer (Graz 2003; former chairman of the EU-Selection Jury), Prof. Dr. Ulrich Fuchs (Linz 2009 und Marseille-Provence 2014; former chairman of the EU Selection Jury), Dr. Dieter Rossmeißl (Deutscher Städtetag – “Association of German Cities”), Prof. Dr. Oliver Scheytt (RUHR.2010), Dorian Celcer (Rijeka 2020), Ektor Tsatsoulis (KALAMATA:21), Georg Steiner (Linz 2009), Svetlana Kuyumdzhieva (Plovdiv 2019) and Christoph Fasbender (TU Chemnitz).

Representatives of potential German candidate cities Chemnitz, Dresden, Gera, Görlitz, Hanover, Hildesheim, Kassel, Magdeburg, Nuremberg und Zittau were guests at the Chemnitz Conference. The ECoC LAB designed a panel with the Austrian ECoC-Expert Prof. Elisabeth Leitner (Initiator of the platform kulturhauptstadt2024.at) with the title “Learning Effects of Major Cultural Projects: Evaluation Methods”, as the subject of evaluation is or will be essential for the application process of the individual cities, as well as for the implementation of the Capital of Culture year for the respective winning city. The conference “Sta(d)t Kultur” in Chemnitz was again scientifically evaluated by the ECoC LAB.

## “under construction”

The Capital of Culture Office Magdeburg, under the direction of Tamás Szalay, organised the conference “under construction” in the state capital of Saxony-Anhalt from March 22 to 24, 2018. A novelty of the fourth ECoC2025-Conference was the invitation of all representatives from Germany, as well as the addition of all Slovenian cities, which are applying for the title of “European Capital of Culture 2025” parallel to Germany and that will present a European Capital of Culture the same year. At that time, these were the Slovenian cities Lendava, Ljubljana and Nova Gorica.

Of the representatives of the German cities that are applying came Chemnitz, Dresden, Gera, Hanover, Hildesheim, Magdeburg, Nuremberg and Zittau.

The conference “under construction” focused on the European dimension as part of the concept of the European Capital of Culture and the question of how or if Europe can be redesigned in this context. Prof. Dr. Clemens Zimmermann (Saarland University), Prof. Dr. Walter Siebel (Oldenburg University), and Neil Peterson (Liverpool, ECoC 2008) addressed these aspects in their lectures.

In open discussions, the conference participants discussed forms of national and international cooperation among the candidate cities, as well

as the challenges of a formation of European identity and how to interact with “unpleasant themes” in the context of the European Capital of Culture. Dealing with growing nationalism, Euroscepticism and inglorious historical heritage, are challenges that candidate cities must address in their project planning. The assertive handling of such unpleasant topics and the direct reference to wounds in the respective candidate city’s history can also be understood as an opportunity. During the application for the European Capital of Culture, appropriate measures can be developed to deal with these issues in a productive, goal and future oriented way. This is a tightrope act, because (a) on the one hand, it costs courage to consciously direct the spotlight to the dark sides of one’s own city in a competition and (b) on the other hand, there is the danger of instrumentalising these aspects.

The invitation of German and Slovenian candidate cities showed that there had already been the first rapprochements of a future partnership of the Capitals of Culture. Nevertheless, it also became clear that it was still too early to seriously consider possible German-Slovenian cooperation in the context of the ECoC application.

Parallel to the conference in the Cultural Historic Museum (Kulturhistorisches Museum), an additional meeting was held again by the candidate cities’ Independent Arts Scene to network and exchange. In contrast to the Dresden ECoC Conference, however, a subsequent merging of the parallel events was not planned.

### One Will Win and All Will Benefit

Another meeting took place on September 24, 2018 in Berlin. This event was organised by the ECoC LAB on the occasion of the publication of the official listing for the National Selection Procedure by the Cultural Foundation of the Countries. The cities that had already received a political mandate from the responsible committees to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture 2025 were invited: Chemnitz, Dresden, Gera, Hanover, Hildesheim, Magdeburg, Nuremberg, Pforzheim and Zittau.

The Austrian Capital of Culture expert Bettina Steindl, head of the Application Office of the City of Dornbirn, and Linda Lücke from the Cultural Foundation of the Federal States (Kulturstiftung der Länder) gave practical advice on the application procedure. With the ECoC LAB, Nadja Grizzo (consultant for Capitals of Cultural), Klaus Hebborn (Deutscher Städtetag – “Association of German Cities”) and Olaf Zimmermann (Deutscher Kulturrat – “German Council of Culture”) discussed the conditions under which the German cultural landscape can benefit from the initiative “European

Capital of Culture” and how the prospects and competencies, developed in the cities and beyond, can be effectively maintained and further developed.

The ECoC LAB is now networked nationwide, as well as on a European level with the key players of the “European Capital of Culture” programme, for example with the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC), KULTURHAUPTSTADT<sub>2024</sub> (AT) and the ECoC Family. Also, in the future, the scientists from Hildesheim will accompany the application process of the German cities and research the further development of the ECoC initiative in Europe.

# European Capital of Culture 2025

## A Magic Mountain or Much Ado About Nothing?

Julius Heinicke

Soon it will be time again. 2025 will be the next time there is a German Capital of Culture. The interest is great: nine candidate cities are currently in the running, and even the media interest continues to rise. After all, it is not just about a lot of funding, but about a major event that lasts for months, which gives a lot of attention to a region and which provides a lot of material for reports and discussions.

Despite it all, the seven-year itch prior tempts the fundamental questions: What can and should a Capital of Culture achieve in the 21st century? Is it not time, to create something new? Europe's festivals currently offer various reasons to reorient itself. The name of the mega-event alone is rather Eurocentric: What is with the cultures of the—as it is so often called—“Others”, which have, without a doubt, arrived in Europe? Will they be integrated into the Capital or ignored; in the Hegelian sense sublated or negated?

Such questions are unavoidable in the course of the current call for entries and demand an approach from the candidates. Moreover, although traditional audience groups are dwindling and upheavals are being initiated, it cannot be said that Germany is doing nothing for its culture. Various programmes for regional and national cultural funding are established and—at least this is still the unanimous opinion—important for society. Because of this comparatively comfortable situation, is it possible for a European Capital of Culture to give new impulses. Or will the brief rain of European money become a regional curse, for example in the form of local over-indebtedness and thus become a boomerang for cultural policy?

## Exhibition and Negotiations

On September 24th, the ECoC LAB (European Capital of Culture Laboratory), located at the Hildesheim Department of Cultural Policy under the leadership of Kristina Jacobsen, Stephanie Koch and Wolfgang Schneider, invited the nine candidate cities to a meeting in Berlin. Chemnitz, Dres-

den, Gera, Hannover, Hildesheim, Magdeburg, Nürnberg, Pforzheim and Zittau sent representatives to Berlin from their municipal cultural administrations or their colleagues, who had been appointed for the application process. Looking at the cities of this exhibition, it is clear that neither the big ones are applying nor are the regional associations coming together as they did in RUHR.2010. Rather, they represent the prototype of local city culture, which may not seem at first to be exciting or fancy. But behind this panorama of the average German city lies a real chance. What can the Capital of Culture offer the citizens of Hildesheim, Gera or Pforzheim? How can an aesthetic—spheres of discussion, of experience and negotiation—be created for Europe? Is it not necessary here, beyond the metropolises of Hamburg, Frankfurt, Berlin, Cologne, Stuttgart and Munich, to create art locations, where the urgent questions of our time will be explored, all of which somehow have a great deal to do with Europe, its idea, its borders, politics, fate and traditions?

## Culture of Planning or Culture Planning?

Such an opportunity must be seized. Some discussions at the conference gave the impression that the candidate teams should swim free from the territorial waters of the Capital of Culture apparatus, in which self-proclaimed counsellors and experts, representatives and current and past winners seem in part only to be splashing about. It has been speculated which big-city strategy the jury was pursuing this time, what was the decisive attribute in the concepts of former Capitals, etc. Such a tactic, which seems to determine in advance in which direction it should go this time, inevitably leads to a European Plan Capital of Culture, which builds up a lavishly funded parallel universe to the locally established, but often precariously lived culture scenes, where it is relatively irrelevant in which region it is created; it can be placed practically everywhere. Perhaps simply next to the shopping malls and shopping centres, which not only look the same everywhere, but also no longer have any direct relationship to the inner cities and their inhabitants. At this point, the commercial marketing of art and cultural work should not be expanded upon any more, but the suspicion arises that the Capital of Culture steamship at times undeniably runs the risk of beginning to lean in that direction.

Instead, it can be considered, analysed and discussed, why a city applies at all, what potential it can provide and what all the effort brings to the city and its population. The meeting in Berlin sparked a lot of ideas: the category “Opportunities and Potentials of the ECoC Candidate Cities for the German Cultural Landscape”, for example, presented strategies with impulses

from participants such as Stephan Hoffman's "Dealing with the dark side of the city" or Thomas Harling's "Approach to cooperation with key players in the independent arts scene". These ideas, which link the Capital of Culture initiative not only with the unpleasant parts of the cities, but also with its artists, who conjure up a colourful cultural offer in the region—every day, usually for little money. In this way, a variety of campaigns are initiated in order to involve citizens in the planning. From city-wide activity-days to the run through the district. These planners are using the creative potential of the society, its associations, groups and institutions. Keep up the good work.

## Critique on Traditions and Transcultural Innovations

If it is possible, that these dark sides of the city are placed in the light, hand-in-hand with the local creators and makers; that art spaces are created here for a European experience and that questions of negotiation emerge—questions, which will continue to have an effect and be used in the times after—then the Capital of Culture is a great opportunity for every region. It can creatively counter the various processes of change and it can give the people a feeling that they have not been forgotten somewhere this year, but that they are in the middle of what is happening in Europe.

An application would gleam in front of this background, if it can convince, how the media attention and the short-term blessing of money can be weaved together with the city and its institutions and its societal and cultural groups. Where and in which contexts can the aesthetic produce gestures of joy and reconciliation, of discussion and critique, but maybe also of fear and insecurity and lead to mutual exchange and shared experience? How can traditions be revisited and where can transcultural innovations be developed, the social environment be included and these new formats be presented, tried out and established?

Such applications must inevitably be diverse and can hardly follow a strategy that was developed somewhere by consultants and experts beyond the regions—which is a good thing. Then let us hope that the steamers and their jury will let themselves be captivated by the created diversity, and that they throw all their presumed directions overboard, which had been taken in advance, if they ever had existed at all.

This entry appeared in Issue 163 IV/2018 in the Kulturpolitische Mitteilungen (Cultural Policy Announcements).



# Universities in Europe – Europe in the Universities

## Reflections on the Role of University in the ECoC Context

Flora Carrijn

By getting actively engaged in the ECoC-scape of their city, universities can underscore their mission of research and education, and fortify their role in the socio-economic and cultural development of their region and the well-being of its citizens. Conversely, they can bring added value to the efforts of the ECoC tenders in their collaboration with local ECoC actors and strengthen the network of “town and gown”.

In this essay we want to focus on how universities can contribute to the success of the ECoC. For a full understanding of the context of this collaboration, we will look into the evolution of the scope of the ECoC itself and the history of the changing mission of university. But first of all, we want to make you acquainted with UNeECC, the university network which was founded especially in and for the European Capitals of Culture.

### Founding an Academic Network

UNeECC, the University Network of Capitals of Culture, with member universities from cities that have been or will be European Capital of Culture, has a tradition of more than a decade of bringing together university scholars, professionals, and local cultural and administrative authorities involved in research on ECoC or culture in general, or engaged in the organization of an ECoC. The network was founded in 2006 in Pecs (Hungary) by 15 founding members who believed this common interest might yield new possibilities for international interdisciplinary academic cooperation, but also foster the collaboration between universities and local stakeholders, thus uniting the expertise of “town and gown” for the benefit of the community. The network counts over 50 members from over 20 countries, representing a true mix of universities with a long-standing tradition and newly founded institutions, from the “old” European countries and newer

member states, connecting the East (e.g. Sibiu) and the West (e.g. Liverpool), the South (e.g. Valletta) and the North (e.g. Umea) of Europe. They all share a true vocation in the development of a more outspoken European dimension as a “UNeECC”ly added academic value, emanating from the interchange of ideas and a thirst for new challenges and opportunities.

With its Annual Conference, UNeECC offers an interdisciplinary platform to academics from all over Europe and beyond, where they can discuss ongoing projects, share insights, compare and exchange data, and critically discuss methodological approaches across their fields. Hence it can be seen as a cocoon for accumulated insight in and as the evaluative promotion of the added value of the ECoC initiative.

The confrontation of ideas and approaches foregrounded at the conferences helps to better understand and respect the diversity of our cultural and artistic expression throughout Europe. Furthermore, by sharing experiences between researchers and representatives of cultural organizations, universities and academics are stimulated to claim a role in the preparation, evaluation and consolidation of the cultural initiatives organized in the ECoC year and, as such, help to support the sustainability of the cultural endeavours.

The ideas put forward in this essay are to a large extent inspired by the presentations of numerous speakers from academia and cultural organizations, focusing on all kinds of aspects related to the European Capital of Culture, such as culture in general, artistic and social projects, evaluation goals and methods, financial investments and ROI in economic and social terms and sustainability. The participants and delegates came from a wide array of disciplines, including anthropologists, business scientists, philosophers, historians, psychologists, sociologists, political scientists, agriculturalists, linguists, theologians, educationalists, marketing experts, artists, and government representatives.

I hereby add the list of overall themes of our past 12 Annual Conferences to illustrate the multivariate but broadly open scope that allows as many as possible different disciplines to contribute to the enriching and mind-opening intra-, inter- and cross-disciplinary debate. Some of the conference themes followed the focus of that year proposed by the European Commission (Vilnius, Pecs), others were inspired by the specific interests of the organizing university or faculty (Wroclaw, Valletta), or the local specificity of the ECoC (Liverpool, Marseille).

2007	Sibiu, Romania	Town and Gown
2008	Liverpool, UK	Whose Culture(s)?
2009	Vilnius, Lithuania	Innovation, Creativity and Culture

## UNIVERSITIES IN EUROPE – EUROPE IN THE UNIVERSITIES

2010	Pecs, Hungary	Inclusion through Education & Culture
2011	Antwerp, Belgium	Culture in / and Crisis
2012	Maribor, Slovenia	Ageing Society, Ageing Culture?
2013	Marseille, France	Cultural Encounters – The Mosaic of Urban Identities
2014	Umea, Sweden	Culture and Growth: Magical Compani- ons or Mutually Exclusive Counterparts?
2015	Pilsen, Czech Republic	Development, Art(s) and Culture
2016	Wroclaw, Poland	Cities: The Fabric of Cultural Memories – Confrontation or Dialogue?
2017	Aarhus, Denmark	Revalue: Rethinking the Value of Arts and Culture
2018	Valletta, Malta	Culture: Invented or Inherited?
2019	Matera, Italy	Cultural Resilience: Physical Artifacts, In- tangible Attributes, Natural Risks

## Evolution of the ECoC initiative

In 1985 the “European City of Culture” award was conceived as a result of a resolution by the Ministers of Cultural Affairs (instigated by Melina Mercouri in 1983) in a meeting within the European Council. The aim was to foster relations between “the peoples” of the EU member states and to create an annual meeting place for exchanging ideas to promote European thought. The appointed city would act as “a focus for artistic activity and a showcase of cultural excellence and innovation”. In the early years, established cultural centres like Athens (1985), Florence (1986), Amsterdam (1987), (West-)Berlin (1988) and Paris (1989), highlighted above all their own cultural canon and heritage, and broader cultural and artistic events were limited in time and outreach. The net result was that these cities, who already enjoyed the interest of visitors from all over Europe and beyond, experienced an even greater boost in tourism.

The designation of Glasgow in 1990 brought about a shift in focus, content and impact. As a post-industrial city with significant socio-economic problems, from unemployment to decaying neighbourhoods and petty crime, Glasgow's artistic heritage and achievements had to be brought forward again. The city invested its energy in a year-long program incorporated in a long-term economic and urban development. Culture was deployed as an additional motor for the rejuvenation of the city. ECOC became the catalyst for city change through urban regeneration and social revitalization. The power of cultural activity as a stimulus for socio-economic innovation became evident.

In 1993 Antwerp, an economic metropolis with a rich cultural tradition, added other dimensions. The emphasis was on creative concepts which would allow for a sustainable cultural development to the benefit of the citizens and the city. It was a new "entrepreneurial" approach which dared to leave the safety of cultural traditions and concentrated on innovation and participation. This last characteristic was also at the core of multicultural and multilingual Brussels 2000, which focused on bringing together people that would otherwise never meet or speak to each other. Community building through "unity in diversity" was promoted. The integrating force of ECoC was meant to strengthen social cohesion. Lille 2004 expanded this mission further by including the whole region, thus even crossing national borders.

This evolution was totally in line with a decision of the European Parliament and Commission in 1999 to enhance the importance of the ECoC initiative "to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens". The award was renamed "European Capital of Culture". The original purpose of showcasing the city's own – mostly "high" or traditional – culture, was transcended by the new aspiration to picture the diversity and the different layers of cultural life in the city, an approach which allowed for an exploration of the multifold array of cultures in European cities, true to the EU's motto "in varietate concordia". Thus, shared cultural characteristics could be identified and add to a better understanding of the European spirit.

European cultural identity recognizes and cherishes local and national cultures, but surpasses it by highlighting the interconnecting history and cultural osmosis in the past, and aiming for intensifying awareness of European citizenship. This remains a core ECoC mission, especially in these times of polarization and danger of disintegration of the European idea. It may look cynical in the age of Brexit, but let us bring back to mind the post-war striving for peace and prosperity in Europe and Churchill's call in 1948 – whether wholehearted or not – for "the united states of Europe".

Over the years more and more cities have applied for the title “European Capital of Culture”, especially since the initiative has proven its socio-economic added value and brings about a considerable financial impetus for the city. This has led to fierce national competition among cities bidding for the title. Preparations for the bids start a lot earlier and have become much more professional. In this context, information about past experiences in other ECoCs, the follow-up of the sustainable results, and the identification of the characteristics leading to success, has become crucial. That is why the role of universities in the ECoC has become more apparent and should grow even further.

### Universities and their societal responsibility

Universities have always played a crucial role in the development of intellectual life in individuals and society as a whole. But the nature of their focus and their impact on society has considerably evolved over the centuries. The adaptive flexibility of continuously and critically questioning itself, its mission and its contribution to our culture and civilization, illustrates the societal responsibility of university

In antiquity and all through the Middle Ages, “institutes of higher education” as a rule primarily provided a kind of “studium generale” aimed at passing on the established knowledge and truths, thus often promoting the consolidation of the existing hierarchy in society. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century intellectual curiosity of inquisitive Renaissance minds such as Leonardo da Vinci and Andreas Vesalius led to scientific exploration of machines and man, as start-ups for technology and medicine. Moreover, the critical reflection on state and government, hence the organization of community life, was reiterated by enlightened minds such as Erasmus (*Laus Stultitiae*) and Thomas More (*Utopia*). This cultural rebirth of the critical human being would later foster Rationalism and Empiricism in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

However, only at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did the principles of Enlightenment seep through at the university and do we find the first manifestations of modern university as we know it today. In England, John Henri Cardinal Newman launched “*The Idea of a University*” where knowledge was transferred through interaction and conflicting ideas, thus introducing a completely new educational approach and laying the foundations of the college system. In Germany, Wilhelm von Humboldt introduced the concept of a research university built on academic freedom and institutional autonomy, and with the explicit interaction between research and education. Today we have moved on to the idea of the entrepreneurial university, where valorization has to be reconciled with free research and academic

freedom in the context of innovation. The academic push for excellence is accompanied by the dynamic of interdisciplinarity.

In line with the foregoing, and as an addition to their key mission of doing research and providing education, universities throughout Europe nowadays also pursue an explicit mission called “service to society”. In times when profit and return on investment have become key concepts at the university as well, its role is often seen as that of the third partner in the “triple helix” process, beside industry and government. In this business model based on DNA-biology the different chains interact from their own specific focus and strength, in order to optimize hybridization and generate innovation and economic development in a Knowledge Society. Research is accompanied by development, creation by innovation. The positive impact of university in this sense – and as such also government’s investments in universities – on economic conjuncture and on individual wealth is obvious and can even be quantified in terms of spin-offs, job-creation and added GDP.

Economic welfare is of course a basic need for a society to thrive in peace as a community of individuals. Hence the first steps towards a united Europe were based on a shared post-war disgust of military conflict and a striving for a secure supply of basic industrial materials (coal and steel). The EU later developed into a broader confederation aimed at economic and social welfare. In that context, the EU nowadays not only faces the challenges of its own (re)structuring or (dis)integration, but it will have to provide sustainable answers to the challenges regarding energy supplies, climate, and migration. Political decisions in all these matters should be based on objective research and interdisciplinary analyses from academics as well.

The standard of living of a community stretches a lot further than income per capita and GDP. In addition, it has to focus on the degree of scholarization and should also take into account cultural richness. Unfortunately, innovation in humanities is mostly a lot less spectacular than in bio-medical or engineering sciences. It is the accumulation of new insights by the systematic questioning of existing theories about our being and acting, about humankind and its socio-economic and cultural environment and history. As such, university education should comprise the dissemination of historically built-up research and of new findings, the teaching of critical reflection and the stimulation of creativity, thus improving the growth of what we tend to describe as civilization. In the Spring of 2009 the EU Ministers of Higher Education met in Leuven with the Bologna follow-up group and stressed that higher education fosters innovation and creativity needed for research and development, and that culture is an important focus as one of the foundations for democracy. In full institutional autonomy and enjoying academic freedom, university has to act as society’s scientific and cultural

memory and provide a historical perspective to coming generations, alongside free independent thinking and innovative creativity.

Culture connects people, individuals and the community, local and global, past and present, ratio and emotion, art and science, tradition and innovation. In short, culture is the beating heart and living soul of a living society. Universities are both universal temples of knowledge and recreational parks for scientific exploration journeys, but also keepers of cultural values. As creators, custodians, communicators or disseminators of knowledge, universities are the core facilitators of people's individual intellectual evolution and their possible personal contribution to civilization. Through their research, education and outreach, universities effectuate economic innovation and social benefits, thus help shape society and safeguard culture. That is why universities must at all times remain havens of critical thinking, where open minds can continue to effectuate intellectual and cultural growth, where cross-disciplinary collaboration and imagination can lead to innovation, and where culture in its entirety is preserved and defended.

### The contribution of university to ECoC

The status of European Capital of Culture reverberates on the visibility of the institutes of higher education located in the town or region. Inversely, the status of an internationally reputed university will certainly boost the marketing efforts of the municipality. The very nature of university as a knowledge centre and an innovation-lab, when deployed in the ECoC context, will most certainly yield an added value for sustainable success. Furthermore, creative imagination on the one hand, and scientific inventions and new insights on the other, may further foster the growth of creative industries.

The involvement of the university from the beginning of the preparatory bidding-process, throughout the organization of the ECoC, the evaluation process and the longitudinal sustainability check afterwards, will increase the quality of the cooperation. Academic research at all stages provides the necessary background information for the ECoC organizers to work out a solid strategy based on facts and figures and, as such, allows for the whole process to be more “accountable”.

The cross-fertilization or pollination between town and gown can take many forms and involve different profiles of university participants. Academics and researchers may come from different faculties and disciplines and deliver different kinds of contributions. ECoC-relevant research can focus on the collection and analysis of data from former ECoCs (information), strategies for the development of the programs (methodology), the description of the different partners involved in the process and of their individual

and/or collective contributions (actors), the financial aspects of fundraising and spending and follow up (budget), the economic profit, social and cultural benefits of ECoCs for the city and region (impact), the degree of participation of the community (dissemination and reception). This allows to identify ECoC “best practices”, taking into account that a thorough analysis of the different socio-economic and cultural specificities of the locations are weighed against the characteristics of the new ECoC-scape under construction. The best advice will be obtained when interdisciplinary teams can discuss their own research results with colleagues from other disciplines and with the other stakeholders in the process.

University staff from administrative and logistics departments can also be involved in other collaborative initiatives. The experience of university event bureaus in organizing international conferences can supplement the expertise of the city marketeers, since they mostly already work closely together. The logistics departments of the university can provide complementary sites and technical support for possible ECoC events at the campus. The university’s communication staff, through their own channels, can contribute to the dissemination of information to the university stakeholders, such as personnel, students, alumni and their “outreach” partners, thus also foregrounding the university’s participation in the ECoC.

Students are an important target group for the ECoC, since they represent the future generation to carry on the cultural accomplishments of the initiative. Universities have an explicit duty to prepare them for their later responsibility in society. University education is aimed at stimulating self-realization of young people who can then create new knowledge and transmit it to later generations. Students have to be educated in the Humboldtian sense, combining knowledge with know-how and attitudes. This interplay has to give them the possibility to mould themselves into visionary entrepreneurs (not only economically!), leaders, and teachers that will be able to safeguard the future for coming generations. They have to be trained in critical reflection, scientific methods, adaptability, flexibility, and teamwork. The involvement of students in research and creative workshops in the onset of the ECoC meets the goals of university education and can generate “fresh” future-oriented ideas for the organizers of the ECoC. Students have to be employed as participative actors in the ECoC process, not only as beneficiaries and cultural consumers.

To stimulate the participation of all the above subgroups in the ECoC process, it is crucial that their involvement is accredited by the university management and the Academic Council. University leaders have to be made conscious that the involvement in the ECoC will also enhance critical creativity and cultural innovation throughout their own academic ecosystem. It will stimulate interdisciplinary research into the impact of culture

in education and on society at large, whether as tangible socio-economic results or intangible benefits. It can break boundaries in the mind and bring about new educational approaches and invigorate cultural life at university. It will promote the university “outreach” and consolidate university’s partnership with the government and with society in a network of shared responsibility for the future.

The appointment of an academic ECoC “inspirator” at the university who liaises with the other stakeholders in the process can facilitate the co-ordination of the manifold contributions the university can make in the process and enlarge the impact in the cooperation. As such, it will increase not only the quality and quantity of the academic input, but also the visibility of the university’s outreach in such an important overall endeavour for the city, the region and cultural well-being in general.

Taking up responsibility in the ECoC process is in full compliance with the present-day mission of university. Research, education and outreach of the university can benefit from this involvement. On the other hand, the ECoC-scape will gain strength from the contribution of the university, by allowing and acknowledging the input of this necessary and desirable partner in the ECoC cultural enterprise.



# The Criterion of the “European Dimension”

## Based on the Example of the Austrian European Capital of Culture 2024

Elisabeth Leitner

In the more than 30-year history of the European Union’s most successful cultural programme, the importance of the award has changed, the size and nature of the candidate cities has changed and the guidelines as well. In April 2015, the current Decision 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council was published, establishing the European Capital of Culture campaign for the period 2019 to 2033. Stipulated in it are the terms that are to be followed by a city in order to obtain the coveted title. The experience of past title holders has also been included in this directive in order to pass it on to the next candidate cities. Compared to the last Decision 1622/2006/EC of 2006, many welcomed changes have been made, in particular with regard to the required long-term impact of the programme. Formulations and terminology were updated and clarified, and objectives and criteria were described as requirements, not just as spaces of possibility.

According to the 2006 Decision, the cultural programme had to meet only two criteria: the “European dimension” and the implementation of the theme “city and citizens”. Although these criteria secured the promotion of international cooperation, today such cooperation is a prerequisite. Decision 445/2014/EU now identifies six categories, each with two to five subcategories: Contribution to long-term strategy, European dimension, cultural and artistic content, feasibility, achievement and involvement of society and administration. The term “urban development” is finally found in the guidelines, the quality of the programme must be guaranteed, an accompanying monitoring and evaluation of the project are part of the required concept, a vision and strategy must be pursued and therefore a “Plan B” also should exist if the title is not achieved. The composition of the jury was changed in favour of internationalisation—in the interest of removing national influences—and now it is possible for the jury to decide not to award the title. The fact that this possibility was written in the guidelines was due to negative experiences with immature applications and political parame-

ters. In some locations, a negative execution of the Capital of Culture year had already been demonstrated in the run-up.

## “Guide for Cities Applying”

Graz was awarded the title “European Capital of Culture” in 2003 and Linz in 2009. Both cities have undergone a change for and during the title that is still noticeable today. Both cities are regarded as successful title holders in international discourse. However, in contrast to the current bid for the 2024 title, neither of the two cities had to face a national competition.

At the beginning of the initiative, the title was awarded directly on the recommendation of those responsible for culture in the Member States. Initially, in the early 1990s, a number of countries began to introduce a national competition in the official process so that it finally found its way into the current guidelines and is now obligatory. Member States are now required to organise a competition for which they are responsible, and to launch it at least six years in advance. As stated in the official “Guide for Cities Wishing to Apply for the Title...”, it is advisable to start earlier and not just begin writing the application in the ten months provided for this purpose. The reason for this is the fulfilment of the required criteria, for example, the integration of the programme with the existing urban development strategy, the involvement of citizens and the private sector as well as international networking, etc. As the order of the countries is laid down in the Decision, preparatory activities can be started well in advance. This is the intention, and this is how it is described in the guide.

With the publication of the current guidelines in 2014 and the announcement that Austria would present the “European Capital of Culture” for the third time in 2024, it made sense to make the best possible use of the ten-year timeframe. The number of candidate cities in question seemed manageable at first glance, due to the number of medium-sized cities. In order to inspire cities to participate in a national competition, it is therefore necessary to disseminate information at an early stage regarding the changed parameters, the objectives that are to be pursued and the possible strategies that are entailed. However, the authorities responsible in Austria had not planned to use this timeframe with the additional measures in order to distribute information, but started the process, as required, six years before 2024. It was therefore decided to encourage and shape public discourse at an early stage by means of university campaigns and projects.

kulturhauptstadt2024.at is the name of the discussion platform, which began in 2015 in a joint lecture of all Austrian architecture, landscape architecture and planning universities. It began with a joint workshop and

a symposium in St. Pölten. The students spent one semester in trans-university teams, developing possible concepts and scenarios for the “Austrian Cultural Capital of Europe 2024”. To this end, they researched all over Austria, conducted conversations and interviews with the population, especially with cultural creators, in order to be able to make well-founded statements. 44 projects were created: regional and urban planning proposals, artistic and theoretical-critical approaches. Supplemented by scientific texts and comments, the projects were published in the 1st edition of the kulturhauptstadt2024.at newspaper as well as on the company’s own website.

In order to set the discourse in motion on a larger scale in Austria, a travelling exhibition was planned from the beginning. Ten exhibition stops were supplemented by discussion events, attended by experts from politics, business, the arts and culture. The execution of the 14-month exhibition tour was organised by the students. They took care of the transport, as well as the building and deconstruction of the exhibition. It was up to them to curate and invite the podium guests, to communicate with the people responsible on site and with the press, and to take care of the dramaturgy, as well as the execution and moderation of the opening evening. We teachers had an accompanying role. The process developed an incredible dynamism, which was reflected in the audience’s response at the openings and in the press.

The following topics were discussed during the panel discussions:

- Graz: Selection Process for the Austrian Capital of Culture 2024
- Bregenz: Potentials, Opportunities and Risks of an Application to Become Capital of Culture 2024
- Innsbruck: Potentials, Chances, Risks of an Application from Cities in the Alpine Region for the ECoC 2024
- Vienna: 1000 Arguments for the Capital of Culture
- Klagenfurt: Potentials and Chances of an Application from a Carinthian City (and its Region) as Capital of Culture 2024
- Salzburg: Why Salzburg Capital of Culture 2024?
- Bad Ischl: 1000 Arguments for the Capital of Culture Salzkammergut 2024
- Linz: Who Wants to Go Again, Who Has Not Gone Yet? The Perspectives of the Capital of Culture Format in Austria and Europe
- St. Pölten: Capital of Culture Chance or Risk!? The Perspectives of the Capital of Culture Format in Austria and Europe
- Wels: Cultural Development as Urban Development / Cultural Development & Capital of Culture / Culture and Economy / Culture and Tourism

In order to document the mood and the state of discussion in Austria, many opinions, exciting statements, critical questions and positive voices were collected during this exhibition tour and prepared for the 2nd edition of the newspaper kulturhauptstadt2024.at. The edition also documents the exhibition tour and supplements it with comments by experts, but also with quotations from the exhibition visitors. Since it is important to us that the newspaper is perceived and used as a medium of information, the potential candidate cities were invited to participate. We, of course, did not deny ourselves to record our own thoughts on certain aspects.

All decisions made during the exhibition tour were discussed in many team meetings and with all available communication channels and were made democratically. This was an instructive group-dynamic process and for us, it was also the test of our content-related debate. On the part of the European Union, the subject of “participation” is spelled with a capital “P” in relationship to the title of European Capital of Culture. How do you design processes so that they are target-oriented? Where do you reach limits? When must which decisions be made? The students have gained a practical insight into a process that cities have to face, in order to be able to achieve future-oriented developments.

## The National Competition in Austria

The official start of the competition took place in Austria in September 2017. Representatives from eight Austrian cities were present at the first informational events—many of them received the first information during the course of our discussion from the students: about the process of obtaining the title, as well as the parameters, changed by the EU. In the course of the one-year preparation period, many an interested city realized that the necessary process to get people excited about the idea, develop concepts and possibly take alternative ways of financing would have to have taken more time, energy and supporters. Today, at the end of the first application period, there are three cities with different themes that have entered the competition for the coveted title: Together with the cities of Hohenems and Feldkirch and the Bregenzer Wald region, Dornbirn wants to use the application to bring about an “outburst of courage” and encourage the population to take the initiative. Together with Salzkammergut, Bad Ischl wants to become a model region for dealing with the issues of “rural exodus” and “hyper tourism”. St. Pölten intends on sharpening a transformation process from an industrial city to a city with a clear cultural profile and to cooperate with the surrounding region. Not only the topics differ strongly, but also the general conditions for the development of the application documents, due

## THE CRITERION OF THE “EUROPEAN DIMENSION”

to the fact that St. Pölten is the only city so far to receive the support of the Federal State of Lower Austria.

All three cities are shortlisted for the title of “Austrian Capital of Culture 2024” and were encouraged by the jury to continue working on their concepts. It will therefore remain exciting for another ten months to see whether and how the parameters for the candidate cities will change and which city and region will manage to be able to present their “need” for the title most convincingly and effectively by the end of 2019, thus beginning a development process that is only possible with this title. Ultimately, it is most exciting to see what the jury will actually focus on when awarding the title.



# European Capitals of Culture across state borders

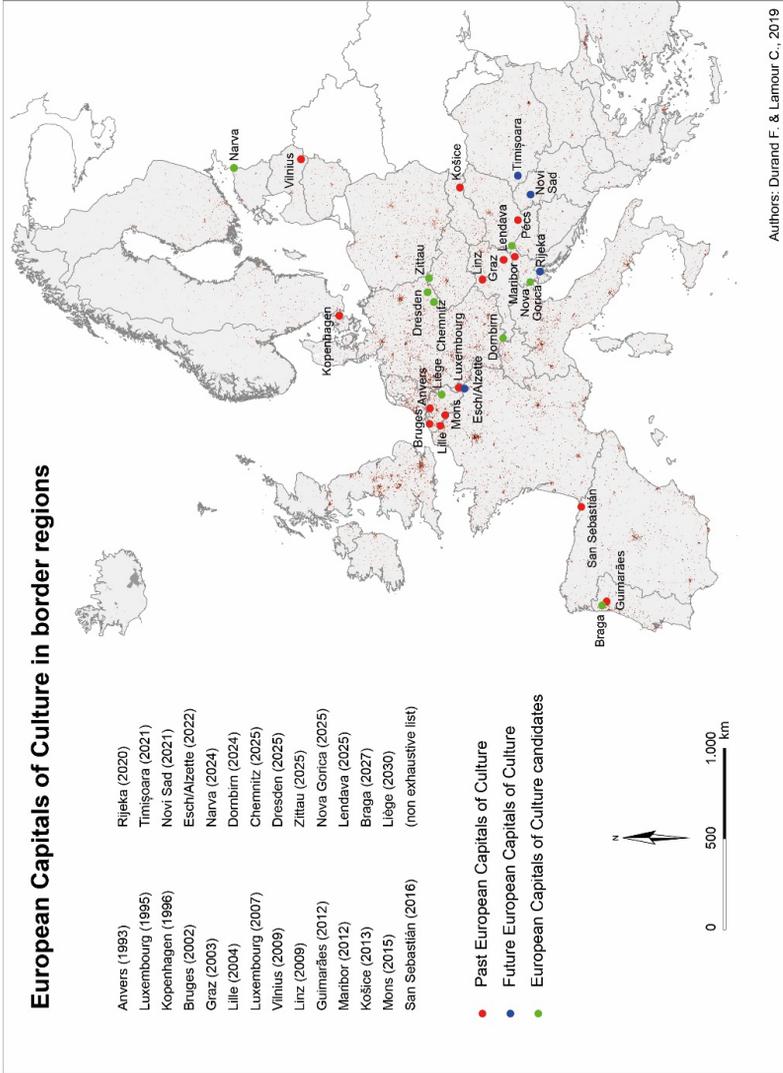
## Challenges and actions for cross-border urban cohesion

Christian Lamour and Frédéric Durand

Nation states and European authorities have always highlighted culture and identity issues during key phases of the extension or internal transformation of the European Union (EU). The integration of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and Denmark in 1973 was, for instance, coupled with the Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity, which insisted on common cultural sharing across nation states and the processual construction of this common identity in relation to the rest of the world (Prutsch, 2017). The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) initiative, created in 1985, was defined in one of these particular periods of the political construction of the EU, characterised by two parallel processes: enlargement (towards southern Mediterranean countries) and intensified economic de-bordering (the signing of the Single European Act). This period was also a moment of affirmation for third-tier political powers in Europe from regions to cities, the recognition of which will experience highs and lows in the decades to come (Bullmann, 1997).

The ECoC initiative has seen its modalities and purposes evolve over time. Four series of transformations can be identified. First, there has been a progressive downscaling of cities that have become ECoCs: from major international urban centres such as Athens and Paris, to more modest urban areas like Mons and Aarhus. Second, and in particular since the Glasgow 1990 event, the ECoC initiative has been increasingly used as a driver of urban regeneration within a changing European and global environment, leading to intensified economic competition between cities. Third, the annual cultural programme associated with the ECoC has been transformed, with organisers being willing to broaden the audience beyond its formerly elite basis, by offering a diversified cultural programme. Finally, a growing number of ECoCs have been planned in the European borderlands (Map 1). The organisation of ECoCs in this specific spatial setting may be instrumental in EU construction at the cross-border level. The current article

Map 1 – Past, future and candidate EOCs in European borderlands



presents, firstly, the challenges associated with the ECoC programme being considered as a potential tool for cross-border integration in Europe, and secondly, the actions to be taken to secure this role of the ECoC initiative.

## ECoCs in European borderlands

The European Parliament and the Council of the EU have notably identified three key goals for the 2020–2033 European Capitals of Culture that will have a special resonance for the cohesion of cross-border regions (EU, 2014). The first goal is to strengthen the sense of belonging to a common cultural space, the second goal is to advocate for the social inclusion of Europeans through better access to and participation in the planned cultural programme, and the third goal is to promote Europe's cultural heritage and to strengthen the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors. The future ECoCs based on borders can play a key role in fostering cross-border urban cohesion in Europe, considered from these three angles.

However, a series of border effects may exist. First, the development of a European sense of belonging in a cross-border environment can be more difficult than in another EU spatial context. Wars are associated with European memories of state borders (Berezin, 1999; Kaiser et al, 2016). This has led to a long-standing process of cultural differentiation between communities located on different sides of this spatial boundary. In the current peaceful context, cultural sameness and otherness are daily reproduced by a “banal nationalism” (Billig, 1995), which is a mundane definition of territorial separation or distinction shaped by a series of discourse and attitudes most notably expressed in mass media. The banal nationalism in the European borderlands can determine the cultural routines of residents, including the language used to access cultural content and the value given to particular heritage sites and artistic expressions. The analysis of some ECoCs with a cross-border dimension has shown that some Europeans are reluctant to access performing arts beyond the border (Bando & Crenn, 2010). It is also important to add that public and associated stakeholders in charge of cultural policies on both sides of the border also have a specific professional identity that is often shaped within nation state silos at different spatial scales. This identity can limit the ability of professionals to work and develop enduring partnerships across these state silos.

Second, social inclusion has been a long-standing objective of the EU, with the definition and perpetuation of the European Social Fund (ESF) currently included in the Cohesion Fund. However, the ESF has been framed by the Lisbon agenda, and therefore has a strong economic orientation. Its main objective is to support the creation of jobs. Nevertheless, the

difficult restructuring of European societies over the past decades, which has often led to an increased gap between the most affluent classes and the most disadvantaged ones, cannot be addressed simply by encouraging the production of new jobs. A main form of exclusion is territorial exclusion, and especially the development of deprived urban areas outside the affluent and booming districts of international metropolises. The most Eurosceptic and/or anti-government citizens are often found in these marginalised and provincial areas that lack public services, as partly proved by the geographical location of pro-Brexit voters in England and those who elected the far right in France (Becker et al, 2016). This sense of exclusion and resentment among marginalised Europeans may be exacerbated in the European borderlands, where one may see an increase in the economic, social and cultural gaps between these generally immobile deprived groups and other residents who cross state borders to seize opportunities related to cross-border integration in Europe (Decoville & Durand, 2018).

Third, the strong economic role attributed to culture and to ECoCs to regenerate the city may lead to two difficulties in cross-border areas. The first difficulty is associated with the “coopetition” environment between urban centres belonging to the same cross-border functional regions. They may share the same geographical environment and a common destiny in Europe, but they do not compete in the same economic market because workers and business taxes are still determined within nation states and no taxes are shared at a cross-border level. The public authorities on both sides of the border may therefore find it difficult to determine a “win-win” business deal securing their common engagement for a culture-led economic policy. The use of culture to promote the image of a common territory often occurs at the highest level of collaboration, which has been put in place in the European borderlands (Lamour, 2013). The second difficulty is linked to socio-spatial effects. The current use of culture for the regeneration of cities has often been accused of intensifying a gentrification process and consequently a growing socio-spatial segregation in the city. Gentrification is viewed as the “dark side” of the creative city (Navarro Yáñez, 2013). Spatial planning with a culture agenda can be simple “the funky side of neoliberal urban development politics” (Peck, 2007, p. 2). Urban areas located at the border are often composed of peripheries connecting more inlands and central nodes. They may have great potential to reallocate business-led investment from a congested and expensive city centre, as proved for instance by the pole of Belval in the Luxembourg canton of Esch, which has been conceived of as a second metropolitan centre, to relieve the congestion of Luxembourg City. However, the gentrification process associated with it can increase the segregation and the feeling of deprivation of borderland residents who do not have access to these regenerated urban places and who have limited space in

the border regions. An ECoC cultural economics strategy with a neoliberal software in European borderlands can consequently exacerbate Euroscepticism among the most fragile and grassroots segment of the population. A specific borderland environment does not necessarily favour a more integrated Europe: the majority of citizens located in the industrial borderland canton of Esch in Luxembourg – one of the most Europhile countries of the EU according to successive Eurobarometer surveys – voted “no” in the referendum related to the European constitution in 2005 (Dumont et al, 2007).

The cultural, social and economic challenges associated with a cross-border ECoC strategy can be addressed if there is a specific Europeanisation of public cultural policies, namely the establishment of meta-level decisions that favour the development of a cultural agenda within transfrontier urban areas.

### Constructing cross-border urban regions with the ECoC programme

The enhancing of the ECoC programme for the benefit of cross-border urban cohesion assumes a particular Europeanisation of the cultural public policies developed on both sides of the state border. It implies that public bodies and other associations or private stakeholders involved in these areas are encouraged to shape alliances, contracts and decisions for the benefit of their common territory. As suggested by Esmark (2007), the Europeanisation of public policies depends on three different models:

- 1) the *regulatory model* based on a series of laws to be passed in Europe,
- 2) the *multi-level governance model*, which means the distribution of procedures, functions and roles within specific programmes connecting agencies located at different geographical locations, and
- 3) the *Open Method Coordination model*, which is based on the transfer and influence of good practices and non-compulsory benchmarking tools among European agents. The successful use of the ECoC initiative to facilitate urban cohesion in cross-border regions will require actions in these three areas.

In terms of *regulations*, the European Parliament and Council have always been willing to include new specifications concerning future ECoCs. However, a series of conditions associated with territoriality, institution-building and cultural programming could play a role in securing cross-border

integration based on the ECoC programme. First, there is the issue of geographical scale. Most ECoCs in some parts of the EU, such as the Benelux and a large number of Central or Eastern European countries, are in this borderland environment (Map 1). The abiding decisions concerning the 2020 to 2033 ECoCs are broad enough to allow candidate cities located in the EU borderlands to include a region, including territories located in the neighbouring states. Nevertheless, it is not specifically stipulated that a cross-border ECoC candidacy would be an important European added value for borderland cities. Regulations clearly encouraging borderland cities to propose a cross-border programme could secure a greater willingness locally to define an inclusive cultural Europe at a transfrontier scale. Second, the development of ECoCs supposes the existence or creation of an institution that is used to secure the implementation of the cultural programme. Candidate cities are also expected to propose long-term projects. Nevertheless, the institution that is created to coordinate the ECoC may often be dismantled once the annual ECoC programme has ended. This dismantling of an institution can be especially detrimental in a cross-border environment, where the level of institutionalisation of cultural policies is fragile compared to the one that exists within states. An EU regulation encouraging the development of a transfrontier ECoC project would consequently need to emphasise the role of cross-border EU institutions such as EGTCs (European Grouping of Territorial Cooperations) to perpetuate cultural partnerships when the annual ECoC programme is over. Finally, the ECoC regulation for the years 2020 to 2033 passed by the European Parliament and Council in 2014 clearly mentions the multiple identity, social and economic scopes of an ECoC, including a willingness to be inclusive.

However, the regulation does not mention the current cultural, social and economic European crises which require us to rethink culture as an important vector of European construction. It fails to precisely mention the increase of Euroscepticism among a large number of European citizens in the lower middle class who feel that Europe is not made for them. This feeling can be especially strong in some Europe borderlands, as shown by the successes of anti-European political parties in the elections over the last two decades. An ECoC regulation that aims to secure urban cohesion, and especially so across states' borders in the current era of Euroscepticism, must reconsider the value of popular culture and its potential European dimension. Culture must be thought of not simply as a branding tool to attract new elites in the European city, but as an instrument of popular emancipation in the European city.

The role of the ECoC as an instrument of European integration in cross-border regions also requires us to rethink the *multi-level governance system* that currently allocates procedures, functions and funding for trans-

frontier regionalism, which is the Interreg programme. Past ECoCs with a clear cross-border programme have been quite rare. Luxembourg-Greater Region 2007 is the only ECoC that clearly portrayed itself as a cultural project connecting different sides of the state borders, even if its cross-border cultural governance did not continue after the end of the 2007 programme. A quarter of its projects had a cross-border dimension, which is far more than was achieved in any other ECoC (Luxembourg-Greater Region, 2008). At the European level, the Interreg programme was designed to help to establish multi-level partnerships, procedures and funds to encourage cross-border cultural projects. The “keep.eu” platform that has regrouped a large number of Interreg projects since 2000 gives interesting insights into the role of this EU programme in encouraging a culture-led integration of cross-border regions. Thirteen percent of cross-border projects (1,906 projects) sponsored by Interreg are focused on culture heritage and arts.

Nevertheless, the use of Interreg programmes as an environment favouring the development and perpetuation of the cross-border ECoC would assume the restructuring of the current procedures and the cross-border strategies. First, there seems to be a decrease in cross-border projects related to culture heritage and arts in the 2014 to 2020 Interreg programme, when compared to the previous two periods (2000 to 2006 and 2007 to 2013). The latest period of the Interreg programme has not yet ended, but it simply regroups around 10% of the 1,906 listed projects, whereas both of the two previous periods assembled around 45% of the projects. This may suggest that “culture” is a thematic objective of Interreg programming that has become less important, compared to economic growth, environment and mobility. It may also suggest that Interreg rulings and procedures have become more complex or have been progressively perceived of as too complex for stakeholders involved in cultural governance. These stakeholders are often small associations and artists who may not have the expertise or enough cash to access Interreg funding. The rethinking of the cross-border multi-level governance system for the development and perpetuation of transfrontier ECoCs would require the relaunching of a new phase of the Interreg programme, with a clear focus on culture (in a broad sense, viewed as a key factor for boosting European integration) and making funding more accessible for local agents involved in the cultural sector.

Finally, the development of an ECoC that could be useful for cross-border urban cohesion in Europe implies a specific *Open Method of Co-ordination*. It supposes the creation of collective know-how that is spread through flexible networks that connect public stakeholders located in different nation-states. Different networks exist in Europe to circulate ideas to improve both the management of ECoCs and cross-border regions. For instance, the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UN-

eECC), with associated academic centres located in past ECoCs, is a visible partnership that facilitates the emergence of common knowledge that is useful for defining future ECoCs. It is also important to note that cross-border collaboration in Europe is stimulated by a series of partnerships, such as the Committee of Regions, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) and the Transfrontier Operational Mission (MOT).

However, few connections have been made between the numerous cities located in Europe borderlands who may be keen to develop an ECoC candidacy, including a cross-border work programme. One of the purposes of the CECCUT Jean Monnet network, created in 2018 and sponsored by the Erasmus + programme, is precisely to create new circuits of knowledge to encourage the definition of cross-border ECoCs. This dissemination of knowledge among borderland cities will occur at a series of public events that will encourage the development of direct ties between past and future ECoCs, as well as between experts and urban practitioners engaged in ECoCs and cross-border integration projects. These meetings and the collection of information by the academic centres involved in the CECCUT network will give birth to two instruments for the *Open Method of Coordination* for cross-border cultural initiatives. The first one is a guide of good practices that will indicate how to overcome the challenges of transfrontier cultural projects. The second one is a guide of indicators that assess how ECoCs can be positively connected to cross-border urban cohesion. The CECCUT network is conceived of as a meta-level partnership that facilitates connections between experts and urban practitioners engaged in ECoCs and cross-border integration projects. Like the Jean Monnet programme, it aims to find a way to better understand and encourage European construction.

## Shall we restart with culture ... across state borders?

“If I were to do it all over again, I would begin with culture” is a well-known apocryphal quote attributed to Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Union. The quote is used in the current Eurosceptic and national populist era to express some doubts about the ability of the long-standing and economy-driven construction of Europe to seduce the majority of European citizens. As suggested by the premonitory quotation of Jacques Delors in the European Parliament in the late 1980s, following the implementation of the Single European Act, “who can fall in love with an inner market?” (Immler & Sakkers, 2014, p. 4), a greater emphasis on European cultural policies to better connect citizens and not simply to strengthen the cultural economic sector in the current global competitive era may be a way to partly overcome the current crisis of the EU. It may in particular improve

the image of Europe that is mainly mass mediated during cross-national crises, representing the EU as the cause of problems and/or EU institutions as lacking the sovereignty and/or the efficiency to resolve problems. The compulsory display of panels on the European continent to advertise projects sponsored by European funding is hardly enough to counter the negativity that appears in the mediated European public sphere. The ECoC programme is one of the rarer instruments that positively connects Europe and its citizens. The main issue, especially in the European borderlands, is to find out which citizens need most to be targeted by the ECoC programme. Should the cultural programme of the ECoC city focus above all on the mobile and metropolitan upper middle class and elite already convinced of the usefulness of the EU, or on the immobile and less affluent part of the European citizenry who may have doubts about the usefulness of European integration?

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General Assessments,  
Using the Example of an ECoC



# Europe's Urban Culture

## The Basic Value for Shaping Democracy

Olaf Schwencke

Jerusalem, Athens and Rome are the places from which the European Urbanum originated. The urban landscape of Europe was structured by Jewish-Christian religion, Greek philosophy and Roman law. With this triple act of civilization, Europe's urban community of values have developed over two thousand years.

This Europe, shaped by history, is our Europe. From such origins, our urban present has emerged and from them our future will be shaped. "Today comes from yesterday, and tomorrow from the past", as the European historian Jacques Le Goff aptly put it. Cultural Europe was followed much later by the political Europe.

I.

Nearly all important innovations in civilisation have originated in the cities of Europe, and have had a lasting impact on society; namely through peace, freedom and democracy. "Urban air makes you free" and an urban climate promotes civic spirit and shapes awareness. Germany, the country in the middle of Europe, has always profited from the centuries of urban development; it has had a positive cultural and cultural-political influence. But that did not create a stable democratic political system in the last century—only rudimentary democratic living conditions prevailed during the Weimar Republic. Such urban-human progress was again totally destroyed by the rulers of the "Third Reich". Most of them were not from the city, but came predominantly from rural and small-town regions in Germany, where even from the beginning Nazi compliance was much greater than in the culturally influenced cities. However, after the "seizure of power", they developed their architectural gigantomania ("Neues Berlin", Reichsparteitagsgelände Nürnberg, Gauforum Weimar etc.) by destroying the old town for liberal, urban citizenships. Thus the destruction of urban culture took its course. Finally, in 1945, only ruins remained in Germany and Europe.

## II.

After the end of the war and the liberation of the concentration camps by the Allies—the singular breach in civilization that would have been barely recognizable in the cityscape—it was not the “end of the story” that came, but the challenge for a creative, urban, fresh start. And the beginning was already a European one, which soon (1949) bore a German-French city name: Strasbourg!

With the Council of Europe and its urban sphere of influence, culture, which was now increasingly understood as socio-political, moved into the public consciousness. And with it, the first international organization to which the Federal Republic of Germany was able to accede in 1951. The good history of Europe begins in the second half of the last, otherwise war-like, 20th century: its Convention on Human Rights (1950) was soon followed by the Cultural Convention (1954), which became the basis of cultural policy in Europe. The first highlight of the programme was then the first European monument year of urban policy, 1975, with the title “A future for our past”. It was so successful that the urban development policy changed completely in the Federal Republic of Germany. After the post-war reconstruction, the old city was once again the focus of political attention: as far as its normative horizon was concerned, cultural policy was now decisive as the basis value for shaping a cultural democracy.

## III.

The European Economic Community (EEC) had not formulated a cultural reference in the Treaties of Rome (1957), but there was still the lively Council of Europe in Strasbourg, which later turned out to be a dilemma with the direct election of the European Parliament (EP). The newly formed Culture Committee had no constitutional basis for its work. It was only with the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 that the European Parliament had an “overall concept of Europe” (Spinelli’s draft Constitution) in mind, including cultural policy.

The idea of designating one (and later several) Capital of Culture each year was not born in circles of committed cultural people, not even as a continuum of the Council of Europe’s cultural policy—such as its monument year 1975—but as the idea of a culture ministry, namely from the Greek singer and politician Melina Mercouri and her commitment after her country joined the European Community after the end of a dictatorship.

She, an icon of art, did not want to accept that a community of nations would not also be responsible for its culture and education. She solicited

support for her idea, and found it in particular among her colleagues Lang and Genscher, as well as in the Culture Committee of the European Parliament. In 1985, the project "European Capital of Culture" began with her hometown Athens. Its visitors from Europe and all over the world were to admire something like a beacon of European culture and values in a selected European city. It was by no means foreseeable at the time that this programme, however hesitantly it was initially accepted, would develop into a success in Florence, Amsterdam, Paris and West Berlin at the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s, and then later—at RUHR.2010—into a trend-setting cultural policy programme.

### IV.

The "European Capital of Culture" project became not only the most popular in the field of European cultural policy, but also a form of identification and proof of the EU's importance as a union of values. Although the public value of European cultural policy is considered to be rather low, it is most closely aligned with the objectives of the European Community as formulated in the Lisbon Treaty. Like no other economic and political sphere, it concerns the core of the EU, as articulated by the "European Agenda for Culture" (2007) in the motto: "Culture is the totality of all dreams and efforts aimed at the full development of mankind". Denis de Rougemont's earlier definition of culture, which he programmatically formulated in 1946 and with which he became a mastermind of European cultural policy, was of the same philosophy: "Although the direct reasons for our unity are economic and political in nature, it is nevertheless equally certain that the unity of Europe is above all of a cultural nature if one applies this term in its comprehensive meaning." The singular significance of Europe is its culture!

The late reaction to the motto of the Council of Europe, with which a European cultural policy began, was the credo: "Cultural policy cannot do without ethical justification" (Arc-et-Senans 1972). Culture is the driving force behind social change and has shaped Europe's image in the world.

### V.

The objectives of the EU project "European Capital of Culture" have not changed fundamentally over the years since 1984, although they have become more precise in terms of cultural policy. Thus, the national orientation of urban projects has developed significantly more into post-national programmes; one can certainly speak of an urban European culture. Yes, even

more: the European Capital of Culture manifests a political real utopia, in fact a model image of Europe, as the writer Robert Menasse has in mind in his novel “The Capital” as a “Republic of Europe”, according to which culture is “a window to the soul of the community” (Jan Kershaw).

New ideas on the concept of the “European Capital of Culture” are being developed in the ECoC LAB of the Department of Cultural Policy at the University of Hildesheim—not without reference to the emerging projects of the German candidate cities for the year 2025: Chemnitz, Dresden, Gera, Hanover, Hildesheim, Magdeburg, Nuremberg and Zittau. Certainly, no new concept idea is needed if the project is to be continued successfully. However, research and scientific studies on the sociology of urban development (from Late Antiquity to the Middle Ages and the architectural period of Modernity, e.g. Bauhaus, to the present) should take place with a view towards the Capital of Culture project. Unfortunately, such investigations, as they had already been discussed at the Essen Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) after the most successful Capital of Culture to date, RUHR.2010, were soon abandoned. Also worth mentioning is the research of Robert Palmer, the director of the Capital of Culture Glasgow 1990, who collected empirical data for the report for the European Commission. Research will therefore not have to start completely from scratch.

## VI.

The EU’s unique Capital of Culture project, which—in addition to its Erasmus programme—is genuinely popular, must not get dusty in its routine and should certainly not limit the city as a place of memorial. That is what the European Parliament should primarily strive to do. Thus, the time has come in the almost forty-year programme and its 60 Capitals of Culture to embark on a phase of new reflection. The future of the programme must therefore take into consideration the EU’s fundamental values: freedom, democracy, equality, tolerance, the rule of law and respect for human dignity.

The city, shaped by European cultural history, was and is an urban structure *sui generis*. This should be clearly reflected aesthetically, politically and culturally in each respective European Capital of Culture.

## VII.

The question “Quo vadis European Capital of Culture?” can therefore be answered with regard to its genesis. The European project, developed from the mere cultural event of its beginnings (Athens, Florence, West Berlin), to

the structural change of cities (Glasgow, etc.), to its comprehensive urban policy and finally to its driving force of social change in the interweaving of all elements of everyday life of the city's citizens (RUHR.2010).

The criteria for assessing candidate cities must be preserved in accordance with the Budapest Declaration (2008): sustainability, citizen participation and the European dimension. The aim of this EU project is to make it visible worldwide, how the idea of Europe is realised in each respective European Capital of Culture. Because cities act as a mirror of the history of Europe's development: originated in the Middle Ages, progressed through the epochs of the Reformation, Enlightenment and modernity up to our time of European growth. The city is also moving into the centre of socio-political life: the human-friendly city remains a utopia, shaped and developed from art and culture. As a special urban entity, it is always the place where diverse new ideas develop and where its citizens feel at home. Thus the city is something like the guiding narrative of Europe.

The Germans have the chance to add another beacon of urban culture to the colourful series of previous European Capitals of Culture in 2025—after Berlin (West), Weimar and Essen (RUHR.2010).



# Interview with Prof. Dr. Oliver Scheytt

Wolfgang Schneider and Kristina Jacobsen

- 1) *Ten years after RUHR.2010 — Which cultural political governance structures supported a successful sustainability for the Capital of Culture programme?*

A structure was developed in 2011 and 2012 that is still effective today in the funding from institutions and projects. The Ruhr Regional Association (RVR – Regionalverband Ruhr) and the State North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) each provide 2,4 million euro per year, which is increased in part by the cities' own resources and additional, continual financing of tourism from the German State NRW. A large part of the resources goes into the company Kultur Ruhr, which initiates and coordinates events and activities under the name "Urban Arts Ruhr" (Urbane Künste Ruhr), which particularly reflects the urban area of the Ruhr metropolis and helps shape them through interventions. "Emscherkunst", which was initially conceived as a Triennale, will now continue as a permanent, visible and experiential "Emscherkunstpfad" (Emscher Art Path). The Ruhr Tourism company (RTG) received the means to design major projects like "Day of Song", which was first realized in 2010, but also to design a new format such as the "Tag der Trinkhallen" ("Day of Drinking Halls"). The institute "european centre for creative economy" (ecce), which emerged from the RUHR.2010 metropolis and is located at the Dortmund University, receives funds for the promotion of creative economy, and has a view on the ten "creative quarters", defined and further developed as a result of the Capital of Culture. Particularly successful is the network of "RuhrKunstMuseen" (RuhrArtMuseums), which is located at the RTG and is also now joined to the "RuhrBühnen" (RuhrStages). These activities are financed for the most part through additional funds, for example from tourism promotion. One of the biggest initiatives during the Capital of Culture, was the project "Jedem Kind sein Instrument" ("An instrument for every child"), which has since been continued by the JeKits Foundation. The aim is to enable children in primary schools to take part in music lessons throughout the country. Since then, the programme has been permanently continued by the State NRW and by the communities, albeit receiving multiple modifications. All of these recurring activities are based on the respective governance structures. However, there are multiple "brackets" for this, such as the RVR, which is very much invol-

ved in its cultural department and the Conference of Cultural Directors. On the other hand, the annual “Cultural Conference Ruhr” has proven to be an instrument at which the cultural key players of the Ruhr metropolis can exchange information on (joint) developments and, in doing so, also deal with a specific topic, on which external experts can also provide impulses. Therefore the characteristic feature of the governance structure is not that there is one organisation that stands or works for its sustainability but that the existing organisations carry on the ideas and projects initiated by the European Capital of Culture RUHR.2010.

- 2) *“Culture through Change — Change through Culture” was the motto of RUHR.2010. Which three projects and programmes make it clear to you that the chosen motto for the Ruhr area was sustainable?*

Urbane Künste Ruhr (Urban Arts Ruhr), RuhrKunstMuseen (RuhrArtsMuseums) and the success of the Zollverein World Heritage Site at the Ruhr Museum, opened in January 2010.

- 3) *And in which three examples did the motto not work (and why)?*

Ultimately it is not about the question, if the motto worked. It is universally valid. What could have worked better following RUHR.2010 is the cooperation of the “political class” in the Metropole Ruhr. The city leaders and the local politics could have “taken off” more effectively in order to use the unity in diversity for a overall appearance in relation to the country and the state. Especially since the citizens had developed a stronger sense of community as was remembered and perceived by the heads of the city.

- 4) *After the experiences of RUHR.2010: What should be the focal points for the next Capital of Culture in Germany?*

It has proved successful to regard the Capital of Culture as an intensive, large-scale process of “self-assurance”. For each of the candidate cities in Germany, a strategic approach of campaigns for a Capital of Culture is already a unique opportunity in the application phase.

- 5) *Capitals of Culture would like to learn from one another; for example, adapting best-practice examples and thus becoming more professional. Which (governance) structures belong so genuinely to the Ruhr region in terms of an activating cultural policy and the location-influenced framing conditions that they are not transferable to other locations?*

The particular structures in the Ruhr Regional Association (RVR), the fisuring of the Ruhr area by three administrative districts and the two Regional Councils (Rheinland and Westphalia) present the Ruhr metropolis with a particular challenge that other cities in Germany do not have. But otherwise there is a very broad range of experiences from which the other cities can profit and also practice in exchange with those involved in RUHR.2010.

- 6) *In the application process of the ECoC Title, the cities are left for themselves for the most part. At which points in the overall process would you have found what kind of support from other political levels meaningful?*

The Federal Chancellery of the Republic of Austria had asked me, together with experts from former or nominated European Capitals of Culture, along with members of the jury, to conceive and moderate a series of workshops for all candidate cities. The events were essentially each based on one of the six criteria, which is used by the jury to select the cities in the title competition on the basis of EU requirements and the standard questionnaire. This was a very important campaign for the Austrian candidate cities. The same is happening in Germany due to an initiative of the University of Hildesheim and the “Kulturpolitischen Gesellschaft” (Society for Cultural Policy) in the form of self-organization of the candidate cities, which are organising a series of events in a beneficial cooperation with one another. In the meantime, the “Kulturstiftung der Länder” (Cultural Foundation of the States) has become active as a coordination agency on behalf of the Federal Government, and has organised an event for the candidate cities. I very much hope that sufficient funding will be made available to continue the successful initiative of mutual exchange, because all cities can learn from one another. As for the other cities that are not applying for the title of Capital of Culture, they could also be involved in this learning process. Above all, the challenges involved in developing a “cultural strategy”, which is one of the six required criteria for the selection of the Capital of Culture, is to be a virulent field of cultural policy for all cities in Germany.

- 7) *Critics describe the “European Capital of Culture” initiative as a travelling circus, festival or mega-event with gratuitous concepts (e.g. with regard to the regional extension of the Capital of Culture Programme). Do you consider parts of this critique to be justified, and if so, how can this be counteracted?*

The catchword “travelling circus” is used polemically in order to express the fact that the same people often deal with concepts of Capital of Culture and

the advice from Capitals of Culture. In this critique lies a truth in reference to a few participants of the European “Capital of Culture family”, because some personalities feel compelled to give advice, although their tips could be spared. But there are a couple of exceptions. Ultimately it is important that the participants learn from one another and that mistakes, that have been made, are avoided. The majority of Capitals of Culture have profited a lot from the title and the related activities and investments. There are numerous, very instructive evaluations (from B. Palmer, B. Garcia, among others, as a result of “Impact 08” (Liverpool) or the RUHR.2010), with pointers that can be used, if a city and the organisation of Capital of Culture want to be successful. Moreover, the questionnaire that is based on the selection of cities is a typical example for the guidance to strategic thinking and acting in cultural policy. When I work through it with the city’s key players, I am never bored, even though I have been constantly involved with questions regarding the Capital of Culture for more than a decade and a half.

- 8) *What can European integration learn from the Capital of Culture Initiative? In your opinion, can the governance principles also be applied to other areas of politics in the EU?*

European integration can learn from the basic idea of the Capital of Culture: In the cities, European history can be traced back over centuries. In buildings, traditions, customs and practices. The traces of religious observance and wartime conflicts, the trademarks of “European urban culture” and “local pride”, the diversity and identity from city life and city politics. Yes, the European city is a culmination of European history. They, who interact with European cities, their history and its current life, will learn what makes Europe special and what unites us in values and traditions.

- 9) *Which cultural policy perspective should the “European Capital of Culture” initiative make possible in the European multi-level system?*

The self-assurance of European civic society on the basis of an orientation through art and culture in its breadth and diversity. By asking people about their way of life in the most diverse European cities (urban culture) and confronting them with the power of reflection through and in art, we find what defines us and where we want and should go in Europe and the world.

# Interview with Prof. Dr. Ulrich Fuchs

Wolfgang Schneider and Kristina Jacobsen

- 1) *How would you describe the cultural political situation in Marseille and the area ex ante? Specifically relating to the beginning of the application for the title “European Capital of Culture” and the preparation phase of the Capital of Culture year (after the title-ceremony)?*

Before the year of European Capital of Culture in 2013 in Marseille, cultural policy was not of significant importance, the cultural management was not well situated and the interest of the politicians was minimal. Noticeably better was the situation in Aix-en-Provence and Arles—in the cities that were in or close to the then not-yet existent metropolitan areas. Until 2013, the two previously mentioned places had remarkably more to offer in their cultural tourism than Marseille. Really there was no specific reason for the culturally interested to visit Marseille before 2013. In this circumstance, it is important that the initiative to apply for the title came neither from politics nor from the cultural scene, but rather very much so from the *Chambre de commerce* and the leading businesses in Marseille and the surrounding region.

- 2) *Which role did the Capital of Culture Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP2013) play within the transformation process from Marseille and its surrounding area?*

On the one hand, the project Marseille-Provence 2013 showed itself to be a catalyst for the existing city renewal project, “Euroméditerranée”, a project comparable with the Project Hafencity (“Harbour City”) in Hamburg, which, founded in 1995, was to guide the city out of its structural crises from the 1960s. Quite successful, by the way. The high investments in cultural infrastructure (660 million euro) that were connected with the Capital of Culture Project were a lucky break for the city planners. The visibility and the ability to experience the urban building development became concrete for the quality of life for the inhabitants within a short space of time. On the other hand, MP2013 had a political responsibility to develop not only for the city but also for the surrounding area, in order to stimulate a will to cooperate among the key players, which at the time was nonexistent. That is, by the way, the key difference to the Capital of Culture Project in the Ruhr, where the collaboration among the municipalities was already more or less

practiced through the Regionalverband Ruhr (RVR – “Ruhr Regional Association”) and the experiences of the IBA. Whereas we needed to motivate the political key players to realize that it can be worth it to think beyond the municipal boundaries. Many local politicians understood, and not unfairly, the Capital of Culture Project to be the “Trojan Horse” of metropolitan development. Shortly after the end of the MP2013, and because of the positive experience, the “Métropole Aix-Marseille-Provence” was founded, which has for the most part been accepted by now, but there is still resistance—especially from the side of the city Aix-en-Provence.

- 3) *MP2013 is regarded as an exemplum of an engine for culturally influenced city development. Where are the limits of the Capital of Culture’s transforming potential?*

Actually the Capital of Culture Project in Marseille changed in an astonishing manner. The cultural offering is richer, internationaler and popular in the best sense of the word. The architecture of the MuCEM, for example—the first national museum of France outside of Paris—is not only a source of pride for the Marseillais but also as a reason for tourists to come to Marseille. Culture has become an inseparable factor for the politics of the city. At the same time, the limits of innovative cultural projects have become clearer. The social division in poor and better situated parts of the city, the high unemployment rates—especially among the youth, the incrustations in the political system—all of that cannot be changed through a major cultural project alone. Everything else would be illusory, if the role of culture is correctly assessed in a society.

- 4) *Which programmes or projects of MP2013 do you think of as a “sustainable success”, and why?*

I perceive the term “sustainability” in conjunction with the topic Capital of Culture to be problematic. In my opinion, the topic of sustainability is often condensed and polemically used in the discussion about the sense and the nonsense of such a project. The opening of MP2013 on the three days in January 2013 were of course—how should they be different?—a one time event. The 450,000 people that participated have a memory and a consciousness that was strengthened through the not only smooth but also intensely joyful course, as well as the pride in their city, which was missing in the years prior in favour of an “underdog” understanding. Even today, six years later, the opening of MP2013 plays an important role in the collective consciousness of the city. Is that not sustainable? In the classic sense there are a majority of realized programmes and projects that are in one

form or another still continued—the “Biennale des Arts du Cirque” and the long-distance hiking trail “GR 2013” are two of the most prominent, but by no means exhaustive, examples.

- 5) *Which programmes or projects from MP2013 were less successful in their sustainability as was predicted, and why?*

With the projects that we aimed to establish in everyday cultural life after 2013, we were able to achieve through collaboration with the responsible cultural administrators from the municipalities. But there were, of course, multiple projects that did not work out as well as we had hoped. And why should they? Art and culture are experiments that either work or do not. In the natural sciences or in technology, no one would even think to question the principal of “trial and error”. Even in culture, there is no progress without venture.

- 6) *Which structures of “cultural governance” originated through MP2013?*

In the preparation years, we, as the organisation structure of MP2013, created very efficient structures in order to mutually prepare the programme for 2013 with the 93 participatory municipals. Routine meetings between the project managers and the people responsible for the culture in each respective city, served a better understanding for the project selection, financing and production supervision. In this way, we could defuse many potential conflicts and misunderstandings before the supervisory board meetings, so that the project remained largely “governable”, regardless of the many involved with fully differing particular interests.

- 7) *To what extent could the “cultural governance” created by MP2013 be maintained?*

The described form of “cultural governance” was initially tied to the organisational form Marseille-Provence 2013 and therefore no longer exists since the dissolution of that legal construction. The Aix-Marseille-Provence regional authority, founded in 2015—identical to the “playing field” of the Capital of Culture programme—is slowly establishing itself in forms of governance that are to be practised. Culture is to be defined as a collective task of the metropolis, analogous to the tested forms of MP2013. But this will probably take some time considering French bureaucracy, which is not exactly known for its dynamism.

- 8) *Cities that apply to be a Capital of Culture or that have already been awarded the title may adopt best-practice examples from successful past Capitals of Culture. Which (governance) structures and location-oriented framework conditions are so genuinely part of Marseille and its surroundings that would not be adaptable for other locations?*

Nothing can be copied, many things can be adapted! The MP2013 project's mutual financial resources, with a total budget of 91 million euro, can be used as an example. We could begin to work on the following project in 2014 with the specifically planned financial reserves of 1,3 million euro, which then—five years later—was successful with Marseille-Provence 2018. Unique to Marseille and its surrounding area was most likely the scepticism and concern of the surrounding communities; that only Marseille would benefit from the project. That luckily did not occur. The opposite. Aside from two exceptions, the expectations of those involved were in some cases exceeded by a wide margin.

- 9) *MP2013 was not just a municipal-regional project but, unlike most other Capitals of Culture, it was also clear to recognize the interests of the French government. To what extent do you consider this mixture of (cultural) political motivations to be justified?*

I would wish all European Capitals of Culture the same attention from the side of the national governments that Marseille-Provence enjoyed in 2013. After all, it is not the national capital that receives the attention of the European public in the given year, but another city as the European Capital of Culture. This is particularly important in centrally governed countries such as France. By the way, the “clear interest” of the French government has not in the least led to interference and intervention. Rather – to put it bluntly: The capital's high level of interest also protects against outbreaks of small-minded provincialisms to a certain extent. In my experience, this was no different in Marseille than in Linz.

- 10) *The current effective EU Order for the Initiative “European Capital of Culture” ends in 2033. Would you advise the initiative to take on another or an expanded legal framework? And if so, which one?*

This is a wide field, to paraphrase Fontane. Without a doubt, the current effective “legal base” must be thought over and changed. The selection process may have become more professional as the vote for the last German Capital of Culture, but it still displays a couple of inconsistencies, of which

the European Commission are aware. The pairing of “old member-country—new member-country” is, for example, obsolete. Smaller Member States like Luxemburg, Austria, Malta and Cyprus are coming to their limits with candidate cities. There is much to reconsider. At the latest after 2025 or 2026, there should be an evaluation, like the one that Bob Palmer delivered in 2004. Followed by an open debate about a future format. But at the moment we need to make sure that the European Union is not weakened but that it emerges, strengthened from the Brexit debacle and the populist-nationalist hostilities at home.



3

## Bidding Processes



# Running for the European Capital of Culture

## The German candidate cities for 2025 at a glance

Jonas Lendl and Thomas Matthias Schmitt

As process-accompanying monitoring, our research project, “The European Capital of Culture programme between local and international cultural policies: an observation and analysis of debates and strategies employed by German cities when applying to be European Capital of Culture 2025”, aims to enrich comparative research on the ECoC programme, which is mostly retrospective. The diverse efforts of, and in, interested cities offered a “valuable window on current ideas about what culture can do for cities” (Griffiths, 2006, p. 417) many years before the designation of the European Capital of Culture, and, especially in the present case, even years before the formal beginning of the two-stage bidding process. The following brief glance at the eight cities which are currently intending to submit their bid books by 30 September 2019, reveals amongst others that most of the candidates were already in full preparation when the call for submission of applications was published on 24 September 2018.

As required by our research design, we are committed to an impartial, unbiased attitude towards all candidate cities. For this reason, in the following reports we remain deliberately cautious with assessments and valuations of the programmes and activities of the candidate cities during the bidding process.

### Chemnitz

In the Saxonian city of Chemnitz, the idea of applying for the European capital of culture was first formulated in 2014 by Christoph Dittrich, the general director of the municipal theatre of Chemnitz. After the participants at an assembly for the preparation of a municipal urban cultural strategy voted unanimously for the idea, the city council resolved to support the initiative in January 2017 and agreed, by a large majority, to the main features

of the planned application in March 2019. Under the motto “AUFbrüche—Opening Minds, Creating Spaces”, the application focuses on three key topics. Firstly, the background of Chemnitz as an historical industrial city will be used for inputs on the future transformation of labour (similar to the concepts of Nuremberg and Magdeburg). Secondly, the striking ruptures in the history of the city (including destruction in the Second World War, renaming of the city as “Karl-Marx-Stadt” in the period of the German Democratic Republic, mass unemployment and population loss in the 1990s), but also contemporary societal conflicts within the city, will be taken up. The latter became patently clear in the violent mass protests organized by members of the political (far) right in summer 2018. Thirdly, the application focuses on the transformation of urban spaces in the inner city, such as the development of a cultural area and the redesign of at least 25 public spaces to be completed by 2025, and the opening of vacant buildings for artists and the creative industry. In 2018, 24 surrounding towns and municipalities declared their intention to contribute to the Chemnitz application. The “Chemnitzer Modell”, a specifically coupled regional train and tramway system, will play a crucial role in the dynamic interchange between the city and the surrounding area; a common regional cultural strategy will strengthen regional collaboration. Should Chemnitz win the title, the city reckons with an overall budget of 60 million euros.

## Dresden

The city of Dresden is the second largest city in Saxony and the regional capital. Compared with the other candidate cities, it leads in terms of the number of overnight stays. In 2014, the city council voted to examine the chances of a bid. Based on a concept developed by the department of culture, the city council decided to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture in June 2016, emphasizing the greatest possible involvement of the citizens. After a citizen consultation and visits by the bidding office to city district festivals, “places of togetherness” were selected by means of a post-card campaign. On a Sunday in August 2018, these places were used by different local initiatives, associations and artists, according to their proposed concepts. The kick-off for the bidding process was scheduled for 3rd October 2016. On that day, the city of Dresden hosted the national celebration of the anniversary of German unity, and it was hoped that the Dresden bid might attract nationwide attention. However, reports on protests by right-wingers dominated in the media. The local confrontations involving the anti-Islamic Pegida movement which occurred in Dresden were seen and analysed as striking examples of conflicts which are virulent in the

whole of Europe. The declared aim of Dresden's application is not to extend the highly developed cultural infrastructure, but to use culture to depolarize the social fronts. This is mirrored in the motto "Neue Heimat Dresden 2025" (New home Dresden 2025), and in dialogue formats such as "Streitbar!", which have attracted nationwide attention, at least in the cultural and literary sections of the media. The city of Dresden also initiated an open letter by German bidding cities, protesting against the exclusion because of Brexit of British candidate cities for 2023 (cf. Fuchs, 2017).

### Gera

The city of Gera in Thuringia is the only candidate city from a federal state that has already hosted a European Capital of Culture, or rather European City of Culture. In 1999, Weimar as a symbol of German unity was successful against candidates such as Nuremberg (Mittag, 2008, pp. 73ff). Gera's application is mainly driven by a private citizens' initiative, the "Kernteam Gera2025" (Core team Gera2025). After the failure of an artistic initiative in August 2017, the activists took up an appeal from the city in which further inputs from the citizens were desired. At the end of September 2018, with assistance from the Free State of Thuringia, the city council agreed to support the application by a large majority. At the beginning of 2019, a professional cultural manager was recruited. Gera's application focuses on the ongoing population decline, a golden past around the end of the 19th century, and the artistic and architectural testimonies from that period, and expresses the intention of making the local cultural life more visible. The image of the outsider is taken seriously in the city of Otto Dix.

### Hanover

Hanover, the capital of Lower Saxony, is the candidate city with the second highest population after Dresden and before Nuremberg. The idea for the bid was born in 2014–15 during the preparation of the urban development concept "My Hanover 2030", which was based on a status quo report by the city administration and an intensive city dialogue. Based on the positive results of a preliminary project phase, in which, among other things, a public participation campaign with the provocative slogan "Hannover hat nichts" (Hanover has nothing) was initiated, the city council unanimously approved the candidature in February 2018 in a cross-party petition. The designated overall theme was "Nachbarschaft" (neighbourship). Picking up Hanover's remarkable kiosk landscape and its function in promoting

neighbourhood cohesion, a pop-up ECoC kiosk was created as a participatory instrument. In March 2019, the guiding theme of the application was sharpened to “HIER JETZT ALLE für Europa” (here now everybody for Europe). This slogan means that Hanover is a special and central place in Europe, where urgent social and ecological challenges can be discussed and responded to by an open European network. By the end of June 2019, the three components are to be further accentuated and combined with showcase projects. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the European Capitals of Culture, the ambitious goal is to establish a new phase of the ECoC programme in which cities strengthen Europe.

## Hildesheim

Less than 30 kilometres from Hanover as the crow flies lies Hildesheim, another Lower Saxony candidate city. In Germany’s second smallest major city, home of the World Heritage Sites Hildesheim Cathedral and St. Michael’s Church, the initiative to bid was inspired by the celebrations surrounding the city’s 1200th anniversary in 2015. Local stakeholders saw an opportunity to build on the positive dynamics of the jubilee and approached the city council. In April 2017, the council unanimously decided to prepare an application, and the approval of the district council followed in June. In the second half of the year, the project office started its work. Hildesheim’s application is limited financially by a future contract between the indebted city and the State of Lower Saxony. The local population was involved by a photo competition on individual understandings of culture and public participation formats on future issues. The project office has used Hildesheim’s potential as an important location for cultural studies and arts education in a reflective manner. To underline the joint application with the district and to highlight mobility as an important topic, the project office decided to visit all 17 other cities and communities by public transport. With the “Tour de Landkreis” (Tour de district), a relay lasting twenty hours and twenty-five minutes was organized, combining sport and culture. Only one rural municipality has refused to sign an intercommunal agreement on cultural cooperation.

## Magdeburg

In Magdeburg, the regional capital of Saxony-Anhalt, the city council decided to apply as early as 2011, as it was assumed that Germany would host a European Capital of Culture in 2020. However, the decision was renewed in 2015. Magdeburg, self-proclaimed City of Otto since 2010 (referring to

Emperor Otto the Great, as well as the inventor and politician Otto von Guericke), was also the first candidate city to publish a conceptual framing of its application in January 2018, which resulted from the work of five thematic advisory committees. The guiding theme “Responsibility!” covers the key aspects “Lost and Found”, “Read and Rights—Magdeburg’s humanistic heritage”, “Made in Magdeburg”, “Colours—Diversity”, and cross-sectional topics such as urban development, digitization and Magdeburg’s relation to its rural surroundings. The dialogue with the eventful history of the repeatedly destroyed Magdeburg is thus complemented by a consideration of the structural change from heavy industry to science and technology, as well as putting social and ecological topics on the agenda. The further elaboration of these themes was conducted by monthly discussion committees on various focal points, the call for projects and participation under the heading “MACHEN!” (make), and a poll. The opening of the glass pavilion “KUBUS 2025” in April 2017 created a permanent contact point for interested people, as well as a place for the organization of public and internal events.

### Nuremberg

Since the city of Kassel, which was interested in bidding, quit before the call for applications was published, Nuremberg, the biggest city and cultural and economic centre in northern Bavaria, is the only remaining city that had already applied for the title. In December 2016, a large majority of the city council voted in favour of the candidacy. In the following spring, the first evening events were initiated under the motto “Let’s Talk”. Originally fed by seven themes (migration, digitization, remembrance, Europe, transformation of work, urban space, cultural history), which were dealt with at the workshop “Let’s Think!” in November 2017, and in line with a large online and offline survey, Nuremberg’s three guiding themes were announced in October 2018. With “embracing humanity—Menschlichkeit als Maß” (humanity as measure), the second largest city in the Free State of Bavaria focuses on dealing with Nuremberg’s role in Nazism. The second topic, “exploring reality—Welt als Aufgabe” (world as task), relates to the spheres of work and knowledge, and more specifically toys, with reference to the great innovations in the city’s history. Among other things, a House of Games is planned. Finally, with “evolving community— Miteinander als Ziel” (coming together as a goal), the diversity of the urban population is put on the agenda, with special attention being paid to the socio-cultural centres in the quarters created in Nuremberg from the 1960s onwards. Beside various discussion rounds, another focus was on visiting participation. The application office was present at festivities with a mobile micro office, and in Sep-

tember 2018, for the “Boulevard Babel” action day, a busy street in a diverse city district was closed to traffic for one day and used for cultural activities.

## Zittau

Zittau, the third candidate from Saxony, with about 25,000 inhabitants, is by far the smallest German city in the race for the ECoC 2025. The core of Zittau’s application, however, is that the shrinking city is not bidding for itself alone, but for the three-country region of Upper Lusatia. Structural change, a negative population development and a lack of social optimism are not limited to the border town of Zittau, but are also virulent in the rest of the district of Görlitz, the neighbouring district of Bautzen, the Polish part of Upper Lusatia and the Liberec region in the Czech Republic. The fact that the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War falls in the European Capital of Culture year 2025 is also of great symbolic significance. Another argument is that European integration in the Euroregion of Neisse-Nisa-Nysa is not only a visionary goal, but part of everyday life in politics, public authorities and leisure activities. Due to overlaps in content, even at this early stage it was agreed to cooperate closely with the twin city of Nova Gorica in Slovenia, which is also applying for the ECoC title in 2025. Local lighthouse projects being discussed include the development of the industrial wasteland of the former VEB Robur-Werke Zittau, the Mandau barracks, and the construction of a foot and cycle bridge over the border triangle. Parallel to the European elections and local elections in Saxony, a referendum on Zittau’s application will be held in May 2019. From the participatory process, Zittau has already been given the self-designation “Kulturherzstadt” (city with a cultural heart).

This brief look at the eight candidate cities has clearly shown the versatility and patience with which the applications have been initiated and developed over the years. Whether the long duration of the preparation process is specific to the German applicants, or whether it reflects a general tendency in the ECoC competition, is certainly a point that is worth further examination. In the coming months, it may be possible to observe how successful high-profile events and small-scale project work are translated in the bid books and presentations. Finally, we will see whether the early launches will pay off, or whether late entrants will also have a chance in the race for the German ECoC in 2025.

It remains to be noted that this overview cannot grasp the complexity of the unique configurations of urban cultural policy in the cities presented here. We have not referred to the micro projects that have been implemented differently by, and in, many candidate cities, or local peculiarities such

as active citizens' initiatives. We have also not discussed the series of constructive encounters which the applicants experienced, with conferences and workshops in the bidding cities of Dresden, Chemnitz and Magdeburg, as well as in Hildesheim and Berlin, initiated by the ECoC LAB and the Federal Cultural Foundation, which is organizing the selection process. While the latter point has been taken into account in this publication, the other points of interest must be postponed for future research.

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# Hildesheim on the Way to the European Capital of Culture 2025?

Daniel Gad

These are exciting and very moving times in Hildesheim. The city has begun to consult its strengths and to continue to develop them. And “the city” here does not mean just the city administration or the political players.

For decades, Hildesheim was the small “big city” with a troubled city identity that is still inherited by its citizens today. Probably because it is no longer the “Nuremberg of the North” in the time before 1945 with its rich timber-framed architecture, and its reputation of being “just the small city next to” the state capital Hanover, as well as the industrial and university cities Braunschweig and Göttingen. But will it be possible to loosen up this burdened legacy and look into the present and the future? Will it be possible to stabilize the current development processes and even see Hildesheim as a model for innovative approaches? As a model for so many other smaller big cities and for bigger small cities in Germany and Europe? What charisma will arise from Hildesheim’s concept of staging the potentials of the province and rural areas in contrast to classic urban agglomerations?

## Potentials of a City

The decision to celebrate the 1200th anniversary of the city and the diocese of Hildesheim in 2015 together with the “Day of Lower Saxony” was a major eye-opener for the city administration and the city’s community. They realised that Hildesheim has a potential with many more visions and positive executions of those visions, as well as a contributing community that wants to be there. This makes the decision to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture seem logical from the outside, but considering the decades of resistance—in particular on the part of the city administration—it remains astonishing that the idea of applying arose immediately after the anniversary. At that time it was not yet clear to everyone that this would require much more than just making the existing churches and the already existing cultural activities more visible internationally. At this time, in the winter of 2015 and to some extent still today, this idea is seen by many as a grasp for the unreachable stars. But the movement, which has since been observed,

reveals the opposite. The idea of becoming Capital of Culture is definitely an achievable goal for Hildesheim, and in accordance with the conditions, i.e. to act comprehensively and consistently, it is also the right one.

## Dealing with Weaknesses

There is no doubt that Hildesheim is a city, which is normal in many ways. However, the lack of self-confidence, paired with a seemingly limited openness for innovation, is a question of identity amongst the city's population. Indicative is how much the city's devastation in the end of World War II and how the reduction of the city to a visual emphasis of the destruction, seems to characterise the citizens today, who essentially only know the contemporary Hildesheim, which was a larger city that had been important for centuries. One can observe this quite well based on the varying levels of self-confidence in the citizens of Hildesheim in comparison with those of cities such as Münster or Munich.

Perhaps it is also possible that Hildesheim is simply a classic provincial city, which, due to its size of sometimes more and sometimes less than 100,000 citizens, still counts as one of the big cities. In addition to the surveyed spirit of identity in the city—as well as the continuous architecturally troubled city image—it is evident that young and innovative minds seldom decide to live in this city. This is remarkable, as Hildesheim is home to various creative courses of study at both of the local universities, where creative minds, e.g. in advertising design or in cultural mediation, have been studying for more than four decades now. Today, they play a decisive role in shaping the cultural and creative scene nationwide, and in many cases, do so in the leading positions.

Fact is, few of them stayed in Hildesheim or returned again. But those who have remained, have had a deciding influence on the existing wealth of the city: beyond the comprehensively destroyed and the exemplarily rebuilt architecture. Physical and temporary spaces of cultural life as well as the networks and communication structures across the city would hardly have been conceivable without these creative alumni. All the more reason for it to be of concern to create the structures that increase their length of stay in Hildesheim. If the change to the Bachelor's and Master's system of study was a bitter setback for this issue—the vast majority of students are no longer in the city for five years but only for two to three—then mechanisms need to be found and applied. Mechanisms, which would make it atmospherically and financially attractive for this target group to stay longer. A brainstorming session on workshops and “what-works-shops”, as well as a corresponding economic funding, has already begun—even if major steps

still need to happen. But it is not only about the liveliness of the city's quarters. The cultural "counter-public", which is already gathering amongst the student body, as well as elsewhere, will certainly question structures that have been established for decades. However, it could be precisely this foundation that precipitates future-oriented processes of change.

### The Application as A Counter-Model

Perhaps Hildesheim is one of the surprise candidates among the candidate cities for the title European Capital of Culture 2025. It quickly gives the impression that the most financially powerful Member State of the European Union, which also sees itself as a cultural nation, would be the only one to set off on its own. After Berlin 1988, Weimar 1999 and Essen/Ruhr in 2010, the candidate cities Dresden, Hanover, Magdeburg and Nuremberg fit perfectly in the picture with their extensive starting capital. But Hildesheim—certainly also with the other smaller candidate cities—presents itself as a worthy opponent, which may even present the more suitable concept to the jury of the European Capital of Culture.

The message from Brussels so far is clear: the individual concept is decisive for success. So Hildesheim has the same chances as any other candidate. Moreover, not just the small EU Member States—particularly in the last few years—have shown that the Capital of Culture can also be understood as something different than "big" or "showy". The reason they have received the title is not based on simply existing. Rather, it is a matter of growing beyond oneself and at the same time, laying the foundations for maintaining this movement far beyond the concrete year of the title. It also creates the impression that the idea of the European Capital of Culture is increasingly interested in motivating cities to apply. Especially when their ability to meet existing and future social challenges—the future of inner cities or issues such as climate change or migration—initially appears to be limited in terms of funding and in terms of capacity. However, their skilful concepts make it possible to devote themselves successfully to these tasks.

But the medium-sized city of Hildesheim also knows that it will only really be able to discover its power, and use it in the long term by collaborating with the surrounding region, including the large number of smaller municipalities and diverse rural areas. For Hildesheim, this also has a European dimension, since Europe is technically a network of smaller cities and the large stretches of land that lie between the urban.

## Engine of Urban Development Processes

Hildesheim is one of the examples that shows how the application process for the title European Capital of Culture works as an engine for the movement of urban development processes in general. A study, which was commissioned by citizens of Hildesheim in 2016 on the 2010 application process, showed very emphatically that practically all candidate cities have described the application process as positive and meaningful, and see it as paving the way for lasting changes. The study also showed, however, that Hildesheim, as an example, has long been very well positioned in terms of inner-city networking, the self-organisation of the cultural scene and its articulation of needs—especially in the Independent Arts Scene (“Freie Szene”) in cultural policy concepts. Hildesheim has also been willing to participate outside the framework of the city administration, which has happened for more than a dozen years. Aspects which the candidates in 2010 view as an essential outcome of an application process. The engine-effect of the Capital of Culture application suddenly opens itself up to the willingness of the city to seriously pay attention to the analyses of the key players in cultural practice. For too many years, the almost cemented ignorance on the part of the city predominated such participation formats, and the will to realize new concepts for the city. The remarkable thing about the current continuation of concepts—for example in the development of an urban cultural strategy—is the positive interaction between administration, politics, city society and the cultural players. If this is understood as a joint, intense and fruitful learning process, then the application will leave lasting traces of positive nature.

## A Competition Without Losers

It is therefore relevant to understand that this competition does not actually entail losers. A Plan B is also requested by the jury of the European Union. Not just because of the fact that only one city will actually win the title, but also because of the general sustainability—i.e. the perpetuation of the will to move forward—it becomes clear that Plan B is probably the essential goal of the whole process. The urban development process is the deciding factor. The title is a relevant driving force: an important goal from a content perspective, a reference point for the idea of the European Union, an important programme for the foundation of intra-European identity, its motivation and its mutual exchange. But ultimately it is about the honouring of a firmly anchored step in order to think through the structures and actions of a city, and develop them meaningfully. If that does not happen, then the title European Capital of Culture will only be a one-time firework,

which remains only as a memory, instead of offering foundations of action that the city life will follow.

It needs to be clear what it could mean to receive the title as an engine for change. Certainly, the first step here is also about money, especially if, like described above, the money for an application does not come solely from public sources. But the title is also an engine in the sense of providing inspiration, generating courage, tackling processes, being eager to experiment, growing out of oneself and realizing the formerly unthinkable.

### The Impulse-Generator of the Development Process

Hildesheim is not particularly big, and reservations to act innovatively and future-oriented as a pioneer has shaped the cityscape for decades. It is all the more remarkable, therefore, that in the last couple of years, the city in Lower Saxony has been taking leaps into the joy and structures of a movement. Structures that clearly set the city apart from the name, hanging in the air—to be the “secret Capital of Culture”—and to be content with that.

Since 2015, a group of well-networked, generally affluent citizens, who founded the Circle-of-Friends 2025 Association (Verein Freundeskreis 2025), has played a decisive role. The association was founded in order to start the application process and prepare for the decisions in the city council and district council. This motivation that came out of the citizenry makes the Hildesheim process special, compared to other cities. However, it will only be successful, when all of the management levels of the city administration—from the Lord Mayor and beyond—seriously grasp this goal, and when decisive parts of the population support and help shape the process.

What is striking here, is that the public and free cultural scene, which has been, as mentioned, well connected for a long time, needs to be incorporated and maybe even convinced to collaborate, after years of pent-up frustration and discouragement; their good ideas have rarely been well-received or sufficiently funded by the cultural funding in the city. Their reservations were well-founded in that the city administration and the city and regional political levels should not merely be striving for a fireworks display during the Capital of Culture if they are not able to tackle the necessary and real structural changes.

### Re-Thinking and Change Management

Once again: The question, to what extent the process is and must be about achieving the actual title is certainly not an easy one. Of course, the appli-

cation process can only be successfully completed if it is taken seriously. At the same time, it is a prerequisite for such an endeavour that private investors participate—especially in a city like Hildesheim that is financially short in supply. However, these investments can apparently only be won when it comes to achieving the actual title, i.e. the greatest award—1st place on the winner’s podium. But it is foreseeable, that in December 2019 about four of the current eight candidate cities will be eliminated from the competition. If Hildesheim wants to remain afloat in the current change of course, then it is an important step to make it clear to all participants—the innovative minds as well as the donors, no matter from which camp—that what is important is not the title but rather the engine of change: to rethink the city in all its facets. The reassurance in the application’s Plan B as the actual Plan A is therefore indispensable and automatically strengthens the chances of success in the competition.

Because in the end, whether a city has become a Capital of Culture or not, the question is still “What remains?” Firstly, this is meant as, “What is the heritage of a former Capital of Culture?”, secondly as “What remains as an achievement of an application for the European Capital of Culture?” and thirdly, “What remains for others, who, for whatever reason, will not even apply for the title of European Capital of Culture, but who nevertheless have a similar demand to realise urban development processes?”

## Tool Kit of a Plan B

From the current events of the city of Hildesheim, six main areas can be depicted, which can be presented as a tool kit of a Plan B:

- 1) *Strong, convinced, influential and interdisciplinary engaged management roles within the city administration with political backing.*

The current movement in Hildesheim seems to be connected with the fact that within the last couple of years, there were three qualified changes in the head positions at the important junctions of social, cultural and building infrastructure. Even if this was not a planned and concentrated structural change, it still shows that the right people in the management functions provide decisive foundations for long-term processes of change.

- 2) *To take seriously and recognize those, who have committed themselves to the city through civic engagement.*

With it, some steps to the current changes and to the will to continue the originated civic engagement, as shown above. In the continuation of the idea of a living democracy and the idea that “the city is us and not just designated and elected representatives” makes it clear, what kind of relevance it has, to recognize and accept these parallel players to the official city administration.

3) *Cluster groups on centrally important, partly interdisciplinary topics.*

Many topics of change need a lot of time, and they need the right dramaturgy of evaluation, analysis and strategy development. Consequently there are the cluster groups, which are staffed with the right experts, whose work is valued and integrated in the existing decision-making structures, in order to secure the relevant vehicles of urban development processes in the medium and long term.

4) *Creating outcomes and results*

The foundation and result of an urban development process must be to be relentless—even in the midst of it—and to create results that convey the serious feeling that the movement is continuing, is leading to tangible and meaningful changes and is improving in the places, where needs have been formulated.

5) *Increasing the length of stay*

Suitable structures need to be created to increase the length of stay of creative minds in the city, to provide incentives for them to settle in the city, to open up professional and private perspectives, and to enable them to settle and survive in the city in the medium to long term. However, the associated change processes must also be met with openness.

6) *Cultural policy approach*

A cultural policy concept that formulates the essential strategic framework is indispensable for the steps mentioned above. Part of this is almost automatically a suitable participation process to be able to co-determine the content. However, it is also important to understand that the result is subject to an ongoing process, i.e. that the content and the accompanying strategy for execution must be monitored.



# Preserving Multiculturalism

## Can two cities build one European capital of culture?

Vesna Humar

Nova Gorica, a city in western Slovenia, located on the border with Italy, was one of the first cities in the country to announce its desire to earn the title of European Capital of Culture (ECoC) in 2025. Since the neighbouring Gorizia is the partner city in the candidature, the bidding process is being managed by the local European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. This legal instrument is being used for the first time as the platform for an ECoC candidacy, and it is thus viewed by the European Commission as a pilot project.

Nova Gorica's decision to bid for the ECoC title arises from ambition and a compelling need. The ambition is to genuinely incorporate the great European ideas of peaceful cohabitation and mutual enrichment between cultures and languages in the life of the city and its inhabitants, thus shaping a modern, open society that is able to face and co-create the future Europe. The compelling need is to enhance economic and social growth, and to assist a city that is on the border, not only geographically, but also politically and economically.

The decision to bid involved a bottom-up process. The bid was first promoted by a group of artists, among them the current leader of the bidding team, theatre director and actress Neda Rusjan Bric. The bid was quickly picked up by the local authorities. But, as the idea grew, it soon became clear that it was impossible to take further steps without involving the neighbouring city of Gorizia.

## Two dots on the map

Gorizia is a small city on the crossroads between Latin, Slavic and Germanic culture, and it was the centre of a vast and flourishing region for centuries. The First World War, with the battles of Isonzo, brought the first divisions and conflicts to the area. When the borders were redrawn after the Second World War, the region was divided between Italy and Yugoslavia. With Gorizia assigned to Italy, the eastern part of the territory found itself

without a city centre. The authorities solved the problem by building a new city right next to the old one and Nova Gorica, meaning “the new Gorizia”, was thus born. The fascinating and historically rare process of creating a new urban settlement defined Nova Gorica as a young, vibrant city, full of hope, potential and opportunities. But, at the same time, the new urban centre remained tragically cut off from part of its roots, a large Slovenian community that remained in Italy, forming today’s Slovenian national minority, and the process of building a new city, which involves much more than simply paving roads, remains unfinished after 70 years. The feeling of being unable to fully evolve and express its identity is a continual source of frustration for Nova Gorica.

Gorizia lacks neither roots nor a sense of identity – quite the contrary. The city’s glorious past is a reason for pride but also a heavy burden, which the inhabitants, becoming fewer and older, are no longer able to carry. Economic decline, a brain drain and negative demographic trends have weakened the community.

Both Nova Gorica and Gorizia are powerful historical images in the Italian and Slovenian political ideologies. The cities were glorified and idealised as strongholds on the ethnic border and, to a certain extent, they still are, but in the political reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they are merely small dots on a far corner of the map. ECoC may be a way of curing this condition.

## “GO! 2025”

The first draft of the Nova Gorica bid is dated 2016. In 2017 the municipality of Nova Gorica formed a working group of artists and cultural managers. Soon a similar, but smaller, working group was established in Gorizia. Neda Rusjan Bric took charge of the bidding process. Born and raised in the region, Rusjan Bric is a successful theatre and film actress, playwright and director. She has worked in national and international co-productions all over Europe, but much of her work evolves around the border, around stories and events that define the specific heritage of the multilingual and multicultural territory, and around personalities, such as the celebrated actress Nora Gregor, the Rusjan brothers – flight pioneers – and the priest poet Simon Gregorčič. She is deeply convinced that centuries of a common past, despite the ferocious divisions brought upon the population by two world wars and authoritarian regimes, can be a solid foundation for the common future of the two cities: “Nova Gorica is the city, aspiring to the title, but we couldn’t imagine this process without Gorizia. It would be like missing an important half. Bidding for the ECoC title is difficult by itself and we are fully aware that the cross-border element will make our work even harder, but at the

same time, we see this common effort as a clear and concrete expression of the European idea.”

The working title of the candidacy is “GO! 2025”. GO is the acronym that appears on vehicle number plates on both sides of the border. This abbreviation of the name “Gorica” and the name “Gorizia” transforms into an exclamation, which encourages both cities to go across, go further, go upwards and move toward a common future. It does not get more European than this.

### In the shadow of the Berlin wall ...

Gorizia and Nova Gorica share a history of divisions, hatred and suspicion. With the rest of Europe, they live a dangerous present, haunted by the ghosts of nationalism that rise from the ashes, but they have also inherited a tradition of collaboration, which goes well beyond peaceful cohabitation.

In the years after the Second World War, while presidents, generals and secretaries were preaching about victory and freedom and toasting a new Europe, a group of children met in front of the Nova Gorica train station, an Austro-Hungarian building overlooking the new border. Their parents had fought a terrible war, standing on opposite sides of the border. The children found a ball and played with it, tossing it over the barbed wire fence. A few feet away, people would walk along the border for hours, hoping to catch a glimpse of relatives and friends who, by twists of fate, had remained on “the other side”. In May 2004, the European Commission chose the very same spot, the barbed wire playground, to celebrate the enlarging of the European Union.

The mayors of Nova Gorica and Gorizia had removed the fence between the two cities months earlier, in February 2004. People celebrated the event by passing a giant red ball over the disappearing border, and the international press described the event as the fall of “the little Berlin wall”. The comparison may be suggestive, but it is wrong. There has never been a wall on the border between the cities, although it was technically the line dividing the so-called western and eastern blocs. From the early 1950s people from both sides have been able to cross the border freely and legally, and soon a border economy flourished. Meat, bread, wine, milk, gasoline and cigarettes travelled from Yugoslavia to Italy. Rice, washing powder, coffee, jeans and LPs went in the opposite direction.

But there was more to this than just shopping. While the Cold War was at its peak in Europe, people from Gorizia and Nova Gorica managed to forge a peculiar alliance, which is the foundation for today’s common ECoC ambition.

## ... and under the Berlin spotlight

In 1950 US President Harry S. Truman ordered the development of the hydrogen bomb, in response to the detonation of the Soviet Union's first atomic bomb a year earlier. In Nova Gorica 5,000 people gathered near the border in Rožna Dolina (Val di Rose) and demanded to be allowed into Italy. The soldiers gave in to the pressure and people rushed across, visited their relatives, and went shopping. Apparently, there was a severe shortage of brooms in Yugoslavia during that period, so almost everybody bought one, and the event became known as "the march of the brooms". In 1955, eight communist countries signed the Warsaw Pact. In the Goriška region, local inhabitants on both sides of the border received their first "prepustnice" or "lasciapassare" passes, which allowed them to cross the border regularly.

In 1965 the first US combat troops arrived in Vietnam and, in Gorizia, two old friends met. The mayor of Gorizia, Michele Martina, and the mayor of Nova Gorica, Jožko Štrukelj, who knew each other from school in the pre-war period, signed a treaty of collaboration between the municipalities. Two years later Willy Brandt invited Martina to Berlin. He addressed an international conference with a speech about "a common cross-border city". To address such a topic at a time when Europe and the world were still hopelessly divided was a huge step forward, but politicians managed this step, because they were inspired by the people. Sports and culture united associations from both sides in common projects and initiatives. Hundreds of events took place in the decades after the war. Among these were a regional singing festival, which annually united more than a hundred choirs from Slovenia and Italy, and the "march of friendship", a large annual sports event that opened the borders on a Saturday in spring. Italians and Slovenians crossed freely, without even showing their documents – a Schengen experience long before anyone even dreamt about a Europe with no border control. The first march of friendship took place in 1976, nine years before the Schengen Agreement was even signed.

Slovenia became independent in 1991, entered the EU in 2004, and became part of the Schengen area in 2007. In these new circumstances, when cross-border projects were no longer an exception, but the rule, the region managed to simultaneously remain a step ahead and fall dangerously behind.

## The step behind: casinos, shops and full plates

While Europe was changing, the border economy in the Goriška region was slowly disappearing. On both sides, losing the benefits of the most open border between Eastern and Western Europe was a painful blow to ent-

preneurs and shopkeepers. Exchanging knowledge, experiences, market reach and technology on both sides of the border could have elevated the cooperation to a completely new level, well beyond jeans and washing powder. But this never happened.

The open border and the new financial and legal possibilities offered by the EU could have developed the tradition of common sports and cultural projects even further. However, this never happened. There is no Slovenian soccer team playing on an Italian playground. There are no crowds from Gorizia attending concerts in Slovenia. There is no prominent bookshop selling books in both languages, or a cinema showing films with both Italian and Slovenian subtitles. People do cross the border, but they mostly do it to visit the casinos, restaurants and shops. The only difference is that large international chain stores, rather than small home-based shop owners, now collect the profits.

With the fence gone, the two cities could form a unique urban area, but only one cycling path crosses the border and the municipalities are not able to develop common traffic and infrastructure solutions. Perhaps the best example of how cross-border cooperation does not work, despite good intentions and frequent declarations of friendship, is the maternity ward. The state closed the facility in Gorizia due to the low birth rates, and the hospital in Nova Gorica, only 500 metres from the border, could have easily taken over. The local authorities tried hard to make this happen, but families in Gorizia instead chose hospitals located further away, in Monfalcone and Udine, not because of mistrust or prejudice, but because of the huge administrative problems that arise for Italian mothers if they give birth in Slovenia.

## The step ahead: a unique European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

Health is one of the main topics of the regional European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Three urban communities, Nova Gorica, Gorizia and Šempeter-Vrtojba, began the preparatory work for the establishment of the EGTC in late 2009 and the tool became operational in 2011. In December 2015, the European Commission specifically recognised the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) for the development of the cross-border territory of Gorizia, Nova Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba, with a total grant of 10 million Euros.

The EGTC GO was assigned the role of intermediate authority, responsible for implementing the ITI in the territory of the three municipalities. The EGTC GO has the authority to intervene on the territory of both states

to implement common projects and will implement the common strategy in its authority as sole beneficiary, consolidating the new concept of territorial cooperation, which represents the most advanced kind of cross-border cooperation. This is indeed the first European case of the implementation of a common strategy by a sole beneficiary. To put it simply: classical cross-border projects assign funds to at least two beneficiaries, one in each state, and each beneficiary spends its own budget. With this new approach, there is a common wallet and a common management process. The concrete and, at same time, symbolic starting project is a cycling path that crosses the border dozens of times. This is a simple endeavour that, without the sole beneficiary concept, would become a bureaucratic nightmare. As the director of EGTC GO, Sandra Sodini explains: “One thing is each to conceptualise our own water purifier and then sit down comparing and coordinating plants. On the other hand: choosing the much more rational and economical solution of building one common depurator demands much more: a joint reflection and a final, operational consensus. It is indeed a mental revolution.”

## The “mental revolution” as one goal of the candidacy

But can we do it? The two mayors respond: “Yes, we can.”

“There is no city in Italy that has tighter and more vibrant cross-border relationships than Gorizia. The same goes for Nova Gorica in Slovenia,” stresses the mayor of Gorizia, Rodolfo Ziberna. His counterpart, Klemen Miklavič, who took office in December 2018 and immediately made ECoC one of his main political goals, points out: “We are in a crucial moment, when we can restore the historical integrity of our territory, respecting and preserving its multiculturalism. We can achieve this through functional projects.” ECoC is one of them.

It is crucial, says Neda Rusjan Bric, that ECoC creates a legacy and helps to form new foundations for the common, successful future of Nova Gorica and Gorizia. The whole process of creating goals and content is based on a cross-border mentality, joint events and participation: workshops, public debates and open calls involve citizens from both sides: “We do not want just a long festival that slips into oblivion, when the lights go off. We live in a region of shared values. But the ugly truth is we do not even speak each other’s language and our young people, who live and study only a few metres apart from each other, converse in English. Our capital of culture wants to change that.”

# Out into the Region?

## The Inclusion of Rural Areas in the Initiative “European Capital of Culture”

Kristina Jacobsen

“European Cultural Region”. “European Main Region of Culture”. “European Main Cultural Region”. That or something similar is what the EU initiative, which in reality bears the name “European Capital of Culture”, would have to be called if it were to focus primarily on a region or a rural area. The fact that this is not the case became clear leading up to the RUHR.2010 European Capital of Culture, which was officially dealt with in the European Commission as “Essen for the Ruhr Area” (“Essen für das Ruhrgebiet”). As far as the naming was concerned, Brussels gave in (cf. Mittag, 2012, p. 68), but a programme for the entire region was nevertheless realised. In a way, each of the 53 cities in the Ruhr area was Capital of Culture for one week—and Essen, as the official title holder, was Capital of Culture for the whole of 2010. Even then there was discussion: Does the concept of the Capital of Culture dilute with the spatial expansion? After all, the initiative in the early 1980s explicitly created the Capital of Culture as a “model of urban culture”, “following the long tradition of a singular European urbanity, which architecturally brought the idea of Europe to the attention of its citizens and the world” (Schwencke, 2010, p. 329).

But the programme managers of RUHR.2010 wanted more, and were ahead of their time in this respect. They created a diverse and ambitious Capital of Culture programme that went well beyond the EU’s selection criteria at the time. And even if it had not been foreseen until then, the subsequent European Capitals of Culture now wanted more and more to include the rural areas surrounding them in their agenda. EU legislation also expanded its requirements in this respect: While the 1999 Capital of Culture Decision (see Link 1) still succinctly states, “Cities may choose to involve their surrounding region in their programme” (Art. 5), the 2006 Decision (see Link 2) recognises greater effectiveness through regional enlargement: “By enabling cities to involve their surrounding region (...), a wider public can be reached and the impact of the event can be amplified” (Recital 3). The latter Decision also seeks to ensure that cultural policy strategies are linked at the level of the city / region / state: “The programme shall be con-

sistent with any national cultural strategy or policy of the Member State or, where applicable under a Member State’s institutional arrangements within the institutional framework of a Member State, any regional cultural strategies (...)” (Art. 3,3).

## A New Relationship Between City and Regions

The expansion of EU requirements is also due to the Budapest Declaration, which in 2005 was the result of the project “European Capitals of Culture in Germany and Hungary” with five international colloquia (Jacobsen, 2009, p. 45). It says:

“Future European Capitals of Culture should demonstrate that they have the capacity to use cultural instruments to create solutions to social development problems in Europe, which are also exemplary for other cities, particularly (...) in dealing with the new relationship between cities and regions.” (Swing, 2005, p. 38)

The “new relationship between cities and regions” became more of a topic in the subsequent Capitals of Culture because it offered them a lot of advantages:

- more inhabitants can be included in the programme
- art in rural areas can be a fruitful extension of the city’s cultural offer
- the number of sights that attract tourists can be increased
- possibly there are “unearthed” treasures in the surrounding area that can enrich the cultural landscape
- border regions can enrich the intercultural exchange of cultural institutions, organisations and artists.

As far as the fear mentioned above—that the urban idea of the Capital of Culture could be softened by the inclusion of regions is concerned—the final Resolution of 2014 (cf. Link 3), which stretches until the provisional end of Initiative 2033, makes a direct reference to it and clarifies that “the title should continue to be reserved to cities, irrespective of their size, but in order to reach a wider public and amplify the impact, it should also be possible, as before, for the cities concerned to involve their surrounding area” (recital 12) and that “where a candidate city involves its surrounding area, the application shall be made under the name of that city” (Art. 4,1).

## Potentials of the Rural Area

The fact that the legal development of the EU cultural policy described above has led to a strengthening of the importance of regions within the “European Capital of Culture” initiative, is part of the EU’s overall regional policy. The diverse potential of rural areas has long been recognised and appropriate instruments of support<sup>1</sup> have been set up. The European Commission identified the most important goals and challenges in 2008 in its working paper “Regions 2020” (see Link 4). Overall, regional policy, but also other EU policies, have the following advantages for rural development:

- Economic advantages: The objective is to strengthen the competitiveness and infrastructure of the regions. For reasons of cohesion, it is also a question of strengthening the weaker peripheral regions of the Member States (e.g. by promoting and developing “Euroregions” or “European regions”).
- Political-administrative advantages: In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, regional administrations are considered to be more efficient because they have more expertise in their areas of responsibility and are closer to citizens. Since the 1980s it has also been postulated in the European Studies and Social Sciences that the nation states are too small to solve the big problems and too big to solve the small problems.<sup>2</sup>

The Maastricht Treaty (1992), Article 198a, therefore established the Committee of the Regions (CoR) as a consultative body of the EU. But also beyond the EU, initiatives were developed during this time which wanted to give the regions in Europe a voice, such as

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1 The main financial instruments of EU regional policy are: ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), ESF (European Social Fund), Cohesion Fund, EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), JASPERS (Joint Assistance in Supporting Projects in European Regions), etc.

2 See Bell, 1988: B3: “The common problem, I believe, is this: the nation-state is becoming too small for the big problems of life, and too big for the small problems of life. It is too small for the big problems because there are no effective international mechanisms to deal with such things as capital flows, commodity imbalances, the loss of jobs, and the several demographic tidal waves that will be developing in the next twenty years. It is too big for the small problems because the flow of power to a national political center means that the center becomes increasingly unresponsive to the variety and diversity of local needs. In short, there is a mismatch of scale.”

the Assembly of European Regions (founded in 1985) or the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (founded in 1994 as the successor institution of the Permanent Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe).

- Social and societal benefits: Synergies can be achieved by developing common approaches to address Europe-wide challenges such as rural depopulation. This can go far beyond economic development: Often, it is not the economic situation but rather the sense of belonging to a certain identity and mentality that decides where people want to live (urban example: Berlin).
  
- Cultural policy advantages: Europe’s cultural heritage does not end at the borders of the nation states, but rather in the (also cross-border) regions. A counter-argument against EU cultural policy, especially from France,<sup>3</sup> is that the regions of Europe are the true carriers of European culture, and not the EU.

## A Europe of the Regions

The application of cities, aiming for the title of European Capital of Culture, reflect the economic, social and cultural policy approaches of a Europe of Regions. The candidate cities Sønderborg (for the title of European Capital of Culture 2017) and Görlitz (for 2010) put the common cultural area with their neighbouring countries in the foreground. An obvious move to fulfil the EU criterion of the “European dimension”—but in both cases this was not enough to convince the selection jury.

The city of Zittau in the border tripoint has similar interests with its application. The other candidate cities, which are aiming for the title of the next European Capital of Culture in Germany (2025), also want to integrate the surrounding region. Examples include Hildesheim, where the region counts for more than twice as many inhabitants as the city itself, and Nuremberg, which would like to include the entire Nuremberg metropolitan region in its Capital of Culture programme, which in turn has a larger area than the Federal State of Hesse.

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3 Inter alia, in the author’s interviews with cultural policy decision-makers in the Marseille-Provence region; to date unpublished.

## OUT INTO THE REGION?

For all cities that want to extend their Capital of Culture programme far beyond the city limits, it is advisable to look at the regional references of successful Capitals of Culture in recent years. These include the cultural hiking trail around the city of San Sebastián (Capital of Culture 2015), the programme and venues of the “Baroque Summer” in the Pilsen region (Capital of Culture 2016) and the new museum network in the Midjulant region (from the Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017).

The text is based on a lecture at the Cultural Policy Colloquium “A More Lovely Country?” (“Ein schöner Land?”) at the Evangelische Akademie Loccum, February 2018.

## Links

- Link 1: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31999D1419&from=DE>
- Link 2: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32006D1622&from=DE>
- Link 3: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32014D0445&from=DE>
- Link 4: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/working/regions2020/pdf/regions2020\\_de.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/regions2020/pdf/regions2020_de.pdf)

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# 4

## Preparation Processes for Designated ECoCs



# European Capitals of Culture in Lithuania

## Vilnius lessons for Kaunas

Audronė Rimkutė

### The programme, legacy and lessons of Vilnius ECO C 2009

Lithuania's capital city of Vilnius was nominated as the ECO C 2009 on 14 November 2005. It was the first city from the former Soviet countries to be designated an ECO C. At that time, the ECO C programme was the largest and most ambitious cultural project ever implemented in Lithuania.

2009 was a special year for Lithuania. The country celebrated its millennium anniversary (the name of Lithuania was first mentioned in the Annals of Quedlinburg in 1009). So, the Vilnius Eco C 2009 programme was part of the festive events that took place in the country that year. The slogan of Vilnius ECO C 2009 was "Culture Live" which claimed that art and culture are constantly changing and constitute an ever-developing process that involves everyone in the action. The execution of the programme was entrusted to the public body VEKS (the abbreviation of the Lithuanian name "Vilnius European Capital of Culture") established for that purpose by the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture and the Vilnius Municipality.

In 2007, VEKS published a handbook for the Vilnius ECO C 2009 programme. The programme comprised seven parts: special projects (opening ceremony, celebration of the millennium, Street Music Day, Let There be a Night, LUX – International Light Festival, Art in Unusual Sites, closing ceremony); conventions and conferences; Create: the European art programme; Communicate: the Culture (Re)Discovery Programme; Remember: the Live History programme; Enjoy: the people programme; and the Ambassadors programme. The programme foresaw the participation of many prominent artists from Lithuania and abroad, and it also had to involve residents and guests of Vilnius, as well as emigrants (Vilnius, 2007, pp. 7–11).

The programme was interesting and ambitious and was positively evaluated by Lithuanian cultural operators and professionals, yet its implementation was not smooth and received many negative comments in the Lithuanian press. VEKS was accused of non-transparency, the protection of

friends and wasteful spending. The situation became especially tense at the end of 2008, when the political elections brought a new majority to the parliament and government. The new Minister of Culture began to check and to criticise VEKS' management decisions, and also assuming the responsibility to cut the budget (Širvinskis, 2009). Finally, the ministry stopped the Vilnius ECoC financing and declared its suspicions that VEKS had used the funds it had already received irresponsibly. The clash between the ministry and VEKS ended with the dismissal of the VEKS manager and the cutting of the Vilnius ECoC budget for 2009. Those project managers who had already been selected by VEKS to implement their projects published two open letters to the Lithuanian Parliament, the President, and the leaders of political parties and expressed their unhappiness with the decision of the Minister of Culture (Crisafulli, 2010, pp. 68–69).

The new managers of VEKS had to solve many problems: negative public opinion about the organisation because of the lack of transparency, budget cuts, and the need to reconsider the Vilnius ECoC 2009 programme. The problems increased when, in January 2009, the Lithuanian national airline, FlyLAL, went bankrupt and flying directly to Vilnius from some of Europe's main destinations became impossible. In February 2009, Vilnius Airport served 42% fewer passengers than at the same time in the previous year (vz. lt, 2009). The bankruptcy of FlyLaL and the increased VAT rate that was due to the economic crisis had a negative impact on hotel business and made the ambitious goal of Vilnius ECoC 2009 to increase the number of tourists in Vilnius by 15% impossible. According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics, hotel occupancy rates in 2009 showed a 21.8% decrease from 2008.

## Links between former, existing and future ECoCs

Nevertheless, Vilnius ECoC was proclaimed as successful at the end of 2009 (BNS, 2009). According to the data of VEKS, in 2009 the Vilnius ECoC offered around 1,500 events that were attended by 1.5 million people. One of the most prominent projects was ARTscape. The project introduced unique contemporary visual arts, jazz and cinema representatives from 12 ECoCs. Their works were presented together with the works of 12 representatives of the same fields of art in Lithuania. The purpose of this intensive programme, which lasted for 18 months, was to build cultural links between former, existing and future ECoCs.

Some of the biggest events of the Vilnius ECoC have now become annual ones, namely Street Music Day, Culture night "Let There Be Night", and the contest for the title of Lithuanian Capital of Culture. The Street Music Day takes place every year on the first Saturday of May. On this day, thousands

of people go onto the streets to play jazz, rock, the classics, folk music etc. This tradition has also become popular in other Lithuanian cities. Culture Night, launched in 2007, takes place every year on a June evening in many Lithuanian cities. During Culture Night, streets, parks, and squares of cities transform into dance schools under the open sky, temporary cinemas, theatre stages and music performances. People can dance, listen to music, and watch movies while sitting on the grass free of charge. Cities are decorated with installations, and night-time classical, rock and organ concerts are performed in churches and museums.

### Cultural needs of the community

The Lithuanian Capital of Culture programme began in 2008. The Lithuanian Ministry of Culture organises the contest and selects one Lithuanian town (with the exception of the capital, Vilnius) every three years as the Lithuanian Capital of Culture. The town is selected after experts evaluate the Capital of Culture projects submitted by the municipalities. The main assessment criteria are: innovativeness of the project and its relevance to the development of the town and the surrounding region, relevance of the project to the cultural needs of the community of the town and the surrounding region, and integration of the project with other major events in the town (Lithuanian Republic Ministry of Culture, 2019). The contest is organised every three years and cultural capitals for three consecutive years are announced as a result. Selected projects receive partial financial support from the Ministry of Culture.

To summarise, Vilnius ECoC 2009 initiated several valuable cultural traditions in Lithuanian cities and left important lessons about the management of large-scale projects. First, it has shown that there is a lack of management competencies at the highest level of cultural governance. According to the ex post evaluation of the European Commission experts, “it is essential but can be challenging to establish an appropriate organizational structure and build a team with the appropriate skills to implement the cultural programme” (European Commission, 2010, p. 5). In the case of Vilnius, an appropriate organisational structure was not found and that led to difficulties for the cultural programme and the overall impact of the ECoC event. As is stated in an interview with the former programme director of VEKS, the Vilnius City Council and the Lithuanian Ministry of Culture had long negotiations about what kind of organisation should administer the programme and in the end they created an institution that could not perform the necessary functions. And, meanwhile, the project lost the time needed for preparation (Bernardinai.lt, 2010).

The second Vilnius ECOC project lesson is that during the preparation phase of the programme, it is necessary to get support from all political parties, as well as their agreement and commitment to fulfilling financial obligations, as a change of the majority in the parliament or city council after an election can hamper the execution of the programme. In 2009, the Vilnius ECoC programme budget was less than half of what had been planned.

The third lesson is the need for the best possible internal and external communication about the ECoC programme and the need for transparency of all operations. The biggest failure of Vilnius ECoC 2009 according to its programme director was that the project was publicly discredited (Bernardinai.lt, 2010). The press accused the whole cultural sector of being corrupt and the Vilnius ECoC team was unable to resist the public assault.

The last lesson is that the residents of the city must be familiar with the ECoC project and must engage with it. The director of Vilnius ECoC 2009 stated that the Kaunas ECoC 2022 team must establish the best possible contacts with the residents and communities of the city: “If the people of the city support the idea, everything will be very good” (Zemkauskas, 2018).

## What did Kaunas learn from Vilnius?

Kaunas was nominated as the ECoC 2022 on 20 December 2017. The programme of Kaunas ECoC 2022 has the slogan “from temporary to contemporary capital” and envisions city change in two directions: culture (to create a new story for Kaunas) and community (to create a capacity-building and happiness-building programme for the whole city).

Kaunas was the provisional capital of Lithuania from 1919 to 1940 after Vilnius was annexed by Poland. These years were the “golden age” for Kaunas architecture as many prominent Kaunas modernist buildings were built at that time and Kaunas transformed itself from a humble provincial town “into a comfortable, energetic, human scale Western city” (Architektūros fondas, 2017, p. 6). In less than 20 years, about 12,000 buildings were built; 7,000 of them were residences. Kaunas became an example of rapid urbanisation and modernisation. Lithuanian historian of architecture M. Drėmaitė described the buildings of the interwar Kaunas as “architecture of optimism” as they reflect “the values and aspirations inspired by an optimistic belief in an independent future” (Drėmaitė, 2018, p. 15).

In 2015, Kaunas was awarded the European Heritage Label, which confirmed the importance of Kaunas modernism for the creation of today’s Europe. Forty-four architectural objects of interwar modernism were included in the European Heritage Label list. However, many buildings on this list are today not used or abandoned. This fact is identified in the Kaunas

ECoC 2022 bid book as one of the challenges to be solved: “the city has a unique heritage, but its citizens lack knowledge and emotional attachment to it”. So, the programme aims “to initiate international research and the establishment of an interpretation centre to showcase our recent architectural heritage – namely the Modernist Movement, and put it into a European/global context” (VšĮ Kaunas2022, 2017, p. 9).

Another prominent feature of interwar Kaunas was its multiethnicity. According to the census data of 1923, 58.97% of the city residents were Lithuanian, 27.09% were Jews, 4.54% were Poles, 3.15% were Russians and 0.6% were Germans (Kaunas, 2006, p. 24). All these diverse ethnic groups had their presses, schools, churches, charities, sports, and professional and political organisations (Laukaitytė, 2010, pp. 245–247). According to the census data of 1931, there were six Jewish organisations that united 27,907 Kaunas residents, the Germans had nine organisations with 1,139 members, the Poles had 12 organisations with 2,062 Kaunas residents, and the Russians had 15 organisations with 2,330 members (Puidokienė, 2012, p. 49). However, today’s Kaunas residents do not know much about this aspect of Kaunas history. The Kaunas ECoC bid book calls this fact “collective amnesia” and identifies it as the second challenge to be addressed. The programme aims “to revive the diverse memory of Kaunas and its citizens, especially regarding an openness towards European values and multiethnicity. To reconcile the past and present to benefit the future” (VšĮ Kaunas2022, 2017, p. 9).

The history of interwar Kaunas as the temporary capital of Lithuania was always a matter of pride for Kaunas citizens. However, as stated in the Kaunas ECoC bid book, this nostalgic memory also has a negative side because the city did not find its contemporary identity. Hence the slogan of the Kaunas ECoC project, “from temporary to contemporary capital”, and the goal “to create a new story for Kaunas”. This new story will be “a myth for our City that it has never had before. The myth will employ all the qualities and trivialities of the genre to appeal to the broadest possible audience from children to adults” (VšĮ Kaunas2022, 2017, p. 8).

The other two challenges that the Kaunas ECoC programme identifies are “weak cross-sectoral cooperation and insufficient bonds among culture, education, business, and social sciences” and the “absence of community activism and lack of belief that all individuals matter” (VšĮ Kaunas2022, 2017, p. 9). Kaunas lacks collaborative spirit and practices, a unifying narrative, civic engagement and participation in culture.

## Local capacity building and extending the European network

To solve all the above-mentioned challenges, the Kaunas ECOC 2022 project encompasses six special platforms and two strategic horizontal programmes: The Mythical Beast of Kaunas (a platform for the creation of a unifying narrative of the city), The Tempo Academy of Culture (a platform for capacity building and further programming), Modernism for the Future (a heritage platform), Memory office (a memory platform), Designing Happiness (a public space platform), Emerging Kaunas (a youth platform), We, The People (a community platform), and Wake It, Shake It (a cultural networking platform). The overall 2017–2023 programme is divided into four phases: (1) ignition (2017–2018) is dedicated to capacity building, deepening local partnerships and extending European networks; (2) agitation (2019–2020) is focused on community involvement in all processes and pilot projects with public events; (3) explosion (2021–2022) involves all partners and communities working to prepare and implement the programme for 2022; (4) during legacy (2023–beyond) the principles of co-creation, co-working and community inclusion adjusted to the local cultural sector during the first three periods will become a sustainable model for Kaunas' cultural development (VšĮ Kaunas2022, 2017, p. 25).

The first phase of the project (ignition) is already complete and its results were reported to the panel of independent experts appointed by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. Since 2017 the initiative group of the Kaunas ECoC project has grown and has become a public body named Kaunas2022 which has a team of 34 persons (the CEO, curators, coordinators, and managers) and 100 volunteers (VšĮ Kaunas2022, 2018, pp. 17–18). As recognised by the panel of European Commission experts in the first monitoring report, the team successfully performs project tasks and

“the preparations for the ECOC year are on the right track with many good achievements such as interesting artistic programme with sound European dimension, strong capacity building initiatives with the Tempo Academy for Culture, the ECOC Forum, the Fluxus lab and agents, and the overall involvement of the communities.” (European Commission, 2018, p. 9)

So, it seems that Kaunas has learnt the first and fourth lessons of Vilnius ECoC 2009 and has managed to build the right organisation and to engage the city's residents.

The official website of Kaunas ECoC 2022 (<https://kaunas2022.eu/en/>) shows that the communication and transparency lesson has been learnt as well. The Kaunas ECoC team regularly publishes financial and activity reports, experts' evaluations, job offers, strategic documents etc. The frequent reporting consumes energy and time, but it is the best way to avoid accusations of wasteful spending and non-transparency, like those that destroyed the reputation of the Vilnius ECoC 2009. And even the Kaunas ECoC team office, called the "open culture office", with large front windows and transparent partitions, seems to embody the ideas of openness and transparency.

The last remaining lesson is the approval of the programme by politicians of all the main parties and their commitment to it. The municipal elections of 2019 and the actions of the new majority in the Kaunas city council regarding the ECoC programme will show whether this lesson was learnt not only by the Kaunas ECoC but also by politicians.

The first Lithuanian project of the ECoC programme – Vilnius 2009 – displayed the many shortcomings of Lithuanian cultural policy in general. Culture in Lithuanian politics has never been a priority. Since the regaining of independence in 1991, Lithuania has not prepared any national strategy of culture that could be adopted by parliament and could serve as long-term policy guidelines. Cultural commitments and programmes initiated by one government are often not continued by others after an election. This feature of Lithuanian politics was one of the major reasons why the Vilnius ECoC 2009 was not a great success. The economic crisis of 2009–2010 and ineffective management were the other two reasons why the programme did not achieve all of its goals. Nevertheless, the Vilnius ECoC 2009 left an important legacy for all Lithuanian cities, one which shows that culture matters and can enrich cities' lives.

The Kaunas ECoC 2022 started its activities with the Vilnius experience in mind. Its success, however, depends not only on the efforts of the ECoC team but also on political support and a common Lithuanian cultural approach.

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# People are the City

## The outreach of Rijeka 2020

Irena Kregar-Šegota, Tanja Kalčić and Nenad Antolović

Rijeka is the first Croatian city to have been designated a European Capital of Culture (ECoC). Rijeka's candidacy and the implementation of the project were prepared and delivered under the new rules for ECoC that apply up to 2033. These rules provide more explicit and measurable criteria regarding contributions to long-term strategy, capacity to deliver, cultural and artistic content, the European dimension, outreach and management.

After providing the context, and describing the preparation and delivery of the Rijeka 2020 project, our paper will focus on the segments of our programme that aim to reach or involve as many different groups as possible in an initiative that has the power to sustainably transform the city in both tangible and intangible ways.

Port of Diversity:  
a deep-seated narrative as the essence of the project

One fundamental and essential question for every ECoC city is the narrative about the city that will connect all the stakeholders in the city and increase participation, give the project focus and coherence, and serve as a story that links the past, present and future of the city, and connects it with the rest of Europe.

In the case of Rijeka, a number of public discussions took place during the bidding process, where cultural stakeholders expressed the opinion that a working group should be formed in order to propose a concept of the candidacy as a fundamental narrative for the further development of the project and its programme. Following the conclusion of the public debates, the city's Department of Culture established an expert working group, which presented a concept proposal in June 2014. The process of defining the concept enabled the largest possible citizen participation: the concept proposal was publicly discussed with artists and cultural workers in Rijeka, and citizens were invited to actively contribute through e-consultations to help determine the specific elements linked to the concept themes.

The main theme of Rijeka's narrative for ECoC 2020 is *Port of Diversity*. A port is a place of welcome, a point of encounter, an entrance and a shelter: the Rijeka 2020 Cultural Programme, which runs from 2016 to 2021, is a map of all entrances to Rijeka, extending into Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, Croatia and Europe, embracing many choices, and exploring diversity for the constructive reinvention of our social relations. The theme of diversity is explored by means of three central clusters, "Water", "Work" and "Migrations", which are linked to issues such as biodiversity, environmental challenges and climate change, new forms of work and production, and attitudes about shifting populations and mobility. These sub-themes reflect values that are deeply woven into the historical and contemporary identity of Rijeka, but they can also be traced to the very foundation of the European Union (EU).

Ensuring that an ECoC project has a European dimension is the aspect of the project with which cities have the most problems. While a European dimension is demonstrated by cooperation with partners from Europe in the form of residencies, co-productions, co-creations etc, it can be even more significantly highlighted by linking the ECoC programme with important European themes. These themes are the axes of a concept that reflect the historical identity of the city but are also incorporated into the EU's very foundations of multiculturalism, diversity, tolerance, openness to dialogue, cooperation, ecological concerns and social standards. However, regardless of political will or democratic tradition, these values are never guaranteed once and for all, and must be defended with deliberation, evaluation and representation from the artistic and cultural perspectives.

## Engaging the stakeholders: from awareness-raising to active involvement

Rijeka's cultural strategy presented before and as preparation for the bidding for ECoC in Croatia highlights four main goals: to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector, both institutional and independent, through improved infrastructure and capacities for management; to increase the quality and availability of cultural products and to open the sector to the public; to promote cross-sector networking, with an emphasis on linking with the educational sector, creative industries and the economy in general; and, finally, to establish Rijeka as a "city of culture and creativity" at the national and international levels.

The strategy also pertinently identified the ECoC project as having the power to bring together the local community around a common vision of

the development of the city, boosting local pride and creating new links in society. From the very beginning, the goal was to include as many stakeholders as possible in the bidding process, to inform them about the ECoC initiative, to make different stakeholders part of the project, and to inspire them into further action during and after the project. Public discussions about the concept of the bid and the challenges that it brings, as well as promotional and participatory activities, prompted massive and valuable feedback. Citizens' suggestions were taken into consideration and included in both the City Cultural Strategy and in the framework of Rijeka's bid. This input helped to redefine the candidacy slogan and provided some direction for the programme design. During the three years of the bidding process, some 130,000 people were involved, by means of 16 public discussions in Rijeka and other cities in the Primorje and Gorski Kotar County, online consultations, and nine presentations for specific groups (economic sector, educational institution, and cultural operators). A number of promotional cultural activities were organised in collaboration with kindergartens and elementary schools, as well as a series of art workshops dealing with the three themes of the *Port of Diversity*. The student population was motivated via projects created in collaboration with the university and the Student Cultural Centre. Examples of other artistic projects hosted during the bidding process are a photo-contest in collaboration with a local photo-club, a DJ contest in cooperation with the Rijeka branch of the Croatian Musicians Union, a "New Carnival" project (a reinterpretation of the traditional Rijeka carnival), action with street artists, and the Ambassadors of Rijeka programme, which included more than a hundred artists, intellectuals, politicians, sportspersons and others who expressed their support for the bid in short videos. Particular attention was paid to online communication, both via the website and social media channels.

Informing and involving citizens and different stakeholders is crucial to ensuring that they "own" the project. An early online survey showed that 68% of informants were aware of the fact that Rijeka was bidding for ECoC status, and 86% thought it was a good idea, while 76% thought that Rijeka had a good chance of becoming an ECoC. Citizens also thought that the title would bring more events to Rijeka, improve its image and create new jobs.

A greater challenge, however, was to sustain the communication in the long term and to manage diverse and numerous expectations. Citizens asked to be involved and wanted the process to be transparent, but also requested strong leadership with a clear mandate to guarantee the success of the project.

All the activities carried out during the bidding period were the seeds of what became the Rijeka 2020 Programme Plus, which will remain one of the most important legacies of Rijeka 2020, apart from the new infrastructure and an ambitious artistic and cultural programme in 2020.

Programme Plus complements the artistic and cultural activities implemented since 2016 (as pilot and audience development activities), as well as those planned for 2020. Programme Plus includes numerous activities in the new cultural centre RiHub, the new programme strands “Civil Initiatives” and “Green Wave”, specifically designed to support citizens’ initiatives, the “Cultural Diplomacy” and “Classroom” strands, and other specific actions by means of which the whole ECoC project reaches different stakeholders and citizens outside of the traditional artistic and cultural audiences.

Programme Plus was created as a platform, a set of tools and channels to enable citizens’ participation, develop capacities, and connect with international, national and local stakeholders, experts and partnering organisations, not only for the celebrations in 2020 but also for the future. Each programme activity within Rijeka 2020 Programme Plus places different groups of citizens at the centre of the programme, answering the needs that are described in this article.

## Capacity building for the cultural and creative sector

The ECoC project is unique in its size and scope, number of partnerships, budgets, territorial spread and ambitions in general. Rijeka 2020 is the largest cultural project ever to be implemented in Croatia. Very early on in the bid we identified the weaknesses of the cultural sector in terms of its managerial skills in general, and the value of providing capacity building programmes for the future of the sector.

The following needs were identified:

- a) development of structured support for organisations and civil initiatives, in the form of advocacy, co-working space, exchange of expertise, networking assistance and fundraising;
- b) affordable and functionally acceptable performance and working spaces (theatres, concert halls, art studios, facilities for education and training, conferences, meetings, offices, warehouses, etc);
- c) development of sustainable labour models, ie reducing dependence on sole project financing (encouraging social entrepreneurship and creative industries);
- d) involvement in and management of a larger scale project at the EU level;
- e) wider, professional and accessible educational facilities in order to develop optimal knowledge and skills ie professionalism;

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- f) development of effective tools for defining and meeting needs, as well as for attracting and increasing awareness among potential beneficiaries and audiences;
- g) broadening and strengthening partnership networks and developing new international collaborations;
- h) professionalisation of productions and organisation of cultural events.

Since the beginning of the capacity-building programme in February 2017, named “Classroom” and designed for the purpose of building and strengthening the capacities of professional stakeholders in the cultural sector and the wider local community, more than 50 activities have taken place. These activities brought together more than 700 participants, primarily representatives of the cultural sector, but also representatives of the business and tourism sector, as well as students. The activities were planned to meet the needs of the Rijeka 2020 cultural programme, but also to meet the needs of the entire cultural sector, with a view to creating a legacy for the whole project. Most of the activities are designed as a series of ongoing educational programmes. Activities are developed according to the following units: (a) audience development and community engagement, (b) management and leadership in culture, and (c) space and technology.

## RiHub

RiHub was designed as a new cultural centre that would be the epicentre of public visibility of the Rijeka ECoC programme and the Rijeka 2020 activities. Covering 1,200 square metres, it includes a cultural information centre, a co-working area, a media centre, and is the seat of participatory and co-operative ECoC programmes. The centre allows for the hosting of various programme activities at a single location and can thus act as an agent, informing citizens about the ECoC project, as well as encouraging their active inclusion.

## Active citizens in an active city

The participatory programme strands (“Civil Initiatives” and “Green Wave”) aim to ensure the direct inclusion of citizens in the activities of the ECoC project. The basic concept of the programme is to create a platform and a system for providing aid to citizen initiatives. The participation of citizens is encouraged by the formation of the Citizens’ Council, a body that decides

on grants for proposed projects. In this manner, citizens are directly involved in the creation of the ECoC programme and are encouraged to assume direct responsibility for a major segment of the programme and the changes in their city.

The Rijeka 2020 volunteering programme is being developed in cooperation with several local NGOs and the city's Department of Culture. Since Rijeka 2020 LLC is legally not allowed to manage volunteers, the whole volunteering programme is managed by the city's cultural institution, the Croatian Cultural Centre. This will ensure the legacy of the whole volunteering programme.

The volunteering programme within Rijeka 2020 has been given special attention and has been designed to create sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in the year's preparation and activities. Involving volunteers in Rijeka 2020 brings results in terms of strengthening citizens' sense of belonging to the community and awareness of their social contribution to the values created by the project, ensuring greater visibility and accessibility of volunteering programmes in cultural institutions, and promoting volunteering as a positive social value. As part of the project, an educational programme for volunteer management in cultural institutions has been offered to all cultural institutions in Rijeka in order to improve the competencies of workers in cultural institutions for the development of sustainable volunteering programmes and to establish a structured approach to organising volunteering in cultural institutions.

An innovative initiative to reach the private sector is the formation of a business club directly linked with the ECoC project. ECoC "Business Club" was designed as a donor community that brings together businesses, primarily from the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, around the ECoC project. The Business Club has been contributing to the development of culture in the county by funding selected ECoC programmes, but its long-term objective is to stimulate philanthropic investment in projects in the cultural sector.

ECoC "Cultural Diplomacy" is a specially designed programme that contributes to the internationalisation and opening of the city and the county, and aims to create strategic international partnerships, to position Rijeka as a relevant regional centre of cultural policy and management in culture, and to promote Rijeka, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County and Croatia through the targeted mobility of experts in the field of arts and culture, cultural and creative industries, and other sectors related to culture through international events that are co-organised and hosted in Rijeka.

The planned events transversely follow the Rijeka 2020 cultural and artistic programme and create lasting links with international networks and organisations in Europe. They contribute to the development of innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to cooperation, promote the local cultural and art scene, increase transnational mobility, encourage professional de-

velopment and networking, the exchange of experiences, and the knowledge and ideas of artists and cultural workers.

International congresses, conferences and gatherings are organised in cooperation with major European cultural networks and foundations and international organisations, which will bring renowned experts, theoreticians, practitioners and decision makers to Rijeka and Croatia, creating a framework for the exchange of knowledge, policy making and debate on relevant topics in the field of cultural policy, cultural diplomacy, interculturality, cultural rights, and cultural tourism etc. The conferences also add to and complete the activities of the “Classroom” programme, thus strengthening the capacity of the cultural and creative sector as a platform for the exchange of knowledge and the latest trends.

Promotions abroad, with a special emphasis on promotions in cooperation with the diplomatic representations of the Republic of Croatia, beyond the media and the programme activities, focus the attention of the international public on the year 2020 and on Rijeka as a destination, ie the Republic of Croatia as a top quality cultural and tourist destination. Promotions also focus on building a positive image abroad.

Since the bidding period, the local population and civil society in general continue to be involved in the preparation and implementation of Rijeka 2020, including specific activities focused on the younger population (Brickhouse, Toboggan Festival, Civic Education), minorities (cooperation agreements with religious communities, Porto Etno Festival, RoUm project with the Roma community, 27 Neighbourhoods), persons with disabilities (5<sup>th</sup> Ensemble, an educational programme to include people with disabilities in cultural events and spread inclusive practices), and the elderly (Culture 54+; Wikkiwarrior, volunteering programme).

Other examples of working with local communities include the creation of the feminist and LGBTQ culture festival Smoqua with NGO Lori, youth programmes with the Benčić Youth Council, and music programmes with Distune Promotion Association. Rijeka 2020 has also invested in the advancement of local NGOs, with ongoing seminars, conferences, workshops and working practices being offered as part of the “Classroom” programme.

## Benefits in development

Programme Plus participants are regularly consulted for the purposes of programme evaluation and direct feedback. Most of them are already aware of the benefits (professional development and personal growth) gained by involvement in different programmes and are highly motivated to use this unique opportunity.

Davorka Medved, a member of two NGOs in Rijeka, has participated in several Programme Plus activities. She has applied the knowledge and skills gained in her personal development and in the work of the NGOs where she is an active member.

“RiHub venue has become a nursery for innovative and creative work, a place where you can share ideas, start to network and gain some useful knowledge and skills. I manage to apply everything I have learnt, and this makes me happy. For example, after attending one of the conferences, our NGOs developed an idea about a project aimed at the conversion of endangered languages through artificial intelligence. Also, I’ve participated in plenty of educational activities. I would surely emphasise the ongoing educational programme ‘Organisation Development’ which included topics like fundraising sources and techniques, basics for project proposal writing, project cycle management and writing proposals for EU funds, project management as well as continuous mentoring support, and the Branding of Culture international conference where experts with experience in branding discussed the trends and challenges of branding culture, said Medved.”

As the main benefits, Davorka emphasised the widening of her contacts list, the exchange of ideas and a chance for new cooperation, and the direct implementation of things she has learnt to the work of two NGOs where she is an active member.

Josipa Cvetic, an officer from Rijeka, has attended the series of workshops in the participatory programme strands.

“For me, the biggest advantage is learning the process of starting a new project and gaining knowledge on tips and tricks regarding communication with included partners. Personally, I find all this education really inspiring and motivational, and professionally, they will help me with work on a project where the city of Rijeka is a partner. As this project deals with co-management, co-creation and co-production in public government bodies throughout Europe, conclusions from the workshops will help with my contribution to the project, she concluded.”

As Cvetic mentioned, the “Classroom” and participatory programmes have already explored and exchanged experiences on partnership and cooperation with other organisations, agencies and local government structures.

Ivana Peranic, of the Creative Laboratory of Contemporary Theatre KRILA, has also participated in Programme Plus activities, mainly focused on the “Classroom” programme.

## PEOPLE ARE THE CITY

“For me, it was really helpful to get all the help from mentors with the implementation of EU projects and the development of future ones. But, surely, I would underline the Classroom ongoing education programme on the topic of audience development ‘Applause please!’ as the programme that has helped me the most. We usually forget to ask ourselves why and for who we are working and miss that awareness of the audience. With this programme and especially action learning as part of the ongoing programme, I have managed to develop a strategic approach to resolving problems. I would say that action learning is excellent as a method as it works on the personal, individual level and at the same time on the development of the whole organisation. Also, some of the mentors were really supportive; they helped me to resolve some of the problems that I had within my organisation and within the EU project that I am leading, claims Peranic.”

Peranic also highlighted that Programme Plus creates conditions for community engagement and networking between NGOs and cultural institutions.

“I think this is the way you can build the community and ensure the development and growth of your idea or project. Networking between people is especially important here; networking between mentors and other participants. Also, what is important is the EU dimension and international visibility. And most importantly, I used to work at home and now, I have the possibility to use RiHub venue co-working space for my everyday work, together with my team, concludes Peranic.”

## ECOC legacy: outreach of the celebratory year and beyond

Every ECOC is different: like every other bidding or designated city, Rijeka has had to articulate its own objectives and purpose. There is no single magic template that guarantees a successful bid or programme. A city's size is not relevant, nor is its cultural heritage a decisive factor. ECOC is not all about arts; arts are the driver for change and other wider sectors will also be involved and will benefit. The reasons for the designing of the ECOC programme should not be forgotten, and the selection criteria should be carefully examined.

The experience of all ECOCs shows that, besides a fantastic arts programme and new infrastructure, besides boosting tourism and the positive economic and visibility effects, ECOC is a unique opportunity for knowledge exchange, mapping, data collecting, dialogue with all stakeholders,

new networks and partnerships (local and international). ECoC is an opportunity for capacity building and boosting democratic processes in general, which will endure and can be used beyond the celebratory year. Every ECoC is a unique possibility for a city to express and test its vision of development beyond “business-as-usual” circumstances.

Rijeka recognises the ECoC 2020 project as a unique opportunity to increase both the scope and diversity of the cultural offerings in the city, as well as to boost its international visibility and relevance. This is also an opportunity for Rijeka to re-examine its own cultural and urban identity, which will not languish in the past, but will be filled with the desire to create new city content and values. Our citizens are the main players and the main bet in this game.

# Cross-Border Issues for Future European Capitals of Culture

## Concepts of territorial cooperation in Timișoara and Novi Sad

Corina Turșie and Nicolae Popa

Building upon the experience of different generations of European Capitals of Culture (ECoC), the ECoC programme turned to culture as an opportunity to Europeanise views on the past and to better communicate the European future. When bidding for the ECoC title, candidate cities are expected to highlight the European dimensions of their cultural programmes, by developing European artistic partnerships, engaging local as well as European audiences, and addressing sensitive European themes.

The meaning of culture has changed, towards an instrumentalised vision of “a resource able to solve political and socio-economic problems” (Miles and Paddison, 2005, p. 834). Using culture as a regeneration tool for cities, and allowing cities “to improve their image on a national and European scale” (Cogliandro, 2001, p. 8) was an important opportunity for cities who did not have a cultural profile, starting from the emblematic case of Glasgow 1990. This opportunity was equally important for smaller ECoC cities, who saw in the title an opportunity to build regional partnerships, and to compensate for their size (Garcia and Cox, 2013, p. 49), and was even more appealing for ECoC cities in border regions (for example, Lille 2004, Luxembourg 2007, Maribor 2012, Mons 2015), who sought in the title an opportunity to enhance border integration. Particularly relevant are ECoCs in new EU Member States or Candidate States, who hoped to highlight their culture and to feel equal to the older Member States, by using different strategies to remake their place identities (Young and Kaczmarek, 2008). At the same time, it is a real challenge for cities coming from peripheral European locations, from young democracies with recent totalitarian pasts and poor economies, to overcome their inferiority complexes and to highlight their European dimensions and their potential contributions to the richness and diversity of European cultures (Turșie, 2015b).

Timișoara and Novi Sad, two cities located in cross-border regions in Romania and Serbia, 150 km apart, will hold the ECoC title in 2021. Their

territorial proximity is seen as an opportunity to shed light on a peripheral European border and to enhance cross-border cooperation by using culture in this part of Europe. What strategies for remaking place identity were applied by these cities in the ECoC context? In what form was the geographical location of the cities considered in the bidding documents? Did the proximity of the two cities include a strategic positioning that aims to enhance cross-border cooperation and a regional sense of belonging? After placing Timișoara and Novi Sad in a geographical and historical context, we will re-read the two bidding documents, tracing the narratives of place identity in a cross-border setting. Examples of doing politics with the past, as well as doing politics with the borders, will be highlighted.

## Geographical and historical context

Timișoara and Novi Sad are cities with different destinies, located in the old intercultural regions of Central Europe, Banat and Backa. Timișoara was the capital city of Banat, and Novi Sad was the capital city of Backa. In the second millennium, these two regions were, in turn, part of the Hungarian Kingdom, the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg Empire, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Practically, throughout these periods and under all political dominance, the two regions represented the feuds or border regions of the royal or imperial centres mentioned above (Cuisenier, 2000).

The long-standing exercise of interculturality, resulting from the mixture of ethnicities and cultures specific to the various empires (Kocsis and Kicosev, 2004; Bocsan, 1986), intensified from the first half of the 18th century, when, after the removal of the Turks, Banat and Backa were the subjects of extensive social engineering actions by Vienna (Leu, 2007; Neumann, 1997). Large colonies were organised in both provinces, with people being brought from different parts of the Habsburg Empire. The majority were German colonists, but there were also Italian, Slovak or Czech, Bulgarian, and even French colonists, all of whom were Catholics (Popa and Ancuta-Sirbovan, 1999). The purpose of this colonisation was twofold: to take advantage of the rich underground resources and the forests of the Banat Mountains, and the fertile lands of Banat and Backa, and to secure this southern frontier area of the Empire against Ottoman pressure (Popa and Cretan, 2001; Mitchell and Kicosev, 1998).

The southern parts of Banat and Backa were integrated into the so-called Border Regiments of the Habsburg Empire, originally established in Croatia (1626) and gradually expanded to the southern and eastern borders of the Empire, from the Adriatic Sea through Backa and Banat, towards Transylvania, until their abolition in 1873 to 1881 (Neagoe, 2004). This contributed to

the German influence increasing in the two regions, whose majority population was made up of Romanians in Banat and Serbs in Backa, together with Hungarians, Jews, Gypsies and so on (Cretan, 1999). An inextricable mixture of ethnicities and cultures resulted, under the authoritative control of the Habsburg authorities, and of the Austro-Hungarian authorities after 1868.

After the First World War, all this space was politically organised in terms of the nation-states approach. The ethno-cultural mix meant it was very difficult to trace national borders, which extended to Banat until 1922, long after the conclusion of the Paris peace agreements. The result was the division of the Banat between Romania (two-thirds), Yugoslavia (one-third) and Hungary (a small north-western fragment) (Popa et al, 2007). In 1921, Backa was divided between Serbia (four-fifths) and Hungary (one-fifth). The Serbian part of Backa and the western third of Banat were reunified under the name of Vojvodina, now an autonomous region within Serbia (Batakovic, 2005). The new local political and administrative structures were thus able to develop affiliations to new regional centres. The Romanian Banat will continue to be polarised by Timișoara, while much more composite Vojvodina, including the part of Banat that has been returned to Serbia, will gradually focus on Novi Sad and Belgrade.

Timișoara is an old medieval town, established in 1212, which served, over the centuries, as a powerful military fortress for the state structures that it formed part of (Munteanu and Munteanu, 2002). Novi Sad is a modern city, founded by Maria Theresa in 1694, and originally developed in the shadow of the ancient city of Petrovaradin (Polic and Stupar, 2015). The demographic evolution of the two cities during the period of assertion of the capitalist economy attests to the earlier consolidation of the city of Timișoara (18th to 19th centuries, and the first half of the 20th century), but also the recent development of Novi Sad in the 1970s and 1980s, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia (Table 1).

Today, both cities take pride in their multicultural traditions, although their ethnic structure has been considerably homogenised after integration into the nations to which they belong today: Timișoara in Romania, and Novi Sad in Serbia. Thus, in the case of Timișoara, the largest ethnic group in 1930 was Germans (32.3%) but in 2011 the largest ethnic group was Romanians (84.7%). In Novi Sad, the largest ethnic group in 1910 was Hungarians (39.7%), while in 2011 the largest ethnic group was Serbians (78.7%) However, the two cities have preserved a rich multicultural heritage, expressed in the urban landscape through the diversity of historic buildings, which are dominated by the Baroque, Art Nouveau, neoclassical, neo-gothic or eclectic architectural styles (Opris, 2007). These buildings are found in the old centres of the two cities, which are relatively well preserved.

Table 1 – Evolution of the number of inhabitants of Timișoara and Novi Sad

Timișoara		Novi Sad	
Year	Inhabitants	Year	Inhabitants
1784	9,242	1798	6,890
1851	20,560	1848	18,530
1900	55,820	1900	28,763
1930	91,580	1931	63,985
1956	142,257	1953	76,752
1990	351,293	1991	198,326
2011	319,279	2011	277,522
2018	329,003	2017	298,000 (estimated)

(Source: Documentation of authors in various databases)

Table 2 – Evolution of ethnic groups in the cities of Timișoara and Novi Sad (percentage of total local population)

Ethnic group	Timișoara			Ethnic group	Novi Sad	
	1930	1977	2011		1910	2011
Romanians	24,6	70,9	84,7	Serbians	17,6	78,7
Germans	32,3	10,6	1,3	Hungarians	39,7	3,9
Hungarians	26,6	13,6	9,1	Germans	17,6	0,1
Serbians	2,2	2,5	1,5	Rroma	n/a	1,3
Rroma	0,4	0,4	0,7	Slovaks	4,3	0,7
Jews	7,1	0,6	0,05	Ex-Yugoslavs	n/a	4,1
Other	6,8	1,4	2,65	Other	20,8	11,2

(Source: Romanian Census, 1930, 1977, 2011; Serbian Census, 1910, 2011)

In Timișoara, this heritage forms the largest protected urban area in Romania, bringing together no less than 14,000 buildings, historical monuments and objects, found mainly in four historical districts, of which one is intramuros (Cetate, representing the city centre) and three are extramuros (Fabric, Josefin and Elisabetin). In Novi Sad, the historical heritage occupies a smaller area in the city itself, but is completed by the Petrovaradin Fortress, one of the most impressive fortified buildings that guards the Danube (Polic and Stupar, 2015). Both cities hope to enhance their future development by highlighting this rich heritage. The cities are capable of

providing pleasant living environments, hosting valuable, open and innovative cultural expressions, engaging in the development of tourism and supporting economic activities with much added value (Timișoara 2021, 2016; Novi Sad 2021, 2016).

After 1990, along with the liberalisation of cross-border movement and the processes of accession to and then integration into the European Union (EU), a rapprochement of the local communities took place through the initiation of collaboration and agreements for mutual acquaintance, to make experiences and territorial practices compatible for regional development. Thus, in 1996, the DKMT Euroregion (Danube-Cris-Mures-Tisa) was created, one of the most active cross-border cooperation structures in this part of Europe. The DKMY brought together several counties in Romania (Arad, Caraș-Severin, Timiș), Hungary (Bacs-Kiskun, Csongrad) and Serbia's Vojvodina autonomous region. In the middle of DKMT we find the old Banat historical region, surrounded by the current territorial units. The whole ensemble is polarised by a competitive and collaborative, at the same time, urban quadrilateral: Timișoara (329,000 inhabitants) and Arad (177,000 inhabitants) in Romania, Novi Sad (298,000 inhabitants) in Serbia, and Szeged (164,000 inhabitants) in Hungary (National/Central Statistical Offices of Romania, Serbia and Hungary, 2019).

The Euroregional structures that have been set up and the projects carried out over the last two decades have reactivated local solidarity, which seeks collaborative development. One problem that is far from being resolved is the precariousness of transport infrastructure and services between the territories on both sides of the Romanian-Serbian border. Part of the old infrastructure (railways, roads) that existed until the First World War was segmented and interrupted by new borders and degraded or dismantled on significant sectors (Turnock, 1999). For almost a century, cross-border links have been discouraged or restricted, and this suspended the old territorial relations and created new centres, whose areas of influence now stop at the borders. Restoring links in the new circumstances requires resources, time and changes in the mentality of decision-makers, but also in the spatial behaviour of the inhabitants.

For both Timișoara and by Novi Sad, winning the title of European Capital of Culture for 2021 represents an opportunity to find solutions to this problem. This is particularly so since the *Bid-Books* and the cultural programmes of the two cities bestow great importance on collaboration between them and on the cultural affirmation and socio-economic development of the regions (Timișoara 2021, 2016; Novi Sad 2021, 2016).

## Narrations of place identity in light of the 2021 cultural year

It has been argued that, while the ECoC *Bid-Books* are opportunities for constructing new official narratives of cities, the ECoC competition represents an identity laboratory. Cities use the ECoC title to re-narrate their past and to reconstruct their images, shedding light on some historical periods and hiding the negative periods, as a way of doing politics with the past. Cities bring to the fore specific *lieux de mémoire* and Golden Ages, remaking them and making them available to citizens through cultural programmes (Turşie, 2015a).

Both Timisoara 2021 and Novi Sad 2021 present themselves in their *Bid-Books* as medium-sized cities, located in peripheral European countries, and present their cultural profiles as the major argument for their candidacy. Timișoara is the capital city of the historic region of Banat and is recognised for its “spirit” (Timisoara 2021, 2016, p. 3). The city hosted a series of “firsts” in the 19th century (the first newspaper in German in Central and South-Eastern Europe, the first public library, the first cinema screening), while in the more recent history of Romania, the civic vigour of the city propelled the anti-communist revolution and the political changes of 1989. Novi Sad is the largest city in the autonomous province of Vojvodina, the wealthiest province in the country, has a long tradition of hosting key cultural institutions, and is responsible for defining the cultural identity of Serbian people, such as Matica Srpska. The cultural profile of both cities is expressed by the urban referential: being the centres of Serbian culture for a long time. Novi Sad is also called “Serbian Athens”, while the baroque-style architecture of Timisoara has given it the title of “little Vienna”. The similarity of their profiles is also expressed by the main European values promoted by the two cities: “Novi Sad is a tolerant, multinational, multi-confessional, multicultural community” (Novi Sad 2021, 2016, p. 2), while Timisoara is an “inter-cultural, multi-confessional, entrepreneurial community” (Timisoara 2021, 2016, p. 3). Specifically, in the case of Novi Sad, belonging to a non-EU country, the title represents a way to “reintegrate” the city and Serbia “into Europe’s cultural life, through a dialogue of cultures” (Novi Sad 2021, 2016, p. 3).

The concept of Timisoara’s bid – “Shine your light! Light up your city!” – uses the universal metaphor of light, which in Timisoara has specific added meanings: in 1884, Timisoara was the first city on mainland Europe to have electric street lightning, in the days of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. In addition, in 1989, the sparks of the anti-communist revolution were ignited in Timisoara. Through the ECoC title, the “spirit” of Timisoara could be reignited in these troubled European times, marked by economic, social and political crises (Timisoara 2021, 2016, p. 3).

The concept of the bid harks back to a pre-socialist Golden Age, when Timisoara was a place for making strategy: the return to a privileged period in the city's history, during the Austro-Hungarian era. The end of the unwanted communist era is marked by Timisoara, which was the first free Romanian city. The negative effects of communism – lack of trust and civic engagement – are exploited in the bid by mapping “a cultural journey to overcome passivity” (Timisoara 2021, 2016, p. 3). Escaping an atomised society will be possible by designing cultural interventions that are relevant both for people, who can rediscover their identities, and for the community, when, at some point, the inner energy of citizens will start making a difference to their social circles. The bid is constructed around the idea of a “journey”, from loneliness to togetherness, across three so-called “territories”, which are “the people”, “the places” where they live, and the “connections” they build with each other, with the surroundings and with Europe (Timisoara 2021, 2016, p. 3). The journey describes territories, stations and trails, representing programme streams and projects. The “connections” territory explicitly refers to the cross-border area.

The concept of Novi Sad's bid, “Four New Bridges”, uses the metaphor of the bridge as a connection. The concept builds upon the symbolic meaning of the city's bridges over the Danube, which were built, destroyed by wars and reconstructed, with the river as a silent witness: “Novi Sad is not the largest European city on the Danube, but it is one of those that has the most bridges, 11 in all: 8 beneath the waters and 3 above, a testimony to its turbulent past” (Novi Sad 2021, 2016, p. 5). Recent trauma in the city's memory is represented by the 1999 NATO bombings, when all three existing bridges were destroyed, leaving the city without any connections between its two shores. All the bridges were reconstructed and reopened in 2000 (the Varadin bridge), 2005 (the Liberty bridge) and 2018 (the rail-road bridge). Today they represent strong *lieux de mémoire*, remembering that in 1999 the local population tried to protect the bridges with their own lives. The chosen concept could be associated with a westernised or internationalised place-making strategy (Young and Kaczmarek, 2008), in the context of Serbia's European aspirations to join the EU. In these challenging times, when the support of the Serbian population for European integration has fallen by 50%, and Russian interests are ever more present in the region, Novi Sad 2021 sends a reconciliation message, wanting to position itself as a promoter of European integration, with the goal of raising support for European integration nation-wide in Serbia by at least 5% by 2021 (Novi Sad 2021, 2016, p. 26).

The cultural programme of Novi Sad 2021 was built around the metaphor of new bridges, bearing the names of values that are to be developed: “Freedom bridge” (the actual name of an existing bridge), “Rainbow bridge”, “Hope bridge” and “New Way bridge”. These bridges represent flagship pro-

jects and programme streams. New Way bridge deals with the strengths of the city – cultural heritage and hospitality – in a new way of dealing with the past, present and future. This approach is best expressed by the fact that Petrovaradin Fortress, the city’s most outstanding architectural feature, has in recent years been hosting the world-famous EXIT summer music festival. Located on the Danube shore, Petrovaradin Fortress has been connected to the city by the Varadin bridge (formerly the Marshall Tito bridge) from the beginning of the 1990s. Its name was changed for decommunisation reasons (Young and Kaczmarek, 2008), to correspond to the new representations of place by the new ruling elite. The Rainbow bridge shows the weaknesses and challenges to be dealt with – migration and reconciliation – by building upon the role of culture in resolving conflicts. The Freedom bridge stresses the innovative potential of the city: the young generation and the creative industries. Finally, the Hope bridge refers to the opportunities made available by strengthening human and cultural capacities and opening public spaces.

## Borders as advantages in the “ECoC area”

In demonstrating their European dimensions, cities located in border areas give new meanings to their geographical locations, repositioning themselves in a more favourable European context, for a presumably successful bidding process (Turşie, 2015b). From a social constructivist approach, borders are social institutions, created and re-created through discursive means (Scott and Sohn, 2018).

Both Timisoara and Novi Sad present their geographical locations near the border as a “huge advantage” (Novi Sad 2021, 2016, p. 33) for meeting the ECoC selection criteria, with regard to attracting international audiences, finding cooperation partners across borders, or even for maximising the impact of ECoC (Timisoara 2021, 2016, p. 7). Examples of doing politics with the borders can be found in both *Bid-Books*. Differences appear between the two cities with regards to the geographical area that each of them will represent as ECoC.

Timisoara 2021 chose a regional and cross-border approach for the development of its cultural programme. The representations of place created for the bid describe three geographically progressive circles, with Timisoara at their centre: the historic region of Banat, the DKMT Euroregion, and the Big League of Central and South-Eastern capital cities.

In relation to historic Banat, Timisoara is described as the cultural centre of excellence of the region. Several projects will be implemented from 2019 to 2021: “Spotlight heritage” (cultural interventions to foster the construc-

tion of a Banat identity in a European context), “Encounters” (establishing cross-border touring routes), “Charioscuro” (sharing the experiences of the refugees hosted at the Refugee Transit Centre in Timisoara), “Knowledge fields” (strategic partnerships between schools and universities to gain experience in cross-border and international collaboration), and “Laboratory for European Project making” (capacity building project, together with Novi Sad 2021, Matera 2019 and Rijeka 2020).

In relation to the Euroregion, Timisoara is presented as the largest city in the entire DKMT area. The bid’s strategic goal for the area is re-establishing Timisoara’s connection to the Danube via the Bega Canal, as a reminder of the old Empire days, when Bega, the channel crossing the city, was used as a navigable canal that connected Timisoara with Budapest or Vienna. The river also contributed to the development of a flourishing industry in Timisoara, renowned in the entire Empire, as Timisoara benefited from the opportunity to use the river for merchandise transportation. In those Golden Age times, Timisoara was the main bridge between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and South-Eastern Europe. The Bega river’s symbolism is exploited in the “Mega Bega” multiannual project. The “Connections” territory describes two cross-border programmes: “Light over borders” and “Moving fireplaces” that will take place within a 150 km radius of Timisoara, in Arad (Romania), Szeged, (Hungary), Novi Sad, Kikinda, Pancevo, Vršac and Zrenjanin (Serbia), addressing the themes of interculturality, multiconfessionality, collective memory and migration.

The largest positioning circle of Timisoara relates to seven capital cities of Central and South-Eastern Europe, located within a radius of 600 km of the city: Belgrade, Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Zagreb, Skopje and Bucharest. They are a general pool of talent and resources. The “Players of change” project will address sensitive European issues, such as the 1989 momentum in Eastern Europe, along with partner cities from Zagreb, Budapest, Warsaw and Ljubljana.

Novi Sad’s *Bid-Book* does not have a cross-border approach equivalent to that of Timisoara. Novi Sad specifically focused on ZONE 021, an area without a cross-border dimension, that has Novi Sad as its urban centre. ZONE 021 comprises 400,000 inhabitants and 15 suburban areas, as well as three partner municipalities, Sremski Karlovci, Irig and Beočin, all sharing the same phone prefix (021).

For the purposes of outreach, a larger geographical area has been described: within a radius of 150 km of the city, five countries and 16 medium-sized cities represent a large pool of audiences. Regional cooperation across the borders targets the former Yugoslavian countries, under the themes of “Art of peace”, “At the Crossroads”, “Boom 21”, “Brotherhood and Unity”, and “Breed”. Cooperation is made possible by the lack of language barriers

between Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Novi Sad also positions itself as a Danube port city, with the purpose of attracting partners from the transnational Danube region (“Breed Ai.i.R”).

Moreover, given the geographical proximity between Pecs 2010, Timisoara 2021, Novi Sad 2021 and other past or future candidate cities (Arad 2021, Debrecen 2023, Mostar, Baja Luka 2024), Novi Sad speaks of this entire region as being an “ECoC area” (Novi Sad 2021, 2016, p. 13). At the time of winning the competition, high levels of enthusiasm and great expectations emerged among the local populations, related to the opportunities offered by hosting two ECoC titles in the area. Two years later, however, border integration issues remain unresolved.

### So close, yet so far ...

From a functional point of view, the Romanian-Serbian border shows a low degree of integration with regard to the accessibility between the border territories. The lack of a modern transport infrastructure that is able to connect the two ECoC cities is becoming clearer as 2021 approaches. A Culture Bus line is projected to connect Timisoara and Novi Sad in 2020/2021, similar to the cultural train line between Berlin and Wrocław 2016 (Novi Sad 2021, 2017). But, if there is no change to the current infrastructure, the 150 km from Timisoara to Novi Sad will require a 3-hour bus ride.

The Romanian Government’s lack of commitment to the budget for Timisoara 2021, mentioned in the First Monitoring Report (Timisoara 2021, 2017) may impede the success of the ECoC year and is troubling for the local artistic community of Timisoara. From an institutional perspective, the DKMT Euroregion seems to be rather inactive, with county councils withdrawing from the structure. An emerging project, called “Activarium”, led by the Arad County Council and starting in 2019, aims to stimulate cultural projects in the Euroregion.

Taking into account the territorial cooperation projects developed from 2007 to 2013 under the INTERREG framework, if we consider the cities as nodes of networking in territorial cooperation projects, cross-border cooperation was greater at the western border of Romania, compared to the eastern and southern borders. However, considering the types of projects involving institutions from Timisoara, 80% of the projects belong to the Hungary-Romania programme, while only 4% belong to the Romania-Serbia Instrument for Pre-Accession (Turșie and Boată, 2018). A longer cooperation in INTERREG projects favours socialisation in the use of EU funds, while citizens’ perceptions of the borders represent an impediment. According to the results of the Eurobarometer 422, “Cross-border cooperation in

the EU” (European Commission, 2015) Romanian citizens from the border regions are among those Europeans who are least likely to travel abroad once a year, they show the lowest levels of mutual trust in their cross-border neighbours, and they show the lowest levels of agreement with the idea that living in a border area represents an opportunity.

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# The Ugly Duckling grows up to be a Swan

## Matera, small but beautiful

Rolf Hugoson

An advantage of the ECoC programme has always been its ability to imagine Europe as a place built from below – by the cities – rather than from the top, by the institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg. The programme moves like a spotlight across the European continent.

In this respect, I am interested in the light falling upon Matera, a city located in the Mezzogiorno (matera-basilicata2019). I will not review the contents of the programme year in advance, but will rather try to understand Matera's place in the Italian urban system. Why was Matera chosen as ECoC 2019?

Located in small Basilicata – the “arch” on the map that connects Puglia's “heel” with Calabria's “toe” in the West – Matera is not even the regional capital, a role fulfilled by Potenza. Basilicata has only half a million inhabitants; only two Italian regions are smaller: Molise (308,000) and Valle d'Aosta (126,000). Of course, all Italian regions appear small next to the gigantic Lombardy with its 10 million inhabitants, but in the south are also Campania (almost 6 million inhabitants) and Sicily (5 million inhabitants), not to mention large cities such as Rome and Palermo. To understand Matera we must first take the nomination process into account, and then consider the history of the Mezzogiorno, the South.

From its beginnings in the 1980s the ECoC programme was an intergovernmental project, running parallel to the ordinary regulations of the EEC. The legal importance of the subsidiarity principle in community regulations meant that any policy for the subnational level was of low priority. At the same time, European culture was arguably a common heritage. After the EU Commission took charge in 1999, financing remained primarily local, regional and national, contributing to the diversity of outcomes and the kaleidoscopic character of the programme. Thus, the dualistic image of Europe as existing either “from the top” (Brussels) or “from below” (the cities) is a simplification, to which must be added the nation states, for reasons that concern democratic institutions, regional employment markets and more generally “histories”. For ECoCs in Austria, Hungary or Italy, it does matter who is ruling Vienna, Budapest or Rome.

## “Cities of culture”

In Mercuri and Lang’s original vision of “cities of culture”, it was assumed that national capitals would be chosen, such as Athens and Paris. Yet, Florence 1986 introduced something new, and this was reinforced by Glasgow 1990 and Antwerp 1993.

In the late 1990s and in the early 2000s, national capitals returned as ECoCs, due to the EU enlargement process, but some original choices were made, such as Bergen 1999 (rather than Oslo) and Krakow 2000 (rather than Warsaw). In this middle epoch, the older member states faced the problem of identifying a “second” capital, often merely selecting the second largest city, such as Thessaloniki 1997 or Porto 2001.

After the confusion in 1999 and 2000 (with multiple ECoCs), 2001 was the first year of two ECoCs: one in the East and one in the West. A few years later, it was decided that ECoCs from the 2013 nominations and onward would be selected by an international committee, although it should be noted that national governments, through funding, retain opportunities to affect the process. As we know, according to the current practice, an international committee votes to arrive at a decision. To some extent, this means that the possibility of unconventional choices increases.

Or, perhaps we should say that the meaning of the conventional has changed. Small ECoC cities are increasingly common. After all, a large population was never a central criterion. But selection will also depend upon the number of cities in a nation. How many cities are there in Luxembourg? (ECoC 2022 will be Esch-sur-Alzette.) Will we ever have a small ECoC in France? While there are more than 35,000 communes in France, there are also 42 cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants ...

To the extent that the quality of the bid book is paramount, a smaller city might find it less difficult than a fractured metropole to agree upon a coherent proposal. Perhaps some large cities perceive themselves as capitals already, so why would they humiliate themselves by entering an open competition, risking defeat? Would London and Vienna fit in this category, or Munich and Hamburg? Or is the title indeed not very important to large cities, preoccupied by so much else? Famously, Paris in 1989 hardly noticed the ECoC events taking place, because of the fervour surrounding the revolutionary bicentennial.

## The smaller city was chosen

In Italy, none of the five largest cities (Rome, Milan, Naples, Turin and Palermo) has yet been an ECoC. Instead, the honour has been awarded to

numbers 8, 7 and 6 on the list, ie in reverse order of size: Florence 1986, Bologna 1999 and Genoa 2004. Had the choice for 2019 been made merely by completing this statistical series, we would have expected the nomination of Italy's fifth largest city, Palermo, the regional capital of Sicily.

Indeed, in 2012, Palermo joined 21 smaller cities in presenting its candidature. But the Commission's international selection process was by then firmly in place, unlike the situation when the earlier Italian ECoCs were chosen. In its November 2013 presentation of the six finalists, the EU committee did not appear to hesitate in excluding Palermo.<sup>4</sup>

The ECoC committee also turned down bids from Venice (Italy's 11<sup>th</sup> largest city), Taranto (16<sup>th</sup>), Reggio Calabria (21<sup>st</sup>), Syracuse (35<sup>th</sup>), Bergamo (36<sup>th</sup>), Pisa (56<sup>th</sup>), Grosseto (66<sup>th</sup>), Caserta (74<sup>th</sup>), Aquila (85<sup>th</sup>) and Urbino (101<sup>st</sup>). Also excluded were quite small or distant cities such as Valle d'Aosta and Valle di Diano, Erice and Mantova.

Interestingly, only one region had two original candidates – Apulia, the “heel” when we picture Italy's geographical “boot”: Taranto (on the south coast) and Lecce (in the east). However, the former appears to have made its political commitment to culture late and with little effort: “Many of the projects had the potential to meet the European dimension criteria if they were open to, and had been planned with, international partnership, but in general the Panel considered that the programme was currently underdeveloped and rested on a very small budget for an ECOC” (ECoC Preselection Report, 2019).

So, when in 2013 the committee reduced the list to six finalists, the smaller city in Apulia was chosen: Lecce (50<sup>th</sup> largest in Italy). The result was thus that of the six finalists, three were located in Italy's South, the Mezzogiorno: Cagliari (26<sup>th</sup> largest) in Sardinia, Lecce in Apulia and Matera (102<sup>nd</sup>) in Basilicata. Three finalists were northern: in Umbria there was Perugia (23<sup>rd</sup> in Italy) “with Assisi”; in Emilia-Romagna there was Ravenna (24<sup>th</sup>) while in Tuscany the small but famous Siena (128<sup>th</sup>) remained (ECoC Report, 2019).

Speculations early on pointed to the fact that there had already been ECoCs in the regions of Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna. Indeed, all previous ECoCs had been northern. How important is such a geographical di-

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4 “In terms of the [Palermo] ECOC programme the Panel noted it was at an early stage but more details should have been developed on projects and their partners. ... There was some indication in the bid book of existing partnerships with cultural operators around the Mediterranean and many more formal organisations and international committees. However, this was not enough to convince the Panel on the maturity of the project in its European Dimension. ... The Panel was not fully confident based on the bid book and presentation on the management and artistic direction to develop in the short term a project as ambitious and complex as the one presented.” See ECoC Preselection Report, 2019.

vide? Arguably all European countries have some kind of dominant divide between the North and the South, or the East and the West. Notably the German separation into two states from 1945 to 1990 was a unique experience, with consequences for the roles of cities and the ambitions of their inhabitants.

The Italian cities share with their German counterparts ancient histories (Roman, Medieval and Renaissance) that tend to reinforce strong regional senses of belonging. Such identities also remain pertinent in terms of economy and politics, despite the national “unifications” of Germany and Italy in the 1860s.

Indeed, the Italian division has endured longer than the German. In both countries, the French Revolution and ensuing invasions led to some drastic reforms, but after 1815 these were regrettably cut short by conservative restorations: monarchic, feudal and religious. In Italy, all restoration rulers had to accept Austrian leadership, not only in the northern provinces of Lombardy and Venetia, but also in the central duchies of Modena, Parma and Tuscany (the latter remaining somewhat more reform-orientated), as well as in the Papal States and in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, which included the whole of the South, including Sardinia.

Through the centuries, the Mezzogiorno suffered from neglect. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was regarded as one of the most backward countries in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Austrian and Spanish rule remains the culprit, even if some positive effects from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century can be observed. The Aragon ruler Ferdinand II (supported by money from banks in Genoa) made Naples his capital, which contributed to making this the largest city in Europe, for a while second only to Istanbul.

Yet, southern cities in the long run failed to develop dynamic political and economic institutions of the kind that ensured wealth in Italy’s northern cities. Gramsci’s idea from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is revealing. He said that the North compared to the South was like a large city compared to the large countryside – not in the organic sense of an industrial city and an agricultural province, but rather like two diverse cultures, a conflict between nations (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 90ff).

Italian governments during the 20<sup>th</sup> century tried to manage the discrepancy between the North and the South through a series of reforms. Yet, between 1860 and 1950, the difference in relative wealth (per capita GDP) increased, until in the South it was only half of the income in the North. Only after the war, in the 1950s and 1960, did the South manage to catch up. Health, schools and infrastructure improved, also allowing for agrarian reforms and some industrialisation. The most prestigious development programme was the Cassa del Mezzogiorno (1950–1993).

## The provincial capital as a “vivid centre”

The continual investments of the Cassa del Mezzogiorno helped to diminish some of the differences between the North and the South. Thus, we also find the provincial capital of Matera in a film, produced in 1970s to publicise the achievements of the Cassa. The new houses in a Matera suburb are shown, to be contrasted with the old abandoned habitations in the cliffs, “the stones” or “i sassi”. The narrator of the film comments happily:

“Matera which was the most dramatic example of the poverty of the South has become an ever more vivid centre, for agriculture, economy, tourism and industry. New perspectives have been opened for the Mezzogiorno through the interventions of the Cassa, directed towards a modification of the territory and improvements of the life and work conditions of the population.” (*Dove il tempo si era fermato*, 1970, my transl.)

Matera remains potentially a relatively dynamic place, in part because of its close connection to neighbouring Apulia, where Bari has more than 300,000 inhabitants.

This tendency to look east to Apulia is mirrored in the railway connections. Westwards, these are operated by Ferrovie dello Stato (FS) and Trenitalia, but the nearest FS railway station is 28km away, in Ferrandina on the Salerno-Rome line. An older connection across the mountains to Matera was shut down in the 1970s, while a 1980s renovation project ended in failure due to prohibitive costs. Eastwards, a railway line between Bari and Matera was already built in 1915. Today, the line is operated by Ferrovie Appulo Lucane (FAL), a state-owned company. A new railway station for the FAL line to Bari opened in June 2019 ([ferrovieappulolucane.it](http://ferrovieappulolucane.it)).

Regrettably, after the 1970s, the South in general lagged behind, while the North developed more rapidly. Furthermore, the Cassa del Mezzogiorno did not survive the general revision of the Italian political system in the early 1990s, known as Tangentopoli or “Bribesville”. This period is remembered for the legal attacks upon the previous clientele system, where politicians gained political and financial support from regional clients, as long as new local investments were delivered.

However, the need for regional investment in the Mezzogiorno apparently remained also after Tangentopoli. Thus, in 2005, Prime Minister Berlusconi created a “Minister for Territorial Cohesion”, renamed the “Minister for Territorial Cohesion and the Mezzogiorno” in 2016, but since 2018 simply “Ministro del Sud”, a position now held by Barbara Lezzi from the Five Star Movement (M5S), otherwise known as “an anti-system party”. Lezzi

had earlier been the M5S representative from the region of Puglia (Presidenza Governo, 2019).

In 2017, the GDP per capita for the South was only 45% of the GDP per capita for the North (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2018; cf Pigliaru, 2009; Daniele and Malanima, 2007). Yet, Matera belongs to the small number of southern cities that are classified as more economically dynamic. Together these cities have acquired the status of being “the other South” or “l'altro Sud”. Identified as members of this group are cities in Sardinia and in southern Puglia, but also a few provincial capitals with “elevated historic-cultural connotations”: Avellino and Benevento in Campania, Cosenza in Calabria, Ragusa in Sicily – and Matera in Basilicata (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2018).

Matera, as part of the “other South” holds a strong cultural position in a poor region. Indeed, already at the end of the Second World War, Matera and the surrounding countryside had become a topic of interest, mostly to the Christian Democrats who dominated the south, but also to the leaders of the Communist Party. As we have seen, the new technocrats in the Cassa del Mezzogiorno soon took an interest in Matera. A notable representative of this technocracy was the urban planner Adriano Olivetti. Furthermore, international scholars also came to Matera, including a couple of anthropologists of international fame. Robert Redfield and Friedrich George Friedman conducted research here, making plans for improvements and advising investors. Yet, in 1948, Matera was said to be of national interest, not because of its success, but because it was “shameful”, a place that the state simply had to change.

## Again, why Matera?

Why was this “l'esempio il più drammatica della povertà del Sud”, to quote again from the Cassa del Mezzogiorno film of 1970? The answer is that Matera and its surrounding province were placed high on the agenda of culture, in a way that differentiates Matera from the ordinary “old European city”. This is clearly not Florence, already made world famous by Dante.

Matera gained its wider reputation as late as 1945, when it appeared as a cultural problem that politicians wanted to solve. The town was portrayed in Carlo Levi's book *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, which had rapidly attracted Italian and international audiences. Levi, an anti-fascist painter from Turin, was in 1935 sentenced to forced residence in “Lucania”, an older name for Basilicata, favoured by the fascist regime. Levi stayed for more than a year in Basilicata, in the two small villages of Aliano and Grassano. His book

tells the story of how a very northern Italian intellectual encountered the poor people of the province.

“Eboli” in the title is a reference to the fact that the region appeared to have also been forgotten by the Church, which “stopped at Eboli” (on the coast, south of Naples). Although Carlo Levi was not allowed to leave his village for Matera, his sister Luisa Levi, a medical doctor, arrived in the provincial capital by train from Bari. According to Luisa’s guidebook, Matera should have been a picturesque town with a museum and some curious cave dwellings. She was disappointed:

“The whole thing looked like an ambitious bit of city planning, begun in haste and interrupted by the plague, or else like a stage set, in execrable taste, for a tragedy by d’Annunzio. These enormous twentieth-century imperial palaces housed the prefecture, the police station, the post office, the town hall, the barracks of the carabinieri, the Fascist Party headquarter, the Fascist scouts, the Corporation and so on. But where was the town?” (Levi, 1945, p. 57)

Luisa Levi found the ancient Matera in the famous gully, “the stones” with houses built as caves in a cliff, with a road winding its way down over their roofs, to a small river at the bottom “like a schoolboy’s idea of Dante’s inferno”, with doors open to caves where 20,000 people were reputedly living, together with dogs, goats, sheep and pigs. “Of children I saw an infinite number. They appeared from everywhere, in the dust and the heat, amid the flies, stark naked or clothed in rags; I have never in all my life seen such a picture of poverty.” Many appeared blind from trachoma, while others had “enormous, dilated stomachs and faces yellow and worn with malaria. In addition, the adults were passive, haunted by malaria, dysentery and the black fever.” Yet, Luisa concluded, watching Matera from below: “The town is indeed a beautiful one, picturesque and striking” (Levi, 1945, p. 60).

Carlo Levi used the reported descriptions in his book, which he completed in the spring and summer of 1944, while hiding in Florence, waiting for the American army to liberate Tuscany. The war was practically over, which was why the author devoted relatively little attention to attacking fascism. He seemed more interested in portraying southern Italy as so poor and undeveloped that – paradoxically – moral and economic development could begin anew.

Soon, this idea would be amplified by the philosopher and anthropologist Friedrich George Friedmann. In the famous New York liberal and left wing *Partisan Review*, Friedmann wrote about the extreme poverty of the Basilicata peasants, called “la miseria”: “[to] the visitor [...] “la miseria” is more than a set of material conditions, for he soon comes to see it as pover-

ty turned into a philosophic outlook [...] a sense of acceptance that reminds us of the pre-Socratic thinkers” (Friedmann, 1953).

## A place where the quality of life could be improved and dramatised

The magnitude of the poverty in the Mezzogiorno in general made it a tempting place for intellectuals, politicians and development technocrats to identify for the rapid improvement of the quality of life. Matera appeared to be the ideal place. Malaria was eradicated and new modern dwellings were built, allowing the inhabitants of “the stones” to move to new housing projects. Already, in the late 1950s, Matera appeared to be a success story.

The ruins and the architectonic landscape of abandoned caves continued to capture the visitor’s interest. Interest groups formed to work for the preservation of “i sassi”. In 1966, Carlo Levi (now a senator in Rome) signed a petition for the preservation of “the stones” (Levi, 1989).

Another amalgamation of ancient stones and spiritual promises occurred in 1964, when the Roman intellectual Pier Paolo Pasolini decided that Christ should come to Matera after all. Having considered filming his *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* in Jerusalem, Pasolini instead settled on Matera. Another version of Christ made an appearance six decades later, when Mel Gibson filmed his *Passion of the Christ* (2004) in Matera.

Matera’s “stones” had by then been pushed through the machinery of cultural preservation regulations; in 1986 Matera was recognised as an area of “exceptional national interest”. In 1992, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) also suggested that Matera be included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. This recommendation was accepted the following year.

By the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Matera was no longer a poor city. Instead “the stones” were officially recognised as a cultural heritage zone. The town was also well-known to artists, not only Italian intellectuals like Levi and Pasolini, but also a Hollywood star like Mel Gibson.

Of course, without the engagement of the inhabitants, even such a list of achievements would not have been enough for an ECoC nomination. Early on, local promoters engaged regional and international networks, which was something that impressed the selection committee. But the ambition to become an ECoC was formed from below, through the NGO “Matera 2019”, which had written a manifesto in 2008 ([associazionematera2019.it](http://associazionematera2019.it)).

Provisional support was soon gained from mayors in Matera and the rest of Basilicata. In return, all towns would become a “capital of culture for a

day” in 2019, through the “Cadmos” project. In 2011 the official campaign began, involving artistic directors and an official committee of politicians and civil servants – all male! ([matera-basilicata2019.it](http://matera-basilicata2019.it))

An example of long-standing local commitment is Rafaello De Ruggieri, a leading member of the Matera committee. Already in 1959 De Ruggieri had joined the cultural club “I Scaletta”, which promoted “the stones” as a monument. Remarkably, after Matera was recommended (by the European selection panel) in November 2014 for the Italian ECoC 2019 title, the inhabitants of Matera also voted for De Ruggieri as mayor.

This was somewhat surprising, since in the parliamentary elections of March 2018 the largest party was M5S, especially in the Mezzogiorno. In Rome, however, a government could be formed only when M5S agreed to cooperate with the Lega, originally a regionalist party, formerly known as Lega Nord. Of course, parties do not always follow simple regional identifications, which is why the Minister of Culture Alberto Bonisolo is from Northern Italy, but represents the M5S – whose leader Luigi di Maio however more typically comes from a small town east of Naples.

Now, perhaps it appears from these concluding words that politicians are transforming cultural experiences into ordinary party politics – where the left, the right and the populists will all try to take credit for Matera, provided that the programme is a success – or they will otherwise blame the opposition. But simple dichotomies between culture and politics can hardly explain Matera’s recent history.

In a sense, Matera appears as an eminently mature ECoC, having been identified for seven decades as a place that politicians must save from “shame”, in the guises of poverty, fascism or abandonment. Yet, simultaneously, Matera is a city that attracts artists. Matera functions like a “grotto” in an Italian renaissance garden, perennially offering a strange mixture of the ugly and the beautiful.

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# 5

## ECoC Portraits and Programmes



# European Capitals of Culture

## Portraits and Programmes

Kristina Jacobsen

Between 2015 and 2019, field research was conducted in nine European Capitals of Culture through interviews with experts and participatory observation. They are part of the applied cultural policy research, which is the focus of the teaching and research at the Department of Cultural Policy at the University of Hildesheim. The analysis and reflection at the local, state and federal levels as well as in an international comparison focuses on the tasks and goals, the conditions and perspectives of cultural policy and its implementation through cultural management and cultural administration. This scientific approach seeks to close the gap between cultural policy and the requirements of cultural practice. Within this framework, the European Capital of Culture is an appropriate research topic for analysing the effects of cultural policy in the European multi-level system.

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### Small, but “très européen”: Mons 2015

If you take the train to Mons, the capital of the Walloon province Hainaut, you first land in a huge construction site. The new train station, described in my travel guide as one of the architectural highlights, currently still consists of construction pits and bridge stumps, jutting into the void. The opening of the train station has been postponed for years. Advertising boards refer to the “Capitale Européenne de la Culture Mons 2015”. On the way into the city centre, you climb the mountain that gives the city its name (“Mons”), through streets visibly affected by poverty. There are no references to the Capital of Culture anywhere here. This arrival in Mons does not exactly give cultural tourists the enthusiasm that other cities, which are proud to bear the title of Capital of Culture, radiate.

At the tourist information at the Grand Place you can find out more. Many, many colourful flyers, program sheets and booklets for different periods of time; it is difficult to find your way around them. The main themes

for the design of the programme are not easy to find. And the translations are somewhat all over the place, which is reflected on the homepage.

“Mons – Where Technology Meets Culture” is the motto of the Capital of Culture year. It corresponds to the triad of urban development planning over the next few years, which foresees the funding of the areas of culture, technology and tourism for the city of 93,000 inhabitants. The conditions in Mons were at first similar to those of the last Capital of Culture in Germany, RUHR.2010: unemployment of over 25% after the closing of the open-cast mine and lack of prospects, especially among the younger generation. But then Google came in 2010 with more than 800 jobs; Microsoft, Cisco and other IT companies followed suit. “With this upswing, a cultural metamorphosis also developed in people’s minds”, enthuses the general director of the Capital of Culture, Yves Vasseur. It was remembered for its high density of UNESCO World Heritage Sites (four in Mons alone, 15 others in the region). In the application phase for the Capital of Culture between 2004 and 2010, there was much criticism at the municipal level for the planned investments in the city’s cultural infrastructure—as was probably the case in most cities in this phase. Culture isn’t so important, what do we have to do with it? In the end, however, considerable investments were made, which, in addition to the Capital of Culture programme, also flowed into a new concert hall and five new museums (especially worth seeing: the Mons Memorial Museum). And like the German Capital of Culture Weimar 1999, Mons also focuses on urban development innovations, including Daniel Libeskind’s Congress Hall and Santiago Calatrava’s Central Station, which is currently under construction. The new buildings will stay, and that is great, but what about the rest? Artistic cooperation between Walloons and Flemings, co-productions with cultural partners from other EU countries, cultural-political networking in the European multi-level system—the future is uncertain!

Director General Vasseur relies on the responsibility of the cultural key players to continue what has been achieved: “It is the question of how things will continue from 2016. We hope to remain in the awareness of our guests as a city of culture, just as Lille, for example, succeeded in being European Capital of Culture in 2004”. There is apparently no solid, cultural policy sustainability strategy, which fits in with the overall impression of the Mons Capital of Culture programme: that much has begun but is not yet fully developed. Despite the growing technological sector, Mons is still not a rich city that could draw on its unlimited resources to create a status symbol with a flourishing cultural life. But it would be all the more important to recognise the existing potential and to use it fruitfully for a cultural, socio-political change, as RUHR.2010 approached it.

In one respect, Mons is ahead of most of the other European Capitals of Culture to date: the title is taken literally. In the small, multilingual country

Belgium only 65km away from Brussels, the control-centre of Europe, many things already have a European orientation. Some instrumentalists from Mons also play in the orchestra in Brussels or in Valenciennes in France, only 30 km away. The tradition of European artists, such as Orlando di Lasso or Vincent van Gogh, who lived and worked in Mons in the past, are to continue. The Capital of Culture's programme is therefore aimed at a European or international audience, and the museums are also geared to this objective, with signs and texts in three to four languages. Various events explicitly include an intercultural exchange, such as the series "Café Europa". Even if the sustainability of a cultural-political anchoring is in question, intercultural dialogue is at least successful and exemplary for future Capitals of Culture.

This text is an abbreviated version of an article published on the website [www.ecoclub.eu](http://www.ecoclub.eu).

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### A Progressive Sign in the Future: Pilsen 2015

"Moouuuuh!", moos the storyteller Olivier with a sound so deep only a Bavarian could have produced it. The children of the German-Czech kindergarten, "Junikorn", hanging on his every word. Even if they do not speak German yet, it is clear which animal Olivier is talking about. At the end of the fairy tale, the children learn a handful of German words, and throw them at each other playfully.

"Promoting dialogue between European cultures and those of other parts of the world and, in this sense, emphasising openness towards others and understanding for others are fundamental cultural values" is one of the EU objectives for the European Capital of Culture programme, which will take place this year in Pilsen, Czech Republic. As in the German-Czech nursery, the goal is already being implemented—even by the little ones. There are similar events in several Pilsen schools, which are also intended to arouse interest in the German language and in their German neighbours in general.

The entire programme of the Capital of Culture Pilsen 2015 is presented under the motto "Open Up!". Events with key players in the cultural sector from neighbouring countries and other EU Member States have been deliberately placed in the foreground, with Bohemian-Bavarian exchange playing a special role due to its geographical proximity. In April, the Centrum

Bavaria-Bohemia (CeBB) organised a Bavarian week with concerts, dance performances, readings by authors, workshops for young people and events for families throughout the city.

“Open Up!”—also pertains to all the other projects in Pilsen’s Capital of Culture Programme. The former depot of the urban transport services (“Städtischer Verkehrsbetrieb”) was converted into Pilsen’s largest cultural centre, the new “DEPO 2015”, in which various exhibitions of international artists can be visited. The city theatre received a new building for cultural activities that are particularly oriented towards children and young people. The festival “9 Weeks Baroque” aims to raise awareness of the West Bohemian Baroque era in the Pilsen region. Several thousand visitors from Germany have already registered for this event alone. All in all, the tourism figures have risen by up to 20%, removing any doubt that had existed in the run-up in regards to the considerable investments for the Capital of Culture year of Pilsen—168,000 inhabitants strong.

The implicit EU objective of strengthening a common European identity with the European Capital of Culture programme has gained importance in the debates on GREXIT, BREXIT and other cracks in EU cohesion. “How else could the EU be a solidary community of convinced Europeans, if not through intercultural exchange between the Member States”, says the programme director of “Pilsen 2015”, Jiří Sulženko, adding to Jacques Delors’ much quoted sentence that nobody falls in love with a single market.

As successful and dazzling as the programme of the Capital of Culture Pilsen is, the legitimate question still arises as to what will remain of the diverse cultural projects after 2015. The challenge for the city will be to select priorities from the multitude of events in order to keep those selected cooperations between the cultural key players alive. The change from an industrial location to a new centre of creative economy has already been a motto of many of the past European Capitals of Culture; not least the last German European Capital of Culture “RUHR2010”. How successful “Pilsen 2015” really is, will therefore have to be judged by how quickly its considerable programme evaporates after the year is over. Or to what extent the co-operation and financing have been successfully planned and consolidated in order to continue the sustainable development of the city and the region on the basis of creativity and intercultural exchange.

This text is the abridged version of an article in the journal *Politik & Kultur* 4/2015.

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## Exciting and Worth a Visit: Wrocław 2016

Despite all the spreading Euro-scepticism, the EU project “European Capital of Culture” is continuing impressively, is effective and is becoming more and more successful. This shows how far the small field of European cultural policy, which otherwise receives little attention, can reach. Although the principle of subsidiarity means that the EU does not have much power to shape cultural policy, it has created the European Capital of Culture. This funding instrument makes it possible for hundreds of thousands of Europeans to participate every year in intercultural events in the city bearing the title. With the EU no longer growing but rather shrinking, the “European Capital of Culture” recognises how eminently important intercultural dialogue is and the importance to reflect on what unites and divides within a common European identity. Because where are the other forums with such a high profile and such charisma that initiate a visible Europe-wide discourse about it?

In addition to Donostia-San Sebastián, Wrocław (German: Breslau) is this year’s European Capital of Culture. Poland’s fourth-largest city, with a population of 640,000, won the national competition against ten other Polish cities, and prepared its ambitious programme for eight years. The given example from previous Capitals of Culture is cooperation between cities that were previously in competition with each other. As part of the “Coalition of Cities” project, each of the former competitor cities is contributing to the Capital of Culture year for one week.

Without a doubt, Wrocław has developed a large and varied programme that is attractive for a wide variety of international visitors. Under the motto “Space for Beauty”, Wrocław 2016 creates “open, dynamic and friendly spaces to fulfil the need for contact with culture and art for beauty”, according to its self-description. That sounds vague, and in fact the city remains below its best, in terms of cultural-political positions. Thus, the conflict with the cultural policy of the national conservative government, which has restricted artistic freedom at various levels since taking office, is not explicitly addressed. The Polish government’s rejection to admit refugees could also have been addressed more strongly—especially in Wrocław, which has so much to tell about the subject of fleeing and displacement due to its city’s history. After the Second World War, almost the entire German population was expelled from the city, and “Breslau” became Wrocław, which in turn was settled by many displaced peoples from the Eastern territories lost to Poland. The influences and the coexistence of the inhabitants with a migration background, which can also be seen in the beautiful and polymorphic architecture of the city that is over 1,000 years old, could have been placed in the foreground of their model programme with current references. But instead, the programme that had been planned for the last eight years was executed.

This program is nevertheless very much worth seeing. There are countless exhibitions, concerts and creative cultural formats in the public space. The message to all cities that want to become “European Capital of Culture” can be read from this: cultural heritage alone is not enough – think of something! Wrocław’s aim in the Capital of Culture programme is to present itself openly and internationally, thereby doubling the number of tourists. In fact, the strategy seems to be working—attracting cross-border attention with as many exchange projects with European partners as possible.

Wrocław wants to present its rich cultural life not only to the greater European public, but also to its inhabitants and the people of the surrounding area. For example, the “Regional Tuesday” series imports a cultural programme from the surrounding region once a week, and Land Art and other cultural events are held throughout the Lower Silesia Voivodeship.

This text is the abridged version of an article in the journal *Politik & Kultur* 6/2016.

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## Culture for a Peaceful Coexistence: Donostia-San Sebastián 2016

This has not yet happened in the history of the “European Capital of Culture”: it is only about itself, its very own challenge, which it creates for itself. The goal is to tackle the trauma of the ETA terror struggle that has been present in the city for fifty years. The EU funding instrument “European Capital of Culture” has therefore not degenerated into mere city marketing, the main purpose of which is to attract more tourists, as sceptics of the initiative have repeatedly claimed in recent years.

“Our aim is not to offer as many events as possible, to generate cultural tourism or creative economic growth,” says Pablo Berástegui, General Director of this year’s Capital of Culture Donostia-San Sebastián, which has 186,000 inhabitants. For example, an embassy bus for the Capital of Culture, called “Europa Transit”, will not travel through different European countries to advertise a visit to San Sebastián (Basque: Donostia). Instead, he will present that, what is attempted and realised in San Sebastián—which is sharing the title of Capital of Culture with Wrocław this year. Almost all exhibitions, performances, forums and other cultural formats, belong to the motto “Culture for Coexistence”. As does one of the major exhibitions in the

programme, entitled “Peace Treaty”, which deals with armed conflicts from the end of the Middle Ages to the present day.

This is a genuinely European challenge, which the great European Jacques Delors, President of the European Commission and visionary of the Union, expressed in 1989. The “Delors Report”, which became the basis for the Maastricht Treaty (1992), already identifies Europe’s task of laying the foundations for the coexistence of peoples and regions—not only in terms of managing economic crises, but also in terms of securing peace. The fact that topics such as intercultural dialogue and peaceful coexistence would be highly topical in the times of European failure throughout the EU (and of course beyond) in regards to the “refugee crisis”, was certainly not expected in the plans for the programme year, which began in 2011.

The Capital of Culture Donostia-San Sebastián 2016 is making politics, in the literal sense of the word. At the forefront is the city as *polis*, which in Aristotle’s political theory stands as a model for a state in which a community of free and equal citizens live together under law and order. This is still not a matter of course in San Sebastián, where, after Madrid, most of the 800 ETA deaths occurred. Although the ETA officially laid down its weapons in 2011, flags of separatist movements can still be seen, hanging out of the city’s windows. It is not difficult to imagine the feelings that the sight can evoke among the bereaved of the victims of ETA terrorist attacks.

San Sebastián’s approach comes close to the original idea of the Capital of Culture formulated in the resolution of the EU Council of Culture Ministers of 1985. Namely, that the initiative should “primarily benefit the inhabitants of the region concerned”. As is well known, the first cities in the programme did not aim at this, but rather presented their already existing cultural assets. Until the end of the 1980s, the programme was tourist-friendly and only took place in summer. San Sebastián consciously goes back to this basic idea—as the famous Spanish film-director, Pedro Almodovár, once put it: “The closer you are to the origin, the better you achieve a convincing effect with others.”

Sometimes the program may seem a little too introverted. Surely many visitors would have been happy, had not only selected but all programme suggestions and information been available in English. Perhaps the themes of pacification and encounter only work as a concept for the Capital of Culture year in a city that, despite the great social challenges, has so many treasures to offer: be it cultural (e.g. an international film festival and several renowned music festivals such as Heineken Jazzaldia) or touristic (highest Michelin star density per inhabitant worldwide; three beaches on one side and a fantastic mountain landscape on the other).

The cultural infrastructure of San Sebastián can also be seen in several modern buildings that have been built in recent years (e.g. the Rafael Mo-

neo Museum, the Tabakalera Cultural Centre or the San Telmo Museum of Basque Art). Thus there was no need to re-develop the cityscape or create new cultural institutions, as was the case in Weimar (1999) and Marseille (2013) as part of the Capital of Culture year.

Donostia-San Sebastián is also proud of the advanced standards of their “European Capital of Culture” programme. The region will of course be included—the programme takes place within a 100 km radius, with San Sebastián as the epicentre. It therefore also includes the French part of the Basque Country. The programme also proved to be participatory, as the public responded to the calls to submit proposals for events, which were often implemented. In any case, the plans for Donostia-San Sebastián in 2016 had to have a majority appeal, since several political changes have taken place in the city since its appointment in 2011: from the Socialists to the Left Nationalists and then to the bourgeois Basque Nationalist Party. With these changes brought new appointments to the management of the Capital of Culture.

In the project “Sans adieu”, twelve artists meet twelve survivors of ETA victims. “We still have no solution as to how a civilised society should deal with the terrorist attacks of the past and the present. This is why it is essential to deal with this issue,” explains Berástegui. It is an optimistic sign that the current European Capital of Culture features and promotes the peaceful coexistence of different cultures—contrary to the anachronistic *zeitgeist* in some EU Member States at the present, to (over-)emphasize the nation-state. May it bear fruit.

This text is the abbreviated version of an article in the journal *Kulturpolitische Mitteilungen* 153/2016.

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## Cultural Encounters in the Open Air: Pafos 2017

“Open Air Factory” is the motto of “Pafos 2017”, the southernmost of all European Capitals of Culture to date. In any case, the motto offers more there than in Danish Aarhus, the other city this year that shares the title of Capital of Culture with the Greek part of Cyprus. The programme included a concert by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra against the backdrop of the Byzantine castle, which towers over the harbour as the city’s landmark. Just unimaginative classic kitsch? Now even media-effective, firecracker events are part of a Capital of Culture programme; just think of the motorway closure at RUHR.2010. A special year can and must draw attention to itself in a

special way. The cultural political objective is expressed, however, in the less bombastic projects: the discovery and conquest of new areas, the innovative display of old cultural sites and Land Art events. Even the construction of the most recently built cultural sites follows the same principle as the motto, so that an open-air cinema has opened in the city of 33,000 inhabitants, and a new open-air stage has been created right in the centre.

With Pafos, a smaller city has once again won the title of European Capital of Culture. It had previously won the competition against Limassol and Nicosia, who had committed themselves to the same theme in their applications: the violent division of the island into the northern Turkish and southern Greek parts. Although Pafos is the furthest from the border of the island's two halves, the city was able to present its contention in the history's division the best. Perhaps this will have the most lasting effect on the Capital of Culture year: Pafos's storytelling; its identification with the places of remembrance, where European history can be traced. From the rock where Aphrodite, according to Greek mythology, arose from the sea in Cyprus, to the traces of the Greek and Roman islanders, who are now UNESCO World Heritage Sites, to the handling of the Wall, which has been separating the island, its families and its fellow human beings since 1974.

That is why the central theme of the programme line-up "Linking Continents – Bridging Cultures" is mainly dedicated to the division of the island. However, the daily media coverage of migration, escape routes from Syria via Lebanon or Turkey—all neighbouring countries of Cyprus—is seldom discussed in the Capital of Culture programme. As with Wrocław (Breslau), which presented itself last year as European Capital of Culture, it would have been beneficial if burning EU topics had been more strongly examined.

What can the candidate cities learn from Pafos? On the one hand, there is the handling of setbacks. These include unforeseen political conditions (the Mayor of Pafos was sentenced to several years in prison for corruption in the run-up to the Capital of Culture year) and financial hurdles. Due to the financial crisis, the budget of "Pafos 2017" shrank by two thirds to 8.5 million euros—the smallest sum a European Capital of Culture has ever had to make do with. However, thanks to cooperation with past Capitals of Culture and the Co-Capital of Culture, Aarhus, as well as other European partners and sponsors, the programme was still realised with 300 events and 150 projects. This is also due to the remarkable help of countless volunteers. And of course the Capital of Culture team, which is small, but obviously strong and competent. It also succeeded in acquiring substantial amounts from the EU's cohesion and structural funds for urban development, including new cultural sites.

Last but not least, Pafos does not rest on its historical treasures, but uses the Capital of Culture year as a development boost for the city. "We did not get the title of European Capital of Culture because Pafos is such a beauti-

ful city, but because we are desperate”, the photographer Ergenc Korkmazel sums up. He was born as a Turkish Cypriot in 1972 in Pafos, was expelled to the North after the division of the island, and has now returned to his native town. The Capital of Culture programme includes an exhibition of his pictures, which portrays the two separate parts of the island.

This text is the abridged version of an article in the journal *Politik & Kultur* 5/2017.

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## An Instructive Look to the North: Aarhus 2017

“Let’s rethink” – the motto of the European Capital of Culture Aarhus is short and sweet. The second-largest Danish city, which shares the title with the Cypriot Pafos in 2017, is taking the Capital of Culture year as an opportunity to rethink various aspects of its municipal policy. In the field of cultural policy, this concerns the relationship between urban cultural life and other policy areas such as the economy, tourism, education, marketing and the design of public spaces. Within the framework of this “rethinking” or “new-thinking”, municipal tasks—that at first glance have nothing to do with culture—are also to be tackled, such as the problem of the casualisation of districts in the western part of the city, or the relationship of the municipality to the surrounding region.

The latter has already been exemplarily organised in the preparatory phase that lasted for almost ten-years. For example, formalised cooperation with the 19 municipalities of the Central Jutland region (Midtjylland), which has a population of 1.3 million, in terms of both content and funding, was arranged. This was possible because all the mayors of the municipalities were convinced of the Capital of Culture. Right from the start of the application phase at the end of 2007, and even more so after the title was awarded in 2012. The viable cooperations were also a decisive factor in the Capital of Culture’s selection. Sønderburg, the only competitor, lost to Aarhus, despite its proximity to its neighbouring Member State, which would have been particularly well-suited for European flagship projects.

It is hoped that the new regional networks will generate sustainable, synergetic effects. According to the credo, competitors should become cooperation partners in order to better position themselves as a cultural landscape. An example of this is the “Seven Deadly Sins” project, which comprises seven museums in the region that have never worked together before. For three

months, artists from all over the world will present their works interpreting “The Seven Deadly Sins”—an example of art as a medium for a discussion of values in an intercultural context. In addition, the accompanying programme includes “Sinful Sundays”, discussion events (including those related to the Luther anniversary) and culinary and cultural events. The cooperation network has existed since 2010 and will continue to exist beyond the Capital of Culture year. Another example of the sustainable effects of a Capital of Culture is the staff of the Capital of Culture Aarhus, 50% of whom were recommended by the participating municipalities or cultural institutions. Especially in a medium-sized city—at least from a German point of view, Aarhus has 320,000 inhabitants—this contributes to the consolidation of networks.

For the theoretical dimension of the year, the University of Aarhus is responsible through evaluations and research reports. This is another example of how the “European Capital of Culture” programme has been professionalised over its 30-year term. The cooperation with the university was introduced for the first time by the last Cultural Capital in Germany, RUHR.2010, and some of the subsequent Capital of Cultural (candidate) cities have also sought out a connection to the local universities. Aarhus had successfully put out its feelers in 2017 to learn from past Capitals of Culture. In addition to RUHR.2010, there were exchanges with the Scandinavian Capitals of Culture Stavanger (2008) and Umeå (2014), as well as Capitals of Culture such as Mons (2015) and Liverpool (2008), which were particularly concerned with the topic of sustainability.

Altogether, productive mutual learning (capabilities) between the Capitals of Culture depends very much on the capacities and contacts of the respective locations. This is unfortunate, because some potential remains untapped—especially if every city has to start from scratch again and again in its Capital of Culture planning—without being able to build on existing experiences from past cities of the initiative. Despite all the basic differences between the participating cities in terms of size, financial possibilities or cultural-political establishment: the level and scope of the modern Capitals of Culture’s design, which has been achieved in the meantime, have long required a superordinate documentation and information centre. The EU Commission sees that the programme is running successfully even without its intervention and is therefore reluctant in this respect. So it is probably up to the participating cities themselves to permanently establish such an authority.

This text is the abridged version of an article in the journal *Politik & Kultur* 2/2017.

## “Festa” on Malta: Valletta 2018

Valletta is the smallest capital of the EU, Malta the smallest Member State and with almost 6,000 citizens, it is also the smallest European Capital of Culture in the 33-year history of the initiative. However, all of the Maltese islands are incorporated in the programme, which have so far been known as a tourist destination not only because to the beautiful landscape but also because of its cultural historical treasures (UNESCO-World Heritage).

So what are the general objectives of the Capital of Culture V18, what problems does it want to address and what does it contribute to cultural policy? At least one issue—and the reason Malta has been internationally present in the media for the past months—will not be covered in the Capital of Culture programme: namely the arrival of refugee boats on the Mediterranean island. This was also the critique of the Capital of Culture Wrocław in 2016. A city, whose population was almost completely replaced after World War II, i.e. which is comprised almost exclusively of refugees, officially devotes itself as an EU Capital of Culture to the mission of addressing current and (inter)cultural issues that are relevant to Europe as a whole ... and leaves out questions on how to interact with refugees. Astonishing.

It also becomes clear in other places that Valletta’s Capital of Culture programme does not have the courage to deal with social challenges. This includes dealing with the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in October 2017, who was on the trail of corrupt, Mafia-like structures in the state apparatus. The memorial to the murder victim has been cancelled nine times for the activities of the Capital of Culture programme, and the director of the V18 Foundation, Jason Micallef, who is responsible for the programme year, publicly called for its boycott. Cultural policy as social policy? Not here. Ulrich Fuchs, the head of the EU jury that awarded the contract to Valletta, calls it a scandal “that it is quite obviously a politically abused project that no longer prioritizes art and culture and the European idea, but the protection of national interests.”

In the history of the initiative, which has existed since 1985, this is “a unique case in which a jury that was responsible for the selection and monitoring of this project, boycotts the project”. The “Festa”, as the motto of V18 is called, referring to the pompous church festivals in Malta, is obviously intended to distract from the country’s political problems and instead is focussed on creating a good atmosphere.

The Capital of Culture can also be a cultural political instrument that provides the impetus to probe the social areas that hurt, as was recently proven in the 2016 Capital of Culture Donostia – San Sebastián. Its main theme was the division of the Basque population into its supporters, opponents or victims of the bloody separatist movement in the 1960s and 1970s (and beyond).

It is a pity that the opportunity was not used to risk an open discourse with the population on how they would like to live together in the future. This is what the current European Capital of Culture Leeuwarden (“Iepen Mienskip” or “Open Community”) is trying to do, as well as many of the past Capitals of Culture, which was, if nothing else, reflected in their respective motto (e.g. “Open up!” at Plzeň 2015 or “Let’s Rethink” at Aarhus 2017).

Nevertheless, there is a polymorphic and extensive cultural programme in V18. As with other Capitals of Culture (e.g. Weimar 1999 or Istanbul 2010), the period between the ECoC designation and the actual programme year was also used to rehabilitate cultural institutions and important buildings. More than 50 million euros have been invested in Valletta since 2013, including 10 million in the cultural sector—the largest investment since Malta’s independence from the United Kingdom in 1964. The most visible examples of this are the conversion of the old National Museum of Fine Arts into the art museum MUŻA and the revival of Strait Street (“Strada Stretta”). Once a pulsating, dirty and colourful amusement mile for sailors, the wild life there fell asleep in the 1980s. As a part of the Capital of Culture programme, artists and creative people are to breathe new life into the city.

It is also noteworthy that the V18 Foundation has implemented a research and evaluation programme. This can provide an important building block for research on Capitals of Culture and for knowledge transfer, which has so far been treated like a stepmother by the EU Commission. It is to be hoped that approaches to the “prettification of a situation that could provide critical reflection” (Fuchs) will be seized by scholars and examined in detail.

This text is the abridged version of an article in the journal *Politik & Kultur* 6/2018

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## Iepen Mienskip or: In Varietate Concordia: Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018

The typical tourist likes to travel to places where they find familiarity. This is not significantly different of the prototypical cultural tourist, explains Oeds Westerhof, the Strategic Director of this year’s European Capital of Culture “Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018” (Leeuwarden-Friesland 2018 or LF2018). It was a real balancing act for those responsible for the programme. On the one hand, there is a need for renowned artists, who the cultural tourists already

know from other big exhibitions at famous events and who are to lure them this year into the Frisian provincial capital with only 100,000 inhabitants. On the other hand, the programme should also be innovative, locally anchored, participatory and authentic.

This conflict manifested itself in the large-scale project “Elf fonteinen”, in which eleven new artistic fountains were created in eleven cities in Friesland. They recall the tradition of speed skating, which used to take place in winter between these eleven cities on frozen rivers and canals. Even though the tradition has not been lived for over 20 years because the winters have become too warm, Frisian culture has always been associated with the theme of “water”, which also plays a role in many other areas of the Capital of Culture programme. The eleven fountains, one of which now welcomes visitors directly at Leeuwarden Central Station, were designed by renowned international artists such as Stephan Balkenhol and Mark Dion. Local artists complain about the amount of money spent on the usual elitist travelling circus of contemporary art, when there is enough creative potential in the region. Those responsible for the programme say they could be involved in other Capital of Culture projects, and certain audience-magnets are just necessary in order to attract attention.

In fact, the participation of the urban and regional population in the programme year is taken so seriously that it sees itself as a prime example of a “bottom-up cultural capital”. It is estimated that by the end of the year, 10% of the resident population will have become actively involved in the programme. This happens with quite a low-threshold, for example, in the project “Leen en Fries” (“Lend a Friesen”), which the regional libraries have developed. Via a user-friendly homepage, you can “borrow” a local volunteer for a few hours, like a book that shows you his city on selectable topics. A steadily growing team of volunteers offers guided tours on art and culture, food and drink, history, sport, “simply cosy” and other topics, and is willing to offer the successful initiative beyond the Capital of Culture year.

The inclusion of the locals belongs immanently to the motto “Iepen Mienskip” (“Open Community”) of LF2018. With its content programme, the Capital of Culture prevailed over its competitors Utrecht, The Hague, Maastricht and Eindhoven—all of which had larger budgets, better infrastructure and a higher profile. “Iepen Mienskip” is “the ‘bottom-up’, in open connection with the whole world, mutual work on a better world. (...) an unconventional and committed society with an eye for the ideas, opportunities and challenges of others,” as is stated in the self-description of the Capital of Culture.

Thus, the deliberately broad concept of culture also encompasses the theme of declining biodiversity in Europe. In Friesland, this current problem is actually more tangible and explosive on the ground than issues such

as migration or the EU's current ordeal. Various interdisciplinary projects deal with man's intervention in nature and the extinction of species in the marshland, which today is predominantly used for monoculture. A small initiative wants to promote biodiversity in the region in an intercultural way: In the "Poetic Potatoes" project, various potato varieties and poems are regularly exchanged with the Maltese Valletta, which also bears the title of "European Capital of Culture" this year.

The model character required in the EU criteria for Capitals of Culture is offered by LF2018 on the subject of provinciality. According to Westerhof, half of the Europeans live in a small or medium-sized town with rural surroundings. As in Leeuwarden, the same questions have to be answered for the future: What is the future profile of the smaller cities after agriculture has become the job and the identity for only a small part of the population? What is the unifying factor when beautiful churches still stand everywhere, but they have lost their community-building function? How will it become more attractive for young people to live in rural areas and get involved again, despite the attraction of the metropolises?

This text is the abridged version of an article in the journal *Politik & Kultur* 5/2018.

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### From the Cave into an Open Future: Matera 2019

Matera, la vergogna nazionale, "the national shame". In 1948, Palmiro Togliatti, Secretary General of the Italian Communist Party, described the southern Italian city in the Basilicata region as such. At that time 15,000 people still lived in the old town in the "Sassi", the stone caves, without water or electricity, together with their sheep and goats, with a child mortality rate of almost 50%. And now: European Capital of Culture 2019, which means triumph over the 20 (!) competitor cities (including Cagliari, Siena and Venice), Europe-wide attention and many tourists. From disgrace to "place to be". This horn has been used by numerous media outlets in order to report in advance on Matera, which bears the title of European Capital of Culture 2019, together with the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv. But this account is a very abridged one. The Sassi, whose inhabitants were resettled in newly built apartments in the early 1950s, have long since found a new and prosperous purpose. Since the 1980s, the fascinating caves, where people have lived for 9,000 years, have been reclaimed by artists. The Sassi have been a UNESCO

World Heritage Site since 1993. This is already associated with a considerable number of tourists, which is to be increased to 800,000 visitors in the Capital of Culture year. But the wish for Matera, which has only 60,000 inhabitants, is not to lose sight of the difference between mass and class in its favoured target group.

The programme managers are meeting this challenge with a special concept to access this year's cultural activities: visitors acquire a "passport" for 19 euros and thus a "cultural citizenship", and can attend all events in the Capital of Culture year. They should not only be consuming tourists, but on the contrary temporary citizens of the city, who actively participate, in order to get closer to the goals of the Capital of Culture. These include five concrete thematic pillars (see <https://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/programme/themes.html>), but also abstract projects such as capacity-building ("Help to Self-Help") in the areas of creative entrepreneurship and cultural sustainability. The brochure "Open future", named after the motto of the Capital of Culture, describes the prerequisites for the agenda in a very grandiose way: in Matera "one becomes aware of the fundamentals of the cosmos and the fragility of existence, of the cycles of life and death and natural processes".

When Matera received the title of Capital of Culture in 2014, the joy of the city's population was unbridled. Like any city awarded the title, Matera had five years after its appointment to launch its programme. During this time the mayor Salvatore Adduce was voted out of office after he had vehemently campaigned for the application for the Capital of Culture. His successor was less ambitious, so that after Addeve's term in office, the preparations for 2019 had to be re-organised. If everything had gone optimally during the preparation period, infrastructure problems such as the poor connection of Matera to the railway network or the lack of a performing arts venue would have been addressed. The lead time could also have been better used for the capacity-building programme, which did not start until 2017.

Although some projects are still waiting to be implemented in the future, innovations relevant to cultural policy have nevertheless been executed. These include the Open Design School (ODS) and the Instituto Demo-Etno-Antropologica (I-DEA), both of which, as interdisciplinary training centres and workshop archives, are intended to promote, institutionalise and thus consolidate the future-oriented ideas of the Capital of Culture.

Matera 2019 also sees itself as a "future laboratory for the whole of southern Italy and southern Europe," explains Ariane Bieou, one of the managers of the Capital of Culture team. The suspended Mezzogiorno should receive impulses for a new self-confidence and a new self-location. "Is it always just a question of money? Or does it also have something to do with us and our own attitude?" asks Adduce, who is no longer mayor, but now

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president of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation, which is responsible for the Capital of Culture. The positive sides of the South—modesty, hospitality and the ability to approach life stress-free—are to be re-explored, as an alternative to a Europe that is otherwise dominated by north-western values and looks down on the South. A possible continuation in 2021 would be exciting if three cities, all located in Southeastern Europe, were to become European Capitals of Culture for the first time.

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# 6

## The Legacy of ECoCs



# Lille 2004: Effects and legacy

## Perspectives of a memorable ECoC

Pauline Bosredon and Thomas Perrin

If it is generally acknowledged that Glasgow 1990 represents a “critical juncture” in the development path of the European Capitals of Culture, Lille 2004 remains as a remarkable example of how the ECoC event can be mobilised, and capitalised from, to foster urban regeneration and renewal (Liefvooghe, 2010; Paris & Baert, 2011).

ECoC renewed the image and territorial branding of Lille and initiated a cultural policy that persisted and became a signature of the city policy. Another characteristic of Lille 2004, due not only to its location but also to the authorities’ political choice, was to give a Euroregional dimension to ECoC by developing cross-border events and partnerships.

We propose: (1) to look back at the success of Lille 2004, (2) to present how this event led to a durable cultural policy, and (3) to open perspectives on the cultural and socio-territorial development of Lille and its metropolitan region.

## Governance and participation

In terms of participation, Lille 2004 remains a successful ECoC (Werquin, 2006). In total, more than 9 million people participated in 2,500 projects and events of the programme, including 4.8 million participants who took part in the street parties and parades, 2.3 million visitors to the visual arts exhibitions, and nearly 825,000 spectators for the performing arts. 17,000 artists contributed to the ECoC programme. Tourist figures also showed a significant increase between 2003 and 2004. A posteriori, such success can be attributed to two main factors: efficient governance on the one hand, and popular interest on the other hand.

The collective dynamics that promoted Lille’s candidacy for the ECoC title were actually put in place in the 1990s, when the city prepared a bid for the 2004 Olympic Games. Although the Olympics bid proved unsuccessful, the partnerships and contacts that were organised around this project, in short, its governance scheme, became useful assets that were remobilised when the city authorities decided to apply to the ECoC scheme. From the

beginning of the process, essential socio-economic actors supported the initiative, in particular the Comité Grand Lille, an informal but influential group that gathers together civil society actors, entrepreneurs and managers and creates a “growth coalition” to serve the development of the metropolitan region. Some major French firms and companies are based in the Lille metropolitan region and provide potentially powerful economic outreach. This situation is somehow contradictory, when one considers the overall socio-economic profile of the region Hauts-de-France, one of the poorer regions in France, that has a high level of unemployment and includes some of the most socially and economically deprived areas. Yet this particular investment of the socio-economic elites resulted in one of the highest shares of private funding ever achieved by an ECoC: 82 enterprises contributed 13 million euros, which represented 18% of the budget.

The good relationship between the socio-economic circles and the mayor of the city, Martine Aubry, and her predecessor, Pierre Mauroy, no doubt fostered this valuable alliance between the city’s main public and private agents. Moreover, Lille 2004 included other territorial authorities in the Lille ECoC. The metropolitan authority Lille Métropole Communauté Urbaine contributed 18% of the budget, and the region Nord-Pas-de-Calais contributed 15%. In total, 193 cities were partners of Lille 2004. The ECoC proved to be an important milestone in the post-industrial “reinvention” and cultural requalification of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais region, and the regional council led several events during the cultural year: an Egyptology exhibition in Boulogne-sur-Mer, exhibitions of works from national museums in the belfries of certain cities, and musical and opera tours in the region. Belgian municipalities in the cross-border region were also included. This multi-territorial scope enlarged the geography of Lille 2004 and gave it a Euroregional dimension.

Participation proved to be another major success factor. Not only visitors, but also inhabitants, contributed to the high participation rate. The organisers observed this “popular alchemy” even at the launching parade of Lille 2004, when the attendance was far higher than expected. One scheme in particular fostered people’s participation: the “ambassadors”, who were volunteers that promoted and disseminated the ECoC programme and activities (Da Lage, 2008). 17,800 ambassadors promoted Lille 2004 throughout the Euroregion, and even at an international level. Hundreds of them volunteered during some of the ECoC performances and a core group of about 200 people were present throughout the year to support the implementation of the ECoC. In hindsight, this system proved to be one of the engines of the popular affiliation to Lille 2004, and the “ambassador” scheme has become a classical device of an ECoC. This system is still continuing in the cultural projects conducted by Lille 3000, the cultural agency that was created from the ECoC.

## Strategy and realisation

A very visible effect of the ECoC was the renovation of various heritage and cultural amenities, like churches or the opera. The Parc Lebas was developed in an area that lacked green spaces. The boulevard Faidherbe, a main street that connects the central station to the city centre, was refurbished so as to be easily transformed into a parade venue. Since then it has been the main venue for the performance of important street cultural events. The Tri postal, a former postal sorting centre, was converted into an exhibition centre and has become a core cultural amenity of the city.

Notably, Lille 2004 delivered a core item of the Lille cultural infrastructure: the maisons Folies. These socio-cultural amenities, created on the occasion of the ECoC, are located in different neighbourhoods and some of them were placed in renovated post-industrial buildings (figures 1 and 2). They form a territorial cultural networking of the city based on proximity and interdisciplinarity, which extends to the whole metropolitan region, and beyond. Among the 12 maisons Folies that were established for Lille 2004, three were opened in the nearby Belgian cities of Tournai, Kortrijk and Mons. And, indeed, the Euroregional outreach was one salient achievement of Lille 2004.

Lille gave a cross-border dimension to its ECoC title from the opening ceremony, with a concert by the National Orchestra of Lille, accompanied by English and Belgian choirs, in front of the Lille-Flandres train station, thus highlighting the role of transportation in the structuring of the Euroregion. Even though Lille remained the epicentre of the ECoC, seven Belgian cities participated in a joint programme, and about 25% of the events took place at the cross-border level. Once again, this Euroregional orientation results from a strategy that started before the ECoC with, at the beginning of the 1990s, the connection to the fast train line to London and Brussels and the consequent building of the Lille Europe station and the Euralille business district (Perrin, 2016). At the political level the city actively co-operated with bordering Belgian communes, and in 1991 the Conférence Permanente Intercommunale Transfrontalière (COPIT) was created. Thus Euroregional cultural cooperation did not start with Lille 2004, but the ECoC was a catalyst to reinforce and promote this dimension.

Thus Lille 2004 was simultaneously a confirmation and a renewal of the policy decisions taken by the city's authorities. Its success, especially its popular success, though somehow "prepared" by a previous chain of development, also contributed to the choice of maintaining a cultural dynamic in the city, as shown by the legacy of the ECoC.

Apart from its success during 2004, particularly in terms of attendance, the reputation of Lille as ECoC is due to its "temporal thickness" (Grava-

ri-Barbas and Jacquot, 2007, p. 2) is the magnitude of its legacy and the sustainability of the event. The ECoC had the driving effect – real or expected – of positioning creative economy at the heart of the public authorities’ metropolitan strategy, in a context in which culture has “an increasingly strategic role for the definition of a new competitive context for cities and regions in the post-industrial society” (Inglehart, 1998, quoted in Sacco and Blessi, 2007, p. 113).

## Cultural action and sustainable management

First of all, this sustainability depends on the continuity of the cultural action occurring within the facilities created in 2004. Among the twelve “maisons Folie” initially inaugurated, only three no longer exist as such: those of Tournai, Maubeuge and Arras. The two “maisons Folie” of Lille (MF Wazemmes and MF Moulins) remain under the direct control of the City of Lille. Their common management provides cultural programming that is mainly focused on popular culture, major festivals (such as Wazemmes l’Accordéon), shows and workshops on social topics such as communities, otherness and discrimination. Operating in their neighbourhood as local cultural centres, they have been involved in the programming of major recurring events since 2004.

The Condition Publique in Roubaix, the Hospice d’Havr  in Tourcoing, the Ferme d’en haut in Villeneuve d’Ascq, the Fort in Mons en Baroeul, the Colys e in Lambersart, the maison Folie Beaulieu in Lomme, the maison Folie in Mons and the Buda Island in Kortrijk have remained cultural centres, although some have abandoned the label “maison Folie”. This is the case, for example, of the Condition Publique (Perrin, 2015), which now has the specific appellation of “Public institution for cultural cooperation” ( tablissement public de coop ration culturelle). This institution attempts to combine local-level projects that are developed in partnership with associations and schools from the surrounding neighbourhood of Pile, one of the poorest of Roubaix, and a demanding artistic programme with a regional outreach.

The strong social dimension of these cultural facilities, particularly those located in the city’s popular districts, and the scale articulation from very local to metropolitan and even international levels, characterise the Lille 2004 legacy. However, this ambition has so far been only a partial success and appears to be quite challenging in the neighbourhoods where people are experiencing great socio-economic difficulties.

## “Permanent policy” and “festive city”

The association Lille 3000 was created right after the ECoC, at the initiative of the city and metropolitan authorities, notably Martine Aubry, with the objective of ensuring the continuation of the spirit and atmosphere of Lille 2004. This association asserts a continuity from Lille 2004 and does not hesitate to project itself into the third millennium. As stated in the preamble of its statute:

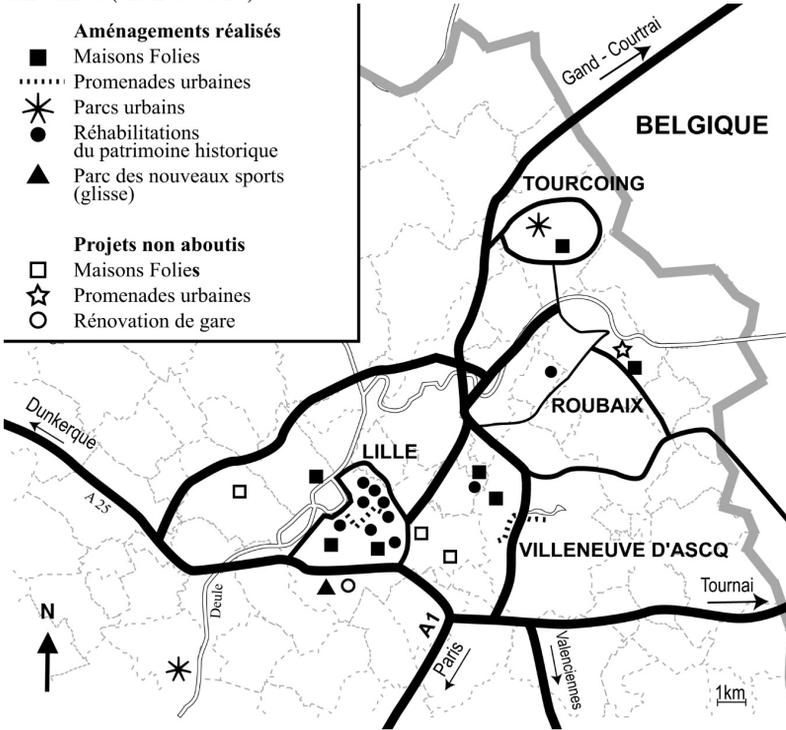
“During 2004, the City of Lille, but also the metropolis, the Nord-Pas de Calais region and its cross-border side, were European Capital of Culture. Noting the important dynamic that has developed during this year, an association has been created to set up, in the continuity of Lille 2004, artistic and cultural events likely to continue this momentum.”

Didier Fusillier, the organiser of Lille 2004, was the director of Lille 3000 from 2005 to 2015 and has remained its artistic advisor. Thus, Lille 3000 acts as both a renewal of and a direct inspiration from Lille 2004. Its main activity is to regularly organise major cultural events of European and international dimensions, approximately every 3 years: “Bombaysers de Lille” in 2006, the travelling exhibition “Futurotextiles” in 2008, “Europe XXL” in 2009, Lille Europe Pavilion in Shanghai in 2010, “Fantastic” in 2012, “Renaissance” in 2015 (figure 3), and “Eldorado” in 2019. Every event, which is like a cultural year or season on its own, is linked to a specific topic and celebrates some specific culture in all its aspects, from popular traditions to artistic productions: Eldorado in 2019, for instance, is dedicated to Mexican culture.

Thus the cultural urban event is at first sight ephemeral: however, many local actors seek to capitalise on the positive effects of these events, sometimes giving the impression of projecting the city into a state of permanent party to transform it into a “festive city” (Gravari-Barbas, 2000).

In addition to these major events, Lille 3000 is responsible for the programming of the “spring, summer and autumn” cultural seasons at Gare Saint-Sauveur, and organises high-profile contemporary art exhibitions at the Tripostal, for instance, “The Silk Road” in 2009, in partnership with the Saatchi Gallery, or “Performance!” in 2017, in partnership with the Centre Pompidou on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of this national art centre.

Figure 1 – Lille 2004 : mapping of the urban developments, achieved (“réalisés”) and unrealized (“non aboutis”)



Conception/realization : C. Liefoghe / J. Domont, TVES, Lille 1, 2009. In Liefoghe, 2010, p. 41.

## Urban dimensions and cultural events

Lille 2004 proved to be a high point in Lille’s urban planning. The ECoC triggered urban operations that renewed industrial heritage and combined popular culture, contemporary art and urban cultures, as in the two maisons Folie of Wazemmes and Moulins, or the Halle de glisse, an amenity dedicated to dance and sliding sports, and inaugurated in 2004 in the working-class neighbourhood of Lille Sud. After the ECoC, new facilities were developed in the same spirit. Le Grand Sud is a performance hall inaugurated in 2013 as a flagship project of the Lille Sud regeneration programme, according to the communication from the City of Lille. The hip hop centre “The Flow” was opened in 2014, also in Lille Sud, offering recording and dance studios and a performance hall.

The Gare Saint Sauveur is a former freight station that was converted by the City of Lille and opened on the occasion of the season Europe XXL, organised by Lille 3000 in 2009. It has become a significant cultural site and is part of a wider mixed-use development project on a vast 23-hectare wasteland, which includes housing, culture, sports and green space. But several associations denounce the excessive densification of the project and the lack of space for nature in the city. The site is indeed strategically located at the gateway to the city centre and the City of Lille expects significant urban transformation in terms of land and property values.

In the current context of competition between cities, the continuation of the cultural and festive event contributes to the creation of a favourable atmosphere to develop the creative economy and to attract a population with strong cultural capital.

“Recently culture has been seen as a form of capital (Throsby, 1999) that acquires a central role in the future development of mature, post-industrial economies as a major engine of innovation and creativity – and therefore of new production and consumption concepts (Rullani, 2004), and of new competitive models (Porter, 2003).” (Sacco and Blessi, 2007, p. 114)

This “creative attractiveness” is a particularly salient issue for post-industrial cities like Lille. The service-oriented transformation of the economy is regarded as the only possible solution at the dawn of the 21st century. In 2004 Martine Aubry clearly focused on culture “as a territorial development project” (Paris and Baert, 2011, p. 41). Lille Horizon 2004, the association in charge of organising the event, referred to the “cultural leap” after 2004: the long-term impact, which cannot be measured, seems to be a desire for a shared culture and a change of mentality, towards more initiative and creativity (Liefoghe, 2010). While it remains difficult to assess the full impact of the event on attractiveness, tourism and employment, Lille seems to have acquired a place among the more appreciated cultural destinations. In this sense, Lille 2004 contributed to changing the image of the city, which was one of the objectives.

## Cultural investments and cross-border cooperation

With regard to the future opportunities for cultural policy, we can highlight the growing importance of the metropolitan level. The metropolitan authority of Lille, which has been active in the cultural field since 2000, established a network of “metropolitan cultural factories” after Lille 2004, to link the “maisons Folie” and three major facilities in cities in the me-

tropolitan area: the Arcades in Faches-Thumesnil, the Nautilus in Comines, and the Vivat in Armentières. All these structures have a common goal of working at the local level, organising street shows or local festivals, and ambitious and specialised cultural programming. The metropolitan authority supports the cultural factories with public subsidies and relies upon this cultural policy's effects in terms of influence and attractiveness. This policy has been extended with the successful bid to be the World Design Capital in 2020. This event will be organised and conducted by the metropolitan authority.

At the regional level, the inscription in June 2012 of the Nord-Pas de Calais mining basin on the World Heritage List and the inauguration of the Louvre museum branch in Lens confirm that this cultural turning point extends beyond the scope of the city, which actually started during Lille 2004 with the region's active participation in the ECoC activities. Yet the culture and creative economy's choice to re-image territories has long been questioned by urban studies on changes in capitalism and its effects on social inequalities (Harvey, 2001; Rousseau, 2009). More recently, the Degeyter collective (2017) showed how Lille's employers and local representatives contributed to place arts and culture at the heart of Lille's metropolitan project, tirelessly promoting the economic, social and territorial benefits of this policy. Criticisms of the real effects of this policy are not lacking and point to the gentrification of working-class neighbourhoods as one of its hidden objectives (Collectif Degeyter, 2017).

With regard to Euroregional cultural cooperation we can observe a certain evolution with, at the institutional level, e.g. the transformation and structure of the COPIT into the Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai, which in 2009 was the first cross-border institution to adopt the European statute of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation. The Eurometropolis promotes cross-border cultural cooperation, labels projects and supports stakeholders in their cooperative projects. It organises events such as workshops or forums to foster cultural cooperation. Beyond this institutional reframing, we can also observe that various actors have for a long time developed cross-border cultural events and networks in the Euroregion, quite independently from the existence of a cross-border institution (Perrin, 2012). We can cite as an example the Next festival for performing arts, which started in 2008 and became a flagship cross-border cultural project in the area. The Keep database on EU projects (<https://www.keep.eu/>) indicates that in the areas of "Community integration and common identity" and "Cultural heritage and the arts", the French-Belgian Interreg cross-border programme supported, from 2007, 58 projects involving 252 partners.

Thus the cross-border dimension of cultural life in this Euroregion can almost be regarded as an "integrated fact", but at the same time it is not al-

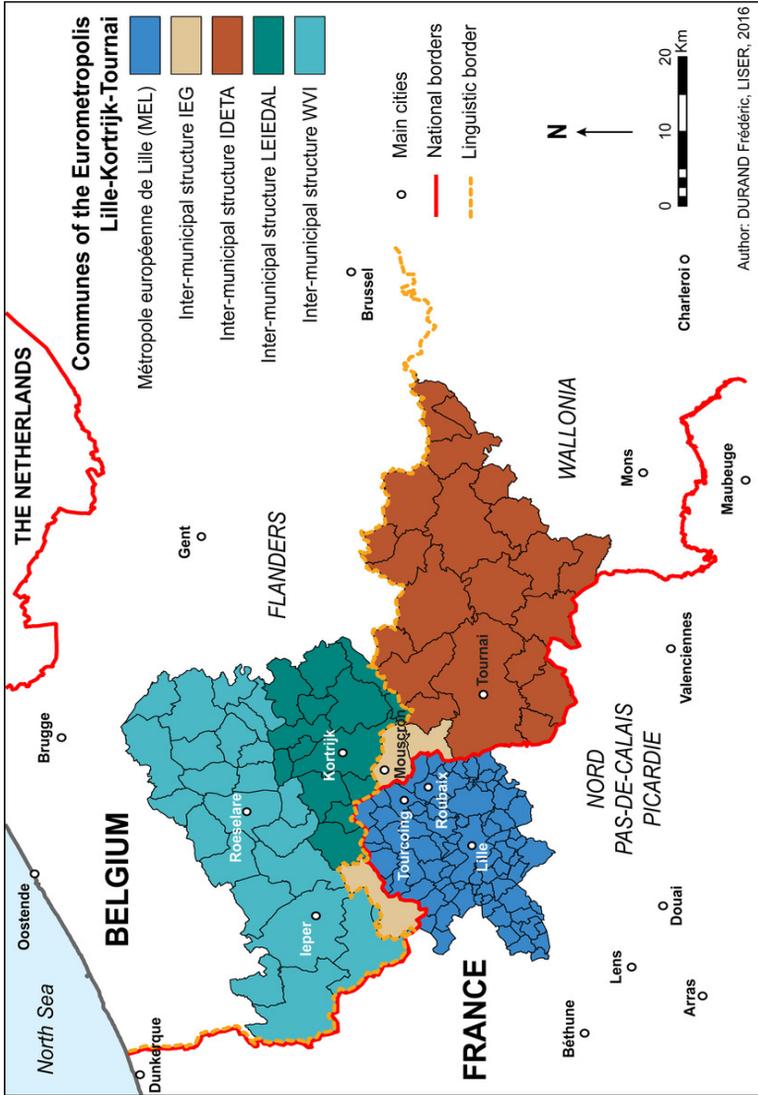


Figure 2 – The Métropole européenne de Lille and Eurometropolis Lille-Kortrijk-Tournai

Author: Durand Frédéric, Lisser, 2016.

ways a salient priority for cultural policies: ultimately, the ECoC Mons 2015 had few cross-border links with Lille, the maisons Folies that were established in Belgium during Lille 2004 do not specifically prioritise cross-border cooperation, and neither do the ones in Lille. Recently, *Le Manège*, an emblematic theatre platform between Mons and Maubeuge that was set up in the 1990s, stopped its cross-border activities due to political disagreements and lack of support. Even temporarily, such developments show that the European and cross-border orientation may be flourishing less than it used to. For instance, the question remains open on how the Next festival can maintain its cross-border programming following a reduction of the Inter-reg funds after 2020, which reveals the fragility of cross-border dynamics.

More broadly, in recent years, electoral results, whether regional or national, have shown an increased support for Eurosceptic parties in the region. Of course, there are large differences between the most socio-economically affected territories and the wealthiest ones, between the Lille metropolitan areas and the rest of the region, and within the Lille metropolitan area. These results must be interpreted in the light of the national and international socio-political context and require a detailed sociological analysis of the vote, which is not the subject of this article. However, such results, precisely in this region, question the concrete impact of the European positioning of the authorities for several decades, and the reception and reappropriation of these political choices by the people. Participatory assemblies such as the Metropolitan Development Council or the Eurometropolis Civil Forum can address these issues, while the French territorial reform in 2015 introduced new parameters by giving a specific European-oriented statute to Lille Metropolis, now called *Métropole européenne de Lille*, and by creating the greater Hauts-de-France region from the merging of the former Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Picardie regions.

Lille 2004 shows a remarkable and durable cultural investment. It exemplifies the effects that cultural policy can have on urban and territorial development to create infrastructure, renew attractiveness, promote socio-cultural projects and reinforce European cross-border cooperation. It also shows that such development depends on a strategic vision, cooperative governance arrangements and a concrete budgetary and policy investment.

Such conditions also reveal certain contradictions and fragilities. First, culture can be only one factor among others to radically improve socio-economic conditions. Second, public investment can evolve following political lines. For instance, in spite of a quite stable development cycle of 15 years, the future of the “Lille 3000” policy remains linked to the results of the next municipal elections in 2020.

In the same year, the Word Design Capital will be a key aspect in re-assessing the impact of the creative-cultural oriented agenda on the metro-

polis' life and economy. Questions remain open on whether this event will help design activities to become a real added-value sector, and on its capacity to raise popular affiliation as in 2004, rather than addressing only a so-called “creative class”.

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# Memories of the Major Cultural Institutions of Liverpool 2008

William John Chambers

## Introduction

Liverpool was the UK's European Capital of Culture in 2008. The year was acclaimed as "The best European Capital of Culture" by the President of the European Union, Jose Manuel Barroso (2015) and as "surpassing all expectations" by Andy Burnham (2009), the British Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

For the University Network of European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC) annual conference in Aarhus, Denmark in 2017 the author carried out an empirical email survey of the perspectives of a sample of 45 Liverpool citizens from the arts, politics, charity, faith and educational sectors on their memories and perceptions of Liverpool 2008 (Chambers, 2018). For the purposes of *this* paper, the responses of 16 respondents, from 12 major arts organisations were examined and those of 7 CEOs and Directors of the major arts organisations of Liverpool were used in detail.

## Interviewees and their organisations

The interviewees were Michael Eakin (ME), Chief Executive of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (RLPO); David Fleming (DF), Director of National Museums Liverpool (NML); Andrea Nixon (AN): Executive Director of the Tate Liverpool; Mike Stubbs (MS), Director/CEO of the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT); Karen Gallagher (KG), Artistic Director of Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI); Maureen Bampton (MB), Director of the Bluecoat Display Centre and Emma Smith (ES), Director of the Liverpool Irish Festival (LIF).

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (RLPO)  
[www.liverpoolphil.com](http://www.liverpoolphil.com)

The RLPO was founded in 1840 and is the UK's oldest continuing professional symphony orchestra. It delivers over 80 classical concerts each season in Liverpool with audiences of more than 370,000. In addition it plays in the north-west and in London at the Proms. It often acts as an Ambassador for Liverpool on international tours which have recently included China, Switzerland, France, Spain, Luxembourg, Germany, Romania, the Czech Republic and Japan. For this it received the Freedom of the City award. It is the largest recipient of Arts Council England funding on Merseyside receiving approximately £10.3m per year.

**Michael Eakin** has been the Chief Executive since 2008. Previously he had run the Hezagon Theatre, Reading and was then Director of Arts and Leisure at Reading Council before his appointment in 2001 as the Executive Director of the Arts Council England North West.

National Museums Liverpool (NML)  
[www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk)

The NML comprises 8 museums and galleries in Liverpool and the Wirral. The first city museum, now called the World Museum, was founded in 1851 and this was followed by the Walker Art Gallery in 1877 and the Lady Lever Art Gallery in 1922. The next addition was in 1980 with the opening of the Maritime Museum, then the International Slavery Museum in 2007 and most recently, in 2011, the Museum of Liverpool. In 2017/8 over 3.3 million visitors were received. The NML is funded by the Department for Digital Media and Sport with an income of £25m in 2017/8.

**David Fleming** was appointed Director of NML in 2001 and retired in 2018. Since he became Director of National Museums Liverpool audiences have more than quadrupled, rising from around 700,000 per year to more than 3.3 million. He started his museum career as founder-curator of the Yorkshire Museum of Farming, York then became principal keeper at Hull Museums which was followed by 11 years as Director of the Tyne and Wear Museums where he led teams delivering major capital developments and massive audience growth.

Tate Liverpool (TL) [www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-liverpool](http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-liverpool)

The Tate comprises a group of art galleries specialising in British and International Modern and Contemporary Art from 1900. The first Tate (in London – now called Tate Britain) opened in 1897, this was followed by the Tate Liverpool in 1988, the Tate St Ives (Cornwall) in 1993 and the Tate Modern (London) in 2000. In 2017 628,000 visits were made to the Tate Liverpool

**Andrea Nixon** was appointed Executive Director of Tate Liverpool in 2006. She led the management and continued development of the gallery from Liverpool's year as European Capital of Culture in 2008 until May 2018. At Tate Liverpool Andrea was responsible for Business Planning, Partnership strategies and delivery, financial management and income generation, HR, Policy development, Governance, Learning and Public Engagement, Fund-raising, Marketing, strategic development, and organisational management. Andrea was Director of Development for the Tate in London from 1998 to 2006 playing a key role in the creation of both Tate Modern and Tate Britain.

The Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT)  
[www.fact.co.uk](http://www.fact.co.uk)

FACT is a visual arts organisation. It supports, produces and presents world-class visual art that embraces and explores creative media and digital technology and is a world leading exhibitor and producer of video and digital art. It was opened in 2003 and its premises include a partnership with PictureHouse cinemas. In 2017-18 its income was £2,093,535.

**Mike Stubbs** was jointly appointed in 2007 with Liverpool John Moores University, where he is Professor of Art, Media and Curating. For 11 years he was the Director/CEO of FACT. He has been a key contributor to the development of culture and cultural policy in Liverpool. As a cofounder of ROOT, Burning Bush and the Abandon Normal Devices festivals, a project of FACT and Cornerhouse, Stubbs has commissioned and produced over 350 exhibitions, interactive, site specific, performative, sound and moving-image based exhibition programmes and artworks. Previously he was Head of Exhibition Programs for the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, a Senior Research Fellow at Jordanstone College of Art and Design Visual Research Centre at the University of Dundee and founding Director of Hull Time Based Arts. He has won more than a dozen major international awards including first prizes at the Oberhausen and Locarno film festivals and an award for his documentary, Cultural Quarter at the

Copenhagen International Documentary Festival. In 1999 he was invited to present a video retrospective of his work at the Tate Gallery, London.

Merseyside Dance Initiative (MDI) [www.mdi.org.uk](http://www.mdi.org.uk)

MDI is a dance agency, whose mission is “inspiring people through dance”. It works with partners to create a healthy and vibrant infrastructure for dance and works for “the advancement of public education in the arts of dance and related arts, through producing and promoting dance with artists, audiences and participants.” It was founded in 1993 and had an income in 2017/8 of £213,400.

**Karen Gallagher** was MDI’s founder and Artistic Director from 1994 until 2018. She has created an organisation with diversity and community at its heart, establishing programmes that support health and wellbeing and social inclusion that encourage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to dance.

She has received numerous awards including a Music of Black Origin award for MDI’s community dance practice (2010), an MBE for services to dance in The Queen’s New Year Honours List (2012) and in 2018 was celebrated by The Women’s Organisation as one of 21 Women who shape Liverpool. She has been responsible for nationally significant events, such as the British Dance Edition as part of Capital of Culture in 2008 and the Decibel Performance Arts Showcase. (2011). LEAP has become the premier dance festival in the UK. She has also been involved in European projects such as Cultiv8, Capital Nights Festival and the Pan European project The Migrant Body.

Bluecoat Display Centre (BDC)  
[www.bluecoatdisplaycentre.com](http://www.bluecoatdisplaycentre.com)

The Centre is a contemporary craft and design gallery that has been established since 1959 and as a registered charity since 2010. It was founded to support the contemporary craft infrastructure in the UK by exhibiting and selling work of international quality. Its Mission is the advancement of education for the benefit of the public in contemporary applied art and design by raising the public’s aesthetic appreciation and the provision of educational lectures, workshops and exhibitions at the Centre Liverpool.

It sells, exhibits and promotes over 350 selected contemporary craftspeople each year working in a broad variety of media. It also runs a series of outreach workshops with local mental health groups and artist residencies with local hospitals. They have worked with a variety of health and social

care partners and local hospitals. This has allowed them to extend their audience to those in the local community who might otherwise not had the opportunity to engage with professional artists or explore their own creativity. Income in 2016/7 was £127,000.

**Maureen Bampton** has worked in the decorative and applied art for most of her working life, initially in the fields of 19th and 20th century objects and later within the contemporary applied arts and crafts as Director of the Bluecoat Display Centre between 1986 and 2017.

She has advised the Crafts Councils of Ireland and England and acted as an External Examiner in various UK universities and colleges. She was a founder member of CraftNet and has worked in partnership with the Craft Council on the Hothouse programme of professional development for emerging makers.

She is now involved in freelance art consultancy, archive work, ceramic restoration conservation, antiques and vintage.

Liverpool Irish Festival (LIF) [www.liverpoolirishfestival.com](http://www.liverpoolirishfestival.com)

The appreciation and celebration of the unique links between Liverpool and Ireland were primary motives for the creation of the Liverpool Irish Festival in 2003. The idea was to create an annual, event to celebrate the Irish contribution to Liverpool's cultural identity and heritage. The Festival would include performance, participation, entertainment and education in Irish traditions, music, literature, theatre, and art and reflect their significance in defining Liverpool as a great European city.

It was initially funded by The Liverpool Culture Company and Arts Council and started in 2003 with 20, largely musical, events spread over 4 days. Events emphasise bold, creative programming, delivering something for everyone and enabling the participation of local people as users and providers of arts and cultural services. It now delivers more than 50 events over 10 days each October attracting an audience of 10,000. Project income in 2017/8 was £52,534.

**Emma Smith**, former Head of Creative Enterprise at the Bluecoat and Executive Director of LOOK, Liverpool's International Photography Festival, was appointed Director of the Liverpool Irish Festival in 2016. She has extensive experience in multi-stream programming and project management in festivals and cultural organisations.

## The Questions

Seven simple email questions were asked. These were:

- 1) What do you consider to have been the single most important benefit/legacy?
- 2) What do you consider to have been 2 other major benefits/legacies?
- 3) Which of the 7000 events did you enjoy most? (Apart from one of yours.)
- 4) What was your biggest disappointment?
- 5) Give 2 other disappointments.
- 6) Rate the year on a scale of 1-5 where 1= poor to 5 = excellent.
- 7) Other comments.

Q1: What do you consider to have been the single most important benefit/legacy?

Three of the respondents spoke of the city regaining its confidence after many decades of economic and social decline. Eakin referred to a renewal of self-confidence of Liverpoolians and Nixon referred to the city regaining its cultural, tourism and marketing confidence. Mike Stubbs talked about the growth in confidence that art could make to the city. Fleming wrote about the improvement of the perception of Liverpool's cultural excellence; Karen Gallagher, of the level of promotion and importance of the arts in the city and Maureen Bampton and Emma Smith of the European and international recognition of Liverpool. Finally, Stubbs discussed the importance of the arts as a potential employer.

Table 1

Name	Organisation	Comments
Michael Eakin	Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra	Liverpool's renewed self-confidence.
David Fleming	National Museums Liverpool	Improved perception of Liverpool's cultural excellence.
Andrea Nixon	Tate Liverpool	Liverpool is getting its cultural, tourism and marketing confidence back.
Mike Stubbs	Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology	The confidence in art to make a difference to a city and that being an artist or creative is a viable career for a new generation of people living here.

Name	Organisation	Comments
Karen Gallagher	Merseyside Dance Initiative	The level of promotion and profile that arts and culture received in the city.
Maureen Bampton	Bluecoat Display Centre	Raising the profile and importance of the arts and that of Liverpool as a European city.
Emma Smith	Liverpool Irish Festival	Aspiration to see beyond the national view of Liverpool; to raise our game and play internationally .... to keep looking ahead....

Q2: What do you consider to have been 2 other major benefits/legacies?

Several (Eakin, Stubbs and Bampton) spoke again of the improved perception and profile of the city in the UK and internationally. Fleming referred to the financial benefits which allowed him to raise funds for a new museum (The Museum of Liverpool) whilst Stubbs alluded to continued investment in the arts sector.

Most notable however was the recognition of the success of collaborative working across the arts sector. Three major partnerships were identified by 3 of the institutions (Tate, MDI, LIF) as of importance for collaboration, partnerships and joint funding: LARC (Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium) a partnership of the 7 major arts organisations; COOL (Creative Organisations of Liverpool) was formed in 2007 and comprises 32 smaller arts organisations whilst 36 smaller organisations are part of CLIP (Culture Liverpool Investment Programme 2014-19) funded by the City Council to the value of £2,779,310 in 2015-6. Whilst not mentioned in the questionnaire survey responses, this partnership working is an extension of the long standing collaboration between these arts organisations and the higher education sector through the City of Learning and Culture Campus networks.

Table 2

Name	Organisation	Comments
Michael Eakin	Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra	Improved perception of the city elsewhere in the UK; a strengthened cultural sector.
David Fleming	National Museums Liverpool	Enabled NML to raise money for the Museum of Liverpool.

Name	Organisation	Comments
Andrea Nixon	Tate Liverpool	Politicians really understanding the importance of culture to place making; familiarity of cultural organisations working together via LARC and COOL for collective rather than individual benefit.
Mike Stubbs	Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology	International profile for Liverpool; continued investment.
Karen Gallagher	Merseyside Dance Initiative	Ability to engage and produce some world class events; collaboration and development of networks such as COOL and LARC.
Maureen Bampton	Bluecoat Display Centre	More international visitors; more appreciation of the arts as a tool for regeneration.
Emma Smith	Liverpool Irish Festival	The development of COOL/LARC Networks and the LCC Clip Funding; ongoing collaboration that put arts and culture at the centre of things.

Q3: Which of the 7000 events did you enjoy most? (Apart from one of yours.)

Apart from high culture end and predictable blockbuster events such as the performance of the Turangalila Symphony by the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Liverpoolian Simon Rattle, the Klimt exhibition at the Tate and the ever-popular Opening Ceremony headlined by Beatle Ringo Starr, the most surprising, most enjoyed event was *One Step Forward, One Step Back* by DreamThinkSpeak in the immense and inspiring Liverpool Cathedral. This, inspired by Dante's Divine Comedy and asking the question 'What is Paradise?' took place in a magical landscape moving through the hidden interiors of the Cathedral whilst accessing views of the surrounding urban landscape.

During the Capital of Culture year it received little local publicity although was well reviewed by the national quality press yet both Michael Eakin of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Andrea Nixon of the Tate considered this to be the most enjoyable event they attended confirming the national press reviews of it as "an extraordinary promenade, unforgettable" (The Independent); "it will sustain you for a lifetime" (The Guardian); "it is transforming and timeless" (The Times) and The Observer which described it as a "fascinating creation by the architecturally inspired *DreamThinkSpeak*".

Other events enjoyed by the Arts Directors and CEOs included the (late) reopening, after refurbishment, of the oldest Grade 1 listed building in Central Liverpool, the Bluecoat Arts Centre (built 1717) and the exhibition by Pipilotti Rist, the leading contemporary Swiss artist, famed for her visually stunning sculptural video installations, major exhibition at FACT with the UK premiere of *Gravity be My Friend* by Mike Stubbs of FACT.

Table 3

Name	Organisation	Comments
Michael Eakin	Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra	One Step Forward, One Step Back, DreamThinkSpeak. Liverpool Cathedral.
David Fleming	National Museums Liverpool	Can't remember.
Andrea Nixon	Tate Liverpool	One Step Forward, One Step Back, DreamThinkSpeak. Liverpool Cathedral.
Mike Stubbs	Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology	Pippilotti Rist new commission/exhibition Gravity be my Friend (FACT); Berlin Philharmonic/Simon Rattle.
Karen Gallagher	Merseyside Dance Initiative	Opening Ceremony.
Maureen Bampton	Bluecoat Display Centre	Klimt at the Tate.
Emma Smith	Liverpool Irish Festival	Reopening of the Bluecoat Arts Centre.

#### Q4: What was your biggest disappointment?

Overall there were few big disappointments and many of those identified said more about the politics of the leaders than widely held views. Michael Eakin would have liked more truly international artists and companies. Presumably his taste in music and venue did not extend to the performance by Paul McCartney at Anfield, the home of Liverpool Football Club!

Two people referred to the timing of events. One (Andrea Nixon) talked of “running out of steam towards the end of the year” and another (Mike Stubbs) talked of congestion of programming. Nixon also referred to the disbanding of the North West Development Agency, a UK government organisation which helped fund regional development and from which Merseyside benefitted.

Strategically there was a comment about the lack of a cultural strategy to follow the Capital of Culture Year by the characteristically critical David

Fleming. Karen Gallagher of The Merseyside Dance Initiative commented on the lack of availability of sponsorship following the Capital of Culture Year. (This organisation subsequently lost its major funder, The Arts Council England.) Other random disappointments related to the late completion of the Bluecoat Gallery (Bamford) and another (Emma Smith) was concerned about the lack of job opportunities and low salaries paid to arts professionals and the preference given to national and international artists.

Table 4

Name	Organisation	Comments
Michael Eakin	Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra	Would have liked a few more truly international artists and companies.
David Fleming	National Museums Liverpool	Failure to follow up with a cultural strategy.
Andrea Nixon	Tate Liverpool	We all ran out of energy at the end and the NWDA was disbanded in 2010.
Mike Stubbs	Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology	Too much programmed in similar periods.
Karen Gallagher	Merseyside Dance Initiative	Lack of sponsorship opportunities post 2008.
Maureen Bampton	Bluecoat Display Centre	We could not be in our space because of project delays.
Emma Smith	Liverpool Irish Festival	Lack of job opportunities and salaries to mid-skilled roles; preference given to national/international workers and apprentices and interns.

#### Q5: Give 2 other disappointments

As mentioned above, there were few other recurrent disappointments identified, at least to the arts leaders of the city. Three of the seven CEOs and Managers could identify no other disappointments (Nixon, Gallagher and Bamford).

In terms of disappointments associated with 2008 and the years leading up the Capital of Culture, one impact which caused disappointment was the 'Big Dig' ie the disruption caused by the roadworks and building activity associated with major developments such as hotel building, Liverpool One Retail Park and the Echo Arena riverside developments (Stubbs).

Subsequent disappointments have included a perceived loss of status compared with neighbouring cities such as Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham-

ham (Eakin); a relatively minor national enhancement of the perception of Liverpool (Smith); a failure to fully establish Liverpool as a Human Rights City and maximise the city's status as a World Heritage site (Fleming) and an inability to sustain the same level of expenditure and the continued recognition of the value and importance of culture to the city (Eakin and Stubbs). None of these views were widely held.

Table 5

Name	Organisation	Comments
Michael Eakin	Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra	We have lost some ground against peer cities in recent years in terms of cultural investment and growth; still some who don't recognise the importance and quality of culture in the city.
David Fleming	National Museums Liverpool	Failure to establish Liverpool as a human rights city; failure to make most of World Heritage Site status.
Andrea Nixon	Tate Liverpool	No response.
Mike Stubbs	Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology	Roadworks, city disruption; not able to sustain same level of expenditure in subsequent years.
Karen Gallagher	Merseyside Dance Initiative	No response.
Maureen Bampton	Bluecoat Display Centre	No response.
Emma Smith	Liverpool Irish Festival	Arts jobs still vastly underpaid especially in the north and outside of education; national perception only moved fractionally.

Q6: Rate the year on a scale of 1-5 where 1= poor to 5 = excellent

The lowest score allocated to the European Capital of Culture was 4 and the highest was 5. The mean score was 4.6. This, from an experienced and critical group of arts managers is a very positive score.

## Other comments

When asked to make other comments on 2008, many positive comments were made. Michael Eakin noted a step change in the city and cultural sector which he attributed to key city leaders and to the ability of the sector to deliver a strong and memorable programme.

Karen Gallagher paid a similar compliment to the vision of the city council for continuing to embed art and culture in their policies and strategies. But David Fleming was concerned about the city being frightened of being strategic in the cultural heritage field (possibly?) because it might conflict with other strategic agendas.

Stubbs saw the year as a great way to build collaborations within the city and across Europe. Similarly, Gallagher thought ECoC had created a positive opportunity to re- present Liverpool as a major City player across the UK. By way of warning, Emma Smith thought Liverpool needed to “think of the damage Brexit may create for our city and that we must make sure our European and Irish population is made to feel continually welcome, represented and expressed through our culture and arts.”

Stubbs wondered what Liverpool would be like if “we had not won the bid” but concluded it had been “worth moving to Liverpool from Melbourne for the ECoC year.” From a totally different perspective Maureen Bampton “loved the way the grass roots people/taxi drivers embraced the year.”

Table 6

Name	Organisation	Comments
Michael Eakin	Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra	A step change for the city and the cultural sector; maintained the momentum because of key leaders in the city and the sector; the cultural sector delivered a strong and memorable programme.
David Fleming	National Museums Liverpool	Liverpool has been frightened of being strategic especially in the cultural heritage field. Why perhaps because it might conflict with other agendas.
Mike Stubbs	Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology	What would Liverpool be like if we had not won the bid? What a hoot, worth moving from Melbourne to Liverpool. Great way of building collaborations within the city and across Europe.

Name	Organisation	Comments
Karen Gallagher	Merseyside Dance Initiative	ECoC created a positive opportunity to re-present Liverpool as a major City player across the UK and the Liverpool City Council should be applauded for continuing to embed art and culture in their policies and strategies.
Maureen Bampton	Bluecoat Gallery	Liverpool was a model of good practice for the year – loved the way grass roots people/taxi drivers embraced it.
Emma Smith	Liverpool Irish Festival	We need to think of the damage Brexit may create for our city. We must make sure our European and Irish population is made to feel continually welcome, represented and expressed through our culture and arts.

## Conclusions

The views of the Senior Arts Managers reported in this paper were inevitably subjective and reflected in many ways the personalities, politics and agendas of each individual. However the conclusions drawn and reported in this paper present a broad cross section of perspectives not dissimilar to the responses reported in the previously published survey of a wider cross section of respondents from a variety of sectors eg education, charity, politics, faith communities (Chambers, 2018).

The overwhelming positive perception of the Senior Arts Managers of the ECoC year ten years on was the raising of self-confidence and aspirations of the population, the city council and the cultural organisations.

There was also a general agreement that the perception and reputation of Liverpool both nationally and internationally had been enhanced.

This confirms the views of the wider community reported in Chambers (2018).

More distinctively, it was widely accepted that 2008 had made a convincing case for the view that culture had a significant economic role to play in the city's development.

Also, the key role of collaboration and partnership between and within the city and the cultural organisations was recognised.

As was the acknowledgement of the importance of the continuing political support of the City Council and its leaders.

Finally, the ability of the arts to provide an economically viable career opportunity in all sectors except arts in education, in all regions except in London, and at all levels except the very highest was noted.

Turning to the negative views, a significant number of people had no negative comments to make about the impact of the ECoC. The most common negative comments related to the specific impact on the organisation to which the respondent was attached; to practical project disruption and delays and a fear that post 2008 funding would not continue to be available.

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# Physical and intangible cultural infrastructure

## Stavanger2008: Becoming a more artistic city

Rolf Norås

### The ambition

After the local elections in Norway in 1999, politicians developed a programme for the coming years. The cultural article in the programme ended with the words: “The cultural ambition for Stavanger is that the city shall apply for, and achieve, status as a European Capital of Culture”.

Stavanger’s opportunity to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture was based on the EU decision of May 1999, Article 4: “European non-member countries may participate in this action. Any such country may nominate one city as a European Capital of Culture and should notify its nomination to the Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions.”

Even though Norway is not a member of EU, we are in many ways strongly connected with Europe, which is reflected in the following extract from the Norwegian Government’s European Policy Platform: “Norway has a great deal to contribute to European cooperation ... Thus, we have an obligation to make an active effort and cooperate in a broad range of areas with other European countries in order to meet common challenges.”

### The designation

Unlike the situation in other countries, where there is intense competition between several candidate cities, Stavanger was chosen by parliament and the government as the Norwegian candidate for the title, without any competition. On 27 May 2004, the EU decided that “Liverpool and Stavanger are designated as European Capitals of Culture in 2008. Both Capitals should take the necessary measures in order to ensure the effective implementation of the EU criteria.”

Among other things, the two cities were asked to develop a link between the programmes of the designated cities. This request was immediately followed up and the mayors of both cities signed a “letter of intent” that identified potential cooperation in several areas. As a result of that intention, direct relations, common projects and exchange programmes were developed and established between various individual projects, institutions, artists, schools etc.

## The strategy

Stavanger is the centre of the Norwegian petroleum industry. We supply the rest of Europe with energy, and we wish to export cultural energy too. Undoubtedly, Stavanger has prospered as a result of the Norwegian petroleum industry. However, the production of oil peaked at the beginning of the millennium and it has decreased significantly since then. The prognosis for the future shows that the production of oil and gas will decrease even if we improve recovery and find new resources.

The Stavanger region was thus facing the challenge of finding new ways of living. One of the most important answers to the new challenge that was given by local authorities was *culture*. The bid for the status of European Capital of Culture in 2008 was *one* element in the local government strategy for regional development.

## The vision

The Stavanger2008 vision was expressed through the concept “Open Port”. This could be understood both in its English sense – “an open harbour” – and in the Norwegian sense of “an open gate”.

“Open Port” was about challenging the region and its people to be even more open, hospitable and inclusive towards each other, art, ideas and opportunities, and emphasised a desire to promote international development, dialogue and hospitality, mainly based on the values of tolerance and freedom of speech, openness, accessibility, cultural heritage, innovation, environment and aesthetics.

Stavanger2008 built a platform and delivered a vision about an inclusive and visionary city. We wanted to enhance the quality of art. We wanted to build networks, cultural infrastructure, regional identity and pride. And we wanted to make our region more attractive, especially for young artists.

Children and young people were important. The aim was to involve them at all levels, and they participated in hundreds of activities and created all kinds of events.

## The opening

The whole region participated in the Opening Ceremony, and every municipality in the county participated in a large parade in the city centre. Two thousand people took part in the parade, and approximately 60,000 people participated in the celebration. Here is a short extract from the report that Gottfried Wagner, the former Director of the European Cultural Foundation, wrote on behalf of the EU Commission:

“A crystal clear day welcomes 60 thousand Norwegians on the streets of Stavanger. The parade welcomed a colourful manifestation. Street artists from all over the continent and from the region mingle with the crowd. For all of Europe there are good reasons to visit Stavanger: to study the city, to get involved in the big event and to start translating dreams into a broader European agenda.”

The programme during the Capital of Culture year was very unconventional. The Stavanger region has an impressive landscape, from miles of beaches along the coastline to high mountains and beautiful fjords. This was of course reflected during a number of the spectacular and large-scale events and shows in the area, at venues that had never before been used for cultural or artistic purposes.

An extraordinary show was performed from an amphitheatre of packed snow in the mountains of Sauda, with contemporary dance and music, extreme skiers and snowboarders, while *Fairytales in Landscape* was the main theatre's biggest production ever, written by Jon Fosse and directed by Oscaras Korsunovas. These are just two examples.

Located on the south-western coast of Norway, Stavanger is conveniently located as a cruise port. The ships dock in the city centre, and there is an easy walk to most attractions. Stavanger is also the gateway to the Norwegian Fjords and is among the fastest growing cruise ports north of Gibraltar, growing from 50 ships with 40,000 guests in 2004 to an estimated 250 ships with approximately 480,000 guests in 2019. It is estimated that each guest going ashore spends approximately 800 NOK, which means that 480,000 guests will spend more than 40 million Euros in 2019.

Our main experience was that it was critically important to be aware of the inclusion and participation of the city's population, the creative sector

and industry, the cultural institutions and independent groups and artists, both in the application and implementation processes. Stavanger2008 worked from the philosophy that the expertise and knowledge came from the artists, cultural organisers, engaged citizens etc. You can only build a great achievement from the regional arts and culture environment by ensuring that you have the support of the region's citizens, and by including and using the competencies that these environments present.

## The effects

After 2008 we entered a new phase regarding the long-term effects of the Capital of Culture year. We continued with great ambitions for the artistic and cultural sectors. The mayor of Stavanger announced in his official New Year's speech in 2009 that "the Capital of Culture Year was not an episode, but the starting point of a new era. The ambitions for the years to come are as high as they were in 2008."

Two months later the City Council in Stavanger purchased Tou Scene, previously the largest brewery in the area. Since then this venue has had a significant impact on cultural and artistic life in Stavanger: 13,000 square meters have been developed into a combined showroom and workplace for the arts and art-related activities, including studios for visual art, music and dance.

Stavanger raised an "Afterglow fund" based on what the city promised in the EU application, to secure the continuation of the Capital of Culture year. A regional centre for competence was established, and the city developed a common strategy and acting plan between the arts and business and worked out a strategy plan for arts and culture from 2010.

The city built creative partnerships with international artists and maintained a budget to continue international work. Many of the 500 volunteers are now involved in Stavanger's cultural and artistic life (festivals, events etc.) as an important volunteer resource.

Future challenges for the city must be connected with identity and history. We had to build a programme that could not happen anywhere else.

Building sustainability is critically important. The years beyond the Capital of Culture year are even more important than the year itself. When we first initiated the process of applying for the status of European Capital of Culture, a significant reason for the application was the long-term effects that such a nomination would have on our cultural life as well as on society at large.

Only if we could use 2008 to raise the importance of arts and culture, politically as well as amongst the region's population, and only if attitudes and values such as tolerance and openness, demands, expectations, knowledge and interest in identity, purpose of life, and aesthetics were established at a

higher level, could we truly say that we have succeeded with the Capital of Culture year.

At the same time, it was important to make clear distinctions between short-term and long-term effects. Even though it was not easy, it was important to secure a balance of high-profile events and local initiatives. The latter are the most sustainable.

Another important experience was that, instead of using famous performers, who would fly in one day and leave the next morning, Stavanger2008 signed contracts with upcoming world class companies, who had to stay in Stavanger for at least one month. In addition to presenting two or three new productions, they had to collaborate with local artistic life, schools and kindergartens, through seminars and workshops. This was also a way of building sustainability, because it improved the quality of the artistic life in our region.

## The evaluation

The social impacts and the soft legacies (personal skills, new ideas, participation etc) must be evaluated in an independent manner. Reports written by members of the operational team are less reliable and less valued. The most relevant and interesting aspect of the evaluation was how the citizens and the artistic sector had been affected by living in a European Capital of Culture.

As a point of reference, the University of Stavanger (UiS) and the International Research Institute of Stavanger (IRIS) completed a research programme on Stavanger2008. The aim was to investigate whether the visions and objectives of Stavanger2008 were fulfilled, and to what extent and in what way the citizens and the artists of the Stavanger region were involved in and influenced by the year.

Would arts and culture take a more prominent position in general politics? Would the citizens take a greater interest in their identity and their history? Would arts and culture become more important to people? Would this give rise to new demands and expectations? What kinds of experiences and assessments would the artists, the project managers, the cultural institutions, the free groups and the freelancers have after the Capital of Culture Year?

Among other things, we found that 75 percent of the inhabitants participated at least once, as either a performer, organiser or volunteer, and that less than 10 percent were fairly or very negative about the Capital of Culture year. We also found that both citizens and leaders, between 70 and 80 percent, believe in culture as an instrument to promote regional development.

A study conducted among artists and organisers of cultural events of the effects on cultural institutions and assessments showed that funded producers were generally positive about their own projects, and that the projects

yielded new ideas, funding and networks, and made the organisations more professional.

A study of the media coverage of Stavanger's year as Capital of Culture showed that the media went from being supportive in the early phase, to being critical and negative in the years leading up to 2008, and the media was mostly supporting and positive during the year. The media paid attention usually before events, but there were few reviews afterwards. The media did not create cultural debates. They were more focused on scandals and trifles, and the attention from international media was greater than the attention from the national media. The sponsorship agreement with the main newspaper was a mistake for both parties.

Finally, the Centre for Innovation Research was engaged in a project entitled "Innovation in Creative Industries", which explored how a city's status as a European Capital of Culture affected innovation within the creative industries.

## The perspective

In 2018, 10 years after the Capital of Culture year, approximately 25 projects, which were initiated, developed and partly financed by Stavanger2008, were still continuing. The projects have both a physical and an intangible cultural infrastructure, and include ensembles, cultural clusters, artist-driven productions units, a Geo-park (a large interactive play and performance space in the city centre), and the project *Norwegian Wood*, which has commissioned architects from across the world to build a whole new generation of wooden buildings.

Stavanger's main newspaper conducted a new survey in 2018, which confirmed and reinforced former investigations. Eighty percent of the respondents stated that Stavanger had become a better and more interesting cultural and artistic city since the Capital of Culture year, and that they were more interested in art and culture, and artists stated that the status of art had been enhanced over the past years.

Stavanger is still in close contact with other Capitals of Culture. In this regard, the network of the informal ECoC family is especially meaningful and valuable. The fact that all the cities have their former, present or future status as a European Capital of Culture in common has shown that they also share common challenges, problems, and opportunities for the exchange of artists, competencies, etc. The ECoC family meetings take place twice a year.

There is no simple measure of success. But good advice, based on Stavanger's experiences, is to be yourself and to be European. Dare to provoke, to be different, to be surprising, to be unique, and to be crazy.

# The legacy of “RUHR.2010”

## Memories of the European Capital of Culture 2010

Jürgen Mittag

While numerous studies have dealt with the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) programme in general and the title holders in detail (Mittag, 2008; Habit, 2011; Patel, 2013) studies about the legacy of the initiative and the memories of the respective titleholders' activities have so far received far less attention. Though sites of memory have been attributed central importance as a driving force in the formation of historical memory in the last two decades, this concept has not yet been studied in the context of the ECoCs. This also applies to the ECoC 2010.

The 2010 title was awarded to three very different cities: Pecs in Hungary, Istanbul in Turkey, and Essen for the Ruhr region. As a polycentric agglomeration, the Ruhr region is particularly interesting, and all the more so because no other city has so far placed as much emphasis on sustainable perception and images as in the case of RUHR.2010, not even the other cities strongly influenced by work and industry, such as Glasgow (1990), Rotterdam (2001), Genoa (2004), Lille (2004) and Liverpool (2008), which deliberately placed structural change and urban redevelopment at the centre of their programme activities. Given that only a few evaluation studies have dealt with the legacy of RUHR.2010 so far, this contribution outlines its memory policy potentials and limits by referring to recent discourses and statements about the ECoC 2010 cities building on the major achievements and activities of the ECoC 2010.

## Background

Already, during the application process, the bid highlighted the aim of planning the cultural activities with reference to the change and linkage of the polycentric Ruhr area and to present the region in a new light. The target of permanent change became the leitmotif, and the term “Metropole Ruhr” became the new buzzword (cf. Scheytt and Beier, 2009, p. 47). Art and culture were attributed the role of a trajectory for the transformation of the re-

gion into the Metropole Ruhr. By applying for the ECoC title, the initiators intended to build on the success of the Emscherpark International Building Exhibition (IBA), which at the time had provided many incentives for the reconversion of the region, with the help of urban development, and social, cultural and ecological projects (cf. Goch, 2002; Urban, 2008). With the ECoC activities, however, the emphasis was shifted largely from the material to the abstract level, and focused increasingly on images and processes of attribution and perception. As a result, officials from various cities aimed above all at a change of perspective: from the supposedly grey and heavily industrialised former mining district to an attractive Ruhr metropolis that would embody a modern location of culture and creativity.

Political and administrative fragmentation and the lack of regional unity – there are 11 independent cities, four rural districts (Landkreise), three administrative districts (Regierungsbezirke) and two regional authorities (Landschaftsverbände) – stood in the way of the metropolitan concept. As a result, the aim of the ECoC was also to strengthen inter-municipal cooperation and to emphasise the common identity of the 53 cities. In addition, the Ruhr area was given the potential to serve as a model project for a region that has both a European and a multicultural character (cf. Lodemann, 2010). Exchanges with Europe and solidarity with European neighbours were consequently further focal points of the application.

The Capital of Culture Year 2010 was opened on 9 and 10 January in Essen in the presence of the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, with a public festival in snowfall and sub-zero temperatures on the grounds of the Zollverein colliery (cf. Hollmann, 2011; Mittag, 2012, pp. 59–92; Scheytt and Achauer, 2012). Under the already well-known motto “Change through Culture – Culture through Change”, an extensive programme was presented over the following twelve months: broad in scope, since all 53 cities of the Ruhr area were included, but also broad in terms of the cultural scope, since high culture as well as mass-compatible event culture were taken into account.

The official budget for the Ruhr ECoC of around 65,5 million Euros was mainly provided by the public sector (including the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the federal government, the Ruhr regional authority and the city of Essen), but also by a few large and numerous small private sponsors. In addition, there were numerous smaller sponsors – such as the “Schacht-Zeichen” – who specifically promoted individual programme items. However, the acquisition of additional funds suffered considerably from the financial crisis. Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that far more money than the official budget suggests was spent in the Ruhr area in 2010. Numerous financially intensive infrastructure projects, such as the renovation of Essen’s main railway station (57 million Euros) or the expansion of the

Folkwang Museum (55 million Euros) financed by the Krupp Foundation, can be directly or indirectly traced back to the ECoC year, but have been provided through grants outside of the official budget.

### Activities

In order to structure the extremely multifaceted programme, which included about 300 projects and about 5,500 events, six thematic fields were developed in addition to the three main themes, which were "Ruhr Mythology" ("Mythos Ruhr"), "Re-Designing the Metropolis" ("Metropole gestalten") and "Moving Europe" ("Europa bewegen"), covering the fields of images, theatre, music, language, creative industries and festivals. Three programme books served as orientation anchors for the entire programme.

The aim of the section "Understanding the Myth of the Ruhr" was to recall the cultural heritage of the region and make the identity of the region tangible. For example, the series of events "Fremd(e) im Revier" (Foreigners in the Ruhr) dealt with the history of individual immigrant groups. The subheading "Faith" included religious projects such as "NightPrayer", when on World Peace Day in September 2010 all major religious communities presented themselves at their places of worship, or the cultural filling stations to which the Christian churches invited people.

The thematic area "Re-Designing the Metropolis" was linked to the IBA Emscher Park in the 1990s and, with 45 individual projects, it was the most extensive of the ECoC activities. The projects were divided into the three sub-categories, "Building Culture", "Light Art" and "Artistic Interventions", which included numerous large-scale temporary projects such as the installation "Ruhr Atoll" on Lake Baldeney or the exhibition "B1|A40 The Beauty of the Great Street". Various construction projects were of a sustainable nature: the renovation of the "Dortmunder U", the long-term transformation of the A42 into a "Parkautobahn", the 70-kilometre-long "KulturKanal" along the Rhine-Herne Canal, and the "coronation" of the Nordstern-turm in Gelsenkirchen with a Hercules sculpture were specifically staged as highly symbolic buildings. Renovations of museums such as "Situation Kunst" in Bochum and the "Kunstquartier in Hagen", as well as the previously mentioned new buildings of the "Ruhr Museum" and the "Museum Folkwang" in Essen also ensured sustainability.

The abstract title "Moving Europe" included a broad range of activities with four different headings: On the one hand, all academic projects and symposia were combined here; on the other hand, future and environmental topics were discussed under the label "Ruhr2030". With "National Heroes", cities that had lost to Essen in the national competition were included

in the programme with their own local events, for the first time in the history of the ECoC. The flagship projects had a direct link to transnationalism: “TWINS”, as a bridge between the 53 Ruhr area cities and their twin cities, and “MELEZ”, with a view to the multiculturalism of the Ruhr Area and the coexistence of people from around 170 nations. Theatre, music and literature projects were located in the thematic fields of “daring to do theatre”, “living music” and “experiencing language”. With the aim of networking the region, not only over 60,000 people sang in the Schalke football arena during the “Day of Song”, but also dozens of choirs in all cities of the region sang. The thematic line “Strengthening the creative economy” intended to highlight the potential of the creative economy. In the areas of media, music and film, existing networks were strengthened, such as the “jazzwerk-ruhr”; in addition, established supra-regional events were brought into the region. “Celebrating festivals” was the programme item that followed the title’s claim. With, among others, the “Extraschicht”, “Bochum Total” and the “Loveparade” in Duisburg, existing and new festivals beyond the ECoC were included in the programme. With “Still-Leben Ruhrschnellweg”, a large folk festival was held, which brought together several million people on the closed Ruhrschnellweg in July and resulted in worldwide media coverage. In addition, hundreds of thousands made the pilgrimage to the “SchachtZeichen” to see the balloons that marked the former locations of the collieries in the Ruhr district.

RUHR.2010 GmbH did not centrally organise the implementation of more than 300 projects with around 2,500 events in 53 cities. Only a few events, such as “Still-Life”, were organised by the ECoC organisation itself; the majority of events were cooperation projects or external events for which cultural institutions or individual artists had applied. The degree of cooperation and subsidy varied considerably. Decentralisation was most clearly expressed in the “Local Heroes” project: every week a different Ruhr district municipality was given the opportunity to present itself and a corresponding cultural programme of the city.

## Legacy

The ECoCs in 2010 have already attracted the attention of academic research, but this has focused on traditional criteria rather than on memory politics (cf. von Hobe et al, 2010; MFKJKS and RVR, 2011; Ditt, 2012; Jacob and Kampe, 2014; Nellen, 2014; Schreiner, 2015; Kießlinger and Baumann, 2016). If one regards the number of projects carried out, the media interest and the increased number of tourists as a yardstick, RUHR.2010 can be regarded as a success. The participation and interaction of the people in the

Ruhr area itself was also assessed as positive in evaluation reports. Among the main criticisms of RUHR.2010 were the low level of involvement of local artists and the independent scene in the creation and elaboration of the programme, among other things, as well as the excessively high expectations of the creative industries. As the selection process for the individual projects took much longer than planned and only a fraction of the applications could be considered, many local artists had little chance of participating. Critics also argued that too many projects were carried out and that there was a certain gap between the demands and the reality of the ECoC. However, almost all ECoCs have faced similar criticism.

If one looks at the visible testimonies of RUHR.2010 that are still present today, one first finds the buildings that were newly constructed, extended or rebuilt in the context of the ECoC. The "Ruhr Museum" on the site of the Zollverein colliery and the "Folkwang Museum" in downtown Essen are just as prominent as the "Dortmunder U". The fact that accessible places are of great importance in the course of remembering the ECoC is certainly due to their immediate visibility; however, there is also a fundamental tendency to see museums increasingly as fora for social self-understanding of contemporary culture of remembrance.

In addition to buildings, individual events of RUHR.2010 are also remembered. The most frequently mentioned events in retrospect include the "Still-Life Ruhrschnellweg", the "SchachtZeichen" and the "Day of Song". The sheer dimensions of "Still-Life" with around 3 million visitors and a complete closure of the Ruhr Express route, as well as the elaborate staging of the event with a series of 20,000 beer table sets, at which associations, organisations, families and neighbourhood communities presented themselves with a variety of activities and programme activities, contributed to the fact that this event has a special role to play both in media reflection and in memory culture (cf. Ruhr2010 GmbH, 2010).

In the case of the "SchachtZeichen" the expressive images have contributed to the lasting memory. Yellow helium balloons rose at 311 locations throughout the Ruhr area to mark the former mining sites (cf. Bandelow and Moos, 2011). The distinct memory of the inter-municipal singing project "Sing – Day of Song!" can be traced back to the identity-forming community experience. On 5 June 2010, people from all over the Ruhr region came together to sing in public places, with about 600 choirs. The revised editions of the event in the following years testified not only to the demand for corresponding local experiences, but also to the positive memories associated with them. The fact that the "Day of Song" has continued only with interruptions since then and that Herbert Grönemeyer's anthem "Komm zur Ruhr", which was frequently played in 2010, has meanwhile fallen into disuse shows that this memory also has its limitations.

The Love Parade, which ended in a catastrophe in Duisburg on 24 July 2010, was a key event of the ECoC 2010, which, in addition to the three events mentioned above, has deeply embedded itself into collective memory. During the Technoparade, which was visited by around one million people, the common entrance and exit of the event were used by a large number of visitors. For various reasons, which are being investigated to this day, the organisation of the entrance led to a mass panic, in which 21 people died and several hundred people were injured, some of them seriously. The effects were so severe that at least six more people committed suicide in the wake of the accident.

The scale of the disaster and the worldwide media coverage of the victims of international origins, but also the trauma of the local people, have contributed to the memory of RUHR.2010 that is always linked with the deaths at the Love Parade. The large number of media documentaries and recurring reports on the anniversaries have kept the memory of the catastrophe alive in public consciousness until today. This has been fostered as well by the outvoting of Duisburg's Lord Mayor in a referendum and the ongoing legal wrangles between the city, the organisers and the police. A memorial plaque was erected at the scene of the accident and a monument was placed in front of the underpass where the accident started. The monument, initiated by a private foundation and designed by Duisburg artist Gerhard Losemann, is based on a steel plate on which 21 overturning steel square pipes symbolise the 21 people who died.

## Memory

Beyond the buildings that are still visible today and the large-scale events with positive or tragic aspects that have been mentioned, hardly any other activities from the ECoC 2010 have remained in the public view. Other memories of RUHR.2010 are strongly linked to individual experiences or visits to events at respective places of residence. From a quantitative point of view, the memory of smaller individual events does not exceed low single-digit percentages in a super ordinate view, which – as Andreas Roßmann already noted at the end of 2010 – may be due to the fact that many projects were more strung together rather than related to each other (Roßmann, 2010). As a result, the question arises as to what significance RUHR.2010 has as a place of memory.

The perception of the Ruhr area over the last 200 years has always been multi-layered – but in the last decades the ambivalence has intensified: while some praised the aestheticised industrial culture, others criticised the region's lack of innovative character. While on the one hand the shared

crisis experience of the 1960s and 1970s was regarded as the driving force behind the identity formation of the Ruhr region, the other side stressed the criticism of the cities' continuing particular orientation towards structural change (cf. Mittag and Seidel, 2006; Prosek, 2009). Against the background of this ambivalence, increasing attention has been paid to perceptions of the Ruhr region. From a strategic perspective even the construction of new modes of perception was promoted, for example, in the image campaigns launched since the 1980s (cf. Kommunalverband Ruhrgebiet, 1993; Butter, 2004; Nellen, 2004).

In recent years, the academic debate about sites of memory or "lieux de mémoire" (Nora) has received much attention from a wide variety of academic disciplines. In the course of the so-called "spatial turn", the concept of spatial images was also considered, which in turn is fed by a broad spectrum of different theories and approaches (cf. Pott, 2007). The common starting point for such studies is the premise that historical reality is developed through a socially constructed reality in which actors and structures constitute each other. Consequently, spatial reality is shaped not only by objectifiable structures and material resources, but also by inter-subjective meanings, which in turn are (re-)produced in processes of social interaction. A region is thus understood as a space of action, perception and consciousness of concrete people in their time (cf. Flender et al, 2001; Briesen et al, 1994; Blotevogel, 2004).

In the light of current social developments, events are attributed special significance in the formation of spaces or spatial images (cf. Schulze, 1992; Gebhardt et al, 2000; Betz et al, 2011). As offers of meaning and orientation for action, events not only contribute significantly to perceptions, but also exert influence on identification and spatial developments. Against this background, RUHR.2010 as an event also has a special significance for the Ruhr region (cf. Pachaly, 2010; Hitzler et al, 2013). Since there have been only a small number of joint local activities and region-wide municipal events in the Ruhr area to date, among which the IBA Emscher Park occupies a prominent position, RUHR.2010 marked another important milestone, both in terms of the perception of the region as a whole and the cooperation between the individual cities.

As a unique and outstanding event, RUHR.2010 left its mark not only because of its striking title, but also because of its scale, and the event showed both internally and externally that the Ruhr region has developed a cultural mentality that can have an identity-forming effect in both the mass cultural and the highly cultural spheres. A survey by Infratest dimap must also be interpreted in this light: 23% of those surveyed in January 2011 see a stronger contribution and 42% see a smaller contribution from the ECoC 2010 to the tendency for people in the Ruhr area to be more strongly connected.

The strong internal impact of RUHR.2010 is still reflected in the statements made by those in charge of the organisation. In the course of the closing event, Fritz Pleitgen spoke of a citizens' movement of culture that had never before brought the citizens of the region together (Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, 2010). And Ulrike Vetter, who was responsible for press and public relations at the Capital of Culture Office from 2006 to 2011, explained that the Capital of Culture was above all a feeling. According to her, self-esteem and self-perception had changed. She stated that before the event everyone felt that their homeland had a poor reputation. With the ECoC, the Ruhr had risen like phoenix from the ashes (Hildesheimer Allgemeine Zeitung, 2017). Despite the Love Parade catastrophe, similar evaluations can also be found in unofficial reviews.

Using regional and national newspaper coverage of individual major events in RUHR.2010, the cultural scientist Thomas Ernst has shown that the Ruhr region has often been portrayed positively and that industrial cultural productions in particular have received a great deal of attention. This portrayal was damaged in supra-regional media coverage, not least as a result of the Love Parade catastrophe, by traditionally critical references to an "underestimated, provincially defensive, inner-city competitive thinking arrested and innovation-hostile-felted Ruhr area" (Ernst, 2012, p. 214).

In assessing the effects of the RUHR.2010 as ECoC 2010 and its role as a place of collective memory, against the background of the observations and statements above, three key results can be identified.

Firstly, the visible "legacies" of RUHR.2010, such as museums and buildings, have so far been particularly remembered by the people. This strongly material dimension can be explained above all by their immediate visibility, the manifest character of the organisations associated with the buildings, and the memory potential inherent in the museums. In this visible dimension of the ECoC 2010, the Zollverein site and industrial culture, which is strongly fed by real or supposed authenticity, are of particular importance, as they support the Ruhr area's overall perspective on the history of remembrance.

Secondly, for the media, the question of RUHR.2010's potential for memory is particularly relevant when it comes to major events that have produced striking images. These events have spatial potential and thus also memorial potential. A distinction must be made between the external view and the internal view. The outside view indicates that the events of ECoC 2010 have certainly strengthened the branding of the region. As a targeted campaign, the Ruhr region has been successfully positioned on the tourist maps and marketed as a potential short-trip destination. The concept of industrial culture has also made a significant contribution to this (cf. Pleitgen, 2010, pp. 6–8). From an internal perspective, the newly created

possibilities of communication and networking in the context of the events and the resulting formation of identity dominated. The network of Ruhr museums thus continues to exist, while the much-criticised parish-pump politics were at least partially overcome by institutions such as "Urbane Künste Ruhr" and the "Zukunftsakademie NRW" in Bochum.

Thirdly, linkages of local people are relevant. In addition to structural measures from above, networks from below, such as the "ruhrVOLUNTEERS", which bring together many of the 1,165 official ECoC volunteers, have also been established. Many artists from the individual cities in the Ruhr area continue to meet in the wake of the ECoC networks, and students and teachers from the various universities in the Ruhr area work together far more often than before. RUHR.2010 has thus not only ignited a firework of events in the region, but has also developed long-term structural and mental significance.

Whether these effects will have such a reach that ECoC 2010 will be further remembered in the future cannot yet be foreseen. To what extent RUHR.2010 will become a permanent regional site of memory will therefore still have to be negotiated in future reflections on the history of the Ruhrgebiet, which will include material and abstract legacies, will combine external and internal perspectives, and which will also be fed by perspectives from "above" and "below". From today's perspective it might be expected that the ECoC title is more likely to be remembered rather than RUHR.2010 itself being perceived of as a place of collective memory.

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# Istanbul 2010 lessons

## Reminders of a dream

Serhan Ada

The UN HABITAT II Conference that took place in Istanbul in 1996 should be regarded as a first in terms of creating dialogue between civil society and the state in Turkey. The activities organised as part of this conference, with the contributions of non-governmental organisations, the History Foundation (*Tarih Vakfı*) being one of the first, were conducted under the auspices of and with direct funding from the Presidency of the Republic. After the conference, representatives from civil society, particularly in Istanbul, embarked on a mission to find other international activities through which the civic dynamism in the city could be concretised. Istanbul's becoming a European Capital of Culture (ECoC) one day was the biggest "dream" expressed by the cultural elites and intellectuals of the city during this period. When the European Parliament decided in 1999 that cities from non-member states of the European Union (EU) could also be designated as European Capitals of Culture (they were previously called European Cities of Culture), representatives from more than ten NGOs founded the Initiative Group and began working towards ensuring that Istanbul would win the competition.

The proposal prepared by this group was presented to the EU in 2005. In 2006, the jury in Brussels declared that they had selected Istanbul as the 2010 European Capital of Culture (from a non-member state) instead of Kiev, the other candidate city from a non-member state. The jury then submitted its decision for the approval of the EU member states' Ministers of Culture. At the end of 2006, it was confirmed that Istanbul was to be a European Capital of Culture. The Capital of Culture activities began with the organising phase during this period and continued until the end of 2010.

Unfortunately, even almost 10 years after Istanbul 2010, it is still not possible to say that a comprehensive study has been conducted on the preparations, activities and discussions that took place before 2010, the activities during 2010, the preparation and execution of the legislation related to the management and implementation of the Capital of Culture, and the funding and the distribution of funds for the Capital of Culture activities both before and during 2010. It will also not be possible to gather and interpret all that was said and done in this paper alone.

Furthermore, it was not possible to find a full archive for Istanbul 2010, which quite literally ended on 31 December 2010. (The Istanbul 2010 “experiment” *came to a complete end* six months later, in June 2011, when the duties of a small part of the team that had been conducting the 2010 work were terminated.) A multidimensional study with a wider range is clearly needed to evaluate such a cultural programme in all its aspects, and to analyse it both with regards to European Capital of Culture practices and local and national cultural policies.

In this short study, I aim to analyse Istanbul 2010 based on cultural policy practice in general, and in the context of the goals and projects proposed in the candidacy proposal submitted to the EU, as well as the projects that were actually conducted until the end of 2010. I will discuss the topic from the perspectives of funding, the decision-making process and cultural governance. While doing so, I will try to interpret the results of Istanbul 2010 with regard to the cultural policy of Istanbul (and Turkey). I will do this by making a pre-post analysis, using my own observations and first-hand experiences<sup>5</sup> between 2007 and 2009, when I worked at the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Agency, as well as the documents and publications about Istanbul 2010.

## Istanbul as an ECoC: Why and how?

From the very beginning, Istanbul as an ECoC was seen as a title and a cultural programme that would support Turkey in the first half of 2000s, when it was closest to becoming an EU member, and that the title would provide impetus and ensure the success of its application to become a EU member. Instead of being a means of analysing the intrinsic cultural dynamics of the city, it was regarded as a useful step in Turkey’s process of becoming a part of the European system, and as a brand through which culture was instrumentalised, and which would provide advantages in the competition between cities.

“With its economic and financial markets, social mobility, and its lively cultural activities and art scene, Istanbul does not deserve to be described as

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5 I first volunteered to participate in the advisory boards, as part of the project submission works and project assessment framework preparations. Later, between 2008 and 2009, I worked as a ‘coordinator’ at the Executive Board, designing and executing the 2010 projects that could be presented in such a way that the urban masses would embrace them. The essence of the opening events, which were originally designed to be participative, so that the inhabitants of Istanbul would be the actors, not the spectators, was changed during the tendering stage. I therefore resigned in December 2009.

a medium-sized city with integration problems. With all its charm, chaos, unpredictability, poverty and nonconforming nature, it cannot be grouped together with mid-sized and quiet cultural capitals” (Ada, 2004). With a few exceptions (especially the metropolises included in the long list of cities that was prepared on the occasion of the new millennium), a review of the cities that became ECoCs up to the early 2000s makes it quite clear that Istanbul had to be in a different league, based on various indicators. So, why did the people that first started to work on earning this title for Istanbul continue such a determined and long-standing effort for four to five years, which is a considerable length of time?

The answer to this question is manifold. First, of course, Turkey wished to become a full member of the EU, as mentioned above. From the beginning, the members of the Initiative Group believed that Istanbul’s receiving a European title would be a significant milestone in Turkey’s integration into the European system and would help with democratic breakthroughs. In 2004, almost half a century after Turkey first applied to be a member of the European Economic Community, the EU announced that full membership negotiations could begin as Turkey met the necessary criteria. It had been a year since the first official steps in the membership journey were taken when, in 2006, Istanbul was designated as Europe’s Capital of Culture for 2010. In the preparation phase, the Initiative Group’s goal for ECoC converged with the government’s EU ambitions. However, the rapid progress made in the EU membership process possibly made it easier to obtain support for the ECoC submission, first from the local government in Istanbul, and afterwards from the central government in Ankara.

Civil society, which was at the forefront during the Habitat Conference and had a clear understanding of human settlements, urban issues, built environments, public spaces and problems caused by urban decay, hoped that the uncontrolled development caused by real estate speculation, which would deepen the economic inequality in the city and disturb the social harmony, would be forestalled by the ECoC activities that would be conducted under Europe’s supervision. However, the local administration and especially the central government had different expectations. They expected the value of the city’s brand to increase with the status of being a Capital of Culture, leading to more capital inflow and an increased number of tourists. Even though their goals differed, Istanbul’s becoming a European Capital of Culture was going to be “useful” for both sides.

Nevertheless, it was emphasised as the first goal in one of the initial documents that “Istanbul 2010’s central mission is to ensure that the city’s inhabitants, in all their diversity, have a real opportunity to participate in 2010 events and in the process that Istanbul 2010 will set in motion” (Master Plan, 2007). The second point that was highlighted was the cul-

tural heritage. In this part, Istanbul's multicultural heritage was described using common expressions, such as "crossroads of cultures" and "capital of three empires", and it was added that the main challenge in carrying out the work was "rehabilitating the city's cultural heritage with the primary aim of turning cultural artefacts into resources that enrich the lives and visions of Istanbul's present-day inhabitants" (ibid). The final emphasis was about focusing the attention of Istanbul 2010 on the "civic Istanbul" concept, with all the city's inhabitants playing an active role.

The paper by Ada, which criticises the European Capital of Culture preparations, stated that "furthermore, it needs to be emphasized that the process of becoming a capital of culture and the period afterwards is just as important as enjoying the 12 months of being the capital", and concluded by saying that "Istanbul's capital of culture candidacy should quickly be turned into an open and participative pilot project" (Ada, 2004). As the master plan shows, during the 2010 preparations, an approach highlighting citizen participation began to receive attention in the Initiative Group's plans.

## What was done and what was not done in 2010?

A law was enacted to manage and execute the activities that were planned for 2010. With regard to cultural governance, it was anticipated that the Executive and Advisory Boards would consist of representatives from central government, local government, public institutions, civil society and the private sector. The draft budget of the project was planned to comprise public funds, contributions from the municipality, sponsorships and donations. However, when the government promised an amount beyond what was needed, it seemed that the problem of funding was resolved, yet it would not be possible to implement Istanbul 2010 with a mixed budget, as was first stipulated.<sup>6</sup>

The functioning of the Istanbul 2010 agency boards, which was expected to be a showcase for governance, was not as successful as had been planned. During 2009, the Executive Board went through two waves of resignations. Members of the Executive Board as well as coordinators of Artistic Committees resigned, mostly as a result of the obstacles and deadlocks encountered in the management process. New appointments had to be made.

While preparing Istanbul's proposal for candidacy, it was envisaged that the activities would be determined in accordance with the four elements

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6 The initially planned budget was 96 million Euros. The promised budget, 95% of which was to be provided by the Ministry of Finance, was almost triple this initial amount (288,65 million Euros), and the actual budget was double the initial budget (193,95 million Euros). See ECORYS, 2011, pp. 70–72.

(air, water, fire and earth), and that they would be spread out through the year so that each would correspond to one of the four seasons. It was hoped that the activity planning would match the four elements as a metaphor for the characteristics of the city. Some of the projects carried out in 2010 were described in the Master Plan (Master Plan, 2007, pp. 2–5). It will be enlightening to review some of these under their various categories and evaluate them with regards to their current status.

## Development of the arts

### Investments in new arts and culture spaces

- *Ayazağa Cultural Complex* was intended to be “Turkey’s biggest cultural centre”. However, it was completed as an investment of TurkMall, a shopping centre development group, at the end of 2014.
- *City Library at Rami Military Barracks* “has been turned over to the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality for development as a public library and cultural centre.” Restoration works are still in progress.
- *Suna Kıraç Opera and Cultural Centre* was to be built “on site of old burnt Istanbul Drama Theatre of mid-19th century... by Frank Gehry.” The project was not followed through.
- *Centre for Young Art and Design* would have “workshops, studios and boarding facilities for artists in residence.” This was not done.
- *Europa House of Arts (the headquarters of Istanbul 2010)*: After serving as the 2010 headquarters, it is now being used by the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism.

### Rehabilitation of existing art spaces

- *Sütlüce Culture and Congress Centre* was “converted from a historical abattoir.” It was completed, and occasionally hosts art performances and international meetings.
- *Tekel Museum* was “restored to house the collections of Tekel, Turkey’s state monopoly for tobacco and alcohol.” It does not function as a museum; it is used as a theatre stage by the state theatre.
- *Atatürk Kültür Merkezi (Ataturk Cultural Center)*: “The building will be preserved and adapted to new cultural uses.” After many disputes, it was demolished in 2018. It will be rebuilt.

## Cultural heritage

### New museums and monuments

- *Istanbul City Museum* was never built. There are now discussions to build it at a different location with a different concept.
- *Theodosius Port*: A museum was supposed to be built on the remains of a fourth century port. In its place is an area for public rallies and a covered space for events.
- *Taşkızak Shipyard*: “Istanbul 2010 proposes to hold an international architecture and urban planning competition to bring forth suitable designs for the area ...” The shipyard was recently allocated to a private group as a real estate development project.

The number of cultural centres, art venues and monuments that were planned during the preparation phase for Istanbul 2010 but were never completed clearly shows how little was actually done. Even though the project was not limited to building new places and giving new functions to existing spaces, it can still be said that it is not acceptable to design the Capital of Culture project based solely on construction and investment.

Reviewing the financial situation: To whom and how much?

It will be useful to closely examine the breakdown of the expenditure in order to properly analyse what was accomplished (and what was not) in 2010. The following table shows the number of projects conducted for Istanbul 2010 and how much they cost in Turkish lira.

Table 1 – Figures and Statistical Data Concerning the Istanbul 2010 Projects

Disciplines	Project Number	Budget	Number of Projects Accepted by the Board	Budget
Public Relations Directorate	96	175.870.193	5	590.890
Urban Projects Coordination Directorate	171	944.429.517	87	128.533.256
Cultural Heritage and Museums Directorate	131	247.721.711	38	19.816.104

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Disciplines	Project Number	Budget	Number of Projects Accepted by the Board	Budget
Urban Implementation Directorate	166	357.609.426	30	9.802.041
Tourism Promotion Directorate	91	103.755.024	33	6.555.207
Promotion and Marketing Directorate	19	46.997.701	1	125.000
Corporate Relations Directorate	91	37.726.561	60	19.652.381
International Relations Directorate	56		31	2.498.286
<b>Artistic Committee Coordinate</b>				
Theatre and Performing Arts Directorate	174	153.610.648	25	11.905.992
Literature Directorate	175	92.644.287	27	7.991.649
Traditional Arts Directorate	88	48.930.980	20	3.165.670
Visual Arts Directorate	233	101.394.938	50	8.220.992
Urban Culture Directorate	364	496.920.894	42	14.232.626
Music and Opera Directorate	202	221.705.824	43	11.952.677
Classic Turkish Music Directorate	40	7.094.071	20	3.980.192
Film Documentary Animation	246	302.898.493	40	41.319.032
Educational Projects	38	23.695.550	10	8.461.827
Central Projects	93	48.411.885	20	22.071.250
Works under the Article 14 of the Law No. 5706	2	218.800	2	258.200
Event Projects	7	1.794.475	4	246.820
Projects for the Closing Events	1		1	972.390
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.484</b>	<b>3.413.463.276</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>322.662.482</b>

Ernst & Young (2011) "Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Impact Assessment Report", May 2011, Istanbul.

The “Artistic Committee” costs given at the bottom half of the table constitute only about 42% of the total amount. Based on this, it can quite easily be shown that arts activities and projects in Istanbul 2010 were less important than other projects. Furthermore, if we remove the “urban culture directorate” expenses, which were part of the same committee’s expenditures and covered social inclusiveness and volunteering works, and also take into account the high production costs of the “film/documentary/animation” category (which was part of the works related to art), it can be seen that arts used about one-third of the Istanbul 2010 budget.

With 30% of the total amount, “urban projects” used the largest amount of the budget. It is obvious that the most significant feature of Istanbul 2010 was that the urban regeneration projects occupied a substantial place. Other costs given in the upper half of the table were related to promotions, communications and tourism.

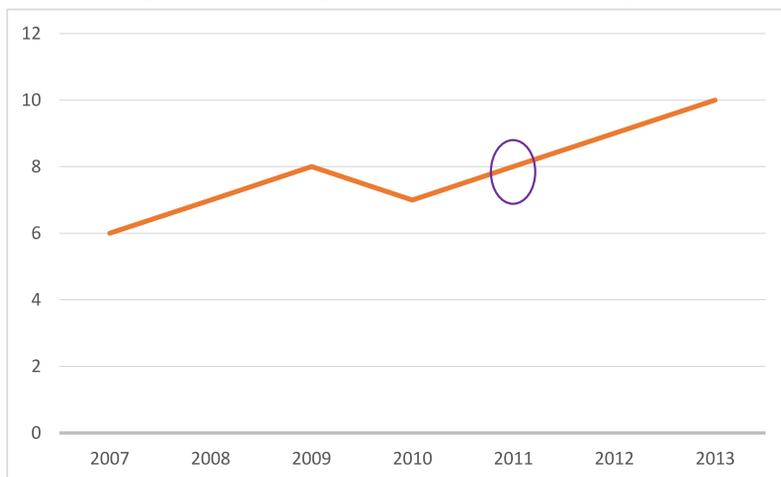
In summary, Istanbul 2010 was a Capital of Culture experience in which urban infrastructure, construction and restoration works were at least equally important as, or even more important than, arts activities. It needs to be added that the “restoration projects proved very difficult to deliver by the end of 2010” (ECORYS, 2011, p. 66). In this respect, restoration and renovation projects, the lasting impacts of which could only be seen in the long term, formed the basis of Istanbul 2010.

With regards to the arts activities, each was created following a decision of the relevant arts discipline’s director and his or her advisory board. However, instead of there being an overarching multidisciplinary artistic vision for the activities, each discipline prepared its own projects separately (even the “music and opera” and “classic Turkish music” under the music discipline were separated), and this prevented a holistic approach. The fact that the application and evaluation formats were not clearly defined is regarded as the reason for the huge disparity between the number of projects submitted and the number of projects carried out. The opportunity to improve Istanbul’s existing arts capacity was missed because of a failure to conduct the project management process with transparency and objectivity, and with a collective artistic vision. Another weakness was that the success of the projects was evaluated based on numbers alone, and not on accessibility for and participation of the city’s inhabitants.

## Capital of Culture: For whom and why?

One of the main motivations for Istanbul 2010 was undoubtedly tourism. “[T]he dilemma that organisers of ECOCs often face [is that] [t]hey need an appeal to external audiences to build up the visitor numbers so needed

Table 2 – Foreign Tourists Visiting Istanbul 2007–2013 ('000,000 persons)



Source: TUIK (Turkish Institute for Statistics)

to proclaim success” (Palmer et, 2011, p. 20). After government support for the project was received, the goal was to attract 12 million foreign tourists (Palmer and Richards, 2009, p. 26).<sup>7</sup>

It is clear by looking at the costs in Table 1 that a considerable amount of funding was allocated to campaigns related to tourism and promotion as well as to international marketing campaigns.

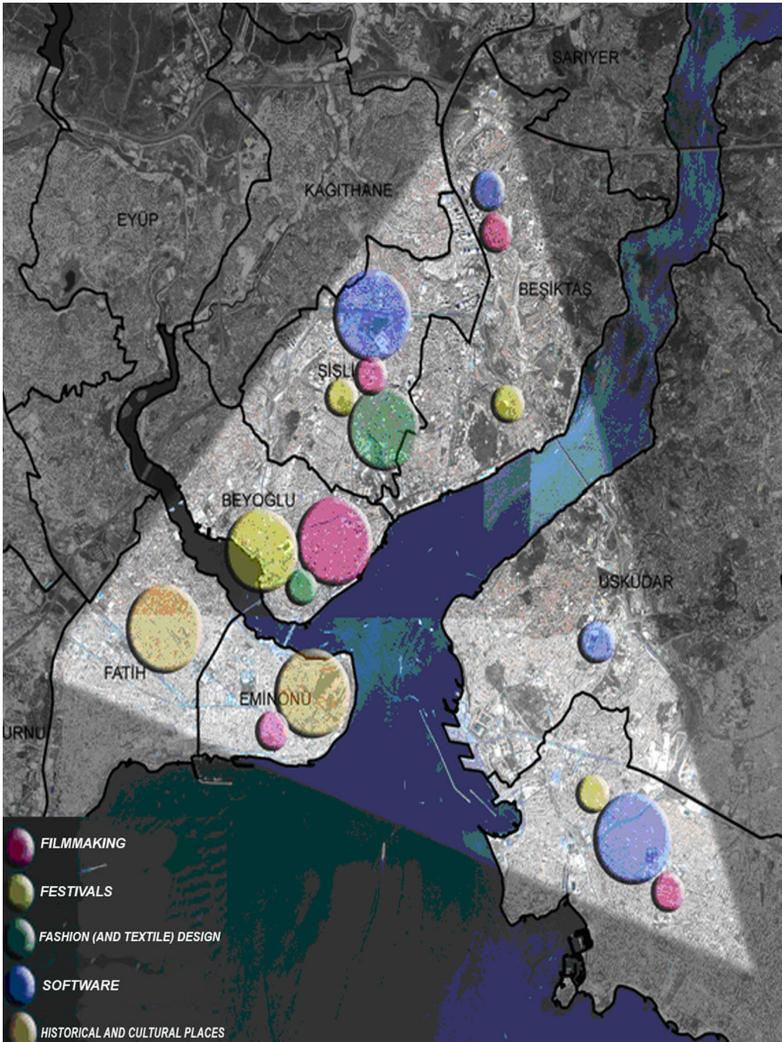
As can be seen in Table 2, the year 2010 had almost the lowest number of foreign tourists recorded during that seven-year period.<sup>8</sup> It was also nearly half of the targeted number. The statement from the previously mentioned study titled “Ex-post evaluation of Istanbul 2010”, which claimed without giving any reference that “there was an increase of 11% in the number of foreign tourists visiting the city” (ECORYS, 2011, p. 77) is incorrect. The final outcome demonstrates that either the targeted number was unrealistic, or that prioritising an increase in tourist numbers as one of the foremost goals of the Capital of Culture was not the right thing to do.

Perhaps, it would be better to look for the main goal elsewhere. Istanbul on its own represents about one-third of the cultural supply and demand in Turkey. On the other hand, around three-quarters of all cultural production

7 Palmer and Richards refer to the 2010 executives for the provision of tourist numbers: ‘During its tenure as the Cultural Capital of Europe the number of tourists visiting Istanbul will reach ten to twelve million.’

8 Precisely 6,928,867 visitors.

Table 3 – Istanbul's Cultural Triangle



and consumption in Istanbul happens in the five to six districts located in the centre of the city, in which one-quarter of the city's population dwells. The cultural inequality that exists between Istanbul and Turkey is fractally repeated within Istanbul between a narrow triangular area located in the centre and the rest of the city. The following table is the result of the research conducted simultaneously with Istanbul 2010 preparations and shows the said narrow cultural triangle located in the centre of the city. It clearly points to the need to prioritise eliminating cultural gap as one of the main objectives.

The following sentence from the abovementioned 2004 article is relevant after Istanbul 2010: “Istanbul’s capital of culture candidacy should quickly be turned into an open and participative pilot project” (Ada, 2004).

## Lessons for Istanbul; takeaways for others

Comments about Istanbul 2010 include “the most unorthodox Capital of Culture since the ECOC’s conception” (Palmer and Richards, 2009, p. 19) and “Istanbul 2010 can be considered a success in spite of [its] weaknesses in the overall artistic coherence” (ECORYS, 2011, p. 77). To test the accuracy of these statements, we need to refer to two criteria. The first criterion is a comparison of the goals against what was actually achieved. The second criterion is the efficiency of what was done. The following lessons can be taken from Istanbul 2010 in this regard:

- The ownership of the project clearly shifted from civil society to the central government during the lifecycle of the project, ie the preparation process, the candidacy period, and then the Capital of Culture period. This was due to the fact that almost all the funding came from one source (the Ministry of Finance). Increasing the funds by diversifying them could have guaranteed the operational flow of the process.
- Having multiple boards is not enough on its own to achieve effective governance. Istanbul 2010 had a structure that consisted of an Executive Board, an Advisory Board, an Artistic Committee, and the individual advisory boards of each directorate of arts. This resulted in an increasingly complex decision-making process. The structure turned into an approval mechanism determined by the secretary-general, appointed by the central government in Ankara, who was responsible for carrying out the works with the government representatives within the Executive Board, who had the de facto majority vote with regards to decisions. In this sense, the dream that civil society actors had had since the early 2000s ended in 2010.
- Founding an (autonomous?) Agency for Istanbul 2010 by law and generating funds by increasing fuel prices by 1 *kuruş* (even though the latter could not be implemented) were potentially good practices.
- “[T]he number of companies operating in the cultural and creative industries in Istanbul increased ... between 2009 and 2011, a rise of 23%” (ECORYS, 2011; Ernst and Young, 2011, p. 82). Even though the source of this is unknown, the validity of this important data is

- a significant indicator of success. However, the evolution and progress of the said companies through time should also be evaluated.
- As can be seen from Istanbul 2010, although work such as restoration and work related to cultural heritage that is done to reinforce the urban identity in cities that become Capitals of Culture are both important, conducting them together with forward-looking activities that encourage contemporary arts, innovative expressions and youth participation, and using participative methods are critical for sustainability. Istanbul's shortcomings in this respect can be viewed as lessons too.
  - The local authorities also remained quiet during the Istanbul 2010 process, just like civil society. It is a *sine qua non* that these actors work together in urban cultural policies.
  - The Capital of Culture concept is first and foremost for the cities and the different groups that live in those cities. The failed foreign tourist objective that was set for Istanbul 2010 should be taken as a lesson in this regard as well.

The Istanbul 2010 experience still acts as a reference point for the cultural policy work of both Istanbul and Turkey. The lack of an archive containing all the documents of the 2010 Agency is the biggest obstacle to conducting exhaustive research. The example of Istanbul is remarkably enlightening for evaluating past and future ECoCs. "The city is using ECoC-related art and culture projects to facilitate larger changes, such as the restoration of buildings and the gentrification of urban districts that are of particular tourist interest" (Hein, 2010, p. 259). This statement clearly shows what needs to be avoided by other cities. Culture itself should be the direct objective of cultural capital work. Making culture mainstream in a way that improves the quality of life of the city's inhabitants and reinforces their attachment to the city should be the objective, instead of using culture simply as an instrument to improve urban processes. Rather than showy, blockbuster activities aimed at impressing global public opinion,<sup>9</sup> it would be more appropriate to prioritise sustainable structures and programmes that will take root in the city and will be adopted by the city's inhabitants, as was the case in Lille.

Nevertheless, the ECoC programme continues to exist and, so far, tens of cities have become cultural capitals. The programme has been a catalyst for significant changes in Europe's regional culture map. It is hoped that

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9 The most blatant example is U2's visit to Istanbul. Previously, the band's spokesperson Bono had refused to visit Turkey because of its failure to recognise democratic rights. The band came to perform in Istanbul with a high budget production and posed for the cameras alongside official authorities on the Bosphorus Bridge, which was closed to traffic exclusively for this occasion.

by trying to analyse the primary trends in the ECoC practices of different cities, research will pave the way for future policies.

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# European Capitals of Culture in Finland

## Focuses and legacies of Helsinki 2000 and Turku 2011

Vappu Renko, Mervi Luonila, Minna Ruusuvirta and Sakari Sokka

As one of the European Union's longest running cultural initiatives, the aims and scope of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) project launched in 1985 have changed over the years. The focus has shifted from the heritage of the cities to the cultural and social development of the cities (Palonen, 2010). Simultaneously, the aim and capacity to secure long-term effects have grown, reflecting a strengthening commitment towards sustainable legacy planning (Garcia, 2013). Decision 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 states that an important objective is to use the ECoC title to stimulate cities' "more general development in accordance with their respective strategies and priorities." Reflecting on these shifting aims, *this article compares the focuses and legacies of the two former Finnish ECoCs, Helsinki 2000 and Turku 2011* with respect to the bidding process for the next Finnish ECoC in 2026.

Since the European City of Culture Programme was established in 1985 in the form of a Ministerial Resolution, the development of the ECoC programme up until today can be divided into three main phases, with the new action (post-2019) constituting the beginning of Phase 4 (Garcia and Cox, 2013, p. 39).

The first phase (1985–1996) included the shifting focus of the ECoC programme: rather than simply being an award for past achievements, ECoC could operate as a platform encouraging cultural and urban development. Glasgow (1990) became the first city to incorporate the title into a long-term economic and urban regeneration strategy (Garcia, 2005; Garcia and Cox, 2013).

The second phase (1997–2004) introduced selection criteria and a clear outline of bidding deadlines for cities wishing to apply for the programme. In 2000, because of the special significance of the millennium year, the title was conferred on all nine cities that presented an application – including Helsinki, Finland.<sup>10</sup>

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10 In 2000, nine locations were chosen for the ECoC programme, including two cities from states that would join the EU on 1 May 2004. The cities were Avig-

The third phase (2005–2019) introduced a more detailed set of regulations, instructions and suggestions for the implementation of the ECoC, formulated by the European Union (EU) (Lähdesmäki, 2013; Oerters and Mittag, 2008). The ECoCs had to, for example, organise a programme of cultural events not only highlighting the city's own cultural heritage but also its place within the common European cultural heritage (Garcia and Cox, 2013, p. 43). Furthermore, the ECoC was strengthened as a tool for urban renewal and local economy and identity (Palonen, 2010). During this phase, the ECoC title was held by Turku, Finland in 2011, at the same time as the title was held by Tallinn, Estonia.

## Finland

Finland, a country with about 5,5 million inhabitants (in 2017), became a member of the EU in 1995, at the same time as Sweden, Austria and Finland's neighbouring country. The first Finnish ECoC, Helsinki 2000, is the capital city of Finland, and is where the majority of people live (643,000 in 2017). Helsinki hosts all the national cultural institutions as well as a large number of the country's museums, theatres and orchestras. The second Finnish ECoC, Turku 2011, is the country's former capital and currently the sixth largest city in Finland. Turku is located on the south-western coast of Finland, about 200 kilometres from Helsinki, and has a population of 190,000 (in 2017).

In 2026, the European Capital of Culture will be selected from Finland for the third time. Currently, three cities intend to bid: Oulu, Savonlinna and Tampere (together with Mänttä-Vilppula).<sup>11</sup> The decision about the next Finnish ECoC will be made in 2021.

In Finland, the local level of government is strong and autonomous. The municipal government has traditionally promoted the aims of the social welfare state with an emphasis on equality, and has maintained modern public services including cultural services (Kangas, 2017, p. 14). Municipalities maintain the infrastructure for local cultural and arts activities (including

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non (France), Bergen (Norway), Bologna (Italy), Brussels (Belgium), Helsinki (Finland), Kraków (Poland), Prague (Czech Republic), Reykjavik (Iceland) and Santiago de Compostela (Spain).

11 Oulu is Finland's fifth largest city and the most populous city in northern Finland (population of 202,000 in 2017). Savonlinna is a city of 35,000 inhabitants (in 2017) in the south-eastern part of Finland, best known for the annual Savonlinna Opera Festival. Tampere is the country's second largest city (population of 232,000 in 2017), located in southern Finland, a similar distance from the capital as the city of Turku.

libraries, museums, theatres, orchestras and arts education) with funding provided by the central government. Since the 1990s, globally-oriented market-driven innovation policies have emphasised the role of the urban regions and regional centres (Pelkonen, 2005, p. 693). In the area of cultural services, the theatres and orchestras in particular are centred upon the densely populated regional centres, such as Helsinki and Turku (Pohjois-Suomen aluehallintovirasto, 2018).

With just over a decade between them, the focuses and the legacies of Helsinki 2000 and Turku 2011 reflect the shifting aims of the ECoC initiative, as well as changing city policies. The next two sections examine the main focuses and legacies of Helsinki 2000 and Turku 2011. The data is drawn from reports about the ECoCs written by the EU and the cities themselves, along with previous research about the ECoCs. Concluding remarks are presented in the final section, reflecting on the past Finnish ECoCs with reference to the bidding process for the next Finnish ECoC in 2026.

## Helsinki

The general purposes of the European Capitals of Culture initiative include highlighting the richness and diversity of European cultures, celebrating the cultural ties that link Europeans, bringing people from different European countries into contact with each other's culture, promoting mutual understanding, and fostering a feeling of European citizenship. These aims remained the same during the second phase of the programme and during 2000 when Helsinki held the title, together with eight other European countries (Garcia and Cox, 2013, pp. 38, 40). In 2000, even though each ECoC's cultural programme was independently planned and managed by each city, the cities jointly decided on nine different themes around which they built their own programme. Helsinki's theme was "Knowledge, Technology and Future" (Cogliandro, 2001, p. 27).

Helsinki's year as the European Capital of Culture had two main aims: (1) to bring permanent improvements to the quality of life of city residents by developing Helsinki and its surroundings in a multifaceted manner; and (2) to raise international awareness about Helsinki and Finland in general as a lively, multifaceted stronghold of culture and know-how (Cogliandro, 2001, p. 44). The aims were related to both local development and using the ECoC as a means of branding. Culture was given an instrumental role. As Cantell and Landry (2001) note, a variety of expectations related to economic benefits, international visibility and the construction of a positive image of the city were set, along with a desire to increase tourism income and to maximise the economic impact.

The Helsinki 2000 programme was arranged using four different content categories: the Children's Year, Everybody's Year, the Year of Art, and the International Year. The programme included about 500 events in total: events for children and families and opportunities for art education with the aim of growing through and into art (Children's Year); events spreading out into the suburbs (Everybody's Year); different scales of art experiences (Year of Art); and art and culture especially from the Baltic rim and from Europe's eight other Cities of Culture (International Year) (Cogliandro, 2001, p. 44). Despite the various programme categories, Helsinki 2000 appeared strongly event-focused.

By the end of the ECoC year, Helsinki 2000 had reached 5.2 million visitors and involved around 100,000 people in the hosting of events. A survey of the population in Helsinki revealed that 83 percent of the respondents were quite or very satisfied with the Year of Culture events that they had attended (Cogliandro, 2001, p. 44).

## Turku

Following a decision that established community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019 (Decision 1419/1999/EC), the list of planning and evaluation criteria for the ECoC in 2011 was broadened. Possible elements of the designated city's programmes included, for example, the organisation of events and activities encouraging artistic innovation, social cohesion and the participation of young people; contribution to the development of economic activity, particularly in terms of employment and tourism; and encouraging the development of links between architectural heritage and strategies for new urban development (Decision 1419/1999/EC, Annex II).

The overarching theme of the city of Turku's ECoC application was "Turku on Fire", referring to the history of the city (ie the Great Fire of 1827) as well as the city's will and commitment to becoming a strong European Capital of Culture. The vision in Turku's application stated: "Turku 2011 is more than one year. It is a process through which Turku emerges as a pioneer and a creative centre of the Baltic Sea region co-operation, a city that produces and mediates arts and science" (Rampton et al, 2012, p. 38; Helander et al, 2006). The vision emphasises the legacy of the ECoC year, as well as the use of ECoC in shaping the image of the city.

The selection panel saw that Turku's proposal had truly involved citizens. After the selection, the panel invited the cities concerned to step up their efforts to make ECoC 2011 a success, mainly through cutting edge artistic

projects in the case of Turku (The Selection Panel for the European Capital of Culture 2011, 2007).

In implementing its vision, Turku had four key objectives. *Internationality* included attracting the attention of European countries to the Baltic Sea region and to common European goals, such as improving well-being and co-operation, and promoting creative industries and sustainable development. *Creative economy* referred to becoming a national pioneer in the creative industries and a significant centre of European cultural production. *Well-being* aimed to support the development of cultural well-being. *Assessment programme* included a commitment to the development of the comprehensive evaluation programme taking place from 2007 to 2016 and delivered through wide co-operation with the local universities and with the Tallinn 2011 organisation (Rampton et al, 2012, p. 38).

The cultural programme was grouped into themes named “memories and truths”, “transformations”, “exploring the archipelago”, “take-offs” and “2011 personally”. In practice, the cultural projects were grouped into a total of ten cultural domains (Rampton et al, 2012, pp. 43–44).<sup>12</sup> The scale of the themes and categories was broader than in the case of Helsinki 2000. The Turku 2011 programme included 165 projects and over 8,000 events, of which 5,000 were free of charge (Rampton et al, 2012, p. 43).

As Turku 2011 was one of the first ECoCs, the programme clearly highlighted the connection between culture and well-being. Turku 2011 also shaped the physical environment: for example, the event centre Logomo was renovated to host the Turku 2011 events and other programmes. Renovation reflected the ECoC title as a tool for urban redevelopment. In Turku – as in Helsinki – cultural activities also took place in areas outside the city centre.

Turku 2011 reached over 2 million visitors and involved about 34,000 people delivering and contributing to the programme. In a survey of the population of Turku, the respondents identified the cultural programme of Turku 2011 as well-balanced, since it included several large-scale events and grassroots initiatives (Rampton et al, 2012, pp. 53–54).

## Legacies

The first decision of the ECoC programme in 1999 (Decision 1419/1999/EC) stated that ECoC has “not always produced results lasting beyond the du-

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12 These cultural domains were City events; Design, architecture and crafts; Music; Exhibitions and visual arts; Theatre, dance, circus and performance; Cinema, animation and media art; Literature and literary art; Children and youth; Sports and outdoor activities; and Research and development.

ration of the project itself and whereas, while recognising their competence to decide about the content of their project, the attention of public decisionmakers in the cities chosen should be drawn to the need to integrate the cultural project into a dynamic medium-term process". For the past decade, the legacy and continuity of the ECoC project has been increasingly emphasised. For ECoCs in 2007 to 2019, "to safeguard the long-term effect of the European Capital of Culture event it is desirable to use the initiative, and the structures and capacities that it creates, as the basis for a lasting cultural development strategy for the cities concerned" (Decision 1622/2006/EC).

Both Helsinki and Turku aimed at both local development and the use of the ECoC title as an instrument to brand the city. Between the two ECoC years, the reporting requirements related to ECoCs have changed, which means that there is less data about the legacy of Helsinki 2000.

Helsinki 2000 aimed, for example, to bring "permanent improvements to the quality of life of city residents" (Cogliandro, 2001, p. 44). After the ECoC year, the project director Georg Dolivo and director of finance and communication Jorma Bergholm stated that, with respect to the year's legacy, culture in Helsinki was a key element for quality of life and competitiveness, and people understood the notion of culture in much broader terms than before. In this way, Helsinki had become "a much more vibrant cultural city than before the year 2000" (European Commission, 2009, p. 31). The ECoC year also created new networks in the field of culture. This was reflected, for example, in the development and conditions of the dance field in Helsinki (Kainulainen, 2007, p. 179). However, the Helsinki 2000 directors saw that the ECoC project lacked a "mandate and/or no acting organisation to create a long-term strategy for the year's aftermath". Therefore, Helsinki 2000 did not meet the expectations related to a strategy with a long-lasting effect (European Commission, 2009, p. 31).

Turku 2011 had a different perspective, reflecting the shifting aims of the ECoC project: "One of the key aims of Turku 2011 was to ensure that the ECoC made a positive contribution to the long-term development of the culture sector and of the city in general" (Rampton et al, 2012, p. 59). According to the ex-post evaluation of Turku 2011, ECoC brought positive developments to the city of Turku and its cultural life. The participation of the residents in cultural activities increased. New contacts and networks were created in the cultural sector. Increased co-operation between the key stakeholders was seen as one of the most important benefits of Turku 2011 (see also Hakala & Lemmetyinen, 2013). Turku 2011 also boosted the local economy, mainly through an increase in tourism (European Commission, 2013, p. 8).

The Turku 2011 foundation continued to fund some cultural activities until 2013 and developed a sustainability strategy defining the activities re-

ceiving funding.<sup>13</sup> In addition, some marketing activities as well as the Turku 2011 foundation's support for some networks and associations continued after the ECoC year, along with a research programme conducted by the University of Turku. The Turku 2011 foundation itself continued its work until 2016. The sustainability strategy highlighted that the ECoC experience related to wellbeing should be included as one of the policy priorities for the development of the city as a whole (Rampton et al, 2012, p. 60).

## Outcomes

Since 1985, the focus of the ECoC initiative has shifted from the heritage of the cities to the cultural and social development of the cities and active citizenship, with the strengthening role of the ECoC as a city branding instrument (Palonen, 2010). Hakala and Lemmetyinen (2013, p. 5) have concretised this shift, suggesting that the status of the ECoC may serve to develop the city through the “increasing awareness, motivation of people to experience it and enhance the quality of such experiences”. The status “also gives – through partnerships – the brand promoter opportunities to form a deeper relationship with visitors, thereby fostering loyalty” (ibid) towards the city. Along with the ECoC's role in developing the city as a whole, the focus on legacy and inclusion has been emphasised (Palonen, 2010; Lähdesmäki, 2013). Furthermore, the EU has played a larger role in evaluating and guiding ECoC cities even before the actual ECoC year. This development is reflected in the cases of the two Finnish ECoCs, Helsinki 2000 and Turku 2011.

The outcomes and legacies of the ECoCs are connected with local aims and contexts. In the case of Helsinki 2000, the legacy and its maintenance were not emphasised as much as they were for Turku 2011. Turku emphasised the connection between culture and well-being, promoting collaboration between different sectors, and including culture in the policy priorities for the development of the city. Turku also focused on urban redevelopment, while in Helsinki the ECoC programme was more event-based. Considering the local context is crucial: the participation of citizens and people

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13 Turku 2011 was partly subsidised by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture. In 2014, the Ministry demanded the return of a part of the state subsidy from the Turku 2011 foundation as the Ministry believed that the funding was not being used in terms of the original decision. Part of the disagreement was related to the Turku 2011 foundation using the state subsidy to continue funding some projects related to Turku 2011 even after the ECoC year. The Turku 2011 foundation appealed against the Ministry's decision but lost the case in the Supreme Administrative Court of Finland in 2018 (Supreme Administrative Court of Finland, 2018).

living in the surroundings reflects the sustainability and long-term effects of cultural and social developments in the city.

Looking at the bidding process for the next Finnish ECoC in 2026, Decision No 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 states that the cities holding the title must seek to develop links between different sectors and to promote social inclusion and equal opportunities. Hence it seems that the role of culture in the development of the city, including cross-sectoral collaboration and inclusion, will continue to be highlighted, both during the bidding phase as well as during the implementation of ECoC 2026.

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# Regional development, culture and border

## The case of Mons2015

Fabienne Leloup and Oana Marina Panait

In 2015, Mons was designated a European Capital of Culture (ECoC). This title is one of the instruments that the municipality had included in its economic restructuring programme, which was implemented in the early 2000s. The UNESCO labelling of a set of local tangible and intangible heritages is another example of instruments used for this purpose. What is the impact of this European cultural title on the city trajectory and, when considering Mons' geographical location – the city is only 16 km away from the Franco-Belgian border – has this trajectory included a cross-border (re) positioning?

After outlining how Mons has included culture in its regional development programme and how the ECoC title has supported this strategy, we will present a first assessment of Mons2015 results for the year 2015 and beyond. (“Mons2015” is the term used for Mons in 2015 when Mons was designated as one of the two ECoCs.)

We will then discuss the border issue. The ECoC title is always given to city located in a predetermined country. However, the programmes of several capitals have crossed national borders, such as Lille 2004 and Luxembourg 2007. What has Mons2015 taught us about cross-border issues?

We conclude with some thoughts about the cultural development currently implemented in Mons and in its surrounding areas.

## Regional development

Mons, including its merged surrounding cities, is a Belgian Walloon municipality of nearly 100,000 inhabitants, located in the province of Hainaut, near the French border.

Like the French side of the border, Mons experienced industrial prosperity based on coal mining until the 1960s, but has since suffered from a long-term economic decline. The European Regional Development Funds (ERDFs) have supported the social and economic restructuring and urban

regeneration of the region, including creative and cultural investments since the 1990s (Leloup and Moyart, 2014).

In the 2000s, the municipality built its urban development plan on three pillars: culture (Mons is the official cultural capital of Wallonia, as Charleroi is its social capital), tourism, and information and communication technologies (ICT). This strategy was decided upon in order to improve the attractiveness of the city, both for tourists and investors. In 2002, the local cultural organisations were reformed and included in a unique cultural centre, the so-called “Le Manège.mons”. This centre was the twin institution of the cultural structure of Maubeuge, a nearby French city on the other side of the border, the so-called “national scene of the Manège”. Cooperation and partnerships between the cities commenced.

In terms of ICT, Mons saw the arrival of various companies specialising in digital technologies and creative economy, including start-ups in the areas of video games (Fishing Cactus), slow motion cameras (I-Movix), applications for Apple (Creaceed) and applications related to voice recognition (A Capella) (CSEF et al, 2013).

Lastly, the city started a huge campaign for international recognition of its heritage. Its baroque Belfry (1999), the Saint Georges’ folk combat (the so-called combat of “Doudou”) (2005) (within a consortium of “Processional Giants and Dragons of Belgium and France”) and the Universal Bibliographic Repertory of the Mundaneum in the “International Memory of the World Register” programme (2013) were indeed recognised by UNESCO as part of the World Heritage Sites. Extending the scope to a radius of 15 kilometres around Mons led to the inclusion of four other heritages acknowledged by UNESCO: the hydraulic boat lifts of the old “Canal du Centre”, the Neolithic flint mines of Spiennes, the carnival of Binche, and the series of four major mining sites. The UNESCO titles thus led to the city being positioned on the Belgian and international tourist scenes (UNESCO, 2019).

Lille’s policy and its designation as ECoC for 2004 initiated the Mons bid for the ECoC title, and Mons was involved in a set of activities co-organised with Lille2004. Mons Mayor Elio Di Rupo, informed that Belgium had to host the ECoC in 2015, put this bid on the city’s cultural agenda and Mons was finally – after Liège’s withdrawal – the only Belgian city to apply in 2009 (Leloup and Moyart, 2014).

The theme chosen for the one-year programme was “When Technology meets Culture” and, as early as 2009, the city implemented an event policy, by exhibiting Keith Haring and Andy Warhol at the recently renovated Fine Arts Museum.

## Assessment of the situation

Mons2015 had to be a high point in the city's renovation policy; it precisely concretised the revitalisation of the city's image and therefore its attractiveness (CSEF et al, 2013). Consequently, the communication strategy was a central element: it is therefore not surprising that, as early as December 2014, CNN Travel ranked Mons second in its ranking of the 10 most attractive cities for 2015, after Milan (the organiser of the world exposition Expo 2015) (Leloup and Moyart, 2018).

Four artists, all related to the region, formed the foundation of the one-year cultural programme: Verlaine, Roland de Lassus, Saint Georges and Van Gogh. In addition to the events associated with these figures, other festivities, activities and celebrations were located in the city, in the Borinage – the mining and rural surroundings of the central city – and in the partner cities.

Various ex-ante and ex-post analyses and evaluations were conducted: two ex-ante monitoring reports before 2015 (The Monitoring and Advisory Panel for the European Capital of Culture 2015, 2012 and 2014) and an ex-post evaluation by the European Commission (2016), an assessment developed by KEA Consulting (KEA, 2016) and a report produced by Mons (Charle, n.d.).

Let us recall, as indicated by the study carried out for the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (Garcia et al, 2013), that few ECoCs have the data to assess the medium-term and long-term impacts of their events. The figures often include redundant elements and an explicitly explanatory capacity often misses due to aggregate criteria (Leloup and Moyart, 2018).

The first figures suggested a multiplier of 1 euro invested against 4 euros of impacts (estimates made by KEA Consulting, commissioned by the Mons2015 Foundation) (KEA, 2016). The figures cover both tickets sold and free tickets (ibid).

In terms of audience, 2,182,622 people visited Mons: 180,000 went to Van Gogh's exhibition, 100,000 attended the opening ceremony, and 80,000 were present at events outside the city ("Le Grand Huit" and "Le Grand Ouest"). During 2015, 21,000 tourists or residents visited Van Gogh's house, 116,500 went to Mons museums, 38,000 went up in the Belfry tower and about 16,000 attended other events (European Commission, 2016). The city experienced an increase in international tourists, coming mainly from neighbouring countries: the figure of about 250,000 international visitors was thus estimated (KEA, 2016).

According to the European Commission evaluation (2016), it is difficult to determine how many visitors were newcomers or attended Mons2015

because of the ECoC title. However, the municipality certainly attracted a large variety of people, including children and the youth, the elderly, socio-economically disadvantaged or disabled individuals, and minority ethnic groups. These groups, especially the socio-economically disadvantaged and minority groups, received free entry into events; specific accommodations ensured accessibility for disabled people. Some specific activities were organised for these groups. With regard to minority groups, Mons2015 promoters focused mainly on the European and Mediterranean minority groups living in Mons, such as Italians, Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, Algerians, Moroccans, Tunisians and Turks (ibid).

Mons2015 hosted more than 300 events between January and December 2015. Various outdoor creations, open-air ceremonies and events reinvested the public space (Charle, n.d.).

The ECoC organisers forged multiple collaborations with various partners, including Belgian cultural associations, European and international organisations (eg coming from Canada, Japan, China) and French cities. All of this strengthened cultural collaborations (KEA, 2016).

Evaluation reports indicated that around 450 international journalists covered Mons2015 and more than 30,000 international papers, in addition to international radio and television stations, mentioned Mons2015.

The data collected by the European Commission noted a positive impact of the ECoC title on the city's image outside Belgium. There were, however, indications of a less important evolution within Belgium (European Commission, 2016). The most significant positive impact was on the local resident population (European Commission, 2016). When the figures of the previous years are taken into account, in 2015 Mons2015 attracted almost 16 times more Flemish visitors, increasing from 263 in 2014 to 4,191 visitors in 2015 (Kea, 2016).

As noted elsewhere (Leloup and Moyart, 2014), the assessment has to distinguish between situational benefits, linked to prestigious and unique events, and structural achievements. The latter achievements include the opening of the Doudou Museum, the Artothèque, and the Arsonic (a concert hall), the reopening of the Belfry and the Mons Memorial Museum (all partly co-financed by EDRFs), and even the erection of a Libeskind convention centre and a Calatrava station, still unfinished in 2019. The outstanding infrastructure that was (re)opened in 2015 has enhanced the city's appeal up to the present.

With regard to the ECoC objective, the European ex-post evaluation showed that Mons2015 fostered the implementation of a "more extensive, more innovative and more European in nature" cultural programme compared with previous ones (European Commission, 2016, p. 52). Out of 219 projects developed, only a minority existed previously, while most were in-

novative. New artworks were created by famous contemporary artists, such as the choral piece written by Jean-Paul Dessys – a Walloon composer and musician – but the local population was also promoted, as illustrated by the book “Mons à petits pas”, which was co-written by 48 children (European Commission, 2016).

Some projects were developed in order to create conviviality and social contacts and to establish meeting and exchange places (eg “Le Jardin Suspendu” and “Café Europa”) (KEA, 2016). Fashion, design, musical, gastro-nomic and literary events took place there (Charle, n.d.).

The ECoC sponsors promoted the local cultural heritage and specificities existing in the city and in its surroundings and reinforced the European and international scope. The link between international artists – such as Van Gogh – and the municipality helped to make the cultural heritage more noticeable for foreign visitors and also for the local population. This link gave Mons and the Borinage surroundings an international visibility (European Commission, 2016).

Mons has made its mark on the European cultural map thanks to Mons2015. The planned establishment of biennales intend to maintain the city’s cultural visibility. Mons held its first biennale in 2018–2019 (Mons Capitale Culturelle, 2019). This will help to ensure Mons’ ongoing attractiveness as a local and international cultural and tourist destination.

## The border

The selection of European Capitals of Culture is conducted according to country. A calendar determines which European member states are eligible. This national affiliation is the first condition. (A very new framework makes it possible for a city in an EU or EFTA candidate country to hold the title) (European Commission, 2019). For example, in 2025 it will be Germany’s turn to host the ECoC (ibid). Six years before the year of the title, the selected member states publish a call for applications. Mons was chosen when it was Belgium’s turn, as was Lille when it was France’s turn.

In spatial terms, the projects proposed often extend beyond municipal boundaries – and this is even encouraged by the European Commission. When the situation warrants it, an ECoC may cross national borders. This was the case in Lille2004 and in Luxembourg2007.

Other cities or regions can be associated with the designated ECoC in the form of partnerships. The network will widen the space covered by the ECoC. The places may or may not be geographically close, they may or may not be in the same country, and they take advantage of the partnerships to make visible their own cultural activities and to promote the ECoC agenda.

Extending to other contiguous areas can also broaden the audience base. In the cross-border case, this objective often requires a specific targeted awareness and information phase. Even if European internal borders are open and not physically marked, they can be thought of barriers that prevent people from crossing them even though there is little distance to be covered. Removing these barriers can be planned during the ECoC year, and also for later on.

For territorial reasons, some ECoCs may include a wider region than the city, and they may possibly include a cross-border section. This may be justified by historical reasons (same languages, same traditions), a desire for diversity or, more pragmatically, the need for a pooling of equipment, staff or expertise.

All the circumstances led to extending the reach of the Mons ECoC. France is located close by: the first village is 16 km away; Maubeuge, a city of more than 30,000 inhabitants, is 27 km away and Valenciennes, a city of nearly 40,000 inhabitants, is 36 km away. This situation is reinforced by the flagship position of Lille, which is only 80 km away. From an organisational perspective, the city's cultural institution, "Le Manège.mons", had partnered with the Maubeuge structure, "the national scene of the Manège", since 2002. They planned a common cultural agenda as well as bus transport facilities between the cities, plus other types of exchanges. Several European Interreg programs, such as Interreg IV (2012), supported this Franco-Belgian partnership.

However, the assessment of the cross-border impact shows that the results were weak. Mons2015 was based on several partnership circles, but the French cross-border municipalities (Lille, Valenciennes and Maubeuge) were positioned in the same way as the Dutch border cities are positioned, in a more transnational rather than a cross-border perspective. None of the activities was labelled as cross-border. France, as a whole, emerged as a partner. It was only by defining the priority target audience, "150 km in Belgium and in the French border region", that the project explicitly mentioned the other side of the border (Charle, n.d., p. 43).

The only reference to a cross-border partner concerned Lille. It was the first of the eight cities of the "Ailleurs" project with Melbourne or Plzen (the other ECoC in 2015), and a collective of artists from Lille exhibited an artwork among the urban installations that decorated the city.

Finally, let us note that, as of early 2016, the dissolution of the "Manège.mons" institution due to management problems erased all signs of a partnership between the institutional structures and the bridges between the cultural life of Maubeuge and Mons. A new structure was established, called "Mars-Mons arts de la scène". It is clearly positioned in the heart of the city where the six performance sites that it manages are located. A recentralisation of the cultural organisation in Mons is thus clear.

## Some prospects

In the aftermath of Mons2015, the city of Hainaut has undoubtedly achieved its visibility objectives. The museum centre, the so-called “pole muséal”, coordinates 12 sites located in and around Mons (Pôle muséal, 2019). The Mons2025 Foundation, heir to the Mons2015 Foundation, plays a key role in the network of European Capitals of Culture, and acts as an ambassador for the cultural activities of Mons on an international scale. In collaboration with the museum centre and “Mars Mons arts de la scène”, the Foundation co-organises the biennales. The first version in 2018–2019 opened with its exhibition on Niki de Saint Phalle, which was a huge success. The Foundation also promotes local cultural activities such as “Le Grand Huit” and “La Grande Clameur” (Fondation Mons2025, 2019).

Mons has kept a logo that is similar to the Mons2015 logo, as well as a website – <http://www.monscapitaleculturelle.eu> – which continues its cultural ambitions at the European level.

Finally, in terms of borders, we can note that, even if improving Franco-Belgian dynamics is no longer a priority, the Mons cultural strategy since 2015 has helped to remove the Flemish border, which is good news for the attractiveness of Mons when we consider that Flanders accounts for a third of Wallonia’s tourist overnight stays (Wallonie Tourisme CGT, 2017, p. 38).

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# Time and Networks

## WROCLAW as European Capital of Culture 2016

Katarzyna Mlynczak-Sachs

I would like to start this article by expressing my enormous enthusiasm for the European Capital of Culture. Personally, participating in this project was a fascinating adventure, in which a huge amount of planning and work resulted in the satisfaction of meeting great people and making big ideas come true. At the back of my head, I constantly felt a huge responsibility to successfully present the city and its inhabitants. If anyone has a chance to get involved in this project, I would encourage them to do so. There are many different possible forms of involvement – from creating artworks to culture management, from public services and volunteering to business support.

In this article, I would like to share my opinion and experience gained during Wrocław European Capital of Culture 2016 and combine it with facts and figures gathered by researchers representing various domains of applied social sciences. The selected aspects are aligned with the motto chosen by Wrocław to promote itself during the celebration of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC): “Spaces for Beauty”. The aim was to “create open, dynamic, and friendly spaces that will serve the human craving for communion with art and culture. We are guided by a desire to establish the presence of beauty in social and personal lives. We intend to create spaces within which to restore the presence of beauty in public life and in daily habits” (Spaces for Beauty. Revisited, 2011, p. 14). The idea of public space has acquired greater significance in the past twenty years due to its associations with many aspects, ranging from architecture to human relations and the expression of freedom.

Thus I would like to concentrate in this text on the impact of Wrocław ECoC 2016 on three areas: the creation of Wrocław as a cultural centre by improving its infrastructure, the participation of residents in culture and the development of international network, and interest in the city as such.

## Infrastructure

The competition for the ECoC title was held at a promising time for Polish cities. The first bid had to be submitted in autumn 2010, six years after Poland joined the European Union, when far-reaching and deep changes were occurring in Polish agglomerations. Cities were joining various networks, exchanging ideas and practices concerning their development, and realising their importance for the state and its citizens. The process of rediscovering the identities of cities and their inhabitants began, resulting in increased interest in their roots and history.

Investments in cultural infrastructure were part of a broader vision and strategy (Dutkiewicz, 2006, p. 13). The Mayor of Wrocław, Rafał Dutkiewicz, initially concentrated on developing the transport infrastructure – the construction of a new ring road and new airport terminal, as well as the modernisation of the railway station. The first important deadline for these projects was the European Football Championship in 2012. By that time Wrocław had already been selected to bear the honourable title of the European Capital of Culture, which required greater focus on cultural infrastructure. Although the decisions to run for the title and invest in cultural venues were taken separately, they need to be viewed as part of the city's general development strategy. Thanks to the ECoC title, many construction projects were sped up to be completed before 2016. The ECoC cultural program and the accompanying marketing campaign ensured that the newly opened cultural venues would have a good start and high numbers of visitors from the very beginning.

In September 2015, a new concert hall called the National Forum of Music (NFM) was opened. The spacious premises made it possible to organise concerts of distinguished musicians and top world orchestras for audiences from all over the world. NFM is a perfect example of using ECoC as an opportunity to develop cultural infrastructure, enabling wider access to culture, improving the image of the city and developing the tourist economy.

In June 2016, the Four Domes Pavilion – a branch of the Wrocław National Museum – inaugurated its functioning with a permanent presentation of Polish modern art and space for temporary exhibitions. The absolute highlight of the year was the “Summer Rental” show, prepared in co-operation with Hamburger Bahnhof and based on the collection of Erich Marx. The Four Domes Pavilion enriched the offer for tourists visiting the area, which also boasts the revitalised Centennial Hall and the accompanying park district.

Several more museums opened its premises in 2016, including the Pan Tadeusz literature museum, the Theatre Museum and the long-awaited Depot History Centre, which presents the history of Wrocław since the war.

Moreover, many cultural investments were undertaken in districts outside the city centre. These initiatives were of special importance in the context of shaping “spaces of beauty”, as it had been announced in the application, and showing Wrocław dwellers that meeting and experiencing culture can be possible in their closest surroundings. A very important role has been played by the Krzywy Komin Center for Professional Development, which offers a wide range of workshops for people seeking new ways of development and professional engagement. Another important venue worth mentioning is the Fama library and cultural centre, which has been working for and with the local community by concentrating on activities connected with cinema, literature and circus.

Theatre lovers enjoy the revitalised edifice of the Capitol Musical Theatre as well as the new stage run by the Jerzy Grotowski Institute. Wrocław boasts the biggest art house cinema in Poland – the New Horizons Cinema, which promotes artistic and independent cinema. Its consistent program and outstanding offer have educated the local audience and acquainted it even with alternative cinematography.

Another goal set within the Wrocław ECoC 2016 was the revitalisation of two historical districts whose architecture dates back to the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since there are many social challenges there, the task was very complex and ambitious. Its implementation was based on a masterplan that included investments in infrastructure, improving the condition of the surviving architecture, reshaping public spaces and proposing activities involving the local communities (Adamczyk-Arns, 2014). It is an ongoing process that has been carried out according to the main objectives and design guidelines set for both areas.

To summarise, I would like to stress once again the huge importance of infrastructural investments for the celebration of the European Capital of Culture program, and far beyond it. Without the necessary venues, it wouldn't be possible to invite high profile artists, build the international reputation of Wrocław and engage the city in various artistic networks. Two years after finishing the ECoC celebration, all the venues are thriving and serving the needs of the local audience and tourists alike.

## Participation

The program of the European Capital of Culture 2016 was full of cultural projects in familiar forms, but also of initiatives revealing different concepts of participation in culture. Based on my observations, I had the impression that with every passing month the public was learning how to understand, comment what they were experiencing and how to get more involved in culture.

One of EcoC's most challenging concerns is placing culture in the very centre of social development and perceiving culture as the key factor for economic development of the society founded on innovation, knowledge and creativity.

The number of events that took place during the year-long celebration in Wrocław and in the region is difficult to count precisely, but it certainly exceeded two thousand. It was an undertaking whose scale was unique and nobody was left indifferent to what was happening. The events called for different forms of participation – from full engagement, through active participation to passive spectatorship.

The Wrocław ECoC 2016 had two flagship projects concentrating on citizens' active engagement in cultural activities. The first one was a series of artistic interventions in chosen backyards in the city, where, ideally, the course of each project would be discussed with the local community. It was a very demanding project with many controversies during the implementation phase. Two years after the end of the Wrocław ECoC 2016, the project is still being developed, the acquired knowledge is being shared with citizens, and long-term development strategies for local neighbourhoods are increasingly taking into consideration the economic and social challenges.

The second participatory project implemented by Wrocław 2016 is called Microgrants. It involves the organisation of projects by local activists or communities, with small financial support of the municipality. The original goals of the project were:

- engagement of citizens in the ECoC program;
- agreeing on shared objectives, meeting the needs of the community, implementing ideas connected with the creation of a friendly and attractive living space;
- inspiring the inhabitants to hold events for neighbours;
- building the identity of Wrocław dwellers on the basis of the city as a “shared space”;
- raising the awareness of social participation and increasing leadership competences (Dolińska, 2017, p. 11).

The successful implementation of the project and its positive evaluation by the grant recipients led to the decision to continue and develop the initiative, putting greater emphasis on dissemination of the work results. Combining Microgrants with the participatory budget and other inclusive elements of municipal policy has brought tangible results to the cityscape.

The degree of participation in the Wrocław European Capital of Culture 2016 has been analysed on the basis of data from surveys conducted among cross-sections of the inhabitants of the city and region. It examined whet-

her the key social background characteristics of the public determined the type of event in which they participated (Banaszek et al, 2017b, pp. 48–49). Participation levels and awareness of the program were rising throughout the year, as ECoC was becoming a popular celebration and an important experience for the city as a community.

Culture is often promoted as a crucial factor in shaping the identity of a city, but it also creates democratic and just cities. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that culture is far more than participation in events. The deep transformation through culture that was projected to be achieved with the Wrocław ECoC 2016 will take many more years and demands changes in daily habits. All the inclusive and participatory projects connected with the creation of culture should be viewed as a starting point that needs consistent efforts. Moreover, it is important to balance the relations and build it on equal terms for different participating actors.

## Relations

Wrocław's ambition is to gain international recognition, raise the international profile of the city and mark its place on the European culture scene. In this section, the last-mentioned aspect will be described.

Wrocław is a very special place because of its complex history – a city that before World War II had nearly one million inhabitants and boasted one of the most important German universities was transformed into a Polish city with exclusively Polish inhabitants. The city was severely destroyed in the Siege of Breslau and it took many decades to rebuild it. The reconstruction concerned not only the buildings but also the social sphere as well as cultural life. In the 1960s and 1970s Wrocław, as a place situated on the edge of a communist country, with strong propaganda raising doubts about the future fate of the region, attracted citizens with a sense of independence, including many artists who created there their own microcosms and built international networks. It led to the emergence of an influential avant-garde movement in Wrocław that provided the required basis for re-establishing artistic and cultural life.

These social and cultural changes were trenchantly tackled in two exhibitions. One of them took place during the 56<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale – it was titled “Dispossession” and presented individual narratives about the loss of one's possession against the broader context of historical and contemporary narratives about the loss of one's home. The cultural heritage in visual arts and design, but also works of urbanism, theatre, film and everyday life of Wrocław since the 1960s until the present was presented in the travelling exhibition “The Wild West. A History of Wrocław's Avant-Garde”, which visited dis-

tinguished institutions in Bochum, Budapest, Kosice, Zagreb and Warsaw. Although neither of these exhibitions was presented in Wrocław, they had a big positive impact on the international media narrative about city.

The ECoC program was also supposed to show the variety of international cultural initiatives in Wrocław and provide the local audience with a unique chance to experience the multiculturalism just behind their doors. The attitude towards the European dimension of ECoC was different in the bidding phase (2007–2011) and during the celebration year (2016) (Gierat-Bieroń et al, 2017, p. 221). One of the possible explanations is the fact that the ECoC program was based on activities promoting the city and on the development of long-existing and newly established festivals. Networking or strengthening the European and local identity was less important. Researchers point out that Poland's accession to the EU demonstrated the acceptance of European values and of the European way of thinking, which was followed by decreased interest in European topics. Poland's first years in the EU were mainly concentrated on budget considerations and financial opportunities. During the ECoC celebration, several important changes took place. The most notable one, in my opinion, was the rise of urban movements. Groups of people began to be increasingly interested in the development of the city from the civil perspective, emphasising both the historical and cultural factors as well as the social and infrastructural issues.

The ECoC programme included several projects focusing on important European topics and emphasising European heritage. In my opinion, these were among the most important undertakings that stressed the European dimension and the inevitability of integration in the relatively small European community. These projects included "Wrocław-Lviv", whose extremely rich month-long program consisted of exhibitions, concerts, screenings and book presentations stressing the historical links between the two cities. Lviv, which is nowadays a Ukrainian city, was the home of many people who were relocated to Wrocław at the end of World War II.

The ECoC title revived co-operation on the Wrocław-Berlin axis with the main partner Stiftung Zukunft Berlin. It was based on many artistic projects and cultural initiatives, such as the "Culture Train" between the two cities. The train will run until the end of 2019. Wrocław's partner cities also played an important role in the preparation of the cultural program; especially intense collaboration was developed with Lille and Dresden and Lviv.

More than 70% of all projects had an international component. Some of the projects were very prestigious and attracted special attention of international media. Wrocław hosted the globally renowned Theatre Olympics, an annual conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, and the European Film Awards ceremony. Wrocław worked hard on preparing the literature program and making it sustainable

for years after the celebration. Two important actions were undertaken in this respect. Wrocław successfully ran for the title of the UNESCO World Book Capital 2016. Moreover, the city became member of The International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) that is “offering shelter to writers and artists at risk, advancing freedom of expression, defending democratic values and promoting international solidarity.” Thanks to all the activities and undertakings in the field of literature promotion, a new institution called Wrocław Literature House was established.

I would like to conclude this section by noting that the international dimension incorporated in the ECoC program was just the beginning of what has already happened and what may happen in the city. It revealed different ways that may be followed to place Wrocław in international cultural networks. Nevertheless, it ought to be stressed that time and consistent co-operation are the most important factors in establishing long-lasting intercultural relations. Patient work on the existing networks is the key to success.

Any evaluation of the effects of European Capital of Culture encompass the topics of interest such as sustainability in developing participatory and inclusive culture forms, building international relations and maintaining international networks as well as developing infrastructure not only for touristic usage but first and foremost to the local community. Implications of all the mentioned aspects and criteria extend the timescale of the ECoC year. The year 2016 was undoubtedly a trigger for many changes in the field of culture. The future culture policy of the city of Wrocław and cultural institutions will show if the legacy of the project extended over the celebration year and culture addressed broader public and became an important factor in citizens life.

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# Culture at the core of the city's development

## Pafos, European Capital of Culture 2017

Georgia Doetzer

Until 2017 the brief history of Cyprus since its independence in 1960 included only few large-scale cultural events. The positive effects of the European Cultural Month in Nicosia (1995) and the unprecedented experiences of many ECoCs, whose cities had been culturally reshaped thanks to the title had generated great interest for the title bidding, setting a fierce competition between Nicosia, Limassol and Pafos.

After Limassol's exclusion in the first round, the decision on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September 2012 in favour of Pafos took almost everyone by surprise, since Nicosia, the last divided capital of Europe, seemed to be the ideal candidate for the title of the ECoC 2017.

Pafos, the smallest city of Cyprus, located at the western coast of the island, is well-known for its excellent weather conditions, its natural beauty and many archaeological sites and monuments, which reveal a long and varied history. A history consisting of beliefs, traditions, stories and myths. Merchants, travellers, pilgrims and conquerors left their mark all over the region, making it a multicultural melting pot.

The city counts 35,000 residents and the district a total of 88,276 residents. Expatriates permanently residing in Pafos represent more than 1/3 of the district's population. These international residents mainly come from Greece, the United Kingdom, Eastern Europe, Syria and Russia and do not necessarily interact with each other.

Pafos is the biggest tourist area of Cyprus (3.8 million in 2017), hosting more than one third of Cyprus' tourists each year. Tourism has, on the one hand, led to the rapid economic growth, and, on the other hand, to a segregation of the city, since the upper part (Pano Pafos) and the lower part (Kato Pafos) of the city have totally different orientations and developments.

The upper part of the city, *Ktima* as the locals like to call it, is a proof of yet another segregation; probably the most important one in the modern history of Cyprus. The Greek Cypriot residents built their houses in the area surrounding the Town Hall and the neo-classic buildings in the city centre, while the area of Mouttalos, where the Turkish Cypriot residents of Pafos

used to live, is still a reminder of the violent division after the Turkish invasion in 1974 that led to the displacement of thousands of both Greek and Turkish Cypriots.

Apart from the fact that Pafos suffered from spatial and social segregation, its cultural sector was small and generally less developed compared to the other Cypriot cities as far as infrastructure, arts and cultural organisations and institutions were concerned. Its dissuasive small size for artists and creative capital, the orientation of its society towards the tourism industry, and its location far away from the capital and the decision-making centres, had placed Pafos in a particularly difficult situation, which worsened even more due to mismanagement and due to political and economic scandals related to corruption and clientelism.

As the bid campaign commenced in 2010, gaining the title seemed to be the only way for the community of Pafos to overcome the city's constraints, to reconnect the separate parts of the city, and to revive its cultural vibrancy and pride.

With the support of Pafos Municipality, a working group of volunteer artists, architects, international experts and academics was formed, aiming to transform Pafos through the title into an open multicultural city with social cohesion and sustainable cultural infrastructure.

According to the decision of the relevant committee, Pafos' proposal of the *Open-Air Factory* responded well to the objectives and criteria of the ECoC. Pafos had been selected due to the cohesion and coherence of its programme, as well as its cultural and artistic quality. The openness of the programme, the idea of bringing arts closer to the audience and the realistic bridging of the gap between the two Cypriot communities and the new resident communities also contributed to the selection panel voting in favour of Pafos.

In March 2013, Pafos2017, an independent non-profit organisation, was established in order to develop and implement the programme of the ECoC Pafos2017. Three out of the four municipalities of the district became stakeholders and contributed financially, in addition to the District Union of Communities and the Pafos Chamber of Commerce and Industry. A Board of Directors, evenly representing most political parties, was appointed by the stakeholders. However, the unforeseen financial crisis that Cyprus faced resulted in delays in all aspects: staffing, programme development, sponsorships, promotion and advertising. Pafos' ability to organise and implement the event was at some point nationally and internationally called into question.

The government's decision in mid-2014 to finance the event with €5 million and the stakeholders' contribution with an additional €1 million finally set the Pafos2017 Organisation free. The initial budget of €23 million had to be reduced to €8.5 million, which already included the Melina Merkouri prize of €1.5 million and other possible sponsorships amounting to €1 million.

By 2015, Pafos2017 had finally set up the minimum operational structures needed to implement the ECoC. The limited resources and the understaffed organisation (even in 2017, the team consisted only of 17 employees and some external partners) led to a series of weaknesses and obstacles, such as the Board's interventions in day-to-day business, an enormous pressure due to the strict deadlines and the massive workload, causing tension among the staff, as well as personnel changes, often affecting both the quality and the effectiveness of the Organisation.

By mid-2016, Pafos2017 was able to save cost and secure supplementary services and additional funding from private and public institutions. Creative collaborations with organisations, bodies and commercial agents from Pafos and Cyprus in general contributed not only to the surpassing of financial constraints, but also to the expansion of the event from a local to a national level. Collaboration protocols with tourism operators, local hoteliers, the national radio and TV, the most important local and national media, as well as with governmental authorities and cultural institutions such as the Department of Antiquities, the Cyprus Theatre Organisation and the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra have brought great savings and added to the financially compressed programme of the ambitious artistic projects of Pafos2017.

The promotion of Pafos2017 and its objectives, the audience building and development, the stakeholders' identification with the objectives of the ECoC and the enthusiasm and participation of the residents from all over Pafos, became the Organisation's priorities. That is why, despite the limited budget, in the preparatory years hundreds of actions were organised by the Organisation, transforming the region of Pafos into a common space shared by all its citizens.

## Programme and Challenges

The cultural programme was the core of Pafos2017 and represented ca. 60% of the total operational expenditure of the ECoC 2017 (€5 out of €8.5 million).

In the introduction of the programme *Open Air Factory* published in 2016, it was highlighted that this was open in time and space, but it was mainly open to people, to the artists, to spectators, to locals, to foreign permanent residents, as well as to visitors and migrants. The philosophy of openness was focused on accessibility, tolerance, acceptance and integration of different cultures, ideas and beliefs.

This sense of openness, which was both a link and a bridge (sometimes even a reunification), of all that had been divided, was reflected in the motto "Linking Continents – Bridging Cultures", which intended to mark the

overcoming of the strict geographic boundaries with a series of projects that would expand relations, proximity and reduce conflict among people.

Most of Pafos2017 objectives were similar to those of other ECoCs (Palmer/Rae 2004:14). Nevertheless, since Pafos had for many years been an important tourist destination, the international visibility and the promotion of the city abroad, in order to attract visitors, was not a major priority for the Organisation, unlike for other ECoCs. Pafos2017 was not so much interested in increasing the city's international profile, but rather in changing it. Considering its small size and the absence of a well-developed cultural sector, as well as the almost inexistent cultural activity, the aim of the active engagement of artists, citizens and visitors became the most important one, along with the interconnections between the different communities and places.

Apart from enhancing the city's creative capital and infrastructure, the programme mainly aimed at changing the local mentality, bringing closer the two Cypriot communities, as well as bridging different groups of people, empowering the residents' pride for their city, increasing their engagement with culture, building audience and creating networks with other European cities.

The projects of the 2017 programme were selected through three different processes: the bidding phase in 2012, the open call in 2014 and the new planning by the artistic team. Out of the 31 original projects included in the bid-book, 25 remained in the final programme following re-negotiation and re-design. The total cost was €1,052,618 or 20% of the total programme cost amounting eventually to €5,289,038. The high percentage reflects the importance of the bid-book projects for maintaining the programme's consistency. The additional projects included collaborations with bodies from Cyprus and abroad, exchanges with other ECoCs, the landmark events of the *Opening*, *Closing* and the *Summer Highlight* and special events, such as the music platform *Moon and Stars*, the multi-language theatre production *Trojan Women*, the visual arts project *Terra Mediterranea* and many more. Special reference should be made to the *European Concert* by the Berliner Philharmoniker not only due to its European dimension and artistic excellence, but also due to the enormous international promotion of Pafos as a cultural destination to millions of viewers around the world since it was broadcast live from Pafos.

A total of 168 projects were conceptually linked to the three thematic lines of the programme, while a platform under the symbolic and literal title *The Travelling Stage* was developed, in an attempt to bring actions to remote communities.

Each of the three thematic lines of the programme connected to the overall narrative and revealed an important aspect of Pafos. The first thematic

line, called *Myth and Religion*, referred to the historical background of the city, its multi-religiosity and its myths. The opening event under the title *Pafos – A work of Art* was inspired by the myth of Pygmalion and Galatea, who gave birth to a son named Pafos.

The second thematic line, titled *World Travelers*, referred to the inter-cultural dialogue and to the interactions and influences that have shaped life in Pafos over the centuries, linking the city to the rest of the world. The summer highlight of Pafos2017, under the title *Eternal Voyages* was inspired by all travellers who have landed on the shores of Pafos, from all over the world and to today's refugees and migrants.

The third thematic line, *Stages of the Future*, placed Ibrahim's Khan and the Turkish Cypriot community of Mouttalos area in its centre, raising issues and challenges for the future of the city, including the division and the prospects of a peaceful coexistence. The closing ceremony of the ECoC Pafos2017, entitled *All about this City*, celebrated the participation of its citizens and highlighted the creative potential of the city.

In parallel to the artistic programme and under the same philosophy, three major programmes were designed to “deepen” the relation between the citizens and the ECoC and to inspire great ownership for the ECoC among the citizens of Pafos (*Passionately Pafos*).

The *Community Involvement Programme* aimed at bringing Pafos2017 closer to the organised local groups and the citizens of Pafos, by implementing community projects and actions. Cultural initiatives, local bodies and people were given the opportunity to participate with their actions in the Pafos2017 programme of events.

The Volunteers' Programme proved to be the most efficient platform for disseminating the mission and goals of the ECoC throughout 2017. By mobilising 350 local and international volunteers of different ages, professions and backgrounds, this programme had a great impact on the society as it significantly increased the citizens' participation and engagement with the ECoC. The volunteers played a major role in the programme's implementation. After a short training, they worked in groups for the organisation, hospitality, promotion and even production of events. Dozens of exhibitions were almost completely covered by volunteers, saving tens of thousands of euro for the Organisation.

Together with the Ministry of Education and Culture, Pafos2017 launched the *Schools in Action* programme. In the context of this successful programme, teachers of Primary and Secondary Schools were partly seconded to the Organisation and they successfully communicated the objects and values of the ECoC Pafos2017 through school programmes at both local and national level by creating hundreds of school events involving thousands of students and teachers all over Cyprus.

As in most ECoCs, there were delays in the delivery of the new venues. The first infrastructure project related to the ECoC programme was delivered in late April 2017, while the renovated Markideio Theatre, which is in fact the only theatre in the city, draw its curtain in November 2017, just a month before passing on the baton. Delays caused additional cost, tensions and, in some cases, the reallocation to other venues or dates.

Nevertheless, placing most of the actions in open spaces in combination with the region's small size and the good weather conditions contributed to a successful implementation. It is estimated that over 70% of the actions in 2017 took place in the open air, a fact that significantly increased the accessibility of the projects and made them very inclusive. On the other hand, many open spaces lacked infrastructure and facilities, thus increasing the budgeted cost. For the platform *Moon and Stars*, which took place on the beach where Aphrodite is thought to have been born, an ephemeral stage and seats for 2,000 people were created and then dismantled again.

The programme included events covering the entire spectrum of arts and genres, such as architecture, gastronomy, visual arts, theatre, dance, cinema, literature, music, photography and the environment, as well as conferences and workshops. More than 50% of the projects were related to music and visual arts. Out of 168 projects, many included more than one genre and had a much larger scope, with clusters of actions spanning in time and space, such as the *Akamas* project with 10 interdisciplinary complex actions, the project *Moon and Stars* presenting six major events and *Re-Visiting Moutalos* presenting dozens of different actions with the participation of the two Cypriot communities. In 2017, 332 actions were implemented covering 2301 days, a number explained by the large number of exhibitions hosted in the city alongside other events.

## Impact and Development

The impact of the ECoC on Pafos was greater in terms of cultural capacity, including the cultural infrastructure and activity taking place in the city, the change of mentality, the economic growth and, to a lesser extent, the international profile of Pafos. The ECoC open public consultation<sup>14</sup> demonstrates that 87% of respondents felt that the ECoC 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.

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14 The European Commission's open public consultation for the evaluation of the 2017 European Capital of Culture (ECoC) Action in Pafos and Aarhus was launched on the 11th March 2018 and closed on the 21st of July 2018.

Crossing the local and national boundaries, the programme of the ECoC Pafos2017 also gained an international dimension. The European dimension is identified in most projects, since almost 80% of them had either highlighted European or global themes or hosted European and international artists. Out of the 168 projects, 49 projects were international productions. In addition, 24 projects included multi-day residencies in Pafos for artists coming from 40 countries.

Since Cypriot and international artists developed together most of the flagship projects, they offered locals a unique opportunity to become involved in large scale projects, gaining skills and building capacities. The interactions and exchanges of local arts organisations and artists with respective counterparts from Europe are yet another vivid example of Pafos' openness to the rest of the world. The two ECoCs in 2017, Aarhus and Pafos, created, in addition to the common events in their opening ceremonies, a series of projects related to music, dance, visual arts and cinema, bringing together actors from both cities. Exchanges were made with other ECoCs as well, such as with Donostia 2016, Wroclaw 2016, Valetta 2018, Leeuwarden 2018, as well as Plovdiv 2019 and Novi Sad 2020, but to a smaller scale. Some of these exchanges became relations and networks that still exist today.

According to data, 207,250 visitors attended the Pafos2017 events. It is estimated that the number is much higher as tickets were required only for 20% of the events. For the remaining 133 projects with hundreds of events in different open spaces and communities the numbers were only estimated by the Organisation.

The fact that many events had free entrance has undoubtedly encouraged many people to attend who did not belong to the usually expected audience. The fact that events were brought to smaller rural communities, together with the lack of linguistic constraints because of the use of English subtitles in most cases, contributed to the elimination of obstacles and to the wide participation of foreign residents and visitors at the Pafos2017 events.

Seven medium scale infrastructure projects, originally developed by volunteer architects, engineers, artists and the local university were included in the overall planning of the ECoC programme so that Pafos Municipality could secure substantial co-financing from the Cyprus Government and the European Structural Funds, amounting to 27.8 million. Among these, Attikon Theatre, Ibrahim's Khan, Mouttalos, Markideion Theatre, have been closely connected to dozens of the most important actions of Pafos2017 programme creating a cultural cluster in the city centre.

The centre that had been abandoned for years has been revitalized, new businesses have established themselves there, creating new employment opportunities and decisively contributing to a wider socioeconomic growth of the city. Another successful parameter is the establishment of small artistic

and cultural organisations, which were reinforced by the action of the ECoC and currently continue to shape and contribute to the city's cultural life.

According to Pafos2017 data, 60% of all projects were produced in Pafos. Local artists participated in 44% of all projects (excluding the community involvement projects). This highlights the opportunities created in Pafos for artists, creators, makers and other local actors and, thus, the ECoC's contribution not only to the cultural capacity, but also to the economic growth of the city. The employment growth and the larger number of opportunities for many professions related to cultural activity, the increase of visits throughout the year, as well as the presence of thousands of spectators and artists from Cyprus and abroad are estimated to have contributed to a significant multi-level increase in the economic activity in 2017.

## Multiculturalism and interactions

In order to measure the impact of ECoC on Pafos and its citizens, Neapolis University in Pafos conducted a research in the years 2016-17 called Cultural Barometer (Tsangaridis K. 2007<sup>15</sup>) focusing on the impact of the ECoC Pafos2017 on a political, cultural, economic and social level. The findings reveal that the title had definitely a positive impact on the city and the mentality of its people.

58.9% of 1588 respondents showed an increased interest in cultural events in 2017 that was not the case for other activities.

More than 82% of the respondents had a positive view of the fact that Pafos became ECoC. All respondents expressed the view that Pafos has changed much or very much in the last two years, with 71.4% attributing the city's changes much or very much to the fact that Pafos was nominated ECoC.

The above confirm that the ECoC Pafos2017 used the title as a strategic investment in order to form in the long-term a new dynamic identity for the city and to make its residents see that as a positive development. The overwhelming majority of the respondents (91.2%) believed in long-term benefits, thus recognizing the value of the ECoC.

Multiculturalism and overcoming the city's segregation has also been a key objective of the institution. Intercultural dialogue, interactions between different ethnic and cultural groups have been strengthened through various projects. According to the Cultural Barometer, 40% of the spectators of Pafos2017 actions were not Cypriots, and almost 83.6% of the participants

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15 The local evaluation of the ECoC undertook a survey of 1,588 people. 1,363 of these participated in Pafos2017 activities (the experimental group) and 225 of respondents had not participated in any Pafos2017 activities (the control group).

in Pafos2017 events were more likely to interact with different cultures in the future.

According to the Cultural Barometer, Pafos' title succeeded in connecting people and making them feel involved. A wide range of people of all ages and nationalities attended the events in 2017; spectators from 10 to 85 years old, of which 59% were Cypriots and 41% residents of other nationalities. Additionally, 74.7% of the respondents answered positively to the question whether the ECoC had had a positive impact on their involvement in cultural activities, with 87% stating that the ECoC had had a positive effect on building the cultural capacity of the sector in the city, 65.8% saying that the ECoC events were more than ever before and 58% saying that they were of better quality and more diverse.

Moreover, Pafos has reinforced dialogue and interaction between the two communities. The area of Mouttalos and Ibrahim's Khan became a place of meeting and exchange, welcoming many actions and works of Turkish Cypriot artists. *The Table of Unification*, the sculptures of Umit Inatchi near his ruined house in Mouttalos, the bi-communal Youth Orchestra, and finally the participation of dozens of Turkish Cypriot artists and citizens in many events, including the Opening and Closing ceremonies, confirm the approach of the two communities via the ECoC.

Considering all of the above, I would dare to say that Pafos2017 can be seen as a positive example of a small city that, despite a very limited budget, successfully implemented the ECoC project. Unfortunately, the city has up to date failed to safeguard continuity and the sustainability of many ECoC projects due to the absence of political will to transform Pafos2017 into a new structure that would maintain the increased cultural capacity, as well as the quality of the cultural offer.

The closing down of the Organisation after 2017 and the lack of a successor structure interrupted the cultural development in 2018, invalidated the dynamic and excitement and, unfortunately, it created a gap between 2017 and the day after the title year. However, hosting the ECoC in 2017 and the passionate involvement of the entire city has set a milestone in the history of Pafos and transformed it into a point of reference for every future endeavour. This and other long term benefits depend now on the actions taken by the city's authorities in the following years.

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# Research-based evaluation: main impacts of Aarhus 2017

Hans-Peter Degn and Louise Ejgod Hansen

During the period 2013 to 2018 Aarhus University conducted an extensive, research-based evaluation of the impacts of the European Capital of Culture (ECoC), Aarhus 2017. The basis for the evaluation was five years of data gathering and analyses. The comprehensive material consists of interviews, questionnaires, monitoring data, documents etc.

This article presents an overview of the evaluation results. Our intention is that future ECoCs can learn and benefit from these experiences of and results from Aarhus 2017. The main evaluation report is available in English at the rethinkIMPACTS 2017 webpage: [www.projects.au.dk/2017](http://www.projects.au.dk/2017).

The Aarhus 2017 project was formed during the application phase, running from 2007 until the designation in 2012. During this phase, important decisions were taken, which became important for the way in which Aarhus operated as an ECoC.

An extensive citizen consultation involving 10,000 citizens led to, among other things, the overall theme of 'rethink', which would characterise the entire ECoC project. This is remarkable in comparison with other ECoC themes, as it did not look backwards at key aspects of common European history and culture, but looked forwards, aimed at addressing some of the 'common agendas, challenges and indeed "burning issues"' (Aarhus 2017, 2012, p. 21; Therkelsen, 2017).

During the application phase, a regional partnership, involving all 19 municipalities in the Central Denmark Region as well as the regional administration, was established. This turned out to be a stable partnership throughout the entire project period.

After the designation, the delivery organisation 'Aarhus 2017 Foundation' was established. During its first years (2013 to 2014) the foundation was characterised by some frustration and turmoil, both due to changes in senior management staff and due to a late confirmation of state funding, which also turned out to be lower than budgeted. The final budget for Aarhus 2017 was € 61.8 million compared to € 66.7 million in the application.

About 80% of the programme was produced by institutions other than the Aarhus 2017 Foundation itself. This meant that local cultural institutions and other agents were able to contribute to and influence the pro-

gramme. During the period 2013 to 2016, more than 400 projects were developed for the cultural programme. Especially in the years leading up to 2017, capacity building activities were a part of many of the projects. In addition, the partnership (sponsorship) programme, with businesses and private and public funds, and the volunteer programme were developed during this time.

The ECoC year itself included two tiers of large-scale events: four mega events and 12 full moon events structured the year. In addition, other small and large events took place throughout the year and across the region. The programme included a total of 628 events distributed across genres such as visual arts, music, performing arts, sport, food etc.

After the ECoC year, the Aarhus 2017 Foundation was closed and the responsibility for following up with legacy activities was handed over to the municipalities and the permanent cultural institutions. The municipalities have decided to continue their collaboration for at least another two years. During this period, they will explore and develop the possibilities for a more permanent framework for future cooperation within the region regarding cultural activities.

The impacts of the Aarhus 2017 project were evaluated by rethinkIMPACTS 2017 at Aarhus University. rethinkIMPACTS 2017 was a partnership between Aarhus University and the Aarhus 2017 Foundation and included the two main local funders, the Aarhus Municipality and the Central Denmark Region. The partners agreed on an independent evaluation carried out with the double purpose of a formative evaluation, which sought to facilitate learning processes throughout the project period, and a summative evaluation, documenting the impacts of the project.

The six strategic objectives from the application framed the evaluation (Aarhus 2017, 2012, p. 8). They constituted the basis on which the European Commission designated Aarhus as an ECoC. However, it was necessary to further specify how these objectives could serve as evaluation criteria, in part because the six strategic objectives were formulated in such general terms that they gave room for wide interpretation, and in part because the ECoC project itself developed objectives. A variety of stakeholders took part in the process of developing the evaluation criteria, contributing to the interpretation and prioritisation of the different aspects of the ECoC project, and thus to the definition of different evaluation criteria for the project. The foundation's long-term outcome objectives became a part of the evaluation design as well (ECoC Aarhus 2017, 2015).

At a series of workshops during the development process, of which the first five took place in the spring of 2014, stakeholders from cultural life, city government etc. participated in the interpretation of the objectives for the ECoC project and identified the different impacts that were to be evalua-

ted. On the basis of the process outlined above, a list of specific evaluation criteria was drawn up, which covered all aspects of the strategic objectives.

These evaluation criteria were prioritised in collaboration with the Aarhus 2017 Foundation, the City of Aarhus and the Central Denmark Region, and the evaluation was carried out based on this prioritisation.

The evaluation of the Aarhus 2017 project builds on extensive data that has been analysed in seven theme reports, each of which illuminates different aspects of Aarhus 2017. In the process of developing the evaluation design, we identified different relevant sectors of the population: citizens, audiences, cultural institutions, politicians, government officials, sponsors, media, etc. The methodological design is characterised by a mixed methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods in order to obtain a nuanced and complete picture of both overall patterns and their underlying causes. In most cases, data was collected over several rounds, before and after the ECoC year.

The evaluation of Aarhus 2017 pointed towards both positive impacts and unrealised potential in a range of areas, which will be briefly presented here.

## Interdisciplinary cooperation

A particular strength of Aarhus 2017 was that the ECoC project was based on many different types of collaboration. Many new relationships, networks and constellations have been created and developed as a result of cooperation within the ECoC project.

These collaborations included cross-municipal cooperation: While Aarhus Municipality was by far the main local funder, all 18 municipalities in the region committed to contributing and taking part in the project. The Central Denmark Region also played a crucial part. The regional perspective linking a city and the region in the ECoC is not a unique feature of Aarhus 2017, but the success of the municipal partnership is remarkable. This has the potential to widen the impacts of an ECoC. For many years the ECoC has been acknowledged for its contribution to urban development, but by including the wider region, a better balance between the urban and the rural can be achieved. This cross-municipal cooperation has continued after Aarhus 2017 in the form of the European Region of Culture, initially for a two-year period, 2018 to 2019.<sup>16</sup>

Eighty per cent of the programme production were handled by cultural operators other than the Aarhus 2017 Foundation itself, mainly local content

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16 What happens after this is an open question. The fact that the government recently proposed the abolition of the regions is a severe threat to the continuation of cross-municipal collaboration, which is one of the key legacies of Aarhus 2017.

providers (cultural institutions, artists and others). Most of the projects presenting events in 2017 were themselves examples of interdisciplinary and/or cross-institutional collaborations, involving several different partners.

One example of a cross-institutional collaboration is that seven museums in the region made a joint exhibition series on the seven deadly sins. Many audiences visited several of the museums, which changed the attitude of the museums: from seeing each other as competitors they now saw each other as collaborators. Another example was the performance 'Fish-a-deli', which combined gastronomy and performing art by presenting audiences with a theatre and circus performance at the same time as they were served dinner. The performance was directly linked to the theme of sustainability, as more sustainable and lesser-known fish and sea food species were served.

The cross-institutional and interdisciplinary collaboration meant that many cultural agents have established new networks and have become experienced with newer formats or larger scales than those they had tried before the ECoC. In this way, the ECoC project challenges participating institutions and culture producing environments in the region, and helps them to become more visible and competent. This capacity building is one of the main legacies of Aarhus 2017.

## The role of the Foundation

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation had various roles along the way, functioning as funder, monitor, artistic content producer and co-developer. The different roles, and the shifts during the years in how these were balanced, led to frustration and confusion amongst some of the cultural operators. A particular challenge was balancing being a funder that needed to control and monitor whether the projects lived up to the terms of the grant and being a creative co-developer that engaged in the project, making suggestions and encouraging the project to strengthen the European dimension or the way in which they were rethinking, for example. Despite some frustration, the cultural operators acknowledge that the involvement of the programme team improved and developed the projects.

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation emphasised cooperation with reliable, stable partners, and placed less emphasis on collaboration with up-and-coming players and some of the newer and smaller cultural operators. The long-term planning that was required to be included in the programme meant that some of the small operators were not included. The popular music sector in particular felt excluded as it tends to operate with a shorter time frame for programming. The public and political attention given to Aarhus 2017 as a cultural mega-event with a high level of public investment

required a less risky approach. With regards to the more large-scale events, the programme had to be delivered by experienced and reliable partners. This meant that the programme in general was delivered in a professional way and without delays, cancellations or failures. But the fact that the small and the up-and-coming were less involved means that they did not benefit to the same extent from capacity building.

The Aarhus 2017 Foundation was operationally reliable, stayed within its budget, lived up to its own key performance indicators, and managed to sustain political support for the project. The stability of the organisation itself was ensured by the secondment model: employees from the municipalities and the region were seconded to the Foundation Aarhus 2017 secretariat. This contributed to a reduction in the Foundation's operating expenses, a smoothly operating secretariat, and competency development for the employees.

## Programme for the traditional audience

The theme 'Rethink' worked well as a framework for a rich cultural programme, and balanced the qualities between, on the one hand, committing the producers and setting a clear frame and, on the other hand, being relatable, inclusive and inspiring. Unlike the theme, the three values (democracy, sustainability and diversity) had only peripheral significance. Despite the fact that the approach to programming included a wide variety of different genres including, for example, sport and gastronomy, the traditional cultural genres constituted most of the programme.

Nine out of ten audience members experienced the various events positively. The programme was of high international artistic quality and the Foundation's own programme contributions in particular were focused on internationally renowned artists. Only to a lesser extent were connections made between these artists and local artists.

Overall, the composition of Aarhus 2017's audience reflected the usual audience for culture, and no effects on general cultural consumption can be demonstrated amongst the regional population. The majority of the audience members were already regular cultural consumers. However, this applied to a lesser extent to the parts of the programme with free admission, where a larger proportion of the audience was young people and people without a high level of education. Despite the lack of impact on general cultural consumption patterns, one-third of the cultural institutions were of the view that they had reached out to new audiences during the ECoC year.

A significant barrier to audience participation was the perception that the programme and how it was communicated were confusing. A clearer

programme structure and better communication about the programme could have facilitated citizens' access to the cultural experiences.

## Citizenship-centred volunteer programme

One strategic objective of Aarhus 2017 was to stimulate active citizenship and the most significant contribution to this was the volunteer programme 'ReThinkers'. A quarter of the participating ReThinkers were 'new volunteers'. The volunteers' experience with the work was positive, and in particular, they emphasise the high degree of variation in and influence on the performance of their tasks. The volunteer programme continued after 2017.

The most extensive involvement of citizens took place in the application phase. At this stage about 10,000 citizens were involved in the development of the overall ECoC project. Subsequently citizen involvement primarily took place in relatively few, specific cultural projects in which citizens were involved and co-produced in various ways.

Aarhus 2017 achieved high visibility, not least in local and regional news media. At the same time, the ECoC project achieved a high degree of awareness among the inhabitants of the region – and the rest of Denmark. The media's presentation of Aarhus 2017 comprised many different stories that were generally positive. The media coverage was not marked by major crises and, in this way, Aarhus 2017 distinguished itself from quite a few other ECoC projects in which negative media coverage at some point, especially during the preparation phase, is considered a natural part of the process.

Aarhus 2017 became a positive brand that citizens associated themselves with, especially on Instagram. In this way, the ECoC project turned both the city and culture into positive identity markers for citizens. To an increasing degree, citizens in the Central Denmark Region perceived both Aarhus and the region as being 'an interesting place for culture'.

## Effects on the role and value of culture

The role and value of culture received increased attention from politicians, the civil service and sponsor companies due to Aarhus 2017. In the wake of the ECoC project, politicians and local government perceived culture as a relevant development driver to a higher extent. On the other hand, this increased acknowledgement of the value of culture was not accompanied by an increased economic prioritisation of culture, understood in terms of the municipal cultural spending per capita.

The ECoC project had a local and regional impact. The project had a major impact especially in the City of Aarhus, while its significance has been slightly less in the region's other municipalities. As compared to the local and regional impacts, the national impact can be regarded as very minor.

The European dimension is particularly visible in connection with the establishment of international partnerships and networks, which was an aspect of many of the projects. In terms of content, the European dimension was less apparent.

This very brief overview of the impacts of Aarhus 2017 gives some idea about the range of both the ECoC project and the evaluation. In conclusion, Aarhus 2017 has already had effects, particularly in relation to the development of interdisciplinary cooperation and a strengthened role for culture.

This overview does not of course provide any great insight into the way in which these impacts were created or how they were evaluated. But what does emerge are a number of impacts that are relevant for other ECoCs as well – both the impacts that apply to several ECoCs and those that are specific to Aarhus.

The more general impacts include the success of the volunteer programme and the value that it had in relation to the engagement of citizens. Although the number of volunteers by no means matches the number of audience members, the involvement, ownership and pride of the volunteers is so much more significant, and thus a successful volunteer programme is a key element for the engagement of citizens. In the case of Aarhus 2017, aspects like the commitment of the staff who engaged with volunteers, as well as the fact that the volunteers had their own premises which functioned as a framework for social gatherings, were key elements of the success of the programme.

The capacity- and network-building aspect of the ECoC is another key impact that is general to most ECoCs. Almost all the professionals involved in Aarhus 2017 point to this impact. It is a major endeavour to deliver an ECoC and it encourages networking and new competencies amongst local cultural agents. In the case of Aarhus 2017, this was enhanced by the decentralised programme structure and the emphasis on cross-institutional and interdisciplinary collaborations, as well as the secondment model for staffing the delivery organisation.

Some of the particular impacts of Aarhus 2017 include the regional impact. Other ECoCs, including Marseille 2013 and Mons 2015, have included the region, but the success of this is unique in Aarhus, both when it comes to the stability of this collaboration and the distribution of activities. The stability was ensured by an early guarantee of decentralisation of activities, so that this matched the investment of the different municipalities. This was named the municipal return-on-investment model, and was in practice a

binding agreement that all municipalities outside Aarhus were guaranteed activities for at least the same amount as they funded. Another key aspect was the Central Denmark Region, which took on the responsibility to gather and facilitate collaboration throughout – and beyond – the project.

It is remarkable that Aarhus 2017 did not change the cultural consumption patterns amongst the regional population and that audiences were mainly the regular cultural consumers. This demonstrates that a vast cultural offer throughout one year is in itself not enough to change stable cultural consumption patterns. In the case of Aarhus 2017, the general programme had a broad target group and not enough special attention was given to marginalised groups at a programme level. The evaluation of Aarhus 2017 underscores the need for strategic and specific actions in programming and communication in order to reach a wider range of citizens.

Every ECoC situated in a specific local context needs to be developed within this context. This means that good practices can never simply be copied-and-pasted. But it does not mean that ECoCs cannot learn from each other and that the evaluations of one ECoC cannot inform the development of others. It is our hope that the evaluation of Aarhus 2017 can inspire other ECoCs to develop their projects and have an impact across a wide range of areas.

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# Leeuwarden – Fryslân 2018

Oeds Westerhof

It was hot. The sixth of September 2013. We gathered in a historical building at the edge of a canal in the center of Amsterdam. The international jury was ready to present the results of the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture on behalf of The Netherlands. Three cities – Eindhoven, Maastricht and Leeuwarden – were still in the competition. Utrecht and The Hague had gone out in the first round.

We prepared every step of the competition thoroughly. Except this last step. That hot Friday we had to deliver a short speech. The speech wouldn't influence the competition. It was just a short pitch before the jury presented its decision. The Director of Eindhoven started with a ten-minute speech. Precisely equivalent to my ten minutes to prepare the speech on behalf of Leeuwarden-Fryslân. During the Eindhoven speech I looked at the members of the jury from time to time. They looked glazed over, neutral. It was my turn. I started with a thank you to all the people who had helped us in developing our concept and supported our bid. The concept of Open Communities. The Bottom-up Process. The Criss Crossing Connections in Europe. While I was speaking, I saw the members of the jury nodding affirmatively. I realised we had won the title. That was the moment in which my knees started to shake, and I felt sweat running down my back. It felt as if the responsibility to organise the best ever European Capital of Culture had slammed me in the face. Pathetic perhaps, but it is how I felt that moment.

## Concepts and principles

Our competition took place during 2012 and 2013. The European crisis was at its deepest. In our analysis it was a crisis of institutions; governments, banks, big companies. Our claim was that if we wanted to give Europe a future, we had to mobilise the people to take responsibility for their street, their village, their region, their Europe. Our concept for organising the European Capital of Culture was based on the principles of working bottom-up. In discussions about our theme we liked to refer to the work of the Polish-American sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1925), the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925), the French writer Guy Debord (1931), the arts

education professor Barend van Heusden (1957) and the Friesian history professor Goffe Jensma (1956).

The city of Leeuwarden, with about 100.000 inhabitants, is the capital of the region Friesland which has a population of around 650.000. The province is one of those special regions in Europe with its own distinct and unique history and culture. A history that is much older than the history of The Netherlands, the country in which Friesland is now a province. Friesland has its own language, the Friesian language. This language is referred to as the closest cousin to English. It differs strongly from Dutch, which is closer to German, although Friesian of course is increasingly adapting to the dominating national language. The Friesian language is not very similar to Ost-Friesisch, which is a Saxon dialect comparable to the Saxon languages in the east of The Netherlands. But it is close to the Friesian spoken in Saterland and Schleswig-Holstein, close to the Danish border.

The first historical mention of Friesland was a few decades after the birth of Christ. The Romans referred to the Friesian area as a land which barbarians inhabited in circumstances that were impossible for life. After the collapse of the Roman Empire, Friesian culture started to flourish. The conditions on the ground where the Friesians lived hindered the development of central power. It was virtually impossible to travel through the swamps and flooded land. Friesian Culture predominantly comprised of a series of villages with cultural similarities. Friesian villages could be found from Dunquerque in the north of France to Esbjerg in the west of Denmark, with isolated villages in England and Sweden as well. The Friesians were adept at shipbuilding and sailing, and they traded extensively around the North Sea, which maps from the time refer to as Mare Frisia. The use of money had become uncommon after the end of the Roman era, but the Friesians reintroduced it. The last significant step was the killing of Bonifatius, who, using a small and aggressive army, had tried to baptise them. But it was a short success – soon their hegemony on the North Sea was taken over by the Vikings.

The importance of Friesian culture declined. They withdrew from the international scene and became farmers. They built artificial hills to protect themselves against the floods, and started to connect these artificial hills with dykes, reclaiming land and digging canals. Perhaps the development of water management – which made the Dutch famous – is their greatest contribution to history. Although their importance for agriculture – especially in the dairy industry – should not be underestimated. This can be found in their world-famous breed of cow – the black and white Friesian-Holsteiner – and in their beautiful black Friesian horses.

The decentralised organisation of society, key to Friesian culture in the early medieval days, continued as a dominant characteristic of Friesian so-

ciety. Clerical history bears testament to this; Friesland has no cathedrals, but it has the highest quantity of churches per square kilometre. Legal documents also prove the uniqueness of Friesian society with early references to the concept of free citizenship, with rights to trade and to possess goods. And further indications can be found in the very rituals which surrounded the justice system. An important site for the Friesian legal system can still be found in Aurich, Germany, an open space in the woods called Upstallesbâm. The Upstallesbâm was an important place for gatherings of the leaders of the Friesian lands, in a period referred to as the Friesian Freedom, in the 13th and 14th centuries.

## Bottom up and social issues

It is important to tell this history in order to understand our concept for the European Capital of Culture. Of key note is that the idea to become European Capital of Culture was first articulated by a popular politician in the Province. By a politician who is very much connected to the culture, the traditions and the language of the region. She was the one who gained the support and financial resources from the relevant political bodies to bring the European Capital of Culture alive. An organisation was set up. It struggled. It struggled so much that it almost killed the initiative. But then a group of around 30 people, artists, cultural entrepreneurs, journalists, scientists, marketeers, stood up. They gave their full support to the idea. They had come to the conclusion that they wanted the European Capital of Culture, because they saw its potential. They believed that the European Capital of Culture title could mark the start of a new flourishing era for the city and the region. But they would only give their full support if the politicians agreed to their idea of organising it from the bottom-up. For the region that was an attractive challenge. But... It then transpired that a region could not be in the lead for reasons of formality, only cities could be official candidates. And this position was endorsed by the European Union. For the city, which was less focussed on Friesian traditions, the bottom-up approach came less naturally. And the Mayor, a non-local, professional politician, was less connected to culture in general, and even less to Friesian culture specifically. Nevertheless, the city took over the initiative – with a small majority in the city parliament – and accepted the challenge. The city demanded a stronger focus on social issues and education than the Province, but the original concept of a bottom-up approach to organising the cultural year could continue.

The decentralised, bottom-up approach to organising society which the initiators stood for, has its roots in a long history. Under the influence of the

industrial era – where central capital and power are leading – and within the context of a centralised media landscape, the power of a bottom-up organisation had been forgotten. So in 2012 and 2013 we were confronted with the weakness inherent in such a centralised organisational model of society, and we realised we had to find a new approach. New ways based, perhaps, on old traditions. We re-introduced the word *Mienskip* – our Friesian word for Sense of Community – and we added the verb *Iepen* to it – to express the fact that we wanted to renew our old concept. As innovation became open innovation, so our sense of community opened for influences from all over Europe.

## Too local, not international enough

It looks easy to print Open Community on your bid book and win the title. But we wanted to actually prove that our model for organising society would work in practise. So instead of appointing an artistic leader to shape a programme, we invited lots of people to speak out. We asked what their artistic ideas were, the urgencies they experienced, both on a very local or regional scale, and at a national and international level. We invited people from outside the region and asked them to mirror these ideas. Once we had gathered all the ideas, they were thoroughly discussed in a series of meetings. Through those discussions we extracted our main lines for the programme. And having the main lines, we started to develop projects. Every project in our first bid book was the result of this bottom-up thinking. We presented projects that focussed on artistic presentation as well as projects in which the arts were used to reflect on serious issues, like the loss of biodiversity.

The city of Eindhoven initially had the best jury response to their bid book, with Maastricht second. Leeuwarden received a lot of criticism from the jury. Despite the fact that they thought our approach was challenging and had considerable sympathy for the bottom-up approach. The jury also considered our programme too local, not international enough. We agreed. And we started all over again.

We left out half of the original programme. And kept the most challenging projects, from an artistic or a societal perspective. And we started a new round. We played the bottom-up approach again, but in another circle. We invited regional and national organisations with a strong international network to come with ideas for our bid book. As the two other cities in the competition were situated in the south of The Netherlands, we invited the important cultural institutions in the bigger cities above the big rivers – the natural border between north and south – to come with ideas. And they did. Some ideas improved existing projects, other ideas brought us new

projects. Instead of working with one final editor for the programme, as we did in the first round, we appointed a curating team comprised of people from the region and people with an international vision. This is how we developed a winning bid book.

This bid book not only described a programme. It also described the long-term goals of the city and the Province, it described our goals, our organisation and our marketing. For the first time in decades the Province and the city managed to negotiate a plan, a plan that covered a period of more than ten years, covering diverse fields like economy, infrastructure and culture. It was a cooperative investment of more than €600 million and the European Capital of Culture was part of it. The goals we presented in the bid book were distilled from the long-term plans of city and province. In total we sought to meet 32 key performance indicators, 14 of them directly achievable by the LF2018 organisation, 18 more indirect influenceable goals.

## Artists and entrepreneurs

The formal structure which we had described in the bid book was an independent foundation. A Foundation with a Supervisory Board and a Board of Directors. The independence of the Foundation was guaranteed in the statutes which specifically ensured that no politician or civil servant connected to the city or the Province could be member of either the Supervisory Board or the Board of Directors. A contract between the governments of the city and the Province would guarantee on the one hand the freedom of the Foundation and, at the same time, that the Foundation would deliver a capital of culture programme. The organisational model we presented in the bid book was hybrid. Partly bottom-up, partly top-down. The model was the result of negotiations between the political structures and the enthusiastic group of young artists and entrepreneurs. For marketing, we opted for a model based on micro-targeting – we anticipated that every project would have its own international fan base.

In the very moment in which we won the title, the Mayor intervened. He gave the President of the Supervisory Board the assignment of redeveloping the organisational model and appointing a CEO and a Cultural Director. The President accepted the challenge and formed a small team comprised of people from the competition team and people from the community. After research into other capitals of culture, like Marseille in France and Umea in Sweden, conversations with former directors of European Capitals of Culture, and visits to former organising cities, the President presented his approach. He de-masked the hybrid organisational model and presented a model that optimised the bottom-up approach; a relatively small central

organisation and the responsibility for every project in the hands of a third party; existing or newly established organisations. This model was accepted by the governments of city and region. The Mayor, however, did not accept the President's suggestions as to how to fill the various positions. He terminated the contract and appointed a recruitment firm which found a CEO and an Artistic Director. Within a year of starting their functions, the former became ill and the latter applied for another job.

A team of programmers, partly from the region, partly national, partly international actually programmed the year. Collective decision making is not always efficient but appeared in the end to be very effective. In reviews the quality of the projects was praised by experts and appreciated by the audience. The appreciation of the event as a whole, on a scale 1 to 10, achieved an average of 7.4. Most of the events in the main programme were ranked above 8.0. The most appreciated project was the Giants of Royal the Luxe, with 430.000 visitors and an 8.6 rating. More than 80 percent of the programme presented in the bid book was ultimately delivered – a record for European Capitals of Culture.

The main programme grew from 40 to 60 projects, with 200 sub-events. The open programme grew to more than 500 projects. And the decentralised model also proved to be very effective. Total expenditure grew from €74 to €105 million. The forecast visitors' total was 4 million. 5.4 million people ultimately attended the cultural year. The economic impact is estimated to be between €230 and €320 million. Ticket sales achieved €20 million – far above the bid book estimate of 4 million. More than ten percent of the region's population volunteered for the project. LF2018 linked with 1.600 international contacts; artists, companies, institutions, schools and other groups from over 80 different countries. About 51% of the visitors were inhabitants of the Province of Friesland, 42% came from the rest of The Netherlands and 6% from abroad.

## Biodiversity and sustainability

The aim was that LF2018 was to be a catalyst for change. Economically it succeeded – but crucially it also succeeded in the fields of biodiversity and sustainability, fostering a more efficient circular economy. The European Capital of Culture had become the changemaker it was supposed to be. The sustainable innovation project Innofest was awarded the European Enterprise Promotion Award. De Elfwegentocht, a project meant to stimulate the use of fossil free transportation, won the Galjaard Prijs, an award for the Best Charity Campaign. Claudy Jongstra, a Friesian artist working on the principles of circularity, became the Dutch artist of the year, the scientist

behind our biodiversity project King of the Meadows, Prof. Theunis Piersma, was awarded the Spinoza Prijs, the most prestigious award for scientists in The Netherlands.

In the bid book we presented the concept of a fully integrated European Capital of Culture marketing campaign and regional marketing organisation. The underlying idea was that, after 2018, the region would have a new brand identity that could be continued going forward. In realising this ambition we were hindered by the fact that the regional marketing organisation had severe problems and had to be reorganised. The reorganisation was led by a Director who could not come to terms with LF2018's CEO. The crisis was solved after they both left and the new director of the marketing organisation was appointed in a selection procedure that also included LF2018 staff members. An effective team was appointed. The marketing targets as formulated in the bid book were met, and exceeded expectation.

## Ideas as an example

On Thursday the 28th of February 2019 we presented our results and outlined our success factors. Of course we don't know every result and figure yet as it is only three months since we finished our cultural year. But the following ideas can be shared as a strong example:

- 1) Invest in arts and culture – it pays back;
- 2) The strength comes from below, support new ways of working. Projects must work, at least to an extent, at a grassroots level or with a grassroots organisation. Give support to the grassroots organisations;
- 3) Strengthen community commitment through cultural projects. Projects must indicate how they will strengthen community commitment through a cultural project. Either through active participation, or through audience reach. A fund focussed on achieving this can be an effective means to delivery;
- 4) Invest in the creators, the makers, to strengthen the creative industry. You need them in order to be successful;
- 5) Create room for complex, innovative projects, projects that make a difference for people's future;
- 6) Play with local language and heritage – people feel very connected to them;
- 7) Enable projects which can attract attention – national and international attention are important here. This is a marketing necessity, as much as a content one. Projects must include a marketing

- plan, showing who their target audiences are and how they plan to reach them;
- 8) Take control of the calendar in your city or region. A central events' calendar – a website and/or ticket sales outlet – should be set up, and a condition should be that events input their information in the centralised calendar. A centralised ticketing system is important;
  - 9) Continue to build the brand of your city or region together;
  - 10) Connect with the national and the international. An international component need not be obligatory in every project, but is an enriching factor for creators and makers, as well as audiences;
  - 11) Seek out a new, shared goal, win competitions – projects should work across-groups (artists, disciplines, audiences, locations, cultures, nationalities, backgrounds) to keep the spirit alive.

The city and region have agreed to invest €2.5 million per annum in a legacy programme. The ticket sales risk fund we set up in 2018 remains in place. One of the main sponsors – the association of local businesses – has already committed to supporting future projects. And a small team has already presented the first plans for the future.

7

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In its more than three decades of history, the European Capital of Culture initiative has become an important instrument for cultural urban development. The EU cultural policy guidelines apply in all participating countries-but the design varies greatly from location to location. This volume reflects the approaches in 18 countries, inside and outside the EU, that have already hosted one or more Capitals of Culture. It conveys the assessments of scholars from various disciplines, and from those responsible for the programme on how art and culture deal with local and regional forms of transformation.