

# **PALMER/RAE ASSOCIATES**

International Cultural Advisors

## **European Cities and Capitals of Culture**

Study Prepared for the European Commission

### **PART I**

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# **REPORT ON**

## **EUROPEAN CITIES AND CAPITALS OF CULTURE**

### **PART I**

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## Preface and Acknowledgements

This report is based on a six-month study of European Cities and Capitals of Culture. It encompassed the gathering and compiling of facts and opinions from people in 27 different European countries. This task was only possible with the cooperation and help of hundreds of individuals who submitted answers to questionnaires, offered information and views in interviews and discussions and sent in reports and data. Most were pleased to be asked and expressed deep interest in the terms of the study and its possible findings.

A frustration is that in a report such as this, it is not possible to record every experience and insight, and in an attempt to address the specifications for the study, we have had to focus on specific topics and issues. Because of the scale of European Cities of Culture, there is a wealth of knowledge that cannot be captured easily.

The research uncovered many strongly held viewpoints of people who were directly involved in one or more of the European Cities or Capitals of Culture, and those who observed from the sidelines. Attitudes (and even perceived facts) sometimes contradicted one another. Whilst some felt an experience to be positive and problem-free, others expressed disappointment and pointed to major weaknesses of that same experience. We recorded faithfully what respondents said and felt and, in the alchemy of combining all the responses to questionnaires and in interviews, assessed relative views and made observations. Terms such as success and failure, strong and weak, good and poor are value judgments, and in this study we have relied on combinations of such judgements, many of which have been quantified, to offer a snapshot of what took place in the European Cities of Culture over a ten-year period.

We have tried to check and validate facts wherever possible and to seek balance when contradictory views emerged. The data contained in the report were gathered from many different sources, and if certain information or detail is lacking, it was because we received no responses to our repeated requests, or what we did receive was incomplete and, in some cases, inaccurate when compared with other data. We have used our best endeavours to locate and use accurate information, but apologise for any inadvertent errors that have been made.

There were many individuals who supported and assisted this study. We owe a debt to the respondents and interviewees who committed time to respond to our questions and to offer views, and apologise for our persistence with e-mails and telephone calls. Mr. Antonios Kosmopoulos and Mr. Harald Hartung, the former and present Heads of Unit, as well as other staff working within the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Union, offered advice. Analysis and texts received from Greg Richards (Tourism Perspectives), François Matarasso (Social Perspectives) and Stuart Gulliver (Economic Perspectives) were essential to the compiling of this report. Thanks also to Eric Corijn, Rod Fisher, Beatriz Garcia, Brit Holtebekk and Gottfried Wagner who, as external advisers, offered suggestions at various points of the study, and to Karyn Allen for her help in analysing data on sponsorship.

The project team for this study had to deal with heavy workloads and pressures, and devoted long hours with diligence to compile reports and develop the database. In particular, I must record the enormous efforts of Susie Jones, Research Manager and Caspar Will, Senior Researcher. Their relentless work that involved crowded travel schedules, the recording and analysis of endless data, and the meeting of near impossible deadlines was handled with skill and persistence, and is a tribute to the dedication of the many thousands of people who have worked on the programmes of European Cities and Capitals of Culture over the years. We hope that this report will make a contribution to an important European cultural project that has attracted substantial interest and attention.

Robert Palmer



# PART I

## Table of Contents

<b>PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>	<b>14</b>
Introduction	14
Methodology	14
History, Procedures, Designations	14
Aims and Objectives	14
Operational Features	14
Cultural Programme and Impact	15
Infrastructure	17
Communication, Promotion and Media Response	17
European Perspectives and Dimension	18
Sharing the Title	18
Economic Perspectives	19
Visitor Perspectives	20
Social Perspectives	21
Monitoring and Evaluation	21
Legacy and Long-Term Effects	21
Keys to Success	22
Cultural Months	22
The EU Community Action	22
City Reports	23
Conclusions	23
Recommendations	24
Organisation of the Report	24
<b>RESUME DU RAPPORT</b>	<b>25</b>
Introduction	25
Méthodologie	25
Origines, procédures et nomination	25
Motivations et objectifs	25
Caractéristiques opérationnelles	26
Programme culturel et impact	26
Infrastructure	28
Communication, Promotion et Réaction des Médias	29
Perspectives européennes	29
Le partage du titre	30
Perspectives économiques	30



La perspective des visiteurs	31
Perspectives sociales	33
Contrôle et évaluation	33
Conséquences et effets à long terme	33
Clés du succès	34
Mois culturels	34
L'action communautaire	35
Rapports de la ville	35
Conclusions	35
Recommandations	36
Organisation du rapport	37
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>38</b>
Background	38
Terms of Reference of the Study	38
Timing and Length of the Study	39
Methodology	39
History, Procedures, Designations	41
Submission of Nominations	43
European Cities of Culture/European Capitals of Culture	44
European Cultural Month	44
The Choice of Cities 1995-2004	44
<b>AIMS AND OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>47</b>
Main Motivation	47
Mission and Objectives	47
Consultation	50
Advice	51
<b>OPERATIONAL FEATURES OF DESIGNATED CITIES</b>	<b>52</b>
Governance Structures and Boards	52
Problems and Issues	53
Advice	54
Involvement of Public Authorities	54
Advice	55
Operational Structure	55
Problems and Issues	57
Advice	58
<b>CULTURAL PROGRAMME AND IMPACT</b>	<b>60</b>
Introduction	60
Location and Timing	60
Programme Themes, Orientations and Coherence	61
Project Selection	62
Scale of the Programme	63
Programme Management	63
Programme Range	64
Art and Culture	64

Tradition and Innovation	65
Cultural Institutions and Independent Groups	65
Public Space	66
Blockbusters and International Stars	67
Community Development, Participation and Inclusion	67
Support for Local Talent	68
Spin-off	69
Programme Expenditure	69
ECOC as an 'Event' or a 'Process'	71
Isolated vs. Integrated Planning	72
Problems and Issues	72
Advice	72
<b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	<b>74</b>
Objectives	74
Types of Infrastructure	74
Expenditure	75
Organisation	76
Results	76
Problems	77
Advice	78
<b>COMMUNICATION, PROMOTION AND MEDIA RESPONSE</b>	<b>79</b>
Objectives and Targets	79
Tools for Communication and Promotion	80
Press Coverage	83
Expenditure	83
Staff and Organisation	84
Problems	84
Advice	84
<b>EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES</b>	<b>85</b>
Approaches	85
Scope and Scale	87
Third Countries	87
Problems	88
Advice	89
Sharing the Title	89
Future	92
<b>ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES</b>	<b>93</b>
Operating Expenditure	93
Overall Financial Performance	95
Capital Expenditure	96
Total Expenditure	97
Income	98
The Private Sector	99
Sponsorship	100

Economic Aims and Objectives	102
Economic Benefits	103
Economic Impact and Economic Importance	106
ECOC and 'Megaproject' Economics	106
Advice	107
<b>VISITOR PERSPECTIVES</b>	<b>108</b>
Introduction	108
Visitor Related Objectives	109
Visitor Numbers	110
Long-term Changes in Visitor Numbers	113
Types of Visitors	117
Socio-demographic Profile	119
Motivation to Visit ECOC	121
Impact on Cultural Visits	122
Visitor Expenditure	123
Marketing	124
Collaboration between the Cultural and Tourism Sectors	125
Image Impacts	126
Trends and Major Issues	127
Future Approaches	128
Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluation	129
Advice	131
<b>SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES</b>	<b>132</b>
Introduction	132
Access Development	132
Cultural Instrumentalism	133
Cultural Inclusion	134
A Framework	135
Social Aims and Objectives	136
Outcomes	137
Problems	139
Monitoring and Evaluation	141
Possible Future Research	141
Advice	142
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>143</b>
Monitoring	143
Evaluation	143
Problems and Issues	144
Advice	145
<b>LEGACY AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS</b>	<b>146</b>
Introduction	146
Greatest Impact	146
Other Important Effects	147
Minor Effects, Difficulties and Negative Effects	149

Sustaining Long-term Effects	150
Advice	150
<b>KEYS TO SUCCESS</b>	<b>152</b>
Critical Success Factors	152
Most Important Piece of Advice	153
Most Beneficial Type of Large-scale Event for Cities	156
Recommendations to Improve the Transfer of Knowledge and Best Practice between Cities	156
Advice from Other Cities of Culture	157
No Simple Key to Success	157
<b>EUROPEAN CULTURAL MONTHS</b>	<b>158</b>
Aims and Objectives	158
Organisation and Management	158
Cultural Programme and Impact	159
Infrastructure	160
European Dimension	160
Funding and Finance	161
Communication	161
Impacts	161
Long-term Effects and Legacies	162
Evaluation	162
The Future	162
<b>EUROPEAN CITIES OF CULTURE 1985 – 1994</b>	<b>164</b>
Introduction	164
Athens 1985	164
Florence 1986	165
Amsterdam 1987	166
Berlin 1988	166
Glasgow 1990	167
Dublin 1991	169
Antwerp 1993	170
Lisbon 1994	172
Observations	172
<b>EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE 2005-2008</b>	<b>174</b>
Cork 2005	174
Patras 2006	174
Luxembourg 2007	175
Sibiu 2007	176
Liverpool 2008	176
Stavanger 2008	177
Future Years	177
<b>THE EU COMMUNITY ACTION</b>	<b>178</b>
Success	178
European Commission	179

Additional EU Support	180
Relationship with the Commission	182
EU Procedures for Nominating, Selecting and Managing the ECOC Action	183
Changing the Procedures	183
The Role of the EU	184
The Future of the ECOC Action	186
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>190</b>
<b>ANNEXES</b>	<b>195</b>
Annex I: ECOC Budgets	
Annex II: Questionnaire	
Annex III: List of Respondents	
Annex IV: EU Legislation	
Annex V: Bibliographies of Cities and Capitals of Culture	
Annex VI: Additional Reading on Cities and Capitals of Culture	
Annex VII: Additional Reading on Large-Scale Cultural Events	
Annex VIII: Maps	

# Summary of Report

## ***Introduction***

This report is based on the findings of a study that was commissioned by the European Commission (Directorate General - Education and Culture) with the objectives of documenting past European Cities and Capitals of Culture, making observations on variations between cities, and offering a factual analysis based on documented information, questionnaires and interviews. The study was completed in six months and has focused primarily on the 21 cities that have held the title of European City of Culture (ECOC) during the period 1995-2004. These cities were: Luxembourg (1995), Copenhagen (1996), Thessaloniki (1997), Stockholm (1998), Weimar (1999), Avignon (2000), Bergen (2000), Bologna (2000), Brussels (2000), Cracow (2000), Helsinki (2000), Prague (2000), Reykjavik (2000), Santiago de Compostela (2000), Porto (2001), Rotterdam (2001), Bruges (2002), Salamanca (2002), Graz (2003), Genoa (2004) and Lille (2004). The study also encompassed to a lesser extent documenting the initiative of European Cultural Months in the following cities: Nicosia (1995), St. Petersburg (1996 and 2003), Ljubljana (1998), Linz (1998), Valletta (1998), Plovdiv (1999), Basel (2001) and Riga (2001). For completeness, the report also refers to the longer-term impacts of the 10 European Cities of Culture designated during the period 1985-1994, and to the European Capitals of Culture designated under new EU procedures for 2005-2008.

## ***Methodology***

The findings are based on research using the main methods of document search, survey questionnaires and interviews. The quality of data from cities and respondents varied considerably. Based on the Commission's terms of reference, the study focuses on factual information when it was available and analysis, reflects the views of respondents and does not include the evaluation, or the relative success or merits, of one ECOC as against another.

## ***History, Procedures, Designations***

The initial scheme of 'The European City of Culture' was launched at an intergovernmental level in 1985, and has been amended and altered several times. In 1992 a new event of 'European Cultural Month' was established; in 1992 a further resolution concerned the choice of future cities. In 1999 ECOC was given the status of a Community Action and new selection procedures and evaluation criteria were outlined. The future procedures for the nomination and selection of ECOC after 2009 are the subject of current debate by the European Parliament.

## ***Aims and Objectives***

The concept of ECOC is open to a number of interpretations and the main motivations behind the nomination for the ECOC title, the key mission and major objectives have varied from city to city. Most cities had multiple objectives, most often referring to the need to raise the international profile of the city and its region, to run a programme of cultural activities and arts events, to attract visitors and to enhance pride and self-confidence. Other objectives for some cities included expanding the local audience for culture, making improvements to cultural infrastructure, developing relationships with other European cities and regions, promoting creativity and innovation and developing the careers/talents of local artists.

The importance of defining and agreeing objectives was considered a significant part of the ECOC process, and many of the tensions and problems arose from difficulties in arriving at commonly agreed objectives by all partners. The methods used for consulting a range of stakeholders about objectives were viewed as important.

## ***Operational Features***

Governance has been a central issue for all ECOC. Most cities chose an autonomous structure with legal status as a not-for-profit company, trust or foundation; a few managed the operation from within the

municipality. The membership of the governing structures of ECOC varied, although there was strong political representation on most. The key responsibilities of the Board were most frequently cited as taking financial decisions, developing policies and strategies, taking decisions about cultural projects and raising funds and sponsorship.

Almost all cities reported that there were problems with their governance structures, and the most common causes were listed as the domination of political interests, relationship difficulties between Board members and with the operational management team, the absence of representation of cultural interests and the size of the governance structure.

For most ECOC, in addition to the municipality, other public authorities had been directly involved in the organisation and delivery of the cultural year. Most frequently this included the region or province surrounding the city and national governments of the country concerned. The political environment (local, regional and national) had significant impacts on certain ECOC.

Almost all ECOC developed special operational management structures that managed the day-to-day operations of the cultural year, although the precise functions, levels of responsibility and sizes of such structures varied. The most frequently mentioned responsibilities were identified as coordinating the cultural programme, initiating and developing projects, communication, promotion and marketing, finance and budgeting and fundraising. Most cities reported on problems associated with their management structures such as the changeover of Directors and other key managers during the planning phase of the project, personality clashes, communication problems, inappropriate experience of personnel and unclear responsibilities and job descriptions. Some cities mentioned excessive workloads for personnel and weak management and leadership.

For most cities, the operational structure remained in place after the cultural year was finished, most frequently for a period of 3 to 8 months to help evaluate the cultural year and finalise accounts. In a minority of cities this structure was continued or developed into another body to continue the work beyond the cultural year.

## ***Cultural Programme and Impact***

The cultural programme was the central element of nearly all ECOC, and represented on average 63% of the operational expenditure of ECOC. ECOC cultural programmes are unique due to their scale, duration, scope and the range of stakeholders and partners. No other large-scale cultural events are directly comparable to ECOC, and hosting the event was an unprecedented experience for most cities.

This study reveals the complexity of developing an ECOC cultural programme and the large number of choices and dilemmas that each ECOC has faced. The task was made much harder if clearly identified aims and objectives were not developed through a consultation process. Programme development required the balance of different and sometimes opposing factors such as artistic vision and political interests, high-profile events and local initiatives, and the involvement of established cultural institutions and independent groups and artists.

The richness but also the challenge of ECOC is that there is no agreed formula for a cultural programme, and the unique historical, economic, social and political context of each city cannot be ignored. Many ECOC tried to develop their cultural programmes in close cooperation with different groups in the city, in an attempt to produce something that not only represented the fabric of the city but also addressed some of its needs.

Although the title of ECOC was given to a particular city, the location of the cultural programme has in most cases spread beyond city boundaries to include the suburbs and the region surrounding the city. In many ECOC the whole country or at least other municipalities in the country were included, and one city extended the cultural programme to towns in other countries. Regional and cross-border programmes seem to be becoming a more popular strategy of ECOC, especially for cities whose geographical position favours this.

The length of cultural programmes ranged from 9 to 13 months, the majority lasting between 11 and 13 months. Many ECOC tried to develop a rhythm to the cultural year both to make the programme more

comprehensible and to keep public attention over such a long period. Sometimes this was done by dividing the year into seasons, or by carefully planning when events would take place during the year.

The planning period for ECOC cultural programmes ranged from 2 to 4 years, with the majority spending 3 years planning. However in many cities planning time was lost due to changes in management and disagreements with the Board. The majority of respondents felt that the ideal planning time for the cultural programme was 3 or 4 years, and a number of ECOC felt that their programmes suffered from the lack of planning time.

All ECOC developed themes or orientations for their cultural programmes although the visibility and adherence to these varied. Some ECOC developed one unifying theme for their programmes, sometimes adding a number of sub-themes or axes; others based their programmes on key concepts or principles. The most frequent theme was that of “the City”, which was seen as flexible and allowed inclusion of very different types of projects. One of the challenges of ECOC was the communication of the cultural programme, and respondents felt that clear themes and structures were essential in creating a coherence that could be easily understood by the public.

All ECOC undertook consultation with cultural organisations and artists during the project selection process. Most ECOC produced calls for proposals: some were open to everyone, others were more specifically targeted. The most common criteria for the selection of projects in all ECOC were the quality and cost of the project.

ECOC cultural programmes are characterised by their large scale and scope. The average number of projects within programmes was approximately 500, although ECOC used very different techniques to measure the scale of the programme, for example by counting projects or counting individual events. Of all the problems and issues in relation to the cultural programme, the most commonly cited was that there were too many projects. All cultural programmes included a range of projects in different cultural sectors (the most prominent being theatre, visual arts, music and open-air events), and a range of traditional, classical, contemporary and modern forms. Many ECOC cultural programmes aimed to include ‘something for everyone’ and most ECOC used a wide anthropological definition of culture that included for example sport, food, crafts and local traditions. Many ECOC paid special attention to innovative and contemporary culture.

One particular challenge for ECOC was the balance between partnerships with the existing cultural institutions of the city and alternative independent groups and artists in the city. Many respondents commented on the difficulty of finding the right balance and had underestimated the complexity of the cultural scene within the city. Difficulties in building relationships, winning confidence and support and creating partnerships were reported. The perception of the ECOC organisation by the cultural operators, professionals and artists in the city was considered important. Some people saw the ECOC organisation as a new power structure that threatened the status quo; some saw it as representing political rather than cultural interests; others viewed it as an accessible partner and facilitator.

ECOC cultural programmes included a plethora of projects and events that together attracted many thousands of visitors and participants. Respondents often commented on the special atmosphere in the city generated by the cultural programme. As most ECOC aimed to reach a wide audience and increase participation in culture, many programmes featured events in public spaces, as well as many festivities, parades and open-air events. The opening events of ECOC stood out as being particularly successful in mobilising the public and creating a festive atmosphere. Many ECOC also included a significant number of non-paying events or subsidised entrance fees.

As well as a large number of projects taking place in public places both indoors and outdoors, ECOC found, developed and used new and unusual venues for projects and events, and developed projects linked to the physical geography and also the history and heritage of the city, region or country. ECOC also had the challenge of balancing big blockbuster events with small-scale local initiatives. Criticism has often been made against ECOC for favouring one or the other. Blockbuster events attracted large audiences but local initiatives tended to be more sustainable.

Community development was a part of all ECOC cultural programmes, and increased participation in culture was a primary aim for most cities. ECOC made attempts to widen the definition of culture and to bridge the gap between high art and popular art and culture. Different sections of the local population



were specifically targeted. Children and young people were the most common target groups and many ECOC developed children's programmes and youth projects. Elderly people, disabled people, ethnic minorities, the homeless and other disadvantaged groups of people were also included.

Attention was paid to the development of local talent and ECOC was seen by many respondents as an incredible opportunity for artists in many different fields. Experience was gained through the many projects realised during ECOC, through exchanges, workshops and master classes and also through specific commissions. Many respondents commented on the invaluable learning experience of the ECOC for all parties concerned.

In some cities ECOC was viewed primarily as an event and in others as a process of development. The majority of cultural programmes of ECOC did not, however, fit neatly into traditional patterns of cultural consumption.

Although the cultural programme of an ECOC may have received substantial attention in terms of public and media interest, it was generally viewed as separate from other initiatives embodied in the objectives of the cultural year. The ECOC cultural programme was not often considered as a unifying force within the process of city development.

## ***Infrastructure***

Alongside their cultural programme, all ECOC in the period covered by this study invested in infrastructure projects. The most common projects were improvements to public space and lighting, and improvements to cultural infrastructure, including refurbishments and restorations of facilities and monuments, as well as the construction of new cultural buildings such as concert halls and museums. About a quarter of ECOC invested in minor capital improvements, while a similar proportion carried out major programmes of urban development, such as developing cultural districts and parks.

Many infrastructure projects were not initiated specifically for the ECOC event, but had already been planned in some form. Many such projects nevertheless benefited from the catalytic effect of the ECOC and its focus on culture, extra funding, joint publicity and programming in cooperation with the ECOC organisation, and from the optimism and ambition that surrounded many ECOC. In the vast majority of cities infrastructure was not managed by the ECOC organisers, but by government authorities and other bodies.

The scale of investment was not related to a city's location, the size of its population, or the year of its nomination. The most important factors seem to have been a city's perceived needs and its ability to raise the required funds.

The scale and speed of several infrastructure programmes presented difficulties to their organisers, as did the future management of buildings. Nevertheless, in many ECOC improvements to infrastructure are a visible and valuable legacy.

## ***Communication, Promotion and Media Response***

Communication and promotion is closely related to some of the key objectives established by ECOC, such as the enhancement of city image, attracting visitors to the city, or expanding the local audience for culture.

The 21 ECOC spent in total over 105 million Euros on communication and promotion, in a range from just under 1 million to 14 million Euros, which represented between 7 and 24% of the total operating expenditure of the ECOC organisation. However these figures should be treated with caution, as most ECOC benefited from significant additional promotional expenditure by tourist boards, media and travel sponsors, cultural institutions and other partners.

The number of staff directly employed on communication and promotion varied from one to forty, however most ECOC contracted elements out to public or private organisations, with tourist boards and municipalities often assuming responsibility for tourism marketing.

The most frequently used media by ECOC were print and broadcasting, while new technologies (internet, SMS) were comprehensively exploited by several recent ECOC. Almost all used special events to promote the year, and a smaller number made significant efforts using merchandise as a communication tool.

In addition to tourism indicators such as visitor numbers, many ECOC counted media coverage and conducted public opinion polls to measure the success of the year. Some measured users of their web sites. Due in part to differences in the techniques used by different ECOC, there is insufficient comparable data to draw conclusions about the relative impact of the different communications strategies and tools adopted by ECOC. Many ECOC achieved a high profile in local, national and international media.

### ***European Perspectives and Dimension***

All ECOC stated that they had given consideration and significance to the European dimension of their cultural programmes. However, cities interpreted the meaning of these terms in different ways. Some ECOC presented events that focused on the talents of European artists; others embarked on European artistic coproductions and cultural collaborations. Several cities developed European themes and issues in their programmes, or identified and celebrated aspects of European history, identity and heritage. A few ECOC entered into partnerships with other European cities and jointly created projects. Many cities had as one of their objectives the promotion of European tourism. All ECOC stated that the designation offered a strong opportunity to develop European networking. The prominence of such European projects and their sustainability beyond the cultural year varied considerably from city to city. About a third of the ECOC preferred to focus on a broader international rather than just a European dimension.

In terms of sectors in which European cooperation took place, the most frequently cited by ECOC were music, dance, theatre and visual arts, followed by new technologies/new media, film and street parades and open air events.

In terms of European cooperation projects, the countries most frequently cited as being the most prominent in ECOC cultural programmes were the United Kingdom, France and Germany, although partners in 30 European countries were involved in one or more ECOC cooperation projects in the period 1995-2004. Most ECOC also collaborated with artists or cultural organisations or presented performances and exhibitions originating from non-European countries.

All ECOC reported that they experienced problems with regard to the planning and delivery of the European dimension of their programmes, including inadequate sources of finance for European projects, often an absence of experience in the city to develop and manage European programmes, and the lack of sustainability of projects beyond the cultural year. There were a number of ECOC that stated that in retrospect they had not spent sufficient time on, or had given too little consideration to, this aspect of their programme in view of many other pressing priorities and pressures.

The issue of building partnerships over time was stressed, and it was noted that when the cultural year concluded hardly any public authorities maintained a budget to continue European and international work. Respondents regretted that the experience and knowledge about developing European projects is not passed from city to city, and that the existing data and information available on European cultural cooperation is fragmented.

### ***Sharing the Title***

In the period of this study, all cities shared the title of ECOC either with another city formally designated as ECOC or with a city chosen to host a European cultural month. The most substantial attempt by cities sharing the title to collaborate was in the year 2000 when 9 cities were designated ECOC. When respondents were asked to rate the extent of collaboration between cities sharing the title, there were considerable variations even from the respondents in the same city, reflecting very different interpretations of the term 'collaboration'. Overall, most cities replied that they cooperated only to a minor extent. The joint projects tended to be of the same types as other forms of European cultural cooperation. There has been very little sustainability of partnerships between ECOC that shared the title.

The main advantages of sharing the title with another city were listed as offering opportunities to exchange ideas, projects and people, and increasing the potential of cultural cooperation. The main reasons for difficulties when sharing the title were cited as problems arising from different aims, objectives and priorities, problems arising from different cultures, sizes and types of cities, and problems caused when there was a lack of interest from one side. Other problems included the competition for visibility, visitors and sponsorship, insufficient planning times and the absence of past linkages and existing cultural connections.

Respondents were divided when asked whether or not the system of one or more cities sharing the ECOC title in the same year should be continued. Many respondents that supported the idea of sharing the title expressed the view that there should not be more than two cities sharing the title in any given year. Various suggestions were offered concerning how the partnering of cities might be mediated.

### ***Economic Perspectives***

Financial data was collected for all 21 ECOC in this study, with significant variations from city to city in relation to income and expenditure. In terms of operating expenditure, elements most generally comprised expenditure on cultural programmes, on promotion and marketing and on wages, salaries and overheads. Total operating expenditure (excluding capital expenditure) of ECOC varied from 7,9m Euro to 73,7m Euro. In terms of expenditure on capital improvements and infrastructure, ECOC reported on the costs of upgrading and renovating facilities, urban revitalisation and physical infrastructure whether the ECOC structure was responsible for this or not. Only a few ECOC organisations took on the responsibility of managing the capital projects. The range of capital expenditure reported varied from 10m Euro to over 220m Euro.

The total operating expenditure reported by all ECOC that were surveyed was 737m Euro. The total capital expenditure reported by all ECOC was 1,4 billion Euros, making a total expenditure (operating and capital) of over 2 billion Euros. This figure does not include substantial additional expenditure on the ECOC event, which was not channelled through the ECOC organisations directly. For example, this included additional expenditure on tourism marketing, additional expenditure by municipalities and regions that paid for projects directly, finance channelled through other municipal budgets that were directly related to ECOC events (protocol, policing), substantial expenditure by cultural organisations themselves from their own budgets and income generated from other sources. Taking this total expenditure into account, the most conservative estimate of the total expenditure attributable to ECOC in the period 1995-2004 would be 3 billion Euros. Several experts placed this total expenditure significantly higher in the region 3,5-3,75 billion Euros. By whatever standards, this represents a massive level of expenditure stimulated by modest amounts of EU funding (1,53 % of total income generated).

In terms of income, the total public sector contribution to ECOC from national, city, regional and EU sources represented 77,5% of the total income generated from all sources. Private sponsorship represented a total of 13,2% of all income generated.

Very few ECOC stated well-defined economic objectives, although most cities stated as priorities the development of tourism, the enhancement of the city's image, urban revitalisation and an expansion of creative industries and jobs. A framework is provided in the report for the analysis of economic benefits to ECOC, but there was very little reliable independent data available to make even informed comments about the total value of economic benefits flowing from ECOC. There is clearly a need for robust detailed research to measure the inputs, outputs and outcomes of the ECOC event.

Bearing in mind the scale of total investment, largely by the public sector, tools should be developed to help safeguard the quality and cost-effectiveness of such investment. Some proposals are identified in the report.

Since the raising of private sponsorship and the involvement of the private sector were critical to the success of most ECOC, an assessment was made of sponsors. There is significant potential for expanding the level of private sector sponsorship in ECOC. However, this will only be achieved if certain main obstacles and problems are eliminated. These concern the lack of expertise, the absence of a clear brand awareness and quality of ECOC cultural programmes, and a longer-term view of sponsorship for the ECOC action as a whole.

## **Visitor Perspectives**

Visitor-related objectives were rated quite highly as objectives for most ECOC, and have a strong relationship to other ECOC objectives, especially concerning city image and economic development.

Statistics on visitor impacts were often cited as evidence for the success of an ECOC since they are more readily measurable than many other impacts. There are problems, however, in estimating the precise number of visitors, with confusion between measuring the number of 'visitors' and the number of 'visits'.

Nevertheless, the ECOC seemed to have had a measurable impact on visitor numbers and expenditure in host cities. The average increase in overnight stays per city when compared to the previous year was about 11% before 1995, rising to over 12% in the period 1995 to 2003. There were considerable variations in overnight stays among ECOC, ranging from an increase of 23% in one city to an actual decline of 6,7% in another.

The largest percentage increases in overnight stays were recorded in smaller cities that start from a lower tourism base. Large cities recorded smaller changes, yet accounted for the majority of overnight stays, and the annual increase in all overnight stays at ECOC cities in the period 1995 to 2003 averaged 4,5%.

The impact of the ECOC seemed to result in higher visitor flows for at least one year after the event, although most cities experienced a decline in visitor numbers the years afterward.

These figures should be read in the context of a general growth in the European tourism market during the period being studied. In most of the years leading up to 2000, there was a fairly steady increase in tourist overnight stays to European cities of about 2% per annum. This suggested that the tourism increases in ECOC were not all due to the impact of the ECOC event.

Some qualitative analysis of visitors was also possible. The majority of visitors to ECOC appeared to be local residents, followed by domestic tourists and foreign visitors. In general, the proportion of foreign visitors increased slightly during the ECOC year.

A major unresolved issue is the extent to which people visited the city specifically for the ECOC. While a majority of people visiting the city were likely to know that it was hosting the ECOC, a smaller proportion were motivated only by the ECOC events to make their visit.

The limited data also suggested that the title of ECOC was a specific motivation to visit only for a relatively small proportion of people who attended specific events in the programme.

The majority of visitors seemed to be attracted to a relatively small proportion of the events staged. While a number of blockbuster events attracted very large numbers of visitors, the large cost of some events called into question their cost-effectiveness in promoting tourism.

In tourism terms, it was not clear that the ECOC had a greater impact than 'mega-events' such as international Expos. It was clear, however, that the ECOC attracted a 'cultural' audience, which remained on the whole professional, middle class and highly educated. While this could be advantageous for cities trying to create a cultural image or attract large-spending cultural visitors, it had implications for issues relating to social inclusion in each city.

Visitor perspectives contributed to tensions relating to the design of ECOC cultural programmes, such as the relative merits of staging events outside the centre of the city, and attracting visitors to accessible city centre locations. There were also issues relating to decisions about developing programmes of interest primarily to local residents or creating special events attractive to large numbers of visitors.

Monitoring visitor impacts for many ECOC was an afterthought rather than a priority, and was usually initiated by agencies outside the ECOC organising body. Monitoring was rarely built into the planning process and was often related to short-term goals. Given the importance of increasing tourism and enhancing image in most ECOC, the longer-term monitoring of tourist flows and image impacts should also be considered in the future.

## ***Social Perspectives***

Social objectives were not the highest priority for most ECOC, yet almost all included projects with social objectives. The different priority given to these objectives partly reflected the different needs of the host cities, although many ECOC displayed good intentions and rhetoric of social development.

All ECOC mentioned growing audiences for culture in the city or region as an objective ("access development"). A broad definition of culture used by most ECOC contributed to this attempt to offer 'something for everybody'. All ECOC ran projects for children; other frequent initiatives included cheap or free tickets, open air events and events in public spaces.

Many ECOC also ran projects to create cultural opportunities for social groups outside the mainstream city culture ("cultural inclusion"). Initiatives were most frequently aimed at young people, ethnic minorities and disabled people. A small number of ECOC structured their programme around those objectives.

Fewer ECOC ran projects to achieve purely social goals ("cultural instrumentalism"). The most common initiatives were training programmes for groups in the city or region.

ECOC reported frequent difficulties with such projects, including variable quality, visibility and difficulties creating partnerships with the relevant organisations. There were several examples of good practice for all three objectives. However there was very little evaluation of social impacts that would allow the drawing of reliable conclusions. More evaluation could be particularly useful in this area as social projects offer significant potential for ECOC to create long-term initiatives.

## ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

Although the majority of ECOC had some form of monitoring systems in place, problems were reported concerning the absence of clear procedures and divisions of responsibility, the fact that monitoring often began too late and that monitoring was often not linked to planning.

Most cities evaluated their ECOC programme in some way, although the majority of cities limited this to a final report written by members of the operational team. In a few cities, evaluations were undertaken by the municipalities or national governments. Although about half of the ECOC undertook evaluations of their cultural programmes, very few evaluated either the social impacts or economic impacts of the ECOC in an independent or robust manner. It was a standard practice for ECOC to undertake visitor impact evaluations, although these data were often inconsistent and of variable quality and relied heavily on tourist office visitor statistics that had not measured the additionality of the ECOC.

Respondents reported that problems associated with evaluation concerned having limited resources, insufficient planning time, ill-defined evaluation criteria and limited or no follow-up to the evaluation itself.

## ***Legacy and Long-Term Effects***

The oldest ECOC is now twenty years past. Attempts were made to study the longer-term impacts of earlier ECOC but the information gathered was often unsubstantiated. Nevertheless, the report summarises key findings when these were available.

The ECOC between 1995 and 2004 present different problems when measuring long-term effects. Some ECOC in this study, for example, are still too recent to evaluate, and others were not able to produce independent longitudinal analyses of impact.

All ECOC in this study described long-term aims for their projects. About half established funds or organisations to continue pursuing those aims. Most cities pointed to projects or organisations that either continued to exist beyond the cultural year or had a long-term impact. However, in many cities the potential for long-term development has not been realised.

Evaluation by ECOC has concentrated on hard legacies (visible and measurable effects, such as buildings, visitor impacts, new organisations and projects) rather than soft legacies (such as city image, personal skills and new ideas). Both were important for the future development of each city, as some

evidence seemed to suggest. However, negative legacies were reported by some cities, including political arguments and adverse effects on future cultural spending.

## **Keys to Success**

There was no simple key to success. Respondents proposed a large array of different thoughts and points of view concerning the critical success factors of ECOC. These varied enormously, but the most common views were expressed around themes such as the context for the event, the extent of local involvement, the need for partnerships, the importance of planning, the need for political independence and artistic autonomy, the requirement for clear objectives, the value of strong content in the programme, and the need for sufficient resources, strong leadership and political will.

Respondents were asked to rank in order of priority cultural events they believed to be most beneficial to cities. About 80% of respondents rated ECOC as the most beneficial type of event, followed by cultural Olympiads and world Expos.

Respondents commented on the need to ensure a better transfer of knowledge between ECOC and most thought this could be done through an effective network of ECOC.

## **Cultural Months**

The report encompasses brief assessments of eight cities that hosted cultural months in the period 1995-2003 (ECM). Most of the months were managed from within the municipality or through the creation of an organising committee working with the cultural department of the city. For most cities the motivation to host the cultural month focused on a desire to raise the European or international profile of the city and to be recognised as a cultural city. The cultural programmes, with a duration of between 1-4 months, generally took place within the city and the suburbs immediately surrounding the city. In most cities infrastructural projects were stimulated. All ECM took into consideration the European dimension when developing their programmes however in general very little cooperation took place between ECM and ECOC although there have been some exceptions. The operating income for cultural months varied from 1,3 million Euros to 7 million Euros. It was difficult to measure economic, social or visitor impacts of ECM, and very little evaluation or research has been undertaken. All ECM had the intention to produce long-term legacies although programmes were not sustained in most cities. Just under half of all respondents agreed that there should be a new scheme of cultural months, however 80% of respondents from cultural months were in favour of re-developing the initiative.

## **The EU Community Action**

Of the total responses received, 95% of respondents rated the ECOC action as successful or partly successful. The justifications used by respondents described advantages to the designated cities, and the advantages to Europe. However respondents were also critical of certain elements of the action. The most common negative views about aspects of ECOC concerned issues around the designation being too motivated by politics, the fact that many cities did not exploit the opportunity, the under-investment by some cities in terms of planning and resources and that too much focus had been placed on local issues, with insufficient focus on Europe. Other respondents referred to the complexity of the selection procedure and the limited lasting effects of being an ECOC.

The European Community's role within the ECOC action mainly involved managing the selection process and funding, either through a general grant to the ECOC or by supporting projects. Cities reported on 51 projects that received financial support from official EU programmes. The total amount of EU finance given to all ECOC in the period 1995-2004 represented 1,53% of the total income generated. Additional EU funds may have been channelled indirectly to certain infrastructure projects and other programmes by governments.

Of the respondents who had had a direct relationship with the Commission, 63% rated their contact with the EC as satisfactory or partly satisfactory. Respondents referred to inadequate levels of funding offered by the EU, a lack of interest, bureaucracy and insufficient expertise. Respondents who were satisfied referred to dedicated individuals and encouragement they received.

About 80% of respondents stated that they were satisfied or partly satisfied with the ECOC nomination and selection procedures. Commenting on the new procedures adopted for ECOC from 2005, around 60% of respondents advocated changes. Suggestions varied from the need to change the objectives and criteria of the action to the need to alter EU financial support and administrative procedures. The most common suggestions are itemised in the report.

Almost all respondents welcomed an expanded role for the EU in relation to ECOC in the future. In addition to managing the selection procedures and the provision of financial support, respondents generally believed that the EU should be involved in the evaluation of results of ECOC, the transfer of knowledge and experience about the ECOC and a more proactive promotion of ECOC and outcomes of each ECOC.

The particular interest of both the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions is noted in the report.

## **City Reports**

Reports of the 21 ECOC and 8 cities that hosted cultural months were compiled and are included in Part II of the report.

## **Conclusions**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the ECOC programme is a powerful tool for cultural development that operates on a scale that offers unprecedented opportunities for acting as a catalyst for city change. However, although full of potential and opportunity, ECOC often do not meet the objectives they set for themselves. The report suggests that cities' expectations need to be formulated more precisely.

For ECOC there is no simple measure of success, and attempts to make comparisons between cities are undesirable and difficult. However, it is beneficial to examine models of good practice, and to highlight trends and common issues that influence ECOC. Such trends and issues are outlined in each of the sections of the report.

The report raises questions over the sustainability of the impact of ECOC, and suggests making clear distinctions between short-term and long-term effects. Sustainability of ECOC initiatives has been greater when cultural initiatives have been integrated with other aspects of urban development.

The cultural dimension of ECOC has been overshadowed by political ambitions and other primarily non-cultural interests and agendas. The European dimension has not been a primary focus, and the potential of ECOC has not been realised as a means of promoting European integration and cooperation. The report suggests that the focus of ECOC should be extended to include the relationship of Europe to the rest of the world.

The report indicates that there are a number of critical factors and conditions that will help ECOC achieve positive results, and proposals and insights of the experienced respondents to this study are mentioned throughout the report.

In spite of the substantial media attention on certain cities, the programme of ECOC remains a significantly misunderstood concept. The EU should focus efforts on enhancing the visibility of the ECOC designation, and improve procedures for selection of ECOC and the administration of the scheme.

Without robust evaluation and the methodical collection and dissemination of practice and knowledge gained through the experience of ECOC, mistakes will be repeated and overall development will be stifled. Additional research is required.

The evidence suggests that the expectations of cooperation between cities sharing the ECOC title have not been realised or sustained. The opportunities offered to certain cities to host European cultural months have been undervalued.

The EU has been heavily criticised for its small financial contribution to ECOC, which is interpreted as reflecting the relatively low value placed on the ECOC action by the EU.

The limitation of time imposed on this study has meant that the research has focused primarily on the main lines of the ECOC experience in each city and on the scheme generally.

## ***Recommendations***

The report makes recommendations grouped under five main headings.

It recommends that the ECOC action should be retained and continued by the EU.

The selection criteria and procedures for future ECOC should be reconsidered in view of experience. Suggestions are offered concerning such procedures, including the simplification and clarification of the primary components of the designation.

The role of the Commission should be reviewed in connection with the ECOC scheme. The report suggests an enhanced role for the Commission in preparing guidelines and in the collection and dissemination of information and documentation relating to ECOC. Furthermore, the Commission should streamline its procedures for the application for and payment of funds to ECOC.

The EU should offer a higher level of financial support to the ECOC action.

The report finally recommends that a new EU action should be launched with the objective of offering opportunities to accession and third countries that will help foster integration and promote cultural cooperation.

## ***Organisation of the Report***

The report is presented in two parts. The first part contains the background to the ECOC action, an analysis of trends and findings, and offers observations and conclusions to the ECOC scheme as a whole. The second part contains individual reports of each city that formed part of the study. The annexes to Part I contain the budgets for each ECOC, the names of respondents to the study, a copy of the on-line questionnaire that was used, EU documents and legislation, a bibliography of documents and other information gathered as well as a suggested reading list, and maps indicating the locations of all cities within the study.

Palmer/Rae Associates  
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# Résumé du Rapport

## Introduction

Ce rapport s'appuie sur les conclusions d'une étude commandée par la Commission Européenne (Direction générale - Education et Culture) ayant pour objectifs de décrire les précédentes Villes Européennes et Capitales de la culture, d'observer les différences entre villes, et d'offrir une analyse factuelle basée sur des informations documentées, des questionnaires et des entretiens. L'étude réalisée en six mois s'est essentiellement concentrée sur les 21 villes qui ont porté le titre de Capitale Européenne de la Culture (ci-après « les Capitales ») entre 1995 et 2004. Ces villes sont: Luxembourg (1995), Copenhague (1996), Thessalonique (1997), Stockholm (1998), Weimar (1999), Avignon (2000), Bergen (2000), Bologne (2000), Bruxelles (2000), Cracovie (2000), Helsinki (2000), Prague (2000), Reykjavik (2000), Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle (2000), Porto (2001), Rotterdam (2001), Bruges (2002), Salamanque (2002), Graz (2003), Gènes (2004), et Lille (2004). L'étude comprend aussi, dans une moindre mesure, la description de l'initiative des « Mois Culturels Européens » dans les villes suivantes: Nicosie (1995), Saint-Petersbourg (1996 et 2003), Ljubljana (1998), Linz (1998), La Vallette (1998), Plovdiv (1999), Bâle (2001) et Riga (2001). Dans un souci d'exhaustivité, le rapport s'intéresse également aux conséquences à long terme pour les dix Capitales Européennes de la Culture désignées entre 1985-1994, ainsi qu'aux Capitales Européennes de la Culture désignées selon les nouvelles procédures de l'UE pour la période 2005-2008.

## Méthodologie

Les conclusions sont fondées sur une recherche recourant principalement aux méthodes suivantes : recherche de documents, enquêtes sur la base de questionnaires et entretiens. La qualité des données varie considérablement selon les villes et les personnes interrogées. Fondée sur le cahier des charges de la Commission, l'étude se concentre sur les informations factuelles, lorsqu'elles sont disponibles, et sur l'analyse; elle reflète les points de vue des personnes interrogées et enfin, elle n'inclut pas l'évaluation des Capitales, ni la comparaison du succès relatif ou des mérites de l'une par rapport à l'autre.

## Origines, procédures et nomination

La première action « Ville Européenne de la Culture » a été lancée à un niveau intergouvernemental en 1985, et a été modifiée et transformée à plusieurs reprises. En 1992 a été mis en place un nouvel événement, le « Mois Européen de la Culture »; cette même année, une nouvelle résolution a été adoptée concernant le choix des futures villes. En 1999, la « Ville Européenne de la Culture » obtint le statut « d'action communautaire ». De nouvelles procédures de sélection ainsi que de nouveaux critères d'évaluation furent établis. Les futures procédures de nomination et de sélection des Capitales après 2009 font actuellement l'objet de débats au Parlement européen.

## Motivations et objectifs

Le concept de Villes Européennes et Capitales de la culture se prête à de nombreuses interprétations. La motivation principale sous-jacente à la nomination en tant que Capitale, la mission-clé et les objectifs principaux ont donc varié de ville en ville. La plupart d'entre elles poursuivaient de nombreux objectifs renvoyant souvent au besoin de développer le profil international de la ville et de sa région, de mettre en place un programme d'activités culturelles et d'événements artistiques, d'attirer des visiteurs et de renforcer la « fierté » des villes et l'image qu'elles ont d'elles-mêmes. Parmi les autres objectifs mentionnés par certaines villes se trouve notamment le fait d'élargir le public local pour la culture, d'améliorer l'infrastructure culturelle, de développer les relations avec d'autres villes et régions européennes, de promouvoir la créativité et l'innovation et de développer les carrières/talents des artistes locaux.

Il est apparu que le fait de définir et de se mettre d'accord sur des objectifs constituait un élément important du processus des Capitales, la plupart des tensions et des problèmes naissant des difficultés

à parvenir à des objectifs consensuels entre les différents partenaires. Les méthodes utilisées pour consulter les parties intéressées sur la question des objectifs ont été considérées comme importantes.

### ***Caractéristiques opérationnelles***

La question de la « gouvernance » a été centrale pour toutes les Capitales. La plupart des villes ont choisi une structure autonome avec un statut légal d'organisation à but non-lucratif, d'association ou de fondation; certaines ont dirigé l'opération au sein de la municipalité. La nature des membres des instances dirigeantes des Capitales est variable, bien qu'il y ait pour la plupart d'entre elles une forte représentation politique. Les principales responsabilités du Conseil d'administration les plus fréquemment citées concernent les décisions financières, le développement de stratégies et de politiques, la prise de décisions concernant les projets culturels ainsi que la recherche de fonds et de sponsors.

Presque toutes les villes ont rapporté la présence de problèmes au sein des structures dirigeantes, les causes les plus répandues étant la prédominance d'intérêts politiques, les difficultés relationnelles entre les membres du Conseil d'administration et l'équipe de management opérationnel, l'absence de représentation des intérêts culturels et la taille de la structure dirigeante.

Pour la plupart des Capitales, d'autres autorités publiques que la municipalité ont été directement impliquées dans l'organisation et le déroulement de l'année culturelle. Ceci inclut le plus fréquemment la région ou la province entourant la ville, et les gouvernements nationaux du pays concerné. L'environnement politique (local, régional et national) a eu des impacts significatifs sur certaines Capitales.

Presque toutes les Capitales ont développé des structures opérationnelles spéciales de management qui ont dirigé les opérations quotidiennes de l'année culturelle, bien que les fonctions précises, les niveaux de responsabilité et la taille de ces structures mêmes aient pu varier. Les responsabilités les plus fréquemment mentionnées ont été la coordination du programme culturel, l'amorce et le développement des projets, la communication, la promotion et le marketing, le financement, le budget et la recherche de fonds. La plupart des villes ont fait état de problèmes liés à leurs structures de management telles que le changement de directeurs et autres postes-clés pendant la phase de planification du projet, les conflits de personnalités, les problèmes de communication, l'expérience inappropriée du personnel et le manque de clarté dans la définition des responsabilités et des tâches. Certaines villes ont mentionné la charge de travail excessive du personnel ainsi que la faiblesse du management et du « leadership ».

La structure opérationnelle est restée en place dans la plupart des villes après la clôture de l'année culturelle, le plus souvent sur une période de 3 à 8 mois afin d'aider à évaluer l'année culturelle et à dresser un bilan financier. Dans un petit nombre de villes, cette structure a été conservée mais transformée en un autre organisme afin de poursuivre le travail au-delà de l'année culturelle.

### ***Programme culturel et impact***

Le programme culturel était l'élément central de la quasi-totalité des Capitales, et a représenté en moyenne 63% des dépenses opérationnelles des Capitales. Les programmes culturels des Capitales sont uniques en raison de leur échelle, de leur durée, de leur envergure et de la diversité des partenaires et des parties intéressées. Nul autre événement culturel de grande ampleur n'est directement comparable aux Capitales, et le fait d'accueillir un tel événement a constitué une expérience sans précédent pour la plupart des villes impliquées.

Cette étude révèle la complexité du développement d'un programme culturel, et la grande quantité de choix et de dilemmes que chaque Capitale a dû affronter. La tâche a été rendue plus difficile pour ceux qui n'avaient pas développé des buts et des objectifs clairement identifiés au moyen d'un processus de consultation. Le développement d'un programme a requis l'équilibre de facteurs différents et parfois opposés tels que la perspective artistique et les intérêts politiques, les événements-phares et les initiatives locales, et enfin l'implication d'institutions culturelles bien établies et de groupes et artistes indépendants.

La richesse mais aussi le défi des Capitales réside dans le fait qu'il n'y ait aucune formule préalable pour un programme culturel, et que le contexte historique, économique, social et politique unique de chaque ville ne peut être ignoré. De nombreuses Capitales ont tenté de développer leurs programmes culturels en coopération étroite avec différents groupes dans la ville, dans le souci d'obtenir un résultat qui non seulement représente la marque de la ville mais aussi réponde à certains de ses besoins.

Bien que le titre de Capitale soit donné à une ville en particulier, le lieu de déroulement du programme culturel s'est, dans la plupart des cas, étendu au-delà des frontières de la ville en question pour englober les banlieues et la région alentour. Pour plusieurs Capitales, le pays tout entier et à tout le moins d'autres municipalités ont participé au projet, et l'une des villes a étendu le programme culturel à des cités étrangères. Des programmes régionaux et trans-frontaliers semblent devenir une stratégie plus populaire parmi les Capitales, en particulier pour les villes dont la situation géographique favorise une telle décision.

La durée des programmes culturels a été comprise entre 9 et 13 mois, la plupart d'entre elles durant entre 11 et 13 mois. De nombreuses Capitales se sont efforcées de développer une progression au cours de l'année culturelle, à la fois pour rendre le programme plus compréhensible et pour soutenir l'intérêt du public sur une longue période. Ceci a souvent été rendu possible par le biais d'une division de l'année par saisons, ou encore par une planification soignée des manifestations au cours de l'année.

La période de planification des programmes culturels des Capitales de cette étude a varié de 2 à 4 ans, la majorité d'entre elles y consacrant 3 ans. Néanmoins, pour nombre d'entre elles, une partie de ce temps a été perdue en raison des changements au niveau du management et des désaccords au sein du conseil d'administration. Pour la majorité des personnes interrogées, la période de planification idéale pour le programme culturel s'étend de 3 à 4 ans, et un certain nombre de Capitales ont considéré que leurs programmes ont souffert d'un manque de temps pour la planification.

Toutes les Capitales ont défini des thèmes et des orientations pour leurs programmes culturels bien que la visibilité et l'adhésion à ceux-ci aient pu varier. Certaines Capitales ont développé un programme qui trouvait sa cohésion autour d'un unique thème, ajoutant parfois un certain nombre de sous thèmes et d'axes; d'autres ont fondé leur programme sur des concepts ou des principes-clés. Le thème le plus répandu fut celui de « la Ville », considéré comme flexible et autorisant l'inclusion de différents types de projets. L'un des défis des Capitales se trouvait dans la communication du programme culturel, et les personnes interrogées ont considéré que des thèmes et des structures claires étaient essentielles pour la création d'une cohérence aisément comprise du public.

Toutes les Capitales ont consulté des organisations culturelles et des artistes au cours du processus de sélection des projets. La plupart des Capitales ont lancé des appels à projets: certains étaient ouverts à tous, d'autres plus spécifiquement ciblés. Les critères de sélection des projets les plus répandus parmi toutes les Capitales ont été la qualité et le coût du projet.

Les programmes culturels des Capitales sont caractérisés par leur grande échelle et leur envergure. Le nombre moyen de projets à l'intérieur des programmes était d'environ 500, bien que les Capitales aient utilisé des techniques très différentes d'évaluation de l'étendue du programme, par exemple en comptant les projets ou en comptant chaque événement. De tous les problèmes en relation avec le programme culturel, il apparaît que le plus fréquent était le nombre trop important de projets. Tous les programmes culturels ont englobé des projets dans différents secteurs culturels (les plus importants étant le théâtre, les arts visuels, la musique et les manifestations en plein air), ainsi qu'un éventail de formes traditionnelles, classiques, contemporaines et modernes. Nombre de programmes culturels ont cherché à inclure la dimension « chacun y trouve son compte » et la plupart des Capitales ont recouru à une définition anthropologique large de la notion de culture qui incluait par exemple le sport, la nourriture, l'artisanat et les traditions locales. Bien des Capitales ont prêté une attention particulière à la culture innovatrice et contemporaine.

L'un des défis spécifiques pour les Capitales se trouve dans la recherche de l'équilibre entre les partenariats avec les institutions culturelles existantes, et les artistes et groupes indépendants alternatifs de cette même ville. De nombreuses personnes interrogées ont souligné la difficulté de trouver le bon équilibre, et ont mentionné avoir sous-estimé la complexité de la scène culturelle de la ville. Des difficultés à nouer des liens, à gagner la confiance, à soutenir et créer des partenariats ont été mis en

évidence. La manière dont les opérateurs et les professionnels de la culture ainsi que les artistes percevaient l'organisation des Capitales a été considérée comme importante. Certains ont perçu l'organisation comme une nouvelle structure de pouvoir qui menaçait le statu quo; d'autres comme la représentation d'intérêts politiques plutôt que culturels; d'autres enfin l'ont vu comme un partenaire accessible et un « facilitant ».

Les projets culturels des Capitales ont inclus une pléthore de projets et d'événements attirant plusieurs milliers de visiteurs et de participants. Les personnes interrogées ont souvent mentionné l'atmosphère particulière dans la ville générée par le programme culturel. Comme la plupart des Capitales tendaient à toucher un large public et à accroître la participation à la vie culturelle, de nombreux programmes ont mis en place des événements dans les espaces publics, ainsi qu'un grand nombre de festivités, de parades et de manifestations en plein air. Les célébrations d'ouverture des Capitales se sont révélées particulièrement efficaces pour mobiliser le public et créer une atmosphère festive. De nombreuses Capitales ont inclus un nombre significatif d'événements gratuits ou ont subventionné les droits d'entrée.

Hormis un grand nombre de projets prenant place dans les espaces publics intérieurs et extérieurs, les Capitales ont trouvé, développé et utilisé des lieux nouveaux et inhabituels pour les projets et les manifestations, et ont mis en place des projets liés à la géographie physique, de même qu'à l'histoire et au patrimoine de la ville, de la région ou du pays. Les Capitales ont aussi été confrontées au défi de trouver un équilibre entre les « superproductions » et les initiatives locales à petite échelle. On a souvent critiqué les Capitales de favoriser l'une au détriment de l'autre. Les « superproductions » ont attiré un large public, mais les initiatives locales ont eu tendance à être plus durables.

Le développement de la communauté a fait partie de tous les programmes culturels et la participation accrue à la culture a constitué un objectif principal pour la plupart des villes. Les Capitales ont essayé d'élargir la définition de culture et de réduire l'écart entre les beaux arts, les arts populaires et la culture. Différentes catégories de la population locale ont été ciblées en particulier. Les enfants et les jeunes ont été les cibles les plus répandues, et de nombreuses Capitales ont développé des programmes pour les enfants et des projets pour la jeunesse. Les personnes âgées, les personnes handicapées, les minorités ethniques, les sans-abri et autres groupes d'individus défavorisés ont aussi été incluses.

Une attention particulière a été portée au développement des talents locaux et la Capitale est considérée par de nombreuses personnes interrogées comme une opportunité incroyable pour les artistes dans différents domaines. Une certaine expérience a été acquise par le biais de nombreux projets réalisés au cours des Capitales, à travers des échanges, des stages et des 'masterclass' de même que par le biais de commissions spécifiques. Plusieurs personnes interrogées ont souligné l'expérience inestimable qu'ont constituée les Capitales pour toutes les parties concernées.

Dans certaines villes, la Capitale a été considérée principalement comme un événement, et dans d'autres comme un processus de développement. La majorité des programmes culturels, cependant, ne s'est pas adaptée d'une manière ordonnée aux modèles traditionnels de la consommation culturelle.

Bien que le programme culturel d'une Capitale ait pu susciter l'attention soutenue des médias et du public, il a été généralement perçu comme étant distinct d'autres initiatives incorporées dans les objectifs de l'année culturelle. Le programme culturel n'a pas été souvent considéré comme un moyen puissant d'unification dans le processus du développement de la ville.

## **Infrastructure**

Parallèlement à leur programme culturel, toutes les Capitales pour la période couverte par cette étude ont investi dans des projets portant sur les infrastructures. Les projets les plus répandus ont été l'amélioration des espaces et des éclairages publics, ainsi que l'amélioration des infrastructures culturelles, incluant la rénovation et la restauration des équipements et des monuments ainsi que la construction de nouveaux édifices culturels tels que des salles de concerts et des musées. Environ un quart des Capitales ont investi dans des améliorations mineures d'infrastructure, tandis qu'une proportion semblable a mené des projets de développement urbain majeurs, comme des quartiers culturels et des parcs.

De nombreux projets d'infrastructures n'ont pas été lancés spécialement pour l'événement que représentent les Capitales, mais avaient déjà été programmés d'une manière ou d'une autre. Un grand nombre de ces projets a néanmoins bénéficié de l'effet catalyseur des Capitales et de son accent sur la culture, de fonds supplémentaires, de publicité commune et de programme en coopération avec l'organisation des Capitales, ainsi que de l'optimisme et de l'ambition qui entouraient bien des Capitales. Dans la grande majorité des villes, la question des infrastructures n'était pas gérée par les organisateurs des Capitales, mais par d'autres autorités gouvernementales ou autres organismes.

L'ampleur des investissements ne dépend pas de la situation de la ville, de l'importance de sa population ou de l'année de sa nomination. Les facteurs les plus importants semblent avoir été les besoins identifiés par la ville et sa capacité à mobiliser les fonds requis.

L'ampleur et la rapidité de plusieurs programmes portant sur les infrastructures ont entraîné des difficultés pour leurs organisateurs, tout comme la gestion future des édifices. Néanmoins, dans de nombreuses Capitales les améliorations de l'infrastructure constituent un héritage visible et précieux.

### ***Communication, Promotion et Réaction des Médias***

La communication et la promotion sont en étroite relation avec les objectifs-clés établis par les Capitales, tels que la mise en valeur de l'image de la ville, le souci d'attirer des visiteurs, ou l'accroissement du public local de la culture.

Les 21 Capitales ont dépensé au total plus de 105 millions d'euros pour la communication et la promotion, sur un éventail allant d'un peu moins d'un million jusqu'à 14 millions d'euros, ce qui représentent entre 7 et 24 % du total des dépenses d'exploitation de l'organisation des Capitales. Néanmoins ces chiffres devraient être traités avec prudence, car la plupart des Capitales ont bénéficié de dépenses promotionnelles additionnelles significatives de la part des organismes touristiques, des médias et d'organismes de voyage, des institutions culturelles et autres partenaires.

L'effectif du personnel directement employé pour la communication et la promotion a pu varier d'un à quarante, mais la plupart des Capitales ont sous-traité certains éléments à des organisations publiques ou privées, les organismes touristiques et les municipalités assumant souvent la responsabilité du marketing touristique.

Les médias auxquels les Capitales ont eu le plus fréquemment recours ont été la presse, la télévision et la radiodiffusion, tandis que les nouvelles technologies (Internet, SMS) ont été utilisées de manière étendue par plusieurs Capitales récentes. Presque toutes se sont appuyées sur des manifestations spéciales pour promouvoir l'année, et un nombre plus restreint a fait un effort significatif dans l'utilisation du merchandising comme outil de communication.

Aux indicateurs touristiques tels que le nombre de visiteurs, de nombreuses Capitales ont ajouté la prise en compte de la couverture médiatique et ont réalisé des sondages d'opinion publique afin de mesurer la réussite de l'année culturelle. Certaines ont mesuré le nombre d'utilisateurs de leur site web. En partie en raison des différences entre les techniques utilisées par les différentes Capitales, il n'y a pas suffisamment de données comparables pour tirer des conclusions sur l'impact relatif des différentes stratégies de communication et des outils utilisés par les Capitales. De nombreuses Capitales ont joui d'une excellente image dans les médias locaux, nationaux et internationaux.

### ***Perspectives européennes***

Toutes les Capitales ont affirmé avoir pris en considération la dimension et l'importance européenne de leurs programmes culturels. Néanmoins, les villes ont interprété le sens de ces termes de manières différentes. Certaines Capitales ont présenté des événements qui se concentraient sur les talents d'artistes européens; d'autres se sont lancées dans des coproductions artistiques et des collaborations culturelles européennes. Plusieurs villes ont développé des thèmes et des questions européennes dans leurs programmes, ou ont identifié et célébré des aspects de l'histoire, de l'identité et de l'héritage européens. Quelques Capitales ont établi des partenariats avec d'autres villes européennes et ont conjointement mis en place des projets. De nombreuses villes ont eu parmi leurs objectifs la promotion du tourisme européen. Toutes les Capitales ont affirmé que leur désignation a offert une excellente

opportunité pour développer leurs connections européennes. L'ampleur de tels projets européens et leur caractère durable au-delà de l'année culturelle a varié considérablement entre les villes. Environ un tiers des Capitales a préféré se concentrer sur une dimension internationale plus large plutôt que sur une dimension uniquement européenne.

Les secteurs les plus fréquemment cités dans lesquels une coopération européenne a eu lieu sont la musique, la danse, le théâtre et les arts visuels, suivis des nouvelles technologies/nouveaux médias, les films, les parades de rue et les événements en plein air.

En ce qui concerne la coopération européenne, les pays les plus fréquemment cités pour être les plus importants dans les programmes culturels sont le Royaume Uni, la France et l'Allemagne, bien que des partenaires de 30 pays européens aient été impliqués dans un projet ou plus de coopération dans le cadre des Capitales au cours de la période 1995-2004. La plupart des Capitales ont aussi collaboré avec des artistes ou des organisations culturelles de pays non européens ou encore ont présenté des spectacles et des expositions originaires de ces pays.

Toutes les Capitales ont rapporté qu'elles avaient rencontré des difficultés dans la planification et la mise en œuvre de la dimension européenne de leurs programmes, liées notamment au manque de ressources financières suffisantes pour les projets européens, bien souvent à l'absence d'expérience au sein même de la ville pour développer et diriger des programmes européens, et au manque de viabilité des projets au-delà de l'année culturelle. Un nombre de Capitales a affirmé rétrospectivement n'avoir pas accordé assez de temps ou d'attention à cet aspect de leur programme, à cause de nombreuses autres pressions et priorités urgentes.

La nécessité d'établir des partenariats durables a été soulignée, tout comme il a été noté qu'à l'issue de l'année culturelle, quasiment aucune autorité publique n'a maintenu un budget afin de poursuivre le travail européen et international. Les personnes interrogées ont regretté que l'expérience et le savoir-faire concernant le développement de projets européens ne soit pas transmis de ville en ville, et que les données existantes et les informations disponibles sur la coopération culturelle soient fragmentaires.

### ***Le partage du titre***

Au cours de la période que couvre cette étude, toutes les villes ont partagé le titre de Capitale avec une autre ville désignée comme Capitale ou choisie pour accueillir un mois culturel européen. L'effort de collaboration le plus important entre villes partageant le titre a eu lieu en 2000 lorsque 9 villes ont reçu le titre de Capitale. Les réponses à la question du degré de collaboration entre villes partageant le titre ont révélé des différences considérables, même entre les interlocuteurs d'une même ville, reflétant les interprétations très différentes du terme de «collaboration». De façon générale, la plupart des villes ont répondu qu'elles avaient coopéré seulement dans une moindre mesure. Les partenariats entre les Capitales partageant le titre n'ont guère été durables.

Parmi les principaux avantages liés au partage du titre avec une autre ville, l'opportunité d'échanger des idées, des projets et des individus, et l'accroissement du potentiel de coopération culturelle ont été mentionnés. Les principales sources de difficultés invoquées par rapport au partage du titre sont les divergences quant aux buts, aux objectifs et aux priorités, les différences de cultures, de tailles et de types de villes, et les problèmes dus au manque d'intérêt de l'une des parties. Parmi les difficultés ont également été mentionnées la compétition pour la visibilité, les visiteurs et les sponsors, des durées de planification insuffisantes et l'absence de liens noués dans le passé et de relations culturelles présentes.

Les réponses à la question de savoir si le système de partage du titre entre une ou plusieurs villes devait être poursuivi a été divisé. De nombreux interlocuteurs qui avaient soutenu l'idée du partage du titre ont exprimé le point de vue qu'il ne devrait pas y avoir plus de deux villes partageant le titre la même année. Des suggestions variées ont été faites quant à la manière d'encourager le partenariat entre villes.

### ***Perspectives économiques***

Des données financières ont été rassemblées pour les 21 Capitales de cette étude, avec des variations significatives d'une ville à l'autre en ce qui concerne les revenus et les dépenses. En termes de

dépenses opérationnelles, les éléments les plus fréquemment pris en compte ont été les dépenses sur les programmes culturels, la promotion et le marketing, ainsi que sur les salaires et les frais généraux. Les dépenses opérationnelles totales (dépenses en capital/infrastructure exclues) des Capitales ont varié entre 7,9 et 73,7 millions d'euros. Au niveau des dépenses pour l'amélioration du capital et l'infrastructure, les Capitales ont fait état de frais pour l'amélioration et la rénovation d'équipements, la revitalisation urbaine et les infrastructures physiques, que la structure des Capitales en soit responsable ou non. Seulement quelques-unes des organisations des Capitales ont pris la responsabilité de la gestion des projets d'investissement en capital. L'éventail des dépenses en capital a varié de 10 millions d'euros à plus de 220 millions d'euros.

Les dépenses totales opérationnelles de toutes les Capitales faisant l'objet de l'enquête s'élèvent à 737 millions d'euros. Le total des dépenses en capital de toutes les Capitales est de 1,4 milliards d'euros, pour une dépense totale (opérationnel et capital) de plus de 2 milliards d'euros. Ce chiffre n'inclut pas les dépenses supplémentaires considérables pour l'événement des Capitales, qui n'était pas passé directement à travers les organisations des Capitales. Ceci inclut par exemple les dépenses additionnelles sur le marketing touristique, les dépenses supplémentaires par les municipalités et les régions qui ont payés directement pour des projets, les fonds affectés par le biais d'autres budgets municipaux directement reliés aux événements des Capitales (protocole, maintien de l'ordre) et les dépenses considérables par les organisations culturelles elles-mêmes à partir de leur propre budget, ainsi que le revenu généré par d'autres sources. En prenant la totalité des dépenses en compte, l'estimation minimale des dépenses totales imputables aux Capitales au cours de la période 1995-2004 serait de 3 milliards d'euros. Plusieurs experts ont évalué ces dépenses à un niveau nettement plus élevé, autour de 3,5-3,75 milliards. Quels que soient les modèles choisis, ceci représente un niveau élevé de dépenses, stimulées par un financement modeste de l'UE (1,53% du total des revenus générés).

En termes de revenus, la contribution totale du secteur public aux Capitales, provenant des sources nationales, municipales, régionales et européennes, a représenté 77,5% du revenu total généré par l'ensemble des sources. Les sponsors privés ont représenté un total de 13% du revenu total généré.

Peu de Capitales ont fait état d'objectifs économiques clairement définis; cependant, la plupart d'entre elles ont considéré que le développement du tourisme, l'amélioration de l'image de la ville, la revitalisation urbaine et l'expansion des industries créatives et des emplois constituait une priorité. Un cadre est fourni dans le rapport pour l'analyse des bénéfices économiques des Capitales, mais il y avait très peu de données indépendantes fiables pour faire des commentaires fondés sur la valeur totale des bénéfices économiques découlant des Capitales. Il y a un besoin manifeste de procéder à une recherche détaillée et solide pour mesurer les « inputs », les « outputs » et les résultats de la manifestation des Capitales.

Au vu de l'importance de l'investissement total, provenant principalement du secteur public, des outils devraient être développés pour aider à sauvegarder la qualité et le rapport coût-efficacité de tels investissements. Des propositions sont définies dans le rapport.

Puisque le développement de sponsoring privé et l'implication du secteur privé ont joué un rôle essentiel dans le succès de la plupart des Capitales, une évaluation a été faite des sponsors. Il y a un potentiel significatif d'extension du niveau du parrainage du secteur privé au sein des Capitales. Néanmoins, ceci ne pourra réussir que si certains obstacles et problèmes majeurs sont éliminés. Ils concernent notamment le manque d'expertise, l'absence d'une image de marque claire et de la qualité des programmes culturels, et d'une vue à long terme du mécénat pour les Capitales dans leur ensemble.

### ***La perspective des visiteurs***

Les objectifs relatifs aux visiteurs ont été placés en bonne position par la plupart des Capitales, et ils ont un lien étroit avec d'autres objectifs, en particulier ceux qui concernent l'image de la ville et le développement économique.

Les statistiques montrant l'impact sur les visiteurs ont souvent été présentées comme des preuves du succès d'une Capitale, d'autant qu'elles sont plus facilement mesurables que l'impact sur d'autres

domaines. Il est toutefois difficile d'estimer le nombre précis de visiteurs, à quoi s'ajoute la confusion entre l'évaluation du nombre de « visiteurs » et du nombre de « visites ».

Néanmoins, les Capitales semblent avoir un impact mesurable sur le nombre de visiteurs et de dépenses dans la ville hôte. La croissance moyenne des nuitées en comparaison avec l'année précédente a été de 11% avant 1995, pour atteindre plus de 12% au cours de la période 1995-2003. Les variations sont considérables en ce qui concerne les nuitées entre les différentes Capitales, allant d'un accroissement de 23% dans une ville à une perte réelle de 6,7% dans une autre.

Les plus grands pourcentages d'accroissement des séjours d'une nuit sont enregistrés dans les villes plus petites qui partent d'un seuil touristique plus bas. Les grandes villes enregistrent des changements plus faibles, comptabilisant néanmoins la majorité des nuitées, et l'accroissement annuel de tous les séjours d'une nuit dans les Capitales au cours de la période 1995-2003 a atteint en moyenne de 4,5%.

L'impact des Capitales semble avoir pour résultat un flux de visiteurs plus important pendant au moins une année après l'événement, bien que la plupart des villes fassent l'expérience d'un déclin du nombre de visiteurs lors des années suivantes.

Ces chiffres devraient être lus dans le contexte d'un accroissement général du marché du tourisme européen pendant la période qui est étudiée. En général jusqu'en l'an 2000, il y a eu une croissance assez stable de 2% par an des séjours touristiques d'une nuit dans les villes européennes. Ceci suggère que les hausses de croissance touristique dans les Capitales ne résultent pas toutes de l'impact de l'événement lui-même.

Une analyse qualitative des visiteurs est aussi possible. La majorité des visiteurs des Capitales paraît constituée de résidents locaux, puis des touristes domestiques et des visiteurs étrangers. En général, la proportion des visiteurs étrangers s'accroît légèrement au cours de l'année culturelle.

Une question irrésolue de première importance est la mesure dans laquelle les gens viennent visiter la ville spécialement pour la Capitale. Alors qu'une majorité de visiteurs de la ville a de fortes chances de savoir qu'elle est Capitale, une proportion plus faible verra sa visite motivée par les seules manifestations de l'événement.

Les données limitées suggèrent aussi que le titre de Capitale est une motivation spécifique de visite seulement pour une proportion relativement faible d'individus qui assistent à des manifestations précises du programme.

La majorité des visiteurs semble être attirée par une proportion relativement faible des manifestations organisées. Alors que de nombreuses superproductions ont attiré un nombre très important de visiteurs, le coût élevé de certains événements soulève la question du rapport coût-efficacité en vue de la promotion du tourisme.

En terme de tourisme, il n'est pas possible de déterminer si les Capitales ont un impact plus important que d'autres « manifestations géantes » telles que les expositions internationales. Il est clair, néanmoins, que la Capitale attire un public « culturel », qui reste dans l'ensemble professionnel, d'un niveau d'éducation élevé et issu de la classe moyenne. Alors que ceci peut être un avantage pour les villes qui essaient de créer une image culturelle ou d'attirer des visiteurs culturels ayant un pouvoir d'achat élevé, cela a des implications sur les questions relatives à l'inclusion sociale dans chaque ville.

La question des visiteurs a suscité des tensions au niveau de la conception des programmes culturels des Capitales, tels que les mérites relatifs de la mise en place de manifestations hors du centre-ville, et le fait d'attirer les visiteurs vers des lieux accessibles au centre-ville. Il y a aussi des questions relatives aux décisions de développer des programmes intéressant en premier lieu les résidents locaux ou de créer des manifestations spéciales susceptibles d'attirer un large nombre de visiteurs.

L'intérêt pour l'impact sur les visiteurs est intervenu pour de nombreuses Capitales, « après-coup », car cela ne constituait pas une priorité; cela reste souvent l'initiative d'agences extérieures au corps organisationnel de la Capitale. Le contrôle fait rarement partie du processus de planification et est fréquemment relié à des objectifs à court terme. Étant donnée l'importance de l'accroissement du tourisme et de l'amélioration de l'image dans la plupart des Capitales, le contrôle à plus long terme des



flux touristiques et des impacts de l'image qui y sont directement liés devraient aussi être pris en considération dans le futur.

### ***Perspectives sociales***

Les objectifs sociaux n'ont pas constitué une priorité de premier ordre pour la plupart des Capitales, et pourtant presque toutes ont inclus des projets ayant des objectifs sociaux. La priorité différente donnée à ces objectifs a partiellement reflété les besoins différents des villes hôtes, bien que de nombreuses Capitales aient exposé de bonnes intentions et une rhétorique du développement social.

Toutes les Capitales ont mentionné comme objectif l'accroissement du public pour la culture dans la ville ou sa région (développement de l'accès). Une définition large de la culture utilisée par la plupart des Capitales a contribué à cette tentative d'offrir «quelque chose à chacun». Toutes les Capitales ont développé des projets pour les enfants; d'autres initiatives fréquentes ont inclus des tickets peu chers ou gratuits, des manifestations en plein air et dans des espaces publics.

De nombreuses Capitales ont aussi développé des projets dans le but d'offrir des opportunités culturelles pour les groupes sociaux hors du courant culturel dominant de la ville (inclusion culturelle). Des initiatives ont le plus souvent ciblé les jeunes, les minorités ethniques et les personnes handicapées. Quelques Capitales ont structuré leur programme autour de ces objectifs.

Un nombre encore plus restreint a mis en place des projets dans le but d'atteindre des objectifs purement sociaux (instrumentalisme culturel). Les initiatives les plus répandues ont été des programmes de formation pour des groupes dans la ville ou dans la région.

Les Capitales ont signalé de fréquentes difficultés avec ces types de projets, comme par exemple d'importantes variations dans la qualité, la visibilité et les difficultés à créer des partenariats avec les organisations compétentes. Il y a eu plusieurs bons exemples pour ces trois objectifs. Néanmoins il y a eu une évaluation très faible des impacts sociaux qui nous autoriseraient à tirer des conclusions fiables. Une évaluation plus importante pourrait être particulièrement utile dans ce secteur car les projets sociaux offrent aux Capitales un potentiel significatif de création d'initiatives à long terme.

### ***Contrôle et évaluation***

Bien que la majorité des Capitales ait eu une forme de contrôle des systèmes en place, on a rapporté des problèmes qui incluaient l'absence de procédures claires et les divisions des responsabilités, le fait que le contrôle ait commencé souvent trop tard et qu'il ne soit souvent pas lié à la planification.

La plupart des villes ont évalué leur programme d'une manière ou d'une autre, bien que la majorité des villes aient limité ceci à un rapport final écrit par les membres de l'équipe opérationnelle. Dans quelques villes, les évaluations ont été effectuées par les municipalités ou par les gouvernements nationaux. Bien que la moitié des Capitales aient procédé à l'évaluation de leurs programmes culturels, très peu d'entre elles ont mesuré les impacts sociaux ou économiques des Capitales de manière indépendante ou solide. Une pratique standard des Capitales a été d'évaluer l'impact des visiteurs, bien que cette donnée soit souvent changeante et de qualité variable, et qu'elle se soit fortement fiée aux statistiques des offices du tourisme qui n'ont pas l'apport supplémentaire des Capitales.

Les personnes interrogées ont rapporté que les problèmes liés à l'évaluation concernaient le nombre limité de ressources, le temps de planification insuffisant, des critères d'évaluation mal définis et les lacunes, ou l'absence, de suivi de l'évaluation elle-même.

### ***Conséquences et effets à long terme***

La plus ancienne Capitale a maintenant vingt ans. Des tentatives ont été faites pour étudier les impacts à long terme des premières Capitales mais les informations rassemblées ont été souvent non corroborées. Toutefois, le rapport résume les conclusions-clés quand celles-ci sont disponibles.

Les Capitales tenues entre 1995 et 2004 présentent différents problèmes quand il s'agit d'en mesurer les effets à long terme. Certaines Capitales de cette étude, par exemple, sont encore trop récentes pour être évaluées, et d'autres n'ont pu produire des analyses d'impact indépendantes.

Toutes les Capitales de cette étude ont décrit des buts à long terme pour leurs projets. Environ la moitié a établi des fonds ou des organisations pour poursuivre leurs buts. La plupart des villes ont cité des projets ou organismes qui ont continué à exister au-delà de l'année culturelle ou qui ont eu un impact à long terme. Cependant, dans beaucoup de villes le potentiel du développement à long terme n'a pas été réalisé.

L'évaluation par les Capitales s'est concentrée sur les conséquences 'dures' (effets visibles et mesurables, tels que les édifices, les impacts des visiteurs, les organisations et les projets nouveaux) plus que sur les conséquences moins tangibles (telles que l'image de la ville, les compétences personnelles et les nouvelles idées). Ces deux aspects sont importants pour le développement futur de la ville, comme certaines preuves semblent le suggérer. Cependant, des conséquences négatives ont été rapportées par quelques villes, incluant des arguments politiques et des effets nuisibles sur les futures dépenses culturelles.

### **Clés du succès**

Il n'y a pas de clé unique pour le succès. Les personnes interrogées ont proposé une large panoplie de différentes réflexions et points de vue concernant les facteurs critiques du succès des Capitales. Ces derniers varient énormément, mais les points de vue les plus répandus ont été exprimés autour de thèmes tels que le contexte de l'événement, la mesure de l'implication locale, le besoin de partenariat, l'importance de l'organisation, le besoin d'indépendance politique et d'autonomie artistique, le besoin d'objectifs clairs, la valeur d'un contenu solide dans le programme, et le besoin de ressources suffisantes, d'une direction forte et d'une volonté politique.

On a demandé aux interlocuteurs de classer par ordre de priorité les événements culturels qu'ils pensaient être les plus bénéfiques aux villes. Environ 80% des interlocuteurs ont évalué le Capitale comme la manifestation culturelle la plus bénéfique, suivie des olympiades culturelles et des expositions mondiales.

Les personnes interrogées ont fait des commentaires sur le besoin d'assurer un meilleur transfert de connaissance entre les Capitales et la plupart d'entre elles ont pensé que cela pouvait être fait par le biais d'un réseau efficace des Capitales.

### **Mois culturels**

Le rapport comprend de brèves appréciations de huit villes qui ont accueilli les mois culturels au cours de la période 1995-2003. La plupart des mois ont été dirigés de l'intérieur de la municipalité ou par le biais de la création d'un comité d'organisation travaillant pour le département culturel de la ville. Pour la plupart des villes, la motivation d'accueillir le mois culturel s'est concentrée sur le désir d'élever le profil européen ou international de la ville et d'être reconnue en tant que ville culturelle. Les programmes culturels, d'une durée de 1 à 4 mois, ont généralement pris place à l'intérieur de la ville et dans les proches banlieues. Dans la plupart des villes les projets infrastructurels ont été stimulés. Tous les mois culturels ont pris la dimension européenne en considération lors de la mise en place de leurs programmes. En général il y a eu très peu de coopération entre les Mois et les Capitales à quelques exceptions près. Le revenu d'exploitation pour les mois culturels a varié de 1,3 millions d'euros à 7 millions d'euros. Il a été difficile de mesurer les impacts économiques, sociaux ou touristiques des mois culturels et très peu d'évaluation ou de recherche a été conduite. Tous les Mois avaient l'intention de produire des effets à long terme bien que les programmes n'aient pas été maintenus dans la plupart des villes. À peine la moitié de tous les interlocuteurs considérait qu'il faudrait une nouvelle action en faveur des mois culturels; cependant, 80% des interlocuteurs des villes ayant accueilli un mois culturel partageaient cet avis.

## ***L'action communautaire***

De toutes les réponses reçues, 95% des personnes interrogées ont jugé l'action des Capitales totalement ou partiellement réussie. Les avantages pour les villes désignées et les avantages pour l'Europe ont été invoqués pour justifier une telle évaluation. Néanmoins les interlocuteurs ont aussi été critiques quant à certains éléments de cette action. Les points de vue négatifs les plus répandus sur certains aspects de l'action concernaient les questions de sélection, perçue comme étant trop motivées par la politique, le fait que de nombreuses villes n'exploitent pas l'opportunité qui leur était donnée, le sous investissement de certaines villes en termes de planification et de ressources et le fait que l'on ait porté trop d'attention aux questions locales, au détriment de l'attention portée à l'Europe. D'autres interlocuteurs ont renvoyé à la complexité de la procédure de sélection et aux limites des effets à long terme du statut de Capitale.

Le rôle de la Communauté européenne dans le cadre de l'action des Capitales a principalement consisté à diriger le processus de sélection et de financement, soit par le biais d'une subvention générale à la Capitale, soit par le soutien de projets. Les villes ont fait un compte-rendu sur 51 projets ayant reçu un soutien financier de la part de programmes officiels de l'UE. La somme totale des financements de l'UE accordée à toutes les Capitales au cours de la période 1995-2004 représente 1,53% du total du revenu généré. Des fonds de l'UE additionnels ont pu être affectés indirectement à certains projets d'infrastructure et à d'autres programmes par les gouvernements.

63% des personnes interrogées qui avaient eu une relation directe avec la Commission ont jugé le contact satisfaisant ou partiellement satisfaisant. Elles ont fait référence aux niveaux de financement inappropriés offerts par l'UE, à un manque d'intérêt, à la bureaucratie et à une expertise insuffisante. Les interlocuteurs satisfaits ont mentionné le dévouement des individus et les encouragements qu'ils ont reçus.

Environ 80% des interlocuteurs ont déclaré être satisfaits ou partiellement satisfaits des procédures de sélection et de nomination des Capitales. Commentant les nouvelles procédures adoptées pour les Capitales à partir de 2005, environ 60% des interlocuteurs ont recommandé des changements. Les suggestions allaient de commentaires sur le besoin de changer les objectifs et les critères du programme au besoin de modifier le soutien financier de l'UE et les procédures administratives. Les suggestions les plus répandues sont détaillées dans la deuxième partie du rapport.

Presque toutes les personnes interrogées ont accueilli favorablement l'idée d'un rôle accru de l'UE à l'avenir dans le cadre de l'action des Capitales. En plus de la gestion des procédures de sélection et la mise à disposition de soutien financier, les interlocuteurs ont en général pensé que l'UE devrait être impliquée dans l'évaluation des résultats des Capitales, dans le transfert de connaissance et d'expérience au sujet des Capitales et dans une promotion plus proactive du programme des Capitales et des résultats de chaque Capitale.

L'intérêt particulier du Parlement européen et du Comité des Régions est noté dans le rapport.

## ***Rapports de la ville***

Les rapports de 21 Capitales et de 8 mois culturels européens ont été compilés et sont inclus dans le rapport.

## ***Conclusions***

Les conclusions de cette étude démontrent que l'action des Capitales est un outil puissant pour le développement culturel, d'une ampleur telle qu'il offre des opportunités sans précédent pour agir en tant que catalyseur d'un changement dans la ville. Néanmoins, malgré le potentiel et les opportunités dont elles bénéficient, les Capitales fréquemment n'atteignent pas les objectifs qu'elles se sont fixées. Le rapport suggère que les attentes des villes soient formulées de manière plus précise.

Il n'y a pas, pour les Capitales, de manière simple de mesurer le succès, et les tentatives d'établir des comparaisons entre villes sont indésirables et difficiles. Toutefois, il est utile d'examiner les modèles de

bonne pratique, et de souligner les tendances et les questions communes qui influencent les Capitales. Ces tendances et questions sont soulignées dans chacune des sections du rapport.

Le rapport soulève les questions de durabilité de l'impact des Capitales, et suggère de faire des distinctions claires entre les effets à long terme et les effets à court terme. La durabilité des initiatives des Capitales a été plus importante quand les initiatives culturelles ont été intégrées à d'autres aspects du développement urbain.

La dimension culturelle des Capitales a été estompée par les ambitions politiques, et par des intérêts et des priorités qui ne sont pas culturels au premier chef. La dimension européenne n'a pas été un centre d'intérêt premier, et le potentiel des Capitales n'a pas été exploité afin de promouvoir l'intégration et la coopération européennes. Le rapport suggère que le centre d'intérêt des Capitales devrait être étendu de manière à inclure la relation de l'Europe avec le reste du monde.

Le rapport indique qu'il existe un nombre de facteurs critiques et de conditions qui aideront les Capitales à obtenir des résultats positifs; des propositions ainsi que des idées émises par des interlocuteurs expérimentés sont mentionnées tout au long du rapport.

Malgré l'attention médiatique conséquente sur certaines villes, l'action des Capitales reste un concept largement mal compris. L'UE devrait concentrer ses efforts sur le renforcement de la visibilité de la désignation d'une Capitale, et améliorer les procédures de sélection des Capitales et l'administration de cette action.

Sans une évaluation solide, sans le rassemblement et la diffusion méthodiques des pratiques et de la connaissance acquises par le biais de l'expérience des Capitales, des erreurs seront répétées et le développement d'ensemble sera étouffé. Une recherche supplémentaire est requise.

Les éléments de cette étude suggèrent que les attentes de coopération entre villes partageant le titre n'ont pas été réalisées ou maintenues. Les opportunités offertes à certaines villes d'accueillir les mois culturels européens ont été sous-évaluées.

L'UE a été lourdement critiquée pour sa contribution financière minimale aux Capitales, ce qui a été interprété comme le reflet de l'importance relativement faible accordé à l'action des Capitales par l'UE.

A cause de la limite de temps imparti à cette étude, la recherche s'est avant tout concentrée sur les grandes lignes de l'expérience dans chaque ville et sur l'action en général.

## **Recommandations**

Le rapport fait des recommandations regroupées sous cinq grands titres.

Il recommande que l'action des Capitales soit retenue et poursuivie par l'UE.

Les critères et les procédures de sélection pour les futures Capitales devraient être reconsidérés au regard de l'expérience. Des suggestions sont faites en ce qui concerne ces procédures, incluant la simplification et la clarification des éléments primordiaux de la désignation.

Le rôle de la Commission devrait être revu en relation avec l'action des Capitales. Le rapport suggère un rôle accru de la Commission dans la préparation de lignes directrices et dans le rassemblement et la diffusion des informations et de la documentation relative aux Capitales. De plus, la Commission devrait rationaliser ses procédures de candidature et le paiement des fonds aux Capitales.

L'UE devrait offrir un niveau plus élevé de soutien financier à l'action des Capitales.

Le rapport recommande enfin qu'une nouvelle action de l'UE soit lancée avec pour objectif d'offrir des opportunités aux pays candidats et aux pays tiers qui permettront d'encourager l'intégration et de promouvoir la coopération culturelle.

## ***Organisation du rapport***

Le rapport est en deux parties. La première partie rappelle le contexte de l'action des Capitales, se livre à une analyse des tendances et des conclusions, et présente des observations et des conclusions sur l'action dans son ensemble. La seconde partie contient des rapports individuels de chacune des villes incluses dans cette étude. Les annexes de la première partie contiennent les budgets de chaque Capitale, les noms des personnes interrogées pour l'étude, une copie du questionnaire utilisé, les documents et textes législatifs de l'UE, une bibliographie de documents et autres informations rassemblées, ainsi qu'une suggestion de lectures et des cartes indiquant la localisation des villes de cette étude.

Palmer/Rae Associates  
août 2004

# Introduction

## ***Background***

Since the publication of the 1994 study on European Cities of Culture and Cultural Months, reports of the event have been compiled only on the initiative of individual cities themselves. Such reports are inconsistent, and many remain unpublished. There is no single source of information for organisers of European Cities of Culture, municipalities and governments, cultural operators, researchers and journalists to consult, and no available inventory or bibliography of published reports.

There has been substantial and growing interest in the scheme as a whole, and by individual cities that aspire to be nominated as a European Capital of Culture. A large number of articles in newspapers, journals, on radio and television, in research texts and in books on cultural cooperation and city development describe or allude to the European Cities of Culture initiative. Similar programmes have been developed in Canada, the USA and Latin America, Australia, Russia and the Arab world and others are under discussion in South-East Asia and China. As far as European cities are concerned, recent evidence in the UK where 12 cities openly competed for the UK nomination for 2008, and in Germany where 10 cities have declared their candidacy as potential Capitals of Culture for 2010, as well as the informal indications from the new Member States of the European Union wanting the opportunity to nominate cities in the future, clearly indicate the substantial and continuing interest in the scheme.

It is therefore timely and useful that the European Commission commissioned this study on the European Cities and Capitals of Culture and European Cultural Months. Although this study takes into account the findings of the earlier study of 1994, it concentrates primarily on the cities designated in the period 1995-2004.

## ***Terms of Reference of the Study***

This study was commissioned by the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture). The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To document past European Cities and Capitals of Culture, focusing in particular on the following aspects:
  - i. Organisation of the event (structures, responsibilities, staffing)
  - ii. Financing (public funding, sponsoring, other sources)
  - iii. Cultural impacts, to include:
    - a. Content and organisation of the cultural programme
    - b. European dimension
    - c. Effects on the cultural life of the city, surrounding region and country (if relevant)
  - iv. Economic Impacts
  - v. Visitor/Tourism Impacts
  - vi. Social Impacts
  - vii. Cooperation between cities when two or more cities organised the event simultaneously
  - viii. Other issues as appropriate

- To make observations on the effects of variations between cities, in relation to aspects listed above
  - To offer a factual analysis of the Capital of Culture events, based on documented information
2. The study aims to present findings in a manner to be of value to the European Commission as well as other EU institutions, to future cities when undertaking preparations for the Capital of Culture event, and to researchers, journalists and others interested in European Capitals of Culture and related topics.
  3. The study also intends to offer a basis for future policy-making in the field.

### ***Timing and Length of the Study***

The European Commission specified that the study must be completed within a period of 6 months, and comprise approximately 200 working days. This timeframe placed certain constraints on the research methodology. The study began on 28 December 2003, and the final report was submitted to the Commission on 28 June 2004.

### ***Methodology***

This study is intended to update the report published in 1994 that examined the first 10 years of the European City of Culture action, in order to complete the documentation of the event.

From the specifications that were established by the Commission, the study was to focus on factual information, documentation and analysis, and not to enter into detailed evaluations of cities or the entire Capital of Culture scheme that would necessitate further research. Similarly, the complexity of the Capital of Culture event, which has multiple objectives and outcomes, makes judgements of overall success and the merits of one city as against another superficial and misleading.

Information was gathered from all of the 21 cities that had been designated European Cities of Culture in the period 1995-2004 and 8 cities that had hosted Cultural Months during that same period. In addition, a survey of the 10 Cities of Culture and a review of the 3 cities hosting Cultural Months in the period covered by the earlier study (1985-1994) was undertaken, mainly to update views on longer-term impacts and legacies. Therefore, the research includes data collected from 40 cities and spanning a period of 19 years.

From the research experience of this study and the 1994 study it is clear that:

- The specialist units often created to manage the City and Capital of Culture events have been disbanded in most cases, and the individuals involved have moved on to other positions, and often other locations. This has meant that the tracking down of key contacts and respondents has been a complex exercise.
- Many municipalities, including city administrations and other relevant agencies (such as tourist boards and arts councils) of cities have changed in personnel and function, and often do not have an organised archive of material. In many cases they have not maintained a continuing interest in the Capital of Culture.
- The quality and comprehensiveness of research data varied considerably from city to city.

Due to the variable quality of data and amounts of available information in cities, sound comparisons between cities have often been difficult to draw. However, attempts have been made wherever possible to comment on trends, similarities and differences between cities.

This study has used primarily the following methods of data collection:

- Identifying and, whenever possible, gathering and reviewing available documentation that has been published and any archival material that has been retained by each city in relation to its City or Capital of Culture/Cultural Month event. This has included where possible strategy papers, programmes, final reports, promotional material and project catalogues.
- Identifying and, wherever possible, gathering and reviewing available published analyses and research undertaken by municipalities, tourist boards, universities and other academic institutions, relevant agencies and other bodies in respect of Capital of Culture and Cultural Month events. This study has gathered over 250 publications from designated Capitals of Culture and Cultural Months 1985-2004 and identified over 300 references to reports, theses and studies relating to Capitals of Culture, major cultural events, the role of culture in economic development and tourism, and related topics. A list of all publications appears in Annexes V, VI and VII.
- Collecting information and data by using a comprehensive questionnaire (Annex II). An abbreviated version focusing on long-term impacts was developed for the cities of culture that took place from 1985-1994. Questionnaires were sent to 412 people in 40 cities covered by this report, which could be accessed and completed on-line via internet or as a Word document. At the date of concluding the study, 163 completed questionnaires had been submitted, representing a response rate of 40%, and considered to be a strong response in relation to such a study.
- Interviewing key informants in each city. Interviews were carried out through personal meetings (visits were made to 20 cities) and telephone discussions, and were based on a prepared list of topics. All of the interviews were confidential and whenever possible recorded. 169 interviews took place.
- Respondents (questionnaires and interviews) included people who worked for the cultural year/month, representatives from the city and other public authorities, tourist boards, cultural operators, experts/academics and journalists. Attempts were made to ensure that the respondents for each city were balanced in terms of experience and interests, of who had access to factual information and key documents, and of reflecting differing points of view in relation to the research topics. The study collected both quantitative and factual information, as well as qualitative points of view. A list of all respondents is included in Annex III.

The work plan for the study comprised 7 main tasks:

- i. Identifying and making contacts and requesting information
- ii. Document and literature search and trends-data analysis
- iii. Fieldwork
- iv. Scrutiny and assessment of data
- v. Assembly of data
- vi. Commentary on data
- vii. Drafting the text

The report is presented in two parts. The first part contains the background to the ECOC action, an analysis of trends and findings, and offers observations and conclusions to the ECOC scheme as a whole. Individual cities have been cited in Part 1 to illustrate particular points. The second part contains individual reports of each city that formed part of the study. The annexes to Part I contain the names of respondents to the study, a copy of the on-line questionnaire that was used, EU documents and legislation, a bibliography of documents and other information gathered, as well as a suggested reading list and maps.



## ***History, Procedures, Designations***

The initial scheme of 'The European City of Culture' was initially not an EU Community Action but launched at inter-governmental level in 1985 by the Council of Ministers (Resolution 85/C153/O2), on the basis that Europe has been and remains the focus of rich and varied cultural activities, and that cities have played an important role in the creation and spread of Europe's cultures. The scheme was established at the suggestion of the Greek Minister of Culture at that time (Melina Mercouris), and was agreed by the Culture Ministers at an informal meeting. Melina Mercouris argued that "it was time for our (the Culture Ministers) voice to be heard as loud as that of the technocrats. Culture, art and creativity are not less important than technology, commerce and the economy".

The aim of the first scheme of Cities of Culture was "to open up to the European public particular aspects of the culture of a city, region or country concerned, and to concentrate on the designated city a number of cultural contributions from other Member States" (Resolution 85/C153/O2). The original conception was that each year one Member State should nominate a city to organise the event, and that the states would follow each other in alphabetical order. While the alphabetical order of nominating states was not completely adhered to, a sequence of designations was made for the first full round of Member States, and the start of a second round.

The first 15 cities to be chosen (1985-1999) were:

<i>1985 Athens (Greece)</i>	<i>1993 Antwerp (Belgium)</i>
<i>1986 Florence (Italy)</i>	<i>1994 Lisbon (Portugal)</i>
<i>1987 Amsterdam (the Netherlands)</i>	<i>1995 Luxembourg (Luxembourg)</i>
<i>1988 Berlin (Germany)</i>	<i>1996 Copenhagen (Denmark)</i>
<i>1989 Paris (France)</i>	<i>1997 Thessaloniki (Greece)</i>
<i>1990 Glasgow (United Kingdom)</i>	<i>1998 Stockholm (Sweden)</i>
<i>1991 Dublin (Ireland)</i>	<i>1999 Weimar (Germany)</i>
<i>1992 Madrid (Spain)</i>	

In 1990, the Culture Ministers agreed to create a further event, a special "European Cultural Month", which was intended to respond to the widespread interest in the European Cities of Culture initiative, especially in cities outside the Community, taking into account the political changes in eastern and central Europe (Resolution 90/C 162/01). The Cultural Month event was launched in November 1990.

The first 9 cities to be chosen (1992-1999) were:

<i>1992 Cracow (Poland)</i>	<i>1996 St. Petersburg (Russia)</i>
<i>1993 Graz (Austria)</i>	<i>1997 Ljubljana (Slovenia)</i>
<i>1994 Budapest (Hungary)</i>	<i>1998 Linz (Austria) and Valletta (Malta)</i>
<i>1995 Nicosia (Cyprus)</i>	<i>1999 Plovdiv (Bulgaria)</i>

In 1992, the Council of Ministers arrived at certain conclusions concerning the choice of European Cities of Culture after 1996 (Resolutions 92/C 1501 and 92/C 336/02). This resolution proposed to alternate the selection between European Union cities and cities from other European countries, that cities should not be from the same geographical zone in consecutive years, that a balance should be struck between capital cities and provincial cities, and that a pair of cities could be designated jointly.

In 1994, a first study on the European Cities of Culture and the Cultural Months was published by the Network of Cultural Cities of Europe. This study presented case studies on each of the individual cities and general observations on the scheme.

For the year 2000, as an exception to the nomination of one city each year, nine cities were given the designation of European City of Culture. These cities were:

*Avignon (France)*

*Bergen (Norway)*

*Bologna (Italy)*

*Brussels (Belgium)*

*Cracow (Poland)*

*Helsinki (Finland)*

*Prague (Czech Republic)*

*Reykjavik (Iceland)*

*Santiago de Compostela<sup>1</sup> (Spain)*

Seven European Cities of Culture were agreed for the period 2001-2004, based on one or two nominated cities each year. These cities were:

*2001 Rotterdam (the Netherlands) and Porto (Portugal)*

*2002 Bruges (Belgium) and Salamanca (Spain)*

*2003 Graz (Austria)*

*2004 Genoa (Italy) and Lille (France)*

In addition, cities were invited to host Cultural Months:

*2001 Basel (Switzerland) and Riga (Latvia)*

*2003 St. Petersburg (Russia)*

In 1999, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union agreed that the European City of Culture scheme should be given the status of a Community Action, under Decision 1419/1999/EC. A new selection procedure was determined and planning and evaluation criteria were outlined. The Decision states in Article 3 that the nomination shall include a cultural project of European dimension, based principally on cultural cooperation, in accordance with the objectives and action provided for by Article 151 of the Treaty. The Council, acting unanimously on a recommendation from the Commission, would officially designate the nominated city, bearing in mind the desirability of four years' preparation time. The designated city would be expected to "organise a programme of cultural events highlighting the city's own culture and cultural heritage as well as its place in the common cultural heritage, and involving people concerned with cultural activities from other European countries with a view to establishing lasting cooperation". In addition, designated cities were asked to take into account planning and evaluation criteria that were set out in Annex II of the Decision which includes a list of 12 different possible elements of designated cities' programmes that reflect the large range of ECOC objectives such

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<sup>1</sup> Referred to as Santiago in this report.

as the promotion of shared artistic movements, the organisation of activities designed to encourage artistic innovation, the contribution to the development of economic activity and the need to develop high-quality and innovative cultural tourism. Cities could choose to involve their surrounding region in the programme. A linkage between the cities hosting the event in the same year was to be made. The Decision also provides for non-member countries to participate in the action (Article 4). The Commission is also obliged to produce a report each year evaluating the results of the previous year's event, including an analysis of the organisers. This Decision appears as Annex IV to this study.

A list of EU Member States responsible for the nomination of European Capitals of Culture 2005-2019 was agreed, although the order of nominations has altered somewhat. At the time of compiling this report, the following cities have been designated European Capitals of Culture 2005-2008:

*2005 Cork (Ireland)*

*2006 Patras (Greece)*

*2007 Luxembourg (Luxembourg) and Sibiu (Romania)*

*2008 Liverpool (United Kingdom) and Stavanger (Norway)*

In November 2003, the Commission submitted to the Parliament, pursuant to Articles 251(2) and 151(5) of the EC Treaty, a proposal for amending Decision 1419/1999/EC that established a Community Action for the 'European Capital of Culture' event for the years 2005 to 2019 (COM(2003) 700-2003/0274(COD)). The draft resolution proposed that from 2009 onwards two European Capitals of Culture should be appointed each year in response to the arrival of the new Member States.

Furthermore, the resolution proposes that each nominating Member State must submit at least two cities to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions no later than four years before the event is due to begin, and may be accompanied by a recommendation.

Similar to the previous Decision, the resolution proposed that a selection panel made up of experts would review and issue a report on the nominations, judged against the objectives of the action. As before, the Council would officially designate the city as 'European Capital of Culture'. This resolution will be adopted, rejected or amended at a subsequent meeting of the Parliament.

The list of nominating Member States (2009-2019) appears in Annex IV, although the list can be altered by mutual agreement.

As it has developed, the European Cities and Capitals of Culture and Cultural Months schemes have touched several other areas of Commission competence, including tourism, economic and social issues, urban regeneration, education and training.

## ***Submission of Nominations***

Throughout the history of the Capital of Culture, nominating governments have been asked to submit dossiers in support of applications. For designations from 2005, these dossiers have been assessed by a selection panel, who also hears a presentation from representatives from the cities nominated, and who can request a visit to these cities, if required. The panel then publishes a report, which is duly considered by the Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the Commission, who makes a recommendation to the Council of Ministers who then takes the final decision.

Before the designation of cities from 2005 onwards, no guidelines were given for the production of dossiers by candidate cities; the examination of dossiers has revealed very different approaches. Certain cities have concentrated on their historical importance and past achievements, whilst others submitted detailed proposals for cultural programmes that will take place during the cultural year, and assessments of likely impacts. They vary in length from 20 to over 200 pages.

For the cities designated between 1995-2004, prior to the introduction of a selection panel that submits a report, the nomination process led to substantial lobbying to the Council, the Parliament and the

Commission on the part of certain candidates. Thessaloniki, although not competing with other cities, lobbied extensively for the designation of 1997, to start a new cycle of Cities of Culture. The designation of 1998 was contested by both Stockholm and Prague, and Stockholm was eventually chosen. Certain cities that applied but were not nominated for the years they requested were designated as Cultural Capitals in later years. There was arbitrariness in the selection of one or two Capitals of Culture each year, with nominated cities having no prior warning of the decision, although there was an expectation of their collaborating with one another. The same was true for the 'matching' of cities with cultural years to cities with cultural months.

For the year 2000, nine cities were designated as European Cities of Culture, as a symbolic gesture to the millennium year. These cities were asked to coordinate their programme and define a common theme for the event. The reaction varied from very positive responses to considerable disappointment by individual cities, many of whom had requested a single rather than a combined designation. The nine cities did form an international association, "The Association of European Cities of Culture and Cultural Months of the Year 2000 (AECC)". The aim of this association was to help promote and develop common projects between the nine cities. In 2001, the Association published a final report of its activities "European Cities of Culture for the Year 2000".

For 2001 two cultural cities and two cultural months were selected (Rotterdam/Porto and Basel/Riga). For 2002 and 2004 two cities shared the title of cultural city each year (Bruges/Salamanca; Genoa/Lille). In 2003, there was one cultural city and one cultural month (Graz and St. Petersburg).

Comments on the procedures for selecting, designating and evaluating European Cities/Capitals of Culture appear in a later section.

### ***European Cities of Culture/European Capitals of Culture***

Although the official procedures for selecting cities in the period 1985-2004 refers to the designation of "European Cities of Culture", many cities themselves simply altered the title to "European Capital of Culture". The Culture 2000 programme of the EU, which foresees a financial contribution for the cities designated from 2000 to 2006, refers to the event as the "European Capital of Culture". In this report, the terms 'ECOC' and 'cultural year' refer to both European Cities of Culture and European Capitals of Culture. They will be used to refer to one or more cities that have been awarded the title.

### ***European Cultural Month***

The scheme of European Cultural Months was launched in 1990. The title for the event in each designated city was "Europe in..... (the city)" and the date. In this report the terms 'ECM' and 'cultural month' refer to this scheme. If cities chose to do so, the event could last for longer than a month.

There was an intention that some link could be established between the European City of Culture and the city hosting a cultural month each year.

The scheme of cultural months is not a community action and remains an intergovernmental initiative. No cities have been invited to host cultural months after 2003.

Although not the major focus of this study, some data was collected from the cities that hosted cultural months. Information gathered varied considerably from city to city; some provided detailed reports while in others there was little trace of what took place. In terms of this study, we were advised by the Commission that since no future cultural months are planned detailed reviews of cultural months were not considered a priority. Brief assessments of each of those cities are found in Part II of the report and general observations about the initiative of cultural months as a whole are found in Part I in the section "Cultural Months 1995-2003", and in the conclusions to this study.

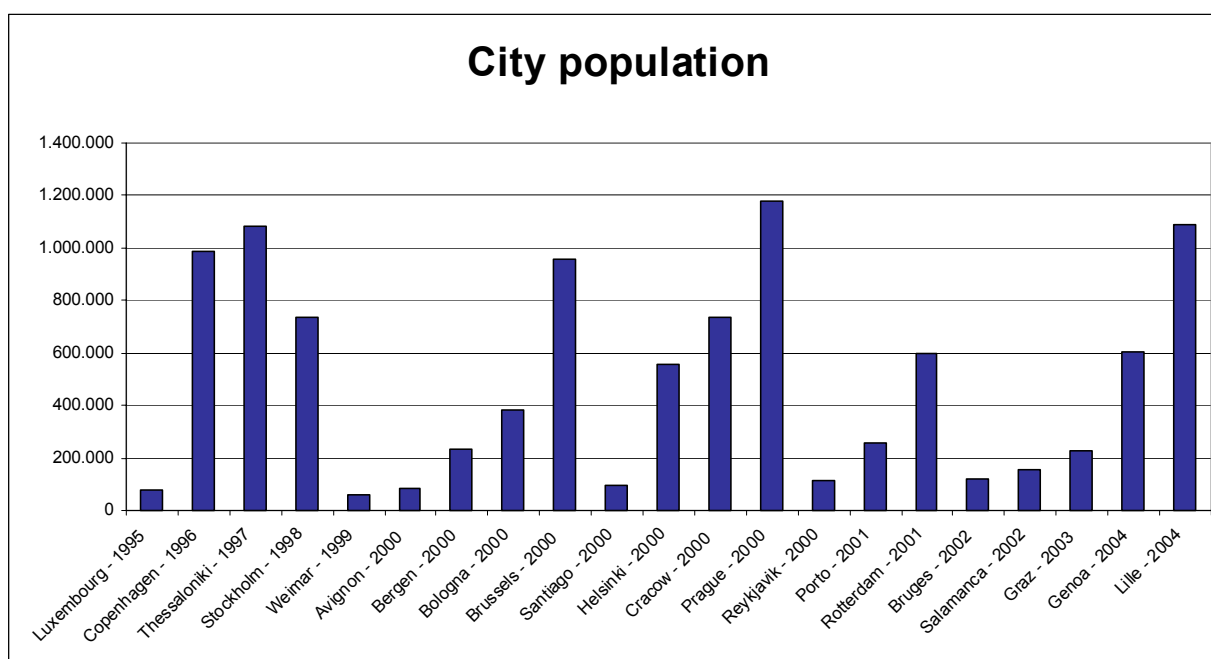
### ***The Choice of Cities 1995-2004***

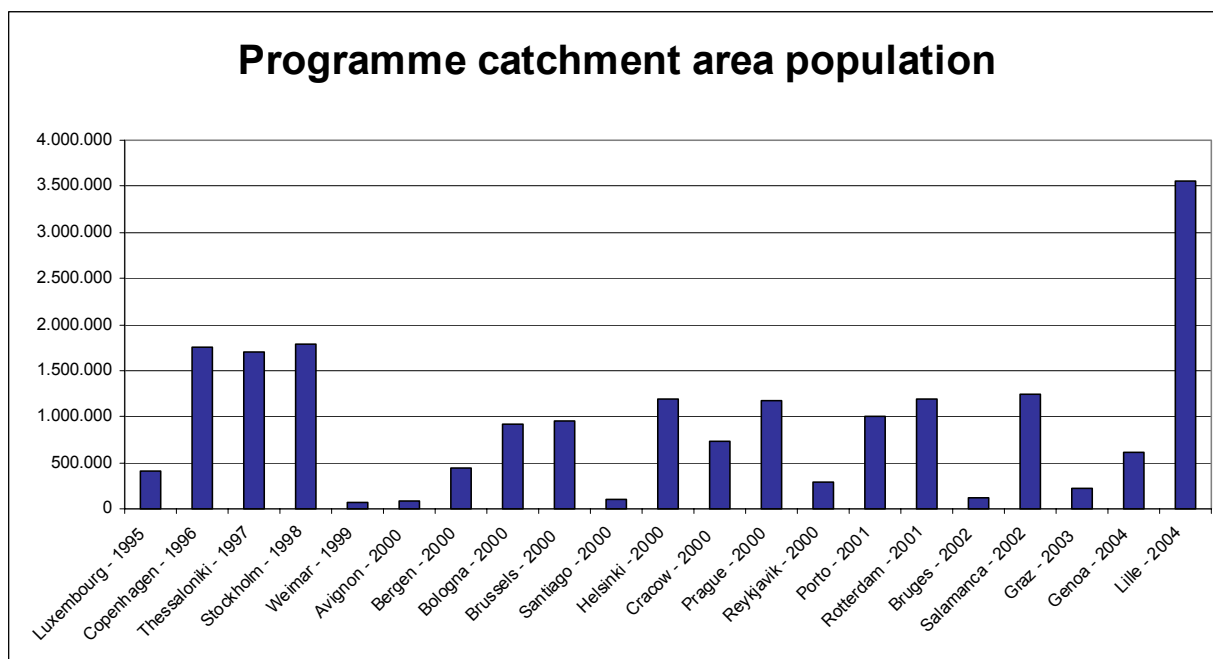
As indicated earlier, the choice of the European Cities of Culture 1985-1994 was essentially a matter for the national authorities in each Member State. This resulted in nominations of capital cities (Athens,

Amsterdam, Dublin, Madrid etc.), historical cultural centres (Florence) and major metropolitan centres (Glasgow, Antwerp).

From 1995-2004, the choice of cities also depended on the nominations by national governments. Until 1996, governments opted to nominate their capital cities (Luxembourg, but also encompassing the whole state, and Copenhagen). From 1997, the situation changed. Member states already had nominated their capital cities during the first round of the scheme, and needed to offer the nomination of another city. Also, in the absence of any clear order for the nominations, there was competition between nominations by different Member States, where the Council of Ministers made choices (of one, two or more cities).

As in the previous period, the designations were given to a range of different types of cities. Between 1995 and 2004, designations were almost evenly divided between capital cities, historical cultural centres, major metropolitan centres, and regional centres, although certain cities acknowledge multiple identities. About half of those cities defined themselves as major tourist destinations. Most indicated that they had already hosted large-scale events that varied from World and European Sports Championships, European summits and major conferences, trade fairs and festivals. Populations of these cities varied from 62.500 (Weimar) to 1.118.000 (Prague). Many ECOC cultural programmes targetted populations beyond the city boundaries. The estimated programme catchment area population for each ECOC is indicated in the second chart below.





None of the national governments in this period organised internal selection competitions (the only example in the period 1985-1994 was the UK), and nominations were based on views held by the national authorities or ministers, sometimes responding to lobbying by particular cities who wanted the designation.

Researchers have attempted to draw conclusions about the relationship of a city's population size, characteristics and experience in hosting previous events to the delivery of the City of Culture event. We have not been able to discern any consistent patterns. Capitals, non-capitals, large and small cities, historic/cultural centres, industrial and port cities all seem to share, more or less equally, successes and failures. It is neither the size nor the status of a city that is a determining factor in the outcome of the event.

However, in all cities there are different challenges and issues. Large metropolitan cities, for example, face issues of visibility of the ECOC event, attendance, finance, the scale of already existing cultural activity and infrastructure. Smaller cities often struggled to attract resources, had insufficient facilities and sometimes problems in transportation (e.g. no major airport or rail links). It is the approaches in dealing with such issues that have defined the relative success of the cultural year. There is a complex matrix of issues for any city of culture to deal with. Different approaches are discussed in other sections, and in the individual city reports that follow in Part II of the report.

# Aims and Objectives

## Main Motivation

In the first inter-governmental Resolution, and then in the decision of the Parliament and the Council, the broad aim of the ECOC initiative has been defined in terms such as “to open up to the European public particular aspects of the culture of the city, region or country concerned” and “to highlight the richness and diversity of European culture and the features they share as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens”. Each ECOC has re-interpreted this aim in relation to the city’s broad vision and aspirations for the designation. The very general wording has made it possible for each ECOC to reinterpret the broad aim in its own terms. From the very inception of ECOC, no city used the official wording when expressing this aim and either added to or most often replaced the EU’s stated aim with a series of alternative aims more aligned to its particular interests and ambitions. The first ECOC Athens in 1985 wished “to provide a substantial stimulus to Greek culture”. Florence (1986) intended to use the opportunity “to reinforce its image”. Amsterdam (1987) wished “to investigate the cultural identity of the various countries of Europe and how these countries could influence each other”. The designation of Glasgow (1990) was a turning point for the ambitions of ECOC in that the city set multiple aims with specific reference to cultural, economic and social goals. Almost all cities that followed have taken a similar approach, although the emphasis and priorities have altered from city to city.

It is interesting to note the distinctions between the main motivation behind a city bidding to become a Capital of Culture, the ‘official mission’ as stated by the city, and the list of objectives that were mentioned by that city. This may reflect the fact that precise aims were not formulated clearly by certain cities when planning their approaches to the cultural year, although most cities did go through a process of defining their objectives. Further comments on the differences between the rhetoric used in such statements and the reality of the outcome appear in the section of this report dealing with the social perspectives of ECOC, where the differences between visions and reality are particularly striking.

In terms of the motivation for bidding, the most frequent replies from cities related to a desire “to promote cultural tourism”, “to renew the city’s image”, “to make the city better known” and “to use the designation as a tool for regeneration” or “as part of a strategy of economic recovery”. There were a few cities whose main motivation emphasised “the cultural”, expressed in terms like “to develop the artistic and cultural potential of the city”, “to crown years of municipal strengthening of culture”, or “to improve the city’s cultural infrastructure”. However, the vast majority focused on issues of “selling the city” and “putting the city on the map”.

In a city like Bologna, a key motivation behind the ECOC was the recognition of the city’s long cultural history and the need to reinforce its image abroad. Bruges wanted to expand its image as a medieval centre to encompass contemporary culture. In Helsinki, following the fall of the Iron Curtain and the recession of the 90s, a key motivation of ECOC was to reposition Finland.

In a small number of cities, the motivation was political, such as Thessaloniki where the government wanted to demonstrate a commitment to Macedonia through a large investment in Thessaloniki developing into a cultural centre of the region. In Prague, a primary motivation was to promote Prague and the Czech Republic before entry into the EU.

## Mission and Objectives

Respondents from each city were asked to express in a few words the official mission of the city’s cultural year. It is interesting to note that even within the same city there were often significant variations between informed respondents in the statement of the main mission. Here are several examples of the most commonly stated missions for each city by respondents from that city.

*“To become the metropolis of the Balkans”* (Thessaloniki 1997)

*“To build bridges, create synergies between the artists of different linguistic communities and be a motor for long-term development”* (Brussels 2000)

*“To put Graz on Europe’s cultural map and to turn around the life in the city through a programme based on a wide notion of culture that makes people understand and actually feel that culture is part of everyday life” (Graz 2003)*

*“To present to the international public the unique role of Cracow as a cultural centre for Poland and Europe” (Cracow 2000)*

*“To show that Santiago is more than just a Pilgrimage, and to bring European culture to Santiago’s citizens” (Santiago 2000)*

*“To redefine its cultural identity as a city with many vocations, where port, industry, touristic and cultural activities coexist” (Genoa 2004)*

Lille was particularly striking in its formal mission, which reads more as a statement of vision:

*“We dreamt of Lille as a spaceship changing the fabric of time, a place where everyone can live at their own pace, cross through exotic parallel worlds, stroll through the new frontiers opened up and already dissolved....a process of metamorphosis with the ability and energy to perpetually remodel the world”*

Some of the mission statements focus on inhabitants of the city and internal change; others on influencing the external perception or role of the city.

The specific objectives set out by ECOC were articulated in different ways by different ECOC, which is understandable. The most useful in terms of helping to guide the priorities and management of the cultural year were objectives that were specific, easily understood by the partners involved, communicated widely, challenging, attainable and measurable. Many of the ECOC objectives do not adhere to this standard. Some are vague; many are not attainable (except in the long run) and rarely is there any consideration given to their measurability.

Dealing with multiple objectives, varying from developing talents of local artists to attracting visitors, was a challenge for most cities. Although many cities identified similar objectives, when asked to rate each objective as having a high or low priority, there were distinct differences between cities. For certain cities, objectives relating to social cohesion were high priorities (Rotterdam, Brussels); while for other cities these were lower down on the priority list. Although the majority of cities ranked attracting visitors as a high priority, there were other cities (possibly with already high tourism figures) where this objective was of less importance (Bruges, Prague).

Examining all cities in this study together, the following objectives were generally ranked as having the highest priority:

- Raising the international profile of the city/region
- Running a programme of cultural activities and arts events
- Long-term cultural development of the city/region
- Attracting visitors from own country and other countries
- Enhancing feelings of pride and self-confidence
- Growing and expanding the local audience for culture
- Creating a festive atmosphere

The most common objectives rated as having medium priority were:

- Making improvements to cultural infrastructure



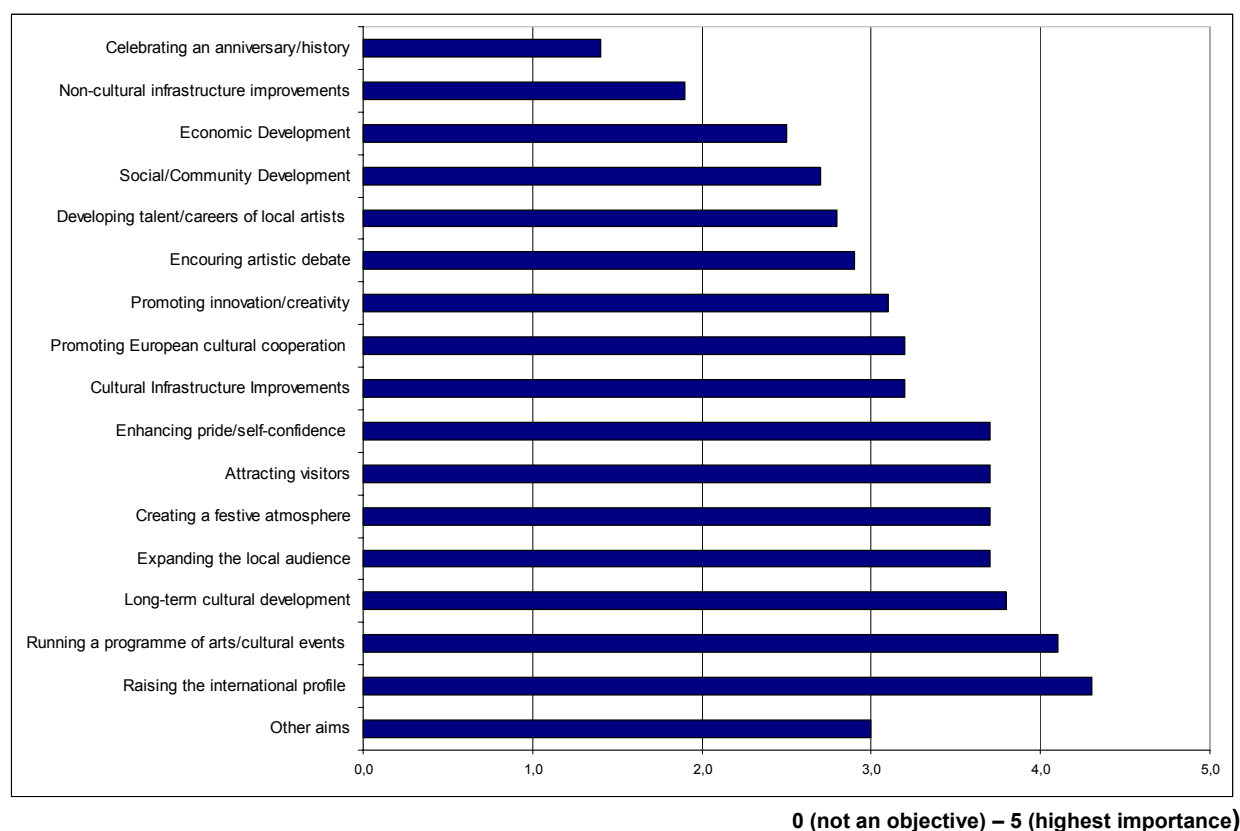
- Developing relationships with other European cities/regions and promoting European cultural cooperation
- Promoting creativity and innovation
- Developing the careers/talents of local artists

The objectives most frequently considered to be of lower priority were:

- Building social cohesion/community development
- Economic development
- Encouraging artistic and philosophical debate
- Improvements to non-cultural infrastructure
- Celebrating an anniversary or history of the city/region

However, as stated above, there were ECOC which almost inversed this list of priorities. For example, in Brussels, building social cohesion and community development was a high priority, and attracting visitors was a low priority. For Stockholm, encouraging artistic and philosophical debate was a high priority and the development of cultural infrastructure was low. In Porto economic development and improvements to non-cultural infrastructure were as important objectives as running a programme of cultural events.

### Rating of Aims and Objectives - Averages of All ECOC



## **Consultation**

What emerged from our findings was that each city had to go through a process of defining its own objectives. All cities, without exception, did this, although the processes varied considerably. Most cities canvassed and took on board the views of politicians (or at least the politicians that were in power at the time) and cultural organisations (only the major institutions for some; almost the entire cultural sector for others). About half the cities consulted the tourism sector and key community organisations. Only very few entered into consultation with either the business community or local residents.

Although many cities report having consulted, it is not always clear what impact these consultations had on the organisers' thinking. Copenhagen is an exception to this general rule, since an extensive consultation process including 30 one-day seminars led to the publication of a White Paper in 1992 outlining the aims and objectives that included a commitment to wide participation, involving particular groups and bringing out "human growth and creativity".

Consultations were handled in different ways by different cities. Most held meetings and discussions or invited written submissions. Several mounted media campaigns and special projects. A number of ECOC set up special commissions comprising politicians and representatives from the cultural sector (Prague, Porto). In some cities it was the politicians who handled the consultations; in others it was the director of the cultural year or an official within the municipality that carried out the consultation.

The project selection process also varied, especially in how widely it was extended. Some cities such as Weimar kept a closer hold on the thinking and decision-making. Other ECOC went to great lengths to prompt suggestions from the public and community organisations; Helsinki had to encourage cultural institutions to take part in a process that some saw as inappropriately broad. The cities who aimed to develop inclusive programmes often invested time and resources in dialogue with a wide range of potential partners. Rotterdam helped set up partnerships between arts organisations and community groups who had not considered becoming involved; Helsinki supported groups in a pre-selection project development process.

The degree to which different interest groups were (or felt) included in the planning of the year had a continuing influence. In Stockholm, for example, some arts groups criticised what they saw as a 'top-down' approach. In Weimar, controversy arose because of a fear of potential negative impacts on the community, such as rising prices and rents, as well as the inconvenience caused by infrastructural projects. It is probably impossible to consult enough to satisfy everyone, but the frequent tensions in this area suggest that cities are struggling to balance the demands of international arts festival programming and local cultural development. The experience of Bergen highlights universal tensions: a common criticism was the lack of high-profile, international projects in the programme; however, some organisers pointed to the lack of money for large-scale projects and wanted the programme to be even more focused on local, small-scale projects.

The importance of defining and then agreeing objectives was stressed by most cities, bearing in mind that defining and agreeing are two inter-linked processes, but that one does not by necessity always follow the other. Many of the disputes, tensions, confusions and disappointments arising in ECOC can be traced back to the period of setting objectives. Cities that avoided debate and discussion about objectives by merely combining all proposals by all partners in order to keep all interested parties involved, that opted for ill-defined or ambiguous objectives, or that were unable to go through a process of reconciling different views about the objectives of the ECOC and agreeing clear priorities with all the partners (or having too many or no priorities) tended to be the cities which experienced political and organisational difficulties during the cultural year.

Determining objectives supported by all seems to be a process that takes time. Once objectives are agreed and priorities are set, the governing and organisational structures must reflect these in their decisions. Several ECOC had stated objectives and priorities, but these were often overlooked when determining projects and events or deciding on precise financial allocations.

**Advice**

The importance of this process of establishing and agreeing aims and objectives cannot be overestimated, and can help to create a strong platform for partnership.

Objectives of each ECOC should follow from its broad mission, and be compatible, evaluating carefully where the attainment of one objective prevents the attainment of another. Objectives should be:

- Limited in number and prioritised
- Ambitious but achievable
- Measurable in some way
- Kept under review
- Integrated into the entire process of planning.

# Operational Features of Designated Cities

## ***Governance Structures and Boards***

Governance has been a central issue for all ECOC. Either in the period of submitting the nomination to the EU, or after being awarded the designation, each ECOC has had to decide on its approach to managing the cultural year. Generally the municipality (Bologna, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Graz) but sometimes national authorities (Thessaloniki) and sometimes the two jointly (Reykjavik, Luxembourg) determined the model to use, influenced both by the experience of past ECOC and also the legal system of the country concerned.

ECOC in this study opted for one of three main models for the overall governance of their cultural years:

- An autonomous structure with legal status as a not-for-profit company, trust or foundation
- Direct administration within an existing local government structure (municipality, mayor's office etc)
- A mixed model comprising both above

Whilst most of the cities chose an autonomous legal structure, a few operated a one of the other two models. Two cities (Avignon and Santiago) managed the operation from within the municipality. A mixed model was adopted by Cracow that began with an autonomous structure and after one year changed to direct administration within the municipality.

Whatever the form, on average, the governing structure was established 3-4 years before the cultural year took place. Where there were independent Boards, the size of these Boards varied considerably, with memberships varying from 6 (Bologna, Genoa) to 42 (Lille). Some of the larger Boards created smaller executive Boards (Salamanca, Porto) and Lille divided the Board into three different 'colleges' (institutional, economic and cultural). The average Board membership of ECOC was 15.

Smaller Boards tended to have fewer problems in relation to its functioning. However, the priority of many Boards was not operational effectiveness but political balance and representation. In Bergen, the Board doubled in size from what had been originally planned, mainly to represent the range of political interests.

Membership of the governing structure also varied in representation, although most frequently it was a mix of politicians from city and regional authorities, representatives from national authorities, cultural institutions, universities and foundations. Lille was quite unique in having members on the Board that represented municipalities across the region and from neighbouring Belgium. Most Boards were chaired by the Mayor of the city concerned, although there were exceptions such as the Chair of Reykjavik 2000 who was the Rector of the University of Iceland and the Chair of Rotterdam 2001 who came from the private sector. With only three exceptions, the Chairs of Boards were male.

Although there were variations in the precise roles of Boards, the most frequently cited responsibilities were:

- To take financial decisions and have overall financial control
- To develop policies and strategies
- To take decisions about cultural projects
- To raise funds and sponsorship

There were several Boards who also monitored progress, evaluated projects and programmes, and undertook media and public relations tasks. In three cities (Thessaloniki, Porto, Genoa) the Board managed programmes of physical construction and infrastructure.

It cannot be said that there is an ideal model for a governance structure of ECOC, although the autonomous structure was most frequently cited as having the most advantages in developing partnerships and focusing on delivering the event. The majority of structures eventually disbanded following the cultural year, or after their final legal and financial responsibilities were discharged, however a number of structures were transformed into bodies to continue the work.

## ***Problems and Issues***

Almost all cities reported that there were problems with their governing structures (only one city reported that there were no problems). The most common problems identified were:

- That the Board was dominated by political interests
- That there were some difficulties with relationships between Board members and the operational management team
- That the Board did not fully represent cultural interests
- That the structure was too large

A few cities cited the lack of clarity in Board responsibilities and the slowness and erratic nature of decision-making. Other cities mentioned the problem of the Board becoming a 'battleground' for conflicting political interests, priorities and egos.

A Board that is constituted as an autonomous structure does not imply that it is immune to political pressures and interests. In the majority of Boards, the members were either politicians or official representations from the different levels of government that were financing the cultural year. Although politically independent, most Boards had very close links with the municipality; as stated, most were chaired by the Mayor of the city. Their primary role was often to protect the interests of the body they were representing, which is a different function than offering skills required for governing a successful ECOC. Political differences were often a main source of frustration in the effective working of the Board (Brussels). In Copenhagen, a large Board comprised representatives from many public bodies and several respondents commented on how many Board meetings became drawn-out fights over the geographical distribution of funds and projects.

The precise role of the Board was not clearly worked out in the majority of cities, creating overlaps and confusions with the responsibilities of the operational management structures. There can be significant conflict if roles and responsibilities are not clarified.

A Board may determine overall policy, but in general, it is the experienced professional management that oversees all the day-to-day operations that implement the policies. The Board is accountable to the public and funders and the management is accountable to the Board. The Board makes a commitment to and secures the finances of the organisation. The management operates within the approved budget and helps in the process of generating finance. The Board is responsible for continuity, sustainability and long-term effects of the cultural year. The management provides support to achieve this goal. Rarely did ECOC Boards spend the time to clearly work out a *modus operandi* for their work.

Boards where membership was drawn entirely or primarily from government bodies were often influenced by political changes in the city; in certain cases, when the governance of the city shifted politically, members of the Board also changed. This appears to have created substantial difficulties in the management of relatively short-term projects like ECOC. In Graz, for example, the city council changed at the beginning of their cultural year in January 2003, and members of the Board were also changed, although the former mayor and councillor for culture remained on the Board. The Board that

originally developed policy for Graz was not the same Board that was in place at the end, which may help explain the problems that Graz is now facing to sustain the impacts of its cultural year. In Stockholm there were 4 different Vice-Chairs of the Board between 1994 and 1999.

Rotterdam was an exception to the general trend of public authority-heavy Boards. The Rotterdam Board comprised representatives from the private sector, cultural institutions, employers' federations, national parliament, and planning and architectural experts. However, this model remains vulnerable to other difficulties that all Boards can experience; difficulties related to strong personalities of Board members or disagreements with proposals put to them by their operational managements.

## **Advice**

The most frequently stated advice about improving ECOC governing structures were as follows:

- Develop a small independent structure with a clear role and common direction
- Ensure strong leadership
- Appoint members who have appropriate expertise and have good relationships with public authorities, the cultural sector and business interests

The importance of strong Board leadership of ECOC cannot be underestimated. Whether this is the Mayor, a business leader, an academic or a cultural expert, the key qualities of leadership: inspiring and motivating Board members and staff, managing conflicts and being a strong spokesperson identified with the ECOC are essential. The relationship between the Chair of the Board and the operational Director of the ECOC (Managing director, Artistic director) is essential to the effective functioning of the organisation. It is interesting to note the large number of ECOC where such a conflict occurred, and the negative impact this had on the effective management of the year, on Board and staff morale, on negative press and media coverage, and even on the health of the individuals themselves.

Working within a very complex political environment, with multiple agendas at play, it is a fundamental challenge to ECOC to arrive at a governance structure (one issue) with a membership (another issue) that is best suited to oversee the objectives of the cultural year. Perfection may be out of reach for certain cities that are characterised by political complexity, but effectiveness is attainable if time and energy are focused not only on the construction of the legal framework and broad objectives but on the building of strong alliances between members, on the processes of meetings, defining precise roles, and clarifying in considerable detail the division of responsibilities between the Board and the professional staff of the ECOC organisation.

## **Involvement of Public Authorities**

In addition to the municipality of the designated city, other public authorities were directly involved in the organisation or delivery of the cultural year. Most frequently this was the region or province surrounding the city, and national governments or state departments of the country concerned. The types and scale of involvement varied but included membership of the governing structure, funding and finance, cultural programming, tourism and economic development and infrastructure development. About a third of the cities involved municipalities surrounding the city itself (Helsinki, Copenhagen) and several involved the municipalities of other cities in the country (Reykjavik). A small number of ECOC made links with all regions of the country, for example Stockholm where the cultural programme was spread over the entire country. Lille made partnerships with municipalities in the region and across the border in Belgium. As indicated in the section on governance structure, a number of ECOC had strong representation from national ministries. In Thessaloniki three government ministers were observers to the Board and influenced the direction and priorities of the organisation by means of allocating funds to certain projects and programmes and not others.

Only one city reported that there were no problems in the relationships between the different bodies involved in the cultural year. Most cities cited tensions relating to political differences and financial issues and conflicts arising over priorities and the selection of cultural projects. Financial issues encompassed the amounts of funding, the conditions attached to funding, and the timing of payments.

One complex case concerning the mix of public authorities involved was Brussels, where the major responsibilities for culture are divided between the French and Flemish communities, where the city of Brussels is organised as 19 separate communes each with its own mayor and administration (including responsibility for culture), and where there is also a Brussels Region (one of the 3 regions of Belgium).

It is not possible to ignore the political environment that can deeply affect the organisation and delivery of a cultural year and many respondents from different cities commented on this point. It is possible to see negative fallout from two or more public authorities (sometimes with different political views and priorities) who are partners of a major project but who cannot agree, or who even attempt to undermine each other. Other problems can arise in terms of determining which authority (or individual politician) is given the credit for or identified with a particular project, and in negotiating varying levels of financial contribution to different projects.

Organisations managing programmes of the cultural year in about half the cities studied indicated that issues surrounding 'political interference' created substantial problems. Such 'interference' from the points of view of the organisers included incidents where politicians insisted on the inclusion of projects that were of particular interest to them or which took place in the neighbourhoods which elected them, the allocation of funds from the ECOC budget to support particular initiatives with which they were associated, personal priorities for infrastructure improvements, the selection of images for media campaigns, or even the 'censorship' of controversial projects.

Many of the public authorities (at municipal, regional and national levels) that contributed finance to the cultural year believed it was fair to impose conditions and assert their priorities. Some argued that although they respected the need for independent artistic judgments, it was elected politicians who had a democratic mandate to act in the best interests of their electorate, which included the choice of projects. There are huge differences in the political culture of Member States; in some it is the publicly elected authorities who directly determine cultural priorities and programmes; in others, authorities delegate the making of such decisions to entirely independent arts councils and cultural organisations. Politicians may also wish to influence decisions indirectly by setting conditions and through systems of monitoring and evaluation. Our findings indicate that whatever the system, the involvement of public authorities often caused tension and friction in the management of cultural capitals. This issue of the precise roles and responsibilities of individual politicians and public bodies should be addressed clearly.

## **Advice**

Many respondents offered advice concerning the role of public authorities in ECOC. Although there were certain respondents who believed that 'public authorities should offer money and leave everything else to the organisers', the most frequently stated views were:

- The need for open discussion of issues and potential problems between public authorities
- The need for agreement to a common set of objectives, priorities and procedures
- Consensus must be reached in relation to policies and strategies, but specific decisions about projects and programmes should be delegated to professional and expert operational structures

## **Operational Structure**

For this study, the operational structure was defined as the body or bodies that managed the day-to-day operations of the cultural year. All cities developed special structures for this task. Although the precise responsibilities of the structures varied from city to city, the most frequently cited tasks were:

- Coordination of the cultural programme
- Initiation and development of projects
- Communication, promotion and marketing

- Finance and budgeting
- Fundraising/sponsorship

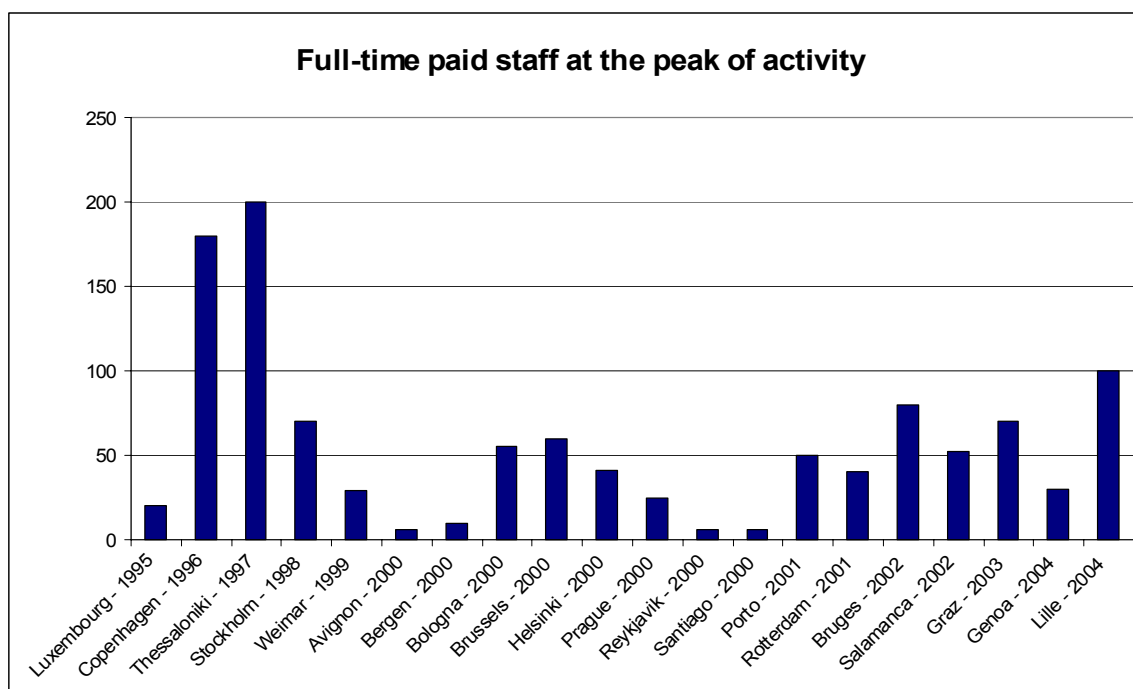
In a few cities, such structures also managed tourism and economic development issues, social and community development and infrastructure works (Porto, Thessaloniki), although in the majority of cities these non-cultural responsibilities were taken on by other organisations and structures such as municipalities, departments of regional or national authorities and tourism boards.

In terms of functions, several ECOC operational structures directly managed most of the day-to-day operational tasks themselves, whereas in others certain tasks such as communications and marketing (Rotterdam, Porto), fundraising, sponsorship (Helsinki, Bergen) and elements of financial management were contracted out to independent specialist organisations.

The size of ECOC operational structures vary considerably from 6 full-time staff (Reykjavik, Santiago, Avignon) to 200 (Thessaloniki) at the peak of activity. Staff numbers relate mainly to the functions of the organisation, and the numbers of staff roughly correlate with the scale of direct functions that are undertaken.

In some cities, the management approach was decentralised, with a central core team 'coordinating' but not managing aspects of the ECOC programme. In other cities, the style was highly centralised, where the core team directly organised projects and events. All ECOC combined to some extent these two management approaches but to different degrees. The ECOC foundation in Helsinki, for example, specifically gave itself the role of facilitator and coordinator and produced very few projects itself. A number of cities followed this model but some found that in reality it was very difficult to achieve an entirely decentralised system. The way in which the ECOC operational structure is perceived from the outside is an important issue that must be given consideration. More details on this are found in the section on the cultural programme.

A question such as 'What is the ideal size of the operational structure of an ECOC?' cannot be answered without first determining the precise functions of the structure. Some cities also engaged staff on a part-time or free-lance basis, some had members of staff who were seconded or attached from other organisations (Helsinki, Brussels) and others also had stagaires, interns and students (Salamanca, Lille). At least three cities developed 'ambassadors' programmes of volunteers (Stockholm: 650 volunteers, Bruges: 85 volunteers, Lille: 16.000 ambassadors) to act as a relay for information and assist the operational team. Almost half of ECOC employed more than fifty people.





In almost every city, it was the overall director (variously defined as Director, Managing Director, Artistic Director) of the operational structure who was appointed first, usually about 3 years before the event. However, in certain cities, appointments were made 4-5 years before (Copenhagen, Graz) or even as little as 20 months (Salamanca) before the cultural year began. It must be pointed out however that in over half of the cities studied in this report the overall director who was first appointed did not remain until the cultural year was finished. There was a very high turnover rate of overall directors, artistic directors and managing directors of ECOC, although the reasons for their leaving varied from city to city. The most frequent reason was cited as a 'conflict with the Board'. The departure of such key individuals can also spark off considerable negative media coverage and speculation, notwithstanding the problem of identifying a suitable replacement. The scale of turnover of senior managers (Director, Finance Director, Communications Directors, and Project Managers) of ECOC should not be ignored. Why do so many senior staff leave or are asked to leave? The reasons vary from inadequate recruitment procedures for such staff to unrealistic expectations and workloads. One former ECOC Director simply commented that "it is an impossible job to do", although the degree of 'impossibility' related directly to the circumstances of each city, the experience and skills of the director, the clarity and responsibilities of the role.

The changeover of directors and other key managers created substantial difficulties for many ECOC, including alterations to the programme, cancellation of projects and a new set of cultural priorities. In Bologna, the change of municipal government led to a change of the ECOC director only months before the cultural year was due to start. In Santiago, key personnel also changed a year before the programme was due to start. The changes caused some friction inside the organisation and a reordering of certain priorities concerning levels of public participation. In Thessaloniki, managing directors changed three times, artistic directors four times and the press/media manager three times during the course of preparations. The fourth artistic director inherited cultural programmes from the earlier directors and had only 6 months to reconsider all aspects of the programme and introduce his own ideas. However, not all changes to key managers were seen as being negative, in some cases changes were perceived to be in the interest of the programme and part of a process to find the right people for the job. Examples are Reykjavik, Salamanca, Graz, Prague and Brussels.

Most ECOC had one overall director who was appointed by the Board who led a senior management team of between 2 and 5 people. In some cases the overall director took on the responsibility of artistic direction but in some ECOC the overall director acted more like a general manager, and as in case of Genoa, there was no specific artistic director. This was also the case for Porto and for Avignon after the artistic director left the project. In Cracow artistic direction was the responsibility of two different people which led to certain problems. It was felt by most respondents that an artistic director was essential for ECOC.

In one city (Avignon) the Mayor, and in another city (Bologna) the Cultural Councillor had overall control of the operational structure. In certain cities, the political affiliations of the director had an influence on the project. ECOC directors have sometimes been former heads of the cabinets of the mayor, former politicians and heads of cultural departments (in certain instances these are political appointments; in others posts are filled through competitive open recruitment procedures). In general, most cities believed that the competence and experience of the overall director was one of the key factors in achieving the objectives of the cultural year.

## ***Problems and Issues***

Most cities reported problems with the senior management team of the organisation. The main ones were:

- Personality clashes
- Different priorities and objectives
- Different management styles
- Communication problems

In terms of organisational structures, most ECOC had tiered hierarchical structures, although the number of tiers varied from two (the director and the rest of the staff as in Reykjavik and Bergen), to four or five tiers, moving through different departments with senior managers, coordinators, project staff, assistants and secretaries (Thessaloniki). A number of ECOC - especially those that had larger numbers of staff - reported on problems that emerged between different departments (Brussels, Copenhagen, Graz, Porto). In Brussels, for example, it was reported that the programme department and the communications department suffered from different management styles and a lack of communication.

There is no consistent pattern to staff structures but the effectiveness of different ECOC operational structures depended on a number of common factors:

- Clarification of precise roles and responsibilities
- Establishing who is managing whom
- Defining clear channels of communication
- Applying resources to defined objectives

All ECOC had to work out for themselves issues connected with delegation, the chain of command, the balance between centralisation and decentralisation, the balance between horizontal (flat structures) and vertical (hierarchical structures) management mechanisms. The management cultures in each country and the management styles of individual directors were two influential factors. In Thessaloniki the office was organised on strict hierarchical lines and run like a ministry. In Helsinki and Brussels, decentralised models of team-working were adopted. The relative power between key managers and directors was an important consideration for many ECOC. In some cities this created tensions and several ECOC went through changes in their balance of power. In Graz, the Intendant had overall responsibility for the cultural programme but was not a member of the executive board; two executive directors working alongside him made up the executive board.

Problems with operational teams were not confined to their management. Only one city reported that they had no problems relating to the operational structure and personnel. All the rest cited difficulties. The main ones were:

- Inappropriate experience/competencies of personnel
- Unclear responsibilities and job descriptions
- Poor internal communication
- Too many changes to personnel
- Poor relations with the Board

A few of the cities also identified other difficulties such as excessive workloads for personnel, inadequate recruitment procedures and weak management. Bearing in mind the importance of both strong leadership and management of ECOC programmes, it is essential that considerable care is taken during the appointments process to create clear job specifications and profiles and then match candidates to these. It was surprising to note how many cities did not appoint senior staff in this way, and where recruitment was based largely on factors of personality, political affiliation or personal contacts of members of governing boards.

## **Advice**

From questionnaire responses and interviews, consensual views emerged about the basic requirements for a strong structure for an ECOC event. At the top of this list were:

- Strong committed and visionary leadership

- Competent and experienced personnel at all levels
- Clear responsibilities and roles

ECOC are relatively short-term projects (in general 3-5 years) and so organisational and staffing decisions are inevitably influenced by the character of this style of project management. The importance of recruiting 'the right personnel' was stressed by many respondents. The organisational charts, the detailed policies and strategy plans, the forceful rhetoric about objectives and missions, the carefully designed concepts for programmes and the outlines for marketing and financial campaigns are of little use without people to make it happen. To function effectively each ECOC must recruit people with skills and dedication suited to the objectives. The effectiveness of leadership was crucial to the outcome of ECOC programmes. Finding the right personnel for a relatively short project like ECOC, and building an effective team under enormous time, financial and political pressures is one of the most difficult tasks for ECOC. In city after city (with a few exceptions), the failure to assemble the right combination of people has led to failure to achieve the original ambitions of the cultural year.

In most cities, the operational structure remained in place after the cultural year was finished for a period of between 3 and 8 months. The main functions over this period were evaluation of the cultural year and the finalisation of financial accounts. In a number of cities, the operational team continued to promote cultural programmes even though the ECOC designation had officially moved to the next city.

When the operational structure disbands, teams are dispersed, and the expertise, experience, and lessons learned are dissipated. Some of this expertise could be retained for the future advantage of the city concerned.

There are at least eight ECOC where the original operational structure, in some form, continues to exist. At the time of writing this report, Genoa and Lille are only half way through their respective cultural years. Part of the Graz team still remains, evaluating the cultural programme for 2003. In Bruges after 2002 an organisation called Brugge Plus emerged to plan events for 2005. In Salamanca, an operational structure has remained in place after 2002 to manage the new cultural infrastructure that resulted from the cultural year and to prepare the celebrations for the 250th anniversary of Plaza Mayor in 2005. In Porto, the organisation was transformed into a company to manage the construction and programme of the new concert hall Casa da Musica. In Thessaloniki, a small team remain in the original offices waiting for the final payments from the Greek Ministry related to the programme of 1997 and dealing with ongoing litigation and court cases arising from the cultural year. In Luxembourg an agency was established after 1995 to continue the work done during the cultural year and maintain the collaboration between the state and the city.

In most cases people responding to this study who had worked for ECOC described it as an invaluable and unforgettable experience and a defining moment in their careers. Many ex-ECOC staff have gone on to hold important posts within the cultural sector and have maintained networks of contacts. The section on legacy and long-term effects also looks at the impacts on organisational structure and staff.

# Cultural Programme and Impact

## *Introduction*

The city has always been a place for the spectacular. Cities are where historic events take place, where grand architecture is constructed, where big decisions are made and where art is produced. Yet the city is also a place of routine events, ordinary buildings, and everyday decisions. Spectacles in cities must find their ultimate relevance in relation to what already exists. The ECOC cultural programmes each had to search for a visibility in and find a relevance to the cities they inhabited. The issue of the relationship of a specially conceived ECOC cultural programme to the ongoing cultural life of the city was central to the ways in which different cities conceived of and constructed their respective programmes. Whereas some ECOC attempted to weave projects carefully through the existing cultural fabric of a city, others took a view of simply 'adding' projects and events on top of existing cultural programmes; without doubt the former was a more complex way of working.

The approach to and content of ECOC cultural programmes were defined and circumscribed by a range of different factors, some artistic, others political, and still others relating firmly to resources (human and financial) in each city. Invariably, the construction of each cultural programme was a hybrid affair, influenced by the sense of each city as a place, its objects and spaces and the skills of its artists and cultural workers. It is easy to misunderstand the complicated nature of ECOC programme construction, very unlike the programming of a two or three week festival (a theatre festival, music festival etc) that may not be influenced to the same degree by local cultural factors.

The cultural programme of ECOC was in most cases the central element of the cultural year and was developed through a process that took a number of years of preparation, consultation and organisation. Programme development has been one of the greatest challenges to any ECOC and has had to take into consideration many different factors, conflicting interests and external pressures. An earlier section of this report identified the number of directors who had to leave the ECOC project during the preparation phase, which reflects the difficulty of the task.

It has become clear that the job of ECOC operational directors was to balance different and sometimes opposing factors to create a programme that suited a particular city. Programmes have had to find the balance between:

- Artistic vision and political interests
- Traditional and contemporary culture
- High-profile events and local initiatives
- City centre and suburb/regional locations
- "High" art and popular art/culture
- Established cultural institutions and independent groups and artists
- Attractiveness to tourists and the local population
- International names and local talent
- Usual activities and new activities
- Professional and amateur/community projects

Each ECOC had to face critical dilemmas and different choices. One of the most often cited problems in developing the cultural programme of ECOC was that there are a very large number of interest groups and stakeholders to serve. Unlike the concept of many city festivals, ECOC are year-long, one-off events, and should have a European perspective. These factors, as well as the number of constituencies that need to be included and the different and high expectations that need to be met, necessitated complex strategies and planning mechanisms.

## *Location and Timing*

The location of the cultural programme varied from taking place just within the city boundaries (Santiago) to across a wide region that encompassed other countries (Lille). All ECOC programmes took place within the designated city but the majority also included the suburbs surrounding the city and the region. Many ECOC had programmes that extended to include the whole country (Luxembourg, Stockholm) or

municipalities across the country (Reykjavik, Helsinki, Copenhagen). Only one city officially extended the location of the programme to include cities or regions in other countries although many cities had parts of their programme that took place in other European cities through cooperation and exchange. In all ECOC it appears that the majority of events and activities took place within the city itself.

The length of the official programme varied from 9 months to 13 months, although many ECOC organised events in the years preceding their cultural year. The Cracow ECOC organisers, for example, ran a series of themed cultural years in the four years leading up to 2000 and Helsinki organised a programme of 10 projects in the summer of 1999 called the "Appetizer programme". Most of the cities ran an official cultural programme that lasted 11 to 13 months although four cities ran shorter programmes lasting 8 to 10 months (Bruges, Brussels, Bergen and Weimar). Apart from Cracow the cultural programmes of ECOC began sometime between the summer before the ECOC year and February of the year. The majority of cities started the programme in January of the year but not on the first day. Several cities decided to choose an important day in the year to start the programme (Lille on the Feast of St Nicholas, Bruges started at 20.02 on 20.02.2002).

The closing date of ECOC cultural programmes ranged from November of the year to the January of the following year. An equal number of cities ended their programmes before Christmas of the year and on New Year's Eve. The often abrupt end of the cultural year, and in most cities, the few strategies that were in place to promote a flow into the following year, left the impression that 'the party had finished', which is not coincident with a process of continuous cultural development.

The planning period for the programme ranged from 2 to 4 years, with most cities spending 3 years in preparation. Some cities lost planning time due to changes within the management teams or disagreements within their Boards. In answer to the question "what is the ideal planning time?" two-thirds of respondents indicated 3 or 4 years with the Board and the management of the operational structure in place before that. Over one-third of cities felt that one of the problems in developing the programme was the insufficient planning time.

Ideal planning time	% respondents
Less than 3 years	13%
3 years	34%
4 years	32%
5 years	17%
More than 5 years	6%

Many cities tried to develop a rhythm to the year, either by dividing the programme into seasons or by placing key projects at strategic points throughout the year. For most ECOC, spring and summer were the seasons where events were concentrated.

### ***Programme Themes, Orientations and Coherence***

All ECOC developed specific themes or orientations for their cultural programmes, ranging from one overall theme in some cities to a multitude of themes in others. Thessaloniki, for example, developed 31 different themes or principles within their programme, Graz decided not to identify specific themes but to be guided by a wide definition of culture that promoted inclusion and participation. In over one-third of ECOC however one unifying theme for the programme was developed. For example:

- "Art and Creativity" (Avignon)
- "The Journey" (Genoa)
- "Bridges to the future" (Porto)
- "Culture and nature" (Reykjavik)
- "City of all cultures" (Luxembourg)

In almost half of the cities studied, themes were developed that related to "the City". For example:

- Brussels had the overall theme of "the City" with 6 thematic axes including "Celebrating the City" and "Re-imag(in)ing the City"
- Copenhagen used three dimensions to develop its programme: "the Arts", "the Community" and "the City". "The City" included programmes such as "the historic city", "the green city", and "architecture"

- Prague had three major themes: “the Story of the City, City of Open Gates and a City to Live In”
- Helsinki chose four themes: “the City of Children, the City of Art, an International City and a City for All”
- Salamanca developed the line “the City of thought, of encounters and of knowledge”
- Stockholm had 15 anchor themes including “a Historic City, an Ecological City and an International City”
- “Rotterdam is many cities” included ten themes, such as “Working City”, “Vital City”, “Home Town” and “City of the Future”.

In a few ECOC seasonal themes were chosen to structure the year. For example:

- Bergen had “spring: dreams, summer: wandering, autumn: spaces”
- Copenhagen had several themes per season: the spring season included “the Historic City” and “the Twentieth century”, summer included “the Green City” and “the Global” and autumn “the Future” and “the new Europe”

Some ECOC chose to structure their programme using key words or principles as well as or instead of themes. For example:

- Cracow focused on “thought, spirituality and creativity”,
- Bologna on “communication”,
- Helsinki on “innovation, internationalisation, inhabitants and investment”,
- Stockholm on “cross-fertilisation, participation and boundary-breaking”.

Although all programmes had themes or guiding principles, usually published in catalogues and programmes, the visibility of and adherence to these during the year varied. In Rotterdam and Brussels for example the themes were found to be clearly visible, whereas respondents from Avignon and Prague commented on the lack of thematic cohesion making it more difficult to understand the unity of the programme.

Coherence of the programme was an important issue. Most ECOC cultural programmes encompassed a very large number of un-connected initiatives, although often grouped under themes or titles. In most ECOC the main means of understanding the extent of the programme was by looking at the promotional material that divided the programme into subjects or topics (in terms of artistic discipline or theme). However, beyond that the public (and even the organisers of separate events) were often unable to discern connections, say by attending one project or performance, which was promoted and marketed as an isolated event. Coherence was usually viewed more as a communications or marketing issue than a cultural one. This fragmentation of disparate elements of a cultural programme may be one of the reasons for the lack of overall impact and understanding of the programme in many ECOC. Specific events may have been critically acclaimed or criticised, but there was usually no appreciation of the whole.

## ***Project Selection***

All ECOC sought advice during the project selection process (see also the section on Aims and Objectives). They all consulted cultural organisations and artists as part of this process and almost half also consulted politicians. Less than half consulted local residents and community organisations and very few ECOC sought advice from the business community or the tourism sector. Consultation was undertaken in different ways including meetings, workshops and media campaigns. A number of cities organised open, public meetings and over half of the cities set up advisory groups or committees to oversee project selection. All ECOC invited project submissions, some through open calls for proposals from anyone (for example Thessaloniki published a call in the press and Helsinki put “ideas boxes” in local libraries) and others through a more selective invitation to specific groups.

As well as undertaking consultation, all ECOC used specific criteria to select projects for their programmes. The most common criteria used by almost all cities were:

- the quality of the project
- the cost of the project

Following these, the most often cited criteria by respondents were:

- the relevance of the project to the programme's aims
- the experience of the organisers
- the long-term impact or sustainability of the project

Other, less common criteria used by cities were the educational potential of the project, the originality of the project, the attractiveness of the project to audiences and the opportunity offered to local producers.

Only one quarter of cities used the European significance of the project as a criterion for selection. This was reflected in some ECOC cultural programmes that were mainly local and national affairs, with most of the cultural energy being focused on domestic cultural needs and agendas. Although, as will be discussed later, the European dimension was present in all ECOC cultural programmes (to greater and lesser degrees), the approaches taken and partnerships developed in most cases led to a marginalisation of the European aspects of ECOC programmes, which were not well-integrated into programming. There is no evidence to suggest that the European perspective was an integral and central part (in practical terms) in any of the ECOC cultural programmes, although the number and type of 'European' projects varied from city to city. (Refer to section on European perspectives).

## ***Scale of the Programme***

Of the 21 problems or issues identified in relation to ECOC cultural programmes the most commonly cited by respondents was that there were too many projects in the programme. Some respondents thought that too many projects resulted in a lack of focus and unity to the programme; others mentioned the difficulty of effectively supporting so many projects in terms of finance and management and a few described problems of saturation and the competition for audiences between projects. When members of the operational teams were asked what they would do differently if they could go back, a common answer was that they would concentrate on a smaller number of projects.

The number of projects within ECOC programmes ranged from 108 in Graz to approximately 2000 in Lille. The average has been approximately 500. These figures do not take into account however that individual projects may in fact be entire programmes of events and so must be interpreted with caution. Larger project numbers do not necessarily mean larger programmes. Graz, for example, estimates that its 108 projects involved approximately 6000 events. Reliable statistical data on the number of events per city has not been possible to collect, although data received from some cities indicates that in general programmes contained over 1000 individual events, and in a few cases many more than this. Thessaloniki used a different measurement of the scale of its programme by calculating 'project days' rather than projects per se. This allowed for the difference between individual performances and long-running exhibitions.

## ***Programme Management***

ECOC organisers invariably used a combination of styles in their approach to programme development. For simplicity, the roles can be categorised as:

*Architect:* designing the programme, its themes and projects more-or less centrally, although often financing others to deliver aspects, most or all of it.

*Facilitator:* working closely with others to design the programme and determine its themes and projects, collaboratively determining what resources are necessary and who provides them.

*Engineer:* allowing others to determine the design, themes and projects, and offering resources and expertise to help make them happen.

All ECOC used a mixture of such techniques, but in different measure. All ECOC organisations produced projects themselves but some were much more involved than others in production. In Helsinki, for example, the staff of the ECOC Foundation were given the specific role of acting as facilitators and developers of ideas coming from the outside and were not themselves generators of ideas. Bergen and Reykjavik both followed the Helsinki approach. In Bologna, a decision made to support local producers meant that the ECOC organisation initiated only 27 projects (and produced 20 of these themselves) out of a total of approximately 550 projects. In Cracow the ECOC bureau produced 10% of the programme's

projects and in Stockholm the organisation produced approximately 30 “profile projects” themselves. A number of the cities’ own reports went into considerable detail about the different types of partnership developed for projects in the programme.

In the majority of cases contracts were agreed between project organisers and the ECOC organisation with lists of detailed obligations of each party. In some cities there was considerable discussion and negotiation between the two parties before a contract was signed. Although this led some cultural operators to view the ECOC structure as ‘just another bureaucracy’, the majority of respondents saw this process as crucial to the smooth and effective management of the programme and to an increase of professionalism within the sector.

Not all projects within the official programmes were financed or supported by the ECOC organisation; some were instead given the label of ECOC and supported through joint marketing. In Stockholm, for example, out of a total of 1218 projects, only 532 were supported financially in some way by the ECOC organisation. The usual cultural activities of the year were often incorporated into the programme in this way. Most ECOC cultural programmes contained a mix of projects financed 100% by the ECOC organisation (and sometimes produced or managed directly by them), projects receiving co-financing from the organisation and projects not receiving financial support but promoted within the programme.

### ***Programme Range***

No two ECOC cultural programmes were identical although all were similar in that they sought to include a range of projects in different cultural sectors. Programmes generally included a mix of classical/traditional and contemporary/modern theatre, dance, opera, visual arts, film and audio-visual media, literature, architecture, design, fashion and crafts. Music was presented in many different forms (including classical/traditional, contemporary/modern, pop/rock, jazz, folk, world, electronic), and projects were developed that focused on heritage/history, archives/libraries, and digital art/new media/IT. Special television projects, street parades/festivals/open-air events and interdisciplinary projects were also part of programmes.

The following sectors were cited most frequently as being most prominent within programmes:

- Theatre
- Visual arts
- Music
- Street parades or open-air events
- Heritage and history
- Architecture
- Interdisciplinary projects

### ***Art and Culture***

ECOC programmes were developed in relation to different definitions of culture and can be charted along a scale that ranges from defining culture as art to taking a wider anthropological view of culture. This issue is developed further in the section on social perspectives in this report. Antwerp in 1993 focused specifically on art and posed such questions as “Can art save the world?” whereas Graz, ten years later, in 2003 developed their programme specifically to convey the message that culture is part of everyday life and is more than art. The majority of cities opted for a wide definition of culture (that included for example sport, food, religion and environment) and tried to create a balance within their programme between traditional art forms and popular culture. Copenhagen attempted this by dividing its programme into three parts: the arts programme, the city programme and the community programme. Examples of ECOC projects that illustrate the wide definition of culture include:

- The Graz Kitchen cooking project
- Sauna of the month project in Helsinki
- Craftsmanship and Gardening project in Stockholm
- Preaching in another man’s Parish project in Rotterdam
- Ecological centres in Copenhagen and surrounding boroughs
- To eat or not to eat? exhibition in Salamanca
- Scientific and technical conferences in Bologna



## ***Tradition and Innovation***

Cultural programmes can also be charted along a scale that ranges from traditional or classical forms of art and presentation to contemporary and innovative forms of art and presentation. Although programmes generally contained a mix of these, some cities specifically focused on contemporary and experimental initiatives. Several cities used contemporary art as one of their main programme interests (Bergen, Bologna), Brussels had as one of its main thematic axes “the City as a Laboratory”, Helsinki chose “innovation” as one of its key principles and a number of cities concentrated on the meeting of tradition with the new (Salamanca created new versions of Baroque music and opera, while Weimar under their programme title “Goodbye & Hello” asked the question what to look for in the future and what to consign to the archives). Lille devoted an important part of its first season to projects that looked to the future. Examples of projects that illustrate a contemporary and innovative vision are:

- Cars of the Future and Cinema of the Future in Lille
- BergArt festival in Bergen
- Icons of the XXth Century contemporary music series in Graz
- Avignonnumériques digital art project

Most cities developed a number of projects that linked directly to the history or heritage of the city, region or country. For example, Genoa had projects linked to its sea-faring past and Lille has developed projects relating to its history as a Flemish city. Other examples:

- Wawel 1000-2000 exhibition in Cracow
- Official and Unofficial: the art of the GDR exhibition in Weimar
- The HANSE@MEDICI.COM exhibition in Bruges
- Brussels Golden Age exhibition of the tapestries of the Spanish crown
- The Treasures of Mount Athos exhibition in Thessaloniki
- Interbellum exhibition in Rotterdam
- Virtual Bologna

## ***Cultural Institutions and Independent Groups***

ECOC programmes were influenced by the differing levels of involvement of the cities’ cultural institutions. The balance between the involvement of cultural institutions and independent groups and artists was often reported as being one of the main challenges of the programme development process. Some cities chose specifically to support the established institutions and reflect the comment on Luxembourg “the year was in one sense an opportunity to do exceptional things within an established pattern of activity and organisation” (Myerscough 1996). Prague decided to support activities that would have taken place anyway as part of the cultural calendar; the aim being to give these projects and events an added-value and the possibility to do things that normally would not be possible. Porto developed its programme jointly with the main institutions of the city. In both these cities, however, there was some criticism of this approach especially from independent groups and artists who felt excluded. Other cities made the decision not to support the usual activities of the year in a desire to use the year as an opportunity to experiment and do something new. Helsinki and Brussels turned down projects from the cultural institutions that did not address the specific themes of the year. Respondents highlighted the importance of the involvement of the major institutions in each city in order to ensure sustainability after the year.

A number of cities reported issues and difficult relationships with some of the major cultural institutions (Bergen, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Cracow, Stockholm, Brussels and Weimar). In Bergen, for example, difficult negotiations between the ECOC organisation and one major institution became a highly public issue in the local press. In some cities it was reported that cultural institutions resented the ECOC organisations and felt threatened by the new power structure that could disrupt the status quo. In a number of cases, it was reported that cultural institutions did not propose projects through the open calls and assumed they would receive extra funding for their normal activities, which was not necessarily the case. On the other hand, several respondents thought that it was important to respect and respond to the existing cultural environment.

Cities also reported relationship problems with the local alternative cultural groups and artists. As mentioned above, in some cities these groups felt excluded or felt that the project was dominated by political interests at the expense of cultural and artistic interests. In Stockholm, members of the artists’

union spoke out against the project publicly and one person went to Brussels to lobby the EU against the designation of Stockholm as ECOC. Some respondents from Graz also commented on the tensions between the local scene and the organisation and highlighted the need for good communication between the two. A number of respondents believed that problems and tensions with the local cultural operators and artists is an inevitable part of the project as there will always be disappointed people whose projects have not been selected by the ECOC organisation.

## **Public Space**

All ECOC cultural programmes included projects taking place in public space. Street parades, open-air events and festivals appeared prominently across the board. For some cities this was very high on their agenda and was often part of a strategy to increase participation in culture. Both the creation of art in public spaces and the organisation of specific events in public space were given considerable attention, and were generally the projects that received the most public and media attention. Over half the cities cited their opening event, usually involving some form of outdoor celebration, as being one of the most successful projects in terms of public attention. These opening events generally consisted of an evening, day or weekend of festivities and events that attracted large crowds (Brussels, Porto, Graz, Copenhagen each recorded an attendance of over 100.000 people and Lille recorded an unexpected 600.000 people). Many respondents spoke of the opening event as one of the most memorable occasions of the year where cities came to a standstill as people filled the streets.

Parades were also cited as being among the most popular events during the year:

- The Zinneke Parade in Brussels (attendance: 300.000)
- Helsinki's 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade (attendance: 80.000)
- The Ponte de Sonhos parade and show in Porto (attendance: 75.000)
- Cabalgata de Reyes in Salamanca

Transformation of public spaces and installations in public places were also significant parts of programmes and also cited as attracting large public and media interest. Lille had in their programme a series of projects under the title of "Metamorphoses" designed to transform public space and question people's perceptions. Examples of these kinds of projects include:

- The Marienlift (Lift to Mary) in Graz (attendance: 240.000)
- The Ice-Pavilion in Stockholm (attendance : 127.000)
- The Snow Church in Helsinki (attendance : 125.000)
- The copy of Goethe's garden house in Weimar
- The Suspended Forest in Lille

Many specific projects took place in different public areas both outside in gardens, parks and on or by waterways. Many cities undertook projects in collaboration with the city transportation services, and a number of projects took place in the underground, the airport, and in buses and taxis.

Many cities also developed projects in relation to their physical geography. Reykjavik had as their overall theme "Culture and nature" and divided their programme into the four elements "Wind, Earth, Fire and Water", and Genoa had as one of its main thematic axes projects based around the title "Genoa: Capital of the Sea". Other examples:

- The WAV soundscape project by the canals in Bruges
- The Line of Light project along the coast of Denmark
- The City on the River programme of projects focusing on the river in Prague (attendance: 140.000)
- Waterproject 1854-2001 on Rotterdam's canals
- The See at Sea film festival in the archipelago in Stockholm
- The KELA Water Nymph project and Coastline 2000 project in Reykjavik, Bergen and Helsinki
- The Time-Break corridor through the forest outside Weimar
- The Mountain of Memories project in Graz (attendance: 100.000)
- The Töölö Bay Art Garden project in Helsinki (attendance: 350.000)

Following on from this and in an attempt to transform perspectives on culture and sometimes break with

tradition, many cities discovered or created new venues for events and projects which have in some cases continued to be used after the year is over. Examples are:

- The Forman brothers theatre boat in Prague
- The Tri-Postal centre in Lille
- Use of power stations in Iceland
- Russian war cemetery in Weimar
- The Vanderborcht building in Brussels

### ***Blockbusters and International Stars***

Apart from the projects in public space, the other projects that were highlighted as being the most successful in terms of public and media attention were key exhibitions, concerts by international artists and special one-off events. Examples of these are:

- “La Beauté” exhibition in Avignon (attendance : 200.000)
- The Van Eyck exhibition in Bruges (attendance : 322.000)
- The Rubens exhibitions in Lille (attendance : 300.000) and Genoa
- The Hieronymus Bosch exhibition in Rotterdam (attendance : 200.000)
- The Treasures of Mount Athos exhibition in Thessaloniki (attendance : 700.000)
- The Rolling Stones concert in Luxembourg (attendance : 60.000)
- The Oasis and Van Morrison concerts in Salamanca
- The Cutty Sark Tall Ships Race in Copenhagen and Helsinki
- The Meeting of celebrity poets in Cracow

Most programmes tried to create a balance between blockbuster events and small-scale local projects, like Rotterdam that created two types of projects: “magnets” that attracted tourists and “generators” that encouraged participation, but cities have often been criticised for either giving too much attention to one or the other. In Brussels for example the programme focused primarily on local projects and was criticised by the tourist board for not hosting a blockbuster exhibition, and Bergen was also criticised for lacking high-profile events. In Avignon, some local groups criticised the programme for its focus on the nationally organised exhibition La Beauté, and in Cracow some respondents thought the programme was dominated by big exhibitions.

ECOC programmes almost always included projects with internationally renowned artists and some names of well-known directors and choreographers appear repeatedly in the programmes of different cities (e.g. Peter Brook, Robert Wilson, Peter Greenaway, Sacha Waltz, Pina Bausch, Jan Fabre and William Forsythe).

### ***Community Development, Participation and Inclusion***

Community development was undertaken in different ways by ECOC and a later section on social perspectives goes into more detail of these. In all cities, projects were developed that targeted specific groups in the community. For some cities this was a high priority and community development and social inclusion were amongst their most important objectives (Copenhagen, Brussels, Rotterdam, Helsinki, Graz, Stockholm). Helsinki used the slogans “a City of Children and a City for All” and Rotterdam “Vital City” and “young@rotterdam” among others. The most common special target group of people to be addressed was young people and most cities had projects or programmes that were specifically for children and youth. Many cities also developed programmes with schools. Just over half the cities studied had projects for people with disabilities, the socially disadvantaged and minority groups. And in a few cities projects were developed especially for women, the elderly and the unemployed. Examples of the range of these projects:

- My City, Our City school project in Bergen
- Dogtroep theatre group working in Bruges prison
- Art à l'école school project in Brussels
- The First Homeless street-soccer World Cup in Graz
- Art in elderly peoples homes in Helsinki
- 2000 Children project in Reykjavik
- Villa Zebra art house for children in Rotterdam

- Juice-Salons project in Stockholm
- Area 99 youth venue in Weimar

Participation in culture by the general public was an objective for most of the ECOC studied. Different methods for encouraging participation have been used from city to city. The use of public space, as mentioned above, was the most common means to increase participation in and accessibility to culture. Programmes have also included a large number of “free” events. For example in Salamanca, of the 1100 activities in the programme 800 of these (73%) offered free entrance; in Thessaloniki over 70% of projects were free and free food was also supplied at most events; and in Helsinki the approximately one-third of events that were free attracted an estimated 3,3 million visitors. There has however been some criticism of this policy by certain respondents who believed that free events “devalue culture” in society.

A number of projects were developed with and by local inhabitants but this was a small part of programmes. The average percentage of “professional” projects (i.e. projects that engaged or were managed by paid personnel, artists etc.) as opposed to amateur/community projects within programmes was 75%. Only in one city was the percentage reported to be 50:50. Projects investigating shared memory and story telling emerged in different cities, for example The Mountain of Memories in Graz, Bruxelles nous appartient (Brussels belongs to us) in Brussels, Tales of the Siilitie Road in Helsinki and Texto in Lille. Projects were also developed to involve the public in performance, for example the Bal Moderne in Brussels, opera projects in Avignon and Porto and the Euro+Song Festival in Rotterdam. In Lille, Les Maisons Folie were opened across the region in an attempt to bring the local population and artists closer together.

The task of increasing participation was not without its difficulties and a number of respondents commented on this aspect of the programmes. In some cities respondents criticised the focus and concentration of events in city centres (Avignon, Stockholm, Brussels) and the lack of activities taking place in the suburbs. From the limited number of visitor surveys that have taken place the evidence has shown that the audiences for ECOC projects tend to be highly educated professional people who are usual cultural consumers. (See the section on visitor perspectives for more details).

### ***Support for Local Talent***

All ECOC programmes endeavoured to develop the talent and careers of local artists and cultural professionals in one way or another. The most common means by which this was done was through the commissioning of new works. No reliable data on the numbers of commissions made by ECOC were available although data from some cities indicated a range from 10 to 200 works commissioned in each ECOC. Examples of commissions include:

- The Maid of Norway opera in Bergen
- The Shadow of the Clock-tower art installation by Markus Wilfling in Graz
- Marie Antoinette opera by Daniel Bortz in Stockholm
- Bologna Towers 2000 projections by Peter Greenaway
- In Bruges local author Pieter Aspe wrote a new novel, then adapted it for the stage

International, national and local residencies and exchanges were the second most common way of improving skills and know-how and a large number of workshops took place within the framework of the ECOC programmes. Some examples:

- Trans Dance Europe contemporary dance project involving eight of the nine ECOC in 2000
- Crossroads jazz programme in Bologna and Tremplin Jazz in Avignon
- Working city Las Palmas in Rotterdam
- Music Labs in Brussels
- Contemporary dance programme in Porto

Very few cities developed projects or initiatives to enhance the skills of cultural managers. Helsinki organised workshops and mentoring for all producers of individual programmes and Bologna also gave greater administration support for projects that came from smaller local producers. The percentage of projects within the programme originating from outside the ECOC catchment area varied significantly from city to city and ranged from 10% to 70%. From the responses received the average percentage of

projects coming from outside the territory was 28%.

ECOC took different positions on the relative importance of 'buying in' of an art experience (whether importing it in or purchasing known 'home-grown' cultural products). Invariably, it is easier for an ECOC to attract a public to a 'brand' that is already well-known (e.g. an orchestra with an international reputation, or an exhibition of recognised artist or artefacts) than to a new untried experiences with artists whose names are unknown. Certain cities focused mainly on a 'franchised' style of cultural programme, whilst others preferred a more developmental approach by creating original projects. All ECOC did both to a larger or lesser extent, although the balance was often a source of friction between the operational teams and their Boards, and sometimes with funders and sponsors. The source of the friction simply reflected different interests, tastes and targets, and sometimes differences of programme philosophy and approach.

### ***Spin-off***

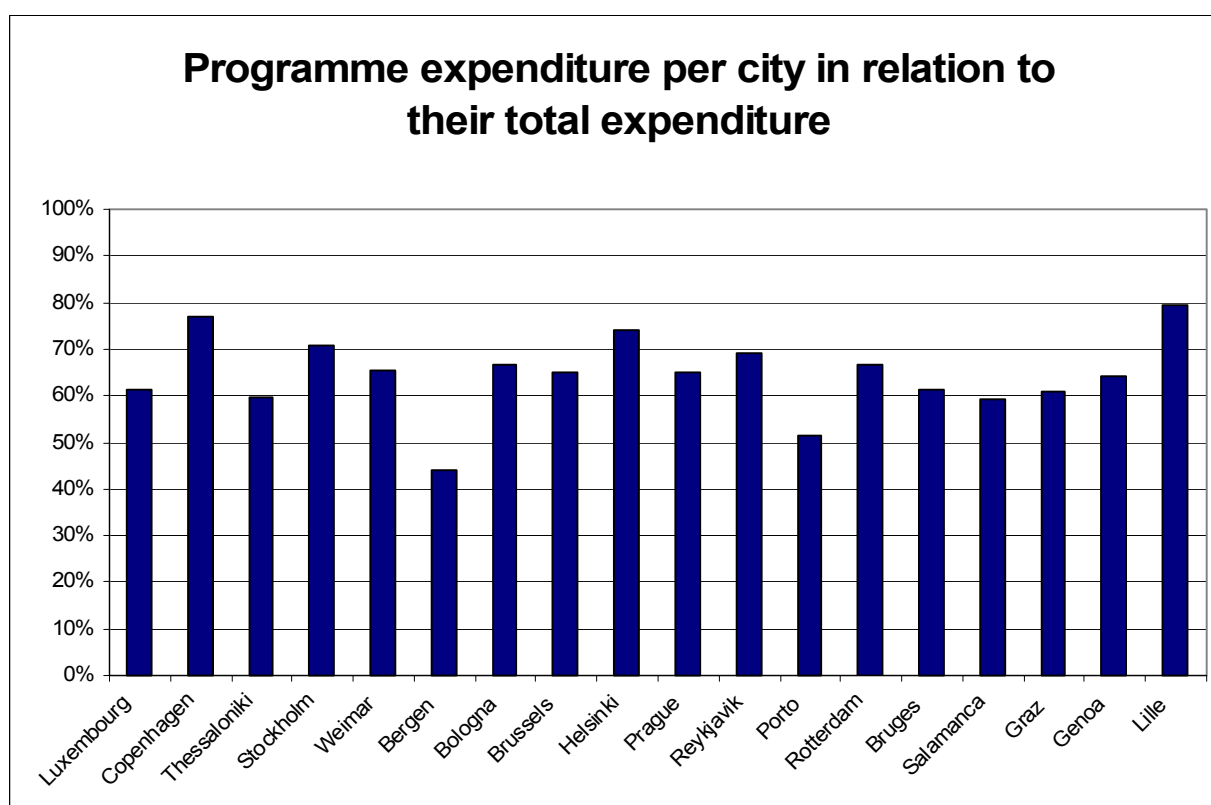
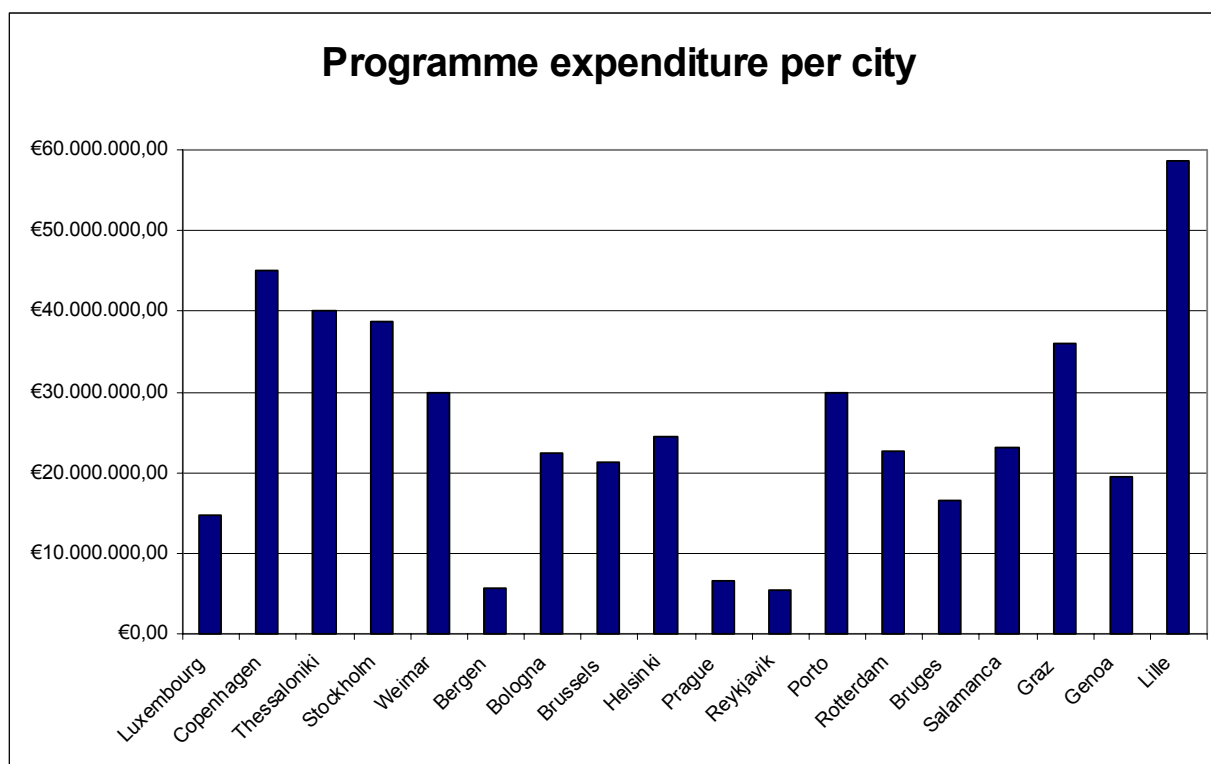
In the majority of cities other programmes developed alongside the official cultural programme. In some cases these were commercial initiatives and in others an "off" or "fringe" cultural programme was developed. Bruges had an off-scene alternative programme, Graz had a by-programme, Salamanca University and the Caja Duero Bank both organised their own cultural programmes to complement the ECOC programme, and Helsinki saw a business campaign develop entitled "Smiling Helsinki".

### ***Programme Expenditure***

For all ECOC organisations, expenditure on the cultural programme accounted for the largest part of operational expenditure (not including capital expenditure), equalling on average 63% of the total operational expenditure (see Annex 1 for all ECOC budgets and the section on Economic Perspectives for more details). Programme budgets ranged from 5,48 million Euros in Reykjavik to 58,6 million Euros in Lille with an overall average of 25,6 million Euros. Caution should be taken when comparing the figures as different elements have been used to calculate the total expenditure by each city.

The figures also relate only to the budget of the ECOC structure and do not take into consideration additional external spend on the programme by public authorities or even the cultural organisations themselves. In all cities additional expenditure on the cultural programme was made through direct funding to projects and therefore did not pass through the accounting system of the ECOC organisation. As the ECOC organisations tended to part-finance projects, these projects had to raise the rest of their budget through other sources such as European, national or local cultural funding programmes or sponsorship. The total expenditure on the programme was therefore much greater than the figures suggest.

In most cases data on this wider investment is not available, but some cities gave figures or at least estimates of this additional spend. In Copenhagen for example reports indicated that a total of 142 million Euros was spent on the programme, of which only one-third went through the accounts of the ECOC organisation. In Helsinki the income and costs were only partially channelled through the ECOC Foundation; production bodies received over 60% of their finances from elsewhere and the overall volume was therefore between 62 and 63 million Euros. In Luxembourg 58% of the programme budget was paid directly by either the State or the City and so the ECOC office handled only 42% of the programme budget. In Prague the ECOC Company spent 6,5 million Euros on programme expenditure and the estimated total operational expenditure given directly by the State and the City to projects was 18,81 million Euros. (A further assessment of this issue is contained in the section on Economic Perspectives).



Financial problems were among the most commonly cited problems related to the cultural programme. Many cities complained that the late confirmation of funding and in some cases the late withdrawal of funding seriously hampered programme development. A number of cities reported on the difficulties inherent in forecasting budget costs especially for large-scale projects and often the actual costs for such projects exceeded forecasts. This had repercussions on other projects within the programmes and in some cases projects were cut or reduced to compensate.

## ***ECOC as an 'Event' or a 'Process'***

The concepts that lay behind ECOC cultural programmes, and the themes and projects that were finally agreed by each city reflected different approaches to the practise of 'culture'. In some cities ECOC was viewed as an event (or series of events) to be produced and consumed (performances, exhibitions, films, parades), and in others as processes of development through which creative ideas were formed and took shape, including the creation of new partnerships and alliances between different cultural groups and artists. There is a choice here of the emphasis on one or other of these programme styles.

When ECOC was conceived and thought of primarily as an event (i.e. time dated), most typically it was the scale and scope of the ECOC programme that distinguished it from other types of cultural events: its length, the number of projects it contained, the sectors and interests it encompassed. A review of the catalogues and reports of ECOC demonstrated that in spite of differences in detailed content, there was often a 'sameness' in the overall 'feel' of ECOC programmes, partly due to degrees of magnitude and dimension, and to a certain extent the vocabulary of intention used by each city (to change, develop, enhance, celebrate). It is clear that in spite of local differences, there is emerging a 'form' for a ECOC, which can be characterised by volume, scale, multi-disciplinarity (although not always inter-disciplinarity) and a 'mosaic' type structure where there is the imperative of offering 'something for everyone'. This is a kind of *cultural isomorphism*, referring to a process of the growing homogenisation of ECOC cultural programmes: common themes, similar projects, same 'stars'. Perhaps the reason for this is that each ECOC is subject to more-or-less the same constraints and opportunities: political, cultural, institutional, financial.

The preoccupation with the notion of ECOC as an 'event' sometimes distorted the ways in which cultural development interrelated with other ECOC objectives, and the problem of identifying the appropriate means of evaluating the cultural content of ECOC programmes meant that organisers often became preoccupied with limited measurements such as attendance figures and numbers of projects when evaluating programmes. Such facts tell us very little about a programme's impact or cultural value, or how the events contribute to a longer-term process, or indeed even 'who' attended or participated. The bigger the better seemed to have been a dominant feeling, although in hindsight, many cities regretted making this assumption, and would have preferred to concentrate on fewer projects of higher quality and impact. The evaluations of ECOC cultural programmes also did not, with a few exceptions, deal in any way with the issues of the quality of the content of aspects of the programme or the effectiveness of the process as far as the ECOC cultural programmes were concerned.

It was interesting to study the controversies that plagued almost every ECOC in relation to its cultural programme, and these were identified earlier in this section. All cities experienced resistance by certain groups of artists and cultural organisations, or by sub-cultures within the city that were unable to identify with the choices that were made of projects and events during the cultural year. ECOC organisers defended their choices vigorously, but rarely did the debate focus on the critical issue of cultural values or on the priorities of cultural development in the long-term. Certainly the elected politicians and the media rarely, if ever, openly discussed or debated such critical matters. Generally discussions about cultural projects and programmes of ECOC were focused not on issues of cultural value or quality but on finances, attendance, who or who was not chosen to organise them, and on their achievement of short-term goals. It was not unusual for ECOC programmes to invoke accusations of irresponsibility, overspending, mismanagement and elitism; ECOC programmes seem to inspire such reactions.

The majority of cultural programmes of ECOC did not fit neatly into traditional patterns of cultural consumption, and so it is not possible to evaluate them purely in terms of ticket sales and attendance. Although the production-distribution-consumption model is perceived by some to be the basis of performances or exhibitions, ECOC do not adapt easily to such a model, since they are often as much about commitments to excellence, accessibility and audience development as 'buying tickets'. The arts is a domain that can be characterised by different types of experiences, from artists creating and delivering works of art to an audience through to audiences actively participating in the creation of the work itself. Indeed the production of art can be accomplished by both artists and non-artists, and also can be combined with non-artistic (although distinctly cultural) elements, such as food. ECOC projects were sometimes multi-dimensional (in terms of different artistic and non-artistic disciplines side-by-side in the programme, or different publics being attracted to the same event). The innovative nature of such projects requires new forms of assessment, and it appeared that no ECOC developed such a methodology. Simply evaluating consumption is insufficient.

## ***Isolated vs. Integrated Planning***

Although the cultural programme of an ECOC may have received substantial attention in terms of public or media interest, it was often viewed as separate from other initiatives embodied in the objectives of the cultural year, and from other cultural and non-cultural processes at play in the city. More often than not, the ECOC cultural programme did not influence the way in which the cultural department of the municipality determined its future strategies or priorities, or the ways in which many cultural institutions already working in the city approached their work and its publics. In many ECOC, two parallel programmes were in evidence: 'business as usual' and 'something different'.

In addition, there was often little interrelationship between the cultural projects within the ECOC programme and the city's infrastructural developments (indeed in some ECOC new or restored cultural facilities were not completed until the end or even after the cultural year was finished). Although tourist boards and economic development departments may have tried to 'use' the cultural programme to meet their own agendas (attract visitors, create jobs, image enhancement, city re-positioning etc), invariably there was little or no integrated planning in most ECOC. Similarly this was the case with a city's social objectives; certain ECOC cultural programmes even had the effect of widening the gap between the zones of affluence and those of deprivation in the city by concentrating on certain forms of cultural consumption with high ticket prices, or placing activities only in certain parts of the city. In many ECOC it was the potential of economic and social gains, rather than cultural ones, that were the major drivers of investment and interest. There is a contradiction here. On the one hand, culture was the very *raison d'être* for the ECOC designation; on the other, it was not the issue of cultural development in its different forms that was the main driver of change in many of the ECOC, particularly if cultural development was not already a key element of a city's overall and long-term strategic development. It was often the cultural professionals in the city that talked the language of culture, whilst others focused on the language of investment, physical transformation and marketing. A cultural programme which becomes mainly a tool for city marketing gives the cultural component of city change a lesser and more subservient role.

## ***Problems and Issues***

The most commonly cited problems and issues in relation to the cultural programme were the following:

- Too many projects
- Relationship problems with local organisations and artists
- Financial problems
- Too many interest groups to serve/please
- Variable quality of projects
- Insufficient planning time
- Scope of the programme too wide

A number of other issues were reported by approximately one-third of all cities:

- Relationship problems with cultural institutions
- Management problems
- Projects not sustainable over time
- Inadequate communication of the programme
- Programme choice influenced by political or economic interests

No cities thought that their programmes suffered from having too few projects.

## ***Advice***

The main pieces of advice given by respondents for the cultural programme were as follows:

- Select fewer projects
- Clearly define the aims, objectives and themes and adhere to these
- Ensure good and adequate communication of the programme
- Find the balance between popular events and smaller niche-audience initiatives
- Develop a programme suitable for the city



- Think about what will happen the year after the event
- Do not be afraid of making choices

The processes that produce a city are cultural, and the ECOC offers a critical platform to understand and enhance such processes. Although in most ECOC, clear acknowledgement was given to the importance of culture, usually as a tool to achieve other objectives relating to city's economic, social and artistic life, the cultural programmes themselves were generally not the arenas that fostered genuine collaboration between all the different stakeholders or which integrated various organisational efforts. The cultural programme was in most cities an engine pulling a train in a specific direction, alongside other engines (urban revitalisation, economic development, tourism, particular artistic interests etc) that were pulling other trains along tracks going in slightly different directions and at very different speeds. For this reason, the ECOC cultural programme was not often considered as a unifying force within the process as a whole, and sometimes as a temporary aberration (although a positive one) to the development of the city's cultural system as a whole. It would be advisable for future ECOC to consider the cultural engine as the force pulling the others along in the same direction.

# Infrastructure

## *Objectives*

Many ECOC mentioned infrastructure development as an objective of the cultural year. On average it came lower on cities' priorities than several other goals, such as increasing tourism, raising the profile of the city, or long term and short term cultural goals. However, improvements to infrastructure have been seen by many ECOC as a way to reach those objectives.

The ECOC in our study began with very different infrastructure needs – some had little or no need for new infrastructure, while for others it was the main reason for bidding to be ECOC.

For at least three ECOC in this study (Porto, Thessaloniki and Genoa) infrastructure development was a key objective of the year, and possibly more important than the cultural programme of projects and events. A minority specifically rejected infrastructure as an objective for the year (including Helsinki, Bergen, Reykjavik and Stockholm). In Bergen, for example, the ECOC title was meant “to crown years of cultural investment by the city” before the event. However, even these cities undertook some infrastructure work, whether renovating historical buildings (like the Kotiharju sauna in Helsinki) or improving public spaces and lighting. In Reykjavik and Bergen new art museums were also linked to the ECOC: in the first case using the year as an opportunity to celebrate the official opening of the museum, and in the second using the ECOC bid to obtain finance and support.

A few cities wanted to incorporate major infrastructure programmes in their plans but could not secure funding or political support. Cracow for example was not able to realise plans for a new concert hall, although the city did make renovations to the Museum of Civic Engineering, two cultural centres, and a part of the city walls.

## *Types of Infrastructure*

Most ECOC did use the year to make extensive improvements to their infrastructure. Cultural infrastructure of the traditional type (theatres, museums, galleries, cultural centres etc) was a higher priority for these cities than non-cultural infrastructure, although the two categories might overlap, for example by making street repairs in a historic town centre.

The infrastructure programmes in some cases included projects that did not seem to be related to culture or the aims of the ECOC. Capital expenditure in Weimar for example included major work on hospitals and a new building for the university.

About one-third of cities carried out work on transport infrastructure. This ranged from redesigning the airport in Thessaloniki (10 million Euros) or renovating the railway station in Weimar, to new car parking facilities in the city centre for Bruges and Santiago. There may have been some connection between investment in infrastructure and tourism objectives.

Almost all cities developed their public spaces and lighting. For many cities this included improving green spaces – for example the development of the island of Barthelasse in Avignon, the City Park and Caminhos do Romantico in Porto and the gardens in the Mala Strana district of Prague.

Almost half of the cities worked to renovate particular districts, although the scale and type of district varied considerably. Brussels and Porto regenerated cultural districts or historical areas, and Salamanca and Graz tried to create cultural districts with a number of new arts venues; Copenhagen renovated the former naval yards in the city centre to house several national academies. A number of cities carried out renovations of their historic centre, such as Weimar and Genoa. Thessaloniki and Porto undertook major urban regeneration projects in the city centre, moving roads, developing derelict areas and remodelling public squares and buildings.

Several projects addressed housing infrastructure in the city. Copenhagen collaborated on a major design and building programme for housing in the Ballerup district. Graz took an unusual approach, making sure that every household in the city had good sanitation facilities.

Almost all ECOC in our study renovated historical buildings. The most common instances were work on heritage sites or the conversion of old buildings into museums, galleries, libraries and venues for the performing arts. Examples include the Sala Borsa library in Bologna, the renovation of the Müller Villa in Prague, the restoration of parts of the Palais du Pape in Avignon, the Rolli Palaces in Genoa and the Hospice Comtesse in Lille.

Many cities created new arts venues and cultural centres. Respondents mentioned over thirty new museums, at least ten new museums or centres for contemporary visual art, three major new concert halls, a dozen new theatres, well over thirty cultural centres, and several multipurpose spaces. Examples include the creation of the Yvon Lambert Museum for Contemporary Art in Avignon, the Museum of the Sea and Navigation in Genoa (not yet opened), the Children's Museum and the Helmut-List Concert Hall in Graz, the House of Animation in Porto, and the Casino Forum for Contemporary Art in Luxembourg. In Salamanca the ECOC organisation started and finished five major projects: two new buildings (a theatre and a multipurpose space), two conversions (part of a convent and the former prison into art galleries) and the renovation of an old theatre.

Several cities considered carefully the location of new cultural infrastructure. The Tensta art museum in Stockholm was an attempt to develop visual arts in the city outskirts. Thessaloniki's building programme extended to neighbouring municipalities and to heritage sites across the region, such as work on the monasteries of Mount Athos. Copenhagen also invested in projects in several municipal and county authorities involved in the year. Lille has stimulated the renovation of 12 buildings across the region and in neighbouring Belgium into arts centres they have called "Maisons Folie".

While infrastructure projects were all linked in some way to the ECOC, most of these projects were not initiated by the ECOC. Some that were already in the pipeline were finished during the year. The prospect of becoming ECOC may also have helped cities to develop earlier projects and speed up projects that had stalled. For example, Brussels was able to attract the necessary funds to finish delayed projects such as the Musical Instruments Museum and the conversion of the former TV and radio studios into a cultural centre (although this project was not completed until several years after the cultural year), and Graz opened their new art museum, the Kunsthaus, after over 20 years of planning. In some instances, however, it was felt that the desire to open or re-open buildings during the cultural year meant that short cuts were taken in order to be ready in time. In Stockholm for example the new modern art museum opened in 1998 but had to close for repairs a few years later due to structural problems.

## **Expenditure**

Capital projects required a large investment by public authorities. Infrastructure projects in the twenty-one ECOC since 1995 cost at least 1396 million Euros. A chart in the Economic Perspectives section of this report shows relative investment in different cities.

Those cities that did not report separate figures for capital investment are not shown, but in most cases their infrastructure programmes seem to have been significantly less than those that did. Details are given in the city reports in Part II. For the cities where there were data, infrastructure expenditure ranged from 7,8 million Euros in Bologna to 232,6 million Euros in Thessaloniki. Weimar city authorities quoted a total capital expenditure of 411 million Euros. However this included major work on city clinics, new buildings for the Bauhaus University, and other projects that do not seem tied to the ECOC. If those projects are not included, an estimated 220 million Euros was spent in Weimar on capital projects related to culture, transport or public space (categories that are directly comparable to other cities' programmes).

There were limited data available for expenditure on individual projects or different categories of infrastructure in different ECOC. Therefore such data could not be analysed as part of this study.

There are no clear trends of rising or falling capital investment in ECOC. One example is the very different expenditure from Rotterdam and Porto, both sharing the title in 2001. Of the nine Cities of

Culture in the year 2000, three (Bologna, Avignon and Brussels) had significant infrastructure programmes – of these, Brussels spent over 80 million Euros. The high investments both in Copenhagen and Weimar are an indication that there seems to be no relation between population size and expenditure on infrastructure.

The most important factor governing infrastructure spend was the perceived needs of the city and its ability to convince state and regional governments to contribute financially. The three cities that have prioritised infrastructural development as part of the ECOC are from southern European countries and are all non-capital cities (Thessaloniki, Porto, Genoa). It is also interesting to note the tendency of northern European cities not to invest so substantially in infrastructure as a result of being ECOC (Bergen, Helsinki, Reykjavik and Stockholm), although Copenhagen was a major exception to this.

Funding for capital projects did not come primarily from the municipality, but rather from the state (Thessaloniki, Porto) or regional authorities (Weimar). Some finance also came from EU programmes such as Urban II, European Regional Development Fund and INTERREG. It is possible that some of the investment in Porto, Thessaloniki and Genoa was channelled indirectly from other EU structural funds. There is also some evidence of investment by public authorities stimulating private investment, for example in hotel building, although these sums are not included in the figures given above. In Brussels a major banking group offered substantial investment to renovate a large building in the centre of the city as an arts centre (the Artesia centre for the arts) in exchange for a long term lease on the property from the municipality of Brussels.

## **Organisation**

Despite the large variation in financial investment, the organisation of infrastructure programmes was fairly consistent. In most ECOC, the municipality agreed on infrastructure programmes with the state or region. The financing and management of the programme usually fell outside the responsibility of the ECOC operating structure.

There are exceptions however: the Island in the river Mur in Graz was managed by the ECOC operational team, and the 5 million Euro cost was part of the Graz 2003 programme budget. In Weimar a number of capital projects were the result of partnerships between the operational team and cultural institutions in the city, such as the Time Break corridor by the Buchenwald Museum.

In both Porto and Thessaloniki the entire infrastructure programme was the responsibility of the ECOC organising committee. This meant that far greater sums were handled by those organisations than for other ECOC. Incidentally, both cities had problems managing their infrastructure programme.

## **Results**

Infrastructure is one of the most visible legacies of the ECOC. In some cases the cultural programmes of ECOC required new cultural infrastructure to ensure there would be enough venues for arts events. However, in several cities these needs were met by temporary structures rather than permanent capital improvements. For example the Zeltstad was erected in the centre of Luxembourg as the venue for major music programmes, and the Barnum des Postes site of circus tents in Lille was the venue for a wide range of activities and performances. Most cities however viewed the ECOC as an opportunity to contribute to the long-term cultural development of the city, whereby long-standing projects were finished, or 'gaps' in the city's cultural life were addressed.

Such large capital investment also had an economic impact, in terms of job creation, both on a short term and long term basis. A more detailed analysis of the economic impact appears in a further section of this report.

Several capital projects stimulated by the ECOC designation were themselves of significant architectural value, and many of the renovations were of existing buildings of architectural worth. Just a few examples are the Kunsthhaus (designed by Peter Cook and Colin Fournier together with Architektur Consult) and the Island in the River Mur (designed by Vito Acconci) both in Graz, the Casa da Musica in Porto (designed by Rem Koolhaas), the Concertgebouw in Bruges (designed by Paul Robbrecht and Hilde Daem), renovations of listed monuments in Thessaloniki, or the renewed interest in vernacular

architecture in Copenhagen with renovations and the rehousing of the Royal School of Architecture. However in certain ECOC architectural quality was compromised in the interest of meeting tight schedules and limited finance. For example, several of the refurbishment projects in Thessaloniki fell into this category.

New infrastructure has had great symbolic value to cities. In Thessaloniki the building programme was partly intended as a sign of the state's commitment to the city and the creation of a cultural centre for the Balkan region. A series of contemporary designs in Bruges could be read as a demonstration of the city's contemporary credentials, and a cultural statement by the Flemish Community in Belgium. Projects could also draw attention to a particular district, like the Island in the Mur in Graz. Some buildings acted as the flagship project for a cultural year (Porto). New projects seem to have been very successful in attracting media and public attention. Given that one of the common objectives among ECOC was to raise a city's profile, infrastructure was an attractive means of doing so. It is interesting to note though that the symbolic power of infrastructure projects backfired on occasion, becoming instead a symbol of mis-management or inflated spending.

## **Problems**

As suggested above, many ECOC reported difficulties with their infrastructure programmes. A common problem was the timing of projects. With sometimes only a couple of years between the designation and the start of the programme, many cities found that buildings were not ready for the year or that the process had to be rushed in order that new buildings might be ready in time. The speed of construction sometimes contributed to building defects or inflated construction costs. Respondents expressed different opinions on whether it was necessary to finish projects for the cultural year. Sometimes the cultural programme required new buildings for venues, as in Thessaloniki or Salamanca, or as a focus for public and media attention. On the other hand, projects completed after the year could provide a boost for culture in the years after the ECOC, as in Bologna.

Several projects were extremely controversial among residents. The new information point opposite Copenhagen's town hall was one example; in Avignon a proposal for a contemporary completion of the Pont d'Avignon aroused great debate, but was eventually rejected in a referendum; in Weimar a new design of the Rollplatz by Daniel Buren was vetoed by politicians after public protests; and in Porto the delays and increased cost of the construction of the Casa da Musica (which was originally planned to open in 2001 but is still not open in the summer of 2004) has been a subject of scrutiny by the public and the press over the last few years. Several respondents pointed out that controversy was not necessarily only negative, as it could galvanise interest in the cultural year and debate about the city itself.

In some of the cities where there were large building programmes, the years before the ECOC were marred by building sites and road works, with consequent risks for business and tourism, as well as the potential to frustrate residents. In at least two cities road works obstructed access to cultural venues during the year itself (Porto, Stockholm).

Several cities reported difficulties sustaining new infrastructure after the end of the cultural year. A common problem was a lack of resources to cover operational costs. During the cultural year extra funds were often made available for international programming, subsidised tickets, and promotion. Without that additional support, several city authorities were left with a large new facility on their cultural budget, and are having difficulty finding sufficient finance for maintenance, programming or publicity. One interesting exception is Bologna, where the state committed both capital costs and annual contributions to operating costs for a twenty year period after the ECOC had finished. Even where they had sufficient funding, new structures could still run into difficulties in following years: for example a city's regular audiences were sometimes simply not large enough to support new venues (Thessaloniki).

As indicated above, capital projects were linked to ECOC in different ways, although it is possible to ask whether some infrastructure projects might have happened anyway, without the designation. (See also the section on Economic perspectives).

Despite these hazards, improvements to infrastructure were popular and tangible results of many ECOC. Several respondents in cities that avoided infrastructure programmes expressed regret at both 'a missed opportunity' for the city and the lack of a visible symbol that could represent the ECOC and its achievement.

**Advice**

The approach to infrastructure for each ECOC depends entirely on the ECOC aims and objectives. There is no imperative to consider infrastructure development as an essential element of an ECOC programme. Particular attention needs to be paid to several critical issues. Amongst these are the following:

- Clear assessments of needs and feasibility
- Realistic time scales
- Adequate resources
- Sustainability.

# Communication, Promotion and Media Response

## *Objectives and Targets*

Several key objectives for ECOC were closely related to communications and promotion:

- Raising the international profile of a city
- Changing the image of the city
- Increasing foreign and domestic tourism
- Broadening audiences for culture

Improving the availability and dissemination of information about cultural events and projects were often ends in themselves in ECOC. Communications initiatives sometimes resulted in the creation of new networks between cultural organisations or among artists within the city.

According to respondents, only a few ECOC tried to communicate all cultural events in the city, whether connected to ECOC programme or not. Most focused only on communicating the projects and events that were part of the official ECOC programme or that were being financed directly through ECOC budgets for the cultural year. ECOC had several communications priorities, including:

- Promoting the profile of the city
- Promoting the brand/image of the Capital of Culture
- Promoting the cultural programme of the Capital of Culture

Communications strategies attempted to tackle these goals in different phases of the project.

### Priority audiences by location

The priority target audience for most cities was the local population, or regional if, as in Copenhagen, there was a strong regional programme. For two ECOC, the national audience was equally or more important than its local audience (Weimar and Avignon). Only two ECOC rated the European or international public as priority target audiences (Prague and Bologna).

### Priority publics by social group

ECOC also rated their priority publics among social groups:

- Opinion-formers and cultural professionals were highest priority; followed by
- Politicians, young people and children; then
- Elderly people, ethnic minorities and disabled people.

Only a small number of cities identified audiences in the third group as a high priority. However respondents in these same cities also rated the more mainstream audiences as an equally high priority. Certain cities considered the target public for the ECOC events to be the “whole population of the city”. This often reflected the absence of a plan for strategic communications and the lack of market segmentation.

## Tools for Communication and Promotion

Print media (posters, brochures, catalogues etc.) was the most important communication tool used by the vast majority of ECOC, followed by broadcasting (television and/or radio), then the internet. Merchandising and special events were less important communication tools for ECOC as a whole. For an analysis of promotion of the ECOC to visitors, refer to the section on Visitor Perspectives.

### a) Print and broadcasting:

The importance of print and broadcasting to ECOC reflects the great potential of these media, particularly in ECOC before the development of the internet as a primary tool of communication. It is likely that future ECOC will view the internet and new technologies as primary tools.

Many ECOC produced advertisements and programmes for television, radio and cinema. Although respondents rated broadcasting as a high priority, few ECOC provided details on their approach. It is unclear for example whether or not ECOC paid for such coverage. Most ECOC were unable to submit a breakdown of communications costs.

All ECOC used official programmes, posters, leaflets, newsletters and magazines to promote and communicate the year. Some ECOC sent programmes to all households in the city (Helsinki, Stockholm). Many produced and distributed regular programmes in collaboration with newspapers.

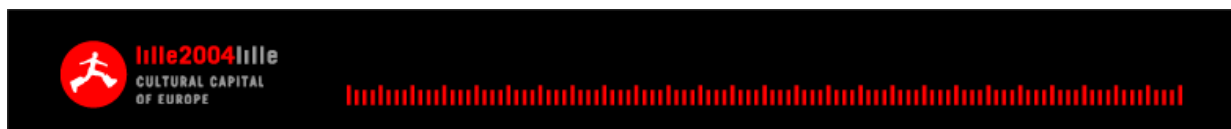
The effective communication of the events in the programme was a major challenge for ECOC. Not only is ECOC a complex and sometimes confused concept, but many featured long and complicated programmes and most were trying to reach a number of different audiences. The sheer number of partners and projects made it difficult for some ECOC organisations to collect the necessary data to produce a comprehensive calendar or agenda. The themes used to guide the creation of the programme were often too abstract or complicated to communicate easily to the public. ECOC adopted several strategies to try to address this: Bruges for example used a short commissioned poem to provide a structure, adding details of the programme organised by discipline and by calendar at the back of the publication. Lille responded to early criticism of its communication of events by creating programmes in many different formats, including monthly programmes and leaflets on specific projects. Graz produced over 3000 different kinds of publicity material.

Promotional campaigns were frequently organised with and supported by both public and private partners. The offer of promotional space and material was one type of in-kind sponsorship, especially by transport and media companies. Almost three out of four cities worked with tourist boards as communication partners, a similar number had partnerships with hotels, and around two-thirds collaborated with either tour operators or airlines. Lille has a promotional campaign in partnership with Eurostar and SNCF; Bergen worked on advertisements and ticket deals with SAS; Brussels arranged in store advertising in Delhaize supermarkets. Such partnerships are dealt with further in the section on Visitor perspectives.

All cities produced a special ECOC logo, for example Helsinki's white star or Graz's "0003".



Many cities chose their logo on the basis of a design competition. Some designs attempted to reflect both the city and the programme. To communicate Lille's regional programme part of their graphic identity was a bar code indicating where the event/project was taking place.





Genoa's "GeNova" reflected the new image of the city. Other logos were inspired by local symbols: Salamanca's was based on a fifteenth century painted ceiling in the university.



A common star logo was created for the nine ECOC of 2000, although it was not used by all nine cities. Helsinki, Reykjavik and Santiago developed a variation of the common logo for their ECOC.

Logos featured on programmes and posters; they also appeared on merchandise, buses and trams in most ECOC. Some ECOC were very aggressive in their use of their graphic identity. Graz promoted its logo so effectively that it appeared on bathroom tiles in those houses that benefited from renovations.

Careful consideration was also given to the typeface and colours that made up ECOC graphic identity. Some recent ECOC put a special effort into branding techniques, including Graz, Bergen and Helsinki. These combined a graphic identity with key features of the event to try to associate the ECOC with certain values or ideas. Graz won a number of awards for its promotional campaigns.

Cities chose how prominently they wanted to promote the ECOC organisation itself. A strong brand might create greater awareness of the fact that the ECOC was happening, or of the basic themes and slogans of the programme. On the other hand it might not communicate the programme in detail, or help cultural partners win recognition. Several cities reported that partner organisations were unhappy following publicity guidelines created for the ECOC brand, fearing a loss or dilution of their own identity.

Branding also raises questions of continuity. In one ECOC, the organisers felt the city had missed an opportunity by not using the ECOC brand for future city promotion after the cultural year had finished. However, a few cities continue to highlight their past ECOC in promotional material, but do not seem to use the original graphic identity.

#### b) New technology and new media

The use of internet was a low priority for three cities, two of which (Luxembourg and Copenhagen) took place before many important developments in this field. Almost all ECOC created web sites since 1995. After 1997 a majority used email messaging or electronic newsletters, and half had electronic ticketing services. Stockholm was the first city to attempt to exploit new technology. The most comprehensive approaches seem to have been in Helsinki and Graz, where the ECOC used e-conferences and debates, internet broadcasting, and the use of SMS and ATM machines.

Seven ECOC reported figures for the use of their web sites, using two different units of measurement (visits and page requests):

Unit	City	Number
Visits	Bologna 2000	200.000
	Reykjavik 2000	300.000
	Rotterdam 2001	350.000
	Helsinki 2000	600.000
Page requests	Salamanca 2002	10.139.000
	Porto 2001	11.379.603
	Bologna 2000	16.488.984
	Graz 2003	22.900.000

It is not easy to make comparisons between ECOC, as cities counted either the number of individual web pages downloaded, or the number of visitors to the site. Bologna counted both, and recorded 16,5 million page requests made by 200.000 visitors. Bologna was also able to measure the origin of visitors.

#### c) Merchandise

Two cities (Bergen and Bologna) reported a higher priority for merchandise as a promotional tool than the other cities. However many ECOC produced a range of merchandise, intended both as a source of finance and to promote the event. Common products included lighters, T-shirts, caps, stationery and crockery. There were some more unusual examples: one company in Thessaloniki suggested producing a branded watch that would contain an electronic ticket to some events (although the idea was rejected by the board). Bologna produced a selection of Italian wines; Stockholm and Weimar, both cities with strong traditions for design, asked design students to create products, such as a Goethe-shaped baby's dummy; the "Bergen dollar" was legal tender in the city in 2000, and featured on national television news.

As well as licensing the merchandise, cities had to arrange for its distribution. Many ECOC had a central vendor, sometimes at the same place as the information point. At least one city found that this did not meet demand, and thought they might have improved distribution with more outlets.

Income generated from merchandise sales is often combined with other sources of earned income in ECOC budgets, but was generally very small. Some ECOC did give separate sales figures, varying from 80.000 to 180.000 Euros.

#### d) Special events

The organisation of special events was another important promotional tool for ECOC. One of the most important was the opening event of the ECOC, often outdoors despite the winter weather, featuring music, fireworks, acrobats and more. For many ECOC, the opening event was one of the most popular of the year: Lille for example reported 600.000 visitors. For more information on special events, refer to the section on the Cultural programme.

#### e) Other initiatives

Many ECOC ran an information centre in the city. At least six ECOC put effort into creating a cultural and information centre that also provided a venue for projects, and acted as a visible and accessible sign of the ECOC in the city. Copenhagen, in addition to a central information point, used a boat, the Ferry Kronberg that also made voyages to cities around the Baltic.

In at least five cities the director seems to have been a well-known figure or celebrity himself (in all cases the person was male).

At least three cities created "ambassadors" programmes, using networks of volunteers to spread information and coordinate group visits to events.

At least three cities also used food to promote the ECOC. Salamanca produced a special menu of regional specialities; one of Bergen's sponsors produced a range of meat products, one for each of the nine ECOC in 2000. In Brussels one of the main chocolate manufacturers produced chocolates with the ECOC logo.

Like the visual brand, some of these initiatives raised questions of sustainability, for example of whether to maintain the information centre or ambassadors programme after the Capital of Culture year. In the end, the majority of information centres were closed at the end of the year, Copenhagen for example sold the Ferry. One of the ambassadors' programmes was also ended, something criticised in the final evaluation for that ECOC.

## **Press Coverage**

All ECOC used the press to promote their event. ECOC organised press conferences and interviews, and most organised familiarisation visits for the press. Several organisations with limited budgets mentioned such trips as an expensive but nevertheless valuable tool. Some ECOC prioritised efforts to win good press coverage over paid press advertising, using it as a cheap method of promotion.

Several ECOC carried out detailed monitoring and assessment of media coverage. The data submitted by ECOC does not allow much comparison, since different kinds of statistics were produced by cities. ECOC made a number of choices when measuring and evaluating press and media coverage:

- Which geographical areas were represented – the most common distinction was between figures for national and international media, although at least five cities reported figures that combined the two
- When surveys were made – some ECOC did not specify whether their figures included the years leading up to the ECOC event. Given the extensive coverage during preparations in some instances, this can make a great difference to the total. The combined press coverage in the three years before Graz and Copenhagen was roughly equal to coverage during the year
- Whether results were counted or estimated – at least five cities highlighted the fact that their figures were estimates
- Which units were used – this issue seems more important in the measurement of broadcasting. Several cities measured the number of broadcasts, while three cities measured air time (their results varied between 6 and 600 hours). Measuring in different units was also an issue for press cuttings, as some cities counted articles mentioning the ECOC, and others articles specifically about the ECOC, or articles promoting or reviewing associated cultural events.

What is clear is that ECOC between 1995 and 2004 attracted extensive media attention. ECOC reported a total of 125,000 newspaper and magazine articles between them, and 9,200 television and radio broadcasts. The actual figure is likely to be significantly higher. Cities such as Porto, Graz and Copenhagen were the subject of tens of thousands of articles, both in the year and during preparations. In some cities preparations were subject to extensive debate not only in the local but also in the national press. Major international newspapers, magazines, television stations and radio stations covered the events in most ECOC. Public opinion polls conducted for one third of ECOC show that national awareness of the event was often extremely high.

The quality of overall coverage however varied significantly between ECOC, between different types of media, and chronologically through the preparation, implementation and aftermath of each ECOC. Several respondents thought that international coverage tended to be more positive than national and especially local media. Negative local coverage was a major concern for eight of the ECOC, often developing at an early stage of the project. Respondents mentioned a number of contributing factors to negative coverage, including the legacy of earlier unpopular events, a lack of information in the early stages, controversies within the organisation, disputes with other institutions, and controversial project proposals. The quality rather than just the quantity of media coverage of ECOC has been studied in a few cases (for example Copenhagen).

## **Expenditure**

Of the 21 ECOC in this study, 17 reported figures for their expenditure on communications and promotion. These vary from under 1 million to 14 million Euros per city; the average ECOC spent just over 6 million Euros, around 14% of the total operating expenditure of those cities. The 17 together spent at least 105 million Euros. It is important to note that ECOC often cooperated with partners (municipalities, tourist boards, sponsors etc.), some of whom invested heavily in promotion of the event; these additional amounts spent on communication were generally not accounted for by the ECOC

organisations budget. An assessment of the finances of ECOC appears in the section on Economic Perspectives.

### ***Staff and Organisation***

The wide variation in communication budgets reflects in part the number of staff involved in the communication, marketing, press or promotion departments of ECOC. These ranged from one member of staff in Avignon and Reykjavik to around 40 in Graz, including call centre and ticketing staff. Graz was an unusual case, however, as the ECOC handled international marketing and design within its operational team.

Many ECOC outsourced parts of their communications functions, especially web design, advertising design, and overseas promotion. Rotterdam contracted a separate organisation to handle most of its communications. As with data on promotional spend, their involvement means it is hard to make reliable comparisons between the number of staff engaged in the communication efforts of each ECOC.

The structure of the ECOC organisation is discussed in an earlier section.

### ***Problems***

The vast majority of ECOC reported difficulties with communication, although these varied considerably. The most common were:

- Limited budgets
- Limited preparation time
- Insufficient personnel
- Inadequate strategy

Fourteen cities mentioned one or more of these.

### ***Advice***

Many respondents emphasised the importance of communications. Respondents underlined that the importance of communications should influence ECOC priorities, in terms of the following:

- Assigning more money to marketing and communication
- Taking more time and thought to develop a comprehensive communications strategy
- Insisting on a dialogue between programming team and communication department from the very start of the project
- Not underestimating the work load involved.

Given the relevance of having a presence within the media in order to raise the profile of ECOC and the wide variations in the measurement and evaluation of press coverage of ECOC, it would be advisable to develop standard European techniques to monitor international coverage. A system of monitoring could be established that would be based on the already strong trend for most key national papers, some local papers and specialist publications to be placed within electronic databases.

## European Perspectives

### *Approaches*

It is noteworthy that when asked if consideration was given to issues of European dimension and significance when developing the cultural programme for the ECOC, all cities, without exception, confirmed that they did. So at one level, all cities felt an obligation to at least consider this aspect when developing their approach and plans. However, the ways in which the term European dimension and significance was interpreted or defined, and the priority it was accorded in the development and delivery of the cultural programmes varied substantially between cities.

The differing definitions by cities of European dimension can be summarised as falling into six main categories:

1. Presenting events (productions, performances, exhibitions) that focus on the talents of European artists (for example, Literature Express and The House of the Nine Cities in Brussels bringing writers or artists to public events at the European Parliament, the concert by U2 in Thessaloniki, European Jazz Festival in Graz, Futurice fashion event in Reykjavik, European lecture series in Helsinki)
2. Collaborations, co-productions, exchanges and other means of developing cooperation between artists, cultural organisations and groups who are based in different European countries (for example Nordic and Baltic projects in Copenhagen and Helsinki, Trans Dance Europe, opera and theatre performances in Salamanca)
3. Developing European themes and issues (multiculturalism and multilingualism in Luxembourg, communication in Bologna, interfaith and religions in Graz, migration and exile in Copenhagen)
4. Identifying and celebrating aspects of European history, identity and heritage that are present already in the designated city (for example The role of Genoa in Europe during the XVII century; the importance of Santiago to European travellers; Luxembourg as the birthplace of Robert Schuman; numerous ideologies and cultural figures associated with Weimar; exhibition of Bruges as a European Crossroad; Erasmus in Rotterdam; exhibition of Alexander the Great in Thessaloniki)
5. Very specific partnerships between two or more cities (for example Café Nine.net and the Voices of Europe project with the nine ECOC in 2000, the squatters project between Porto and Rotterdam, the symbolic naming or declarations made between Salamanca and Bruges or Graz and St Petersburg) or within a region (for example Lille's partnership with towns across national borders of France and Belgium).
6. Promoting European tourism (a specific objective for Bergen, Avignon and Genoa)

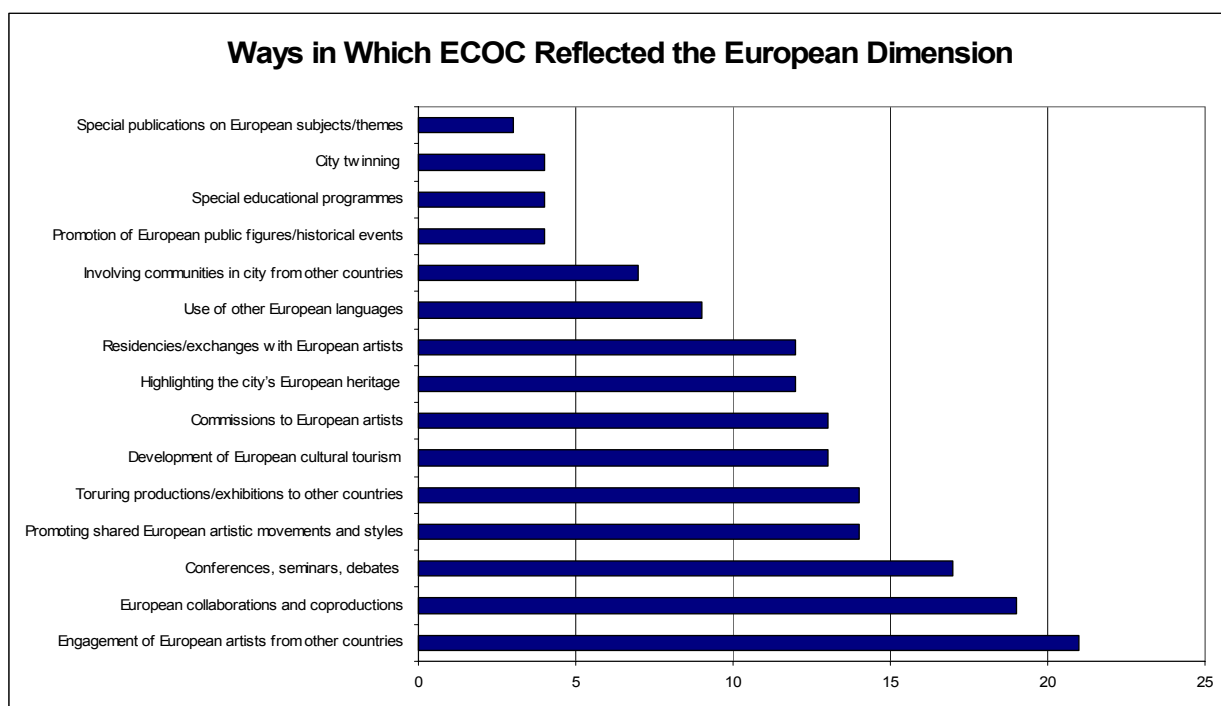
The prominence of events in the categories above, and indeed the sophistication with which they were presented or developed (as a one-off performance/exhibition/initiative with no context or presented within a well integrated or contextualised programme of events, or as part of a longer-term process of trans-border collaboration) varied from city to city. Whereas many cities simply adopted a policy of 'buying' big concerts with famous names at current market rates or mounting blockbuster exhibitions, others strove to develop partnerships and relationships by working on smaller projects, or fostering exchange programmes between artists. The cultural programme was a catalytic point of departure for constructive thinking and international links, especially cultural networking, for several cities with a view to the sustainability of links and projects beyond the cultural year (e.g. Helsinki, Reykjavik, Lille). Other cities focused on the formal European links they already had through existing twinning agreements.

Although no ECOC to date has attempted to assess the specific European dimension of its cultural programme, a research project of this type is under way at the Utrecht School of Arts, examining four projects that took place within the framework of Rotterdam 2001 (but not necessarily representative of the programme as a whole). Four elements were identified as expressions of European identity: the

cultural history or traditions of Europe, particular expressions of the EU, the cultural market in Europe and Europe as part of the world. Preliminary findings indicate that although the concepts were of distinctly European character and quality, often the execution was not. Projects became more introverted and local as they developed. This point may well relate to European projects in other ECOC, which means that caution should be exercised when evaluating the European dimension of a cultural programme simply on the basis of intentions and names of projects and participants.

About one third of the cities in this study preferred to focus on a broader 'international', rather than a more defined 'European' dimension, often making no real distinction between the two. European projects were presented as part of a city's 'international programme'. Some looked for quality of projects rather than geographical themes; others pursued connections with specific places (for example Images of Africa festival in Copenhagen).

Of the cities studied only four rated the European dimension as being a 'high priority' in the development and delivery of their cultural programmes. For most, it was considered a 'medium priority'. Two rated this dimension as a 'low priority' in relation to other priorities that were established. Brussels, for example, wanted to focus primarily on the 'city' dimension of the programme, recognising the existing scale and importance of European events already happening in the city, its already established role as a home for European institutions and as a major centre for European cultural networks. On the other hand, cities on the periphery of Europe in terms of geography and cultural links used the opportunity of being ECOC to introduce major European artists never seen before by the public to that city and as a chance to become more integrated in European cultural networks (for example by hosting the annual meeting of IETM – Informal European Theatre Meetings – in Stockholm, or the Europa Mundi conferences in Santiago) and by actively promoting coproductions and joint projects with other European cultural partners (e.g. Unpacking Europe in Rotterdam, baroque opera series in Salamanca).



0 (no cities) – 21 (21 cities) reported using these activities to promote the European dimension in their programmes

All ECOC stated that the designation offered a strong opportunity to develop European networking, although the degree to which this opportunity was exploited did vary. Networking offered as part of Artgenda for young people around the Baltic (Copenhagen and Stockholm), the World Conference on Peace and Religion (Graz) and the Rotterdam Community Theatre Festival are a few examples.

## ***Scope and Scale***

In terms of sectors in which European cooperation projects took place, the most frequently cited by ECOC were:

- Music
- Dance
- Theatre
- Visual Arts

Followed by:

- New technologies/media
- Film
- Street parades/open-air events

In certain cities the sectors of architecture, fashion and design, opera, literature, archives and interdisciplinary projects were prominent.

Music and dance were reported to be sectors in which it was easier to develop European cooperation since these are mainly non-verbal art forms.

Very few European cooperation projects were developed in the sectors of crafts, and no significant European cooperation projects were reported in the broadcasting sector (television and radio).

Of the 31 European countries listed in the questionnaire, partners in all (except Lichtenstein) were involved in one or more ECOC cooperation projects in the period 1995-2004. The countries most frequently cited as being the most prominent in ECOC cultural programmes were:

- United Kingdom
- France
- Germany

Many factors influence the prominence of one country over another in ECOC programmes. These include the priorities of the particular ECOC (for example Copenhagen, Stockholm, Bergen, Helsinki and Reykjavik prioritised Nordic collaboration; Thessaloniki attempted to build closer relations with Balkan countries), artistic decisions taken by organisers and cultural operators in each city (based on existing relationships or artistic criteria), and sometimes on funding that was available in European countries for cross-border collaborations and visits (through bodies like government ministries, cultural institutes and arts councils). Bodies like the British Council, the Goethe Institute and the Association Française d'Action Artistique (AFAA) have been particularly active in supporting ECOC programmes.

## ***Third Countries***

Most ECOC also collaborated with artists or cultural organisations or presented performances and exhibitions originating from non-European countries. Those that were most prominent in ECOC programmes included Japan, USA, Canada, Mali, India, Russia, Israel, Ukraine, Cuba, Burkina Faso, Morocco, Turkey, China, Palestine, Brazil, and Switzerland. The most frequently cited non-European countries were Japan and USA, although the emphasis varied from city to city. All ECOC mentioned projects that were designed specifically to promote dialogue between the cultures of Europe and the cultures of other parts of the world.

Many of the ECOC developed Japanese projects in association with the EU-Japan Fest organisation. This body was launched in 1993 when the trade friction between Japan and Europe was becoming a serious political issue and raises its funds from government bodies and the business community in Japan. In certain years this organisation has had financial difficulties, and in others has offered substantial support. The EU-Japan Fest provides liaison with Japanese artists and has developed joint projects in many of the ECOC, including fireworks displays, photographic exhibitions and concerts, such as cutting-edge music concerts and a Japanese kite festival in Graz, an architectural exhibition in Salamanca, the Toyo Ito Pavilion and Edo fireworks in Bruges, and the "Flower Power" Exhibition and performances of light in Lille.

## **Problems**

All ECOC reported that they experienced difficulties in the planning and delivery of the European dimension of their programmes. The most frequently stated problems were:

- Inadequate sources of finance for European projects
- Lack of sufficient experience in the city to develop and manage European programmes
- The lack of sustainability of projects over time.

These are serious issues that need to be addressed if future ECOC are to enhance the European dimension of their programmes. There were a number of cities that stated that in retrospect they had not spent sufficient time on this aspect of their programme or had given it too little consideration in view of many other pressing priorities and pressures, or did not have a clear strategy for promoting cultural cooperation on a pan-European basis. As stated earlier, the level of priority given to developing the European dimension of ECOC varied from city to city, and it seems often the European nature of the concept behind a project was not translated into a reality during the execution of such projects. There was no enforced obligation when awarding the designation for ECOC to prioritise this dimension, nor was any guidance or information about how to develop it offered to cities or organisers. Larger cities or cities in which there was a body of individuals (producers, artists, curators) already working at a European level, or cultural organisations that had experience in European networking and European programming and who had contacts and ideas, were able to help create large and significant programmes; others tried but were not able to achieve this effectively, or simply concentrated on existing partnerships with twin cities, or in the case of the ECOC for the year 2000, with a few other cities in this group.

The issue of building and sustaining partnerships over time was stressed. Many cities were interested in the European dimension during the cultural year, but once the ECOC organisers departed, so did the expertise and contacts. Most public authorities that were financing ECOC were sympathetic to the idea of European cultural cooperation (although in general viewed it as a lower priority when compared to local, regional and national cultural cooperation). However, when the cultural year finished, hardly any public authorities maintained a specific or additional budget to continue European and international work. The individuals and organisations that had been most active in this field lost support or continued to work but with inadequate resources.

Respondents highlighted other problems as well. In a number of cities, European projects were attempted that were too ambitious in relation to the planning time that was available, or to the expertise and finance that could be identified for this area of work. Many such projects faltered or failed, or in some cases were cancelled. Other respondents reported difficulties in making contacts and in developing relationships; it takes both parties to be interested, and larger more experienced cities had difficulties in collaborating with smaller and less experienced ones with limited budgets and know-how. A few cities stated that they began working too late on European projects, where the planning time is often longer than local projects, especially in relation to identifying and applying for funding. Almost all cities indicated that there was a willingness of local artists and cultural institutions to work on European projects. The difficulty was not 'will' but experience and resources. In some cities the absence of adequate resources and experience resulted in projects of variable quality.



It is regrettable that experience and knowledge about developing European projects is not passed from city to city. Cities where cultural operators are part of important cultural networks can rely on this expertise, but often this is confined to certain specialist sectors (contemporary theatre production and dance, museums, training and education, etc) rather than to large-scale city celebrations and year-long multi-disciplinary cultural programmes.

A number of respondents disagreed with the idea of prioritising the building of relationships and developing cultural projects with operators and artists from other EU Member States. Some argued for a larger international perspective (building relationships between Europe and the rest of the world, for example with the Islamic world, Latin America, Africa); others supported focusing on one region (for example work with the Baltic states or south-eastern and eastern European counties, whether or not they are Member States).

## **Advice**

Respondents to this study offered advice to future organisers of ECOC. The most common suggestions were as follows:

- Prioritise this dimension if it is to be significant
- Ensure that a fair proportion of the budget is linked to this priority
- Define the goals and coherent themes, and develop a clear strategy. Do not collect individual projects and ideas here and there
- Select European partners carefully. Build on existing links and connections
- Start early to make contacts and plan far in advance
- Ensure there is real expertise available to help. Experts can be local, but many work internationally. Invite them to participate
- Focus on the quality and profile of projects, not on the political dimension of making contacts
- More challenging European projects are likely to have the greatest impact. Do not be afraid to deal with difficult or controversial themes
- Ensure a public dimension to European projects. Do not only focus on artist-to-artist exchanges and minority interests.

There is much information available on practical issues and models of good practice in relation to cross-border European cultural cooperation. Cultural networks have experience to share. The European Commission has published reports on this matter (such as the 'Study on Cultural Cooperation in Europe' by EFAH – European Forum for the Arts and Heritage – and the Interarts Foundation). However such data and experience is fragmented. The European Cultural Foundation is developing a project (The Lab) that aims to develop an interactive portal as a tool to gather, analyse and publish practical information for those interested in European trans-border cultural projects. All ECOC recognised the opportunity to use their cultural years as platforms for developing cooperation projects. Many of them admit that they fell far short of exploiting the potential of such an opportunity.

## **Sharing the Title**

In the period of this study every city shared the title of ECOC, either with another city designated as ECOC or with a city designated to host a cultural month. Between 1995 and 1999 each ECOC was paired officially with a city hosting a cultural month. In the year 2000, there were nine cities asked to share the ECOC designation and no cultural months. The pairing of ECOC with a city cultural month continued in 2001 where two ECOC and two city cultural months were declared. In 2002 there were two ECOC and in 2003 one ECOC and one cultural month. In 2004, there were two ECOC. The pattern has

therefore been inconsistent and somewhat erratic. This section confines its analysis to the sharing of the ECOC for a year between two or more cities. Cooperation between ECOC and cultural months is dealt with in the section on cultural months.

There was a clear expectation by the EU when offering the ECOC designation to more than one city that there should be collaboration between the cities in terms of cultural cooperation. Cities were informed of this expectation after the designations were made, but left entirely free to determine the means and extent of the cooperation.

When respondents were asked to rate the extent of collaboration between cities sharing the ECOC title, there were considerable variations in the responses even from respondents in the same city. The examples given suggested that this reflects different interpretations about the meaning of 'collaboration'. To some, collaboration meant any form of joint action (including discussions between the mayors of the cities, attendance at each other's opening events, adding each other's web site address on publicity brochures, etc); to others, collaboration referred to working closely and comprehensively with one another on a series of projects. When averaging out these responses to this question city by city, most respondents from ECOC that shared the title believed that the cities sharing the title only cooperated 'to a minor extent'. Very few cities answered that they collaborated to 'a major extent'.

As important as the extent of collaboration between cities in any given year, is whether such collaboration could be sustained after the cultural year had finished. Since collaboration took the form less on an official city-to-city basis and more between artists, cultural operators and cultural organisations in the different cities, this study was unable to assess the extent of individual artist-to-artist or organisation-to-organisation partnerships. Judging from the questionnaire responses and interviews, although there were a number of clear instances where collaborations were valuable and were sustained in the year following the cultural year (for example Trans-Dance Europe, Festival of Light), in most cases the joint actions were confined to the cultural year itself and then were abandoned. There is no evidence of the widespread sustainability of partnerships in ECOC that shared the title.

The joint projects tended to be of the same types as other forms of European cultural cooperation that the ECOC were engaged in – theatre coproductions, artist exchanges and residencies, youth exchanges and programmes, touring exhibitions, joint seminars, etc. There was little evidence of cities sharing common cultural themes, embarking on joint artistic programming of any scale, or major joint marketing or tourism initiatives. Relationships between cities sharing the title remained peripheral and somewhat insignificant.

### Year 2000

The most substantial attempt by cities sharing the title to collaborate with each other was in the year 2000 when nine cities shared the title. The nine cities jointly established an association (AECC) referred to earlier in the report, and appointed a coordinator based in the offices of Brussels 2000. The role of this association was to help facilitate collaborations, and not to impose or manage projects.

Each of the nine cities chose a different overall theme for its cultural programme (e.g. Helsinki: Knowledge, Technology and Future; Reykjavik: Culture and Nature; Brussels: The City; Avignon: Art and Creativity), but they were unable to integrate or connect these themes in any way through their individual programmes. The Directors and other staff of the various ECOC offices in each city held joint meetings every few months and tried over a period of three years to develop joint approaches and projects. Various initiatives were taken, such as the setting up of a system of intranet communication 'Weboffice' (which was used by few of the cities), determining a common logo (which was a source of considerable controversy between the cities and in the end, though adopted by the association, was only used by some of the cities on their publicity material), commissioning jointly a study on a common sponsorship programme for the nine cities (which did not succeed in attracting any sponsors, and which exposed the incompatibility of the city programmes in terms of sponsorship potential), and a proposed programme of joint promotions by organising common publicity material, a common press conference, and a joint promotional stand at international fairs (which was assessed as not being particularly effective).

In spite of strong intentions to integrate programmes and develop major joint marketing initiatives, the most practical outcome of cooperation was the decision of the nine cities to embark on 12 joint co-operation projects covering different interests, each led by different cities, and involving different

combinations of the other cities. These nine projects were: Technomade (Avignon), Coasts and Waterways (Bergen), Café Nine.net (Bologna/Helsinki), Walkabout Stalk (Brussels), Codex Calixtinus (Cracow), Citylink (Prague), The Faces of Earth (Santiago), Kide (Helsinki), The House of the Nine Cities (Brussels) and Bologna Gala Dinner (Bologna). There were about 60 other international projects in which two or more of the ECOC of 2000 were involved. Whilst some of the nine cities believed these cooperation projects were highlights of their cultural programmes, in other cities they had minimal impact or were marginal to the city's own cultural programme.

The Nordic countries (Bergen, Helsinki, Reykjavik) cooperated on a series of large-scale projects that had considerable public impact (for example the Baldur ballet/opera, Futuice fashion show, Nordic light festivals, Kela water nymph), that were quoted by each of the cities as successful cooperation projects. These cities were able to build on existing cultural ties between their countries, and have continued that cooperation. They also worked towards cooperation with the five other cities: Helsinki in particular felt that it was taking a lead in cultural cooperation among the nine, while Bergen initiated attempts to develop joint marketing and sponsorship.

Cooperation between the nine cities as a whole however proved more complex and difficult, bearing in mind different cultures, different expectations and artistic interests, a lack of planning time, different budgets and methods of organisation and management, and different decision-making systems.

In its final evaluation, the ECOC Directors concluded that in spite of strong efforts and some successful joint projects, the nine city approach was too complex and unworkable. The final report of the AECC organisation, based on a survey of its members, concluded: "All the people interviewed answered that this unprecedented experience (of nine cities) should not be repeated again" (European Cities of Culture Final Report, p.67, Cogliandro 2001).

The experience of the nine cities sharing the designation of ECOC was echoed in situations where just two cities were sharing the title.

#### Advantages of sharing

The main advantages of sharing the title were considered by many respondents to be the following:

- Opportunities to learn from another city by exchanging ideas and projects
- Exchanges of people (artists, community groups etc)
- Potential of increased cultural cooperation

A few respondents also mentioned the importance of jointly promoting projects and events being able to generate increased visibility. Others referred to projects that helped cities gain a greater sense of a common European heritage.

#### Disadvantages of sharing

The reasons for difficulties in sharing the title, and the disadvantages of sharing were also clearly stated by respondents who commented on:

- Problems arising from the different aims, objectives and priorities of the different cities
- Problems arising from the different cultures, sizes and types of cities endeavouring to work together
- Problems caused when there was a lack of interest from one side

Other problems cited included:

- The competition for visibility, visitors and sponsorship

- Insufficient planning time
- The absence of past linkages and existing cultural connections
- Personality differences

A few respondents remarked that a significant disadvantage of sharing the title was the EU dividing whatever small amount of funding was available for ECOC between two or more cities. They believed that the EU should accept the financial consequences for a decision where more than one city is awarded the title.

In some cities sharing the ECOC title, more significant cooperation projects were reported with other cities than with their paired ECOC cities (for example Rotterdam, Bruges, Lille).

## **Future**

All survey respondents were asked whether or not they believed the system of having more than one city designated as ECOC in the same year should be continued. Interestingly, views were equally divided: 50% of respondents replied 'yes'; 50% replied 'no'. Although often respondents in the same city expressed different views, respondents in cities that felt more isolated or peripheral to European issues or where for historical, geographical or cultural reasons there had been few opportunities to join with other European cities in joint cultural projects tended to favour the idea of sharing the title more than in other cities.

Those that disagreed with the idea of sharing the title focused on a contradiction in terms of being called a 'capital' and there being more than one 'capital' each year. "A capital should be unique, hence its appeal and imaginative power," said one respondent. Several commented on potential 'competition' for visitors and visibility between cities with the same title in the same year. A few believed that the impact on cities not sharing the title was likely to be greater than those that did share, although there is no clear evidence to support that assumption.

Many respondents that supported the idea of sharing the title expressed the view that there should not be more than two cities chosen to share the title in any given year. Some supported the idea of sharing by referring to advantages of the new EU proposal to pair cities from the 'old' and 'new' Member States. In general, this was thought to be an interesting idea, but much depended on the nature of the selection process and on which cities were paired.

Many respondents also believed that the system should not be as arbitrary as it has been. "The process of twinning cities must be mediated carefully, and possibly by the EU", said one respondent. Another referred to the problem of "forcing marriages between cities that have little in common".

If there are to be two cities sharing the title of ECOC each year, how should such cities be selected? Respondents spoke from their own experience about what has and has not worked in past sharing. About 60% of respondents believed that the cities themselves should have the final say about whether or not they are paired. About 35% believed that the EU should take such a decision, but bearing in mind the compatibility of cities and taking into account the views of the cities themselves and their national governments. Only 5% of respondents believed that national governments should take such decisions without any discussion with the cities to be paired.

The implications of the view that cities themselves should be consulted before a decision is taken imply that the process of selection should involve a stage of consultation with cities that may be sharing the title. One respondent suggested that if the EU continues to offer the right of nomination of ECOC to Member States in rotation, that knowing which two states have nominating rights, the cities themselves in those two countries should consider partners and propose themselves in pairs to their respective national governments and then to the EU. Another point of view was that cities should not be obliged to cooperate as this has not often produced extensive or sustainable European cooperation. Instead they should be free to explore the European dimension in other ways more suited to their city.

## Economic Perspectives

As part of this study all ECOC were asked to provide budgetary and financial information on a pro forma that was circulated to key respondents. Although every attempt was made to collect reliable data, it is interesting to note that certain cities had difficulties in furnishing even basic information. In other cities, two or even three sets of figures were received that were sometimes difficult to verify, and frequently summary figures mentioned in final published reports of individual cities did not match with the budgets submitted. The assessments of financial issues are based on the best available data at the time of completing this study. This is the first time such comprehensive financial data about ECOC has been collected and compared. Financial data was collected for all 21 ECOC which formed part of this study and appears in both Annex I and in the individual city reports in Part II. Incomplete figures were received from Santiago, Avignon and Cracow.

### Operating Expenditure

The category of operating expenditure of the ECOC organisation comprised three elements:

- Programme expenditure
- Promotion and marketing
- Wages, salaries and overheads

For many cities, expenditure has been aggregated for a three to five year period during which expenditure has been incurred. The figures exclude all capital costs.

Considerable caution must be taken when comparing the figures of one city to another not least because no allowance has been made for inflation over the ten years covered by this study. Additionally, in certain cities, all operating expenditure for ECOC projects was centralised and channelled through the ECOC organisation and its accounts; in other cities, a more decentralised approach was used, often where public authorities, sponsors etc, contributed directly to specific projects or particular organisations, and where such sums are not recorded as items of expenditure or income in the ECOC accounts. The question 'how much did an ECOC spend?' is a complex one to answer accurately. This study has confined comparisons only to figures supplied by each ECOC organisation relating to its own operating expenditure and income.

The operating expenditure of the organisations specifically created to manage the ECOC excluded capital expenditure, which was most often paid directly by public authorities. Exceptions to this were Porto and Thessaloniki, where capital expenditure was channelled through the operating funds of the ECOC. It is important to bear this in mind when comparing figures.

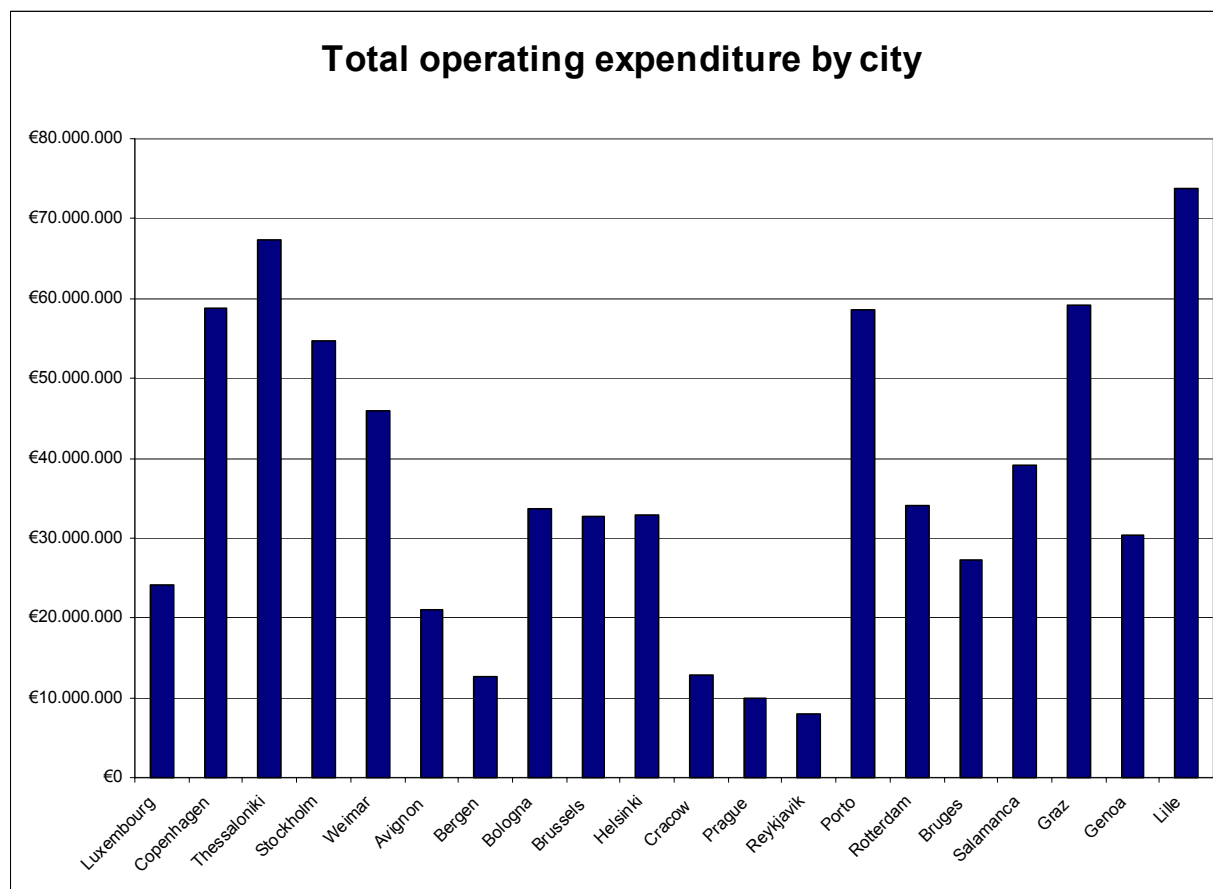
The distribution of total operating expenditure (excluding capital) for 20 cities can be shown as follows:

	<u>Number of Cities</u>
Under 15m Euro	4
15 - 29m Euro	3
30 - 44m Euro	6
45 - 59m Euro	5
60m Euro +	2
<hr/> 20 cities that submitted information	
	<hr/>
	<u>lowest</u> <u>highest</u>
Range	7,9m Euros (Reykjavik)      73,7m Euros (Lille)

Not surprisingly there is a wide range in the recorded levels of operating costs - the largest is over nine times larger than the smallest. It is not possible to relate the scale of ECOC expenditure to factors such as population size, the size of the total budget of the municipality concerned, the GNP of the country concerned, or any other factors. There are no discernable trends in this regard. The budget of each ECOC was developed on the basis of many variables, including the objectives and precise responsibilities of the ECOC organisation, the types and scale of projects, the income that was available from all sources, and the political environment and practices of each city.

The table below presents a summary of the estimated total operating expenditure for all ECOC.

Total Operating Expenditure for 20 Cities	=	737m Euros
Average Operating Expenditure per City	=	36,9 m Euros



As indicated earlier, the operating budget was broken down into main components.

i) programme expenditure: this generally covered costs of cultural projects and events, but in some cities also certain staff and project management and marketing costs directly related to projects.

- average expenditure on programme was 62,6% of total operational expenditure
- the range was 44,1% (Bergen) to 79,5% (Lille)

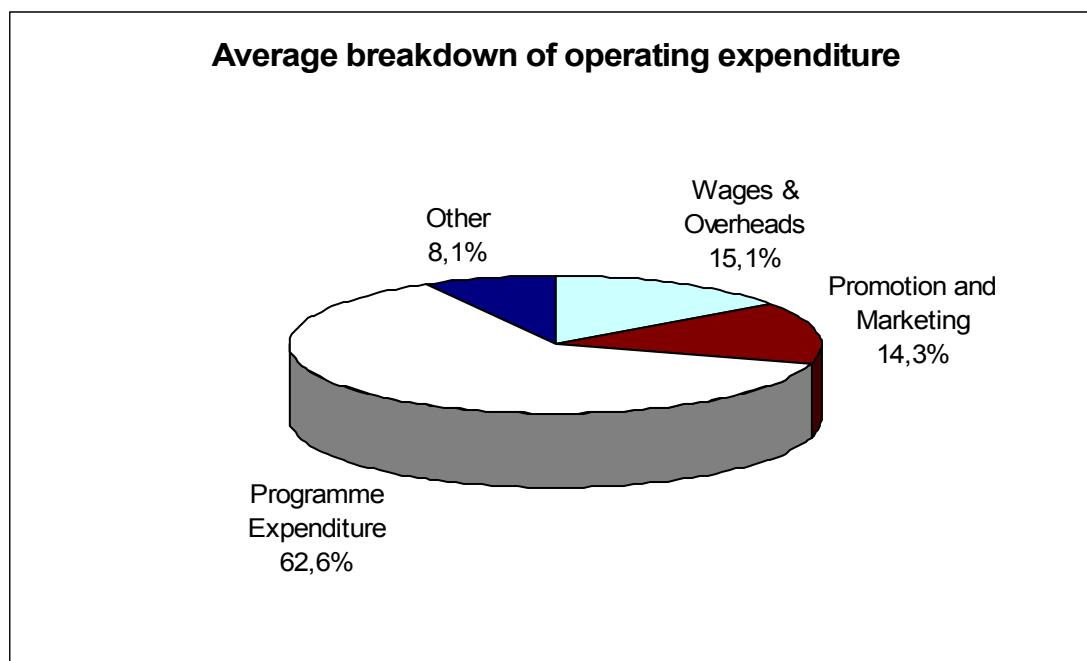
ii) promotion and marketing expenditure: this generally included costs of communications, print, advertising, press and public relations, and use of electronic media. In some cities, expenditure included costs of tourism marketing.

- average expenditure on promotion and marketing was 14,3%
- the range was 7,2% (Bergen) to 23,9% (Graz)

iii) wages/salaries and overheads: this generally covered wages of all staff employed directly by the ECOC organisations (often not attachments or posts funded by other bodies). Overhead costs for certain cities also included wages costs and other items such as office costs, supplies and equipment, utilities, telephone, accountancy and audit costs. Certain cities included wages/salaries and certain overhead costs in programme expenditure

- average expenditure on wages/salaries/overheads was 15,1%
- the range was 5,4% (Helsinki) to 48,8% (Bergen)

Once again, caution is advised when comparing categories of operating costs between cities without examining the detail and the conditions in which the ECOC was operating.



### **Overall Financial Performance**

Of the ECOC that responded, about a third claimed to make a small surplus, a third a break-even situation and one third a deficit. Superficially, this is one way of evaluating financial performance. However, this simple means of evaluating performance is too blunt, since it does not take into account the particular financial issues that each ECOC had to face. In many cities budget forecasts were based on assumed income and probable expenditure and needed continuing fine-tuning in the light of changing circumstances. In certain cities, public authorities did not confirm levels of funding until the cultural year had begun; some cities were not able to achieve income targets due to factors that included everything from rain affecting outdoor performances to the fluctuation of exchange rates. Some cities recorded a 'technical deficit' as a considered and agreed means of attracting additional finance, or a means of ensuring the contribution of bodies such as the national lottery, which in some countries contributed towards deficits. One should not assume the absence of a financial deficit as being a strong indicator of prudent financial management or vice versa. However, the prospect of a deficit contributed to political and organisational disputes in several ECOC.

As far as financial performance is concerned, almost a third of the cities mentioned 'poor financial management' as an issue, whereas two-thirds identified the 'late confirmation of funding' as being the most difficult financial problem. Other cities referred even to the withdrawal of funding for political reasons prior to or during the cultural year. A few cities identified difficulties of accurate budget forecasting, bearing in mind the complexity of financial partnerships with cultural and non-cultural partners. Often, the ECOC only contributed a proportion of the cost of a project, and this required the project's organisers to identify other funding sources, whose certainty might only be known at a very late stage, and where deadlines might not correspond to the planning deadlines of the ECOC.

Most cities referred to the need for strong financial management and the value of the senior Finance Manager being included in the senior executive team. The financial procedures and systems adopted by each ECOC and the number of personnel employed differ depending on the scale of its operation. In Thessaloniki, at the peak of its activity, 30 people were reported to have been directly employed only to process invoices, whereas other ECOC outsourced all accounting, which was undertaken by the municipality itself or by accountancy companies in the private sector.

The procedures of the financial management of ECOC should be the basis of a study in its own right, since most of the designated cities identified similar issues and problems, and developed different means of dealing with them. The nature of an ECOC (time-dated, large-scale, many partners, mainly

cultural projects) necessitates approaches to finance that are in keeping with the nature of the event. There is considerable experience to share.

### **Capital Expenditure**

Capital expenditure associated with ECOC has been broadly of three types:

- i) New provision and upgrading of cultural capital: including museums, galleries, theatres, concert halls, arts centres etc.
- ii) Urban revitalisation: renovation of squares, gardens, streets; tree planting, public place development, lighting etc.
- iii) Infrastructure: investment in the underground, rail stations, dockyards, roads etc.

All three elements have been included in the estimates for capital expenditure since the cities themselves have claimed that, in the main, they received the commitment to proceed with these capital expenditures only because of their designation as ECOC. This is a point that is difficult to verify i.e. whether or not capital expenditure would have been forthcoming without being designated ECOC. The answers to this question varied from “this project may have happened anyway but not so quickly” to “the government would not have financed this project if the city had not been designated ECOC”. Certain cities simply added all infrastructure developments (including the building of new hospitals and schools) to arrive at extraordinary levels of investment, whilst others were very modest and did not include capital expenditure in accounts unless it directly related to specific cultural projects that directly related to the city’s ECOC cultural programme. There is, of course, a powerful psychology of capital projects which makes them susceptible to influence by major events. Such major events have the effect of bringing forward, advancing or, in some way, inducing projects which are often only indirectly related to the event itself. The “if we can’t do this project now when will we be able to do it?” attitude becomes a powerful part of the development psychology and helps catalyse the dynamic process of capital project generation.

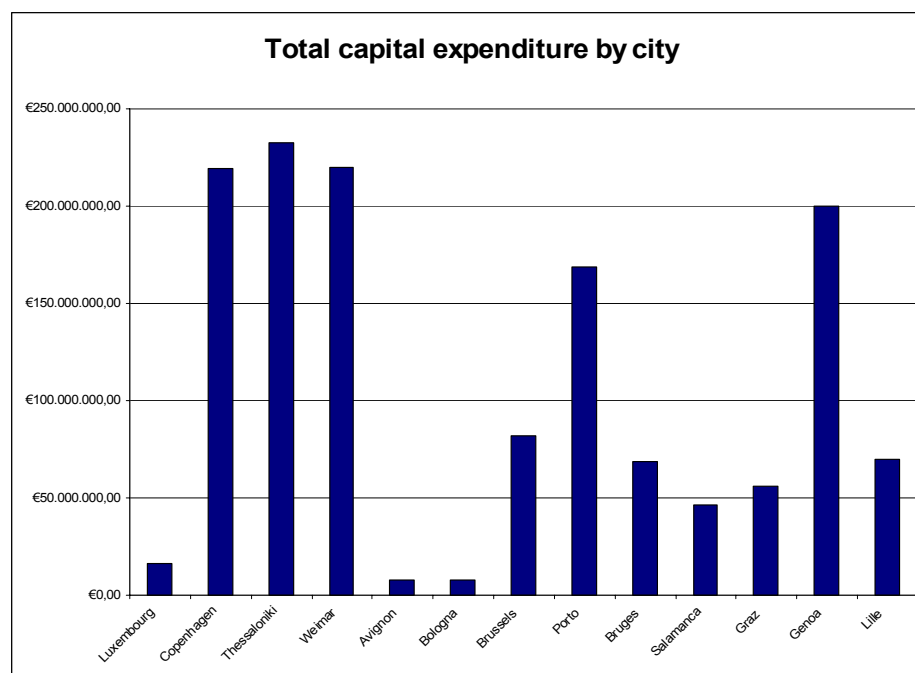
There was no alternative but to allow cities themselves to define which capital projects were supported as a result of the ECOC designation, and to estimate the cost of these. To a certain extent, this factor may account for the wide variations.

Some cities spent relatively small sums on capital expenditure either on principle, because they viewed the event as essentially a cultural celebration and fundamentally not about “bricklaying”, or because these cities were already sufficiently endowed with cultural assets in order to mount a successful ECOC event (e.g. Stockholm, Helsinki). This issue is explored further in the section on infrastructure in this report.

The range of capital expenditure for the 13 cities for which we have data varied from less than 10m Euros (Bologna, Avignon) to over 200m Euros (Copenhagen, Thessaloniki, Weimar, Genoa).

	<u>Number of Cities</u>	
Under 50m Euro	4	
50 - 99m Euro	4	
100 - 199m Euro	1	
200m Euro +	4	
<hr/>		
13 cities that submitted information		
<hr/>		
	<u>lowest</u>	<u>highest</u>
Range	7.8m Euros (Bologna)	232.6m Euros (Thessaloniki)





### **Total Expenditure**

Total expenditure identified by the ECOC organisations that were surveyed comprised the two items above:

Total Operating Expenditure	737 m Euros
Total Capital Expenditure	1.396 m Euros
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.133 m Euros</b>

This figure does not include substantial expenditure on the ECOC event, which often was not channelled through the ECOC organisation directly. For example, many tourist boards incurred large expenditure in marketing, cultural organisations in each city financed all or parts of projects from their own budgets or other sources, municipalities and regions sometimes added and paid for their own projects directly, finance was sometimes channelled through other municipal budgets (protocol, policing, security) and so was not recorded as direct expenditure on ECOC, even though expenditure could be directly attributed to an ECOC event.

Certain ECOC did provide figures indicating the order of magnitude of additional support (beyond their own budgets) for both capital and cultural projects, which formed part of their programmes (Copenhagen, Helsinki, Luxembourg, Prague) and additional data about such costs was gathered through interviews in each city, although many informants could only give estimates.

Based on rough calculations of additional expenditure, **the most conservative estimate of the total expenditure attributable to ECOC in the period 1995-2004 would be 3 billion Euros.** In assessing this figure, several experts placed the total expenditure attributed to the 21 cities included in this study significantly higher in the region of to 3,5 – 3,75 billion Euros. These figures do not include expenditure of the ECOC in the period 1985-1994, or the expenditure of the cultural months.

Even recognising a margin of error in such a calculation, this is a massive level of expenditure stimulated by extremely modest amounts of European funding.

There is no comparable series of European cultural programmes or events that have generated such a large expenditure.

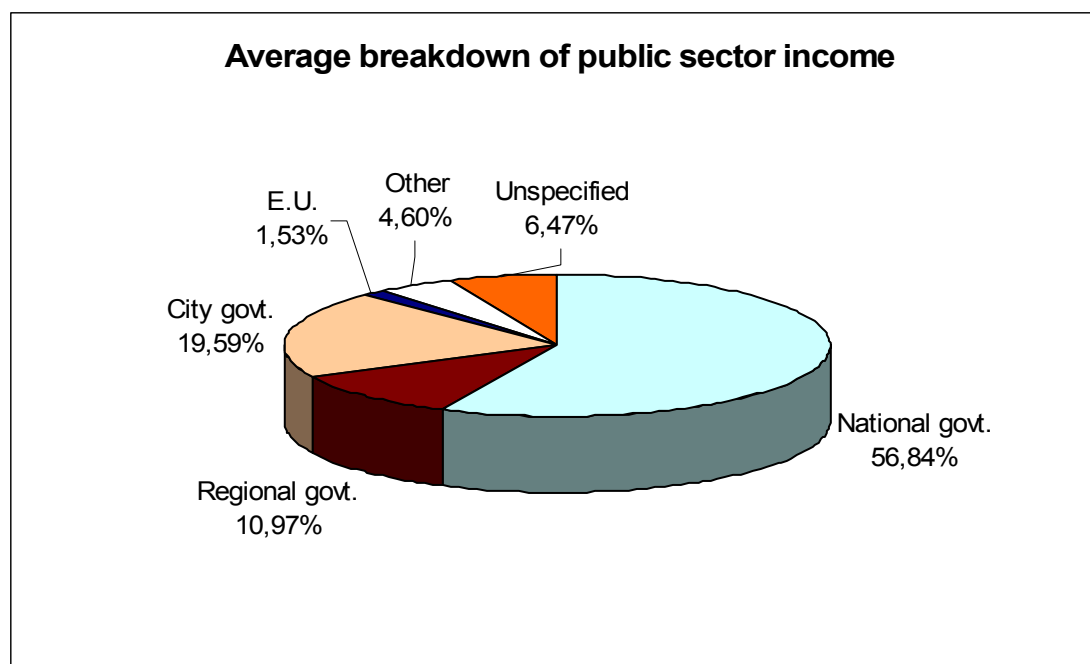
## Income

### The public sector

The public sector contribution to ECOC comprises funds from national governments, cities, regions (provinces, districts) and the EU. The public sector pays on average some 77,5% of the operating budget of each ECOC and this is illustrated below for all 21 cities.

The proportion of the budget paid for by public sector

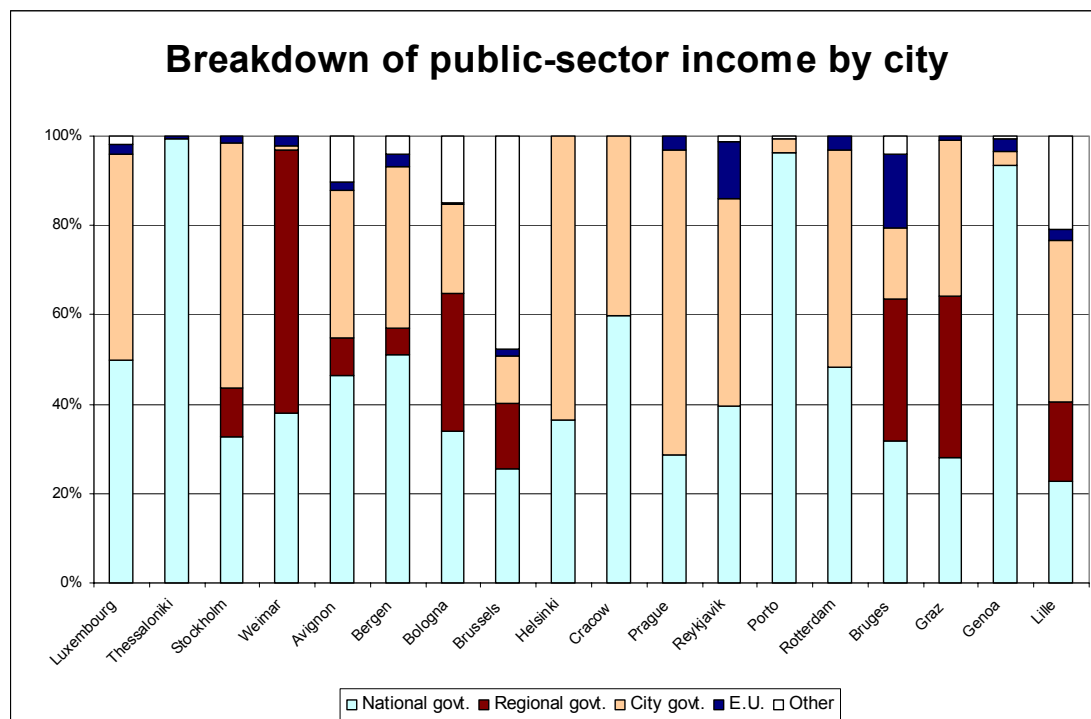
	<u>Number of Cities</u>
less than 50 %	2
50 - 69 %	4
70 - 89 %	11
90 % +	4
	<hr/> 21
<hr/>	
Lowest	highest
31% (Santiago)	99% (Thessaloniki)



Of the total income generated from public sector authorities, the proportions vary from city to city.

	<b>Range of contributions</b>	<b>Average contribution</b>
<b>National government</b>	23% - 99%	56,84%
<b>City government</b>	1% - 68%	19,59%
<b>Regional government</b>	6% - 59%	10,97%
<b>EU</b>	0,3% - 16%	1,53%

Certain ECOC did not specify the breakdowns between sources.

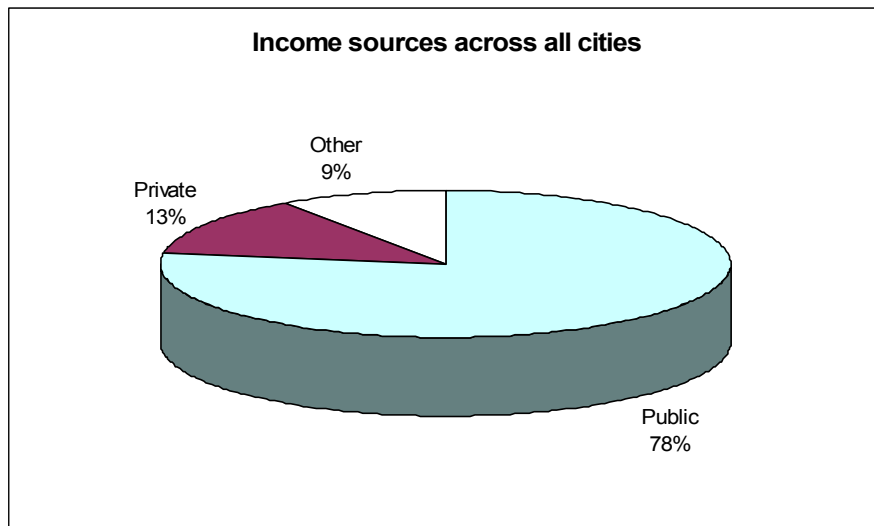


### ***The Private Sector***

The private sector through sponsorship in cash and in kind contributes an average of 13% of the operating budget of each ECOC.

#### Proportion of the Budget from Private Sector

	Number of Cities	
less than 15 %	6	
15 - 19 %	5	
20 - 24 %	4	
25 % +	4	
	19	cities that submitted information
<hr/>		
	Lowest	highest
	0,05% (Thessaloniki)	68,7% (Santiago)



## Sponsorship

Sponsorship and the meaningful involvement of the private sector are critical to the success of ECOC. Most ECOC aspire to raise a proportion of their income from business sponsorship, and in the face of changing attitudes about public sector subsidies and the problems of government funding in certain countries, this study paid some attention to the trends and potential of attracting sponsorship for ECOC.

An analysis of sponsors for ECOC (as listed in the city reports) reveals a wide cross-section of sectors, including finance, airline, soft drink companies, automobile, accounting, hotel, transportation, energy, construction, food, fine china and media partners. There is no dominant sector. There appears to be an under-representation of foundations, especially foundations linked to the private sector (e.g. bank foundations).

Due to the main objectives and title of the event, it is not surprising that when compared to other international events, the ECOC sponsors are almost entirely European, and primarily local or regional. However, there would be no reason not to seek sponsorship from outside Europe if sponsors expressed interest in the European market or in improving relations with the EU. A non-European company with a major branding initiative might view the expanded European marketplace as an excellent opportunity.

Branding is a pivotal component, which has been seriously undervalued by ECOC. It is key, both for the ECOC and for the sponsors. ECOC should have a bold, striking and meaningful presence in the marketplace, both in Europe and abroad, in order to attract sponsors at a significant level. ECOC is an international programme in terms of its reach, and should brand and market itself in the context of the highest international standards.

From the examination of documents provided by ECOC, it appears that many cities have an inadequate understanding of the current approaches to attracting sponsors and managing a sponsorship programme. Sponsorship is a business; the standards are sophisticated, the level of detail complex, the competition in the marketplace fierce, and companies expect a high level of deliverables. For sponsorship levels to increase, the task demands professional experience and expertise.

The study of information provided by ECOC in terms of sponsorship raised indicates the following:

- There is a significant difference between cities in the approaches they use to attract sponsorship
- In most cities, sponsorship strategies are non-existent or superficial. Many rely only on personal contacts

- Very few ECOC considered the range of possible sponsor involvement, including partnerships relating to promotion and artistic projects where cash was not the only requirement
- ECOC have not identified ways of forecasting sponsorship income reliably, which then creates problems for ECOC budget forecasting
- ECOC do not share collective experience about sponsors or sponsorship approaches, so the same problems recur year after year. There is no common database of potential sponsors
- Most ECOC start the process of sponsorship fundraising far too late; there is a repeated under-estimation of the time required
- Since a common ECOC brand does not exist, potential sponsors in almost every city have difficulties in understanding the concept (unlike the Olympic Games or an Expo)
- Larger cities do not necessarily have advantages over smaller cities when attracting sponsors (e.g. Santiago earned the largest percentage of sponsorship 68,7%, with a population of 140.000; Bruges raised 23,3% in sponsorship)
- Only six of 19 cities that reported on sponsorship identified international sponsors; Coca Cola appears in the lists of three ECOC. When compared to other international events, this level of international sponsorship is disappointing
- In-kind sponsorship is typically not differentiated from cash sponsorship by many cities; in other cities in-kind contributions are disregarded as sponsorship income. In budgetary terms both figures are important; sponsorship strategies are inadequate in this regard
- Merchandising programmes for ECOC have not been a priority for many cities, and few ECOC undertook evaluations of the merchandising market before deciding to, or not to, use this means of generating revenue or as incentives for partnerships with sponsors (Bergen explored this relationship). In several cities merchandising programmes failed entirely from a financial point of view. The link between sponsorship and merchandising has been ignored by most ECOC
- Sponsors involved in many ECOC had high expectations, which in most cases were not met. Businesses require advanced planning and need several years' lead time to implement their branding and marketing strategies
- Corporate tax structures and incentives concerning sponsorship vary considerably from country to country, which accounts in part for the huge differences in amounts raised. For Santiago and Salamanca, the Spanish government introduced special legislation to offer tax breaks to businesses that wished to support the ECOC event. Eastern and central European cities have considerable disadvantages.

### Problems

When asked to identify the main problems or issues concerning the raising of sponsorship, a large number of ECOC indicated that there were delays in finalising sponsorship commitments. Further analysis indicated that the delay in finalising the cultural programme was a root cause of this problem. The argument is circular. Organisers wait for sponsorship to be confirmed before finalising their cultural programmes, and sponsors wait for the final programmes before confirming their sponsorship.

For certain ECOC the problems are even more fundamental when organisers express a distrust of the private sector, or have philosophical objections to working with certain sponsors. In a few cities ECOC organisers were not able to disregard the attitudes of their cultural partners. Each ECOC needs to consider its ethical and practical position with care before embarking on attracting sponsorship.

Another issue in some cities was displacement. If a sponsor withdrew support from an existing institution in order to offer sponsorship to the ECOC organisation for a year, this created tensions and only compounded financial problems for the cultural sector in the city.

### Advice

Sponsorship, to be successful, should be viewed as an integral and valuable part of an ECOC programme from the outset. The participation of sponsors must be visible and consistent with high standards of brand recognition. A strategic plan for sponsorship should be developed in tandem with potential sponsors at the early stages of programme development, in an attempt to build partnerships and a mutual understanding of each party's interests, timescales and priorities. A key challenge is to determine the nature and value of the sponsorship offer. Professional advice is invaluable with regard to such calculations. ECOC cultural partners where appropriate need to be consulted as part of this process.

The composition and effectiveness of the ECOC Board or governing structure was considered by some respondents to be a key to the successful raising of sponsorship. A favoured current model for ECOC Boards is to offer membership almost entirely to representatives from the public sector. The recruitment of business leaders to the Board may provide a powerful tool for making connections and gaining the confidence of business leaders and sponsors.

Some respondents suggested that the ECOC action as a whole should investigate the attractiveness of multi-annual involvement by certain sponsors across different cities. Such companies would likely be multi-nationals working in the European marketplace and might include technology companies, soft drink companies, airlines and the media. A few respondents suggested that the EU should finance a feasibility study to investigate such a possibility. However, for such a strategy to work, the brand-image of ECOC would have to be clear and protected in terms of licensing and quality, and cross-branding opportunities would need to be carefully explored. Potential sponsors of ECOC would have to be assured high exposure over a number of years, but in exchange would offer financial commitments over this same period. The continuity of funding and visibility would be the main rationale behind securing a group of official private sector sponsors for the overall ECOC scheme. Again, several respondents believed that the EU should assist in helping to develop a contractual agreement between ECOC and sponsors (using the model of the Olympic Games, but on a smaller scale). An alternative proposal would be for the EU to work carefully with future nominated cities to help secure sponsorship or to support a small independent structure for ECOC that could seek sponsorship among other responsibilities. A carefully selected sponsorship consultancy may be able to facilitate the negotiations.

The nine ECOC of the year 2000 attempted jointly to attract a main sponsor. This did not succeed in the absence of strong coordinated leadership and a clear agreement between the cities involved. For this reason, the most advantageous approach would likely involve the EU or an independent structure as a coordinating and perhaps even the contracting body.

## ***Economic Aims and Objectives***

Very few ECOC set well-defined economic objectives. When asked to specify their general economic objectives, many cities stated as priorities:

- i) **Tourism:** Developing national and international tourism generally and cultural tourism in particular
  - building and improving cultural infrastructure
  - expanding the market for cultural events
  - enhancing the general cultural environment
- ii) **Image:** Enhancing external image and perception
  - boosting confidence of local business community and their belief in their own city
- iii) **Urban Revitalisation**
  - creating cultural districts

- investing in public realm & major infrastructure development

iv) **Industry and Jobs**

- development of creative industries
- specific job creation programmes

Overwhelmingly, the cities looked to tourism and visitor attraction as yielding the most significant impact to the city economy (refer to the section on Visitor Perspectives). Improving the external image was identified as an aspiration by almost all the cities, but there is little evidence that any of the cities have undertaken research into whether their images have been enhanced in any sustainable way by being an ECOC.

The majority of the cities used the opportunity to upgrade districts of their city and install new and improve existing infrastructure. For some cities this became a high priority, such as Thessaloniki (with over 300 infrastructure projects) as well as Genoa, Porto, Graz and Copenhagen (see the section on Infrastructure).

Improving city economic performance was an aspiration for all the ECOC, but outside tourism and in certain cities major infrastructure investment, there is little evidence of a genuine effort to address economic performance in any thorough way.

It is interesting to note that generally it was not the ECOC organisation that took responsibility for setting economic objectives, but other municipal, regional or national government offices and departments, or other bodies such as tourist offices.

Very few cities submitted evidence of following through in any meaningful way on genuine economic targets. Economic objectives were stated in reports and in interviews, but there appeared to be much rhetoric but few independent analyses of actions and outcomes. With the exception of tourism, as mentioned above, there is no clear evidence that the ECOC action has been used to create a platform from which to enhance 'investability' in the designated cities.

## ***Economic Benefits***

Any detailed analyses of costs and benefits need to take account, and adjust for, a range of considerations concerning their measurement. Chief amongst these in this particular study are:

- 'additionality': the issue of establishing whether or not a particular investment (or benefit) made in a city is attributable to its being ECOC.
- 'displacement': might the proportion of cultural expenditure in the city be accounted for by reduced expenditures elsewhere in the city.
- 'measurement of intangibles': particularly the change in external image and perception and the estimation of the benefits arising from an enhancement of 'investability'.

These technical issues are not developed in this report, largely because estimates of the size and scale of adjustments would depend on the quality of detailed city-specific economic surveys and evaluations. As stated above, few ECOC embarked on such evaluations. Some valuable independent research was undertaken in Bruges by WES Onderzoek and Advies, in Luxembourg by John Myerscough, in Stockholm by USK, in Thessaloniki by Euroconsultants, in Bologna by Prometeia and in Graz by the Institute of Technology and Regional Policy at the Joanneum Research Institute. However, each of these reports makes different assumptions and deals with different elements of the economic value of ECOC. This specialist topic might form the basis of a subsequent study that would require the collection of additional raw data and the conducting of additional research.

The figure on the next page presents a framework of 5 sets of economic benefits which many cities have identified as important.

The framework illustrates the traditional types of economic benefits arising from being ECOC. In general, they are derived directly as a result of increased expenditures and investment that occur as a result of the event taking place - and these lead to the further creation of additional income in the city.

**Box 1** - refers to the expenditure streams resulting from managing and operating the events plus spending on cultural goods and services.

**Box 2** - essentially traces the impact of increased visitor spending in the cities and has been dealt with in another section. The visitor benefits will be short- to medium-term at best unless something is specifically done to sustain the momentum once the year itself is over.

**Box 3** - includes all capital projects, direct and induced, developed as part of the ECOC. These will have a medium- to long-term effect on the city.

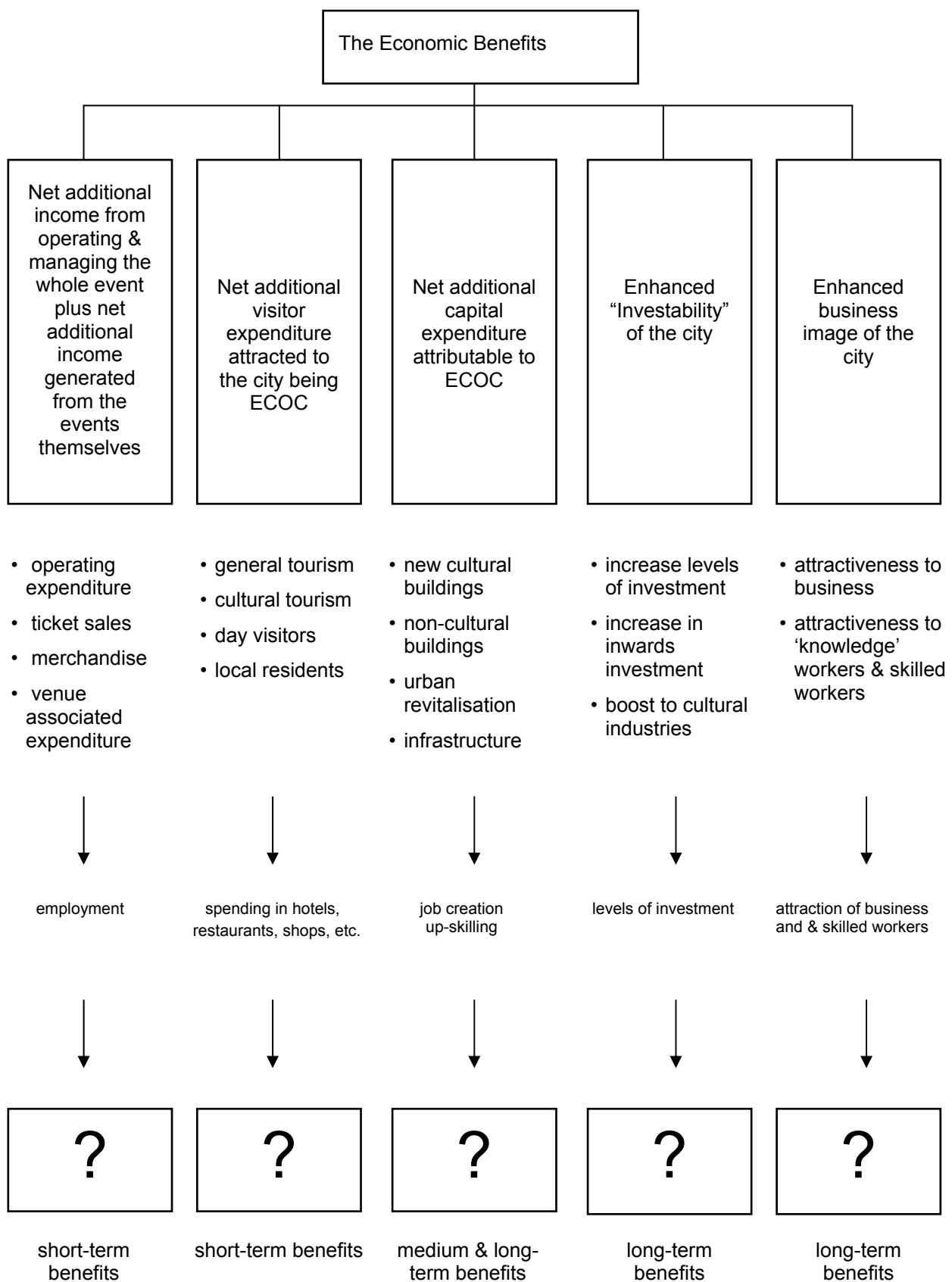
**Box 4** - is included because of a genuine belief by some of the cities that being an ECOC would in some way enhance their ability to attract investors and businesses to the city. In principle this remains an attractive notion but one which has not really been tested, certainly by ECOC. Few ECOC have used their ECOC status to create a platform from which to develop a strategy seeking to directly influence investors and business. It is a strategy that would need sustained long-term attention.

**Box 5** - enhancing image was mentioned by many of the cities as being an important priority. Again, no real distinction has been made between self-image, tourist image and the business image. Any change in image would require a long-term strategy in order to produce benefits. Interestingly, there is a growing view that those cities that have developed a reputation for culture and the arts, and also have a degree of diversity, are likely to be very attractive to knowledge workers who have become an increasingly important component of dynamic and competitive city economies. Whether ECOC provides a sufficient stimulus to a city to permit it to develop in this way is not clear - but raising the awareness and profile of the city in this way may be a good start.

For the ECOC of this study, no reliable total quantifiable estimates of economic benefits can be made in the above categories, hence the “?” in the framework.



## A Framework of Analysis for Economic Benefits



## ***Economic Impact and Economic Importance***

Many respondents in the study of ECOC referred to the term economic impact or economic importance as an objective of their ECOC events. However, as indicated earlier, there are few reliable independent data with which to make informed comments about these issues. Robust detailed research is necessary to measure inputs, outputs and outcomes of an event such as ECOC. An important issue relates to the point at which one measures such impacts, since it is clear from the views of respondents that the impact of each ECOC event has changed over time. Do you measure the impact at the end of the cultural year, the next year, 3 years afterwards, 10 years afterwards? Ideally, measurements should be taken at each of these points if the claims of short-term and long-term effects of the ECOC are to be verified. Such an evaluation has been regarded by almost all ECOC as an additional, rather than an integral part of the strategy of the cultural year, and the comprehensive collection of data is generally perceived as a burden. One honest respondent suggested that it is easier to build on the general rhetoric of the economic success of a cultural year, because the actual data might prove otherwise, thereby calling into question the large investment that was made. Indeed, there was at least one city in the survey that preferred 'not to know' actual results.

In various attempts to measure economic impacts of cultural events, researchers have identified many difficulties including the problem of developing appropriate indicators which reflect the multiple objectives of an event, the problems of identifying the unforeseen benefits of impacts, and the difficulty of measuring and proving negative impacts.

In an event such as ECOC, there are clear limitations that would have to be overcome to give a true indication of economic impact. Most of the work undertaken in this field relies on narrow economic values and economic indicators that are inadequate for measuring outcomes that may be difficult to quantify (city image, confidence etc.). In such calculations, as indicated earlier in this section, there is often a failure to take into account factors of displacement and leakage of spending from the local economy. There is very often the failure to distinguish between distributional effects and aggregate income effects of cultural spending.

Studies of a few ECOC have sometimes used jobs created as an important indicator of economic value. However, most of such studies have been discredited because of the short-term contract nature of the market, the distortion of employment patterns in certain cities through large one-off construction projects, and the lack of sustainability of the jobs created (for example, in the tourism sector). Another problem identified from past studies has been the use of multiplier effects. Multiplier or 'second round' effects of public expenditure are the indirect effects of expenditure, and estimating these accurately is a very contentious issue, unless very sophisticated techniques of cost-benefit analysis are used. In any case, multipliers vary from city to city and so each impact assessment must clearly incorporate a methodology that can calculate these in a robust manner.

Developing useful frameworks for the economic assessment of major cultural events, ECOC included, is long overdue. It is surprising that the ECOC event, subject to many claims about its value and importance to local and regional economies, and which began 20 years ago, and which may continue for another 20 years has not inspired specialists to work more comprehensively on more accurate forms of measurement. Perhaps the EU, through one of its existing programmes, can offer incentives for work in this area.

## ***ECOC and 'Megaproject' Economics***

In terms of investment, mainly expenditure by the public sector, the ECOC action is both large and significant in relation to other cultural events and projects. Spending commitments in the order of 3 billion Euros as a conservative estimate over a 10 year period reveals ECOC as being in the 'megaproject' bracket, at least as far as the cultural sector is concerned. Despite its relatively small stature when compared to large projects in other fields (transportation, sanitation etc), there is strong evidence that ECOC is now exhibiting the key defining characteristics of what might be described as 'megaproject' economics. This is the economics of inadequate forecasting and uncertain economic impacts, cost overruns and inadequate attention to risk and uncertainty.

What is now clear is that designating a city as ECOC is a decision of considerable importance, which will stimulate, based on the evidence gathered in this study, large investments. In these circumstances it is unreasonable to act as though risk does not exist.

## **Advice**

Although the topics of EU involvement, including the selection process and the need for procedures for monitoring and evaluation are considered elsewhere in this report, there are a number of proposals concerning the economic perspective of ECOC that should be considered to help safeguard the quality and cost-effectiveness of whatever investment is made:

- Install Project Audit Infrastructure as a key component of the ECOC action. The EU should develop at least a modest project auditing infrastructure for future ECOC events. This might comprise 2 elements:
  - i) Project Management and Monitoring Guidelines: This document might be written under the auspices of the EU, and could identify the processes, procedures and personnel it would expect to be in place as a condition of being awarded ECOC status.
  - ii) Evaluation: It is extremely important that an evaluation (to include economic and financial questions) is undertaken of each ECOC as a condition. It would be valuable for the EU to support both a 'baseline audit' of the city and an overall evaluation of the project to be undertaken by one of a panel of external consultants chosen by the EU and the city concerned.
- Working with the business community: The public sector provides 77,5% of funding for ECOC. There is scope for more private sector participation and money. Research should be commissioned into 'good practice' in this area and private guidance to future ECOC as to how to maximise the uptake from the private sector. The sponsorship component of such research was considered in the earlier section on sponsorship. However, the relationship with the private sector should move beyond simply the raising of sponsorship to help finance events and projects.
- How to sustain the momentum of ECOC: This is a serious issue for ECOC. If the impact of ECOC is to be more than just a short-term phenomenon in each city, then it would be useful to study how some cities have put in place successful approaches to sustaining the momentum.
- Enhancing 'Investability': No serious attempt has yet been made to see to what extent cities can use ECOC as a platform in order to persuade businesses, organisations and talented people to invest in, or move to, their city. An explicit 'demonstration project' should be supported to test out what is possible in this respect.

# Visitor Perspectives

## *Introduction*

Substantial attention appears to have been paid to the attraction of visitors to ECOC, and this impact is much quoted as being significant evidence of the 'success' of ECOC.

The analysis of visitor impacts is based on the limited evidence available from the reports of ECOC, as well as indirect evidence gathered from tourist offices in different cities, independent studies of individual cities and other independent sources of visitor and tourism data. Data that was gathered for the earlier ECOC in the period 1985-1994 are also included.

There is often confusion about terms such as 'visitors' and 'tourists', so it is important to provide some definitions. In this section 'visitors' refer to all those attending events in the ECOC cultural programme or visiting the ECOC host city. The total visitor population will include: (a) local residents, (b) day visitors (people visiting the city for the day) and (c) tourists (who spend at least one night in the ECOC). Tourists can further be divided into domestic tourists (overnight visitors from the country in which the ECOC is being staged), and foreign tourists (coming from outside the country). Visitor impacts therefore cover the activities of all those participating in the ECOC, although for most practical purposes, and particularly the calculation of economic impacts, local residents are often excluded from the analysis.

It is clear from the review of the visitor impacts of ECOC that relatively little information is available about the impact of the event on visitors to the host cities. In most cases the evidence available is indirect, consisting mainly of total visitor numbers for the year in question. The impact is usually measured by the cities themselves in terms of the increase in visitor numbers relative to the previous year.

This method gives a rough indication of visitor impacts, but is inadequate for identifying the specific influence of the event on visitor flows, behaviour or expenditure. In most cases, it is not known whether the change in visitor numbers is due to people travelling to the city with the specific intention of visiting one or more of the cultural capital events, or because they are aware that the city is ECOC, or if they would have visited even if the event was not taking place. A further complication is the fact that a few cities (Luxembourg and Prague) actually experienced a decline in overnight tourism during the cultural capital year. Intuitively, it is difficult to attribute such a decline to the fact that ECOC was being held. This indicates that many other factors are likely to affect the total number of visitors in the cultural year, apart from the ECOC event itself.

The answers to such questions can only be obtained through more detailed survey research undertaken during the cultural year. Such research has been undertaken in a number of the cities, but most are still content to use indirect measures.

There is some evidence that the importance of monitoring is beginning to become more evident to the host cities, since most of the recent ECOC have carried out some form of visitor survey. For example Rotterdam, Bruges, Salamanca and Graz all undertook comprehensive visitor research covering visitor behaviour, motivations and expenditure. Such studies have tended to be undertaken relatively sporadically (Glasgow, Antwerp, Luxembourg, Helsinki).

The coverage of data remains patchy particularly in view of the greater research attention paid to certain cities perceived as being 'successful' ECOC. This is particularly the case with Glasgow, which is often held up as the model of a successful event in visitor and expenditure terms. Events which have not enjoyed this reputation, however, also tend to have been less well researched or the data are less readily available. It should therefore be borne in mind that the concentration on 'successful' cities by independent researchers may give a more positive view of the effects of the cultural capital event than it may actually have.

## **Visitor Related Objectives**

The questionnaire sent to respondents of this study covered both the general objectives of the event as well as the specific objectives that the cities had with respect to visitors. None of the cities saw ECOC only as an opportunity to attract visitors or develop tourism, although visitor-related objectives did sometimes feature in the basic motivation for bidding for the event. Most cities referred to aims of promoting cultural tourism and raising the international profile of the city. Visitor-related objectives were far more likely to be seen as one element of ECOC, alongside cultural, social, economic and image-related objectives. When cities were asked to rank their overall objectives for the event, attracting domestic and foreign visitors scored an average of 3,7 on a scale of 0-5.

This ranking of visitor objectives seems to indicate a strong link with both economic objectives (attracting high spending foreign tourists to bring money into the city) and city image (raising the profile of the city internationally). Most cities had fairly simple visitor objectives and seemed to concentrate either on increasing visitor numbers or improving the image or international profile of the city. Copenhagen provides one example of a more comprehensive set of visitor-related objectives:

- Increasing awareness of Copenhagen in the tourist sector
- Extending the tourist season in Copenhagen
- Increasing the number of conventions in the city
- Developing new European markets
- Developing new types of tourism
- Promoting a different image of the city

This shows that visitor objectives can be related to developing tourism per se, to combating seasonality, to developing new markets or market segments and to improving city image. Attracting visitors need not be an end in itself, but can form part of wider strategies.

Some of the objectives set by the cities are relatively easy to undertake and measure, such as the number of tourists staying overnight. Other objectives, such as image improvement or the development of new markets, are much more difficult to assess. This at least partly explains why most cities have tended to measure success in terms of easily available indicators.

However, not all cities had the objective of attracting visitors, or placed it as a low priority. For example, one respondent remarked: "the event is for the local population and it is in principle not meant for tourists". A few cities have made statements expressly playing down the objective of attracting visitors, or at least certain types of visitors. For example, Bruges made a clear statement to the press at the launch of the event that the aim was not to attract tourists, because the city already had too many. Bruges is one example of ECOC that deliberately sought to 'de-market' the city to specific types of visitors, and for which attracting visitors per se was a low priority. For similar reasons, this attitude could also be detected in Brussels and Prague, both of which also already attract large numbers of visitors.

The attitudes of different ECOC towards visitors underlines a distinction that many cities seem to make between visitors (or cultural visitors) and tourists. Tourists are usually equated with leisure tourism, which is sometimes not viewed as a legitimate form of cultural consumption. For this reason some cities have tried to play down the role of tourism in the total visitor mix. Other cities, on the other hand, have made greater attempts to differentiate between different types of tourists. In particular, tourists staying overnight in the city are perceived as being preferable to day visitors, because their economic impact is higher. There is also evidence to suggest that a small number of cities have specifically targeted 'cultural tourists' as being a more acceptable type of visitor to encourage.

## Visitor Numbers

Estimating the number of visitors to an event such as ECOC is at best a very inexact science. Because ECOC offers a varied programme of events over the course of a year, many of which are free open-air events, actually counting the number of visitors is a difficult task. In most cases cities have tried to present estimates of the number of visitors attending ticketed events included in the ECOC programme, as well as estimating attendance at non-ticketed events. For example, Helsinki estimated that about 2 million people attended ticketed events in the city in 2000, while a further 3 million attended free events. In particular, installations and displays in public spaces which are open for a long period of time and new infrastructure present problems in estimating visitor numbers. However, these activities may also be extremely important in terms of generating large visitor numbers for ECOC as a whole. In Graz, for example, the newly constructed island in the River Mur attracted an estimated 966.000 visits out of a total of 2,7 million for ECOC as a whole (more than a third of the total visits for the year).

Analyses of previous ECOC events have also underlined the problems of estimating total visit numbers. In the case of Antwerp, for example, the total number of visitors to the city in 1993 was claimed to be 10 million, or three times the normal flow of visitors. This estimate, however, included many events which were not actually part of the official ECOC programme, such as the Tall Ships Race. Some of the cities included in the current study have also given very high estimates of the total number of visits. This is particularly noticeable in the case of Stockholm (19,8 million), Helsinki (10 million) and Copenhagen (10 million). As in the case of Antwerp, however, the total number of visits made to a city during the cultural year should not be confused with the total number of visitors to the ECOC programme. In Stockholm, for example, the estimated number of visits in 1998 was only 1,8 million higher than the figure for 1997, which is probably a more realistic indication of the additional visitor impact of ECOC itself.

Because of the difficulties involved in measuring the total number of visits or visitors to ECOC, the approach adopted in this section has been to rely more heavily on data available on the number of people staying in commercial accommodation in the city during the cultural year. These data have the advantage of being widely available (almost all the cities studied have some data available for hotel overnight stays), broadly comparable between ECOC and comparable to non-ECOC as well. These data are also available from the TourMIS system developed by European Cities Tourism. The most effective way of measuring the impact with these data is to compare the cultural capital year with the years before and after the event.

Of course these data also have a number of limitations, in so far as they ignore day visitors and they are also affected by the availability of hotel accommodation in the city concerned. In popular tourist destinations, for example, hotel occupancy may already be high, which limits the impact of ECOC on overnights. Using overnights as the main indicator will therefore tend to overestimate the impact in smaller cities which do not usually attract large numbers of tourists (such as Graz and Weimar) and will tend to underestimate the impact in larger cities with large existing tourist flows or those cities close to major conurbations which are within easy reach of day visitors (such as Brussels or Rotterdam). However, as most cities prioritise the attraction of overnight stays in their visitor objectives, it seems reasonable to use the number of overnights as the basic comparative indicator, although the implied limitations of this approach need to be understood.

In looking at the impact of ECOC on overnight stays, it is interesting to compare the experience for the study period with ECOC before 1995. Data available for the period 1989 to 1994 show that the event did not always lead to a growth in visitor numbers. In Dublin and Madrid, for example, staying visitor numbers actually fell. It is also important to note that the number of tourists actually staying in the city can sometimes give a very different indication of trends than the number of day visitors, which are inevitably higher.

**Table 1: Change in overnight visitors to Cultural Capitals in the period 1985 to 1994**

ECOC	% change in visitor stays in ECOC year	% change in visitor stays ECOC +1
Paris 1989	22,8	5,1
Glasgow 1990	39,6	-28,4
Dublin 1991	-3,9	11,1
Madrid 1992	-11,5	-14,3

Antwerp 1993	11,1	
Lisbon 1994	11,4	-2,0
<b>Average</b>	<b>11,6</b>	<b>-5,7</b>

In terms of the average percentage increase in overnight stays, the ECOC between 1989 and 1994 reported an increase of 11,6% for the ECOC year, and a drop of almost 6% in the following year. It should be noted that in 1989 Paris was also celebrating the Bicentenary of the French Revolution, which was the event concentrating most of attention and resources of the city, while the ECOC passed as an almost invisible complement.

**Table 2: Change in overnight visitors to Cultural Capitals in the period 1995 to 2003**

<b>ECOC</b>	<b>% change in visitor stays in ECOC year</b>	<b>% change in visitor stays ECOC +1</b>
Luxembourg 1995	-4,9	-4,3
Copenhagen 1996	11,3	-1,6
Thessalonica 1997	15,3	-5,9
Stockholm 1998	9,4	-0,2
Weimar 1999	56,3	-21,9
Helsinki 2000	7,5	-1,8
Prague 2000	-6,7	5,6
Reykjavik 2000	15,3	-2,6
Bologna 2000	10,1	5,3
Brussels 2000	5,3	-1,7
Bergen 2000	1,0	1,2
Rotterdam 2001	10,6	-9,6
Salamanca 2001	21,6	-
Bruges 2002	9,0	-
Graz 2003	22,9	-
<b>Average</b>	<b>12,7</b>	<b>-3,9</b>

Similar results were found for the period from 1995, with the cities reporting data showing an average growth of 12,7% in the ECOC year, and a drop of almost 4% for the following year. This seems to indicate that the positive impacts on visitor flows have remained high, while subsequent declines have been less dramatic.

When the figures are measured in terms of total bed nights recorded in the TourMIS system, however, the result for the ECOC as a whole in recent years is less dramatic. Table 3 gives the total number of overnight stays for Luxembourg, Copenhagen, Thessaloniki, Stockholm, Weimar, Helsinki, Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, Prague, Reykjavik as recorded in the TourMIS system. Although the largest growth in overnight stays was seen in smaller cities such as Weimar and Graz, in absolute terms the numbers of visitors are not so great. It is the large cities that account for the majority of bed nights, but which also record smaller visitor changes as a result of events such as the ECOC. This results in a total growth rate across these 12 cities of about 4,5% in the ECOC year. The total figures also indicate a small increase of 0,3% in the following year, which shows some lasting effect of ECOC.

**Table 3: Change in total overnight stays for selected ECOC 1995-2000 from TourMIS**

<b>12 Cities</b>	<b>ECOC-1</b>	<b>ECOC</b>	<b>ECOC+1</b>	<b>% Change ECOC</b>	<b>% Change ECOC +1</b>
<b>Total</b>	30.375.083	31.752.535	31.856.367	4,5	0,3

However, some account also needs to be taken of the general growth in the European tourism market. In most of the years leading up to 2000, there was a fairly steady increase in tourist overnights to European cities of about 2% per annum. This means that the tourism increases in ECOC host cities are not all due to the impact of the event. If one compares the increases for ECOC with the general rate of change for European cities as a whole in the same years, we see that at least in the year 2000 the ECOC cities performed less well than other cities in terms of visitor growth. This may be related to the event being shared between nine different cities, which probably diluted the impact to some extent, as well as competition from the many Millennium events taking place in 2000.



**Table 4: Change in overnight stays in ECOC compared with other European cities in the same year**

Cities	% Change ECOC	% change European cities	Difference
Luxembourg City	-4,9	2,1	-7
Copenhagen	11,8	1,5	10,3
Thessalonica	15,3	2,7	12,6
Stockholm	9,4	3,8	5,6
Weimar	56,3	3,7	52,6
2000 (data for 7 cities)	1,3	4,7	-3,4

In the years after 2000, however, the ECOC cities have performed much better than other European cities, which saw a fall in total overnight stays in 2001 and 2002 and only a very small increase in 2003.

In terms of the total growth in tourism that can reasonably be attributed to the effect of ECOC, therefore, it is likely that the events taken together have generated about 1,5 million additional overnight stays since 1995. As noted above, these estimates ignore the impact of the event on day visitors.

For some cities, however, other indicators are also available on visitor numbers. In some cases, cities have regular visitor monitoring which allows some indication of the total number of visits to the ECOC to be given. In Rotterdam, figures provided by Rotterdam Marketing indicated that total visits to the city increased by 17% in 2001. In Bologna, visitor surveys showed a growth of 11% in total day visitors to the city in 2000, and a 7% growth in foreign visitors.

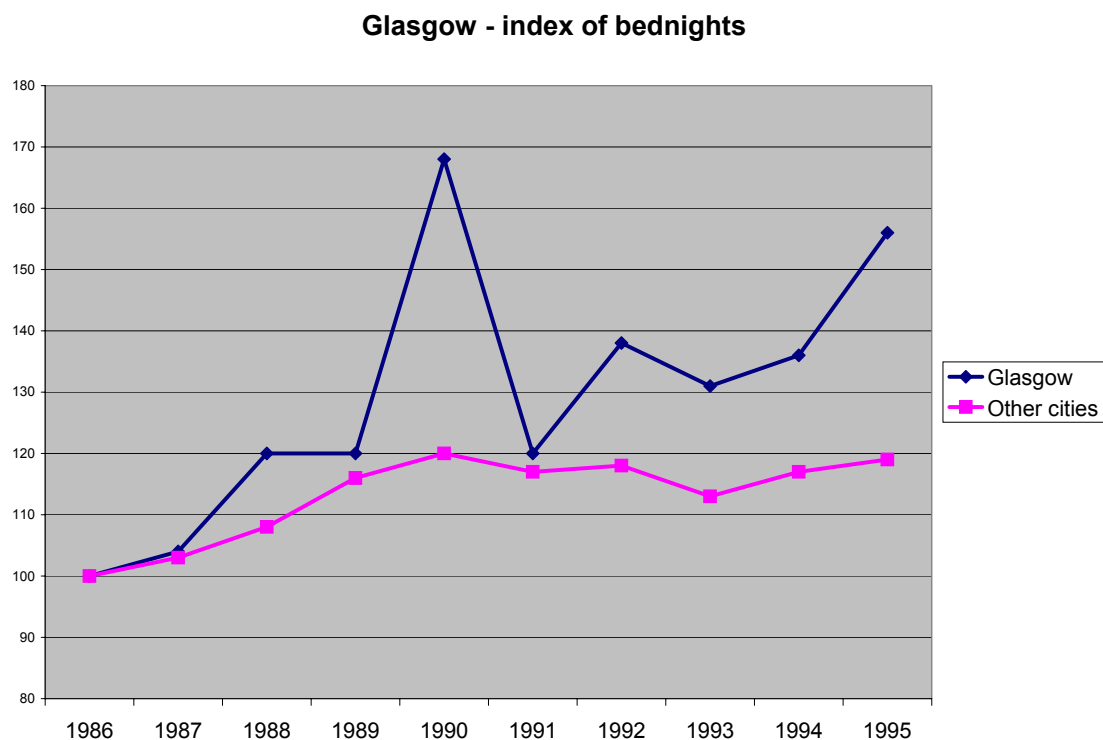
Other indirect indicators of visitor numbers are also available. In Porto, for example, data were obtained on the number of enquiries at tourist information offices. The figures for Porto show an increase of almost 10% in enquiries in 2001, but this growth was actually lower than in previous years (29% in 2000). In Santiago there was a substantial increase in foreign tourist enquiries in 2000, but domestic enquiries were lower than in 1999 (which was a holy year and generated a great deal of religious tourism). Figures for Luxembourg indicated a 26% growth in tourism enquiries in the whole country and a 48% growth in Luxembourg City. Salamanca and Lille both reported a 100% increase in visitor enquiries at tourist offices during ECOC.

The much longer time series available for tourist office enquiries in Avignon shows how erratic measures such as tourist office enquiries can be. Fluctuations of 30% or more per annum are not unusual, depending on the staging of major events, terrorist attacks and other external factors. The Avignon data clearly show that relative to these external impacts, the effects of ECOC were noticeable, but not out of proportion with previous fluctuations. It should also be noted that ECOC have adopted different strategies to the provision of visitor information, with some cities primarily utilising existing tourist offices and others placing more emphasis on dedicated ECOC information points. In the former case tourist offices will show a much bigger increase in enquiries than if there is a specific office dealing with ECOC visitors.

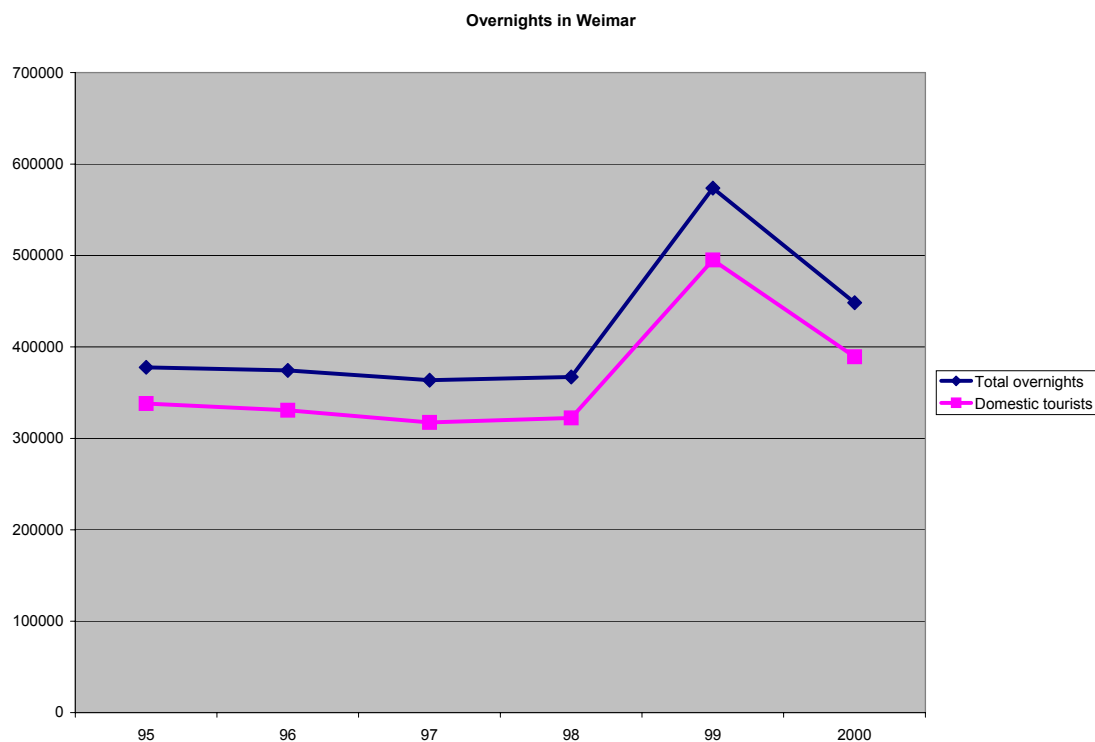
### ***Long-term Changes in Visitor Numbers***

Within the overall trend of visitor growth stimulated by ECOC, different patterns of change can be distinguished for individual cities over the longer-term. In broad terms, three types of patterns of visit change can be discerned from the data. The first is those cities that have a strongly marked increase in visitor numbers, followed by a sharp decline. This is the case with cities such as Glasgow and Weimar. Both of these cities can be viewed as 'non-traditional' tourist destinations, which managed to attract large numbers of day visitors and tourists in relation to the normal levels of tourist flows during the cultural year. Because of the strong positive effect of ECOC, the subsequent decline in visitors was also relatively sharp. In Glasgow, there was also a fall in visitors to cultural institutions after ECOC, but in Weimar high visitors levels were maintained (see section on cultural visits below). However, when the Glasgow figures are compared to the average growth in overnight stays in other European cities in the TourMIS database, they indicate that Glasgow enjoyed a higher rate of growth than average in the years following ECOC.

**Figure 1: Glasgow overnight stays index 1986 to 1995**



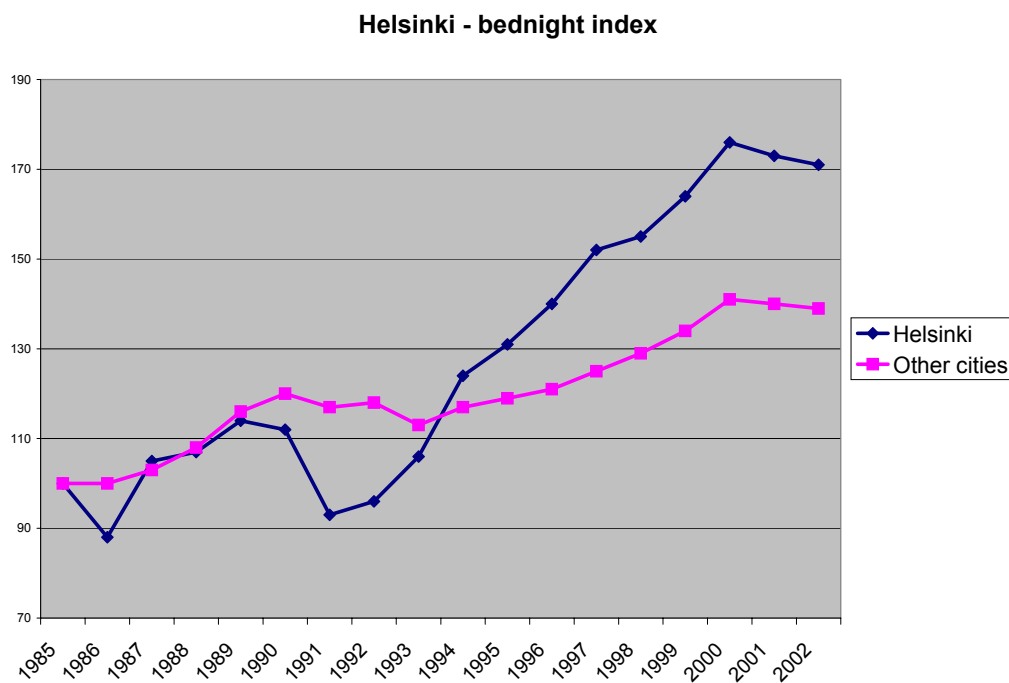
**Figure 2: Weimar total overnights 1995-2000**



The second group of cities show a moderate increase in visitor numbers (usually around 10%) followed by a small decline in the year after ECOC. This is evident in cities such as Copenhagen, Helsinki,

Reykjavik and Thessaloniki. In the case of Copenhagen and Helsinki these capital cities already have relatively large tourism flows and cultural activity, but the ECOC had a marked effect on overnight stays and an even bigger impact on total visitor numbers. In the case of Helsinki, however, the increase caused by ECOC was not much greater than the average rate of tourism growth over the previous decade.

**Figure 3: Helsinki bed night index**



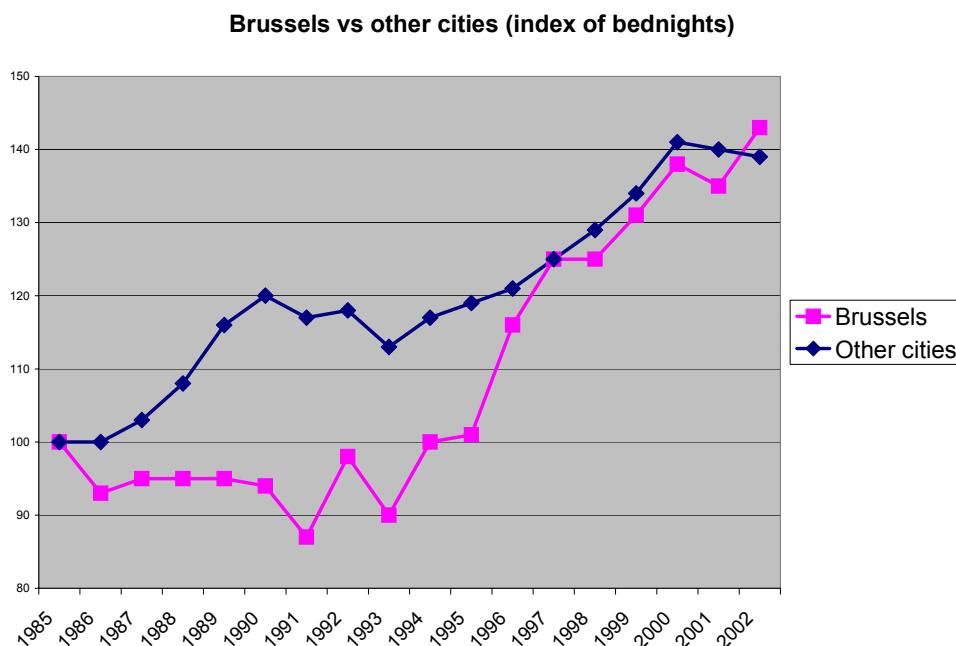
In the case of Thessaloniki, it is clear that the 1997 ECOC had a bigger impact on domestic tourism than on foreign tourism arrivals.

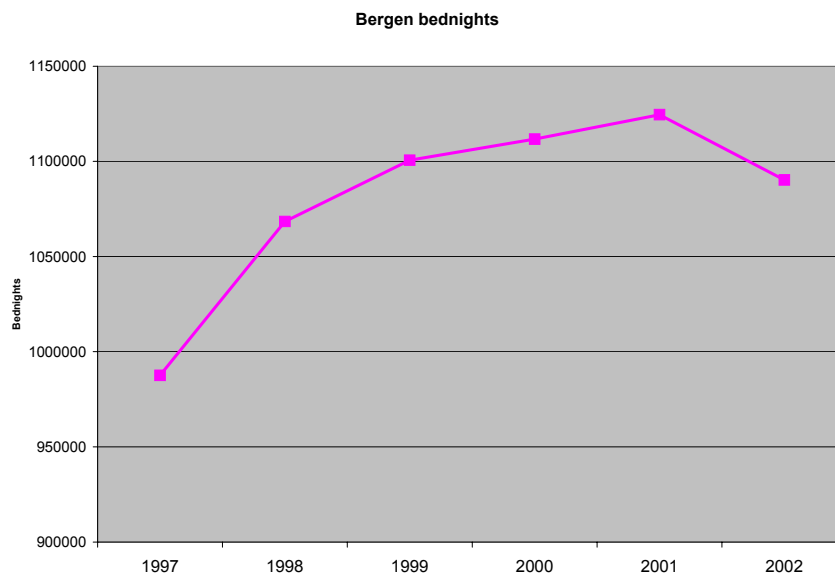
**Figure 4: Tourist arrivals in Thessaloniki**



The third group represent those cities in which the ECOC event had little or no impact on overnight tourism flows. These include Brussels, Luxembourg and Bergen. In the case of Brussels there was a 5% growth in bed nights in 2000, but this was only slightly higher than the growth recorded in other European cities (4,7%). It may be that it was difficult for the Brussels ECOC to have much additional impact on the already substantial visitor flows. In Luxembourg, Myerscough (1996) estimated a 5% increase in tourism flows, but this does not seem to be reflected in the data for tourist overnights. The relative isolation of Bergen may have prevented the city from generating much staying tourism, particularly in view of the other ECOC taking place in 2000.

**Figure 5: Brussels (ECOC 2000) bed night index 1985-2002**



**Figure 6: Bergen (ECOC 2000) bed night index 1997-2002**

For some other cities, comparisons against national tourism trends show that the ECOC has occasionally been successful in helping the host city to achieve growth rates far above national averages. In the case of Graz, for example, the ECOC had a growth of almost 23%, while other Austrian cities experienced little or no growth.

There have also been discussions about the extent of the 'halo effect' surrounding the ECOC. For example, Herrijgers (1998) indicates that the ECOC has a relatively short-term impact on the delivery of tourists to the city by the tourist industry. Almost all of the Dutch tour operators she interviewed indicated that they had featured ECOC in their tour programmes during the cultural year itself. The effect of this was limited, however, as most tour operators moved on to a new ECOC as soon as the event ended. The relatively short-term nature of the ECOC effect for tour operators is confirmed by research for Antwerp 1993, which indicates that almost half of the increased tour brochure coverage of the city in 1993 had disappeared again in 1994 (TFPA, 1994).

In a number of cities, however, there is evidence that the impact of the ECOC lasts beyond the year itself. Although the classic pattern is for visitor numbers to fall immediately after the ECOC, some cities have managed to sustain the growth they experienced. Scandinavian cities in particular seem to have held on to much of the tourism growth generated by the ECOC. This is perhaps due to the image change that many of these cities hoped to achieve (see below). For smaller cities, it may also be true that the ECOC helps to put them 'on the map'.

### ***Types of Visitors***

As a number of cities aimed to attract particular types of visitors to ECOC (particularly overnight stays and foreign visitors), it is important to consider the actual mix of visitors attending ECOC.

In general, local residents represented the largest visitor group for the cities for which survey data are available. Most cities reported between 30-40% local residents, compared with 10-20% day visitors, 20-30% domestic tourists and 10-20% foreign tourists. Data from Luxembourg and Bologna show that the presence of tourists was strongly influenced by the type of event, with local residents more strongly represented at theatre performances and tourists attending more exhibitions. This follows the pattern of cultural tourism consumption in general, as tourists are less likely to be able to attend theatre performances because of information and language barriers.

One key issue for the cities is the impact of ECOC event on international visitors. The number of international visitors during the cultural year should reflect to some extent the international impact of the event.

In a few cities for which figures are available on the number of foreign tourists staying overnight, it is clear that there has been an overall increase. Weimar again shows the largest percentage growth in foreign arrivals, but from a very small base. In Thessaloniki there was a 15% increase in foreign tourists in 1997, following two consecutive years of declining international arrivals. In the year following ECOC, however, the number of foreign visitors fell below pre-ECOC levels. In general, other cities have tended to experience less dramatic increases in foreign visitors.

**Table 5: Foreign tourists in selected ECOC**

City	ECOC -1	ECOC	ECOC +1	% change ECOC	% change ECOC +1
Copenhagen	2.462.095	2.589.063	2.626.490	5,2	1,4
Thessaloniki	210.608	242.142	206.924	15,0	-14,5
Weimar	44.958	78.760	59.089	75,2	-25,0
Helsinki	1.362.966	1.500.859	1.515.582	10,1	1,0
Reykjavik	862.433	890.229	905.569	3,2	1,7
Bologna	212.621	238.395	248.366	12,1	4,2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.155.681</b>	<b>5.539.448</b>	<b>5.562.020</b>	<b>7,4</b>	<b>0,4</b>

In both Stockholm and Rotterdam the proportion of foreign bed nights fell in the ECOC year, although in the case of Rotterdam this fall was reversed in 2002. In the case of Rotterdam the absolute number of foreign bed nights remained fairly constant during the ECOC, but there was a large increase in domestic visitors. This evidence also seems to contrast with other survey data from Rotterdam Marketing that indicated a growth in the proportion of foreigners among the total visitor population, from 4% in 2000 to 7% in 2001. This may indicate that most of the foreigners interviewed in the city were day visitors rather than staying visitors.

Another measure of the impact of the ECOC on foreign visitors is the extent to which tourists have been persuaded to visit the city for the first time. Research in Bologna indicated that 25% of domestic tourists and almost 78% of international tourists were visiting the city for the first time. In Luxembourg, 48% of tourists attending exhibitions in the ECOC were first time visitors, as were 31% of tourists attending performances.

The most important question about visitor numbers, however, is the number of visitors who attended events and initiatives within each ECOC programme. This is very difficult to calculate, because as was noted above, many of the events in the ECOC programmes are large scale, open air unticketed events. In some cases, estimates to all such events seem to have been included in the estimates of visitor numbers, while in other cases the organisers have chosen to report only those events for which more robust estimates of visit numbers are available. This suggests that the visitor number estimates presented in table 6 vary greatly due to the method of estimation. For those ECOC where only visits to ticketed or gated events in the programme have been included in the estimates, visit numbers over the year tend to range between one and three million.

**Table 6: Total visit numbers to selected ECOC**

City	ECOC visits	Total city visits
Luxembourg	1.100.000	
Copenhagen	6.920.000	10.000.000
Stockholm		19.800.000
Weimar		7.000.000
Reykjavik	1.473.724	
Avignon	1.500.000	
Bologna	2.150.000	
Helsinki	5.400.000	10.000.000
Rotterdam	2.250.000	

Porto	1.246.545	
Salamanca	1.900.000	3.000.000
Bruges	1.600.000	3.600.000
Graz	2.755.271	

These figures tend to indicate that the total number of visits to the ECOC cities during the year is far greater than the number of visits to the official ECOC programme. This observation supports the data on visitor motivation provided below. However, caution also needs to be exercised in interpreting these data, due to the lack of distinction often made between visits and visitors. Surveys at some ECOC have indicated that there are many visitors who make multiple visits to the ECOC programme, and these often account for a large proportion of total visits. In Helsinki, for example, the estimated 5,4 million visits in 2000 were generated largely by the 1,3 million Finns who each visited a number of events in the programme.

The question also needs to be posed as to how many of these total visits were additional – in other words visits that would not have taken place without the ECOC being held. Some details are provided on this in the motivation section that appears later, but the Stockholm data also provide a useful indication. Although the city received an estimated total of 19,8 million visits in 1998, this was only 1,8 million more than in the previous year. This number of additional visitors is not far from the figures reported in some other cities, such as Graz (1,5 million additional visits).

### ***Socio-demographic Profile***

Surveys of visitors have become more common in recent years. One problem in utilising this information to construct visitor profiles for ECOC is that the research in each city is usually conducted using a different methodology, with different samples and definitions. The only ECOC at which comparable surveys were conducted were Porto, Rotterdam and Salamanca, where the same survey instrument was used by members of the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) to research ECOC in these cities (Richards *et al.* 2002).

**Table 7: Age distribution of ECOC visitors**

Age group	Rotterdam 2001 %	Porto 2001 %	Salamanca 2002 %
15 or younger	1,3		1,8
16-19	5,4	7,4	6,2
20-24	8,4	26,0	16,9
25-29	9,7	19,7	14,1
30-39	19,7	19,7	23,8
40-49	21,7	12,0	18,5
50-64	25,7	7,6	15,0
65+	8,0	7,6	3,7

source: ATLAS

In principle, visitors under 16 were not included in the surveys. However, a small number of under 16s were included in the self-completion surveys for Rotterdam and Salamanca. The age profile for Porto was considerably younger than the other two cities, which probably reflects the fact that Portugal has one of the youngest populations in the EU. In Rotterdam the programme tended to attract an older audience, particularly because of the popularity of major exhibitions and other high profile classical or traditional cultural events, such as the Hieronymus Bosch exhibition (220.000 visits, or 10% of the total).

**Table 8: Highest educational levels of ECOC visitors**

	Rotterdam 2001 %	Porto 2001 %	Salamanca 2002%
Primary school	3,9	7,9	8,1
Secondary school	13,1	28,7	22,7
Further education	10,5	19,7	
First degree	63,4	37,0	53,2
Postgraduate degree	6,7	6,7	16,0

Source: ATLAS

ECOC visitors tend to be very highly educated, with at least 40% of visitors having some form of higher education qualification. In the case of Rotterdam and Salamanca the relatively older audience is even more highly educated, with levels of higher education participation over 30% higher than the EU average.

The academic background of the respondents is not surprisingly linked to a relatively high occupational profile. Over three-quarters of the Rotterdam audience belonged to the two highest occupational groups, with a particularly strong presence of those in the academic and educational sectors. These groups were over-represented in the Rotterdam audience by a factor of two. A similar picture emerges in Porto and Rotterdam, and in the study undertaken in Bruges in 2002. It is also noticeable that visitors tended to have occupations linked to the cultural sector. In the case of Salamanca those with a culturally-related occupation (which is a fairly broad definition) reached 61%. High levels of participation by those in the cultural sector have also been noted in ATLAS surveys of cultural tourism, but it seems that the ECOC tends to attract an even more 'cultural' audience.

**Table 9: Employment category for Porto and Salamanca visitors**

Employment category	Porto 2001	Salamanca 2002
Director or manager	11,9	6,6
Professional	25,8	48,1
Technical professions	25,5	10,4
Clerical, administrative	4,6	19,1
Service personnel	26,0	12,8
Manual or crafts worker	6,1	2,0

source: ATLAS

High education levels and professional/managerial occupations tend to generate relatively high incomes.



**Table 10: Income groups for ECOC visitors**

Income group (Euros)	Rotterdam 2001	Porto 2001
Up to 5000 per year	7,7	27,3
5001-10000	4,8	19,1
10001-20000	11,6	18,8
20001-30000	22,3	13,7
30001-40000	18,8	9,8
40001-50000	17,2	3,6
50001-60000	6,9	4,1
Above 60000	10,7	3,6

source: ATLAS

A very similar profile of visitors was found in a large scale survey of Portuguese visitors to Porto by dos Santos *et al.* (2002). In their surveys of almost 5000 visitors they found that 35% of visitors were aged between 25 and 34, over 47% professionals and managers, and almost 74% with some form of higher education. On this basis, dos Santos *et al.* concluded that the event had done little to reach beyond traditional cultural audiences.

Similar evidence emerges from Bruges, where visitor research was conducted on a different basis. In 2002, the profile of tourists visiting the city was surveyed, revealing that the largest age category was 25-54. About 65% of the tourists had a higher education qualification and 87% were drawn from the higher social classes. Comparisons with research undertaken in 2000 indicated that there had been an increase in visitors aged between 18-24 and 45-54 and more visitors from the higher social classes.

Richards *et al.* (2002) concluded from their review of the audiences for Rotterdam and Porto that ECOC in these cities had not succeeded in broadening the traditional cultural audience and that the visitor profile was very similar for that at other cultural events staged in Europe. In Rotterdam, however, the policy of developing a very broad and diverse programme had been successful in attracting certain minority groups in the local population to specific events, particularly popular music. They concluded that Rotterdam had managed to create 'an event for all' as they had aimed to do, but that there was little mixing of different cultural groups within individual events in the programme. High cultural events tended to attract a high cultural audience, and popular cultural events tended to attract a more popular audience.

### **Motivation to Visit ECOC**

In some of the cities research has been conducted to establish the role of the ECOC as a motivation for tourists or visitors to come to the host city. Table 11 shows that estimates of the proportion of total visitors attracted by the ECOC event itself vary considerably. In Rotterdam only 7% of visitors indicated that the ECOC programme was important, although a much larger proportion (40%) said they were travelling specifically to see one of the events in the programme. The highest level of motivation was found in Salamanca, where over a third of visitors saw ECOC as a primary motivation for their visit. These differences may well be explained to a large extent by the context of the host city. In the case of Rotterdam a large number of day visitors came from other parts of Holland to visit specific events, most travelling less than one hour to get to the city. On the other hand, Salamanca is at least 2 hours from Madrid and not as easily accessible as Rotterdam. This means that people are probably more inclined to visit because of the special status of the city rather than to see just one event in the programme.

**Table 11: Motivation to visit ECOC**

City	% motivated primarily by ECOC	% motivated by cultural content of the event
Luxembourg 1995	15	
Bologna 2000		27,1 ('cultural motivation')
Rotterdam 2001	7,2	40,0 (a specific part of the ECOC programme)
Porto 2001	16,4	
Salamanca 2002	34	

Source: ATLAS, city reports

The Bologna research also gave some indication of the role of ECOC in total tourism flows by asking visitors about their awareness of the event and whether they had actually participated in ECOC events while in the city. Over 72% of Italian tourists and almost 70% of foreign tourists said that they were aware of the ECOC event in 2000, although only 44% of Italian tourists and 42% of foreign tourists actually participated in the programme while in the city. In Luxembourg 48% of tourists indicated they were aware of the ECOC event before deciding to visit the city, while a further 30% became aware of the event during their visit.

Taken together, this evidence indicates that by no means all of the visitors to the host city during the cultural year are motivated to travel because of ECOC, and once in the city, not all visitors actually participate in an event in the programme. This is not particularly surprising given the normal tourists functions that the host cities have, but it does underline the fact that total visitor numbers are not a very accurate guide to participation in or awareness of the ECOC programme.

### ***Impact on Cultural Visits***

Given the cultural nature of ECOC, it might be expected that the event would have a particularly strong impact on visits to cultural institutions as a whole in the city. Figures quoted by Myerscough (1996) for the period up to 1995 show that the increase in visitor numbers varied greatly between cities.

**Table 12: Increase in cultural visits during ECOC 1990-1995**

	<b>Museum/exhibitions</b>	<b>Performances</b>
Glasgow 1990	+40%	
Dublin 1991	+72%	+31%
Madrid 1992	+10%	+21%
Antwerp 1993	+87%	+2%
Lisbon 1994	+50%	
Luxembourg 1995	+50%	+45%

source: Myerscough 1996

In general terms, the growth in cultural visits is related to the increase in day visits to the city, and much less to the growth in staying tourism. The increases tend to be greatest for exhibitions and least for museums and other permanent attractions. In Luxembourg, the number of visits to museums and historic properties in the city grew by almost 3% in 1995, although this growth merely reversed the decline experienced in the previous year.

**Table 13: Visits to museums and historic properties in Luxembourg (ECOC 1995)**

	<b>Visits</b>	<b>% change</b>
1991	540.000	
1992	535.000	-0,9
1993	531.000	-0,7
1994	515.000	-3,0
1995	529.000	2,7

Source: Myerscough 1996

In Bologna, total visits to the city's museums and cultural institutions grew by 17,4% in 2000 compared with 1999. In Weimar in 1999, the number of museum and cultural attraction visits more than doubled compared with 1998. Even though the number of visits fell again in 2000, the figures were still considerably higher than they had been in 1998.

In Copenhagen, there was a growth of almost 13% in museum visits in 1996, which matches the increase in overnight stays quite closely. Again there was a slight fall in 1997, but overall visit levels remained higher than before the ECOC. In Helsinki, museums and other cultural attractions experienced a 9% growth in visitor numbers in 2000 compared with 1999. Visitor numbers also remained more or less stable in 2001.

On the other hand, figures from Luxembourg show that theatre and concert performances experienced a much greater growth in visitor attendance, up from 299.000 in 1994 to 450.000 in 1995 (+50,5%). The attendance at exhibitions grew even more dramatically, from 85.000 in 1994 to 494.000 in 1995. In total, therefore cultural attendances in Luxembourg increased by 64% during the ECOC, adding nearly 600.000 visits. Most of these additional visits were of course due to exhibitions being specially staged for the ECOC programme.

In Santiago the number of museum visitors in 2000 was lower than in 1999, which was a Holy Year. In spite of this, museum visitors were higher than in previous years, and the growth seems to have been maintained beyond the ECOC, with 2001 attendances being higher than those in 1998.

In some cities, national surveys have been used to measure the impact of the event on stimulating visits to the ECOC among the national population as a whole. In the case of Belgium, for example, surveys indicated that 5% of the Belgian population participated in Brussels 2000, compared with 9% of the population that participated in Bruges 2002.

In Finland, it was estimated that 1,3 million Finns attended at least one event during Helsinki 2000. This is around 25% of the population. A follow up study in 2001 conducted by ATLAS members indicated that over a third of those interviewed in Helsinki in 2001 had attended at least one event in ECOC in 2000. Not surprisingly, the majority of those attending were local residents. The average number of events attended was 5, a figure which varied very little with age. However, those with a cultural occupation were twice as likely to have attended an event as those with other occupations, and those with some form of higher education had attended twice as many events on average than those with secondary education.

The Helsinki research also indicated a close relationship between visits to Helsinki in 2000 and visits to other ECOC events. Of the 400 people interviewed, 11,5% said they had attended other ECOC as well. Those with a cultural occupation were three times as likely to have attended other ECOC. However, when asked to name the ECOC attended, a number of people named cities that had not been ECOC. The most frequently cited ECOC was Stockholm (one third of all responses). Foreign visitors responding to the survey mainly indicated that they had visited the ECOC in their home country. These data do seem to indicate that there is some circulation of visitors between ECOC, even though this tends to be limited to frequent culture consumers.

## Visitor Expenditure

Estimates of visitor spending also vary considerably from one city to another, largely depending on the assumptions made about visitor numbers and the elements of expenditure included. The survey responses from the cities indicated that accommodation, food and drink and cultural expenditure were the most frequently counted elements of expenditure. About half the expenditure estimates also included travel to the city, and two thirds also included travel within the city. In some cases spending by local residents has also been included. This tends to inflate the true additional economic impact of visitor spending, since much of the spending by local residents would have taken place in the city anyway.

**Table 14: Visits and visitor expenditure to selected ECOC 1995-2003**

	Visits (million)	Total visitor spend (€ million)	Total additional visitor spend (€ million)	Additional visitor spend directly attributable to the ECOC (€ million)
Luxembourg	1,1			14
Avignon	1,5	45		
Bologna		63		
Rotterdam	2,3	165	73	17
Porto	1,2		69	23
Salamanca	1,9		180	37,5
Bruges	1,6		41	10
Graz	2,7		116	21

Source: estimates based on figures from visitor surveys and city reports

The visitor expenditure estimates in the final column of table 14 have therefore been adjusted to take account of differences in calculation methods, and should therefore be roughly comparable. The indications are that cities such as Rotterdam and Bruges which generate a large number of domestic day visits tend to generate less additional spend than cities such as Porto and Salamanca which attracted proportionately more staying tourists.

These figures indicate that additional visitor expenditure that can be directly attributed to ECOC itself ranges between 10 million Euros and 37,5 million Euros, largely depending on the mix of day and overnight visitors and the total attendance. The average additional spend generated per visitor ranges from almost 20 Euros in the case of Salamanca and Porto to 6-7 Euros in Rotterdam and Bruges.

Detailed visitor surveys in a few ECOC have indicated that the bulk of visitor expenditure is accounted for by accommodation and subsistence costs for visitors staying overnight. Spending by day visitors and local residents not surprisingly tends to be much lower. The fact that most of the economic impact of ECOC is concentrated in the hotel and catering sector points to a problem of coordination that is also noted below in the discussion on collaboration. Although additional visits to ECOC are arguably generated mainly by the cultural resources of the city, relatively little of the visitor expenditure flows back to the cultural sector, for example through admission charges to cultural institutions. The policies of encouraging access to culture tend to keep entry fees low, except in the case of some high profile arts performances. This means that the cultural sector itself gets relatively little direct financial benefit from increased visitor spending compared to the tourism sector.

## **Marketing**

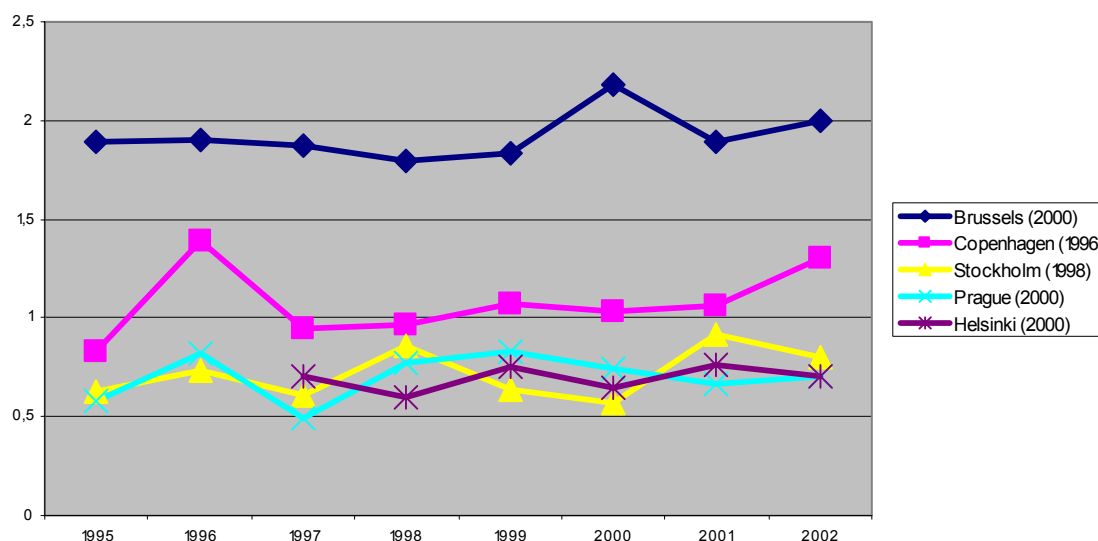
Attracting visitors to ECOC obviously involves a considerable marketing investment, particularly as the competition from other cultural events grows. The marketing budgets of ECOC have varied considerably, although caution should be exercised in comparing marketing and promotional budgets which may include very different elements, and generally do not include additional marketing spend by local, regional and national tourist boards and municipalities. It should also be noted that for most ECOC organisations responsible for managing the cultural programme, marketing efforts were focused mainly on the local or regional populations, leaving the prime responsibility for tourism to specialist agencies or municipal departments.

The total marketing budget will usually also include the provision of information to residents, general promotion designed to improve the image of the city, and other non-visitor elements. However, almost all ECOC survey respondents indicated that there had been a specific additional promotional effort to attract visitors. The most important target groups for this promotion were foreign overnight visitors, followed by domestic overnight visitors and then day visitors. This clearly indicates an attempt to maximise the visitor spending impact of the event. However most were not able to identify any additional budget allocation to tourism promotion specifically related to the ECOC status of the city. Those few cities that did provide figures indicated additional spending between 1 and 4 million Euros.

Most cities conducted marketing in collaboration with the tourism sector. The most frequently used partners were local and regional tourist offices, followed by national tourist offices and the tourist industry (hotels, airlines, tour operators). There was relatively little collaboration with cultural venues and facilities to undertake visitor promotion. Many cities also used diplomatic channels, such as embassies, to promote the event abroad.

In terms of promotional media aimed at visitors, local and national tourist offices were again most important, followed by TV/radio, newspapers and magazines. Promotion through the tourism trade press or web sites was used much less frequently. Relatively few respondents indicated that their cities had collected data on the effectiveness of tourism promotion. The most frequently used method was to measure the volume of press and TV coverage. The cost effectiveness was assessed in only two cases. Only seven respondents indicated that the number of tour operator programmes featuring the city had been assessed (see section on Communication, Marketing and Media Response).

For those cities that did provide detailed information on marketing activity, there did seem to be a positive relationship between the success in generating foreign press coverage and the growth in overnight stays.

**Figure710 International Conferences Market Share (UIA)**

There was some evidence that a few cities had begun to think about their visitor marketing in a more segmented way. As indicated above, some cities had specific strategies to attract cultural tourists, but there were also other cities that tried to attract less obvious market segments. One segment of interest to a number of cities was the conference market. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the ECOC host city becomes a more attractive venue for staging conferences, not only because conferences with a cultural content might be attracted to the city, but also because the general cultural activity in the city is attractive to conference organisers in general. Bologna, Genoa and Stockholm specifically stated that they had specifically targeted conferences during the ECOC. However there also appears to be an effect for other cities as well.

In terms of the problems arising from visitor marketing, few cities indicated that they had experienced major difficulties. Of those that did respond, however, the lack of a clear marketing strategy and communication problems between the tourism and cultural sectors were cited most frequently. The advice offered by respondents in terms of visitor strategy also clearly emphasised the need for clearer strategies and closer collaboration between tourism and cultural organisations.

### ***Collaboration between the Cultural and Tourism Sectors***

As the discussion of visitor expenditure and marketing has indicated, the degree of collaboration between the cultural and tourism sectors in ECOC can have significant implications. The cultural sector stands to benefit from a growth in visitor numbers and increased attention generated by the event, and the tourism sector should be able to benefit economically from ECOC. The emergence of cultural tourism as a segment of the tourism market (and as a specific objective of some ECOC) indicates a mutual interest in attracting culturally interested, high spend tourists to the city.

There are some examples given by the cities of positive impacts of collaboration between the tourism and cultural sectors. For example in Weimar, hotel owners collaborated to form a marketing company, Weimar Kulturstad, which aimed to market the city abroad as a cultural destination. In Reykjavik the ECOC helped to open a dialogue between the two sectors which led to the creation of a new organisation responsible for tourism, city marketing and events. In other cities the benefits of collaboration were less explicit, but respondents in Bologna, Salamanca and Santiago stated that there had been a growth in tourism as a long-term legacy of ECOC.

More frequently, however, respondents identified problems which emerged in trying to coordinate the activities of the two sectors during ECOC. The most frequently voiced complaint was that there was a lack of communication between tourism and cultural sectors. This also seemed to be linked to a number

of other problems, such as a lack of a clear visitor strategy, insufficient planning time and budgets and inadequate information.

The communication problems usually revolved around the different cultures and expectations of the two sectors. For example, tourism promotion bodies usually work on a longer planning cycle, because they have to produce promotional material well in advance. Cultural organisations usually produce programmes much closer to the date of an exhibition or performance because of the problems of finalising the programme. This means the tourism bodies often complain that the cultural sector is not able to provide them with the information they need to market the cultural product. On the other hand, those in the cultural sector sometimes complain about a lack of understanding of their needs on the part of the tourism sector, and the unwillingness of the tourism sector to embrace the marketing of non-traditional or unusual events. In most cases such misunderstandings are the cause of friction that can be overcome, rather than serious problems.

### ***Image Impacts***

Even where attracting visitors is not one of the main aims of ECOC (although it appears to be for most), changing or enhancing the image of the city usually is an objective, as outlined in earlier sections of this study. Image change is indirectly related to visitor impacts, since by making the city more attractive, it should attract more investment, attention and visitors in the longer-term.

For many cities, developing a 'cultural' image seems to be a major objective of ECOC. Often following the example of Glasgow, other industrial centres such as Rotterdam and Porto have tried to add a cultural dimension to their image. In cities which already had a specific cultural image, such as the historic city of Bruges, there was an attempt to add new dimensions of culture.

However, measuring the image impacts of ECOC is very difficult. The main means used by some cities to establish the image impacts is visitor surveys, which usually present visitors with a pre-formulated list of image elements. For example, data collected by Myerscough in Luxembourg in 1995 indicated that established images of the city such as 'history and charm' (47%) were far more important images than the city being a 'cultural centre' (9%). Research conducted in Bruges in 2002 indicated that elements of cultural heritage such as 'like an open air museum' (47,5% of staying tourists) or 'traditional, old classic' (19,1%) dominated the visitor image of the city. In the latter case there was little evidence that Bruges had succeeded in adding a contemporary cultural element to the city image, as ECOC had aimed to do. This was a specific bone of contention between the ECOC organisation and the tourism authorities, as respondents thought the latter did not make use of the contemporary cultural images that were provided by ECOC for marketing purposes. The tourism sector preferred to stick to the traditional, historic images of Bruges, perhaps feeling that these reflected the expectations of the bulk of visitors, even though, as stated earlier in the report, developing a more contemporary image for Bruges was a priority objective.

A problem with most of the image research conducted in ECOC and other cities is that the data are rarely collected longitudinally in order to show changes in image over time. In Glasgow, Myerscough collected data on the cultural image of the city during the ECOC year and in the month immediately following it. These indicated a strengthening on the cultural image of Glasgow through the event itself, but declined thereafter.

The regular surveys of cultural tourism in Europe by ATLAS provide one means of measuring image impacts over time. The ATLAS surveys have now been staged five times between 1992 and 2004, and since 1997 there has been a specific question on the attractiveness of certain cities as cultural tourism destinations. Since 1999 the list of cities has been expanded to include a number of ECOC host cities. In 2001 data collected by ATLAS in Rotterdam and Porto indicated that Rotterdam had succeeded in improving its cultural image relative to other European destinations in the previous two years. Independent surveys among residents and visitors to Rotterdam also indicated that the perception of Rotterdam as a city of culture and art increased by about a third in 2001. Porto, on the other hand, actually had a weaker international image after the 2001 event than before it. Measurements of the image of Weimar in 1999 and 2001 in the ATLAS surveys also indicate that there was almost no international effect of ECOC. This indicates that image improvements for ECOC are not automatic, but need to be worked for. In the case of both Porto and Weimar image improvement among international

visitors was a relatively low priority, so perhaps it is not surprising that little impact was made. In the case of Weimar, international visitors also comprised a very small proportion of the total.

### ***Trends and Major Issues***

In general terms, it appears that attracting visitors was not the main reason for most cities bidding for ECOC designation. Visitor-related objectives, although rated quite highly on average, were not the most important consideration for most cities. Only a handful of cities rated attracting visitors as one of their most important objectives, or saw tourism impacts as an important legacy of the event.

However, attracting visitors does have a strong relationship to some of the other main objectives of staging ECOC, such as strengthening the international profile of the city. It also becomes one of the main pieces of evidence to be cited for the 'success' of an ECOC event, for the simple reason that visitor impacts are more readily measurable than cultural, social or economic impacts.

ECOC does seem to have a measurable impact on visitor numbers and expenditure to the host city. The average increase in overnight stays recorded for individual cities during the ECOC has been about 11% since 1989, and has risen slightly to over 12% a year during the period 1995 to 2003 (figures for 2004 are not yet available). However, there are considerable variations in the change in overnights between cities, with some cities experiencing much bigger increases (23% in Graz, for example) and other cities experiencing a decline (-6,7% in Prague).

It is also clear that the largest percentage increases in overnight stays are recorded in smaller cities that are starting from a lower base. In larger cities such as Brussels the effects tend to be less marked. Over the period under study, therefore, the total annual increase in overnight stays at ECOC host cities has averaged 4,5%. The visitor impact of ECOC does seem to last beyond the event itself, although most cities experience a decline in visitor numbers in the year immediately following the event. The average fall is much smaller than the increase in the cultural year (average 0,3%).

The visitors attracted to ECOC are mainly local residents, followed by domestic tourists and foreign visitors. In general, the proportion of foreign visitors also increases slightly during the cultural year. The overall visitor profile reflects a highly educated professional audience, which is little different from that at other cultural events in Europe. Those working in the cultural sector tend to be particularly important in the audience, and they attend more events than other visitors. Attempts to spread the cultural audience to new groups seem to have made little quantitative impact, although those programmes which include a wide range of different cultural forms tend to attract a wider audience as well. There is some evidence to suggest that a larger, more complex cultural programme will attract more visitors in total than a smaller, simpler programme.

However, one of the major unresolved issues in terms of the visitor impacts of ECOC is the extent to which people visit the host city specifically for ECOC. The evidence from surveys conducted in a small number of cities indicates that ECOC is a specific motivation for a relatively small proportion of people visiting events in the programme. A broad programme of events is therefore likely to generate large number of visitors because of the individual events being staged, rather than being a direct impact of the ECOC event itself. The extent of this effect is extremely hard to assess in the light of the limited data available.

The bulk of the visits also seem to be attracted to a relatively small proportion of the total events staged. In the case of Thessaloniki, almost half of the total 1,5 million visits were made to the Treasures of Mount Athos exhibition (700.000 visits) and in Graz in 2003 almost a million of the 2,7 million visits were recorded on the Island in the Mur. This hints at a 'pareto effect' in visitor attendance, where 20% of the events are likely to attract 80% of the audience. This may strengthen the current tendency in many cities towards 'blockbuster' events.

Blockbuster events represent an attempt to provide 'something for everyone', but also have important strategic and financial implications. In Thessaloniki, for example, the U2 concert attracted 50.000 people, but it cost 3,2 million Euros to stage. In view of the limited total funding available for ECOC, cities will need to think about the desirability of increasing total visitor numbers through such events relatively to their high (and rising) cost. Such events also raise cultural issues about the relationship between global,

European and local culture in the ECOC programme. (Refer to the section on Cultural Programme and Impact).

While ECOC has largely been successful in attracting large numbers of visitors, awareness of the programme is sometimes low. Although the majority of people visiting ECOC are likely to know that the city is hosting the event, a much smaller proportion (generally 10-30%) will be motivated by ECOC to visit the city. There is some indirect evidence to suggest that ECOC acts as a general 'atmosphere' which many visitors may find attractive, even if they do not visit specific events in the programme. This underlines the important role played by installations, site-specific projects and events in public spaces, which will tend to reach a wider cross-section of city visitors than enclosed events.

Most of the host cities made considerable investment in marketing, much of which was targeted at visitors, either local residents or tourists. There is some evidence to suggest that greater investment in marketing will generate higher visitor numbers. This seems to indicate that collaboration between the cultural and tourism sectors can be fruitful, since increased visitor numbers also lead to a growth in cultural visits. There have been a few examples of successful collaboration initiatives during ECOC, some of which have also had a longer-term impact. In many cases, however, collaboration between the cultural sector and tourism bodies has been problematic.

Although attracting visitors is not generally listed as a particularly important objective by all cities, nevertheless it tends to be a widely quoted impact of the event, probably for the simple reason that visitor numbers are one of the most readily available sources of data that can be used to plot trends. However, this study has revealed many of the problems that exist in estimating the number of visitors, and the confusion that often exists between the number of visitors and the number of visits.

There is evidence that ECOC can help cities to achieve greater visitor impacts than would be possible without the event. It is not always clear, however, that ECOC has a bigger impact than 'mega-events'. In the case of Portugal, for example, the impact of Lisbon and Porto were far less than Expo 98 in Lisbon, which attracted over 7 million visits (dos Santos *et al.* 2002).

It is clear, however, that ECOC does attract a 'cultural' audience. This may be advantageous for cities seeking to create a cultural image or trying to attract cultural tourism. It is more problematic if the aim of the event is to create an accessible cultural festival which includes all potential visitor groups. The audience for ECOC on the whole remains firmly professional, middle class and highly educated. This is a phenomenon also observed at other cultural events across Europe, but it has important implications for issues of social inclusion. There is some evidence that some cities have been successful in creating specific events that cater to wider audiences, although little mixing of audiences seems to take place at individual events within the ECOC programme. (Refer to the section on Social Perspectives).

The relatively homogeneous nature of the audience attracted to ECOC was noted by some of the cities in their response to the questionnaire. In particular Stockholm noted that the tendency for events to be located in the city centre reinforced the tendency to attract 'the usual cultural consumers and tourists'. The experience of Rotterdam also showed the importance of developing events in different neighbourhoods of the city to attract a more varied audience. There are potential contradictions between trying to spread the programme spatially and trying to attract more visitors. Inevitably, the most popular events will be those which are in the most accessible, city centre locations. This suggests that a careful selection of events in terms of potential audiences and locations needs to be made in compiling the programme. There is a tendency in some ECOC programmes to try and develop 'something for everyone', but as respondents pointed out this may make the programme unwieldy as well as reducing the visibility of the ECOC events as a whole. The survey evidence from Rotterdam, Porto and Salamanca suggested that the more complex programme in Rotterdam was more difficult for visitors to understand.

## **Future Approaches**

In general, those cities which have established clear visitor objectives seem to have achieved more visitor impacts than those cities which did not. In part, this may be due to better monitoring by the former, but it does seem that a clear visitor strategy is likely to attract more visitors. Essential elements of such a strategy include collaboration with the tourism sector, particularly destination marketing organisations. At



present, there is a lack of involvement of individual cultural organisations in the planning and execution of visitor strategies.

As already stated, this study underlines the difficulty of assessing the visitor impacts of ECOC in the light of the very different measures (or lack of measures) used by the cities. In order to better assess the functioning of ECOC it is advisable to create comparative measures which can be put into practice across different cities. It is also important to integrate monitoring of visitor impacts into the planning and execution of ECOC, and link visitor monitoring with measurement of economic, social and cultural impacts.

The issues of collaboration between the tourism and cultural sectors as highlighted earlier in this section should also be considered in the early stages of planning ECOC. Even if attracting visitors is not a major objective of the event, it is inevitably an important function of ECOC. One might pose the question whether a city is worthy of the title if it does not seek to attract visitors from the rest of Europe. Even if it is not possible for people to visit in person, then thought needs to be given for providing other means of access.

It is worth stressing once again that part of the problem in developing collaboration between the cultural and tourism sectors is a difference in language and culture. But there also seems to be a remarkable convergence between the two sectors in the relatively simplistic approach that both benefit from ECOC visitors. More attention should be paid to analysing the type of visitors that ECOC wish to attract, and how they are going to communicate with these visitors. In some cases all visitors have been seen as 'tourists', even when the bulk of visits are generated by local residents. 'Tourists' may also be seen as an undesirable market, even though visitor surveys consistently show that the tourists attracted to ECOC tend to be highly culturally motivated and high spending. Perhaps the realisation that 'cultural tourists' are simply local cultural consumers that have displaced their cultural consumption to another city might ease the communication difficulties between the cultural and tourism sectors. There are also some tensions that can occur between visitor and social objectives, or when a city feels invaded by others from outside causing a distortion in prices, difficulties in parking, or in the case of the opening event in Lille, interruptions to daily routines such as shopping. The social perspectives section of this report also refers to this issue.

A more sophisticated view of visitor markets might also help ECOC cities to benefit from some of the indirect impacts of the designation. The tendency for ECOC to become a focus for conference activity, for example, has not been fully exploited by most host cities.

The development of a more structured approach to collecting visitor data as suggested above should provide a sound basis for developing new insights into the role of ECOC in European tourism as a whole, in generating visitors to ECOC and for exploring the relationship between tourism and cultural consumption. This latter point is perhaps of particular interest, as 'cultural tourism' is cited in many EU contexts as a means of supporting culture and economic development as well as increasing understanding between different cultures. ECOC, as a major arena for cultural tourism generates an ideal setting in which to explore questions related to the impact of culture on tourism and the impact of tourism on culture.

### ***Methodology for Monitoring and Evaluation***

Monitoring for many cities is an afterthought rather than a priority. Many cities mentioned that monitoring began too late, or did not include elements of visitor or economic impacts, even though these are often much easier to measure than cultural impacts. Recent experience of monitoring exercises suggests that monitoring of visitors is often initiated externally to the organising body, often at the request of the local authority. As a result, monitoring processes are not built into the organisation process, and are rarely related directly to the aims established by the event.

Monitoring also usually stops after the cultural year itself, so there is little opportunity to measure long-term impacts. It is important for longitudinal monitoring systems to be put in place well in advance of the event. Ideally, baseline measures of key indicators should be made at least two or three years before the event and monitoring should continue for two or three years after the event as well.

The patchy and often indirect evidence on the long-term visitor impacts of ECOC suggest that there is a small increase in visitor numbers in the post ECOC period for most cities. But it is almost impossible to attribute this increase to the effects of ECOC without further monitoring. Given the importance of image improvement to most ECOC cities, the development of longer-term monitoring of image impacts should also be considered.

The indicators to be measured should be related to the aims and objectives of individual ECOC, but particularly in the field of visitor impacts there is considerable scope for developing core indicators. Where possible these indicators should be based on data which is already collected on a regular basis by local authorities or tourism bodies. Such data might include the number of overnight stays (which is the most widely available measure of staying tourism), visits to cultural and other attractions, visits to cultural events, tourist office enquiries, and web site visitation.

In order to establish the impact of the event on visitors and among the population at large, it is important to develop survey methodologies which can generate specific information on the motivations, profile and activities of ECOC visitors. Again, such surveys would be most effective if accompanied by baseline surveys held two or three years prior to ECOC. Such surveys should include specific questions relating to the motivation of visitors to visit the city and the ECOC event. These data give an important basis for estimating the additional economic impact of visitor spending. The socio-demographic profile of the visitors should be surveyed so that specific objectives relating to visitor groups can be monitored (age, education level, employment status, income, ethnic background, etc.). Based on the experience of the ATLAS surveys conducted at recent ECOC events it is also advisable to include questions on the 'normal' cultural consumption patterns of visitors. These data serve to distinguish between traditional and new cultural audiences, and can identify areas of crossover between different audiences.

As one of the most important quantitative indicators of ECOC is the number of visitors it attracts, consideration should also be given to systems for collecting these data. For events in the programme which are ticketed, it should be possible to collect relatively sound figures from the venues involved. For events in public spaces (which often account for a large proportion of total attendance) consideration should be given to the development of guidelines for estimating visitor numbers. For events where such approaches are impractical (for example art installations in busy city centre spaces), it may be better not to attempt unsound estimation. Although a more conservative approach to the estimation of visitor numbers may reduce the total number of visits recorded, the attendance at enclosed venues or events should provide a suitably accurate indicator of visitation in most cases. It should be recognised that there is a large degree of multiple visitation among the ECOC audience, so even if all events are not covered in the collection of visit figures, most visitors will stand a chance of being measured at some point during their visits to the programme.

A more standardised approach to visitor research would help to make the results comparable between cities, and to identify more clearly trends in the economic, social and cultural impacts of ECOC. This would require the development of a common approach to definition of key terms, such as 'visitor', 'visits' and 'tourists' as discussed earlier. The research should also be based on a basic premise of measuring the additional effects of ECOC itself, rather than simply reporting the total number of visits or amount of expenditure.

In terms of evaluating the results of ECOC, the indicators generated by the monitoring exercise should be used to assess the extent to which the visitor objectives of the event have been met. It should also be recognised, however, that visitor indicators can also help in evaluating broader objectives as well. Visitor surveys may identify the extent to which a broad audience or specific visitor segments have been attracted, for example. Given the European scope of the event, another element of evaluation might include the contribution of ECOC to European tourism. In this context it is preferable if visitor-related indicators are not seen as stand-alone measures, but are integrated into a general system of monitoring and evaluation. The development and execution of this system should be conducted by an independent body, rather than ECOC organisers or the local authority. Many cities have carried out evaluations, but these inevitably tend to be focused on internal rather than external concerns (refer to section on Monitoring and Evaluation).

In developing monitoring and evaluation systems it might also be helpful to place ECOC in an overall context of a major events strategy for each host city. Although ECOC is clearly unique in its conception and content, the experience of staging it can be of great value in preparing for or building on other major

events. The ability to demonstrate careful planning, execution and achievement of objectives could be of great value in attracting other major international events to the city. Previous experience seems to indicate that those cities that benefit most from event such as ECOC are those that have integrated it into a more structured longitudinal programme of events and venue development.

The EU could help to promote more effective monitoring and evaluation by developing guidelines for ECOC. In developing such guidelines, consideration should be given to the potential for generating transferable knowledge which will enable the host cities to learn more effectively from each other. In the past many cities have expressed a desire to develop a more systematic approach to learning from ECOC experience, but this has rarely come to fruition.

Another potential contribution from the EU could be a broader, European monitoring of the impact of ECOC. It might be possible, for example, to include one or two questions on ECOC awareness or attendance into the Euro barometer surveys at regular intervals. This would provide an overview of the European impact of ECOC as well as giving host cities a baseline measure against which to measure the impact of their own event.

### **Advice**

ECOC should consider approaches and strategies relating to visitors bearing in mind evidence and experience that exists from past cities. In general, advice from respondents encompassed the following:

- Set clear objectives that are realistic and based on reliable data
- Do not exaggerate expectations and claims of success
- Develop close cooperation between the tourism and cultural sectors
- Introduce rigorous methods of monitoring and evaluation
- Create clear strategies to help ensure sustainability after the event and follow-up.

# Social Perspectives

## *Introduction*

At one level the social impact of ECOC is a vast question since almost all ECOC programme outcomes can be seen in social terms. Even the promotion of tourism or the creation of jobs, both common aims among ECOC will be felt in the social fabric of the city.

This section therefore focuses on the stated social objectives of ECOC, the programmes and initiatives which were specifically intended to achieve those objectives, and the approaches adopted to assess their results.

In the past 25 years the social potential of culture has been the subject of renewed debate, as European societies have undergone deep changes in structure, values, economy and politics. Cultural action has been increasingly used to alleviate the symptoms of change; the more imaginative actors have begun to recognise the cultural dimension of both change and symptoms.

This has fostered a greater awareness of the social dimension of their work among cultural professionals. For some this means renewing arguments to secure legitimacy and public funds, while others create cultural projects with directly social objectives. Still others resist such thinking as an inappropriate intrusion into cultural matters; and, for many, the social impact of culture is simply a matter of confusion, marginal to their main concerns. The concepts and programmes of ECOC reflect all these positions, often at the same time.

The way in which ECOC have approached their social aspirations within their cultural programmes seems to fall broadly into three general types of intervention.

## *Access Development*

A principal approach to achieving social objectives has been to improve access to cultural projects and programmes. The creation of new facilities, improved customer care and controlled prices are typical of this approach. All ECOC have recognised access development as an objective, and have attempted to extend their programmes to sections of the local population which, it is believed, will not otherwise participate. The resulting work includes:

- Initiatives designed to assist people in attending or participating in the main programme events, through discounted tickets, pass cards, dedicated transport etc
- Free events, notably popular concerts and street activities
- Events in neighbourhoods, schools and community venues, usually for a local audience

Such initiatives can be found in the programmes of all ECOC: indeed, some commitment to inclusion along these lines appears to be accepted as necessary in each ECOC programme. However, the effort spent in trying to engage those who are not already committed consumers of public cultural provision has varied widely.

All ECOC sought to have some social impact through improving access to the arts or culture. Avignon, with reduced entrance prices, free events and a PASS card for museums, is typical of the kind of initiatives undertaken. Bruges also created a cultural pass for local residents (9.400 'Poorterspases' were sold). Bergen allocated 27.000 music festival tickets to local schools. Many cities tried to extend access by putting on events in unusual venues, including some in non-central neighbourhoods; Brussels had one of the most substantial programmes of this kind including a short film project in different communes, the 'Récits de Ville' (stories of the city), Brussels Underground, Hidden Music of Brussels and many others; this commitment to decentralisation may be due in part to the specific situation of a city of 19 communes and many identities.

Access initiatives were not limited to seeing events. Most cities developed projects designed to enable amateurs and non-professionals to take part in the arts directly. Many of these opportunities were small scale, and did not go beyond workshops, public performances or exhibitions. Others, like Porto's community production of the opera *Wozzeck*, were more ambitious.

A particularly important area of access development was work with children. All cities prioritised work with children and young people (which they tended to describe in the same terms) within their social or community programmes. Indeed, in some cases, such as Reykjavik, children's projects made up almost the whole of the community programme. Such an approach is common in the cultural sector, both because children are seen as the audience of the future, and because schools provide an effective structure through which to develop work with many people at relatively low cost. Much of it was conceived within a framework of education about 'culture and cultural values' – in other words, an attempt to enhance the cultural capital of the students involved. The Brussels ABC (Art Basics for Children) programme belongs in this category. Other examples of education projects include

- A robotic insects exhibition in Luxembourg
- A children's film-making project in Stockholm
- A schools opera project in Avignon
- A project touring to 30.000 day care children in Helsinki
- 'Le città dell'infanzia' involving over 22.000 children in Bologna
- Links between professional artists and secondary schools in Bruges

Attention was also given to improving access for young people outside schools, particularly through partnership with youth services: Thessaloniki established youth centres in poor neighbourhoods to support cultural initiatives.

Access was also considered in respect of elderly and disabled people, usually through specific projects. Helsinki promoted 'IIK! Art in Institutions' which focused on homes for the elderly and Bruges offered arts workshops for people with learning disabilities. Likewise, Salamanca implemented special programmes for the elderly and for disabled people. Some of the access initiatives were more ambitious, in the sense of targeting marginalised groups. Thessaloniki, Stockholm, Rotterdam and other cities developed initiatives to extend access to immigrant communities. Some of these (for example in Bergen and Rotterdam) focused on religion as a way to engage specific communities, or to develop connections between them.

It is not possible to know how far some of these initiatives promoted cultural inclusion, in addition to access, without much more detailed research. The issue turns on the complex questions of artistic creation and the connections between specialist projects and the mainstream of the festival and the city's cultural life.

## ***Cultural Instrumentalism<sup>2</sup>***

As the socio-economic problems of post-industrial restructuring and globalisation have made themselves felt in European societies, there has been a growing readiness to use cultural programmes to alleviate their symptoms, or even their causes. The focus of these interventions has shifted with the evolution of thinking in social policy, encompassing community development, social inclusion and, more recently, social capital.

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<sup>2</sup> 'Instrumentalism' refers to culture as a tool to achieve other objectives. Cultural policy is necessarily instrumental in that it has purpose: the differences are of ideology and degree.

These initiatives are distinguished by their social purpose, with cultural concerns relegated to a secondary position. The projects themselves tend to be small-scale, narrow in focus and limited in time: valuable as they may be for those concerned, they tend to remain marginal to both cultural and social policy and could therefore be considered palliative at best. Typical examples include:

- Workshops for young people, aiming to reduce anti-social behaviour and build confidence
- Theatre productions developed to convey information about health or social issues
- Programmes for unemployed people designed to help them rejoin the workforce

Many ECOC have included at least some projects aiming to use the arts to achieve social goals, but the extent, quality and impact of this work has been much less than that concerned with access development. There were a few examples of projects which aimed to use the arts wholly to reach other objectives – mostly in training for people at risk of social exclusion – but these were unusual. Instead, the focus of work remained mainly on cultural action and outcomes. The hope was often expressed that community projects would have some impact on social inclusion or community development, but how that might happen was rarely very clear. It is likely that where such projects were well-conceived and executed, they did produce social outcomes independent of, if not more important than, their cultural ones; but there is little information and insufficient evidence to validate such outcomes.

Stockholm was one of several cities to establish a training programme for people working in the city (bus and taxi drivers, police, library staff etc.), and designed to give them a better understanding of local culture and history so that they could help guide visitors. Elsewhere training programmes targeted unemployed and otherwise excluded people, with the aim of using arts and cultural programmes to improve participants' skills, confidence and networks, and so help them find work. In Bruges, a programme was developed to help long-term unemployed, low skilled and recently-settled workers to gain jobs through the ECOC initiative, though in the event much non-specialist work was reportedly done by volunteers. Salamanca also developed training programmes for volunteers with the aim of helping people gain transferable skills.

Some cities developed cultural programmes with the aim of passing on specific messages, or to educate target audiences in non-cultural issues. Prague, for example, initiated a film festival focussing on 'human rights, ethnic and racial issues, rights of minorities'.

Some cities established projects to engage with very difficult social issues, including: social inclusion, civil society and democratic participation, cultural diversity, migration, asylum and human trafficking. Although large ambitions are sometimes reported by cities, there is much less information about the resulting projects, or how they were intended to have an impact on such major social challenges. Specific outcomes, to say nothing of the complex ethical issues involved in such approaches, are conspicuous by their absence. It is possible that reports by some ECOC may exaggerate what actually took place, its success and its longer-term effects.

## ***Cultural Inclusion***

This type of action aims to extend opportunities for creation to people whose cultural values are marginalised by, or excluded from, the dominant cultural landscape (whether publicly-funded or commercial).

Though this work often has a social perspective and will have social outcomes, it is primarily cultural or artistic. Its aim is to enlarge the framework of cultural expression, to enable new voices to be heard and, ultimately, to make the cultural space more open and democratic. This is an emerging form of practice. Examples include:

- Programmes to bring the cultural work of immigrant communities into mainstream venues
- New artistic productions that enable people to reflect personal and collective experiences
- Initiatives to develop how cultural institutions relate to the local population

An essential aspect of cultural inclusion is to connect community initiatives with mainstream cultural programmes. Some of the most original developments undertaken by ECOC can be seen as cultural inclusion; it is also where the greatest potential for lasting social impact lies.

Several cities set out to develop projects which would bring new voices into the cultural arena, including those of young people, non-professional artists and disabled people among others. The Helsinki programme, for example, included 'EuCrea' events promoting independent participation and cultural production by disabled people and work in this area was developed by several other cities. Memory and oral history was an important component of work in Brussels, Graz, Helsinki and elsewhere, reflecting an intention to enlarge the way the city is imagined. Projects like 'Bruxelles Nous Appartient' (Brussels Belongs to Us) and Helsinki's 'Street Memory' new media programme represent a new approach to inclusion in ECOC programmes.

Some cities sought to use cultural projects to strengthen the position of local minority groups:

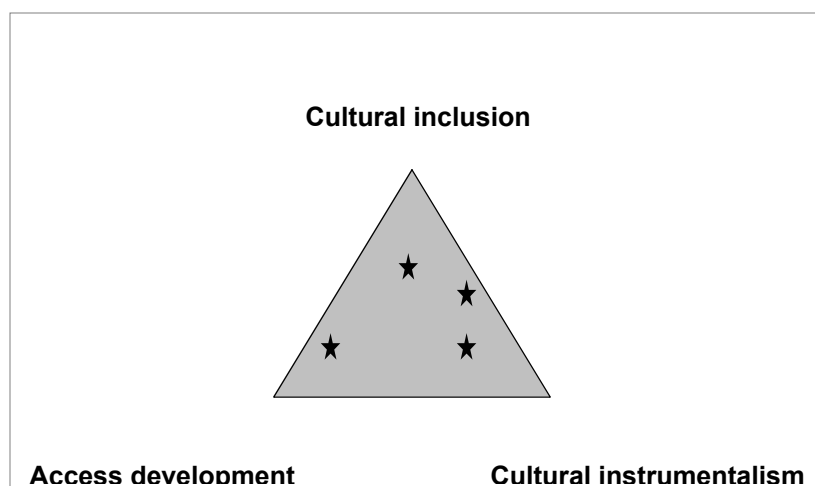
- Thessaloniki worked with the Jewish community on the development of a museum documenting 2000 years of residence and the experience of the Holocaust; projects with Armenian and immigrant groups were also undertaken
- Prague included 'Khamoro 2000' an international festival of Roma culture – a strong signal of inclusion in this context
- Rotterdam developed arts projects involving substance abusers, sex workers and other marginalised groups, including a fashion show, 'Koninginnen Van De Nacht'

The Brussels programme was also strong in its concept and implementation of cultural inclusion, based on a commitment to cultural democracy in a city of great diversity. The Zinneke Parade, which aimed to include all the city's ethnic and cultural groups, has continued to grow as an important space for cultural diversity and respect.

Helsinki, Rotterdam and Graz also made commitments in this area. Rotterdam initiated an ambitious project under the title 'Preaching in someone else's parish', in which theologians, artists and politicians spoke to a faith community to which they did not themselves belong; the programme involved 52 different churches, temples and mosques, and attracted much interest. Rotterdam was also committed to developing sustainable relationships between the established cultural sector and community groups, notably through training for young and ethnic minority programmers, and supporting arts institutions in contacting and working with them.

## **A Framework**

Viewing these three different approaches used by ECOC suggests a model to help monitor and evaluate social objectives and projects. The framework should be considered as defining a space within which organisations or projects situate themselves. For all its limitations, the model may provide an initial framework for considering the concepts and projects relating to social objectives of the different ECOC.



## ***Social Aims and Objectives***

The stated aims and objectives of most ECOC were only partly concerned with social questions. They were dominated instead by ideas of profile raising and improving the city's image. Avignon is representative in aiming 'to promote cultural tourism and reinforce the image of Avignon as an important cultural city'. This sense that the title is an opportunity in city marketing is very widespread.

However, several ECOC prioritised the importance of social objectives, and took a less presentational view. As Rotterdam observed: 'the honorary title Cultural Capital of Europe can be used to bring all this culture to the attention of a broader public more successfully, but that is not really enough to justify the title'. Consequently the city created a programme which overtly placed cultural inclusion in its fundamental concepts.

Other cities have also taken a broad view of the social potential of their programmes. Brussels aimed, in part, to develop connections between artists from different linguistic communities, and Helsinki linked its year with a strategy to improve residents' quality of life; Porto aimed to increase participation in culture and use its potential in urban regeneration. For others, though, such as Santiago or Weimar, such concerns were much more peripheral to their main objectives.

ECOC are prone to rhetoric when presenting their ambitions, their place in historical and contemporary cultural life, and their intentions for their programme. 'We dreamt of Lille 2004 as a spaceship changing the fabric of time' is a recent example, but similar phrases can be found in the publications of every city that has held the title. There has been a noticeable inflation of language over the years, as the title's perceived value has grown, along with the number and range of partnerships involved, and of the socio-economic goals associated with it. In particular, there is a burgeoning rhetoric relating to inclusion and social change.

The published programmes of most ECOC demonstrate a wish to be seen as 'inclusive' and concerned for the cultural (and the non-cultural) interests of a population perceived, or feared, to be disengaged from the ECOC event itself. Graz wanted a programme which combined 'top quality with maximum acceptability' and presented 'culture as a constructive instrument for life management' to 'a large audience'.

This goal has found expression, in most cases, through a wide range of concrete initiatives which are considered below. But it is also pursued through rhetorical strategies. The most important of these is the adoption of a very open concept of culture: 'Good everyday life is good culture', according to Helsinki. So, in different cities, sport, food, religion and local specialities like sauna, were included. As a result, the ECOC programme instantly became more inclusive, since it encompassed many things which involved people who were not (or were not thought to be) interested in art.

The published aims are one thing; the perception of those responsible for the programmes and events is another. The study asked respondents to rank various aims in terms of importance to their ECOC programme, with 5 as the most important, and 0 as the least. Two of these aims were directly concerned with social issues: 'Growing and expanding the local audience for culture' (relating to access development) and 'social cohesion/community development' (relating to cultural instrumentalism).

Most respondents placed a fairly high importance on the first. Many put 'Growing and expanding the local audience for culture' among the city's most important aims (Luxembourg, Graz) or among the next



most important. For others, it came further down the list, but it was never ranked bottom. This high level of commitment to audience development reflects normal cultural policy throughout most of Europe. All the cities, except Cracow, said that 'social cohesion/community development' had been an objective, but its relative importance was much less. Only Rotterdam ranked it among its top priorities, with Luxembourg, Brussels, Helsinki, Graz and Lille also ranking it highly; nine cities described it as a medium priority. All the cities which gave a high priority to social cohesion and community development as an objective were similarly committed to expanding the audience.

Some broad conclusions emerge from this review of respondents' perceptions of the relative importance of these objectives:

- People working in the same city had very different ideas of their programme's goal. In many ECOC, there is clearly no consensus about the year's objectives among these individuals.
- Audience development was a much more common objective than social cohesion or community development. More than that, it is perhaps an initial stage of thinking, since all the cities which placed a high priority on the second were also committed to audience development.
- Although a number of cities have approached their programmes from the perspective of cultural inclusion, it is not recognised as a distinct concern or area of practice. As a result, the approach continues to be marginalised, and unlikely to fulfil its potential.
- Social objectives are articulated more often and more thoroughly by the northern European cities – Scandinavia, Netherlands, Belgium etc. – than those in southern or Eastern Europe. This may reflect differences in their respective cultural, social and political landscapes.
- Social objectives are becoming increasingly important in the thinking of ECOC. Until the year 2000, few cities had made a serious commitment to the potential social impact of their events. Since then, this has been an important part of the thinking of Brussels, Helsinki, Rotterdam and in different ways to Porto, Graz and Genoa.

As might be expected of ECOC taking place in different European countries over a 10-year period, there has been a wide variety in the projects undertaken with broadly social objectives.

## Outcomes

For many of the respondents, the social outcomes of ECOC were sometimes more positive than the attention or resources assigned to them in the programme would suggest. In particular, it is widely thought that there was a greater impact on social cohesion and community development than on expanding the local audience for culture, although the latter was much more widely stated as an aim at the outset, and generally accorded a higher priority.

A range of specific social outcomes was reported. These included improved access to cultural activities and resources (both through city centre and new neighbourhood provision), various community development outcomes (such as strengthening voluntary organisations), and changes to the pattern of cultural inclusion by relatively marginalised or excluded groups. It was also reported, for instance in Porto, that the attempts to develop social programmes had a positive effect on the cultural organisations, in developing their practice in education and outreach work, and their connection with local people.

Outcomes tended to be reported either as clear positive results or as problems and project failures. In fact social outcomes are inherently complex, and even those involved may not be clear how they feel about them. Change produces tensions and difficulties as well as opportunities for growth. Outcomes, and how they appear, are both liable to change over time. This is an area with very few black and white contrasts: the work and its results are far more nuanced than people often allow. The absence of any real recognition of the ambiguous and changeable nature of social outcomes (despite the recognition of problems described below) is a telling indicator of how they have been conceived and approached by organisers.

The difficulty of defining boundaries between social and cultural objectives of ECOC, already noted, is very evident in the reported social outcomes of ECOC programmes. For many cities, raising the level of interest in, and discussion around, culture was an important outcome. Like the creation of new public spaces (a concrete symbol of democratic engagement in culture), assigning a social, cultural or even political label to such change is not very meaningful.

The section of this report concerning evaluation studies of ECOC initiatives observes how uneven such studies have been. While a few cities commissioned external consultants (Luxembourg, Helsinki, Bruges, Bologna) or academics (Copenhagen), most had resources only to produce an internal report (Weimar, Reykjavik); in some cases (Stockholm) the evaluation (or one of them) was the responsibility of an official body or department. The extent to which the social impact of the event featured in these evaluations varies from slightly to not at all.

In the end, and in the absence of rigorous and consistent evaluation of social outcomes, what is reported in the documentation or by individuals involved in the organisation of ECOC programmes lacks a strong evidential base.

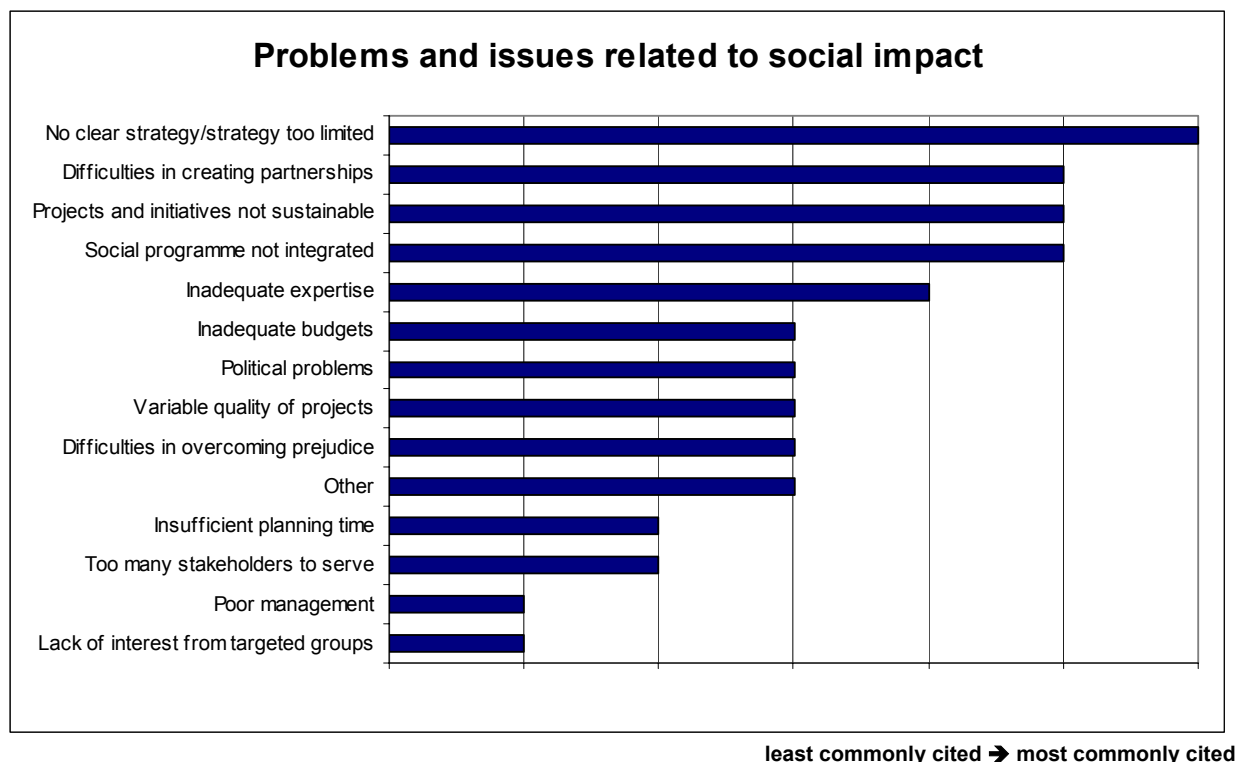
Sustainability was a general concern to most ECOC, inescapable in any time-limited cultural programme, and it was often raised in respect of projects seen as successful in their social outcomes. But sustainability is not just a question of whether an individual project continues. Sometimes, it is not appropriate for it to do so, at least not in the form it took in the exceptional context of an ECOC programme. Nor should the fact that those involved do not want to continue be taken as a negative outcome: the project may simply have fulfilled their expectations, and they now want to move on. When looking at sustainability of outcomes, the more critical questions may be what people feel about what they have done, and what they will do next. Whether the experience and learning developed is built on is also important: as an example, Rotterdam's inter-faith project has been sustained in part because it inspired Graz to take on a similar initiative.

Two points may be noted in regard to sustainability of community projects:

- First, in contrast to the mainstream cultural programme in many ECOC, which was understood to be 'special' and short-term, there was a common expectation and desire that community projects should be sustained. They were perceived, by those involved in setting them up at least, to have provided real value to the city's inhabitants
- Second, and despite the concern expressed about sustainability, community initiatives often do continue because they are relatively inexpensive, because they can root themselves well locally and because those involved often care about them deeply. The continuation of the oral history project, 'Bruxelles Nous Appartient' illustrates the potential

It may therefore be that, alongside infrastructural improvements, it is community projects that offer the best opportunities for ECOC programmes to produce lasting local change. If this is the case, their relative position in ECOC should be reviewed. (Refer to section on Legacy and Long-term Effects)

## Problems



Many respondents felt that their projects in the social and community fields were hampered by fundamental problems. In some cities, the problems were very basic: there was no tradition, and little experience, of cultural programmes that extended beyond a core constituency, or aimed to meet the needs of excluded groups.

More common was a lack of a commitment to the work by the ECOC organisation, its sponsors and its political masters. People felt there was no clear strategy guiding community work, or, where it did exist, that it was too limited in scope and resources. In practice, the people-centred rhetoric often fell in the face of the other powerful pressures – political, economic, administrative and cultural – that are inescapable in delivering a programme on this scale.

There were also major problems in creating partnerships, since these were governed by the needs and opportunity of the festival, rather than growing from existing needs and interests. They often involved people with different expectations and reasons for taking part, and those disparities were liable to cause difficulties. Partners' lack of experience in working across wide cultural and social divides was also problematic: in Rotterdam, some projects were curtailed as a result of such differences. Sometimes community projects provoked deeper tensions about values and society: in Helsinki, one project organiser felt they met prejudice in projects that aimed to engage immigrant artists and communities.

The variable quality of projects and lack of expertise were quoted as problems by several cities. Projects varied widely in their quality of conception, execution and outcome. One reason was that people familiar with working in one area or style cannot necessarily transfer to very different situations. It is not enough for an artist or company to want to work with a community group: they need relevant knowledge, expertise and experience. Such things cannot be commanded instantly to meet the needs of an ECOC programme.

Lack of, or uneven, commitment generally translated into lack of visibility for social projects. Although in cities like Thessaloniki, substantial work was undertaken in this field, those involved found it hard to interest others in it. The press and media were not particularly interested, and the extensive programme of infrastructure developments and the problems and delays concerning these made far more interesting stories.

Some cities, most recently Lille, have taken the view that social objectives should be integrated within the programme itself, rather than taken on as a separate issue. This is perfectly defensible – given that all cultural activity will have some kind of impact on society – and, in principle, a clear commitment to cultural inclusion. However, whether it can be achieved in practice is questionable. Social concerns, especially the demanding areas of access, community development and cultural inclusion, are weak components of cultural policy. Marginalised and excluded people, by definition, do not have the leverage of investing partners, politicians, art critics and paying audiences. When the pressures of delivery begin to be felt, as they are in every city, it is these projects whose budgets, resources, timetables and space get squeezed.

While striking differences in the programme are to be avoided, it is probably necessary to give this area of work separate support within the organising structure, not least because the work requires different skills, experience and methods from other parts of the programme. Not to recognise this difference organisationally is very risky.

In practice, and despite cities' good intentions, community-based work with clear and achievable social objectives accounted for a small part of final programmes, and an even smaller part of the overall budgets of ECOC initiatives.

Some cities equated community engagement with urban regeneration, but, despite obvious connections, the work is not interchangeable. The risk of conflating them is that costly infrastructural projects overshadow the more complex human concerns of community regeneration, in much the same way that the big exhibitions and festival events overshadow the community and education work happening alongside. From a distance, the ECOC programme can appear like a great cruise liner, sailing stately and glamorous into port, surrounded by an unconnected flock of community sailboats, wary of being crushed if they get too close.

When community activities did form a larger part of the programme, the organisers found themselves criticised for alleged neglect of the high-profile, international festival events people felt the title demanded. This was the situation in Brussels, even though the organisers were explicit about their primary objectives. On the other hand, when organisers saw community involvement as a responsibility of other organisations or the municipality of the city, they felt criticised for not having done enough to meet them through the ECOC programme. Sharp political and ideological divisions separate people here. It does not seem likely that any city could put on an event on this scale (and with this level of expectations) and satisfy all the interests involved. Objectively, all the cities promoted the conventional elements of a major cultural festival: this was not an area of significant weakness. Yet the criticisms were still made from both sides – that the programme was excessively, or insufficiently, community oriented.

The appropriateness of a social perspective in a cultural event remains controversial. A few respondents in the survey were very clear about this – either in favour or against – but most had ambiguous feelings. Partly this is because ideas about the social dimension of culture remain unclear to many cultural professionals. There is widespread opposition to perceived instrumentalisation of culture, but, at the same time, many people are passionate about widening the cultural franchise. Debates about social responsibility and effects, within, and beyond, the cultural sector, can be simplistic, falling easily into polarised belief positions, rather than a balanced assessment of evidence or practice.

There are also examples of good practice in cities such as Stockholm, Rotterdam and others. The level of engagement evident, for example, in Helsinki's decision to give one of its project teams the specific task to work with underprivileged groups, is a significant change in approach. These give some grounds for optimism about the potential for social projects within the ECOC programme and the future of individual actions. The creation of new neighbourhood facilities, the strengthening or creation of community organisations, and the inclusion of marginalised groups through cultural projects have produced visible local change.

The widespread recognition of this dimension of an ECOC, even reflected in some of the EU criteria for the event, means that it cannot easily be ignored in future. Cities will either have to develop specific ideas in terms of the social outcomes of such events, or consciously to reject such concerns: either strategy is defensible, intellectually and culturally, but acting as if these concerns do not exist is becoming less so with each passing year.

## ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

The methodologies for assessing the social outcomes of ECOC programmes – as of cultural action in general – are weak, often inappropriate and unevenly followed. As a result, they are of little value in producing reliable information or, more importantly, effective learning.

Evaluation should not be to produce advocacy materials that allow the organisers to assert that “everything turned out the way we had planned” (Graz web site), or to support the case for funding. Yet confusion of these goals is an abiding problem of most cultural evaluation. Rather than trying to prove that certain, apparently desirable, outcomes were produced, it is essential to consider *how* a project or a programme achieved the results – good, bad and mixed – it produced. Only in this way can those involved learn from and build on their experiences.

There is a management purpose in monitoring performance and results, but there is also a research purpose, since understanding how projects work depends on this. If a youth theatre project fails, but was well conceived and executed, the experience will have wide lessons to offer both for those involved and for people hoping to do similar work in other cities. If it fails because it was badly conceived and executed, it will offer few lessons which can be generalised.

It is also important that evaluation of programmes with social objectives should be proportionate to the programmes themselves. Whilst it may be necessary to maintain a basic overview of performance, it is not necessary to evaluate every project when a sampling process is more than sufficient to satisfy the needs of management monitoring and wider evaluation. This is particularly important given the possibility of damaging the projects themselves by intrusive or burdensome evaluation systems. It is also essential that all those involved in a project with social objectives should be involved in setting its objectives, assessing to what extent they have been met, and determining the appropriate evaluation methods.

## ***Possible Future Research***

There is a vast area of potential research which could be important to present and future ECOC, and to other, large-scale cultural programmes.

It would be valuable to undertake more research into the practice and processes of ECOC programmes and projects with stated social intentions. Rather than focusing wholly on the outcomes produced – an approach too easily drawn into advocacy for decisions taken – future research could focus on how and why project outcomes have occurred. This is more likely to produce a deeper understanding of practice (good and bad), and of the results in all their complexity. Such research would consider, among other questions:

- The initial concepts and assumptions which shape a project
- The way in which objectives and plans are developed
- The relationships between partners, artists, participants, funders and others
- The conditions and situation within which the project is undertaken
- The artistic or cultural values, aims and implementation
- The process and experience of development over time
- The complex nature of the outcomes and the value placed on them by different people.

The purpose of such research would not be to identify that there is a ‘desirable’ social outcome to certain projects and programmes undertaken by ECOC but to develop understanding, particularly for artists, practitioners, managers and policy makers of the social dimension of cultural programming. If such work were done well, it could be of real value to other cities considering the social aspects of cultural action within and beyond the ECOC designation.

## **Advice**

Diversity is a strength of the ECOC action, since it reflects the different situations, needs and cultures of the cities taking part, and allows scope for experimentation and innovation. The growing importance and reputation of the title has, arguably, encouraged a certain uniformity, at least of expectation, and if this were so, it would be unfortunate.

To help nominated ECOC develop better proposals in this area, there is a need to enlarge and enrich debates around the social dimension of their programmes. Problems with the conception of social goals within the ECOC idea, lead to problems in planning, implementation and evaluation. Consequently, the results vary widely, and it is not possible to assess properly what is being done, or the extent to which it represents a worthwhile outcome and an appropriate return on investment. The European Commission could help by facilitating regular exchange of experiences between past, current and candidate cities.

Few respondents reflected on the social perspectives of ECOC when offering advice about approaches to ECOC programmes, although as discussed above, they did cite problems and issues directly associated with this area of activity. The key elements of advice were as follows:

- The conception and realisation of social objectives require expertise and need to be influenced by local experience
- Potential conflicts between social objectives and other objectives need to be mediated and carefully managed
- If social goals are central to any ECOC programme it will require specialist support and resources
- Monitoring and evaluation are essential tools to the development and sustainability of social outcomes.

# Monitoring and Evaluation

## Monitoring

The majority of ECOC had some form of system in place for monitoring their cultural programme and/or their financing. In most cases monitoring was the responsibility of the operational management team but for some cities the Board was responsible (Porto). In a small number of cities external consultancies and accountants were used for the monitoring process (Brussels, Bruges, Thessaloniki). Very little information about the nature of monitoring systems used has been available from cities and from the information gathered there are very few examples of specific systems developed especially for the ECOC project. In Graz, local software developers created a system of monitoring based on spreadsheets that were coordinated with the bookkeeping and management control system used by the financial department. Helsinki set up a database with progress reports of all projects including all projects that were never realised. All projects, as part of their contracts with the ECOC organisation, had to submit interim reports before receiving part of the funding. Stockholm also had a database that was developed for them by TietoEnator for project management.

Several cities reported serious difficulties tied to a lack of close and early monitoring. The complexity of both cultural and infrastructure programmes makes monitoring a necessity for good management. By far the most common reason cited by respondents for difficulties in monitoring and lack of monitoring has been the absence of clear procedures and lack of clear division of responsibility.

Respondents also reported that:

- Monitoring began too late
- Monitoring was not linked to planning
- Criteria for monitoring were inadequately defined

Some cities reported that due to already heavy workloads, monitoring was not seen as a priority and the large numbers of projects within some programmes made it almost impossible to keep track of them all.

## Evaluation

More attention has been paid to evaluation than to monitoring, although even this has been irregular and often not independent. Most cities evaluated the ECOC programme in some way or another, but in the majority of cases this was limited to the publication of a final report written by the members of staff of the organisation and not an independently commissioned study. Evaluation has, in most cases, been the responsibility of the operational management team and/or Board, but in a few cities it has been under the responsibility of the municipal authorities (Rotterdam, Copenhagen) or the national authorities (Stockholm). The most common means of evaluation has been through quantitative surveys and questionnaires, and qualitative surveys and interviews.

### Evaluation of the cultural programme

Almost half of the ECOC organisations undertook their own evaluation of the cultural programme (including Avignon, Porto, Bergen, Reykjavik, Bruges, Graz, Bologna and Copenhagen), usually in the form of a final report. The quality of these varies significantly. In several cities this has been more a documentation of the year than a thorough evaluation. Others include an analysis of the cultural programme and budgets (Bologna, Copenhagen, Brussels), reflections by staff, and a range of opinions on the event (Stockholm, Bergen, Rotterdam). Some cities undertook their own evaluation with the assistance of external consultants (Brussels). In most cases this evaluation/documentation was undertaken in the months following the cultural year. For at least four cities an entirely independent evaluation of the cultural programme was undertaken. This was the case for Thessaloniki, Luxembourg, Bruges and Helsinki. Evaluation in these cases was sometimes started either during or prior to the start

of the year and continued after the end of the year; in others evaluation did not begin until the cultural year had finished.

Gallup polls or equivalents have been used in a number of cities to measure opinion about the event (including Reykjavik, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Cracow, Genoa, Bergen). Cities conducted or commissioned surveys among cultural partners of the project, public opinion in the city, audiences to ECOC events, and national public awareness of the programme. In Reykjavik in response to a survey made by Gallup at the end of 2000, 80% of respondents said they were “pleased” with the cultural year. In Helsinki, 64% of those surveyed agreed that the ECOC was a “good project”. In Bergen 42% of respondents from the public said they had participated in more culture than in the previous year.

#### Evaluation of social impacts

As described in the section on Social Perspectives, very little attention has been given by cities to evaluation specifically of the social impacts of ECOC. It has been common in final reports and documentation for the organisation to dedicate a small section to the social outcomes but often this has been limited to the mention of attendance figures and project descriptions. Exceptions to this general pattern have been Bruges, Stockholm and Helsinki that commissioned independent evaluations of the social impacts, although such studies cannot be easily compared.

#### Evaluation of economic impacts

Only a minority of cities have undertaken a specific evaluation of the economic impacts of the cultural year, although this was more common than an evaluation of the social impacts. Bruges, Bologna, Thessaloniki and Luxembourg all commissioned independent research on the economic outcomes. In a number of other cities economic impacts were evaluated at the initiative of individuals and academic institutions and were not officially commissioned by the ECOC organisation or the city (Salamanca). As in the case of other ECOC evaluations, these reports cannot be easily compared. (Refer to section on Economic Perspectives.)

#### Evaluation of visitor impacts

Again, it has not been standard practice in all ECOS to undertake visitor impact evaluations. Official statistics collected from tourist boards and city marketing agencies have been used to show total numbers of visitors and overnight stays etc. to the city but often no additional evaluation is done that specifically relates to the ECOC status of the city. As tourist boards tend to concentrate on visitors coming to the city from outside, very little data is available on the mobilisation of the local population. Independent evaluations on visitor impacts were commissioned for Bruges, Bologna and Luxembourg and research has been undertaken by ATLAS (Association for Tourism and Leisure Education) in Rotterdam, Porto and Salamanca. The Portuguese Cultural Observatory also undertook a study on the public that visited events within the Porto 2001 programme. (Refer to section on Visitor Perspectives).

#### Other evaluations

Some individual projects have been evaluated by the project organisers themselves but further research is necessary to get a clear picture of how frequent this has been. Also a significant number of academic Masters and Doctoral theses have been written on different topics within ECOC programmes. In Helsinki, for example, one person is writing his PhD on just one of the social projects organised within the framework of the ECOC. The study on Rotterdam by students at Utrecht School of Arts has focused on two aspects of the ECOC project: its organisation and European dimension. (Refer to section on European Dimension).

### ***Problems and Issues***

The main problems cited by respondents in relation to evaluation were the following:

- Limited resources



- Insufficient planning
- Criteria for evaluation inadequately defined
- Limited or no follow-up to evaluation

A number of respondents commented on the lack of interest by the Board or the municipality to undertake evaluation. In Brussels, for example, the Board did not agree on how the evaluation should take place, and were cautious of the political implications of evaluation in the Brussels environment. The perceived political risks of evaluation hampered the process in several ECOC.

In a number of cases where evaluation has been done externally to the ECOC organisation, members of the organisation have criticised the assessment. In Copenhagen the General Secretary of the ECOC organisation was not happy with the official evaluation written by the Danish National Institute of Social Research (based on data supplied by the ECOC Evaluation Committee) and as a result the ECOC organisation produced its own report. In Stockholm the official evaluation done by the National Council for Culture (Statens kulturråd) has been criticised as “unprofessional” by both members in the city cultural department and members of the ECOC organisation.

## **Advice**

The advice given by respondents in relation to monitoring and evaluation was the following:

- Plan the evaluation before the start of the year and assign adequate resources to it
- Develop clear objectives and criteria for monitoring and evaluation
- Ensure evaluation is made independently and by professionals

From an observer’s point of view, the purpose of evaluation in this area seems two-fold:

- To monitor actual performance and results against plans; and
- To provide better understanding which may improve future work.

The media and political interest in ECOC projects, and the large sums of public money involved, may focus attention on the first goal. Independent evaluation is difficult but important in this context. The second goal relies on a consideration of how a project or a programme achieved the results – good, bad and mixed – it produced, helping people to learn from and build on the experience. This also makes it possible to distinguish between competent failure (which all projects, but especially arts projects, may legitimately experience) and incompetent failure, from which little can be drawn.

# Legacy and Long-term Effects

## *Introduction*

It is difficult to make an even-handed assessment of the long-term effects of cities at any one point in time. Three quarters of ECOC are only four years old or less, making judgements of long-term effects seem premature. Some respondents emphasised projects in their programmes that might bring results ten years or more down the line, especially projects with children or young people.

For ECOC, two categories of legacy have been reported. The first was 'hard' legacies that offer tangible, measurable and visible evidence of what has been achieved. This category includes buildings and infrastructure, jobs and tourists, but also events and organisations, and sometimes even people, if you can see and count them. The second was 'soft' legacies, that are often intangible, difficult to measure and even invisible to many observers. This includes image enhancement, increased confidence, creating a festive atmosphere and the experience that has been gained. It is no surprise that it is easier to talk about hard legacies than soft ones, and much of the data gathered from ECOC concentrates largely on these. However, hard legacies only tell one part of the story.

Given the levels of investment, especially from the public sector, on ECOC, the issue of legacy and long-term impact is critical. Some ECOC that were judged by the local inhabitants and media to be unsuccessful in the cultural year itself have had significant long-term legacies. In Thessaloniki for example the infrastructure projects were not completed in the cultural year, causing substantial problems and hostile media reaction. But six years later they were complete, offering new facilities for the public and renewed atmosphere to certain parts of the city such as the port.

Respondents in most cities were able to point to impressive cultural projects, buildings or organisations that either continued to exist beyond the cultural year or had a long-term impact. About half established funds or organisations to continue pursuing their aims. However, in many cities there was a sense that the full potential of the event had not been realised. A number of respondents regretted that the ECOC had not been part of a sustainable strategy for their city. ECOC have had important short-term impacts, and a number of long-term benefits; however the huge levels of investment and activity they generated rarely seem to have been matched by long-term development in the city.

## *Greatest Impact*

In general across all ECOC, respondents rated three long-term effects very highly:

- Cultural infrastructure improvements
- More developed programmes of cultural activities and events
- Increased international profile of the city/region

Improvements made to cultural infrastructure are easy to identify and quantify. However, such improvements (hard) may also have other indirect positive effects, for example on the cultural organisations that are housed in them, such as the standard of their work (soft). In certain cities, the creation of new cultural spaces led to the need to create new organisations to manage them (e.g. the Salara in Bologna or the Casa de Musica in Porto), thereby increasing both the city's cultural 'hardware' and 'software'. In other instances, the preoccupation was to improve infrastructure with less consideration given to its users or managers (such as the Multiusos "Sánctoz Paraíso" in Salamanca).

Many cities renovated historical buildings (e.g. the Musical Instruments Museum in Brussels) or districts in the city (e.g. the formal naval yards in Copenhagen). Others developed existing institutions – examples include a new wing to the Museum of Modern Art in Reykjavik, the new "E-werk" stage for the Deutsche National Theatre in Weimar, and created new cultural venues (e.g. the coastal culture centre in Bergen or Las Palmas in Rotterdam). The section in this report on Infrastructure records and assesses many of these, and further examples are given in the city reports in Part II.

These buildings have made a significant difference to the range of culture on offer for audiences, offered increased opportunities for local artists, and provided employment within the cultural sector and the

services that relate to it, not to mention the positive impacts on the local construction industry. The section in the report on Economic Perspectives comments further on the issue of the impact of infrastructure development.

In terms of softer legacies, respondents generally rated “a more developed programme of cultural activities and arts events” higher than either the creation of new cultural networks or new cultural organisations in terms of the impact they have on the city.

Another soft legacy of ECOC identified by respondents was the enhancement of experience, skills and confidence gained by those involved in the direct management of the ECOC cultural programmes. In certain cities, this has been a relatively small number of people, but the impacts arise from what people do and not how many there are. Respondents in Reykjavik, for example, talked about the value organisers gained experimenting between different artistic sectors, which has had an impact on the nature of cultural projects which are now taking place. In Helsinki and Bergen, staff from the city’s cultural department left to work on ECOC, later returning to their former jobs. In Brussels, some of the coordinators of the ECOC cultural programme have become Directors of the city’s major cultural institutions, carrying on the philosophy and projects that underpinned part of the Brussels ECOC programme.

Another perceived (soft) major long-term effect that respondents reported on was the role of ECOC in helping to enhance a city’s international image. As discussed in the sections on Economic perspectives and Visitor perspectives, there is limited (hard) evidence to prove this conclusively, looking at the range of ECOC as a whole. Those sections deal with the issue of city imaging and profiling.

### ***Other Important Effects***

Six other long-term effects were also rated highly by respondents, with little difference between them:

- Enhanced pride and self-confidence in the city/region
- New networks and increased collaboration in the cultural sector
- New cultural organisations still in existence
- Long-term cultural development for the city/region
- Increasing foreign visitors to the city/region
- Growing or extending the local audience for culture

Respondents in Graz, Copenhagen and other cities believed that the ECOC experience helped to enhance ‘pride and self-confidence’ in their city or region. However, such views are notoriously difficult to prove, except through anecdotes and stories.

In terms of new networks that were established and continue, there is the example of R2002, a group of cultural entrepreneurs in Rotterdam, and Trans Danse Europe dance network, and the Theorem Theatre Network, both originating in Avignon. These last two have received multi-annual funding from the EU. However, it is difficult to attribute the success of these projects to the ECOC in question. In addition to the continuation of networks, many cities drew attention to less formal collaborations that continued after the cultural year was over. One example is an ongoing series of international academic ties with the university in Santiago. Cultural institutions in the Mont des Arts quarter of Brussels have continued to collaborate on certain projects and festivals after the experience of the cultural year. Respondents in Reykjavik pointed to a legacy of working with different communes throughout Iceland, as well as greater cooperation with the business sector.

Collaborations that began as part of ECOC sometimes lead to the formation of new institutional structures. Examples include the Sinfonietta Cracovia chamber orchestra, the BRAK centre for electronic and rock music, the INCOLSA tourist office in Santiago, and the Mt. Athos Civil Company in

Thessaloniki, which is a continuing link between the city and the monasteries, following on from an important collaboration of mounting a major exhibition.

Many cities listed examples of festivals that were initiated for the ECOC, and then continued afterwards on an annual or bi-annual basis. Examples are the summer Kunstfest Weimar, the BergArt contemporary art festival, the international film festival, the veteran ship festival and the Fløien festival in Bergen, the international festival of street theatre in Salamanca, a multidisciplinary youth festival Motel Mozaïque in Rotterdam, Luxembourg's Festival de musiques amplifiées, Bologna's Netmage festival for art with new media and the Segnalemosso festival for outdoor theatre. There has been the continuation of a new dance festival in Bruges, as well as Jazz Bruges and the .wav contemporary music festival. The Santirock music festival in Santiago, the Summer Stage theatre festival in Copenhagen, the See at Sea film festival in Stockholm and Helsinki's theatre festival Baltic Circle and Forces of Light festival are still further festivals that continue.

It is interesting to note just how many ECOC projects that were initiated for the first time during a cultural year carried on happening in subsequent years: Rotterdam's Preaching in another man's parish, the Dowry tapestry project, Luxembourg's Forum for contemporary art and Mondorf Literary Encounters, Reykjavik's Hrafnagaldur, the WijkUp project in Bruges and Brussels' Bal Moderne. There is Tremplin Jazz in Avignon, Psalm 2004 and the Homeless Street Soccer Cup in Graz, Art Genda in Copenhagen. Stockholm's "Short for free" film screenings and the summer school and partnership on urban studies and the programme for art in play parks in Helsinki. The list is impressive.

Respondents also highlighted developments in existing organisations as a result of the ECOC experience that had longer-term positive effects on those organisations. In Brussels, Het Groot Beschrift literature festival was able to enhance its international programme during the cultural year, and then, based on this experience, created a new festival "Literature Rendez-Vous" two years later.

Although the continuation of such events is cited as a clear example of legacies by all relatively recent ECOC, it is uncertain how long such events can be sustained. The evidence gathered from the earlier ECOC (1985-1994) suggests that there are large variations from city to city in terms of the long-term sustainability of events and festivals. The interpretation of 'long-term' itself varies, depending on what cities are trying to demonstrate. Closer investigation of some of the examples given above for continuing 'long-term' projects suggests that although they are continuing, many are experiencing major financial problems. Rarely have municipalities, Arts Councils or other funding agencies been able to absorb the number of newly initiated events and projects and support them at levels that ensure their survival and development. One example of this problem was in one ECOC where many of the production companies that were specifically created to organise and manage events during the cultural year tried to continue after the year had finished, but went bankrupt two years later. In other cities cuts to the city's cultural budget following the cultural year led to the closure of theatres, museums and other facilities.

The legacy of certain ECOC cultural projects is not necessarily the fact that they continued to exist in the same city. Some projects that were initiated in one ECOC have continued in other places, such as Memento Metropolis, a project from Copenhagen 96 that was picked up by Stockholm 98. Ideas and projects from one ECOC have often inspired people in another city to develop a similar sort of project. The Partot parade in Bologna was influenced by the Zinneke Parade in Brussels.

Even where specific projects have not been continued, the ECOC priorities have sometimes focused attention on a particular target group, where the focus has continued in subsequent years, such as cultural projects with the homeless in Rotterdam. Different artistic sectors have been given special attention as a result of special initiatives of ECOC, where the benefits have flowed into the years following. The focus on visual arts in Avignon, contemporary film and music in Bergen, dance in Porto, children's projects in Helsinki, design in Stockholm and architecture in Copenhagen have all had some lasting benefits (at least in the short-term) in those cities.

Some cities used their cultural years to pilot the use of unusual and outdoor venues for major events. Their success has led to continued use of those sites, and the mounting of other special outdoor events in those cities (e.g. Prague, Stockholm).

While remembering the very large number of initiatives in each city that continued beyond the cultural year (listed in the city reports in Part II), several respondents noted that it was not only the projects, but

sometimes the challenging questions raised during the cultural year that would continue on as well, such as in Brussels with an ongoing debate about the cultural identity of the city/region, and the need for a unifying cultural strategy that is not polarised into the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking communities. In many cities, the debate has lingered on about the financing of culture, sometimes focusing on the financial cutbacks on cultural spending by municipalities.

A few respondents referred to the legacy of the memory of a cultural year, which is very difficult to evaluate in terms of impact, and which, of course, might be either positive or negative.

### ***Minor Effects, Difficulties and Negative Effects***

The lowest rated long-term effects by respondents included:

- Increased public funding for cultural organisations (in several cities budgets for culture decreased the year after)
- Continuation of a festival atmosphere (for most cities, it did not)
- Increased sponsorship for cultural activities (for almost all cities it declined)

These were echoed in the respondent's comments on difficulties of maintaining legacies of the year, where the highest rated was:

- Insufficient finance

The decrease (or standstill) of public funding for cultural activities and the decrease in sponsorship raised for cultural activities appeared to be two of the most common short-term and long-term negative effects of ECOC.

The issue of sustainability of the impact of ECOC is most certainly related to questions of finance. Very few ECOC addressed such questions prior to, during or even at the end of the cultural year. Some respondents referred to the issue of 'political will' as a determining factor. However, the availability of both public and private funds is profoundly influenced by wider changes in the economy, and not only by the attitudes of politicians.

Other reasons were identified by many respondents for the absence of sustainable legacies after the cultural year. The most common were:

- Change of city priorities
- Absence of leadership
- Inadequate organisational structures in place

As well as reporting the positive results from an ECOC, respondents were also asked to consider any negative impacts of the year. The most common responses were:

- Political arguments and fallout with negative consequences
- Adverse effects on future cultural spending
- Negative impacts on staff health and personal life

In at least five ECOC, major political changes that took place just prior to, during or following the cultural year were stated as causes for being unable to sustain the impacts of the ECOC experience. On the other hand, even cities where there was political continuity, respondents reported that arguments between public authorities or the city leadership losing interest proved detrimental to exploiting the successes of the cultural year.

## ***Sustaining Long-term Effects***

Many respondents offered advice on ways of trying to ensure the sustainability of the achievements of a cultural year. One of the most common was the importance of maintaining or developing a structure that has this responsibility. Many ECOC discussed the nature and function of such structures, which either were created or, in most cities, were not.

Different models for structures have been adopted by different cities.

- In six cities, the existing cultural department of the city absorbed responsibilities and also the resulting financial surplus (Stockholm, Reykjavik). In certain cities, there was inappropriate experience to do this effectively, the former ECOC organisers were largely ignored, and the contacts developed during the cultural year were not followed up. In others, ECOC personnel and project leaders were engaged by the municipality. Such was the case for Rotterdam's Impex festival and the Cultural Bridge foundation and festival in Copenhagen. In Bergen and Helsinki, staff from the city authorities worked on the cultural year before returning to the municipality, and in Bologna several staff from the ECOC organisation found jobs in the municipality afterwards. These were ways of ensuring the transfer of skills and continuity.
- Reykjavik and Copenhagen established new cultural funds, repeating the cooperation between state and local public authorities. It seems that both funds, however, were temporary initiatives and lasted only a few years. Helsinki set up a committee to help continue initiatives arising from the cultural year.
- New cultural organisations to continue the work of the year were created in five ECOC. In Salamanca a new organisation was established to manage the city's cultural policy and new infrastructure. Initially, ECOC staff were employed but then were removed. In Bruges, the organisation BruggePlus was created and is being financed by the city. It is responsible for programming regular events and organising a celebration in the city in 2005. Luxembourg established a similar model, creating an organisation to continue cultural cooperation between the city and the state, and employing the same director as for the ECOC. This organisation is involved in preparations for Luxembourg 2007 and is organising cultural projects across the region. Genoa is considering keeping ECOC personnel at the end of the year to manage an event celebrating Columbus in 2007. In Porto, the ECOC organisation was transformed into another company that is overseeing the completion and management of the Casa de Musica.
- In both Weimar and Reykjavik new promotional organisations were formed financed by the municipality, and also with other partners in the case of Weimar. Both employ staff who worked on the ECOC. Respondents reported on the difficulties of creating such organisations too long after the cultural year has finished, when profile and contacts have been lost.

There are other examples. In Cracow, a part of the ECOC organisation was absorbed into the municipality during preparations and continues to function. The organisation for Thessaloniki's ECOC still formally exists but is not active. In Santiago, the Consorcio that oversaw the ECOC still works to promote the city.

The issue of evaluation is considered elsewhere in this report, but it is linked closely to the issue of sustainability. Evaluation is essential to assess the results of the year, the projects that should be continued and the priorities that require support. Where cities did undertake evaluations, they were rarely used to help make decisions about the future. It seems imperative to ensure that future funders for any follow-up are integrated in the process of evaluation, and that it is conducted in an independent and expert manner.

## ***Advice***

Many respondents stated that it is essential to plan well in advance for the years following the ECOC. One reason for this was that political and public attention moves on, and it is often easier to set up a long-term framework while organisers have that attention.

Advice included:

- Asking the city to make a clear statement of long-term cultural policy prior to the cultural year starting by considering proposals for a follow-up organisation
- Agreeing detailed financial plans to support some of the cultural organisations, venues and events created for the cultural year as part of the ECOC financial strategy
- Ensuring that the city's cultural budget is geared to support the higher level of activity for several years after the ECOC
- Involving sponsors in financial planning for later years as part of the sponsorship agreements
- Giving full consideration to the future management of any new facilities beyond the cultural year

Gaining local support for the continuation of projects and events was cited by many as being of utmost importance to ensuring sustainability. Respondents also mentioned the importance of the support of new networks of local cultural groups and artists and cooperating organisations such as tourist boards.

Without question, the importance of legacy was stressed by almost all respondents, although as outlined earlier, the interpretation of what was important varied a great deal. Most ECOC felt compelled to justify their investment in terms of facts and figures proving its cost-effectiveness and the scale of return. In the absence of comprehensive and independent research, it has been difficult through this study to assess the accuracy of the value or importance of the stated effects of each ECOC.

# Keys to Success

## Critical Success Factors

In answer to the question “what, in your opinion, are the most critical success factors of the Capital of Culture”, many respondents from all cities replied, and a large array of different thoughts and points of view were put forward. The spectrum of responses to this question reflects the diversity of ECOC programmes and the uniqueness of the event to each city; what may be a success factor in one city may not necessarily be transferable to another. It also reflects the different interpretations of success by different individuals. What does it mean to have a successful Capital of Culture? Success is always relative and can only be measured against aims and objectives. For example, if a city did not have as an objective the improvement of cultural infrastructure it cannot be deemed unsuccessful for not stimulating capital projects. The debate then focuses on whether the aims and objectives developed were the right ones for the city.

There is not therefore a recipe or formula for success for ECOC. However, there were a number of common success factors raised by respondents. These included:

- **Context:** the city must develop a programme that is right for that city at that time. Each city is at a different phase of its historical, cultural, social and economic development, and this context must be taken into consideration.

*“Start with what’s important in the city”*

- **Local involvement:** the engagement and ownership by the local population is crucial.

*“It is very important to make projects with and not for citizens”*

- **Partnerships:** the development of partnerships with many different stakeholders is of primary importance: cultural institutions, local independent arts groups, business and tourism sectors and social services/community organisations.

*“Profound collaboration with local partners”*

- **Long-term planning:** both advance planning and post-ECOC planning are essential.

*“Plan before and after the journey, and always exceed the speed limit”*

- **Political independence and artistic autonomy:** the cultural programme should not be influenced by political interests and the operational structure should have artistic autonomy.

*“Never leave it (the cultural programme) in the hands of the politicians”*

- **Clear objectives:** clearly defined aims and objectives must be developed.

*“Defined goals and a clear profile”*

- **Strong content:** the programme should be unique and visible with a balance of different types of projects.

*“A creative approach that ensures event distinctiveness”*

- **Good communication and marketing:** a clearly defined communication strategy is indispensable.

*“An extensive and broad based communication effort”*



- **Sufficient funds:** a confirmed budget should be in place as early as possible in the preparation phase.

*“Solid financial background”*

- **Strong leadership and committed team:** an independent director with an international vision and leadership skills to head a team of committed staff should be recruited.

*“The clear and absolute competence of a director and a good team”*

- **Political will:** the project needs political support especially if it wants to have a sustainable impact.

*“Active and interested political leadership”*

Other factors mentioned but that were expressed less frequently include:

- Investment in cultural infrastructure
- Integrated educational and community programmes
- A sense of excitement and enthusiasm in the city
- Projects in public spaces
- International linkages and cooperation

Other issues have been raised by individuals:

- *“Clear and rather radical choices are better than a lot of everything”*
- *“Avoid excessively ambitious statements and thus conflicting priorities”*
- *“Events must become organic parts of the city life”*
- *“Evaluation and follow-up are important”*
- *“Start and end with a bang”*
- *“Do a small number of things well”*

### **Most Important Piece of Advice**

As for the previous question, respondents gave what in their view was the most important piece of advice for other cities planning ECOC. In many cases, the advice corresponded to suggestions given for success factors above and reflected individual circumstances of cities. There are, however, a number of issues that were expressed more frequently than others. The most common advice given by respondents was:

- **Concentrate on the long-term perspective**

*“Integrate the ECOC in a long-term project to ensure legacy”*

*“Identify the long-term legacy benefits in advance”*

*“Be prepared to invest to sustain the momentum”*

*“Future effects will be greater if some kind of city plan is developed or followed during planning and afterwards”*

*“Build up cultural institutions and public participation and interest in culture rather than the “big bang effect” of glamorous events that leave little behind”*

*“Create sustainable programmes”*

*“Fireworks are often fantastic but you cannot use them for heating purposes”*

*“The city must be prepared to follow through on its initial investment in terms of money and political commitment”*

- **Ensure ownership by the local population**

*“Make sure that the local population feels part of the project”*

*“Involve ALL the population”*

*“Make sure the event is owned by the local community – this is the key factor to ensure sustainability”*

*“Try to get people involved in developing objectives”*

*“Make sure you get your own people excited about it then you will attract visitors as well”*

- **Plan in advance**

*“Start at least 3 years before the year”*

*“You can never begin too early”*

*“Plan well ahead”*

- **Be selective**

*“Define a limited number of objectives and goals”*

*“Be ambitious but realistic”*

*“Be uncompromising in some ways and cooperative in others”*

*“Focus on fewer projects”*

*“Try to be selective, put quality first – and do not try to please everyone!”*

*“Less events, better selection, more success”*

- **Secure the budget**

*“Start from a strong financial base”*

*“Secure a sufficient amount of resources”*

*“Have a sound budget”*

- **Use the opportunity**

*“Do something creative, something new”*

*“It is a fantastic opportunity to do something different – something you could not normally do”*

*“Be bold and exploit local talent”*

*“Be original, not a copy”*

*“Go for it and do your own thing”*

*“Create controversy”*

*“ECOC is a vehicle for change and a strong vision and themes are needed”*

- **Focus on the cultural programme**

*“Have a clear artistic vision”*

*“The artistic and cultural programme is the base, the heart and soul of it. Every other aspect, marketing, brand management, sustainability, economic factors etc arise from this”*

- **Strong leader and professional team**

*“The most important thing is to select and then support a strong intendant”*

*“To find a fascinating and at the same time effective director”*

*“Find a professional, ambitious and creative team”*

- **Other pieces of advice**

*“Infrastructure is important”*

*“Think international: act local”*

*“Do not underestimate the costs and energy needed for good communication and promotion”*

*“Clear goals should be matched with suitable resources for measurable ends”*

*“Good organisation is better than a lot of money”*

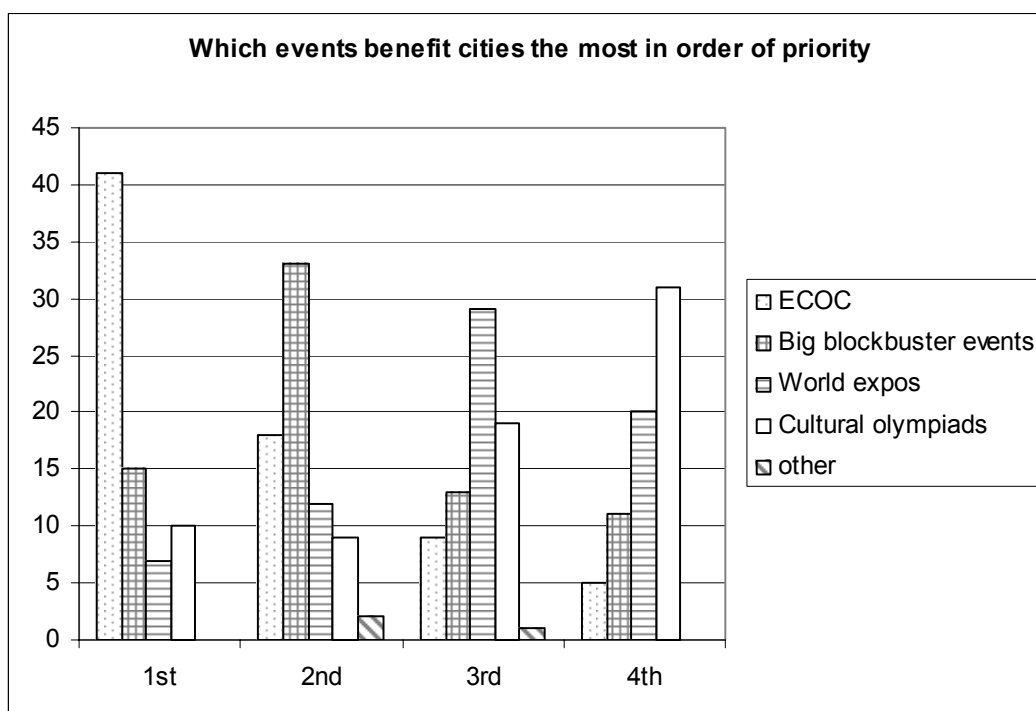
*“Clear strategy is vital”*

*“Do not believe you can change either cultural structures or cultural habits by single events”*

*“Accept that there will be tensions and problems to face during the course of the project”*

### **Most Beneficial Type of Large-scale Event for Cities**

This question asked respondents to rank in order of priority the large-scale cultural event they thought benefited cities the most out of four choices. 56% of respondents rated ECOC as the most beneficial large-scale event and a further 24% rated it as the second most beneficial event for cities. As all respondents were answering the questionnaire in relation to ECOC, the high support for the ECOC event might have been expected. Other large-scale projects, such as major building projects (‘the Guggenheim effect’) were also considered by some to bring major benefits.

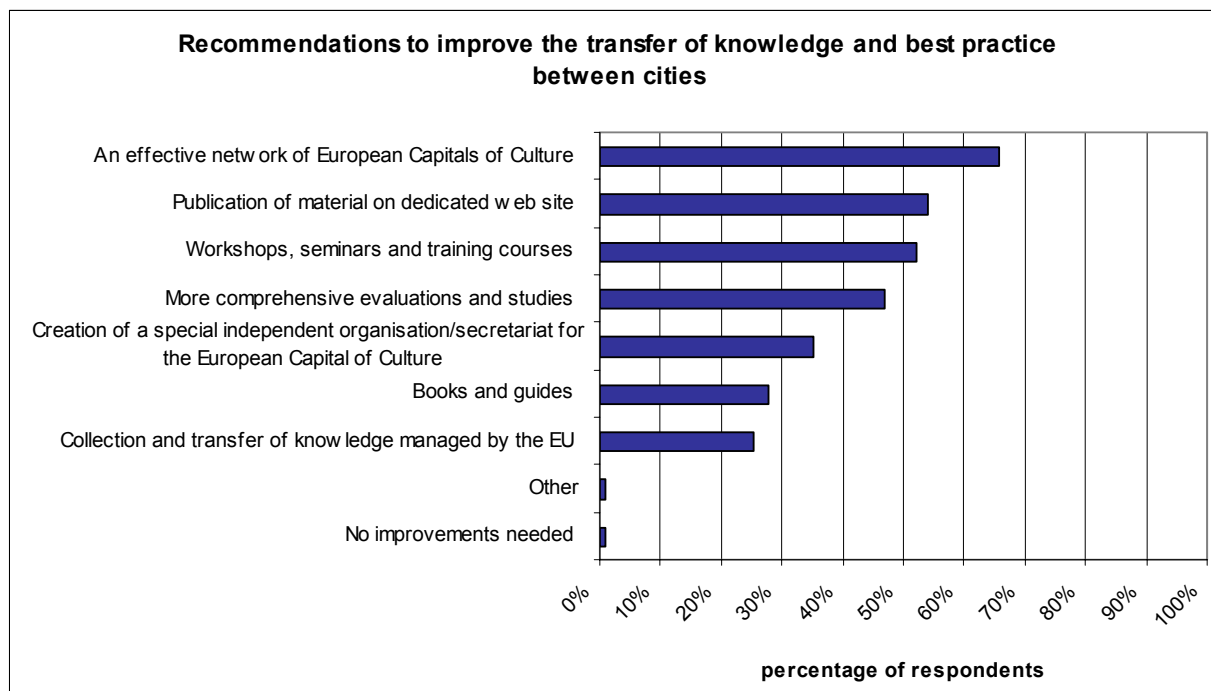


### **Recommendations to Improve the Transfer of Knowledge and Best Practice between Cities**

Respondents were asked what they would recommend, if anything, to improve the transfer of knowledge between cities. Only one person out of 111 that answered that question felt that no improvements were

necessary. The most common recommendation, given by two-thirds of respondents to that question, was for an effective network of ECOC, although this suggestion most likely did not refer to the existing network. Although a network of ECOC cities was founded in 1990 ("the Network of European Cities of Culture and Cultural Months") with one of its objectives to share information between past and future ECOC, respondents involved in this network said that very few past ECOC directors were now members, and that it was not the meetings of this network that promoted an exchange of experience, but rather informal discussions with certain experienced individuals. An accurate list of strong contacts was considered more valuable than an organised network.

The chart below gives details of the number of people who chose each method for improving the transfer of know-how. One person suggested that project organisers (not just ECOC directors) in different ECOC would also benefit from exchanges and meetings with each other.



### ***Advice from Other Cities of Culture***

From 1990 onwards, most ECOC examined to some degree the experience of previously designated cities, and many actively sought advice from them. There has been no consistency in the manner with which cities have sought such advice (in some there was informal contacts between Mayors; in others past directors were invited to share experience; in still others delegations would visit past ECOC and draw their own conclusions).

Cities most frequently cited as offering strong advice were Glasgow, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Antwerp, cities which shared certain similarities in their objectives and outcomes.

### ***No Simple Key to Success***

It is clear from the views of respondents that a complex event like ECOC with multiple objectives requires a delivery strategy that corresponds to its many objectives. Although the principles appear to be common to all ECOC, the uniqueness of each city necessitates a fresh view about how the principles might be applied in relation to a city's particular situation. Several respondents commented that although they had sought advice from and listened to others who had experience, they nevertheless proceeded to make most of the same mistakes. Listening to good advice is one thing; actually knowing how to apply it effectively or adapt it to suit local circumstances is another.

## European Cultural Months

Eight cities hosted cultural months in the period between 1995 and 2004:

- Nicosia, Cyprus in 1995
- St Petersburg, Russia in 1996 and 2003
- Ljubljana, Slovenia in 1997
- Linz, Austria in 1998
- Valletta, Malta in 1998
- Plovdiv, Bulgaria in 1999
- Basel, Switzerland in 2001
- Riga, Latvia in 2001

The cities that have hosted cultural months include capital cities (Nicosia, Ljubljana, Valletta, Riga) and non-capital cities (St Petersburg, Plovdiv), regional capitals (Linz, Basel), small cities such as Valletta with a population of just over 100.000 and larger municipalities such as St Petersburg with a population of 4,7 million.

### ***Aims and Objectives***

For many cities the motivation to host the Cultural Month focused on a desire to raise the European or international profile of the city and to be recognised as a cultural city. This often included a desire to present the city's cultural life to the rest of Europe or highlight the contribution made by the city to European culture. For St Petersburg in 1996 hosting the ECM was also a symbol of the integration of Russia in Europe.

A number of aims have been highlighted for each city, including for Nicosia an objective to increase interest in culture within the city, for St Petersburg '96 an opportunity to learn about trends of modern Russian and foreign art, for Linz to highlight the changes in society through their motto "job-net-gen-fun", for Valletta to develop a broad programme with wide appeal, for Basel to present new music to a wide audience and for Riga to stimulate innovative projects in contemporary culture and arts fields.

### ***Organisation and Management***

Most of the ECM were managed from within the municipality or through the creation of an organising committee working with the cultural department of the city. In Riga, however, the office was founded as part of the Ministry of Culture and the ECM received no support from the city. Only in Ljubljana and Basel did independent structures emerge to organise the event. Boards have been established normally during the year before the ECM but in a few cases two years before (Basel) and the size of Boards has ranged from five members in Basel to between 15 and 20 in Nicosia. The Chairs of the Boards have varied from politicians to a director of the cultural department of the municipality to an academic professor. The following table shows the number of staff in the operational team or where indicated in the organising committee. These range from three full-time managers in Riga to 30 staff in Plovdiv. Riga did however involve approximately 30 people in the PR campaign. In Nicosia the 12 members of staff were assisted by some 120 specially trained volunteers.

City	Number of Staff
Nicosia 1995	12
St Petersburg 1996 (organisational committee)	10
Ljubljana 1997	6
Linz 1998	10
Valletta 1998 (organisational committee)	18
Plovdiv 1999	30
Basel 2001	12
Riga 2001	3

### **Cultural Programme and Impact**

The cultural programmes for ECM generally took place within the city and the suburbs immediately surrounding the city. The length of the programmes ranged from 1 month to 4 months although Basel, for example, had specific programmes that lasted almost the whole year. The most popular seasons chosen by ECM were summer and autumn.

City	Start of programme	End of programme	period
Nicosia	15 September 1995	15 October 1995	1 month
St Petersburg	26 May 1996	30 June 1996	5 weeks
Ljubljana	01 May 1997	31 August 1997	4 months
Linz	28 August 1998	04 October 1998	5 weeks
Valletta	01 June 1998	30 June 1998	1 month
Plovdiv	28 May 1999	8 August 1999	2 months
Basel	01 November 2001	30 November 2001	1 month
Riga	27 July 2001	30 September 2001	2 months
St Petersburg	27 September 2003	02 November 2003	1 month

The planning time to develop the programmes ranged from less than a year in the case of Riga to two years for Basel. Themes and orientations for programmes varied from in the case of Nicosia a programme designed to promote the culture and traditions of different European countries to a specific focus on new classical music and its introduction to a wide audience in Basel. Basel, Linz and Riga made the decision to focus on contemporary and modern culture.

In most cities the programme was developed in close cooperation with cultural institutions and artists in the cities. Most programmes included events or festivals that were part of the usual cultural calendar. In St Petersburg '96 for example, the programme was based around the usual city festivals including "Stars of the White Nights" and "Swing of the White Nights" and in Linz the Ars Electronica Festival influenced the focus on contemporary issues and media and digital art. In Riga approximately 26% of the programme was made up of usual festivals including HOMO NOVUS and Art + Communications. All programmes were composed of a range of projects within different cultural sectors except Basel, that chose to concentrate on music and called its cultural month European Music Month. Numbers of projects and events ranged from 30 projects in Linz and Valletta to over 350 events in Plovdiv. The table below provides details of project and/or event numbers. Caution should be taken however in comparing figures as one project may in some cases include numerous events and performances.

City	Number of events/projects
Nicosia	130 events including 35 exhibitions
St Petersburg '96	over 100 drama and musical performances, 34 exhibitions and 10 international festivals
Ljubljana	over 200 events
Linz	30 projects
Valletta	30 projects
Plovdiv	350 events
Basel	120 projects and over 200 individual performances
Riga	44 theatre and dance performances, 23 concerts, 5 exhibitions and 19 other

	events
St Petersburg '03	over 100 events

All ECM had projects in public spaces and many opening events included street festivities and celebrations. St Petersburg '96 opened its ECM on May 26<sup>th</sup>, the anniversary of the city's foundation, with free performances and concerts for residents. Nicosia organised city walks for children and adults and in Linz the project Laager involved four sound artists directing a mobile train through the city to different locations.

Different venues in cities were also used to stage events. In Basel, a temporary hall for music performances was constructed by architects Herzog and de Meuron in a trade-fair building. In Linz a number of projects were developed in sites related to the industrial heritage of the city, for example, the Bruckner Orchestra performed in the furnace hall of the old steel works and the project Hybrid Factory took place in an old leather factory.

All ECM developed projects or programmes for children or young people. Ljubljana, for example, organised an art workshop for 1100 children. Valletta's children's programme was supported by Playmobil who created a special mascot for the event. Basel produced a 10-month educational programme entitled "Klangserve" that was specially designed to widen the audience for new music and increase participation in music. Educational activities took place in schools, businesses, factories, banks, etc.

The main issues highlighted by respondents and relating to the cultural programmes were that there was insufficient planning time to develop the programme and for some cities too many projects and lack of adequate promotion.

### ***Infrastructure***

In most cities the ECM stimulated infrastructure projects. These projects were mainly restorations and refurbishments of cultural facilities and public space redevelopment. In Nicosia, numerous projects were undertaken including the transformation of an old market hall into exhibition space and the opening of the Melina Mercouris hall in tribute to the founder of the European Capitals of Culture initiative. An old building near the buffer zone that divides the city was transformed to house the ECM information centre and now houses a Tourist Information Centre. In Plovdiv the ECM renovated an ancient amphitheatre. In Basel the main capital project was the renovation of the Gare du Nord into a centre for new music that opened in 2002. Valletta undertook the refurbishment of cultural facilities, road redevelopment and street lighting. In 2003, St Petersburg started the programme by opening a new square, and created a "European walkway" highlighting famous European who had contributed to the history of the city. Linz and Riga did not engage in any specific infrastructure projects.

### ***European Dimension***

All ECM took into consideration the European dimension when developing their programmes although there were different interpretations of what that meant. For Nicosia and Plovdiv, the European dimension was seen as a spirit of cooperation and European cultural diversity. For Linz it was defined as the development of European networks and European themes and for Valletta, Basel and Riga it was interpreted as the involvement of European artists. For Linz and Basel the European dimension was placed within a wider international perspective. All cultural months featured cooperation projects with other European countries and in a number of cities including Ljubljana, Plovdiv and St Petersburg links were developed through foreign embassies, consulates and cultural institutions. Riga reported an influx of over 600 foreign artists, critics and producers during the 2-month period.

In general very little cooperation between cultural months and ECOC took place although there have been some exceptions. Nicosia undertook joint promotion with Luxembourg in 1995 and had a number of cooperation projects and exchanges. Plovdiv exchanged several projects with Weimar in 1999. St Petersburg in 1996 collaborated with Copenhagen (7 projects from St Petersburg were presented in Copenhagen, and 8 projects from Copenhagen presented in St Petersburg). Respondents have commented on the difficulties of developing cooperation between the two projects that are of very different scale and ambition. The main limitations to the development of European cooperation cited by



respondents from the ECM were the lack of planning time, the lack of a clearly defined strategy, the lack of funds and a strong reliance on already existing links.

### ***Funding and Finance***

Exact budget information has not been available from all cultural months but from the information that has been collected it can be seen that total budgets ranged from approximately 1,27 million Euros for St Petersburg in 1996 to 7 million Euros for Basel. It is interesting to note that the cultural months that took place pre-1995 had higher budgets than three of the cities post-1994. The EU contribution has varied from 321.000 ECU for the first ever ECM in Cracow in 1992 to 75.434 Euros for Linz in 1998.

<b>City</b>	<b>Operating income</b>	<b>EU contribution</b>
Nicosia	1.354.479	97.735
St Petersburg '96	1.275.000	120.000
Ljubljana	3.044.200	-
Linz	1.754.430	75.434
Plovdiv	1.636.134	-
Basel	7.000.000	-
Riga	1.031.340	-
Cracow 1992	2.140.000 ECU	321.000 ECU
Graz 1993	2.270.000 ECU	90.800 ECU
Budapest 1994	2.240.000 ECU	134.400 ECU

Source: Myerscough 1994

All ECM received support from sponsors although the level of support varied from city to city. In Nicosia 24% of the budget came from sponsorship and in Linz 8%. Some cities found it particularly difficult to attract sponsorship. In St Petersburg '96 it was believed private companies were more concerned with the elections than supporting the cultural month and in Basel respondents thought that sponsors shied away from the specific theme of new music.

The main difficulties cited by respondents in relation to funding and finance were late confirmation of funding, insufficient income and difficulties in attracting sponsors.

### ***Communication***

While all cities concentrated on the promotion of the cultural month's programme of events, a number of them also focused on marketing the city's image (e.g. Nicosia and Linz). This was often done in collaboration with the tourist authorities. The local and national publics were targeted as priorities, followed by European publics. The most commonly used promotion tools were print and broadcast media. The later cities tended to use more new technologies for promotion and Linz in accordance with its focus on digital and media art made a special effort in this area. Press coverage tended to be concentrated on the local and national level; Ljubljana for example recorded 180 broadcasts on local and national TV, 500 radio broadcasts and 500 press cuttings in national newspapers. However, Linz seemed to receive more international media coverage with a recorded 1000 European and international press cuttings compared to 300 at the national level.

A number of difficulties were cited by respondents in relation to communications and media response and the most common problem seemed to be the inadequate budgets available. Insufficient personnel, lack of planning time and lack of a clear strategy were other problems mentioned.

### ***Impacts***

The economic, visitor or social impacts of the cultural months are very difficult to measure and very little evaluation or research has been undertaken in this field. It is clear that the impacts that can be generated from a one-to two-month programme are not the same as for a full-year ECOC. The cultural months have fewer objectives than the ECOC and economic or social strategies outside the field of culture were less developed. Linz, for example, had no specific objectives for visitors and Basel reported that they had no economic objectives for their event.

There were, nevertheless, some visitor, social and economic initiatives undertaken by the cities. Nicosia and Valletta both worked with their respective tourist boards and planning departments to reach common aims of attracting visitors to the city, developing cultural tourism, improving the cultural infrastructure and promoting the city image. Linz used the ECM to help secure the image development of the city. Basel had a more focussed strategy to increase the public for contemporary music and develop a broader audience. They ran a 10-month educational programme based on this one principle objective. Riga also tried to widen the audience for non-commercial, contemporary arts.

All ECM undertook community initiatives and for the most part this focused on children's programmes and educational projects. Many respondents commented on the lack of a clearly defined strategy in this area. For all areas of impact it was felt that action was limited by insufficient planning time, inadequate budgets and insufficient investment and to a lesser extent by a lack of personnel.

### ***Long-term Effects and Legacies***

All ECM had an intention to produce long-term effects, and of the legacies that were rated as having the highest impact on the city, growing or extending the local audience for culture was the most common across the cities. Other important legacies were the cultural infrastructure developments, a more developed programme of cultural activities and arts events, continuing development of the talent/careers of local artists and an enhanced artistic and philosophical debate.

As most of the ECM were managed from within the city cultural department, continuation of the programme or follow-up was done by the same department. Since the ECM, Nicosia has hosted an annual cultural festival dedicated to one European country each year. Linz has developed a Cultural Development Plan for the city that gained much acceptance through the ECM and has continued to be implemented. Linz is now applying to host the ECOC in 2009. Following the ECM in St Petersburg in 1996 the city applied for the title of ECOC for 2003. The ECM foundation in Plovdiv continued until 2003, organising cultural months in the city in 2000 and 2001.

Respondents have cited various limitations to long-term development and sustainability, the most common being the insufficient finance available and the decreased public sector funding. Other problems mentioned were the lack of advanced planning and the lack of a long-term vision.

### ***Evaluation***

This study has found no independent evaluations of cultural months. Most cities produced a final report or documentation of the month that was undertaken by the organisational team themselves. In some cases they were assisted by either an external company or experts in the cultural field. Respondents reported a number of issues that hindered the level and extent of monitoring and evaluation. These included a lack of time and resources, insufficient planning, responsibilities and procedures not clearly defined and limited or lack of follow-up.

### ***The Future***

In response to the question about whether the ECM initiative should be re-developed, 41% of all respondents (both from ECOC and ECM) agreed that it should and 59% disagreed. It is interesting to note however, that of the respondents only from cities that hosted a cultural month, 80% thought there should be a new scheme developed but of the respondents from cities that hosted a Capital of Culture only 25% thought so. This difference of opinion is also reflected in the reasons given for the response.

The main reasons given by respondents who did not think a new scheme should be developed were:

- One month is too short a time to have a significant impact, particularly at a European level
- The concept of cultural months is not clear
- The EU should focus just on the Capitals of Culture action
- The cultural months lack visibility at European level
- There has been an absence of any serious cooperation between cultural months and capitals of culture in the past

The main reasons given by respondents who did think a new scheme should be developed were:

- ECM gives cities who would be unable to sustain a year-long programme the opportunity to focus on culture for a month (particularly smaller cities)
- ECM gives cities from non-EU countries the opportunity to have an open dialogue with Europe
- The scheme of ECM has benefited and stimulated cities and inspired projects on different levels (e.g. cultural, social and infrastructure)

The ECM scheme was initiated in response to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the changes that ensued in an attempt to open dialogue with central and Eastern Europe. The advantages and benefits of this scheme can be seen from the review above. Although many of the countries that hosted ECM have now joined the EU, there is still a need to create links with non-EU countries, and the ECM could be re-developed with this in mind.

# European Cities of Culture 1985 – 1994

## *Introduction*

The research study published in October 1994 by the Network of Cultural Cities of Europe and financed by the European Commission and city authorities of the Network described and assessed the European Cities of Culture and cultural months that had been designated in the period 1985 to 1994. The 10 European Cities of Culture covered in this report were: Athens (1985), Florence (1986), Amsterdam (1987), Berlin (1988), Paris (1989), Glasgow (1990), Dublin (1991), Madrid (1992), Antwerp (1993) and Lisbon (1994).

The research for that report reviewed all the available documentation on the cities concerned and involved interviews with key informants in each city. The report included a case study of each city and general observations concerning these cities and the ECOC scheme as a whole.

When undertaking the research for the 1994 study, researchers commented that most of the specialist units responsible for the management of each ECOC had disbanded, and few of the city administrations and other relevant agencies involved had maintained any continuing interest in ECOC. Now 10 years after that 1994 report, identifying knowledgeable respondents who had both a memory of the ECOC year, and who were able to comment on the legacies and longer-term impacts proved extremely difficult in many of the earlier cities. The ECOC designations of Athens and Florence, for example, were almost 20 years ago. Former organisers in many cities are retired or are no longer working in the cities; city administrations in many cities have changed (sometimes several times), and earlier respondents in many of the cities no longer feel qualified or interested in commenting on the issue of impacts.

Nevertheless, this study used its best endeavours to track down a number of people in each former city who were able to make informed comments about the linkages between what happened during their respective cultural years and the current situation in the city. The development of cities is a complex process, and it is inappropriate and often impossible to make causal links between one event years ago and what is happening now. There are multiple factors at play, and many variables to consider when analysing city development. Cities change in demographic terms; patterns of city economies alter; political priorities are modified; people and expertise come and go.

Of the 10 ECOC designated in the period 1985-1994, only Glasgow and Antwerp have been used consistently as a benchmark for the ECOC action and a hallmark of city regeneration through arts activity (see Bianchini & Parkinson 1993; Saye 1992). Glasgow was the most celebrated point of reference in the recent competitive process in the UK when nominating ECOC for 2008. The University of Glasgow, recognising the interest in the phenomenon of Glasgow 1990, has embarked on an assessment of Glasgow, 14 years after the ECOC, with detailed interviews with people who had been involved, analyses of press and media coverage, and tracking the major changes that have occurred since 1990. This study is due to be published in 2005. For the other ECOC, comments of varying quality and verifiability were received from respondents in all of the cities, with the exception of Paris and Madrid, which are therefore not included in this section. In spite of vigorous attempts to track down and then invite people to make comments, in the end a total of 21 respondents submitted completed questionnaires or agreed to be interviewed. The limitations of time and the priority of assessing 21 cities and 8 cultural months designated as ECOC between 1995 and 2004 meant that it was not possible to visit the former cities. The reports that follow are based on the responses received, and are confined to the issue of legacy and long-term effects of their respective cultural years.

## *Athens 1985*

Almost 20 years after the Athens ECOC, it was only possible to identify one respondent who was able to report on identifiable legacies.

The most significant long-term impacts were listed as follows:

Cultural and Artistic Development: Athens 1985 was viewed as a significant learning experience for cultural professionals, many of whom went on to produce and promote important events and exhibitions in Greece. Publics that were created for live popular music touring programmes have continued.

Changing Attitudes to Culture: the ECOC designation and programme was heavily promoted and publicised in spite of the shortage of planning time (only 7 months), and was viewed as increasing peoples' consciousness of culture.

Introducing the Link Between Education and Culture: the concept of culture was broadened from the notion of 'entertainment' to 'education'.

Co-ordination of Cultural Initiatives: the ECOC designation offered the first opportunity for the unification of archaeological sites in Athens, which has been sustained.

Infrastructure: the legacy of new infrastructure was cited, the most significant of which was the new exhibition hall by the port (O.L.P.), the renovation and modernisation of 5 rooms of the National Archaeological Museum, the Kyrenia Shipyard, the restoration of a number of theatres in Athens, and a number of cultural buildings in the municipalities surrounding Athens that were financed by the Greek Ministry as part of the ECOC initiative. An example of this was the Theatre of the Eastern Municipalities. This was an important starting point for an approach to 'cultural decentralisation' in Greece, and paved the way for the development of cultural policy in the municipalities.

Touring Exhibitions: several exhibitions created for Athens 1985 toured for many years afterwards, and Athens has tried to be a partner in the programmes of ECOC.

Helping to Establish ECOC as an Institution: Athens has remained an influential partner within the Network of Cultural Cities and Cultural months. The city and the Greek Ministry have helped to finance and host meetings of the Network (in Athens, Delphi and other cities), and have initiated and supported initiatives such as the 'Day of Culture' in May, an international essay competition between pupils in European schools based on the subject of Europe's Cultural Diversity, and currently a project to mount an exhibition in Patras based on the experiences of ECOC since Athens 1985.

Feeling European: Although difficult to prove, it was reported that Athens 1985 was the first cultural experience in Greece where Greeks felt that they were participating in something truly European, and the event was used as a landmark in advancing political and cultural relationships between Greece and its political partners at the time.

## ***Florence 1986***

As with the case of Athens (1985), it was only possible to identify one respondent who was able to report on identifiable legacies. The role of Florence was a major cultural and tourist centre historically, and it has not been possible to distinguish between the initiatives of the ECOC and many significant developments that happened prior to and following 1986.

The most significant long-term impacts were listed as follows. Very limited detail was offered in support of these views:

Enhanced Cultural Programme: several events and festivals created for 1986 were reported as having continued in the city, although no details were provided.

Infrastructural Improvements: examples are the Piazza della Signoria (restoration and transfer to the museum of archeological remains), Uffizi (completion of gallery space in Vasari wing), the Silver Museum (creation of tapestry room), the Bargello (creation of gallery space), San Pierino (relocation). The exhibitions staged during 1986 were the catalyst to clean and restore hundreds of works of art, attracting financial support from private donors and several banking institutions in Florence.

## **Amsterdam 1987**

Few significant long-term positive impacts of Amsterdam 1985 were reported by respondents. The reasons stated for this point of view were as follows:

No interest by the municipal authorities: responsibilities for the ECOC cultural programme were handled by three NGO organisations (the Holland Festival, the Netherlands Theatre Institute, and the Amsterdam Uit Bureau. (The Uit Bureau subsequently withdrew from the promotion). The nomination of Amsterdam as ECOC was put forward by the Cultural Ministry without consultation with the City of Amsterdam, who subsequently felt no ownership of the event, especially at a time when the city was considering reducing its cultural budget, and when the city's international aspirations had been affected by an unsuccessful bid to host the Olympic Games. The municipality did provide financial support, but it did not attempt in any way to integrate the ECOC within wider cultural, economic and social strategies for the city. Although the organisers had a strong desire to continue many of the initiatives of Amsterdam 1987, most of these were of little interest to the city authorities.

Organising Partnerships Proved Problematic: there was less than two years available to organise the ECOC, and only 15 months from the time the finance for the event was agreed. The planning of the event did not develop a wider framework of relationships outside the cultural sector. The tourist authorities believed that by the time the programme was developed, it was too late to make an impact on tourism and so were not heavily involved. Major institutions were put under some pressure by the Ministry to participate, but without prior consultation there was resistance. Where there was interest, this sometimes waned when the low level of finance became known. Even the management model (new to the Netherlands at the time) eventually broke down whereby three different organisations were responsible for the programme. One withdrew, and the two remaining (Holland Festival and NTI) had different management styles, interests and priorities, and in the end developed parallel rather than integrated programmes.

Perceived Lack of Success: although it is evident that many successful projects took place, the perception generally was that there was limited impact and that the year's activities were little different from what usually takes place in the city.

Of the long-term impacts that were mentioned, the following were most prominent:

Continuation of Certain Cultural Organisations/Events Established in the Cultural Year: examples are the het theaterfestival, Amsterdam-Maastricht Summer University, scholieren theaterfestival, the Informal Working Body Gulliver, the Felix Meritus Foundation and Arts and Cable TV. The NTI has maintained a few of the initiatives.

European Cooperation and Networking: although organisers in Amsterdam had been involved in European cultural co-operation prior to the year, certain projects and the experiences of some new partners enhanced the level of continuing cooperation, for example connections with central and eastern European decision-makers and east-west projects.

## **Berlin 1988**

Respondents referred to the impact of the integration of the GDR into the Federal Republic of Germany, the designation of Berlin as the capital city of the FDR, and other major political changes since 1988 as overshadowing all other impacts that may have arisen during the cultural year. Subsequently, the problems that Berlin has had with maintaining the financing of culture in the city have also had significant negative consequences, including a retrenchment and the disappearance of some of the city's cultural assets.

However, the most significant long-term impacts of Berlin 1988 were listed as follows:

Continuation of new cultural organisations/Events Established in the Cultural Year: in the short-term, examples are the Europäischer Filmpreis, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Künstlerförderung and Hofkonzerte. In the longer-term, examples are the Hebbel Theater (and its continuing programme of international coproductions), Unerhorte Musik, Tanz im August, Tanzwinter and other dance festivals.

Enhanced levels of artistic debate: the ECOC Werkstatt programme introduced new notions and tendencies in the theatre and dance sectors that have become embedded in the city's cultural life, and had an influence on the city's (then) young emerging producers and artists, especially in relation to trans-national productions.

New Networks and Increased Collaboration Between the Cultural Sector: strengthening of working relationships between city organisations and involvement in international networks, although it is not possible to attribute this only to the cultural year.

New Forms of Organisation: the opening and continuous functioning of a theatre working without a residential ensemble was very unusual for Germany and was introduced in 1988 for the first time.

Respondents also reported on a large number of projects that had not been sustained, and the negative impact caused by press and media distortion during 1988. However, as indicated, such influences have been overtaken by other political events in relation to Berlin and the new concerns that have been precipitated as a result.

## ***Glasgow 1990***

A major study is underway by Glasgow University that focuses on the legacies of Glasgow 1990. Respondents provided considerable information about long-term impact, and there are many published articles about the city's development prior to and following 1990. Only the most salient features are summarised in this report.

The most significant long-term impacts of Glasgow 1990 were reported as follows:

Continuation of enhanced cultural and artistic development: a very highly rated impact has been the increased confidence and greater national and international projection gained by local artists and arts organisations, especially in the period between 1987 and 1994. However, many of the new partnerships and international links have been lost over time and the levels of funding to support innovative avant-garde work were drastically reduced after local government reorganisation (1995/96). Some of the cultural projects initiated in 1990 continued for some years (e.g. Streetbiz festival) or have survived until present times (Call That Singing!), and a number of artistic organisations (although some had been established prior to 1990) were inspired or transformed by the experience of Glasgow 1990 (e.g. Fablevision, Project Ability, Birds of Paradise, Giant Productions, Cranhill Arts Project). Many of these organisations focus on expanding access to the arts and focus on special communities. Glasgow 1990 introduced the idea of large-scale site specific productions to the city, and these continue as regular features of the city's annual cultural offer. The decision to bid and win the right to host the 1999 Year of Architecture and Design is also a legacy of 1990, which resulted in further cultural developments such as the creation of the Lighthouse (Scottish Centre of Architecture and Design). Similarly, the decision by the city to host the Visual Arts Festival in 1996 was due to the city wanting to maintain the substantial gains arising from the 1990 experience. At another level, over the 1990s, there was a very significant increase in jobs within the cultural and creative industries including music production, film production, book publishing and design trades.

Image Transformation: a sustained significant long-term impact has been the dramatic transformation of Glasgow's image, from being perceived as a violent post-industrial city into being celebrated as a creative cultural and leisure centre and one of the most vibrant cities in the UK. Glasgow did not have such an image prior to 1990, and the cultural year is widely acknowledged as having a transformative power for the city's image, which has continued undiminished for 14 years.

Infrastructural Improvements: examples include the establishment of new avant-garde cultural venues such as The Tramway (in a former tram depot and workshop), The Arches (a self-financed institution today), the refurbishment of the MacLellan Galleries (an exhibition space for the city visual arts collections); construction of the Royal Concert Hall (plans were underway regardless of 1990, but the event helped accelerate the process); restoration of the Scotland Street School (designed by C.R. Mackintosh); beautification of public spaces in the city centre. At another level, the effect of 1990 in attracting tourist visitors has also had an impact on the increase of hotel provision and other amenities, including the development of shopping and leisure centres throughout the city.

Sustained Economic Development: 1990 contributed to increasing Glasgow's attractiveness as a business centre and thus accelerated office relocation – although this process has slowed down in the past four years and the city is no longer within the UK's top ten business location league. There is no clear evidence of 1990 being a direct catalyst for other successes in terms of Glasgow's economic development such as the consistent growth in inward investment and job creation (particularly the creative industries and 'knowledge economy'). However, indirectly, a link can be established between this success and the effect of 1990 in transforming Glasgow's image, and the introduction of pilot projects during 1990 concerning the film and music industry in particular. These have led to sustained development programmes to support certain cultural industries (e.g. Glasgow Film Office, the Film City Business Centre, the Music Business Development Programme, the Cultural Enterprise Office). Positive references to the ECOC effect on Glasgow's economic regeneration are recurrent within the media and were particularly noticeable within the press coverage of the bid process for the next UK ECOC in 2008.

Continued Tourism Development: A sustained legacy relates to tourist/visitor development, especially cultural tourism, with a marked increase in the number of visitors interested in the city's arts and cultural offer (not only museums, galleries and heritage buildings, but also the performing arts). Prior to 1990, Glasgow was viewed primarily as a gateway to the Scottish Highlands and other natural or heritage landmarks, and the successes of becoming an important cultural destination is widely attributed to the Glasgow 1990 event. The substantial growth in business tourism, conferences and conventions attributed to 1990 has been sustained. (Glasgow is today one of Europe's fastest growing conference destinations, a process that started at the time of securing the 1990 bid). Glasgow has become the third largest overseas tourist centre in the UK.

Continued social/community development: Glasgow 1990 had an immediate impact on increasing access and participation in the arts among traditionally deprived communities, although there was a reduction in attendance figures post 1991, due to the reduction in the cultural offer (but higher than 1989). In the long-term, a very significant legacy is the survival and increased professionalism of some of the grassroots organisations that were funded in 1990 to develop artistic initiatives with communities in outlying areas of the city. These organisations gained in confidence and ambition and have become more professional in their approach to managing cultural projects due to the massive scale of the 1990 community programme. However, financial provision by the city was inadequate to ensure the survival of these organisations and several initiatives have disappeared. Since local government reorganisation in 1996, Glasgow City Council has focused on arts development to increase access to the arts and enhance social inclusion. It can be argued that part of this commitment has been inspired by the experience of Glasgow 1990, as well as the formation of local arts development teams and community outreach programmes for city cultural events.

Sustainable Impacts of Local Networking and European Cooperation and Networking: many new connections were established among the city's artists and cultural organisations directly related to the strategies adopted by the organisers of the cultural year. These were sustained for the next 5 or 6 years, but there is no clear evidence of these networks surviving in the long-term. European cooperation was given a major boost by the activities and events of 1990, and many of the city's producers, artistic directors and artists attribute enhanced contacts and experience to the Glasgow 1990 programme. However, certain important European links were lost due to the disbandment of the regional authority – Strathclyde Regional Council – in 1996. Glasgow's continued involvement in European networks such as Les Rencontres, Atlantic Arc and Eurocities is certainly a direct legacy of 1990.

New Management Structures: directly arising from Glasgow 1990 was the creation of a new department of the city council with part responsibility to maintain the momentum of 1990. The city council also, for the first time, began working on a city-wide arts policy, an arts strategy and a cultural industries strategy. However, these developments coincided with financial problems caused by the re-organisation of local government in Scotland and the need for the city to reduce budgets. In 1997 the Director of the newly established arts department was attracted to a new job, and as part of an internal exercise of reducing departments and combining roles, responsibilities for arts and museums were merged with parks and recreation, thereby losing the clear focus that the arts had in the wake of the Glasgow 1990 experience.

Although respondents clearly praised Glasgow's long-term achievements, attempts were made also to determine problems and issues that arose following the cultural year. A number of these are mentioned above. Others include:



The absence of any clear plan (and budget) to follow-up the cultural year: the city council had been focused entirely on the successful promotion and delivery of cultural projects during 1990. The Glasgow authorities approached the 1990 programme as an opportunity to advance their ambitious economic regeneration strategy, which was not sufficiently embedded within a long-term cultural strategy or a clearly defined cultural policy. Their priority was to present cultural activities during the event year and maximise their media and promotional impact. Proposals were discussed, but not agreed, to establish a legacy programme to maintain the impact of Glasgow 1990 in the medium to long-term. At that time, the ECOC action was in its infancy and there was no expectation of a follow-up to the celebrations. Previous ECOC had been less ambitious than Glasgow and, as such, the contrast between the level of activity during the event year and the following year was less remarkable. This explains the absence of consideration about legacy and sustainability of the impact of the event prior to Glasgow 1990.

Financial Difficulties Following the Cultural Year: problems included insufficient finance to maintain an enhanced cultural programme on a significant scale due to decreased public sector funding, decreased sponsorship, a change of city priorities, political changes and an absence of strong political leadership interested in cultural matters (the political leadership of the city changed in 1992).

Rates of Growth Could Not Be Maintained: the creative community in Glasgow virtually doubled between 1986 and 1995 remaining fairly static thereafter. Attendance at cultural events and attractions in Greater Glasgow fell after 1990 to 1997/8, the last year that comprehensive cultural statistics were gathered. As programming returned to 'normal' after 1990, the market for theatres/concerts still settled at a level well above the 1989 position. Concert attendances began to slip back from 1992 onwards but theatres showed a top of the range performance (in comparison with Scottish and English theatres generally) until 1995/96, followed by a decline. As indicated above, local government reorganisation took place in 1995/96 resulting in a loss of funding for Glasgow cultural organisations. The mid-nineties level of funding from the Council has not been restored although this has been offset to some extent by increased opportunities through the National Lottery since 1999.

Frustration Followed by Rebuilding: the 'high' of 1990 was followed by a sense of frustration that the momentum could not be sustained. It has taken almost 10 years to re-build confidence and to restore, to some extent, the range of cultural events. More considered effort is placed in trying to ensure the long-term sustainability of cultural projects so as not to diminish again the opportunities of maintaining cultural development as a key strategy for city change and revitalisation. Respondents were divided on the issue of the extent of Glasgow's rebuilding of its cultural programme and its ability to exploit its cultural assets. Several believed that Glasgow still has not learned the lessons from the Glasgow 1990 experience, and is working too slowly to effectively leverage or maximise the benefits and experience of the cultural year, and recreate the substantial positive effects that it achieved.

## **Dublin 1991**

The advance planning time for Dublin 1991 was considered very short (14 months), and the budget was small when compared to ECOC in that period. A special organisational structure that was established to manage the year was immediately disbanded at the year's end, and the municipal administration was unable to continue initiatives that had been started. It should be noted that the 1990's was a period when the Irish economy developed on an unprecedented scale, resulting in, amongst other things, the development of the arts and culture sector across a range of fronts. It would be difficult to prove that the Dublin 1991 experience was a primary agent for such developments. Respondents were equally divided in their views about longer-term legacies of Dublin 1991. Some believed that there were significant long-term legacies; others believed that the legacies were negligible.

Of the respondents who listed significant longer-term impacts, the following were mentioned:

Maintaining elements of cultural and artistic development: Dublin 1991 helped to achieve an enhanced urban identity in relation to contemporary culture for a city, which was previously identified with literary and music traditional heritage. Projects that brought the arts outdoors, and that made connections with streets and community spaces have been maintained. The event helped develop skills and practices around large-scale cultural programming that those involved had not previously had. The nature and quality of projects undertaken following 1991 benefited from such experience. Also, the piloting of projects for innovation and creativity, and those that increased access for new projects (e.g. film, photography, children's arts programmes) were taken into account in subsequent Dublin Arts Plans. A

Dublin Arts Report was commissioned by Dublin 1991, which proved to be a vehicle to build relationships between the local authorities and the Arts Council. This Report continues to influence the arts development agenda in the city and the county of Dublin. Some respondents believed that although Dublin 1991 was not a model for cultural co-operation in the city, this may have influenced the need to develop different more effective approaches that were channelled into the Dublin Arts Report, which led to the appointment of the city's first arts officer.

Infrastructural development: the development of the Temple Bar area was cited as a long-term legacy. The consideration of the Temple Bar seed grant from the European Commission was said to be linked to the ECOC designation as a pilot project for using culture and the environment as engines of economic and social rejuvenation in peripheral cities of Europe. Several respondents disagreed with this, suggesting that this development would most certainly have happened anyway, and that the project was driven by the national government and involved organisations, policies, funding and personalities that were not related in any way to Dublin 1991. Possibly Dublin 1991 accelerated the prospectus for Temple Bar, but this cannot be proved. Similarly, it can be contested that other developments such as the Irish Museum of Modern Art, the Dublin Writer's museum etc. were a direct or indirect result of Dublin 1991.

Economic Development: although no development initiatives were directly attributable to Dublin 1991, some respondents argued that the event may have contributed to an enhanced view of the value of creative industries to the economy.

Social and Community development: although respondents cited few or no impacts in this area, there was some mention of smaller initiatives that helped establish new ways of brokering partnerships between cultural and commercial interests, especially in mixed urban developments. The foundation of The Ark, a cultural centre for children, was also listed as a legacy.

European Cooperation and Networking: although evidence is anecdotal, reference was made to the experience of Dublin 1991 helping artists and cultural organisations to initiate contacts, the development of a culture of exchanges, and some increased networking. The precise role that Dublin 1991 played in this cannot be ascertained.

Increased Role of Culture: Dublin 1991 was one among many initiatives that have assisted the process of placing culture higher on the political agenda locally and nationally, and developing the argument of the importance of culture to the life of the city and its economy.

In terms of negative aspects of the legacy of Dublin 1991, respondents mentioned the negative media coverage and absence of ownership by the local population that influenced a feeling of failure. There was also reference to problems caused by gentrification in developing areas of the city, although this might not in any way be attributed to Dublin 1991. Some of the successful initiatives of Dublin 1991 in community programming were not followed through.

## **Antwerp 1993**

It is interesting to note that Antwerp is not only a world port and major industrial area, but has a very high multicultural mix of population, with Moroccan, Turkish and Jewish-orthodox communities. 33% of the population votes for the extreme right Flemish nationalist party the Vlaams Blok since 1991 and since then the city government is a rainbow government of all parties opposed to the Vlaams Blok. According to Newsweek Magazine (2002), Antwerp is one of the world's top eight creative cities. During 1993, there was considerable friction between the Antwerp 1993 team and the city council. Uniquely, among all the ECOC, the director of the organisation established to manage the cultural year decided to challenge the mayor politically in the elections of October 1994 with a coalition of parties under the name Antwerpen 1994, resulting in the director of Antwerp 1993 becoming the vice-mayor for culture in Antwerp. This was an exceptional opportunity to continue and follow-up the spirit of the cultural programme of the year.

Due to political problems, it was not possible in 1994 to persuade the city council to maintain the momentum of 1993, but from 1995 onwards the importance of cultural development in the city has consistently increased. In 1996-97, an organisation called Antwerpen Open was created with the purpose of organising frequent, big, international events (every 2-3 years) and other, smaller events and

to organise the “summer of Antwerp”, a festival event every summer. This new organisation ensured the continuity of the initiative of Antwerp 1993. There is evidence that the cultural climate in the city of Antwerp was influenced by Antwerp 1993, with the recruitment of new directors and curators to the major cultural institutions in Antwerp and the involvement of a new generation of young people willing to cooperate with new initiatives, running the cultural institutions. The traditional cultural institutions in Antwerp have now been restructured, more in line with the ethos of Antwerp 1993, reflecting the need to re-invent, to value artists and artistic expression, and to become more efficient in the delivery of their services.

The most significant long-term impacts of Antwerp 1993 were reported as follows:

Cultural and Artistic Development: since 1993, the city has successfully attracted talented international companies and artists to the city, as part of a new summer festival for Antwerp. A new generation of artistic and cultural programmers and producers had gained the confidence and experience from Antwerp 1993 to develop interesting and ambitious artistic programmes focusing mainly on the contemporary arts. Antwerp concentrated on city-culture marketing, and there was substantial interest from the Tourist Board in cultural development, socio-artistic projects, architecture, design and large-scale cultural events to re-position Antwerp as a major European centre for cultural activity. Major events and exhibitions were launched. Some examples were a major exhibition of Van Dyck in 1999, Mode2001 Landed-Geland (fashion), Rubens2004 and Antwerp World Book Capital 2004.

Continued Investment on Infrastructural Development: since 1995, the investment in cultural infrastructure has increased. Antwerp 1993 was clearly a starting point. In addition, there has been increased investment in non-cultural infrastructure, such as hotels in Antwerp's city centre, and the redesign of major public space to an international standard of architectural quality.

Sustained Economic Development: acceptance and increased investment in cultural industries as part of the city's strategy for economic development.

Continued Emphasis on Social and Community Development: attention on community outreach work in different artistic areas, with a strong emphasis on museums and performing arts. Following initiatives of Antwerp 1993, collaborations continued between cultural and non-cultural organisations. Antwerp 1993 began a tradition of large-scale artistic creation and outdoors presentation throughout the city. This has had effects on helping to develop social cohesion in Antwerp, a major challenge for the city at this time.

Maintaining Visitors Development: since 1993, Antwerp has maintained interest from European tourist markets (e.g. Germany) that had not been of importance before 1993. Antwerp has become a major cultural destination for tourists. Although variations have occurred in visitor numbers, visits have increased substantially from figures prior to 1993. Tourism has appeared to grow steadily since 1993, which provided a new benchmark.

Transformation of City Image: press and media coverage appears to have been monitored since 1993, with the result of maintaining and improving the perception of Antwerp when compared to the period prior to 1993. Even in 1994, Antwerp continued its promotion as a cultural city, with the strap line “Antwerp City of Culture 1994” (although the ECOC title had passed to Lisbon). As indicated above, Antwerpen Open, as an organisation based on some of the same principles and vision of Antwerp 1993, was established in 1998, and has helped maintain a volume and quality of press and media coverage for Antwerp as a cultural city.

Infrastructural Improvements: several key restoration projects were initiated in 1993. Examples are the restoration of the Central Train Station (still ongoing), Bourla Theatre and Cathedral of Our Lady. A major traffic zone was created, and several banks, shops and major landmarks (e.g. the Grand Bazaar, KB tower) were restored. Other projects included an extension to the museum of Contemporary Art, the restoration of the organ of St. Pauls Church, and the conversion of St. Augustinus (that played a special role in the music programme of Antwerp 1993).

Although all respondents praised Antwerp's long-term achievements, problems and issues that arose following the cultural year were identified. Many projects developed in 1993 were unsustainable; political arguments and fallout had negative consequences; there were conflicts within the cultural sector, and adverse effects on cultural spending and policies as a backlash to the cultural year. There was an

acknowledged lack of ownership of the vision behind Antwerp 1993, which fuelled the political difficulties during 1993 and in 1994 between the Mayor and the organisation of the ECOC. The private sponsors who helped to finance events of Antwerp 1993 (24% of the budget came from sponsorship) later withdrew support from cultural projects in the city. Many were coerced by the political leadership at the time in 1993 to support projects, but did not maintain their commitments and interest. Two-thirds of the sponsors of Antwerp 1993 were first-time sponsors of the arts, and at the end of the cultural year 78% indicated an interest in sponsoring the arts in the future. This interest was not maintained.

It is regrettable that Antwerp 1993 has not been the subject of further study, due to its apparent success in helping to change the image of Antwerp, in re-positioning Antwerp as a European cultural centre, in becoming a fashionable destination for cultural tourists, and in encouraging creativity and an ambience of cultural innovation. Yet Antwerp has remained in some respects a conservative city, witnessing the continuing growth of extreme right wing and racist support. Antwerp 1993 used the slogan 'Can art save the world?' Over 10 years later, such a question remains unanswered.

## **Lisbon 1994**

Similar to some of the other ECOC in the period 1985-1994, very few respondents were identified as being able to comment reliably on the legacies of Lisbon 1994. The replies were of a rather general nature.

Of the respondents who listed significant longer-term impacts, the following were mentioned:

Infrastructure Development: this was a major element of the strategy for Lisbon 1994, although building projects were already underway prior to ECOC as part of a programme to refurbish the city's cultural buildings. There was an extensive list of restorations and refurbishments. Some examples were: the Coliseum, many museums including the Ancient Art, Tiles, Anthropology, the re-opened Chiado Museum, works at the Archaeological Museum, and the new Theatre and Music Museums, visual arts venues such as the CCB and Culturgest. The refurbishment of the Tivoli Cinema was a private-public partnership, but managed privately (in 1994 it was put at the disposal of the organisers of Lisbon 1994).

Increased International Visibility: bearing in mind the country's long history of political isolation and its geographic position, it was argued that Lisbon 1994 was a first major step to help re-position the city, offering it increased international visibility. It was the beginning of the growing status of the city as a conference destination, and was used as the basis of a platform for tourism development.

Respondents also identified a long list of other very general impacts that varied from increased European cooperation and networking, to giving the city a sustainable boost in terms of developing a local market for arts activities, and the beginning of a programme of arts development. As with other cities, in the absence of reliable data to corroborate such claims, it is not possible to attribute such impacts to Lisbon's cultural year, nor to comment on whether or not they had longer term effects.

## **Observations**

The absence of independent research about the impact of the ECOC designation in the long-term (more than 10 years) creates difficulties when attempting to distinguish between the stories that cities tell themselves, sometimes for reasons of city marketing and public relations, and the factual reality of what may or may not be linked to the ECOC event. Because of the lack of such independent research, it was necessary to rely on informants who sometimes provided contradictory information or who had different views.

However, it can be concluded that the scale of each ECOC, its links (not always positive) with government authorities, its attempts (not always successful) to develop relationships with the local cultural sector, the international character of its programme, and for most ECOC the significance of buildings and infrastructure developments for which the designation was a catalyst, if not the cause, has created for each city legacies and impacts that may not be quantifiable, but have been none the less important in the development of each city.

Both Glasgow and Antwerp stand out in relation to the first cycle of ECOC as having attempted to

recognise the successes and problems of their cultural years, which to differing degrees, have informed certain processes of decision-making about cultural, tourism, economic, social and infrastructural development in those cities. The development paths, however, were not always direct, and reflect more of a curve, with highs and lows.

In certain cities, such as Athens, Dublin and Lisbon, other than the clearly declared infrastructure changes, it is difficult to determine causality between an approach or an activity of the cultural year and its direct consequences. Respondents even disagree about the nature and scale of particular impacts, especially when they relate to changes in policy or strategy of government bodies (such as a new approach to decentralisation in Athens, the arts strategy eventually adopted by Dublin, or the social programmes piloted in Lisbon).

ECOC are set in a wider context, and the powerful economic and political factors that influence cities can become major forces that clearly overtake events such as cultural capitals in the scale of impact. The recent history of Berlin (post-1989) is a powerful example of this phenomenon, although this affects all cities.

Cities are themselves cultural entities, and each ECOC has no alternative but to build on the cultural legacies of its past, using its history as a reference point to frame its approach to the cultural year. In cities like Athens and Florence, the historical backdrop is a feature that is stronger in its influence than any cultural year could ever be.

When cities can confront the problems and issues that arose during the cultural year (such as the complex management approaches in Amsterdam, the inadequate preparation times in Dublin, Amsterdam and Athens, the absence of strategies for sustaining new cultural projects and events beyond the cultural year including the ability to secure an appropriate level of finance to maintain and develop new cultural programmes and organisations (in most cities)), the learning of lessons in itself can be a powerful legacy. This has an impact less on the way in which the political entity of a city behaves, and more on those many individuals (organisers, producers, artists, politicians, inhabitants) who invested considerable time and passion preparing for and delivering the complex mix of requirements essential to making an ECOC happen. Perhaps the most significant legacy that can be traced to the earlier cities of the ECOC scheme is 'experience', embedded in the thousands of people who made a contribution to their cultural years, and who continue to make a contribution to the development of their own, and often other, European cities.

## European Capitals of Culture 2005-2008

Since the EU has now selected Capitals of Culture until 2008, the designated cities have begun their preparations. The plans for forthcoming ECOC are at varying stages of development. Some details are available, and it may be valuable to summarise briefly the different approaches that are being taken.

### **Cork 2005**

Cork was the first city selected as ECOC under the new procedures agreed by the EU in 1999. The Irish government nominated four cities: Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford. Under the new procedures, an EU selection panel considered the proposals from each of the nominated cities, visited two of the cities and recommended that the designation be conferred on Cork. In official documentation, Cork 2005 identifies its objective as exploring "the culture of Ireland, Europe and beyond through programmes, events and attitudes that will confirm urban life as a creative cultural space". The programme intends to demonstrate "the vision of a confident 21<sup>st</sup> century city". The full programme of events is due to be published in October 2004. The organisers state that "they refuse all models of cultural programming that begin with the idea of the passive consumer", and place considerable emphasis on creativity. The operational team of Cork 2005 received over 2000 submissions of proposals for projects in response to an open call for ideas. They state that about 70% of their programme has been developed on the basis of the ideas received. In addition to many local projects, Cork 2005 will also encompass a wide European programme. Projects such as Enlargement and the Cork 2005 Translation series specifically address the issues of both the periphery of and an enlarged Europe. There will be lectures on language and liberty, and projects focusing on minority languages. Other projects include a contemporary ceramics exhibition, an artists residency programme, hosting the Eurochild project, a rowing race, a choral festival, a photographic exhibition based on the theme of EU Internal Border checkpoints and dance and theatre events, including large-scale outdoor performances.

As is the case of most ECOC during the preparation period, press and media reaction has been mixed. Many are perturbed at the absence of details concerning the programme, and cultural organisations are frustrated at the inability of Cork 2005 to make final financial decisions. There are a range of infrastructure projects underway or completed (some of which coincide with but are not part of Cork 2005). These include the upgrading of certain cultural facilities, and the redesign of the city centre of Cork. A long awaited redevelopment of the Cork School of Music has been postponed.

The initial budget for Cork 2005 that was submitted to the EU at the time of selection indicated total estimated expenditure on the event in the region of 10 million Euros, of which 7 million Euros would be contributed by the Irish government and the City of Cork. The initial target for sponsorship was estimated at 1.2 million Euros.

### **Patras 2006**

The government of Greece nominated the city of Patras as ECOC for 2006. Under the revised selection procedures, an expert selection panel considered the proposal and reviewed the plans put forward by Patras, visited the city and then put forward a recommendation to the EU. The panel concluded that the city's plans did not meet several of the established criteria as set out in the EU Decision regarding ECOC, and that the proposals that were submitted did not demonstrate clearly a project of European dimension. However, the panel believed that the city of Patras would be capable of organising a cultural year if the city was able to address critical weaknesses that the panel outlined in its report. In addition, the panel offered suggestions of how Patras could go about improving its proposals. As part of its deliberations the panel also called on the European institutions to consider its concerns in relation to the nomination and selection of future ECOC.

Since the EU approval of Patras as ECOC for 2006, the city government of Patras changed, and the city's Mayor and some of the organisers of the original proposal also changed.

In its original proposal to the EU, Patras focused on two central ideas: 'bridges' and 'dialogues'. In addition, four thematic poles/programmes were suggested. 'A city for Europe' would relate to the architectural heritage, the industrial revolution and other historical topics. 'The counterpart cities'

programme would concentrate on the field of human and social sciences and diverse artistic sectors. 'The three sea battles' would be a cultural programme focusing on peace and understanding. The last theme, 'The many homelands' would be linked to the etymology of the name of the city. Examples of the main events suggested in the proposals included a major archaeological exhibition, an exhibition based on digital culture, the production of the Zakynthos narrative plays, dance theatre, concerts of religious and ethnic music, an open sculpture park, wine and taste routes, a special edition of the Patras carnival and poetry symposia.

Patras also proposed an ambitious programme of infrastructural works, and stressed that because Patras was an Olympic City for the games in 2004, a number of projects would be completed by then. In terms of new infrastructure, the city indicated its desire to build a new open-air theatre seating 3000, an indoor theatre seating 900 and a new art gallery. In addition, there are very large projects that form part of a major remodelling plan for Patras, including the improvement of roads, the completion of a bridge linking the Peloponnese to central Greece, a redevelopment of the seafront, and the redesign of streets, public squares and pedestrian precincts.

In its proposals, Patras estimated the cost of the cultural programme for 2006 at 36 million Euro. In addition, 100 million Euros has been estimated for investment in cultural infrastructure. These costs will mainly (estimate 80%) be covered by the Greek Ministry of Culture, as was the case for ECOC in Thessaloniki (1997) and Athens (1985).

### ***Luxembourg 2007***

The concept proposed for the approach to Luxembourg 2007 extends to the Greater Luxembourg Region, which includes the bordering regions of Lorraine (France), Rhineland-Pfalz and Saarland (Germany) and the French and German-speaking communities of Belgium. Each of the participating regions will focus programmes around 5 main themes: Migrations, Industrial Culture and Heritage, Great European Personalities, Culture and Memory and Expressions of Modernity. Although very much in its preparatory phase, the cultural programme includes a number of key projects (already announced) such as a MetaMigrations exhibition, the opening of the Centre Pompidou in Metz and an extensive Constantine exhibition in Trier. The main thrust of the programme will operate around the notion of a 'European Experiment', with a number of interconnecting sub-themes concerned with 'roots', 'borders', 'arriving-leaving', 'creating together', 'learning', 'new horizons' and 'Europe and the world'. Projects within such themes will include historical exhibitions, cross-border cultural itineraries, inter-regional conferences, festivals of cinema, music and theatre, cross-border television broadcasts, projects with schools, a celebration of the Treaty of Rome and artists' residencies.

A not-for-profit organisation "Luxembourg and the Greater Luxembourg Region, ECOC 2007" has been established, and an operational management team with a General Coordinator has been appointed. Each region participating will identify its own management structure and appoint regional coordinators. At present, project proposals are being gathered and redefined and clear decisions will be made early in 2005. The final programme will be confirmed in 2006.

Due to a substantial investment in Luxembourg on cultural facilities in the period 1995-2007, there are few proposals for additional cultural building projects. Already completed projects include the National Centre for Literature, Casino Luxembourg, the National Museum of Natural History, the Kulturfabrik Cultural Centre in Esch, the Abbey of Neumunster Cultural Centre, the Grand-Duchess Joséphine-Charlotte Concert Hall and the Grand-Duke Jean Modern Art Museum (due to open in 2005). The CFL Rotunda at Luxembourg Train Station is also currently being restored and will be used for events in 2007.

The budget for 2007 proposed to the EU estimated 28 million Euros for Luxembourg programmes and a further 28 million Euro for the other regions involved. In Luxembourg, the estimated contributions are from the national government (10 million), the City of Luxembourg (7 million), and from private sponsors (7 million).

The idea of a cross-regional perspective for an ECOC is an interesting interpretation of the designation. It will be valuable to watch this model as it unfolds.

## **Sibiu 2007**

The partnership between Luxembourg Greater Region and the Romanian town of Sibiu has been proposed by the two governments. The Sibiu region was the destination for many migrants from Luxembourg in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. A variation of the Frankish language is very close to Luxembourgish.

Sibiu has proposed its candidacy as partner ECOC for 2007, and it was considered by the same selection panel as Luxembourg. The two cities were entirely supportive of each other's candidacy. When the city's proposals were considered by the European selection panel, certain concerns were expressed over the nature of the proposals and the ways in which Sibiu was proposing to manage and finance its cultural programme. The panel suggested that Sibiu be given more time to develop its programme and financial strategy.

In terms of exchange projects between Luxembourg and Sibiu, projects include the inauguration of the "Maison Luxembourg" in the centre of Sibiu, the development of existing cultural routes in Sibiu, and exchanges with artists from Sibiu's gypsy population.

For its preparations, Sibiu has created a Management Board and established an artistic consultative committee and a coordination task force. The projects that are under consideration cover most artistic sectors, and have as a key objective the close collaboration between the cultural sector in Sibiu and European networking and cooperation. A number of improvements to cultural facilities in Sibiu are also proposed.

## **Liverpool 2008**

The UK government mounted a major competition before nominating Liverpool as the ECOC for 2008. Twelve UK cities bid for the title, and submitted detailed proposals and arguments supporting their candidacy, which were evaluated by an independent panel, prior to making a recommendation to the UK government. This competition stimulated extensive media coverage in the UK, and the cities themselves invested considerable resources in the preparation of their bids. The selection process also involved visits by the panel to the cities and presentations.

The overarching theme proposed for Liverpool 2008 is 'the world in one city'. The approach intends to engage and transform the entire city, make use of the strengths of all the city's cultural organisations, and embed culture across the entire community, whilst at the same time raising the city's external profile. The city wants to reposition itself on the cultural map of Europe, and will be using the cultural year as a major catalyst to develop itself as a key tourism destination. The cultural objectives for 2008 (and other themed years that precede it) are integrated with the city's economic and social strategies.

It is too early for the city to confirm projects for 2008, but proposals include a large opening celebration "Liverpool's fanfare for Europe", enhancing the scope of the existing Liverpool Art Biennial, and mounting a "Cities At The Edge" festival that will explore the creative and historic links with some of Europe's other port cities. Other projects may include a Festival of Light bringing together the city's diverse faith communities, a Lantern Carnival and over 1000 community-based events.

The plans for 2008 also incorporate about 25 major new infrastructure projects. They include high profile projects such as the King's Dock Arena and the construction of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grace.

A special independent company, the Liverpool Culture Company Ltd, has been established, comprising senior representatives from the city's cultural, political and business worlds. An operational management team is now in place, with key appointments of an overall operations director and an artistic director.

The overall operating budget for Liverpool 2008 is in the region of 85 million Euros, not including capital projects, and the financial strategy includes contributions from the city council, regional bodies (development agencies, arts councils) and the national government, as well as the raising of private sponsorship.

In its comments on the Liverpool 2008 proposals, whilst recognising the efforts to boost the urban regeneration and marketing of the city, the European selection panel believed that the European



dimension of the 2008 programme needed to be strengthened, and that many of the European projects that had been proposed should be further developed.

### ***Stavanger 2008***

Norway formally nominated the city of Stavanger as ECOC for 2008. Liverpool and Stavanger had discussed this proposition and were supportive of each other's candidacy. The proposals by Stavanger were considered by the same selection panel as had considered the Liverpool nomination.

The overarching concept proposed by Stavanger is "Open Port", defining culture in terms of openness and transparency. The programme will encompass Stavanger and the entire region around it, including the municipality of Sandes and the county of Rogaland. Projects to be developed as part of the programme would include "the Arts of Hospitality", "Youth and Migration", a large-scale open air production of "Oedipus Rex", an exhibition of the works of the painter Lars Hertervig, an international peace conference, and the design of new wooden buildings. The programme will mix site-specific artistic interventions, participation projects, special programmes for youth, and a major emphasis on European collaborations. A key question underpinning European projects would be "What is Europe, really?". This will focus on aspects of cultural identity, and relationships between Norway and the rest of Europe. Cooperation projects in the Nordic area (including new Member States) and with Liverpool will be highlighted.

An independent Board for Stavanger 2008 will be established as a foundation, with representatives from central government, the municipalities involved and the county. An operational team will be appointed, and artistic committees will be created with responsibility for various aspects of the programme.

The local and regional authorities have infrastructural projects that are underway, or will be considered. These include the development of the Blue Promenade of Stavanger, Stavanger City Park, an urban arts centre in the old Tou Brewery, a new Kunstens Hus and a Knowledge Centre in Sandes, a Historic Centre in Avaldsnes, and a new concert hall in Stavanger (which may not be completed by 2008).

The operating budget for Stavanger 2008, as submitted to the EU, estimates a total cost of about 36 million Euros, not including any capital investment. The national government has agreed to a contribution of 12 million Euros, Stavanger municipality 6 million, Sandes municipality and Rogaland County 3 million each. The organisers plan to raise almost 9 million from sponsors.

When commenting on the Stavanger proposals, the selection panel noted Norway's high contributions to the new EU Member States, and believed the designation of Stavanger as ECOC was relevant in relation to European issues and could have an impact on the current debates in Norway about its relationship with the EU.

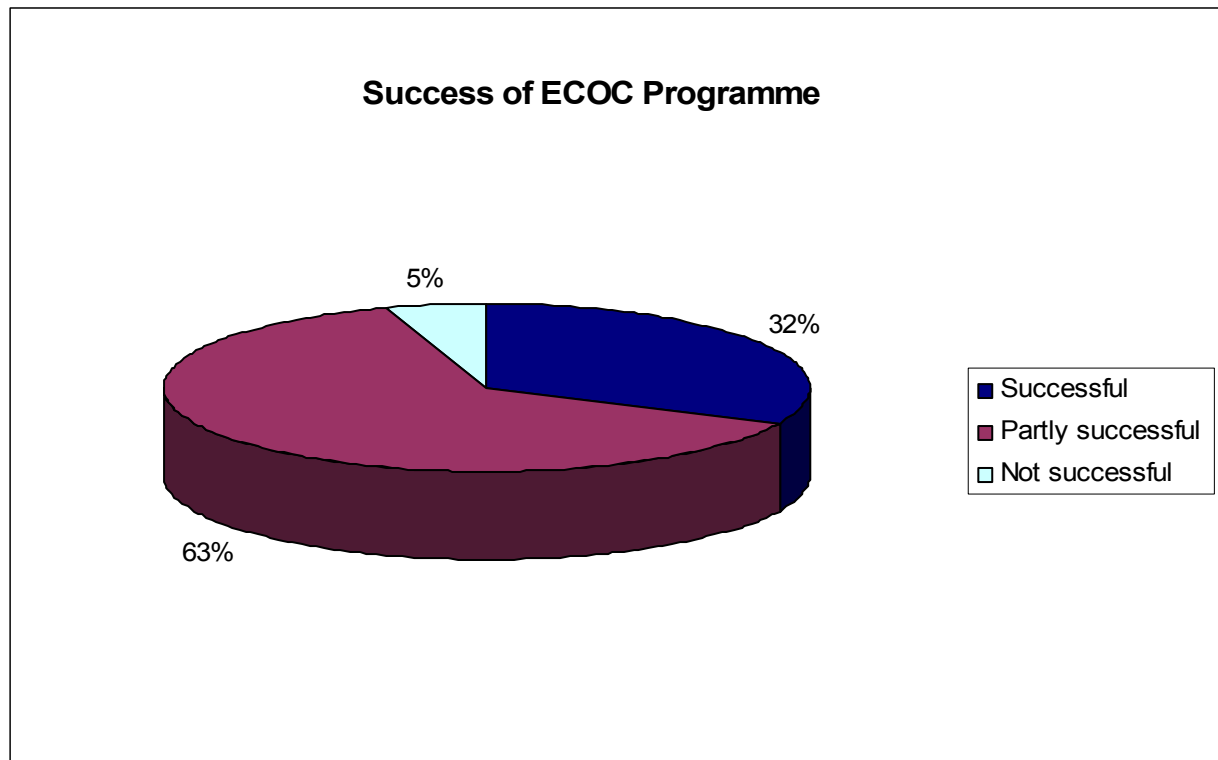
### ***Future Years***

Austria will be nominating the ECOC for 2009. Germany will be nominating the ECOC for 2010. In Germany, 10 cities have declared their candidacy for the ECOC title, and the government is considering national selection procedures.

## The EU Community Action

### Success

Has the EU action of ECOC been successful? All individual respondents in this study were asked this direct question. 95% of respondents replied that the action was either successful or partly successful. Only 5% of respondents rated the action as unsuccessful.



It should be noted that respondents were reacting to the ECOC action as a whole and not to any particular city.

Respondents were then asked to give reasons for their views.

The justifications used by respondents for rating the scheme as successful or partly successful can be summarised under two main themes that emerged.

*Advantages to the designated cities:* for many cities the scale of the cultural, visitor and social impacts could not have been easily achieved in other ways so quickly; developing increased cultural awareness for the public and politicians; increased budgets for culture; additional investments in cultural infrastructure; development of international artistic standards; helping young artists; helping cities to network with other cities and to think internationally; a focus for city/regional partners to engage in collaborative planning; enhanced cultural profile locally and internationally, increased city profiling in terms of image; a vehicle for cities to re-examine their cultural identity and relationship with the rest of Europe.

*Advantages to Europe:* raising the importance of Europe today and European integration; generating an interest in European issues; important investment in a common European identity; offering opportunities for European countries to cooperate; reinforcing Europe as a part of each national identity; significant promotional tool for European culture and the EU due to media attention and recognition.

However respondents were also critical of certain elements of the realisation of ECOC. The most common negative views about aspects of the ECOC action were:

- The designation is motivated too much by politics (at both national and European levels)
- The opportunity was not exploited sufficiently by many cities
- Underinvestment by some cities in terms of thought, time and financial resources
- Too much focus on local issues; insufficient focus on Europe; cities being unable to get much beyond the idea of a big local, regional and occasionally national festival; cities have different priorities than the EU
- Too many cities have now been designated, which has devalued the title
- The idea of having several cities designated each year (and especially the error of designating nine cities in the year 2000) has depreciated the importance of the title
- The procedure for selection is too complex
- Limitations in the lasting effects of being a ECOC
- Not enough evidence of increased European cultural cooperation as a result
- Unclear vision by the EU about the main objectives of ECOC; no active help or guidance; no investment in helping cities learn from one another; no dedication to monitoring and evaluating the programme to ensure the sharing of know-how, and archiving
- Apparent lack of interest by the EU evidenced by low levels of funding; the EU leaves this important initiative underexposed and underdeveloped

There were clearly divergent views between respondents:

*“The city is an interesting laboratory to work on issues concerning European culture”*

*“Just look at how many cities now want the title. Is that not proof of success?”*

*“After 20 years, the programme has now lost its meaning”*

*“Too many cities have been complete failures”*

## **European Commission**

As described in a previous section, it was only in 1999 that the European City of Culture initiative was given the status of a Community Action. In the first phase of the scheme (1985-1994), the Directorate General for Information, Communication, Culture, and Audiovisual Policy (DGX) was active in supporting the project with funding and in other respects. After a reorganisation of Commission departments, the responsibility for supporting the action was given to the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), within the Directorate Culture, Audiovisual Policy and Sport (Unit Culture: Policy and Framework Programme).

Financial support for ECOC was channelled through the Culture 2000 programme from 2000-2004 and is being prolonged to 2006. It is specified that the Commission should contribute between 200.000 Euros and 1 million Euros per year to ECOC. There has generally been an incremental increase of general financial support given to ECOC since its inception in 1985. The following figures do not include supplementary contributions to specific projects, and are the amounts allocated by the EU to each city:

Year	City	ECU/EURO (thousands)
1985	Athens	108
1986	Florence	136
1987	Amsterdam	137

1988	Berlin	200
1989	Paris	120
1990	Glasgow	120
1991	Dublin	120
1992	Madrid	200
1993	Antwerp	300
1994	Lisbon	400
1995	Luxembourg	40
1996	Copenhagen	60
1997	Thessaloniki	300
1998	Stockholm	590
1999	Weimar	unknown
2000	Avignon	220
	Bergen	220
	Bologna	220
	Brussels	220
	Cracow	220
	Helsinki	220
	Prague	220
	Reykjavik	220
	Santiago	220
2001	Porto	500
	Rotterdam	500
2002	Bruges	500
	Salamanca	(uncertified) 500
2003	Graz	500
2004	Genoa	500
	Lille	500

It should be noted that in many cases the EU contributions were paid to ECOC after the cultural year had finished.

### ***Additional EU Support***

Apart from the direct support given to ECOC through "Action 3" (special cultural events) of the Culture 2000 programme of the European Commission, additional EU support for ECOC has come from other actions of the Culture 2000 programme and from other services within the Commission. It has proved possible for certain cities to attract additional funds for specific cultural projects under EU funding programmes.

The ECOC in the period 1995-2004 reported on 51 projects that received financial support from official EU actions and programmes, with most cities reporting 1 to 5 projects being co-financed under the EU Kaleidoscope and Culture 2000 programmes.

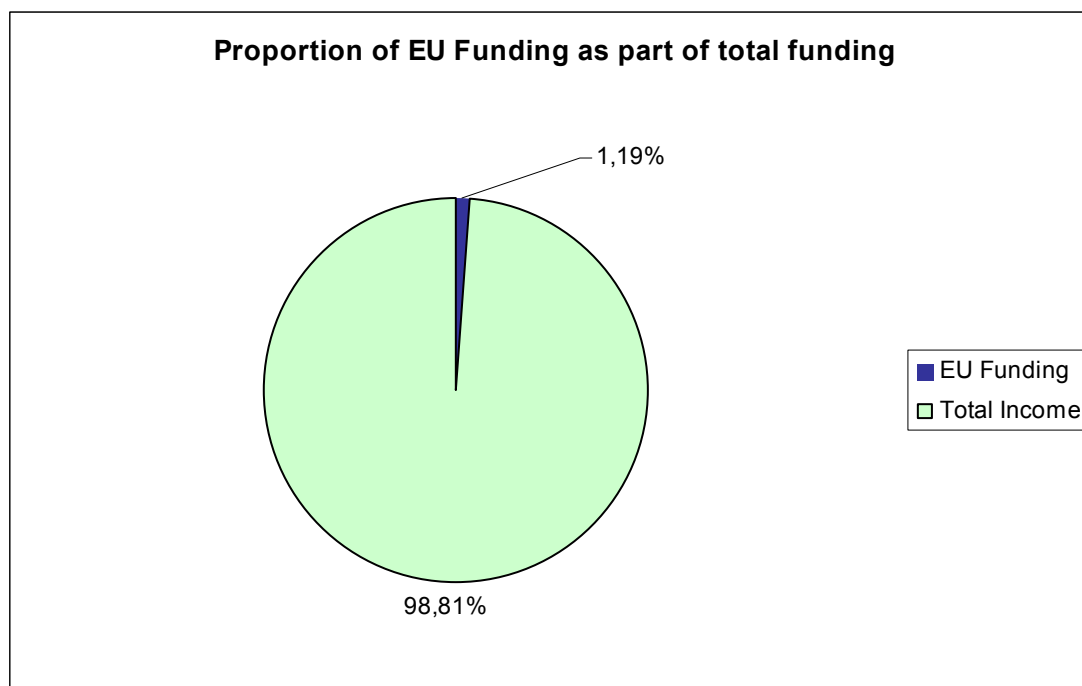
Following its introduction as a pilot programme in 1999, the Culture 2000 programme was viewed by ECOC as the main scheme for EU funding of cultural projects. However, it appears that no priority was given to project applications from or in association with ECOC; there were other criteria. It is outside the terms of this study to evaluate EU funding programmes. However, one general comment offered by respondents was that the thematic approach used by Culture 2000 from 2001, whereby one sector was prioritised by the EU each year, had to influence the choice of ECOC projects proposed for EU funding. If the main focus or theme of a particular ECOC did not coincide with the annual theme of Culture 2000, the chances of receiving project support under the Culture 2000 programme were severely reduced. Many respondents also referred to the complex application procedures and long waiting periods for decisions from Culture 2000, and the problems that this caused in confirming certain EU funded projects.

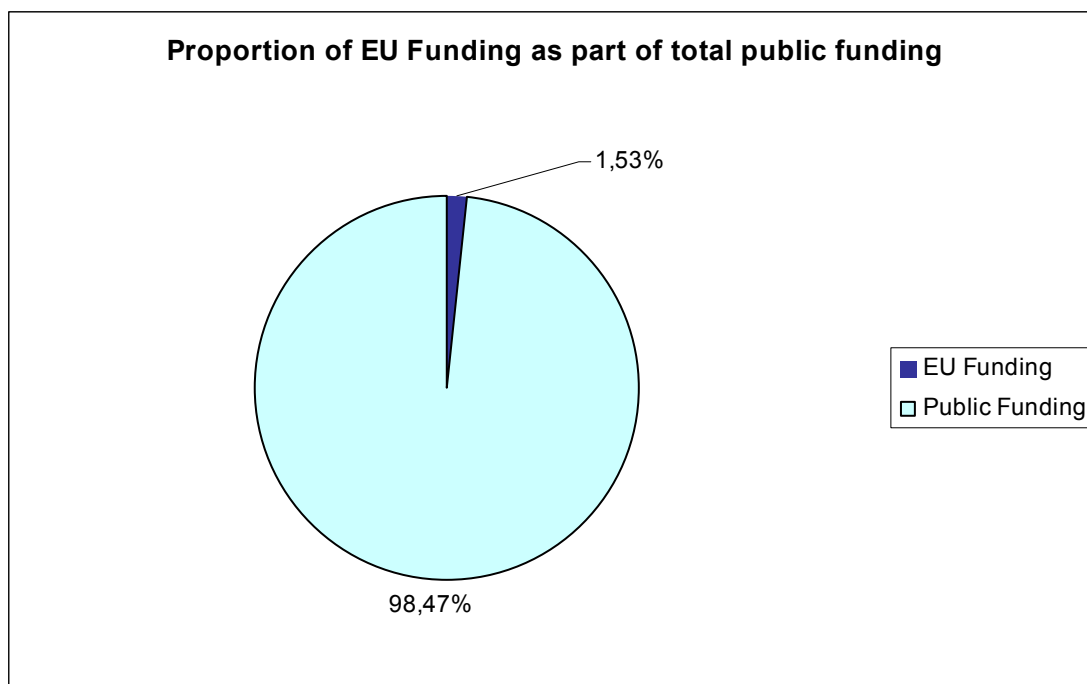
Other EU funding programmes mentioned were YOUTH-EVS (European Voluntary Service), CONNECT, Netdays and YFE. Two cities mentioned the hosting of the Aristeion Prize for European Literature and Translation. The highest number of projects financed by the EU was in Stockholm where 8 projects were reported.

In terms of the projects that received EU financial support within an ECOC cultural programme, only one was listed by respondents as being sustained in the long term (Trans Dance Europe). A few projects, however, took place under the aegis of EU multi-annual funding agreements (e.g. Theorem). Most were one-off projects, illustrated by the following range:

- Evidence! Archives book and internet project (Bergen with Iceland, Czech Republic, Finland, Spain, Italy)
- Le Città dell'infanzia at the Teatro Testini (Bologna and the European Network of Artistic Bodies and Young People)
- Collaboration Project with Four Theatres (Genoa with France, Germany and Lithuania)
- Icons of the 20th Century Concert series (Graz with Germany and Switzerland)
- Hosting of Volunteers (Graz with Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary)
- L'Amore Indistioso opera production with the Porto National Orchestra (Porto with Scottish Opera)

The total amount of EU support estimated by all cities (1995-2004) that reported was 10.766.160 Euros. This represents 1,19% of the total funding generated for ECOC in the period 1995-2004, or 1,53% of the total funding contributed by the public sector (national, regional, municipal governments etc).





A few cities were unable to identify all the EU actions and programmes that offered support, or did not know the precise amounts given by the EU to projects that may have taken place during the cultural year, but that were organised by independent cultural organisations and operators, both locally and internationally. In addition, EU general support given directly to networks that may have added to the year's activities through contacts, advice, meetings and conferences was not included. It is difficult for the Commission itself to identify the total expenditure from its programmes to ECOC in any of its Directorates. However, even taking probable additional funds into account, the EU financial contribution to the entire ECOC action is very small in relation to income from other sources.

EU funds may have been channelled to certain infrastructure programmes and projects by local authorities and Ministries. Certain ECOC projects and developments within ECOC may have benefited indirectly from EU contributions through structural funds and operational programmes, such as INTERREG, LEADER, EQUAL and URBAN. Such projects were not included as an official part of ECOC programmes and were not managed by the ECOC organisations themselves and so have not been included in the calculations.

### ***Relationship with the Commission***

Respondents were asked about their relationship with the European Commission. Only respondents who had direct contact with the Commission answered this question, and there were 51 replies in the online questionnaire.

The results were as follows:

- 9 stated that contact with the Commission had been satisfactory
- 23 stated that contact with the Commission was partly satisfactory
- 19 stated that the contact with the Commission was not satisfactory

Further interviews in each ECOC also reflected this division.

Respondents were then asked to give reasons for their views.

The justifications used by respondents for not being satisfied or only partly satisfied with the Commission can be summarised under several main themes that emerged:

- Inadequate levels of funding: many respondents reflected their dissatisfaction with the EU by referring to the limited financial support that was received.
- Lack of interest: many respondents felt that the Commission was not really interested in ECOC after the designation was made.
- Bureaucracy: several respondents commented on the length of time it took to get answers to questions or to receive payments that were due, and to the amounts of paperwork required.
- Insufficient expertise: although respondents often commented on the 'friendliness' of Commission officials, many expressed disappointment at the inability of the Commission to provide useful information about cultural contacts or to assist in trans-border projects through offering suggestions of possible partners or funding sources.

Respondents who were satisfied referred to 'dedicated individuals' in the Commission and the encouragement they received.

### ***EU Procedures for Nominating, Selecting and Managing the ECOC Action***

About 80% of the respondents stated that they were satisfied or partly satisfied with the ECOC nomination and selection procedures as they affected their city. It should be remembered that in the period covered by the study, there were no stated requirements for cities wanting the nomination. In general, it was the Culture Minister of the Member State who formally declared the nomination, and then passed this recommendation to the Council for a decision. There were few formalities and no juries or reports, but only declarations of nomination and lobbying. Respondents were generally happy with the earlier procedure, which had after all resulted in the designation of their city as ECOC. However almost all the respondents commenting on the earlier procedure believed that it was correct to discontinue this method of selection.

Where there was dissatisfaction, this most often related to the long waiting periods between being nominated and the final decision by the Council. Some of the ECOC for the year 2000 were disappointed because the decision to designate nine cities came as a surprise and without consultation. In answering this question, respondents also referred to 'inadequate financing' of ECOC by the EU as a reason for dissatisfaction.

This question did not ask for respondents' views about future procedures, which is dealt with in the next section of the report.

### ***Changing the Procedures***

Many respondents to the questionnaire and who were interviewed were aware of the changes to the nomination and selection procedures affecting the designations of ECOC from 2005. However, others were not, and could only offer views concerning the earlier procedures. When analysing the results to this question, it was important to bear in mind which procedures the respondents were commenting on.

However, of the respondents commenting on the procedures concerning the selection of ECOC from 2005, around 60% advocated changes. Specific suggestions offered by respondents varied from comments about the need to change the objectives and criteria of the action to the need to alter EU financial support and administrative procedures. The most common views were as follows:

- The scheme requires a clearer definition of purpose
- The selection criteria should be clarified and simplified

- The ECOC selection juries should be experts in relation to Capitals of Culture, need detailed briefings about nominated cities, and need to be given an enhanced role, for example in monitoring after the designation is made
- Member States should seriously consider running national competitions for cities wishing the designation
- Member States should nominate a minimum of 2 cities, and the EU should decide which one gets the designation (based on the reports by experts). As with other cultural projects supported by the EU, the decision should be based on cultural and not political criteria
- There should be a contract between the city and the EU to ensure that what a city promises in its application will be delivered; there is a need for monitoring progress
- The EU should not be proscriptive, but should offer guidelines to cities to help them determine priorities and avoid past mistakes
- There is the necessity for an independent review and evaluation of results of each ECOC
- Significantly higher levels of financial support should be given by the EU, especially to new Member States
- ECOC do not know precisely the amount of EU financial support in advance. In several cities the amount was substantially less than initially indicated; in other cities the amount was not clarified until the cultural year was in progress
- There is the need to simplify the EU payment procedures for claiming financial support. There should be automatic entitlement to a guaranteed amount of funding if designated. At present cities are asked to complete forms that are inappropriate. EU payments should be made earlier (certain cities waited several years for payments to be processed).

A small number of respondents suggested that the action of ECOC should be abandoned altogether, and a few others proposed that it be changed into a different type of initiative. Suggestions for alternatives varied from the EU designating 'centres of excellence' in different artistic sectors (dance, literature, training etc) or designating an annual European City of Design, a European City of Film, a European City of Cultural Diversity etc to the re-focusing of objectives to stress not 'cultural' projects in a traditional sense (exhibitions, performances, etc) but rather projects that work within the contemporary realities of an information and media-based society.

It is interesting to note that most respondents continued to be engaged with ideas for improving future ECOC selection and monitoring procedures, even though their cities would probably not be designated again. Many were pleased that the EU, through this study, was canvassing views, and asking those who have practical experience of ECOC for suggestions.

### ***The Role of the EU***

Respondents were questioned about how they perceived the future role of the EU in relation to ECOC. Many of the most common views are expressed in the previous section on procedures. Respondents welcomed an expanded role for the EU. Very few respondents (less than 5%) were of the view that the EU should only designate the ECOC and do nothing more: "The EU should only nominate the city, and then every organiser should do whatever he wants. There should be absolutely no obligations." This was distinctly a minority view.

In addition to managing the procedures for selection and the designation of cities, and the provision of financial support to ECOC (at increased levels), most respondents expressed views that the EU should also:

- Evaluate the results of each ECOC



- Provide information to ECOC and actively promote the transfer of knowledge and experience

About half of the respondents also suggested that the EU should:

- Provide information and help with the European aspect of each ECOC cultural programme and with contacts and networking across Europe
- Assist with promotion, and to publicise each ECOC more proactively

The issue of the EU's role in promoting the visibility of the ECOC was mentioned by many respondents. One said "the EU should do for Capitals of Culture what the IOC does for the Olympics". Another similar comment was that "the ECOC programme should be considered as a kind of 'olympiad' in scale and scope that promotes the arts, humanistic values and European integration. The EU must take this more seriously and exploit the opportunity for Europe that it offers". Another respondent stated "the EU should make use of the remarkable achievements of ECOC and give it increased importance by enhancing the action, with substantial promotion and investing adequate resources for this." Many were of the view that "the programme is underestimated by the EU".

About a third of the respondents believed that the EU should monitor the progress of each designated ECOC by using experts who could also offer advice and help to cities that had limited experience in the development of large-scale cultural programmes and with creating projects of European significance. One respondent suggested that the EU should establish a small ECOC support unit, bearing in mind the scale, significance and potential impacts of the ECOC action, and the likelihood that this action will continue until 2019. This unit would offer support and help to each ECOC, but also help to ensure the continuity, the sharing of information and experience and the development of cooperation between European cities.

When reflecting on the levels of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the Commission summarised earlier, it is interesting to note that one of the main reasons for being dissatisfied (other than the low level of funding and bureaucratic procedures) was the belief that the Commission was not doing enough for designated cities through guidance, the sharing of expertise and the monitoring and evaluation of the ECOC. Several respondents suggested that the EU should have no role whatsoever (except financing) and recommended that the EU should hand responsibilities over to an independent organisation (funded by the EU) to oversee the ECOC action. Respondents also mentioned the potential role of a network such as the Network of European Capitals of Culture and Cultural Months, but most were not satisfied with its current role, membership and effectiveness. The Network is endeavouring to address these problems.

Several respondents referred to 'missed opportunities' by the EU to exploit the ECOC action to help promote European values and identity, bearing in mind ECOC's high visibility and broad awareness. This should mean more than simply adding the EU logo to printed brochures.

### The European Parliament

The Parliament's interest in ECOC is clear from the number of questions dealing with particular designations and general progress. The ongoing debate within the Committee on Youth, Education, Media and Sport in recent months about the procedures and the Committee's active consideration of past nominations and designations has added a further political dimension to the process. The Committee has been critical of the selection process and the ambiguous role of the selection panel, and has expressed concern over the nature of European collaboration and cooperation resulting from the ECOC designation. In fact, committees have been expressing such concerns since 1991. MEPs have clearly recognised the very high profile of cities offered the designation, and the opportunities that ECOC could offer in relation to European cultural cooperation, European integration, and European identity. Due to the relatively low level of financial support offered to designated ECOC in relation to their overall budgets, and the principle of subsidiarity, it has been difficult for the European institutions to influence the nature of the events, other than the designation itself.

It is interesting to note that the Parliament declined its right to nominate representatives to sit on the selection panel for the ECOC nominations for 2008. Although the procedure continued without such representation, the withdrawal from the process symbolised the Parliament's concern over current

arrangements and its belief that changes are needed. The Parliament clearly wishes to play an enhanced role in ECOC.

A proposal for amending the 1999 Decision 1419/1999/EC for European Capitals of Culture is under discussion. The proposal is intended to establish a new system of appointing two Member States eligible to submit nominations for ECOC each year and would apply to the ECOC event for the years 2005 to 2019 (The proposal appears in Annex IV).

### The Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions has an obvious interest in ECOC, which involves the reinforcement of the idea of the European city as a cultural entity. In addition, the growing interest of designated cities to involve their surrounding regions in the events, and the significant regional impacts of ECOC are aligned to regional interests. The Committee of the Regions already participates in the selection process, and there are signs that it will wish to continue to do so. In its consideration of the Parliament and Council proposal for amending Decision 1419/1999/EC, the Committee considered the European Capitals of Culture event “an ideal platform to showcase, support, enrich and experience the wider cultural perspective that will come with the enlargement of the Union” (21 April 2004).

### ***The Future of the ECOC Action***

Over 90% of respondents believed that the action of ECOC should continue in some form into the future. There were some extreme negative views: “Stop the current programme as soon as possible. It is totally useless on a European level”. Most were very positive: “This EU programme exceeds all others in terms of its potential and impact. It must continue”, said one respondent. “The programme has had an extraordinary impact on the restoration and revitalisation of European cities in ways that go far beyond urban renovation policies”, said another.

In general the views of respondents represented a very wide spectrum of opinions and suggestions about how the scheme should be improved. Comments concerning improvements that might be made to the selection procedure for cities and the approaches for designating cities being asked to share the title are discussed in earlier sections concerning procedures, the role of the EU and sharing the title, and will not be repeated here.

Many respondents, when commenting on the future of ECOC, criticised the cultural programmes in certain cities that were primarily tools for city marketing and promotion, rather than for European integration and expression. “The programme must not simply be a vehicle to reinforce the prestige of a city, but rather should be an expression of the European dimension of an expanded EU”, said one respondent. “The criteria should be redrawn to reflect the new European situation”, said another. “In each ECOC, the local community should use the occasion to strengthen its cultural scene, but primarily to find its identity in a bigger and bigger European landscape”.

Another major theme that emerged when respondents reflected on the future of ECOC was the need to encourage projects that were ‘more bold’ and ‘visionary’. Encouragement should be given to designated cities to perceive themselves as ‘cultural leaders’, with a responsibility to experiment with ‘new adventurous ideas’: “Each ECOC should keep one step ahead of where European culture is going, and many steps ahead of what may be happening anyway in the city”. A few respondents regretted the tendency for ECOC to be seen as part of a ‘blockbuster culture’, and believed that each ECOC should focus on achieving a “cultural authority because of the excellence and ambition of its programme”, and not through “the rhetoric and hyperbole” it uses in its marketing brochures. To achieve this, many suggested that the EU must be more rigorous in its selection and more demanding in its requirements. Almost all respondents believed that it was a responsibility of the EU, through the cities it selects, to protect the cultural focus of the ECOC initiative.

A recurring comment by respondents was the need to ensure the primacy of the broad cultural goal of the ECOC action. “It should not be hijacked by political interests and respect cultural interests,” said one. “The base of the year must always be the cultural concept and programme, and any other sustainable effect must come from there”. “Culture is the soul of Europe; economy its body. Let ECOC focus on the soul”, reflected one respondent.

A few respondents commented that attempts should be made to ensure that an ECOC is not 'inward looking', meaning that cities should not only look to themselves and their own cultural operators, and that they should seek expert help when developing approaches to concepts and themes. "The EU should encourage cities to use international cultural experts who are able to engage with such ideas".

Respondents were mixed in their views about where the emphasis should lie in future ECOC programmes as far as artistic sectors were concerned. Some wanted to see "more specialisation", others "greater diversity". Most believed that the programmes should focus more on "modern aspects of culture" and less on "tradition and history". In general respondents thought it was best to leave such priorities to the cities themselves. However many believed that maintaining the key characteristics of the 'brand' of ECOC should be a responsibility of the EU. "Should ECOC simply be a free-for-all, where each city does whatever it wants? Or should the ECOC action stand for something – a set of clear values, common goals, style?" asked one respondent. This issue of the 'ECOC brand' can be considered at different levels: from a decision to use one logo that is identified with the ECOC action over time, and ensuring the quality of each ECOC programme, to preserving the diversity of the publics served, and especially to the relative importance of the European dimension reflected by the ECOC: "If the brand is not protected, the programme will lose its attraction and become irrelevant" said a respondent. "ECOC should stand for European cultural excellence". Others believed that ECOC should reflect "the building, enlarging and promoting of and exchanges between artists, groups, producers between cities and networks across Europe".

Most respondents supported the idea of annual designations of an ECOC, although a few respondents did suggest that the impact may be greater if the designations were offered every two years.

The importance of legacy and longer-term impact of an ECOC, rather than the shorter-term celebratory aspect of a one-year cultural programme was emphasised by many respondents, whose ECOC had long finished: "the ECOC must not be like a party that quickly fades away and no-one can really remember". This issue of memory, and the need to consider offering incentives to cities to continue their efforts in the cultural domain after the year has finished, was mentioned by many. A few respondents suggested that an explicit and essential criterion when selecting cities should be their proposals (and perhaps even indicative budgets) to maintain developments following the special cultural year. "The EU should evaluate whether cities are really serious and have a long-term commitment to European culture, or just want a quick promotional opportunity. The designation should only be conferred as proof of the former". The proposals by many respondents concerning the importance of independent evaluation of ECOC (indicated in earlier sections) may be an approach at least in monitoring long-lasting effects if not being able to influence them.

## Conclusions

1. The European Capital of Culture (ECOC) action of the European Union is a powerful tool for cultural development that operates on a scale that offers unprecedented opportunities for acting as a catalyst for city change.
2. Although full of potential and opportunity, ECOC often do not meet the objectives they set for themselves.
3. ECOC have encompassed the rhetoric of cultural, social, urban regeneration, economic, marketing, creative and European goals simultaneously. Although it may not be possible to set limits for the goals of each ECOC, the expectations set by cities need to be formulated more precisely to achieve realisable outcomes.
4. Culture as a unifying concept has not been the central focus in many ECOC. The cultural dimension has often been overshadowed by political ambitions and other primarily non-cultural interests and agendas.
5. The quality and ambition of the cultural programme of an ECOC has been a central factor to the value of the ECOC experience. However, its impact and sustainability is greater when cultural initiatives are integrated with other facets of urban development and a part of a sustained vision for the city.
6. The impact of ECOC has been greater when the event has been an integral part of a city's longer-term cultural development strategy. Culture is both a product and a process and both are common interests of ECOC.
7. It is important for ECOC to distinguish between short-term and longer-term impacts, and to recognise the implications of approaches to maintaining sustainable initiatives.
8. The strains and problems caused by an inflation of the ECOC ambition poses threats for future cities, in terms of identifying the resources that are required and the ability to meet the expectations for the outcomes of the event.
9. Context, in terms of the city's history, traditions, values, demography, politics, cultural life, architecture, infrastructure, people and resources, is a prevailing force in shaping the nature and character of each ECOC.
10. The conflicting, multiple and often ill-defined criteria published by the EU, the high expectations of ECOC, and continuing problems with the process of nominating and selecting ECOC are detrimental to the progress of the scheme.
11. For ECOC there is no simple measure of success, and attempts to make comparisons between cities are undesirable and difficult. It is more beneficial to examine models of good practice, and to highlight trends and common issues that influence ECOC. Such trends and issues are outlined in each of the sections of the report.
12. Although there is no formula that can guarantee positive results, the experience of many ECOC demonstrates that there are a number of critical factors and conditions that all ECOC should consider. These relate to setting clear and agreed objectives, identifying strong leaders and managers, forming committed partnerships within and outside the cultural sector, developing cultural programmes of quality and ambition that combine both a local and international focus, communicating effectively with different publics, establishing reliable systems for monitoring and evaluation, and ensuring adequate levels of human and financial resources.
13. Without robust evaluation and the methodical collection and dissemination of practice and knowledge gained through the experience of ECOC, mistakes will likely be repeated and overall development of the ECOC will be stifled. Additional research is required.

14. In spite of its scale and media attention, especially in relation to certain cities, ECOC remains a significantly misunderstood concept. The programme's capacity to generate broad interest and foster critical debate about European issues remains untested.
15. The European dimension has not been a primary focus of ECOC, and its potential has not been realised in terms of European integration and cooperation.
16. The expectations of cooperation when several cities share the title of ECOC have neither been realised nor sustained in any significant way.
17. The expectation of a unique focus on Europe is limited. The ECOC action should extend to an international focus and the relationship of Europe to the rest of the world.
18. The experience and opportunity afforded to certain cities to host European cultural months, as distinct from years, have been undervalued.
19. The value and potential of ECOC has been underestimated, and new efforts need to be made to focus on enhancing its visibility, supporting its potential as an effective instrument of European cultural action, and improving procedures for selection and administration.
20. Resourcing of the ECOC has remained a key challenge for cities, and the low level of contribution from the EU is heavily criticised as reflecting the relatively low value placed on the ECOC action by the EU. The EU would likely only be able to assert its priorities if a higher level of financial support were offered to ECOC.
21. The findings of this study have only focused on the main lines of the ECOC experience in each city and for the programme generally over a 10-year period. There is a need to undertake further research, which will be of value not only to future ECOC, but to other European cities, the cultural sector, and those involved in the practice of European cultural cooperation and events.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations emerged from the findings of this study and an assessment of the data and views expressed by respondents.

### 1. The ECOC action should be retained and continued by the EU

- The findings of this study endorse the view that the EU should retain the European Capital of Culture as a community action. The evidence points to a scale and scope of cultural development stimulated by the scheme that has had significant outcomes in past cities that have held the title, and that opportunities should continue to be offered to other European cities to bid for and benefit from the designation.

### 2. The selection criteria and procedures for future ECOC should be re-considered in view of the experience of past ECOC

- The criteria need to be simplified and clarified to place emphasis on four primary components of the designation: i) the value and importance of culture and the cultural experience as a central unifying concept; ii) the challenges of European integration and diversity, cultural cooperation and Europe's relations with a wider world; iii) the demonstration of cultural development as a driving force of local and regional development strategies; iv) the sustainability of declared outcomes following the cultural year.
- EU Member States, based on rotation, should continue to propose nominations for ECOC, and should be encouraged to run national competitions for cities wishing to bid. The EU criteria should be used as the basis of national selection by an independent jury of experts, of which one-half should be nominated by EU institutions, including the Chair. Experts should be nominated by Member States and the EU on the basis of their experience of ECOC, cultural development in cities and European cultural issues. The independence and calibre of the selection juries will be of critical importance, and the expertise of the members will be a determining factor in arriving at the best decision concerning the nomination and maintaining the credibility of the ECOC action. The procedures for such a competition should be clear and should not be used by competing cities for the purposes of city marketing. The national selection panel would submit a report to the European institutions that would retain the right to accept or reject the panel's recommendation, with a view to making a nomination of ECOC to the Council for decision. This recommendation therefore presupposes the abandonment of a European selection jury. The national jury (comprising 50% European experts) would replace the current European jury.
- If the EU wishes to continue the process of selecting ECOC on the advice of a selection jury made up of only European cultural experts, then the precise role and membership of the jury needs to be reassessed. EU Member States would be asked to propose a minimum of two cities seeking the nomination. The European jury would make a choice as a recommendation to the Council for a decision. Jury members should be chosen on the basis of the criteria mentioned above. There should be continuity in membership over several years; the Chair of the jury should be nominated by the EU for a three year period. The jury should visit all nominated cities and take into account the views of national experts of the country concerned. The jury's report should assess nominated cities in relation to the revised objectives and criteria of ECOC as proposed above. If this option for selection is preferred, Member States should still be encouraged to run national competitions to select the city to be nominated.
- The EU Institutions involved in the selection process should heed the advice of the expert jury.
- In view of the planning time required for ECOC, nominations by Member States should be made a minimum of 5-6 years before the year the ECOC event is due to take place, with a view to the Council taking its decision not more than 6 months of the nomination being made (after accompanying reports and documentation have been submitted).

- A maximum of two ECOC should be designated in any year. There should be no obligation for these cities to collaborate unless they choose to do so. However, both cities should be encouraged to collaborate on projects, and should be obligated to demonstrate clearly the means of achieving the criteria for ECOC as set out above, including the criterion relating to European integration and cooperation.
- There should be no attempt to distinguish between Member States who should be treated as equal regardless of the date of their accession. Provision should be made in any new ECOC Decision relating to further enlargement of the Union.
- The cities should be expected to adhere to the guidelines as issued by the Commission, including the obligation to submit annual reports of progress prior to the event and an evaluation report based on specifications, not later than one year after the ECOC has taken place. The evaluation report from each city, accompanied by a report by the Commission, should be received by the Parliament as a record of what was achieved and of lessons learned, and disseminated by the Commission (see Recommendation 3).
- New models for ECOC should be considered if proposed by Member States and cities. These might include the combination of city regions or two or more neighbouring municipalities. This would assist smaller cities and encourage their eligibility for the nomination, and be of benefit to certain cities in the financing of the event.
- New procedures should apply to nominations for designations from 2010 on the basis of a new Decision to be approved by the Parliament as soon as practical.

### 3. The role of the Commission should be reviewed in relation to the findings of this study.

It is recognised that an enhanced role for the Commission may require additional resources. The Commission should:

- prepare guidelines to be issued to nominated ECOC. These should not be proscriptive or mandatory, but be based on the experience of past ECOC, and include examples of model strategies and advice. The guidelines should include specifications for monitoring and evaluation reports, and for the submission of the nomination.
- prepare plans for increasing the visibility of ECOC and helping to guarantee its clarity and the understanding of its objectives.
- support an independent evaluation of each ECOC by appropriate experts selected from lists approved by the Commission. That report should be published along with the evaluation and any reports submitted by each ECOC. Monitoring and evaluation of all ECOC should be based on a common framework.
- be proactive in the collection and dissemination of information, guides, studies, databases, documentation and archival material related to each ECOC etc. This would be of value to bidding and nominated ECOC, other cities, cultural operators, researchers, students and other bodies.
- support further research related to the findings of this study; various topics have been proposed in this report.
- simplify and streamline procedures for the application and payment of funds to ECOC.
- dedicate one full-time official to manage the ECOC scheme, in view of its significance and enhanced role.
- develop internal communication among all directorates and units that may have an interest in and/or be supporting initiatives that relate to ECOC. A co-ordinating role would be of considerable value to the nominated ECOC and help consolidate the EU's experience and information.
- continue to seek advice and use experts or specialist consultants to assist it in its expanded tasks.

An alternative model, whereby the Commission itself does not play an enhanced role in the ECOC action should be considered. Recognising the importance and potential of the ECOC project and the requirement to develop a strong expert base to offer guidance to nominated cities, carry out independent evaluations, and oversee the selection process, a small independent structure should be established with EU support to undertake such tasks. This model would have the advantages of ensuring a clear association with the ECOC project, having independence of action that would help maintain the standards and continuity of ECOC including its primary focus on European integration, diversity and cultural cooperation, and assisting future nominated ECOC in practical ways by having the expertise to pass on knowledge and experience. This structure would advise EU Member States on national competitions, offer help to cities in approaching the complexities of planning and the effective delivery of the ECOC as a major cultural event of European significance, and monitor developments within ECOC.

4. The EU should offer a higher level of financial support to the ECOC action.

- Increased direct support should be in the form of a significantly larger one-off financial contribution to each designated ECOC, bearing in mind the substantial level of resources required, the European added value of the designation, the need for the EU to maintain credibility as a partner and to maximise the visibility of the EU's involvement in this action, and as a means of maintaining the quality and impact of a large-scale cultural event of European importance.
- Increased indirect support from the EU should be in the form of expertise as mentioned in the recommendation above.

5. A new EU initiative should be launched with the objective of offering opportunities to Candidate and Applicant States and Third Countries.

- Based on the findings of this study, a maximum of two ECOC should be designated each year. However, recognising the value of the European Cultural Months, the EU should launch a new scheme that is focused on providing opportunities for cities (or combinations of cities) in Candidate and Applicant States and Third Countries to receive a special EU designation as a centre of cultural excellence. That 'centre' would be expected to mark the designation with a special event of between one and three months' duration, depending on the city's ambitions and resources. The main objective of the event would be to help foster integration and cultural cooperation between the designated city (and its national authorities) and EU Member States. Only one such designation should be made in any given year.
- A selection procedure, involving national nominations, criteria, guidelines and an expert European selection panel, should be designed by the Commission.
- Nominations should be received a minimum of 3 years before the year the designation is to apply to allow sufficient time for planning and the development of cooperation projects.
- Synergies should be encouraged between the designated ECOC and the designated centres under this new action. However, there should be no obligation to collaborate unless they choose to do so. One of the criteria for the centre would be to develop projects that promote cross-border cultural cooperation.
- The EU should offer financial support to this new scheme.

Robert Palmer  
Palmer/Rae Associates  
August 2004.







## **Annexes**

## **Annex I: ECOC Budgets**

### Notes:

- This spreadsheet reflects the most accurate figures received from ECOC as of 28 June 2004.
- Budgets in Euro were calculated using exchange rates given on the official Europa web site, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/budget/infoeuro/>, based on figures for December of the year in question.
- No allowance has been made for inflation over the ten-year period.

**Footnotes to Budget****1. Stockholm - Operating Expenditure**

Wages and overhead costs have been included in the other budget headings.

**2. Helsinki - Public funding**

16.740.000 Euros includes contributions from the cities of Helsinki, Vantaa, and Espoo.

**3. Prague - Operating expenditure**

“Other costs” refers to operational expenses.

**4. Porto – Public funding**

Income from public authorities includes finance for infrastructure/capital projects.

**5. Porto - Private Cash Sponsorship**

The figure represents all sponsorship.

**6. Porto - Other Income**

The figure in “Other/Unspecified” refers to concessions and other receipts.

**7. Graz - Private Cash Sponsorship**

The figure represents all sponsorship.

**8. Avignon - Operating Expenditure**

The division of expenditure into budget headings is unknown.

**9. Copenhagen - Operating Income**

The “unspecified” amount includes contributions from the municipalities and counties in the Copenhagen region.

**10. Bruges - Operating Income**

The income from the region refers to the Flemish Community.

**11. Weimar - Private Cash Sponsorship**

The figure represents all sponsorship.

**12. Rotterdam - Private Cash Sponsorship**

The figure represents all sponsorship.

**13. Cracow - Operating Expenditure**

The division of expenditure into budget headings is unknown.

**14. Thessaloniki - Private Cash Sponsorship**

The figure represents all sponsorship.

15. Salamanca - Operating Income

The figure refers to income from all public institutions.

16. Salamanca - Private Cash Sponsorship

The figure represents all sponsorship.

17. Bergen - Private Cash Sponsorship

The figure represents all sponsorship.

18. Santiago - Operating Income

The figure refers to income from the State, the Region and the City.

19. Santiago - Private Cash Sponsorship

The figure represents all sponsorship.

## **Annex II: Questionnaire**

## Annex III: List of Respondents

### Athens 1985

Spyros Mercouris

### Florence 1986

Alessandra Buyet

### Amsterdam 1987

Steve Austen

Freek Bloemers

### Berlin 1988

Volker Hassemer

Nele Hertling

Jörg-Ingo Weber

### Glasgow 1990

Charles Bell

Beatriz Garcia

Steve Inch

### Dublin 1991

Eve-Anne Cullinan

Martin Drury

Marian Fitzgibbon

Colm O'Brian

### Antwerp 1993

Eric Antonis

Patrick De Groote

Bruno Verbergt

### Lisbon 1994

Rodrigo Miquelino

Yvonne Felman

### Luxembourg 1995

Simone Beck

Guy Dockendorf

Claude Frisoni

Daniele Kohn-Stoffels

### Nicosia 1995

Lilika Christodoulaki

Lellos Demetriades

Rena Fotsiou

Loukia L.Hadjigavriel

Bouli Hadjioannou

Titina Loizidou

Hadjipanayis Panikos

### Copenhagen 1996

Tom Ahlberg

Finn Andersen

Marianne Bech

Nanna Bugge

Birgitt Curry

Trevor Davies

Bente Frost

Lars Bernhard Jorgensen

Lars Ramme Nielsen

Ida Munk

Birgit Sørensen

Kathrine Winkelhorn

John Winther

### St. Petersburg 1996 and 2003

Finn Andersen

Nina Lebedeva

Natalia Strougova

### Thessaloniki 1997

Thanassis Georgidis

Thomas Goudantsis

Loukia Ikonomidou

Sotiris Kapetanopoulos

Ioannis Kessopoulos

Georgios Lontos

Costas Loizos

Rodolfo Maslias

Spyros Mercouris

Lois Papadopoulos

Mr Philipopoulos

Mr Tavridis

George Terzis

Panos Theodoridis

Persefoni Tricha

### Ljubljana 1997

Lilijana Rudolf

Vanda Straka



**Stockholm 1998**

Pelle Andersson  
Sören Falk  
Carin Fischer  
Susanna Freund-Widman  
Bengt Göransson  
Bo-Erik Gyberg  
Bitte Jarl  
Inge Jonsson  
Sten Månsson  
Palaemona Mörner  
Anders Nordstrand  
Anna Pontén  
Lena Porsander  
Birgitta Rydell  
Eva Schöld  
Leif Sundkvist  
Per Svenson  
Beate Sydhoff  
Tjia Torpe  
Gudrun Vahlquist  
Mats Widbom

**Linz 1998**

Christian Denkmaier  
Reinhard Dyk  
Gerda Forstner  
Karin Frohner  
Gottfried Hattinger  
Siegbert Janko  
Gabriele Kepplinger  
Karolin Kutzenberger  
Peter Leisch  
Florian Sedmak  
Elfi Sonnberger  
Gerfried Stocker  
Wolfgang Winkler

**Valetta 1998**

Josette Ciappara  
Charles Camilleri  
Paul Mifsud

**Weimar 1999**

Ulrich Ballhausen  
Anke Gaudes  
Volkhardt Germer  
Annegrit Goermar  
Elke Harjes-Ecker  
Angela Holzweg  
Bernd Kauffmann  
Friederich von Klinggraeff  
Burkhardt Kolbmueller  
Christian Lohmann  
Katja Meyer  
Frank Motz  
Konrad Paul  
Bernhard Post  
Silke Roth  
Nicole Schaeufler  
Rudiger Schmidt  
Gerd Schuchardt  
Hanns-Michel Siebert  
Stephan Weitzel  
Gerd Zimmerman

**Plovdiv 1999**

Vessela Ilieva  
Virginia Mercouris

**Avignon 2000**

Luis Armengol  
Louis Bec  
André Benedetto  
Marie-Claude Billard  
Céline Breant  
Frederique Debril  
Rene Diez  
Raymond Duffaud  
Daniel Favier  
Amelie Grand  
Marie-Louise Laghiomie  
Jacques Montaignac  
Pierre Provoyeur  
Jean Paul Ricard  
Alain Timar

**Bergen 2000**

Sven Åge Birkeland  
Terje Gloppen  
Jostein Gripsrud  
Audun Hasti  
William Hazell  
Paal Henriksen  
Bjørn Holmvik  
Kristian Jörgensen  
Jan Landro  
Sissel Lillebostad  
Maria Bakke Orvik  
Anne-Grete Strøm-Erichsen  
Tone Tjemsland  
Harm-Christian Tolden  
Morten Walderhaug  
Ole Warberg

**Bologna 2000**

Paolo Cacchioli  
Giuditta de Concini  
Cristina DeRubertis  
Mauro Felicori  
Giordano Gasparini  
Elena di Gioia  
Roberto Grandi  
Giulia Grassilli  
Francesco Montanari  
Monica Sassatelli  
Stefania Storti  
Laura Tagliaferri  
Paolo Trevisani  
Francesco Volta  
Carlo Vitali

**Brussels 2000**

Els Baeten  
Toon Berkmoes  
Derek Blyth  
Patricia Bogerd  
Roger Christmann  
Guy de Bellefroid  
Annick de Ville  
Dirk De Wit  
Bernard Focroulle  
Paul Huygens  
Piet Joostens  
Annette Katz  
Guido Minne  
Robert Palmer  
Marie-Laure Roggermans  
Hilde Teuchies  
Karel Verhoeven  
Andre Vrydagh

**Santiago de Compostela 2000**

Encarno Otero Cepeda  
Anu Pitkanen  
Maria Xose Porteiro  
Flavia Ramil  
Paolo Roca  
Teresa Garcia Sabell  
Natalia Fernandez Segarra  
Fabiola Sotelo  
Ramon Maiz Suarez

**Helsinki 2000**

Rauno Anttila  
Jorma Bergholm  
Ilkka-Christian Bjorklund  
Timo Cantell  
Georg Dolivo  
Rita Ekelund  
Timo Heikkinen  
Jukka Hytti  
Marianna Kajantie  
Tuula Karjalainen  
Meena Kaunisto  
Juha Kesänen  
Raija Koli  
Hellevi Majander  
Laura Itävaara  
Kimmo Oksanen  
Vesa Ristimäki  
Ritva Siikala  
Yrjö Sotamaa  
Pekka Timonen  
Susanna Tommila  
Paiju Tyrväinen  
Mikko Vanni

**Cracow 2000**

Filip Berkowicz  
Danuta Glondys  
Kasia Janicka  
Elize Krol  
Waclaw Krupinsky  
Dorota Laidledo  
Anna Marchwica  
Krzysztof Orzechowsky  
Jacek Purchla  
Boguslaw Sonik

**Prague 2000**

Roman Belor  
Jana Chalupova  
Kaliopi Chamonikola  
Ludvik Hlavacek  
Ondrej Hrab  
Dana Kalinova  
Jan Kasl  
Antonin Kudlac  
Bohumil Nekolny  
Pavla Petrová  
Michal Prokop  
Marta Smolikova

**Reykjavik 2000**

Stefán Baldursson  
Felix Bergsson  
Bjorn Bjarnason  
Tinna Gunnlaugsdóttir  
Julius Hafstein  
Katrin Hall  
Olöf Ingólfssdóttir  
Svanhildur Konradsdóttir  
Thorgeir Olafsson  
Hjalmar H Ragnarsson  
Asa Richardsdóttir  
Gudridur Sigurdardóttir  
Thorunn Sigurdardóttir  
Pall Skulason  
Eiríkur Thorláksson  
Sigrun Valbergdóttir

**Porto 2001**

Isabel Alves Costa  
Novais Barbosa  
Eunice Basto  
Oscar Faria  
Joao Fernandes  
José Luis Ferreira  
Paulo Gusmão Guedes  
Teresa Lago  
Paula Marques  
Manuela Melo  
Antonio Jorge Pacheco  
Tereza Siza  
Jorge Vaz de Carvalho

**Rotterdam 2001**

Boris van Berkum  
Bas van den Bosch  
Carla Breitbarth-Feldmann  
Han de Bruijne  
Carolien Dieleman  
Dirk Evers  
Giep Hagoort  
Erik Hitters  
Paula Korteweg  
Bert van Meggelen  
Paul Nouwen  
Peter Ouwerkerk  
Ap van der Pijl  
Kees Weeda

**Basel 2001**

Matthias Bamert  
Numa Bischof  
Thomas Gartmann  
Sven Hartberger  
Toni J. Krein  
Fritz Näf  
Daniel Ott  
David Streiff  
Niggi Ullrich

**Riga 2001**

Zanda Kergalve  
Gundega Laivina

**Bruges 2002**

Rik DeKeyser  
Hugo de Greef  
Lut Laleman  
Etienne Mommerency  
Elsie Roose  
Yves Roose  
Manfred Sellink  
Steven Slos  
Robrecht De Spiegelaere  
Jan Vermassen  
Reinhilde Weyns

**Salamanca 2002**

Celia Lumbreras Díaz  
Maria-Angeles Encinas  
Begoña Fernandez  
Lola Flecha  
Ana I. Hernandez  
Luis Cesar Herrero  
Juan Carlos Lopez  
Enrique Cabero Moran  
José Antonio Sánchez Paso  
Fernando Pablos Romo  
Chelo Sanchez  
J. Agustin Torijano  
Javier Valbuena  
José Luis Zarza

**Graz 2003**

Max Aufischer  
Harald Baloch  
Manfred Gaulhofer  
Dieter Hardt-Stremayr  
Sven Hartberger  
Kathi Hofmann-Sewera  
Frido Hütter  
Wolfgang Lorenz  
Brigitte Schlick  
Hansjürgen Schmölzer  
Eberhard Schrempf  
Barbara Simma  
Karl Stocker  
Helmut Strobl  
Hans Peter Trumler  
Gerold Zakarias

**Genoa 2004**

Enrico Da Molo  
Erica Della Casa  
Kathrin Deventer  
Serena Fittabile  
Marco Galeotti  
Anna Galleano  
Giorgio Gallione  
Franco Melis  
Adolfo Parodi  
Renato Picco  
Andrea Rocco  
Lucia Vinzoni

**Lille 2004**

Thierry Baert  
Marie-Hélène Boudin  
Stéphanie Campagnie  
Laurent Dreano  
Gérard Flament  
Rosalie Lakatos  
Anne-Françoise Lémaître  
Emmanuel Vinchon  
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European Cultural Contact Points

## **Annex IV: EU Legislation**

## Annex V: Bibliography of ECOC and ECM

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EU legislation and official documents relating to culture:

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## ANNEX VIII: Maps



