



**EUROPEAN CAPITAL  
OF CULTURE**

**Selection of the European Capital of Culture  
in 2019 in Italy**

**The Selection Panel's  
Final Report**

**Rome  
November 2014**

## Introduction

This is the report of the selection panel for the competition for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) in 2019 in Italy

The Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism (the “Ministry”) is the national authority in charge of organising the competition. It appointed the “European Capital of Culture Focus Point” (the “Focus Point”) to administer the competition.

The competition is governed by:

- Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019 (the “Decision”)<sup>1</sup>,
- Rules of Procedure – “Competition for the 2019 European Capital of Culture title in Italy” (the “Rules”) signed by the Italian Minister of Culture on 23 April 2013 and published on the Ministry’s website<sup>2</sup>

The Ministry appointed the 13 members of the selection panel on 21 October 2013. In line with the Decision (article 6) seven were nominated by the European institutions (European Parliament, Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions) and six were nominated by the Ministry in consultation with the European Commission.

The competition is in two phases: pre-selection (shortlisting) and final selection. The Ministry issued a call for applications to all Italian cities on 20 November 2012.

There were 21 applications submitted by the deadline of 20 September 2013: Aosta; Bergamo; Cagliari; Caserta; Città-diffusa Vallo di Diano e Cilento con la Regione Campania e il Mezzogiorno d'Italia; Erice; Grosseto-Maremma; L’Aquila; Lecce; Mantova; Matera; Palermo; Perugia; Pisa; Ravenna; Reggio Calabria; Siena; Siracusa ed il Sud Est; Taranto; Urbino; Venezia con il Nordest.

The selection panel met in Rome on 11-15 November 2013 for the pre-selection meeting. It appointed Mr Steve Green as chair and Prof Emma Giammattei as vice-chair. All members of the panel signed a declaration of non-conflict of interest.

The panel recommended that the Ministry invite six cities (Cagliari, Lecce, Matera, Perugia, Siena and Ravenna) to progress to the final selection. The panels’ report is published on the website of the European Commission<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006D1622>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.capitalicultura.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/21/archivio-news/6/disponibili-le-regole-procedurali>

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/tools/actions/documents/ecoc/2019/preselection-report-italy\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/tools/actions/documents/ecoc/2019/preselection-report-italy_en.pdf)

The Italian Minister of Culture accepted the panel's recommendation on 18 March 2014. The Ministry invited the six cities to submit revised applications with a deadline of 8 September 2014.

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

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

- The mandate of panel members Dr Manfred Gaulhofer and Sir Jeremy Isaacs expired on 31 December 2013 and they were replaced by Dr Suzana Žilič Fišer and Dr Ulrich Fuchs.
- All six cities met with the panel's chair in April in London to seek clarification of the recommendations in the pre-selection report.
- A delegation of the panel (Anu Kivilo, Jordi Pardo and Paolo Dalla Sega) visited all six cities from 3 to 13 October, spending one day in each. They were accompanied by observers from the Focus Point and the European Commission. The panel members reported back to the full panel at the selection meeting.

## **Selection Meeting**

The final selection meeting took place in Rome on 15-17 October 2014. All panel members attended; they re-signed statements of non-conflict of interest and confidentiality.

Representatives of the Ministry and the European Commission attended as observers. The observers took no part in the panel's deliberations or decision.

Each city made a 30 minute presentation followed by 60 minutes in a Question & Answer session. All six delegations were led by their Mayor. The candidates appeared before the panel in alphabetical order. In each Q & A session the panel sought clarification on the city's objectives, the European Dimension, the City and Citizens (including legacy) and the capacity of the candidate to deliver (governance, finance and staffing). A selection of the particular questions asked of each city is given in the next section.

After the meeting, at a press conference, the chair of the panel gave the name of the panel's recommended candidate to the Minister of Culture and Tourism as a representative of the Italian presidency of the European Council. The Minister duly announced the recommended candidate.

## **The candidates' applications**

### **Cagliari**

In their bidbook Cagliari<sup>4</sup> presented their programme under the title "Weaving Possible Worlds". This concept contains the basic principle of the candidacy: the re-creating of

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cagliari-sardegna2019.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/modulo-ENGLISH-digital-singlepage.pdf>

cultural geographies. It is inspired by the Sardinian artist Maria Lai with the ideas that the future is the result of the course agreed upon by the entire community. The aim of the bid is to make Cagliari an innovative centre of inter-disciplinary production which will constitute a reference point in the Italian and European scenario, especially concerning the testing of new and emerging languages.

The central element of the programme is the EuCHo (European Cultural Home). This will have at least nine locations (former industrial buildings, parks, the municipal art gallery, the Sant'Elia neighbourhood etc.). These are creative spaces where models, ideas, languages and experimental forms of art come to light. The programme itself is built around five “landscapes”, each representing a different geographical area of the region.

The five landscapes of the programme:

- Obsidian: along the coasts
- Silver: the Sulcis Iglesiente region of old mines and mining ports
- Salt: the wetlands
- Winds: the opening to the sea, harbour and Gulf of Cagliari
- Water: the island

The bid has the full support of all political parties, of the Sardinian Regional Administration, neighbouring municipalities and a cross-section of the private sector in the city and region. The city is currently spending slightly over 8% of its annual budget on cultural activities.

Cagliari is developing its cultural strategy; the ECOC, the panel was informed, would be consistent with that strategy.

The proposed budget for operational activity is €32.5m of which the main items are €23.9m for programme, €5m for communications and marketing and €3.1 for staffing and administration. The main funding sources are expected to be the city of Cagliari with €8m, the Region with €6.1m, the national government €8m and the private sector €5.8m.

Cagliari presented their case to the panel. They outlined some of the challenges facing the city and region: very high youth unemployment, high school dropout rates and a collapse of the manufacturing industry. The ECOC bid process has enabled them to test new models of governance to improve the social fabric. The presenters explained the city's industrial and urban development plans. The “EuCHOs” are at the heart of the project, and were illustrated with a recent photographic project. All projects in the ECOC are planned with legacy in mind as part of the city's long term strategy. The bid team highlighted the “*OpenCampusTiscali*” app as an indication of both the commercial and digital engagements in the programme. The project will include projects on the Sardinian language.

Among the questions put to the presenters were how the city would meet its main focus as a centre of interconnectedness, the relationship between the city and the region, more

detailed explanations of projects (in particular the highlights in the programme for European diversity), the certainty of those building projects relating directly to the ECOC programme and more details on the Sardinian language projects.

## **Lecce**

Lecce presented their application<sup>5</sup> under the theme of “Reinventing EUtopia”. This resulted from an analysis of their city and the Salento region. It suffers from a lack of money, a lack of trust and a lack of communication and coordination of policies. There are strong divisions. The goal of the programme is to transform the territory where different communities understand and respect their interdependencies and create a culture of co-operation and trust.

The programme has at its core the concept of the “European Academy of Human Potential” with eight “utopias”:

- DEMOCRAtopia (democratic participation)
- EDUtopia (knowledge through education)
- PROFItopia (new economic models and job development)
- EXPERIENtopia (new forms of travel and tourism)
- POLIStopia (social welfare and inclusion)
- TALENtopia (enhancement of human potential)
- ECOtopia (self-sustainability, environment)
- ARTopia (artistic creation and role of artists in social innovation)

The bid has the full support of all political parties who have agreed to pursue the objectives even if unsuccessful in the competition. In 2014 the city has been able to increase its cultural spend (including sport and heritage) to 5.37% of its budget, reversing the trend of the three previous years.

The city council has approved a comprehensive “Integrated Territorial Investment Programme 2014-2020” which incorporates the ECOC into the Puglia region planning documents. This is the first time the city has a long term plan for culture beyond cultural heritage

The ECOC programme, the panel was informed, was fully in line with these plans. The bidbook outlined the key elements of the strategy and referred to appropriate selected projects in the ECOC programme.

The proposed operational budget is €38.8m with the main items being €28.3m for programme expenditure, €5.4m for marketing and €5.1m for staff and administration. The main funding sources are the city €5m; the national government €5m, the private sector €6.8m, the region €1m, other public authorities (eg University of Salento, Brindisi etc)

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.lecce2019.it/2019/bidbook.php?setLanguage=eng>

€4.3m. There are plans to use €14.5m from EU structural funds and a further €2.1m from other EU funds.

Lecce opened their presentation by highlighting the wide range and depth of their 14,000 “citizens’ encounters”, a city learning to do it together. The ECOC bid has enabled a close partnership between the city, Brindisi and the Region notwithstanding party political differences. The bid would be seeking considerable funding from the integrated regional programme for EU structural funds. The region has an acknowledged track record in completing major projects. The bid team has established a close relationship with foundations and the private sector. Already €2.5m of the forecast €6.8m has been promised. A social bond is planned with a major bank, with the consequent credit line doubling private sector funding. The ECOC is not seeking simple event sponsorship but “investment in the community” (where there is 40-50% youth unemployment). The “European Academy of Human Potential” brings formal and informal education to the fore. The programme includes projects with Morocco and Egypt. There is a strong focus on accessibility.

Among the questions put to the bid team were those on earning and building trust, changing the city image, the cultural elements within the infrastructure proposals, the role of the “European Academy of Human Potential” after 2019, linguistic diversity projects and the matrix management structure.

## **Matera**

Matera presented their programme in their bidbook<sup>6</sup> under the theme of “Open Future”. Matera2019 is seen as an opportunity to move towards openness, as in “accessible to all”, “freely available and unrestricted”, “not concealing thoughts” and “admitting debate”. It sees the future not as one concentrating major institutions in a handful of cities but by leveraging existing institutions to mobilise the greater number of people and motivating them to generate culture. They see Matera as a starting point for a grassroots movement for renewal in Europe.

The programmes’ goals are to use culture as a propellant for conceiving an open future; strengthen the breadth and diversity of citizens who actively participate in culture; increase Matera’s capital of personal relations; engage in a capacity-building programme for socio-cultural operators; build useful and sustainable cultural infrastructure; enhance the city’s international visibility and tourism potential and to consolidate its leadership in open-data. They sought to position Matera as the most important open cultural system platform in Europe.

The programme is built on two foundations, *I-DEA* and *Open Design School*. The programme itself has five themes:

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/mt2019/matera-2019-book.html>

- Ancient Futures: the relationship with nature and landscape
- Continuity and Disruptions: a story of ingenuity and resilience
- Utopias and Dystopias: radical new models which challenge assumptions
- Roots and Routes: the possibilities of mobility
- Reflections and Connections: art, science and cultural citizenship as catalysts for a new model in Europe

The bid has the support of the city council, the region of Basilicata, the municipality of Potenza and all 131 municipalities in Basilicata. In recent years the city has been able to increase its expenditure on culture to 3%.

The ECOC programme is in line with the “Matera 2020 City Strategic Plan”. There is a Framework Planning Agreement between the municipality and the Basilicata Region for implementing the cultural programme within the Strategic Plan.

The proposed budget is €52m. The main areas of expenditure are €36.2m for programme; €9.3m for marketing and €6.4 for administration. The forecast income sources are €25m from the Region (including from EU structural funds), €5.2m from the city, €11m from the national government and €7.3m from the private sector. 70% of the income is already guaranteed as an endowment under the Framework Agreement.

In their presentation, which started with a “multi-sensory workshop” based on a project featuring the use of found objects, Matera pointed out that the Foundation which would be responsible for the ECOC was created in September 2014. It has been granted an endowment of €30.2m regardless of the outcome of the competition. This is a demonstration of the commitment of the public authorities to the objectives of the bid. The bid has changed its focus from the pre-selection stage, from “Together” to “Open Futures”. It now represents a partnership between citizens, institutions and the private sector. The vision is for an “Open Europe” based on culture. The presenters explained that the bids’ strengths include its origin by citizens, the full support of 131 municipalities in the region, a commitment to innovation and a strong responsibility towards Europe. The bid is, they stated, both visionary, achievable and a means to enable Matera to scale up to Europe.

Among the questions put to the team by the panel were the additional value added of the ECOC title, the implementation of the cultural investment programme, how the programme would appeal and engage with minorities, the city’s capacity to deliver, the staffing of the foundation, the Renaissance project and the impact of increased tourism on the fragile environment.

## Perugia and the places of Francis of Assisi and Umbria

The programme<sup>7</sup> put forward by Perugia is under the title “Seeding Change”. Perugia is a medium sized city facing several challenges: a declining and impoverished city centre, the higher education sector not functioning as an “urban creativity engine” and mass tourism creating an “open air museum. The bid’s objectives include to regenerate the city centre through culture, to integrate the higher education sector into the city development and make the city a “lively, lived and participated city”. In the bidbook the city noted that in the last years the cultural focus has been on nurturing the tourist sector rather than stimulating the cultural participation of citizens; the bid seeks to achieve a balance.

The city, in preparing the bid, has developed a Cultural Strategic Plan 2013-2030, linked to the Urban Plan. The ECOC programme, the panel was informed, is in line with these plans; the bidbook identified particular projects relating to objectives of the Strategy.

The programme is structured around three themes, each with sub-themes:

- I’mMATURE: a living lab, relaunching as an International University City, strengthening networks, improving cultural and urban infrastructure
- I’mMERGE: new generations, city networking, citizens and institutions, redefining European medium sized cities
- I’mMOBILE: Umbrian hospitality, holistic cultural experiences new technologies.

The bid has the support of all political parties in Perugia, Assisi and the region of Umbria. The higher education institutions have also signalled their full support and engagement. The city has been allocating between 3.88% and 3.43% of its budget to culture in the last three years.

The proposed operating budget is €38.6m of which the main elements are €29.1m is for programme activity, €5.5m for marketing and €4m for staff and administration. The main forecast sources of funding are city €5.2m, national government €8m, private sector €11.8m, region €5.4m, other local authorities €2.7m and EU €4m. The EU figure includes possible future income from structural funds and competitive programmes including Creative Europe.

In their presentation Perugia noted the city had been a centre of creativity, of creative curiosity, for over 1,000 years. It was rooted in its Europeanness. “Seeding Change” described the concept of the bid; it was not a simple slogan. The programme was not just a series of showcasing events or an abstract theory nor was it self-reverential. It was a laboratory of new ideas and approaches with a strong focus on young people. The three themes of I’mMature; I’mMerge and I’mMobile included a play on words (e.g. immature) and paradoxes. It was not a top down project but one which “topped-up”. The programme was closely associated with over 20 major projects to renovate and regenerate

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.perugia2019.eu/the-bid-book-of-perugia-2019-seeding-change-is-online/>



buildings whose original purpose has passed. As an example the former prison would be the place for multiple interventions with many possibilities. With over 17% of its schoolchildren with non-Italian backgrounds the programme had a focus on internationalism.

The panel sought clarification on a number of issues. These included further elaboration on the city centre regeneration, the programmes and objectives in Perugia and Assisi, the role and responsibilities of the Artistic Director, staffing, the main criteria for the open calls for projects, the use of EU structural funds, the forecast high contribution from the private sector, and the engagement of the universities.

## **Ravenna**

Ravenna's application<sup>8</sup> is founded on the concept of a "Mosaic of Cultures". The city is experiencing a condition of apparent calm, "a sort of silent crisis". It needs to become more accessible and welcoming. Its historic role as a crossroads of cultures is now being re-established as 12% of its citizens are from migrant background. The bid's four goals are to build a stronger cultural sector, a better governance model of a smart and interconnected city, a happier, healthier and inclusive society and an economically robust city with an emphasis on cultural and creative industries and a new tourism model.

The programme is structured under the slogan "Create your Europe everyday". It has five themes

- From threshold to threshold: diversity and relations
- Dance of opposites: conflicts and oppositions
- Toward the open sea: travels and mirages
- Imagine the imaginary: the future we want
- I transform, therefore we are: community and changes

The bid has the support of the city and the six cities in the region who will take part (Rimini, Forli, Cesena, Faenza and the Union of Romagna Faentina, Cervia, Russi and the Union of Municipalities of Bassa Romagna).

The city's budget for culture is around 7.5%, declining in recent years because of the economic situation.

The forecast operating budget for the ECOC is €50m of which €35m is for project costs; €8m for marketing and €7m for administration. The proposed main funding sources are from Ravenna €10m, Emilia-Romagna Region €10m, national government €9m, other cities etc. €7,5m and private sector €11m.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ravenna2019.eu/dossier-finale-di-candidatura-di-ravenna2019/>

In their presentation the Ravenna delegation noted that they were all born in Ravenna and were “hungry for the title”. They had adopted a team approach to the bid preparation with no single person in charge. They assured the panel that everything in the bidbook would be delivered and the budget was both sustainable and underwritten. They had involved thousands of people (for example over 25,000 students responded to their call for ideas for the programme, they have over 100 volunteers and 28 working groups across the city).

They outlined the cultural programme and the tiles structure, highlighting projects such as “*European Propaganda*” and the “*League of Extra-ordinary Children*”. The House of Europe, recently completed, will become the beating heart of European culture. Almost every project in the bidbook has international partners. They will engage a group of international producers to plan further projects. They outlined their social media presence. The mayor said he had granted autonomy to the project team and the bid had all-party support in the city and in the associated cities and region.

Among the questions the panel asked were the relationship of the ECOC programme with the existing cultural offer in the city, how the city intends to become “a magnet for innovation”, further information on the “European Propaganda” project, the regeneration of the Darsena and the planned cultural offer in renovated buildings, who would be producing projects, the role of universities and the recruitment of the Artistic Director.

## **Siena**

Siena’s bidbook<sup>9</sup> sets their programme under the title “On” as only those places and people which are “on” can have a chance to be socially innovative: a key underlying theme of the bid. The city is facing various challenges: an ageing population, young people moving away, the economic crisis and a mass market “hit and run” type of short term tourism. The city is recovering after the considerable local impact of the banking crisis, described as a “silent crisis”. The bid’s objective is to develop a “Heritage 3.0” concept as a game changer for the future of European heritage cities. They do not intend to build any new buildings but to transform the city from a teaching to a learning city.

The bid has been prepared very closely to be in tune with the city’s 2014-16 development strategy and the Regional Plan for Culture 2012-15 and the region’s Thematic Objectives for the ERDF strategy 2014-2020. The bidbook gave examples of how projects in the programme linked to the relevant objectives in these plans.

The programme is built on three themes:

- Health and Happiness: innovating in what makes life worth living
- Social (in)justice: after the banking scandals new ways at looking at the socio-economic reality, at exclusion and conflict

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.2019si.eu/index.php/en/archivio-news/item/532-dossier-di-candidatura>

- Smart tourism: new solutions to mass tourism, the reshaping by digital societies.

The bid has the support of political parties at city and regional levels as well as universities, the Chamber of Commerce and the Contrada of the Palio.

The city's budgetary allocation for culture has declined from over 10% to just under 6% in recent years reflecting the economic crisis.

The proposed operating budget for the ECOC is €79.1m, of which the main elements are €49m for programme expenditure, €20m for marketing and €7.6m for administration. The forecast funding is from the region €40.8m (including EU structural funds), national government €13.2m, city €6m, regional cities €4, EU €4m (including the conditional Melina Mercouri Prize) and the private sector €10.6m.

The bid is an integral part of the development strategy plan of the city. It intersects with the Regional Territorial Plan.

In their presentation Siena noted that heritage has now become their outstanding problem with the impact of short-term tourism. This is coupled with the impact of the bank crisis which both had a practical impact on the cultural sector and on the pride and self-confidence of the city and citizens. There was an important and urgent need for the city to change. The impact of mass tourism on the smaller heritage cities was a Europe-wide issue. The ECOC bid process has already started a visible change in attitudes and optimism. The presentation included examples of areas where change was both needed and included in the programme. These included the "*Copywrong*" project which indicates a direction to a new cultural era and the "*We are Leonardo*" project which gives inspiration based on "learn, invent and experiment". The programme wants to tackle the obstacles and barriers faced by migrants to Italy who face a hard time.

The financial forecasts have been prepared on the precautionary principle on both income and expenditure. There are over 40 agreements in place with the private sector.

Among the questions asked by the panel were the earning of trust through the ECOC programme, the role of neighbouring cities and the region, the flexibility in the programme, the use of EU structural funds, the development of a "smart tourist", the involvement of migrants in the programme development and the proposed senior staffing and governance plans.

### **The Panel's Evaluation**

The panel thanked all six cities for their considerable efforts in preparing the bids which extended from their bidbooks, through the visits to the presentations and the answer session.

To evaluate the bids the panel considered how candidates:

- met the objectives of the ECOC programme set out in Article 3 of the Decision and the criteria defined in Article 4 : the “European Dimension” and the “City and Citizens”
- and how the candidates demonstrated the capacity to ensure the implementation of the event, notably the governance, the proposed budget, the staffing plans, the support of local and regional authorities and the business sector (as these are connected with the credibility and sustainability of the proposed projects).

The panel was impressed with all six applications. They proposed different approaches to the title of European Capital of Culture reflecting the challenges faced by each city.

It was clear that each city, during their years of bid preparation, has worked considerably not only on the bid but also on enhancing and developing the cultural offer in their city. There were a number of common features among the six candidates:

The ECOC candidature and the proposed programme was expressed as a priority in city, and regional, development plans. This presumably extends beyond simply gaining the title. The expectation is that all candidates will implement as much of their programme, regardless of the outcome of the competition. They owe this to their citizens.

All six contained many projects within their programmes which impressed the panel.

The panel appreciated in particular the close relationship all six candidates had established with their Bulgarian counterparts.

The panel also welcomed the way in which the six cities (and others) worked together under the Italia2019 umbrella.

Although only one city can hold the title it is hoped that many of the projects in the bidbooks can be implemented. Many projects (programme as well as infrastructure) were due to be financed through EU structural funds and all cities had the strong support of their Region. It is understood the national government many also be able to offer assistance. All cities, in different ways, engaged in participatory ways with their citizens, a key social development. With all of these avenues available it is hoped that all cities can develop the principal elements of cultural and social development set out in their bidbooks.

## **Cagliari**

The panel appreciated the clear analysis of the challenges facing the city. The urban development programmes are strong and the use of culture as a transversal theme is positive and forward-looking. There is a well-defined relationship with the neighbouring municipalities and with the regions of Sulcis Iglesiente and Marmilla as Cagliari is well on the way to becoming an integrated metropolitan area. The main objective of becoming an innovative centre for interdisciplinary production is

ambitious. It sits comfortably alongside both the policies of regeneration of key areas of the city and of developing a new diverse economic model for the city based on the knowledge economy. It is a strategy shared by many European cities.

The programme, based around the five landscapes, is easy to understand and would be evident to citizens and visitors. The EuCHos (European Cultural Homes) have the potential to be effective locations for artistic events and projects offering a wide diversity of venues. They are central to the programme. The panel was pleased to learn that about half are already operational or in late stages of preparation. These will contribute to the cultural life in Cagliari. The panel sought reassurances that the other half would all be ready in time; it was partially reassured. The Panel had concerns about the long term financial sustainability of the number of increased cultural venues.

The programme has a good emphasis on the first sub-section of the European Dimension (co-operation with artists and cultural operators, co-productions, residencies etc.). Many projects are already underway or due to start in the ramp-up years to 2019. The panel was especially pleased to note the wide range of partners from the southern and eastern Mediterranean. Projects which the panel thought were well connected to the objectives included the *Sulcis lab* (creative industry development) and *Thinking Europe*.

The panel felt the other two sub-sections of the European Dimension (cultural diversity and common aspects) were less well developed which gave the programme an imbalance toward local objectives rather than balancing the objectives of the ECO program with local policy and regeneration objectives. The panel considered the programme did not offer strong attractions to visitors from the rest of Europe.

The bid process has involved the institutions, associations and cultural operators but the panel considered that there was less evidence of citizens' participation at this stage.

The legacy in terms of urban regeneration was well laid out and indeed central to the city's development plans. It was less clear on the artistic and cultural legacies; indeed the bidbook noted that the city still aims to draw up a planning document on legacy issues. On balance the panel did not consider that the programme as presented would meet the ambitious objectives set in the bidbook (e.g. to become the "innovative centre for interdisciplinary production").

The financial forecasts were prudent although the forecast contribution from the national government at 30% was higher than the planned ratio from other candidates. The panel was concerned that the proposed staffing levels were considerably lower than those of previous successful ECOs. It noted that the plan was to use staff from the city council's departments alongside the staff in the small Foundation. The total was at the very low end of staffing seen in successful ECOs of comparable size.

## Lecce

The panel appreciated the project's consistency with the long term plans of the city (including Smart City initiative, sustainable energy and local social plan). It was encouraged that this was the first time the city had formalised long term cultural development beyond cultural heritage. The ECOC's aims based around "Utopia" were challenging and have a high degree of behavioural change characteristics, notably in earning trust through participatory engagements and seeking a new culture of relationships.

The panel welcomed the strong endorsement and active participation of the Puglia region in addition to the city of Brindisi and 80 of the 127 municipalities. It noted the section in the bidbook which indicated that discussions are underway for regional funding regardless of the outcome of the competition; a clear demonstration of the centrality placed towards culture as a driving sector for change in a community.

The programme is built around the "*European Academy of Human Potential*" and the subsequent eight "Utopias". The panel had difficulty understanding the relationships and interactions of the structure and felt that it may be too complex for audience recognition and marketing both locally and internationally.

The panel recognised the very strong participatory nature of the bid; this was clearly evident as a strong point of the bid. It is very consistent with the objective of earning trust. This high level of participation is further strengthened by the emphasis on process in the programme development. The panel was very impressed with the inclusion of disabled people into the programme and the theme throughout the programme of accessibility (interpreted in many ways) rather than as separate theme.

Overall the panel felt that the bid approached the criteria of citizens' engagement in a very strong and positive manner and this would go some way to meeting the trust objectives.

The programme as presented in the bidbook gave a good cross selection of co-operation with artists and operators from other countries, meeting part of the European Dimension. These included residencies, exchanges, commissions etc. The panel appreciated projects with the southern Mediterranean. The panel however felt that the programme was under-developed at this stage. It was noticeable that the major projects highlighted in the bidbook appeared to use only 20% of the forecast programme budget and so did not give the panel enough guidance on the overall nature of the 2019 programme. Answers during the Q&A did not reduce this uncertainty. This led to a view that the criteria of cultural diversity and common aspects were under-recognised in the programme notwithstanding projects such as the "*Olive Routes*", "*Adriatic Connection and Mediterranean Metamorphosis*" and "*ArcLatinistan*".

The panel felt the legacy issues are less clearly outlined in the bidbook and the presentation. The panel did acknowledge that based on the methods employed by the ECOC in the development phase it will go some way to meeting its trust agenda. The well-set out listing of objectives in the monitoring and evaluation plan are generally short term during the life of the ECOC with some a year or two later.

The proposed finances are prudent both from the public and private sector. The panel noted the innovation of the Social Bond, a use of a financial instrument not normally associated with the cultural sector.

## **Matera**

The panel appreciated the strategic analysis of Matera, as a small to medium sized European city, with a relatively passive audience for culture brought in from major cities. Its aim of being at the forefront of a movement stripping away the barriers to culture, especially through new technologies and learning, is visionary. It leads to an ambitious, if risky, programme.

The panel noted the strong support from the Region and local municipalities, both in terms of finance and in participation in projects in the programme. The concrete commitment of 70% of the funding, *regardless of the outcome of the competition*, is a clear demonstration of the centrality of the ECOC programme to the city and region's development. It is one of the clearest examples, in recent years, of a candidate's programme being part of a strategic plan rather than simply a bid for a competition.

The programme has many strong features. The panel was impressed with the vibrancy and innovation of the artistic approach. There are several projects which have the potential to attract a wider and varied European audience, including the major Southern Renaissance exhibition. The panel appreciated the engagement with the existing mainstream cultural institutions and organisations especially how they had already started to change their practices. This approach may have wider application for European cultural institutions.

The panel appreciated the strong focus on digital technology which by 2019 will be far more prevalent in the cultural and social sectors than it is now. The programme ranges from an online TV channel to the digitisation of heritage archives to coding clubs for young people. This is a forward looking and innovative approach for an ECOC.

The panel was impressed on how what was initially a grass-roots initiative has developed into a formal central element of the city and regional planning. This interlinking of citizens' participation with cultural and social aims has continued in the programme development.

The policy towards inclusion is progressive with an emphasis on bringing those frequently excluded from culture into projects rather than creating parallel project lines. The project involving elderly people and young people through a digital middle process was noted. The panel appreciated the strong intention of foregrounding participation and co-design. The bid preparation included an open call. This often runs a risk of local priorities dominating the criteria for the title. The panel appreciated the use of cultural mediators and an advisory panel to co-develop ideas from the open call into stronger projects.

The projects highlighted in the bidbook demonstrate a good spread of European partners and co-productions. There are projects engaging with artists and operators from the southern and eastern Mediterranean. Common aspects of European culture such as light/noise and abandoned rural villages are covered. The emphasis on new technology (including in the heritage sector) also meets a common aspect of future European culture. The programme is weaker on exploring the diversity of cultures in Europe so that citizens in Matera will have a greater awareness and appreciation of that diversity.

The panel had concerns about the ability of Matera to manage the considerable number of projects and events that an ECOC entails. The bidbook acknowledged this weakness, indeed the need for capacity building in the cultural sector and public administration is one of the main goals. During the presentation the panel was informed of a project to train a number of project managers which went some way, but not completely, to allay those concerns. The panel were, however, impressed with the project to train up public officials in new ways of working in a more open manner (Matera Public Service build-up programme).

The panel explored the intention to increase tourism from an annual 200,000 to 600,000, and its possible impact on the fragile eco-system of the region. The panel was re-assured that research has indicated this is a sustainable number.

The financial forecasts are strong with over 70% of the projected budget already endowed to the Foundation regardless of the outcome of the competition. The intended use of the city and regional diaspora both as ambassadors and for crowd funding is innovative.

### **Perugia and the places of Francis of Assisi and Umbria**

The panel appreciated the city's Cultural Strategic Plan, set out in the bidbook with its emphasis on reconfiguring the city (especially the city centre) and strengthening the social and cultural sectors (both as individuals and organisations and through cultural and urban infrastructures). The city has an impressive list of 21 projects renovating buildings into cultural venues which it intends to carry out in the next five years. These, the panel noted, will change the potential for the cultural offer of the city.



The panel noted the participation of Assisi in the programme and the full participation of the 90 municipalities of the region. These would host 30% of the programme, a high proportion of the whole programme. Whilst welcoming geographic coverage of the programme the panel considered it can run the risk of diffusing the impact of an ECOOC and make it more difficult for an ECOOC to meet the European Dimension criteria in full in the majority of locations.

The proposed programme based around the three themes was clearly set out. However the panel were not convinced the themes were translated into a coherent artistic vision across both cities and region. The panel noted the intention to work with previous and future ECOOCs and twin cities. One of the key objectives of the ECOOC and the cultural strategy is to revitalise the universities but the panel did not see a substantial engagement with them as it would expect with such a prioritised objective.

The projects illustrated good partnerships with cultural operators across Europe although generally leaning towards the older Member States (excluding the partnership projects with Bulgarian cities). There was a lack of clarity on the criteria to be used in the open calls. The panel was uncertain that the programme would attract visitors from other countries (over and above the current visitor attractions of the city and region). Several areas of common European cultures were included, for example the “Future Farmers” project and “Never too Old to Surf”. The panel considered that the programme was not clear on exploring the cultural diversity of European cultures with the aim of enhancing an appreciation and understanding of that diversity by the citizens of the city and region.

The participation of citizens in the development and design of the programme was less evident than expected. The bidbook did acknowledge the aim to enhance participation in various projects but generally the panel thought this aspect of the criteria to be under-played.

It was clear that a strong legacy of the programme would be the revitalised buildings into new uses, including cultural. As with all ECOOCs with a large building related component there are concerns on the reliability of completion in time for the ECOOC year. However other areas of legacy were unclear. The ECOOC was strong in urban development but the benefits to cultural operators and artists in the city were not so visible.

The panel had concerns over the relatively high percentage of the budget forecast from the private sector. At 24% it is considerable higher than that achieved by previous ECOOCs and notwithstanding the assurances the panel considered this a risk.

## **Ravenna**

The panel appreciated the strategic objectives of the city, notably the inclusion of cultural and creative spaces in the Darsena urban regeneration programme. Such

massive revitalising of former industrial and port spaces has been a feature in several European cities and there is much to learn from such experiences. The panel noted the interesting analysis of the “silent crisis”, a period of apparent calm and the consequent need for a significant change in the relationship between citizens and public administrations; an area where culture can play a key role.

Ravenna started their bid process in 2007. This has enabled them to develop an enviable “bottom up” engagement with many citizens in the city, for example including over 25,000 schoolchildren contributing ideas on their views of Europe in 2019. There were two elements of the bid process which drew particular appreciation from the panel: the “2019 Test Runs” and “What If?” These were an innovative means of engaging with and explaining to citizens and the cultural sector the essence of the ECOC programme. The panel considered their engagement with panels, workshops and directed open calls a very good example of the bottom up process within the “city and citizens” criterion.

The programme based around the “Mosaic of Tiles” theme is well presented although the panel considered the sub-themes might be difficult to convey to both a local and international audience.

The programme incorporates a wide range of artists and cultural operators from across Europe. Several projects are likely to attract a wider international audience (e.g. *The Golden Age in the Arts*). The early completion of the House of Europe, demonstrates a clear commitment to the aims of the ECOC competition. The panel expects it will be a useful venue and practical symbol of the event in the city (notwithstanding the outcome of the competition). The panel noted the ambition behind the *European Propaganda* project; in a period where populism is on the rise in Europe this is a risky but needed project. The common aspects of culture in Europe were addressed in projects such as *Gender Notes* (with the LGBT community) and projects associated with the *Dante* anniversary starting in 2015 to 2021. The programme, the panel felt, did not highlight sufficiently the diversity of European cultures to enable citizens in Ravenna to increase their awareness and appreciation of that diversity.

The bidbook mentioned the high proportion on non-Italians now resident in the city and highlighted the “Festival of Intercultural Neighbourhoods” project at Lido Adriano where 80% of the population comes from 57 countries. This gives a strong contemporary European aspect to the bid. The panel appreciated the inclusion aspect of the projects using culture as a means to tackle the problems non-Italians often face.

Overall, however, the panel considered that the programme lacked an artistic and innovative depth. This may have been linked to the collective artistic leadership approach. This approach has not been successful in previous ECOCs who, although starting out with this approach, have found the need for an Artistic Director, rather than co-ordinator, to be necessary.

The financial plans for the ECOC were sound and well presented as were the objectives sought.

## **Siena**

The panel noted the clear analysis of the challenges facing the city and the clarity of the objectives. The aim is to develop a more open and diverse development model for the city replacing in part the previously dominant role of the banking sector. The ECOC bid connects with the diversification strategy of the economy of the city in which the knowledge economy, with innovation, contemporary culture, creative industries and new tourism models, have a central role. The positioning of the city alongside similar small to medium heritage/tourism based cities being overwhelmed by short stay “hit and run” tourism is shared with other European cities. The honesty of the problems facing foreigners in Italy was appreciated as was their active inclusion in the programme.

The programme sets itself some strong ambitions and consistent with the overall strategy of the city. It was coherent in its artistic direction and the bidbook matched the aspirations of the programme with specific projects.

The European Dimension was adequately set out in the cultural programme in terms of co-operation with artists and institutions. This was wide-ranging both across the EU and internationally. Several common aspects were addressed, notably the problems facing smaller heritage/tourism based cities and young people leaving for larger cities. There was less clarity on the cultural diversity of Europe and how the Sieneese will gain a greater awareness and appreciation of this diversity.

The panel appreciated the strong digital agenda, which by 2019 will be even more widespread and important to the cultural sector than now. It was noted how the digital/new media aspects permeated many projects from many disciplines. The panel was less convinced there were enough key anchor projects to attract a wider audience (rather than niche interests) beyond the regular attractions of the city. The panel noted the emphasis on the “prosumer” idea which is central to several strands of the programme. This is very much a contemporary approach to culture (and other sectors) and exploring how it might develop is of European importance. The objectives of moving to smart and newer forms of tourism were both central to the project but less convincingly explained in the bidbook and the presentation. The panel had concerns on the ability of the ECOC to change the business operations of the commercial tourism sector.

The approach to engaging with citizens in the bids development was novel, being based on many small scale interventions rather than a “mass market” approach. This was in keeping with the objectives of going beyond sheer numbers although it made

the participation less immediately evident. A noticeable element was that 20% of the programme had been developed by ethnic and cultural minorities.

The staffing plans of the ECOC were novel and in view of previous ECOC experience constituted a risk. The Panel's understanding of the role of the Artistic Director caused particular concern. The artistic vision of the ECOC is normally set out in the bidbook and so both guides and limits the subsequent influence of the Artistic Director. As the bidbook becomes the de facto contract for the title significant changes to the vision and programme are not expected subsequently.

### **The Panel's Decision**

The strength of all six candidates presented the panel with a challenging task.

The panel was presented with six different bids from six different cities facing their own challenges and each with its own interpretations of the criteria. All of the bids had many strong points as well as weaknesses. The panel was looking, according to the Decision, at the programme specifically designed for the ECOC year.

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

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

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

In the first, and only, ballot seven members, a majority, voted for Matera. Accordingly the panel recommends that the Ministry nominates, as the European Capital of Culture in 2019, the city of

### **Matera**

### **The next steps: designation**

This report has been submitted to the Ministry and the European Commission. Both will publish it on their websites. The Ministry will formally nominate one city to hold the title of ECOC in Italy in 2019 based on this report. By the end of 2014 the Ministry will duly inform the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, the European Commission and

the Committee of the Regions of its nomination. The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the European Commission within three months of receiving the nomination.

The Council of the European Union, upon a recommendation of the European Commission drawn up on the opinion of the European Parliament and the justification in this report will formally designate a city as the ECOC 2019 in Italy. This is expected in mid-2015. Only then may the recommended city call itself “European Capital of Culture 2019”.

### **The next steps: the monitoring phase**

Once an ECOC has been designated it enters the “Monitoring Phase” (article 10 of the Decision). The monitoring panel (the seven members of the selection panel nominated by the European Union institutions) will work with the ECOC to ensure the quality of the ECOC brand and to offer advice and experience.

The European Commission will invite the ECOC to provide progress reports and attend three meetings of the panel in Brussels:

- Autumn 2015 an “informal” meeting
- Autumn 2016 the first “formal” meeting. The panel’s report will be published.
- Spring 2018. At this meeting the panel will decide whether to recommend to the European Commission that the ECOC be granted the Melina Mercouri Prize. The panel’s report will be published.

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

The Melina Mercouri Prize is awarded by the European Commission on the basis of the report issued by the monitoring panel after the second monitoring meeting. The Prize is not automatic and is dependent on the ECOC meeting the objectives of the ECOC action set out in the Decision and how it has implemented the recommendations of the selection and monitoring panels (article 11 of the Decision).

The Prize is monetary, currently €1.5m and if all conditions are met, is awarded three months before the start of the ECOC year (in September 2018 for 2019).

### **The next steps: the panel’s recommendations**

The panel makes these recommendations to the recommended city. The monitoring panel will expect a progress report in autumn 2015.

Experience has shown that successful ECOCs use the first year after selection to establish all the governance, management and administration structures and systems. This allows the subsequent two years to focus on programme development in time for the full programme to be in place by mid-2018. The panel would expect:

- The Foundation established in September 2014 to be fully operational and the various Board members appointed.
- The relationship between the Board of Trustees, the Board of Directors and the staff of the foundation to be clearly delineated and made public.
- The Boards to understand their role as strategic not executive, facilitative, ambassadorial and financially accountable. The expectation is that politicians and political appointees will be in the minority of the Boards (and possibly not in chair positions).
- The recruitment through open competition, as set out in the bidbook, of the senior posts of Director-General and Artistic Director (Cultural Manager) together with the Administration and Development managers. All posts should be filled by early 2015. The bidbook did not clearly indicate the responsibility for marketing, only a team. Experience has shown the need for a close link between the marketing function and the cultural manager. There is a risk the former may become too close to the tourism rather than cultural objectives of the ECOC.
- A detailed staffing plan up to 2020 including the use of volunteers.
- To revisit the training needs of cultural and project managers in the city and region and develop an enhanced and sustainable skills programme.
- The internal administrative systems to be in place and operating. These include finance, human resources, legal (e.g. project contract arrangements), data privacy, intellectual property rights, the criteria and systems for calls for projects, the marketing, branding strategy and the external auditing arrangements.
- A start to the monitoring and evaluation process including the collection of base-year qualitative and quantitative data. A noticeable trend in recent ECOCs (e.g. Aarhus2017) is for monitoring and evaluation to be in progress and open during the development period to record progress being made towards objectives. This runs in parallel but ahead of the standard evaluation which takes place after the ECOC year and beyond (the approach of the Liverpool08 study). The evaluations should include references to the two main ECOC criteria, the European Dimension (e.g. how citizens in Matera become more aware of the diversity of European cultures as a result of the ECOC) and the city and citizens (e.g. how citizens feel they are more engaged in civic decision making).
- To continue discussions with the national government over its contribution to the ECOC (and with the other five candidates) so that long term planning can take place in a reasonably secure financial context.
- To establish a working relationship between the ECOC Foundation and the appropriate senior staff in the Council administration (across many departments). This may also extend to the Regional administration.
- Given the acknowledged prudent budgeting of the ECOC steps should be taken to review the financial forecasts. This should include exploring EU funding, as outlined in the bidbook. A specialist fundraiser function (seeking funds from all sources) may be of use in the early years.
- The bidbook, its programme, its artistic vision and objectives, will remain the principal focus: it is the de facto contract to hold the title. The monitoring panel

will seek an update on the programme, and any changes, at all of the meetings. Keeping to the original bidbook is a significant factor in the discussions leading to the recommendation for the Melina Mercouri Prize.

- The ECOC should retain the momentum and engagement with citizens and cultural operators in the city through meetings and events (e.g. around Europe Day in May 2015) in line with the city and citizens objective.
- The European Dimension needs a constant refresh and enhancement. Previous ECOCs often find difficulty in meeting this criterion as the programme develops in detail. This trend should be resisted and the European Dimension kept to the forefront. The panel felt that in particular the criterion of highlighting the diversity of cultures in Europe, for citizens in Matera, was under-prepared. The panel will expect an increase in projects in this area.
- To ensure that all material (print, online) in the name of the ECOC duly recognises the ECOC as a European Union programme.

## **Thanks**

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

Mr Steve Green – Chair

Mrs Emma Giammattei – Vice Chair

Mrs Lorenza Bolelli

Mr Gerardo Casale

Mr Paolo Dalla Sega

Dr Ulrich Fuchs

Mr Alessandro Hinna

Mrs Anu Kivilo

Mr Francesco Manacorda

Mr Jordi Pardo

Mr Norbert Riedl

Prof Dr Elisabeth Vitouch

Dr Suzana Žilič Fišer