



Matera

European Capital of Culture 2019

Second Monitoring Meeting

Report by the Monitoring and Advisory Panel

Brussels, April 2018

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Directorate Culture and Creativity
Unit D2

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Introduction

This report follows the meeting in Brussels on 18 April 2018 between Matera, one of the two European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) in 2019, and the monitoring and advisory panel (the "panel")¹. Matera was designated as European Capital of Culture in May 2015 on the basis of the panel's selection report²; its bid-book is available on the Matera-Basilicata 2019 website³. There was an informal meeting between Matera and the panel in September 2015, and a first formal monitoring meeting in October 2016. There were also two visits by a panel's delegation to Matera in March 2016 and in September 2017.

The report is addressed to the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation (the "Foundation") and will be published on the European Commission's website⁴.

Attendance

The panel members:

Sylvia Amann (Rapporteur) and Cristina Farinha (Chair), appointed by the European Parliament 2018-2020

Jiří Suchánek and Tamas Fejerdy, appointed by the Council of the European Union 2016-2018

Ulrich Fuchs and Suzana Žilić Fišer, appointed by the European Commission 2017-2019

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

For Matera-Basilicata 2019:

Raffaello De Ruggieri, Mayor of Matera

Salvatore Adduce, President of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation

Paolo Verri, Director of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation

Ariane Bieou, Cultural Programme Manager of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation

Rossella Tarantino, Development and Relations Manager of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation

Giuseppe Romaniello, Financial and Administrative Manager of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation

¹ The European Capitals of Culture action is governed by Decision 1622/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council for the titles 2007 to 2019, which provides for two formal monitoring meetings between designated cities and a monitoring and advisory panel. See: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1476455600669&uri=CELEX:32006D1622>.

² See selection report at: https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/files/ecoc-2019-report-italy_en.pdf

³ <http://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/archivi/news/550-the-bid-book-of-matera-2019-is-on-line.html>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en

Antonio Nicoletti, Municipality of Matera

Giovanni Oliva, Secretary General of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation

Elvira De Giacomo, Secretary, Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation

Also in attendance were observers from the European Commission (Directorate-General Education and Culture), from the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture and Svetlana Kuyumdzhieva, the Artistic Director from Plovdiv 2019 Foundation.

Report from Matera-Basilicata 2019 and discussion

The Matera-Basilicata Foundation 2019 submitted a comprehensive report in advance of the meeting. The report reflected on the status of the ongoing intensive preparation for the ECOC year as well as on the recommendations included in previous monitoring reports and in the letters resulting from the city visits by the panel.

In addition, the Matera-Basilicata 2019 delegation focused their presentation on the following points:

- The Mayor highlighted the importance of the European Capital of Culture project for the transformation of the city and the potential to generate equally pride and sense of responsibility within the population. The Mayor also presented the new President of the Foundation, Salvatore Adduce, former Mayor of Matera during the bid process.
- Based on the panel's recommendations, the Foundation changed its statutes in order to simplify its governance structure. In particular, it suppressed the originally planned supervisory board and decided to do without the planned Artistic Director for the non-bid artistic projects. Furthermore, it was highlighted that Mr. Giovanni Oliva was appointed as new General Secretary of the Foundation.
- The Foundation considerably enlarged the number of staff members with respect to communication, marketing and administration – the latter to ensure correct cash-flows and monitoring. The mid-term staff plan foresees a total number of 65 members for the year 2019.
- The overall budget for the ECOC project is secured. Minor shifts concern the budget lines "wages" and "promotion". The main financial management focus is now on appropriate cash-flows.
- The programme for the ECOC year is under intensive preparation with 62% of the programme being already negotiated (and in phase of implementation) while 12% is currently being negotiated.

- Major advancements are achieved with regard to 27 co-creation projects involving the local creative scene and population as well as with the initiative “Change Makers and Linkers” – a network of 40 cultural producers covering the whole South of Italy.
- The preparation of 4 main exhibitions is under way. These will cover the whole year 2019 and provide easy access to the ECOC programme.
- The ODS – Open Design School (Pillar Project 1) – is operational and works with a co-creation and open approach to develop the European Capital of Culture programme covering inter alia exhibition design, mapping of venues as well as stage design challenges.
- The second Pillar Project – “I-DEA” – advanced in selecting 30 archives, and further cooperation with curators was established.
- The cooperation with the second European Capital of Culture Plovdiv 2019 is planned in detail and will cover 5 major events including the opening and urban games.
- The communication plan will also include shared activities with Plovdiv 2019, namely common major events in Italy (such as in Rome notably) in 2018.
- Lump sum tickets for the ECOC 2019 year are expected to be available from September 2018 on.
- Innovative digital communication approaches are planned with the support of a specialised company developing an application enabling visitors to become temporary citizens of Matera in the year 2019. The related revenues generated will be used for legacy activities beginning in 2020.

Discussion

During the discussion part of the monitoring meeting, the panel sought clarification on a number of issues and offered experience and advice. The following topics were addressed:

- The panel sought explanation regarding the preparation of the four main exhibitions and the current status of development of the programme. The Matera 2019 team ensured that the main curators and staff for the exhibitions were under contract and operational. Furthermore, it stressed that contracts were already signed for a majority of projects. The panel insisted that at least 70% of the overall programme should now be under contract.
- The panel further asked about the current status of programme planning and looked for clarification on the total number of cultural offers for the year 2019 in Matera as well as the splitting of the programme between own productions, co-

productions and labelled events. The team replied that at this stage it was too early for them to provide a complete answer and that they were aware of the need for urgent action.

- The panel showed concerns about the opening ceremony and asked for clarification. The Foundation explained that it will sign by the end of May an all-in contract with the national broadcasting company RAI for the opening ceremony; the event will include cooperation with different Italian and European cities, a working group between RAI and the Foundation is established while the Foundation will bear the responsibility for the artistic content.
- The panel wished deeper insight in the “Change Maker and Linker” initiative. Matera 2019 team explained that to date 40 young cultural operators were involved. While the Makers focus on production, the Linkers work on audience engagement and community building. The participants benefit of an intensive training programme.
- The panel asked how the European dimension was ensured in the programme. The team confirmed that all projects had a European dimension whether by the topic, by the artists invited or by the partnership involved. Furthermore, considerable efforts are dedicated to the streaming of events in order to allow a wider (European) audience to participate in Matera 2019.
- The panel asked about the involvement of citizens. The team highlighted the activities of the Open Design School as well as of the Lumen project. A community platform is facilitating small community projects and enables cooperation with other ECOC cities. Furthermore, the co-creation projects also involve schools while efforts are under way to enlarge the number of volunteers.
- The panel wanted to better understand the current status of the locations available for the ECOC 2019 events and potential needs for alternatives to be devised. The Matera 2019 team insisted that due to the wealth of potential locations – a specific mapping was recently done by ODS – all the problems that may arise in this respect could easily be solved. A new nomadic structure for performing arts, to be used notably in the Cava del Sole, was mentioned. Finally, the change of location for the ODS from the Sassi district to a rural villa in the city outskirts was also explained and justified by the opportunity to revitalise this area. The representative of the city confirmed that considerable efforts were under way to have all the needed infrastructures ready for the year 2019.
- Communicating a complex programme is not an easy task. The panel sought further clarification on the related efforts from Matera 2019. The team outlined the main communication tools such as the cooperation with RAI PLAY and the application for temporary citizens. Crucial will be a good and easy readability of the message and vision of the ECOC year and the idea of a "symphony telling stories" is currently under investigation. In addition, Matera 2019 informed the Panel that a wide range of communication partnerships would be established.

- The panel asked the main reasons why a tourist should go to Matera in 2019. The Mayor stressed that the vision of Matera 2019 was unique as it aims at involving and encouraging strong interactions with visitors, in particular through the concept of temporary citizens. The panel sought further clarifications on this concept and the corresponding application (Passport 2019). The Foundation explained that an application had been developed with a private company for the booking of cultural events. Cooperation with the tourism stakeholders is also planned.
- Further insight was then requested by the Panel with regard to the Passport 2019. The team explained that the contract with the company would soon be signed and that the company would also hold the rights on the application. The panel expressed concerns regarding the timing as well as the rights and content management (also for a potential use in monitoring) which it urged the Foundation to clarify before signing contracts.
- The panel wished to further discuss the governance structures. The Mayor and the President of the Foundation confirmed their good partnership. The newly appointed General Secretary defined his tasks with regard to dealing with citizens' requests, human resources coach and building up a team to ensure the fulfilment of all legal requirements for financial transactions.
- The panel further asked about the current level of staffing and was ensured that an external company was contracted to guarantee appropriate internal work flows, decision making as well as financial management. Moreover, the panel also asked for clarification regarding the position of Joseph Grima and the division of roles and interdependencies between him and the managers of the cultural programme and development and relations. The team ensured that there were regular meetings among them and that Joseph Grima assumed independently the responsibility of concrete projects. On legacy and sustainable use of heritage in the city, the Mayor replied that after the ECOC year the city's ambition was to be a model for the whole South of Europe in terms of positive development. Central concerns must be creativity and production anchored also in the digital context of the 21st century.
- The panel closed by saying that it wished to the whole team fruitful and successful preparations of the ECOC year.

The Panel Opinion

The panel welcomes the considerable improvements achieved with regard to the governance structure on strategic and operational levels as well as the good cooperation between the Mayor and the new President of the Foundation.

However, further clarification regarding the tasks of some staff members in connection with key parts of the development of the cultural programme (pillar projects, cultural

direction) is still needed. Furthermore, persisting vacancies with regard to the staffing plan need to be filled as early as possible.

The panel welcomes the secured budgetary framework and the related commitments of all key financial providers. It equally appreciates the settings and staffing framework in order to ensure appropriate cash-flow and financial reporting. With the newly appointed General Secretary related strategic responsibilities are clearly defined.

The panel recognises the results achieved so far with some of the key projects of the cultural programme. The involvement of the next generation from the whole region within the Change Makers and Linkers project is especially promising. The open and engaged cooperation with Plovdiv 2019 is another positive element.

The panel would like to draw the attention of the Foundation to the preparation of the programme and notably to the operational implementation settings. To date no thorough distinction is made between projects produced by the Foundation, those co-produced and/or labelled (with specification about a co-financing or not by the Foundation). Furthermore, the pace of contracting is insufficient also regarding the preparation of the four main exhibitions. The cooperation structure with the RAI in order to prepare the opening ceremony needs considerable further planning and clarification.

The panel recognizes the important communication and marketing efforts already implemented by Matera Basilicata 2019 and especially honours the initiative for joint marketing with Plovdiv, the other European Capital of Culture in 2019. It encourages the team to make further efforts regarding the translation of the programme's content into simplified and meaningful messages towards the different target groups.

However, several elements of audience and visitor's communication (including tourists) will need further attention: the proposed communication approach using the metaphor of a symphony is rather complex, the Passport 2019 requires further discussions and arrangements with the sponsoring company and the hospitality offer is not yet clearly communicated.

The panel draws further attention of the team to the strategic planning of the legacy. The proposed Passport 2019 will in the best case provide the financial framework for activities after the implementation year.

The panel recommendation

- The panel recommends updating the tasks descriptions for the key staff members for the preparation of the cultural programme in order to clarify responsibilities and ensure smooth decision making and contracting.
- The panel encourages the team to further accelerate the filling of vacancies in order to make the whole foundation fully operational.
- The panel strongly recommends a structured planning of the programme covering own productions, co-productions and labelled projects. Related settings and contracts should be concluded by June 2018 for 70% of the total programme. The remaining 30% are to be finalised by September 2018.
- The panel reminds the team that the four main exhibitions are the pillars of the cultural programme for visitors. Special attention has to be given to the careful planning of these programme elements. Related contracting must have absolute priority.
- The opening weekend is a demanding event and needs therefore an own team. The panel recommends to clarifying further the responsibilities between this team of the Foundation and the external contractor.
- The panel recommends building up a task force for assisting and guiding those being in charge of co-productions to ensure a clear division of tasks as well as rapid preparation.
- The panel suggests further reflection on meaningful communication messages. The different target groups need to be carefully taken into account including also the categories of more “traditional” and new tourists. Related hospitality programmes are to be developed.
- With regard to the Passport 2019 project, the panel proposes a careful analysis of management capacities as well as the rights (Foundation, company, and Passport holders) and potential use for monitoring and evaluation of the data collected in line with privacy rules. It needs furthermore a systematic cooperation and involvement of the local and regional tourism boards.
- The panel advises to make a clear plan for the use of the infra-structure needed for the whole year round ECOC programme, including alternative locations, so to ensure a smooth change in case of delays. The panel also suggests starting communicating this issue beforehand, so that there is also a good understanding among the population and the media about this issue.
- The panel recommends dedicating resources to the strategic planning of the legacy of Matera Basilicata 2019, notably regarding the ODS and other flagship projects, with a participative approach involving the team of the Foundation, the Scientific Committee and stakeholders of the city and region.

Next steps

The panel congratulates Matera Basilicata 2019 for the efforts made so far and its dedication to the preparation of European Capital of Culture in 2019.

In view of the compliance with the criteria of strong European Dimension and City and the Citizens involvement, and the take up of most of the recommendations of the panel during the preparation phase, the panel recommends the Commission to award the Melina Mercouri prize to Matera Basilicata 2019.

The panel thanks the Matera Basilicata 2019 delegation for their report and the open discussion and looks forward to the implementation of the ECOC in the coming year.

