



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

Matera

European Capital of Culture 2019

Informal Post-Designation Meeting

Report by the Monitoring and Advisory Panel

Brussels

September 2015

Introduction

This report follows the meeting in Brussels on 16 September 2015 between Matera, one of the two European Capitals of Culture (ECOC)¹ in 2019, and the monitoring and advisory panel (the “panel”). It is the first meeting since the selection meeting in October 2014² and the formal designation of Matera as an ECOC in May 2015.

The report is addressed to the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation (the Foundation) which may decide on its wider distribution. The panel encourages the Foundation to publish the report on its website.

Attendance

The panel members:

Sylvia Amann and Cristina Farinha, appointed by the European Parliament 2015-2017

Anu Kivilo and Norbert Riedl, appointed by the Council of the EU 2013-15

Ulrich Fuchs (Chair) and Dr Suzana Žilič Fišer, appointed by the European Commission 2014-2016

Dr Elisabeth Vitouch, nominated by the Committee of the Regions 2013-2015

For Matera-Basilicata 2019:

Raffaello Giulio De Ruggieri, Mayor of Matera

Paolo Verri, Director of Fondazione Matera-Basilicata 2019

Rosa Tarantino, Development and Relations Manager of the Fondazione Matera-Basilicata 2019

Antonio Nicoletti, Strategic Programs and EU Funds for the Municipality of Matera.

Also in attendance were observers from the European Commission (Directorate-General "Education and Culture").

Report from Matera-Basilicata 2019 and discussion

The Foundation submitted a written report in advance of the meeting. The report outlined the activities carried out since their selection in 2014. The panel welcomes that the report is public on the website of the Foundation.

At the meeting Matera made a presentation which included these points:

¹ The European Capitals of Culture are governed by Decision 1622/2006/EU of the European Parliament and Council. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006D1622>

² http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/2019/report-italy_en.pdf

- Raffaello de Ruggieri, the newly elected Mayor of Matera, presented the team around him and gave an introductory speech about the importance of the title for the city and the commitment of the new City Council to make a big success of it, building on what had been achieved so far. He also insisted on the fruitful connections developed with the Regional and the National Government, and on the need to maximise the engagement of the citizens of Matera and its region in favour of the project and attract visitors from Italy and beyond as "temporary citizens".
- Paolo Verri explained what happened last year in Matera and what would happen in the coming months. The recognition of the importance of the ECOC title is illustrated by the Ministry of Culture's decision to have the other finalists of the competition as Italian Capitals of Culture in 2015. Matera is now working with the short-listed candidates for the title of Italian Capital of Culture in 2016 and 2017 to help them taking advantage of this opportunity.
- Media attention has been very high since the designation of Matera, with many media requests coming from Italy and abroad, including an article of 18 pages in the New Yorker. It is estimated that this represents the equivalent of an investment of 15 million Euros.
- In December 2014, Paolo Verri and Rossella Tarantino - Director and Project Manager of Matera 2019 Committee – have been confirmed respectively as Director and Development and Relations Manager of the Matera-Basilicata 2019 Foundation without the issuing of a call. Other staff members have also been maintained, for example the person in charge of digital communication, ensuring that the momentum is not lost.
- The funding from the Basilicata Region was confirmed and secured contractually in April.
- In April Matera held a communication meeting with other ECOCs (past and future) resulting in recommendations addressed to various stakeholders including the European Commission. Matera is ready to be a platform for communication of the ECOCs.
- The collaboration with Plovdiv is already strong. A joint event was held in Brussels to celebrate the official designation of the two cities. A common dissemination strategy has been designed.
- Matera is also collaborating with other ECOC and European cities that share similar problems with tourism and want to induce change through culture.
- On governance, research is being carried out to find out what is the best model with the view to ensuring a high quality implementation. A regional coordination group is already in place, having also financing functions. The idea is to maintain the delivery structure to a minimum and enhance co-production or external production to foster capacity building in the region. On the other hand, the legal structure of the Foundation is in place, so is the Board of Directors, which includes the Mayor, the President of the Region and the Rector of the University. The setting up of a Board of Trustees is in progress.

- Audience development is one of the main focuses for Matera, as the ambition is to involve a population scattered in 131 municipalities across the region. The connection to the whole region is very important in this project. The idea is to have the citizens of Matera and its region more culturally engaged.
- Regarding the staff of the Foundation, an open call for an administrative manager and for a cultural manager are being prepared, and will be launched on the basis of the results of the study about overall management. Also an advisory committee for the artistic direction is sought, where Joseph Grima would be involved. The evaluation will be made by a separate body while monitoring will be carried out in collaboration with the Basilicata University.
- On the programme, there are no big changes from the bid-book. However, the team is now re-reading the bid-book, with the idea to merge some of the themes and some of the projects, reducing their number as well as the number of clusters to one per month plus the opening and closing events. Equally, the main projects will be reduced to one per week.
- So as to better involve local cultural operators, it was decided that 10% of the budget would be allocated through an open call to involve operators that were not included in the current bid-book.
- Next steps to be taken are the definition of the budget for the main events and the definition of the main projects for 2016.
- Finally stress will be put in strengthening the links with the city strategy.
- Rosa Tarantino explained that the budget could slightly increase in comparison to what was foreseen at selection stage (as to the National Government contribution) and commented on the steps being taken to secure it.
- The idea is to extend the inter-institutional working group set up to identify funding sources for each of the projects to the national Government in order to secure national funding. The Foundation is now working with the view to formalising the contribution of the National Government, estimated at 20 MM €, instead of the 12MM initially estimated.
- On the "City and the Citizens" dimension, Matera highlighted the projects "Basilicata Fiorita" and "Gardentopia", with an estimated participation of 1,000 citizens. A community is being created around green culture with four projects selected through a call for projects.
- Antonio Nicoletti explained briefly his role as EU funding advisor within the Municipality, collaborating closely with the Foundation. His mission is to ensure that all facilities are in place at City level to host the ECOC project, also in terms of welcoming the visitors and development of infrastructures. Negotiations are underway with the National Government about loosening the constraints connected with the Stability Pact. Training of the staff in the administration and the city's visitor front-line services (policeman, bus and taxi drivers etc) is also under development.

Discussion

During the discussion the panel sought clarification on a number of issues and offered experience and advice. Topics included:

- The panel welcomed the support expressed by the newly elected Mayor to the overall concept and vision of the ECOC project as presented in the original bid-book. It also gave its full support to the delivery team that has managed the successful application of Matera 2019 as well as the first steps in the preparation of the ECOC project since the city was recommended as the Italian ECOC for 2019.
 - **Recommendation 1:** The panel recommends that the City and regional authorities continue to fully support the Foundation and its team members, and play a strategic (as opposed to executive), facilitation, ambassadorial and financially accountable role vis à vis the Foundation.
- Regarding the choice of the governance and management models for the Foundation, still to be decided, the panel takes note that the outcomes of the ongoing research will be delivered very soon. It is however concerned about the delays already incurred.
 - **Recommendation 2:** The panel recommends that the structure of the Foundation is decided and the senior management is completed as soon as possible (at the latest by the end of 2015 or early 2016), to avoid further delays that might jeopardize the preparation of the year. There is also a need to rapidly put in place a complete organisation chart and a solid team with long term contracts and clear mission statements.
- The panel had some concerns about the choice of not having an artistic director but a cultural manager and the impact this might have on the artistic leadership of the project. Equally, the panel expressed some concerns about the composition of the Artistic Board. The Foundation explained that the Board would have 3 to 5 members not linked to the political establishment. It should contain the local, regional, national and European dimensions. A person in charge of "the City and the Citizens" dimension and an expert in digitisation might also be included.
 - **Recommendation 3:** The panel recommends Matera 2019 to clearly define the roles of the Artistic Board and the senior management team and to reconsider if there should not be an artistic director (instead of a "cultural manager"). It is important to ensure that the artistic leadership is clear and is clearly communicated internally and externally. The artistic board should also include local representatives.
- The panel inquired about the digitisation strategy, which is an important element of Matera 2019. It also asked about the contacts developed with the network of Italian Universities on Digital Cultural Heritage and whether they would contribute financially to the ECOC. The Foundation confirmed that Universities would provide

in-kind contribution and also help with applications to EU programmes such as Horizon 2020.

- Regarding the budget the panel takes note of Matera's intention to make an intensive use of ERDF and ESF funding as already mentioned in their bid-book, as well as of their plan to negotiate with the banks to cover possible cash-flow problems with ERDF or ESF money. The panel also welcomes the ongoing discussions with the National Government to increase the latter's financial contribution to the ECOC project.
 - **Recommendation 4:** The panel recommends Matera to define a strategic planning for the years to come in relation with their requests for funding from ERDF and ESF (including a precise timetable and identification of cash flow needs).
 - **Recommendation 5:** The panel recommends Matera to include a representative of the National Government in its Board.
 - **Recommendation 6:** The Foundation should clearly define the roles and responsibilities of the Foundation and the City Council with regards to the infrastructure projects, notably as the capital expenditure previewed is high. Accordingly the timetable for the urban planning that is connected to ECoC programme should be presented in the nearest future (or beginning of 2016).
- The panel was interested in the sponsorship strategy and its results, and whether it is gathering also new financiers for culture. The Foundation explained that some key sponsors have already been identified. The Foundation is confident that the private funding figures foreseen can be reached.
 - **Recommendation 7:** The panel recommends that a clearer sponsorship strategy be developed, including accurate projections for income and a contingency plan in case these are not achieved. This should include more realistic plans for private funding.
- The panel inquired about the communication strategy and staff as changing the image of the city notably among tourists and tourist operators is part of project aims. The Foundation said they have a person from the Region seconded for communication. The Foundation is already working with RAI for a specific programme in 2019. The Foundation intends to cover two further positions for communication, for advertising and copywriting.
- The panel understands that the programme is now under revision with the ambition to increase the European Dimension. This might result in the grouping of similar

projects and the simplification of clusters and, consequently, ease the management of the programme and make the programme easier to communicate. The panel also welcomes the idea of testing one project per cluster.

- **Recommendation 8:** The panel recommends that the local artists and cultural operators are properly involved in the programme preparation to enhance capacity building in the sector.
- **Recommendation 9:** The panel recommends that the decision on the co-production modalities (self-production, partial co-production, full outsourcing) are made already now, taking into account the environment and capacities available in Matera. The panel also recommends that a list of projects starts to be built (including timetable, budget, legal status, EU dimension and partners).
- **Recommendation 10:** Further to the above points, the panel recommends that Matera should continue working with the other candidate cities and enhance the cooperation with other ECOC.
- **Recommendation 11:** On a more general tone, the panel recalls that the programme of Matera which is currently under scrutiny must be in line with the bid-book on the basis of which the city was selected. The programme must in particular include a strong European Dimension (in all its three facets), foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and raise the interest of citizens from abroad, as well as be sustainable and an integral part of the long-term development of the city.

Next Steps

The panel would appreciate to be informed by the end of 2015 which model of governance the Foundation has chosen.

In autumn 2016 the European Commission will invite Matera for the first formal monitoring meeting. Ahead of the meeting, it will issue guidance on the content of the advance progress report. This advance progress report will be more detailed than the one produced for this meeting and will include reference to the recommendations included both in this post designation report and in the selection report. The main focus is likely to be on the plans for the programme and the panel looks forward to the initial views of the Cultural Manager/Artistic Director. The report from that meeting will be published on the European Commission's website.

The panel thanks the Matera Basilicata 2019 delegation for their report and the open discussion. It congratulates them on a substantial achievement in their first year and looks forward to another successful year in the development of the ECOC.