

REPORT
FOR THE FIRST MONITORING AND
ADVISORY MEETING
FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF
CULTURE 2012

Issued by

**The Monitoring and advisory Panel for the European
Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2012**

December 2009

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This is the report of the first monitoring and advisory meeting of the European Capital of Culture Panel. The meeting concerned the 2012 European Capitals of Culture, namely Guimarães (Portugal) and Maribor (Slovenia); it took place on 25 November 2009.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The European Capital of Culture designation and monitoring

The European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) initiative, a major European Union activity, is aimed at highlighting the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as promoting greater mutual knowledge and understanding among Europe's citizens.

“The European City of Culture” project was launched in 1985 by the Member States meeting in the Council on the initiative of Mrs Melina Mercouri. Since then, the event has grown in popularity every year, and is now well known to European citizens.

Until 2004, the European Capitals of Culture were designated by the Council on the basis of intergovernmental cooperation. Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council established a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019. By this decision, a *new nomination procedure* was introduced, involving a panel in charge of assessing the proposals of cities. For each year from 2009 to 2019, two Member States are entitled to make proposals to the EU: one from the Member States which joined the EU in 2004, another one from the others.

Following recommendations from stakeholders, the scheme of designating the European Capitals of Culture was modified in 2006, in order to introduce a more effective process of European designation. Consequently, Decision 1622/2006/EC is now the only applicable legal Decision. In accordance with this Decision, the 2010 European Capitals of Culture and all those that follow are submitted to a monitoring phase between the designation and the beginning of the event.

The 2012 European Capitals of Culture were designated under the scheme laid down by Decision 1419/1999/EC; they are submitted to the monitoring process initiated by Decision 1622/2006/EC.

The monitoring is carried out under the responsibility of 7 members designated by the European Institutions. This panel is called the monitoring and advisory panel. It shall be convened on two occasions between the designation and the beginning of the event to give advice on, and to take stock of the preparations for the event with a view to helping the cities develop a high quality programme with a strong European dimension. For the 2012 title, the first monitoring meeting took place on 25 November 2009, the second one will take place in spring 2011.

On the basis of the report issued by the monitoring and advisory panel after its second meeting, a prize in honour of Melina Mercouri shall be awarded to the designated cities by the Commission, provided that they meet the criteria of the action and have implemented the recommendations made by the selection as well as the monitoring and advisory panels. The prize shall be monetary and shall be awarded at the latest three months before the start of the relevant year. It will be financed by the Culture Programme. The requirements for the award of the prize are mentioned in paragraph 5 below.

1.2. Guimarães and Maribor as 2012 European Capitals of Culture

Portugal and Slovenia were the two Member States entitled to make proposals for the 2012 title. Portugal proposed Guimarães and Slovenia proposed Maribor.

The selection panel met on 23 April 2008 to examine the nominations. This examination included hearings of representatives from the candidate cities. The panel assessed the proposals against the criteria laid down for the event and then invited the cities concerned to develop their plans further, to focus more strongly on the main objectives and characteristics of the action as defined in Decision 1622/2006/EC, including cultural programmes that have a long term impact for the city and the region, and to complete their application accordingly. The panel expected a more detailed programme, especially for artistic events with a major European dimension. The completed applications were received by the Commission by 30 September 2008 and a new selection meeting took place on 5 November 2008. The panel submitted its report to the Commission in late November 2008; at the request of the panel, the Commission forwarded the report to the other Institutions.

On the basis of an overall evaluation of the applications, the panel – while suggesting some improvements, notably concerning Maribor's application - reached a consensus to recommend to the Institutions of the European Union that Guimarães and Maribor host the European Capital of Culture in 2012.

The Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament forwarded a letter to DG EAC on 28 January 2009, as a follow up to the panel's report, to highlight the relevant aspects of the designation of the 2012 European Capitals of culture.

In conclusion, the Commission submitted to the Council a recommendation for the official designation of Guimarães and Maribor for the 2012 European Capital of Culture event.

The EU Council of Ministers of 12 May 2009 designated Guimarães and Maribor as the 2012 European Capitals of Culture (2009/400/CE).

1.3. European Capitals of Culture 2012. Remarks made by the selection panel

This section summarizes remarks made by the Selection Panel in November 2008:¹

1.3.1. Guimarães

The panel has welcomed the vast progress made by the city in comparison with its first application. The panel was impressed by the commitment of the team and the cultural sector to this project, which greatly relies on the quality of the partnership. The concept of the event was strong, and the University was highly motivated to participate in the event. The panel was impressed by the team and its presentation and stressed the importance of now translating the vision and the concept into concrete projects. The success of progress made by Guimarães would greatly depend on continuity of the working method and the new team now put together. The panel recommended continuing

¹ The report is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/2012ecoc-report.pdf>

along the lines which have now been set for the entire preparation phase, stressing the importance of staff stability. It regretted that the newly appointed director did not participate in the presentation and would like to see the whole team formally appointed as soon as possible.

1.3.2. Maribor

The panel was impressed by the commitment, enthusiasm and ambition of the new team and was happy to see that the city had improved the bid in comparison with the application presented in April 2008 by taking into account the advice delivered at that time. It stressed the very high number of projects comprising the programme and expressed its doubts about the capacity of the city to implement them all. In priority, it would like to see events specifically designed for the year in the programme. It therefore underlined that in order to be successful, Maribor would need to be selective. The panel members advised that the programme would be more easily manageable if the team succeeded in giving priority to a more restricted number of demanding, but realistic projects. In this regard, the panel requested a list of 5 to 7 priorities for the event. The panel also reflected on the added value which external expertise could bring in helping to acquire the added value needed for the preparation of this kind of European project. In this context the panel suggested that the city might benefit from involving external advisors for the further development of the project, in particular with regards to artistic excellence.

1.4. The monitoring and advisory panel

The monitoring and advisory panel is currently composed of the following members:

Sir Robert Scott and Mr Manfred Gaulhofer, appointed by the Commission for the 2008-2010 period (Commission Decision of 17 April 2008).

Mr Andreas Wiesand and Ms Danuta Glondys, appointed by the European Parliament for the 2009-2011 period (Decision of EP Conference of Presidents of 13 November 2008).

Ms Mary Mac Carthy and Ms Mary Michailidou, appointed by the Culture Council for the 2007-2009 period (Council Decision of September 2007).

Mr Jyrki Myllyvirta, appointed by the Committee of the Regions for the 2007-2009 period (letter of 3 April 2007 from President Delebarre to Commissioner Figel').

The panel was chaired by Sir Robert Scott.

2. FIRST MEETING OF THE MONITORING AND ADVISORY PANEL IN BRUSSELS, 25 NOVEMBER 2009

2.1. Organisation of the meeting

The 2012 European Capitals of Culture had been invited by the panel to answer some questions listed in a "monitoring form" and to send it back to the Commission by the end of August 2009. The Commission forwarded the completed forms to the panel immediately upon their reception. At the initiative of the Commission, the panel members were invited to a meeting on 25 November 2009 in Brussels. The cities were

invited to present the progress achieved so far in the preparation of the event and to answer questions from the panel members.

The meeting was structured around the following sessions:

- Presentation by representatives from Guimarães 2012 and question/answer session
- Presentation by representatives from Maribor 2012 and question/answer session
- Panel discussion, outlines of the report and conclusions (restricted to Panel members and the Commission as observer)

Sir Robert Scott chaired the meeting. The following were present from the European Commission, as observers: Mr Vladimír Šucha (Director for Culture, Communication and Multilingualism), Ann Branch (Head of Unit - Culture Programme and Actions), Jacqueline Pacaud, Patrizia Baralli, Jean-Philippe Gammel (Culture Programme and Actions Unit). The delegations of the 2012 European Capitals of Culture were composed as follows:

2.1.1. The Guimarães 2012 delegation

1. Mrs Cristina DE AZEVEDO – Fundação Cidade de Guimarães CEO (excused)
2. Mr João SERRA - Fundação Cidade de Guimarães Chief Executive in charge of the Cultural Program
3. Mrs Carla MORAIS - Fundação Cidade de Guimarães Chief Financial Officer (excused)
4. Mr Carlos MARTINS – Guimarães 2012 Project Manager

2.1.2. The Maribor 2012 delegation

1. Mr Vladimir RUKAVINA - director of Maribor - ECoC 2012 Secretariat
2. Mr Uroš MENCINGER

3. SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE 2012 ECOCS AND QUESTION/ANSWER SESSIONS

3.1. Guimarães 2012

In the absence of Ms Azevedo, Mr Martins presented the preparation of Guimarães 2012. At the request of the Panel, he explained that Ms Azevedo had taken her current function of Director of the Foundation only on 1 September 2009, but, as she knew of her official appointment since October 2008, she had been informally involved much earlier.

Mr Martins presented the governance structure. In September the managing agency had been set up as a foundation, Cidade de Guimarães, funded by the City of Guimarães and the Ministry of Culture. The foundation reported to three boards, whose chairpersons had been appointed: the Board of Representatives, the Board of Directors and the Fiscal Committee. The Board of Representatives was chaired by the former President of the

Portuguese Republic, Dr. Jorge Sampaio. The Board of Representatives included local, regional and national cultural institutions. The Foundation was still in the process of recruiting people, with a financial department and a team for community involvement already working (11 people) and 20 more people to be recruited in the coming months. The Foundation would take care of the culture programme. Infrastructures would be followed up by the city itself through a board of which the director of the foundation was a member.

Regarding their communication strategy, Guimarães 2012 had decided to target those living within a 1 hour drive from the city. It had therefore reached an agreement with the surrounding area (Vale do Ave) for a specific communication project. Other agreements were in preparation with Galicia and North Portugal in order to reach a potential public of 3 million people. The national administration and public opinion was reported to broadly support Guimarães 2012. The Portuguese Tourism Office, would promote Guimarães abroad as the main tourist destination in 2012 and use it to promote Portugal more generally. Concerning the budget, 25 million Euros had already been committed to the cultural programme, out of which 18 millions Euros were already available. Renovation and infrastructure would have a separate budget and would be directly managed by the city. As of the current year small shares of the ECOC budget would be injected into the cultural programme of the year to reinforce key elements of the ECOC (city involvement and the European dimension). The ECOC contribution to the cultural programme would increase to 50% during 2011 and would decrease, but still be continued beyond 2012. Only events of a distinctively high quality would be associated with ECOC 2012: namely festivals of music and performing arts, and the overall city celebrations. As visual arts was not a strong point in the city's cultural traditions, it might be envisaged to call on international expertise, such as travelling exhibitions, shared with other ECOCs.

The mandate of the Foundation and of the boards would last until 2015, with a fund raising mission in order to keep cultural infrastructure alive after ECOC2012.

Former industrial premises would be restored to host most 2012 events. The cultural programme would put emphasis not only on consuming arts, but also on producing arts. Activity, openness and experience would be the guiding themes of Guimarães 2012 that aspired to position itself as a medium-sized city crossing information technology (IT) and culture to improve the life of citizens. For instance, a red line would be drawn in the city, with IT devices, to browse the city differently and link it to other EU cities via webcams. The involvement of schools and citizens through volunteering had already begun via two projects, Guimarães Academy and Collective Intelligence Lab. It had not yet been decided whether to hold an open call for cultural projects or to directly commit most of the cultural programme. The programme manager had not been appointed yet.

The European dimension along with the international reach would be highlighted through the red thread of common history. A project would be launched to twin Portuguese and foreign artists, especially from other Portuguese speaking countries.

Regarding evaluation, an agreement had been reached with the University of Porto covering three topics: economic, social and tourism impacts.

In view of the very brief information in the monitoring form, the Panel asked more detailed questions throughout the presentation, in order to grasp better the progress which had been made. The Panel showed its concern about the fact that, although the theoretical framework seemed appropriate, implementation seemed to have only just

started, while time was passing very fast. The panel remarked on the loss of continuity between the bidding team and the implementation team and warned of the need to stabilize the team to ensure effective delivery.

The Guimarães delegation recognised that they were still in the initial phase: real preparation had started only after the official Council designation and since then most of their energy had gone into securing the budget. Furthermore the city had held municipal elections in October. On a positive note the delegation stressed that financial resources had now been secured, that there was political stability and that the Foundation would now be able to make rapid progress. The Foundation would submit its overall concept to the general council on 18 December 2009 and an outline of the cultural programme by June 2010.

3.2. Maribor 2012

Mr Rukavina presented the state of progress as far as governance was concerned. Although the government had changed since designation, the new one openly endorsed Maribor 2012 as a national project. The government proposed to appoint the festival foundation "Narodni dom Maribor", currently hosting the ECOC 2012 secretariat, as the managing agency. Nevertheless an independent study entrusted to Ljubljana University had favoured the creation of an independent agency. The current proposal was for a governing board of 15 members comprised of high level officials, complemented by an advisory board expert "arts" council (11 members), an Evaluation (auditing) Council and a Project Coordination Board. An Honorary Board composed of politicians would have representational functions.

The Panel raised some concerns about such complex governance model reporting, that most medium-sized cities only had an artistic director and an executive director reporting to a governing board. Mr Rukavina made clear that the dual structure of artistic and executive board was a requirement of the Slovenian law for public bodies, and functioned quite well as these two bodies would only approve the broad lines of action and activity reports, leaving enough freedom to the executive director.

Mr Rukavina then confirmed the geographical reach of the application, involving neighbouring cities hosting some significant ECOC events.

He also mentioned that the outline of the programme would be ready by mid 2010, and that the team in charge of devising it was seeking a balance between approximately 7 cutting edges projects, which were attractive on a European scale, and projects of more local interest.

The budget in the application had been confirmed: 1.5 million EUR had already been invested in 2009 by Maribor and its partner cities, while the Ministry of Culture had committed to transferring to the managing agency 2.4 millions EUR in 2010, 2.6 millions EUR in 2011 and 7.5 millions EUR in 2012 plus 10 million EUR through priority in the public call for cultural projects. In total, the operational budget for the preparation and the year itself from the local and national public authorities would amount to 57 million EUR.

Awareness-raising activities had already started with good responses using arts festivals and educational venues. The communication strategy had two strands: selling abroad, involving citizens. The communication action plan was about to be finalised by the end of 2009 (7 million EUR were planned to communicate about the event) , with the

Ministry of Tourism committed to playing a significant role. There were already clear ideas on how and when partner cities could use the ECOC logo.

Concerning Maribor's geographical position and history, the European dimension was naturally present in ongoing cultural activities and was going to be reinforced for 2012. Cooperation with other ECOCs, especially Guimarães, Marseilles and with the closer ones like Graz and Linz was already in place. An animation on the Maribor plan of new or reformed buildings was shown, making clear that not all of them would be ready for 2012.

Evaluation and monitoring had been put in place, with 6 reports per annum starting from mid-2010 and an independent monitoring board taking care of output and results. Again the Panel observed that, although it welcomed the idea, it would recommend to implement the reporting more flexibly, leaving room for change and adjustment during implementation.

Mr Rukavina specified that the team regularly consulted independent experts for the preparation of the various aspects of the event.

4. THE PANEL'S ASSESSMENT

In accordance with article 10 of Decision 1622/2006/EC the role of the monitoring and advisory panel consists in monitoring the implementation of the objectives and criteria of the action and to provide the European Capitals of Culture with support and guidance.

In this context, the assessments and recommendations of the panel are as follows:

4.1. Guimarães 2012

The panel acknowledged the efforts Guimarães had made in preparing the ECOC 2012, in particular in securing the budget and setting the governing structure. It was nevertheless concerned about the pace and timing of delivery, as preparation seemed to still be in a preliminary phase.

The panel wanted to be kept informed of progress on the programme, by receiving copies of the overall concept and an outline of the programme as soon as they were ready, in early 2010 and June 2010 respectively.

The panel made clear that in the second monitoring form it would expect to receive much more detailed information and evidence on the programming process in place, on the links between the theoretical framework and the programme delivered, on the communication strategy, the European dimension and the involvement of Portuguese as well as international partners.

The panel recalled that in order to receive the Melina Mercouri prize Guimarães should follow the panel's advice and comply with the objectives stated in the application.

4.2. Maribor 2012

The panel was satisfied by the steady progress Maribor 2012 had made since its designation.

The panel was, however, concerned about the uncertainty of the governance arrangements and by the proliferation of boards as this could slow down the implementation process by introducing unnecessary rigidity. It advised Maribor delegation to adopt a pragmatic approach and consider a leaner governance model. In particular, it recommended separating marketing and finance functions. Although the importance attached to reporting was impressive, the panel was concerned that the right balance should be struck so that the project was not weighed down by administrative requirements.

The panel repeated its concern at the number of themes (16) in the programme which had not been reduced since application phase, and highlighted the importance of having a few cutting edge projects attractive at European scale. The European dimension of the project still needed to be reinforced.

The panel asked to be sent the programme as soon as it was finalised (mid-2010). More generally, it wanted Maribor to provide a more thorough, detailed and concrete progress report at the final monitoring stage. It would like also to meet people dealing with the finances and artistic concept at the final monitoring meeting.

The panel reminded that in order to receive the Melina Mercouri prize Maribor should follow the panel's advice and comply with the objectives stated in the application.

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARDING THE MELINA MERCOURI PRIZE

On the basis of the report issued by the monitoring and advisory panel after its second meeting, a prize in honour of Melina Mercouri shall be awarded to the designated cities by the Commission, on the condition that they meet the criteria laid down in article 4 of Decision 1622/2006/EC (see below), have fulfilled their commitments and have implemented the recommendations made by the selection as well as the monitoring and advisory panels. The prize consists of a payment of 1.5 million euros and shall be awarded three months before the start of the relevant year. It is financed by the European Union's Culture Programme.

Article 4 of Decision 1622/2006/EC specifies the criteria that the cultural programme shall fulfil. They are subdivided into 2 categories (the "European dimension" and the "City and citizens").

As regards the "European Dimension", the programme shall:

- a) foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector;
- b) highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe;
- c) bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore.

As regards the "City and citizens", the programme shall:

- a) foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad;
- b) be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

The panel

Sir Robert Scott signed

(Commission designation)

Manfred Gaulhofer signed

(Commission designation)

Danuta Glondys signed

(Parliament nomination)

Mary Mac Carthy signed

(Council designation)

Mary Michailidou signed

(Council designation)

Jyrki Myllyvirta signed

(Committee of the Regions nomination)

Andreas Wiesand signed

(Parliament nomination)