

**Designation of
a European Capital of Culture
for 2014**

Selection Panel

Pre-selection report

January 2009

In accordance with decision no. 1622/2006/CE of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action to further the “European Capitals of Culture” scheme for the years 2007-2019, and decision no. Ku2007/3264/KR of the Swedish Government of 22 November 2007, a competition has been established to designate the Swedish city responsible for organising the event entitled “European Capital of Culture” for the year 2014. The procedure for implementing this decision in Sweden was set out in decision no. Ku2007/3264/KR and the notice published on 28 November 2007.

The following cities submitted an application for the title of European Capital of Culture for the year 2014:

Gävle,
Lund,
Uppsala,
Umeå,

According to article 7 of the decision of 24 October 2006, a selection panel must examine the applications in accordance with the criteria set out in article 4 of the said decision, agree on a shortlist of cities to be examined in greater depth and produce a report on the application files and a list of recommendations for shortlisted cities.

The selection panel, whose members are listed in an appendix, was established by the orders of 6 November 2008.

The Swedish Arts Council invited the panel to a pre-selection meeting, which was held in Stockholm on 8 and 9 December 2008. The application files had been submitted to panel members by the Swedish Arts Council prior to this meeting.

In accordance with article 6 of the decision of 24 October 2006, the panel appointed Sir Robert Scott as Chair; it also appointed Philip Johnsson as Vice-Chair. The secretariat from the Swedish Arts Council functioned as Recorder.

The panel had an interview lasting one hour with each of the four candidate cities. The cities presented their projects for 30 minutes before answering questions from panel members. The cities were all represented at the highest level by their Mayor or Deputy Mayor. Most of the presentations were based around audiovisual materials.

Having conducted the interviews, the panel would like to note the quality of most of the files and of the oral presentations.

The panel recognised the great desire expressed by each city to host the event, the work most of them had already put into defining their projects and the work they were ready to undertake to become the European Capital of Culture.

The panel believes that the work already carried out by all candidate cities can be put to good use by each one, including those that are not short-listed, to give impetus to their cultural life.

To draw up the short-list of cities,

- the panel closely examined the extent to which the candidates met the event's objectives, as set out in article 3 of the decision of 24 October 2006 and the two categories of criteria defined in article 4: "the European dimension" and "city and citizens";
- it based its considerations on the guide and questionnaire for candidate cities prepared by the European Commission;
- it considered what a Swedish European Capital of Culture should be, notably in terms of its impact at the national and European levels;
- lastly it felt that the shortlist should not include too many candidates in order to avoid several cities embarking on a long and costly process that would have no chance of success.

After a long discussion it was judged that the two cities that best met the objectives of the event and the criteria of "the European dimension" and "cities and citizens" were:

Lund,
Umeå

Following its deliberations, the panel submitted the shortlist of cities to the Swedish Arts Council and to the Swedish Ministry of Culture.

In accordance with article 7 of the decision of 24 October 2006, the panel made the following conclusions, including recommendations to shortlisted cities:

Conclusions

Lund

The panel thought that the concept of the bid was original and strong, and that the city and the regional concept of Lund, the Region of Skåne and Öresund showed a good, basic cultural infrastructure to build on. And of course Lund has a well-known cultural heritage. To win this contest Lund would have to represent Sweden in a European context and some members of the Panel wondered how the proximity of the much larger Malmö on the one hand and Denmark on the other could be turned to the City's advantage.

The Panel was satisfied with the basic concept of the European dimension and that the city already had explored European networks. The Panel was also pleased to see the involvement of citizens and the undertaking to encourage participation. The Panel anticipated that in the second round these key criteria will be further developed. Furthermore the Panel would like to see at the second stage how Lund would develop the whole concept of both the City and Sweden in the European context.

The Panel was pleased that Lund was learning lessons from other Capitals of Culture but they needed to start to prioritize the things they have to do. They need to be clear about their governance and the structure of the operating company. The Panel thinks that the intellectual content is high, but now the City needed to prove that they could manage a promising process. In particular, the Panel needed more definition of the programme and the legacy.

Gävle

The Panel admired the enthusiasm and energy of the bid and in particular the involvement of citizens and the concept of Kulturell Allemansrätt.

However, the Panel did not believe that the European dimension of their presentation was strong enough. The Panel was not convinced that the organisers appreciated the difficulties of the implementation of their ambitious proposals into concrete action. The panel was also concerned that the budget might be a constant source of difficulties over the next years, because of the evidence of opposition to the bid.

The Panel was impressed by the clear commitment that Gävle had made to raise culture up the local agenda and the Panel particularly wanted to wish Gävle well in their efforts to achieve their ambitions.

Uppsala

The presentation from Uppsala showed clearly that they were very late starters and it was also evident that their bid was at an underdeveloped stage compared with the other three bids. Uppsala relied on its heritage, its cultural infrastructure and its fame. Unfortunately, however, the Panel simply did not see enough evidence of innovation and creativity in the programme.

While the representative of the University and the former Minister for Culture spoke very well, the panel was not convinced that the governance and structure of what would have been the organising committee was either formally or properly agreed. There was little evidence of consultation with the city and the citizens, and even all the cultural institutions had not been seriously consulted. The Panel was disappointed by the Uppsala bid and presentation, because Uppsala had real advantages which could have been built on, but which had not been properly developed.

Umeå

This was a strong application which had been in the course of preparation for several years. The actual appearance before the Panel was excellent, with a particularly good and imaginative high-tech visual presentation.

Clearly the city and the citizens were genuinely involved. The organisers claimed 93% recognition from their poll. Umeå clearly presents a potentially new kind of European Capital of Culture, which is at the heart of the City's economic and development strategy. Their location at the Northern tip of Europe might be seen as being isolated from most of the Union, while on the other it might offer a new European perspective from its position on the edge.

Although there were many attractive concepts in the bid, the Panel thought that it was now very important for Umeå to be more precise and possibly also reduce the number of themes and slogans. There is a need to differentiate between the short-term planning for 2014 and the long-term objectives which could take decades to achieve. They need to give real thought to priorities and precision of the programme. The Panel could see that the East-West partnerships with Finland, Russia and Norway were developed and important, but more detail should now be attached to the North-South partnerships. The Panel was not fully convinced of the proposals around the celebration of Saami Culture, which clearly had to be handled very carefully in dialogue with Saami leaders.

To obtain more complete information for the final selection process, the Chair of the panel would like to visit the shortlisted cities, accompanied by a delegation whose membership may vary.

Sir Robert SCOTT, chairman

Philip JOHNSON, vice-chairman

Cissi ELWIN

Birgitta ENGLIN

Manfred GAULHOFER

Danuta GLONDYS

Majlis GRANSTRÖM

Mary MAC CARTHY

Jyrky MYLLYVIRTA

David NEUMAN

Per-Magnus NILSSON