

European Capital of Culture (ECOC)

Call for submission of applications
EAC/P01/2023

Call for submission of applications for the Union action “European Capital of Culture” for the year 2030 for cities in EFTA/EEA countries, in candidate countries and in potential candidates for EU membership

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Call for submission of applications for the Union action "European Capital of Culture" for the year 2030 for cities in EFTA/EEA countries, in candidate countries and in potential candidates for EU membership

EAC/P01/2023

Throughout history, Europe has been a hub of artistic development of exceptional richness and great diversity where European cities have played a vital role in the formation and spread of culture.

The European Capital of Culture (ECOC) action is an initiative of the European Union governed by Decision No 445/2014/EU[1] for the titles 2020 to 2033, which aims at highlighting this richness and diversity as well as common cultural aspects in Europe with a view to contributing to bring the peoples of Europe closer together and improve mutual understanding. This Decision was amended by Decision (EU) 2017/1545[2] to open the action, subject to conditions, to cities from European Free Trade Association countries that are parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EFTA/EEA countries). Furthermore, the Decision was amended by Decision (EU) 2020/2229[3] to rearrange the ECOC calendar for the years 2020-2023 in light of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The general objectives of the European Capital of Culture action have been defined as follows: to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe and to highlight the common features they share as well as to increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area, on the one hand, and to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities at economic, social and urban level, in accordance with their respective strategies and priorities, on the other hand.

In line with these objectives, activities developed by the city that will be designated as European Capital of Culture will strive to enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of its cultural offering, including through transnational co-operation; to widen access to and participation in culture; to strengthen the capacity of its cultural sector and the links of the latter with other sectors and to raise its international profile through culture.

In accordance with the calendar set out in the Annex of Decision No 445/2014/EU as amended by Decision (EU) 2017/1545 and Decision (EU) 2020/2229, the title of European Capital of Culture shall be awarded in 2030 to one city in Cyprus, to one city in Belgium and to one city in an EFTA/EEA country, a candidate country or a potential candidate to EU membership.

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[1] Official Journal of the European Union, OJ L 132 of 3 May 2014: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2014:132:TOC.

[2] Official Journal of the European Union, OJ L 237 of 13 September 2017: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32017D1545.

[3] Official Journal of the European Union, OJ L 437 of 28 December 2020: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32020D2229

The aim of this call is:

- to trigger applications from cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries and potential candidates participating in the Creative Europe Programme[4] (at the date of publication of the call), which wish to bid for the "European Capital of Culture" title for the year 2030 and

- to lead to the designation of one of these cities as European Capital of Culture 2030, that may be awarded the Melina Mercouri prize (funded from the respective Union programme supporting culture at the time of its award).

To assist cities in the preparation of their bid, this call provides an overview of the criteria that will be applied for the assessment of their applications, in accordance with the criteria set out in Decision No 445/2014/EU, as well as information about the selection procedure. In Annex 1 of this call, cities will also find the application form they have to complete in order to submit an application.

The Managing Authority in charge of the selection procedure for the 2030 European Capital of Culture title for cities from EFTA/EEA countries, candidates counties and potential candidates is the "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate within the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission (here-after the "Culture, Creativity and Sport Directorate of the European Commission").

Further details on the European Capital of Culture action may be obtained from the following webpage of the European Commission: https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policies/culture-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-culture.

1. Outcome of the selection process

The outcome of the selection process of the European Capital of Culture Union action under this specific call is twofold:

- The award of the title of European Capital of Culture;

- The award of a pecuniary prize of 1.5 million EUR in honour of Melina Mercouri,

to the designated city from one EFTA/EEA country, candidate country or potential candidate listed in section 2.a below.

To that extent, this call for submission of applications is also to be seen as the rules of the contest for the awarding of the Melina Mercouri prize.

The title and the prize are awarded on the basis of the same criteria detailed in section 2. The

[4] The Creative Europe Programme has been established by Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021.

payment of the prize occurs in the course of the title-year and is conditioned and ruled by the requirements laid down in section 5 of this document.

2. Criteria for designating a city for the title of European Capital of Culture and awarding the Melina Mercouri prize under this Call

a. Eligibility criteria

Eligible applicants:

This call for submission of applications is exclusively addressed to the cities wishing to apply for the title of European Capital of Culture 2030 from the following EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries or potential candidates[5]:

- Albania (except the city of Tirana, as the city already submitted an application for the competition for the 2024 ECOC title),
- Bosnia and Herzegovina (except the cities of Banja Luka, Mostar and Srebrenica, as these cities already submitted an application for the competition for the 2024 ECOC title),
- Georgia,
- Iceland,
- Kosovo[6],
- Liechtenstein,
- Montenegro (except the city of Herceg Novi and the city of Budva, as these cities already submitted an application respectively for the competitions for the 2021 ECOC title and 2028 ECOC title),
- Türkiye[7],
- Ukraine.

The title applies to a city. Cities may involve their surrounding areas if they wish so, but the title is awarded only to the city itself and not to the whole area. Therefore, where a city involves its surrounding area, the application shall be made under the name of the city.

Every application must be based on a cultural programme with a strong European dimension. The cultural programme shall cover the year of the European Capital of Culture title and shall be created specifically for the title.

[5] Serbia, Norway and North Macedonia are not entitled to participate in this competition under the current Decision, as the cities of Novi Sad (Serbia), Bodø (Norway) and Skopje (North Macedonia, pending formal endorsement by the Commission) host the title of European Capital of Culture in 2022 (initially 2021), 2024 and 2028 respectively.

[6] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[7] Providing that Türkiye is associated to Creative Europe programme (Culture strand) at the time of publication of the call.

For recollection, in case of claims relating to the activities carried out in the framework of the submission for applications, the sole liability of applicants can be invoked.

Formal criteria of the application:

All candidate cities shall fill in the common application form laid down in Annex 1. Candidate cities should note that there are different questionnaires for preselection and selection.

Candidate cities are invited to comply with the following formal requirements when drafting their application. Applications which do not follow these requirements at pre-selection or final selection stages[8] may be considered ineligible and not examined further:

(i) The candidate cities shall communicate in writing to the Managing Authority their intention to submit an application at the latest one month before the deadline specified in section 4 below "Submission of applications".

(ii) The application shall be written in English.

(iii) Candidate cities shall answer all the questions listed in Annex 1.

(iv) For the pre-selection stage, the applications shall not exceed 60 pages in A4 format. For the final selection stage, the applications shall not exceed 100 pages in A4 format. Applicants may include illustrations, graphics or any other visual elements (such as logos), but these are included as part of the page limit.

(v) For the pre-selection stage, applications shall be sent in paper and pdf formats within the deadline indicated under section 4 below "Submission of applications". For the final selection stage, applications shall be sent in paper and pdf formats within the deadline that will be indicated by the "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate of the European Commission to the shortlisted cities after completion of the pre-selection stage.

(vi) In accordance with Article 3, paragraph 4, subparagraph 2, of Decision No 445/2014/EU as amended by Article 1 of Decision (EU) 2017/1545, cities in EFTA/EEA countries, in candidate countries and in potential candidates shall only be allowed to participate in one competition during the period from 2020 to 2033. Accordingly, the cities of Herceg Novi and Budva (Montenegro, candidate cities respectively in the competitions for the 2021 title and for the 2028 ECOC title), Tirana (Albania, candidate city in the competition for the 2024 title), Banja Luka, Mostar and Srebrenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina, candidate cities in the competition for the 2024 title) cannot participate in the competition.

(vii) In accordance with Article 3, paragraph 4, subparagraph 3, of Decision No 445/2014/EU as amended by Article 1 of Decision (EU) 2017/1545, each EFTA/EEA country, candidate country or potential candidate shall only be allowed to host the title once during the period from 2020 to 2033. Accordingly, Serbia, Norway and North Macedonia cannot

[8] More details about the pre-selection and selection stages are provided in section 3 of this call.

host the title in 2030 and cities from Serbia, Norway and North Macedonia cannot participate in the competition as Novi Sad (Serbia) is nominated as European Capital of Culture for 2022 (initially 2021), Bodø is nominated as European Capital of Culture for 2024 and Skopje has been recommendaded as European Capital of Culture for 2028.

(viii) The other mandatory conditions regarding the participation of EFTA/EEA countries candidate countries and potential candidates are stipulated further in Article 3, paragraph 5, of Decision No 445/2014/EU.

b. Exclusion criteria

Candidate cities must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in in Articles 136(1) and 141 of the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union9, filling in the relevant form attached in Annex 2.

c. Award criteria

The award criteria for the assessment of the applications are divided into six categories corresponding to the provisions laid down in Article 5 of Decision No 445/2014/EU and all six categories have the same weighting:

1. Contribution to the long-term strategy
2. European dimension
3. Cultural and artistic content
4. Capacity to deliver
5. Outreach
6. Management

1. As regards the "contribution to the long-term strategy", the following factors shall be taken into account:

   - that a cultural strategy for the candidate city, which covers the action and includes plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title, is in place at the time of its application;

   - the plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including developing long-term links between the cultural, economic and social sectors in the candidate city;

[9] Financial Regulation of 30 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (Official Journal L 193 of 30.7.2018)

- the envisaged long-term cultural, social and economic impact, including urban development, that the title would have on the candidate city;
- the plans for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the title on the candidate city and for disseminating the results of the evaluation.

2. As regards the "European dimension", the following factors shall be taken into account:
   - the scope and quality of activities promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens;
   - the scope and quality of activities highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes;
   - the scope and quality of activities featuring European artists, cooperation with operators or cities in different countries, including, where appropriate, other cities holding the title, and transnational partnerships;
   - the strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public.

3. As regards the "cultural and artistic content", the following factors shall be taken into account:
   - a clear and coherent artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme;
   - the involvement of local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme;
   - the range and diversity of the activities proposed and their overall artistic quality;
   - the capacity to combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions.

4. As regards the "capacity to deliver", the following factors shall be taken into account:
   - the application has broad and strong political support and a sustainable commitment from the local, regional and national authorities;
   - the candidate city has or will have an adequate and viable infrastructure to hold the title.

5. As regards "outreach", the following factors shall be taken into account:

   - the involvement of the local population and civil society in the preparation of the application and the implementation of the action;
   - the creation of new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, in particular young people, volunteers and the marginalised and disadvantaged, including minorities, with special attention being given to persons with disabilities and the elderly as regards the accessibility of those activities;
   - the overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

6. As regards "management", the following factors shall be taken into account:

   - the feasibility of the fund-raising strategy and proposed budget, which includes, where appropriate, plans to seek financial support from Union programmes and funds, and covers the preparation phase, the year of the title, the evaluation and provisions for the legacy activities, and contingency planning;
   - the envisaged governance and delivery structure for the implementation of the action which provides, inter alia, for appropriate cooperation between the local authorities and the delivery structure, including the artistic team;
   - the procedures for the appointment of the general and artistic directors and their fields of action;
   - the marketing and communication strategy is comprehensive and highlights that the action is a Union action;
   - the delivery structure has staff with appropriate skills and experience to plan, manage and deliver the cultural programme for the year of the title.

These criteria are explained and illustrated by examples in the Guide for candidate cities, available at the following website of the European Commission:

- https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/capitals-culture-candidates-guide_en_vdec17.pdf

3. Procedure for the designation of one city as European Capital of Culture and the award of the Melina Mercouri prize

a. The panel of experts

A panel of independent experts ("the panel") shall be established to carry out the selection and monitoring procedures.

The role of the panel is to assess the applications received from candidate cities, agree on a list of pre-selected cities as well as recommend one city for being awarded with the title of European Capital of Culture and the Melina Mercouri prize. At the end of the monitoring phase[10], it is also the role of the panel to issue a report that will serve as the basis for the Commission's decision to pay or not the Melina Mercouri prize to the city.

The panel will consist of 10 members.

For the purpose of the pre-selection and selection stages, these ten members will be experts appointed by the Union institutions and bodies, i.e. the European Parliament, Council of the EU, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions.

The same experts shall be appointed by the authorising officer of the European Commission in order to be able to give a recommendation about the award of the Melina Mercouri prize.

In accordance with Article 6 of Decision No 445/2014/EU, the experts shall be citizens of the Union, shall be independent, have no actual or potential conflict of interest in respect of a specific candidate city and have substantial experience and expertise in the cultural sector, in the cultural development of cities or in the organisation of a European Capital of Culture or an international cultural event of similar scope and scale.

b. Phases of the procedure

The procedure for designating one city as European Capital of Culture is broken down as follows:

b.1 The selection phase:

The selection phase is made of two different stages:

- *Pre-selection stage*

Cities wishing to apply will send their application to the "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate of the European Commission within the deadline set below. The "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate of the European Commission will convene a pre-selection meeting with the Panel on a date that will be specified later on its website. Candidate cities will not be invited to this meeting.

The panel shall assess each candidate city on the basis of its application against the

[10] More details about the monitoring phase are provided in section 5 of this call.

objectives of the European Capital of Culture action and the criteria as specified above.

After this meeting, the panel will agree on a shortlist of candidate cities, which shall be invited to revise and complete their application during the final selection stage. It shall issue a pre-selection report containing a general assessment of all the applications, the short-list of candidate cities that are to be considered further as well as recommendations to these cities.

The Commission shall then approve the short-list based on the report of the panel and send a letter to short-listed candidate cities inviting them to complete and revise their applications and indicating the deadline for submitting such applications.

- *Final selection stage*

The short-listed candidate cities will complete and revise their applications with a view to complying with the award criteria as well as taking into account the recommendations contained in the pre-selection report. Each pre-selected city will send its revised application to the "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate of the European Commission in due time.

The "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate of the European Commission will organise a selection meeting on a date that will be specified later on its website inviting all short-listed cities to send a delegation for a hearing with the panel. This meeting will take place no later than nine months after the pre-selection meeting but, where necessary, the Commission may extend that nine-month deadline for a reasonable period.

The panel shall assess each short-listed candidate city on the basis of its revised application and hearing against the objectives of the European Capital of Culture action and the criteria as specified above.

After this meeting, the panel shall agree on the recommendation of a maximum of one city for the title. If none of the candidate cities fulfil all the criteria, the panel may recommend not to award the title.

The panel shall issue a selection report containing a general assessment of all the applications and a justified recommendation for the designation of one city for the title. The report shall also contain recommendations to the city concerned regarding the progress to be made by the year of the title.

b.2 The designation of the city as European Capital of Culture and the award of the Melina Mercouri prize

On the basis of the recommendation of the panel, the European Commission shall designate one city to hold the title for the 2030 European Capital of Culture in an EFTA/EEA country, a candidate country or a potential candidate and shall notify the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions of that designation no later than four years before the title-year.

At the same time it recommends a city for the title, the panel will also recommend the authorising officer of the Commission to award the Melina Mercouri prize to this city.

Once the city has been officially designated, the authorising officer of Commission, upon this recommendation, may award it the Melina Mercouri prize which amounts to 1.500.000 EUR[11].

4. Submission of applications

The cities in eligible EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries or potential candidates wishing to apply for the European Capital of Culture title in 2030 shall reply to this call by filling in the application form in Annex 1 as well as the "declaration of honour" form in Annex 2.

As mentioned in section 2 under a) above, there are two questionnaires: one for the pre-selection stage and one more developed for the final selection stage.

Twenty paper copies and one pdf copy of the application in English must be sent respectively to the following postal address and e-mail address no later than **16 October 2024 (please send the paper copies by registered mail: date of the post office stamp will be considered proof)**:

European Commission
DG EAC
Directorate Culture, Creativity and Sport
Creative Europe Programme – Unit D2
J 70 2/015
1049 Brussels, Belgium

E-mail: EAC-ECOC@ec.europa.eu

The candidate cities shall communicate in writing their intention to submit an application at least one month before the deadline for submitting applications, i.e. **16 September 2024**, by sending an e-mail to EAC-ECOC@ec.europa.eu.

Applicants will be informed by of the receipt of their application within 15 working days.

By submitting an application, cities accept that their e-application at both pre-selection and selection stages be made public on the website of the European Commission:

https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policies/culture-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-culture at the end of the selection phase.

[11] Subject to the funding being made available under the EU Programme "Creative Europe".

For formal requirements please refer to section 2.a of the Call.

5. Monitoring and payment of the Melina Mercouri prize

The Melina Mercouri Prize is awarded in connection with the designation of one city as European Capital of Culture. However, its payment will occur no later than the end of March 2030 provided that the city designated continues to honour the commitments it made at the application stage, still complies with the criteria stipulated in the call and takes into account the recommendations contained in the selection and monitoring reports of the panel.

The commitments made at the application stage shall deemed to have been honoured by the designated city where no substantial change has been made to the programme and the strategy between the application stage and the year of the title, in particular where:

- the budget has been maintained at a level capable of delivering a high-quality cultural programme in line with the application and the criteria;
- the independence of the artistic team has been appropriately respected;
- the European dimension has remained sufficiently strong in the final version of the cultural programme;
- the marketing and communication strategy and the communication material used by the designated city clearly reflect the fact that the European Capitals of Culture is an action of the Union;
- the plans for the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the title on the city are in place.

Compliance with these requirements will be assessed by the Commission on the basis of a recommendation made by a panel of independent experts at the end of the monitoring phase, which runs from the designation of the city as European Capital of Culture up to the beginning of the year of the title.

Similarly to the selection process, the monitoring phase is carried out by the panel. The Commission will convene three monitoring meetings between the panel and the designated city in order for the panel to take stock of the preparations for the event and give advice with a view to helping the city to develop a high-quality cultural programme and an effective strategy. After the third meeting, the panel will issue a report, which will be the basis for the Commission's decision to pay or not the Melina Mercouri prize to the city. Please note that the payment of the prize is therefore not automatic.

Once the authorising officer of the Commission has issued the decision regarding the award of the prize, the city accepts that checks and audits by the Commission, OLAF and the Court of Auditors can be carried out.

Regarding the award and payment of the prize, the Law of the Union applies. The competent

court or arbitration tribunal to hear disputes is the General Court of the Court of Justice of the European Union:

General Court
Rue du Fort Niedergrünewald
L-2925 Luxembourg
tel.: (352) 4303-1 Fax: (352) 4303 2100
e-mail: GeneralCourt.Registry@curia.europa.eu

Financial or administrative penalties, or both, may be imposed on applicants who have made false declarations, or committed irregularities or fraud, in accordance with the conditions laid down in Article 243 of the abovementioned Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union and in proportion to the value of the Melina Mercouri prize.

Once the title year ends, the city awarded the title of European Capital of Culture will have to produce an evaluation report using the common guidelines and indicators established by the Commission[12] and transmit it to the European Commission by 31 December of 2031 in accordance with Article 16 of Decision No 445/2014/EU.

6. Additional information

Information on the European Capital of Culture action can be consulted on the website of the European Commission at the following address:

https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policies/culture-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-culture

Candidate cities are advised to read the guide for cities applying for the title of European Capital of Culture, which is available at the same address.

Cities interested in the title can obtain further information from the "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate of the European Commission at the following address:

European Commission
DG EAC
Directorate Culture, Creativity and Sport
Creative Europe Programme – Unit D2
J 70 1/234
1049 Brussels, Belgium
E-mail: EAC-ECOC@ec.europa.eu

The Rules of procedure, specifying in particular the name of the Managing Authority

[12] https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/2021-04/ecoc-guidelines-for-cities-own-evaluations-2020-2033.pdf.

responsible for organising and managing the competition, the competition arrangements as well as the rules for the pre-selection and selection meetings, including the language regime and the organisation of the candidate cities' hearings, will be available on the website of the European Commission.

Your reply to the call for submission of applications will involve the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address and CV), which will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39). Unless indicated otherwise, your replies to the questions in this form and any personal data requested are required to assess your application in accordance with the specifications of the call for submission of applications and will be processed solely for that purpose by Unit D2 – Creative Europe. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at the page:

http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf.

Your personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) by the Accounting Officer of the Commission, should you be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (‘the Financial Regulation’), (for more information see the Privacy Statement on http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm), or

- The Commission Regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (for more information see the Privacy Statement on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE)

ANNEXES:

Annex 1 – Application form

Annex 2 – Declaration on the Honour

ANNEX 1

APPLICATION FORM

Candidate cities must clearly answer all the questions below. For each section (1 to 6) questions can be answered separately or jointly.

Candidate cities are also invited to be clear, concise and sharp in their answers. Furthermore, great care should be given to ensure maximum readability of the applications; and bids should be written in no smaller than 10-pitch font.

There are different questionnaires for preselection and selection

Preselection questionnaire:

Introduction – General considerations (max. 3 pages)

- Why does your city wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture?
- Does your city plan to involve its surrounding area? Explain this choice.
- Explain briefly the overall cultural profile of your city.
- Explain the concept of the programme that would be launched if the city is designated as European Capital of Culture.

1. Contribution to the long-term strategy

- Describe the cultural strategy that is in place in your city at the time of the application, including the plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title.
- Describe the city's plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including through the development of long term links between these sectors and the economic and social sectors in your city.
- How is the European Capital of Culture action included in this strategy?
- If your city is awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, what do you think would be the long-term cultural, social and economic impact on the city (including in terms of urban development)?
- Outline briefly the plans you will put in place for monitoring your progress in preparing and implementing your title-year and for evaluating the impact of the

latter.

2. Cultural and artistic content

- What is the artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme of the year?
- Give a general overview of the structure of your cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities/main events that will mark the year.
- Explain succinctly how the cultural programme will combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?
- How has the city involved, or how does it plan to involve, local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme?

3. European dimension

- Give a general outline of the activities foreseen in view of:
    - Promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens;
    - Highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes;
    - Featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships.
- Can you explain your overall strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?
- To what extent do you plan to develop links between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title?

4. Outreach

- Explain how the local population and your civil society have been involved in the preparation of the application and will participate in the implementation of the year.
- Explain how you intend to create opportunities for participation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups.
- Explain your overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

5. Management

a) Finance

- ***City budget for culture:***

- What has been the annual budget for culture in the city over the last 5 years (excluding expenditure for the present European Capital of Culture application)? (Please fill in the table below).

Year	Annual budget for culture in the city (in euros)	Annual budget for culture in the city (in % of the total annual budget for the city)
n-4		
n-3		
n-2		
n-1		
Current		

- In case the city is planning to use funds from its annual budget for culture to finance the European Capital of Culture project, please indicate this amount starting from the year of submission of the bid until the European Capital of Culture year.

- Which amount of the overall annual budget does the city intend to spend for culture after the European Capital of Culture year (in euros and in % of the overall annual budget)?

- ***Operating budget for the title year***

  - **Income to cover operating expenditure:**

- Please explain the overall operating budget (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside to cover operational expenditure). The budget shall cover the preparation phase, the year of the title, the evaluation and provisions for the legacy activities. Please also fill in the table below.

Total income to cover operating expenditure (in euros)	From the public sector (in euros)	From the public sector (in %)	From the private sector (in euros)	From the private sector (in %)

  - **Income from the public sector:**

- What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure? Please fill in the table below:

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	in euros	%
National Government		
City		
Region		
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)		
Other		
Total		

- Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure? If not, when will they do so?

  - **Income from the private sector:**

- What is the fund-raising strategy to seek support from private sponsors? What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?

  - **Breakdown of operating expenditure:**

- Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure, by filling in the table below.

Programme expenditure (in euros)	Programme expenditure (in %)	Promotion and marketing (in euros)	Promotion and marketing (in %)	Wages, overheads and administration (in euros)	Wages, overheads and administration (in %)	Other (please specify) (in euros)	Other (please specify) (in %)	Total of the operating expenditure

- ***Budget for capital expenditure :***

- What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title year? Please fill in the table below:

Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure	in euros	%
National Government		
City		
Region		
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)		
Other		
Total		

- Have the public finance authorities (city, region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure? If not, when will they do so?
- What is your fundraising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?
- If appropriate, please insert a table here that specifies which amounts will be spent for new cultural infrastructure to be used in the framework of the title year.

b) Organisational structure

- Please give an outline of the intended governance and delivery structure for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year.

c) Contingency planning

- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of your project? How are you planning to overcome weaknesses identified?

d) Marketing and communication

- Please provide with an outline of the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year.
- How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?

6. Capacity to deliver

- Please confirm and supply evidence that you have broad and strong political support and a sustainable commitment from the relevant local, regional and national public authorities.
- Please confirm and provide evidence that your city has or will have adequate and

viable infrastructure to host the title. To do that, please answer the following questions:

- Explain briefly how the European Capital of Culture will make use of and develop the city's cultural infrastructure.

- What are the city's assets in terms of accessibility (regional, national and international transport)?

- What is the city's absorption capacity in terms of tourists' accommodation?

- In terms of cultural, urban and tourism infrastructure what are the projects (including renovation projects) that your city plan to carry out in connection with the European Capital of Culture action between now and the year of the title?

Selection questionnaire:

Introduction – General considerations

- Has the concept of the programme described for the ECOC year changed between the pre-selection and the selection stage? If yes, please describe the new concept and explain the reasons for the change.

1. Contribution to the long-term strategy

- Describe any changes to the cultural strategy since the preselection stage, and the role of the ECOC pre-selection in these changes, if relevant. Indicate specifically which priorities of this strategy the European Capital of Culture action intends to contribute to, and how.
- Have your intentions in terms of long-term impact of the European Capital of Culture action on the city changed since pre-selection? If yes, please describe the changes or further impact foreseen.
- Describe your plans for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the title on your city and for disseminating the results of the evaluation. In particular, the following questions could be considered:
    - Who will carry out the evaluation?
    - What objectives and milestones will be included in your evaluation plan between the time of your designation and the year of the title?
    - What baseline studies or surveys do you intend to use?
    - What sort of information will you track and monitor?
    - How will you define "success"?
    - Over what time frame and how regularly will the evaluation be carried out?
    - How will the results be disseminated?

To get guidance for answering this question, please read the Guidelines established by the European Commission for the cities' own evaluations at the following web address: https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/2021-04/ecoc-guidelines-for-cities-own-evaluations-2020-2033.pdf

2. Cultural and artistic content

- Describe in detail the artistic vision and the strategy for the cultural programme of the year outlined at pre-selection stage, explaining any changes brought in since pre-

selection.

- Describe the structure of the cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities and the main events that will mark the year. Please provide with information about project partners and estimated budget.
- How will the events and activities that will constitute the cultural programme for the year be chosen?
- How will the cultural programme combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?
- How has the city involved local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme?
- Please give some concrete examples and name some local artists and cultural organisations with which cooperation is envisaged and specify the type of exchanges in question.

3. European dimension

- Elaborate on the scope and quality of the activities:
    - Promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens;
    - Highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes;
    - Featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships;
    - Name some European and international artists, operators and cities with which cooperation is envisaged and specify the type of exchanges in question. Name the transnational partnerships your city has already established or plans to establish.
- Can you explain in detail your strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?
- Describe the links developed or to be developed between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title.

4. Outreach

- Explain in detail how the local population and your civil society have been involved in the preparation of the application and will participate in the implementation of the year.

- How will the title create in your city new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, in particular young people, volunteers and the marginalised and disadvantaged, including minorities? Please also elaborate on the accessibility of these activities to persons with disabilities and the elderly. Specify the relevant parts of the programme planned for these various groups.

- Explain in detail your strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

5. Management

a) Finance

- ***Operating budget for the title year***

  - **Income to cover operating expenditure:**

- Please confirm or update the budget figures using the tables below. Explain any differences with regards to pre-selection.

- Total operating budget (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside to cover operational expenditure)

Total income to cover operating expenditure (in euros)	From the public sector (in euros)	From the public sector (in %)	From the private sector (in euros)	From the private sector (in %)

  - **Income from the public sector:**

- What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure? Please fill in the table below:

Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure	in euros	%
National Government		
City		
Region		
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)		
Other		
Total		

- Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure? If not, when will they do so?
- What is your fund raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover operating expenditure?
- According to what timetable should the income to cover operating expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture?

Source of income for operating expenditure	Year -5*	Year -4*	Year -3*	Year -2*	Year -1*	ECOC year
EU						
National government						
City						
Region						
Sponsors						
Other						

* Please fill in the appropriate date

- **Income from the private sector:**

- What is the fund-raising strategy to seek support from private sponsors? What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?

- **Breakdown of operating expenditure:**

- Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure, by filling in the table below.

Programme expenditure (in euros)	Programme expenditure (in %)	Promotion and marketing (in euros)	Promotion and marketing (in %)	Wages, overheads and administration (in euros)	Wages, overheads and administration (in %)	Other (please specify) (in euros)	Other (please specify) (in %)	Total of the operating expenditure

- Planned timetable for spending operating expenditure:

Timetable for spending*	Programme expenditure (in euros)	Programme expenditure (in %)	Promotion and marketing (in euros)	Promotion and marketing (in %)	Wages, overheads and administration (in euros)	Wages, overheads and administration (in %)	Other (please specify) (in euros)	Other (please specify) (in %)
Year n-5								
Year n-4								
Year n-3								
Year n-2								
Year n-1								
ECoC year								
Year n+1								
Later								

*Please fill in the appropriate date

- ***Budget for capital expenditure :***

- What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title year? Please fill in the table below:

Income from the public sector to cover capital expenditure	in euros	%
National Government		
City		
Region		
EU (with exception of the Melina Mercouri Prize)		
Other		
Total		

- Have the public finance authorities (city, region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure? If not, when will they do so?

- What is your fund raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?

- According to what timetable should the income to cover capital expenditure be

received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture? Please fill in the table below.

Source of income for capital expenditure	Year -5*	Year -4*	Year -3*	Year -2*	Year -1*	ECOC year
EU						
National government						
City						
Region						
Sponsors						
Other						

* Please fill in the appropriate date

- If appropriate, please insert a table here that specifies which amounts will be spent for new cultural infrastructure to be used in the framework of the title year.

b) Organisational structure

- What kind of governance and delivery structure is envisaged for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year?
- How will this structure be organised at management level? Please make clear who will be the person(s) having the final responsibility for global leadership of the project?
- How will you ensure that this structure has the staff with the appropriate skills and experience to plan, manage and deliver the cultural programme for the European Capital of Culture project?

  These two questions above could be answered by enclosing in particular diagrams, the statutes of the organisation, its staff numbers and the curricula vitae of those primarily responsible.
- How will you make sure that there is an appropriate cooperation between the local authorities and this structure including the artistic team?
- According to which criteria and under which arrangements have the general director and the artistic director been chosen – or will be chosen? What are – or will be – their respective profiles? When will they take up the appointment? What will be their respective fields of action?

c) Contingency planning

- Have you carried out/planned a risk assessment exercise?
- What are your planned mitigating measures?

d) Marketing and communication

- Could your artistic programme be summed up by a slogan?
- What is the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year, in particular with regard to the media strategy and the mobilisation of large audiences? This includes the use of digital communication channels.
- Please describe the partnerships planned or established with media with a view to ensuring wide coverage of the event.
- How will you mobilise your own citizens as communicators of the year to the outside world?
- How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?

6. Capacity to deliver

- Please supply evidence of the continuous political support and commitment from the relevant authorities.
- Please detail the state of play of the foreseen infrastructure projects detailed at pre-selection stage, including the planned timetable for the works. Please clarify the links with the European Capital of Culture project.

Additional information

- Add any further information that you deem useful in relation with your application.

ANNEX 2

DECLARATION OF HONOUR BY THE APPLICANT CITY

The undersigned [*insert name of the signatory of this form]*:

representing the following legal person:

full official name:

official legal form:

full official address:

VAT registration number:

- declares that the applicant city is **not** in one of the following situations(***if yes, please indicate in annex to this declaration which situation and the name(s) of the concerned person with a brief explanation***):

(a) is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or national laws or regulations;

(b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant city is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the applicable law;

(c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the applicant city is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the person/entity belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

a) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of eligibility or selection criteria or in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision;

b) entering into agreement with other persons/entities with the aim of distorting contest.

c) violating intellectual property rights;

d) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Commission during the award procedure;

e) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue

advantages in the award procedure;

(d) it has been established by a final judgment that the applicant city is guilty of any of the following:

(i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 3 of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;corruption, as defined in Article 4(2) of Directive (EU) 2017/1371 or Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, or conduct referred to in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, or corruption as defined in the applicable law;

(ii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;

(iii) money laundering or terrorist financing within the meaning of Article 1(3), (4) and (5) of Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council;

(iv) terrorist offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;

(v) child labour or other offences concerning trafficking in human beings as referred to in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;

(e) the applicant city has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract, a grant agreement or a grant decision financed by the Union's budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;

(f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the applicant city has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95;

(g) It has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant city has created an entity in a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or any other legal obligations of mandatory application in the jurisdiction of its registered office, central administration or

principal place of business;

(h) it has been established by a final judgement or final administrative decision that the applicant city has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);

- declares[13] that, for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, in the absence of a final judgement or a final administrative decision, the applicant city is:

i. subject to facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by the European Public Prosecutor's Office, the Court of Auditors or internal auditor, or any other check, audit or control performed under the responsibility of an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body;

ii. subject to non-final judgments or non-final administrative decisions which may include disciplinary measures taken by the competent supervisory body responsible for the verification of the application of standards of professional ethics;

iii. subject to facts referred to in decisions of entities or persons being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;

iv. subject to information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;

v. subject to decisions of the Commission relating to the infringement of Union competition law or of a national competent authority relating to the infringement of Union or national competition law;

vi. informed, by any means that it is subject to an investigation by the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF): either because it has been given the opportunity to comment on facts concerning it by OLAF, or it has been subject to on-the-spot checks by OLAF in the course of an investigation, or it has been notified of the opening, the closure or of any circumstance related to an investigation of the OLAF concerning it.

- declares that the applicant city:

  - has no conflict of interests in connection with the prize; a conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinity, family, emotional life or any other shared interest;

  - will inform the Commission, without delay, of any situation considered a conflict of interests or which could give rise to a conflict of interests;

  - has not granted and will not grant, has not sought and will not seek, has not attempted and will not attempt to obtain, and has not accepted and will not accept any advantage, financial or in kind, to or from any party whatsoever,

[13] The declaration under this point is voluntary and it cannot have adverse legal effect on the person until the conditions of Article 141(1)(a) FR are met.

where such advantage constitutes an illegal practice or involves corruption, either directly or indirectly, inasmuch as it is an incentive or reward relating to the award of the prize;

- provided accurate, sincere and complete information within the context of this prize award procedure.

- declares that the applicant city is fully eligible in accordance with the criteria set out in the specific call for submission of applications.

- acknowledges that according to Article 131 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 ('the Financial Regulation'), applicants found guilty of misrepresentation may be subject to administrative and financial penalties under certain conditions.

Remedial measures

If the person declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above, it may indicate remedial measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, in order to allow the authorising officer to determine whether such measures are sufficient to demonstrate its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to prevent further occurrence, compensation of damage or payment of fines or of any taxes or social security contributions. The relevant documentary evidence which illustrates the remedial measures taken must be provided in annex to this declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of this declaration.

Evidence upon request

The Commission may request any person subject to this declaration to provide information on any natural or legal person that is member of an administrative, management or supervisory body or that have powers of representation, decision or control, including legal and natural persons within the ownership and control structure and beneficial owners, as well as on a natural persons who are essential for the award or for the implementation of the action or work programme subject to the grant application. and appropriate evidence that none of those persons are in one of the exclusion situations referred to in (c) to (f).

The Commission may request any person subject to this declaration to provide the appropriate evidence concerning the person itself and the natural or legal persons which assume unlimited liability for the debts of the person.

- If selected to be awarded a prize, the applicant city accepts the conditions as laid down in the call for submission of applications.

- **The person must immediately inform the Commission of any changes in the**

situations as declared.

- **The applicant city may be subject to rejection from this procedure and to administrative sanctions (exclusion) if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.**

Last name, first name:

Title or position in the city:

Signature [and official stamp] of the applicant:

Date:

The declaration is to be signed with:

- ***Electronic signature (recommended option):***

In case you have the possibility to sign the declaration using a qualified electronic signature (QES), please have it signed electronically by your authorised representative(s). Please note that only the qualified electronic signature (QES) within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation) will be accepted.

Before sending back your electronically signed document, please check the signature and validity of the certificate with one of the following tools:

- *DSS Demonstration validation tool available at https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/DSS/webapp-demo/validation can help you check the validity of a certificate by indicating the number and type of valid signatures in a document.*

- *EU Trusted List Browser can be consulted in order to check whether the electronic signature provider and the trust service it provides are part of European Union Trusted List: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tl-browser/#*

To make sure you use a QES compliant to eIDAS Regulation, you need to check that both the service provider and the qualified certificate generation service used are included in the EU Trusted List Browser.

- ***Handwritten signature:***

In case you do not have the possibility to sign the declaration using a qualified electronic signature (QES), please fill it in electronically, then print it and have it signed and dated by your authorised representative(s) using a hand-written signature.