EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 2.3.2015
COM(2015) 74 final

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Ex Post evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture (Košice and Marseille-Provence)

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is presented under article 12 of Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019[1], which requires that each year the Commission shall ensure the external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capital of Culture event of the previous year and report on that evaluation to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.

This report puts forward the Commission's position on the main conclusions and recommendations of the external evaluation of 2013 European Capitals of Culture[2] that can be obtained via the link below:

http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc-2013-full-report.pdf.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE ACTION

2.1. The EU action for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) event

The initial scheme of "the European City of Culture" was launched at intergovernmental level in 1985[3]. On the basis of this experience, Decision No 1419/1999/EC[4] established a Community action for the ECOC event for the years 2005 to 2019. Member States were ranked in a chronological order of entitlement to host the event each year.

Decision No 1419/1999/EC was replaced by Decision No 1622/2006/EC which kept the principle of a chronological order of Member States but further refined the objectives of the action and introduced new selection and monitoring arrangements.

2.2. The selection and monitoring of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture

In accordance with the Decision No 1622/2006/EC, France and Slovakia were entitled to host the ECOC in 2013.

The 2013 ECOC are the first ones to be subject in full to the new selection arrangements introduced by the Decision. According to these arrangements, the competition is managed by the relevant authorities of the Member State concerned, usually the Ministry of Culture. The

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1 OJ L 304 of 3.11.2006, p.1

2 Ex-post Evaluation of 2013 European Capitals of Culture, Final Report for the European Commission, entrusted in 2013 by the Commission to ECORYS UK Ltd under framework service contract n° EAC/50/2009 on evaluation, evaluation-related services and support for impact assessment

3 Resolution of the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, meeting within the Council, of 13 June 1985 concerning the annual event 'European City of Culture' (85/C 153/02); http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:1985:153:0002:0003:EN:PDF

4 Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019 (OJ L 166, 1.7.1999, p.1. That Decision was amended by Decision 649/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 117, 4.5.2005, p.20)

selection is in two phases: a pre-selection phase and a final selection nine months later. A panel of thirteen members – six of whom nominated by the Member State concerned and the other seven by European institutions – examine the bids from candidate cities on the basis of the criteria laid down in the Decision. In Slovakia, nine bids were received, from which four were short-listed in December 2007[5]. The panel then recommended Košice as European Capital of Culture in September 2008. In France, eight applications were received and four cities were shortlisted in January 2008. The panel finally recommended that Marseille-Provence be awarded the title in September 2008.

In May 2009, the two cities were formally designated as European Capitals of Culture for 2013 by the Council of Ministers of the European Union.

The monitoring arrangements mean that the designated cities have to attend two formal meetings with a monitoting panel consisting of the seven experts nominated by the EU institutions, respectively 2 years and 8 months in advance of the title year. The monitoring process ends up with the panel making a recommendation to the Commission on awarding a €1.5m prize in honour of Melina Mercouri to the European Capitals of Culture, provided that the latter meet the criteria laid down in Decision No 1622/2006/EC and have implemented the recommendations made by the selection and monitoring panels. The two monitoring meetings with Košice and Marseille-Provence took place in December 2010 and April 2012. In its 2012 report, the monitoring panel recommended that the Melina Mercouri Prize be awarded to the two cities.

3. THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

3.1. The terms of the evaluation

The evaluation explores the implementation of the two 2013 ECOC throughout their life cycle and considers the impact of hosting the title in the two cities. In particular, it assesses their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, draws conclusions emerging from these two ECOC and considers implications for the ECOC action as a whole.

3.2. Methodology

This evaluation and its methodology are designed to satisfy the standard requirement of the legal basis. Although it is primarily tasked with assessing the 2013 ECOC against the objectives and criteria set out in the Decision No 1622/2006/EC (the legal basis in force at the time of their official designation), the methodology takes account of the changing policy context for this EU action and changes to the legal basis[6] wherever possible.

In order for results to be comparable with previous evaluations, the methodology follows a consistent approach for evidence gathering and analysis. The two cities were evaluated individually, based on primary data either collected during the fieldwork or provided by each ECOC, as well as the analysis of a range of secondary data sources.

Primary data sources include interviews conducted during two visits to each city or by telephone, as well as through an online survey. These interviews sought to gain a variety of perspectives on each ECOC, including those of the management teams, decision-makers at local and national levels, key cultural operators, as well as a range of partners involved in the

5 All reports for the two 2013 competitions are available at the following web-page: http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm

6 Decision No 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC (OJ L 132, 3.5.2014, p.1)

delivery of the ECOC and a sample of organisations either leading or participating in ECOC projects.

The secondary data sources include information in the original ECOC applications, studies and reports produced or commissioned by the ECOC, events programmes, promotional materials and websites, statistical data on culture and tourism and quantitative data supplied by the ECOC on finance, activities, outputs and results.

4. THE EVALUATOR'S FINDINGS

The evaluation confirms that many of the findings from previous reports, especially those pertaining to the overall relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the ECOC action are still valid. These findings have been updated with new information gathered during the 2013 evaluation wherever possible.

4.1. Relevance of the ECOC action

The experience of 2013 reinforces the finding from previous evaluations that ECOC remains highly relevant to the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union, particularly Article 167, through contributing to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, highlighting common cultural heritage as well as cultural diversity and increasing cultural co-operation between Member States and beyond.

4.2. Relevance of the two 2013 ECOC

According to the evaluation, the selection process introduced by the Decision No 1622/2006/EC ensured that the applications of both eventual ECOC title-holders set out objectives and approaches that were coherent with the legal basis. It considers that the two ECOC implemented cultural projects and activities that were consistent with the essence of their applications and therefore in line with the strategic and operational objectives of the ECOC action.

It holds that the ECOC concept also continues to be of relevance to the objectives of local policymakers and stakeholders. The experience of 2013 shows that the ECOC action has made a positive contribution to developing the range and diversity of cities' cultural offerings; enhancing social development; promoting the cities' international profile; and supporting their economic development (in particular through support for tourism and the creative economy).

4.3. Efficiency of governance and management and capacity to deliver

The evaluator looked at the cities' capacity to deliver and the efficiency of the governance and management of the ECOC, including their organisational models, processes for selecting and implementing cultural activities and events, communications and promotions, and processes for raising finance.

The delivery agency for Košice 2013 ("Košice – Európske hlavné mesto kultúry 2013, n.o.") was established at a relatively early stage of the development phase in the form of an arms-length, non-profit association with some independence from the city council. It had the main responsibility for cultural programming, while the city had sole responsibility for the implementation of infrastructure projects.

The evaluation considers that positive support from all levels of government (national, regional and local), and cutting across political parties, has been an important factor in the success of Košice 2013. It notes that this can be attributed to an understanding of the profile and benefits that the programme can bring based upon past ECOC, the motivating force of

need (particularly at the city level), and also issues of national pride and Slovakia's standing within Europe. According to the evaluation, ensuring a successful ECOC was seen as a national political priority for the country, despite the economic downturn. This encouraged for example the national government to invest significant national funds and EU Structural Funds in the ECOC, and ensured that the city government was an active partner in the successful delivery of the infrastructure projects, to an extremely short timescale. However, at least in part due to the lack of a culture of corporate giving or supportive tax regime in Slovakia, efforts to raise private sponsorship were not fully successful.

In Marseille, the ECOC was implemented by a dedicated arms-length agency, the Association Marseille-Provence 2013. As Marseille-Provence 2013 covered one of the largest territories and one of the highest number of municipalities of any ECOC to date, putting in place an effective governance and management arrangements was always going to prove a challenging task, especially in a time of public budgets' constraints. However, according to the evaluation, despite the number and diversity of partners, not least the public authorities of different political persuasions, the governance arrangements were effective. All the main stakeholders remained committed, the promised funding was provided and artistic independence was mostly respected.

Furthermore, Marseille-Provence 2013 needed and secured the support of key corporate sponsors. This support was gained through the implementation of a clear and coherent strategy of targeting different sizes and types of potential sponsors, ranging from multinational corporations to local SMEs. This strategy offered a clear understanding of the level of funding that each type of potential sponsors might offer and the benefits that they would expect. As a result, some €16.5m of corporate sponsorship was secured against the target of €14m.

Marketing and communication activities presented challenges of a different nature for each city, which were complicated by the cities' limited marketing budgets and their need to enlist a variety of tourist and public bodies in communication efforts.

At European level, the ECOC action continues to be very cost-effective when compared to other EU policy instruments and mechanisms, given the very modest EU funding available from the Melina Mercouri Prize.

The 2013 ECOC were the first ones formally subject to the selection process introduced by the Decision No 1622/2006/EC. According to the evaluator, evidence suggests that the new process enabled two high quality applications and two interesting, innovative ECOC to be selected. Moreover, there is evidence that specific recommendations of the monitoring panel positively affected final implementation. For Marseille-Provence this related to the further development of the European dimension in the final programme, while Košice took on board recommendations on legacy planning and the need to reach new audiences.

4.4. Effectiveness in developing cultural activities and cultural and artistic content

Despite a shortage of comprehensive data on results and impacts, the evaluation concludes that the 2013 ECOC created a more extensive cultural offer in both cities during the title-year.

Marseille-Provence implemented a comprehensive range of activities and attracted an audience that was estimated to exceed 11 million, making it perhaps the best-attended ECOC to date. As well as a greater volume of activity than usual, Marseille-Provence also successfully introduced many new approaches to culture. Most notably, the waterfront area was used in a new way, including the Vieux Port (where key open-air events were held) and the area between Fort Saint-Jean and the current port (which featured new venues). In addition, the ECOC represented the first time that co-operation in the field of culture had

taken place at this scale across the wider Marseille-Provence territory. Such co-operation has laid the groundwork for future activities and generated important lessons from experience.

Many of Kosice's aims were long-term and aspirational in nature, with a detailed assessment of effectiveness made more problematic by the lack of available data. Although Košice's programme was clearly smaller in scale and spread out over a longer time period, it was however highly innovative in scope and content, with experimental art forms and creativity in its broader sense strongly represented. Košice's programme made a contribution to many of the defined EU level objectives for ECOC, especially in terms of strengthening the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors and their connectivity, as well as access to and participation in culture by a broad cross-section of residents (thanks in large part to investments in SPOTs – a programme featuring the regeneration of a number of disused heat exchanger stations and cultural events in Kosice's neighbourhoods – and other cultural facilities and the number of large-scale public events).

4.5. Effectiveness in promoting the European dimension

The European dimension of Marseille-Provence 2013 particularly highlighted the location of the city on the Mediterranean, in line with the broader theme of "Sharing the South", which was the axis of the title-year. In this respect, the emphasis was on Marseille-Provence as a place of meeting and dialogue between different European cultures and their Mediterranean neighbours. The evaluation notes that some 80% of projects adopted the Euro-Mediterranean theme in some form and that as a result, the European dimension was an integral part of Marseille-Provence's programme.

It is the evaluator's view that Košice's final programme placed less emphasis on the European dimension, which was incorporated in a number of specific activities rather than permeating the entire programme. The most noteworthy aspects included the Košice Artists in Residence programme and a range of networking activities and good practice sharing (in particular in relation with the creative economy, tourism development and the community development aspects of the SPOTs programme). This was integral to Košice 2013's wider strategy to raise the profile of the city, diversify its cultural offer and establish long-term international partnerships with the potential to support creative industries.

There was also some collaboration between the two ECoC title-holders, although this was modest in scale, reflecting the very limited links that would otherwise exist between these two places.

4.6. Effectiveness in engaging the citizens and in outreach

In Košice, there was an emphasis on major new cultural events (for example in public spaces) and infrastructure to promote greater use of the city by local people. The projects supported notably through the SPOTs programme succeeded in decentralising and widening access to culture outside the city centre, while supporting community development, citizen engagement and interactions with minority and marginalised groups.

The evaluation considers that Marseille-Provence ECOC was primarily a cultural event which was accompanied by a broader development of the cultural infrastructure of the territory, particularly in Marseille. The generation of a substantial social impact was therefore perhaps not a primary objective, although certain social impacts have arisen. The ECOC succeeded in encouraging wider participation in culture through many open-air events held in public spaces. There were also specific events for young people and projects committed to engaging with people who would not usually attend cultural venues or are residents of disadvantaged parts of the territory for example via the Quartiers Créatifs (creative neighbourhoods) project.

According to the evaluation, the experience of both ECOC shows that the effective involvement of non-traditional cultural audiences or disadvantaged communities requires extensive preparatory work and/or effective partnership working with intermediary organisations. These organisations are often small, inexperienced or "amateur" in nature and are less likely to (successfully) apply for funding in programmes of this size and significance. The experience of Marseille-Provence suggests that it may be useful for ECOC delivery agencies to consider separate, streamlined funding instruments for "newer entrants", smaller cultural operators and community-based groups, either through restricted or targeted calls, capacity building and more hands-on support.

4.7. Effectiveness in achieving economic, urban development and tourism impacts

According to the evaluation, in terms of economic impacts, both ECOC made a clear contribution to developing the creative economy and the tourism offer in their respective cities. Both had a positive effect on the cities' national and international profiles and attracted significant numbers of additional visitors. Hotel stays and international tourist visits increased respectively by 9 and 17 % on previous year in Marseille while overnight stays increased by 10 % in Košice, which was included in the Top 10 destinations for 2013 in a famous tourism guide. Marseille-Provence in particular generated considerable media coverage and high levels of awareness among the general population (97 % of residents had heard of the ECOC). There is also evidence that negative perceptions of Marseille – amongst the city's residents and nationally – have been challenged and for the first time, Marseille is being seen as a cultural destination.

In Marseille-Provence, the intention was always to generate impact across a wider, sub-regional territory. Whilst such benefits have occurred, a large part of the impact was and will inevitably be concentrated in the city of Marseille itself, since the majority of new infrastructure developments and cultural events took place there.

Košice 2013 had greatest impact on the city itself, with regional effects more limited and focussing mainly on improved regional cooperation. This included improvements to the city's cultural facilities administered at regional level, as well as some joint projects focussing principally on cultural and heritage tourism.

4.8. Sustainability

The ECOC is according to the Decision No 1622/2006/EC intended to "be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city". The evaluation notes that there is evidence of sustainability in the two 2013 ECOC in terms of new refurbished cultural facilities, improved capacity and greater expertise within the cultural sector as well as better networking and co-operation within the sector and links with other sectors.

Evidence of lasting improvements in the cultural vibrancy of cities is perhaps strongest in the case of Košice, thanks to the numbers of continuing projects and the establishment of a new timetable of recurring events and festivals. Marseille-Provence 2013 did however have a positive impact on the level of (international) collaboration and networking amongst local cultural operators.

Both cities saw significant improvements to their cultural infrastructure, which are a key legacy effect. In some ways this is most noteworthy in Košice given the context of many years of under-investment.

The city of Marseille enjoyed huge investment in its cultural infrastructure in the years leading up to 2013, with the title-year providing a stimulus for their timely completion and the opportunity for them to host ECOC events and benefit from the communication activities of

the ECOC. More particularly, the Museum of Civilisations from Europe and the Mediterranean (MuCEM) – which was opened in June 2013 – as well as other new venues will continue to attract visitors and maintain the vibrancy of the city beyond 2013.

Although a key objective of Marseille-Provence 2013 was to deepen collaboration across the Marseille-Provence area, in the absence of formal legacy structures or cultural competencies for Marseille-Provence Métropole, this is most likely to be done on an informal basis in future. However, it is clear that 2013 has done much to improve local stakeholders' awareness of the potential for culture to contribute to broader developments of their localities.

The experience of 2013 illustrates that legacy planning must involve a range of partner organisations, begin at an earlier stage and be adequately resourced, if ECOC are to create more sustainable longer-term effects. Košice's programme was part of a long-term process of urban development and, as a consequence of this (supported by the recommendations of the monitoring panel), legacy planning in Košice was well-developed by the close of 2013. This has included the establishment of three legacy bodies (for cultural policy, management of cultural infrastructure and tourism development), adoption of a new long term cultural development strategy and renewed willingness on the part of public agencies to value and fund investments in culture.

Stakeholders in Košice also commented that ECOC had a beneficial impact on the atmosphere in the city's neighbourhoods, improving the confidence of local people and the capacity of local organisations. ECOC also played a role in shaping cultural practices in Košice, promoting the importance of dialogue and partnership, partnership-working, more "resilient" funding models (with less reliance on state funding) and increasing the level of interaction between cultural operators, other sectors and local citizens.

5. MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND CONCLUSIONS FROM THE COMMISSION

The Commission considers that the evaluation report provides a reasonably solid basis on which sound conclusions can be drawn as to ECOC performance. Hard data on the impact of ECOC is not available to support all conclusions, but available data is supported by other evidence, including an on-line survey and interviews. On the other hand, most of the qualitative evidence, in the form of on-line survey and interview results, is limited to those directly involved in and benefiting from the programme. Some of the objectives set are also broad and difficult to measure and it is too early for this evaluation to have been able to assess any longer term impacts. As a consequence, much of the evidence focuses on results rather than impacts. In order to better capture such impacts, it would be useful for the two cities to have longitudinal evaluations, notably to confirm the efficiency of the public spending in the ECOC from both a social and an economic points of view, also using a broader range of evaluative data to support the conclusions.

Nevertheless, the Commission finds a sufficient basis in the data and other evidence supporting the evaluation to allow it to share the overall assessments and conclusions of the evaluation, which are considered to provide a broadly true and complete picture of the two 2013 ECOC, although lacking strong data and other independent evidence to support very solid conclusions on efficiency and impacts.

It concludes from the evaluation report that the ECOC title remains highly valued by those who receive the money and generates extensive cultural programmes with some positive impacts which cannot, however, yet be fully assessed.

The Commission also concludes that the programmes implemented by two 2013 title-holders were innovative and consistent with the action's objectives; they reflected the European dimension of the ECOC action, involved many residents, brought culture to new audiences, raised the interest of citizens from abroad and are likely to lead to some legacy. However, deeper assessments of the extent of the benefits produced against the costs incurred will be useful to confirm the impact of the programme.

The evaluators' recommendations are based on the evaluators' considerations of the 2013 ECOC but relate to the implementation of the ECOC action as a whole. Recommendations include the promotion of other sources of financing such as the EU Structural Funds through the identification of good practices and the provision of relevant advice, a policy dialogue with Member States to incentivise private sector investment in the arts and culture, the enhancement of the dissemination of good practices from ECOC, in particular in the communication activities of the Creative Europe Programme and any future European Culture Forum, the establishment of guidelines and indicators for the cities' own evaluations and the publication of cities' own evaluation reports..

It also recommends that the recommendations from the selection and monitoring panels relate to the criteria in Article 14 of the Decision No 445/2014/EU and that Member States are encouraged to indicate their funding to the potential candidate cities when the call for applications is issued.

The Commission accepts the recommendations of the evaluation and, in this respect, underlines in particular that:

– It published on its website a revised guide for cities preparing to bid[7], as well as a guide on "How to strategically use the EU support programmes, including Structural Funds, to foster the potential of culture for local, regional and national development and the spill-over effects on the wider economy"[8], which are both very relevant to ECOC. Moreover, especially as far as Structural Funds are concerned, the obligation included in the Decision No 445/2014/EU to further embed the ECOC in the long-term development of cities should help the latter plan their title year more strategically, facilitating thereby the use of such Funds;

– It issued guidelines for the cities' own evaluations of their ECOC year[9], which are largely based on the expertise resulting from the external and independent evaluations of the ECOC produced since 2007 and provide cities with a set of common indicators as well as common guidelines in the form of a list of questions cities should ask themselves when deciding to bid or planning their evaluation procedures. The guidelines encourage cities to carry out longitudinal evaluations;

– It will continue its dialogue with Member States and stakeholders about the value of investing in the arts and culture as a way to encourage investment in the sector;

– It intends to use the opportunity of the 30th anniversary of the ECOC scheme in 2015 to further increase the visibility of this EU action, notably as part of its next European Culture Forum in the autumn 2015. This will help highlighting and disseminating examples of good practice from ECOC, including in the use of the EU Structural Funds or private sector investment.

The Commission will also prepare an internal action plan addressing the recommendations in the evaluation report. A follow up of this action plan will be done in 2016.

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7 http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc-candidates-guide_en.pdf

8 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/documents/structural-funds-handbook_en.pdf

9 http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/documents/ecoc/city-own-guide_en.pdf

Finally, the Commission intends to develop the approach to the evaluation of ECOC in order to ensure more and better data and to better measure the efficiency and impact of this EU action.