



Open call for expression of interest EAC/A03/2021 for the establishment of a pool of experts to be potentially members of the Panel for the Union action "European Capital of Culture" under Decision 445/2014/EU

I. Background

1. The "European Capital of Culture" action

The Decision 445/2014/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (hereafter "the Decision") establishes a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033¹.

The general objectives of this initiative are to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, to highlight the common features they share as well as to increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area, and to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities in accordance with their respective strategies and priorities.

More specifically, the European Capitals of Culture (hereafter "the ECoC") are also aiming at enhancing the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational co-operation; widening access to and participation in culture; strengthening the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors and raising the international profile of cities through culture.

Further information on the "European Capital of Culture" action can be found on the following webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/tools/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm

2. The selection procedure for the "European Capital of Culture" title

Each year, two Member States of the European Union are entitled to host the ECoC action in accordance with the chronological order annexed to the Decision.

Furthermore, in 2024, 2028, 2030 and 2033, cities from European Free Trade Association countries that are parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EFTA/EEA countries), as well as from candidate countries or potential candidates for European Union membership² will also have the possibility to hold the title.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014D0445>

² https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/eu-enlargement_en

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, Decision 445/2014/EC was amended to give the 2020 ECoCs the opportunity to prolong their title year to April 2021, while the 2021 ECoCs were postponed to 2022 (Novi Sad, Serbia) and 2023 (Elefsina, Greece and Timisoara, Romania).

While each Member State manages its own selection competition for the ECoC title at national level in accordance with the procedure and criteria laid down in the Decision and with the assistance of the European Commission, the Commission is responsible for the organisation of the open competition for cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries or potential candidates.

In practical terms, this means that, every year, parallel competitions will run at national level in two Member States, and that, for the ECoC titles 2028, 2030 and 2033, a third competition – open only to cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries and potential candidates – will also take place.

The competition for the title is launched at least six years in advance – with the publication of a call for submission of applications – in order to give the cities sufficient time for their preparation before the beginning of the title-year. The competition is organised in two rounds – preselection and selection – each including the organisation of a meeting. The aim of these meetings is for the Panel (see section I.4 below) to assess the application submitted by the corresponding cities against the objectives and criteria laid down in the Decision and to announce the names of the cities recommended for pre-selection / the ECoC title.

The cities are then officially designated as European Capitals of Culture by the Member State concerned (for the competitions in Member States) and by the Commission (for competitions between cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries or potential candidates). The designation formally marks the end of the selection procedure.

3. The monitoring procedure of the cities designated as “European Capitals of Culture”

Once cities are designated as "European Capitals of Culture", they are submitted to a monitoring procedure during the preparatory period running from their designation up to the title-year.

The monitoring procedure aims to provide the cities with support and guidance. It is the opportunity to take stock of the preparations and give advice with a view to helping designated cities to develop a high-quality cultural programme and an effective strategy for the title-year.

The monitoring consists of three formal meetings between the Panel and each city. These meetings are convened by the Commission. The first monitoring meeting takes place three years before the title-year, the second 18 months before the title-year and the third just two months before the title-year.

In addition to these meetings, the Commission may organise monitoring visits to the designated cities whenever necessary.

4. The Panel of independent experts

In accordance with Article 6 of the Decision, a Panel composed of independent experts is established to take part in the abovementioned selection and monitoring procedures.

Panel experts work independently, i.e. in a personal capacity and not on behalf of any organisation.

The Panel consists of ten experts appointed by Union institutions and bodies (the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions) (the "European experts") plus up to two experts appointed by the Member State for its own competition in accordance with its own procedures and in consultation with the Commission (the "national experts").

The role of the Panel is to assess the applications received from cities bidding for the ECoC title, to agree on a shortlist of cities for pre-selection, to recommend one city for the title in the context of each competition and to monitor the preparation of the designated cities until the title-year.

II. Purpose of the call

This open call for expressions of interest is managed by the European Commission, Directorate-General Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Directorate Culture and Creativity. The European Commission issues this call with the aim of establishing a pool of potential "European experts" for the Panel.

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission will subsequently select three experts each from this pool – and the Committee of the Regions one expert from this pool – and appoint them as members of the Panel in accordance with their respective procedures. In selecting experts, each of these Union institutions and bodies will seek to ensure a complementarity of the competences, a balanced geographical distribution and a gender balance in the overall composition of the Panel.

The "European experts" are appointed for a period of three years. During their contract, the members of the Panel will be requested to carry out at least one of the following duties:

1) Pre-selection phase

a) Preparatory work

Appointed Panel members read carefully all the written applications submitted by cities in response to the calls for submission of applications, in order to be in a position to make an informed assessment of each application against the objectives and criteria laid down in Article 2 and Article 5 of the Decision.

The number of applications will vary from one competition to the other. For past competitions, this number has varied from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 21. Information on the applications to be submitted by candidate cities is available at the following link:

https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/library/capitals-culture-call-applications2019_en.pdf (template of the call for submission of applications)

https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/capitals-culture-candidates-guide_en_vdec17.pdf (guide for cities preparing to bid)

This preparatory work is carried out prior to the participation of the experts in the pre-selection meeting.

b) Pre-selection meeting

Appointed Panel members attend the pre-selection meeting. The meeting will take place either in the Member State organising the competition or in Brussels (for the open competitions for cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries or potential candidates). The meeting can also be held online through a videoconference tool. The duration of the meeting will depend on the number of applications received. At the end of the meeting, the Panel will agree on a short-list of candidate cities.

c) Reporting

The Panel issues a report on the applications of all candidate cities providing inter alia recommendations to the short-listed candidate cities. This report is submitted to the Commission and the Member State concerned and is made public.

2) Selection phase

a) Preparatory work

After the pre-selection meeting, the short-listed cities are given time to complete and revise their applications.

Appointed Panel members read carefully all the revised applications received from the short-listed cities, in order to be in a position to make an informed assessment of each application against the objectives and criteria laid down in Article 2 and Article 5 of the Decision.

This preparatory work is carried out prior to the participation in the selection meeting.

b) Selection meeting

Appointed Panel members attend the selection meeting. The meeting will take place in the Member State organising the competition or in Brussels (for the open competitions for cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries or potential candidates). The meeting can also be held online through a videoconference tool. The duration of the meeting will depend on the number of short-listed candidate cities. At the end of the meeting, the Panel will agree on one city which will be recommended for the title.

c) Reporting

The Panel issues a report on the applications with a recommendation for the nomination of one city to the title. The report also contains recommendations to the city concerned regarding the progress to be made by the year of the title. This report is submitted to the Commission and the Member State concerned and is made public.

d) On-site visits

Visits of pre-selected cities in Member States by a delegation of Panel members may be organised after the deadline for submitting the revised applications and before the selection meetings.

3) Monitoring phase

a) Preparatory work

Prior to the monitoring meetings, the cities concerned transmit progress reports to the Commission, which forwards them to the Panel. Each Panel member reads carefully the progress reports received in order to be in a position to ask relevant questions to the delegations from the cities during the monitoring meetings.

b) Meetings

Appointed Panel members concerned attend the three meetings that will be convened by the European Commission for each designated city. These meetings between the monitoring Panel and the respective designated cities will be held in the Commission's premises in Brussels. The meetings can also be held online through a videoconference tool.

c) Reporting

After each meeting, the Panel issues a report on the state of preparations and further steps to be taken by the cities. This report is submitted to the Commission as well as to the designated cities and the Member State or country concerned. These reports are made public.

d) On-site visits

In agreement with the Commission, a delegation of Panel members may pay visits during the monitoring phase to the designated cities whenever necessary. The Commission will organise these visits with the cities concerned.

III. Application and selection procedure for the pool of experts

1. Procedure to follow and timetable

Step 1	Experts who are interested in this call send their application. The call for expressions of interest is open until 31.12.2027. Experts can register at any time prior to the last three months of validity of the call (see section III.2 below).
Step 2	Applications are registered by the Commission services.
Step 3	On the basis of the information provided in the application, the Commission services assess whether the applicants meet the criteria laid down in section III.3 below.
Step 4	The applicants will be duly informed by the Commission within 3 months of the date of application whether they have been included in the pool of potential experts or not.
Step 5	Access to the pool of registered experts is given to the other European institutions and bodies entitled to appoint members of the Panel in accordance with Article 6, paragraph 3, of the Decision.
Step 6	<p>In accordance with Article 6, paragraph 3, of the Decision, each European institution / body will then appoint a number of experts according to its own procedure, as follows:</p> <p><u>2021</u> Council: 3 experts for 3 years (2022, 2023 and 2024) Committee of the Regions: 1 expert for 3 years (2022, 2023 and 2024)</p> <p><u>2022</u> Commission: 3 experts for 3 years (2023, 2024 and 2025)</p> <p><u>2023</u> European Parliament: 3 experts for 3 years (2024, 2025 and 2026)</p> <p><u>2024</u> Council: 3 experts for 3 years (2025, 2026 and 2027) Committee of the Regions: 1 expert for 3 years (2025, 2026 and 2027)</p> <p><u>2025</u> Commission: 3 experts for 3 years (2026, 2027 and 2028)</p> <p><u>2026</u> European Parliament: 3 experts for 3 years (2027, 2028 and 2029)</p> <p><u>2027</u> Council: 3 experts for 3 years (2028, 2029 and 2030) Committee of the Regions: 1 expert for 3 years (2028, 2029 and 2030)</p>
Step 7	The Commission informs all experts appointed as Panel members of their appointment and issues a contract with each of them.

2. Applications

Applicants are asked to submit their application in English by using the online form available at the following address: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/pool-of-experts>

The online form provides details on the applicant's profile.

Together with the online form, the applicants are requested to submit the following documents:

- A curriculum vitae in Europass format highlighting how his / her profile covers the selection criteria indicated below. You can download the Europass format CV from the following link: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae>
- A motivation letter explaining why the applicant would like to be part of the Panel and how he / she could bring added value to the work of the Panel.

Only complete applications including the online form, the curriculum vitae and the motivation letter will be considered.

3. Selection procedure and criteria

3.1 Exclusion criteria

Candidates will be excluded from participation in this call if:

- (a) the applicant 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 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 is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:
 - (i) 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;
 - (ii) entering into agreement with other applicants with the aim of distorting competition;
 - (iii) violating intellectual property rights;
 - (iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the Commission during the award procedure;
 - (v) 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 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;

- (ii) 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;
 - (iii) conduct related to a criminal organisation, as referred to in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;
 - (iv) 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;
 - (v) 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;
 - (vi) 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 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 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 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 an entity has been created with the intent referred to in point (g);
 - (i) for the situations referred to in points (c) to (h) above, the applicant is subject to:
 - (i) facts established in the context of audits or investigations carried out by European Public Prosecutor's Office after its establishment, the Court of Auditors, the European Anti-Fraud Office or the 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) 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) facts referred to in decisions of persons or entities being entrusted with EU budget implementation tasks;
 - (iv) information transmitted by Member States implementing Union funds;

- (v) 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; or
- (vi) decisions of exclusion by an authorising officer of an EU institution, of a European office or of an EU agency or body.

Remedial measures³

If an applicant declares one of the situations of exclusion listed above, it must indicate the measures it has taken to remedy the exclusion situation, thus demonstrating its reliability. This may include e.g. technical, organisational and personnel measures to correct the conduct and 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 the declaration. This does not apply for situations referred in point (d) of section 7.1.

Rejection from the call for proposals

The authorising officer shall not award a contract to an applicant who:

- (a) is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with section 7.1; or
- (b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information; or
- (c) was previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equal treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

Administrative sanctions (exclusion)⁴ may be imposed on applicants, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

Supporting documents⁵

Applicants must [provide a declaration on their honour](https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/2021-05/eac-a03-2021-declaration-honour.pdf) certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 136(1) and 141 FR, by filling in the relevant form available at <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/2021-05/eac-a03-2021-declaration-honour.pdf>.

3 Article 136(7) FR

4 Article 138 FR

5 Article 137 FR

3.2 Selection criteria:

The call is open until 31.12.2027 to natural persons who are **citizens of the European Union and are independent**.

Applicants must demonstrate through their CV either at least **eight years** of professional experience and expertise in the cultural sector or at least **eight years** of professional experience and expertise in the cultural development of cities or at least **four years** of professional experience and expertise in the organisation of a European Capital of Culture / an international cultural event of similar scope and scale, whatever the cultural field.

The applicants **have to be available to devote an appropriate number of working days per year to the Panel**. Average estimations based on past experience indicate the number of working days to be approximately 25 to 40 per year. This includes an average of 6 working days for pre-selection, 4 days for selection and 2 days for the monitoring of each city. They take into account the preparatory work, the attendance to the meetings, the reporting work and the possible on-site visits. The number of working days may vary a lot from one year to the other, depending on the number of candidate cities in the competitions organised each year. According to the circumstances, the annual workload for appointed Panel experts may be higher or lower than these estimations.

English is the working language of the Panel. Applicants must demonstrate through the activities included in their CVs their **ability to work in English level C1, both orally and in writing**.

If appointed as a member of the Panel, each expert will have to sign:

- (1) a declaration of honour attesting that she/he is not in any of the exclusion criteria set out in section III.3.1
- (2) a non-conflict of interest declaration that she/he is in no actual or potential conflict of interest in respect of a specific candidate city (candidates are invited to have a through look at the “Declaration of absence of conflict of interests and of confidentiality” included as Annex 3 of the draft contract to better understand when such occurrence happens).

It is the responsibility of Panel members to signal any change in their professional or private duties that may give rise to a conflict of interest or be perceived as giving rise to one.

IV. Validity of the list of experts

The pool of experts established during this call is valid until 31.12.2027. Interested parties may submit an application at any time prior to the last 3 months of validity of the list.

V. Practical provisions for remuneration and travel arrangements

The pool of experts drawn up on the basis of this call for expressions of interests entails no obligation on the part of the Union institutions and bodies concerning the conclusion of contracts.

Only appointed Panel members shall be offered a contract and shall be paid for their work and be reimbursed for their travel costs according to the provisions below.

Remuneration

The contract signed between the Commission and each Panel member nominated by Union institutions and bodies will indicate the remuneration Panel members are entitled to for the various tasks they will have to carry out (see Article 4 of attached draft contract). In principle, each member will be entitled to a payment of a fixed price of EUR 500 in the form of a lump sum for each full day actually worked.

Travel expenses and allowances

The contract signed between the Commission and each Panel member nominated by Union institutions and bodies will also indicate the reimbursement of expenses and allowances Panel members are entitled to for meeting(s) and other work involving travel (see Article 5 of attached draft contract). This is as follows:

Travel expenses:

For distances of less than 400 km (one way, according to official distance by rail): - train travel (1st class); the original ticket has to be presented with the final declaration of expenses; - travel by private car will be reimbursed at the price of the train travel (1st class) or, if there is no train travel for this journey, on the rate of EUR 0.22 per km.

For distances of more than 400 km: economy class air travel.

As a general rule, the most economical means of travelling and the most direct journey have to be chosen. Taxi fares will not be reimbursed, except specific decision by DG EAC of the Commission.

Allowances:

A full daily allowance will be paid to Panel members residing over 100 kilometres from the city where the meeting or visit is organised. The daily allowance paid for each day of the meeting is a flat rate to cover all expenditure at the place where the meeting or visit is held, including for example meals and local transport (bus, tram, metro, taxi, parking, motorway tolls, etc.) as well as travel and accident insurance and liability insurance. If the place of departure is 100 km or less from the place where the meeting is held, the daily allowance shall be reduced by 50%.

Experts who have to spend one or more nights at the place where the meeting or visit is held due to the fact that the times of the meeting or visit in question are incompatible with the times of flights or trains will also be entitled to an accommodation allowance, provided that accommodation's costs have actually incurred.

Amounts on travel and subsistence expenses shall be aligned with any updates on Commission-approved scales applicable for mission costs for Commission officials, annexed to the missions guide: Commission Decision on general implementing provisions adopting the

guide to missions for officials and other servants of the European Commission (C(2008) 6215 of 18.11.2008).

VI. Data Protection – Privacy statement

If processing your expression of interest involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address and CV), such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, your reply to this notice and any personal data requested are required for the purposes indicated above in point 4 and will be processed solely for those purposes by the contracting authority indicated in point 1, which is also acting as data controller. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at: http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System by the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046⁶. For more information see the Privacy Statement on: https://ec.europa.eu/info/data-protection-public-procurement-procedures_en.

VII. Ex-post transparency

A list of experts (name and subject of the tasks executed) who have concluded a contract following this procedure shall be published on the website of the contracting authority.

If an expert has concluded a contract of more than €15 000, the name, the locality (region of origin), amount, and subject of the contract shall be published on the website of the contracting authority no later than 30 June of the year following contract award. The information shall be removed two years after the year of contract award. Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

VIII. Submission of applications

Experts interested in the call are invited to send their application at any time prior to the last 3 months of validity of the list (31.12.2027) only by using the online form available at the following address: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/pool-of-experts>.

Applications using other communication mean will be disregarded.

Only applications containing the following three documents will be considered:

- The online application form;
- A curriculum vitae in the Europass format;
- A motivation letter.

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1046>

IX. Contact

Questions may be sent to the following functional mailbox:
EAC-ECOC-EXPERTS@ec.europa.eu.

X. Supporting documents

Decision 445/2014/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32014D0445>

Template of the call for submission of applications (for cities wishing to bid for the ECOC title):

https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/default/files/library/capitals-culture-call-applications2019_en.pdf

Guide for cities preparing to bid for the ECOC title:

[A guide for cities preparing to bid - European Capitals of Culture 2020 to 2033 | Culture and Creativity \(europa.eu\)](#)

Website of the European Commission:

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

XI. Annex

Draft Contract for external experts (and relevant annexes).