



Rules of Procedure

In relation with call for submission of applications EAC/A04/2021
Competition for the 2028 European Capital of Culture title for cities in EFTA/EEA countries,
candidate countries and potential candidates participating in Creative Europe.

The European Commission having regard to 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, as amended by Decision (EU) 2017/1545 of 13 September 2017, further amended by Decision (EU) 2020/2229 (hereinafter referred to as "the Decision") hereby issues these Rules of Procedure for the competition for the 2028 European Capital of Culture title for cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries and potential candidates participating in Creative Europe. These rules have to be read in connection with the call No EAC/A04/2021:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/calls/ecoc-2028>.

Article 1

Introductory provisions

1. These Rules of Procedure define the rules concerning the competition arrangements for the 2028 European Capital of Culture title for cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries and potential candidates participating in Creative Europe, and particularly the composition, membership and activities of the Expert Panel established for the selection procedure (hereinafter referred to as "the Panel").
2. The Panel shall agree on a short-list of applicant cities and, after the final selection meeting, recommend one city for the title of European Capital of Culture except in the event that no city is deemed to have fulfilled all criteria.
3. The body responsible for organising and managing the competition (hereinafter referred to as "the Managing Authority") is the "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate within the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission.

Article 2

Composition of the Panel

1. The Panel shall have ten members. The European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission shall each appoint three members of the Panel and the Committee of the Regions shall appoint one member of the Panel, in accordance with their respective procedures.
2. The Panel shall be led by a chairperson, who shall be deputised by a vice-chairperson in his or her absence.
3. The chairperson and the vice-chairperson shall be designated by the members of the Panel at the start of the pre-selection meeting, preferably by consensus.
4. If no consensus can be found, a vote shall be organised. The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be elected by secret ballot. Voting slips shall be provided by the Managing Authority, who shall lead and supervise the voting. The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be the candidates who receive the votes of a majority of the members of the Panel who are present.
5. If no candidate receives the votes of a majority of the members of the Panel in the first round of voting, a second round shall be conducted among the two top-scoring candidates.

Article 3

Membership of the Panel

1. Members of the Panel cannot be replaced by substitutes except in the cases foreseen under paragraph 4 below.
2. The members of the Panel shall be citizens of the Union. As members of the Panel, they shall work independently, in a personal capacity and not on behalf of any organisation. They shall 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 event or an international cultural event of similar scope and scale. They shall also be in a position to devote an appropriate number of working days to the Panel.
3. The members of the Panel shall sign a declaration of honour that they do not have any actual or potential conflict of interests in respect of any of the cities that have applied for the title of European Capital of Culture before both the pre-selection and final selection meetings. The Managing Authority shall store the original declaration of each member of the Panel.
4. It is the responsibility of Panel members to signal changes to their professional or private duties that may give rise to any actual or potential conflict of interest in respect of a specific applicant city. In the event of such a declaration by a member, or if such a conflict of interest comes to light, that member shall resign and the relevant Union

institution or body shall replace that member for the remainder of the mandate, in accordance with the relevant procedure.

Article 4 Meetings of the Panel

1. Meetings of the Panel shall be convened by the Managing Authority. The cities short-listed by the Panel will be invited by the Managing Authority to take part in the final selection meeting by means of a written invitation to submit completed and revised applications.
2. The Managing Authority shall provide all the technical and logistical assistance needed for the work of the Panel during the meetings.
3. Meetings of the Panel shall not be open to the public. Representatives from the Managing Authority have the right to take part in the meetings of the Panel as observers. Other people may be invited to attend with the agreement of all the members of the Panel who are present.
4. The chairperson of the Panel or, in his or her absence, the vice-chairperson shall lead the meeting and be responsible for the proceedings.
5. Voting in the Panel shall be secret. Voting slips shall be provided by the Managing Authority.
6. The members of the Panel must not disclose matters relating to individual applications and recommendations of the Panel relating to the candidacy of the cities before the final selection. However, the chairperson or, in his or her absence, the vice-chairperson may answer oral queries from the applicant cities after the pre-selection meeting.
7. The working language of the Panel will be English.
8. Following each meetings of the Panel, a report shall be drafted in English by a rapporteur chosen from among its members and agreed upon by all the members of the Panel.

Article 5 Pre-selection

1. The Managing Authority shall send the applications submitted to all the members of the Panel.
2. The Managing Authority shall convene a pre-selection meeting with the Panel. The pre-selection meeting shall take place a few weeks after the deadline set for submitting applications. Applicant cities will not be invited to this meeting.

3. No visits of the Panel to the applicant cities are allowed before the pre-selection meeting.
4. The Panel shall assess the applicant cities on the basis of their applications against the objectives and criteria laid down in the Decision.
5. The Panel shall discuss the merits of each city and shall agree on a short-list of applicant cities that shall be invited to revise and complete their application during the selection phase. The Panel should only put forward cities that it considers to have a real chance of receiving its recommendation at the final selection stage.
6. The Panel should try to reach a consensus about which cities to pre-select. If consensus cannot be reached, the decision establishing the short-list of pre-selected cities shall be made on the basis of a vote. For each applicant city, each Panel member shall vote in favour or against short-listing it. The decision on whether a city is shortlisted shall be taken by a simple majority of the Panel members present. In the event of an equal number of votes, the chairperson casts the decisive vote and, in his or her absence, the vice-chairperson.
7. The Panel as a whole shall endorse the final decision.
8. The short list drawn up by the Panel shall be announced following the pre-selection meeting.
9. The Panel shall produce a report containing a general assessment of all the applications and the short-list of applicant cities that are to be considered further as well as recommendations to these cities.
10. The Panel shall deliver its report to the Managing Authority in principle no later than 21 working days after the pre-selection meeting. The Managing Authority will publish the Panel's report on its website.
11. The Commission shall send a letter to all short-listed applicant cities inviting them to complete and revise their applications and indicating the deadline for the submission of these applications.

Article 6

Final selection

1. The short-listed applicant cities shall complete and revise their applications with a view to complying further with the criteria of the Decision as well as taking into account the recommendations made the Panel in its pre-selection report.
2. The Managing Authority shall send the completed and revised applications of the applicant cities to all the members of the Panel.
3. No individual invitations from short-listed cities to members of the Panel to visit them prior to the final selection meeting can be accepted.

4. The Managing Authority shall invite cities to send a delegation to the final selection meeting for a hearing. The meeting may take place online through a video-conference tool. The cities are free to decide who to present their candidature, provided that the delegation is limited to a maximum of 10 people. Cities can bring in their own technician. In this case, the technician will not be counted as a member of the delegation, providing that he or she does not take the floor during the hearing.
5. The final selection meeting shall take place no later than nine months after the pre-selection meeting. Where necessary, the Managing Authority may extend that deadline for a reasonable period.
6. The hearing shall comprise:
 - a. An oral presentation by each applicant city giving the most precise and updated view of its candidature, with a time limit that will be simultaneously specified by the Managing Authority to all short-listed cities after the pre-selection stage;
 - b. A question/answer session between the Panel and each applicant city, with a time limit that will be simultaneously specified by the Managing Authority to all short-listed applicant cities after the pre-selection stage.
7. The language for the hearing shall be English and the Managing Authority shall not provide for interpretation. However, applicant cities may provide for simultaneous interpretation from and into English at their own expense and using their own equipment. In this case, interpreters will not be counted as a member of the delegation, providing that their role is strictly limited to interpretation.
8. The Panel shall assess the short-listed cities based on the revised applications and the hearing against the objectives and criteria laid down in the Decision.
9. The Panel shall seek to recommend one city for the title by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the decision concerning this city shall be made on the basis of a vote by simple majority of the members of the Panel, who are present. Each Panel member has one vote and gives his or her vote to one city. If no pre-selected city obtains the required majority of votes in the first round, a second round of voting shall take place. The two applicant cities with the highest number of votes of members of the Panel present and ties shall go forward to this second round of voting. For a decision to be adopted in the second round of voting, it must have the support of a majority of the members of the Panel who are present.
10. In the event of the necessity for a third round of voting, the city with the lowest number of votes will be eliminated. In the event of a tie between two or more candidates for the city with the lowest number of votes, the chairperson of the Panel or, in his or her absence, the vice-chairperson shall have the casting vote as to which city shall be eliminated before the third round of voting.
11. If, after a third round, no city has reached a majority, a subsequent round will follow the procedure set out above. In the event of an equal number of votes at the fourth round, the chairperson casts the decisive vote and, in his or her absence, the vice-chairperson.
12. If none of the applicant cities fulfil all the criteria, the Panel may recommend not awarding the title.

13. The Panel as a whole shall endorse the final decision.
14. The selection of the Panel shall be announced after the final selection meeting.
15. The Panel shall issue a general assessment report on the applications of all the short-listed cities and a duly justified recommendation for the nomination of one city as European Capital of Culture. The report shall contain recommendations to the selected city regarding the progress to be made by the year of the title, if formally designated as European Capital of Culture. It shall also point out the questions to be raised by the Panel during the first monitoring meeting.
16. The Panel shall deliver its report to the Managing Authority in principle no later than 21 working days after the date of final selection meeting. The Managing Authority shall publish the selection report on its website.
17. The Commission shall designate one city to be European Capital of Culture, based on the recommendation contained in the selection report of the Panel, and shall notify the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions of that designation.

Article 7
Final provisions

1. The expenses incurred for the participation in the meetings of the Panel members will be covered by the European Commission.
2. These rules of procedure shall take effect on the date when they are signed by the Director of the "Culture, Creativity and Sport" Directorate within the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture of the European Commission.

Tamas Szucs

Director