



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

**Selection of the European Capital of Culture
2021 in Greece**

**The Selection Panel's report
Pre-Selection Stage**

**Athens
March 2016**

Introduction

This is the report of the selection panel (the “panel”) for the pre-selection phase for the competition for the European Capital of Culture in 2021 in Greece.

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports (the “ministry”) is the managing authority of the competition which is governed by:

- Decision 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 16 April 2014 (the “Decision”)¹ and
- Rules of procedure – Competition of the European Capital of Culture in Greece in 2021 – (the “Rules”) signed by the Greek Minister of Culture and Sports and published on the ministry’s website in April 2015.

A panel of 12 independent experts was established for the selection process in line with article 2 of the Rules. Ten members were appointed by the European Union institutions and bodies (European Parliament, Council, Commission and the Committee of Regions). Two members were appointed by the ministry.

The competition is in two phases: pre-selection (shortlisting) and selection. The ministry issued a call for applications on 9 December 2014. Fourteen applications were submitted by the closing date of 30 November 2015: (in alphabetical order)

Corfu, Delphi, Elefsina, Ioannina, Kalamata, Larissa, Lesbos, Messolonghi, Piraeus, Rhodes, Salamis, Samos, Tripolis and Volos

Panel Meeting

The panel met in Athens on 22-26 February 2016. The panel elected Steve Green as its chair and Apostolos Kalfopoulos as vice-chair. All panel members signed a declaration of no conflict of interest and confidentiality.

Representatives of the European Commission and the Ministry attended as observers. These observers took no part in the panel’s deliberations or decision.

¹ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.132.01.0001.01.ENG

At the meeting each candidate, in alphabetical order, presented their case (in 30 minutes) and answered questions from the panel members (in 45 minutes). Each delegation consisted of up to ten members.

At a press conference on 26 February 2016 the chair of the panel announced the panel's unanimous recommendation that the Minister invite the following cities to submit revised bids for final selection (in alphabetical order):

Elefsina, Kalamata and Rhodes

Next Steps

The ministry will arrange for the formal approval of the shortlist based on this report (article 8 of the Decision). The ministry will then issue an invitation to these cities to submit revised applications for final selection.

The shortlisted cities should take into account the assessments and recommendations of the panel in this report.

The deadline for submission of revised applications is **1200hrs on 5 October 2016**.

The final selection meeting will be held in Athens on **10-11 November 2016**.

Two to four members of the panel will pay a one-day visit to the shortlisted cities shortly before the meeting to obtain more background information.

Representatives of the European Commission and the ministry will accompany the panel members as observers.

Thanks

The panel members would like to thank all fourteen bidding candidates and everyone who contributed to their bids; the European Commission for their advice and the Minister of Culture and Sports and his staff for their excellent administration.

Assessments of the candidates

In their assessment of the candidates the panel noted the general and specific objectives in article 2 of the Decision and the requirement for the application to be based on a cultural programme with a strong European Dimension created specifically for the title (article 4).

The panel assessed each bid against the six criteria in article 5:

- Contribution to the long term strategy of the city
- European Dimension
- Cultural and artistic content
- Capacity to deliver
- Outreach
- Management

One of the most important changes in the Decision for ECOCs from 2020 is the requirement that cities have a formal and explicit cultural strategy. This is to ensure that the ECOC is grounded in a medium term transformation of the city and its cultural life rather than a once-off festival. The panel was disappointed that few of the candidates in Greece have taken the opportunity to develop cultural strategies, offering instead a list of projects mostly capital based and co-funded from EU programmes.

Recent ECOC preselection panels in Croatia, Ireland and Romania have seen candidates take this opportunity to develop, many for the first time, a cultural strategy. This was a missed opportunity for those cities in Greece. Cultural strategies, which can be short documents, should set out the medium term outcomes and objectives the city is seeking. They are action documents and not descriptive or academic. The strategies should be approved by the relevant councils. They act as a transparent guide for cultural development (and financing) in the city. Once a strategy is in place specific projects and funding trends can be designed to achieve the objectives set out in the strategy. The panel hopes that all the candidates develop cultural strategies, regardless of the outcome of the ECOC competition.

For the shortlisted cities it is imperative that the city's cultural strategy is approved by the municipal council (and separate from their approval of the ECOC bidbook and financing). A cultural strategy would normally have a wider scope than the ECOC.

The panel will have to exclude candidates if the relevant councils have not approved both the strategy and the second ECOC bidbook before the submission of the bidbook.

In the commentaries which follow the panel notes the main elements of their discussions. Recommendations are made to the shortlisted cities to assist them in their preparation of the final bidbooks in both the individual city comments and in the general recommendations. The panel found that in many cases the presentations and the subsequent answers tended to be general rather than specific; the panel expects the shortlisted cities to take note for the final selection meeting.

The panel emphasise that their assessment of the candidates was based on the proposed programme set out in the bidbook and presentation session. A city's heritage and history (however rich), its recent and current policies, and cultural offer may form a basis for a programme but play no part in the selection process. The panel also points out that although the European Capitals of Culture programme originated in 1985 in Athens the current objectives and criteria are significantly different.

Corfu

Corfu presented their bid under the banner of “Be My City”. Its aim is “to animate the cultural life of Corfu as a force for the future development of the place and its people.” The proposed programme has four creative streams: Back to the Future, the Imagined City, C-Citizen and Future/Creative Portal.

The bid seeks to include the whole island, the Ionian Islands group and the coastal regions of Albania, Montenegro, Croatia and Italy.

The forecast operating budget is €19.058m of which €13.340m is reserved for programme expenditure.

The panel learnt that a new cultural strategy has recently been approved. It aligns Corfu2021 with overall policies for economic development, infrastructure and education. A key element is “the past as a foundation for the future”. The strategic orientations are cultural renaissance, cultural dissemination, enhancing the role of local communities, culture as a multiplier and its long term impact. The process of developing this new strategy was not clear, most notably in the participation of (rather than informing of) citizens and specific outcomes were not in place. This was reflected in the lack of success criteria in the evaluation section.

One of the key aims of Corfu2021 is to assist in re-branding Corfu as a tourist destination, reduce the seasonality of tourism and to engage tourists with the

cultural life of the island. The panel appreciated the intention to integrate cultural and tourism specialists to help this re-alignment of the tourist offer. The panel could not however link the proposed strategy or the outline programme with these aspirations. There was little evidence of market research or engagement of tourists in the bid preparation.

The panel was impressed with the information on the scope and dynamism of the cultural life on the island, mostly delivered through amateur associations and societies rather than a professional cultural sector. The panel felt that this cultural strength could have been used more in the bid preparation and design.

The programme has three priorities: commissions, residencies and festivals; an innovative approach to increase participation and a new cultural platform.

The panel appreciated the programme's emphasis on public spaces, especially in the old town. The plan to create an Art Hub as a flagship project was welcomed as an appropriate tool to enhance creative exchange, learning and develop the capacity of the creative sectors in Corfu. Its mission, to host, support and contribute to the professional development of artists and creative professionals would leave a sustainable legacy. The bid would have been helped with more details on its programme and how, within the context of a European Capital of Culture, it would link with similar developments in other countries. The panel welcomed the attention given to artists' residencies. There was little detail about proposed projects in the bidbook; the panel could not gain a sense of the ambition (of scope, artistic quality) or of international partnerships.

The panel noted the plans for links and partnerships with Albanian, Montenegrin and Italian cultural organisations but felt that the proposed programme lacked, even at this stage, a clear focus on creating new partnerships and co-productions with cultural institutions from other countries. The proposed programme lacked highlights which would attract visitors (beyond those already attracted by the tourist offer).

The panel felt there was a mismatch between the ambitions of the C-Citizens stream, aiming to put citizens at the forefront of the ECOC process and the extent of the outreach programme for developing the strategy and the programme.

The panel noted the education and outreach programmes as a basis for audience development. The cultural voucher for free attendance was a particularly sound proposal.

The panel felt the programme expenditure of €13.3m to be rather low for an event seeking to make an impact at a European, rather than national, level. The bidbook described a long list of infrastructure projects but their relationship to the ECOC was not clear.

Overall the panel felt although the cultural strategy for the island was sound the ECOC bid itself was undeveloped at this stage. There was a limited understanding of the European Dimension and a gap between the aspirations and the programme. The island has a strong cultural offer which could have been developed in more detail.

Delphi

Delphi presented their bid with the theme “Metamorfosis”. The main objectives are aligned with the national policy to promote an integrated collaborative approach between science, technology and innovation with the cultural sector. Delphi asks “Europe to turn back to its roots, guided by the values of the ancient Delphi, “the navel of the Earth”. Europe should thus find again the spirituality represented by Delphi, its ancient universal symbolism and also the modern vision based in ancient “Delphic Ideal”.

The proposed programme has four pillars: “From Mythos to Epos to Networks”, “From Local Memory to Global Unity”, “From nature to culture using social innovation as a vehicle” and “From Transformation to Interpretation”.

The bid covers the area of the municipality and the Central Greece region.

The forecast operating budget is €8m of which €5.5m is allocated for the programme.

The panel learnt during the presentation of the wide range of cultural infrastructure developments planned across the region. There was a focus on archaeological and heritage based sites and institutions. These are presented as part of a cultural strategy.

The region intends to adopt the Leipzig Charter for Sustainable Cities and intends to invest in cultural tourism, culture and natural heritage and local produce as vectors for regional development.

The artistic programme put forward in the bidbook and the presentation was set out in brief descriptions of possible projects. There was limited information on the degree of international partnership and co-production that was envisaged. Contemporary art and artists were in the minority compared to heritage and history related activities. The panel could not discern how such a programme would attract visitors to Delphi (over and above the current tourist appeal).

The panel found it difficult to identify a strong European Dimension in the proposed cultural programme. Few of the indicative projects were associated with artists and cultural organisations from other countries (excluding lists of names not yet contacted).

The concept of open innovation presented in the bid book was not sufficiently elaborated and translated into concrete outcomes and programme activities. The panel felt that activities in schools based on local history are not a sound basis for audience development.

The small budget is a concern. The operational budget is planned to be €8m, which is less than the city budget for culture in 2015. The panel consider this is inadequate for an event as extensive as an ECOOC which needs to make an impact, through its programme, on a Europe-wide basis. It was also concerned that the salaries component was planned at 25%, considerably above a standard ECOOC's experience. The municipalities' contribution before 2021 was less than would be expected.

Overall the panel felt the bid was too focussed on the past and the programme undeveloped for this stage of the competition. The four elements of the European Dimension were scarcely touched.

Elefsina

The Elefsina bid has as its banner "Eleusis -EUphoria". The main objectives are to have a catalytic effect on the city's ongoing effort to become a dynamic cultural centre in the broader area of Western Attica leading to a positive impact on the lives of citizens. Its proposed programme has three main themes (each divided into four sub-themes) of "EUnvironment", "EUrbanisation" and "The EU working class".

The bid covers the municipality of Elefsina and the region of Western Attica.

The forecast operating budget is €22m of which €15.4m is allocated to programme expenditure.

The presentation set out clearly the strategic analysis of Elefsina as a post-industrial city seeking a new long term direction. Culture was to play a key role in the new city environment. The bid team had studied Glasgow and Bilbao. The panel suggests more similar cities could be researched to see how culture has been deployed alongside the economic transformation of a city from an industrial base to a service sector focus. The city's cultural strategy was approved in February 2016 with a strong emphasis on social development and cultural rights for all. The panel learnt that the city intends to proceed regardless of the outcome of the competition. The panel saw evidence that the cultural transformation was underway with an emphasis on contemporary art and artists.

The bidbook identifies relevant themes and concepts crucial for contemporary societies and for the European project. These include the challenges of transition, the need to redefine environment, urbanisation and relationship with work. These themes are translated into 12 artistic and culture programmes. It previews cooperation with European artists and networks as well as with other ECOCs.

New and existing cultural and creative hubs such as the Olive Oil press factory, the railway station and Kronos are to become cultural venues and facilities to support capacity building of the sector's professionals and organisations. They will promote the creation of new creative businesses and the facilitate crossovers. The panel would expect a clearer, detailed and elaborated diagnosis on the sectoral needs with a deeper feasibility, management and sustainability plan for these developments.

The bid proposes an interesting vision of the artistic director as a creative networker. This is an innovative approach.

The bid presents a lively artistic and cultural scene, active civil society organisations and local ethnic associations. It proposes cultural neighbourhood councils. There is still a need to profile more clearly the different communities and target audiences in the city, their challenges and how the ECOC programme might include and contribute to their expectations. The bidbook informed the

panel that 80% of the city's current cultural output was from the independent sector; the panel would seek more information on this sector and their intended role in the ECOC.

The panel appreciated a focus on residencies, especially those aimed at early career artists. The panel noted the emphasis given to the "Innovation and Capacity Development Centre" as a way to address the acknowledged lack of expertise in cultural management in the city. The panel expects more information on its programme, staffing and sustainability. The indicative projects in the bidbook included many which took place in 2015 or are planned in 2016. They demonstrated the type of projects planned for 2021 and act as trial run. In the final bidbook the focus should be on the projects planned in 2021 (and those which are multiyear projects building up to 2021). The panel noted the ambition to direct much of the programme to the city's neighbourhoods, in particular the "Refugee" neighbourhood dominated by housing for the refugees including those from Asia Minor in 1924. The panel hopes projects can involve artists from Izmir. ECOCs on the borders of the EU usually make a focus on working with artists and cultural managers from neighbouring non-EU countries.

The bid tackles the European Dimension by addressing contemporary issues. There is a strong intention to work with European wide artistic networks (eg IETM, On The Move, Soul for Europe and Culture Action Europe). The panel hopes artists and cultural managers from Elefsina will become active members of such networks as well as rely on them for contacts. The panel would expect a considerably more detailed engagement with international partners in the second bidbook, aiming to meet all four of the elements in the criterion.

The bidbook outlined the strength of citizen's involvement in the public life of the city. It was less forthcoming on the manner in which citizens contributed to the programme planned for the ECOC. The audience development plans are less developed at this stage. More detail is needed on active steps by the cultural sector to reach out to new audiences including those who are not currently participating.

The forecast budget is adequate at this stage. It is on the low side for an event which needs to make an impact at European and not just national level. The panel noted the firm statements from local businesses on support for the ECOC.

Overall the panel appreciated the dynamism in the presentation and the clear commitment to tackling contemporary issues facing the city. There was a strong link with the approved cultural strategy and the ECOC. The relatively simple structure of the programme makes it easy to understand. To enhance the bid the team need to significantly improve the European Dimension and focus the programme on 2021. Areas only briefly touched on (creative industries, social development) will need elaboration.

Ioannina

Ioannina presented their bid with the theme of “Here and Beyond”. By becoming ECOC Ioannina wants to make a new mark, reviving urban, peri-urban and agricultural spaces, bolstering tourism, attracting business opportunities, rebuilding networks of collaboration and educating the residents of the city socially, culturally, and artistically. The city wishes to redefine its position on the map of Greece - especially metaphorically, by seeking to place itself anew on the social, cultural and economic map of Europe.

The bid involves the city of Ioannina and selected villages and sites in the Epirus region.

The programme has nine themes: Lake Narratives, Beyond Prosperity Benefaction and Enlightenment, Beyond Power – the dark side of politics, Beyond Communities, Beyond Nature, Beyond Heritage, Beyond life, Beyond Science and Beyond Boundaries.

The forecast budget is €24,617,000 of which €12,797,000 is allocated for programme expenditure.

There is a municipal cultural strategy to 2019; the bidbook has the support of all the major political parties. The ECOC and cultural strategy cover the same areas, which is unusual as a cultural strategy normally has a wider remit and scope. The panel noted the programme set out in the bidbook. This was set out as a complete annual programme with the indicative projects budgets adding up to the programme expenditure in the finance section. This degree of advance planning is rare at this stage of a competition, some five years in advance.

The panel felt the programme lacked a cohesive artistic vision and was more suited to an annual event-based arts festival. There were several individual projects which stood out (for example the Ark of Sound) but the panel was less convinced with the view “a major emphasis is placed on cultural heritage and

folklore with a lesser focus on modern culture”. The programme was to be delivered through the city administrations’ cultural centre and the panel was not convinced of the support and further development of the independent arts sector (a strong sector) and of individual artists. There were several innovative digital based projects and the panel noted the intention to livestream events, albeit on a paid basis. The potential for further developing the digital sector was not fully covered and elaborated in the bid.

The European Dimension was underdeveloped for a programme at this stage of the competition; more so given the bidbook set out the full plan for the year’s activities. Few artistic organisations from other European countries appear in the bidbook and the panel did not feel that the proposed programme would lead to an increased understanding of the diversity of cultures in Europe rather than a re-emphasis of the city’s own artistic output. The presentation highlighted the laudable way the city had coped with the refugee influx a decade ago; this could have provided a strong storyline in current circumstances.

The panel appreciated the efforts to engage a wide range of volunteers, with over 12,000 currently registered. The panel welcomed the efforts to engage with the global diaspora from the region. This could have been developed into sharing the artistic partnerships from around the world. The bidbook was limited in its explanation of both audience development and artistic education in schools.

The bid proposed a novel way of funding the ECOC with over 90% of the operating income coming from an interest bearing financial instrument issued through the financial services industry. The panel felt this has a potential, especially with the diaspora wishing to link back to the home city and region. However the panel was concerned that at 90% of total income the risk was too high for such a novel and untested funding approach. The other consequence of the funding reliance on the bond was also evident, in that the city council was intending to invest a relatively small proportion into the cultural programme. The panel was concerned that the 31% of the budget allocation for marketing, considerably more than in recent ECOCs, would restrict the scope of the programme.

Overall the panel appreciated a sound relatively local programme with some innovative features. There was a risk approach taken to charge for live streaming (a method which has not taken off except at the high quality end of

arts; commercial rights for the more popular entertainments would be difficult to acquire). The programme was lacking in its internationalism which is a key criterion for an ECOC. The funding was seen as too risky.

Kalamata

Kalamata presented their bid with the theme of “Kalamata Rising”. The main objective is to highlight a new model for Europe for small resilient communities as a counterbalance to large and megacities. The programme has four themes: Rising Up/UpRising, The Senses/Everyday Living, Exile/Return and Goodbye to the Dead.

The bid is supported by the five neighbouring municipalities in Messenia.

The proposed operating budget is €20m of which €12m is allocated to programme expenditure.

The panel appreciated the honest appraisal of the current situation of the city. It has significantly changed with improved transport communications in the last few years. The ECOC bid has triggered the development of an integrated cultural strategy for the city, with considerable input from citizens. Currently the draft strategy has nine priority areas with the development of creative and cultural industries possibly becoming a tenth item. The strategy is in its final phase of development prior to approval by the city council.

Kalamata is well-known in international cultural circles because of its longstanding International Dance Festival and its new dance/performing arts theatre. The bid team has used its European connections to good cause.

The panel noted the innovative idea of three umbrella projects (Residencies: 21, Academy:21 and Digika) which seek to address perceived weaknesses in the current cultural management of the city; all three have strong legacy potential.

The flagship exhibition “The Body in Revolt” is a modern way in dealing with the 1821 bicentenary. The synopsis takes a Greek origin and turns it into a contemporary European issue. It has the potential to be an internationally attractive exhibition. The panel however has concerns over the technicalities of hosting such an internationally curated loan exhibition without a modern contemporary art gallery/museum.

The European Dimension presented in the bidbook has potential. There was an awareness with the four elements of the criterion but not yet converted into an adequate level in the programme. The panel appreciated the connection with Bulgaria and Romania in shared projects based around film with the Roma communities. The bid team is already discussing specific project areas with future ECOCs and with candidates in 2020 and 2021. As with the artistic programme the panel would expect to see greater depth, scope (especially in the full range of the visual arts) and significantly more international artistic collaboration in the next bidbook.

The bid has attracted a strong outreach campaign with citizens, with clear note that they have been involved in programme objectives and design. This has spilled over into the cultural strategy discussions. The bidbook outlined a positive strategy for audience development with a focus on how the cultural sector itself needs to adapt and change. The panel would expect to see a concrete action plan for implementation. The plans for engaging with school are sound if limited at this stage.

The panel felt the budget projections to be sound at this stage. However the programme expenditure forecast is relatively low for an event to make an impact at European level. The budget appears overloaded towards a few projects (eg Abramović, the Dance Festival, and Euripides Rising).

Overall the panel felt the bid was comprehensive at this stage and showed a good understanding of the ECOC criteria. It sought to place Kalamata into a contemporary European context. The artistic programme, with its European Dimension, needs considerable deepening with a renewed artistic vision. Good practices from other European cities in the field of creative industries should be used to inspire related plans to develop especially the digital economy in Kalamata. The funding expectations need a re-evaluation.

Larissa

Larissa presented their bid under the banner of “This is not a dot”. The main objectives include regenerating the city and its surrounding area in terms of raising the international profile and image of the city and the region; raising the capacity and ambition of the cultural offer of the city. The proposed programme has three perspectives: bridging talent with social integration, bridging cultural production with socio-economic innovation and bridging crisis with opportunity.

The bid is supported by the municipality with the expressed support of six municipalities in the surrounding area of Thessaly.

The proposed budget is €29.3m of which €22.5m is allocated for programme expenditure. There is a relatively high expectation of €7.4m from the private sector.

The cultural strategy has recently been finalised although the panel was not able to identify concrete relationships between it and the ECOC objectives.

The European Dimension of the programme is less developed than expected at this stage. The section in the bidbook outlined the natural and archaeological aspects of local area but the European Dimension requires more than local attributes. The panel would have expected more elaborated details about partners in key projects (not including Greek expatriate artists). It was not clear how citizens of Larissa would enhance their understanding of the diversity of cultures in Europe (for example the operations and intention of the Committee on Intercultural Dialogue were unclear). The panel learnt that the president of the Roma Association was a member of the programme team.

The panel noted the proposed key lines of the artistic programme in the bidbook. Each was set out with a specific number of projects. The panel appreciated several of the ideas put forward, the “Memories and Identities” and the opening and closing events.

The creation of a sustainable Cultural Entrepreneurship Learning Lab to build capacity in the cultural and creative industries was welcomed. However the proposal lacked feasibility, organisational and content programme to ensure its sustainability.

Six other cities are partners in the bid but the panel could not see how they were to be included, except as venues.

The panel felt though the programme was interesting and future-orientated it lacked a coherent overall vision which would unite the individual items. The proposed projects were admirable but perhaps of a secondary level within an ECOC programme. There was little indication of events or projects which would attract the attention of a wider European audience.

The audience development plans were convincing based around a Community Outreach department. The panel appreciated the linkage of results of surveys

with the fine tuning of the programme. The plans for parallel activity with schools are also sound.

The overall budget plans were considered adequate although the panel has concerns over the proposed 25% to be raised from the private sector (including diaspora) a level not attained by recent ECOCs.

The governance and management structure is sound. The panel noted the two senior level posts of Engagement Director and Transparency Director.

Overall the panel appreciated the analysis of the city's cultural offer and the structures around the proposed programme. The panel felt however the proposed artistic programme was too underdeveloped and lightweight at this stage. It lacked the ambition to make an impact at European level. The European Dimension was also underplayed in the four aspects of the criterion. The panel recommend the municipality continue at a local level in their aim "to emancipate culture and their cultural offer from institutionality".

Mytilene-Lesvos

The Mytilene-Lesvos bid is under the twin banner of "Poetry Designs the City" and "Solidarity is Civilisation". The main objectives include the continuing art education and training of citizens, the establishment of several new institutions and festivals.

The proposed operating budget is €27.3m of which €15.8m is allocated to programme expenditure. (These amounts exclude the capital rehabilitation budgets set out in the bidbook).

The panel appreciated the exceptional circumstances under which the bid had been prepared. The influx of refugees has been exceptional. The islands citizens, and authorities, have demonstrated through their positive actions European solidarity.

There is, however, no long-term cultural strategy. The proposed programme has four core areas of action: Redevelopment, Enactment, Expansion and Collaboration. The Redevelopment area covers the capital projects.

The panel felt that there was limited artistic vision across the proposed projects. Most envisaged an enhancement of existing festivals with little indication of how they would be significantly different in the ECOC year, as required by the

criterion. The panel has concerns over the impact of the Academy of the Muses in developing the artistic capacity of islanders. There was an imbalance between traditional arts and contemporary arts, with little co-curation or co-production. Excluding the various conferences and symposia most of the art productions would be brought in. The bid book concentrated too much on what has already been done on the island, instead of presenting the plans for the future. The programme offered very little for the younger generations.

The European Dimension was underplayed for a bid at this stage of the competition. There was little in the outline programme which would enable citizens of the island to enhance their understanding of the diversity of cultures within Europe (although the panel did appreciate the contacts with Turkish organisations and artists).

The focus in the cultural and creative industries is on modernizing the local traditional crafts industries (employing 27% of the islands population). The panel noted that publishing houses, another element of the local creative industries, have not been integrated in the development plans. Many of the envisaged programmes are designed within the cultural tourism sector.

Audience development is primarily seen as a marketing and communication issue, rather than linking cultural managers and festival directors with potential audiences through outreach. The bidbook has limited information on the engagement of the ECOC with schools.

The panel has concerns over the proposed management structure and in particular the role and authority of the artistic director. These concerns were not allayed in the presentation session. Although some formative training programmes were planned, the capacity of the cultural sector to host a large scale and all year long ECOC is limited.

Overall the panel felt the bid, put together in exceedingly difficult times, was under-developed for this stage of the competition. The plans to modernise and develop the large cultural and creative industries sector are solid and fit with a medium term business strategy.

Messolonghi

Messolonghi presented their bid under the banner of “Exodos 2021”. The main objectives were expressed as “in the course to a symbolic milestone such as 2021, the Sacred City of Messolonghi through its candidacy in this celebration of culture can reflect the values of freedom, culture, collaboration and the Heroic Spirit”. The proposed programme was presented as a series of activities and areas. The bid has the support of the region of Aetoloakarnania.

The forecast budget is €300,000 of which €170,000 was allocated to the programme (after a correction of an error in the bidbook).

The bidbook outlined a series of festivals and events rather than a coherent medium-term cultural strategy. During the presentation the panel learnt of recent positive steps to increase the cultural tourism attraction of the city and region, notably the lagoons.

The bidbook set out a short introduction to the artistic vision and strategy by listing details of past events; the panel was unable to discern any over-arching artistic vision, beyond a collection of individual activities and events. There was a strong focus on the 200th anniversary of the role Messolonghi played in the War of Independence. This is an obvious foundation for a programme but there was little information in how the anniversary could be transformed with a wider and contemporary European focus on reconciliation (eg by including Turkish artists). There was little information on how the 2021 event would be different, except in scale, to the usual annual events.

The presentation team highlighted the creation of a Salt Museum; the panel felt this could have contributed towards the European Dimension if placed within the existing European network of industrial heritage which has a pan European salt section. This was symptomatic of the bidbook which had little information on proposed cultural partners from other European countries rather than administrative links.

The proposed governance structure caused the panel some concern. It is unusual for a mayor to be the executive director. Mayors are often members of boards, at strategic level, rather than as executive decision makers. An ECOC, even relatively small ones, requires a full time CEO. Best practice from experience of ECOCs is that the managing agency needs to be at arm’s length from the city authorities. The panel was not convinced that the area had the necessary managerial capacity for an ECOC; there was no mention of capacity building programmes in the bidbook.

The outreach to civil society, the cultural sector and citizens appeared to be more focussed on gaining support for the bid rather than contributing to its design as required by the criterion. There was no information about audience development.

The budget presented in the bidbook is far too small for an ECOC which needs to make an impact at a European level.

Overall the panel felt the bid was under-prepared at this stage of the competition, considerably underfunded and too inward focussed. The bid did not take the opportunity to use the 200th anniversary as a way into contemporary European issues. The panel saw the potential for an increase in niche cultural and environmental tourism building on the natural assets of the area.

Piraeus

Piraeus presented their bid under the title “The Floating City”. Its main objectives are to add a strong cultural element to the considerable urban developments in the city. The proposed programme is divided into two elements (independent productions and thematic units) both of which support an atmosphere of social engagement.

The proposed budget is €12m of which €8m is allocated for programme expenditure.

The panel noted the strong urban development programme with considerable infrastructure projects planned over the next few years. The intention to “spice it up with culture” was admirable. However, the proposal has not, in the view of the panel, made full-use of existing good practices in Europe regarding the role of culture in urban development.

The artistic programme in the bidbook is more general and limited than would be expected at this stage. There is little information about direct contact with partners from across Europe, and further afield. From this the panel finds it difficult to assess the degree of meeting the European Dimension and the artistic criteria.

The plans for social engagement were appreciated by the panel. The intention to give those usually excluded a voice had a very clear approach. It is understood this objective will be implemented regardless of the outcome of the competition.

The panel felt the outreach with citizens was overbalanced towards top down information and support seeking rather than an informed dialogue leading to the development of the programme. The plans for audience development concentrated on engagement with the education sector, from schools to universities. They were outlined by reference to current activities; the panel was not clear on future plans up to 2021. There was little attention paid to audience development by the cultural institutions and operators themselves. There was limited attention paid to capacity building in the cultural sector.

The proposed budget, at €12m was low for an event intended to make an impact at a European level from a mid-sized city. The panel would have expected a greater investment in culture given the size of the urban transformation. The panel also has concerns that 53% is expected from EU funds; this is a high proportion for programme funds (compared to co-financing capital projects). The management and governance structure was not clearly described.

Overall the panel was impressed by the scale of the urban redevelopment plans and the associated capital expenditure. This will have a significant impact on the city. This social programme, including elements of behavioural change, is increasingly a key element of ECOCs. However the panel did not consider that the proposed artistic programme was as well developed; a factor emphasized by the relatively low planned budget.

Rhodes

The Rhodes bid is under the banner of “Journey to the Light”. The five main goals are: to foster European consciousness, support international cultural cooperation, promote a positive image of Rhodes, Greece and Europe, develop new sustainable strategies and create new opportunities for young people. The programme is based on five pillars: Citizen Europe, Art of Troubled Water, Rhodes and Re-genesis, Sustainability U-turn, YouTH-turn.

The bid includes the 12 islands of the Dodecanese.

The proposed operating budget is €50m of which €25m is allocated to programme expenditure. (€10m of the €50 is allocated to years 2022 and 2023).

Rhodes has a cultural strategy, approved in 2015 as part of a wider Operational Plan 2015-19. The overall plan introduces some of the challenges facing Rhodes, including the financial crisis, political instability in the region and the refugee flows. The challenges for culture include developing SMEs; preventing social isolation and giving young people renewed hope. There are ten priority objectives covering, for example, consolidating local identity, eliminating racial or nationalistic behaviours, enabling artistic creation and encouraging alternative forms of tourism. The panel noted the latter aim; it is of growing importance as increasing cruise liner tourists overload current tourist offers.

During the presentation the panel learnt more about the ambition to change the tourist offer of the island and the key role the ECOC would have in this change.

The programme was presented in the bidbook through 50 indicative actions contributing to the 5 main goals and 21 targets of the ECOC. The five goals are linked directly to the five pillars of the programme. The panel noted the intention that the new festivals developed for the ECOC are planned to continue beyond 2021. The planned cooperation between craftspeople and designers has potential on which the programme should further build on. The panel felt that although the structure and intent of the programme is well developed the artistic vision and content is weak at this stage. It needs deepening and strengthening. The panel was unclear about the attractiveness of the programme to international visitors (over and above the current tourist attractions of the island).

The panel welcomed the core commitment that the European Dimension will be at the centre of the programme. The concept of a “Social Erasmus” is ambitious: every action will have partners from at least 2 EU countries and 1 non-EU country. This is a big challenge. The listing in the bidbook was rather limited in naming signed up artistic partners from other countries and the degree of co-curation and co-creation envisaged. The panel expects to see partners in projects from the countries signed up in the second bidbook (rather than lists of names or organisations). The panel appreciated plans to further develop the Greek-Turkish Youth Orchestra. The bidbook includes an aspiration to foster citizen solidarity and the intention to build tolerance and integration among the neighbouring countries, becoming a hub for European integration. However the

indicative projects in the programme outline lacked partners in the eastern and southern Mediterranean and a guide to how these would be selected.

There has been a strong engagement from citizens who have contributed to the programme design. The panel would expect more details on plans to develop the managerial competence of cultural operators on the island.

The proposed budget in total appears adequate although it was unclear on the relationship between the current cultural spend of the municipality and that of the ECOC. The private sector funding is higher than that achieved by recent ECOCs. The panel questioned the very high proportion (30%) allocated to marketing and the consequent low proportion of 50% to programme. This would considerably restrict the scope and depth of the artistic programme. The ECOC budget should normally only fund direct ECOC related marketing; changes in the cultural branding offer of the island are the role of the Tourist Board. The ambitions of the artistic programme will be considerably affected with such an imbalance.

The panel notes the intention to operate with four artistic directors. This is unusual but has been tried in previous ECOCs (eg Riga2014). The panel would expect further clarification on the decision making process in the next bidbook.

Overall the panel appreciated the focussed and approved cultural strategy and the intention of the ECOC bid to help facilitate its development. The bid contains several ambitious elements (such as Social Erasmus and its 2+1 principle). The indicative programme needs a more coherent vision and strengthening to match the ambitions of the ECOC. The bidbook projects could form the basis for such a larger programme.

Salamis

The Salamis bid was under the theme of “Culture: the Soul of the Society”. Its main long term goal is to leverage factors such as culture and the islands historical background to spark reconstruction at all levels. The basic objective is to find again the historical identity of the island and to showcase to the Europeans some Greek ideals concerning democracy, freedom, self-determination etc.

The proposed programme is based on the six acts of ancient Greek tragedy: Myth, Ethos, Dianoia, Lexis, Melos and Opsis.

The proposed budget is €12m of which €7m is allocated for the programme expenditure.

There is no formal cultural strategy however the bidbook sets out a wide ranging scope of activity aiming for the cultural, social and economic revival of Salamis. This would be implemented if Salamis was selected as ECOC.

The proposed programme makes use of the references to ancient Greek tragedy; these provide a sound framework. The programme as presented in the bidbook includes a strong focus on the Battle of Salamis (there are events every year in memory of the battle), on folklore and the classics from ancient Greece. The panel felt that these needed to be better balanced with more modern and contemporary cultural and artistic productions and events. There was little in the programme which would have helped increase the understanding and awareness of the diversity of cultures in Europe to local residents.

The panel was interested to learn of ambitions to host events within the ECOC2021 not just in Salamis but all over the world. Plans at this stage are necessarily limited. Overall the European Dimension was very underdeveloped with few concrete links to other European countries. The bid book did not indicate how the values from ancient Greece would be reflected to relate to contemporary problems in Europe.

The panel noted the ambitious plans for a major drama-documentary film featuring the Battle of Salamis. This will be a multinational production (New Zealand, USA, UK and possibly Iran). The panel learnt that it will proceed regardless of the outcome of the ECOC competition.

There was little mention in the bidbook or the presentation on the engagement of citizens in the development of the programme and the bid; this is probably a result of the short time frame in its preparation.

The panel had several concerns on the financial forecasts. Overall at €12m it is rather too low for an event which needs to make a European wide impact. No ECOC has managed to obtain over 40% of its income from the private sector and this represents a major risk. The balance between programme expenditure and marketing is not sound: when marketing gets 25%, it leaves the programme with less than 60 percent; insufficient for a programme required in an ECOC.

Overall the panel felt the bid was underdeveloped for this stage of the competition. The focus on the 2,500 year anniversary battle and ancient Greek

values could have provided a foundation for a programme if they were made relevant to today's European circumstances. The panel had concerns over the depth of managerial expertise and capacity available to the bid's ambitious global programme.

Samos

Samos presented their bid under the banner of "Knowledge Connects". Its aim is "to position culture as the central pivot of our life". The proposed programme has emblematic projects and a wider range of smaller projects.

The bid involved a number of neighbouring islands who have signified their inclusion.

The forecast operating budget is €42m of which €28.560m is allocated for programme expenditure.

There is no formal cultural strategy in place. During the presentation the panel learnt that flagship capital projects have been approved (based on cultural buildings) and the intention is a cultural transformation of the island. The aim is to double the cultural GDP of the island, a very ambitious aspiration.

The panel learnt more on the three new permanent institutions which would carry out a central role in the programme for 2021: the international Mathematics and Music Research centre, the International Centres for the study of history of technology and the International Centre for the research and history of astrology. These would be part of a large cluster of Knowledge which would include inviting over 500 universities to participate over a five year period: a "huge Erasmus". Over 60% of the projects would involve partners from other European countries. There would also be creative industries fairs with an emphasis on businesses from India and Japan. These raised concerns regarding the real market potential and high market entrance costs. The panel also lacked a clear understanding of Samos' creative sector potential which limited the evaluation of the adequacy of the proposed projects.

The panel noted the strong education focus of the project and its international networking aspirations. With the 2,000 students already on the island the education aspects of the bid would provide a critical mass for change. There was a clear educational strategy.

The panel felt the cultural elements of the bid, which should be at the core of a bid for an ECOC, were less well developed than would be expected at this stage of the competition. The ambition to have 60% of the projects with European partners was not evidenced in the outlines of major projects. It appeared there had been little contact with international artists and institutions. The outline programme lacked a clear overall artistic vision. It was unclear how the cultural sector, both mainstream and independent, on the island would be developed on increased and sustainable basis. There was little put forward on capacity building and audience development or on the engagement of the islands' cultural (compared to the educational) sector in developing the bid.

Overall the panel felt the educational aspects of the bid were well developed. The aim for a huge Erasmus involving 500 universities was a promising base for island development. However the cultural aspects were less well articulated and lacked the depth of quality expected of an ECOC.

Tripolis

Tripolis presented their bid with the theme of "Arcadia". The bid has the potential of becoming a turning point in the development pattern of the city and region. The general idea is to present to the European public the rich cultural heritage of Arcadia and thus seek solutions for the contemporary anxieties and concerns of Europe, all this leading to a balanced relation between man and nature.

The proposed programme has seven themes: The European Network "Arcadia", Arcadian Visions, Arcadia in Situ, the Tree of Liberty, Pan's Flute, Et in Arcadia Ego and Arcadia in the Present Tense.

The bid has the support of the municipality and involves the neighbouring region.

The forecast operating budget is €10.9m of which €8.175m is reserved for programme expenditure. Over €6m of the budget is expected from a range of EU funding programmes.

During the presentation the panel learnt that the municipality has a long term cultural strategy, to 2030, and intends to implement it (including much of the ECOC programme) regardless of the outcome of the competition. Cultural

infrastructure developments are also aimed at furthering the creative industries, but it became less clear how e. g. the incubator will link to the artistic and cultural programme.

The proposed programme was presented in relatively general terms in the bidbook. The seven themes were described well, with good analysis. The panel would normally expect more detail on the proposed indicative projects. There was limited information on potential partners.

The panel was disappointed not to have the opportunity within the bid team to discuss with a current cultural operator from the city to understand the possible impact on artists and cultural managers of the city. Taken with the underdeveloped project section of the bidbook the panel was unable to come to a positive view on the type of programme that would be delivered in 2021 and how it would meet the elements of the artistic programme criterion.

The panel felt the European Dimension was set out in a too general manner at this stage. It was not evident that the cultural managers of the city had sought new partners for the proposed projects. The selection criteria for open calls, rather than the process, were not explained. The indicative programme was traditional with limited innovation and focus on modern artistic creation (separate from reworking of classical works).

The panel appreciated the research analysis of the current cultural offer in the city, noting the main finding that the majority of the public has little or no public participation in events. It found however that the proposed solutions to these findings had little relationship to the proposed programme and the operations of the cultural operators themselves. With such a research finding the panel would have expected a considerable element of the bid to be devoted to audience development by the cultural sector (beyond “communication”) and to capacity building in the sector itself.

During the presentation the panel learnt that the proposed budget had increased, most notably from a contribution of €2.5m from the Greek diaspora in Australia. The bid team would now include a contribution, yet to be decided for all candidates, from the national government. Notwithstanding this increase the panel had concerns over the size of the budget. The majority was expected from EU sources, several of which are competitive with no certainty of success and others which rarely finance cultural and arts projects within the operating programme.

Overall the panel appreciated the strategic concept of Arcadia and that it had possibilities of being re-interpreted in contemporary society with contemporary new artworks etc. However the bidbook and presentation lacked sufficient detail of the artistic programme, its partners and taken with restricted approach to the European Dimension, weakened the overall bid.

Volos

The Volos bid is presented under the theme of “Attracting Evolution”. The main objectives are based “on the need of the city to recover its former splendour, to overcome the scourge of the economic and institutional crisis”. The proposed programme is based on four pillars: “Attracting Evolution”, “Culture for All”, “Building the Audience of Tomorrow” and “Antithesis-Synthesis-Metamorphosis”.

The proposed budget is €23m of which €17.250m is allocated for programme expenditure.

A long-term cultural strategy of the city is not visible and the long-term sustainability of the planned cultural infrastructures was not convincingly presented to the panel.

The panel noted the proposed programme. During the presentation they learnt more about the flagship projects within the 70 proposed events. There was a wide range of artforms involved but the panel was disappointed with the low inclusion of innovative and contemporary art. There was little clear activity which would benefit local artistic development. The artistic programme contains some interesting suggestion and openings, but the artistic vision is at this stage too underdeveloped. Some of the projects, especially related to art exhibitions, are perhaps too challenging for a city without major internationally oriented art museum.

The panel noted the intention to have at least 50% of the events with a European partner. However the outline of the programme in the bidbook did not appear to be well developed in the identification of those partners as would be expected. Lists of names of international artists are not helpful at this stage. The European Dimension was underplayed; it is not clear how the citizens of Volos would increase their understanding of the diversity of cultures in Europe.

The panel appreciated the efforts to build up a large grouping of volunteers (10,000+ so far have signed up).

The overall budget is realistic, but the role of the municipality is disappointingly small, leaving the national government the main financier of the project. The city budget for culture has been very small and would remain so that after the ECOC year. This would severely compromise any legacy aspirations.

The intention for crowd-funding support from the expatriate community is an interesting approach with the potential to contribute financing as a supplementary source.

The panel was concerned with the intention to merge the roles of Chief Executive and Artistic Director, and that the post would be part time. Experience has shown that an ECOC, even in the bid stages, requires two full time and demanding roles.

Overall the panel felt the bid was narrow in its approach to the criteria. Notwithstanding the efforts to sign up volunteers (but little information on what they would be doing) the panel felt the outreach and engagement with local artists was limited. The artistic programme was underdeveloped at this stage with not enough information on the proposed partners. The sustainability of a legacy was questionable.

Recommendations to the national government

The panel makes these recommendations to the ministry to assist the smooth running of both the final selection stage and the subsequent ECOC.

Financial support. The panel is well aware that the government is not able to commit a definitive sum to the ECOC for 2021. However the panel does ask that the ministry gives clear guidance to the three cities on an amount of a contribution from the national government for the purposes of the final bidbook. It is important there is a level playing field between the three cities.

Legal Status. The panel understands that the Ministry of Interior is drafting a new law which will enable the eventual ECOC to form an independent agency (subject to public standards of accountability) to

manage the ECOC. Experience has shown that this separation of the ECOC management from a city administration is a significant element in a successful ECOC.

ECOC as a single project. The ministry is asked to ensure that the ECOC is treated as a single project for the purposes of national government decision making and not as a series of individual projects requiring individual approval by central authorities (eg Ministry of Culture and Sports, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Finance). Failure to do this has resulted in considerable delays and problems for recent ECOCs.

Recommendations to the shortlisted cities

The following recommendations apply to the three shortlisted candidates.

The panel considers that all three cities need to develop their bids for the final selection in order to reach the required level of quality for such a demanding event as an ECOC. There is a considerable step-change between proposals at pre-selection stage and those at final selection.

The panel will expect significant changes in the final bidbooks to reflect these recommendations.

The shortlisted candidates are advised to study carefully the **six criteria in the Decision** and the comments in the assessments above.

A study of the bidbooks of successful recent ECOCs of recent (since 2013) may also be of value. Most are available on-line or from the ECOC.

The bid-book at final selection becomes the de facto contract for the designated city; it sets out the artistic vision and the key objectives, projects, directions, financing and management of the programme. Close concurrence with the bidbook is a factor when the monitoring panel will recommend the payment of the Melina Mercouri prize.

In the final selection bidbook candidates must cover all the questions in Annex 1 (the “application form”) in the call for applications. The panel expects a considerably more developed section on the proposed artistic vision, the programme and the European Dimension.

The selection panel (and the subsequent monitoring panel) has a responsibility to protect the long term brand of the European Capital of Culture programme. Candidates should be aware that with the level of international attention now being given to ECOCs that policy decisions over a wide area (not just cultural) may affect the reputation of the city, and in turn the ECOC image. The panel would expect to see candidates being aware of this and taking steps to minimise international and national negative images of their city through policy changes rather than marketing/PR.

- **ECOC and Cultural Strategy**

The bid book should clearly state the date (and appropriate reference) when the municipal council approved the cultural strategy. The strategy need not be long; it is action orientated not an academic or descriptive document. In the bidbook cities should indicate the priorities of the strategy, its target outcomes and how resources will be changed over the next few years (rather than broad changes in the total budget allocated to culture).

A city's cultural strategy will normally be wider in scope than the objectives of an ECOC. Bidbooks should indicate more clearly which priorities of the broader cultural strategy the ECOC is seeking to contribute to.

If a region or neighbouring municipalities is included in the bid area then the bidbook should clearly describe the activities in and benefits sought in the region (as well as the lead city). These were not clear in the pre-selection bidbooks.

An ECOC is a transformational opportunity for a city.

The pre-selection bidbooks set out in general terms the objectives of why a city is seeking the title. The panel would expect a far more focussed (and shorter) explanation which can link to the programme vision, themes, the programme, and through evaluation, to the outcomes in the subsequent legacy. There is considerable literature and research available for cities to see the range of cultural, economic and social benefits of an ECOC.

There was a tendency in the evaluation sections of the bidbooks to list many indicators. There was a mismatch between the objectives of an ECOC and the indicators in the evaluation section. There is also a risk of overkill of statistics and data gathering. The final bidbook should focus on the **priority** objectives

for the ECOC (rather than those for the entire cultural strategy). One of the priority areas should refer to how the ECOC will meet the four elements of the European Dimension criterion.

Consideration should be given to the monitoring arrangements during the ramp-up period, 2017-2020, which can inform management on a timely manner to take action. Shortlisted cities may wish to involve management consultancies in addition to the more academic approach currently proposed.

- **European Dimension**

The panel felt that this criterion was considerably under-developed. At this stage the proposals are too inward looking in their local context in the city, the region and Greece. The panel would wish to see a greater deepening and widening of programmes to ensure a more relevant **European Dimension**. That a city is in Greece (with its rich heritage), in Europe, has a vibrant existing cultural offer and will market itself in Europe is not in itself a strong interpretation of the European Dimension. An ECOC enables a city to promote itself internationally but that is only part of the story.

An ECOC is a cultural event. Information on town twinning and similar city institutional contacts is useful background but is relevant when they are turned into co-operation between the cultural communities in twinned cities.

The European Dimension has a two-way direction. An equal focus is on seeking to broaden the understanding and awareness of the city's own citizens on the diversity of cultures in Europe and linking through cultural and other projects with citizens in other countries. It is this focus on other cultures which primarily differentiates an ECOC from a national city of culture. An ECOC offers the opportunity for a city and its citizens to learn from others in an open way. One important legacy area is the creation of new and sustained partnerships between a city's cultural players and those from other countries.

The panel expects to see a significantly increased focus on European partnerships: co-productions, exchanges, co-curations, conferences, networking as well as visiting artists/performers.

Most recent ECOCs have included European and international partners in well over half their projects. Cities should encourage their cultural operators to be active participants in European cultural networks (not only the ECOC team).

Most ECOCs feature multi-year projects which develop during the four years before the ECOC. There were few such projects in the bidbooks. That public sector budgets in Greece are annually based should not preclude such projects. The ministry is asked to consider ways the winning city can implement multi-year projects which require advance stability of funding.

There will be three ECOCs in 2021. The panel will expect more information on the proposed partnerships with the shortlisted cities in Romania and in a candidate country/potential candidate to EU membership. The panel would also expect to see further collaborations with the ECOCs designated for 2016-2020. Expressions of general intent are not enough; project areas should be outlined. The panel expects the shortlisted cities to visit and also host, the shortlisted cities in Romania and the candidate countries.

One of the elements of the artistic criterion for the ECOC title is the ability to attract **visitors from the rest of Europe**. This attraction has to be in the **programme and distinct from the normal tourist offers of the city** and region to meet this criterion. The panel would expect to see proposed ideas in the ECOC programme in 2021.

- **Cultural and Artistic programme**

The focus of the final selection is the **operating programme** between end 2016, when the ECOC will be formally designated and, in particular, the ECOC year of 2021.

A city's previous cultural history and heritage and its recent and current cultural and tourist offer, may form a basis for this programme but plays no part in the decision.

2021 is the 200th anniversary of the start of the Greek War of Independence. There will be national events and it is expected most cities will also run their own events. The shortlisted cities should ensure that there is a clear separation from the ECOC programme and any 2021 programme (which may be embedded in an ECOC but not as its principal theme). The panel would expect the occasion, in an ECOC, to include participation and partnership with Turkish artists and cultural organisations representing the European value of reconciliation.

Many ECOCs in recent years have used the opportunity provided by an ECOC to address difficult issues from their 20th century past which still resonate today. The panel suggest candidates re-consider their approach to the appropriate topics from Greece's 20th century.

Where a candidate proposes to include an existing festival in its 2021 programme the bidbook should make it clear how the 2021 edition will be significantly different to the 2020 edition.

The panel will expect to see considerably more detail on the programme and its main projects. The three cities should set out their artistic vision, the programme and projects more clearly; differentiating between partners who have indicated firm interest and those who are still only potential or possible partners. Lists of internationally and nationally known names are not helpful unless they have indicated their willingness to participate.

ECOC programmes normally cover a wide range of artforms and include the increasing development of creative interventions in social issues. An approximate budget should be shown for each major project for the panel to understand the relative balance of projects in the programme.

The panel recommends a more focussed and detailed approach to digital cultural content (not just social media promotions and inter-actions) as integral parts of their programme. This was under-developed in all bidbooks.

Information on urban development and infrastructure programmes, cultural heritage restoration projects and new cultural premises is useful as background and context at pre-selection. The final selection will focus on **the capital projects which directly impact on the programme activities** (e.g. a new cultural centre in a restored building which becomes a focal point for community arts projects contained in the programme or a creative hub hosting an international creative entrepreneurs residency programme)). A timeline for these projects and the realistic estimate of completion should be given.

- **Capacity to deliver**

Candidates should re-confirm that their bidbook, including the programme and the financial commitments, have the formal approval of the mayor, the city (and county if appropriate) councils and all political parties.

Candidates are reminded that the criterion for an ECOC requires a special programme for the year in addition to the normal cultural offer. The panel expects more information on the managerial capacity in the city/region and its cultural sector to manage the depth and range of an ECOC. The bidbook should explain who will be managing projects in the programme (eg the ECOC agency itself, co-managed with institutions, independent sector, educational and social sectors etc). The bidbook should outline plans to develop the managerial capacity of the city and region.

- **Outreach**

The **audience development** programme is expected to be much further developed in the final bidbooks including online and offline measures and channels for all identified target groups. There should be a clear dividing line between enhancing art education in schools and audience development by and for the cultural sector.

The panel would expect to learn about the audience development policies of the main cultural organisations including the main independent operators. The role and contribution of universities (except for evaluation work) was underplayed in the pre-selection bidbooks.

Special focus should be dedicated to those audiences which are more difficult to reach but being crucial for a new “cultural climate” in an ECOC city (e. g. the elderly, disabled, people temporarily in the city, cultural minorities). These are under-represented in the bidbooks at preselection. The bidbooks should cover the participation of schools, youth groups, volunteers etc in the city.

- **Management**

The **membership of, and independence from city administrations, of governing boards** should be explained, with post holders (or positions) and the method of appointment. The decision making role of the board should be explained.

The **General and Artistic/Cultural Directors** play a key role in all ECOCs. The selection, preferably through an open international call, of these posts before the candidates’ appearance at the final selection meeting, will be to their advantage. This is especially important for the Artistic Director as, unlike many such appointments, the artistic vision is already set out in the bidbook. The

same applies if a candidate proposes a collective artistic leadership. It is acknowledged that the appointments may be conditional on the outcome of the competition.

If projects are planned to be funded from competitive EU programmes (e.g. Creative Europe) this should be indicated.

The final bidbooks should clearly indicate how potential **capital investments crucial for the ECOC** (those mentioned in the capacity to deliver criteria above) will be managed (management structures, state-of-play related to the EU-ESI-Funds such as the connection with the relevant Operational Programme, time line and public procurement).

The planned staffing arrangements from 2016 to 2021 should be outlined including secondments, interns and volunteers.

The bidbook should set out the arrangements for **external auditing** and the **publication of the Annual Report and Accounts**.

Bidbook presentation. The panel recommends that the final bidbooks are in A4 format with Times New Roman 12 point for the main body of text.

In the interests of public accountability the panel recommend that each candidate puts its final bidbook on its website (and not just its Facebook page) on the first day of the selection meeting. ECOC websites should also be referenced from the municipalities' website.

Signed

Steve Green (Chair)

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Cristina Farinha

Ulrich Fuchs

Alain Hutchinson

Apostolos Kalfopoulos (Vice-chair)

Jordi Pardo

Aiva Rozenberga

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Athens

March 2016