



Selection of the European Capital of Culture
2022 in Luxembourg



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

**Selection of the European Capital of Culture
in 2022 in Luxembourg**

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

Luxembourg

July 2016



Selection of the European Capital of Culture 2022 in Luxembourg

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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 2022 in Luxembourg.

The Ministry of Culture of Luxembourg (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 for the European Capital of Culture in Luxembourg in 2022, signed by the Minister of Culture of Luxembourg and put on the ministry's website in October 2015.

A panel of 11 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). One member was appointed by the ministry.

The competition is in two phases: pre-selection (shortlisting) and selection. The ministry issued a call for applications on 21 July 2015. One application was submitted by the closing date of 23 May 2016:

Esch-sur-Alzette

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

Panel Meeting

The panel met in Luxembourg on 14 June 2016. The panel elected Ms Sylvia Amann as its chair and Robert Philippart 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.

At the meeting the candidate presented their case (in 30 minutes) and answered questions from the panel members (in 60 minutes). The delegation consisted of 10 members.

At a press conference on 14 June 2016 the chair of the panel announced the panel's unanimous recommendation that the Minister invites

Esch-sur-Alzette

to submit a revised bid for final selection.

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 the city to submit a revised application for final selection.

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

The deadline for submission of the revised applications is **1700hrs 15 September 2017**. This is an extended deadline in accordance with the provision of Article 9 of the Decision. The reason why the panel has recommended this extension is



covered in the report below. The final selection meeting will be held in Luxembourg in **October 2017**, on a date that will be communicated later by the ministry to the city of Esch-sur-Alzette.

Two to four members of the panel will pay a one-day visit to the shortlisted city 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 take this opportunity to thank all those involved in this pre-selection phase of the competition.

The panel thanks the candidate and everyone who contributed to the bid; the European Commission for their advice and the Minister of Culture and his staff for their excellent administration.

Avant Propos

The city of Esch-sur-Alzette is situated in the south of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The former industrial (mining) centre, a boom-town in the late 19th and in the 20th century with large work migration inflows, has undergone substantial transformations during the last decennials inter alia by the establishment of the University of Luxembourg.

The competition for the European Capital of Culture 2022 in Luxembourg benefits of comparative advantages in the European context due to the stable and considerable financial means available for local development. The country's role in the centre of the European integration processes and its place in

the history and heritage of the European Union have the potential to shape this ECOC project also on the European Union's history. The exceptionally rich cultural diversity of the population in the area (with 122 different nationalities) can be a source for developing a model of reciprocal understanding and exchange by the means of culture and the arts. The southern region of the country – which is in the middle of a transformation process from an industrial to a knowledge-based economy with a rapidly growing students' population – has all the ingredients to develop an ECOC project of great interest and relevance for many other cities in the European Union.

The panel considered that the bidbook submitted is considerably less developed than would be expected at this stage of the competition. In mitigation, it appears that the city's bid team has only worked on the project for a short time. Taking into account that there is one single candidate, the panel accordingly recommended to the ministry that the candidate be given additional time to re-work their application from a new basis. Article 9 of the Decision gives the authority to the ministry to extend the application process.

Assessments of the candidate

In their assessment of the candidate 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 the 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.

In the commentaries which follow the panel notes the main elements of their discussions and specific recommendations are made to assist the preparation of the final bidbook.

Long-term cultural strategy

The panel noted that the city has started activities related to the adoption of the Agenda 21 for Culture in April 2016 which has the potential to be an inspiration for cultural development but it is not a specific local strategy. It provides a framework but needs more work in its practical application to the city. A separate cultural development strategy including the definition of the expected social, economic, urban and cultural impacts – and the related implementation plan – was not provided. The panel was not convinced that one exists.

The evaluation and monitoring plan remains generic. There was no mention of what the city would define as the success of the ECOC. The definition of the service providers and their profile is a first step for a more detailed planning of the evaluation processes and content.

The panel was not convinced at this stage that the proposed use of the local industrial heritage sites by the ECOC was both feasible within the timeframe and part of a longer term use of the land.

The panel noted that neighbouring municipalities in Luxembourg and France would be partners in the ECOC. However the panel was unclear on the benefits to the cultural

strategies of those partners. The governance and relationship with the municipalities was not devised. It was then unclear who would have the final say on events and projects in those cities and how they would be integrated in the overall ECOC project (e.g. would they run their own events with the ECOC logo or would ECOC projects be carried out regardless of location?)

→ **Recommendations**

- *The criterion requires a city to have a long-term cultural strategy for Esch-sur-Alzette approved by the time of the final application. Strategies developed in an integrative approach, including the community, the sector professionals and organisations participation, have proven to be the most sustainable.*
- *As urban transformation and the innovative use of the considerable industrial heritage plays an important role for the further cultural development of the city, Esch-sur-Alzette will require a mid-term urban development plan, a strategy for a step-by-step opening of currently un-used areas including a feasible time plan.*
- *The city of Esch-sur-Alzette is becoming the research hub of the country with the still growing University of Luxembourg. This fact will affect the urban landscape and fabric of the city and needs to be taken into account in all cultural and urban strategies.*

European dimension

The European cooperation anchors too strongly on the existing network of twin towns and the creation of the project Embassies abroad. The panel did not feel that a programme virtually fully devoted to the twin cities would meet the criterion's requirement to enable Esch's citizens to increase

their awareness and understanding of the diversity of cultures in Europe.

Newly established connections include the Agenda 21 for Culture international network as well as the city of Kaunas – one of the two shortlisted candidates for the Lithuanian ECOC 2022 – and the continuation of the collaboration with the former ECOC Sibiu 2007. First project ideas were already developed and the will for a serious and long-term cooperation is visible. Although this was very positive the panel was disappointed that there was not the same attention paid to the other five candidates in Lithuania. There are now two shortlisted cities for the ECOC title in Lithuania: Kaunas, as said, and Klaipeda. The panel expects Esch-sur-Alzette to work with both, equally, before the final bidbook. The bid book remains less clear about cooperation with further ECOCs and regarding a wider European cooperation in the artistic and cultural field, despite the recognition of Luxembourg's forefront position regarding European integration.

The strategy to attract the European audience is too strongly focused on tourism promotion and public relations instead of highlighting the most attractive elements of the artistic and cultural programme.

→ **Recommendations**

- *The background of the city of Esch-sur-Alzette – already described in the introductory part of the bid book – provides a whole set of potential European themes which can be developed and addressed through culture and the arts. The long-term migration inflows as well as the considerable cultural and linguistic diversity of the population of the region are key areas. The positive and crucial role of Luxembourg in the European integration process constitutes a further very specific opportunity*

for the ECOC project which should be reflected in the final bidbook.

- *The process of transformation of industrial places to cultural centres has been of relevance for many European cities (including several previous ECOCs e. g. Essen-Ruhr, Mons, Plzen). The city of Esch-sur-Alzette should take better advantage of the existing experience and know-how and build further on related exchange with the ECOC cities – and beyond.*
- *The European dimension of an ECOC requires an intensive artistic and cultural exchange and collaboration as a transversal feature of the whole programme (e. g. by the means of co-productions, residencies, capacity building for European cultural cooperation, enhancing of learning about European cultures for and with the local residents, etc.). This fact should become fully integrated in the updated version of the bid book to be on the expected quality level of an ECOC.*

Cultural and artistic programme

The ECOC programme is built on the notion of “love” and will be guided by the principles of sharing and caring. Sharing is meant inter alia in the sense of time, space, creations, cultural heritage. Caring includes also caring about the neighbours or the children. The project title “Heartland of 171,436 heartbeats” is too enigmatic. The programme uses the four seasons approach including “Love sparks” (spring), “Fires of fusion” (summer), “Hearts ablaze” (autumn) and “Eternal flame” (winter). The major urban development project “Arcelormittal – Esch-Schifflange” – an urban industrial area which should be opened to the public by 2022 – is highlighted. However there was too little concrete information on this project.

The programme lacks an overarching narrative specifically translating the intended cultural transformation process in Esch-sur-Alzette. The panel did not consider the “love” concept to have a specific foundation in the city and to be innovative enough. The way it was presented seems too broad and generic to be the focus for an ECOC programme.

The step-by-step approach to build the programme is reasonable, but lacks a strategy for the involvement of the different local and international target groups (e. g. how to involve artists and cultural operators from the different nationalities and/or languages present in the city in the programming process?).

The panel felt that too much of the programme is planned to be developed later in the project. According to the present selection criteria for an ECOC, the major projects of an ECOC are detailed with information on (local and European) partners and budget outline. Perusal of more recent final bidbooks (e.g. in Croatia and Ireland) would give a guide.

The proposed selection criteria for ECOC projects (the project filter) seem to be too technical and lack European dimension. The cross-sectoral approach raises questions regarding its feasibility (e. g. involving a business in each project). The artistic criterion is under-developed. The will to combine heritage with new technologies becomes visible, but lacks more innovative and elaborated approaches. The involvement of cultural institutions and artists is briefly described, which is appropriate. The required integrative nature of the programming process for the ECOC bid was not fully visible.

→ **Recommendations**

- *ECOCs to become visible on the international level and to guide the local transformation process require a clear message anchored in the local context. The theme of*

love and the related artistic vision need further deliberations on the city level. External views are required to further inspire the local discussion for an artistic vision and narrative. Several ECOCs have refined or changed their concept between pre-selection and final selection.

- *The local cultural and artistic context was described in the bid book and during the hearing as rich and diverse. The involvement of the full range of local contributors should be therefore ensured for the development of the final bidbook. Due to the size of the country regional artists and cultural managers, as well as cultural institutions, from other parts of Luxembourg could be also easily involved in the preparation work.*
- *The University, especially as the city is experiencing a change from an industrial to knowledge-based development model, would also be a relevant partner and contributor to the overall programme.*
- *The team should furthermore ensure that the requirements space- and time-wise of projects are fully taken into account (e. g. a large exhibition needs appropriate venues, activities in 2021 must be in accordance with the plans of the three ECOC cities of that year).*

Capacity to deliver

The city of Esch benefits of very good support at local, regional, and national level. The transborder cooperation should be defined more accurately. The financial contribution of the Luxembourg State was indicated with 67% of the total estimated budget of € 60 million. The city has good connectivity and networks. The proposed programme in the bid book requires space for a larger exhibition and aims at further using the industrial site of "Arcelormittal – Esch-Schifflange". This

urban development part of the ECOC project lacks further detailed planning including a systematic overview of related works and capital expenditure budget of those projects directly related to the ECOC programme.

The bidbook pointed out that the area lacked platforms for contemporary art and accordingly the ECOC sought to use temporary sites as a “foundation” for more permanent locations. The panel would expect to see more details on the plans for these permanent locations.

The panel was uncertain whether the city has the professional management capacity to oversee such a major project as an ECOC.

Tourism statistics were not fully accurate and require update. It must be also ensured that sufficient accommodation capacity will be available for the ECOC year. Tourism management structures with a commercial permit are not yet in place.

→ Recommendations:

- *A viable cultural infrastructure (including human resources) is a pre-condition for a successful implementation of an ECOC programme. The cultural investment plan should be therefore critically analysed with regard to feasibilities by 2022. The cultural and artistic programme can then be built on a reliable framework.*
- *Due to the expected size and scope of the ECOC project capacity building in the art sector, the creative industries, the cultural administration and the hospitality sector should be firmly planned and described in the final bidbook.*

Outreach

Outreach activities target mainly the younger generation through collaboration with schools. The will to involve children and the next generation in the ECOC 2022 is visible, but seems to be too restricted (e. g. one-week-activity at the end of the ECOC year). Other outreach tools are outlined and constitute a sound basis for further development and planning. The home-embassy project is a very good idea to generate further engagement and active contribution for the ECOC project in Esch-sur-Alzette – especially as the pre-selection preparation seems not having benefited extensively from a broader involvement of the local population. The involvement of local businesses is also a promising approach.

The bidbook pointed out that many residents do not use the cultural offers of the city. This is a starting point for a major audience development strategy by the existing cultural institutions and organisations. This needs to go beyond the target group of children, families and schools set out in the bidbook and reach out to the different cultural and linguistic communities.

The panel was surprised that the bid team did not include representatives from the university. With 5,000 additional students expected before the ECOC year the university could be playing a major active role in the ECOC (beyond academic evaluation).

→ **Recommendations:**

- *In order to achieve sustainable effects, it is crucial to fully involve the local population including all communities. This is an especially challenging task due to the 122 nationalities present in the City of Esch-sur-Alzette. First promising ideas like the home embassies should already be used to involve the population*

including the communities in the preparation of an updated cultural and artistic programme. In recent ECOCs similar community projects have involved both capacity building and a cross-border element.

- *The audience development programme requires further systematic planning regarding different target groups, the enhancement of their creativity as well as participation in cultural and artistic activities. Co-creation and crowd-based initiatives have proven to have considerable motivation potential. The involvement of the cross-border audience has the potential to generate further European added value. The audience development strategy needs initial mapping and research as well as tools and methodologies in order to ensure an evidence-based implementation programme.*

Management

The ECOC operating budget of the city of Esch-sur-Alzette is estimated to reach € 60 million. The city is committed to spend on legacy in the years 2023 and 2024 which is appropriate. The city budget on culture is expected to increase annually by 1.25%. The national government plans a considerable investment in the ECOC 2022, € 40 million is foreseen. The region is committed to contribute with another € 5.3 million. The proposed timing of the expenditure is not appropriate to ensure the financing of a project taking place in 2022.

The information on planned capital expenditures for projects related to the programme is not systematic enough and lacks a time plan. The conditions for the cultural use of the industrial sites remain unclear (e. g. private ownership and potentially multiannual soil investigations). The organizational chart is especially unclear regarding decision making processes and the

distribution of responsibilities. It lacks appropriate planning for ensuring leadership in the project. The cooperation framework between the city and the ECOC association remains too vague in order to ensure systematic common planning (e. g. for the urban development related ECOC projects). The role of the regional and transborder stakeholders in the governance and management structures should be made clear. Contingency planning and how to cope with the different threats identified are not sufficiently elaborated. The proposed slogan needs to be updated reflecting the updated artistic and cultural message of the ECOC project in the final bidbook. The marketing and communication strategy remains too general in the bid book for the pre-selection, as e. g. the different communication target groups were not defined.

→ Recommendations:

- *The current budgetary framework is favourable for the city, but requires clear systematic time planning with regard to the updated cultural programme and investments.*
- *The final bid book should include further information on the decision making processes. This should be illustrated by the means of an updated organisational chart with a more focused plan for the staffing.*
- *The panel recommends strongly that an artistic director be appointed at an early stage over the summer 2016 to give a stronger leadership to the concept development and the subsequent programme.*
- *The systematic involvement of the University of Luxembourg could provide further support in the preparation phase and the ECOC year.*
- *The marketing strategy as well as the slogan should be reworked in order to ensure full range of communication on the ECOC beyond the current focus on branding. The*

ECOC must not be perceived as a label, but as a multiannual process of cultural transformation.

Concluding recommendations

The following recommendations apply in addition to the specific recommendations made above and should be also reflected in the final bidbook.

After a careful assessment of the bidding document, the presentation and discussions during the question-and-answer session, the selection panel consider that the short-listed bid needs to be worked on intensely to reach the required level of quality of 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 shortlisted candidates are advised to study carefully the criteria in the Decision and the comments in the assessments above.

An analysis of the evaluations of recent ECOCs may also be of value. However the candidate should note that the criteria for ECOCs from 2020 on are significantly different to those, which applied for Luxembourg's previous ECOCs in 1995 and 2007. They are also different to those used for the selections and programmes of Lille2004 and Mons2015.

In the final selection bidbook the candidate must cover all the questions in Annex 1 (the "application form") in the call for applications. There are extended questions, compared to pre-selection, on the proposed programme and the financial plans. There is no need to repeat in so much detail the contextual and historical opening sections of the bidbook. This was invaluable for the pre-selection phase. The focus will be more on the proposals for the ECOC's programme.

The pre-selection bidbook tended to set out in very general terms why the city is seeking the title. The panel would expect a more focussed (and shorter) explanation which can link to the programme themes, the programme and through to the outcomes in the subsequent legacy.

The city does not have a cultural strategy but has taken an initial step by adopting the framework of Agenda 21. This is a positive step forward for culture in the city development. In the final bidbook the panel would expect the cultural strategy and the ECOC to be clear on priorities, implementation plan, outcomes and targets. In particular the panel would look for proposed changes in how resources in the cultural budget will be changed in the coming years in line with the strategy.

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

The bidbook noted that neighbouring municipalities and cross-border regions are partners. The final bidbook should indicate how the artistic programme in each meets the European dimension and the cultural and artistic criteria as well as contribute to the long term cultural strategy of each municipality and region. The role of these regional stakeholders in the governance and management structures should also be made clear.

At this stage the proposals are too inward looking in their local context in the city, Luxembourg and the near region. The panel would wish to see a greater deepening and widening of programmes to ensure the European dimension was met. That a city is in Luxembourg, in Europe and has a vibrant existing cultural offer (and has a multi-cultural population) is not in itself a strong interpretation of the European dimension. The



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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. An ECOC offers the opportunity for a city and its citizens to learn from others in an open way.

One of the elements of the criteria for the ECOC title is the ability to attract visitors from the rest of Europe. The panel would expect to see proposed ideas in the ECOC programme in 2022 (i.e. distinct from the normal tourist offers of the city and region) which meet this criterion.

The focus of the final selection is the operating programme between 2017, when the ECOC will be formally designated and, in particular, the ECOC year of 2022. A city's previous cultural history and heritage and its current cultural offer, may form a basis for this programme but plays no part in the decision. The panel will expect to see considerably more detail on the programme and its projects. The candidate should work out its artistic programme and projects more clearly; indicating partners who have signed up and those who are still only potential partners. If projects are planned to be funded from competitive programmes (e.g. Creative Europe to 2020, and its successor subsequently) this should be indicated. It may wish to highlight their approach to digital cultural content (not just social media promotions and inter-actions) as integral parts of their programme.

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 ECOC programme).

The audience development programme is expected to be much further developed in the final bidbooks including online and offline measures for all identified target groups. 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. diverse communities, people temporarily in the city). The bidbooks should cover the participation of schools, youth groups, volunteers, diverse communities, etc in the city.

The membership of governing boards should be explained, with post holders (or positions) and the method of appointment.

The General and Artistic Directors play a key role in all ECOCs. The selection, preferably through an open 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 will already be set out in the final bidbook.

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 panel expects the candidate to publish its final bidbook on its website both for public accountability and engagement. The bidbook should be online shortly before the final selection meeting.

The city Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg can build on many relevant pre-conditions – a multicultural and multilingual society, the considerable industrial heritage and the solid



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financial framework – which could lead to a successful ECOC project.

Signed

Sylvia Amann (Chair)

Cristina Farinha

Ulrich Fuchs

Steve Green

Alain Hutchinson

Jordi Pardo

Robert Philippart (vice-chair)

Aiva Rozenberga

Pauli Sivonen

Agnieszka Wlazel

Suzana Žilič Fišer

Luxembourg, July 2016