



EUROPEAN CAPITAL
OF CULTURE

**The European Capital of Culture
2022 in Lithuania**

**The Selection Panel's report
Final report**

**Vilnius
April 2017**

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Introduction

This is the report of the selection panel (the “panel”) for the competition for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) in 2022 in Lithuania.

The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania (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 for the European Capital of Culture 2022 title competition in the Republic of Lithuania (the “Rules”) signed by the Lithuanian Minister of Culture on 30 June 2015 and published on the ministry’s website².

The competition is in two phases: pre-selection (shortlisting) and selection. All information on the procedure including history and updates can be found on the ministry’s website³.

Selection Panel

A panel of 10 independent experts was established for the selection process in line with Article 2 of the Rules. The members were appointed by the European Union institutions and bodies (the European Parliament, the Council of the EU, the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions). The ministry decided not to exercise its right to appoint up to two national experts.

The panel appointed Agnieszka Wlazel as chair and Alain Hutchinson as vice-chair. All members of the panel signed a declaration of non-conflict of interest and confidentiality at both meetings of the panel.

Pre-Selection

The ministry issued a call for applications to all Lithuanian cities on 20 July 2015. There were six applications submitted by the deadline of 24 May 2016.

The panel met in Vilnius on 20–21 June 2016 for the pre-selection meeting. The panel recommended that the ministry invite two cities (Kaunas, Klaipėda) to progress to the final selection. The panel’s report is published on the website of the European Commission⁴.

The Minister of Culture of Lithuania accepted the panel’s recommendation and issued the Minister’s order No IV-626 on 15 July 2016. The ministry invited the two cities to submit revised applications with a deadline of 28 February 2017.

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

2 <http://old.lrkmlt/go.php/lit/IMG/4>

3 <http://lrkm.lrv.lt/en/international-cooperation/european-capital-of-culture-2022>

4 <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/files/ecoc-2022-lithuania-preselection.pdf>

The two cities submitted their revised applications (“bidbooks”) by the deadline.

Between the pre-selection and final selection meetings the following steps took place:

- The mandate of two panel members, Steve Green and Jordi Pardo, expired on 31 December 2016 and they were replaced by Beatriz Garcia and Jiří Suchánek.
- The two cities met with the panel’s chair in Vilnius to seek clarification of the recommendations in the pre-selection report.
- A delegation of the panel (Sylvia Amann, Cristina Farinha and Ulrich Fuchs) visited both cities on 27 and 28 March 2017, spending one day in each. They were accompanied by observers from the ministry and the European Commission. The delegation reported back to the full panel at the selection meeting.

Selection Meeting

The final selection meeting took place in Vilnius on 29 March 2017. One panel member (Suzana Žilič Fišer) was excused. Representatives of the ministry and the European Commission attended as observers. The observers took no part in the panel’s deliberations or decision.

The candidates appeared before the panel in alphabetical order. Each city made a 30 minutes presentation followed by 90 minutes in a Question & Answer session. Delegations had up to ten members and they were both led by their Mayor.

The chairs of the panel announced the panel’s recommendation at a press conference after the meeting in the presence of the Minister of Culture.

National context

2022 will be the second-time Lithuania hosts an ECOC after Vilnius in 2009. The criteria for an ECOC have changed considerably since then. They now embrace a deeper and wider scope of the role of culture in the city and European development. A particular new requirement is for a city to have a formal medium term cultural strategy. This ensures that the ECOC is an element in progress of a city and not a one-off event. It enhances the importance of sustainable legacy.

The panel noted that both cities have a vibrant, although very different, cultural offer with a special emphasis on high quality festivals. The selection of an ECOC is based on the programme set out in the bidbook, not the current cultural offer in a city or “business as usual”. The panel recognised two strong bids reflecting different situations in the respective areas.

The panel appreciated the announcement that the Lithuanian government will contribute up to 50 % of the budget for the cultural programme within a limit of €10m in total. This notice enabled both candidates to work on a level playing field. It also enables the title holder to plan over the four-year period to the ECOC year.

Assessments of the candidates

The panel assessed each candidate against the objectives of the ECOC programme (article 2 of the Decision) and the six specific criteria in article 5:

Contribution to the long term cultural strategy of the city

European dimension

Cultural and artistic content

Capacity to deliver

Outreach

Management

Kaunas

Kaunas, a former fortress city and multicultural temporary capital for many years, now “neglected second city” seeks to create its identity as a city that is modern, progressive, and full of culture, science and innovation. The ECOC will include the city’s surrounding area potentially involving nearly 400,000 people living in Kaunas and the Kaunas District. 12 universities and colleges serve 40,000 students as of today. With a good cultural infrastructure and the high density of heritage objects in Lithuania Kaunas has just recently been awarded the European Heritage Label.

The bid was presented, as at preselection, under the banner of “ConTEMPORary Capital”. The programme has three key strands: Confusion, Confluence and Consciousness. The vision is underpinned by three main values of creative entrepreneurship, localism, and inclusivity. The city envisions its change in two directions: Culture (to create a new story for Kaunas) and Community (to create a capacity and happiness building programme for the whole City).

The bidbook and the team clearly presented why the city wishes to become ECOC and the reason why this is a valid cultural project. This is a good starting point for an ambitious mission.

The bidbook is available at <http://kaunas2022.eu>

Cultural strategy

The Kaunas City Cultural Strategy 2017–2027 discussed widely within the sector was approved by Kaunas City Municipality Council on 7 February 2017 and it is already in the process of implementation from the beginning of 2017. The Strategy includes a clearly articulated vision for “Kaunas – city of inclusive culture, contemporary art and innovative design”. It ensures that the urban development plan and infrastructure projects are correlated with cultural needs, challenges, and services. ECOC goals such as European partnerships, capacity building and civic participation are also integrated in the Kaunas City cultural strategy document. The Strategy objectives are linked with the ECOC actions and expected impacts/success factors are accompanied with good indicators for

monitoring success. As additional updates for cultural involvement into economic and social sectors were also included in the “Kaunas City Strategic Action Plan: 2017–2019” a strong focus on Kaunas cultural development is demonstrated. However, the urban development plans and involvement of all stakeholders in the vision delivery were less clear for the panel. In parallel, a sustainable culture and creative industries (CCIs) policy at the city level, with due engagement and coordination of its diverse stakeholders – city council, university and business community – is still to be developed.

A total of four monitoring stages are planned every two years – before (2018, 2020), during (2022) and after (2024) the ECOC year. This is appropriate, however, the baseline studies that were mentioned in the pre-selection phase are omitted this time. So, the bid provides a good indicators’ list but misses to define targets in a specific and measurable way. The evaluation programme will be done by an independent poll agency working in partnership with local academic institutions, which is in line with the ECOC best practice.

Some interesting elements are planned for social evaluation, e.g. measuring of happiness including a hedonometer art work. This attention-grabbing element may however confront the team – if the art work presents the unhappy rather than the happy city – so this should be considered as an artistic endeavour or thought provocation rather than a proper evaluation tool. The objective to design a safe and happy environment “to make citizens happy” is itself idealistic, but multidimensional and hard to achieve and measure. The panel would like to encourage the team to define what “happy” means for them or reformulate this intention.

European Dimension

The theme of Europeanism from the perspective of Lithuania is well thought through and it is a good starting point for the project’s European dimension. Local challenges match European ones and the aim is to “re-connect” with the continent and “create a contemporary Europe together”. Poles, Jews, Tatars, Russians and Litvaks formed the history of Kaunas and currently just 6% of national minorities form the city’s population.

Although there are some up-to-date questions raised, the panel felt this criterion was addressed too much in the historic manner and reconciliation with the Kaunas past seems not to tackle post WWII issues. The programme is not discussing enough current (and future, as ECOC attention is on 2022) European challenges. Moreover, enhancing local citizens’ awareness of the diversity of cultures across Europe should be reinforced as it is not enough to invite Europe to discover and co-create Kaunas.

The European dimension chapter, however, includes several good elements: a systematic cooperation at all levels (UNESCO creative cities network, UNESCO world heritage application, twin cities as well as other diverse European networks) and connections with European cities with similar characteristics (e.g. other temporary capitals, modernist architecture, and former fortress cities). The relations with other ECOCs are convincing: they are project based and indicate many productive conversations taking place in the implementation phase. There are several good ideas to address the European and international audiences in the artistic programme (e.g. based

on developed festivals and biennials, acknowledged European artists and the Kaunas Beast).

Artistic programme

The programme is well structured with three key strands: Confusion (projects dealing with blocked memory), Confluence (projects dealing with weak cross-sectorial cooperation and brain drain) and Consciousness (projects focusing on community building and strengthening of civic society). Therefore, the programme clearly builds on Kaunas characteristics and deals with the city's weaknesses. The structure includes six special platforms and two strategic horizontal programmes: The Mythical Beast of Kaunas and the Tempo Academy of Culture. The strands' message and their objectives are clearly articulated in an accessible way for diverse audiences.

The panel liked very much the dynamic, innovative and memorable approach to the opening event and the multidimensional catching concept of the Beast. These elements will symbolically develop a distinct and strong narrative for the ECOC and clearly link it to the concept of the city. The Beast projects, built through a participatory approach, have a potential to mobilise diverse segments of the population (including European audiences) in both intellectual and imaginative ways. The programme in every strand includes many strong projects well anchored in the specific local context. However, the panel would like the team to push even further and go beyond the past to include more up to date issues. The Confusion strand could for example tackle not only the blocked memory of the city's (or Europe's) past but contribute to awakening empathy (towards neglected social groups or new comers in the city) and a new understanding of the city's and Europe's present and future. Design projects, linked to UNESCO creative cities network, are promising, but they should be developed more building on the innovative potential of the theme. Nevertheless, the combination of new and old is a strong point of the candidature, which is visible throughout the programme (e.g. traditional events such as Kaunas/Hanseatic Days based on medieval culture or folk dance and song festivals which will be enriched with contemporary content). The innovation potential should be even further explored as digital technology's inclusion is not visible in the programme for example.

The panel is concerned that there are too many and too broad projects' selection criteria and that the European dimension (as a two way learning/promotion process with mutual benefits) is lacking clear prominence in some projects (e.g. Fluxus labs/Silainiai). Regarding more specifically the very promising Fluxus labs programme, it is lacking a strong organisational/financial backup to sustain this innovative participatory approach and make sure it leaves a legacy.

The capacity building in the form of a horizontal strand called the Tempo Academy of Culture, is well structured and important for the successful implementation of the ECOC. The bid sets out the ambition for the ECOC to become a place for learning, experimentation, cross-sectorial collaboration and openness as well as a platform for the young generation. This positive approach was welcomed by the panel and the latter expects this approach to be deepened and be made more visible in the projects and the cultural strategy implementation.

Capacity to deliver

The mayor confirmed in the presentation that the bid, including the city's financial contribution, has the unanimous support of the major political parties in the city, and that the city is ready to change.

There is an appropriate cultural infrastructure available in the city, in addition to considerable but feasible renovation plans. In this context, it is unclear which locations will be dedicated to contemporary art. The funds allotted to culture by the city are already on the increase and will continue to slowly but steadily grow to reach over 7% of the overall city budget in 2023. During the Question and Answer session the panel learned that the city prepares new cultural sector funding mechanisms including the implementation of a 3 years' funding scheme for non-governmental initiatives. The panel noticed with satisfaction that a CCIs survey was done in 2016 to analyse more thoroughly the current dynamics of the sector but it is not clear how the capacities of the creative industries are going to be supported, notably to ensure the intended cross-sectorial interactions.

The panel could not identify in the bidbook the specific local, regional and national stakeholders from different sectors that are crucial for the ECOC planning and implementation, nor information on how they were going to be sustainably engaged in the process. An ECOC is an opportunity to build cross-sectorial capacities of the whole city – a holistic approach to city development requires holistic approach in capacity building.

Outreach

The panel appreciates that the bidbook reflects the citizens' viewpoint as an extensive survey in Kaunas and the Kaunas District served as a check-up of the cultural climate across different neighbourhoods in the city and beyond. This citizens' barometer analysis will be continued. Participation is a key ECOC programme value and there is a strong evidence of community and cultural operators' engagement with a high level of motivation. This is demonstrated in the programme with its focus on accessibility and inclusiveness connected with the European dimension. As an example, the Fluxus Lab, involving both local inhabitants and international cultural workers, are state of the art of creative participatory neighbourhood development. The volunteer programme is planned to attract a high number of active members. No Border Radio 2022 – The Radio For Independent Europeans for young adults and University students, planned with Luxemburg ECOC candidate city, will support the international outreach strategy.

Some good audience development projects are mentioned in the bidbook, such as Travelling Museums and other actions by cultural institutions in the city and rural public spaces. The panel appreciates Emerging Kaunas as well as projects with Centuryans that engage young people and activities for the different "disadvantaged" target groups. Nevertheless, these projects are just a starting point for the future audience development strategy with ECOC's own ambitions. By 2020, Kaunas will have developed a culture accessibility plan, adopted by many local cultural and minorities organisations (e.g. Community Cultural Consulates and Kaunas Centre for Various Nations, connecting different minority communities of Kaunas). This is feasible if audience development is

part of the capacity building programmes and if all partners are actively included in the accessibility plan's creation.

Management

The proposed budget is €30m, with respectively €12m and €4m from the city's and district's funds. The budget forecasts €2m from the private sector which seems a lot, but the team is confident that the amount is feasible as negotiations are already taking place and the business sector is expressing its interest in supporting the ECOC. The panel welcomed the intention to use crowdfunding platforms, but those aspects (especially its cost-benefit ratio) are still unclear. The Beast concept will create merchandising opportunities that need to be well thought through (notably considering copyright issues).

In general, operating budgets are well distributed - the main allocations are €19,5m for programme expenditure, €6m for marketing and €4,5m for administration. The investment programme looks more realistic than at pre-selection.

The governance of the ECOC has been considerably developed from the pre-selection phase. A not-for-profit company will be established to deliver the programme. The panel noted that the management structure was based on best practice (and recommendations from Vilnius 2009) and that the staff organisation chart with employment schedule is well developed. During the presentation the panel learned that the curatorial team's main task would be to unite the narrative for all platforms, securing in this way an inclusive but in the same time an artistically coherent ECOC concept. A permanent Citizen Advisory Group will help to test and implement campaigns, participation models and project demos.

The programme and the communication strategy go through four stages: Ignition (2017–2018), Agitation (2019–2020), Explosion (2021–2022) and Legacy (2023 and beyond). The communication message will be developed around two issues: "contemporary capital" and the Beast. The panel considers those two pillars as promising: they will effectively reach diverse audiences on local, national and European level. The digital communication, including also digital products of the ECOC programme, seems to be underdeveloped in the communication plan. The marketing campaign's budget is appropriate as the city needs to invest in its communication and visibility in Europe.

Summary

The panel felt this was a solid bid and that the project was moving in good direction to meet the challenges faced by the city. The programme emerges from a shared vision from the city administration and the cultural sector. The European dimension intentions are positive, especially with its interactions with European cultural networks. The capacity building programme will provide a sustainable legacy in terms of improved cultural management. The proposed artistic programme is strong. The weaknesses, mentioned above, include ECOC's outreach and audience development, strategic interactions with different city policies and related long term engagements, as well as the development of the creative industries. The panel appreciated the plan to run some

projects between 2018 and 2021. This will not only create momentum but also lead into a sustainable longer term legacy in line with the cultural strategy.

Klaipėda

The city of Klaipėda presented its ECOC candidature together with Neringa and Palanga under the title "Meeting point". In 2017 Klaipėda holds the title of Lithuanian Capital of Culture (LCOC). Klaipėda is the third largest city in Lithuania with a population of over 155 000 inhabitants at present. This coastal city and its surrounding region are a business and industrial centre in Western Lithuania. Klaipėda is a shrinking city that completely changed its identity several times in its history. In 2022 the city will celebrate its 770th anniversary. The candidature encompasses 99km of Baltic seacoast including a unique landscape stretching throughout the Curonian Spit National Park. There are 3 universities and 7 colleges in the city.

The ECOC Programme includes two strategic horizontal platforms: Fresh AiR (developing conditions for artists) and Vivid Community (attracting European communities and a change from passive to active citizens), as well as five vertical programmes (Creative Landscapes, Hub of Partnership, Live History, PORTable Culture, Confrontation of Violence and Humanism). The city hopes that the ECOC will inspire challenges and reinforce changes oriented towards artistic innovations and community vitality.

The bidbook is available at <http://www.klaipeda2022.eu>

Cultural strategy

The cultural strategy of the city until 2030 was voted on 23 February 2017. Additionally, other city documents (both existing and currently developed) such as the Klaipėda City Municipality Strategic Development Plan 2013–2020, the city's Breakthrough Strategy 2020–2030, and the Klaipėda City Cultural Heritage Protection Strategy include some elements relevant to the cultural development and the ECOC project.

The cultural strategy aims are important and worth pursuing. Klaipėda decided to double the funding for culture within four years until 2019. The panel was impressed with the city's aim to change the distribution of funds between cultural institutions and the free cultural scene already in 2019. This would be a good practice on the European scale.

The cultural, social, urban and economic impacts are briefly described, without, however, providing clear performance indicators. Definition of success, including the idea of the city being perceived as a meaningful place in the inhabitants' lives and the raise in their European self-awareness, presents a good approach. All this, however, is too briefly defined, without providing information on how such an intangible success would be measured.

The monitoring will be carried out in all three city partners of Klaipėda 2022 with yearly reports planned. The evaluation will be led by Klaipėda University Social Change Study Centre, partly using existing evaluation instruments. Four evaluation stages are planned and the methods used to compile data are generally appropriate with the exception mentioned above.

In the bidbook the urban development plans are not presented in detail, but it appears that plans exist for the further development and reconversion of the city centre. It seems that the city lacks a clear creative industries strategy though. The panel has concerns over the concrete legacy aspirations and on the implementation of the cultural strategy if the ECOC title is not awarded.

European Dimension

The city of Klaipėda and its partners actively participate in international associations and networks, for example the Eurocities association or the Union of Baltic cities and they intend to increase their collaboration with other partner cities, such as former port and historically similar ECOCs. The proposed programme includes many partnerships with cultural organisations in Europe, mostly from the neighbourhood region, with an emphasis on commissioning, invitations and co-productions. The panel considers that more is needed to deepen the European connexions beyond the close neighbourhood area and to reinforce the links with the city's own residents of foreign origins as 26% of the city population is of foreign origin (Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Armenians, Germans, Latvians, Azerbaijanis, Poles, and Tatars).

The panel felt that the European dimension was still under-played, lacking a clear European narrative beyond mentioning several European topics (tolerance, human values, European cultural heritage, a city at the port). Some interesting ideas e.g. the historic postal route or "the city and the port" (instead of "port city") became not sufficiently visible in the programme. Moreover, the bidbook lacks more elements of a distinctive cultural identity that would make "a new meeting point" an attractive destination for European audiences.

Artistic programme

The programme structure is clear with relevant objectives (platform for communities and artists) and its five vertical strands.

There are some very interesting concepts, for example the idea to link the programme with various historic personalities connected to the city and having a European resonance (the somehow strong focus on German personalities seems to be justified by the history of the city). Other interesting projects include e.g. the intellectual approach in the Lessons of 20th century, the art colony development and the Light festivals idea. The panel also considers that the Hub of Partnership, addressing the topic of cross-sectorial cooperation, is relevant and a very good idea, as it encourages the university's interaction with the city in "out of the box" projects. The panel also notes with satisfaction that the Creative Landscapes programme, developing art in public spaces and opening parts of the port to creative endeavours, includes more, and welcomed, contemporary approaches.

However, the programme lacks a clear, united and perhaps more "coherent" artistic vision and seems to be more a patchwork of sometimes good but isolated ideas. Additionally, the projects presented in the bid-book are in general underdeveloped and too unspecific for this stage of the competition. Moreover, the programme focuses on developing diverse cultural routes (more permanent but dispersed initiatives of unknown

size) rather than on developing ECOC programme's artistic highlights. This approach fits well the ambition to develop local and regional cultural tourism but will not contribute to an effective programme communication on the European level. Additionally, the proposed formats are too traditional (e.g. folk festivals, brass band competitions) and digital elements are too limited. Although some connections between past and future are mentioned, the bid lacks clear innovative and unique elements that could grab the attention of European artists and audiences. Therefore, it is not clear how the ECOC would contribute to reversing the current regional challenges such as large-scale emigration, severe anxiety symptoms in the society, fragmentation of the cultural field, and a lack of uniting community models. The panel's concern is that the proposed programme would underline rather than challenge Klaipėda's status quo.

The selection criteria used for the development of the programme are on the contrary overdeveloped. According to the panel, the proposed procedures do not fit the capacities of the cultural sector in the city and could therefore have counterproductive outcomes.

The bid-book includes a capacity building programme for cultural and community managers as well as for officials but without giving solid information in this regard.

Capacity to deliver

The ECOC project has the clear support of the mayor and the unanimous support of the major political parties in the city. The project has the support of the partner cities, the Curonian Spit National Park and Klaipėda University. The panel welcomed the fact that the city has increased the funding for culture and planned to continue this policy in coming years. There are good prospects for private sponsorship, and the city is already active in the EU programmes. The cultural infrastructure is appropriate and a plan for further development is in place. The details about the state of the capital investments' preparations are missing and it is not clear if the plans are targeting also the bedroom suburbs.

Access, transport, and hotels' capacities are satisfactory.

Outreach

The "Everybody participates" slogan is at the same time the outreach strategy. The involvement of over 500 people directly and indirectly in the preparation of the application is one of the biggest strengths of the bid. Events and activities organised during the second preparation phase and the elaboration of the cultural strategy additionally underline clear engagement of the citizens in the ECOC preparations.

The panel appreciated the Vivid Community strategic platform inspired by the very interesting methodological approach "Creative Partnerships" that was implemented in schools at national level in Lithuania. The aim now is to mobilise further the wider local community, beyond schools, but also working with cultural centres and other facilities, promoting interaction of diverse cultural communities with European artists.

Some preliminary problem analysis regarding audience is in place, which is very positive, and some promising ideas for audience development such as the cooperation with the Department of Education, Creative Partnerships and the Cultural Backpack, the School

for Volunteers and the Youth and Partnership Hubs are also presented. First target groups are defined but the audience development strategy is still too generic.

Management

The proposed budget is €32m with €15m from the city, which is appropriate. The contribution from the region is modest at €1m. The budget forecasts €3,5m from the private sector seems a lot but the team assured there were good prospects for private sponsorship and that crowdfunding had been successfully used for public activities in Klaipėda and would be used again as a fund-raising tool. The panel noted that 10% of the city budget for culture would be devoted to ECOC. This may lead to reduced funding for the regular activities of the cultural sector.

In general, operating budgets are well distributed. The main allocations are €22,58m for programme expenditure, €4,5m for marketing and €4,5m for administration. However, the budget forecasts for the ramp years seem too high for operating expenditure. The panel noticed that the investment programme was cut from the preselection phase but the rationale behind this decision was not clearly articulated.

The panel considers that the marketing strategy is basic and that the communication channels and tactics are quite general without being linked to the project's vision. The slogan will hardly stimulate public interest and reflects the lack of a thematic focus in the programme.

The management structure is generally good. However, the roles of and interrelations between the different forums, platforms and committees are not clearly defined. The presence of too many potentially advisory councils in the management structure may hamper the effectiveness and speed of the organisational processes and decision making. The artistic director's staff will include the audience development coordinator, which is *per se* positive, but it is not clear why the team responsible for the artistic content includes also the volunteer coordinator. Public competitions for general and artistic director are planned which is in line with ECOC best practice.

Summary

Overall, the panel felt that the bid was stronger in the development of the existing (traditional) cultural agenda rather than taking a radical forward-looking step and encouraging the development of a contemporary artistic offer with a clear European profile. The plans to run some projects between 2018 and 2021 were appreciated as they contribute to a sustainable longer term legacy of the ECOC. The programme is in line with the ambition of the city and its partners to enhance a touristic development, whereas an ECOC should seek to significantly develop the cultural and creative sectors at local level with clear cultural, creative and social outcomes also on the European level.

The panel was encouraged by the commitment and approach of the local authority and its recognition of the role of culture in the city's development. The proposed programme with further strategic analysis and sustained civic engagement could clearly contribute to the advancement of the partner municipalities.

The panel did not learn very much about the status of Klaipėda as the Lithuanian capital of culture in 2017 or the possible connections of this project with the ECOC bid.

The Panel's Decision

The panel was presented with two different bids from two different cities facing their own challenges and each with its own interpretations of the ECOC criteria. The bids had many strong points as well as some weaknesses. The panel was looking, according to the Decision, at the programme specifically designed for the ECOC year.

After the presentations the panel debated the merits of each city against the six criteria and then in the final discussion the applications were weighed up against each other.

Each panel member weighed their own interpretation of the criteria against the two bids with their bidbooks, presentations, questions and answers, augmented by the feedback from the visits.

The panel reached consent on a single candidate in the first vote.

Accordingly, the panel recommends that the ministry designates, as a European Capital of Culture in 2022, the city of

Kaunas

Designation

This report has been sent to the ministry and the European Commission. Both will publish it on their websites. In accordance with article 11 the ministry will designate Kaunas to hold the title of ECOC in Lithuania in 2022 based on this report. It will then inform the European Parliament, Council, Commission and Committee of the Regions. This formal designation enables Kaunas to use the title "European Capital of Culture 2022".

Melina Mercouri Prize

The panel recommends that the European Commission awards the Melina Mercouri Prize to the designated city. The payment of the €1.5m is deferred until 2022. It is conditional. The monitoring panel will make a further recommendation to the European Commission in late 2021 on whether to make the payment.

The conditions are (article 14 of the Decision):

- The ECOC honours its commitments made in the application
- It complies with the criteria
- It takes into account the recommendations of the selection panel report and the reports of the monitoring panel

- There has been no substantial change to the programme and strategy set out in the bidbook
- The budget has been maintained at a level capable of delivering a high-level programme and at a level consistent with the bidbook
- The independence of the artistic team has been respected
- The European Dimension has remained sufficiently strong in the final programme
- Marketing and communications have clearly shown it is a European Union action
- Plans for monitoring and evaluation are in place.

Reputation of an ECOC

A city awarded the ECOC title receives considerable international attention from the selection recommendation and extending well beyond the ECOC year. It has a responsibility to uphold the reputation of the ECOC brand for the benefit of those previous title holders and future ones. City administrations should be aware that decisions taken (and not just in the cultural sector) may attract formal media and social media attention far beyond they are used to handling. This adds a special and new aspect to decision taking in the city over wide full range of issues much beyond culture only.

The monitoring phase

Once an ECOC has been designated it enters the “Monitoring Phase” (article 13 of the Decision). The monitoring panel will work with the ECOC to ensure the quality of the ECOC brand and to offer advice and experience.

The bidbook at final selection becomes the *de facto* contract between the designated city and the expert panel, the ministry and the European Commission as well to its own citizens. It has an important role in the payment of the Melina Mercouri Prize. The monitoring panel will expect a close alignment with the bidbook during the preparation phase and during the ECOC year. Significant variations from the bidbook should be discussed with the panel, through the Commission, in advance of decisions being made.

There are three formal monitoring checkpoints (normally autumn 2018, mid 2020 and autumn 2021) when the ECOC will meet with the panel. Prior to each meeting the European Commission, on behalf of the monitoring panel, will invite the ECOC to provide progress reports. The Commission, after consultation with the panel, will indicate areas which specifically need to be addressed in the reports.

In addition, the panel may decide to visit the city to observe progress.

The panel’s reports after all three meetings will be published on the Commission’s website. The ECOC may decide to publish its own progress reports in the interests of transparency.

The panel's recommendations

The designated ECOC now moves to a transition period from a set-up suited to a bid campaign to the more formal ECOC delivery structure which is independent of local city administration. The panel expects Kaunas to develop co-operation with the other Lithuanian cities, especially Klaipėda. The ECOC in Lithuania in 2022 provides a national opportunity which will reflect internationally not only on Kaunas but on the country as a whole.

The panel will expect the first progress report in autumn 2018 to take into account the recommendations and comments in the assessment of the bid as well as the recommendations below.

The recommendations refer to the content of the proposed programme:

Cultural strategy

- The work continues on the implementation of the cultural strategy and further arrangements are made for integration between policy areas (culture / urban development / innovation and creative industries). All documents are published to ensure transparency.
- Stronger connections between the cultural sector and the city administrative staff are secured with involvement of both in the capacity building activities; long-term links between the cultural, economic and social sectors in the city are being developed.
- The ECOC 2022 impact assessment is detailed with monitoring tactics, the baseline figures are defined and first attempts to outline the specific targets are made. KPIs include European sources of information like Eurostat for example. Existing happiness indexes/reports are taken into consideration.
- CCIs enhancement supporting strategies/plans are developed with all relevant stakeholders involved: city council, university, business community, the sector professionals.

European dimension

- Stronger focus is placed on current European issues.
- The scope and quality of activities promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens is secured and developed.
- The cooperation and communication beyond Baltic countries is strengthened and actions to generate an interest of the western and southern parts of Europe are promoted.

Artistic content

- An equally effective opening ceremony needs to be developed in case the actions currently planned are not feasible.
- Specific strategic planning document for The Beast theme should be developed for the ramp years to build the momentum for a culmination in 2022.

- Fluxus Lab activities as a key element of the programme are developed alongside a strong organisational and financial backup to secure it can potentially be used as a foundation for the updates of the long-term strategy for the city.
- Innovative, experimental and digital programme elements are strengthened to ensure the ECOC 2022 meets the needs of the XXI century.

Capacity to deliver

- The urban development plans affecting the ECOC delivery are clarified. The Kaunas 2022 team has clear information on the status of the implementation of these projects.
- The built heritage (not just the modernist architecture) is well protected.
- The hotels capacities are re-examined and alternative plans are developed.

Outreach

- More work is done to ensure social innovation and full community engagement.
- ECOC audience development strategies and plans are developed.
- Involvement of the young generation (beyond formal cooperation with universities and schools) is further developed to increase its scope.

Management

- Information about the registration of Kaunas 2022 organisation and its statutes is publicly available.
- The ownership of strategic areas / spaces is clearly defined and clear information on what will be integrated and what will not be included in the programme are communicated.
- The strategies and copyright issues of the Beast concepts including authorship rights of related merchandise and services are developed and publicly communicated.
- The communication message (including the European dimension) is clearly articulated for the use of ECOC team and other relevant stakeholders.

The bidbook sets out several actions to be taken in 2017 and 2018 - these time frames should be met. Experience has shown that successful ECOCs use the first year after selection to establish all **the governance, management and administration structures and systems**. This essential role needs to run concurrently with the first stage of the project in 2017-18. Recommendations in this section are based on experience of previous ECOCs.

The panel would expect (page references are to the bidbook):

- The Kaunas 2022 organisation to be established and fully operational with its Supervisory Council (page 87).
- The relationship between the Supervisory Council and the staff of the Kaunas 2022 organisation to be clearly delineated and made public.
- Council members to understand their role as strategic, not executive, facilitative, ambassadorial and financially accountable. The expectation is that politicians and political appointees will be in the minority within the Council (and possibly not in

position of chair). Council members have a special responsibility to focus on the legacy objectives.

- The General and Artistic Directors are in place as soon as possible within 2017 after an open recruitment process (page 91).
- The senior staff are recruited through open competitions and contracted to be in place by summer 2017. This includes the Communication and PR, Fundraising, Administration, Finance and Monitoring/Evaluation managers.
- The General Director issues, with the approval of the Council, financial regulations for the Kaunas 2022 organisation:
 - An external organisation is appointed to undertake annual audits and to approve the annual accounts of the organisation.
 - Arrangements are made for the publication of the Annual Accounts and the Annual Report to ensure transparency.
 - Internal management and administrative processes are in place. These will include human resources, legal (e.g. project contract arrangements), data privacy, intellectual property rights, the criteria and systems for calls for projects, the marketing and branding strategy.
- An internal communications strategy is developed and implemented. This covers communications within the Kaunas 2022 organisation, between the organisation and the city administration, between the organisation and the Ministry of Culture and between the organisation and the European Commission.
- A detailed staffing plan up to 2022 including the use of volunteers is created.
- The organisation ensures that in all its (on and offline) marketing and communications there is recognition that the ECOC is a European Union programme.

Thanks

The panel wishes to place on record its thanks to the Minister, the staff of the ministry, ably supported by DG EAC of the European Commission, for their efficient management of the competition.

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