

Annex 4
Rules for the ECoC Panel

RULES FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE PANEL

The Union action for the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) 2020-2033 is established and governed by Decision No 445/2014/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ("the Decision"). We kindly invite you to read the Decision at the following web address:

- <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2014:132:TOC> and
- http://ec.europa.eu/culture/tools/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm

The Decision specifies in particular the objectives of the action (Article 2) and the criteria according to which you will have to assess the cities bidding for the ECoC title (Article 5).

It lays down the selection procedure for designating the ECoC (Articles 7 to 10) as well as the monitoring procedure aiming at providing guidance and support to the designated cities during their preparation phase up to the title-year (Article 13).

To carry out these selection and monitoring procedures, the Decision establishes a Panel of independent experts ("the Panel") (Article 6).

The role of the Panel is essential in the designation and preparation process of the ECoC, for the quality of the action and consequently the credibility and the prestige of the title.

The aim of this document is to clarify the rules governing the Panel and to provide its members with useful information about the Panel's composition, functioning and role during the selection and monitoring procedures. It is based to a large extent on the above-mentioned Articles of the Decision.

1. Background

Each year, two Member States are entitled to host the ECoC action in turn according to a chronological order annexed to the Decision. Furthermore, every third year starting from 2021, cities in candidate countries or potential candidates for EU membership may also hold the title.

While each Member State manages its own selection competition for the ECoC title at national level, under the responsibility of its relevant authority (referred to here as the "Managing Authority") and with the assistance of the European Commission, the Commission is directly responsible for the organisation of the open competitions for cities in candidate countries or potential candidates.

In practical terms, this means that, every year, parallel competitions will run at national level in two different Member States, and that, every third year, a third competition – open only to cities in candidate countries and potential candidates – will also take place.

The selection phase is organised into two stages: a pre-selection stage and a final selection stage, each including a meeting of the Panel, during which the latter assesses candidate cities.

It starts with the publication of a call for submission of applications at least six years before the year of the title and ends up with the formal designation of the cities as European Capitals of Culture on the basis of the Panel's recommendation, normally around four years before the year of the title.

There is then a monitoring phase aiming to help each designated city in its preparations up to the beginning of the title-year. This phase is coordinated by the European Commission, which shall convene three meetings between the Panel and the designated cities. On top of these meetings, the Commission may also organise visits of the Panel to these cities whenever necessary.

This phase ends up with the Panel making a recommendation to the Commission on whether or not it should pay to the cities concerned the "Melina Mercouri Prize", an EU pecuniary Prize in honour of the former Greek Minister for Culture, who invented the concept of ECoC. The Melina Mercouri Prize is currently a one-off grant of 1.5 million Euros coming from the Creative Europe Programme¹.

2. The Panel

The Panel consists of ten experts appointed by Union institutions and bodies ("European experts" or "European members"). In addition, for the selection and monitoring of the cities from Member States, the Member State concerned shall be entitled to appoint up to two experts ("national experts" or "national members").

Requirements

All Panel members shall be citizens of the Union. They shall be independent and have substantial experience and expertise in the cultural sector, in the cultural development of cities or in the organisation of a European Capital of Culture event or an international cultural event of similar scope and scale.

While the national members serve for the selection and monitoring phases only for the country which has appointed them, the European members serve, in principle, for terms lasting three years. However the arrangements in the Decision mean that the replacement of European members is staggered in order to prevent a loss of know-how and memory, which could occur if the members were all replaced simultaneously.

All the members must sign a statement of non-conflict of interest with regard to the candidate cities before both the pre-selection and final selection meetings as well as with regard to the designated cities before the monitoring meetings. These declarations shall be stored by the Managing Authority for the pre-selection and final selection meetings and by the Commission for the monitoring meetings. It is the responsibility of members to declare any changes to their professional or private duties which may give rise to an actual or potential conflict of interest. In the event of such a declaration by a member, or if such a conflict of interest comes to light, that member shall resign.

Publication of the names of Panel members

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/creative-europe/index_en.htm

The Commission's preference is to be discreet regarding the names of the Panel members once designated, in order to avoid them coming under undue pressure.

The Commission indicates the names of the European members in the press releases it publishes after the pre-selection and final selection meetings. Furthermore, the names of all the Panel's members appear in the reports produced by the Panel at pre-selection and final selection phases and then at monitoring phase.

However it should be noted that in some Member States transparency rules could mean that the national authorities are obliged to release the names earlier. It should also be noted that as the European members are appointed for a three year term, once their selection is made public, it is no longer possible to keep their identity secret. However, Member States usually publish the names of all Panel's experts one week prior to the pre-selection meeting in a press release or on the Managing Authority's website.

Election and role of the chairperson

The Panel shall designate its chairperson. In practice a chairperson is appointed for each single competition as the membership of the Panel varies from one competition to the other. It is recommended that the chairperson be deputised by a vice-chairperson.

The chairperson and the vice-chairperson shall be designated during the first pre-selection meeting for a given competition.

The chairperson is appointed from among the European members. He/she shall lead the meetings, coordinate the content of the reports and be the main point of contact for dealings with the short-listed and selected cities. As there is considerable media interest in the ECoC action and the work of the Panel, the chairperson is very publicly visible, and may also have to deal with regular queries from the press.

The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be designated by consensus.

If no consensus can be found, they shall be elected by secret ballot. Voting slips shall be provided to the members of the Panel by the Managing Authority, which shall lead and supervise the voting. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the Panel shall be the candidates who receive the votes of a majority of the members of the Panel who are present.

If no chairperson and / or vice-chairperson are elected in the first round of voting, a second round shall be conducted among the two top-scoring candidates.

Members of the Panel are entitled to contest the position of chairperson at a later stage for duly justified reasons. In this instance, a new selection process will be carried out in line with the procedure described above.

3. Role of the Panel in the selection procedure

All the Panel's members will be invited by the Managing Authority concerned (for competitions in Member States) or the Commission (for the open competitions) to a pre-selection meeting and a final selection meeting.

Each member shall strive to be present at both meetings, for the whole duration of the meetings. To ensure maximum attendance, the Managing Authority and the Commission shall seek to confirm the dates of the meetings as far in advance as possible and to prepare an agenda as convenient as possible for the Panel.

The pre-selection and final selection meetings are organised by the Member State concerned (usually) in its capital city (for the competitions in Member States) or by the Commission in Brussels (for the open competitions for cities in candidate countries or potential candidates). The duration of the pre-selection and final selection meetings will depend on the number of candidate – respectively pre-selected – cities.

The aim of the pre-selection and final selection meetings is for the Panel to assess the candidate cities against the objectives and criteria laid down in the Decision, compare them and identify which ones are the best. The Panel shall assess the candidate cities on the basis of their written applications submitted as well as their hearings².

The Panel's members are expected to read the applications carefully ahead of the pre-selection and final selection meetings and to be in a position to ask relevant questions to the delegations of candidate cities during the hearings.

For the competitions in Member States, in order to ensure the smooth functioning of the Panel and facilitate the induction of the national experts, a briefing session (approximately 3 hours) and a working lunch/dinner will be organised between the European and national experts before the pre-selection meeting. This will serve as a valuable opportunity for the national experts to be briefed on the ECoC action and its criteria, as well as to learn from the experience of the European members. For the European members it will serve as an opportunity to learn about the national cultural context; the Managing Authority or the national members shall present to the whole Panel an overview of the outstanding features of the cultural life of the country.

Pre-selection phase

At the pre-selection meeting, after the hearing of the candidate cities³, the Panel shall meet in camera⁴ to discuss the merits of each city against the ECoC objectives and criteria and shall agree on a shortlist of candidate cities which shall be invited to revise and complete their application during the selection phase ("pre-selected cities").

In its work, the Panel should try to reach a consensus regarding the number of cities to be shortlisted and the cities to be put on the short-list.

If consensus cannot be reached between the Panel's members, a vote shall be organised. Each member has one vote. The rules of votes are detailed in the Rules of the Procedure for the

² Please note that there is no meeting with candidate cities at pre-selection phase in the framework of the open competition for cities from candidate countries or potential candidates.

³ Hearings of the cities are closed. No filming or recording of the presentations is allowed.

⁴ The representatives of the European Commission and of the Managing Authority attend the debates and the voting to provide guidance concerning the rules if need be and to seek to ensure that the rules and procedures are correctly followed.

ECoC competition published by the Member State concerned (for competitions in Member States) or by the Commission (for the open competitions). We therefore invite you to read this document on the website of the Member State concerned, respectively on the Commission website (at the web address indicated above).

The Decision does not specify any set number of pre-selected cities. The quality of the bid in relation to the objectives and criteria put forward in the Decision is the most crucial element for pre-selecting a city. It is, however, recommended to shortlist a maximum of two to four cities, depending on the quality of the bids. It would be neither useful nor efficient (waste of time, money, energy) to pre-select a city which the Panel considers to have no real chance of receiving its recommendation at the final selection stage.

The Panel as a whole shall endorse the final decision.

The Panel shall issue a report, the outline of which shall be agreed upon by the Panel before the end of the meeting.

This report shall contain a short presentation and a general assessment of all applications, the shortlist of cities which are to be considered further as well as recommendations to these cities. It shall be drafted by a rapporteur (chosen either from among the Panel's members or someone from the Managing Authority).

The draft of the report shall be prepared (in English) by the rapporteur after the meeting, submitted by e-mail by the Managing Authority or the rapporteur to the Commission for consultation and then sent by the Commission to the Panel's chairperson. The chairperson will then send the draft report to the other Panel's members who may suggest corrections or additions. Once the report is agreed upon and signed by all Panel's members (by e-mail), it is forwarded to the Managing Authority and the Commission in principle no later than 21 working days after the end of the pre-selection meeting. The report will be made public by these two institutions as soon as possible.

The quality and consistency of the Panel's report is crucial as it is on this basis that each Member State will formally approve the short-list.

Immediately after the pre-selection meeting, a press announcement will take place during which the chairperson will disclose the list of recommended pre-selected cities without giving further explanations.

Final selection phase

At the final selection meeting, after the hearing of the pre-selected cities⁵, the Panel shall meet in camera⁶ to discuss the merits of each city against the ECoC objectives and criteria and agree on one city to be recommended for the title. If none of the candidate cities fulfil the criteria, the Panel may recommend not awarding the title.

⁵ Hearings of the cities are closed. No filming or recording of the presentations is allowed.

⁶ The representatives of the European Commission and of the Managing Authority attend the debates and the voting to provide guidance concerning the rules if need be and to seek to ensure that the rules and procedures are correctly followed.

In its work, the Panel should try to reach a consensus.

If consensus cannot be reached between the Panel's members, a vote shall be organised. Each member has one vote. The rules of votes are detailed in the Rules of the Procedure for the ECoC competition published by the Member State concerned (for competitions in Member States) or the Commission (for the open competitions).

The Panel as a whole shall endorse the final decision.

The Panel shall issue a report, the outline of which shall be agreed upon by the Panel before the end of the meeting.

This report shall contain a general assessment of all applications and a duly justified recommendation for the nomination of one city as the European Capital of Culture. It shall also contain recommendations to the city concerned regarding the progress to be made by the year of the title.

The drafting arrangements for the report are the same as in the pre-selection phase.

The report shall be made public by the Managing Authority and the European Commission as soon as possible.

The quality and consistency of the Panel's report is crucial as it is on this basis that each Member State (or the Commission for the open competitions) will formally nominate one city to be European Capital of Culture, and notify it to the relevant European institutions and bodies. It is also on this basis that the Commission will decide whether or not to award the designated cities with the Melina Mercouri Prize.

Immediately after the final selection meeting, a press announcement will take place during which the chairperson will disclose the name of the city recommended by the Panel without giving further explanations.

4. Role of the Panel during the monitoring procedure

The monitoring phase takes place from the designation of the cities as European Capitals of Culture until the start of the title-year.

In this context, the Commission shall convene three meetings in Brussels between the Panel and the designated cities. The first meeting shall take place three years before the year of the title; the second meeting shall take place eighteen months before the year of the title and the third meeting shall take place two months before the year of the title.

The aims of the meetings are to monitor the implementation of the objectives and criteria of the ECoC action, to take stock of and assess the preparations achieved and to check that the commitments made at selection phase are being fulfilled. It is also to provide the designated cities with support and guidance from their designation until the start of the event.

Each member shall strive to be present at all monitoring meetings. To ensure maximum attendance, the Commission shall seek to confirm the dates of these meetings as far in advance as possible and to prepare an agenda as convenient as possible for the Panel.

Approximately five months ahead of the first monitoring meeting, the Commission, on the basis of the application submitted at selection phase and the Panel's selection report, sends a list of questions to be replied to by a given designated city. The responses shall serve as the core of the progress report the city has to provide normally 6 weeks ahead of the meeting.

Each Panel member must carefully read the reports provided by the cities ahead of the monitoring meeting. This preparation is essential so that the Panel is in a position to ask informed questions to the delegation of the city concerned during the meeting.

The debate during the first monitoring meeting will focus on the issues highlighted in the questionnaire sent to the city. In addition, the Panel will be free to raise any other points regarding the preparation of the event.

At the end of the meeting, the Panel will prepare its report and conclusions, based on a draft submitted by the Commission. The report will summarise the steps to be taken or the elements to be improved, in particular in relation to the commitments made at selection phase and to the objectives and criteria of the ECoC action. It shall clearly stress the points to be examined at the following monitoring meeting. This report will be made public.

The same principles apply for the second and third monitoring meetings: in these cases, the questions to be answered by the city prior to the meeting for its progress report will be based on the recommendations made during the previous monitoring meeting and any other issue which may have come to light in the meantime.

The quality and consistency of the Panel's reports is crucial. It is indeed on the basis of the Panel's final monitoring report that the Commission will take its decision on whether or not to pay the Melina Mercouri financial Prize to the Capital concerned.

The payment of the Prize depends on the Capitals having complied with the criteria of the action, honoured the commitments made at the application stage and taken into account the Panel's recommendations, as laid down in Article 14 of the Decision. In making its decision, the Commission must be certain that all these conditions are met as it has a responsibility for the sound financial management of public funds.

5. Visits to the cities

Visits during the selection phase

To prevent any possible conflicts of interest arising, no visits of the Panel to the candidate cities shall take place prior to the pre-selection meeting after they have expressed their intention to bid. No invitation from any candidate city shall be accepted by any Panel member.

For competitions in Member States, during the final debate of the pre-selection meeting, the Panel can express the wish that a delegation visit the short-listed cities. In such a case, the visit shall take place after the deadline for submitting the revised applications, and prior to the final selection meeting. The aim is for the Panel to get *in situ* a better understanding of the candidacies as well as the level of ownership among the city's inhabitants and key stakeholders.

Two to four Panel members will in principle be delegated to represent the whole Panel. At least one member of the delegation shall be a European member. The names of the delegates are decided upon during the pre-selection meeting. As far as possible, a gender balance will be ensured.

The delegates should relate their visits to the whole Panel as factually and comprehensively as possible, if time permits in writing, and orally before the cities present their revised bid at the final selection meeting.

Equal treatment between all pre-selected cities must be ensured, which means that all pre-selected cities must be visited and that the amount of time spent in each city is the same. The visit of each city should last roughly one working day. The visits shall be organized by the Managing Authority with the cities concerned.

Visits during the monitoring phase

The complexity of the ECoC action requires a pragmatic and case by case approach as some cities will experience greater difficulties than others.

If specific problems regarding the preparation of the ECoC arise in a given city, it can prove useful and sometimes even necessary for visits to be made during the monitoring phase.

The aims of such visits are for the Panel to meet *in situ* the team in charge of implementing the ECoC as well as the local authorities and other key stakeholders in order to improve its overall assessment of the preparations and for the cities to receive from the Panel hand-on guidance and assistance in a manner which is more informal than during the monitoring meetings.

Such visits can be triggered either at the request of the Panel or at the request of the Capitals themselves. In both cases, the Commission must be consulted in advance and give its consent.

In principle one member of the Panel will be mandated for the visit on behalf of the whole Panel. In justified circumstances, the Panel may also request a second member to be mandated, with the consent of the Commission and if administrative resources permit. The Panel member(s) must ensure that no possible conflicts of interests or perceptions of conflicts of interest could arise.

Following the visits, the delegates should relate in an objective way their own opinion to the whole Panel in writing, and a report should be sent to the city visited.

These visits shall be organised by the Commission in cooperation with the cities concerned. They shall in principle last one day and the accommodation for the European members shall be organised and paid for by the Commission.

6. Contacts with cities

Communication about the event

Contacts between members of the Panel and candidate cities are not permitted prior to the pre-selection stage. After the list of the pre-selected cities is announced, the chairperson may answer oral queries from pre-selected cities. In such a case, the chairperson must abide by the principle of equal treatment for all pre-selected cities.

The chairperson is also allowed to answer oral queries (only oral contacts, no written exchanges) from the recommended city after the announcement of the Panel's recommendation.

The principle of confidentiality will apply to the deliberations of the Panel and individual members of the Panel will not comment on the proceedings. This also applies to the chairperson in any public comments s/he makes.

Invitations to Panel members to attend other events

The experts serving as Panel members may find themselves solicited to attend events in their capacity as a Panel member. In some instances the invitations may be disguised as more general invitations to them on account of their competences as cultural experts. Panel members are therefore expected to apply caution in responding to invitations.

In principle they should not agree to attend events if they are being invited in their capacity as Panel members without the prior agreement of the European Commission, and informing their fellow Panel members.

If Panel members are invited in their capacity as cultural experts to events but find themselves probed in their capacity as a member of the Panel, they must exercise the utmost caution and prudence and avoid commenting on their role as a Panel member. They have to inform the Panel and the Commission about such debates if necessary.

No Panel member is allowed to represent the whole Panel to deliver recommendations or to express his/her view on the preparation of a city for the event on behalf of the Panel without consulting it in advance.

7. Contacts with the press

Journalists sometimes seek to contact the Panel members during the competition process in order to get an interview or ask their view about the candidate cities. In the interests of avoiding misrepresentations or perceptions of conflicts of interest, Panel members should decline such invitations and refer the queries to the European Commission.

Concerning contacts with journalists on the occasion of the pre-selection meeting, final selection meeting and visits to the cities, the chairperson or another designated member of the Panel may respond to journalists' queries in these specific circumstances, with the agreement also of the European Commission.

8. Practical provisions

The expenses incurred for the participation of the European Panel members in all the above-mentioned meetings and visits will be covered by the European Commission⁷. The Commission shall reimburse the travel expenditure (economy class air tickets, first class train tickets), a daily allowance (for every day from the departure to the return to home) and a fee for each day of attendance and for the preparatory work.

The Commission (either directly or via a contractor) will take over all bookings and payments regarding the visits and meetings (trips, hotel and fees) of the European members of the Panels.

However, for the visits of pre-selected cities during the selection phase, the accommodation of the Panel members is to be provided (and paid for) by the cities concerned.

The expenses incurred for the participation in all the meetings and visits of the national Panel members shall be covered by the Member State. However, as is the case for the European members, the accommodation of the national members for the visits of pre-selected cities during the selection phase is to be provided (and paid for) by the cities concerned.

In order to simplify arrangements for the Panel, the Managing Authority of the competition shall organise transfers from the airport or station to the hotel for the Panel members participating in the visits as well as the pre-selection and final selection meetings.

COMPETITION IN GREECE FOR THE YEAR 2021

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THE CALL FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS:
9 DECEMBER 2014**

**DEADLINE FOR CANDIDATE CITIES FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS:
30 NOVEMBER 2015**

**NAME OF MANAGING AUTHORITY FOR THE COMPETITION:
HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS
DIRECTORATE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN UNION DEPARTMENT**

**CONTACT PERSON WITHIN THE MANAGING AUTHORITY:
EIRINI KOMNINO
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DIRECTORATE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EUROPEAN UNION
HELLENIC MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND SPORTS**

⁷ The expenses incurred by national members are covered by the national Managing Authority.