



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 20.7.2012
SWD(2012) 226 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

European Capitals of Culture post 2019

Accompanying the document

**Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council
establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to
2033**

{COM(2012) 407 final}

Lead Service: DG EAC

Other involved services: SG, SJ, DG BUDG, DG ELARG, DG EMPL, DG ENTR, DG ENV, DG MARE and DG REGIO

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List of main abbreviations

CSWD: Commission Staff Working Document

ECoC: European Capitals of Culture

EU: European Union

MS: Member States

Table of contents

1.	Procedural issues and consultation of interested parties	5
1.1.	Purpose of the CSWD	5
1.2.	Procedural issues, organisation and timing.....	5
1.3.	Evaluations and external expertise.....	5
1.4.	Public consultation.....	6
2.	Context and Problem definition	7
2.1.	Historical and Policy context	7
2.2.	Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a EU action for the ECoC for the years 2007-2019	8
2.3.	Main facts and figures about the ECoC	9
2.4.	Identification of problems faced by the ECoC and their underlying drivers	11
2.4.1.	Problem n° 1: the lack of stability in the governance structures and in the budgets .	12
2.4.2.	Problem n° 2: the limited European dimension	13
2.4.3.	Problem n° 3: weak legacy planning.....	13
2.4.4.	Problem n° 4: the lack of evaluation and comparable data.....	14
2.4.5.	Problem n° 5: the limited number of credible candidates in certain MS	14
2.5.	Baseline trends: how would the problem evolve, all things being equal?	15
2.6.	Justification for EU intervention.....	16
2.7.	Complementarity to other EU policies and instruments	16
3.	Objectives.....	18
4.	Policy options.....	20
4.1.	Discarded options.....	20
4.2.	Options retained for analysis.....	22
4.2.1.	Option 1 "No change" (the baseline)	22
4.2.2.	Option 2 "No action".....	22
4.2.3.	Option 3 "Revised legal base".....	23
5.	Analysis of impacts	26
5.1.	Option 1 "No change" (the baseline)	28

5.2.	Option 2 "No action"	28
5.3.	Sub-option 3a "Revised legal base with a chronological list of MS"	29
5.4.	Sub-option 3b "Revised legal base with an open competition"	30
6.	Comparing the Options	32
6.1.	Effectiveness	32
6.2.	Efficiency	32
6.3.	Costs and administrative burden	33
6.4.	Coherence.....	35
6.5.	Political feasibility	35
6.6.	Preferred option.....	37
7.	Monitoring and Evaluation	37
7.1.	Monitoring of designated cities.....	37
7.2.	Evaluation of past Capitals	38
7.3.	Evaluation of the ECoC action.....	38
8.	Annex	41

1. PROCEDURAL ISSUES AND CONSULTATION OF INTERESTED PARTIES

1.1. Purpose of the CSWD

The current legal base for the ECoC (Decision 1622/2006/EC) includes a chronological list of MS indicating the order in which they are entitled to host the event until 2019. The preparation time involved for preparing each ECoC (currently 6 years) and the time needed for the ordinary legislative procedure means that the Commission's proposal for a continuation of the ECoC should be adopted in 2012 in order to ensure a smooth transition in 2020. The present CSWD summarizes the main results of DG EAC's reflection on the future of the ECoC.

1.2. Procedural issues, organisation and timing

The preparatory work for the new proposal started in mid-2010. A roadmap was submitted in November 2010 and the SG confirmed that no formal impact assessment was needed because the proposal concerned the continuation of an already existing action and the budgetary implications would be modest. Nevertheless, DG EAC decided to use many of the logical steps of an impact assessment in order to gather the needed evidence and to help in the choice of the best possible option for the future of the ECoC. The present CSWP also fulfils all the requirements of an ex-ante evaluation.

The preparation of the CSWD was followed by an inter-service group composed of SG, SJ, DG BUDG, DG EAC, DG ELARG, DG EMPL, DG ENTR, DG ENV, DG MARE and DG REGIO¹. The group met in January 2011 and April 2012 and the draft of the present document was discussed at the second meeting. The comments of the group were taken into account for the finalisation of the CSWD. DG DEVCO, DG RTD and ESTAT had asked to be kept informed about the various steps of the process.

1.3. Evaluations and external expertise

Decision 1622/2006/EC requires that from 2007 the Commission ensures the **external and independent evaluation of each ECoC**. So far the 2007-2010 Capitals were evaluated (the 2011 evaluation has been launched and will be finalised in June 2012). Previously the 1995 – 2004 ECoC had also been evaluated externally in a single report².

Many cities have carried out their **own evaluations** of the event (Glasgow 1990, Luxembourg 1995 and 2007, Graz 2003, Lille 2004, Cork 2005, Sibiu 2007, Stavanger 2008, Liverpool 2008, Essen für die Ruhr 2010, Istanbul 2010, Turku 2011...)³.

¹ A total of 25 DGs had been invited to participate.

² All these evaluations were published on DG EAC's website. They can be consulted at the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/evaluation-commissioned-by-the-eu_en.htm

³ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/evaluations-by-previous-capitals_en.htm

The Commission also commissioned an **evaluation of the selection and monitoring procedures** introduced by Decision 1622/2006/EC⁴. The provisions introduced by this Decision have been gradually phased in: the new monitoring provisions have applied so far for the 2010-2015 ECoC and the new selection provisions for the 2013-2017 ECoC. Therefore although a whole cycle governed by the new scheme will only be completed at the end of 2013, a reasonable body of knowledge has already been gained.

In addition to these various evaluations, the present CSWD also builds on consultancy services provided by Ecorys UK Ltd. Ecorys did in particular assist the Commission in the analysis of the contributions to the public consultation and provide additional expertise concerning the identification of the potential impacts of the ECoC, the comparison of the options and the definition of evaluation indicators.

1.4. Public consultation

An **online consultation** on the future of the ECoC took place between 27 October 2010 and 12 January 2011. The consultation was fully in line with the General Principles and Minimum Standards for Consultation of Interested Parties by the Commission⁵. The questionnaire posed both closed, as well as open questions. It was designed to build on the findings of the evaluations and invited the respondents to express their views on the relevance of the ECoC action, its objectives, the potential benefits for cities holding the title, the selection criteria and procedures, the duration of the event, the territory covered by the event, the participation of third countries, the accompanying measures aiming at helping the selected cities to organise a successful event and the visibility of the ECoC. The Commission received a total of 212 responses. The majority of respondents participated in the online consultation as private individuals (58 %). 30 % were representing organisations and 12 % public authorities.

The online consultation was followed by a **public meeting** which took place in Brussels on 2 March 2011 and was attended by more than 200 people including a large majority of representatives of public authorities and organisations. This meeting enabled the first results of the online consultation to be presented and discussed.

The analysis of the results of the online consultation, the received contributions and the summary of the public meeting were published on DG EAC's website⁶.

Important inputs in the reflection on the future of the ECoC were also provided by the own initiative report adopted by the Committee of the Regions in February 2012⁷ and by the 25th anniversary conference of the ECoC organised in Brussels in March 2010. This conference gathered more than 50 past, present and future Capitals or bidding cities and 500 participants and it focussed in particular on the potential

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ecoc_assignment_final_report_en.pdf

⁵ "Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue – General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission", COM(2002) 704 final.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/consultation-on-the-future-of-ecoc_en.htm

⁷ <http://coropinions.cor.europa.eu/COROpinions.aspx>

legacy of the title in cities and the evaluation processes and methodologies used and implemented by them⁸.

Finally, the Commission has been managing the ECoC action since 1999. This has enabled DG EAC to develop its own practical experience of the action and to hold regular discussions with past, present and future Capitals, candidate cities, selection panel members, MS, MEPs, etc...

It is important to note that on all the key issues there was a broad convergence between the evidence and data collected through the evaluations on the one hand and the views expressed during the consultation process, on the other hand. This enabled the Commission to draw a number of important lessons for the future of the ECoC which have served as the backbone for all the analytical steps.

2. CONTEXT AND PROBLEM DEFINITION

2.1. Historical and Policy context

With regard to the **historical context**, the ECoC have undergone many changes since their creation in 1985. They started as an intergovernmental initiative and the cities were simply designated by national governments in the Council of Ministers, without the involvement of external experts or any formal assessment.

They were transformed officially into an EU action in 1999 (Decision 1419/1999/EC) in order to make the initiative more effective. New criteria and selection procedures were established, a chronological list of MS was drawn up indicating the order in which they were entitled to host the event, and a European panel of independent cultural experts was created to assess the applications.

The rules were renewed in 2006 (Decision 1622/2006/EC) in order to develop the effectiveness of the event further by stimulating competition between the cities and fostering the quality of the bids. These new rules which will be described in great detail in the following section also introduced various measures to accompany the cities in their preparation, including a monitoring process.

There was a large consensus in the evaluations and during the consultation that over the years the ECoC have become one of the most ambitious cultural initiatives in Europe, both in scope and scale. They have also become one of the most visible and prestigious initiatives of the EU and one of the most appreciated by European citizens. As a result, there is also a very strong support for their continuation after 2019 (e.g. 91% of the respondents of the online consultation are in favour of the continuation and only 6% against).

Since their creation in 1985, the main objective of the ECoC has been to promote and celebrate the richness and diversity of European cultures, to stress the common bonds and to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens. Over the years, cities holding the ECoC title have progressively added a new dimension by using the leverage effect of the title to stimulate the city's more general development

⁸ The conclusions of the conference can be consulted at the following link:
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/conclusions_ecoc.pdf

and the ECoC are now frequently quoted as exemplary "laboratories" for strategic investment in culture at local and regional level.

In parallel to the evolution of the ECoC, there have also been important developments concerning the broader **policy context** for culture in recent years. In 2007 the Commission adopted its first real strategy for culture, "the European Agenda for Culture"⁹ which was recognised at the highest level by the European Council in its conclusions of December 2007. The Agenda has three strategic objectives: to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, to foster culture as a catalyst for creativity, and to promote the role of culture in international relations.

Furthermore, in accordance with the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, which entered into force in 2007 and which is part of the *acquis communautaire*, the EU has a moral and legal obligation to take action to promote and safeguard cultural diversity.

At a broader level, Europe 2020, the ten year growth strategy for the EU adopted in 2010, emphasises the importance of "creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship" which are central to the cultural sector.

2.2. Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a EU action for the ECoC for the years 2007-2019

Decision 1622/2006/EC lays down the rules for the ECoC until 2019. In accordance with the chronological list, each year two cities in two MS can hold the title. While under the former rules, the participation of European third countries was possible, the action has been limited to the MS in the present Decision as a result of the enlargement of the EU. The competition for the title is only open to cities, but these cities can decide to involve their surrounding regions. The title is not awarded for what a city is or its glorious past, but on the basis of a cultural programme created specifically for the ECoC.

One single general objective is laid down in the Decision: to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, and to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens. This objective is not developed into specific and operational objectives, however further indications about the aims of the action are given in the five criteria which must be fulfilled by candidate cities. These criteria seek to ensure the European dimension of the cultural programme, the participation of citizens and the integration of the programme in the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

The organisation of the competition in each respective MS is the responsibility of the MS concerned (the "managing authority"). It must publish a call for submission of applications to enable the participation of all interested cities.

The selection is carried out in two stages by a European panel of independent experts. 7 members in this panel are appointed by the European institutions and 6 by the MS concerned. During the pre-selection phase, the cities with the strongest bids

⁹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world (COM(2007) 242 final), 10.05.2007.

are short-listed and invited to flesh out and improve their applications on the basis of recommendations made by the panel. At the final selection stage, the panel then recommends the best candidate for the title. The formal designation is made by the Council of Ministers after consultation of the Parliament.

The monitoring procedure introduced by the 2006 decision aims to help the cities between their designation and the beginning of the year of the title (the preparation phase for a city lasts 4 years). This monitoring is carried out by the 7 "European" members of the panel of experts. If all the recommendations made by the panel in the final selection report and in the monitoring reports are implemented by a city, the Commission awards the "Melina Mercouri Prize" to the city. The amount of the Prize is currently 1.5 million €. The Melina Mercouri Prize must be paid three months before the beginning of the year of the title in principle.

The Commission ensures the external and independent evaluation of each ECoC in the year following the year of the title.

2.3. Main facts and figures about the ECoC

The following facts and figures draw mainly on the ECoC since 2007 which followed the entry into force of Decision 1622/2006/EC and which were therefore all covered by the new evaluation requirements mentioned above. On a few occasions, facts and figures from previous ECoC will also be mentioned when they bring an additional relevant insight.

Before starting the short enumeration, three remarks need to be made. First, it is important to keep in mind that the provisions of Decision 1622/2006/EC only phased in gradually as mentioned in section 1, and therefore the cities which will be mentioned in the present section were influenced to various degrees by the new selection or monitoring procedures. Second, while the Commission now systematically evaluates past Capitals, the cities themselves currently have no evaluation obligations and therefore the information collected by cities before, during and after the year of the title differs considerably and in many cases the Commission misses comparable data (this will be discussed in greater detail in section 2.4). Third, some of the most important benefits of ECoC such as for example the improved image of cities, their cultural vibrancy or the strengthened international outlook of residents are intangible and unquantifiable. However, despite these three factors, a number of interesting trends can be drawn.

Since 2007, very different types of cities have been awarded the title including capital cities (Luxembourg, Vilnius, Tallinn...), large former industrial centres (Liverpool, Essen für die Ruhr...) or smaller provincial cities (Sibiu, Linz, Pécs, Košice...). As a consequence the operating expenditures for the implementation of the cultural programme vary widely. They range from 16 million euro in Tallinn 2011 and 17 million euro in Sibiu 2007 at the lower end to 98 million euro in Marseille 2013 and 194 million euro in Istanbul 2010 at the higher end. To these operating expenditures, several cities have also decided to add significant capital investments to build or renovate infrastructures. These capital investments are not required from cities but can go up to 137 million euro as in Sibiu 2007 or 140 million euro in Pécs 2010. One of the main lessons of the ECoC is without any doubt that all ECoC, past, present or future, are different because Europe is diverse and all cities are different. The reason why cities bid for the title, their own long term objectives,

the way to prepare are all different and therefore the achievements are different. This is part of the reality and success of the concept.

Despite this great diversity, it emerges very clearly from the evaluations that ECoC have many potential benefits for all cities when they are planned with consideration. They remain first and foremost a cultural event, and must reflect our times and the way art is made and distributed; but they can also have significant social and economic benefits, particularly when the event is embedded as part of a long-term culture led development strategy in the city and its surrounding region. It should also be noted that although only one city in each MS can host the event in any given year, the competition has an important leverage effect on the development of new or more effective policies and strategies even in cities which do not win the title.

When well prepared, the ECoC can induce a number of immediate results which can be impressive. These results are first cultural: with the title the cultural activity in the city increases, new audiences are reached and the cultural operators acquire a more international outlook and thus improve their skills and professionalism. As an example, the 200 projects which took place in Linz in 2009 generated 7700 events involving 5000 artists. 1 million people attended a cultural event during Pécs 2010, 3.3 million during Luxembourg 2007, 10.5 million during Essen 2010 and 12 million during Istanbul 2010. 139 cross-border projects were implemented with partners from the Grande-Région in Luxembourg, 270 with neighbouring countries in Pécs and during Stavanger 2008, collaborations, co-productions and exchanges took place with 54 countries.

There are also social benefits: ECoC foster cohesion and intercultural dialogue through outreach programmes for young people, minorities, the disadvantaged or through volunteer programmes. All the children of all the schools of Liverpool participated in at least one activity in 2008 and 70% of the people in the city visited a museum or a gallery. 40% of Luxembourgish residents and nearly 60% of residents from the city itself visited a Capital-related event. Istanbul 2010 cooperated with 2500 schools. 74% of children were involved across the region in Stavanger. They were 9,894 registered volunteers in Liverpool, of whom 851 received a training, 1200 registered volunteers in Essen or Sibiu and 780 in Pécs.

The main economic benefits include the increase of tourism, regeneration and urban development, knock-on effects on other sectors or a stronger attention on the city at international level. The average increase of overnight stays upon the previous year for an ECoC is of 12%. This can go up to 20% as for Liverpool or even 27% as for Sibiu and Pécs (including an increase of 71% of foreign visitors). Liverpool estimated that visits motivated by the ECoC generated an additional economic impact of £ 753.8 million. Linz estimated additional regional GDP of 8.4 million euro. 12 000 press articles were written about Liverpool 2008 worldwide. 25 000 media reports mentioned Linz 2009.

But besides these immediate results, the ECoC are also a process of change for a city, its image, its cultural sector and its citizens, and these changes are expected to have positive effects for many years after the event actually takes place. The legacies of the ECoC were discussed at large during the 25 year anniversary conference¹⁰ and it emerged that there is a large variety of possible legacies. Some of them are material

¹⁰ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/conclusions_ecoc.pdf

and relatively easy to quantify. They include the many cultural infrastructures that were built or revamped for the ECoC and which live on after the event and better equip the city such as for example the Grande Rotonde in Luxembourg, the Arena built on the docks in Liverpool or the new centre for contemporary art in Stavanger. Some cities used the ECoC to regenerate former industrial areas and to transform them into new cultural or creative quarters such as the Zsolnay quarter in Pécs or the Zeche Zollverein in Essen. In Pécs, the ECoC was also at the origin of the building of the new highway which now links the city to Budapest.

The ECoC have also led to the creation of many new cultural events or festivals. Lille 3000 for example is a cultural season which takes now place every 2 or 3 years and is based on the same basic concept as Lille 2004. The Zinneke parade which is now held every two years was first created in the framework of Brussels 2000.

Hosting the event also leads to the creation of new organisations, structures and networks. One of the main objectives of Luxembourg 2007 was to increase cross-border cultural cooperation with its partners in the Grande-Région. Following the year a permanent structure was created to keep the momentum and continue the common work that was initiated. Essen für die Ruhr 2010 also led to the creation of a permanent framework for discussion and cultural cooperation between the 53 cities of the Ruhr.

Many other legacies of the ECoC are much harder to quantify and measure. This includes for example the image improvement, as in the case of Glasgow 1990, Lille 2004, Liverpool 2008 and many others. These cities all suffered in the past from economic crises which had a negative impact on their image. Being an ECoC has turned them into more attractive places which manifested itself for example in a continued increase in tourism. In a similar way, Cork 2005 is proud that the city has been named as one of the top 10 cities in the world to visit in 2010 by the Lonely Planet travel guide while a few years before hosting the title, the same guide published a rather negative review of the city. Sibiu 2007 and Pécs 2010 claim that the ECoC title helped to put their relatively small cities on the map.

This small sample of examples displays the wide variety of results and legacies that ECoC can achieve. Despite the great diversity of cities which held the title and the differences in their aims and preparation, all Capitals have achieved some benefits. At the same time, the evaluations have also shown that the ECoC are highly challenging and some Capitals have been less successful than others in capitalising on the potential of the event. Staging a year long programme of cultural events is extremely demanding. The main problems faced by cities will be analysed in the following section.

2.4. Identification of problems faced by the ECoC and their underlying drivers

The main challenge for the ECoC action after 2019 will be twofold. On the one hand, it is important to help each city to make the most of the title and to fully use the potential of the ECoC. On the other hand, to retain the strong "brand" value which the ECoC title acquired over the years, it will be essential to ensure that the action as a whole remains credible and relevant in the long term. To this end, the following five problems encountered by cities under Decision 1622/2006/EC will need to be tackled after 2019.

2.4.1. Problem n° 1: the lack of stability in the governance structures and in the budgets

The most common difficulty encountered by cities in their preparation phase has been the effect of national and local politics on the budgets, which need to be as stable as possible between the bidding and final stages, as well as the impact of politics on other aspects of the organisation of the event. Political support is fundamental as most of the funds are public, and without it a city cannot have a credible bid, but at the same time the implementing team needs its artistic independence to be respected in order to protect the credibility of the event.

The evaluation of Vilnius 2009 for example analyses all the changes that took place before 2009 and in the first half of the title year. First, the new government that took office after the general election at the end of 2008 faced a very large budget deficit and reduced the budget for the cultural programme by about 40%. Secondly, the total number of staff employed by the delivery agency was reduced by about one-half early in 2009. Thirdly, there were two changes of director of the delivery agency – the first in 2007 and the second early in 2009. The result of these changes was that some projects started much later than planned and a significant number of projects (previously selected following calls for proposals) did not take place at all. This created great frustration among the local cultural sector.

The evaluation of Pécs 2010 also shows that the numerous changes in the leadership of the key institutions, as well as in the individuals responsible for the development of the programme made the preparation challenging. When the situation finally stabilized towards the end of 2008, it was already too late to mobilize many of the cultural operators at local level and realise some of the original project ideas. Many of the planned infrastructure projects also had to be delayed and were inaugurated only in the final months of the year of the title (new library, new concert and conference venue) or even in the following year (Zsolnay cultural quarter). Other examples of cities which have suffered from important cuts in the budgets or changes in the implementing team in the final months before the start of the title year include Tallinn 2011 or Maribor 2012.

It may be argued that during a time of financial crisis, all cultural budgets and therefore the budgets of the ECoC are understandably under threat. But at the same time the financial crisis makes jobs in the cultural and creative sector – a sector with strong growth potential in a knowledge-based economy – all the more important in order to tackle current social and economic challenges. Furthermore, one of the most interesting lessons of the 25 year conference is precisely that many post-industrial cities such as Glasgow 1990, Lille 2004 or Liverpool 2008, which all suffered from a difficult economic transition, managed to fully use the potential of the ECoC to revive their cities and pave a new path for the future.

The lack of stability in the preparation phase always leads to reduced ambitions for the ECoC, delays in the implementation of the activities and frustrations among the population and therefore it weakens the potential impact of the title on the city and its citizens. Furthermore, the changes in the programme between the selection phase and the year of the title distort the competition as some Capitals implement in the end a programme which is much less ambitious than the one for which they were selected. This can create frustrations among the other cities which participated in the competition and were not retained for the title.

2.4.2. Problem n° 2: the limited European dimension

The ECoC are not the only culture-led regeneration strategy that can be used by a city. The opening of a new museum for example such as the Guggenheim in Bilbao or the Centre Pompidou in Metz can also trigger important social and economic benefits. However what gives the ECoC a very specific place is on the one hand its strong brand which provides an important opportunity for visibility at European and international level, and on the other its aim to increase mutual understanding among Europeans and bring them closer together. ECoC must therefore create a cultural programme with a strong European dimension. This European dimension usually entails three aspects: activities which highlight the cultural diversity of Europe, activities with content related to European themes, history and heritage, and activities fostering cooperation between artists and cultural operators from different European countries.

The evaluations have shown that in a lot of past Capitals this European dimension was not well understood and therefore remained too limited or at least insufficiently visible in their programmes. Sibiu 2007, Liverpool 2008 or Stavanger 2008 for example focussed mostly on cooperation activities and had very few activities highlighting the diversity of European Cultures or based on European themes. Furthermore, in the case of Liverpool or Stavanger, the cooperation activities were more international at large than truly European. In contrast in Sibiu a very large majority of the cooperation activities took place solely with the other ECoC of the year Luxembourg.

The question of the visibility of the EU is directly linked to the weak European dimension. In many ECoC such as Liverpool 2008 or Turku 2011 for example, there were very few references to the fact that the ECoC are an initiative of the EU in the communication material. Other cities such as Tallinn 2011 stopped using the logo of the Commission as soon as the Melina Mercouri prize had been paid (3 months before the beginning year of the title).

2.4.3. Problem n° 3: weak legacy planning

It clearly emerged from the 25 year anniversary conference which focused on the legacy of ECoC that legacy is far from automatic simply because a city holds the title. Indeed, it has to be planned, budgeted for and worked at well in advance. One of the main keys in ensuring long-term legacy is embedding the event as part of a long term cultural development strategy, designed itself within the long-term development of the city as a whole through synergies between culture and other areas. This point was also highlighted by the own initiative report of the Committee of the Regions.

Several of the past Capitals that were present at the anniversary conference acknowledged that in retrospect they had not done enough to forward plan for the period after the event and some, such as Cork 2005 for example, regretted not having budgeted for the year after the title. The various evaluations carried out after 2007 have also shown that the end of the title year typically leads to the disbanding of the delivery agency and the loss of precious experience. For example, in the case of Istanbul 2010 the law creating the ECoC delivery agency also set a firm timetable for its demise and no specific legacy plan for the overall ECoC was enacted. Other cities

such as Vilnius 2009 or Pécs 2010 have struggled or are still struggling to fully exploit the potential legacies of the event.

2.4.4. Problem n° 4: the lack of evaluation and comparable data

As already mentioned, since 2007, the Commission ensures the external and independent evaluation of each ECoC. These evaluations are carried out in the year following the title. It is important to note that their aim is to put single ECoC in a European context, enabling wider circulation of information, allowing for comparisons and drawing useful lessons for future ECoC. They cannot, however, provide primary data on the impact of the event and are based on data collected at a local level. Therefore it is essential that the Capitals themselves put in place measurement mechanisms. Cities are the first recipients and beneficiaries of the evaluation results and they should remain the key players in the evaluation process.

However, at the present stage the situation varies considerably from one city to another. Liverpool for example carried out a longitudinal evaluation called "impacts 08" which covers a period of nearly 10 years and analyses a wide variety of tangible and more intangible effects on the city. The Commission supported a project in the framework of the Culture Programme to transfer and adapt this model to the needs of other ECoC such as Essen für die Ruhr 2010, Turku 2011 or Marseille 2013¹¹. Many other cities have adopted a more modest approach and their evaluations have focussed mainly on quantitative indicators, targeting economic impacts in the city (Luxembourg 2007, Sibiu 2007, Stavanger 2008...). Some cities have carried out no own evaluation at all (Vilnius 2009, Pécs 2010...).

This disparity creates a very fragmented view on the impacts of the ECoC and it makes a real comparison between cities very difficult, which is harmful for the transfer of experience. Furthermore, the experience has shown that planning evaluation and evaluation tools well in advance helped many cities to clarify their vision of their strengths and weaknesses, to analyse what they could realistically strive to achieve through the ECoC title, and thus to refine their objectives, which helped them to improve the end result of the year.

2.4.5. Problem n° 5: the limited number of credible candidates in certain MS

The competition for the title introduced by Decision 1622/2006/EC has two main potential benefits. On the one hand, a tough contest stimulates the cities to put forward strong applications and to try to improve these applications throughout the process, in particular on the basis of the recommendations made by the panel of experts for the short-listed cities. On the other hand, cities like Bordeaux in France, Bremen in Germany or Zaragoza in Spain confirmed that the competition has an important leverage effect in all participating cities, even those which do not win the title.

In certain MS, the competition attracted a great number of participants: 15 in Spain and 11 in Poland for 2016, 9 in Slovakia and 8 in France for 2013. In others, the number of applications was much lower: only 1 in Belgium for 2015 and in Malta for 2018, 2 in Denmark for 2017, 3 in the Czech Republic for 2015 and Cyprus for 2017.

¹¹ European Capitals of Culture Policy Group (2009-2010), An international framework of good practice in research and delivery of the European Capital of Culture Programme.
http://ecocpolicygroup.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/ecoc-policy-group_research-framework1.pdf

This is probably linked to the fact that some MS have a far larger pool of realistic candidates than others. It should also be noted that several small or medium-sized MS have already hosted the ECoC title on several occasions such as for example Greece in 1985, 1997 and 2006, Belgium in 1993, 2000 and 2002, Portugal in 1994, 2001 and 2012, Luxembourg in 1995 and 2007 or Ireland in 1991 and 2005.

The current rules for the ECoC would make it politically very difficult for the panel to refuse to award the title to one city in each of the two MS concerned every year. Luckily, so far there was always at least one credible candidate in each competition, even those which did attract very few participants. However this may become a problem in the future and selecting weak candidates for the title would without any doubt risk damaging the prestige and brand value of the ECoC in the long term.

2.5. Baseline trends: how would the problem evolve, all things being equal?

If the ECoC continue in their current form after 2019, it is likely that a very diverse selection of cities would continue to be awarded the title. The size, scale and budget of cultural programmes would vary widely, reflecting the diversity of cities, as well as varying levels of political and corporate support. The impacts of the title would also continue to vary widely from city to city.

On the one hand, it is reasonable to assume that all ECoC would continue to have at least some of the cultural, social and economic benefits described in section 2.3. On the other hand, the problems described in section 2.4 would not be addressed and some cities would continue to struggle with the challenges of organising a successful ECoC and to fail to fully capitalise on the potential of the event.

Two main risks are linked to a simple continuation of the ECoC in their current form.

Firstly, there is the risk to have weak ECoC in certain years. So far, the European panel could always find at least one credible candidate in each MS, but this may not necessarily always continue to be the case. This is directly linked to the fact that, as mentioned before, some MS have a far larger pool of realistic candidates and a greater capacity to host an event of this scale on a regular basis than others, and by 2019 many small and medium sized countries will already have hosted the title several times. The risk of having a weak ECoC would also be directly linked to the fact that some cities would continue to suffer from instability in governance and from budget cuts between the designation and the year of the title, and therefore from reduced cultural programmes or investments and from delayed activities.

Secondly, there is the risk of damaging the prestige and the "brand" that were developed for the ECoC over the years. This second risk would be a direct consequence of having several weak ECoC in a row. This risk is also reinforced by the fact that in 2020 the ECoC title would be awarded for the 60th and 61st times. There is therefore a strong need for the designated cities to continue to demonstrate their excellence and capacity for innovation in order to avoid a banalisation of the title and a dilution of its prestige.

Such a loss of prestige and brand value would create an un-virtuous circle. The first consequence would be that fewer cities would be interested in participating in the competition for the title, which would diminish the intensity of the competition and thus generate weaker applications and as a result even weaker ECoC. The second

consequence would be a weaker interest of citizens and of local stakeholders in the event, as well as a weaker international visibility, which would considerably reduce the potential social and economic impact of the title on a city and its citizens.

2.6. Justification for EU intervention

The legal base for the ECoC can be found in article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This article gives the EU the mandate to "contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the MS, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore". The EU shall also encourage "cooperation between MS" in the field of culture and "if necessary, support and supplement their action".

The main level of action for the implementation of the ECoC remains at local and national level. However, the EU has an important role to play in the coordination between MS and in ensuring the application of common, clear and transparent criteria, as well as selection and monitoring procedures for the ECoC. The EU also supports the preparation of the selected cities through the recommendations of the European panel of experts, the exchange of best practices between cities and a financial contribution.

Past experience clearly shows that the transformation of the ECoC into an EU action in 1999 and the new rules adopted in 2006 have helped the initiative to take a qualitative step forward which would not have been possible with the previous intergovernmental arrangements. The options tested for the future of the ECoC after 2019 all keep the existing balance, while aiming at addressing some of the difficulties encountered by cities, at retaining the strong potential and brand value of the title and at ensuring that the ECoC action remains credible and relevant in the long term.

2.7. Complementarity to other EU policies and instruments

The ECoC are fully in line with the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy and the evaluations of past Capitals have shown indeed that they can make an important contribution to Europe 2020 and to several of its flagship initiatives such as the "Innovation Union" (in particular through capacity building in the cultural and creative sectors), "Youth on the move" (by stimulating the mobility of young cultural professionals or pre-professionals), "An industrial policy for the globalisation era" (by contributing to the competitiveness of the European tourism sector) and the European Platform against Poverty (by using the potential of the ECoC to reach out to the socially excluded). However, this could be greatly optimised by a more targeted approach in the proposal for the continuation of the ECoC after 2019.

They are also fully in line with the objectives of the European Agenda for Culture and of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions such as described in section 2.1. The ECoC are now frequently quoted as exemplary "laboratories" for culture-led development strategies and they can therefore provide a significant input in EU culture policy in particular by providing models of good practice which can be transferred in different contexts.

Since they became a formal action of the EU, the ECoC have received funding from the EU's Culture Programme. Special attention will therefore need to be given to

carefully link the objectives of the ECoC post 2019 to the objectives of the new Creative Europe Programme which will replace Culture as from 2014, i.e. to foster the safeguarding and promotion of European cultural and linguistic diversity and to strengthen the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors with a view to promoting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. It should be noted that while the objectives of Creative Europe and the ECoC are close, the mechanisms used to pursue these objectives are very different and complementary. Creative Europe will indeed mainly co-finance cooperation activities involving partners from different countries and guarantee bank loans to the cultural and creative sector, and the past experience has shown that in addition to the Melina Mercouri Prize many past Capitals have made use of the calls for proposals of the Culture Programme to co-finance their transnational cooperation activities.

Evaluations have also shown that the ECoC have the potential to be reinforced by and add value to investments made by the European Structural Funds. In Pécs 2010 for example, 120 Million € were invested by the ERDF in projects directly linked to the ECoC title such as the construction of the new Library, the new concert and conference venue, the development of the brownfield site of the Zsolnay ceramic factory and its reconversion to a Cultural district or the regeneration of the city's main public places and green spaces¹². Linked to the public investments, several private hotels also decided to upgrade their facilities with the help of the ERDF. In Essen für die Ruhr 2010, 50 million € were invested by the ERDF in particular for the transformation of the Zeche Zollverein in a creative quarter which is now considered as a model of good practice for the contribution of culture to local and regional development. Liverpool 2008 has also benefited from important ERDF investments and was invited as one of the key contributors to DG REGIO's 2009 "Regions for economic change" conference in order to transfer its experience.

Finally, it is important to mention the European Green Capitals implemented by DG ENV, as well as the European Youth Capitals which were launched by the European Youth Forum and which can benefit from a financial support from DG EAC's Youth in Action programme¹³. Both were created in recent years and influenced by the success of the ECoC, however they are still in their beginnings and at this stage their scope and scale, as well as their prestige and visibility are far from those reached by the ECoC. The Green Capitals recognise and reward cities which have a consistent record of high environmental standards, which are committed to further environmental improvement and sustainable development, and which can act as a role model to inspire other European cities. While the objectives of the Green Capitals and of the ECoC are very different there is a potential for synergies which the two DGs are starting to explore.. On their side, the Youth Capitals encourage cities to showcase their youth related social, cultural, political and economic life and development. The overlap remains very limited as on the one hand culture is just a small part of the programmes implemented by the Youth Capitals and on the other hand the ECoC aim at reaching the widest possible range of citizens and not only young people.

¹² The new highway between Pécs and Budapest mentioned above was built in the framework of a public-private partnership without a contribution from the ERDF or the Cohesion Fund, but the EIB was part of the support scheme.

¹³ The European Youth Capitals are a civil society initiative and the EU is not involved in the selection or designation procedures. However, the candidate cities are encouraged to participate in the call for proposals of the Youth in Action programme in order to co-finance some of their activities. This helps to foster the European dimension of the Youth Capitals.

3. OBJECTIVES

On the basis of the evaluations and of the consultation, it appears very clearly that the ECoC after 2019 will have to keep the general spirit of the current action and to build on the strengths that have enabled past Capitals to reach many significant benefits. At the same time, it is important to tackle the problems which have emerged and made it difficult for some cities to optimise the title. It is also important to limit the risks linked to a simple continuation of the ECoC in their current form.

The objectives for the ECoC post 2019 which are presented in table n°1 below build therefore both on the current objective and criteria of the ECoC described in section 2.2 and on the results of the evaluations and the consultation. A special attention was given to better reflect the contribution culture can make to stimulate the cities' more general development in line with the evolution of the ECoC over the years. This will also strengthen the relevance of the action to the Europe 2020 strategy. The new objectives give a clearer steer to candidate cities about the common goals to be achieved at EU level while at the same time leaving some room to the cities to develop their own vision of the event and to define the local goals they want to achieve through the title.

As the problems described in section 2.4 are technical problems linked to the implementation of the action, they will be tackled mainly at the level of operational objectives. These operational objectives are divided in two categories. First, the objectives to be achieved at city level by each ECoC through their cultural programmes for the year, as well as through their longer-term strategies for cultural development. Second, the objectives to be achieved at EU level through the operation of the selection and monitoring procedures. In both categories, several operational objectives aim at perpetuating the current strengths of the ECoC, while others aim at addressing the problems identified in section 2.4 (each of the 5 problems can thus be linked to one or several of the operational objectives).

Table n°1: Objectives for the ECoC post 2019

General objectives								
to safeguard and promote the diversity of European cultures, and to highlight the common features they share		to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities						
Specific objectives								
to enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation		to widen access to and participation in culture		to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its connectivity with other sectors		to improve the international profile of cities through culture		
Operational objectives – at city level								
to stimulate extensive cultural programmes of high artistic quality	to ensure cultural programmes feature a strong European dimension and transnational co-operation	to involve a wide range of citizens and stakeholders in preparing and implementing the cultural programme	to create new opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events	to improve cultural infrastructure	to develop the skills, capacity and governance of the cultural sector	to stimulate partnerships and co-operation with other sectors	to promote the city and its cultural programme	to improve the international outlook of residents
Operational objectives – at EU level								
to ensure geographical balance in the location of ECoC to ensure the selection of credible candidates to ensure cities put in place effective governance and stable budgets to strengthen the accompanying measures and the evaluation								

4. POLICY OPTIONS

A wide range of options were considered for the ECoC post 2019 including all the suggestions raised by stakeholders or external experts. These options were then narrowed down through an initial screening taking into account the results of the evaluations and the public consultation, as well as the technical constraints of the ECoC and their feasibility. As a result the following three options were retained for further analysis. One of these options contained two sub-options:

Table n° 2: Analysed policy options

Option	Summary
1. No change (baseline)	The ECoC continue with an identical legal base to the current Decision to which a new chronological list of MS is annexed
2. No action	The ECoC stop after 2019
3. Revised legal base	<p>The ECoC continue with a new legal base which addresses the problems encountered with the current Decision.</p> <p>Sub-option a: a new chronological list of MS is annexed</p> <p>Sub-option b: the title is awarded on the basis of an open competition</p>

4.1. Discarded options

A very large consensus emerged from the evaluations and consultation that the ECoC are a well-established and successful initiative which still has a very strong potential for the future, and that no radical change to the concept was needed. All the options retained for further analysis therefore build on a certain degree of continuity in the approach and we focussed mainly on examining the best ways to keep the strong brand value of the ECoC and to help all cities to optimise the title.

One of the keys of the success of the ECoC is the simplicity of the concept. This simplicity is what makes the Capitals so attractive for the media across Europe, and through this channel also for all European citizens. The straightforwardness of the concept also greatly contributes to the strong symbolic value of the ECoC. All options suggested by stakeholders which would have over-complicated the ECoC were therefore discarded, such as for example having three distinct competitions in parallel every year according to the size or the population of a city.

For similar reasons, we have also rejected the idea of having every year one large scale ECoC selected through an open competition, accompanied by a small number of "European Cultural Seasons" or "Months" (a shorter and lighter version of the ECoC for smaller MS), which would have rotated in chronological order among MS. It became clear very quickly that this solution would have created a lot of confusion

and frustration. First, the new Seasons or Months would not have been considered as attractive enough by a majority of smaller MS compared to the fully fledged ECoC. Second, it would have taken a lot of time and investment to develop them into a strong brand and they would probably not have been sufficiently distinctive from many large scale existing festivals. Third, they could have diluted and undermined the interest in and the prestige of the fully fledged ECoC.

We have rejected all options which would have been binding over a too long period of time. For example, having only one Capital per year and a chronological list of 28 MS¹⁴ would have implied being bound from 2020 to 2047 without any possibility to make a significant change in the legal base for reasons of equal treatment between the MS. The same would have been true in the case of two Capitals per year with one selected through an open competition and one on the basis of a chronological list of MS as suggested by some stakeholders. In addition, this second option would also have created a risk of confusion as mentioned above.

We have discarded the possibility to award the title to metropolitan areas or regions and decided that the ECoC title should continue to be reserved to cities as is currently the case (these cities have however the possibility to involve their surrounding regions). Initially, the opinions were divided on this issue during the online consultation and the public meeting. It came out very clearly however that there is no consensus on the definition of what a region or a metropolitan area is as MS administrative structures are so different. Those participants who were in favour of the opening of the ECoC to regions stressed that this should not apply to "administrative" regions but to areas which share a common history, identity or project. Most agreed that such a vague definition would make it very difficult to have clear and transparent rules and criteria. Several past and future ECoC also underlined based on their own experience that governance is already a serious challenge and that the risk would be multiplied (which is confirmed by the Commission's day to day management of the action). They insisted on the fact that the clear leadership of one city is a key success factor. As a consequence, many participants recognised that it would probably be wiser to continue with the current rule. This issue was also discussed at length by the Committee of the Regions which reached the same conclusion in its own initiative report.

Another discarded option, was awarding the title exclusively to clusters of cities from different countries in order to foster cross-border co-operation between these cities. The main risk here would have been to duplicate the activities already covered by the Creative Europe Programme. Furthermore, all cities applying for the title are pursuing their own local policy objectives which are deeply rooted in the local cultural, social and economic context. Indeed, the evaluations have shown that in order to be successful, Capitals must stay authentic and build on their strengths, draw on their past, on all their communities, while looking to the future. Articulating a clear and coherent vision which goes beyond the simple accumulation of co-operation projects would have been inaccessible for most transnational clusters. Finally, as seen above, the challenge of putting in place effective governance structures would be multiplied in the case of transnational clusters thus increasing the risk of failure.

¹⁴ Subject to the accession of Croatia in 2013.

While screening the possible scenarios for an open competition, we have rejected the idea of a cap in the number of candidates per country and of a pre-selection at national level. Such a national pre-selection would indeed have resembled the discontinued system for the Capitals between 2005 and 2010 when MS put forward one or more applicants to a European panel. The disadvantages would have been the danger of a much weaker European dimension due to a purely national pre-selection and the difficulty of ensuring genuine competition at national level and equal treatment for all cities. From the experience of the Commission, this would not have optimised quality, transparency and fairness.

We have discarded all options which would have implied a large increase of the amount of the Melina Mercouri Prize. First, evaluations have shown that the Melina Mercouri Prize has acquired a strong symbolic value which goes far beyond the actual amount of the Prize, that the ECoC title in itself has an important leverage effect for cities and that therefore the amount of the Prize does not have a significant influence on the decision to apply for the ECoC. Second, a large number of cities holding the title have also received EU funding from other sources, notably the European Structural Funds which have supported many associated infrastructure developments. Third, in the current financial context a large increase in the amount of the Melina Mercouri Prize would only have been possible within the envelope of the Creative Europe Programme, and thus at the expense of all the other cultural projects for which Creative Europe was designed.

Finally, we have rejected the option to outsource the implementation of the ECoC to the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) or to another external body. The day to day management of the selection and monitoring procedures for the ECoC is very different from the management of grants which is the core task of the EACEA. The experience has also shown that the operation of these procedures was often highly sensitive and that it implied numerous high level political contacts with the local, regional and national authorities. Furthermore, there is a very strong interest in the ECoC from the media which generates a very high number of contacts with the press and of requests from the Spokesperson Service. In both cases, the Commission is much better placed to pass the appropriate political messages. Outsourcing the implementation would generate no economies of scale. On the contrary, keeping the practical dimension and political dimension of the ECoC in the same hands would keep the procedures much lighter and more flexible.

4.2. Options retained for analysis

4.2.1. Option 1 "No change" (the baseline)

The "No change" option would require the European Parliament and the Council to adopt a new legal base which is identical to the current one (Decision 1622/2006/EC – see section 2.2), except for a new chronological list of MS entitled to host the title. For reasons of equal treatment between the MS this list would have to run until 2033 at least on the basis of 28 MS or more if new MS join the EU in the meantime. This is the baseline option against which the other options are tested.

4.2.2. Option 2 "No action"

In the absence of any action by the EU, Decision 1622/2006/EC would lapse and the ECoC title would no longer be awarded after 2019.

4.2.3. Option 3 "Revised legal base"

Under this option (which includes sub-options 3a and 3b as explained below) the European Parliament and the Council would need to adopt a new Decision which addresses the problems described in section 2.4.

On the basis of the results of the evaluations and of the consultation, the main features and the general structure of the current Decision would be kept:

- The title would continue to be reserved to cities which may decide to involve their surrounding region.
- The attribution of the title would continue to be based on a cultural programme created specifically for the ECoC year in order to ensure the strong European dimension of the event.
- The current two stage selection process carried out by a European panel of independent experts would be kept. This process was generally held to be fair and transparent. It has also increased the general interest in the ECoC, generated a high number of applications and enabled cities to improve their applications between the pre-selection and the final selection phase on the basis of expert advice received from the panel.
- There was also a large consensus that the title should continue to be awarded for a full year to keep it distinctive and ambitious.

The main improvements that would be introduced in the legal base would be the following:

- The evaluations and the consultation have clearly shown that while the current selection criteria are still considered as fully relevant, they could benefit from some adjustments. On the one hand, they would need to be made more explicit in order to give more guidance to the candidate cities and more measurable in order to help the panel of experts in the selection and monitoring of cities. On the other hand, the so-called "unwritten criteria" (capacity of the city to hold the title, budgetary guarantees, governance, independence of the artistic team...) which are not mentioned in the current legal base (although mentioned in the Guide for bidding cities), but already taken into account by the selection panel need to be clearly written down in the new proposal. The criteria would also gain to be aligned more closely to the revised objectives of the ECoC laid down in section 3 and to pay a special attention to the problems described in section 2.4.

Therefore, with option 3 the legal base would introduce a new set of criteria which would be divided into six categories:

- "long-term strategy": this category would ensure that the applications are embedded in a long term strategy for cultural development including inter-alia the plans for cultural governance and sustaining cultural activities beyond the year of the title, the plans for strengthening the capacity of the cultural sector and for building sustainable partnerships with the economic and social sectors, and the plans for the monitoring

and evaluation of the title. It would thus contribute to tackling problems n° 3 and 4.

- "capacity to deliver": this category would ensure that the applications benefit from cross-party political support, and that the cities would have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title. It would thus contribute to tackling problems n°1 and 5.
 - "cultural and artistic content": this category would ensure a clear and coherent artistic vision for the cultural programme of the year, the range and diversity of cultural activities, their overall artistic quality, as well as the involvement of local artists and cultural organisations. It would thus build on the best practices noted under the current scheme.
 - "European dimension": this category would ensure the scope and quality of the activities promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, of the activities highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, and of the activities based on trans-national co-operation and partnerships. It would thus contribute to tackling problem n°2.
 - "outreach": this category would ensure the involvement of the local populations and civil society in the preparation and implementation of the ECoC, the access of a wide range of citizens to cultural activities and a clear strategy for audience development. It would thus build on the best practices noted under the current scheme.
 - "management": this category would ensure the credibility of the budgets, the stability of the governance structures, the independence of the artistic teams and comprehensive communication strategies highlighting that the ECoC are a EU initiative. It would thus contribute to tackling problems n° 1 and 2.
- It would be stated explicitly in the Decision that there is no obligation to award the title in a given year if none of the applications fulfils the criteria.
 - There was a very large consensus in the evaluations and in the consultation that the accompanying measures which support cities during the four year preparation period after winning the title were the main step forward brought by Decision 1622/2006/EC and that they have been very useful for cities. There was strong support for these measures to be continued and further developed. Therefore, with option 3 the revised legal base would introduce an additional monitoring meeting, the visits to the cities by panel members would be made more systematic and the exchange of experience and best practices between past, present and future Capitals, as well as candidate cities would be reinforced through regular seminars.
 - Providing EU funding in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize as has been the case as from the 2010 Capitals rather than a traditional grant as before has been welcomed due to the reduced administrative burden and increased flexibility in the use of funding. However, new, stronger conditionality criteria would be introduced for the payment of the Prize, making the grounds on which the Commission can refuse this payment much clearer. No substantial

changes to the cultural programme and the long-term strategy would be allowed between the bidding stage and the year of the title. Special attention would be given to the stability of the budget, the independence of the artistic team, the European dimension of the cultural programme, the communication strategy (including the due references to the EU) and the plans for monitoring and evaluation. Furthermore, the Prize would no longer be paid three months before the beginning of the year of the title, but during the middle of the year itself in order to be certain that cities keep to their commitments. This would also be fully in line with one of the main recommendations from the evaluations which suggested requiring cities to develop their applications and programmes without including the Prize in their budgets. Whenever attributed, the money of the Prize could be used to enlarge the scope of some of the activities of the second semester of the year or to finance legacy activities in the years following the year of the title.

- There is a strong demand from third countries to open up the ECoC again to the participation of non MS from 2020, as was the case until 2010. 25 % of the responses to the online consultation came from non MS. Important delegations also participated in the public meeting. Furthermore, the experience of recent years (e.g. Sibiu 2007, Istanbul 2010) demonstrated that the participation of candidate countries can contribute to bring them closer to the Union by highlighting the common aspects of European cultures. It can thus be beneficial both for these countries and the Union. Therefore, the new legal base would open again the ECoC to the participation of candidate and potential candidate countries.
- Finally, in line with article 291 of the TFUE, and taking into account the precedent of the European Heritage Label in 2011, the official designation of the ECoC formalising the recommendations made by the European panel would be made by the Commission and no longer by the Council.

4.2.3.1. Sub-option 3a "Revised legal base with a chronological list of MS"

With sub-option 3a, a new chronological list of two MS entitled to host the title every year would be included in the legal base as for option 2. For reasons of equal treatment between the MS this list would have to run until 2033 at least on the basis of 28 MS, or more if new MS join the EU in the meantime.

However, in parallel to the competition in the two MS, an open competition would be organised for candidate countries or potential candidates every third year. This competition would be open to cities in all the countries concerned, provided that these countries participate in the Creative Europe Programme or in the subsequent EU programmes supporting culture at the date of the beginning of the competition. A maximum of one city in one candidate country or potential candidate could be awarded the title. For reasons of equity with MS, each candidate country or potential candidate country would only be allowed to host the title once during the period from 2020 to 2033.

With this sub-option, we would thus have a maximum of two Capitals every "regular" year and a maximum of three Capitals every third year, taking into account that the European panel has no obligation to recommend a city if there are no

credible candidates in a specific MS or among candidate and potential candidate countries.

4.2.3.2. Sub-option 3b "Revised legal base with an open competition"

With sub-option 3b, the ECoC title would be awarded to a maximum of two cities every year on the basis of an open competition. This competition would be accessible to cities in all the MS, candidate countries and potential candidates.

However, in order to limit the risk that the title would be awarded exclusively in the few bigger and wealthier countries, a country which has been awarded the title would not be allowed to participate in the competition again before 9 years. Thus on the basis of 36 countries (28 MS + 4 candidates + 4 potential candidates), the competition would be open only to a maximum of 18 countries every year.

The managing authority for the competition would be the Commission and all cities in the countries concerned would have the possibility to submit their applications directly to the European panel.

5. ANALYSIS OF IMPACTS

In identifying and analysing the likely impacts of the options, we were able to draw on the evidence gathered from the various evaluations, the conclusions of the 25 year anniversary conference and the public consultation. It is however important to keep two factors in mind. These two factors were discussed more in detail in section 2:

- All ECoC are different because all cities are different. With all of the options, the local circumstances would continue to deeply influence the priorities each city sets for itself and the volume of the impacts that can realistically be achieved.
- Many of the most important benefits of the ECoC are intangible and unquantifiable and cannot therefore be monetised. This is amplified by the fact that there is still a lack of collection of primary data by the cities themselves which creates a fragmented view and makes comparisons difficult.

For these reasons, we have adopted a multi-criteria analysis approach in order to examine the impacts of each option. This approach mixes qualitative and quantitative data, takes into account the varying degrees of certainty of the impacts, and puts the emphasis on the causal chains that would generate the advantages and disadvantages of each option rather than attempting to isolate the impact of the ECoC on particular variables.

The analysis of impacts is based on the proposed options compared to the baseline. Table n°3 below summarizes the main areas of cultural, economic, social and environmental impacts that were examined.

Table n° 3: Main areas of cultural, economic, social and environmental impacts

Areas of cultural impacts	Areas of economic impacts	Areas of social impacts	Areas of environmental
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			impacts
Cultural programmes of large scale & high artistic quality Promotion of European cultural diversity Promotion of the European dimension of and through culture International partnerships, exchanges & networking Improved cultural governance Sustainable cultural legacy	Improved infrastructure and facilities Strengthened capacity of the cultural and creative sectors Increased connectivity between the cultural, economic and social sectors Stronger international profile and image of the city Increased tourism	Wide range of citizens and stakeholders involved in preparation & implementation of the ECoC Citizens' sustainable attendance or participation in cultural events (especially young people, minorities or the disadvantaged) Greater profile for cultures of minorities and marginalised groups Increased volunteering Stronger international outlook of residents Improved perception of the city by residents	Contribution to global climate change / Change in CO2 emissions Improvements in the urban environment

Before examining each option in greater detail, it should be pointed out that none of these options would infringe the fundamental rights of citizens as defined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. On the contrary, the cultural programmes of the ECoC could in certain cases contribute to a greater awareness of and empathy for fundamental rights. As options 3a and 3b would strengthen these cultural programmes through improved selection criteria and reinforced accompanying measures, they could have positive effects in this regard which would be greater than under the baseline, however these effects would remain marginal.

The environmental impacts should also not be overplayed, but they have been assessed for all the options. On the one hand, there is the negative impact of the change in CO2 emissions which is directly linked to the success of a Capital: the more a Capital is successful, the more it attracts visitors and stimulates the mobility of cultural operators, and the more it risks generating additional CO2 emissions due to transport. Options 3a and 3b with stronger cultural programmes might have slightly stronger impacts here. On the other hand, in many cases the ECoC have stimulated improvements to the physical environment of cities through the renovation of neighbourhoods or the refurbishment of city parks or public spaces. Furthermore, candidate cities start to take into consideration issues such as eco-innovation for newly built or renovated infrastructure, local mobility and transport or waste production and management in their applications. Encouraging these positive impacts would enable to cancel out the potential negative impacts mentioned above or even ideally to leave a positive environmental legacy in the city, even if, all in all, the global impact on environment would remain marginal. Here again, the impacts (positive this time) might be slightly higher with options 3a and 3b. The various cultural, economic, social and environmental impacts of each option are scored in table 6 in the annex.

5.1. Option 1 "No change" (the baseline)

The "no change" scenario was described in detail in section 2. With this scenario, the impacts of the title would continue to vary widely from city to city. On the one hand, each city would continue to have at least some of the benefits described in section 2.3. On the other hand, the problems and the risks described in section 2.4 and 2.5 would not be addressed and some cities would continue to fail to fully capitalize on the potential of the title.

It should also be noted that for reasons of equal treatment between the MS, the new chronological list of MS would fix the system up to at least 2033 with no possibility to make significant changes to the scheme.

Cultural impacts

The scale and quality of the cultural programme would continue to vary widely from one city to another and to be endangered by the lack of stability in the governance structures and in the budgets. The European dimension of the cultural programme would remain limited in many ECoC. The sustainability of the effects such as the improved cultural governance and the increased cultural activity after the year of the title would also differ from city to city and be endangered in a number of cases by the weak legacy planning.

Economic impacts

The economic impacts would also continue to vary considerably from one ECoC to another. All Capitals would probably benefit at least to a certain degree from improved infrastructure and increased tourism. Strengthened capacity of the sector and increased connectivity with other sectors would continue to be directly linked to the quality of the long-term strategy of the city and its legacy planning. The improved image would continue to depend on the overall level of success of each ECoC.

Social impacts

The same disparity would also perpetuate concerning the social impacts, with some ECoC putting in place ambitious schemes to involve citizens in the preparation and implementation of the event or to improve the access of residents including young people, minorities or the disadvantaged to culture, while others would continue to miss the opportunities provided by the title.

5.2. Option 2 "No action"

Without action from the EU, the ECoC would stop after 2019 as there is a very low probability that MS would come back to the intergovernmental arrangements which existed until 1999 and which on the basis of the various evaluations proved to be much less successful than the current EU action. There is also a very low probability that a private body would have the capacity to step in. Without a strong commitment of the EU and of the MS, such a private initiative would lack legitimacy and the recent attempts to launch Cultural Capitals initiatives on other continents have clearly shown that it is very difficult to attract the interest of cities and citizens.

Cultural impacts

In the absence of ECoC, there would be a loss of all the positive cultural impacts described in section 2.3. Any city would be free to invest its own resources in implementing a one-off cultural programme of large scale and high artistic quality. However, in the absence of ECoC status, cities would be less likely to place as much emphasis on the European dimension of culture. Moreover, such programmes would not benefit from the brand value associated with the ECoC. In particular, cities that are newly emerging as cultural destinations – or aspiring to such status – would struggle to gain the same prestige and profile that they currently gain from ECoC status. At the European level, there would be a loss of cultural diversity, as the European cultural “scene” would be even further dominated by larger, already well-established cultural centres rather than showcasing the cultures of all 28 MS.

Economic impacts

The “no action” option would constitute a lost opportunity for the positive economic impacts described in the baseline scenario, such as the contribution to economic growth generated by the increased number of cultural activities or the increased number of visitors and tourists, or such as the improved international profile and image of a city. In the absence of ECoC, less impetus would be given to investments in cultural and other infrastructure. An opportunity would also be lost to help strengthen the capacity of cities’ cultural and creative sectors in terms of greater skills, experience and international contacts or to increase the connectivity between the cultural sector and other sectors.

Social impacts

The “no action” option would constitute a lost opportunity for the positive social impacts experienced by ECoC to date. In particular, fewer opportunities would be created to widen participation in cultural events and access to cultural resources or to introduce new outreach activities for young people, the marginalised and disadvantaged (such as ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities, the elderly). The cultures of minorities and marginalised communities would be given less prominence within cities and at European level. Wider social impacts associated with the ECoC would also be lost, such as for example new job creation linked to the title or impetus given to dialogue between cultural operators in different MS or between cultural operators in MS and third countries.

5.3. Sub-option 3a "Revised legal base with a chronological list of MS"

Option 3a would keep the essence of the current ECoC action and the title would continue to be awarded to a wide variety of cities all over the EU. As a result, the size and scope of the impacts would also continue to vary widely. However, the changes made in the legal base would help to reduce the difficulties encountered by cities in their preparation and thus would help all the ECoC to make the most out of the potential of the title in accordance with their own local context. With this option, the risks to have weak ECoC in certain years and thus to damage the prestige and the “brand” value of the title in the longer-term would also be significantly reduced.

Cultural impacts

Thanks to the greater stability in the governance structures and in the budgets, as well as the greater independence of the artistic teams, and thanks to the reinforced

legacy planning which would result from the revised legal base, there would be a much stronger guarantee that each ECoC would have a cultural programme of large scale and high artistic quality and with a strong European dimension.

Economic impacts

As a direct result of having stronger cultural programmes, the ECoC would be able to attract even more tourists and to increase even further the international profile and the image of the city. This would strengthen the contribution of the ECoC to the local and regional GDP. Furthermore, the obligation to embed the title in a long-term strategy would enable to reinforce the skills and experience of the cultural and creative sectors, as well as the connectivity with the economic and social sectors, and thus to multiply the spill-over effects.

Social impacts

As noted in the baseline scenario, the ECoC to date have demonstrated a high degree of success in widening the participation of citizens in culture, including those that would not normally participate. With option 3a, the ECoC could be expected to continue to foster new approaches to participation, increase attendance at events, involve more school children in culture, offer a greater profile for the cultures of minorities and marginalised groups, enhance access to culture for disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities, and increase volunteering in the cultural sector. However, the improvements made to the processes might serve to make these positive impacts more certain to be achieved, for example, by making the funding or governance of ECoC more reliable.

5.4. Sub-option 3b "Revised legal base with an open competition"

Option 3b would introduce the same changes in the legal base as option 3a, and therefore similar improvements compared to the baseline scenario could be expected. The only difference with option 3a, is that option 3b would introduce a form of open competition for the title instead of the current rotation between the MS based on a chronological list.

Past experience, especially in the larger MS, shows us that the likely outcome of an open competition would be a very high number of applications in total, even if the competition is limited to 18 countries every year (for example 17 cities competed in Germany for the 2010 title, 15 in Spain for the 2016 title, 12 in the UK for the 2008 title, 11 in Poland for the 2016 title...). This fierce competition would probably raise the overall quality and size of the applications and, as a result, only the very best candidates would be awarded the title every year. This would raise even further the credibility and prestige of the title and would ensure its brand value in the long-term. However, at the same time the candidates are also likely to be dominated by big cities from the larger (and often wealthier) MS, many of whom would have the proven capacity to organise such a large scale event. A scattering of ambitious but smaller cities with probably less capacity might also apply, particularly from the new MS, but these would most probably struggle to compete with the larger cities.

Cultural impacts

Although ECoC selected via an open competition at European level might be larger than those selected via competitions at MS level, the evidence from the evaluations suggests that they would be no different in essence: the nature of their objectives and activities would be the same, merely different in scale. For that reason, their effects would most probably be towards the top end of the range of effects described in section 2.3. The average level of operating expenditure per ECoC would probably be between 70 million € as in Linz 2009 or Essen für die Ruhr 2010 and 100 million € as in Marseille 2013. The number of activities would be around 7000 as in Graz 2003, Liverpool 2008 or Linz 2009. The total audience would often exceed 10 million people as in Liverpool 2008, Essen für die Ruhr 2010 or Istanbul 2010.

As with option 3a, the new legal base would ensure that the title is embedded in a long-term strategy and that the cultural programme has a strong European dimension. Option 3b would however have a serious disadvantage concerning the promotion of the cultural diversity of Europe. While options 1 and 3a would give each MS an equal opportunity to have a ECoC during the period from 2020 to 2033, with option 3b it is much more likely that the title would be mostly awarded to bigger cities in the larger and wealthier MS as already mentioned above. As a result, while several MS would host the title on a regular basis and on a shorter interval than is currently the case, others would have no Capital at all and would thus lose an opportunity to highlight their contribution to European culture. The ECoC action as a whole would also no longer be in a position to present the full diversity of European national (and regional) cultures. Linked to this, there would also be the risk of a gradual waning in media interest in those MS not hosting a successful applicant over several years, with citizens thus becoming unaware of or much less interested in the ECoC. This would represent a lost opportunity to strengthen the sense of belonging to a common cultural area.

Economic impacts

As with Option 3a, the stronger requirements for cities to put in place a long-term strategy for cultural development and to keep stable governance structures and budgets would raise the probability that all ECoC would improve their infrastructure, strengthen the capacity of their cultural and creative sectors and increase the connectivity to other sectors. The higher quality of the cultural programmes would also contribute to improve the cities' image and international profile.

In addition, with a selection through an open competition, a majority of ECoC would be bigger than those selected through a rotation between MS and their cultural programmes would be larger. As a result, the direct and indirect economic impacts would also probably be larger in volume. However, at the same time these impacts might represent less when considered in relative terms. For example, the percentage increase in tourism for large cities that already enjoy high international profile might be less than for relatively unknown, but aspiring "newcomers" that are more likely to be located in new or small MS. For example, both Sibiu 2007 and Pécs 2010 enjoyed increases in tourist visits of around 27%, far greater than the average increase of 12%. Recent experience has also shown that in the case of very big cities like Istanbul 2010 for example, the ECoC is diluted in the overall cultural offer of the city with a risk of a weaker awareness among residents and visitors and a weaker visibility for the title in itself. Furthermore, there is an important risk with option 3b that the ECoC might reinforce the existing territorial imbalances in the economic benefits linked to culture and cultural tourism.

Social impacts

Here again, as with option 3a, the improvements made to the legal base might serve to make the positive social impacts described in section 2.3 more certain to be achieved, *inter alia* by making the funding or governance of ECoC more reliable.

Since ECoC selected via an open competition might be more likely to be big cities from the large MS, their social impacts might be higher in volume per ECoC, e.g. number of school-children involved. However, those impacts would be much less likely to occur across all 28 MS and therefore also less likely to occur where they are most needed, i.e. in cities that are less well-established as cultural centres and where new approaches to participation, the involvement of school children in culture, volunteering in the cultural sector or the profile for the cultures of minorities or marginalised groups are much less developed.

6. COMPARING THE OPTIONS

The comparison of options is based on a multi-criteria analysis which includes the following elements: effectiveness in terms of achieving objectives, efficiency, costs and administrative burden, coherence and feasibility. The results are summarized in table 4 below. The full results are presented in table 6 in the annex.

6.1. Effectiveness

Section 5 above described the main impacts of the options compared with the baseline scenario. In a nutshell, option 2 "no action" would mean the loss of all the positive impacts the ECoC currently have. On the opposite, options 3a and 3b would make these impacts more certain in all Capitals by strengthening the selection criteria, the accompanying measures and the conditionality of the Prize.

With option 3b and a selection through an open competition, the volume of the impacts would probably be larger as the Capitals would be mostly bigger and already well-established cities, but these impacts would represent less in relative terms as they would be less likely to occur in the cities and in the MS where they are most needed. Furthermore, option 3b would make a much weaker contribution to the promotion of the cultural diversity of Europe than the baseline scenario or option 3a.

6.2. Efficiency

Four main criteria have been examined concerning the efficiency of the action. These criteria are directly linked to the operational objectives to be achieved at EU level (cf. section 3):

- to ensure geographical balance in the location of ECoC;
- to ensure the selection of credible candidates;
- to ensure cities put in place effective governance and stable budgets;
- to strengthen the accompanying measures and the evaluation.

Both options 3a and 3b would equally improve the governance and the stability of the budgets compared to the baseline scenario through the strengthened selection criteria and the increased conditionality of the Prize.

Both options 3a and 3b would equally strengthen the accompanying measures compared to the baseline scenario through an additional monitoring meeting, more systematic visits of European panel members to the cities and a strengthened exchange of experiences between past, present and future Capitals. The evaluation of the action would also be reinforced through the new obligations introduced for the cities themselves which would be directly linked to the payment of the Melina Mercouri Prize.

Both options 3a and 3b would ensure that only credible candidates are awarded the title, firstly by introducing more explicit selection criteria covering inter-alia the capacity of cities to deliver, and secondly by giving stronger grounds to the panel for not awarding the title in a given year if none of the applications fulfils the criteria. Option 3b would go one step further than 3a because with an open competition only the very best candidates at European level would be awarded the title.

Option 3a would ensure the same balance in the location of the ECoC across the EU as the baseline scenario through a new chronological list of MS. In addition, it would slightly extend the geographical scope of the ECoC by opening the action to candidate countries and potential candidates through an open competition every third year. Option 3b on the contrary would weaken the current territorial balance as bigger cities located in the larger and wealthier MS would have much higher chances to win the competition and to host the title than less-established cities in MS with a smaller experience or capacity to organise this type of events. As a result, some MS would most probably host the title at much closer intervals than with a chronological list while others would be left out of the scheme.

6.3. Costs and administrative burden

The costs and the administrative burden linked to the selection and monitoring procedures have been examined both at EU level and national level for the three options proposing the continuation of the ECoC after 2019 (options 1, 3a and 3b). The end of the action (option 2) would of course remove all costs and administrative needs.

Currently, the only direct costs for the ECoC at EU level are the Melina Mercouri Prize (cf. section 2.2). This Prize is financed by the Culture Programme and for the period from 2007 to 2014 its amount has been set at 1.5 million € per ECoC. From 2014, the Prize will in principle be financed by the Creative Europe Programme and its amount may be re-evaluated to a maximum of 2 million €¹⁵.

It is important to stress that this contribution of 1.5 million € coupled with the ECoC title has a large leverage effect on other funds, triggering national investments of between 16 and 194 million € for the operational budget (cf. section 2.3) and triggering additional investments in capital expenditure which can go up to 140

¹⁵ All the discussions on the amount of the Melina Mercouri Prize take place in the framework of the Culture / Creative Europe Programme and of its Management Committee and are directly linked to the evolution of the budget of the Programme.

million €, often partly from the European Structural Funds (infrastructure investment is not however a formal requirement of the title).

The costs at EU level would remain unchanged with options 3a and 3b. The Melina Mercouri Prize would in principle continue to be financed by Creative Europe and the subsequent EU programmes supporting culture¹⁶ and its amount would remain in the same lines as now and would continue to be re-evaluated with each new generation of programmes. With option 3a, a third city could potentially be awarded the title every third year which might increase the overall costs of the action. However, this would be compensated by the fact that with the stricter selection criteria and the stronger conditionality of the Prize, neither the title nor the Prize would systematically be awarded and paid to two or three cities every year. With option 3b, a maximum of two cities would be awarded the title every year as is currently the case, but with the fiercer competition for the title at EU level there would be a much lower probability that the title or the Prize would not be awarded or paid to these two cities every year.

Concerning the costs at national level, it is important to note that the participation in the ECoC action is on a voluntary basis: it is up to each city to decide if it wishes to apply for the title or not. Furthermore, there is no obligation concerning the amount of the budget or the sources of financing. Each city, region or MS can decide if it wishes to invest in the ECoC and how much. As a result, the size of the budgets varies considerably from one ECoC to another and the distribution of the sources varies considerably. It has however been calculated, that on average 77% of the budget of an ECoC comes from public sources and in most of the cases the national, regional and local levels contribute.

Here again, the situation would remain very close to the baseline with options 3a and 3b. Cities would retain their freedom concerning the budgets they would propose, the new legal base would simply ensure that they keep to their commitments and that the budgets are not reduced between the bidding stage and the year of the title. With option 3b and the open competition at EU level, bigger cities with higher budgets might probably have a greater chance of winning the title. This might influence many cities and MS to increase their budget for the ECoC and to invest more money in the bids.

The administrative burden linked to the selection and monitoring procedures is currently shared between the MS and the Commission. However it should be noted that each MS only has to organise the competition at national level once every 14 years.

At national level, this burden would remain unchanged with option 3a and it would be removed with option 3b as the open competition would take place solely at EU level.

At EU level, the burden would increase modestly with option 3a due to the strengthened accompanying measures. It would however increase considerably with

¹⁶ It is important to note that the three options proposing the continuation of the ECoC after 2019 (options 1, 3a and 3b) would all cover several multi annual financial frameworks and be linked to several generations of programmes. It must therefore be stressed that, as for all other EU programmes, the future programmes supporting culture after 2020, including the Melina Mercouri Prize, will be conditioned by the provisions included in the future multi annual financial frameworks.

option 3b as the organisation of the open competition would fall solely on the Commission. Furthermore, there is a high probability that a large number of cities would apply for the title every year (cf. section 5.4) with a risk that the action would become unmanageable for the Commission and the European panel of experts without a significant increase in the human resources.

6.4. Coherence

Evaluations have clearly shown that under their current form, the ECoC make a significant contribution to the objectives of article 167 of the TFUE, of the European Agenda for Culture and of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In a large number of Capitals, important synergies have also been built with the Culture Programme and with the European Structural Funds.

With option 2 "no action", the contribution of the ECoC to the broader EU policy objectives and the synergies with other EU initiatives would be lost. Option 3a would retain the overall coherence of the action with the broader EU objectives. The better reflection of the contribution culture can make to stimulate the cities more general development in the new legal base and the stronger requirements for candidate cities to embed the title in a long-term strategy would reinforce the contribution the ECoC can make to the Europe 2020 strategy, as well the potential for synergies with the Creative Europe Programme and the European Structural Funds.

Option 3b would also further develop the links with the Europe 2020 strategy, however the synergies with the European Structural Funds would be weakened. By awarding the title mostly to bigger cities in the wealthier MS, this option would have less potential to contribute to the territorial cohesion objective of the EU's Regional Policy. Furthermore, the past experience has shown that some of the most significant investments made by the European Structural Funds in connection with the ECoC were made precisely in those MS and regions which would have weaker chances to be awarded the title with an open competition.

6.5. Political feasibility

The end of the ECoC (option 2) would send a strong negative political message to the MS, the European Parliament, the cities and the European citizens themselves which all have a strong interest in the ECoC as demonstrated inter alia by the public consultation and by the high number of cities already contacting the Commission to express their interest in competing for the title for the years after 2019.

Option 3b would most probably be difficult to accept by some of the smaller MS which would have much less chances to host the title than is currently the case.

Option 1 and 3a would keep the current balance between the MS and would therefore also be the closest to the expectations of stakeholders.

Table n°4: Scoring of the options - summary

	Option 1 Baseline scenario	Option 2 No action	Option 3a New legal base with MS rotation	Option 3b New legal base with open competition
Legend: = no change, + better than baseline, ++ much better than baseline, - worse than baseline, -- much worse than baseline				
Effectiveness in terms of achieving the objectives				
SO 1: to enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation	=	--	++	+
SO 2: to widen access and participation in culture	=	--	+	+
SO 3: to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its connectivity with other sectors	=	--	++	++
SO 4: to improve the international profile of cities through culture	=	--	++	+
Efficiency	=	--	++	+
Administrative arrangements and financial impacts	=	++	=	=
Coherence	=	--	+	=
Political feasibility	=	--	=	-
Overall assessment	=	--	++	+

6.6. Preferred option

The options were scored and ranked. The option with the most positive overall assessment is option 3a, namely a new legal base with a chronological list of MS. This option scored higher than all other options and was ranked as the preferred option (see table 4 below).

Option 3a would have significant advantages over all the other options:

- Compared to option 1 "no change", option 3a would offer equivalent costs and only a slightly higher administrative burden at EU level. The strengthened selection criteria, accompanying measures and conditionality for the Prize would help to steer the cities more effectively in their preparation and to reduce the risks and difficulties they might encounter. Option 3a would thus make the positive cultural, economic and social impacts more certain in each ECoC and would help each single city to optimise the high potential of the title. This would also contribute to preserving the prestige and strong brand value of the title in the long-term.
- Compared to option 2 "no action", the modest costs and administrative burden of option 3a would be by far outweighed by the positive cultural, economic and social benefits of the ECoC.
- Compared to option 3b "new legal base with an open competition", option 3a would first and foremost enable to keep a better geographical balance in the location of the ECoC and thus to give a much better picture of cultural diversity in the EU. The fact that all the MS would keep an equal opportunity to host the title would also enable to keep a strong interest for the ECoC from the media and the citizens from all over Europe. The volume of the impacts on single cities might sometimes be smaller with option 3a than with option 3b, but these impacts would often represent more in relative terms as option 3a would enable to select also on a regular basis ambitious cities from smaller and new MS which are less known and established, but which have stronger needs. Therefore option 3a would also offer a stronger coherence with the broader objectives of the EU, in particular the objective of territorial cohesion, and would thus offer a stronger potential for synergies with the European Structural Funds. Finally, option 3a would remain much more manageable at EU level than option 3b where all the burden of the action would shift towards the Commission with a risk in certain years for the Commission and the European panel to be overwhelmed by the number of applications.

7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

With option 3a, the monitoring and evaluation framework of the ECoC post 2019 would comprise three elements which need to be distinguished.

7.1. Monitoring of designated cities

As mentioned in section 4.2.3, three monitoring meetings would take place between the designation of a city and the beginning of the year of the title. Before each meeting, the city would have to submit a report taking stock of the progress made in

the preparation. Panel members would also visit the designated cities whenever needed.

The monitoring would continue to have two main purposes as with the current legal base. On the one hand, the European panel would try to ensure that the cities keep the commitments made at application stage. On the other hand, it would give advice with a view to helping cities to develop a high-quality programme and to put in place an effective long term strategy.

The Commission would decide if it pays the Melina Mercouri Prize or not on the basis of the results of the monitoring.

7.2. Evaluation of past Capitals

This evaluation would be reinforced after 2019 through the new evaluation obligations introduced for the cities themselves which would now carry the main responsibility in this respect. The aim is to have a more comprehensive view of the impacts of the title on each city and to provide comparable data.

In order to ensure a coherent approach, common indicators would be prepared by the Commission (these indicators would be linked to the indicators for the evaluation of the ECoC action as a whole – cf. section 7.3 and table 5). Each city would have to clearly announce its plans for evaluation at the application stage. These plans would have to be in place at the latest at the beginning of the year of the title. The evaluation reports would then have to be sent to the Commission at the latest by 31 October of the year following the year of the title.

On the basis of the reports provided by the cities, the Commission would continue to ensure its own external and independent evaluations of past ECoC. These evaluations would however no longer be carried out directly in the year following the title, they would be carried out every five years in parallel with the evaluations of the ECoC action as a whole (cf. section 7.3) and would regroup several past ECoC. The Commission evaluations would focus on putting all past Capitals in a European context, allowing for comparisons and drawing useful lessons for future Capitals, as well as all European cities.

7.3. Evaluation of the ECoC action

Finally, the Commission would also ensure the external and independent evaluation of the action as a whole. This evaluation would examine all elements, including the efficiency of the processes involved in running the action, the impact of the action and how it could be improved.

A first interim evaluation combining the evaluation of the results of past ECoC and the evaluation of the action would be carried out before the end of 2024, a second interim evaluation would be carried out before the end of 2029 and an ex-post evaluation would be carried out before the end of 2034. Reports would be presented to the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions.

The procedures for evaluating the ECoC Action would have to make use of objectives and indicators which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed (S.M.A.R.T.). For that reason, we present in table 5 below a set of indicative indicators for the general and specific objectives which have been informed by those

piloted in the recent evaluations of the ECoC, as well as by the work of the European Capitals of Culture Policy Group (2009-2010)¹⁷, and which would need to be further developed in the light of the evolving circumstances until 2024. These indicators are intended to capture the essence of the objectives of the ECoC Action, whenever possible in a quantified form.

Table n° 5: Indicative indicators

Related objective	Type of indicator	Indicator	Source of data collection
General objective 1: To safeguard and promote the diversity of European cultures, and to highlight the common features they share	Impact	Citizens' awareness and appreciation of the diversity of European cultures Citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space	Surveys of local residents, e.g. undertaken or commissioned by municipalities or agencies managing ECoC
General objective 2: To foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities	Impact	National / international recognition of cities as being culturally-vibrant and having improved image Increase in GDP and employment in cities' cultural and creative sectors	Surveys of tourists and visitors to host cities; international surveys of tourist opinions; opinion of national or international cultural experts; other authoritative published sources Statistical data provided by municipalities, national statistical offices, sector bodies, etc.
Specific objective 1: To enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation	Result	Total n° of events € value of ECoC cultural programmes N° of activities highlighting European diversity, based on European themes or based on transnational co-operation	Programme data provided by the agencies managing ECoC
Specific objective 2: To widen access and participation in culture	Result	Attendance at ECoC events	Programme data provided by the agencies managing ECoC Surveys of local residents,

¹⁷ European Capitals of Culture Policy Group (2009-2010), An international framework of good practice in research and delivery of the European Capital of Culture Programme.
http://ecocpolicygroup.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/ecoc-policy-group_research-framework1.pdf

		% of residents attending or participating in events, including young, minorities or the disadvantaged Number of active volunteers	e.g. undertaken or commissioned by municipalities or agencies managing ECoC Programme data provided by the agencies managing ECoC
Specific objective 3: To strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its connectivity with other sectors	Result	Strategy for long-term cultural development of the city € value of investment in cultural infrastructure and facilities Sustained multi-sector partnership for cultural governance	Statistical data provided by public bodies at local, provincial or regional level Published documents of ECoC legacy body, municipalities and/or other relevant body Published documents of ECoC legacy body, municipalities and/or other relevant body
Specific objective 4: To improve the international profile of cities through culture	Result	Increase in tourist visits Volume and % of positive media coverage of cities Awareness of the ECoC among residents	Statistical data provided by tourist boards or relevant public authority Data provided by authoritative media monitoring organisations Surveys of local residents, e.g. undertaken or commissioned by municipalities or agencies managing ECoC

8. ANNEX

Table n° 6: Scoring of the options

	Option 1 Baseline scenario	Option 2 No action	Option 3a New legal base with MS rotation	Option 3b New legal base with open competition
Legend: = no change, + better than baseline, ++ much better than baseline, - worse than baseline, -- much worse than baseline				
Cultural impacts				
Cultural programmes of large scale & high artistic quality	=	--	+	++
Promotion of European cultural diversity	=	--	++	-
Promotion of the European dimension of and through culture	=	--	++	++
International partnerships, exchanges & networking	=	--	++	++
Improved cultural governance	=	--	+	+
Sustainable cultural legacy	=	--	++	++
Economic impacts				
Improved infrastructure and facilities	=	--	+	+
Strengthened capacity of the cultural and creative sectors	=	--	+	+
Increased connectivity between the cultural, economic and social sectors	=	--	+	+
Stronger international profile and image of the city	=	--	++	+
Increased tourism	=	--	++	+

Social impacts					
Wide range of citizens and stakeholders involved in preparation & implementation of the ECoC	=	--	+	+	
Citizens' sustainable attendance or participation in cultural events (especially young people, minorities or the disadvantaged, including persons with disabilities)	=	--	+	+	
Greater profile for cultures of minorities and marginalised groups	=	--	+	+	
Increased volunteering	=	--	+	+	
Stronger international outlook of residents	=	--	++	+	
Improved perception of the city by residents	=	--	++	+	
Environmental impacts					
Change in CO2 emissions	=	++	-	--	
Improvements in the urban environment	=	--	+	+	
Efficiency					
Geographical balance in the location of ECoC	=	--	=	--	
Selection of credible candidates	=	--	+	++	
Effective governance and stable budgets	=	--	+	+	
Strengthened accompanying measures and evaluation	=	--	+	+	
Financial implications					
EU level	=	++	=	=	
National level	=	++	=	-	

Administrative burden				
EU level	=	++	=	--
National level	=	++	=	++
Coherence				
Coherence with broader EU political objectives	=	--	+	=
Synergies and complementarities with other EU initiatives	=	--	+	-