



European Capital of Culture Info Day in Finland

Helsinki, 2 April 2019



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Some initial reading...

- Decision No 445/2014/EU of the EP and the Council: new rules and criteria applied for the first time in Finland
- The call for applications and the rules of procedure published in your country
- The guide to cities preparing a bid + guide for evaluation and compendium of recommendations from ex post evaluations
- Internet: applications from former candidate cities / future ECOCs



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What is a European Capital of Culture?



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An ambitious event

- Not always a capital city
- A large scale **cultural** event of one year
... developed for the title and with a strong European dimension
- Not about what a city looks like or its past/heritage, but what it **envisages to be and to do** (programme) during the year and after (legacy)
- A title awarded to one city in 2 Member States in 2026



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A demanding and complex event (1)

- One of the most visible and successful European cultural events:
An honour and a responsibility
 - A multi-faceted event with (sometimes) conflicting agendas
 - Time is needed for a careful preparation and planning:
 - To embed the event in a cultural longer term strategy
 - To significantly engage with the citizens, the cultural and creative sectors and other key stakeholders
- .../...



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A demanding and complex event (2)

.../...

– To make the necessary European links and develop relations with peer cities and partners

– To ensure the right infrastructure is in place

- Learn from previous experience

> You have to put in place a bid team



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Objectives

- **General objectives at EU level:**
 - Promoting cultural diversity and common features of cultures
 - > ***"Sense of belonging to a common cultural area"***
 - Fostering contribution of culture to long-term development of your city
- **Cities can have their own local objectives responding to their local/regional needs and priorities**



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How to become a European Capital of Culture?



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The selection procedure

- A real competition for all cities from your country > only one city can win but it's up to you to make the most of the bidding experience...
- A competition organized by your national authorities
- A competition launched with the publication of a call for applications
- The call includes formal, exclusion and selection criteria as well as the questionnaires cities have to answer



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How is the competition organized?

- A two-step competition
 - Pre-selection phase with hearing
 - Selection phase with visits of short-listed cities and final hearing
- Candidatures (applications + hearings) assessed by a panel of up to twelve independent experts with no conflict of interest...
 - ... on the basis of 6 categories of set criteria
- No need for lobby to affect outcome! Costs money and is pointless



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How to prepare your application?



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Formal and exclusion criteria

- Be a city in Finland
- Need to send a written application answering all the questions of the call by the deadline set in the call
- In English (+ another official language of the EU)
- Respect the size limit
 - 60 pages in A4 format for pre-selection
 - 100 pages in A4 format for final selection
 - All illustrations, graphs etc. included in the size limit



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Six categories of award criteria

- ECOC = high standards reflected in demanding criteria
- See the criteria as a tool to prepare your bid and – if elected – to plan the title-year
- Six categories with equal weighting – All are important to ensure a successful ECOC
- Advice: Be concise and sharp in your answers, but also creative!



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What is the outcome of the competition?

At the end of the final selection meeting the Panel will:

- Recommend one city for the ECOC title in Finland
 - Endorsement by your national authorities (= formal designation)
 - Publication in the OJ of the European Union
 - No need for a positive recommendation
- Recommend to the European Commission whether or not to award the Melina Mercouri Prize
 - Actual payment is ***conditional*** and will come ***later***



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Thank you for your attention

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http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm