



department for
culture, media
and sport

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S PROPOSALS FOR A EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE PROGRAMME 2020-2033

December 2012

Our aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

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Section 1: Introduction

- 1 In September 2012 DCMS launched a consultation on the European Commission proposal for a new European Capitals of Culture programme for 2020-2033 to follow on from the current programme which comes to an end in 2019. Interested parties were given until 30th November to respond to the consultation.
- 2 The questions asked in the consultation are attached at Appendix A.
- 3 The Department received 3 responses to the consultation, from Arts Council England, Creative Scotland and Gateshead Council. This note summarises the responses.

Section 2: Responses to the questions

1. All three respondents considered that there is value and benefit in the European Capitals of Culture programme and they supported the UK's continued participation in the programme. With Glasgow used as one example (in 1990), the programme was considered to be a success that motivates regeneration, better public perception, an increase in tourism and socio-economic stability. It involves and inspires a diverse local population to focus on a shared strategy for the future from which the City (and by extension country) benefits in the build-up, the nominated year, and subsequently.
2. The objectives of the programme are well defined to focus on long term cultural, social and economic effects that will benefit the successful City. Some further emphasis could be made on diversity within cultures, and a "specific" objective for a stronger focus on innovation to deliver socio-economic sustainability for the city in the long-term (instead of a "general" one as stands).
3. All the respondents agreed that there should be a pre-determined order of Member States. They also supported candidate and potential candidate EU countries participating in the programme. This pre-determined system will make sure every Member State gets an assured opportunity to host a European Capital of Culture with an internal open competition, and knowing the dates in advance gives more time to research and prepare bids. Potential nominees should build up European networks and audience development projects. There should be a greater provision of expert independent advice through the monitoring process which would be invaluable and essential to potential bidders.
4. The criteria for selection are relevant and intelligent. Some suggestions for other criteria are that cities should "raise the bar" on artistic excellence, whilst also reinforcing the arm's length principle and independence of artists. Cities must be encouraged to connect themselves to international or European networks. In panel selection one respondent suggested that the recruitment process for appointing panel experts should be widely advertised, such as on relevant bodies' websites. The process of selecting and designating the European Capital of Culture should formally embrace the principles of quality, diversity and equality. It should also be made explicit who makes the final decision on awarding the title
5. The Melina Mercouri Prize is a valuable support resource for potential bidders. Some suggest that the award should be of higher financial value, and some worry that not releasing the funds until part way through the year could make financial planning complicated and difficult. As Arts Council England commented: "This could lead to a focus on 'getting the money out the door' rather than intelligent commissioning. The Commission should consult with cities to determine if this approach is sustainable."

6. A commitment from previous winners to transfer the learning and systematic exchange of experience to a future host would be welcomed. The existing October report is of some help, but can be bogged down with logistics and operational "lessons learnt" rather than looking at long term benefits or practical outputs.
7. There are some concerns about there being two similar schemes running close to one another. To have a UK City of Culture in 2021, then a UK European Capital of Culture in 2023, followed by another UK City of Culture in 2025 would be confusing, make resources for potential bidders stretched, dilute the tourist benefits, and take away from the prestige and brand of either title. Potential solutions would be to combine the titles and resources in 2023, reconsider the frequency of the UK City title after 2017, or request that the UK should be allocated 2021 for European Capital of Culture and then cancel the UK City of Culture award that year.

Appendix A: Consultation Questions

1. Do you agree that the European Capitals of Culture programme should be renewed? Why (not)?
2. Do the proposed objectives cover everything the programme can/should aim to achieve? Are there any other objectives that should be included?
3. Do you agree that each EU Member State should have the opportunity to host the European Capital of Culture once during the life of the programme on the basis of a pre-determined order?
4. Should EU candidate and potential candidate countries be able to participate in the programme?
5. Do the proposed criteria for the assessment of applications cover everything the applications should include? Are there any other criteria that should be included?
6. Should the selection European Capitals of Culture be carried out by a European panel of independent experts? Do you agree with the proposed process for appointing the panel and the role of the panel?
7. Do you agree with the process for selecting and designating European Capitals of Culture? Are the timescales for the preparation and assessment of applications clear and sufficient? Are the respective roles of the Member States, the Commission and the European panel clear?
8. Are the arrangements for monitoring and supporting the preparations of European Capitals of Culture sufficient? Are any further measures required?
9. Should the Melina Mercouri Prize (if awarded) be paid to cities part way through their year as European Capital of Culture or at some other time? Should payment of the Prize be subject to any other conditions besides – or instead of – those specified in the proposal?
10. Are the arrangements for evaluating each European Capital of Culture and the programme as a whole sufficient? Should each city which holds the title be

- responsible for evaluating itself, subject to the common guidelines and indicators established by the Commission?
11. Should the UK be entitled to host a European Capital of Culture in 2023? How should an overlap with the UK City of Culture programme be managed? Do you foresee any other problems if this year is assigned to the UK? Would another year be better for the UK, if so which one?
12. Do you have any other comments on the Commission's proposal?



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2-4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y 5DH
www.culture.gov.uk