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POLICY DEPARTMENT
STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES **B**



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**EUROPEAN
CAPITALS OF CULTURE:
SUCCESS STRATEGIES AND
LONG-TERM EFFECTS**

STUDY





DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

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This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education.

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Abstract

The European City/Capital of Culture Programme was launched in 1985 and the ECoC title has been awarded to nearly 60 cities in 30 countries. The Programme has become a key platform for city positioning and a catalyst for economic and cultural regeneration. Immediate cultural, social and economic impacts are common and the capacity to secure long-term effects, though harder to evidence, has grown in key areas such as urban image change and tourism development. The latter is evidence of the stronger commitment towards sustainable legacy planning and ever more defined and locally sensitive vision statements. This report documents common approaches and success strategies, highlights the strongest claims of long-term effect and analyses recurrent challenges that limit the Programme's ability to reach its full potential. Key recommendations are the establishment of a standardised evaluation framework, greater emphasis on comparative research and the creation of a formal knowledge transfer programme so that future hosts can better benefit from the wealth of experience developed in the last three decades.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- EC** European Community
- ECoC** European City/Capital of Culture
- EP** European Parliament
- EU** European Union
- GR** Greater Region

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This study, conducted over a period of seven months in 2013, is a response to the European Parliament 2012 call for a comprehensive assessment of the long-term effects of hosting the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) Programme, and the potential organisational and policy implications of these findings.

Research questions

The main aim of the study is to examine and interrogate the wealth of published material produced about respective ECoC host cities, in order to: identify the most common strategies for success; collate and review evidence of impacts and long-term effects from a cultural, economic, social and policy point of view; and understand the main recurrent challenges.

The study addresses six main research questions:

- 1) How did the "European Capital of Culture" initiative come into being, what changes has it undergone, and what are its constitutive elements?
- 2) What trends and common patterns, if any, can be discerned with regard to successful applicant cities since 1985?
- 3) What different strategies and concepts have been developed and used to make the ECoC a success for the individual cities both in the short and long term?
- 4) What are the discernible long-term effects connected with ECoC status in terms of cultural, economic, social, and political aspects?
- 5) What are the main obstacles ECoC hosts faced in the past, and what similarities and differences can be identified?
- 6) What recommendations can be given to exploit the potential of the ECoC initiative more efficiently and tackle challenges more effectively, both at the level of programming and organisation?

In addition, the study reflects on a series of more specific questions which point at two of the most pervasive challenges for ECoC hosts since the inception of the Programme in 1985: the Programme's capacity to develop a meaningful European Dimension; and the capacity for hosts to extract lessons from previous experience and maximise knowledge transfer.

The Study has considered evidence available for the three first decades of the ECoC Programme, as articulated by published material on 48 host cities between 1985 and 2013, and the proposals of 10 upcoming hosts between 2014 and 2019. This has been complemented by selected expert reflections across the Programme.

Key findings

The European City/Capital of Culture (ECoC) Programme has evolved considerably since its inception, becoming a fully mature year-long international event, with the capacity to shape and be shaped by European as well as global trends in major cultural event hosting. Host cities have used the Programme to pioneer as well as replicate techniques and approaches that are today widely accepted and expected.

History and development

The Programme has prompted, as well as benefited from, considerable advancements in its formal operational and legislative framework at EU level. These advancements translate into three main Phases, reflecting the application of key EU decisions.

- Phase 1 (1985-1996) comprised the first cycle of ECoC cities, representing each of the 12 EC member states at the time. In this phase, the Programme was considered intergovernmental activity and did not have a legislative framework. Cities were mostly nominated by the state and most had less than two years to plan their programme, which posed a challenge to their capacity to fund or develop ECoC-specific initiatives. A few cities, such as Glasgow 1990, Antwerp 1993 and Copenhagen 1996 stood out for their capacity to innovate and take the Programme forward.
- Phase 2 (1997-2004) started a new cycle, involving 19 cities in 14 countries. Selection criteria and bidding deadlines were implemented from 1998, bringing considerable advancement to the capacity for ECoC-specific programming and raising the scope of ambition. The Programme also secured greater EU centrality by being under the umbrella of the main EU culture programme, first *Kaleidoscope* and then *Culture 2000*. Dedicated EU funding towards the ECoC grew over this period.
- Phase 3 (2005-2019) has been the most extensive, including 29 cities from 29 countries, of which 10 are new EU members (having joined after 2004). The ECoC Programme had its first legislative framework and became a Community Action at the start of this new Phase, involving the inclusion of formal European Dimension criteria, in line with the Maastricht Treaty, and clearer Selection Panel guidelines. Two subsequent decisions applied during this period have contributed to refining selection criteria and strengthening the monitoring and subsequent evaluation processes.

In 2013, the European Parliament (EP), Council of Ministers and European Commission have been working towards the update of the legislative framework for the next ECoC Phase, covering 2020 to 2033.

Bidding approaches

Important steps forwards in enhancing the quality of both bid processes and bid outputs have been the competitive bid process introduced in 1998, the guarantee since 2005 of a minimum of four years' lead-in time, and the subsequent provision of formal Monitoring Panel support (since the 2007 ECoC bidding process).

With the growth in the Programme's profile across Europe, the bid process has become a high profile ECoC stage in its own right, leading to growing demand for its responsible management. In this context, the most widely recognised strength of successful bids is broad stakeholder consultation, in agreement with and support of the bid proposal. This is seen as essential in order to confirm the viability of a city and the ownership of its bid across different groups, from politicians, to the local cultural and private sectors, and local communities. A key lesson learnt is that those cities which begin the process significantly in

advance of the bidding period for the year in which they want to host, tend to build better support with key stakeholders. For others, this can be a challenge.

Other major elements relating to the viability of bids are the proposed level of investment and a high quality artistic programme. However, the Study has uncovered contradictory views regarding the desirability of making the artistic programme too specific at the bid stage: ECoC organisers believe that more emphasis should be given to defining a distinct and inspiring vision, while the actual programme of events should be given more time (after the bidding stage) to mature and adapt to the needs of the city.

In terms of overall vision, the most common objectives expressed by successful bidding cities are raising the capacity/ambition of the cultural offer in the host city (internally) and raising the profile of the city and its cultural offer (externally). The dominance of these two objectives is a likely explanation for the two most common areas of positive impact, which tend to be articulated in a very similar way: raising the capacity and ambition of the cultural sector; and achieving image enhancement for the host city, often involving a repositioning as a leading cultural centre.

Another objective emphasised by bidding cities are conceptualised within the ambition for the ECoC to be a 'catalyst' for change in other areas, such as: tourism development; increased inward investment; supporting the growth of new industries; physical regeneration; social engagement and enhanced pride in the city.

In contrast with the above areas, a commonly perceived weakness of successful bidding proposals is the absence of a strong European Dimension. Since their activation for the 2005 ECoC, Selection Panels have voiced concerns in respect of this area. A common limitation is that, while applications tend to stress the European and/or multi-cultural character of their city and cultural offer, plans are often not in place to establish meaningful connections with the rest of Europe. The establishment of a Monitoring Panel role since the 2010 bid process, offering immediate feedback and able to influence early hosting decisions, has brought opportunities to better address this issue.

Delivery approaches and success strategies

Beyond the bid stage, the actual hosting process has evolved from widely diverse beginnings that were very dependent on (and vulnerable to) the specific circumstances of host cities, into a highly professionalised affair. This means that common approaches and strategies for success have become more widespread and are currently applicable to the majority of cities, regardless of size, geography or length of EU membership. Some of the most noticeable common ECoC approaches include:

- Developing an aspirational vision, aimed not just at celebrating the city (as was commonly the case in the early stages) but also at providing opportunities for 'transformation'. The notion latter reflects the ambition to use the ECoC as a catalyst for change in other areas – from image change (the most dominant and successful) to cultural or social change. Glasgow 1990, Lille 2004 and Liverpool 2008 are widely viewed as examples of very successful image change strategies.
- Using the ECoC to generate a momentum conducive to shared cross-sector agendas – commonly across culture, tourism, education and social services – in order to position or reposition a city and, occasionally, its surrounding region. A particular example of joint regional positioning is Essen for the Ruhr 2010, which has resulted in the creation of a new regional brand, the Ruhr Metropolis. In different ways, Luxembourg GR 2007 and Marseille-Provence 2013 have also worked towards furthering regional relationships via joint ECoC programming and promotion.

- A balanced range of themed activity throughout the year, often in the form of distinct seasons, to assist in the distribution of resources and the coordination of marketing priorities. Themes have varied from a reflection on the city as a place to explore European culture (common in the early years and in established cultural centres such as Athens 1985 or Florence 1986), to specific facets of the city and/or national culture (e.g. water connections in port cities such as Porto 2001, Genoa 2004 or Stavanger 2008), or its wider social or economic aspirations (e.g. urban development and creative economy in Essen for the Ruhr 2010; industry, culture and nature in Linz 2009; and technology and culture in Mons 2015).
- A rapid first growth in grassroots activities and then a sustained effort to identify and engage with as diverse an audience as possible, supported by strategic and substantially funded social programmes, including volunteering and active participation schemes. The approach to volunteering has been one of the areas seeing greater evolution and reported success, from early concepts such as *The public network* in Bruges 2002, to the *Ambassadeurs* of Lille 2004, the *08 Welcome* programme in Liverpool 2008, and ambitious training initiatives in Istanbul 2010 and Marseille-Provence 2013.

The above commonalities suggest an 'ECoC style' of operations and hosting processes. To date, this 'ECoC style' is being shared informally through personal networks, but would benefit from being formally translated into a common 'ECoC know-how' for easier adaptation and knowledge transfer. Concerns over the desirability of advancing towards too standardised a framework for operations has limited this process, allowing greater freedom and flexibility than is the case for other major events, such as the Olympic Games or Expos. However, it also explains some of the ongoing challenges for the Programme, which are summarised below.

Effects and impacts

The Programme has proven capable of generating noticeable impacts in respective host cities; however, with the broadening of objectives and expectations, the breadth and ambition of related claims has also grown and these are not always supported by evidence. Some of the areas of positive impact for which evidence is stronger include the following:

Cultural impacts

- The Programme can have a significant effect on the city's cultural vibrancy. Its contribution to strengthening networks, opening up possibilities for new collaborations, encouraging new work to continue, and raising the capacity and ambition of the cultural sector is commonly acknowledged. Examples of cities that provide good evidence of emphasis on new work, or approaches that added capacity to the sector, are Glasgow 1990, Cork 2005, Stavanger 2008, Essen for the Ruhr 2010, Turku 2011, Tallinn 2011 and Guimarães 2012.

Image impacts

- Many cities with a previously low (and, at times, even negative) profile have experienced an image renaissance, attracting considerable media attention and enhancing local, national and international perceptions. Cities such as Glasgow, Lille, Liverpool, Pécs and Turku have been successful in repositioning themselves as cultural hubs at a national and/or European level in the wake of their event years.
- Beyond discussion of the city, media interest in the ECoC and what it stands for in respective host countries has grown over time and covers a broader time spectrum than was originally the case, with it now beginning in earnest at the bidding stage. International interest is, however, more changeable and depends upon the strategic capacity of respective hosts.

- With the growth of digital and, particularly, social media platforms, media trends could change considerably, but to capture such effects in full requires new ways of thinking, both in terms of ECoC promotion and media monitoring. The most recent hosts, such as Turku 2011, Maribor 2012 and Guimarães 2012, claim considerable online news impact, far above any other type of media.

Social impacts

- The most positive dimension of social impact can be understood in terms of effects on local perceptions and fostering a sense of pride, which partly relates to image impacts and is closely influenced by local and national media attitudes.
- Cities report considerable impact on improved local perceptions of the city, with many recent editions being able to claim that 50% to 90% of their local population feel that their city is a better place after having hosted the ECoC.
- Other notable social impacts include increases and wider diversity in cultural audiences during the ECoC year. Hosts as diverse as Helsinki 2000, Luxembourg GR 2007, Liverpool 2008, Essen for the Ruhr 2010, Guimarães 2012 and Maribor 2012 claim that over half of their local population engaged with their ECoC programme.

Economic impacts

- While claims of economic impact have been at times over-inflated or lacking in robust evidence (particularly in terms of job creation), it is apparent that the ECoC can have a considerable effect on immediate to medium-term tourism trends, which, in turn, can have a significant impact on the city's economy. In the case of cities capable of undergoing considerable repositioning, growth in tourism visits and spending can be sustained for many years to come. Glasgow 1990 is one of the best examples of long-term effect; Liverpool 2008 achieved unprecedented growth during the year itself; and Linz 2009 offers a good indicator of a city not previously well-known demonstrating steady growth.

Other areas of impact – from wider social impacts to physical and political effects, and the Programme's European Dimension – are harder to prove, but this is partly due to the fact that appropriate methodologies for capture are also more complex. Discussion on the capacity of the Programme to create and sustain social impacts beyond improved perceptions keeps growing, and, given the continuous development of new and more far-reaching techniques to engage communities and ensure active participation (e.g. via volunteering and training opportunities), this is the one area of ECoC impact most likely to develop over the coming years. The European Dimension is another area with potential, particularly since the implementation of refined criteria and greater monitoring support, applicable to ECoC editions after 2010. For the latter to be strengthened further after decades of mixed interpretation and implementation, one common view is that it must be seen as an opportunity to open debate with the local population, so that consideration of European identity and exchange is clearly seen as complementing – and not competing with – the exploration and celebration of their local identity.

Challenges and opportunities

As noted already, with growing profile and ambition comes greater expectations and stronger scrutiny. Early research on the ECoC Programme highlighted challenges that, by 2013, appear to be largely overcome thanks to new or clearer regulations, professionalisation and experience gained. Others have remained entrenched or have evolved over time, in parallel with the broadening of Programme objectives and/or changing world trends.

Some of the challenges which were common up to Phase 2 but have been largely surpassed are: the lack of planning or poor sustainability approaches, concerns over inconsistent communications, and poor marketing and branding strategies. For over a decade now, most ECoC cities have shown clear awareness of and commitment to legacy planning and are far more sophisticated in their marketing strategy, which, as noted, is now seen as a priority area and supported by a much larger proportion of total budget than was the case for over a third of all cities in the first two Phases. However, the issue of securing sustainability remains complex, as, while cities are aware and express an interest in addressing this point, evidence of clear success is still scarce, in common with other kinds of major events.

Other challenges that remain and continue to cause public controversy and/or criticism within the expert literature are:

- The capacity for ECoCs to propose a clear vision that can secure local ownership across diverse stakeholders and the public.
- Adequate balancing of cultural, social and economic agendas; or, according to many, ensuring that cultural agendas are not unduly instrumentalised in the interest of economic objectives.
- Addressing social inequalities – in particular, ensuring that all city neighbourhoods and/or communities of interest benefit.

Interestingly, the first challenge has also been identified as a key for success, when it works well. This is because, while some cities have successfully applied their original vision or have been able to achieve their key goals (e.g. in image or cultural terms), others have struggled to make a distinction between broad vision and specific programming needs, and have found it difficult to ensure that the ECoC is fully coherent with other city needs.

Of all the challenges noted in the literature and emerging out of dedicated data analysis, the two that stand out and, if properly addressed, offer the most important areas of opportunity are the cities' treatment of the European Dimension and the Programme's capacity for knowledge transfer.

European Dimension

- Ensuring a European Dimension within the ECoC Programme has been a core EU objective since the Programme's inception, which has been highlighted in the Programme's legislative framework. However, individual host cities have often struggled to fully understand, implement or demonstrate their capacity to meet this requirement.
- A key challenge when assessing success in this area is the common disparity between stated objectives (at the bid stage, in mission statements) and their eventual programme implementation. An added complication is that it is difficult to capture the most successful examples, because the mechanisms used to explain this dimension are often inadequate. Formal evaluations taking place during Phase 1 and 2 of the Programme tend to conclude that this area is underachieved, but this could partly be due to inappropriate assessment methods.
- With the expansion of formal EU-funded monitoring and evaluation exercises, there are greater opportunities to identify limitations early on and help cities address them. However, an ongoing issue seems to be that although aspirations have become more concrete, individual hosts still find it difficult to operationalise the European Dimension as a leading aspect of their programme. Further, local agendas keep gaining momentum and tend to dominate public debate.

- To change this trend, careful reflection on the recurrent challenges and new opportunities is required. Three aspects stand out in this study: opening up the debate so that local hosts and publics understand European and local identity issues as part of the same conversation, rather than viewing them in opposition to each other; ensuring greater distinction between the ECoC and other domestic/national events of a similar format (often inspired by the ECoC); and refining the monitoring process further, to develop richer data capture techniques that can support a better understanding of this area.

Transfer of knowledge

- There is limited evidence of formal knowledge transfer and exchanges between event hosts within or outside of the ECoC Programme; however, the few available studies offering comparative ECoC findings are used extensively – in particular, the European Commission-funded Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 report, which is mentioned by over a third of ECoC studies between 2005 and 2012.
- Despite the value of published studies, most ECoC organisers highlight that the most important reference for them are direct contacts with previous hosts; and informal networks of prior and upcoming ECoC organisers are valued as a key contact point for first-hand experience.
- In the wake of the 2004 study, there has been a marked effort to conduct regular evaluation, and published materials have grown exponentially (in particular, academic papers and city evaluations involving case-specific as well as comparative research). This provides an opportunity for an improved evidence base. However, respective city evaluation approaches lack continuity and coherence, and the quality of much evidence is poor and/or not comparable. In order to improve this situation, more standardised data collection and analysis is required.

Conclusions and recommendations

As of 2013, the ECoC Programme is one of the most visible and prestigious EU initiatives. The Programme has become a popular subject of study, and the number of independent publications, in practitioner as well as academic circles, keeps growing. However, the capacity to understand the real worth of the Programme and the applicability of key learning across different countries and points in time requires a better-coordinated approach to assessment, so that it is possible to understand which dimensions are comparable and transferrable, and which are context-specific.

The key recommendations emerging out of this study are listed below, preceded by an indication of whom they are targeted at:

Encourage a clear vision from the outset, rather than detailed programming

For ECoC candidates:

- Focus attention on the phrasing of the overarching vision and concept for the ECoC year, ensuring this can provide a distinct but flexible framework that can guide specific programme development and an appropriate communication strategy over time.
- Ensure that this original vision can translate from the candidature to the delivery stage, so that it will be fit to be taken over and appropriated by a potentially different operational team.

Distinguish the ECoC vision from a cultural and communications strategy

For ECoC organisers:

- Beware of the cyclical nature of an ECoC hosting process. Ensure that the vision is clearly set up and understood by the core team before attempting broader communication.
- Identify the right milestones to make public statements and avoid making statements ahead of time, which may raise (and eventually fail to meet) expectations.

Emphasise the Programme's cultural dimension

For ECoC organisers:

- Place a cultural ambition at the heart of the ECoC vision, and arrange other (economic, social or wider) objectives as subsidiaries.
- Link the main underlying cultural objective with existing local cultural strategy plans. In the absence of a previous cultural strategy, use this cultural objective(s) as a springboard or platform for a new culture-driven strategy.
- Ensure that the core vision for the ECoC emerges out of broad consultation with key stakeholders across sectors, but that the primacy of a cultural objective is understood and agreed upon as the leading reference.

Provide greater clarity in the definition of respective creative industry sectors

For ECoC organisers:

- Reflect on and make explicit what is meant by the 'creative industries' in respective host environments.
- If this is an area still underdeveloped in a particular host city or country, use the ECoC planning and hosting experience as an opportunity to better define this area and to explore meaningful links between cultural and economic objectives.

Utilise a flexible but effective constellation of organisations to manage the ECoC process

For the European Commission:

- Encourage the continuity of core teams and staff members, but be open to the possibility of senior role changes over time, to ensure the ECoC counts on the most appropriate champion for every stage of the process (e.g. the right person to lead the ECoC bid may not be the right person to deliver the event year).

For ECoC organisers:

- Understand the cycle of an ECoC hosting process, and accept that priorities and skills change from the bid to the lead-up and event stages, as well as in the immediate post-event phase.
- Plan ahead to cope with the potential loss of know-how due to people moving on; as the cases of Lille 2004 and Liverpool 2008 show, retaining some key staff throughout the process (ideally, from the bid stage) maximises continuity and results in unique expertise that can be of great added value in the ECoC legacy development phase.

Balance the relationship between political support, accountability and independence

For European Commission, Selection Panels and Monitoring Panels:

- Reframe official advice so that the aspiration to independence from politics does not risk political disengagement.

For ECoC organisers:

- Take due consideration of the most appropriate roles for the local political class: away from day-to-day decision-making, but central to ECoC championing.
- Ensure that key ECoC operations remain transparent and can be justified (accounted for) to the general public.
- Make a distinction between artistic independence and cultural responsibilities (e.g. balancing the aspiration to take risks in certain aspects of the programme, with the need to be inclusive and representative of diverse constituencies).

Plan for post-ECoC transition to maximise legacy and sustainability

For the European Commission, Selection and Monitoring Panels:

- Establish a minimum term of office for the ECoC delivery agency after the event year, advising core staff to remain in place six months to one year post-event.

For ECoC organisers:

- Appoint a transition task-force to manage the handover of key ECoC materials and know-how back to established city stakeholders.

Standardise data collection and formalise knowledge-transfer

For the European Commission (with legislative backing from the EP and Council):

- Work towards a centralised documentation centre or repository of knowledge for reliable data archiving (e.g., an ECoC observatory and/or resource intranet, coordinated centrally by the Commission).
- Invest in a dedicated exercise to forge a common set of indicators and a data collection framework with clear definitions and specifications as to desirable collection times during the ECoC hosting cycle (pre-, during and post event).
- Consider allocating a part of EU grant funding towards ECoC-related research, so that the host data collection plan includes the capture of aspects relevant to broader Programme impacts and legacies, beyond their local environment.

For ECoC organisers and researchers:

- Provide data against a common set of indicators as defined by the European Commission, ensuring the minimum number of 'priority' indicators are populated or justifying why this is not possible, so as to help improve the framework.
- Always document sources and methodologies and note caveats in the data presented.
- Suggest a stable organisational contact point to provide data updates at regular intervals.

Open up local debate around the value of a European Dimension

For the European Parliament, Council and Commission:

- Supplement current European Dimension criteria with encouragement to debate.
- Recommend a wider (but consistently applied) set of indicators and request quantitative as well as qualitative accounts of relevant outcomes.

For host organisers:

- Build on European Dimension criteria as a platform to open up a conversation about Europe amongst the local population.
- Avoid contrasting local programming against European or international programming. While it is appropriate to distinguish between local and international communication strategies, host cities should view the Programme as an opportunity to explore the relationships between local and European cultures and values, rather than only one or the other.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study has been conducted in response to the European Parliament 2012 call for a comprehensive assessment of the long-term effects of hosting the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) Programme, and of the potential organisational and policy implications of these findings.

Since its inception back in 1985, the ECoC Programme has grown into a highly coveted prize for cities aiming to position or reposition themselves as distinct European hubs for culture and creativity. Recently, there has been a dramatic surge in candidature bids, involving (at times) considerable expense by local authorities over many years. A prime example of this was the competition for the 2016 edition, in which there were up to 16 Spanish cities and 11 Polish cities that expressed an interest and engaged in a fiercely competitive bidding process. However, despite the growth in interest and the development of widely shared narratives of success about specific cases (for instance, Glasgow 1990, Lille 2004, Liverpool 2008), accompanying evidence is scarce and, when available, it tends to be limited to an assessment of the year itself and its immediate aftermath. Remarkably, there has been little to no research looking back into the medium to long-term effects of hosting an ECoC in a host city or beyond.

This study offers a systematic review of all the academic, policy and practitioner literature available on cities that have hosted the ECoC since 1985, as well as of the ECoC Programme vision and policy framework evolution.

The study builds on the experience of the authors, based at the Institute of Cultural Capital,¹ in conducting research on the various impacts and long-term legacies of the ECoC Programme. This includes what has been widely acknowledged as the most extensive study into any ECoC to date (the five year, multidisciplinary *Impacts 08* research programme on Liverpool 2008);² the longitudinal (over ten year) retrospective research on the long-term effects of hosting the Glasgow 1990 ECoC; and experience leading an ECoC cultural policy network dedicated to exchanging research best practice between academics and ECoC delivery partners, with funding from the European Commission.³

Acknowledgements

The research team wishes to thank Markus J. Prutsch for his support and coordination throughout the period of this study, and the European Parliament pool of internal and external reviewers for their insights and suggestions to previous study versions. Thank you also to James Milton for his copy-editing assistance.

¹ The Institute of Cultural Capital is a strategic collaboration between the University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University (www.iccliverpool.ac.uk).

² See: www.impacts08.net.

³ See: http://www.liv.ac.uk/impacts08/complementary-programmes/EC_cultural_policy_group.htm.

1.1. Key objectives and research questions

Overall objectives

The main aim of the study is to examine and interrogate the wealth of published material gathered about respective ECoC host cities, in order to identify verifiable evidence of impacts and long-term effects from a cultural, economic, social and policy point of view.

Based on the identification and evaluation of such material, recommendations are made and these are targeted at three constituencies:

- Policy-makers at a European level as well as within respective host nations.
- Organisers of future ECoCs in respective host cities and their key stakeholders.
- Academic researchers and consultants dedicated to the assessment and evaluation of future ECoCs.

The study performs three distinct functions:

- Identification, selection, listing and presentation of highlights of key published material on the ECoC Programme.
- Critical assessment of this material on the grounds of the priority research questions and multiple dimensions of impact.
- Operational and policy recommendations.

Research questions

The original tender placed an emphasis on a series of research questions, which have acted as the point of departure in setting priorities for this study:

1. How did the "European Capital of Culture" initiative come into being, what changes has it undergone, and what are its constitutive elements?
2. What trends and common patterns, if any, can be discerned with regard to successful applicant cities since 1985?
3. What different strategies and concepts have been developed and used to make the ECoC a success for the individual cities both in the short and long term?
4. What are the discernible long-term effects connected with the ECoC status in terms of cultural, economic, social, and political aspects?
5. What are the main obstacles ECoC hosts faced in the past, and what similarities and differences can be identified?
6. What recommendations can be given to exploit the potential of the ECoC initiative more efficiently and tackle challenges more effectively, both at the level of programming and organisation?
7. Are there suggestions for concrete policy and legislative action to be taken?

These research questions have required the establishment of some conventions to guide assessment, namely, defining the following key terms:

- **Strategies for success** (question 3): They are understood as: a) approaches that host cities feel help them meet their defined objectives; b) approaches that help address the objectives of the ECoC Programme as presented in official EU documentation; and c) approaches that can lead on to additional impacts or effects (beyond the above), which are considered positive for (or are valued by) local communities, key stakeholders and/or external audiences. Effectively, they consist of 'inputs' and 'outputs' that can lead to the desirable 'outcome' (i.e. effects and impacts) noted below.

- **Long-term effects** (question 4): These are understood to include the outcome, impact or legacy of ECoC-related activity *one or more years* after the event hosting date. In contrast, effects or impacts captured before the end of the year are considered to be short-term (i.e. only apparent in the lead-up to the event or during the ECoC year itself) or medium-term (i.e. apparent up to one year after the ECoC). As noted throughout Chapter 5, most evidence of impact is of a short or medium-term nature.
- **Difference between cultural, economic, social and political aspects** (question 4): These different dimensions of impact were thoroughly explored within a previous five-year research programme on the multiple-impacts of hosting an ECoC (*Impacts 08*). The *Impacts 08* model forms the basis of the study's Research Framework. The way differences have been defined and used to guide in the selection of key indicators is described in Section 1.2.

In addition, the study reflects on a series of more specific questions that point at two of the most pervasive challenges for ECoC hosts since the inception of the Programme in 1985: the Programme's capacity to develop a meaningful European Dimension; and the capacity for hosts to extract lessons from previous experience and maximise knowledge transfer.

- I. What are the opportunities and challenges for the ECoC Programme to have a genuine European Dimension in respective host cities?
- II. Is there any clearly discernible impact of the ECoC initiative on cultural life and exchange at the European level?
- III. Did the Palmer/Rae Study of 2004 have any significant impact in terms of policy-making and the organisation of later ECoCs?
- IV. Have any "best practices" been developed and used outside Europe for similar cultural events and initiatives that might be meaningfully applied?

1.2. Methodological approach

After over 28 years in development, the ECoC Programme has attracted a considerable volume of dedicated literature, ranging from grey literature (produced by the bodies in charge of the Programme at the European level) to host city promotional, as well as analytical materials, and – particularly since 2004 – a growing number of commissioned evaluations and independent academic assessments.

This study has been mainly dedicated to identifying, validating, interrogating and summarising relevant findings produced through this extensive and diverse literature – an exercise never before undertaken in such a comprehensive and systematic form. The material has been reviewed exclusively through the lens of the agreed research questions, and has involved an international team of experts operating in eight European languages.

The current study follows in the footsteps of the two most comprehensive exercises to have previously examined the ECoC Programme in a comparative way, each of which was produced to assess a full decade of ECoC hosting:

- The first study, covering ECoC cities from 1985 to 1994, was conducted by John Myerscough with funding from the first Network of European Cities of Culture (Myerscough, 1994).
- The second study, covering the 1995 to 2004 ECoC hosts, was conducted by Palmer/Rae Associates, with funding from the European Commission (Palmer/Rae, 2004).

It was important for this study not to replicate previous assessments. However, the brief required that the Programme be considered as a whole, not just from 2005 onwards. The main difference between this study and previous comparative research – in particular, the Palmer/Rae 2004 report – is that this study has focused on an assessment of the published literature, rather than relying on primary research capturing the views of ECoC stakeholders. This was considered important, firstly, because it avoids unnecessary replication of work, and secondly, because it highlights the views of expert analysts and independent researchers, as well as reflecting the official narrative and summary assessments produced by direct stakeholders at the European and host city levels.

The study’s methodological approach involved the following:

- **Research framework:** An adaptation and expansion of the model developed in the context of the five-year *Impacts 08* programme, which was used to define the key dimensions of ECoC impact and legacy and provide a structure for the presentation of findings.
- **Secondary research:** Document mapping as a main priority area, involving selection and validation of key sources on the basis of the above framework, as well as extensive mining and content analysis of available data to populate core indicators and inform the literature review that forms the main basis of this study.
- **Primary research:** Targeted exercises to address core research questions, or aspects of the questions, that could not be answered through available publications and required additional data gathering. Given the scope of the required secondary data analysis, this has been a minor exercise mainly aimed at filling in gaps or to test emerging findings.

Research framework: Building on the *Impacts 08* research model

This study benefits from the robust model of impact assessment that the lead investigator and supporting team had the chance to test extensively in the lead-up to, during and after Liverpool 2008, and then apply, contrast and compare with six other host cities in the context of a European Commission-funded ‘ECoC Cultural Policy Network’.⁴ This study has thus organised its findings in terms of four main possible areas of impact – areas that are, in turn, elaborated thematically as follows:

Table 1: Impact areas and thematic areas

IMPACT AREA	THEMATIC AREA
Cultural and image impacts	The City’s Cultural System Image and Sense of Place
Economic and physical impacts	Economic Impact and Processes Physical Developments
Social impacts	Public Engagement and Representation
Political and policy impacts	Philosophy and Management of the Process

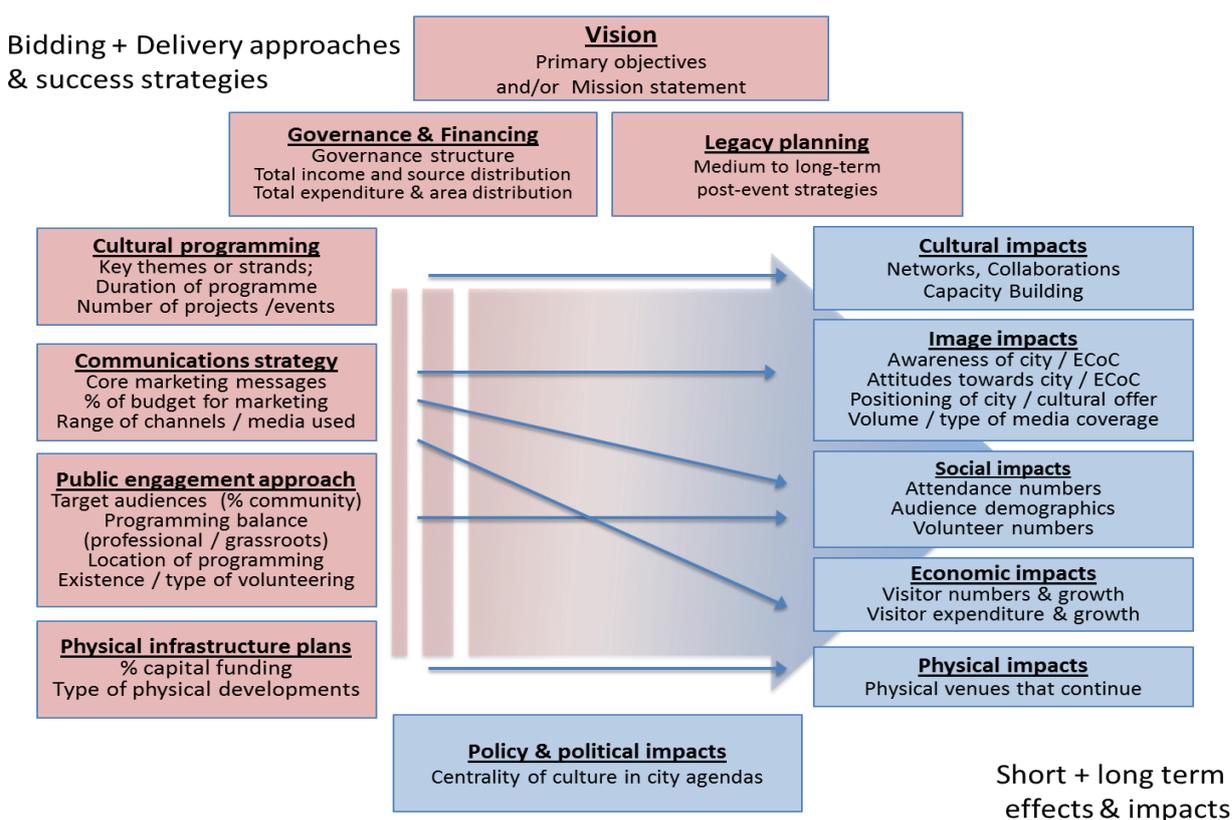
⁴ The cities involved were: Marseille-Provence 2013, Turku 2011, Stavanger 2008, Košice 2013, Linz 2009, Essen for the Ruhr 2010.

Each of these thematic areas incorporates a series of sub-themes that guided the identification of the most appropriate performance indicators to assess actual impact and long-term effects. Find below a brief summary of these sub-themes:

- **The City's Cultural System:** Sub-themes include: profile of the host city's cultural and creative sector (number and type of organisations, facilities); sustainability of the system (e.g. skill development in the cultural sector); contribution by the appointed ECoC delivery agency (e.g. direct investment/funding of the city's cultural system) and contribution of other relevant institutions to the area's creative economy in the context of the ECoC hosting process.
- **Image and Sense of Place:** Sub-themes for this area include: the (re)positioning of the host city before and after becoming ECoC; changing meanings associated with the city by its diverse local communities; and changing perceptions of the city by regional/national visitors and overseas tourists. It also assesses variations in the sense of identity and self-confidence of local communities before and after hosting the ECoC.
- **Economic Impacts and Processes:** Sub-themes include impacts of the ECoC title on: inward investment; tourism, employment and job creation; and the strength and quality of the local business sector.
- **Physical Infrastructure Developments:** Sub-themes include impacts on: the public realm; the heritage environment; the quality and type of the physical infrastructure of culture (built environment, venues, parks, public art); physical access issues (transport, parking); and the environmental sustainability of the programme.
- **Public Engagement and Representation:** Sub-themes include: demographic and geographic data on participants and non-participants in cultural activities and access to opportunities for cultural involvement. It also looks into particular sub-cultures and groups, and explores experiences, cultural values, reasons for participation or reasons for disengagement. This theme considers the impact of direct or indirect participation, and explores the added value of engagement for people's well-being and quality of life.
- **The Philosophy and Management of the Process:** This theme reflects on the impacts of the processes and philosophies underpinning the management and development of the ECoC, and their policy and political implications for the host city, nationally and at a European level.

These areas were critical as a point of departure for the organisation of material and the identification of key indicators. However, given that this study is not only looking into impacts, outcomes or effects but also the analysis of success strategies – which consist, in effect, of inputs (e.g. strategic priorities, objectives) and related outputs (e.g. programmed activities), it was important to devise a more detailed modelling approach to structure key data and assist in the identification of possible causes and effects. The model, which also builds on the *Impacts 08* experience and the ECoC Policy framework, can be summarised as follows:

Figure 1: Model of assessment



Source: ICC modelling. Simplified list of indicators (Full list in Appendix B)

This Figure shows two main types of data: in **pink**, data that informs the assessment of key delivery approaches and success strategies (effectively, inputs and subsequent outputs); in **blue**, data that provides evidence of impact or effects (that is, the outcome of such approaches). All of these areas correlate in some way, and some of the divisions are blurry; for instance, the approach to 'cultural programming' involves key decisions to encourage 'public engagement' as well, but these areas have been separated in order to facilitate a differentiated assessment of cultural and social dimensions respectively. By the same token, activity developed under the 'cultural programming' or 'communications' heading can have a cultural as well as image, social or economic impact. However, some areas – and, particularly, the indicators chosen as the main source of evidence – are more likely to have a direct causal link to certain kinds of effects than others. The narrow blue arrows mark such links.

As noted in the relevant Chapters and in the 'Methodological challenges' Section below, simultaneous evidence of impact across all of the areas identified is rarely available for single ECoC hosts. Further, the quality and consistency of claims and evidence about medium to long-term effects varies considerably. As a result, despite applying this model consistently and trying, where possible, to produce comparative tables and figures that capture key trends, commonalities and differences across these areas, there are some important gaps that this study can only point at and use as a springboard for future research recommendations. The key indicators listed within Figure 1 represent the areas for which there exists a greater range of verifiable data (see also Appendix B for a detailed list of core indicators and populated tables). These indicators, outlined within boxes, mainly represent data about what ECoC organisers intended to do (strategic input, e.g. vision, programming plans), what they actually did (i.e. outputs, such as number of events) and some data about what actually happened which can be broadly attributed to the ECoC

(impacts, in selected areas). This effectively means that the main bulk of this study is about what has been considered important to make the ECoC a success, both in terms of input, output and impacts. The area for which less evidence is available is in terms of the actual relationships between both areas (what the model represents as arrows), so the most this study can do is infer some cause-and-effect relationships, but with clear limitations. These and other significant gaps in evidence are pointed out within the relevant Chapters and Sections of this study.

Finally, beyond these areas of specifically ECoC-related evidence, the study has also considered a selection of contextual factors about respective host cities. This assessment has been undertaken in order to determine whether it is possible to talk of clear ECoC city typologies, an exercise already attempted at the early stages of the ECoC Programme (Richards, 1996). The chosen contextual factors are as follows:

- Population size of the ECoC host (city and, where relevant, region) at the time of hosting the title
- Geographical location (North, South, West or East Europe, as defined by the UN Stats office)
- EU positioning in the context of successive enlargements (EU-12, EU-15, EU-25, EU-27, accession countries, non-EU members)

Secondary research: Document mapping and literature review

Due to the very wide scope of the subject of study (effectively, up to 2019, 60 host cities in 30 countries over 34 years), the study has focused on secondary data. This has required a three-stage approach:

- **Document mapping:** Involving an extensive search and validation of all available published material on the ECoC Programme since its inception, and some basic codification to assist in the distribution of core reading by respective area specialists. The following pages offer a summary of the main results of such mapping.
- **Literature review:** Assessment of all valid material, involving detailed quantitative and qualitative data mining to populate core indicators, followed by their statistical or content analysis⁵; and, in parallel, identification of key quotes and summary of findings against each research question. The remainder of this study presents the analysis of such findings.

The objective of the document mapping exercise was to compile a representative list of key references pertaining to the ECoC Programme, covering the entire history of the initiative and using a broad and well-designed typology to accurately classify materials gathered. As it was not within the scope of the exercise to consider material relating to failed ECoC bid cities, only materials concerning host cities were evaluated – with analysis focused to a great extent on documents relating to the actual delivery and impacts of ECoC programmes as opposed to bid documentation (the latter providing instead an ancillary component to the other elements of the document base). The material gathered via the literature review was used by the research team to identify evidence of impacts as well as long-term effects⁶ for host cities up to 2008, and medium-term effects for host cities during the period 2009 to 2011. Cities from 2012 onwards were also analysed, mainly from the perspective of key defined objectives and approaches (or commitments) to evaluation that future research can test them against.

⁵ Find a detailed list of core indicators by Chapter in Appendix B.

⁶ Defined as effects that are discernible more than one year after hosting the title.

Document volume and typology

In total, the research team located 484 valid references and 302 (62%) of these have been reviewed in depth. A valid reference was understood as material discussing the ECoC Programme specifically or using ECoC hosts as direct case studies (as opposed to publications discussing broader cultural policy issues, and only mentioning the ECoC in passing). Although all valid references received some basic coding (e.g. type of document, year of publication, ECoC to which they refer), the reason to focus on 62 % of this material for detailed reviewing, data mining and direct quoting, was on the grounds of relevance to the study, the reliability of data presented (e.g. methodological clarity, explicit sourcing) and/or the quality of argumentation.

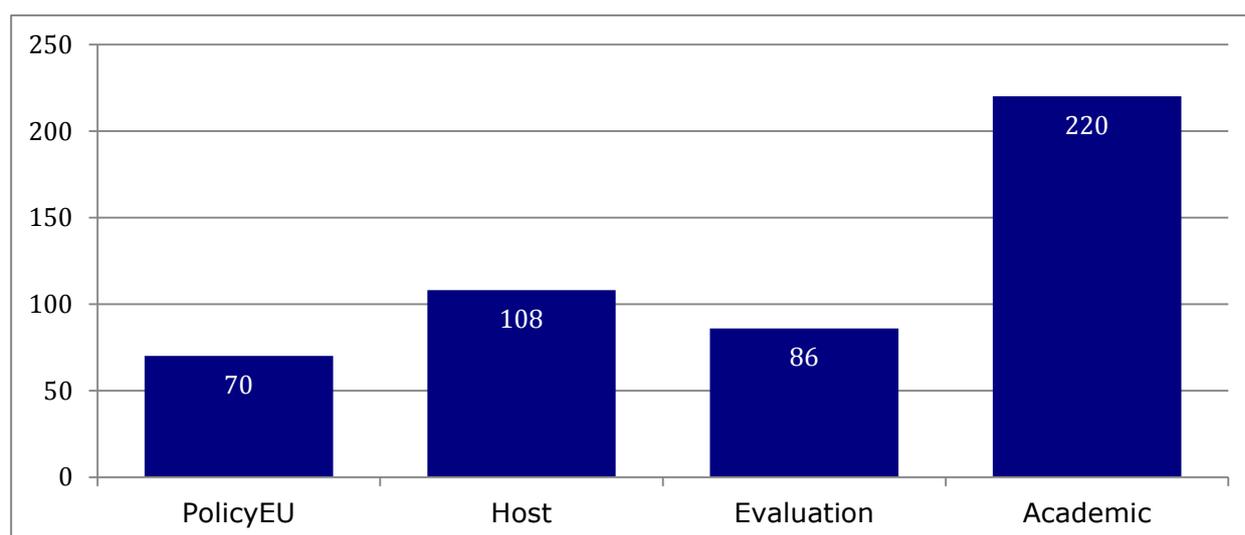
Although English language documents constituted a large majority of these references (80 %), the review also considered significant numbers of French (6%) and German (5%) documents, as well as documents in a range of other European languages. Indeed, in total, the research team identified relevant literature in 19 different European languages.

Documents were categorised using the following four main groups:

- **Policy EU:** Official documents produced by EU bodies, including resolutions, decisions, conclusions and proposals to advance the operational and/or legislative framework of the Programme; procedure documents, guides for host cities and information for applicant cities; public consultations on the future of the Programme; nomination and selection reports; and monitoring reports.
- **Host City:** Host City official materials offering significant information on their vision, strategic priorities, programming detail and intended (or achieved) outcomes, such as bidding documents, official programmes, and final reports.⁷
- **Evaluation:** Evaluation reporting dedicated to individual ECoC cities and evaluations of the ECoC Programme as a whole. Within this group, the study also distinguishes between evaluations commissioned by respective host cities and evaluations commissioned by external government bodies at European or national levels.
- **Academic:** Academic publications, published in refereed journals, as book chapters, monographs, conference proceedings, working papers, and PhD and Masters theses.

As Figure 2 demonstrates, academic literature was by far the most prevalent category of these groups, accounting for 220 documents (or 45 % of all material). 'Host City' documentation was the second most common type (with 22 % of all documents), followed by the 'Evaluation' (18 %) and 'Policy EU' categories (14 %).

⁷ This document type was extensive for host cities from 2000 onwards, once digitalisation had become commonplace. However, very few host city materials were accessible to the team for host cities in the 1980s and early 1990s. This did not pose a significant barrier to analysis, as the most relevant information about this period is compiled in the thorough 1994 study by John Myerscough covering host cities from 1985 to 1993.

Figure 2: Document volume by type

Source: ICC Document mapping

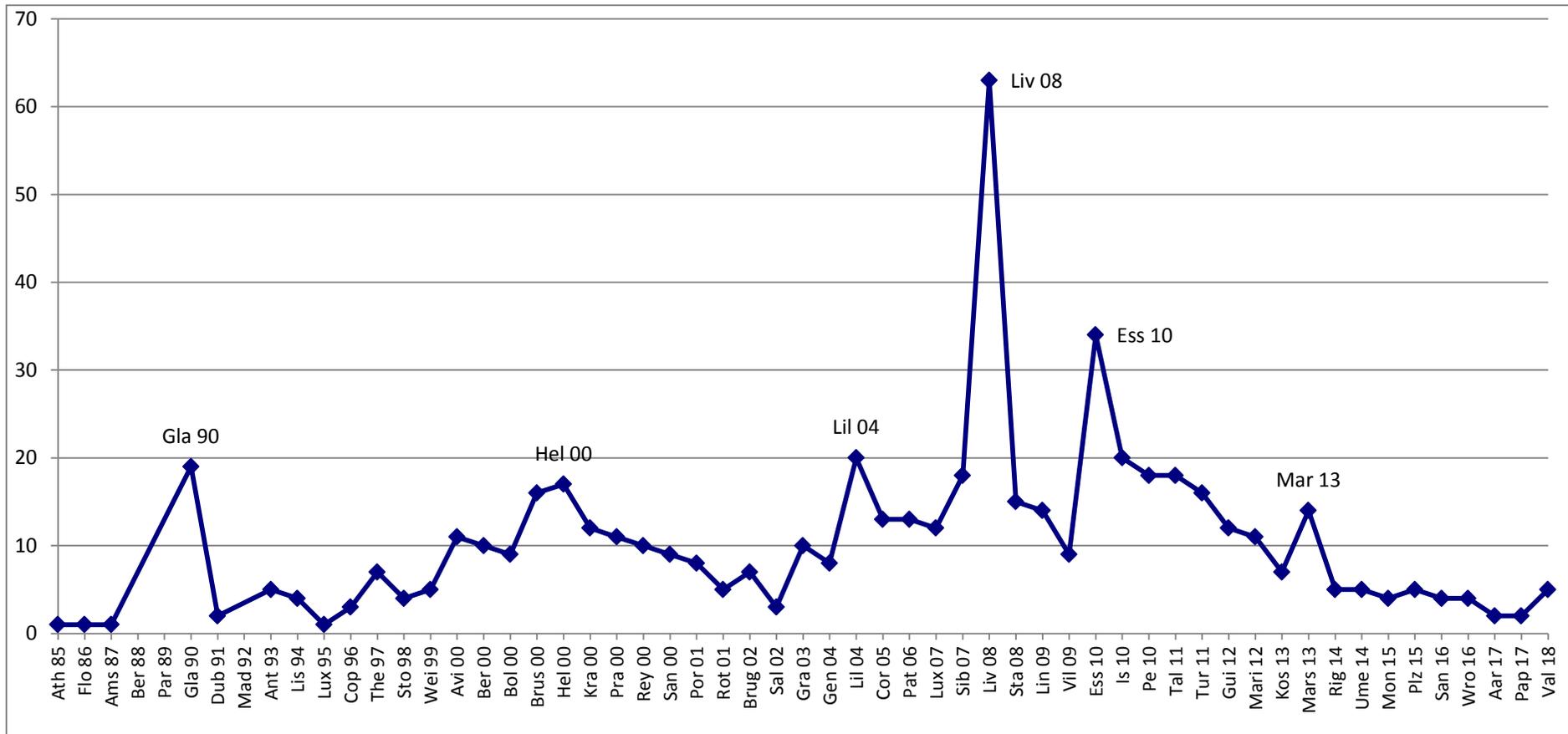
Distribution of documentation against respective ECoC cities

The material gathered as part of the document mapping covers all the past, present and future ECoC cities (See Appendix C for bibliographic listing per ECoC city). Individual documents were coded against each specific ECoC city that they referred to in a significant way (i.e. involving substantial focus on the ECoC year rather than just mentioning it in passing). It was not uncommon for documents to refer to more than one city within the same publication, with an overview or analysis of two to three cities being a recurrent focus for single publications. In such cases, documents were coded as covering several ECoC cities.

In terms of the distribution of references to specific ECoC host cities (see Figure 3), the main distinguishing features of the material collated are as follows:

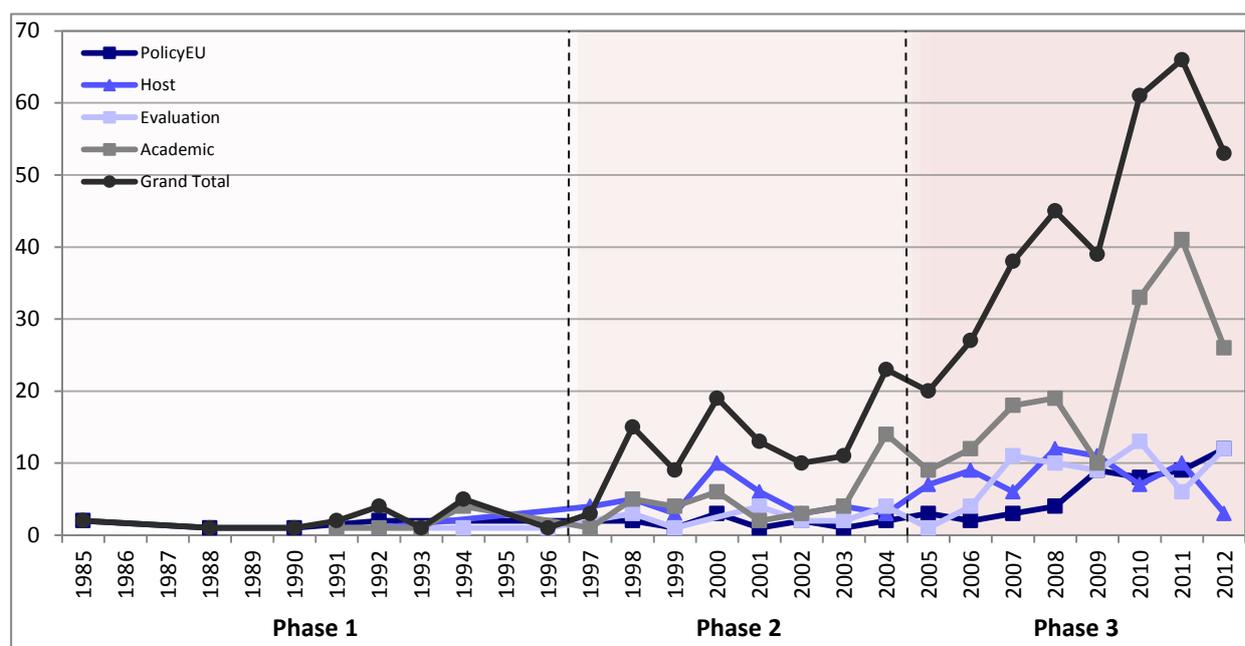
- There are dedicated publications on each ECoC city since 1985 except two: Paris 1989 and Madrid 1992. However, these cities are covered by overview documents, such as Myerscough (1994) and Palmer/Rae Associates (2004), and by overarching EU policy documentation from these periods.
- The single host city that gathered the most extensive range of dedicated publications is Liverpool 2008 and, more specifically, the evaluations and academic papers that were published in connection with it.
- The review identified EU policy documents, academic publications, dedicated evaluations and a good range of official host material across most cities. The only variations occur for cities pre-1995 (for which there are no dedicated evaluations and almost no host city material – the notable exception being Glasgow 1990) and cities post-2012 (see below).
- An average of 10 documents per city have been identified, with almost every city hosting the title from 2005 up to 2011 assessed by more than 10 documents each. As was to be expected, there is a lack of published evaluations and academic documents from 2012 onwards, due to the fact that the end of these ECoC years is either too recent or yet to occur (with actual assessment of impact therefore still to be conducted fully).

Figure 3: Document volume by ECoC city



Source: ICC Document mapping

Note: The graph above shows the total number of documents found offering significant data and analysis on specific ECoC cities. In the case of documents that look in detail into more than one case study at a time (e.g. a comparative study), such documents counts as one for each of the cities to which it refers. References in passing are not considered as a dedicated document count.

Figure 4: Document volume by type and publication year

Source: ICC Document mapping

Variations in the volume and type of documentation over time (see Figure 4), as well as the amount of attention paid to respective ECoC hosts (see Figure 3), support the view that there have been three distinct periods in the history of the ECoC initiative to date, as argued in Chapter 2. These distinctions have informed the document analysis, which has placed particular emphasis on cities hosting the title from 2005 onwards, but include reference to previous cities where relevant.

- 1985-1996:** As seen in Figure 4, this initial period did not produce many dedicated publications at the time. The few available materials are mostly EU policy documents and some early academic reflection, but the lack of dedicated evaluations is notable. Further, as is apparent in Figure 3, only 8.3 % of references are about host cities in this period, of which 40.8 % concern Glasgow 1990.⁸ Other ECoC hosts from this period for which there are detailed host city materials and academic assessments include Amsterdam 1987, Dublin 1991, Antwerp 1993 and Lisbon 1994.
- 1997-2004:** The second phase of the Programme saw a marked growth in contemporary publications, with evaluations becoming commonplace. Expectedly, the peak of host city publications was in 2000, when nine cities were awarded the title simultaneously. Independently of date of publication, 33.9 % of references are about ECoC hosts in this period, with most cities discussed by five or more different documents, and one, Lille in 2004, discussed by 20. All cities in this period are covered by EU policy documents, host city materials, commissioned evaluations and academic analysis.
- 2005-2018:** This is the period for which a larger variety of material is available, comprising 57.8% of identified documents, which make specific references to respective host cities, across all document typologies, and with 10 to 15 documents for most cities up to 2011. Liverpool 2008, Essen for the Ruhr 2010 and Istanbul 2010 stand out as

⁸ Note that a large majority of publications on Glasgow 1990 were not produced at the time, but years after, during the second and third Phases of the programme. This explains the divergence between the dominance of Glasgow 1990 as a subject of analysis in Figure 1, and the limited number of documents listed as published in 1990 and 1991 for Figure 2.

they are described or analysed by 20 or more dedicated documents respectively. In this last period, the growth in EU policy-related documents is also notable, including not only official guidelines, but also analytical material produced by the appointed Selection Committees or summaries and reflections on commissioned evaluations.

Common impact areas identified

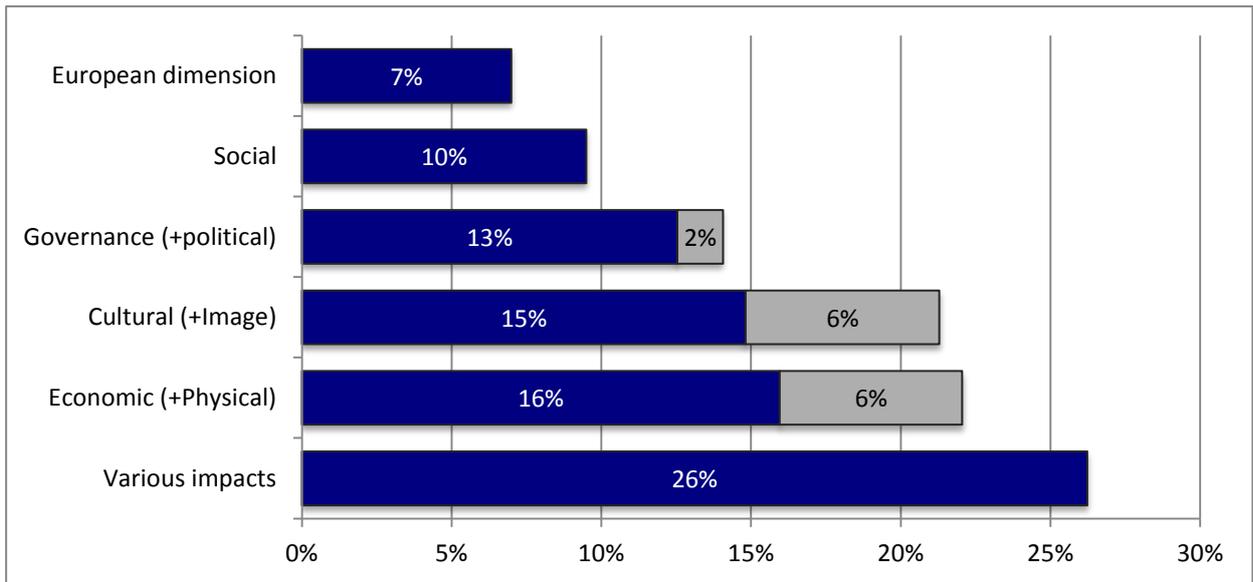
As requested in the original Terms of Reference, the literature review examined evidence of ECoC impacts across economic, social, cultural and policy spheres. By building on the experience of the *Impacts 08* programme, more specific areas of impact were identified – for instance, by distinguishing between generic ‘cultural impact’ discussion (e.g. on artistic practice and approaches to cultural programming) and specific discussion on image, or city positioning. The latter is a type of cultural impact that stands out and has become a common objective of host cities, particularly since the experience of Glasgow in 1990 and its then pioneering use of the title as a catalyst for urban regeneration. The study also distinguishes between political impacts and impacts on policy or governance approaches, with the latter being understood from a process and strategy point of view, and the former being linked to discussion on political inclinations (e.g. political party positioning or debates over left or right-wing narratives around the ECoC hosting process and its aftermath).

In order to determine the extent of evidence available on the chosen impact areas, documents including discussion on impact methodologies and actual data were coded accordingly. Coding was conducted in two rounds: firstly, the area of impact covered was determined on the basis of abstracts or executive summaries; secondly, the quality and relevance of data included was verified by full document reading.

Based on Figure 5, it is quite clear that some impact areas have been researched or discussed more thoroughly in the literature than others. The most dominant areas of discussion appear to be economic and cultural impacts, followed by discussion of governance and the social dimension (this applies to documents focused on single areas of impact as well as the majority of those coded as looking into ‘multiple impacts’).⁹ In contrast, there were relatively few entries identified through the literature review that were dedicated to discussing impacts on politics specifically. On the other hand, the degree of discussion on image can be considered significant, given that it is only one of many examples of cultural impact. It is also interesting to observe that the proportion of material discussing the European Dimension is higher than originally expected, given the fact that previous research suggests that this is an area not well explored by host cities up to 2004 (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004). Tellingly, the majority of these publications were published after 2005.

⁹ Please note: documents were coded by primary impact area and, where relevant, secondary impact areas were also noted. Documents coded as ‘multiple impacts’ were those placing similar level of emphasis on more than one impact area at a time. Typical examples of the latter are the comparative evaluations undertaken for European bodies, such as the Palmer/Rae 2004 report, the ECORYS reports and Selection Panel reports. In contrast, independent academic papers tend to focus on one area over the rest.

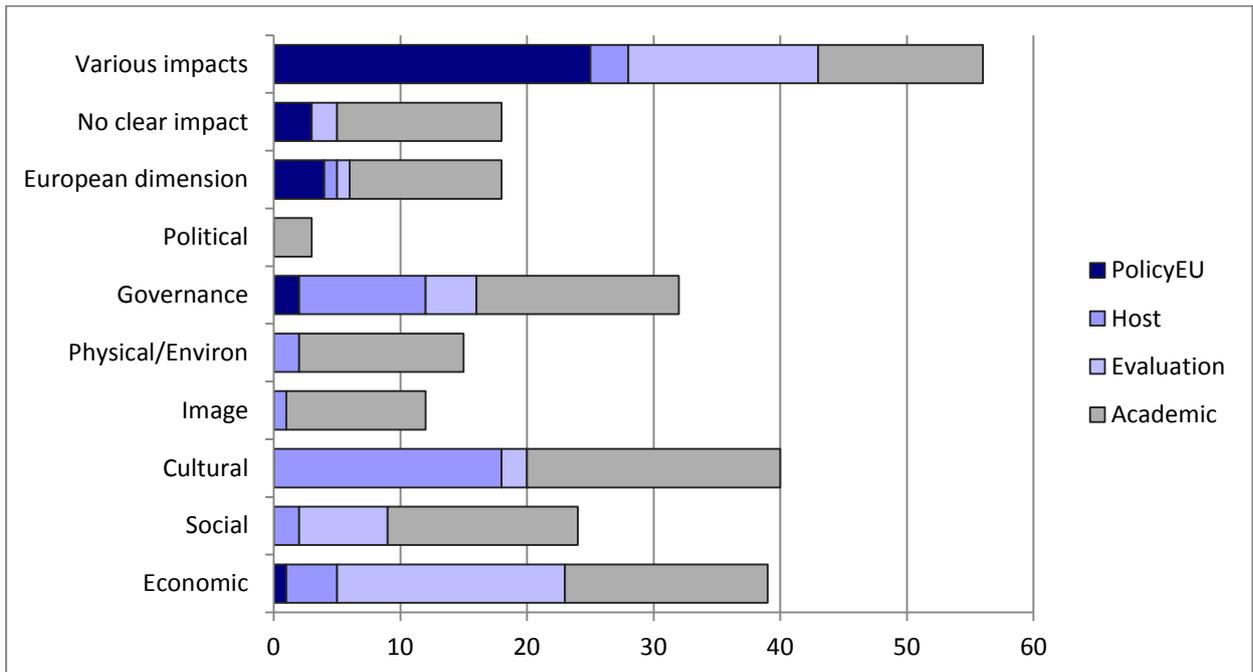
Figure 5: % publications by impact area



Source: ICC Document mapping

Finally, there were a number of discernible trends between document type and impact area, as Figure 6, below, demonstrates. Host city materials, for instance, were more likely to relate to the cultural and governance aspects of an ECoC, whereas most evaluations appear to focus mainly on the economic and, to a lesser extent, social aspects of an ECoC. Most discussion on the European Dimension, meanwhile, is divided between academic and Policy-EU documents.

Figure 6: Document volume by impact area and type



Source: ICC Document mapping

Primary research

This study employed two complementary primary research methods to assist in addressing aspects of the research questions for which the available literature is limited.

Expert workshops

Two workshops were conducted, each of which involved key team representatives plus seven acknowledged experts on the ECoC Programme from the worlds of policy (cultural, urban, social and economic), event and cultural management, academia, and consultancy. The workshops provided an opportunity to present early findings and seek reactions from key ECoC stakeholders, thereby helping to inform the study's full assessment and shape final recommendations.

- The **first workshop**, hosted in Liverpool, considered ways to exploit the potential of the ECoC initiative more efficiently and tackle challenges more effectively from a programming and organisational point of view. Special emphasis was also placed on the challenges and opportunities to better develop the European Dimension within respective cities. For this workshop, targeted contributors were researchers who have led comprehensive programmes of work on previous ECoCs or offered expert advice on the ECoC Programme, as well as practitioners who have led previous ECoCs (as general managers or artistic directors) and other large cultural events (see Appendix D1).
- The **second workshop** was hosted in Brussels and involved representatives from the EP, the European Commission, the ECoC Selection Panel and ECoC research think tanks. Issues discussed at the workshop included the impact of evaluations undertaken on behalf of the Commission (in particular, the Palmer/Rae 2004 report and subsequent ex-post ECoC evaluations), opportunities to develop the European Dimension, and updates on current policy and the legislative review for the Programme beyond 2019 (see Appendix D2).

Press media content analysis

- The analysis of ECoC-related press coverage has proven to be an invaluable source of qualitative and quantitative information for host cities such as Glasgow 1990 and Liverpool 2008. This study replicates part of the methodology developed to assess the evolving narratives of Glasgow 1990 over two decades (Garcia, 2005; Reason and Garcia, 2007) and the narrative of Liverpool 2008 from the bid stage onwards (Garcia, 2006; 2010). The objective of media content analysis, in the case of this study, was to capture and compare press clippings across different European countries, verify how long references to an ECoC are maintained within a particular host city after the event year is over, and determine whether hosting an ECoC has any impact on levels of interest in ECoC hosts in other countries.
- The scope of this exercise was dependent on the availability of long-run European press sources through reliable and fully-searchable electronic databases such as Lexis Nexis. As such, the analysis has focused on the only eight European countries to provide similar levels of access to newspapers for more than ten years in a row, and covers the period 2001-2012, which is the only period fully searchable. As described in more detail in Appendix E, the countries analysed are: France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the UK, and this required searching for variations of the phrase 'European Capital of Culture' in six different languages. These searches have brought 8,351 individual press clippings, the vast majority of which have been published in Germany and the UK, followed by the Netherlands, France, and Ireland.

Methodological challenges

Compiling a representative database of all published material relating to the ECoC Programme was a complex and time-consuming task. These difficulties were accentuated by the commitment of the study to collating several different types of document – each of variable quality and reliability – rather than just focusing on the refereed, English-language academic literature or documents officially sanctioned by EU organisations. Nevertheless, completing this exercise to the best ability of the research team was a key added value for the study. It enabled the team to argue with confidence about existing evidence and overarching trends, whilst at the same time creating greater certainty as to where the most significant knowledge gaps currently exist.

Some of the key challenges encountered during the document mapping exercise, which have influenced the structure of this study and its ability to address key research questions, are as follows:

- **Balancing a macro (meta-evaluation) and micro (dedicated ECoC city analysis) approach:** As this study is essentially a meta-evaluation of the ECoC Programme, its validity relies on retaining a comprehensive lens and ensuring as broad a perspective as possible on the overall Programme experience. Due to the greater availability of data for ECoC hosts from 2005 onwards, it is also possible to provide some closer analysis of the last phase of this Programme (referred to throughout as Phase 3 and characterised by a much clearer operational model and consistent monitoring framework). This is in line with the explicit request for the study to offer analysis of individual host cities from 2005 onwards. Given the resources and time available, this study is not focused on producing new evidence but, rather, on making the most of existing evidence and pointing at the most noticeable trends and problematic gaps in the material at hand.
- **Lack of actual evidence, particularly for long-term effects:** Many documents reflect an ambiguity or confusion as to what constitutes an actual impact, what counts as a long-term effect, and what is simply a strategy aimed at achieving these outcomes. While there has been a significant growth in awareness and commitment to attaining long-term effects, the evidence is rarely available. Instead, many reports and journal articles refer to 'impact' when in fact they are simply covering aspirations for impact, or strategies to achieve impact and legacy. Such distinctions are noted in the analysis of material throughout Chapter 5, which is dedicated to the assessment of short- and long-term effects. Moreover, where appropriate, data on aspirations (rather than actual impact) is presented as an example of strategic intent or objectives, and discussed as an example of a delivery approach or success strategy.
- **Access/availability of material:** Whilst there is an impressive volume of ECoC-related literature available online – both through free-to-access sources and subscription-only journals – there are nevertheless a number of lacunae in the material, most notably in the case of earlier ECoCs, for which little evidence is readily available. This scarcity of particular types of material compounds problems concerning the quality of available documents.

Aside from the above, the two most important challenges that have had a notable impact on the capacity of this study to provide comprehensive data analysis across the ECoC Programme are the quality and reliability of data and the comparability of data.

- **Quality and reliability of data:** An important goal of this study is to account for documents produced in as many European countries as possible, reflecting a wide range of academic, policy and practitioner backgrounds. Such an approach has allowed the identification of published materials on almost every single ECoC host city, and this, in itself, provides a rich source of information for identifying predominant and changing trends from a thematic point of view, across very different geographical and political

environments. However, the identification of topics or themes for discussion and analysis is not equivalent to a robust data and evidence base that can allow direct comparison and the establishment of reliable baselines. For instance, a range of publications were identified in which topics as diverse as approaches to volunteering and the value of creative entrepreneurship in ECoC host cities were discussed. However, in some instances, these documents – on occasion, academic publications – present dubious claims and are not supported by a well articulated methodology. In cases where the information presented outlines significant strategic intent, references have been used to inform qualitative research questions such as ‘Strategies and concepts developed to make the ECoC a success for individual cities’ (Chapter 4); but if claims around actual outcome have not been clearly justified, these have not been used as concrete evidence against the question ‘Discernible long-term effects’ (Chapter 5). (Indeed, in some cases, references were deemed to be invalid or unreliable and, as such, could not be included as part of the study.)

The problems relating to the quality and reliability of documents are a particular hindrance to interpreting and evaluating quantitative data (pertaining, for instance, to operational budgets, audience numbers, visitor figures and so on). In some cases, difficulties arise simply due to the failure of host cities to supply studies with full and accurate data, resulting in gaps in secondary data sets. However, in other cases, ECoC studies – particularly within the non-academic literature – are themselves guilty of poor presentation of data, with some lacking the basic source attribution and methodological notes required to explain *where* data has come from and *how* exactly it is being presented.¹⁰ Although data relating to different ECoC host cities can naturally be very difficult to reconcile (see the Bullet Point, below, on the comparability of data), further problems are also created by the failure of some studies to render their data in a way that is as comparable and standardised as it could be.

- **Comparability of data:** It is not straightforward to compare data from different ECoCs. European cities have been hosting the ECoC event for almost 30 years, across every corner of the continent, and these dynamic variables of time and location naturally make like-for-like comparisons between host cities difficult. With financial data, for instance, the effect of inflation over time obviously renders the comparison of different ECoC budget figures less and less meaningful. Similarly important are the purchasing power disparities between different European states, which effectively allow some cities to ‘buy’ more culture with the same nominal amount of money. Clearly, without adjustment for these phenomena, the capacity to provide adequate analysis is limited; yet, it is noteworthy that very few studies have ever made these adjustments.

As there is no requirement for host cities to report data in a standardised format, this has also created a great deal of variation in the data that is available. Some of this variation stems, as one would expect, from the different schemes that host cities devise to *gather* and *organise* their data. When, for instance, host cities decide to conduct surveys of the general public in their cities, the questions and sampling approaches used are almost invariably different, to varying degrees. Equally, when ECoC delivery agencies *publish* the data they have amassed, there are also various, starkly contrasting ways in which this can be done (as is evident from an examination of data relating to expenditure and event totals in different ECoC). To some extent, these variations are likely to be attributable to the essential contestability of many of the terms and concepts commonly used in relation to the ECoC Programme. By way of illustration: what one ECoC host city administration considers to be an item of ‘programme expenditure’ could quite easily be classified by another ECoC as a

¹⁰ The task of researching the ECoC initiative is made especially problematic when *both* of these issues combine – resulting in the circulation of dubious figures by existing studies, without any of the necessary caveats attached.

'promotion and marketing' expense or something entirely different altogether; similarly, a 'project' for one ECoC might equate to an entire 'programme' for another ECoC.

1.3. Structure of the report

The study is organised into an introduction (Chapter 1), five analytical chapters and a recommendations chapter. The chapters are structured to respond to the main research questions, as noted below, and are complemented by a range of technical and analytical appendices, which offer more detailed insights on the range of methodologies used and the material accessed to support this work.

Table 2: Report structure

CHAPTER	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Chapter 2: History and development	1) How did the "European Capital of Culture" initiative come into being, what changes has it undergone, and what are its constitutive elements?
Chapter 3: Bidding approaches	2) What trends and common patterns, if any, can be discerned with regard to successful applicant cities since 1985?
Chapter 4: Delivery approaches and success strategies	3) What different strategies and concepts have been developed and used to make the ECoC a success for the individual cities both in the short and long term?
Chapter 5: Short- and long-term effects	4) What are the discernible long-term effects connected with the ECoC status in terms of cultural, economic, social, and political aspects?
Chapter 6: Common challenges and areas of opportunity	5) What are the main obstacles ECoC hosts faced in the past, and which similarities and differences can be identified? I. What are the opportunities and challenges for the ECoC Programme to have a genuine European Dimension in respective host cities? II. Is there any clearly discernible impact of the ECoC initiative on cultural life and exchange at the European level? III. Did the Palmer/Rae Study of 2004 have any significant impact in terms of policy-making and the organisation of later ECoCs? IV. Have any 'best practices' been developed and used outside Europe for similar cultural events/ initiatives which might be meaningfully applied?
Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations	6) What recommendations can be given to exploit the potential of the ECoC initiative more efficiently and tackle challenges more effectively, both at the level of programming and organisation? 7) Are there suggestions for concrete policy and legislative action to be taken?

1.4. Conventions

Throughout this study, references to the ECoC event or ECoC organisation are presented using the name of the host city and the event year. Some hosts, particularly those involving wider regional partners, have changed their official denomination from the bid stage onwards. This was the case for the Ruhr 2010, which was originally named Essen 2010, and then Essen for the Ruhr 2010. Throughout this report, the latter denomination is used. In the case of Marseille, the official event name is Marseille-Provence 2013. In the case of Luxembourg and Greater Region 2007, for simplicity purposes, the reference throughout this report is Luxembourg GR 2007. Please note that where discussion relates to the city rather than the ECoC event, organisation or hosting process, the city name is used without a link to the event year.

2. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

2.1. Introduction

This Chapter addresses the question:

- How did the 'European Capital of Culture' initiative come into being, what changes has it undergone, and what are its constitutive elements?

The Chapter offers an overview of the development of the ECoC Programme, since its launch in 1985 to its present legislative framework, which is committed to run up until 2019. It identifies key milestones in the development of the Programme and ends with a brief reference to current policy revisions.

2.2. Emergence of the European Capital of Culture initiative

The European Capital of Culture initiative has evolved considerably since its inception in 1985 as the European City of Culture, and is now one of the best-known EU initiatives. Yet, the very fact that the Programme was conceived in the 1980s – at a time when the European Community (EC) had no legislative basis to act at the level of cultural policy – is quite remarkable in itself. As Gold and Gold (2005: 221) point out, the EC was originally created to focus specifically on economic matters, with no explicit provision for culture in the Treaty of Rome of 1957. However, with the continuation of economic integration, the eligibility of other policy areas for action at a European level was gradually reconsidered. As Langen (2010: 73) explains, the first actions of the EC in the cultural field “can be understood in the context of the lack of public support for the European project, which had been a growing concern for the Community since the 1970s”. Among the initiatives undertaken to address this problem was the appointment, in 1984, of the Adonnino Committee, which considered various measures to stimulate citizens’ identification with Europe (eventually resulting in the *People’s Europe* campaign). While culture had not been mentioned specifically in the mandate of the Committee, it nonetheless concluded that culture was “essential to European identity and the Community’s image in the minds of its people” (Adonnino, cited in Langen, 2010: 74). Subsequently, culture increasingly became seen as a way to “relaunch the European project” (Gold and Gold, 2005: 222).

It was against this background that the European Capital of Culture initiative came into being, with the actual idea of designating a European city as a “Cultural City of Europe” first put forward by the Greek Culture Minister, Melina Mercouri, during one of the early informal meetings of the Ministers of Culture in Athens in November 1983. Mercouri argued that culture had to be given equal weight to trade and economics (which had been the main focus of the EC until that time), and she emphasised the important role of culture within the European project, specifically in relation to advancing European integration. As a result of Mercouri’s proposal, on June 13, 1985, the Culture Ministers of the EC established the European City of Culture as an annual event intended “to help bring the peoples of the Member States closer together” (Council Resolution 85/C 153/02). The scheme involved the selection of one European City each year to be awarded the title of European City of Culture (ECoC), with the primary aim of the initiative being to “highlight the cultural wealth and diversity of the cities of Europe whilst emphasising their shared cultural heritage and the vitality of the arts.” (*ibid.*)

Over the last 28 years, the ECoC initiative has far outgrown its original goal, evolving into a versatile and highly coveted development tool that encourages and has proven capable of achieving a number of objectives, not only for the EU, but also for the host cities themselves (see summary objectives in the Box below). Indeed, from its origins as a largely symbolic intergovernmental initiative with no legislative framework, the Programme

has developed into a well-established action of the EU with a far clearer operational and legal framework, which offers host cities the opportunity to boost local regeneration efforts and improve their image both nationally and internationally.

Box 1: The purpose of the ECoC initiative

The European Capitals of Culture initiative was set up to:

- Highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures
- Celebrate the cultural ties that link Europeans together
- Bring people from different European countries into contact with each other's culture and promote mutual understanding
- Foster a feeling of European citizenship

In addition, studies have shown that the event is a valuable opportunity to:

- Regenerate cities
- Give new vitality to their cultural life
- Raise their international profile, boost tourism and enhance their image in the eyes of their own inhabitants

Source: European Commission (2013)

In the following Section, the many changes and developments to the Programme during its first three decades are explored in more detail.

2.3. Development of the Programme

The development of the ECoC Programme up until the current period can be divided into three main Phases, with the beginning of each new Phase generally characterised by the formal application of changes made to the operational procedures of the Programme. However, there is some overlap between the different Phases due to the fact that, since the 1990s, cities are appointed well in advance of their title year, with any subsequent legislative changes to the Programme unable to be implemented retroactively. The dates of key legislative developments cannot be seen as actual 'Phases' as what matters is the time from which actions can actually be implemented – that is, the ECoC year from which they are effective. Such developments do still fit, largely, within the three main Phases identified, with the only exceptions of developments published in 1992, 2005 and 2006, which introduced specific modifications affecting cities in the latter part of Phases 2 and 3 respectively. Current developments in preparation of the new action (post-2019) will be treated as constituting the beginning of Phase 4.

The following Table presents a list of all ECoC host cities organised against each of the Programme's main Phases, including reference to the time of application of key operational and/or legislative developments.

Table 3: Key phases in the ECoC Programme evolution

Phases	Host cities	ECoC policies and European policy milestones	
Phase 1 1985-1996 12 cities (1 for each Member State)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athens 1985 • Florence 1986 • Amsterdam 1987 • Berlin 1988 • Paris 1989 • Glasgow 1990 • Dublin 1991 • Madrid 1992 • Antwerp 1993 • Lisbon 1994 • Luxembourg 1995 • Copenhagen 1996 	<p>1985: Launch of the ECoC as annual event (Resolution 85/C/153/02)</p> <p>1990: Launch of the <i>European Culture Month</i> event, to be hosted by cities in non-EC countries between 1992-2003</p> <p>1992: The <i>Maastricht Treaty</i> provides the legislative basis for further EC contribution to European culture (Article 128).</p> <p>1996: Launch of the <i>Kaleidoscope</i> programme, incorporating the existing ECoC action (Decision 719/96/EC).</p>	<p>1983: Informal proposal to Ministers of Culture</p> <p>1990: Conclusion 90/C 162/01</p> <p>1992: Conclusion 92/C336/02</p>
Phase 2 1997-2004 19 cities 2 non-EU members (<i>in italics</i>) 2 accession countries (<u>underlined</u>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thessaloniki 1997 • Stockholm 1998 • Weimar 1999 • Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, <u>Kraków</u>, Helsinki, <u>Praque</u>, Reykjavík, Santiago de Compostela 2000 • Rotterdam & Porto 2001 • Bruges & Salamanca 2002 • Graz 2003 • Genoa & Lille 2004 	<p>1997: Start of new ECoC cycle, allowing designation of cities in non-Member states as ECoC (Conclusion 90/C 162/01)</p> <p>1998: First application of Selection Criteria and bidding deadlines (introduced by: Conclusion 92/C336/02)</p> <p>2000: <i>Culture 2000</i> replaces the <i>Kaleidoscope</i> programme. ECoC remains under the umbrella of the new culture programme, as part of its third action strand for 'special cultural events with a European and/or international dimension (Decision 508/2000/EC).</p> <p>2004: Enlargement of EU with 10 new member states leads to much broader diversity in ECoC host cities.</p>	<p>1999: Decision 1419/1999/EC</p>
Phase 3 2005-2019 29 cities 2 non-EU members (<i>in italics</i>) 10 new EU members (<u>underlined</u>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cork 2005 • Patras 2006 • Luxembourg GR & Sibiu 2007 • Liverpool and Stavanger 2008 • Linz & <u>Vilnius</u> 2009 • Essen for the Ruhr, <u>Pécs</u> & Istanbul 2010 • Tallinn & Turku 2011 • Guimarães & <u>Maribor</u> 2012 • Marseille-Provence & <u>Košice</u> 2013 	<p>2005: Application of First legislative framework, establishes ECoC as a Community Action ; rotational system is established ; nomination must include projects with a European Dimension (Decision 1419/1999/EC)</p> <p>2009: New EU Member States included in the rota (<u>underlined</u>) (Decision 649/2005/EC)</p> <p>2010: Application of changes to Selection Criteria ; distinction between 'European Dimension' and 'Cities and Citizens' as two aspects of the Action (Decision 1622/2006/EC)</p>	<p>2005: Decision 649/2005/EC</p> <p>2006: Decision 1622/2006/EC</p>
Upcoming cities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Umeå & Riga 2014; Mons & <u>Plzeň</u> 2015; San Sebastián & <u>Wrocław</u> 2016; <u>Aarhus</u> & Paphos 2017; <u>Valletta</u> & Leeuwarden 2018; Italy & <u>Bulgaria</u> (cities TBC) 2019 			

Source: ICC elaboration

Phase 1: 1985-1996

As noted, the European City of Culture Programme was established in 1985 in the form of a Ministerial Resolution (Resolution 85/C/153/02). As a purely intergovernmental activity, the Programme operated outside the existing legislative framework for European Community actions, which did not yet provide any room for actions in the field of culture.

In its original conception, the 12 established EC Member States were allocated the title in turn, and each State nominated a city to organise the event each year, with many being given less than two years' notice. The UK was the first country to propose a national competition and offer four years' leading time to plan the event.

To start with, designated cities concentrated their artistic and cultural programming on established (or 'high') art. In these inaugural years, programmes often had to be organised with limited finances and planning time, which resulted in a concentration of activities in the summer months, mainly around the existing city festival season. In the 1990s, however, with the benefit of longer planning times, organisers moved towards year-long programming. Furthermore, the wider benefits – in particular, the economic benefits – of hosting the city/capital of culture title became more apparent as a result of Glasgow 1990, which was the first city to incorporate the title into a long-term economic and urban regeneration strategy (Garcia, 2003; 2004c; 2005). Following Glasgow's 1990 appointment and success, which became iconic of a new wave of post-industrial culture-led regeneration initiatives, it became more common to appoint cities that were not regarded as already established cultural centres – as can be seen in the choice of cities for Phase 2 of the Programme. The main realisation over this period was that the ECoC Programme, rather than just acting as an award for past achievements, could operate instead as a platform to encourage additional cultural development and/or reposition urban environments.

In 1990, the Council of Ministers decided on the future of the Programme for the period beginning in 1997, the year after a 'first cycle' of host cities from all 12 EC Member States was due to be completed (Conclusion 90/C 162/01). Its application is presented under the next Phase. Further, in response to the increasing popularity of the ECoC initiative (both within the EC and the non-EC countries of Central and Eastern Europe), under the same Conclusion, the Council decided "to open up the nominations to other European countries basing themselves on the principle of democracy, pluralism and the rule of law" (*ibid.*). This was a notable change to the rules governing the Programme to that date, and resulted in the *European Cultural Month* scheme, which started with immediate effect in 1992, and continued until 2003. Roughly modelled on the ECoC, *European Cultural Month* was organised in a different non-EC country every year, in addition to, rather than in competition with, the ECoC title holder. Between 1992 and 1996, five cities hosted a Cultural Month.¹¹

Phase 2: 1997-2004

While the 1990 Conclusion mentioned above did not alter the aims of the Programme in its second Phase, 1992 saw the Cultural Ministers introducing new procedures in the form of another Conclusion (Conclusion 92/C 336/02). This involved the introduction of selection criteria, as well as a clear outline of bidding deadlines for cities wishing to apply for the Programme. The selection criteria were designed to secure a balance between capital and provincial cities, EU cities and non-EU cities, and different geographical zones across Europe. Not surprisingly, the process led to strong advocacy and lobbying on the part of candidates but, clearly, such an approach guaranteed broad geographical diversity and balance, as can be appreciated in the Tables presented in Section 2.4 (Geographic and demographic characteristics of host cities).

¹¹ These were: Kraków 1992, Graz 1993, Budapest 1994, Nicosia 1995 and St. Petersburg 1996.

The Ministerial Conclusion can be seen as a significant step forward in creating a framework for the ECoC initiative in general. Further development of this action was facilitated by another significant advance in the early 1990s, when, for the first time, specific references to culture were included in the EC Treaty. In particular, Article 128 of the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 represented a turning point for cultural policy at a European level, allowing culture to move further up the European agenda. For the first time, the EU was able to act more proactively within the sphere of cultural policy, by contributing to cultural exchange across Europe and promoting the common European cultural heritage:

The [European] Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore (Article 128, Maastricht Treaty, 1992).

One of the results of this newly established legal basis for community action in the field of culture was the creation of a first generation of long-term cultural programmes from 1995 onwards. In 1996, the ECoC Programme and the *European Cultural Month* scheme were incorporated into the new *Kaleidoscope* programme, dedicated to "encourage artistic and cultural creation and to promote knowledge and dissemination of the culture and cultural life of the European peoples" (Decision No. 719/96/EC, Art.1). While this meant that both actions were funded through a Community programme, both remained intergovernmental actions, which meant that they continued to fall within the remit of the Council of Ministers exclusively. This practice was changed in 1999, when a separate Community action was created, as discussed below.

A distinct feature of this Phase is that in the year 2000, the title was conferred on all cities presenting an application, nine in total, including those that would have normally been considered under the *European Cultural Month* scheme. Presented as a symbolic choice, reflecting the "special significance of the year",¹² the decision to appoint more than one host city for the first time established a precedent that was to be repeated for many subsequent ECoC editions in following years (e.g. 2001, 2002 and 2004). With Bergen, Kraków, Prague and Reykjavik all designated as title holders, 2000 was also the first year in which cities from non-EC countries were appointed as ECoCs – although, for most cities outside of the EC with similar titular aspirations, designation under the *European Cultural Month* scheme remained a more realistic goal during this period. Between 1997 and 2003 (after which the scheme was abolished), an additional seven cities organised a *European Cultural Month*.¹³

Phase 3: 2005-2019

Significant changes to the Programme were introduced in 1999 affecting ECoC host cities from 2005 onwards. Oerters and Mittag (2008) argue that these were driven by several trends:

- Throughout the 1990s, the Programme secured greater public awareness and cities became more interested in applying to be European City of Culture. As such, the need for a clearer selection process became more pressing.
- The Maastricht Treaty in 1993 had established a legal basis for the EU to deliver policies directed at the cultural sector. The culture article in the Treaty highlighted cultural diversity across the EU and encouraged cultural cooperation between EU countries and

¹² However, some observers (see, for instance, Sassatelli 2009: 111) have argued that the decision was more likely a consequence of the failure to reach an agreement on a preferred candidate.

¹³ These were: Ljubljana 1997; Linz and Valletta 1998; Plovdiv 1999; Basel and Riga 2001; and St. Petersburg 2003.

third countries, recognising the common cultural heritage across Europe. This article provided a way to establish a legal basis for the ECoC Programme as well.

- Criticism had been voiced regarding “unprofessional preparations and unsuccessful arrangements in some cultural capitals”, which prompted calls for the introduction of clear regulations to ensure the quality and sustainability of the initiative (Oerters and Mittag, 2008: 76).

In May 1999, through a joint Decision of the European Parliament and the Council, a legislative framework was introduced for the Programme for the first time, establishing it as a Community action for the years 2005 to 2019 (Decision 1419/1999/EC). Although the name of the action was officially changed to ‘European *Capital* of Culture’, the purpose remained the same, i.e. “to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens” (Decision 1419/99/EC, Art.1). The new Decision underlined the symbolic importance of the event, as well as its importance for strengthening local and regional identity and fostering European integration.

Decision 1419/1999/EC established a rotational system of designation, in which, each year, one Member State was allocated the title. The countries invited to host the event for a given year were expected to propose cities and submit applications (including cultural programmes for the year) to a European Selection Panel, which then passed on its recommendation to the European Commission. This new system was introduced in order to ensure that each Member State had one of its cities chosen at regular intervals. Furthermore, the Decision officially allowed the European Parliament to voice its opinion on the selection procedure. Although the Council remained formally responsible for the final designation, this was a significant departure from former practice, in which the Commission appointed cities on the basis of decisions made by the Ministers responsible for cultural affairs within the Council.

The new legal basis also set out clear guidelines for the Selection Panel, which was responsible for recommending a candidate city to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council. In this Phase, it remained the Commission’s responsibility to form a panel but each European institution would nominate independent experts from the cultural sector to be part of the panel: two nominations by the Commission, two by the European Parliament, two by the Council and one by the Committee of the Regions (making seven in total). This represented a much more transparent selection process compared to previous selections and nominations.

The newly established procedure stipulated that, four years before the event is due to begin, the appointed Member State would send a nomination or nominations, possibly accompanied by a recommendation, to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions. After this, the Selection Panel issued a report on the nomination(s). No later than three months after receiving this report, Parliament was to forward an opinion to the Commission, which was then to draw up a recommendation in light of Parliament’s opinion and the Selection Panel’s report. In the final stage, it would fall to the Council to designate an ECoC for the year in question.

In 1999, it was also decided that the nomination must include a cultural project with a European Dimension, based principally on cultural cooperation, in accordance with the objectives and action provided for by Article 151 of the Treaty (formerly Article 128). The Decision document indicated that this project could be organised in association with other European cities. The application had to specify how, within the scope allowed by the theme, the applicant city intended to:

- Highlight artistic movements and styles shared by Europeans that it has inspired or to which it has made a significant contribution

- Promote events involving people active in culture from other cities in Member States of the European Union and leading to lasting cultural cooperation, and to foster their movement within the European Union
- Ensure the mobilisation and participation of large sections of the population
- Encourage the reception of citizens of the European Union and reach as wide an audience as possible by employing a multimedia, multilingual approach
- Promote dialogue between European cultures and those from other parts of the world
- Exploit the historic heritage, urban architecture and quality of life in the city (Decision 1419/1999/EC, Article 3)

The planning and evaluation criteria for applicant cities, stated in Annex II to the Decision, also stipulated that cities must: organise a programme of cultural events that not only highlights the city's own cultural heritage, but also its place within the common European cultural heritage; and encourage artistic innovation and generate new forms of cultural action and dialogue. Specific attention here was to be paid to encouraging the involvement of young people and organising specific cultural projects designed to increase social cohesion, whilst the programme was also expected to contribute to the development of economic activity (particularly in terms of employment and tourism), and encourage the development of links between architectural heritage and strategies for new urban development. All of these criteria combined were very much in line with the general objectives of *Culture 2000*, the follow-up programme to *Kaleidoscope*, within which the ECoC Programme was firmly established under its Third Action section, dealing with "special cultural events with a European and/or international dimension".

The EU enlargement in 2004 made it necessary to make new amendments to the legal basis. The legal framework was therefore amended in 2005 to fully integrate new Member States into the set rota for hosting the ECoC title (Decision 649/2005/EC). For the period 2009-2019, new Member States were included in the rota and the Programme was officially amended to appoint two ECoCs each year: one from the old and one from the new Member States. Decision 1419/1999/EC reaffirmed the earlier Decision of the Council that the Programme was to be open for cities from all European countries, including non-Member countries (which remained the case up until 2010). This opened the door for countries such as Romania (Sibiu 2007), Norway (Stavanger 2008) and Turkey (Istanbul 2010) to host the ECoC title, in addition to the entitled Member States.

Further changes to the selection process were made in 2006, when a new Decision introduced an extended framework for the Selection and (now) Monitoring Panel, as well as an outline for the application process and the criteria for a candidate's cultural programme. Decision 1622/2006/EC repealed the old Decision 1419/1999/EC, although the old rules continued to apply to the cities designated for 2007, 2008 and 2009. The Decision refined the Programme's objectives, introduced a two-stage national competition and determined that the Selection and Monitoring Panel was extended from seven members to 13. In addition to the seven members selected by the EU institutions, as set out in the previous Decision, Member States who were due to host the title were asked to nominate six experts in consultation with the European Commission. Additionally, the responsibility of the Panel was broadened to include monitoring the progress of the selected ECoC in the run up to the title year, making this a condition to receive financial support. Since 2010, all designated cities have been submitted to this monitoring phase.

In 2013, the Panel continues to play a monitoring role following the designation of the title to assess the progress of the ECoC and monitor, in particular, aspects of the European Dimension of the title. The criteria for the city's cultural programme are explicitly outlined under two headings: 'European dimension' and 'City and citizens' (Decision 1622/2006/EC, article 4). While the former builds on the established criteria, as outlined in Decision 1419/1999/EC, (in particular Article 3), the 'City and citizens' heading outlines for the first time the need for each city's programme to be sustainable and orientated towards achieving long-term benefits for the people of the city. The core aim of such programmes,

however, remains the same and aspires to put the European Citizen, as well as European culture, at the heart of the initiative.

Phase 4: 2020-2033

The current basis for the ECoC Programme, Decision 1622/2006/EC, runs until 2019. During the previous two years, preparations for the future of the Programme have been ongoing. On 20 July 2012, the European Commission published a legislative proposal to establish a new action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033, which would provide an updated legal basis and operational framework for the current action. As stated in the Commission's proposal, the general objectives of the new action should be to:

- Safeguard and promote the diversity of European cultures, and to highlight the common features they share.
- Foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities (European Commission, 2012: 10).

The Commission proposes to retain the main features and structure of the current action:

- The title will continue to be awarded on the basis of a rotational system of designation, using a chronological list of Member States, in order to ensure equal opportunity for all Member States, as well as a geographical balance.
- The title is awarded to cities exclusively, although cities will be allowed to involve their surrounding region in the year.
- To ensure a strong European Dimension, the title is awarded on the basis of a cultural programme created specifically for the year.
- The two-stage selection process, led by a panel of independent European experts, will be continued, as it is seen to be fair and transparent.
- The title will continue to be awarded for one full year.

In order to address some of the main difficulties experienced in the current Programme, the Commission proposed the introduction of the following changes:

- Selection criteria have been made more explicit and more measurable, in order to provide more guidance to candidate cities and help the experts in the Selection and Monitoring Panels. The criteria have been divided into six categories: 'long-term strategy', 'capacity to deliver', 'cultural and artistic content', 'European Dimension', 'outreach' and 'management'.
- The Panel is explicitly not obliged to give a positive recommendation if none of the bids fulfil the stated criteria; this point has been added specifically to address concerns regarding the limited number of credible candidates in certain Member States.
- Changes have been made to the rules for the Melina Mercouri Prize, the grant which is awarded to the designated city (see also Section 2.4 below). The conditionality of the prize has been reinforced, and it will no longer be paid in advance of the year of the title, but during the middle of the year itself to ensure that cities keep to their commitments.
- Additional support and guidance will be provided to cities during the preparation period, including an additional monitoring meeting, systematic visits to the cities by panel members, and the exchange of experience and best practices between past, present and future (candidate) ECoCs.
- To address the lack of evaluation and comparable data, new evaluation obligations are to be introduced for the cities. This should also contribute to the transfer of experience.
- The action is proposed to be reopened for (potential) candidate countries, through an open competition organised every three years.

In November 2012, the proposal was discussed at Working Party level within the Council of Ministers. Although the Council was supportive of the proposal overall, some delegations expressed concerns with specific aspects, which appeared to weaken the involvement and responsibility of the Member States. For instance, there were concerns regarding the panel of independent experts, which in the Commission's proposal would no longer be composed of experts from the Member State hosting the title, but would instead be appointed by EU institutions from a pool of candidates established by the Commission. Additional concerns were raised regarding the feasibility of some of the criteria, the reopening of the action to non-EU countries, changes proposed in relation to the awarding of the Melina Mercouri Prize, and the fact that the Council would lose its final role in designating the city to hold the title (Council of the European Union, 2012).

Within the European Parliament, the proposal is currently awaiting first reading. A first draft report has been discussed and voted upon by the CULT Committee. The Rapporteur to the CULT Committee, Marco Scurria, welcomed, in particular, the fact that the two-stage selection process was retained, that certain improvements had been made to the evaluation system, and that the action was to be opened up to non-EU cities. Scurria also suggested, however, potential improvements in relation to a number of other issues, including the strengthening of the criteria regarding the European Dimension, the involvement of local civil society, the sustainability of the year, the inclusion of Member State experts on the European panel, and greater clarity over the Commission's role in establishing the panel. Overall, for this new Phase, the majority of proposed changes are mainly of an operational rather than legal nature.

Proceedings with the Council and European Parliament run parallel and are currently still underway. The new Decision is to be adopted by the end of 2013, in order to ensure sufficient preparation time for new candidates for the title from 2020 onwards.

2.4. Some notable changes in the Programme's focus and scope

As discussed in the previous Section, the ECoC initiative has evolved considerably in size and importance since its inception in the 1980s. This metamorphosis has provided greater opportunities for host cities to make choices that can bring short- and long-term benefits, but has also brought with it an elevated level of risk and responsibility. With the increased profile of the initiative, the stakes for cities are getting higher and higher, all the more so because of the increased expectation that culture can act as a lever for the economic development and transformation of cities and regions. Many cities now realise that if they are to reap all of the cultural, social and economic benefits that can potentially result from the title, it is essential to embed the title year and its cultural programme within a long-term, culture-led development strategy upon which stakeholders have agreed. This is corroborated by Palmer and Richards (2009), who observe a shift over time, from a traditional arts festival framework mainly relying on existing activity and infrastructure, towards more multifaceted and purpose-specific ECoC programmes that are tied to broader cultural, social and economic goals.

The move from a traditional festival model into a year-long designation approach occurred early on in the Programme, although particularly since the 1990s. Despite the fact that the original terms for an application were kept deliberately vague, with the interpretation of the scheme being left very much to the designated cities, there have been some important commonalities in the Programme's progression over time, which are reflected in the current (far more specific) legislative and operational framework. The key commonality is that, for the most part, the ECoC title has not been treated as a one-off arts festival but rather as an opportunity to reflect on the cultural identity and aspirations of respective host cities relating them to their local and national, as well as European, context. In this latter sense, dialogue and public participation are considered to be key elements for opening up debate and the understanding of culture's contribution to city life and its future.

As Gold and Gold (2005: 223) note, the strength of the ECoC initiative lies in its ability to involve stakeholders at many levels (thus making the European project more 'relevant' to the public), as well as its adaptability and the fact that it requires relatively modest levels of financial resources. Further, Bergsgard and Vassenden (2011: 305) argue that the success of the Programme depends:

partly on (1) the high degree of leverage exerted by both the cities and the European Commission; (2) the financial collaboration between local, regional and national authorities and the EU, which substantially increased the cultural funding; and (3) the possibility to embrace a range of policy aims, from cultural ones to urban regeneration, social cohesion and image change.

In addition to the historical overview given in the preceding sections, the sections below offer an overview of some key developments to the ECoC Programme, including the evolution of Programme objectives, changes in the geography and demography of host cities, changes in funding patterns and the increasing emphasis on evaluations in relation to the sustainability of the ECoC actions. These topics are also discussed in greater detail in the remainder of this study.

Broadening Programme objectives

From the outset, the ECoC initiative was set up to celebrate both the diversity and the commonalities of European cultures, an objective that has been eventually phrased around three main core goals: "highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures"; "celebrate the cultural ties that link Europe together"; and "bring people from different European countries into contact with each other's culture and promote cultural understanding" (European Commission, 2013). These goals have been refined over time to better align with Article 151 of the EC Treaty. As indicated by the European Commission in its response to the first round of centrally commissioned ECoC ex-post evaluations:

The implementation of the [ECoC] action had been relevant to Article 151 of the EC Treaty: the objectives of 'developing cultural activities' and 'promoting the European dimension of and through culture' have featured strongly in the Action (European Commission, 2010b: 4).

Although these core objectives have remained throughout the Programme, ECoC hosts have committed to additional priority areas – thus, effectively broadening up the ECoC remit beyond the explicit priorities of the EC Treaty. ECORYS and other authors define this a "third broad objective", as described by the Commission below:

it appears [...] that cities holding the ECOC title have over the years adopted a third broad objective that evaluators have defined as 'supporting social and economic development through culture' although such an objective does not explicitly feature in Article 151 of the Treaty. (European Commission, 2010b: 4)

This 'broadening-out' approach, apparently taking the initiative away from the initially more tightly-focused Programme goals, is commonly associated with Glasgow 1990. Gold and Gold (2005: 225) note that "Glasgow 1990 changed the scale of the event and showed what could be achieved by a city not usually associated with the arts", and that this "shifted the agenda towards urban regeneration". This shift is also noted by Labrianidis and Deffner, who point out that, "In the early years, the event was purely limited to established cultural capitals, but [that] the event is now increasingly being used as a vehicle for regional economic development by cities with far less accumulated 'cultural capital'" (2000: 32). Similarly, in the UK, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport states that the scope of the Programme is a broad one:

the purpose of the title is not simply to highlight existing cultural excellence, but to encourage cities to develop and innovate in the cultural field. It will be an opportunity to show that culture is central to the life of a city, and demonstrate its contribution to regeneration, social inclusion, education and business (2002).

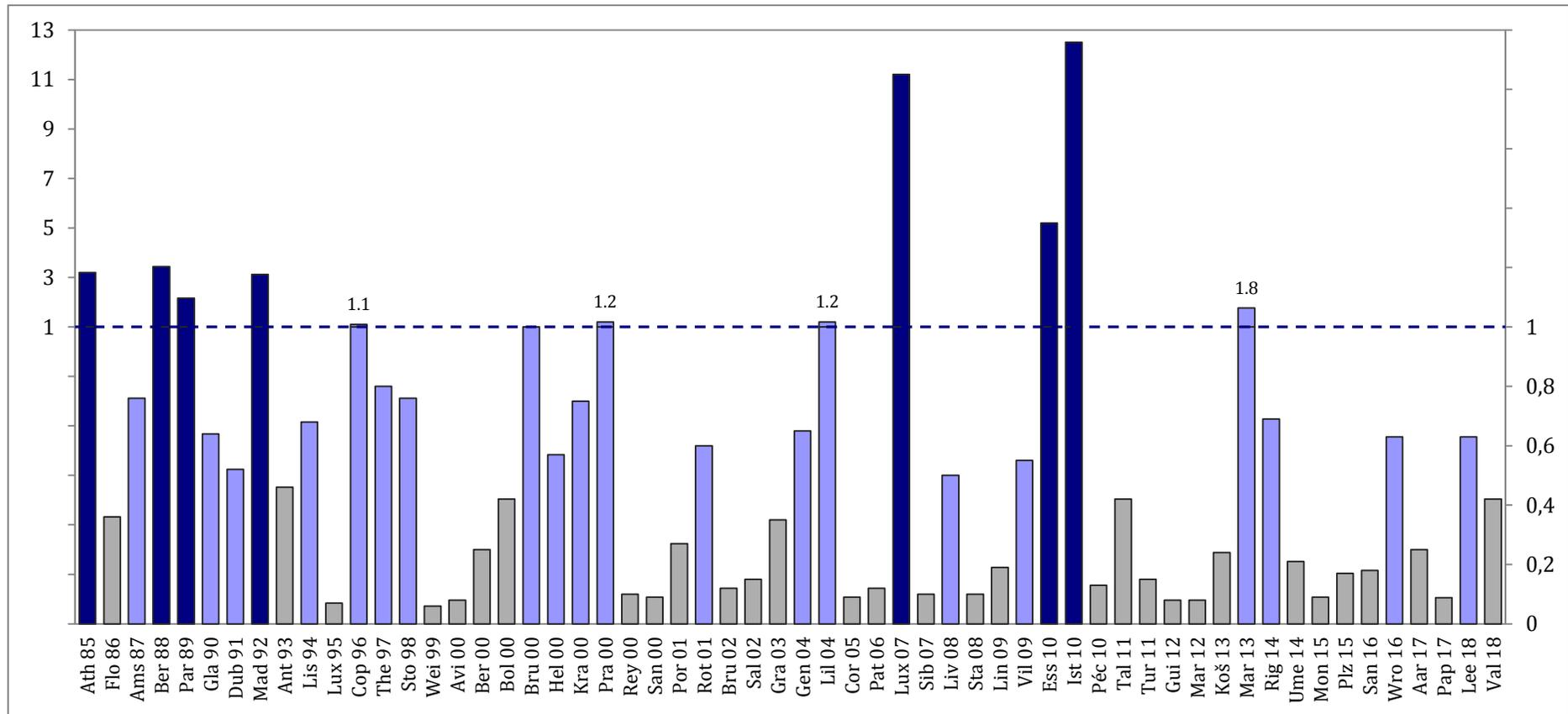
It is commonly accepted that the broadening up of the Programme objectives was initiated by the host cities themselves, in line with wider urban cultural policy trends throughout the 1990s; however, the European authorities took these developments on board and made them a formal requirement for ECoC hosts from the 2005 edition onwards (as has been noted within the previous Section in reference to Phase 3 of the Programme). In particular, the preamble to the 1999 Decision made for the first time "explicit references to the development of culture and tourism and to the need to mobilise large sections of the population" and the 2006 Decision further broadened objectives by including explicit criteria relating to "fostering the participation of citizens' and 'long-term development'" (European Commission, 2009: 4).

Arguably, the formal recognition and expectation that the ECoC "is a valuable opportunity to regenerate cities... raise their international profile, [and] boost tourism" (as is now formally stated on the European Commission website (2013)) has contributed to the appeal and competitiveness of the title for city authorities. However, it has also opened new areas of concern, in common with other established event-led and culture-led regeneration strategies. As summarised by the Commission:

the growing importance of these [additional] objectives has been accompanied by a debate about balance between whether culture should be supported for its own intrinsic value or as a means to deliver tangible, quantifiable returns on investment (European Commission, 2009: 4).

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 in this study present a detailed assessment of the implications of such broadening-up of objectives as reflected in the vision, thematic priorities, approach to programming, promotion, engagement, and the subsequent effects, of respective ECoCs. Understandably, expectations for the latter have expanded in parallel with the breadth of objectives, so that they go beyond the purely cultural into wider social and economic realms. This has brought some opportunities but also some challenges, including growing ambiguities about the way the notion of a "European dimension of or through culture" (EC Treaty, Article 151) is defined and implemented by respective hosts. This is the subject of discussion in Chapter 6, where debate about the evolution of references to the ECoC European Dimension is presented – from vague references during the Programme's origins, to the explicit proposal that it should involve lasting cultural cooperation and exchange (European Parliament and Council, 1999), and the view that it can also be expressed via international tourism trends or business relations (Mittag, 2011).

Figure 7: ECoC population size (in million inhabitants)



Sources: Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a); Palmer and Richards (2007); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); and city census data as reported online

Note: The population figures cited correspond with the area in which the ECoC Programme took place (or is intended to take place, in the case of future ECoCs). For cities that organised (or will be organising) events predominantly within the urban city area, for instance, the population figure for the urban city area has been given; whilst for cities that distributed (or plan to distribute) events within a wider area surrounding the city, the population for this area has been given (e.g. Friesland for Leeuwarden 2018 or Malta for Valletta 2018). The population figures for future ECoCs are not projected figures, but instead the most recently available figures.

Geo-political and demographic characteristics of host cities

The average population of ECoC host cities has declined somewhat since the inception of the Programme in 1985 (as is clear from Figure 7). This trend is attributable to the fact that many of Europe's major capitals and cultural centres (e.g. Athens, Berlin, Paris and Madrid) dominated the first Phase of the ECoC Programme, while in more recent years, smaller cities (many of which are based in new Member States) have featured much more prominently. One possible consequence of the declining size of host cities is the growing trend towards regional partnerships (as showcased by Lille 2004 and Luxembourg GR 2007). In 2010, Essen presented a new concept for hosting the title, standing in for the entire Ruhr region and a cultural programme that was planned out across its 53 cities. Marseille-Provence 2013 offers another example of a region-wide approach, where ECoC events have not just been organised in the city of Marseille, but in the entire surrounding Provence region too.¹⁴ Another interesting, but somewhat contentious, development – in terms of geographical scope – has been the inclusion of cities from non-Member States in the Programme. The number of non-EU cities that have taken part in the Programme is limited (although the figure is significantly larger if the *European Cultural Month* action between 1992 and 2003 is taken into account). However, notable differences in opinion exist regarding the desirability of reopening the Programme to non-EU countries, as proposed by the Commission. Within the Council, some Member States have expressed concerns that such a decision would affect the quality and reputation of the title, whilst also pointing out inconsistencies in the distribution of funds reserved within the new *Creative Europe* programme (Council of the European Union, 2012).¹⁵ The European Parliament, on the other hand, is more positive about the inclusion of non-Member States and is supportive of the principle.

Table 4: Distribution of ECoCs against European geography and EU positioning

ECoC Phase	EU-12	EU-15	EU-25	EU-27	Accession	Non-EU	Total
1-1985-1996	12						12
North	3						3
South	4						4
West	5						5
2- 1997-2004	12	3			2	2	19
East					2		2
North		2				2	4
South	6						6
West	6	1					7
3-2005-2019	12	3	10	2	1	2	29
East			4	2			6
North	3	2	3			1	9
South	4		3			1	8
West	5	1					6
Grand Total	36	6	10	2	2	4	60

Source: ICC analysis. For the classification see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/methods/m49/m49regin.htm#europe>.

¹⁴ It should be noted, however, that the Commission's proposal for the new legal basis after 2019 emphasises that the title will continue to be reserved for cities specifically, as past experiences have shown that the clear leadership of one city is one of the key factors in the success of an ECoC year (European Commission, 2012:5).

¹⁵ Opening up the ECoC to non-EU countries could result in three cities being designated every year. In the eyes of some Member States, this could negatively affect the quality and reputation of the title. Regarding the financing, several Member States have pointed out that this would make a larger number of cities eligible to participate in the ECoC programme than in the new Creative Europe programme, although the ECoC is to be financed through the latter programme after 2013.

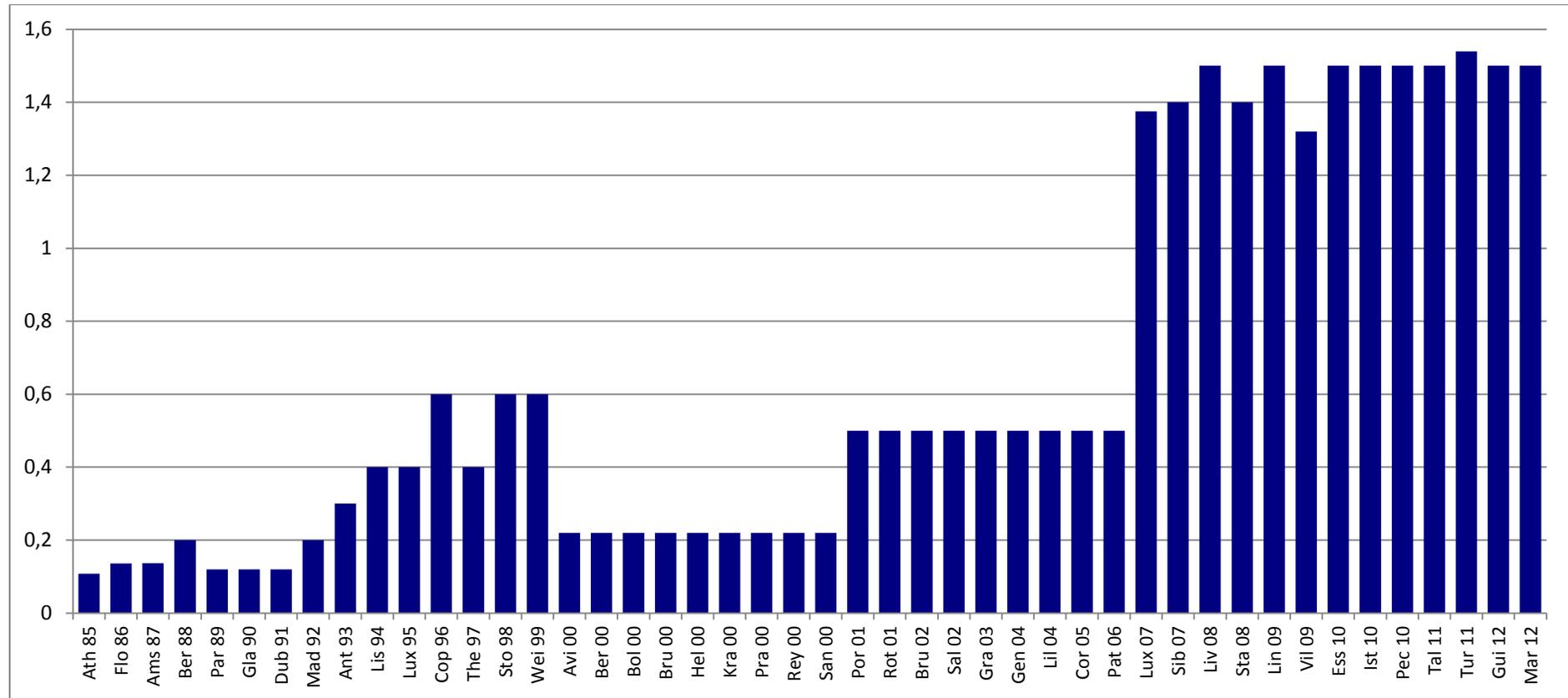
Clearly, the distribution across European geographical areas has always been quite well-balanced; the most marked change has been the growth in Eastern European hosts, which did not feature in Phase 1, were still in the minority in Phase 2, and feature in the same proportion as 'Western' countries in Phase 3.

From a EU positioning point of view, the most remarkable change has been the move from a clear dominance of EU-12 and EU-15 countries, to a balance between these and new European countries for Phase 3.

Funding patterns

As Figure 8 shows, European funding of the ECoC initiative has gradually increased, from just over €100,000 (allocated for the first ECoC year, 1985) to a maximum of €1.5m, which is currently available through the Melina Mercouri prize. These funds have been dispensed without regard to city size or the scope of the cultural programme involved, and simply reveal a budget increase in absolute terms over time.

Since 1996, funding for the Programme has been made available through the overarching culture programmes *Kaleidoscope* (1996-1999), *Culture 2000* (2000-2006) and *Culture Programme* (2007-2013); after 2013, the intention is that it be provided through the planned *Creative Europe* programme. Since 2010, EU funding has been awarded in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize. This prize money, which, as noted above, is awarded up to a maximum sum of €1.5m, is to be used to finance projects that are part of the Programme or that result from it. The Melina Mercouri Prize is a significant departure from the earlier grants awarded to ECoC host cities, in that it is no longer received automatically but is conditional on the outcome of the monitoring phase, following the designation of the title to a particular city. If the city has honoured the agreements made in the selection phase, and adhered to the recommendations made by the jury, the total sum is to be paid out no later than three months before the start of the event. In the Commission's proposal for the new Decision on the ECoC Programme post-2019, these rules are to be made even more strict: it is required that the budget remain stable between the designation of the city and the beginning of the year; that the independence of the artistic team must be respected; and that the European Dimension must remain sufficiently strong in the final version of the cultural programme (European Commission, 2012). Furthermore, the Commission has proposed that the prize should no longer be paid in advance of the year of the title, but should instead be paid no later than the end of June of the title year itself. Both conditions are still being discussed in the Council and the European Parliament.

Figure 8: Levels of European Union Support, 1985-2012 (€m)

Sources: ICC analysis of Gold and Gold (2005) for 1985-1999; Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a; 2004b) for 2000-2004; Quinn and O'Halloran (2006) for 2005; and ECORYS (2009a; 2010a; 2011c; 2012a) for 2007-2011

Note: The data provided has not been collated in a strictly comparable way in terms of the definition of EU support. Gold and Gold, for instance, include supplementary EU contributions to specific projects while Palmer/Rae Associates and ECORYS only include the main EU allocation (except in the case of Turku 2011, which includes an additional €39,000 towards specific projects). Figures for Patras (2005), Guimarães (2012) and Maribor (2012), meanwhile, have been deduced from official guidelines, due to the absence of strictly accurate data in the available literature. It should also be stressed that all figures represent *nominal* values, and that no adjustment has been made for inflation, due to the apparent lack of readily-available inflation rate data for both the time frame and countries required. The usefulness of such a transformation would be questionable in any case, given that the support provided by the EU generally remains at a fixed nominal sum, which changes infrequently and is not determined by the circumstances of particular ECoCs or wider economic conditions.

Development of evaluation and emphasis on sustainability

Over time, it has become a standard requirement within EU cultural policy that actions, including the ECoC initiative, are evaluated. Since 2009, independent ex-post evaluations have been carried out by external consultants on behalf of the European Commission, with contracts awarded annually to companies on the basis of their ability to perform the evaluation effectively and efficiently. As required by the 2006 Decision (Art. 12) (European Parliament and Council, 2006), by the end of the year following the ECoC event, the Commission must also submit its own final report to Parliament, Council and the Committee of the Regions. These evaluations are intended to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the previous ECoC against the objectives set for the year, in order to assess the impact of the initiative, help inform EU cultural policies, and establish and spread good practice. Their focus is commonly on the European Dimension, public involvement and the city's own objectives, but they also address the impact of the title on cultural, social and urban development. Operational features, such as city governance, financing and the communication strategy, are also taken into account (European Commission, 2013).

The European Commission's evaluation draws on a number of sources:

- Policy and academic literature (European level)
- The original applications submitted by the ECoC
- Studies and reports commissioned by the ECoC
- Events, programmes, promotional materials and websites used during the year
- Quantitative data supplied by the ECoC on activities, outputs and results
- Interviews with the managing team
- Telephone survey of key stakeholders in each ECoC
- Visits to each city (European Commission, 2013)

Evaluations have been carried out on all ECoCs from the 2007 edition up until 2012. The preceding periods were evaluated by John Myerscough with funding from the European Cities of Culture Network (covering 1985 to 1994), and by Palmer/Rae Associates, with funding from the European Commission (covering the period between 1995 to 2004).

Additionally, many ECoCs carry out their own evaluations, with a tendency, in recent years, for cities to commission independent evaluation reports. The evaluation for Liverpool 2008 can be regarded as a key point in this development; the independent *Impacts 08* study, carried out on behalf of the organising body, was the first study of a longitudinal nature that explicitly took into account the longer-term impacts of the year (Garcia *et al.*, 2010). This work was followed by a Commission-funded European Capitals of Culture Policy Group, which piloted a framework to adapt the *Impacts 08* research model for other ECoC cities to use (ECoC Policy Group, 2010).

In preparation for this new ECoC cycle, a number of additional evaluation tools were used by the Commission. ECORYS was commissioned to carry out an external evaluation of the selection and monitoring procedures introduced by Decision 1622/2006/EC (ECORYS, 2011e), as well as an online consultation on the future of the ECoC, held at the end of 2010, and a public consultation meeting in Brussels on 2 March 2011 (ECORYS, 2011a). Other public input was collected through the 25th anniversary conference of the ECoC, organised in March 2010 (European Commission, 2010). Reference to the outcome of these evaluations is included in relevant Chapters of this study. Chapter 3 (Bidding approaches) includes a content analysis of the main assessment of selection and monitoring procedures, while Chapter 7 (Recommendations) refers to the results of the online and public consultations over the future of the ECoC. Despite these advances, important evaluation challenges still remain. These are discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 (Challenges).

3. BIDDING APPROACHES

KEY FINDINGS

- **Stakeholder consultation and agreement** with the bid proposal is seen as necessary and a key strength in confirming both the viability of a city and the ownership of its bid across different groups (from politicians, to the local cultural and private sectors, and local communities). **Strong political support** is considered particularly important. Those cities that begin the process significantly in advance of the bidding period for the year in which they want to host, tend to build better support with key stakeholders. For others, this can be a challenge.
- After stakeholder agreement and support, other major elements relating to 'viability' are seen to be: the **proposed level of investment**; and a **high quality artistic programme**.
- A common weakness of bidding cities – including successfully bidding cities – is the **absence of a strong European Dimension** to the bid. Whilst all applications tend to stress the European and/or multi-cultural character of the cities themselves (and the cultural 'offer' of the city), plans are often not in place to reach beyond the city itself.
- Another area of potential contestation in developing bids is the **balance between local and national or international cultural influences**. These challenges are often taken as short-hand for what are perceived to be the competing agendas of positive benefit for, and representation of, the local population, versus the drive for additional tourism.
- Overall, the competitive process introduced since 1998 is perceived as being beneficial in improving the quality of both bid processes and bid outputs. Further, the provision of formal Monitoring Panel support since the 2007 ECoC bidding process is also seen as an important step forward in enhancing bidding outputs.
- The most common leading objectives expressed by successfully bidding cities are: raising the **capacity/ambition of the cultural offer** in the host city; and raising the **profile of the city and its cultural offer**.
- Other aspects emphasised by bidding cities are the possibilities for change that the ECoC is perceived to offer in other areas, and the **concept of the ECoC and cultural activity as 'catalytic'**. Different cities find different emphases within this, but common areas of focus include:
 - Tourism development
 - Improving external perceptions of the city, often for economic purposes
 - Supporting the growth of new industries, either for diversification or replacement of receding industries
 - Social engagement, including stimulating pride in the city
 - Physical regeneration

3.1. Introduction

This Chapter addresses the question:

- What trends and common patterns, if any, can be discerned with regard to successful applicant cities since 1985?

The approaches to bidding for the ECoC Programme are discussed under a range of headings. The Chapter begins with the analysis of some of the common strengths and weaknesses of bids which Selection Panels for ECoCs between 2005-2018 have identified, and then considers some of the different themes and processes for bidding which successful cities demonstrate. Before 2005, there are no consistent materials recording the bidding process specifically, as prior to this period there were no formal guidelines for the production of bids by candidate cities. As such, the discussion of overall bidding trends for cities hosting the ECoC since 1985 is presented in the following two Sections, which summarise the most important bases for successful bidding: ECoC visions, aims and objectives; and the different ways in which ECoC candidates have secured stakeholder engagement. The ways these approaches have been developed for actual delivery of ECoCs are discussed in Chapter 4.

3.2. Common strengths and weaknesses of successful bids

The ECORYS interim evaluation of the selection and monitoring procedures for the 2010-2016 ECoCs included: close study of the reports of Selection Panels; interviews with Selection Panel members and representatives from candidate cities; and a focus group with Panel members (ECORYS, 2011e). The evaluation focused upon assessing the new procedures introduced by Decision 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (hereafter referred to as the 2006 Decision), which was implemented in part from the 2010 ECoC onwards, and in full from the 2013 ECoC. Its findings illuminate some of the difficulties that cities encounter most frequently despite the introduction of the 2006 Decision, as well as the strategies that successful cities applied in order to overcome these. In this Section, discussion of data from this evaluation is supplemented by a content analysis of Selection Panel reports encompassing every ECoC year from 2005 to 2018. This exercise has involved thematically coding the strengths and weaknesses of successful applicant cities, as identified by the Selection Panels in their reports (see Appendix F for more details on the methodology employed here).

The content analysis of Selection Panel reports reveals that the strengths that successful cities are most often commended for at bid stage include: evidence of local political commitment to the project; the use of the ECoC to achieve long-term development goals; the quality of the artistic programme; the involvement of citizens in planning or programming the ECoC; and the concepts and themes around which the artistic programme is organised. Each of these elements has been highlighted as a strength in at least 30% of successful bids (see Figure 9). Some of these elements appear to have been just as important to *national* juries:

Of the three cities that reached the final stage of the selection process [for the ECoC 2008 competition in the UK], Liverpool stood out as the only city where there was strong local political support from the outset, as well as being the only city where there was a clear connection between the ECoC and the development strategy of the city (Griffiths, 2006: 421-2).

A significant finding of the ECORYS interim evaluation was that “motivating local stakeholders to commit to a shared vision” was one of the common problems faced by applicant cities at the bid stage (ECORYS, 2011e: 25). However, they also found that the cities that coped best with this challenge – which included many of the cities that went on

to win their country's nomination – had begun considering the possibilities of an ECoC application, and their bidding process, significantly in advance:

Lund began its preparations for 2014 in 1999 having witnessed the experience of Stockholm 1998; similarly, Mons began its preparations for 2015 in 2004, inspired in part by the experience of Lille 2004 (and recruiting the head of its delivery agency from amongst the staff of that ECoC); the application of Istanbul, for its part, although led by the city was originally initiated by civil society operators that had observed the experience of ECoC across Europe more generally (ibid.).

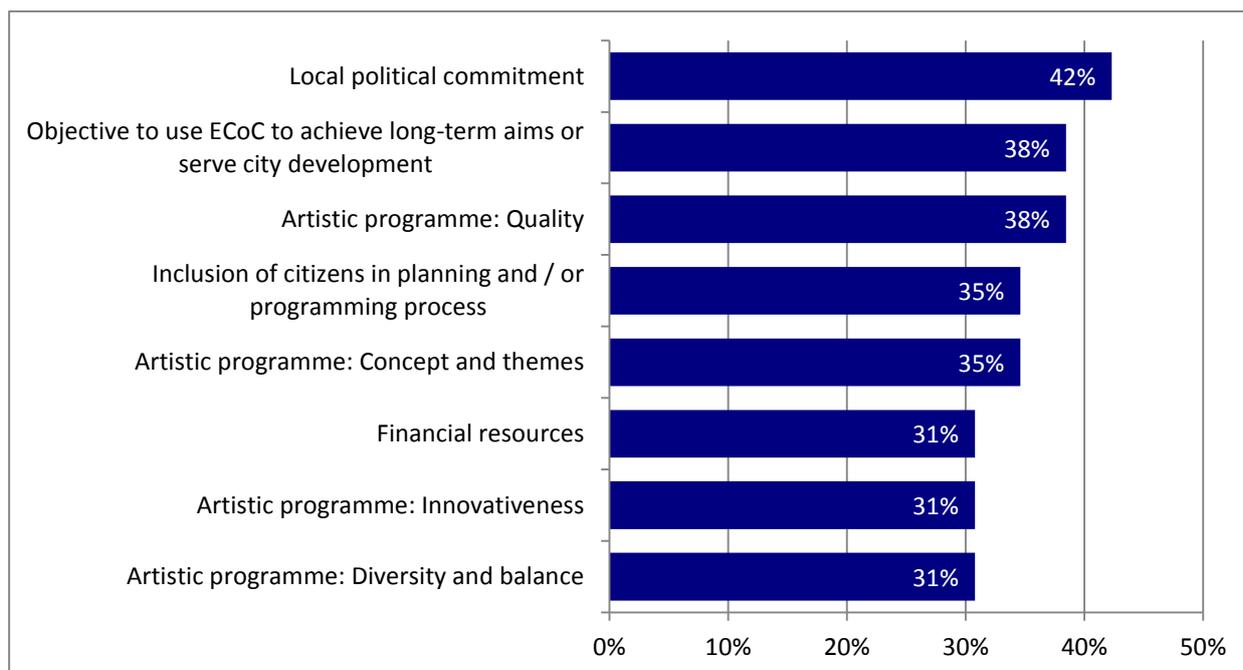
ECORYS also found – in a similar vein to Griffiths' comments on Liverpool above – that for some cities their ECoC application fitted within a pre-existing local development strategy:

A second key success factor is the existence of a broad strategy for local development, to which the ECoC concept can add value and from which it can draw inspiration. For example, the overall concept of the Mons ECoC ('Where technology meets culture') reflects the local economic development strategy pursued in recent years and which has facilitated the attraction of hi-technology employers, such as Google, Microsoft, IBM, Hewlett-Packard and Cisco. Similarly, the application of Maribor reflected broader efforts to diversify the local economy of an area that remains reliant on the energy industry and that has suffered a degree of industrial decline (ECORYS, 2011e: 25).

Finally, the ECORYS interim evaluation noted that applicants for the ECoC title tended to come to the bidding process with relatively little knowledge of the "concept of the ECoC", although, subsequently, those cities that made successful applications tended to be those that had made connections with current or previous ECoCs (ECORYS, 2011e: 26).¹⁶ The assessment of materials by this study, however, highlights that, in general, there is lack of clarity about what this 'concept' is supposed to be (as discussed in more detail within Chapter 6, in the 'Challenges to the European Dimension' Section).

The Figure below offers an overview of the most commonly identified strengths of successful bidding cities by Selection Panel reports, and indicates what proportion of bidding cities were felt to demonstrate these strengths.

¹⁶ In this particular evaluation, the 'concept' of the ECoC as a Programme (rather than individual cities' conceptual responses to it) is expressed (following the 1985 Resolution) as "a year-long event during which a city would operate a programme of events to highlight its contribution to the common cultural heritage and welcome people and performers from other Member States" (ECORYS, 2011e: p. 1), which it then refers to as being "transformed" by the 1999 Decision. In the context of this transformation, the interim evaluation discusses the ways in which the explicit criteria, and less explicit criteria, are applied by the Selection Panels.

Figure 9: % of successful bid cities demonstrating particular strengths

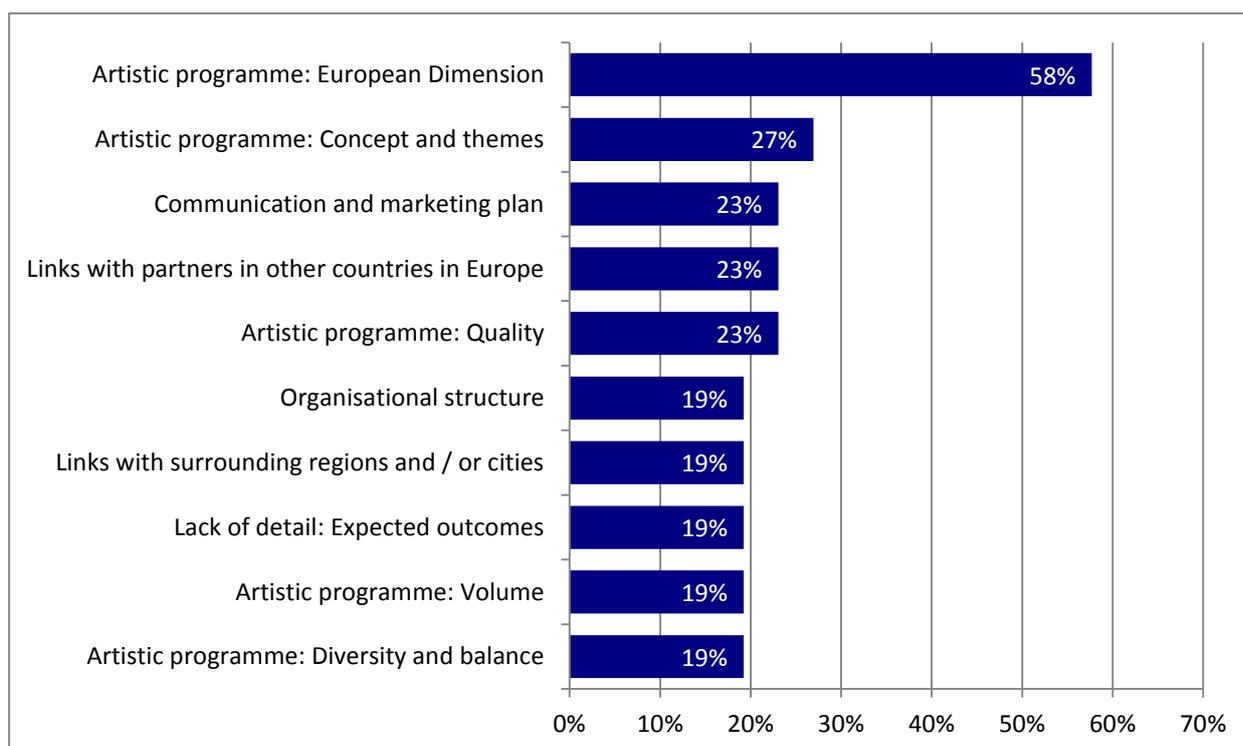
Source: ICC analysis of Selection Panel for the European Capitals of Culture reports (2001 to 2012d)

Note: For the category 'Financial resources', it should be noted that the Selection Panel reports have tended to commend larger proposed budgets, (even where doubts are expressed as to their feasibility), but that Panels have also occasionally commended more modest budgets, where there are firm or binding commitments on the part of local or national governments to provide the proposed funding. The revisions to the ECoC Programme post-2019 have introduced new clauses so that budget feasibility becomes a firm criterion for selection.

In contrast with this analysis of strengths, the task of balancing local and European dimensions in composing an ECoC application was considered a common obstacle for candidate cities surveyed in the ECORYS interim evaluation. The evaluation noted, however, that this did not necessarily preclude a bid from being successful, highlighting the examples of Košice and Umeå, which "faced a challenging task in addressing the European dimension, but in fact turned this into a positive factor in their winning applications" (ECORYS, 2011e: 24). The notion of a European Dimension used by ECORYS was that officially presented since the 2006 Decision, and articulated as follows:

As regards 'the European Dimension', the programme shall: (a) foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector; (b) highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe; (c) bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore (ibid.: 9).

The evaluation found that "the panel reports request[ed] four of the five ECoC designated for 2013-2015...to strengthen the European dimension of their programmes" (ECORYS, 2011e: 30). Analysis of all the selection reports for the ECoC years 2005 to 2018 supports this view of a widespread weakness in this area. This is clearly shown in Figure 10, which highlights that 58% of bids from successful cities during this period were identified as having an underdeveloped European Dimension.

Figure 10: % of successful bid cities demonstrating particular weaknesses

Source: ICC analysis of Selection Panel for the European Capitals of Culture reports (2001 to 2012d)

Chapter 6 offers a more detailed outline of the kinds of concerns expressed by various Selection Panels and their suggestions to host cities for strengthening their European Dimension. They range from broad assertions, such as requesting cities to further develop contacts with other countries and establish lasting partnerships (Selection Panel, 2008a, in reference to Marseille-Provence 2013; and Monitoring and Advisory Panel, 2012, in reference to Mons 2015), to very specific points – such as the suggestion for Umeå 2014 to offer a “new European cultural perspective from its position in the far North” and make this “accessible to young people from other European countries” (Selection Panel, 2009b: 4-5).

Beyond the above issues, the ECORYS interim evaluation (2011e: 22) found “broad agreement among the stakeholders consulted that the competitive approach...had a number of significant benefits”, including a general increase in the quality of bids, and greater success in generating media publicity and public interest.

A more detailed summary of candidate cities’ key strengths and weaknesses is included in this report as Appendix F. The next Section looks in more detail at the way in which successful candidature cities vary in their vision for the ECoC, and at approaches used in engaging different stakeholders in the bidding process.

3.3. Vision, aims and objectives

Primary motivations and objectives

This Section considers the primary stated motivations or major objectives/visions for particular cities, primarily using data from Myerscough 1994, the Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 study (which aggregated data in this area), and the ECORYS ex-post evaluations of cities from 2009 onwards.¹⁷ There are two areas in which a significant number of cities, from 1985 to the present, state some motivation/objective at the bidding stage:

1. **Raising the capacity/ambition of the cultural 'offer' in the host city:** Specific objectives in this area include: new physical developments (e.g. venues) (Lisbon 1994); networks (Rotterdam 2001); celebrating change which has already taken place to improve the cultural offer (Bergen 2000); 'stabilising' funding for culture (Kraków 2000); and demonstrating the ability to host a major event (Liverpool 2008, Turku 2011). In some cases, this is expressed as a reinforcement of existing strengths (e.g. Florence 1987, already a well-established cultural centre) or as a divergence from existing strengths (e.g. Bruges 2002, in which diversification from heritage-led culture was sought). In the case of earlier ECoCs, a slightly stronger emphasis on the ECoC as a platform for artistic exchange and development is also apparent (noted by Myerscough, 1994, for example, in respect of Athens 1985, Berlin 1988 and Antwerp 1994).
2. **Raising the profile of the city and its cultural offer:** This is sometimes expressed specifically as revealing an offer that already exists, but is not widely known/recognised.¹⁸ In other cases, a change in existing image is sought – for example, in the case of Istanbul 2010, the city had a significant international reputation for its heritage assets, but wished to position itself in relation to contemporary culture; Bruges 2002 sought a similar change. For some cities, this change was particularly couched in relation to changes in the city's industrial base (e.g. Linz 2009).

Beyond these two broad areas of primary motivation, earlier ECoCs were also more likely to emphasise a motivation expressed specifically in terms of using culture to situate/explore the hosting city in a European context. For example, Myerscough 1994 notes that the Athens 1985 organisers viewed their ECoC as "a means of allowing every citizen 'to participate in the shaping of European consciousness'" (Athens 1985, cited in Myerscough, 1994: 48).

On the whole, however, connections with Europe are expressed largely in terms of presenting a city to Europe, an approach that is particularly common within accessional countries (those who had recently joined the EU or countries attempting to establish a particular role within the EU), such as Kraków 2000 and Prague 2000.

Specific tourism and economic regeneration objectives figure more strongly after the year 2000 (two clear earlier examples are Glasgow 1990 and Copenhagen 1996). However, relatively few cities offer a primary motivation that explicitly articulates benefits for the local population; those that have are predominantly from 2005 onwards, with both Istanbul 2010 and Essen for the Ruhr 2010 citing the engagement of young populations as an area that they were seeking to prioritise. Essen for the Ruhr 2010 also notes the ambition of involving a more diverse population as an area of priority for their ECoC.

¹⁷ Please note that, in order to account for cities since the very start of the ECoC Programme, including a period when bidding processes had not been fully formalised, it has been necessary to include assessment of motivations, not only from formal bidding proposals (which is the case for ECoC cities from 1998 onwards) but also broader declarations of intent, as captured by Myerscough (1994) and Palmer/Rae Associates (2004).

¹⁸ For example, in respect of Turku 2011, "it was felt that Turku's cultural life and traditions, its well-established old cultural institutions as well as its underground culture, would...also merit greater visibility in Finland and across Europe" (ECORYS, 2012: 37).

Beyond these areas, there are a small number of specific objectives that emerge for just a few cities. Both Luxembourg GR 2007 and Essen for the Ruhr 2010 cite regional projects, e.g. bringing an area “together”. Luxembourg GR, however, specifically sought to ‘reinforce’ the Greater Luxembourg area as a ‘political entity’ (ECORYS, 2009a), whilst the Ruhr’s motivation was expressed more in economic terms: “Helping to bring the Ruhr together as a single metropolis, as a new type of decentralised post-industrial conurbation” (ECORYS, 2011c: 24).

Aside from this, Ruhr’s stated aims also included an emphasis on translating this concept of a “single metropolis” through new governance structures. The motivation for Pécs to bid to be ECoC in 2010 also reflected a sense of opportunity around city governance, with “civil society organisations” credited with the initiative to bid as a way of developing their role in the city and that of citizens (ECORYS, 2011c).

The concept of the ECoC as a ‘catalyst’ for change

Beyond this analysis of ‘primary motivations’, bidding documents and Selection Panel reports also reveal some key conceptualisations of the ECoC and its potential. The most prominent of these is the notion of the ECoC as a ‘catalyst’ for change.

As noted in the previous Section, changes in the cultural activity/offer of the bidding city are commonly sought across successfully bidding cities; however, the concept of the ECoC as a ‘catalyst’ often suggests that cities are seeking to create change in areas beyond the cultural system. For example, with regard to the four candidate cities for the French bid for 2013, the Selection Panel noted that all had emphasised:

[the role of culture] as a means of strengthening social cohesion, developing exchanges and diversity and embracing multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue. These cities all believe that artists and culture can provide answers to the complex questions posed by diversity and globalization. Culture is also regarded, particularly in economic circles, as a major element in making the city and region more attractive and increasing innovation (Selection Panel, 2008a: 3).¹⁹

Thus, culture is understood as having the potential to effect both social and economic change in the context of the city. Similarly, Swedish bids for the ECoC 2014 were noted as having identified the ECoC as an opportunity both “to integrate culture as a catalyst in the local development and to get stronger connection with Europe” (Selection Panel, 2009b: 3). The notion of a catalyst for “local development” was also identified in the bids from cities in the Czech Republic for the ECoC 2015 (Selection Panel, 2010b: 3).

In other bids, the object of the ECoC’s catalytic effects is more clearly outlined in economic terms, although within this motivation to bid, different contexts and outcomes are apparent. For cities in which the industrial and economic base of the city is changing or disappearing, the ECoC is framed as a route to building alternative industries, including culture, the creative industries and tourism.²⁰ For Pécs 2010, for instance, the ECoC title was seen to offer “a new path of growth ... for the tourism and creative industrial sectors of Pécs and the region, thereby creating the possibility of an economic breakthrough for a stagnating region” (Pécs 2010, 2005: 23).

¹⁹ The emphasis on ‘social cohesion’ is interesting given the relative absence (already noted in this Section) of references to the local population in the primary motivations of cities to bid.

²⁰ See, for instance, Liverpool 2008, Marseille-Provence 2013, and the applications from Guimarães, 2012. As a specific example, Matlovičová notes that economic change was also at the heart of the Košice proposal, as the city had found itself falling behind Bratislava economically in the 1990s and 2000s and saw the ECoC as a key platform to narrow this gap (Matlovičová, 2010). In the case of Liverpool 2008, Connolly (2013) offers a critical assessment of Liverpool’s attempt to link economic development with the ECoC at the bidding stage, and of the approaches to delivering claims made in the bid at the delivery stage of the ECoC.

The most interesting development since 2005 is that such an alternative industry-focused approach is not only being utilised by cities suffering from economic decline – as had predominantly been the case since Glasgow 1990 – but also by relatively wealthy cities. For Stavanger 2008, which looked to culture as a source of economic value that could complement existing industries (Stavanger 2008, 2003), proposals to explore the relationship between culture and the economy have diversified and become more complex both during and after the ECoC year. Bergsgard and Vassenden (2011: 305-6) point out that Stavanger is:

a prosperous city with less need of regeneration than many European cities that have emphasised cultural strategies. Rather, [bidding for and hosting the ECoC] was part of a policy that promoted culture as an important area for future restructuring of the regional economic basis (away from oil). It was much more about regional development than urban regeneration.

The evolution of the regeneration debate, beyond the post-industrial city, includes other concepts of economic development, such as the perceived potential of the ECoC initiative to contribute to 'city competitiveness' – a concept explicitly explored by urban studies literature since the early 2000s (e.g. Begg, 2002; Rondinelli *et al.*, 1998). For instance, both Akçakaya and Özeçevik (2008b) and Beyazit and Tosun (2006) refer to Istanbul's bid and plan to be ECoC 2010 in relation to the concept of 'city competitiveness'.²¹

Another element of the notion of the ECoC as a catalyst for economic development has emerged through explicit objectives to develop the 'creative industries' of a bidding city (as opposed to the 'cultural offer' or 'assets'), as separate from seeking economic impact through increased tourism. (It is worth noting that where this study discusses the ways in which ECoCs attempt to support or develop the 'creative industries', what is being considered is the use of the term 'creative industries' by bidding/host cities, rather than a fixed single definition determined by the authors of this study.)

There are clear references to developing creative industries in the bids of both Liverpool and Stavanger for 2008, with the strongest emphasis evident in the bids of cities hosting the ECoC from 2010 onwards (e.g. Riga 2014, San Sebastián 2016, and Valletta 2018). In plans for Essen for the Ruhr 2010 there was a significant focus on the role of digital/online content within the overall goal of developing the 'creative industries', and for Essen for the Ruhr 2010 to be "the first European Capital of Culture to integrate the creative industries in its overall concept, and on the role that such practice could play in bringing 'new markets' to the region" (Essen 2010, 2010a). Similarly, the bid for Pécs 2010 notes that:

one possible economic breakthrough point for Pécs and its region is creative industry and cultural tourism. The European Capital of Culture title would facilitate the development of precisely these two interrelated strategic sectors (Pécs 2010, 2005: 114).

Plans to establish an 'incubator' facility for small enterprises as part of the ECoC are also discussed in the Pécs 2010 bid. Following this, in respect of Tallinn's bid to host the ECoC in 2011, Lassur *et al.* state that:

Tallinn's application for the European Capital of Culture 2011 focused on valuing culture in the development of the city. It explicitly discussed the need to develop creative industries (using that particular term) and the application also featured broader statements connected to the development of a creative city (2010: 69).

²¹ Despite much of this evidence suggesting rather broad conceptualisations of potential change (e.g. 'local development'), it is worth noting that the EU funded *PICTURE* project suggested that cities who did not clearly define their objectives in respect of "economic impacts and attracting visitors" were "unlikely to succeed in the bidding process" (Sutherland *et al.*, 2006).

During this same time period, the concept of the 'creative city' is referred to as a key inspiration in documents for Linz 2009, Istanbul 2010 and Guimarães 2012. As noted, since Liverpool 2008, and particularly from 2010 onwards, cities bidding to be ECoCs are placing stronger and clearer emphasis on the potential development of creative industries – with the bids for Riga 2014, San Sebastián 2016 and Valletta 2018 all demonstrating this focus. Despite this apparent entrenchment of the idea of 'creative industries' in the ECoC process, however, it should be noted that the extent to which ECoC interventions actually succeed in reaching beyond more traditional artistic programming practices and contribute to the successful sustained development of broader creative industries remains open to question (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3).

The potential for the process of bidding itself to be useful in prompting change was highlighted in the analysis of Polish cities bidding to be the ECoC 2016:

The concepts of the cities, the cultural programmes developed for the competition and the cultural activity in general served as catalysts of change, be it mentality change, social change or change in both cultural infrastructure and in the acceptance of artistic challenges (Selection Panel, 2011a: 4).

The notion that a process itself might be a catalyst is also picked up in formulations of the bidding city as a venue in which people are invited to experiment with new ideas, artforms and technologies, or become a constituent part of a social process that is untested or (putatively) transformative. The concept of the city as a 'laboratory' seems particularly popular, with Linz 2009 (Selection Panel, 2005: 4), for example, describing itself in its application as a "laboratory of the future" and Valletta 2018 (2012: 14) appropriating for itself the term "cultural laboratory".

Balancing local, European and international dimensions

As discussed earlier in this Chapter, although there is a clear requirement for a European Dimension from bidding cities, Selection Panels regularly perceive this as being a weakness in bids (including in successful bids). Despite this, almost all applications stress the innately European and multi-cultural character of their city. Essen for the Ruhr 2010 (Essen 2010, 2005: 19) described itself in its application as a "European microcosm", home to migrants from all over world, whilst Pécs 2010 (2005: 30) marketed itself as a cosmopolitan city with the potential to open a gateway to Balkan culture. All cities tend to stress their openness, and their desire to engage in – and stimulate – intercultural dialogue. These notions are reinforced by many of the central concepts of successful ECoC cities – including Stavanger 2008, the 'Open Port', and Pécs 2010, the 'Borderless City'. For Pécs, Tallinn and Turku, Lähdesmäki argues that:

All of the cities stress their location as a historical meeting place of different ethnicities and nationalities. Additionally, the cities stress their architecture as an expression of multicultural layers of the cities. In the cities, cultural diversity is related to the global imagery of popular culture, street culture and contemporary art. In addition, the cities stress the canon of Western art history as a base for common Europeanness compounded of various nationalities and regionalities. One essential strategy is to represent different minorities and their visual culture as signs of cultural diversity (2010a: 27).

As demonstrated in these examples and the earlier analysis of primary motivations, cities tend to focus on exploration of the links between their local identity and their place in the world – be it Europe or elsewhere – and also focus on explorations of diversity within their local population. Lähdesmäki (2010a) argues that the focus on 'cultural diversity' and 'multiculturalism' in bids from Pécs, Tallinn and Turku reflects the cultural policy of the EU; mirroring EU rhetoric is a prerequisite for a successful application, although the political and ideological components in these discussions are obscured (see further analysis on this point

in Chapter 6). Bullen goes further, arguing that the rhetoric is unsupported by planned activity, and suggests that Liverpool's 2008 bid theme of 'the world in one city' was:

clearly responding to the Capital of Culture directive that successful projects should 'promote dialogue between European cultures and those from other parts of the world' (Decision 1419/1999/EC). Yet there is little emphasis either in the bid or in the artistic programme on transnational links between people in the city and the rest of the world. Indeed, rather than Liverpool in the world, the signifier of diversity is attached to the identity of local population in the city (Bullen, 2013: 59-60).

Beyond the specific question of satisfying the bidding requirement for a European Dimension, there is evidence of a tension between the role of the 'local' culture and the desire to position a city as 'international'. O'Callaghan argues that: "in general, the discourses used by ECoC often try to streamline issues of 'local' culture with the image of the city as international or 'global'" (2012: 190).

Analysis of Thessaloniki 1997 offers an example of these multiple ambitions for a city:

Whilst seeking to place Thessaloniki on the national and international cultural map, the organisers also wanted to increase the local communities' engagement with the arts, emphasise the Orthodox faith, and make connections with the influence of Hellenism outside Greece, while making the event available to all through education (Gold and Gold, 2005: 239).

Multiple ambitions and competing discourses of this kind suggest that, inevitably, there are tensions to be negotiated between the types of culture that can find a place within an ECoC Programme. Whilst internationally significant work is seen as necessary to support tourism objectives and external profile, local cultural connections are (in effect) the bit which makes a city culturally particular and specific.

3.4. Stakeholder engagement

As noted earlier in this Chapter (in the analysis of successful ECoC bids between 2005 and 2018), key strengths of successful bids include political commitment and the engagement of the city's public. This kind of engagement is often referred to in terms of the different kinds of stakeholders, or with regards to the different motivations for seeking that engagement. This Section discusses some of these issues.

Political engagement

Political engagement is most often referred to as an indicator of the viability of a proposed city to become ECoC, and particularly of its financial viability. For example, the Selection Panel for ECoC 2013 noted:

Marseille's [France 2013] bid enjoys very strong commitment from all the political authorities [...]. This political commitment and financial support are fundamental guarantees of the success of the event. It is crucial that all partners involved maintain a strong political and financial commitment to the project [...] throughout the entire period of preparation and during the year 2013 itself. (Selection Panel, 2008a: 4)²²

²² See similar remarks regarding Mons (Belgium, 2015) in Selection Panel (2010a: 4).

Gauging political engagement is also important in establishing the likelihood that a potential host city will be subject to disruptive political changes or interference. For example, both Umeå's 2014 bid (Selection Panel, 2009b) and Plzeň's 2015 bid (Selection Panel, 2009c) are cited as positive examples of "strong political engagement...regardless of political allegiance" (Selection Panel, 2009b).

Private and third sector engagement

Moving beyond the commitment of public agencies, some bid assessments considered engagement from private or third sector organisations to be key. Engagement from local businesses is sometimes referenced – for example, in the case of Liverpool 2008 (ECORYS, 2009a) and Marseille 2013 (Selection Panel, 2008a). Support from the local cultural sector – individual artists and organisations – is also cited as a specific strength in some instances, including Liverpool 2008 (ECORYS, 2009a), Donostia - San Sebastián (Spain 2016) (Selection Panel, 2010d) and Aarhus (Denmark 2017) (Selection Panel, 2012b). In both cases, this kind of support is often referred to in broad terms by Selection Panel reports: the significance appears to be the evidence of shared motivation across the city.

Public engagement

Demonstrating the engagement of local communities and the city's public is considered important, both to ensure an 'authentic' bid *and* a bid which could conceivably deliver some of the changes which it promises. The Selection Panel for the ECoC in France 2013 noted that:

All the cities had made efforts to rally the local population to their bid; several had already launched a number of the activities planned in their cultural project. The panel thinks that these activities will be pursued and that the unifying effects of preparing the event will give new impetus to their cultural life (Selection Panel, 2008a: 3).

Some bids have been noted for placing specific emphasis on engaging excluded groups (e.g. Wrocław for Poland 2016 (Selection Panel, 2010c)) or bringing different cultures together; for example, in the case of Cyprus 2017, both candidate cities aimed to realise a rapprochement between the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities through shared cultural projects and an inclusive approach to the "new Cypriots" (increasingly, residents from both within the EU and from other countries) (Selection Panel, 2012a: 4). However, such approaches are not always regarded as likely to be successful; in the case of Riga 2014, for instance, and their expressed intention to develop an element in their programme celebrating Saami culture, the Selection Panel said that they were "not fully convinced of the proposals [...], which clearly had to be handled very carefully in dialogue with Saami leaders" (Selection Panel, 2009a: 5).

Engagement as an indicator of potential success in delivery

Significant engagement at the bid stage is often seen as an indicator of potential engagement in the delivery of an ECoC. This is exemplified in the ECORYS evaluation of Liverpool 2008:

when bidding for ECoC status, it is important to demonstrate broad participation in the process, from cultural organisations, businesses and residents. This can also help to set a benchmark and tone for achieving high levels of participation post-designation (ECORYS, 2009a: 74).

The potential for future engagement from stakeholders and the public is also emphasised in advice from Selection Panels²³ and in the suggestion by some cities that processes of engagement at the bidding stage can help to support new approaches to city development—for example, the goal of the Initiative Group for Istanbul 2010 was to:

involve as many people and organizations as possible; and to use this opportunity to redefine relations between the people of Istanbul and the city administration in order to create a new mechanism for decision making (Initiative Group, 2005: 143, cited in Hoyng, 2012: 6).

Again, this reflects the concept of the ECoC as a catalyst for change beyond the delivery of cultural activity.

Cities that were not successful in bidding to be an ECoC sometimes saw different responses to the attempts made through the bidding process to harness a wider group of stakeholders. In Karlsruhe, flawed consultation techniques resulted in a lack of local support and subsequent bid legacy, whilst in Belfast the bid process provided a foundation for the city to build upon the resulting teamwork and partnerships in order to deliver a long-term strategy for managing its cultural resources and help the city become a competitive urban tourist destination (Besson & Sutherland, 2007).

However, despite positive responses from Selection Panels and other sources, it is important to note that the integrity of public engagement by cities hosting ECoCs is a significant focus of critique for some researchers and commentators; this is discussed further in Chapter 6 (Challenges).

²³ For example, Aarhus' winning bid (Denmark 2015) was presented as a collective effort, revealing a recognised need for Aarhus to further involve the citizens, students, artists and cultural operators in the long-term development of the city. The Selection Panel noted that all the stakeholders, together with the population of Aarhus and its region as well as the business sector, should work together for this project (Selection Panel, 2012b: p.4).

4. DELIVERY APPROACHES AND SUCCESS STRATEGIES

KEY FINDINGS

- **Visions** for the purpose of the ECoC have changed over time, from being a celebration of a city to being an opportunity to transform a city (at least in terms of its image). This notion of transformation has become prevalent in the language of visions, but can sometimes be quite separate from practical themes used for developing cultural programmes.
- A variety of approaches are taken in different cities to **provide a balance of activity** throughout the year, a balance of input from local and international artists and companies, and a balance of high profile and more community-focused work. Programmes are, on the whole, broad and diverse, in terms of artform, size and scale of individual projects, and types of activity. Programming processes also vary, with open calls sometimes being used as a way of ensuring significant opportunity for local artists, and direct flagship commissions as a way of gaining input from international artists. Collaboration that supports interaction between the local cultural sector and artists or organisations from Europe and beyond has become an area of emphasis.
- **Physical developments** continue to be a key element of many ECoC plans, although the direct relationship between ECoC investment/strategic activity and many physical developments (of both cultural buildings and other kinds of infrastructure like hotels, transport routes and the public realm) is often complex, and not clearly articulated.
- Increasingly ECoCs are **planning for the extension of activity and benefits beyond the ECoC year itself**. Since 2006, with the inclusion of a specific request for ECoC hosts to strive towards long-term benefits as part of the Programme Selection Criteria, this commonly emerges at the bid stage.
- Formal **branding, communication and marketing strategies** – both for programme activity and, more broadly, for hosting cities themselves – are now part and parcel of the ECoC process for all cities, and spend on this area has increased as a proportion of the overall budgets. Many cities work with specialist resource or external agencies, buying in expert experience in order to undertake these processes.
- **Approaches used to support social engagement** include dedicated programmes focusing on particular groups (e.g. young people), programmes focusing on specific impact areas (e.g. health) and those working with specific sectors (e.g. education). On the whole, these appear to have become more substantial and formalised over the period of the ECoC initiative.
- **Volunteer programmes** are a significant element of the public engagement approach of several ECoCs, and are increasingly sizeable and sophisticated, often including specific job descriptions and training. There are particular examples of volunteers supporting ‘city welcome’ activities, and in encouraging audience development from local residents.
- The **size and scale of investment** in ECoCs varies significantly, and the range of core sources also varies according to national funding models and experiences.
- Different **models of governance** are apparent across different ECoCs, but a common element considered important is a dedicated vehicle for undertaking delivery of the ECoC that can be kept free of issues such as political interference.

4.1. Introduction

This Chapter addresses the question:

- What different strategies and concepts have been developed and used to make the ECoC a success for the individual cities both in the short and long-term?

This Chapter focuses upon the choices that different title holders have made, as well as the mechanisms and strategies that have been employed to deliver them. As already noted in Chapter 1, the evidential base for 'success' in the context of this study is very limited, particularly in terms of being able to understand the relationships between input and actual outputs and outcomes. In line with the approach outlined in Chapter 1, examples of approaches that cities have pursued, and that they feel have been important, have been highlighted where they exist. Overall, the Chapter is organised largely to reflect on the 'inputs' to the process, while discussions of impacts and effects – both positive and negative, both immediate and long-term – are discussed in Chapter 5. A consideration of the challenges faced by ECoC-designated cities is largely undertaken in Chapter 6, although some of these issues are referred to in this Chapter where particularly relevant.

As noted within Chapter 1, this study understands success strategies in delivering an ECoC in the following terms:

- Approaches that host cities feel help them to meet their defined objectives
- Approaches/initiatives that help address the objectives of the ECoC Programme (as presented in official EU documentation)
- Approaches that can lead on to additional impacts or effects (beyond the above) which are considered positive for (or are valued by) local communities, key stakeholders and/or external audiences

In this Chapter, strategies and concepts concerning the attainment of success are considered through the available literature, and common trends and approaches are considered. Overall, there is some continuity between the strategies for success identified through this study, which makes specific reference to the cities hosting the title from 2005 onwards, and those success factors outlined in the Palmer/Rae Associates report for cities hosting the title up to 2004 (or, where relevant, factors noted by Myerscough (1994) for cities up to 1994). For the cities hosting the title between 1995 and 2004, Palmer/Rae Associates summarised the most commonly reported critical success factors as follows:

the context for the event, the extent of local involvement, the need for partnerships, the importance of planning, the need for political independence and artistic autonomy, the requirement for clear objectives, the value of strong content in the programme, and the need for sufficient resources, strong leadership and political will (2004a: 20).

When looking at the full Programme history, it is possible to identify six core areas against which to organise the most notable range of approaches that cities feel are important for successful ECoCs, including all of those identified by Palmer/Rae (2004a):

Table 5: Success strategies

A clear vision, set up from the start	Approaches to developing a vision, including key objectives and programming themes, vary significantly between ECoCs; however, clarity and consistency of approach seems to have been important.
Distinct programming	ECoCs are keen to ensure that programming is distinctive, reflecting the city's assets and history, and expressing the cultural identity of the area, as well as providing the opportunity for work that might be innovative and/or internationally recognised.
A balance between event programming and relevant infrastructure development	This is an area where marked differences exist, but a common issue is the city's ability to determine whether investment in infrastructures (either cultural or for supporting services) is required in order to maximise the benefits of the ECoC year, and whether this needs to be coordinated directly by ECoC teams or developed in parallel.
Clear lines of communication adapted to different constituencies	For instance, a distinction between local, national and international communication strategies.
Broad public engagement	Dedicated strategies to involve the local population and maximise their sense of ownership, from targeted community programming to volunteering schemes.
Strong governance & financing models	Governance and funding models that are independent of political interference, and that can provide a single point of clarity in terms of the management of an ECoC, are important.
A commitment to legacy planning	Actively planning for legacy, whether in terms of the long-term physical infrastructure for culture, engagement with communities or the nature of the cultural offer, is considered crucial.

Source: ICC elaboration

All of the examples explored in this Chapter consider what might be deemed 'successful' approaches, organised against these categories. However, it is worth noting that, despite the volume of available literature, relatively few evaluation studies exist that particularly examine the relationship between specific choices or strategies within an ECoC, and successful outputs. In addition, it is important to recognise that 'success' in the context of one ECoC may not translate to the same choice or strategy being successful in another ECoC. Contextual factors are also an important determinant of the efficacy and value of certain activities and approaches.

4.2. Vision

Chapter 3 has already considered questions of the primary motivation and objectives expressed by ECoCs when bidding for the title. The same methodological approach is used here to look at the vision which cities put forward leading up to hosting the title. Primarily drawing on data from Myerscough 1994, the Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 study (which aggregated data in this area from a questionnaire), and for later cities from the ECORYS ex-post evaluations, the major objectives/visions for cities will be considered.^{24 25} In many cases, there appears to be relatively little substantive change between intentions expressed at the bidding phase and in the delivery phase, and so this Section does not seek to repeat those areas covered in Chapter 3, but to consider issues of clarity (where possible) concerning stated visions and to identify any further significant findings. This Section is also largely concerned with the strategies and concepts employed by ECoCs and demonstrated through their articulation of a vision – as such, it can reveal what host cities feel is important to aim for in delivering an ECoC, but does not consider whether these aims have been achieved.

Key aims and objectives

As already noted in Chapter 3, the notion of the ECoC as a cultural programme – a 'cultural festival' – was prevalent with many early ECoCs. Within this approach, different cities sought different angles – for example, by celebrating the culture of the city itself (Florence 1986), by focusing on international artists (Athens 1985), or by taking multiple approaches to position the festival within other cultural activities in the hosting city (e.g. Berlin 1988, Paris 1989) (Gold & Gold, 2005).

The widening of the ECoC to encompass social and economic objectives (discussed in Chapter 3) suggests a range of further potential narratives upon which cities can draw, and these are discussed below.

Response to economic crisis/de-industrialisation

The need to ensure a response to economic crisis or processes of de-industrialisation is cited as a key driver for some cities, e.g. Glasgow 1990 (Garcia, 2004b), Weimar 1999 (Roth & Frank, 2000) and Helsinki 2000 (Heikkinen, 2000). The most commonly cited area for which direct economic benefit is sought is tourism; although, more recently, this formulation has begun to touch upon areas like the development of the 'creative industries' (e.g. Essen for the Ruhr 2010, 2005). For some cities, there is also a significant focus on physical/infrastructural developments (e.g. Pécs 2010, Tallinn 2011 and Maribor 2012). Yet

²⁴ It is important to note that, although the data sources noted here have been thoroughly reviewed, it is not always clear whether motivations and objectives have been expressed at the bid stage and carried through into the delivery phase, or whether there is a clear separation between such articulations. In the case of cities up to 1995, no bidding requirements were made for cities, and therefore all available data was related to cities' plans for delivery.

²⁵ See Appendix B for a full list of sources by data indicator and city.

the degree to which such narratives reflect the beliefs of different stakeholders involved in the ECoC is an interesting issue to consider; Rommetvedt's study, looking at the views of stakeholders in Stavanger, for instance, suggests disagreement among different stakeholders as to the potential value of culture as an economic driver (2008).

Socio-economic development/regeneration

Looking at cities from 2005 onwards, a broad range of economic and social objectives tend to characterise individual cities' statements of their vision for the ECoC. The ex-post evaluation for ECoCs in 2007 and 2008 associates all the ECoCs with the pursuit of "economic development through culture", "primarily through using the ECoC to improve the image of the city"; and of pursuing "social development through culture" through "widening access to culture" (ECORYS, 2009a: iii). Whilst the individual cities are, of course, cited as having particular areas of emphasis (e.g. consider Luxembourg GR 2007, which sought specifically to "build... a cross-border region", or the emphasis placed by Sibiu 2007 on the city's international profile), multiple objectives remain part of their core vision. The following summary of Essen for the Ruhr 2010's original aim exemplifies this approach:

[to] develop culture as a means to achieve wider social and economic goals, including community cohesion, integration of immigrant or ethnic groups, development of the creative economy, improved perceptions of the region and bringing the Ruhr together as a single metropolis (ECORYS, 2011c: iii).

A high profile cultural programme

Whilst subsequent hosting cities have widened the focus of ECoCs beyond that of a cultural festival, most still demonstrate significant emphasis on a high profile cultural programme, and on seeking a conceptual vision that is explicitly cultural. Cork 2005, for example, presented itself as "city in the making", with core objectives to "explore the culture of Ireland, Europe and beyond through programmes, events and attitudes that will confirm urban life as a creative cultural space" (MKW GmbH, 2007: 11). Tallinn 2011 took this concept further, articulating its vision to:

create a cultural event that is supported on every level by its urban community, proving in the process that a small society built on a strong cultural foundation can be as much a success as that of larger nations (ECORYS, 2012a: iv).

Raising profile/changing image

As already noted in Chapter 3, one of the changes most often sought by cities in their visions for an ECoC involves either raising the profile of the city (and usually its cultural offer) or changing perceptions of the city.²⁶ It is worth noting that these perception-changes are quite often linked to concerns about the perceptions of the economic status or competitiveness of the city (e.g. Tallinn 2011, which sought to discard its image as a post-communist city); they demonstrate attempts to move away from existing perceptions linked to previous industrial bases or political regimes, or to insist upon the contemporary and modern nature of the city.

²⁶ For example, in the cases of Glasgow 1990, Helsinki 2000, Liverpool 2008, Linz 2009 and Tallinn 2011, each city sought to overturn what it felt was a widely held existing negative image or perception of the city.

Differences in aims and objectives

This widening of objectives over the period of the ECoC initiative is one of the few clear 'trends' apparent from an analysis of different ECoCs. ECoCs from 2005 onwards tend to indicate a broad range of economic and social objectives, as well as aspirations to develop a programme and a profile; variation between cities tends to be in the specific emphasis on particular areas or formulations of an area of impact, rather than in opting for either one or another area of impact. Evaluations for ECoC cities from 2009-2012 (nine cities) suggest that relatively little changed in the core objectives of the cities between the bidding and delivery phases; however, changes in emphasis in some cases, or reworking to ensure practical delivery, are noted (ECORYS, 2010a; 2011a; 2012a; 2013a).

Whilst many cities offer similar aims and objectives, Istanbul 2010 provides a particularly interesting comparison with other ECoCs, given both its size and existing international profile and image. Some commentators (e.g. Akçakaya and Özeçevik, 2008a) have framed Istanbul's objectives as an ECoC within regeneration discourses; however, the ex-post evaluation suggests that Istanbul did not need regenerating in the way some other ECoCs did, and that it would have been unrealistic, in any case, to expect an intervention on the scale of the ECoC to have a significant economic or social impact on a city the size of Istanbul (ECORYS, 2011c: 74).

More widely, the impact of thinking connected with urban regeneration, and broader trends in cultural policy and the use of culture in other public policy areas, is reflected in the language that cities use to express what they wish to achieve through an ECoC. Turku 2011 sought a particular emphasis on the well-being of its citizens; Linz 2009 expressed itself in terms of a laboratory for future development; and Guimarães 2012 sought to develop 'human capital'.

4.3. Programming processes and choices

This Section looks at some of the approaches used in determining the programme for an ECoC, including the conceptual and temporal organisation of activity, and the ways in which different cities have dealt with programming both within and beyond the city's existing cultural offer.

Themes, strands and seasons

As with other areas in this study, a single dataset looking at programme themes has been brought together using two major multi-city studies (Myerscough, 1994 and Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a) and the ECORYS ex-post evaluations looking at ECoCs from 2007-2012; where cities fall between these studies, other sources have been used.

Looking at themes developed by cities for ECoCs, there are a number of types of theme around which cities can be clustered. In the first 15 years of the initiative, a number of cities chose a theme specifically relating to the city as a place to explore European culture, and usually the relationship between the hosting city and the rest of Europe; on the whole, themes selected by cities hosting the ECoC post-2000 did not make many specific references to European concepts or relationships. Beyond this movement, there do not appear to be clear trends over time in terms of theme selections; nor are there any significant relationships between different types of cities (geography, size or European status) and approaches to theming cities.

A similar cluster of cities opted for themes that related to specific facets of the city or national culture, such as Porto 2001 reflecting on the river and bridges across it, and cities like Genoa 2004 and Stavanger 2008 taking their status as a port as the starting point for

the subsequent generation of themes. Not all locally/nationally-specific themes were felt to be viable, with Tallinn's 2011 original theme at the application ('folklore and fairytales') being changed following advice from the Selection Panel that it was not sufficiently relevant to a wider European audience. Some cities have focused on themes from artistic sources (e.g. Bruges 2002 which commissioned a poem, from which twelve programme strands were taken), or focused on formulations of 'art and creativity' or questions of 'culture and nature'.²⁷

Whilst in many ways, the expression of themes is perhaps the clearest expression of an artistic and cultural vision for the ECoC, it is also true for some ECoCs that themes have specifically reflected the wider (sometimes economic and social) outcomes sought through the ECoC process; as such, some of these offer a conceptualisation of "the city" through the programme themes (e.g. Rotterdam 2001: "Rotterdam is many cities", or Essen for the Ruhr 2010: "City of Arts – identity; City of Cultures – integration; City of Possibilities – urban development; City of Creativity – creative economy"). Linz 2009 took the core themes "industry, culture and nature" (ECORYS 2010a), whilst Mons 2015 is taking the theme "Mons, where technology meets culture" (Mons 2015, 2011). Three cities sought – in developing a theme – to reflect a wider conception of culture, either as an important space for dialogue or in the sense of "culture for all" (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a).

Another concept important for a small number of cities was indicating the sought-for development: Maribor 2012 arranged sub-strands under the slogan "The Turning Point"; Essen for the Ruhr 2010 used a "leitmotif" in a similar way: "Change through culture – Culture through change". Beyond these smaller groupings, other cities chose a variety of themes, though often under a single broad slogan or concept. A third of all ECoCs in the 1995-2004 period (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a) had a single theme; Thessaloniki 1997 seems to have been the exception in terms of the typical number of themes, with 31 programming themes identified by Palmer/Rae (2004a).

The purpose of themes – whether for internal organisation and/or external communication of the ECoC – is not always clear for individual ECoCs. The ex-post evaluation for Turku 2011 notes that the themes used for internal planning were not used for external communication, with the programme being clustered by artform rather than theme (ECORYS, 2012: 43). In some cases, activity was also organised into clear strands; for example, artform strands were used by Cork 2005 (O'Callaghan, 2012), while Copenhagen 1996 had three main strands: an arts programme, a city programme and a social programme (Davies, 2012). As with themes, it is not always clear whether these organising principles were predominantly for internal or external purposes.

Sibiu 2007 did not have a specific theme for its artistic programme. Meanwhile, the ex-post evaluation for Pécs 2010 notes that the city planned themes for the years prior to 2010, but that it was not clear how much activity delivered in that period responded to those themes. In respect of Luxembourg GR 2007, different themes were developed to reflect different regions, but the practical application of these appears to have been rather uneven; the ex-post evaluation suggests that, in practice, these reduced to two main themes, which were felt to have "facilitated more coherence and collaboration within the ECOC" (ECORYS, 2009a: 24) – suggesting perhaps that the primary benefit of themes is "internal" to the delivery process.

In terms of external communication of programmes, Palmer and Richards (2007; 2009) identify a number of distinct trends in ECoC programming. They particularly note the production by ECoC cities of distinct 'seasons' throughout the year (that is, grouping activity temporally) in order to facilitate the communication and marketing of a city's programme and provide some focus around which to build local and external visitor excitement.

²⁷ See Appendix B for a full list of sources by data indicator and city.

Duration of programme

Most ECoCs in the first decade of the initiative undertook a programme of between six and ten months, with only Glasgow 1990 and Madrid 1992 offering a full year of activity. From Luxembourg 1995 onwards, programmes comprised full years, and increasingly cities have included some pilot or lead-in activity prior to the hosting year. Approaches to this kind of lead-in include: Helsinki 2000's "appetizer programme" in the summer of 1999; Prague 2000, which similarly held "prologue" events in the previous year; Stavanger 2008, which ran some "taster" events in 2006 and 2007; and Linz 2009, which ran 147 projects in the run up to 2009, with the aim of testing the feasibility of certain activities.²⁸ Theming (externally) years in the lead-up to the hosting year has become more widespread, with Stavanger 2008 theming 2007, Liverpool 2008 theming years from 2002 to 2010, and Pécs 2010 planning to theme years from 2008 (although the extent of this approach appears to have been limited in the latter case). Both Liverpool 2008 and Stavanger 2008 explicitly stated plans to theme/connect activity after the host year. In several cases with more recent ECoCs, the ex-post evaluations note that planning activity (commissioning new works, developing productions) was being undertaken for several years in advance of the host year, reflecting the necessary lead-in times for programming.

As with most approaches discussed here, undertaking work prior to the hosting year has been positive in some respects. For instance, in Liverpool, the ECoC organisers felt this work helped with the engagement of a diversity of local communities and that it consequently gave greater credibility to some of the city's most complex and sensitive grassroots projects (such as *Four Corners* and *It's Not OK*, which involved work with deprived and marginal communities throughout the city and, in the case of *It's Not OK*, considered issues such as youth crime and alcohol abuse) (Liverpool 2008, 2008). However, organisers have also indicated that this drained resources ahead of the actual event year and placed excessive pressure on the ECoC team, who had to be in delivery mode from the very moment the city gained the nomination, rather than having time to plan and refine priorities for the ECoC year (ICC Workshop I, 2013).

Location of the programme

On the whole, ECoCs seem to have undertaken activity both within the hosting city (including suburbs) and the wider city region. Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) note that Avignon 2000 was criticised for not undertaking sufficient activity outside the city walls, but this does not appear to have been a significant issue across other ECoCs. Marseille-Provence 2013, Essen for the Ruhr 2010 and Luxembourg GR 2007 have all specifically sought to apply the ECoC to a wider regional area than a city, and this is reflected in the reported spread of activity; this appears to be, relatively speaking, a new trend amongst ECoCs, and has currently been limited to cities in the west of Europe and from the original member states (i.e. EU-12 and EU-15 countries).

Cities reporting activity across the whole host country tended to be from 2000 or earlier, although Linz 2009 made specific connections with Vienna. Other cities in the more recent period report connections with neighbouring cities and towns, or with exchange/twinned cities and fellow ECoCs outside the host country.

²⁸ For analysis in this section, see Appendix B, which provides a full list of sources by data indicator and city.

Artforms and activity genres

The majority of ECoCs have programmed activity across most of the major artforms, although, within this, different ECoCs demonstrate an emphasis on particular areas. Antwerp 1993, for example, concentrated to a great extent on contemporary art (Martinez, 2007: 2455); whereas Graz 2003 placed particular emphasis on new architecture, with a high profile new venue created which attracted significant visitor numbers (Acconci 2008; and MKW GmbH, 2007: 5). In other cases, by comparison, cities are viewed as *deficient* in particular artform areas; for instance, the main impact study commissioned by Bruges 2002 (2003) notes that, whilst both exhibitions and performing arts activities were seen as strong elements of the programme, stakeholders felt that the contemporary visual art offer was much less strong.

The Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 study asked cities between 1995-2003 to indicate what had been the most prominent artforms in their programme (19 cities offered responses). Those responses are aggregated in the Table below:

Table 6: % of 1995-2003 ECoCs reporting artform prominence

Music	89%
Theatre	84%
Visual Arts	79%
Street parades/open-air events	42%
Interdisciplinary	16%
Architecture and/or design	26%
Heritage and history	32%
Literature	11%
Dance	11%
Performing Arts	11%
Conferences	5%
Audio-visual media	5%
Opera	5%

Source: Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b)

The dominance of major artform groups is unsurprising, particularly given the range of potential sub-genres under these areas. The emphasis upon street or outdoor activities, however, suggests both an impetus to place activity within the landscape of the city and a broader reflection on the way in which this kind of activity (sometimes now termed 'outdoor art' in the UK) is a significant part of contemporary cultural programming, and particularly festival programming. It is worth noting that Luxembourg 1995 suggested that "street parades/open-air events" were amongst its most prominent artforms, and that Copenhagen 1996 indicated an "interdisciplinary" approach to its artforms; emphasis on cross-artform areas is not a particularly recent phenomenon. All those cities (six) emphasising 'heritage and history' were what might be called historic cities: Thessaloniki 1997, Stockholm 1998, Weimar 1999, Avignon 2000, Bologna 2000 and Kraków 2000.

Beyond these groupings, wider definitions of culture mean that areas like fashion, sport, religion, industry, gastronomy, gardening and science are reflected in some ECoC programmes, though there is no evidence of any of these areas being as significant as the major artform groups. Crafts as a specific area are considered important by six cities between 1995-2000, but are only referred to again by Turku 2011; it is difficult to know if this reflects absorption of crafts into a broader 'visual arts' category, or simply a choice of ECoCs where no particular craft tradition exists.

There is some degree of evidence of more recently recognised/adopted artforms or conceptions of cultural activity emerging in ECoC programmes: Brussels 2000 refers to "urban cultural initiatives defining the city" (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a); Lille 2004 refers to "land art" (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a); and Turku 2011 refers to both "circus" art and "urban city events" (Turku 2011, 2010). There is also some evidence of artforms that are nationally specific or important: Istanbul 2010 highlighted "classic Turkish music projects"; whilst Tallinn 2011 had an emphasis on "folk culture".

New and additional programming

In Myerscough's 1994 study of ECoCs, estimates were offered of the extent to which programme activity was additional to that which might have taken place in hosting cities if the ECoC had not been awarded; the estimates ranged from 65% (Florence 1986 and Madrid 1992) to 100% (Glasgow 1990). Subsequent studies have not offered similar estimates, but commentary from both Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) and ex-post evaluations by ECORYS seems to suggest a slight movement away from cities building strongly on *existing* programmes (e.g. Prague 2000, Reykjavík 2000 and Porto 2001 are all noted as building very directly on the existing cultural calendar) towards a stronger emphasis on new works, productions and approaches to presentation/creation. Indeed, in some cases, the emphasis on new work has been perceived as too pervasive. For instance, Essen for the Ruhr 2010 is noted for having received criticism from some stakeholders, who wanted "better support" for the existing cultural offer, rather than an over-emphasis on "new products and collaborations" (ECORYS, 2011c).

There are relatively few confirmed numbers of actual new commissions or productions from the main data sources for individual ECoCs, but a number of cities (in addition to Essen for the Ruhr 2010) are strongly cited in respect of new work – including Cork 2005, Liverpool 2008 (with 60 world and European premieres), Tallinn 2011 ("42% of projects featured the commissioning or creation of new works; 56% of projects featured the performance or exhibition of new works" (ECORYS, 2012b: 23)), Turku 2011, and Guimarães 2012 (1,000 "new creations" in the cultural programme). Deffner & Labrianidis (2005) refer to innovation in the Thessaloniki 1997 programme through the introduction of "new types" of activity, including workshops, 'lounges', engagement with people with special needs and specific areas of programme focus. Bruges 2002 (2003) makes a point of the "contemporary creations" that took place in the city as part of the year, and the way in which this contradicted the normal perceptions of what might happen in Bruges. In the case of Turku, works and activities in "unexpected spaces" were a particular feature of the programme (ECORYS, 2012a: vi); whilst Essen for the Ruhr 2010 commissioned new works in a number of non-traditional artforms, including music, games, design and communications (Essen 2010, 2011).

Programme balance

In understanding the range of programming approaches, a valuable indicator is the origin of programme elements: whether they come from local cultural organisations and institutions, or from outside the city. The Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 study asked respondents (ECoCs from 1995-2003) to estimate what percentage of events and projects originated from outside the host city.²⁹ Most respondents indicated that 20% to 30% of events and projects had originated outside the city, although responses range from 10% (Helsinki 2000) to 70% (Salamanca 2002). The Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 reports notes specific issues of balance between high profile and "local" activities in the cases of: Avignon 2000, which was criticised by local groups for its focus on a nationally-organised exhibition; Brussels 2000, which was "was criticised by the tourist board for not hosting a blockbuster

²⁹ 11 of 19 cities offered a response.

exhibition"; Kraków 2000, for not sufficiently using local talent; and Porto 2001, for engaging with established cultural institutions rather than independent organisations and artists. In Weimar 1999, the controversial decision was made to skew the artistic programme heavily towards 'high' culture events, despite the use of a broader concept of culture during the application stage, as it was argued that such events would be more attractive to international tourists (Roth and Frank, 2000: 232); during the year itself, there was further controversy and widespread public protest within the city, in relation to a proposed artistic installation on the Rollplatz (*ibid.*: 234-5).

Similar estimations are not available for other cities outside the Palmer/Rae 2004 study, but the ECORYS ex-post evaluations and other sources note, in the case of cities from 2005 to 2012, the presence of both local organisations and artists *and* international companies and collaborations in the different ECoC programmes. Some ECoCs have placed specific emphasis on acknowledging links outside the host city, such as Cork 2005, in which 27 of the 33 organisations that were interviewed as part of the year's evaluation reported some kind of collaboration with a European organisation or individual (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006).³⁰ Essen for the Ruhr 2010 is noted as placing particular emphasis on collaborations between artists, rather than touring or visiting productions (ECORYS, 2011a); this ECoC also specifically referred to a number of projects designed to celebrate and explore European links and relationships, including a range of projects with fellow ECoCs in 2010, i.e. Istanbul and Pécs (Essen 2010, 2009). Some ECoCs specifically identified programme areas relating to different providers. For instance, the ex-post evaluation of Istanbul 2010 notes: a strand of "high-profile" cultural events, many of which involved international artists and companies; a strand of activities highlighting the "traditional and historical culture of Istanbul and Turkey"; and a strand of activity developing new works, and including input from local artists and organisations (ECORYS, 2011c: vii). Guimarães 2012, meanwhile, is noted for its focus on artistic development in the city itself, rather than inviting the involvement of artists and projects developed outside of the city. On the whole, the emphasis in more recent ECoCs appears to have been on utilising relationships with artists and companies external to the city to develop the capacity or profile of organisations within the city, through collaborative or other approaches, rather than just 'receiving' touring productions.

Two cities from the post-2005 period of ECoCs suffered significant budget cuts, and their responses to programme reduction offer an interesting point of comparison. Vilnius 2009 cut its *People Programme* ("small, local projects", where funding had not yet been committed) because, in many cases, it had already entered into contractual commitments for its *European Art Programme* (ECORYS, 2010a). In contrast, Tallinn 2011 had to cancel or reduce the budget on costly international projects; instead, the ex-post evaluation reports "an emphasis on funding local artists and productions, rather than bringing in more expensive productions from abroad" (ECORYS, 2012a: 19).

Where data is available, most cities appear to have involved a range of artists, from local to national and international. Comparison is not possible between different cities due to the type of data involved, but examples include: Liverpool 2008 (with 50% local artists, 30% national and 20% based overseas); Essen for the Ruhr 2010 (with 140 international artists involved in their *City of Possibilities* theme, and the *TWINS* programme with 20,000 "artistic participants" from 257 cities, 39 countries and four continents); and Linz 2009 (with artists from 66 countries involved in their programme). Similarly, recent ECoCs (reflecting the available data) demonstrate significant numbers of projects and co-productions between ECoCs taking place in the same year, and also involving other countries.³¹

³⁰ How unique or different from normal activity these connections are is sometimes less clear. In the case of Cork 2005, the kinds of 'collaboration' include showing "films pertaining to European countries" or working "with European language materials", which may be activities which would take place within cultural organisations regardless of the ECoC designation.

³¹ See Appendix B for a full list of sources by data indicator and city.

The Palmer/Rae 2004 study also asked respondents (ECoCs from 1995-2003) to estimate the percentage of "professional" projects as opposed to "community/amateur" projects.³² Most respondents indicated that between 70% and 90% of projects were "professional", although responses range from 50% (Helsinki 2000) to 90% (Brussels, Prague and Bruges 2000, and Salamanca 2002). The particular formulation of this question makes it difficult to directly compare with other ECoCs outside this period, and the phrase "community/amateur" is not necessarily coherent with "participatory" or "outreach" – terms more commonly used with recent work that focuses on participants rather than the presentation of professional production.

Looking over the wider ECoC initiative, approaches range from Berlin 1988, which "focused on art rather than culture generally and [made] no broad attempt to develop a parallel programme of social initiatives" (Myerscough, 1994: 98), to Glasgow 1990, which is noted by Myerscough (1994) as having "extensive programmes of community events and projects", and appears to have spent about 19% of the programme budget on those events and projects.

ECoCs from the recent period (2005-present) are all reported as having some element of the programme focused on community engagement. Liverpool 2008 stands out, with an £11m multi-year programme (*Creative Communities*); however, Turku 2011 is also noted for its grassroots and participatory programmes, and a number of cities (for example, Cork 2005 and Pécs 2010) are cited as using open call funding programmes to enable community-led projects to find a place in the programme.

Programme consultation and funding processes

A small number of cities (five) are specifically reported through Palmer/Rae 2004³³ as having run an open call funding process for ideas and projects: Luxembourg 1995; Thessaloniki 1997; Stockholm 1998; Helsinki 2000; and Reykjavík 2000. Post-2004 these include: Cork 2005 (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006); Tallinn 2011 (ECORYS, 2012a: v, 17); Turku 2011 (ECORYS, 2012a: 40); and Pécs 2010 (here, projects were selected through a number of calls for proposals, including calls specifically targeting third sector organisations; ECORYS, 2011c: 49). Four cities are cited as finding these processes challenging: Luxembourg 1995, where over-subscription (750 applications) meant that additional advisers had to be brought in to deal with the submissions; Stockholm 1998, for which 5,000 submissions were received but not processed quickly due to issues with budget confirmations, resulting in 4,000 being turned down; Helsinki 2000, where some cultural organisations objected to the broad nature of the process; and Cork 2005, where the volume of submissions was also a problem (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006).³⁴

Beyond this approach, Copenhagen 1996 was particularly noted for the thoroughness of its formal consultation process and the way in which it genuinely informed the programme (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a). Cities varied in whom they included in their consultation processes, with some focusing largely on the cultural sector, and others engaging in wider processes involving politicians, businesses, the tourism sector, community organisations and the social sector, and local residents (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a). The team in

³² 14 of 19 cities offered a response to the question about programme consultation, and so the data from Palmer/Rae is not a comprehensive analysis in this case.

³³ In some cases, funding calls or calls for submissions of ideas are reported, but not specifically described as 'open'.

³⁴ Cork 2005 also took longer than anticipated to be able to sift through submissions and administer the funds; in addition, the available investment was significantly smaller than the level of investment sought across submissions, resulting in many applications being unsuccessful: "In general, the considered view was that while the principle of an open call may seem democratic, the practical realities within which the organisation was operating meant that its democratic qualities were difficult to operationalize" (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006: 18).

charge of Brussels 2000 felt that the “power of the dialogue with local people” was a key element for a successful ECoC year, and set up a ‘dialogue’ process both with the local cultural organisations and residents during the design and implementation phase of the cultural programme (Brussels 2000, 2001).

In comparison, Istanbul 2010 had specific issues with the governance and funding sources for its cultural programme, which resulted in the application of “conventional government procedures in the tendering for services with the emphasis placed on accountability and value for money” (ECORYS, 2011c: 75) for all activities. The ex-post evaluation notes that this approach was perhaps appropriate for the construction and infrastructure projects, but that interviewees felt it was unsuitable for many of the cultural programme activities and providers, as well as making basic administration difficult.

The balance of funding between different aspects of programming can be another area of contention. Deffner and Labrianidis note that five events (out of a total of 1,271) took up 24% of the budget for the programme for Thessaloniki 1997, and suggest that this is “typical for the cases of cultural planning in which the economic aspect is dominant” (2005: 251).

Turku 2011 found managing the communication of the programming and funding process difficult:

Communicating to the wider public and the media why there was limited information available was one of the key challenges during the development phase...for example, interviews indicated that there had been a lack of information on the selection process of the projects, how the programme was being formed, and what type of projects would be selected. This alienated the local as well as national media and cultural organisations in Turku which proved challenging to change (ECORYS, 2012a: 42).

In response to these problems, the delivery vehicle for the ECoC ran a series of meetings with the media and invited journalists for visits, went on to present at tourism fairs, and worked with embassies to engage the international media (ECORYS, 2012a: 42). Artists referred to similar challenges in the clarity of funding processes in the context of Liverpool 2008 (Impacts 08, 2009a).

4.4. Programme size and scale

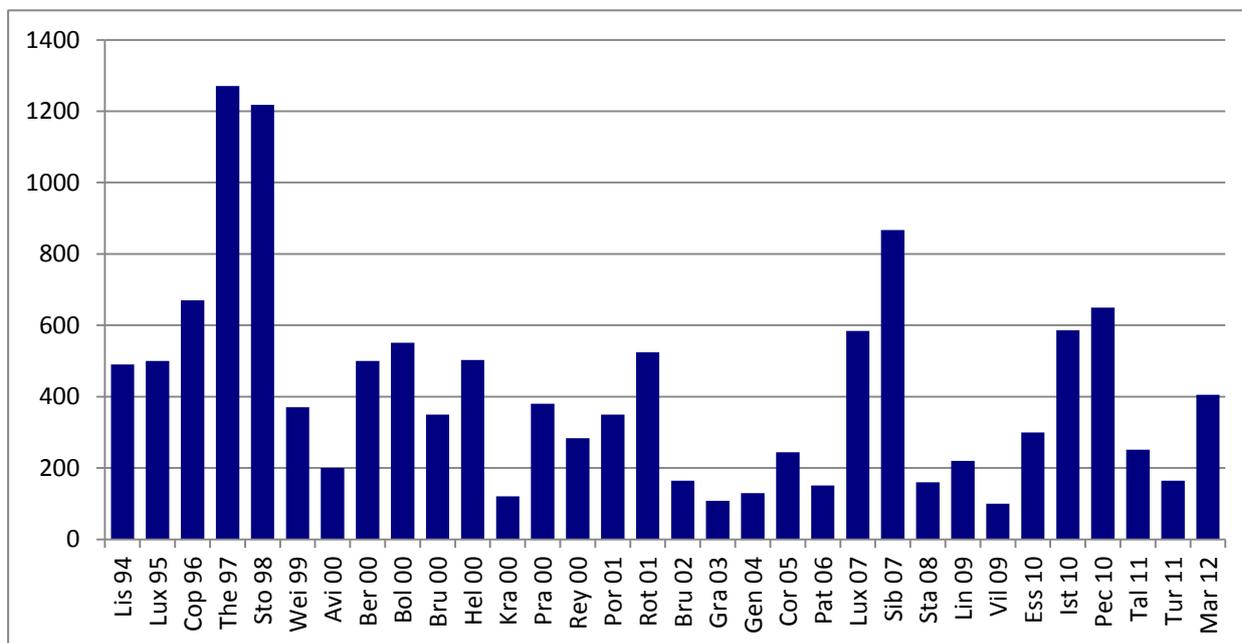
At the most basic level, the first area of output from the year that particularly impacts upon the cultural system is the individual ECoC’s cultural programme. For example, the ex-post evaluation of the years 2007 and 2008 points out that in each city “a more extensive cultural programme has been implemented than would have been the case in the absence of ECOC designation” (ECORYS 2009a: vi). Assessing the relative size and scale of individual ECoCs is complex, predominantly because there is no standardised unit of measurement that can provide a reliable point of comparison for one ECoC and another. Figure 11 offers a comparison of the number of projects in ECoCs between 1995 and 2012. No ‘project count’ is available for cities prior to 1994, which offer, instead, event counts. A comparison of the number of events from 1985 onwards is provided in Figure 12.

What is difficult to determine in comparing the number of projects between ECoCs is what actually constitutes a project, particularly where sources have not identified what definitions have been used by cities reporting this data: where is a project a programme, or an event, or a series of events and activities? The multiple sources used in producing Figure 11 also make it difficult to draw confident conclusions. Whilst there is other evidence that, for example, Thessaloniki ran a very high volume of activity (Deffner & Labrianidis, 2005), understanding the relationship between the volume of projects and this apparent volume of activity is not necessarily straightforward. What is perhaps most reasonable is to assume

that something an ECoC itself designates as a 'project' is a conceptually differentiated unit of the programme.³⁵

The following Figure presents the number of projects for each ECoC, where data is available, in chronological order.

Figure 11: Number of projects by ECoC, 1994-2012



Sources: ECoC documentation centre website; ECORYS (2009a; 2010a; 2010b; 2011d; 2012a; 2013a); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Quinn and O'Halloran (2006); Stavanger 2008 (2009); Zentrum für Kulturforschung and IGC Culturplan (2011)

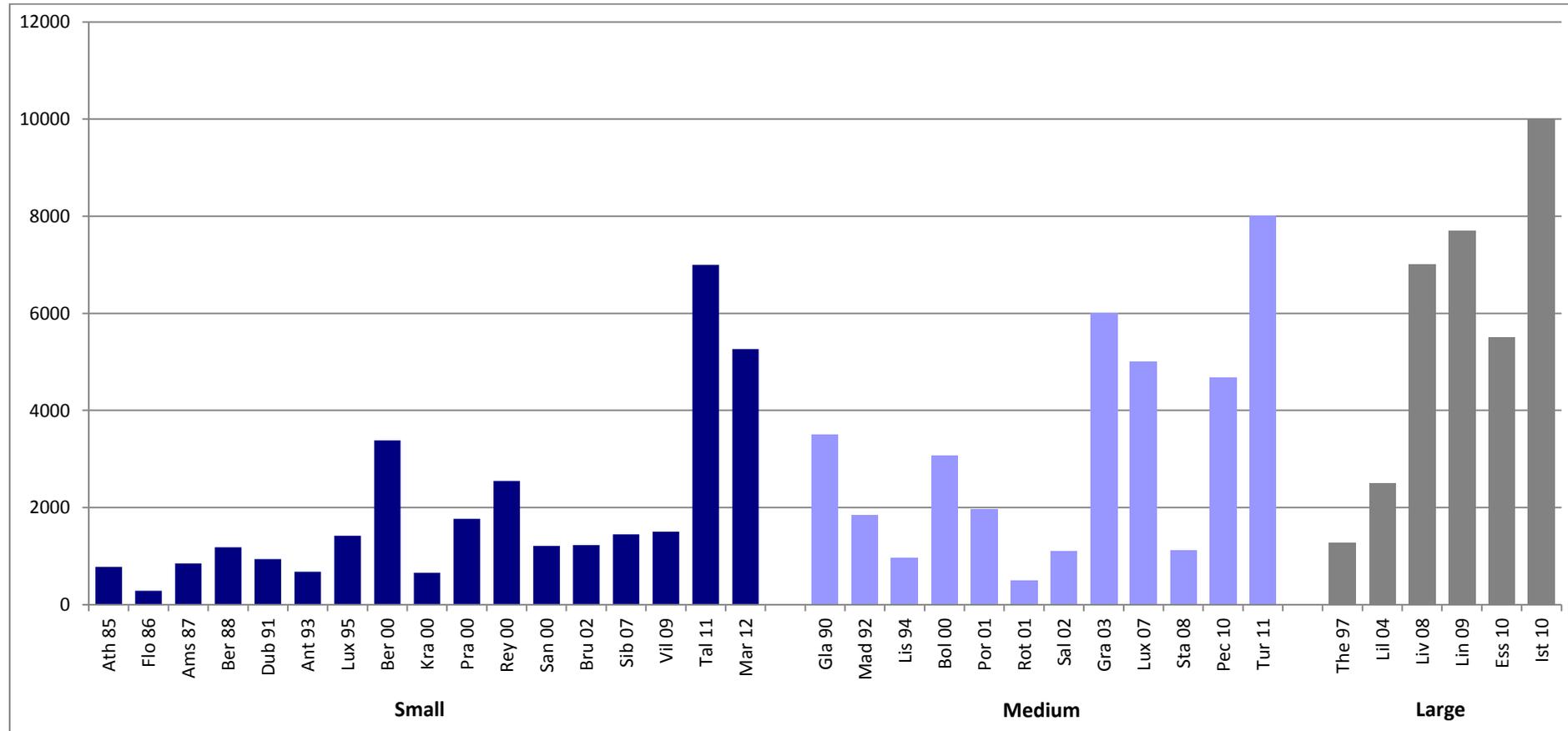
When comparing the number of projects with the population size of cities, the average (mean) number of projects per 100,000 of population was 187. Istanbul 2010, Essen for the Ruhr 2010 and Luxembourg GR 2007 all show the smallest numbers of projects (single figures) per 100,000 of population; at the other end of the scale, Pécs 2010, Maribor 2012, Weimar 1999, Luxembourg 1995 and Sibiu 2007 all show more than 500 projects per 100,000 of population.

Looking more broadly at project counts by the general size of the city, there does not appear to be a direct correlation between project count and city size. The two cities with the largest number of projects are Thessaloniki 1997 and Stockholm 1998, both medium-sized cities. The third highest number of projects is attributed to Sibiu 2007, a small city. All the large cities – Luxembourg GR 2007 (reflecting the Greater Region), Essen for the Ruhr 2010 and Istanbul 2010 – show fewer than 600 projects each. There is also no strong correlation between income size and project count.

³⁵ There is evidence of significant variation in the way cities define a 'project'. For example: "Lille realised 2500 projects during the ECoC year, counting every single event as a project" (MKW GmbH, 2007: p.9). The Palmer/Rae Associates study (2004a) did not appear to attempt to aggregate and compare project numbers in its main report, cautioning that the figures reported by ECoC to its research team "do not take into account ... that individual projects may in fact be entire programmes of events". Indeed, the project figures for each host city, recorded in Part II of the report, leave considerable room for uncertainty, and in some cases suggest that the terms 'project' and 'event' have been conflated/used interchangeably.

An alternative approach to understanding the 'size' of an ECoC programme is to assess available data on the number of events in an ECoC. Figure 12 offers this assessment of the number of events accounted for from 1985 onwards, and considers the relationship between the volume of events and the overall level of ECoC income.

Figure 12: Number of events by ECoC, 1985-2012, by income group



Sources: Axe Culture (2005); Bruges 2002 (2003); Deffner and Labrianidis (2005); ECORYS (2009b; 2010b; 2011c; 2011d; 2012b; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Richards and Rotariu (2011); Richards and Wilson (2004)

Whilst this comparison is based on a number of similar data sources (ex-post evaluations), there remain potential issues within the data. As with projects, the unit of comparison of events may be defined differently by different cities. It is also not always clear where cities might supply figures relating to multi-year activity, though where the data has been sufficiently detailed only host year figures have been included (e.g. in the case of Liverpool 2008).

Figure 12 shows cities by broad income group, with small defined as budgets less than €30m; medium as between €30m and €60m, and large as bigger than €60m. There is a Pearson Correlation of 0.67 between income and event count, confirming a relationship between budget size and the volume of activity produced by ECoCs; at the most straightforward level, this suggests that larger budgets support larger programmes. On the whole, it is also apparent that the typical volume of events per ECoC has grown over the period of the initiative.

As with the project count, it is possible to consider the number of events per 100,000 of a city's population; the average (mean) number of events is 1,140 per 100,000 of population, with significant variance between different cities. Five cities from the period 1985-1992 demonstrate fewer than 80 events per 100,000 of population, suggesting that the overall scale of the ECoC has increased since this period. Glasgow is the significant exception from the pre-1995 period, with 547 events per 100,000 of population. In general, those ECoCs with significantly larger population sizes – Istanbul 2010, Essen for the Ruhr 2010 and Luxembourg GR 2007 – all show much smaller than average events per 100,000 of population. The four cities with the highest volume of events per 100,000 of population are from the period 2009-2012. On the whole, the data appears to suggest a growth in the size and scale of the ECoC over time, but also that this is mitigated in some cases by increasingly large areas (usually covering a city plus its regional surroundings) receiving the designation.

Looking at broader city size groupings, there does not appear to be a particularly strong relationship between city size and the volume of events. Turku 2011, Linz 2009, Tallinn 2011 and Graz 2003 all reported 6,000 or more events, and all are small cities.

Some of the comparative differences to the project count are also worth noting. The relative sizes of Liverpool 2008 to Stavanger 2008, and Linz 2009 to Vilnius 2009, seem to be broadly confirmed (with Liverpool and Linz being the larger programmes in each case). For Pécs 2010, Tallinn 2011 and Turku 2011, however, the trend in project volumes seems to be reversed in event volumes.

By way of elucidating this challenge further, individual studies can give us some indication of the different ratios of events to projects for different ECoCs. Graz 2004 included 108 projects and 6,000 events (approximately 55 events to each project) (MKW GmbH, 2007). By comparison, Stavanger 2008 had 150 projects and 450 events (three events to each project; Bergsgard & Vassenden, 2011).

Looking beyond a bare comparison of numbers, it seems that, when considering size and scale as an indicator, bigger is not always better. Deffner and Labrianidis attribute some of the lower attendances at events in Thessaloniki 1997 to the sheer volume of events that were part of the Thessaloniki 1997 programme, including high concentrations of events over the summer period and large numbers of similar events (2005). Similarly, Helsinki 2000 included about 500 projects, and this was felt to have generated "the typical effects of semantic saturation: audience and publics' loss or decrease of meaning, attention and interest" (translated from Mazzucotelli, 2005).

4.5. Physical developments

Since the mid-1990s, in line with the generalisation of culture-led regeneration strategies as a distinct form of urban cultural policy (see Garcia, 2004c), it has become very common for cities to specifically link their ECoC to a range of physical developments of the cultural and/or wider city infrastructure. Lisbon 1994 is considered to be the first ECoC to have an integrated urban intervention – one that set out to achieve improvements and extensions in cultural venues, and to implement full utilisation of this and existing capacity to raise the visibility of the cultural sector, as well as to serve as a market stimulator and draw for a new public (Roseta, 1998).

Some reflection on the relationship between ECoCs and physical developments is available from the main overview sources (Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) and the ECORYS ex-post evaluations).³⁶ Of those cities for which there is some information about the influence of the ECoC on physical developments (23 cities), just less than half reported situations in which developments were planned in advance of and independently from the ECoC, but with suggestions that (post-designation) timescales had been aligned to ensure completion for the hosting year. For a third of cities, some specific projects (usually amongst a larger programme of development) were publicly associated with the ECoC, with evidence of funding from the ECoC budget in some cases, or of projects gaining leverage from other investment sources due to the association with the ECoC. Less than a fifth of cities appeared to have major programmes of physical development as part of their ECoC. The ways in which physical developments are associated with the ECoC itself, in the wider perception of the ECoC Programme, vary: in some cities (e.g. Liverpool, physical developments were considered central to the ECoC, even if they were not funded or planned as part of any programme (see Garcia *et al.*, 2010; Impacts 08, 2010c); in other cities (e.g. Cork 2005), actors within the cultural system did not associate capital projects with the ECoC designation (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006: 47).

Within the same collection of sources, there are some clear statements from a small number of cities (11) concerning physical development programmes positioned either as a high priority or as of no priority (i.e. cities identifying that they were specifically not pursuing such a programme as part of their ECoC). All those specifically stating that physical development programmes were a key objective of their ECoC were significant historic cities (Thessaloniki 1997, Porto 2001, Genoa 2004, Istanbul 2010, Pécs 2010); whereas those that did not undertake significant physical programmes included a number of Nordic cities (Bergen 2000, Helsinki 2000, Reykjavík 2000 and Stavanger 2008), in addition to Santiago de Compostela 2000 and Rotterdam 2001. Amongst this latter group, Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) note criticism from stakeholders in the cases of Helsinki 2000, Reykjavík 2000 and Santiago de Compostela 2000, for the failure of the city to leave a legacy of significant physical development. The pattern across different phases of the ECoC initiative seems to suggest that the inclusion of physical development programmes as part of the ECoC has not changed significantly in the second and third phases; although it appears that early ECoCs did not (on the whole) include such programmes other than linking to “schemes already in the pipeline” (Myerscough, 1994: 18) which, in a few instances, were accelerated in the context of the ECoC (e.g. Glasgow 1990, Dublin 1991, Antwerp 1993) (*ibid.*).

In terms of different types of physical developments, renovation of existing assets for cultural purposes is the most prevalent (more than 90% of those cities for which data is available), including the restoration/refurbishment of existing cultural spaces or heritage sites, and the development of cultural-use spaces from buildings previously used for other purposes (e.g. industrial buildings). 80% of cities also undertook renovations of existing buildings/spaces for non-culturally specific purposes: most of these appear to have been ‘public realm’ works, such as improving lighting, signage, streets and parks and other

³⁶ For analysis in this section, see Appendix B, which provides a full list of sources by data indicator and city.

public spaces. Two-thirds of cities reported some new buildings for cultural purposes, with new venues across the artforms (including multi-artform spaces) being the most common. This notion of “flagship buildings” for some cities building new developments (e.g. Linz 2009; see 2010a: 27) is an important concept alongside “flagship events” – seen by delivering cities as key signifiers of the status of the ECoC designation. Thessaloniki 1997 stands out for the volume of its developments, including eight theatres and 15 cultural centres. A smaller proportion of cities (about two-fifths) reported new physical developments for non-cultural purposes; these include hotels and transport infrastructure, although (on the whole) the available data is not very specific. Sibiu 2007 invested significantly in tourism infrastructure (ECORYS, 2009a). Transport and tourism infrastructure projects were a substantial part of the plans for Pécs 2010 (Pécs 2010, 2009); the ex-post evaluation notes “five key infrastructure projects”, two of which were completed in time to host events during 2010 itself (ECORYS, 2011c: v-vi). Alongside a number of cultural and ‘creative economy’ projects, Essen for the Ruhr 2010 also noted 15 new hotels being constructed in the area (Essen 2010, 2009).

For some cities, physical developments are a part of wider ECoC objectives to respond to changes in the industrial base of cities. This sometimes involves developing areas of the city for cultural activity that previously had not been used in this way. Copenhagen 1996 sought to focus on new areas of the city, including Holmen (the old naval dock area), ‘Den Brune Kødby’ (Brown Town of Meat) and ‘Turbinehallerne’ (the turbine halls) (Fridberg and Koch-Nielsen, 1997). Pécs 2010 included the “transformation of the Zsolnay Factory into the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter” (Pécs 2010, 2008: 59-61). Turku 2011 had a new flagship venue, the Logomo, an exhibition and performance venue with a centre for the creative industries, which was developed in a former railway engineering workshop in the middle of an industrial area (ECORYS, 2012a).

Tallinn 2011 planned investment in several infrastructure developments, although many of these did not happen due to the lack of funding gained for the ECoC. However, the ex-post evaluation still notes the value of some of the activities that went ahead, in providing positive evidence of the benefits to the city of what could be temporarily undertaken for the year:

Most notably, the ECoC introduced the concept of the “Cultural Kilometre” at the seafront and made it a reality albeit one that requires further ongoing development. A former industrial site was also cleaned up and served as the Cultural Cauldron (Kultuurikatel), attracting 40,000 visitors during the year. The Cauldron has not only attracted cultural audiences to the seafront area but will also continue to serve as a venue for events and as hub for the development of the cultural and creative industries, once its refurbishment is complete in 2013. Overall, the ECoC has served to highlight the potential of the seafront by bringing people to the areas for the first time and showing imaginative use of previously derelict space (ECORYS, 2012a: v).

Physical developments are sometimes part of longer-term plans. Luxembourg GR 2007 invested in a number of refurbishment projects (ECORYS, 2009a), although there was no “major new construction” due to the fact that Luxembourg “embarked on an extensive programme of cultural infrastructure development” following its first designation as an ECoC in 1995 (Luxembourg GR 2007, 2008: 6). The city architect for Maribor 2012 claimed that “the title European Capital of Culture represents a challenge and a responsibility for everyone working on the spatial or urban development of the city” (Maribor 2012, 2009a: 6), and Maribor 2012 outlined a scenario for city development reflecting this proposition.

Where developments are less firmly linked to the ECoC, it is still perceived to be the case that linking the ECoC with existing capital development plans is valuable. In the case of Liverpool 2008, the ex-post evaluation states that:

ECOC status can provide an important catalyst for city regeneration, and in particular provide a milestone for bringing major capital projects to fruition. To maximise the benefits, the ECOC year should be integrated within existing plans and strategies (and as early as before the city has received its designation) (ECORYS, 2009a: 74).

Despite this perception, physical developments that are part of, or associated with, ECoCs are not always viewed as positive. Challenges and critiques of particular examples are considered in Chapter 6 of this study.

4.6. Communicating the ECoC

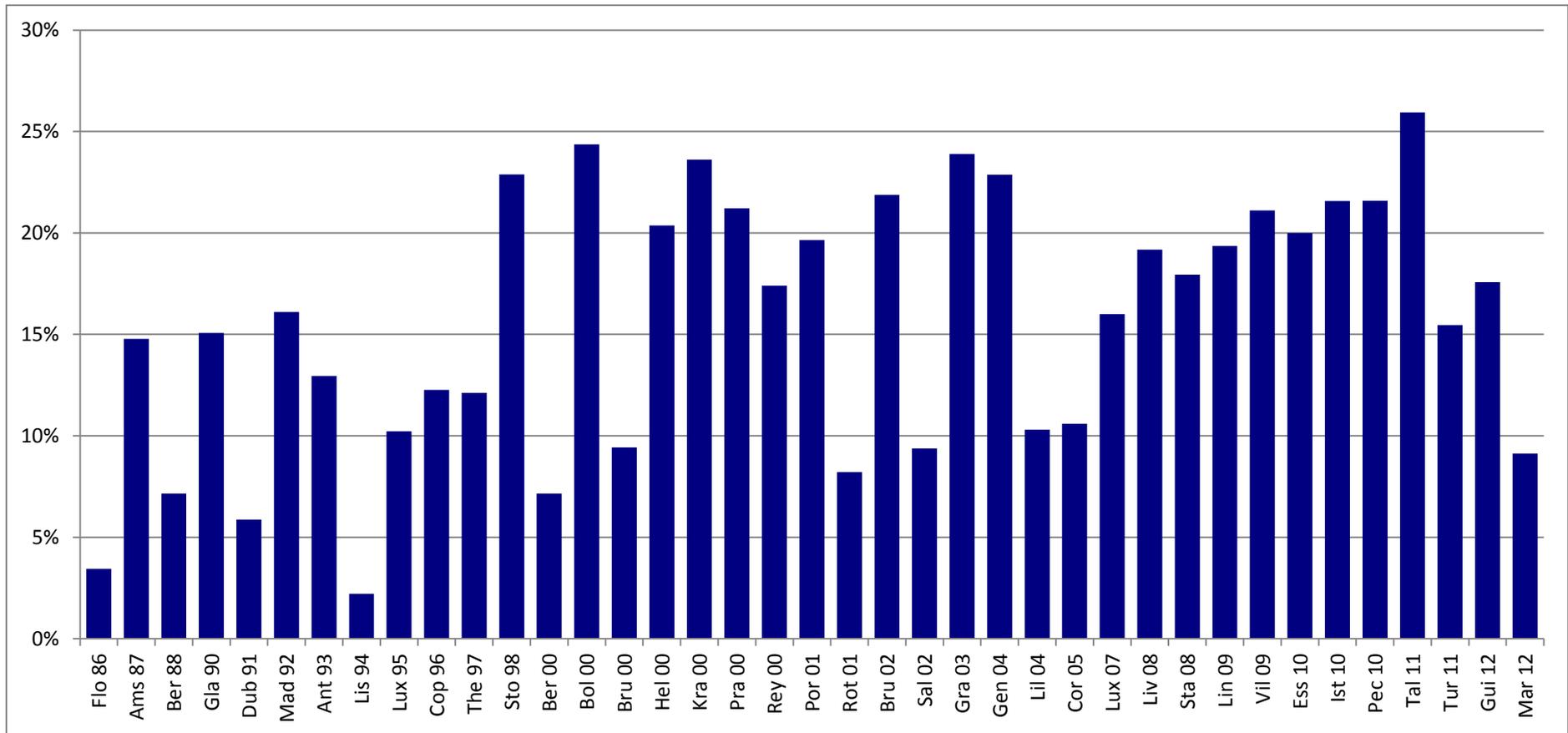
As an event and as an intervention seeking broader social and economic outcomes, a key concern for cities hosting the ECoC is communicating both its designation and its ECoC-specific activity. This Section looks at the budgets ECoCs invest in marketing and communications activities, the kinds of core messages and approaches used, and the specific methods of communications that cities employ to build tourism.

Budgets for marketing and communications

The analysis below (see Figure 13) looks at the proportion of ECoC operating expenditure (not including expenses/expenditure on infrastructure/physical developments) that cities report as having spent on marketing, promotion and communications activities.

Please note that, due to the amalgamation of this data from multiple sources, and the unavoidable variations in the way that the data is collected/supplied by cities, this data should be treated with some caution. The range for all ECoCs included in this analysis is between 7% (Bergen 2000) and 26% (Tallinn 2011), although, broadly speaking, cities fall into two general groups, with a third spending between 7% and 12% on marketing and communications and more than half spending between 20% and 26%. From a historic perspective, there are cities at both the lower and higher end of this spectrum in each of the three Phases; but it is also apparent that, from 2008 onwards, the majority of ECoC hosts are spending around 20% on marketing and communications.

Figure 13: Proportion of total ECoC budget spent on marketing and communications, by ECoC (1986-2012)



Sources: Cork 2005 website; ECORYS (2010a; 2011c; 2012a; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1991; 1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Stavanger 2008 (2009)

Beyond the trend towards higher marketing spend, particularly in the third phase of the ECoC Programme (2005 onwards), the only other detectable correlation – which is, however, tenuous – is with city size. Over half of all small cities (less than 0.5m inhabitants) for which data is available tend to spend 20% or more of their budget on marketing; and 64% of them spend 15% or more. In contrast, only 43% of medium cities spend over 20% of their budget on marketing, and only half spend more than 15%. Large cities, meanwhile, though a small group, spend the lowest proportion, with only 29% spending 20% or more of their budget on marketing. (Clearly, there is a relationship between these city size-related variations and the temporal trends detected, as the number of small cities hosting the ECoC has been on the rise, particularly since 2005.) Contrastingly, there is no apparent correlation between the size of a city's programme (the number of events or projects) and its proportional marketing allocation, with the only exception being during Phase 1 of the Programme, when Glasgow 1990 and Madrid 1992 stood out both for the size of their programmes and their marketing effort. This did not apply, for example, to Amsterdam 1987 and Antwerp 1993, both of which also had higher-than-average marketing proportions but average programme sizes. The motivations for cities to spend more or less in marketing are, thus, varied and not dependent on single factors that would allow easy typification. An assessment of the kinds of messages prevailing in the communication effort does, however, shed some more light on key delivery trends.

Core messages and approaches

After mixed beginnings, when marketing strategies were unclear or poorly operationalised, ECoC hosts have become increasingly strategic in their communications. As highlighted by Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b), the main focus of communications is the city itself, and this study confirms that city positioning (for cities with low profile pre-ECoC year) or repositioning (for those that may have a profile, either nationally or internationally, but one that is considered outdated or negative) is the priority marketing approach for 70% of cities for which data is available – with the majority of the other 30% being national capitals and/or cities with an established international profile, such as Athens 1985, Paris 1989, Luxembourg 1995, Copenhagen 1996, Prague 2000, Helsinki 2000, Brussels 2000, or Istanbul 2010.³⁷ Expectedly, the other most common focus of communications is the promotion of ECoC programmes themselves, which, whilst often secondary to city positioning, features in one way or another in almost all marketing campaigns. The majority of cities not prioritising city promotion focus their communications on their respective ECoC programme, with varying degrees of emphasis on their chosen themes for the year (as discussed in the previous Section). However, it is also worth noting that some cities, particularly in the early years but also in a few recent editions, did not develop (or could not fund) ECoC-specific marketing campaigns, relying instead on the dispersed communication efforts of existing cultural organisations or tourist boards.

In terms of priority audiences for the communication effort, the report by Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b) offers an illuminating overview of the period 1995 to 2003. In this period, 75% of hosts indicate that their priority was to reach "opinion formers", followed by cultural professionals (62.5%). Only 31% indicate that young people are their first priority target (instead, the latter tend to be seen as a 'medium priority' target for communications). This is quite a revealing finding, as it suggests that for most hosts in this period, the main purpose of their marketing campaign was to influence media narratives, alongside the views of their peers and key decision-makers, which, in turn, may have influenced a wider audience. This finding supports the view, expressed in

³⁷ This assessment results from analysis of references to respective ECoCs' core marketing messages or marketing strategy by Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b), Myerscough (1994), Garcia (2004) and ECORYS ex-post evaluations of ECoCs from 2007 to 2012.

Chapter 5, that for a long period of time, an important impact area was the ability to shape opinions amongst the elite, to consolidate the credibility and relevance of ECoC programming. In the same report, children and young people dominate as a medium priority communication target (81% of surveyed ECoCs), followed by politicians (50%); whereas elderly people, ethnic minorities and disabled people are mostly considered a low communication priority (44% to 50%). As discussed in Section 4.7 ('Public engagement'), programming for young people has become a common pursuit for the majority of ECoCs; however, the analysis of findings by Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b) suggests that this was not extended to the marketing strategy before 2005. In fact, as extensive research on Glasgow 1990 shows, despite the fact that this city provided an early example of an ECoC presenting work for a very wide range of audiences, its sophisticated marketing strategy was, nevertheless, mostly oriented towards opinion formers and other elites (Garcia, 2003; 2004b). Research conducted on cities within Phase 3 of the Programme, on the other hand, suggests a change of trend, with young people, as well as ethnic and other minority groups, featuring more prominently in marketing and frequently acting as the focus of dedicated marketing campaigns (Garcia *et al.*, 2010; ECORYS, 2009a; 2010a; 2011c; 2012a).

Communicating with local audiences

As noted above, it has become common in recent years (particularly from 2005 onwards) to identify a series of targeted communication activities to make the ECoC appealing to distinct groups at local and national, as well as international, levels. Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b) provide the only attempt at comparing the scope of communication targets over a 10 year period. Their research claims that the priority audience for 81% of cities hosting the title between 1995 and 2004 was locally based, while 62.5% of cities had the region as their secondary audience, with the nation as third target audience (62.5%), and Europe as fourth target audience (87.5%). The only exceptions in this period are Bologna 2000, which considered Europe as its priority communication target, and Prague 2000, which considered Europe its secondary target.

Table 7: Priority communication targets

Year	ECoC	Priority target	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
1995	Luxembourg	Local	National	Regional	European	International
1996	Copenhagen	Regional	National	Local	European	International
1998	Stockholm	Local	Regional	National	European	International
1999	Weimar	National	Local	Regional	European	International
2000	Prague	Local	European	International	National	Regional
2000	Bologna	European	National	Local	Regional	International
2000	Brussels	Local	Regional	National	European	International
2000	Bergen	Local	Regional	National	European	International
2000	Helsinki	Local	Regional	National	European	International
2000	Reykjavík	Local	National	Regional	European	International
2001	Rotterdam	Local	Regional	National	European	International
2001	Porto	Local	Regional	National	European	International
2002	Bruges	Local	Regional	National	European	International
2002	Salamanca	Local	Regional	National	European	International
2003	Graz	Local	Regional	National	European	International
2004	Genoa	Local	Regional	National	European	International
Most dominant target audience		Local (81%)	Regional (62.5%)	National (62.5%)	European (87.5%)	International (93.8%)

Source: ICC analysis of Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a)

Although comparable data for other ECoC periods is not available, an assessment of the literature gives a strong indication that the emphasis on local (or internal) audiences as top priority continues to be on the rise and that, since 2005, this is the area benefiting from the most extensive variation of dedicated communication techniques. The most important change over time has been a switch from a focus on reaching out to local media and other local elites (cultural and political actors), to a far broader exploration of local community marketing strategies. Amongst the latter, approaches that stand out are locally-owned branding techniques (e.g. contests to design variations of the ECoC logo) dedicated to the local population, or often produced in collaboration with the local groups they serve; and techniques dedicated to rebrand local areas (new place branding). Some examples of this are discussed below, while communication techniques created to appeal to external audiences (in particular, tourists) are discussed in the following Section.

Locally-owned branding

Looking at the marketing techniques employed by Istanbul 2010 from a local perspective, Hoyng notes that:

Especially amongst poor communities, [such as] ex-migrant [communities] in the urban peripheries, technologies of place branding were used to foster 'urban consciousness' and a sense of belonging to the city. A volunteer to Istanbul 2010 explained to me that the project, The March of the Cultural Ants, targeted children from such communities, not so much to define Istanbul for the children as to let them define their city and the event was positioned not just as a festival but as a step towards sustainable change in governance and participation (Hoyng, 2012: 9).

In order to encourage local ownership, some ECoCs make available versions of the core ECoC branding for use by local projects, even if they have not received direct financial assistance from the ECoC agency. In this case, the support provided could be interpreted mainly as a joint communication platform, which heightens the visibility of existing city cultural activities during the ECoC year and helps ECoC organisers in their claim to connect with grassroots organisations, such as neighbourhood associations and community-led youth, religious or ethnic-minority centres. In the case of Istanbul 2010, Hoyng (2012) defines this as "logo support", while other marketing literature would define this as umbrella branding. More generally, Hoyng states that: "Istanbul 2010's place branding staged local populations as co-producers of the project, and more broadly, of Istanbul as a thriving creative city and a frontrunner among global knowledge economies" (*ibid.*: 9).

In addition, Istanbul also seemed to offer a different kind of city in terms of its existing 'brand'. As Bıçakçı (2012: 1004) points out, Istanbul was different to many of the other cities that have been awarded the ECoC title, in that it already had a very strong brand as an international cultural centre and was therefore faced with no overwhelming imperative to build on this area. Indeed, the ECoC award was perceived as an opportunity to market the European aspect of Turkey's identity, thereby helping to facilitate the country's long-term ambition to accede to the EU. However, the author argues that the success that the city had in achieving this goal will not be evident for some time (*ibid.*: 1005). Beyond this, the core communication aim of Istanbul was to use the title to "Involve as many people and organisations as possible; and Redefine the relations between the people of Istanbul and the city administration in order to create a new mechanism for decision-making" (ECORYS, 2011: 76)

The local appropriation and reinterpretation of the ECoC brand was also evident, although highly contested, in Glasgow 1990, Cork 2005 and Liverpool 2008 (Mooney, 2004; O'Callaghan and Linehan, 2007). The struggle over control of logos and advertising materials gave rise to local forms of cultural production that were used both to preserve and promote the oppositional cultures important to these cities' sense of identity. As such, in some cases, communities reinterpreted the logos or created mock versions (see Reason, 2006a on Glasgow 1990). In other cases, communities or individuals have instead chosen to use the original bidding emblems over the official ECoC brand, as the former tend to be seen as accessible, and not commercially owned nor subject to exclusivity deals with sponsors as is the case with the latter (Garcia, 2008). This activity was often conducted in the face of criticism from the organisations administering the ECoC.

Local branding or rebranding of places

Local adaptation of marketing materials has also been used to develop new senses of place and new local brands. Scheytt and Beier (2010: 44) discuss the approach for RUHR.2010, the brand title chosen for Essen for the Ruhr's year as ECOC. As one of the central themes of the programme was the social and cultural transformation of the Ruhr area as whole, it was decided to change the title of the year from 'Essen for the Ruhr Area' to 'RUHR.2010'. In this way, the organisation not only hoped to rebrand the region as a whole (the affix 'Area' was also dropped by other regional organisations), but also to ensure that all individual cities, municipalities and cultural institutions involved could present themselves in unity as part of the larger whole. In some cases, this can present some branding challenges, such as with Marseille-Provence 2013, which has tried to conflate two very different, previously existing place brands: Marseille, as a diverse port city with some rough edges, and Provence as an idyllic/traditionally country area that is much more mono-cultural.

The Pécs 2010 marketing strategy (2008: 21-27) had a similar aim, attempting to develop a new brand for the city via partnerships, with a focus on local elements. Pécs' strategy notes that close strategic partnerships between local, national and international institutions and actors were essential to achieving its goals, along with cooperation with other Hungarian cities and with the two other ECoC for 2010: Essen for the Ruhr and Istanbul. Pécs aimed to establish a new brand that would move away from some of the negative associations that the place had developed (as a site of declining population and tourism), whilst retaining the notion of the city as a cultural city (Pécs 2010, 2008: 11-12). As discussed in Chapter 5, these objectives were largely met and Pécs succeeded in its repositioning as a cultural centre.

Communicating for tourism

At the other side of the spectrum, many ECoCs have specifically identified tourism objectives within their plans for the year, predominantly intending to attract tourism through the marketing of events and wider place-based branding. Prominent examples include Glasgow 1990 and Liverpool 2008, which saw their ECoC year as the chance to reposition their city nationally and internationally, and as the key platform to launch a previously underdeveloped tourism framework. Gold and Gold (2005: 225) argue that as the Programme has developed, the ECoC has become: "longer, better planned, and more extensively marketed, particularly through international tourist agencies".

In terms of external perceptions and tourism, there are different views as to the immediate benefits of gaining ECoC status but most would agree that the designation in itself will not result automatically in tourism benefits; rather, it requires that the ECoC status is used effectively as part of appropriately defined marketing strategies. For a number of cities, the literature suggests that the ECoC status provides a 'hook' for communication with potential tourism markets. For instance, the ex-post evaluation of the 2007 and 2008 ECoCs suggests that the 'visibility' that the designation prompts supported all four ECoCs in those years in generating tourism increases (ECORYS, 2009a) – evidence for which is discussed in the next Chapter, dedicated to exploring the impacts and effects of ECoC activities. The 'hook' of the ECoC goes alongside the creation of a tourist-friendly image, flagship activities and other activities to improve the tourism 'offer', including skills development for the city's visitor front-line services. In all of these cases, what is important is to establish priorities that are appropriate to external audiences and, thus, clearly distinguished from the type of techniques relevant to the local population. In this sense, Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) found clear evidence of a relationship between type of communication message and target audience: while marketing communications focused on positioning the city were mainly aimed at national or international audiences, the promotion of the ECoC programme *per se* was mainly dedicated to local audiences, with audiences further afield a secondary target or a target only of a selection of event highlights.

It is common for ECoC hosts to want to use the year to change existing perceptions. Bruges already had a significant tourism base upon which to build, but was keen to change perceptions of the city as "corny" and "dead" (Bruges 2002, 2003). Working with specialist agencies, Bruges undertook a branding campaign prior to the start of the year itself and supported this with a media plan, aimed at using the ECoC as the centre piece of a new image: "The Cultural Capital concept is a well-known formula, so Bruges 2002 could automatically count on press interest from at home and abroad" (*ibid.*: 58).

For the year itself, Bruges 2002 worked with travel operators and media to promote the city and the year's activities, and worked with the national and city-based tourism agencies to promote tourism. Similar processes have been used by other ECoCs, from Lisbon 1994 in the early years (Holton, 1998), to Essen for the Ruhr 2010 (Essen 2010,

2009), Liverpool 2008 (ECORYS, 2009a; ENWRS and Impacts 08, 2010) and Linz 2009 (ECORYS, 2010a).

Flagship events have often been a key element of marketing the ECoC and city to tourists. Events that were staged under the 'Liverpool 08' banner – the formal branding for the Liverpool ECoC programme – were an important factor in driving visitors, including those who did not attend events (ENWRS and Impacts 08, 2010: 4, 20). On their own, significant events can be significant drivers of tourism. In Thessaloniki 1997, two significant events (a U2 concert and an exhibition of artifacts from Mount Athos) drew in approximately 10% of Thessaloniki 1997's audience from outside Greece (Deffner & Labrianidis, 2005). In contrast, for Luxembourg GR 2007, there was a sense that the "very limited number of flagship events and relatively weak artistic themes" limited the ability to promote the ECoC to international tourists (ECORYS, 2009a: 33).

Finally, developing the branding and marketing skills of those working in the tourism sector has been a way to develop a city's offer on an almost one-to-one basis. Pécs 2010 ran a foreign language training programme with transport staff, policemen and people working in the service sector, and a regional 'cultural-touristic' network with a job creation programme in support of it, to run until 2012 (2009: 5). Similarly, Liverpool developed a *Welcome programme*, involving 10,000 people (5,000 of whom attended training) who were 'frontline' staff in the visitor experience (ECORYS, 2009a: 69-70). Like Liverpool, Linz trained staff in public transport interchanges to provide information to tourists, and a number of routes – including information centres, cultural institutions and shops – were used to carry information for visitors (ECORYS, 2010a).

Strength of the ECoC brand

Views on the strength or weakness of the ECoC Programme as a distinct brand vary. This is partly a result of the diversity of approaches and models for ECoCs that have been applied across different cities due to the differing national understandings of the ECoC, but also due to the complex interrelationship between ECoCs and wider trends in city marketing and city branding approaches in the context of major event strategies (Richards, 2000; Evans, 2005). The academic debate in this area points at both the risk of underplaying the core brand (which results in poor recognition of what makes the ECoC distinct from other cultural events, e.g. the fact that it is a European initiative and aspires to project a European Dimension) and the risk of making it too uniform (which would lead to a disconnection with the particularities of each host). On the first point, Garcia (2004a) argues that the ECoC brand has been underused or overshadowed for most of the Programme's history up to 2004, which may explain the limited impact of its European Dimension aspirations, particularly from a media coverage point of view. With regard to more recent ECoC editions, however, Aiello and Thurlow (2006: 151) suggest that the promotional material across a range of ECoC cities has developed a "general uniformity". Aiello and Thurlow make the point that cities reproduce "the institutionalised *look* of a European Capital of Culture", suggesting that there is an ECoC brand, and that communicating that the city has become an ECoC is more easily and effectively enabled by adopting the institutional image of the ECoC. To explain what is meant by this "institutionalised look", the authors claim that cities focus on the use of the cityscape as a common visual device, along with other imagery such as fireworks and groups of children. Clearly, the most effective branding approach for ECoCs would be one that strikes the right balance between the individual distinctive features and collective memory of respective host cities, whilst retaining the supposedly recognisable ECoC 'look' identified by Aiello and Thurlow (2006). The paragraph below offers a reflection on some of the best achieved examples, either for the distinctiveness of the look, or the variety of mediums used to make it connect with different constituencies.

Ever since Berlin 1988, which Myerscough (1994: 98) considers the first city “to commit serious resources to the promotion of the event”, respective ECoC hosts have created logos and designed a corporate identity for the year that could be applied to a range of media to make the brand visible and widespread. The most common ECoC communication approach is exemplified by Turku 2011. The city used a range of regular communications methods and mediums, including: press releases, meetings and media materials available online; a listings calendar; magazine supplements with national and local newspapers; an online presence; presence at tourism fairs and work through tourism agencies and tour operators; a targeted promotional campaign for nearby countries (in the case of Turku, Sweden and St. Petersburg in Russia); and inviting journalists to view the city (ECORYS, 2012a: 50). The latter method can be an important source of (medium- to long-term) impact, as travel and culture journalists can be motivated to visit the city for the first time and thereafter use it as a point of reference (see Chapter 5 for a discussion on available evidence). An additional and, if adequately used, very effective mechanism for ECoC branding is to devise a ‘look of the city’ programme, involving the distribution of flags and banners displaying the year’s corporate identity at the most popular city streets and public squares, around iconic buildings and throughout the main city entry points (airport, train stations, road links); this is alongside the display of branded signage, helping visitors find their way around the city. Research on the Liverpool 2008 experience (Impacts 08, 2010d) shows how such programmes can play a key role in shaping first impressions of the year for external visitors, as well as ensuring that tourists not originally motivated to visit the ECoC develop an awareness and interest. The issue of awareness/interest can also apply to locals, with programmes shaping or enhancing their opinion of the year and its value for the city - the subject of the following Section.

4.7. Audiences, participants and volunteers

Most host cities have stressed the importance of engaging local people in the planning and delivery of the year (see, for example, Pécs 2010, 2008: 51), as well as building audiences for activities from within the local population (de Munnynck, 1998; Cogliandro, 2001). The rhetoric of social inclusion is strong in relation to ECoCs. The Director for Cork 2005, for example, stated that: “This project [the ECoC] can only be regarded as a success if all of Cork’s citizens have an opportunity to participate in this celebration of our culture” (quoted in Quinn & O’Halloran, 2006).

What has sometimes been called the ‘citizenship dimension’ of the ECoC is considered key to the success of an ECoC by several commentators (Buursink, 1997; Besson & Sutherland, 2007; Boyko, 2008). For several cities – such as Rotterdam 2001 (Buursink, 1997), Salamanca 2002 (Herrero *et al.*, 2006) and Liverpool 2008 (Prado, 2007) – the ECoC was seen as an opportunity to change public participation in the cultural activity in a significant way. Several ECoCs have demonstrated significant challenges in balancing local participation with other agendas, and the perceived absence of appropriate or significant engagement of local populations is an area of significant critique in literature about the ECoC Programme. For example, Besson and Sutherland note that Cork 2005 acknowledged a tension between the “once in a lifetime agenda of international cultural events” and the potential for excluding local people, resulting in “a loss of public support during the cultural year” (2007).

Despite this emphasis on the importance of public engagement, relatively little information emerges through the main sources to identify what cities did to engage citizens, and particularly what were the mechanisms and detailed approaches. Some evidence is available of different kinds of public engagement sought by cities. Discussed in this Section are:

- Evidence of activity targeted at specific groups
- Approaches to audience development and participatory activity
- Volunteering programmes.

Activity targeted at specific groups

As with other areas in this study, a single dataset looking at activity targeted at specific groups has been brought together using two major multi-city studies (Myerscough, 1994 and Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a) and the ECORYS ex-post evaluations of ECoCs from 2007 onwards; where cities fall between these studies, other sources have been used.³⁸

Using these sources, the following Table shows those groups that are most regularly noted as having been targeted by an ECoC through its programme; the Figure indicates the number of cities targeting a given group in this way.

Table 8: Target Groups for ECoCs

Demographic group	No.
Children and young people	32
Socially disadvantaged people	15
Disabled people	12
Minority groups (unspecified)	9
Different neighbourhoods	8
Elderly people	8
Ethnic minorities	7
Women	5
Unemployed people	4
Gay/Lesbian people	3

Sources: ECORYS (2009a; 2010a; 2011c; 2012a; 2013a); Lille 2004 (2005); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b)

It is important to note that this does not represent a comprehensive assessment of the programme of every ECoC, but rather identifies those groups that different ECoCs have been noted in previous evaluations as targeting. Beyond this, some groups are very broadly defined in the source material (e.g. socially disadvantaged people, or minority groups), and so this data offers only a general indication. The recurrent focus on programming for children and young people is worth noting, however, as is the emergence of programming for other more specific groups. Not included in this Table, but highlighted once or twice in the dataset was work with immigrant populations, religious groups, hospital patients, prisoners, and families, reflecting the range of engagement and outreach work that takes place as part of regular artistic and cultural programming in organisations across Europe.

There do not appear to be any strong relationships, either between the phase of the ECoC Programme and targeted groups, or between other contextual factors (e.g. size, EU status, type of city) and groups which are targeted; the limitations of the data as an indicator may be partially responsible for this.

³⁸ For analysis in this section, see Appendix B, which provides a full list of sources by data indicator and city.

Engaging audiences and participants

Amongst the available sources, most of the activity reported, and most of the commentary on approaches undertaken by ECoCs to engage the public, falls into one of two categories:

- Activity or marketing approaches designed to engage a more diverse population as audiences for cultural activity.
- Approaches designed specifically to engage groups in participatory activity.

Attracting a diverse audience

At the level of awareness-raising, the ex-post evaluation of Essen for the Ruhr 2010 suggests that the allocation of a significant budget; the creation of co-ordinated teams across communications, press and marketing; the structuring of promotional activity around clusters; and a focus on projects with the most potential for profile, were extremely successful approaches in raising the visibility of the ECoC with local residents (ECORYS, 2011c: iv). Beyond this, specific programming is sometimes cited as a route to 'new' audiences. The ex-post evaluation of Pécs 2010 suggests that a mixture of events, including mass participation and niche events, helped to engage people; in addition, it highlights the importance of non-governmental organisations in working with specific communities (ECORYS, 2011c: v).³⁹ Maribor 2012's plans sought a particular engagement with politics through, amongst other items, a festival of rhetoric and a programming theme on the 'Muses of Socialism' (Maribor 2012, 2009b).

The location of activities can be important. In Copenhagen 1996, activities took place around the region (Davies, 2012). 'Alternative' venues are considered by some ECoCs to be particularly effective in terms of engaging different types of audiences, e.g. Luxembourg GR 2007's Rotundas and Stavanger 2008's use of outdoor and 'countryside' spaces (ECORYS, 2009a).

Dedicated programme strands with partners from other sectors have been one way in which ECoCs have sought to engage different groups of the public. Cork 2005 had a *Culture and Health* strand and a *Culture and Community* strand with projects throughout the wider cultural programme (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006). Both areas of the programme demonstrated engagement with non-arts and cultural partners (for example, the Health Services Executive for the area), and some of the potential longer-term effects of Cork 2005 emerged through the commitment of those partners post-2006. Essen for the Ruhr 2010 similarly developed "new partnership structures, including representatives from a variety of organisations, such as youth groups, churches and sporting associations" in order to support participation from different groups (ECORYS, 2011c: iv).

Turku 2011 also approached engagement by exploring cross-sectoral relationships, by identifying 'well-being' as a core objective across the cultural programme:

The theme of well-being was of key importance during the title year, through a number of projects that encouraged the active participation of older people in the cultural activities or that increased access to and accessibility of culture, as well as through research and analysis of the impact of culture for health and well-being. This theme was reflected in the communication and marketing activities with such slogans as "culture does good" (ECORYS, 2012a: vi).

³⁹ The evaluation suggests that this resulted in a "widening of participation in culture", although the study appears to point at the activity rather than at audience/participant data as evidence of this (ECORYS, 2011c: vi).

Bruges 2002 worked significantly with the Flemish Ministry of Education to develop projects (Decoutere, 2003), and Brussels 2000 with the Centrum voor Amateurkunst in developing projects for schools (Brussels 2000, 2001). Liverpool (Liverpool City Council 2007) sought to comprehensively engage schoolchildren within the city as part of their *Creative Learning Networks* programme:

Link Officers for Creativity & Culture were established in every school to improve communication, maximise creative and cultural education opportunities and develop a themed programme of collaborative teaching & learning with creativity (Liverpool City Council 2008: 3).

Tallinn 2011 had a *Young Audience Programme* and a programme specifically targeting disadvantaged youth, as well as activities in counties outside Tallinn (ECORYS, 2012a: v). Tallinn also focused on specific activities for the Russian community, which was not as well-served by the cultural offer as the Estonian-speaking community (ECORYS, 2012a: 15). This approach was mirrored in the marketing spend and organisation of Tallinn 2011, with a commitment of "600EUR per week throughout 2010 to enable a story to be told about the city each week from a different perspective, including Russian, Ukrainian, etc." (ECORYS, 2012a: 24).

Connolly (2013) argues that the approaches to engagement with the public embodied in Liverpool's bid to become ECoC 2008 remove the consideration of structural factors that may cause deprivation, and place the responsibility with the individual to enact change for themselves through engaging with 'culture'. His analysis goes on to suggest that planning documents from Liverpool Culture Company attribute deprivation to a lack of access to cultural activities. Liverpool 2008 tried to address access and inclusion issues by developing a significant programme, *Creative Communities*, in this area. More broadly, Bullen argues, in her twin case studies of Liverpool and Marseille, that:

officials are coming up with ideas of populations that bear little reality to what or how people actually live their lives, in order to win funding or to control populations or create order (Bullen, 2013: 84).

As noted earlier, Chapter 6 considers some of the challenges to public engagement, and the wider critical discourse in this area, more fully.

From other available material, some examples of targeted work are available. Bruges 2002, for example, had an *Artists in Residence* programme in schools, a project with prisoners, and activities at a neighbourhood level; it also engaged amateur artists in activities and established a *Citizen's Pass* and a *Public Network* (Decoutere, 2003). However, not all targeted activity has necessarily been well-received by intended groups; for instance, research by Churchill and Homfray (2008) into the opinions of gay residents of Liverpool concerning the 2008 programme suggested mixed views, with some believing gay-themed programming to be well-integrated into the main programme, and others seeing this as a mere 'box-ticking' exercise. The challenges of attempting the engagement of diverse communities are not unique to the ECoC, or, indeed, to cultural activities as a policy area. However, what is clear from the range of commentary concerning this area is that the way in which the role and identity of different groups is constructed within the context of the ECoC is an area for potential debate and challenge. Some of these issues are discussed further in Chapter 6.

Overall, more recent ECoCs (2005 onwards) demonstrate greater awareness of the need to engage with different groups, and invest significantly in organised programmes to support this kind of engagement.

Volunteering

Volunteering schemes are a fairly common element of public engagement used by ECoCs. This Section briefly discusses some examples, and looks at the different ways in which volunteers are used as part of the ECoC.

Bruges 2002 set up a volunteering scheme that focused particularly upon encouraging participation in the wider ECoC from different groups of the public; they called the scheme *the public network*. The national government supported the scheme, and individuals were encouraged to use either municipal routes of communication and networking, or their own existing routes. Participants in the network were supplied with marketing materials to share with their contacts and communities, and the network was supported by a co-ordinator. 112 people were involved in the network (Bruges 2002, 2003). Effectively, this is an example of volunteering as audience development. Lille 2004, similarly, sought to use their volunteer programme, *Ambassadeurs*, as a route to “relay...information” as well as to “assist the running of events and participate in special activities” (Besson & Sutherland, 2007). Besson & Sutherland describe the programme, involving 17,000 people, as enabling “the organizers...to keep in close contact with the general public, develop a system of feedback on public opinion and ensure key conditions of public support” (Besson & Sutherland, 2007).

Volunteer programmes appear to have become increasingly ‘professional’, with different roles available, training support and, in some cases, job descriptions. The Patras 2006 volunteers programme identified nine different areas of activity that volunteers could get involved in, and supported them with training, with the aim of “finding the right persons for the right positions” (Pallikarakis, 2006: 21). A formal management structure was put in place for the volunteers programme, and many of the volunteers were placed with specific venues. Similarly, Sibiu had 1,200 volunteers, with the majority being under 30; volunteers had “job descriptions, and were selected to match specific roles...training was also provided” (ECORYS, 2009a: 47). Liverpool 2008 had 9,894 volunteers registered in August 2008; and 851 volunteers completed a training process to become active ‘08 *Volunteers*’ within the dedicated *08 Welcome Programme*, giving 5,611 days of volunteering in 2008 (Garcia *et al.*, 2010: 22). Tallinn 2011 had a volunteer programme that “linked individuals to specific volunteer positions with cultural operators” (ECORYS, 2012a: v), and drew on the experiences of Liverpool 2008 (ECORYS, 2012a: 28). Volunteers had a ‘job description’, received training and were supported by a dedicated co-ordinator.

Istanbul 2010 ran an “extensive volunteer programme” (ECORYS, 2011c: viii), with three-day training courses and some volunteers receiving additional training to support them in engaging with foreign visitors to the city. Haying (2012: 9) discusses how Istanbul’s programme could be understood in terms of a catalyst for broader changes in governance, and this is linked to the volunteering programme in the city:

This Program connected a group of 6,000 volunteers (initially it aimed for 10,000, but the amount was lowered, not because of lack of interest, but because the size of the group became unmanageable). In order to promote a participatory culture and as a reward for their time and energy, volunteers received training by professionals in entrepreneurship and self-organization, especially within the cultural and the third (NGO) sector. Moreover, the volunteers were invited to directly practice the skills they had gained by brainstorming with other volunteers they had met during their service or through the online database in order to initiate more projects and events for Istanbul 2010 (Hoyng, 2012: 10-11).

Other volunteer programmes from the more recent ECoCs include Linz 2009 and Turku 2011, both of which specifically involved volunteers in elements of their artistic programmes (ECORYS, 2010a: 39; ECORYS, 2012a: 58). Similarly, Essen for the Ruhr 2010 ran a volunteering programme involving 1,165 active volunteers (ECORYS, 2011c: 39), and Pécs 2010 began a volunteering programme in 2007, three years prior to its ECoC year. In Marseille-Provence 2013, an additional dimension to the volunteering programme has been to link it to paid opportunities, oriented towards young people in particular, in a move to ensure that the volunteering programme can also act as a platform to enter the workplace (ICC Workshop I, April 2013).

4.8. Governance

Development of governance

As noted by Cogliandro (2001: 12), from 1985 until the present, ECoCs have tended to utilise one of two alternative administration models: "either direct administration within existing government structures, usually 'politically' driven, or independent promoting companies".

Between 1985 and 1990, direct administration within existing government structures ran the ECoC year. The Greek Ministry of Culture handled Athens in 1985 centrally, through a newly established autonomous office. The years in Florence (1986) West Berlin (1988) and Glasgow (1990) were each coordinated by a dedicated team appointed by their respective local authorities. The only exception in this period was Amsterdam (1987) where the Holland festival and The Netherlands Institute were jointly contracted to organise the event.

Gold and Gold (2005: 231) note that Dublin 1991 broke with the pattern adopted before 1991 and took the approach that has been dominant ever since, with independent companies running almost all subsequent ECoCs. The separate delivery vehicle model has seen some slight variations, operating either at arms-length from the city council (the most usual approach) or in some cases still linked to council structures (e.g. Liverpool 2008), to develop a programme, raise funds and market the year. In the period post-1995, only four cities appear to have pursued direct administration, rather than a separate or independent body: Avignon 2000, Kraków 2000 (which pursued a mixed model), Santiago de Compostela 2000 and Cork 2005, which used direct administration for its infrastructure programme (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a; Quinn and O'Halloran, 2006).

Discussing the period 1991 to 2000, Cogliandro (2001: 12) details how, for Lisbon 1994, a former Minister was executive chair supported by a series of company directors each taking executive responsibility in relation to a particular area of the programme. In other cases (Antwerp 1993, Copenhagen 1996, Stockholm 1998), directors were appointed to carry out the executive function. These individuals were selected mainly from a professional background in the performing arts:

Broad responsibilities were much the same with each model that was adopted, namely to plan the programme and co-ordinate and promote the event. The size of office required was most affected by the programming method adopted, especially the degree to which direct promotion and marketing was undertaken 'in-house'. Numbers of staff engaged to manage and co-ordinate the years ranged from 15 in Athens 1985 to 93 in Antwerp (Cogliandro, 2001: 12).

The importance of good governance can also be seen in the case of Helsinki 2000, where there was a lack of clear organisation. Although the event itself was a great immediate success for the city, the lack of mandate and the absence of an acting organisation limited

the opportunity to create a long-term strategy for the year's aftermath (Mazzucotelli, 2005). The importance of a simple administration structure for an ECoC was also evident in the example of Kraków 2000 (Kraków 2000, 2001).

In more recent editions, such as Sibiu 2007 and Stavanger 2008, having an agency that is separate from the municipality was considered "essential" (ECORYS, 2009a). In previous ECoC cities, particularly in the early to mid-1990s, this had been raised repeatedly as a key issue in order to guarantee independence from politics. For instance, in response to the question of what advice he would give to those preparing to host a European Capital of Culture, Eric Antonis, the Director of Antwerp 1993 said: "Try to create structures that are independent of the political scene so that you can work with total independence" (European Commission, 2009: 21). Glasgow 1990 had similar advice for future ECoCs: "The cultural dimension must be the unifying concept and it mustn't be overshadowed by issues connected to political ambition" (*ibid.*: 18). This was also highlighted in the Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 report, and appears (broadly speaking) to have been taken on-board, even if there are still challenges – as discussed in Chapter 6.

Despite the changes and developments, there are still examples of delivery vehicles finding it difficult to negotiate political and governmental input. In the case of Istanbul 2010:

certain features of the governance arrangements proved problematic and led to the overall impact of the ECoC being less than anticipated; as the government became the supplier of 95% of the funding, the state bodies exert increasing control over the ECoC to the frustration of the independent cultural operators, several of whom resigned their positions within the agency in 2009 (ECORYS, 2011a: vii).

The evaluators were, however, keen to put this specific issue in the context of 'normal' approaches to governance within Turkey, noting that:

...in mitigation, it must be said that the functioning of the agency did represent somewhat of a departure from the usual *modus operandi* of the state institutions and by the end of the title year, artistic and administrative staff had learned from the experience and begun to understand the others' point of view better (ECORYS, 2011a: vii).

Similarly, Pécs 2010 found it difficult to manage the involvement of national government through a pair of committees, which contributed to a process for decision-making that:

was complicated and lengthy, resulting in a relatively short planning timescale for the cultural programme, and the subsequent loss of some relationships with cultural organisations and areas of the programme which had originally been envisaged (ECORYS, 2011c: v).

The average (mean) size of management models at their operational peak is 80 posts, but with wide variation from six posts for Reykjavík 2000 and Santiago de Compostela 2000, to 200 posts for Thessaloniki 1997 and Brussels 2000 (data on this is only available, with some exceptions, for 1995-2004 (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a) and for Liverpool 2008 (ECORYS, 2009a)).

Directorship vs. pluralist models

Möll and Hitzler (2011) propose that there are two typical models of the ECoC managing organisation: a pluralist model and a one-tier model. Both models are the result of specific programmatic and conceptual considerations, and both have different organisational implications and goals. In the pluralistic model, various actors contribute to the design of project ideas for the ECoC programme, at times involving different sectors within the city, and at times regional actors. The authors claim that as part of the pluralistic model, an inductive path can be taken, where an overarching programmatic approach is developed on the basis of the proposals made by the various actors. In contrast, the one-tier, or 'directorship', model takes a centralised approach to the ECoC year, starting with a programmatic concept and looking for projects to match this idea. In the pluralist model, development of the indigenous potential of the city or region is at the forefront, whereas the one-tier model places greater emphasis on cultural highlights that will draw national and international attention. In terms of success criteria, the pluralist model is focused on the longevity and sustainability of the projects pursued as part of local or regional development, which means that cooperation with regional actors and attention for the evaluation and implementation of projects within the surrounding region play an important role in this model. The one-tier model, on the other hand, focuses on short-term achievable goals, such as an increase in media attention or an increase in overnight stays, which requires that priority is given to marketing and public relations, while the opinion of local actors may be disregarded (*ibid.*).

This analysis suggests the (co)presence of what might be understood as two extreme examples or opposite styles of governance. In reality, most ECoCs lie somewhere in between these extremes, and may combine elements of both in a variety of forms. For instance, a city may rely on a directorship model for its central artistic programme, but be pluralist in its development of a parallel community programme, as had been the case in Glasgow 1990 (Garcia, 2004b; Myerscough, 1994: 115). The degree to which management of the programme – including artistic directorship – and management of other aspects can be understood as part of a single approach to governance, or as separate issues, is not always clear.

More specifically, the case of Essen for the Ruhr 2010, according to Möll and Hitzler (2011), exemplifies a middle position, although at times it tended more towards the pluralist model. For other ECoCs, it has been the preference to have very clear lines of responsibility and authority, with a single overall director, or in some cases a single high profile board member to aid the ECoC. This was, for instance, the case for Stavanger 2008 (ECORYS, 2009a). Liverpool 2008, on the other hand, could be seen as a clear example of the pluralist model, going as far as not to reappoint an artistic director after the original appointment withdrew, so that its core cultural programme was mainly the result of programming across the main established cultural institutions (Garcia *et al.*, 2010).

Similarly, Betz and Niederbacher, in discussing how Essen for the Ruhr 2010 was organised, distinguish between two typical forms of control: *formal control* (or 'government'), based on hierarchical and institutionally entrenched procedural rules and a legal monopoly of power; and *informal control* ('governance'), based on cooperation, trust, commitments and neoclassical contracts in a non-hierarchical network of actors (Betz & Niederbacher, 2011: 319-20). They note that a project of the complexity and dimension of the ECoC is commonly referred to as non-centrally controlled. Nevertheless, the actors within the organising body of Essen for the Ruhr 2010, GmbH, had an interest (at least initially) to monitor the progress of the ECoC and (if possible) to connect the varied interests of all actors involved. The authors show that while the application stage of the ECoC process was dominated by informal control modes (governance), in the implementation phase the control mode of the network was split. As the organising body of Essen for the Ruhr 2010, GmbH remained highly dependent on other actors at the

content level; it participated in content negotiation processes with the project partners (governance), while at the same time controlling the constellation of actors at a formal level (directly and indirectly via financial assistance and generating attention; that is, government). Although all actors experienced relative autonomy in terms of content, access to resources (financially or in terms of attention) was centrally controlled.

Roles within the delivery vehicle

The role of artistic director

ECoCs demonstrate different approaches to the appointment and positioning of an artistic director. Linz 2009, for example, (who appointed a single artistic director) specifically emphasised what they felt was the value of an “artistic directorate of people with no prior connection to Linz” as enabling “a fresh perspective on the city and unbiased assessments” (Linz 2009, 2010a: 15). The ECORYS evaluation of Linz 2009 notes that the autonomy of the artistic director was not without some challenges, particularly in terms of involvement of senior stakeholders, including public authorities, the Board of Curators and local cultural institutions (2010a). However, the study also notes that attracting significant individual talent in this area is likely to require such autonomy (ECORYS, 2010a).

Other ECoCs have taken different approaches. Essen for the Ruhr 2010, for instance, structured their team with four ‘artistic directors’, with a chairperson and managing director taking responsibility for relationships with key stakeholders and a programme coordinator engaging directly with a wider regional consultation group (ECORYS 2011c). The ex-post evaluation particularly praises the support provided by the delivery vehicle to projects in terms of advice on press, promotional activities and a range of administrative support (ECORYS, 2011c: iii). It also suggests that the approach might be considered a “decentralised approach”, with activities managed by other partners (ECORYS, 2011c: 42). This approach was not, however, always felt to be helpful – for example, in dealing with the requirements of sponsors when the delivery vehicle did not ‘own’ (because they were not responsible for running) a particular activity (nor the communications relating to this activity). Turku 2011 also chose not to appoint a single artistic director, with “the intention being that each project would have its own Artistic Director”, but instead appointed a programme director (ECORYS, 2012a: 48). There was some criticism of the cultural experience of the team (ECORYS, 2012a: 49).

Luxembourg GR 2007 also did not have a single artistic director, but instead two “coordinators” working with a “managing director” (Luxembourg GR 2007, 2008). In the case of Istanbul 2010, a decision was taken by “independent cultural operators” to not appoint an artistic director, but to have a series of committees overseeing decisions, and artistic directors for individual cities (ECORYS, 2011c).

Some cities found challenges in negotiating the role of artistic leadership in the context of the wider objectives for their ECoC. The management structure for Pécs 2010 involved two delivery vehicles:

which resulted in a lack of clarity over the responsibility for artistic direction; responsibility for allocating funding tended to remain with the public authorities and the managing agency enjoyed only a limited degree of autonomy (ECORYS, 2011c: v).

In terms of the origin of artistic directors, a brief survey of available data (mostly relating to the period from 2002 to 2018) suggests that more than two thirds of artistic directors are local, or at least from the same country as the host city. Meanwhile, there are three examples (of data from 34 cities) of combinations of local and foreign artistic directors working together on ECoCs. There are also two, contrasting, examples of unforeseen

changes in artistic director: one in which a foreign director left the post, and was replaced with a local appointment, and the other in which a local/national appointment was replaced with a foreign director. From the data available, it appears that four cities did not have an artistic director; in one case (Avignon 2000), an artistic director had been appointed, but resigned and was not replaced.⁴⁰

Other expertise and support

Some vehicles have sought to ensure that very specific support is available; for example, the team organising Bruges 2002 included a specialist legal resource for drafting contracts with partners (Bruges 2002, 2003). The vehicle set up to run Cork 2005 (Cork 2005 Ltd) expressed a particularly broad range of potential support functions it anticipated it would undertake: "...in April 2003 the company stated that it could 'offer project proposers promotion and marketing, networking and creative partnerships, financial investment, advice and project management as well as technical management'..." (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006: 39).

In following this through, a dedicated project manager was appointed in Cork for each programming strand, bringing experience and knowledge in the area covered by the strand, and providing "...a consistent source of expert advice, support and back up for individual project partners" (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006: 39).

In the context of cultural programmes seeking to 'raise the game' of existing cultural institutions and organisations, this additional support and expertise would seem to be important. However, the study on Cork found that cultural organisations and individuals responding to their survey only "modestly or problematically acknowledged" support received from the Cork 2005 vehicle, beyond the funding for specific activities. The research does not offer evidence or a discussion of the reasons for the gap between the support that the Cork 2005 vehicle sought to provide, and the experiences of receiving that support. The study does, however, report that there were tensions between the "workings of the programme" and the "workings of the organisation itself", with "operational difficulties" becoming a significant issue from time to time (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006).

The role and composition of boards

Reflecting on the experience of Liverpool 2008, the ECORYS ex-post evaluation notes:

ECOC boards need to be fit for purpose in terms of their role and composition, and include a sufficient number of independent 'advocates' for the ECOC. For example, it may be useful to include high profile, local representatives of the cultural sector on ECOC boards, who can help articulate positive messages to a receptive media, free from political pressures and prerogatives (ECORYS, 2009a: 74).

Beyazit and Tosun (2006) explore changes in governance leading up to Istanbul 2010, and note the engagement of both the advisory and executive boards of the ECoC 2010 'Organization Team' by national authorities, city authorities, cultural institutions, the private sector and universities. They suggest that the numbers involved in these boards compare poorly with other ECoCs – specifically Genoa 2004, which they cite as involving 300 'associations' in the organisation (it is not clear here whether the authors are really comparing like with like; it seems unlikely that Genoa 2004 included 300 associations in a committee structure, for example) (Beyazit and Tosun, 2006: 7).

⁴⁰ Sources: Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a); respective ECoC official reports and websites and ECORYS ex-post evaluations. See appendix B for a more detailed list of sources against this indicator.

The role of the arts and cultural sector

Beyond the response of the local arts and cultural sector to programming opportunities, consultations and processes, there are some examples of formalised governance relationships involving members of the local arts and cultural sector. Tallinn 2011 established a delivery vehicle with a Creative Council of seven people from the cultural sector, whose role was to select projects and manage the artistic content of the year. This Council was generally felt to be able to operate and make decisions independently of political issues (ECORYS, 2012a: 22). Regardless, Tallinn did not escape political challenges in the overall leadership of the delivery vehicle (ECORYS, 2012a: iv). Lille 2004 appears to have included people from the local cultural sector as part of the 10-strong Cultural College on their 42-person strong board. Cork 2005 included two individuals from the cultural sector in the city, who were elected by their peers to the board of the arms-length delivery vehicle (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006). Stavanger 2008 had three board places (from seven) reserved for those from cultural institutions.

Besides board positions, other ECoCs used different mechanisms to codify strategic relationships with the cultural sector. In Liverpool, the 'Big Eight' – the eight largest non-commercial arts and cultural organisations in Liverpool⁴¹ – emerged over 2005 and 2006, as ongoing issues relating to the structure and activities of Liverpool Culture Company continued to occupy local and national commentators and agencies. Their formalisation as LARC (Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium), prompted by funding from Arts Council England under the *Thrive* programme⁴², broadly coincided with the part-time secondment of Michael Elliott, Chief Executive of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (a LARC member) as Cultural Advisor to the Liverpool Culture Company (following the resignation of Robyn Archer as Artistic Director to Liverpool Culture Company and the decision not to seek a direct replacement). Liverpool 2008 offers the best-documented example of such an approach; the absence of other examples here may reflect the quality of available sources rather than the lack of such approaches being utilised elsewhere.

4.9. Financing

The financing approach to the ECoC Programme has seen some considerable changes over time. Gold and Gold (2005: 225) argue that as the Programme has developed: "More sophisticated patterns of financing [have] developed, with a mixture of private and public sources supplying the increasing funds required."

Assessing these changes by comparing different ECoCs is complex, due to some of the challenges around data already discussed in Chapter 1 (Introduction). This Section looks at some of the available data on the volume of ECoC budgets, and on the different areas of funding that are sought for ECoCs.

Readers should be aware, however, that, unless otherwise stated, financial data in this Section is all reported using *nominal* values. No adjustment for inflation has been undertaken, due to the absence of readily-available historical inflation and exchange rate data for the broad time frame and range of countries required.

⁴¹ The 'Big Eight' comprised: the Bluecoat, FACT, Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse, National Museums Liverpool, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Tate Liverpool and Unity Theatre.

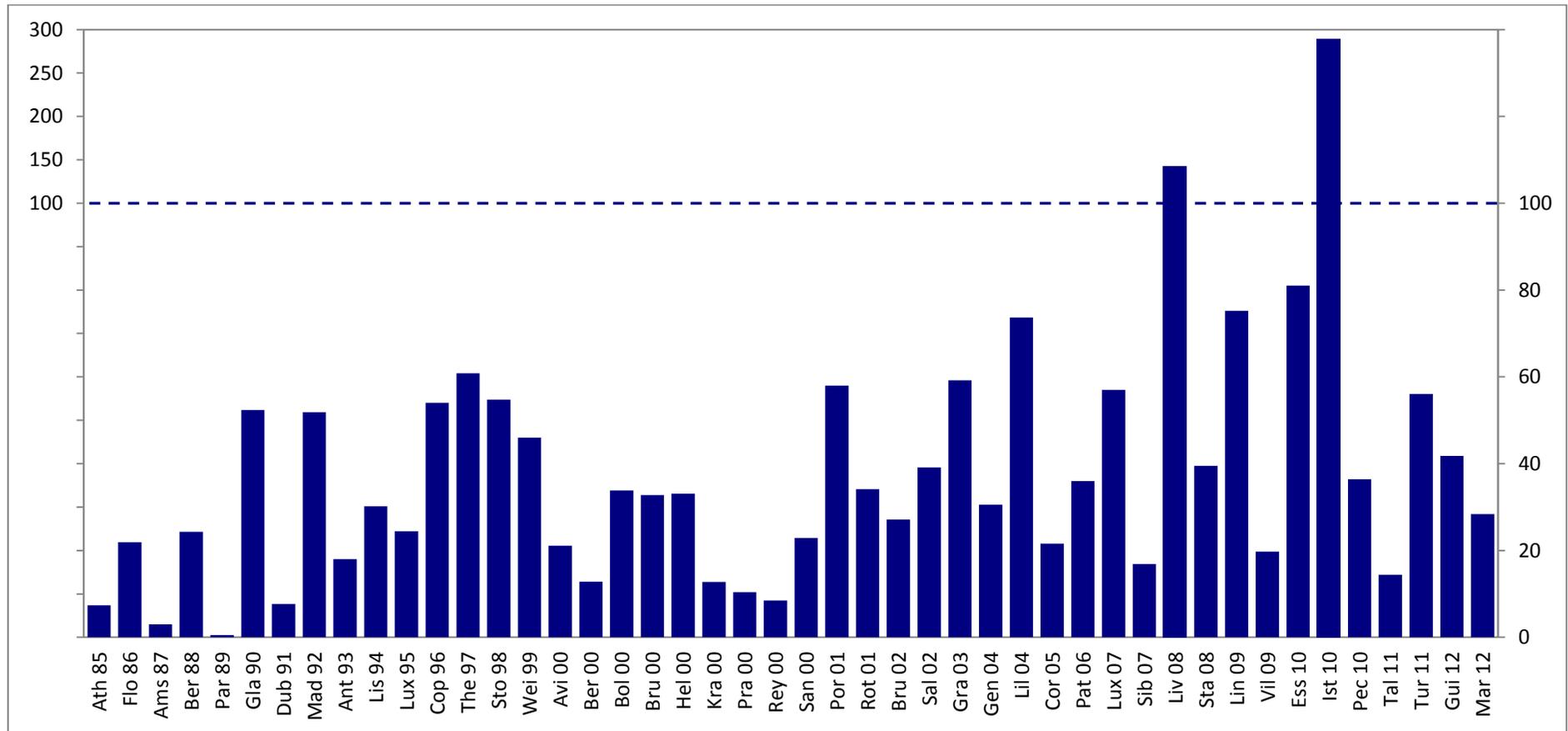
⁴² The *Thrive* funding programme was formally termed 'organisational development'; LARC were one of 22 networks, groups, agencies or individual organisations in receipt of funding under an Arts Council England programme that emerged partially to test some of the suggestions.

Comparative budgets

Figure 14 shows the operating budgets (net of capital expenditure) for ECoCs. There is significant variance in the size of operating budgets for different cities, although the single biggest outlier, Istanbul 2010, should be treated with caution as Istanbul ran a surplus of close to €100m. From 2005 to 2013, the average (mean) operating budget is in the region of €64m, although the median is closer to €37m. The budget for Liverpool 2008, in addition to Istanbul 2010, stands out as being particularly high; and it is important to note that Liverpool themed its activity over multiple years and directed revenue funding of cultural organisations, from the core local authority through the delivery vehicle, for a period of time leading up to and including 2008. In contrast, Cork 2005, Sibiu 2007, Vilnius 2009 and Tallinn 2011 all had budgets of less than €20m.

On the whole, average budgets for the ECoC have grown over time, although there is still significant variance, with EU-15 countries demonstrating slightly larger average budgets between 1997-2004 than non-EU countries and countries that joined the EU later. Geographically speaking, over the whole period of the ECoC initiative, countries from the east of Europe, on average, have had smaller budgets than those from elsewhere in Europe. Again, looking over the whole period of the ECoC, on average, larger cities have had larger budgets (although the size of Istanbul 2010, here, overstates the case for larger cities). Variance with regards to size groupings is significant: Tallinn 2011, a recent small city to host the ECoC, had a budget of €14.4m; Linz 2009 (also a small city), by comparison, had a budget of €75.2m.

Figure 14: Operating budget for ECoCs 1985-2012, by ECoC (€m)



Sources: ECORYS (2009a; 2010a; 2011c; 2012a; 2013a); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Quinn and O'Halloran (2006); Palmer *et al.* (2007; 2011)

With respect to Essen for the Ruhr 2010, the ex-post evaluation suggests that, despite a relatively small budget (particularly in relation to the size of the area and the population included in the designation), “Essen for the Ruhr 2010 created significant impact” (ECORYS, 2011c: 42). In comparison, the ex-post evaluation for Tallinn 2011 notes that “Tallinn [is] one of the least-resourced ECoC to date. As a result, the programme was much less ambitious than had originally been planned” (ECORYS, 2012a: iv). Activities were reduced, including the cancellation of some infrastructure development projects, and there was “an emphasis on funding local artists and productions” (ECORYS, 2012a: iv). The reduction in the ECoC budget followed a “significant reduction in public expenditure at all levels in Estonia”, due to the global economic crisis and Estonia’s preparation for adopting the Euro in 2011 (ECORYS, 2012a: 18-19). However, the ex-post evaluation also suggests that there were perhaps some other factors involved in the failure of anticipated national funding to materialise, including political changes at a national level (ECORYS, 2012a: 19).

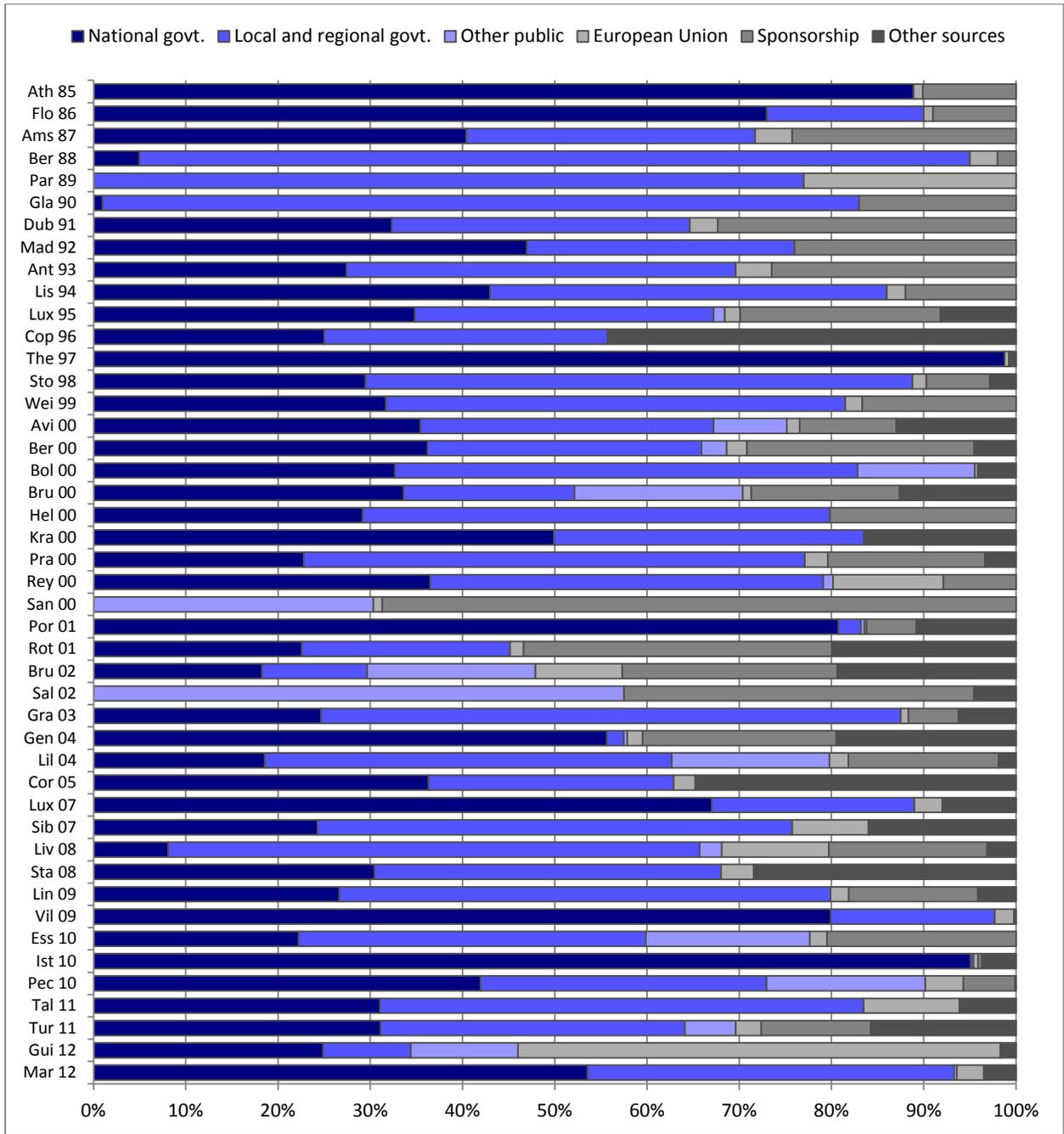
Public and private funding

Reflecting different national and local governance and investment structures, sources of public funding vary across ECoCs. In some cases, a balance of local and national investment is apparent, e.g. Cork 2005 (MKW GmbH, 2007) and Liverpool 2008 (Garcia *et al.*, 2010). In others, such as Patras 2006 (MKW GmbH, 2007), cities were funded very heavily through ministries of culture.

Figure 15 looks at income to ECoCs by the source, aggregating different kinds of income into six broad groups. As the Figure shows, nine cities gained more than 50% of their income from national government, including Thessaloniki 1997 (with 99% of its income from national government), Istanbul 2010 (95%), Maribor 2012 (54%) and Genoa 2004 (56%); the average (mean) income from national government across all ECoCs for which data is available is 37%. 12 cities, meanwhile, sourced more than 50% of their income from local or regional government (average (mean) for all cities of 34%), notably: Berlin 1988 (90%), Paris 1989 (77%) and Glasgow 1990 (82%), which show a significantly higher proportion of income from local or regional government than do other cities.

Looking at the overall ECoC initiative, countries from the South of the EU have been more likely than others to have a high percentage of funding from national government. For regional/local government funding, in contrast, a slightly greater number of cities from the West and North areas of the EU have had more than 50% of their funding from these sources (four of these cities were also national capitals). The majority of cities with more than 50% of their funding from regional/local government had either EU-12 or EU-15 status. Of the four cities with sponsorship of more than 30%, two are from the South area of the EU, and all are from countries with EU-12 status.

Figure 15: % Income by source for ECoCs 1985-2012, by ECoC

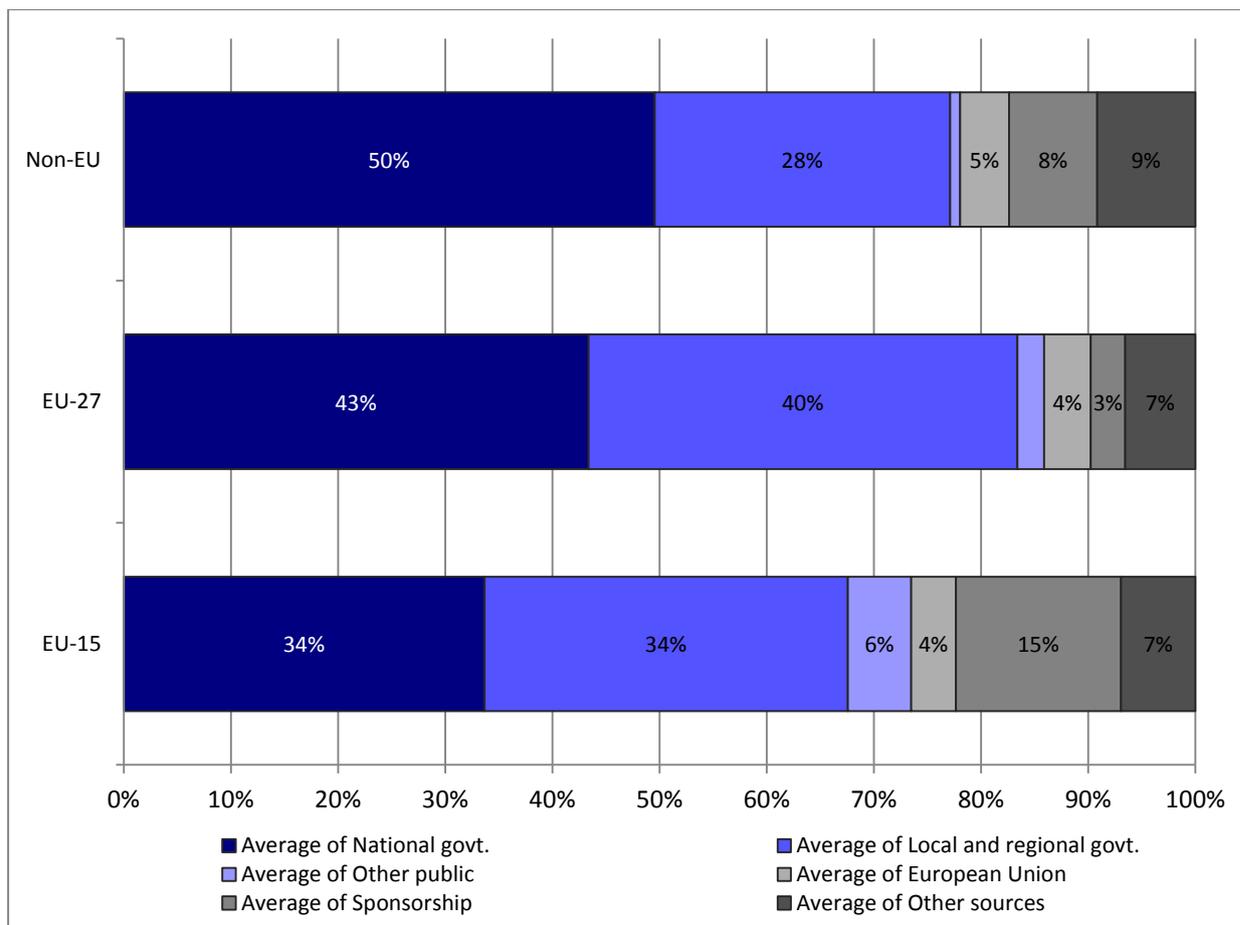


Sources: ECORYS (2009a; 2010a; 2011c; 2012a; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Quinn and O’Halloran (2006)

In terms of private funding, several ECoCs demonstrate attempts to gain sponsorship from a range of sources. As shown in Figure 15, Bruges 2002, for example, succeeded in securing 23% of its total budget from sponsorship (both in cash and in kind), with a stratified sponsorship programme. However, the 2003 evaluation report on Bruges suggests that the large number of sponsors in this programme (46) may have been too great to build meaningful relationships, and considers that possible further stratification – separating sponsors from different kinds of partners – might have been a preferable model.

Figure 16 considers the same data, looking at the average funding from different sources for clusters of countries by EU status.

Figure 16: Average % income by source for ECoCs 1985-2012, by EU Status



Sources: ECORYS (2009a; 2010a; 2011c; 2012a; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Quinn and O’Halloran (2006)

The Figure above suggests there may be a slight relationship between EU status and dominant sources of income, particularly in respect of national and local government. It is worth noting, however, as the previous Figure does, that the range between individual cities can be substantial. Non-EU countries show the strongest reliance on national government funding, though the small number of cities in this group (four) means that the presence of Istanbul 2010 (with 95% funding from national government) affects the average significantly. Older EU countries seem to report higher levels of sponsorship.

More generally, in respect of private funding, MKW GmbH (2007: 3) noted that:

There is a distinct tendency to more spectacular event programmes occasioning enormous costs. Therefore, private sponsoring is becoming more and more important to enable an all-embracing and high-quality event programme. Sponsors come from various industries and there is no dominant sector, but they are largely companies situated in the city or region.

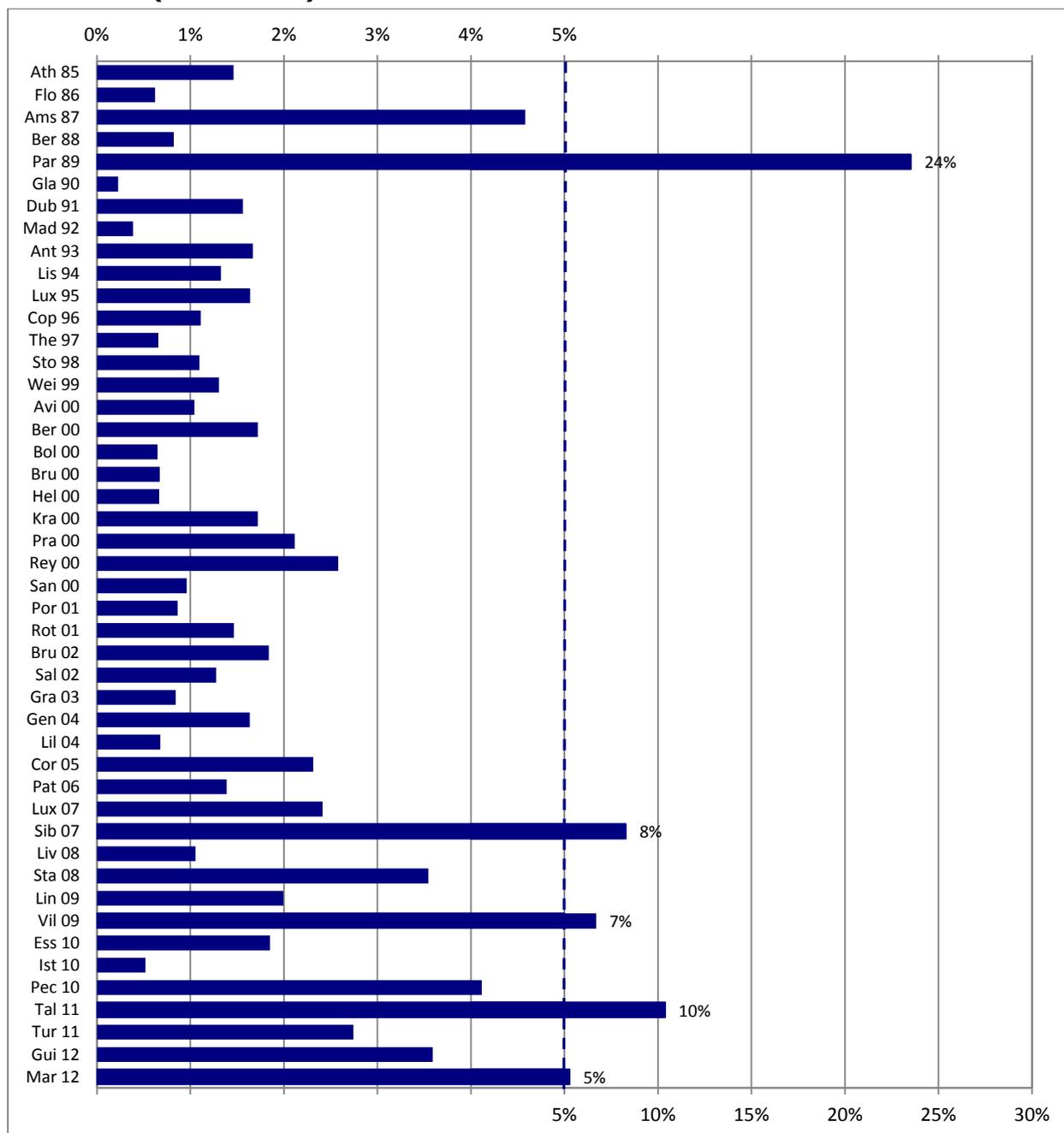
Much of the engagement with businesses focuses either on corporate sponsorship or co-ordination of tourism offers. Linz 2009, however, engaged with local Rotary clubs, who

organised art exhibitions and events in business venues during the year as part of a project they had initiated themselves (Linz 2009, 2010a).

Income from Europe

Designation of specific funding from the EU for the ECoC is presented in Chapter 2. The analysis below looks at a range of sources to bring together a comparative assessment of the proportion of ECoC operating budgets that come from European funding sources.

Figure 17: European funding as a proportion of operating budget, by ECoC (1985-2012)



Sources: ECORYS (2009a; 2010a; 2011c; 2012a; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Gold and Gold (2005); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Quinn and O'Halloran (2006)

The impact of reductions in national funding for Tallinn 2011 can be seen very clearly in the high percentage of funding from the EU as a proportion of overall funding. The EU funding, in the shape of the Melina Mercouri Prize, was used to support elements of the programme, communication and marketing, and administrative costs for Tallinn 2011 (ECORYS, 2012a). Paris 1989 had the smallest income budget of all ECoCs, and so the relative value of EU funding is significantly higher than that of any other city. Both Sibiu 2007 and Vilnius 2009 had relatively small budgets of less than €20m, again showing a higher than average proportion of EU funding.

More generally in respect of funding from Europe, ECORYS (2009a) notes that, whilst the EU funding per ECoC in 2007 and 2008 was a “very modest proportion of the total expenditure” and that it was not a driver in cities’ decisions to bid for the title, the designation itself “has a very effective leverage effect” (ECORYS, 2009a: v). It is important to note this specific formulation, as the notion of ‘leverage’ suggests a causal relationship between different elements: in this instance, the ECORYS report is suggesting that this relationship exists between the title itself and other income streams (rather than between EU funding and other income streams).

In terms of the general role of EU funding, the ex-post evaluation for the 2010 ECoCs suggests that the relatively small proportion of EU funding makes “the Action as a whole... very cost-effective when compared to other EU policy instruments or mechanisms”, and advises the continuation of the Melina Mercouri Prize beyond 2019 in its current format (ECORYS, 2011c: ix).

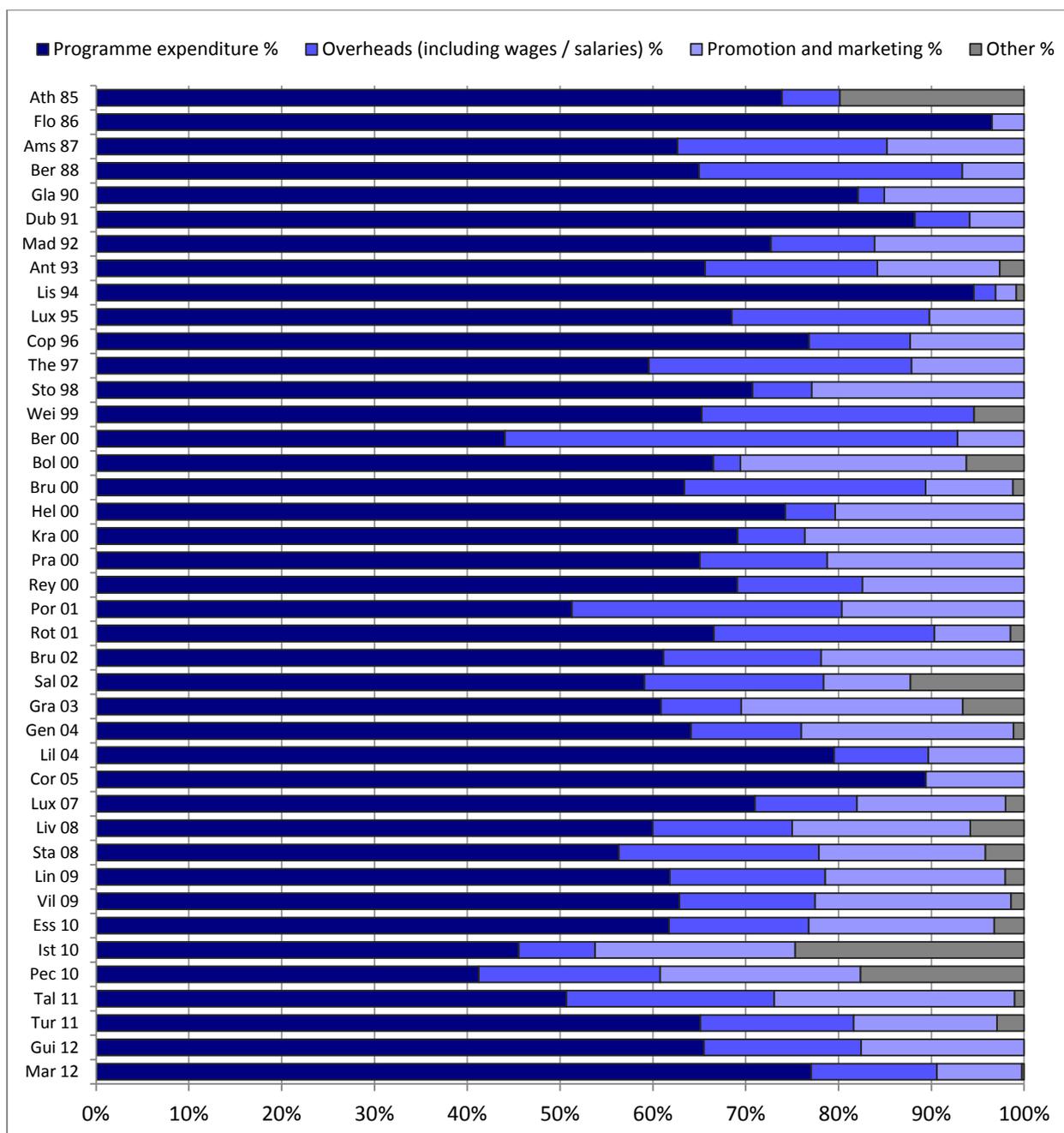
Expenditure

Figure 18 looks at the proportion of the operating budget spent on different areas of activity, in broad groups:

- Programme, including artistic and community-focused activities
- Overheads, including administration, wages and salaries
- Promotion and marketing
- Other expenditure

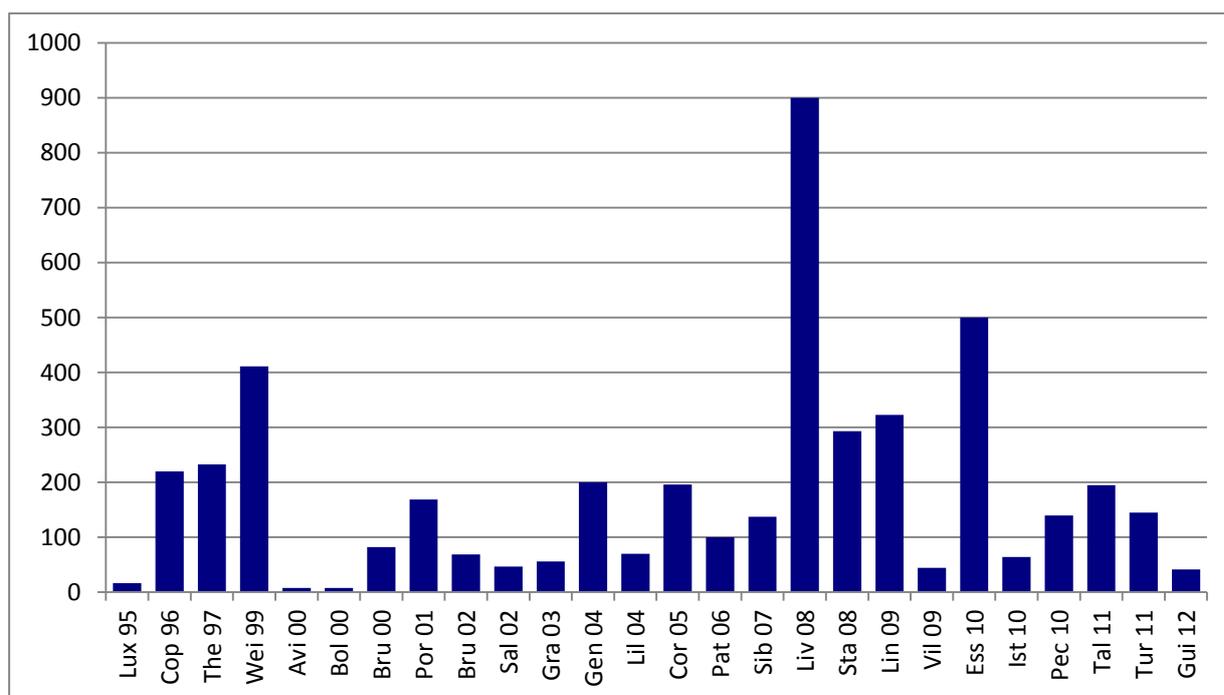
On average (mean), ECoCs spend 67% of their operating budget on their programme, 15% on overheads, 15% on promotion and marketing, and 3% on other expenditure. ECoCs in EU-12 and EU-15 countries spend more, on average, on their programmes than ECoCs in other countries (cities from the East area, on average, spend the least on their programmes). In contrast, ECoCs from more recent EU member states, on average, spend more on promotion and marketing (this is also the case for ECoCs in the East area of the EU). ECoCs in non-EU countries, meanwhile, spend more on overheads. The size of the host city does not appear to have a particular effect upon approaches to expenditure. In terms of temporal trends, between Phase 1 of the Programme (1985-1996) and Phase 3 (2005-2012), the average (mean) spend on marketing has doubled, from 9% to 18%; whilst spend on programme, as a proportion of total expenditure, has reduced over the same period.

Figure 18: Expenditure by area of activity, for ECoCs 1985-2012, by ECoC



Sources: Cork 2005 website; ECORYS (2010a; 2011c; 2012a; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1991; 1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Stavanger 2008 (2009)

Figure 19 shows the level of expenditure on infrastructure associated with ECoCs. The level of association (whether funds were directly allocated to the ECoC, or whether a more distant relationship was the case) is not possible to ascertain from the available sources, and so this data should be treated with caution.

Figure 19: Expenditure on infrastructure for ECoCs 1995-2012, by ECoC (€m)

Sources: Cork 2005 website; ECORYS (2010a; 2011c; 2012a; 2013a); Essen 2010 website; Palmer *et al.* (2007; 2011); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b)

Infrastructure spend per capita of population was significantly higher in post-1996 ECoCs, as might be expected from the development of wider objectives for the Programme and by individual cities. Smaller cities (in terms of average expenditure on infrastructure) spend significantly less than medium and large cities.

Revenue investment prior to the hosting year

It is worth noting that some cities demonstrate significant increases in revenue investment in cultural organisations in the period leading up to the hosting year, not all of which will have been reflected in the income contributions from cities in the analysis earlier in this Chapter. In Liverpool2008, direct revenue subsidies to arts organisations grew significantly from two major sources: Arts Council England, whose investment in Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs) went from 15 organisations and £2.7m in 2003/2004, to 24 organisations and almost £7.5m in 2008/2009; and Liverpool City Council, which increased its funding by 84% between 2002/2003 and 2008/2009 (Garcia *et al.*, 2010: 33).

In respect of Lille 2004, “between 2000 and 2004, cultural expenditure of municipalities concerned [had] increased 52.8%”, whilst general operating costs of the same authorities had only increased by 13.7% (Wequin, 2006). This increase does seem, in part, to reflect the opening of some new venues in the city prior to 2004. This increased support seems to have come partly from increased revenue to the municipalities from existing venues/activities.

It is not possible to tell from the available data whether this is a broader trend, but the approach of revenue funding (rather than project funding) in advance of the year is worth noting as an indicator of building capacity in the local cultural sector.

4.10. Planning for legacy

Emphasis on long-term planning, or 'planning for legacy', is apparent in both the articulation of a number of recent ECoCs, and in some of the programme and investment planning. However, the temporal nature of the in-year resource is acknowledged by many as a particular challenge:

This could be a challenge, as usually the delivery team would move on to other jobs and often different cities and countries. Strong political commitment was therefore necessary, as was the case for Lille's mayor (European Commission, 2010: 6).

In the early stages of the ECoC Programme, before the Commission placed significant emphasis on the need for 'sustainability', practical plans for legacy beyond the year itself were not widespread. There are, however, some examples from that period of planning for the future – particularly, of using the ECoC as a platform to develop a cultural or arts strategy that would survive the year. Dublin 1991 (1991) notes that planning for the year gave rise to a cultural policy document outlining a potential future arts strategy, although this study has not located discussion about whether the strategy was implemented and sustained. Glasgow 1990 encouraged the creation of a first regional cultural strategy, developed and led by the Strathclyde Regional Council, the regional authority, between 1988 and 1993 (Garcia, 2004c: 320). Unfortunately, despite attempts at adaptation, this strategy was interrupted due to the disbandment of regional authorities in the UK in the mid-1990s; and it was not until the early 2000s that the city developed a consistent cultural policy framework (Garcia, 2004c: 320). Despite these interruptions, it is, however, possible to claim that the ECoC hosting process encouraged Glasgow to devise its first cultural strategy, with this laying the foundations for its current cultural strategy framework.

Since Decision 1622/2006/EC (European Parliament and Council, 2006), which impacted most directly on ECoC cities from 2009 onwards, the explicit requirement for the Programme to be sustainable and have a long-term effect has led to more frequent discussion of the need for legacy and some examples of strategic legacy planning. In some cases, cities have attempted to promote sustainability by making this a criterion in the selection of activities for the hosting year. For instance, Essen for the Ruhr 2010's 2009 monitoring report specifically refers to the ECoC year as a "temporary highpoint", and talks about selecting projects on the basis that they will "establish a permanent provision of cultural activities way beyond 2010" (Essen 2010, 2009: 8).

The ongoing challenges of, as well as opportunities for, sustainable cultural policy and cultural strategies framing the ECoC year and contributing to its legacy are further discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

5. SHORT- AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

KEY FINDINGS

Cultural

- Impacts upon the host city's **existing cultural system** and **future plans for cultural activity** are the most prolific areas of reported beneficial impact from ECoCs. Benefits include projects that continue beyond the hosting year, increased collaboration and networking between cultural providers, and increased capacity and ambition within the sector.
- **Improved image** is a key impact indicator for many ECoCs, and there is some good evidence that ECoC hosts with a low profile before the event have experienced positive changes in terms of both internal perceptions and external responses, leading on to long-term improvement of their national and international ranking as top cultural and/or tourism destinations.

Economic and physical

- Increasingly, cities which are targeting tourists for their ECoC are demonstrating significant returns on this investment. However, it is sometimes unclear precisely why certain cities do better than others in this area. This is one of the few areas where long-term data exists to enable some assessment of potential long-term impacts, with evidence of some cities sustaining **increases in tourism** in the longer term.
- **Physical developments** are often pointed to as some of the most tangible indicators of long-term impact in ECoC cities. However, this is one of the more contentious areas of impact, and there are examples of cities in which physical developments have not been sustainable or properly planned for beyond the hosting year.

Social

- There is a significant **absence of real evidence** relating to the social impact of ECoCs, probably due – in part – to the relatively diverse nature of work that is targeted towards social impacts, and the relative cost of undertaking significant fieldwork to explore such a field of activity.
- Most commonly reported and evidenced are **increases in audiences** at existing venues in cities; beyond this, there is some evidence of diverse audiences' cultural engagement. Other reported impacts are patchy and often relate to specific activity rather than an overall ECoC 'effect'.
- Whilst there is evidence that, for some host cities, ECoC designation and activity has helped to increase **pride in the city** (and encouraged residents to feel that the city is viewed positively externally), there are also negative perceptions of some ECoCs from local communities. This is a complex and difficult area, which would benefit from further research.

Policy and political

- The notion of the ECoC as a '**catalyst**' for change is a strong one for many cities, but the research supporting it is limited, and there is significant concern about the uneven distribution of beneficial effects from the ECoC across communities of interest, which is associated with uneven policy priorities.
- Some cities demonstrate both intention and commitment to **supporting culture** through formal cultural policy and governance structures, and to extending the use of culture in relation to other policy agendas. This is supported by evidence of **improved funding** for future activity, and a greater impetus to strategically plan for cultural development and position culture within the city's wider planning.

5.1. Introduction

This Chapter addresses the question:

- What are the discernible long-term effects connected with the status of European Capital of Culture in terms of cultural, economic, social and political aspects?

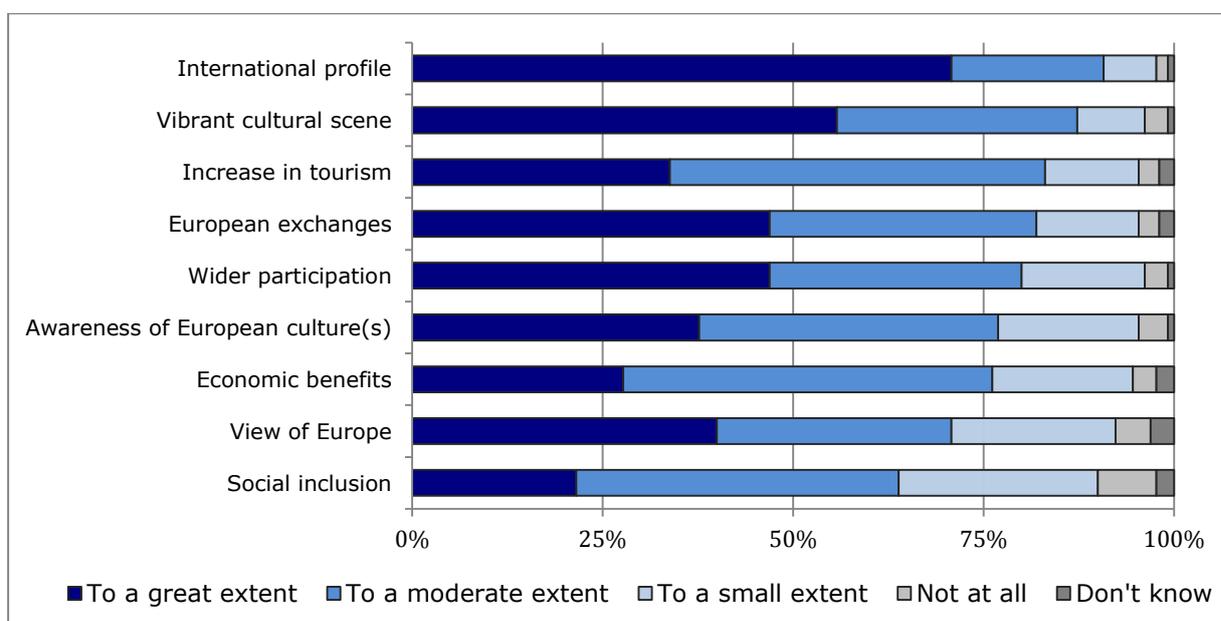
There is limited evidence of long-term benefits (understood as effects that can be clearly linked to the ECoC hosting process more than a year after the event has officially come to an end) and a significant absence of evidence of direct effects more than three years after the event. In many cases, limited proxy indicators, such as plans for the future, or evidence of capacity or long-term activity, are the best available indications. In addition, there is a tendency in some sources to attribute a status of 'long-term' to certain kinds of benefits, when they are in fact in-year outputs, and will only be beneficial in the longer term if they can be sustained. For example, ECORYS (2010a) describes the immediate 'economic impact' of Linz 2009 as a long-term benefit.

Quinn & O'Halloran (2006) note that understanding outcomes in some areas (they are specifically interested in 'cultural outcomes') may be difficult to do only a year after the event; however, relatively little research or evaluative work has taken place significantly post-event. In a similar vein, Labrianidis and Deffner note that:

at this stage it is difficult to draw generalized conclusions about the role of EC[o]C since this cannot be based on strong evidence rooted on the analysis of each individual case (Labrianidis & Deffner, 2000: 33).

This seems to hold true today – there has been little research into long-term effects overall. What are available are indications of the expected long-term impacts. As an example, ECORYS conducted an online consultation on the future of the ECoC Programme beyond 2019. Respondents were asked about the most likely long-term effects of the Programme.

Figure 20: Expected/anticipated long-term benefits of holding the ECoC title



Source: ICC adaptation of ECORYS (2011b)

As is evident in Figure 20, respondents felt that the most tangible impacts of being a European Capital of Culture were a “better international profile and image for the city” and “a more vibrant cultural scene” (ECORYS, 2011b: 9). While the majority of respondents felt that the title offered all of the possible benefits suggested either “to a great extent” or “to a moderate extent”, a ‘more favourable view of Europe and the EU’ and ‘social inclusion through culture’ were considered to be to be the least tangible benefits of the title (these are the only two categories attracting over 20% of ‘not at all’ or ‘don’t know’ responses).

Beyond the expectations of stakeholders, some other indications of potential longer-term impact are available. This Chapter considers the few examples of evidence found in this area, alongside a discussion of the in-year outputs and impacts for which more substantial evidence is available. This takes the form of four Sections. The Sections are organised according to the distinct – but interrelated – areas of impact commonly identified in the literature over the last 20 years, and extensively articulated within the *Impacts 08* ECoC research programme; these are as follows:

- Cultural impacts, including image
- Economic and physical impacts
- Social impacts
- Political and policy impacts

5.2. Cultural and image impacts

The notion of ‘cultural impacts’ is complex and it resists easy definition, given the range of conceptions of ‘culture’ which might be brought to bear in any given analysis. Here, such impacts are specifically taken to mean impacts upon the cultural system and programme of the city, and the first part of the Section considers how activities, organisations, individuals, funding programmes and strategies have been affected by ECoC designation. The second part of the Section, meanwhile, considers issues of image, and looks at impact on media coverage and public perceptions.

5.2.1. The city’s cultural system and programme

The Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 study asked respondents to reflect upon the legacy of ECoCs between 1995-2004. A number of cities – including Stockholm 1998, Bologna 2000, Helsinki 2000, Prague 2000 and Santiago de Compostela 2000 – are cited as failing to plan for activity beyond the year itself. In the case of Stockholm 1998, Helsinki 2000 and Bologna 2000, specifically, there was a sense that the “political will” to support culture further was not in place (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004b).

Looking at more recent ECoCs, the ex-post evaluation of the 2010 ECoCs notes a wide range of benefits in Key Conclusion 6 of the report, and identifies “new cultural activities that endure beyond the title year, improved networking and co-operation between stakeholders in culture, and new and improved cultural facilities” (ECORYS, 2011c: x). Providing a supporting view from within a city’s cultural system, Quinn & O’Halloran’s study on Cork 2005 reflects upon the expectations of the cultural sector, and notes that cultural organisations’ aspirations for the year often included specific aspirations for their organisation’s development, as well as general aspirations for the wider impact on the sector and city (Quinn & O’Halloran, 2006; Quinn, 2010).

The ex-post evaluation of the 2010 ECoCs does, however, note that “the creation of a sustainable legacy is more uncertain” and recommends (Recommendation 6.1) that the Commission should “consider giving explicit encouragement in the criteria to reward cities which have already developed a long-term cultural policy strategy for their city” (ECORYS,

2011a: x). A salient example in this regard is Istanbul 2010, for which the ex-post evaluation notes that “there is ... a legacy of experiences, networks and dynamism, though there is no specific plan for the continuation of activities initiated by the ECoC” (ECORYS, 2011c: viii).

This Section will continue by considering evidence of both in-year impacts and (where available) evidence that some ECoCs have succeeded in converting the promise of the year itself into longer-term plans and approaches. (Not included in this Section, but later in this Chapter, is consideration of formal policy and political responses to the role of culture in the city by city governance agencies. Some of what is discussed in the following Section necessarily relates to this area, but its primary consideration is the question of the capacity of the cultural sector itself.) This discussion will specifically include the following aspects:

- Projects and activities that continue
- Increasing capacity in the sector
- Networks and collaborations

Projects/activities that continue

Participants in the conference ‘Celebrating 25 years of European Capitals of Culture’ mentioned several distinctive cultural impacts, including examples of the creation of new cultural events or festivals as a direct result of the ECOC year – such as *Lille 3000*, a ‘cultural season’ based on the basic concept of Lille 2004 (now taking place every two to three years), and the *Zinneke Parade*, which was first created in the framework of Brussels 2000 (European Commission, 2010: 7). A number of projects from Copenhagen 1996 were carried over into the following years, and ten years later 50 projects were still going (Davies, 2012). Bergen 2000 is also credited with planning ongoing activity, including creating the *BergArt Festival* (involving eight local companies), the *Bergen International Film Festival* and BRAK (to support the local music industry) (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004b). The ex-post evaluations for Luxembourg GR 2007 and Sibiu 2007 both note ongoing projects beyond the hosting year (ECORYS, 2009b).

A number of strands – including major events, cross-European collaboration, community projects and organisational/sector development activities – were planned for continuation in Liverpool beyond 2008 (ECORYS, 2009a: 71). Similarly, Stavanger is able to list a range of ongoing projects (*ibid.*: 94), as are Linz 2009 (Linz 2009, 2010a: 40), Vilnius 2009 (ECORYS, 2010a: 61) and Essen for the Ruhr 2010 (ECORYS, 2011c: iv and 40-1). Organisations surveyed by the Turku 2011 Foundation were optimistic that their projects would continue beyond the ECoC year, with 78% agreeing that this would be likely (Hakala and Lemmetyinen, 2013: 9).

Increasing capacity in the sector

Building on the sense that the cultural programme of the ECoC supports either bigger, better or different/new kinds of activity, Bergsgard *et al.* (2010: 368), in their case study of Stavanger 2008, found evidence of “new knowledge, new ideas and new methods” having been developed by firms that played a role in the ECoC year. In a web survey of projects delivered as part of the year, 80% of respondents indicated that their involvement had “contributed to innovation in their production of culture and art” (*ibid.*: 363); whilst 70% felt that participation had enabled them to pursue larger projects in the future (*ibid.*: 365).

Developing the capacity of individuals within the cultural sector seems to have been important for some cities. Porto 2001 reported a “new generation of cultural managers, many of whom still work within the field” (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004b). Over three

quarters (78%) of organisations involved in the delivery of the Turku 2011 programme felt that their operational capacities had increased as a result of involvement in the ECoC year, with 86% stating that they had learnt new things (Hakala and Lemmetyinen, 2013: 9-10). A study by Quinn & O'Halloran (2006: 41), looking at the 'cultural outcomes' of Cork 2005, showed that the majority of respondents agreed that Cork 2005:

- "Constitute[d] a learning curve", with respondents trying out different kinds of activities, undertaking work on a different scale and developing new skills.
- Changed the way others saw and felt towards their organisation, with some respondents citing the changed attitudes of their peers (including internationally) and others citing changes in public perception.
- Brought contact with "new influences", including working in different kinds of venues or across genres, different kinds of activities, and engagement with audiences new to those organisations.
- Had produced activity that "will turn into a regular production/event", with some indicating that this would happen only if funding became available. A small number of respondents also indicated that some new work would go on a tour or "have a tangible life". In moving on from 2005, and converting new activity from 2005 into something regular, respondents cited continuing ways of working, collaborative relationships, and continuing actual events/programme activities that started in 2005.
- Had increased their organisation's confidence, with respondents citing the activities of the year as an opportunity to increase or prove their capacities.
- Had increased their operational budgets during 2005.

On the whole, established organisations were more likely than other kinds of organisations to indicate that they had not experienced these benefits. Just under a third of all respondents indicated that they felt activities would continue in a similar way after the ECoC; most of this group were established organisations. This compares interestingly with the findings from Bergsgard and Vassenden's survey of organisations that had been part of Stavanger 2008. Whilst organisations here reported new models of production, an increased sense of capacity, the use of new venues and increased professionalism, it was *larger* organisations who were 'more optimistic' than smaller organisations and freelancers about the potential long-term impact of these benefits (Bergsgard & Vassenden, 2011).

When asked about their capacity to continue to "work at this level" in 2006 and beyond, the responses were mixed from organisations involved in Cork 2005 (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006). Some stated that 2005 had been a year in which "a majority of organisations worked extremely hard", and that, therefore, there would be a need for individuals and organisations to recover. Bergsgard and Vassenden note a similar issue for smaller organisations in Stavanger, who "were nearly 'burned out' by the extra effort they had put into the project" (2011: 314). More generally, smaller organisations (and non-funded organisations) were also more likely to view the programme as a missed opportunity (*ibid.*: 315). In the case of Bologna 2000, the Palmer/Rae Associates report (2004b) notes that existing institutions found it difficult to continue to produce the level of activity that they had in the ECoC year.

Other respondents, in the case of Cork 2005, cited financial issues as a potential barrier in the future; that is, either the need to deal with immediate challenges in operational finances, or requirements for future funding in order to continue to do things differently. In the case of Stavanger 2008, meanwhile, financial issues were specifically raised in respect of the value of additional funding within the ECoC year itself:

Quite a few of the periodical organisations that had received relatively small amounts of money complained that the support was actually a hindrance, because of the restrictions in S[tavanger] 2008's sponsorship (Bergsgard & Vassenden, 2011: 314).

In the case of Liverpool 2008, both individual practitioners and organisations reported being in receipt of additional programme and project funding in the lead-up to, and including, 2008, although this was not a universal experience. Some issues were raised in relation to transparency of funding processes from Liverpool Culture Company to artists and organisations – specifically, what funding would be available to bid for, and how that bidding would work (Impacts 08, 2010c).

The ex-post evaluation for the 2007 and 2008 ECoCs reflects some similar 'benefits' for the cultural sectors in those years to those identified in the case of Cork 2005, noting that:

...a significant number of local cultural operators have been supported in each [ECoC]. As well as enjoying greater profile and contacts, one of the most important benefits reported across all four ECOC is the greater professionalism and operational capacity of such operators. In many cases, the mere fact of working more closely with cultural institutions and authorities has enabled greater support to be provided than would otherwise have been the case (ECORYS, 2009a: vi).

It also suggests that, more generally across the ECoCs, organisations anticipated undertaking a "higher level of activity than before the title year" in the future (ECORYS, 2009a). There is no discussion, however, of what would be required to support activity at that "higher level" in the future. These broad observations, concerning a sample of four different cities from two years, suggest that, on the whole, impacts in terms of capacity-building may be felt in different sizes and types of cities and ECoCs – and that, overall, they are not unique to a particular type of city.⁴³

Some examples suggest benefits for specific groups within the sector: in respect of Luxembourg GR 2007, the formal process of funding some "smaller, new or informal" organisations and individuals was felt to have supported them in becoming more "professional" (ECORYS, 2009a: 37). Sibiu 2007 reports similar benefits (ECORYS, 2009a), as does Linz (ECORYS, 2010a: v). For organisations involved in Pécs 2010, capacity-building through the undertaking of "more and bigger projects than in previous years" was felt to have been beneficial for the sector (ECORYS, 2011c: v), as was the sense that these organisations were "more engaged than previously in the civic life of the city" (*ibid.*: vi); this extends the notion of benefit beyond the cultural sector to a wider conception of the role of culture in the city.

In some cases, the particular contextual circumstances of a city and its cultural sector appear especially salient in the apparent development of the capacity of this sector. The ex-post evaluation for Tallinn 2011, for example, notes that the reporting of enhanced capacity by 'cultural operators' in the city is:

all the more significant given that Estonia (a former Soviet republic) does not have a long tradition of a diverse, independent and multi-disciplinary cultural sector or many long-established private and commercial operators in the cultural and creative industries (ECORYS, 2012a: 29).⁴⁴

⁴³ What is perhaps to be supposed is that such benefits might be relative to the state and constituent parts of the cultural system in any given city, in terms of what 'raising the bar' might mean for different institutions and organisations.

⁴⁴ It is perhaps worth noting that this analysis implies a preferred model for a cultural sector (with multiple independent providers). Relatively speaking, there is little research or commentary on ECoCs which reflects on the different arrangements of local cultural sectors between different ECoCs.

On the whole, as the majority of the data presented here is from the period 2005 - present, it is difficult to understand whether such benefits have emerged from changed practices over the period of the ECoC initiative; however, the absence of many responses in the Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 study citing impacts in this area suggests that ECoC organisers in Phase 3 of the Programme are, at the very least, more aware of the opportunity to build capacity within the sector in order to support post-hosting year sustainability.

Networks, collaborations and shared structures

Another area of benefit to the cultural sector that is widely reported across ECoCs concerns improved networks and new opportunities to support (e.g. through the development of partnerships) collaborations in the delivery of cultural activity. Participants in the conference 'Celebrating 25 years of European Capitals of Culture' linked the improved skills among cultural operators and local policy-makers to "the opportunity that the event gives for improving cooperation between cultural operators and local authorities and between cultural operators and citizens" (European Commission, 2010: 9). Rotterdam 2001 specifically set up a new network for young "cultural entrepreneurs" in the year after their ECoC.

New connections with other organisations, through collaboration or shared activities, was a significant outcome of Cork 2005 (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006), whilst the ex-post evaluation of Linz 2009 praised its "networks and alliances" as a route to "sustain momentum" (ECORYS, 2010a: 43). A survey conducted by the Turku 2011 Foundation, meanwhile, claims that 93% of projects involved in the delivery of the artistic programme developed new contacts and networks through their experience (Hakala and Lemmetyinen, 2013: 9).

Bergsgard and Vassenden's study offers a more in-depth view of the relationship between improved networks and collaborations, and the role of the ECoC. They surveyed the views of cultural producers/artists regarding Stavanger 2008 and reflected that:

Most of the funded producers whom we interviewed said that their participation in Stavanger2008 had created new (or stronger) relations with their collaborators in the cultural and creative sectors. Nearly all of the institutions and companies report such an impact, especially locally – in the region – but also nationally and internationally to an extent (2011: 310-1).⁴⁵

However:

Some of these non-funded producers, who still delivered big cultural productions during 2008, report new and improved collaborations as a result of their own project, but do not attribute this to Stavanger 2008 (ibid.: 311).

Bergsgard and Vassenden found that a significant majority of organisations reported that some new relations had emerged as a result of Stavanger 2008, and that these new relations were formed locally and nationally (and even internationally in some cases); however, the study cannot give any measure as to long-term effects, given that data was collected in late 2008 and early 2009. Additionally, two-thirds of respondents to the survey felt that Stavanger 2008 had "contributed to the establishment of new arenas for collaboration for the cultural life in the region" (2011: 363). Over 90% stated that these

⁴⁵ The research continues: "The following statements capture this: Stavanger2008 has created 'lasting effect, established points of contact between milieus in Stavanger and abroad'. 'It has created a culture to collaborate [...] seeing the value of connecting projects together'. '2008 brought people together; it made us aware of commonalities and shared interests in arts'" (Bergsgard & Vassenden, 2011: 311).

new areas had “brought new knowledge to their organisation”, with 80% reporting that they had “opened new channels for the production and promotion of culture and art” (*ibid.*).

However, elsewhere, Bergsgard *et al.* (2010: 369) felt that:

There are ... strong indications that the larger the organisation, the more it will benefit from the results of Stavanger 2008 in the years to come. In other words, they have the resources, the institutional structures and the personnel to make use of new relationships, and to develop new methods. They have the absorptive capacity to make use of new knowledge imported from collaborating partners. In addition there is a tendency that the effect of increased collaboration is concentrated to relatively limited parts of the cultural and creative sector.

In the case of Liverpool 2008, the city’s cultural sector, and particularly its non-commercial actors, built formal networks that have been recognised by non-cultural agencies and partnerships – such as the work of the Liverpool Arts Regeneration Consortium’s (LARC) with the Local Strategic Partnership, and the Mersey Partnership (tourism and inward investment agency) – indicating that the greater organisation of the cultural sector has been rewarded with acceptance of cultural players around the broader, city ‘table’ (Impacts 08, 2010c). Reflecting on the findings from Stavanger 2008, alongside the case of Liverpool 2008 and the relative ‘success’ of LARC, goes at least some way to supporting the view that larger organisations are most equipped to build upon new networks and collaborations.

Looking at indications of potential long-term impact, some cities have either planned for or developed formal shared structures to continue support for particular activities or functions. As a result of Bruges 2002, an organisation called Bruges Plus now exists, with an annual operating budget of between €2.5-6m (depending on the number of projects in a year), this being revenue financed to a basic capacity by the city itself. It supports, amongst other things, a range of special activities and infrastructure support, including centralised ticketing and tourist and culture information (Bruges 2002, 2012). Bruges Plus supports collaboration, works across different genres and disciplines, has the capacity to pilot events and projects, and is able to undertake activities that are not the core job of other organisations or agencies (Bruges 2002, 2012). Linz 2009 also developed a joint ticketing system for culture and tourism (Linz 2009, 2010a: 39).

Other examples of formal structures for future shared working include Luxembourg GR 2007. The cross-border collaborations undertaken in 2007 have been taken forward by the creation of a new body to “continue the cross-border cultural co-operation” (ECORYS, 2009a: 35) for the Luxembourg Greater Region.⁴⁶ In Turku 2011, meanwhile, a network (the Aura River Network) had plans to work together in future years, bringing “different summer events together under one umbrella, based on the ECoC experience” (ECORYS, 2012a: vi). The ex-post evaluation for Tallinn 2011 notes that a specific legacy vehicle was established to take forward some post-ECoC activity, with a particular focus on the ‘Cultural Cauldron’, a former industrial site at the seafront which is part of an ongoing refurbishment, due for completion in 2013 (*ibid.*: v); and that this new vehicle would carry across some staff and resources from the ECoC vehicle (*ibid.*: 30).

Whilst these formal structures are a useful indication of potential long-term impacts, it is worth reflecting on the period of time that might be required for benefits in this area to be secured. Copenhagen 1996 also cites a legacy of networks several years after the year itself (including contacts with European partners), but it is stressed that this took some time to really happen (Davies, 2012). It is worth noting, again, that the evidence here

⁴⁶ The body is called Espace culturel Grande Région, and ECORYS (2009a: 36) states that: “The aim of ECGR is to bring together the public authorities responsible for culture within the GR to develop a programme of shared activities.”

does not suggest particular correlations between city size or the status of an existing cultural system and the potential benefits; rather, what seems to be most important is the political and sector commitment to supporting further shared and collaborative activities and approaches.

5.2.2. Image and sense of place

The potential for an ECoC to transform the image of a city is a well-established part of the narrative of ECoC impacts, particularly since the dominance of medium to small cities with a low or outdated national and international profile. As discussed in the previous Chapter, this has given rise to discourses around specific city experiences as a focus of the ECoC communications narrative, in particular, Glasgow 1990's pioneering use of the year to rebrand itself (Garcia, 2003; 2004a; 2005; Tucker, 2008), which has been partly replicated in Liverpool 2008 (Garcia *et al.*, 2010). The ECoC is part of more widespread trends in place branding for cities, the use of flagship building projects, and a desire to position cities as creative and cultural spaces. However, in the case of ECoCs, attempts to change perceptions of hosting cities are not just undertaken to stimulate new economic activity (either through tourism or other kinds of economic development), but are also part of the desire to develop civic pride and celebrate local narratives associated with a city creating or enhancing a strong sense of place.

This Section looks first at evidence of changes in the positioning of cities, considering the impact on media coverage primarily; secondly, it looks at how this positioning or repositioning may, in turn, impact on local awareness about the ECoC and changes to host citizen perceptions (i.e. internal image impacts), and how it impacts on national and international awareness and perceptions (external image).

Media Coverage

Impact on individual host city profile

There is a range of evidence from ECoC cities that the ECoC year leads to increased media coverage for host cities that have a limited profile pre-ECoC, and that this can result in a sustained legacy of image change within national and international media discourse – for instance, by offering a stronger association between respective cities and their cultural assets, or by presenting them as business and tourism destinations more broadly. The most common discussion is how media coverage can transform perceptions of place and lead to a change of image for a host city, amongst key stakeholders and opinion leaders (nationally or internationally), amongst the local population at large, and amongst potential visitors and/or investors. Assessment of the impact of media coverage on perceptions of the ECoC Programme itself or the quality of individual city programming is discussed in the next Section.

One key indicator of impact on profile is the volume of media coverage the city can generate upon becoming ECoC, and its capacity to attract coverage not only locally, but also nationally and internationally. For most cities, the overwhelming majority of ECoC-related coverage is of a local nature and occurs in the press, but there are also outstanding examples of cities attracting considerable national and international attention. The latter tends to be of a more positive nature than local coverage, and more focused on cultural issues or discussion concerning the city's characteristics, its capacity for renaissance or regeneration (in the cases of cities undergoing major changes), and its wider tourism offer. In contrast, local coverage is often focused on controversies of a political or managerial nature relating to respective ECoC programmes, as noted in the next Section.

This study has assessed available evidence about the volume of media coverage from 48 cities, as well as the wide range of literature offering dedicated analysis on the topic. It is, however, not possible to present a summary table of comparable data, as every city has used different methods to account for media volume. As such, while some cities make claims relating to just one year, others present combined information covering three or four years; some cities separate local media from national media, while others present a single domestic figure combining both; and most cities use different standards to account for press or broadcast data capture – be it radio or television – which is further complicated with the advent of digital media (sometimes accounted for separately, sometimes combined with press or broadcast). Despite these disparities, it is possible to identify some relevant trends, listed below, which apply to all cities, regardless of size or previous profile:⁴⁷

- *Local media* have always shown an interest in the ECoC, and it is not possible to detect growth overtime to parallel the development of stronger or more sophisticated communication strategies. The fact that early communication strategies (in Phase 2, for instance, as discussed in Chapter 4) were mainly aimed at opinion formers explains the ongoing media interest.
- Attracting *national media* attention has been harder for hosts that are not national capitals (which is the case for 71% of cities since 1985, and 91% since 2001). However, cities developing clear markers in the year (e.g. Opening and Closing events) have had greater success securing national attention at these points (this is remarked explicitly by Liverpool 2008, Pécs 2010, Turku 2011 and Guimarães 2012). Beyond this finding, it is not possible to identify clear patterns, due to the trend to conflate national press data with local press data.
- Overall, the combined volume of reported local and national data ranges from 1,000 to 20,000 press clippings, with the majority of cities reporting 5,000 to 10,000 clippings. As noted, these variations cannot be explained on the grounds of city typologies, as sources are not always clear about whether this volume represents single or multiple years of coverage, and the definition of ‘press clipping’ varies.
- The volume of reported *international media* attention ranges from 200 to 3,500 press clippings, with the majority of cities reporting 500 to 1,500 clippings. Cities tend to report greatest interest from neighbouring countries or countries with clear cultural affinities (e.g. other Nordic countries for Turku 2011 and Stavanger 2008; Ireland for Liverpool 2008; Spain for Guimarães 2012). There does not seem to be a direct correlation between the previous profile of the city and its international ECoC appeal. Rather, greater impact is achieved by cities with a dedicated international communication strategy.
- With the advent of *digital technologies*, it is easier for ECoCs to have a more pervasive media presence, and recent hosts, such as Essen for the Ruhr 2010, present the most voluminous claims as to media coverage (e.g. “65,000 media reports” according to ECORYS, 2011d: 36-7, this referring to international coverage in terms of “print and online” combined). However, in order to make sense of what this actually means, it is essential to set up some rules as to how digital media are coded, how to distinguish between clippings produced by the ECoC organisers and institutional stakeholders (e.g. via official websites, blogs, and Twitter and other social media), clippings produced by journalists, and entries produced by the wider public. There have been some attempts at codification (e.g. Impacts 08, 2010d) but a common methodology for digital capture and reporting is yet to be applied. At the moment, the counts for

⁴⁷ The combined data sources for this assessment are: Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Lille 2004 (2005); Quinn and O’Halloran (2006); ECORYS (2009b; 2010a; 2010b; 2011c; 2011d; 2012b; 2013a); Luxembourg 2007 (2008); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Stavanger 2008 (2009); Linz 2009 (2010a; 2010b); Turku 2011 Foundation (2012); Maribor 2012 (2013); Universidade do Minho (2013).

online media range from 2,300 online articles for Turku 2011, to 5,867 online news stories for Guimarães 2012, while other cities report the number of website hits (2 million for Sibiu 2007), which is clearly indicative of a very wide disparity in capturing approaches.

The analysis of published studies in this area confirms and contextualises the trends detected within available indicator data. The clearest (and an unsurprising) finding is that cities with a limited national and international profile prior to the ECoC year tend to see the strongest benefit from increased media attention. As noted by Prado (2007), greater visibility in both local and national press can automatically increase a city's 'cultural status' and its tourism potential. For instance, in the case of Sibiu 2007, its cultural positioning was improved inside the town, as well as with the people of Romania and those outside the country, mainly through mass media and tourism visits (Rotariu, 2007). Rotariu claims that Sibiu established itself as a tourist destination, as evidenced by the volume of press coverage and the expressions of interest ("direct contact") of thousands of tourists and participants (Rotariu, 2007).

There has been a similar story in both Cork 2005 and Liverpool 2008. In respect of Cork 2005, Quinn and O'Halloran (2006) concluded that the city had generated extensive national media coverage as a result of the ECoC; during the year itself, the city also received coverage in British newspapers. For Liverpool, meanwhile, the media impact was exceptionally high. Shukla *et al.* (2006) suggest that there was a transformation of image in the lead-up to the ECoC year, as Liverpool became more attractive to potential tourists. The year itself generated "overwhelmingly positive" media coverage between 2003 and the end of 2008; and the coverage of the city itself also changed, generating a 71% growth in the number of positive media stories about the city between 2007 and 2008 (Garcia, 2006; 2010; Garcia *et al.*, 2010).

For other cities – notably those trying to overcome negative stereotypes or an established image problem (particularly at the national level) – the importance of media attention focused on positive culture-related stories has been even more critical. This was clearly the case for Glasgow 1990, which moved from being a city with one of the worst reputations in the UK in the mid-1980s, to being widely accepted as the leading creative industries hub in Scotland and one of the top ones UK-wide; additionally, Glasgow became the fastest-growing business tourism destination in the UK in the late 1990s. All of these changes in fortune were consistently narrated by the UK press, which kept referring to Glasgow as the key success story, the 'renaissance city', and the top model to follow by 2008 ECoC candidates during the fierce bidding competition in 2003 (Garcia, 2003; 2004a; 2005; Reason & Garcia, 2007).

Despite these successes, however:

Research by Myerscough in Glasgow, host city in 1990, also indicates how quickly the image effects of the event can dissipate. Surveys carried out in the UK in January 1991 indicated that the perception of Glasgow as 'increasingly important for the arts' had slipped by 3% compared with September 1990, and its rating as an 'exciting place to visit' had fallen by 5%. Even so, the overall rating of the city was much better than prior to the event. The effect in terms of visitors also dried up quickly in the case of Glasgow (Richards, 2000: 175).

In this sense, Garcia (2004a; 2005) goes on to note that when assessing a city's experience over a 10-year period, the emerging picture can be considerably different. As such, in the case of Glasgow, whilst the immediate aftermath of 1990 resulted in a decrease in positive media attention and a marked drop in visitors up to 1993, by 2003, as noted above, the city had turned around its image and secured a strong position as one of the UK-leading destinations for business tourism.

Image improvement was mentioned as one of the less quantifiable impacts of the ECoC by participants at the conference 'Celebrating 25 years of European Capitals of Culture' (European Commission, 2010: 8). Nevertheless, the work by Garcia on Glasgow 1990 (Garcia, 2003; 2005; Reason and Garcia, 2007) and Liverpool 2008 (Garcia, 2010) has gone to considerable lengths to demonstrate that such image change can be objectively captured and that rich methodologies are available for this assessment via thorough longitudinal media content analysis. The key is to ensure there is a will to capture such progression over time (beyond 5 and 10 year periods), so that natural cyclical changes in attention do not mask the appearance of sustained long-term impact. The other key is to ensure that data capture techniques are comparable. Specific recommendations for improvement in this area are presented within Chapter 7.

Impact on perceptions of culture

A distinct media impact discussed in a small but significant selection of the literature is the opportunity for cities or countries to use the ECoC as a platform to overcome preconceptions about the value of 'culture' within mainstream media discourses. The ECORYS ex-post evaluation of Istanbul 2010 indicates that such efforts were successful in Istanbul, suggesting that "there is evidence that culture and art are higher on the agenda of the media and the general public than ever before" (ECORYS, 2011c: viii). In the case of Liverpool 2008, Garcia (2010) has argued that the ECoC experience influenced the tone and interest of a considerable number of articles within the tabloid UK press, papers tending to overlook stories on arts or culture but that ended up producing a range of positive articles on Liverpool and the value (and accessibility) of its artistic offer.

The most notable (positive) media effects often come from specific projects in the year. MKW GmbH (2007: 3) note the lasting attraction of one of the most iconic interventions in Graz 2003, the Acconci architectural project, and state:

The public awareness of Graz as a cultural city was boosted because of the ECoC event. Graz had more than 10.000 international press articles. 35 TV channels reported about Graz in 2003 and the webpage had more than 23 million visitors (*ibid.*: 5).

In the case of Liverpool 2008, the events attracting the highest volume of coverage nationally and internationally were the concerts by iconic artists such as the two surviving Beatles, Sir Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr; meanwhile, at a national level specifically attention also focused on city spectaculars such as the arrival of the giant mechanical spider, *La Princesse* (Garcia, 2010). As noted elsewhere in the study, local press attention is not necessarily focused on the same types of events, and tends to pay more attention to activities demonstrating a strong local or neighbourhood connection (*ibid.*; Garcia *et al.*, 2010).

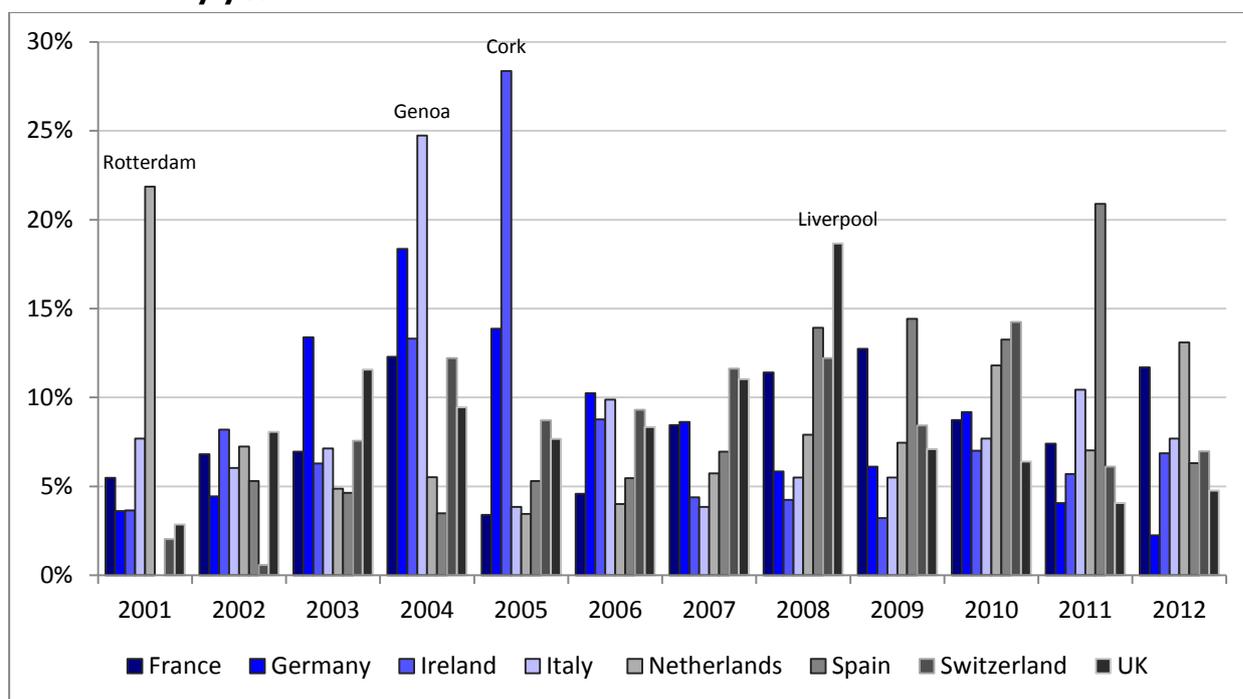
Impact on the ECoC Programme

The examples above all relate to the benefits that the ECoC can bring to media discussion about cities and their cultural offer. From a different perspective, it is also interesting to observe whether hosting an ECoC has an impact on how the media reports on the ECoC Programme itself, and whether interest in the title is sustained beyond the event year and/or may lead to a growth in interest in other cities hosting the title overseas. Evidence of this could be considered to be an example of a short-term or, potentially, a long-term effect on European cultural media narratives. This area, however, has not been the subject of dedicated analysis in the available literature to date, which is indicative of the fact that most research is funded locally and thus focused on addressing local concerns rather than assessing broader international effects. In an attempt at filling part of the gap, this study has conducted selected media analysis of press coverage making explicit

mention of the ECoC title within eight different European countries. The focus has been on references to the 'European Capital of Culture programme' (in different languages and using different phrase variations) rather than specific host cities. It covers the period 2001 to 2012 and includes a representative selection of national press sources (two to four papers per country, representing different editorial positioning as well as different target audiences – i.e. both popular (tabloid) and broadsheet press). The methodology and selected results of this analysis are presented in Appendix E, and a summary overview is included around the two summary Figures below.

Figure 21, which compares the distribution of ECoC-related press coverage in each country over the course of the period under analysis, does not readily reveal any obvious patterns. However, by highlighting the years in which particular cities hosted the ECoC title, a trend for national coverage to peak in the year that a 'home' city hosts the ECoC title becomes more visible. This is the case in all analysed countries except Germany and Spain. In France, there is a peak during its Lille 2004 ECoC year but this is not as marked as for other countries, and a similar peak takes place in 2009.

Figure 21: % distribution of ECoC-related newspaper coverage for each country, by year



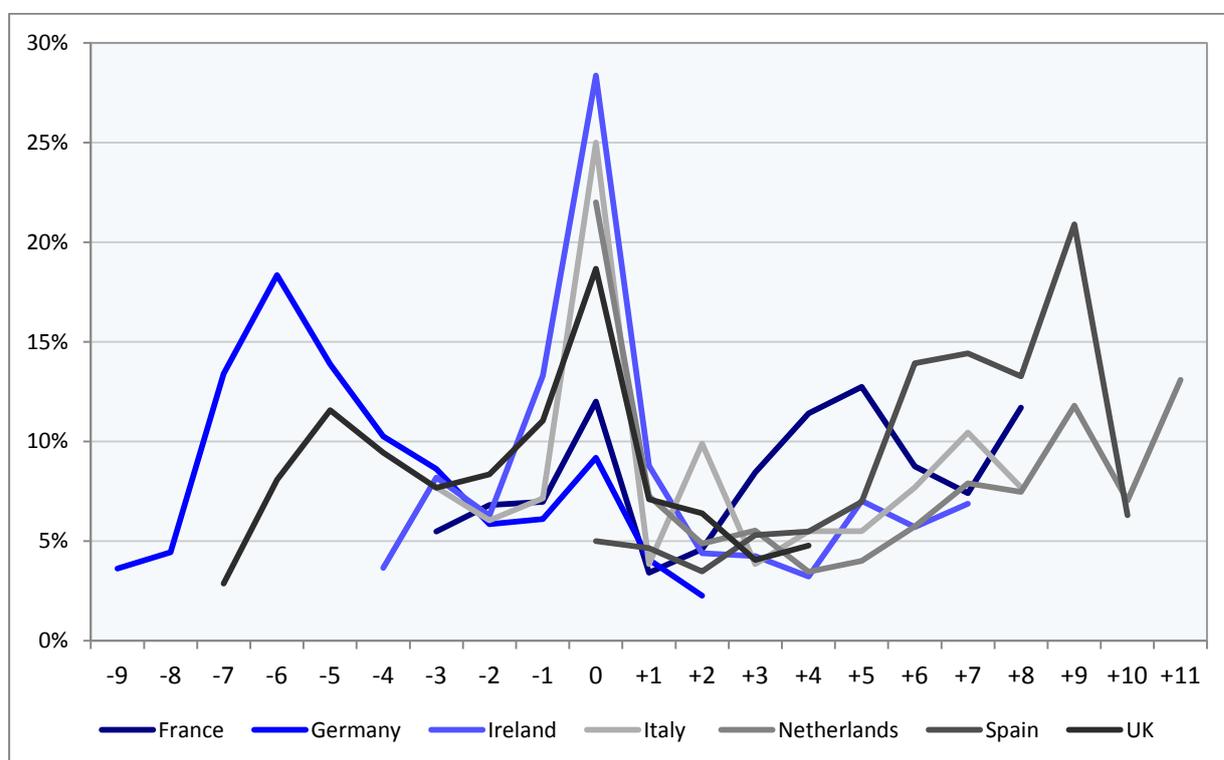
Source: ICC analysis, Lexis Nexis digital clippings (2001-2012)

In Figure 22, the year in which respective countries hosted an ECoC is marked as point zero, with the percentage of coverage related to the ECoC programme organised around this central period. This Figure shows more clearly that, in most European countries analysed, there is a distinctly similar cycle to press coverage mentioning the term ECoC, consisting of the following:

- A progressive build up in coverage during the two years preceding an ECoC hosted by a home city.
- A peak in coverage mentioning the ECoC programme during the title year (e.g. Ireland, Italy).
- A very marked drop in coverage immediately after the year.
- Growth in coverage starting again when a new round of national bidding begins, which, in some countries, may reach a peak similar to, or in excess of, that for the actual event year (e.g. Spain).

These trends confirm the assumption that most ECoC coverage is about the national hosts, rather than other country hosts and there is no evidence to suggest that having hosted an ECoC makes the national media more likely to cover subsequent hosts.

Figure 22: % distribution of ECoC-related newspaper coverage for each country– pre ($x < 0$), during ($x = 0$) and post ($x > 0$) respective national ECoC years



Source: ICC analysis, Lexis Nexis digital clippings (2001-2012)

Of course, it is also evident from the two Figures that countries differ, to varying degrees, in the way that they distribute coverage about the ECoC Programme. For instance, while some of the countries observed provide practically no coverage other than during their own event year (e.g. Ireland, which focused 28% of all its ECoC coverage on 2005), other countries distribute coverage much more evenly across the bidding process, award year and build up to the event year (e.g. Germany and France, where coverage on the bidding process was even greater than the coverage on their respective event years).

These differences between countries seem to be related to a number of overall trends, which the Figures also help to illuminate. In the first place, the degree of attention to the bidding process appears to have become much stronger since 2005 – this is evident in the candidature process for Spanish cities (ECoC 2016 edition), French cities (ECoC 2013) and Dutch cities (ECoC 2018), and provides a stark contrast to the very low coverage for particular ECoC years prior to 2005 (e.g. Spain, which offered limited coverage on Salamanca 2002 even during the year itself).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ It should be remembered, however, that analysis of materials published in Spain in 2002 was only possible for June onwards.

Attitudes towards specific ECoCs

Another dimension worth exploring is the attitudes shown by the media towards ECoC activity; although this is another area where methodologies tend to vary quite broadly, which makes it difficult to establish a comparison across different hosts (e.g. cities account for 'neutral' coverage quite differently; some do not report on this area at all, while others view it as the dominant tone of reporting). An assessment of the available data does, however, throw up some interesting findings that reveal the most noticeable areas of impact:

- Over half of all cities for which data exists emphasise the dominance of positive coverage, particularly during the event year. Many cities account for positive coverage as an economic impact as well by calculating its publicity value. There is no standard formula being applied across all cities, so economic media value claims are not strictly comparable. Claims identified by this study range from €2m in Avignon 2000 to £200m (equivalent to approximately €207m at December 2008 rates of exchange) in Liverpool 2008, with most cities claiming €30m to €40m. The disparities in claims are often due to the type of events being accounted for (e.g. Liverpool 2008 included the MTV Europe awards as part of its ECoC programme, which comes with its own well established international media trail).
- A few cities have concluded that neutral coverage dominated their media reporting. This is the case for Luxembourg GR 2007, Vilnius 2009, Pécs 2010 and Cork 2005. With these examples, the impact of coverage is mainly calculated in terms of volume rather than attitude, with large numbers of press articles assumed to represent a positive impact in itself, and at times considered to imply economic value as well (as described above).
- Negative coverage is reported as dominant for a minority of cities, all of them within Phase 2 of the Programme (Thessaloniki 1997, Bergen 2000, Brussels 2000, Porto 2001, Kraków 2000). Such negative coverage comes mostly from the local press, and focuses on organisational and financial issues. In some cases, it can overshadow perceptions on the quality or value of the cultural programme, and can involve gimmicks such as the publication of "an obituary for the ECoC" the month before the year was officially due to start in Maribor (ECORYS, 2013a: 48).⁴⁹ However, many cities indicate that reporting tends to become less negative once the year starts, particularly if there are clear markers, such as a meaningful opening event, as mentioned above. There is practically no research available on the medium- to long-term effects of negative ECoC coverage when this dominates locally. The two cases that have been looked at, Glasgow 1990 and Liverpool 2008, indicate that a well-managed ECoC year – and, particularly, a successfully received cultural programme – can secure a significantly positive balance to the experience, with positive coverage on the 'legacies' dominating press references for years to come (Garcia, 2005; 2010).
- As already noted, there are marked differences between the tone and emphasis of local, national and international press. The local press offer the largest volume of coverage and also tend to be more negative, while international coverage is far lower but overwhelmingly positive. This points at the importance of well-managed international communication strategies.

Finally, an important impact of the year on media reporting is the opportunity it may offer to bring in foreign journalists to the city, in many cases for the first time. Bergen 2000 reported 273 visits (contrasting with 66 visits pre-ECoC), Linz 2009 reported 300 visits,

⁴⁹ Maribor only attracted 2% negative coverage, but gimmicks such as the one mentioned can have a noticeable impact amongst the local population.

and Turku 2011 reported 500 visits. Although the data is patchy, it is possible to detect progressive growth, regardless of city size and location, which is suggestive of the growing appeal and recognition of the ECoC as a media event.

Awareness and perceptions

Alongside media impacts sits the potential for an ECoC to broaden or change perceptions of the host city and its cultural offer. This study has considered five key indicators to assess evidence of impact in this area.⁵⁰ These are:

- Local (internal) awareness of the ECoC
- Effect of the ECoC on internal perceptions of the city
- Regional, national or international (external) awareness of the ECoC
- Effect of the ECoC on external perceptions of the city
- Effect of the ECoC on national or international city rankings/brand positioning

These indicators have been complemented with qualitative discussion available via the published literature. The main combined findings are organised in two areas: impact at the local level (internal awareness and perceptions) and at the regional, national or international level (external awareness and perceptions).

Local awareness and perceptions

Looking into the available indicator data, responses in this area are consistently strong, particularly in Phase 3 of the Programme, where a noticeable number of cities have conducted research showing that over 90% of the local population has a basic level of awareness of their city's ECoC by the end of the year (e.g. 97% in Linz 2009, 94.7% in Liverpool 2008, 95% in Luxembourg GR 2007, 100% in Turku 2011). In Istanbul, a city with 12.5 million people, the claim is that 75% of residents were aware (ECORYS, 2011d: 48). This is evidence of improvement in the effectiveness of communication strategies, which have gone some way since Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Programme (e.g. in Helsinki 2000, the maximum reported awareness was 60% in June 2000). Of course, 'awareness' does not necessarily entail a detailed knowledge of the programme, but it is an indication of the capacity for the ECoC to stand out rather than blend in with existing activity. School children tend to be amongst the groups with the highest levels of awareness, particularly in cities that have developed programmes targeted at schools (e.g. 99% awareness for school pupils in Guimarães 2012 (ECORYS, 2013a: 35)), which is proof of the added-value of such focused programming.

Regarding the impact that such awareness can have on perceptions of the city, for all cities for which data is available, there are high percentages of public agreement with questions regarding improved opinion about their city post-ECoC year. The majority of these cities indicate 80% to 90% agreement (e.g. Liverpool 2008, Essen for the Ruhr 2010, Sibiu 2007, Guimarães 2012), with a few, like Tallinn 2011 (48%), indicating lower levels of agreement among the local population (ECORYS, 2012b: 26-7). These are cities with a variety of backgrounds, including some national capitals. In some cases, the claim is that this is the view of specific groups only, such as "cultural players" in the case of Bruges 2002 (Bruges 2002, 2003: 83). In a few cities, claims are also made about improvement to the city's image as a cultural centre, specifically, or as place with a better atmosphere and services, in some cases creating strong associations for the first time or renewing them after years of stagnation. For instance, by the end of the year in Sibiu 2007, 50% of audiences "considered Sibiu as a cultural centre and as a multicultural European city"; in Liverpool, "the percentage of [local] people thinking Liverpool was

⁵⁰ See Appendix B for a full list of sources by data indicator and city.

better for hotels, music, galleries and particularly shopping increase[ed] significantly between 2005 and 2008" (Garcia *et al.*, 2010: 49); in Rotterdam, "the perception of Rotterdam as a city of culture and art increased by about a third in 2001" (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a: 115); after Turku 2011, "64% of ... residents think that the atmosphere of the city has improved... and 56%... reported that the ECoC strengthened their pride in the city" (Turku 2011, 2012: 44).

Beyond these two core indicators (awareness of the ECoC and changed perceptions of the city), the analysis of available literature shows that most published research about effects on local perceptions has concentrated on three groups: local residents, cultural stakeholders and local businesses. In keeping with the discussion above, research indicates a positive impact on local pride and sense of identity, with a range of specific examples of individual cities.

Both the build up to the ECoC in Liverpool 2008 and the year itself showed positive effects on residents' perceptions, whether in terms of the hopefulness that the year would have an impact on the city or in terms of the year itself (Anderson & Holden, 2008). Garcia *et al.* (2010) found that around 60% of the local population had a very positive perception of Liverpool. In 2008, there was a significant rise in the percentage of local people who mentioned both shopping and a feeling that Liverpool was "an interesting place, with lots to do". The *Impacts 08* research in Liverpool found evidence that residents' impression of external views of the city was improving and that residents' views on how Liverpool compared with other cities was also improving – for instance, the proportion of people agreeing Liverpool was better than the majority of other UK cities for hotels, music, galleries and shopping increased significantly between 2005 and 2008 (Garcia *et al.*, 2010).

Istanbul 2010, as has already been noted in the study, had a significant international profile prior to the ECoC. The ECORYS ex-post evaluation argues that one of the most important outcomes for the city from the ECoC was, thus, not its effect on external profile but rather its impact on local communities:

The relevance of the ECoC to this objective... related primarily to the creation of a new narrative... This narrative was based around a redefinition of citizenship, particularly in the context of social change (and even upheaval) as well as Turkey's hoped-for accession to the EU. For example, as one interviewee noted, 'the city has received huge migration from Anatolia in the last twenty years, but many Anatolians still live in Istanbul as they used to live in their villages; some have never even seen the Bosphorus, despite living here for years'. Another noted that 'the arts provide a unique opportunity to unite people from diverse and contrasting backgrounds and perspectives in harmony and mutual understanding; Istanbul 2010 can serve as a showcase of living together' (ECORYS, 2011c: 74).

In the case of Liverpool 2008, improved perceptions of businesses in respect of the city's image were also demonstrable. The ECORYS ex-post evaluation of Liverpool 2008 states that:

From a business perspective, the ECoC has helped to raise the profile of the city, which has encouraged investment and has made Liverpool a more attractive place to do business. Liverpool is in a more favourable position to continue building on further opportunities to continue to attract new investment to strengthen the local economy and create new job opportunities (ECORYS, 2009a: 72).

Similar trends are evident for Sibiu 2007. Cosma *et al.* (2009), in a survey of Sibiu businesses, highlight the fact that 72.5% of the companies surveyed consider the ECoC year to have had a decisive impact in attracting new investors, with similarly high levels

of agreement with the proposition that the ECoC contributed to development in the city by attracting tourists and increasing investment figures. These attitudes imply that Sibiu's businesses see the city as somewhere with an attractive image for business.

Regional, national and international perceptions

Levels of national awareness in relation to the ECoC, is an area demonstrating a clear rising trend over time. The cities for which data is available show this marked development: from a nadir of 46% national awareness during Kraków 2000, to 65% during Liverpool 2008, 60% during Linz 2009, 83% during Pécs 2010 and 96% during Turku 2011.⁵¹ One city that stands out in this progression is Vilnius 2009, which reached 93% national awareness in 2009 – considerably higher than Linz in the same year and similar to figures not otherwise reached until 2011 by Turku. (This may be explained by the fact that Vilnius is the only national capital amongst these examples.)

At an international level, data is less common and overarching trends are harder to identify. However, from looking at the available data, a growth in awareness among city visitors is apparent, with levels of awareness ranging from 48% to 60% pre-visit or during visits in the period preceding the ECoC year (in the cases of Luxembourg GR 2007 and Istanbul 2010, respectively), to 70% and 78% during the title year itself (respectively, the cases of Bologna 2000 and Luxembourg GR 2007). In either case, this data suggests that communication strategies have been successful in positioning the ECoC Programme beyond the local community.

A more telling approach is to analyse whether visitor awareness of the ECoC affects their perception of the city. The approach to collating data in this area is quite diverse and not strictly comparable, as some ECoCs only capture the impressions of visitors; some engage in national polls, regardless of visit; and some try to infer changes to external perception by asking the opinion of local stakeholders. Regardless of these variations, the data available supports the view that hosting the ECoC can have considerable impact on perceptions of the city, from enhancing overall impressions (the most dominant impact), to projecting a stronger cultural image in particular. Expectedly, these effects are stronger for those that visit the city, but there is also evidence of effect on national perceptions independently of any visits, as outlined below.

Regarding evidence of an increase in interest in the city's cultural life or enhanced opinion on its cultural reputation specifically, a range of cities present claims of such changes at a national level, regardless of visit. For example:

- After Turku 2011, 21% of Finns "report that the ECoC increased their interest in the cultural life of Turku" (ECORYS, 2012b: 28), and 38% have a better opinion of the city at large (*ibid.*: 33).
- At the end of Pécs 2010, "56% of [national] respondents considered Pécs as the second most important city from a cultural point of view in the country after Budapest. This was a significant growth compared to previous year's 35%" (ECORYS, 2011d: 39).
- After Stavanger 2008, research suggests that the largest gains for the "city brand" occurred nationally and within other Nordic countries, which now view Stavanger as "a city with money for culture" (ECORYS, 2009b: 61).
- After Liverpool 2008, "79% of [UK] people now think Liverpool is a city on the rise, the highest in the UK" (ECOTEC, 2009a: 70).

⁵¹ See Appendix B for a full list of sources by data indicator and city.

Evidence for enhanced opinions about the city in general is more striking, particularly amongst visitors to the most recent ECoC editions:

- During Liverpool 2008, 97% of visitors praised the feeling of welcome (compared to 88% in 2006) and 99% rated very highly the city's general atmosphere (a growth from 91% in 2006) (Garcia *et al.*, 2010: 47).
- During Sibiu 2007, 94% of regional visitors, 90% of rest-of-Romania visitors and 86% of foreign visitors "considered that the ECoC improved the image of Sibiu" (Richards and Rotariu, 2011: 46).

These changes in external perceptions can be important, not only in respect of one-off tourism, but also longer-term visits and investment. Hunter-Jones (2009) suggests that the ECoC designation can have long-term impacts by attracting students to ECoC cities, finding, in the case of Liverpool, that ECoC status was mentioned by a number of students as a factor affecting their choice of study location.

Effect of the ECoC on city ranking/brand positioning

Ultimately, although this is not an area for which much comparable data is available, the few examples for which there is evidence provide strong and positive claims. These range from considerable change within European cultural city destination rankings post-event, to the city becoming one of the top national destinations or considered amongst the best places to live in their country. Examples of the former include Rotterdam, which rose from 20th to 15th place in the ATLAS list of 22 top European cultural destinations by the end of its ECoC year in 2001 (Richards *et al.*, 2002); and Sibiu and Luxembourg GR, which were viewed as one of the top-five European destinations by a larger proportion of visitors after their respective ECoC years (ECORYS, 2009a: 48; Palmer *et al.*, 2007). Notable examples of the latter, meanwhile, are: Glasgow, which, from having no tourism base to speak of before the mid 1980s, became the third-top business destination in the UK by 1994 (Myerscough, 1994); Liverpool, which became the third most popular UK city in the Condé Nast Traveller Survey by 2008 (ECORYS, 2009b: 51); and Turku, which was evaluated as the second best place to live in Finland by its residents in 2012 (ECORYS, 2012b: 33).

Interestingly, beyond an overall positive effect, it is less clear whether the ECoC or its promotional strategy can change previously established aspects of the city brand. For instance, while Bruges 2002 reinforced its (positive) image as an "open air museum" or a "traditional, old classic", Palmer/Rae Associates note that research commissioned by Bruges 2002 (2003) suggests that they did not succeed in adding "a contemporary cultural element to the city image", as was the priority objective of its ECoC marketing (2004a: 115).

5.3. Economic and physical impacts

The economic framing of several ECoCs, in terms of aspirations for the year itself and its legacy, is clear (as discussed in Chapter 4). In some cases, this is manifested through expectations of both economic activity in the year itself and longer-term effects, e.g. in the case of Cork 2005 (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006). However, an assessment of the available literature provides very few examples of actual evidence of long-term economic effects directly related to the ECoC year.

This Section considers evidence relating to physical developments, tourism and city competitiveness, and the creative industries. It discusses common outputs from different ECoCs and considers what can be said about the potential for these outputs in the long term.

5.3.1. Physical developments

The lasting improvement of 'cultural infrastructure' and the potential spill-over effects for other parts of the local economy were cited as possible legacies of ECoCs by participants in the ECOC 25th anniversary conference. Examples given included the *Grande Rotonde* in Luxembourg GR 2007, the *Maison Folies* of Lille 2004 and the new *Arena* in Liverpool 2008. Although it was noted that, in many cases, such projects were already being planned before the ECoC, "the prospect of the ECoC year helped focus minds and serve as a catalyst for completing the projects" (European Commission, 2010: 7).⁵² Likewise, participants considered that the event also had an impact on the development of other kinds of physical infrastructure, such as road-building projects and hotel stock. Although these developments could not be directly connected to the ECoC title, it was argued that they were often brought forward (i.e. happened sooner or more expansively than they otherwise would have done) because of the event.

Whilst ex-post evaluations and other sources demonstrate significant examples of both culturally focused development, and other kinds of development (tourism infrastructure, public realm, and so on), it is often not clear what the potential lasting impact might be in terms of urban regeneration (see European Commission, 2009: 7, referring to the ex-post evaluations of the four ECoC cities in 2007 and 2008).

The importance of some degree of physical transformation in connecting the ECoC to a wider narrative of urban regeneration can be seen in a number of examples. For example, Glasgow 1990 is referenced by DCMS (2002), Gold and Gold (2005), Herrero *et al.* (2006) and Liu and Lin (2011) specifically in respect of the capital developments that took place, ranging from restoration to new buildings, and improving visitor facilities. Salamanca 2002 (Tzonos, 1998; and Prado, 2007), Graz 2003 (Gaulhofer, 2007), Genoa 2004 (Mazzucotelli, 2013) and Cork 2005 (Linehan, 2005) are other examples of physical developments in ECoCs that are widely discussed.

As with other areas of this Chapter, there is relatively little evidence that concerns the post-year effects of physical developments (the in-year outputs of which are discussed in Chapter 4). What follows, therefore, is a discussion of some of the early indications of the kinds of benefits and issues that were felt to have arisen from these developments. For instance, new venues resulting from Graz 2003 were felt to have "improved the position of Graz as location for cultural events in the international competition" (MKW GmbH, 2007: 3). This sense of development for future positioning in a competitive market for culture is also evident in the planning of those cities for whom physical development programmes are not limited to new venues or other spaces due to open in the ECoC year itself. Both Patras 2006 (MKW GmbH, 2007) and Luxembourg GR 2007 (ECORYS, 2009a) included plans for developments that would come to fruition in the longer-term; in the case of Luxembourg GR 2007, Rotundas (used temporarily in 2007) were scheduled for "complete refurbishment".

The role of an ECoC in providing focus for political will also seems to have been important for some cities, even those with significant existing cultural assets. Worth noting is the example of Istanbul, for whom "...a huge and rather overdue investment was made in urban regeneration and restoration projects that secured Istanbul's placement on UNESCO's World Heritage list" (Hoyng, 2012: 1).

⁵² As noted in Chapter 3, discussions concerning physical development sometimes throw up complex issues in respect of attribution. For instance, the last of the three examples noted above is a development which was planned, funded and delivered separately from the ECoC in Liverpool, although the designation may have affected the timescale for completion and opening. It is perhaps worth noting that the term 'catalyst' is often used as a catch-all conception of the relationship between the ECoC and activities that are felt to be in some way associated; it is not always helpful in terms of making manifest precisely what kind of mechanisms or impacts these relationships exert.

Pécs 2010, a very different size of city from Istanbul, offers another good example of the ECoC providing focus for significant infrastructure projects. Indeed, the ex-post evaluation for the city suggested that other host cities could learn from the deliberate alignment of the Pécs ECoC with physical development, as this ensured the use of the new buildings and their introduction to “a diverse public” through activities in the ECoC year (ECORYS, 2011c). In addition, the benefits of raised marketing and media interest for the developments were felt to have enhanced their profile with the public, as well as focusing stakeholders; although some issues were reported in the managing of very different planning timescales and funding processes (*ibid.*).

Beyond this, the most crucial issue with new physical assets appears to be their ongoing use. 16 years on, Copenhagen 1996 was able to report that 18 infrastructure projects either started by, or part-funded by, the ECoC programme were still operating, and that many have significant visitor numbers (Davies, 2012). By comparison, Thessaloniki 1997 (in the same period as Copenhagen 1996) developed a number of spaces that it struggled to use, either because of the absence of programme funding or simply because the capacity was too large for the local audience (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004b); for some, this was felt to be symptomatic of the absence of strategic planning (Deffner and Labrianidis, 2005). Two years on, Weimar 1999 was also reported as finding it difficult to use new venues fully, as well as closing some museums and reducing numbers of staff and programmes in other organisations (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004b). Reasons cited for this included national economic conditions, but also significant spend on both the programme and physical developments for the year (*ibid.*). Cork 2005 demonstrated similar issues with long-term planning, with some venues and organisations closing after 2005, and others scaling-back operations (O’Callaghan, 2012).

What does not emerge from this evidence is any relationship between the type of city undertaking physical developments and the relative benefits or issues. Rather, what seems paramount is that cities demonstrate realistic and strategic understandings of the challenges and opportunities in developing physical infrastructure, and that due care is paid to the current and future circumstances of that particular city environment.

5.3.2. Tourism and city competitiveness

Concepts of tourism and city competitiveness are an important aspect of the way in which ECoC benefits are reported and framed. Palmer/Rae Associates’s (2004a) work suggests that this is especially important for cities without reputations as tourist centres prior to hosting the ECoC, and without strong ‘brands’ otherwise. However, the impact of the ECoC in terms of tourism must be placed in an appropriate historical context. Whilst Glasgow is often seen as the first ECoC to transform the image of a city with a comparatively low tourist base into a tourism destination, Richards (1999) has indicated how replicating major transformative effects by different cities is becoming increasingly difficult given the growing number of cities adopting a similar cultural agenda to promote economic transformation.

Furthermore, as Richards *et al.* (2011) note, it is important to disentangle the specific effects of the ECoC from other trends. They note how “the long term average boost given to overnight stays in the ECoC year itself now hovers around 11%” (*ibid.*: 35), suggesting a generally positive impact. There are, however, also a range of activities that may contribute to the upward trend in tourism numbers, which either may be separate from the ECoC (including tourism and transport infrastructure projects and general economic growth), or may be only indirectly linked to the ECoC.

The above cautionary comments notwithstanding, the narrative of the ECoC’s effects on tourism is generally one of success.

Tourism growth

Richards *et al.* (2011) outline four ways to understand tourism impact: transportation statistics; accommodation statistics; tourist spending; and tourism marketing. Across these fields the evidence is of a very positive short-term impact by ECoC, with more mixed results over the longer term. The cities that have managed to make the short-term boost to tourism numbers sustainable in the years following the ECoC are those that have developed post-ECoC marketing and event strategies. For example, Copenhagen 1996 appears to have benefited particularly from a smooth handover in terms of passing on tourism responsibilities after the end of the year (Davies, 2012), and the number of visitors has increased in each year since 1996. Moreover the quality of the ECoC is potentially secondary to the fact of being granted the title, as the mixed reaction to – but subsequent tourism success of – Cork 2005 illustrates (Palmer *et al.*, 2011: 45).

Alongside the complex relationship between the designation of ECoC and post-ECoC tourism numbers is the supply and demand question. An important driver for tourism growth may be grounded in supply side measures. An area for future research is the extent to which the ECoC stimulates hotel development and greater bed number availability, and whether better tourism services and room availability results in higher tourism numbers (that is, tourism impact being “supply-led” rather than just being due to greater demand), given that greater supply may also result in greater choice at lower prices (Palmer *et al.*, 2011: 45-6).

There is also the question of scale. MKW GmbH (2007: 3) argue that smaller cities see a comparatively larger increase in tourism than do bigger cities. They note that during 2003, day visitors to Graz doubled and that there were 2.5 million visitors in total (*ibid.*: 6). Also:

Lille 2004 attracted more than 9 million visitors. From December 2003 to November 2004, the Lille Tourist Office has been visited by 823.000 tourists, compared to 308.000 tourists in the previous year (*ibid.*: 9).

The summary work of Richards *et al.* (2011), discussed above, can be given depth by considering individual city case studies that all support the way that the ECoC leads to a growth in tourism numbers during the year itself – see Box 2 below.

Box 2: Tourism impact examples

- In respect of Glasgow 1990, DCMS (2002: n.p.) note that “There was a 50% increase in foreign market traffic from 320,000 in 1989 to 450,000 in 1990, putting Glasgow in third place in the UK's top city destinations for overseas visitors (behind London and Edinburgh).”
- Copenhagen 1996 saw an 11% rise in tourism in the year of the ECoC designation whilst the rest of Denmark saw an overall drop in tourism (Davies, 2012).
- Bruges 2002 was able to demonstrate a range of tourism impacts, including an estimated additional €42m of spend by tourists, representing an increase of 25% (Bruges 2002, 2003). The WES study commissioned by Bruges 2002 (2003) suggested that the tourist season began earlier in Bruges in 2002, because of the ECoC designation and the activities that had been undertaken to raise the profile of the year. On the whole, it appeared that exhibitions were the activities that generated overnight stays in the city (*ibid.*).
- In Sibiu 2007, “...Richards and Rotariu (2011) found that the number of tourist arrivals at accommodation establishments in the first six months of 2007 increased by almost 27% and the number of overnight stays grew by almost 36%, compared with the same period in 2005. Moreover, 32% of visitors surveyed by Richards and Rotariu came to Sibiu specifically because of the ECOC” (ECORYS, 2009a: 50).
- Liverpool 2008 saw substantial additional visits as a result of the ECoC during the event year (estimated at 9.7 million visits) and the impact of the resultant additional spend (estimated at £753.8m); there were significant numbers of first-time visitors to the city in 2008 driven by the ECoC, estimated at 6.4 million visitors (including 947,000 from Europe and over 1.5 million from the rest of the world). Overall, tourism in the city grew by 34% between 2007 and 2008, and by 19% for the city region (ENWRS and Impacts 08, 2010). Within the UK, significant target markets for marketing had been London and the South East, which both showed higher concentrations of visitors in comparison to all Liverpool ECoC-influenced visitors (ENWRS & Impacts 08, 2010).
- It appears that events that were staged under the *Liverpool 08* banner – the formal branding for the Liverpool ECoC programme – were an important factor in driving visitors. The events also remained an influential factor for many who did not actually attend an event, but whose perception of Liverpool and desire to visit was influenced in some way by the city's raised profile (ENWRS and Impacts 08, 2010: 4, 20). For the *Liverpool 08* programme itself, a third of the audiences and visitors came from Liverpool (3.3 million), and just over 3 million more from the wider Merseyside area. The remaining audiences and visitors – just over a third – were split, with a sixth from the North West region, a little over a sixth from the rest of the UK (1.5 million) and 0.3 million from outside the UK (Garcia *et al.*, 2010: 20).
- The ECORYS ex-post evaluation of Linz 2009 considers that Linz has improved both the city's image and the tourism offer (ECORYS, 2010a). A short-term analysis of Linz (Heller and Fuchs, 2009) states that there were 2 million day visitors and a 10% increase in overnight stays during 2009, together with investments in cultural infrastructure.
- Turku 2011 saw an increase in tourism by 7%, which was higher than the average increase of 4% across Finland during 2011 (ECORYS, 2012a: 58). However, this was lower than Turku's application estimate, which was for 15% (*ibid.*).

Sources: Quoted within text

Long-term effects?

The previous Section noted that the long-term effects of the ECoC on tourism are much more difficult to judge than the effects on tourism during the ECoC year. Whilst little longer-term analysis is currently available, as far back as 2000, Richards was noting the danger of ascribing long-term impact to ECoCs:

The relatively short-term nature of the Cultural Capital effect for tour operators is confirmed by research for Antwerp '93, which indicates that almost half of the increased tour brochure coverage of the city in 1993 had disappeared again in 1994 (TFPA, 1994). The relatively short-lived impact of the Cultural Capital designation is also reflected in the impact of the event on total tourism flows to designated cities. As Table 9 shows, the Cultural Capital year has a mixed effect on visitor numbers. Some cities have experienced significant rises in overnight visitors, but there have also been cases where the number of visitors has actually declined. The Cultural Capital event itself does not therefore necessarily lead to a long-term increase in staying visitors. The event is far more likely to produce a growth in day visitors (Richards, 2000: 174).

Analysis by Richards (2000: 174) of visitor overnights per year, looking at the years before, during and after the ECoC for ECoCs between 1989 (Paris) and 1993 (Antwerp), demonstrated a range of experiences – from Paris 1989, which saw a rise year on year, to Madrid 1992, which saw a decline in overnights year on year. However, an analysis based on the single year following the hosting year is limited in its ability to reflect on long-term effects. Individual case studies can be useful, although the most detailed come from two of the comparatively more successful ECoC years, Glasgow 1990 and Rotterdam 2001.

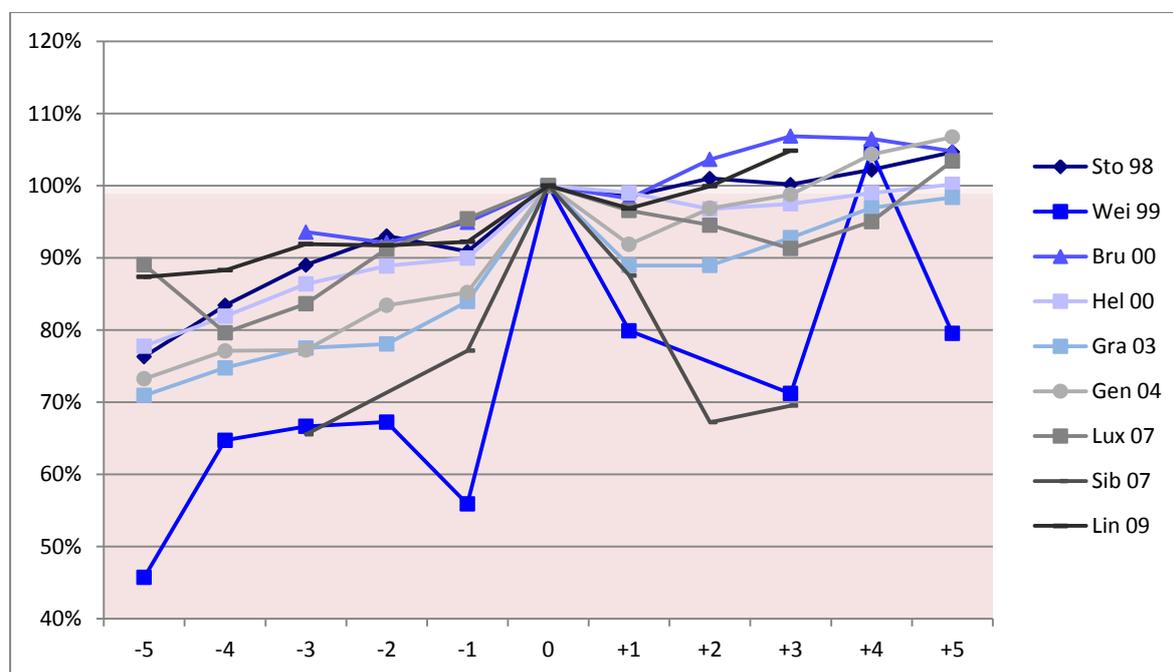
Garcia (2004a) conducted an analysis of the effects on Glasgow 1990 post-hosting year, looking at the decade following the year, which showed a significant long-term change in tourism. Concerning the period of 1982-2000, there is a spike in both the volume of visits and spend by visitors in the ECoC year itself compared to previous years, followed by a subsequent decline and then recovery, leading to longer-term growth in tourism figures; this is for a variety of infrastructure, marketing and city branding reasons (discussed previously in Section 5.2.2). A similar trend can be seen in Rotterdam in respect of overnight stays in hotels and hotel beds in the city (an indicator of tourism capacity) during the period 2000-2009; here there was a decline in volume in the two years following the ECoC year and then a subsequent return to growth (Palmer *et al.*, 2011). Palmer *et al.* (2011) see the role of the ECoC in Rotterdam's tourism economy as primarily to do with the development of the physical infrastructure, particularly hotel accommodation, which was able to support an intensification of event-led development that re-emerged strongly in 2003.

Looking more widely at trends over multiple ECoCs, some wider comparative trends can be considered utilising two indicators: arrivals and overnights. The TourMIS website collates longitudinal data on European city tourism; where possible, the figures reported here relating to visitor impacts have been drawn directly from this source, enabling a standardised dataset to be produced.^{53 54}

⁵³ The strength of this data lies not only in its extensiveness, but also the consistency and clarity of its statistical definitions. Where necessary, of course, this data has also been supplemented with data derived from secondary sources of information – including host city final reports and the studies by Palmer/Rae Associates and ECORYS – in order to extend the temporal breadth of the analysis. However, it should be noted that the data relayed by secondary sources is not typically comprehensive or clear. Reported changes in visitor and tourist flows, for instance, do not always refer to the base year (or years) that were used for the purpose of comparison; meanwhile, the origins and meaning of other figures can be clouded by vague or otherwise inadequate methodological notes, as well as by the conflation of terms which have statistically distinct meanings. There are, furthermore, inexplicable and worrying discrepancies within the available literature – and sometimes within the same source – for figures that, nominally, correspond to the same city and statistical indicator.

By far the most common trend has been for host cities to enjoy an increase in arrivals during the ECoC year itself, which is then followed by a decline in arrivals the following year, as shown in Figure 23.

Figure 23: Total arrivals per year as % of ECoC arrivals – cities showing increase and decrease in years either side of hosting year



Sources: Richards and Rotariu (2011); TourMIS database; Universidade do Minho (2013); Zentrum für Kulturforschung and IGC Culturplan (2011)

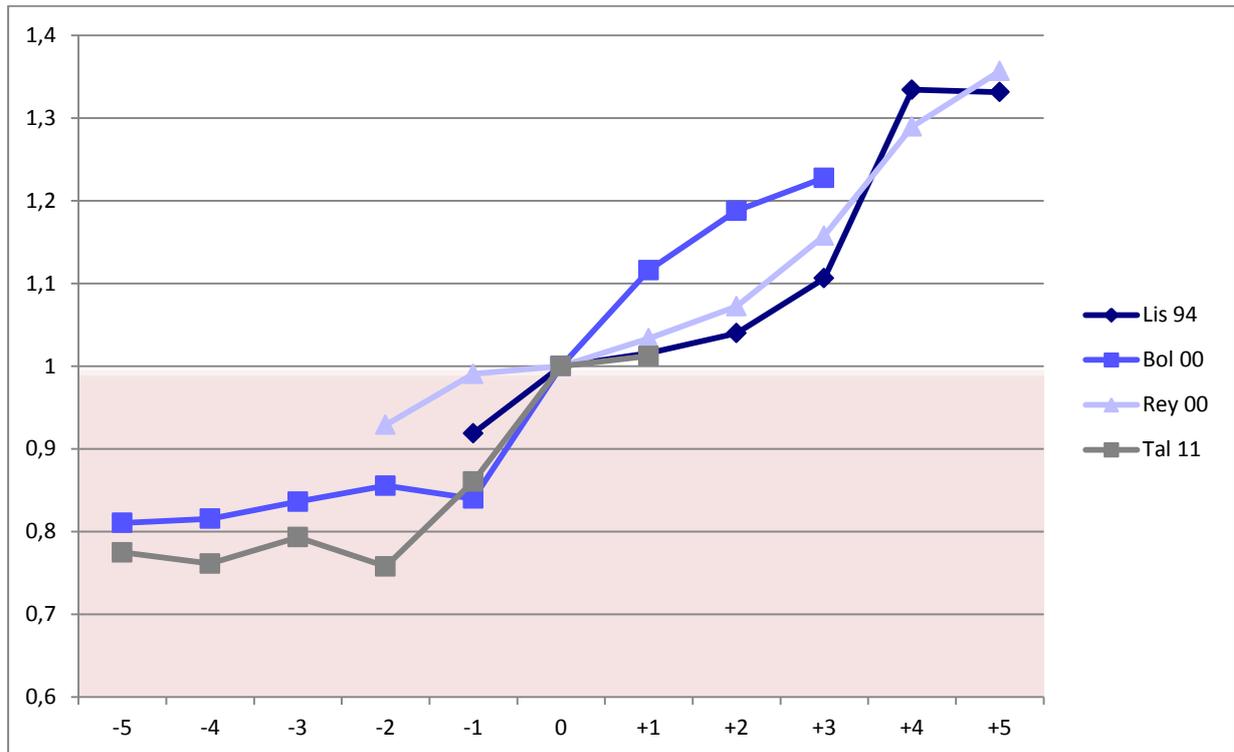
It should be noted that a significant number of such cities have gone on to exceed the benchmark set by the ECoC year, experiencing, over the longer period post-ECoC, a growth in the rate of arrivals (with cities, in general, averaging considerably higher rates of arrivals in the period after their ECoC than in the period before). Stockholm 1998, Brussels 2000, Genoa 2004 and Linz 2009 all showed very strong 'recoveries' over a longer period. Linz 2009 is perhaps the most interesting amongst these, as a city with a less obvious tourism base than the other three (although it is worth noting that Linz and Brussels both received a similar number of arrivals in their ECoC year, and so are comparable in terms of the size of their tourist base).

Based on the available data, it would appear to be unusual for an ECoC to experience growth in arrivals both during the ECoC title year *and* the year immediately afterwards. Out of all the cities for which data is available, only four (Lisbon 1994, Bologna 2000, Reykjavík 2000 and Tallinn 2011) have achieved this (see Figure 24).⁵⁵

⁵⁴ All figures in this dataset represent total foreign and domestic arrivals. However, not all sources use the same statistical definitions and areas of coverage. For data sourced directly from the TourMIS website, for example, a number of definitions apply to the different cities considered here. Most figures represent arrivals in all paid forms of accommodation in the city area only (Athens, Luxembourg, Weimar, Bologna, Brussels, Helsinki, Bruges, Graz, Linz, Tallinn and Maribor) or the greater city area (Madrid). However, some represent arrivals in hotels and similar establishments in the city area only (Paris, Lisbon, Stockholm, Genoa and Vilnius) and one set of figures (Glasgow) represents arrivals in all accommodation establishments, including people visiting friends and relatives, in the greater city area. The statistical definitions used for Guimarães, Essen for the Ruhr and Sibiu are not known, but it is known that the area of coverage for Sibiu is Sibiu County and that the area of coverage for Essen for the Ruhr consists of Essen and its "portal" towns.

⁵⁵ In the case of Lisbon, the Expo '98 may have been partly responsible for an upturn in arrivals post-1994.

Figure 24: Total arrivals per year as % of ECoC arrivals – cities showing increase in years both sides of hosting

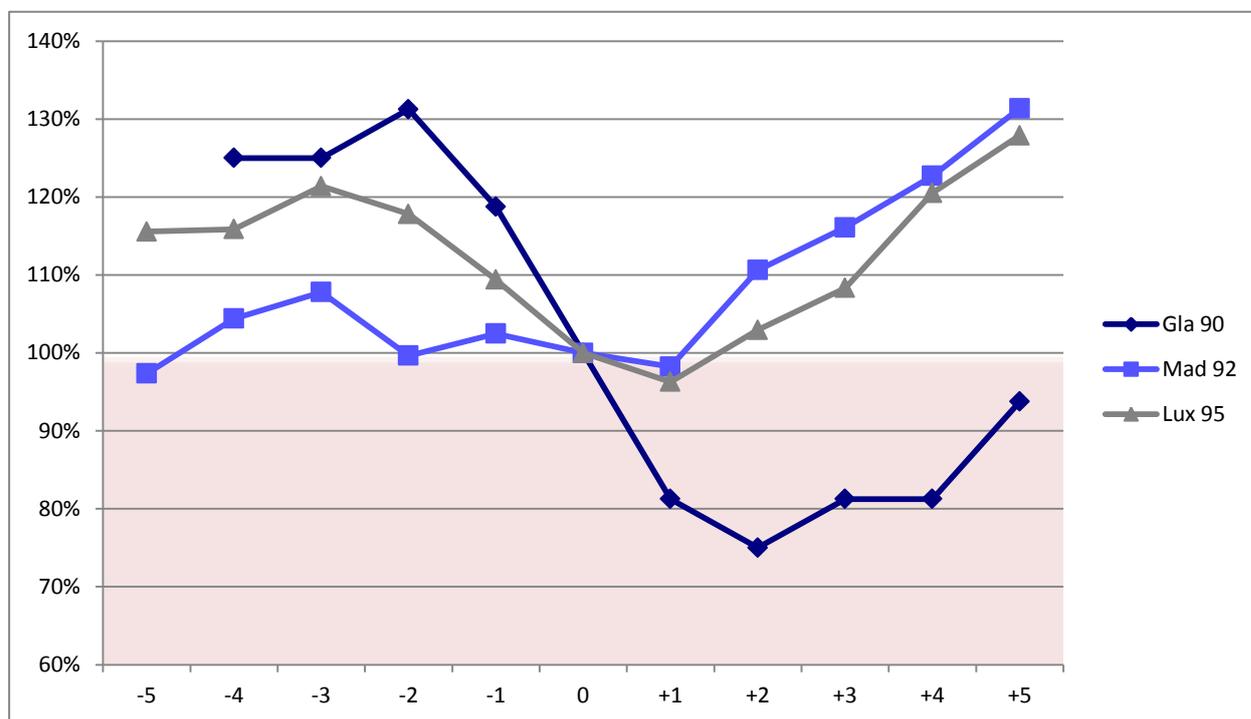


Sources: Richards and Rotariu (2011); TourMIS website; Universidade do Minho (2013); Zentrum für Kulturforschung and ICG Culturplan (2011).

Lisbon and Tallinn both show substantially larger tourist bases than Bologna and Reykjavík, suggesting that the size of the existing tourism market is not necessarily the leading factor in post-hosting year effects.

Equally uncommon are cases where the number of annual arrivals *decreases* during the ECoC year – as in the case of Glasgow 1990, Madrid 1992 and Luxembourg 1995 (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: Total arrivals per year as % of ECoC arrivals – cities showing decrease during and after the hosting year



Sources: Richards and Rotariu (2011); TourMIS website; Universidade do Minho (2013); Zentrum für Kulturforschung and ICG Culturplan (2011).

It is noteworthy that, of the three cities to suffer such a fall, only one (Glasgow 1990)⁵⁶ experienced a slump of any considerable length of time, with the remaining two (Madrid 1992 and Luxembourg 1995) both exceeding the total number of arrivals reported during the ECoC year within a two-year period.

These trends in arrivals are mirrored, to a great extent, by the available data on total overnight stays (see Table 9). Again, the most common trend, by far, is for host cities to experience an increase in overnights during the ECoC year, followed by a decline in the year immediately after. In total, 17 cities – from Glasgow in 1990, to Tallinn and Turku in 2011 – have exhibited this trend, albeit with some cities experiencing much more turbulent changes than others.

⁵⁶ It is important to note here that 'arrivals' is not the same as 'total visits' (referred to earlier in this Chapter); in this instance, 'arrivals' is concerned with visitors arriving in accommodation, and therefore does not include (for example) day visitors.

Table 9: Total overnights per year as a % of ECoC year

Host city	Year	Phase	ECoC year										
			-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Berlin	1988	Phase 1			74.8%	84.6%	97.0%	100.0%	110.0%	121.1%	128.2%	128.1%	121.9%
Bergen	2000	Phase 2			88.8%	96.1%	99.0%	100.0%	101.2%	98.1%			
Bologna	2000	Phase 2			88.4%	89.9%	89.2%	100.0%	110.2%	106.5%	105.8%	103.2%	106.9%
Porto	2001	Phase 2		92.9%	103.0%	100.0%	93.7%	100.0%	101.5%	104.0%	111.0%	116.1%	
Istanbul	2010	Phase 3	91.7%	88.5%	99.3%	91.5%	90.4%	100.0%	105.9%				
Paris	1989	Phase 1		74.9%	66.8%	70.0%	81.2%	100.0%	104.9%	95.1%	104.2%	89.0%	90.8%
Antwerp	1993	Phase 1					88.9%	100.0%					
Salamanca	2002	Phase 2					82.2%	100.0%					
Lille	2004	Phase 2					70.5%	100.0%					
Essen	2010	Phase 3					88.5%	100.0%					
Guimarães	2012	Phase 3					69.9%	100.0%					
Maribor	2012	Phase 3	81.5%	84.3%	74.9%	79.8%	83.4%	100.0%					
Glasgow	1990	Phase 1		59.5%	62.2%	71.6%	71.6%	100.0%	71.6%	82.4%	78.4%	81.1%	93.2%
Lisbon	1994	Phase 1					89.8%	100.0%	98.0%	99.3%	105.3%	134.2%	126.2%
Copenhagen	1996	Phase 1	80.1%	84.1%	84.8%	89.1%	89.4%	100.0%	98.8%	99.6%	103.4%	112.9%	114.9%
Thessaloniki	1997	Phase 2					86.2%	100.0%	91.7%				
Stockholm	1998	Phase 2	74.0%	80.4%	86.6%	89.8%	91.4%	100.0%	99.8%	103.2%	104.2%	104.0%	107.5%
Weimar	1999	Phase 2	54.7%	65.8%	65.2%	63.4%	64.0%	100.0%	78.1%		69.3%	78.3%	83.5%
Avignon	2000	Phase 2					87.5%	100.0%	98.3%				
Brussels	2000	Phase 2	73.4%	84.6%	90.9%	90.8%	94.9%	100.0%	98.3%	104.2%	106.6%	104.9%	103.4%
Helsinki	2000	Phase 2	74.1%	79.3%	86.2%	87.8%	93.0%	100.0%	98.2%	96.7%	97.2%	96.7%	98.9%
Reykjavík	2000	Phase 2			71.8%	90.2%	97.1%	100.0%	98.3%	102.1%	109.7%	118.3%	126.3%
Graz	2003	Phase 2	67.5%	70.9%	74.6%	74.5%	82.1%	100.0%	86.3%	87.6%	88.7%	93.7%	95.7%
Genoa	2004	Phase 2	80.5%	81.0%	87.2%	90.2%	90.5%	100.0%	91.9%	101.3%	100.0%	107.1%	106.6%

Host city	Year	Phase	ECoC year										
			-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5
Luxembourg GR	2007	Phase 3	93.4%	79.7%	87.4%	90.1%	93.7%	100.0%	96.2%	90.5%	87.6%	94.4%	101.0%
Sibiu	2007	Phase 3			69.5%		82.0%	100.0%	86.7%	72.0%	64.1%		
Linz	2009	Phase 3	87.7%	93.0%	92.8%	91.5%	91.3%	100.0%	93.8%	100.5%	107.4%		
Tallinn	2011	Phase 3	75.7%	75.3%	75.1%	69.1%	82.1%	100.0%	98.8%				
Turku	2011	Phase 3	95.6%	98.6%	98.5%	95.4%	94.7%	100.0%	94.7%				
Amsterdam	1987	Phase 1						100.0%	105.2%	112.3%	126.2%	118.3%	129.1%
Athens	1985	Phase 1						100.0%	62.9%	67.6%	68.1%	70.6%	72.6%
Bruges	2002	Phase 2						100.0%	90.8%	88.0%	87.2%	92.5%	95.8%
Dublin	1991	Phase 1					103.9%	100.0%	111.1%				
Prague	2000	Phase 2					106.7%	100.0%	105.6%				
Vilnius	2009	Phase 3					115.6%	100.0%	108.5%	128.6%	145.6%		
Madrid	1992	Phase 1	105.8%	110.5%	119.5%	122.9%	113.1%	100.0%	93.1%	104.4%	108.5%	114.8%	121.3%
Luxembourg	1995	Phase 1	101.2%	116.2%	118.0%	117.0%	105.1%	100.0%	95.7%	98.7%	106.8%	112.5%	120.7%
Rotterdam	2001	Phase 2				89.4%	174.6%	100.0%	99.3%	81.6%	88.0%		

Sources: Axe Culture (2005); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a; 2004b); Richards and Rotariu (2011); TourMIS website; Universidade do Minho (2013); Zentrum für Kulturforschung and ICG Culturplan (2011).

Few of the cities for which data is available enjoyed an increase in overnight stays during the ECoC year *and* the year after the event. Of the six that did, three were very large cities that already possessed well-developed cultural infrastructure and tourist appeal (Berlin, Paris and Istanbul). Even less common has been the trend for cities to experience a decrease in overnight stays both during the ECoC year and the following year. Out of the 38 ECoCs for which data was gathered on overnight stays, only three have demonstrated this trend, and it is worth stipulating that the fortunes of at least two of these cities (Rotterdam and Madrid) may have been influenced by events elsewhere.⁵⁷ Equally rare are cities that have experienced a decrease in overnight stays during the ECoC year, followed by an increase in overnight stays in the year immediately preceding the event. Again, there appear to be particular explanations, in the case of such cities, for these unusual patterns. The ECoC in Vilnius, for instance, was severely affected by the collapse of Lithuania's main airline at the beginning of 2009, which effectively halved the number of destinations offering flights to Vilnius (from 28 to 14; ECORYS, 2010a).

⁵⁷ In 2000, Belgium and the Netherlands hosted the UEFA European Championship, with Rotterdam hosting a number of matches, including the final. This is likely to have inflated tourist numbers for the city during the year. For Madrid, meanwhile, it is possible that the Summer Olympics in Barcelona in 1992 depressed visitor numbers.

Creative industries

It is important at this point to reiterate that the following Section, in discussing the 'creative industries', is concerned with the use of the term 'creative industries' by bidding/host cities, rather than a fixed single definition determined by the authors of this study. References to the concept of the 'Creative City' are not new, and had been partly explored in the context of Helsinki in 2000 (Landry, 2002: 41). However, until quite recently (in particular, since Essen for the Ruhr 2010), this has not necessarily implied the involvement of creative industry sectors other than the arts world, as became apparent in Liverpool 2008 (Impacts 08, 2009b). As such, caution should be exercised in assessing the long-term results of such attempts; the currently available evidence suggests that there is unlikely to be a strong legacy of creative industries development emerging from the most recent ECoC programmes. In studying creative industries operating in Stavanger during 2008, for instance, Bergsgard and Vassenden (2011: 309) find that:

only one-tenth reported that Stavanger's status as Capital of Culture had fairly or to a large degree resulted in 'new customers', 'new collaborating partners', 'new international contacts', 'better economic situation', 'possibilities to realise new ideas' or '[giving] the company a boost'. ... 'Most notably, two-thirds reported no influence at all.'

Similarly, Impacts 08 (2009: 3) note of creative industries in Liverpool that, whilst there had been a general improvement in the external image of Liverpool, and this had helped to improve overall morale and credibility within the creative industries sector:

[t]he sector felt that, particularly around marketing and profile-raising activities, the Liverpool ECoC had focused on the 'cultural' and 'tourism' offers, but that this did not necessarily extend to *creative industries*.

Relatedly, Campbell (2011) discusses the ambivalence of local creative practitioners in Liverpool to the 2008 programme. Whilst there are clearly good intentions at the bidding stage in this area, then, the extent to which they result in meaningful outcomes for creative practitioners in host cities is less clear. This is perhaps worthy of particular attention, as, in later work, Campbell (2013) notes the apparent emergence of a political discourse that assumes that the link between cultural programmes such as the ECoC and the development of economically successful creative industries has *already* been proven, despite the questionable nature of data to support such a linkage.

With their increased emphasis on the role of creative industries in their ECoC programme, one may expect a greater impact to be felt in Essen for the Ruhr 2010. Essen 2010 (2009b: 124) argues that:

Never before has a Capital of Culture made the creative industry [sic] one of its main themes and put it on an equal footing with publicly funded culture in its programme of events. For the first time, independent creators and artists who (have to) refinance their cultural productions on the market are being acknowledged as a model industry for change through culture.

Essen for the Ruhr 2010 established the ECCE (*European Centre for Creative Economy*), a project intended develop and maintain a legacy from the 2010 programme, and it is clear that major infrastructural changes were planned during 2010:

The old coal mine Zeche Lohberg in Dinslaken is still a gigantic building site at present. It is the foundation of a pilot project unprecedented in Europe. The concept developed by RUHR.2010 with the town of Dinslaken and the mining company RAG for the next 10 years: instead of renaturalising the premises, a development plan for residential and light industrial use is to be worked out for an area the size of the Old Town in Dusseldorf. 'For

the first time a location is being developed in which the creative industries will play a major role. To inject new life into the quarters as soon as possible, we have already started with intermediate use of the area,' says RAG CEO Hans-Peter Noll '[Similarly] the Scheidt'schen Hallen, a former cloth mill, are to be converted into an area 37,000 square metres in size for creative work and life in close touch with nature' (Essen 2010, 2010a).

In the case of Essen for the Ruhr 2010, however, there are also question marks over the long-term impact that will be achieved. Heinze and Hoose (2011) conducted an analysis of the discourse surrounding the concept of cultural and creative industries in media, politics and science, and argue that the expectation of a long-lasting economic impact (which was already claimed to have emerged during 2010) should be regarded more as a case of wishful thinking than of a well-evidenced position. That said, they also note the evidence in wider literature that 'soft factors' such as culture can indeed be relevant for the economic success of a region, but in a less tangible manner than specifically acting as a catalyst for a discrete group of industries.

Similarly, there are question marks over the outcome of intentions to develop creative practice in Tallinn 2011. Lassur *et al.* (2010) discuss the development of policies related to the ECoC and creative industries ('CI'), and their gradual divergence, in the case of Tallinn:

In an early stage, these two processes amplified each other, later on they diverged. One of the important aims in the application for the Capital of Culture was to use it for developing CI in the city, making the environment more attractive and linking CI to the developments in the sectors of economy, information and communication. In the following process, CI was sidelined, cultural and social keywords like variety, multiculturalism, multiactorism gained a central significance. (ibid.: 79)

... According to the first monitoring of Tallinn as the European Capital of Culture 2011 the focus of Tallinn's programme had changed (Report of The First Monitoring and Advisory Meeting 2008). The monitoring revealed that the development of CI had been somewhat neglected and the foundation has mostly focused on creative projects of the cultural programme... (ibid.: 71)

... On one hand it is a natural choice following a sharp decrease in financial means, on the other hand, it is sad to note how little remains of the project which initially enabled such an extensive development of Tallinn's CI (ibid.: 73).

Given their persistent prominence in cultural policy discourse at a global level, it is likely that bidding cities will continue to make the case for the role that the ECoC can play in developing creative industries. However, it is clear, even from the small amount of evidence available on this issue, that for such development to be successful there has to be, at a minimum, a sustained and tangible plan for the role the ECoC is expected to play in such development. Hosting the ECoC will not in and of itself serve to successfully boost this area, and even with sustained and tangible plans, host cities must look beyond the temporal and geographical boundaries of the ECoC year itself in order to meaningfully engage in this area.

5.4. Social impacts

This Section considers the available evidence on social impacts in two sections: common areas of evidence in relation to public engagement (looking at questions of the volume of engagement, and what can be said about who is engaging), and the limited range of information on impacts upon individuals and communities, including the role of volunteer programmes.

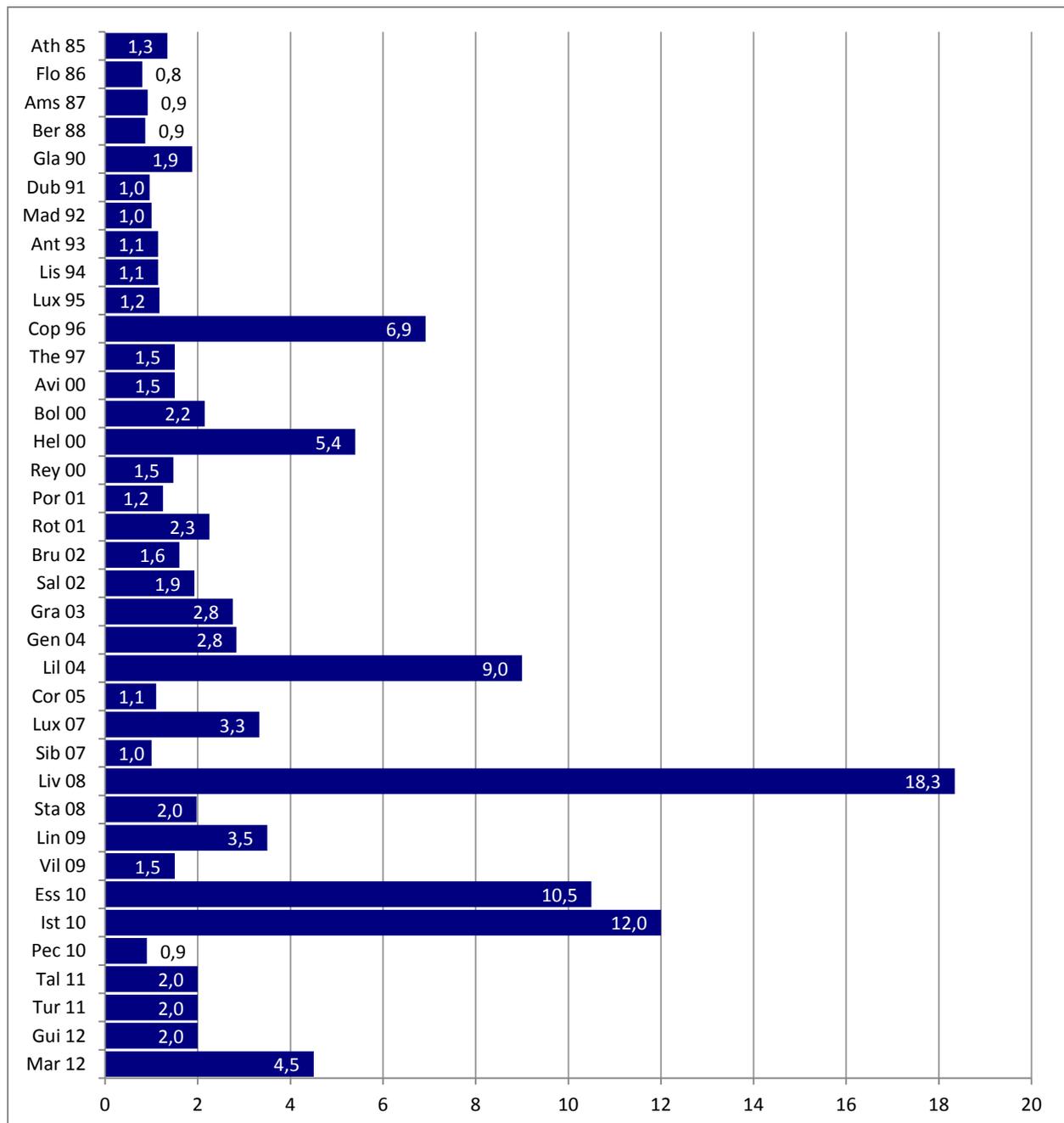
5.4.1. Public engagement

Audiences and participants

Combining data from existing multi-ECOC studies, ex-post evaluations and other individual sources, Figure 26 brings together available information on attendances at ECOC activity, by city.

Whilst the average (mean) attendance figure for ECOCs is just over 2.5 million, the data shows significant outliers, most particularly in the case of Liverpool 2008 (which includes attendance across four years (2004-2008) in reflection of its programming approach with themed years in advance of the hosting year⁵⁸) but also for Essen for the Ruhr 2010 and Istanbul 2010 (both of these reflecting, to some extent, significant programme budgets). From earlier ECOC phases, Copenhagen 1996 stands out significantly from the first 15 years of the initiative (it also had the largest income for ECOCs in that period). What is difficult to adequately ascertain from these figures is the potential impact of different kinds of programming, where large-scale outdoor activities might individually attract very large attendances, whereas venue-focused programmes might play to significantly smaller audiences per event.

⁵⁸ Even without the inclusion of these pre-hosting years, Liverpool 2008 would have shown amongst the largest attendances, with various sources reporting either almost 10 million or 15 million attendances for the hosting year itself.

Figure 26: Volume of attendance at ECoC activity for ECoCs 1985-2012, by ECoC

Sources: Axe Culture (2005); ECORYS (2009a; 2009b; 2010a; 2011c; 2011d; 2012a; 2012b; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Myerscough (1994); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Quinn and O'Halloran (2006)

Attendance amongst populations

Attendance at ECoC activities by local and national populations is usually expressed either as a percentage of the overall population choosing to engage, or as a proportion of the overall attendance at the ECoC from a particular group. Data from a range of cities over a 13-year period is available in this first category, and is presented in Table 10:

Table 10: % of national and city populations engaging with ECoC

ECoC	% of national population	% of city population
Brussels 2000	5%	
Helsinki 2000	25%	70%
Bruges 2002	9%	
Luxembourg GR 2007	40%	60%
Liverpool 2008		66%
Linz 2009	7%	50%
Vilnius 2009		10.7% ⁵⁹
Essen for the Ruhr 2010		61% ⁶⁰
Istanbul 2010		7.6% ⁶¹
Guimarães 2012		74.9% ⁶²
Maribor 2012	11%	53%

Sources: Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Helsinki 2000 (2000a); ECORYS (2009a; 2010b; 2011d; 2013a); Garcia *et al.*, (2010); University of Minho (2013)

With two exceptions, participation from city residents appears to sit within a range of 50-70%. For Istanbul 2010, the sheer size of the city and the limits on the overall possible size of the ECoC probably accounts for the smaller proportion. At a national level, participation rates for Luxembourg GR 2007 seem to be a reflection of the decision to undertake programming across the Greater Region.

Increases in audiences/new audiences

For ECoCs between 1990-1995, Myerscough 1996 (reported in Palmer/Rae Associates 2004a) reported increases in visits to museums/exhibitions of between 10% (Madrid 1992) and 87% (Antwerp 1993); amongst the four cities for which increases were reported for performances, the highest is Luxembourg 1995 with 45%. On the whole, rises reported after this period seem to have been more modest; Weimar 1999 suggested that museum and cultural attraction visiting had doubled (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a), but other increases tend to be smaller, with the exception of a 68% increase in visitors to Tate Liverpool, contributing to Liverpool 2008 (Garcia *et al.*, 2010). In Cork 2005, all the organisations that responded to Quinn and O'Halloran's study reported audience increases, with the size of increase ranging from 14-200% (2006).⁶³

⁵⁹ The data source suggests that "10.7% of residents" engaged, but does not specify whether these were city or national residents.

⁶⁰ This data relates to "survey respondents" and it is not specified what the survey sample is.

⁶¹ The source indicates "950,000 residents accessing culture"; this is expressed as a proportion of 12.5million, as a total population.

⁶² The source denotes this as the proportion of "locals" who engaged.

⁶³ However, the study notes the absence of regular and detailed data on audiences from arts organisations: "In general, ... it can be noted that organisations did not seem to have very in-depth information on their audiences and while several were able to estimate changes in terms of size and composition, it seemed that few regularly undertake comprehensive analyses of their audiences" (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006: 54).

Supporting this broad trend is evidence from a number of recent ECoCs about increases in the volume of cultural attendance by individuals. Luxembourg GR 2007 reported significant proportions of 15-24 year olds attending more cultural events as a result of the ECoC, although it is noted that whilst (amongst the overall population) 45% said they intended to engage more, only 20% did (ECORYS, 2009a). Essen for the Ruhr reported that 53% of those responding to a survey stated that they had attended more frequently than would normally be the case (ECORYS, 2011d); in the case of Istanbul 2010, 70% of residents "report more cultural activity in title year" (*ibid.*); and Turku 2011 reported that 40% of residents "consumed more culture than during previous years" (ECORYS, 2012b).

Attendance/participation from particular groups

There is some limited evidence of audiences who are 'new' to culture altogether, or of audiences trying out something 'new'. In Liverpool 2008:

the percentage of Liverpool residents who claimed to have attended a gallery or museum over the previous year rose between 2005 and 2008 (from 60% and 42% to 69% and 52% respectively). Theatre going also rose in Liverpool in 2008 from 2006 levels (Garcia *et al.*, 2010: 23).

Copenhagen 1996 reported high levels of local engagement, with 87% of the population of the region visiting at least one event, 40% visiting a cultural event they had not tried before, and 50% visiting a place they had not visited before (Davies, 2012). The ex-post evaluation for Stavanger 2008 notes that it was felt audience size was an indicator that those who "would not normally get involved did" (ECORYS, 2009b). Istanbul 2010 reported that 45% of audiences were from "groups not usually participating in culture" (ECORYS, 2011d). Turku 2011 surveyed the population, and asked whether groups with different levels of previous "cultural consumption" had attended activity in the ECoC; 2% of those with no previous consumption, and 4% of those with "light" consumption reported doing so (Turku 2011 Foundation, 2011).

A few cities collected data about the income group or occupation of audiences and participants. Both Porto 2001 and Salamanca 2002 showed significant proportions of their audience coming from director/manager, professional or technical professional occupations, although Porto 2001 also had more than a quarter of its audience from service personnel (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004b). Porto 2001 also demonstrated that a significant proportion of its audience (27.3%) were in the income bracket of up to €5,000 per year (*ibid.*).

Luxembourg GR 2007 showed broadly similar characteristics, with those in managerial and professional occupations "strongly represented", and a growth in audiences earning more than €3,000 per month (Luxembourg GR 2007, 2008). The research notes that "this largely reflects the profile of attendance at cultural events in general" (*ibid.*: 40), indicating the way in which ECoCs are connected to wider socio-cultural trends. The ex-post evaluation of Luxembourg GR 2007 seeks to differentiate between the types of activities which are undertaken by these ECoCs and certain outcomes: "However, the social dimension of the 2007 & 2008 ECOC has consisted primarily of widening access to culture, rather than of cultural inclusion or social inclusion *per se.*" (ECORYS, 2009a: viii)

Liverpool 2008 also demonstrated a smaller proportion of its audience from C2DE groups than would be representative of the population (Garcia *et al.*, 2010). On the whole, data on the level of education of audiences and participants across different ECoCs (the small number for whom some data is available) is similar to that of occupation and income groups.

Data on the age of participants is both very partial, but also not comparable between most cities due to different approaches to reporting information in this area. Data for Rotterdam 2001, Porto 2001 and Salamanca 2002 reveals a relatively young audience for Porto 2001 (33.4% under 24), in comparison to Rotterdam 2001 (with 55.4% of the audience over 40) (Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004b). Across other ECoCs, Bruges 2002 reported the largest age category to be 25-54 (*ibid.*); Liverpool 2008 had 11% of its audience aged between 16-24, and 13% aged 65+ (Garcia *et al.*, 2010); Guimarães 2012 had 20% of its audience at younger than 25, and 62% under 44 (University of Minho, 2013).

Participation by different ethnic groups is little reported on in the main sources available to this study. The Palmer/Rae Associates study notes data from a study on Rotterdam 2001 demonstrating lower engagement from the local ethnic minority populations, and notes that “mainstream cultural events often had difficulty attracting ethnic minority audiences” (2004b), a challenge which also seems to have been the case for Liverpool 2008 (Garcia *et al.*, 2010). By comparison, Luxembourg GR 2007 is reported as achieving a level of engagement with Portuguese residents broadly proportionate to their share of the population (Luxembourg GR 2007, 2008).

In terms of gender, Luxembourg GR 2007 reported a 50:50 split between male and female participants (Luxembourg GR 2007, 2008). Data available for both Turku 2011 (Turku 2011, 2011) and Guimarães 2012 (University of Minho, 2013) suggests a bias in favour of women.

Liverpool 2008 reported an audience of whom 7% were disabled, significantly lower than the proportion of the population in the city or nationally (Garcia *et al.*, 2010).

5.4.2. Impacts on individuals and communities

The relative absence of programme-wide data on either individual or community impacts from ECoC programmes makes it difficult to appreciate the value of work undertaken in this area. It is perhaps worth noting at this stage the range of critiques of approaches to engaging communities, which is discussed in Chapter 6. On a practical level, the example of Avignon suggests a problem that may be more widespread when considering the question of long-term social impact from the ECoC. Ingram (2010: 22) considers the short-term nature of specific projects within Avignon’s planning and notes:

the failure [of a specific project] to last points to the value of planning for long term projects to extend beyond the ECOC year. While planners have acknowledged the value of long term projects relating to economic growth and tourism [...] it seems equally important to ensure the ongoing vitality of initiatives devoted to the civic goals of the ECOC.

This Section briefly discusses examples where data that considers issues of public perception within a city, and what evidence of individual projects and schemes reveals, is available across ECoCs.

Public perceptions

Section 5.2.2. (‘Image and sense of place’) has already provided a summary discussion about the impact of the ECoC on local perceptions. Here, the study offers a closer look into specific examples, placing more emphasis on the qualitative angles and contextual factors, so as to add another layer onto the broader trends identified earlier in the Chapter – this time from a community engagement point of view.

Lück (2010) makes a case for the positive effects of (media) attention during the bidding process on local perceptions of the city with specific regard to the failed bid of the German city of Görlitz (candidate city for 2010), arguing more broadly that the application process can be beneficial to local populations if seen as a long-term process – i.e. one that aims to achieve goals not merely in terms of economic and tourism benefits, but in terms of the mobilisation and activation of local civil society and the strengthening of identity and identification with the region (Lück, 2010: 66).

In the case of Liverpool 2008, significant data concerning local perceptions of the ECoC exists. Across four different areas in Liverpool, reported participation in some aspect of the Liverpool ECoC in 2008 was 66%, with quite significant variance between different areas (Impacts 08, 2010b: 15).⁶⁴ When asked “what was the best thing about European Capital of Culture”, the largest number of respondents identified things that might be termed ‘regeneration’ benefits: “buildings”, “city changing”, “made city better”, “investment”, “clean city”, and “business boost”. Other popular ‘themes’ around which responses might be gathered included: ‘image change’ (with responses such as “shone a good light on us” and “brought Liverpool to the forefront”); the increased number of tourists visiting Liverpool; the events programme; a sense of civic and community pride (with responses such as “bringing communities together”, “proud of area”, “buzz generated” and “lifted spirits”); and shopping, particularly the new Liverpool ONE shopping facilities (*ibid.* 16).

Residents in these four areas were also able to identify negative responses to the Liverpool ECoC, which clustered around four concerns: the perception that there were no benefits from the ECoC; concerns over value for money; perceptions that those benefits that had taken place had been concentrated on the city centre, with no impact on their own neighbourhood; and a lack of participation in any of the Liverpool 2008 programme. The question “will money be wasted?” was posed in each year of the survey: in 2007, 48% of respondents said that money spent on the ECoC would be wasted; by 2009, 23% of respondents agreed with the statement. In 2007, 37% of people agreed that “there won’t be things for ordinary people”; in 2009, this had fallen to 21% (Impacts 08, 2010b: 17-8).

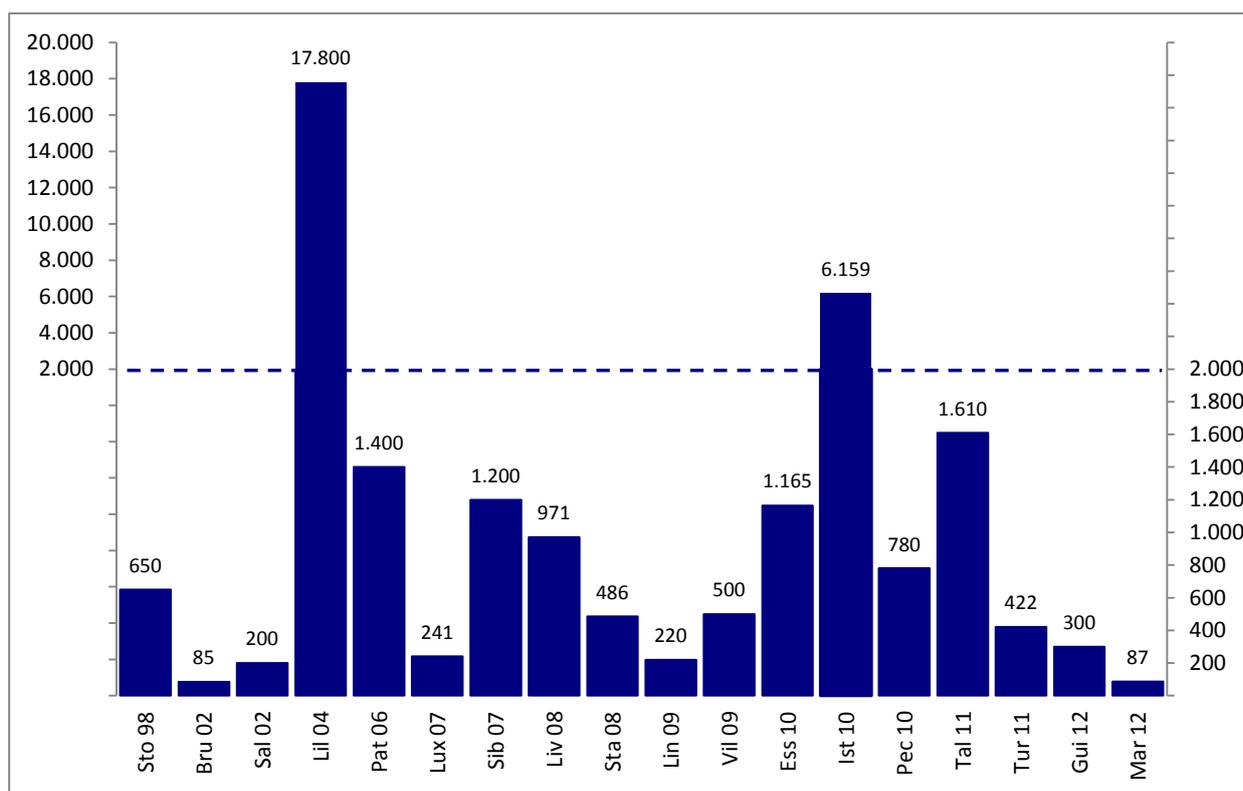
Residents retained some scepticism concerning whether “everyone will [sic] gain from Capital of Culture”, with 56% of respondents in 2009 stating that only the city centre would benefit. Confidence that the Liverpool ECoC would make a difference in their neighbourhoods remained below 50% in 2009 (Impacts 08, 2010b: 43).

Ahead of Weimar’s 1999 festival year, the expectations of local residents were not necessarily that high. In a survey of March 1998 (Roth and Frank, 2000: 228-9), 79% of respondents agreed that the event was likely to benefit the city; yet 63% were not expecting the event to have an impact on their lives, and 51% felt that the event would create little benefit for others living in Weimar. These attitudes were combined with the view that the event was organised primarily for the benefit of tourists (72%), and that the money spent on the year could be better spent in other ways (55%). However, a further survey, in September 1999, found that many of the fears of local people did not materialise. These brief examples demonstrate some of the complex perceptions of local people regarding ECoC experiences.

Volunteer programmes

Volunteer programmes are a key element of many ECoCs, as a route and mechanism for engaging residents and communities. The analysis in Figure 27 offers a brief overview of recent ECoCs, and gives an indication of the size and scale of volunteer engagement.

⁶⁴ The ‘local area studies’ project, part of the *Impacts08* programme, undertook research into the views of Liverpool residents from four distinct and different areas of the city. A survey was undertaken in 2007, 2008 and 2009 to recognise any changes in the communities’ awareness and experiences from before the ECoC year itself, during and after.

Figure 27: Number of volunteers by ECoC, ECoCs 1998-2012

Sources: Axe Culture (2005); Bruges 2002 (2003); ECORYS (2009b; 2010b; 2011d; 2012b; 2013a); Garcia *et al.* (2010); Luxembourg GR 2007 (2008); Pallikarakis (2006); Palmer *et al.* (2012); Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b); Stavanger 2008 (2009); Turku 2011 Foundation (2012)

Whilst the number of volunteers engaged in different ECoCs varies significantly, it is worth noting that the type of volunteering opportunity and programme also tends to vary from ECoC to ECoC.⁶⁵

There are some positive examples of volunteer programmes engaging communities and individuals, and producing a range of positive benefits for those groups:

- In the case of Bruges 2002, which ran a 'Public Network' through which people could volunteer, a survey of those who engaged with cultural activity via the network (through group visits organised by network members) showed high levels of satisfaction with the organisation of the network itself and with the cultural activity with which they had engaged; respondents also indicated that they had met new people through network-organised visits (Bruges 2002, 2003).
- In Liverpool 2008, volunteers reported positive personal experiences, with 64.8% of respondents feeling that they had 'shown visitors how great Liverpool is', while 44.9% had 'contributed to the local community'. Other perceived benefits included: meeting people; civic pride; learning new things and developing skills; and improving individual confidence (Impacts 08, 2010a).

⁶⁵ The Axe Culture (2005) document suggests that the 17,800 were 'ambassadors', and that there were 200 people who volunteered throughout the year.

- Istanbul 2010 ran an “extensive volunteer programme” (ECORYS, 2011c: viii), with 3-day training courses and some volunteers receiving additional training to support them in engaging with foreign visitors to the city. 901 volunteers eventually took part, 57% of whom were volunteering for the first time (ECORYS, 2011c: 81, quoting data from Ernst & Young 2011, Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Culture Impact Assessment Report).

Negative impacts

Discourses relating to social impacts, the relationship between the ECoC and residents and communities, and the ownership of the ECoC (both practically and figuratively), provide a rich area of critique about the ECoC and its purposes. This richness sits against the relative paucity of evidence of the actual effects (positive or negative) of much of the activity that has been designed to create benefit in these areas. Issues raised include tensions in attempting to change a city’s image to reflect what tourists might prefer, rather than the needs of local inhabitants (Lanoue *et al.*, 2011). Examples of such negative consequences are, according to the authors: the expropriation of residents from targeted buildings; the rerouting of traffic flows to enable infrastructural hallmarks; the forming of financial cartels (e.g. to enable such infrastructural investments), which may result in “vicious infighting as players jockey for position in the newly-defined financial and political networks”; and dramatic increases in rents and real estate prices in newly gentrified historic city centres (*ibid.*: 144-5).

Frey *et al.* (2012) examine regional Eurobarometer data dating to 2002 relating to “life satisfaction”. They conclude that in regions hosting an ECoC, average “life satisfaction” is 2.94, compared to an overall average of 3.05. Regression analysis finds that:

When a region hosts a European Capital of Culture, the life satisfaction of the local population decreases roughly 0.07 on the four point scale. The size of the effect equals one fourth of the effect of being unemployed (compared to having an employment) and thus is quite sizeable (*ibid.*: 7-8).

The authors indicate that possible explanations for this decrease are factors similar to those found in connection with other mega-events:

The increased number of tourists causes, noise, disturbance, overcrowding of public places and means of transportation and pushes up prices. Furthermore, a reallocation of public funds towards activities connected with the event takes place, which does not necessarily reflect the preferences of the local population. A further explanation is suggested by Hall and Hodges (1998) whose analysis emphasizes the effects of mega-sporting events on the housing market and land values. They claim that the building of event-related infrastructure can involve housing relocation because of the compulsory purchase of land for clearance and building. It can also lead to a rise in rents and house prices, negatively affecting people with low incomes living in these areas (*ibid.*: 8).

Their analysis also finds “that there are no positive (or negative) legacy effects on average happiness of the local population” (*ibid.*: 16).

It is worth noting that these examples are part of a discourse reflecting, particularly, upon the challenges of ownership of the ECoC, and which in some cases links to wider discussions about the relationships between other kinds of ‘regeneration’ and urban development activities and their local communities.

5.5. Political and policy impacts

This Section considers the political and policy impacts of the ECoC, where there is available evidence to support discussion and analysis in these areas. The proposition that the ECoC might have effects on the political system of a city (as opposed to the cultural system) brings forward complex questions concerning how we might understand the intersection between politics/policy-making and the role of culture in a city (and the discourse concerning this intersection), and to what extent these might be understood to be either 'cultural' impacts or 'political/policy' impacts.

Three areas have been identified as the most relevant discussions concerning political and policy impacts for the purposes of this study:

- Cultural policy and governance developments
- Evidence of culture in other policy areas
- Any evidence of effects on wider governance and political activity as a result of the ECoC process

The first two of these areas also have direct effects on the cultural system of a city, and so it should be understood that the location of this discussion in the study is not seeking to obscure those effects; necessarily, any attempt to take a holistic view of impact areas will find different activities overlapping and fitting into multiple impact categories.

Political and policy aspects of an ECoC are a complex and contradictory area to study, and thus far there has been limited research in this area. In existing research, where there has been much more detailed consideration of governance issues (e.g. the special issue of *Town Planning Review* edited by Sykes 2011) the authors have tended not to focus on comparisons that would provide the basis for models of political impact, as comparative research is more concerned with social, economic and cultural aspects of the ECoC. Where political and policy aspects are considered, this Section considers, on the one hand, a range of discernible and, in some cases, demonstrable effects on the politics and governance of ECoC hosts cities. On the other hand, the Section reveals a strong insistence – sometimes from the same authors seeking to demonstrate the political effects of ECoC – that the capture and measurement of political effects is difficult or perhaps impossible.

This complexity is furthered by the lack of consensus on the nature of a 'political' or 'policy' effect. For the purposes of this Section, 'political effects' will be understood by using a twofold definition. First, it refers to specific effects of the ECoC on the governance arrangements of a host city or its surrounding context. This is seen in a range of examples outlined in the Section below, whereby hosting the ECoC has required the creation of new administrative forms, or has caused the exacerbation of existing tensions between local, regional, national and European tiers of public administration, civil society or the private sector. Second, and almost entirely absent from discussions of the ECoC, are the electoral effects of hosting the ECoC, whether in terms of bolstering the position of an incumbent party or politician(s), or causing a change of regime. There has been little to no specific research on this issue, partially due to the low salience of cultural policy within European political science research, but also because of the traditionally low level of electoral importance attached to cultural policy by voters and governments (Gray and Wingfield, 2011). Thus, political effects should be seen as synonymous with electoral effects, as well as with governance effects.

Overall, there are thus two core themes in the area of political effects: the nature of the ECoC as a catalyst; and the methodological difficulties associated with assessing long-term political effects. There is also, as a subsidiary issue within the latter theme, a concern with the uneven distribution of political effects of hosting the ECoC. This Section considers these areas, and the current evidence and discourse.

The concept of ECoC as a catalyst

A series of texts employ the concept of the ECoC as a 'catalyst', some (Cox and O'Brien, 2012) using the term, and others (Anderson and Holden, 2008) employing different wording to explore the same concept. The focus on the ECoC as a catalyst is grounded in the idea that either longer-term governance projects – for example, urban regeneration in Lille (Paris and Baert, 2011) – or shorter-term coalitions for bidding and delivery of ECoC – notably in Liverpool (O'Brien, 2011), Istanbul (Gumus, 2010) and Genoa (Sacco and Blessi, 2007) – will crystallise around their respective ECoC hosting processes as a focal point to bring together a level of administration associated with successful European city governance.⁶⁶ In this respect, the proposition appears to be one that connects the governance of cultural activities to the wider city governance.

One example of the longer-term political impact of the ECoC is in the *UK City of Culture* (UKCC) programme. UKCC is the most obvious expression of a catalytic aspect of the ECoC. The bidding guidance from the UK's Ministry of Culture uses the specific term 'catalyst', and speeches by policy-makers employ references to the possibility of hosts making step changes as a result of the catalytic nature of UKCC's aim that host cities develop a cultural programme that will generate social and economic impacts and a demonstrable legacy.

Challenges and competing agendas

The governance model for the ECoC takes a range of forms, and could be considered a clear indicator of a direct cultural policy output from the ECoC. This is in keeping with the disparate political arrangements of potential host cities, as long-term EU member countries, as well as accession and non-EU nations, can be hosts for the ECoC. In Palonen's (2010) work, the contrasting demands of European, national, regional and local levels of governance are illustrated by reference to ECoC politics. The author notes that it is important to recognise the potential complementarity of agendas across multi-level governance layers but, most crucially, to be aware of the often contradictory and competing approaches of disparate governance stakeholders. Palonen (2010), along with writers focusing on the former Soviet Bloc nations of Central and Eastern Europe (Crisafulli, 2011; Irmer, 2010; Lahdesmaki, 2011), describe how differing levels within governance structures may aim for cultural expressions that represent nation state development through the assertion of national identities – that is, as opposed to the construction of a pan-European cultural consciousness at the root of the European Commission's aims for the ECoC.

Gumus (2010), for example, outlines how the creation of an organisation in Istanbul 2010, to coordinate both NGOs and civil authorities, ended up becoming another bureaucratic organisation within the layers of that city's multi-level governance. Rather than coordinating the governance framework, this approach made cross-city coordination, especially on the level of planning, more complex. The narrative of Istanbul 2010's governance arrangements is presented within an interview, which means there needs to be caution when interpreting the narrative of a negative impact. For example, it may not be robust enough to respond to Evans' (2005) concerns, even though they are based on considerable expertise.

Amongst the academic discourse on the relationship between culture and city policy in the context of the ECoC, concern relating to the 'appropriation' of culture in other policy agendas is evident. Hitters (2000), writing on Rotterdam's 2001 ECoC, also draws attention to how artistic communities (as part of the civil society with which government agencies seek to engage) had aims for the ECoC that did not entirely fit within the conception of

⁶⁶ The notion of the ECoC as a 'catalyst' is not linked solely to governance models, and is discussed elsewhere in this Study in respect of areas like economic development.

culture held by Rotterdam's political organisation. Similar narratives are found in Cork 2005 (Keohane, 2006; O'Callaghan and Linnehan, 2007), Liverpool 2008 (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004), Istanbul 2010 (Gumus, 2010) and Glasgow 1990 (Mooney, 2004). Indeed, for Miles (2005), the idea of deploying art for political projects centred on urban regeneration altogether misses the true function of culture, which (as each of the above authors also asserts) has a critical function in challenging, opposing and overturning existing social and economic relations.

The potential clash of agendas that takes the form of competing cultural expressions is made more likely as a result of the funding structures surrounding the ECoC. The ECoC only has a comparatively small, direct European grant associated with it, leading to the need to leverage in other funds from sponsorship, civil society and sub-European levels of government. In Pécs, Farago (2012) identifies how an excessive focus on attracting EU funding, particularly as part of the use of structural funds, excluded a range of policy actors, local communities and cultural practices. This point is backed up by ZUK's (2011) evaluation of Essen for the Ruhr's 2010 ECoC, which asserts the need for more resources to be devoted to building governance networks that will be sustainable in the years following ECoCs.

The potential opportunities and tensions between region-, nation- and Europe-building projects find expression in a range of non-cultural programmes. There are two useful illustrations that are concerned with the explicit governance arrangements required to reconcile complex policy areas. Andres (2011b) describes the Marseille-Provence regional coalition as an example of the creation of collaboration, bringing together a range of sub-regional governmental organisations – albeit as one that, on its own, would not be able to find the solution to longstanding issues associated with urban regeneration in the city. Second, in the example of Lille's urban regeneration, Paris and Baert (2011) discuss how that city drew on national and regional urban regeneration programmes to couple urban policy to the delivery of what is currently broadly considered a successful example of an ECoC-hosting process (Sacco and Blessi, 2007).

There has been attention to this area by the small number of authors focusing on the governance and politics of the ECoC. In the view of these authors, the coalition-building process associated with the potential of the ECoC to be a catalyst for a range of long-term effects runs the risk of marginalising specific members of the population. This plays out particularly with regard to urban regeneration agendas, as tensions between the aims of development agencies and the aims of cultural project leaders become clear. In the case of Marseille-Provence 2013 (Andres, 2011a), there were distinct phases of governance development around disused sites that became cultural spaces, but the cultural regeneration of disused spaces was mainly brought within the demands of mainstream local governance. This is in contrast to how the diverse (and often marginal) cultural actors in the city might have laid claim to these spaces.

The conflicts over cultural spaces can be seen in other cities, such as the experiences of Liverpool 2008 (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004) and Glasgow 1990 (Mooney, 2004). There are differences, as the relationships between artistic elites, government officials and grassroots cultural organisations take specific forms in each place. However, these examples suggest an important counterpoint to more structural governance analysis. Much as with Cox and O'Brien's (2012) discussion, the importance of key intermediaries is clear in Marseille-Provence 2013 – this is to say that individuals, as well as the institutions of which they are part, play an important role in governance transformations, whether by enabling or constraining the catalytic effects of hosting the ECoC. What is most crucial to note is how these intermediaries are often drawn from existing positions of power within local elites, rather than reflecting broader community representation.

Mooney's (2004) work on Glasgow 1990 represents a common strand of thought within opposition to the ECoC, which argues that the ECoC is both spatially and economically exclusionary, whilst, most importantly, also being part of a broader tendency towards cultural exclusion and the erasure of diverse voices that may be represented in a cultural event focused on a particular place. This danger is seen in Cork's 2005 ECoC, as both Keohane (2006) and O'Callaghan and Linnehan (2007) outline how the marginalisation and cultural exclusion of local art communities and cultures occurred for the benefit of property development. The multi-level governance perspective is seen in Keohane's (2006) description of how, in a non-capital city, local elites construct themselves through forms of subaltern cultural capital, and of how their decision to include or exclude visions of the city's various cultural practices and histories as the ECoC is tied to the interests of global consumer capitalism. Even where political actors may be sensitive, as in Lille 2004 (Colomb, 2011), the benefits of cultural programmes are often unable to overcome deeper structural inequalities, such as those with a more social and economic aspect. Indeed, for many local populations, the experience of the ECoC may ultimately be one of continued exclusion from the decision-making process surrounding the ECoC itself, the political process surrounding the ECoC, and any associated urban development.

A point of focus

Notwithstanding the risks of competing agendas clashing, it is clear that the need to win and then deliver an ECoC offers a unique opportunity to policy-makers to galvanise government, civil society and the private sector around an agenda that may be interpreted very differently by differing groups. In the case of Anderson and Holden's (2008) discussion, work grounded in theories drawn from cultural studies complements the political science reading of the political effects in Liverpool. Anderson and Holden's use of the term 'hope' suggests the ECoC is capable of providing a central point of focus, around which different agendas and requirements can coalesce, creating space for a particular kind of policy and political alliance. These are in terms of the build up to the ECoC, including the bidding process; the ECoC's specifically cultural focus; and its use as a regeneration tool in a variety of Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and continental settings (Jones and Wilks-Heeg, 2004; Mooney, 2004; O'Callaghan, 2012; Paris and Baert, 2011). The conflation of these aspects, which is an inevitable part of hosting the ECoC, offers the right mix of circumstance, demands and possibilities to sustain political projects, collations and networks. Liverpool 2008 and Lille 2004 thus offer sharply contrasting, but also clearly complementary, versions of how a multi-level governance network might be made operational by the ECoC.

Future governance, funding and strategies for culture

The participants of the conference celebrating 25 years of the ECoC pointed out the creation of many organisations, structures and networks as a lasting impact of the event. Examples given included: the permanent structure for cross-border cultural cooperation resulting from Luxembourg GR 2007; the creation of a framework for discussion between the 53 mayors of the Ruhr Area, as a result of Essen for the Ruhr 2010; and the continuous cultural cooperation between the 12 bidding cities in the UK (European Commission, 2010: 8).

The ex-post evaluation for 2007 and 2008 ECoCs notes that, despite the disbandment of delivery vehicles and the discontinuity of experience resulting from this:

the ECoC has brought about important shifts within the governance of culture within their respective cities. Not only is much of the experience retained (with many individuals remaining involved in the cultural governance of the city, having returned to their previous employers, e.g. municipalities, or taken up new posts, e.g. with cultural institutions); ECoC have also led to the introduction of new ways of working, new partnerships, and new

strategies...Overall then, the ECOC have seen significant changes in the way cultural activities are brought about which have established new platforms for activity which are likely to be sustained into the future (ECORYS, 2009a: viii).

These propositions for new governance have led in some cases to propositions for new policies at national levels. The clearest example of this is the establishment by the UK government of the *UK City of Culture* competition, and the references to Liverpool 2008 made to justify this new development (Campbell, 2011; 2013; Cox & O'Brien, 2013).

Several cities show the benefits of increased investment in the arts and cultural sector beyond the ECoC year itself. For example, Copenhagen 1996 saw funding after the year maintained by the majority of local authorities, with a small number reducing funding, but a larger number increasing it. A new state fund for "interdisciplinary art support" was established, and there is a sense that the ECoC "chang[ed]...the perspective of cultural investment locally" (Davies, 2012). In Cork 2005, this included some specific legacy funding (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006). The ex-post evaluation for the 2007 and 2008 ECoCs notes that (across those ECoCs) in some cases "public authorities have provided ongoing funding" (ECORYS, 2009a: viii). Funding and commitment specifically to support tourism related to culture is noted in the ex-post evaluation of Essen for the Ruhr 2010 (ECORYS, 2011c: iv), as well as commitments in relation to annual budgets from the Ruhr Regional Association; and match-funding was forthcoming from the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (ECORYS, 2011c: 41).

In the case of Cork 2005, however, it appears that funding on its own is not necessarily enough. O'Callaghan states that:

...Despite the bestowal of five 'legacy grants' (each worth 50,000) to four initiatives and one organisation launched during 2005, the fact that Cork 2005 Ltd. was disbanded in 2006 after providing groups with once-off funding meant that the potential for sustainable impacts were severely limited (O'Callaghan, 2012: 199).

By comparison, Turku 2011 specifically planned for both funding and strategic support to continue beyond the end of 2011:

A working group with the aim to develop sustainability strategy was established in spring 2011. Turku 2011 Foundation will continue funding cultural activities until 2013 and providing support for networks and associations, thus contributing to the implementation of the sustainability strategy. In addition, some marketing activities will also continue beyond 2011 in order to share experience from the title year (ECORYS, 2012a: vii).

Liverpool 2008 was also noted by ex-post evaluators as demonstrating strong plans and potential in respect of long-term strategies and funding for culture beyond the year itself:

This includes the development of a new Culture Strategy up to 2012, the maintenance of funding for cultural organisations at pre-2008 levels, plans to expand their events and public art programme into 2009 and beyond, drawing upon European funding from the North West Development Agency (NWDA), and through the continuation of their neighbourhoods and schools engagement programme. Additionally, Liverpool's consortium of large cultural organisations, the LARC, has successfully accessed a number of national arts-based grants (e.g. Thrive) to deliver additional projects from 2009, as a consequence of strengthening partnership working within their consortium during 2008 (ECORYS, 2009a: 65).

Other cities, such as Linz 2009, indicated that some consideration was being given to drawing up strategic guidelines (presumably for culture) following the ECoC (ECORYS, 2010a).

Despite some ECoCs building in both investment and strategic approaches beyond the ECoC year, there are recent ECoCs for whom further commitments were still to take place – for example, Pécs 2010, about whom the ex-post evaluators noted:

The development of the city's cultural sector remains a high political priority at local level and there is a strong support for a city development strategy based on culture. However, the new cultural strategy for the city remains to be developed and the financial support for that strategy (and the projects therein) remains to be confirmed (ECORYS, 2011c: vi).

In the case of other ECoCs, significant strategic change is not evident. Istanbul 2010, for instance, is characterised as a “‘missed opportunity’ in terms of changing the model of cultural governance in the city” (*ibid.*: viii).

One of the findings from the study looking at Cork 2005 and the effects of the ECoC upon the cultural sector was the way in which the profile and focus of the year had enabled respondents from within the sector to have the confidence to engage in discussions about the sector, and what its role was in the city (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006). Quinn specifically frames this and other findings in the context of enhancing the 'sense of well-being' of the cultural sector and those working within it (Quinn, 2010).

The Impacts 08 final study notes, in respect of Liverpool 2008, that:

Culture is more widely accepted as a driver for economic change, health and social inclusion. The cultural sector took the opportunity to play a larger role in the city's leadership in the lead up to 2008, demonstrating that they had a contribution to make across a number of city agendas. As a result, one year on, there is ongoing commitment to ensure that the sector continues to contribute in areas as diverse as community safety, tourism development, health or city centre management (Garcia *et al.*, 2010: 59).

Again, the degree to which this benefit has remained the case in ECoCs is difficult to comment upon. The broader appreciation of this has been noted in the wake of Helsinki 2000. Mazzucotelli suggests that Finnish inhabitants and local authorities started to consider culture itself – art, music and design but also food – as a key element for quality of life and competitiveness. The author goes on to indicate that people, moreover, now have a broader understanding of the concept of culture, and the city itself has inherited a vibrant cultural city life clearly visible in the rich palimpsest of concerts and festivals organised for the duration of the summer each year (Mazzucotelli, 2005).

The findings of the ex-post evaluation of 2007 and 2008 suggest that “in many cases, the ECOC has ushered in a new set of relationships between local municipalities and cultural operators, and pushed culture up the agenda of local political debate” (European Commission, 2009: 8).

6. CHALLENGES AND AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

KEY FINDINGS

Challenges to the ECoC Programme have evolved and changed over time. Some common challenges in respect of the early editions have been mostly overcome due to new regulations and experience gained; others, meanwhile, remain entrenched, and new challenges appear in the context of new regulations, changing world trends and heightened expectations.

Early challenges (mostly overcome) have included:

- Lack of planning or poor sustainability approaches
- Inconsistent communications, poor marketing and branding strategies

Ongoing challenges include:

- Clarity of vision and adequacy to specific environments to ensure local ownership
- Balancing cultural, social and economic agendas
- Addressing social inequalities: ensuring that all city neighbourhoods benefit

Two of the most complex and long-standing challenges for the Programme, which, if properly addressed, also offer the strongest areas of opportunity, are the capacity to fulfil its European Dimension and develop appropriate knowledge-transfer mechanisms.

European Dimension

- Host cities have often struggled to fully understand or implement the European Dimension requirement, despite formal efforts to specify criteria and guidelines.
- A recurrent issue is a disparity between stated ECoC objectives (at the bid stage, in mission statements) and their eventual programme implementation.
- An added complication is that it is difficult to capture the most successful examples, because the mechanisms used to explain this dimension are often inadequate.
- With the expansion of formal EU-funded monitoring and evaluation exercises, there are greater opportunities to identify limitations early on and help cities address them.
- However, local agendas keep gaining momentum and tend to dominate public debate.
- To change this trend, careful reflection on the recurrent challenges and new opportunities is required. Three aspects stand out: opening up the debate so that local hosts and publics understand European and local identity issues as part of the same conversation, rather than as opposed ends of their programme; ensure greater distinction between the ECoC and other domestic / national events of a similar format; refine the monitoring process further, and develop more sophisticated (qualitative as well as quantitative) data capture techniques that can help better tell the story.

Knowledge-transfer

- There is limited evidence of formal knowledge transfer and exchanges between event hosts; however, the few available studies offering comparative ECoC findings are used extensively – in particular, the European Commission-funded Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 report, which is mentioned by over a third of ECoC studies between 2005 and 2012.
- Most ECoC organisers highlight that the most important reference for them are direct contacts with previous hosts; and informal networks of prior and upcoming ECoC organisers are valued as a key contact point for first-hand experience.
- Since 2005, there has been a marked effort to conduct regular evaluation, and published materials have grown exponentially. This provides an opportunity for an improved evidence base. However, the lack of continuity and coherence in respective city evaluation approaches and the absence of a common data capture framework diminish the quality and usability of such material. This is a priority area for the Commission to address.

6.1. Introduction

This Chapter is organised in two distinct parts. In the first part of the Chapter, discussion focuses on challenges faced by most ECoC cities in the past, as well as in present times. It addresses the question:

- What are the main obstacles ECoC hosts faced in the past, and what similarities and differences can be identified?

The second part of the Chapter, meanwhile, is dedicated to two areas that have remained difficult since the origins of the Programme, but, if properly addressed, may open up areas of opportunity. These are the ongoing difficulties in exploring a 'European Dimension' to the ECoC, and the necessity to provide platforms for knowledge-transfer.

Research questions related to the European Dimension are:

- What opportunities and challenges exist for the ECoC to have a genuine European Dimension in respective host cities?
- Is there any clearly discernible impact of the ECoC initiative on cultural life and exchange at the European level?

Research questions related to knowledge-transfer are:

- Did the Palmer/Rae Associates study of 2004 have any significant impact in terms of policy-making and the organisation of later ECoCs?
- Have any 'best practices' been developed and used outside Europe for similar cultural events or initiatives which might be meaningfully applied?

6.2. Common challenges

As with almost every other area of enquiry in this study, key challenges within the ECoC Programme have evolved over time and do not apply equally to every host city. However, it is possible to identify some key commonalities and trends over time. Many of these challenges also apply to other large one-off cultural events, which is an indication of the professionalisation and maturity of the ECoC Programme; however, for the majority, there are specificities particular to the ECoC designation, given its current status as a year-long event with far a broader scope than established city or genre arts festivals. Notably, it is apparent that as the Programme has matured over time, so has the nature of related challenges – evolving from basic issues largely mastered at the present time, into more complex underlying issues and the pressure of higher expectations that are, understandably, also harder to meet in full.

Overall, challenges can be organised against the same set of areas identified within Chapter 4, thus suggesting that factors that can be seen as a source of success for a given host city, may also be considered as comprising a challenge, either for the same city at a different point in time, or for other ECoC cities. These are:

- The coherence and ownership of vision
- Clarity and sustainability of event and physical planning
- Communication, marketing and branding challenges
- Local engagement issues
- Governance issues
- Finance issues

6.2.1. Coherence and ownership of vision

Coherence and ownership of vision is an area that has improved considerably since the inception of the Programme. While most of the early ECoC editions did not develop a special vision for the ECoC (tending, rather, to showcase what was already established and widely recognised in their locality), since the 1990s, ECoC hosts have become more sophisticated and ambitious in their ECoC proposals (see Chapter 3), in part due to greater demands for specificity by the European Commission.⁶⁷ However, with new regulations and pressures, new challenges have emerged as well. The most common challenges to attempts at developing an ECoC vision are as follows:

- Failure to set and sustain a vision or mission statement from the beginning
- The issue of 'authenticity' and how to ensure local ownership
- The wide range of goals and their potentially contradictory nature

Failure to set out a vision of the host city's ECoC journey from an early stage

The importance of ECoC cities mapping out a clear vision for their ECoC journey is noted in a considerable proportion of published material, and was reiterated by most of the contributors to the study's first expert workshop (ICC Workshop I, April 2013). An important point raised in this regard was that this necessity was accentuated due to the excessive emphasis on providing specific programming detail at the bidding stage. Workshop contributors claimed that bidding cities would spend so much time identifying specific areas of programming to illustrate their capacity to deliver, that they would fail to spend the time required to reflect on why such activity was relevant in the first place. For instance, Beyazit and Tosun (2006: 10) indicate that their analysis of Istanbul 2010 reveals "a lack of vision-oriented comprehensive action plan [sic]", and that, as a result of this, the programme constituted a series of events without a strategy or objectives to support it.

Confusion between the specifics of programming and the need for an overarching strategic vision is considered widespread and an important challenge is to ensure the coherence, distinctiveness and sustainability of programming. As noted in Chapter 7 ('Recommendations'), this is an area where the European Commission could still play a more defining role and where clear knowledge-transfer mechanisms can be most helpful. The Study Workshop I participants highlighted the detrimental effect of placing too much emphasis on event detail at the bidding stage, before a sound mission statement has been defined and fully developed, validated and appropriated by key stakeholders. Such detail, and the expectation that final programming should adhere to original event proposals from the bidding stage, hinders the city's ability to develop a sound vision afterwards, and forces organisers to compromise in order to keep often disparate events as part of the programme (ICC Workshop I, April 2013).

Commission representatives, meanwhile, have indicated that the bidding requirements are more nuanced than what is suggested by previous workshop participants, that the main emphasis is on clarity about the 'concept' for the year, and that the Selection Panel understands that bid ideas can evolve over time (ICC Workshop II, June 2013). Regardless of these caveats, the current ECoC Application guidelines (European Commission, 2012) require cities to provide specific information about events, and request that cities 'substantiate' how they plan to meet a range of Programme objectives. In this context, it is not surprising that cities spend considerable time thinking of detailed programming examples, which may, in turn, limit their capacity to consider carefully enough the overarching vision, or result in specific event programming promises that may eventually contradict or limit the credibility of the overarching vision.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 2, in particular, for greater clarity on bidding guidelines from Decision 1419/1999/EC onwards.

The actual phrasing of the request in current ECoC application guidelines is as follows:

2. What main events will mark the year? For each one, please supply the following information: description of the event / date and place / project partners/ financing (European Commission, 2012).

This is followed by another question:

3. How does the city plan to choose the projects/events which will constitute the programme for the year? (*ibid.*)

While question 3 can be seen as fully relevant and a useful exercise to ensure that cities think carefully about their concept or vision for the ECoC, question 2 requires far too much detail and poses a challenge for bidding cities (in line with the point raised by contributors to the Study Workshop I). As discussed in the 'Recommendations' Chapter, this question would benefit from some rephrasing during the current post-2019 revisions.

Vision versus reality, the question of 'authenticity' and who owns the vision

In the cases where cities propose a strong vision from the early stages, another common challenge is the extent to which such vision reflects the aspirations of the few or the many – and whether such vision truly represents the reality of the city or, instead, masks complex issues and tries instead to oversimplify them in order to appeal to external audiences. In some cases, the criticism is that the official or publicly stated vision does not correspond with the reality of the delivery process; here a major related challenge is that of raising and then failing to meet people's expectations.

For instance, Quinn and O'Halloran (2006) note in their study of Cork 2005 the apparent divergence between public statements of strategic vision, and the operational reality of applying investment rationales. In their view, there was no proper framework connecting individual activities and ideas to that larger vision, so it could be concluded that the ECoC vision lacked weight or was not supported by actual delivery. Quinn (2010) and Garcia *et al.* (2010) note the negative effect of making ambitious promises at the bid stage and boosting them via the media if this results in generating unrealistic or unmanageable public expectations. In the case of Liverpool 2008, the key challenge was a partial conflation of the vision for the ECoC year with the vision for Liverpool's future at large, resulting in confusion over "what it is realistic to expect from a programme of cultural events" (Garcia *et al.*, 2010). Although it is important to align an ECoC proposal with the long-term aspirations of its host city, making no distinction between the two makes it virtually impossible for ECoC organisers to prioritise and fully deliver within the constraints of a year-long event. In response, Connolly (2013) suggests that cities should be held to account for the claims they make, whether they are realistic or not. This points again at the importance of host organisers receiving greater guidance on how to define their ECoC vision and set it within the right parameters so that it is both strong and deliverable.

At another level, a common issue when exploring the credibility of formal vision statements is what language should be utilised: more specifically, how to balance direct input from local communities and the need to translate this in a form that can be understood by diverse stakeholders (local, national and international). Connolly (2013: 170-1) discusses the tensions between attempting to secure public ownership of Liverpool 2008's ECoC bidding process, which involved engaging in wide public consultation, and the kind of rhetoric and branding that came through input from marketing and public relations specialists (in place of the voice of local people). Back in the late 1990s, when the uses of marketing to promote cities was still at an early stage of development, Holton (1998: 184) critiqued Lisbon 1994's "conflation of self-improvement with cultural consumption" in creating a marketing rhetoric that encouraged citizens, in the style of a New Year's

resolution, to “become dutiful cultural consumers”. These examples all point at the tensions inherent to an event which must fulfil the expectations of different constituencies with often contradicting demands – in particular, the need to remain locally meaningful (e.g. for citizens and community stakeholders both within and outwith the realm of arts and culture) while being attractive at a national and international level (e.g. for tourists, potential investors, and opinion leaders in diverse peer groups, from the worlds of art to, increasingly, far broader leisure and business travel environments). The ways in which respective ECoCs have tried to balance expectations has been discussed in Chapter 4, where the diversity of target audiences and engagement strategies were outlined. In order to overcome tensions, the underlying issue that must be addressed to meet such a challenge is to make a clear distinction between what is meant by a ‘vision’ (outlining a prioritisation of audiences and messages) and the specifics of event programming, delivery and promotion (where specific interests can be dealt with individually).

Additional issues specific to the planning and communication of the ECoC are discussed within separate Sections later on in this Chapter. In this Section, further reflection is offered on the challenge posed to the ECoC vision by potential perceptions of its inauthenticity or exclusivity (concerning the voice of the local population). This is an issue that tends to have greater weight in the context of the ECoC than in average artistic festivals, due to the growing significance of the ECoC as a defining moment for cities and respective populations’ sense of place and identity projection, which goes far beyond the realm of the arts and the interests of specific peer groups. As noted by O’Callahan (2012: 191):

While any programme of events is likely to produce disagreement among both cultural practitioners and the general public, [the] ECoC tend[s] to produce dissonance between the ‘official’ representation of the city’s cultural infrastructures and other representations that are variously narrated as more ‘authentic’ or representative of the locality.

This, notes the author, is produced by the ‘catch-all’ framework within which the ECoC operates, which offers a very valuable opportunity to bring in all city stakeholders and communities to rethink the city’s identity and its aspirations; however, it equally opens an important challenge to reflect everyone’s voice:

The emphasis on regional development objectives and on European integration as part of the ECoC event places a premium on putting forward a consensus on what the city ‘means’ culturally both in and of itself and in relationship to Europe. The messy image of culture expressed by divergent and competing representations does not fit with the perspective of culture as an economic driver of the region or as an expression of ‘unity in diversity’. Yet, it is often within the context of such divergent meanings that culture becomes vibrant and interesting (*ibid.*: 198).

Indeed, the added-value brought by an ECoC emerges out of such challenge and the pressure it brings to address it in one way or another. The need to reconcile external projections with internal or local meanings, in order to produce an ‘authentic’ vision for the ECoC, is a very common criticism, with the academic literature tending to highlight poor representation of local voices, particularly in the cases of ECoC editions considered successful from an ‘external’ projection point of view. For instance, Gold and Gold (2005: 230) note opposition from the city’s population in the case of Glasgow 1990 for “prioritising the marketing agenda” and marginalising the indigenous population. Similarly, in respect of Liverpool 2008, Jones and Wilks-Heeg (2004: 357) note the tensions involved in branding a city for the ECoC and thus privileging certain aspects over others, potentially obscuring the inequalities within a location:

Without a genuine commitment to reducing existing inequalities, the ECoC process is in danger of simply using ‘diversity’ and the discourse of social inclusion to legitimate an economically motivated regeneration strategy.

Further, Lähdesmäki (2010a: 34) argues that in making the case for ECoC status:

Past as well as current conflicts and confrontation related to cultural diversity are turned into a peaceful dialogue, which fades away the hierarchies of dominance and suppression related to confrontations, conflicts or 'dialogue'.

In the context of Istanbul 2010, Hoyng notes that despite the focus on the role of 'participation' to articulate the year's programme, there were important difficulties faced in representing the population of the city:

those who thought of themselves as excluded from formal, representative politics and from society's hegemonic formations of publicness were often only reaffirmed in their belief. Considering the fact that racism and the oppression of dissidence are pervasive in Istanbul and Turkey – and in relation to the Kurdish population this situation is exacerbated by a covert history of civil war – to insist on a cooperative 'network of the willing' might not, I would argue, constitute a strategy poised to improve the state of democracy and cultural rights (2012: 14).

In some cases, such lacks are said to exacerbate political tensions. For instance, in the context of Antwerp 1993, Martinez discusses the way in which far-right parties used what they viewed as the wrong or failed priorities of the ECoC programme to advance their own agenda:

Vlaams Blok repeatedly manifested their disagreement with Antwerp 93 activities (De Morgen, 1993; Gazet van Antwerpen, 1993). Concretely, Vlaams Blok politicians described Antwerp 93 as a melting-pot, which did not show Flemish identity, as was initially intended. They pointed out that some Flemish projects were refused in favour of foreign ones (2007: 2456).

Martinez then points to arguments suggesting that cosmopolitan festivals, rather than making people more tolerant towards diversity, can actually make some groups feel excluded from public life and more likely to support extreme parties. Importantly, this should not be interpreted as offering a reason to downplay the cosmopolitan aspirations of the ECoC, but instead be read as evidence of the ECoC's capacity for real political impact, and also as evidence that with this comes an important responsibility to address community concerns and prevent misinterpretations or the hijacking of its vision in support of particular agendas. The case of Antwerp represents an extreme example (not common to other ECoCs), related to the particular political context in this city at the time and the determined ambitions of the ECoC organisers to counteract right-wing positioning. However, as already mentioned, cities such as Glasgow 1990, which pioneered the use of city marketing techniques and cultural tourism promotion, have provoked varied levels of activism (this time, from the left) motivated by a perception of an inauthentic ECoC vision, not true to a "Workers City" (MacLay, 1991). (Some of these issues were suggested within the 'Policy and Political Impacts' Section of Chapter 5 and are also explored further on in this Chapter, within the 'Local engagement issues' Section.)

The wide range of goals and their potentially contradictory nature

With the growth in ambition of the ECoC Programme, and its claims to operate beyond the realm of culture into that of wider society and economics, additional challenges have emerged that can affect the coherence of respective host core visions. In cases where cities have failed to prioritise goals and set up relationships (so that they can complement, rather than contradict each other), such a diversity of agendas, instead of strengthening the event's mission, has weakened the possibility for the ECoC to meet all of them. For instance, O'Callaghan (2012: 186) argues that "host cities have been increasingly criticised

for failing to enable local cultural ownership, overcome real social divides, and create lasting cultural legacies." In the author's view:

The ECOC has come to be viewed as a multi-dimensional action that must incorporate economic and cultural objectives, must represent both local cultural heritage and European identities, and must stage an international arts event while simultaneously advancing the local cultural sector and social inclusion objectives. These multiple objectives are not mutually reinforcing and often contradictory. The ECOC has become alienated from its original, comparably modest, objectives, while, in its current format, the ECOC promises more than it can realistically deliver. Many critics have suggested how social objectives frequently lose out to economic goals. Few ECOC have managed to replicate the success of Glasgow in regeneration terms or [in] culturally repositioning themselves in Europe. With the notable exceptions of Liverpool and Lille, few cities have achieved a high profile in the international media, sustained image enhancement and tourist attraction through hosting the event (*ibid.*).

Rather than interpret this solely as a negative issue, it is important to appreciate that it is evidence of an increasing rise in expectations and standards to which ECoCs are currently held. It is, nevertheless, a frequent motif for discussion and disagreement, particularly from Phase 3 of the Programme onwards. The way in which such a challenge materialises can be summarised in terms of two main areas: the tension between meeting cultural, as opposed to other kinds of, goals; and the difficulty of meeting the objectives of an increasingly diverse range of stakeholders, both within and outwith the cultural realm.

The challenges emerging out of the latter point are discussed within the 'Governance issues' Section, later on in the Chapter. On the first point (how to balance a cultural vision versus other agendas), the ex-post evaluation of ECoCs from 2007 and 2008 offers a relevant reflection:

The introduction of [explicit social, economic or tourism] objectives into the ECOC Action has both shaped and reflected broader trends in cultural policy. However, the growing importance of these objectives has been accompanied by a debate about balance between whether culture should be supported for its own intrinsic value or as a means to deliver tangible, quantifiable returns on investment. Indeed, there is a view that the introduction of economic and social objectives into cultural policy risks skewing policy and practice towards those activities that have maximum wider impacts, which arguably militates against the funding of 'risky' and/or avant garde cultural activities (ECORYS, 2009a: ii).

As noted by ECORYS, then, this introduction of other objectives has brought the ECoC Programme in line with the majority of current cultural and sporting events, which commonly find a tension at the heart of their vision between cultural and economic values. This discussion has become central to a broad range of published literature on the ECoC specifically, where authors have raised concerns that economic imperatives are overriding cultural aspirations and that, while this may be acceptable for other kinds of tourism-driven events, this contradicts the essence of the ECoC Programme. For instance, Quinn & O'Halloran (2006) note the challenge of balancing the requirements of the cultural sector with those of other agendas in Cork 2005. Connolly (2013) takes issue with the extent of Liverpool's attempt to harness social and economic agendas with its ECoC designation and plans, and suggests both the failure and abandonment of this approach. Beyazit and Tosun (2006: 10) align attempts to gain more tourism through Istanbul 2010 with a marketing and public relations approach, and place this in opposition to an "urban planning" approach which might "consider... social values". In all these cases, the underlying concern is that, while economic objectives may be a valuable add-on in the context of an ECoC, these should not supersede the event's cultural aspirations.

In this sense, some authors have gone on to suggest that the emphasis on tourism or other economic goals at the heart of the ECoC vision means the event can be seen as interchangeable with other major events that do not have an exploration of European cultural values at heart – in particular, highly competitive sporting events such as the Olympic Games or Formula 1 races (Beyazit and Tosun, 2006). In fact, as discussed during the second expert workshop organised as part of this study (ICC Workshop II, June 2013), it is now common for city authorities to look into a whole range of different large-scale events as equally attractive platforms to pursue their economic goals. While this is in some ways understandable within a global economy, and explains the growth in bidding interest for the ECoC Programme, it should also be considered a challenge to the coherence and specificity of vision of respective ECoC programmes.

6.2.2. Clarity and sustainability of event & physical planning approaches

Clarity and sustainability of planning approaches is an area that has clearly improved over the years, thanks to the introduction of explicit demands for the sustainability of the ECoC Programme and legacy planning. As such, the most extreme examples of clear challenges to sustainability are all found within the early stages of the Programme, up to the late 1990s. Here, a lack of proper planning could result in myriad, related challenges, ranging from low attendance levels, to difficulty in completing infrastructural developments on time during the ECoC year or in maintaining new facilities once the ECoC year was over. This can lead to the conclusion that the ECoC may have produced a larger number of negative than positive effects. For instance, Labrianidis and Deffner (2000: 37) note that planning was an issue in Thessaloniki 1997 and that “235 events had to be cancelled either because the appropriate spaces were not ready, or due to cuts of government funding”, with the paradoxical situation that “in 1997 there were fewer [cultural] spaces [available] than in 1996, due to the renovation works underway” (*ibid.*: 42). The authors also identify low attendance at many events in Thessaloniki, attributing this to the high level of events during 1997, their similarity, and their concentration in a relatively small time period (*ibid.*: 35).

Despite the fact that such extremes are rare in more recent ECoC editions, poor planning approaches can still be identified. Issues with practical planning related to the ECoC Programme are often a manifestation of issues with coherent cultural policies more broadly, which affect the way culture is understood in cities, far beyond the specific context of the ECoC. For instance, Bullen (2013: 79) suggests a lack of a “real municipal cultural policy” in either Liverpool or Marseille, noting in the latter case that “Over and over again people bemoaned the lack of direction, or suggested that the current mayor had little interest in any cultural activity other than the opera”. Garcia (2005) also points at poor cultural policy frameworks in the context of Glasgow 1990 and its immediate aftermath, which limited the city’s capacity to capitalise on the many successes associated with the ECoC year in the years immediately following the event. Interestingly, however, in the case of Glasgow, what started as a challenge was subsequently overcome and transformed into a city strength, in part due to the pressures and expectations raised after the ECoC year. As such, although the Glasgow ECoC year was not framed by a coherent cultural policy, it contributed to the city’s commitment towards medium- and long-term cultural strategies. This process did take, however, well over a decade, which is yet another example of the need to take a long-term view to fully understand ECoC effects. In the case of Liverpool 2008, despite Bullen’s concerns, it is also possible to argue that the ECoC raised the bar for the city’s approach to cultural policy, with the first cross-sector consultation on a long-term cultural strategy being developed in the wake of 2008 (Liverpool First, 2009).

The Sections below offer additional examples of challenges related to planning: the first focusing on the downside of excessive focus on delivering events as an end in itself, rather than setting up a coherent process or framework for delivery; and the second discussing distinct obstacles to making the most of physical infrastructure developments.

Event vs. process

The issue of how to balance the pressures to deliver events as the main measure of success for an ECoC, as opposed to valuing the establishment of a meaningful framework and working process to make these events possible in the first place, was highlighted in the Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) report (and in separate discussion by Palmer, 2004). This issue was also at the heart of the *Impacts 08* research programme, which highlighted the need to ensure that assessment of the ECoC year is not only focused on outcomes but also on process (Garcia *et al.*, 2010). However, as of 2013, there is still a widespread lack of understanding amongst ECoC organisers and stakeholders as to what the ECoC initiative actually is, and how to ensure the right balance between delivering activity and framing it appropriately. During this study's first expert workshop, one participant noted that many stakeholders in ECoC host cities fail to understand that the ECoC year is not merely a programme of cultural events, but rather a process of change. Another participant, likewise, criticised the widespread perception of ECoC status as a prize, rather than an opportunity to be grasped by the host city; this participant also highlighted the common misperception that an ECoC year is all about a handful of large showpiece events, instead of a range of events of different sizes. In this vein, other contributors noted that there was an over-emphasis on budgets, insisting that ECoCs should not be expected to reach a minimum budget in order to be deemed a success; and cautioning, relatedly, that a huge budget is no guarantee of a successful event (ICC Workshop I, April 2013).

This is clearly not a new challenge. Referring back to the Thessaloniki 1997 example, Deffner and Labrianidis suggest that, despite the relatively significant size of the investment in Thessaloniki 1997 (the highest between 1995 and 2004; Palmer/Rae Associates, 2004a: 63, 86), "the outcome fell short of expectations" (2005: 251). They attribute these issues to "both the heterogeneous character of the Programme and to its unrealistic time schedule, i.e. a combination of a lack of cultural and time planning" (*ibid.*); and they conclude that this can be seen as an example of an ECoC excessively focused on presenting events, rather than properly planning for due process.

Quinn and O'Halloran's study of Cork 2005 (2006) and a later journal article by Quinn (2010) both discuss the tensions between an approach that focuses on large-scale output for the ECoC year itself, and approaches that instead seek to set in place some kind of process. Debates, discussions, new relationships and networks are all referred to as helping to constitute a process, although Quinn (2010) also goes on to identify particular models of activity as 'building blocks' for post-2005 in Cork. However, Quinn concludes that – on the whole – Cork 2005 was "primarily an event rather than a vehicle for process" (2010: 259), and links this emphasis to agendas that "prized [the ECoC] for its place promotional value" in opposition to aspirations from the arts and cultural sector to pursue "arts and cultural agendas" (*ibid.*: 261). Quinn argues that further work needs to be done to understand and support the "needs of the cultural sector...amidst competing calls from other stakeholders" (*ibid.*: 263). Whilst oppositions like this can be understood in broad terms, it is worth noting that Quinn and O'Halloran's study focuses on the cultural sector's sense of its own development; as such, the outcomes which their research seeks to understand are 'cultural' predominantly because they relate to the benefits or challenges to a sector engaged in cultural production. Some of the same benefits and challenges could be transferable, arguably, to other sectors' experiences of large-scale events.

Iconic vs. locally owned physical development

At the other extreme of the planning debate, it is interesting to observe the growth in commitments towards developing physical infrastructures (rather than just events) as part of the ECoC hosting process. Such interest does, however, result in additional challenges when it fails to be framed by a coherent cultural policy. An assessment of the available

evidence and analysis of ECoC experiences suggests that the following areas of tension represent ongoing challenges:

- Balancing plans for flagship/high profile physical interventions (e.g. original proposal for a Fourth Grace in the Liverpool 2008 bid) with the capacity to address local sensitivities and develop locally owned spaces (e.g. new neighbourhood facilities, such as the *Maisons Folie* in Lille 2004).
- Balancing aspirational cultural ambitions (which may result in distinct and/or avant-garde cultural infrastructures, usually relying on public funding, e.g. new concert hall in Stavanger 2008) with the need to satisfy basic tourism needs (i.e. transport, shopping, hotels, restaurants, which tend to follow standardised production models, dominated by national or international commercial chains, and tend to involve private investment – for example, the Liverpool ONE shopping development and Arena and Convention centre in Liverpool, both commonly associated with the ECoC, although neither were funded or planned as part of the core ECoC strategy).
- Balancing plans for heritage refurbishment (e.g. Istanbul 2010 proposals) and new cultural space developments.

The first area of tension is the most commonly found in the literature. Authors have criticised the emphasis on star architects to redevelop urban areas in the context of major events, if these plans are more focused at promoting the city as a space for consumption (including iconic architectural consumption) at the expense of nurturing locally sensitive cultural production (e.g. Mazzucotelli, 2008). In some cases, the criticism is that the investment on cultural refurbishments with a focus on attracting external visitors or as part of an external image strategy may lead to the loss of some of the original, locally meaningful, purposes of such spaces. This is a complex challenge that has been noted in cases as diverse as Glasgow 1990 (and its refurbishment of The Third Eye Centre), Lisbon 1994 (The Coliseu de Recreios) and Liverpool 2008 (The Bluecoat).

Box 3: Physical development case study: Lisbon 1994

In Lisbon 1994, one of the aspirations of the ECoC was to raise the visibility of existing cultural venues and activities, and encourage new audiences. Activities included the refurbishment of spaces with significant cultural heritage, with approaches including architectural competitions. However, Holton (1998) criticises the refurbishment of the Coliseu de Recreios as 'cleaning up' both the building and the behaviour of audiences. The Coliseu was built in the late 19th century, a concert hall showing a variety of activities and holding an important place in Lisbon's cultural life. Towards the end of the 20th century, the physical fabric of the building had deteriorated, and the activities within the building had shifted from traditional culture to bingo and striptease. In the context of the ECoC programme, an architectural competition was run, and funds invested, to refurbish and redesign the building, removing the bingo and peep show bar, bringing in a range of new or enlarged facilities, and new seating in the main space, signifying more room per person. In this process, however, the pricing of access for renewed cultural activity also went up and the space became less accessible to the increasingly diverse range of publics that the venue had attracted during its less affluent years. Holton suggests that, through this change, a sense of "communitas" and opportunity for cultural transgression was lost:

the old cramped general seating, [...], was often populated by younger, less affluent ticket purchasers and became known as the domain of transgressive behaviour and vocalized cultural critique. Due to close physical proximity and the common endurance of less than ideal viewing conditions, members of the general public often shared an experience of what anthropologist Victor Turner defines as "communitas" [...]. In the Coliseu's former general, cigarettes were often shared, flasks of alcohol passed, coats borrowed and lent, and dialogue exchanged (Holton 1998: 186).

Source: ICC analysis based on DaCosta Holton (1998: 170-86)

The point raised via this case study is indicative of the potential downside of high-end refurbishment of long-established cultural venues, which, at times, may be transformed into spaces that their previous communities of users would perceive as too sanitised, standardised or professionalised. While this is not a challenge unique to the ECoC Programme (and, in many cases, examples of these occurrences fall beyond the remit of the ECoC hosting process), this is nevertheless an area worth considering as a potential pitfall if the vision and cultural strategy surrounding the ECoC – particularly when it comes to physical developments – does not sufficiently take into account the needs and sensitivities of immediate local communities. As a counterpoint, the example of Lille 2004, with its *Maison Folies* (Liefoghe, 2010), and the Liverpool 2008 *Pavilions* – both of which involved the creation of new grassroots cultural spaces distributed across different city neighbourhoods, and catered to economically deprived communities in collaboration with established local community centres – are two good examples of alternative ways of thinking about sustainable cultural infrastructure development.

6.2.3. Communications, marketing and branding challenges

The most common communication challenges noted in the literature relate to the difficulty of promoting the ECoC at a national or international level. Although ECoC hosts have become more sophisticated in the development of branding strategies, with the growing dominance of second or regional cities as hosts, an ongoing issue has been the capacity of these cities to attract media attention and support from their respective state capitals, as well as the mainstream international press. As noted by a representative from Košice 2013, during a presentation at a seminar on ECoC experiences organised by the EUCLID network in 2008 (EUCLID, 2008), one of the first tasks of many ECoC hosts, when presenting their work, is simply to show people how to locate their city on the map.

The most pervasive challenges to an ECoC's communication of the event (and making it 'stand out') occur in host cities that *already* have a well-established cultural reputation (an issue common in the early years of the Programme) and, conversely, cities *without* a strong cultural reputation and no sufficiently distinct vision or approach to event programming.

Gold and Gold (2005: 223) note that, despite the established cultural profile of the initial ECoC host cities, events in the first round of capitals from 1985-96 "made little impact on the European scene", as they were "primarily summer events staged for domestic audiences". Similarly, they note the lack of visibility of Dublin 1991 within the city's arts scene, "a recurrent problem when the City of Culture festival took place in large cities with established traditions in the arts", noting Madrid 1992 as another example where the ECoC events "failed to stand out". According to the authors, attempts in 2000 to broker joint sponsorship deals for the multiple ECoC cities also "resulted in total failure", particularly because "the 'product' on offer was insufficiently distinct" (*ibid.*: 263).

In the case of previously unknown cities at the European level, an additional challenge is that of establishing a name as a new cultural destination in an increasingly competitive international tourism market. Richards (2000: 173) notes that:

the cities which are seen by consumers as being most desirable for a cultural holiday are the traditional 'cultural capitals', such as Paris, London and Rome. In order to challenge the popularity of established destinations, 'new' destinations must attract the attention of cultural consumers in other ways. Most often they attempt to stage cultural events which will attract attention from the new producers, the media, and the cultural tourist. The European Cultural Capital Designation is one means of attempting this, but the evidence from [research conducted in 1997] shows that for cities such as Copenhagen, Dublin or Lisbon that this has so far had minimal effect on their image with consumers.

For instance, in the case of the nine ECoCs for the year 2000, the primary goal of realising a common communication, marketing and sponsorship programme did not materialise:

'the life span of the nine European Cities of Culture offices is by definition too short for complex advertising strategies such as common communication on the 9 EC[o]C2000. It would take years to build up the required image and one cultural event doesn't have that purpose. If the event is world-wide there are opportunities for companies to have strong labels and images, if their promotion is in one way or another combined with the image of the event. Europe is more than one marketing area, not always with the same emphasis, and what was even more important, not having one marketing office for the whole Europe,' confirmed the participants. Moreover, the participant cities pointed out that 'global advertising initiatives would not have been the right approach to European national markets and the cultural products' (Cogliandro, 2001: 53).

Cogliandro (2001) remarks that the best results in the common promotion were achieved when the nine managers had to promote a common project (i.e. *Voices of Europe, Café9.net*).

Since these early experiences, efforts have been made to devise stronger slogans or taglines for respective ECoC cities, with such requests or advice being explicit within current ECoC candidature guidelines. However, although often such strategies can work at the local or national level, achieving European (or international) recognition remains a difficult area to address and is still a common weakness identified since the bidding stage. For instance, the Selection Panel for the 2013 and 2014 editions expressed the following concerns:

- Slovakia 2013 (Košice): "it would be difficult to raise awareness of Slovakia within Europe [...]. The presentation of the winning project will be an enormous marketing challenge, mainly in its aspects of how to attract the attention of the European tourists and tour operators" (Selection Panel, 2008b: 4).
- Sweden 2014 (Umeå): "the Panel believes that Umeå, due to its remoteness and size, will have particular problems in communicating and marketing their Year to the rest of Europe. The Panel will be particularly keen to hear how the organisers will deal with this problem" (Selection Panel, 2009b: 4).

The relative importance of these issues, as a manifestation of challenges in the fulfilment of the Programme's European Dimension, is discussed in more detail in the second part of this Chapter.

6.2.4. Local engagement issues

Whilst most ECoC host cities, as a rule, stress the importance of engaging local people in the planning and delivery of the year (particularly since this has become an explicit requirement by the European Commission; see Chapter 2), some cities have encountered direct opposition to the methods they use to engage and involve local people. Interestingly, when this is the case, opposition tends to be incentivised due to strong local currents of radical left-wing politics, or a vibrant alternative culture scene – which is in itself a positive indicator of strong local voices and a strong demand for open dialogue and debate, however controversial. Two examples stand out in this area:

- During Glasgow 1990, there was a “growing, although never mass-movement, level of opposition”, which focused mainly on the amount of public money being spent on the year, and the question as to whether this could be used more productively elsewhere; yet also to a lesser extent on the concerns of radical left-wing critics, who questioned whether the designation was being used to ‘gentrify’ the city and appease big business (Reason, 2006b: 76). Such movement took the form of the ‘Workers City’ group, which was created specifically in response to the 1990 European City of Culture experience and led to a range of dedicated publications (e.g. McLay, 1990) expressing concern over whose culture was being celebrated during the year. As noted above, such activism should not be interpreted as a negative outcome for the city at large, but is an indication of the challenge that ECoC organisers face to achieve full acceptance of their proposed programme.
- In more recent ECoC editions, there has been local resistance to the official management and organisation of the year. In Turku, a project called *Turku – European Capital of Subculture 2011* arose from opposition to certain aspects of the management and financing of the official Turku 2011 event, including what the activists perceived as the official programme’s “high-cultural understanding of art” and its view of citizens “as [a] passive audience of the cultural events” (Lähdesmäki, 2012a: 3). The Turku 2011 management team made quite considerable efforts to involve the local population in the planning and implementation of the ECoC events. As Lähdesmäki (2012a: 8-9) points out, events put forward during the city’s open project call, which allowed anybody to suggest cultural events to be funded as part of the city’s official programme, ultimately went on to form the basis of three quarters of all projects in the official programme. However, the activists declined the chance to be involved in an enterprise that, in their opinion, represented the festivalisation and commercialisation of culture (*ibid.*: 9).

The challenge of local engagement becomes more acute when considering the event’s capacity to reach out to all geographical areas in the city. As discussed in previous Chapters, ensuring adequate spatial balance in the distribution of activity and infrastructure development is no easy task, an issue extensively discussed within the literature on special and mega-events. However, this is a particularly sensitive issue for ECoC hosts, given the event’s connotation as being more than an arts festival, operating instead as an opportunity to reimagine the city and its communities in the broader European context. A failure to spread activity beyond the city centre, and, equally important, a failure to communicate clearly how the ECoC attempts to reach out to all of its outlying communities, can result in entrenched criticism and disregard for its areas of success. For instance, research from the *Impacts 08* programme on the lead up to Liverpool 2008 indicated that in 2007, communities perceived a spatial bias of benefit towards the city centre; this was reflected in the views of small and medium tourism enterprises (McEvoy and Impacts, 2009) and also in the views of some residents, whose negative responses centred around four areas of concern: that there were no widespread benefits from the ECoC; that those benefits which had taken place had been concentrated on the city centre, with no impact on their own neighbourhood; that in certain areas of the city, people did not participate in any of the Liverpool 2008 programme; and concerns over value for money (Impacts 08, 2008a; 2008b). Interestingly, the research was used as an incentive to improve the approach to

local communications, and organisers took seriously the need to explain and promote more clearly their grassroots programming as distinct from the high profile activities oriented towards mainstream arts audiences and tourists. The creation of dedicated local campaigns helped address some local concerns, and by 2009, perceptions of geographical bias were less entrenched (Garcia *et al.*, 2010; Impacts 08, 2010b). However, this was clearly only possible due to the fact that organisers had actually invested in geographically spread programming, such as the *Four Corners* and *Pavilions* initiatives, both taking place in outlying and deprived areas of the city.

Beyond the long-established challenges noted above, an additional challenge to engagement has emerged in recent years, accentuated by the global economic crisis and a growing questioning of the value and relevance of the European project amongst certain communities of interest. This is particularly acute amongst young people, who see their chances of first employment diminished, and have grown disenchanted with the political class. During the study's first expert workshop, one of the participants noted how the growing public distrust of politicians and officials has been noticeable in Italy and made it difficult to involve the citizenry in the ECoC process in any kind of constructive or meaningful way (ICC Workshop I, April 2013). Although some participants questioned the extent to which this public cynicism and distrust was a new obstacle for ECoC host cities, others felt that scepticism towards European themes had increased across member states as a result of the financial crisis and its after-effects. As such it was highlighted that this required new, dedicated measures to renew trust and interest in the project and, in particular, to overcome the risk of the ECoC Programme being perceived as an elite process, or top-down political initiative. In this context, the need to understand the concerns of – and engage – young people was perceived as an area of priority and an opportunity to refresh the purpose of the Programme, thereby ensuring that it connects with the interests of new generations rather than remaining anchored in frameworks appropriate to the late 20th Century. This is the focus of some of the recommendations presented in Chapter 7.

6.2.5. Governance issues

The complexities of ECoC governance have been identified as a major challenge since the inception of the Programme, and were reiterated by Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a), as well as subsequent reports by Palmer *et al.* (2011) and the ECORYS ex-post evaluations (2009a, 2010a and 2011c). ECORYS go on to suggest that future evaluations of ECoCs should consider whether the support and advice supplied to ECoCs by the European Commission in respect of governance is sufficiently effective, and this remains a key gap in the current knowledge-transfer approaches. The main governance issues that remain standing after three decades of Programme development can be summarised as follows:

- Getting the right specialised skills
- Team stability
- Relationship management, in particular:
 - Establishing the right balance between political support and interference
 - City/Region relationships

Getting the right specialised skills, team stability and relationship management

In common with other one-off major events, the study's expert workshop participants felt that there is a lack of managers with the experience and skills required to lead an ECoC process on behalf of a city; additionally, in many cases, cities do not have a clear idea of what qualities to look for in a senior manager. Other participants with direct experience of being part of an ECoC hosting team argued that the well-being of the people involved in delivering an ECoC year is often overlooked, despite the fact that the workers involved in

steering organisations are crucial to making a successful ECoC year – perhaps explaining the frequent turnover of positions, and resignations at senior as well as junior levels, within ECoC teams (ICC Workshop I, April 2013).

This issue is further complicated when considering the different stages in ECoC delivery, from the bidding to the build-up and delivery stages. Each of these stages requires distinct skills, and achieving the right balance between continuity and change in focus is often an issue. For instance, the ex-post evaluation for ECoCs in 2007 and 2008 notes that:

all four ECoCs faced difficulties in establish efficient governance arrangements, particularly during the development phase. These difficulties primarily related to the challenge of establishing an organisational structure and building a team with the appropriate skills to implement the cultural programme. In each case, this required a wider set of skills and thus a different structure from the team that had prepared the successful application, albeit retaining most of the key individuals (ECORYS, 2009a: iii).

This opens up an important area of debate that has not been appropriately covered by the available literature. While the lack of team stability is often highlighted as a key governance challenge (Palmer *et al.*, 2011: 27-8), it is also important to acknowledge that some staffing changes, particularly at the top levels, may be appropriate in order to meet the different demands related to distinct phases in the hosting process. This was noted by European Commission representatives within the study's second expert workshop (ICC Workshop II, June 2013), indicating that, for some cities, a change in direction at the appropriate point in time had actually been positive. For instance, changes in the team direction for Aarhus 2017 after winning the bid was highlighted as a good example of proactive and positive, rather than crisis-triggered, team changes (ICC Workshop, June 2013).

The specificity and complexity of managing an ECoC has resulted in the widespread assumption that the most appropriate vehicle for ECoC delivery is the creation of a new and independent structure. As noted by ECORYS:

The experience of 2007 & 2008 demonstrates that a new and independent structure is usually advisable, one that is carefully customised to reflect the political and cultural context of the city and, indeed, the country more generally (2009a: iii).

However, creating a new structure also involves associated additional challenges, as the appointed team – often involving experts brought in from outside the city – needs to negotiate its positioning within the existing culture delivery infrastructure and related stakeholders, both inside the cultural sector and beyond. In this sense, workshop participants discussed the difficulties that can sometimes arise between teams of ECoC experts brought in from the outside and the local cultural sector; they stressed the need for constructive dialogue between the two. Frequent staffing changes in the core team can also limit opportunities for such dialogue to develop appropriately. This was clearly an issue for Pécs 2010, where frequent turnover in personnel and disagreements between stakeholders hindered the success of the project (Zalaföldi, 2013). The ECORYS ex-post evaluation of 2009 ECoCs concludes that the examples of Linz and Vilnius help to reinforce the importance of setting the appropriate delivery structures – although Linz 2009 did so by demonstrating a successful model, and Vilnius 2009 by demonstrating what can go wrong (2010a: 63-5).

Establishing the right balance between political support and interference

According to the participants to the 25th ECoC anniversary conference, managing “the delicate relationship between politics and artistic independence [is] one of the key challenges” of organising the ECoC event. While political support is fundamental, and it may be inevitable that politicians seek control over the programme, the team responsible for implementing the event also needs to have its artistic independence. This means that “[s]table working relations based on trust and united partnership between the political authorities and the implementing team are [...] essential”. Linz (2009) is mentioned as a city in which this balance was achieved in a particularly effective way (European Commission, 2010: 6).

Although the need to ensure that politicians do not interfere in the ECoC programme remains a key recommendation in most published literature, organisers and commentators have also highlighted that this should not lead to complete political disengagement either. During the study’s first expert workshop, one of the participants noted that the issue of political interference is often a misconceptualisation: the participant stressed that some degree of involvement on the part of political leaderships is in fact desirable and necessary, and that the relationship between political and cultural actors is really one in which the right balance must be struck (rather than one in which any involvement on the part of local politicians is seen as undesirable encroachment on the terrain of the cultural sector). In this vein, participants stressed the importance of strong political leadership and vision linked to the ECoC, and the added value of having local councillors being openly supportive and interested in the programme. Having the political class too far removed from the ECoC hosting process is, thus, also considered a challenge, as it may pose difficulties in achieving planning approvals, budget coordination and general facilitation of city-wide and cross-sector operations. Furthermore, political involvement is essential to guarantee a commitment towards long-term legacy (ICC Workshop I, April 2013).

An important downside of not having politicians fully on-board for the ECoC is that, when this happens, this is often an indication that political leaders do not give due consideration and weight to cultural matters, and may be under the perception that culture can happen without much dedicated resources or support infrastructure. As an important challenge to the ECoC, workshop participants noted that many politicians continue to operate under the misconception that the cultural sector is somehow ‘cheap’ (i.e. that doing art should cost little money and that being an artist is a vocational choice that may not require large payments) (*ibid.*). This misconception can lead, in some cases, to events such as the ECoC being organised ‘on the cheap’ as well. In this sense, another workshop participant complained that a long-running difficulty remained in convincing culture ministers (and politicians, more generally) of the value of culture. This participant felt that politicians, in many cases, see culture as somehow ‘exclusive’, and as a ‘nice to do’ (something that may benefit a few), rather than a ‘must do’ (something that benefits everyone). The participant did not feel that the catalytic potential of cultural policy had been properly recognised by politicians and argued this may result in a lack of commitment to, and understanding of, the long-term legacies of an ECoC year. In the view of some participants, a possible way to reverse that trend is to try to use the ECoC as a platform to engage broad citizen, as well as political, debate on the value of culture.

Participants of the 25th ECoC anniversary conference also noted that the relatively long period between the designation and the event itself included a risk, due to possible changes in the political configuration of the city in the meantime. It was considered that this might lead to changing perspectives regarding previous commitments. For instance, specific political challenges were faced by Vilnius 2009, with late budget reductions (40% cut in 2008) following a change of government, and, subsequently, significant changes in the programme, into the delivery year (ECORYS, 2010a). In addition, difficult external circumstances (the global economic recession and the collapse of the main airline serving Lithuania at the beginning of the year) proved challenging. The team from Pécs 2010 also

noted the impact of the global recession on infrastructure projects, particularly due to the significant changes in currency exchange rates between Hungary and the EURO, leaving building projects with significant deficits in funding against original costs (Pécs 2010, 2009b). As a partial solution to the challenge of timing and political cycles, the importance of ensuring cross-party support from the outset has been stressed by the European Commission (2010: 6) and has been introduced as a new requirement for post 2019 ECoC candidate proposals (European Parliament, 2013).

City/region relationships

With the growing interest of ECoC hosts in involving a broad geographical area beyond the remit of a single city, new challenges have emerged in relation to the most appropriate ways to facilitate city/region partnerships. These challenges have evolved over time, and expressed concern has moved from an original view that greater regional involvement could be more desirable, to arguments about the need to ensure that the city remains central in more recent or upcoming editions. For instance, the Selection Panel on the Irish nomination for 2005 stated that "Cork should be prepared to take a leading role in the cultural life of Ireland in the years leading up to 2004 and most certainly in 2005 in order to ensure that the Capital of Culture event will be of importance regionally and nationally as well as in Cork itself" (Selection Panel, 2001: 10). Further, in its report on the selection of Marseille-Provence 2013, the Panel stressed that "[t]he participation of the Provence area in the programme should be more visible and better integrated" (Selection Panel, 2008a: 5). In contrast, for two upcoming editions, in the case of Riga 2014, the Panel stated that it welcomed "the involvement of the wider region but it will be keen to see that the City of Riga stays at the centre of the planning and programme for the Year" (*ibid.*). A similar statement was made about Umeå 2014.

Luxembourg GR 2007 specifically focused its activities on the Greater Luxembourg Region, which resulted in effectively five different cultural programmes (one for each territory). Only 352 of the 584 projects in the programme operated solely in Luxembourg, with 93 solely in a French or German region and 139 cross-border projects (ECORYS, 2009a: 25). This approach was reflected in the governance structure, effectively devolving funds and programming responsibility to different regional co-ordination offices; in practice, some interviews for the ECORYS (2009a) study suggested that this had "weakened the artistic direction of the ECOC" (*ibid.*: 28). In addition, engagement with decision-makers who were not based in Luxembourg (e.g. in Mainz or Brussels) was sometimes quite challenging due to the lack of face-to-face communications (*ibid.*: 30). However, Luxembourg GR 2007 is also considered "highly innovative in its European dimension" in comparison with other ECoCs (*ibid.*: 106).

Essen for the Ruhr 2010 faced a particular challenge in attempting to unify the range of cities, towns and regional authorities in the area in support of the ECoC activities (Essen for the Ruhr 2010, 2009b), and in terms of seeking to create a single communications strategy (ECORYS, 2011c: iii). There were some difficulties between the original understanding of the bid, and the chosen approach to branding which sought to emphasise the 'metropolitan' element of the area (*ibid.*: 43).

Box 4: Challenges of ECOC management: Case study - Essen for the Ruhr 2010

The organisation of events such as the ECOC involves the building of highly complex structures, in particular in the case of Essen for the Ruhr's year as ECOC. "RUHR.2010" was organised within a highly politicised field of actors with different interests and ways of operating. On the one hand, the regional municipalities and their cultural institutions were interested primarily in a sustainable regional development programme of a wide scope, in which their own individual communities would have a prominent position. On the other hand, the Bundesland Nordrhein-Westfalen and sectoral stakeholders were primarily interested in events with wide appeal. The sectoral stakeholders, the major sponsors of the year, favoured large-scale events because they were most likely to have the biggest marketing effects. Likewise, the Land – finding it problematic to favour individual regions – was aiming for mega-events that would make the entire Bundesland shine within Germany as a whole and across international borders. This distinction had a significant impact on the management structure and the content orientation of the year. While the latter interests – organising major events with international appeal – required a one-tier management structure and a deductive approach (i.e. starting with a strong and independent director), the former implied an inductive process, i.e. building on individual project ideas, and a pluralistic management working to create regional learning effects and long-term, bottom-up development. From the beginning, both approaches were present in the organisation of Essen for the Ruhr 2010, which led to power struggles and (potential) conflicts throughout the different phases of the ECOC organisation. In addition to that, the extensive expansion of the "RUHR.2010" organisation (from 6 employees at the start to 150 at its peak) had a significant impact on its functioning. The heterogeneous development of the organisation resulted in a variety of internal team management styles, ranging from grassroots to highly hierarchical decision-making structures. The fact that the organisation was spatially distributed over five sites also contributed to this heterogeneity. As a consequence, communication between the different organisational units varied greatly. All of this further complicated the complexity inherent in temporarily existing organisations (such as the motivation and security of temporary employees), thus complicating effective organisational action and the transparent management of the organisation.

Source: ICC analysis, building on Betz (2012)

Despite the fact that the Essen for the Ruhr 2010 governance model was clearly challenging from a governance perspective, work by the think tank ECCE (created in the aftermath of the year) suggests that this approach has left a valuable legacy for the region and a framework for joint working that is being sustained beyond 2010.

One of the key conclusions from the ex-post evaluation of 2010 ECoCs relates specifically to impact and the "size and nature of the territory":

Key Conclusion 3: The human and financial resources necessary to achieving a critical mass of impacts vary according to the size and nature of the territory of the ECoC. Covering a very large territory (and/or population) will naturally require extensive resources, but future ECoC should give careful consideration to the nature of the impact that they wish to achieve; it is likely either to be concentrated in one particular area or to consist of effects such as enhanced networking and profile across the territory, rather than in a step-change in cultural vibrancy (ECORYS, 2011c: ix).

As a result, in the current revision to the ECoC Programme for the period 2020 onwards, it is stressed that the title is awarded to cities exclusively, although cities will be allowed to involve their surrounding region in the year (European Parliament, 2013).

6.2.6. Financing issues

A very common claim amongst host city representatives and organisers, concerning challenges to delivering the ECoC event, is that it does not come with a large budget attached and relies mostly on the capacity of the host city and/or nation to raise the funds. Clearly, as shown in Chapter 4, the proportion of funding provided by the EU is very small within the total ECoC delivery budget, particularly in cases where cities also invest in physical developments. However, this is a disputed area, as European Commission representatives consider that most cities do not bid 'for the money' but, rather, for the prestige and the opportunity the title presents to advance particular agendas (at a local, national or international level) and to position themselves externally (ICC Workshop II, June 2013).

Beyond discussion of whether core financing is an embedded challenge or not, other aspects of financing that are regularly noted as a challenge relate to the associated politics, and are thus an extension of the points discussed in the previous Section regarding the dangers of relying on political cycles and potential political interference. In the case of Lisbon 1994, Gold and Gold note that:

Problems over finance hampered preparations for the City of Culture festival, particularly due to conflicts between Lisbon's socialist mayor and the conservative central government. Indeed, the delay in finalising the funding for the arts themselves led to the cancellation of two events (2005: 234).

With the expansion of the ECoC Programme into an ever broader range of Eastern European countries, issues around the appropriate degree of organisational and financial independence from national and supranational bodies have been accentuated. As noted by Palmer, Richards and Dodds (2011), as well as participants within the study's first expert workshop, within more centralised political systems, there is a danger that funding from national governments bodies may be given with 'strings attached' – a form of interference which can take ownership of the Programme away from the city (ICC Workshop I, April 2013). One example that has been highlighted in the literature is Istanbul 2010, "where the goals and ambitions of the original civil-society led board that won the bid were ... pushed aside and new appointments made without transparency" (Palmer *et al.*, 2011: 27).

In order to address the challenges related to an excessive dependence on public funding, ECoC hosts have become increasingly focused on ways to attract private sponsorship. Although there has been much progress in this area since the early 1990s, the challenge of handling commercial partners and sponsors for an ECoC comes through in some of the evaluations of ECoCs, with a particular tension between gaining sponsorship through the ECoC delivery vehicle for the ECoC itself, and building longer-term relationships between existing arts and cultural organisations, and activities and commercial partners (e.g. Cork 2005) (Quinn & O'Halloran, 2006).

In respect of Luxembourg GR 2007, a target of 20% of the budget from corporate sponsorship had been set in the original budgets; but in reality, less than 8% of the budget came from sponsorship (ECORYS, 2009a: 26). Challenges in obtaining sponsorship included:

the difficulty of getting companies to sponsor activities across four countries, a perceived lack of coherence of the GR concept, a perceived lack of attractiveness of the cultural programme to international audiences and media, and the fact that the ECOC was, for some, 'old news' in Luxembourg which had held the title before. Moreover in Lorraine, the policy of the Conseil Régional was to not seek corporate sponsorship of culture, that authority being under socialist leadership (*ibid.*: 26).

The 2009 monitoring report from Essen for the Ruhr 2010 suggests that finding sponsors for cultural activities is still difficult, when compared with sporting activities, because “it is often impossible to optimise advertising opportunities and build them into the events. For this reason businesses tend to regard the rewards from such sponsorship as inadequate” (Essen 2010, 2009: 6). Liverpool 2008 is considered to be the city that has attracted the largest sponsorship income to date, but some issues similar to the Essen for the Ruhr 2010 experience were raised by dedicated research on the sponsor experience (Impacts 08, 2008d). Istanbul 2010 had originally anticipated bringing in €10m of sponsorship, but was eventually only able to raise €2.26m, despite all corporate sponsorship being fully tax-deductible; although a range of ‘in-kind’ contributions were raised in addition to cash (ECORYS, 2011c: 70):

The reason suggested by interviewees from the Agency for the reluctance of potential sponsors included the global economic situation in the years leading up to 2010, managerial instability within the Agency and the dominance of the government amongst the funders. This view is supported by the two corporate sponsors interviewed: both reported that they had been excited by the original vision of Istanbul, but that once some of the key individuals departed the Agency in 2009, the Agency did not maintain a constructive dialogue with them. As a result, both sponsors reported their overall frustration and dissatisfaction with their experience as corporate sponsors (*ibid.*).

6.3. Two long-term challenges and areas of opportunity

Beyond the specific areas of challenge outlined above – which, though common, have varied overtime and are not viewed consistently by all stakeholders – there are two important areas that are unanimously highlighted in the literature and mentioned by key ECoC stakeholders in the context of surveys, workshops and interviews. These are the capacity of ECoC hosts to address the Programme’s European Dimension requirements, and the need for more reliable and coherent knowledge-transfer mechanisms. Despite the fact that there have been some important advancements in terms of official guidelines and support in these areas, both of these points are still mostly discussed as a ‘challenge’, or an area that needs further development; significantly, however, they are also seen as two important factors for the future of the Programme, which, if well addressed, can better guarantee its distinct value and sustainability. Importantly, it can be argued that better addressing these two areas would have positive effects against most of the individual challenges mentioned in the previous Section.

6.3.1. European Dimension

Despite ongoing efforts by the European Commission to position the European Dimension as central to the ECoC Programme (see e.g. Barroso 2010), this area remains one of the most contested points of the Programme, primarily due to a broad, varied and (at times) conflicting range of interpretations over its precise meaning. This is a topic that has received attention in a number of both internal and external evaluations of the Programme and has also been the focus of some scholarly debate. As discussed in Chapter 2, the issues and recommendations raised by previous studies informed some of the most recent actions, in particular, Decision 2006 (EP and Council, 2006). However, measuring the effects of the way in which respective ECoCs deal with the European Dimension remains a challenge that needs to be addressed, with subsequent evaluations consistently noting a significant degree of confusion in this area. This part of the Chapter starts by looking at the early challenges, focusing on hosts within Phase 2 of the Programme. It then moves on to discuss recurrent challenges after the application of the 2006 Decision, followed by an analysis of underlying factors (i.e. European vs. local identity issues), and ends with a reflection on areas of opportunity and recommendations for the better capturing (evaluation) of effects in this area.

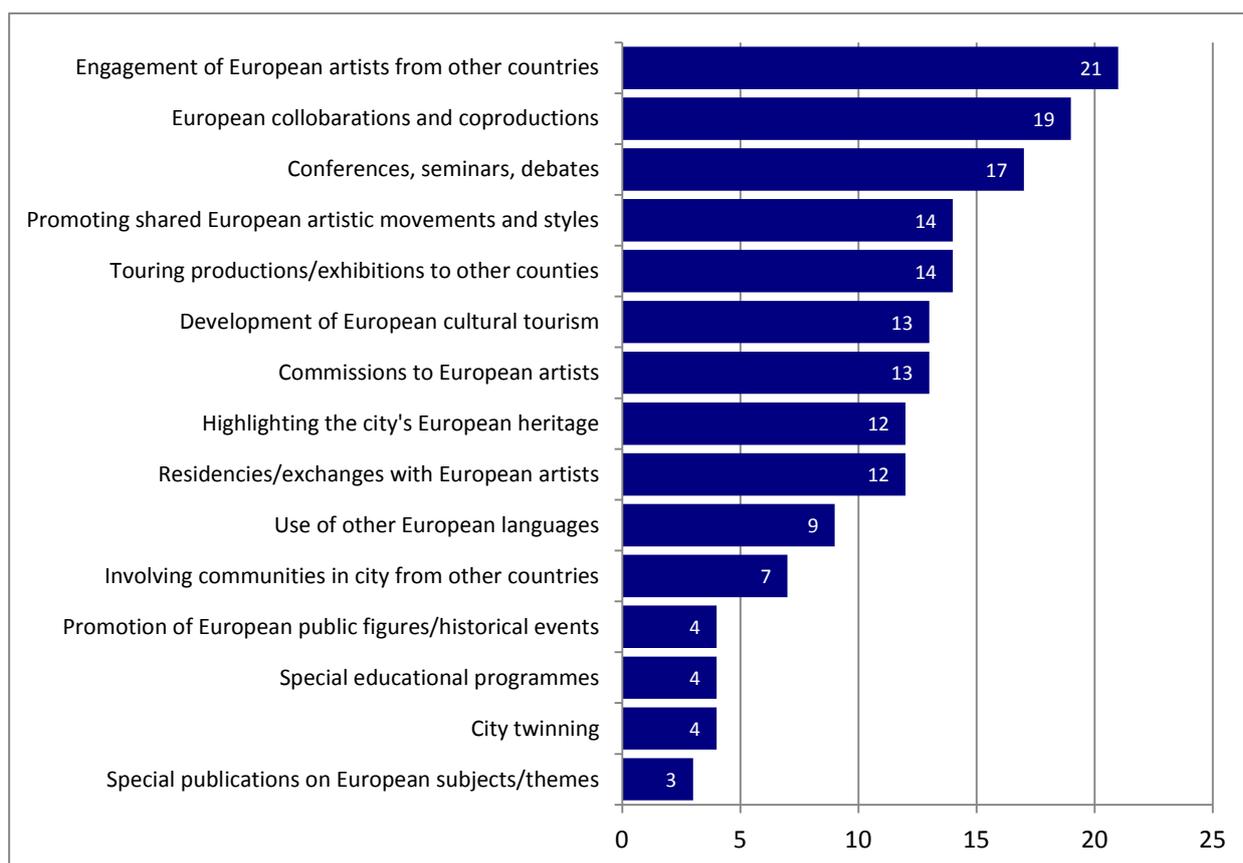
Interpreting a meaningful European Dimension

In the earlier stage of the Programme (up to 1994), questions of Europeanness were largely ignored by host cities, with more focus on exploring their unique features than their points in common (Myerscough, 1994: 20, 40). With growing demand for European reflection from the European authorities (European Parliament and Council, 1999 and 2006), cities gradually became more explicit, particularly since the implementation of the 2006 Decision applicable in full to cities from 2010 onwards. This Section offers some reflection on the main issues and challenges identified up to 2009 (before the full application of the 2006 Decision).

The Palmer/Rae Associates 2004 report on the 21 ECoCs between 1995-2004 provides a useful starting point for the assessment of the European Dimension. It notes that “when asked if consideration was given to issues of European dimension and significance when developing the cultural programme for the ECOC, all cities, without exception, confirmed that they did” (2004a: 85). When examining these claims in more detail, the authors note significant differences in the way in which the respective cities interpreted the European Dimension. The report (*ibid.*) summarises these as falling into six main categories:

- Presenting events featuring European artists
- Collaborations, co-productions, exchanges and other means of developing cooperation between artists and cultural organisations across different European countries
- Developing European themes and issues
- Identifying and celebrating aspects of European history, identity and heritage already present in the designated city
- Specific partnerships between two or more cities
- Promoting European tourism

Despite some important caveats in the availability of comparable data, these categories have been a useful reference in subsequent discussion and attempts at analysis of achievement in exploring a European Dimension (i.e. ECORYS, 2009a, as discussed later in this Chapter). The Figure below, taken from the Palmer/Rae report (2004b: 86), shows how the 1995-2004 host cities themselves reported on the use of the various activities related to the European Dimension.

Figure 28: Ways in which ECoCs reflect the European Dimension (1995-2004)

Source: Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a)

However, despite the cities' own claims, the authors find that "[t]here is no evidence to suggest that the European perspective was an integral and central part (in practical terms) in any of the ECoC cultural programmes" (2004a: 63). This conclusion is partly based on the fact that most cities reported having considered the European Dimension a "medium priority" (only four of the 21 cities regarded it a "high priority", while two considered it a "low priority"). Some cities indicated that "in retrospect they had not spent sufficient time on, or had given too little consideration to, this aspect of their programme in view of many other pressing priorities and pressures" (*ibid.*: 88). In addition, Palmer/Rae stress that:

caution should be exercised when evaluating the European dimension of a cultural programme simply on the basis of intentions and names of projects and participants. About one third of the cities in this study preferred to focus on a broader 'international', rather than a more defined 'European' dimension, often making no real distinction between the two. European projects were presented as part of a city's 'international programme' (*ibid.*:6).

Specifically relating this to the period 1995-2004, they conclude that "it seems often the European nature of the concept behind a project was not translated into a reality during the execution of such projects" (*ibid.*: 88).

Other authors have also noted this apparent inconsistency between the European aspirations of host cities at the bid stage and/or in their mission statements, and the actual results in terms of a clearly articulated European Dimension within the programme. For instance, Sassatelli (2002), in her study on the 2000 edition of the ECoC, notes that although the European Dimension was very prominent at the outset of the project (i.e. the

nine cities involved planned to work together within the context of the 'Association of European Cities of Culture in the year 2000' in order to organise a 'cultural space' for the year 2000), the actual programmes of the individual cities focused primarily on the specificity of the city and big events, "regardless of their having a European dimension or not" (Sassatelli, 2002: 444). Sassatelli concludes that there was no clear vision of what would constitute the common European Dimension between the nine cities, resulting in the outcome that Europe was "not so much an issue" in the final programming, although it remained one of the most frequent keywords in the programme documentation for all cities. A similar conclusion was reached by Cogliandro (2001) in her study of the nine 2000 ECoCs.

As an explanation for the disparities noted above, the Palmer/Rae report of 2004 indicated a lack of guidance and information available to cities and organisers about how to develop the European Dimension, while also noting that, at that point in time, "[t]here was no enforced obligation when awarding the designation for ECOC to prioritise this dimension" (2004, p.88). In addition to the existence of more "pressing priorities" as a reason for not prioritising the European Dimension, other problems experienced by the organising cities in relation to the delivery of this dimension of the Programme included: inadequate sources of finance for European projects; an absence of experience regarding the development and management of European programmes; and a lack of sustainability of projects beyond the cultural year, particularly in relation to support by public authorities.

The challenge of dealing with a dimension that is so fundamental to the purpose of the ECoC initiative, but for which (according to most ECoC hosts) criteria are difficult to interpret and operationalise, has been recognised by the various European institutions and has also been discussed in the wider context of EU cultural policy development. Most evaluations of EU cultural actions throughout the 1990s and 2000s highlighted the importance of a European Dimension, while at the same time acknowledging the need to further specify what this meant. As discussed by Langen (2010), an example of this can be found in Resolution 2002/C 162/03 of June 25, 2002, in which the Council of Ministers set out a new work plan for European cultural cooperation. Langen notes that as its first priority, the Council stated that it would be necessary to clearly identify the "European added value" of European cultural actions, which it defined as "the synergy effects which emerge from European cooperation and which constitute a distinctive European dimension in addition to Member State level actions and policies in the field of culture" (Council of the European Union, 2003: point 7). In line with the principle of subsidiarity, European added value was "to be found in actions that cannot be sufficiently undertaken at Member State level and therefore [...] are better undertaken by the Community". (*ibid.*: point 5). In agreement with earlier statements made by the EP, the Commission and, in the context of the *Culture 2000* evaluation, the cultural sector, the Council underlined that European added value was fundamental to European cultural cooperation and should be considered as an overall condition for Community cultural action (*ibid.*: point 2). However, Langen, concludes, "it also acknowledged that it was 'a dynamic concept', requiring flexible implementation. European added value was therefore to be identified and evaluated cumulatively" (Langen, 2010: 118-9).

Following up on this more general cultural policy guideline, as well as building on the recommendations outlined by Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a), the 2006 Decision (EP and Council, 2006, Article 4) specified some key characteristics that served the purpose of making the European Dimension criteria more explicit as a core objective of the ECoC action. As already noted in Chapter 3, these are:

- Fostering cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector
- Highlighting the richness of cultural diversity in Europe
- Bringing the common aspects of European cultures to the fore

These stipulations are directly in line with the objectives of EU cultural policy, as stipulated in what was then Article 151 (now 167) of the EC Treaty, but can also be seen as according with the categories identified by Palmer/Rae. Importantly, beyond attempting a clearer definition, and making (for the first time) a clear distinction between 'European Dimension' and 'City and Citizens' criteria so that they were not unduly conflated, the 2006 Decision stated that assessing the European Dimension would be a central aspect for the Selection Panel – which would also act as a Monitoring Panel in order to provide additional guidance. Given that this Decision could only be fully applicable for 2010 hosts onwards, there is not yet a great deal of evidence to discuss the extent of its impact. However, ever since the first round of Commission-funded ex-post evaluations by ECORYS, this has been a priority area for observation, resulting in mixed findings: on the one hand, the evaluations note that there is still considerable variation in the interpretation of European Dimension criteria; on the other hand, they remark on the benefit of additional monitoring and guidance support, which has strengthened this dimension in a number of cities. This is discussed in more detail in the Section below.

Ongoing challenges since the publication of the 2006 Decision

A notable finding of research into recent ECoC hosts is that the European Dimension seems to be the only ECoC criterion that continues to provoke at least some degree of confusion and variety of interpretation; indeed, this is in sharp contrast with the objectives related to the 'City and Citizens' criteria, which ECORYS note are far easier to understand and address (ECORYS, 2011e: 34). The recurring point of criticism in a number of evaluations produced since 2004 has concerned the lack of clarity regarding what the idea of a European Dimension is, even after the 2006 Decision. For example, the ex-post evaluation of the years 2007 and 2008 carried out by ECORYS stated that:

[t]he 1999 Decision offers no explicit definition of the European dimension and the criteria of the European dimension as set out in the 2006 Decision are open to very different interpretations. Perhaps as a consequence, the European dimension of the ECOC Action was interpreted in very different ways by the 2007 and 2008 ECOC (ECORYS, 2009a: vi).

Using the same key categories as identified in the Palmer/Rae Associates report, the evaluation concluded that:

[w]hilst all four ECOC were effective in implementing a wide range of activities with a European dimension, the nature of that dimension and the extent of effectiveness varied. Although all cities established transnational partnerships and undertook collaborations, co-productions and exchanges, only Luxembourg GR was considered to have done so extensively. Liverpool, Sibiu and Stavanger, on the other hand, gave more prominence to attracting artists of European significance. None of the cities had paid any significant attention to the development of European themes and issues, while activities relating to 'European history, identity and heritage already present in the city' were only extensively implemented in Luxembourg GR and Sibiu (ibid.).

The topic was also addressed in the conference marking the 25th anniversary of the ECoC. In its conference report, the European Commission noted that:

there was considerable discussion on whether [the criterion of European Dimension] should be further defined. ...It seemed to be agreed in the end that there were limits to how far the European dimension should be pre-defined as each city had its own European narrative depending on its geographical location and its history, its past and present populations, and that in some cases it might also extend beyond the borders of the current European Union. In some cases the cities did in fact have a good European dimension in their projects, but did not make it visible enough in their communication material. This was therefore an area where cities needed to do more and could also benefit from advice early on (2010: 6).

The fact that cities continue to experience difficulties when dealing with the European Dimension is also apparent when looking at the reports delivered by the various Selection Panels. As noted within Chapter 3, despite having made their decision to award the ECoC title to certain cities, in their final reports the Selection Panels still often express their concerns regarding the European Dimension of the winning proposal. This is not specific to particular kinds of cities, but rather a generalised issue affecting 58% of all successful bidding proposals in the period 2005 to 2019. The following examples represent cities of all sizes and geographical location, and include both long-term and recent EU members, therefore suggesting that this issue is not specific to the type of city:

- France 2013 (Marseille-Provence): “the European dimension requires greater emphasis. Contacts with other countries in the Union should be more developed and lasting partnerships established. It should be possible to communicate the experience of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue proposed by Marseille widely in Europe” (Selection Panel, 2008a: 4).
- Sweden 2014 (Umeå): “a lot of work is still to be achieved by Umeå [...] to make the event a success, notably in terms of European dimension”; “The Panel will expect Umeå to set out in 2014 to offer Europe in general and cities and regions in other European countries in particular a new European cultural perspective from its position in the far North of the continent” (Selection Panel, 2009b: 4-5). In particular, the Panel “will wish to see that the events of 2014 should be made accessible to young people from other European countries. The organizers should undertake efforts to enable students and backpackers to participate in the cultural events and help with encouraging” (*ibid.*: 4). (See also similar comment on Riga (Latvia 2014) in Selection Panel, 2009d: 2.)
- Belgium 2015 (Mons): “The European dimension of the programme should go beyond networking and be further developed on the basis of the themes put forward. The highlighting of Europe’s cultural diversity should also be deepened. Contacts with other countries of the Union will have to be developed and lasting partnerships established” (Monitoring & Advisory Panel, 2012: 5).
- Cyprus 2017 (Paphos): “[T]he city’s development in a broader European context should be considered by developing European co-operation and connections based on European themes”. The panel even suggested that “the issue of migration, integration and inter-cultural dialogue might be an interesting European theme to develop” (Selection Panel, 2012a: 9).

Importantly, however, it should be noted that the opportunity for the Selection Panel – and, subsequently, the Monitoring & Advisory Panel – to offer some early feedback and advice may improve the chances of fulfilment of the European Dimension. Although evidence of this is still scarce, one example is Tallinn 2011, which was advised to change the focus of its original programme theme, ‘Folk and Fairy Tales’, as it was not considered sufficiently outward-looking. This resulted in a more “focused and coherent” theme, defined as ‘Opening up to the Sea’ (ECORYS, 2012a). Although the final programme presented more local than international events, its focus was better suited to the year’s budget and allowed the city to succeed in exploring European themes within individual projects; that is, rather than risk missing out on such an opportunity altogether by relying on its originally broader, but eventually cancelled, international project plans.

This issue suggests another reason for the ongoing challenge in recent editions of the Programme: namely, the continued growth in local agendas for host cities, and the high proportion of funding derived from local and national sources when compared with EU support. Local (rather than European) agendas as a core motivation for bidding have grown, particularly since the ECoC began to be seen as a catalyst for urban regeneration. As such, for many cities (and the stakeholders leading the process), hosting the ECoC is primarily about addressing their own particular needs and agendas, rather than about

reflecting on the meaning of being European or exploring a European Dimension. The main limitation in this approach, when it occurs, is that local and European agendas are often seen in opposition to each other, rather than as two complementary dimensions.

In this study's second expert workshop, one of the participants noted that with the creation of spin-off events specific to respective countries (such as the *UK City of Culture* programme), it becomes even more pressing to look at the European Dimension as providing a key point of distinction for the ECoC Programme. The participant argued that cities exclusively interested in dealing with domestic issues should look into such alternative national programmes, while ECoC candidates accept that the purpose of their bidding and eventual hosting should be to connect their locality with a wider European framework and open up an international dialogue. In other words, in the context of an ECoC, hosts should stop seeing European and local agendas as competing with each other, and instead regard them as being complementary, to inform reflection and representation of their cultural identity (as was partly explored in the case of Tallinn 2011 above). The complexity and possibilities of making both agendas more complementary are discussed below.

European Dimension and issues of local identity

The relationship between the European Dimension on the one hand, and local concerns on the other hand, is central to the work of two authors in particular. Sassatelli (2008; 2009; also see 2002) and Lähdesmäki (2009; 2010; 2012b; 2012c) both address the way in which the European Dimension of the Programme affects processes of identity construction for inhabitants of ECoC cities, both at the European and the local levels. According to Sassatelli, the ECoC initiative can be considered as "a primary example of EU attempts at awakening European consciousness by promoting its symbols, while respecting the content of national cultures" (2002: 435). She describes the ECoC as "the EU's most direct attempt, both practical and symbolic, at creating a European cultural space" (2008: 226) and notes that the implementation of the Programme has resulted in projects widely varying in scale, scope, objectives and means, carefully balancing the local and the European (*ibid.*: 234-5). Lähdesmäki (2012c: 67) states that the underlying strategy of the European Dimension requirement is "to get the cities to present themselves as a part of the common European cultural identity". At the same time, she notes that through the Programme:

the cultural integration process of Europe [...] seems to be generated as a bottom-up process, starting from the cities and their local and regional institutions to the citizens themselves, even though the direction of the process is the opposite.

Lähdesmäki's study of Pécs as ECoC in 2010 shows that Europe, Europeanness and a common European cultural identity were quite central to the city's promotional material and programme. According to this study:

the abstract ideas of unity and diversity of the European cultural identity are clearly present in the promotional material [while] in the program, the 'European dimension' is present both on the practical level, referring to the collaboration between artists and other cultural actors from different member states, and in various European themes on the contentual level (2012b: 70).

These themes, Lähdesmäki notes in a different publication:

were not always explicitly articulated as European; however, they were often discursively produced as such in the promotional material of the city, e.g. by using references to Europe's history, cultural canon and canonized works of art, monuments and artists (Lähdesmäki, 2012a: 3).

Having emphasised that cultural heritage and history appeared to be the main point of departure for the discourse on Europeanness in Pécs 2010 (Lähdesmäki, 2012b), the author goes on to show that this is also the case in the EU's own documents on the ECoC Programme:

Even though the guide (European Commission, 2009) emphasizes in the beginning that the EC[o]C program should not only focus on 'architectural heritage' or 'the historical assets of the city', both the decisions on the ECC and the guide itself explicate the expected elements of the EC[o]C program in terms of cultural and historical heritage (Lähdesmäki, 2012c: 69).

Studying the applications of Istanbul 2010, Pécs 2010, Tallinn 2011 and Turku 2011, Lähdesmäki (2009) finds that the meanings of concepts such as local culture, local identity, regionality, Europeanness and European heritage are generally presented as self-evident rather than explained on an individual basis; moreover, all bids seemed to follow the principle of there being a necessary interplay between regions and Europe in the construction of the identity (or identities) of a city and its inhabitants. Despite individual differences, all cities followed the instructions and criteria that have been formulated by the EU in order to apply for the title in a similar way; as a result, discussions, definitions and depictions of the identities of the four cities were also quite similar, with 'Europeanness' always reflected by way of reference to cultural, historical and artistic canons. In all bid books:

European culture is seen manifested in those works of art and cultural sites which are valued (written valuable masterpieces) in western art and cultural history. [...] the local and regional works of art and cultural sites are seen to form parallels with general artistic movements in western countries, in other words, the canon is paralleled. This means that the local and regional cultures are often seen in a profoundly official sense and in the frames of high culture (Lähdesmäki, 2009: 219).

Secondly, all 2010 and 2011 host cities presented themselves as "a kind of borderland", or a meeting point for different kinds of cultural features, which was often enhanced with reference to the city's history. By emphasising the city's connections to other European cities and countries, these hosts, which in one way or another could be viewed as being at the margins of Europe, are transformed from a peripheral locality to one of centrality and significance. According to Lähdesmäki, this reinforces the dominant aspirations of EU cultural policy "by stressing ideas of cultural dialogue, interaction and, even in some sense, unification" (2009: 220):

The EU's decisions, instructions and evaluation and selection criteria of the European Capitals of Culture have an effect on the language, plans and programs of the cities applying for and obtaining the title. Thus, the application books, as well as all official or promotion material of the cities, reflect the rhetoric of the EU, sometimes even in detail, because it is a prerequisite for a successful application. This prerequisite makes the application books quite similar in their views on locality, regionality and Europeanness (*ibid.*: 217-8; see also Lähdesmäki, 2012c).

Extending this analysis to the experience of ECoC audiences, Lähdesmäki (2012b: 3) concludes that “[t]he ECoC programme creates an ideological frame for the urban cultural event that directs not only the implementation but also the reception and experiences of ECoC events”. Her analysis of discourses of Europeanness in the reception of ECoC events in Pécs 2010 concludes that the programme succeeded in “producing both top-down-based notions of Europeanness and subject-based feelings and experiences of Europeanness, of which many people become aware because of the frame of the ECoC programme” (2012a: 12). However, the study also reveals that audiences perceived ‘Europeanness’ in a very heterogeneous way, as well as mostly in an abstract manner, “as a social and mental project, rather than as any localized qualities in physical places”; only a few respondents discussed Europeanness through common European heritage, monuments or historical sites (Lähdesmäki, 2012b: 11). This confirms the complexity of approaches related to the European Dimension and the existing challenge to develop appropriate tools for their assessment.

In trying to explain this complexity, Sassatelli (2008) argues that the “rhetorical space” provided by the formula ‘unity in diversity’ works as both limiting and enabling for host cities. She finds that although this “may well be more the result of necessity than virtue, [...] in the [ECoC] the European framework could only obtain a wide acceptance on the condition that it would not impose a specific and exclusive content.” (240-1) Lähdesmäki (2010: 32) notes a potential conceptual problem in this area:

The possibility for cultural dialogue presumes an existing cultural distinction and presupposition that ‘European cultures’ are limited to the borders of Europe. Thus, the decision creates an impression that the cultures of ‘other parts of the world’ or cultures of outsiders (like immigrants) are not a part of European cultures.

On a slightly different but related note, O’Callaghan (2012: 188-9) argues that:

the sets of objectives that are presupposed in the event – such as fostering cooperation between cultural operators and practitioners in the host member state and other member states, fostering the participation of citizens and forming part of a sustainable long-term approach to local cultural development (European Council 2006) – are not readily reconcilable with each other, primarily in that they presuppose the importance of a European integration agenda at the local level.

For other cities, the issue with fully accepting the European Dimension requirement as formulated at present is to ensure they are not seen as politically compromised. For instance, in the context of Bruges 2002, Hugo De Greef, the City Intendant, noted:

We have developed our programme starting from the past and the history, but bearing in mind that Bruges is actually also a modern city with great interests in present culture and art, and for that reason also a European city. The aspects of European culture and cultural heritage belong indeed to the European character of our programme, but they are in no sense dictated or prescribed by European regulations, or documents or structural contexts. The link with the European Community is restricted to a twofold aspect. The title of the programme ‘Bruges 2002 Cultural Capital of Europe’ is given by Europe and the projects are financially supported by a ‘ridiculously’ small subsidy of 500,000 Euro. The projects that we worked out with this financial support and the title ‘Bruges 2002’ are clearly connected with Europe, but there is no further institutional or structural European policy that determined or influenced our programme (Decoutere, 2003: n.p.).

What is revealed by this debate concerning the effects of the European Dimension on the construction of identities for ECoC cities and their inhabitants is that, although it would appear that a narrative regarding the European Dimension is being produced discursively (despite, or perhaps because of, the fact that this dimension has not been clearly defined), there is still a need to rethink the European Dimension discourse within ECoC requirements.

The challenge lies within the tension between the wish to have a Programme with a genuine European added value – a requirement for any cultural action undertaken at the European level due to the centrality of the principle of subsidiarity within EU cultural policy – and the necessity for the Programme to be fully open to local interpretation, to allow for the different ways in which Europe is defined and/or valued in each place. In some cases, this may require the start of a previously non-existent conversation, and being open to the possibility that there may be some interrogation around what Europe really means to diverse communities within ECoC hosts. This would require welcoming an honest debate, without fear that the outcome may not adhere to current EU cultural policy assumptions but, instead, may help update them and make them more authentic to, or better connected with, contemporary European identities.

Areas of opportunity

Despite these challenges, there are also important areas of opportunity and examples of successful attempts at using the European Dimension as a core element in a city's programme. While remarking on the limitations, noted earlier, the ex-post evaluation of the 2007 and 2008 ECoCs also notes, in respect of activities with a European Dimension, that:

all were effective in undertaking collaborations, co-productions and exchanges, although this activity was only extensive in three ECoC; in the other (Sibiu), collaboration was peripheral to the main cultural programme and primarily took place only with the other title holder; similarly, all were effective in establishing transnational partnerships with other cities or regions, but this activity was only extensive in Luxembourg GR; three of the ECoC were effective in meeting their objective of attracting artists of European significance; in the other (Luxembourg GR), this was a less prominent objective although many European artists were attracted; activities related to 'European history, identity and heritage already present in the city' were implemented to a modest degree in all four ECoC, although all were relatively effective (ECORYS, 2009a: vii).

Taking the European Dimension as a focus for substantive projects with a defining role in respective host programmes, rather than just individual events, is most notable for cities from 2010, thus suggesting that full implementation of the 2006 Decision may be having an effect. Essen for the Ruhr 2010, Istanbul 2010 and Pécs 2010 collaborated on a project with students researching questions about European urban societies (Essen 2010, 2009: 10). Examples of successful European exploration are reported by all three 2010 hosts.

The ex-post evaluation of Essen for the Ruhr 2010 notes that "the European dimension was a core component ... and one of the main reasons for the success of the original application". This ability to provide "[a] model for Europe was one of the three selection criteria for projects, meaning that all activity had to address themes and issues of European interest in some way" and even if, content wise, the programme placed "most emphasis on regional themes, it did seek to link these with European issues" (ECORYS, 2011c: 31). The report also notes that "the programme as a whole placed most importance on cultural collaborations and 'exchanges of creativity' rather than visits and tours by artists of European or international significance" (*ibid.*). One project that is highlighted as distinct and successful in growing European exchanges was the *TWINS* project. Indeed, the president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, is quoted as stating:

The *TWINS* project is an excellent example, with Essen and the Ruhr using the 'Capital of Culture' status as a springboard to activate cultural networks and stimulate cultural ideas across Europe. With thousands of cultural groups involved across a wide range of artistic disciplines, the 53 towns and cities of the Ruhr are using their 200 twin town contacts to reach out to diversity and imagination across Europe (Essen 2010, 2010b: 3).

The most distinguishing factor of the *TWINS* project is that all activities under this umbrella, developed by 1,700 participants across subjects ranging from photography to urban planning, cooking, gardening or sports, all shared “a uniting factor”, that is: “every project in the Ruhr Metropolis will be co-operating with partners from our European twin towns and/or Istanbul, Pécs and Israel” (*ibid.*: 7).

In supporting a European Dimension, alongside collaboration with fellow ECoCs for the same year, Pécs 2010 identified an area with which they specifically wanted to engage:

[T]here was the aim of fostering co-operation in the Southern Cultural Zone (covering Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia). This was perceived as being a very important objective for the city in terms of defining and reinforcing the international relations of Pécs. Co-operation with neighbouring countries had existed historically but been disrupted by the war in the former Yugoslavia. Hosting the ECoC title was seen as an important opportunity for developing common cultural projects and other forms of co-operation with cities in these neighbouring countries (ECORYS, 2011c: 54).

For Istanbul 2010, the ultimate aim of the European Dimension of the programme was to support Turkey’s candidacy for EU membership:

The activities implemented within the eventual cultural programme retained a strong focus on the European dimension, though in practice the balance of emphasis was perhaps more towards the historical perspective and slightly less on modern and contemporary European culture. Nonetheless, the cultural programme did feature a suite of ‘International Relations projects’ which involved extensive collaborations, particularly with other cities holding the ECoC title – Liverpool 2008, Pécs 2010 and Essen for the Ruhr 2010. Projects involving co-operation with artists and operators from other countries were also present in most of the other strands of activity, e.g. Visual Arts, Music and Opera, Theatre and Performing Arts (ECORYS, 2011c: 72).

The above seems to indicate a shift in focus towards a greater range of European Dimension activity which is more strategic and taken more seriously, in comparison to the period covered by the Palmer/Rae Associates report. However, their warning regarding what cities plan to do, and what actually happens during the year, still needs to be taken into account. Furthermore, clear evidence of the effects of the European Dimension is still sparse. However, based on the few examples that can be found in the literature, the cautious conclusion may be drawn that there appears to be room for the European Dimension to become more relevant to host cities and that there is an opportunity for genuine dialogue and reflection on the values (as well as challenges) of European culture and exchange. Chapter 7 revisits this area to offer specific recommendations.

6.3.2. Transfer of knowledge

The notion that host cities should liaise and ensure there are formal pathways to exchange views, share key lessons and warn of key challenges has existed from the early days of the Programme. There have been attempts at formalising exchanges and forming ECoC networks since 1990, when an informal ‘Network of Cultural Cities of Europe’ was first formed and funded the first comparative analysis of ECoC experiences (Myerscough, 1994). Since then, a variety of informal networks have been created. However, such exercises have been mostly fragmented, without long-term continuity and with poor centralisation of resources. As a result, while some areas have been barely researched, other assessments have been unnecessarily replicated and, in general, the large majority of the documentation analysis conducted on ECoCs has been done without following a common pattern, which results in data and discussions about specific cities that are hardly comparable.

As noted by Hugo de Greef in the context of Bruges 2002:

the organisation of an event like 'Cultural Capital of Europe' is a very serious and difficult enterprise linked with economical, financial, cultural and political aspects that have to be kept in balance. Since 1986 a lot of experience has been gained in this matter, but Europe has never gathered or safeguarded that experience in some kind of records or information centres. There are no European guidelines that can be consulted as to the practical organisation of an event like 'The Cultural Capital of Europe'. This lack of assistance from [the] European side is compensated by looking for personal contact with other colleagues who dealt with similar projects in the past. There has been some contact with our colleagues in Salamanca, but not as intense as we had expected. Most contacts were of an amicable and communicative nature with sometimes co-operation as result (Hugo de Greef; in Decoutere, 2003: 71-2).

Informal communications and networks are common, involving valuable personal initiative and trust between individuals interested in the frank exchange of experiences. In 2013, active networks include the informal European Capitals of Culture network of host city organisers and policy makers, involving representatives of recent ECoCs, as well as current and upcoming host cities. This network operates independently, and members join in and leave in an informal manner. The network does not have allocated resources and, as such, it cannot function as a repository of knowledge beyond the immediate needs of members; nor can it provide access to historical archives or information. In an attempt at addressing core lacks, the European Commission has been increasingly proactive in the funding of dedicated evaluations and piloting research frameworks for the ECoC Programme. This resulted in the funding of the comprehensive Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) study, discussed below, and regular ex-post evaluations of all ECoC cities since 2007. As mentioned earlier, the Commission also funded an ECoC Policy Network, which represented a first attempt at exploring options for the creation of a common framework for host city data collection (see ECoC Policy Network, 2010). The recommendations by the Network were taken positively. However, to date, they have not been coherently implemented. This is subject to dedicated discussion in Chapter 7.

Impact of comparative ECoC evaluations

The 2004 Palmer/Rae Associates report, the second dedicated study overview of the ECoC Programme since the first exercise in 1994 by John Myerscough, has been extensively referred to within European networks and in seminars and conferences dedicated to reflecting on the ECoC hosting process over the years. In the assessment of published literature, a quarter of documents published since 2005 explicitly mention Palmer/Rae Associates, with this proportion going up to 33% of published evaluations and 36% of published academic papers.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Please note that this may be a slight understatement as not all documents offer the possibility of a full electronic search; it is possible that some brief references may have been missed out of the 356 documents identified and analysed over this period.

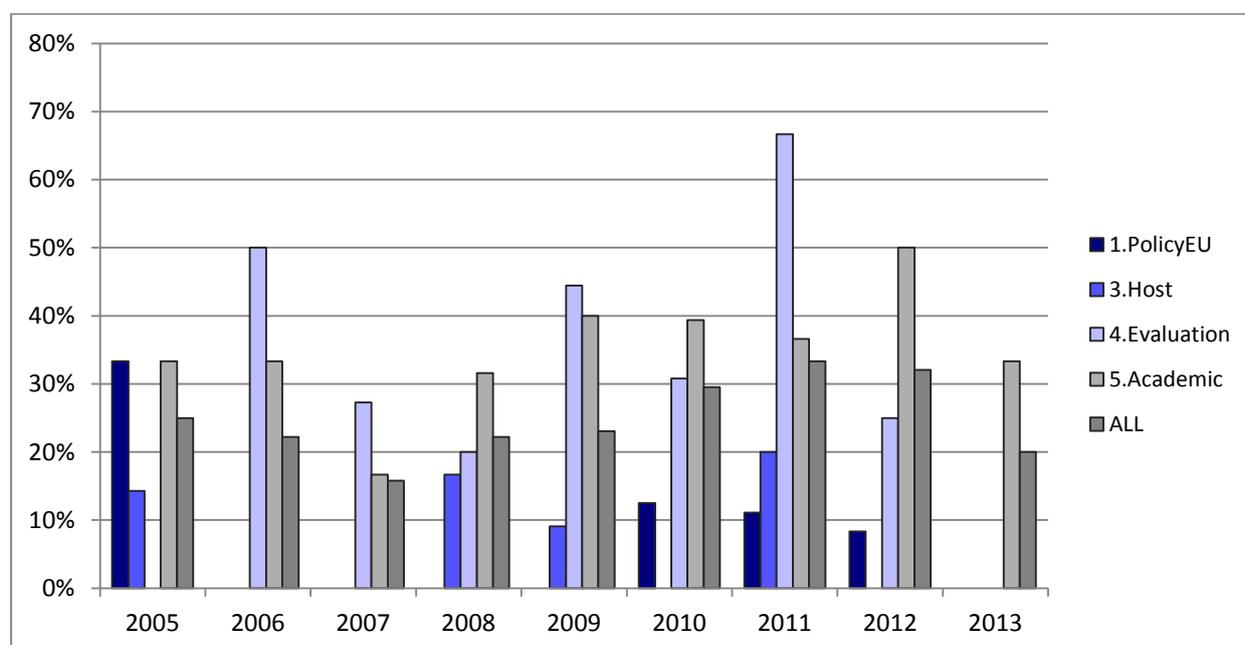
Table 11: ECoC publications (2005 – April 2013); % of documents referring to Palmer/Rae (2004a; 2004b)

	Total publications	Documents referring to PalmerRae	Percentage of references
1. PolicyEU	52	4	8%
3. Host	66	6	9%
4. Evaluation	67	22	33%
5. Academic	174	63	36%
ALL	359	95	26%

Source: ICC documentary mapping

Table 11 (above) and Figure 29 (below) show that there is a demand for comparative ECoC analysis and, when available, that this is extensively used and referred to, particularly by analysts in the academic and broader evaluation fields. Interestingly, there is a clear trough post-2012, partly explainable by the fact that, in 2013, only four months of publications have been captured so far, but perhaps also indicating that the currency of published material fades after a certain period of time. This should be compensated for with the availability of other, newer studies, such as the work by Palmer and Richards (2007; 2009), Palmer *et al.* (2011; 2012), the various ECORYS evaluations, or the current ICC study.

Figure 29: % of publications referring to Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a; 2004b), per type & year (2005-April 2013)



Source: ICC documentary mapping (publications between Jan 2005 and April 2013)

Regarding the Palmer/Rae Associates report, typical references within the published literature note that:

The now seminal 'Palmer report' [Palmer/Rae, 2004a] ...is required reading for any prospective bidding team, as are the European Commission guidelines which provide case studies of 'successful' projects. These policy networks are created and drawn upon, with actors who are successful (bid writing consultants, evaluation experts etc.) called upon, perpetuating and informing existing trends (Bullen, 2013: 67-8).

In the analysis of changing trends regarding success strategies, approaches to delivery and challenges over time, it is apparent that some of the issues detected by Palmer/Rae Associates back in 2004 have been partly addressed. This is probably largely explained by the fact that many of the report recommendations were taken on-board by the European Commission and influenced the reshaping of bidding procedures and the approach to assessment by Selection Panels from 2006 onwards. In fact, similar positive effects can be noticed as a result of subsequent evaluations, such as the work by ECORYS, which led to the identification and explicit naming of key success, as well as challenging, factors for bidding cities (see Chapter 3), previously only implicit within candidature materials and not always expressly tackled by candidate cities.

The extensive *Impacts 08* research programme on Liverpool 2008, resulting in 28 reports throughout five years, has also had a positive ripple effect in knowledge-transfer terms. On the one hand, it has been complemented by the broadest range of dedicated academic literature on a single ECoC: over 36 dedicated papers on Liverpool 2008 have been identified (64 including *Impacts 08* related material), which is a far larger number than any other ECoC – the next one being Essen for the Ruhr 2010 with 34 dedicated papers. Additionally, it was followed by the Commission-funded ECoC Policy Network (2010), which, in collaboration with six other host cities, provided grounds to expand discussion on the best framework to assess ECoC experience and pilot a replicable model for assessment.

However, these are still isolated examples, which do not guarantee the same level of dedication to evaluation across ECoC host cities and have not involved formal commitment towards unified data collection approaches. Despite the fact that other ECoC cities have also embarked on extensive longitudinal assessments (e.g. Turku 2011), without an explicit evaluation framework being agreed upon and some degree of adherence being formally requested by the Commission from the ECoC bidding stage, thorough comparisons and comprehensive knowledge-transfer remains uneven, relying on partial and informal sharing, and, thus, an unresolved challenge.

Other cultural event best practices

The growth and development of the ECoC Programme has occurred within a much broader framework of major event hosting opportunities that have proliferated and become a highly sought opportunity for development for cities across Europe as well as throughout the globe. Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a) mentioned briefly the Olympic Games official cultural programme as a reference point for ECoC hosts up to 2004. Since then, there has been a marked growth in other types of one-off cultural event initiatives, many of which have actually used the ECoC framework as the point of inspiration.

As an example, Mittag (2008) notes that:

The popularity of the ECOC program is also reflected by imitations around the world. An Arabic capital of culture was selected in 1996; a Central- and South American capital of culture has existed since 2000, Canada implemented the idea in 2003 and in 2009 the USA joined in.

Other reports go into more detail to trace the origins of these parallel initiatives, indicating that the American continent was in fact working on such a framework since 1997, as was the case with the Arabic Capital of Culture:

the Organisation of American States, including all 35 countries on the American continent, adopted the European idea by initiating an annual event called the American Capital of Culture in 1997. Though, there are some difficulties in pushing through the initiative. For example, the cities of Austin/US (2004), Saskatchewan/Canada (2005) and Toronto/Canada (2002) were offered the honour, only to decline it when they discovered the financial and personnel commitments the award implied. In Russia, the federal district of the Volga decided in 2001 to set up an event based on the EU concept (MKW GmbH, 2007: 14).

These programmes are not mentioned as a direct reference point by ECoC hosts, but some of the available evaluation reports refer to these parallel host cities and try to indicate emerging trends as a point of comparison. Palmer *et al.* (2012) make a point of listing all recent, current and upcoming hosts, and note that, in some countries, cities look into the full range of possible events available to them in a given period of time to plan a continuous bidding strategy. During the study's second expert workshop in Brussels, however, stakeholders noted that these parallel Capitals of Culture programmes are far too diverse and not strictly comparable (ICC Workshop II, June 2013). Their vision, programming approaches and funding commitments are not fully consistent over time, and they are not backed by international agencies comparable within other continents to the European Commission. As such, they must be looked at with caution. So far, it has not been possible to identify specific evidence that their approaches to policy, delivery and evaluation are in any way a point of reference worth replicating by ECoC cities.

Other initiatives that have been relevant to ECoC host cities and organisers involve collaborations between European networks and networks in other continents. Two such examples are the EU-Japan Festival and the China-Japan-South Korea initiative, which were highlighted by participants in the study's first expert workshop (ICC Workshop I, April 2013). Additionally, a recent initiative, the World Design Capital launched by the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design in 2008, is also seen as an interesting counterpoint, which offers an interesting point of reference in its approach to candidature selection, vision and programming frameworks.⁶⁹

Out of all major events in current development, the Olympic Games can be considered the event that has developed the most sophisticated framework for its staging, branding, legacy planning and long-term evaluation; and this should be considered a serious point of reference for ECoC cities. Other mega-events, from the Universal Expo to the World Cup, are either far behind the Olympic Games in terms of knowledge transfer strategies, or do not include sufficient cultural-led agendas to make the comparison relevant to the ECoC. In the case of the Olympic Games, the event incorporates a large, official cultural programme with a similar rationale to the ECoC, the so-called *Cultural Olympiad*, which has been mentioned by some authors – including Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a), Garcia (2004b; 2004c) and Gold and Gold (2005) – as a relevant reference for ECoC hosts.

For the purposes of this study, the aspect that is particularly worth considering and, potentially, adapting to the ECoC framework is the Olympic Games approach to evaluation and knowledge transfer – an exercise that has been in development since 2000, and has resulted in a detailed indicator framework and data collection requirements that host cities must adhere to as part of their host city contract. The most important aspect of this exercise is the requirement to collate certain data following a consistent pattern, so that different host cities can be compared against each other and over time. There is a degree of flexibility to allow for national and other contextual differences, but also a clear

⁶⁹ See: <http://www.worlddesigncapital.com/>.

requirement for standardisation and transparency in the choice of methods. An important aspect of this exercise is that it has been developed to respond to the needs and demands of the international community, rather than the host city and nation. As such, there is a guarantee that part of the data collection process is geared to satisfy the needs of future Games hosts, rather than just the needs of local stakeholders. This is an important difference that is not currently being properly addressed by ECoC evaluations, as most of the research exercises are funded and framed exclusively by local stakeholders, which may not give priority to the same areas that are relevant from a European point of view. This explains the lack of dedicated research on, for instance, the impacts of the ECoC European Dimension.

The Olympic knowledge-transfer⁷⁰ framework (Bianchi & Deserno, 2002) is supported by a dedicated team within the lead organisation, the International Olympic Committee, and also supported by related research teams based in dedicated Olympic Study Centres.⁷¹ The framework involves an extensive digital intranet, accessible to all Games hosts – the OGKM (Olympic Games Knowledge Management) – and regularly maintained archives, including key materials from each host city labelled and made available according to a centralised search system. As argued in Chapter 7 ('Recommendations'), this is a key area to further develop in the context of the ECoC Programme.

⁷⁰ See: UNESCO, online, 2002, Transferring Knowledge from Games to Games, International Council on Archives, Section of International Organisations (ICA/SIO), 28 Session, Rome www.unesco.org/webworld/ica_sio/docs/28session/annex7.ppt.

⁷¹ See: <http://www.olympic.org/olympic-studies-centre>.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Conclusions

This study has considered evidence available for the first three Phases of the ECoC Programme (1985-2019), as articulated in published material about 58 cities⁷² or selected expert reflections across the Programme. The main ambition was to identify: the most pervasive success strategies; evidence of impact and long-term effects; and indications of the main recurrent challenges.

The Programme has developed considerably since its inception, and is nowadays a fully mature, year-long, international event, with the capacity to shape and be shaped by European (and global) trends in major cultural event hosting. Host cities have used the Programme to pioneer, as well as replicate, techniques and approaches that are today widely accepted and expected (e.g. Glasgow 1990, which became iconic of currently commonplace 'culture-led regeneration' strategies) and keep experimenting with new ways for culture to shape or influence wider agendas (e.g. Essen for the Ruhr 2010 using culture and the creative industries to create a new regional 'Metropolis').

Common approaches and success strategies

The Programme has evolved from widely diverse beginnings, mostly specific to individual host cities, into a highly professionalised affair. This means that key approaches and strategies for success are currently applicable to the majority of cities, regardless of size, geography or length of EU membership. Some of the most noticeable common approaches include:

- Developing an aspirational vision aimed at providing opportunities for transformation.
- Using the ECoC to generate a momentum conducive to shared cross-sector agendas – commonly across culture, tourism, education and social services – in order to position or reposition a city and, occasionally, its surrounding region.
- A rapid first growth and then a sustained effort to maximise engagement and identify as diverse an audience as possible, supporting this with ever more professionalised social programmes, including volunteering and active participation schemes.

The above commonalities suggest an 'ECoC style' of operations and hosting processes – one that, so far, is being shared informally through personal networks, but would benefit from being formally translated into a common 'ECoC know-how' for easier adaptation and knowledge-transfer. Concerns over the desirability of advancing towards too standardised a format or framework for operations has limited this process, allowing greater freedom and flexibility than is the case in other major events (such as the Olympic Games or Expos). However, it also explains some of the ongoing challenges, noted below.

Effects and impacts

The Programme has proven capable of generating noticeable impacts in respective host cities; however, with the broadening of objectives and expectations, the breadth and ambition of related claims has also grown and these are not always matched by evidence. Some of the areas of positive impact for which evidence is stronger are the following:

⁷² This includes the bidding proposals for ten upcoming cities, from 2014 to 2018.

- The Programme can have a remarkable effect on the city's cultural vibrancy. Its contribution to strengthening networks, opening up venues for new collaborations, encouraging new work to continue, and raising capacity and ambition is commonly acknowledged.
- It is apparent that cities with a previously low (and at times, even negative) profile can experience an image renaissance, attracting considerable media attention and enhancing local, national and international perceptions. Media interest in respective host countries has grown over time and covers a broader time spectrum than was originally the case, with it now beginning in earnest at the bidding stage. International interest is, however, more changeable and depends upon the strategic capacity of respective hosts. With the growth of digital and, particularly, social media platforms, media trends could change considerably, but to capture such effects in full requires new ways of thinking, both in terms of ECoC promotion and media monitoring.
- Claims to economic impact have been at times over-inflated or lacking in robust evidence (particularly in terms of job creation). However, it is apparent that the ECoC can have considerable impact on immediate to medium-term tourism trends; and, in the case of cities capable of undergoing considerable repositioning, these effects can be sustained for many years after the ECoC. Glasgow 1990 is one of the best examples of long-term effect, Liverpool 2008 achieved unprecedented growth during the year itself and Linz 2009 offers a good indicator of a city not previously well-known demonstrating good, steady growth.

Other areas of impact, from social, physical and political effects, to the added-value of the Programme's European Dimension, are harder to prove, but this is partly due to the fact that appropriate methodologies for capture are also more complex. Discussion on the capacity to create and sustain social impacts keeps growing and, given the continuous development of new and more far-reaching techniques to engage communities and ensure active participation, this is the one area of ECoC impact most likely to grow over the coming years. The European Dimension issue is the other area involving great potential, particularly since the implementation of the 2006 Decision (the effects of which cannot yet be fully captured as they only apply to ECoC editions after 2010). For the latter to be strengthened further after decades of mixed interpretation and application, one common view is that it must be seen as an opportunity to open debate with the local population so that discussion on European identity and exchange is clearly seen as complementing – rather than competing with – discussion about their local identity.

The future

As already noted, with greater ambition and claims to success, come greater expectations and greater demands for accountability. The ECoC Programme has become a popular subject of study, and the number of independent publications, in practitioner as well as academic circles, keeps growing. However, the capacity to understand the real worth of the Programme and the applicability of key learning across different countries and points in time requires a better coordinated approach to assessment – so that it is possible to infer which dimensions are comparable and transferrable, and which are context-specific.

As is outlined in this study's Recommendations (Section 7.2), the next big step for the Programme (after considerable advances having been made in terms of Programme concept, selection processes and immediate monitoring) is to develop a far more robust and objective data collection mechanism, with clearer specifications as to *what* should be collated by each city, and, importantly, *how* this should be collated and subsequently presented. This is no easy task, and it is an area that has lagged behind most high profile events of global relevance, from Expos to football World Cups. However, at this point in the Programme, after gaining such relevance and a profile as one of the most prestigious EU initiatives, this study shows that the main challenge to the Programme's growth and

sustainability is its own capacity to tell the story of what has been achieved without having to resort to anecdote and 'myth management' (as so often noted by two-time ECoC director Robert Palmer). It is indeed disappointing that not much can be made – in terms of a coherent, progressive narrative – of the impressive wealth of experience accumulated over three decades, due to the lack of comparable frameworks. This is not to deny the value of subjective (self-reported) interpretations of 'what matters' and what works for cities; however some simple, but firmly applied, guidelines for ECoC documentation could ensure that the story of the next 30 years can be told with even greater confidence, and so provide an invaluable archive of European cultural aspirations and achievements for generations to come.

7.2. Recommendations

This study has taken place in 2013, in parallel with the process of revision and update to the legal base for the ECoC Programme from 2020 onwards; as such, there has been no opportunity to access the final wording for the new EU Action. The choice of key recommendations below are based on: the assessment of the available literature to date; the data available to populate selected benchmark indicators; and expert discussions conducted via the two dedicated study expert workshops in Liverpool and Brussels.

7.2.1. Previous summary policy and legislative recommendations

It is useful to start by reviewing the key recommendations emerging out of the ex-post evaluation report by ECORYS on the 2011 host cities, as the main points made have been an important reference to the revisions to post-2019 ECoC legislation during 2013. The main recommendations are:

- 1) The European Commission should continue the ECoC Action as a high-profile and symbolic initiative of the EU, which makes a significant contribution to policy objectives in the field of culture and in the wider fields.
- 2) When preparing the legal basis for ECoC post-2019, the Commission should consider expanding the objectives of the action to include enhancing the governance of culture at the local level, supporting social development and citizenship and supporting the economic development of the city particularly through development of its cultural and creative sectors.
- 3) There is a need for a more explicit and comprehensive set of selection criteria especially related to governance and funding. Such criteria should be consistently applied not only for selecting the cities but also for monitoring progress.
- 4) The Melina Mercouri Prize also should be strongly tied to the cities' progress in delivering their commitments especially in relation to selection criteria. Recipients of the Prize should also be required to take appropriate steps to publicise the use of Prize money in their cultural programmes.
- 5) There is a need for clarification of what budget is provided at the application stage, and particularly whether the budget in cities' application includes only the funding that is to be managed by the delivery agency or whether it also covers the funding secured by the projects and other cultural and public organisations. The Commission should consider providing clarifications for the cities as to what funding should be considered as direct funding for ECoC when compared to the mainstream funding for cultural activities in the city.

- 6) There is a need for more explicit requirements for using the EU logo within communication materials in order to ensure the visibility of the European dimension. Consideration should therefore be given to including the requirement to use the EU logo among the criteria for awarding the Melina Mercouri Prize.
- 7) As recommended by the evaluation of the ECoC Selection and Monitoring Panel, consideration should be given to introducing in the new legal base for ECoC post-2019 a requirement for Member States to indicate clearly from the outset of the process in their country the amount of funding, if any, which they will make available for the winning city.
- 8) Cities should be encouraged to implement a core set of research tasks in order to provide evidence of the achievement of their objectives, including a survey of residents and visitors. As part of that, the European Commission could consider a requirement for each ECoC to commission evaluations satisfying certain key criteria.
- 9) The Commission should consider awarding the Melina Mercouri Prize only once there is clear evidence that the commitments made from the selection phase through to the second monitoring phase have been fulfilled, especially those related to finance. On that basis, it may therefore be necessary to award the Prize much later, e.g. during the title-year itself, in which case it would serve as a source of funding for legacy activities rather than for activities during the title-year. (ECORYS, 2012a: x):

The remainder of this Chapter frames additional recommendations responding to the key challenges identified in Chapter 6. They are organised into six main areas:

- Strengthening the vision
- Maximising public engagement
- Effective governance and financing
- Research and knowledge-transfer
- European Dimension
- Legacy and sustainability

7.2.2. Strengthening the vision

Encouraging a clear vision from the outset, rather than detailed programming

Candidate and host cities should articulate a strong vision for their city's ECoC journey from the outset, and this vision should cover both the period leading up to the ECoC and the intended legacy of the ECoC in the years after its passing. Contributors to the ICC dedicated ECoC expert workshop (ICC Workshop I, April 2013) suggested that there should be two versions of the vision document: a simpler public version, which can be used to assist in creating coherence for media communications and to manage citizen expectations; and an internal version that can afford to be more detailed and complex in assisting the delivery team in establishing key priorities.

The most important aspect of this exercise is to have clarity about what the ECoC vision is for, how it differs from (but complements) existing or new city cultural policies and cultural strategy, and how it differs from actual event programming. As noted in Chapter 6, the most common limitation to the development of a coherent vision is excessive emphasis on specific programming detail at an early stage of the process. In this sense, the bid stage for an ECoC year should be about communicating a strategy and a vision, not a fully developed programme of events. It should be about defining the journey that cities embark on in a way that can raise aspirations and encourage joined-up thinking. It also needs to provide

an easily transferable structure, which has the clarity – but also flexibility – to adapt and evolve from the bidding to the delivery stage (ICC Workshop I, April 2013).

Recommended actions

For the European Commission:

- Rephrase the current ECoC Applicant Guideline requirements regarding “II Structure of the programme for the event” (European Commission, 2012). In particular, avoid reference to Point 2. ‘What main events will mark the year’, which, although indicated as “optional at the pre-selection stage”, encourages an early level of detail that can be seen as detrimental to the coherence of the final programme.

For ECoC candidates:

- Focus attention on the phrasing of the overarching vision and concept for the ECoC year, ensuring this can provide a distinct but flexible framework that can guide specific programme development and an appropriate communication strategy over time.
- Ensure that this original vision can translate from the candidature to the delivery stage, so that it will be fit to be taken over and appropriated by a potentially different operational team.

Distinguishing the ECoC vision from a cultural and communications strategy

After having defined a strong vision, it is important to establish a communications strategy to help in the build-up of the ECoC year following a city’s successful bid. A communications strategy should define realistic milestones to present the vision at the right points in time. ICC workshop participants noted that communicating with the press too early can raise expectations to unrealistic levels. In this sense, a clear vision and mission statement can be as much about managing expectations (as well as managing disappointment).

Recommended actions

For ECoC organisers:

- Beware of the cyclical nature of an ECoC hosting process. Ensure that the vision is clearly set up and understood by the core team before attempting broader communication.
- Identify the right milestones to make public statements and avoid making statements ahead of time, which may raise (and eventually fail to meet) expectations.

Emphasising the Programme’s cultural dimension

Participants in the 25th anniversary conference insisted that, despite the economic regeneration potential of the ECoC Programme, it was important not to lose sight of the intrinsic value of culture and what it means for individuals and the creativity of European societies (European Commission, 2010: 5). It was, therefore, considered necessary to find a balance between the cultural objectives of the event and other local development priorities, and to ensure that the event core vision prioritises cultural – over other – agendas. This point is important in order to address other entrenched challenges, from the difficulty in making ECoC programming ‘stand out’ in marketing terms, to the value of exploring a meaningful European Dimension, ensuring local ownership and engagement, and securing long-term sustainability. The latter should be strengthened if the event’s cultural vision is properly linked to the city’s long-term cultural strategy, as noted later.

Recommended actions

For ECoC organisers:

- Place a cultural ambition at the heart of the ECoC vision, and arrange other (economic, social or wider) objectives as subsidiaries.
- Link the main underlying cultural objective with existing local cultural strategy plans. In the absence of a previous cultural strategy, use this cultural objective(s) as a springboard or platform for a new culture-driven strategy.
- Ensure that the core vision for the ECoC emerges out of broad consultation with key stakeholders across sectors, but that the primacy of a cultural objective is understood and agreed as the leading reference.

Greater clarity in the definition of respective creative industry sectors

One way of protecting the event's cultural dimension, while also connecting with the economic agenda, is to encourage cities to be more focused and explicit in their definition of their creative industries (if they are presented as key to the ECoC) and the way in which they differ (or not) from the rest of the arts and cultural sector. Campbell (2011: 517) points to research that suggests that whilst an engagement with developing creative businesses is often mentioned by bidding cities, this seldom manifests itself in tangible programmes or meaningful intervention. Whilst the benefits of the increased attention to creative and cultural practice within a city that the ECoC often brings will likely have many short-term benefits in this area, a much deeper, sustained engagement is required if a sustainable legacy with respect to the creative industries is truly a goal of ECoC cities. Fundamentally, cities must also be clear about what they *mean* when they refer to 'creative industries'. Clearly some cities conceive of these primarily as arts institutions and practices, or businesses that are mainly part of the tourism offer of the city. Others are referring to, for instance, design agencies or web development companies. A 'one-size-fits-all' approach is thus not appropriate to such a wide range of activity, and so cities must consider not only the *extent* to which they see the ECoC playing a role in promoting 'creative' activity, but also what *specific* activities they seek to focus their attentions on.

Recommended actions

For ECoC organisers:

- Reflect on and make explicit what is meant by the 'creative industries' in respective host environments.
- If this is an area still underdeveloped in a particular host city or country, use the ECoC planning and hosting experience as an opportunity to better define this area and to explore meaningful links between cultural and economic objectives.

7.2.3. Maximising public engagement

A major challenge to public engagement has been noted as the potential local alienation created as a result of excessive emphasis on flagship or iconic activity promotion in order to attract external audiences and tourists. In this context, the most important areas of recommendation involve paying continuous attention to local sensitivities and avoiding the 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Priority tools for engagement highlighted by this study are:

- **Active participation:** As noted in the Post-2019 Online consultation, "Citizens should be involved in the projects as their creators not audience only" (ECORYS, 2011b: 13). This approach is increasingly common within the ECoC hosting process and should be praised and further encouraged.

- **Volunteering programmes:** This is another area that has become increasingly common and effective as a tool for ECoC engagement, as well as a platform to strengthen local citizenship and broader engagement in city issues beyond the ECoC year. Such programmes are most effective when they target particular communities, making a distinction between the needs of young people as volunteers (who would benefit from the scheme being linked to further training and job opportunity creation) and those of other communities (such as retired people, who come with different life experiences and expectations not related to the job market).
- **Social media technologies:** Digital technologies – in particular, user-led social media platforms – offer new opportunities for ECoC host city organisers to engage with the public, and particularly younger people. Social media should not be used only as a platform for marketing communications, but also as a space for creation and dialogue with diverse communities. There is very limited research on this area, either in the context of the ECoC specifically or other major events, so reference points are scarce (Miah and Adi, 2009, offer one of the few dedicated studies in the context of Liverpool 2008). As such, both its operationalisation and analysis of impact should be marked as a key priority area for testing and development.

Recommended actions

For the European Commission:

- Encourage and reward the close involvement of sectors such as formal education and social services as key ECoC stakeholders.
- Encourage hosts to programme a minimum percentage of activity beyond the city centre and in socio-economically disadvantaged areas or hard-to-reach communities.
- Work towards a more refined framework for data gathering and monitoring so that it is possible to capture the following distinctions (currently unavailable). For example:
 - *Number of participants and type of participant*
(as distinct from number of audiences and number of volunteers)
 - *Type of volunteer programmes*
(Specify whether age, ethnic or other demographic groups have been targeted)
 - *Digital impact*
(Propose types of digital engagement; e.g. user-led digital forums)
 - *Proportion of activities taking place in traditionally hard-to-reach areas*

For ECoC host cities:

- Work should be strategic, explicit and targeted.
- It must recognise the role of key sectors (e.g. educational, social services)
- It must respect and find space for communities to develop their own identities and respond to the ECoC in their own terms.
- Hosts must collect reasonable data to explain volume and type of engagement, using standardised definitions provided by the Commission or justifying the need for additional / different type of definitions adequate to their programming.

7.2.4. Effective governance and financing

Utilise a flexible but effective constellation of organisations within the host city to manage the ECoC process

Although governance and financing is an area supported by extensive debate and benefiting from the sharing of know-how via informal networks, it continues to set a major challenge for host cities. Building on the available literature as well as the analysis of workshop discussions, the key aspects to take into account in order to set the right balance between flexibility and continuity are as follows:

Recommended actions

For the European Commission:

- Encourage the continuity of core teams and staff members, but be open to the possibility of senior role changes over time, to ensure the ECoC counts on the most appropriate champion for every stage of the process (e.g. the right person to lead the ECoC bid may not be the right person to deliver the event year).

For ECoC hosts:

- Understand the cycle of an ECoC hosting process, and accept that priorities and skills change from the bid to the lead-up and event stages, as well as in the immediate post-event phase.
- Plan ahead to cope with the potential loss of know-how due to people moving on; as the cases of Lille 2004 and Liverpool 2008 show, retaining some key staff throughout the process (ideally, from the bid stage) maximises continuity and results in unique expertise that can be of great added value in the ECoC legacy development phase.

Balancing the relationship between political support, accountability and independence

This is an area that has been extensively discussed in previous assessment exercises. Suggestions arising from the post-2019 Public Consultation meeting noted, in particular, the risks of tensions between national and local politics and artistic independence and highlighted “the value ... in setting up an independent artistic team responsible for the artistic programme of the ECoC, which has other advantages, such as facilitating private sponsorship” (ECORYS, 2011a: 8). In order to strengthen this, the Consultation report notes that:

[t]he presence of the European Commission and the independent panel in the monitoring process is also very useful in limiting the risk of interference from national and local politics, and it could be reinforced in the future (ECORYS, 2011a: 8-9).

The ECoC Bid Selection Panel has also emphasised the importance of a strong management body with an artistic vision that is separate from local politics. Responding to Cork’s 2005 bid, for instance, it noted that the:

[s]election and recruitment of the chief executive is of major importance and should be planned carefully and be implemented as soon as possible. The city should aim to appoint a chief executive of international standing and who has experience of European cultural networking. The city may also wish to establish a team of international advisors to help with the development of the programme and other issues (Selection Panel, 2001: 10).

However, the most relevant point of caution emerging out of the current study is that, while such recommendations are still valuable, they cannot risk political disengagement. Indeed, the active interest and support of local councillors is essential to the sustainability and credibility of the programme. Further, the suggestion that the ECoC should be led by a chief executive of international standing with support from international advisors needs to be complemented by the involvement of local staff with strong roots in the city and credibility amongst the immediate communities of interest. Ultimately, the issue of independence should always be balanced against the need for accountability to the public, both via their political representatives and directly.

Recommended actions

For the European Commission, Selection Panels and Monitoring Panels:

- Reframe official advice so that the aspiration to independence from politics does not risk political disengagement.

For ECoC organisers:

- Take due consideration of the most appropriate roles for the local political class: away from day-to-day decision making, but central to ECoC championing.
- Ensure that key ECoC operations remain transparent and can be justified (accounted for) to the general public.
- Make a distinction between artistic independence and cultural responsibilities (e.g. balancing the aspiration to take risks in certain aspects of the programme, with the need to be inclusive and representative of diverse constituencies).

Budgetary stability

Participants to the post-2019 Public Consultation Meeting suggested that:

candidate cities should be asked to prioritise the different parts of their programme during the selection process and make the distinction between those parts that would risk being dropped in case of a lower budget and those that they commit to implement. While it was felt important that ECoC are not selected on the sole basis of the size of their respective budgets, the panel should assess how realistic the programmes and the budgets of candidate cities are, to avoid giving the title to cities with overambitious programmes which are not likely to be implemented. The participants also highlighted the value of the role that the monitoring panel can and does play in working together with ECoC in cases where programmes have to be altered due to changing budgets, so as to ensure the highest possible level of continuity (ECORYS, 2011a: 9).

This recommendation is being implemented as part of the current post-2019 ECoC Programme revisions.

7.2.5. Formalising knowledge transfer

Although the methods and practices involved in monitoring and evaluation have improved considerably since Phase 3 of the Programme, considerable lacunae remain that would be addressed to a great extent by encouraging more longitudinal studies; firming a comparable framework for data collection; and establishing a centralised and accessible archive or documentation gateway of key published evaluations. The latter is important to filter relevant from irrelevant (or unreliable) documentation and promote some continuity in ECoC knowledge accumulation.

It is the conclusion of this study that there should be a commitment to a centralised documentation centre or repository of knowledge, with support or encouragement given to local or national research bodies (e.g. universities) to develop independent but specialist research units that can feed into this central knowledge repository. A good referent is the Olympic Studies Centre model, which is supported by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne and involves independent and academically prestigious research units across the globe. The IOC does not finance these Centres but it has a dedicated position for 'University Relations', as well as a dedicated Knowledge Management department and Knowledge archive (the OGKM). The IOC has developed close relationships with some of the most advanced Olympic Study Centres, and has created several programmes to

encourage academic research and the sharing of key findings to advance 'Transfer of Knowledge'. This, in turn, provides critical referent points for event host organisations.

Finally, to aid the process of ex-post evaluation, each host city should be required to provide data for a common set of indicators, which could then be revisited every five years. These indicators should inform a longitudinal 'Transfer of Knowledge' exercise, where each host city commits to gathering key information against commonly agreed headlines, provides a summary debrief at the end of their year, and suggests a stable organisational contact point (e.g. local authority) to provide data updates at regular intervals.

This study has engaged in a comprehensive assessment of available indicators since the start of the programme. The list presented within Appendix C should be considered a useful referent for this exercise, and represents a considerable step forward since the previous attempt at proposing a common ECoC data collection model (ECoC Policy Group, 2010).

Recommended actions

For the European Commission (with legislative backing from the EP and Council):

- Work towards a centralised documentation centre or repository of knowledge (e.g., an ECoC observatory and/or resource intranet, coordinated centrally by the Commission).
- Invest in a dedicated exercise to firm a common set of indicators and data collection framework with clear definitions and specifications as to desirable collection times during the ECoC hosting cycle (pre-, during and post event). While it is appropriate to allow a degree of flexibility for cities to determine which indicators they are capable of populating, all host cities should be expected to collect a minimum number of 'priority indicators' and they should be expected to populate indicators in the same way.
- Consider allocating a part of EU grant funding towards the ECoC-related research (e.g. to ensure that host data collection includes the capture of aspects relevant beyond the host city and key to the understanding of broader Programme impacts and legacies).

For ECoC organisers:

- Provide data against a common set of indicators as defined by the European Commission, ensuring the minimum number of 'priority' indicators are populated or justifying why this is not possible, so as to help improve the framework.
- Always document sources and methodologies and note caveats in the data presented.
- Suggest a stable organisational contact point to provide data updates at regular intervals.

7.2.6. Strengthening the European Dimension

Participants in the Public Consultation Meeting organised to gather views regarding the future of the Programme post-2019 felt that the European Dimension should remain a key criterion in the selection procedure. Some participants even proposed to increase the weight attached to this criterion to 60-70% in the final selection. Another suggestion was to have a stronger presence of the Commission and the independent Selection Panel following the designation of the title to a specific city – for instance, through more informal monitoring meetings in the ECoC city itself (instead of Brussels), and opening these up to a wider range of stakeholders, as well as facilitating contact points in other Directorates-General (DG), such as the DG for external relations (ECORYS, 2011a: 9).

Respondents to the Post-2019 Online Consultation likewise thought that the European Dimension and the cooperation dimension of the action could be strengthened. In the words of one anonymous respondent, "Generally, the European element should be at the fore, otherwise ECoC loses its Unique Selling Point" (ECORYS, 2011b: 14). This is a point

also highlighted during this study's second expert workshop, with participants noting that with the creation of domestic spin-offs of the ECoC, such as the *UK City of Culture* programme, there is a wealth of opportunity for cities to host events exclusively oriented towards their domestic agenda.

However, when it comes to actual recommendations to better implement the Programme's European Dimension, views differ. A common view, indicated within the Post-2019 Online consultation is that the criteria are still too vague and need greater definition:

As noted in the ex-post evaluation of the cultural capitals of Europe in 2009, these criteria are still vague and allow considerable room for interpretation. We suggest, therefore, [the need] to define more specific criteria for implementing a European dimension (e.g. minimum number of European cooperation projects, 'European' theme implemented throughout the program, common European values and history) (ECORYS 2011b: 15).

Specific suggestions for implementation abound, with a full strand focusing on recommendations for greater coordination between host cities in the same ECoC year, including joint-artistic programming or formal agreements on fields of cooperation. However, within the study's expert workshops, and after careful analysis of the available literature (in particular, the theoretical academic debate surrounding this issue), it is apparent that what is most essential for the meaningful application of this objective is, yet again, to ensure local ownership and genuine engagement with the principle. Given the ambiguity of understanding with regards to what Europe is and what European cultural values may mean to people, a key first step that does not seem to have been successfully implemented to date is to actually open up the conversation and welcome debate about these issues.

Open up local debate around the value of a European Dimension

The key recommendation in this area is, thus, to use the European Dimension criteria mainly as a platform to open up a conversation, rather than just as a vehicle to present a finished or coherent story. The latter, in a wide variety of forms, seems to have been the most common aspiration over the last three decades of ECoC programming, but this has rarely resulted in distinguishable short- or long-term effects. In the current climate, with growing disaffection (particularly in the media) around European institutions, this seems to be a particularly timely issue to address, and one that would benefit from being explored within a culture-led setting, such as the ECoC, rather than just political and economic arenas.

Recommended actions

For the European Parliament, Council and Commission:

- Supplement current European Dimension criteria with encouragement for local debate.
- Recommend a wider (but consistently applied) set of indicators and request quantitative as well as qualitative accounts of relevant outcomes. (See a reflection and proposal in Appendix G.)

For host cities:

- Build on European Dimension criteria as a platform to open up a conversation about Europe amongst the local population.
- Avoid contrasting local programming against European or international programming. While it is appropriate to distinguish between local and international communication strategies, host cities should view the programme as an opportunity to explore the relationships between local and European cultures and values, rather than only one or the other.

7.2.7. Legacy and sustainability

Taking all identified challenges combined, from difficulties setting a coherent vision, to exploring the Programme's European Dimension in a meaningful way, it is apparent that one of the key points to come to terms with in order to ensure the ECoC is playing a relevant role is to understand it not just as a one-off celebratory event, but as a platform to strengthen, define or initiate more coherent policies and strategies about culture with a local – as well as a national and an international (European) – perspective. Taking this point to the extreme, Davies (2012: n.p.), discussing the legacy of Copenhagen 1996, has summarised this by noting that hosts must “focus on process, networks, learning, competencies, development, experience and forget the events and programme.” This is advisable in the years following the ECoC, but needs to build on a framework that should have developed in the lead-up period.

Maximising opportunities for legacy and sustainability requires a combination of both macro-frameworks and very specific, concrete actions. A few of the most relevant areas of priority could be summarised as follows:

- From a macro perspective, as already noted in a number of studies, a key priority is to integrate the ECoC process within a broader and longer-term city strategy.
- In terms of specific actions, two important exercises framing the very beginning and the end of the process are to: i) explore options to ensure bidding legacies, and ii) improve the approach towards the immediate post-event phase (transition planning).

Integrating the ECoC into a broader and longer-term strategy

Throughout the literature, it is made clear that embedding the ECoC within a long-term strategy for culture-led development is the key to ensuring lasting impacts. Keuning (2012: 70) argues that:

the event itself – as well as other mega events or flagship projects – is not enough to completely change the (image of) the city. Most important is that the event or project must be part of a long-term vision and policy for culture in the city, where the event or project is just a dot on the line of the long-term progression.

This is not a new claim, and has been consistently articulated in the context of major event hosting processes since the late 1990s and 2000:

Isolated events will generate short-term benefits, but in order to ensure long-term success the event needs to be integrated into a total cultural strategy. This can involve staging a series of events, in order to convince visitors that there is always 'something happening' in the city. This harbours the danger, however, that the city will become trapped on a treadmill of investment, requiring a constant supply of events to ensure the visitor flow. It should be much more effective to combine event based and attraction based strategies, as Glasgow has done. This can help to attract short-term attention to the city, at the same time as new cultural facilities are being developed to increase the 'real cultural capital' base of the city in the long term (Richards, 2000: 177).

Despite the fact that these arguments are well known, cities do continue to struggle fulfilling this ambition, so the key recommendation is to continue highlighting this as a priority area within the ECoC legislative framework, as was the case within the 2006 Decision (EP and Council, 2006: Article 3).

Ensuring a bidding legacy: Collaborative projects between candidate cities

In recent years, the Selection Panel has recommended to almost all selected cities that they should collaborate with the other (losing) candidates, to adopt or incorporate part of their programme ideas in order to strengthen its own approach (see e.g. Selection Panel, 2009d, on Riga 2014). This may be seen as general praise for the work carried out by all candidate cities, but it also contains the hope “that the work carried out by [an applicant city] can be put to good use to give impetus to its cultural life and therefore should not be lost” (Selection Panel, 2009e: 5). At the same time, selected cities are also being urged to “quickly extend and intensify links” with their partner ECOCs in order to “come forward with joint project proposals” (Selection Panel, 2011b: 9; also see 2009d).

Ensuring that the bid process itself results in positive legacies for candidates has become particularly important given the dramatic rise in the number of candidate cities within large countries such as Poland or Spain. Approaching the bid as a useful cultural strategy exercise in itself can help avoid the potential negative effect of generating a large number of losers in order to secure just one winner. There are good examples of bidding legacy within the UK, where the 2008 competition process was followed by the creation of a UK ‘Cultural Cities Network’ in 2003, involving most of the other candidate cities, and this network laid the foundations for the eventual *UK City of Culture* programme, also supported by a wider network of cultural cities involving all event candidates (Wilson & O’Brien, 2012).

Recommended actions

For the European Commission, Selection and Monitoring Panels:

- Continue sharing best practice regarding candidate city networks; keep a record of reported candidate networks and refer candidate cities to their experience.

Transition planning

Davies (2012) recommends that a ‘task force’, parallel to any ECoC delivery vehicle, should be appointed to lead the transition between the event and the period afterwards. Similarly, in respect of Sibiu 2007 (after which the delivery vehicle was immediately disbanded), lessons learnt from the ex-post evaluation included the suggestion that the delivery vehicle should have a minimum extension period beyond the end of the year itself (ECORYS, 2009a).

This is an important recommendation to broadly ensure the sustainability of the year, but to also assist with knowledge-transfer – particularly so that there is sufficient time to archive and organise key materials that should remain available for future enquiry. At present, there is no standard timeframe for the ECoC delivery agency. This should change, in line with the approach to other major events such as the Olympic Games, where there is a standard agreement as to the period during which the organising committee is operational. Depending on the size of respective ECoC programmes, a minimum of six months to a year, during which the core staff disbands progressively, is advisable.

Recommended actions

For the European Commission, Selection and Monitoring Panels:

- Establish a minimum term of office for the ECoC delivery agency after the event year, advising core staff to remain in place six months to one year post-event.

For ECoC organisers:

- Appoint a transition task-force to manage the handover of key ECoC materials and know-how back to established city stakeholders.

O'Callaghan (2012: 200-1) offers a reflection on what the ECoC and its future might usefully hold, which provides an appropriate concluding quote:

The ECOC must be reinvigorated as a cultural policy if it is to remain in any way vital. ... [T]he ECOC can be a potent tool for cultural policy. This potency lies not in its ability to 'represent' or 'promote' culture, but in the ways it draws out debates about culture. The ECOC can enable a creative space through which questions of culture, representation and place can be contested. It provides a framework for asking questions about what culture and the arts mean for communities and places. The aim should not be to answer these questions but to use this contested space to stimulate dialogue through creative responses; practice as an end in itself. While many ECOC claim to encourage debate, the politics of the event stops them from truly engaging in real creative dialogue. One of the original aims of the ECOC was as a forum for cultural discussion. When the meanings of the event are set in advance, discussion is disabled and we are left with resistance. In order for the ECOC to function as a dynamic cultural policy, it must openly embrace the praxis that comes out of contested meanings.

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⁷³ ECORYS published their first strand of evaluations in 2009 and 2010 under the name ECOTEC with the note 'ECORYS in the UK'. For the purposes of simplicity, this study refers to all their work under ECORYS.

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