



The future of the European Capitals of Culture 2019 and beyond **5 Theses by “A Soul for Europe”**

Initiative „A Soul for Europe“

c/o European House for Culture
Place Flagey 18
1050 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM
mail@asoulforeurope.eu
www.asoulforeurope.eu

1. Each European Capital of Culture is a contribution of the cities and regions to the development of Europe. It is a symbol of the diversity and wealth of European culture. Each ECoC demonstrates what it is capable of and what it means for Europe. It is no venue for any arbitrary cultural event, however attractive this may be.
2. The ECoC has to relate specifically to the special cultural potential of the respective city and its opportunities for development. Furthermore, it has to rely on the achievements and contribution of its citizens.

The preparation of the ECoC programme is therefore a conjoint achievement of the citizens and of the people responsible for the city. It is the city itself that is special, not its political management. Hence, applications for ECoC that are lead by civil-society initiatives ought to be permitted as well.

3. Impressive and glamorous cultural projects should not be the main focus of the ECoC programme. They could bring rewarding effects, and in this regard may be part of the programme, but they should relate to what is special about the respective city/ECoC, and what the citizens are ready to accomplish.
4. The ECoC stands for the recognition of the responsibility of cities and regions for the development of Europe. Therefore, the ECoC has to specify what special contribution to the cultural development and the cultural diversity of Europe this city will make in particular after the ECoC year has ended. ECoC is a project demonstrating the importance of culture for the development of Europe.

At the same time, it is a project documenting the relevance of European development “from the bottom up” by organizing the sustainable contribution of cities and regions for Europe. In this local responsibility, the application of a whole region around one or more cities is admissible also.

5. It has to be ensured that the programme submitted for the application as well as the organization of the ECoC year is truly adhered to in the implementation of the ECoC. The implementation of the ECoC has to be controlled after the “title” is awarded.

A self-management and self-monitoring process that is co-designed and developed by respective cities and regions themselves is eligible. This does not mean disentitling the EU-Commission of its general responsibility for ECoC. However, it should compose an independent monitoring authority, different from the implementing agency that is built. It should include local civil society (including business), representatives of the cities and regions as well as independent experts.

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The **Strategy Group** consists of more than 50 young individuals from 21 countries. They are responsible for the conceptual development and dissemination of the idea of "A Soul for Europe". The Strategy Group was built up and its work is made possible with the financial support of the **Robert Bosch Stiftung**.

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The legal seat of the EEIG ASfE is in Brussels.

*>> This text is a collection of the individual statements of
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