

# Circostrada Network

## EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE AND CIRCUS ARTS

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The Dutch festival Circo Circolo and the French information centre HorsLesMurs, both active members of Circostrada Network, started already in 2011 to analyse the relationship between cities involved in the European Capitals of Culture programme and the circus arts field.

In the framework of the successful cultural event "Cirque en Capitales" proposed during Marseille-Provence 2013, a third seminar was organised in Aix-en-Provence (France) to gather circus stakeholders, European Capitals of Culture teams and policymakers.

Circostrada Network proposes in this publication, thanks to the work of Daphné Tepper, a synthesis of the discussions, as well as recommendations to fully recognise circus specificities, strengths and potential to contribute to the success of this European programme.

This report was delivered by Daphné Tepper and the publication coordinated by Yohann Floch

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Culture

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**HORSLES MURS**

HorsLesMurs is the French national information centre for street arts and circus arts. Created in 1993 by the Ministry of Culture and Communication, since 2003, it has been the general secretariat of Circostrada Network, European platform for the street arts and circus dedicated to information, observation and professional exchanges. Representing 55 members from 21 countries, the network is working to develop the structuring and recognition of these sectors in Europe.

# Editorial

In 2011 the European platform Circostrada Network, in partnership with the French national information center for street arts and circus HorsLesMurs and the Dutch festival Circo Circolo, launched a working group on the integration of circus arts into the programmes of the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC).

A second European seminar took place on 11 April 2012 in Paris (France) just before the second Fresh Circus international conference. A second seminar was held in Aix-en-Provence (France) in February 2013, organised in close partnership with the regional agency Arcade, the Pôle Cirque Méditerranée, and the Bois de l'Aune, pôle artistique et culturel de la Communauté du Pays d'Aix. The seminar also took place in the context of Cirque en Capitales, a Marseille-Provence 2013 festival.

The aim of these international seminars was to discuss the current developments at the local, national and European levels of the contemporary circus field, as well as its integration into the cultural celebrations and long-term cultural plans of the European Capitals of Culture programmes.

The discussions were rich and intense. Bringing circus arts professionals from different EU countries together with team members of past, present and future European Capitals of Culture, the seminar saw experiences shared and questions raised on the opportunities and challenges for circus arts in ECOC contexts.

Despite the diversity of testimonies and the different realities faced by circus arts and ECOC stakeholders across Europe, some conclusions emerged and exploration was begun into new types of partnerships and initiatives. Lessons learned by stakeholders who took part in past ECOC adventures were passed on to the teams of cities that will hold the title in the coming years, and recommendations to all actors (circus stakeholders, ECOC teams and public funders/policymakers) were formulated.

The seminars were successful first steps, launching new relationships and lines of inquiry that we commit to pursue. To capitalise on this experience and pave the way for the next steps we decided to extend our discussions in this publication, which collects information on the ECOC programme, reflects on evaluation elements available on previous ECOC experiences, presents testimonies expressed during the seminars or in subsequent interviews, and puts forward recommendations on ways to strengthen opportunities for circus professionals, ECOC programmers, and policymakers.

We hope this publication will feed your reflection, open the way to new partnerships, and raise the interest of many more stakeholders to participate in Circostrada Network's next initiatives on the place of circus arts in European Capitals of Culture programmes.

# European Capitals of Culture & Circus Arts

## *Setting the stage*

European Capitals of Culture have existed since 1985. They started as an intergovernmental initiative and developed in 1991 into a full-fledged Community action overseen by formal selection and implementation rules.

Today the ECOC programme draws up a calendar of the countries eligible to apply for the title in different years<sup>1</sup>, and has established a series of objectives to be pursued by any ECOC bid, as well as a formal selection procedure with a panel of experts, and a monitoring process before, during and after the year<sup>2</sup>.

The financial contribution coming from the EU for each Capital of Culture (the Melina Mercouri Prize) amounts to €1.5 million. Total budgets vary greatly<sup>3</sup> and are co-funded by different public and private sources. Capital investments are often largely funded by European structural funds.

Over time, and following the evidence that an ECOC title could bring visibility, resources, and even social inclusion and economic growth to a city and its region, national selection processes have become more and more competitive. For several years now preparing a bid has been – for most cities – a challenge in itself: a project launched six years in advance of the actual activity year, and an endeavour which often impacts the local cultural and/or urban landscape, whether the city obtains the title or not.

But the European Capital of Culture can also bring missed opportunities, and there are many examples of ECOC initiatives which have been strongly undermined by failed political support, an incapacity to maintain planned budgets, or conflicts between the artistic teams and their political environments. The failure of ECOC teams to work in partnership with the local cultural sector or to build programmes that not only offer one-off artistic programmes but also invest in the future have been a source of frustration for many cultural operators.

Assessing the success of an individual ECOC or of the ECOC programme as a whole since its creation is, however, a very challenging – and often subjective – exercise. EU evaluation criteria are still quite vague, but are now up for improvement as a new legal base, to be used from the year 2020 onwards, is to be adopted this year.

## *The ECOC programme beyond 2020*

As the current regulation of the ECOC programme runs till 2019, and now that the selection process is launched three years before the attribution of the title and six years before the launch of the Year, the European Union has to adopt a new legal base this year (2013) for implementation from 2020 onwards.

To prepare its proposal the European Commission used various evaluation documents<sup>4</sup> and launched an online public consultation that received slightly over 200 written contributions<sup>5</sup>.

On this basis the European Commission adopted and published in July 2012 its proposal<sup>6</sup> for the future of the scheme for the period 2020-2033. The European Parliament and the Council are expected to adopt the proposal, possibly with some amendments, in the course of the year.

In its proposal the Commission recommends to continue the ECOC programme beyond 2019 and to maintain its main features: two cities holding the title each year, with bids coming from a pre-established calendar of eligible Member States; the possibility for a city to involve its surrounding region; the attribution of a grant to implement a cultural programme created specifically for the year; a two-stage selection process; and a European panel of independent experts.

In the proposal several dimensions of the programme are also reinforced or clarified, such as the necessity for the Year to have sustainable impact ("stimulating long-term local culture led development strategies") or the importance for ECOC programmes and teams to give proper meaning to the European dimension – which has often been considered the weakest link of the Capitals' projects so far.

Stricter demands regarding the production of evaluation data (transferable to future title holders), a reinforced conditionality of the payment of the EU grant, and the need for politicians and funders to strengthen their commitments to the project, complement the proposal.

As it stands today the document very much responds to the views of a large majority of cultural stakeholders who support the ECOC scheme but demand its improvement through bolder and steadier political commitments translated into stable and sufficient funds; a better cooperation with the local cultural stakeholders at all stages of the preparation, implementation and evaluation of the Year; and a better balance between the one-off celebration dimension and the long-term legacy.

The importance of positioning an ECOC project within sustainable local development strategies is also very much supported by European city policymakers, as illustrated by the work of the Culture Forum of Eurocities and its contribution<sup>7</sup> to the future of the ECOC debate.

In this document, representatives of large European cities reaffirm that culture, connected to other policy areas, has a key role to play in sustainable integrated urban policies, and that ECOC schemes could better contribute to such integrated development if a balance could be found between the economic benefits and the local citizen involvement of the Years, as well as between their flagship projects and grassroots initiatives.

## *How to evaluate an ECOC initiative and build on previous experiences?*

Formal and external evaluation exercises were introduced only a few years ago and have been available for cities which have held the title since 2007<sup>8</sup>. For ECOC experiences before 2007, the reference document is the Palmer/Rae Associates report<sup>9</sup> published in August 2004. Commissioned by the EU, it still carries a lot of clout for the quality of its analyses and the recommendations it puts forwards. It is a must-read for candidate cities, and an important benchmark in the history of the ECOC programme.

Drafted by a team of international cultural advisers, including the former Director of Glasgow 1990 and of Brussels 2000, Robert Palmer, who then became Director of Culture at the Council of Europe from 2004 till 2012, the Palmer/Rae Associates report gives an overview of the European Capitals of Culture experience since 1985.

Despite the limited time granted to the study and the difficulty of identifying former staff members of the oldest Capitals, it offers a thorough review of all the main features of a European Capital of Culture (the operational structure, the cultural programme, infrastructure investments, the European dimension, the promotion and communication strategies, the monitoring and evaluation processes, the legacy), as well as of the different types of impact (visitors' perspectives, social and economic perspectives), and gives advice to candidate cities on how to overcome the main challenges faced by ECOC teams.

In the report's own words, this advice can be summarised as follows: "Take the context into account; ensure local involvement; develop partnerships; allow for long-term planning; define clear objectives; base your work on strong content; ensure good communication and marketing; secure sufficient funds, a strong leadership and a committed team; and make sure you maintain political will for the whole duration of the project and beyond."

Some individual cities have also invested in evaluation exercises to respond to the demands of their funders and/or to contribute to the development of evaluation tools. A good example is the Liverpool Impact08 programme. Commissioned by Liverpool City Council, and implemented in partnership by the University of

## **Aix-en-Provence: when a city takes advantage of an ECOC event to develop a new cultural policy axis in support of circus**

The city of Aix-en-Provence will host the second 'circus highlight' of the MP2013 programme. For five days in September (25-29), the event Jours (et nuits) de cirque(s)... will celebrate the birth of a new resource centre for circus arts: CIAM (Centre International des Arts en Mouvement – International Center for Arts in Motion).

Coming out of the city's own desire to develop its actions in the circus field, the project benefited from the MP2013 energy by launching its activities with a bang. It will invite the audience to discover the different dimensions of contemporary circus arts as well as a recently rehabilitated space on the outskirts of Aix. Following this event CIAM will initiate its long-term activities. It will inaugurate its amateur school and start building its dedicated pedagogical tent, designed by the architects Loic Julienne and Patrick Bouchain. In the years to come CIAM is planning to develop its activities in different ways: outreach activities with schools, transition classes for the most talented students of the amateur school, artists' residencies and professional workshops, etc.

Nathalie Allio-Duclos, Director of Culture of the city of Aix-en-Provence, explains how the city has developed its circus priority in the MP2013 context, and what are the expectations for the future.

*Why did the city of Aix-en-Provence decide to create a new centre dedicated to circus? How does it fit within the city's overall cultural policy, and what's the connection to the European Capital of Culture programme?*

The cultural policy of the city of Aix-en-Provence pursues three main objectives:

- > cultural 'excellence', mostly through the work of large-scale cultural operators with an international status such as the Festival d'Art Lyrique, the Grand Théâtre de Provence, and the Centre Chorégraphique National;
- > a presence on the entire territory through the provision of operational and financial support to over 250 cultural associations in different cultural fields;
- > a specific action towards target audiences (young people, disadvantaged groups) through partnerships with the national education department and the regional arm of the Ministry of Culture, and with cultural venues and social centres.

To complement those three objectives the city decided to take advantage of the European Capital of Culture and develop two new axes of action: in the music field and to support circus arts. The aim was to benefit from the visibility and connection with other regional initiatives provided by the Year.

## *How far in advance did you start preparing this action and how difficult was it to convince the local politicians to engage in this adventure?*

The city of Aix had a partnership with the company Cirque Désaccordé between 2005 and 2010, and when the company left we started thinking of the kind of activities we could develop to maintain our engagement with the circus field.

In 2011 we held a first round of discussions with different regional partners and then asked, in 2012, the Pôle National Méditerranée to run a feasibility study on the creation of an amateur school in Aix. Discussions with the different institutional funders also took place, and following an agreement on the venue, the operator, and the relationship between this project and MP2013, we formally decided to engage in this ambitious project.

It was not that difficult to convince local politicians to support the project, even though we had to demonstrate that CIAM fitted our overall cultural policy objectives and complemented our current actions by being inter-generational, dedicated to cultural practice, accessible, etc. On the contrary, they very much appreciated the celebratory dimension of the opening event to be held in September, and liked the idea that CIAM will be offering a new space facilitating cultural practice and the exploration of new cultural experiences and aesthetics.

## *How much did the city of Aix commit to this project? What are the mid-/long-term perspectives?*

The city of Aix and the Community of the Aix country are financing the renovation and rehabilitation of the venue/space, as well as the running costs of the centre. We are currently having discussions with the Ministry of Education concerning the possibility of CIAM obtaining the 'academic institution' label that would open new perspectives in terms of sustainability and funding. But more than anything we are counting on the success of the opening event to consolidate the support already given to the project, and to help us enter into a new development phase with public and private partners.

Liverpool and the Liverpool John Moores University, it evaluated the social, cultural, economic and environmental effects of Liverpool's hosting of the European Capital of Culture title in 2008. It also aimed to develop a research model for evaluating the multiple impacts of culture-led programmes.

The research programme focused on different themes (Economy and tourism, Cultural vibrancy, Access and participation, Image and perceptions, Physical infrastructure & sustainability, Governance and delivery) and resulted in a number of reports on the impact on media, the city's public spaces, tourism and business, and on local residents.

Through the European Capitals of Culture Policy Group, bringing together representatives of Liverpool 2008, Stavanger 2008, Turku 2011, and Marseille 2013, and funded by the European Commission Culture Programme, Liverpool's research framework was discussed and shared between the different ECOC teams represented. A final report entitled 'An international framework of good practice in research and delivery of the European Capital of Culture programme'<sup>10</sup> is the result of this co-operation.

## *Exploring opportunities and thinking long-term*

ECOC programmes, as any ambitious cultural initiative, carry important potential, both on the level of the local cultural scene and from the perspective of affecting change in a city's broader development strategy.

Both short and long-term benefits for Capitals of Culture have been identified and are most often categorised as follows<sup>11</sup>:

- > increase of the volume of cultural activities, such as new cultural venues, events, etc;
- > increase of the participation of the inhabitants in the local cultural life (including amateur practice);
- > empowerment of the local cultural sector, support to organisational and infrastructure development, new professional and training opportunities, new partnerships and networks;
- > improved tourism indicators (number of visitors, number of hotel nights, etc);
- > better visibility of the city on the national, European, international scene;
- > social impact (community/intercultural/anti-discrimination action, social inclusion, etc);
- > economic impact (new business opportunities and jobs, creative hubs, etc);
- > urban redeployment (regeneration programmes, new or reclaimed public spaces, etc).

The focus on one or the other of these objectives in a given ECOC programme depends very much on the local context and on its specific features and needs. Priorities are also influenced by political choices and by the compromises reached between the different stakeholders – local policymakers and other public and private stakeholders investing in the project – of a given territory at the time of developing an ECOC bid and of implementing it.

The European dimension of ECOC projects has very often been considered the weakest link of the ECOC programme so far, with both limited guidelines from the European Commission (to be improved in the new framework to be implemented beyond 2020) and a lack of imagination and risks taken on the side of the cities, ECOC teams and local operators. The potential for circus artists to work on this topic both at an artistic level, and at a more value-based level, is certainly important, and could be a way for circus arts to be even more visible in ECOC projects in the future.

The potential of an ECOC to support the development of the local cultural scene is of course of fundamental importance for the cultural professionals and the artists. In this field, as in others, positive results demand a strong vision and leadership on the part of the city policymakers (read about the example of the city of Aix-en-Provence in box 1) combined with a genuine consultation with and the participation of the local cultural operators.

For cultural operators to coordinate their action and obtain visibility in packed ECOC cultural programmes, specific efforts and strategies are also required, as illustrated by the example of the Cirque en capitales festival implemented by a partnership of cultural operators on the entire territory of Marseilles Provence 2013 (read the interview with Guy Carrara in box 2).

To convince policymakers and ECOC teams that circus should be put at the heart of a Year's programme, and in strategic locations in a city territory, different efforts can be pursued as highlighted in the testimonies of key actors of Lille 2004 (read about their experience in box 3).

## *Thinking 'out of the box' and allowing culture – and circus – to contribute even more*

Entering into discussions and reflections with city officials and other stakeholders of an ECOC programme on the contributions circus could bring to the Year objectives, and how it could fit into the long-term development of a city strategy as requested by the European guidelines, is necessary for a strong cooperative environment to be set up. In this field interesting initiatives have been launched to open up the perspective on impact and indicators.

This was, for example, the case in Turku 2011 where one of the three objectives of the Capital (next to rather economic ambitions) was dedicated to well-being, and the contribution culture could bring to a variety of individual and collective causes such as physical and mental health, family and community relationships, sustainable development, etc.

The need to complement economic indicators, such as the Gross Domestic Product, with well-being indicators has been on the agenda of international institutions such as the UN<sup>12</sup> or the OECD<sup>13</sup> for a few years already. Cultural commentators and researchers have also started to question the role of culture in individual and community well-being.

In this line, next to stimulating the creative economy and encouraging cultural exchanges on the international scene, Turku 2011 developed its well-being programme as a full-fledged strategy covering the period 2008-2012. This strategy focused on different themes (cultural encounters, cultural practice, mental health, the healing power of reminiscence and narrative, culture for all, and the environment and ecology), which guided the choices of the cultural projects that made the ECOC programme. They were also at the heart of a research project coordinated by the University of Turku which looked at the connections between well-being

and culture from the perspectives of different disciplines such as medicine, pedagogy, psychology, and social sciences.

In Liverpool 2008 a Mental Well-being Impact Assessment of the Liverpool Capital of Culture programme was also run before the launch of the Year14.

## **Cirque en Capitales: circus in the spotlight**

Marseilles Provence 2013 has given a prominent place and visibility to circus arts in its programme. Cirque en capitales, a contemporary circus festival that ran for a month across the entire Marseille Provence region, was the first large-scale event to inaugurate the Year, following the big opening day.

Guy Carrara, co-director of the company Archaos, of the CREAC, and of the Pôle National des Arts du Cirque Méditerranée, tell us more about the festival, its impact, and the perspectives it opened for local circus operators.

*Tell us more about the Cirque en Capitales festival. What were its main features?*

Cirque en Capitales, initiated by the Pôle national des arts du cirque Méditerranée, was a partnership between a large number of regional cultural operators. It presented more than 60 shows from over 40 companies in a diversity of venues and places (Arles, La Seyne-sur-Mer, Marseilles, Aix-en-Provence, Martigues, Port-de-Bouc, Istres, Vitrolles...). It was an incredible success with an audience of over 55,000 and an average occupancy rate of 85% over the total 217 performances\*.

*How would you describe the process that led to the festival? How much was it a 'structuring' event?*

The organisation of the festival and the establishment of the institutional and operational partnerships that underpinned its success was a very challenging process. We had to be patient, and take advantage of opportunities when they appeared.

On the basis of the festival's success we can now build on the experience and project our activities into the future. We spoke with the city of Marseilles about a contemporary circus biennale – an idea I have been promoting for several years already – and they showed great interest. The intention is to draw conclusions on our experience and capitalise on the lessons learned. We have identified a number of issues that posed problems in terms of coordination, simultaneous programming, time management, etc, which we will have to better manage in the future if we wish to consolidate the regional partnership and continue working on ambitious events. But those difficulties are also maybe the fate of all large-scale cultural endeavours, especially in the context of European Capitals of Culture programmes.

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## *Are you planning to formally evaluate the event with your cultural partners or the MP2013 team?*

MP2013 is running a large evaluation exercise on its entire programme and Cirque en capitales will be included in it. But we are not associated with the exercise at the moment. We will organise in a few weeks a partners' meeting as well as meetings with our different institutional funders. This should allow us to evaluate our experience and better explore future opportunities.

Many partners have however already expressed an interest in carrying on their support of circus activities, which means that Cirque en capitales had an impact on the way circus is being perceived in the region and on how it could continue to be promoted. City officials also expressed an interest in some of the successful practices we put in place in the context of the event (our communication strategy on many different support including media or in the Marseilles subway, for example).

## *In your opinion what should be the relationship between practitioners / cultural operators and policymakers? What advice could you give to circus professionals who would like to participate in an ECOC programme?*

I believe that artists and cultural professionals have a responsibility in informing cultural policies and in orienting them in a direction that responds to the sector's needs and visions. To achieve this, it is important to adapt to sometimes complex political landscapes, and to remain open to opportunities while keeping in mind the long-term vision.

I also believe in the importance of preserving our artistic independence, of dedicating the bigger part of our budgets to creation, and of developing and maintaining European and international partnerships.

\* See the final press release of the 'Cirque en capitales' event: [www.mp2013.fr/pro/files/2013/02/CP\\_Bilan-cirque.pdf](http://www.mp2013.fr/pro/files/2013/02/CP_Bilan-cirque.pdf)

## *Outdoor interventions – a valuable tool for reaching out to new audiences but also an opportunity to initiate change*

The use of public space during ECOC programmes for large-scale popular celebrations, such as the opening and/or closing events, or for bringing art to new urban spaces and audiences, is another type of activity programmed by a vast majority of ECOCs, and a place where the circus arts could take a bigger role, highlighting circus' potential both in terms of site-specific events and for the longer term impact these events could create for the audience and the sector itself. A good example of such action, coming from another context than the ECOC framework, is Piccadilly Circus Circus held in London during the 2012 Olympics.

Could the one-off nature of a large-scale celebration event, and the long process that leads to its success, serve longer-term objectives?

The Piccadilly Circus Circus initiative<sup>15</sup> closed down the iconic landmark and a number of the surrounding streets for a day, and transformed this normally busy place into a circus experience with 143 performances by 33 companies and 247 performers. The event, presented by the Mayor of London's cultural office, part of the London 2012 Festival, and produced by Crying Out Loud, was an amazing success and a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the artists and all the other professionals engaged in preparing the day.

But beyond its celebratory dimension the event was also planned by its organisers as a tool to push some of the boundaries for the circus field, to increase the interest and appetite for circus, to experiment with new environmental and sustainable models, to promote the acquisition of skills through internships and volunteering schemes, and to help the circus arts sector structure in more general terms.

Cultural interventions in the public space, site-specific art works, and other street arts initiatives are very often at the heart of ECOC programmes. They have tremendous potential in terms of audience development, increased participation in culture, and the development of new practices and partnerships within the cultural sector. They should be viewed as an integral part of the overall cultural strategy implemented by an ECOC initiative, and described as such by cultural operators, demanding the means and timeframe necessary to initiate genuine impact both at the level of the audience and at the level of the professionals engaged in the actions.

## *The potential legacy of an ECOC programme*

Looking at ECOCs as 'laboratories' for strategic investment in culture at local and regional level, and securing the necessary means to evaluate, draw conclusions, and build on the lessons learned during the ECOC with further development, is clearly the way to go for future programmes.

Several examples of legacy strategies are available such as Lille 3000<sup>16</sup>, Brugge Plus<sup>17</sup>, or the Tallinn Creative Hub<sup>18</sup>. The Tallinn Creative Hub was set up to ensure the legacy of Tallinn 2011, and to capitalise on its outcomes in terms of international visibility and tourism, audience development, professional opportunities for cultural operators, and European and international partnerships. It will be a physical venue (a former power and heating plant) and a virtual platform to stimulate good practices and the exchange of experiences. It will include a New Circus Information Centre, a Black Box, an exhibition space, and many more facilities and resources.

Legacy structures and initiatives can of course only happen with a political and financial commitment to pursue the dynamics launched during an ECOC initiative beyond its Year, something that will now be demanded in a more systematic way for Capitals of Culture after 2020<sup>19</sup>. ECOC teams will therefore have to engage in even more structured discussions with cultural stakeholders when elaborating their programmes and partnerships. It is therefore the right moment for circus operators to participate more directly in ECOC bid preparations, to feed future ECOCs with their ideas on how they could contribute to the Capital objectives, and to demand a proper recognition of their role and needs within the local cultural strategy and longer-term development plans.

## Lille 2004, circus arts and circus' place in the city

Lille 2004 was another ECOC that put circus at the heart of its artistic programme. It also offered a number of performances and cultural activities under tents, in particular at Le Barnum des Postes, a huge tent positioned at the edge of three disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Through this experience city officials and cultural operators reflected on the way nomadic structures could invest neglected spaces and create new dynamics between the audiences and the artists. Lille 2004 was a European Capital that based its actions on an ambitious long-term cultural strategy that continued to be promoted by politicians and ECOC team members well beyond 2004.

Two key actors of the Lille 2004 adventure go back in time to share with us their experiences, and to reflect on the legacy. The first to take the floor is Patricia Kapusta, Secretary general of Le Prato – Pôle National des Arts du Cirque.

*What was your engagement in the Lille 2004 project? How early did you enter the discussions and with what kind of results?*

Le Prato has existed since 1973. It had been labelled 'regional pole' in 2002 and 'national pole' in 2012. When the first Lille 2004 discussions started in 2001 we

were already an important actor within the local cultural scene, having visibility, recognition and legitimacy in the circus arts field. We were therefore invited to take part formally and informally in the discussions and preparations.

During the couple of years that followed, Gilles Defacque, director of Le Prato and I made sure to be present at all the workshops, working groups and meetings to promote the importance of integrating circus in the future ECOC project, and to defend creation resources for Le Prato and its partners. Gilles was a Board Member of Lille 2004 and is still today a Board Member of Lille 3000. That collaboration has been good because Didier Fusillier has been following the work of Gilles Defacque and Le Prato for a long time.

This work bore fruit as, in the end, circus was quite well represented in the Year activities with two circus 'highlights' (the opening event in December 2003 with Les Arts Sauts and the 20th edition of Le Prato's festival, and a circus programme under the tent of the Barnum des Postes in May), two Prato creations (Deûles d'amour and Gamberges), and a collaboration with CNAC (the Centre National des Arts du Cirque).

*How do you assess the impact of the 2004 legacy on your own activity and on the rest of the cultural sector?*

Since 2005 we have participated in all the editions of Lille 3000\* [a cultural initiative created by the city of Lille to keep the Lille 2004 momentum going, maintain the partnerships, and offer the audience new opportunities to mobilise around large-scale events with a European and international dimension] even if it is sometimes difficult to adjust to imposed themes and integrate them in your own artistic programme! We also engaged strongly in the station Saint Sauveur project, also developed in the framework of Lille 3000.

If the ECOC did not change fundamentally our working conditions or practices (it is still difficult to secure funding, still important to defend your artistic autonomy, etc) the partnerships developed with the city and other local stakeholders during Lille 2004 reinforced our position as a key partner in the circus field and opened doors for future cooperations. Lille 3000 teams have always been loyal, attentive and respectful.

To ensure a legacy and a positive impact, it is fundamental, in my opinion, to always maintain a strategic view of your actions. The experience of the city of Lille of running a large-scale tent during the Lille 2004 Year [the Barnum des Postes], for example, was key to the discussions we initiated later on with city representatives on the possibility of reserving an empty space for tents in the context of the development of a new neighbourhood currently under study. You have to stay visible and maintain relationships if you want to see results in the long-term.

## Lille 2004: Le Barnum des Postes

Olivier Sergent, Director of the Maison Folie in Lille-Wazemmes, was part of the Lille 2004 team in charge of the production of different large-scale events including the activities held at Le Barnum des Postes.

*What was your experience of working with circus partners, and on circus productions during Lille 2004? What main challenges did you face at Le Barnum des Postes?*

One of the most important factors of success, in my opinion, is to trust your partners and rely on their expertise. It was fundamental for me to work with Le Prato, and to benefit from their experience and extensive knowledge of the circus field.

As the production manager of Le Barnum des Postes I had to supervise nine consecutive festivals, not only in the circus field. The experience of managing a large-scale tent infrastructure installed in an unconventional public space (next to a highway but also very close to homes, and with a large number of technical challenges) was extremely interesting as it raised many issues around the place of culture

in the city, the kind of relationships to establish with the public, and the investments to be made by public authorities for culture to be present in alternative locations.

The city of Lille clearly learned from the Barnum des Postes experience, and from the other tents that were installed in other city locations during Lille 2004, and used this knowledge to continue the reflection on where to invite tents in the city and for what purpose.

*As the Director of a Maison Folie\*\*, one of the important legacies of Lille 2004, how do you assess the heritage of the European Capital of Culture on the territory of the city and its regions, and for the local partners?*

Lille 2004, through its funding and operating models, pushed us to work together and develop new types of partnerships. Those ways of working then sank into the local practices as operators realised the benefit of reinforcing their cooperations.

The fact that many ECOC team members remained in Lille or in the region after 2004, and that policymakers also maintained their commitment to the dynamics launched during the Year, reinforced the Capital of Culture legacy and its impact.

\* Read more about the Lille 3000 initiative:  
[www.lille3000.eu/lille3000/en/presentation](http://www.lille3000.eu/lille3000/en/presentation)

\*\* Visit the website of the Maison Folie Wazemmes:  
<http://mfwazemmes.mairie-lille.fr/fr>

# The way ahead: recommendations to circus stakeholders, ECOC teams, and policymakers

The circus arts are a young and dynamic art field, offering an **alternative vision of contemporary artistic creation**. Presented in black boxes, traditional theatres, tents, or in the public space, contemporary circus has the capacity to attract new audiences and touch the diversity of individual and collective sensitivities at work in our societies.

Relying on the talent of highly trained professionals but being also a popular cultural practice and a socially engaged sector, the circus arts have the capacity to contribute to a variety of local development objectives but also to **question mainstream opinions and institutionalised policy choices**.

At the crossroads of different artforms, and more flexible in its structure and operations than other sectors, the circus arts have the capacity to invent or contribute to **original partnerships, within or beyond the cultural sector**.

To be able to contribute, however, circus artists and professionals need **dedicated support that recognises their specificities, strengths and potential**. In complex consultation processes they have to be given the space and means to make their voice heard. They should also be recognised as a fully legitimate voice of the performing arts field, and counterparts should automatically be identified and designated within ECOC teams and city administrations.

To be heard within ECOC preparation processes circus stakeholders should **be present from the very beginning of the discussions**, and participate in the very shaping of the ECOC objectives and activities. They should establish partnerships within the circus sector and beyond and make sure they **overcome any competition or conflicting interests** present within their field that could weaken their voice in the consultation and implementation processes.

To develop an appropriate support for the circus arts field and promote new and long-lasting partnerships policymakers have for their part to **understand the cultural state-of-play** on their territory and **think 'out of the box'**, with the help of the cultural actors, to invent new ways to position culture, and circus in particular, within their cultural policies, and to connect their cultural policies to the overall development strategy of their city or region.

The legacy of a European Capital of Culture should be part of the project from the very beginning, and a balance should be found between the celebratory, one-off nature of the Year and its long-term impact on local cultural and urban development policies. **Policymakers and funders should commit to sustain their support beyond the activity year** and legacy bodies, structures or partnerships should ideally be set up to retain the experience, knowledge and know-how developed during the ECOC process.

Lessons learned from previous Capitals of Culture or other large-scale, celebratory cultural events should be more systematically collected and shared in order to **build on successful schemes and strategies** (such as volunteer and internship programmes, private/public partnerships, regional co-commissioning or touring structures, etc).

Circus arts and other cultural professionals, ECOC teams and policymakers should engage more bravely in the European dimension of the Years to contribute to the development of **a shared vision of Europe, building on the different cities' experiences** and offering Europeans a space of reflection, debate and experimentation on what Europe is (or should be).

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 Consult the calendar here: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc481\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc481_en.htm)
- 2 Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:304:0001:0006:EN:PDF>
- 3 In 2013, for example, Marseille Provence 2013 has announced a total operational budget of 91 million Euros, and an additional 80 million in capital investment not directly managed by the ECOC team. Košice, on the other hand, announced a total budget (operational and capital investment) of 84.7 million Euros.  
  
Source: Report for the second monitoring and advisory meeting for the European Capitals of Culture 2013, issued by the Monitoring and Advisory Panel for the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2013, May 2012: <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/2013-monitoring-report.pdf>
- 4 'European Cities and Capitals of Culture', 2004, Study prepared for the European Commission, Palmer/Rae Associates: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc926\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc926_en.htm)  
  
European Commission report and ECOTEC report on the 2007 & 2008 Capitals: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0689:FIN:EN:PDF> and [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ex\\_post\\_evaluation\\_final\\_report2007\\_08.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ex_post_evaluation_final_report2007_08.pdf)  
  
European Commission report and ECOTEC report on the 2009 Capitals: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ex\\_post\\_evaluation\\_final\\_report2007\\_08.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ex_post_evaluation_final_report2007_08.pdf) and [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ecoc\\_evaluation\\_2009.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ecoc_evaluation_2009.pdf)  
  
ECORYS report on the 2010 Capitals: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/pdf/ecoc/ecoc\\_2010\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/pdf/ecoc/ecoc_2010_final_report.pdf)  
  
ECORYS report on the 2011 Capitals: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/evalreports/culture/2012/ecoreport\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/evalreports/culture/2012/ecoreport_en.pdf)
- 5 See the website of the public consultation: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/consultation-on-the-future-of-ecoc\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/consultation-on-the-future-of-ecoc_en.htm)
- 6 Summary of the Commission proposal: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/capitals-beyond-2019\\_fr.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/capitals-beyond-2019_fr.htm)  
  
Full proposal document: <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ec-proposal-post-2019.pdf>  
  
Accompanying Commission staff working document: <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ec-staff-working-doc-ecoc-post2019.pdf>
- 7 See the Eurocities Statement on the Future of the European Capitals of Culture, January 2011: [http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/EUROCITIES\\_statement\\_on\\_Capitals\\_of\\_Culture-SMUL\\_10798.pdf](http://nws.eurocities.eu/MediaShell/media/EUROCITIES_statement_on_Capitals_of_Culture-SMUL_10798.pdf)
- 8 To consult all the available evaluation reports, see here: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc485\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc485_en.htm)
- 9 'European Cities and Capitals of Culture', 2004, Study prepared for the European Commission, Palmer/Rae Associates: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc926\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc926_en.htm)
- 10 An international framework of good practice in research and delivery of the European Capital of Culture programme, 2010 can be downloaded here: [www.liv.ac.uk/impacts08/Publications/ECoc\\_Policy\\_Group\\_Framework.pdf](http://www.liv.ac.uk/impacts08/Publications/ECoc_Policy_Group_Framework.pdf)  
  
To consult the blog of the project see here: <http://ecocpolicygroup.wordpress.com/>
- 11 For a summarised view of the different types of impact and legacy of ECOC initiatives, see the Summary of the European Commission conference "Celebrating 25 years of European Capitals of Culture", Brussels, 23-24 March 2010: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/conclusions\\_ecoc.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/conclusions_ecoc.pdf)
- 12 See the UN Human Development reports and read more on the International Day of Happiness: <http://hdr.undp.org/en> and [www.un.org/en/events/happinessday](http://www.un.org/en/events/happinessday)
- 13 See the OECD Better Life Initiative which includes well-being indicators and a Better Life Index: [www.oecd.org/statistics/betterlifeinitiativemeasuringwell-beingandprogress.htm](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/betterlifeinitiativemeasuringwell-beingandprogress.htm)
- 14 Liverpool 08 European Capital of Culture: Mental Well-being Impact Assessment – Executive Summary, 2007: [www.liv.ac.uk/ihia/IMPACT%20Reports/MWIA\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.liv.ac.uk/ihia/IMPACT%20Reports/MWIA_Executive_Summary.pdf)
- 15 For more information see the website: [www.piccadillycircuscircus.co.uk](http://www.piccadillycircuscircus.co.uk)
- 16 Visit the Lille 3000 website, legacy of Lille 2004: [www.lille3000.eu/lille3000/en](http://www.lille3000.eu/lille3000/en)
- 17 Visit the Brugge Plus website, legacy of Brugge 2002: [www.bruggeplus.be](http://www.bruggeplus.be)
- 18 For more information on the Tallinn Creative Hub, see here: [www.kultuurikatel.ee/eng](http://www.kultuurikatel.ee/eng)
- 19 See the Commission's proposal for the ECOC scheme beyond 2019: <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc/ecoc/ec-proposal-post-2019.pdf>