

# Capitals of Culture

An introductory survey of a worldwide activity

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## **About the author**

Steve Green was an independent expert member of the selection (2011-16) and monitoring panel (2011-14) for the European Capitals of Culture 2011-2016. He chaired the meetings from 2014. Previously he had a 35 year career in international cultural relations with the British Council and European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC).

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# Preface

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During my five years, three as its chair, on the selection panel for the European Capitals of Culture over 80 cities from 14 countries presented themselves as candidates for the title. All had different reasons for entering the competition but they shared a common ambition that culture could play an important part in the future of their cities. They also recognised the importance of a title awarded externally.

The title has become a brand leader. It is recognised worldwide. The concept of a “Capital of Culture”, or “City of Culture” (awarded, not self-proclaimed) has gone global. Some awards are a direct spin-off of the European title, in Lithuania, in the UK, in Italy. Others have taken the concept and adapted it to their region, to their country and their own culture.

This paper is an introductory survey of 31 titles. Some have closed but in 2017 there are 23 cities around the world with a “Capital of Culture” title. They join over 300 cities which have held titles since 1985.

The paper is descriptive not analytical or theoretical. It is also open access.

The European title has spawned an immense literature in reports, books, theses, evaluations and media articles. The other titles are far less reviewed. Even Wikipedia falls short. This survey has been primarily online based (thanks to Google Translate which for all its faults can be quite useful!). My thanks go to those who have replied to my requests for information about their programmes.

I hope the paper triggers more research into the “Capitals of Culture” programmes around the world. I would welcome more information, and corrections, and will keep the paper updated.

Steve Green

# Introduction

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This paper is an introduction to the Capitals, and Cities, of Culture programmes around the world. The European “City of Culture” title started in 1985. It was the first time a phrase previously (and still nowadays) associated with marketing and PR was bestowed on a city by a third party. That programme, now the “European Capital of Culture” has generated a considerable library of reports, theses, analyses, evaluations, articles, books and commentaries. Far less has been written about the programmes which have followed in its footsteps.

This paper surveys 31 titles. Some have ended and several lasted only a few editions. More are due to start in the next few years. Over 320 cities in 104 countries have held titles. Over 50 cities are already designated to hold titles to 2025.

This paper outlines the programmes. It is very much an introductory survey: more information is needed on almost all of the titles except the original European title.

Many titles are reticent about key elements of their programmes, the selection process, the funding and sometimes the nature of the programmes delivered by the title holder. Not surprisingly this reticence often tends to follow the openness of the governments or organisation running the titles and the limited questioning of their media.

The research for the paper has been mostly online with welcome contributions from title “owners” and contacts. There are several titles where it has been very difficult to obtain information or indeed replies from the organisers. Any further information is welcome!

The paper is in two parts. I survey the titles in Chapters 1 to 5. Chapter 6, the longest part of the paper, is a Directory with more detailed information on each of the programmes. If someone wants to update Wikipedia (which is woefully short of information on many “Capitals of Culture”) please go-ahead. There are a few thoughts for the future in the Reflections (chapter 5).

The paper is descriptive rather than academically analytical. There are those who dislike many aspects of such titles. Criticisms include “They take funds away from other cultural purposes”, “they are neo-liberal mechanisms to use culture for economic gains”, “competition between cities is defeating”, “benefits are overstated”. Most academic papers seem to be negative as a Capital city, or overall programme, does not meet the objectives of the author. I leave such judgements to others and another time. In this paper I record and compare not judge. My aim is to open awareness not close down.

# Chapter 1 Origins

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In 1982 UNESCO organised the “World Conference on Cultural Policies” in Mexico City. Over 900 delegates from 126 countries (mostly led by ministers of culture) plus many intergovernmental and NGOs took part. The conference was the culmination of a number of preparatory regional conferences held during the 1970s. Reading its report now is an interesting experience. Setting aside the political changes (the Cold War was still cold) and the formality of the language, the cultural issues raised are similar to those which would be raised in a global conference on culture today. (Experts in cultural policy studies will spot nuances of approach).

The topics included tangible and intangible heritage, culture and education, the mass media, science, the emerging new technologies, international cultural exchanges, migrants, cultural imperialism, youth and diversity and the equality of cultures. The role of culture in peace and reconciliation was centred on the apartheid Southern African region (and the still unresolved conflicts in Palestine/Israel and Cyprus).

One of the points the delegates agreed was that economic development (applicable at all stages of economic standing) was not an end in itself and that culture (in its broadest definition) had to play a key role:

The conference was also unanimous in declaring as a self-evident truth that economic growth should no longer be an end in itself and that any development should henceforth be centred on man (*sic*) and his wholeness.

...development should henceforth be based on the cultural values of societies and on maximum respect for the personality of each of them and that it should therefore be centred on human individuals and on the communities to which those individuals belonged.

The Greek and French delegations were led by their respective Ministers of Culture, Melina Mercouri and Jack Lang. All of the European Economic Community countries, except Ireland, were also at the conference, their delegations led by a Minister or by a Director General.

Fifteen months later, in November 1983, Mercouri set out her ideas at the first meeting of culture ministers of the then 10 member European Economic Community. Jack Lang was present. The influence of the sentiments expressed at the Mexico meeting is clear.

“How is it possible for a community which is deprived of its cultural dimension to grow? Our role as Ministers of Culture is clear. Our responsibility is a must. Culture is the soul of society. Therefore, our foremost duty is to look at the foundations and

nature of this Community. This does not mean that we should impose our ideals. On the contrary, we must recognize the diversities and the differences amongst the people of Europe”

“The determining factor of a European identity lies precisely in respecting these diversities with the aim of creating a living dialogue between the cultures of Europe. It is time for our voice to be heard as loud as that of the technocrats. Culture, art and creativity are not less important than technology, commerce and the economy.”

The outcome of this plea was a plan to designate a city every year which would represent the culture of Europe through a specially designed programme. The concept of an organisation designating a city as a “Cultural Capital” was born. Not surprisingly Athens was chosen as the first “City of Culture” and in 1985 presented its programme organised by Mercuri’s brother.

The “City of Culture” programme continued through the 1980s and 1990s. Most cities were chosen behind closed doors by their governments. There was an unofficial rota of countries, often changed by agreement and trade-offs. In 1990 the United Kingdom pioneered the idea of an open competition. It was won by Glasgow whose approach on engaging with citizens and linking the programme to their existing regeneration policies changed the direction of the programme.

In 1999 the programme was formally adopted by the European Union, the title changed to “European Capital of Culture” and new processes and objectives introduced. The programme flourished. Over time the emphasis of the programme in cities has changed. According to an early reviewer, and programme director of two titles, the first three phrases could be identified as “expensive arts festivals” followed by “cultural regeneration” followed by “city infrastructure”. In more recent editions title holders have focused on the attitudes and behaviours of citizens. Candidates are now required to have a medium term cultural strategy.

The rules, objectives and processes for the programme changed in 2004, 2009 and 2014; each time significantly. The trend has been for a wider range of activities, more transparency, longer forward planning and more open and independent selection and monitoring processes.

In 2017 the Capitals in 2022 are being selected and candidates for the titles up to 2030 are already preparing their bids.

## Chapter 2 Diffusion

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It took 6 years after Athens for the next title to appear. By 1999, 15 years after the initial Athens event, there were only two other titles (Ibero-American and Arab). The 2000s saw a veritable explosion in titles; between 2000 and 2010 17 titles appeared. The 2100s have (so far) seen a further 11 appear. Ten programmes have closed.

The European title is referenced by many of the organisers when they first start their own title; it is clearly seen as the global “brand leader”. None follow it in detail but have adapted it to suit their own objectives. One feature of the European title that none have recognised is its changing nature; all have stayed consistent with their original intentions.

The programmes vary considerably; there is no sense of a “one size fits all” or a simple take up of the European title either in organisation or in delivery.

In order to survey the titles, and to compare their similarities and differences I use a four category model based on their “owners”: the organisation which creates them (and has the authority, sometimes exercised, to discontinue them), provides the geographic area, the objectives, the criteria and importantly the degree of credibility.

The first three categories are in the public sector: governments or city administrations; the fourth picks up private and NGO organisations.

The four categories are:

- Intergovernmental or international organisations of governments and cities
- National titles under authority of governments, normally the ministry of culture
- Regional titles under the authority of a regional public administration or network
- Titles organised outside the public sector by independent organisations and NGOs

The Directory contains a complete listing of all title holders together with details of each organiser, objectives, and brief comments on some of the more recent editions to give a flavour of the city programmes.

A frequent occurrence is where a ministry or regional administration has nominated a city as a “cultural capital” as one time tourist promotion. Examples include Mons (Belgium) in 2003; Lviv (Ukraine) in 2009 and Casablanca (Morocco) in 2017. This survey does not

include this type. I also exclude the self-proclaimed Capitals (a recent example, but one of many, is Wellington in New Zealand).

There are many other titles for cities around the world to aim for. Within Europe there are titles of Youth, Sport, Gastronomy, Innovation and Green. Networks include Eurocities and the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Network. Since 2004 UNESCO has designated cities in the fields of crafts and folk art, design, film, gastronomy, literature, music and media arts. By 2017 there were 116 members from 54 countries in its Creative Cities Network. UNESCO also runs the World Book Capital award. The World Cities Culture Forum brings together 33 cities from around the world. I do not cover these titles in this survey but do bring them into a discussion over legacy.

Table 1 shows the development of "Capital of Culture" programmes. They are listed in order of their first edition rather than the date of the decision to start the programme. Those titles which have ended are in italics with the start/end dates shown. In the case of the international titles the organiser, and administrator, are shown.

I have tried to avoid acronyms. For titles of programmes all but two are referred to by the short title in Table 1 (eg "European" rather than "ECOC"). The two exceptions are the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP, its Portuguese acronym). I have used the accepted acronyms for the organising international organisations (eg ASEAN, ISESCO and ALECSO).



**Table 1 Capital of Culture programmes**

Year	International	National	Regional	Independent
1985	<b>European</b> <i>European Union/ European Commission</i>			
1991	<b>Ibero-American</b> <i>Union of Capital Cities of Ibero-America</i>			
1996	<b>Arab</b> <i>Arab League/ALECSO</i>			
2000				<b>American</b>
2001-06			<i>Volga, Russia</i>	
2002-06	<i>Lusophone</i>			
2003-12		<i>Canada</i>		
2003-05		<i>Portugal</i>		
2004				<b>Catalan</b> Spain/France
2005	<b>Islamic</b> <i>Organisation of Islamic Conference/ISESCO</i>			
2006-12				<i>Brazil</i>
2007-13			<i>Nord-Pas-de-Calais, France</i>	
2008		<b>Lithuania</b>		
2009			<b>Eixo Atlântico</b> <i>Portugal/Spain</i>	
2010		<b>Belarus</b>		
2010	<b>South East Asian</b> <i>ASEAN</i>			
2010	<b>Turkic World</b> <i>Turkic Council/TURKSOY</i>			
2010			<b>Krasnoyarsk</b> <i>Russia</i>	
2010-14			<i>Wallonia, Belgium</i>	
2011	<b>Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)</b>			
2013		<b>United Kingdom</b>		
2014-17				<b>Finno-Ugric</b>
2014		<i>Ireland</i>		
2014	<b>East Asia</b> <i>China, Japan, Korea</i>			
2014-16		<i>Cape Verde</i>		
2015		<b>Italy</b>		
2016	<b>South Asia</b> <i>SAARC</i>			
2016				<i>Korea</i>
2017	<b>Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP)</b>			
2018			<b>Victoria, Australia</b>	
2019			<b>London, UK</b>	

# Chapter 3 Process

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The process of selecting a European title holder has gone through four major iterations since the 1985 opening edition. Each has broadened the scope of the objectives and changed the detailed process. As an indicator of change the initial 1983 intergovernmental agreement on the programme ran to half a page. The “Decision” agreed in 2014 for Capitals from 2020 to 2033 runs to 12 pages with a further 6 pages of detailed rules and a 19 page “Guide to Candidates”.

The evolution of the regulations for the European title is transparent. The same cannot be said for all the other titles. Several match the European approach (eg UK, Italy and Krasnoyarsk) others are opaque to say the least (eg American and Turkic World).

For this survey I have primarily used online sources. This may militate against some of the longer running titles before the web became widespread but even so the older titles should really keep their up-to-date. Chapter 6 gives a more detailed picture of the processes, from initial agreements to start the programme, objectives and selection systems.

## Objectives

The objectives of the programmes are found variously on the websites of the programmes, announcements of the successful cities and in some cases in media reports. Regardless of the organiser there is a high degree of commonality among the published objectives of Capital programmes. Some programmes have lengthy (which must be almost impossible to achieve) lists of objectives where it seems almost every possible potential outcome is addressed; others are more succinct.

The objectives for the intergovernmental programmes tend to be broader and less specific than those at national and regional level. This is probably related to the political concern not to interfere with the internal policies of countries. An exception is the European title which has very clear objectives but the EU is in a different category from other international organisations. It is the only international network which seeks to act as a supranational body, to agree legal rules and regulations on its members as part of its strategic purpose. All the other networks seek to share policies, to work on programmes together on a voluntary basis. It is noticeable how the scope of activity of these intergovernmental networks is progressively widening and deepening.

Objectives fall into several categories and virtually all of the programmes’ objectives fit into 3 or all 4 of these categories

- To showcase, promote and safeguard the cultures, languages and heritage of the geographic scope of the programme

- To seek increased economic benefits, notably through increased recognition (place branding) and subsequent tourism, to support regeneration and encouragement of the cultural industries
- To promote artistic production, attract new audiences and encourage cultural exchanges
- To encourage citizens participation, with an emphasis on young people

The balance of importance between these categories becomes clearer when the programmes of title holders are compared. The promotion and safeguarding of culture and heritage is strong in titles such as Turkic World, South Asian, Islamic and South East Asia. It is noticeable that the activities in title holders in these programmes place a high priority on traditional and folk arts. Uniquely the South Asian title is based on archaeological sites.

The encouragement of artistic production, especially contemporary arts, and a drive for the active engagement of citizens is more to the fore in some national and regional titles (eg European, UK, Italy, Lithuania, Victoria and the former programmes in Nord-Pas-de Calais, Wallonia and Volga). Most titles are managed “top-down” with little evidence of the active participation of citizens in decision making. The use and promotion of languages, especially regional or “lesser used”, is a key feature in many programmes.

The Canada and Finno-Ugric titles took an interesting approach. The Canada programme divided its award into three categories based on population. In the smallest category for communities under 50,000 it accepted bids from “First Nations governments, and Inuit and Métis communities”. There were several title holders in this category from First Nation communities (eg the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan in 2005 and the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve in 2006).

The Finno-Ugric title covered a vast geographic area, spread over a number of countries. There is no political or administrative structure; it is entirely cultural. The four title holders are all very small communities (less than 2,000) with a strong focus on the traditional culture and language.

### **Governance and administration**

Titles in the three public sector categories are almost always set up at ministerial level, either heads of government or culture ministers. The two exceptions are the titles set up by international networks of cities (Ibero-American and the now closed Lusofone). These were set up at their respective annual governing meetings of mayors.

National and regional titles are administered by the relevant ministry (normally Culture) or local regional administrations. These have the staff and budgets to handle applications and

the selection process. The current (and previous) titles in these categories are also very transparent as they are open to taxpayers and the media.

Intergovernmental organisations, once they have set up the programme, tend to pass the administration to an “arm’s length” organisation which specialises in cultural project management. The Arab, Islamic, Turkic World, Commonwealth of Independent States and the South Asian titles are all administered by such organisations. The first four use their regional cultural, scientific and educational organisations which work in parallel to UNESCO. The East Asia title is unusual in that the three participating countries’ Culture Ministries run parallel, open, selections.

The programmes which select on the basis of the venue of the next ministerial meeting (Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries and the South East Asia title) do not appear to need any specific organisational activity. The European title is now a hybrid with management of the process delegated to the relevant national ministry of culture. However the ministry has to work under very tight oversight and advice from the European Commission which ensures each national programme keeps to the central objectives and rules.

Two of the independent titles (American and Catalan) are managed by the “International Bureau of Cultural Capitals” which is based in Barcelona, Spain. It is very reticent about its membership and processes and this has led to considerable controversy. It appears to be directed by a single person. In the case of the American title the Bureau president has informed the author that candidates need to pay a registration fee of €10,000 and subsequently 25% of their private sector income to pay for television advertising carried by the media partners of the Bureau.

The Finno-Ugric title is another outlier and one of the most interesting. It is being run by volunteers from an international umbrella network of youth organisations.

## **Selection**

Most programmes operate on an annual basis. Some have more than one capital per year (European, Islamic); a few have a variable number (Canada, CIS). A two yearly cycle is seen in Eixo Atlântico and South East Asian. The outlier is the UK with a four year cycle.

The selection of title holders falls into a two or three stage process in virtually all of the programmes. The three stages are:

- **A forward rota of countries** (optional). This appears mainly in the intergovernmental category. This can be formal (in the case of the European title which now has a list to 2033 and the Islamic to 2025) or informal where “countries take their turn”. In regional titles there is often an attempt to move the title between sub-regions within the organisations membership.

- **Selection** of the city. There are four broad approaches:
  - A fully open competition with an independent selection panel. This is the rule in all the current national programmes, all but one of the regional titles and two intergovernmental (European and East Asia). The Finno-Ugric title also used this approach, with an impressive quality of panel members given the volunteer nature of the organisers.
  - Closed doors: nomination by governments. This was the original approach of the European title and is now used by the Turkic World, Commonwealth of Independent States, SAARC South Asia and the new regional title in Victoria Australia.
  - Expressions of interest to organiser with a private proposal in the Arab, Ibero-American and the independent American (with a candidate's fee) and Catalan titles.
  - Location city of the next Ministerial meeting: a new approach adopted by the South East Asian, Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries and for one of the Islamic capitals. These all operate on a two yearly cycle.
- **Designation** This is the formal decision to award the title. In the three public sector categories this is carried out by ministers or heads of government (or the annual meeting of the mayors for the Ibero-American). The Commonwealth of Independent States takes this as a two stage process with Foreign Ministers initially approving the nominations of governments and passing the candidates to the meeting of heads of government for final designation. For many titles the designation announcement is the first public notice of the title holder.

Selection generally takes place 12 to 15 months before the title year. Selection normally precedes designation by a few months. The timing of selection is important. A short advance notice restricts the title holder from developing a significant and extensive programme. Indeed reviews of the Canadian, Lithuanian and Italian titles have all recommended a longer lead in time, a point adopted by the last two titles. The European title gradually increased its lead-in time from one year to the current four years. The UK title also enables four years preparation. Both titles give titleholders an adequate period for a gradual build-up of activity and engagement as well as preparing an in-depth programme. The Arab and CIS titles are now moving to longer lead in periods.

The Islamic title has a listing of holders (cities not just countries) up to 2025. However it appears most cities do not start their preparations until formal designation about a year before the title year.

## **Selection Criteria**

Several titles have specific criteria for the selection of title holders. Those with open competitions are more likely to list the criteria whilst those with closed selection or based on the location of next ministerial meeting approaches tend to be more circumspect. Indeed for the latter category the criterion is political as the Ministers and diplomats agree the next venue for their meeting. It is uncertain which comes first: the choice for the political meeting or the selection of a cultural city.

A geographic restriction is sometimes the first criterion. Naturally title holders come from within the membership area of the title organiser but not all may apply. London is excluded from the UK title; Vilnius may not apply for the Lithuanian title; the Italian title is expressly for smaller and medium cities; the Finno-Ugric excludes regional and administrative cities.

The European and Islamic titles have the most extensive and exhaustive list of criteria. They are very different with the European title seeking forward looking information on the proposed programme whereas the Islamic title's criteria primarily refer to a city's intangible and tangible heritage and contribution to Islamic thought. Other titles, especially those where a candidate proposes itself without an open competition tend to have more open criteria, if indeed any at all. Both the Belarus and Krasnoyarsk titles refer to the implementation of, respectively, their national and regional cultural policy. The upcoming celebration of a city anniversary is often a factor in application and selection (for example, some Canadian cities and more frequently in the Ibero-American).

Both the European and Italian titles publish reports on the selection process with the reasons for the selection of the title holder and where the unsuccessful candidates fell short.

## **Finance**

“Capitals of Culture” programmes are very cost effective for the owner of the title. The majority operate with no funding from the owner; the title holding city bears all the responsibility for raising the funds for its programme, and any infrastructure projects associated with their plans. These funds come from combinations of city, regional and national budgets depending on the system and policies of public finances in a country. Private sector funding is a very small contributor and rarely reaches 10% of total expenditure.

At intergovernmental level only the European title offers central funding, in this case from the European Union. It is currently, and has been for over 10 years, €1.5m. The payment is conditional on the title holder meeting a range of conditions during the period from designation to the title year. So far every city has earned this payment. The South Asia

title-holder would appear to host regional festivals under the auspices of the SAARC Cultural Centre.

There is greater flexibility in the national and regional titles. In all cases however the central payment is only a contribution to the full costs of a programme. The Italian title holders receive €1m from central government with title holder's programmes typically costing €3m to €9m. The Lithuania government grants a maximum of €58,000 or 80% of the total costs although most title holders achieve a greater share of self-funding. The UK government does not fund its title holder directly although the arm's length Arts Councils, and the British Council, have funded parts of the programmes of the two title holders. The new London title will offer £1.1m from city funds on the condition there is at least 30% matching funds from the borough. Interestingly it has a long list of cultural operators, and some cultural funding foundations, in London who are prepared to work with the title-holder.

The stand out exception in financing is the independent American title which as mentioned above, charges a fee to the candidates and takes 25% of the private sector funding for media activity with its television partners. It appears there was also a registration fee for the now closed Brazilian title which came from the same overall organising family of titles.

### **Programme closure**

Ten "Capital of Culture" programmes have ended. There is a noticeable imbalance between inter-governmental programmes (only 1 has ended) and national/regional programmes (8 ended). The two prime reasons behind the closure of national and regional titles are easy to recognise: money and political change. The Canadian title, the first national Capital programme, was closed by the government after 12 years, as an "austerity measure"; the Volga programme, the first regional programme, closed for lack of financial support and political issues. At regional and national level a change of political party after elections is a common occurrence; Portugal being a good example.

That inter-governmental programmes have a longer life is perhaps not too surprising. In the first instance there will be the view that "everyone must have a turn". Indeed in almost all cases the title has moved around all member states in the first wave of the programme. Once so established it would take a strong diplomatic drive to suggest to co-members that the title should be closed: a loss of diplomatic face or of appearing over-bearing is to be avoided in such networks. Of course any argument to close will need to overcome the celebrations of success from previous titleholders. That the organiser does not have to contribute financially is also a strong factor in maintaining the status quo. A Capitals programme is one of the few programmes or activities of an intergovernmental network which reaches citizens directly; a small but valuable piece of maintaining visibility. For those titles where the holder is the venue for the Ministerial meeting, or where such meetings usually takes place in the title holder, there is the host nations desire to put on a good show to their peers.

## **Future titles**

In 2017 three new titles were announced: CPLP, Victoria (Australia) and the London Borough of Culture. The first two will have their opening editions in 2018 and London in 2019.

There are several possible titles in active development. Discussions are taking place in Switzerland and Ukraine. In Malta the CEO of the European title holder in 2018 has proposed a three-yearly national title, an idea taken up by the ruling political party of which he used to be general secretary. There has been a strong campaign in recent years for a national title in France. There were discussions a few years ago to start a West African title. An attempt was made in the 2010s for a “World Capital of Culture “title aimed at the global mega cities and primarily to be financed by private sector funding.



# Chapter 4 Cities

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323 cities around the world have held a title “Cultural Capital” since Athens in 1985. Two have managed to hold two titles concurrently (Lisbon in 1994 European and Ibero-American and Astana in 2012 with Turkic and CIS). A few more cities have held two titles in different years; a few have held the same title twice. 53 cities are already designated to hold titles from 2018 to 2025.

I do not intend in this paper to review all the cities that have held titles. That is for another day (or year). The Directory in Chapter 6 gives some details of recent title holders. I will make a few observations on some of the principal topics.

## **Demand**

The demand is strong. 46 cities have expressed an interest in applying for the Italian title in 2020 and 31 eventually submitted formal applications in September 2017. Eleven cities entered the 2021 UK competition. Several cities are already preparing their bids for the European title as far ahead as 2027 and even 2030. Those titles with an open competition are attracting anything from 3 to 20+ candidates every year. There does not seem to be a public sector based title which has a problem in finding suitable candidates. There are several cases of an unsuccessful city re-entering a future competition (eg in the Krasnoyarsk, European and East Asia competitions).

There are reports of unsuccessful candidates still continuing with much of their proposed programme (eg Rouyn-Noranda in Canada 2010, Cluj-Napoca with the European title for 2021).

## **Information**

Information about cities and their programmes varies. At one extreme is the considerable website, publications, social media activity and media reporting demonstrated by the European, UK and Italian titles. At the other end of the spectrum is almost total silence shown by, in the recent and current years, by some title holders in the Belarus, Islamic, CIS and South Asian titles. This is not an absolute spectrum. Cities holding the same title vary in their openness from year to year. To a large extent the information flow reflects the nature of media censorship and public information policies of governments. For many titles holders in say CIS, Turkic, Arab and Islamic media reports will say who was present at an opening ceremony but not what they said beyond the protocol niceties.

Social media has opened up information. To take the current year, 2017, as an indicator; there are 23 title holders. Only nine appear to have no presence through a website or are inactive on Facebook or Twitter. (Of those nine, three have no apparent programme).

Fourteen of the Capitals have webpages; Twelve are on Facebook and 10 on Twitter. Seven are active on all three outlets.

## **Objectives**

What do cities seek to gain? Why do they put their names forward, either by competition or by nomination? The speeches and press reports at selection, designation and at some opening ceremonies bring out many common threads. In most cases these have a reasonable overlap with the objectives of the competition/selection which gave them the title. But of course local audiences want to hear local objectives.

The principal themes, whether made by ministers or mayors, include

Pride in the recognition of the city, its heritage and culture. Many speeches claim their city deserves the title thanks to its history, its heritage and its current cultural activity. This is often despite the formal criteria of the title.

Aspiration the title will increase awareness, tourism, well-being and prosperity

Call for citizens to engage in the arts as audiences

Commitment to build on the cultural offer of the city (especially where there is a large cultural infrastructure element)

Celebration of a common language or promoting lesser used languages

Linking the title, and culture, to an urban transformation project in the city, either of the whole city or of certain areas

The international title holders normally add:

To bring people together from different member countries, and

Embrace a sense of shared common values

Once the natural element of pride in the recognition has been taken into account it is clear that tourism is the major objective of most title holders. The recent increase in titles in Asia can be seen to reflect the considerable increase in tourism in the region.

## **Budgets**

A common feature in all programmes is that the Capital city has to finance its own budget; as noted above there is limited funding, if any, from the organiser.

The degree of openness on funding is considerable. Most of the Capitals in the various programmes in Europe announce their budgets and some even disclose actual expenditure afterwards but most in the Middle East and Asia remain silent.

Even when the budget is in the public domain it is difficult to compare budgets between title holders. Some budgets include the financing of capital projects (mostly but not exclusively cultural). The period covered also varies, from 5-6 years for the European title down to the more usual single year. For many titles the existing cultural offer of the city is subsumed into the programme; in others a special programme is developed.

The source of funds varies even within programmes. The public sector is by far the most important provider of funds. National, regional, and city budgets all come into play, the balance between them is depends on the national system for public financing. Private sector support appears negligible outside of titles in Europe.

The largest budgets so far identified are around \$500,000,000.

Najaf was awarded the Islamic title for the Arab region for 2012. The city saw the title as a catalyst for a major rebuilding after the invasion of Iraq. A sum of \$500m was allocated with \$330m for investment in infrastructure and \$170m for programmes. Delays, overruns and allegations of corruption led the government to request a postponement of the title.

Baghdad and Constantine, the Arab title holders in 2013 and 2015, both worked with budgets around €500m. Both included considerable cultural and other city infrastructure projects. Constantine had, for example, only 10% of the budget, €50m, for its artistic programme. This level of funding for the artistic programme is similar to that of recent European title holders.

In 2017 Lisbon as Ibero-American title holder has a budget of €3m, a considerable increase over the €100,000 of the previous title holder Andorra.

National and regional titles tend to have smaller budgets. Hull, the UK's 2017 title holder has a budget of £33m, probably the highest so far for a national title. Its predecessor Derry/Londonderry had an expenditure of £25m in 2013.

The major cities in Canada had programmes of C\$5-8m. Palermo in Italy 2019 is planning on a €9m budget. Lithuanian Capitals have reached over €100,000 for relatively small cities. Klaipėda in 2017 is exceptional with an overall budget of €1.3m (€58,000 from national government; the city has provided €322,000 for management, €900,000 for projects and €160,000 for promotional activities).

Regional budgets become smaller, with the two small cities hosting the Eixo Atlântico's holders in 2016 coming in at €3m and €2m. The two cities adopted different strategies with Matosinhos using its whole budget for programme activity and Vila Real using some for a capital project. Two of the independent titles in 2017 Reus, (Catalan) manage on €450,000 and Merida (American) on \$3m of public funds (its publicity includes a good number of private sector partners who presumably are contributing in cash or kind).

## City Programmes

Programmes vary considerably in size, complexity and period. The variation is such that it is not really fruitful to try to make too many comparisons between title holders. These variables are not only driven by the size of the budget.

City programmes fall into broad categories:

A major arts festival showcasing the arts of a city or region with little overall concept or design but noticeably more than the normal arts offer of the city

An arts programme divided into several themes under an overall concept

A multisector programme going beyond the arts sector to engage with schools, universities, NGOs, creative industries etc

The first category covers most titles. The showcasing of arts is the prime activity, and objective. Some titles lean towards the preservation of their cultures against what they perceive as the encroaching dominant regional culture (eg Turkic World and Catalan).

Not all Capitals run their programmes for a full 12 months. An opening in March/April and a run to December is common (eg Turkic and Eixo Atlântico). Luxor, the Arab title holder in 2017 has a programme running from March 2017 to March 2018 when it hands over to Basra.

There is a standard template which fits almost all title holders regardless of title. The start is an extensive opening ceremony, often extending over a few days with a wide range of activities. There is a special focus on outdoor spectacles, regardless of the weather.

Concurrently there is a formal protocol opening mainly at minister and mayoral level.

Aarhus, one of the European titles in 2017 featured the Queen of Denmark, their patron. A variant, especially outside Europe for the international titles, is the presence of heads of government or ministers from other member states as well as heads of the organiser (eg ALECSO, Türksoy etc).

Most Capitals also have a smaller closing ceremony often marked with a formal handover of a symbolic artefact to the next title holder.

The programme in many titles in Europe (European, Lithuanian, Italian, and UK) is divided into themes, 3-5, rather than a prolonged festival with disconnected events. For example the 2017 edition of the Ibero-American title in Lisbon has its programme based on five themes each exploring particular aspects of the Ibero-American relationship including migration and slavery. This structure and conceptual approach differs considerably from previous holders of the title.

The size of the budget is clearly a key factor. Operating budgets over €50m can produce over 500 activities, quite common with the European title. Budgets around €2-3m produce

corresponding fewer projects and activities and those with even smaller budgets are correspondingly more limited in their delivery. As most title holders are formally designated a relatively short period before the title year an extensive programme is more difficult to organise.

After size, the most obvious difference in programmes is the balance between contemporary and traditional arts. The Belarus, CIS, Turkic, South East Asia and South Asian Capitals have a very clear focus on showcasing their traditional artforms mixed with classical music and ballet. The Arab title normally has followed along the same lines; Constatine2015 and Sfax2016 were more contemporary orientated than earlier title holders. Both managements made references to Marseilles-Provence, the European title holder in 2013 and implied it could be a model, even if out of reach of the capacity of their cities to deliver. Luxor, the 2017 holder, has reverted to type with a strong programme of traditional arts. The trilateral East Asia title takes a mixed route depending on the city with the Japanese cities making a greater emphasis on contemporary arts. Titles in Europe and the Americas concentrate on contemporary arts. There is a strong focus on street and open air events in most titles.

The Volga title made a clear statement of intent to focus on contemporary arts which had been “persona non grata” in Soviet times.

Virtually all Capitals make a feature of international artists in their programme regardless of their contemporary or traditional focus. The international partners are primarily from the region of the title holder where there is a shared common cultural foundation. The cost of partnering is obviously a key factor in the choice of international partners beyond the near neighbours.

In recent European editions the majority of projects and activities have included an international partner. This extent is not matched elsewhere but nonetheless Capital programmes do increase the degree of international artistic performance and cooperation whether of sand sculptors (Yokohama, East Asia 2014), traditional drumming (Luxor, Arab 2017) or digital artists (Mons, European 2015).

Politics intervenes at times. Indeed the very first European title in Athens in 1985 included an exhibition to point out cultural and heritage issues caused by the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. The very selection of Al-Quds (Jerusalem) as an Arab title holder provoked predictable opposition from Israel. A festival in Sfax was cancelled after it was discovered that the organiser had previously organised the same festival in Israel.

## **Legacy**

What happens after the title year? How do cities maintain the momentum of activity built up in the year? Or do they do nothing? It appears that the range of eventualities is wide and there is no single post title trajectory. Garcia and Cox in their review of the long-term

impact of the European title grouped the legacies of the programme in four categories: cultural, image, social and economic.

Those cities which run a large long term arts festival appear, especially those with a strong protocol and diplomatic element, appear to do little after the year. The showcasing was an end to itself although it may have brought more attention to the city for possible tourists.

A one-year programme, however intense, in itself does not create a legacy. That requires a more sustained effort by the city. The Capital year may be part of an existing strategy; it may be a catalyst (Liverpool, European 2008 makes this claim). Many report an increase in the self-esteem of citizens.

It appears that for several titles the Capital year is a one-off; a large arts festival associated with a marketing campaign for tourists. A sense of “status” is achieved. This is not dissimilar from the early years of the European title. Capitals in the CIS, Belarus, South Asian, Arab, Islamic, American tend to fall into this category. There are exceptions in these titles.

At the other end of the scale are those cities which have a clear goal of using the Capital title for a sustained change in their cities. Lille and Liverpool stand out from the European title.

Looking beyond the European title there is evidence that an increasing number of title holders are looking at the role of culture in their city beyond showcasing. Ulyanovsk, (a Volga and CIS title holder), Yokohama (East Asia), Merida (America 2000 and 2017) are in this category. The latter indeed has issued an open call for small arts projects in 2018 as part of its cultural strategy.

Panama (Ibero-American 2019) in its preparatory phase appears to be taking a broader view of the possibilities of hosting the title and linking it to urban development priorities. Lisbon has issued a comprehensive cultural strategy alongside its year as Ibero-American title holder.

One way of exploring active legacies is to see how cities maintained a connection with their title year. There are several possible approaches.

UNESCO Creative Cities network which started in 2004. 18 Capitals have taken this route as have several candidates

UCLG Pilot Cities network which started in 2014 and eight capitals are members.

Set up an organisation to build on the year. A route taken by several European title holders (eg Bruges, Krakow, Mons), Ulyanovsk (Volga and CIS).

## Evaluation

This appears to be an underdeveloped aspect of Capitals programmes, both at organiser and city level. I can find few reports, outside of the European and UK titles, where there is even a periodic evaluation of the current titles.

The European Capitals are required to undertake formal evaluations and the organising European Commission also commissions a formal independent evaluation. Few other titles require such formal evaluations. A major problem is that the evaluations commissioned by Capitals are not consistent and frequently not available. There are some reports of activity (eg Yokohama, East Asia 2010) which detail the activity but with limited scrutiny.

There are reports on the impact of tourism from Faro (Portugal 2002). Limerick, the sole holder of the Ireland title produced two independent reports on economic and social impacts. There is a very good evaluation of the Limerick project by the audit department of the ministry. It is especially strong on the objectives, governance and management of the programme. Derry/Londonderry the first UK holder in 2013 is about to issue its evaluation report. In the meantime it claims considerable tourist and economic benefits. Hull University has a unit monitoring and evaluating Hull2017.

The Ibero-American title holders sometimes report back to the organisations' culture committee on developments since the title year.

# Chapter 5 Reflections

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It's time now for some reflections on the development of "Capitals of Culture" since 1985.

The raw numbers are impressive. Thirty one programmes, 323 cities have held a designated title of the "Capital of Culture" or "City of Culture"; cities in over 130 countries are now participating in competitions or awards. There are 23 cities holding a title in 2017. Title holders have ranged from communities of a few hundred to national capitals. Interestingly none of the global mega cities has held a title, (except Paris as European in 1989 and then it did not put on a special programme). Africa, especially south of the Sahara, is the most underrepresented continent. The pace of new titles has increased in the last decade and shows no sign of slowing down. Three new titles have been announced in 2017; several more are in discussion.

These are some reflections to act as possible triggers for further research and commentary rather than a comprehensive in-depth analysis

## **Factors behind the global trend for more titles**

Four stand out. Each may apply to more than one competition, and at different times.

- International networks of countries (and to a lesser extent of cities) have been around in their current format since the 1950s. Initially talking shops for heads of governments they have gradually expanded their scope. In recent years and especially since the early 2000s the culture ministers started meeting, now often annually, within the network frameworks. A Cultural Capital programme emerges as one of their early joint activities. Such programmes bring visibility to the network, are cost effective for the organising network and stay clear of interfering with the national cultural policies of member states. Even within the European Union cultural policies are a "supporting" activity. With culture ministers meeting so frequently at a regional level (and increasingly at global meetings such as the G-7 Culture Ministers in Florence 2017, the Edinburgh International Cultural Summit every two years, BRICS Culture Ministers 2017, and more) the question arises of just how influential these meetings are in changing cultural policies or actions. The same can be said for the increasing activity at city and arts administration levels (World Cultures Forum, UCLG and Agenda 21, IFACCA etc).
- In the mid-1980s there was very little appreciation, in practice or in academic circles, of the impact culture can have in a city. From seeing culture, (especially what used to be called "high culture" mainly for a small minority), in formal galleries, theatres and festivals the understanding now has widened and deepened. The writings of Landry Bianchini, Throsby and Florida in their different ways prompted ,from the mid-1990s



onwards, an abundance of academic and management literature, reports, theses and indeed consultants each with their own interpretation of the (mostly) positive effects of culture in a city's wellbeing and prosperity. By the time the rapid expansion of titles occurred in the 2000s the terms "creative city" and a "cultural city" had become part of the global lexicon of urban development.

- At the same time the concept of "place- branding" as a development of nation branding initiatives has come to encompass a wide range of aspirations for cities. At its heart is a recognition that cities are competing with each other for jobs, for inward investment, for tourists etc. At this stage the critics of neoliberalism took issue with the impact such a competitive environment allegedly has with culture and the arts. City mayors and managers however, as well as national cultural ministries, saw the potential opportunities. The self-proclaimed World Cities Cultural Forum claims to offer "global leadership of culture in cities" from its 35 members.
- An increasing awareness emerged in the 2000s that the cultural and creative industries sector is a significant economic player in a city's economy, providing jobs, assisting in attracting and retaining "talent. This economic impact of the creative and cultural industries had been indeed noted in the UNESCO conference in 1982 but really came to major policy standing in the early 2000s. It must be said however that few of the Capitals programmes address this issue beyond the tourism sector. With that sector growing significantly around the world, albeit based on low pay, seasonal, precariat jobs, the competition to expand a city's tourist appeal is obvious.

Concurrently with these factors, especially the latter three, has come the critique that the world is seeing an instrumentalisation of the arts for economic and political ends and less for its intrinsic artistic merit. Notwithstanding this it is undoubtedly true that there are more arts practitioners (let alone the layers of arts managers, curators, consultants and academics) now active than at any time in the past.

### **Innovations**

The standard model is for a city to be awarded the title. Some hold the title for two years but generally there is a common approach. There have been several interesting and innovative approaches.

The Volga title was perhaps the purest title aimed at an artistic change by focussing on developing the contemporary arts, which were not permitted in Soviet Union times. Its focus on training arts managers is now being followed by many European titles especially those in central and eastern Europe. Looking back, the director of the European title in Copenhagen in 1998 felt that the experience of introducing new management methods to arts and cultural managers was the most significant legacy of the title.

The Canadian title was the first national title. Its three tier approach, from major city to smaller communities, remains an innovative structure but not one followed by any other programme.

The Finno-Ugric title seeks to preserve and develop a traditional culture not associated with a political entity. Here the emphasis was clearly on the culture rather than the arts. Set up to run for only four years it is to be hoped that its originators can continue with the programme with financial support. A similar focus on culture was evident in the Canadian title being open to First Nation communities rather than a city administration. The forthcoming title in Victoria, Australia, also has a focus on First Nation peoples.

### **City programmes**

Most of the newer titles are in the stage of “enhanced arts festivals”. This certainly applies to the titles in Asia and the Middle East. The focus appears to be a celebration of the arts and a marketing opportunity for the city and in some cases the country. In many ways this reflects the very early years of the European title. Many cities in these regions are known to be active in using culture in their urban policies (eg evidenced at the UGLC conference in Jeju in 2017) but their “Capital of Culture” programmes appear to run on parallel lines. I have found little in the way of evaluation or analysis of these cities; the titles are simply dismissed by commentators as “cultural propaganda”; possibly unfair without more in depth reviews. What is clear is that the depth of the European title and its integration with city cultural strategies is considerably different to most other titles. There is also a tendency to see other titles through the eyes of the European one.

### **Selection process**

As can be seen in the Directory and covered earlier in this paper there is a wide range of processes used to determine title holders. Does it make any difference which process is adopted? Probably not much, although there are a few caveats. The intentions and aspirations of a city can overcome any weaknesses in selection: the test is to see if any cities selected though a closed door approach did develop an in-depth sustainable programme or one off showcasing arts celebration. A good example is the 2017 Ibero-American title in Lisbon. A closed and opaque selection process has not prevented an imaginative and challenging small programme to be developed by a leading cultural director.

Credibility is important. The public sector titles carry the credibility of the organiser. They indicate a degree of independence, that the selection was fair even if it was behind closed doors. The independent title in the Americas has come under considerable criticism for its lack of transparency and unclear status.

At national and regional levels an open competition with an independent selection process adds a strong degree of fairness and respect. The downside is, especially at national and

regional level, is that the programme is at the mercy of finance and party politics. Far too many titles have made a promising start with 2-4 editions and then folded. Momentum is lost, lessons learnt not applied and the within a few years even the title is forgotten. The Canada title with its very imaginative structure was stopped as an austerity measure; it was not deemed cost effective at national level and suffered from relatively low budgets in the major cities holding the title. It never gained the wider appeal of the European title even after 12 years.

Open competitions between cities in different countries are rare. Even the European title has only attempted this three times (2000, when it ducked the selection issue and awarded titles to all 9 candidates whether members or not, for 2010 between Istanbul and Kiev and for 2021 between cities in Serbia and Montenegro). For intergovernmental titles a rota system, formal or informal, avoids potential political issues. The designation of a “Capital of Culture” as the city of the next meeting of culture ministers is a very safe fall back but it remains to be seen if these cities respond to the challenge of the title. The new title in the CPLP will be an interesting experiment. Previous titles in the Portuguese speaking world have closed after only a few editions (eg Portugal, Cape Verde and Lusófona).

The East Asia process of three countries concurrently but separately selecting their Capitals is an imaginative and bold approach. It is noticeable that the programmes of the cities could be seen as relatively “safe” in their focus on traditional artforms, with little linkage to urban transformations (active in both Japan and Korea) or the more politically controversial elements often seen in the arts. The overriding diplomatic objectives keep the programmes within tight artistic bounds.

One limiting factor in many titles is the short notice of selection and, linked to it, many titles have relatively small budgets given the objectives they set themselves. Reviews over the years in Canada, European and Italy have all called for a longer lead in time from selection to the title year; it is very difficult to organise an in-depth programme, or build public engagement, at only a year’s notice.

One area to explore is the degree of interaction between different titles holders. Currently there appears virtually none, except between the two annual European titles.

### **Traditional vs contemporary arts**

The attention given in many of the newer titles to traditional arts and crafts can be seen as a conservative approach. I think this is the wrong view. Kanazawa, the Japanese holder in 2018 of the East Asia title has a four year cultural strategy based around its vibrant and economic sectors of crafts (especially textiles) and its membership of the UNESCO Creative Cites network in the arts and crafts category. Attention needs to be paid to the impact of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. As long as the traditional arts are not kept going simply as a watered down

tourist attraction but remain in the core of the artistic production of the country, (with new productions) the UNESCO Convention rightly protects them.

Finally two quotes from two organisers

The European Capitals of Culture are a flagship cultural initiative of the European Union, possibly the best known and most appreciated by European citizens.

They are a clear illustration of the EU's commitment to cultural diversity, but also of how culture can unite people within Europe. Indeed, the Capitals have always been an opportunity for Europeans to meet, to learn about their diversity, but at the same time to enjoy together their common history and values, to cooperate in new initiatives and projects: in other words, to experience the feeling of belonging to the same European community. (*José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, 2010*)

TURKSOY Secretary General *Dyussen Kasseinov* said that one of the most successful projects of TURKSOY is the election of the cultural capitals of the Turkic world since 2012.

### **What next?**

It's certain that the 2020s will see more titles emerge. Within Europe, Lithuania, Italy and UK, have shown that national titles can be organised and cities can use them to make a lasting impression. Canada showed how to make a title more inclusive with its three tier approach. London is pioneering a city based programme; will other major cities follow? As these titles develop successive title holders expand and deepen the scope of the title. There is little reason for other countries not to develop their own titles. My preference would be for them to under public administration rather than private or NGO organisation.

Outside Europe the main drive it seems to me is to encourage title holders to understand better the opportunities a title can bring beyond single years' activities; to go beyond the arts festival celebratory concept. A first step could be to point out to organisers that they should select their title holders more in advance; even a two year lead in time will bring benefits.

Perhaps there is scope for the European Union, as the owner of the oldest title, to invite the key organisers of the other programmes for a working conference to explore how to take the "Capitals of Culture" forward through the 2020s and 2030s. This could be a valuable element in the emerging strategy for culture in the external relations of the European Union; an opportunity to both learn and to share.

# Chapter 6 Directory

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This directory records past and present Capital, or City, of Culture programmes. It covers the origins of each title, significant developments during its lifetime, the organisations behind its creation and administration, the objectives (and sometimes the criteria for selection). The method of selection is outlined including composition of selection panels if used.

For many titles there is a brief mention of recent titleholders including key elements of programmes, budgets and evaluations or reports. The aim is to give a flavour of recent titleholders and not a comprehensive evaluation.

For each title there is a list of all the title holders. The tables include future holders already designated (or countries if a rota system is used). These future holders are listed in *italics*.

The programmes are listed in the four categories described in the survey by the nature of their owner. The four categories are

1. Intergovernmental or international organisations of governments and cities
2. National titles under authority of governments, normally the Ministry of Culture
3. Regional titles under the authority of a regional public administration or network
4. Titles organised outside the public sector by independent organisations and NGOs

Within each category titles are listed in the order of the first edition rather than the date of formal decision to start the programme. Programmes no longer active have their titles in *italics*.

## 1: Intergovernmental and international organisations.

### European Capital of Culture

The European City of Culture title was initiated by the Culture Ministers of the then 10 member European Community in 1983 following the promotion of the idea by the Culture Minister of Greece, Melina Mercouri, strongly supported by her French counterpart, Jack Lang. The first title was held in Athens in 1985. It remained an intergovernmental agreement until its adoption as a formal programme of the European Union in 1999 when its title was changed to the European Capital of Culture.

There were major revisions to the objectives, criteria and selection procedures in 1992, 1999, 2006 and 2014. The current programme is governed by Decision 445/2014/EU approved in 2014 by the European Council (heads of government) and the European Parliament. It sets out objectives, criteria, process and a rota of member states who will host the title from 2020 to 2033. There are two Capitals in each year from two member states. In every third year there is an additional title holder from a candidate, a potential candidate or an EEA country.

The current objectives of the programme are:

1. The general objectives of the action are:

(a) To safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe and to highlight the common features they share as well as to increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area;

(b) To foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities in accordance with their respective strategies and priorities.

2. The specific objectives of the action are:

(a) To enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational cooperation;

(b) To widen access to and participation in culture;

(c) To strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors;

(d) To raise the international profile of cities through culture.

The programme is assessed against six criteria; each having several sub-criteria:

*Contribution to the long-term strategy:*

(a) That a cultural strategy for the candidate city, which covers the action and includes plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title, is in place at the time of its application;

(b) The plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including developing long-term links between the cultural, economic and social sectors in the candidate city;

(c) The envisaged long-term cultural, social and economic impact, including urban development that the title would have on the candidate city;

(d) The plans for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the title on the candidate city and for disseminating the results of the evaluation;

*European dimension:*

a) the scope and quality of activities promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens;

(b) The scope and quality of activities highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes;

(c) The scope and quality of activities featuring European artists, cooperation with operators or cities in different countries, including, where appropriate, cities holding the title, and transnational partnerships

(d) The strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public

*Cultural and artistic content of the proposed programme,*

- (a) A clear and coherent artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme;
- (b) The involvement of local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme
- (c) The range and diversity of the activities proposed and their overall artistic quality;
- (d) The capacity to combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions

*Capacity to deliver*

- (a) The application has broad and strong political support and a sustainable commitment from the local, regional and national authorities;
- (b) the candidate city has or will have an adequate and viable infrastructure to hold the title

*Outreach*

- (a) the involvement of the local population and civil society in the preparation of the application and the implementation of the action;
- (b) the creation of new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, in particular young people, volunteers and the marginalised and disadvantaged, including minorities, with special attention being given to persons with disabilities and the elderly as regards the accessibility of those activities
- (c) The overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools;

*Management and finance*

- (a) the feasibility of the fund-raising strategy and proposed budget, which includes, where appropriate, plans to seek financial support from Union programmes and funds, and covers the preparation phase, the year of the title, the evaluation and provisions for the legacy activities, and contingency planning;
- (b) the envisaged governance and delivery structure for the implementation of the action which provides, inter alia, for appropriate cooperation between the local authorities and the delivery structure, including the artistic team;
- (c) The procedures for the appointment of the general and artistic directors and their fields of action;
- (d) that the marketing and communication strategy is comprehensive and highlights that the action is a Union action;
- (e) That the delivery structure has staff with appropriate skills and experience to plan, manage and deliver the cultural programme for the year of the title.

The managing authority for each competition is the national Ministry of Culture. It follows detailed guidance and oversight from the European Commission to ensure the competition is the same in each country. Cities bid in open competition for the title in a two stage process. There is a standard list of questions which must be answered by each candidate. These are presented in a bidbook of 80-100

pages. The candidate cities also make a presentation to the selection panel followed by a Q & A session.

Selection is based on how a candidate meets the criteria in its proposed programme rather than a city's current cultural offer or its heritage.

The panel consists of independent cultural experts. Ten are chosen by the European institutions (European Council (of culture ministers), European Parliament (culture committee), European Commission and the Committee of Regions). Panel members serve for a period of three years, sometimes renewable with three or four retiring each year. This nomination system is often misunderstood by the media assuming the panel members are employed by the European Commission. These ten members provide consistency and continuity. The national ministry of culture may appoint up to two further members. Some countries choose not to do so (eg Ireland for the 2020 competition). A delegation from the panel makes a day long visit to each candidate in the final selection phase. The panel makes and announces the final recommendation.

The national ministry of culture makes the formal designation of the candidate recommended by the panel. No ministry has challenged the panel's selection. The announcement is four years before the title year. After designation the panel has a formal monitoring role to assist the capitals during their development phase. This includes three formal progress reports by the title holder and meetings with the panel. The panel recommends whether the Melina Mercouri prize of €1.5m should be paid to the Capital. It is subject to conditions being met between selection and implementation. This is the only direct financial contribution by the European Union to the title holder although most cities bid on a competitive basis for support from EU funds for specific projects in their programme.

The number of candidates for titles from 2020 to 2022 has been Ireland 4, Croatia 9, Romania 14, Greece 14, Luxembourg 1 and Lithuania 6. The panel produces a detailed report after each meeting. These are available on the European Commission's website. Most recent bidbooks are available online.

The literature on the European title is considerable. Three major reports cover the first 30 years: Myerscough (Director of Culture in Glasgow) in 1996, (unfortunately not available online), Palmer (Programme Director for Glasgow 1990 and Brussels 2000) in 2004 and Garcia and Cox in 2015.

The European Commissions' website has the latter two reports as well as recent selection, monitoring and evaluation reports.

In recent years the programme budget for ECOCs has varied widely. It is difficult to compare budgets because of the differing purchasing power in each country. One feature of the budgets for the European title is that they are spread over 6 years with the bulk in the year before the title year and the year itself. They are normally in addition to the annual cultural budget of the city.

Recent programme budgets, over 4-6 years, excluding infrastructure projects: Liverpool 2008 £100m, Marseilles Provence 2013 €98.9m, Kosice 2013 €20.8m, Riga 2014 €27m, Umea 2014 €22m, Mons 2015 €71m, Plzen 2015 €18m, Donostia San Sebastian 2016 €49.6m, Pafos 2017 €8m and Aarhus 2017 €57m.



It is standard practice for the ECOC to be managed by an independent not for profit foundation rather than under the direct management of the city administration and politicians. Investment works on infrastructure and new or renovated cultural premises are managed outside of the Capital's management.

The scope of an ECOC programme has broadened and deepened since its start in 1985.

In the early years the programme was primarily a long arts festival involving the cultural institutions in the city. Berlin in 1988 was heavily criticised for its "elite" focus. Cities tended to be clearly culturally wealthy and often were capital or second cities in a country. Over time the title holders have progressively been smaller cities. Glasgow in 1990 changed the direction by linking the event both to significant public participation in street performance, and to the regeneration of the city. This focus on regeneration set the mode for many subsequent capitals, notably Lille in 2004. Liverpool in 2008 took the event in a new direction with its extensive Creative Commons programme in the areas of the city not used to "culture". A new element developed in the later 2010s with programmes aimed at changing the behaviour and perceptions of a city's citizens (eg, Plzen in 2015 with its "Opening Up" theme; Donostia San Sebastian in 2016 with a "coexistence" theme and Aarhus in 2017 with the concept of "Re-thinking").

A key phrase now used is that holding the title is a "process not an event" and with bid preparation, selection, build up, the year and immediate legacy it is realistically a 7-10 year activity.

Arts activities remain central, both by the existing cultural institutions and those developed specially for the programme. Most programmes present a challenge to the existing cultural sector and are aimed at expanding its reach and level of partnerships. There is a strong focus on contemporary productions and creativity rather than heritage. The programme will also include seminar and conferences on topical European themes, support for the creative and cultural industries and intensive activity with schools and youth groups. "Audience Development" is a key component to see to broaden the participation in and attendance at cultural events in the city. Most Capitals now have a strong capacity building programme to increase the skills and competencies of cultural managers in the city.

The advantage of a long lead in, four years, gives the title holder time to plan and develop an intensive year. There is a significant increase in multiyear projects rather than only one off events or performances. The programme of recent capitals now reaches in excess of 400-500 projects with many more individual events and activities. An important element is that the majority of projects involve partners from other European countries. The aim is not only to present the city to others but also to increase the understanding and awareness of a city's own residents of the diversity of cultures in Europe today.

All capitals have a formal external evaluation overseen by the European Commission with reports on their website. Capitals also organise their own evaluations often with a local university.

<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Country</b>
1985	<b>Athens</b>	Greece	2012	<b>Maribor</b> <b>Guimarães</b>	Slovenia Portugal
1986	<b>Florence</b>	Italy	2013	<b>Marseilles-Provence</b> <b>Košice</b>	France Slovakia
1987	<b>Amsterdam</b>	Netherlands	2014	<b>Riga</b> <b>Umeå</b>	Latvia Sweden
1988	<b>Berlin</b>	Germany	2015	<b>Plzeň</b> <b>Mons</b>	Czech Republic France
1989	<b>Paris</b>	France	2016	<b>Wroclaw</b> <b>Donostia/San Sebastian</b>	Poland Spain
1990	<b>Glasgow</b>	UK	2017	<b>Pafos</b> <b>Aarhus</b>	Cyprus Denmark
1991	<b>Dublin</b>	Ireland	2018	<b>Valletta</b> <b>Leeuwarden</b>	Malta Netherlands
1992	<b>Madrid</b>	Spain	2019	<b>Matera</b> <b>Plovdiv</b>	Italy Bulgaria
1993	<b>Antwerp</b>	Belgium	2020	<b>Galway</b> <b>Rijeka</b>	<i>Ireland</i> <i>Croatia</i>
1994	<b>Lisbon</b>	Portugal	2021	<b>Timișoara</b> <b>Elefsina</b> <b>Novi Sad</b>	<i>Romania</i> <i>Greece</i> <i>Serbia</i>
1995	<b>Luxembourg</b>	Luxembourg	2022	<b>Kaunas</b>	<i>Luxembourg</i> <i>Lithuania</i>
1996	<b>Copenhagen</b>	Denmark	2023		<i>United Kingdom</i> <i>Hungary</i>
1997	<b>Thessaloniki</b>	Greece	2024		<i>Austria</i> <i>Estonia</i> <i>Candidate/EEA country</i>
1998	<b>Stockholm</b>	Sweden	2025		<i>Germany</i> <i>Slovenia</i>
1999	<b>Weimar</b>	Germany	2026		<i>Finland</i> <i>Slovakia</i>
2000	<b>Avignon</b> <b>Bergen</b> <b>Bologna</b> <b>Brussels</b> <b>Helsinki</b> <b>Krakow</b> <b>Prague</b> <b>Reykjavik</b> <b>Santiago de Compostela</b>	France Norway Italy Belgium Finland Poland Czech Republic Iceland Spain	2027		<i>Latvia</i> <i>Portugal</i> <i>Candidate/EEA country</i>
2001	<b>Rotterdam</b> <b>Oporto</b>	Netherlands Portugal	2028		<i>Czech Republic</i> <i>France</i>
2002	<b>Bruges</b> <b>Salamanca</b>	Belgium Spain	2029		<i>Poland</i> <i>Sweden</i>
2003	<b>Graz</b>	Austria	2030		<i>Cyprus</i> <i>Belgium</i> <i>Candidate/EEA country</i>
2004	<b>Genoa</b> <b>Lille</b>	Italy France	2031		<i>Malta</i> <i>Spain</i>
2005	<b>Cork</b>	Ireland	2032		<i>Bulgaria</i> <i>Denmark</i>
2006	<b>Patras</b>	Greece	2033		<i>Netherlands</i> <i>Italy</i> <i>Candidate /EEA country</i>
2007	<b>Luxembourg</b> <b>Sibiu</b>	Luxembourg Romania			
2008	<b>Liverpool</b> <b>Stavanger</b>	UK Norway			
2009	<b>Linz</b> <b>Vilnius</b>	Austria Lithuania			
2010	<b>Pécs</b> <b>Essen-Ruhr</b> <b>Istanbul</b>	Hungary Germany Turkey			
2011	<b>Turku</b> <b>Tallinn</b>	Finland Estonia			

## The Ibero-American Capital of Culture

### *La Capital Iberoamericana de la Cultura*

The Ibero-American Capital of Culture programme was initiated by the Culture Committee of **La Unión de Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas** (Union of Capital Cities of Ibero-Americas) - (UCCI) - at their meeting in Bogotá in 1991.

The UCCI, founded in 1982, is a network of the capital and major cities in Spanish and Portuguese speaking America and the three Iberian countries in Europe. It currently has 30 members working on inter-municipal cooperation in a wide range of programmes covering 14 sectors including sustainable development, education, equality, tax and finance, information technology. It is decentralised with a secretary general in Madrid.

The title is limited to members of the network. The first title holder was Bogotá in 1991, appointed as the host of the meeting when the title was agreed.

Candidates present their bid several years in advance to the Culture Committee with an outline of their plans and objectives. The criteria are open, having regard to geographic rotation and the opportunity to link to other specific interests of the city. La Paz presented their bid in 2005 for the 2009 title. Guatemala City presented their bid in 2011 for the 2015 title. There is rarely an open competition although both La Paz and San Salvador sought the 2018 title with La Paz being the eventual title holder.

A common aspect is linking the title to an anniversary. México's title in 2010 coincided with both the bicentenary of independence and the centenary of the revolution. Cadiz's title in 2012 was part of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the first Spanish constitution. Panama was selected in 2016 to host the title for a second time in 2019 to coincide with the 500th anniversary of its founding. In 2003 it held the title on the occasion of the centenary of its separation from Colombia.

The UCCI Executive Committee makes the formal designation after the decision of the culture committee. The culture committee of UCCI holds its annual meeting in the title holding city.

The Director of Culture of Lisbon compared the Ibero-American title to the European title (the city held both titles in 1994):

"Ibero-American capitals are more in charge in each of the countries, they can invent the format that suits them, adapting the objectives of spreading the culture of this geographic space to their reality and the offer they already have."

Lisbon's title in 2017 has a budget of €3m (compared with the €100,000 budget of Andorra in 2016). The curator has a very clear approach to the programme with five themes with a clear focus on Ibero-America: Past and Present, Migrations, African Descendants, Contemporary Creation and Indigenous Issues. The programme deals with migration, indigenous peoples and the legacy of slavery, among other issues.

"On the occasion of Past and Present - Lisbon, Ibero-American Capital of Culture 2017, a special line of support was opened to integrate independent projects in programming. More

than fifty entities and projects responded to this challenge, and fourteen were selected. These projects enrich, on the one hand, the prepared programming, and, on the other, extend the platform of participation of the sector in this project that is either imbibed in the city”.

From time to time previous title holders report back to the culture committee on significant impacts and legacies of the programme. For example at the 2014 meeting of the Culture Committee, three former title holders (La Paz2009, Montevideo2013 and San Salvador 2011) reported on aspects of their programme. The committee at that meeting also agreed to review title holders in order to understand the legacies of the programme. At their meeting in 2017 the Culture Committee agreed to call for applications for the 2020 and 2021 titles; to be determined at the 2018 meeting.

The UCCI also awards, concurrently with the main title, a “Plaza Mayor” title to a member city, a smaller version of the Capital title.

Year	City	Country		Year	City	Country
1991	<b>Bogotá</b>	Colombia		2005	<b>Sucre</b>	Bolivia
1992	<b>Buenos Aires</b>	Argentina		2006	<b>San José de Costa Rica</b>	Costa Rica
1993	<b>Santiago de Chile</b>	Chile		2007	<b>Bogotá</b>	Colombia
1994	<b>Lisbon</b>	Portugal		2008	<b>Managua</b>	Nicaragua
1995	<b>Managua</b>	Nicaragua		2009	<b>La Paz</b>	Bolivia
1996	<b>Montevideo</b>	Uruguay		2010	<b>México City</b>	Mexico
1997	<b>Havana</b>	Cuba		2011	<b>San Salvador</b>	El Salvador
1998	<b>Madrid</b>	Spain		2012	<b>Cádiz</b>	Spain
1999	<b>La Paz</b>	Bolivia		2013	<b>Montevideo</b>	Uruguay
2000	<b>Rio de Janeiro</b>	Brazil		2014	<b>San Juan de Puerto Rico</b>	Puerto Rico
2001	<b>Asunción</b>	Paraguay		2015	<b>Guatemala City</b>	Guatemala
2002	<b>Lima</b>	Peru		2016	<b>Andorra La Vella</b>	Andorra
2003	<b>Panamá City</b>	Panama		2017	<b>Lisbon</b>	Portugal
2004	<b>Quito</b>	Ecuador		2018	<b>La Paz</b>	<i>Bolivia</i>
				2019	<b>Panama</b>	<i>Panama</i>

## Capital of Arab Culture

The originator is the **Arab League** which has 22 member states.

The administration of the title is by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) based in Tunis. ALECSO was set up to mirror and give regional support to UNESCO’s global activities

The idea of the Arab Culture Capitals project started in the 1990s within the UN’s [International Decade for Cultural Development \(1988-1997\)](#)<sup>1</sup> and developed in the framework of the subsequent Arab Convention for Cultural Development (2005-2014).

“The celebration of Cultural Capital was, for each country that had the privilege of such a status, an opportunity for further promoting common Arab cultural cooperation, activating bilateral conventions between Arab states, achieving complementarity at national and inter-Arab levels, taking legal action for the protection of copyrights, granting copyright utmost importance in facing risks and challenges stemming from cultural industry dissemination

<sup>1</sup> <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0008/000852/085291EB.pdf>

and commercial initiatives as to cultural products, and encouraging private companies and individuals to sustain creation and innovators by enacting laws and legislation allowing exemption from revenue income.

The activities encompass the translation fields; attributing awards, organizing book, plastic arts and handicraft fairs; festivals, competitions and cultural weeks, delegations and artistic groups exchange, new cultural institutions creation, enhancing existing institutions and developing their performance, fostering creation and encouraging innovators, supporting intellectuals and animating the cultural spheres. These occasions witnessed initiatives from the private sector aiming at supporting culture and interest in cultural and creative industries.”

The first Capital was Cairo in 1996. Cities are nominated by their governments (normally the Culture Ministry) and forwarded to ALECSO who review the bids. Final designation is at the annual meeting of Culture Ministers of the Arab League. At their meeting in Tunisia in December 2016 the Culture Ministers agreed to the designation of cities to 2021 and provisionally agreed title holders in 2022 and 2023 pending submission of their files. They also asked the government of Libya to submit an application from Benghazi to host the title in 2024.

The initial cities tended to be the national capitals (including al-Quds, Jerusalem in 2009). More recent title holders have been second or third cities.

Constantine was selected in November 2012 to host the 2015 title. It planned a major programme of renovation of its cultural heritage and arts infrastructure with 74 cultural heritage projects and 25 urban projects. Its budget from the national government was around €500 million. Not surprisingly the overall plan went behind schedule. For the artistic programme in 2015 the budget was over €50million. It included 180 concerts, 108 theatre performances as well as public spectacles and seminars. Both folkloric and contemporary arts were presented

Sfax in 2016 ran its programme from July 2016 to March 2017. The theme was “la culture nous unit et Sfax nous rassemble” (“culture unites us and Sfax brings us together”). Planned infrastructure projects included a school of crafts and a major waterfront development. The programme had its share of controversy with the resignation of a management team and a poor opening event. A festival had to be cancelled after it was discovered its promotor had run a similar festival in Israel.

At the opening of Luxor’s programme in 2017 an official from the Ministry of Culture said:

“Poets from Tunisia, Jordan, the UAE and Algeria have reached the city of Luxor to participate in the celebration events, which is set to last for one year. The one-year celebrations include organizing several book fairs, symposiums and conferences throughout the year.”

Plays from Tunisia and Sudan were performed in May 2017. A major event during the year will be a major hot air balloon festival in December with over 80 competitors from 30 countries as part of the strategy to increase winter tourism. There was an intense programme of events during Ramadhan 2017. The majority are showcasing traditional dance and performance and musical folk arts. A group of traditional dancers from China also performed. A carnival of drums included participants from

Nigeria, China, Russia, Indonesia and Mauritius, as well as the Luxor folk and folklore groups for folk music and singing and folk arts teams of Toshka, Qena and Port Said.

Year	City	Country	Year	City	Country
1996	<b>Cairo</b>	Egypt	2010	<b>Doha</b>	Qatar
1997	<b>Tunis</b>	Tunisia	2011	<b>Sirte</b>	Libya
1998	<b>Sharjah</b>	UAE	2012	<b>Manama</b>	Bahrain
1999	<b>Beirut</b>	Lebanon	2013	<b>Baghdad</b>	Iraq
2000	<b>Riyadh</b>	Saudi Arabia	2014	<b>Tripoli</b>	Libya
2001	<b>Kuwait City</b>	Kuwait	2015	<b>Constantine</b>	Algeria
2002	<b>Amman</b>	Jordan	2016	<b>Sfax</b>	Tunisia
2003	<b>Rabat</b>	Morocco	2017	<b>Luxor</b>	Egypt
2004	<b>Sana'a</b>	Yemen	2018	<b>Basra</b>	Iraq
2005	<b>Khartoum</b>	Sudan	2019	<b>Port-Sudan</b>	Sudan
2006	<b>Muscat</b>	Oman	2020	<b>Bethlehem</b>	Palestine
2007	<b>Algiers</b>	Algeria	2021	<b>Irbid</b>	Jordan
2008	<b>Damascus</b>	Syria	2022	<b>Kuwait City</b>	Kuwait
2009	<b>Al-Quds</b>	Palestine	2023	<b>Tripoli</b>	Lebanon
			2024	<b>Benghazi</b>	Libya

## American Cultural Capital

*See 4: Independent titles*

## *Capital Lusófona da Cultura*

The “**União das Cidades Capitais Luso-Afro-Americo-Asiáticas**” (UCCLA: Union of Capital Cities of Luso-Africa-American-Asia) was formed in 1985 with 8 city members from the Portuguese speaking world. The Union has since increased its membership to 23 full members and 16 associates. Members now include major cities not just national capitals. It has formal Consultative Observer status with the Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP: see below).

The title is little referenced online. There are isolated references to Lisbon (1994) and Guimarães (1998) holding the title but the actions were little more than a few meetings rather than a programme of activities. There are stronger references to the title being reformed in 2002. Some title holders have held the title for 2 years.

The title holder hosted the meeting of the General Assembly of UCCLA towards the end of its title period.

For the 2003 title Mindelo had an initial budget of €172,000 with €50,000 coming from the city of Lisbon.

Year	City	Country
<b>2002</b>	Macau	China
<b>2003</b>	Mindelo	Cape Verde
<b>2004/5</b>	Luanda	Angola
<b>2006/7</b>	Salvador	Brazil

## Cultural Capital of the Islamic World

The third Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Doha, 2001) adopted the draft programme of the “Capitals of Islamic Culture” submitted by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization<sup>2</sup> (ISESCO), and invited the OIC Member States (57 members) to nominate cities of which ISESCO shall select – each year - three capitals of Islamic culture, representing the Arab, Asian and African regions. The Conference also decided to proclaim Makkah Al-Mukarramah (Mecca) as the first Capital of Islamic Culture in 2005.

ISESCO created the concept of the programme. The concept includes the criteria for the selection of the capitals along with the broad lines and general trends of the activities for the celebration of the selected capital.

It proposed thirty capitals from the Arab, Asian and African regions to become capitals of Islamic culture over the ten years after Mecca. At their meetings in Algiers (2004), Baku (2009) and Muscat (2015) the Culture Ministers, on the recommendations of ISESCO, progressively extended the lists of Islamic Culture Capitals. The list now extends to 2025.

In addition to the three annual regional Capitals there is a fourth Capital every 2 years, in the city hosting the Culture Ministers conference. Four designated cities have been withdrawn at the request of their government.

The procedures<sup>3</sup> for the Capitals include advance preparations and oversight by ISESCO.

The criteria used by ISESCO for selection are:

FIRST: The city nominated should be enjoying a confirmed historical status and a large scientific renown conferring on it a prominent cultural position in its country and region throughout Islamic history.

SECOND: The city should have an outstanding contribution to both Islamic culture and universal culture confirmed through the scientific, cultural, literary and artistic works of its scholars, men of letters, intellectuals and artists.

THIRD: The city should have its own scientific research centres, manuscript libraries and educational archaeological centres, making it a destination for researchers and people interested in the different fields of science, culture and knowledge.

FOURTH: The city should host cultural institutions active in individual and group cultural promotion (festivals, cultural events, book fairs, painting exhibitions, plays, translation, and publication.)

FIFTH: The nomination for the capital of Islamic culture should be accompanied by a detailed study on the city, meeting all or part of the aforementioned criteria. The presentation shall

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.isesco.org.ma/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.isesco.org.ma/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/IslamicCapitals.pdf>

include a well-documented historical and geographical presentation highlighting the cultural importance of the city in terms of:

- Reference works written about the city or making mention thereof
- its historical or modern libraries of manuscripts and records
- Famous archaeological landmarks and Islamic architectural works (old schools, historical mosques, historical public gardens, bastions, palaces, zawayas, bazars, hospices and famous mausoleums)
- Famous handicrafts and folklore
- Famous museums and sites of memory
- Major regional or international cultural conferences, symposia and events it hosted, if any
- A proposed general programme to be implemented in celebration of the city as Islamic culture capital for one year, as well as a brief presentation of local, regional and international cooperating parties, if any, and the nature of their contribution
- the estimated budget allocated by the country concerned to the celebration programme
- the competent authority supposed to assume the coordination, implementation and follow-up of the celebration programme along with ISESCO.

It can be seen from the criteria that the focus is very much on the city's past and existing status within Islamic history. In many ways the title is the equivalent to a "heritage achievement" accolade. For example for Aleppo in 2006 the announcement was made with the comment "since time immemorial the city has been an example of coexistence between religions, communities and faiths".

The programme of title holders varies considerably. There are high level openings attracting ministerial meetings and conferences. In some programmes culture, as in the arts, tends to be a minor part of the year. There is an emphasis on Islamic themed conferences, exhibitions of calligraphy etc.

The government of Iraq and the city of Najaf sought to make the city's title year, 2012, a standard bearer for the rebuilding of Iraq after the USA/UK led invasion in 2003. A major rebuilding programme was started. The total budget was in excess of \$450m with \$170m initially earmarked for the programme. However delays, overruns of budget and time and the withdrawal of private investors led to the programme budget being reduced to pay for the infrastructure. Allegations were made of corruption. In the end the national government withdrew the title.

Kuwait (2016) had three main goals:

The first is to change the perception of Muslims all over the world,



The second is to prove that Kuwait is a country that believes in moderation and liberalism. It accepts and receives people of different nationalities who live in the country peacefully and are treated equally

The third is to prove that Kuwait is a humanitarian country,

Its programme included over 800 events with a wide range of international partners. It held events in UK and other countries. Kuwait is a serial title chaser. It held the Arab title in 2001, the Islamic title in 2016 and the Arab title returns in 2022.

The ISESCO Director General announced at the opening ceremony in Amman in 2017:

“It is a modern city that is full of knowledge and science and at the same time it has a unique cultural and historical significance. The selection criteria require that the capital be of rich cultural and historic heritage, enjoying the ability to provide distinguished contributions to the Islamic culture and humanity in general”

Mashhad (2017) has a national level policy committee chaired by the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance. At a policy planning meeting in 2016 a senior official said

“We should ask all ministries and organizations if possible, to hold their art and cultural activities during 2017 in the holy city of Mashhad. He said by holding such events in Mashhad, we can introduce our arts, cultures, handicrafts and cultural heritage to Islamic World. He also said we should invite prominent artists and cultural personalities to come to Mashhad during the celebrations to further promote our country's cultural potentials.”

Mashhad is active on social media; one of the first Islamic capitals to do so. The city has a magnificent mosque which has an important position in Shia Islam. The city already has 22million visitors a year and seeks to use the title to increase this by 6m in 2019. Its programme included meetings of the mayors of cities in the Islamic world and ministers for women’s affairs. The programme planned to include 150 international events.

Year	Arab region		Asian region		African region		Host of ministerial meeting	
2005	<b>Mecca</b>	Saudi Arabia						
2006	<b>Aleppo</b>	Syria	<b>Isfahan</b>	Iran	<b>Timbuktu</b>	Mali		
2007	<b>Fez</b>	Morocco	<b>Tashkent</b>	Uzbekistan	<b>Dakar</b>	Senegal	<b>Tripoli</b>	Libya
2008	<b>Alexandria</b>	Egypt	<b>Lahore</b>	Pakistan	<b>Djibouti*</b>	Djibouti		
2009	<b>Kairouan</b>	Tunisia	<b>Kuala Lumpur</b>	Malaysia	<b>N'Djamena</b>	Chad	<b>Baku</b>	Azerbaijan
2010	<b>Tarim</b>	Yemen	<b>Dushanbe</b>	Tajikistan	<b>Moroni</b>	Comoros		
2011	<b>Nouakchott*</b>	Mauritania	<b>Jakarta</b>	Indonesia	<b>Conakry</b>	Guinea		
2012	<b>Najaf*</b>	Iraq	<b>Dhaka</b>	Bangladesh	<b>Niamey</b>	Niger		
2013	<b>Tripoli*</b>	Lebanon	<b>Ghazni</b>	Afghanistan	<b>Kano</b>	Nigeria	<b>Medina</b>	Saudi Arabia
2014	<b>Sharjah</b>	UAE	<b>Bishkek</b>	Kyrgyzstan	<b>Ouagadougou</b>	Burkina Faso		
2015	<b>Nizwa</b>	Oman	<b>Almaty</b>	Kazakhstan	<b>Cotonou</b>	Benin		
2016	<b>Kuwait</b>	Kuwait	<b>Male</b>	Maldives	<b>Freetown</b>	Sierra Leone		
2017	<b>Amman</b>	Jordan	<b>Mashhad</b>	Iran	<b>Kampala</b>	Uganda	<b>Sennar</b>	Sudan
2018	<b>Al Murraq</b>	<i>Bahrain</i>	<b>Nakhichevan</b>	<i>Azerbaijan</i>	<b>Libreville</b>	<i>Gabon</i>		
2019	<b>Al-Quds</b>	<i>Palestine</i>	<b>Bandar Seri Begawan</b>	<i>Brunei</i>	<b>Bissau</b>	<i>Guinea Bissau</i>	<b>Tunis</b>	Tunisia

2020	<b>Cairo</b>	<i>Egypt</i>	<b>Bukhara</b>	<i>Uzbekistan</i>	<b>Bamako</b>	<i>Mali</i>		
2021	<b>Doha</b>	<i>Qatar</i>	<b>Islamabad</b>	<i>Pakistan</i>	<b>Banjul</b>	<i>Gambia</i>		
2022	<b>Damascus</b>	<i>Syria</i>	<b>Bandung</b>	<i>Indonesia</i>	<b>Yaoundé</b>	<i>Cameroon</i>		
2023	<b>Benghazi</b>	<i>Libya</i>	<b>Selangor</b>	<i>Malaysia</i>	<b>Abidjan</b>	<i>Cote d'Ivoire</i>		
2024	<b>Marrakesh</b>	<i>Morocco</i>	<b>Kabul</b>	<i>Afghanistan</i>	<b>Lomé</b>	<i>Togo</i>		
2025	<b>Mogadishu</b>	<i>Somalia</i>	<b>Ashgabat</b>	<i>Turkmenistan</i>	<b>Maputo</b>	<i>Mozambique</i>		

*\*Djibouti, Nouakchott, Najaf and Tripoli were postponed at the request of their governments.*

## ASEAN City of Culture

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has 10 members. The ASEAN City of Culture concept was first discussed and adopted at the meeting of Asia Ministers for Culture and Arts in January 2008 in Myanmar. The Ministers meet as the “Asian Ministers Responsible for Culture and the Arts” (AMCA) every two years. In recent years the culture ministers of China, Japan and Korea have participated in the meetings under the “ASEAN plus Three” grouping.

The ASEAN City of Culture initiative aims to strengthen the ASEAN identity and raise the profile of ASEAN in the region and internationally, celebrate ASEAN arts and culture and promote the growth of the region’s creative industries, as well as promote People to People Engagement.

The selection of the ASEAN City of Culture coincides with the Chairmanship of AMCA and the city hosting the AMCA meeting is designated as the ASEAN City of Culture. The title accordingly last for the two years of the chairmanship.

The first title, 2010-11 was awarded to the Philippines. “The Organizing Committee is co-chaired by the Secretary of Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the National Centre for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), with a coordinating secretariat jointly operated by the Office of the NCCA Executive Director and the President of the Philippine Centre of the International Theatre Institute (ITI)”

During the two year period the Philippines government awarded the title to 10 cities in a rotation. Each held the title for a few months. Subsequently the title has been awarded to a single city.

In April 2014 the AMCA meeting declared Hue City, its host, as the Capital for 2015-2016.

“After receiving the title of “ASEAN City of Culture”, the Chairman of Hue People’s Committee, Mr. Nguyen Van Cao, pledged to have a detailed plan and programme on introducing Vietnamese in general and Hue people in particular the image of ASEAN community, at the same time promulgating Hue culture to the region and the world. The targets of Hue after receiving this title are to bring achievements into play, and to promulgate the image of peaceful, civilized ASEAN community with happy and comprehensively developed people.”

At their meeting in August 2016 in Brunei’s capital Bandar Seri Begawan the culture ministers of China, Korea and Japan expressed interest in strengthening cultural ties with Brunei through the East

Asia Cities of Culture network. At the meeting they declared Bandar Seri Begawan as the title holder for 2016-18 (the title period is summer to summer period rather than calendar).

Year	City	Country
2010-11	Manila, Angono, Tarlac, Angeles, Batangas, Roxas, Tagbilaran, Cagayán de Oro, Dapitan and Cebú	Philippines
2012-13	Singapore	Singapore
2014-15	Hue City	Vietnam
2016-17	Bandar Seri Begawan	Brunei
2018-19		Indonesia

## Cultural Capital of the Turkic World

The Heads of States of Turkic Speaking Countries (now the Turkic Council) at their summit in Istanbul in 2010 initiated the “Cultural Capital of the Turkic World”.

The administration is delegated to TURKSOY<sup>4</sup>, based in Ankara. TURKSOY is the international organization of Turkic culture (also known, unofficially, as the UNESCO of the Turkic World) was established in 1993 upon signature of its founding agreement by the Ministers of Culture of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Turkey. Later on, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the Republics subject to the Russian Federation, Tatarstan, Bashkortostan, Altai, Sakha Yakutia, Tyva and Khakassia also joined the organization along with Gagauzia (Moldova) as member states with an observer status. For more than 20 years TURKSOY has been carrying out various activities to strengthen the ties of brotherhood and solidarity among Turkic peoples and transmit their cultural heritage to future generations.

There are no published objectives or criteria. A press report on the election of the 2017 capital noted:

“The title of cultural capital of the Turkic world is given to cities which could serve as a model of peace and international friendship, cities with cultural and historical significance”.

The title holder is formally designated at the start of the title year by the ministers of culture of TURKSOY member states. The meeting is held, around December, in the outgoing Capital. Government representatives pitch their case at the annual meeting of culture ministers. There is one candidate a year implying behind the scenes discussions.

The first title holder was Astana in 2012 on the nomination of the president of Kazakhstan at the meeting in Istanbul in 2010.

President Erdogan of Turkey supported the case of Eskişehir for the 2013 title; the city had a budget of \$200 million. It hosted over 250 events during the year. TURKSOY itself manages events in the title holder but it no longer runs a regional “Eurovision” contest. The involvement of TURKSOY in the programme is illustrated by the 2017 edition in Turkestan. Forty events are planned, 21 by the region, 14 by TURKSOY and 5 by the Ministry of Culture.

The openings of the Capital are concurrent with the celebration of the Nevruz Festival.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.turksoy.org/en/turksoy/about>

“Although the origins of this ancient tradition are a matter of historic debate, Nevruz, which means "new day" in Persian, is said to have its origins in Zoroastrianism, the religion of pre-Islamic, Persian empires. According to this religion, March 21 is considered as the day of the earth's creation and the first day of the new year”. Festivals take place across the Turkic world.

Ufa the capital of Bashkortostan in Russia was to hold the 2016 title before Russia announced the withdrawal of the region from TURKSOY. It appears this was related to the incident of the Russian aircraft shot down over Turkey. Sheki was hastily designated the 2016 Capital.

“Cities which have been awarded this title until now have all been extremely successful in their commitment to represent the Turkic World and bringing its people closer together. Indeed, they all hosted hundreds of cultural and artistic events making it possible for artists, scholars and intellectuals of the whole world to exchange their views, knowledge and experience. The Cultural Capital of the Turkic World is an initiative which does not only contribute to the enrichment of our cities' cultural and artistic life but also gives an impetus to the process of cultural integration among Turkic republics”

Turkestan is the title holder for 2017:

The draft programme of the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World 2017 foresees nearly 50 celebration events and activities. These will start with the Opening Ceremony of the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World 2017 in March and go on throughout the year. Celebration activities include traditional events of TURKSOY such as Nevruz Celebrations, Opera Days, Photographers’ and Painters’ Gatherings along with the Congress of Literature Journals of the Turkic World, the Festival of Animation Cinema, the Meeting of UNESCO National Commissions, and the Handcrafts’ Festival, and the International Media Forum. Another activity which will be carried out within the framework of the Cultural Capital Programme will be the restoration of the Khoja Akhmet Yassawi Shrine.

Year	City	Country
2012	<b>Astana</b>	Kazakhstan
2013	<b>Eskişehir</b>	Turkey
2014	<b>Kazan</b>	Russia
2015	<b>Merv</b>	Turkmenistan
2016	<b>Sheki</b>	Azerbaijan
2017	<b>Turkestan</b>	Turkmenistan

## **Cultural Capital of the Commonwealth of Independent States**

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is a regional intergovernmental organization, whose main purpose is cooperation in political, economic, environmental, humanitarian, cultural and other fields among a number of former Soviet Republics. There are currently nine full and two associate member countries.

The project for Cultural Capitals was initiated in 2010 as a key element in the “Year of Historical and Cultural Heritage in the Commonwealth of Independent States” at the second Coordination Meeting

of the Heads of the Sectoral Cooperation Agencies of the Humanitarian Sphere in Minsk. The initiative on the preparation and implementation of the programme was put forward by the Council for Humanitarian Cooperation of the CIS member states and the Interstate Fund for Humanitarian Cooperation of the CIS member states.

At the XXV jubilee meeting of the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the CIS member states on October 4, 2010 in Moscow, this proposal was supported and the draft Concept of the Programme was approved in general to highlight the potential of cities and to draw attention to their rich heritage. The rules were formally adopted in 2012 after two “pilot” cities held the title in 2011.

“The Programme “Cultural Capital of the CIS” is meant to be an effective instrument of interstate cooperation in the sphere of culture aimed at enhancing cultural ties between the CIS countries, their integration, creating a favourable climate for economic and political cooperation, humanitarian, social, economic and infrastructural development, and raising the status of the CIS in the world”<sup>5</sup>

The **Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund of the CIS** member states (IFESCCO) operates on the basis of the Treaty signed at a meeting of the Council of CIS Heads of Government on 2006 in Dushanbe by seven states - Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In 2008, the Azerbaijan joined the Treaty and in 2014 Moldova joined. IFESCCO supports the international cultural programme, which takes place throughout the year in each of the cultural capitals with the participation of other countries of the Commonwealth.

The selection process has varied over time. At times up to three cities are selected each year and approved at Heads of State meetings. They are nominated by their governments, reviewed in Minsk by the IFESCCO and formally designated by the Heads of States.

Ulyanovsk was awarded the first title for 2011, ten years after it held the inaugural Volga Region title.

Ulyanovsk created in 2012 an organisation to maintain the momentum of the year.

Then it became clear that to form a new cultural policy and modernize the cultural environment of the region it was necessary to attract foreign investments, cooperate with experts from Russia and other countries and create an attractive outward brand of the region. The Foundation was created thereby the Foundation “Ulyanovsk – the Capital of Culture”:

- holds the International Cultural Forum in the Ulyanovsk region annually;
- holds various events aimed at cultural, art and creative industries development and promoting the Ulyanovsk region with the help of culture on the regional, federal and international levels;
- initiates grant contests supporting and developing cultural initiatives in the sphere of modern culture;
- consults and gives information concerning culture and cultural policy of the region;

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.turkmenistan.ru/en/articles/15366.html>

- holds seminars, open discussions and round tables.

In 2012 Astana held the title as well as the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World. Gyumri's programme in 2013 had around 40-50 events, concerts, exhibitions, school based activity. The funding came from four sources: Ministry of Culture (180 million dram), the Government reserve fund, the Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund (main funder) and the Gyumri municipality. The overall budget was 500 million dram (approx. €1,000,000).

At the meeting of the CIS Foreign Ministers Council in April 2017 the Capital Cities for 2018, 2019 and 2020 were agreed and sent for formal approval to the Heads of States meeting in autumn 2017.

“The programme assumes an annual concentration of the creative resources of the Commonwealth states in non-capital cities of the CIS member states that have received the status of the "Cultural Capital of the Commonwealth" and the creation of a bright, rich and diverse palette of cultural and humanitarian events based on strong historically established cultural ties and ongoing dialogue in our day between the original cultures of sovereign states. The interstate program "Cultural Capitals of the Commonwealth" is one of the key projects of the CIS in the sphere of culture. It is designed to help expand cultural exchange and more closely integrate the cultural potential of the CIS countries. In a short time, the program proved itself as a significant step towards uniting the efforts of the creative community in order to expand cultural ties, promote common humanistic values, raise awareness and interest of the international community in holding joint cultural events in the CIS space”.

<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Country</b>
2011	<b>Ulyanovsk</b> <b>Gomel</b>	Russia Belarus
2012	<b>Mary</b> <b>Astana</b>	Turkmenistan Kazakhstan
2013	<b>Mogilev</b> <b>Gabala</b> <b>Gyumri</b>	Belarus Azerbaijan Armenia
2014	<b>Osh</b> <b>Almaty</b>	Kyrgyzstan Kazakhstan
2015	<b>Voronezh</b> <b>Kulob</b>	Russia Tajikistan
2016	<b>Dashoguz</b>	Turkmenistan
2017	<b>Ganja</b>	Azerbaijan
2018	<b>Goris</b>	Armenia
2019	<b>Brest</b>	Belarus
2020	<b>Shymkent</b>	Kazakhstan

## **Cultural City of East Asia**

The Culture City of East Asia project is a three-nation project based on the agreement at the Japan, China and South Korea Culture Ministers' Meeting in 2012 in Shanghai. The programme is an element in the Shanghai Action Plan agreed at the meeting. The aim is strengthen cultural exchanges among the three countries

The Shanghai meeting was the first time the three countries agreed to adopt an “Action Plan” instead of the “Declarations” issued at the previous three trilateral cultural ministers' meetings. The Action Plan is more detailed and practical to realize cooperation in a concerted effort. It is expected:

to illustrate widening cultural cooperation among the three countries. The Action Plan covers the selection process of “East Asia Cultural Cities”, future “East Asia Arts Festivals”, cultural activities to be held for the Trilateral Summit Meeting and promoting communication and cooperation on cultural relics and intangible cultural heritage protection, as well as strengthening exchanges and cooperation in the cultural industry.

The East Asia Cultural Cities project selects one city in each of these three countries to hold various cultural activities in the fields of contemporary art, traditional arts and the culture of everyday life, aiming to deepen mutual understanding and build a sense of solidarity in the East Asian region, as well as enhancing the ability of intercultural communication. In addition, the cities selected as Culture Cities of East Asia intend to use this opportunity to implement the project on a continuous basis by promoting their cultural peculiarities, arts, creative industries and tourism.

Selection takes place in the three countries independently in the year before the title year. Each country has an open selection competition and candidate cities present in front of an expert panel in China and Korea. There are usually 3-4 candidates in each country. In Japan the culture ministry opens a call and selects. There is less information about the Japanese process compared to the other two members. The three cities are announced by their governments in June to July each year. The formal designation by the Culture Ministers follows at their annual trilateral meeting in August.

At their meeting in August 2016 the ministers agreed in principle to build a network of cities that have been or will be designated as the "Culture City of East Asia," as a way to keep exchanges going among the towns and prevent them from being one-time events.

The first title holders were in 2014.

Yokohama, the first Japanese city to hold the title ran a programme concentrated in the last four months of the year. Over 100 projects attracted an audience of 2.8million. Fifteen projects were trilateral. It produced a comprehensive report on the year, including market research findings.

For the selection of the 2017 title in China there was an eleven person committee of experts in the fields of cultural exchange, cultural service system construction and intangible cultural heritage protection and inheritance. The vice-minister for culture was a committee member. Three cities made it to the final evaluation meeting. Ningbo was selected.

Changsha was one of the unsuccessful candidates for the 2016 title but it re-entered a year later and was selected for the 2017 title ahead of Harbin and Sanya. Harbin was successful for the 2018 title.

In Korea for 2017 four cities were in contention (Daegu, Changwon, Iksan and Jeonju). In August 2016:

“Jury members gave high marks to Daegu's experience of successfully hosting many international events, its advanced transportation infrastructure and cultural facilities, and good record of cultural exchanges with foreign countries”

Kyoto, the Japanese city, had already been selected in 2015.

Jeju, the Korean partner in the 2016 edition hosted 10 events from the opening in April to the closing ceremony in December. These included an exchange of calligraphy students from Ningbo. Unlike the other Korean title holders the project was organised by a private sector organisation which led to controversy. The City Council explained that this was due to a lack of suitably experienced staff. The Jeju budget was (approx.) €1.1m. Jeju became a Pilot City of the UCLG with a focus on integrating its traditional heritage and peoples into a cultural strategy.

The programmes of the title holders vary. Qingdao in 2015 focussed almost entirely on traditional arts and heritage with little contemporary production. Nara in 2016 used heritage sites and buildings for site specific contemporary art installations.

The opening ceremony of the 2017 cities, held in Kyoto, featured ethnic dances, traditional Chinese music and drum operas from Changsha, music opera and Korean percussion performance from Daegu. Kyoto's programme includes an exhibition featuring 14 contemporary artists, Asia Corridor, from the three countries.

Changsha has a budget in 2017 of \$45million and planned around 100 activities. At its opening in April 2017 the Chinese Vice-Minister of Culture said

The three countries co-founded the international cultural city aimed at promoting "East Asian awareness, cultural blend, and mutual appreciation, in the spirit of exchanges and cooperation, highlighting the "symbiotic, innovative and harmonious" cultural development consensus. The selected city highlights the cultural leadership, supports the role of promoting the concept of urban development innovation, cultural capital construction and urban development integration. He is looking forward to the "2017 East Asian Cultural Capital · China Changsha Activity Year" an interpretation of a brilliant, unforgettable gorgeous movement, to show the diversity and inclusiveness of the ancient city culture, bring the three countries closer through cultural exchange networking, to further deepen links in East Asia and the world by the understanding and friendship of the people of all countries, and the writing of a new glorious chapter for the development of East Asian culture.

The opening programme included

Theatrical performances with "East Asia is happy, Changsha" as the theme, by the introduction, heritage, integration, the end of four parts. Dance drama "Peach Blossom Spring" kicked off, the Chinese guqin, Japanese piano, Korea Gayagegi ensemble a "piano harmony". Xiang Opera "Patio Spring Changsha", "fan dance", tap dance "Hui Night Princess.

The programme for the year has four themes "spring reading mountain", "summer listening to water", "autumn pro-continent", "winter love city". Events include "

"The Eleventh National Library of the Chinese Library", " the East Asia Wisdom Happy Changsha" National Concert, the Meixi Lake International Culture and Art Festival, the East Asia Cooperation Forum, the "East Asia Wendu Changsha Memory" exhibition, the 2017 "Art Changsha" Biennale, the East Asia regional public welfare film month and a series of activities, covering culture, sports, education, tourism, economic and trade in various fields.



China selected Harbin for its 2018 title holder. It won the title over Sanya and Xi'an who were awarded the title of "Supporting City of the 2018 Culture City of East Asia".

Announcing the Korean title holder for 2018 the Korean Culture Ministry stated:

"Busan Metropolitan City will be a cultural city of East Asia linked to existing projects such as the Korea-China-Japan Humanities Forum, the Korea-China-Japan Cultural Diversity "Enjoy the Difference," cultural and cultural programs, the Korea Communications Festival, the Busan International Film Festival, and the One-Asia Festival. In addition to actively running exchange programs, we will set up a secretariat and hold various programs throughout the year, including opening and closing ceremonies."

Kanazawa was nominated for the 2018 title by the Japanese Culture Ministry. It is already a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (for arts and crafts). Its cultural strategy is based around the exploitation of its creative and cultural industries in arts and crafts. There is a four year programme involving UNESCO CCN activity, the East Asia Cultural City and leading to the Cultural Olympiad in 2020.

Year	China	Japan	Korea
2014	Quanzhou	Yokohama	Kwangju
2015	Qingdao	Nigata	Chongju
2016	Ningbo	Nara	Jeju
2017	Changsha	Kyoto	Daegu
2018	Harbin	Kanazawa	Busan

## SAARC Cultural Capital

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)<sup>6</sup> brings together 8 countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka).

The SAARC Culture Ministers Conference in September 2014 agreed the cultural capitals for the next two years as part of the Delhi Resolution as part of a road map for regional cultural ties till 2017.

A SAARC Cultural Capital is selected based on the richness its cultural heritage and the similarity such heritage has with heritage of other SAARC countries. It is also selected to allow the designated city to drive up its present cultural, social and financial benefits bolstering the city's image in the global stage. The programme is administered by the SAARC Cultural Centre in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Every year, an archeologically and culturally rich city in the one of the eight SAARC countries is declared as the cultural capital for a year.

In the city a total of six cultural events are organised by the SAARC Cultural Centre one every two months in addition to locally managed events. The events range from the SAARC Artist Camp, South Asian Music Festival, and South Asian Food Festival to the SAARC Film Festival, SAARC Photo Exhibition on Historical Sites and Decorative Art.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://saarc-sec.org/#>

The title was first awarded for 2015/2016 to Banyam in Afghanistan. This is the site of the famous Buddha statues destroyed by the Taliban in 2001.

Bangladesh was nominated to host the second title. In order to select a city the national government nominated several candidates (Bogra, Kushtia and Comilla). These were visited by a delegation of SAARC Cultural Centre senior staff. These recommended the archaeological site of Mahasthangargh in Bogra to the Prime Minister for final approval. The site is the earliest archaeological site in the country.

Year	city	country
2015-16	<b>Banyam</b>	Afghanistan
2016-17	<b>Mahasthangargh in Bogra</b>	Bangladesh

### **Capital da Cultura da Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa (CPLP)**

The **Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa** (Community of Portuguese Language Countries) (CPLP) has nine full members (Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, San Tome and Príncipe, Timor-Leste and Equatorial Guinea). There are several associate member countries which have significant numbers of Portuguese speakers.

The title was inaugurated at the IX meeting of the Culture Ministers of the CPLP in April 2014 in Mozambique.

The agreement set out that the country holding the rotating presidency of the CPLP would select a city to be called the “Capital of Culture of the CPLP”. The city would be designated at the meeting of the culture ministers and would hold the title for the two year period of the country’s presidency.

The title filled a gap in the Portuguese speaking world following the ending of national titles in Portugal and Cape Verde, the independent title in Brazil and the city-led Capital Lusófona da Cultura.

At their following meeting, in May 2017, the culture ministers designated Salvador in Brazil as the title holder for 2017 and 2018 during Brazil’s presidency.

“In order to win the title, it was considered that Salvador was the first capital of Brazil (1549-1763), besides being a point of convergence of European, African and Amerindian cultures and centre of diffusion of the Portuguese language in the most diverse cultural manifestations. In addition, the authorities took into account the architectural, landscape and urban development of the historic city centre, inscribed as a cultural asset on the World Heritage List by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1985.

This will increase the stimulation of exchanges in the most varied artistic languages, with a view to strengthening the ties of friendship and cooperation between citizens of Portuguese-speaking countries through culture.”

The formal designation states:

Considering the importance of Salvador as the first capital of Brazil (1549-1763), a point of convergence of European, African and Amerindian cultures and centre of diffusion of the Portuguese language in the most diverse cultural manifestations;

Considering that the architectural, landscape and urban development of the historic centre of Salvador was inscribed as a cultural asset in the World Heritage List of UNESCO in 1985

There is little information about any programme in Salvador except for events during the Culture Ministers meeting.

Cape Verde assumes the CPLP presidency for 2018-20 and will nominate a city to hold the title in 2019.

<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Country</b>
2017-18	Salvador	Brazil
2019-20		Cape Verde

## 2: National titles

### *The Cultural Capitals of Canada*

In June 1998, the Canadian Conference of the Arts (CCA) Final Report of the Working Group on Cultural Policy for the 21st Century recommended "...a Canadian City of Culture project be placed on the agenda of the next federal/provincial meeting of culture ministers for discussion and implementation."

There was an extensive consultation with the European Cities of Culture programme including a delegation from Europe to Ottawa.

The Government of Canada announced on May 31, 2002 the creation of the "Cultural Capitals of Canada".

This national program recognizes and supports municipalities that already demonstrate support for arts, culture and heritage as integral to community life. The designation "Cultural Capital" is awarded to cities demonstrating the ability to celebrate and build a legacy for arts and culture, and also demonstrating a good track record of past achievements. Submissions for the award must contain plans for an ambitious program that can be realistically achieved within the limitations imposed by the size and resources of the city.

The program highlights applicants' past achievements that demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the arts and culture. The funds enable recipient communities to hold special events that celebrate the arts and culture and to organize activities that create a legacy for the future and ensure that arts and cultural issues are integrated into municipal planning. Designations are awarded based on merit, the quality of the project proposal, and the applicants' earlier achievements.

The program is open to municipalities, First Nations governments, and Inuit and Métis communities.

There were three categories. Each attracted a government award of up to a certain amount and in the case of the largest award that the city contributed a certain sum from its own, regional and private sector resources. The amounts varied over the course of the title but were typically in these ranges:

- for cities over 125,000 \$2m
- between 50,000 and 125,000 \$750,000
- One, two or three titles for communities under 50,000: \$500,000 each.

There was an open competition. Candidates presented to an advisory panel of the mayors of the previous year's title holders supported by a panel of expert advisors. Formal designation was by the Minister for Canadian Heritage.

The first title was in 2003 and the government closed the programme as an austerity measure in 2012. The programme had cost the government \$32million over its ten years.

In 2007 the Ministry produced a comparative timeline of the European titles alongside developments of, and title holders of the Canadian title<sup>7</sup>.

There was an evaluation after the first three years which made recommendations to enhance the programme, most notably to select title-holders earlier to give them longer to prepare the programme.

For the 2009 titles there were 3 candidates for the major award, 5 in each of the two smaller awards.

Vancouver merged its Capital programme in 2003 with the celebrations of the city's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The federal funding of up to \$1.75m enabled the city to have a total budget of just under \$7m. A city councillor said

This allows us to capitalize on the Cultural Olympiad," said Ms. Deal. "Ever since that ended, people have been going: what do we do next? How do we keep that energy going? How do we capitalize on that success? We knew we had this birthday coming so it seemed the perfect opportunity.

Robert Kerr, who ran Vancouver's Cultural Olympiad, was contracted by the city to produce the 125th anniversary celebrations.

Levis was the 2011 title holder for the middle category. It also merged its programme with an anniversary, this time its 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Charlottetown was the 2011 title holder in the below 50,000 category

The City of Charlottetown will use the funding to launch a range of projects and activities, including an opening concert, urban planning workshops, studio and gallery tours, multicultural celebrations, a Nuit blanche focusing on young artists, a traditional Aboriginal garden, a Francophone and Acadian festival, short films and interactive productions about the city, a book fair, arts and crafts workshops, arts discovery days, an Aboriginal play, and a series of artworks about Confederation.

In 2010 the city of Rouyn-Noranda put forward a bid in the small city category. It was not successful but decided to carry out its programme anyway.

Year	>125,000	50,000-125,000	>50,000
2003	Vancouver	Red Deer	Thunder Bay Caraquet Rivière-du-Loup
2004	Regina	Kelowna	Owen Sound Powell River Lethbridge, Canmore, Drumheller, and Crowsnest Pass, Alberta, and Fernie, British Columbia
2005	Toronto	Victoria,	Annapolis Royal, Saint-Jean-Port-Joli Algonquins of Pikwakanagan
2006	Saskatoon	St John's	Saint-Joseph-de Beauce,

<sup>7</sup> <http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/ahc/2006/03-23/CANADIAN%20CITIES%20OF%20CULTURE1.htm>

			<b>West Vancouver Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve</b>
2007	<b>Edmonton</b>	<b>Comox Valley</b>	<b>Wendake, Moose Jaw, Baie-Saint-Paul</b>
2008	<b>Surrey</b>	<b>Morden</b>	<b>Nanaimo Sackville</b>
2009	<b>Trois-Rivières,</b>	<b>Coquitlam</b>	<b>Fredericton Caraquet, Whistler</b>
2010	<b>Winnipeg Saguenay</b>	<b>St John</b>	
2011	<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>Lévis</b>	<b>Charlottetown</b>
2012	<b>Calgary</b>	<b>Niagara</b>	

## *Cultural Capital of Portugal*

### *Capital Nacional da Cultura*

This was a short lived title. It was introduced in 2001 as part of a government policy to decentralise culture in the country. The competition was open for small and medium sized cities to use culture in the social, technological and economic fields as well as to develop the cultural sector itself.

In an interview with the president of the first title holder

the objective should be achieved through a careful selection of candidate cities for Capitals of Culture so that it is not based on ad-hoc candidacies, but is independent of the lobbies of each city, political or economic, and has a location and relation with the Regional and local context.

Coimbra was selected in 2001 to be the first title holder in 2003. Faro was selected to hold the title in 2005. The selection and formal designation was by the government.

The choice of Coimbra was a logical choice, given its history and its centrality to the country. Another of the objectives has to do with the city itself, which has an illustrious history but which has a recent past less favourable to the city, in which the city closed, for reasons that have to do with university education that lost its monopoly, has to do with a very suppressed attitude of the city, especially in relation to the growth of the other cities of the Region Centre.

I'm happy to tell you why I'm Coimbricense and I really like my city, but I think the city did very badly when it closed, especially in the second half of the twentieth century. The fact that Coimbra is the National Capital of Culture is therefore a very important instrument for the recovery of the city itself, its self-esteem and centrality, and for finding a future strategy that Coimbra has not had in the last decades

Coimbra had an initial budget of €7m from the Ministry of Culture.

Faro set out its mission and objectives:

The Capital of Culture is a great opportunity for the City and the Algarve. Over the next few months it will provide residents and visitors with a set of cultural events of the highest quality and in various areas of expression - music, theatre, dance, the new circus, exhibitions, cinema, and literary manifestations. It is intended to attract new audiences to cultural activities and to project nationally and internationally Faro and the Algarve as poles of tourism and cultural. More than a local capital, Faro 2005 is a project of national impact, which seeks to integrate the Algarve into Portugal's cultural production and diffusion networks and the World

- To rescue the city and the region from the cultural marginality, attracting to the cultural activities new publics and the great mass of the population that has been away from them.
- To support the continuity and consolidation of cultural projects in the city and in the region, and to contribute to the raising of the cultural level of the Algarve society.
- To project nationally and internationally the city of Faro and the Algarve region, both as poles of cultural tourism and activities related to the culture and leisure industries.

The Faro 2005 National Capital of Culture took place between May and December in several cities of the Algarve region, with most events occurring in Faro. The programme consisted of 185 different performances represented through music, cinema, theatre, ballet and plastic arts. There have been two evaluations of Faro, one focussing on tourism and the other on sustainability.

After the general election in 2005 the new Minister of Culture ended the programme.

“There will not be a National Capital of Culture in 2006 because I am interested in evaluating this initiative of the ministry, which has never been evaluated,”

Evora had been promised the third title, in 2006, by the previous Minister (and the parliamentary candidate for Evora) during the election campaign.

In 2015, ten years after hosting the title, Faro announced its candidature for the European title when it is next in Portugal in 2027. Evora is also exploring a bid as are several other cities including Braga and Aveiro.

Year	City
2003	<b>Coimbra</b>
2005	<b>Faro</b>

### *Brazilian Capital of Culture*

See Part 4: independent

### **Lithuanian Capital of Culture**

The Lithuanian Capital of Culture initiative was launched in 2008 as a part of Vilnius European Capital of Culture 2009 and is considered a successful legacy.

The programme is administered by the Ministry of Culture. Any Lithuanian city except Vilnius can apply for this title. The process is regulated as an Order of the Minister of Culture.

The objectives are to encourage cultural activity and creativity of local inhabitants, to develop culture and arts, creative initiatives and access to culture in the regions of Lithuania

Originally the competition was administered on an annual basis. However representations from the municipalities led to a change. The competition is now organized once every three years to give successful cities time to prepare. In June 2015 the title holders for 2017-19 were announced.

The selection criteria are: project relevance and quality, reasonable estimation of activities, human resources and budget.

A priority is given to the applications with strong emphasis on promotion of art and culture activities, raising awareness of local identity, continuity of local traditions, the active participation of local communities and engagement of private sponsors

The selection panel consists of representative of the Ministry of Culture and 4 members representing structures related to local administration: Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania, the Board of Culture Self-governance (association), Association of Museums, and Lithuanian National Culture Centre.

The Ministry signs a contract with the Municipality of the selected city. It envisages monitoring via 2 stages of financing with a mid-term financial report. The final report has to be presented by the end of the year and approved by a responsible officer of the Ministry.

The successful city is awarded a maximum of €58,000 up to 80% of the total budget.

The first title holder was in 2008.

There is a smaller competition in Lithuania: **Small Capitals of Culture of Lithuania**. This was the idea of a prominent politician and businessman. 10 small towns are selected every year and are awarded with €3,000 by the businessman. The towns raise additional funds from public and private sources.

In 2017 Klaipėda's programme is based around five themes under the theme of "Non-Freezing Port of Culture".

"to reveal the city's history and present contemporary culture of today, to expose uniqueness and specific image of the city as a vivid, active, innovative and tolerant city. Other aims:

1. reflecting the past and today of marine culture that is a factor of the port's self-identity, to reveal the city's cultural identity integrated into the cultural area of the Baltic Sea Region;
2. To promote the interest of city visiting tourists in the cultural products created in Klaipėda;
3. To promote the cultural and creative activity of the inhabitants and to increase the level of culture consumption (audience development);
4. To reveal Klaipėda as an attractive city for creativity and creative industries;



5. To encourage cultural innovations and ensure the development of new services based on information and communication technologies.

The total budget is €1.3m of which €0.9 for programmes, €380,000 for management and €160,000 for promotion. The national government provided €58,000 and the city the remainder. In addition the cultural institutions provided co-funding for certain projects. Four title holders made bids for the European title to be held in Lithuania in 2023; all were unsuccessful as Kaunas was selected.

Year	City
2008	Zarasai
2009	Plungė
2010	Ramygala
2011	Šilutė
2012	Anykščiai
2013	Palanga
2014	Panevėžys
2015	Joniškis
2016	Telšiai
2017	Klaipėda
2018	<i>Marijampolė</i>
2019	<i>Rokiškis</i>

## Cultural Capital of Belarus

The Cultural Capital of Belarus programme started in 2010. It is managed by the Ministry of Culture. The programme superseded a one-off nomination of Vitebsk in 2009. The rules of the competition are public

It is an action that consists in the annual election of a particular city of Belarus as the centre of the cultural life of the country with the aim of developing and enriching the cultural life of the regions, activating the local public initiative to support the national culture, attracting the attention of the general public and foreign tourists.

There is an annual competition. Regional administrations are invited to nominate candidates by 1 April of the year preceding the title. They need to include a draft programme. The objectives are

The presentation of the cultural identity of the cities and Belarusian regions;

Development and popularization of the traditions of the achievements of the national culture, and introduction to the general public;

Intensifying creative initiatives and exchange of spiritual cultural values, improving the quality of training and the organization of cultural events;

The creation through the sphere of culture conditions for socio-economic development of cities and Belarusian regions and increasing tourist attractiveness.

Selection is by the collegium of the Ministry of Culture. The collegium consists of representatives from the arts and education sectors as well as ministries. The criteria are:

A well-developed social and cultural infrastructure of the city

A positive experience of organizing and conducting of cultural events

A systematic work on the study and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural and historical heritage, preservation and development of regional characteristics;

And ideas for new cultural projects planned for the year

The organisation of a title holder's programme is overseen by a committee of national, regional and cultural managers whose responsibilities are set out in the Rules. Funding is from national, regional and city cultural budgets. There does not appear to be a special fund for the programme.

Two cities competed for the 2014 title<sup>8</sup>; Grodno beat Molodechno (who eventually held the title in 2016). In April 2017 the Ministry of Culture announced Novopolotsk as the 2018 title holder.

The programme of Bobruisk in 2017 concentrates on folk and traditional arts with several international festivals. The opening events featured crafts, ballet, children's arts, orchestras, local fashion designers and a demonstration of AI robots from the Technical College. There was an open competition to select projects. These included a city quiz, a programme for ill children, folk dances, and a series of souvenir postcards.

Year	City
2010	<b>Polotsk</b>
2011	<b>Gomel</b>
2012	<b>Nesvizh</b>
2013	<b>Mogilev</b>
2014	<b>Grodno</b>
2015	<b>Brest</b>
2016	<b>Molodechno</b>
2017	<b>Bobruisk</b>
2018	<i>Novopolotsk</i>

## United Kingdom City of Culture

The programme was launched by the Department of Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) in 2009 after the success of Liverpool as European Capital of Culture in 2008. The title is held every four years with the first title in 2013 when Derry/Londonderry was selected ahead of three other cities on the shortlist. Initially 29 cities and regions expressed an interest and were on the longlist. The shortlist contained 4 candidates.

The objectives for the 2021 title are:

- Deliver a high quality cultural programme that builds and expands on local strengths and assets and reaches a wide variety of audiences over the course of the year;
- Deliver a programme that uses culture and creativity to lead to lasting social regeneration through building engagement, widening participation, supporting cultural diversity and cohesion, contributing to the localism agenda and reaching out to sectors of the community who are disenfranchised and isolated;
- Create a demonstrable economic impact from the programme, through investment and innovation in culture and creativity;

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.belarus.by/en/press-center/news/grodno-named-belarus-capital-of-culture-for-2014-i-7687.html>

- Demonstrate a clear approach to maximising the legacy and evaluating the impacts from being UK City of Culture;
- Present realistic and credible plans for managing, funding and delivering the programme and its legacy.

DCMS is seeking bids which:

- Are distinctive and representative of the area – building on what the area has to offer and its existing assets;
- Have strong leadership, management and governance
- Are ambitious and stretching, with the potential to create lasting economic and social regeneration in the area;
- Demonstrate cultural and artistic excellence and innovation ;
- Include and work with a broad range of local, national and international partners ;
- Engage a wide range of audiences and participants , especially children and young people and under-represented groups and communities;
- Are realistic, affordable and deliverable.

There is an open competition starting four years in advance. London may not bid but individual boroughs may be associated with other bids. There is a two stage selection process with an independent selection panel making a recommendation to the Minister. The bids are assessed by a consultancy company who submit a report to the selection panel.

There is no direct government funding although successful cities have gained funding from Arts Councils. The winning city may select from a number of national arts events (eg the award of the Booker Prize for literature or the Turner Prize for contemporary artists) to gain added national exposure.

There are 11 candidates for the title in 2021. A shortlist of five (Coventry, Paisley, Stoke-on-Trent, Swansea and Sunderland) was announced in July 2017. The announcement of the winner will be made in Hull later in 2017.

The Derry/Londonderry programme in 2013 produced over 400 events, with over 1,000,000 visitors. The programme budget was £24m from the city council and an urban regeneration company. Over £140million was set aside for capital investment projects. At its selection in 2010 the chair of the independent advisory panel said:

The programme suggested was impressive, as were the plans for community engagement, economic investment and the development of digital technology. It was also the way all these elements had been woven together through a strong and compelling narrative about the City and its people. And if culture cannot be used to help promote harmony, tolerance, hope and aspiration; if it cannot be used to help people understand their past, inform their present and help shape their future - then what role does it have?

The cities' own post year reports have focussed on the economic benefits that the title has produced. It claims for every £1 invested there was a return of £5 (a similar return claimed by the evaluation of the European title holder Mons in 2015).

By the start of Hull’s programme in 2017 it had secured a budget of £33million compared to its original target in its bid of £13m. The aims:

The arts and cultural programme for the year celebrates the unique character of the city, its people, history and geography. In 2017, the programme runs from 1 Jan to 31 Dec and is split into four seasons, each with something distinctive and intriguing to say, and each created to challenge and thrill.

We’re working with the artists of Hull to celebrate the culture of the city and its place in the wider cultural offer of the North, and make Hull a cultural destination for must-see events. Young people are at the heart of the programme – it is this group who will inherit the longer-term benefits as a result of our focus around learning and participation. We are giving every young person of school age the opportunity to participate in 2017 as well thousands of volunteers who will help deliver the year.

Interim findings of an evaluation study being undertaken across the year by the University of Hull’s Culture, Place and Policy Institute (CPPI) show that nine out of ten residents attended or experienced at least one cultural event in the city in the first three months of 2017 – the Made in Hull season. This is more than double the number participating before the city’s bid.

At least 450 events, exhibitions and cultural activities took place during the first season, attracting over 1.4 million visits, with many drawing large, often sell-out audiences. As we approach the end of season two, this has now increased to a total of nearly 1000 events, exhibitions and cultural activities.

Year	City
2013	Derry/Londonderry
2017	Hull
2021	

### *Cultural Capital of Ireland*

In June 2012 Ministry of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht prepared the criteria for a national city of culture programme and presented it to Government. In July 2012 Limerick was appointed as the National City of Culture for 2014 as a pilot for a future programme. The government provided €6m for the programme.

The subsequent plan was for an open competition every two years but this did not materialise. 2016 was a significant cultural year as the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Easter Rising and in 2018 cities would be bidding for the European title to be co-hosted in Ireland in 2020.

The guiding principles for the project:

Supporting community involvement in planning and delivering events during the title year;

Increasing participation in the arts by local residents, especially from disadvantaged communities

- Encouraging the involvement of local schools in the organisation and delivery of events;
- Fostering creativity within communities;
- Maximising existing cultural infrastructure and facilities to the benefit of the arts; and
- Delivering a long-term positive impact on awareness of and participation in the arts within the city

Limerick's programme had a final expenditure of €10.9m, slightly under budget. There were over 3,000 events organised in 152 projects. A feature of Limerick's title year was a strong emphasis on legacy in capacity building.

year	city
2014	Limerick

## *Capital of Cape Verde*

### *Capital da Cultura Cabo-verdiana*

The Cape Verdean Capital of Culture (CCC) competition was launched by the Ministry of Culture. The process was conducted by the National Association of Municipalities together with the Parliamentary Network for the Environment and Combating Desertification and Poverty.

It operated with an open competition from cities for three years from 2014 to 2016.

Year	City
2014	Nova Sintra
2015	Cidade Velha
2016	Taffafal de Santiago

## **Cultural Capital of Italy**

### *Capitale Italiana della Cultura*

The "Italian Capital of Culture" was introduced in 2014 at the same time Matera was nominated to be the European Capital of Culture in 2019. The Italian Ministry of Culture awarded the Italian title to the five cities which were in the final selection phase for the European title. The five were declared Italian Capitals of Culture in 2015.

The conferment of the title "Italian Capital of Culture", in line with the EU action "European Capital of Culture 2007-2019", has the following objectives: improving the cultural offer; strengthening social cohesion and inclusion, and the development of public participation; increasing the attractiveness of tourism; the use of new technologies; the promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative sectors; the achievement of sustainable results in the cultural innovation.

The aim of the programme is to support, encourage and enhance the autonomous planning and implementation capacities of the Italian cities in the field of culture, so that it is in an increasingly widespread acknowledged the value of cultural lever for social cohesion, 'integration without conflicts, creativity, innovation, growth and ultimately economic development and individual and collective well-being".

There is an open competition in two stages, shortlisting and final selection. There is an independent selection panel of experts. The bidbooks set out a proposed programme, indicative budget and management structures.

The titleholder is awarded with €1m from national funds to complement funding from cities, regions, foundations and business. There is a special allowance made for these funds in the Italian government's public expenditure austerity programme.

There was a single completion for the titles in 2016 and 2017. Ten cities made the shortlist. After Mantua was selected for 2016 the remaining 9 candidates were reviewed to select the 2017 title holder.

The Ministry announced that Mantua had chosen Mantua as the cultural capital of 2016 from the list of 10 finalist cities, including those who had submitted their candidacy for 2016/2017. This afternoon October 2016 will be announced as the city of the remaining 9 finalists () was chosen by the jury led by Marco Cammelli.

Pistoia was selected for 2017 from the 9 remaining finalists (Aquileia, Como, Herculaneum, Parma, Pisa, Pistoia, Spoleto, Taranto and Terni). Its planned operating budget was €6.1m and a capital budget plan of €15m.

After the selection of the 2016 and 2017 titles the selection panel made a series of recommendations to the Ministry. These included the lack of advance notice a city has from selection to the title year and the very wide scope of the objectives.

The competition for 2018 was only for that year. Palermo was successful from a short list of 10 candidates (made from 21 original candidates). Palermo had been unsuccessful in its bid for the European title in 2019.

Palermo proposed a budget of €6.5m for the programme in addition to the €70m it will spend on culture and infrastructure. The contemporary art festival Manifesta will also be in Palermo in 2018.

After making the announcement of Palermo the Culture Minister extended the programme to 2020. The competition would be in 2017/2018 to enable the successful candidate to have two years to prepare their programme.

In June 2017 it was reported that 46 cities had expressed an interest in applying for the 2020 title. The Ministry announced in October 2017 that 31 cities had submitted applications (10 more than for the 2018 title). The selection process starts in autumn 2017 with an independent seven person selection panel. The successful city will be announced in January 2018.

"Big and small municipalities from all over Italy have decided to invest in culture as the cornerstone of their development: it is a sign of a new awareness that is our duty to encourage and encourage as much as possible"

Mantua (2016) claimed an increase of 28% in overnight stay and 43% museum entrances. Even before its year started, its successor, Pistoia showed an 11% increase in the year before title. Both these Capitals have placed culture as a central pillar in their city development, using the Capital year as a springboard.

Mantua

“The active involvement of residents and stakeholders in the implementation of a plan including activities of urban branding and community building is decisive in Mantua, in order to promote culture as a positive and inclusive driver of development with direct impact on the creation of better local services and infrastructures”.

Pistoia:

“The city decided not to have a cultural policy just for culture but to make culture the load-bearing axis of current and future strategies of urban development” says Giuseppe Gherpelli, project manager of Pistoia 2017”.

“Since the first phase of candidature, different local institutions (such as the City, the Province and the Region, as well as the Chamber of Commerce, the local bank and the local Catholic diocese) have decided to establish a common development strategy having at its core cultural heritage and structures to be regenerated in the medium to long term”.

Year	City
2015	Ravenna, Siena, Cagliari, Perugia/Assisi, Lecce
2016	Mantua
2017	Pistoia
2018	Palermo
2019	No award as Matera hosts the European title
2020	

### *Cultural Capital of Korea*

*See 4: independent*

## Part 3: Regional titles

### *The Volga Region Capital of Culture*

The Volga region in Russia, capital Nizhny Novgorod, has a population of nearly 30 million.

The Capital of Culture programme ran from 2001 to 2006 and was organised by the Nizhny Novgorod branch of the National Centres for Contemporary Art (NCCA).<sup>9</sup> NCCA was created in 1994. It became the first federal specialized museum, exhibition and research organisation for contemporary art in Russia. NCCA is an institution within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

The intention of the programme included several ground breaking initiatives; working at a vertical, administrative level (city, regional and national), inter-disciplinary between artforms and managements, the development of regional networks and an emphasis on contemporary art. The Director set out the aims:

Essentially important, is that contemporary art forms the contents of this network (*of title holders*). First of all, it is the area of obviously innovative, experimental cultural action. Secondly, there is not in our country established institutions in this sphere as during the Soviet period contemporary art was “*persona non grata*” in culture. Therefore such a network is created not through reforming, but through forming, that is much easier and more effective.

There was an annual contest for selection. Initially the announcement of the winner was 6 months before the title year but this was extended to one year to give the successful city more time to organise. For example, Perm the 2006 title holder, was informed in November 2004. There were 6 candidates for the 2006 title. In 2002 and 2004 two cities were chosen.

Dimitrovgrad in 2004 had a programme budget of 100 million roubles (about €2,000,000).

The city will be divided into 7 sectors, with the predominance of a certain colour in each of them. Streets, shops, houses and kiosks, which are located in the same colour zone, will be issued in the appropriate colour scheme. It is planned that multi-coloured buses will go along the streets of the city. As the director of the programme "Dimitrovgrad - the cultural capital of the Volga region - 2004" Alexander Melnikov noted, "The rainbow will become a symbol of the city's multifaceted development and its multinationality."

The title was not awarded in 2005. Instead the year was declared a “network of cultural capitals” with events in each of the title holders as well as the regional capital of is Nizhny Novgorod.

The Week of "Cultural Capitals of the Volga Region-2005" will take place within the framework of the general Network Marathon of cultural events, which is an intensive form of presentation of cultural projects and the spectacular culmination of the programme "The Cultural Capital of the Volga Region". The projects that won the competition will form the

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.ncca.ru/en/articles.text?filial=3&id=24>



basis of the Marathon Week's program of cultural events. Cities who had not won the title were invited to submit project bids for the event. Awards of up to 10,000 roubles were available. Each of the cities of the Network will hold events in September-October 2005

One reported legacy of the programmes (as well as continuing festivals in cities) was the capacity building in the cultural sector. In most cities ten to fifteen cultural professionals obtained new skills and a new consciousness to become effective cultural managers. There was an active network of managers from the capitals supported by a central fund. This was a lasting legacy of the programme.

The programme closed because of difficulty of raising funds and political issues.

Year	City
2001	Ulyanovsk
2002	Nizhnekamsk Kirov
2003	Cheboksary
2004	Izhevsk Dimitrovgrad
2005	A network of Cultural Capitals
2006	Perm

### *Métropole Culturelle en Communauté Wallonie-Bruxelles*

The project “Métropole Culture en Communauté Wallonie-Bruxelles” was adopted in November 2008 by the regional governments of the French Community of Belgium and the Walloon Region.

The objective of the project was to promote the arts, culture and heritage in cities and towns by recognizing and supporting special activities.

A call for candidates was launched in 2009 for the titles in 2010 and 2012. Two candidates bid for 2010 and three for 2012. Six experts from the Walloon Region and the French Community analysed the candidate's applications. The experts used 9 criteria including:

Candidate's influence on the Region and the Community,

Innovative qualities of the project,

Involvement of citizens,

Presentation of the heritage and

The programme is accessible to a wide audience.

For 2010, two applications were considered admissible: Liège and Namur. The experts unanimously proposed Liège, (which would not be a candidate for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2015). For 2012, the jury selected La Louvière over Liège and Namur, the other two candidates. The two governments accepted the decision of the jury.

The French Community and the Walloon Region each awarded €500,000, spread over two years (the year preceding and the title year). The cities also had to make a financial contribution, proportional to the number of inhabitants (at least €1 per inhabitant).

For the 2014 title the competition was limited to the 19 municipalities of Brussels. Municipalities could make joint bids, with one as the leader. Bids had to include a commitment to co-fund the programme with at least €1 per inhabitant.

The criteria for the 2014 competition were:

- a. The effects of the proposed program on the influence of the municipality concerned in particular and on the French Community Commission and the Wallonia-Brussels Community in general;
- b. The innovative, original and attractive qualities of the whole programme and of each activity of the latter;
- c. The qualities of the programme in terms of enhancing the material heritage existing in an original way or in terms of the elaboration of a contemporary material heritage;
- d. Active involvement and participation of the population;
- e. Target audiences must be broad;
- f. The development of a collaborative network of organizers and promoters;
- g. The financial and organizational feasibility of the project and co-financing;
- h. The strength and the scale of the communication and promotion plan, with particular attention to the recognition of the support of the Wallonia-Brussels Community and the French Community Commission;
- i. The lasting effects on cultural heritage.

Nine communities made bids and Molenbeek was awarded the title. The contribution from the two administrations was €700,000 and Molenbeek needed to contribute at least €92,000.

Three candidates (Charleroi, Marche and Florennes) were, in 2013, preparing bids for the 2016 title when the two administrations ended the programme “for budgetary reasons”. They did, however, maintain their financial support for Mons as the European title holder in 2015.

In 2002 Mons had been awarded the title “Cultural Capital of Wallonia”. This appears to have been a one-off award.

Year	City
2010	Liège
2012	La Louvière
2014	Molenbeek-Brussels

### *Capitale régionale de la Culture, Nord-Pas-de-Calais*

Following the success of Lille as European Capital of Culture in 2004 the Regional Council of Nord Pas-de-Calais, in 2006, agreed to start a regional Capital title. It was planned to be held every two or three years.

The objectives were:

The democratization of access to culture and heritage,

The networking of regional cultural structures in the design, construction and implementation of the artistic and cultural programme with a balanced, equitable and sustainable development of the territory

The development of the attractiveness of the region and territory

There were three editions. The cities appear to have been selected by the regional authorities and from different areas of the region. A strong factor behind Valenciennes nomination as the opening title was that it spent considerably more on culture than the national average (17% compared to 10%).

After three editions the title was closed with Mauberge left high and dry as a nominated capital but with its budget withdrawn. It appears the regional council directed its attention and funding in 2015 to Mons, the European title holder in neighbouring Belgium. Several of Mauberge's planned projects did take place in the city within the framework of Mons2015.

All three title holders had budgets of €12m (mainly from the regional council) and organised their programmes from April to December. Each had additional funds for cultural investment projects and from sponsorship.

A feature of the Valenciennes title was the strong support (over €1m) from regional business sector, following on from their support to Lille the European title holder in 2004.

Dunkirk's bidbook is online. Their programme, which incorporated 16 neighbouring communes, in 2013, attracted nearly 700,000 spectators and visitors. As well as the programme funding an additional €100m was planned for cultural investment in the region

Year	City
2007	Valenciennes
2011	Béthune
2013	Dunkirk
2015	(Mauberge)

## Finno-Ugric Capital of Culture

*See Independent*

## Capital da Cultura do Eixo Atlântico

The EuroRegion of Eixo Atlântico (Atlantic Axis) of northern Portugal and Galicia in Spain started in 1992 and progressively developed networking and partnerships and broadened its sectoral scope. By 2016 34 cities were members. The capital of culture programme was developed in 2007 in order

“to promote culture in all its expressions in the cities of the Eixo Atlântico, always counting on the cultural presence of the countries historically linked to Portugal and Galicia. Crossing

all cultural areas, the Cultural Capital of the Eixo Atlântico promotes every two years the artists of the EuroRegion”.

The first edition was in 2009. Initially one city was chosen but two were selected for the 2016 edition.

In January 2015 the Executive Committee of the Region announced the 2016 titleholder.

The programmes for the early title holders ran for 2-3 months. By 2016 the programme in Matosinhos was running for the full year with a special emphasis in May to September. Matosinhos opened a Design House as part of its programme. In 2017 it plans to seek the UNESCO City of Design title. The combined budget of the two title holders in 2016 was around €5million. Matosinhos had a budget of around €3m and Vila Real around €2m.

The two programmes in the two cities are quite different. Matosinhos matches the title with a programme of urban regeneration, which will create new squares in the city, a memorial to Manuel Passos and a monument honouring the workers of the canning industry. The investment programme of the city of Matosinhos also includes the construction of new cultural facilities such as the House of Architecture, the House of Memory, the House of Design, the Aviation Museum and the launch of the project of a museum of the diaspora.

In terms of cultural programming, Matosinhos allocates €3 million to support the various events, reinforcing the expenditure on organizations in the city, but which will have a different visibility through the regional title. Examples include the Travel Literature Festival (13-15 May), the Romani music and dance festival (18 June), the Beach Party on Leça beach (1 and 2 July) or the various historical recreations of Roman and medieval ages.

Unlike Matosinhos, Vila Real will not make major investments in infrastructure. The president of the municipality considers that the county is already well served by cultural facilities, such as the 10 year old Municipal Theatre. Therefore, the priority for the Capital of Culture is mainly in the programming, which has a budget of around €2 million.

Year	City	Country
2009	Vilanova de Gaia	Portugal
2011	Viana do Castelo	Portugal
2014	Ourense	Spain
2016	Matosinhos Vila Real	Portugal Portugal

## The Cultural Capital of Krasnoyarsk

*Культурная столица Красноярья*

Krasnoyarsk is a federal administrative region, *krai* in Russian in Siberia in Russia with a population of 2,400,000. It comprises 13% of Russia’s territory.

The Cultural Capital of Krasnoyarsk was initiated by the regional government in 2007 and set to run from 2009 to 2016. It has since been extended<sup>10</sup>. The rules and procedures are online (in Russian) as are concept papers from winning cities from 2013<sup>11</sup>.

The purpose of the competition is the formation of a “single social and cultural space of the region”.

The objectives of the competition:

- Stimulation of social and economic development of municipalities;
- Motivation of municipalities to form a single, regional, social and cultural space;
- Identification and support of municipalities actively developing "culture" in their territory;
- Ensuring access of the population to the regional state cultural and educational institutions;
- Introduction of modern technologies in the activities of cultural and educational institutions in the region's culture.

There is an annual competition. The Organizing Committee is formed from representatives of the Ministry of Culture of the Krasnoyarsk Territory and the leaders of the regional state cultural and educational institutions in the field of culture.

The jury may include members of the Krasnoyarsk Territory Government, deputies of the Krasnoyarsk Territory Legislative Assembly, officials of the Ministry of Culture of the Krasnoyarsk Territory, heads of regional state cultural and educational institutions in the field of culture, and representatives of public organizations. The Jury determines the winner of the contest.

The main criterion for assessing the applications of municipalities for participation in the competition is the effectiveness of the implementation of state cultural policy on their territory.

In 2012 applications for participation in the competition were received from 19 territories of the region. When determining the winner, the detailed criteria included:

The share of the expenses of the municipality for financing "culture",

The participation of local collectives in regional actions and projects,

The number of realized own cultural projects,

The demand of the population for activities of cultural institutions

Cultural institutions in the "Cultural Capital" receive additional state support for the implementation of their own initiatives. The holders of the title mainly have city populations between 18,000 and 45,000 with two over 75,000.

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<sup>10</sup> <http://krascult.ru/kulturnaya-stolitsa-krasnoyarya/95>

<sup>11</sup> <http://krascult.ru/kulturnaya-stolitsa-krasnoyarya>

In recent years the title holders have been announced in the early months of the title year.

Sharypovo won the 2017 competition after making four previous bids. There were seven candidates. The dominant concept of their programme is the “Year of Ecology”.

In the first 7 years of the competition more than 500,000 people visited the "Cultural Capitals". More than 900 different cultural and educational events took place.

Year	City
2010	Zheleznogorsk
2011	Nazarovo
2012	Minusinsk
2013	Bogotol
2014	Borodino
2015	Kansk
2016	Divnogorsk
2017	Sharypovo

### **Regional Centre of Culture, Victoria, Australia**

In 2015 the State of Victoria, Australia, launched a four year long Creative State strategy. One element is the “Regional Centre for Culture”. It is a programme based around a year-long celebration of arts, culture and community in a region of the State. The overall strategy has a budget of AUS\$20m.

Inspired by the EU 'Capital of Culture' initiative, the Regional Centre for Culture will focus on an area in Victoria, shining a spotlight on local culture and events. The program will also include specially commissioned artworks, activities and community-based projects by local artists as well as leading Victorian creative practitioners.

The inaugural Regional Centre for Culture in 2018 will be held in one of Victoria's key regional cultural hubs, encompassing the City of Greater Bendigo, Mount Alexander Shire, Central Goldfields Shire and Hepburn Shire and is one of the most significant arts and cultural programs to be established in regional Victoria.

The strength of the cultural offering in this region is derived from:

Reflecting the rich cultural heritage and contemporary presence of Victoria's Aboriginal people, this designation recognises the Dja Wurrung and the Taungurung as Traditional Owners and places these communities at its centre as First Peoples.

The region's cities and towns which have developed and nurtured a strong and iconic cultural identity, reflected in the area's theatres, galleries, festivals and cultural life.

The high number of artists developing work locally and collaborating with other artists and communities

The 2018 programme will include:

The premiere of newly commissioned works by a select number of Victorian arts companies and artists based on the local stories of the region

Large scale community and participatory arts projects across the region

The presentation of the biennial Artlands conference in Bendigo and surrounds (delivered by Regional Arts Victoria)

Augmenting the profile of existing arts and cultural events across the region

The presentation of new projects by local artists and arts groups supported through a contestable grants programme. A call has been made for projects in the range of AUS\$1,500 to AUS\$30,000.

It is reported that the first Regional Centre programme will have a budget of AUS\$3.93m. Bendigo has a population of 111,000 and the surrounding areas an additional 44,000.

Year	Region
2018	Bendigo, Mount Alexander Shire, Central Goldfields Shire and Hepburn Shire
2019	
2020	
2021	

## The London Borough of Culture

In his manifesto for Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, promised a programme for a “London Borough of Culture”. London is excluded from the UK City of Culture competition. Of its 32 boroughs 19 have populations over 250,000, several over 300,000 and only 4 below 200,000.

The programme was launched in June 2017 for title holders in 2019 and 2020. Up to six other boroughs will receive support to deliver bespoke cultural projects

“The London Borough of Culture will put culture at the heart of the community, celebrating the unique and distinctive creativity, character and diversity of London’s people and places.

It is a chance for boroughs to be bold and imaginative, working collaboratively across their communities and with artists to deliver against local priorities and ambitions, to explore new ideas and pilot new partnerships”.

Bids will be assessed in three criteria areas: Celebrating Creativity. Making an Impact and Deliverability. The winning borough will receive up to £1.1m and has to commit at least 30% matching funds. Several funding organisations, including the Heritage Lottery Fund and the City Bridge Trust will discuss further funding possibilities with the successful boroughs.

Applications will be submitted online by 1 December 2017 for both title years. Selection is by staff in the London Assembly with advice from external monitoring panel. The successful boroughs will be announced by the Mayor in February 2018.

Year	Borough
2019	
2020	

## 4: Independent Titles

### American Capital of Culture

The American Capital of Culture title was created in 1998 by the “*Bureau Internacional de Capitales Culturales*”, a private organisation based in Barcelona, Spain. The first edition was in 2000.

There is little publicly available information about the organisation or its processes. In correspondence with the president I understand the Bureau has 34 (unnamed) members, mostly Spanish or with Spanish connections. The three people on the Executive Committee are the president and an administrator in Barcelona and the president of the Catalan Association in Sao Paulo Brazil. The organisation was mentioned in the final communique of the XV European Union/Latin America Inter-Parliamentary Conference of 2001. It claims accreditation by the Organisation of American States but this is not clear on the OAS website. There does not appear to be any formal interaction or active engagement as is common with formal accredited observers of international organisations.

The stated objectives of the programme are:

To be an instrument of Inter-American integration in the cultural sphere,  
to contribute to the peoples of the American continent knowing each other better, respecting  
its national and regional diversity, as well as highlighting their shared cultural heritage;  
and to promote the cities nominated as the American Capital of Culture in the American  
hemisphere and in the rest of the world, at the same time as building new bridges of  
cooperation with the other continents which have established cultural capitals

The title is open to all cities in the Americas. The call for candidates is made in the year prior to the title year. There is no information on the selection process, on the competition or selection process. From correspondence with the president it appears 1 or 2 candidates might have presented themselves in a recent years but with no details of who they were, what their bid consists of or who made the final selection.

The lack of transparency or information about the title has led to considerable controversy. In 2004 and 2005 it was announced that, respectively, Austin (USA) and Regina (Canada) were selected for the title. Both cities withdrew with comments about the financial demands of the title which were not apparent when they were announced as title holders. Similar comments were made in Colombia in 2002. By 2017 there have been no title holders from the English and French speaking countries of the Americas.

The president has informed the author that current candidates pay an application fee of €10,000 which enables them to make several bids. The nominated city also pays 25% of their private sponsorship funding to the IBCC which arranges marketing with its TV media partners, Antenna 3 and Discovery Channel.

The first title was in 2000. The city council in Mérida voted for a budget around €3m for their 2017 programme. During their year the city became a member of the Pilot Cities group of UCLG and announced a legacy programme for 2018 through an open call.



<b>Year</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Country</b>
2000	<b>Mérida</b>	México
2001	<b>Iquique</b>	Chile
2002	<b>Maceió</b>	Brasil
2003	<b>Ciudad de Panamá</b> <b>Curitiba</b>	Panamá Brasil
2004	<b>Santiago</b>	Chile
2005	<b>Guadalajara</b>	México
2006	<b>Córdoba</b>	Argentina
2007	<b>Cusco</b>	Perú
2008	<b>Brasilia</b>	Brasil
2009	<b>Asunción</b>	Paraguay
2010	<b>Santo Domingo</b>	República Dominicana
2011	<b>Quito</b>	Ecuador
2012	<b>São Luís</b>	Brasil
2013	<b>Barranquilla</b>	Colombia
2014	<b>Estado de Colima</b>	México
2015	<b>Mayagüez-Puerto Rico</b>	Puerto Rico
2016	<b>Valdivia</b>	Chile
2017	<b>Mérida</b>	México

## The Catalan Capital of Culture

The title was created in 2004 under the auspices of the “International Bureau of Cultural Capitals” (see American Capital of Culture) by the organisation “Cultural Capital of Catalonia” with the same president. The Parliament of Catalonia supported the project in March 2004.

“The Catalan Capital of Culture is aimed at all linguistic and cultural Catalans. It aims to contribute and expand the dissemination, use and social prestige of the Catalan language and culture, increase cultural cohesion of the territories of the Catalan language and culture and, finally, promote and project the municipality designated as Capital Catalan Culture, both inside and outside”

There is virtually no public information about the process and selection. There is little indication of a formal competition. The president of IBOCC stated to the author:

In the first years of its existence the city was selected by a jury of rectors of universities in Catalonia. Subsequently the selection has been based on geographic distribution, the political consensus in the city and the project plans of the candidate.

Who makes the selection is not made public. The timing of the announcement of title holders appears to vary. Sometimes it appears to be two years advance. In 2012 three future title holders were announced at the same time (for 2014, 2015 and 2016). In 2017 the title holders for both 2018 and 2019 are known.

Of the first 16 title holders 14 were in Spain and one each in France and Andorra.

Reus, the title holder in 2017, has a budget of €540,000. It hopes to earn more from sponsorship. It has plans for “Over 80 confirmed projects (and forecasts more than 200) that will be developed throughout this year”.

Manresa is reported to hold the title in 2018. It has an initial budget of €75,000. The council approved the bid in 2014 and the title was awarded the same year. In April 2017 it was reported to be starting work on a programme.

Year	City	Country
2004	<b>Banyoles</b>	Spain
2005	<b>Esparraguera</b>	Spain
2006	<b>Amposta</b>	Spain
2007	<b>Lleida</b>	Spain
2008	<b>Perpignan</b>	France
2009	<b>Figueres</b>	Spain
2010	<b>Badalona</b>	Spain
2011	<b>Escaldes-Engordany</b>	Andorra
2012	<b>Tarragona</b>	Spain
2013	<b>Ripoli</b>	Spain
2014	<b>Barcelona</b>	Spain
2015	<b>Vilafranca del Penedès</b>	Spain
2016	<b>Vic</b>	Spain
2017	<b>Reus</b>	Spain
2018	<i>Manresa</i>	Spain
2019	<i>Cervera</i>	Spain

## *The Brazilian Capital of Culture*

### *Capital Brasileira da Cultura*

The Brazilian Capital of Culture was a nationwide project implemented by the NGO “Capital Brasileira da Cultura”. It is in the same organisational family as the Barcelona-based American Capital of Culture (see American Capital of Culture).

The title had the organisational support of the Ministries of Culture and Tourism through a partnership agreement and by their participation in the judging panel.

The objectives were: -

To value and promote the historical, artistic, cultural and environmental heritage, as well as the diversity and cultural identity of the Brazilian people

Contribute to a greater mutual understanding of cultural identity and foster the self-esteem of Brazilian citizens through the promotion and dissemination of the regional cultures existing in Brazil.

Establish a new way of cooperation between municipalities and Brazilian states, favouring internal cohesion and national integration.

Create a new field for the development of Cultural Marketing.

To promote Brazilian culture, nationally and internationally, showing the socio-cultural diversity of the country

Promote the access of all Brazilian citizens to the knowledge of their culture, making possible the social inclusion and through this, the exercise of citizenship.

Strengthen the growth of cultural tourism.

Encourage the development of domestic tourism in the country, also opening up new possibilities to receive international tourism.

To move the pole of the cultural movements of the great centres, taking the potential and visibility to all the regions of the national territory

To show Brazil with its riches and potentials for the world, through the National Culture

The title ran from 2006 to 2011. Selection was through an open call and a three stage selection process (prequalification, shortlisting and final selection in front of the judging panel). A proposed programme had to be presented. It appears that a registration fee of 3,000 reais (approx. €1500) for cities with more than 400,000 residents was required for the 2011 title. The panel included representatives of the two ministries, the Sao Paulo region and, after a few editions, representatives of previous title holders. Between 3 and 6 candidates made the final selection stage in each year. The announcement of the successful candidate was made around 13 months before the title year.

Year	City
2006	<b>Olinda</b>
2007	<b>São João del-Rei</b>
2008	<b>Caxias do Sul</b>
2009	<b>São Luís do Maranhão</b>
2010	<b>Ribeirão Preto</b>
2011	<b>Lapa</b>

## **The Finno-Ugric Capital of Culture**

The title is an initiative of MAFUN, the umbrella organisation of the network of youth organisations of Finno-Ugric Peoples in Russia, Finland and Estonia.

The title covers a linguistic and cultural area which spreads, not contiguously, through Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Russia, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova, Austria and Serbia.

The title springs from the experiences of the Tallinn as European Capital of Culture in 2011.

Any city, town or village from the traditional territories of Finno-Ugric peoples can apply for the title, irrespective of their size, population and the percentage of ethnic Finno-Ugrians in the overall population. The only exceptions are national capitals (i.e. Moscow, Helsinki, Tallinn, and Budapest) and capitals of federal districts of the Russian Federation (e.g., Petrozavodsk, Khanty-Mansiysk).

The programme was set to run from 2014-2017. The following year, 2018, is planned to be a fallow year to review and if finances can be found the programme to restart from 2019.

The objectives are

To contribute towards preservation and progress of Finno-Ugric peoples, languages and cultures;

To encourage efforts to strengthen Finno-Ugric identity and image – both in traditional Finno-Ugric regions and in the wider world,

To recognise the need for creating new socio-economic development opportunities for Finno-Ugric peoples;

with the objectives to strengthen common identity of kindred Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic peoples, to raise awareness of Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic peoples and languages and the Uralic language family, and to stimulate cultural, economic and civic development on a local level.

The selection is based on an open call. The Programme Board (of volunteers from the network) tries to ensure a geographic rotation between four regions; one capital will not be in the same region as the previous holder. There is a five or six person independent selection panel of cultural experts from the region. The main selection criteria are:

Substantive quality of the proposed program of the Capital of Culture year

Engagement of civil society in developing and implementing the programme

Availability of resources and administrative support to implement the programme

Prior experience of Applicant in implementing cultural projects

There is a two stage selection process. The judging panel review written applications and select three candidates for a final selection meeting. The process is in the year preceding the title year.

This title must surely go to the smallest communities of any capitals programme, villages rather than cities. However although the title holder is small it is encouraged to work with a wider region or larger city. For example in 2016 the village of Iszkaszentgyörgy with a population less than 2,000 worked in tandem with Veszprém. The other three title holders have been even smaller.

Year	Title holder	Country
2014	Bygy	Russia
2015	Obinitsa	Estonia
2016	Iszkaszentgyörgy	Hungary
2017	Vuokkiniemi	Finland

### *Cultural Capital of Korea*

This title appears to have been a one-off. It was initiated by the Korean Capital of Culture Foundation, a NGO formed by a group of artists. In their introductory brochure there are expressions of support from senior government figures but no apparent formal connection with government. One city was announced as holding the title, for 2016, but little information is available about their programme. There has been no announcement of a 2017 title holder.

Year	City
2016	Siheung

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This is a selective listing of online references. All urls were checked in October 2017. I have only recorded some of the more interesting references, including those with the formal regulations of a Capitals programme. Most recent Capitals of Culture have their own websites, Facebook pages or are active on Twitter. I have not referenced any of the copious literature on culture and cities or of evaluations, reports etc on the European title.

## European Capital of Culture

The European Commission's site has the current "Decision", guidance for candidates, recent selection and monitoring panel reports, evaluations and the reports of Palmer/Rae and Garcia/Cox. Unfortunately the Myerscough report on the first 10 years of the European title has not yet been made available on the web. Given its (non-commercial) publisher no longer exists and I can't see Mr Myerscough objecting it would be very useful for someone to scan and upload the report on a public site. There is a considerable literature about the European title.

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Mérida 2017 organisation

[http://www.merida.gob.mx/copladem/contenido/areas/capital\\_american/capital\\_american\\_cultura.php](http://www.merida.gob.mx/copladem/contenido/areas/capital_american/capital_american_cultura.php)

Mérida 2017 and Pilot Cities UCLG [http://prensa.merida.gob.mx/6751/Merida-referente-mundial-en-derechos-culturales-y-sustentabilidad?utm\\_content=buffer2c485&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=twitter.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://prensa.merida.gob.mx/6751/Merida-referente-mundial-en-derechos-culturales-y-sustentabilidad?utm_content=buffer2c485&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

Austin 2004 pulls out <https://www.austinchronicle.com/arts/2004-01-16/193303/>

Regina 2004 declines <http://publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=55853>

Mayagüez 2015 funding <http://periodicovision.com/media-dinero-publico-para-otorgacion-de-distintivo-regional/#comment-1583>

## **Catalan**

Catalan Capital of Culture website <http://www.ccc.cat/>

Vic 2016 <http://viccc2016.cat/presentacio/en>

Reus 2017 <http://capitalcultura.reus.cat/>

Manresa 2018 <http://www.regio7.cat/cultures/2017/04/01/manresa-declaracio-dintencions-capital-cultura/407508.html>

## **Brazil**

Capital of Culture FAQs <http://www.capitalbrasileiradacultura.org/cbc/?Url=FAQ#06>

Capital of Culture (archive site) <https://archive.is/www.capitalbrasileiradacultura.org>

Caxias do Sul discussion <http://www.frispit.com.br/site/capital-da-cultura-criticas-e-indagacoes/>

## **Finno-Ugric**

Call for 2016 competition and background <http://jabadaba.eki.ee/index.php?id=33138#.We-UxGcUIKp>

Call for 2017 and rules etc <https://mariuveren.wordpress.com/2016/04/06/finno-ugric-capital-of-culture-2017-competition-has-been-announced/>

Vuokkiniemi 2017 <https://vuokkiniemiseura.wordpress.com/>

**Korea**

Website <http://kcoc.or.kr/Capital-of-Culture>

**END**