RELIGION, MULTICULTURALISM AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE

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Abstract: The European Capital of Culture programme encourages cities to rediscover their identity and to reposition themselves in a multicultural, European dimension perspective. Despite this, only some ECoC appealed to religion in their cultural programmes, and this occured in two cases - when aiming to demonstrate their European dimension or when dealing with social inclusion issues. Moreover, there was limited interest paid by cities in developing projects explicitly involving religious communities or interfaith projects. A radiography of such projects is offered by this research, covering ECoCs from 1995 until 2018.

Keywords: European dimension, social inclusion, religion, European Capital of Culture

Introduction

The UNESCO definition of culture states that "Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs"[1]. When referring to these cultural 'features', the idea of cultural values emerges. Cultural values relate to "the attitudes, traditions and other habits distinguishing one person from another and one social group from another"[2]. Also, groups can be identified with respect to "region, religion, ethnicity, political approaches or generation

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1 UNESCO (2001), „Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity", Preamble.

2 ESSnet-CULTURE (2012), European Statistical System Network on Culture, Final Report, Luxembourg, ESSnet-Culture project co-financed by the European Commission, 42.

(e.g. 'youth culture'). A group may differ in terms of signs, symbols, texts, languages, objects and references to different types of traditions. The function or intrinsic value of these expressions is to establish the identity and affiliation of groups"[3]. According to UNESCO, culture is nowadays at the heart of the debates about identity, social cohesion and knowledge society. In the European Union, the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) programme is in line with these preoccupations.

The ECoC programme was created in 1985 and since then, several cities have been awarded the title. The initial idea of the programme was to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and to bring Europeans together, connecting them not only by the opportunities offered by the free market, but also by promoting shared values. The goals of the programme changed over time[4], as well as the perspective on the role of culture, so that the title became a catalyst for urban regeneration, community development and social inclusion. Cultural programmes were developed by cities in relation to different definitions of culture and can be distributed along a scale that ranges from defining culture as high art to taking a wider anthropological view of culture. The majority of cities opted for "a wide definition of culture (that included for example sport, food, religion and environment) and tried to create a balance within their programme between traditional art forms and popular culture"[5]. Wider definitions of culture mean that areas like fashion, sport, religion, industry, gastronomy, gardening and science are reflected in some ECoC programmes, though there is no evidence of any of these areas being as significant as the major artform groups (music, theatre, visual arts etc).

This paper is concerned with the inclusion of the area 'religion' in the cultural programmes of ECoC cities, aiming to identify the instances where 'religion' was used. The research methodology consists in analysing the content of several types of documents: landmark comparative studies (Palmer/Rae Association Report[6] presenting past ECoCs, from 1985

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3   Idem.

4   Corina Turşie, (2015), "Re-inventing the centre-periphery relation by the European capitals of culture: case-studies; Marseille-Provence 2013 and Pecs 2010", *Eurolimes*, 19, 71-84.

5   Beatrix Garcia and Tamsin Cox (2013), "European Capitals of Culture: Success Strategies and Long-term Effects", Study request by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education, Brussels, 77.

6   Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a), "European Cities and Capitals of Culture – City Reports", Study prepared for the European Commission, Part. I; Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b), "European Cities and Capitals of Culture – City Reports", Study prepared for the European Commission, Part. II.

to 2004); commissioned documents (European Communities'[7] study regarding the success stories of ECoCs from 1985 to 2010; Garcia and Cox study[8] discussing success strategies and long-term effects of ECoCs from 1985 to 2012), as well as ex-post evaluative studies ordered by the European Commission for ECoCs 2007-2017 (the last available ones on the European Commission's website[9]). The study is organised as follows: first, it discusses two content areas were religion was included in the cultural programmes of ECoC cities (related to the European dimension, as an important criteria of selection of ECoCs and related to the social inclusion goal of the programme); secondly, it offers a radiography of specific projects from the above areas, having 'religion' at their core. The paper's conclusions are in line with a limit of the research: the study didn't analyse the bid books of ECoCs (documents which could have been offering a more complete image of cities' own identity narratives, in terms of European dimension, religion and intercultural dialogue) nor cities' own evaluation documents (which are scarce, evaluations being mandatory only for ECoCs after 2019), so the information used for this research is limited.

Religion and cultural diversity - an expression of the European dimension of cities

Since 2006[10], there was a clear requirement for a 'European Dimension' from bidding cities, still, the selection authorities regularly perceived this as being a weakness in bids (including in successful bids). Despite this, almost all applications, even older, stressed the innately European and multi-cultural character of their city. All cities tended to highlight "their openness, and their desire to engage in – and stimulate – intercultural dialogue. (…) their location as a historical meeting place of different ethnicities and nationalities"[11] clearly responding to the Capital of Culture

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7   European Communities (2009), *European Capitals of Culture: the road to success From 1985 to 2010*, Luxembourg, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

8   Garcia and Cox (2013).

9 ECORYS (2011-2013), ECOTEC (2009-2010), European Commission (2014-2018).

10   "Decision No. 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 Establishing a Community Action for the European Capital of Culture Event for the Years 2007 to 2019," *Official Journal of the European Union* L 304.

11   Garcia and Cox (2013), 61.

prior directive that successful projects should "promote dialogue between European cultures and those from other parts of the world"[12].

The European dimension of cities was approached by developing European themes and issues. Among past ECoC there have been highlighted 'multiculturalism and multilingualism' in Luxembourg ECoC 1995 and San Sebastián ECoC 2016, 'communication' in Bologna ECoC 2000, 'interfaith and religions' in Graz ECoC 2003 and 'migration and exile' in Copenhagen ECoC 1996[13]. The bid of Wrocław ECoC 2016 presented the city under the slogan 'spaces for beauty', reflecting a broad understanding of culture and its role along with beauty in the life of the city. Aspects emphasised included the multicultural character of the city, notably its religious diversity as epitomised by the 'Mutual Respect District', inhabited by four religious groups: Catholics, Jews, Protestants and members of Orthodox churches. Wroclaw's emphasis on intercultural and interreligious dialogue, as well as social inclusion were "one of the main arguments for being awarded the ECoC title for the year 2016"[14].

The European dimension was also expressed by identifying and celebrating aspects of European history, identity and heritage already present in the city. In the case of Sibiu 2007 this consisted in "promoting the city's cultural heritage, e.g. Germanic heritage, churches of different European denominations"[15].

Networking between European artists and artistic organisations was also a reflection of the European dimension of the cultural programmes proposed by cities. Organising artists' residencies and co-productions with European artists for the creation of a city orchestra, bringing together 55 young musicians from different European countries and Portugal was the most visible project of Guimarães ECoC 2012. *Fundação Orquestra Estúdio* brought together young European musicians

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12   "Decision No. 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 Establishing a Community Action for the European Capital of Culture Event for the Years 2005 to 2019," *Official Journal* L 166.

13   Garcia and Cox (2013), 77.

14   European Commission (2017), "Ex-post Evaluation of the 2016 European Capitals of Culture, Final Report. A study prepared for the European Commission by Ecorys and the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES)", 67.

15   ECOTEC (2009), „Ex-post Evaluation of 2007 & 2008 European Capitals of Culture Final Report", Birmingham, 118.

to live and work in the city for one year. The city orchestra performed in number of non-traditional spaces including private homes, churches, schools and others. It was a significant part of the programme and "citizens took ownership of it"[16].

Beyond the specific question of satisfying the selection criteria for a European Dimension, there is evidence of "a tension between the role of the 'local' culture and the desire to position a city as 'international' (…) in general, the discourses used by ECOC often try to streamline issues of 'local' culture with the image of the city as international or 'global' "[17]. Analysis of Thessaloniki ECoC 1997 offers an example of these multiple ambitions for a city: "whilst seeking to place Thessaloniki on the national and international cultural map, the organisers also wanted to increase the local communities' engagement with the arts, emphasise the Orthodox faith, and make connections with the influence of Hellenism outside Greece, while making the event available to all through education"[18].

Apart from the European dimension, religion was also brought up by ECoCs when discussing social inclusion issues.

Religion, community development and social inclusion

The stated aims of most ECOC were only partly concerned with social issues. They were dominated instead by ideas of raising the international profile of cities and improving the city's image. Moreover, social impacts proved to be difficult to measure, even though their long-term character, seen as sustainable development of cities, was mentioned by researchers[19]. Sustainability was not seen just as continuity of an individual project, but as community building. Community projects were perceived, by those involved in setting them up at least, to have provided real value to the city's inhabitants: "it is community projects that offer the best opportunities for ECOC programmes to produce lasting local change"[20].

However, several ECOC prioritised the importance of social objectives. Rotterdam ECoC 2001 created a programme which placed

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16   ECORYS (2013), „Ex-post Evaluation of 2012 European Capitals of Culture, Final Report for the European Commission DG Education and Culture", 27.

17   Garcia and Cox (2013), 61.

18   Garcia and Cox (2013), 61.

19   Idem.

20   Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a), 138.

cultural inclusion in its fundamental concepts, arguing in its bid that "the honorary title Cultural Capital of Europe can be used to bring all this culture to the attention of a broader public more successfully, but that is not really enough to justify the title"[21].

According to Palmer/Rae Report, cultural inclusion aims "to extend opportunities for creation to people whose cultural values are marginalised by, or excluded from, the dominant cultural landscape (whether publicly-funded or commercial). Though this work often has a social perspective and will have social outcomes, it is primarily cultural or artistic. Its aim is to enlarge the framework of cultural expression, to enable new voices to be heard and, ultimately, to make the cultural space more open and democratic"[22].

Considering cultural inclusion an emerging form of practice at the beginning of the years 2000, Palmer/Rae Report observed that there was a burgeoning rhetoric relating to inclusion and social change, which developed since then. The bids of most ECOC demonstrate a wish to be seen as inclusive and concerned for the interests (cultural or others) of the disengaged population related to the ECoC event. Graz ECoC 2003 proposed a programme which "combined top quality with maximum acceptability and presented culture as a constructive instrument for life management to a large audience"[23]. As a result, the ECOC programme instantly became more inclusive, since it encompassed many things which involved people who were not (or were not thought to be) interested in art. Expanding the local audience for culture, social cohesion and community development became important ECoC goals.

Most host cities have stressed the importance of engaging local people in the planning and delivery of the year, as well as building audiences for activities from within the local population[24]. The ECoC was seen as an opportunity to change public participation in the cultural activity in a significant way so that it offer local support for the cultural year. The groups that have been most regularly noted[25] as having been targeted

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21   Idem, 136.

22   Idem, 133.

23   Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a), 136.

24   Garcia and Cox (2013), 91; Giannalia Cogliandro (2001), *European Cities of Culture for the Year 2000. A wealth*
of *urban cultures for celebrating the turn of the century*, European Commission.

25   Garcia and Cox (2013), 92.

by an ECoC through its programme were children and young people, socially disadvantaged people, disabled people, minority groups, different neighbourhoods, elderly people, ethnic minorities, women, unemployed people, gay/lesbian people. At a lesser extent the targeted audiences were immigrant populations, religious groups, hospital patients, prisoners, and families, reflecting the range of engagement and outreach work that takes place as part of regular artistic and cultural programming in organisations across Europe.

Access development was a preoccupation of all cities in the years 2000. Only some of them, for example in Bergen ECoC 2000 and Rotterdam ECoC 2001, focused on religion "as a way to engage specific communities, or to develop connections between them"[26]. Other few cities followed this practice later. The cultural programme of Essen for the Ruhr ECoC 2010 included large numbers of events, activities and projects to widen participation and improve access to culture, particularly for certain target groups. For example, the 'City of Cultures' theme included numerous events dealing with youth, multiculturalism, ethnic arts and music and interreligious programmes[27].

Involving citizens in new cultural experiences was also an important element of the cultural programme of Guimarães 2012. *Fundação Orquestra Estúdio* performed in number of non-traditional spaces, such as churches[28]. In Marseille-Provence ECoC 2013 many cultural operators also organised events in new or unusual locations. For example, the 'Theatre of Arles' held one event in a church for the first time[29].

One of the goals of Kosice ECoC 2013 was to achieve "enhanced community development by involving citizens from suburbs (…) to support diversity of cultures of various social and religious groups and minority cultures" [30]. A significant cultural event of Kosice included the festival of religious art. Marseille-Provence ECoC 2013 implemented "one of most extensive and wide-ranging cultural programmes of any ECoC to date" [31], creating significant opportunities for citizens, whether

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26   Palmer/Rae Associates (2004a), 133.

27   ECORYS (2011), „Ex-Post Evaluation of 2010 European Capitals of Culture, Final report for the European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture", iv.

28   ECORYS (2013), 27.

29   European Commission (2014), "Ex-post Evaluation of the 2013 European Capitals of Culture, Final Report for the European Commission DG Education and Culture", 89.

30   Idem, 38.

31   Idem, 89.

locals or tourists, to attend or participate in cultural events. The cultural programme attracted a large audience of more than 11 million individual visits and in addition to this, there was an increase in the number of visits to existing sites. For example, the number of visitors to the church of Notre Dame de la Garde in Marseille increased from 1.5 million in 2012 to 2 million visitors during 2013[32].

In the case of Wroclaw ECoC 2016, the European Commission's ex-post evaluation appreciated that 'some' effort was made to engage the organisations associated with the various ethnic groups living in Wrocław and to open the spaces of Wrocław for the presentation of their cultures. Examples of projects that pursued this ambition were as follows: 'Yiddish and Ladino', a music project to promote Jewish musical heritage to a wider audience and emphasize the importance of two languages of European Jewish minorities. Moreover, a microgrants programme provided 115 grants of up to 5,000 zloty (about €1,175) for individuals, informal groups, NGOs, home-owner associations, social co-operatives, church institutions, religious organisations and other similar groups to implement their own cultural activities[33].

The main beneficiaries of the theme 'Myth and religion' developed by Pafos ECoC 2017 were the local citizens and not the tourists. The programme tried to reconnect the citizens of Pafos with its "rich mythological and religious history as the basis of European civilization, by organising events in locations such as Aphrodite's Rock, the Sacred Gardens and the Geroskipou area"[34]. Through the ECoC projects developed under this theme local people were encouraged to visit these areas of the city and rediscover a connection with their city's past.

In the following part of the paper a chronological list of projects involving religious communities will be presented.

A radiography of ECoC projects involving religious communities

Following the content analysis of the documents presented at the beginning of the paper, by selecting all references to the key-words

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32   Idem.

33   European Commission (2017), 8.

34   European Commission (2018), "Ex-post Evaluation of the 2017 European Capitals of Culture, Final Report. A study prepared for the European Commission by Ecorys and the Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services (CSES)", 67.

'religion', 'faith' and 'church', we produced a very diverse radiography of projects developed by ECoC cities having religion at their core.

Chronologically speaking, the first ECoC mentioned in the analysed documents for developing a project with religious connotations was Copenhagen ECoC 1996. 'Project Islam' consisted in three major inter-related exhibitions on the religion and culture of Islam, and its relationships with Danish culture[35].

Thessaloniki ECoC 1997 included in its cultural programme specific themes[36], some of them having religious connotations 'Between East and West', 'The Balkan Dimension', 'The Circle of Inferiority', 'Land of Jewish martyrs', 'The Holy Mountain'. The year helped to develop relations with Mount Athos, including the creation of Mt Athos Civil Company[37], consisting in collaborations between the city and the monasteries on cultural projects. The social perspective of the bid allowed for several other groups including the immigrant, Jewish and Armenian communities to gain greater attention in the city.

Bergen ECoC 2000 showed a broader interest on religious diversity in its cultural programme, including references to other non-Christian religions, as social aspects of the programme. Projects were specifically developed in the field of education (about culture and cultural values) and cultural diversity. Several of the research based programmes focused on cultural values in a broad sense – for example a knowledge festival on religious studies reached out to the Muslim community[38].

The bid of Krakow ECoC 2000 was organised along three specific themes, one of them being of special interest for this paper: 'Thought' – especially the 600th anniversary of the renewal of the Jagiellonian University; 'Spirituality' – including 'Faces of God', a series of ten exhibitions and two festivals on art, music and rites from different religions in the city; and 'Creativity' – presenting Polish and European culture[39]. The exhibition 'The faces of God' was showed in a church, one of the main temples in the city, and the main topic was the different appearances under which the figure of the Creator has been represented through the ages, countries and different religions[40].

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35   Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b), 31.

36   Idem, 49.

37   Idem, 61.

38   Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b), 123.

39   Idem, 169.

40   European Communities (2009), 36.

Within the Krakow ECoC 2000 programme, a series of events were organised presenting the common heritage and the beginnings of European culture, mainly from the musical perspective. A representative project consisted in the reconstruction, by an ensemble of international singers, of mediaeval liturgy from the manuscript *Codex Calixtinus*, which was presented in concert in the nine European Cities of Culture 2000. A second project of this type was the series called 'Seven Traditions', presenting the oldest traditions of religious singing from all over Europe[41]. Also, the the tenth 'Jewish Culture festival' took place – an annual Kracow festival featuring performers in various fields of Jewish art and culture[42]. Moreover, in 1999, one year prior to Cultural Year, Krakow offered a mixed programme, with themes of Central Europe and ethnic diversity, including theatre, exhibitions and concerts on Jewish spirituality, Ukrainian culture, and churches in the Middle East[43].

For Santiago de Compostela ECoC 2000 a significant characteristic of the city's identity is its status of a pilgrimage city, a religious city with a strong sense of tradition. Still, no relevant religious project was mentioned in Palmer/Rae Report.

A project specifically meant to promote dialogue between cultures was developed by Graz ECoC 2003: a week-long interreligious conference that brought together all the religious communities represented in Graz[44]. The goal of the project was "to develop models of inter-religious cooperation in European cities to find common guidelines on educational, cultural, social and media issues"[45].

Rotterdam ECoC 2001 included in its bid several inter-cultural initiatives. 'Aisha en de vrouwen van Medina' was a project about the history of the Islam, which did not actually take place during the cultural year, although it contributed to "a public debate about the interpretation of the Islamic world in Europe"[46]. Another project, this time implemented, was 'Preaching in Another Man's Parish', which involved ministers of different faiths preaching in each other's places of worship[47]. The project involved

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41   Idem, 33.

42   Palmer/Rae Associations (2004b), 172.

43   Palmer/Rae Associations (2004b), 178.

44   European Communities (2009), 43.

45   Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b), 327.

46   Idem, 123

47   European Communities (2009), 7.

52 mosques, temples and churches, where, each week, a theologian, artist or politician of international reputation preached to a faith community to which they did not themselves belong[48].

Graz ECoC 2003 received advice from Rotterdam, among others[49], and developed as the philosophy behind the programme the idea that "culture is more than art"[50]. This idea reflected a wider understanding of culture, in order to include aspects of daily life and the use of public space. The cultural sectors extensively described within the programme were: theatre, dance, opera, visual arts, film, literature, architecture, design, fashion, music (classical/traditional, contemporary/modern, pop/rock, jazz, folk, world), heritage/history, archives/libraries, new media/IT, television, street festivals/parades. Other sectors were also mentioned: food, sport, science, religion, social projects, children's projects, youth projects.

The city manifested interest for including people who were not ordinary art consumers and for involving the inhabitants of Graz in the creation of projects. Among the categories of specially targeted projects were: children, young people, schools, disabled people, minorities, socially disadvantaged people, women, unemployed people, European and international projects and special interfaith projects.

Religion, along with language, immigration, asylum, borders, identity etc. was considered an issue of European importance to be addressed by different projects. Among them, the projects 'Interfaith Europe' and 'Psalm 2003' attempted to develop a culture of tolerance. Other large-scale events hosted by city were the second European Ecumenical Assembly with about 10.000 participants (in 1997) and the Conference of European imams and leaders of Islamic centres (in 2003)[51].

Liverpool ECoC 2008 received funding from the coinciding European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) for its 'Intercultural Capital' series of projects, which involved Liverpool's twin and partner cities in promoting dialogue between different cultures, faiths and age groups.

In the case of Linz ECoC 2009, organ recitals in churches were appreciated as innovative cultural practices. The ex-post evaluation of

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48   Palmer/Rae Associations (2004b), 169.

49   Idem, 322.

50   Idem.

51   Palmer/Rae Associates (2004b), 319.

the city showed the cultural programme of Linz featured a number of 'conventional' cultural events of international significance, such as the 'Ars Electronic Festival', the 'Brucknerfest' (after the name of the composer Anton Bruckner, who worked as a church organist in the city), visits of the Vienna Philharmonic and the 'Best of Austria' exhibition of existing works from museums across Austria. But it also placed a strong emphasis on innovation, the creation of new works and the development of new forms of cultural expression, such as short lunchtime readings of literature and daily organ recitals in Linz's churches. The ex-post evaluation report showed that 13,000 people attended the daily organ concerts in churches across the city[52].

Linz also registered an innovative practice in terms of describing its European dimension. The city chose to explore its role in a darker chapter in European history: the Nazi era and the city's Jewish heritage. This was "the first time that any ECoC had explored such a difficult isse in such an explicit way"[53]. The positive ex-post evaluation received by Linz offered useful lessons for future ECOCs, especially for the ones coming from ex-communist countries, who were facing difficulties in exploring their unwanted past[54].

In the case of Essen for the Ruhr ECoC 2010, the title was used as an opportunity for urban regeneration and economic development and has been supported through the creation and refurbishment of cultural facilities, such as a new mosque and Islamic centre in Marxloh and the creation of house of Jewish culture at Old Synagogue, in Essen[55]. A high-profile event of the area was represented by '*Ruhrtriennale*', a series of three-year long festivals with the first taking place between 2002 and 2004. The idea of linking an international arts festival with the industrial heritage of the Ruhr. The '*Ruhrtriennale*' for the 2009 to 2011 and explored the tensions between art and creativity through the prism of Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist culture.

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52   ECOTEC (2010), "Ex-Post Evaluation of 2009 European Capitals of Culture, Final Report to DG Education and Culture of the European Commission in the context of the Framework Contract for Evaluation Related Services and Support for Impact Assessment" (EAC/03/06), 37.

53   ECOTEC (2010), 80.

54   Corina Turşie (٢٠١٥), "The unwanted past and urban regeneration of communist heritage cities: Riga 2014, Pilsen 2015 and Wroclaw 2016", *Journal of Education Culture and Society*, 2, 122-138.

55   ECORYS (2011), 39.

A unique case of ECoC was represented by Istanbul ECoC 2010, coming from a non-EU Member State (non-EU ECoC were allowed since 1999), the first ECoC with a non-Christian majority population. The ex-post evaluation of Istanbul referred to the city as displaying a cosmopolitan culture reflecting the prominence of Islam and the presence of many ethnic and religious minorities. Aspects of the desired European dimension of the project consisted in the promotion of values of tolerance and cultural diversity. These included projects presenting the cultures of Istanbul's Jewish, Greek and Armenian communities amongst others. For example, the 'Hand In Hand With Love' art festival brought together children and young people from the majority Muslim community and the minority Armenian, Greek and Jewish communities to take part in shared cultural activities such as poetry-reading, painting and choral performances. Another significant project was 'Istanbul 2010 course', which introduced a new elective course at eight universities in Istanbul, with the aim of making young people more conscious of the diversity of cultures within their city[56].

Similar to Istanbul, Tallinn ECoC 2011 was criticized for not expressing the European dimension of the city adequately in the cultural programme as a whole, even though specific themes of European significance, were reflected in a limited number of individual projects, such as the 'Ariel Festival of Jewish Culture'[57].

The multi-cultural nature of the Kosice ECoC 2013 was highlighted in the bid and was reflected in a multi-ethnic programme of events and activities embracing Jewish, Hungarian and Roma heritage, as well as several key personalities. This included the celebration of Andy Warhol (whose parents emigrated to the USA from north-eastern Slovakia), the 'Mazal Tov Jewish Festival' (a cross-border cooperation project with Krakow in Poland, designed to replicate the very successful Jewish Festival held in Poland), a 'Diversity Festival' and Roma community projects[58].

Several projects were developed by San Sebastián ECoC 2016, focused on the aspects related to migration, such as human rights, roles of women and coexistence with several religious identities. Activities included the promotion of the benefits of new communities living in

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56 ECORYS (2011), 81.

57 ECORYS (2012), „Ex-post Evaluation of 2011 European Capitals of Culture, Final Report for the European Commission DG Education and Culture", 27.

58 European Commission (2014), 43.

Europe and how places with high numbers of migrants can learn from cities such as San Sebastián where communities with sometimes very different beliefs live together in the same neighbourhood. An example of this theme was represented by the 'Europa Transit' project[59].

Pafos ECoC 2017 presented an artistic programme organised around three main themes, the first one being of interest for our study, and it was called "Myth and religion". It linked back to city's cultural heritage and historical background as the place of birth of European civilisation. Within this theme, different sub-themes arise such as 'Between Heaven and Earth', linking Pafos to its mythological past and 'A Goddess- A Woman', putting Aphrodite in the centre and humanising the myth in her[60].

Aarhus ECoC 2017 organised at its opening event a light procession through the city, to the newly developed harbor area, gathering 76.000 people. 'The Garden' was a new triennial exhibition introduced for the first time in 2017. It replaced a previous biennial event, 'Sculpture by the Sea', which had taken place in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015. 'Sculpture by the Sea' had featured the transformation of three kilometres of coastline into a sculpture park with works from artists across the world.

Conclusions

Several ECoCs approached a wider definition of culture, including, religion, among others, in their cultural programmes. ECoCs appealed to religion when they spoke about their identity, when trying to express their European dimension and when they proposed measures for community development, audience development and social inclusion. Even Istanbul, the only ECoC with a Muslim majority population, appealed to the values of tolerance and cultural diversity in order to sustain its desired European dimension. A diverse range of projects developed by ECoC was radiographed in this paper, having in common the appeal to religion as a part of the multicultural heritage of the city and as an opportunity for intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Such projects included the use of religious spaces for concerts and cultural events, the organisation of interfaith conferences and events, the organization of religious festivals

59   European Commission (2017), 33
60   European Commission (2018), 58.

etc. Jewish community festivals are an extending practice. For example, Timisoara ECoC 2021 will organise in 2019 its first edition of a Jewish festival. A few cities developed projects involving the Muslim community, trend to be developed along with the increased attention paid to the migration theme in Western European countries.

As we have seen in the previous parts of this paper, the analyzed documents spoke about one or two projects with religious connotations per city, and they were developed only by some ECoCs. All the non-mentioned ECoCs did not develop any flagship projects in the area, at least not significant enough to be mentioned in the evaluative studies. In this regard, extensive monitoring and evaluative studies produced by cities would have been helpful, if they existed, but they are not a part of this research. We can conclude that, despite the official rhetoric of the majority of ECoC cities regarding their multicultural character and despite the generous goals of the ECoC programme in terms of intercultural dialogue, in practice, the interest in projects involving religion and interfaith dialogue is limited. More in-depth research regarding the causes of this phenomenon, as well as ECoC comparative studies could represent feature research.

Acknowledgement

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