

HOMEE

Heritage Opportunities/threats
within Mega-Events in Europe:
Changing environments, new challenges and possible solutions for
preservation in mega-events embedded in heritage-rich European cities

National Case Studies: Report Briefs



JPICH
Heritage in
Changing
Environments

Project Partners:
Politecnico di Milano
University of Hull
Neapolis University Pafos
International Cultural Centre

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HOMEE – Heritage Opportunities/threats within Mega-Events in Europe: Changing environments, new challenges and possible solutions for preservation in mega-events embedded in heritage-rich European cities

In the past, many cities used mega-events to support capital and revenue investments and boost tourism while harnessing their competitiveness on a global scale. Until recently, the emphasis has been placed by and large on the creation of new infrastructural components, new stadiums and other public facilities to host events. In many instances today, on the contrary, mega-event organizers have opted for the re-use of existing facilities, the conversion of inner-city areas and the regeneration of neighborhoods. For heritage-rich European cities, this shift in paradigm represents both an opportunity and a threat. The HOMEE project brings together leading research centers working in the fields of cultural heritage preservation and mega-event planning, in close contact with key institutions and policy officers who have already had or will have direct responsibility for planning and implementing mega-events in Europe, from the local to the international level. The project will investigate past events and develop new policy tools for dealing with the emerging opportunities and threats in planning and implementing mega-events in heritage-rich cities.

National Case Studies: Report Briefs

This report of the five national case studies (Milan 2015, Genoa 2004, Hull 2017, Pafos 2017, Wrocław 2016) provides new information on recent events and highlights important issues pertaining to cultural heritage. The information collected also provides valuable insights for academics and the APs connected to these events to show the far-reaching impacts and potential of their events in historic contexts and for their legacies. The aim of the National Case Studies Report Briefs is to present a broad overview of each case as well as highlight the key themes and findings.

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Front cover: Compagnie Retourmont, The Dance of the Caryatides, Pafos 2017 (source: fotoLarko).

Back cover: Poppies: Weeping Window, Hull 2017 (source: E. Tommarchi).

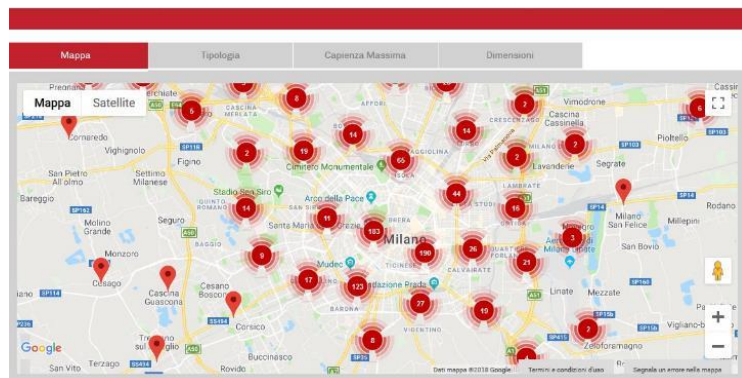


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MILAN 2015 EXPO

The spread of cultural events in historic places and beyond



ExpoinCittà program: locations of events collateral to Expo 2015 in Milan's metropolitan area (source: <http://it.expoincitta.com>).

The exhibitions promoted by the Bureau International d'Expositions (BIE) are usually located in one, large and specifically dedicated exhibition area. In the case of the Milan Expo 2015, the official venue was located on the outskirts of the city. Yet Milan already had a strong tradition of hosting events, tradition that the city leveraged in this occasion. Specifically, the Fuorisalone (design week) event inspired the development and coordination of thousands of minor collateral events gathered through an online platform under the ExpoinCittà umbrella label. These events were located in and impacted dozens of historic and modern buildings and spaces throughout the city and metropolitan area. Other heritage sites underwent more substantial transformations, as in the case of the renewal of the old Darsena and the pedestrianization of the central Piazza Castello.

Key heritage issues and takeaways:

- Smaller events supporting the mega-event celebration
- Targeting long-term leisure and culture tourism goals
- Self-reinforcing political constituency and the festivalization of urban space

Facts and figures

City population
1,365,000 (2018)

Metropolitan population
3,235,000 (2018)

GDP
National
€22,938.24 (2004)
€26,168.63 (2017)

City
€33,855.67 (2014)

Tourists
3.4 million arrivals (2008)
5.3 million arrivals (2015)
5.7 million arrivals (2017)
Growth Rate (2010-2015):
+38%

Event attendance
Expo 2015: 21.5 million
ExpoinCittà 2015: 11 million

Total no. of events
46,310 collateral events
(ExpoinCittà)

Total event cost
€14,780,000,000

Heritage project budget
€20,000,000 (ExpoinCittà +
Piazza Castello + Darsena)

Smaller events supporting the mega-event celebration

The Milan Expo 2015 is now considered a great success for the city and its economy, despite the great costs shouldered by the public, the limits in completing relevant infrastructures and the great difficulties in reusing the Expo site. A broader interpretation of this event shows how contemporary mega-events can activate multiple resources (i.e. funds, projects, expertise) and impact a larger urban system than the official exhibition site alone. Accordingly, the ExpoinCittà initiative was promoted in 2015 by the Milan Municipality and the Chamber of Commerce of Milan, in cooperation with the Expo 2015 agency and several other private and public actors. Through an ad hoc governance and an innovative web-based platform, this initiative mixed top down and bottom up approach was able to systematically detect, map, certify and put to use available facilities and places for hosting smaller events concurrent to the Expo. This innovative open data collection allowed the city to foster and spread thousands of cultural, entertainment and sport events to a scale, size and pace that was not neither envisioned in nor requested by the Expo format promoted by the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE). Local investments in locations and a wide array of events significantly and positively contributed to the impact and legacy of the official Expo 2015 event. Based on existing tradition and expertise of hosting large and small events (e.g. the Fuorisalone during the Design Week, catwalks for the Fashion Week) and by building a critical mass with more recent cultural events, the ExpoinCittà increased the availability of spaces and fuelled economic interests for more and more events, both in heritage (villas, cloisters, theatres, open spaces, etc.) and modern sites, mostly in the metropolitan core.

Targeting long-term leisure and culture tourism trends

The success and legacy of the Expo and its side events can be considered in terms of resources, projects, governance and political outcomes, in particular for supporting a long-term increase of leisure and culture tourism in a city previously known mostly for business. Prior to 2015, the deadline for meeting the infrastructure and organizational needs of the mega-event injected additional funds, knowledge and professional expertise into Milan's development. Despite the failures in accomplishing grand infrastructural improvements, the mega-event planning unlocked several projects and processes. An innovative inter-institutional coordination board increased the speed in approving the requests for using public space for side events, including heritage sites in the centre and elsewhere (ExpoinCittà). Expo also clearly eased the transformation of two historic places in the city centre. First, the renovation project for the Darsena (the old docks of the Navigli canal system) had been standing idle for years and was fast-tracked due to the Expo, becoming the location of a new food market, a public space for small scale events and entertainment and an addition to the existing nightlife of the Navigli area. Second, in the years prior to the event, the area in front of the Castello was pedestrianised and the main contact point for the Expo 2015 was placed there with the Expo Gate pavilions. These initiatives have changed and adapted the public use and general meaning of many heritage sites and spaces, adding to the new image of Milan as a tourism city. Despite the lack of a long-term urban and metropolitan vision, the Expo event helped in consolidating Milan's development trends. The interest groups and political constituency that supported these transformations reinforced their positions in Milan's decision making. In 2016, the former CEO of Expo 2015 was elected City Mayor. His political constituency consolidated a pro-growth, event-fuelled and tourism-based approach to city

management, that has been growing during the post-event phase with a systematic calendar of events derived from the ExpoinCittà model. Furthermore, in 2019, the city secured another mega-event, the 2026 Winter Olympics (in partnership with Cortina).



+50% visitors in Milan museums registered in May-October 2015

5 new Milan museums opened in 2015: Silos Armani, Pietà Rondanini, F. Prada, Casa Manzoni, MUDEC

Growth of tourist arrivals in Milan 2000-2007 (source: Comune di Milano, Area Turismo).

Self-reinforcing political constituency and the festivalization of urban space

In Milan, the presence of tourists has been steadily growing (see the graph above), exerting an increasing pressure over the historic city center, which presents clear risks of generating over-tourism and eroding public spaces, limiting the appreciation of heritage places and reinforcing current gentrification trends. The most recent response to the problem seems to suggest more of the same formula, but spread across the metropolitan space. The local government claimed to be aware of excessive pressure on the historic city center and promoted a strong program for redistributing wealth to the outskirts, also by spreading cultural, leisure and sport events in available facilities and public spaces located in peripheral areas. Besides the usual attention to infrastructure, a new city image and tourism growth, Expo 2015 shows that the legacy of successful mega-events can also include governance and organizational improvement, as well political lock-ins as certain political constituencies gain power and consensus through the mega-event. Yet such an approach might have unpredictable effects on heritage and the use of space and landscape in the metropolitan region.



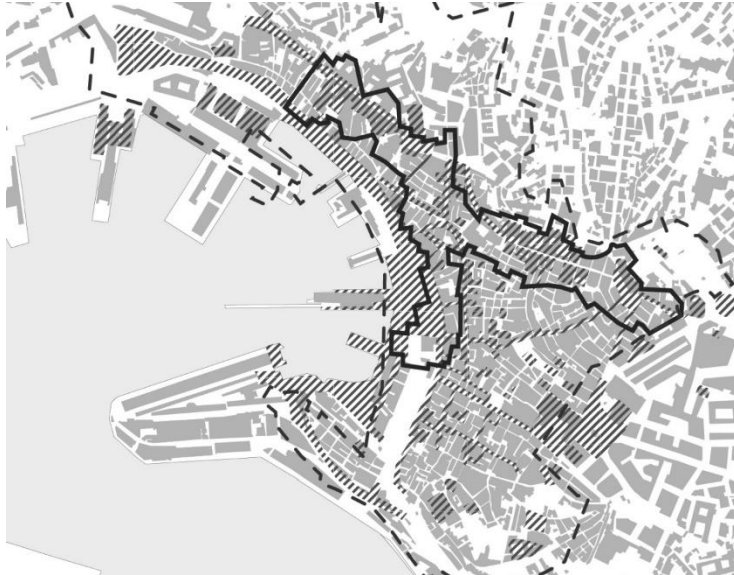
Expo Gate temporary pavilions in front of the Castle
(source: <https://www.designerblog.it/post/168786/expo-milano-2015-gli-interventi-di-secco-sistemi>).



The Darsena following the completion of the renovations (source: www.seidimilano.it/?p=382).

GENOA 2004 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

A cultural mega-event within a strategic vision for heritage development



Genoa city center: UNESCO site (black line), buffer zone (dashed line) and restoration/renewal areas (grey hatch) (source: Z. Jones).

Genova 2004 represents the quintessential heritage-led redevelopment approach, using the European Capital of Culture event as the mechanism to bring together diverse actors and implement changes in the city fabric. One proof of the success of this endeavor was UNESCO recognizing the system of palaces and streets of Genoa as World Heritage in 2006, two years following the event. Many of the efforts of the event therefore contributed to the proposal and eventual listing of the sites as part of a larger long-term strategy the city employed using large scale events including the 2001 G8 Summit and a number of urban regeneration projects.

Key heritage issues and takeaways:

- A long-term vision and urban regeneration program
- Tourism economies in the historic city centre
- Creating a new City Museum system
- Becoming a World Heritage City

Facts and figures

City population

601,338 (2004)

583,601 (2017)

GDP

National

€22,938.24 (2004)

€26,168.63 (2017)

City

€33,396.96 (2003)

€31,616.60 (2012)

Tourists

492,498 overnight (2000)

586,633 overnight (2005)

801,833 overnight (2014)

1,083,244 total nights (2000)

1,230,123 total nights (2005)

1,585,061 total nights (2014)

Event attendance

2,835,960

Total no. of events

439

Total event cost

€252, 000,000

Heritage project budget

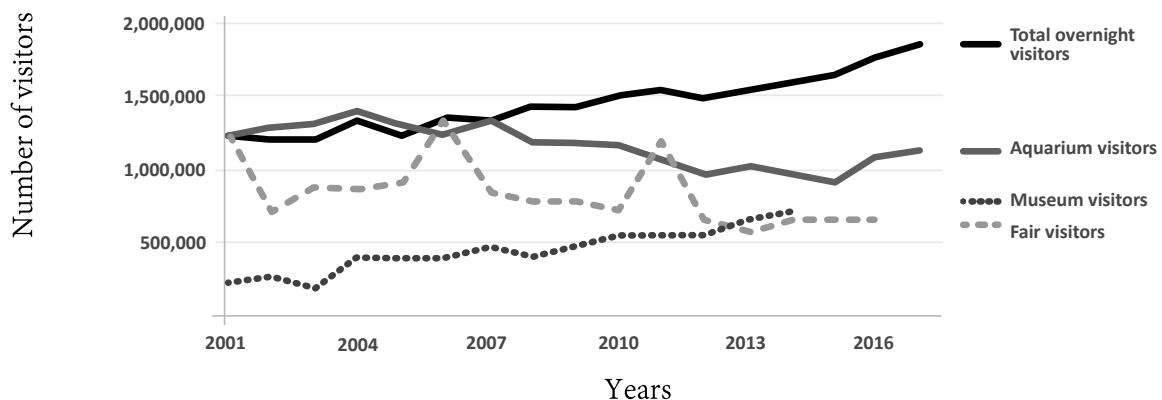
€300,000,000 (G8 and ECoC)

A long-term vision and urban regeneration program

The 1999 Strategic Conference and subsequent *Operative Plan for the Historic Center* (2000) were the key planning documents that established a strategic direction for the city of Genoa, which largely centered around the 2004 ECoC. The main issues addressed in the conference were those of tourism, education, development, livability and infrastructure. The primary strategy was to develop the city center and the waterfront as the main centers for the whole city that was perceived to lack a true central destination and to restructure the economic base of the city. This transformation was proposed through a revitalization of existing heritage spaces in the city center as well as the insertion of new cultural centers on the waterfront. More than 160 individual restoration/conservation projects were carried out for Genoa 2004, with the Strade Nuove (New Streets) of Via Balbi and Via Garibaldi highlighted as key resources. Projects including the restoration of many of the city's painted facades, particularly on the Rolli Palaces, as well as the repaving and pedestrianizing many streets and public squares.

Tourism economies in the historic city centre

The strategic conference ultimately cast a grand vision for the city as it aimed towards 2004. The heritage of the city plays a crucial role in creating this city of culture and tourism that the Operative Plan described more explicitly. The intention was that the city itself would draw local residents and visitors back to the city center, both during the ECoC year itself and beyond. The heritage of the city was therefore valued for its desired secondary effects to create a previously non-existent tourism sector as well as to provide an anchor to attract a new creative sector to the city to initiate the regeneration of the city. The year 2004 represents a key point of change in the city's tourism standings. Compared to the number of visitors 5 years prior to the event, there was a 20% increase in tourism during the year of 2004 alone. This increase has taken place despite decreases in attendance to the city's two previous main attractions: the fairgrounds and aquarium. Due to the consistent growth, it seems quite clear, based on the available data that the 2004 European Capital of Culture and the mass urban restoration works completed for the event have significantly and successfully contributed to establishing Genoa as a cultural destination.



Change in the number of visitors to Genoa and its tourist attractions (source: Z. Jones elaboration of Comune di Genova - Annuario Statistico Edizione 2017).

Creating a new City Museum system

One of the city's main goals for the event was the reorganization of the city's heritage infrastructure. This goal was primarily realized through the establishment of the museum system and museum poles that connected the many existing institutions. The museum system most notably directly connected several of the palaces that had been restored, including the Palazzi Bianco, Rosso and Tursi. Part of this system also included the newly created museum on the waterfront, the Galata Museum of the Sea. Another key pole of the city museum system, this entirely new museum utilized parts of an existing former port building, encased within a glass shell. Finally, a handful of restoration projects were completed outside of the city centre to attempt to diffuse the effects of the event and tie together the polycentric nature of the city, though the clear emphasis was on the city centre. The changes made to this system have seen a continuous increase in annual visitors to the museums since 2004, as can be seen in the graph above.

Becoming a World Heritage City

Within the city center, the Strade Nuove (New Streets) of Via Balbi and Via Garibaldi were highlighted as key resources to develop in order to highlight the main tourist attractions of the city and to draw visitors and citizens through the city, serving as a kind of open air museum. A key goal was for the historic center to be recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The quality of the existing public space was also highlighted as an essential aspect to creating a more livable city. All of the intended works aim towards two conditions: recuperate the centrality of the city and create a diffused sense of a stabilized livability. The re-establishment of public space was perceived to be the necessary impetus to initiate the intended reimagining of the city. Much of the physical restoration works done for the 2001 and 2004 event focused specifically on the register of Rolli Palaces (that were once used for lodging notable guests) and related urban spaces, simultaneously intended as the focal point of the WHS bid. The city was awarded this status in 2006 for "Genoa: *Le Strade Nuove* and the system of the *Palazzi dei Rolli*". It would have been much less likely for the city to have ultimately gained such an expansive WHS without the works done in preparation of the 2001 and 2004 events as many of the palaces, streets and public spaces that had been renovated and pedestrianized during the events became part of the final site.



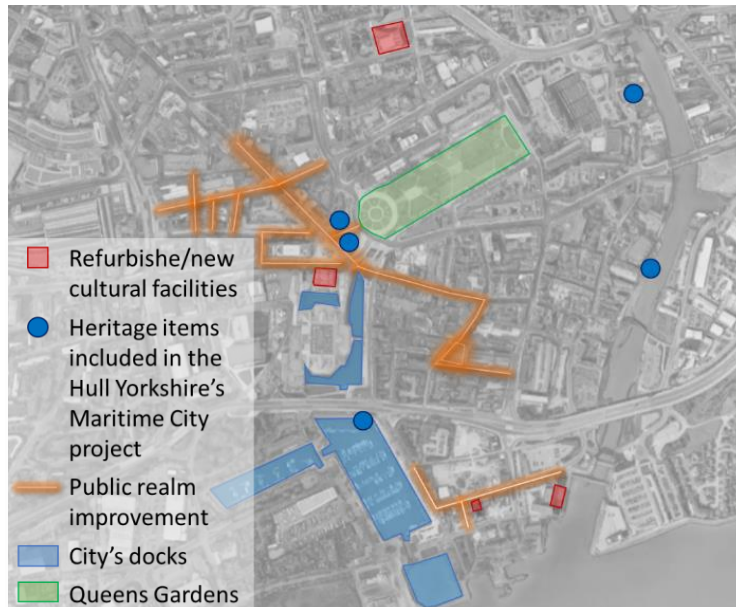
Restored Piazza De Ferrari (source: Z. Jones).



Façade restorations to Palazzo Doria Spinola (source: ARKOS Speciale G8, 2001).

HULL 2017 UK CITY OF CULTURE

Communicating heritage through the arts



Areas of public realm improvements, new/refurbished cultural facilities for the 2017 event and heritage assets included in the Hull Yorkshire's Maritime City project (source: E. Tommarchi. Background map: Imagery ©2019 Google, Map Data ©2019).

Hull UK City of Culture 2017 was celebrated in a port city suffering from socio-economic decline and negative perceptions. The City Council invested on the refurbishment of cultural facilities and on public realm improvements. Hull 2017 encouraged participation and learning and was a platform for broader discussions about heritage. It boosted heritage-related cultural and urban projects after 2017, including the Hull Yorkshire's Maritime City.

Key heritage issues and takeaways:

- Learning about heritage through a mega-event
- Mega-events as heritage partnership-building devices
- Capital investments and built heritage
- Post-event heritage projects and cultural events

Facts and figures

City population

256,406 (2001)

260,354 (2017)

GVA (Gross Value Added)

National

€32,620.73 (2016)

€31,170.45 (2017)

City

€25,007.31 (2016)

€24,110.23 (2017)

Tourists

352,000 overnight (2013)

360,400 overnight (2016)

415,900 overnight (2017)

4.75 million visits (2013)

5.65 million visits (2016)

6.2 million visits (2017)

Event attendance

5,300,000

Total no. of events

more than 2,800

Total event cost

€93,977,272

Infrastructure cost

€56,704,545

Cultural program cost

€37,272,727

Heritage project budget

n/a

Learning about heritage through a mega-event

Hull 2017 demonstrated how City of Culture schemes can be very effective in enabling residents and visitors to learn about local history and heritage. Plays and art installations were a means to convey knowledge about heritage and to stimulate participation and engagement in innovative and inclusive ways. Some of these events made use of heritage spaces to tell local stories. An example is the use of the historic Guildhall to tell the story of activism against the conditions of fishermen on distant-water trawlers. Artists felt enabled to engage freely with tangible and intangible heritage. Residents and visitors were encouraged to look at iconic and less well-known elements of local built heritage from different perspectives. These events contributed to changing traditional interpretations of heritage, suggesting that it can incorporate contemporary stories and traditions. The preliminary evaluation of the event suggested that 65.6% of residents reported that their knowledge about history and heritage had increased as a result of the City of Culture year. The use of art-based approaches to present history and heritage made them more interesting (92.1%) and easier to understand (91.3%) for local audiences. This also helped to overcome diffidence and lack of interest in high-culture and heritage. This approach, combined with the spectacularization of built heritage and the choice of iconic locations across the city, was also considered crucial to establish a connection with local audiences and gain their trust and interest in attending cultural events and activities for the rest of the year.



Art installation on the façade of the Maritime Museum (source: E. Tommarchi).



Wind turbine blade manufactured in Hull displayed at Queen Victoria Square (source: E. Tommarchi).

Mega-events as heritage partnership-building devices

Hull UK City of Culture 2017 was a platform to facilitate broader discussions about heritage and to encourage heritage and culture-related partnerships. For example, the partnership with Associated British Ports led to the restoration of the Dead Bod (a 1960s mural of a dead bird on a shed at Alexandra Dock), which was displayed at the Humber Street Gallery, and to an exhibition at the historic Pump House at Alexandra Dock, which was opened to the public for the event. The work with Historic England led to nine new elements being recognized as built heritage in 2017, including the 1981 Humber Bridge and the 1980 Tidal Surge Barrier. This also led to discussions about a potential bid for World Heritage Status for Hull's Old Town and contributed to generating momentum for the heritage project Hull Yorkshire's Maritime City. The partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) enabled the culture company Hull 2017 Ltd to test new ideas and approaches. After 2017, HLF (NLHF since 2019) have been supporting the legacy company Absolutely Cultured Ltd in their work with heritage.

Capital investments and built heritage

The case of Hull 2017 also suggests that mega-events can positively contribute to providing the rationale and to generating the necessary momentum to convey and accelerate the preservation and conservation of built heritage. In times of austerity, the event was key to generate public support around a £100 million investment by the City Council in a wide range of improvements. These included the refurbishment of iconic heritage buildings and cultural facilities such as Hull New Theatre and the Ferens Art Gallery, as well as the redevelopment of the Fruit Market area – where many historic buildings, mainly 19th century fruit warehouses, were badly preserved – into a new cultural hub and fashionable quarter for residential and night-time activities. The compressed timeframe of public ground works had a transformative impact and contributed to connecting elements of built heritage across the city center. The Hull 2017 event also made it possible to attract £13 million additional funding from central government and, more in general, it has been a catalyst for heritage projects.



Public realm improvements in Queen Victoria Square (source: E. Tommarchi).



Humber Street in the Fruit Market area (source: E. Tommarchi).

Post-event heritage projects and cultural events

Cultural events in 2018 and heritage legacy projects have helped sustain engagement with cultural activities, and more specifically heritage after the event. Ephemeral events in 2018, organized by the legacy company Absolutely Cultured Ltd, created kinetic art trails across less well-known heritage-rich areas of the city, some of which had been relatively neglected in 2017. These arts-heritage collaborations promoted innovative approaches to encourage cultural participation, such as aesthetic innovation and creative learning. The UK City of Culture 2017 also gave a huge boost to the £27 million project Hull Yorkshire's Maritime City, focused on the creation of a maritime cultural offer through the restoration of a range of tangible maritime heritage assets.

PAFOS 2017 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Event motivating new planning practices and a rethinking of heritage



PAFOS2017
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE



Pafos center with buildings and public spaces restored for ECoC2017 (source: A. Sivitanidou).

The projects designed for the Pafos 2017 ECoC event have contributed to generating a new long-term development strategy for the city founded not only on seaside tourism, but also on the enhancement of cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, inclusion and social capacity. The event generated a long-term vision and stimulated the design of various urban interventions related to cultural heritage. The recovery of historic buildings and public spaces is an obvious legacy of the ECoC. However, it is too early to yet provide a definitive assessment of the economic and social effectiveness of this approach and the series of plans and projects generated by the event in various parts of the city.

Key heritage issues and takeaways:

- A scheme based on community and heritage
- A strategic vision for the transformation of the city center
- The ECoC as incentive and activator of change

Facts and figures

City population

32,892 (2011)

GDP

National

€21,000 (2013)

€22,900 (2017)

City

N/A

Tourists

930,886 overnight (2013)

1,369,527 overnight (2017)

Event attendance

207,250

Total no. of events

168 projects

Total event cost

€30,500,000

Infrastructure budget

€22,000,000

Heritage project budget

N/A

A scheme based on community and heritage

Pafos's small size and diverse social make-up were the defining factors on how the ECoC was planned, funded and delivered as well as how it has benefitted the city so far. With the city being an already well-established seaside tourist centre, Pafos 2017 was not so concerned about increasing the international profile of the city as it was about changing it. Pafos pursued the 2017 ECoC designation in order to steer social and cultural development along new paths (heritage preservation, environmental protection, community inclusion and social responsibility) and diversify its primarily tourist-based economy, based on the area's culture, its historic and natural assets. A new planning season started in sight of the mega-event.

During the application process, Pafos's bid developed into a city-wide endeavour; the concept of the Open Air Factory was developed through an open call extended to all Pafos residents. Apart from its communicative and supportive aspects, the call managed to integrate in-depth knowledge of the city's virtues and shortcomings, coalesce the various social groups of Pafos around a common cause, and create a sense of joint ownership of the project and a collective vision for the future of the city. Both the spatial and the cultural components of Pafos's Open Air Factory ECoC bid were shaped in a series of volunteer workshops, with much input from local authorities and professionals.

Surprisingly, and despite its small size, lack of experience in large-scale cultural events and limited cultural infrastructure, Pafos was awarded the title. The economic crisis that hit Cyprus during Pafos's preparation greatly affected the program and its financing, yet the enthusiasm and participation of locals as Pafos 2017 employees, artists, donors or volunteers contributed to the success of the event.

A strategic vision for the transformation of the city centre

Lacking a pre-existing comprehensive development plan for Pafos, the spatial programme was shaped as a road-map for further elaboration by the authorities, even if the ECoC application were unsuccessful; the projects included were regarded as components of a long-term development strategy for the area and their versatility could satisfy a wide range of scales, for 2017 and beyond. By creating a network of outdoor and indoor spaces via identifying and using existing public spaces and historic buildings to fill in urban voids, particular attention was paid to heritage sites which had either been empty or underused and neglected. Discrete urban projects already in various stages of development by the Municipality of Pafos (the remodelling of the historic/commercial centre, the Municipal Gardens - Town Hall - Schools complex) were also integrated into the network, so as to take advantage of soon-to-be-completed spaces or to expedite their implementation. The main goal was to re-instate the city centre as a shared civic space to be a point of convergence for the various social groups of Pafos. Inherent in the concept were ideas about sustainability, economy, flexibility: central public spaces and historic buildings to be re-animated through culture and, in turn, become catalysts for economic and cultural activity, environmental awareness, neighbourly interaction, and social cohesion.

The projects for the city of Pafos can be grouped in two clusters:

- The Urban Network of Ktima integrates public spaces with specific buildings and connects the administrative core of the city (28th Oct. Sq. & City Hall), through Kennedy Sq. and Pazari, its main commercial axis, to the abandoned Turkish-Cypriot quarter of Mouttallos. This cluster involves the extensive pedestrianisation of the historic market area, the upgrade of cultural

venues (the Attikon Cinema, the Markideion Theater), and the creation of new infrastructure with the restoration of the highly symbolic Ibrahim Khan.

- The Archaeological Network of Kato Pafos links the UNESCO World Heritage site of Nea Pafos with the modern settlement, forming an extended historic walk and an ecological corridor between two Natura 2000-designated areas. This is expected to enhance the tourist experience and to shape a vibrant public space that highlights Pafos's multi-cultural character.

The interventions in Ktima aim to generate an alternative pole of attraction for locals and visitors as a counterpoint to the most-frequented areas along the waterfront. Using the area's extensive built heritage, the projects aim to re-insert the features of centrality and livability into the long-overlooked city core.

The ECoC as incentive and activator of change

Although the infrastructure projects were part of the ECoC2017 bid, the responsibility for their completion fell upon the local authorities; the selection of Pafos as ECoC became a mandate for the Municipality of Pafos to pursue the proposed redevelopment of the city centre. In order to obtain funds, the Municipality put together the Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP 2014-2020), based on the Pafos2017 spatial program. The Pafos IUDP comprises three axes: (i) protecting and promoting cultural heritage, (ii) enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises and (iii) promoting employment and alleviating social exclusion. With the IUDP, Pafos could claim assistance from the EU Cohesion Fund for Investment in Growth and Employment. It could then proceed with its extensive pedestrianisation, remodelling and restoration program, which turned the entire centre in a construction site, and was completed in 2017. This city-wide process of urban interventions, which amplified public support for the ECoC event, is still on-going, as the Municipality has expanded the initial projects with further plans. It is still, however, too early to discuss the social, economic or tourist impacts, and the lack of legacy planning so far seems to compromise the city's increased cultural capacity in terms of audience participation, expertise and active spaces.



Left: Kennedy Square pedestrianisation & remodelling (2017) (source: fotoLarko).



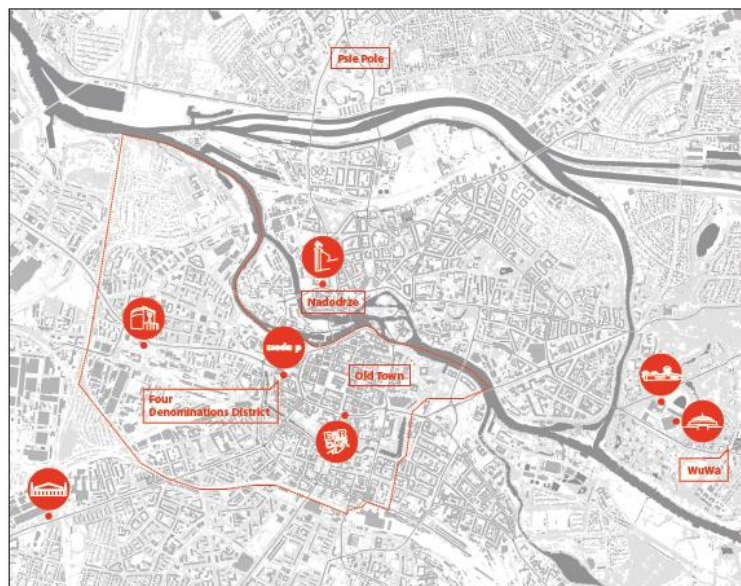
Right: Ibrahim Khan (before and during 2017) (source: E. Dova – A. Sivitanidou).

WROCLAW 2016 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

A new urban vision based on culture, heritage, and social dialogue



WROCLAW 2016
European Capital of Culture



Map of the key heritage projects, actions and locations (source: International Culture Centre).

With its slogan, “Spaces for Beauty”, Wrocław 2016 ECoC tried on one hand to tackle its complicated multicultural past (it is the largest city in the world to have had its entire population replaced after WWII), and, on the other, to make the city a true contemporary meeting point for diverse cultures and people. One of the key aims was to restore the presence of art, culture and beauty in public space, public life and people’s daily habits. Heritage was present in the ECoC concept and in projects related to memory, identity and history, as well as in the revitalisation of neglected neighbourhoods and adapting historic, sometimes post-industrial buildings, for new functions.

Key heritage issues and takeaways:

- Mega-event as a catalyzer for urban and economic development
- Mega-event as a platform for social and urban change
- Mega-event as a trigger for new approaches to heritage
- Managing change and increasing expectations: post mega-event lessons

Facts and figures

City population

635,759 (2015)

638,586 (2017)

GDP

National per capita

€11,200 (2015)

City total

€11,671 million (2015)

City per capita

€18,000 (2015)

Tourists

1,039,959 overnight (2015)

1,113,596 overnight (2016)

1,117,440 overnight (2017)

Event attendance

5,200,000

Total no. of events

4,500 (within 425 projects)

Total event cost

€79,956,184.16 (OPEX total)

Cultural/ Entertainment

Programme Cost

€37,211,224

Mega-event as a catalyzer for urban and economic development

One of the major urban strategic development concepts in Wrocław was to host a mega-event that would serve as leap forward in terms of social and economic development, bringing different types of capital, tourists as well as opportunities for social change. Being a host city for 2012 UEFA European Championship was an important trigger for infrastructural investment (the main railway station, the airport, the motorway city bypass). The path toward the ECoC 2016 event pushed the city to rethink its strategies and in particular the role of previously underappreciated cultural and cultural heritage resources for socio-economic development. The ECoC fostered urban regeneration processes (e.g. Nadodrze district), restoration of heritage venues (e.g. the UNESCO listed Centennial Hall) as well as building new cultural infrastructure (e.g. National Forum of Music) and adaptation of existing venues for culture (e.g. History Centre “Depot”). The idea of “putting Wrocław on the map” after 50 years behind the iron curtain, as well as creating a city narrative and attracting tourists (est. 5 million visitors, amounting to almost 15% of Polish tourism in 2016) became part of this strategy. While planning to use culture and heritage for urban change, decision makers and planners focused on opportunities rather than on potential threats posed by organising a mega-event.



Krzywy Komin Centre for Professional Development in the Nadodrze district (adapting post-industrial heritage) (source: <http://www.wroclaw2016.strefakultury.pl/centrum-rozwoju-zawodowego-krzywy-komin>).



Backyard Door project (artistic interventions in public space) (source: Wrocław Culture Zone).

Mega-event as a platform for social and urban change

The Wrocław 2016 motto “Spaces for Beauty” gave the city the narration about embellishment, regeneration of degraded areas, revitalization of public spaces, as well as fostered change in the sphere of spiritual values, fulfilled the need to experience art and culture, prosocial and encouraging pro-civic attitudes. The overall aim was to establish the presence of beauty in social and personal lives of inhabitants. The ECoC goals, such as developing social participation and good, effective, local cooperation, building communities and social capital, revival of civic involvement (through micro-grants and volunteering) were generally positively assessed. However, both the decision makers and the civic society had not been fully aware of the number of challenges of the programme, especially the ones related to effective management of a huge ECoC programme and its legacy combined at the same time with active social participation. Issues become more visible when the time began to play a key role, efficient management become crucial, and the social (and cultural) partners could not come to terms with the sudden change of the perspective, from the space of civic involvement to implementing concrete projects, often of celebratory rather than social nature.

Mega-event as a trigger for a new approaches to heritage

In line with the Potsdam Conference agreements (1945), Polish borders were shifted to the west and the German Breslau became, after over 600 years, again the Polish city of Wrocław. At the same time, it became the largest city in the history in which there was almost a complete population exchange. During the communist era, Wrocław became a somewhat forgotten, peripheral city that had to face not only the challenge of reconstructing the material urban fabric (70% of the city was destroyed during WWII) but also create a totally new community comprised of Polish migrants from what today is Ukraine and all around Poland. The issue of constant processing of the city's multicultural history, uprooted residents, dissonant heritage ("heritage of the enemy") could have been the reason behind the reluctance in using the term "heritage" in the official ECoC documents. However, a number of projects did undertake the issue of Wrocław's heritage. The mega-event gave an opportunity to rethink the identity of the city and to construct an attractive urban narrative based on history, creating a bond of common experience and city's uniqueness among residents. ECoC 2016 sparked the rediscovery of heritage spaces and the appreciation and use of historical venues. The new city narrative was often told in newly refurbished historical buildings (such as Musical Theatre Capitol or Centennial Hall) and heritage venues as WuWa (Workplace and House Exhibition grounds of 1929).



Flow project (discussing history and identity of Wrocław). View of the Cathedral Island (source: Wrocław Culture Zone).



View from the tower of Wrocław Cathedral (source: Wrocław Official flickr).

Managing change and increasing expectations: post mega-event lessons

The organisation of such an extensive event as the ECoC, with a huge number of events, targeting various groups and places, resulted in establishing new public cultural institutions or enlarging the scope of action of others, in a slight clash between these institutions which clearly benefited from the ECoC and those which felt that the celebration drained the municipal budget, in residents becoming accustomed to a large and varied cultural offering. The feeling of void after the event and the clear limits of the ECoC legacy scheme, the significant decrease in the budget for culture after the event (from over 6% and 5% of the total budget of Wrocław in 2015 and 2016 to 3,7% in the years 2017-2019) led to a certain degree of disappointment among various social groups. However, capacity building, local to international networking and permanent relations, new connections between artists and people taking care of the local heritage are significant positive lessons. At the same time, there is still a challenge of building bridges in the culture sector between a group of ECOC leaders, seen as those accustomed to large festivities and ECOC outsiders who claim deeper involvement in social issues and grass-root work.

