

ECoC - European Communication of the Capitals

Report by **Ilaria d'Auria**



WROCŁAW 2016
Europejska Stolica Kultury

2016 Plzeň



ECoC - European Communication of the Capitals

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1 _ Survey

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The Matera 2019 Committee launched the idea of building a permanent network of communication and marketing experts, specialized in European Capitals of Culture. For this reason, the Committee organized and hosted the first event in Matera on the 9th and 10th of April 2015, inviting all the people responsible for those fields from past, present and future ECoCs.

Before the event, a survey was done amongst ECoCs and 9 of them answered over 30 questions on communication and marketing strategies. The different situation of the ECoCs doesn't always allow a linear comparison between the quantitative data although similar challenges are faced by all cities in very different ways, as the qualitative case-studies show.

Survey Participants

ECOC CITY	ECOC YEAR	JOB TITLE
Umea	2014	Head of Communications and administrative manager
Mons	2015	Press Officer Digital Communication Manager
Plzeň	2015	Director of Marketing and Communication
Wroclaw	2016	Head of Marketing Department
San Sebastian	2016	Communication Director
Leeuwarden-Fryslân	2018	Head of marketing and communications
Valletta	2018	Communications Officer
Aarhus	2017	Head of Communication
Matera	2019	Press Office Manager Digital Communication Manager

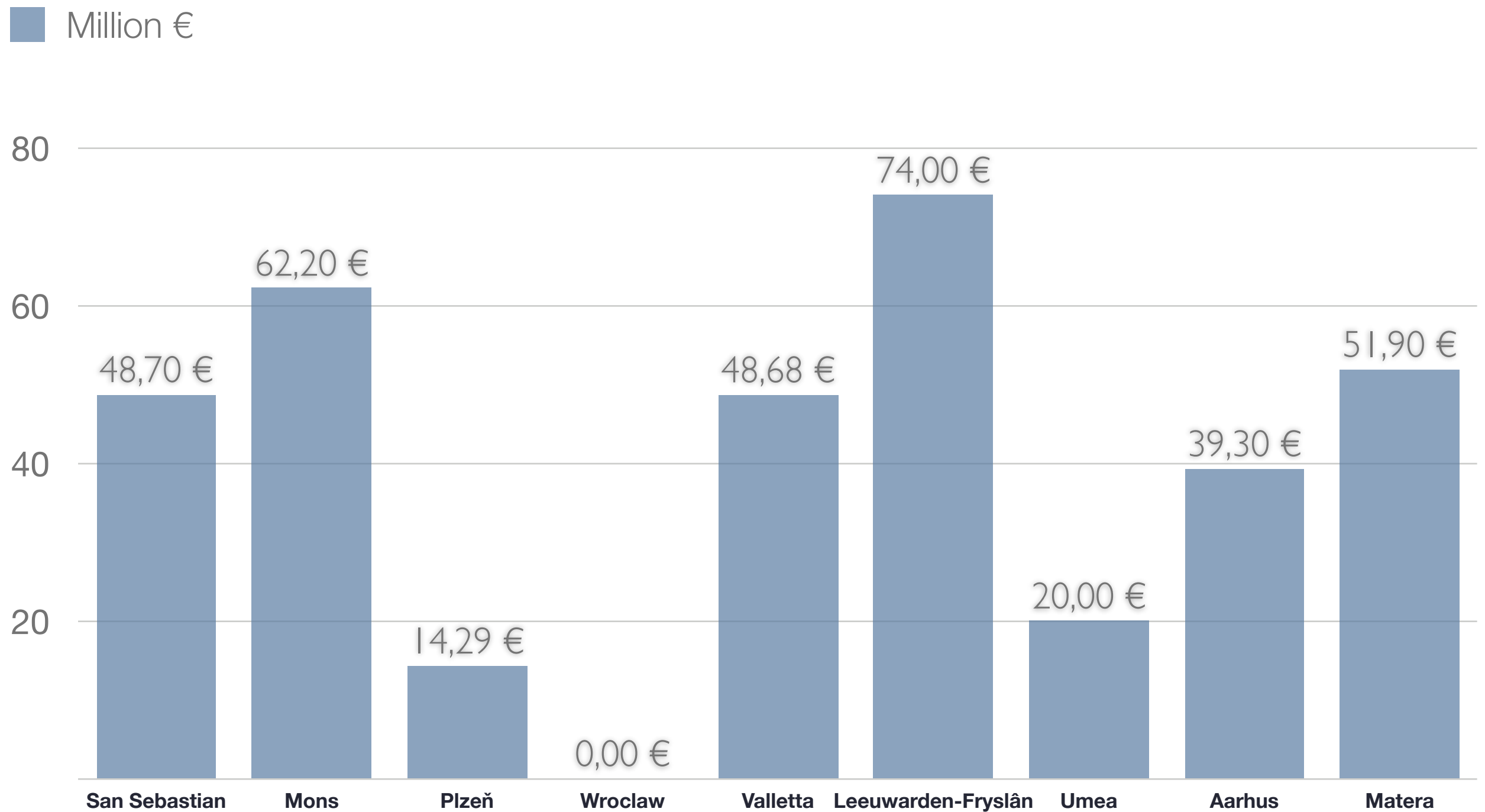
Communication Channels

	WEBSITE	FB	TW	YOUT.	PINT.	LINK.IN	VIMEO	INSTA.	FLICKR	G+	NEWSLETTER	RSS Feed	BLOG	EVENT CALENDAR	APP	STREAMING
San Sebastian 2016	X	X	X	X									X			
Mons 2015	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
Plzeň 2015	X	X	X	X	X			X					X	X	X	
Wroclaw 2016	X	X	X	X	X		X	SOON	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Valletta 2018	X	X	X	X	X			X					X	X		
Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018	X	X	X	X	X	X	SOON	X	SOON	SO ON	X	SOON	SOON	SOON	X	
Umea 2014*	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Aarhus 2017	X	X	X	X		X		X			X		X	X	SO ON	X
Matera 2019**	X	X	X	X				X		X	X	X	X	X		X

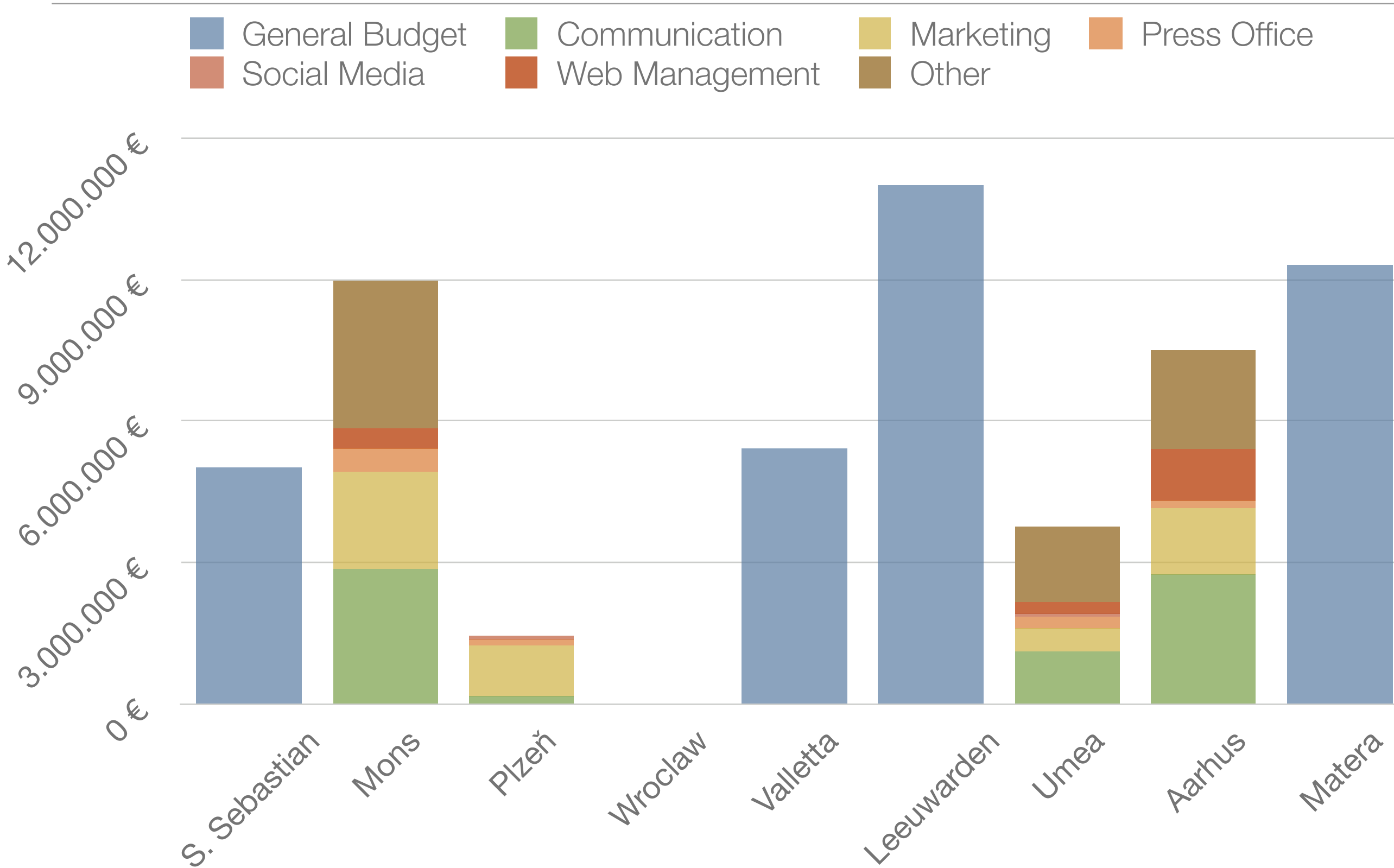
* OTHER CHANNELS: A dedicated communication channel for the press and My Space for some events

** OTHER CHANNELS: Online web community

Operating Expenditure

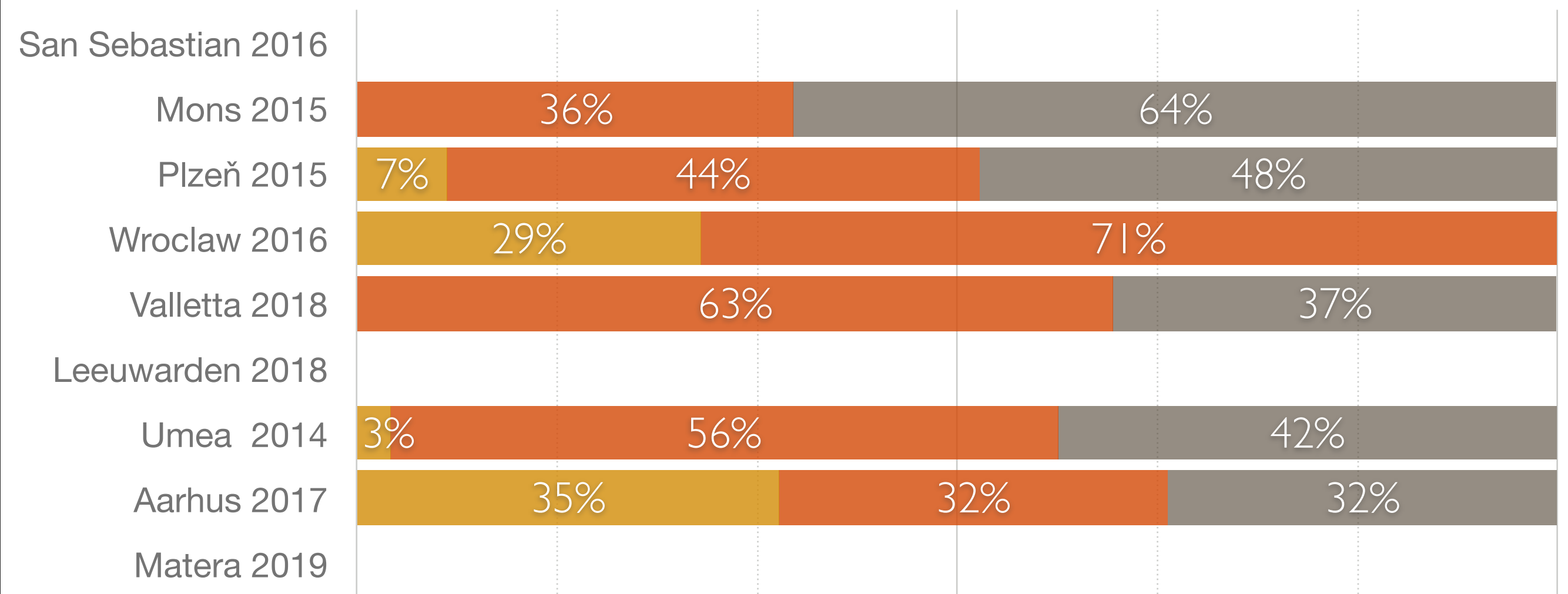


Total budget allocated to Communication - Programme

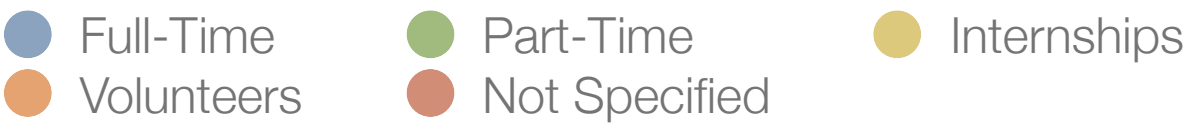


Total budget allocated to Communication - Phases

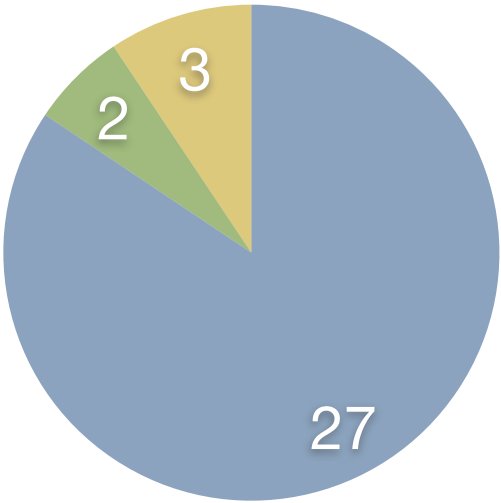
Bidding phase Lead-up ECOC year



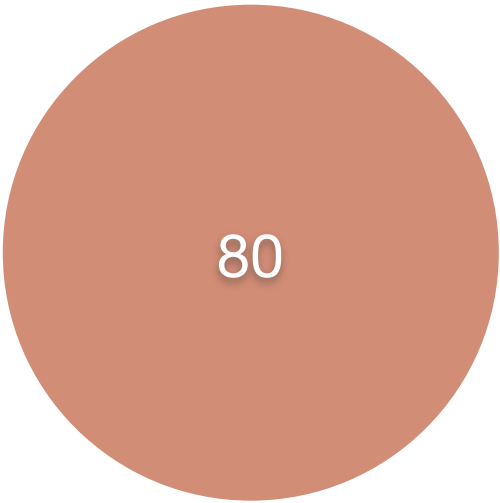
Team structure



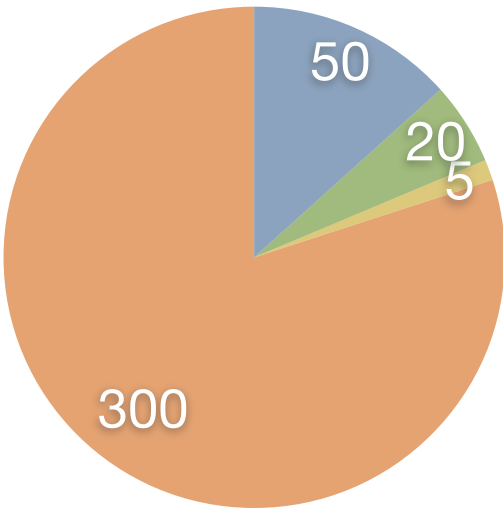
29 San Sebastian 2016



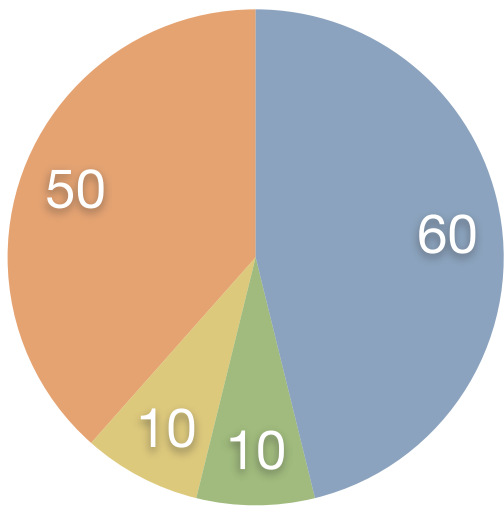
80 Mons 2015



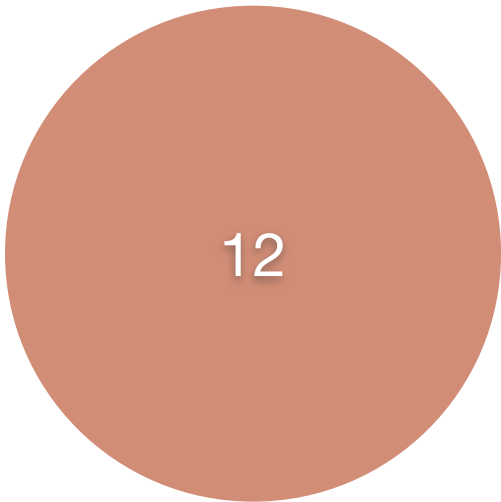
70 Plzeň 2015



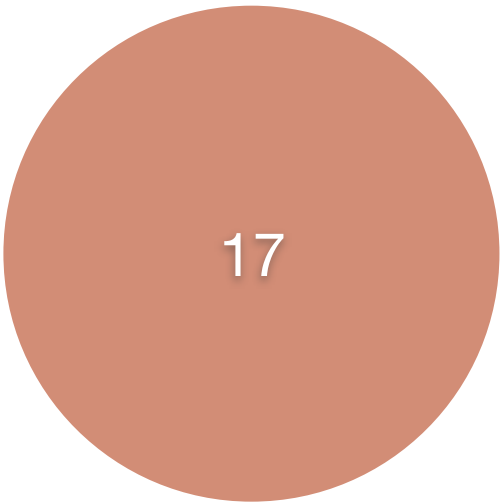
70+ Wroclaw 2016



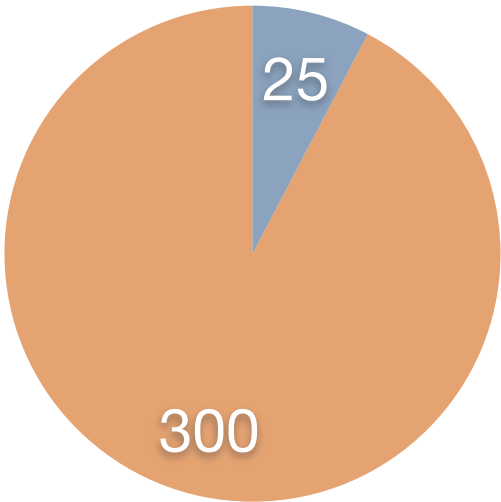
12 Valletta 2018



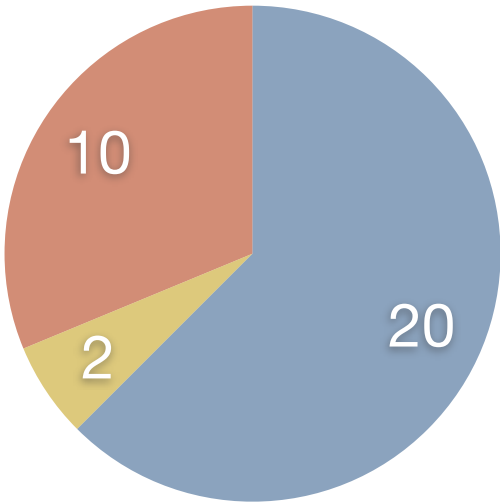
17 Leeuwarden 2018



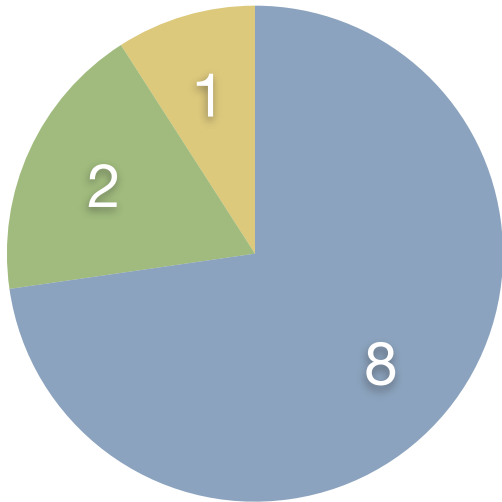
25 Umea 2014



30 Aarhus 2017



11 Matera 2019

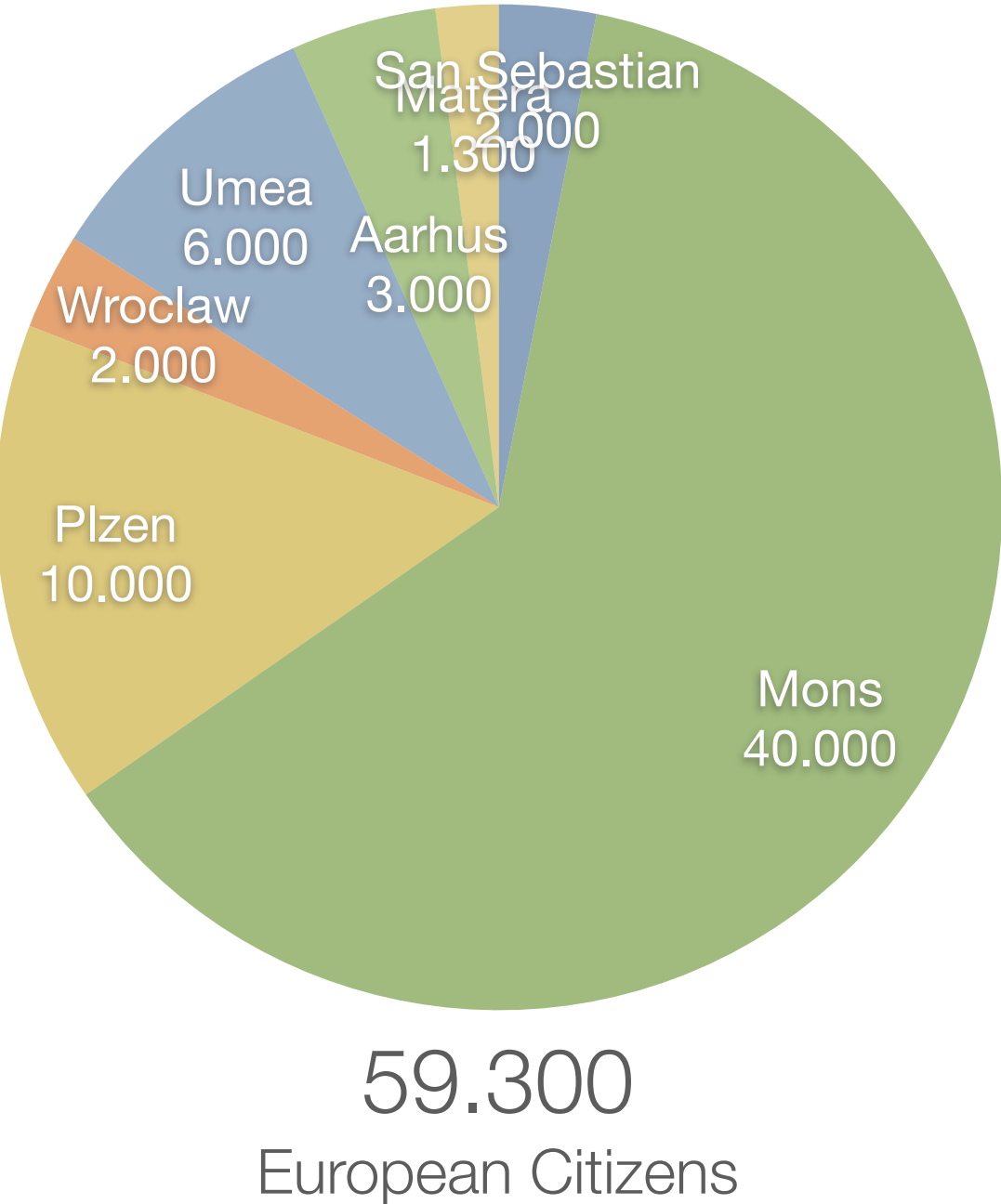


Newsletter

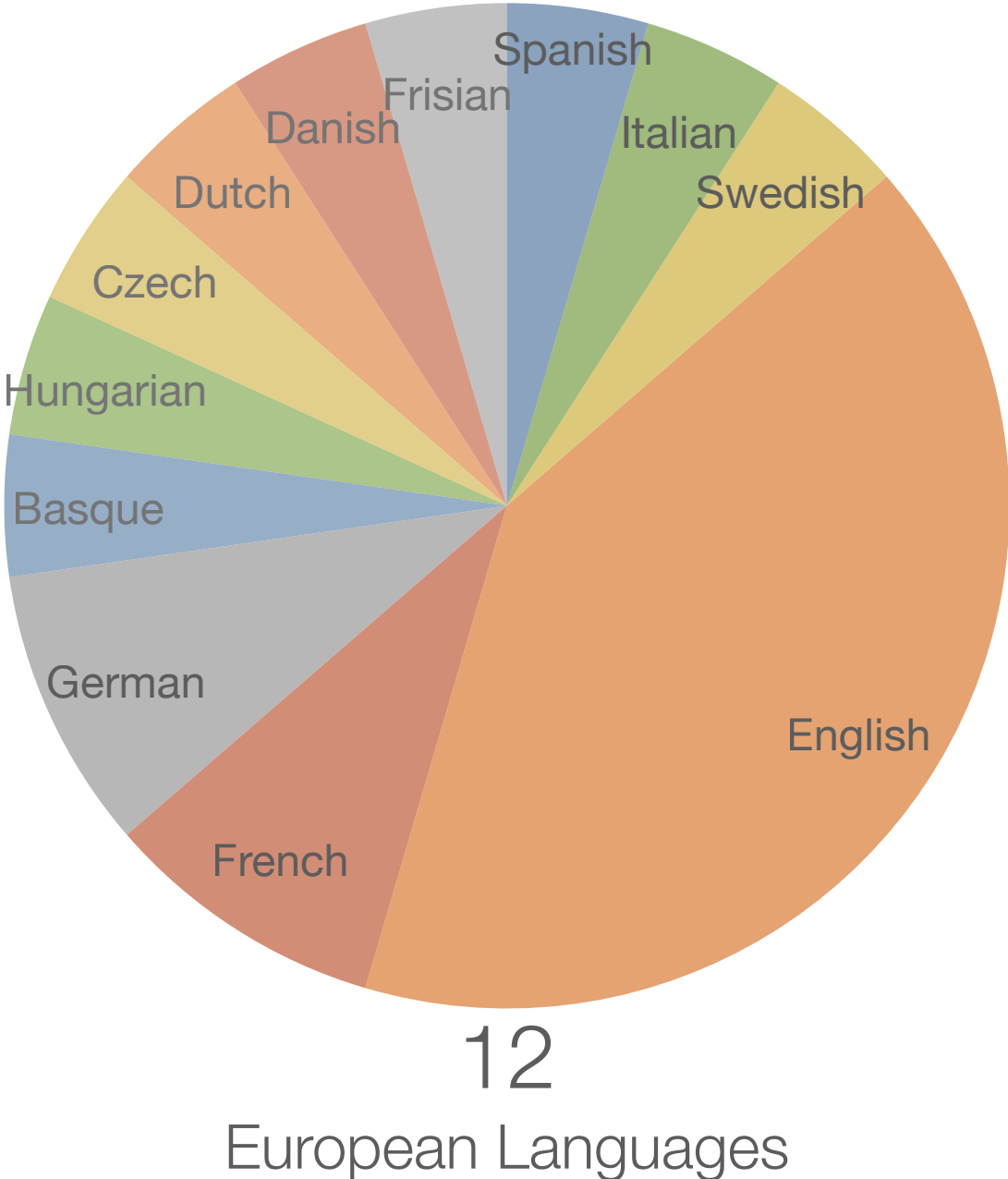
ECOC CITY	FREQUENCY	SUBSCRIBERS	LANGUAGE
San Sebastian		2.000+	Spanish-Basque, English, French
Mons	Weekly	40.000	FR/NL/ENG + German
Plzeň	Weekly	10.000	National Language + ENG
Wroclaw	Monthly	2.000+	National Language + ENG
Valletta	Other	/	National Language + ENG
Leeuwarden-Fryslân	Other	/	National Language + German + Frisian + ENG
Umea	Weekly	6.000	National Language + ENG
Aarhus	Monthly	3.000	National Language + ENG
Matera	Other	1300	National Language + ENG

Newsletter

ECoC Newsletter Subscribers



ECoC Newsletter languages

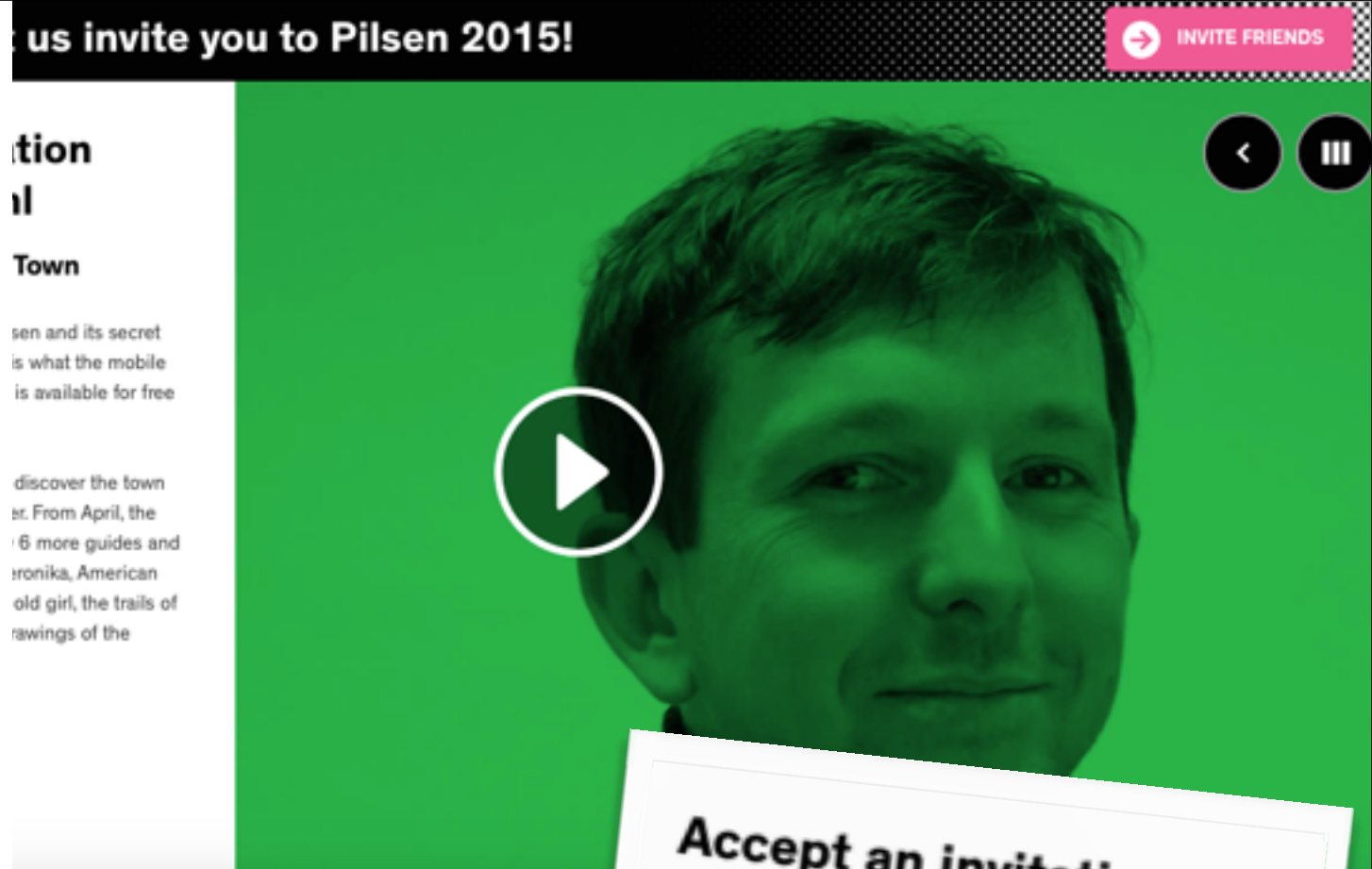


Marketing ECoCs: case studies

2014 Plzeň

THE INVITATION SYSTEM

Launched in 2014, the system aims at engaging the audience with video invitations by Pilseners. In exchange of accepting an invitation, you can have a free beer in one of the partner pubs in Plzeň.



Accept an invitation from Jakub Deml

How to receive your personal invitation:

1. Fill in your name and e-mail address. Click "send".
2. An invitation with a unique bar code will be sent to the given e-mail address. Please print or download the invitation into your smartphone.
3. Pack your bag full of culture and head for Pilsen!
4. When in Pilsen, come see us at the Meeting Point 2015 on the Republic Square, and submit your invitation with the bar code. After its validity is checked, you will receive a leaflet for a free beer which you can claim in selected restaurant.

Your name

Your e-mail address

 **SEND**

We invite you to the European

Let us invite you to the European capital of culture by famous figures who entertain Pilsen (not only in 2015)!

First 50 000 will receive one free Pilsner Urquell or Gambrinus beer along with the invitation!

Marketing ECoCs: case studies



CLUB 2018

Launched in 2015, the marketing campaign aims 2018 SMEs willing to invest 2018€ in Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018. In exchange, they can make an exclusive use of the golden logo, add a product of the merchandising under the label 2018, attend networking events, and have two exclusive tickets for the opening ceremony.

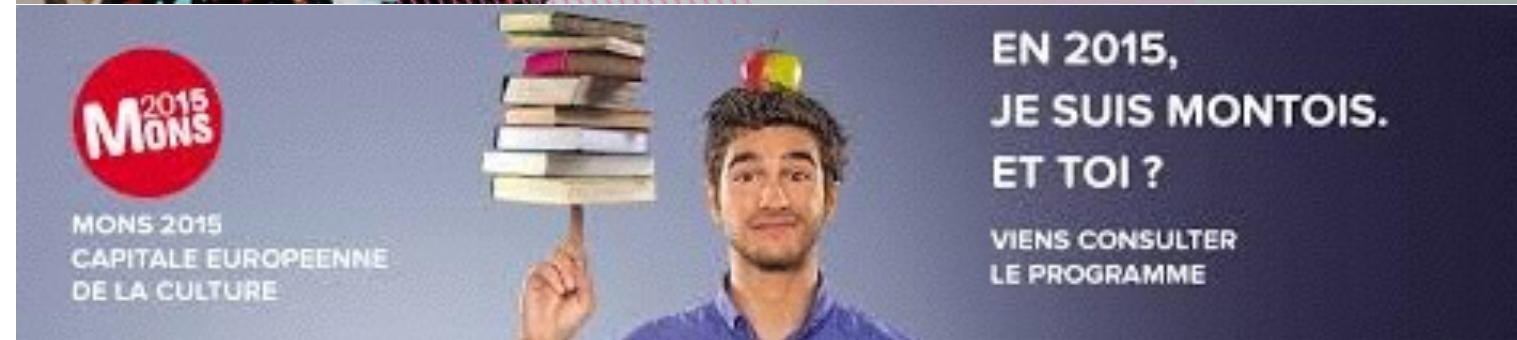


Marketing ECoCs: case studies



JE SUIS MONTOIS, ET TOI?

Launched in 2014, the “everybody is from Mons” campaign aims at creating a membership feeling (appropriation by the general public) as well as a feeling of pride (appropriation by the locals). Long-term campaign with a baseline that can be adapted by Mons 2015 - according to the projects (circus festival, ticketing service) - as well as by its partners.



Marketing ECoCs: case studies



THE FALL OF “The Passenger”



Communiqué du 24/12/2014 | 20h30

LA FONDATION MONS 2015 PREND ACTE AVEC STUPEFACTION DE L'EFFONDREMENT D'UNE PARTIE DE LA STRUCTURE D'ARNE QUINZE « THE PASSENGER »

Aucun blessé, de très légers dégâts matériels et le périmètre de sécurité bouclé ce mercredi 24 décembre rue de Nimy à Mons mais la Fondation Mons 2015 tient à marquer sa totale incompréhension face à l'effondrement de la partie centrale de la structure d'Arne Quinze.

Toutes les mesures de sécurité avant, pendant et après le montage ont été prises, ce compris tous les contrôles légaux de stabilité qui avaient été effectués avec succès. La Fondation examinera néanmoins avec l'artiste ce qu'il conviendra de faire une fois la partie effondrée dégagée. A ce stade, aucune piste n'est exclue ; c'est une enquête qui déterminera les causes de cet accident.

L'axe de la rue de Nimy permettant de rejoindre la Grand-Place est fermé jusqu'à nouvel ordre. Une déviation est en place.

Marketing ECoCs: case studies



CAUGHT BY UMEA

Launched in September 2013 for 1 month, the roadshow aimed to pique people's curiosity and interest on Umeå 2014 across Europe. An experience place was built in 7 cities, with elements from Umeå and Sweden to capture all the senses. In and around this place there were dining experiences, musical performances, cultural exchanges and film screenings. Environments were built up where visitors could be inspired by the Swedish lifestyle and Umeå's unique progressive culture. We also let visitors experience the contrast between summer and winter. They could hang out in an summer hammock or watch the pros create ice sculptures live.



Marketing ECoCs: case studies



RETHINK - The Glass Container

From the get go this project focused on the communication and PR of the different activities in connection with Aarhus' and the region's candidacy. During the autumn 2010, the glass container was used as a information stand with a variety of information about the project in general, where interested citizens was offered the opportunity to visit the container and have an informal chat with one of our competent employees. The interested citizens also had the opportunity to write their visions for respectively Aarhus and the region – an initiative that was well received by the visitors. The container visited Aarhus and several other cities in the region during the 10 weeks it was on the road. It has always been a priority to ensure that the regional cities played an active part in communicating the project. The container tour was an integrated part of the communication and PR strategy and the public involvement ensuring that the citizens feel a sense of ownership of the project as early in the process as possible.

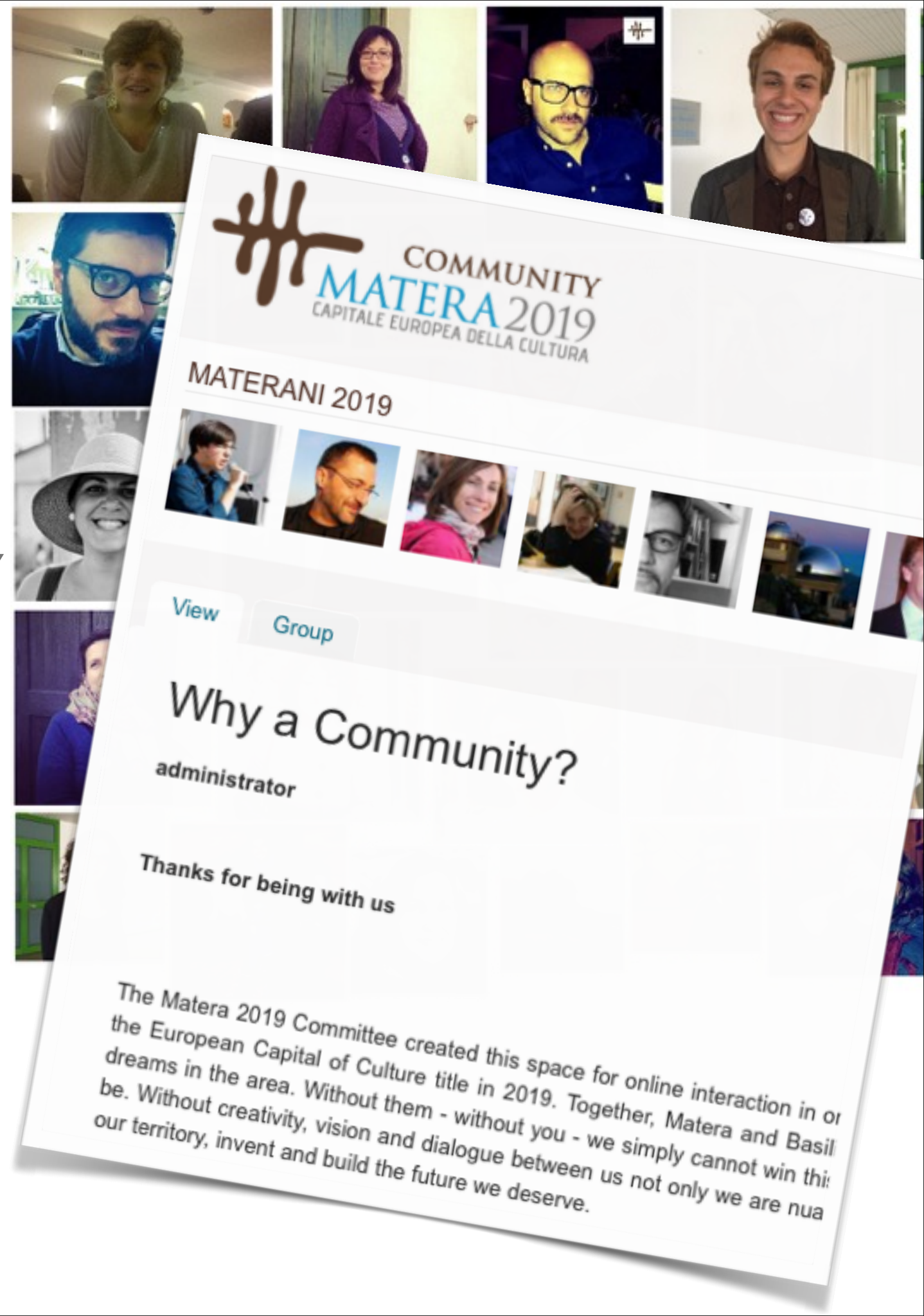


Marketing ECoCs: case studies



WEBTEAM & ONLINE COMMUNITY

In 2012 and 2013 a group of volunteers interested in gaining skills in social media was formed and trained. As the group grew larger, it also started becoming creative by experimenting hashtags, Twitterstorms and interaction between offline and online engagement. In 2013, the online community was launched which enabled remote project design, open discussions and contributions both to the bid book and the programme of events.



Mistakes

COMMUNICATING THE REASONS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN ECoC
(PILZEN 2015)

DIDN'T THE DIGITAL IN THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY UNTIL VERY LATE
(MONS 2015)

DIDN'T THINK ENOUGH THE MARKETING STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL
OUTREACH
(MONS 2015)

ATTENDING BIG EVENTS LIKE ITB, THE WORLD'S LEADING TRAVEL SHOW, WITHOUT
GETTING MUCH BACK
(UMEA 2014)

NOT BEING TRANSPARENT ENOUGH WITH THE NEW LOGO
(LEEWARDEN 2018)

DURING LEAD-UP, WE PUT TOO MUCH FOCUS ON THE FINANCIAL, PRACTICAL AND
ORGANIZATIONAL SET-UP AND NOT ENOUGH ON CULTURE AND CONTENT
(AARHUS 2017)

Toughest communication challenge?

How would you overcome it?

EXPLAIN TO THE LOCALS WHAT THE BENEFITS OF AN ECOC ARE

Explain the ideas and benefits of ECOC in a few sentences.

Advertising and PR does NOT work to sell the success to the citizens. Organize live presentations for different groups of citizens: all the team should be involved in this kind of presentation, including volunteers. Go to offices, families, schools.

ORGANIZE THE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

During the ECoC year there is so much going on. If the internal communication is not perfectly organized the whole strategy collapses, especially when it comes to fine-tuning and coordinating the communication between the artistic and cultural programming team and the marketing one.

HANDLE SOCIAL MEDIA WHEN THERE IS HOSTILITY ON THE WEB

Be transparent, don't adopt a defensive approach. Don't feed the trolls but don't run away from criticism.

WAITING TOO LONG TO GET THE CONTENT OF THE CULTURAL PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY FOR THE OPENING CEREMONY

Build and maintain excellent and fluid internal communication between the teams.

KEEP UP PASSION WITH CITIZENS AND MEDIA DURING THE LEAD-UP

Many aspects seem abstract two years ahead of the ECoC year, and many highlights need to be kept confidential in order to create momentum. Be transparent on the plan for publication of events and activities, use touring activities (itinerant roadshows) and one-year-ahead-of-opening dates to build momentum. Be present at many meaningful cultural events and meetings.

Requests to the European Commission

PUT MORE MONEY IN THE ECoCs IN ORDER TO MAKE IT EASIER TO ENFORCE ITS GUIDELINES

HELP THE ECoCs THROUGH THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S COMMUNICATION TOOLS

SUPPORT THE LAUNCH OF ACTIVITIES BY ECoCs THROUGH ALL RELEVANT EC CHANNELS

HELP WITH SUCCESS STORIES, BEST PRACTICES, SHOWCASE OF VIDEOS

SHOW THE PROGRESS: 5 YEARS AFTER, 10 YEARS AFTER

ENHANCE THE VISIBILITY OF THE ECONOMICAL DATA

FACILITATE THE DISSEMINATION OF ECoC COMMUNICATION MATERIAL

SUPPORT WITH INNOVATION AND NEW MEDIA

SUPPORT SPONSORING AND FUNDRAISING WITH NETWORKING ACTIVITIES AND BROKERAGE EVENTS

BE CLEARER ABOUT EXPECTATIONS OF ECoCs ON THE LONG TERM

TALK LESS ABOUT MARKETING, MORE ABOUT COMMUNICATION

GIVE HIGHER STATUS TO THE COMMUNICATION DIMENSION ON THE ECoC AGENDA

KEEP PROVIDING ANALYSIS AND REPORTS ON ECoC CITIES TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT

INCLUDE ECoCs IN ALL RELEVANT FORA ON CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION

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Building a permanent network of communication and marketing experts, specialized in European Capitals of Culture starts from knowing each other, sharing best practices and exchanging knowledge on how to face similar challenges. The European Communication of the Capitals event aimed at comparing individual ECoC experiences on the first day in order to come up with a proposal for a common method to strengthen each other's communication strategies and expand the scope of programmed activities by involving the largest possible number of European citizens around the ECoC.

A network made of people, not of cities, interested in capitalizing on experience gained during the bidding and implementation phase and ready to contribute to the legacy of ECoCs by transferring their knowledge to peers and colleagues.



Matera,
9 - 10 April 2015

8 ECoCs from 2014 to 2019

Event Participants

Valeri KYORLINSKI, Plovdiv 2019 - Executive Director
Tsvetelina KERANSKY, Plovdiv 2019 - Marketing Director
Paolo VERRI, Matera 2019 - General Manager
Serafino PATERNOSTER, Matera 2019 - Press Office Manager
Raffaella PONTRANDOLFI, Matera 2019 - Digital Communication Manager
Ida LEONE, Matera 2019 - Community Manager
Ilara d'AURIA, Matera 2019 - Support to Artistic Direction
Jelle BURGRAAFF, Leeuwarden 2018 - Head of European Affairs
Hanita VAN DER SCHAAF, Leeuwarden 2018 - Head of Marketing and Communication
Annaliza BORG, La Valletta 2018 - Communication Officer
Fernando ALVAREZ, Donostia-San Sebastian 2016 - Head of Communication
Pauline COUTANT, Mons 2015 - Digital Communication Manager
Charline CAUCHIE, Mons 2015 - National Press FR Manager
Radovan AUER, Pilzen 2015 - Marketing and Communication Director
Jachym KLIMKO, Pilzen 2015 - Deputy Director Marketing and Communication
Elisabeth LIND, Umea 2014 - Head of Communication

Strengths / Weaknesses



DO ONE DEFINED AND TAILORED PR TOUR IN 7 CITIES IN EUROPE PRIOR TO THE ECoC YEAR - Caught By Umea

THERE IS NO EFFICIENT COMMUNICATION WITHOUT REAL CONTENT: DON'T START TOO EARLY

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS IN NEIGHBOURHOODS, SPANISH CITIES AND HOPEFULLY EUROPEAN ONES

TRANSLATE THE BID BOOK IN "Jip & Janneke" LANGUAGE, SO EVERYBODY CAN UNDERSTAND
(Newspaper distributed to every household and an animation)

* * * *

DIDN'T MANAGE TO GAIN INTERNAL APPROVAL FOR AND CONSENSUS ON THE MAIN MESSAGE

WE DIDN'T BUILD THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AROUND THE DIGITAL TOOLS:
THE DIGITAL DIMENSION WAS SET ASIDE AND NOT SEEN AS A NECESSITY

LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION ISSUE: English engages with a certain audience (maybe already more sensitive to culture already), National language with another one

EXPECTATION MANAGEMENT: DIDN'T SAY ENOUGH "NOs"

PARTICIPATION: all of our projects are proposed, developed with partners of the cultural industry and associations of the city. VERY HIGH EXPECTATIONS: "management of NO"

THE LOGO: EVERYBODY OWNS IT vs. MORE EXCLUSIVE VALUE

ONE YEAR OF SILENCE AFTER NOMINATION



Advice

BE FLEXIBLE: communication is not an exact science, be progressive, adjust the tools

PUT THE DIGITAL AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

BUDGET CONCENTRATED ON THE LAUNCH, NOT THE LEAD-UP

Avoid too many expectations, create momentum, wait for concrete projects to communicate

PERSONALIZE COMMUNICATION, INVOLVE THE CITIZENS IN FOREIGN AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

COLLABORATE CLOSELY WITH MARKETING AND TOURISM DEPARTMENT OF THE CITY, BUT DO NOT MIX CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES: city branding is not the same thing as communicating the cultural program and marketing the ECoC

BE CALM, BE FLEXIBLE AND DON'T LISTEN TO THE EXTERNAL PRESSURE ON THE PLAN

THE PROJECT HAS TO BE A COMMUNITY, EACH PROJECT IS A COMMUNITY IN ITSELF: each project is its own ecosystem.

BE CAREFUL IN BALANCING LOGO APPROPRIATION WITH A SERIOUS CO-BRANDING STRATEGY OTHERWISE THE RISK IS TO LOSE VALUE TO GET SPONSORS.

HATERS NEED LOVERS

INSTEAD OF TARGETING ON TRANSLATION, TARGET ON CO-PRODUCTION

EURONEWS STRATEGY: 12 languages in the same moment on every subject: 12 people, not 1 person then translated.

START IMMEDIATELY WITH THE MEDIA MONITORING:

WE KNOW WHO ARE THE INFLUENCERS. Invite them to the office.

GO TO OTHER ECoCs, INTERVIEW CITIZENS ON THE EFFECT ON THE CITY, USE ARGUMENTS TO CONVINCE SPONSORS 25

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Each ECoC presented strengths and weaknesses of the communication and marketing strategies, sharing advice and challenges to be faced in the different phases from the nomination to the actual implementation. The outcome of the event confirmed the necessity to constitute a permanent network of experts specialized in communicating ECoCs, although consensus on the definition of the next steps is intimately related to the resources each ECoC can dedicate. For this reason, the intermediation of the European Commission appears like a *conditio sine qua non* to develop a fluid and fruitful discussion.

Proposals to the European Commission

During the event, the strong and shared interest in constituting a permanent network of experts specialized in communicating ECoCs was confirmed.

However, the discussion on defining the next steps, shared methodology and choice of tools seemed to rotate around 3 main areas, depending on the privileged final objective:

- strengthen the experts' skills;
- strengthen the ECoC's respective communication strategies;
- expand the scope of the ECoC brand and the visibility of ECoCs cultural program and audience;

In function of the priority given to each objective, different types of tools were imagined and a different kind of coordination support from the European Commission was defined. If the network is more about reinforcing the experts' skills, the support activities needed would look more like travels, exchanges, workshops and the outcomes would look like guidelines. On the other hand, if the final aim is to channel common efforts towards a common communication strategy, then support would be needed on centralization efforts and outcomes would look more like an shared online platform, a digital channel or a unique magazine showcasing ECoC events.

Proposals to the European Commission

ECoCs NEED A MAIN MESSAGE FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING AN ECoC, THAT CAN BE COMMUNICATE IN A EASY WAY, WITH SOME KEY ARGUMENTS TO BUILD UPON.

PARTICIPATION TO THE COMMUNICATION NETWORK SHOULD BE MANDATORY:
ECoC is a communication project, so an appointed ECoC has to actively participate to the network

SUPPORT THE PERMANENT WORKING GROUP ON ECoC COMMUNICATION

ONLINE PLATFORM TO CENTRALIZE INFORMATION / MATERIAL (videos, websites)?

COORDINATOR / SECRETARIAT / ADMINISTRATOR OF THE NETWORK?

HOST THE BI-ANNUAL MEETINGS IN BRUSSELS.

ECoCs invest considerable effort in the implementation of their own strategy. Adding another workload such as the coordination of a network at European level is unrealistic. The European Commission could appoint a coordinator and program tailored meetings at the margins of the ECoC meetings.

SUPPORT ECoCs COMMUNICATION WITH EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S OFFICIAL CHANNELS

RESEARCH ON IMPACT OF ECoC COMMUNICATION ON EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP

LAUNCH OF THE ECOC YEAR FROM BRUSSELS, IN THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Proposals for the ECoC Network

ECoCEvents.com : SHARED OPENDATA PLATFORM WITH ALL ONGOING EVENTS IN DIFFERENT ECoCs

SHOULD BE AN OBLIGATION FOR A CITY WHICH IS APPOINTED TO BE PART OF THE NETWORK: MANDATORY TO BE THERE LIKE THE ECoC MEETINGS.

HOSTS SHOULD BE ECoCs THAT JUST FINISHED THE YEAR

ECONOMICALLY SUSTAINABLE: WHAT ARE THE EXPENSES THAT NEED TO BE COVERED?

APPOINTED ECoCs LOOK FOR EXPERIENCE. FINISHED ECoCs HAVE GAINED KNOWLEDGE. IS THERE MATERIAL PRODUCED? SHARE THE MATERIAL? ALSO HELPFUL TO GET SPONSORS

BLOG: EVERY WEEK ONE OF THE ECoC WRITES ABOUT EXPERIENCES. EVERY CITY PUTS IT ON THEIR WEBSITE. INHABITANTS OF CITIES ARE VERY INTERESTED. HAND OVER TO OTHER CITY.

STUDENTS: EXCHANGE PROGRAMME, NOT ONLY TRAVELING BUT ALSO TRANSLATING CONTENT

MERCHANDISING: EVERY CITY PUTS AN ITEM IN IT —> CO-BRANDING

LOOK AT EACHOTHERS WEBSITE: ALL ECoCs on EACHOTHERS WEBSITES.
MONITOR IF IT GETS US SOME TRAFFIC

EXCHANGE PROGRAMME OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL JOURNALISTS

HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN WHAT AN ECoC IS?

2 LEVELS TO WORK TOGETHER: PRODUCE MATERIAL / OFFER TO CITIZENS WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OTHER ECoCs;

NEXT ECOC MEETING: stay one day more and work on

THANK YOU!

Join the Google Group
ecoc-comm@googlegroups.com

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[@iaichka](mailto:dauria@matera-basilicata2019.it)

