



larissa | candidate city | european capital of culture 2021

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**Special thanks** goes to every person, individually and as member of a group for empowering the preparation process life-cycle through creative design and forward thinking, open consultation, knowledge democratization, ideas sharing, impact maximization and collective wisdom, effort and commitment.

10.150 citizens who have expressed their support by signing our Citizens' Support Book

140 fully active Volunteers skyrocketing grassroots social impact

8.816 Facebook friends who like, share, post our news through their networks

81 Cultural operators who have shared their profile and initiate creative matching through our electronic database

88 Organizations, from 27 countries, having expressed their support through cultural friendship letters

Senders of 4.679 e-cards to 126 countries

62 cultural creative minds that have proposed their ideas, helping us form a true bridging perspectives program

The Open Interactive Multi-stakeholder Consultation Group consisting of the Larissa Municipal Council, local, regional and international Cultural Operators, Larissa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Region of Thessaly, Ambassadors' group, High Education Institutes (HEIs), Secondary Education Institutes, Media Community, Digital Multipliers and other social actors

Thousands of people building up our loyal audience (artists, producers, event participants, photo contestants, spokespersons, etc.)



# THIS IS MY CITY



photo source: angelos katsoris | 'The other side of Larissa' photo competition

## TURNING IN2 A **LIVE STAGE**

# “initiator”

With sentiments of joy, pride, but also with confidence, the City of Larissa is submitting its candidacy application for the title of European Capital of Culture for the year 2021. Joy, due to the fact, that the submission of our proposal is accompanied by the wishes, warm and sincere, of the thousands of citizens and friends of Larissa who embraced the candidacy. Our pride is justified since the bid proposal for the Capital of Culture has inspired and directly set into orbit of creative motion the multitude of Larissa's human capital, provoking thus conditions of a "cultural spring" in our city. I am positive that this "spring" shall continue to bloom in the hearts of our people in the course towards 2021, if of course Larissa shall be designated European Capital of Culture. Finally, please allow me to feel confident that our proposal corresponds fully to the spirit, essence and context of the institution of the European Capital of Culture.

*Apostolos Kalogiannis Mayor of the City of Larissa*

Larissa of the Pelasgian era, with its 8,000 years of history, its two ancient theatres in the center of the town, with the second largest private painting collection in Greece exhibited at the Municipal Gallery - G. I. Katsigras Museum, with one of the largest Folklore Museums in the country, a Municipal Conservatory and the only Symphonic Orchestra in the regional unit, with the renowned Municipal Theatre of Thessaly, the first ever Regional Theatre in Greece -, the Municipal School of Ballet, the Puppet Troupe "Tiritomba" and the Puppet Museum, the new Diachronic Museum and more than 120 active cultural institutions, is unfortunately a city famous for its cafés and for the first regional football team that ever won a championship. Perhaps, this can be explained by the familiar introvert nature of all peripheral cities in Greece. However, the Municipality of Larissa gives priority to culture, regulates long term cultural policies and utilizes the city's vast artistic potential; thus, we firmly believe that the European Capital of Culture 2021 action shall support Larissa in its effort to become famous, from now on, as a City of Culture, not only in Greece but all over Europe.

*Panos Sapkas Deputy Mayor for Culture & Science*

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It is this conscious moment  
You realize culture is within you  
An act of life transforming ego to eco  
A generous want, a must can do  
It is the now, in front of you,  
awaiting this conscious  
moment of yours

What is my vision for my city?  
A city busy for words of apologies  
A city impatient to live its moment

This conscious moment of Larissa has come

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# Introduction

## general considerations

*“It's true that many times I saw things others didn't see and I felt that they will be lost... So, a great desire of capturing was born inside me.”*

***Takis Tloupas (1920 - 2003)***

Takis Tloupas was born in Larissa.

Son of a woodcarver, he gets introduced to the art of photography during an excursion to Mount Olympus, and after 1945 he opens a photographic studio in Larissa.

For more than 50 consecutive years, he captures characteristic views of postwar and contemporary Larissa and images from daily life, manners and customs of the people of Thessaly area, moments of life, movements of nomadic tribes (Vlachs, Sarakatsani) and local farmers in traditional jobs. He records professions that have lost in the fast pace of industrialization of the modern world.


His favorite subjects, the life in the Thessaly plain, mountains of Pindus and mount Olympus.

Takis Tloupas counts many individual and group exhibitions in Greece and abroad. Many photo albums, literacy and historical books have been published with his photographs. Special value is attributed to the album "The Greece of Takis Tloupas". In 1994, he was honored by the Ministry of Culture for his contribution to cultural life.

[www.takis.tloupas.gr](http://www.takis.tloupas.gr)

*in memoriam*



 Why does your city wish to take part in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture?

**T**he people of Larissa wish to reflect, disrupt, transform and re-write the history of their city and challenge their future perspectives. With this as solid starting base, the city of Larissa competes for the title of the European Capital of Culture because it wants to unleash this unprecedented cultural investment and stake its claim for a new position at the heart of the national and European social, economic and cultural edifice. To this end, ECoC will help us explore how the city - in its human scale, its liveability and conviviality and its embeddedness in space and historical character - may be culturally relocated on the map, the national and European map alike.

# THIS IS NOT A DOT



- This is a wholehearted and well justified logic. A masterplan of connecting dots.
- This is my city, Larissa, 'being there' for almost 8000 years. One of the fastest developing urban centres in Greece. Not a metropolis, but a principal agricultural centre with the largest plain in the country and a national transportation hub, lying exactly mid-ways between the two metropolitan areas of Athens and Thessaloniki, linking the South and the North, as well as the East and the West of the country.
- The city's positioning is rendering its role as a 'way through', a 'transit' point and at the same time a 'centre' as the capital of Thessaly. This has played a crucial role in the cultural make-up of the city and its people throughout history. It is a classic example of a medium-sized European city facing complexities and challenges, with the big cities, Athens and Thessaloniki, absorbing the lion's share, setting the pace in economic and cultural development, leaving the periphery with an undifferentiated, supporting role in the national narrative; almost 'rampageous' reconstruction and urbanisation processes; lack of long-term planning and vision, towards merging the 'old' with the 'new' to equally benefit centre and periphery at country level.
- This is our goal! To activate the city generic features having thus the role of a 'territory-in-between'; however in a different manner. Instead of an 'interface', we propose an imaginary that takes advantage of accumulated cultural capital, but also the opportunity and the potential of creating new one. It is about a project through cultural activity, looking at the human potential of the city as its most important asset, aspiring to trigger the imagination of citizens through cultural empowerment. We engage people's creativity, to encourage dialogue on but also questioning of possible futures, to offer platforms for self-expression; all of these through the powerful medium of culture and arts and their nature as exciting, unpredictable but profoundly fun.
- This is the key visual part of the Larissa 2021 image, signalling the bridging perspectives, as a notion, concept, methodology, best practice and effect. Trying out novel combinations in a dynamic place, sets the pace for a common journey that has started before the designation, to be continued and lived out much longer. In 'Bridging Perspectives' we aspire to expand the role of a 'creative class' and the responding creative sector into one including the 'intellect' and the creative energy of the whole city: artists, scientists, cultural actors, citizens, irrespective of age, gender, race, beliefs and notions, offering them the opportunity to be creative, and after all, the possibility of expressing themselves, sharing representations of the city's past, present and future among each other, and among European cultural actors and artists, conveying their own cultural messages.
- This is every single Greek, Turkish, Jewish, Albanian, Armenian, Roma, Arab and African that lives and has lived in the city, living in harmony, naturally forming a multi-national, multi-lingual, and multi-religion melting pot, due to the fact that openness and inclusiveness is fundamental in the city's DNA.

# THIS IS NOT A DOT



• This is every person, idea, history, project standing unique and independent, free from stereotypes and predispositions, and at the same time it is a circle of friends, a mindful collective effort, that generates culture, at local, regional, European and international level. This is Larissa calling out its openness to people, ideas, innovation, challenges, new experiences, networks, visitors, knowledges, to Europe and to the world.

• This is the exact openness and inclusiveness that makes the city special; still taken for granted by its people, as usually done with unrealised strengths. This ECoC creative journey, a self-strength process catalyst at the same time, will enable the people of Larissa to recognize that this city's DNA asset, of openness and inclusiveness, is of paramount importance in embarking on an extroversion journey.

• This is our approach that sees beyond a city surface; rather it is a game-changing approach that offers another viewing angle, revealing more depth in the observed object. Likewise, we will review Larissa, from a different angle, elevating it above its peripheral position. From a flat dimensional dot on the map, to a four dimensional, real time, city generating profound cultural experiences for all Europeans.

• This is the ECoC opportunity to challenge identities by acknowledging, inviting and bridging new perspectives; to contest boundaries, real or symbolic, material or cognitive; to run the torch of cultural enlightenment by shedding light to new meanings; to tolerate and adopt new inclusive ways of understanding and coexistence; and to generate new forms of social experience.

• This is an ECoC statement: We want to fully acknowledge the several forms of capital that converge on Larissa (*Intellect and knowledge, human capital and aspiration, technology & infrastructure, social mobility & innovation, fertility & natural resources, democratic tradition and open participation*) and summon its actors from all sections of our society; to create new interfaces for ideas, perspectives and visions; to imagine a new habitat born out of artistic expression and creative encounter with reference to space and time: Larissa in the year 2021.

• This is Larissa's flashlight, at last switch on to its untapped cultural potential, enlightening a city view that is unknown to European citizens, although well-known but remaining at rest, unexploited, by its people. A flashlight to guide the city's cultural potential beyond the regional boundaries, becoming a peripheral role model, a cultural paradigm, with ECoC being an excellent landmark signalling regional growth and development.

• This is Larissa, with the engine on, ready at the start line to take off for a well-wanted, well-planned, new cultural journey, awaiting the ECoC green light. As the European Capital of Culture, Larissa will be turned into a stage acting out, representing and embodying what the city stands for in the collective conscious of its citizens. It will demonstrate how identities, lives and destinies are conditioned through time and space by local, national and European patterns of culture; it will uncover the mosaic of prospects, values, and meanings inherent in the very notion of European culture to epitomise the overarching concept of **Bridging Perspectives**, Larissa's driving force through the process of bidding.

## THIS IS MY CITY **creativity & talent interwove** **local with European identities**

Our cultural and artistic program is the canvas for welcoming ideas and revitalising cultural **togetherness**, something special for the citizens of Larissa to wake up to every single day of the ECoC year. Each day would be an opportunity to be part of a new routine, a city-wide creative workshop that turns potential into vivid cultural experiences. As an ECoC, Larissa will be a vehicle of meaning, a symbol and an allegory for never - ending transition. It will also afford its visitors, nationals and Europeans, the opportunity to reconsider European culture and eventually the very notion of 'Europeanness' as an ongoing 'will to form'; something in the making; something transforming that which it takes over; something that is created rather than already formed, eccentric in nature and decentred in form, transcending political and economic order, **towards a new mode of intervention, communication and understanding.**



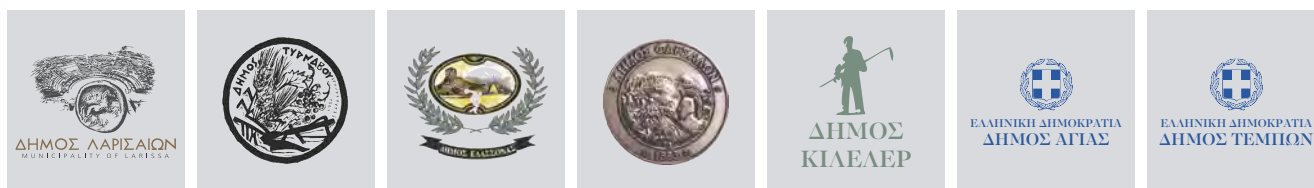
Does your city plan to involve its surrounding area?

## city embedded in a 'cultural area'

**A** call for joint action to culture was addressed by the ECoC bid office of Larissa to all of the adjacent Municipalities of the Regional Unit of Larissa, in Thessaly, to support the efforts of Larissa to be designated as the European Capital of Culture for the year 2021. They all said yes! Six cities, in the surrounding area of Larissa, committed themselves in this joint cultural venture, showcasing inclusive and synergetic approaches as the way to move forward, as cultural and historical loci at regional level are not isolated in time and space, but rather share common heritage and legacy with the history and the cultural profile.

### Intraregional Municipal Liaison Committee

- ➊ Municipality of Agia
- ➋ Municipality of Elassona
- ➌ Municipality of Farsala
- ➍ Municipality of Kileler
- ➎ Municipality of Tempi
- ➏ Municipality of Tyrnavos
- ✚ Municipality of Larissa



All invited adjacent Municipalities held separate City Councils assemblies and decided to support the city of Larissa in the ECoC 2021 competition.

Due to the key positioning of the city, as an interface between urban and rural areas, in terms of mixed identities already in place, conflating elements of urbanisation processes and agricultural livelihoods as they shape images and behaviour of people, a cultural approach that makes no clear distinctions between urban and rural patterns of life is preferred. Larissa goes along the idea that the built-up environment of a city which is shaped by compactness, mixed-uses and also density, should correspond to social, cultural and political aspects that in turn shape the profile of a 'cultural area'. Thus, the cultural project of the European Capital of Culture in its artistic, cultural and developmental scope looks into encompassing places and human activity that go beyond the boundaries of the city, which function socially, politically and also economically as one unit to a great extent.

The cultural and artistic programme of Larissa 2021 is the main carrier of the cultural project of ECoC. The planned activities are designed to be implemented in a way that serves the actual involvement of the surrounding area of Larissa by both the means of events and initiatives taking place exclusively in the adjacent municipalities, as well as 'touring' or 'simultaneous' events, originating in the city of Larissa, but also show-casing in tandem in different places in the region; a cultural trip through time and space, weaving local tradition with innovation, culture's, nature's, and history's long-term structures, with 'eventemental' histories of now and here, as the par-excellence historian of the Mediterranean Fernand Braudel once proclaimed.

Be it the case where nature's gifts and human activity meet, a landscape providing a unique panorama of natural habitat, an important historical event that marked a social change, a once thriving socioeconomic model of cooperation and justice, a practice of social and cultural critique or of world renowned gastronomic specialties, the surrounding area of the city of Larissa has had and still has its own say in the cultural make-up of Larissa.

### Municipality of Ellassona

*by the shadow of Mount Olympus*

Ellassona is situated at the foot of mountain Olympus, the so called Parthenon of Greek nature and is crossed by the river Ellassonitis, flowing directly into the river Pinios. The two parts of the town, as divided by the river, are connected through three bridges, and an old bridge which is one of the main attractions of the city. The city hosts the Panhellenic feast of Greek white cheese, feta, while the whole region is the largest provider of milk products in the country.





## Municipality of Agia

*nature's garden next door*

Agia, a graphical village of 5.000 inhabitants, lies on the slopes of mountain Kissavos, with its lush forest and unique nature. The area hosts the coastline of the Prefecture of Larissa to the Aegean, where the green of the mountain blends with the blue of the sea. In the area of Agia grows around 20% of the apple production in Greece, the famous apples of Agia, and the main occupation of the Agia people along with cherries and pears. A river city as Larissa itself, three stone bridges are connecting the banks of Amyros river flowing through the city. The village hosts an open theatre right under the shadow of the mountain Olympus, with an unprecedented view to the river Pinios delta and the Aegean Sea. Agia has a rich cultural scene, museums and archaeological sites.



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**municipalities  
each with its distinctive  
local character  
complement the cultural  
layout of Larissa  
in an ever-interconnected  
cultural, economic  
& social matrix**



## Municipality of Tempi

*historical reflections of cooperative spirit*

Ampelakia is a unit of the Municipality of Tempi. A small village 30 km away from the city of Larissa, up on a hillside above the picturesque valley of Tempi by the river Pinios, carries a long and important history. It is called 'The jewel of Thessaly'. An originally rather poor village, Ampelakia is associated with an important achievement, the creation of a cooperative, the first of its kind in the whole world. The first family-led companies have been established in Ampelakia in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, leading to more and more companies over time. Increasing demand brought along the first signs of competition that could turn into being harmful for the people of Ampelakia, so the leaders of the companies decided to bring all the companies under the same union, in the sense of a 'brotherhood'. Men, women, and children became shareholders, while fields, money and work have been equally shared. Restrictions in capital deposit made it impossible for any fund holder to dominate over the others. Agencies and branches were established in Austria, Germany, England, The Netherlands, Russia and France, following the same rules, while money and income was foreseen to cover the needs of the poor or the sick. Historical circumstances, new economic models and financial practices have among other reasons caused the dissolution of the cooperative in 1812. However, even today, for the people of Ampelakia, collaboration, culture, education and openness inhabit their hearts and are manifest in their manners and customs.

## Municipality of Kileler

*a place and its symbolism: equal rights, social and economic justice*

Kileler is a village and a municipality which belongs to the regional unit of Larissa. The place became known for the Kileler incident back in 1910. Rural areas in Thessaly were regulated through a semi-feudal status, while through the years, living as well as working conditions of the farmers worsened, leading to frequent protests. The Kileler incident occurred when during clashes between the local militia and farmers, four protesters were killed and many of them wounded. The incident is a marking-time milestone of Greek modern history with respect to the land reform issue of Greece, i.e. the redistribution of wealth and land, following the formation of the Greek nation-state (The Kingdom of Greece) in 1830, after the liberation from the Ottoman Empire. Today, the incident is vividly remembered and celebrated, symbolising the fight for equal rights, social and economic justice.



## Municipality of Farsala

*connecting continents through taste*

Farsala, the powerful ancient city of Pharsalus, the famous Phthia of the Mycenaean period, was the birthplace of the most emblematic of ancient Greek heroes, the Homeric Achilles. However, a whole different story locates the city of Farsala amidst the cultural routes of gastronomy. Owing to the fact that Thessaly is Greece's granary, Halva, a regional specialty well-known all over Greece, connects the small city at the south of Larissa with Asia, Africa, Europe and the Jewish world. A local Halva feast each year is the perfect opportunity to cross boundaries - physical as well as cultural - ranging from the Balkan Peninsula to India.

## Municipality of Tyrnavos

*carnival as social critique and regeneration*

Near the mountains and the Thessaly plain, the city of Tyrnavos holds the famous Annual Phallus Festival having its roots in the antiquity. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century the carnival was regarded offensive towards moral standards of the time and was eventually prohibited; locals continued to celebrate it secretly. Once more, during the dictatorship years in Greece (1967-1974) it was prohibited again, and it wasn't until the early 80's when it was revised. Nowadays, following the social and cultural properties of a carnival as "social commentary and critique", during the famous custom of "Burani", morals, etiquette and decent behaviour are temporarily violated, mainly by the means of a phallus festival symbolising fertility and reproduction.



Explain briefly the overall cultural profile of your city

# city facts

The Municipality of Larissa is the capital of the region of Thessaly in Central Greece. The total area of the municipality is 335.12 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 160.000 inhabitants (2011 census). Larissa is the largest city of the region with a significant rural hinterland, and hosts many public organizations, educational and financial institutes and health institutions, while it has a considerable production infrastructure and commercial activity. The city has a highly developed tertiary sector of economy, highly dependent however on a primary sector and agricultural economy which characterizes the whole region.

The city of Larissa, as well the whole Region of Thessaly, was part of the Ottoman Empire until 1881 when it was annexed to the Greek nation-state, established earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the year 1830. The city has suffered from unplanned, uncontrolled spreading of urban development, at least until the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, followed by a substantive rise in population. It wasn't until 1974 when a first town-plan has been designed but never implemented in full. In the following years and well into the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, several time-plans have been developed and implemented, leading to the city as we know it today.

**Larissa is a very youthful and live city** hosting a very active commercial, pedestrian centre which lies into walking distance from many of the city's historic monuments. A river, the Pinios river, runs through the northern part of the city and it is a meeting point for people who enjoy nature, walking, hiking and biking. The city is in close proximity of many interesting destinations in the region (mount Olympus, mount Kissavos, Meteora, Lake Plastira, Pilio, etc.) suitable for daily trips. The area also provides several agricultural products of excellent quality, including many products with designation of origin (PDO) - Feta, Tsipouro, lamb, many wines as well as vegetables, legumes, grain, herbs, fruits, local traditional pasta (trachanas, chylopites), etc. Furthermore, during the year there are many product festivals (feta cheese festival, wine festival, chestnut festival, cherry festival, etc.) exhibiting local gastronomy and culture.

## Larissa lives 'in the open'

**“We all came to Larissa;  
the city was always there”**

- common say of the people of today's Larissa

Never fortified, accessible through the ages to cultures, civilisations, peoples, a mix of 'otherness' ever merged to form identities of tolerance and cohabitation. The pulse of the modern city is beating along the pulse of the Thessaly plain, echoing the 'sounds' of a lively, busy city and its vibrant feel as they cling to the 'silence' of openness and unobstructed horizon of the country's largest flatland, the granary of Greece in ancient times and still the largest cultivated and exceptionally fertile area of the country occupying approximately 2.400 km<sup>2</sup>, supplying with cotton, grains, watermelon, tobacco, vegetables, to name only some of this land's products.

The city of Larissa has a history of 8.000 years, but even before that, traces of human settlement have been recovered, dated in the Paleolithic period. During the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, Larissa takes the form of an organised community, a small village in today's terms, confined in the acropolis hill of the city, still the only natural elevation of the land surface of the city. The origin of the name Larissa itself is believed to be Pelasgian, meaning 'fortress', or 'citadel', sounding however like an euphemism considering the all-around flatness of the city. A hundred years later, Larissa reaches the status of a wealthy city, the capital of ancient Pelasgiotis, sharing the name of the Pelasgians, the indigenous inhabitants of the Aegean Sea region, referred to as the ancestors of the Greeks. In the middle of an extremely fruitful area in antiquity, as also now, the city was widely known for its horses. Larissa was a town whose constitution was always democratic, having thus sided with Athens in the Peloponnesian Wars of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. It was here, in Larissa, where Philip V of Macedonia signed the treaty with the Roman Empire in 197 BC, and Larissa became an ally of Rome and the centre of the Thessalian League, the confederacy of city-states in the Thessalian plain.

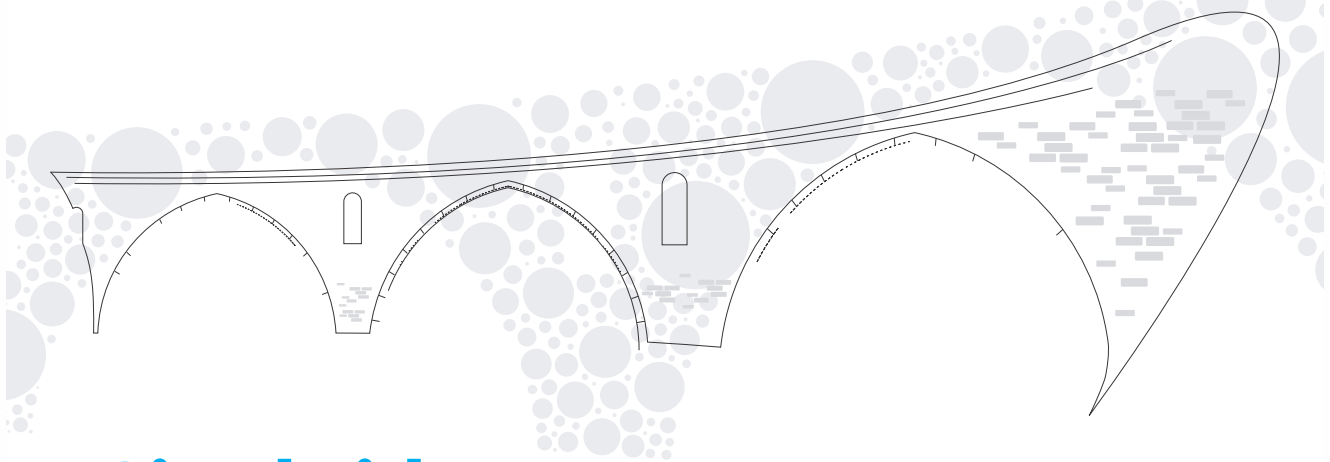
**Legend and history  
interwoven as they are, have it that  
Achilles, the Greek hero of the Trojan War  
was born in Farsala  
while almost 800 years later  
Hippocrates the Greek physician and  
father of Medicine lived in the city**



## #River-city

Larissa is crossed by the river Pinios which flows from the Pindus mountains in the northwestern part of the Thessaly plain and empties into the Aegean Sea to the East. Pinios is inextricably connected with Larissa's history and culture. In Greek mythology, the river Pinios was the son of Ocean and Tibya, and the father of Nymph Dafni, the priestess of 'Mother Earth'. Homer, the Greek epic poet of the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, the author of the Iliad and the Odyssey, is referring to the river Pinios as 'argyrodinis', the one 'who has silver-coloured waters'. Until 1986, the river has been the sole drinking water source for the city, but the extended use of

- its waters, especially covering the needs of the vast cotton plantations in the Thessaly plain, has led gradually to the
- exploitation of underground water resources through
- drilling. In recent times, Pinios has been aggravated by
- industrial and urban waste, and has also been subject to
- numerous flood control and irrigation projects. The river
- waters are irrigating approximately 80.000 acres of
- cultivated land in the Thessaly plain. The part of the river
- flowing through the city provides a lively habitat within the
- city, complemented by a large recreational park, the
- Alkazar park, hosting a lot of cultural events.



## #City bridge

*The Pinios bridge has been and still is the symbol of the city of Larissa through the ages; a symbol of resourcefulness and creativity, a manmade path for connection, exchange and evolution. According to historical evidence, the bridge dates back to the Byzantine period in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The architectural elements of the bridge convey its byzantine and Islamic character. The stone bridge was built in the place where one can see the bridge of today, which has been built in 1950, following the destruction of a large part of it in the Second World War. The second part of the modern bridge was built in 1980, running in parallel with the old bridge, having also 9 arches and sharing the same foundation on the ground. After the annexation of Thessaly to Greece in 1881, and especially in more recent times, the bridge has been functioning as the transit point from southern to northern Greece.*

### *The bridge is still there today*

Hundreds of people cross it every day, thousands of stories can be told because it exists. The bridge will be the symbol of the city's journey towards celebrating its culture and tradition, a symbol of its vision to connect, enrich, evolve and create a new exhilarating cultural experience, off the beaten European path.



## #City monuments & cultural infrastructure *a journey through the ages*

The city of Larissa in its entirety has been designated as an archaeological site by the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs of the Hellenic Republic in 2003, as the modern city of Larissa is actually built and layered upon the ruins and remnants of the ancient city.

Larissa a city full of cultural activities and events, such as amateurish theatrical scenes, a live scene of music bands and choirs, the symphonic orchestra and the philharmonic, very active local culture associations of folklore music and dance, a well-known photography club and galleries that promote the very productive local artists. The Municipality of Larissa has also a long tradition in operating District Culture Clubs for arts

- and crafts for both children and adults, a famous Puppet Troupe that operates the only Puppet Museum in Greece and the Municipal School of Ballet that has showcased prominent dancers. Furthermore, the city hosts the famous first regional Municipality Theatre, The Municipal Art Gallery of Larissa - G.I. Katsigras Museum, with a significant art collection and art workshops for children, the Ethnographical Historical Museum of Larissa and the Archaeological & Byzantine Museum of Larissa, the Municipal Conservatory, the International Film Festival of Larissa / Artfools every spring, the Cultural Festival of Pinios in June, to name a few.

### **Municipal and Regional Theatre of Larissa**

#### *first ever at regional level*

The first Regional Theatre in Greece, the Thessalian Theatre was founded in 1975 in order to bring in contact the residents of region and remote villages with theatrical art. Its main care is addressed in the "simple spectator" with creations of the most important Greek and foreign writers and with performances extremely professional. Equally important, the Thessalian Theatre has always strived to give the occasion to new writers, directors, actors, scenographers, musicians and chorographers to create and to be proved through its performances.





### ***The first Ancient Theatre***

Built in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC out of white marble of excellent quality, the Ancient theatre has a capacity to host approximately 12.000 spectators. It is the only ancient theatre, and the oldest one, that exists within an urban space of a city in Greece. Until today, the major part of the theatre is visible and accessible, while it is also partly operational, having hosted theatrical plays and various events. From 1994 to 2013, major restoration works took place to clean the monument from the groundwork. The final phase of the restoration is being implemented in order to make the theatre fully accessible and operational.

### ***The second Ancient Theatre***

Built in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, this theatre is smaller and not as well preserved as the 1<sup>st</sup> theatre. The theatre is in need of further restoration works. Near the centre of the town, the site of the theatre is not open, but can however be directly viewed from the nearby streets of the town.

### ***The Archaeological Museum***

The Archaeological Museum of Larissa was housed in Yeni mosque, a mosque, built in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as a donation of Queen Olga to the remaining Muslims in the city of Larissa. It is the newest of the city's mosques and the only extant today. Now that the new Museum is taking over, the Yeni mosque is planned to give stage to the city's central tourist info point having a crucial role in facilitating city's visitors in finding their way around and making the best use of their time in Larissa.

### ***The New Museum***

Larissa is soon to celebrate the opening of its new Diachronic Museum where all planned exhibitions are under preparation and expected to be completed end 2015. The Diachronic Museum of Larissa has been erected on the "Mezourlo" hill at the city's southern outskirts. It includes single exhibition area for the Paleolithic, Neolithic, prehistoric, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman and early Christian Middle Ages and Byzantine antiquities, warehouses and specialized maintenance workshops for frescoes, mosaics, clay and glass objects, metal sculptures and images. It also includes a cafeteria, shop, multipurpose hall for temporary exhibitions, lectures and other events as hall and educational programs. In the new building are also the premises of the Ministry of Culture services in Larissa.

### ***The monument of Hippocrates father of western medicine***

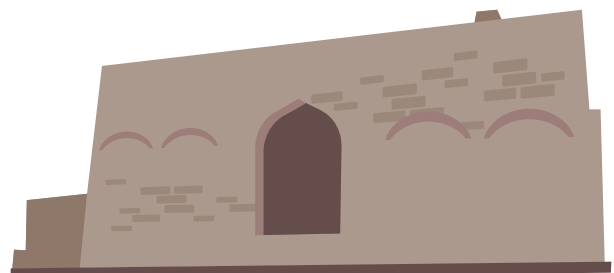
The tomb of the great Greek physician of the Age of Pericles (5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) who has travelled to Thessaly and Larissa and practiced medicine there, has been discovered in 1826. A flood of the river Pinios has been nature's way to offer to the people of Larissa and the whole world a gift. A silent reminder of the intellectual roots of western medicine lied for ages in the city, waiting to be discovered through the ages. The monument and the museum can be visited since 1986.

### ***The Acropolis on the Castle hill***

This is the only elevated surface around the city. Most cities in ancient Greece had at their centre a hill, a fortified height or citadel, hosting important temples. Inhabited since long before the classical Greek times, during medieval times, it held the city's kastro (castle).

### ***The Bezesteni***

A 15<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman period, market place of the city functioning as such until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It functioned mainly as a textiles market [the word comes from the Persian «bez» which means cloth]. It is a rectangular building that used to include six domes supported by double arches on two large built-pillars. The building is a protected monument, with strong potential of full restoration.



### ***The Municipal Art Gallery among the top 3 in Greece***

The Art Gallery, also known as the G.I. Katsigras Museum, by the name of the great benefactor of Larissa who donated his personal collection to establish the museum and its rich collection of modern Greek art of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Municipal Art Gallery of Larissa is an out of the city center, cultural activity hob and provides all the incentives and opportunities for citizens to participate actively in the field of visual arts. The Gallery houses the whole paintings collection of Katsigras with famous Greek and foreign artists. The plot has an area of 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> and the building is a two-storey one plus basement, of a total area of 7.285 m<sup>2</sup> including the G.I. Katsigra Museum, exhibition spaces (1000 m<sup>2</sup>), relaxation areas, outdoor exhibition spaces, library, amphitheater of 261 seats, artistic workshop, conservation laboratories and storage of paintings, photo lab, etc. It organizes and implements, among other, workshop and artistic training for adults and children, educational programs for junior and senior high-school pupils and exhibitions in collaboration with Greek and foreign organizations and cultural operators.

### ***The Averoff Agricultural School complex***

This is an exemplary complex of buildings serving educational purposes. It is located in the outskirts of the city, and was built in 1901. The school is still functioning today as a vocational agricultural training centre. Both its function as well as architectural design account for a prominent cultural locus responding to the importance of agriculture for the whole region as a source of livelihood and development.

### ***Puppet Museum 'Tiritompa' the only of its kind in Greece***

The Puppet Museum of the city of Larissa is the only one in Greece. It hosts a rich exhibition of approximately 300 hand-made puppet dolls. The municipal Puppet Troupe 'Tiritompa' supports the art of puppetry in Greece, offering and hosting performances at a regular basis throughout the year.

### ***Municipal Conservatory***

The Municipal Conservatory of Larissa (MCL) was founded in 1930. In 1993 it was transferred to its current building, where it offers 34 teaching rooms for musical instruments and theoretical classes, which are equipped with the appropriate instruments, 2 concert halls, a testing room, 3 concert grand pianos, a library with books in hard copy and electronic form, equipment for sound and video recording. It has since been a benchmark for the municipal conservatories of our country and this has been recognized by internationally prominent personalities in the field of music creation and education. MCL is one of the longest standing conservatories in our country, with 85 years of uninterrupted operation, during which it has achieved important educational and cultural work. For the past 30 years, MCL has on average 700 regular students, with 60 teachers and 10 people for administrative and auxiliary personnel of various specialties.

### ***Folklore Historical Museum***

The Folklore Historic Museum of Larissa was founded in 1974 as a "Folklore Society" by a group of Larissa's citizens, with initiators the couple George and Lena Gourghioti. Initially, it was housed in the Town Hall, but soon it was transferred to a rented space in the center of the City. It quickly became one of the most important

museums of the Greek country side and the country as a whole, due to its emphasis on the concentration, the study and the promotion of tangible and intangible evidence of modern culture in Larissa and Thessaly. The Museum's collections consist of more than 20.000 objects from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. They include objects of traditional and urban life, agricultural production and livestock, ceramic, secular and ecclesiastical silversmith, copper art, weaving, costumes, stamped, embroidery, wood carvings, prints and artworks, rich historical and photographic archives. Through permanent and temporary exhibitions, educational and other scientific activities, the Museum has diffused all these years the modern culture of Larissa in the contemporary Greek and international community. Its new building, where the permanent collection is housed, was inaugurated in 2014.



It hosts the premises of the city's candidacy office and will be the "heart" of Larissa 2021.

*It is a unique central multipurpose complex that generates prototype cultural content, nurtures artistic creation and production, and escalates audience development. It is the initiator and soon will host the Cultural Entrepreneurial Learning Lab.*

Once a five-storey milling industry built in 1883, Pappa's Mill is a restored architectural complex by the Municipality of Larissa and a protected monument, fully converted into a cultural, entertaining and educational building. The surrounding buildings and open space host the Municipal Regional Theatre of Larissa - Thessaly Theatre, the Puppet Theatre "Tiritompa", the doll museum, the Municipal Ballet School, the offices of the Philharmonic, the only open air cinema in the city and the music scene "Mylos 1929". Today it belongs to the Municipality of Larissa and it is a preservable building listed by the Ministry of Culture.

*The Pappa's Mill*

## ***cultural talent, actors, dynamics, potential***

The city of Larissa exhibits a large number of cultural actors in various fields. It was one of our aims however, first to identify, and then call the entire cultural potential of the city into action. Much to our surprise, the creative minds of the city have more than eagerly accepted our call, and were delighted to share ideas, and prospects of collaboration within the scope of the common objective to organise artistic and cultural activities towards and during the year of 2021, should Larissa be nominated the European Capital of Culture.

A rich mosaic of cultural producers ranging from

- architecture, sculpture, the visual arts, literature, dancing,
- photography and comics, music and opera, tradition, but
- also education, fashion, graphic design, 3D, digital content
- to name a few, has steadily been formed, exhibiting the
- cultural human potential of the city.
- The old and the young, gatekeepers of tradition and
- innovative, experimental spirit, established cultural actors
- and newcomers seeking for opportunities for cultural
- expression have lined up in a unique cultural assembly, ready
- to showcase the cultural talent and potential of the city.



**\*** Explain the concept of the programme to be launched if the city is designated as European Capital of Culture



**T**he Bridging Perspectives concept was born through creative dialogue, thorough research and intensive work put on the city's cultural strategy, as part of a larger city vision and mandate. It is thus a true bottom up concept, generated from the citizens themselves of Larissa, through collective wisdom, design thinking, feasible goal-setting, and daredevilry to actively listen to the city's stories, not-again, wants, candos, and then simply act! Act with a well-designed plan, methodology, tools, means and techniques to cause, facilitate and accelerate collective change. What is the prerequisite? The inclusive, open, all-in approach that is the result of a sincere bridging perspectives startpoint, ongoing process and continuous dynamic impact.

'Bridging perspectives', as an encompassing concept, creates a momentum that is enabling the 'meeting of ends' and the very notion of 'reaching out' to something new. Through it, the metaphor of '**bridge**', points at communication, connection, but also transition and change at the same time. Difficult or easy to cross, a bridge is also worth lingering on to observe where the city comes from and where it wants to head to, at the nexus of local, national and European horizons. The metaphor of '**perspective**' on the other hand implies the interrelations of aspects, notions, potential and dynamics within the living space of the city, with the help of which something can be mentally viewed and eventually experienced.

Here comes culture to play its role as a polar concept exhibiting the interdependence of potentialities and human creativity. Our concept for the programme allows for ways to see how cultural production can contribute to re-imagine the city, its places and identity.

- Furthermore, it allows to understand the city and how
- knowledge can be both formed and especially
- transferred and mediated through aesthetic meaning.
- Performativity, the manifesting potential of culture,
- and its ability to provide 'hints' and 'comments' through
- events, influence people's idea of a city and eventually
- its place at the local level but also at the European
- level. The symbolism of our cultural proposition as
- manifested in the 'Bridging perspectives' concept
- aspires to the provision of points of identification
- forming a platform of creativity to host and perform
- local and European identities, with the city and its
- surrounding area being the physical 'carrier' of this
- process. The city of Larissa, its creative sector and its
- people will then lend themselves to a common cultural
- quest which will focus on innate resources but also
- cultural encounters with European patterns of culture
- and resources, consolidating facets of histories, talents,
- spaces and creative energy.





## bridging talent with social integration

*Inclusiveness and openness are the only way to secure the feeling of belonging and the sense of a shared pursuit, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, nationality, religion, disability, beliefs and notions.*

Each city, so Larissa as well, has its own powers of life and the human potential making way towards the future. The city has rich pool of talent, often undiscovered, unused and a lost opportunity. However, with this action, we want to build bridges to enable the talent to be discovered, and fully exploited to further strengthen the community and sense of pride of the city. We look at the issue of talent and diversity in the context of differences between subcultures, generations, and people of varying competence, aiming to promote an enhanced self-image of both the city and its citizens.

## bridging cultural production with socio-economic innovation

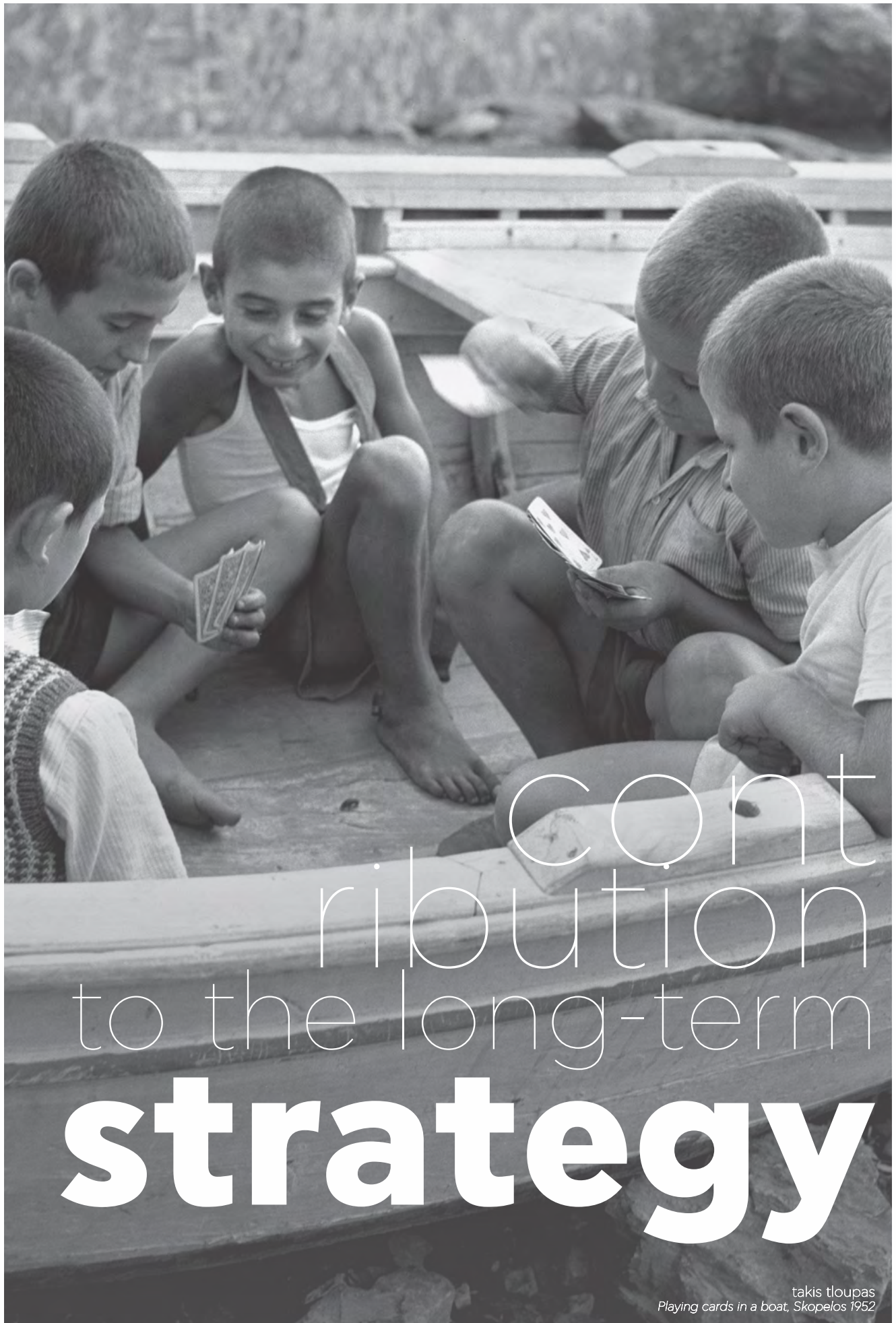
Cultural production is about producing, reproducing and modifying norms and values underlying our social and cultural relations. It involves materials, ideas, and resources imaginary and real as well, serving our purposes and rendering them meaningful. More than this, cultural production cannot be even conceived beyond the horizon of today's trends and notions, economic development and

social innovation; it cannot eventually be conceived as happening in a social and economic vacuum, and above all, it is meant to be linked to the cultural, productive, and economic profile and aspects of Larissa and its surrounding habitat. Bridging cultural production with economic and social innovation means building on the merits of creative economy.

## bridging crisis with opportunity

Crises and times of progress, well-being and development are part of the lives of people, cities, countries and even entire cultures and civilisations in time and space. Falling down and standing up again, rejuvenation and regeneration render our lives meaningful and provide us with purpose and responsibility towards ourselves and the generations to come. Bridging crisis with opportunity provides the common ground for revisiting lost opportunities and 'skeletons in the closet', glories of the past that have ended up in ramshackle of today, opportunities awaiting to be embraced and freed. Combining creative arts and cultural production with knowledge sharing and technology, we rely on the capacity of culture to condense and symbolically represent complex historical and social processes marking the life of the city, a process of re-evaluation, decision and action.





cont  
ribution  
to the long-term  
**strategy**

takis tloupas  
Playing cards in a boat, Skopelos 1952



*Describe the cultural strategy and the city's plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors, including through the development of long term links between these sectors and the economic and social sectors in your city. What are the plans for sustaining the cultural activities beyond the year of the title?*

**T**he cultural strategy suggests and targets a structural intervention in the city character, mainly by making the citizens themselves aware of how powerful is the perspective unfolding before them should they decide to exploit and redirect the openness and inclusiveness of the city's DNA towards drastic extroversion, with clear socio-economic benefits for the city and its citizens in the European context.

Recognizing the low appreciation of the city's cultural identity and legacy by the citizens themselves, as well as the fact that its unique openness character doesn't translate into an asset as it should and it could, Larissa is self-restrained into a periphery 'pushed' to the background, with low visibility at European and international level, remaining a trade-and-business rather than cultural destination, missing out on its untapped potential, talent, product, that deserves acknowledgement. Therefore, Larissa through its solid, yet dynamic, extroversion-dedicated cultural strategy, aims to become a role-model medium-sized city of the periphery, that invests on and exploits its rich cultural human capital, infrastructure and legacy, its openness and inclusiveness as main cultural traits, the high number of active cultural actors and bodies generating local action and the plethora of existing cultural programmes, initiatives and events around the year.

## **Larissa has it!**

### **Time to do something with it.**

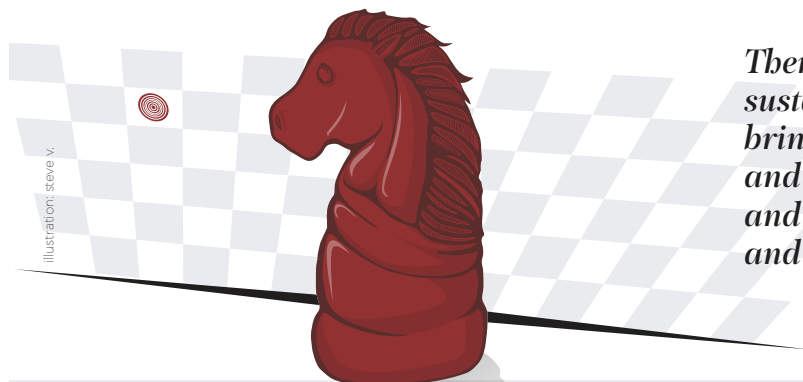
During the last decade, the cultural strategy for the city has been attended and fleshed out on the Municipal Strategic Development Master Plan drafted in 2004. The prospects for cultural development and its importance towards social and economic development have been clearly stressed, by considering the cultural sector of the city as the main future asset of Larissa at local, regional, national and European level. The Strategic Marketing Plan of Larissa developed by the University of Thessaly, has been drafted following two phases, being the product of open consultation among the political, social and economic actors of the city, as well as its citizens. Its last phase is being concluded (late 2015), awaiting its official submission as a reference document, laying down the principles and the action plan for cultural development as linked with social and economic development between the years 2016 and 2021.

The cultural strategy of the city of Larissa is furthermore in line with the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 for the Region of Thessaly, as complemented by the Regional Strategy for Smart Specialisation (RIS3 Thessaly) and the assessment of the cultural sector at regional level by the Regional Innovation Council. The Operational programme for the period 2014-2020 foresees an overall budget of 400 m. Euros, while approx. 320 m. Euros respond to the co-financing of the European Union. The main axes of the Programme address the strengthening and extrovert character of SMEs, the development of human resources and potential, social integration, the development of infrastructure at local level, and urban development.



- \* Creating an extrovert cultural sector and increasing its importance for the development of the city in a long-term horizon
- \* Building the sense of common European culture principles fostering EU diversity at the grassroots level
- \* Promoting the idea of participation and cooperation between stakeholders and citizens through accessibility to European cultural initiatives, programmes and events
- \* Further developing an effective creative sector based on strategic planning principles improving its capacity, knowledge and experience in planning and implementing cultural events
- \* Supporting the appropriate framework to promote the city's cultural image at the European and international level by using a targeted methodology and planning, benefiting from collaboration schemes and initiatives
- \* Bridging the socio-economic profile of the city and the region with the untapped cultural potential towards the empowerment of the cultural and creative sector as development driver





*There is only one way, that of sustainability when you achieve to bring to the surface 'hidden gems' and ideas recollecting the city's past and envisioning its future through art and cultural expression.*

It is expected that newly conceived and planned innovative cultural activities, especially endowed with a strong European dimension, will bring together cultural actors and citizens in an unprecedented way up to that moment, setting firm foundations for the institutionalisation of cultural initiatives to stay with the city, interwoven into its cultural make-up and life.

Events, festivals, venues of cultural production, and forms of artistic expression will be revisited, only this time as enablers and facilitators of the city's new identity as a cultural mediator for its own actors and citizens, and from there off, to Europe. What is and will be 'said, communicated, and done' towards and during the ECoC year will thereafter be crystallized into tangible creative and cultural asset, be it in the form of a wholly new and extrovert cultural sector; new collaborations and networks; sites, places, sounds and visions reminiscent of the ECoC year and echoing into the future; persons, actions, and attitudes having shaped lived experience.

Availability of existing and developed cultural infrastructure, as having served for the ECoC cultural

programme, will continue to provide, host, the action field for cultural production, exchanges, and development of new cultural capital. While, at the same time, the citizens of the city and its surrounding areas, having gained a whole new attitude towards cultural manifestation and performance, will be emancipated from the notion of being mere 'audience', in a move through the cultural programme itself to collapse the distance between cultural production and cultural consumption, the distance between 'audience' and 'active participant' in the making of culture.

The merits of investing in culture will be clearly demonstrated through the ECoC project, but beyond programmatic funding at the level of the State and/or the EU, **we intend to create an on-going participatory network of donors (cultural fund)** with the objective to secure self-sustainment for the creative sector of the city. This will reflect one of the main objectives of the ECoC project to show that cultural development and excellence is to a great extent a bottom-up, community-led issue, rather than a top-down approach.



*How is the European Capital of Culture action included in this strategy?*

**L**arissa, in this creative journey that redefines its cultural legacy seeks to use and exploit the ECoC frame to enforce the long-term vision, and implement its cultural strategy, building at the same time a European platform for cultural and political intervention, and thus building a bridge that empowers the full participation of all citizens of Larissa, Greece and Europe.

Larissa is an open city, but this seems to be conceived by its own people as a form of inertia forcing the city and its potential to stay at rest, rather than move and remain in motion towards experiencing in real life that what 'openness' as a signifier is implying, especially towards Europe.

The ECoC action scores a bull's-eye on Larissa's cultural strategy, as it will culturally display the natural make-up of the city in its openness, accessibility and centrality to function as a catalyst for extroversion, innovation and openness towards local, national and European realities. This will be achieved through cultural intervention by the means of exploration of the city's cultural potential, creative manifestation thereof through co-creation and encounters between local and European cultural patterns and notions, and eventually, creation of a new image.

The ECoC year and the cultural activities provide the perfect opportunity to assess the potential of the creative sector of the city, to gain a first-hand experience on what the city and its surrounding area can achieve through culture at local and especially European level, how to exploit the lessons learned from this experience, and how to safeguard sustainability of the cultural activities, drawing from the added cultural value obtained.



*If your city is awarded the title of European Capital of Culture, what do you think would be the long-term cultural, social and economic impact on the city (incl. in terms of urban development)?*

**T**he 7-year long ECoC project will be a catalyst for the realisation of the long-term benefits documented in the city's strategic plan for cultural, social and economic development. The long term impact of the project will be aligned and assessed against several axes that converge on the enhancement and empowerment of the cultural prospective of the city.

## Main axes of long-term cultural social and economic impact

- \* Regenerating the city and its surrounding area in terms of raising the international profile and image of the city and the region
- \* Enhancing the image of the city in the eyes of its citizens (social and cultural engagement)
- \* Repositioning of the city as a significant cultural centre with a productive and integrated cultural scene, including new cultural activities and improved cultural infrastructure
- \* Raising the capacity/ambition of the cultural offer in the city through connectivity with the creative community and contributing to innovation in their production of culture and art
- \* Developing the capacity of the cultural sector, by identifying and eventually bringing forth a new generation of cultural actors
- \* Offering unobstructed access to culture through new ways of embracing new communities
- \* Developing partnerships and collaborations for the delivery of cultural activities, through the improvement of links between local authorities, cultural operators and citizens
- \* Connecting with Europe, especially by focusing on local communities as European communities

## Long-term effects pursued by the city at the nexus of ECoC

### Awareness raising among citizens in the cultural infrastructure and potential of the city

- Increasing the knowledge of the population on both the number and the potential of the city's cultural infrastructure by at least 50%.
- Mobilising citizens' participation and commitment during the preparation of the bid and the years towards 2021.
- Setting the frame and nurturing an open consultation process and interactive communication.
- Designing a highly inclusive cultural offer through the artistic programme and turning the city and its surrounding area into a cultural stage.
- Raising and maintaining momentum for the ECoC project through sustained, wide-reaching communication campaign.
- Maintaining transparency, openness and inclusiveness as main principles in the preparation of the city in becoming the ECoC 2021.

### Higher participation rates in cultural events

- Redefining and highlighting audience development through novel methodologies, and bottom-up intervention.
- Transforming the whole city into a cultural stage and making cultural interaction a daily routine for the citizens.
- Rather than a set of performances aimed at various audiences, the ECoC programme will be about participation and interaction making citizens the origin of cultural production.

### Strengthening volunteerism

- Implementing a full volunteers' programme and building a strong community through exclusive communication and interaction platforms, rewarding schemes and the gradual cultivation of roles for those most committed.
- 136 active and committed volunteers are already on board offering their invaluable time and creativity during the bidding process. Our target is to have 10 times as many on the designation year.

### Inaugurating a new generation of cultural actors

- Bring the talent to the spotlight and celebrate talent in science, arts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, cultural production.
- Implementing events with high levels of co-operation between older and younger generations of artists/cultural actors at local and European level. Trans-generational collaboration in cultural production and implementation of artistic events is core objective of our artistic programme.

- Creating unique opportunities for a new generation of artists to present their work taking advantage of the European status of ECoC as a cultural project, merging experience with inspiration, and talent with innovation across arts and cultural expression.
- Give access and make accessible to the disabled, be it due to physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, or developmental disability by breaking down the barriers of restricted participation and activity.

### **Cultural mobility at regional and national levels**

- Co-production and co-creation of events by bringing together local and European artists/cultural actors exploring cultural and artistic perspectives, forming the base for sustainable cultural networks.
- Exporting creativity and sharing the cultural potential of the city with national and European audiences thus facilitating cultural exchange, interaction and collaborative schemes.

### **Increased number of national and international visitors**

- Redefining the touristic profile of Larissa as a destination for cultural tourism by showcasing ways of life, cultural heritage, arts and local cultural assets, building on the geographical and spatial positioning and advantage of the city.
- A 50% increase of visitors, especially in the sector of cultural tourism is foreseen for the designation year.

### **Additional income for the city**

- *Fostering novel models of production that rely on the creative sector, especially with respect to the up to now unexplored potential of culture and cultural industry to transcend local production and consumption notions and practices towards the creation of a wholly new force of production, transforming cultural capital to an opportunity for development.*
- *Raising the ambition of the city and its citizens in terms of what the culture can offer regarding personal, professional, economic and social development aspects.*

### **New enterprises in the creative sector**

- Creating new cultural enterprises by exploiting the dispersed and dormant creative potential through foreseen collaborations at local, national and European levels.
- Boosting existing entrepreneurial initiatives in the creative sector and allowing these to benefit from fresh collaboration opportunities with European actors and to form sustainable cultural structures during and after the ECoC year.
- Establishing a Cultural Entrepreneurial Learning Lab, incubating cultural start-ups and fostering initiatives in the culture related sectors that create new business and employment opportunities for the citizens of Larissa, and the region of Thessaly.

### **Creating new and strengthening existing links between local authorities, cultural operators and citizens**

- Accumulating knowledge capital and developing best practices on joint cultural management and cooperation strategies, including the establishment of networks and collaboration schemes acquired during the ECoC action at national and European levels.
- Developing blue-prints for action and collaboration as conceived and implemented between local authorities, cultural operators and the citizens.

### **Providing innovative tools and practices for monitoring and supporting cultural production in the city**

- Enhancing and technically upgrading, the already operational online tool of mapping cultural actors in the city, as well as their collaboration potential with national and European actors. In its full development, the tool will offer advanced capabilities for platform sharing and networking and will function along the lines of smart, open and transparent matrix of the cultural product on offer in the city.

### **Urban and cultural infrastructure development**

- Developing existing infrastructure through restoration and regeneration projects and upgrading cultural hardware (i.e. restoration of the First Ancient Theatre, completion of the Proscenium Theatre, development of the Cultural Village through regeneration of three Old Agricultural Warehouses).
- Revisiting neglected neighbourhoods and turning 'urban' or industrial ruins (e.g. abandoned industrial plants, warehouses, places, buildings) into places of cultural production.

**\* ECOC  
PROJECT  
CATALYST  
4 LONG-TERM  
BENEFITS**

photo: fotis natsioulis





*Describe your plans for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the title on your city and for disseminating the results of the evaluation.*



**T**he monitoring and evaluation of the cultural potential of the city of Larissa and its impact, as well as certain aspects for the development of the creative sector itself have already been addressed, but however not to an extent which would allow to derive elaborated results to be assessed and then fully integrated in the mid- and long-term strategy for social and economic development of the city, especially in terms of how the cultural sector could foster and drive development at large.

Thus the monitoring and evaluation plans to be put in place in association with the ECoC title, are **highly informed by and elaborate on the important aspects as documented in the long-term strategy** of the city and the way ECoC is involved in this, and of course the **capacity of the city to deliver** the foreseen activities, initiatives and the ECoC project in its entirety.

As documented below, we established cooperation with the Higher Technological Institute of Thessaly and have put in place an **experts' team for the monitoring and evaluation of the ECoC action**. The members of the team have been involved in the development of the Strategic Plan for the city of Larissa and thus are perfectly suited to attend the ECoC action in terms of its relevance to the overall strategy of the city, including cultural development strategy.

This structure will be institutionalised as the **Permanent Delegation of the City to assess cultural development** and suggest **directives and recommendations** towards, during and beyond the ECoC year for the city and the region.

For the needs of the ECoC action a set of general and specific objects as well as tools of impact measurement have been set as described below. However, the developed structure and experts' team will on top of this task provide **elaborate analyses that connect the ECoC action and its impact with the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 for the Region of Thessaly and also the National Strategic Reference Framework for the years beyond 2020**.

Within this scope, **four over-arching axes** are going to be attended, drawing from the evaluation and monitoring of the ECoC action, as related however to the overall assessment of the cultural development of Larissa:

- **Cultural vibrancy of the city**
- **Impact of cultural industry on employment and entrepreneurship at the local and regional level**
- **Impact of cultural sector on volunteerism**
- **Environmental sustainability and European cultural heritage preservation**

These axes build the reference points upon which Analyses and recommendations for strategic planning in cultural development for the city will be reported by the Delegation on a yearly basis, in line with the Regional Operational Programmes for the years 2014-2020 and until 2026.

## **Disseminating results**

The Analyses will be made publicly available in Greek and English and communicated to the Ministry of Culture and Sports, and the Ministry of Economy, Development and Tourism. Furthermore, colloquia and conferences will be held involving stakeholders, social partners and the wider public at the local level. Laymen reports and 'Citizens' Summary' publications will be also made available and disseminated at the local and regional level. All relevant documentation and reports will also be uploaded on the Municipality of Larissa portal, in a specially designed ECoC e-watch application, as well as the Transparency Program Portal as operating since 2010 under the auspices of the Ministry of Administrative Reform and e-Governance, safeguarding accountability and transparency and reinforcing citizens' participation through access to information.

## **Who will carry out the evaluation?**

Up to date and throughout the development phase we have had several working sessions with the multidisciplinary team of experts of the Larissa-based Department of Business Administration of the Higher Technological Institute of Thessaly. We have thoroughly discussed strategy, monitoring tools data collection and processing that can measure impact and results and evaluation objectives with a view of fully exploiting the ECoC as a capacity building project designed to drive change at cultural, social and economic levels.

To this end, once the city is designated as ECoC the overarching managing Authority will proceed with a public tender, within the framework set by national and European public procurement legal provisions, to contract an external independent organisation for designing and implementing the ECoC monitoring and evaluation strategy.

The external partner will work closely with the ECoC team designated expert and in accordance with the Guidelines for the cities' own evaluation of the results of each ECoC as these have been laid out by the European Commission.

The overarching principles of transparency and accountability in terms of assessing how the ECoC is implemented vis-à-vis the long term strategy envisaged at application stage and against a set of criteria measuring the impact and/or the results of the programme, will be maintained throughout.

### *Will concrete objectives and milestones between the designation and the year of the title be included in your evaluation plan?*

The two most important objectives between the designation and the ECoC years are capacity building in the cultural sector and audience development. We are looking to constantly measure, assess and review our strategies of upgrading the capabilities of our cultural operators and widening the cultural sphere to include audiences with little previous involvement and engagement with the cultural and artistic production and output on offer in our City. Therefore, we are looking for gradual measurable increases of indicators that will be determined after that whole monitoring and evaluation plan has been designed.

### *What baseline studies or surveys - if any - will you intend to use?*

There are number of surveys, studies and documents that the evaluation team will have at its disposal in order to use as the base of its work.

A study from the University of Thessaly and from a multidisciplinary team of experts, related to the **Strategic Marketing Plan** of Larissa is at the very final stage, due for official submission to the Municipality of Larissa in December 2015. It covers a 5-year period that coincides with the ECoC project, i.e. between 2016 and 2021. One of its basic components is the local cultural development strategy.

The **Region of Thessaly / Regional Innovation Council** had already implemented a study related to the Cultural Sector of the Thessaly Region, its status and its potential, highlighting important aspects of creativity as a catalyst for the development of the culture and tourism sectors.

The Final **Report** of the **Municipal Cultural Strategy Committee** is another strategic document to be taken into account. During the development phase of the Larissa 2021 project, the Municipality of Larissa along with the Candidacy office, established a specific Committee in order to study, envisage and prepare the Cultural Strategy of the City from 2016 to 2025. This will be the first ever collective, bottom up, Strategy Plan setting the long term objectives of the city's cultural sector.

Larissa **Municipal Strategic Development Master Plan** (2004) and the **Municipal Operational Programme** (2014-2019) are two additional policy documents that will bring the Municipality's input, vision and potential to the baseline study.

In addition, the set of **Guidelines for the cities' own evaluations of the results of each ECoC**, the **Eurobarometer Reports** on citizens own reflections for a number of European core policy areas such as culture and statistics on culture, and the **creative industry released by the Hellenic Statistical Authority** will also be taken into consideration and treated as baseline material.

### *What sort of information will you track and monitor?*

In the monitor and evaluation strategy that will be compiled of all the aforementioned baseline studies and surveys, all general and specific objectives, goals and success indicators will be laid - out and along with the policy and scientific rationale for their inclusion in the overall plan. However, we have already identified a set of objectives and indicators that will be included in our strategy:

## ● INDICATIVE GENERAL & SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

### G.O. 1

#### IMPACT MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

#### TOOLS

#### **Increase the importance of cultural sector to the development of the city in a long-term horizon**

- \* Increase the awareness of city image and the level of city's participation in a common cultural idea European Scale level
- \* Increase the contribution of cultural sector regarding the level of GDP by 10% of the city and the wider region by 2023
- \* Increase the employment ratio by 30% in the city by 2023

Statistical Data collection provided by primary and secondary resources in several Target Markets in relevant Stakeholders by using questionnaires, focus group analysis, interviews and official national and European reports

## ● INDICATIVE GENERAL & SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

### G.O. 2

#### IMPACT MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

#### TOOLS

##### Build the sense of European Common culture fostering EU diversity

- \* Improve and support the mobility between several groups (citizens, stakeholders, artists, students, researchers etc.) in common cultural activities
- \* Improve the exchange of cultural heritage education among European students and researchers
- \* Establish a framework of cultural communication model between EU cities
- \* Support the dialogue between cultural organisations and agencies in Europe
- \* Foster the active participation of people with disabilities in cultural actions, seminars, conferences and creative events

Surveys and collection of primary data regarding citizens, students, researchers, cultural executives and disabled groups

### S.O. 1

#### RESULT MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

#### TOOLS

##### Promote the idea of participation and cooperation between stakeholders and citizens through the level of accessibility in European cultural programmes and events

- \* Increase the Citizens awareness and diversity in the idea of European culture, through the participation in cultural events by 20% until 2020 (the year prior to the Title)
- \* Establish and evaluate the Citizens' sense of belonging to the European Union with common cultural principals, values and heritage

Surveys and collection of primary data regarding citizens and stakeholders from the evaluation team

### S.O. 2

#### RESULT MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

#### TOOLS

##### Create an effective cultural sector based on strategic planning principles improving its capacity, knowledge and experience in planning and implementing cultural events

- \* Increase the number of grassroots organisations activities within the city by 10% per year until 2023
- \* Increase the participation in EU projects funding by 10% from the baseline study year to 2023
- \* Increase the private sector sponsorship in cultural activities in the city by 40% by 2023
- \* Increase the private sector investments in cultural infrastructures in the city by 40% to 2023

Statistical Data collection provided by secondary resources and official national and European reports

### S.O. 3

#### RESULT MEASUREMENT INDICATORS

#### TOOLS

##### Create and support the appropriate framework to promote the city's cultural image in the European and international level by using a particular methodology and planning

- \* Increase the actual Number of International Activities in the city (festivals, fairs, exhibitions) that are organized in the local level
- \* Increase of the participation of Local Cultural Operators in international activities, festivals, fairs, exhibitions, EU projects related to culture
- \* Number of tourists visiting the City for Cultural purposes  
Rising the percentage of the visitors to 30% by 2021 starting from year 2017
- \* Media coverage  
Increase the media coverage related to the city's cultural sector 50% in local, and 20% in international Medias, by 2021 from baseline year (2017)

Statistical Data collection provided by primary and secondary resources in several Target Markets (Citizens, Visitors, Artists, Stakeholders etc.) by using questionnaires, focus group analysis and interviews

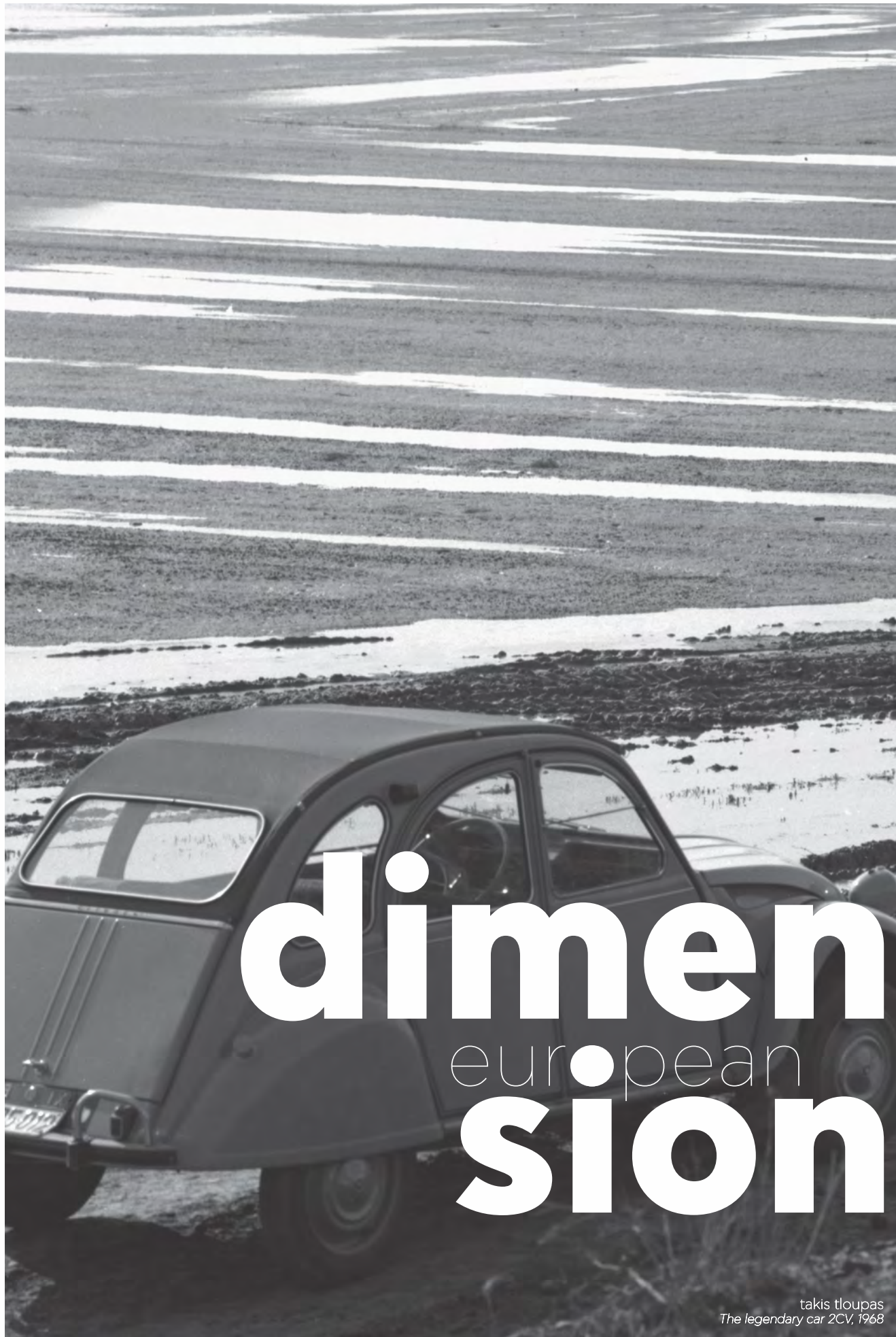


## This is how we define success

- Engaging new local and regional in cultural production, arts, entrepreneurship, science, agriculture. Allow it to function as a driver for social and economic development
- Boosting the creative sector through the development of an integrated, dynamic, open online tool mapping cultural actors in the city, enabling matching and collaboration prospects and schemes among national and European actors
- Incorporating more than 50% of the innovative cultural developed within the ECoC into city's future cultural offer
- Achieving high survival rate of all annual creative activities and increasing audience engagement
- Recording substantial increase in the creation of cultural start-ups, enhancing business growth and employability
- Redefining volunteerism as an integral component of cultural development and community involvement, managing to create a steady body of 1500 volunteers as 'cultural curators' by the end of the ECoC year
- Attracting more visitors to Larissa and upgrading its image as a cultural destination
- Enhancing the image of the city in the eyes of its own citizens, as a European, extrovert city
- Rejuvenating de-centered, neglected neighbourhoods, by turning them into lively spaces of cultural production and expression
- Making the entire city a cultural stage through the EcoC cultural programme

**The indicative timeframe and the tasks to be addressed during the Evaluation and Monitoring process are as follow:**

- 2017**
  - *Team of Experts appointment of the evaluation team*
  - *Mapping the standards and the skills of ECoC Team executives: recruitment of appropriate staff*
  - *Matching local development objectives with ECoC goals at economic, social and cultural levels*
  - *Evaluation of previous experiences based on contacts and diffusion of knowledge with other ECoC winners (knowledge sharing and exchange of practices and experiences)*
  - *Baseline study that determines indicators, methodology, procedures and tools of evaluation, timespan (first semester 2017)*
  - *First year report regarding the identification of the future strategy, tactics, alternative scenarios and selection of qualitative and quantitate methods (second Semester 2017)*
- 2018**
  - *Adjustment of tools and indicators (if necessary)*
  - *Mid-year report (June 2018)*
  - *Final year report (Dec. 2018)*
- 2019**
  - *Adjustment of tools and indicators (if necessary)*
  - *Mid-year report (June 2019) running quantitative and qualitative analysis based in primary research focus groups and interviews*
  - *Final year report (Dec. 2019) // Report of Expectations (regarding stakeholders' appreciation about economic, social and cultural impacts) entrepreneurs' appreciation regarding economic development and citizens' perceptions and expectation of hosting the event*
- 2020**
  - *Adjustment of tools and indicators (if necessary)*
  - *Mid-year report (June 2020)*
  - *Final year report (Dec. 2020)*
  - *Final Pre-Title Evaluation survey (2017-2020)*
- 2021**
  - ***Title Year Evaluation***
  - *Mid-year report (June 2020)*
  - *Final year report (Dec. 2020)*
- 2022**
  - ***Ex Post Evaluation (tbrough to 2025)***
  - *Evaluation report of previous yearly reports*
  - *Primary research to citizens regarding their continuing sense of being Europeans*
  - *Primary research to visitors regarding their appreciation about the city after the event*
  - *Co-organise and international conference regarding European Culture and the impacts of ECoCs, with the European Capital of Romania and Candidate country*
  - *Prepare and present the Final Evaluation Report*



# dimension

eu•ropean

# sion

takis tloupas  
The legendary car 2CV, 1968



*Promoting the cultural diversity of Europe, intercultural dialogue and greater mutual understanding between European citizens*

**I**ntercultural Dialogue is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage.

- Council of Europe, White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue

## *The principle of intercultural dialogue is an understanding of the 'Other'*

It is intercultural dialogue in the first place that can lead to mutual understanding, which in turn fosters cultural diversity in the sense of '**cultural democracy**'.

Mutual understanding among European citizens can be promoted only if we turn patterns of distance - in space, or in terms of political and/or economic order at national level and most importantly within the European project - as well as patterns of cultural diversity, into patterns of cultural proximity. The very concept of cultural diversity is highly important at the constitutional level of Europe as a union of people, while the need for its preservation as such is expressed in European Union's motto "United in diversity". In exploring this process, we follow the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in particular stating that "...each individual must acknowledge not only otherness in all its forms but also the plurality of his or her own identity; within societies that are themselves plural. Only in this way can cultural diversity be preserved as an adaptive process and as a capacity for expression, creation and innovation"<sup>1</sup>.

It is in the sense of this adaptive process and capacity for expression, creation and innovation that our 'Bridging perspectives' concept, setting the pace for the cultural and artistic programme of ECoC year, will strive to link existing 'pluralities' and 'diversity' within and between societies, and individuals in societies, creating cultural and artistic manifestations of cultural proximity in the European context.

We are utilising our programme to demonstrate multiple levels of cultural proximity, building on cultural elements engulfing the world of arts; performing arts like music, dance, theatre and film, visual arts like drawing, painting, sculpture and photography, literature, comics, as well as aspects of life referring to customs, attitudes, experiences, and traditions. Equally important, along the lines of a broader sense of culture and going beyond obvious notions of cultural expression through arts, we are exploding these concepts to include patterns of knowledge production and transfer, education, technology and innovation.

Throughout our cultural programme we put forward collaboration schemes not only in the sense of one-off co-production or co-presentation activities, but rather, in terms of the creation of an ongoing dialogue inaugurated and sustained during the ECoC year, looking into the establishment of firm ground and networks to outlive the ECoC year and become a model for Larissa as a creative city. By the creation of a dialogue we mean the lived-out exploration of forms of cultural production, co-creation and community participation, involving arts and culture, cultural professionals and actors, academics and the education community, active in the local context and pursuing creative synergies at national and most importantly European level.

We want to further promote a 'Unity in diversity' model within, which is actually the model on which the city lives now and has lived in the past, embracing social groups with diverse cultural identities as integral parts, respecting the responding various cultural elements, and resisting all forms of intolerance and exclusion.



*Highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration and current European themes*

The culture of Europe cannot be confined to the concept of 'one' culture, considered merely as the sum of the cultures of the nations belonging to Europe. European culture rather transcends the particular cultures of Europe. Nations contribute to the European culture, while none of them in the past or in the future had or will have the ability to exhaust the potentialities of it.

European cultural heritage as a concept is interwoven with European history as a process of change, and European culture as the meeting point of diverse cultures, forming in turn a European model of culture to offer to Europe and European citizens a vivid, common representation that has a highly unifying nature, building however on this very diversity of national and also regional and local cultures as components of a common cultural wealth.

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO (2002) Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (Paris: UNESCO)



The most culturally powerful aspects which find best the way to a European imaginary, are the works of women and men through time, literary, musical, audiovisual, performative, as well as the knowledge, the traditions and practices of the people of Europe. Natural, built, or archaeological sites, monuments and works of art as objects are in turn signifiers having incorporated human creativity, expressing communities of Europe's past, in constant dialogue with present and future ones to come.

In designing the cultural and artistic programme of the ECoC action of Larissa, our first and most prominent care was not to take for granted, that by simple labelling the whole project as 'European', that is as part of an EU led cultural project, would automatically translate into the creation of a respective perception by those participating in this project, either as audience or co-creators, co-participants, city citizens, nationals or Europeans and beyond. This means that instead of leaving to the ECoC audiences, citizens, artists, co-producers and participants the task of connecting the dots of what is happening during the ECoC project with the European idea and all that it stands for, simply because these things happen within the scope of this project, we offer them the reasoning and the representations in the form of cultural expressions, human and material, to think of those expressions, the city, themselves, the generations before them and those to come, as historical actors forming Europeanness and common European culture.

*What follows is a conceptual map, showing how common aspects of European heritage, culture and history are reflected in diverse forms of cultural expression and respective activities in the artistic programme, as well as how human and historical agency, as well as material cultural infrastructure of the city and its surrounding area are symbolically performed and manifested, reinforcing the sense of belonging to Europe.*

We attend common European cultural heritage by the means of five axes, embedding human-built environment (architecture, buildings, archaeological sites and monuments), nature, arts and artistic creativity as a common European heritage, social heritage, and local knowledge, bottom-up cultural heritage.

## Common European cultural heritage in the form of architecture and buildings

The built environment of Larissa through its many manifestations in the form of buildings, architecture, monuments and archaeological sites, reflects the transformation of the cultural reality of the city through time and history. What we see today, is a city built on the multiple layers of its past, some of them visible and tangible, others hidden and implied, but also omnipresent in their own way. The city's two ancient Greek theatres stand side-by-side with Byzantine churches and Ottoman period mosques; the legacy of ancient Greece in arts, like the standards of aesthetic beauty, in government, like the principles of democracy, and science, the exploration of how the universe works, stand side-by-side with the relationships between Reason and Religions, the contested opposition between the 'West' and the 'East' and eventually the cultural dispositions between 'self-ness' and 'otherness'.

This is then the human-built scenery of Larissa for the ECoC year, having historically conflated aspects of the European cultural legacy, and most importantly, resonating along much similar lines the process of the Eastern enlargement of the European Union, but also Europe's culturally diverse and rich make-up of different notions, religious beliefs, 'world-views', ever-transforming and challenging its own geographical and cultural reality.

Beyond the traditional perception of heritage as national, the Larissa2021 ECoC project is inviting people to rediscover places as symbolic places of European history and culture, at the same time, facilitated rather than labelled by the ECoC title.

ECoC participants and audiences will then form a 'communitas', as coined by the cultural anthropologist Victor Turner, as they will spontaneously share a common experience of togetherness and creation of bonds; thinking of common aspects of European cultural heritage. The title itself and the activities within its spirit, as placed in the city's human-built scenery, **is a means rather than a reason**, the temporal point to celebrate common cultural heritage, Larissa's turn to participate in this 'ritual' since its inauguration in 1985.

*Moreover, European cultural heritage in the form of architecture, building, monuments, is part of sustainable development in terms of the relationships between past, present and future generations with equal responsibility to preserve this heritage, and exchange, as well as confer meanings and values between generations.*

This is a common concern for Europe in creating bonds of continuity, within local communities and from there on to the European community as a whole. The sense of place, with its inhabitants embodying the spirit of a place, the spirit of the city of Larissa is being reinforced as lived out within the communal spirit of ECoC.

## ★ Natural heritage vis-à-vis the city & the concept of development

A vast plain, a river, and a city to live on them. Crops, water, livestock, and from there on to the city standing there from times lost in the past until the modern era. This is nature's scenery for the city of Larissa in constant interplay with 'rural' and 'urban' livelihoods, so much characteristic of many European cities through history. Larissa in its mixed natural and human-built habitat exemplifies a typical example, almost as an archetypal city as positioned in place. In its connectedness, openness and accessibility as natural attributes, **Larissa's story is a story of human intervention in nature as a resource, but also a cultural denominator**, with the city ever trying to balance development, sustainability and preservation, with its achievements, but also failures.

A core interest for Europe, the relationship between nature's and culture's assets, especially concerning the interaction between the human factor in its economic and productive activity and nature, is present throughout the cultural programme for the ECoC year. Through artistic expressions such as photography, documentary, theatre, painting, but also through the exploration of traditional and modern, innovative practices as they find their way in the borderline between rural and urban models of production and ways of life, harmonies as well as dissonances are being portrayed and presented, lending themselves as 'food for thought' and of course action towards how we can optimally preserve what nature openhandedly is offering to us, in our efforts for economic and cultural development.

Within the Municipality limits, the NATURA protected area of the Thessaly Plain covers the south-western part of the city, while a further biotope according to EU's CORINE (Coordination of Information on the Environment) classification system can be also found within the city. Pinios, the river running through the city, has also been designated as a wetland habitat by the Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre.

## ★ Arts and artistic creativity as shared heritage

Arts and artistic creativity are forms of expression and thought that have shaped and are shaping understanding in terms of historical flow and change, providing representations of the world and life itself, but also provoking pleasure and enriching human experience. Furthermore, artistic creations are stimulators of innovation and social critique, reinventing media and deploying novel technologies in more contemporary societies.

Works of art and artists themselves are a vital part of Europe's cultural heritage. Works of art can be found or experienced in specially designated places like Museums, Art Galleries and Auditoria, but also in public spaces. Others are to be found in books, private collections, in a cinema or theatre. **All of them can be heard, seen, felt, contemplated, absorbed and interpreted by our senses and our reason.**

Our ECoC programme gives space for all forms of artistic expression, and opens up the doors of all the places where art can be experienced. **We turn the city into an open exhibition** of local, national, and European works of art, blending them together, as well as giving local artists and cultural actors the opportunity to interact through art with European and international artists.

In this favour experiment and ad hoc creation, combination and collaboration, allowing to see the work of art from alternative perspectives, and thus think of it in whole new ways. The local artistic creativity of the past but also of the modern times in its many manifestations, is revisited through the interaction between the cultural and artistic mind-sets that have shaped the works of art of local artists with that of European artists and cultural actors. A great part of the artistic programme relies actually on the effect through which different forms of life can be breathed into diverse artistic expressions.

Looking into the arts and their common European heritage, how it can resonate in Larissa, a city in the Greek periphery, in what way this heritage is shared, and how Larissa relates to the common heritage of arts and artistic creation, we are guided by the statement and approach of a polymath, **Leonardo da Vinci**, a man attending multiple areas of accomplishment, because this is the nature of the quest for integration at the European level after all. He said: *"Painting is poetry that is seen rather than felt, and poetry is painting that is felt rather than seen"*. This is an allegory epitomizing the 'Renaissance man', representing a way of thinking so fundamental for the idea of Europe. It is an allegory opening up new ways to give meaning to a **unity through art's potential** as common heritage, as a common language of expression, to make this unity a cultural reality in its intellectual, artistic, physical and social aspects.

## ★ Social heritage

Within cultural heritage, and common European aspects thereof, we further look into the concept of social heritage as a distinct kind of heritage. Social heritage is closely connected with the flow of history and change, in other words, human agency. Social heritage components are to be found in the spheres of social, industrial, rural, and urban life of the past and today. It is about the minutiae of everyday life, as manifested in artefacts, traditions, customs, folklore, language, personal collections, especially as they interact with aspects of history and memory, crises, conflict, war, continuities and disruptions in the life of the social fabric. **Local social heritage is part of the heritage of the people of Europe.**

In our cultural programme, we dedicate activities, artistic performances, dialogue, colloquia, as well as we incorporate local tradition, feasts, festivals with strong local character into the ECoC action. We attend **personal and collective memory**, aspirations fulfilled or unfulfilled, livelihoods and customs of social groups of immigrants, ethnic groups, all those that passed through the city, and are to a wide extent still with us. We are calling out to all the citizens of Larissa to tell us their personal stories, through art, discussion, participation, by sharing personal collections of artefacts, photographs or testimonials of the past. We revisit the city with them, public spaces, forgotten and neglected neighbourhoods, recollecting 'stories and histories' that have made up what we are looking at today, and that which lead us here. We invite European and international artists and audiences not just to 'perform' or to 'attend' performances in the city, but to share personal representations and experiences as lived out in a European city that is most probably unknown to them, finding out ways and good justification that Larissa, and any other city indeed, **is a not just a dot on the map**. We want them, together with us, to feel the spirit of the city of Larissa and its surrounding area, its collective cultural identity, which is after all embodied in the driving force of feelings, sensations, insights, private or public, but most of the time communicable only through symbols and symbolic activity. We then imagine in common what we want Larissa to become, and what it is capable of in the future.

## **Local knowledge and grass-roots cultural heritage**

Local knowledge and grass-roots cultural heritage refers to the ways local communities produce economic and social value, which in turn conditions the relationship of the local communities with their national and European context, but also frames their potential for further development and extroversion.

Local modes of production and local products, ways of acquiring, conveying, exploiting knowledge and skills, as well as the constant dialogue and exchanges between grass-roots cultural aspects and new technologies, new ways of economic collaboration and networking, are framing the potential of local communities in strengthening their economic and social ties at local, cross-border, interregional and transnational levels. Larissa, as well as the whole region, has a strong agricultural character. The ECoC project is an opportunity not only to highlight local knowledge, but to celebrate it, especially in the sense of connecting local knowledge and practices with novel approaches towards renewed potential in highly relevant fields for the whole region like agro-entrepreneurship, branding, skills in ICT and effective marketing, as they are practiced across Europe.

In our cultural programme we connect local festivities and trade-fairs with training and entrepreneurial support. We summon local, traditional knowledge, science, technology but also feasting and celebration of local products as trade and cultural rituals under the same roof of social and economic development. We foster local potential for development not by disturbing local cultural and social structures, but by endowing them with new form of knowledge and practice they can absorb and integrate. By this we attend the hot issue, at national but also European level, to preserve an equilibrium between local habitus, the local understanding of place in a structure that starts at the local level and unfolds at this of the national and European level, and appropriate process of further development.



*Featuring European artists, cooperation with operators and cities in different countries and transnational partnerships.*

## ***Bridging perspectives with ECoCs and candidate European cities***

The Candidacy Office of Larissa has visited 4 European cities, and has signed 7 MoUs in total. The cities we have visited are Mons (ECoC 2015), Craiova, Novi Sad, and Leicester, while we have co-signed 7 MoUs in total with (1) Timisoara, (2) Cluj Napoca, (3) Tigris Mures, (4) Brasov, and (5) Craiova, candidate Romanian cities for the year 2021, (6) Novi Sad, candidate Serbian city for the year 2021, and (7) Dublin in Ireland, candidate city for the year 2020.

The mutually signed MoUs between the Executive Director of the Larissa 2021 Candidacy Office and the respective Program Directors of the cities, considered shared interests and determine areas of cooperation, as for example innovative approaches in art to support community involvement, exchange of artists through residencies, educational and cultural projects addressing cultural diversity in Europe, as well as the youth, joint applications for EU funds in the field of culture.

## ***Study visits and collaboration prospects***

**Mons (ECoC 2015, Belgium)** Mons is the ECoC 2015 for Belgium. We had the pleasure to meet the Head of the Executive Committee, Mr. Yves Vasseur, as well as the Communication Director of Mons 2015, Ms. Caroline Kadziola. We presented the main aspects of Larissa's candidacy, while the visit offered us a first-hand experience of how an ECoC functions in real time. We discussed in particular management and administration issues, as coupled with the strategy of the city, as documented in its original application. The Deputy Mayor for Culture and Sciences of Larissa, Mr. Panos Sapkas, presented the candidacy of the city in the frame of the Creative Wallonia programme, organised by the European Commission within the scope of the Culture for Cities and Regions project, promoting in particular the development and the potential of Europe's regions and periphery through the creative sector, a topic lying at the core of Larissa's long-term strategy and eventually the ECoC bid. **Wallonia Region (Brussels, Liege, Namur)** For two days we attended a good practice creative road trip along the Wallonia having the opportunity to study the flagship Programme Wallonia European Creative District which transformed the whole region to an EU demonstration project for Creative Industries.



**Lille 2004 ECoC** During our visit to Nord Pas de Calais Region we had the chance to study the project Lille3000 which continues the legacy of the Lille 2004 ECoC. We also visited Lens, a city in transition, using its Industrial Heritage and the establishment of Louvre - Lens Museum, to become a Cultural and Creative pole in the area. **Novi Sad (ECoC 2021 candidate city, Serbia)** A meeting between Larissa's Candidacy office representative, the Deputy Mayor for Culture of the city of Novi Sad, and the artistic director of Novi Sad 2021 was held. The two cities signed an MoU and explored in particular the exchange of mutual artistic residencies during the ECoC year 2021. **Leicester, UK: A networking visit** In Leicester, we met Mrs. Lucy Phillips, chief executive of the candidacy team for the UK City of Culture 2017. We had the opportunity to visit the Leicester Creative Business Depot, and explore valuable methodologies for strategic planning for urban and cultural development. **Craiova (ECoC 2021 candidate city, Romania)** We participated in the Conference '30 Years - 50 Cities, History through the European Capital of Culture', and had thorough discussions with the Mayor of Craiova, Ms. Lia Olguța Vasilesc. We explored aspects of the cultural programme of Larissa and Craiova with the President of the Craiova Candidacy Office, Mr. Lucian Dindirică, as well as the General Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Mr. Bogdan Stanoevic. We also discussed aspects of success for a candidate ECoC with the Executive Director of Plovdiv 2019, the Bulgarian ECoC for the year 2019, as well as the preparations of the city towards the ECoC year.

### ***Bridging perspectives with cultural operators and networks in Europe***

In August 2015, the Candidacy Office of Larissa launched the BRIDGING NETWORKS initiative, a set of online discussions among representatives of influential European cultural networks and the city of Larissa. The aim of these European creative e-talks is to “bridge networks” by providing an occasion for the exchange of ideas, trends and best practices in the cultural and creative industries at a European level. During the online discussions, following the presentation of the Larissa 2021 bid, exchange of ideas and envisaged cooperation and participation models have been attended with the following actors:

**The Balkan Express Network (Rarita Zbranca // board member)** Main topic of collaboration: The territorial aspects of ECoC in South-eastern Europe and the Balkans

**Roots&Routes international Association (Sophia Koustas // board member)** Main topic and aspects of collaboration: Streaming the output of artists' mobility programs to the wider community

**The River // Cities Platform (Martine Meire // board member)** Main topic and aspects of collaboration: Cultural, environmental and political initiatives which work in their cities to interact with and develop their rivers or waterfronts as cultural spaces

**European Festivals Association** Main topic of collaboration: Putting together a local festival with a truly European outreach

**Connecting Cities** Main topic of collaboration: Building up a connected infrastructure of media facades, urban screens and projection sites to circulate artistic and social content

**Amateo** Main topic and aspects of collaboration: Creation of networks of amateur cultural actors and artists Europe-wide for participation in ECoC actions



### ***Featuring European and international artists and cultural actors***

In the following table we provide a non-exhaustive list of European and international artists with which we envisage cooperation and/or co-productions across the artistic programme. We couple them with indicative activities and events as foreseen in the artistic programme. There are three categories of artists and cultural actors: European and international artists, expats, and cultural organisations to directly get involved in specific events according to their fields of expertise and cultural experience.

|                                    | Name, country, artistic field  | Type of exchange             | Indicative event/s in the artistic programme   |
|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS | Maria Markesini<br>(The Netherlands, Jazz singer)  | Performance<br>Co-production | Opening Ceremony,<br>Nat Birchall and Friends  |
|                                    | Jeroen Marcelis & the StarFish Taxi<br>(The Netherlands, Singer and Composer)  | Participation<br>Performance | Opening Ceremony, European Music Day   |
|                                    | Daniel Vetzal (Germany, Director)  | Co-production                | Theatre, Cinema from the Past,<br>This is not a dot this is my story                       |
|                                    | Renato Ganella (Italy, Choreographer)  | Performance<br>Co-production | Ancient Theatre reimagined, Mill<br>of Performing Arts, Ballet Dance Week                  |
|                                    | Przemyslaw Blaszczak (Poland, Actor)   | Participation<br>Performance | Theatre, Cinema from the Past,<br>This is not a dot this is my story, Mill Performing Arts |
|                                    | Karol Jarek (Poland, Photographer)   | Participation<br>Performance | Urban snapshots  |
|                                    | "Pasion Flamenca" Institute<br>(Spain, Dancers)  | Participation<br>Performance | Opening ceremony   |
|                                    | Juan José Corrales Zamorano<br>(Spain, Puppetry)   | Performance<br>Co-production | International Puppet Festival, Un-Label  |
|                                    | Anton Malikov (Russia, Director)   | Co-production                | Ancient Theatre reimagined, Cinema from the Past,<br>This is not a dot this is my story    |
|                                    | Nella Golanda<br>(Greece, Landscape Sculptor)  | Performance<br>Co-production | Philolaos Returns, Contemporary<br>Sculpture Exhibition, Urban S-culture                   |
| EXPATS                             | Tim Matiakis (Denmark, Soloist<br>at Royal Danish Ballet)  | Participation<br>Performance | Ballet Dance Week  |
|                                    | Ilias Tzempetonidis<br>(France, Casting Director)  | Participation<br>Performance | CULT-STERS   |
|                                    | Christos Papanikolaou (Albania, Painter /<br>Giuseppe Sciacca Award 2015)  | Participation<br>Performance | CULT-STERS   |
|                                    | Berlin Collective<br>(Germany)   | Participation<br>Performance | UNITED WE STAND  |
|                                    | Myrsini Margariti<br>(Greece, Opera / Soprano)   | Participation<br>Performance | CULT-STERS   |
|                                    | Dimitris Karakantas<br>(Austria, Violin soloist)   | Participation<br>Performance | Various  |
|                                    | Dimitris Syringelas<br>(Austria, Musician)   | Participation<br>Performance | Opening ceremony   |
|                                    | Dimitris Andrikopoulos<br>(Portugal, Composer)   | Performance<br>Co-production | Opening ceremony   |
|                                    | Athena Tacha (USA, Environmental<br>public sculpture and conceptual art)   | Performance<br>Co-production | Philolaos Returns, Contemporary<br>Sculpture Exhibition, Urban S-culture                   |
|                                    | Philip Tsiaras (USA, Sculptor)   | Performance<br>Co-production | Philolaos Returns, Contemporary<br>Sculpture Exhibition, Urban S-culture                   |
| CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS             | Mara Karetsos (USA, Sculptor)  | Performance<br>Co-production | Philolaos Returns, Contemporary<br>Sculpture Exhibition, Urban S-culture                   |
|                                    | Petrovaradin Fortress "Art Circle"/<br>Novi Sad, Serbia: The oldest, active<br>for 63 years and the biggest<br>art colony in Europe, with<br>more than 80 art ateliers | Co-production                | Residencies, Performing Arts,<br>Photography, Painting, Sculpture                          |
|                                    | Craiova Municipal Library<br>(Biblioteca Județeană Alexandru<br>și Aristia Aman) / Craiova, Romania  | Co-production                | Literature, e-databases<br>and digitalisation, History                                     |
|                                    | ARTSCAPE - Arts Agency /<br>Vilnius, Lithuania   | Co-production                | Residencies, Performing Arts   |





## *Can you explain your strategy to attract the interest of a broad European and international public?*

In order to attract the interest of a broad public at European and international level, we think of them with regard to the communities they belong to, and from there on, to the relationship between our cultural offer and these communities. The cultural and artistic programme of the ECoC year has been thus conceived in a way to be in line with how people in our times prefer to be treated when they are being offered a service, a product, an idea, a way of life. They want to have plenty of room to explore and relate to what is offered on their own terms, while at the same time they are confronted with a lot of information and a very high number of options in what, when, where, how and with whom to do, which eventually leads to ever-changing behaviours and tastes regarding their engagement in culture. Bottom-line is, that fixed, inflexible, predictable and thus less stimulating cultural offers have limited potential to engage them.

This is why we develop and promote a cultural programme that embraces cultural interests and needs, well beyond the usual and ordinary. We offer a set of cultural experiences combining arts with innovation, knowledge and tradition, exchange of ideas and skills with notions on cultural production, bringing together the creativity potential of humans and their propensity to open-up, explore new cultural manifestations and how they shape their lives, especially as being part of a wider community of local, national and European character at the same time.

The cultural messages conveyed rest on acted-out performances that exceed the limitations of time, space, artistic and cultural sector, leading to an integrated understanding of how culture is able to suggest a model for a city in this case, within its context in terms of human and material potential, cultural legacy and historical aspects, the world of times gone and the modern profile of the city and its surrounding area. This will be done by attending **practices that create experiences and not products, address communities rather than undifferentiated audiences, and utilise platforms instead of traditional venues to the widest possible extent.**

The programme itself consists of events that vary in their nature, the planned places to host them and the use of public space, their artistic orientation, merging artistic creation across several arts, the targeted audiences (e.g. age, specialisation, preferences, levels of foreseen involvement), their popular character, their scale and presence in everyday life in the city, their European character vis-à-vis local cultural particularities.

A strong attribute of the entire artistic programme and the majority of the events is the innovative practice followed, according to which we seek to promote cultural and artistic dialogue among artists at the local and European level, offering at the same time the creative space for a dialogue among different artistic expressions. For example, common artistic themes and cultural products will be represented through different arts, like a theme of a painter expressed through dancing and theatre, a work of literature translated into musical scores, an ad hoc street art performance celebrating the convergence of art and livelihood in an unexpected manner, all of them providing unique cultural experiences that attract interest and convey multiple cultural messages.

By this we intend to make the lines that create barriers between 'high' and 'popular' arts, between the 'essential' and 'important' and the 'trivial' and 'commonplace', between the 'professional' and the 'amateur', the 'main street' and the 'back street', much more hazier.

Moreover, the cultural and artistic programme of Larissa involves initiatives which go beyond artistic content, and namely platforms, workshops, creation of hubs that connect the worlds of arts, culture, and entrepreneurship. These initiatives speak to a wider audience, and especially to the potential and the opportunities of the city and the region to embark on synergies in the creative sector, in agro-entrepreneurship, and creative industries.

Alternative ways of presentation and performance, ranging from traditional modes in physical places, to digital content and simultaneous online presentations at local, national, European and international level, further engage multiple audiences which either are not physically present in the city and its surrounding area, or prefer virtual participation and interaction.

A wide mix of local, national, European and international artists across many artistic disciplines and in creative industry at large, especially by collaborating and exchanging cultural and artistic views with each other, attracts the interest of wider audiences at the international level, both in terms of professionals, as well as those who love arts, experimentation and innovation through intercultural dialogue.

Should Larissa be designated as the ECoC for the year 2021 in Greece, all the planned events for the period towards the year, as well as the established partnerships with international artists and cultural actors, will be communicated and promoted through an ongoing publicity campaign. Our extended outreach strategy in preparation of this bid, having thus far showed excellent results in engaging audiences of all kinds (see more in Section 5 – Outreach), will continue to create momentum towards 2021, engaging further audiences and securing more partnerships.



**\*** To what extent do you plan to develop links between your cultural programme and the cultural programme of other cities holding the European Capital of Culture title?

We are mapping cultural initiatives that could interact with our cultural programme. So far, we have already identified one specific case we intent to create links with: one of the most exemplary actions of the city of Matera (ECoC 2019) and its surrounding area. It is the Reflections and Connections initiative, which examines the role of culture in offering escape from the tyranny of present. The whole approach is based on the profoundly southern value of slowness to escape from the ideology of speed, looking back in order to build a better future. We consider this idea, and also the cultural statements implied, as suiting best to our approach, where we seek extroversion, opening up to Europe, planning to further development through culture, but without forgetting what brought us where we are at the present time.

Matera 2019 has envisaged this initiative as an exhibition, re-reading Renaissance, seeking the cultural traces of Renaissance left in two of the regions in the surrounding area of Matera.

• In a similar way, we want to identify connections  
• with relevant traces, bringing together works of  
• art, research and history; sociological approaches  
• that trace the cultural identity of Larissa and its  
• surrounding area at the time-border of 1881,  
• which is the year of the annexation of Thessaly  
• to the nation-state of Greece.  
•  
• Across this time-border, before and after the year  
• of annexation, we will bring into light and present  
• cultural aspects of the city and the area, showing  
• how the annexation at the geographical level  
• resonated in the cultural level. We plan thus to  
• organise a recurring exhibition of available works  
• of art, artefacts, archives, documentation,  
• photographs, dated before and right after 1881, but  
• also representations as can be found in travel  
• literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; capturing this turn.  
• The whole initiative will be complemented by  
• dialogue and open workshops, but also testimonies,  
• photographs, objects that are parts of personal or  
• other collections, in Greece and abroad.  
•



# Cultural + artistic content



takis tioupas  
Central square, 1960



*What is the artistic vision and strategy for the cultural programme of the year?*

The artistic vision for the cultural programme of the ECoC year is to have an impact on the enrichment, the inspiration and the multiple forms of expression of the human experience; to be versatile, seeking excellence and diversity in artistic form and genre, in collaborations, in audiences and their participation, as well as the artists and cultural actors themselves; to turn spaces to places of cultural production, and places of cultural production to spaces of social interaction and community engagement; to offer an adventure, a cultural one, that everyone can relate to, to the widest possible extent, challenging performers, artists, producers, as well as the audiences to respond to the cherishing of the collective soul of the community, the local and the European.

Our strategy to make this vision a lived experience is to turn the city into a live stage. By this we mean the constant presence of cultural triggers that ignite imagination, and bring festivity amidst everyday life, creatively disturbing the order of the city as we know it. We want the city's pulse to beat along culture. This is not an easy task, because it implies more than staging several artistic events in a given time slot, the ECoC year, and a given place, Larissa and its surrounding area. We have to connect, to interweave, to create a sense of continuity and meaning.

Bidding for the ECoC 2021 title was a long journey. It took lots of effort, painstaking and joyful at once, even self-abnegation. Being the ECoC 2021 is about taking the responsibility to rise to the occasion and respond to the expectations of the city, the country and Europe. The strategy for the cultural programme is then both a plan and a method to achieve a goal for the ECoC year, as well as to bring about a desired future for the city. In order to satisfy both these aspects, our strategy for the programme relies on the following principles:

### **Cultural infrastructure that can afford the programme**

- We have thoroughly explored the cultural infrastructure of the city and its surrounding area, its potential to host the scheduled events, but also its potential for mixed cultural uses. In this, we considered their dispersion in space, accessibility, and planned improvements needed
- We care in equally highlighting the cultural infrastructure of the city; famous archaeological sites and monuments, highly and less known cultural places, buildings, architectural structures
- We have consulted with the administrations of the city's cultural structures, making plans and identifying strengths and weaknesses to be addressed

### **Cultural programme in harmony with the local human cultural potential**

- We have good knowledge of all the cultural operators and actors of the city, their expertise, their ideas and aspirations, and we have included them in the cultural programme to the widest possible extent
- We encouraged exchanges among them to present innovative forms of cultural expressions

### **Decentralised and diverse cultural programme**

- We have scheduled events of unprecedented character, of highly popular nature, but also ad hoc, surprise, small-scale events making vivid and ground-breaking statements
- We balance events in institutionalised and non-institutionalised places
- We take events to the public space, from the city's centre to the outskirts and the surrounding area
- We mix up artistic genres with local and European cultural actors, giving lot of space for a truly European dimension to emerge, across people, arts, notions, world-views, practices and creativity modes

### **Coupling culture with education, livelihoods, personal and professional aspirations**

- We want each artistic event to make a statement, to provide models for action and involvement, scenarios for the future of the city; they are the starting points towards a new identity, hints on where and how to find the raw material for development
- We bring together culture and celebration with the prospect of a new life, and new opportunities





*Describe the structure of the cultural programme, including the range and diversity of the activities/main events that will mark the year*

# ***The ECoC title is where it all starts!***

First, we mark the ECoC year. An opening and closing event are both rituals of initiation in their own terms. The opening event celebrates the ECoC title, it epitomizes the cultural offer to follow, it is setting the pace, fuelling enthusiasm through feasting and togetherness, it is shining and making fuss, it prompts everybody to leave the couch and go out in the streets, it is about growing impatience and eagerness. The closing event marks the entrance into a new era for the city and its people. It is the view from the top of the mountain on what the city is capable to achieve, to contemplate about the opportunities opened up and ready to be further realised.

We will then embark on the ECoC adventure to host an unprecedented cultural programme in terms of volume and variety. Some of the events and themes we are contemplating are presented hereafter to convey the structure and character of the cultural offer we have in mind for 2021 and the years leading up to it.



bridging

***Crisis with opportunity  
Talent with social integration  
Cultural production with socio-economic innovation***

The keywords in these themes have their origins in ancient Greek and Latin words, spread throughout European medieval languages and to current uses. Crisis (from the Greek word krisis) as the turning point, the selection, the judgment, opening up opportunities, for talent (inclination, desire, will) to emerge and be integrated, to bring into being, produce, production, leading to social and economic innovation.

Cultural expression, artistic genres, creativity, all of them vehicles of meaning, representing modes of being and reflecting of the world, guiding livelihoods, giving direction, and signalling change, are embodied in the events of the cultural programme. Each one of them conveys its own message through art and culture, making these messages intelligible through cultural manifestation.

## **OUR AIMS**

bridging

***crisis with opportunity***



- Understand and capture, for the sake of cultural expression, the dynamism inherent in social transitions in both public and private narratives
- Explore “rural” or “urban” ruins, having fallen outside of the social and economic life of the city, turning them into places of cultural production
- Empowering people in the creative industry through acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and competences to successfully manage their own affairs and turn their passion into a legitimate career path
- Foster initiatives and best practices in the cultural related sectors (local, regional, national, European) that create new business and employment opportunities for the citizens of Larissa, and the region of Thessaly

bridging

***talent with social integration***



- Bring creativity to the spotlight and celebrate talent in arts, cultural production, entrepreneurship and technology
- Bridge social norms and values; foster inclusion build communities through cultural dialogue among generations, traditions and ethnic groups
- Utilise public space and provide the means for communities' artistic expression to surface. Facilitate culture creation deep in the grassroots as a vehicle for tolerance, understanding and co-existence
- Promote the pursuit of equal membership and active participation in society for the young and the old alike
- Break down the barriers of restricted participation and activity limitations as experienced by the disabled, be it due to physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, or developmental disability.
- Harness talent wherever it comes from

# bridging *cultural production* with *socio-economic innovation*

11  
events

- Experience and produce cultural value through technology - enhanced perceptions and cutting-edge thinking
- Challenge spatial arrangements and functions allow artistic expression in every conceivable outlet of the public domain
- Embed entrepreneurial approaches to artistic vision to create and maintain ventures with the financial, social, and organizational infrastructure necessary for arts and artists to survive and thrive.
- Advance existing knowledge (scientific, academic, laymen) with ground-breaking ideas, forming real, grassroots 'knowledge alliances' which lie untapped in the minutiae of everyday life and discourse.
- Understand arts, music, theatre, dance and festivity as rituals, bringing about messages of collaboration, social cohesion, participation and production of material and spiritual, cultural values to be commonly shared

## OPENING CEREMONY

*It is January 1<sup>st</sup> 2021.*

Embarking from the Larissa Station, yes this is the name of the central historical railway station in Athens, famous soloists in a wagon-size string ensemble take passengers enroute to Larissa by surprise, as they perform classical European works. Musicians disembark at Larissa Station, this time the central railway station of Larissa. They relay their symbolic torch, inaugurating at last ECoC, to a much greater ensemble consisting of choirs and soloists in the infamous 1<sup>st</sup> Ancient Theatre.

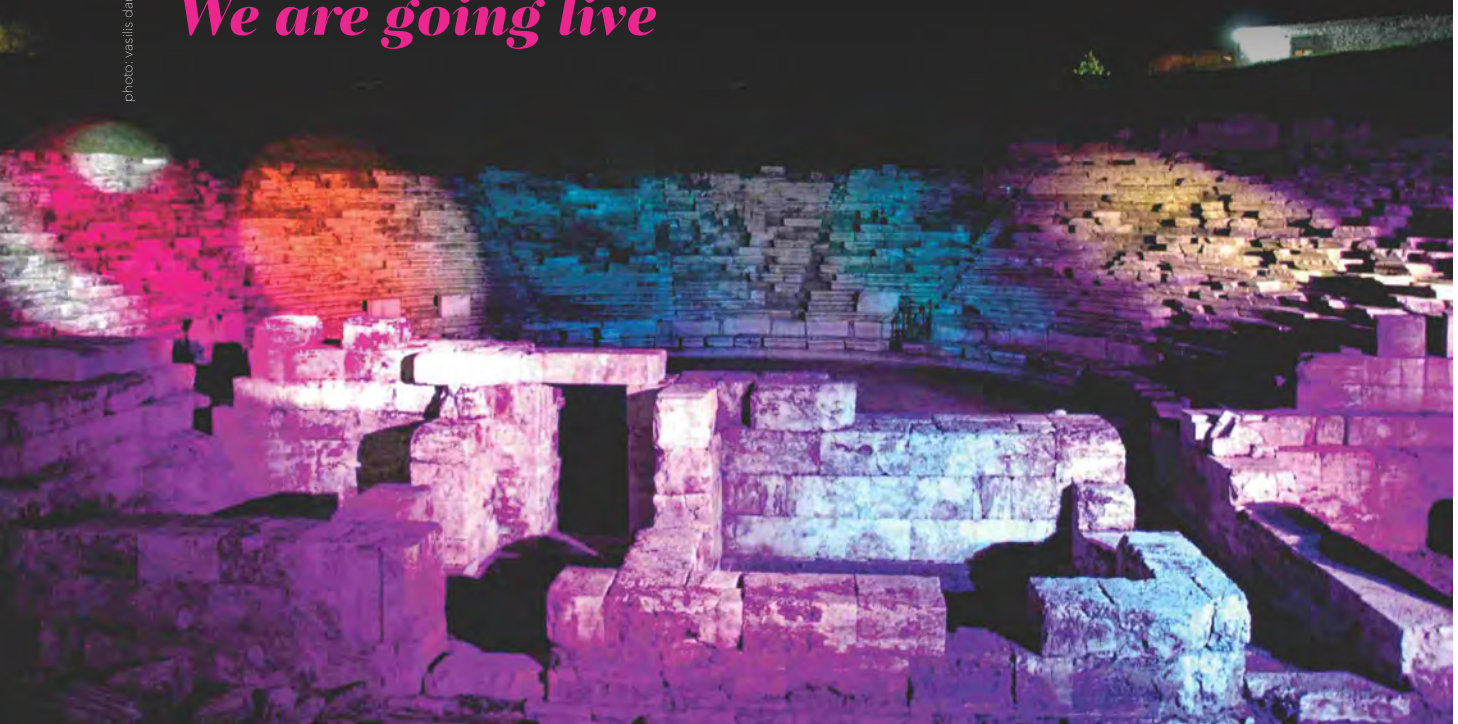
### *We then ignite the stage*

A cultural litany starts by the philharmonic orchestras igniting the city stage, with on the spot performances, the one giving lead to the next. Venues light up with culture. Starting from the Municipal Conservatory where via internet a maestro from the outgoing Croatian Cultural Capital is conducting the performance remotely; then, more crowded, we march towards the Diachronic Museum where a dialogue between ancient Greek and Celtic antiquities links Larissa with the outgoing Irish ECoC; then, even more crowded, we walk by the sound of music, towards the Proscenium and the Thessalian Theatre interrupting the rehearsal of an ancient Greek drama, pulling actors towards the Municipal Gallery where last details are taken care of by the curators of the temporary "bridging aesthetics" exhibition; then we all walk towards the Bezesteni debugging 3D technologies to bring alive the Byzantium & Ottoman pasts; then towards the Folklore Historical Museum where folk dance costumes are being hang in the dressing rooms; then towards the Papa's Mill where local and visiting contemporary dance groups assemble in great numbers to perform "bridges".

Citizens converge to the city centre, finding themselves being the centre of Larissa2021, right at the central city square.

### *We are going live*

photo: vasilis dampalis



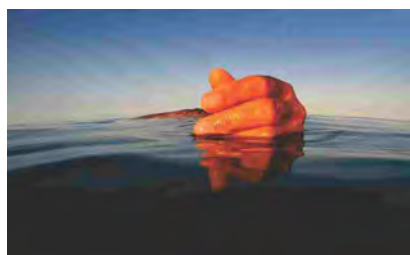
## bridging crisis with opportunity



### Urban Landscape

#Sculpture #workshops #convention #exhibition #digital  
2021

Representing the natural in the human made environment. A symbolic route back to what is connecting us with nature. The Larissa experiment is a set of total art operations, already in place, for the reestablishment of the natural, historical and cultural landscape of the city of Larissa. Aiming at creating a new identity for the city of Larissa, based on the enhancement of the Ancient Theatre of the city, two main squares of the town are included in a holistic design approach in order to reveal the temporal historical character of Larissa. The design included the “sculpted river”, marking the lost relation of the city with its river (**Pinios**) and emphasizing the different landscape types of Thessaly (the uplands and the lowlands) along its route. The “sculpted river”, flows towards the Ancient theatre and enables the development of the mountainous and lowland flora of the region. Reflecting on concerns about endangered aspects of identity founded in the living environment and tradition, a series of events including urban and landscape sculpture, photography and street theatre along the “sculpted river” will reinterpret the limits and play out the tensions between the urban and the rural.



### THE OCEAN SON

*Development with not against nature!*

The legendary Pinios River has gone several ups and downs during the centuries that it flows through Larissa and empties into the Aegean Sea. For years neglected and polluted it has recently come back to the spotlight thanks to green activism and the environmental movement. Despite some noticeable efforts to turn its banks into a true hotspot of social and cultural interaction, an integrated approach to the river's environmental legacy and impact is still required. Within the ECoC Project a new cultural and environmental alliance is formed to interact with and develop the River and its waterfront as a truly cultural space, through a curated multidisciplinary effort that re-enacts its past, defines its present and imagines its future. One of the artistic actions foreseen, is the hosting of an **International Choir Festival** on the River banks dedicated to Romantic Classical Music as part of a wider aesthetic current that inspired by the glory and beauty of nature.

#### Music

#festival #environment #sports  
Special Edition 2021



### REBELLIOUS ARTS

*Human agency, time for change!*

The Kileler incident occurred in 1910, when clashes between farmers and the Army, ahead of a general protest for land reform, lead to the killing of four and the wounding of many protesters. Even though it took another fifteen years until substantial land redistribution was initiated the incident is vividly remembered and celebrated by farmers across Greece as the decisive rebellious act against the feudal forces dictating life in the Thessaly plains at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. More than a hundred years later the ECoC will bring to Kileler artists from all over Europe to examine the legacy of the feudal oppression in Europe. An outdoor **International Silent Film Festival** will invite co-productions between accomplished and young European filmmakers that address the politics of land, through contemporary, symbolic cinematography.

#### Cinematography

#outdoor film festival #memory  
#history  
2021



### MEMORIES & IDENTITIES

A special memory tour originates from the Museum of National Resistance to take the participants for a walk inside private apartments and houses. In there, they are let into memories though private photography exhibition, storytelling, books, crafts and objects. Ordinary people from every walk of life, assisted by amateur curators transform their houses into art spaces and share instances and meanings of their past. Moving beyond dominant nostalgic narratives about the good old days this is a journey of uncovering the city's social legacy and current order of identities. Those who open up their houses participate in an art project founded on the moment when private memory becomes collective history, fusing the boundaries between the private and the public.

#### Photography

#audience participation #identity  
2021





## POETREES

*Joy, sadness, bliss and unhappiness*

*The circle of life in poetry & literature*

Fragments of European poems and literature works are dispersed in the city. **Works that challenge, provoke, explore the good times and times of dire and pain, about falling down and standing up again.** Verses and passages are written on paper, attached to small objects and are then hung from tree branches. More than one thousand (1000) such objects are placed in trees, deep in the city neighborhoods. They are available to be collected, read and then to either put back where they were found or placed on another tree branch. As audiences collect, record and read together the verses and passages, new works emerge allowing language to escape reason the same way other arts can escape form. An immersive experience based on deconstruction // reconstruction effect directly reflecting aspects of postmodern culture.



***The sense of crisis, and the senses in crisis. An aesthetic exploration of current challenges!*** Dialogues are staged between two European thinkers and/or artists from various disciplines and cultural - artistic traditions about social, political, cultural and artistic challenges of European interest. Against minimal backgrounds the genres of debate and performance are diffused. Knowledge then is becoming not only a matter of reason but also an act of aesthetics. In the process, cutting-edge European thinking and reflection on challenging issues, stimulate live audiences and are streamed online.

**Knowledge**

**#dialogue #performance #digital content #audience participation**  
Start date 2021

## EUROPEAN POETRY SLAM FESTIVAL

Young European poets meet in Larissa for a slam (i.e. performance poetry competition). They recite in front of live audiences while their performances are accompanied either by visual jockeys or live music. Spontaneous unmediated creativity and expression is encouraged and facilitated while new talent emerges. Parallel activities include creative writing and visual arts residencies with academics and scholars delivering creative workshops.

**Poetry & literature**

**#language #audience participation #viral action #video art #music**  
2021



## CULTURAL VILLAGE

***Bringing back to life, culture is the way!***

The cultural village is a flagship EcoC initiative that involves the transformation of three old agricultural warehouses laying aside the city. It is both a regeneration project and a social experiment for innovative, creative and imaginative interdisciplinary productions, open for observation to audiences as they are conceived and developed. The village will be offering residencies to any European artist who wishes to spend time in Larissa, explore new paths of creativity and participate in a dialogue among arts, generations, genres, aesthetic traditions, and social theories. Ideally, we hope to see original work created, new currents emerged, new symbols conceived and new reason manifested, all born out of openness and inclusion.

**Residency**

**#transdisciplinary arts #audience participation #sustainability #cultural exchange #regeneration launch 2017**



## THIS IS NOT A DOT THIS IS MY STORY

***A kaleidoscope, from fragments and non-structure to structure and meaning, each time differently***

An open novel containing innumerable different standalone stories will be written during a three-year long collective but moderated effort. This novel **will capture current anxieties, hopes, and dreams, in a fragmentary way, whereas meaning will be a an ever-contested issue.** The project will start in 2017 and will end in December 2020 and will be implemented through an online community of registered writers, editors and facilitators linking various literature university faculties across Europe. Accomplished european writers will be invited to contribute. In 2021, parts of the novel are edited to align with European themes and produced in a book for the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, Europe Day. The book is illustrated by artists participating in the International Comics Festival that is hosted in Larissa on a biannual basis.

## THEATURE

In 2021 parts of the novel are acted and performed throughout the year. Acclaimed and young European stage directors team up with actors, dancers and video artists to produce plays based on the novel. In other instances the novel is performed on a "theater for one" involving just the actor//actress and one audience member.

**Literature and Theatre**

**#performance #video arts #dance #theatre for one #audience participation #Europe day 9 May**  
Start date 2017



## PHILO RETURNS

*Artistic excellence out of the darkest sides of history*

A retrospective **3D printing exhibition** dedicated to cosmopolitan sculptor Filolaos Tloupas. A young man raised in Larissa as a 'mud-town', having left the country right after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, during one of the darkest periods for Europe and Greece. Some of his most acclaimed monumental sculptures that decorate several French cities will be exhibited for the first time and with the help of technology in the city he was born and spent the first years of his life. New interpretations of his work will be sought as audiences contextualize his works in an environment that influenced the artist deeply in the use of materials and in the shape of its forms.

### Visual arts

#sculpture #digital content

#technology

Start date 2021



## INTERNATIONAL PUPPET FESTIVAL

The Puppet Museum and the Municipal Puppet Theatre **Tiritompa** are two of the most popular cultural acts in Larissa. The Museum is the only one of its kind in Greece and has on display more than 300 natural size puppets created or collected from Tiritompa performances in Europe and beyond. In 2015 the first ever Puppet Theatre Festival was organised in Larissa, hosting Greek puppet troupes, mime and marionette theaters, street circus, workshops and children's activities. Following its success and with the possible participation in a transnational project, co-funded by the Creative Europe programme, in the pipeline, the Festival will reach out for new partners and exchanges with a view of becoming a truly international event.

In 2021 it will be a flagship event for children.

### Performing arts

#audience development #cultural tradition #children

Start date 2015 | annual



## LIVE IN LARISSA

DIVINE HARMONY IN DUENDE

The power of the Event. Backstage becomes front stage in unprecedented ways! European Jazz artists meet in Larissa for a week of concerts in selected bars and music scenes inspired by Nat Birchall live performance at Larissa's Duende Bar in 2013. Nat Birchall was the last ever artist to perform at Duende before it finally closed, heavily affected by the financial crisis. Surprisingly, this last concert was so successful that Nat Birchall decided to release it on vinyl. Today "Live in Larissa" is one of the most popular records in European Jazz. A music festival, as a time capsule, brings us back to a much more glorious cultural moment in the past, rethinking about the ways that culture can transcend crisis and pointing out to a new starting point.

### Music festival

#Jazz #live performance

Start date 2021

## bridging talent with social integration

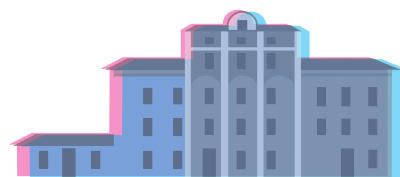
CULTURAL  
**ENTREPRENEURIAL LAB**

Building and developing entrepreneurial capacities for artists and professionals in the creative sector is a standalone imperative of the ECoC project. The Learning Lab will be founded at Papa's Mill, already a local cultural production and performance powerhouse that accommodates under the same roof acclaimed and upcoming art groups and enterprises. We seek to move away for the public-funded model of cultural production and adopt concepts and practices of identifying entrepreneurial opportunity and mitigate risk. We seek experimentation and innovation in products, services, processes, and business models that are as central to entrepreneurial activity and cultural start-ups. The Learning Lab will act as idea validator and start-up incubator and will empower local artists to manage their cultural output to benefit the wider community.

### Learning

#capacity building #cultural entrepreneurship

Start date 2017



## MILL OF PERFORMING ARTS

Mill, as in grinder, is a metaphor for experimentation based on deconstructing artistic form and expressive means to produce new conventions and experiences of artistic performance. This is what is happening at Papa's Mill nowadays where numerous teams meet to diffuse the limits between the different types of performing arts and explore new entrepreneurial approaches to cultural production. Already launched in 2014, the Mill of Performing Arts Festival will continue as a permanent artistic experiment around performance and as a symbol of (re) generating meanings for old city landmarks.

### Performing arts

#Festival #Theatre #Dance #digital 2014

## THESSALY ESSENCE



The acclaimed late photographer Takis Tloupas is celebrated through an open air, city-wide curated exhibition of his photographs that are displayed on digital advertising panels and shop vitrines. Tloupas camera captured Thessaly through moments of life, movements of nomadic tribes and local farmers in traditional jobs. He recorded professions that faded away in the fast pace of modern world industrialization. **However, the spirit of these times, as captured by the photographic lens is still with us, as a reminder of how people call forth and mobilize the 'human talent' to lead a livelihood through thick and thin, having as companion the plough or the computer.** Single actors, inspired by Tloupas' photographs, perform spontaneously across the city in front of exhibited works that act as theatre sets.

### Photography

#visual arts #street performance #theatre

Start date 2021



### X RATED

*In talent, sometimes anything goes, unobstructed and free!*

Celebrating fertility and reproduction, the infamous Annual Phallus Festival of Tyrnavos is a carnival dating back to ancient paganism. Over the years and in numerous occasions this Dionysian ritual was proved too hard to stomach and was prohibited as such, at least twice in the twentieth century. Yet the carnival was just too popular and invested with meaning to be forgotten and left to fade away. Nowadays it is as vibrant as ever. Within its framework the ECoC will put to the test a series of cultural values and norms regarding morality and sexuality. After the ritual is performed on the first Monday of Lent, called the 'Clean Monday', there will be series of events reflecting on and challenging predispositions founded on gender, sexuality and body politics. A week of transdisciplinary arts including satire & performance, theatre, literature, and visual & media Arts will examine body identity through several aesthetic and theoretical traditions.



### BRIDGING BODIES

INTERNATIONAL DANCE FESTIVAL

Accomplished and young European dancers meet up in Tyrnavos for a week of contemporary and classical dance, the art that more than any other is using the body as its main expressive mean.

**Carnival | Festival**

**#folk tradition #dance #cultural theory #transdisciplinary arts**  
**Special Edition 2021**



### FOLK NARRATIVES

Folk festivals are standard features in Larissa's calendar of cultural events. Throughout summer, localized festivities take place in which customs and traditions are celebrated by Vlachs, Sarakatsani, Jews, Emigres and Roma. Even though such festivals are open to all, only seldom attract substantial numbers of visitors beyond the communities in question. The ECoC offers the opportunity for a sustained dialogue between folk narratives and artistic expressions in music, dance and fashion. A week Folk Festival is foreseen with the participation of musicians, folk dance ensembles and catwalks and fashion workshops on folk costume. Side conventions are held, examining issues of community consciousness and tradition, identity, assimilation and social inclusion.

**Folk Festival**

**#dance #music #fashion #cultural theory**  
**Special Edition 2021**



### UNLABEL<sup>2021</sup>

Artists with and without disabilities reside together in Larissa to explore and implement new forms and production methods for performing arts. Based on a methodology developed by a project within the framework of the Creative Europe Programme, comprehensive concepts of inclusion are merged and transformed into collective creative activities with an ultimate goal of reducing barriers, encouraging equal participation of people with disabilities in the cultural sector of society.

**Performing arts**

**#audience development #social inclusion #disabilities**  
**2021**

### eutropia

Young European artists are invited to Larissa to reside, collaborate and participate in an open dialogue about performing, visual and audiovisual arts. They contribute in the creation of a new shared expressive language that is based on the cultural heritage and modern influences of each, while bridging traditional and contemporary aesthetic codes. They participate in a series of creative workshops with a common theme and goal, bringing into it different expressive means. A team of professional managers, facilitators and artists support the young residents and provide them with the necessary tools to achieve a supplementary collaboration between the variety of art forms and a harmonious coexistence between the diverse disciplines.

**Transdisciplinary arts**

**#performance #audiovisual arts #cultural exchange**  
**2021**



### E-DAYS

The squares of the city are turned into art embassies each hosting a European country showcasing its cultural tradition, on three different occasions. **Europe Day**, celebrated on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, **European Music Day** on June 26 and **European Day of Languages** on September 26, are offered to creative crews from European countries to present interdisciplinary works of art. They act, perform, sing, paint, and design in the open air, they re-think and re-create the part of public space that they have been offered and they interact with citizens and ECoC visitors.

**Music Festival // Visual arts**

**#street art #concerts #performances**  
**2021**





Designated walls across Larissa and the six other capital towns of the prefecture are offered to artists for transformation through painting, mural and graffiti. There may be common themes so that artworks can collectively convey messages as parts of an underlying narrative. Statements, quotes, images, symbols will bring about alternative scenarios and perceptions of life, social structure and roles, disrupting the 'visual silence' of a wall, by turning it to a canvas for commentary.

#### Visual arts

#graffiti #painting #mural

Start date 2021



## URBAN RE-ENTER

Facades and walls on entry city points are turned to canvasses and transformed through painting. Under the broad theme of inclusion, young artists from Larissa and elsewhere participate in an online international competition and the winners are commissioned to produce selected works. The artists decide the way that the complete composition will convey the theme of this exhibition. Visitors who enter the city from any given entry point, come across one of the paintings and are enticed to follow the route leading to the other six of the artistic whole.

#### Painting

#street art #urban exhibition

Start date 2021



### *Bridging cultures through bridging perspectives.*

A whole month devoted to Azerbaijani culture emerging common commitment towards the enhancement of Intercultural dialogue and exploiting the cultural coincidence i.e. the Azerbaijani rich cultural programme being implemented the last years in Greece, under the motto "Bridging Cultures", fits ideally the Larissa ECoC2021 motto of "Bridging Perspectives" semantically, symbolically and in substance. Azerbaijan, moving beyond its current strategic significance as an energy powerhouse will fuel ECoC with its music (classical, modern, jazz), poetry anthologies, gravures, crafts, photo albums, enabling cultural synergies that will be presented throughout an entire cultural month, devoted to the Azerbaijani culture, with European artists participating in co-productions reinterpreting Azerbaijani works of art.

#### Transdisciplinary arts

#Music #finearts #folklore #contemporary #festival  
2021

## FRIENDS FROM AFAR



## CULTURAL EMBASSIES

Integrating, means 'making it a whole!' Foreign information desks aimed at fostering cooperation and content exchange will be set up in the two 2020 ECoC's and in the two tandem 2021 ECoC's, in Romania and Serbia. Experienced and well trained city ambassadors will be placed at the cultural embassies to disseminate material, provide on the spot information, arrange and organise real time streaming of output, install a flexible facility allowing remote participation to Larissa ECoC2021 activities, organise tandem events where possible and eventually lay the foundations for the formation of an ECoC cultural network that will keep functioning after 2021.

#### Network

#tandem events #cultural exchange #project outreach #audience development

Start date 2020



## UNITED WE STAND

The village of Ampelakia, the “jewel of Thessaly” is famous for social innovation. It is the birth place of the first ever cooperative, formed back in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to withstand competition in yarn dyeing and spinning. Embodying a deep held folk tradition on fair contribution of profit in the community, the cooperative of craftsmen, merchants, labourers and farmers was established and created much wealth for the once poor village. Since then cooperatives have flourished in Europe and acquired new manifestations: social cooperatives formed to deal with the effects of crises, to protect and support those affected. In art, collectives were formed to generate discourse through exhibition and exposure. Today art collectives feature in all major European metropolises and have formed networks helping artists to grow and reach new audiences. In 2021, we go back to where it all started, we remember and pick up the traces of the cooperative spirit, we give space to new forms of social cooperatives in art and enterprise.

### Transdisciplinary arts

#history #photography #exhibition  
#workshop #literature  
2021

## CONNECTING CITIES

This is a cutting-edge expanding global network of Cities, connecting trans-locally through three overlapping scenarios: At first they utilize urban media facades which provide space for intercultural encounters and exchange. They then seek to increase participation in digital technologies enabling citizens to be part of urban media projects and play an active role in how their urban environment is shaped. Lastly they turn “invisible structures” embedded in the urban environment into zones that visualize and symbolize societal processes. Larissa will join this network and invite its mobile urban media labs to work from Larissa, hold their yearly events and workshops in the city and be inspired from its semi-urban environment.

### Media Arts

#technology #video arts #media  
labs #network  
join date 2017



## ALL THINGS APPLE

Organically connected with the “united we stand” event, a capacity-building event designed to showcase a product-specific cooperative will be held in the town of Agia, the single largest apple producing area in Greece, amounting for the 20% of the national output. All things apple is a culture and agricultural enterprise fair, a multidisciplinary exhibition of marketing and branding, packaging, gastronomy, craftsmanship and other by-products and services associated with growing and trading apples. Within its framework a folklore & popular apples and art culture festival will take place with dance, theatre, costumes, literature, poems and painting inspired by apple.

### Agricultural fair

#outdoor festival #agricultural  
branding & marketing #graphic  
design #workshops, #transfer of  
innovation #rural sculpture  
#folklore art  
2021



## DIGITALLY RE-MASTERED

Special digital capabilities are offered to the city museum visitors that enable projections on displayed items creating a palimpsest of meanings. Art works are transformed and re-interpreted without being damaged while visitors and audiences are allowed to “touch” and interfere with the exhibits using cutting-edge technology.

### Visual arts

#audience participation  
#technology #immersion #cultural  
exchange  
2021



## COFFEE FESTIVAL

### Let's talk over coffee!

The Greek stereotype about Larissa is that it has the highest coffee per capita rate, serving more cups than any other city in the country. There is some truth in this predisposition, some of the most innovative and popular coffee-chains in Greece have, indeed, originated from Larissa. It looks like there is no better place to reflect on the **coffee culture** for its social properties and manifestations. From the infamous Viennese Café Central with Sigmund Freud and Adolf Loos among its regulars to the Parisian frequented by key French intellectuals, the coffee culture is interface between the public and the private a social occasion for reflection and exchange. Much of the ongoing Greek crisis has been debated upon in populated coffee houses all over the country. The coffee festival will be a celebration of the coffee culture and its profound effect in local, national and European social realms and a showcase on design and branding trends driving the industry.

### Transdisciplinary arts

#performance #installation  
#literature #poetry #design #music  
Start date 2017 & biannually

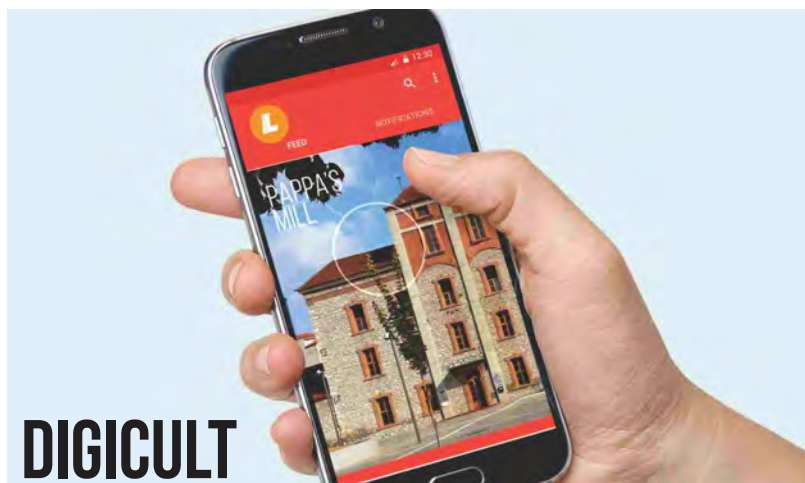


European and world architectural landmarks are embedded in the urban environment through digital projections and 3D mapping. At the same time Larissa's urban architecture is seen in new contexts. Buildings are recreated and repositioned with the help of visual technology. The action is inspired by the Architravel project, a web “Architectural City Guide” that combines texts, pictures and maps of the most significant architectural buildings and recommends digital “architectural journeys”.

### Visual arts

#photography #urban  
environment #media arts #3d  
mapping  
2021





The development of a mobile application operating with technology based in augmenting reality, will allow ECoC visitors to aim urban cultural landmarks with their mobile devices and instantly see how these looked in the past, as if they were observing the city through a time-travel device. Through the same application adults and youngsters participate in city treasure hunts evolving around ECoC events.

#### Visual arts

#photography #augmenting reality technology #app #audience participation  
2021



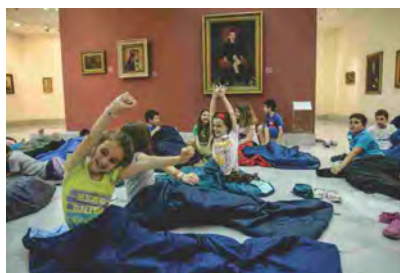
## BRIDGES

THE EUROPEAN LANGUAGE OF COMICS & CARTOONS

Cartoons & Comics are both special forms of artistic expression and unique genres in their capacity to express values and challenge qualities by stimulating the imagination. They also combine artistic properties of many other arts such as painting, cinematography, theatre and literature. In 2015, in the frames of the Larissa2021 bidding effort, "Bridges: the European Language of Comics Festival" took place in Larissa, the first of its kind to ever take place in the city. Several highly acclaimed European artists participated not only with their works but also by delivering workshops and speeches. The Festival will continue on a biannual basis with the 2021 edition also incorporating Cartoons, and it will be specifically curated to explore narratives, characters and heroes who may live in parallel realities but still share with us familiar representations and meanings.

#### Comics

#festival #exhibition #comics #cartoons #video #workshops #seminars #masterclasses  
2015 & biannual



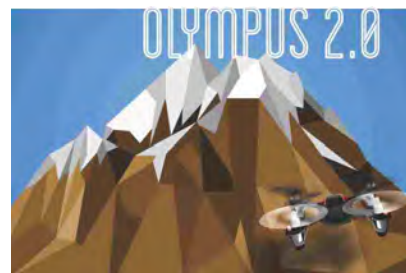
## INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL SLEEPOVER

#### Wake up in Culture

Thrilling, after-dark experiences are offered to visiting children and young adults from Europe who along with Greek children spend nights among antiquities in the new Archeological Museum. Myth is re-enacted through interaction with the exhibits, digital storytelling, ancient drama workshops and mythology reading. Ancient Greek art will be experienced and understood through an interdisciplinary approach, involving immersive educational means. Similar sleepovers are held in other city Museums. At the same time youngsters from Larissa are sponsored to participate in sleepovers abroad in an exciting cultural exchange scheme.

#### Art & History

#audience development #children #immersion #cultural exchange  
2021



The highest mountain range in Greece and the mythical seat of the ancient Greek pantheon, Olympus is a worldwide heritage landmark, a mountain of breathtaking beauty and an inexhaustible source of history and myth. A high-profile international Symposium with the participation of historians, cultural studies' scholars, environmental scientists and geologists will mark the start of the Olympus month, a special ECoC event with a twofold aim: To study the mountain's historical, cultural and environmental legacy and to offer a set of **onsite** cultural activities that will allow citizens and visitors to experience the mountain in new ways. Among the activities planned is a European ambient music festival, extreme sports and trekking competitions, media arts camp temporarily transforming the mountain through immersive technologies (holograms), gastronomy and experiential workshops about ancient Greek life and social legacy.

#### Conference & Festival

#interdisciplinary convention  
#Electronic music festival  
#extreme sports #drone  
#experiential workshops #media arts camp #immersive technologies  
#mythology #history  
2021



## GASTRONOMY ROOTS

28 top chefs, 28 EU countries, 28 different recipes based on halva, the sweet local specialty of Farsala. The famous Farsala halva will be transformed into a gastronomic cultural ambassador, through transcultural confectionery. The art of making sweets will meet the art of intercultural dialogue through taste.

#### Gastronomy

#taste #design  
2021



# TURNING IN2 A LIVE STAGE

## CLOSING CEREMONY

A city production will be broadcast to celebrate the past 12 months of cultural experience and transformation leaving a unique cultural legacy for the city itself, as envisaged and worked towards. A legacy that does not depend on a single event, performance, idea, year, but rather unleashes potential as a cultural generator, that turns closing ceremony into a starting testimony.

Production foresees a virtual European tour of artists and schemes regardless of genre, size, recognition, performing live via streaming, from 10am, as part of a well-structured programme, projected on walls and facades, turning the city into a giant cultural screen, for all.

Special programme slots will be dedicated for the other ECoC2021 countries.

This European virtual tour will 'land' to Larissa, where all cultural actors will be signaled to get ready to start their own performances. When the clock turns 8pm, for the first time ever, the entire city, every cultural operator, scheme, venue, part of this ECoC journey, will be on the spotlight, will have its own moment of fame, regardless of genre, size, recognition.

At 8pm sharp Larissa will turn in2 a live stage. As envisaged, as promised!

Music, dance, arts, every single corner of the city is culturally flooded, neighborhoods, streets, venues. Backyards, balconies, roads, schoolyards and squares are turned into cultural assemblies.

There is only one production rule, @ 8pm sharp!

Live music comes from every corner of the city. The streets are full with theatre, performance and dance. Now, Larissa is loud, extravagant and flamboyant, just as spontaneous expression can be. Lights, technologies, a full professional production, indoors and outdoors. This is a moment for all.

**We are in sync with the biggest ever production  
live @ Larissa stage**

**We are in sync with our new cultural identity**

**This is the moment**





*How will the cultural programme combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions?*

In our cultural programme we touch upon all layers of heritage: Built environment, nature, social heritage, the heritage of arts artistic creativity, local knowledge and grass-roots cultural heritage. We aim to connect heritage with present elements of life and cultural dispositions. We draw the line not only to remember, but to look at heritage as a process on the making. What we do today will be the legacy of tomorrow. The human agency of today, the ECoC year itself, will be the legacy for a future ECoC. The innovative cultural expressions of today will then be the traditional forms of tomorrow. The spirit of the city will ever be embodied in these forms of expression. We don't draw lines between past, present and future, this is the work of time, we draw the frame within which we think about what is given (tradition), what we make of it and why (the meaning we attach), and how we conceive of new symbolic and actual combinations thereof towards new territory, new uses, new benefits (innovation and experiment), and this circular pattern goes on and on.

In our Bridging Perspectives programme we create links between heritage and tradition, and experimental, innovative forms of cultural expression, by changing the perceived social and cultural roles of building, spaces, the nature, events, endowing them through art and cultural expression with plural, alternate meanings, turning them into opportunities to think of another possible reality in life, and the observer, participant, or artist, into the human agent facilitating this change.

For example in *the Larissa Experiment*, the strong links between the city and its natural attributes having shaped its spirit - the river, the plain - are symbolically revisited through urban sculpture in open space, out of the human-made materials that make up the city, referring however to the matter of nature. In *Rebellious Arts* the politics of land, memories of oppression and resistance, social change, are reinterpreted and contextualised through symbolic cinematography. In *Poetrees*, nature's presence in the city - the trees - are carrying fragments of literature and poetry, allowing to look at artistic genres as the fruits of the human mind and creativity. A 3D printing exhibition, objects as no-objects, challenges traditional ways of attending works of art in *Philo Returns*. In *Folk Festival*, tradition is celebrated with musicians, folk dance ensembles and fashion workshops on folk costume celebrate

*X Rated* and *Bridging bodies* are linking traditional practices and festivity coming from ancient times with classical dance and the human body as a medium for cultural expression and social critique. In *Thessaly Essence*, traditional livelihoods of the past are played out in artistic performances, conveying messages of continuity and change. *Digicult* is a journey to the life of objects, a mobile application by which when aiming at urban cultural landmarks, one can see how these looked in the past as if they were observing the city through a time-travel device. *Eutopia* is bridging traditional and contemporary aesthetic codes through collaborations, artistic and cultural exchanges, while in *United We Stand*, the social legacy of the cooperative spirit of the Ampelakia cooperative of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, lends itself as a metonymy, a model for social cooperatives in arts and enterprise. In *Connecting Cities*, the urban environment is turned into canvas for the visualisation of societal processes. A different view on cultural heritage in a museum is enabled by projections on displayed objects in *Digitally Remastered*.

• • • • •



*How has the city involved, or how does it plan to involve, local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme? Please give some concrete examples and name some local artists and cultural organisations with which cooperation is envisaged and specify the type of exchanges in question.*

During the preparation period towards the submission date of Larissa's bid, we called upon all the cultural actors and organisations of the city, inviting them to share ideas, cultural profiles, expertise, and field of possible involvement. Through face-to-face consultation, as well as online communication, we came up with more than 40 ideas submitted, and 80 cultural actors' and operators' full profiles across several artistic genres in the cultural sector. We went along the following process and principles:

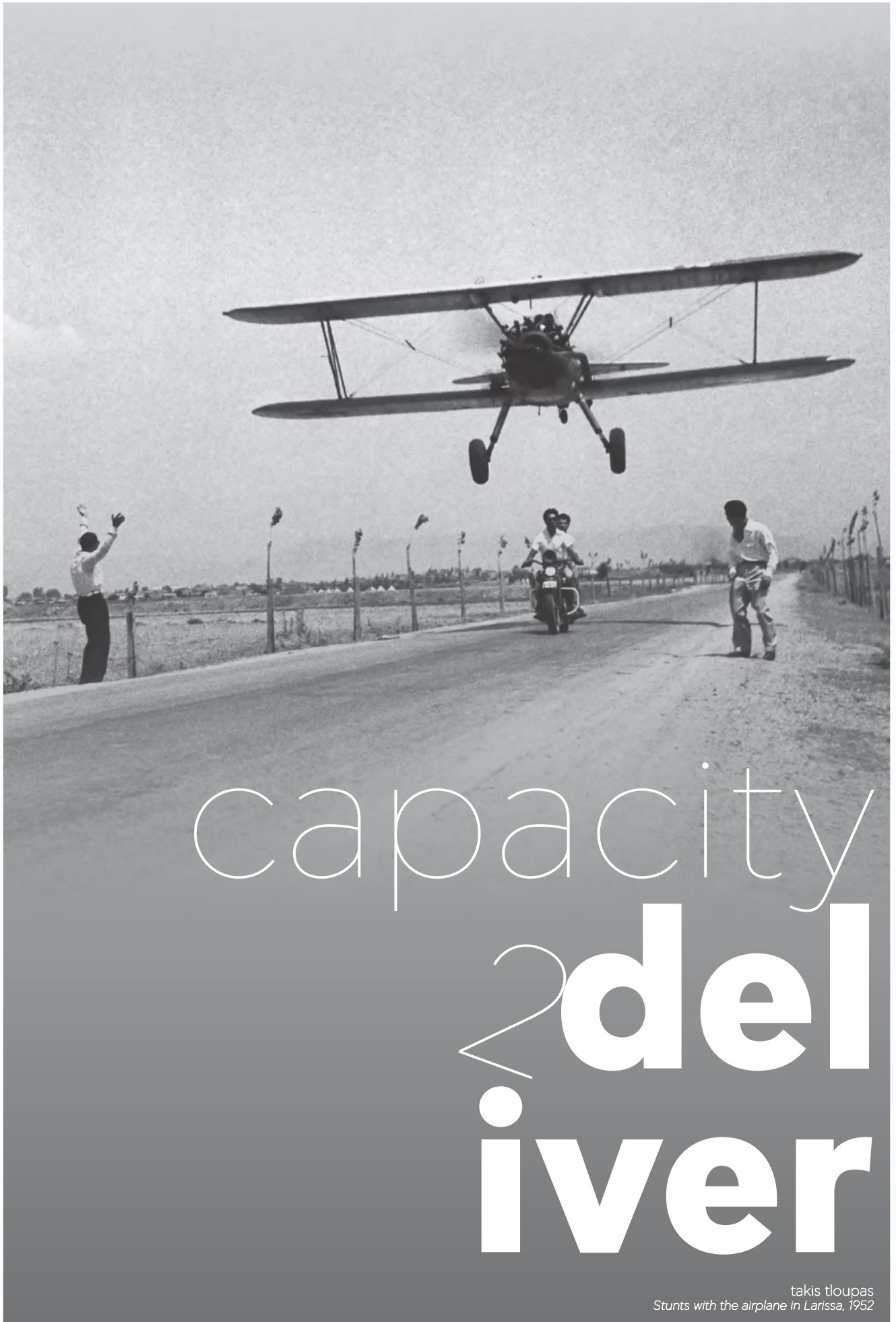
- Creation of a database designating full-blown, well documented new ideas, draft approaches to be further elaborated, and already existing cultural actions that could be included/revised in/for the ECoC year
- Identification of existing and exploration of possible networks among cultural actors, in terms of mixing of genres and actors, for the development of integrated approaches to be turned into innovative elements in the cultural programme
- Consideration of the available infrastructure (buildings, cultural hubs and labs, etc.) already in place and utilised by the local cultural organisations and their capacity to host ECoC artistic events
- Identification of elements of local cultural character vis-à-vis European dimension
- Documented outreach of past cultural activities at the local level (potential for audience engagement)
- Safeguarding a fair balance between traditional cultural expressions and innovative, disruptive ones (cultural diversity in form and expression)
- Fostering especially new, undiscovered talent and ideas
- Taking up ideas and involving actors irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, status as 'amateur' or 'professional', ensuring representation of all social groups and communities.

In all our consultations with the local cultural actors we commonly explored the concept and the artistic vision of our ECoC action, as well as the expectations to be met in such a demanding project. We stressed the need to address local cultural heritage and tradition as interwoven with cultural aspects and expressions of the present, as well as common European cultural legacy, using this aspect as a yardstick for our joint efforts. We also reaffirmed in common, that the ECoC project is a vital part of the city's aspirations and strategy towards social and economic development, and is therefore rather future-oriented. What would become of the actual involvement of the local cultural actors, their collaboration with European and international actors is the creation of a sustainable creative sector to outlive the ECoC year.

## Indicative list of local cultural actors & envisaged involvement

| Cultural actors & organisations   | Type of exchange                          | Indicative event/s in the artistic programme                                 |
|---|---|--|
| S.mou.th ( <i>Music/theatre</i> )   | Co-production/Performance                 | MILL OF PERFORMING ARTS   EUTROPIA<br>UNLABEL   CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL LAB |
| ArchiTeam ( <i>Architecture</i> )   | Participation   Dialogue   Exhibition     | ARCHITRAVEL  |
| Architects Club of Larissa ( <i>Architecture</i> )  | Participation   Dialogue   Exhibition     | CONNECTING CITIES<br>CULTURAL VILLAGE  |
| f+ club ( <i>Photography</i> )  | Co-production                             | MEMORIES & IDENTITIES  |
| Diachronic Museum Friends Club  | Participation                             | INTERNATIONAL SLEEPOVER<br>DIGITALLY RE-MASTERED                             |
| K. Dais,<br>S. Papanikolaou,<br>V. Grousopoulou,<br>C. Makropoulos,<br>C. Samaras,<br>N. Golanda ( <i>Sculptors</i> ) | Co-production<br>Exhibition Presentations | THE LARISSA EXPERIMENT<br>PHILO RETURNS                                      |
| 6 Municipalities' Philharmonic Orchestra  | Performance                               | OPENING CEREMONY<br>THE OCEAN SON  |
| Center of Folklore Research   | Participation/Exhibition                  | FOLK NARRATIVES  |
| Lazaros Maravas ( <i>Painter</i> )  | Participation                             | URBAN RE ENTER   |
| Artion Conjectural Space  | Co-production                             | EUTROPIA   |
| Oniron Thavmata<br>Amateur theatrical team  | Co-production/Performance                 | UNLABEL  |
| Avlaia ( <i>Theater</i> )   | Co-production/Performance                 | THIS IS NOT A DOT<br>THIS IS MY STORY  |
| Artfools ( <i>Cinema</i> )  | Co-production                             | REBELLIOUS ARTS  |
| Greek Center of Cinematography  | Co-production                             | REBELLIOUS ARTS  |
| Athina Krikeli  | Participation (Cinematographer)           | OLYMPUS 2.0  |
| Myrto Papathanassiou  | Performance (Soprano)                     | OPENING CEREMONY   |
| Symphonic orchestra of Larissa  | Performance                               | OCEAN SON<br>E - DAYS  |
| InDonnation ( <i>Choir</i> )  | Performance                               | OCEAN SON<br>E - DAYS  |
| Tiritompa Puppet Troupe   | Performance                               | INTERNATIONAL PUPPET FESTIVAL  |
| Off-Art ( <i>Dance/Theatre</i> )  | Co-production/Performance                 | THIS IS NOT A DOT<br>THIS IS MY STORY  |
| Lindy Hop ( <i>Dance</i> )  | Performance/Street art                    | E-DAYS   |





capacity  
2del  
iver

takis tloupas  
Stunts with the airplane in Larissa, 1952



Confirm and evidence that you have broad and strong political support and a sustainable commitment from the relevant local, regional and national public authorities

**T**he City Council of the people of Larissa voted for the candidacy of the city to bid for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2021. With starting point the well-being, development and growth of the city and its people, and with vehicle the city cultural strategy, the designation of the City of Larissa as ECoC 2021 is pursued and embraced while the project realisation and sustainability are safeguarded under a democratic coalition, above political parties and beyond political term deadlines.

**Municipal:** < from Latin *municipālis*, ("of or belonging to a citizen or a free town"), from *municeps* ("a citizen, an inhabitant of a free town"), from *munus* ("duty") + *capere* ("to take").

Taking the decision to bid for the title of the European Capital of Culture involves the formal agreement on behalf of the elected representatives of the people of Larissa, i.e. Municipality of Larissa and the City Council. On April the 7th, 2015, the City Council of Larissa assembled to decide whether the city of Larissa would enter the competition for the title of the European Capital of Culture or not. According to the formal process, 44 out of 49 of the City Council members were present, rendering the assembly valid according to the law.

The Mayor of the City of Larissa introduced the institution of the European Capital of Culture and highlighted the envisaged impact thereof for the city, as well as analysed in detail the prerequisites,

in terms of financial, managerial and technical aspects, and the steps towards the submission of the candidacy application. The candidacy has been addressed as a unique opportunity for the city to both benefitting urban development aspects and plans, as well as a challenge for Larissa and the adjacent Municipalities of the regional unit to showcase their rich cultural assets, but more importantly, to lead to a much more extrovert strategy to embrace the European dimension of the whole endeavour, to transform Larissa, a medium-sized city of the Greek periphery into a cultural centre.

The City Council members have been briefed on all preparatory activities on behalf of the Mayor up to this date, in exploring the

ground for a successful candidacy. All participants have been ensured but also prompted to actively support the candidacy, not only through their positive vote, but also, should a positive decision be taken, through their own active participation in mobilising the economic, social and cultural actors of Larissa.

The members of the City Council, in their vast majority voted for the candidacy of Larissa for the title of the European Capital of Culture, including the political parties of the opposition, securing this way the smooth implementation of both the preparations towards the year 2021, as well as the planned activities to take place during the ECoC year.



## ***Sine-qua-non actors***

### ***Supporters & Companions of the city bid ECoC 2021*** **@ 6 Municipalities of the Regional Unit of Larissa**

The city of Larissa acknowledges and integrates the surrounding area of the city in its bid for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2021. To this aim, following the decision taken by the City Council of the people of Larissa in April 2015, an invitation letter has been sent to all 6 adjacent Municipalities i.e. the Municipalities of Agia, Elassona, Farsala, Kileler, Tempi, and Tyrnavos. City Council assemblies were convened in each of the six invited municipalities during the months of June and July 2015. In all cases, the members of the City Councils were joined by representatives of the local administrative units (LAUs, i.e. municipal communities - lower tier of local representation) in deciding to endorse the city of Larissa's bid and actively participate in the competition for the European Capital of Culture 2021. In at least two cases the vote was unanimous while the rest decided by vast majorities that included main opposition parties.

Following this decision, 6 different Committees of the respective municipalities have been established, in order to collaborate with the candidacy office of Larissa. A first working group meeting between the Committees, the candidacy office and the Municipality of Larissa took place in early August 2015. The participants shared ideas on the organisation of the involvement of the Municipalities, their citizens' and cultural actors in the preparations of the bid, as well as the foreseen involvement in the planned artistic and cultural programme towards and during the ECoC year. On-going, intense communication has been established thereafter, highlighting the importance of the diverse cultural potential beyond the city of Larissa, as well as of further local development aspects merging urban and rural aspects, extremely characteristic of the whole cultural area.

*Moreover, an Intraregional Liaison Committee, with representatives from each Municipality (see Bid Book Credits), was established, developing already into a dynamic cultural collaborative network that gathers, distils and relays information on cultural status, ideas, projects, enabling at the same time benchmarking approach that allows the identification of good practices, while it raises awareness, informs and engages at very local level.*

## **@ Region of Thessaly**

At **regional level**, the Regional Council of Thessaly, during the assembly held on Monday, 31 August 2015, voted in its vast majority (40 out of 46 present members) and decided to support the city of Larissa in the competition for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2021. To this end, the Regional Council appointed an official representative of the Region of Thessaly in the candidacy organising committee.

*\*assembly are available online, in a bidbook workpage (metrics) to facilitate the evaluation procedure. Visit*

*[www.larissa2021.eu/el/metrics.php](http://www.larissa2021.eu/el/metrics.php)*

## **@ Hellenic Parliament**

At **national level**, the Members of the Parliament representing the Electoral District of Larissa, have expressed their strong support through their direct participation in numerous strategic preparational phase activities and events, such as the National Media Press Conference organised at the European Commission Representation in Greece on Wednesday, 7 October 2015. Moreover, an intra-political initiative is exhibited through a video production, recorded at the Hellenic Parliament, conveying a strong message that overpasses political stand points and differences for the sake of the city's opportunity and capability to achieve its cultural goal-growth (see Video on Larissa2021 youtube channel).

*A rally of bilateral and group meetings, all publicly announced, have taken place the last months to raise awareness, inform and engage key actors and stakeholders (policy and opinion makers, academia, industry, business, media, civil society) on Larissa's bid for ECoC 2021; its vision, strategy, plan, doings.*





*Confirm and evidence that your city has or will have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title*

**A** *welcoming city; a solid melting pot of cultural infrastructure, top-touch venue-facilities, easy to spot and reach, open and accessible to all, capable and thus ready at all times to host any mainstream and out-of-the-box cultural project, embraced by the cultural specialists of the city, letting the audience experience the soul of culture.*



## CITY'S CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The city of Larissa has a rich cultural infrastructure. Monuments, cultural buildings and facilities, as well as numerous scenes, stages of local cultural actors across several arts, provide the loci hosting the cultural and artistic events towards and during the ECoC year.

There is a great variety of facilities and buildings, some are purpose-built, other multipurpose and some have been identified and are planned to be adapted for reuse according to needs. In any case, the total of the spaces and cultural components fully support the making of art, storage and preservation, artistic performance, and of course the exhibition of heritage or art like as for example museums and galleries.

Still, taking a good look beyond the functioning of cultural infrastructure and its individual components, we address them as the starting point to bridge artistic disciplines of expression and functions, with a continuum of artistic activity and the capacities, features and goals of the community.

As such, our cultural offer emancipates culture from 'institutionalisation' as in our notion culture is not solely attended within the boundaries of buildings and institutions (museums, galleries, specially designed places for 'cultural consumption'). Therefore, while we will make full use of the generous cultural infrastructure of the city for artistic events and performances, at the same time, we equally turn public spaces, the whole canvas of everyday city life, to springboards of cultural activity, clearly connected with the celebration of the European Capital of Culture.

*We are creating an imaginary node, connecting diverse components of city cultural infrastructure, so as to transform the city itself into an integrated cultural live stage.*

**How?**

- \* We mix living spaces with cultural expression
- \* We provide experimental spaces for artistic and cultural expression
- \* We turn public domain spaces into creative production and participation habitats
- \* We couple cultural production with science, technology, and entrepreneurial support
- \* We develop a sense of place and community
- \* We facilitate networks and clusters
- \* We transform artists to creative resources for the community

*Cultural preservation,  
heritage, and tradition  
Adaptation and change  
Spaces for community  
development  
Facilities for art-making  
and cultural presentations  
Supporting new perspectives  
and new voices*

# accessibility assets

*Larissa is a city that connects and bridges*

Accessibility is one of the major advantages of Larissa. The transport infrastructures of the city of Larissa, especially its railway network and the national road, provide extremely easy access to the city.

*Any traveller who wants to cross Greece, from South to North, has to pass through Larissa*

The city lies midway in the main North-South transport line of the country, both through railway and the main national road (E75), connecting the metropolitan areas of Athens, the country's capital, with Thessaloniki in the North. A frequent train service, destined for a quality upgrade and higher quality service connects Larissa with Volos, while another does the same towards Karditsa and Trikala. A suburban train also runs frequently between Larissa and Thessaloniki. The project envisages an increase in service frequency and passenger numbers, a reduction in the number of stops, and a travel time of less than 60 minutes between the stations of Larissa and the other Thessalian cities, and of less than 80 minutes between the stations of Larissa and the Thessaloniki.

By train



The Athens - Thessaloniki railway line consists of a double, high-velocity line. The trip from Athens to Larissa by train is supported by modern passenger trains, covering the distance from Athens to Larissa in 3 hours with the Intercity/Express line, and from Thessaloniki to Larissa in 1 hour. There are 12 scheduled routes on a daily basis connecting Athens with Larissa, and 22 scheduled routes for Thessaloniki.

By car, by bus



By car, the distance between Larissa and Athens (approx. 350 km) can be covered through the national road (speedway E75). Furthermore, Larissa lies at the crossroads to the West part of Greece and the Epirus Prefecture, connected with it through speedway E92.

By bus, there are 7 scheduled routes connecting Athens with Larissa on a daily basis, for a trip lasting for 3 and a half hour. Larissa is connected with Thessaloniki through 10 scheduled routes on a daily basis, while the trip lasts for 1 hour and 45 minutes. Beyond the connection with the metropolitan areas, 7 bus stations are serving connection to the western part of the Thessaly region and Epirus further beyond to the west. They are easily accessible within the city, scattered around the city's centre.

By plane



By air, Larissa is mainly served by the Thessaloniki Airport ([www.thessalonikiairport.com](http://www.thessalonikiairport.com)), which is about 160 km from its centre and is host to dozens of international destinations.

## Domestic Traffic

## International Traffic

| Year | Airplanes Arr + dep | Pass. Arr. | Pass. Dep. | Cargo t. arr. | Cargo t. dep. | Year | Airplanes Arr + dep | Pass. Arr. | Pass. Dep. | Cargo t. arr. | Cargo t. dep. |
|------|---------------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------------|------|---------------------|------------|------------|---------------|---------------|
| 2014 | 19.675              | 888.459    | 1.003.559  | 2.028         | 1.516         | 2014 | 26.225              | 1.569.814  | 1.488.894  | 1.070         | 1.132         |

**Athens International Airport** ([www.aia.gr](http://www.aia.gr)) serves hundreds of connections to destinations all over the world, being one of busiest in Europe (2014 data show a 15,2 million of travellers, 5,3 domestic and 9,9 international).

**Volos Airport** ([www.volosairport.gr/en](http://www.volosairport.gr/en)) serves seasonal flights of Austrian Airlines, Regional Airlines, Ryanair, Germania Airlines, Monarch, Transavia, Transavia France, FlyNiki, Small Planet; though it is rapidly augmenting its throughput and role for tourist travels towards Central Greece.

One of the strategic improvements in the transport system entails a **dedicated fleet of shuttles scheduled to connect by 2021 Larissa** with all airports either directly or in an intermodal way. Last but not least, Larissa hosts the larger military airbase of Greece that can serve VIP and emergency flights under any circumstances.

By boat



Larissa is also well connected through the port of Volos with frequent passenger-boat line and catamarans to Sporades islands (Skiathos with its national airport (JSI), etc.). The port of Volos, 60 km from Larissa, is a developing cruise destination in Eastern Mediterranean, with more than 40 cruise ships calls every year. In the following years, Larissa intends to combine its cultural activities with cruise arrivals, so as to give visitors a great chance of being part of them.



THIS IS MY CITY



## Getting around in the city

### URBAN MOBILITY



Upgrades are currently being made to several road connections and improvement works are planned for the Larisa ring road, facilitating city's traffic flow. Clearly, Larissa has a high quality and efficient public transport sector.

The city bus-lines are connecting all the main points of the inner city and its centre with the city's periphery. Urban mass transport is served by a local cooperative, Larissa Urban Ktel ([www.ktelast-larissas.gr](http://www.ktelast-larissas.gr)), which operates 53 buses, of which 39 with accessibility for disabled, composed of thirteen (13) bus lines (six primary and seven secondary) that connect all city districts with the centre. Two main transversal bus-lines go diametrically through the city, accounting for approximately 50% of the passengers. The city is rather lively, hosting a rich commercial and trade hub in its centre. However, the median duration of bus routes shows no significant fluctuations, while the average speed of the buses lies between 14,5 and 18 km/h. Interurban bus-lines connect the city with adjacent municipalities as well as further regions to the North, South and West.

The taxi sector of the city accounts for approx. 300 taxis, exposing a balanced taxi supply in comparison with the rest of Greek and European cities (approx. 2 taxis/1000 of population).

*We encourage smarter, alternative and sustainable mobility. We stimulate, wherever possible, local business activities and a more general and wide-ranging change in how people (whether residents, temporary residents or tourists) use transport and deal with their mobility needs. Car-pooling, car sharing using hybrid vehicles, info-mobility and urban bike sharing are some of the schemes that we seek to get financed by the new regional development programme for the years 2014-2020.*

## a highly walk-able city!



Larissa has a very vivid city centre, easy to navigate, which takes only a few minutes to walk through. There are already adequate parking places built on the edges of the city so people can leave their car behind and enjoy the city in the most natural and proper way, by walking. An all-around flat surface is warmly welcoming the eager pedestrian who wants to roam around the city, the downtown shopping and trade district, or along the banks of the Pinios River and the adjacent parks and city squares. Since 1985, Larissa has been developing and implementing a systematic pedestrianization plan of the inner city, which nowadays pays-off, as most streets in the town centre are pedestrianized, rendering a substantial part of the commercial centre of the Larissa as one of the most extended urban pedestrian areas across European cities.

The flat surface of the city provides also the ideal conditions for the use of bicycles. The city has a total of 12.5 km of bicycle lanes, while according to the latest data, in Larissa, there are around 25.000 bicycles!

## Tourists' accommodation capacity

Larisa is an economic and administrative centre, offering a strong entrepreneurial, human and services potential, mainly associated with the agricultural sector. Larissa is not yet a touristic destination, despite its reach cultural offer, but rather, it is a business tourism centre.

Tourist volume in the prefecture of Larissa, in recent years, amounts on average 100.000 domestic and 10.000 foreign visitors. The hotel accommodation of the city has been upgraded and is now varied with points of absolute excellence that have received acknowledgement from the national and international press. Non-hotel accommodation in the vicinity of Larissa, also offers variety and high quality options for all styles. The number of residences, hostels and dormitories for young people and students, who make up an important part of the potential public for the events connected with the bid, is steadily and significantly increasing.

| Area               | Accommodation potential | 5★    | 4★    | 3★    | 2★     | 1★    | TOTAL  |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| Larissa Prefecture | Units                   | 2     |       | 12    | 18     | 8     | 40     |
|                    | Rooms                   | 224   |       | 500   | 519    | 196   | 1.439  |
|                    | Beds                    | 433   |       | 946   | 944    | 346   | 2.669  |
| Thessaly Region    | Units                   | 28    | 106   | 131   | 228    | 77    | 570    |
|                    | Rooms                   | 1.316 | 2.878 | 3.812 | 5.293  | 1.438 | 14.737 |
|                    | Beds                    | 2.686 | 5.710 | 7.476 | 10.093 | 2.809 | 28.774 |



Larissa's reception facilities are small, but well-suited and welcoming, ranging from hotels to family hospitality. Current supply meets current demand and, thanks to the continuous expansion, the city is constantly enabled to cope with growth, in a sustainable manner.

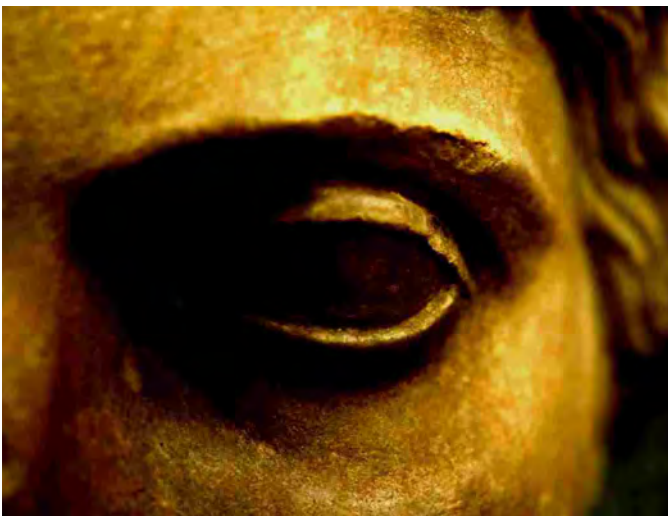
*Actually, Larissa intends to be a proving ground for cities that are medium sized but attract a large number of visitors.*

Larissa seeks to balance two potentially conflicting needs. On the one hand, it wants to have sufficient capacity to absorb the inflow of tourists with a supply of high-quality accommodation; on the other, it is our aim to protect people's everyday modus-vivendi from the very same inflow. Accordingly, some of the accommodation supply in 2021 will include innovative and original features. For that year in particular, **Larissa households themselves, through a special hospitality programme, will make available their own homes or rooms therein and offer visitors an in-family experience.** This programme will also be geared to artists and cultural operators who will be involved in the activities relating to the candidature.

## Infrastructure works

*Recovering cultural marvels, rejuvenating abandoned places, reactivating dormant places of everyday life, and enriching the cultural assets of the city... a city continuously evolving*

These are the main objectives of the planned projects between 2015 and the ECoC year 2021, and to that end, we fully adjust the planned works to the aspirations of the entire cultural project for the city of Larissa. Some of these works have already started, some of them have been considered and await to take off, while other are completely new, and planned to start in the very near future. Whatever the case, all of them, will enhance the cultural and hence urban and touristic assets of the city, and their much appraised finalisation will be an ideal metaphor for the collective imaginary of the people of Larissa, connecting the cultural rejuvenation of the city with the competition for the title of the ECoC.



### 1<sup>st</sup> Ancient Theatre Restoration in progress

Expected full capacity delivery, year 2021

*“An ongoing story of ancient glory revelation,”*

Built on the slope of the Fortress Hill 23 centuries ago, the First Ancient Theater of Larissa had until recently been lying underground. Early excavations brought to light only part of its scene while substantial revelation begun in 1990 and lasted for a decade. The monument now stands fully uncovered right before the eyes of the beholder, strolling through the streets of the modern city. It is still is one of the few ancient, monumental theatres to be located right at the center of its host city and be fully integrated into its urban fabric. A celebrated venue for theatrical performances and the place where the Ancient Assembly of Thessaly used to convene, the Theatre is currently undergoing major restoration work, co-financed by the EU through regional development programmes. Restoration work will be intensified in the coming years to first make the Theatre accessible to visitors and subsequently capable of hosting major events with a worldwide cultural impact.

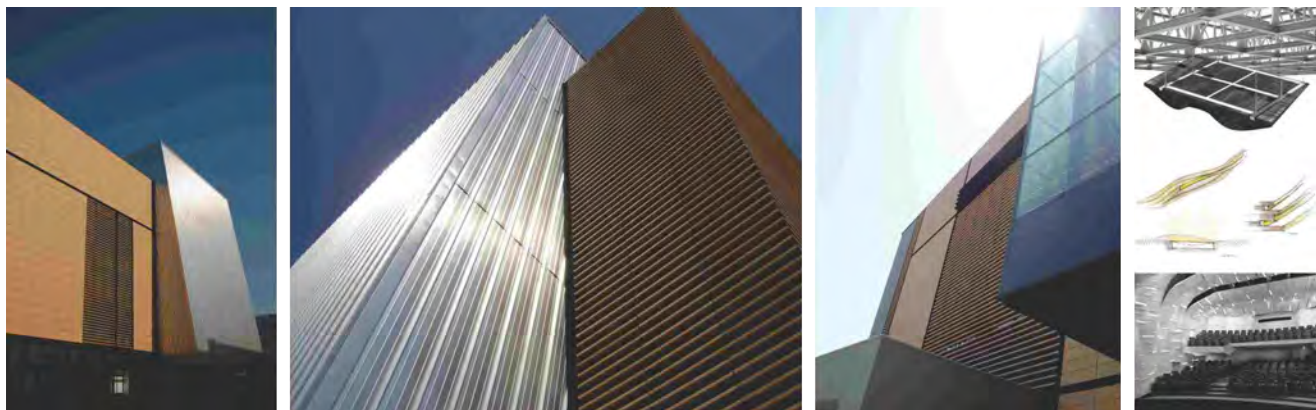
### Diachronic Museum Grand Opening announced

Delivery November 2015

*“An integrated whole of Thessaly's timeless history under one roof,”*

The grand opening of the Diachronic Museum coincides with Larissa's ECOC bid submission. Erected at the Mezourlo Hill, in the southern outskirts of the City, this major cultural infrastructure project has just been completed with the support of the EU, within its Community Support Framework. It was conceived and developed to house important findings from every historical era that made Thessaly the great palimpsest that it now is and exhibits, in a chronological narrative, Paleolithic, Neolithic, Prehistoric, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman and Early Christian, Middle Ages and Byzantine antiquities. Its treasures include unique ancient idols of the archaic age, pottery from settlements that prospered in Thessaly during pre-historic times, ancient crafts and sculpted artworks, mosaic floors, church items and everyday life objects of the byzantine and meta-byzantine period.

Home to the Regional Division of the Ministry of Culture, the Diachronic Museum offers a full range of reception services and facilities to visitors and can host temporary exhibitions, lectures, conferences and educational programs in its state-of-the-art multipurpose hall.



## Proscenium of Culture

(Theatre of Larissa)

**Under (progressed) Construction**

Estimated delivery year 2028

*“A modern theatre, a creative arena enriching the cultural asset of the city,”*

The new home of the celebrated Municipal & Regional Theatre of Larissa, is already at halfway completion stage. Built on a 4000 m<sup>2</sup> site, the Proscenium of Culture is designed as a free rotation of rectangles. Total indoor surface amounts to 4530 m<sup>2</sup> distributed in a ground and three additional floors. Interior infrastructure and design is still under construction. At completion, the Proscenium will host an indoor theatre accessible from the first floor with 366 seats and a further 159 seats at the second floor balcony. The theater covers 410 m<sup>2</sup> and has 11 meters available height for the scenery, and an additional 2,60 meters height for mechanical installations and lighting. Currently the indoor theatre is shaped and used as a large multipurpose hall (showroom, event, etc.) and utilizes an area of 570 m<sup>2</sup>. The third floor is under construction and will be reserved for the headquarters of the Municipal and Regional Theatre of Larissa, a conference room, a video & book library and several store rooms. A multi-purpose room is already completed and is in use at the ground floor with additional facilities available i.e. cloakroom and bar. The building has been erected right at the center of the site leaving several hundreds of square meters available that will be shaped and used as a plaza covering the area between the front street and the entrance of the Theatre. The building is erected upon an underground parking with a capacity of 298 spaces.

## Averoff Agricultural School Complex

**Restoration foreseen**

Estimated delivery year 2018

*“The agricultural past comes alive through educational and artistic innovation; yet another monument of cultural heritage,”*

Just several meters away from the west end of the city lies the Averoff School Campus, on a 40.000m<sup>2</sup>. Forty three (43) buildings make up this educational complex listed since 1993, as monument of national cultural heritage. Even though only a handful of its buildings have undergone restoration and maintenance the whole site still radiates some of its old grandeur. It once was the first Agriculture University in Greece. Nowadays, it is used as a vocational school with 100 enrolled students, mostly agricultural machinery technicians. The ECoC project will utilize the complex for an artistic residency that will experiment with new interpretations of agricultural life and production through educational and artistic innovation. The 50 dormitories will be fully upgraded and renovated to host European residents during the summer months while the old piggery and the most recent hangar will be transformed to spaces of creative experimentation and material installation. The Averoff School was also the residence of Colonel Liapkin, a person made infamous by the renowned novelist M. Karagatsis (1908-1960), the most celebrated of the so-called 1930's generation of Greek writers. The Liapkin Residence will be fully restored to its initial condition and may be transformed into a literature micro-museum reenacting fictional characters through digital storytelling.

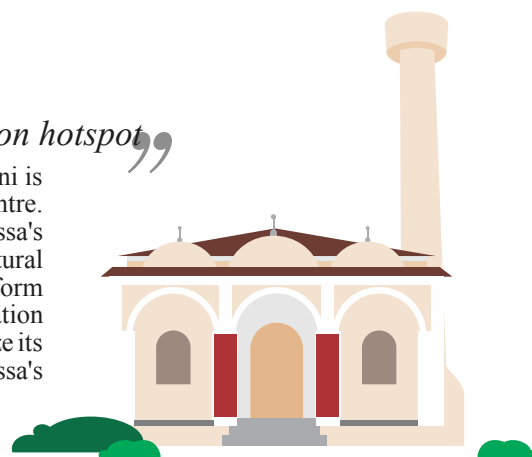


## Yeni Mosque

### Operational

*“An integrated tourism and culture information hotspot”*

Up until recently the home of the Archeological Museum, Yeni is an old mosque situated right at the north entrance of the city centre. It is the one mosque still standing intact, reminiscent of Larissa's ottoman past, a fully operational building with no major structural work required. The Municipality of Larissa considers to transform the interior of Yeni into the main Information and Documentation Hub for the city's artistic offerings and cultural output and utilize its location as the ideal starting point for the exploration of Larissa's inner centre.



## The Bezesteni

### Operational

*“reactivating dormant places of everyday life”*

Standing there since the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the Bezesten is the old Turkish market, once a vibrant trading spot for textiles (the word comes from the Persian «bez» which means cloth), now a silent monument of the ottoman era. The Bezesten is rectangular in shape and covers a total surface of 610 m<sup>2</sup>. Its roof consisted of six domes, supported by several double arches. Today only the outer stonewalls survive. In 2012 the Central Archaeological Council that is responsible for managing the site approved a detailed plan for the full restoration of the monument including the application a full bioclimatic system. The project may be implemented in the following years if sufficient funding is secured through the European structural funds. Still, mild restoration and maintenance is taking place to keep the site operational and capable of hosting low-production intensity events.

## Abandoned agricultural warehouses

### Restoration foreseen

*“turned into a cultural village”*

Venues and cultural infrastructures are abundant in the city centre yet the planned acquisition and restoration of three old wheat storehouses of 1850 m<sup>2</sup> each, laying within the city limits, may eventually become the game changer in how the city is engaged with modern arts. An ECOC flagship project, the acquisition of the storehouses has been preliminary agreed between the Municipality and the Ministry of Agriculture that owns the premises. A long-term, 40-year lease is expected to go ahead that will subsequently unleash a considerable investment involving the public and the private sectors. The Cultural Village will be a smart experiment with upgraded technological and digital capabilities in which artists may reside, learn, cooperate and create experimental and interdisciplinary, cutting edge works of art. The artistic creation will be open to audiences not only during scheduled shows, exhibitions and performances but throughout the process of production. A surrounding area of 25.000 m<sup>2</sup> will also be made available as part of the lease and will be used to host outdoor activities and festivals during the hot months of the summer. Right in the middle of the Thessaly plains the European festival culture will discover a new heaven for ambitious transnational productions. Basic infrastructure such as water and power supply will be offered by the Municipality however the project at its core will remain a mega exercise for innovation, creativity sustainability and environmental best practice.

The total land on which the warehouses are situated covers a vast area of 400.000 m<sup>2</sup>. Minus the area that will be leased to the Municipality, the remaining surface will be utilized by the Ministry of Agriculture for a new botanical garden and a Centre for soil research.

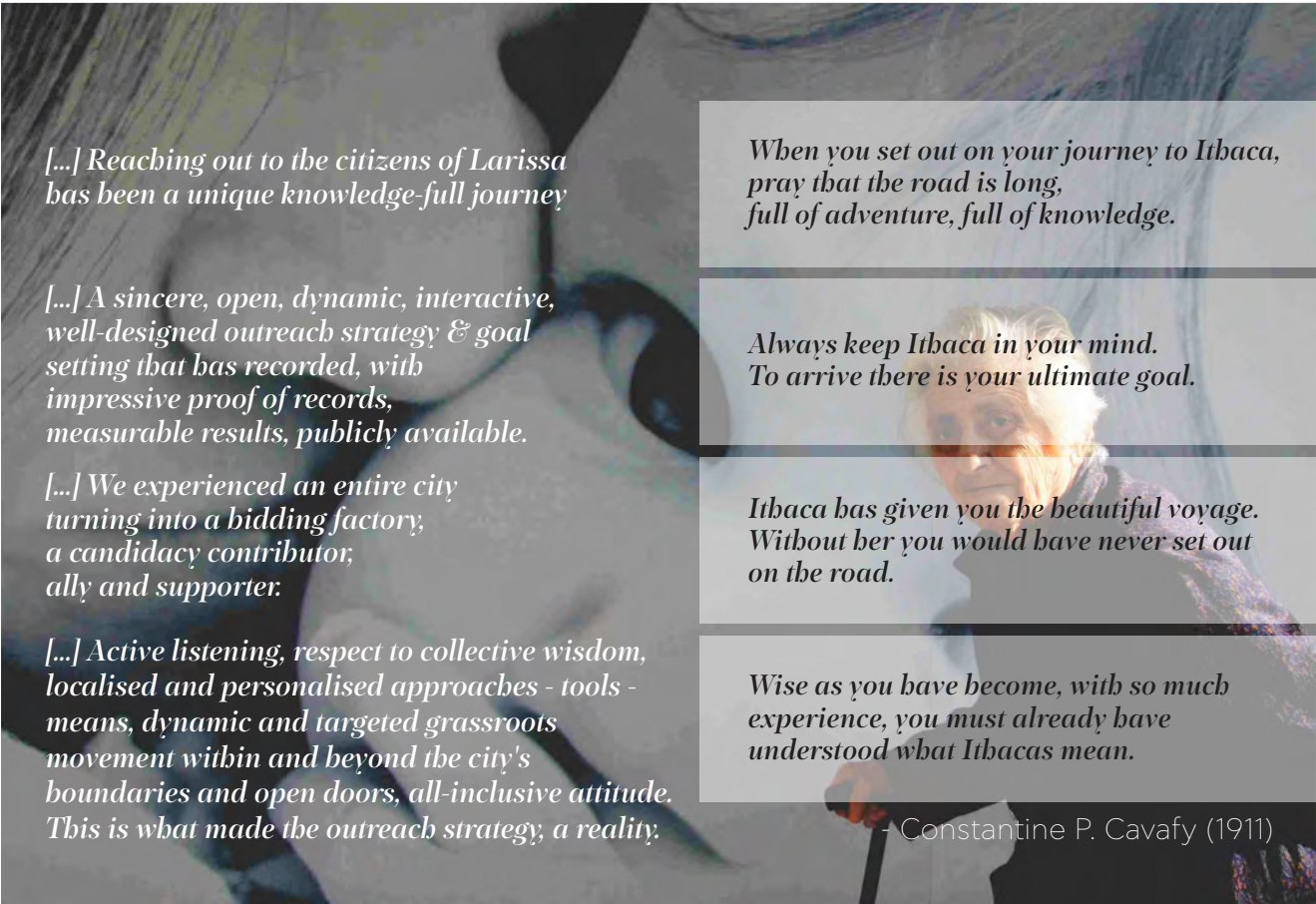
## Urban infrastructure projects for better accessibility and legibility

The City already explores the implementation of an automated system, controlling the entrance of vehicles into the pedestrian city centre. The initiative will enhance unobstructed accessibility to main facilities, including cultural infrastructure facilities foreseen to be used during the ECoC year. It is also the city's intention to ensure the full implementation of advertisement related laws and instructions, for the city to achieve the best possible civil environment in terms of visual disturbance. This will be implemented in tandem with the development of a standardized signage and public display signs system, especially in association with the cultural programme flow within and beyond the city limits. Also, in the city's immediate plans is the development of a smart, open access platform and database, responding to civic monitoring principles and smart/open governance.





takis tloupas  
*Climbing Olympus mountain, 1970*



*[...] Reaching out to the citizens of Larissa has been a unique knowledge-full journey*

*[...] A sincere, open, dynamic, interactive, well-designed outreach strategy & goal setting that has recorded, with impressive proof of records, measurable results, publicly available.*

*[...] We experienced an entire city turning into a bidding factory, a candidacy contributor, ally and supporter.*

*[...] Active listening, respect to collective wisdom, localised and personalised approaches - tools - means, dynamic and targeted grassroots movement within and beyond the city's boundaries and open doors, all-inclusive attitude. This is what made the outreach strategy, a reality.*

*When you set out on your journey to Irbaca, pray that the road is long, full of adventure, full of knowledge.*

*Always keep Irbaca in your mind. To arrive there is your ultimate goal.*

*Irbaca has given you the beautiful voyage. Without her you would have never set out on the road.*

*Wise as you have become, with so much experience, you must already have understood what Irbacas mean.*

*- Constantine P. Cavafy (1911)*



*Explain how the local population and your civil society have been involved in the preparation of the application and will participate in the implementation of the year?*

Preparing the bid for the European Capital of Culture action has been a creative experiment for Larissa. More than reaching out to the community and the creative forces of the city, we ended up with a **'blue print'**, a **small-scale test model** for them to have a taste of the ECoC year itself!

It took the form of an **ongoing rally** of all cultural forces and the citizens of the city that will help to form new, future cultural capital. Our goal was for this project to become the common project of all citizens, providing a **platform to express and formulate a shared vision** for the future of this city and develop a common understanding about the city's future cultural progress. It was a unique chance for all of us to **act as a community** to commonly build the strong fundament on which the future generations and all cultural enthusiasts will cherish on for years to come.

**Creative energy** was our keyword and springboard for wide-spread involvement, as it is the most important source for change and development - and one of the world's few inexhaustible natural resources. We achieved to enable the creative forces of the city to serve as a trigger to bring forward new ideas and innovation, opening up new opportunities for all to get involved. Right from the start, it was clear, that only by exchanging viewpoints and perspectives we would be able to benefit from our multiple identities, values and objectives as they are constantly redefining one another, needing however to be channeled to maximize the positive impact they can have on the city and its community.

To this end, we developed an inclusive, community-based engagement and outreach strategy, which resulted in **impressively high levels of participation** in the ECoC process through calling for action, reaching out at personal level, presenting and performing across the city, organizing innovative initiatives, and instilling excitement!

\* Due to the specifications of the bidbook (limitation in number of pages), **we hereby touch upon only few indicative examples of our outreach doings**. Detailed info-material with proof of records, including all quantitative data presented in the infographic, as well as hereafter, are available online, in a bidbook workpage (metrics) to facilitate the evaluation procedure. **Visit the bidbook metrics**

[www.larissa2021.eu/el/metrics.php](http://www.larissa2021.eu/el/metrics.php)



# metrics

from June till now

citizens'  
**signatures**  
 **10150**

**facebook** **8816**   
**likes**  
~800000 **REACH**

 **10396**  
**videos**  
**views**

 **4679** **e-cards**

 **140** **volunteers**

 **62** **submitted**  
**ideas**

**cultural**  
**operators**

**81**

**news**  
**media**

**1389**



letters of  
**cultural friendship** **88** 

**78** **events**  
**audience**  
~32000 

**website visits**

 **11802**

**MoU**

Dublin 2020  
Cluj - Napoca 2021  
Brasov 2021  
Timisoara 2021  
Craiova 2021  
Saint George 2021  
Novi Sad 2021



## Mapping and segmentation of outreach target groups

*This close collaboration and cultural consensus in the development of the cultural and artistic programme has emerged an umbrella approach, based on creative complementarity and interlinkage, that feeds into the overall Larissa 2021 artistic and cultural concept.*

The city of Larissa hosts a large number of cultural actors and organisations across many artistic disciplines, as well as Civil Society actors and NGOs. These are the actors which are setting the pace of the city's cultural pulse (e.g. amateur and professional cultural actors, artists at local and national level, civil society organisations, public agencies, press, citizens). Thus, it has been one of our key goals not only to communicate the decision of the people of Larissa to embark on the endeavor to bid for the title of the European Capital of Culture, but also to map in a structured way the overall human cultural capital of the city; a task that has never been undertaken in the past, at least in such an integrated and holistic manner.

We decided to do this in a rather straight-forward way. We issued a call on a series of open consultation meetings that took place at the focal point of the city, as well as of the ECoC bid - the Pappa's Mill. This has been a dynamic public consultation round inviting the local community to collectively think and form the bid of Larissa for ECoC 2021. Approximately **100 local cultural actors**, operators, organisations, collective bodies, foundations, gatekeepers of tradition and history, innovators in the creative sector, but also in science, technology and alternative cultural expression, representatives of local ethnic communities and social groups, citizens with cultural aspirations and suggestions to name a few, showed up and met the artistic director of the ECoC in an open dialogue where they presented their views and ideas, their capacity and expertise in cultural production, and most importantly, their will to be an active part of the ECoC process as planned and foreseen to be implemented. The artistic and cultural programme is actually the result of this process, foreseeing the largest possible involvement, as key producers and organisers, from this rich pool of cultural operators, depending on the theme, interest, and cultural project.

## Creating cultural profiles

Following up the mapping process and looking into enhancing the appeal and outreach of the ECoC action, we have created an online platform where cultural actors are able to create a cultural profile, for instant search and communication with further cultural operators and institutions in Greece and abroad. The online database displays the profiles of the registered cultural institutions / organizations / associations, artists and creators, with full contact information and activity description. So far, we have collected **81 entries** (cultural actors, foundations, clubs, individuals, professional and amateur artists, NGOs, public and private institutions) into a fully dynamic and searchable database according to artistic discipline and/or field of activity at local, national or international level, location and scope. This platform will be enriched with more functions allowing further matching, awareness, co-productions possibilities. An enhanced targeted campaign is foreseen to increase the number of entries; **first goal for the next one year: from 81 to 300.**

### Sharing ideas

An open online platform - Share Ideas for Action - has been developed, welcoming ideas for cultural and artistic actions to be shared among various actors. Following a welcome message for the ECoC candidacy by the artistic director of Larissa 2021, cultural actors and operators of the city, as well as citizens were prompted to submit their ideas in supporting the bid of Larissa, making the preparation of the bid an issue that involves the city in its entirety. All interested actors and/or individuals have had and still have the opportunity to fill out their details, and provide a short description of their proposed input or action either as awareness raising event or an artistic event to be included in the ECoC artistic programme. All submissions are monitored and assessed by the Larissa 2021 Candidacy Office. The response level of

- the citizens, the civil society organisations, cultural
- actors known but also unknown, was surprisingly
- high. More than 62 innovative ideas and suggestions
- have been proposed so far, still going strong day after
- day. A steady input of suggestions on cultural aspects
- of the city that should be revisited and highlighted,
- personal and family stories and testimonies of
- everyday life about the city's present and past that have
- never been brought to light hitherto - invaluable
- components of the city's microhistory - full blown
- proposals for cultural activities to be considered for
- the ECoC artistic programme, as well as laymen
- sketches and drafts, simply but however vividly
- expressing cultural anxieties and interests, forms a real
- grassroots matrix on which the city's bid will rest on.

## Bringing the Larissa ECoC bid to the attention of the whole country

The media community was invited and we achieved to engage them, through the media relations plan, to act as multipliers in order to ensure that all Larissa 2021 ECoC activity is publicly followed, logged and available at all times. Significant TV and radio coverage offered valuable information and awareness on the ECoC itself, in an effort to share knowledge on cause, the goals, the objectives, while also they gave the opportunity to the City's bid initiators to address their vision and how it fits in the ECoC project. In addition, more than **1.389**, as of today, media publications in local and national media have been recorded and presented in proof records, covering the topic of Larissa 2021 ECoC, published in press and posted on online media outlets. During the ECoC 2021, media multipliers will be offered with the knowledge, frame, and facilities to also act as a **social media hub** that does not only generate and release news, but also fosters media start-ups and professional upskilling with an emphasis in the creative industry - cultural sector, and provide an open learning media platform on new digital skills, multiple production platforms, ethics, etc.

## @Larissa going local, regional & national

The initial Press Conference, held on June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015, was an open call to local and national media, as well as city stakeholders and cultural actors, and of course citizens. During the Press Conference, which has been hosted by the Mayor of Larissa and the Deputy Municipal Head for Sciences and Culture, the concept, the aspirations, the goals and the foreseen impact of the ECoC title should Larissa be designated as the European Capital of Culture 2021, have been presented. The Press Conference was held at the city's administrative complex and major cultural hub of Pappa's Mill, pointing this way the importance of the action at the levels of cultural, social, economic and also political level for the city and the region, sending a clear message for the commitment and political will needed, as well as the cultural readiness that the city as a collective actor should strive for. The event was live-streamed through the portal of Larissa 2021 and is available on its youtube channel.

[www.larissa2021.eu](http://www.larissa2021.eu)

## @Athens, going national and European



A special event for the presentation of the bid, at national level, took place in Athens, on October 7<sup>th</sup> 2015, at the European Commission Representation in Greece to an accumulated exclusive audience of 70 opinion-makers, members of the national press and representatives of several Athens-based, cultural institutions. The bid was presented by two of our most famous Greek, Larissa born, artists, the actor Lakis Lazopoulos and the ballet dancer Eleanna Andreoudi. They were summoned to lend their weight to the bid and join the scores of citizens and other local actors already committed to the cause. It was a moment when grassroots mobilization effectively inspired the most prominent members of our cultural scene to join the creative alliance being formed. As expected, the impressive impact of their presence was evidenced in the increased volumes of interactivity with the digital content produced by the presentation and the hundreds of new friends that joined our digital networks and asked to stay informed of our activities.

## @Thessaloniki going international, going extrovert

The Thessaloniki International Trade Fair (Nov. 2015) is an annual commercial exhibition event of great importance in Greece and South - Eastern Europe. Larissa 2021 and the Candidacy office were there, having its own booth to communicate and promote the candidacy. Information material, video projections, publications on the history and cultural legacy of the city were at the disposal of approximately 15.000 visitors. It was a move towards the will of the city to become extrovert, to make itself visible to a wider community, to explore networks for collaborations, and be present in an event of strong political significance and economic importance, held in the metropolis of Thessaloniki every year since 1926. During the Thessaloniki International Trade Fair, the number of citizens' signatures, collecting through June, exceeded the 10.000! In just a few months, our active and effective volunteers have informed, **one by one, 10.000 citizens**, on our candidacy, vision and goal. And we have their support, by proof of signatures.

**Next target: 20.021 signatures**





## PERSONALISING THE BID PROCESS EACH AND EVERY ONE CAN BE PART OF THIS ENDEAVOUR ENGAGE ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO BECOME AN ACTUAL **ACTIVIST**

### *volunteers*

The volunteers' community is clearly another success indicator, and proof, of the results of the outreach and information measures implemented so far. The candidacy office targeted the creation of an initial volunteers' corpus of 100 people, truly active and committed. To this end, we already report an empowered volunteers' community of more than **140 full-force, grassroots, active volunteers, of all ages, social groups and gender**, that have officially applied, following the open call made by the Candidacy Office, and have offered their knowledge, skills, services and time towards the Larissa 2021 cause. It is a complementary team, stereotypes-free, a true *“bridging perspective best practice”* that forms the basis of the ambitious, yet realistic, volunteers' programme to be implemented should Larissa is designated as ECoC 2021; Expected to count over 1.500 volunteers during the year 2021.

The open call is ongoing and available through the online platform, where interested citizens complete the related volunteer's application.

Our volunteers, citizens themselves who were engaged through the outreach strategy, have offered volunteer, yet highly professional services, great sense of commitment and enthusiasm, and they have developed into a self-managed key volunteering corpus that will lead and implement the volunteer's programme, following a state-of-the-art training on how to organize and provide services in such large-scale projects like ECoC.



An info-point has been also established, consisting of both Candidacy Office representatives and volunteers, in order to provide all needed information on the Larissa 2021 bid process. It is easily accessible in person, and via phone, e-mail and social media, while representatives of the office have been present in all initiatives and events involving the citizens.

## EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK an opportunity to walk-the-talk



The Candidacy Office organised a special event, “Walking to Culture”, on the September 22<sup>nd</sup> 2015, in downtown Larissa. ECoC volunteers, along with citizens and persons with disabilities took a walk around the city, spotted and assessed accessibility potential of cultural spaces and buildings, took down their notes, and highlighted what really works in terms of unobstructed accessibility and what not. More than an awareness raising action, the event made clear, that cultural as well as urban infrastructure, should be freely and openly accessible to all, not only through the mind, but also through the body. Not only in words, but in action. So, we walked the talk, and provided a set of recommendations to the Local Authorities for further action. Actually, the Municipality of Larissa participated in the walk, so as to have an immediate assess through the citizens' perspectives. An act of culture, improving the quality of life!





## Endorsing Larissa

**More than 10.150 signatures are there in our ECoC 2021 Signatures Log. Handwritten, each one, different from the other, unique, but equally valuable in marking time and attitude.** From stakeholders and economic actors, to scientists, cultural actors, artists, politicians, and above all people next door in Larissa and around the whole country, putting their name and signature on paper is a personal statement! Our Larissa ECoC Signatures Log is the permanent companion in all the events for the promotion of the candidacy, while our volunteers were present in public spaces across the city, deploying direct communications and grassroots techniques, informing each citizen, one by one on ECoC, handing out informative material such as the leaflet of Larissa 2021 bid ECoC, while exploring interest of everyday people to participate, and also suggesting ways for them to be part of the city's bid. Signing our log, is a spontaneous act of endorsement that complemented each and every event, occasion, dedicated to the candidacy of Larissa to become the European Capital of Culture 2021.

## BEING CONSTANTLY PRESENT, PURPOSEFUL IN CONTACT WITH AN EVER-GROWING COMMUNITY VIA TRADITIONAL & INNOVATIVE MEANS

### *e-card for Larissa reaching the world*

Spreading the word by sending an e-postcard to a friend! This is an innovative and rather spontaneous way to celebrate the candidacy of Larissa. It is an outreach activity directed to the general public, at national, European and international level, so as to have immediate access to the information that Larissa is bidding for ECoC. Friends, colleagues and people we communicate with, in our everyday lives in person or through the social media, have been prompted to initiate, on their own, a momentum, drawing their will to support, by sending personalised e-cards, in Greece and abroad, to their friends via an easy-to-use online application hosted on our website. More than **4679 e-cards** originated from Larissa travelled from inbox to inbox, from Larissa to other Greek and European cities, and beyond!

### *Social media and public involvement*

Substantial awareness raising and building momentum through social media have been one of our main communication and involvement goals right. We have exploited the power of social media through the design of a dedicated Facebook page for Larissa 2021, counting **8.816 LIKES** by now (end Nov.), open to the public to share views and follow the process and preparations of the bid. In addition, a YouTube channel has been created, hosting relevant videos and material, portraying events and initiatives supporting the bid of Larissa in the preparation phase. So far, more than **10.396 video views** are reported.

### *Introducing 'the other side of Larissa' through the camera lens*

The Candidacy Office, collaborating with the fanzine 'Fmag' organised a photo competition under the theme “the other side of Larissa”. Amateur and professional photographers were invited to submit photos capturing and introducing less known aspects of the city, as they experience them in their everyday lives. The competition was supported by the Fplus photography club. A multi-disciplinary jury was set up to assess the **97 submitted photographs**. Three kinds of awards have been granted to **17 photographers** and their work. The first award was the people's choice, resulting from votes by **500+ online voters**. The second award was the jury's award, while 15 more photographs have been selected to receive an honorary mention. Photographs from the competition appear in the current bidbook.

The city's existing cultural events, but also events and initiatives designed and implemented ad hoc supporting the candidacy of Larissa have been the perfect opportunity to involve the local population in the process towards the designation. A total of **more than 78 events**, some of them familiar, enjoying wide recognition and acceptance by the citizens of Larissa, others novel and innovative, took place throughout the period towards the official deadline for the submission of Larissa's application to become the European Capital of Culture 2021; with a great number of upcoming ones. So far, approximately **32.000 participants** are estimated to have participated in the events organised, during which Larissa 2021 ECoC strategic and high visibility presence (e.g. either as organiser, or co-organiser, or supporter, or promo presence, etc.) , boosting the outreach of the bid process to unprecedented heights. In all events, the **full mobile info booth was predominant**, with volunteers informing citizens and enlarging our supporter's community.

## INITIATING AND FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS IN EXISTING & FAMILIAR CULTURAL EVENTS OR IN THE FORM OF NEW, INNOVATIVE INTERVENTIONS

### *28 EU comic artworks @Larissa for the European Language of Comics*



good  
2 know

*This was another proposal submitted and request by the people of Larissa that was effectively realised by the Candidacy Office within few months. An underground connection, going back to time, has surfaced through the open consultation, where comic lovers have appeared throughout the public of the city. One more thing that Larissa has in its cultural nature and for which it hasn't done anything to exploit it, up to this successful exhibition. As decided, and suggested, in the artistic programme, this Pan-European Comics Exhibition is established as an **annual event**, a cultural norm.*

Larissa as a candidate ECoC city organised and hosted an international exhibition on the art of comics. Renowned European (coming from all 28 EU Member States), local and national artists in the field of comics had the opportunity to meet, present their work, exchange ideas and artistic forms of expression in an open exhibition that lasted 16 days, and was hosted at the Cultural Proscenium complex in Larissa. This was a unique and highly innovative initiative, setting the pace for the highly participatory and innovative nature and character of the artistic programme as planned for the ECoC year. It was also a perfect opportunity for visitors to explore this rather untapped potential of an artistic form. The series of events, workshops, and interaction games have been highly appreciated by the visiting citizens.

### *Bridging Music Perspectives on European Music Day @ the Pinios River Festival*

The festival takes place in Larissa during the summertime; a highly popular event that involved to the greatest possible extent the cultural actors of the city and the citizens of Larissa, by the city river Pinios. Music, dance, theatre, sports, photography, creative workshops make up the festival agenda each year. However, this was a special year for the festival, as its central location appeared the Larissa 2021 ECoC kiosk, under the symbolic (see our logo) bridge, broadcasting for 4 days the city's vision to reconnect the people of Larissa with the city's cultural offer and potential.

The opportunity was seized for the implementation of several Bid-related actions such as open riverside debates, children's wall-painting workshops and on the spot "spread the word" campaign with more than **2.500 people** visiting our info-kiosk, learning about the Bid and signing the Bid support petition that had just been launched. **The target to reach 2021 signatures in 4 days was achieved, in a symbolic outreach activity.** Other activities included video recording of testimonials by citizens who expressed on camera their aspirations and sentiments about the prospect of the ECoC. In addition, the Candidacy Office connected the Festival with the **European Music Day, which was launched in Greece at Larissa's 2021** info-kiosk, an instance of highlighting the European dimension perfectly of the ECoC project.







## *The 'Mill of Performing Arts' towards the art of making business*

*A four-day long festival for performing arts took place at the end of September 2015 in the city's cultural hub, the Pappa's Mill, with music, modern dance, painting, cultural workshops, puppetry and focus discussions on cultural entrepreneurship. The festival has been organised by the Deputy Municipal Head for Sciences and Culture in collaboration with the local and widely known cultural actor S.moo.th. in the frames of the Larissa 2021 ECoC bidding, and acted specifically as pre-platform for the Cultural Entrepreneurial Learning Lab to be developed and established at the Pappa's Mill, so as to enhance and promote cultural entrepreneurship, to foster start-ups in the creative industry and to map and define the user requirements and development steps and phases towards the realization of this ambitious project, as also foreseen in the artistic and cultural programme.*



## *The European Union anthem, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy", moved the city; with a flash mob by almost all orchestras of the city. A city that wants to become ECoC!*

An ad hoc performance in one of the most central and popular squares of the city took bystander citizens by surprise! A flash mob conceived, organised and produced by the Regional-Directorate for Secondary Education and the Municipal Conservatory of Larissa as a community action to raise awareness and gather support for the Bid. Conducted by the renowned maestro and artistic director of the Municipal Conservatory, Mr. Christos Ktistakis a **200-persons choir** formed unexpectedly from participating schools and professional ensembles to sing a Greek-lyrics version of Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy', the Anthem of the European Union. The performance had twofold aim: To endorse the ECoC Candidacy for embodying and celebrating the pacifying power of culture and to present a concrete example of grassroots mobilisation of a great scale for a unique outdoor performance capable of developing new audiences. In less than a month, the video on YouTube has over **7.600 views**.



*Overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.*

## **Creating cultural experiences and notions that look and feel like the people they serve**

Audience development is about further securing existing audiences and cultural interest, as well as reaching out to new audiences. For both of these to happen one has to look into enriching the experience of audiences by making the cultural offer at hand relevant to the widest possible extent for different community groups, both at local level, as well as at the European or international levels. As already stated, turning the city through the ECoC action into a cultural ecosystem will help in breaking barriers to participation, as the city's citizens will have the opportunity to experience the ECoC activities and the artistic programme as a project which they will consider worthwhile, being offered multiple experiences, combining aesthetic delight with celebration, learning and sociability; a way of life supported by meaningful patterns of culture as viewed through the lens of the title of the European Capital of Culture for their city.

The main goal of our strategy for audience development is then to make the cultural offer of the ECoC year audience-centred rather than product-led, because otherwise the whole project would over the course of one long year fall into the trap of becoming disconnected from its context which is the promotion of Europeaness and the layered local, national and European identities viewed as a core property of the city's citizens as European citizens.

The leading axis of our audience development strategy is thus to provide the citizens of the city, on the basis of an otherwise familiar feeling of being comfortable and at ease with the cultural context and surroundings of the city, with a cultural platform that beyond serving as a medium of cultural and artistic performance, it will be an opportunity for social interaction and participation, and an opportunity to learn and have the challenge of new experiences, regarding what their own city and they themselves are culturally capable of.

Through the structured cultural programme, we are aiming to succeed in eventually deriving the worthiness that an ECoC title might carry from what it does to the city and its citizens, rather than from what it is.





## **Audience development methodology and tools**

A Community Outreach department will be established in 2016 to solely be occupied with the task of audience development in collaboration with the organisational, artistic, administrative, and management teams.

Following the available data at this point, showing a low appreciation of the city of Larissa as a European city with rich cultural profile on behalf of the citizens, we will **conduct three surveys, one in the year 2018, three years before the ECoC year, one in the year before the ECoC year, which will be the anticipation year, and one during the designation year.** We will explore certain predictors such as personal interests, demographics, prior exposure, availability of time, values, notions and beliefs towards participation in cultural events and initiatives, as well as demotivators leading to reduced cultural participation. This will help as follows:

- We will have a solid baseline profile of all current audiences and their typology
- The preparation activities (2016-2020) towards the ECoC year will be informed by these findings, enhancing their scope and outreach
- Foreseen participation in the ECoC action will be measurable by gauging the different attitudes documented between designation and ECoC anticipation years
- Certain aspects of the artistic and cultural programme will then be fine-tuned to align with the most prominent factors and motivators for cultural participation as detected.

In terms of making increased participation a future, sustainable trend for the city, we believe that knowing why people have chosen or not chosen to participate in the arts and in cultural production, before and in anticipation of the ECoC year, it is more likely the case, that their experience as documented, will substantially help to influence their perceptions about culture, leading them to increased participation during the ECoC year and in times to come.

Following this process, we will **document both current and new audiences** that need to be addressed through communication and specific actions to ignite their interest in culture and the ECoC year in particular. For the current audiences we aim at **sustaining and deepening their engagement**, while for the new audiences we aim at **reaching out to them and broadening their base.**

Following the course of the cultural activities foreseen to take place before the ECoC, but also during it, the Community Outreach committee will keep detailed records of attendance in terms of age, gender, place of residence, and also qualitative data, mostly towards documenting the impact of the ECoC cultural activities on the audiences as a cultural intervention with strong European dimension.

In trying to ignite interest and boost participation during the ECoC year, we plan to approach the involved audiences at a personal level, giving them step to express views and lived experiences through short interviews at the spot, after having participated in a cultural event, but also in public or work spaces, as we believe that first-hand testimonies do function as facilitators of momentum, fostering a collective desire to be part of what is happening around the city in the ECoC year.

All testimonies and inputs will be presented across the ECoC 2021 social media, as well as broadcasted and showcased in local media TV channels and radio stations.



## **Linking education and schools with the ECoC action**

The young generation, pupils, students, are maybe the toughest audience to reach. They like to get excited, but also tend to get disappointed or lose their interest quite fast. They are constantly questioning all that is taken for granted by the older generations, seeking to find their own interpretation of how the world ticks. Considering the ages between 6 and 18, the school years as a prominent socialisation stage beyond the family environment, it is during this period when culture and nurture are merging to form a conscious approach of a person's identity towards otherness, especially regarding its symbolic apparatus.

Our plan to create a direct link between the ECoC and schools consists then in providing the pupils and students themselves with a model to think about culture not in the sense of holidays, religious traditions or even recipes, but as a stimulator for interconnectedness and tolerance, as well as a way to overcome stereotypes, because stereotypes are there with us from the very beginnings of our lives. Furthermore, we strive to link culture with learning, especially in terms of life-long learning as an approach for personal development. What we keep in mind is that today's students will be a good part of the young generation of the ECoC year, right at the start of their most productive years, that is between the ages of 18 and 24.

**The Candidacy Office of Larissa 2021, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs of Greece and the Unit of Secondary Education has reached an agreement that has allowed us to visit schools and present the ECoC intervention to the students from now on and of course during the ECoC year.** Following this, the Candidacy Office has established a group of volunteers who have already started visiting local schools in collaboration with the respective School Administrations in order to avoid disturbance of the daily programme and curriculum. In the form of short-time workshops we show to the students what cultural development entails for the local community and especially them as part of the community, and how the ECoC is connected with Europeaness. At another level, the volunteers will identify how culture is perceived by the students themselves, and how do they consider themselves as producers and consumers of culture.

In collaboration with the teachers, we try to pin down subtle differences and similarities between notions about tradition, heritage, history, the modern and the obsolete, as well as representations of the students in their everyday life in the city, especially in terms of their knowledge and appreciation of the city's cultural infrastructure. Lastly, we are reporting the teachers' account on how culture as a way of life is interwoven with the educational process itself.

The Candidacy Office and the ECoC volunteers will continue to visit schools throughout the years towards the designation year, while the experiences and input will be reported in a baseline study for further analysis at the levels of both the Municipality as well as the State. This study will be the first of its kind at least for the region of Thessaly.



# Management

takis tloupas  
*Awaiting for the ship in Skopelos, 1965*

## FINANCE

### City budget for culture



What has been the annual budget for culture in the city over the last 5 years (excluding expenditure for the present European Capital of Culture application)?

**D**uring the last five years, despite the economic crisis in Greece, the Municipality of Larissa has managed to maintain the funding rates of cultural activities at 4%-5% of its budget, reflecting minor fluctuations, mostly due to the structural change of local government introduced with the “Kallikratis Law” plan, the Greek public finance crisis and the local elections of 2014.

| year  | 2011         | 2012         | 2013         | 2014         | current   |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---|
| <b>Annual budget for culture in the city €</b><br>(in euros)                                  | 4.093.918,44 | 4.530.163,64 | 5.645.190,89 | 3.518.783,41 | 2.081.954<br>(*until September 2015<br>as the financial year<br>is still running) |
| <b>Annual budget for culture in the city %</b><br>(in % of the annual<br>budget for the city) | 5.52         | 3.73         | 5.52         | 4.32         | 3.79<br>(*until September 2015<br>as the financial year<br>is still running)      |



Which amount of the overall annual budget does the city intend to spend for culture after the European Capital of Culture year (in euros and in % of the overall annual budget)?

The annual expenditure on cultural policies for the Municipality of Larissa, after the completion of the European Capital of Culture year, will be ranging at around 7% of its annual budget (about 5.500.000€). According to the results of the ECoC 2021 valuation, particular attention will be devoted on the sustainability of the successful cultural and educational projects / events that will ensure the legacy of ECoC 2021, and which will be established as cultural norms, to be repeated on an annual basis, and be fully integrated in the cultural roadmap of the city of Larissa.

## Total budget for European Capital of Culture

The budget for the ECoC 2021 has been drawn up responsibly, resorting to realistic and restrictive estimates. However, given the estimate that by 2021 the recession will be reversed and improved revenues for public bodies and local authorities will be recorded, a further rise of revenue for the ECoC 2021 budget may be possible, following a revaluation.

The European Capital of Culture programme's budget amounts to **39.324.545€**, taking into account the overall operating cost and a part of the investment in cultural infrastructure which is directly related to the implementation of the project. If we include investments in urban regeneration and infrastructure projects of a broader importance to the city (e.g. restoration of Ancient Theatre A, which has the characteristics of a major project), total expenditures and investments amount to **62.624.545€**.

|   | Operating<br>Expenditure | Capital Expenditure<br>cultural infrastructure | TOTAL       |
|---|--------------------------|--|-------------|
| <b>ECoC Expenditure</b>                             | 29.274.545€              | 10.050.000€                                    | 39.324.545€ |
| <b>Capital Expenditure<br/>Urban Revitalisation</b> |                          |  | 23.300.000€ |
| <b>General TOTAL</b>                                |                          |  | 62.624.545€ |





*Please explain the overall operating budget (i.e. funds that are specifically set aside to cover operational expenditure). The budget shall cover the preparation phase, the year of the title, the evaluation and provisions for the legacy activities.*

## Operating budget for the title year

### Income to cover operating expenditure

The total budget for the organisation and implementation of the 2021 European Capital of Culture year amounts to **29.274.545 €** - 75% of this is coming from public sources, while 25% from private. The operating budget consists of the following elements:

- 1** Costs for the implementation of the Cultural Programme
- 2** Administration, management and project support costs: Wage costs, fixed and mobile infrastructure, organisation and technical support of the Committee, professional fees, monitoring and evaluation of the project
- 3** Communication services, public relations and marketing

| Total income to cover operating expenditure € | From the public sector € | From the public sector % | From the private sector € | From the private sector % |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 29.300.000                                    | 21.850.000               | 75                       | 7.450.000                 | 25                        |



*What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover operating expenditure?*

### Income from the public sector

The basic funding sources for the operational budget to be covered by the Municipality of Larissa is 45,77% of the total budget and the estimated funding by the State budget, is equally 45,77% of the total amount. To ensure the aforementioned amount, the Municipality of Larissa intends to submit a formal proposal to the central government, so that the government may make available to the Greek city which will be chosen as European Capital of Culture for the year 2021 an amount up to 30% of its budget and, in any case, this amount would not exceed 12.000.000€. Given that the ECoC 2021 is contested by many Greek cities, the Municipality of Larissa the acceptance of this proposal can secure financing for any city that will, ultimately, be selected, without this consisting a form of preferential treatment in favour of any candidate.

Additionally, the programmes which will be funded by the structural funds of the NSRF 2014-2020 have been studied, and potential resources for up to 3,89% of the revenue of the ECoC 2021 operating budget have been identified. These resources will come from the participation in the programmes of the Prefecture of Thessaly, within a framework of actions to support innovation and entrepreneurship related to cultural production. Concerning the submission of any specific proposals, there are announcements expected, regarding the commencement of the actions by the Prefecture of Thessaly, which is the managing authority for these programmes. However, there is regular communication between members of the Prefecture and the Municipality, concerning the smooth integration of projects to the Programmes.

| Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure | €          | %     |
|--|------------|-------|
| National Government  | 10.000.000 | 45,77 |
| City   | 10.000.000 | 45,77 |
| Region   | 850.000    | 3,89  |
| E.U. (with exception of the "Meling Mercouri Prize")         | 800.000    | 3,66  |
| Other  | 200.000    | 0,91  |
| TOTAL  | 21.850.000 | 100   |

Also, 3,66% of the operating budget revenue will come from the implementation of projects within the framework of EU co-funded programmes, while 0,91% of the revenue will be income from cultural institutions of foreign countries, which will include the cultural programme of ECoC 2021 in their own programmes.



*Have the public finance authorities (City, Region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover operating expenditure? If not, when will they do so?*

The Municipal Council of the city of Larissa has so far made a number of rulings concerning the financing of the ECoC 2021 operating budget, within the framework set by administrative, economic transparency and proactive auditing regulations, carried out by the designated authorities of the state.

***Specifically, the municipal rulings are:***

- Decision of the Municipality Council concerning the submission of the ECoC candidacy
- Decision of the Municipality Council concerning the ECoC programme agreement
- Decision of the Municipality Council concerning the creation of a special budgetary reserve for the Municipality of Larissa, regarding the organisation of ECoC 2021
- Decision of the Municipality Council concerning the submission of a proposal to the greek government for the financing of the candidate cities, regarding the implementation of the ECoC 2021 project and issues pertaining to the implementing bodies of the project

Any binding decisions by the central government will be made after the selection of the Capital of Culture, but, nonetheless, there are efforts for an earlier decision, which will set the framework of the financial contribution of the Greek state to the ECoC 2021 project. The rulings by the Prefecture of Thessaly, concerning the amount and the prefecture's proportion, will be made when projects are included in the Regional Operational Plan.



*What is your fund raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover operating expenditure?*

The Municipality of Larissa has a discreet administration unit under the Deputy Mayor of Operational and Business Planning, which deals with the investigation, the participation and the implementation of co-funded European programmes. Moreover, there are open channels maintained between the city's productive and educational institutions, and any European partners, for an ongoing assessment and upgrading of its European operational profile. Also, the municipality cooperates with specialized consultants to submit joint-venture proposals, with the direct participation of the municipality or any of its supervised entities. Until the submission of the present proposal, the Municipality of Larissa had funding from the implementation of co-funded programmes by the European Commission amounting to **393.000€**.

Particularly, during the stage of the submission dossier's preparation for the ECoC 2021, the Municipality of Larissa has processed, evaluated and participated in proposals and implementations of European projects within the framework of the following Programmes (indicatively):

- **Creative Europe**
- **Erasmus+** Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sports
- **EaSI** Programme for Employment and Social Innovation
- **URBACT II and URBACT III** Programme of Territorial Cooperation

The Municipality already accumulates significant knowhow that enables its staff to further claim its inclusion in a greater number of projects, oriented and coherent to its policy, which benefit the city and its citizens. In this frame, and in order to utilize any funding resources from EU programmes, the Municipality of Larissa will further update its administrative structure, resorting to external partners and qualified personnel who will process and effectively prepare the proposals. Given that it takes a long time for this kind of proposals to become mature, and, also, that there are strict restrictions on operating expenses which can be justified by the implementation of EU co-funded projects, the provision of the Municipality of Larissa is expected to initially reach the amount of 800.000€ for the 2016-2024 period, i.e., the total period for the ECoC, from the stage of preparations to the years of valuation and capitalization of its cultural inheritance.

The strategic approach for the opportunities, the methods and the tools with which we may utilize EU funding are being developed by the Municipality of Larissa **regardless of the ECoC Contest outcome**.

### **Funding from European Union Programmes between 2016-2024**

| YEAR | 2016 | 2017 | 2018   | 2019    | 2020    | 2021    | 2022    | 2023    | 2024   | TOTAL   |
|------|------|------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| EU   |      |      | 80.000 | 110.000 | 150.000 | 150.000 | 120.000 | 100.000 | 90.000 | 800.000 |
| %    | 0    | 0    | 0,27   | 0,38    | 0,51    | 0,51    | 0,41    | 0,34    | 0,31   | 3       |



*According to what timetable should the income to cover operating expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture? (This question is optional at pre-selection stage)*

| Source of income for operating expenditure / Years | € | E.U.    | National Government | City      | Region  | Sponsors  | Other*    | TOTAL      |
|--|---|---------|---------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 2016   |   |         |                     | 620.000   |         |           |           | 620.000    |
| 2017   |   |         |                     | 930.000   |         |           | 10.000    | 940.000    |
| 2018   |   | 80.000  |                     | 1.385.000 | 100.000 |           | 25.000    | 1.590.000  |
| 2019   |   | 110.000 | 1.000.000           | 460.000   | 200.000 | 150.000   | 40.000    | 1.960.000  |
| 2020   |   | 150.000 | 1.500.000           | 1.320.000 | 250.000 | 850.000   | 175.000   | 4.245.000  |
| 2021   |   | 150.000 | 7.500.000           | 3.930.000 | 300.000 | 3.500.000 | 1.700.000 | 17.080.000 |
| TOTAL  |   | 490.000 | 10.000.000          | 8.645.000 | 850.000 | 4.500.000 | 1.950.000 | 26.435.000 |

*\*Tickets, crowdfunding, donor's fund, etc.*



*What is the fund-raising strategy to seek support from private sponsors? What is the plan for involving sponsors in the event?*

### ***Income from the private sector***

Within the competitive and promising environment, we suggest the deployment of a well-designed and structured sponsorship strategy that is based on win-win-win approach (community, Larissa ECoC 2021, sponsors). It will be carried out through a sophisticated Sponsorship Support Programme (SSP) that will include state-of-the-art techniques and toolkit, specifically designed to inspire, convince, produce results and benefit the wider community, having as vehicle the ECoC 2021.

Despite the fact that Greek businesses have been severely challenged by the economic crisis, still a great number of community initiatives and support schemes are recorded. The private sector, with state finances in difficult shape, funds numerous important social, educational and cultural initiatives in order to help them remain operational, sustainable and to accomplish their mission.

The cultural and creative sector and its industries are important drivers of economic and social innovation in Europe, and in Greece as well. Being at the crossroads between arts, business and technology, cultural and creative sectors are in a strategic position to trigger spill-overs in other industries. For example, they fuel content for ICT applications, creating a demand for sophisticated consumer electronics and telecommunication devices. Culture and creativity have also direct impacts in industries such as tourism, agriculture, food, transport, etc. and are integrated at all stages of the value chain of other such as fashion and high-end industries, where their importance as key underlying assets is increasing.

#### **Cultivating partnerships with local & regional enterprise into a newborn alliance**

Larissa hosts a vibrant entrepreneurial scene including technological start-ups, gastronomy and hospitality SMEs and several national champions mostly, but not exclusively, aligned to the predominant regional outlook of an agricultural powerhouse. Local and regional business are invited to participate in the ECoC project not as a mere source of finance but as an integral aspect of the strategic vision for a new ecosystem developed around culture with distinct entrepreneurial and social responsibility properties.

Our strategy, and so far things aim to build sustainable relations and insert the ECoC project into the exclusive list of flagship social responsibility initiatives implemented by the regional business heavyweights. In addition, we are working towards proposing operational models of knowledge transfer that allow the emergence of customized, benchmarked, targeted and efficient sponsorship solutions, designed with the help of industry. We are working towards an integrated sponsorship programme that fosters cultural productions for the ECoC and strengthens capacity building through entrepreneurial education and skills acceleration.

Following a preliminary yet thorough mapping of the ecosystem, initially we have dispatched a set of **LETTERS OF INTENT** addressed to local and regional enterprises to support the foreseen ECoC Sponsorship Support Programme (SSP).



Moreover, we have dispatched and we have so far obtained (more are expected) official **STRATEGIC LETTERS OF COMMITMENT** signed by the Larissa Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Hellenic Associations of Young Entrepreneurs (O.E.SYN.E Greece), the Hellenic Associations of Young Entrepreneurs -Thessaly Branch (ESYNE Thessaly), the Economic Chamber of Greece – Thessaly District, the Association of Advertising and Communication Enterprises of Central Greece (EEDKE), the Association of Thessalian Industries and Enterprises (STHEV), and the Hotel Association of Larissa Prefecture. They have all committed to undertake a key role as validators, facilitators and multipliers, and to enable and foster synergies and project partnerships between their Members and Larissa ECoC 2021; a full list of such letters of intent and commitment is already available and is being enhanced gradually.

Moreover, several expatriate communities have already expressed interest in supporting the Project and even commit funds to it. Such was the impetus during the 7<sup>th</sup> World Conference and Gathering of Thessalians that took place in Larissa in July 2015 organised by the World Confederation of Thessalian Federations and Associations “Asclepius”. Hundreds of Expatriates converged to Larissa for the occasion, learned about the Candidacy, proposed the creation of a Donor's Fund and expressed solid interest in contributing according to their capacity. Several legal matters regarding taxation and applicable transaction laws are currently under consideration and are examined by the Municipality of Larissa.

Great interest by various stakeholders is already recorded for the establishment of the innovative Cultural Entrepreneurship Learning Lab, an arts and culture business incubator that will provide cutting edge lifelong learning and skills acceleration for aspiring cultural entrepreneurs and will specifically work towards ensuring sustainability of the cultural offer that will be developed within the ECoC. The Municipality of Larissa, has already studied, visited and established creative networking with similar projects across Europe and especially the Wallonia European Creative District where the leverage of Private funds in cultural and creative sector is a European Showcase example.

Aspects of the sponsorship strategy were further presented and debated upon at the 1<sup>st</sup> Cultural Symposium “Agenda 2021: Funding culture in the region”, held in Larissa (Nov. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2015). It also provided a platform for creative dialogue on how culture could be funded from corporate programmes such as CSR and marketing initiatives, either horizontally or per project. It was attended by a targeted audience of executives, business trendsetters and opinion and decision-makers. Among the speakers were the Mayor and Vice-Mayor of the City of Larissa, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Greece, and the Head of the European Parliament Office in Greece. The event was also addressed, via video, by the European Commissioner for Regional Policy, Ms. Corina Crețu and the Founder of Global Women's Entrepreneurship Day celebrated that same day at United Nations, Ms. Wendy Diamond. The Symposium was an unprecedented success and it has been decided to continue as an annual event dedicated on the regional development through culture.

Another source of private income will be the production and retail of merchandising products developed specifically for the ECoC. Some very important designers, with international reputation and impressive portfolios, reside in Larissa and produce cutting edge design. For example, the case of the graphic artist Dimitris Evangelou is indicative of the talent currently accumulated in the city on this type of art; his proposal won the Warner Bros international competition for the design of promotional t-shirt of the “Batman: The Dark Knight Rises” movie. Our approach to merchandising will be subjected to the whole process of product development and will be implemented within the framework of an overall business plan with an ultimate goal of becoming a substantial source of income for the ECoC and reinforcing its branding. Additional sources of funding are being explored such as online crowdfunding that will target artistic communities and will employ avant-garde digital marketing based on latest trends. To this end, a designated position will be included in the organizational structure of the ECoC managing entity to embed the imperative of the online funding strategy into the project's governance. We aim to have in place on time for the start of our project, and no later by the beginning of 2017, a step by step manual for those submitting project ideas on how to develop and implement crowdfunding campaigns.



*Please provide a breakdown of the operating expenditure, by filling in the table below:*

### *Income from the private sector*

| Programme expenditure |    | Promotion & Marketing |    | Wages, overheads & administration |    | Total of the operating expenditure |
|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|
| €                     | %  | €                     | %  | €                                 | %  |                                    |
| 22.500.000            | 77 | 3.804.545             | 13 | 2.970.000                         | 10 | 29.274.545                         |

The structure of the operating budget for ECoC 2021 has been prepared based on realistic needs and estimates that safeguard the proper implementation of the project, as well as based on comparative analysis of previous ECoC budgets.

Altogether, its structure can be outlined as follows:

- 77% is allocated to cultural activities programmes.
- 13% is given to highlight and promote Larissa as ECoC 2021, with actions and initiatives of local, national or European importance.
- Administrative, organisational and support expenses concern 10% of the budget and will cover general and administrative expenses - e.g., professional fees, technical support expenses, fees to monitor and evaluate the programme, which is estimated to absorb around 7% of the total amount allocated for the management of the programme.



*Planned timetable for spending operating expenditure  
(this question is optional at pre-selection stage)*

| YEAR         | Programme expenditure |            | Promotion & Marketing |            | Wages, overheads & administration |            | TOTAL of the operating expenditure |
|--------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|------------|------------------------------------|
|              | €                     | %          | €                     | %          | €                                 | %          |                                    |
| 2016         | 450.000               | 2          | 76.9091               | 2          | 89.100                            | 3          | <b>615.191</b>                     |
| 2017         | 675.000               | 3          | 114.136               | 3          | 148.500                           | 5          | <b>937.636</b>                     |
| 2018         | 1.125.000             | 5          | 228.273               | 6          | 237.600                           | 8          | <b>1.590.873</b>                   |
| 2019         | 1.350.000             | 6          | 342.409               | 9          | 267.300                           | 9          | <b>1.959.709</b>                   |
| 2020         | 3.150.000             | 14         | 646.773               | 17         | 445.500                           | 15         | <b>4.242.273</b>                   |
| 2021         | 13.500.000            | 60         | 2.092.500             | 55         | 1.485.000                         | 50         | <b>17.077.500</b>                  |
| 2022         | 1.125.000             | 5          | 190.227               | 5          | 148.500                           | 5          | <b>1.463.727</b>                   |
| 2023         | 675.000               | 3          | 76.091                | 2          | 89.100                            | 3          | <b>840.191</b>                     |
| 2024         | 450.000               | 2          | 38.045                | 1          | 59.400                            | 2          | <b>547.445</b>                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>22.500.000</b>     | <b>100</b> | <b>3.804.545</b>      | <b>100</b> | <b>2.970.000</b>                  | <b>100</b> | <b>29.274.545</b>                  |

*The distribution of the annual operating expenses for EcoC 2021 can be further analyzed as follows:*

- 10% is allocated for preparation (2016-2018)
- 22% is for the period of production and final preparations (2019-2020)
- 58% is for the ECoC year (2021)
- 10% is for the valuation and capitalization period (2022-2024)



*What is the breakdown of the income to be received from the public sector to cover capital expenditure in connection with the title year?*

### **Budget for capital expenditure**

The Municipality of Larissa will implement reasonable capital expenditures to upgrade its cultural infrastructure and utilize its potential in existing buildings, treating respectfully the traditional architectural, functional and cultural characteristics of its urban space, along with the character of the city. The infrastructure on which we plan to invest is connected to actions and initiatives which will be developed under the programme of ECoC, the majority of which is infrastructure that has already been organically integrated in the city's everyday life and culture. The prospect of 2021 allows us to redesign and upgrade some infrastructure and carry out redevelopments, which will be a new inheritance for the city. The income from the public sector as a funding source for investment in infrastructure can be analyzed as follows:

| Income from the public sector to cover operating expenditure | €                 | %          |  |
|--|-------------------|------------|--|
| National Government  | 23.300.000        | 70         | Sectoral Operational Programmes NSRF 2014-2020 |
| City   | 1.050.000         | 3          | Municipal Budget                               |
| Region   | 9.000.000         | 27         | Regional Operational Programme NSRF 2014-2020  |
| E.U. (with exception of the "Melina Mercouri Prize")         |                   |            |  |
| Other  |                   |            |  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>33.350.000</b> | <b>100</b> |  |

70% of the income will come from the Sectoral Operational Programmes of the national part of the NSRF 2014-2020, 27% from the Regional Operational Programme of Thessaly and 3% from the municipal budget (technical programme) of Larissa.

In this context, there are two types of investments:

**A. CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE** which includes projects that will upgrade and modernize the existing cultural and educational infrastructure in the city, so that it becomes perfectly suited for events, actions and residencies for artists.

**B. URBAN REGENERATION INFRASTRUCTURE** which includes broader interventions in city areas which are considered as landmarks and generate added value for the cultural and architectural heritage of Larissa by improving the quality of life along with the natural and cultural environment. Such an integral intervention is the one on the 1<sup>st</sup> Ancient Theatre of Larissa, considered a unique characteristic of the city, and, also, on the surroundings of Larissa's urban center.

*Table for capital expenditure on infrastructure*

| <b>CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>                     | <b>Budget €</b>   | <b>Type of work required</b>   | <b>Funding</b>  |
|--|-------------------|--|---|
| <b>CULTURAL PROSCENIUM</b>                         | 9.000.000         | Completion and configuration of interior spaces, stage equipment costs, electric and mechanical installations                            | Provision of inclusion to NSRF 2014-2020, ROP THESSALY, Thematic objective 6  |
| <b>MUNICIPAL CONSERVATORY</b>                      | 100.000           | Upgrades   | Covered by the annual municipal budget of Larissa   |
| <b>MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY G.I. KATSIGRAS MUSEUM</b> | 100.000           | Modernization and purchase of equipment  | Covered by the annual municipal budget of Larissa   |
| <b>HATZIGIANNIO MUNICIPAL CULTURAL CENTER</b>      | 150.000           | Enhancement and upgrading  | Covered by the annual municipal budget of Larissa   |
| <b>MAINTANCE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE</b>        | 700.000           | Maintenance and renovation of various halls and cultural structures  | Covered by the annual municipal budget of Larissa   |
| <b>TOTAL ON CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>            | <b>10.050.000</b> |  |   |
| <b>URBAN REGENERATION INFRASTRUCTURE</b>           | <b>Budget €</b>   | <b>Type of work required</b>   | <b>Funding</b>  |
| <b>SEFKO WAREHOUSE &amp; FARMLANDS</b>             | 4.000.000         | Modernization and purchase of equipment  | Provision of inclusion to NSRF 2014-2020, in the Regional Operational Programme "Transportation & Environmental Infrastructure and Sustainable Development", Thematic Objective 6 |
| <b>ANCIENT THEATRE</b>                             | 14.000.000        | Reconstruction of theater and stabilisation of ladders and seats, recovery of theater suprastructure & interventions in adjacent streets | Provision for inclusion in ROP Thessaly, in the planned Integrated Territorial Investment   |
| <b>BEZESTENI</b>                                   | 5.000.000         | Implementation of recover study and building promotion   | Provision of inclusion to NSRF 2014-2020, in the Regional Operational Programme "Transportation & Environmental Infrastructure and Sustainable Development", Thematic Objective 6 |
| <b>AVEROFF SCHOOL</b>                              | 300.000           | Purchase of equipment and renovation of facilities   | Provision of inclusion to NSRF 2014-2020, ROP THESSALY, Thematic objective 6  |
| <b>TOTAL ON CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE</b>            | <b>23.300.000</b> |  |   |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                                 | <b>33.350.000</b> |  |   |



*Have the public finance authorities (city, region, State) already voted on or made financial commitments to cover capital expenditure? If not, when will they do so?*

In the coming months, the Region of Thessaly and the managing authorities of the sectoral operational programmes which will fund capital expenditures are expected to announce the calls for proposals.





**What is your fund raising strategy to seek financial support from Union programmes/funds to cover capital expenditure?**

The main approach is the inclusion of actions to the NSRF 2014-2020 programme, for which the new funding tools of the Integrated Approach to Territorial Development are provided, and, especially, the Integrated Territorial Investment (as defined in the article 36 of the regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013).

In the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) Thessaly, the Integrated Territorial Investment which will be proposed is about the emergence of a cultural and touristic journey through Thessaly, regarding the utilization of its historic and natural heritage in the development of the Prefecture of Thessaly. The route will be covering the most important, recognized historical landmarks of Thessaly and the four ancient theatres found in it, including the two which are found in Larissa. The main route will also highlight other places of cultural or natural interest, because its ultimate goal is the overall utilization and promotion of the cultural heritage of Thessaly, the increase of the number of visitors and the creation of the right conditions for the development of entrepreneurship and related jobs.

The Integrated Territorial Investment, after the call for proposals by the managing authority for the Regional Programme, will include the whole of the restoration work for 1<sup>st</sup> Ancient Theater, as well as the interventions to adjacent roads, which will contribute to its emergence and the facilitation of access to it.

There has also been a proposal towards the Greek Ministry of Environment and Energy, concerning the inclusion of projects, such as the SEFKO WAREHOUSE AND FARMLANDS and the utilization of the ottoman monument BEZESTENI to the Regional Operational Programme “Transportation and Environmental Infrastructure and Sustainable Development”, Thematic Objective 6, “Protection of the environment and promotion of resource efficiency” for the Investment Priority 6iv, “Taking action to improve the urban environment, recreate cities, regenerate and disinfect environmentally degraded areas, reduce air pollution and promote measures to reduce noise”.



**According to what timetable should the income to cover capital expenditure be received by the city and/or the body responsible for preparing and implementing the ECoC project if the city receives the title of European Capital of Culture? (This table is optional at pre-selection stage)**

| Source of income for operating expenditure / Years | € | E.U. | National Government | City    | Region    | Sponsors | Other | TOTAL      |
|--|---|------|---------------------|---------|-----------|----------|-------|------------|
| 2016   |   |      |                     |         |           |          |       | 0          |
| 2017   |   |      | 500.000             |         | 500.000   |          |       | 1.000.000  |
| 2018   |   |      | 3.000.000           |         | 1.500.000 |          |       | 4.500.000  |
| 2019   |   |      | 6.300.000           | 150.000 | 3.000.000 |          |       | 9.450.000  |
| 2020   |   |      | 8.000.000           | 400.000 | 3.000.000 |          |       | 11.400.000 |
| 2021   |   |      | 5.500.000           | 500.000 | 1.000.000 |          |       | 7.000.000  |

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



**What kind of governance and delivery structure is envisaged for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year**

**O**ur intention is to safeguard, right from the beginning, transparent, effective and smooth operation of the independent body to carry out Larissa2021, while respecting and in being full compliance with the Greek legal framework; avoiding any bureaucratic ambiguities

To this end, Larissa2021 will be entirely managed and realized by an independent body with a specific mandate, organizational structure and obligations embedded in its corporate charter. The exact type of legal entity will be soon finalized upon the conclusion of the current deliberations with the State on what officially the Greek law foresees. In the

meantime, the Greek candidate ECoC2021 cities have made a formal request to the State for an amendment in the current legal framework of “Kallikratis”, the overarching set of laws dictating local government. The amended provision will thus allow the designated city to establish a new legal body to run the ECoC. Alternatively, the State has been requested to issue an Act directly establishing the body responsible for the ECoC management on behalf of the City (a practice that was followed, previously, for two Greek ECoCs, Thessaloniki and Patra). Nonetheless, we are working towards a managing entity that will operate under corporate standards and will remain fully functional and independent without jeopardizing its transparency, accountability and social responsibility obligations. In addition, it will oversee the Larissa2021 Project in its entire lifecycle, including the design and the implementation of the Cultural Programme, the development of international relations and co-productions, the implementation of promotion and marketing strategy and the delivery financial management and reporting.

With the aim to safeguard, at all times, a steady political and institutional support, and a collective consensus and effective joint action, the founding members of the **High Level Governing Committee (HLGC), the top hierarchy governing body to be established**, will consist of official representatives of the City Council i.e. Mayor, Vice Mayor, city council members, of the Regional Council, the Ministry of Culture, the Local Chamber of Commerce and representatives from various local and regional stakeholders, posit that none will be holding the absolute majority. The HLGC will be responsible for the overall strategic direction of the implementation and will be reinforcing the alignment of the ECoC project with the strategic objectives set out at the application stage.



*How will this structure be organised at management level?  
Please make clear who will be the person(s) having  
the final responsibility for global leadership of the project?*

The structure has been developed in a practical, workable model that strives for effectiveness, and relies on collective wisdom and expertise, evolving in a four level management approach.

Right under the oversight of the High Level Governing Committee (HLGC), stands the **CEO having the final responsibility for the global leadership** of the Larissa2021 project. She/He will be the legal representative of the managing entity, acting at the same time as the liaison between the HLGC and the Board of Directors managing the entity.

The management structure foresees and depicts the significance attributed the central thematic directions to be led by a **Board of Directors, consisting of five top-level with proven experience per directorate**; all having an equal vote and saying, all offered the appropriate level of autonomy with clear responsibilities to carry out successfully their management plans through their **distinct directorates**. These five directors, forming the BoD, work closely with each other, as a strategic wisdom group, and will be supported by experienced and knowledgeable staff according to job descriptions per directorate unit.



A separate **Advisory Board** may be established consisting of members of other important regional institutions such as the University, professional associations, and representatives from cultural related sector. The local element will be dominant in both bodies ensuring appropriate cooperation between the local authorities and the ECoC management including its artistic team.

The **monitoring and evaluation** of the Larissa2021 will be undertaken by external experts (see Section Strategy); All five Directors will be required and responsible to make available information and data to the external evaluators, in an organised manner, following specific reporting guidelines.

The organisational structure and the top management responsibilities and obligations will be included in the establishing act of the Managing Body, along with other procedures and provisions regarding transparency and accountability in recruitment and procurement.



*How will you ensure that this structure has the staff with the appropriate skills and experience to plan, manage and deliver the cultural programme for the year of the title?*

## we call out for the best!

The HLGC will assign and approve a well-elaborated and documented recruitment plan, which will feed from and elaborate on vacancy needs, with specific developed position descriptions (e.g. duties, responsibilities, skills, prior experience and other preferred qualifications). The recruitment plan will define the strategy for raising awareness on the hiring opportunities (e.g. open announcements, print advertisement, social media), and at the same time raising interest on getting the ideally qualified candidates to apply for the openings.

The process will be adhering to European standards and practices regarding recruitment of executive management. Still, advice and guidance on drafting the job description may be sought from previous Cities hosting the ECoC while external experts may be summoned to observe and advice on the recruitment.

A three phase hiring process is foreseen (to be finalised though by the recruitment plan) that entails initial evaluation, short list of qualified candidates, on site screening interview, and selection interview for those who have achieved to enter into the final round. Interviews shall be conducted by a committee of three people at least.

In all cases, an open procedure, exploiting public awareness means will be followed in order to ensure that applications submitted meet qualitative and quantitative targets for the benefit of the endeavour. Clearly, the openness that characterizes deeply the city of Larissa will be applied in the recruiting aspect as well: no discrimination will be tolerated against qualified candidates. Moreover, equal job and payment opportunities will be applied for both men and women.

### **Equal pay for work of equal value.**

This open procedure, in a search of the ideal and most qualified candidate for each management position and further management support team, is qualified-oriented rather. To this end, following the initial selection of the Board of Directors, the Transparency Director will ensure that this is diffused in all recruiting processes for Larissa2021.

Regarding external collaborations, there has already been an extensive consultation and mobilisation of local human capital that has brought forward valuable experience, talent and ambition capable of assuming ownership and offering solutions.

.....



*According to which criteria and under which arrangements have the general director and the artistic director been chosen - or will be chosen? What are - or will be - their respective profiles? When will they take up the appointment? What will be their respective fields of action?*

According to the criteria defined at the recruitment plan, as described above, the first two, consecutively, vacancies to be covered, and to whom the recruitment will be then passed as foreseen by their duties and responsibilities, are those of the CEO and Managing Director. Right after, the second wave of openings will be the four additional Directors, forming the Board of Directors i.e. Artistic, Creative & Communication, Engagement and Transparency Directors. The recruitment procedure will be equally and identically applied to all.

The overarching criterion for the selection of the **CEO** will be his/her ability to implement the City's bold strategic vision as it is embedded in the ECoC project and at the same time to deliver sound, efficient and transparent project direction. As such, we will be looking for an accomplished leader with an instinct for culture, innovation and creation, experienced in orchestrating both public and private funding strategies directed at local, regional, national and international levels and with the proven record in managing transnational projects involving diverse audiences and stakeholders. A C-level knowledgeable, with over 10 years of work experience at executive positions, with strong leadership to provide bold strategy direction, specific job related technical skills to implement large-scale and complex project.

The **Artistic Director** will also be appointed via an international tender. He/she must demonstrate a deep awareness of European cultural heritage not only in terms of artistic creation but also in terms of social legacy. He/She should be able to comprehend the interdisciplinary character of culture and to perceive cultural phenomena as human activities from regional and linguistic perspectives, as well as from a cross-cutting viewpoint transcending boundaries between different genres. His/her approach to artistic direction should entail clear-cut strategies for capacity building and audience development. Finally, he/she should demonstrate good working connections and contacts with the European arts & culture scene. The Artistic Director will be responsible for further developing the themes described in the ECoC application, directing their team into devising the cultural and artistic programme for 2021 and implementing specific measures that support the engagement of local and regional cultural stakeholders, inviting them to assume ownership of the programme.

The procedures for recruiting will be initiated once the city is designated and the managing entity has been established.

***Appointment is expected to have been taken up for all, by January 2017.***



## CONTINGENCY PLANNING

A full-force risk assessment exercise is planned for the second development phase, should Larissa2021 ECoC bid is shortlisted. It will be carried out with the help of external experts; it could possibly be some who have already designed risk assessment and management plans for previous or designated ECoCs. The risk assessment will also take into account the feedback released on our present application.

Hereafter, we have categorized perceived risks under three broad sections and we have subsequently identified several strengths and weaknesses for each and a corresponding basic mitigation approach:

| RISK CATEGORY                       | STRENGTHS   | WEAKNESSES   | MITIGATION APPROACH  |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|
| <b>Outreach</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment and support from the local and regional public authorities</li> <li>• Wide support from local citizens</li> <li>• Strong sense of purpose among citizens to open-up and make Larissa more visible culturally</li> <li>• High volumes of participation in awareness raising actions</li> <li>• Collaboration with, national and European artists, cultural operators and networks</li> <li>• Involvement of 6 more Municipalities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low visibility and brand awareness of Larissa</li> <li>• Low appreciation of the cultural image and potential of the city from its citizens</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making extensive use of social media and maintaining visibility across all platforms</li> <li>• Contacting European networks through the local cultural operators</li> <li>• Involving citizens and stakeholders at all levels</li> <li>• Acknowledging the citizens' low appreciation of the city in the Bid Book and lay out specific measures to counter it</li> </ul> |
| <b>Organisational</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to municipal resources</li> <li>• Rich local cultural capital and creative potential from grassroots organizations</li> <li>• Strong Political Support from Regional Authority</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertain overall political and economic situation in Greece</li> <li>• Possible delays in establishing the Managing Organization due to legal restrictions</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Securing broad political support and building consensus at local and regional levels</li> <li>• Work closely with the State to address the issue of governance at the very first stage of the project preparation phase</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Infrastructure &amp; funding</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of most of the infrastructure required to organise ECoC events</li> <li>• Centrality and proximity of most cultural venues</li> <li>• Reliable transportation system available and widespread use of bikes</li> <li>• Sufficient Hotel accommodation</li> <li>• Rich cultural infrastructure with respect to the human scale of the city</li> <li>• Good reputation and credibility of the Municipality of Larisa</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliance on Community funding for completing infrastructure projects, especially the 1<sup>st</sup> ancient theatre</li> <li>• One of the main ECoC venues still under construction (Proscenium)</li> <li>• Bureaucracy may delay the lease of certain venues aimed for residencies</li> <li>• Required upgrade of infrastructure to allow full accessibility</li> <li>• Renovation of hotel rooms may be required</li> <li>• Concrete Financial Commitments still pending</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of Municipal budget reserves</li> <li>• Cultivation of support and lobbying at decision making levels</li> <li>• Strong regional enterprise capable of supporting</li> </ul>   |

## MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION



*Could your artistic programme be summed up by a slogan?*

The artistic programme of Larissa 2021 can be summed up in the slogan '**Turning the city into a live stage**'. Sights, sounds, festivity, performance, are mixing up with the buzz of the city and its everyday life. Buildings, public squares, neighbourhoods in the front line and in the 'backyard' are transformed to a cultural scenery. The cultural aura of the city will be turned into the soundtrack and the canvas of the ECoC year. The entire city will be a cultural stage, in a harmonic overdose of synthesis of people, ideas, voices, sounds, writings, doings, movements, projections ... and anything that can generate without limits culture. This will be achieved through a **bridging perspectives** methodology and action that will spread the news, that **Larissa is not a dot in the map**. Is the European Capital of Culture for the year 2021!



## What is the city's intended marketing and communication strategy for the European Capital of Culture year?

If we wanted to think about one thing and one thing only that is most characteristic of the city of Larissa and its people, this would be communication, since the city has always had the role of a geographical point in space that is connecting the north, the east, the south, and the west of the country. On the other hand, intense communication, prompting however to active participation, has been one of the main goals of our outreach and audience development strategy. Last but not least, communication is one of the determining factors of our 'Bridging perspectives' concept for the whole ECoC programme. So far, having blended those three elements, we have reached excellent results. We took the time and the effort to **personalise communication and outreach**, we engaged a high number of volunteers who proved to be the most appropriate communication means to address target groups of all kinds in a rather direct and straight-forward way, we used press communication careful and conveyed messages and information on the ECoC action in a consistent way, favouring quality and igniting interest, rather than bombarding audiences with indifferent and trivial messages. We gradually expanded our outreach starting from the local and regional levels, moving then to the national and international levels. We safeguarded the outreach potential of social media and online promotion, by preventing over-saturation of communication. We placed high value on the directness of special designed events to act as powerful multipliers for the ECoC project.

Should the city of Larissa be designated as the ECoC 2021, we will further build on this approach, however by intensifying efforts, structuring our communication and marketing strategy in time between 2016 and the designation year, and deploying additional tools to support communication and measuring its impact.

### *The overall communication and marketing strategy to be put into effect during the ECoC year consists of:*

The **planning stage** which involves designing the essential elements of the Communication Strategy, defining the phases along with the messages to be promoted and the activities to be implemented, integrating them into a sustainable working document, the "Communication Strategy Plan". This document constitutes the roadmap to be followed throughout the lifecycle of the ECoC, laying down the common ground and understanding on communication issues as well as the processes for its implementation along with evaluation indicators.

The **implementation stage** which is about carrying out and coordinating all activities provided for in the Communication Strategy, while looking for synergies and partnerships for a multiplier effect. The implementation stage is the most demanding in terms of resources and it needs to go hand-in-hand with the next stage: the monitoring stage.

The **monitoring stage** which is crucial in order to achieve the project communication objectives. It is important to regularly measure the impact of every activity and message used by all participating partners in the project in this direction. Number of recipients of communication messages, number of people impacted by dissemination tools, social media statistics (likes, follows), number of answers in polls etc. are considered valuable indicators of the effectiveness of the communication and dissemination activities. This monitoring will ensure a better understanding and guarantee vigilance for better guiding the communication outputs, which brings us to the adjustment stage.

The **adjustment stage** which ensures that all "messages sent", e.g. indications given, by the wider community, including direct and indirect target groups, have been received and that the Communication Strategy takes them into account in introducing corrective actions, adjustments, additions or any other action needed in order to ensure that actual performance and impact of the implementation stage matches the one foreseen during the planning stage.

Throughout the ECoC year a **comprehensive evaluation** takes place. This evaluation, based also on the feedback from the regular monitoring stages throughout the project, aims to identify the points and key issues that can or need to be improved and/or enhanced in view of achieving the maximum impact and have an amplified outreach, increasing the number of people that have been informed about and/or engaged with the ECoC project.

### *Methodology and indicative set of tools for the implementation of the Communication and Marketing Strategy*

- Gradual disengagement from the key messages deployed during candidacy, and development of messages that respond to the fact that Larissa holds the ECoC title.
- Enhancement of the already existing partnerships with the media sector (written, online, radio, TV), especially at the wider national and international level
- Development of a full-force Media Center, with a specific media plan and media relations strategy, as part of the ECoC managing organisation, to develop and handle media communication (editorial team, bloggers and social media administrators and facilitators, press communication and PR officers, national and international liaison officers)
- Creation of a separate body of volunteers, building on the existing volunteers, but also complemented by volunteers with relevant experience, especially occupied with communication of the ECoC action. The communication volunteers' team will be trained on effective practices of direct, face-to-face communication.
- Promotion of Larissa 2021 as ECoC, as well as the cultural programme and its impact on wider audiences in national and international fora and conferences throughout the ECoC year

- Organisation and implementation of Press Conferences at national and European level during the ECoC year
- Production of informative material (leaflets, posters, banners, physical and electronic) in at least 4 European languages (EL, EN, DE, FR), customisable and allowing for alternative versions following the flow of the ECoC year and the planned events
- Promotion of Larissa as ECoC 2021 in city hotels, tourist accommodation structures, tourist guides, tourist organisations at the local, regional level, international level

### *Main goals of communication and marketing strategy*

- Raise awareness of the ECoC action in Larissa at the local and European level
- Clearly communicate the ECoC institution as a European Union lead action
- Steadily engage wider audiences for involvement and participation and maintain their interest
- Present the benefits of the ECoC for the city, the country and EU
- Stir interest of cultural actors, organisations and networks in the ECoC action towards the creation of further synergies with the cultural sector of the city
- Turn the celebration of the events and actions of the ECoC programme, into a celebration of the European idea



*How will you mobilise your own citizens as communicators of the year to the outside world?*

Through a sophisticated set of interlinked, complementary, smart, catchy, fun, useful, interactive communication tools, which will form part of the communication plan, proposing various activities, interactive games, APPs, etc. that will bring people on board because they find it attractive, and speaks their language, we will prompt citizens to become communicators and multipliers of the ECoC. One example is the development of an interactive platform where people, from all over the world, will be invited to upload own photos with a target to make the biggest ever multiple photos collage. Each one participating in this game will be able to see the growing pace of the collage, and trace hers/his photo along with the photos of friends, colleagues, acquaintances she/he has brought in this fun game. Along the same philosophy, we look into setting up web TV dedicated show on 'culture everywhere', where people, after having submitted their creative proposal, will be offered the opportunity to voice one's cultural work or expertise. Another possible idea, we examine, is the creation of a set of personal icons, such as a personal signature, with a catchy motto, including Larissa 2021, to be used by the citizens in all their communication through e-mail, mobile phone messaging, social media accounts. A full list of ideas is well underway. Using digital and traditional means and tools so as to include in our communication plans all target groups, regardless of age or digital literacy level.



*How does the city plan to highlight that the European Capital of Culture is an action of the European Union?*

Up to this moment, in all our outreach activities, we have been very careful in indicating that all activities implemented, messages conveyed, tools deployed, have done so within the scope of the candidacy of the city of Larissa for the title of the European Capital of Culture, a European initiative by the EU. All future communication, between the first and second phase of selection should the city be promoted to the second one, as well as between 2016 and the ECoC year and during the ECoC year should the city win the title, will also carry a clear message of the action as part of a European title, that is the title of the ECoC. Furthermore, signage, labelling, promotion material for the events, broadcasts and telecasts, key messages, references in interviews, spots, will also make clear mention of the ECoC title as an EU initiative. In all respective documentation, contracts, memoranda etc. for all involved cultural actors, organisations, artists, a clear mention of the ECoC will be made, as well as the European dimension of the title. Promotional material, questionnaires, posters, banners, for public use will also carry clear mention to the ECoC institution. Central public spaces and public buildings in the city of Larissa, but also in the surrounding area, will have special designed signs informing on the title of the ECoC 2021 for Larissa, with the formal, respective logos. To the widest possible extent, online references to the Region of Thessaly and Larissa (e.g. Wikipedia and other sources by reaching respective agreements) will communicate that Larissa is the ECoC 2021, as part of an EU initiative. Lastly, as already stated, in all monitoring and evaluation activities and surveys, documenting and measuring the impact of the ECoC title, the perception by the public of the ECoC title and the cultural programme of the city as an EU lead initiative will be gauged and analysed, and additional actions will be taken if needed towards making the ECoC action as an EU action more visible.



*In a few lines explain what makes your application so special compared to others?*

### ***This is the moment for Larissa. A city that wants to become ECoC!***

When we decided to enter this demanding endeavour, we were surprised, finding out that there was a whole city with a pending, unfulfilled, never openly expressed will to open up, to let it out, and take out the step forward. They took the bull by the horns, they are not in a competition with other candidate cities, but with themselves. This was crystal clear in the glimpse of their eyes when they asked about how they can contribute, what it takes to become an ECoC, saying all the time that even if we don't make it, this would be one of the most joyful trips the city has ever embarked on.





ANNEX 2

**DECLARATION OF HONOUR BY THE APPLICANT CITY**

The undersigned **APOSTOLOS KALOGIANNIS**:

representing the following legal person:

full official name: **Municipality of Larissa**

official legal form: **Local Authority**

full official address: **Ionos Dragoumi 1, 41222, Larissa, Greece**

VAT registration number: **997844860**

- certify that the applicant city is not in one of the following situations which would exclude it from receiving Union prizes:
- a) is bankrupt or being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
  - b) has been convicted of an offence concerning professional conduct by a judgment of a competent authority of a Member State which has the force of *res judicata*;
  - c) has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the Commission can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
  - d) is not in compliance with all its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions and the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established, with those of the country of the authorising officer responsible and those of the country where the action is to be implemented;
  - e) has been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
  - f) is subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresenting the information required as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or another grant award procedure or failing to supply this information, or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under contracts or agreements covered by the Union's budget.
- declare that the applicant city:
- g) have no conflict of interests in connection with the prize; a conflict of interests could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinity, family, emotional life or any other shared interest;

- h) will inform the Commission, without delay, of any situation considered a conflict of interests or which could give rise to a conflict of interests;
  - i) have not granted and will not grant, have not sought and will not seek, have not attempted and will not attempt to obtain, and have not accepted and will not accept any advantage, financial or in kind, to or from any party whatsoever, where such advantage constitutes an illegal practice or involves corruption, either directly or indirectly, inasmuch as it is an incentive or reward relating to the award of the prize;
  - j) provided accurate, sincere and complete information within the context of this prize award procedure.
- I declare that the applicant city is fully eligible in accordance with the criteria set out in the specific call for submission of applications.
- I acknowledge that according to Article 131 of the Financial Regulation of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (Official Journal L 298 of 26.10.2012, p. 1) and Article 145 of its Rules of Application (Official Journal L 362, 31.12.2012, p.1) applicants found guilty of misrepresentation may be subject to administrative and financial penalties under certain conditions.

If selected to be awarded a prize, the applicant city accepts the conditions as laid down in the call for submission of applications.

Last name, first name: **Kalogiannis, Apostolos**

Title or position in the city: **Mayor**

Signature [and official stamp] of the applicant:

Date: **19/11/2015**



Your reply to the call for submission of applications will involve the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address and CV), which will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, your replies to the questions in this form and any personal data requested are required to assess your application in accordance with the specifications of the call for submission of applications and will be processed solely for that purpose by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available on the privacy statement at the page:

[http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement\\_publicprocurement\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf).

Your personal data may be registered in the Early Warning System (EWS) only or both in the EWS and Central Exclusion Database (CED) by the Accounting Officer of the Commission, should you be in one of the situations mentioned in:

- the Commission Decision 2008/969 of 16.12.2008 on the Early Warning System (for more information see the Privacy Statement on [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/legal\\_entities/legal\\_entities\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm)), or
- the Commission Regulation 2008/1302 of 17.12.2008 on the Central Exclusion Database (for more information see the Privacy Statement on [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect\\_en.cfm#BDCE](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE))



# **This application is the work of the people of Larissa**

It is a true, unique, people's proposal

If we make it  
if they make it...  
we will move forward,  
fully committed, full-force,  
wholehearted and together,  
ready to make the long-pending leap forward.





### **M. Karagatsis**

*M. Karagatsis, nom de plume of Demetrios Rodopoulos, is probably the most renowned novelist of Larissa.*

*His father was a lawyer and a politician hailing from the Peloponnese who, nevertheless, had established himself in Larissa. His mother originated from the township of Tyrnavos, Thessaly.*

*The nom de plume "Karagatsis" derives from the elm tree, called "karagatsi" or "ptelea" in Greek. At the summer home of the family in Rapsani, Thessaly, where he spent most of his adolescent summers, he acquired the habit of reading under an elm at the courtyard of the village's church.*

*His first endeavor in literature was in 1927 with the short story "Miss Nitsa", an autobiographical story inspired by his childhood feel for his teacher at the elementary school of Larissa.*



"The plain. In the winter it is miserable.  
In summer, hell.  
Come fall, sweet melancholy wraps it.  
Yet, in spring,  
Nothing compares to Thessaly's plains.

You must set out at daybreak,  
When the roses of the rising sun  
Adorn Mount Ossa  
When the snows of Olympus still maintain  
The last blue veils of night.

[...] Further away, you can sense the river  
Hidden in the jungle  
Nurtured by water and swamps.  
Willow trees and elms, chastetrees  
Oaks, bloomed hawthorns and a myriad of others  
On this bountiful soil, smothered,  
Tightly clustered, they follow the flow  
Of the spawning riverbed."

