

Research on the Development of European Capitals of Culture

Chen Wei

Shanghai Jiao Tong University 215300, Shanghai, China

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Abstract: With the rising of Capitals of Culture selection mechanism among international communities and in the background that numerous cities are transforming and developing from Functional Cities to Cultural Cities, European Capitals of Culture is emerging gradually. Most importantly, the construction of European Capitals of Culture has an extensive reference significance in the promotion of city culture and public services. In this paper, the virtuous interaction relationship between the construction of European Capitals of Culture and city culture and public services is sorted out and analyzed, which is the mutual agreement in meeting citizens' basic and various culture needs, the mutual consistency in enlarging the whole society involvement in culture and developing citizens' cultural competence, the mutual promotion in cultural infrastructure building and improvement of cultural services supply and the cooperative interaction in enlarging regional and international culture exchange and fusion.

1. Introduction

The program of European Capitals of Culture was initiated on June 13, 1985 by Council of the European Community based on the proposal of Melina Mercouri, the Minister of Culture of Greece. It was named European City of Culture before 2000, and renamed European Capitals of Culture after that. After 2011, there are two cities in Europe winning the title each year. It is stipulated that a city applying for European Capitals of Culture shall organize cultural activities for almost successive 12 months. The purpose of European Capitals of Culture selection is to take culture as a bridge to activate city development and maintain the cultural diversity and richness in Europe. In the program, the selected city has the opportunity to demonstrate its cultural achievements in a massive scale during the whole year. And moreover, other European cities can further improve their city culture in the six-year-long preparation stage.

2. Background of the Proposal of European Capitals of Culture

In January 1981, Greece officially joined the European Community and became the tenth member of European Community, which indicated the European Community's determination in Europe integration in culture and prompts the "second culture enlarging"^① in European Community history. With the international relationship becoming closer and closer, the issue of culture was scheduled on the agenda in European Community. In 1983, Council of the European Union released Solemn Declaration on European Union after Stuttgart Summit, pushing cultural action in the European Community forward. In the Declaration, it was indicated that European Union should encourage to build a further closer relationship in various cultural issues between members, and make it the main way to construct future European recognition by improving European citizens' common awareness on cultural heritage. Meantime, the Declaration provided policy support for kinds of cultural actions of Council of the European Union. In 1984, cultural ministers meeting was held by Council of the European Union. In the meeting, a further discussion on the cultural building proposals were conducted between the Council and cultural ministers, and European Council for Cultural Affairs was officially founded.

In Europe, after the economic recession in 1980s, countries started to seek for a new solution for city problems. And culture became to be focused as a new means, including constructing new flagship cultural buildings, holding cultural events, organizing and developing cultural industry or

innovation industry cluster districts. It was under this background that the selection of European Capitals of Culture was formed, and was regarded as the most successful long-term mechanism to prompt urban transformation and development. After that, European Council for Cultural Affairs adopted various measures to enhance and improve European citizens' recognition among European Community and world image, meeting European citizens' cultural expectations and demands. Series of cultural activities, such as Europe Music Year and European Capitals of Culture, centering on European Union cultural integration and European culture recognition, are held. Besides, European Youth Orchestra and European Sand Art Competition are organized. All these programs mean to eliminate cultural barrier between European citizens and have close relationship with European integration. Cultural cooperation effectively strengthened cultural communication between different countries, increased international culture and personnel exchanges, drove art works and cultural products circulated internationally, and set up European Citizen awareness among peoples gradually.

3. The Development of European Capitals of Culture

Table 1 Developmental Stages of European Capitals of Culture

Stage	Selected City	Major culture resolutions and policies of EU in the period
Stage I: From 1985 to 1996 City number: 12 Distribution: 1 city of 12 EU members	1985 Athens 1986 Florence 1987 Amsterdam 1988 Berlin 1989 Paris 1990 Glasgow 1991 Dublin 1992 Madrid 1993 Antwerp 1994 Lisbon 1995 Luxembourg 1996 Copenhagen	1985: it was announced that European Capitals of Culture will be an annual culture event of EU (European Union 85/C/153/02 resolution); 1990: European Culture Month was started; 1992: Treaty of Maastricht provided law basis for EU culture policy and project (Article 128); 1996: Kaleidoscope project was started (European Union 719/96 resolution).
Stage II: From 1997 to 2004 City number: 19 Distribution: 2 non-EU members and 2 to-be EU members	1997 Salonica 1998 Stockholm 1999 Weimar 2000 Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, Helsinki, Krakow, Reykjavik, Prague, Santiago de Compostra 2001 Rotterdam, Porto 2002 Brugge, Salamanca 2003 Graz 2004 Genoa, Lille	1997: Start to allowed non-EU members to participate the selection of European Capitals of Culture (European Union 90/C162/01 resolution); 1998: Start to confirm evaluation standard and application deadline (European Union 92/C336/02 resolution); 2000: EU Culture 2000 replaced Kaleidoscope program. Culture programs shall have European and global perspective. (European Union 508/2000 resolution); 2004: 10 more members were added in EU, and selected cities of European Capitals of Culture increased.
Stage III: From 2005 to 2021 City number: 34 Distribution: totally 28 EU members, including 13 new EU members and 2 non-EU members	2005 Cork 2006 Patras 2007 Luxembourg, Sibiu 2008 Liverpool, Stavanger 2009 Vilnius, Linz 2010 Eisenruhr, Page, Istanbul 2011 Turku, Tallinn 2012 Jimarius, Maribor 2013 Marseille-Provence, Kosice 2014 Moo, Riga 2015 Mons, Plzen 2016 San Sebastian, Wroclaw 2017 Aarhus, Paphos 2018 Valletta, Leeuwarden 2019 Matera, Provdiv 2020 Rijeka, Galway 2021 Timisoara, Elefsina, Novi Sad	2005: European Capitals of Culture became a European action; applicants shall have to include program planning with European perspective (European Union 1419/1999 resolution); 2009: European Capitals of Culture was held among new EU members; 2010: Selection standard changed; European Perspective and City & Citizen were two main parts.

If a city is selected as the European Capitals of Culture, it will have the opportunity to demonstrate the symbolic cultural highlights, cultural heritage and development and innovation of the city and local region. In addition, artists and performers of other EU members will be attracted to perform and settle down in the city. For EU, the program of European Capitals of Culture can maintain and express the richness and diversity of European culture, unite the whole Europe with culture, promote people's communication and understanding between different countries, and cultivate the recognition of the identity of European citizen. For selected cities, they can take the opportunity to improve the city's cultural infrastructure, develop tourism and cultural industry, expand the city popularity to attract more tourists and new investment with cultural construction, which can bring new energy and new opportunities.

For the 32-year history of European Capitals of Culture, there are several times of rule change. Its development can be divided into three stages (See Table 1) as a result. Under the rules, every EU member has equal chances to organize the event. In addition, new members of EU, even other European countries that are not EU members are encouraged to participate in the selection.

Soon afterward, the concept of European Capitals of Culture has spread beyond EU to other regions from 1990s. In American Continent, the Organization of American States (OAS), constituted by 35 countries, decided to set up large annual cultural event, called American Capitals of Culture in 1997, referring to the name "European Capitals of Culture". Besides, the Arabic Capitals of Culture and Islamic Capitals of Culture also developed rapidly. In UK, inspired by the fact that Liverpool was selected as European Capitals of Culture, UK Media and Culture, together with Department of Sports, started the British Capital of Culture selection in 2009 in UK. In Asia, ASEAN Capitals of Culture and East Asia Capitals of Culture has been started one by one in recent years. Overall, more and more countries and regions benefit from the Capitals of Culture program.

4. Conclusion

The program of European Capitals of Culture is to promote regional cultural development with city culture branding and city comprehensive development. With cultural interaction, people can expand common ground and solve political, economic and social problems of common interest within the region. Depending on the overall coordination of regional organization, cities, no matter political capital, economic capital or a city with both functions, become the reproduction places of cultural resources and recombination of space with the help of cultural shift. European Capitals of Culture makes it the force and mechanism that cultural resources, cultural production and cultural functions drive city form evolution and society development.

The program of European Capitals of Culture is the best test of the selected city in the aspect of cultural building, and also will bring changes to improve cultural management ability of the management department of city culture. Despite the fact that there are many differences in region and city development, the applicants of European Capitals of Culture have intrinsic consistency, which means that culture plays a major role in a city's comprehensive development, and the development concept and planning of city culture are demonstrated on a deeper level.

References

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