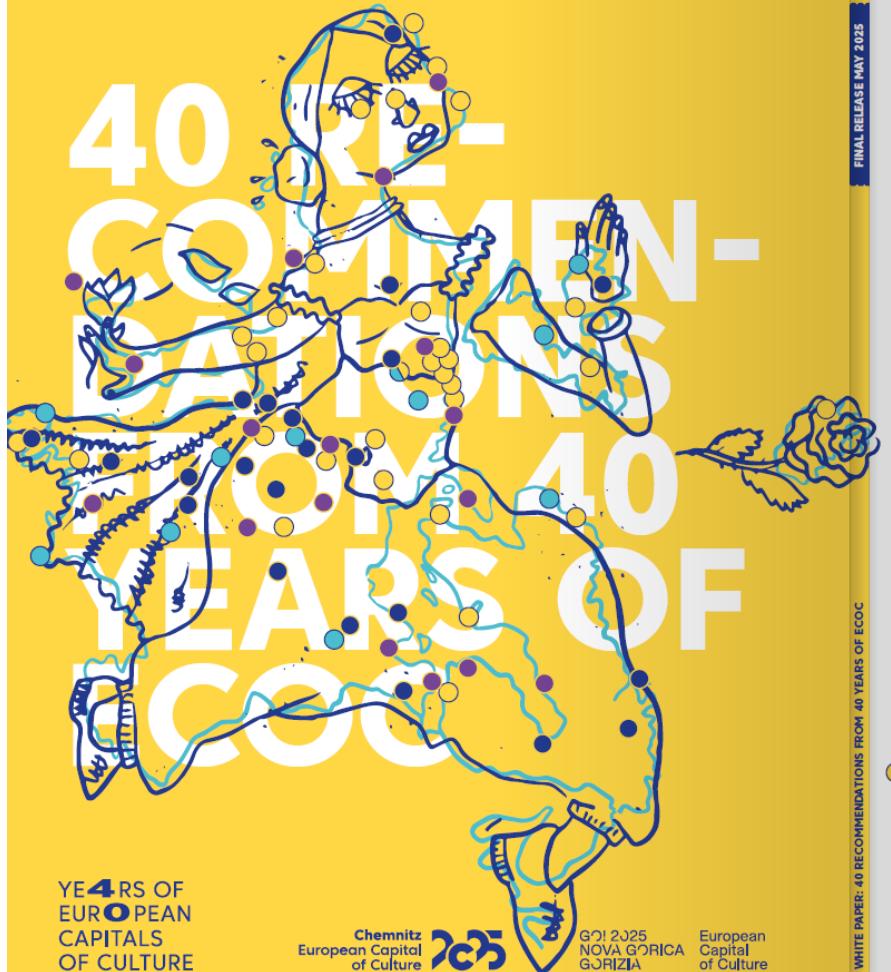


# 40 YEARS OF EEC

Chemnitz  
European Capital  
of Culture  
2025

GOI 2025  
NOVA GORICA  
GORIZIA  
European Capital  
of Culture

YEARS OF  
EUROPEAN  
CAPITALS  
OF CULTURE



FINAL RELEASE MAY 2025

## WHITE PAPER



WHITE PAPER: 40 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 40 YEARS OF ECOC

Chemnitz  
European Capital  
of Culture **2025**

GO! 2025  
NOVA GORICA  
GORIZIA

European  
Capital  
of Culture

POLITICAL MATTER 1.  
EUROPE IN  
EVERYTHING YOU DO



**POLITICAL MATTER 1.  
EUROPE IN  
EVERYTHING YOU DO**



**POLITICAL MATTER 2.  
CELEBRATE WHAT  
YOU CHANGE**

**POLITICAL MATTER 1.  
EUROPE IN  
EVERYTHING YOU DO**



**POLITICAL MATTER 2.  
CELEBRATE WHAT  
YOU CHANGE**

**POLITICAL MATTER 3.  
MAKE IT SIMPLE AND  
TRANSPARENT**

YE4RS OF  
EUROPEAN  
CAPITALS  
OF CULTURE

Chemnitz  
European Capital  
of Culture **2025**

GO! 2025  
NOVA GORICA  
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European  
Capital  
of Culture

**POLITICAL MATTER 1.  
EUROPE IN  
EVERYTHING YOU DO**



**POLITICAL MATTER 4.  
KEEP YOUR  
PROMISES**

**POLITICAL MATTER 2.  
CELEBRATE WHAT  
YOU CHANGE**

**POLITICAL MATTER 3.  
MAKE IT SIMPLE AND  
TRANSPARENT**

**POLITICAL MATTER 1.  
EUROPE IN  
EVERYTHING YOU DO**

**POLITICAL MATTER 5.  
STOP MAKING THE  
SAME MISTAKES**

**POLITICAL MATTER 4.  
KEEP YOUR  
PROMISES**

**POLITICAL MATTER 2.  
CELEBRATE WHAT  
YOU CHANGE**

**POLITICAL MATTER 3.  
MAKE IT SIMPLE AND  
TRANSPARENT**



# HOW DID WE GET THERE?



# 40 YEARS OF ECOC IN A NUTSHELL



+240  
Candidate Cities

82  
Capitals until 2029

33  
Hosting countries

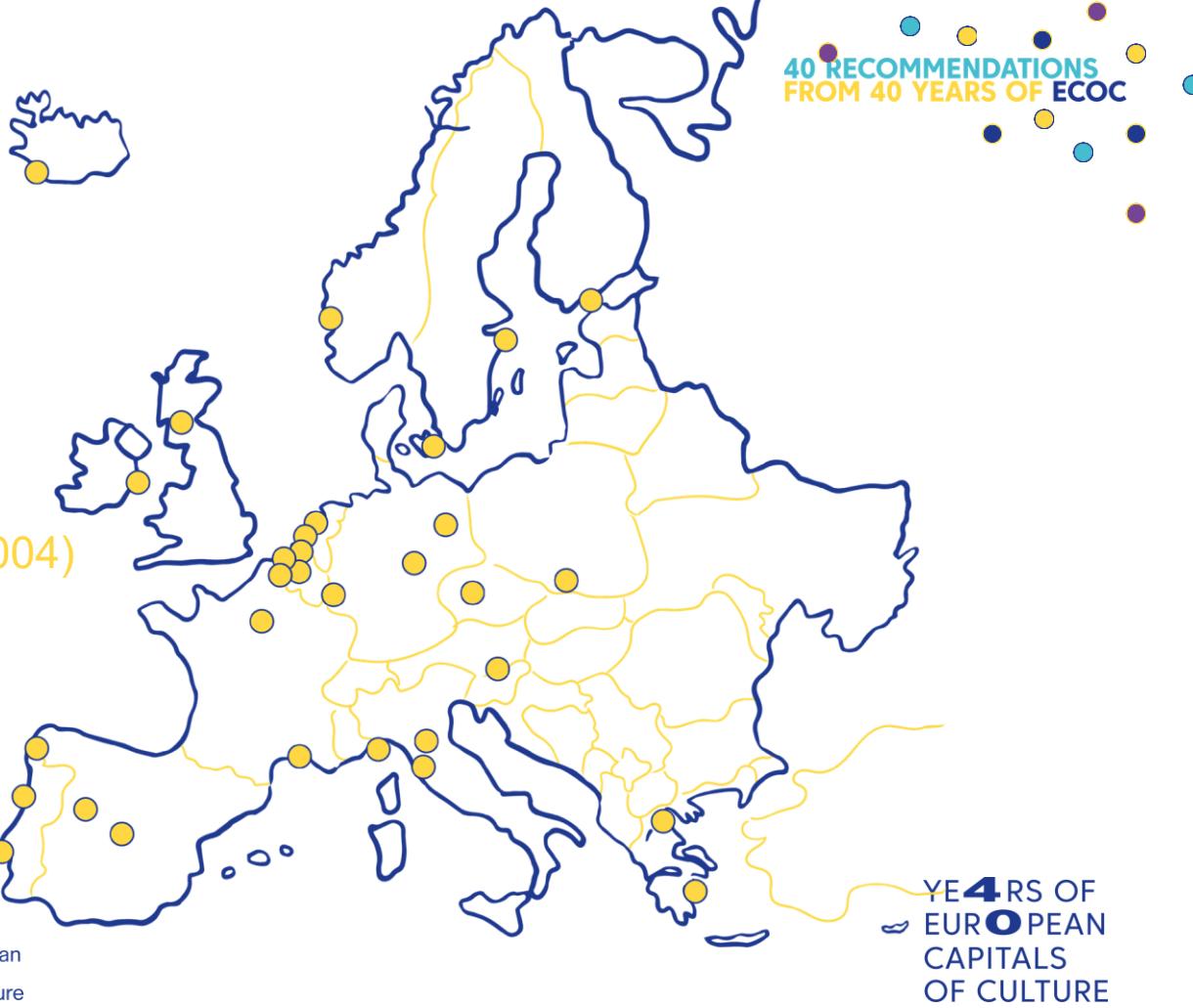
52mln  
Europeans possibly  
experienced the ECoC

YE4RS OF  
EUROPEAN  
CAPITALS  
OF CULTURE

# SEASON 1

Symbolic Celebration (1985-2004)

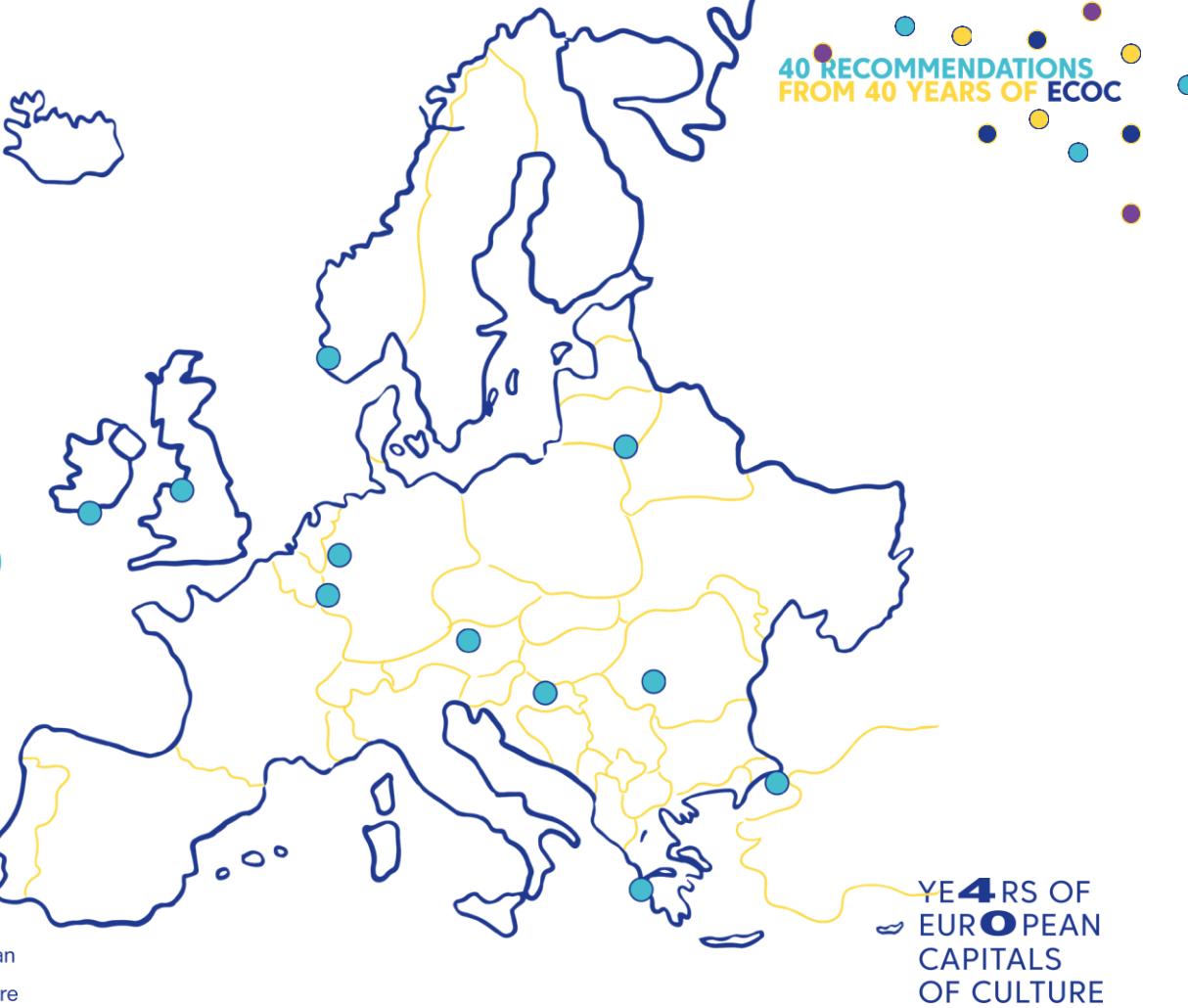
- Celebration of **Europe's rich and diverse cultures**.
- **No competition** organised.



# SEASON 2

## Institutionalisation (2005-2010)

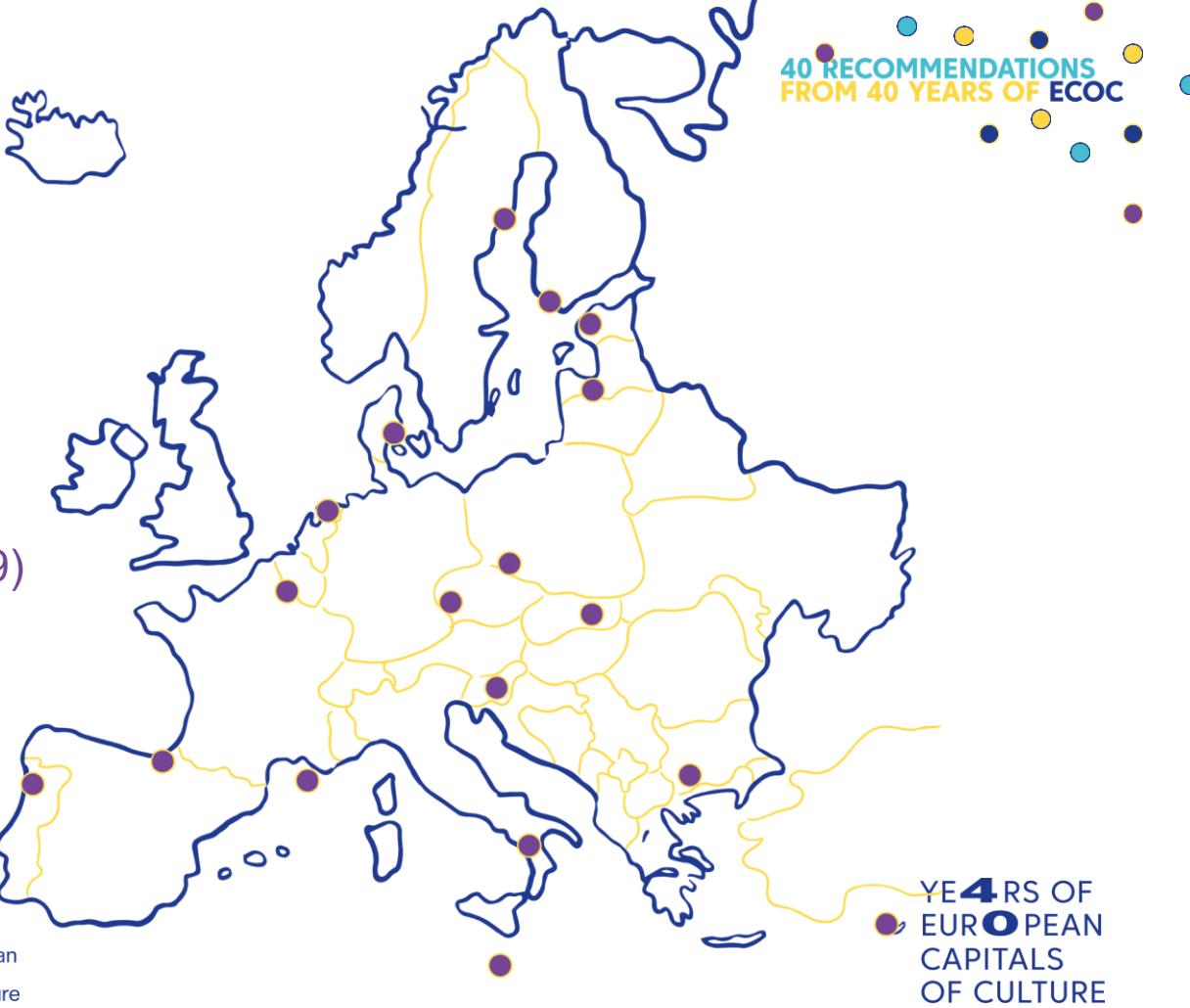
- First legal basis adopted.
- Title requires a **specific cultural programme** having a **European dimension**.



# SEASON 3

Professionalisation (2011-2019)

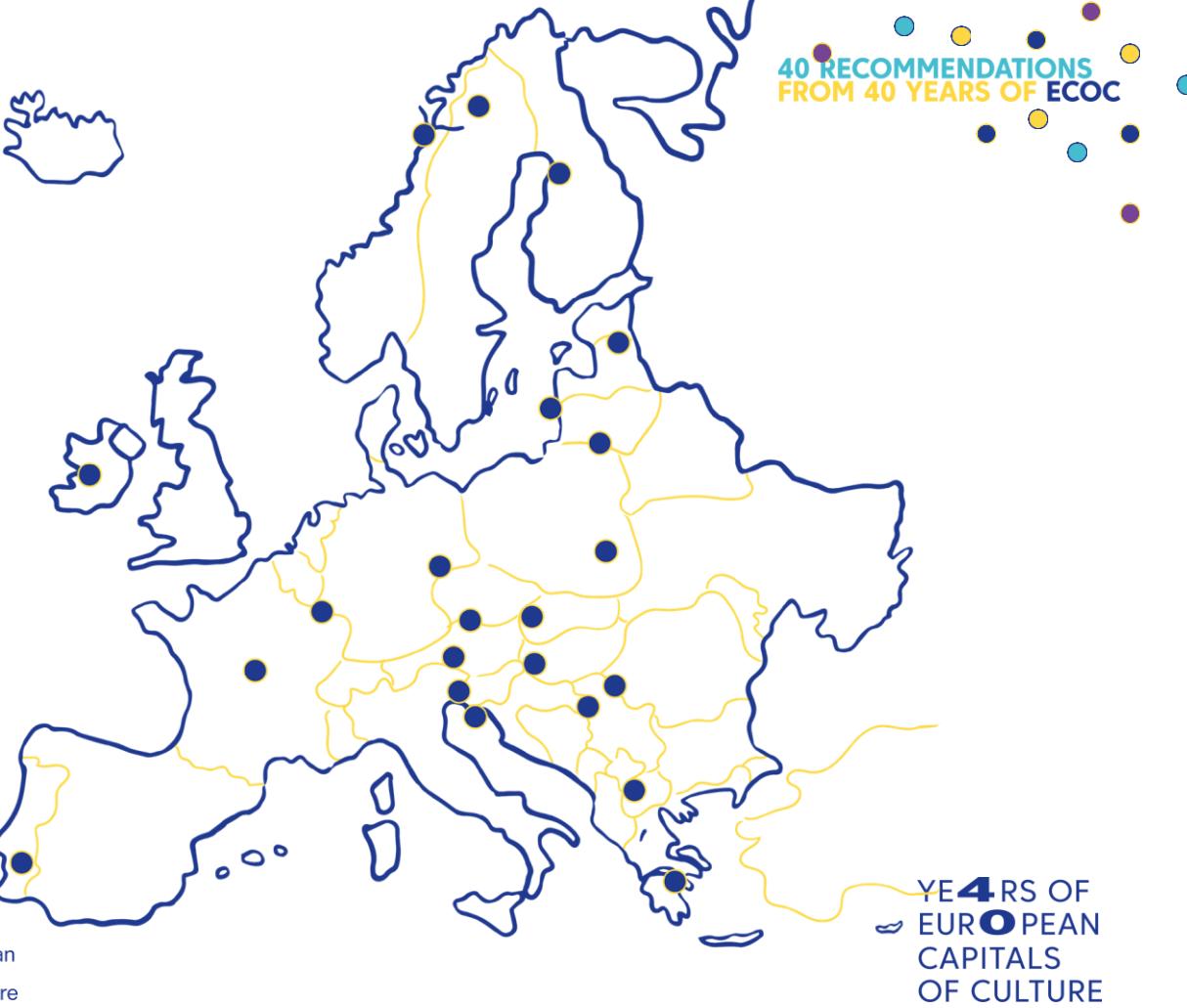
- Legal basis revised.
- **Two-stage competitive selection** introduced.



# SEASON 4

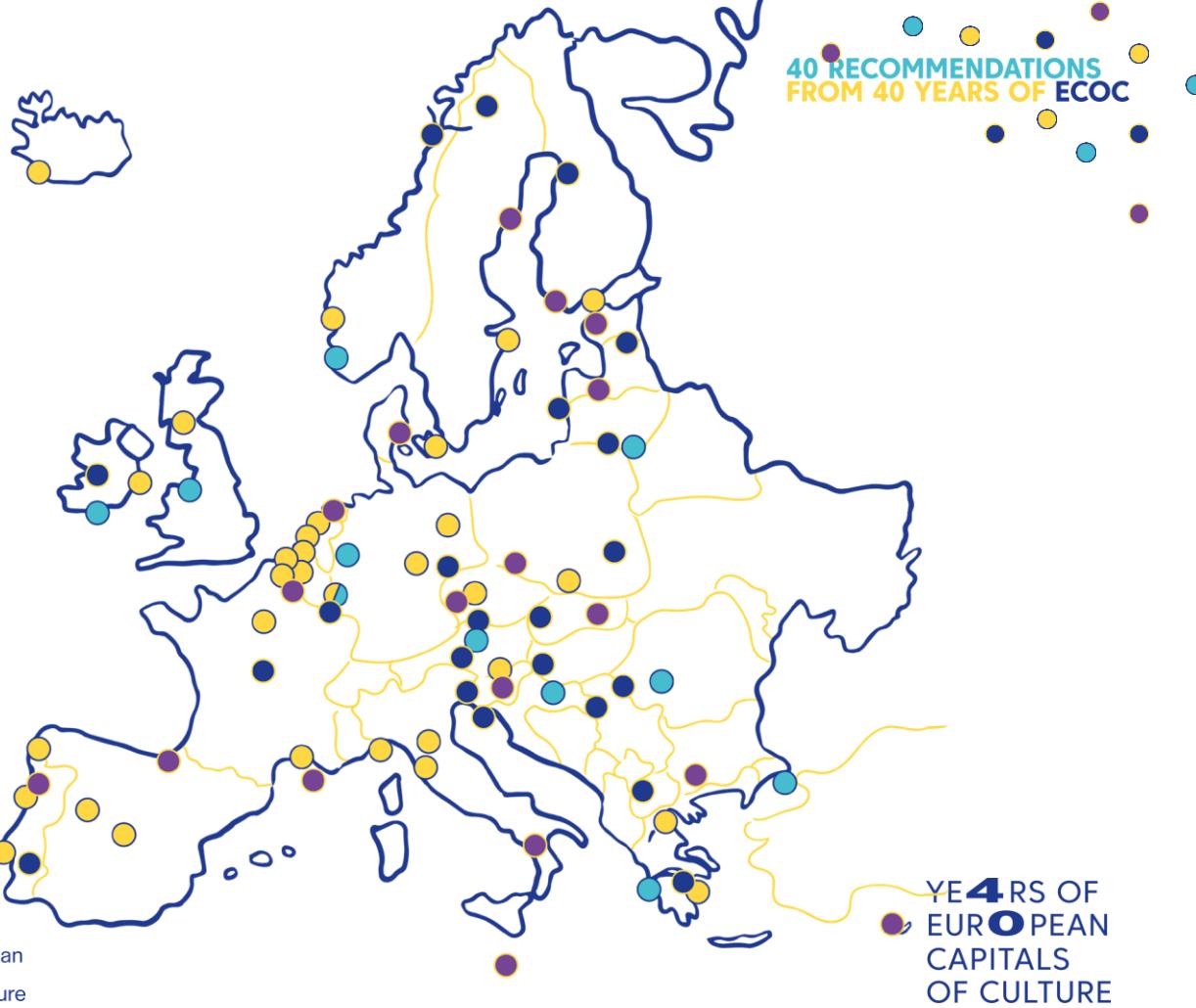
Legacy (2020-2033)

- **Second general objective** introduced.
- 1) celebration + 2) legacy.



# 2034: WHAT'S NEXT?

- New EU legal basis for Capitals from 2034.



# FOUR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR 2034 ON



## CELEBRATION

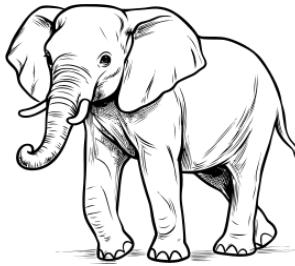
### PARADING ELEPHANT

A majestic *European* celebration.

# FOUR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR 2034 ON

EUROPEAN

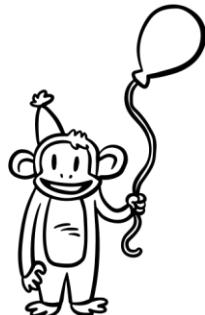
## CELEBRATION



### PARADING ELEPHANT

A majestic *European* celebration.

LOCAL



### FESTIVE MONKEY

A playful *local* celebration.

# FOUR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR 2034 ON

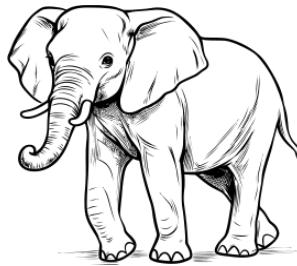


# FOUR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR 2034 ON

EUROPEAN

LOCAL

## CELEBRATION



### PARADING ELEPHANT

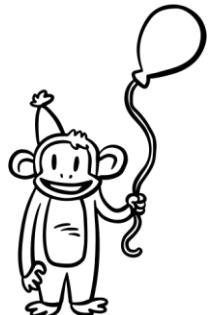
A majestic *European* celebration.

## CHANGE



### EUROPEAN PHOENIX

A programme of *European rebirth and change*.



### FESTIVE MONKEY

A playful *local* celebration.



### RISING BEAVER

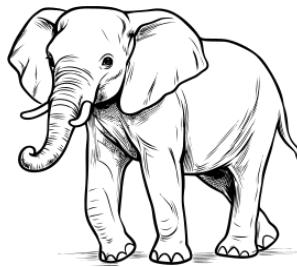
A programme bringing gradual but steady *local change*.

# FOUR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR 2034 ON

E U R O P E A N

L O C A L

## CELEBRATION



### PARADING ELEPHANT

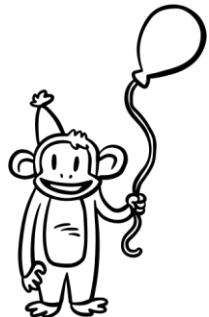
A majestic *European* celebration.

## CHANGE



### EUROPEAN PHOENIX

A programme of *European rebirth and change*.



### FESTIVE MONKEY

A playful *local* celebration.



### RISING BEAVER

A programme bringing gradual but steady *local change*.

# THE WHITE PAPER



## WHAT

**40 actionable recommendations** to enhance ECoC's impact and relevance and align it with **contemporary challenges**.



## WHY

Guide **EU decision-makers** in the Commission, European Parliament, Council, and Committee of the Regions, who will prepare the **new legal basis** (draft: 2025; adoption: 2027).



## HOW

Complement the **mid-term evaluation** carried out by the EU Commission + research by others (Culture Next, Eurocities) through **practical insights** from **ECoC managers**.

# TWO CRITICAL REALITIES

40 RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM 40 YEARS OF ECOC



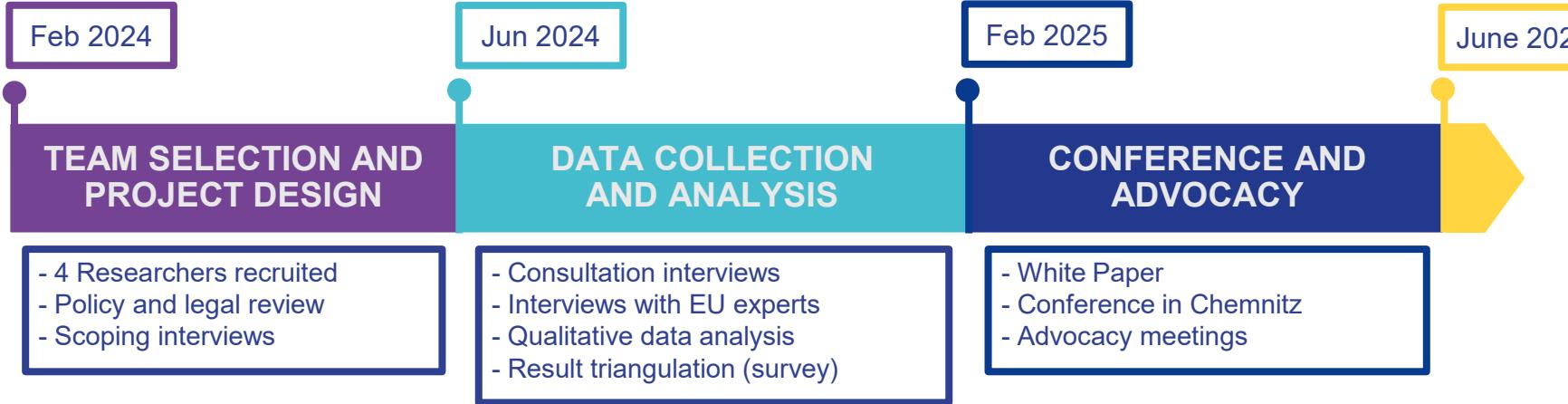
EU LIMITED  
RESOURCES



LEGAL  
BASIS

# METHODOLOGY AND TIMELINE

40 RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM 40 YEARS OF ECOC



Representative from

**64 ECoC cities**

interviewed



“ The whole focus needs to be more, not on the celebration of a Capital of Culture, but on the whole notion really **focusing on long-term development and change.** ”



“ There is a very **specific skill set** and knowledge that only people who have designed, developed and delivered an ECoC will have, that's just fact, and they are best placed, in my humble opinion, to support others and to understand. ”



“ Tradition can live long only if it is combined with **innovation.** ”

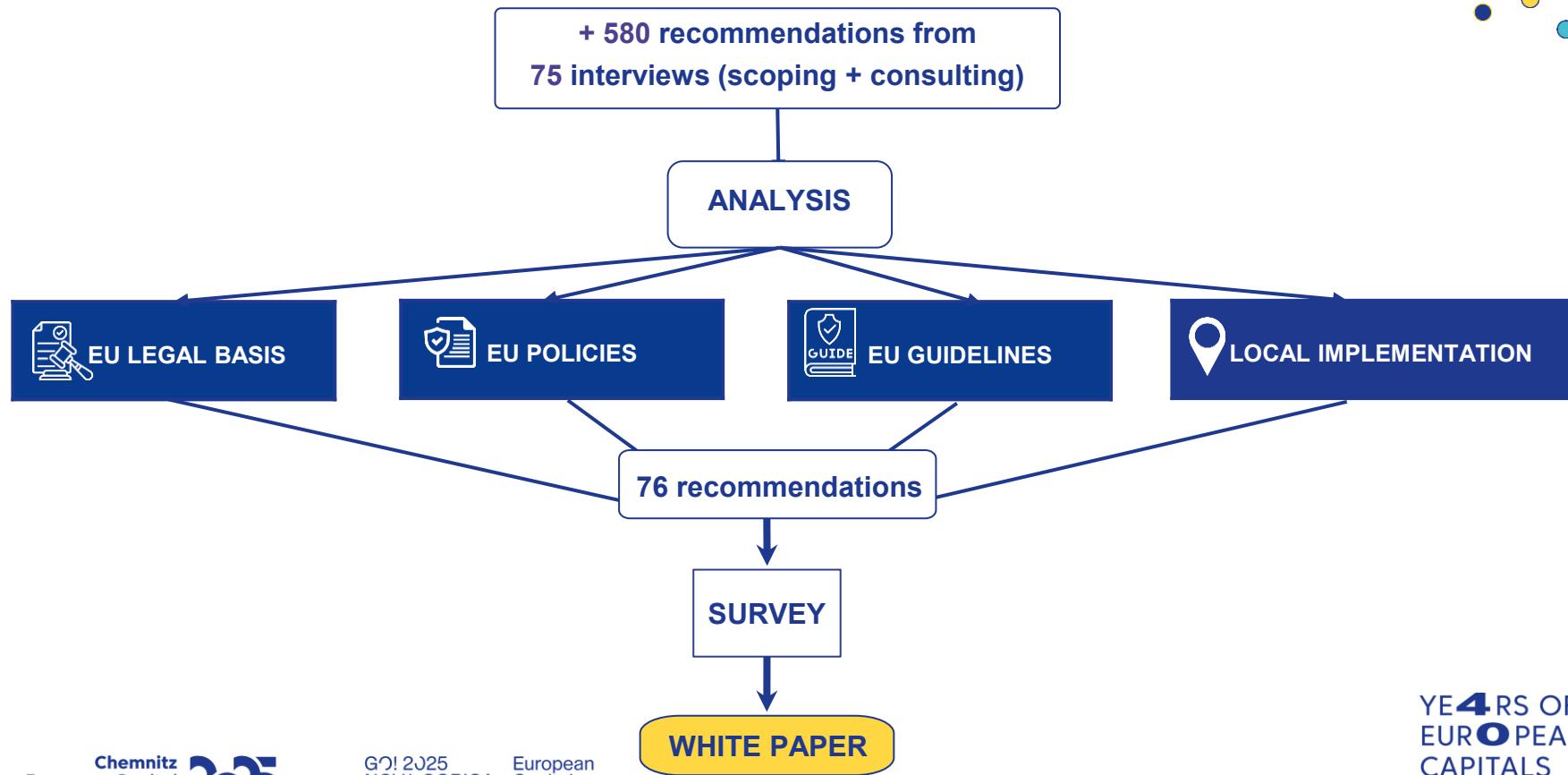


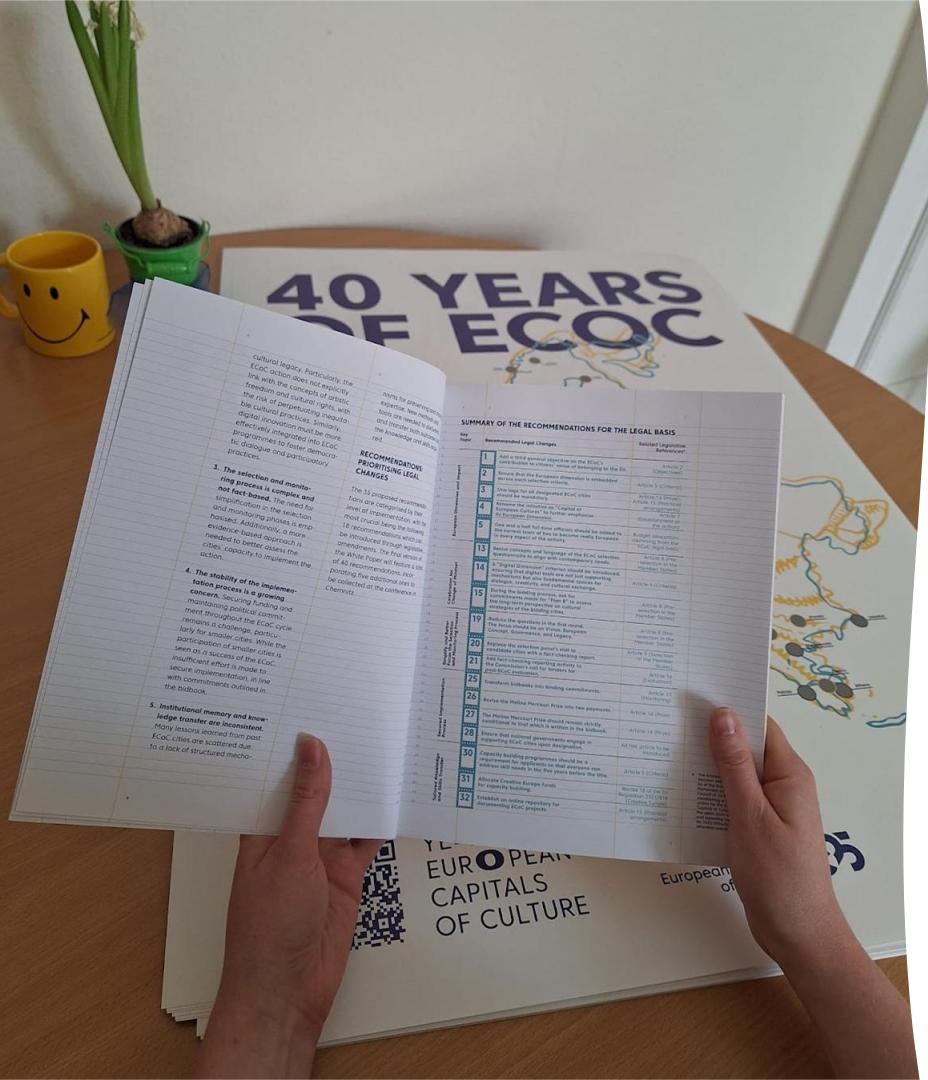
“ I would strongly stress that there should be a way to really assess the commitment of a city to be an ECoC and to their **capacity to understand that this is a long-term effort.** So it shouldn't be a marketing exercise. It should be for real. ”

# IMPLEMENTATION: FOUR OPTIONS, A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY



40 RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM 40 YEARS OF ECOC



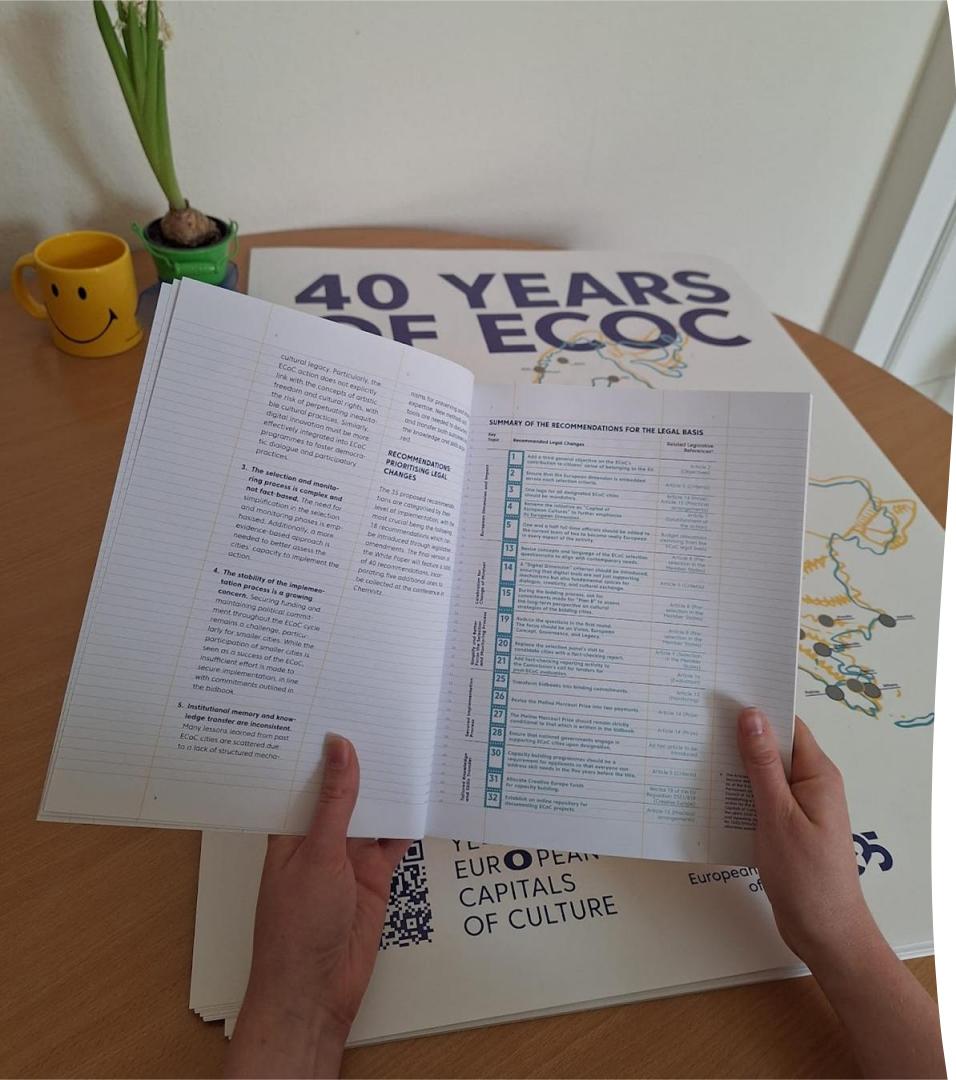


## 40 RECOMMENDATIONS

19

of which are  
«legal» recommendations

YE4RS OF  
EUROPEAN  
CAPITALS  
OF CULTURE



40 RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM 40 YEARS OF ECOC

## 40 RECOMMENDATIONS

5

co-designed  
in Chemnitz

19  
of which are  
«legal» recommendations

YE4RS OF  
EUROPEAN  
CAPITALS  
OF CULTURE

POLITICAL MATTER 1. IN EVERYTHING YOU DO		RECOMMENDED LEGAL CHANGES		
Key Political Matter	Legal instruments to bring change	Related articles <sup>3</sup>	Recommendations	Related Legislative References <sup>3</sup>
POLITICAL MATTER 1. IN EVERYTHING YOU DO				
General objectives	2	7	1 Add a third general objective on the ECoC's contribution to citizens' sense of belonging to the EU	Article 2 (Objectives)
Selection criteria	5	8	2 Ensure that the European dimension is embedded across each selection criteria.	Article 5 (Criteria)
ECoC Logo	15	9	3 One logo for all designated ECoC cities should be mandatory.	Article 14 (Prize); Article 15 (Practical arrangements)
Budget allocation for staff and communication	—	11	4 Dedicate specific EU funding and expertise to professionalise the communication of the ECoC action.	Budget allocations stemming from the ECoC legal basis
	12	10	5 The equivalent of 1.5 full-time staff should be added to the current team of two to become European in every aspect of the activity.	Budget allocations stemming from the ECoC legal basis
	13	11	14 Revise concepts and language of the ECoC selection questionnaire to align with contemporary needs.	Article 8 (Pre-selection in the Member States)
	14	12	15 A "Digital dimension" criterion should be introduced, ensuring that digital tools are not just supporting mechanisms but also fundamental spaces for dialogue, creativity, and cultural exchange.	Article 5 (Criteria)
	15	13	16 Introduce "Sustainability" as a selection criterion, integrating culture as a driver and fundamental condition for economic, environmental, and social sustainability.	Article 14 (Prize); Article 15 (Practical arrangements)
	16	14	17 During the bidding process, ask for commitments made for "Plan B" to assess the long-term perspective on cultural strategies of the bidding cities.	Article 8 (Pre-selection in the Member States)
	17	15	22 Reduce the questions in the first round. The focus should be on Vision, European Concept, Governance, and Legacy.	Article 8 (Pre-selection in the Member States)
	18	16	23 Replace the selection panel's visit to candidate cities with a fact-checking report.	Article 9 (Selection in the Member States)
	19	17	24 Add fact-checking reporting activity to the Commission's call for tenders for post-ECoC evaluation.	Article 16 (Evaluation)
	20	18	30 Transform bidbooks into binding commitments.	Article 13 (Monitoring)
	21	19	31 Revise the Melina Mercouri Prize into two payments.	Article 14 (Prize)
	22	20	32 The Melina Mercouri Prize should remain strictly conditional to what is written in the bidbook.	Article 14 (Prize)
	23	21	33 Ensure that national governments engage in supporting ECoC cities upon designation.	Ad hoc article to be introduced
	24	22	15 Capacity building programmes should be a requirement for applicants so that everyone can address skill needs in the five years before the title.	Article 5 (Criteria)
	25	23	16 Allocate Creative Europe funds for mentoring, training and fostering partnerships.	Recital 18 of the EU Regulation 2021/818 (Creative Europe)
	26	24	17 Establish an ECoC official online repository for documenting ECoC projects.	Article 15 (Practical arrangements)
POLITICAL MATTER 2. CELEBRATE WHAT YOU CHANGE				
Pre-selection process	—	—		
In Member States	8	18		
Selection criteria	5	19		
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POLITICAL MATTER 3. MAKE IT SIMPLE AND TRANSPARENT				
Pre-selection process	—	—		
In Member States	8	25		
Selection process in Member States	9	26		
Evaluation process	16	27		
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POLITICAL MATTER 4. KEEP YOUR PROMISES				
Monitoring process	13	35		
Melina Mercouri Prize	14	36		
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POLITICAL MATTER 5. STOP MAKING THE SAME MISTAKES				
Selection criteria	5	41		
Creative Europe programme	18 <sup>4</sup>	41		
ECoC official online repository	15	42		
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# AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY



40 RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM 40 YEARS OF ECOC



Dedicate specific EU funding to introduce a one **customisable logo and professionalise communication** of the ECoC action

3  
4



Article 14 (Practical arrangements)



Align **selection criteria** to contemporary challenges:  
Digital criterion **15** + Sustainability criterion **16**



Article 5 (Criteria)



Request a 'Plan B' to ensure the investment made is fully leveraged, regardless of the competition's outcome **17**



Article 8 (Pre-selection)

# ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED BUT ...



## Excluded controversial recommendations

**Eliminate the fixed calendar of countries** and organise open competitions: as soon as a city has been chosen, the belonging Member State would be eligible to apply again only after 12 years.

Disagree

33%

Neutral

27%

Agree

40%

# HOW CAN YOU MAKE IT BIGGER?



40 RECOMMENDATIONS  
FROM 40 YEARS OF ECOC

SHARE & DEBATE!

A NEW ECoC  
REGULATION

04  
APRIL



40 YEARS OF ECOC  
CONFERENCE,  
CHEMNITZ

07  
APRIL



ONLINE  
SURVEY

13  
MAY



EUROPEAN  
PARLIAMENT

07  
JULY



COUNCIL'S CAC  
(CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE)

2027



YE4RS OF  
EUROPEAN  
CAPITALS  
OF CULTURE

# THANK YOU!



## RESEARCH TEAM

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