

Learning from European Capitals of Culture Program in Developing Urban Tourism

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ABSTRACT: Cultural potential in today's urban design literature is considered as an efficient tool in urban regenerating in addition to improving urban tourism. The integrated decision of European countries in organizing the European capital of culture program since 1985 followed specific goals, such as attracting international tourists. Considering the Islamic capital of culture program and selection of Mashhad as Cultural Capital in 2017, this paper attempts to examine the European capital of culture program to study their achievements. The Research method of this article is an analytical - descriptive method based on content analysis of two group of documents: The first group of documents are those provided by the EU for selection and evaluation of cultural capitals, and the second group consists of 5 cultural capitals' documents from different parts of Europe. Results of analysis indicate that by selection of each city as the capital of culture, the whole country gets involved in the program and a wide range of projects from micro to macro levels will be planned for the city in different cultural contexts. This program has had different results and impacts, some of which include: representing cultural and historical origins, attracting more local, national and international tourists, improved international image of the city, presentation of different art groups creativity, different rate of tourist attraction, Improving economic infrastructure, enhancing national pride and confidence and strengthening cultural cooperation in Europe.

Keywords: Capital of Culture Program; Europe's Experiences; Urban Tourism

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INTRODUCTION

In today's world, tourism is considered as one of the three major industries, along with oil and automobile industries. It is anticipated that, tourism be in the first place, at the beginning of the third millennium AD. There are different perspectives in the definition of this social activity. Some look at tourism as an economic activity, and thus consider it an industry. In addition to that, tourism can be studied from a technical, psychological and holistic point of view (Homayoon, 1998). Tourism is a very old activity, based on human different social, economic and historical needs, which has had quite a few outcomes, Due to the expansion of connectivity, Dramatic increase in the number of tourists and foreign currency earnings. These outcomes influence the urban physical context and can be effective in changing urban spaces through modifying components such as economy, population, culture and other social features (Mehrabi Basharabadi, 2011).

Every country and every culture has unique elements that are new to the people of other lands and cultures. These unique elements, can be the reason for tourism activities. Known as tourist attraction, these elements are divided into two groups: natural attractions and cultural attractions. Cultural attractions – which are man made- have more diversity, due to different existing cultures. These attractions refer to historical and

civilization attractions, such as: Monuments and museums; social attractions, such as: Popular culture and government properties; Folk attractions, such as: Ceremonies and cultural traditions of different ethnic groups (Homayoon, 1998).

In another classification, tourism attractions can be divided into three category of symbolic formal, functional and semantic factors. From the formal aspect of view, these factors include historic and archaeological monuments, contemporary creative cultural monuments and natural- leisure structures (based on local geographical potentials). Functional factors include variety of activities and social interactions. The last category which is semantic factors consists of national-historical characteristics, ethnic- social characteristics, mythic characteristics, artistic characteristics (ancient contemporary arts), religious characteristics, Scientific-technological characteristics, Natural-leisure Characteristics and Literary characteristics (Habib, 2012).

The value and importance of tourism in the new world is so high that urban design is considered as a tool to attract more international tourists and therefor gain financial profit for the city along with introducing the cultural features of the area.

One of the most influential decisions in this regard was the European Union decision to select cultural capitals for every year from 1985. Therefore

each European city organize its cultural events for the year and announce it in a document. This program has a profound impact on the increase in the number of visitors in and after the cultural year. Studies on the impact of this program indicate that there is a significant increase in the number of visitors of the cities that have held this title. Although, this amount is reduced by the end of the year, but yet the number of visitors after the year, are even higher than the number before the introduction of the city as cultural capital. Without any shadow of doubt, there is a mutual interaction between this program and tourism. In fact, the number of visitors of the city increases during the cultural year, and on the other hand, The increase in the number of visitors will contribute to the richness of this program. It should be mentioned here that, like the European capital of culture program, there is a similar program among Islamic countries, in which a city is selected for each year to hold the title.

Although Iran has a very rich history and culture, which is formed during a period of several thousand years and also a variety of subcultures and traditions, there is no reflection of culture in urban spaces and not enough attention is paid to this issue. However, Mashhad is chosen to be the Islamic capital of culture for the year 2017. The reason for this selection is that the city of Mashhad, as the world second religious metropolis, has a special status. The holy shrine in Mashhad made this city a destination for tourists in the world. While the annual number of pilgrims and travelers arriving Mashhad in 1347 was about one million people, this figure reached near 20 million in 2006, and it is estimated that in 1404 about 40 million travellers visit this city, which requires special attention to planning and design of spaces for the wide range of visitors with different cultures (The Reconstruction and Renovation Plan for Urban Fabric Surrounding the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza). This article aims to study European capitals of culture and their documents, to find the strengths of these programs and how they are planned, in order to use them as a guide for planning similar cases in Iran.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method of this article is an analytical - descriptive method based on content analysis of the most important documents presented about European capitals of culture. These documents include two major groups: The first group are documents provided by the European Union, which present general policies for selection and evaluation of cultural capitals, and the second group consists of each city's cultural document which comprehensively introduces each city's program and projects. In the first part of this paper, analysis, resulting from the first group of the documents are presented. In the second part, five cities from different parts of Europe are selected and their cultural documents will be analysed to study their different aspects. These cities include: Istanbul in Turkey, Helsinki in Finland, Riga in Latvia, Bruges in Belgium and Prague in Czech Republic.

Table 1 represents the European capitals of culture from 1985 to 2013.

Table 1. European capitals of culture from 1985 to 2013

Row	Decade	City/ Country/ Year
1	1985-1990	Athens (Greece) 1985, Florence(Italy) 1986, Amsterdam(Netherlan) 1987, Berlin(Germany) 1988, Paris(France) 1989
2	1990-2000	Glasgow(England) 1990, Dublin(Ireland) 1991, Madrid(Spain) 1992, Antwerp(Belgium) 1993, Lisbon(Portugal) 1994, Luxembourg(Luxembourg) 1995, Copenhagen(Denmark) 1996, Thessaloniki(Greece) 1997, Stockholm(Sweden) 1998, Weimar(Germany) 1999
3	2000-2010	Avignon(France) 2000, Bergen(Norway) 2000, Bologna(Italy) 2000, Brussels(Belgium) 2000, Helsinki (Finland) 2000, Krakow(Poland) 2000, Prague(Czech Republic) 2000, Reykjavic(Iceland) 2000, Santiago de Compostela(Spain) 2000, Rotterdam(Netherland) 2001, Porto(Portugal) 2001, Bruges(Belgium) 2002, Salamanca(Spain) 2002, Graz(Austria) 2003, Genova(Italy) 2004, Lille(France) 2004, Cork(Ireland) 2005, Patras(Greece) 2006, Luxembourg(Luxembourg) 2007, Sibiu(Romania) 2007, Liverpool(England) 2008, Stavanger(Norway) 2008, Vilnius(Lithuania) 2009, Linz(Austria) 2009
4	2010-2013	Essen(Germany) 2010, Pecs(Hungary) 2010, Istanbul(Turkey) 2010, Turku(Finland) 2011, Tallin(Estonia) 2011, Guimaraes(Portugal) 2012, Maribor(Slovenia) 2012, Marseille(France) 2013, Kosice(Slovakia) 2013

Source: European Capitals of Culture: the road to success, From 1985 to 2010

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Capitals of Culture Program

Following local cultural programs, The European capital of culture program gradually initiated and completed in the European Union and finally turned into a stronger local stimuli in urban spaces. The European cultural capital idea was first proposed in 1983 by Melina Mercury and Athens.(Beatriz,2004) The overall goal of this program is to introduce cultural traditions as well as establishing a closer relationship among European nations through displaying their culture. From 1985 to 2000, each year one city was chosen to hold this title. After the impacts of this program and its financial profit for the city was revealed, there was a competition among European cities over this title and resulted in selection of two or three cities to be the capital of culture simultaneously in a year (Azimi Etemadi, 2011).

The concept of the program: In 2004, the European Commission codified the aims and objectives of European Cities and Capitals of Culture as follows: "The concept of ECOC (European Capital of Culture) is open to a number of interpretations and the main motivations behind the nomination for the ECOC is open title, the key mission and major objectives have varied from city to city. Most cities had multiple objectives, most often referring to the need to raise the international profile of the city and its region, to run a programme of cultural activities and arts events, to attract visitors and to enhance pride and self-confidence. Other objectives for some cities included expanding the local audience for culture making improvements to cultural infrastructure, developing relationships with other European cities and

regions, promoting creativity and innovation and developing the careers/talents of local artists..."(ECOC, 2004) (Papanikolaou, 2000). There are many international festivals and mega-events taking place all over the world, due to the need to promote the important achievements of mankind in all kinds of areas. The results are various: "These can draw in huge tourist revenues and focus international media attention on the host city..." (Gold and Gold, 2010). Evidently, inherent features of marketing represent hallmark events that create opportunities for tourism, showcase national and international features, have an impact on local society, promote culture, and maximize the economic and environmental benefits, always on the basis of proper planning (Deffner and Labrianidis, 2005).

In accordance with the criteria established by the European Union on the European Capital of Culture (decision on the European Capital of Culture, 2004, article 4), "candidate cities must present the role they have played in European culture, their links with Europe, their European identity. They must also demonstrate current involvement in European artistic and cultural life, alongside their own specific features". In the same article of the European Commission decision, the relationship between the city and its citizens is specified and, regarding the program, "candidate cities must present a program that anticipates large-scale public involvement at both local and European levels. How can the city attract not only the local and national population, but also tourists from other countries? This criterion is also intended to encourage cities to devise a program with lasting effects, a program which impacts on the long-term development of the city" (Papanikolaou, 2012).

In fact, it can be stated that tourism development, promotion of the city and development of creative life are the main principles of the European capital of culture program, which is the longest cultural policy in the European Union (Sourris, 2012).

Aims and Objectives: The general and specific objectives were laid down by the 2006 Decision. The general objective of the 2006 decision reiterates the overall objective of the 1999 Decision, whilst the specific objectives consist of criteria relating to "the European Dimension" and "City and Citizens" (Rampton et al., 2011).

Studying the previous European capitals of culture, some of the impacts of this program can be noted as:

Support the development of local artists and cultural organizations, Individuals accessing in cultural events, activities and projects, Individuals and organizations on exchanges, marketing campaigns to promote the city and its cultural program to visitors and tourists and activities to improve the visitor experience, activities focused on improving image of the city, New/refurbished facilities, Individuals / businesses receiving training and support, Positive effects on participants in cultural activities, events and projects, Positive effects on participants in activities, events and projects to widen participation, Stronger businesses, higher skills levels and Sustainable platform for establishing international cooperation (Rampton, et al, 2011).

The following diagram display priorities in candidate cities' objectives (diagram 1). It should be noted that priorities in objectives for capitals of culture vary. For example, in Brussels, building social cohesion and community development was a high priority, and attracting visitors was a low priority. For Stockholm, encouraging artistic and philosophical debate was a high priority and the development of cultural infrastructure was low. In Porto economic development and improvements to non-cultural infrastructure were as important objectives as running a programme of cultural events (Palmer, 2004).

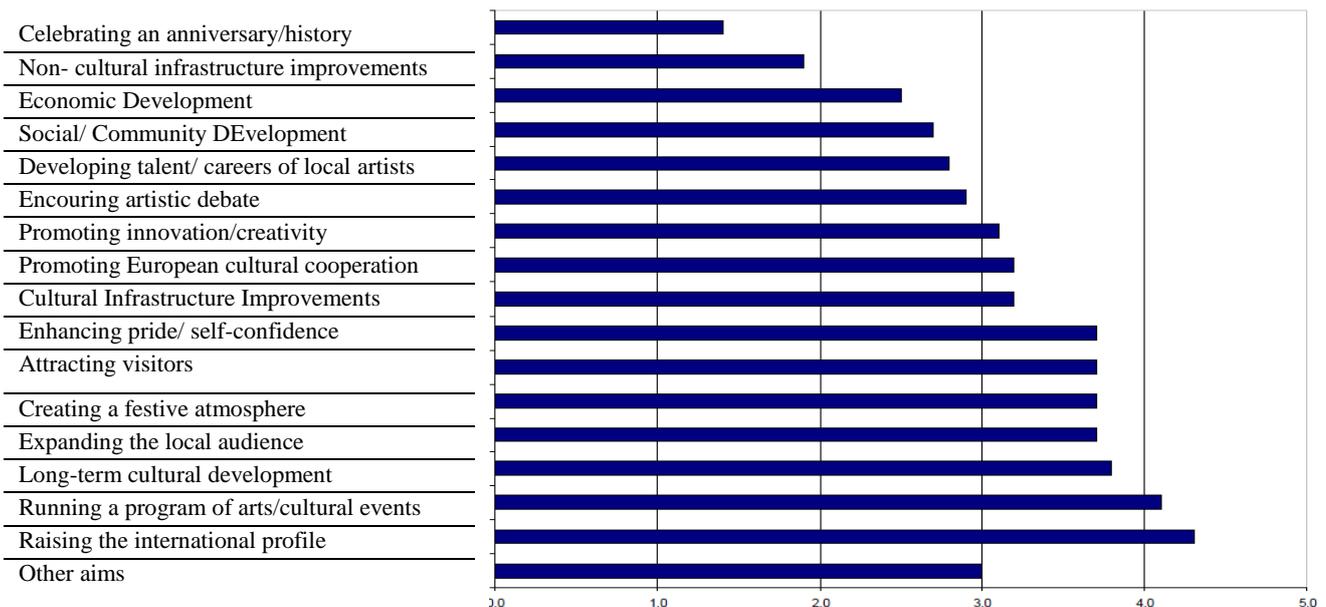


Diagram 1: Rating of Aims and Objectives - Averages of All.
(0 (not an objective) – 5 (highest importance)
Source: Palmer/ Rae Association. 2004

Keys to Success

The experiences of the previous capitals of culture would be a great help in organizing this event for the latter programs. Although there is no real key to success for an event such as the European Capitals of Culture,

The experts who have organized the Capitals of Culture, the panels which have evaluated the applications and the results of a summary report ordered by the Commission (the "Palmer Report") underline the following elements (Guides for cities applying for European capital, 2000):

1. It is essential to thoroughly prepare the concept well in advance on the basis of the objectives and criteria for the event and to have very clear ideas on intended actions. Above all, the application must present a clear, coherent vision of the year in question, established in light of the "philosophy" of the title and the criteria set out in the Decision. A simple compilation of different events or projects cannot constitute the one-year program for the European Capital of Culture.

2. Public commitment to the program and the budget must be firm and constant throughout the preparatory phase for the Capital of Culture.

3. The structure created for planning and running the event must be given sufficient financial and administrative capacity. The quality of the contacts and networks which it will establish with civil society is fundamental in this respect.

4. The selection of the partners and projects for the program is one of the crucial aspects of preparation, particularly in the context of the "European Dimension" of the event. It is therefore important to:

- Carefully select partners at European level: start off with existing links and contacts and initiate the process early so as to establish the contacts and plans well in advance.

- Focus on the quality and characteristics of the projects, and not on the political dimension of the contacts. It is important to consider the European dimension to the event from an objective standpoint;

- Bear in mind that often ambitious and innovative European projects have the greatest impact. It is therefore important not to hesitate when faced with difficulties.

5. One of the factors of success for the Capitals of Culture in the past has been the city's capacity to *involve* both stakeholders in the cultural and socio-economic world and the local population. The event will have to reconcile artistic standards with public enthusiasm.

6. In order to unite the stakeholders in the cultural and socio-economic world in a common project, it is first of all important to consult the cultural operators in the field, i.e. to design the event using a "bottom-up" approach. On the subject of partnership with stakeholders in the socio-economic world, we can give the example of Lille, which managed to mobilize socio-economic partners with the active participation of sponsors. It should be borne in mind here that the sponsors contribute on average 13% to the resources

budgeted for a Capital of Culture (source: Palmer report). This cooperation is essential, particularly in the transport sector. In 2004, the SNCF provided connections between Lille and many cities in both France and abroad at particularly favorable rates, especially for the Lille 2004 event.

7. The organizers of the event will have everything to gain from highlighting the special features of the city. The previous Capitals of Culture stress that it is useful to start with local culture and then work outwards to include other cultures: in other words, they recommend building the event from the city's own roots.

8. It is important for the program to be forward-looking, without neglecting the history of the city underpinning its identity. This means that the innovative nature of the event and, in this context, the emphasis laid on contemporary cultural forms and the capacity to foster creativity by involving local and European artists, are of the utmost importance. The program will be supported by a cultural dynamism which surpasses the historical assets of the city, namely the richness of its heritage.

9. The sustainable nature of the event is a parameter to be integrated into the project at the time of its design: the follow-up to the Capital of Culture year must be envisaged before the year in question. The challenge at the heart of the "European Dimension" and "City and Citizens" criteria is therefore to develop a well-balanced project, promoting the special features of the city as elements of European cultural diversity while conveying an attractive image at international level and arousing the interest and enthusiasm of the local population and those further afield.

10. The communication campaign directed at the city, the region and beyond is a key factor in the programming of a Capital of Culture and is planned far in advance.

11. Independence from the political authorities of the artistic director and the structure responsible for implementing the program can prove crucial in a Capital of Culture's preparations. Some previous Capitals of Culture suffered considerably from the direct involvement and omnipresence of political authorities in the structure responsible for implementing the program. It must be borne in mind that a city's preparations for the title take at least six years and that policymakers may change over this period. (Palmer, 2004)

Long-term Changes in Visitor Numbers

Within the overall trend of visitor growth stimulated by ECOC, different patterns of change can be distinguished for individual cities over the longer-term. In broad terms, three types of patterns of visit change can be discerned from the data. The first is those cities that have a strongly marked increase in visitor numbers, followed by a sharp decline. This is the case with cities such as Glasgow and Weimar. Both of these cities can be viewed as 'non-traditional' tourist destinations, which managed to attract large numbers

of day visitors and tourists in relation to the normal levels of tourist flows during the cultural year. Because of the strong positive effect of ECOC, the subsequent decline in visitors was also relatively sharp. In Glasgow, there was also a fall in visitors to cultural institutions after ECOC, but in Weimar high visitors levels were maintained (see section on cultural visits below). However, when the Glasgow figures are compared to the average growth in overnight stays in other European cities in the TourMIS database, they indicate that Glasgow enjoyed a higher rate of growth than average in the years following ECOC (Chart 2 and 3).

The second group of cities show a moderate increase in visitor numbers (usually around 10%) followed by a small decline in the year after ECOC. This is evident in cities such as Copenhagen, Helsinki, Reykjavik and Thessaloniki (chart 4 and 5). In the case of Copenhagen and Helsinki these capital cities already have relatively large tourism flows and cultural activity, but the ECOC had a marked effect on overnight stays and an even bigger impact on total

visitor numbers. In the case of Helsinki, however, the increase caused by ECOC was not much greater than the average rate of tourism growth over the previous decade.

The third group represent those cities in which the ECOC event had little or no impact on overnight tourism flows. These include Brussels, Luxembourg and Bergen. In the case of Brussels there was a 5% growth in bed nights in 2000, but this was only slightly higher than the growth recorded in other European cities (4,7%) (Palmer, 2004).

In a number of cities, however, there is evidence that the impact of the ECOC lasts beyond the year itself. Although the classic pattern is for visitor numbers to fall immediately after the ECOC, some cities have managed to sustain the growth they experienced. Scandinavian cities in particular seem to have held on to much of the tourism growth generated by the ECOC. This is perhaps due to the image change that many of these cities hoped to achieve (see below). For smaller cities, it may also be true that the ECOC helps to put them 'on the map' (Palmer, 2004).

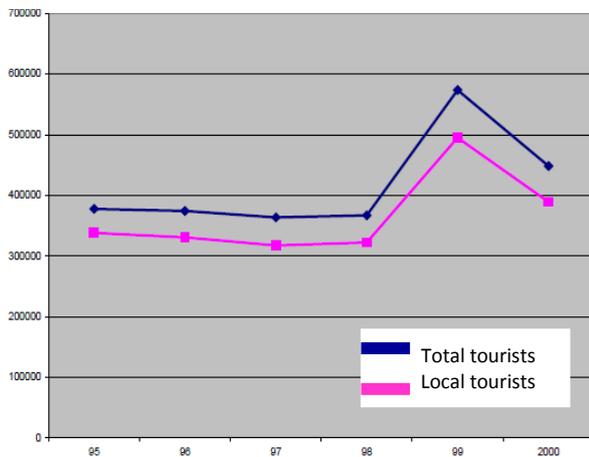


Diagram 3: Weimar
Source: Palmer/ Rae Association. 2004

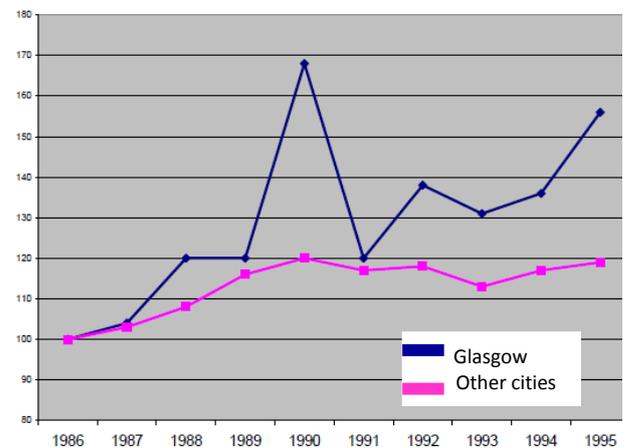


Diagram 2: Glasgow
Source: Palmer/ Rae Association. 2004

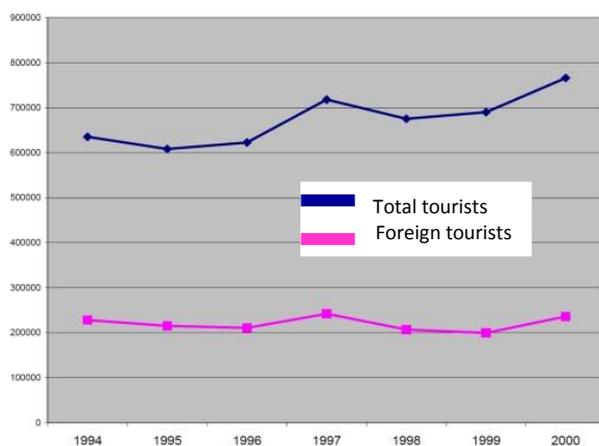


Diagram 5: Thessaloniki
Source: Palmer/ Rae Association. 2004

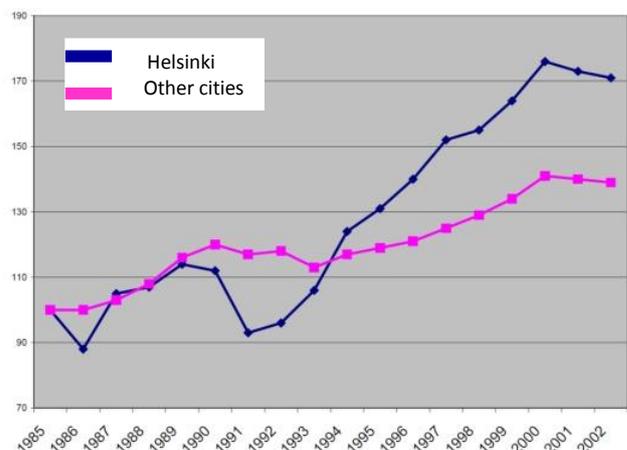


Diagram 4: Helsinki
Source: Palmer/ Rae Association. 2004

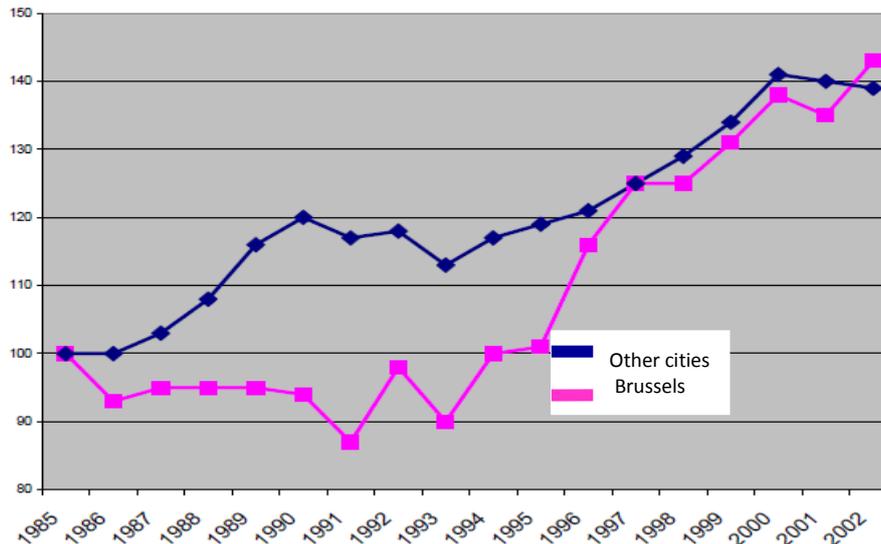


Diagram 6: Brussels

Source: Palmer/ Rae Association. 2004

Detailed reviews on European Capitals of cultures

Istanbul Capital of Culture Program: Istanbul is Turkey's largest city and its cultural and economic center, which separates two continents of Asia and Europe. This multi-cultural city was chosen as one of the three European capitals of culture for the year 2010, and developed a document for the planning of this event. In this document, Istanbul's projects are divided into seven categories, which include: urban projects, cultural heritage and museums, visual arts, traditional arts, classical Turkish music, music and opera, theater and performing arts, film documentary animation, literature, urban culture, education, international relations and tourism and promotion. The most important projects of this program are briefly defined in the following table. It should be noted that due to the large number of projects, only a few are mentioned in the table.

Riga Capital of Culture Program: Riga, the capital and largest city of Latvia, is one of the most important centers of industry, commerce, culture and finance and also a major port in the Baltic region. This city, which is the largest one of the Baltic region, was chosen as the cultural capital of Europe in 2014. Likewise the Istanbul's document, Riga's program has categories which are: Riga's proposal for the project of the European capital of culture 2014 and its challenges, goals proposed in Riga's application, Riga's program 2014, program guidelines and structure, thirst for the ocean, freedom street, survival kit, road map, Riga carnival, European dimension, cooperation with Sweden 2014, cultural centers of Riga and largest venues for 2014 events. All of Riga's programs for this cultural year are presented in this document. Riga's effort is to introduce its history and identity and organized its program and projects in order to achieve this aim.

Prague Capital of Culture Program: Considering its heritage, Prague has developed a rich and ambitious program with a cultural context. Cultural

Year in Prague initiated on December 14, 1999 and came to an end on February 2001. The backbone of the Prague 2000 programme was made up of 100 projects relating to the cultural heritage, including intellectual and artistic material. This title helped Prague to increase awareness and investment on cultural events like music, dance, theater, film, architecture, literature, and multimedia events. Prague's program consisted of three main themes: the story of the city, the city of open gates and City to Live In. These were all themes that reflected contemporary trends in the cultural development of Prague.

The Story of the City: is a view on the cultural past, but it is not simply a retrospective look at the tradition. It has an urgent and contemporary relevance in the healing process after a fifty year period in which the Czech culture was not spiritually free and historical connections and contexts were deliberately distorted or passed over.

City of Open Gates: Prague is also considered as a historical crossroad of cultural movements and influences, the place of encounters and collisions between many cultures and the unique location where the diversity of individual achievements combines and recasts into an unusual cultural whole.

City to Live In: It is typical of contemporary cultural projects that they often go beyond the narrow framework of old art and culture and make inroads into other spheres such as education, the environment, information systems and lifestyle. The thematic program, 'City to live in', brings together projects that express all these tendencies in Prague cultural life.

Bruges Capital of Culture Program:

Known as the capital of Flemish, Bruges was elected as the European capital of culture for the year 2002, along with Salamanca. This city organized over 160 musical, scientific and literary projects for a period of 10 months. Some of Bruges projects for the year 2002 included:

Table 2. Istanbul program for European capital of culture 2010

Project's name	Description
Urban projects	
MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR PROGRAM FOR WOODEN BUILDINGS	The registered wooden buildings are part of world heritage. These contexts are preserved with financial and technical support to the homes of people who are not able to maintain the buildings.
LIGHTING PROJECTS	The purposes of the lighting projects can be summarized as: to increase the recognition of buildings' structural architectural qualities by the visitors and residents of the city and to improve the livability of the relevant districts during nighttime.
Cultural heritage and museums	
DIGITAL INVENTORY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRY	The project is a "cultural mapping" study and its aim is to provide sufficient advices to establish policies for Istanbul as a cultural center.
Visual arts	
MUSIC ON ISTANBUL STAGE	This project is using Istanbul as a stage to create unforgettable moments of Turkish and foreign works of art, like opera, ballet, and ... in images .
PHOTOGRAPHY PARADE	The project aims to document Istanbul, with photography, one of the most important arts of our time and to pass solid works on to the future generations
TRADITIONAL ARTS	
ISTANBUL'S CRAFTSMEN	Providing a map of craft workshops and a site to show examples of their work
BOOK OF MAHYA / MINARET RIDGES	Mahya-making, an art peculiar to Turks and especially to Istanbul in Islamic world, is a 400-year-old tradition
CLASSICAL TURKISH MUSIC	
MUSIC OF ISTANBUL ARCHITECTURE	The target is to build the relations among time/space/music in Istanbul. The locations set for the 9 concerts of the project can be defined as the symbols of urban culture memory of Istanbul
TURKISH MUSIC INSTRUMENTS	The project covers the instruments of Classical Turkish Music, Turkish Folk Music and Military Music (Janissary Band). While some of these instruments are still used, some are employed quite rarely and some are completely forgotten.
MUSIC AND OPERA	
MUSIC STOPS	Playing music on city streets, in order for the music to become part of the life of the city
THEATRE AND PERFORMING ARTS	
KARAGÖZ IN ISTANBUL, ISTANBUL IN KARAGÖZ	The aim of this project is to restore the Shadow theater, which is one of the elements of traditional culture.
FILM DOCUMENTARY ANIMATION	
COLORS OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE	A documentary that shows how different cultures and minorities in Istanbul help enrich the city
LITERATURE	
. ISTANBUL POEMS FROM BYZANTINE TO OUR DAY	In this project, poems written on Istanbul from the Byzantine era to date will be collected in a book during an organization on poetry
URBAN CULTURE	
AHIRKAPI-ÇATLADIKAPI HIDRELLEZ FESTIVITIES	This project is comprised of joyful festivities aiming at continuing the Hydrellez tradition, reflecting musical diversity and proliferation in the society and exposing local tastes.
LIVING LIBRARY	the Living Library project is aimed at contributing to social peace through offering people an environment for constructive dialogue channels among various segments of society
Education	
ONCE UPON A TIME IN MY STREET	This project is going to explore children's identities, the sense of belonging to Istanbul, Istanbul's transformation as a metropolis, daily life in the city, the stories of people residing in central Istanbul and surrounding towns, the monuments, environment, districts and local neighborhoods of the city.
WE ARE RECORDING ISTANBUL	Throughout a year, with high school students from public and private schools in 12 different districts of Istanbul, 12 short films will be made about the history, geography and social life of their region.
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	
"FAIRYTALES AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN PEOPLE AND CULTURES" FAIRYTALE FESTIVAL	The festival program includes many activities like exhibitions, films and recitations. The festival is also going to call attention to the tradition of "narrator" in different cultures.
"ON THE ROAD – EUROPEAN LITERATURE GOES TO TURKEY / TURKISH LITERATURE GOES TO EUROPE"	The project will be started in Istanbul and end in Brussels. Turkey leg of the project includes a tour by 48 well-known writers, numerous photography and cinema artists and musicians to visit 24 different cities. In the cities to be visited in the scope of this project, "European Culture Weeks" will be organized, during which reading sessions, discussions, concerts will be held.
TOURISM AND PROMOTION	
INTRODUCTION OF THE MAWLAWI CULTURE AND SEMA CEREMONY	This project covers all three main elements (literature, music and visually) of the Mawlawi culture. A total of 59 sema ceremonies (Ayin Sharif) will be held every week through 2010 and also on holy days.
ESSEN-PÉCS-ISTANBUL ON BIKE	As a project jointly designed by Istanbul 2010, Pécs 2010 and Ruhr 2010, "Essen-Pécs-Istanbul on Bike" involves a cycling trip to last for 2.5 months The items and buildings of the historical and cultural heritage on the route will be documented and filmed.

Table 3. Riga program for European capital of culture 2014

Program guidelines and structure	1- Thirst for the ocean - human relations with the essence of the world - the trajectory of human creation, the sense of the individual path	Events: International conferences and exhibitions, multimedia events in urban environments, cinema, concerts.
	2- Freedom street - ‘explosions’ of ideas stimulating receptivity and cultural dynamics - the history of power, destruction and renewal -encounters of ideas and discussions, the battlefields of culture and the dream of a universal culture	Events: Exhibitions, art and music campaigns, theatrical tours, literary readings, open-air cinema, digital laboratories, creative trade fairs.
	3- Survival kit - the urban dweller discovers fire again the rural returns the town - mastering new skills and know-how, gaining experience, experiencing new feelings - a return to basic truths and skills, to the fundamental human needs of the future	Events: Creative workshops, seminars, research projects, interactive events with an ecological bent, art in the public space, plains airs, fairs, competitions, talent shows, performances, discursive events.
	4- Road map - private and public space in the urban environment - the accessibility of singular spaces in the cities, neighborhood lore, local memory - a brand new physical and mental circulatory system for the city, new and active centers in local neighborhoods	Events: Excursions, bicycle routes, open house days, interdisciplinary events, creative areas in the urban environment, circus performances, events, performances in atypical spaces, anthropological documentary films.
	5- Riga carnival - traditions and festive rites from a fresh point of view - the diversity of cultures and cross-cultural dialogue	Events: Festivals, seasonal rites, concerts traditional and non-traditional, interactive games.
	6- Amber vein - contemporary communication, new cooperation networks and the opportunities they offer - European cultural cooperation networks	Events: Interdisciplinary expeditions, presentations of the distinctive, international photography campaigns.

Table 4. Bruges program for European capital of culture 2002

Exhibitions	Three major exhibitions spanned the cultural year, and a number of smaller ones were staged around specific themes. At any time during the year visitors were able to choose from between one and three exhibitions, apart from the contemporary one. All told, they received 460,000 visitors. The three exhibitions include:
Contemporary art	Bruges is a city with a compelling historical cultural quality. This means that modern art is faced with the permanent - and admittedly extremely fascinating - challenge of integrating itself on an equal footing. BRUGGE 2002 showed that such integration is possible through a diversity of initiatives, some of which have had a lasting impact. BRUGGE 2002 deliberately opted to use the city itself as a stage. A whole host of projects were organised at unexpected locations and in streets and squares, the aim being to surprise Bruges residents and visitors.
Architecture and monuments	Bruges is a city of monuments, and is full of superb architecture from down the centuries. Due to the qualities of Bruges' heritage, but also on account of the city's tendency to look at this with a degree of nostalgia, Bruges 2002 resolutely decided to be a catalyst for contemporary architecture in this city.
Performing arts	In performing arts, too, Bruges 2002 provided for a diverse and yet very distinctive range of dance, theatre, new media and "performance". This program opted for innovation works that had not been put on before. Playing on a current trend and a desire on the part of many performing artists and directors, the programmes often transcended disciplines and combined speech, dance and music.
Film and media	Film and image culture are constantly making deep inroads on our culture, and are increasingly playing a decisive role in shaping it. BRUGGE 2002 did not remain indifferent to the obstinate dreams of a number of filmmakers, and saw to it that a number of new projects were given the seed needed for them to grow and develop.
Literature and debate	BRUGGE 2002 never nurtured the ambition of offering a large-scale or representative programme of literature. However, it did want literature and reflection to be present throughout the year's programme as a leitmotif and as a quietly palpable inspiration.
Events	The cultural year was to be peppered with festive classics and examples of show and spectacle that were the reason for a great number of visitors. Nonetheless, popular festivals and events were not to be the reason or excuse for the program losing anything in terms of quality or innovation. For every event included in the BRUGGE 2002 calendar, the criterion was the question as to how this could create a surplus value for the total project.
Publications	Catalogues were published for various exhibitions and projects. To this end we organised a unique kind of co-operation with a number of publishers. In all, many books were published in this context.

Turku Capital of Culture Program: Turku is a city in Finland that was selected as the European capital of culture for the year 2011 along with Tallin.

Turku's program include both scientific and artistic aspects and consists of different projects. The following table presents a summary of these projects:

Table 5. Turku program for European capital of culture 2011

Urban city events	Turku is renowned for its traditional urban events. During this program, Turku hosts a variety of major outdoor music events, festivals, exhibitions, workshops, carnivals, hiking route to the university of Turku, Garden Competition, etc.
Exhibitions and visual arts	Turku has a long tradition of being a city of artists, galleries, art museums and museums of cultural history. The various museums in Turku will also host Capital of Culture exhibitions. In addition to the traditional venues, visual art will extend throughout the urban space. Some of the exhibitions include: fire exhibition, Contemporary photography exhibits on various topics, Turku residents' portrait, etc.
Design, architecture and crafts	Wide-scale production has been practised in Turku since the 1500s, and the first handicrafts trade professions were established during the 1600s. Turku also hosts the most extensive selection of valuable buildings in Finland, in terms of historical range, cultural history and architecture. This program consists of Investment on the Industrial Design, Architecture along the river, carpet exhibition, Fashion design competition, etc.
Music	Turku music includes traditional music in addition to contemporary music. Turku Music Festival, which is organized already for 50 years, is one of the leading music events in Finland. This program includes operas, music festivals, night clubs, concerts, etc.
Theatre, dance, circus and performance	The well-established theatre city of today boasts three major theatre venues and some 20 amateur theatres or other association-based groups in the region. Thanks to the circus training at the Arts Academy, future of circus in Turku is secure. This program include: musical theaters, comedies, puppet shows, traditional music and dance festival, circus, etc.
Cinema, animation and media art	This program promotes the city as a location for both national and international audiovisual productions. Besides that, The education in animation and film at the Arts Academy at Turku University of Applied Sciences is internationally established and praised. Projects in this area include: Festival of Finnish Film, running for the 20th time in 2011, the international children's film festival, animation competitions, etc.
Literature and literary art	Highlights during the Turku literary year include: the Turku International Book Fair, organized annually since 1992. The Southwest Finland Poetry Week, storytelling festival, etc. In addition to them, The Book House, which is located in central Turku provides home for several professional and amateur associations.
Children and Young People	Turku features several tourist attractions for children and young people. Turku offers its young people a wide variety of leisure activities, including theaters, museums, clubs, workshops, Finland beaches, swimming halls, open-air swimming pools, water parks and spas. A multitude of sports and exercise clubs promote the physical well-being of young people

CONCLUSION

The significant point about this program is that by selection of each city as the capital of culture, a wide range of projects from micro to macro levels will be planned for the city. In addition to that, the responsible group begin planning and managing the program seriously, and the projects will be developed in specific categories. For instance the Istanbul program considers all aspects of culture and art including urban projects, films, literature and theatre to

name but a few. It is clear that each project is defined by certain professional groups, but they are classified in a manner which will cover all aspects of art and culture. It should be noted that the projects are quite detailed and precise so that even the way a cultural monument is used, or the events in a project would be defined. This of course, requires a well understanding of the culture, which also guarantee the implementation of the projects.

All capital of culture programs especially focus on the residents and their everyday life along with

tourists, and plan to improve the quality of life and combine it with culture for the residents, to experience a better living environment.

The most important issue in organizing this event, is to consider native culture and traditions and transfer it to other nations. In addition to the native culture of the selected city, the capital of culter program also regards the culture of the visitors and their countries, therefor it attracts more culturally diverse people and creates a common ground for communication and cross-cultural exchanges.

By selecting a city as capital of culture, not only the city but the whole country is involved in this program to organize events and projects. These projects are usually held in enclosed buildings such as concert halls, museums, exhibitions halls, etc. or in open spaces such as streets and squares. Thus it is essential to facilitate the city and equip it with more pedestrian ways.

Another important issue in organizing this program is to represent the city's gradual changes and its history to the present, which will help introduce the origins and culture of the country and can be in the form of films, seminars, photographs and their exhibition in urban spaces.

Another point in the capital of culture program is that the selected countries try to communicate with other countries in different fields, so that they will be able to gain international standards in implementation of the program in addition to profiting from their experience and acquiring financial aid. Besides that, the local talents and creative artists will be known internationally.

To sum up, with all this taken into account, the capital of culture program in a city can attract international tourists through international marketing of the city and its organizations. The European Union decision to select several capitals of culture in a year from 2000 on, indicates the aim to attract cross-continent tourists.

Finally, it is necessary to note here that the rich culture of Iran has high potential for creation of this communication and distribution of it to other nations, but it is important first to plan in this context and conduct studies on the existing diverse cultures of this country. A look on European capitals of culture experiences, and a detailed study on rich culture of each Iranian city can help organize coherent programs in Iranian cities such as Mashhad which is going to be the Islamic capital of culture in 2017.

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