



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE
Culture, Creativity and Sport
Creative Europe

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Subject: Your letter of 10/2/2022 presenting the revisited bid-book of Timișoara, European Capital of Culture 2023

Dear Madam,

I thank you very much for your letter and the impressive revisited bid-book you provided.

I am pleased to see that since the monitoring meeting we organised in June 2021 between the ECoC team in Timișoara and the Expert panel, much work and progress have been achieved, in line with the recommendations of the panel.

The revisited bid-book is clearly one of the strongest achievements in recent months and an essential milestone towards 2023, and surely the positive outcome of the huge endeavour of the new curatorial team, which provides the project with the artistic guidance and strong strategic expertise the panel was calling for.

I note with satisfaction that the curatorial team has multiplied contacts in Timișoara, the Timis County, Romania and the rest of Europe to ensure that many relevant cultural institutions and organisations were ready to be part of the ECoC project.

I am happy to see that this revisited programme is aligned on the thrust, vision and objectives of the original bid-book submitted by Timișoara, following the same stations and trails, and including partners initially mentioned. Many projects have the potential to reignite a sense of active citizenship in the city and in Europe, as has always been the intention of your European Capital of Culture.

As you rightly point out in your letter, the Expert panel and the Commission tend to see the original bid-book as a kind of *de facto* contract between the city designated, on the one hand, and its inhabitants, the national Government, the regional authorities and the

Commission, on the other hand. We, however, understand that delivering a European Capital of Culture is an organic endeavour and that along the ramp up years, changes may result necessary to take account of a changing environment – especially when the title-year has been postponed and the project has been through turbulent times, as is the case in Timișoara. The key point is to preserve the essence of the project and be able to justify the changes made.

In its early January letter to Timișoara, the panel underlined that “time is crucial as we enter the last 12 months before the start of the ECoC year”. It called for action and highlighted the need to rapidly sign cooperation agreements with your local, national and European partners.

We hope that the revisited bid-book can be a solid basis to move forward without further delay, a basis on which all three institutional partners of Timișoara ECoC 2023, the City, the County and the Central Government, can work together and find the appropriate mechanisms to provide the needed level of funding to a project declared a national priority. Your project has the potential to have a strong resonance and send very positive messages across the European Union, and we count on Timișoara, Timis County and Romania to materialise it.

I finally inform you that we already contacted the Expert panel to organise a meeting with the curatorial team in late March, as a milestone between now and the final monitoring meeting in November this year.

Wishing you well in your endeavours,

Yours faithfully,

Electronically signed

Barbara GESSLER
Head of Unit