

## **Marseille 2013 or the final round of a long and complex regeneration strategy?**

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### **Abstract**

European Capital of Culture 2013 is the last link in the chain of a 30 year regeneration policy for Marseille. However despite the fact that Marseille is the core city of the application, Marseille Provence 2013 actually gathers 130 communes. The main objective of the paper is to discuss the ground roots and the challenges of the application for the city and its urban area. The paradoxes faced by Marseille Provence 2013 as well as how the bid fits in with the overall regeneration strategy of Marseille and how it rests on non-traditional cultural facilities are analyzed in this paper.

### **Key words**

Urban regeneration, Cultural Policy, European Capital of Culture, Urban Renewal, Marseille

### **Introduction**

In September 2008 Marseille was selected as the 2013 European Capital of Culture (ECOC). The “*workshops of the Mediterranean*” aim at developing “*a space devoted to dialogue between the cultures of Europe and those of the South, welcoming and reaching out to their artists and scholars, to masters and students, to the transmission of knowledge and to the production of works*” (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008, p.19). The main objective of the event will be to create a platform of cultural cooperation between diverse actors and countries in Europe and more widely in the Mediterranean region. Hence, even if most of the attention is given to Marseille, the scheme actually relates to a broader urban area including other secondary cities such as Aix en Provence, Arles, Toulon or Hyeres. It actually reveals a distinction between Marseille 2013 and Marseille Provence 2013 that needs to be questioned.

For the selection committee, Marseille – the core city of the bid – surpassed its competitors (Toulouse, Lyon and Bordeaux) as its project represented a particularly successful equilibrium between cultural quality, political engagement and economic support (Selection Panel, 2008). On the one hand the cultural quality of Marseille referred both to the cosmopolitan character of the city and to its diverse cultural and artistic activities. On the other hand the intercommunal partnership gathering together numerous communes, different

levels of government as well as various economic actors ensured the political and economic support of the bid. However, these criteria reveal an unusual situation and raise a couple of paradoxes that will be addressed in this paper.

The success of the city has been globally perceived as deserved and fair within the French political spheres and the media. This paper is thus not going to assess the relevancy of the choice of Marseille but the ground roots and the challenges of the application for the metropolis and its urban area. This discussion is based on a three year research project (2005-2008) undertaken on the regeneration of Marseille, gathering both primary and secondary data; these first results have been updated between April 2009 and March 2010. Whilst the first section of the paper will examine the paradoxes faces by Marseille Provence 2013, the second and third sections will focus more specifically on the case of Marseille highlighting how the bid fits in with a 30 year regeneration strategy and how it rests on non-traditional cultural facilities that clearly galvanized the ECOC bid. The paper will conclude in arguing that the role given by Marseille to the ECOC bid may create some problematic political and economic disequilibrium to the whole territory of Marseille Provence 2013.

## **1 – The paradoxes of Marseille Provence 2013**

### *A legendary and heterogeneous cultural quality?*

The cultural quality of Marseille Provence 2013 rests upon two paradoxical criteria: a socio-cultural diversity which relies on a subjective perception of Marseille as a cosmopolitan metropolis and a variety of cultural and artistic activities testifying to a subtle balance between well known cultural hubs and secondary centres.

Firstly, in comparison to its competitors, the geopolitical situation of Marseille as well as its poly-ethnic profile has been promoted all along in the ECOC application. It has participated to the elaboration of a programme based on the transformation of Marseille into “*a hub of artistic and cultural co-operation between European and all the countries of the Mediterranean*” (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008, p.5). Such a discourse on the multicultural nature of ECOC applicants is not new. It was used in the slogan “The World in One City” in Liverpool 2008 as a reference to the multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and social diversity of the city and its status of economic and cultural pole with a long history of both inward and outward social migration (Jones and Willks-Heegs, 2004). However considering the city as a cosmopolitan and poly-ethnic city is a myth according to Peraldi and Samson (2005). Indeed, Marseille, as a port-city, between 1850 and 1920, welcomed migrants from Italy and then since the 1960’s from North Africa (Donzel, 1998). Therefore the proportion of non-French population was reaching no more than 7% in 1990 (in comparison 16% in Paris and 14% in Lyon). Even if Marseille has managed to preserve this historical image of a mixed and diverse city, such a perception of the city is irrelevant. From the moment the city was affected by deindustrialization in the 1960’s, migrants didn’t settle anymore in Marseille and quickly moved to more prosperous metropolitan area where they could find a job more easily (especially Paris). Consequently even if Marseille during several centuries has been a city of

transit and migration, the city is not characterized by organized communities settled over several generations forming one unitary city (Peraldi and Samson, 2005). It is far from being the most relevant example of cosmopolitanism in France even if such a perception remains dominant in people's minds.

Secondly, the diversity of cultural and artistic activities and events already taking place in the area of Marseille Provence 2013 is acknowledged as a strong asset for the bid. Hence it reveals a paradoxical distinction between Marseille on one hand and other secondary cities (Aix en Provence and Arles in particular). Marseille is the core city of the bid but is actually more or less recognized for its cultural weakness. The latter as pointed by Grésillon and Girard (2004) contains 42 auditoriums, one opera, 20 museums and multiple cultural initiatives which in most cases are not widely recognized. Nationwide the city can barely compete with similar metropolitan area such as Lyon or Toulouse; Marseille is actually not even perceived as the cultural centre of the metropolitan area, on the contrary to Aix en Provence which is famous for its museums (e.g. Museum Granet) and festivals (e.g. International Festival of Lyric Art). Despite regular increase of the public budget (70 million Euros in 1995 and 117 millions in 2005) (Bertoncello, Rodrigues Malta, Dubois, 2009), the various cultural facilities, events and festivals of Marseille haven't gained a national or international recognition (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008). However, on the contrary, Marseille benefits from various singular alternative initiatives developed on urban brownfields from the 1980's (Grésillon, Girard, 2004). The following –such as *La Friche* for example – have acquired a national and international visibility from which Marseille has clearly benefited (Andres, forthcoming). Consequently, the juxtaposition of this mixed cultural offering within the Marseille Provence urban area created an adequate balance for the success of the bid. However this balance is fragile as it relies on a common collaboration between different communes which is far from being easy and sustainable.

#### *A fragile political engagement and financial support?*

Marseille Provence 2013 represents 130 communes (including Saintes-Maries de la Mer, Arles, Saint Rémy de Provence, Salon de Provence, Aix en Provence, Martigues, Aubagne, Gardanne, Cassis, Bandol, Toulon, Hyères) both located in the East, North and West of Marseille (see figure 1). It represents more than 2.2 million inhabitants. Apart from ensuring the cultural quality that the bid needed, such a vast territory also brings a number of key assets: an excellent tourist image related to a rich landscape, diverse transport facilities (airports, high speed train, motorways) and a total of €400 million per year devoted to culture (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008). Now, this cooperation is exceptional but was necessary to guarantee the success of Marseille. The commission indeed appreciated the “*strong political engagement on the part of the mayor of the core city and all the local authorities involved, whatever their political allegiance, across a broad geographical area in Provence and the solid financial support from local authorities and business with a carefully considered funding plan*” (Selection Panel, 2008, p.3).

Please insert Figure 1 The perimeter of Marseille Provence 2013. Source :[http://www.marseille-provence2013.fr/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=394&Itemid=502](http://www.marseille-provence2013.fr/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=394&Itemid=502))

Nevertheless this intercommunal partnership is extremely fragile, this area being well known for its governance backwardness (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008) characterized by strong economic and political conflicting interests between the different communes and the different levels of government (including the *Département de Bouches du Rhône* and the *Région Provence Alpes Côtés d'Azur*). In particular, the core city of the bid, Marseille, is famous for harsh conflicts opposing the municipalities in the other urban authorities and for its difficulties in building coherent partnerships (Donzel, 1990). Historically, these political tensions (that relate to opposite political ideologies) have severely impacted Marseille. They contributed to the late consideration of the economic decline of the city by national authorities from the 1970's. In the late 1980's these political tensions led to a lack of national and regional support towards the problematic economic restructuring of Marseille. These tensions were actually denounced by the City Council in the early 1990's who argued that the State and the *Conseil Régional* were acting as if they wanted the death of the city (Bertoncello, Malta and Dubois, 2009). These political tensions revealed and still reveal a severe economic and cultural competition between the various urban authorities that are part of Marseille Provence 2013. Particularly relevant in the 80's and 90's (Motte, 2003), these tensions are still apparent, probably historically enforced by the Latin, Mediterranean history of this territory where cities and elite social groups used to struggle for complete autonomy.

In this regard the partnership formed for Marseille Provence 2013 is unusual. It enhances indeed the faith of urban authorities in taking benefit of the bid (cf section 2). However it underlines also the crucial role played by Marseille (who clearly took the lead in developing the application) and the application committee that was put in place. This committee ensured a strong leadership in involving the different communes and in securing the financial support acknowledged by the selection committee. This support has actually not only been supra-communal but also national, financial guarantees having been asked from the government, in order to secure the development of one of the key facilities for the bid, the MUCEM (*Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée*). This leadership rests upon the fact that the application committee was led by highly competent and re-known actors, under the direction of Bernard Latarget, former cultural advisor of President Mitterrand, who is highly respected across the political spectrum. Thanks to his networks and his ability to neutrally and consensually discuss issues with all urban authorities, he managed to gain their attention. Moreover, his past experience made him gain the respect of local cultural actors and artists as well as of local economic actors, confident in the seriousness of the application.

As a matter of fact, the application to the 2013 ECOC bid highlights an efficient use of the key assets of the Marseille Provence metropolitan area specially the legendary image of

cosmopolitan city of Marseille and the complementary cultural activities and events. It testifies also of the leadership taken by the core city of the bid, Marseille, in bringing together the political and economic coherence necessary for the success of the bid. However the three criteria on which the success is built tend to imply that all partners should equally be implicated and dedicated to the event. In reality, this political consortium is very fragile as Marseille not only remains the overall focus of the event but has clearly incorporated the bid in its long term urban and cultural regeneration plan.

## **2 – ECOC 2013: the last link in the chain of a 30 year regeneration policy for Marseille**

### *Marseille: a crisis port-city*

As Liverpool, Marseille is an old industrial city whose economic decline started as soon as in the 1950's (San Marco and Morel, 1998). This economic decline was followed by a demographic crisis in the 1960 and a political and social crisis in the 1970s emphasized by huge tensions between the different ethnics groups and the rise of far right, extremist political party ("*Front National*"). This severe crisis continued in the 1980s and 1990s : population impoverishment and unemployment rates increased and the transition from secondary activities to tertiary activities was particularly difficult as companies were not interested in developing new activities in the city; this obviously led to the profusion of derelict areas, to the deterioration of the living conditions of the poorest communities and had a particularly negative impact on the image of Marseille that become perceived as a dangerous, unsecured, dirty place with no jobs (Verges and Jacquemoud, 2000). In fifteen years, the city lost 100 000 inhabitants: its population decreased from 908 600 inhabitants in 1975 to 800 550 inhabitants in 1990 (Donzel, 1998). Similarly, from 1962 to 1990, Marseille lost half of its jobs in the secondary sector. In 1990 the unemployment rate reached 19% (i.e twice the national unemployment rate) whereas the City Council was still funding 90% of its expenses by loans incapable of engaging itself in the support of any kind of regeneration policy that addressed these issues (Bertoncello, Rodrigues Malta, Dubois, 2009). In 1999 half of the population was still not paying taxes and one fourth was living under the poverty threshold. Today, the situation of Marseille is still problematic in comparison to other French cities. The unemployment rate was still reaching 12.5% in 2007 (versus 7.8% at a national level); nowadays in the poorest neighborhoods (3<sup>rd</sup> arrondissement for example), 40% of the 18-25 years old are unemployed. In addition, the city is characterized by severe socio-spatial segregation between the northern and poorest part of the city and the southern, richest and obviously "whiter" part of the metropolis.

### *The regeneration project Euroméditerranée 1 and 2*

In order to respond to the severe decline of the city and the difficulty in getting sorted by the sole actions of local authorities, a broader regeneration project *Euroméditerranée* was launched in 1995 by the French State in partnership with the local council, the *Département*

*des Bouches du Rhône* and the *Region Provence Alpes Côtes d'Azur*. A specific structure was created to manage the project: the *Etablissement Public d'Aménagement Euroméditerranée* (EPAEM). The main ambitions of the project were to re-position Marseille within the French, European and Mediterranean cities and make the city, as in the past, a metropolitan area of the first rank. This 313 hectare project covers port and industrial brownfield lands as well as derelict housing units and public buildings. It aims to renew the economy and the image of city through four key principles: 1/foster economic development and job creation; 2/ enhance the influence of Marseille through the provision of important amenities; 3/ promote urban renewal and urban design; 4/ improve the quality of life. Extended to 483 hectares in 2007 (see figure 2) the project broadly covers the city centre and its waterfront. It is divided into 6 different areas: *Arenc \_ La Joliette* (new business district), *Cité de la Méditerranée* (new waterfront with mixed uses), *Rue de la République* (new residential and commercial avenue) / *Pole de la Belle de Mai* (centre for cultural and creative industries) / *Gare Saint Charles* (refurbished and extended train station) / *Northern perimeter* (vast territory including the district of “*Les Crottes*” dedicated to mixed uses inserted in the perimeter in 2007).

Please insert figure 2: The perimeter of *Euroméditerranée* (Source : <http://www.euromediterranee.fr/>)

The project is obviously not yet complete. The operations launched on the first 313 hectares will probably end by 2014. On the other hand the northern perimeter is part of a broader strategy of re-development that should last up to 2020. In total thanks to a 7 billion Euro investment within these 480 hectares, 18 000 housing units, 1 million square meters of offices, 200 000m<sup>2</sup> of public facilities, 40 hectares of public and green spaces should be built. A total of 35 000 jobs should be created and a gain of 38 000 inhabitants is expected<sup>1</sup>. Even if the project has undeniably led to a couple of successes especially in regard to the renewed image of the city and attraction to both companies and residents, different criticisms have emerged: the lack of participation and the disconnection with the local needs of the poorest communities, the lack of concordance between the six areas of the perimeter and the different projects that are part of each of these areas, the spatial and socio-economic segmentation between the areas that are part, or not, of *Euroméditerranée* and the non-existence of a transverse master plan incorporating a multi-scale vision of the regeneration strategy (Bertoncello, Rodrigues Malta, 2001; 2003; Bertoncello, Rodrigues Malta, Dubois, 2009). On the other hand, despite these criticisms *Euroméditerranée* has been a condition sine qua non to the success of the ECOC bid. It is and it has been a catalyst for Marseille to rebuild its image and stature in France and in Europe and the ECOC bid fits with the broader perspective of the urban transformation of the metropolis.

*ECOC 2013 in a long term strategy of urban transformation and city “reimageenering”*

2013 ECOC has been positioned as a major financial and economic catalyst for the city to pursue its strategy of urban regeneration and more particularly culture-led regeneration. It is

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.euromediterranee.fr/>

significant of how the label has been used within broader regeneration strategies in previous industrial cities such as Glasgow in 1990 or Liverpool in 2008 (Garcia, 2004; 2005). In France, Marseille is the second city, after Lille in 2004, whose bid (and generally speaking cultural activities / events) has been positioned as a catalyst for economic growth and city competitiveness (Miles and Paddison, 2005, Evans, 2001; Hall, 2000, Verwijnen and Lehtovuori, 1999). The expectations of the local authorities towards the economic outputs of the scheme are indeed pretty high; the event should lead to a noticeable increase of the number of tourists and a significant return on investment (one euro invested in the project will generate 6 Euros of income). Marseille is also betting on the long term inputs of the scheme and its capacity to foster its strategy of “reimageenering” (Paddinson, 1993) thanks to *Euroméditerranée*.

*Euroméditerranée* and Marseille 2013 are even more connected as ECOC has also be an “electroshock” (Gauthier, 2009) to secure the realization of key facilities in particular the MUCEM which was in stand-by mode due to a lack of national funding. Moreover, both strategies go in tandem with other projects currently launched or supported by the City Council: the extension of the public transport network (tram and metro), the creation of a new semi-pedestrian space on the historical waterfront (Vieux Port”), and the requalification of the main shopping mall (Centre Bourse).

All these high-profile projects and events aim to contribute to the upgrading of the image of the city to further attract potential investors and tourists. They indeed testify of the integrated regeneration strategy built in this regard in Marseille but also raise several concerns as the success of the ECOC scheme relies not only on the mobilization of Marseille but of Marseille Provence urban area. Nevertheless this integrated regeneration strategy offers also the opportunity of developing a more coherent culture-led regeneration policy where alternative cultural initiatives are given a major focus.

### **3 – The recognition of alternative cultural initiatives in the galvanisation of the ECOC bid**

*Towards a more coherent policy of cultural regeneration?*

The combination of *Euroméditerranée* and Marseille 2013 offers the opportunity of promoting a more coherent policy of culture-led-regeneration which has up to now been secondary within *Euroméditerranée*. Even if culture has been acknowledged as a key area of action of the project, the investments of the EPAEM towards culture were for instance limited, especially in relation to creative industries (Media Park of la Belle de Mai). More attention was given to housing and office redevelopments. Consequently, the program ECOC might be a way to promote a better coherence between different cultural projects more or less isolated currently within the cultural policy of the City Council and the regeneration plan. In particular, it offers the opportunity of acknowledging and reinforcing the role of a panel of non conventional artistic experiences which have played a decisive role in the regeneration of the city and the galvanization of the ECOC bid.

Several projects including la *Cité des Arts de la Rue* and especially *La Friche de la Belle de Mai* have been valorized in the ECOC application as key resources, privileged poles (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008) while they were already considered as innovative experiences in the cultural policy of the City Council since the mid-1990's. Both are significant of how Marseille, in the eighties offered available and cheap underused or derelict lands for artists. They are also the symbols of how specific experimentations undertaken before any other kind of regeneration policy thanks to local and initially marginal political support have been a catalyst for redevelopment.

### *La Cité des Arts de la Rue*

The *Cité des Arts de la Rue* (Street Arts Community) is an experimental and developmental space for street arts - the first one in France - comprising different companies: the *Ateliers Sud Side* (a workshop for the creation of performance constructions and an associative motorbike garage), the *FAI AR* (France's first higher education Arts programme), *Générik Vapeur* (an international street art company), *Karwan* (a hub centre in charge of the development and the distribution of street arts and circus arts), *Lézarap'art* (a group promoting local cultural actions), *Lieux Publics* (the National Centre for the Creation of Street Art) and *Théâtres Acrobatiques* (a creation and training space for acrobat actors). Due to open in 2011, *La Cité des Arts de la Rue* will hold in 2013 different events and workshops as well as being used as a space for rehearsal and storage.

Please insert Figure 3 : *La Cité des Arts de la Rue* : a space of work and experimentation (Andres, 2010)

This project of a Street Arts Community was launched in the beginning of the nineties when two street art companies met. The first one was *Lieux Public* and its director, Michel Crespin, who left Paris in 1992 for the southern part of France. The second one was *Generik Vapeurs* who in the late eighties settled in derelict slaughterhouses in the northern part of Marseille. For financial and artistic reasons, the two companies started to build this project of street art community. From 1995, while both were still working in separate derelict areas, they presented their project to local authorities and regional representatives from the Ministry of culture (DRAC PACA: *Direction Régionale des affaires culturelles Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur*) and gained their support; then they started to prospect for suitable places within the city. In order to strengthen their project, the association for the promotion of the street arts community (APCAR) was created in 1998. The same year, the construction of the Community was assisted by a convention between the City Council, the Region and the State. However despite these significant political supports from various urban authorities, the realization of the Community didn't start before 2007.

A derelict oil factory located in the northern part of Marseille (15<sup>th</sup> arrondissement) was bought in 1999 by the City Council thanks to urban policy funding (the factory was part of the perimeter of the *Grand Project Urbain*). An architectural competition was launched in 2001 and the first works finally began in 2007 while the *Cité des Arts de la Rue* was already

occupied by some of the street art companies. The long but nevertheless successful process characterizing the *Cité des Arts de la Rue* is a proof of the interest given to such artistic practices by urban authorities especially as this place is clearly a space for production and experimentation and not a place of representation. *La Cité des Arts de la Rue* is considered from the mid-1990's as an innovative experience within the cultural landscape of Marseille. However, on the contrary to *La Friche* its role within a strategy of culture-led regeneration has been minor and might potentially increase within the perspective of Marseille Provence 2013.

#### *La Friche de la Belle de Mai*

*La Friche* is the most well-known example of regeneration of a derelict plant into an innovative and alternative cultural space in France. It is labeled as one of the main alternative cultural places in France (Lextrait, 2001), head representative of the "new artistic territories". From far, it is one of the key flagship facilities of ECOC 2013, as "a hub of creativity representing an urban community whilst still maintaining its status as a cultural incubator" (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008). By 2013, in addition to the existing facilities already available (auditoriums, workshops, restaurant, sport complex), *La Friche* will also include living quarters for visiting artists and operators and inhabitants of all origins and a vocational training institution for performing arts (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008). In the application its international recognition has been extensively marketed and one of its key principles of development (i.e. a cultural project for an urban project, SFT, 1997) has also been used to entitle one of the workshops of the Mediterranean (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008). In addition, the offices of the selection committee are located at *La Friche* thus used at a platform for the organization of the event. Now on the contrary to *La Cité des Arts de la Rue*, *La Friche* has already previously played a crucial role in the regeneration of Marseille. Above being considered as a fundamental facility in the ECOC application, it has also been a catalyst for the regeneration and the cultural revival of the city as well as a flagship project for *Euroméditerranée* (Andres, 2008).

Please insert Figure 4 : "*La Friche de la Belle de Mai*" (Andres, 2009)

*La Friche* is an old tobacco factory whose activity ceased in 1990 (see figure 4). As the owner of the company didn't manage to sell immediately the manufacture due to an unattractive property market, he approved its reuse by cultural actors and artists. The following were supported by the City Council (particularly by the deputy major responsible for cultural policies) who bet on the capacity of cultural activities to fight against the impact of economic, social and demographic decline (Peraldi, Samson, 2005). One of the objectives of this strategy was to reuse brownfields lands thanks to temporary cultural activities to counter the negative impacts of derelict lands, i.e. social and spatial marginalization. Cultural actors and artists approached by the City Council occupied in the factory in 1991 and gathered in an association *Système Friche Théâtre* (SFT). From a temporary initiative, *La Friche* rapidly evolved towards a sustainable project perceived as a key reference, one of the most

innovative project in Marseille (Ville de Marseille, 1997).

SFT built and conducted its own model of development qualified as “alternative economic culture” (Foulquie, 1996) leading to its key strategy of development: “*a cultural project for an urban project*” (Système Friche Théâtre, 1996). *La Friche* thanks to various events and the mobilization of key personalities (for example the architect Jean Nouvel who became president of *La Friche* from 1996 to 2002) quickly gained a local, national and international political, cultural and media reputation (Achmy, 1993; Bedarida, 1996, Buob, 1995; Samson, 1997). In 1995, while the use of flagship facilities was considered as a necessity for the launching of *Euroméditerranée*, *La Friche* was inserted in *Euroméditerranée* with the two other units of the factory as a cultural catalyst (EPAEM, DIDEM, 1997). By giving the EPAEM an existing high profile project, it also enabled him to launch the new economic sector of cultural industries in the second unit of the factory. This media park centre (multimedia, audiovisual, entertainment engineering) holding audiovisual studios, installations for multimedia technical industries and office space for producers, editors and distributors is used in the ECOC application as the core element of the creative sector in Marseille.

Since its insertion in *Euroméditerranée*, *La Friche* has benefited from a progressive renewal of the factory and its legal status has evolved towards a much more sustainable status. It became the first cultural SCIC (Co-operative Company of Collective Interest) in France in 2007; the company is the legal tenant of the unit for 40 years, free to manage and develop its property. This innovative and singular configuration has been galvanized in the ECOC programme and it explains the central and mixed role given to *La Friche* in 2013. Within the broader perspective of urban and cultural regeneration, the evolution of *La Friche* have fostered some alternative process of governance giving SFT a status of cultural intermediaries with a predominant role in the urban transformation of Marseille (Andres, 2008, Andres, forthcoming). However it has also created some tensions amongst cultural actors and artists as only a few of them are able to gain such attention.

Consequently, the use of *La Cité des Arts de la Rue* and of *La Friche* highlights a very strategic use of a couple of cultural facilities in the ECOC scheme as well as within the longer strategy and urban and cultural regeneration of Marseille. It emphasizes also the specificity of a certain number of collectives of artists who managed to penetrate the governance process thanks to the quality of their initial project, their internal structure and credibility towards other actors, their ability to communicate, negotiate with and convince decision makers of their strategic use of networks (Andres, forthcoming). While ECOC offers a definitive recognition to alternative cultural space in Marseille Provence 2013 it also fosters the resentment of smaller cultural companies or spaces that tend to feel excluded from these big scheme of cultural development.

**Conclusion: Marseille 2013 versus Marseille Provence 2013**

It's been one year since Marseille has been selected as 2013 ECOC. Whereas ECOC is offering Marseille new opportunities from which its global strategy of reimagegenering and regeneration of the city is going to benefit from, it is also currently raising a couple of concerns in addition to the impacts of the current economic context.

As any other metropolis, Marseille has been affected by the economic crisis and particularly several projects that are part of *Euroméditerranée* have been put on stand-by or even reconsidered. Marseille has also suffered from the decision of the government to reduce the cultural funding given to cultural facilities and the difficulty of urban authorities to compensate these losses. The pressure related to the on-time completion of a certain number of facilities on which ECOC sits has nevertheless enabled a reconfiguration of certain developments. As *Euroméditerranée* and 2013 ECOC rest upon a renewed image of the city and its waterfront, a new skyline was expected comprising initially four high rise buildings. The recent credit crunch led to a minimization of the objectives as finally only 3 towers are going to be built (one being almost completed already). Alterations have also been made in the nature and financial scheme of certain projects (for example *Les Terrasses du Port*). In addition, while the government decided to participate to the building of the MUCEM, they nevertheless reduced their support to other cultural facilities, which are part of ECOC. Some of the smallest such as the theatre *Toursky* denounced in 2009 their difficulties and even their impossibility to face such additional financial charges. Other facilities such as the museum in the *Palais Longchamps* or the regional centre for the Mediterranean are also suffering from a lack of funding from local, regional, and national authorities. In regard to these difficulties, fears are addressed towards the respects of the deadlines for the completion of some of the key facilities of ECOC and concerns are being already raised for the MUCEM whose construction might not be achieved by the beginning of 2013 (Deroubaix, 2010; O B., 2010; Thézan, 2009).

These difficulties are even more relevant as the political consortium of Marseille Provence is currently put to the test. Major difficulties appear in generating the 98 million Euros necessary for the scheme from the various local partners. These delays obviously impact the start of the preparation of the workshop of *Euroméditerranée* and rest upon the historic tensions between the different communes which have come to light again. These tensions refer also to the attention given to Marseille, generating a certain lack of commitment for the other communes not so urgently in the need of using ECOC as an economic catalyst. But actually should ECOC really answer to the fundamental objectives that are addressed in Marseille?

As pointed out by Mooney (2004, p.327) regarding the case of Glasgow, these kinds of events can do little but gloss over and divert attention away from the major structural problems which characterize many ex-industrial cities. It is clearly within the action of *Euroméditerranée* and the other urban policies that answers might eventually be found for the renaissance of Marseille as ECOC is definitively not a policy for the socio-economic recovery of the city. However these policies are already acknowledged for their moderate

impacts, especially on the poorest population.

Moreover, aiming towards the ambition of developing “*cultural life as a platform for the renewal of the city, for a collective quality of life and for better ways of living together*” (Marseille Provence 2013, 2008, p.5), very high cultural expectations are given to the scheme but we need to be aware of its limits. Not all cultural actors and artists will be part of the event and are currently claiming so. Of course, proposing all local talents is not the goal of ECOC. Nevertheless as mentioned by Jones and Wilks-Heeg (2004) authorities need to be aware or to pay attention to the fact that such strategies that tend to prioritize tourists over and above residents (Eisinger, 2000) and that involve the re-definition and even the attempted eradication of local cultures (Paddison, 1993; Mitchell, 2000) have frequently served to foster significant tensions between local elites and local residents.

Finally, as regards again to the case of Glasgow (Garcia, 2005), one of the challenges of Marseille will be to respond to the long term strategy of urban and cultural regeneration both at the scale of the city and the metropolitan area. Particular attention should be given to local communities so as not to create with the ECOC an event of excellence that is segregationist and particularly disconnected from local needs, reproducing the tendency of *Euroméditerranée* and its “*facilities of excellence*” (Bertoncello, Malta, 2001).

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