



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 20.7.2012  
COM(2012) 407 final

2012/0199 (COD)

Proposal for a

**DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE  
COUNCIL establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the  
years 2020 to 2033**

{SWD(2012) 226 final}

## EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

### **1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL**

The European Capitals of Culture were created in 1985 as an intergovernmental initiative. They were transformed officially into a European Union action in 1999 in order to make the initiative more effective. New criteria and selection procedures were established, a chronological list of Member States was drawn up indicating the order in which they were entitled to host the title, and a European panel of independent experts was created to assess the applications (Decision N° 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019). The rules were renewed in 2006 in order to develop the effectiveness of the initiative further by stimulating competition between the cities and fostering the quality of the bids. These new rules also introduced various measures to accompany the cities in their preparation, including a monitoring process (Decision N° 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019).

Decision N° 1622/2006/EC will end in 2019. The competition for the title is currently launched six years in advance in order to give the cities sufficient time for their preparation before the beginning of the year of the title. Therefore, the new legal base for the continuation of the European Capitals of Culture should be adopted in 2013 in order to ensure a smooth transition in 2020.

### **2. EVALUATIONS, CONSULTATIONS WITH THE INTERESTED PARTIES AND COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT**

The Commission's work on the proposal for the European Capitals of Culture after 2019 has been based on broad range of inputs.

Since 2007, the Commission ensures the external and independent evaluation of each European Capital of Culture. So far the 2007-2010 Capitals were evaluated and the 2011 evaluation is underway. Previously the 1995 – 2004 European Capitals of Culture had been evaluated externally in a single report. The Commission also commissioned an evaluation of the selection and monitoring procedures introduced by Decision N° 1622/2006/EC.

An online consultation was carried out between 27 October 2010 and 12 January 2011 and 212 responses were received. This online consultation was followed by a public meeting which took place in Brussels on 2 March 2011 and was attended by more than 200 people including a large majority of representatives of public authorities and organisations.

Important inputs in the reflection on the future of the European Capitals of Culture were also provided by the own initiative report adopted by the Committee of the Regions in February 2012 and by the 25th anniversary conference of the European Capitals of Culture organised in Brussels in March 2010 and which gathered more than 50 past, present and future Capitals or bidding cities and 500 participants.

It is important to note that on all the key issues there was a broad convergence between the evidence and data collected through the evaluations on the one hand and the views expressed

during the consultation process on the other hand. This enabled the Commission to draw a number of important lessons for the future of the European Capitals of Culture.

There is a large consensus that the Capitals are a highly successful action, as well as a very strong support for their continuation after 2019. It clearly emerges that they have become one of the most ambitious cultural initiatives in Europe, both in scope and scale. They have also become one of the most visible and prestigious initiatives of the Union and probably one of the most appreciated by European citizens.

The European Capitals of Cultural can bring many benefits to cities when they are planned with consideration. They remain first and foremost a cultural event, but they can also have significant social and economic benefits, particularly when the event is embedded as part of a long-term culture led development strategy in the city and its surrounding region. It should also be noted that although only one city in each Member State can host the event in any given year, the competition has an important leverage effect on the development of new or more effective policies and strategies even in cities which do not win the title.

However, the European Capitals of Culture are also highly challenging. Staging a year long programme of cultural activities is demanding and some Capitals have been more successful than others in capitalising on the potential of the title. The main challenge for the future will therefore be to build on the strengths of the current scheme, while at the same time helping each single Capital to fully exploit the potential of the title and to optimise the cultural, economic and social benefits.

On the basis of the results of the evaluations and of the public consultation, the Commission identified the five main problems faced by cities in their preparation for the title:

- The most common difficulty so far has been the effect of national and local politics on the budgets, which need to be as stable as possible between the bidding and final stages, as well as the impact of politics on other aspects of the organisation of the event. Political support is fundamental as most of the funds are public, and without it a city cannot have a credible bid, but at the same time the implementing team needs its artistic independence to be respected in order to protect the credibility of the event.
- The evaluations have also shown that in some of the past Capitals, the European dimension was not well understood and could have been more visible.
- Several cities have failed to embed the title in a longer-term strategy and have struggled as a consequence to ensure the legacy of the title in the city.
- There is still a lack of measurement mechanisms put in place by the cities themselves and thus of primary data on the impacts of the title. This makes a comparison between the Capitals difficult and weakens the transfer of experience.
- Finally, many Member States have already hosted the title on several occasions and some of them only have a limited number of realistic candidates for a large scale event such as the European Capitals of Culture. Hosting the title could have strong negative effects on a city which has too limited capacities and selecting weak Capitals would risk damaging the prestige and brand value of the European Capitals of Culture in the long term.

On this basis, three options were tested for the future of the European Capitals of Culture after 2019:

- (1) continuing the action with an identical legal base to the current Decision to which simply a new chronological list of Member States is annexed;
- (2) stopping the action;
- (3) continuing the action with a new legal base which addresses the problems encountered with the current Decision. For this third option, two sub-options were tested:
  - (3a) a new chronological list of Member States is annexed;
  - (3b) the title is awarded on the basis of an open competition.

The various cultural, economic, social and environmental impacts were examined for each option. The options were then assessed and ranked according to their effectiveness in terms of achieving the objectives of the European Capitals of Culture, their efficiency, their costs and administrative burden, their coherence with broader Union political objectives and their synergies and complementarities with other Union objectives, and their feasibility.

The option with the most positive overall assessment is option 3a, namely a new legal base with a chronological list of Member States. This option scored higher than all other options and was ranked as the preferred option.

The main results of the evaluations and of the public consultation, as well as the logical steps followed for the comparison of the options are summarized in the Commission Staff Working Document which is accompanying the present proposal.

### **3. LEGAL ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL**

The European Capitals of Culture are based on article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This article gives the EU the mandate to "contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore". The Union shall also encourage "cooperation between Member States" in the field of culture and "if necessary, support and supplement their action".

In line with article 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, under the new Decision the official designation of the European Capitals of Culture formalising the recommendations made by the European panel of independent experts should be made by the Commission.

The proposal is in keeping with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. The main level of action for the implementation of the European Capitals of Culture remains at local and national level. However, the evaluations and the public consultation have shown that the Union has a crucial role to play in the coordination between Member States and in ensuring the application of common, clear and transparent criteria, as well as regarding selection and monitoring procedures for the European Capitals of Culture. The Union will also support the preparation of the selected cities through the recommendations of the European panel of

experts, the exchange of best practices between cities and a financial contribution in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize.

#### **4. BUDGETARY IMPLICATION**

As was already the case under Decision N° 1622/2006/EC, the Commission's proposal has no direct budgetary implication.

The period covered by the proposal will coincide with several multi annual financial frameworks. For the 2014-2020 financial framework, the financial aspects in relation to the European Capitals of Culture, including the Melina Mercouri Prize, the costs of the European panel of experts, the visibility of the action at European level and the human resources needed within the Commission to support the action, will be dealt with in the framework of the Creative Europe Programme.

For the years after 2020, the legal and financial aspects of the European Capitals of Culture will be directly linked to the provisions included in the future multi annual financial frameworks, and on this basis, they should also be dealt with in the framework of the respective Union programmes supporting culture.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF THE DECISION**

On the basis of the results of the evaluations and of the public consultation, the proposal for the European Capitals of Culture after 2019 retains the main features and general structure of the current scheme:

- The title will continue to be awarded on the basis of a chronological list of Member States. Such a rotating system proved to be the only system which ensured an equal opportunity for each Member State to host the title and a geographical balance in the location of the European Capitals of Culture, and hence the opportunity for the Union to highlight the diversity of European cultures and for the public across Europe to experience the event close to home.
- The title will continue to be reserved to cities. Cities will also continue to have the possibility to involve their surrounding region in order to reach a wider public and amplify the impacts, however past experience has shown that the clear leadership of one city is a key success factor.
- The attribution of the title will continue to be based on a cultural programme created specifically for the year of the title in order to foster a strong European dimension.
- The two stage selection process carried out by a European panel of independent experts has proven to be fair and transparent and will be kept. It enabled in particular cities to improve their applications between the pre-selection and the final selection phase on the basis of expert advice received from the panel.
- The title will continue to be awarded for a full year to keep it distinctive and ambitious.

At the same time, a number of improvements are proposed in order to address the problems encountered with the current Decision and to help all cities to make the most of the title. The main changes introduced by the new legal base are the following:

- The criteria have been made more explicit in order to give more guidance to the candidate cities and more measurable in order to help the panel of experts in the selection and monitoring of cities. A special attention was paid to optimise the potential leverage effect of the initiative on stimulating long-term local culture led development strategies, to ensure the capacity of candidate cities to actually host the title, to boost the European dimension and visibility of the cultural programmes, to ensure the high quality of the cultural and artistic content, to foster a large participation of the local populations and to try to ensure the stability of the budgets and the independence of the artistic teams.
- The conditionality of the Melina Mercouri Prize has been reinforced. Furthermore, the Prize will no longer be paid three months before the beginning of the year of the title, but during the middle of the year itself in order to be certain that cities keep to their commitments regarding in particular funding, programming and Union visibility.
- It is stated explicitly that the European panel is not obliged to give a positive recommendation if none of the bids fulfils the criteria.
- The accompanying measures which support the cities during the preparation period after winning the title have been strengthened in order to provide further support and guidance to the cities. An additional monitoring meeting has been introduced, visits to the cities by panel members will be more systematic and the exchange of experience and best practices between past, present and future Capitals, as well as candidate cities will be reinforced.
- New evaluation obligations were introduced for the cities themselves in order to have a more comprehensive view of the impacts of the title and to provide comparable data.
- Finally, it is proposed to open the action again to the participation of candidate and potential candidate countries after 2019, as was the case until 2010. The experience among others of Sibiu 2007 and Istanbul 2010 has shown that this can be beneficial both for these countries and the Union.

Proposal for a

**DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL**

**establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033**

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 167 (5), first indent, thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national Parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions<sup>1</sup>,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure,

Whereas:

- (1) The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) aims at an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe and confers on the Union the task, *inter alia*, of contributing to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. In this respect, the Union, where necessary, supports and supplements Member States' action to improve the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples.
- (2) The Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world<sup>2</sup>, endorsed by the Council in Resolution of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture<sup>3</sup> sets the objectives for future activities of the Union in the field of culture. These activities should promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. They should also promote culture as a catalyst for creativity within the framework of growth and jobs, as well as a vital element in the Union's international relations.

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ C , , p. .

<sup>2</sup> COM(2007) 242 final

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1.

- (3) Decision N° 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 established a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019<sup>4</sup>.
- (4) The evaluations of the European Capitals of Culture as well as the public consultation on the future of the action after 2019 reveal that the Capitals have progressively become one of the most ambitious cultural initiatives in Europe as well as one of the most appreciated by European citizens.
- (5) In addition to the original objectives of the European Capitals of Culture which were to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share and to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens, cities holding the title have also progressively added a new dimension by using the leverage effect of the title to stimulate the city's more general development.
- (6) These objectives are fully in line with the objectives of the Creative Europe Programme<sup>5</sup> which aims to promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and to strengthen the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, with a view to supporting smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- (7) The evaluations and the public consultation have demonstrated that the European Capitals of Culture have many potential benefits when they are planned with consideration. They remain first and foremost a cultural initiative, but they can also have significant social and economic benefits, particularly when they are embedded as part of a long-term culture led development strategy in the city.
- (8) The European Capitals of Culture are also highly challenging. Staging a year long programme of cultural activities is demanding and some Capitals have been more successful than others in capitalising on the potential. Therefore, the action should be reinforced in order to help all cities to make the most of the title.
- (9) The European Capital of Culture title should continue to be reserved to cities, but in order to reach a wider public and amplify the impacts, these cities should also continue to have the possibility to involve their surrounding region.
- (10) The award of the title of European Capital of Culture should continue to be based on a cultural programme created specifically for the European Capital of Culture year and which should have a very strong European dimension, but this programme must be part of a longer-term strategy.
- (11) The two stage selection process based on a chronological list of Member States and carried out by a European panel of independent experts has proven to be fair and transparent. It has enabled cities to improve their applications between the pre-selection and the final selection phase on the basis of expert advice received from the panel, and ensured an equitable distribution of Capitals across all Member States.
- (12) The selection criteria should be more explicit in order to give more guidance to the candidate cities and more measurable in order to help the panel of experts in the

---

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 304, 3.11.2006, P. 1.

<sup>5</sup> COM(2011) 785 final



selection and monitoring of cities. They should in particular reinforce the legacy of the title by rewarding cities which have developed a long-term cultural policy strategy.

- (13) The preparation phase between the designation of a city and the year of the title is of crucial importance for the success of a European Capital of Culture. There is a large consensus among stakeholders that the accompanying measures introduced by Decision N° 1622/2006/EC have been very useful for the cities. These measures should be further developed in particular through more frequent monitoring meetings and visits to the cities by panel members, and through an even stronger exchange of experience between past, present and future Capitals, as well as candidate cities.
- (14) The Melina Mercouri Prize has acquired a strong symbolic value which goes far beyond the actual amount of the prize which may be awarded by the Commission. However, in order to ensure that the designated cities fulfil their commitments, the conditions for payment of the prize should be made more stringent and explicit.
- (15) It is important that the cities make clear in all their communication material that the European Capitals of Culture are an initiative of the Union.
- (16) The Commission's evaluations of the results of past European Capitals of Culture cannot provide primary data on the impact of the title and are based on data collected at a local level. Therefore, the cities themselves should be the key players in the evaluation process and should put in place effective measurement mechanisms.
- (17) The experience of Sibiu 2007 and Istanbul 2010, among others, has shown that the participation of candidate countries can contribute to bring them closer to the Union by highlighting the common aspects of European cultures. The European Capitals of Culture should therefore be open again to the participation of candidate and potential candidate countries after 2019.
- (18) In order to ensure uniform conditions for the implementation of this Decision and, in particular, the provisions concerning the designation of the European Capitals of Culture, implementing powers should be conferred on the Commission.
- (19) Decision 1622/2006/EC should be repealed and replaced by this Decision. Its provisions should however continue to apply for all the European Capitals of Culture up to 2019 which were already designated or are in the process of being designated.
- (20) Since the objectives of this Decision cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States by reason of the need, in particular, for common, clear and transparent criteria and procedures for the selection and the monitoring of the European Capitals of Culture, as well as for a strong coordination between the Member States, and can therefore be better achieved at Union level, the Union may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in article 5 of the Treaty on European Union. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that article, this Decision does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

*Article 1*

**Subject matter**

This Decision establishes a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033

*Article 2*

**Objectives**

1. The general objectives of the action shall be the following:
  - (a) to safeguard and promote the diversity of European cultures, and to highlight the common features they share;
  - (b) to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities.
2. The specific objectives of the action shall be the following:
  - (a) to enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offer in cities, including through transnational co-operation;
  - (b) to widen access to and participation in culture;
  - (c) to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its connectivity with other sectors;
  - (d) to improve the international profile of cities through culture.

*Article 3*

**Access to the action**

1. Cities in Member States shall be entitled to be designated as European Capitals of Culture for one year, in the order set out in the Annex.

The designation shall apply to a maximum of one city in each of the Member States appearing in the list.
2. Where a country accedes to the Union after the adoption of the present Decision, the list referred to in the annex shall be updated accordingly. Thus the cities in this country shall be entitled to be designated as European Capitals of Culture according to the same rules and procedures as for other Member States.

However, as the competition for the title shall start six years before the beginning of the year of the title in order to give the cities sufficient time for their preparation after

their designation, the list shall not be updated in the case of countries acceding to the Union after 31 December 2026.

Where a city of the acceding country has already been designated as European Capital of Culture during the period from 2020 to 2033 under the rules and procedures for candidate and potential candidate countries as laid down in paragraph 3, the list shall not be updated.

3. Cities in candidate and potential candidate countries shall also have the possibility to apply for the European Capital of Culture title in the framework of an open competition organised every third year in parallel with the competitions in the two Member States, in accordance with the calendar in the annex.

The specific provisions for cities in candidate and potential candidate countries are laid down in Article 10.

#### *Article 4*

### **Applications**

1. The competition for the European Capital of Culture title shall only be open to cities. Candidate cities may involve their surrounding regions. However, the applications shall be made under the name of the leading city and, if selected, the title will be awarded to this city.
2. A common application form based on the criteria laid down in Article 5 shall be prepared by the Commission and used by all candidate cities.
3. Every application shall be based on a cultural programme with a strong European dimension. This programme shall last one year and shall be created specifically for the European Capital of Culture title, in accordance with the criteria in Article 5. It must however be embedded in a long term strategy for cultural development in the city.

#### *Article 5*

### **Criteria**

The criteria for the assessment of the applications are divided into six categories: "long-term strategy", "capacity to deliver", "cultural and artistic content", "European dimension", "outreach" and "management":

1. As regards the "long-term strategy", the following factors shall be assessed:
  - (a) the strategy for the cultural development of the city that is in place at the time of the application, including the plans for cultural governance, and sustaining cultural activities beyond the year of the title;
  - (b) the plans to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector;

- (c) the plans to strengthen the long term links between the cultural sector and the economic and social sectors in the city;
  - (d) the envisaged long-term cultural, social and economic effects that the title would have on the city;
  - (e) the plans for the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the title on the city.
2. As regards the "capacity to deliver", the candidate cities shall demonstrate that:
- (a) the application has cross-party political support;
  - (b) the city has or will have adequate and viable infrastructure to host the title.
3. As regards the "cultural and artistic content", the following factors shall be assessed:
- (a) a clear and coherent artistic vision for the cultural programme of the year;
  - (b) the involvement of local artists and cultural organisations in the conception and implementation of the cultural programme;
  - (c) the range and diversity of the activities proposed and their overall artistic quality;
  - (d) the capacity to combine local cultural heritage and traditional art forms with new, innovative and experimental cultural expressions.
4. As regards the "European dimension", the following factors shall be assessed:
- (a) the scope and quality of activities promoting the cultural diversity of Europe;
  - (b) the scope and quality of activities highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, heritage and history, as well as European integration;
  - (c) the scope and quality of activities featuring European artists, co-operation with operators or cities in different countries, and transnational partnerships;
  - (d) the strategy to attract the interest of a broad European public.
5. As regards "outreach", the following factors shall be assessed:
- (a) the involvement of the local population and civil society in the preparation of the application and the implementation of the European Capital of Culture;
  - (b) the creation of new and sustainable opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural activities, in particular young people and the marginalised and disadvantaged, including minorities. Special attention shall also be given, wherever possible, to the accessibility of these activities to persons with disabilities and the elderly;
  - (c) the overall strategy for audience development, and in particular the link with education and the participation of schools.

6. As regards "management", the following factors shall be assessed:
  - (a) the feasibility of the proposed budget. This budget shall cover the preparation phase, the year of the title in itself and provisions for the legacy activities;
  - (b) the envisaged governance structure and delivery body for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture;
  - (c) the appointment procedure of the artistic director and his/her field of action;
  - (d) the communication strategy, that shall be comprehensive and shall highlight that the European Capitals of Culture are an initiative of the Union.

#### *Article 6*

#### **European panel**

1. A European panel of independent experts ("European panel") shall be established to carry out the selection and monitoring procedures.
2. The European panel shall consist of 10 members. They shall be citizens of the Union. They shall be independent experts with substantial experience and expertise in the cultural sector, in the cultural development of cities or in the organisation of a European Capital of Culture. They shall also be able to devote an appropriate number of working days per year to the European panel.

The Commission shall pre-select a pool of potential panel members following the organisation of a call for expression of interest. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall subsequently select three experts each from this pool and appoint them in accordance with their respective procedures. The Committee of the Regions shall select one expert and appoint him/her in accordance with its procedures.

Each institution and body shall seek to ensure that the competences of the experts it appoints are as complementary as possible, and that those experts are drawn from a balanced geographical spectrum.

The European panel shall designate its chairperson.

3. The members of the European panel shall be appointed for a period of three years. However, by way of derogation as regards the first panel to be established under the present Decision, the European Parliament shall appoint its three experts for three years, the Council for one year, the Commission for two years and the Committee of the Regions shall appoint its expert for one year in order to enable a staggered replacement of panel members and thus to avoid the loss of experience and know-how which would result if all members were replaced simultaneously.
4. The members of the European panel shall declare any actual or potential conflict of interest in respect of a specific candidate city. In the event of such a declaration by a member, or if such a conflict of interest comes to light, that member shall not participate in the selection procedure for the Member State concerned or, where

appropriate , in the selection procedure for candidate or potential candidate countries. The member concerned shall not be replaced for this procedure and the selection shall be carried out by the remaining members of the European panel.

5. All reports of the European panel shall be made public on the Commission website.

#### *Article 7*

##### **Submission of applications in the Member States**

1. Each Member State shall be responsible for the organisation of the competition between its cities in accordance with the calendar in the annex.
2. The Member States shall publish a call for submission of applications six years before the beginning of the year of the title.

Each call for submission of applications, aimed at the candidate cities for the title, shall use the common application form referred to in Article 4(2).

The deadline for submitting applications under each call for submission of applications shall be scheduled 10 months after its publication.

3. Applications shall be notified to the Commission by the Member State concerned.

#### *Article 8*

##### **Pre-selection in the Member States**

1. Each of the Member States concerned shall convene the European panel for a pre-selection meeting with the candidate cities five years before the beginning of the year of the title.
2. The European panel shall assess the applications according to the criteria set out in Article 5. It shall agree on a short-list of candidate cities which are to be considered further and issue a report on the applications of all the candidate cities and recommendations to the short-listed candidate cities.
3. The European panel shall submit its report to the Member State concerned and to the Commission. Each of the Member States concerned shall formally approve the short-list based on the report of the panel.

#### *Article 9*

##### **Selection in the Member States**

1. The short-listed candidate cities shall complete their applications according to the criteria and the recommendations issued by the panel during its pre-selection meeting and transmit them to the Member States concerned, which shall then forward them to the Commission.

2. Each of the Member States concerned shall convene the European panel for a final selection meeting with the short-listed candidate cities nine months after the pre-selection meeting.
3. The European panel shall evaluate the completed applications.
4. The European panel shall issue a report on the applications with a recommendation for the nomination of one city in the Member State concerned as European Capital of Culture. However, if none of the candidate cities fulfils the criteria, the European panel may recommend not to award the title that year.

The report shall also contain recommendations to the recommended city concerning the progress to be made by the year of the title.

The report shall be submitted to the Member State concerned and to the Commission. It shall be published on the Commission website.

### *Article 10*

#### **Provisions concerning candidate and potential candidate countries**

1. The Commission shall be responsible for the organisation of the competition between cities in candidate and potential candidate countries.
2. The Commission shall publish in the Official Journal of the European Union a call for submission of applications six years before the beginning of the year of the title. This call shall be open to cities in all candidate and potential candidate countries, provided that these countries participate in the Creative Europe Programme or in the subsequent Union programmes supporting culture at the date of the publication of the call.

However, for reasons of equity with the cities in the Member States, every city shall only be allowed to participate in one competition for cities in candidate and potential candidate countries during the period from 2020 to 2033, and it shall not be possible for a city which participated in such a competition to participate in any subsequent competition in a new Member State under the rules laid down in Article 3(2) during that same period.

Furthermore, also for reasons of equity with Member States, each candidate country or potential candidate country shall only be allowed to host the title once during the period from 2020 to 2033. Therefore, cities from countries which were already awarded the title shall not be allowed to participate in the subsequent competitions during that same period.

3. The conditions laid down in Article 4 and the criteria laid down in Article 5 shall apply for candidate and potential candidate countries.
4. The pre-selection of the cities shall be carried out by the European panel five years before the beginning of the year of the title, on the basis of the written application forms referred to in Article 4(2) only. No meeting with the candidate cities will be organised.

The European panel shall assess the applications according to the criteria. It shall agree on a short-list of candidate cities which are to be considered further and issue a report on the applications of all the candidate cities and recommendations to the short-listed candidate cities. This report shall be submitted to the Commission and published on the Commission website.

5. The short-listed candidate cities shall complete their applications according to the criteria and the recommendations issued during the pre-selection and transmit them to the Commission.

The Commission shall convene the European panel for a final selection meeting with the shortlisted cities in Brussels, nine months after the pre-selection.

The European panel shall evaluate the completed applications.

It shall issue a report on the applications of the short-listed candidate cities together with a recommendation for the nomination of a maximum of one city in one candidate country or potential candidate country as European Capital of Culture. However, if none of the candidate cities fulfils the criteria, the European panel may recommend not to award the title that year.

The report shall also contain recommendations to the recommended city concerning the progress and the arrangements to be made by the year of the title.

The report shall be submitted to the Commission and published on the Commission website.

#### *Article 11*

### **Designation**

The Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, officially designate the European Capitals of Culture, having due regard to the recommendations of the European panel. The Commission shall inform the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions of its designation.

#### *Article 12*

### **Co-operation between the designated cities**

1. After their designation, the European Capitals of Culture of the same year shall seek to develop links between their cultural programmes.
2. The co-operation shall be assessed in the framework of the monitoring procedure as laid down in Article 13.

#### *Article 13*

### **Monitoring**



1. The European panel shall monitor the preparation of the European Capitals of Culture and provide the cities with support and guidance from the time of their designation to the beginning of the year of the title.
2. To this end, the Commission shall convene the European panel and the concerned cities to three meetings: the first meeting shall take place three years before the beginning of the year of the title; the second meeting shall take place eighteen months before the beginning of the year of the title and the third meeting shall take place two months before the beginning of the year of the title. The Member State or country concerned may nominate an observer to these meetings.

The cities shall issue progress reports to the Commission six weeks before each of the meetings.

During the meetings, the European panel shall take stock of the preparations and give advice with a view to helping the cities to develop a high-quality programme and an effective strategy. The panel shall pay special attention to the recommendations laid down in the selection report and in the preceding monitoring reports.

3. After each meeting, the European panel shall issue a report on the state of preparations and any steps to be taken.

The monitoring reports shall be forwarded to the Commission and to the cities and Member States or country concerned. They shall also be published on the Commission website.

4. In addition to the monitoring meetings, the Commission may organise visits of European panel members to the designated cities whenever necessary.

#### *Article 14*

##### **Prize**

1. The period covered by the present Decision will coincide with several multi annual financial frameworks. For each of these multiannual financial frameworks, the Commission shall examine the possibility to award a pecuniary Prize in honour of Melina Mercouri to the designated cities. The legal and financial aspects of this Prize shall be dealt with in the framework of the respective Union programmes supporting culture.
2. If the conditions laid down in Paragraph 1 are fulfilled and the Melina Mercouri Prize is awarded to a designated city, the Prize shall be paid no later than the end of June of the year of the title, provided that the city keeps to the commitments it made at the application stage and all the recommendations made by the European panel in the selection and monitoring reports were implemented.

The commitments made at the application stage shall be deemed kept by the designated city where no substantial change was made to the programme and strategy between the application stage and the year of the title, in particular:

- (a) the budget remained stable between the designation of the city and the beginning of the year of the title;
- (b) the independence of the artistic team was respected;
- (c) the European dimension remained sufficiently strong in the final version of the cultural programme;
- (d) the communication strategy and the communication material used by the city clearly reflect that the European Capitals of Culture are an initiative of the Union;
- (e) the plans for the monitoring and evaluation of the impacts of the title on the city are in place.

### *Article 15*

#### **Practical arrangements**

The Commission shall in particular:

- (a) ensure the overall coherence of the action;
- (b) ensure coordination between the Member States and the European panel;
- (c) in the light of the objectives and criteria, establish guidelines to assist with the selection and monitoring procedures in close cooperation with the European panel;
- (d) provide support to the European panel;
- (e) make public all relevant information and contribute to the visibility of the action at European level;
- (f) foster the exchange of experience and of best practices between past, present and future Capitals, as well as candidate cities.

### *Article 16*

#### **Evaluation**

1. The evaluation of the results of each European Capital of Culture shall be under the responsibility of the concerned city.

The Commission shall establish common guidelines and indicators for the cities based on the objectives and the criteria of the action in order to ensure a coherent approach to the evaluation procedure.

The cities shall send their evaluation reports to the Commission by 31 October of the year following the year of the title at the latest. The Commission shall publish these reports.

2. In addition to the cities' evaluations, the Commission shall also ensure an external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capitals of Culture on a regular basis. The Commission evaluations shall focus on putting all past Capitals in a European context, allowing for comparisons and drawing useful lessons for future Capitals, as well as all European cities.

These external and independent evaluations shall also assess the European Capitals of Culture action as a whole, including the efficiency of the processes involved in running the action, the impact of the action and how it could be improved.

The Commission shall present to the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions:

- (a) a first interim evaluation report not later than 31 December 2024;
- (b) a second interim evaluation report not later than 31 December 2029;
- (c) an ex-post evaluation report not later than 31 December 2034.

#### *Article 17*

#### **Repeal and transitional provisions**

Decision N° 1622/2006/EC is hereby repealed. It shall however continue to apply in the case of cities which have been designated or are in the process of being designated as European Capitals of Culture for the years from 2012 to 2019.

#### *Article 18*

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

*For the European Parliament*  
*The President*

*For the Council*  
*The President*

## ANNEX

### Order of entitlement to nominate a European Capital of Culture

<b>2020</b>	Croatia <sup>6</sup>	Ireland	Candidate or potential candidate country
<b>2021</b>	Romania	Greece	... <sup>7</sup>
<b>2022</b>	Lithuania	Luxembourg	
<b>2023</b>	Hungary	United Kingdom	Candidate or potential candidate country
<b>2024</b>	Estonia	Austria	
<b>2025</b>	Slovenia	Germany	
<b>2026</b>	Slovakia	Finland	Candidate or potential candidate country
<b>2027</b>	Latvia	Portugal	
<b>2028</b>	Czech Republic	France	
<b>2029</b>	Poland	Sweden	Candidate or potential candidate country
<b>2030</b>	Cyprus	Belgium	
<b>2031</b>	Malta	Spain	
<b>2032</b>	Bulgaria	Denmark	Candidate or potential candidate country
<b>2033</b>	Netherlands	Italy	

---

<sup>6</sup> Subject to its accession in 2013.

<sup>7</sup> The third column of the list referred to in the annex shall be updated if new countries accede to the Union after the adoption of the Decision. The order of their accession shall be respected. A minimum of six years shall be calculated between the date of the accession and the beginning of the year of the title in order to allow sufficient time for the selection and monitoring procedures. The maximum number of European Capitals of Culture in a given year shall not exceed three. If two or more countries accede to the Union at the same date and if no agreement on the order of participation can be reached between the countries concerned, the Council shall organise a draw.