

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

2012/0199(COD) - 20/07/2012 - Document attached to the procedure

The current legal base for the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) ([Decision 1622/2006/EC](#)) includes a **chronological list of Member States indicating the order in which they are entitled to host the event until 2019.**

The preparation time involved for preparing each ECoC (currently 6 years) and the time needed for the ordinary legislative procedure means that the Commission's proposal for a continuation of the ECoC should be adopted in 2012 in order to ensure a smooth transition in 2020.

The present Commission Services Working Document summarises the main results of DG EAC's reflection on the future of the ECoC.

The document offers in particular the results of an external evaluation of the initiative, a public consultation on the effectiveness and impact of the initiative. It also outlines the main problems arising from the implementation of the ECoC.

The main challenge for the ECoC action after 2019 will be twofold.

- On the one hand, it is important to help each city to make the most of the title and to fully use the potential of the ECoC.
- On the other hand, to retain the strong "brand" value which the ECoC title acquired over the years, it will be essential to ensure that the action as a whole remains credible and relevant in the long term.

To this end, the following five problems encountered by cities under Decision 1622/2006/EC will need to be tackled after 2019 :

1. the lack of stability in the governance structures and in the budgets: the most common difficulty encountered by cities in their preparation phase 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;

2. the limited European dimension;

3. weak legacy planning: several of the past Capitals acknowledged that in retrospect they had not done enough to forward plan for the period after the event. Others stated that they have struggled or are still struggling to fully exploit the potential legacies of the event;

4. the lack of evaluation and comparable data: it is essential that the Capitals themselves put in place measurement mechanisms. Given the lack of these measures, disparities create a very fragmented view on the impacts of the ECoC and it makes a real comparison between cities very difficult, which is harmful for the transfer of experience;

5. the limited number of credible candidates in certain MS: the current rules for the ECoC would make it politically very difficult for the panel to refuse to award the title to one city in each of the two MS

concerned every year. Luckily, so far there was always at least one credible candidate in each competition, even those which did attract very few participants. However this may become a problem in the future and selecting weak candidates for the title would without any doubt risk damaging the prestige and brand value of the ECoC in the long term.

The Commission document outlines proposals for each of the problem areas addressed with the aim of proposing a more targeted action plan. An impact assessment is proposed for after 2019 which will include the different options proposed as well as the one which the Commission intends to maintain in its proposal.