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

2012/0199(COD) - 19/06/2013 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Culture and Education unanimously adopted the report by Marco SCURRIA (EPP, IT) on the 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 parliamentary committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission's proposal as follows:

European dimension: Members stressed that this initiative should have a strong European dimension focused on the use of the Union's policies and programmes and based on **current European themes and European issues with broad social impact**.

Among the objectives for this initiative highlighted by Members were:

- promoting a European cultural identity;
- strengthening intercultural dialogue;
- strengthening the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with regional and local authorities and with other sectors, such as those concerned with education, scientific research, the environment, creative industries, urban renewal and cultural tourism, etc;
- boosting the involvement of residents and include excluded groups.

Selection criteria: Members considered that the selection criteria should be made more explicit and more measurable in order to help the panel of experts in the selection and monitoring of cities. The criteria should in particular **reinforce the legacy of the title** by rewarding cities which have developed a **long-term cultural policy strategy**, which can generate sustainable effects in terms of economic and social growth.

Every European Cultural Capital application should:

- aim at securing the widest possible involvement of residents, not least **the most vulnerable**;
- promote **social inclusion** and equal opportunities;
- involve **young people** to help them to become more self-reliant and with a special emphasis on volunteering;
- provide for links with other European Capitals of Culture;
- promote the involvement and commitment of civil society.

Broad political and financial support: Members stipulated that the European Cultural Capital project should benefit from broad cross-party political support and a sustainable financial commitment from the local, regional and national authorities.

Involvement of surrounding areas: candidate-cities can be of any size and may involve their surrounding areas, **including those in countries adjacent to them**, in cooperation with local and regional authorities.

Panel: the European panel should consist of 10 members selected following the organisation of an open call for expressions of interest. Members should also be able to devote sufficient time to the European

panel. Each of the Member States concerned may nominate **two consultative members to the panel**. After organising a call for expressions of interest, **the Commission should propose a pool of all potential panel members who expressed their interest** and who are deemed to meet the qualification criteria. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission should subsequently select three experts each, and the Committee of the Regions one expert, from that pool and appoint them in accordance with their respective procedures.

Call for applications: Members stipulated that **Member States should publish a call for submission of applications at least six years** before the beginning of the year of the title.

Mercouri Prize: Members institutionalised the Mercouri Prize whereby the Commission may, within the framework of the respective Union programmes supporting culture, award this prize to the designated cities.

Use of European financial support: Members stipulated that the Commission should encourage candidate cities to make full use of other potential sources of financial support from the Union, such as the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.

Network of European Cultural Capitals: Members encouraged the exchange of experience and of best practices between past, present and future Capitals, as well as candidate cities, *inter alia* **using already established formal and informal networks of the Capitals**.

International visibility of the initiative: Members stressed the visibility of this initiative and called for it to receive improved promotion on a worldwide scale.

25th anniversary of the European Cultural Capital: lastly, Members call on the Commission to update the touring exhibition created in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the European Capitals of Culture action and support its participation in each new European Capital of Culture.