

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

2012/0199(COD) - 12/12/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 577 votes to 26, with 25 abstentions, a legislative resolution 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.

Parliament adopted its position at first reading following the ordinary legislative procedure. The amendments adopted in plenary are the result of a compromise negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council.

Objectives: the general objectives of the action shall be the following:

to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe and to highlight the common features they share as well as to increase **citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space**;

to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities in accordance with their **respective strategies and priorities**.

Access to the action: the competition for the European Capital of Culture title shall only be open to cities, which may involve their surrounding areas. **The number of European Capitals of Culture in a given year (the 'year of the title') shall not exceed three.**

The designation shall apply each year:

- to a maximum of **one city in each of the two Member States appearing in the calendar** set out in the Annex and, in the relevant years,
- to one **city from candidate and potential candidate countries or to one city from a country that accedes to the Union** in the circumstances set out in text.

Cities in Member States shall be entitled to be designated as European Capitals of Culture for **one year** in accordance with the calendar.

Cities in candidate and potential candidate countries shall only be allowed to participate in **one competition during the period from 2020 to 2033**.

Furthermore, each candidate or potential candidate country shall only be allowed to host the title once during the period from 2020 to 2033.

If a city from a country acceding to the Union participated previously in a competition for candidate and potential candidate countries, it cannot participate in any subsequent competition for Member States. If more than one country accedes to the Union on the same date and if there is no agreement on the order of participation in the action between those countries, the Council shall **organise a draw**.

Selection criteria: the selection criteria should be made more explicit in order to give better guidance to the candidate cities regarding the objectives and requirements they need to comply with in order to obtain the title of the European Capital of Culture. The criteria for the assessment of the applications are divided into six categories:

1. contribution to the long term strategy,
2. European dimension,
3. cultural and artistic content,
4. capacity to deliver,
5. outreach,
6. management.

In this regard, a particular focus should be on the candidate cities' plans for legacy activities embedded in a long-term cultural policy strategy, which can generate a **sustainable cultural, economic and social impact**.

Expert panel: the panel of independent experts shall consist of **ten experts** appointed by Union institutions and bodies (the 'European experts').

After organising a call for expressions of interest, the Commission shall propose a pool of potential European experts.

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall subsequently **select three experts** each from the pool and appoint them in accordance with their respective procedures.

All experts shall be citizens of the Union. They shall be independent and have substantial experience and expertise in the cultural sector, in the cultural development of cities, in the organisation of a European Capital of Culture or an international cultural event of similar scope and scale.

The European experts shall be appointed for a period of three years. Experts of the 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 an expert, or if such a conflict of interest comes to light, that expert shall resign and the relevant Union institution or body or Member State shall replace that expert for the remainder of the mandate.

In addition, for the selection and monitoring of the city from a Member State, **the Member State concerned** shall be entitled to appoint up to **two experts** (the 'national experts').

Presentation of candidates: provisions are laid down to formalise the presentation of candidates as well as the pre-selection, the selection of cities in the Member States as well as in the candidate and potential candidate countries.

Cities designated for the same year shall seek to develop links between their cultural programmes.

Mercouri Prize: the Commission may award a pecuniary prize in honour of Melina Mercouri to a designated city (the 'prize') subject to the funding made available under the relevant multiannual financial framework.

Practical arrangements: the draft Decision details the practical arrangements of the implementation of the conditions of the initiatives and the technical support to the panel.

Evaluation: the evaluation of the results of each European Capital of Culture shall be the responsibility of the city concerned .

In addition to the cities' evaluations, the Commission shall also ensure that external and independent evaluation of the results of the action are produced on a regular basis.

The Commission shall present to the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions, the following reports based on these evaluations , accompanied, if appropriate, by relevant proposals:

- a first interim report by 31 December 2024;
- a second interim report by 31 December 2029;
- an ex-post report by 31 December 2034.

Calendar: a calendar is set out in the annex presenting the order of countries that should present themselves as candidates from 2020 to 2033 with, for each year, two current Members States and a candidate or potential candidate country.