

Union action for the European capitals of culture for the years 2020 to 2033: inclusion of EFTA/EEA countries

2016/0186(COD) - 17/06/2016 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend [Decision No 445/2014/EU](#) establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: in comparison with [previous Decision No 1622/2006/EC](#), Decision No 445/2014/EU extends the action to candidate countries and potential candidates to EU membership, providing that they participate in the Creative Europe Programme or in the subsequent Union programmes supporting culture at the date of publication of the call for applications.

As a result, every third year starting from 2021 (i.e. in 2021, 2024, 2027, 2030 and 2033), cities from candidate countries or potential candidates may hold the title.

However, Decision No 445/2014/EU does **not include European Free Trade Association countries which are parties to the Agreement** on the European Economic Area ("EFTA/EEA countries") (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein).

In order to reinforce the cultural links between the European Union and EFTA/EEA countries, it is proposed to modify Decision No 445/2014/EU so as to make it possible for cities from EFTA/EEA countries which participate in the Creative Europe Programme or in the subsequent Union programmes supporting culture, to **apply for the ECOC title**.

Furthermore, the inclusion of EFTA/EEA countries would also be in line with Article 81 of the EEA Agreement and Article 13 of its Protocol 31 on the cooperation in specific fields outside the four freedoms.

CONTENT: in its proposal, the Commission proposes:

- to **open the ECOC action to the participation of cities from EFTA/EEA countries** providing that these countries participate in the Creative Europe Programme or in the subsequent Union programmes supporting culture at the date of publication of the call for submission of applications;
- in this perspective, to extend the open competition for cities from candidate countries/potential candidates to cities from EFTA/EEA countries;
- to have an ECOC title in a city from a candidate country/potential candidate or an EFTA/EEA country in 2028 instead of 2027 so as to make it possible for these countries to negotiate their participation in the Union programme supporting culture that will follow Creative Europe for the period 2021 to 2027 before the Commission publishes the relevant call for submission of applications at the latest six years before the year of the title;
- to modify the calendar in the Annex of Decision No 445/2014/EU accordingly.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS: the Commission's proposal has no direct budgetary implication, as the Melina Mercouri Prize and the costs of the members of the expert panel designated by Union institutions and bodies are covered by the existing resources of the Creative Europe programme for the 2014-2020 financial framework, or will be covered by the subsequent Union programmes supporting culture for the years after 2020.

Furthermore, the proposal will not result in a higher number of European Capitals of Culture over the period from 2020 to 2033 because the cities from EFTA/EEA countries will compete with cities from candidate countries/potential candidates which were already part of the competition.