

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

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The Committee on Culture and Education adopted the report by Santiago FISAS AYXELÀ (EPP, ES) on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading, following the ordinary legislative procedure, should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Aim: Members stressed that promoting culture shall be a **priority** for the Union since it is fundamental for human development, stronger political integration and growth in aggregate income.

Union action shall:

- encourage mutual understanding and **intercultural dialogue** and bring common cultural heritage to the forefront;
- foster the contribution of culture to the **smart, sustainable and inclusive development** of cities and their surrounding areas in accordance with their respective long-term strategies and priorities;
- highlight the **richness and diversity** of European cultures and the features those cultures share, while promoting better mutual understanding and a sense of belonging among European citizens;
- have a positive impact in cultural terms, while **boosting tourism** and fostering the development of cities across Europe.

Members stressed the important role played by the European Capitals of Culture in promoting Union values.

Participating in the action: the Commission's proposal provides that cities in EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries and potential candidates shall only be allowed to participate in one competition during the period from 2020 to 2033. It stated that each EFTA/EEA country, candidate country or potential candidate shall only be allowed to host the title once during the period from 2020 to 2033.

Members proposed that **Novi Sad (Serbia), Timioara (Romania) and Elefsina (Greece)** shall be European Capitals of Culture in 2021.

Network of European Capitals of Culture: Members suggested that recognition shall be granted to the Network of European Capitals of Culture (NECC), comprising cities that have held the title at least once, in order to enhance the experience gained from the cultural capital scheme.

The Commission shall be empowered to adopt **delegated acts** concerning the regulation of the NECC. The power to adopt such acts shall be conferred on the Commission for an indeterminate period of time from the date of entry into force of the Decision.