

# European Capital of Culture for the years 2005 to 2019: participation of the new Member States

2003/0274(COD) - 17/11/2003 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE** : to amend the list that determines for each year from 2005 to 2019 the Member State eligible to nominate a city to host the Cultural Capital event for that year, out of the current Member States.

**PROPOSED ACT** : Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council. **CONTENT** : designed to bring European peoples closer, the European City of Culture was launched in June 1985. The European Cities of Culture up to 2004 have been selected on an intergovernmental basis. The Member States unanimously selected cities worthy of hosting the event, and the European Commission awarded a grant each year to the city selected. Decision 1419/1999/EC, of 25 May 1999, adopted on the basis of Article 151 of the EC treaty, amended the procedure for selecting the successful cities from 2005 onwards, to be known as "European Capitals of Culture". Henceforth, the European Capital of Culture will be decided each year by the Council on a Commission recommendation, which will take into account the view of a jury comprising 7 prominent independent members, each of them experts in the culture sector. The selection will be based on criteria laid down in the above Decision (please refer to COD/1997/0290).

Annex I of Decision 1419/199/EC contains a chronological list that determines for each year from 2005 to 2019 the Member State eligible to nominate a city to host the Cultural Capital event for that year, out of the current Member States. Article 2 of this Decision states that this chronological order may be modified by mutual agreement between the Member States concerned. Such an agreement was reached by Greece and the Netherlands, who exchanged their positions (2006 now being the year during which a Greek city will be European Capital of Culture, and 2018 for the capital of the Netherlands) as the Culture /Audiovisual Council noted during its meeting on 28 May 1998. In accordance with Article 6 of Decision 1419/1999/EC, the Commission may make proposals for revisions of the decision, specifically to adapt it to the enlargements of the European Union. This is the purpose of this Commission proposal. Given the symbolic importance and repercussions of the "European Capital of Culture" event and the interest expressed by the new Member States in this action, there would seem to be a need for them to be able to participate without having to wait for an update to Decision 1419/1999/EC establishing a new chronological order for the Member States from 2020 onwards. Moreover, it is important that no changes be made to the existing order for nominations from Member States, because preparations for these nominations and then for the European Capitals of Culture projects can take several years. Under Article 2 of Decision 1419/1999/EC, States must submit these nominations no later than four years before the event in question is due to begin. This proposal is thus intended to establish a new system appointing two Member States eligible to submit nominations each year, so that each one could host a European capital. Each year, two capitals could therefore be nominated within the European Union in accordance of Article 2 of Decision 1419/1999/EC, in addition, potentially, to a capital in a third European Country (Article 4 of the Decision). It should be noted that Article 5 of Decision 1419/1999/EC states that a linkage between the programmes of the designated cities of the same year should be made. This proposed amendment was prepared with the full cooperation of the Member States and the accession countries, which were able to express their preferences during an informal consultation exercise launched by the Commission among the new States during 2003. The other European institutions concerned were also able to express their support for the principle of such an amendment. The Commission therefore proposes to amend Article 2(1) and Annex I of Decision 1419/1999/EC in order to complete the chronological order and establish a system whereby two cities in Member States can be designated European Capitals of Culture each year. The proposed order shall be as follows : - 2005 Ireland - 2006 Greece - 2007 Luxembourg - 2008 United Kingdom - 2009 Austria/Lithuania - 2010 Germany/Hungary - 2011 Finland/Estonia - 2012 Portugal /Slovenia - 2013 France/Slovakia - 2014 Sweden/Latvia - 2015 Belgium/Czech Republic - 2016 Spain /Poland - 2017 Denmark/Cyprus - 2018 Netherlands/Malta - 2019 Italy.