

# European Capitals of Culture 2007 - 2019

2005/0102(COD) - 24/10/2006 - Final act

**PURPOSE:** to establish a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019.

**LEGISLATIVE ACT:** Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019.

**BACKGROUND:** the European City of Culture was launched by the Council of Ministers on 13 June 1985. Until 2004, the European Cities of Culture had been selected on an intergovernmental basis whereby Member States unanimously selected cities worthy of hosting the event.

Decision 1419/1999/EC amended the procedure for selecting the cities from 2005 onwards, known as “European Capitals of Culture” (ECOC). The ECOC is now decided by the Council on the basis of a Commission recommendation, which takes into account the view of a jury of seven independent members. This Decision includes a list of Member States setting out the chronological of entitlement from 2005 to 2019 in accordance with Decision No 649/2005/EC (see [COD/2003/0274](#)).

With the arrival of 12 new Member States, a new system had to be put in place, made formal by the present Decision.

**CONTENT:** a study into the results achieved by the European City of Culture event until 2004 showed that it had a positive impact in terms of media resonance, the development of culture and tourism and the recognition by inhabitants of the importance of their city having been designated. However, the action still needs to be improved, particularly with regard to its long-term effect on the cultural development of the city and region concerned.

As a consequence, the European Parliament and the Council decided to set out a new designation process of the European Capitals of Culture in order to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual understanding between European citizens.

The new method of designation which includes all amendments suggested by the European Parliament at first reading, shall be based on the following principles:

**Applications:** cities in Member States and in countries acceding to the European Union after 31 December 2006 shall be entitled to be designated as European Capitals of Culture for one year, in the order set out in the Annex. The designation shall apply to one city in each of the Member States appearing in the list. The chronological order given in that list may be altered by mutual agreement between the Member States concerned. As a result, from 2009 onwards, there will be **two European Capitals of Culture each year** (one from the EUR-15, one from the new Member States). According to the indicative order or entitlement, Romania and Luxembourg are nominated for 2007.

**Submission of applications:** a call for submission of applications shall be published by each of the Member States concerned no later than 6 years before the event in question is due to begin.

**Criteria for the cultural programme:** the cultural programme shall fulfill the following criteria, subdivided into two categories, ‘the European Dimension’ and ‘City and Citizens’: as regards ‘the European Dimension’, the programme shall: a) foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from the relevant Member States and other Member States in any cultural sector; b) highlight the

richness of cultural diversity in Europe; c) bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore. As regards 'City and Citizens' the programme shall: a) foster the participation of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings and raise their interest as well as the interest of citizens from abroad; b) be sustainable and be an integral part of the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

**Strengthening the competition element:** Member States are called on to organise competition between interested cities at national level. Each of the Member States concerned shall nominate one city to be European Capital of Culture and shall notify the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions, no later than four years before the event is due to begin.

**Improving the role of the selection panel:** each selection panel shall consist of 13 members, seven of which shall be the persons nominated by the European institutions. The remaining six members shall be nominated by the Member State concerned in consultation with the Commission. The Member State concerned shall then appoint the selection panel. The panel shall designate its chairman from among the persons nominated by the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions. The overall composition of the panel should ensure adequate balance between local and national interests and guarantee the "European" dimension ahead of the national selection decision.

**Establishing a "monitoring panel"** to evaluate, in particular, the European added value of the programme. This European monitoring panel will be composed of only the 7 members of the selection panel designated in turn by the European Institutions. In addition, the Member State concerned may nominate an observer to this panel.

**Extending the planning time:** the Member State concerned should launch a call for submission of applications 6 years before the event is due to begin, and organise an information day for potential candidates. The selection panel should meet 5 years before the event to agree on a short-list of candidates. The panel should meet 9 months after the first selection meeting in order to prepare a report on the programmes of the short-listed candidates, and, on that basis, recommend a city for nomination as ECOC.

**Mercouri Prize:** on the basis of a compromise obtained by the European Parliament, a pecuniary prize in honour of Melina Mercouri shall be awarded to the designated cities by the Commission provided that they meet certain criteria and have implemented the recommendations made by the selection and the monitoring and advisory panels. The prize shall be awarded in full no later than three months before the start of the relevant year.

**Evaluation:** each year, the Commission shall ensure the external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capital of Culture event of the previous year. It shall present a report on that evaluation to the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions by the end of the year following the European Capital of Culture event.

**Repeal and transitory measures:** this Decision replaces and repeals Decision No 1419/1999/EC from 2007. That Decision shall however continue to apply in the case of cities which have been designated as European Capitals of Culture for 2007, 2008 and 2009 and a transition period has been provided in the case of ECOC for 2010, 2011 and 2012, unless the city in question decides to base its programme on the criteria set out in the new Decision.

**ENTRY INTO FORCE:** 23/11/2006. This Decision shall apply from 1 January 2007, with the exception of the article relating to the submission of applications, which will apply from 23 November 2006.