


Procedure file

Basic information			
COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) 2012/0199(COD) Decision		Procedure completed	
Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 Repealing Decision 1622/2006/EC 2005/0102(COD) Amended by 2016/0186(COD) Amended by 2020/0179(COD)			
Subject 4.45.02 Cultural programmes and actions, assistance			
Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	CULT Culture and Education		03/10/2012
		PPE SCURRIA Marco	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		S&D IVAN Cătălin Sorin	
		ALDE TAKKULA Hannu	
		Verts/ALE ALFONSI François	
		ECR MIGALSKI Marek Henryk	
	Former committee responsible		
	CULT Culture and Education		03/10/2012
		PPE SCURRIA Marco	
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Agriculture and Fisheries	3307	24/03/2014
	Education, Youth, Culture and Sport	3201	26/11/2012
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Education, Youth, Sport and Culture	VASSILIOU Androulla	
European Committee of the Regions			

Key events			
20/07/2012	Legislative proposal published	COM(2012)0407	Summary
11/09/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
26/11/2012	Debate in Council	3201	
	Vote in committee, 1st reading		

28/05/2013			
19/06/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A7-0226/2013	Summary
12/12/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
12/12/2013	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T7-0590/2013	Summary
25/03/2014	Council position published	05793/1/2014	Summary
02/04/2014	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
10/04/2014	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		
10/04/2014	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A7-0275/2014	Summary
16/04/2014	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T7-0413/2014	Summary
16/04/2014	Final act signed		
16/04/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		
03/05/2014	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2012/0199(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
	Repealing Decision 1622/2006/EC 2005/0102(COD) Amended by 2016/0186(COD) Amended by 2020/0179(COD)
Legal basis	Treaty on the Functioning of the EU TFEU 167-p5
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Mandatory consultation of other institutions	European Committee of the Regions
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/7/15517

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal	COM(2012)0407	20/07/2012	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SWD(2012)0226	20/07/2012	EC	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR2077/2012	30/11/2012	CofR	
Committee draft report	PE500.756	28/02/2013	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee	PE510.506	22/04/2013	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A7-0226/2013	19/06/2013	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single	T7-0590/2013	12/12/2013	EP	Summary

reading					
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2014)148	13/02/2014	EC	
Committee draft report		PE532.282	20/03/2014	EP	
Commission communication on Council's position		COM(2014)0183	25/03/2014	EC	Summary
Council position		05793/1/2014	26/03/2014	CSL	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A7-0275/2014	10/04/2014	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T7-0413/2014	16/04/2014	EP	Summary
Draft final act		00084/2014/LEX	16/04/2014	CSL	

Additional information

National parliaments	IPEX
European Commission	EUR-Lex

Final act

[Decision 2014/445](#)
[OJ L 132 03.05.2014, p. 0001](#) Summary

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

The current legal base for the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) ([Decision 1622/2006/EC](#)) includes a chronological list of Member States indicating the order in which they are entitled to host the event until 2019.

The preparation time involved for preparing each ECoC (currently 6 years) and the time needed for the ordinary legislative procedure means that the Commission's proposal for a continuation of the ECoC should be adopted in 2012 in order to ensure a smooth transition in 2020.

The present Commission Services Working Document summarises the main results of DG EAC's reflection on the future of the ECoC.

The document offers in particular the results of an external evaluation of the initiative, a public consultation on the effectiveness and impact of the initiative. It also outlines the main problems arising from the implementation of the ECoC.

The main challenge for the ECoC action after 2019 will be twofold.

- On the one hand, it is important to help each city to make the most of the title and to fully use the potential of the ECoC.
- On the other hand, to retain the strong "brand" value which the ECoC title acquired over the years, it will be essential to ensure that the action as a whole remains credible and relevant in the long term.

To this end, the following five problems encountered by cities under Decision 1622/2006/EC will need to be tackled after 2019 :

1. the lack of stability in the governance structures and in the budgets: the most common difficulty encountered by cities in their preparation phase has been the effect of national and local politics on the budgets, which need to be as stable as possible between the bidding and final stages, as well as the impact of politics on other aspects of the organisation of the event. Political support is fundamental as most of the funds are public, and without it a city cannot have a credible bid, but at the same time the implementing team needs its artistic independence to be respected in order to protect the credibility of the event;

2. the limited European dimension;

3. weak legacy planning: several of the past Capitals acknowledged that in retrospect they had not done enough to forward plan for the period after the event. Others stated that they have struggled or are still struggling to fully exploit the potential legacies of the event;

4. the lack of evaluation and comparable data: it is essential that the Capitals themselves put in place measurement mechanisms. Given the lack of these measures, disparities create a very fragmented view on the impacts of the ECoC and it makes a real comparison between cities very difficult, which is harmful for the transfer of experience;

5. the limited number of credible candidates in certain MS: the current rules for the ECoC would make it politically very difficult for the panel to refuse to award the title to one city in each of the two MS concerned every year. Luckily, so far there was always at least one credible candidate in each competition, even those which did attract very few participants. However this may become a problem in the future and selecting weak candidates for the title would without any doubt risk damaging the prestige and brand value of the ECoC in the long term.

The Commission document outlines proposals for each of the problem areas addressed with the aim of proposing a more targeted action plan. An impact assessment is proposed for after 2019 which will include the different options proposed as well as the one which the Commission intends to maintain in its proposal.

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

PURPOSE: to establish a new Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033.

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

BACKGROUND: the European Capitals of Culture were created in 1985 as an intergovernmental initiative. They were transformed officially into a European Union action in 1999 in order to make the initiative more effective. New criteria and selection procedures were established, a chronological list of Member States was drawn up indicating the order in which they were entitled to host the title, and a European panel of independent experts was created to assess the applications ([Decision N° 1419/1999/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council).

The rules were renewed in 2006 in order to develop the effectiveness of the initiative further by stimulating competition between the cities and fostering the quality of the bids. These new rules also introduced various measures to accompany the cities in their preparation, including a monitoring process ([Decision N° 1622/2006/EC](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council).

Decision N° 1622/2006/EC will end in 2019. The competition for the title is currently launched six years in advance in order to give the cities sufficient time for their preparation before the beginning of the year of the title. Therefore, the new legal base for the continuation of the European Capitals of Culture should be adopted in 2013 in order to ensure a smooth transition in 2020.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: on the basis of the results of the evaluations and of the public consultation, three options were examined for the future of the European Capitals of Culture after 2019:

1. continuing the action with an identical legal base to the current Decision to which simply a new chronological list of Member States is annexed;
2. stopping the action;
3. continuing the action with a new legal base which addresses the problems encountered with the current Decision. For this third option, two sub-options were examined:
 1. a new chronological list of Member States is annexed;
 2. the title is awarded on the basis of an open competition.

The various cultural, economic, social and environmental impacts were examined for each option. The options were then assessed and ranked according to their effectiveness in terms of achieving the objectives of the European Capitals of Culture, their efficiency, their costs and administrative burden, their coherence with broader Union political objectives and their synergies and complementarities with other Union objectives, and their feasibility.

The option with the most positive overall assessment is option 3a, namely a new legal base with a chronological list of Member States. This option scored higher than all other options and was ranked as the preferred option.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 167 (5), first indent of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: the aim of this proposed Decision is to establish a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033.

The general objectives of the action shall be the following:

- to safeguard and promote the diversity of European cultures, and to highlight the common features they share;
- to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities.

Moreover:

- the title will continue to be awarded on the basis of a chronological list of Member States: such a rotating system proved to be the only system which ensured an equal opportunity for each Member State to host the title and a geographical balance in the location of the European Capitals of Culture, and hence the opportunity for the Union to highlight the diversity of European cultures and for the public across Europe to experience the event close to home;
- the title will continue to be reserved to cities: cities will also continue to have the possibility to involve their surrounding region in order to reach a wider public and amplify the impacts, however past experience has shown that the clear leadership of one city is a key success factor;
- the attribution of the title will continue to be based on a cultural programme created specifically for the year of the title in order to foster a strong European dimension;
- the two stage selection process carried out by a European panel of independent experts has proven to be fair and transparent and will be kept. It enabled in particular cities to improve their applications between the pre-selection and the final selection phase on the basis of expert advice received from the panel;
- the title will continue to be awarded for a full year to keep it distinctive and ambitious.

Amendments and proposed improvements: at the same time, a number of improvements are proposed in order to address the problems encountered with the current Decision and to help all cities to make the most of the title. The main changes introduced by the new legal base are the following:

(1) The criteria have been made more explicit in order to give more guidance to the candidate cities and more measurable in order to help the panel of experts in the selection and monitoring of cities.

Special attention was paid to optimise the potential leverage effect of the initiative on stimulating long-term local culture led development strategies, to ensure the capacity of candidate cities to actually host the title, to boost the European dimension and visibility of the cultural programmes, to ensure the high quality of the cultural and artistic content, to foster a large participation of the local populations and to try to ensure the stability of the budgets and the independence of the artistic teams.

The criteria for the assessment of the applications are divided into six categories: "long-term strategy", "capacity to deliver", "cultural and artistic content", "European dimension", "outreach" and "management":

(2) The conditionality of the Melina Mercouri Prize has been reinforced. Furthermore, the Prize will no longer be paid three months before the

beginning of the year of the title, but during the middle of the year itself in order to be certain that cities keep to their commitments regarding in particular funding, programming and Union visibility.

(3) European Panel. It is stated explicitly that the European panel is not obliged to give a positive recommendation if none of the bids fulfils the criteria.

(4) The accompanying measures which support the cities during the preparation period after winning the title have been strengthened in order to provide further support and guidance to the cities. An additional monitoring meeting has been introduced, visits to the cities by panel members will be more systematic and the exchange of experience and best practices between past, present and future Capitals, as well as candidate cities will be reinforced.

(5) New evaluation obligations were introduced for the cities themselves in order to have a more comprehensive view of the impacts of the title and to provide comparable data.

(6) Finally, it is proposed to open the action again to the participation of candidate and potential candidate countries after 2019, as was the case until 2010. The experience among others of Sibiu 2007 and Istanbul 2010 has shown that this can be beneficial both for these countries and the Union.

It should be noted that cities in candidate and potential candidate countries shall also have the possibility to apply for the European Capital of Culture title in the framework of an open competition organised every third year in parallel with the competitions in the two Member States, in accordance with the calendar in the annex.

Designation: the Commission shall, by means of implementing acts, officially designate the European Capitals of Culture, having due regard to the recommendations of the European Panel. The Commission shall inform the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions of its designation.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: the Commission's proposal has no direct budgetary implication. The period covered by the proposal will coincide with several multi annual financial frameworks. For the 2014-2020 financial framework, the financial aspects in relation to the European Capitals of Culture, including the Melina Mercouri Prize, the costs of the European panel of experts, the visibility of the action at European level and the human resources needed within the Commission to support the action, will be dealt with in the framework of the [Creative Europe Programme](#).

For the years after 2020, the legal and financial aspects of the European Capitals of Culture will be directly linked to the provisions included in the future multi annual financial frameworks, and on this basis, they should also be dealt with in the framework of the respective Union programmes supporting culture.

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

The Committee on Culture and Education unanimously adopted the report by Marco SCURRIA (EPP, IT) 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.

The parliamentary committee recommended that the European Parliaments position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commissions proposal as follows:

European dimension: Members stressed that this initiative should have a strong European dimension focused on the use of the Union's policies and programmes and based on current European themes and European issues with broad social impact.

Among the objectives for this initiative highlighted by Members were:

- promoting a European cultural identity;
- strengthening intercultural dialogue;
- strengthening the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with regional and local authorities and with other sectors, such as those concerned with education, scientific research, the environment, creative industries, urban renewal and cultural tourism, etc;
- boosting the involvement of residents and include excluded groups.

Selection criteria: Members considered that the selection criteria should be made more explicit and more measurable in order to help the panel of experts in the selection and monitoring of cities. The criteria should in particular reinforce the legacy of the title by rewarding cities which have developed a long-term cultural policy strategy, which can generate sustainable effects in terms of economic and social growth.

Every European Cultural Capital application should:

- aim at securing the widest possible involvement of residents, not least the most vulnerable;
- promote social inclusion and equal opportunities;
- involve young people to help them to become more self-reliant and with a special emphasis on volunteering;
- provide for links with other European Capitals of Culture;
- promote the involvement and commitment of civil society.

Broad political and financial support: Members stipulated that the European Cultural Capital project should benefit from broad cross-party political support and a sustainable financial commitment from the local, regional and national authorities.

Involvement of surrounding areas: candidate-cities can be of any size and may involve their surrounding areas, including those in countries adjacent to them, in cooperation with local and regional authorities.

Panel: the European panel should consist of 10 members selected following the organisation of an open call for expressions of interest. Members should also be able to devote sufficient time to the European panel. Each of the Member States concerned may nominate two consultative members to the panel. After organising a call for expressions of interest, the Commission should propose a pool of all potential panel members who expressed their interest and who are deemed to meet the qualification criteria. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission should subsequently select three experts each, and the Committee of the Regions one expert, from that pool and appoint them in accordance with their respective procedures.

Call for applications: Members stipulated that Member States should publish a call for submission of applications at least six years before the beginning of the year of the title.

Mercouri Prize: Members institutionalised the Mercouri Prize whereby the Commission may, within the framework of the respective Union programmes supporting culture, award this prize to the designated cities.

Use of European financial support: Members stipulated that the Commission should encourage candidate cities to make full use of other potential sources of financial support from the Union, such as the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund.

Network of European Cultural Capitals: Members encouraged the exchange of experience and of best practices between past, present and future Capitals, as well as candidate cities, inter alia using already established formal and informal networks of the Capitals.

International visibility of the initiative: Members stressed the visibility of this initiative and called for it to receive improved promotion on a worldwide scale.

25th anniversary of the European Cultural Capital: lastly, Members call on the Commission to update the touring exhibition created in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the European Capitals of Culture action and support its participation in each new European Capital of Culture.

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

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.

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

In its communication concerning the position of the Council on the adoption of 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, the Commission stated that it agreed on the compromise reached during the informal tripartite discussions between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

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

The Council's first reading position is the result of informal negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.

The text builds upon the strong points of the previous European Capitals of Culture decision, such as the chronological order of the Member States entitled to host the action, a selection based on a one-year long cultural programme specifically created for the action, the possibility for cities to involve their surrounding regions and a two-stage selection process (consisting of pre-selection and selection). It also addresses the main weak points of the current action on aspects such as:

- stability of governance structure and budget,
- the need for better understanding of the European dimension,
- the need for greater embedding of the action in the long-term strategy for the development of cities.

Important changes have also been made to the composition of the expert panel which selects and monitors cities and to the designation process.

A number of important clarifications, including on access to the action, management criteria, criteria for obtaining the prize and the evaluation procedure, have also been made.

- Amendments accepted: the Council endorsed the majority of the changes proposed in the Commission's initial proposal. It agreed with a partial opening of the action to candidate countries and potential candidates and with making selection criteria as well as criteria for paying the pecuniary "Melina Mercouri" prize more stringent and specific. The Council supported the emphasis to be given to the long-term culture-led development strategies and to a cultural programme with a strong European dimension, when applications for the title are assessed.

The Council also agreed to postpone the payment of the prize after the start of the year of the title, albeit only by three months and not six months as proposed by the Commission.

- Amendments rejected: on the other hand, the Council was unable to support the Commission's change aiming at establishing a selection and monitoring panel composed solely of European experts, as opposed to national experts. Similarly, the Council rejected the Commission's proposal for designation to be carried out by the Commission rather than by the Council as it has been the case until now.

- Structural changes: the Council made a structural change to the Commission proposal. Provisions scattered in other articles which dealt with access to the action in general and specifically with the access by candidate countries and potential candidates have been placed in a single article, Article 3. That article was further restructured in order to clearly distinguish between three categories of eligible cities, i.e. cities from Member States, those from candidate countries and potential candidates and those from countries acceding to the Union after the entry into force of the proposed decision.

- Substantive changes: among the main substantive changes introduced by the Council are the following:

a) Expert panel (Article 6): the Council in its first reading position enabled the Member States which are entitled to host the title in a given year - according to the calendar annexed to the decision - to appoint a maximum of two experts to the panel responsible for selection and

monitoring procedures. Thus the panel will be composed of 10 experts appointed by the Union institutions and bodies (the European Parliament, the Commission, the Council and the Committee of the Regions), as proposed by the Commission, and up to two experts appointed by a Member State whose city is to be selected or monitored by the panel. The role of national experts is to offer the local expertise and knowledge to the panel. In addition, the first reading position makes the provisions on conflict of interests stricter: any expert who has a conflict of interest with a specific candidate city must resign.

b) Designation (Article 11): the first reading position gives the designation power to the Member State which is entitled to host the title in a given year. This is a change to the Commission's proposal in which the designation was proposed to be done by the Commission as well as to the current rules set out in Decision No 1622/2006/EC according to which the Council has been a designating body. The Commission will, however, be in charge of the designation of cities from candidate countries and potential candidates since the open competition in which those cities will be selected is entirely managed by the Commission, without the involvement of those countries. Within two months after the Member State concerned has designated a city, the Commission will publish the name of the city in the Official Journal of the EU.

c) Derogation measures for European Capitals of Culture in 2020 (Articles 7 and 11): due to the delay in the legislative procedures, the Council has introduced in its first reading position several derogation measures that provide 2020 European Capitals of Culture with more time. The deadlines were extended at the key stages of the selection procedure for convening of the panel for a pre-selection meeting and for designation.

d) Postponing the competition for candidate countries and potential candidates by one year (annex): lastly, the Council has postponed by one year the possibility for candidate countries and potential candidates to compete for the title (from 2020 to 2021). In this way, those countries will have sufficient time to sign the Memorandum of Understanding which is required for their participation in the Creative Europe Programme, from which the European Capitals of Culture.

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

The Committee on Culture and Education unanimously adopted the recommendation for second reading contained in the report by Marco SCURRIA (EPP, IT) on the Council position at first reading in view of the adoption of 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 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC.

The agreement reached between the European Parliament and the Council amounts to a realistic and balanced compromise. It provides for:

- a stream-lining of the selection procedure,
- sustainability of infrastructural investments,
- access to additional sources of EU funding, and
- the possibility for a city to lead a regional bid.

The committee also recommended that the European Parliament approve the Council's first-reading position, without amendment.

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

The European Parliament adopted the Council position at first reading in view of the adoption of 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 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC.

Parliament adopted the Council's position at first reading without amendment.

The act is adopted in accordance with the Council position.

It should be noted that a proposal to reject the Council position presented by the EFD group was rejected in plenary.

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

PURPOSE: to establish a new Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision N° 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC.

CONTENT: the Decision establishes a Union action entitled European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033.

Objectives: the general objectives of the action are:

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

The specific objectives are:

- to enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational cooperation;
- to widen access to and participation in culture;
- to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors;
- to raise the international profile of cities through culture.

Access to the action: the competition for the title shall be open to the cities listed in the Annex to the Decision, and may involve their surrounding areas.

The number of cities holding the title European Capital of Culture shall not exceed three in a given year.

Accordingly, the title of European Capital of Culture shall be awarded each year to:

- one city in each of the two Member States appearing in the calendar set out in the Annex;
- one city from a candidate country or a potential candidate, or
- to one city from a country that accedes to the Union in the circumstances set out in the Decision.

Cities in Member States shall be entitled to hold the title for one year in accordance with the order of the Member States appearing in the calendar.

Cities in candidate countries and potential candidates which 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 may apply for the title for one year in the framework of an open competition organised every third year in accordance with the calendar.

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

Where a country accedes to the Union after 4 May 2014 but before 1 January 2027, it shall be entitled to host the title 7 years after its accession. Where a country accedes to the Union on or after 1 January 2027, it shall not be entitled to participate in the action as a Member State.

Application: a common application form shall be prepared by the Commission and used by all candidate cities.

Every application shall be based on a cultural programme with a strong European dimension.

In order to determine the winning city, criteria for the assessment of applications have been laid down according to the following categories:

- contribution to the long-term strategy;
- European dimension;
- cultural and artistic content;
- capacity to deliver;
- outreach;
- management.

Details of each of these categories are laid down in the Decision, along with the factors to be assessed for each city.

Expert panel: a panel of independent experts will be established for three years to carry out the selection and monitoring procedures. The panel will consist of 10 experts appointed by Union institutions and bodies. After organising an open call for expressions of interest, the Commission will propose a pool of potential European experts. The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission will then select three experts each from that pool and appoint them in accordance with their respective procedures. The Committee of the Regions will select its own expert.

In addition to the European experts, for the selection and monitoring of a city from a Member State, the Member State concerned shall be entitled to appoint up to two experts to the panel in accordance with its own procedures and in consultation with the Commission.

Specific provisions define the eligibility of the experts and the experience required. In any event, experts must be free of any actual or potential conflict of interest in respect of a specific candidate city.

Applications in Member States, pre-selection and final selection: each Member State will be responsible for the organisation of the competition between its cities. It must publish a call for submission of applications at least six years before the year of the title. However, derogations are laid down in the Decision.

Each Member State concerned must convene the panel for a pre-selection meeting with the candidate cities no later than five years before the year of the title.

After assessing the applications, the panel will agree on a shortlist of candidate cities and issue a pre-selection report.

Each Member State concerned will convene the panel for a selection meeting with the shortlisted candidate cities, then the panel will assess the applications, after which, panel will issue a selection report on the applications of the shortlisted candidate cities with a recommendation for the designation of a maximum of one city in the Member State concerned. The panel will submit the selection report to the Member State concerned and to the Commission.

Regarding selection in candidate countries and potential candidates, it will be for the Commission to organise the competition between cities and not the States themselves. The pre-selection of the cities shall be carried out by the panel at least five years before the year of the title, on the basis of their respective applications.

Designation: each Member State concerned shall designate one city to hold the title, on the basis of the recommendations contained in the selection report of the panel, and shall notify the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions no later than four years before the year of the title.

In the case of candidate countries and potential candidates, the Commission shall designate one city to hold the title in the relevant years, on the basis of the recommendations contained in the selection report of the panel.

Cooperation between designated cities: cities designated for the same year shall seek to develop links between their cultural programmes and such cooperation may be considered in the framework of the monitoring procedure laid down in the Decision.

Monitoring: the panel shall monitor the preparation of the designated cities for the year of the title and provide them with support and guidance from the time of their designation to the beginning of the year of the title. The Decision provides for monitoring meetings with the Commission.

Prize: the Commission may award a pecuniary prize in honour of Melina Mercouri to a designated city. The prize money shall be paid provided that the designated city concerned continues to honour the commitments it made at the application stage, complies with the criteria and takes into account the recommendations contained in the selection and monitoring reports.

Evaluation: each city concerned shall be responsible for the evaluation of the results of its year as a European Capital of Culture. The Commission shall establish common guidelines and indicators for the cities concerned in order to ensure a coherent approach to the evaluation procedure. The cities concerned shall draw up their evaluation reports and transmit them to the Commission by 31 December of the year following the year of the title.

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

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

Repeal and transitional provision: Decision No 1622/2006/EC is repealed. It shall however continue to apply in the case of cities that have been designated or are in the process of being designated as European Capitals of Culture for the years from 2013 to 2019.

Annex: the Annex to the Decision contains a list of those countries whose city must be designated as a European Capital of Culture between 2020 and 2033, together with a calendar for designation of a candidate country or potential candidate.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 04.05.2014.