

**REPORT
ON THE NOMINATIONS FROM
AUSTRIA AND LITHUANIA
FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF
CULTURE 2009**

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**Issued by
The Selection Panel for the European Capital of
Culture (ECOC) 2009**

April 2005

This report was written on the basis of the meeting of the Selection Panel on 14 April 2005. The report is addressed to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Commission and the Committee of Regions.

Background

The European Cities of Culture initiative, which is a major activity by the European Union, is a way of bringing together people involved in culture from the European Union and other European countries. The objective is to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures and the features they share, as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens.

“The European City of Culture” was launched in 1985 by the Member States meeting in the Council on the initiative of Mrs. Melina Mercouri. Since then, the event has grown in popularity every year and is now well known to European citizens. For each year from 1985 until 2004 at least one European city has been awarded the title of European City of Culture. In 2000, as a tribute to the new millennium, a total of 9 European Cities of Culture were designated.

In intergovernmental and community texts, the “European Cities of Culture” changed to “European Capitals of Culture” (ECOC) with the Culture 2000 programme. The cities themselves have often used the title “Capital”, with an exception of the cities for the year 2000 when, because of the large number of designated cities, they preferred the title “City”.

Until 2004, the European Capitals of Culture were designated by the Council on the basis of intergovernmental cooperation. Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council established a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019. By this decision, a *new nomination procedure* was installed. Each year, one city of a Member State shall be designated as European Capital of Culture, in turn, following a list annexed to the decision. A modified Decision was adopted in February, 2005, in order to integrate the 10 Member States which joined the EU in 2004. Thus, from 2009 to 2019, 2 Member States will be entitled to make proposals to the EU : one from the “new” Member States, another one from the others.

For the year 2009 onwards, the *nomination procedure* for member states is as follows:

- The national authorities of the relevant countries nominate one or several cities, 4 years before the event is due to begin. The nominations are notified to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions by the Member states concerned four years before the event is due to begin.

- A selection panel issues a report on the nominations judged against the objectives and criteria specified in the decision. The report is submitted to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council.
- The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the Commission on the nominations within three months after the receipt of the report.
- The Commission gives a recommendation on the designation of the Capitals of Culture to the Council. The recommendation takes the opinion of the Parliament and the selection panel's report into consideration.
- The Council officially designates the cities in question (one from each MS entitled to make proposals) as the European Capitals of Culture for the year in which they have been nominated.

According to Article 2 of Decision 1418/1999/EC, the *selection panel* shall be composed of seven leading independent figures who are experts on the cultural sector, of whom two shall be appointed by the European Parliament, two by the Council, two by the Commission and one by the Committee of the Regions.

The selection panel:

By written procedure number E/1577/2004 – on the basis of the draft Decision C(2004)2954 – the Commission appointed on 4th August 2004 Mr Jean-Jacques Aillagon and Mr Jacek Purchla .

The European Parliament decided, on the basis of the proposal of the Committee on Culture and Education, to nominate Mr Georg Dolivo and Ms Danuta Glondys on 17th February, 2005.

The Council approved the two Council appointed members, Dr Charlie Hennessy and Mr Bert van Meggelen, on 16th November, 2004. The two candidates had been nominated by the Irish and the Dutch Council presidencies, in accordance with the Council Decision of 17th December 1999 (2000/C 9/01).

The Committee of the Regions presented their appointed member, Mr Seamus Murray (Mr Henning Jensen as alternate member), by their letter of 10th November 2004 from President Peter Straub to Commissioner Viviane Reding.

The Commission sent the applications from Linz (Austria) and Vilnius (Lithuania) to the selection panel on the 24th March, 2005

Candidates for 2009

With his letter of 14th December 2004 to the President of the Commission, the State Secretary for the Arts and Media of Austria submitted the nomination of Linz for the

title of European Capital of Culture, referring to annex I of the (modified) Decision 1419.

With his letter of 27th December 2004 to the President of the Commission, the Minister of Culture of Lithuania submitted the nomination of Vilnius for the title of European Capital of Culture, referring to annex I of the (modified) Decision 1419. From a legal point of view, this proposal and the assessment of the selection panel concerning Vilnius will be taken into consideration when this modified Decision enters into force (scheduled on 11 May). In anticipation of the entry into force of the amended Decision which includes the new Member States, the panel was content to consider the proposal.

Meeting of the selection panel in Brussels, 14 April 2005

On the initiative of the Commission, the panel members were invited to a meeting on the 14 April 2005 in Brussels. The applicant cities were invited to present their applications and to answer questions from the panel members.

The agenda of the meeting was as follows:

1. Introduction by Harald Hartung, European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture.
Presentation of the context and role of the selection panel in accordance with Decision 1419/199/EC.
Nomination of the Chairman.
2. Presentations by the Austria's nomination, Linz, and questions from the selection panel to the delegation.
3. Closed discussion.
4. Presentations by representatives from Lithuania's nomination, Vilnius, and questions from the selection panel to the delegation.
5. Closed discussion.

MM Aillagon and Murray were absent. Mr Jensen replaced Mr Murray and attended the meeting for the presentation and discussion concerning Linz only. Both cities presented their candidature.

The following were present from the Commission as observers: Harald Hartung (Head of the Culture Unit), Jacqueline Pacaud (Culture Unit), James Bird (Culture Unit) and Irene Katzensteiner (Culture Unit).

Dr Charlie Hennessy was elected chairman and conducted the meeting.

Representatives of each nominated city gave a presentation of their candidature and answered questions from the selection panel. After each presentation, the panel had a

closed-door deliberation of the city's proposal. The panel then invited the nominated cities back and presented advice for preparation of the programmes and gave indicative remarks about the quality of their presentations. However, they emphasised their advisory role and that they would take a formal position in the report but the final decision was for the Council.

Summary of the presentation of the nominated cities:

Linz:

The nine representatives from Linz emphasised that Linz had changed from an industrial to a high-tech cultural city since 1985. Linz now had great expertise and investment, particularly in new media. An artistic director was currently being advertised in the Austrian national press. The application brochure had the support of all political and social institutions, the Government of Austria, the regional authority of Upper Austria and the City of Linz, as well as the people of Linz.

The representatives presented a new paper which described concrete proposals. They presented Linz as a creative, cultural and dynamic city with worldwide significance. Linz would prioritise its rapidly changing work environment, its worldwide networking capabilities, and the themes of social and economic justice; and natural resources and ecology.

From a European perspective, the city would emphasise urban development based on equality, migrants enriching cities and regions and European integration including peace, solidarity and diversity. Linz wanted to create an environment of openness for artists to develop their works.

Linz wanted to create a laboratory for the future, involving creative, inspiring spaces for people working together to create a vision for the future. It wanted to equip the city with large public screens broadcasting cultural programmes from all over the world. Linz also wanted to convert industrial areas into new living areas.

The Danube was to be used as a metaphor for a trans-national challenge, a drama on the river as an example for artists. Other themes which were highlighted included the Power of Knowledge, the Culture of Media, Connections and Exchange Programmes. The theme "Culture for All and Culture by All" would brand the programme until 2009.

In the years leading up to 2009 €300 million would be invested in infrastructure order to make Linz "Euro-fit" for 2009. The Capital of Culture programme for 2009 would cost an additional €67 million. This would be met in equal €20 million shares by the city, regional and national governments. An additional €7 million would be met by sponsorship and fundraising.

Vilnius:

The eight representatives from Vilnius assured the jury that their Capital of Culture programme was included in the legislative programme of the Lithuanian Culture Minister. The programme organisers would consult cultural institutions to bring as many ideas together as possible. There was not currently an artistic director for the programme but one was being recruited.

Relativity and Vitality would be the themes of the Vilnius bid. There would be projects across the four historic capitals of Lithuania based on four core seasonal themes. This would enable the organisers to re-launch the programme at the beginning of each season. The four seasonal themes were: Open History Season, with an emphasis on restoration; Open Space Season, which aimed to celebrate the Lithuania's 5th anniversary of accession to the EU with street parties with a southern European flavour; Open Community Season concentrating on young people and site specific works; and Open Future season highlighting cinema and theatre.

The highlights of the programme would include a Celebration of Independence, an international Christmas Fair the Artscape Cultural Centre and European Baroque Dialogues in conjunction with Linz.

The vision of the programme for the city of Vilnius would be: competitiveness, a new economy, advanced society and a transport and engineering infrastructure. The total cost of the programme would be €467 million, consisting of €25 million of programme costs and €442 million of infrastructure costs, €20 million of this would be provided by the Lithuanian culture ministry.

The infrastructure plans included construction of a Palace of Lithuanian Sovereigns, an art gallery and a multi functional cultural centre and roads and bypasses. The cultural centre would be built with public/private partnerships. This and the competitive labour costs made the project possible. Project partners included the Guggenheim Museum and the Hermitage Centre.

The panel's judgement

The panel based its judgement on criteria outlined in Article 3 of the decision 1419. This article states that the nominations shall include a cultural project of European dimension, based principally on cultural co-operation, in accordance with the objectives and action provided for by Article 151 of the Treaty. The further specifications of Article 3 as well as the criteria mentioned in annex II of the decision were taken into account fully by the panel during the meeting.

The criteria are attached to the report.

Conclusions

Linz

The panel was impressed by Linz's proposed use of modern technology as a permanent application and its use for communication. The panel felt that communication was a key aspect of any bid and that Linz had shown itself to be fully equipped to utilise it. The panel was impressed by the city's responses to questions of finance and felt that Linz had the organisational capacity to host the event. The panel also noted that several areas of Linz's programme involved other countries in some capacity.

The panel felt that recent history should not be discounted from the programme and that it would be a real benefit if the Linz programme included material referring to the city's history in the context of the Third Reich.

The panel noted that tourism appeared have declined in Linz over the past year and emphasised that the city should use the occasion as an opportunity to draw in tourists.

Having emphasised their advisory role, the Panel wished to stress the following points:

- The programme showed impressive instrumental aims by using art to benefit society and felt this was laudable but stressed that there was room for "art for arts sake" too.
- The programme organisers could place further emphasis on what the programme was for and who the target audiences were. They could also emphasise the role of the inhabitants of Linz in the events.
- Linz no doubt had the capacity to organise an event such as this and the panel emphasised the need to examine the reasons for holding such an event; Linz could take this opportunity to redefine the role of culture in its civic policy.
- Linz was the "City of Media" in Europe; this gave it a responsibility of critical reflection on new media.
- The panel felt that Linz had a good opportunity to examine the role and status of cultural policy in a pan-European context.
- The panel liked the use of the Danube to draw on Bavarian elements and Czech visitors, and the European Baroque Dialogues in collaboration with Vilnius. In addition the programme should collaborate with target groups in the region.
- The panel was pleased to note that more traditional culture would not be neglected.

Vilnius

The panel were impressed with the enthusiasm and vitality of the presentation from the delegates from Vilnius and were happy that in Vilnius's post-communist system there was a certain civic pride and optimism. The panel felt that certain aspects such

as the Country's historic links with Poland, the Jews etc. should be further emphasised. The panel was confident that Vilnius would find a balance between national pride and its ancient role as a European cultural cosmopolitan meeting point.

The panel agreed that the presentations so far from Vilnius were a good base to build on and the panel was confident it would build in concrete developments that would contribute to well-rounded strong programmes. The panel felt that Vilnius's programme would have a positive and long term impact on the country. Vilnius really wanted this chance to host the Capitals of Culture event, and it was clear to the jury why they needed to.

Having emphasised their advisory role, the panel wished to stress the following points:

- Vilnius might wish to add a critical element of the preparations by inviting outsiders to participate in the planning process.
- The panel were confident that Vilnius would celebrate a pan-European cultural agenda and that programme would be careful not to tip the programme content balance too far towards Eastern Europe. They felt that the European identity of Vilnius should be emphasised.
- The panel suggested rewording the documentation about the Palace Of Lithuanian Sovereigns to reflect the fact that it was not a restoration project but a new construction project. This would avoid creating a potentially misleading impression.
- By creating the right atmosphere to draw together the diverse projects in the four historic capitals, the panel were confident Vilnius would avoid any risk of deconcentration.
- The panel felt by emphasising its local businesses, character and restaurants, Vilnius would avoid the encroachment of globalisation. The panel felt that Vilnius would have a smooth development and implementation period if it was wary of tying the programme planning commission too closely to civic politics.
- The panel felt that a strong infrastructure would work towards a stronger civil society. The four-year preparation time would encourage Vilnius's citizens to dare to create and this would continue after 2009. It was felt that the city could promote its historic cultural links with Milan, Germany and Poland to encourage repeat tourism. Sustainability could be built into the programme from the start.
- The panel felt confident that Vilnius would create a strong balance between civic/national pride and metropolitan cultural life. They felt that Vilnius had a historical opportunity for two successes; to strengthen Lithuanian identity and to strengthen knowledge of Lithuania's ecumenical commonwealth history.
- Vilnius, as a new Member State had a chance to reinvent what it meant to be a Capital of Culture.

The panel's recommendation

On the basis of an overall evaluation of, and the panel's recommendations to the applications from both the nominated cities, the panel – while suggesting some improvement in the areas commented upon - agreed unanimously to recommend to the Institutions of the European Union that Linz and Vilnius host the European Capital of Culture in 2009.

General Considerations

- Both cities were advised to keep in contact with the Commission over the course of their programme development.
- The jury advised that candidates should ensure that finances were approved by the responsible authorities immediately because a change in political administration could jeopardise funding.

Bert van Meggelen (signed)
(Council designation)

Charlie Hennessy (signed)
Elected chairman
(Council designation)

Henning Jensen (signed)
(Committee of Regions designation)

Jacek Purchla (signed)
(Commission designation)

Georg Dolivo (signed)
(Parliament nomination)

Danuta Glondys (signed)
(Parliament nomination)