

**REPORT
ON THE IRISH NOMINATIONS
FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF
CULTURE 2005**

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**Issued by
The Selection Panel for the European Capital of
Culture 2005**

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This report was written on the basis of the meetings of the meetings of 4 and 23 September 2001 and the intervening visit of certain cities by the selection panel for the European Capital of Culture 2005. The report is addressed to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission.

Background

The European Cities of Culture programme, 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 Council of Ministers 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 Capitals of Culture were designated.

In intergovernmental and community texts, the “European Cities of Culture” changes to “European Capitals of Culture” 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 have been designated by the Council. Decision 1418/1999/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.

For the year 2005 onwards, the *nomination procedure* is as follows:

- The national authorities of the relevant country nominate one or several cities. The nomination(s) are notified to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions by the Member state concerned four years before the event is due to begin.
- A selection panel issues a report on the nomination(s) judged against the objectives and criteria specified in the decision. The report is forwarded to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission.
- The European Parliament may forward an opinion on the nomination(s) within three months after the receipt of the report.

- The Commission gives a recommendation on the designation of the Capital 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 one of the cities as the European Capital of Culture.

The *selection panel* is composed of seven people 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 appointed for the selection procedure for the European Capital of Culture 2005:

The members of the selection panel formed to judge the four Irish cities nominated for 2005 were appointed as described in the decision 1419. The following members were appointed:

By E/2001/81 – SEC(2001)88 ; SEC(2001) 88/2, the Commission appointed 29 January 2001 two members, Tuula Arkio and Robert Palmer.

The Council approved the two Council appointed members, Mr Antonio Mega Ferreira and Mr Bernard Faivre d'Arcier, 23 November 2000 in the Council of Culture and Audio-visual Affairs. The two candidates had been nominated by the Portuguese and the French Council presidencies, in accordance with the Council Decision of 17 December 1999 on appointment by the Council of the members of the selection panel for the 'European Capital of Culture' Community action (2000/C 9/01).

The Parliament selected two members, Mr Enrico Castiglione and Mr Franco Bianchini, in the conference of the presidents of the European Parliament 29 March 2001. The Parliament also appointed two substitutes, Mr Roger Tropeano and Mr Olaf Schwenke. The Commission was informed of the appointed members by the letter of 4 April 2001 from President Nicole Fontaine to President Romano Prodi.

The Committee of the Regions presented their appointed member, Mr Alberto Joao Jardim, by their letter of 2 May 2001 from President Jos Chabert to Commissioner Viviane Reding. As Mr Jardim was not able to be present at the meeting of 4 September 2001, Ms Irma Peiponen was selected by the Committee of the Regions to take part as full member in this meeting, cf. letter of 23 August 2001 from President Chabert to Director-General Nikolaus G. van der Pas.

The members of the panel received the applications from the cities by the letter of 23rd July 2001 from the Commission.

The Commission has presented a set of *rules of procedure* for the selection panel, taking into account that a further specification of the panel's work as described in the decision is required. The rules were adopted by the panel.

Candidates for 2005

With their letter of 20 December 2000, from Minister Sile De Valera to Commissioner Viviane Reding, the Irish government presented the nominations for the European Capital of Culture 2005. Four candidates were presented. No further recommendations as to the final selection of a city were given. The four nominations were: Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford.

Meeting of the selection panel in Brussels, 4 September 2001

On the initiative of the Commission, the panel members were invited to a meeting on the 4th September 2001 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 Director Jean-Michel Baer, the Commission – Directorate General for Education and Culture, and appointment of the chairman of the panel.
2. Presentations by the cities in the following order: Galway, Cork, Waterford, Limerick.
3. Deliberations and selection of the city that corresponds best to the objectives and characteristics of the action (closed discussion).

All panel members except Mr Antonio Mega Fereira (Council designation) were present. All cities presented their candidature. The following were present from the Commission: Jean-Michel Baer (Director) (until the deliberations), Theo Mastrominas (the Cultural Unit), Brit Holtebekk (the Cultural Unit).

Robert Palmer was elected chairman and conducted the meeting. The Commission assisted in the drafting of the report.

Representatives of the four candidate cities each gave a presentation of their candidature and answered questions from the selection panel. After the hearings, the panel had a closed-door deliberation of the candidates with a view to making a proposal as to which of the cities should be finally designated. Having taken regard to the criteria for the selection and following a detailed discussion of the documentation that had been submitted by the candidate cities, the panel was reluctant to arrive at a final conclusion without further investigation of two of the cities, Galway and Cork. The panel therefore decided to visit these two cities during the weekend of 22-23 September. Letters informing about this decision were sent to all four cities.

Visit to Galway and Cork, 22 and 23 September 2001

The Commission and the two cities worked together on the practical arrangements of the visit. All panel members except Mr Antonio Mega Ferreira (Council designation) and Enrico Castiglione (Parliament designation) were present. Brit Holtebekk from the Cultural Unit of the Commission was present.

During the visit, the panel viewed the cultural infrastructure of each of the cities/regions, and visited briefly key venues and sites that would be used for major projects. In addition, the panel was presented with more detail information about the plans for the main events of the proposed programmes for 2005 and the events leading up to this year. The Panel met some of the people (directors of cultural institutions, curators, artists, policy makers, project managers) who would be in charge of directing and managing important specific events, and the Panel received further details on the content and budgets for the cultural programmes and projects. The Panel was satisfied with the detailed arrangements that had been made by the cities they visited and grateful for the warm reception they received. The panel believes that such visits are an essential part of the selection process and should take place as part of the selection procedures of future European Capitals of Culture.

Programmes for each of the visits are attached to the report.

Conclusive meeting in Cork, 23 September 2001

After the visits, the Panel met for a closed meeting in Cork. All members except Mr Antonio Mega Ferreira (Council designation) and Enrico Castiglione (Parliament designation) were present. Brit Holtebekk from the Cultural Unit of the Commission was present.

The previous meeting's Agenda was continued, with deliberations and selection of the city that corresponds best to the objectives and characteristics of the European Capital of Culture. The panel reviewed the notes of its previous meeting and the documentation provided by the candidate cities and held detailed deliberations on the strengths and weaknesses of each of the bids that had been presented. This discussion took into account fully the experiences of the visits to two of the cities.

Short presentation of the four candidate cities

Cork: (127 000 inhabitants, second largest city of Ireland) Cork launched a five year Arts Development Plan in 2000 both to enhance existing infrastructure and to develop new activities. The existing cultural infrastructure includes an opera house, several theatres, galleries, sculpture workshop, arts centres, libraries and concert halls, and a public museum. Cork also hosts several festivals each year. The city supports a range of cultural organisations and arts projects. The proposed programme for 2005 is multi-themed and multi-focused. Cork presents five major themes for the event: Creativity, Community, Diversity, Celebration and Innovation. The themes will be applied to different cultural sectors. The application presents a calendar of events and proposals for improvement of the infrastructure of the city. The impact of the event is expected to be a more diverse and dispersed involvement in cultural activities by the wider community, as well as development of local perspectives in the fields of economy and tourism, and at a social level.

Galway: (65 000 inhabitants in the city; 500 000 inhabitants including the surrounding region, which is included in the bid) The existing infrastructure of Galway includes several theatres and performance spaces, a youth orchestra, galleries and art centres, outdoor venues and several festivals. The city and region support a large number of cultural organisations and arts initiatives. The proposed theme for the event in 2005 is “The New Millennium – the Role of Culture: a view from the periphery”. Galway has established four guiding principles for the event (the emergence of an image; the role of culture in the life of the city; defining culture as process; the big debate). The application includes a programme with information on 6 marker events and other projects, an operational plan and proposals for expanding the cultural infrastructure.

Limerick: (54 000 inhabitants) A long-term arts strategy for Limerick, based on a previous arts plan, was published in January 2001. The existing cultural infrastructure of Limerick includes one multifunctional arts centre, a concert hall, several galleries and museums, a theatre and cinemas. Limerick also hosts some festivals. The city encourages a wide range of arts projects. The chosen theme for the event in 2005 is “the quiet minute” referring to the moment twice a day when the River Shannon is stopped by the tide. “The quiet minute” is a symbol representing the point of creativity and cultural reflection. The application presents a draft programme, an operational plan and proposals for improvements to the cultural infrastructure. Details are given for a selection of events in all art sectors.

Waterford: (50 000 inhabitants) Waterford has several theatres, a multifunctional art centre, galleries and several other outdoor and indoor venues and supports various arts initiatives and projects. Waterford underlines the importance of involving the ordinary citizen in the Capital of Culture event. A preliminary programme based on five major strands or themes and covering all cultural sectors is presented. “Reflections 1 and 2” are the planning and evaluation stages; “Explorations” will emphasise participation by schools and special needs projects; “Expressions” aims to enhance creativity; “Celebrations” focuses artistic expression and cultural diversity; and “Horizons” presents events that encourage the public to look positively towards the future. The application includes a preliminary programme and proposals for development of the cultural infrastructure of the city.

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.

The panel wishes to emphasise these aspects of the application for each city:

Cork: The ongoing art activities are of an impressive volume and the cultural climate seems capable of generating further activity in the coming years. The panel notes that the cultural activities take place in many parts of the city, including deprived neighbourhoods. The city council expresses a strong commitment to the cultural life of the city and the plans for the European Capital of Culture event. The bid shows that the link between the city and the surrounding regions is strong. The new infrastructure development in the city is notable and of considerable scale in the longer term. The panel feels, however, that the artistic ambition of the programme which was proposed for 2005 is somewhat modest. The city's capacity for staging and managing high quality, innovative projects requires strengthening, and the approach to marketing must be re-examined. The cultural infrastructure of Cork has the capacity to be exploited for an event of the scale of a Capital of Culture over the period of a full year. However, at present there is limited evidence that organisations are using this capacity to host larger scale international events which are of European significance, although the local following is strong for the projects that do take place. These include several annual festivals and special exhibitions. The city appears to be open-minded in terms of collaboration with other cities in Ireland and the rest of Europe. The city participates in various European networks, although these are not particularly focused on culture.

Galway: The cultural life of the city illustrates a high level of enthusiasm and involvement. The fact that the city consists of two language communities offers important possibilities. The surrounding landscape is exceptional. The panel noted the international experience of several arts organisations, in particular Druid Theatre Company, Macnas and Galway Arts Festival, as well as the cohesion of the local arts community and the positive contribution made to the bid by many local artists and thinkers. Although impressed by the passion, track record and imagination of organisations and artists in the city and the region, the panel feels that the artistic aspirations as expressed in the bid should have been set higher. The desire to re-examine the notion of culture and how it is expressed and developed in communities across Europe has substantial potential. However, the proposed programme lacks continuity, and the panel is not certain that the city, through the listed events, would be able to sustain a significant level of activity throughout the whole of the year as its intention states. The physical infrastructure is limited, in particular with regard to possibilities for hosting larger scale events. The panel finds that the European

dimension of the proposal is rather vague, and that the programme could have included a larger number of significant European collaborations. Further, the projects inspired by the dramatic landscape of the region remain under-developed. The panel recognises the special qualities and vibrancy of cultural life as reflected in Galway and its region and encourages the city to realise ambitions for its further artistic and cultural development and the enhancement of its cultural infrastructure. The city has strong potential to develop further its bilingual cultural identity and reputation for innovative cultural activity and to enhance the important collaborations internationally which the city has developed in the past. _

Limerick: The application presents a strong managerial capability with clear evidence of partnerships between different agencies and cultural and educational institutions. The city has undergone important changes in recent years, and appears to have a strong commitment to continued development. The core theme “the quiet minute” is interesting and has considerable potential, but has not been fully developed. Limerick seems to have the capacity required to stage events and projects and a clear vision relating to longer-term objectives. The physical infrastructure in the city for cultural projects is limited. The artistic and cultural programmes presented in the application are vague, and other plans lack detail. The European dimension of the programme is limited in scope and is lacking in scale. The panel finds that although Limerick has the potential of hosting the Capital of Culture event and that the city has a strong desire to do so, the proposal is not sufficiently convincing when judged against the criteria established for the event. The panel commends Limerick on the process used in the preparation for the bid and strongly encourages the city to consolidate its achievements to date and to develop and implement the next phase to enhance and exploit its substantial cultural potential.

Waterford: The city has been undergoing important changes during the last years, and the application focuses on the point that a designation would assist the city to move to the next stage of its development. The city displays enthusiasm and conviction about the Capital of Culture event, and the commitment to cultural activity is notable. The presented programme shows a strong concern about involving citizens, and through this bringing young people together and increasing social cohesion. The main themes and strands are interesting, but not detailed enough to be evaluated fully. The submission has not convinced the panel that the infrastructure in physical and human terms is sufficient to host an event of European scale. In arriving at its conclusion, the panel recognises the significant efforts that are being made by the city and encourages it to continue the momentum that has been generated by the bidding process.

Conclusions

The panel expresses sufficient confidence in the case which was presented by Cork to recommend that this city be designated as the European Capital of Culture 2005. However, in doing so, the Panel strongly believes that Cork must address various concerns if this city is to exploit its potential and develop a programme which is credible and which will have importance on a European scale.

The panel recommends that steps should be taken to strengthen the artistic content and quality of the proposed programme for the year. The procedure for the selection and recruitment of the chief executive is of major importance and should be planned carefully and be implemented as soon as possible. The city should aim to appoint a chief executive of international standing and who has experience of European cultural networking. The city may also wish to establish a team of international advisors to help with the development of the programme and other issues.

In its review of the programme for the event and the years leading up to it, Cork should place a stronger emphasis on innovation and new contemporary cultural practice. The programme should include innovative cultural projects with a significant European dimension. Through the planning of the programme, the city should develop international partners and work towards collaborations that will continue after the cultural year. Since the information technology sector is of great importance to the economic life of the city, the panel encourages Cork to include aspects which address relationships between information technology and digital culture, including their applications to traditional cultural institutions.

The panel would like to stress that a coherent and well-developed marketing plan with sufficient resources made available to support it is essential. There is a need for Cork to improve its existing plan. The city should use expert advice in relation to how to address the different segments of local, regional, national and international markets through different strategies.

The operational plan for the Capital of Culture event should include provision for training cultural personnel across the city in areas such as promotion and fundraising. Further, the city should be conscious of a need to develop further its approaches to programming on a European scale.

The panel would like also to point out that if designated, Cork should be prepared to take a leading role in the cultural life of Ireland in the years leading up to 2004 and most certainly in 2005 in order to ensure that the Capital of Culture event will be of importance regionally and nationally as well as in Cork itself. The city should recognise the special qualities of artistic and cultural life of other Irish cities and towns. In particular, Cork is encouraged to collaborate with some of the important artistic organisations of the other three applicant cities and consider an approach to collective working on certain key projects which formed part of their submissions and which could help strengthen the programme of Cork during the cultural year.

The panel further recommends that if designated, Cork be asked to submit a progress report including details of how the city was addressing the concerns of the panel. This report should be received 6 months after the city has been designated officially by the Council. The selection panel is prepared to convene to consider such a report should the European Institutions request that it does so.

The panel's recommendation

On the basis of an overall evaluation of the applications from all four cities, the panel finds that Cork responds best to the objectives and the characteristics set in decision 1418/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council. We therefore advise the Institutions of the European Union that this city hosts the European Capital of Culture 2005.

Mr Bernard Faivre d'Arcier
(Council designation)

Ms Irma Peiponen
(Committee of Regions
designation)

Ms Tuula Arkio
(Commission designation)

Mr Robert Palmer
(Commission designation)

Mr Franco Bianchini
(Parliament designation)

Excused:

Mr Antonio Mega Fereira
(Council designation)

Mr Enrico Castiglione
(Parliament designation)