II

(Preparatory Acts)

COMMISSION

Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision establishing a Community initiative for The European City of Culture event

(97/C 362/09)

(Text with EEA relevance)

COM(97) 549 final — 97/0290(COD)

(Submitted by the Commission on 30 October 1997)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 128 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 189b of the Treaty,

Whereas Europe has, throughout its history, been the site of exceptionally prolific and varied artistic activity; whereas urban life has played a major role in the growth and influence of the European cultures;

Whereas the EC Treaty gives the Community competence in the cultural field (Article 128); whereas all Community activity designed to promote the arts should therefore be placed on the new legal basis, in accordance with the objectives and means assigned to the Community by the Treaty;

Whereas, on 13 June 1985, the Ministers responsible for cultural affairs meeting within the Council adopted a resolution concerning the annual organization of the European City of Culture, the main aim of which was to make certain cultural aspects of the city, region or country in question accessible to the European public, an event for which the European Community has provided financial support;

Whereas Parliament, in the discussions leading up to its opinion of 7 April 1995 on the Kaleidoscope programme [1], asked the Commission to present a specific programme on the European City of Culture after the year 2000 on the basis of Article 128 of the EC Treaty;

Whereas any Community initiative to promote the European City of Culture must satisfy predefined objectives and use the resources provided for by the Treaty in accordance with article 128;

Whereas, in compliance with the principles for action laid down by Article 128, a European City of Culture is to be selected each year to organize a cultural project on a specific, European theme, possibly in association with other European cities;

Whereas the European Cultural Month event should be discontinued;

Whereas the Community has in the past made a contribution to the European City of Culture and the European Cultural Month events within the Kaleidoscope programme, which is due to expire in 1998 [2];

[1] See report by Mr Augias PE 211.116/final of 27 March 1995. Amended Commission proposal COM(95) 373 final of 28 July 1995. Decision No 719/96/EC of 29 March 1996 (recital 11) establishing a programme to support artistic and cultural activities having a European dimension (Kaleidoscope).

[2] See European Parliament and Council Decision No 719/96/EC of 29 March 1996 establishing the Kaleidoscope programme (action 4).

Whereas the Council adopted a Decision on 30 June 1997 calling on the Commission, in accordance with Article 152 of the EC treaty, to conduct a study prior to presenting proposals for a single programme for culture by May 1998, into which an action European City of Culture will be incorporated, including funding arrangements,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The Community shall organize a promotional initiative entitled 'European City of Culture'. The purpose shall be to highlight the richness and diversity of European cultures, and the features they share, and promote greater mutual acquaintance between European Union citizens.

Article 2

From 2002, the European City of Culture shall be chosen in accordance with the following procedure:

— three years before the event is due to begin, the Member States concerned shall submit to the Commission an application for the town or towns, as described in Article 3, for the year in question,

— the Commission shall form a selection panel which shall deliver its opinion on the applications, judged against the objectives and characteristics of this action. The selection panel shall be composed of seven leading independent figures of whom two shall be appointed by Parliament, two by the Council, two by the Commission and one by the Committee of the Regions. The selection panel shall present its opinion to the Commission,

— on a proposal from the Commission and after the European Parliament has been consulted, the Council, acting by qualified majority, shall designate the European City of Culture for the year in question.

Article 3

The application must present a European cultural project focusing on a specific European theme and based principally on cultural cooperation, in accordance with the objectives and measures provided for by Article 128 of the EC Treaty. The project may be organized in association with other European cities.

The application must specify how, within the scope allowed by the theme, the applicant city intends:

— to highlight artistic movements and styles shared by Europeans which it has inspired or to which it has made a significant contribution,

— to promote cultural events and works involving people active in culture from other cities in Member States of the European Union and leading to lasting cultural cooperation,

— to receive citizens of the European Union and reach as wide an audience as possible for the various events by employing a multimedia, multilingual approach,

— to promote dialogue between European cultures and those from other parts of the world.

Article 4

The countries of the European Economic Area, the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Cyprus and European third countries which have concluded Cooperation Agreements with the Community containing a cultural clause shall be allowed to participate in this initiative.

Article 5

The Commission shall be responsible for the implementation of this intiative each year it shall produce a report evaluating the results of the previous year's event. This report shall be presented to Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions.

Article 6

This initiative, containing detailed information on procedure and closing dates for submission of applications, shall be published each year in the 'C' series of the *Official Journal of the European Communities.*

Article 7

This Decision shall enter into force on ...

ANNEX

European City of Culture initiative

Conditions of participation

In order to promote cultural awareness, greater mutual acquaintance between European Union citizens and cooperation and exchanges in the arts world, the Community intends to promote the European City of Culture. The Community is therefore organizing this initiative on the following terms:

1. Each year, a city will be chosen to be European City of Culture, in accordance with the objectives laid out in Article 1.

   In order to be considered, cities must submit an application presenting a European cultural project based on a specific European theme. It may be organized in association with other cities and must be based principally on cultural cooperation, in accordance with the objectives and measures provided for by Article 128 of the EC Treaty.

   The city's plans must comprise specific measures satisfying the following criteria:

   — promotion of shared artistic movements and styles in the development of which the city has played a particular role,

   — organization of artistic events (music, dance, theatre, visual arts, cinema, etc.) highlighting the city's own culture and involving people involved in cultural activities from other cities in the Member States of the European Union, with a view to establishing lasting cooperation,

   — promotion of European public awareness of the figures and events which have marked the history and culture of the city,

   — organization of measures to increase access to and awareness of fixed and movable artistic assets and artistic productions specific to the city,

   — promotion of a cultural heritage which, even if less well-known, is of a quality worthy of a wider audience,

   — organization of specific cultural projects designed to bring young people to the arts,

   — organization of specific cultural projects designed to increase social cohesion,

   — taking the planned activities to a wider public, particularly by the use of multimedia and audiovisual means and a multilingual approach,

   — organization of initiatives concerning the promotion and management of the arts,

   — contribution to the development of economic activity, particularly in terms of employment and tourism,

   — need to develop high-quality and innovative cultural tourism (alternative forms of tourism, original methods for managing flows of tourists, new systems of partnership between the parties concerned) with due allowance for the importance in this connection of managing the cultural heritage on a sustainable basis and reconciling the wishes of visitors (reception, guides, information, accommodation) with those of the local population (respect for the quality of life, the environment, etc.),

   — joint organization of initiatives designed to promote dialogue between the cultures of Europe and the cultures of other parts of the world.

2. Applications must be sent to the European Commission by the Member States on an application form published in the *Official Journal of the European Communities.*

They must present the specific European theme on which the city's project is to be based and must contain a detailed description of the specific measures to be organized (see point 1) with reference to the criteria set down in Article 3. They must also give details of the financial contribution(s) of the Member States concerned and the results expected.

3. Applications must be presented by the Member States three years before the date envisaged for the start of the annual event. Decisions on the choice of the European City of Culture will be taken in the year in which the applications are presented.

4. Applications must contain a balanced financing plan showing the resources needed for its realization.