EUROPEAN
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Brussels, 30.4.2014
COM(2014) 253 final

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

designating the European Capital of Culture for the year 2018 in the Netherlands

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Decision No1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019,[1] lays down the procedure of designation of the European Capitals of Culture. According to Article 2 of this Decision, from 2009 onwards, two cities of two Member States will be designated as European Capitals of Culture, in turn, according to the chronological order set out in the Annex to the Decision. Malta and the Netherlands are entitled to host the event in 2018. Malta decided to proceed with its selection procedure one year ahead of the normal time schedule, and Valletta was designated as "European Capital of Culture 2018" in Malta by Council Decision 2013/286/EU of 17 May 2013.[2]

The nomination for the European Capital of Culture for the year 2018 in the Netherlands is submitted to the following process.

A call for submissions of applications is published by the Member State concerned no later than six years before the event. A selection panel composed of 13 independent experts in the cultural sector is convened for a pre-selection meeting no later than five years before the event. It assesses the applications received against the criteria laid down in article 4 of Decision No1622/2006/EC and agrees on a short-list of candidate cities which have to be considered further after completing their application.

The Member State concerned convenes the panel for a final selection nine months after the pre-selection meeting. After an extensive evaluation of the pre-selected cities based on the criteria laid down for the action, the panel recommends one city for the title in the Member State concerned.

On the basis of this recommendation, the Member State nominates one city to be European Capital of Culture and notifies the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions no later than four years before the event in question is due to begin.

The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the Commission no later than 3 months after receipt of the nominations.

The Council, acting on a recommendation from the Commission, officially designates the cities in question for the year for which they have been nominated.

After completion of the two-round competition described above, the panel recommended that Leeuwarden (Netherlands) host the event in 2018 in its report dated September 2013. The Netherlands notified this nomination to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions in December 2013.

The European Parliament forwarded its positive opinion to the Commission in February 2014.

Consequently, the Commission, in accordance with Article 9.3 of Decision No1622/2006/EC submits to the Council the appended recommendation for the official designation of Leeuwarden for the 2018 European Capital of Culture event in the Netherlands.

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1 OJ L 304 of 3.11.2006, p. 1.

2 OJ L 162 of 14.06.2013, p. 9.

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Decision No1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019[3], and in particular Article 9(3) thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation from the European Commission,

Having regard to the Selection Panel report of September 2013 regarding the selection process of the European Capital of Culture in the Netherlands,

Whereas :

Considering that the criteria referred to in Article 4 of Decision No1622/2006/EC are entirely fulfilled,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Leeuwarden is designated as “European Capital of Culture 2018” in the Netherlands.

[3] OJ L 304 of 3.11.2006, p. 1.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President