

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 18.10.2005
COM(2005) 508 final

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the European Capital of Culture event for the year 2009

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 25 May 1999 establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019[1], lays down the procedure of designation of the European Capital of Cultural from 2005 and onwards. Annex 1 of this Decision sets out the list of Member States entitled to propose cities for the title. The ten new Member States, which joined the EU on 1 May 2004, were not included in this list. The Commission, therefore, submitted a proposal to amend Decision 1419/1999/EC to enable the new Member States to propose an ECOC from 2009. This proposal was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 13 April 2005 (Decision 649/2005/EC). According to Article 2 of Decision 1419/1999/EC modified by Decision 649/2005/EC, from 2009 onwards, two cities of two Member States (one from the EUR-15, one from the new Member States) will be designated as European Capitals of Culture, in turn, according to the chronological order set out in Annex I to the Decision.

The nominations are notified to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions by the Member States concerned no later than four years before the event in question is due to begin.

The Commission, each year, forms a selection panel which issues a report on the nominations judged against the objectives and characteristics of this action. The selection panel is composed of leading independent figures who are experts on the cultural sector. The selection panel submits its report to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council.

The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the Commission on the nominations no later than 3 months after receipt of the report. For 2009, the European Parliament did not forward any opinion[2]

The Council, acting on a recommendation from the Commission drawn up in the light of the selection panel's report, officially designates the cities in question for the year for which they have been nominated.

In accordance with article 2 and Annex I, Austria and Lithuania notified the nomination of Linz and Vilnius respectively.

The selection panel met on 14th April 2005 to examine both nominations. This examination included hearings of representatives from Linz and Vilnius. The panel submitted its report to the Commission on the 29th of April 2005 ; on the request of the panel, the Commission forwarded it to the other Institutions.

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

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1 OJ L 166 of 1.7.1999, p. 1.

2 See « Report on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision 1419/1999/EC », Rapporteur Michel Rocard, PE 334.052, Explanatory Memorandum, page 10.

In conclusion, the Commission, in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 3 of Decision 1419/1999/EC modified by Decision 649/2005/EC submits to the Council the appended recommendation for the official designation of Linz and Vilnius respectively for the European Capital of Culture event 2009.

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Decision n° 1419/1999/EC modified by Decision n° 649/2005/EC of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019[3], and in particular its article 2.3,

Having regard to the Selection Panel report of April 2005 submitted to the Commission, the European Parliament, the Council in accordance with Article 2 paragraph 2 of Decision 1419/1999/EC modified by Decision 649/2005/EC,

Considering that the criteria laid down in article 3 and annex II of the Decision 1419/1999/EC modified by Decision n° 649/2005/EC are entirely fulfilled,

Having regard to the recommendation from the Commission of the ---------- 2005,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Linz and Vilnius are designated as "European Capital of Culture 2009" in accordance with Article 2 paragraph 1 of Decision 1419/1999/EC modified by Decision 649/2005/EC.

[3] OJ L 166 of 1.7.1999, p. 1 and OJ L 117 of 4.05.2005, p.20.

Article 2

Both cities designated shall take the necessary measures in order to ensure the effective implementation of Articles 1 and 5 of Decision 1419/1999/EC modified by Decision 649/2005/EC.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council
The President