

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 30.5.2005
COM(2005) 209 final

2005/102 (COD)

Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

establishing a community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. INTRODUCTION

The European City of Culture was launched by the Council of Ministers on 13 June 1985. Until 2004, the European Cities of Culture had been selected on an intergovernmental basis whereby Member States unanimously selected cities worthy of hosting the event.

Decision 1419/1999/EC[1], adopted on the basis of Article 151 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, amended the procedure for selecting the cities from 2005 onwards, known as "European Capitals of Culture" (ECOC). The ECOC is now decided by the Council on the basis of a Commission recommendation, which takes into account the view of a jury of seven independent members. The selection is based on criteria laid down in the above Decision. This Decision includes a list of EUR-15 Member States (Annex 1) setting out the chronological of entitlement from 2005 to 2019[2].

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/CE in November 2003 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. As a result, from 2009 onwards, there will be two European Capitals of Culture each year (one from the EUR-15, one from the new Member States).

2. NEED TO REVIEW THE CURRENT DECISION

2.1. Improvements required from the experience and consultation of the stakeholders

The Commission launched a study[3] (hereafter: ECOC study) which confirms that the ECOC action is generally viewed very positively by the general public. Nevertheless, the implementation of the designation process, as laid down in Decision 1419/1999, revealed a number of weaknesses, in particular with regard to:

- the competition between cities;
- the role of the selection panel;
- the question of monitoring
- the European dimension
- the question of timing
- the participation of third countries.

The assessment reports of the selection panels, the Committee for culture, youth, education, media and sports of the European Parliament in its report of the first reading of the modified decision, as well as the ECOC study confirmed these weaknesses. Accordingly, the present proposal, based on the various contributions, aims at replacing Decision 1419/1999 as

---

1 Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 May 1999 (OJ L 166, 1.7.1999). http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/1999/l_166/l_16619990701en00010005.pdf

2 Starting with Ireland in 2005, followed by Greece in 2006.

3 *Study on European Cities and Capitals of Culture and the European Cultural Months (1995-2004)* (Palmer-Rae Associates August 2004) http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources_info/studies/capitals_en.html

amended on 13 April 2005. It also aims at improving, i.a. the transparency of the selection process and the definition of European added value.

2.2. Outline of the proposal

A) Strengthening the competition element

Following careful consideration of various competition models, the Commission has:

- rejected the idea of a **totally open competition**, Europe wide, with any European city being able to be nominated. Such an approach would require, each year, considerable and disproportionate resources in the Commission, the selection panels and the Members States. It would also not guarantee rotation between Member States.

- ruled out a **limited competition** system which would impose **a minimum of two proposals** for each Member State; this system offered no guarantee of a stronger European dimension of ECOC events. Furthermore, all Member States might not be in a position to present a minimum of 2 proposals.

On this basis, the Commission has opted for a system which encourages Member States to organise **competition at national level** between interested cities.

B) Role of the selection panel

The Commission proposes establishing **a "mixed" selection panel** consisting of 7 experts designated by the European Institutions, of which one taking the Chair, and 6 experts designated by the Member State concerned, in agreement with the Commission. The 7 experts should be appointed in turn for 3 years by the Council, the European Parliament, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions in accordance with the criteria laid down in Article 5(3) of this proposal. The overall composition of the panel should ensure adequate balance between local and national interests and guarantee the "European" dimension ahead of the national selection decision.

The Member State concerned should launch a call for submission of applications 6 years before the event is due to begin, and organise an information day for potential candidates.

The selection panel should meet 5 years before the event to agree on a short-list of candidates. It should prepare a report on the candidates' programmes and make recommendations to the candidates short-listed. The report should be submitted to the Member State concerned and the Commission.

The panel should meet 9 months after the first selection meeting in order to prepare a report on the programmes of the short-listed candidates, and, on that basis, recommend a city for nomination as ECOC. The report should also contain recommendations to the selected city. It should be submitted to the Member State concerned and to the Commission.

The Member State concerned should notify one nomination 4 years before the event is due to begin. The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the Commission within the following two months. On that basis, the Commission would make a Recommendation to the Council. The Council would then designate the city.

C) Monitoring by the "European monitoring panel"

The Commission proposes establishing a "European monitoring panel" (EMP) for the period after the designation of the ECOC until the start of the event. It would focus on the European dimension of the programme and contribute, wherever necessary, to ensuring the European added-value of the programme.

This European monitoring panel will be composed of only the 7 members of the selection panel designated, in turn as explained in 2.2.B, by the European Institutions. The EMP should provide cities with support and guidance in further elaborating their programme:

- Two years before the event is due to begin, the EMP should carry out a mid-term monitoring of the project and programme of the two cities on the state of the preparation as well as on the European dimension.

- Six months at the latest before the event, the EMP should meet again with the authorities of the designated ECOCs to take stock and assess the preparatory work done so far and the remaining steps to be taken. The EMP should then issue a final monitoring report, not later than one month after the final meeting.

On this basis, the Commission may award a prize to the designated cities, provided that their authorities met the commitments made during the selection phase and adequately responded to the recommendations issued by the panels during the selection and monitoring phase.

D) European dimension – selection criteria

The ECOC programme of activities should include events/actions which highlight the European dimension and offer European added value. The following aspects should be emphazised :

-a European dimension, which should foster multilateral cooperation between cultural operators at all levels, highlight the richness of cultural diversity and bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore;

-a citizenship dimension, which should raise the interest of the citizens living in the city and from other countries and be an integral part of the long term cultural development of the city.

E) Timing

Past experience and the ECOC study confirm that the overall planning time needs to be extended. The selection process should start six years before the event is due to begin (pre-selection / selection / nomination). The Council should be in a position to designate the ECOCs four years before the event.

F) The participation of third countries

On the basis of the ECOC study, the Commission proposes a maximum of two ECOCs per year. This approach is in line with the March 2005 Decision which integrates the new Member States.

More than two ECOCs per year would harm visibility of the event. Therefore, the reference to the nomination of an ECOC by third countries has been dropped. Instead, the successful

"cultural month" initiative which was in place for third countries until 2003 could be resumed. Discussions on this possibility should take place outside of the ECOC context.

G) Conclusion

As a result, the European Capitals of Culture will be designated in 2 phases, on the basis of the assessment of a panel composed of experts appointed by the Institutions and experts designated by the Member States concerned. A monitoring panel will support the designated cities in their preparation phases until the start of the event. A prize will reward the quality of the programme (particularly the relevance of the European dimension) once finalised.

This scheme maintains a good balance between national and local priorities and the required European added value of the action.

3. FLANKING MEASURES

The selection panels, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions and the ECOC study call for several flanking measures to:

- improve transparency of the selection process;

- clarify the aims and objectives of the ECOC event;

- clarify the selection criteria;

- define the concept of European dimension;

- provide guidance to potential candidates.

On that basis, the Commission will develop relevant documentation, including specifications for the submission of nominations and the related official reports. This material will be made available online as soon as possible, starting in the year 2006. The Commission will also promote information and exchange of experience between ECOCs.

4. RESOURCES - DURATION OF THE VALIDITY OF THE DECISION

4. 1. Resources

This proposal has no direct financial implications. The financial aspect in relation to the ECOCs is dealt with in the framework of the Culture 2000 and future Culture 2007 programmes. At this stage, the Commission's proposal for the Culture 2007 programme would allow up to a tripling of the Community contribution to each individual ECOC as compared to the current programme.

4.2 Date of application (transitional period)

The present proposal, which replaces and repeals Decision 1419/1999, will apply as of 2007. It includes a transitional period between the two schemes in order to cover the designations for 2011 and 2012.

2005/102 (COD)

Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

establishing a community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2007 to 2019

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 151[4] thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission[5],

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions[6],

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty[7],

Whereas

(1) Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council [8] established a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event for the years 2005 to 2019

(2) A study which has been carried out into the results achieved by European Capital of Culture event until 2004 showed that it has a positive impact in terms of media resonance, the development of culture and tourism and the recognition by inhabitants of the importance of their city having been designated. However, this action still needs to be improved.

(3) The stakeholders of the event stressed problems in the selection process laid down in the Decision 1419/1999/EC, and recommended monitoring the proposals, particularly in order to enhance their European dimension.

(4) The importance and impact of the European Capital of Culture calls for the creation of a mixed selection process, involving national and European levels, and the introduction of a strong monitoring element.

(5) The preparation phase of the event is of crucial importance for its success in accordance with the objectives of the action.

---

4 OJ C 325, 24.12.2002, p.99.
5 OJ .
6 OJ… .
7 OJ C 325, 24.12.2002, p.133
8 OJ L 166, 1.7.1999, p.1. Decision as amended by Decision 649/2005/EC (OJ L 117, 4.5.2005, p.20)

(6) A monitoring phase after the designation is needed to guarantee the European added-value of the action.

(7) It is important to reward the quality of the programme in terms of the objectives and criteria of the action and particularly the European added value by awarding a prize.

(8) The designation process laid down in this Decision needs a period of six years to be implemented ; this period cannot be guaranteed for the years 2011 and 2012 given that this Decision enters into force in 2007. For these years a designation process is provided, as laid down in Decision 1419/1999/EC as modified by Decision 649/2005/CE.

(9) In the interests of clarity, Decision 1419/1999 should be replaced by this Decision.

HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS

Article 1
Subject matter

A Community action entitled "European Capital of Culture" is hereby established in order 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.

Article 2
Access to the action

1. Cities in Member States shall be entitled to be designated as European Capitals of Culture for one year, in turn, as set out in the list of the Annex .

2. The designation shall apply to one city of each of the Member States appearing in the list referred to in paragraph 1.

The chronological order set out in that list may be altered by mutual agreement between the Member States concerned.

Article 3
Applications

1. Every application shall include a cultural programme with a European dimension, based principally on cultural cooperation, in accordance with the objectives and action provided for by Article 151 of the Treaty.

2. The cultural programme of the event shall be specifically created for the European Capital of Culture year, highlighting the European added value in accordance with the criteria laid down in paragraph 3.

3. The cultural programme shall meet the following criteria, grouped into two categories called “The European Dimension” and “City and Citizens”:

As regards “The European Dimension”, the programme shall:

(a) foster cooperation between cultural operators, artists and cities from other Member States in any cultural sector,

(b) highlight the richness of cultural diversity in Europe,

(c) bring the common aspects of European cultures to the fore.

As regards “City and citizens”, the programme shall:

(a) raise the interest of the citizens living in the city and its surroundings as well as of citizens from abroad,

(b) be sustainable and be an integral part of the long term cultural development of the city.

4. The programme shall last one year. In duly justified cases designated cities may opt for a shorter period.

A linkage between the programmes of the designated cities of the same year shall be made.

Cities may choose to involve their surrounding region in their programme.

Article 4
Submission of applications

1. A call for submission of applications shall be published by each of the Member States concerned no later than six years before the event in question is due to begin.

These calls for submission of applications, aimed at the candidate cities for the title, shall mention the criteria laid down in Article 3 of this Decision and on the Commission web site.

The deadline for submitting a proposal under each of these calls for submission of applications shall be scheduled ten months after its publication at the latest.

The proposals received under these calls shall present the outlines of the programmes which the candidate cities plan to realize for the given year.

2. Proposals shall be notified to the Commission by the Member State concerned.

Article 5
Selection panel

1. A selection panel, shall be established to assess the proposals of the candidate cities and to recommend the nomination of one city by the Member State concerned.

2. The selection panel shall consist of 13 members. The members are appointed by the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the

Regions and by the Member State concerned each year. It shall designate its chairman among the personalities nominated by the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions.

3. Two Panel members shall be appointed by the European Parliament, two by the Council, two by the Commission and one by the Committee of the Regions.

These selection panel members shall be independent experts with no conflicts of interest and with substantial experience and expertise in the cultural sector, in cultural development of cities or in organization of European Capital of Culture.

They shall be appointed for three years.

By way of derogation to the first subparagraph in the first year this Decision is in force, two experts shall be appointed by the Commission for one year, two by the European Parliament for two years, two by the Council for three years and one by the Committee of the Regions for three years.

4. Each of the Member States concerned shall nominate six personalities as members in agreement with the Commission, who shall be independent from the cities which applied to the call for submission of applications.

These selection panel members shall be independent experts with no conflicts of interest and with substantial experience and expertise in cultural sector or city development.

Article 6
Pre-selection

1. Each of the Member States concerned shall convene the relevant selection panel as laid down in Article 5 no later than five years before the event is due to begin.

2. Each of the selection panels shall assess the proposals of the cities which applied to each of the calls for submission of applications, assessing their proposals according to the criteria laid down in Article 3.

It shall agree on a short-list of candidates which are to be further considered and issue a report on the proposals of the candidate cities and recommendations to the short-listed candidates.

It shall submit its report to the competent Member State and the Commission.

Article 7
Final selection

1. The short-listed cities shall complete their proposal and transmit the completed bid to the Member States concerned, which shall then forward it to the Commission.

2. Each of the Member States concerned shall convene the relevant selection panel, for final selection, nine months after the first selection meeting.

It shall evaluate the amended programmes of the short-listed cities according to the criteria of this action and the recommendations issued by the panel during its pre-selection meeting.

It shall issue a report on the programmes of the short listed candidates together with a recommendation for the nomination of one city to become European Capital of Culture.

The report shall also contain recommendations to the selected city concerning the progress and the development to be achieved by the given year, if designated as European Capital of Culture by the Council.

The report shall be submitted to the Member State concerned and to the Commission. It shall be published on the internet site of the Commission.

Article 8
Designation

1. Each of the Member States concerned shall nominate one city to be European Capital of Culture and shall communicate it to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions, no later than four years before the event is due to begin.

   The nomination must be accompanied by a justification for the decision based on the reports of the selection panel.

   The nomination shall take into account the recommendations issued by the selection panel.

2. The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the Commission not later than two months after receipt of the nominations of the Member States concerned.

   The Council, acting on a recommendation from the Commission drawn up in light of the opinion of the European Parliament and the justifications based on the reports of the selection panels, shall officially designate the cities in question as European Capitals of Culture for the year for which they have been nominated.

Article 9
Mid term Monitoring

1. The designated Capitals of Culture shall issue a mid term progress report to the Commission, at the latest 27 months before the event is due to begin, on the state of the preparations of the programme for the event.

   The Commission shall ensure independent evaluation of this report.

2. No later than 24 months before the event is due to begin, the Commission shall convene the seven experts nominated by the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the authorities responsible for the implementation of the programmes of the cities designated as European Capitals of Culture.

From this stage these experts form a "monitoring panel".

They shall meet to evaluate the preparation of the event, particularly concerning the European added value of the programmes.

The monitoring panel shall issue a mid term monitoring report on the state of the preparations for the event, and the steps still to be taken, in line with the objectives and criteria of the action and the recommendations laid down in the reports of the selection panels referred to in article 7(2).

The mid term monitoring report shall be transmitted to the Commission and to the cities and Member States concerned not later than one month after the mid term monitoring meeting. It shall be published on the internet site of the Commission.

Article 10
Final monitoring

1. The nominated Capitals of Culture shall issue a final progress report to the Commission, at the latest nine months before the event is due to begin, on the state of the preparations of the programmes for the event. The Commission shall ensure independent evaluation of this report.

2. The Commission shall convene a meeting of the monitoring panel with the authorities responsible for the implementation of the programmes of the cities which have been designated as European Capitals of Culture no later than six months before the event is due to begin in order to evaluate the preparation of the event, particularly concerning the European added value of the programme.

   The monitoring panel shall issue a final monitoring report on the state of the preparations for the event, and the steps still to be taken, in line with the objectives and criteria of the action and the recommendations laid down in the reports referred to in article 7(2) third subparagraph and in article 9(2), fourth subparagraph.

   This final monitoring report shall be transmitted to the Commission and to the cities and Member States concerned not later that one month after the final monitoring meeting. It shall be published on the internet site of the Commission.

Article 11
Prize

On the basis of the report referred to in Article 10(2), second subparagraph, the Commission may award a prize to each of the designated cities provided that their programmes meet the criteria of the action and the recommendations issued by the panels during the selection and monitoring process as referred to in Articles 9 and 10. This prize shall reward the quality of the programme in accordance with the objectives of the programme as specified in Article 3.

Article 12
Evaluation

Each year the Commission shall ensure external and independent evaluation of the results of the European Capital of Culture event of the previous year in accordance with the objectives and criteria of the action laid down in this decision.

A report on that evaluation shall be presented by the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the Committee of the Regions.

Article 13
Repeal

Decision 1419/1999/EC as modified by Decision 649/2005/CE is hereby repealed.

Article 14
Transitional provisions

1. The cities designated as European Capitals of Culture for 2010 on the basis of Decision 1419/1999/EC as modified by Decision 649/2005/CE shall be submitted to the monitoring process laid down in Articles 9 and 10 of this Decision. The Commission may award a prize to the designated cities on the basis of Article 11 of this Decision.

2. By way of derogation to Article 4 to 8, the nominations for European Capitals of Culture concerning the years 2011 and 2012 shall be governed by the following decision procedure:

    1) Cities in Member States shall be designated as European Capital of Culture, in turn, as set out on the list contained in Annex.

    2) Each Member State shall submit, in turn, its nomination of one or more cities to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions.

    3) This nomination shall be submitted no later than four years before the event in question is due to begin and may be accompanied by a recommendation from the Member State concerned.

    4) The Commission shall each year form a selection panel which shall issue a report on the nomination or nominations judged against the objectives and characteristics of this action.

    5) The selection panel shall be composed of seven leading independent personalities 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.

    6) The selection panel shall submit its report to the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council.

7) The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the Commission on the nomination or nominations not later than three months after receipt of the report.

8) The Council, acting on a recommendation from the Commission drawn up in the light of the opinion of the European Parliament and of the selection panel's report, shall officially designate the city in question as a European Capital of Culture for the year for which it has been nominated.

9) The nomination shall include a cultural programme based on the criteria laid down in Article 3.

Article 15
Entry into force

This Decision shall apply from 1st January 2007.

Date and place

For the European Parliament	*For the Council*
The President	*The President*

ANNEX

Order of entitlement to nominate a "European Capital of Culture"

2007	Luxembourg	
2008	United Kingdom	
2009	Austria	Lithuania
2010	Germany	Hungary
2011	Finland	Estonia
2012	Portugal	Slovenia
2013	France	Slovakia
2014	Sweden	Latvia
2015	Belgium	Czech Republic
2016	Spain	Poland
2017	Denmark	Cyprus
2018	Netherlands	Malta
2019	Italy	