EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

designating the European Capital of Culture for the year 2015 in the Czech Republic

EN

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Decision No 1622/2006/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 for designating 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. Belgium and the Czech Republic are entitled to host the event in 2015.

The nomination of European Capitals of Culture concerning the year 2015 is submitted to the following process.

A call for submissions of applications is published by each of the Member States 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 No 1622/2006/EC and agrees on a short list of candidate cities which have to be considered further after completing their application.

Each of the Member States concerned convenes the panel for final selection, 9 months after the pre-selection meeting. After an extensive evaluation of the preselected cities based on the criteria laid down for the action, the panel recommends one city for the title in each Member State concerned.

On the basis of these recommendations, both Member States nominate one city each to be European Capital of Culture and notify 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.

Three applications for the European Capital of Culture title were received in the Czech Republic : Hradec Králové, Ostrava and Plzeň.

At the end of the two stage selection procedure, the project of Plzeň was judged to respond best to the objectives and criteria of the event as defined in article 4 of Decision No 1622/2006/EC.

Consequently, the panel recommended that Plzeň hosts the event in the Czech Republic in 2015 in its report of September 2010. The Czech Republic notified these nominations to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions at the end of 2010.

[1] OJ L 304 of 3.11.2006, p1

The European Parliament forwarded its positive opinion to the Commission in early January 2011.

The selection process in Belgium was finalised in spring 2010 and the designation of Mons took place in November 2010.

Consequently, the Commission, in accordance with Article 9(3) of Decision No 1622/2006/EC submits to the Council the appended recommendation for the official designation of Plzeň for the 2015 European Capital of Culture event in the Czech Republic.

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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 No 1622/2006/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[2], 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 2010 regarding the selection process of the European Capitals of Culture in the Czech Republic,

Whereas:

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

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Plzeň is designated as "European Capital of Culture 2015" in the Czech Republic.

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 […],

For the Council
The President

[2] OJ L 304, 3.11.2006, p. 1.