I

(Information)

COUNCIL

CONCLUSIONS OF THE MINISTERS OF CULTURE MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

of 18 May 1992

concerning the choice of European Cities of Culture after 1996 and the European Cultural Month

(92/C 151/01)

The European City of Culture operation is now well established. The European Cultural Month will take place for the first time this year (Europe in Cracow 1992).

The conclusions of 18 May 1990 noted that a first cycle of designations of Cities of Culture among the European Community Member States would be completed in 1996. It was decided that after 1996 not only Member States of the European Community but other democratic European States should be eligible to designate a city as European City of Culture. It was stated that the first designations for the period after 1996 could take place from 1992 onwards.

In making these first designations the Ministers considered it appropriate, given that the field of choice of European City of Culture will be much wider after 1996, to set out some criteria for their own guidance and that of interested European states.

Without making hard and fast rules, they propose to alternate between current Member States (which will have had a City already) and other European States. Flexibility could be allowed between one category and the other for States which are expected to become Community members in the short term.

It will be advisable to avoid having cities from the same geographic area two years running, and sometimes a capital city will be chosen, at other times a provincial city. Specific anniversaries might be taken into account.

There may well be several candidatures at any one time, and this could give rise to frustration if cities have been chosen for many years ahead. It is therefore of great interest to continue with the European Cultural Month. A year or two of experience will be needed before its success can be judged. It should receive full support as a major European cultural event and should be thought of in the long term as a worthwhile alternative to the European City of Culture, which could be placed just as well in a Community Member State as in a non-Community country. It would be useful to review the situation after 'Europe in Graz 1993'.

Occasionally there might be twin Cities of Culture in a particular year, when two cities having affinities might want to harmonize their activities. Similarly, two cities might exceptionally want to share a year, each taking a different time period.

Decisions taken now about European Cities of Culture after 1996 should not prejudice any decisions which might need to be taken later about a second operation in the year concerned.