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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 18.10.2010
COM(2010) 566 final

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

designating the European Capital of Culture for the year 2015 in Belgium

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 2019¹ 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. Belgium and the Czech Republic are entitled to host the event in 2015.

The nomination for 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 pre selected 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.

An application for the European Capital of Culture title was received from the city of Mons. No other cities applied in Belgium.

At the end of the selection procedure, the panel concluded that the city's application met the objectives of the event and the criteria defined in article 4 of Decision No 1622/2006/EC and reached the high standards of quality required for the event.

Consequently, the panel recommended that Mons hosts the event in Belgium in 2015 in its reports dated February 2010. Belgium notified these nominations to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions by end 2009.

The European Parliament forwarded its positive opinion to the Commission in early July 2010.

¹ OJ L 304 of 3.11.2006, p1

The selection process in the Czech Republic is still on going and will be completed in early 2011.

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 Mons for the 2015 European Capital of Culture event in Belgium.

Recommendation for a

COUNCIL DECISION

designating the European Capital of Culture for the year 2015 in Belgium

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 2019², and in particular Article 9(3) thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation from the European Commission,

Having regard to the Selection Panel reports of February 2010 regarding the selection process of the European Capitals of Culture in Belgium,

Whereas:

Considering that the criteria referred to in Article 4 of Decision No 1622/2006/EC are entirely fulfilled,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Mons is designated as “European Capital of Culture 2015” in Belgium.

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.