



department for  
**culture, media  
and sport**

# Consultation on the European Commission's Proposal for a European Capitals of Culture Programme 2020- 2033

September 2012

Our aim is to improve the quality of life for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.

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# Section 1: Introduction

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1. This consultation seeks views on the European Commission's proposal for a new European Capitals of Culture programme 2020-2033. The new programme would follow on from the current European Capitals of Culture programme which comes to an end in 2019.
2. Negotiations on the proposal have begun in the Council of Ministers and the Cypriot Presidency of the Council is expected to seek agreement to a general approach on the proposal at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council in late November.
3. The European Parliament will also consider the proposal, and the Parliament and the Council will need to agree on the final version before it can be formally adopted. In order to meet the timetable envisaged for the selection and designation of the European Capitals of Culture for 2020, the legislative procedure will need to be completed during 2013, ideally in the first part of the year during the Irish Presidency of the Council.
4. We would like to hear your views on the Commission's proposal. The text of the proposal, together with other relevant material, is available on the Commission's website at: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/capitals-beyond-2019\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/capitals/capitals-beyond-2019_en.htm). A summary of the proposal is in Section 2.
5. Questions on the proposal are in Section 3, but please feel free to comment on any aspect of the proposal whether or not it is explicitly covered in the questions.

## How to respond

6. We would be grateful for your responses to this consultation as soon as possible to help inform our approach to the negotiations in the Council of Ministers. The final deadline for responses is 14 November 2012.
7. Please send your response to [ecoc@culture.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ecoc@culture.gsi.gov.uk) or by post to:

Simon Rushbrook  
EU & International Team  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
2-4 Cockspur Street  
London  
SW1Y 5DH

8. When responding, please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear which sector(s) the organisation belongs to and, if applicable, who the organisation represents.

### **Disclosure of responses**

9. Please note that the Department will publish all responses in full, unless specifically requested not to do so. However, all information in responses, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure under freedom of information legislation. If a correspondent requests confidentiality, this cannot be guaranteed and will only be possible if considered appropriate under the legislation.
10. Any such request should explain why confidentiality is necessary. Any automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be considered as such a request unless you specifically include a request, with an explanation, in the main text of your response.

## Section 2: Summary of the proposal

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1. The European Commission has published a proposal for a new European Capitals of Culture programme for the period 2020-2033. The new programme would follow on from the current European Capitals of Culture programme which will end in 2019.
2. The Commission's proposal retains the main features and general structure of the current programme (as set out in Decision 1622/2006/EC). Thus, the title will continue to be awarded to cities for one year on the basis of a chronological list of Member States; and cities will be selected through a two-stage selection process carried out by a European panel of independent experts, on the basis of their proposed cultural programme for the year.
3. However, the Commission is also proposing a number of changes in order to address the problems and weaknesses it has identified in the current arrangements. Thus, the objectives of the programme and the criteria for the assessment of applications have been expanded and made more explicit; there will be a common application form to be used by all candidate cities; measures to support cities during the preparation of their year as European Capital of Culture have been strengthened; and new evaluation requirements have been introduced.
4. For each year of the programme, two Member States will be entitled to host a European Capital of Culture. The order in which they will do so is set out in the Annex to the Decision. In this proposed order, the UK will host a European Capital of Culture in 2023, alongside Hungary.
5. EU candidate<sup>1</sup> and potential candidate<sup>2</sup> countries may also participate in the programme, and a city from one of these countries may be designated as European Capital of Culture for the first year of the programme (2020) and thereafter for every third year of the programme. Thus a city in a candidate or potential candidate country could be designated alongside the UK and Hungarian cities which hold the title in 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> The candidate countries are: Iceland, Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia (accession negotiations with the last three have not yet started).

<sup>2</sup> The potential candidate countries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo (without prejudice to the resolution of Kosovo's status).

6. As noted above, the criteria for the assessment of applications have been expanded and made more explicit. There are now six categories: long-term strategy, capacity to deliver, cultural and artistic content, European dimension, outreach and management. Each of these categories contains between two and four criteria.
7. The selection and monitoring of the European Capitals of Culture will be carried out by a European panel of independent experts. The panel will consist of 10 members appointed by the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions from a pool of potential members established by the Commission.
8. The selection process will begin 6 years before the start of the year to which it relates. Thus, for 2023 it will begin at the start of 2017. It should be noted that this creates a potential overlap with a possible selection process for UK City of Culture 2021, if the Government decides to continue the UK City of Culture programme on a 4-yearly cycle after 2017.
9. The selection process will have two stages. In the first stage, the European panel will assess the applications against the criteria and select a shortlist of candidate cities. The panel will also issue a report on all the applications and recommendations for the shortlisted cities. The shortlisted cities will then have a further period of time to revise and improve their applications in light of the panel's recommendations. The panel will then assess the final applications and may recommend a city to be designated as European Capital of Culture. However, if the panel considers that none of the candidate cities fulfils the criteria, it may recommend that the title should not be awarded for that Member State in that year.
10. After designation, cities' preparations for their year as European Capital of Culture will be monitored by the European panel. Cities must provide progress reports on their preparations and the panel may provide advice and recommendations to assist the cities.
11. Provided that cities keep to the commitments made in their applications and implement the recommendations of the European panel, they may receive a financial contribution from the Commission in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize. Whether the Prize is available in any particular year will be subject to decisions about the future multi-annual financial frameworks for the EU. If awarded, the Prize would be paid part way through the year to which it relates.
12. Cities designated as European Capitals of Culture will be required to evaluate the results of their year, on the basis of common guidelines and indicators established by the Commission, and to produce an evaluation report. The Commission will ensure wider, independent evaluation of the programme as a whole on a regular basis.



## Section 3: Questions

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We would be grateful for your responses to the questions below. Please do not feel obliged to provide a response to every question, and please feel free to provide additional information and comments separate from your responses to the questions.

1. Do you agree that the European Capitals of Culture programme should be renewed? Why (not)?
2. Do the proposed objectives cover everything the programme can/should aim to achieve? Are there any other objectives that should be included?
3. Do you agree that each EU Member State should have the opportunity to host the European Capital of Culture once during the life of the programme on the basis of a pre-determined order?
4. Should EU candidate and potential candidate countries be able to participate in the programme?
5. Do the proposed criteria for the assessment of applications cover everything the applications should include? Are there any other criteria that should be included?
6. Should the selection European Capitals of Culture be carried out by a European panel of independent experts? Do you agree with the proposed process for appointing the panel and the role of the panel?
7. Do you agree with the process for selecting and designating European Capitals of Culture? Are the timescales for the preparation and assessment of applications clear and sufficient? Are the respective roles of the Member States, the Commission and the European panel clear?
8. Are the arrangements for monitoring and supporting the preparations of European Capitals of Culture sufficient? Are any further measures required?
9. Should the Melina Mercouri Prize (if awarded) be paid to cities part way through their year as European Capital of Culture or at some other time? Should payment of the Prize be subject to any other conditions besides – or instead of – those specified in the proposal?

10. Are the arrangements for evaluating each European Capital of Culture and the programme as a whole sufficient? Should each city which holds the title be responsible for evaluating itself, subject to the common guidelines and indicators established by the Commission?
11. Should the UK be entitled to host a European Capital of Culture in 2023? How should an overlap with the UK City of Culture programme be managed? Do you foresee any other problems if this year is assigned to the UK? Would another year be better for the UK, if so which one?
12. Do you have any other comments on the Commission's proposal?





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2-4 Cockspur Street  
London SW1Y 5DH  
[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)