Council of the European Union

Brussels, 10 March 2021
(OR. en)

6843/21

Interinstitutional File: 2020/0179(COD)

CULT 11
AELE 22
EEE 11
CODEC 332

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	13207/20
Subject:	Proposal for a DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Decision No 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 – Letter to the Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)

Following the Permanent Representatives Committee meeting of 25 November 2020 which endorsed the final compromise text with a view to agreement, delegations are informed that the Presidency sent the attached letter, together with its Annex, to the Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT).

Council of
the European Union
General Secretariat
TREE 1B

SGS 20 / 005103

Brussels, 25 November 2020

Ms Sabine VERHEYEN
Chairwoman, European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education
European Parliament
60, rue Wiertz
1047 BRUSSELS

Subject: Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033

Dear **Ms Verheyen**,

Following informal contacts between the representatives of the three institutions, a draft overall compromise text was agreed today by the Permanent Representatives' Committee.

I am therefore now in a position to confirm that, should the European Parliament adopt its position at first reading, in accordance with Article 294 paragraph 3 of the Treaty, in the form set out in the final compromise text contained in the Annex to this letter (subject to revision by the legal linguists of both institutions), the Council would, in accordance with Article 294, paragraph 4 of the Treaty, approve the European Parliament's position and the act shall be adopted in the wording which corresponds to the European Parliament's position.

On behalf of the Council I also wish to thank you for your close cooperation which should enable us to reach agreement on this dossier at first reading.

Yours sincerely,

Szech-Koundouros

Susanne SZECH-KOUNDOUROS
Chair of the Permanent Representatives Committee
(Part 1)

copy to: Mariya GABRIEL, Member of the European Commission
Željana ZOVKO, Rapporteur

Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

amending Decision No 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 167 (5) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions[1],

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure,

Whereas:

1. The objectives of the European Capitals of Culture action are, according to Article 2 of Decision No 445/2014/EU, to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities, to enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational cooperation, to widen access to and participation in culture, to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors and to raise the international profile of cities through culture.

[1] OJ C , , p. .

2. The attainment of these objectives presupposes mobility, tourism, organisation of events and public participation, which are extremely difficult if not virtually impossible in the COVID-19 pandemic era.

3. As a direct consequence of lock-down measures taken across Europe, cultural venues have been closed down and cultural events have been cancelled or postponed for an undetermined period of time. European and international cultural cooperation projects have been radically slowed down, as the physical crossing of borders has been limited. Finally, due to rapidly decreasing revenues and emerging public health-related needs, local, regional and national governments are under increased budgetary pressures. Private sponsoring for culture is also becoming more challenging for the time being as there is no public event to sponsor or because companies give priority to public health-related sponsoring activities.

4. Current and future European Capitals of Culture are impacted to various degrees primarily depending on the year for which they hold the title. It appears that the impact is strongest on the implementation of the two European Capitals of Culture 2020 and the preparation of the three European Capitals of Culture 2021 though the future impacts on the subsequent European Capitals of Culture remain undefined.

5. The two European Capitals of Culture 2020 had to postpone or cancel events from March 2020 without any clarity as to when (and whether) the situation will come back to normality, while still incurring costs. In practice, they are prevented from fully implementing their year as a European Capital of Culture and capitalising on the huge human and financial investment made.

6. In the three European Capitals of Culture 2021, the pandemic results in a very high level of uncertainty in nearly all areas associated with their preparation: insecure financing perspectives from public and private partners, unknown future safety regulations affecting both participatory work and event types to be authorised, as well as travel restrictions reducing tourism flows and possibilities of European partnerships. The preventive measures slowed down the preparatory work of the three European Capitals of Culture 2021 to a critical point, when they should, under normal circumstances, double efforts, due to the fact that delivery teams were in lockdown while the economic survival of potential contracting partners is uncertain.

7. Decision No 445/2014/EU does not provide for the necessary flexibility to take into account these extraordinary circumstances, more specifically it does not include any provision on prolongation or postponement of the year when a particular city holds the title of a European Capital of Culture.

8. Decision No 445/2014/EU should therefore be amended in a way that is strictly tailored to the need to address this exceptional situation in order to allow cities holding the title of a European Capital of Culture that are most severely impacted by the pandemic to implement their programmes in a way that allows the delivery of the objectives of the action.

9. After a consultation process that involved the cities and the Member States concerned, it has been concluded that it is appropriate to provide the possibility to the ECOC cities designated by Croatia and Ireland for 2020 to continue implementing their programmes until 30 April 2021, without changing the year of designation. Therefore, Articles 3, 4 and 16 of Decision 445/2014/EU should be amended accordingly.

10. After a consultation process which involved the cities and the Member States concerned, it has been concluded that the year in which Romania and Greece are entitled to host the title of a European Capital of Culture should be postponed from 2021 to 2023 and the year in which a candidate country or potential candidate is entitled to host the ECOC title should be postponed from 2021 to 2022. Therefore, Article 3 of Decision 445/2014/EU and the calendar set out in the Annex to that Decision should be amended accordingly. This Decision should not affect the validity of the procedures referred to in Articles 7 to 11 and 13 that have already been concluded with respect to the year of the title 2021,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Decision No 445/2014/EU is amended as follows:

(1) Article 3 is amended as follows:

(a) the second subparagraph of paragraph 2 is replaced by the following:

‘The title shall be awarded each year to a maximum of one city in each of the two Member States appearing in the calendar set out in the Annex (“the calendar”) and, in the relevant years, to one city from a European Free Trade Association country which is party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (“EFTA/EEA country”), a candidate country or a potential candidate, or to one city from a country that accedes to the Union in the circumstances set out in paragraph 5. In 2023, a maximum of one city in each of the three Member States appearing in the calendar set out in the Annex shall hold the title.’;

(b) paragraph 3 is replaced by the following:

‘Cities in Member States shall be entitled to hold the title for one year in accordance with the order of the Member States appearing in the calendar. The cities holding the title in 2020 shall have the possibility to continue implementing their cultural programme until 30 April 2021, without the year of designation being changed.’

(2) The second subparagraph of Article 4(2) is replaced by the following:

‘The cultural programme shall cover the year of the title and shall be created specifically for the title, in accordance with the criteria laid down in Article 5. The cities holding the title in 2020 shall have the possibility to continue implementing their cultural programme until 30 April 2021.’

(3) In Article 16(1) the following fifth subparagraph is added:

‘The cities holding the title in 2020 shall draw up their evaluation reports and transmit them to the Commission by 30 April 2022.’

(4) The Annex is replaced by the text set out in the Annex to this Decision.

Article 2

The procedures referred to in Articles 7 to 11 and Article 13(2)(a) of Decision 445/2014/EU already concluded for the year of the title 2021 shall remain valid. The year of the title shall be changed according to the Annex to this Decision.

Article 3

This Decision shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels,

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

CALENDAR

2020	Croatia	Ireland	
2021			
2022	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Candidate country or potential candidate
2023	Hungary	Romania	Greece
2024	Estonia	Austria	EFTA/EEA country, candidate country or potential candidate
2025	Slovenia	Germany	
2026	Slovakia	Finland	
2027	Latvia	Portugal	
2028	Czech Republic	France	EFTA/EEA country, candidate country or potential candidate
2029	Poland	Sweden	
2030	Cyprus	Belgium	EFTA/EEA country, candidate country or potential candidate
2031	Malta	Spain	
2032	Bulgaria	Denmark	
2033	Netherlands	Italy	EFTA/EEA country, candidate country or potential candidate