



EUROPEAN COMMISSION – PRESS RELEASE

Two Danish cities preselected for title of European Capital of Culture 2017

Brussels, 25 November 2011 – The selection board responsible for evaluating the applications for the European Capital of Culture 2017, meeting today in Copenhagen, recommended that Aarhus and Sønderborg should be preselected for the title. Once this recommendation has been confirmed by Denmark, the preselected cities will have to flesh out and complete their applications by the summer of 2012.

Androulla Vassiliou, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, said: "I would like to warmly congratulate Aarhus and Sønderborg for their nominations, following the first round of the competition to find a European Capital of Culture in Denmark in 2017. The detailed work carried out by these cities to submit their applications testifies to the popularity of this European initiative. Both cities have recognised the exceptional opportunities offered by this event for their long-term development, not only at a cultural level, but also for their socio-economic and touristic development. The key to its success remains, above all, the European dimension and the active participation of citizens. I encourage Aarhus and Sønderborg to pursue their efforts in this regard and to work for their long-term development via this project."

According to the Decision establishing a Community action for the European Capital of Culture event¹, Denmark and Cyprus are the two Member States hosting the event in 2017. The preselection meeting in Cyprus will be held in mid December 2011.

Following Turku (Finland) and Tallinn (Estonia) this year, the next Capitals of Culture will be Guimarães (Portugal) and Maribor (Slovenia) in 2012, followed by Marseilles (France) and Košice (Slovakia) in 2013, Umeå (Sweden) and Riga (Latvia) in 2014, then Mons (Belgium) and Plzeň (Czech Republic) in 2015.

¹ Decision No 1622/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006

Contacts :

[Dennis Abbott](#) (+32 2 295 92 58)

[Dina Avraam](#) (+32 2 295 96 67)

Background

In late 2010, Denmark published a call for applications from interested cities. Two cities – Aarhus and Sønderborg – applied.

These applications were examined on the basis of the criteria laid down in the above-mentioned Decision by an international selection board with 13 members: 6 appointed by the Member State concerned and 7 by the European institutions.

The members appointed by the European institutions are:

- Appointed by the European Commission: Manfred Gaulhofer (Austria), Director-General of Graz 2003 and manager of many European projects; Sir Jeremy Isaacs (UK), television producer and former director of the Royal Opera, Covent Garden.
- Appointed by the Council: Erna Hennicot-Schoepges (Luxembourg), former Minister for Culture, MEP and member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, currently chairwoman of many national and international cultural organisations; Constantin Chiriac (Romania), former vice-chairman of Sibiu 2007 and currently director of the national theatre Radu Stanca.
- Appointed by the European Parliament: Andreas Wiesand (Germany), consultant and researcher in cultural policy; Danuta Glondys (Poland), director of the Villa Decius Association and of many other activities in the field of international culture.
- Appointed by the Committee of the Regions: Elisabeth Vitouch (Austria), a member of the Committee of the Regions' Commission for Culture and local councillor in Austria.

According to the current system for designating the European Capitals of Culture, the selection has two rounds: a preselection round, following which a shortlist of candidate cities is drawn up, and a final selection round nine months later. The two selected cities are then officially named by the Council of Ministers of the EU.

For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and_actions/capitals/european-capitals-of-culture_en.htm