

Decision of the Bundesrat

Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a European Year of Cultural Heritage

COM(2016) 543 final

At its 949th session, on 14 October 2016, the Bundesrat adopted the following position pursuant to Sections 3 and 5 of the Act on Cooperation between the Federation and the *Länder* in European Union Affairs (EUZBLG):

1. The Bundesrat welcomes the fact that the Commission has acted upon the suggestion of the European Parliament and the Council and now formally proposed that 2018 be designated European Year of Cultural Heritage.
2. As the funding for preparatory work and events in the German *Länder* (federal states) must be agreed in budgetary negotiations, it considers it imperative that a firm basis upon which to plan be put in place as quickly as possible and therefore reminds the Commission of the need for a swift decision at European level.
3. As regards the content of the Commission proposal, the Bundesrat would fault the fact that the proposal is largely confined to summarising, and assigning to the Year of Cultural Heritage, the elements of EU cultural policy which already exist anyway and their planned initiatives.
4. In this connection, it finds that the proposal lacks an overarching concept. Although the goals and actions set out in the proposal are, for the most part, acceptable, it would be desirable also to use the Year of Cultural Heritage as an opportunity to counteract the current societal and political centrifugal forces through reflection on what we have in common culturally and in relation to our world view. Such approaches are not currently contained in the Commission proposal and should be added as a matter of priority.

5. On the other hand, the Bundesrat considers that too much emphasis is given to the economic and other secondary aspects of cultural heritage (creativity, innovation, tourism, job creation, education, conflict prevention and ties to countries outside the EU). In contrast, the intrinsic value of artistic and cultural expression and the importance of our cultural heritage in itself, which are not just linked to their instrumental use, are understated.
6. The Bundesrat notes that according to the Commission proposal, no additional funds are to be made available for financing the Year of Cultural Heritage at EU level. Considering that the approach being adopted for this Year of Cultural Heritage extends beyond just the cultural sphere, it regards it as necessary that the funds provided for it by the Commission are not limited to a restructuring of the already small budget for the Creative Europe programme.
7. The Bundesrat strongly opposes the development, announced in Article 2(2)(d) of the Commission proposal, of new indicators and benchmarks in the cultural sphere. It sees neither any reason nor any legal basis — considering the prohibition on harmonisation in Article 167 TFEU — for introducing such assessment and governance tools.
8. The planned activities set out in Article 3 for the Year of Cultural Heritage are too distant from citizens. Our cultural heritage cannot be felt and will not come alive through conferences, campaigns and academic studies alone. The Bundesrat therefore welcomes the provision made in subsection (2) allowing Member States to 'identify other activities which could contribute to the objectives of the European Year set out in Article 2', on top of the activities set out in the proposal.
9. With regard to the advisory committee for Germany's domestic programme, it reminds the Commission that the German *Länder* must be included in a suitable way when specifying for Germany the national coordinator provided for in Article 4.
10. The Bundesrat is sending this position statement directly to the Commission.