



EUROPEAN COMMISSION - PRESS RELEASE

Donostia-San Sebastián to be the European Capital of Culture in Spain in 2016

Brussels, 28 June 2011 - The Spanish city of Donostia-San Sebastián was recommended today for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2016 by an independent selection panel. It will host the title along with Wrocław in Poland ([IP/11/766](#)). The formal nomination by the EU's Council of Ministers will take place in May 2012.

Androulla Vassiliou, the European Commissioner responsible for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, stated: *"The competition in Spain for the 2016 title attracted 15 eligible bids – the highest we have seen since the launch of the European Capital of Culture initiative in 1985. I congratulate Donostia-San Sebastián, and I hope it will make the most of this unique opportunity to bring long-term cultural, economic and social benefits to the city and its surrounding area."*

Background

Poland and Spain are the two Member States hosting a European Capital of Culture in 2016. The list of countries hosting the title until 2019 was laid down in a [decision](#) of the European Parliament and Council of Ministers in 2006.

The European Capitals of Culture are selected by an independent panel: an initial shortlist of cities is drawn up after a pre-selection phase, followed by a final selection nine months later. The two cities chosen (one per country) are then officially designated by the EU's Council of Ministers. Last week, the independent panel proposed Wrocław to be the European Capital of Culture in Poland.

The 15 cities which contested the title in Spain were Alcalá de Henares, Burgos, Cáceres, Córdoba, Cuenca, Donostia-San Sebastián, Málaga, Murcia, Oviedo, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Pamplona, Santander, Segovia, Tarragona and Zaragoza. Of these, six were shortlisted: Burgos, Córdoba, Donostia-San Sebastián, Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Segovia and Zaragoza.

Applications were examined by a panel made up of 13 independent cultural experts; six appointed by the Member State concerned and the remaining seven by the European institutions. They examine the applications on the basis of the criteria laid down by the European Parliament and Council decision.

The cities have to prepare a cultural programme with a strong European dimension and foster the participation of citizens living in the city, in its surroundings and abroad. The European dimension is reflected in the chosen themes and the way in which the events in the programme are organised (cooperation between cultural operators in different EU countries is encouraged). The programme must also have a lasting impact and contribute to the long-term cultural and social development of the city.

The members of the panel appointed by the European institutions are:

- Appointed by the European Commission: **Sir Jeremy Isaacs** (UK) a television executive and a former Director of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; **Manfred Gaulhofer** (AT), Director-General of Graz 2003, who has managed many European projects.
- Appointed by the Council: **Erna Hennicot-Schoepges** (LU), former Member of the European Parliament, of the Council of Europe Assembly and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), currently heads various national and international cultural organisations; **Constantin Chiriac** (RO), Vice President of Sibiu 2007 and currently director of national theatre Radu Stanca.
- Appointed by the European Parliament: **Andreas Wiesand** (DE), consultant and researcher in the field of cultural policy and activities; **Danuta Glondys** (PL), head of the Villa Decius association, which runs many activities in the field of international culture.
- Appointed by the Committee of the Regions: **Elisabeth Vitouch** (AT), represents the Commission for Culture and Education of the Committee of the Regions and is a member of the Vienna City government.

Following Turku (Finland) and Tallinn (Estonia) this year; Guimarães (Portugal) and Maribor (Slovenia) will be European Capitals of Culture in 2012; Marseille (France) and Kosice (Slovakia) in 2013, Umeå (Sweden) and Riga (Latvia) in 2014 and Mons (Belgium) and Plzen (Czech Republic) in 2015.

To find out more:

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc413_en.htm

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