

COVID-19: Culture committee backs extending 2020 European Capitals of Culture to 2021

On Wednesday CULT committee backed the proposed extension of 2020 European Capitals of Culture to the next year, due to the delays in culture programmes caused by the pandemic.

Culture and Education committee on Wednesday unanimously backed Commission's proposal to extend the programmes of the current European Capitals of Culture Rijeka (Croatia) and Galway (Ireland) until 30 April 2021, without change in the year of designation.

The proposal also postpones the year in which Timișoara (Romania) and Elefsina (Greece) are entitled to host the Capital of Culture title from 2021 to 2023, and postpones the year in which Novi Sad (Serbia) was due to host a European Capital of Culture from 2021 to 2022. [Read the full recommendation with additional changes in rules.](#)

"This decision offers the best solution for these cities in order to regain the missed opportunities due to the corona crisis. Holding the status of European Capital of Culture should be seen as a privilege to promote the cultural scene of the region and European values by bringing people and cultures together. In close cooperation with the involved stakeholders, the European Union is willing to provide additional chances for the affected cities to realise these objectives in a sanitary safe but culturally enriching fashion," said the rapporteur [Željana Zovko \(EPP, HR\)](#) after the vote.

Next steps

After announcement in plenary, MEPs will start inter-institutional talks with the Council on the final draft of the legislation.

Once agreed with the Council, the amended decision needs backing by the full House before entering into force.

Background

Due to pandemic, European Capitals of Culture have had to postpone or cancel their cultural programmes since March 2020. The extension of the programmes into 2021 is intended to partly compensate the two cities for the loss and shed an increased light on the activities of both ECOC 2020 in the early months of 2021.

The preventive measures have slowed down the preparatory work of the three Capitals of Culture designed for 2021, with the economic survival of potential contracting partners being uncertain, therefore the Commission has recommended postponement of Timișoara and Elefsina to 2023, and Novi Sad from 2021 to 2022.

The European Capitals of Culture initiative was developed in 1985 and has, to date, been awarded to more than 50 cities across the European Union. In 2017 the framework was updated to make it possible also for cities from EU candidate countries, potential candidates or countries of the European Economic Area to hold the title in 2021, 2024, 2028, 2030 and 2033.

Further information

[Committee on Culture and Education](#)

[Press release: Commission proposes to extend 2020 European Capitals of Culture into 2021 \(August 2020\)](#)

[Designated site for European Capitals of Culture \(Commission\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

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