

The Secretary of State for Education, Culture and Science Mr. drs. H. Zijlstra
Postbox 16375
2500 BJ The Hague

Date: 5 September 2011
Reference: rc-2011.06223/2

subject: advice European Cultural Capital 2018

Dear Mr. Zijlstra,

By decree of the European Parliament and the Council (1419/1999/EG, reviewed in 1662/2006/EG) the Netherlands, as well as Malta, have been appointed to propose a European Cultural Capital in 2018.

You intend to appeal to Dutch cities to declare candidacy by the 31st of December 2011. For this purpose, it is allowed (cf. article 3.3 of the decree) to set a limited amount of specific national conditions for the candidates.

In your letter of 29 June 2011 you asked the Council for Culture to advise you with regard to possible conditions in a short advisory. These conditions are to serve as points of interest to the candidates.

Alongside specific European conditions to which the programme of any candidate must conform and which the European commission will supervise, article 3.3 of the decree states that: "The programme must be consistent with the national cultural strategy or national policy of the relevant member state, or conform to the institutional structure of the member state, with the regional cultural strategies, provided that such a strategy or policy does not limit the number of cities that may be appointed Cultural Capital of Europe based on this decision".

Taking the above-mentioned into consideration and expanding upon it, the Council has drawn up the following points of interest:

The European Cultural Capital (ECC) programme must be embedded in the long-term strategy of the city's cultural policies. The programming for European Cultural Capital is to be, at most, an additional impulse. This also entails that no large infrastructural works will be carried out to facilitate only the ECC programme, but that these are a part of the urban development in general. On the other hand, the aim of the programming should be to realise lasting benefits to the city, springing from the title of European Cultural Capital .

In the European Cultural Capital, culture is placed in a broad context whereby links are attempted to be forged with other sectors such as the business community, education and urban development. The city must be represented and recognise itself in all its levels. Links to other sectors will also guarantee the importance of culture in the long run.

Concerning the above-mentioned guarantee it is also important that all segments of the population are reflected in the programme. This means that the programme is attuned to the diversity of the population in its broadest sense: age, gender, socio-economic background, sexual orientation, cultural and ethnic diversity.

Aside from the national orientation that may be expected of the ECC programme, it must also be embedded in the region. This entails that programming must be designed together with regional partners to ensure that the prestige attached to the title of European Cultural Capital benefits not only the city, but the entire region.

A European Cultural Capital is expected to reveal itself to Europe as well as reflect Europe within the city itself.

Finally, with regard to the composition of the jury, the Council would like to remark that such a jury should be in a position to evaluate the programmes which are presented by candidates from a broad perspective.

Kind regards,

Mirjam de Meijer
Acting Chair

Jeroen A. Bartelse
General