

European Capitals of Culture: Council proposes to extend Galway and Rijeka beyond 2020



The Council today adopted its position on a proposal which would allow the cities of Galway in Ireland and Rijeka in Croatia, designated as European Capitals of Culture for 2020, to continue implementing their programmes until 30 April 2021. The proposal also provides that Greece and Romania will host the title European Capital of Culture in 2023 instead of 2021. The draft decision takes into account the COVID-19 pandemic which forced Galway and Rijeka to postpone or cancel events from March 2020 and created a very high level of uncertainty for cities initially designated to host the title in 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not spared the European Capitals of Culture action and has had a huge negative impact on the cities of Galway and Rijeka. We are determined to support them by extending the implementation of their programmes beyond 2020. This will help both cities not only financially, but also culturally. The heart of Europe lies in its culture, in its European Capitals of Culture.

Monika Grütters, Minister of State for Culture and the Media of Germany

The draft decision amends Decision № 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2023. The decision currently in force does not include any provision on prolongation or postponement of the year when a particular city holds the title of a European Capital of Culture.

Background and next steps

The European Capitals of Culture action aims, in particular, to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, to widen access to and participation in culture, to strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and to raise the international profile of cities through culture. The Commission adopted its amending proposal on 18 August 2020. The agreement reached by the Council today will serve as the basis for negotiations with the European Parliament.