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European Union

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#### INFORMATION NOTE

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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Council

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Subject: European Capitals of Culture 2021  
*- Information from the Greek and Romanian delegations*

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Delegations will find attached an information note from the Greek and Romanian delegations on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda under 'Any other business' for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 22-23 May 2017.

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## **European Capitals of Culture**

Through the years, the European Capitals of Culture initiative has grown in scope and size, contributing to the cultural, social and economic development of many cities and their neighbouring regions across Europe.

It is a prestigious action that fosters cooperation between European people, enhancing common features of their history, their shared cultural expressions, as well as their specific cultural identity. An initiative that brings a new vision of culture as a driving force which inspires, raises awareness and mobilizes the EU citizens towards a more sustainable, tolerant and human-centred Europe, with an emphasis on democracy, civic participation and unity as core European values.

In 2017, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, the original motivation of the project, started in 1985 on the initiative of Greece, is still valid: it brings citizens of the European Union closer together. Today, we need more than ever a Union based on intercultural dialogue as a means of reaffirming our commitment to achieve common goals and face together all major challenges.

Within this context, the cities of Elefsina (Greece) and Timișoara (Romania) have been formally designated as the 2021 European Capitals of Culture, following a highly transparent and competitive bid managed by national authorities and evaluated by a panel of independent experts.

Both Elefsina and Timișoara will implement a long term cultural strategy which will promote the most creative aspects of their cultural heritage and their contemporary artistic creation at local, national and European level. They will create an inspiring, challenging and motivating environment, which forges an image of a creative and attractive Europe on the international scene and adds a small but important stone to the edifice of EU Cultural Diplomacy. Last but not least, Elefsina and Timișoara will have an important contribution in reinforcing cultural ties between the Union and the candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership, entitled to participate in the action every third year as of 2021. In that year, Novi Sad (Serbia) will be the third European Capital of Culture.

Since the Decision 445/2014 no longer involves the Council in the formal designation of the European Capitals of Culture, Greece and Romania would like to briefly inform the delegations about the cities of Elefsina and Timișoara.

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