



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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PRESSE 201

San Sebastián and Wrocław are the European Capitals of Culture for 2016!

The Council adopted today¹ a decision officially designating Donostia-San Sebastián (Spain) and Wrocław (Poland) as European Capitals of Culture for 2016 ([8380/12](#)).

The European Capitals of Culture initiative was launched in 1985 in order to highlight in particular the richness and diversity of European cultures, celebrate the cultural ties that link Europeans together and promote mutual understanding between people from different European countries. Since then, over 40 cities have been designated and until 2019 cities from two member states will be designated each year as European capitals of culture. This year's capitals are Guimarães (Portugal) and Maribor (Slovenia). The Commission is expected to present in July a proposal for the European Capitals of Culture from 2020 onwards

The candidate cities must present a comprehensive programme, illustrating the role they have played in European culture, their links with Europe, their European identity. They must also demonstrate current involvement in European artistic and cultural life, alongside their own specific features.

¹ At the meeting of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sports Council.

P R E S S

Additional Background:

The European Capitals of Culture action is regulated by decision 1622/2006/EC¹ and the Commission manages the EU funding, in the framework of the Culture Programme. For each member state concerned a selection panel is established which assesses the applications of the candidate cities and draws up a report together with a recommendation for the nomination of one city in that member state as European Capital of Culture. On the basis of this report, the member states concerned nominate one city to be European Capital of Culture and notify the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions. These notifications must be accompanied by a justification based on the selection panels' reports.

The European Parliament may forward an opinion to the Commission on the nomination of the city in question. In light of that opinion and of justifications based on the selection panels' reports, the Commission draws up a recommendation on the nomination of a city as a European Capital of Culture which is then forwarded to the Council for official designation.

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

¹ OJ L 304, 03.11.2006