



**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND TOURISM**

**THE MINISTER**

Mr. Josep Borrell Fontelles  
President of the European Parliament  
Brussels

Ankara, 18 July 2005

Dear Mr. President,

I hereby have the pleasure to inform you, on behalf of my Government, that Turkey nominates Istanbul as a European Capital of Culture for 2010. We are also notifying the European Commission, the Council of the European Union and the Committee of the Regions accordingly.

This nomination, based on Article 4 of Decision 1419/1999/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council as modified by Decision 649/2005/EC, follows our letter of intent sent to the Commission on 30 October 2003, which is attached herewith. As the letter demonstrates, interest of the Government and the civil society of Istanbul in this event is not a development of today, but have been in place for a number of years. The Governorate and Municipality of Istanbul are also fully committed to the project, and have already taken the appropriate resolutions supporting the "European Capital of Culture 2010/Istanbul". In this framework, important ground with respect to the preparations has already been covered. The application file, which is in its final stages of completion, will be presented to you later this year.

We believe that Istanbul merits the title European Capital of Culture for a variety of reasons, a few of which I would like to briefly touch upon. First and foremost is the vivacious life of arts and culture in Istanbul today, which both reflects and takes advantage of its immense heritage. Another element is our conviction that the designation of Istanbul by the European Union at this particular point in time, where the attention of the wider international community increasingly focuses on concepts of dialogue among civilizations and mutual understanding, would have a profoundly positive impact on the efforts of those who strive for promoting these high ideals. Another factor is our feeling that the designation of Istanbul, with its rich heritage, would also help promoting the cultural diversity of Europe as well as improving the dialogue between Europe and the rest of the world. Last but not least, we believe that designating a European Capital of Culture from Turkey, a candidate country that would be hosting this event for the first time, would help strengthen the dialogue among our respective citizens and therefore make an important contribution to the accession process.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to assure you that the Government fully supports the civil initiative in charge of the preparations. As active partners in the ongoing works, government bodies stand ready to provide any and all possible assistance to the civil initiative, as well as local administrations.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Atilla KOÇ