



European
Commission

Florence, Lisbon, Prague Athens, Dublin, Paris, Saint Guimarães, Stavanger, Rosice, Tallinn EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE more than 30 years

What is a European Capital of Culture?

European Capitals of Culture are one of the most recognised EU projects. They started in 1985 on the initiative of the then Greek Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri.

The idea is to put cities at the heart of cultural life across Europe. Through culture and art, European Capitals of Culture improve the quality of life in these cities and strengthen their sense of community. Citizens can take part in the year-long activities and play a bigger role in their city's development and cultural expression.

Being a European Capital of Culture brings fresh life to these cities, boosting their cultural, social and economic development. Many of them, like Lille, Glasgow and Essen, have demonstrated that the title can be a great opportunity to regenerate their urban centres, bringing creativity, visitors and international recognition.

But there is also something for all Europeans: Capitals of Culture highlight the richness of Europe's cultural diversity and take a fresh look at its shared history and heritage. They promote mutual understanding and show how the universal language of creativity opens Europe to cultures from across the world.



The 2016 Capitals

Donostia-San Sebastián 2016 (Spain) will focus on better ways of living together through art and culture, promoting stronger ties with the rest of Europe and fostering innovation in the cultural sector. Its "Cultura para la convivencia" (Culture for living together) programme includes highlights such as the Peace Treaty, an exhibition of how peace has been depicted in the arts in Europe throughout the ages, and three "Travelling Embassies",

a project that will bring artists of different nationalities to several European cities by ship, bus and bicycle to create, share and spread works of art which express linguistic diversity, among others.

With "Spaces for Beauty" as its motto, Wrocław 2016 (Poland) is set to offer more than one thousand cultural events during the year. Its programme is based on metamorphosis and diversity, drawing on the city's unique history of transformation. The citizens of Wrocław were invited to run part of the programme – hundreds of its inhabitants will perform in major public events. During the year, Wrocław will also become UNESCO World Book Capital with a special edition of European Literature Night.

SOME NUMBERS

31
years
of
European
Capitals
of Culture

2 European Capitals of Culture
each year and (starting in 2021)
a 3rd one every third year
in a candidate country
or a potential candidate

Being a European Capital of Culture brings real and lasting benefits. It has helped to...

Create Economic Growth

Each euro of public money invested in Lille 2004 (France) is estimated to have generated 8 euros for the local economy.

Marseille-Provence 2013 (France) attracted a record number of 11 million individual visits.

Pécs 2010 (Hungary) experienced a 27% increase in overnight stays, which rose to 124,000 during its year as European Capital of Culture.

Build a Sense of Community

Liverpool 2008 (UK) had nearly 10 000 registered volunteers; all schoolchildren in the city participated in at least one activity during the year.

In Linz 2009 (Austria), local volunteers and students built 900 polythene animals as part of Flut ("The flood"); school workshops spread the message across Upper Austria with a programme

called "I Like to Move It, Move It...". A dozen "Cultural neighbourhoods of the month" across the city set up their own cultural events, generating works in such unusual venues as shop-windows, tunnels under the city, and even a bus route.

Regenerate Cities

Marseille-Provence 2013 (France) transformed itself physically with additions such as the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations. The European Capital of Culture was part of an investment project in new cultural infrastructure of more than €600 million - which was in turn integrated into a multi-billion euro effort to revitalise the city that spanned several decades. Marseille 2013 raised €16.5 million in private sponsorship from 207 companies.

In Kosice 2013 (Slovakia), the private sector and local universities worked together to transform an industrial city to highlight creative potential, new cultural infrastructure and establish Kosice as a tourist hub for the Carpathian Region.



Did you know that...?

... during its year as European Capital of Culture, Mons inaugurated 5 new museums, 2 new concert halls and 1 conference centre?

... when Stavanger (Norway) was European Capital of Culture in 2010, cultural collaborations, co-productions and exchanges took place with more than 50 countries?

... when Brussels was European Capital of Culture in 2000, the city hosted its first Zinneke Parade which - since then - has taken possession of the city streets every two years?

... Pilsen has opened its first incubator for cultural and creative industries "DEPO2015" in a former tram and bus depot?

54 CITIES

European Capitals of Culture from **Athens** in **1985** to **Wrocław & Donostia-San Sebastián** in **2016**

- 2017 **Aarhus** (Denmark) and **Paphos** (Cyprus)
- 2018 **Leeuwarden** (Netherlands) and **Valetta** (Malta)
- 2019 **Plovdiv** (Bulgaria) and **Matera** (Italy)

6 YEARS

- **Competition** for the title starts at least 6 years in advance, to give bidding cities enough time to:
 - **ENGAGE** with their citizens as well as their cultural, economic and social stakeholders,
 - **DEVELOP** an ambitious programme for their year, fully integrated into their overall development strategy and
 - **HAVE** all new cultural infrastructure projects **READY** by their year.