



European
Commission

Florence Lisbon Prague Athens Dubrovnik Duisburg Potsdam Salzburg Guimarães Stavanger Osaka Lille Glasgow Essen Rijeka Galway European Capitals OF CULTURE

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.

All EU Member States, as well as candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership and European Free Trade Association/European Economic Area countries participating in the Creative Europe programme can host a European Capital of Culture.



The 2020 Capitals

Rijeka is the first Croatian city to be chosen as European Capital of Culture. **Rijeka 2020** intended to bring many new opportunities and international visibility to the city, as well as to reach out to the rest of the Western Balkan region. With hundreds of projects developed with 250 partners from 40 countries under its motto "**Port of Diversity**", Rijeka built its programme around three main themes: water, work and migration.

Situated on the western edge of Europe, **Galway** is the third city in Ireland to hold the European Capital of Culture title after Dublin in 1991 and Cork in 2005. The programme for **Galway 2020** was organised around the motto "Let the Magic In". The intention was to explore the quintessential Irish themes of language, landscape and migration, which also have a European and universal relevance and resonance.

Since the outbreak of the **COVID-19 pandemic**, Rijeka and Galway have had to postpone or cancel all events since March 2020 without any clarity on if or when the situation would allow them to resume their cultural programmes. Despite the enthusiasm and professionalism of their teams and partners, Rijeka and Galway have been unable to deliver their European Capital of Culture programmes as planned. In **August 2020**, the European Commission proposed to give Rijeka and Galway the possibility to have their title year prolonged until 30 April 2021. It also proposed to postpone the year in which Novi Sad is due to host a European Capital of Culture from 2021 to 2022 and the year in which Timisoara and Elefsina will hold the title from 2021 to 2023. Due to the high level of uncertainty in their preparations, the three cities cannot implement their European Capital of Culture programmes in 2021 as planned. The Commission's proposal has now passed to the European Parliament and the Council for consideration and final adoption.

SOME
NUMBERS

35
years

of
European
Capitals
of Culture

2 European Capitals of Culture
each year and (starting in 2022)
a 3rd one every third year in a candidate country,
a potential candidate or a country which is part of the
European Free Trade Association/European Economic Area.

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

Build a Sense of Community

Plovdiv (Bulgaria) 2019 has been successful in making cultural participation the norm for the city's inhabitants, thanks to an increase in both the number and diversity of cultural initiatives in the city, including in the Roma neighbourhood of Stolipinovo.

Leeuwarden 2018 connected with citizens, making them producers of the European Capital of Culture in addition to consumers of it. 70% of the Frisian population was involved in projects and 10% acted as volunteers. A new wave of Frisian amateur performers emerged!

In Donostia-San Sebastián 2016 (Spain) about 60% of the projects involved local people. This helped achieve the aim of fostering cohesion, and encouraging mutual understanding and respect.

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 EUR 600 million – which was in turn integrated into a multi-billion euro effort to revitalise

the city that spanned several decades. Marseille 2013 raised EUR 16.5 million in private sponsorship from 207 companies.

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

Develop European Connections

In Aarhus 2017 (Denmark), 1,200 international artists contributed to the programme while approximately 80% of projects featured an international partner and/or a cultural exchange within Europe.

Out of the 5.2 million tourists who visited Wrocław in 2016, 1.6 million came from other countries, marking a substantial increase in international tourist stays during the year.

Stimulate Economic Activity

Each euro of public money invested in Mons 2015 (Belgium) is estimated to have generated between EUR 5.5 and 6 for the local economy.

A record number of 5.8 million tourists visited Leeuwarden 2018 (The Netherlands) and its region, Friesland. The economic impact to the region, including the spending generated by extra tourists and revenues for the cultural sector, is estimated at around EUR 300 million.

During Wrocław 2016 (Poland), more than 40% of the city's cultural and creative industries reported an increase in turnover.

... Wrocław 2016 (Poland) attracted one of the biggest investments ever for a European Capital of Culture, with a total of around €615 million?

Did you know that...

... when Stavanger (Norway) was European Capital of Culture in 2008, 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?

The world acclaimed Estonian composer Arvo Pärt produced his famous Adam's Lament piece of music as a cooperation between Istanbul 2010 and Tallinn 2011.

62 CITIES

European Capitals of Culture from **Athens** in **1985** to **Rijeka** & **Galway** in **2020**

UPCOMING

Novi Sad (Serbia, candidate country)
Kaunas (Lithuania)
Esch (Luxembourg)
Timisoara (Romania)
Elefsina (Greece)
Veszprém (Hungary)
Tartu (Estonia)
Bad Ischl (Austria)
Bodø (Norway, European Free Trade Association/European Economic Area country)

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, fully integrated into their overall development strategy and
- **HAVE** all new cultural infrastructure projects **READY** for the start of the year.