

The European Capitals of Culture for 2012 and 2013 are announced

The Council of the EU is today designating Guimarães (Portugal) and Maribor (Slovenia) to be the European Capitals of Culture in 2012, followed by Marseille-Provence (France) and Košice (Slovakia) in 2013. This decision reflects the recommendation made in autumn 2008 by the selection panel.

Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, said: *"I am delighted and congratulate the four cities on their designation as European Capitals of Culture. This title has a long-standing and excellent reputation, and to bear the title for a full year puts a city firmly in the spotlight. This creates an enormous potential for local development. I am pleased that the new selection procedure, which resulted in the designation of the 2013 capitals, generated vigorous competition and a lot of public interest, which is reflected in the great number of cities applying, and the high quality of their bids for the title."*

Guimarães and Maribor: European Capitals of Culture 2012

Portugal and Slovenia are the EU Member States entitled to host the European Capital of Culture event in 2012. Portugal proposed Guimarães and Slovenia Maribor. On the basis of an overall evaluation against a set of criteria laid down in 2006 a panel of independent experts assessed these proposals and reached a consensus in the autumn of 2008 to recommend that the two cities host the European Capital of Culture in 2012. Consequently, the Council is designating today both cities as the 2012 European Capitals of Culture.

Marseille-Provence and Košice: European Capitals of Culture 2013

A new designation process was applied for the 2013 Capitals consisting of a two round competition managed by the Member State concerned. On the basis of the relevant criteria for the event, Marseille-Provence and Košice were assessed by the panel as the best applications submitted and won the competition in France and Slovakia respectively. Consequently, the Council is today designating Marseille-Provence and Košice as the 2013 European Capitals of Culture.

Preparing for the event

Today's formal designation is only the beginning of a process leading up to the year as a European Capital. The preparations lasting several years are decisive for the eventual success of the event. One of the keys to this success is a consistent commitment of state and municipal governments throughout, right up to the year itself, including financial contribution.

The event generates considerable cultural and socio-economic benefits, including positive effects on tourism. The scale of the event – lasting an entire year – is extremely challenging.

This is why there is now a monitoring and advisory process – organised by the European Commission – to help the cities during the preparation period. The monitoring panel will give constructive advice and seek to ensure that the commitments made at the selection stage are fulfilled. If these commitments and the recommendations of the panel are followed, then in line with the legal decision, the cities will be awarded the Melina Mercouri prize to reward them for the preparations of the event.

Following Vilnius (Lithuania) and Linz (Austria) this year, the next European Capitals of Culture will be Essen (Germany), Pécs (Hungary) and Istanbul (Turkey) in 2010, and Turku (Finland) and Tallinn (Estonia) in 2011.

To know more:

European Commission: European Capitals of Culture:

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

European Capitals of Culture 2012 and 2013

<http://www.maribor2012.si/en/>

<http://quimaraes2012.com/>

<http://www.marseille-provence2013.fr/>

<http://www.kosice13.sk/en/>