



## A festive event...

The European Capitals of Culture are also moments of celebration — and celebrations are by definition festive events. The cities that have been selected have shown limitless imagination and energy in devising novel festivities, and have also frequently ensured that the simple and more sincere forms of local celebration have been integrated into the programmes alongside the more professional and public events.

The opening ceremony of Marseille-Provence took place not only in Marseille — prominently featuring the iconic Notre Dame de la Garde that surmounts the city — but also, over the same weekend, in the cities of Aix-en-Provence and Arles, with an estimated crowd of 600 000. Throughout the year there were numerous events in public spaces, more than half of which were free to the public.

In Guimarães, crowds were enchanted by giant beasts and men and aerial contraptions in the opening show by La Fura dels Baus, involving hundreds of volunteers and visitors.

In Umeå, 11 000 people came to Rådhus-torget to watch the last big show of the European Capital of Culture year — ‘Northern lights’ — a light show on the old city hall, together with newly composed music by Henrik Oja, and a finale with a major firework display.

Turku joined forces with Tallinn (Estonia) to offer Estonians the best of Finland’s renowned club music, by presenting ‘Night moves’, a pulsating clubbing experience with the top acts from both cities. Turku also produced its own festive events, with a colour-saturated chamber labyrinth in Kupittaa Park, with ‘Music of the spheres’ from

giant globes floating on the River Aura, or with a procession of 1 000 lantern-bearing children along its banks, accompanied by a joint choir of hundreds of singers.

Festive events can take many forms — as Essen for the Ruhr demonstrated with its meal for many... or singing for many...

...while Riga (Latvia) hosted 27 000 singers from five continents, 73 countries and 460 choirs during its World Choir Games in July 2014.

Vilnius organised events targeting the wider public with ludic art installations and animations, such as ‘Art in unexpected spaces’, ‘Street music day’ and ‘Let there be night’. Maribor, too, maximised the use of street art to bring a sense of fun and festivity to the city, with performers appearing in unexpected locations, extravagant costumes,





Linz 2009 —  
Höhenrausch —  
photographer: *Andreas Strauss*

Turku 2011 —  
Colourscape, "Music of the Spheres" —  
photographer: *Arto Takala*

and exotic displays — right in the middle of the everyday routines of the city. Stavanger mounted a spectacular outdoor show.

For a week, Umeå was filled with folk music and song in a national get-together of folk instrumentalists from the Nordic countries culminating in a festival.

And Linz interpreted the entire city as an acoustic space with its 'Hörstadt' (Acoustic city) concept and the 'Klangwolke' (Cloud of sound), an open-air music festival, as well as offering its citizens and visitors new perspectives on the city at ground level, with a street art festival featuring 1 000 different music, theatre, and circus acts, and from above with 'Höhenrausch' (Art on the rooftops) — a walkway system above the city centre combining viewing points, stairways, plateaux and bridges, and featuring exhibits of new artistic works.









## ...leading to local and regional development

The focus on culture that the European Capitals of Culture bring also has an impact on the selected cities in promoting a culture of participation among organisations and institutions at local or regional level, across the range of sectors covered by the cultural and creative economy — from art to music, literature, film, the media, design, architecture and games development. This has led to some striking regeneration of cities and their surroundings in their cultural life, and frequently to their vigour in other dimensions, from their image — in the outside world and among their own citizens — to their infrastructure. Just as often, it has also helped to forge new partnerships among the authorities responsible for a city's broader destiny. Glasgow (United Kingdom) is famous for having rejuvenated what was regarded a city in decay. More recently, Marseille-Provence is one of

the most frequently cited examples of this form of rebirth. The city transformed itself physically with such additions as MuCEM — the Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée — the first national museum opened in France outside the Paris region. It was one of the outcomes of a more than EUR 600 million investment in new cultural infrastructure, which was part of a larger, decades-long, multibillion euro development effort to revitalise the city.

But in addition, the territory for the European Capital of Culture 2013 included close to 100 communities surrounding Marseille, and links were built — often as a by-product of shared cultural events — that eased cooperation at local and regional level.

Essen for the Ruhr is another striking example of local and regional development.

The clue is in the name — not only Essen, but Essen for the Ruhr. Essen represented all 53 towns in the region in the application — and it was the first time a region was so prominent. The consequence of the year was that each town and city obtained reinforcement from the common elements of the year, and was also able to strengthen its own identity — particularly through events that celebrated local heroes. At the same time, all towns and cities came together to realise joint projects that enjoyed huge success: examples include 'Odyssey Europe', the RuhrArtMuseums alliance, the 'Henze' project, 'Culture Canal', 'pottfiction', 'Murder on the Hellweg', 'Shaft signs', '!Sing — Day of song', 'Still-Life A40/B1', 'Symphony of a thousand', etc.

The European Centre for Creative Economy stands as a powerful symbol of this cooperation in regional development. The



Turku 2011 —  
Logomo Café 'Nothing happens  
for a reason' by Tobias Rehberger —  
photographer: *Bo Stranden*

European Capital of Culture year was an element — and the culmination — of a long-term engagement for the cultural and creative economy. As a result, this sector now represents some 86 000 employees in more than 10 000 businesses across the Ruhr area — linking culture, urban development and education. The centre, jointly run and funded by local and regional authorities, also with a contribution from the EU Structural Funds, is committed to supporting its components as well as the development of creative locations and spaces.

Mons is also embedded in a wider development strategy started some 10 years ago to transform part of the Hainaut region of Belgium into a digital valley. Approximately 3 000 jobs in the city and surrounding area are now related to the creative and digital economy. In Pécs, cooperation was engendered between the local government of the city and the surrounding Baranya

Photos on the next double page  
Essen for the Ruhr 2010 —  
European Centre for Creative Economy Dortmund U —  
photographer: *Manfred Vollmer*

Essen for the Ruhr 2010 —  
Centre for International Light Art Unna —  
photographer: *Manfred Vollmer*

county in unifying their libraries, and the result was a green-field investment in a new regional library and information centre. Pécs also created a 'Grand exhibition space' by reconstructing the baroque block of the former county hall, adding a modern new wing, as part of a development project involving the completion of Museum Street, in the inner-city neighbourhood of the early Christian necropolis and the Basilica.

In Košice, the activities of the project team increased cooperation between involved departments in the local and regional administrations, and also brought the private sector and local universities into the loop in improving creativity and creative sectors in the city and the region. Urban development transformed an industrial city to highlight creative potential, a university background and a new cultural infrastructure — the Kasárne Kulturpark and the Kunsthalle/Hall of Art. Further cooperation boosted tourism from across the Carpathian Region,

Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine — and for the first time the European fund for its eastern neighbourhood was used to support public-private partnerships in the tourism sector.

Pilsen moved its buses, trolleybuses and trams out of a maintenance depot in the town centre to turn it into a creative centre, which will also become the first incubator for the cultural and creative sectors of this kind in the Czech Republic. And among the many other examples of imaginative reuse of redundant or obsolescent infrastructure, Turku renovated an engineering workshop to serve as the main indoor arena for many of its events in Logomo, and Tallinn's 10 000 m<sup>2</sup> Creative hub (Kultuurikatel) of studios, galleries, function rooms and restaurants was created in a disused power and heating plant. It was designed specifically to stimulate partnerships, knowledge transfer, good contacts and a broad European network for creating synergy between various cultural trends and organisations as

well as creative industries and businesses. Guimarães' Couros Multifunctional Complex became a place for meeting, socialising, playing, having parties, holding fairs and markets, planting vegetable gardens, staging shows, and more. And for creating new infrastructure, the city obtained around 70 % of the total funding from the EU Structural Funds (European Regional Development Fund — ERDF).

Often the development has been at a very utilitarian and even straightforwardly economic level. Lille (France) estimates that every euro it invested in its European Capital of Culture year brought in between six and eight in the local economy. Linz saw a significant economic impact from its year, as well as an improvement in the city's tourist offer with three new hotels built, and upgrades in restaurants and local transport facilities. And governance and partnerships were strengthened, creating the basis for further development of the city's cultural sector.













## For and by the citizens

Striking the balance between high art and wide participation is a central challenge of the European Capital of Culture. Success depends on satisfying popular as well as elite opinion, in fostering the involvement of citizens — whose city, after all, is the focus of the event. But this is not an afterthought, a purely defensive exercise to avert criticisms of ignoring local feelings. On the contrary, citizens are a major resource, and an often untapped source of cultural wealth and diversity. It is a matter of embracing and welcoming the heterogeneity of a city's population. So programmes have been increasingly planned to promote wide and deep engagement across the groups of people who are the heart of any city. And in recognition of the merits of that broad participation, special efforts are made to bridge the gaps —

including to those hard-to-reach citizens that for one reason or another do not customarily take part in cultural events.

Evidence of the wide range of citizens' involvement was visible everywhere in the streets of Maribor, with specially-commissioned plaques, neighbourhood noticeboards advertising local events, incorporation of schools and youth groups into the festivities, and the recruitment of numerous members of the population as an active part of the celebrations.

In Pilsen a sequence of local events were organised in the run-up to the beginning of the year, ranging from tours that plunged into the history of the city's districts to neighbourhood races staged with ride-upon lawnmowers.

In Umeå a piano casually placed on the riverbank allowed everyone to make their contribution in passing to the city's music programme.

And music offered a chance for young and old, professional and amateur, to play a part in the European Capital of Culture in Guimarães.

In Turku, local residents were given a new view of the area around a former prison when they were led by urban artist Meiju Niskala along a 400-metre parade carpet that had been created for the occasion by more than a thousand weavers from southwest Finland. More generally, Turku extensively engaged with health services, as well-being was a core objective of the year under the motto 'Culture does good'.





The narratives can have a distinctly local appeal, and even be created by specific population groups — perhaps with practical support as well as money, or evoke a broad European context. They can be small and amateur, or be integrated as part of a large professional event, and build social cohesion. In Tallinn, volunteers worked on opening up the city to the sea in advance of the inauguration of the year.

Košice involved citizens from its suburbs in SPOTs, which celebrated the diversity of minority cultures through a participatory approach that involved neighbourhood visits, community meetings, and resident surveys. Local residents were encouraged to organise their own activities, and one of the outcomes was a Roma Ball in the Lunik 9 neighbourhood.

Many of the European Capital of Culture events could be enjoyed without being physically present, as they were broadcast live on television and radio or streamed online via the Internet. Latvian Television viewing figures show that broadcasts of Riga events, concerts, opera and other activities reached a total of 6.2 million views.

Part of the programme in Riga was ‘Urban storytelling’ — a sequence of neighbourhood photography exhibitions featuring local residents that the commissioned artists — Japanese photographer Ayaka Yamamoto and Aija Bley of Latvia — met by chance as they were walking around. The same attention to people was demonstrated in another project that looked for culture beyond the centre of the city, treating each resident of the neighbourhoods as a unique work of art. ‘We started out



at the central market, in the meat pavilion with 30 salespeople, workers and butchers, and we ended the project with 100 Rigans on the stage of the Culture Centre,’ says Gundega Laiviņa, the Director of the New Theatre Institute of Latvia and curator of the ‘Riga roadmap’.

Marseille-Provence involved citizens in pre-programme events, combining high artistic requirements with outreach to audiences in neighbourhood projects such as ‘Quartiers créatifs’, which installed artists in residence in the heart of 15 districts undergoing urban renewal, with a mission to question, comment on and complement the renovations, in close contact with the local inhabitants. It also ran events specifically aimed at young people, as well as involving smaller cultural operators that had never before received public funding. Mar-

Umeå 2014 —  
Old pianos transformed into playable pieces of art by  
Marc Strömberg —  
photographer: *Eugenio Della Morra*

Guimarães 2012 —  
Operation Big Bang —  
photographer: *João Peixoto*

seille-Provence also hosted 15 volunteers via the EU's 'Youth in action' programme, giving an opportunity for young people from outside the city and outside France to have a stake in the event — and to widen their own cultural awareness at the same time.

Turku's commemoration of the great fire of 1827 reached back into the city's past but linked it firmly to the younger generations by recreating it with a heavy metal musical conceived and performed by Turku Young Theatre — in which the average age of the performers was 14 years. A similar outreach to a different group of the population was 'Middle-aged hair', in which professionals worked with 120 citizens to put on a musical with community spirit. And 'Turku 365 Playfriends', a group of well-known artists and performers, arranged stand-up comedy on long-distance buses, tap dancing on trains and poems written on hand towels in public bathrooms.

Guimarães brought 300 instrumentalists and a gigantic choir together on a giant stage.

There was a strong local participation accent to the European Capital of Culture in Linz. Local volunteers and students built 900 polythene animals as part of 'Flut' (the flood), and school workshops carried the message across Upper Austria in the programme called 'I like to move it, move it'. 'Kulturhauptstadtteil des Monats' (cultural capital neighbourhood of the month) provided a dozen neighbourhoods across the city, generating works in such unusual venues as shop windows, tunnels under the city, and even a bus route. And 'Culture pilots' featured guided tours of the Wiener Straße conducted by members of the 12 different local ethnic communities.

Citizens were directly involved in many events — some small-scale, such as

citizens in Essen celebrating Europe by offering a welcome in a dozen languages.

And some were definitely not small-scale. In Essen for the Ruhr, people took over the main motorway into the city.

Liverpool (United Kingdom) ran outreach programmes with the city's schools, and all the city's pupils participated in at least one activity during the year. Liverpool was one of the first cities to engage volunteers, enrolling around 10 000 people, but the practice has spread widely. In Turku they provided help to older citizens in visiting art galleries and other venues.

And Istanbul (Turkey) distinguished itself with ambitious training initiatives for its volunteers, which resulted in skills development and improved job opportunities for those who took part in it.



# More than a year

Part of the aim of the European Capitals of Culture is to provide a lasting effect in the chosen cities. By definition, this can be measured only after the event, and the tools for such an assessment are not fully established. But some concrete and durable effects can certainly be identified on a purely empirical basis. For Lille, being the European Capital of Culture is widely acknowledged to have been the beginning of a permanent renewal, and Liverpool's reinvigoration continues to show how a city's image and essence can be improved over the long term by determination, triggered by the focus of the European Capital of Culture.

Since 2006, the explicit requirement for the programme to be sustainable and have a long-term effect has led to more frequent discussions of the need for legacy and

some examples of strategic legacy planning. In some cases, cities have attempted to promote sustainability by making this a criterion in the selection of activities for the hosting year. For instance, Essen for the Ruhr monitoring report in 2009 specifically refers to the European Capital of Culture year as a 'temporary highpoint', and talks about selecting projects on the basis that they will 'establish a permanent provision of cultural activities way beyond 2010'.

In Košice the revitalisation of a disused swimming pool has endowed the city with a remarkable and enduring cultural centre, the Kunsthalle, a permanent site for what are now regularly recurring events.

Many of the infrastructure improvements have persisted elsewhere — in terms of buildings or transport links or artworks: the

Aix-en-Provence conservatoire; MuCEM — now home to the collection of the Musée national des arts et traditions populaires; Košice now has direct flights to London; Turku's Logomo is now established as a nationally known culture centre and as one of Finland's most popular event arenas offering big concerts and major theatre performances; and the wall in Turku's city centre painted by Spanish visual artist Aryz as part of its celebration of international street art has become a permanent part of the cityscape.

The approach of local authorities and operators to culture has in many cases been changed by the European Capital of Culture year. A sense of pride (and sometimes the prospect of economic benefits from continued tourism) has induced some of them to maintain innovations created for

the European Capital of Culture year. Some of the persistent results take concrete form. The city of Marseille maintains the 'Ex voto' light installation in the Tunnel National into the city centre, and Marseille-Provence Métropole oversees the new panoramic viewpoint at La Viste.

Building on the extraordinary creative energy and popular enthusiasm triggered by the European Capital of Culture year, Lille decided to pursue this adventure through the creation of lille3000, in order to continue exploring the cultures and complexities of today's world while focusing on contemporary art, innovation and the future.

But there are other more subtle influences. Essen for the Ruhr has left a framework for joint working at regional level sustained beyond 2010. And although few cities







Turku 2011 —  
Eurocultured festival, street art by Aryz —  
photographer: Kari Vainio

set up formal legacy structures, cooperation often continues on an informal basis. Among cultural operators that took part in the programme, this is because the experience has strengthened their skills and capacities — for smaller operators in particular, now more familiar with networking, and with increased capacity to access funding. For many who previously relied on state funding, they have seen that other possibilities exist, creating something of a shift in mindsets. Artists have more routine contact with local people and with international exchange. In addition, residents in many cities are now more likely to attend cultural events. And greater awareness among local stakeholders of the potential for culture to contribute to development also promotes an interest in continuing engagement. Turku river network has, since being the European Capital of Culture, organised a range of events, including annual





Aarhus 2017 —  
Rethink landscape —  
photographer: *Dav Jacobsen*

summer carnivals. 'Neighbourhood weeks' constituted themselves as an association and have continued to arrange the weeks every year. An accessibility project has been managed by the Arts Academy at Turku University of Applied Sciences, and now accessibility activities and education are strongly embedded in its syllabus.

Sometimes the continuation of events spawned by the European Capital of Culture year is the consequence of a deliberate policy, such as the 'Guimarães Tempos Cruzados' programme promoting synergies and sharing resources. This is also the case in Košice, particularly for events that were designed to appeal to young adults less

likely to participate in cultural activities — such as the City festival, Sound city days, or Nuit blanche. Similarly, SPOTs has provided Košice with a network of community arts centre. And it is still running a project known as 'Escalator', which it created for its European Capital of Culture year, providing training for people to work on administration





of the cultural and creative sector. This has now grown to extend its scope to the entire territory of Slovakia.

Linz cultural activities continue and there is an increased capacity of Linz's cultural sector, in terms of greater experience, better collaboration, more positive attitudes and greater professionalism. Linz now has the cultural infrastructure to match its aspirations and a partnership between the key stakeholders that remains strong. Examples are: Kepler Salon (a series of scientific dialogues hosted in the former home of the 17<sup>th</sup> century astronomer), Turneremit (Hermit of the tower), the Next comic (interdisciplinary festival for comics and cartoon art) and the Pixel Hotel

(a network of newly-created 'hotel' rooms in unusual locations across the city).

Umeå will continue its work and will continue to be associated with open-mindedness, involvement, curiosity and passion, said Mayor Marie-Louise Rönnmark.

The European Capital of Culture is more than a year in another sense too. Many cities conduct advance programmes as they prepare themselves — and their citizens — for being the focus of attention. Since 2014, the Pilsen meeting point has served as a source of information, a box office, and a space for promotional exhibitions and performances, and 'coworking wo-co husovka' has provided

a space for workshops, discussions, meetings and connections among people from different domains interested in creative ideas which have the potential to be translated into business. Aarhus (Denmark), which will be European Capital of Culture 2017, is already in on the act.

And as Pilsen says in its promotion as it starts its year as European Capital of Culture, it is 'more than a one-off revival of the city, more than an advertising space for sponsors. It is a project which has the power to change how Pilsen is perceived and how the role of culture is perceived, and to become a milestone in the evolution of the city.'





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