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MARSEILLE-PROVENCE 2013
CAPITALE EUROPÉENNE
DE LA CULTURE

Marseille is all set to be “European Capital of Culture 2013”. Throughout the year Marseille will be rolling out a programme of unusual cultural events, exhibitions, shows, festivals and more, divided into three major episodes. More than 12 million visitors are expected from all over the world. The economic challenge is at the heart of the project. This immense cultural event, with an emphasis on the innovative, original and surprising, will be a powerful force in boosting the city’s economic and cultural development, at the same time as contributing to its influence and attraction on the world stage.

Major international events are powerful levers for growth. When Lille became European Capital of Culture in 2004, the image of an entire region changed dramatically. The event proved to be an agent of social cohesion and it sparked off a great many initiatives. Tourist numbers increased by 10% and the number of jobs created in the commercial, hotel and catering sector grew by 7%.



In 2013, it will be Marseille’s turn to take up the challenge, alongside the Slovak city of Kosice. Since its creation in 1985, at the initiative of the European Union, the much coveted title of “European Capital of Culture” has contributed to bringing European peoples closer together, whilst at the same time ensuring economic benefits and improving infrastructure. “*The event is an exceptional opportunity for the city organising it to put new energy into its cultural life, but also to showcase its transformation to the world, improve its visibility at an international level and stimulate its tourist sector,*” says a pleased Jacques Pfister, president of Marseille-Provence 2013, the body in charge of the event.



MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES

Founded around 600 BC by Greek seafarers originating from Phocaea in Asia Minor, with the name *Massalia*, Marseille earned itself a place in the history of trade and commerce in the Mediterranean. For this reason, more than any other city it symbolises the common political will of the member countries of the Union for the Mediterranean to redouble their efforts to transform this area into a zone of peace, democracy, cooperation and prosperity.

The programme of Marseille-Provence, which unites 100 or so *communes* (including Aix-en-Provence, Arles, Salon de Provence and La Ciotat.) around this tremendous project, will take the form of a story in three episodes: “*Marseille-Provence accueille le monde*” (Marseille-Provence, Welcoming the World), “*Marseille-Provence à ciel ouvert*” (Marseille-Provence, Open Sky) and “*Marseille-Provence aux mille visages*” (Marseille-Provence, Land of a Thousand Faces). Almost 500 cultural events are planned from 12 January to 31 December.

For the event organisers, the prospects for success are boosted by an exceptional geographical position. Standing at the crossroads of Northern and Southern Europe, the region enjoys a privileged location on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. “*The Euro-Mediterranean location of our region, open both to Europe and to the Mediterranean – and therefore to the world – is at the heart of our project. “Marseille-Provence, Welcoming the World” is indeed one of the main themes of our programme,*” emphasises M. Jacques Pfister.



With its diversity, its history and its heritage, the region is already a major European destination. Moreover Marseille is served by an international airport, three high-speed rail lines, the port of Marseille and a highway network linking it with the major cities of Europe. Tourists flock here from all over the world. “*In 2013 Marseille will be in the limelight and it will be a theatre for all cultures. We are going to show at a European level what we have discovered in our city in the last ten years: that culture is in itself a force for development and an economic industry in its own right,*” states Marseille’s Mayor, Jean-Claude Gaudin. “*We are expecting the year of being “European Capital of Culture” to attract about a million and a half additional tourists over the 10 million who visit the region in a normal year,*” stresses the president of Marseille-Provence.

The economic repercussions are considerable. The first to benefit will be the hotel, catering and transport sectors, but it is also a tremendous driver for the development of work and employment in the construction sector. Sixty refurbishment projects have been designed by leading international architects. “*Already over €660 million are being earmarked for the refurbishment or construction of major cultural facilities in our region, such as the MuCEM (Museum of Civilisations from Europe and the Mediterranean) in Marseille, the extension of the Musée Granet in Aix-en-Provence and Frank Gehry’s project for the Parc des Ateliers in Arles*”. According to the organisers, for every euro invested, six euros of economic effects are expected, i.e. nearly €600 million.

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