EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE

30 YEARS

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Foreword

Tibor Navracsics, European Union Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

Over the past 30 years, the European Capitals of Culture have grown into one of the most ambitious cultural projects in Europe. And they have become one of the best known — and most appreciated — activities of the European Union (EU).

The original motivation of the project —started in 1985 on the initiative of the then Greek Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri — is still very much valid: to bring citizens of the European Union (or the European Community, as it was then called) closer together.

By providing opportunities for Europeans to meet and discover the great cultural diversity of our continent and to take a fresh look at our common history and values, the European Capitals of Culture promote mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue among citizens and increase their sense of belonging to a community.

The European Capitals of Culture remain first and foremost a cultural event. Cultural activity in these cities increases, new audiences can be reached and the city's cultural operators can acquire a more international outlook and thus improve their skills and professionalism. The European Capitals of Culture also contribute to forging an image of an attractive and creative Europe open to cultures from across the world.

Being a European Capital of Culture can also boost the long-term socioeconomic development of cities. They often take this opportunity to regenerate themselves, improve their creative and innovative potential, develop new and more sustainable forms of tourism and raise their profile. Being a European Capital of Culture can also foster social and territorial cohesion within city boundaries and beyond, strengthen citizens' roles in the city's development as well as their participation in the shaping and making of cultural expressions.

This brochure showcases successful projects in recent European Capitals of Culture. They show that the European Capitals of Culture have become laboratories of strategic investment in culture, benefiting our economies and our societies as a whole.

The European Capitals of Culture are an integral part of the Creative Europe programme 2014–20, whose ambition is to promote Europe's cultural diversity and cultural heritage and to reinforce the competitiveness of our cultural and creative sectors. Creative Europe helps artists, cultural professionals and cultural organisations to adapt to the digital age and globalisation, work across borders and reach as many people as possible in Europe and beyond. It also supports efforts to improve access to finance through the setting-up of a new financial guarantee facility.

I am pleased to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the European Capitals of Culture, and I invite you to discover more on the following pages.

Guimarães 2012 —
Platform for arts and creativity in a former market —
photographer: *Paulo Pacheco*

European Capitals of Culture: 30 years of achievements

Thirty years old in 2015, the European Capitals of Culture initiative remains fresh and vigorous, highly popular with cities and citizens across the European Union. It is now a prestigious and fully mature year-long international event with an established place in global cultural calendars.

Over and over again throughout those 30 years, the European Capitals of Culture have highlighted the richness of cultures in Europe, and allowed European citizens to share celebrations of their diversity. Millions of Europeans have also been offered a new sense of belonging to a common cultural area — and millions, in the more than 50 cities that have taken part, have had the chance to show off the local places and customs and events that they take pride in.

The European Capitals of Culture can also deliver in terms of prosperity and quality of life for the cities that take part. Culture has become more closely integrated into the long-term development of many of the participating cities. And the cities have in turn benefited from regeneration and new infrastructure, a higher international profile, increased tourism — and an enhanced image in the eyes of their own inhabitants. Participation in the European Capitals of Culture programme has frequently helped achieve many policy goals at regional and national level, too.

From its earliest days, it offered a platform for creativity. The idea of designating an annual 'European City of Culture' was first proposed by the Greek Culture Minister, Melina Mercouri, in 1983, long before culture was elevated into an explicit EU policy. And the first city to hold the title was Athens, in 1985. Glasgow in 1990, Antwerp in 1993 and Copenhagen in 1996, to name just a few, conspicuously demonstrated just how much could be done.

Progressively, a sequence of refinements in the processes for choosing cities, and in monitoring and evaluating their performance, have helped to raise the level of professionalism in the preparation and execution of the events. Milestones include the competitive bid process introduced in 1999, and the guarantee since 2005 of a minimum of four years' lead-in time — a development that has inspired still bolder ambition. With the growth of the profile of the European Capitals of Culture, the bid process itself has become a high-profile event in its own right. And increasingly,

Guimarães 2012 —
Renascer 'Time to be reborn' —
photographer: *José Caldeira*

the initiative has fostered the development of an aspirational vision that goes beyond celebration, and embraces transformation. Being a European Capital of Culture has become a catalyst for a wider change in the perception of a city — both by its own residents, and by the world beyond.

At the same time, a trend has emerged for activities to have an impact that is felt not only in the cultural sphere, but spreads into the social, educational, urban-planning and even economic and regional dimensions. Programmes have deliberately sought to widen engagement across more diverse audiences — particularly in parts of a city or segments of its population that do not represent customary customers for cultural events. Involving local populations actively in the creation and conduct of events has also become a matter of routine, and the deployment of 'citizen volunteers' has cemented many of the cities' programmes into the consciousness of the local population. The 'life cycle' of each European Capital of Culture programme has evolved too. Nowadays, six years before their title year, two Member States of the European Union invite applications from the cities on their territory that might be interested in bidding for the honour. Over the course of the following two years, the applications are reviewed by a panel of independent experts in the field of culture, who recommend one city in each Member State for the title. These are then formally designated as the European Capitals of Culture four years ahead of the relevant year, permitting extensive and detailed planning and preparation. The panel, supported by the European Commission, continues to offer advice and guidance to designated cities on the evolving preparations until the hosting year. Finally, at the end of the European Capitals of Culture year, an evaluation report is prepared for and published by the European Commission. EU funding of the European Capitals of Culture initiative has also increased over the years. It amounts now to EUR 1.5 million for each chosen city, in the form of the Melina Mercouri Prize, which is awarded in light of the outcomes of each city's preparation.

Umeå 2014 —
Closing ceremony, Northern light —
photographer: *Fredrik Larsson*

Riga 2014 —
Chain of book lovers —
photographer: *Martins Otto*

During its evolution, the programme has encouraged a stronger commitment towards more closely-defined and locally-sensitive vision statements. It is important that the programmes not only correspond to the ambitions of the planners but also sit comfortably with the city's own population. This requires an acute consciousness of local culture — in every sense of the word — to ensure that the content of the programme and the creation or import of new cultural activities win the support of local communities, rather than generate disruption and associated tensions.

Bringing 'European added value' to the event has always been an obligatory theme for aspirants. For cities, it means connecting their local context with the European framework, but also being locally meaningful while appealing at European and international levels. This has resulted in presenting events featuring European artists, collaborations, co-productions, and exchanges between artists and cultural organisations across Europe. At its best, this cooperation has a strong rationale — often

Riga 2014 —
Musical light show —
photographer: *Martins Otto*

based on a pre-existing geographical, historical or more personal links. The European dimension can also be explored through developing European themes and issues or celebrating aspects of European history, identity, shared values and heritage. Sometimes this has taken the form of presenting old themes in fresh ways, or revealing hidden aspects of a European connection — or even tackling difficult themes that resonate across the continent. Specific partnerships between cities have also offered scope for new reflections and new relations.

And of course the promotion of tourism across Europe, attracting visitors from other Member States or beyond, automatically reinforces the European significance of a city's event.

Candidates — and winners — have faced up to the challenge of communicating a vision for the event, and of setting goals, especially for the longer term, as is evident from the sustainable legacy planning that has become a growing feature of programmes.

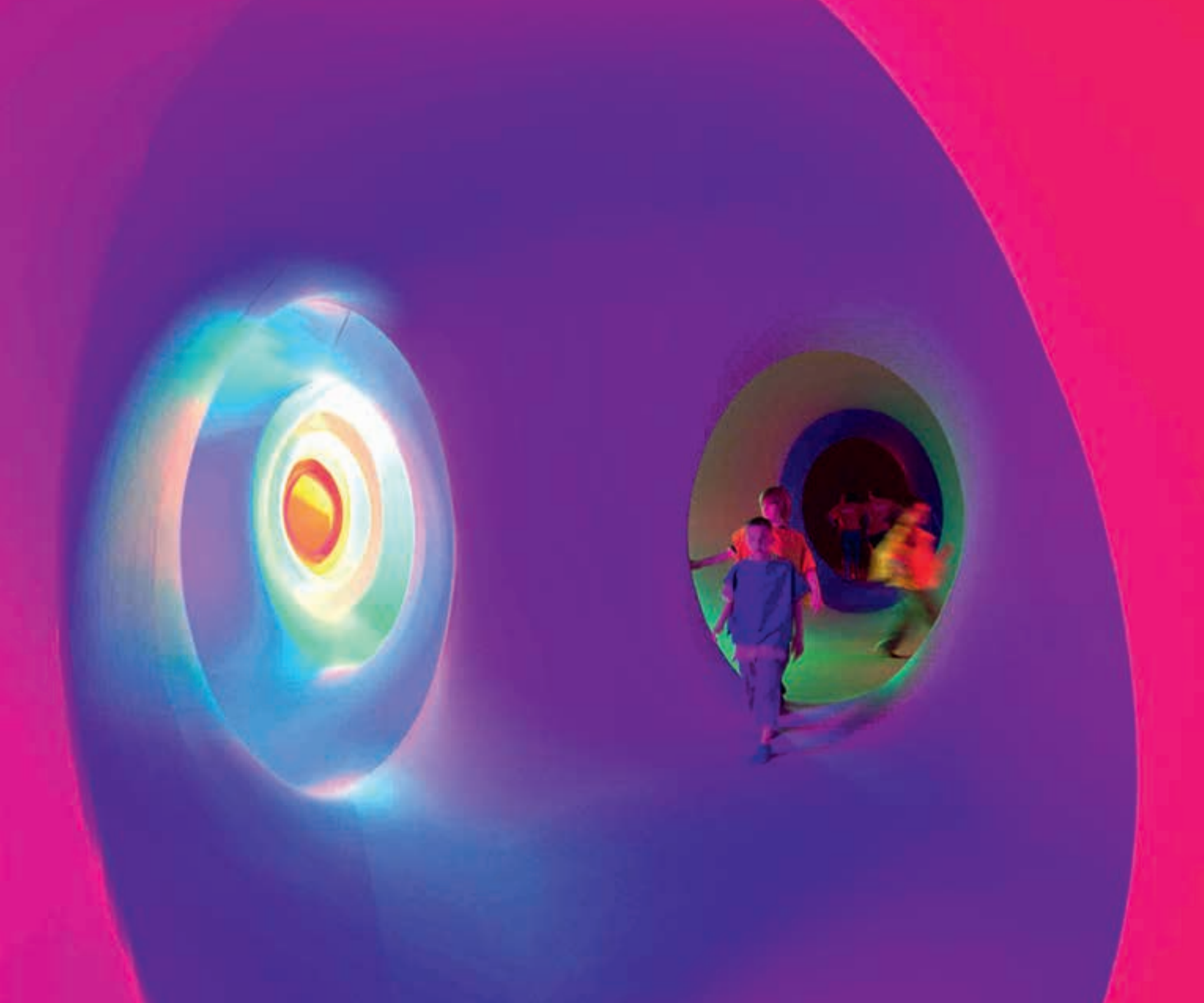
The Directorate-General for Education and Culture, the responsible department of the European Commission, has supported the process, producing a guide for candidate cities, and a series of information days at which potential candidates can learn more about the logistics of organising a bid. It has also fine-tuned the presumptions and mechanisms at the heart of measuring success for the programme.

The programme is already looking ahead to the next 20 years. On 14 April 2014,

Turku 2011 —
Colourscape colour labyrinth —
Eye Music Trust

acting on a proposal by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a decision for a new action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033. The aims are largely unchanged — to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, to highlight the common features that they share, and to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities. The main features would also be retained — equal opportunities for all Member States, geographical balance, a strong European dimension, and the inclusion of all citizens in all neighbourhoods of the city in the project. There will be an increased focus on the need for candidate and winning cities to better embed their European Capitals of Culture project into their overall cultural strategy as a way to produce a sustainable cultural, social and economic legacy. And additional support will be made available to cities during the preparation period. It will also be possible for a city in a candidate country or potential candidate for EU membership to hold the title every third year as of 2021.

Although it is now one of the longest-running EU initiatives, the European Capitals of Culture remain relevant — as may be seen by the continuing intense interest. In the competition for the 2016 edition, 16 Spanish cities and 11 Polish cities expressed a desire to become their country's European Capitals of Culture, and engaged in a fiercely competitive bidding process. And the following quotation from late 2014 — from Androulla Vassiliou, the former European Commissioner responsible for education, culture, multilingualism and youth, on the recommendation of Matera as European Capital of Culture in 2019 — is self-explanatory: 'I congratulate Matera on its successful bid. The competition for the title in Italy was one of the strongest ever, with 21 initial contenders narrowed down to six finalists. This number is a testimony of the immense popularity of this European Union initiative. I am confident that Matera will attract more visitors from Europe and all over the world to discover the city, its history and the cultural diversity which is one of the strengths of our continent.'



Mons 2015 —
Opening —
photographer: © *David Bomans*

A high-profile cultural event

The concept of culture has taken on new meaning with the European Capitals of Culture. Not just high culture — although there has been plenty of that. The capitals have demonstrated Europe's capacity for defining culture in the broadest possible sense — and for giving it a high profile too. In recent years, the chosen cities have promoted culture in so many of its facets, from the most refined miniatures to the most spectacular public events. And in giving culture that high profile, it has repeatedly breathed new life into a city's cultural consciousness.

Marseille-Provence (France) mounted one of the most extensive and wide-ranging programmes — culturally and geographically — of any European Capitals of Culture to date, creating numerous opportunities for citizens to attend, to take part in or sometimes also to co-create cultural events stretched across several cities and a wide territory. Altogether it featured some 950 projects, including an exhibition of Cézanne, van Gogh and Bonnard in Marseille and in Aix-en-Provence that was seen by nearly half-a-million people.

But Marseille-Provence also took new approaches to culture, such as moving 3 000 sheep across the region in commemoration of the summer tradition of transhumance, reminding the urban population of its earlier pastoral roots as the flocks converged on the city centre in the final stages of the event. Stavanger (Norway) adopted a different approach to taking advantage of the physical environment — staging an aerial ballet against a dramatic rockface.
The more conventional forms of culture have also featured prominently, but often associated with a touch of modernity. In Turku (Finland), the world premiere of the opera 'Eerik XIV', specially commissioned from composer Mikko Heiniö, inaugurated the new main hall for performances. Appropriately, it depicts the life of the 16th century Swedish king who cherished dreams of a civilized Europe, once proposed to Elizabeth I of England, and afterwards lived happily with his peasant Finnish wife in Turku castle.

In Essen for the Ruhr (Germany), a performance of Gustav Mahler's eighth symphony — the 'Symphony of a thousand' — was given exactly 100 years after the premiere, under the baton of Lorin Maazel,

and with more than 800 singers and more than 150 musicians on stage, including almost all the philharmonic orchestras of the Ruhr region and 28 choirs.

The balance between high culture and local culture found different forms of expression from city to city. Košice (Slovakia) took cultural events beyond the mainstream of the city centre by making imaginative use of a former barracks and of neighbourhood heat exchange stations, renovating them for local art events. To maximise the impact, it began many of these cultural activities during the development phase of its European Capital of Culture year, as part of a long-term process that included the use of local groups in innovative art forms. But other Košice events included celebrations of the work of the son of Slovakia, Andy Warhol, and gestures of multicultural inspiration, paying tribute to Slovak–Hungarian and Roma heritage or the Mazal Tov Jewish festival. There was experimental dance and opera, and there were high-profile performances, including the Tokyo Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, and works by Krzysztof Penderecki. And Jordi Savall, the renowned viola da gamba player, conductor and composer, brought his early music ensemble Le Concert des Nations to perform Haydn's 'Seven last words of our saviour on the cross' in St Elisabeth's Cathedral.

Most cities mounted events with a specific link to their own historic culture. Guimarães (Portugal), closely associated with the emergence of the Portuguese national identity in the 12th century, and with a rich architectural heritage, had exhibitions and a competition on architecture, which was a strong focus of the overall programme.

Others moved into entirely new territory for culture. Pécs (Hungary) created a brand new state-of-the-art auditorium, which featured concerts of a wide range of music and spectacles during the year.

And others deliberately courted controversy, generating vivid public debate about the role of art. The sculpture 'Embankment arch' created in Vilnius (Lithuania) by Vladas Urbanavicius led to widespread reflections on the relationship between local people and contemporary art.

Perhaps above all, it is the performances that leave the strongest impression, and

Stavanger 2008 —
Project Bandaloop aerial ballet —
photographer: *Asle Haukland*

Essen for the Ruhr 2010 —
Symphony of a thousand —
photographer: *Manfred Vollmer*

imprint themselves onto the cultural consciousness of a city long after the year has closed — such as Maribor's (Slovenia) opening production of its year with Marij Kogoj's opera 'Black masks' performed by the joint ensembles of the Maribor and Ljubljana National Theatres.

Taking culture outdoors in huge popular celebrations is a frequent element in European Capitals of Culture. Mons (Belgium) opened its year with a ceremony of light, flame and colour — and although culture is much more than fireworks and lightshows — as Mons, Marseille-Provence and Stavanger (among many other cities) demonstrated, events like that can give culture a high profile too.

Turku 2011 —
Eurocultured Festival —
photographer: *Kari Vainio*

Maribor 2012 —
Cultural Embassies, Mexico —
photographer: *Miha Sagadin*

A European event

The programme is not entitled 'European Capitals of Culture' by accident. It is central to the concept that the cities chosen do not exist in a vacuum: they are part of Europe too, as their designation affirms. Every city that is selected has had to demonstrate in its proposal how it intends to fulfil this aspect of its role, reinforcing elements of Europe's common cultural features and values as well as showcasing the huge diversity of cultures in Europe.

Not that this is a problem for them. The complex evolution of Europe means that there is hardly any city within it that has not, at one time or another, been the location for a moment in Europe's history, or the place of birth or passage for one

Essen for the Ruhr 2010 —
TWINS project, Next Generation —
photographer: *Diana Küster*

Essen for the Ruhr 2010 —
MELEZ project —
photographer: *Manfred Vollmer*

of the pageant of personalities who have shaped Europe, or reflected a cultural or artistic movement or influence that has contributed to the Europe we know today. Consequently, the European Capitals of Culture have frequently drawn on previous links to lend that European dimension to their programme.

In Essen for the Ruhr, where the region's mythology is set against a backdrop of coal and steel, even the influence of industrial history on its culture was celebrated, with the mine museum.

And in its 'Moving Europe' programme, tribute was paid to the 150 years of migration — from Belgium, England, France, Italy, Portugal, Prussia, Scotland, Silesia and Turkey — that was largely triggered by the region's industry, and which has led to some 170 different nations and regions represented among the population there, in one of Europe's largest conurbations. In Essen, the mosque was opened to visitors, giving them an insight into a religion that has come from afar to embed itself into German culture too.

Pécs also reflected the multicultural dimension of Europe. Its principal message was 'opening the gate to the multiculturality of the Balkans'. The city itself is an example of a multicultural past and present of the region, with the Pasha Gazi Kaszami Mosque in the main square, German influences (Pécs and its region are now the most important cultural centre of the German minority in Hungary), ethnic minorities (including Bulgarian, Greek, Polish and Serbian) and its Roma education system.

Links to Europe need not be historical or pre-existing, either. The energy of Europe's contemporary culture also offers rich grounds for novel connections and innovative approaches to celebrating its diversity, in promoting co-productions or collaborative works between partners from different countries, establishing new partnerships and highlighting new comparisons and contrasts.

In some cases, the European aspect has been expressed in links developed between cities, in particular, between cities that have shared the title of European Capital of Culture. Some of the Marseille-Provence operators formed partnerships with operators in Košice. Košice created collaborative activities with Marseille-Provence, and set up new cross-border cooperation with Krakow and with Hungary. Members of the Košice team moved to work for Pilsen (Czech Republic), and Guimarães built up bonds with Maribor, while Mons hosts eight European and non-European cities — Tokyo, Casablanca, Montreal/Quebec, Milan, Lille, Pilsen, London and Melbourne — for 11 days each, for a programme mixing cultural performances and residences, concerts and gastronomy.

Programmes specifically created to promote the exchange of artists have also been created. Košice provided support for mobility of artists and exchanges across Europe, with an artists-in-residence programme that allowed Košice artists to visit other countries, and international artists to visit Košice. Vilnius operated a European School of Arts that offered creative workshops and residencies for young artists, and cooperation between schools of art from many parts of Europe.

Sometimes the European dimension took the form of distinct facets of Europe being brought to the selected city. Two thirds of the operators in the programme of Marseille-Provence had an explicit European and international character — ranging from outdoor readings of regional and Mediterranean authors to the Villa Méditerranée, a dramatic new building on the waterfront, as an international centre for Mediterranean dialogue and exchange. In Košice, 15 countries were represented during the opening and closing ceremonies. The Turku programme included the 'Eurocultured' street culture, and its festival finale on the banks of the Aura featured hundreds of artists from 10 European countries; on the river's islands it created the Turku Contemporary Art Archipelago featuring international and local artists.

In Vilnius, the European art programme was implemented in partnership with cultural organisations and artists from other

Maribor 2012 —
Cultural Embassies, Italy —
photographer: *Miha Sagadin*

European countries. It included the London Symphony Orchestra and a showing of the silent film by Danish director Carl Theodor Dreyer, 'The passion of Joan of Arc', with music written for the occasion by the Lithuanian composer Bronius Kutavicius and performed live in the National Opera and Ballet Theatre. Maribor established cultural embassies involving dozens of organisations from more than 30 countries, and renovated the Slovenj Gradec, birthplace of Austrian composer Hugo Wolf, into an international museum and documentation centre about him. A performance based on Wolf's lieder was accompanied by the first international workshop on classical solo singing.

While Europe frequently came to cities, the programmes of many of the cities also contained projects that extended way beyond their own confines and out into Europe. This was sometimes very tangible: Linz (Austria) offered Danube music tours to the Black Sea and North Sea; Umeå's 'The birds show the way' project followed — through computer technology — birds migrating from the Ume delta through Europe to Asia and Africa, and back again, culminating in an April homecoming party.

Sometimes the reaching out was more conceptual. Guimarães' 'Spera Mundi' represented the universal potential of Portugal in Europe. Linz celebrated its links with eminent Europeans, including the 17th century mathematician and astronomer Johannes Kepler, and the 19th century composer Anton Bruckner. In a more sombre mode, it also offered a retrospective of the city's association in the past with the Nazi period. And the Umeå (Sweden) film festival's courageous programming opened with 'Violette', evoking post-war Saint-Germain-des-Prés and the links between Violette Leduc, Simone de Beauvoir, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Cocteau, Albert Camus and Jean Genet.

New technologies can also lead to new bonds across Europe. With 'Café Europa', a network of digitally connected modular and moveable places, Mons explores with other cities how new ways of learning and technological tools can become vectors of social links.

Guimarães 2012 —
Opening ceremony “TIME TO FEEL” —
photographer: *João Peixoto*

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 Rådhustorget 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.

Guimarães 2012 —
Postgraduate Advanced Centre, Couros Multifunctional Complex,
Fabrica Freitas e Fernandez —
photographer: *Paulo Pacheco*

…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 Dortmunder 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^2 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.

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Turku 2011 —
Parade carpet by Meiju Niskala —
photographer: *Tuukka Kaila*

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 élite 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-Province 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-Province 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

Marseille-Province 2013 —
MuCEM —
© R. Ricciotti and Carta Arquitects

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

Pilsen 2015 —
Opening: David Dimitri, Artist—
photo: © *Pilsen 2015*

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 17th century astronomer), Turmeremit (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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