

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE TARTU 2024 – A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGION

University town Tartu together with South Estonia holds the title of the European Capital of Culture in 2024. The preparation and implementation of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) is the largest ever cross-sectoral cooperation in South Estonia, with the aim to develop the economy of Tartu and South Estonia through culture. One million visitors are expected to attend the ECOC events.

The Capital of Culture program will bring more than 1000 different events to people of all ages. At the same time, Tartu 2024 is diverse in both its nature and its program. On the one hand, it is a spectacular celebration of culture, attracting visitors from Estonia and abroad alike. On the other hand, it is an opportunity to involve southern Estonians in laying the foundation for long-term change in Tartu and South Estonia.

A quarter of Estonia joined forces for the European Capital of Culture!

A total of 20 municipalities from South Estonia bring versatile events to the audience and tell the story of their Arts of Survival. The European Capital of Culture is organised by: Antsla Parish, Elva Parish, Kambja Parish, Kanepi Parish, Kastre Parish, Luunja Parish, Nõo Parish, Otepää Parish, Peipsiääre Parish, Põlva Parish, Rõuge Parish, Räpina Parish, Setomaa Parish, City of Tartu, Tartu Parish, Tõrva Parish, Valga Parish, Town of Viljandi, Town of Võru and Võru Parish.

The municipalities signed a cooperation agreement for the implementation of the European Capital of Culture.

The Creative Concept – Arts of Survival

The year-long program in Tartu and South Estonia tells the story of the Arts of Survival – the knowledge, skills and values that will help us live better in the future. As a community, we want to both share knowledge and learn from others. In this way, we use culture to create a better tomorrow.

The four most important Arts of Survival, as expressed in the Tartu 2024 program, are: uniqueness, sustainability, awareness and co-creation:

- **Uniqueness**

Tartu 2024 takes pride in the local uniqueness of Tartu and South Estonia. Our program that opens up this uniqueness, its outstanding presentation in Europe and the good hospitality towards our guests will be a reason for many to come and visit, to enjoy the stay and to come again.

We are an international city of culture. The strategic goal of Tartu and South Estonia is to create even more connections to the world and to increase the attractiveness of the region as a tourist destination.

- **Sustainability**

The Tartu 2024 program raises questions and seeks answers on how to live well in the future as an individual, as a society, as an environment – both in the city and in the countryside.

- **Awareness**

As the European Capital of Culture, we will be driven by the erudition and ingenuity that characterise Tartu and South Estonia.

As critically aware, we explore the relationships between people and technology, information, knowledge and science, and do so through arts.

- **Co-creation**

The Tartu 2024 code contains co-creation across generations, sectors and nations.

Tartu 2024 is the European Capital of Culture for grandparents, mothers and fathers, as well as for children. Together we create a more cohesive society.

Environmentally sound cultural management

The Tartu 2024 Foundation created an environmental strategy in cooperation with Acento, a partner for sustainability and waste planning.

The strategy is supported by a guide for organizing green events, which sets out the principles to be followed by all events included in the official program of Tartu 2024. Tartu 2024 has consistently trained and advised all event organizers to adhere to this guide.

Education

More than 60 projects in the Tartu 2024 main program have a connection to school or educational activities. This is why we have also called our program the Tartu 2024 Program of Culture and Education. Tartu 2024 also runs a youth program called Extended, where young people from South Estonia learn to organize cultural events. Ideally, they will become the future cultural organizers of Tartu and South Estonia.

Accessibility

It is important for Tartu 2024 that the events of the Capital of Culture were accessible to various target groups. We have therefore prepared materials for ECOC event organizers that list common solutions and services that can help organizers ensure smooth accessibility for everyone. This material will also help to define and describe the accessibility of the event displayed in the Tartu 2024 program calendar.

Hospitality network

For the European Capital of Culture, it is important that guests have a good experience in our accommodation and catering facilities. The aim of this network that includes catering, hospitality, cultural and other service businesses, is to develop the local service culture, and highlight the places with great service in the region.

Travelguider

In addition to the rich European Capital of Culture program, we also help visitors discover unique experiences in South Estonia. To this end, we have created a platform called Travel guides, through which South Estonia's leisure providers can offer unforgettable experiences for visitors to the Capital of Culture: visits to a mud sauna, a bog tour and other things that make our South Estonia special.

Volunteers

The European Capital of Culture is an opportunity to contribute to the work of specialists in different fields. Our hundreds of volunteers are a great support to the Capital of Culture, and their contribution in making it a reality is invaluable.

Impact of the Capital of Culture

The impact of the Capital of Culture on the region goes beyond the creation of a compelling program of ECOC events and experiences.

The aim is also to have a more indirect and longer-term positive impact on the region: improved accessibility of South Estonia as a region, the experience and increased confidence of the organizer of a successful ECOC event to continue to organize attractive events, and the selection of South Estonia as a region to live and holiday in.

When we visited Hungary in June 2023 with representatives of the municipalities of South Estonia, where the Veszprém-Balaton region was then the European Capital of Culture, the Mayor of Veszprém mentioned a couple of interesting trends:

- Now that the Veszprems region has received more attention in the country thanks to the ECOC, they have witnessed a noticeable increase in the number of applications to the University of Veszprém;
- This is also the case for medical residents, who were previously reluctant to study outside Budapest.

The impact of the ECOC has been tangible.

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