



# Info

## Luxembourg and Sibiu: 2007 European Capitals of Culture

Since its initiation in 1985 - the European Capitals of Culture project has been used as a way of highlighting the diversity of the continent's cities. As well as the prestige of being chosen the title also brings tourism, investment and urban regeneration. This year, the 50th anniversary of the foundation of what we now call the European Union, cities from its oldest and newest members hold the title. Luxembourg and Sibiu in Romania will hold the title jointly for the next 12 months.

### Luxembourg: "Reaching beyond borders"

Luxembourg was last the capital of culture back in 1995. This time the title will apply to the whole surrounding area of some 11 million people. This includes the whole of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the French and German speaking communities of Belgium, Lorraine in France and Rhineland-Palatinate and Saarland in Germany.

For this reason the organisers have given it the theme of "Reaching beyond borders" of language and culture. Over 500 projects are planned to mark the year.

### Sibiu in Romania: ethnic diversity key

Sibiu, known as Hermannstadt in German, is located in Transylvania in the heart of Romania and was founded eight centuries ago. When it was nominated in 2004, Romania was not yet an EU member. The theme chosen by Sibiu this year is "City of Culture-City of Cultures"

Sibiu hosts Romania's largest German community and a significant Hungarian minority, although 95% of the population are ethnic Romanians; these three cultures co-exist along with smaller minorities of Roma, Slovaks and Ukrainians, a multitude of different cultures that brings dynamism into the town.

The inhabitants celebrated the New Year in with two days of music, light, dance and fireworks, marking both Romania's accession to the European Union and the official opening of the Sibiu - European Capital of Culture 2007 program.

Among the projects being organised in the city are ones on architecture, literature, mobility, performing arts, visual arts and cultural heritage.

### How are the cities chosen?

To ensure fairness, in 1999 a chronological list of countries was drawn up - entitling them to hold the event in turn if they meet the criteria.

For the specific selection, a panel of seven independent people send a report to the

Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the European Commission. The Parliament can send its opinion to the Commission if it chooses. After a recommendation from the Commission the Council of Ministers designates a capital of culture.

## **Who's next?**

In 2008 it will be Liverpool (UK) and Stavanger (Norway) whilst in 2009 Linz (Austria) and Vilnius (Lithuania).