

Plovdiv and Matera: European Capitals of Culture in 2019

With a rich historical and cultural heritage and an eye to the future. Plovdiv in Bulgaria and Matera in Italy are this year's Capitals of Culture.

Plovdiv

Plovdiv is the first Bulgarian city to take on the mantle of European Capital of Culture. Located in south-central Bulgaria, in the centre of the Thracian plain, it is the country's second largest city, with approximately 345,000 inhabitants.

"After the presidency of the Council of the EU [between January and June 2018], [Plovdiv 2019](#) is one of the next major and significant events for Bulgaria," said [Andrey Kovatchev](#), a Bulgarian member of the EPP group.

"Together" is the motto of Plovdiv European Capital of Culture. It includes [four thematic platforms](#): "Fuse" integrates ethnic and minority groups, and aims to bring together different generations and social groups; "Transform" re-thinks and revives forgotten urban spaces; "Revive" aims to preserve historical heritage and expand access to culture; while "Relax" promotes sustainable living with a slow pace and slow food.

The city is planning more than 300 projects and nearly 500 events in more than 70 locations. "More than two million tourists are expected to visit Plovdiv in 2019," said Kovatchev.

Matera

A city of 60,000 in the south of Italy, Matera is famous for its historical Sassi cave dwellings and designated a Unesco world heritage site.

Being a Capital of Culture will give the city the opportunity to show the world its natural-historical attractions, said [Piernicola Pedicini](#), an Italian member of the EFDD group. "People will have the possibility to admire the beauty of its homes carved in the rock, the underground churches, the thirteenth-century cathedral and the incredible landscape that surrounds the city."

[Matera 2019's](#) slogan is "Open Future!" and has [five main themes](#): "Ancient Future", "Continuity and Disruptions", "Reflections and Connections", "Utopias and Dystopias" and "Roots and Routes". It includes [two pillar projects](#): "I-DEA", dedicated to investigation and representation of

the cultural, artistic and anthropological history of the region; and “Open Design School”, a design laboratory, experimentation and interdisciplinary innovation.

Find out more

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Capitals of Culture: Matera (top) and Plovdiv © AP Images/European Union-EP