



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 23 November 2011

16961/11

CULT 102

INFORMATION NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council

to: Council

Subject: **Maribor and Guimarães - European Capitals of Culture, 2012**

- Presentation by the Slovenian and Portuguese delegations

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Slovenian and Portuguese delegations on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda, under "other business", for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 28 and 29 November 2011.

Note from the Slovenian and Portuguese delegations

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, 28 - 29 November 2011:

Maribor and Guimarães - European Capitals of Culture, 2012

In the beginning of 2012, Turku and Tallinn will pass their titles of European Capitals of Culture to Guimarães and Maribor. We would therefore like to use this opportunity to shortly present both these European projects to the Council.

GUIMARÃES

Established in the 10th century, Guimarães represents much more than the mere birth of a city. It precedes and foreshadows the founding of Portugal, one of the oldest countries of Europe, becoming a compulsory reference point for any visitor in pursuit of culture, heritage and atmosphere. Because indeed Guimarães has it all: history, the wealth of monuments, archaeology, art and museums, intense cultural motion framed by the romanticism of its surroundings.

The historic centre of Guimarães, already described as “a city on a human scale”, has received international awards which symbolically resulted in its inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage List. This worldwide recognition makes us particularly proud, as it celebrates a considerable effort to ensure the harmonious evolution of this remarkable city, from mediaeval times to the present day.

In fact, when we think of Guimarães today, we acknowledge as well the successful modernization of traditional industries together with a fresh investment in manufacturing, not only incorporating increasingly more technology but also assuring a standing commitment to social development projects, contributing therefore to a fundamental change in both economic and social structures of the region.

As the European Capital of Culture 2012, what Guimarães has to offer its visitors is a well-founded experience in hosting cultural events of national and international scale. We invite you all next January 21st to come and visit Guimarães, the cradle of one of the oldest European nations, and witness multiple, lively events where Music, Theatre, Art, Cinema, Architecture, Literature and Citizenship will be represented.

MARIBOR

In a little more than a month, 5 partner towns from Slovenia, lead by Maribor, the second largest city in Slovenia, will proudly bear the title of the European Capital of Culture. Together, these partners from the north-eastern region of Slovenia will host a unique and diverse cultural programme: 400 projects – realised through 1000 events – will be carried out during the Year, presenting a rich cultural and historical heritage and involving numerous internationally acclaimed artists and creators.

Maribor – the heart of the Year – will host 70 % of the events. Through the process, this mostly post-industrial region will be offered a chance to acquire a modern image and a new splendour, based on creativity, co-operation and European spirit. Everyone involved in the story believes in its vision: harnessing the energetic cultural activity in Maribor and its partner towns and using it to boost development at all levels, making the region, and indeed the whole of Slovenia, more successful, adding an innovative edge to its economy and self-confidence to its people.

The Year's ambition is to become a turning-point: making the society more creative, open and bold. You are therefore kindly invited to become a part of this story which will start unfolding with the opening weekend between 13 and 15 January, with the opening ceremony taking place on 14 January.

See you in Guimarães and Maribor!