Magiczny Kraków

Association of European Cities of Culture of the Year 2000

2011-08-17

European Capital of Culture:

The title is granted to a European city chosen by the European Union which then presents the cultural life of the city, the region and the country for a period of one year. In general, the cities try to use this opportunity and funds related to it to develop its cultural offer in order to attract an international audience. The title means great prestige and - in the long term - a significant increase in tourism as well as better promotion. The chosen city presents its heritage for 12 months. On this occasion, the cities and regions organize concerts, festivals, shows, conferences and other activities promoting the city and the region. 60% of the cost of all events in European Capitals of Culture is covered by the European Union. So far, only one Polish city has been honoured with this title. It was Krakow in the year 2000. The year 2000, called the millennium year, was treated by the European Union in a special way, in order to emphasize the enduring heritage and contribution of European cities to the achievements of world culture and civilization. Because of that, as many as seven European Union cities were chosen, together with two cities of new member states that were to join the EU on 1 May 2004 -Krakow in Poland, and Prague in the Czech Republic. The decision to choose Krakow from among all Polish cities was made by the Polish government. There were no presentations or entries from other cities.

Association of European Cities of Culture of the year 2000 - AECC:

Nine European Capitals of Culture: Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, Helsinki, Prague, Reykjavik, Santiago de Compostela and Krakow founded the Association of European Cities of Culture of the year 2000 - AECC. The objective of its activity is to coordinate promotional activities and to apply a common information policy. The opening session was organized in February 1996 in Krakow. The following sessions were held in Bologna, Santiago de Compostela, Avignon and Helsinki, where the cities signed an agreement concerning three principle cooperation issues: foundation of the Association of European Cities of Culture in the year 2000 (including the adoption of principles of management within the association), definition of a common visual identity by means of adopting the logo and adoption of main programme principles. In accordance with the agreement, a key objective of the cooperation is to bring the European nations closer thanks to their cultures and to achieve durable structural changes by means of developing lasting forms of activity, continuing beyond the year 2000. To achieve this objective, the programme assumed that each city would prepare a selected and agreed part of the common project, symbolically called a "Chapter". These chapters form a "Book" under the common title of "European Cities of Culture of the year 2000".

Krakow has been a member of the Association since 1997, pursuant to Resolution of the Krakow City Council no. LXXVI/737/97 dated 9 April 1997. The central theme of the "Chapter" prepared by Krakow is: Thought - Spirituality - Creation. Themes prepared by the remaining cities include: Avignon - Art and Creation; Bergen - Art, Work and Relaxation; Bologna - Information and Communication; Brussels - City; Helsinki - Knowledge, Technology and Future; Reykjavik - Nature vs. Culture; Santiago de Compostela - Europe and the World; Prague - Heritage.

The AECC is divided into the President, Secretary and Treasurer. These are honorary functions which do not involve any obligations, apart from the President of the AECC who is in charge of organizing the meeting of nine cities. (Such a meeting was held in Krakow on 9-13 July 1998). The AECC activities are supervised by a coordinator with its registered office in Brussels. He is not separate from the nine cities, but acts as a link between the associated cities and the European Commission. The function of the Secretary is performed by a future President of AECC, whereas the Treasurer is an ex-President. A rotation takes place every fourteen weeks.

The basis for international cooperation of the nine European Cities of Culture is constituted by international projects. As a project leader, each city has presented its proposal to the remaining eight cities. Each city was responsible for making a decision on joining a given project, depending on the city's cultural character, the programme and the budget. The selected projects cover a vast range of themes, such as music, fine arts, geography, new technologies, urban planning and ecology and include the following: "Faces of the Earth" - Santiago de Compostela; "Technomade" - Avignon; "The coasts and Waterways" - Bergen, "The house of the 9 cities" - Brussels, "CafeNINE" - Bologna in cooperation with Helsinki, "Telelink" - Prague, "Codex Calixtinus" - Krakow, "Communication" - Helsinki, "Voices of Europe" - Reykjavik, "Kide" - Helsinki, "Walk About / Stalk" - Brussels.

Coordination of cooperation:

The Culture and National Heritage Department is the coordinator of Krakow's participation in the organization's activities.