



Broumov, 24th June 2020

Broumov seeks to be European Capital of Culture 2028. Brno has already announced its candidacy; Liberec and other cities have expressed their interest as well.

At a recent meeting, the Broumov town council approved the town's candidacy for the European Capital of Culture 2028 title. Broumov thus seeks to join other smaller European towns with successful candidacies such as Bad Ischl (Austria), Matera Basilicata (Italy), Paphos (Cyprus), and Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg). The story of Broumov hopes to show that Europe is a continent of strong regional identities, thus calling into question the concept of center and periphery.

Every year, two countries of the European Union nominate one city for the title of European Capital of Culture, which in 2028 will be hosted by the Czech Republic and France. The European Commission's motivation behind the Capital of Culture project is to showcase the selected cities' cultural richness and to call attention to shared European cultural values, but also to emphasize the importance of cultural activities to cities' strategic development.

"With Broumov's candidacy, we would like to show that culture can play a key role in regional development, and that even a small, provincial town can be a confident player in an urbanized world. The point is not to define ourselves in opposition to centers of culture and politics, but to become a proud partner with a rich history and a determined populace. Our candidacy is not about size or finances; instead, it will be built on a strong story. Here, too, we can be a source of inspiration," says Monika Lukašáková, the main coordinator of Broumov's candidacy, in explaining the reasons for the town's current effort.

As part of its candidacy, the town of Broumov will work closely with other important regional actors. "Europe is looking for examples of good practice among cities that, though they face the same problems as other towns, have taken a path worth following: They are successful and are prepared to continue their active approach. In this regard, there is no question that Broumov has much to offer. It is a 'Little big town!' that has spent many years supporting and promoting cultural independence. The result has been the creation of numerous European-level projects and a positive impact on local development," says Jan Školník of one of Broumov's partner organizations.

Broumov's candidacy has also been positively received by the Hradec Králové Region, under whose auspices the project is being organized.

Since its creation in 1985, the European Capitals of Culture project has awarded the title to more than 50 cities and towns. The project's character and goals have evolved over the past 35 years, and the meaning of the title has changed along with its new legal foundation and new priorities. What was initially a festival or showcase-type of event has become a more all-encompassing cultural project that takes advantage of a town's cultural activities to promote its strategic development.

"The project's cultural dimensions mean exploring subjects such as the town's history and identity, its regional ties and broader European contexts, citizen involvement in the project's planning and realization, the development of cultural infrastructure, and identifying the main areas of development in which the town is already on a European level or in which it hopes to achieve this level," adds Lukašáková.

Žaneta Vávrová, a representative of another of the town's partner organizations, describes the candidacy's themes: "Our project means the candidacy of not just Broumov, but the entire region. We see the Broumov region as a living cultural landscape, much of which the Benedictines constructed from the very beginning as a functional unit, as a single ecosystem, and it is this heritage that we hope to build on."

The Broumov department of culture is establishing the position of candidacy administrator, and the town is also convening a working group that will help to draft a Cultural Development Strategy for the town of Broumov and that will put together the town's formal application, the deadline for which is 2022.

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