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TURKU ● ÅBO 2011  The two new

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

European Capitals of Culture for 2011 are Turku in Finland and Tallinn in Estonia. Each city launches an intensive year-long programme of international cultural events.

Turku will open the Capital of Culture year 2011 with a three-day weekend full of events and activities on 14–16 January 2011 with a **spectacular outdoor performance** that is the single largest event of the year.

“The Capital of Culture year puts Turku on the European map in a whole new way and shows the rest of the world what good culture is able to do. Right from the opening ceremony, the strong history of Turku as the oldest city in Finland will intertwine with an open-minded outlook on the future. In Turku, culture will do good for residents, visiting guests, companies and the surrounding region as a whole,” says **Aleksi Randell**, Mayor of the City of Turku.

With the 2011 programme, Turku wants to especially highlight the importance of culture to the **well-being of people and the environment**. This is also Turku’s message to the rest of Europe. The Turku 2011 programme includes a number of projects that relate directly to well-being or that help to increase well-being.

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, will also be the capital of culture for all of Europe in 2011. This will be the biggest cultural event in the history of Estonia. Something will be happening in Tallinn every day in 2011, since the year of capital of culture will be bringing some of the world’s biggest names to Estonia.

The main theme of **Tallinn 2011 – European Capital of Culture** is **"Stories of the Seashore"**. This Europe-wide short-story contest offers participants a chance to join the large number of European writers, musicians and actors, who will tell, sing and act tales inspired by the sea in Estonia’s capital, in the largest storytelling event of its history.

The **European Capital of Culture** is an initiative of the European Commission. Each year, cities chosen as European Capitals of Culture provide living proof of the richness and diversity of European cultures. Started in 1985, the initiative has become one of the most prestigious and high-profile cultural events in Europe.

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