

GO! 2025  
NOVA GORICA  
GORIZIA

Evropska prestolnica kulture  
Capitale europea della cultura  
European Capital of Culture

## **THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE, AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA**

The European Capital of Culture action was established in 1985 to highlight the richness and diversity of cultures in Europe, promoting the added value of culture as an engine for development.

The title of European Capital of Culture is awarded to cities that exemplify the richness and diversity of European culture, but they are also designated on the basis of the program of work they propose to implement during the selection year: a distinctive element is their ability to contribute to the strengthening of European citizenship and cultural ties among the peoples of Europe, through the promotion of mutual understanding and knowledge among citizens who come from different areas of the continent.

Over time the initiative has grown, becoming an opportunity to raise its international profile, increasing visibility and enhancing tourism and cultural development in its area.

## **NOVA GORICA AND GORIZIA TOGETHER FOR THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2025**

Nova Gorica submitted with Gorizia a joint candidacy and cultural program in November 2019, (the so-called bid book), making cross-border cooperation its strength, the emblem of a unique territory. After the delivery of the second bid book, Nova Gorica and Gorizia were proclaimed European Capital of Culture 2025 on December 18, 2020: the first designation given to two cities from two different states (Slovenia and Italy), which shared in the dramatic events of the 20th Century by finding the strength to overcome borders and build a new future.

The official inauguration is scheduled for February 8th, 2025, National Day of Slovenian Culture, which commemorates the passing of Slovenian poet France Prešeren (Feb. 8th, 1849). February 8th is also a significant date on the Italian side as it marks the anniversary of the birth of Italian poet Giuseppe Ungaretti (February 8th, 1888).

**GO! Borderless** is the claim chosen for the European Capital of Culture 2025, emphasizing the cooperation between the two countries and the cross-border nature of the project, which challenges conceptions of borders and nationalities, finding in differences and mutual cooperation its added value.

To implement the official program of the European Capital of Culture, the Slovenian public body (Javni zavod) GO! 2025 was founded. Coordinating the infrastructure

aspects is EGTC GO, the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation founded in 2011 by the municipalities of Nova Gorica, Gorica and Šempeter-Vrtojba to address common challenges that can make the cross-border territory more competitive and attractive. EGTC GO has jurisdiction over the territory of the three cities and can conduct cooperation that plans and implements together, thinking no longer of three separate municipalities, but of a single cross-border city, with no more divisions. The GO! 2025 entity is financed by the Slovenian government, while EGTC GO's infrastructure works are financed with European and Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region funds.

GO! 2025 aims to overcome the physical and mental barriers between the two cities and in societies, demonstrating that borderless living and cross-border governance can have an impact on strengthening and growing each other. The opportunity, therefore, to connect the potential of the two border cities and their territory into a tourism, cultural, economic, educational and infrastructural unicum, attractive for investment and tourist flow even beyond 2025.

### **MATTOTTI'S IMAGE: UNION, HARMONY, BELONGING TO A COMMON SPACE**

The themes of overcoming borders, sharing, influences and the importance of culture blending between two countries expressing itself powerfully in music, dance, art and theater. Born from the elaboration of these concepts is the image created by Lorenzo Mattotti chosen as the manifesto of "GO! 2025" and "GO! 2025&Friends," to represent the message and goals of the project between the celebration of the cultural characteristics that Europeans share and the sense of belonging of European citizens to a common cultural space. Lorenzo Mattotti, one of the world's leading authors in the field of graphic design, with numerous and achievements of posters, covers and advertising campaigns to his credit, wanted to condense the essence of this important event in his graphics. The image depicts a couple - he Italian, she Slovenian or vice versa, the connotation of nationality is not important - dancing on a bridge surrounded by a thousand shades of green, above the river Isonzo/Soča, elements of union and connection between Nova Gorica and Gorica. In the beauty of nature, music and art in general, archetypes of a universal language, there are those elements of borderless sharing that help break down all language, physical and political barriers. There are the river, the bridge and the meeting of two people to represent two peoples, two cultures, two worlds. In one image, the symbol of the harmony of sharing a journey that starts from the very border.

### **GO! 2025, THOUSANDS OF EVENTS TO INVOLVE A VAST AREA, ALWAYS #BORDERLESS**

The European Capital of Culture 2025 will offer thousands of initiatives, concerts, theater, cinema, dance and meetings, a constantly updated program available at <https://www.go2025.eu/>, articulated between the official program, managed by the Slovenian public body (Javni zavod) GO! 2025, the SPF projects supported by EGTC GO, the GO! 2025&Friends program and other projects funded by the Friuli Venezia Giulia

Region, and last but not least the events of the two municipalities, Gorizia and Nova Gorica. The European Capital of Culture 2025 cultural offer will involve a large part of the larger territory in Friuli Venezia Giulia and Slovenia: it will be a kind of #borderless extension of the Capital of Culture, aiming to involve the whole region and a good part of Slovenia, to make this area known and loved by tourists well beyond 2025. An area that expresses two thousand years of history, a true "time machine" that leads to the intersection of splendid historical sites from every era as it crosses and recrosses the border: from Celtic influences to the vestiges of the Roman age in the splendid site of Aquileia, a UNESCO heritage site. And again the traces of the passage of Huns, Turks, Lombards, up to the age of the Patriarchate, the Republic of Venice, the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Then the dramatic events of the Great War, World War II and the Cold War: deep traces of each event are etched in this borderland.

### **NOVA GORICA AND GORIZIA, BETWEEN HISTORY AND THE PRESENT DAY**

Gorizia, first mentioned in ancient sources dating back to 1001, in the Middle Ages had a county of its own reaching as far as the Tyrol; in the age of the Habsburg Empire it was the exile city of the Bourbons of France. Nova Gorica is a modernist project conceived by architect Edvard Ravnikar, a pupil of Le Corbusier. Transalpina/Europe Square is the meeting place of the two cities and will be the epicenter of the European Capital of Culture 2025, nurturing spaces for reflection on history, current events, minority rights and the values of the European Community.

In 1947, at the end of World War II, the thousand-year-old city of Gorizia was literally divided in two: half to Italy, which had lost the war, and the other half to Yugoslavia, which was among the winning nations. Houses, streets, courtyards, stables, even a cemetery, a grave. A river, a mountain, whole families. Everything was cut in half by the Treaty of Paris. The city of Nova Gorica was built in the aftermath of the official agreements, and the border survived for a long time garrisoned in the heart of the city. Decades of divisions and geopolitical shifts followed: of barbed wire, armed guards, passes and smuggling, of confrontations, but also of goodwill to overcome hatred and resentments, pacify tempers and soothe the deep scars left by the war. Years culminated in 1991 with Slovenia's declaration of independence from Yugoslavia and in 2004 with the "fall" of the border and Slovenia's entry into the European Union. A new meeting between conterminous populations, in 2007 with Slovenia's entry into Schengen, conceived as a celebration celebrated in the Transalpine/ Europe Square, located exactly in the center of the border between Nova Gorica and Gorizia, the ideal "set" where to prefigure new scenarios of peace and coexistence, promoting a common identity as a legacy for future generations. It is precisely for this reason that Nova Gorica and Gorica have been named European Capital of Culture for 2025.

### **GORIZIA**

Border town in the center of Europe, with one foot in Italy and one in Slovenia, a place that escapes the more traditional tourist routes. Until a few years ago, Piazza Transalpina was the symbol of a border town, and the wall that crossed it divided the two souls of the city: today it is a topography of memory, an indelible memory, but

also the symbol of a renewed unity. From the castle of Gorizia the view opens to the rolling hills of Collio, the land of production of world-renowned wines.

### **NOVA GORICA**

Called the city of roses (mesto vrtnic), it was founded after World War II. It is located right on the border with Italy and is in fact inextricably linked to the neighboring city of Gorizia; one could say that the two cities flow into each other. The city was built according to the urban design of architect Edvard Ravnikar and is marked on its periphery by the Soča River with the famous Solkan Stone Bridge, the longest stone arch bridge in the world. The city and its surroundings offer a diverse and interesting natural and cultural heritage, from Kromberk Castle, Rihemberk Castle, Sveta Gora Basilica, Peace Park on Sabotin, Panovec Forest, and many other natural and cultural sights.

### **PHOTO MATERIAL**

At the following link you can find a selection of photos of the two cities, of cultural events and of the borderless area: [GO! 2025 PICTURES](#)

