

The European Capital of Culture as a Laboratory for Regional Development

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The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) is often perceived primarily as a year of cultural events. Its greatest potential, however, lies in its ability to serve as a real-world laboratory for long-term regional transformation. The presentation explores how the ECoC framework can bring together public authorities, cultural institutions, universities, businesses and local communities to experiment with new approaches to regional development. Using České Budějovice 2028 and the South Bohemian Region as a case study, it examines three interconnected dimensions: strengthening cultural and creative ecosystems, developing cross-sector partnerships, and testing innovative approaches to public space, community participation and sustainable development.

