



Welcome to Umeå – European Capital of Culture 2014

With the opening of *Future Flows Through Us*, Umeå will set the tone for the rest of its year as European Capital of Culture. Hundreds of events in the form of festivals, theatrical performances, opera, literature, film, art, crafts, sport and much more.

The Council of the European Union has appointed Umeå European Capital of Culture 2014. The EU's aim with capitals of culture is to reflect cultural diversity, increase exchange and awaken interest in Europe's cultural wealth. The first Capital of Culture, in 1985, was Athens. Today two capitals are appointed every year and for 2014 Riga has also been appointed.

Umeå was appointed thanks to a desire to make Umeå and northern Sweden more visible in Europe and to use culture as a driving force in regional development. The focus is on Umeå but several other places in the region are also involved.

The City of Birches

Umeå is situated in the province of Västerbotten in northern Sweden and has approximately 118,000 inhabitants. The city has many open-air recreation areas and nature is never far away. In the area around Umeå are beaches, lakes, forest areas and jogging tracks, and in winter skiing tracks and ski slopes. People in Umeå often cycle because distances are short and there are cycle paths almost everywhere.

Much of Umeå was destroyed by fire in 1888. When the city was rebuilt, birches were planted along the streets to prevent any fires from spreading. That is why Umeå is called the City of Birches.

Rich cultural life

Umeå University is one of Sweden's largest with students, teachers and researchers from all over the world. The large number of students means that the average age in Umeå is low. On the banks of the Umeå River lies the Arts Campus with cut-

ting-edge education programmes in design, art and architecture. It is also home to Bildmuseet, a leading museum of contemporary art.

Umeå has a rich cultural life with theatres, museums and music venues, for example Norrlandsoperan. Many international cultural festivals are held every year and the many cultural societies are very active. The city has a great many bands and several of them have achieved international success.

Co-creation

The programme for Umeå's year as European Capital of Culture is divided into eight seasons, according to the Sami calendar. The Sami are the EU's only indigenous people and Umeå is part of Sápmi, the Land of the Sami.

Co-creation is important in Umeå's Capital of Culture year. Anyone who wants to can join in and fill the programme. Activities during 2014 will be arranged by associations, organisations, cultural institutions and other players who receive support from Umeå2014. This ensures that many of the capital of culture projects will continue after 2014.

Umeå2014 is part of the long-term development of the city – both culturally and socially – to create new meeting-places, networks, international collaborations and opportunities.

You can find the whole programme for Umeå's Capital of Culture year in Swedish and English at www.umea2014.se.