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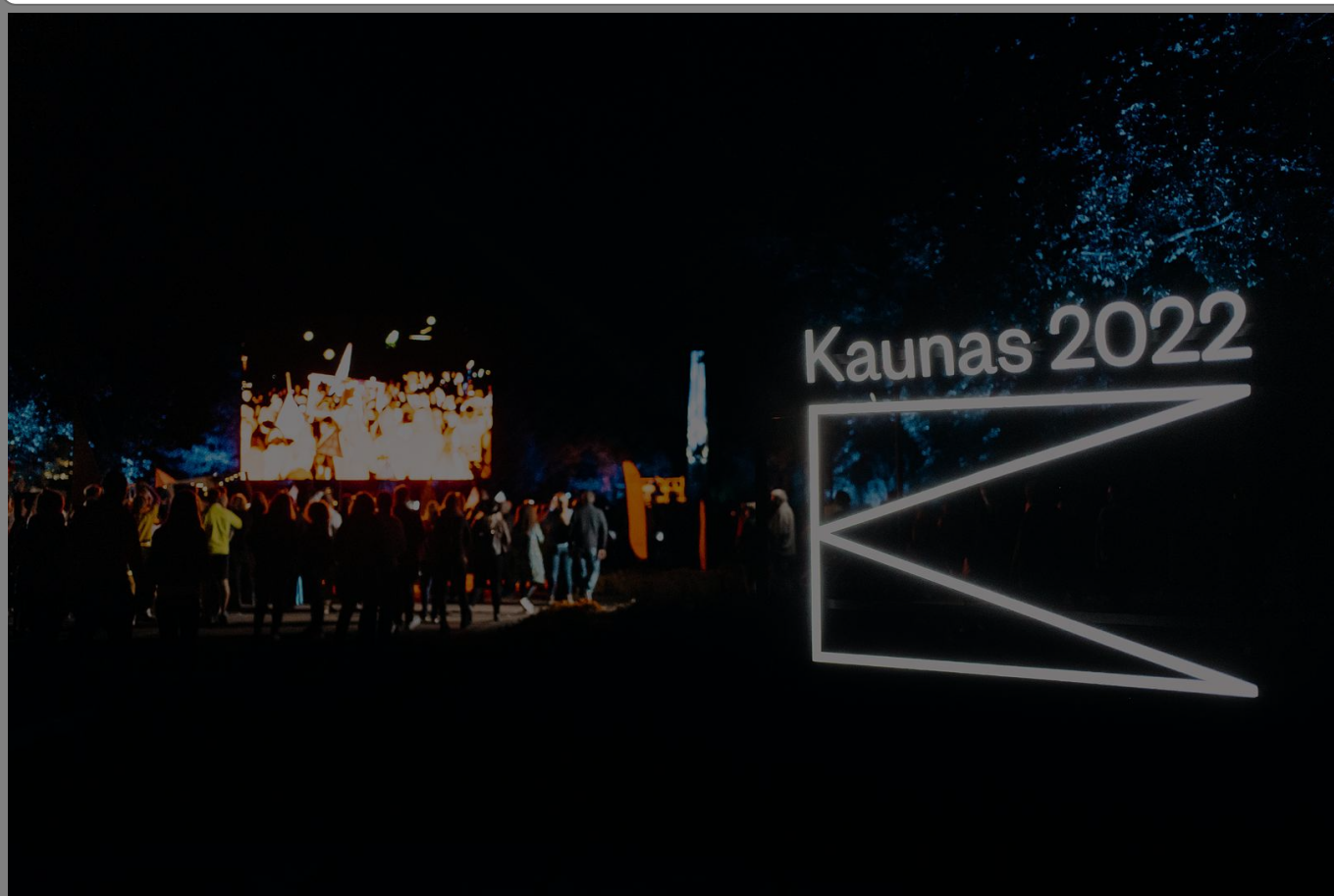
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With the new year comes the launches, and hopes, for the Capitals of Culture planned in Europe and Asia in 2022. Following the disruptions of the past two pandemic years, when the European Capitals of Culture programmes had to be postponed and curtailed, there is much anticipation.

There are three **European Capitals of Culture** for 2022. In the ASEM region, **Kaunas** in Lithuania joins **Esch-sur-Alzette** in Luxembourg (with Novi Sad in Serbia as the 3rd partner ECoC city). **Kaunas 2022** will launch on January 22nd promising "One big stage for Europe". The **spectacular opening** involves over 800 artists in more than 100 events. In Luxembourg, the wider region of Esch-sur-Alzette, which includes border municipalities in France, launches **Esch2022** on 26th February on the theme of REMIX. The programme has over 2,000 events including 310 performances, 137 exhibitions, 141 concerts and 360 participatory workshops.

For China, Japan and Korea, the **Capital City of East Asia** selections are announced. Last year the Culture Ministers agreed that China would have two cities to sit alongside the other two. They also approved the " ***Kitakyushu Declaration*** with the aim of promoting new cultural and artistic exchange plans using cutting-edge technologies in the post-COVID-19 era".

In 2022 the four cities are

**Wenzhou.** This article gives a good survey of the proposal and their aims. Of interest is their ambition to work with ECOCs and Asian CoCs as well as the partner cities in East Asia. A quick trip

**Jinan, a city of springs**, in Shandong province China. Another quick view of the city of 8 million (perhaps the largest city in recent times to hold a title?)

**Oita prefecture** in Japan formed its executive committee in December. A walk through with a Studio Ghibli focus.

**Gyeongju** in South Korea, home to UNESCO World Heritage sites. Its slogan for the year is "Gyeongju that opens culture, peace that connects East Asia". The city was originally selected for 2021 and now will run its programme in the first half of 2022. A drive and walk through.

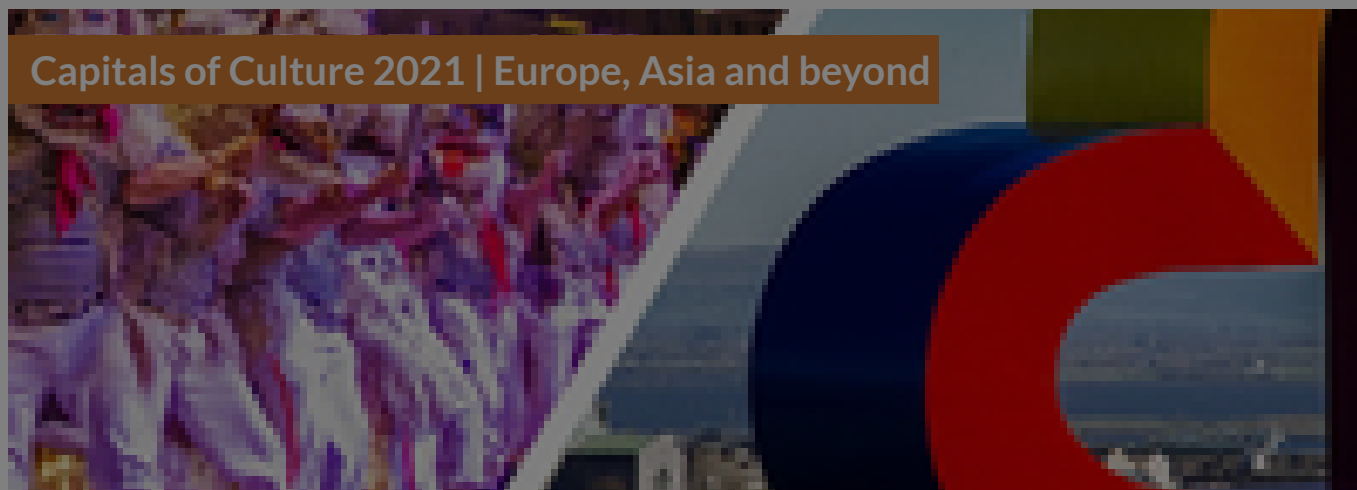
Further information on Capitals of Culture around the world, including national cities selected, comes from the informative **Prasino article** by Steve Green.

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