



Matera to Receive 400 Million as 2019 European Cultural Capital

Alex Catti (October 02, 2017)



Following an intensive candidacy period in 2014, Matera, Basilicata has been chosen as the 2019 European Cultural Capital. In order to prepare the city for the events of 2019, the Italian government has destined 400 million for the development and improvement of all aspects of the city.

Every year, a different European city is chosen as the European Capital of Culture, and in [2019 Italy will be hosting the Capital of Culture](#) [2]. In 2014, following a competitive selection process, [Matera](#) [3], a city in the [Basilicata](#) [4] region, was chosen as the 2019 host. This window of time affords Matera a chance to plan cultural events as well as to update the city's infrastructure for increased tourism. In order to assist the city in preparing for the honor of Culture Capital, 400 million euro have been designated to assist upgrades and development across the city.



A Unique City

Matera has long been known for its “Sassi” cave dwellings, which have been deemed a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) [5]. The city has also been the shooting location of several films including Pasolini’s [The Gospel According to Matthew](#) [6] and Mel Gibson’s [The Passion of the Christ](#) [7]. In order to ensure that Matera is ready not only to host its visitors but also to leave a lasting impression on them, a contract was signed among several entities including the [Ministry of the Environment](#) [8], the [Ministry of Culture](#) [9], the City of Matera, the region of Basilicata, and [Invitalia](#) [10].

The Significance of the Contract

The Minister of the [Agency for Territorial Cohesion](#) [11], [Claudio De Vincenti](#) [12], spoke on the importance of this funding: “...these funds are completely covered [...] and will not create any debt [...] This is a historic, if not epic, day.” As De Vincenti stated, Matera and the region of Basilicata do not need to pay back any money as it is not loaned or borrowed. The mayor of Matera stated that this is a “not-to-be-missed development opportunity,” and the President of Basilicata, [Marcello Pittella](#) [13], says he sees this opportunity as a “responsibility,” both for the Region and for the south.

Prospects for Development

Italy’s Prime Minister, [Paolo Gentiloni](#) [14], stated that the contract “calls for different measures and projects as well as for decisions regarding environmental quality, life in the city, and transportation connections.” For example, the city is looking into creating a road connection with the A14 highway. The new contract may also allow for certain areas within the city to give special tax incentives for the development.

The revitalization of this unique city in southern Italy could have a significant impact on more than just the city itself. [Mayor De Ruggieri](#) [15] told ANSA that he believes “the government is starting to see, in Matera’s designation as European Capital of Culture for 2019, a unique and strategic time to assert the dignity and credibility of Italy in the world.”

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- [2] <http://www.matera-basilicata2019.it/en/>
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- [4] <http://www.regione.basilicata.it/giunta/site/giunta/home.jsp>
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- [14] <http://www.governo.it/governo/gentiloni-paolo/presidente-del-consiglio/paolo-gentiloni-silveri>
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