

LANDMARKS ACROSS EUROPE HONOUR THE EU-CHINA TOURISM YEAR

Brussels, 4 March 2018. More than 50 landmarks, iconic sites and venues across Europe turned a shade of red over the past weekend to build a symbolic bridge of light to China honouring the 2018 EU-China Tourism Year (ECTY). From renowned UNESCO World Heritage Sites like the Pont du Gard in France to lesser-known monumental building such as the National Athenaeum in Bucharest (Romania), a host of sites in 18 countries took part in the initiative. Cultural events involving both local and Chinese communities accompanied the illumination of the landmarks in several locations, such as on the memorable Grand Place in Brussels (Belgium). The latter hosted an exhibition of giant Chinese lanterns and a concert of traditional Chinese music organised by the Chinese Mission to the EU, along with the special illumination of the façade of the Hotel de Ville (City Hall) in red.

The pan-European celebration entitled “The EU-China Light Bridge” is an initiative of the European Commission in cooperation with the European Travel Commission (ETC), numerous municipal councils, cultural institutions and tourism boards in Europe. The Light Bridge aimed at increasing awareness of lesser known European destinations in China as well as to provide an opportunity for European and Chinese communities to better familiarise and appreciate each other’s cultures. The initiative coincided with the celebration of the Lantern Festival in China which marks the end of the New Year’s festivities. The Chinese pillar of the Light Bridge will be built on 9th May 2018 at the invitation of China National Tourism Administration and on the occasion of “Europe Day”, with a number of Chinese sites including the famous Macao Tower illuminated in the blue of the EU flag.

This Light Bridge is part of the ambitious programme of activities prepared for the EU-China Tourism Year (see www.ecty2018.org). The ECTY aims to promote the European Union as a travel destination in China, provide opportunities to increase bilateral cooperation as well as mutual understanding and create an incentive to make progress on market opening and visa facilitation.

Europe saw a remarkable 16% increase in tourist arrivals from China in 2017, reaching a record 13.4 million arrivals. The ETC forecasts an average 9.3% annual growth in tourist arrivals in Europe over the next three years.

European line-up for the EU-China Light Bridge:

Austria

- Olympic Sky Jump, Innsbruck
- Brucknerhaus, Linz
- Design Center, Linz
- TipsArena, Linz
- Swarovski Crystal Worlds, Wattens

Belgium

- Sint-Janshuis Mill, Bruges
- Grand Place, Brussels
- City Hall, Dinant
- Topiary Park, Durbuy
- The Caves of Han, Han-sur-Lesse
- Massmechelen Village, Maasmechelen

Ireland

- Spike Island, Cork
- Meath County Council Headquarter, Kells
- Kildare Village, Kildare
- Powerscourt House and Gardens, Wicklow

Italy

- Roman Forum, Aquileia
- Royal Palace, Caserta
- Fidenza Village, Fidenza
- Tree of Life, Milan
- Teatro Massimo, Palermo
- Po Delta, Rovigo
- Palazzo Madama, Turin
- MAO Oriental Art Museums, Turin

Croatia

- Great Revelin Tower, Korčula
- Trsat Castle, Rijeka
- Stari Grad Plain, Stari Grad
- Zagreb Fountains, Zagreb

Denmark

- Copenhagen

Estonia

- TV Tower, Tallinn

France

- Palais des Ducs, Dijon
- Hotel La Cloche, Dijon
- Place Stanislas, Nancy
- La Vallée Village, Serris
- Pont du Gard, Vers-Pont-du-Gard

Germany

- Mouse Tower, Bingen
- Ingolstadt Village, Ingolstadt
- Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, Koblenz
- Postdam
- Wertheim Village, Wertheim

Hungary

- Lookout Tower, Bekecs
- Hotel Gellért, Budapest
- Múpa, Budapest

Malta

- St James Cavalier, Valletta

Portugal

- Moorish Castle, Sintra

Romania

- Romanian Athenaeum, Bucharest
- National Theater, Bucharest

San Marino

- Government Palace, San Marino
- Statue of Liberty, San Marino

Serbia

- Ada Bridge, Belgrade
- Palace Albania, Belgrade

Slovakia

- Old Castle, Banská Štiavnica

Spain

- Saint Anthony's Church, Aranjuez
- La Roca Village, Barcelona
- Hanging Houses, Cuenca
- Windmills, Consuegra
- Las Rozas Village, Madrid

United Kingdom

- City Hall, Belfast
- Victoria Square Dome, Belfast
- Bicester Village, Bicester

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Note to editors

About the European Travel Commission

The European Travel Commission is an association of National Tourism Organisations (NTOs). It was created in 1948 to promote Europe as a tourist destination to the long-haul markets outside of Europe, originally in the USA and later in Canada, Latin America and Asia. It currently has 33 member NTOs, including 8 from outside the European Union. Europe is the world's no. 1 tourist destination with 671 million international arrivals in 2017 and more than 50% of the market share of worldwide tourism.

For further information: ETC's corporate website <http://www.etc-corporate.org> is aimed at industry, government and educational personnel interested in tourism to Europe. Tourists seeking travel-specific information and ideas are directed to ETC's consumer portal <http://www.visiteurope.com>.