



Dokkum

Leeuwarden-Fryslân European Capital of Culture 2018

Surprising and exceeding expectations

In 2018 all eyes are on the northern Dutch province of Friesland (Fryslân in the local language) and its capital Leeuwarden. As part of the title European Capital of Culture various cultural productions, projects and events will be organized in Friesland this year. Thanks to this title, not only the leisure market has set its aim on Friesland: associations and corporations will also go north.

For this year the organization 'Culturele Hoofdstad van Europa Leeuwarden-Fryslân 2018 (LF2018)' has composed a program with over a hundred events, consisting of projects, productions and smaller initiatives in the fields of theater, music, dance, visual art, literature and film. These events will take place throughout the year and in the entire province. The main theme Leeuwarden has chosen is 'iepen mienskip', or open community. The

underlying idea is that society is changing and Friesland wants to show how this province handles these changes. By seizing the opportunities, by listening to new insights, by being flexible and by adapting itself without losing its identity, Friesland demonstrates its transition from 'mienskip' to an 'iepen mienskip' during the cultural year 2018.

PROGRAM

Apart from the sixty events and projects falling under the main program (including a large exhibition of Escher in the Fries Museum and the music theater show Lost in the Greenhouse performed in a greenhouse among the paprikas), there is also a special 'iepen mienskip' program with hundreds of events staged partly on their own initiative by private individuals and organizations. By means of these cultural events social issues like the impact of agriculture, sustainable energy, language and the European

Fries Museum



Leeuwarden



Union are touched on. The program FossilFry Fryslân includes various (partly already existing) activities pertaining alternatives for the use of fossil fuels. For instance a parade of futuristic, sustainable vehicles from all over the world will be held on the highway from the city of Drachten to Leeuwarden. In September a major energy congress will take place. The biggest challenge is the Elfwegentocht (Eleven roads journey) lasting two weeks during which all Frisians will make an effort to leave their fossil-fuel powered vehicles and instead use electric taxis and boats, Segways, greengas buses and e-bikes.

CULTURAL SETTING

The campaign Meet in Friesland, a joint effort by Merk Fryslân and LF2018 to promote Friesland as a corporate destination, has given the regional MICE market a serious stimulus. According to Jant van Dijk, director of Congres Bureau Friesland, various national and international congresses will be taking place in Friesland this year. The preliminary activities for these events were partly initiated thanks to the title European Capital of Culture. "The title has incited many industries and associations to put themselves forward for 2018. If, apart from a good bid you can also use this title

in the competition, associations are more quickly inclined to consider Friesland as a destination. Normally, each year Friesland manages to attract some international association congresses. This year, Friesland has clearly made its mark, because ten congresses lasting several days and each attended by more than 250 participants will be organized. These congresses include the CIRCOM congress (association of European regional broadcasting networks), ISASA (International Small Islands Studies Association) and the WTCAGA 2018 (World Trade Centers Association General Assembly). Apart from that, the effect of this positive imaging has a follow-up: even now, companies and institutions try to find the link between their congress or inspiration day, and the conferences that are a part of the LF2018 program, such as the monument congress, ISPA (International Society for the Performing Arts) and the European Water Tech Week. In January alone we have received several requests of congresses attended by more than one hundred persons. One of these is the Architects' Council of Europe."

To make sure that the congress participants really learn something about LF2018, Van Dijk tries to implement, wherever possible, parts of LF2018 in the program of these congresses. "The participants of the WTC congress partner program visit the Escher exhibition and the participants of the ISPA congress visit various LF2018 projects during a walking dinner. They also visit the



Oerol cultural festival. LF2018 is mentioned in all communication around the congresses.”

AWAKENING LANDSCAPE

Yvonne Hulleman, Campaign Manager Meetcentives with Merk Fryslân adds that it offers the opportunity to enhance the image the meeting and event planners have of Friesland. “They think of Friesland as a water sports province and like to combine their business meeting with a sailing trip, an excursion to the Wadden islands or a guided tour of the city center of Leeuwarden or the picturesque town of Sneek. Thanks to LF2018 and the extensive marketing campaign initiated by Meet in Friesland and LF2018, Leeuwarden is now full in the spotlights as cultural capital. During site visits we showed several meeting and event planners exceptional locations and unique activities that will be taking place as part of LF2018.

They can, for instance, take part in the program ‘Ontwakend Landschap’ (Awakening landscape), during which they dine together in the open air, attend a performance, sleep in tents and are awakened the following morning by a trumpet player, take a walk in the forest with the forester and then have breakfast together. The experience offered by the landscape is surprising and that appeals to the meeting planners. Apart from that, various events also include the themes water management (WaterCampus Leeuwarden and the Afsluitdijk), sustainable energy and dairy production (DairyCampus), about which the province can offer a great deal of knowledge. All this increases the intrinsic value of a meeting. Thanks to LF2018 we can add culture to this list of knowledge themes.”

A special Hospitality Desk was established for the growing number of corporate requests.



Harlingen



Opening LF2018



IJlst



The river Geeuw flows through the city of JIJst

This Desk helps meeting and event planners to link their meeting with a compatible LF2018 project and offers assistance in the quest for appropriate meeting and congress locations and hotels in the entire province of Friesland.

BOOST

The positive effects LF2018 has on the Frisian MICE market have not gone unnoticed by the partners of Congres Bureau Friesland. Van Dijk: "During the introductory period the stakeholders and MICE partners like the hotelsector already noticed how the region could profit from the congress market. In order to better facilitate this market, Friesland Convention Partners was established last year. This is a joint venture of Frisian entrepreneurs active in the MICE sector. We also get more and more tips from the parties involved

to approach certain organizations." Hulleman: "LF2018 causes a huge boost for the positioning of Leeuwarden and Friesland as city of culture. You notice that we are top of mind with the meeting and event planners. With the unique possibilities we offer we can really surprise them and exceed their expectations. The inhabitants, organizations and corporations are also enthusiastic and act more and more as ambassadors for their province."

More information on the MICE possibilities can be found at www.congresbureau friesland.nl and www.meetinfriesland.nl. The website www.friesland.nl/en/european-capital-of-culture offers all activities around Leeuwarden-Fryslân2018.