In Mons, the spirit is blowing between the words of the poets, the walls of the old city, the ideas of the innovators.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY MEETS CULTURE
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE
WWW.MONS2015.EU
Where Technology Meets Culture

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It’s only a few years, a few months until Mons holds the title of European Capital of Culture. And now is the time to explain, without going into details of the programme, which we will be gradually unveiling, the main concepts for preparing the event. From which angles are we approaching the creation of this exceptional year which constitutes an extraordinary opportunity to showcase our city and our region so in tune with Europe?

Answering this question is the main aim of this publication. The second is to introduce Mons to our friends from other parts as well as to the people of Mons, an attractive innovative city, a city with pride, rediscovered after decades of economic and social difficulties. Finally, we are proposing in this brochure various means of fully subscribing to this project which will only be a success if as many people as possible adapt it to their needs, companies, associations, artists, students...

We’ve given 2015 the slogan “Mons, where technology meets culture” because we truly believe that these two levers, technology and culture, can, if combined in the optimal manner, have a multiplying effect on the economic development of the city.

Lille 2004 advanced the northern metropolis 10 years in terms of brand image and attractiveness. We are hoping for the same effect for Mons in 2015 provided that everyone plays a positive role in this venture.

Mons 2015 will be the project of all projects or will not be at all. The hundred or so uniting events which will be organised in Mons and the region will attract the greatest number of people possible, whether these be the defining projects led by the Mons 2015 Foundation, partner city or institution projects, or most importantly, projects proposed by the people via the Foundation website which you can now consult, improve and add to.

2015 will be a big party, a year of shared happiness, a celebration of creativity in which everyone will play a role. To do this, we are counting on you to share our deep sentiment that being European Capital of Culture constitutes a unique opportunity to influence and develop the life of a city, a region and its people.

The concept of European Capital of Culture was created in 1985 based on the idea of Melina Mercouri, the then Minister of Culture for Greece. Since then, the Belgian cities of Antwerp, Brussels and Bruges have held this coveted title that Mons will share with the Czech city of Plzen in 2015. Here are the other Capitals already chosen prior to 2015, many partners that we come across on our travels through Europe:

2011 Tallinn (Estonia) and Turku (Finland)
2012 Maribor (Slovenia) and Giumarães (Portugal)
2013 Marseille (France) and Košice (Slovakia)
2014 Riga (Latvia) et Umeå (Sweden)
2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 selection in progress
Six points of view, six approaches focusing on single objectives, that will contribute in 2015 and beyond to develop the city, giving its people, companies and artists the opportunity to advance. Each of these approaches combines art and economy, the people and the city, heritage preserved and a future under control. They can be divided into four types of defining projects that will drive the 2015 programme.
TECHNOLOGY
Follow the Digital Innovation Valley. Get trained in the eye-catching technologies of tomorrow. Take part in workshops to discover Green IT. Follow the start up success stories recognised the world over. Take a gamble on us that will gradually come true: believe in an economic restructuring for Mons based on the technologies of tomorrow.

ARTISTS
The energy to progress towards the future, we first find it in reinterpreting our past. We have chosen four symbolic characters to mark the links between yesterday and tomorrow: Vincent van Gogh, Orlando di Lasso, Paul Verlaine and ...Saint Georges! And 2015 will mostly be a year open to contemporary artists.

20 YEARS OLD IN 2015
20 years old in 2015! Or how to combine dreams and the economic crisis, desires for change and social reality, ambition and difficulties. Mons 2015 does not claim to have all the answers but it asserts itself as a decisive vehicle for the advancement of young people.

ARCHITECTURE
Without ostentatious madness, with rigour and economy, Mons is set to change its look between now and 2015. Renovation of the old quarters and buildings but also the creation of a new cultural quarter in the heart of the old town dedicated to the theatre, exhibitions and music.

PARTNERSHIPS
Collaboration with Plzen, the other Capital in 2015 through a Czech season, cross-border partnerships with Lille which has not forgotten its fabulous experience of 2004, cross-functional network with the main Belgian cities in the country, both Flemish and French-speaking. All together, for cultural Europe.

CARBON 0
Mons 2015 hopes to be the first significant cultural event to respect a Carbon 0 charter, to promote sustainable development in all aspects of its programme and to assert itself as a real eco-design project.
Since 2004, Mons has dared to gamble its economic restructuring on three main areas: new technologies, tourism and culture.

This intuition has proven sound. The number of tourists visiting Mons is constantly increasing and the title of European Capital of Culture will reward creative dynamism. But it is also necessary to note that many companies, both local and multinational, are now using high-level technological expertise. They are located in the so-called Digital Innovation Valley, and support the research centres that drive the universities.

Google, IBM, Hewlett-Packard, Microsoft, H&M and Cisco invest in Mons. The city now holds a place on the map of Europe on the move. But smaller firms, from Mons, are also taking the world by surprise: I Movix is experiencing unequaled success in the field of extreme idling and A Capella is a world leader in the field of voice recognition.

A stone’s throw from the historic city, a new city is expanding and attracting investors. And the future station entrusted to the architect Santiago Calatrava will be the ideal link between them. This symbolic station will enable us to surpass the theoretical wording of our slogan by recognising it in everyday life. It will constitute the keystone of an innovative programme that will be the link between cultural heritage and technological culture, between roots and the future, between traditional and evolving artists.
Artists

En route to 2015, we need solid guides, strong pro-Europeans that know the road and its pitfalls, adventurers in art who still have plenty of secrets to tell.

From among others, we have chosen four. Four emblematic characters that have made a lasting mark on the collective subconscious of Mons. Four characters that reflect the main aspects of culture, music, visual arts, literature and memory. Four destinations between which we will travel with the aid of today’s digital technology. Three of them have also changed their paths definitely at Mons.

Orlando di Lasso was only a gifted young singer in the choir of the St Nicolas church when he was noticed by one of the big European choirs. There, he polished his talent and became above all a prolific composer, offering the Renaissance the magic of polyphony.

In 1879, Vincent van Gogh arrived in the Mons region as an evangelist. He set off again two years later convinced that his destiny was linked to design and painting.

As for Paul Verlaine, he went into Mons prison bubbling with rebellion, to come out grown up, wiser, philosophical. The spirit of Mons? Of course. But is it these crafty currents that help Saint George slay the dragon each year? He will also lead us proudly on the path to Europe which he cheerfully lines with a thousand versions of his myth which still lives on today.

We will of course add many more talents from yesterday and today to these shining stars in the Mons sky, to provide the excitement expected from a European year of culture.
3. 20 YEARS OLD IN 2015

Mons 2015 is first and foremost a project for young people. So that this experience gives them reason to believe in a solid future, so that they seize training and staff development opportunities, so that the development of the city and the region is synonymous with their life plan.

Making way for young people and making the 2015 event fully accessible to them, is not just about creating the audience of tomorrow but about becoming aware of the social, human, philosophical and technical values that living art conveys at the start of the 21st century. And to share it with them.

We have symbolically chosen to follow an age group up to 2015; the thousand young students in Mons who will be 20 in 2015. We are promising to follow them up to that time, whatever school, geographical and family issues they encounter in the future.

How? By each year offering them a series of special pedagogical, recreational activities which will generate among them a real feeling of ownership of this European year of Culture.

For example: an email address dedicated to Mons 2015, an intensive private course in Dutch language, an introduction to “slam”, photo competitions, an interactive TV network… And of course access to all the communication technologies guaranteed through a partnership with Microsoft who is backing the whole operation.

All these activities have also in common the capacity to constitute a vehicle for exchange with other young people of the same age in partner or other cities, European Capitals of Culture past or future. It is clear that these young people already constitute a formidable network of active ambassadors within their families, associations and leisure groups, a network which will be developed over the years.

And in 2015, we will find them at the heart of the action, occupying a strategic place in the fields of reception, arbitration and leadership.
4. ARCHITECTURE

To transform the city, make it more beautiful but also more suited to our cultural and mobility objectives. To create a cultural hard shoulder within the city, a real contemporary architectural urban itinerary. To thus link three areas which are the active focus of the 2015 experience.

THE CULTURAL MILE
Around the Théâtre du Manège, opened in 2006 and designed by Pierre Hebbelinck, you will find:
- The Mons 2015 headquarters, meeting place dedicated to artists, journalists, guests.
- Arsonic, focus for emerging music, concert halls, places to listen and record.
- The Digital Location connected to new technologies and their experimentation, demonstration and archiving.

Along this innovative route, some hundred or so luxury apartments will be built whose inhabitants will be the first players in this new resolutely cultural quarter.

TO CREATE A CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURAL URBAN ITINERARY

1. Théâtre du Manège
2. Mons 2015 headquarters
3. Arsonic
4. The Digital Location

Mile 2015
THE CARRÉ DES ARTS

Headquarters of the art school, the Carré will see its superb court covered by a removable roof that will make the meetings proposed by its inhabitants and the “Festival au Carré” in July possible. A stone’s throw away, the “Maison du Design” will be created. And a bit further away, the superbly renovated buildings of the former Abattoirs house a gallery reserved for contemporary art and the headquarters and gallery of the World Crafts Council.

THE STATION

The station linking the two parts of the city, a project entrusted to Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, will constitute our thematic architectural symbol, extolling the coming together of culture and technology. On one side, the square and roads leading to the city centre will be completely restored. On the other side, around the commercial centre, near the Grands Prés and the Digital Innovation Valley, a Conference Centre will be created alongside underground car parks providing easy access to the city from the motorway.
5. PARTNERSHIPS

Mons 2015. Connection obligation. Europe is coming to Mons. Mons is connected to Europe. Tours, exchanges, partnerships, business tourism and city trips, our welcome officers will have their work cut out!

Czech season in honour of the European title shared with Plzen.

Cross-border season with Lille which is still riding the wave of success following 2004 but also with Valenciennes and Maubeuge which will be the Regional Capital of Culture in 2015.

Flemish season as we cannot plan a European project without the involvement of the northern half of our own country.

Finally, the main French-speaking cities and all the cities and towns of the Province of Hainaut of which Mons is the capital will join in the celebrations.

So as not to dilute the project by holding too many external events, each city develops a single event in harmonious chronology which will highlight the European status of Mons throughout the year.
Mons 2015 is an invaluable opportunity to reinvent the City, by reconciling notions of environmental quality, economic efficiency and social justice, fundamental issues in sustainable development.

Our organisation will try to limit the environmental impact of the event, by considering multiple sources: transport, infrastructure, catering and accommodation, to cite the most significant. So our suppliers, service providers and producers, encouraged to make efforts in eco-responsibility, will be selected first and foremost from local or fair trade sources. A Mons 2015 green charter will be drawn up, in order to approve the plans and products used for the event and will benefit from Mons 2015 communication.

Mons 2015 will also be a special time for raising awareness among the general public about environmental issues and tools will be developed to promote individual eco-responsibility.

Moreover, Mons 2015 wants to be a great popular celebration, accessible to as many people as possible and in which each inhabitant of Mons will have the chance to be involved according to his/her talents. In fact, our ambition is to have a profound and lasting effect on the Mons landscape and way of life by considering sustainable development as an additional means of expressing the creativity of Mons and its region.

Mons 2015 will not be an aim in itself and we will endeavour to make Mons a model city for European eco-responsibility, where the pleasure of life is shared by all, permanently!
THE PROGRAMME, A FOUR-STROKE ENGINE

1 THE DEFINING PROJECTS

They are proposed and managed by the Mons 2015 Foundation. These are big exhibitions whose main role is to attract a European audience within a potential radius of 250 km. These also include the opening and closing ceremonies for which participation plans will be submitted. And then there are the main theatrical, musical, literary and technological themes on which we are relentlessly working. Not forgetting the Czech season during which we will highlight the treasures of our 2015 partner, the city of Plzen.

2 THE PROJECTS OF THE 14 PARTNER CITIES

Each city develops a single event in harmonious chronology which will highlight the European status of Mons throughout the year. These 14 cities are, in alphabetical order, Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Charleroi, Ghent, Kortrijk, La Louvière, Liège, Lille, Maubeuge, Mechelen, main Flemish partner, Namur, Tournaï (Wapi) and Valenciennes.

3 THE PROJECTS OF PARTNER INSTITUTIONS

The museums and the music and drama institutions form in Mons and the surrounding area a crown of marvels. Mons 2015 will highlight them in a series of original projects, in search of optimal communication in terms of both ideas and geographical accessibility.

4 CITIZEN’S PROJECTS

Project ideas are already being submitted, the practical details of which you will find on page 34. In 2013, a jury composed of independent experts will choose the most suitable projects to take part in the 2015 programme.
WHERE IS MONS?

Mons is meant to be the mobility champion. It is located on the main north European motorways, the Thalys/Eurostar high speed train network and close to three international airports, Brussels National, Charleroi Brussels South and Lille. Not to mention its marina, a compulsory stopover on the North/South riverway. In short, Mons is located in the heart of Northern Europe, midway between Paris and Amsterdam, two hours from London and Cologne and in the immediate proximity of the French border. You can’t miss it!
1. VISIT THE UNESCO TREASURES

During your visit to Mons, discover three works of art that UNESCO has listed as World Heritage sites: the neolithic mines of Spiennes from which flint was sent to the four corners of Europe, the recently restored Belfry that dominates the city from the superb landscape gardens, the only baroque belfry in Europe, and the “Doudou” which, each Trinity Sunday, makes the heart of each inhabitant and friend of Mons dance to the rhythm of its traditional music.

2. GREET SAINTE WAUDRU

A stone’s throw from the baroque Belfry, the collegiate church of Sainte Waudru asserts the serenity of its gothic naves. It’s a universe of silence, peace and meditation that presides over the fabulous alabaster sculptures of Jacques Dubrœucq, a Mons designer from the Renaissance. It is also here that you can hear the polyphonic marvels of Orlando di Lasso, born in Mons before asserting himself throughout Europe, in Milan, Naples, Rome and finally at the court of the Dukes of Bavaria.
3. DREAM WITH THE ANGELS

It’s a story that has crossed the Channel and more. It’s the story of a celestial cohort of archer angels that at the start of the war 1914-18 supported and encouraged the English troupes stuck on the outskirts of Mons. It’s the birth of a legend that made Winston Churchill write that “Mons is a predestined city”. It’s a hand outstretched to fantasy, dreams and friendship, a chapter of hope in the heart of a tragedy. The Legend of the Angels will be at the heart of the Memorial for Peace which will open in Mons in 2014 on the site of the Machine à Eau.

4. VISIT THE VARIOUS MUSEUMS

In 2015, Mons will have succeeded in creating a real ambitious and eclectic museum project. From the “Abattoirs” to the “BAM” (Mons Fine Arts Museum) for contemporary art, from the Memorial for peace to the Myth of Saint George Interpretation Centre via the “Mundaneum” for history, from the Sainte Waudru’s Treasures to the Duesberg Museum for the jewels of the past, it’s a real series of marvels which will again be made accessible. It will recite the history, development and creations of a city on the move.
5. TIMELESS WALKS

Mons is also a passionate and mysterious medieval city. The gargoyles of Sainte Waudru overlook the alleyways of the old town. Take time to lose yourself there and savour the charm of the hanging gardens of the ramparts of the Belfry. And then skip a few centuries and discover the “Maison Losseau”, an Art Nouveau haven which in 2015 will house an exuberant literary cafe in memory of Verlaine and Rimbaud. The coalman’s house where Vincent van Gogh lived, Paul Verlaine’s prison cell, the boulevards glorified by Charles Plisnier and the Belfry that Victor Hugo mocked, all these places take you on an unbelievable journey through the arts and centuries, which will only be improved between now and 2015.

6. DISCOVER THE ART OF TODAY

Mons is the home of cultural design. The Royal Chamber Orchestra of Wallonia for classical music and the “Ensemble Musiques Nouvelles” for contemporary music offer a wide variety of sounds. The “Théâtre du Manège” is a bastion of theatrical creation where some ten productions come to life each year. The “manège.mons” was created there and brings together theatrical, musical, digital and community productions. Each season it offers more than a hundred high-quality events including the famous “Festival au Carré”. As for design, Mons can cite among its most innovative creations the “Maison du Design” and the World Crafts Council. And let’s not forget the art schools combined under the Art² label: they are a real talent incubator. Not to mention the hundreds of associations which brighten up the city with their many events including the Saint John’s fires.
7. EXPERIENCE THE INTENSITY OF THE “DOUDOU”

If you can only spend one day in Mons, make sure you choose Trinity Sunday. That way you can experience Saint George fighting the Dragon at the heart of this ritual fair before joining in the jubilations in a packed and friendly crowd.

8. BROADEN YOUR HORIZONS

In a city of heritage, Mons ventures mobility and contemporary architecture. The new multi-modal station project has been entrusted to Santiago Calatrava. It will be a real link between the two parts of the city, the historic city and the site of the “Grands Prés”. A station as a symbol of reconciliation between culture and cutting-edge technologies.

9. ENJOY SIZZLING EVENINGS

Mons is a friendly, festive and open city. The terraces of the “Grand-Place” are jam-packed from the first days of spring and students meet at the “Place du Marché-aux-Herbes” every Friday evening to liven up proceedings.
HOW TO TAKE PART?

1. Be informed first about all aspects of Mons 2015 Foundation projects via a monthly newsletter.
2. Pass this information on to your family, friends, work colleagues and associations so that the Mons 2015 project can gradually become the business of every inhabitant of Mons – and others!
3. Benefit throughout the year from special cultural offers, reduced tariffs, invitations, meetings and previews.
4. When the time comes take part by volunteering, according to your availability and skills with no obligation, in the supervision and development of some of the big festive events that will take place in 2015.
5. Give us your ideas, reviews, comments, in a friendly and constructive way that will help us expand the project.
6. Be first in line at this great adventure that will constitute an unforgettable experience for the City and its people.

BY BECOMING AN AMBASSADOR VIA THE HOME PAGE OF THE WEBSITE

Mons 2015 will not be possible without you as it is first and foremost a social, uniting and participative event. To make Mons 2015 “European Capital of Culture” succeed, it is of course essential to have the artists onboard, but also the associations and the people.

We are therefore enthusiastically awaiting your ideas and projects which, in the spirit recommended by the European authorities, must meet a series of criteria set out in the registration form. You can compare them on the platform created for this purpose on the website. We will be accepting them up to the 31st of December 2012 and they will be selected during the first quarter of 2013.

BY SUBMITTING A PROJECT VIA THE “TAKE PART!” SECTION OF THE WEBSITE

BY SPONSORING A PROJECT

Like Lille which was so successful in 2004, we really hope to manage to form close partnerships with private enterprises. That’s why we have decided to manage the project in the form of a Foundation, which enables the sums provided to our budget to be exempt from tax. We constitute a real team of enterprises with various types of input:

- **Generic sponsors**: from 2,000,000 Euros – deliberately limited number of enterprises – presence on all media communications – gala evenings – possibility of a regional enterprises club.
- **Project sponsors**: between 100,000 and 500,000 Euros targeted at particular operations, large exhibitions, festivals, shows – strong presence on media communications for the target project: catalogue, programme, tickets... – free invitations, gala evenings. The projects likely to be sponsored will appear on the Foundation’s website.
- **Service sponsors**: free availability of various services for the benefit of the Foundation. A list of services we would like will appear on the Foundation’s website. Visibility and communication provided.
- **Media sponsors**: in the audio-visual field and written press, we are hoping that the Foundation will form an exclusive partnership providing regional, national, even cross-border coverage of the Mons 2015 events and their preparation.
- **Business ambassadors**: based on a symbolic yearly contribution of 100 Euros, your company can enjoy the special advantages and benefits of being an ambassador.

BY ORGANISING A DEBATE ’12:15 PM’

Once a week, the Mons 2015 team will be available to attend your school, company, association, favourite café or meeting place for a public debate. It will take place on the day of your choice, decided after consulting our diary. It will take place over lunch time (from 12:15pm to 1pm) and will enable you to raise all the questions that you are concerned about regarding the organisation of Mons 2015 directly with the managers, with no taboos or restriction.

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