

For immediate release
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Lviv takes ‘European Youth Capital 2025’ title hours after city falls into darkness

Today, the European Youth Forum awarded the title of ‘European Youth Capital 2025’ to Lviv, the largest city in western Ukraine. A jury convened by the European Youth Forum announced its decision to award Lviv the title based on a detailed plan submitted by the municipality and TVORY!, the local network of youth spaces. Lviv won the title hours after a Russian missile strike left the entire city without electricity and, possibly, without water supply.

Lviv had joined the competition on 21 February, only three days before the Russian army invaded Ukraine and everyday life was thrown into turmoil. Lviv, a city of 750,000 residents, became a humanitarian hub for Ukrainians fleeing other parts of the country, and it provides shelter to some 250,000 displaced people. The invasion, and the new reality it forced on Lviv, brought the municipality and TVORY! to revise their application and create a new programme that fits the needs of young people experiencing war, as well as a plan for a hopeful future.

In the updated application, Lviv expressed its motivation to win the title:

“Since February 24 [when Russia began its attack], we have had a colossal outflow of youth from the country, which has already exceeded two million people. These are those who created and continue to create Ukraine.

“With this in mind, we set ourselves a vision: To form and strengthen a youth capital and capital in youth to survive, live and develop. Here and now. In European Ukraine. To be those who spread the values of freedom in the world. We want everyone to understand: our self-realisation is the affirmation of our country.”

The Lviv team built its programme with three goals in mind: To encourage young people to stay in Ukraine; to encourage those who had left the country to return to it and to build connections between young people in Ukraine and the rest of Europe.

The Jury awarded the European Youth Capital 2025 title to Lviv in recognition of the vision it presented for young Ukrainians and the programme which addresses the emotional, moral, physical and financial losses that Ukraine's youth experience. Lviv's vision answers such needs by making the European Youth Capital into a centre that helps young people survive, live, and develop in a modern and a European Ukraine.

European Youth Forum Board Member, Tom Matthew, said:

"This is the first time that a European Youth Capital has won the title while its country is at war. Despite the challenges, Lviv introduced a detailed plan that is full of hope and aspiration. We share this hope with Lviv's young people and we will be by their side when they rebuild their country.

"Even under attack, Lviv was able to adapt its plans and present a coherent programme. We are inspired by Lviv's resilience and we are confident that the city will make their year as the 2025 European Youth Capital a great success."

Lviv dedicates the year not only to the young people living within its boundaries but also its residents who fled to other countries, as well as the many young Ukrainians who have been displaced from their hometowns and now live in the city for an unknown period of time.

Lviv's European Youth Capital programme for 2025 will include youth forums for high-level engagement in debates on issues ranging from security to science and creative industries. It will also include a large-scale 24-hour youth event which combines training, discussions, networking and entertainment for young people and youth organisations from all over Europe. Lviv also plans to use the title to boost volunteering, skills development and employability among its young citizens. The programme will extend from shelters housing internally displaced people to community centres and youth hubs.

Every year, cities from across Europe are attracted to apply for the European Youth Capital title. This year, 19 municipalities have applied, four of which made it to the final round (in alphabetical order): Fuenlabrada (Spain); Izmir (Turkey); Lviv (Ukraine) and Tromsø (Norway). Before the announcement, representatives from the municipalities and from local youth organisations presented their applications in an award ceremony which took place in Tirana (Albania), European Youth Capital 2022.

Notes for Editors

- [The European Youth Capital title](#) invites cities across the continent to rethink how they engage with and include young citizens. In order to win the title, European Youth Capital candidate cities follow an extensive application process, where shortlisted cities are selected by an independent jury composed of representatives from international institutions, civil society and youth organisations.
- The European Youth Capital is an opportunity to showcase innovative ideas, projects and activities that aim to foster youth participation. Lviv is the 17th winner of the title, which was first awarded to Rotterdam in 2009.
- Lviv's mayor, Andriy Sadovyi, reported that, earlier on 23 November, the entire city was without light, and that there may be interruptions with

water supply. The same attack was also reported to have hit infrastructure affecting power supply in Kyiv and in Moldova.

- The European Youth Forum is the largest platform of youth organisations in Europe, representing over 100 diverse youth organisations and platforms. It is led by young people who are democratically elected every two years.

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