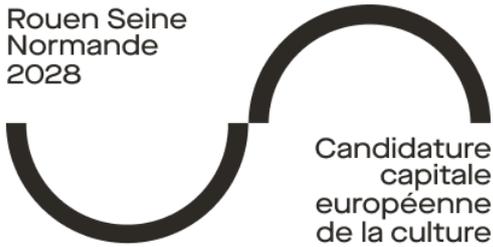


Rouen Seine  
Normande  
2028



Candidature  
capitale  
européenne  
de la culture

August 25, 2022

## For Immediate Release

### European Supporters for Rouen Seine Normande 2028, European Capital of Culture

**For the past several months, Rouen Seine Normande 2028 has been reaching out to, and working with, a number of European cities. One of the tangible outcomes of this work are the bonds forged with many different people. Women and men from all walks of life, some of whom are key figures who have become supporters of Rouen's bid to be a European Capital of Culture in 2028. These personalities act as ambassadors for Rouen Seine Normande 2028.**

#### **Martin Wåhlberg:** Trondheim, Norway

Martin Wåhlberg has enjoyed considerable success with the Norwegian period-instrument orchestra Orkester Nord, which he has conducted since its founding in Trondheim in 2018. Under his leadership, Orkester Nord has achieved swift and substantial international renown, and the ensemble's recordings on the Aparté label have drawn praise far and wide.

*Released on Aparté – Mozart Grétry 1773: two symphonic composers come face to face on this album by the Orkester Nord ensemble led by Norwegian conductor Martin Wåhlberg*

*Mozart Grétry 1773 / Released August 26, 2022*

*Concert on August 26 – Chapelle Corneille in Rouen as part of the Musicales de Normandie festival*

#### **Why I agreed to be a supporter**

When I was asked to support the City of Rouen's bid to become a European Capital of Culture, I accepted immediately, because Rouen is a city that has been close to my heart for a very long time. To be more precise, ever since the years I was a Norwegian teenager and my entire high-school education was spent in the beautiful, historic setting of the Lycée Pierre-Corneille. Rouen is an extraordinary city with exquisite architecture. It's a city with a long history, and one that bears the scars of that history. Rouen is a rare gem. Its nearness to Paris might sometimes mean it's obscured by the capital's immense shadow, but Rouen is a city that deserves to be known for itself, on its own terms. Rouen's location in Normandy, on the river that connects France with the rest of the globe, with its own

landscapes, its own agriculture, its own contact with the outside world, has always made, and continues to make, Rouen a city of rich and varied character. Times and technical means may change, but this extraordinary geographical location, and all the opportunities that come with it, remains. Now we need to bring these opportunities into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, using the resources and possibilities that new technologies offer so we can build the future, while staying locally rooted and open to all of Europe. This is the meaning of the City of Rouen's project for its European bid.

**What I will do to support the bid:**

I can serve as an ambassador and a spokesperson for this project. Because Rouen's location makes it both a port city and a river city, it has always forged very close ties with international communities. This is especially the case for the countries of the North. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for example, Rouen was home to a Norwegian church for sailors in the commercial fleet. Old sailors in Norway all know the city of Rouen, no exceptions. But these existing networks need to be kept alive, nurtured and renewed for the generations to come. Rouen is a city that deserves to be better-known. With our orchestra, Orkester Nord, through our international activities and to the best of our ability, we can be ambassadors of the ideas borne by the City of Rouen's ECOC bid.

**Laure Dréano-Mayer:** Hanover, Germany

Laure Dréano-Mayer oversees L'Antenne Métropole, a cultural structure in Hanover, Germany, that supports Franco-German projects. It is part of the network of the Institut Français in Germany and the Metropolregion, a metropolitan region in South Lower Saxony.

**Why I agreed to be a supporter:**

I'm delighted to be the Franco-German supporter of Rouen's bid to be a 2028 European Capital of Culture. Rouen is unfailingly open to Europe and this bid can only reinforce such openness.

Although I'm not from Rouen and have never worked there, I know Rouen from the outside, about 800 kilometres away, seen from Hanover, its sister city since 1966, and from Lower Saxony, the Land (German state) partner of the Normandy region.

For Rouen, the application process to become a European Capital of Culture is an incredible opportunity to solidify and expand a European cooperation that is already quite well-established. For several years, relations between our two cities have taken the form of such things as musical exchanges for the French-style Fête de la Musique in Hanover and the "Thursday Terraces" in Rouen, tandem work on literary events, regular communication between the cities' two mayors, organized outings between the two cities by friends of the sister-city program, numerous academic exchanges, etc. These initiatives are made possible through the work of various cultural, political and associative entities in both cities.

**What I will do to support the bid:**

As the Franco-German supporter of this bid, it's my pleasure to continue overseeing and contributing to this network and, most especially, to promoting these forms of cooperation. In the weeks to come, I will be very happy to be the face and voice in Hanover of Rouen's bid for European Capital of Culture 2028.

According a special place in the bid to the relationship with its sister city is a choice that speaks volumes: It's the opportunity for an entire region to demonstrate its commitment to a solid, creative Europe that's in touch with its peoples! So, as we say in German, *Viel Glück* – good luck to Rouen 2028!

## **Chris Gribble:** Norwich, United Kingdom

Chris Gribble is the Chief Executive of the National Centre for Writing based in Norwich. NCW is a physical and virtual space that works with budding writers as well as translators, readers, audiences and communities to connect and transform lives through words. Chris led Norwich's bid to become England's first UNESCO City of Literature in 2012. He chairs the International Cities of Refuge Network ([www.icorn.org](http://www.icorn.org)), a family of 73 cities around the world offering refuge to artists and writers whose freedom of expression has been threatened, and he sits on the board of directors of Carcanet Press.

### **Why I agreed to be a supporter:**

Rouen and Norwich have a deep and lasting friendship – so what better way to celebrate that than by helping Rouen campaign for the fantastic honour of being a European Capital of Culture in 2028? Histories and culture are what connect people, communities, cities and countries. It's a way to celebrate these shared histories and explore the differences that make each city unique.

### **What I will do to support the bid:**

I hope to be an advocate for Rouen's bid, and as Norwich is a UNESCO City of Literature, I'll be supporting the bid through the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and other entities in its attempt to share Rouen's stories and strengths with all of Europe.

## **Vesna Stevanoska:** Skopje, North Macedonia

Vesna Stevanoska was born in 1973 in Skopje, where she grew up. After completing her studies at the Faculty of Architecture, she graduated with a degree in Sculpture from the Academy of Fine Arts of the Republic of North Macedonia. From 1997 to 2000, she lived in Prague, in the Czech Republic, where she earned a Research MFA in Universal Sculpture and New Media at the Academy of Arts, Architecture and Design - UMPRUM. She also holds a Master's degree in Cultural Management from the Institute of European Studies at the Université Paris 8 in France. Ms. Stevanoska has had solo exhibitions in France and North Macedonia and has been part of numerous group exhibitions abroad. She lives in Paris.

### **Why I agreed to be a supporter:**

This commitment resonates with my civic, creative and artistic journey and I am always eager to pursue grander and nobler things.

I have a special relationship with Normandy: It has become a source of energy and inspiration since I arrived in Paris. Especially Rouen, which is where I went on my most extraordinary journey, one that revolutionized my work and my research.

One autumn day in 2002, I suddenly had the opportunity to create one of my major installations on our perception of time and space. Without time to prepare, I found myself rushing to the Gare Saint Lazare ticket office asking for "a ticket for a direct trip to a place about 90 minutes away, returning sometime on the same day" – a rather atypical request for the person manning the ticket counter. The explanation was technical and partly hypothetical, so I looked at the board displaying the pending departures and simply said, "Rouen, please." A few minutes later, I was filming on the train. When you film the landscape from the window of a moving train in Normandy, it's like stepping into the ring with

the world wrestling champion without ever having wrestled before. You are in the grip of the light. A powerful, omnipresent light that dominates and plays every possible trick on you with a speed of its own – light, rendering impossible any improvisation whatsoever. It wasn't possible for me to stop or pause the camera, just like there was no way I could make the train go backwards to get a "good shot." That's what I call "action filming": I had to adapt, concentrate and act; when faced with the light, we are...light! (Equipped with a human body and a camera in terms of technical means.) Such was the tension I was feeling when I arrived in Rouen. By the time I came to my senses, I was already far from the station. What a sight! The city delicately unrolled its streets beneath my feet, under a majestic sky in which the light animated the parade of clouds. It was beautiful. Rouen could not be an ordinary city. I eventually arrived in front of the Joan of Arc monument – *Hey, I know her* – and it was at that moment that my mind made its time-space calculations, bringing me back to myself, very shortly before the departure of my return train.

**What I will do to support the bid:**

In concrete terms, I will open my network and bring together the dynamics of my artistic work and my creative projects and the dynamics of this bid by supporting existing exchanges and collaborations and initiating new ones. In my experience, culture is plural and dynamic. It's a process that generates creation, research, collaboration, dialogue – it is long-term and remains a constant value.

The Rouen European Capital of Culture bid opens up an extraordinary space for communication at all levels, as it's at the heart of a region located in the centre of the continent. Just take a compass and choose Rouen as the centre, put the other arm on the farthest point to the east and draw a circle and you will realize to what degree its location is a catalyst for communication with many cultural corners.

**Arnaud Serry:** Honorary Consul of Lithuania in Normandy

Arnaud Serry is Norman through and through. He was born in 1975 and spent his childhood in Tréport, then his adolescence in the Rouen region. His life's path then took him toward the coast to continue his studies at the Université Le Havre Normandie, where he is now a research professor in geography. Over time, he also established strong relations with Lithuania, for which he now serves as Honorary Consul in Normandy.

**Why I agreed to be a supporter:**

I agreed to become a supporter because this bid stretches along the Normandy Seine valley, from Giverny to Le Havre, in a logical and meaningful way. This delineation reflects the diversity, breadth and depth of our region, one to which I am deeply attached.

I also accepted because I'm convinced that this bid is an opportunity to increase Normandy's prominence on a European scale and to strengthen collaborations with other regions of the Old Continent.

**What I will do to support the bid:**

Naturally, I intend to help build a bridge with Kaunas 2022, so that Rouen can learn from Lithuania's experience.

Then, being from Le Havre, I hope to help promote the original scale of the bid, that of the Seine Valley.

## THE ROUEN SEINE NORMANDE 2028 BID

The *Rouen Seine Normandie 2028* bid area starts in the City of Rouen and its metropolis and encompasses the Seine Normandie Valley, from Giverny to Le Havre and Honfleur. The area's local communities have expressed their fervent desire to work together with the area's residents, artists, businesses, and non-profit and cultural entities to transform this delineated region with the European Capital of Culture project serving as catalyst and objective.

*Review of the bid timeline:*

<b>2022</b>	Submission of the application, known as the bidbook
<b>2023</b>	Preselection of some cities, then designation of the two chosen cities at year's end
<b>2024-2028</b>	Project implementation and production phase
<b>2028</b>	Rouen Seine Normandie becomes a European Capital of Culture

## BECOMING A EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE IN 2028

Each year, the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) initiative honours two or three cities that have been designated by the European Commission. For a full calendar year, the chosen cities will showcase their heritage and cultural dynamism by holding dozens of exhibits, festivals, and other culture-centred events. Becoming a Capital of Culture is a collective and civic project intended to lastingly transform the territory and its image through culture. This designation is principally awarded to what are known as "resilient cities," ones which have recognized weaknesses or have survived crises that they manage to turn into strengths, setting ambitious objectives for transforming their municipalities over the long term, with culture as both catalyst and ambition.

Since the program began, more than 60 cities have been granted this designation, four of them in France: Paris in 1989, Avignon in 2000, Lille in 2004, and Marseille in 2013. In 2028, another French city will be designated a European Capital of Culture, along with a city of the Czech Republic and another in a candidate country seeking to join the European Union.

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