

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY

COMMITTEE ON LOCAL AUTHORITIES



PACCOM029533

Sub-Committee on the Europe Prize
and
propagation of the European idea

EUROPE PRIZE

Candidature of
MENTON (Alpes Maritimes, France)

I have the honour to submit to the Committee on Local Authorities of the Consultative Assembly at Strasbourg the candidature of Menton for the Europe Prize.

Menton is a member of the Council of European Municipalities, and is paired with the following towns:

- Montreux (Switzerland) since 6th April 1953
- Noordwijk (Netherlands) since 6th April 1953
- Namur (Belgium) since 10th March 1956
- Baden Baden (Federal Republic of Germany) since 10th September 1961.

Pairing ceremonies have been held both at Menton and in our sister towns.

We have frequent contacts with these towns abroad, which take part in our own festivities. Thus, delegates from the town councils of Namur and Baden Baden will visit Menton from 27th February to 3rd March 1965, on the occasion of the Lemon Festival. Several town-councillors from nearby Italian towns (Ventimiglia, Bordighera and San Remo) will also be present.

The national holidays of our sister towns are celebrated with panache at Menton.

Our European activities have taken many forms:

Cultural: Every year foreign artistes take part in the Chamber Music Festival, which is held in the first half of August, notably;

- I Musici di Roma
- Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra
- The Hungarian Trio
- The Octet of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra
- The Bucharest Trio

The Jury of the Menton poetry group set up by the town council at its International Arts Centre, which honours five poets every year, has twice selected Belgian poets, MM. Edmond Vandercammen and Géo Norge, in 1960 and 1964.

Folklore: Menton societies, particularly "La Capeline", have taken part in events organised by our sister towns.

Schools: Student exchanges with Baden Baden are planned for the Easter holidays. In August young people from Baden Baden will visit Menton.

Every year Menton exchanges book-prizes with Namur. Each town presents prizes to three children from the other town.

Swedish boys and girls, and even adults, follow holiday courses at Menton during June, July and August, in order to improve their knowledge of the language and to visit the area.

Our schools take part in the European Schools Day; drawing competitions are organised.

Solidarity: Menton has acquired and converted the former Casino, which has now become the "Palais de l'Europe". A true arts centre, this building is suitable for national and international congresses. Lecture halls, a theatre to hold eight hundred and a radio and television studio will soon be added.

Exhibitions: Menton has been represented at the following international exhibitions:

- Belgium: Brussels, Verviers, Namur, Liège, Ghent, Ixelles.
- Federal Republic of Germany: Frankfurt, Munich, Baden Baden.
- Sweden: Stockholm, Falkenberg, Molnë, Orebro, Olofström.
- Switzerland: Zurich, Montreux.
- Norway: Oslo.
- Portugal:
- England:
- Canada:

Monuments: To perpetuate the memory of distinguished foreigners and sovereigns who have stayed at Menton, the town has erected the following monuments:

- A stele on the Promenade Reine Astrid in memory of the Queen of the Belgians;
- A commemorative plaque at the gate of the Villa Fontana Rosa, where the great Spanish novelist Blas Ibáñez lived and died;
- A plaque on the site of the former Pont Elisabeth to commemorate the stay of the Empress of Austria (Sissi);
- A monument to the memory of Queen Victoria, officially unveiled on 21st February 1960 in the presence of Lady Patricia Ramsay, a grand-daughter of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and a squadron of the Royal Navy.

Tourists: In 1964, 74,988 tourists visited Menton:

- French	60%	- Dutch	2%
- English	12%	- Germans	2%
- Belgian	10%	- Scandinavians	2%
- Italians	3%	- Swiss	2%
- Spaniards	2%		

Television: German radio and television and French radio and television (ORTF) made a full-length publicity film for direct transmission.

Sport: Tennis tournaments and football, basketball, volleyball and swimming matches are held between local teams and teams of foreign players visiting the town on tour.

A frontier town which suffered much in the war and was awarded the Croix de Guerre, Menton has overcome its difficulties and achieved close ties with neighbouring towns across the frontier.

A number of associations (prisoners-of-war and war veterans) have been paired.

The "Pont de l'Amitié" a new frontier post by the sea which was inaugurated on 3rd July 1964, is a symbol of these ties.