



OULU EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE 2026



A satellite night view of Europe, showing city lights and national borders. The city of Oulu is highlighted with a bright starburst and labeled 'OULU'.

Oulu

**European Capital of
Culture 2026**

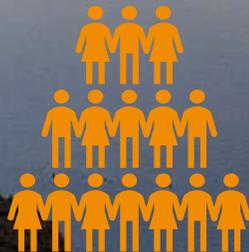


CITY OF OULU, FINLAND

INTELLIGENT, COMPASSIONATE, CREATIVE



209 000 INHABITANTS



AVERAGE AGE 39

EASILY ACCESSIBLE, LIGHT OF THE NORTH





**Extreme,
wonderous
winter**



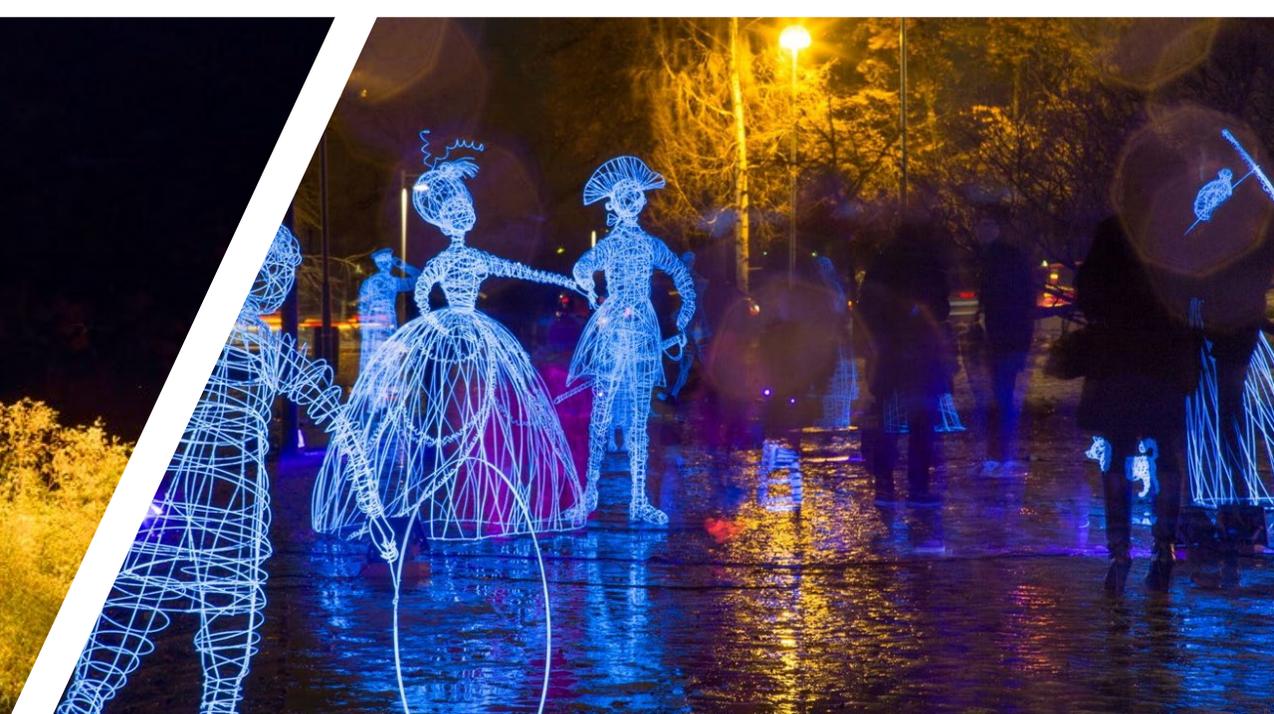


**Bright, lively
summer**





**Dark,
luminous
autumn**





European Capital of Culture 2026

Main theme:
CULTURAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Co-creation

Thousands of people participated in the preparation of the programme

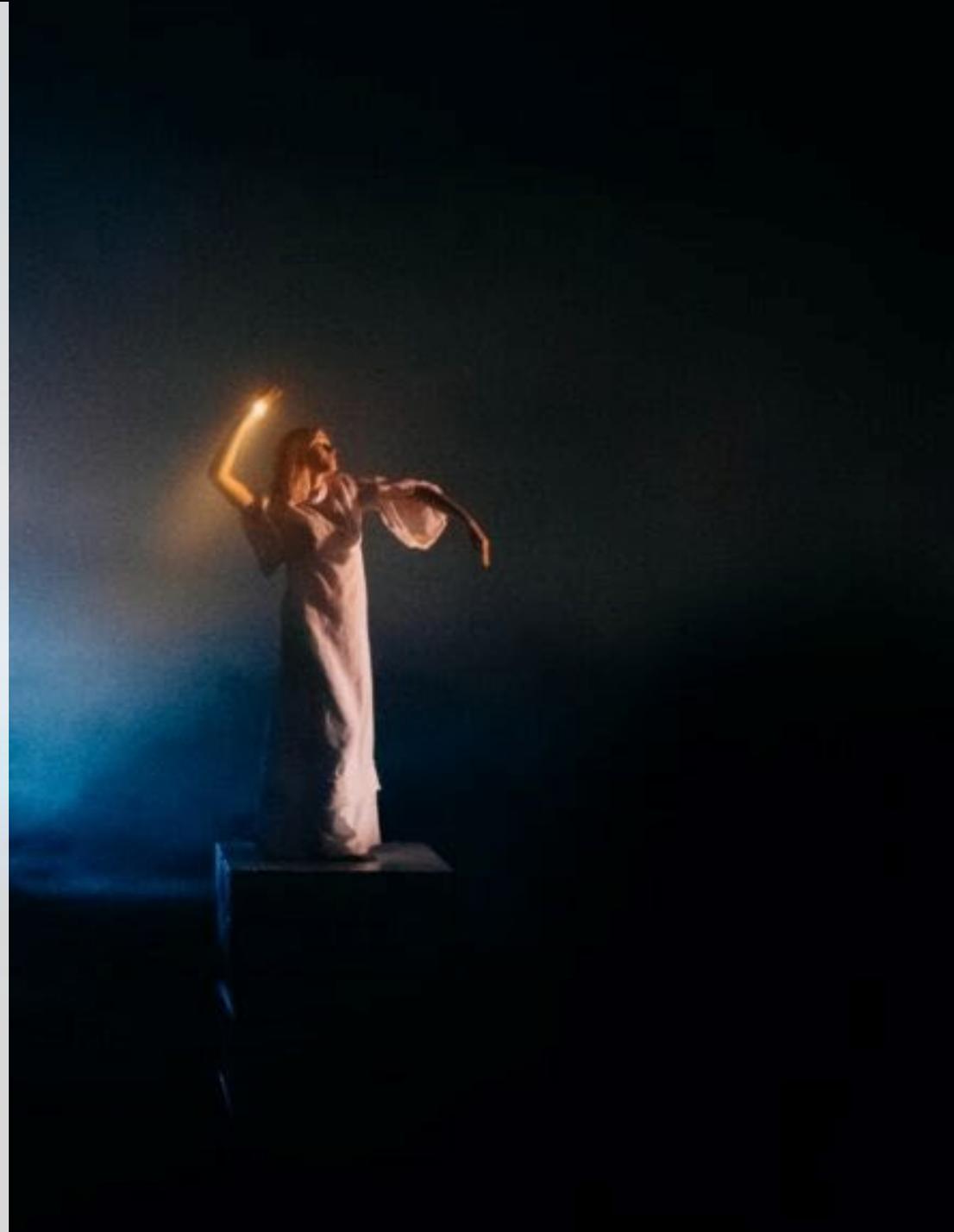
Budget

2021-2027 in total 50 M€

What is European Capital of Culture exactly?

Since 1985 (Finland: Helsinki 2000, Turku 2011)

- One of the most visible actions of the European Union
- Highlights the importance of cities as centres of cultural life
- International cooperation opens doors for art and culture professionals – and brings new cultural life to Finland



THE GOALS OF OULU2026

FROM A COLD TECH CITY TO A **VIBRANT, GRIPPING CITY**

- Oulu's reputation as a city of culture strengthens in Finland by 25% and Oulu's international visibility grows by 25% by 2027
- 50% of the events of the cultural programme's projects take place outside of established cultural facilities
- Net migration is positive among young adults (25-34 years) in 2027



THE GOALS OF OULU2026

FROM AN UNBALANCED COMMUNITY TOWARDS **EQUAL CULTURAL RIGHTS**

- 40% of Oulu2026 projects are implemented outside of Oulu city centre
- 10% of residents participate as volunteers and 80% as an audience in Oulu2026 activities in the project area
- 80% of Oulu's residents feel that, by 2026, it is good for everyone to be in Oulu

FROM A PERIPHERIC AREA TO A **CREATIVE AREA WITH NEW JOBS**

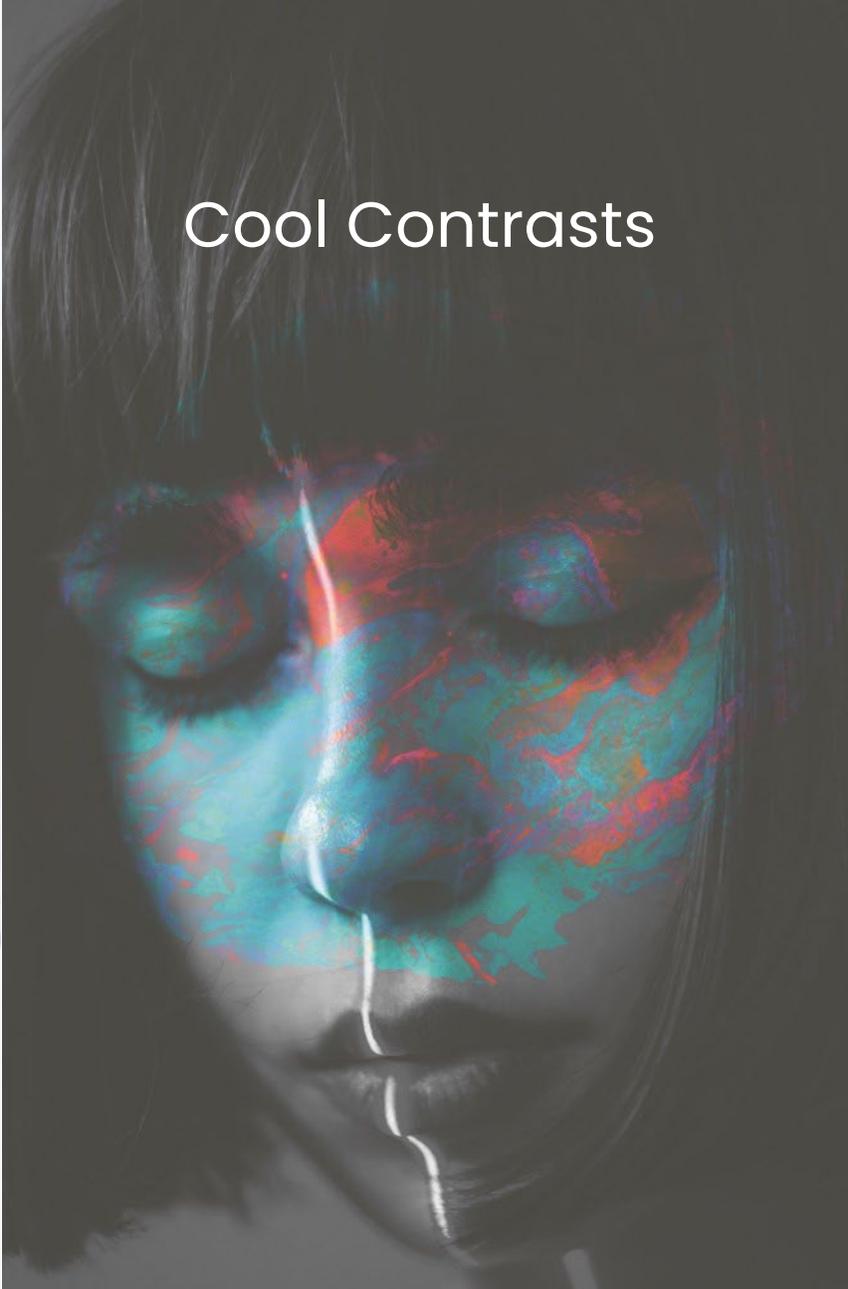
- 80% of Oulu2026 projects are implemented via international cooperation
- 70% of Oulu2026 projects combine art and technology
- The creative economy in the Oulu region has grown by 20% and the number of jobs in the creative sector has grown by 30% by 2027



Brave Hinterland



Cool Contrasts



Wild City



CULTURAL CLIMATE CHANGE

Brave Hinterland

Far away from everything, on the periphery of Europe we face an uncompromising nature, extreme climate (change), enormous distances and wild vastness, excessive light and excessive darkness. Only a few in Europe are willing to live with extreme hardship and extreme beauty.

Actual Climate Change impacts us more visibly here than almost anywhere else in Europe with biodiversity already significantly diminished. The global response to climate change has so far been too timid. We explore this topic in our theme Brave Hinterland.



Cool Contrasts

Oulu is the kingdom of great contrasts – positive, but also challenging. Contrasts such as the nightless nights of the midnight sun and sunless days in the heart of winter. Contrasts have the power both to connect and disconnect, but also to create something new.

Cool Contrasts is about rebalancing our communities. There is already a recognised European need to use culture as a means to help reduce health inequalities. Oulu2026 will work with our citizens and with European partners to develop cultural practices that promote positive engagement to rebalance these inequalities.



Wild City

Oulu is on the cusp. We could settle for being a tame municipal city on the fringe. Or we could go Wild. We choose Wild.

With Wild City we bring wildness into the city by celebrating the wilderness around it. Creating a new cultural approach with our unique northern vibe. Oulu as a cultural laboratory, going wild for Europe.

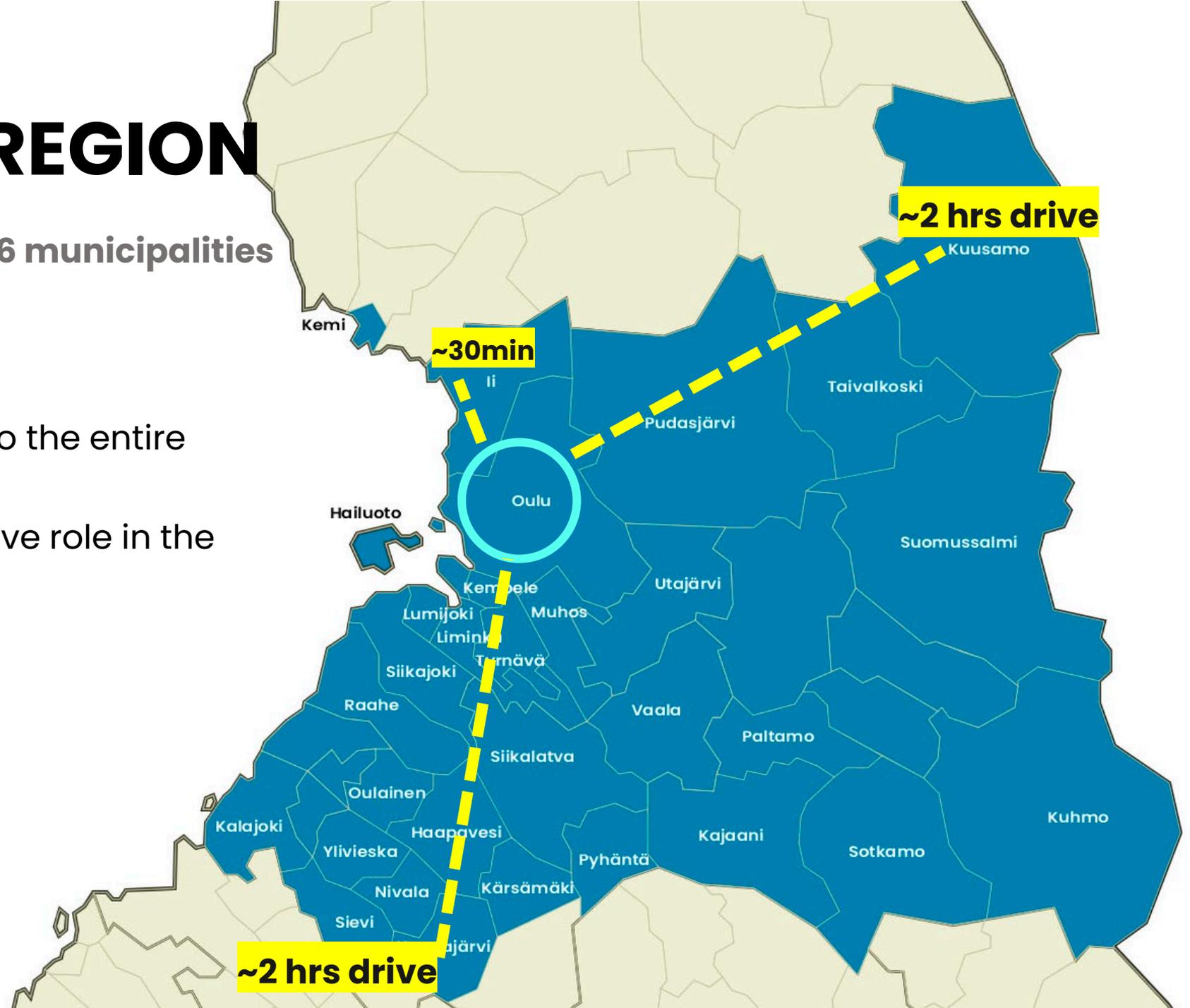
What exactly is a creative city in the middle of the wild nature? What is a lively, creative village? How do art, subcultures and creative spaces fill emptiness, silence and darkness?



OULU2026 REGION

Oulu2026 region covers 36 municipalities from the North

- the ECoC title belongs to the entire region
- Region will have an active role in the culture programme.
- Regional programme:
Art & Nature Trails
Arctic Food Lab
In Europe's Spotlight



THE CULTURAL PROGRAM IS STARTING TO SHOW!

Peace Machine - a flagship project that unites people in Europe

Arctic Food Lab celebrates arctic gastronomy in everyday life

The Cultural Program is expanding with Open Calls



Let's meet in social media!



www oulu2026.eu



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