CultureCase

The economic impact of hosting a European Capital of Culture

This research was conducted by **Andrej Srakar** and **Marilena Vecco** at the **University of Ljubljana, Slovenia** and **Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands.**

Summary

This article looked at the impact on the Slovenian city of Maribor of being the 2012 European Capital of Culture. It found that the event boosted tourism and economic activity. It didn't have a positive impact on employment. Although Maribor shared the title with five other Slovenian cities, most of the benefits accrued only to Maribor itself.

It is common for European Capitals of Culture to claim impacts and benefits either before or during the event itself.

This paper looked at the overall effects of the designation after 2012. As part of the Capital of Culture festivities there were over 5,900 events in six Slovenian cities. It has been calculated that the total number of visitors and spectators for all the events both live and digital reached more than 4.45 million people. This study showed there were 19,461 'new visitor arrivals' to Maribor in 2012 and that there were more than 46,000 additional overnight stays by foreign tourists in the same year.

The paper reported that the general effects on employment from Maribor 2012 were 'negative'

The authors have a few possible explanations for this: a problem in their calculations; the possibility that short-term jobs associated with the year-long event had an impact on the normal working of the labour market; and (their

most likely explanation) that a financial crisis in 2012 ‘outweighed the effects of the European Capital of Culture’.

Keywords

major events | slovenia | modelling | cities

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