

Notte Bianca lights up on the European circuit

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After just two years, *Notte Bianca*, the all-night cultural and artistic event in Valletta, has made it onto the White Nights Europe network, together with the top cities of culture - Paris, Rome, Riga, Brussels, Madrid and Bucharest.

Joining the European cultural zone and securing its position on the prestigious network was considered to be an "honour" for the Culture Ministry.

Sources close to the ministry said Lejl Imdawwal would be sharing its artistic and cultural projects with its city-associate networkers, and would also be promoted and recognised on a European scale.

The capital cities decided to join forces in 2006 to carry out the shared artistic project, *White Nights Europe*. One of the major bonuses of the agreement is that the capital cities would be marketing each other's events.

The first *Notte Bianca* starts in Riga at the end of August and continues to be held in the other cities almost every weekend until Malta's Lejl Imdawwal at the end of the list in October, meaning it stands to benefit from the marketing in the other six countries throughout the previous two months.

Marketing obligations include the publication of Valletta dates and details on any promotional material, emphasising the Maltese name Lejl Imdawwal. Being part of the network also means the creation of a common website, leading to the separate links of each country. The process involved Malta's formal request to get onto the network, followed by the unanimous agreement between the other countries, based on the attendance of their 'mystery' representatives to gauge the event last year.

The White Nights Europe project also provides a network of co-operation between the events organised in the various European capitals. The cities have agreed to share a number of cohesive criteria, including the organisation of a common artistic project with the objective of promoting an exchange of experiences at a European level, the ministry source said.

Notte Bianca was first held in Paris in 2002, leading other European capitals and large cities to organise their own, based on the Parisian model.

The artistic directors from each city have officially met to outline the outcomes of 2007 and to reflect on the 2008 preparations, highlighting common factors for improvement. These include the need to reduce the number of events and have larger-scale activities, with a larger audience in more concentrated spaces, creating a greater impact; visibility and freedom of expression to young artists; the organisation of workshops, and the stronger participation of city residents to develop a sense of ownership.