

NICE CARNIVAL MOVING TO CHINA



The famous Nice carnival, “the King of Energy”, like the phoenix, will rise from its ashes in order to parade throughout Xiamen. The Chinese seaside resort has just signed a partnership agreement with Nice.

The king of carnivals - this year named “the King of Energy” - ended its reign with the traditional bonfire after fifteen days of festivities in February. This year however, the carnival did not take place on the beach along the “promenade des Anglais” out of respect for the victims of the 14th of July terrorist attack.

In spite of the change in venue, carnival lovers showed up in large numbers. Due to a somewhat slow start, the commentators were anticipating a drop in attendance rates of up to 20% for the 2017 edition. In the end, the security measures which were put in place were enough to reassure visitors, and the drop in the attendance rate was no more than 8% according to the City of Nice which recorded more than 131 000 admissions at the Nice carnival.

While visiting the “Côte d'Azur” city, Yang Qi, the Director General for the seaside resort destination of Xiamen, announced the signing of a partnership agreement between the two cities - which have been twin cities since 2014. With its location facing Taiwan, and welcoming 70 million tourists annually, Xiamen has secured the exclusive rights for China to the “Carnival de Nice” for 5 years. The first trial run, with a small selection of floats, will take place later this year from the 29th of April to the 5th of May. Beginning in 2018, the year of Chinese tourism in Europe, “flower battles” and carnival parades will be exported to China according to the theme chosen for that year by the Nice carnival organizers.

The floats will be sent to China, and some of them may be adapted to Chinese culture. The latter will be created on location with the assistance of carnival specialists from Nice who will share their know-how with their Chinese counterparts.

China represents an important stake for Nice's tourism interests. In 2015, China already held the seventh place among foreign market visitors, with a 60% increase in short stays (46 284) and a 64% increase in overnight stays (102 731). **Visitation numbers dropped in 2016 in response to the terrorist attacks and to the general feeling of insecurity which resulted from them.** Nice and the “Côte d'Azur”, which are seeking to strengthen their exchanges with China, have chosen as their ambassador, Liu Ye, a famous Chinese actor whose wife is from Nice. Local authorities are working hard to establish a direct air route with the “Nice-Côte d'Azur” airport as a point of departure.

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