



## Pressedienst

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### **Grand Départ 2017: the host city Düsseldorf introduces itself and presents its objectives for the major sporting event**

#### **The state capital Düsseldorf**

Cosmopolitan charm and the Rhenish joy of living shape the image of North Rhine-Westphalia's state capital. Düsseldorf is a leading economic centre in the heart of Europe, a lively, modern city with more than 635,000 inhabitants. Messe Düsseldorf organises around 50 trade fairs at its Düsseldorf location, 24 of which are globally leading fairs. Düsseldorf Airport is one of the world's most modern airports and is considered the gateway to the world of North Rhine-Westphalia.

The attractive city on the Rhine stands for fashion, shopping, culture and exceptional events. From Königsallee, affectionately called "Kö", one of Europe's most luxurious shopping boulevards, it is not far to the historic old town with its 260 bars and restaurants. Their flair is world-famous, the alleys pulsate with life, and the multi-faceted cultural scene offers spectacular events and exhibitions. The art academy as well as more than two dozen museums and exhibition halls, Schloss Benrath, the Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus (theatre), the Deutsche Oper am Rhein (opera), the Tonhalle (concert hall), over a hundred galleries, numerous stages, cabaret and variety shows and many concert halls make Düsseldorf a recognised cultural metropolis. Major annual events such as the carnival procession on Shrove Monday, Japan Day Düsseldorf/NRW, the "Biggest fair on the Rhine", the Christmas market and the jazz rally attract hundreds of thousands of visitors.

The Rheinuferpromenade on the bank of the Rhine, one of Düsseldorf's most popular meeting places, leads to the Media Harbour with the buildings by international star architects such as Frank O. Gehry. The Media Harbour has now become a popular hot spot. Numerous bars, bistros and restaurants invite visitors to enjoy coffee, cool beers, cocktails and culinary delights until the late evening hours.



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Also from a sporting point of view, the state capital is well positioned: top clubs and traditional associations in sports such as football, ice hockey and table tennis play in the top German leagues. Grassroots sport with its countless varieties and clubs has something for everyone. When it comes to quality of life, Düsseldorf is one of the world's leading cities (ranked 6, study by Mercer Human Resource Consulting 2017). Therefore, not only the inhabitants feel at home, but also the growing number of visitors. With over 4.6 million overnight guests and numerous day visitors, Düsseldorf is one of the most popular destinations in Germany for city trips.

### **Objectives of the state capital Düsseldorf as the host of the Grand Départ**

The name Düsseldorf is internationally associated with one of the biggest sporting events this year. From 29 June to 2 July, the Tour de France is set to start here, and, as so often is the case, the capital of North Rhine-Westphalia will be a great host for these days.

Mayor Thomas Geisel explains: "With the Grand Départ of the Tour de France, this summer, a sporting event of global significance is coming to Düsseldorf. The start of the legendary French Tour is a great opportunity for the state capital and the whole region - for our city marketing, for Düsseldorf as a sporting municipality and also for Düsseldorf as a metropolis with 630,000 inhabitants - to promote the bicycle as a means of transport. The Grand Départ is also a great opportunity for the sporting nation of Germany to successfully position itself as a host for major events. Düsseldorf is a master of such major events - as the many spectators along the route as well as millions of people at their TV screens in Germany and abroad will see for themselves."

With great pictures on television and in the Internet, in 2017 Düsseldorf will be able to present itself globally as a town that is open to the world, friendly and diverse, and thus raise its profile ever further.

The Grand Départ is also an excellent opportunity to promote the bicycle as



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an attractive, healthy and environmentally-conscious means of transport. Düsseldorf has set itself ambitious goals here. The share of cyclists in the traffic volume as a whole is to be increased. The focus is on the implementation of a citywide cycling network with a total length of about 300 kilometres. The whole thing is organised under the umbrella of the citywide initiative "RADschlag - Düsseldorf tritt an".

But it's also a great opportunity and a sign for the sporting city of Düsseldorf and the sporting state of North Rhine-Westphalia, when the biggest sporting event of the year 2017 starts in the Rhine metropolis Düsseldorf. Especially in a year without Olympic Games, and without football World Cup and European Championships, the Tour de France is even more in focus. In addition, the entire Tour de France 2017 will be broadcast worldwide in over 190 countries.

With the Grand Départ Düsseldorf 2017, the Tour de France is starting in Germany again after 30 years - in 1987 the cyclists started in Berlin. Thus, the Grand Départ Düsseldorf 2017 will also send a strong signal of the Franco-German friendship.

For the grassroots sport and the promotion of new talent in the cycling clubs, the Grand Départ provides a unique opportunity to raise interest in cycling as a sport.

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