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Published April 8, 2019, 5:19 PM

By *Roy Mabasa*

The European Union (EU) Delegation to the Philippines, alongside other EU member states, inaugurated on Monday the "Viva Europa", an annual cultural diplomacy event aimed at reinforcing mutual understanding and strengthening people-to-people links.



EU flag (REUTERS / MANILA BULLETIN)

"What we are trying to do is to veer away from our usual way of working where we are focusing on political, economic, global issues and we are trying to bring Europe closer to the hearts of the people in Manila and the Philippines. We do that by bringing some of the things that Europe is strongest –culture," EU Ambassador to the Philippines Franz Jessen said in his opening remarks.

For the Viva Europa 2019 edition, the EU Delegation adopted "Go Techno" as the theme for this year's Europa Day reception on May 9 by conducting a stargazing activity and a session on stars and constellation in cooperation with the Manila Astronomical Society.



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Prior to the launching, the EU held the Copernicus Conference last month, a cornerstone of the EU efforts to monitor the earth and its many ecosystems from the integrated space and ground-based data.

Along with Copernicus-related activities, Viva Europa 2019 will also cover topics like children's rights, environmental protection, and music.

Together with the embassies of Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, and the Philippine-Italian Association, the EU Delegation, and the Museo Pambata will give disadvantaged children the opportunity to hear European stories and to participate in games and other fun cultural activities.

Activities under EU's Viva Europa 2019 are being held in partnership with the Museo Pambata, the Far Eastern University, and the Bohol city government.



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Among the marquee events that will take place under the Viva Europa 2019 are the following: Schuman Cup Football teach-in in Alabang (May 4); Bike Tour in Bohol (May 6-7); Euro-Pinoy Concert in Poblacion, Makati City (May 7); and Musica FEUropa Choir Competition (May 25-26).

Renowned artists from all the EU states and the Philippines are also slated to perform during the Viva Europa 2019 season, among them, Czech guitarist and composer Lukas Sommer; Spanish Flamenco guitarist Alex Alcaraz; and half-German, half-Filipina DJ Marie Badkiss.

Viva Europa 2019 is the outcome of the fruitful cooperation between the embassies of Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom; Alliance Francaise; the British Council; the Goethe-Institut, Instituto Cervantes, and the Philippine-Italian Association.

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