Beaches in the city?

In summer, Paris is hotter and more humid than many other European cities. July and August, Parisians leave their city and go to the beach on vacation. But many have to stay behind. The mayor of Paris, Bertrand Delanoe, wanted to give those people a better quality of life during the summer. So he transformed the center of the city into a beach.

The beach is located on the bank of the Seine River, in the heart of the city. They have a lot of heart of the city. The area has lots of sand, umbrellas, deck chairs, and two enormous swimming pools. There are courts to play various sports, there are showers, and there’s even a library. One August, more than 3 million people used the beach. “I can work, and enjoy the sunshine. Also it is cheaper and more convenient than going to a crowded place in the Riviera,” said Maurice Lavalle, a chef at Le Bistro.

Other European capitals copied the idea: Budapest, Prague, Brussels, Berlin, and Milan. The beach in Budapest is located on the banks of the Danube River; in Prague, on the Vltava River; in Brussels, opposite a canal; in Berlin, along the Spree River; and in Milan, across from the Sempione Park.

Sometimes, what seems a crazy idea can make thousands of people very happy. The sea is missing in these beaches in the city, but who cares?

About Reading

1. What’s the weather like in Paris in the summer?
2. What do most Parisians do in July and August?
3. Why did the mayor convert the center of the city into a beach?
4. How does the Paris beach compare to the seaside?
5. What did other European capitals do?

Speaking

1. Would you like to try the beach in the city? Does it sound like fun?
2. In a group, discuss the things that can be done to make your city better?
3. Compare living in your town to living in other towns in your country.