

Let's Go

 **RYANAIR**

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LETSGO-MAG.COM

WIN
€200
FLIGHT
VOUCHERS

S IS FOR SKATEBOARDING

HOW EUROPE'S NEW
SKATEPARKS ARE
INSPIRING EUROPE'S
NEW SKATE KIDS

H IS FOR HAPPY PEOPLE

WHY COPENHAGEN
IS THE HAPPIEST
CITY IN THE WORLD

M IS FOR MICRONATIONS

WANT TO START YOUR
OWN COUNTRY? MEET
THE PEOPLE WHO DID

FINN'S SMILING
'COS HE'S JUST
PULLED OFF A
FRONTSIDE
WALLBASH

TRAVEL
AZ
TO



GOT A THING FOR CEREMONIAL ROBES? A BURNING DESIRE TO BANISH CAR TAX? WANT TO GET PAID IN SNACKS? YOU WOULDN'T, AS **SI HAWKINS** REPORTS, BE THE FIRST...

It was probably just hours after Europe's disparate, warring tribes first banded together to form nations that a few of them started to think about independence. Creating your own country is tempting for many reasons: power, wealth, the glory of having an oversized, overpriced statue of yourself erected after death... even if doing so now would cause massive complications for the Eurovision Song Contest. And don't even mention the European Football Championship. Mind you, just imagine how confusing those competitions would be if they included micronations too.

What is a micronation? Well, anyone could potentially start one. Hunkered awkwardly within

is for...

MICRONATIONS

or hovering just outside mightier, more established countries, these bold mini-states have given it the full Mel-Gibson-in-Braveheart and cried "FREEDOM!" with varying degrees of success.

Often a micronation is the brainchild of one charismatic, driven, really quite eccentric individual. The four states that grace these pages, for example, were initially ruled by a clown, a flower grower, an illegal radio entrepreneur and a sailor famous for sinking.

Not that they should be taken lightly. Micronation natives are fiercely patriotic, even if, whisper it, no one actually lives there. And these thrones can be hotly contested. Shots have been fired, kings have revolted and one ruler was even imprisoned for what he insists is an inalienable right: to drive around the Shetland Islands in an untaxed van. Heads of tiny states, we salute you. ➤



THE PRINCIPALITY OF SEBORGA

HEAD OF STATE Prince Marcello I, who was elected by public vote in 2010 following the passing of nation founder Prince Giorgio I

YEAR FOUNDED 1963

POPULATION 322

NATIONAL ANTHEM *La Speranza*, which translates as *The Hope*

WHERE IS IT? North-western Italy

Giorgio Carbone made a unique switch in 1963, from growing flowers to seizing power. The self-proclaimed 'Serene Highness of Seborga', Carbone queried Italy's ownership of this Ligurian town, held an election and was proclaimed prince, complete with ceremonial sash and no salary but free snacks. The Italian government didn't intrude and the locals lapped it up: Seborga now has a currency, TV station, even an Olympic committee. New monarch Marcello will do well to match the Prince-florist.

MICROFACT This flower-focussed nation has its own rose, the Prince of Seborga.