Press Announcement
Brussels, 19 November 2025

Tampere and Dubrovnik selected as 2026 European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism

The European Commission announces the 2026 European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism, celebrating destinations leading in accessibility, sustainability, digitalisation and cultural heritage.

Tampere (Finland) and **Dubrovnik (Croatia)** have been selected as the winners of the EU's 2026 **European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism** competitions, following a European Jury meeting held in Brussels on 18-19 November 2025.

This year's competitions saw an increase in participants from a wide range of countries. In total, 58 destinations from 22 countries competed for the European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism titles. The 15 shortlisted destinations were invited to present their cases to the European Jury in Brussels, who selected the winners of both competitions.

Tampere stood out for its innovative practices, performing strongly across all four categories and presenting an interesting programme of activities planned for 2026. The city presented a balanced vision of sustainable growth by demonstrating how local wellbeing can benefit from tourism but also impressed with comprehensive storytelling and a clear legacy for the EU, positioning itself as a role model committed to sharing knowledge. Dubrovnik impressed the jury with its pioneering approach to sustainability and its potential to serve as a role model for other destinations. The city impressed with its comprehensive and data-driven tourism management and implementing actionable measures that not only engage local communities but also support long-term planning and sustainable visitor flows.

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, the European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism, emphasised the European Commission's ongoing commitment to promoting smart, innovative, and sustainable tourism across the continent: *"Tourism is one of Europe's most dynamic sectors and a cornerstone of our cultural and economic identity. By investing in sustainability and digital innovation, we are ensuring that Europe remains not only the world's leading destination, but also the most responsible. This year's winners embody this ambition, setting a high standard for smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive tourism across our Union."*

The 2026 European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism are at the forefront of shaping the future of tourism across the EU. Next year, the Capital city will showcase innovative approaches to accessibility, digitalisation, sustainability and creativity, while the Green Pioneer destination will champion sustainable tourism initiatives and green transition practices. Their achievements perfectly demonstrate the European Commission's vision for a smarter, greener and more inclusive tourism sector, setting a benchmark for other destinations and inspiring innovation across the continent.

Both winners will receive a specially designed award sculpture, which will be displayed in their respective destinations throughout their year as the 2026 European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism. The winners will also benefit from promotional support and

become part of a growing network of Europe's leading smart and sustainable tourism destinations. This network encourages collaboration and knowledge sharing among cities across Europe.

The 'Leading Examples of Smart Tourism Practices in Europe' and the 'Leading examples of Smart and Sustainable Tourism Practices in Europe' reports showcase smart tourism practices in Europe, implemented by the applicants of the 2025 competition.

In the EU Smart Tourism Podcast series, delegates from winning and shortlisted European Smart Tourism initiative cit ies, alongside European Commission representatives, regularly discuss the latest innovations and pioneering practices that are shaping the future of tourism across Europe.

For the latest updates on the European Capital of Smart Tourism, follow us on our website, Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and subscribe to our podcast series.

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Notes to Editors:

1. The 2026 European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism competitions were open to submissions from 5 March 2025 to 30 May 2025. Terms and conditions are available at https://smarttourismcapital.eu.
2. In the first stage of the competition, a panel of independent experts evaluated the applications. As the result of the evaluation, a shortlist of seven Capital and eight Green Pioneer finalists were established. All finalist Capital cities demonstrated excellence across the four competition categories combined and the finalists Green Pioneer destinations stood out for their green transition practices.
3. Since the announcement of the shortlist, one of the European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism destinations has withdrawn from participation, leading to seven shortlisted destinations presenting at the Jury meeting.
4. In the second stage, representatives of all finalists presented their candidatures and the programme of activities planned for 2026 in front of the European Jury. The European Jury met on 18-19 November 2025 in Brussels and selected two destinations to hold the titles of the European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism in 2026.
5. Smart tourism responds to new challenges and demands in a fast-changing sector, including the expectation of digital information, products, and services; equal opportunities and access for all visitors; sustainable development of the local area; and support to creative industries and local talent.
6. In 2024, from 21 applicant cities, Torino was selected as the 2025 European Capital of Smart Tourism. In 2023, from 29 applicant cities, Dublin was selected as the 2024 European Capital of Smart Tourism. In 2022, from amongst 29 EU cities which applied, Pafos and Seville were selected as the European Capitals of Smart Tourism in 2023. 2021, from 30 EU cities which applied, Bordeaux and València won the title of European Capitals of Smart Tourism 2022. In 2019, amongst 35 EU cities which applied, Málaga and Gothenburg stood out and were selected as the European Capitals of Smart Tourism 2020. In 2018, amongst 38 EU cities, Helsinki and Lyon stood out and were selected the European Capitals of Smart Tourism 2019.

Benidorm was selected as the 2025 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism and Grosseto was selected as the 2024 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism, while previous winners of European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) include Kranj in 2023 and Middelfart in 2022.