



Media Alert

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From Tampere to Dubrovnik, EU Competition Winners are Shaping the Future of Smart Tourism in Europe

From natural lakes in northern Europe to the sunny Mediterranean coastline, these places have more in common than just stunning landscapes and vibrant surroundings. Tampere (Finland) and Dubrovnik (Croatia) are the latest destinations to receive the [European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2026](#) titles. As leaders in innovative tourism practices, these cities are united by a strong commitment to environmentally friendly solutions and a focus on sustainability.

Tampere: sustainability as part of everyday life

Named the sauna capital of the world, Tampere places great importance on protecting its local traditions as well as its natural heritage. Recognised as the [2026 European Capital of Smart Tourism](#), the city is putting nature at the heart of its tourism strategy – promoting environmentally friendly activities and providing easy access to the region's lakes and forests. The city involves local businesses and residents in this strategy through the '[Think Sustainably](#)' initiative, which helps stakeholders set and measure their sustainability goals.

Tampere's inclusive approach to attractions allows all visitors and residents to experience the surrounding nature. Accessible beaches, barrier-free routes and camping sites are complemented by a special shuttle service, the '[Outdoor Express](#)'. The service connects the city with national parks, enabling visitors with disabilities, the elderly, and families with children to enjoy the beautiful Finnish landscape more easily.

The city's sustainability efforts are supported by digital innovation initiatives. For instance, the Tampere Pulse service uses predictive analytics to forecast visitor flows, which not only helps local businesses anticipate demand, but also ensures safety in the city. The service uses data from traffic cameras, weather forecasts and event calendars, to also allow tourists to plan their visits and avoid crowds.



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Dubrovnik: sustainable tourism management and nature protection

As a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most renowned destinations in the Mediterranean, Dubrovnik has become a leading example of sustainable tourism management. Through the [‘Respect the City’](#) initiative, Dubrovnik has implemented policies that balance visitor growth with heritage preservation, environmental protection, and improving the quality of life for residents.

A science-based approach to managing visitor flows in the historic core, the responsible regulation of cruise tourism, and the [‘Dubrovnik Pass’](#) contribute to reducing pressure on the Old City while supporting cultural conservation. The [‘Management Plan for the Old City’](#) further safeguards Dubrovnik’s outstanding universal value, placing a strong focus on preserving the city’s vibrant living. At the same time, urban greening projects and sustainable mobility measures are improving public spaces and reducing pollution. Through integrated planning, innovative policies and community engagement, Dubrovnik demonstrates that tourism development and nature protection can coexist successfully.



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Meet the European Capital & Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism at ITB Berlin

Tampere and Dubrovnik, the 2026 European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism, will kick start their winning year at the [ITB Berlin Travel Trade Show](#). City representatives will discuss their destination transitions and innovative tourism management practices on the international stage. Meet representatives from Tampere, Dubrovnik and the European Commission at the Smart Tourism stand in Hall 1.1 (Stand 207) from 3-5 March 2026. Learn more [here](#).

The European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism competitions recognise and reward destinations that are leading the shift towards more sustainable, inclusive and innovative tourism practices. To discover the latest smart tourism practices, listen to the 'Smart gets you further' podcast [here](#). For the [latest updates](#) on the European Smart Tourism, follow us on our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#), and subscribe to our [newsletter](#).

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