

Press Announcement
27 February 2025

Torino & Benidorm: Winners of the Smart Tourism Competition Showcasing Innovation at ITB Berlin 2025

**New Competition will be launched at ITB – Join Us in Shaping the Future of
Smart and Green Tourism!**

As ITB Berlin 2025 unfolds, the spotlight will be on Torino (Italy) and Benidorm (Spain), the newly designated [European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism](#), as they embark on a year-long journey to redefine the future of travel through innovation, sustainability, and digital transformation. Both cities, recognised for their outstanding achievements in smart tourism, will formally launch their titles at the ITB travel trade show in Berlin, presenting their pioneering approaches to sustainable and forward-thinking tourism. From **4 – 6 March 2025**, representatives from Torino, Benidorm, and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE) will be present at the **EU Smart Tourism stand (Hall 2.1, Stand 103b)**. They will engage with industry professionals, stakeholders, and media to exchange insights, highlight best practices, and discuss the impact of smart tourism policies across Europe.

Torino: A Blueprint for Smart Urban Tourism

Torino, the [2025 European Capital of Smart Tourism](#), is a city redefining urban tourism through innovation, accessibility, and sustainability. Having also been named the 2024–25 European Capital of Innovation, it is at the forefront of digitalisation and cultural heritage preservation, creating a people-centred tourism experience that benefits both residents and visitors.

Benidorm: Pioneering a Greener Future for Tourism

Benidorm, the [2025 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism](#), exemplifies sustainable destination management, balancing economic growth with environmental protection. A leader in smart tourism, it has implemented digital solutions to manage visitor flows, protect its coastline, and mitigate seasonal tourism impacts while fostering community engagement.

ITB 2025: Smart Tourism in Focus

As part of the [ITB Berlin Convention programme](#) representatives from Torino, Benidorm, and the European Commission will contribute to high-level discussions on the future of tourism, sharing their insights on sustainability, destination development, and smart tourism governance.

Key ITB events include:

- **Wednesday, 5 March, 11:15 – 11:55 (Hall 7.1b, Blue Stage)**
Panel Discussion: "Destination Development through Mega Events: Curse or Blessing?"
 - Speaker: Dario Destefanis, Head of Events and Tourism Promotion Division, Torino
- **Wednesday, 5 March, 12:45 – 13:15 (Hall 7.1b, Blue Stage)**
Panel Discussion: "Is Tourism Coming to an End? From Overtourism to Sustainability Governance"
 - Speaker: Laura García, Promotion and Marketing, Benidorm
- **Thursday, 6 March, 11:00 – 12:00 (Hall 7.1a, Orange Stage)**
Panel Discussion: "From Promise to Progress: Steering Tourism in Challenging Times"

- Speaker: Misa Labarile, Policy Officer, European Commission (DG MOVE)

**THE 2026 EUROPEAN CAPITAL
& GREEN PIONEER
COMPETITIONS ARE COMING UP!**

Launch of the 2026 Competitions at ITB Berlin

A key highlight of ITB Berlin 2025 will be the official launch of the 2026 [European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism competitions](#), scheduled for 5 March. Cities from EU Member States and non-EU countries participating in the [Single Market Programme](#) – including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo¹, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine – will be invited to apply.

To qualify, cities applying for the **European Capital of Smart Tourism** title must have a population exceeding **100.000 inhabitants**, while contenders for the **Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism** title must have populations ranging between **25.000 and 100.000**. The application platform will open soon, and further details will be available through the EU Smart Tourism initiative's [newsletter](#) and [website](#).

Resources and Insights: Learning from the Best

Applicants and industry professionals can explore best practices in smart and sustainable tourism in the '[Leading Examples of Smart Tourism Practices in Europe](#)' and '[Leading Examples of Sustainable Tourism Practices in Europe](#)' reports, which showcase innovative approaches implemented by past competition participants.

Additionally, in recent episodes of the '[Smart gets you further](#)' podcast [here](#), representatives from Torino, Benidorm, and the European Commission discuss the significance of the competition and the impact of smart tourism strategies on accessibility, sustainability, digitalisation, and cultural heritage. Misa Labarile, Policy Officer at DG MOVE, provides further insights into the role of tourism innovation in shaping Europe's future. The podcast is available on major streaming platforms.


For the [latest updates](#) on the European Smart Tourism initiative, follow us on our [website](#), [Facebook](#), or [X](#), and subscribe to our [EU Smart Tourism Podcast series](#) on [Spotify](#) and [Amazon Music](#).

¹ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.

For further press information and interview requests come to the EU Smart Tourism stand (Hall 2.1, Stand 103b) or contact:

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Notes to Editors:

1. 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.
2. In 2024, out of 21 destinations across 10 countries, the European Jury selected Torino for the 2025 European Capital of Smart Tourism title and Benidorm for the 2025 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism title. In 2023, out of 40 destinations across 21 countries, the European Jury selected Dublin for the 2024 European Capital of Smart Tourism title and Grosseto for the 2024 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism title. 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. Previous winners of European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) include Kranj in 2023 and Middelfart in 2022.
3. The 2025 European Capital and Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism Torino and Benidorm provide a series of smart tourism experiences that they are continuing to develop and expand upon.
4. For more information and insights on the EU's ongoing efforts in promoting and shaping the future of sustainable tourism, including the **'Sustainable EU Tourism – Shaping the Future of Tourism'** initiative and the **Transition Pathway for Tourism**, please visit [Sustainable EU Tourism](#).