



*Press Announcement  
Brussels, 15 September 2022*

## **Seven shortlisted cities for the 2023 European Capital of Smart Tourism title**

The cities shortlisted for the [European Capital of Smart Tourism](#) 2023 award were announced today by the European Commission. Presented in alphabetical order, **Aarhus (Denmark)**, **Gijón (Spain)**, **Pafos (Cyprus)**, **Porto (Portugal)**, **San Sebastián (Spain)**, **Seville (Spain)**, **Zagreb (Croatia)** are the finalists selected from 29 candidates from 13 countries.

A short profile of each shortlisted city can be found [here](#)

The competition was open to cities across the EU and the non-EU countries that take part in the COSME programme<sup>1</sup>. The applications were evaluated by a rigorous panel of independent experts. Applicants with the highest overall score across all categories made the cut.

As a next step, the shortlisted cities will be invited to present their candidatures in front of a European Jury, who will select the 2023 European Capitals of Smart Tourism. Coming with the title of 2023 European Capital of Smart Tourism, communication and branding support throughout 2023 will be provided to the winners. This includes a promotional video, a specially designed hashtag sculpture for the city to display, and tailored promotional actions designed to increase visibility at EU and global level and increase the number of visitors.

Since 2018, the competition has provided a platform to showcase outstanding practices and success stories. The victors from previous editions Helsinki and Lyon (2019), Málaga and Gothenburg (2020), València and Bordeaux (2022) are role models for smart tourism in Europe and top international rankings of sustainability, innovation, livability, and integration of smart practices.

### **About the initiative**

The European Capital of Smart Tourism is an EU initiative, currently financed under the COSME Programme, that aims to promote smart tourism in the EU by rewarding cities for their pioneering smart tourism approaches in accessibility, digitalisation, sustainability, and cultural heritage and creativity. Built on the successful experience of a preparatory action proposed

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<sup>1</sup> Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine, and United Kingdom (<https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/49405>). The EU stands in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Ukrainian cities retain the right to apply to the opportunities offered by the COSME programme.



by the European Parliament, the initiative seeks to foster innovative, sustainable, and inclusive tourism development, as well as spread and facilitate the exchange of best practices.

Smart tourism practices in Europe implemented by the applicants of the 2022 competition can be found in the [‘Leading Examples of Smart Tourism Practices in Europe’ report](#). Likewise, delegates from the European Capitals of Smart Tourism competition winners, shortlisted cities, and EU Commission’s representatives discuss in the [EU Smart Tourism Podcast series](#) the role of the European Capital of Smart Tourism competition in driving the smart tourism innovation and examine smart tourism practices that are shaping the future in Europe.

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

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**Notes to Editors**

1. The 2023 European Capital of Smart Tourism competition was open to submissions from 31 March 2022 to 1 June 2022. Terms and conditions are available at <https://smarttourismcapital.eu/>.
2. 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.
3. In 2021, from amongst 30 EU cities which applied, Bordeaux and València were selected as the 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. Watch the Smart Tourism Capitals video for [Bordeaux](#) and [València](#).