

# LEADING EXAMPLES OF SMART TOURISM PRACTICES IN EUROPE

from the 2025 European Capital of Smart Tourism competition



Title:

Leading Examples of Smart Tourism practices in Europe  
from the 2025 European Capital of Smart Tourism competition

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## Table of Contents

<b>1. GENERAL BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2. PURPOSE OF THE BEST PRACTICES FROM THE 2025 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SMART TOURISM COMPETITION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3. THE 4 CATEGORIES OF THE COMPETITION MAKING TOURISM SMART.....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 ACCESSIBILITY.....	6
3.2 SUSTAINABILITY .....	6
3.3 DIGITALISATION .....	7
3.4 CULTURAL HERITAGE & CREATIVITY .....	7
<b>4. PRESENTING BEST PRACTICES.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4.1 BEST PRACTICES IN ACCESSIBILITY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1.1 ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL.....	8
4.1.1.1 Inclusivity for all: Lviv .....	8
4.1.1.2 Accessible infrastructure: Barcelos; Braga; Genoa; Messina; Porto .....	9
4.1.1.3 Involvement of local communities: Braga; Brussels; Torino .....	11
4.1.1.4 Accessibility to rehabilitation: Lublin; Lviv.....	12
4.1.1.5 Accessible beaches: Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Porto.....	13
4.1.1.6 Wider access to cultural activities: Brussels; Kaunas.....	14
4.1.1.7 Accessible tourism management: Kaunas.....	14
4.1.1.8 Inclusivity to different social groups: Brussels; Gaziantep .....	15
4.1.2 ACCESSIBILITY FOR INFORMATION .....	16
4.1.2.1 Accessibility through digital innovation: Kaunas; Taranto; Torino.....	16
4.1.3 ACCESSIBILITY OF MOBILITY.....	18
4.1.3.1 Sustainable accessibility options: Genoa; Porto.....	18
4.1.3.2 Promotion of cycling and walking paths: Lahti; Sakarya: .....	19
4.1.3.3 Accessible public transport: Brussels; Konya; Lahti .....	20
4.1.3.4 Digital solutions in mobility accessibility: Lahti; Porto.....	22
<b>4.2 BEST PRACTICES IN SUSTAINABILITY .....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.2.1 COMBATTING OR ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE.....	23
4.2.1.1 Sustainable Action Plans: Porto .....	23
4.2.1.2 Mitigating pollution: Torino.....	23
4.2.1.3 Sustainability education: Taranto.....	23
4.2.1.4 Eco-friendly tourism publications; Kaunas .....	24
4.2.1.5 Sustainable resource management; Lahti.....	24
4.2.2 PRESERVING OR ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.....	25
4.2.2.1 Nature conservation: Taranto.....	25
4.2.2.2 Sustainable Urban Planning: Brussels; Porto.....	25
4.2.3 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT .....	26
4.2.3.1 Tourism development: Genoa; Porto.....	26
4.2.3.2 Actions mitigating tourism seasonality: Arezzo; Barcelos; Brussels; Klaipėda; Matosinhos; Messina; Taranto.....	27
4.2.3.3 Creation of sustainable tourism sites: Konya; Skopje .....	31
4.2.4 SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY.....	31
4.2.4.1 Sustainable public transport: Coimbra.....	31



4.2.4.2 Sustainable urban mobility planning: Brussels; Genoa; Lahti; Lublin.....	31
4.2.4.3 Sustainable outdoor tourism: Torino.....	33
4.2.5 SUSTAINABLE INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES .....	33
4.2.5.1 involvement of Local Communities in Tourism Planning: Arezzo; Kaunas; Klaipėda; Torino .....	33
4.2.5.2 Involving Local Communities in Sustainable Initiatives: Braga.....	35
4.2.5.3 Sustainability education for local communities: Braga; Konya; Lublin; Lviv.....	36
<b>4.3 BEST PRACTICES IN DIGITALISATION.....</b>	<b>38</b>
4.3.1 FACILITATING INFORMATION FOR SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS .....	38
4.3.1.1 Digital Visitor Platforms: Brussels; Lahti; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Porto; Sakarya....	38
4.3.1.2 Digital City Maps: Lviv.....	39
4.3.1.3 Use of Artificial Intelligence in Communication: Kaunas; Torino.....	40
4.3.1.4 Digital Applications Enhancing the Visitor Experience: Braga; Gaziantep; Genoa; Konya .....	41
4.3.1.5 Digital Tours and City Exploration: Coimbra; Klaipėda; Messina.....	42
4.3.1.6 Virtual Exploration of the City: Braga; Coimbra; Skopje; Torino .....	44
4.3.2 COLLECTING INFORMATION FOR SMART MANAGEMENT.....	45
4.3.2.1 Open Data for Tourism Management: Gaziantep; Lahti; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria....	45
4.3.2.2 Smart Urban Management: Genoa .....	47
4.3.2.4 Digital Solutions for Business: Lahti; Lublin; Porto; Torino .....	47
4.3.3 TRANSFORMATION INTO DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING .....	49
4.3.3.1 Digital Access to information: Barcelos; Kaunas .....	49
4.3.3.2 Digitalisation in cultural spaces: Genoa; Konya.....	49
4.3.3.3 Enhancement of Digital Skills: Arezzo; Barcelos; Brussels; Matosinhos; Skopje; Torino..	50
4.3.4 INNOVATIVE MOBILITY THROUGH DIGITALISATION .....	52
4.3.4.1 Digital Mobility solutions: Brussels; Konya; Sakarya .....	52
<b>4.4 BEST PRACTICES IN CULTURAL HERITAGE &amp; CREATIVITY .....</b>	<b>54</b>
4.4.1 REVIVAL OF CULTURAL HERITAGE.....	54
4.4.1.1 Cultural events & Festivities: Brussels; Gaziantep; Konya; La Palmas de Gran Canaria; Lublin; Porto .....	54
4.4.1.2 Dedicated Heritage Years: Brussels; Genoa .....	56
4.4.1.3 Restoration of Cultural Heritage Sites: Konya; Lahti; Messina; Porto.....	57
4.4.1.4 Transformation of Cultural Heritage Sites and Urban Spaces: Kaunas; Lahti; Matosinhos; Torino .....	59
4.4.1.5 Establishing Cultural Institutions: Kaunas.....	62
4.4.1.6 Preserving Traditions: Barcelos; Coimbra; Klaipėda; Lahti .....	62
4.4.1.7 Creating alternative heritage tours: Arezzo; Braga; Coimbra; Klaipėda; Lublin; Messina; Taranto.....	64
4.4.1.8 Preserving Culinary Heritage: Lublin; Torino .....	67
4.4.2 CULTURAL HERITAGE USAGE FOR NEW CREATIVITY.....	68
4.4.2.1 Use of new technologies: Arezzo; Brussels; Lviv; Skopje .....	68
4.4.2.2 Creating New Cultural Spaces: Barcelos; Lviv; Skopje.....	70
4.4.3 MAINTAINING CULTURAL HERITAGE .....	71
4.4.3.1 Cultural Heritage Management: Matosinhos; Sakarya .....	71

## 1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The European Capital of Smart Tourism is an EU initiative, currently financed under the Single Market Programme (SMP) - former COSME Programme. It is built on the successful experience of the Preparatory Action proposed by the European Parliament and implemented by the European Commission in 2019 and 2020. The initiative seeks to strengthen tourism-generated innovative development in European cities and their surroundings, increase their attractiveness and foster economic growth and job creation. It also aims to establish a framework for the exchange of best practices between cities participating in the competition, create opportunities for cooperation and new partnerships.

In line with this overarching definition, the initiative will showcase exemplary practices by tourism destinations in implementing innovative and intelligent solutions in four categories:



## 2. PURPOSE OF THE BEST PRACTICES FROM THE 2025 EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SMART TOURISM COMPETITION

21 cities from 10 countries applied for the 2025 European Capital of Smart Tourism. In November 2024, Torino (Italy) was announced as the 2025 winner.

The 2025 collection of best practices has been derived from the applications that cities submitted to the competition. The report showcases a selection of best practices in each category (Accessibility, Sustainability, Digitalisation, Cultural Heritage and Creativity) and solely presents and relies on the data that the cities have submitted in their applications.

The purpose of this document is to enhance and facilitate the exchange of best practices in promoting innovative and smart measures and initiatives for tourism destinations in the EU Member States. The report aims at raising awareness about smart tourism tools, measures and projects, sharing the best practices in tourism implemented by cities and strengthening peer-to-peer learning and innovative development of tourism in the EU in general.

### 3. THE 4 CATEGORIES OF THE COMPETITION MAKING TOURISM SMART

Applicant cities were invited to describe and share their projects, ideas and initiatives implemented under each of the four award categories (Accessibility, Digitalisation, Sustainability, Cultural Heritage and Creativity) which have helped them to improve their profile as a tourism destination.

As guidance, the four categories were described as follows (although applicant cities were encouraged to think beyond these examples and to demonstrate specific cases, concrete actions and solutions).

#### 3.1 ACCESSIBILITY

Which resources does a city have in order to be physically and psychologically accessible to travellers with special access needs, regardless of age, their social or economic situation and whether they have disabilities or not? Being accessible means to be easily reachable through different modes of transport and with a strong transport system in and around the city. What does the infrastructure look like and how accessible is the city – by car, train, plane and bike? Apart from the infrastructure itself, how can you make tourism offers barrier-free, both physically and psychologically?

Accessibility does not only entail being a barrier-free destination, it also encompasses services that are multilingual and, for example, digitally available to all travellers or visitors – regardless of age, cultural background or any physical disability.

#### 3.2 SUSTAINABILITY

What opportunities does a city have to preserve and enhance the natural environment and resources while maintaining economic and socio-cultural development in a balanced way? How are natural resources (including innovative environmentally friendly measures) managed in a tourism destination and have resource-efficiency measures been implemented, as well as actions aimed at combating or adapting to climate change? Being sustainable goes even further – are there measures aimed at reducing tourism seasonality and involving the local community? How can cities as tourism destinations contribute to local employment and a diversification of local economies?

Therefore, being sustainable does not only mean managing and protecting natural resources, but it is also about reducing seasonality and including the local community.

### 3.3 DIGITALISATION

Is the city supporting tourism businesses in the development and use of digital skills and tools? How does the city support the digitalisation of tourism services?

Digital tourism means offering innovative tourism and hospitality information, products, services, spaces and experiences adapted to the needs of the consumers through ICT- based solutions and digital tools. It is about providing digital information on destinations, attractions and tourism offers as well as information on public transport and making attractions and accommodation digitally accessible.

### 3.4 CULTURAL HERITAGE & CREATIVITY

Is the city making creative use of its cultural heritage and creative industries for an enriched tourism experience? What actions are implemented to recognise and incorporate the tangible and intangible heritage of art, history and culture in its centre and surroundings, in the enhanced tourism offer? How is cultural heritage and creativity used to attract tourists from countries outside the EU and exploit synergies between tourism and cultural and creative industries?

A focus on cultural heritage and creativity means protecting and capitalising on local heritage as well as cultural and creative assets for the benefit of the destination, the industry and tourists.

## 4. PRESENTING BEST PRACTICES

### 4.1 BEST PRACTICES IN ACCESSIBILITY

#### 4.1.1 ACCESSIBILITY FOR ALL

##### 4.1.1.1 Inclusivity for all: Lviv

**A city without barriers; Lviv (Ukraine):** In 2023, Lviv launched three key projects – ‘Hospitality Without Barriers’, ‘Services Without Barriers’ and ‘Lviv Without Barriers’, to improve accessibility across the city, focusing on hospitality, public services and public spaces. The ‘Hospitality Without Barriers’ project aimed to train over 220 employees from 65 accommodation and food service establishments on effective communication with people with disabilities and provide recommendations for infrastructure improvements. The ‘Services Without Barriers’ initiative targeted 400 public service providers, including those from educational, cultural and local government institutions, as well as public transport drivers, to ensure better accessibility of services. Finally, the ‘Lviv Without Barriers’ programme addresses physical accessibility in public spaces, with a particular focus on the creation of accessible tourist routes and infrastructure upgrades, such as the installation of over 1,700 ramps and the construction of accessible paths in the historic centre. This combined effort helps Lviv become a more inclusive city for both residents and visitors.



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Find out more via: <https://www.undp.org/ukraine/news/services-without-barriers-how-begin>



#### 4.1.1.2 Accessible infrastructure: Barcelos; Braga; Genoa; Messina; Porto

**RAMP Project; Barcelos (Portugal):** The RAMP Project in Barcelos focuses on improving the accessibility of public spaces, cultural sites and historical monuments. It aims to remove the physical barriers that people with disabilities face when moving around the city. By upgrading public areas and buildings with wheelchair ramps, accessible restrooms, tactile paving and audio guides, the project ensures that Barcelos is a more inclusive destination for all visitors. The initiative benefits tourists by providing easier access to key attractions, while improving the daily lives of residents with disabilities. This contributes to a safer, more welcoming environment and enhances the city's reputation as an accessible and inclusive destination.

Find out more via: <https://www.cm-barcelos.pt/visitar/o-que-fazer/barcelos-acessivel/>

**Áreas+; Braga (Portugal):** The Áreas+ project, launched in 2019, has provided four of Braga's neighbourhoods with 100% accessible pedestrian routes. It aimed to address architectural barriers for people with reduced mobility, including the elderly, while humanising public spaces and prioritising pedestrian access. For tourists, the improved accessibility enhances the experience of exploring the city, while local communities benefit from safer, more sustainable transport options. The city's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and noise pollution align with broader environmental goals. The project has also resulted in a 20-40% increase in pedestrian traffic, boosting local commerce and creating a more vibrant city atmosphere.



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Find out more via: <https://urbact.eu/articles/transfer-story-municipality-braga-and-urban-regeneration-mix-project-challenge>

**Barrier-free infrastructure; Genoa (Italy):** Genova4all project provides easier access for people with disabilities. In 2024, the project focused on enhancing accessibility along Strada Nuova (Via Aurea, then via Garibaldi), removing architectural barriers in key museums like Palazzo Rosso, Bianco, and Tursi. The initiative prioritises a ‘design for all’ approach, ensuring accessibility for users with disabilities. The project includes maps detailing accessible accommodations in Genoa and advancements in museum accessibility such as tactile exploration devices, multi-language guides, and multisensory paths. New lighting improves artwork visibility at Palazzo Rosso, and the ‘Genoa Natural History Museum’ App offers podcasts, itineraries, and games. Some museums provide multilingual video guides in Italian Sign Language (LIS) and tailored visit aids for those with intellectual disabilities.



© Municipality of Genoa

Find out more via: <https://www.museidigenova.it/it/percorsi-speciali-1>

**Accessible pedestrian paths; Messina (Italy):** Messina has introduced an accessibility feature with Bluetooth TAGs placed along pedestrian paths, allowing visually impaired people to interact with their smartphones for real-time navigation. This technology helps users to move around the city independently and safely. In addition, all road junctions in the city centre are equipped with tactile paving, which further assists blind and partially sighted people by guiding them across the road. These measures improve accessibility for both locals and tourists, promoting greater independence and ease of movement.

Find out more via: <https://www.comune.messina.it/it>

**Tour4all; Porto (Portugal):** Tour4all is a project aimed at improving accessibility in museums, churches, gardens, and historical monuments throughout Porto. The project addresses physical, economic, social, and linguistic barriers, ensuring that cultural facilities are accessible to all visitors, including those with disabilities. For

tourists, this initiative opens up Porto's rich cultural heritage to a wider audience, offering an inclusive experience with the creation of audio guides, Braille routes, and an accessibility guide titled 'Porto for Everyone'. Locals and visitors alike benefit from a more inclusive city that promotes equality in tourism.



© City of Porto

Find out more via: <https://www.tur4all.com/pt/accessible-portugal>

#### 4.1.1.3 Involvement of local communities: Braga; Brussels; Torino

**'Eu Já Passo Aqui'; Braga (Portugal):** In response to the challenges of implementing accessibility policies for all, the city of Braga has developed numerous projects, including 'Eu Já Passo Aqui'. The project aims to eliminate barriers in the city by collaborating with organisations supporting individuals with mobility disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments. The project works closely with ACAPO, a social solidarity organisation representing the interests of visually impaired people. ACAPO reviews municipal projects, provides advice, and ensures that the work addresses mobility issues for the blind. For tourists and locals alike, this initiative improves accessibility, fostering a more inclusive and welcoming environment for people with visual impairments. It contributes to a more accessible and equitable city, ensuring everyone can navigate public spaces safely and independently.

Find out more via: <https://www.cm-braga.pt/pt/0201/home/noticias/item/item-1-14147>

**Inclusion of the LGBTQIA+ community; Brussels (Belgium):** The visit.brussels organisation employs a diversity manager and experts focusing on LGBTQIA+ issues and collaborates with local associations, such as equal.brussels, to create equal opportunities for all. The visit.brussels website also hosts a dedicated LGBTQIA+

guide, which shows events, bars, cabarets and LGBTQIA+ friendly clubs. In 2023, 16,000 users visited the LGBTQIA+ guide on the website.

Find out more via: <https://www.visit.brussels/en/visitors/what-to-do/lgbtqia>

**Co-creation with disabled communities; Torino (Italy):** Torino has made significant strides in improving accessibility by upgrading its underground system and co-designing transportation solutions with associations representing individuals with diverse abilities. The project addresses the mobility challenges faced by people with disabilities by ensuring that all means of transportation, including 245 new electric buses, are fully accessible. The city has also established an advisory board consisting of over fifteen associations and stakeholders to shape transport policies for disabled individuals and relay their needs to the Disability Manager of Torino's transport company (GTT). For both tourists and locals, this initiative fosters an inclusive environment, making public transport safer and more comfortable for people with disabilities. It strengthens community ties by involving social groups in the decision-making process and enhancing the overall mobility experience for all citizens.

Find out more via: <https://www.gtt.to.it/cms/en/>

#### 4.1.1.4 Accessibility to rehabilitation: Lublin; Lviv

**Lublin 4 all; Lublin (Poland):** Lublin responded to the difficult situation in Ukraine and provided broad support as it demonstrated solidarity by offering comprehensive aid to Ukrainian refugees, including accommodation, education, medical assistance, and cultural activities. Recognised as the 'City Rescuer' by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in 2023, Lublin extends its commitment to inclusivity beyond humanitarian aid. The city prioritises accessibility for foreigners, ensuring that municipal and tourist websites are available in multiple languages, and providing guided tours and descriptions of attractions in English, German, Spanish, French, and Ukrainian. This holistic approach enhances Lublin's accessibility for diverse communities while showcasing its dedication to inclusivity and support. The city puts emphasis not only on foreigners but also disabled people.

Find out more via: <https://lublin.eu>

**City Heals Programme; Lviv (Ukraine):** The City Heals programme in Lviv provides psycho-emotional recovery for military personnel and civilians undergoing treatment or rehabilitation in the city. The programme aims to address the need for social and cultural rehabilitation by offering free city tours and visits to cultural institutions, helping patients reconnect with the city's rich history and vibrant cultural life. Since its launch in March 2023, around 700 military personnel and their families have

benefited from the initiative. In addition to supporting the well-being of patients, the programme also encourages service providers, such as tour guides, cultural institutions and restaurants, to adapt their services to be more accessible to people with disabilities. Through such initiatives, Lviv demonstrates its commitment to inclusivity and helps both locals and visitors experience the city in a meaningful and supportive way.



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Find out more via: [https://lviv.travel/en/news/lviv-dlia-viyskovykh?srltid=AfmBOoqaodlnend6PjBu1K8gmYDQC\\_QaQ0zKJNRI6-dycUdy-ZyUhyd](https://lviv.travel/en/news/lviv-dlia-viyskovykh?srltid=AfmBOoqaodlnend6PjBu1K8gmYDQC_QaQ0zKJNRI6-dycUdy-ZyUhyd)

#### 4.1.1.5 Accessible beaches: Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Porto

##### **Universal Accessibility Management System; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain):**

The Universal Accessibility Management System at Las Canteras Beach is a leading initiative to ensure that the beach is fully accessible to all visitors, regardless of their physical abilities. The system has been implemented to remove the barriers faced by people with disabilities and to provide equal access to one of the city's most popular public spaces. This accessibility model includes features such as an assisted bathing service and accessible pathways, making the beach more inclusive for individuals with mobility challenges or visual impairments. As a result, it has not only improved the experience for residents and tourists with disabilities but also gained international recognition as a model of accessible tourism. This system fosters a more inclusive community, helping to ensure that everyone can enjoy the beach and access its facilities more easily.

Find out more via: <https://www.accessiblespaintravel.com/las-palmas/>

**Ensuring inclusivity by the sea; Porto (Portugal):** Porto’s natural resources are designed to be inclusive for all visitors. All beaches in the city boast a Blue Flag status, and two are certified as ‘Accessible Beaches’. These beaches feature dedicated pathways, clear signage, parking spaces for individuals with reduced mobility, emergency stations, adapted toilets, and free access to amphibious chairs for bathing throughout the bathing season, ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone.

Find out more via: [https://www.visitportugal.com/en/encontre-tipo/?context=404&&regioes=285&f%5B0%5D=bm\\_field\\_ma\\_praia\\_aces\\_vel:true](https://www.visitportugal.com/en/encontre-tipo/?context=404&&regioes=285&f%5B0%5D=bm_field_ma_praia_aces_vel:true)

#### 4.1.1.6 Wider access to cultural activities: Brussels; Kaunas

**Last-minute ticket platform; Brussels (Belgium):** The last-minute ticket portal democratises access to culture in Brussels by allowing visitors to buy tickets at half price for concerts, plays or cinemas. It also encourages spontaneous participation in culture. Every week, cultural partners participate and add their unoccupied seats or places to the online platform. In 2023, 37,000 tickets were sold through the platform.

Find out more via: <https://www.visit.brussels/en/visitors/agenda/lastminutetickets>

**Creating an accessible cultural landscape; Kaunas (Lithuania):** Kaunas IN collaborates with (Ne)Regėjimo galia, an initiative by the Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired, to offer a unique 5 km guided tour led by blind guides. This experiential route allows participants to navigate the city using senses other than sight, providing profound insight into the daily lives of visually impaired individuals. The journey begins in Oak Park and continues through Kaunas’s urban landscapes, challenging participants to rely on sound, touch, and spatial awareness. Activities include learning to use a mobility cane and ‘seeing’ landmarks like the Church of St. Michael the Archangel by touch. Kaunas IN promotes this award-winning initiative at tourism fairs and used it to launch the 2023 tourism season. By offering this transformative experience, Kaunas fosters empathy, inclusivity, and a deeper appreciation of accessibility in urban spaces.

Find out more via: <https://kaunaspilnas.lt/en/to-see-the-city-with-your-eyes-closed/>

#### 4.1.1.7 Accessible tourism management: Kaunas

**Kaunas for All; Kaunas (Lithuania):** The ‘Kaunas for All’ culture accessibility guide, aimed at cultural organisations, venue managers, and event planners, enhances accessibility for all social groups, particularly those with special needs. Created as part of the ‘Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022’ title, the comprehensive

guide offers institutions detailed instructions on site signage, event guidelines, drawings, and reproducible signs.

Find out more via: [https://kaunas2022.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/I\\_Kaunas-for-All.pdf](https://kaunas2022.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/I_Kaunas-for-All.pdf)

#### 4.1.1.8 Inclusivity to different social groups: Brussels; Gaziantep

**Access-i; Brussels (Belgium):** The non-profit association Access-i aims to promote information on the accessibility of goods and services for persons with specific needs. At the moment already 40 partners from Brussels' tourism sector have obtained the Access-i label with support of visit.brussels in obtaining the label. visit.brussels provides financial support for auditing and certification to tourism operators with infrastructure that has accessibility potential. The labelling process continues, with the target of 70 certified tourism partners by 2028. To achieve this, the Access-i label is included in 'Label week' for tourism reference labels.

Find out more via: <https://access-i.be/en>

**'Women Friendly City'; Gaziantep (Türkiye):** Gaziantep's 'Women Friendly City' mobile application is a digital platform designed to empower women by providing easy access to city services, social events and discounts. It aims to solve the challenge of information accessibility for women, especially in urban areas, by centralising key city resources in one app. With over 200,000 downloads, the app benefits both local women and visitors by providing tools to report neighbourhood issues, learn about city activities and access cultural opportunities. For mothers in particular, the app provides detailed information on how to visit the city's museums, parks, restaurants and cafes. Women can also earn rewards such as a 2GB internet package, stars for cultural tours and free public transport passes. The app, along with free Wi-Fi zones across Gaziantep, makes the city more accessible and connected for both residents and tourists.



© Municipality of Gaziantep

Find out more via: <https://akillikent.gaziantep.bel.tr/en/project/detail/gaziantep-women-friendly-city-mobile-application>

**Multu Kafe; Gaziantep (Türkiye):** The Mutlu Kafe (Happy Cafe) in Gaziantep is a unique initiative that employs people with Down syndrome to provide exceptional service in an inclusive and supportive environment. The project aims to address the lack of employment opportunities for people with special needs by providing meaningful work and social integration. With 50% of the staff being young people with Down syndrome, the café creates a friendly atmosphere where both staff and customers thrive. The employees receive practical training in a variety of roles, such as serving food and drinks, and contribute to the café's warm, welcoming environment. As well as providing jobs, this inclusive café helps to break down social prejudices, allowing both locals and tourists to experience the positive impact of inclusive employment.

Find out more via: [https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/yerel\\_basin/detay/gaziantep-buyuksehir-belediyesi-bunyesinde-acilan-mutlu-kafede-20-ozel-gereksinimli-birey-gorev-yapiyor](https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/yerel_basin/detay/gaziantep-buyuksehir-belediyesi-bunyesinde-acilan-mutlu-kafede-20-ozel-gereksinimli-birey-gorev-yapiyor)

#### 4.1.2 ACCESSIBILITY FOR INFORMATION

##### 4.1.2.1 Accessibility through digital innovation: Kaunas; Taranto; Torino

**Explorable city; Kaunas (Lithuania):** Kaunas offers over 30 specialized routes conveniently digitised on the kaunastika.lt website. It allows comprehensive coverage across a spectrum of interests. For instance, 'It's Kaunastic' offers insights and recommendations from locals, the Modernist's Guide delves into the city's iconic



modernist culture, and the Wallographer's Notes (a term coined by the city) unveils the highlights of street art. The Sugihara Route pays homage to Japanese influences and the heroic efforts of one ambassador in saving lives during the Holocaust in WWII. Kid Sized Kaunas is tailored for families seeking child friendly attractions. Visitors can also delve into various districts beyond the city center (routes for the urban districts of Šančiai, Petrašiūnai, Aleksotas, Šilainiai and others), explore the cultural imprints left by different communities in Kaunas, including Ukrainian, Scandinavian, Polish, Jewish, French, or other groups. While the majority of the routes are available in Lithuanian and English, publications are also accessible in German, Polish, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Ukrainian, Latvian, French, Estonian, Spanish, and Finnish languages.



© Kaunas IN

Find out more via: <https://kaunastika.lt/map/modernists-guide>

**Accessible city routes; Taranto (Italy):** The Sit&Enjoy project, implemented by Taranto Municipality, installs benches around the city, creating a visit route for people with disabilities and allowing autonomous and inclusive tourism. Each bench, created as a work of art, includes a QR code, which allows visitors and locals to hear stories about the city and recommendations on what to visit in four different languages.

Find out more via: <https://sit-enjoy.it/>

**Turismabile; Torino (Italy):** Torino champions accessible and inclusive tourism with Turismabile, a platform that enhances inclusivity by providing detailed and comprehensive information on the accessibility and usability of tourist services such as accommodations, restaurants, and museums. This initiative, accessible via the Turismo Torino e Provincia website, ensures all visitors can easily plan their trips with confidence, thanks to tools like the 'Accessiway' service, which aligns the site with international web accessibility standards (WCAG). These efforts benefit tourists by

creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, locals by fostering awareness and inclusivity, and the city by positioning it as a leader in accessible tourism. A new UX/UI-optimised version of the website, launched by the end of 2024, will further enhance user engagement with enriched content created by influencers with disabilities.



© Municipality of Torino

Find out more via: <https://www.turismabile.it>

#### 4.1.3 ACCESSIBILITY OF MOBILITY

##### 4.1.3.1 Sustainable accessibility options: Genoa; Porto

**Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan; Genoa (Italy):** Genoa is implementing the Metropolitan Bike Plan and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (P.U.M.S.), involving the community in urban transformation. Under these plans, Genoa is upgrading pedestrian routes, implementing barrier-free paths, and adding bicycle and scooter stations. Examples of successful project implementation include the Corso Italia bike route, opened in 2022, with greenery, amenities, and 120 bike parking spaces. Genoa's Mobility Plan considers school and university areas, public transport, and accessibility criteria for the Historic Centre and Old Port. Emphasising accessibility and sustainability, the plan integrates the University's cycle ring, bike stations, and bike boxes for traffic control. Genoa is improving connections with urban lifts, reorganising resident parking, and implementing pollution reduction projects. Tourism signposting revisions and pedestrian area surveillance cameras are planned, alongside Metrominuto Tour Maps promoting walking and socialising in public spaces.

Find out more via: <https://biciplan.cittametropolitana.genova.it/>

**A Model for Mobility and Pedestrian Networks; Porto (Portugal):** Pedestrian mobility and cycling networks are integral to Porto’s sustainable action plan, positively impacting both visitors and residents. Cars and parking have been gradually banned from the historical centre, creating pedestrian-only areas that make key attractions, traditional commerce hubs, restaurants, and nightlife spots easily accessible on foot. Enhancing connectivity, the Guindais Funicular, Lada Elevator, and Miragaia Mechanized Stairs link high- and low-elevation areas, while a 55-kilometer cycling network and 210 bicycle and scooter sharing points promote eco-friendly travel. Porto’s commitment to inclusivity is evident in upgraded pedestrian routes featuring ramps, tactile paving, wider pavements, and lowered crossings. Pedestrian traffic lights with audible warnings and countdown timers aid navigation, while 100% of metro vehicles and stations are equipped with adapted features, including lifts and provisions for guide dogs, wheelchairs, bicycles, and strollers. Two Type A intermodal train stations cater to mobility-impaired users, and 66% of urban buses include ramps and wheelchair spaces, ensuring seamless and inclusive travel for all.



© City of Porto

Find out more via: <https://smarttourism.cm-porto.pt/accessibility/>

#### 4.1.3.2 Promotion of cycling and walking paths: Lahti; Sakarya:

**Smart citiCAP bicycle path; Lahti (Finland):** Introduced in 2021, the Lahti citiCap bicycle path is a 2.5 km smart cycling route designed to enhance mobility and safety. It meets the need for safer and more efficient cycling infrastructure in the city. Connecting the Lahti Travel Centre to Ajokatu, the path is separated from other traffic, ensuring a smooth ride all year round. It features energy-efficient lighting with motion sensors, traffic sign projections for visibility in darkness or snow, and two digital information boards with real-time bike count data. This smart infrastructure is part of Lahti’s 2030 Bicycle Network Plan, which aims to create a 60-kilometre network

connecting residential areas to the city centre, benefiting both tourists and locals by promoting safer, more sustainable cycling.

Find out more via: <https://www.lahti.fi/en/city-and-decision-making/projects-and-programs/citicap/>

**Let's cycle; Sakarya (Türkiye):** The 'Let's Cycle' project promotes bicycle tourism by offering specialized training and mentoring for local businesses and entrepreneurs, particularly in the tourism sector. This initiative addresses the need for bicycle-friendly services in Sakarya and other participating cities. The project provided entrepreneurship and sector-specific trainings to a total of 1,800 individuals, including young people, women, and local businesses, covering topics such as bicycle tourism and the development of local handicrafts. As a result, businesses like hotels, tourism agencies, and restaurants have been equipped with the knowledge to offer 'bicycle friendly services' that cater to cycling tourists. The project also encouraged the creation of local handicrafts linked to bicycle tourism, supporting the growth of this sector. Participants who completed the program and developed strong business plans were supported with one-on-one mentoring, helping them turn their ideas into successful ventures.

Find out more via: <https://letsycle.org>

#### 4.1.3.3 Accessible public transport: Brussels; Konya; Lahti

**TaxiBus; Brussels (Belgium):** As part of the 'Good Move' mobility plan, combining soft mobility, cycling and pedestrian routes, the city of Brussels is enhancing the offer of public transport to locals and visitors. The city's metro and bus and tram networks are wheelchair accessible offering low-floor vehicles, while a dedicated taxi transport, TaxiBus, offers on-demand door-to-door transport services reserved for people with disabilities at a reduced rate. In 2023, the TaxiBus transported 179,626 clients.

Find out more via: [https://www.stib-mivb.be/article.html?\\_guid=d0f0d466-1483-3410-45af-9748427ab131&l=en#contentBodyList2](https://www.stib-mivb.be/article.html?_guid=d0f0d466-1483-3410-45af-9748427ab131&l=en#contentBodyList2)

**Accessible Konya; Konya (Türkiye):** As part of the 'Accessible Konya' initiative, the city is implementing accessible transport solutions, cycling infrastructure, and barrier-free urban plans to ensure easy access to public buildings, parks, and urban spaces, thereby fostering social integration by improving accessibility for people with disabilities. One notable example is the 'Line Announcement System,' which provides audible bus information at stops for visually impaired and illiterate visitors. Additionally, barrier-free and accessible kiosks enable visually impaired individuals to

use public transport with ease by utilising voice commands, allowing them to send information directly to the driver for necessary assistance.



© Konya Municipality

Find out more via: <https://atus.konya.bel.tr/>

**City E-Bike System; Lahti (Finland):** Lahti's citywide e-bike rental system provides a convenient and sustainable way to explore the city during the snow-free season. It was created in response to the need for environmentally friendly and accessible transport options for residents and visitors. With 500 'Mankeli' e-bikes and 60 stations, the system provides an affordable and easy way to get around, with rental prices set at 20 cents per minute in 2024. A variety of ticket options, including day passes and season tickets, are available through the Freebike 2.0 app or the Mankeli website, benefiting tourists and the local community by promoting sustainable mobility and improving urban accessibility.

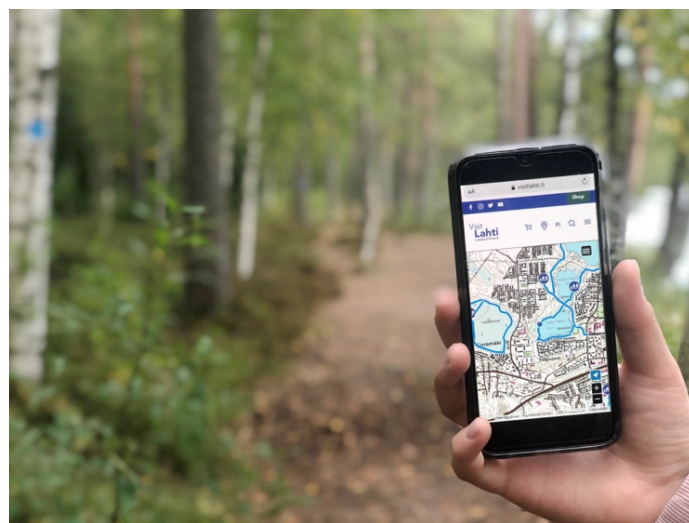


© Visit Lahti

Find out more via: <https://www.lahti.fi/en/housing-and-environment/transportation-and-streets/city-bikes/>

#### 4.1.3.4 Digital solutions in mobility accessibility: Lahti; Porto

**Digital 'Route Map'; Lahti (Finland):** Lahti promotes ecological exploration by offering more than 560 km of walking and cycling paths for residents and visitors. The initiative aims to provide sustainable travel options and increase opportunities for outdoor activities throughout the year. The city ensures that its main cycling routes are well maintained, even in winter, and the digital Route Map app helps users find suitable routes, including hiking, cycling, kayaking, themed and mountain bike trails. The app also highlights top routes, scenic routes and refreshment stops, benefiting tourists and the local community by encouraging sustainable travel and promoting outdoor activities.



© Visit Lahti

Find out more via: [https://visitlahti.fi/en/map/#cat=\\*&filter=r-fullyTranslatedLangus\\_r-openState-,sb-sortedBy-0&ov=mtb&zc=8.,25.84507,61.23683](https://visitlahti.fi/en/map/#cat=*&filter=r-fullyTranslatedLangus_r-openState-,sb-sortedBy-0&ov=mtb&zc=8.,25.84507,61.23683)

**Explore Porto; Porto (Portugal):** Porto has enhanced the accessibility of its transport network through digital innovation by developing online services like Explore Porto and Terminais Porto. These platforms provide real-time information and support for the city's public transportation system, addressing the need for efficient and accessible travel planning. Locals as well as tourists benefit from seamless navigation and reduced stress while exploring the city as this initiative improves the overall travel experience, making urban mobility within the city more convenient and reliable while promoting sustainable urban mobility.

Find out more via: <https://explore.porto.pt/lp/en/learn-more/>

## 4.2 BEST PRACTICES IN SUSTAINABILITY

### 4.2.1 COMBATTING OR ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

#### 4.2.1.1 Sustainable Action Plans: Porto

**Porto Climate Pact for carbon neutrality; Porto (Portugal):** Porto's commitment to the Porto Climate Pact highlights the city's ambition to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. With more than 200 institutions from various sectors—including academia, transport, industry, and culture—on board, the pact fosters collaboration to implement sustainable practices and decarbonisation strategies. The initiative promotes circularity, energy efficiency, and green innovation while generating economic opportunities and jobs. Through collective action, Porto strives to become a leader in climate action, advancing a greener, more sustainable future for its residents and visitors.

Find out more via: [https://pactoparaoclima.portodigital.pt/?page\\_id=5850](https://pactoparaoclima.portodigital.pt/?page_id=5850)

#### 4.2.1.2 Mitigating pollution: Torino

**Commitment to climate neutrality; Torino (Italy):** Torino has implemented a wide range of measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, investing 740 million euros from 2019 to 2023. By 2019, emissions were reduced by 47% compared to 1991, thanks to initiatives like expanding the district heating network, constructing metro line 1, improving energy efficiency in municipal buildings, and replacing streetlights with LED lamps. Additionally, the city increased its electric bus fleet, promoted nature-based solutions to combat heat islands, and incorporated green roofs and permeable materials to improve sustainability.

Find out more via: <https://torinocitylab.it/en/2024/10/24/torino-riceve-la-eu-mission-label-climate-neutral-smart-cities/>

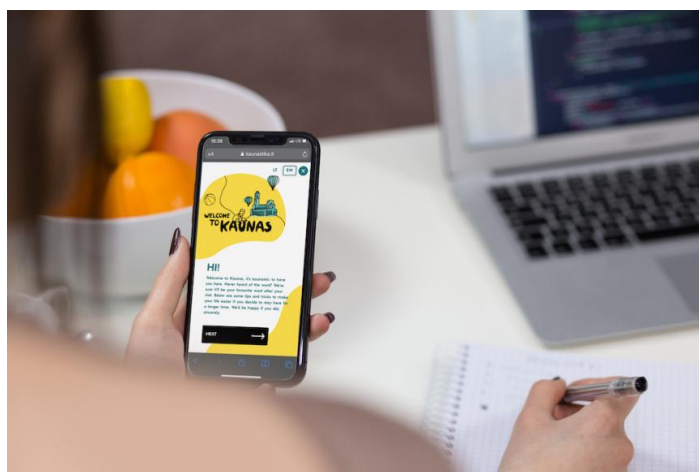
#### 4.2.1.3 Sustainability education: Taranto

**Ketos Centre; Taranto (Italy):** The Euro-Mediterranean Center for Citizen Science – Ketos Centre in Taranto provides education and training about the sea and cetaceans (whales, dolphins, porpoises) and works as a research centre for marine management. Tourists can visit the centre to learn about the importance of cetaceans to our environment, take part in educational tours or explore the museum individually, with the help of touch screens and 3D educational panels. The centre offers an immersive experience of underwater ecosystems and highlights the importance of protecting our environment.

Find out more via: <https://progettoketos.eu/>

#### 4.2.1.4 Eco-friendly tourism publications; Kaunas

**Digital publications; Kaunas (Lithuania):** Kaunas is actively reducing the use of printed publications where possible, while still ensuring visitors have access to essential tourist information. In 2024, the number of printed materials such as city maps and multilingual booklets was reduced by 24%, with more specific publications like the 'Thematic Kaunastic Routes' maps seeing a 56% reduction. To compensate, the city offers digital alternatives, including information screens at key tourist hubs like Kaunas airport, bus and train stations, and tourist information centres. All city publications are also accessible online and through the dedicated website [kaunastika.lt](https://kaunastika.lt), which is interactive and user-friendly. Additionally, 'Kaunas Trip Tips' are available via QR codes placed throughout the city. Visitors can also access tourism information through chatbots on the city's tourism website and social media platforms.



© Kaunas IN

Find out more via: <https://visit.kaunas.lt/en/maps-and-guides/>

#### 4.2.1.5 Sustainable resource management; Lahti

**Kujala Waste Centre; Lahti (Finland):** The Kujala Waste Centre in Lahti is an important facility for managing the city's waste and supporting its circular economy efforts. It was established to address the challenge of waste management and promote resource recovery. The centre processes bio-waste and bio-residues into products such as biogas, bio-fuel, compost and fertiliser, recycling about 100,000 tonnes of waste per year, almost all of which is reused for energy or raw materials. Recognised by the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform, the centre plays



a key role in Lahti's goal of reducing waste and achieving waste-free status by 2050, benefiting both the local community and the city by contributing to sustainability and resource efficiency.



© Visit Lahti

Find out more via: <https://salpakierto.fi/en/kujala-waste-centre/>

## 4.2.2 PRESERVING OR ENHANCING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

### 4.2.2.1 Nature conservation: Taranto

**Dolphin conservation; Taranto (Italy):** Jonian Dolphin Conservation organisation conducts research on cetaceans (aquatic mammals such as whales, dolphins and porpoises) in the Gulf of Taranto. Apart from conducting marine research, the Jonian Dolphin Conservation team involves tourists, educating them about the importance of protection and safeguarding of these animals. Several activities are designed to involve citizens: photo identification of cetaceans and identification of animals by their vocalisations. Collected data is used to create scientific publications useful for the protection of cetaceans.

Find out more via: <https://www.joniandolphin.it/>

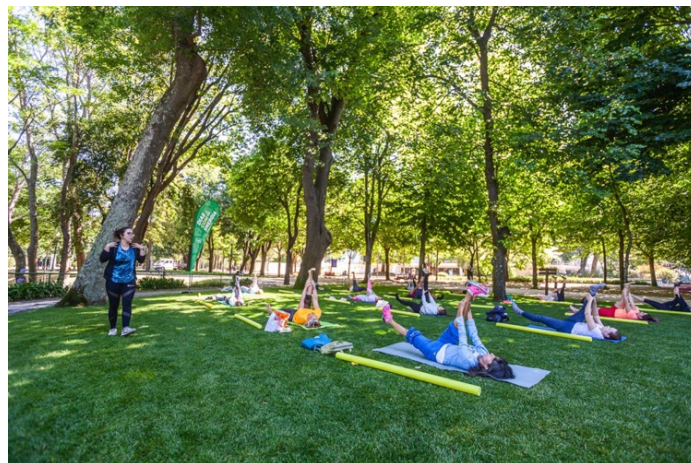
### 4.2.2.2 Sustainable Urban Planning: Brussels; Porto

**The Urban Green Network; Brussels (Belgium):** The Urban Green Network in Brussels includes cultural sites and provides activities for all ages. One of its features is the Promenade Verte, a 60-kilometer route through unspoiled natural landscapes and historic buildings that may be accessed on foot or by bike. The Bois de la Cambre, on the fringe of the Sonian forest, is well-known for its UNESCO World Heritage-listed beech forests. The ancient Rouge-Cloître site, a former 14th-century

priory, has a peaceful atmosphere and a rich architectural and woodland legacy. The Canal's 60,000 m<sup>2</sup> banks are being revegetated to enhance biodiversity. Laeken Park, located at the heart of the Royal Estate, is part of a massive, landscaped complex that includes various parks and gardens. Parks, gardens, and urban forests are integrated into the urban landscape, providing recreational areas for residents and promoting biodiversity.

Find out more via: <https://www.laeken.brussels/en/i-am-visiting/see-do/walks-parks/>

**Enhancing green spaces; Porto (Portugal):** Porto has enhanced its green spaces by incorporating nature-based solutions, including sports equipment and green rooftops. Asprela Park, inaugurated in March 2022, serves as the 'New Green Lung of Porto', covering six hectares with water mirrors, over 900 planted trees, preserved trees, and streams. The park features more than two kilometres of pedestrian and cycle paths accessible to people with reduced mobility, promoting health, well-being, and environmental sustainability.



© Municipality of Porto

Find out more via: <https://una.city/nbs/porto/creation-park-asprela>

#### 4.2.3 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT

##### 4.2.3.1 Tourism development: Genoa; Porto

**Enhancing the night economy; Genoa (Italy):** As part of the 'Cities After Dark' project, Genoa focuses on night-time economy for sustainable growth. The city is using the project to not only boost the city economy but also revitalise lesser-known neighbourhoods of the city. Genoa has tested the introduction of services at night, such as the experimental opening of the public library until 11pm and a library open throughout the night at the Students' Housing Centre. During peak tourism seasons,

the city provides night bus lines in the coastal part of the city and an on-call bus service connecting other neighbourhoods to the centre.



© Municipality of Genoa

Find out more via: <https://urbact.eu/networks/cities-after-dark>

**New tourism quarters and Tourist Manifest; Porto (Portugal):** Porto's strategy to manage sustainable tourism focuses on balancing visitor numbers throughout the city. The creation of new tourism quarters redistributes tourist flows, reducing overcrowding in popular areas and encouraging exploration of lesser-known districts. This approach stimulates local economies and fosters social development across the city. In addition, the 'Tourist's Manifest' promotes responsible tourism, encouraging visitors to respect local heritage, public spaces, and adopt environmentally friendly practices, further reinforcing Porto's commitment to sustainable tourism and preserving its cultural identity.

Find out more via: <https://smarttourism.cm-porto.pt/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Strategy-for-dispersion-of-tourism-flows-and-creation-of-quarters-in-Porto.pdf>

4.2.3.2 Actions mitigating tourism seasonality: Arezzo; Barcelos; Brussels; Klaipėda; Matosinhos; Messina; Taranto

**Tourism Trail; Arezzo (Italy):** Arezzo has actively been addressing tourism seasonality by implementing measures to attract visitors during off-peak periods and promote sustainable tourism. The city offers special travel packages and incentives during off-season periods, such as during Christmas, to encourage visitation. To maintain its appeal throughout the year, Arezzo organizes a variety of cultural events and festivals that showcase its rich heritage, such as guided tours, concerts, and local markets. These initiatives not only balance tourist activities throughout the year but also create

stable economic opportunities for the local community. By combining creative programming with tailored incentives, Arezzo ensures that tourists can visit and enjoy regional charm and traditions across all seasons.



© Arezzo Intour

Find out more via: <https://www.discoverarezzo.com/en/>

**Year-Round Tourism; Barcelos (Portugal):** Barcelos implements strategies to reduce the seasonality of tourism by offering year-round attractions and activities. This approach aims to ensure a steady flow of visitors throughout the year and address sustainability challenges. Key initiatives include the '7 Pleasures of Gastronomy' and Wine Tourism, the 'Walk to Know Barcelos' initiative, sports and nature tourism activities such as the Windmill Trail, and cultural events such as Carnival and the Festival of the Crosses. These efforts help to attract visitors during the low season, supporting local businesses and contributing to a more sustainable and balanced tourism model.



© Municipality of Barcelos

Find out more via: <https://www.cm-barcelos.pt/visitar/o-que-fazer/barcelos-acesivel/>

**Year-round activities and events; Brussels (Belgium):** Brussels is not only a destination for all seasons but also a city that actively seeks to reduce tourism seasonality through innovative initiatives and strategic planning. Major professional events are spread throughout the year, like those dedicated to art and design that are split between January, April and September. Open-air music events are focused per quarter and district, thus spread all over the territory. Annual events, such as Iris fest, Artonov, Banad festival or Bright Brussels, showcasing light installations across the city, exemplifies Brussels' commitment to promoting tourism beyond peak periods and distributing the activities every time in different districts. Such an approach ensures a more balanced distribution of tourism throughout the year, benefiting both visitors and local businesses alike.

Find out more via: <https://www.visit.brussels/en/visitors/agenda/bright-festival>

**MICE events; Klaipėda (Lithuania):** Recognising the economic challenges posed by seasonal fluctuations in tourism, the city has implemented strategies to diversify its tourism offerings and attract visitors year-round. The promotion of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events) tourism has emerged as a key strategy for reducing seasonality, with Klaipėda hosting business seminars, presentations, trainings, and fairs throughout the year. By attracting visitors beyond the traditional tourist season, the city aims to create a more stable and resilient tourism economy.

Find out more via: <https://klaipedatravel.lt/en/events2/>

**Extending the tourism seasons; Matosinhos (Portugal):** Matosinhos promotes local communities as part of its tourism offer and implements various initiatives to mitigate tourism seasonality problems in local communities. For example, the municipality organises gastronomic events like the Matosinhos Rally Fish or the Degustar Matosinhos Festival. These events not only help local entrepreneurs attract visitors and bring extra revenue but also allow year-long employment possibilities for people working in local businesses. Highly popular surf schools of the city also suffer from tourism seasonality. To combat this problem, the municipality has created the Surf School Cup, a competition between surf schools in the lower season, which helps with their businesses throughout the year.



© Municipality of Matosinhos

Find out more via: <https://www.cm-matosinhos.pt/servicos/comunicacao-e-imagem/eventos/evento/rally-fish-38>

**‘Messina City of Events’; Messina (Italy):** Messina has addressed tourism seasonality through the ‘Messina City of Events’ website, which presents a wide range of cultural, artistic, food, music, and sports events during the autumn and winter months. Key attractions include visits to the Peloritani Mountain Museums, which preserve ancient rural traditions, and the Strait Natural History Museum, which highlights the region’s unique natural heritage. In addition, birdwatching tours during the spring migration are an off-season attraction. These offerings help maintain a steady flow of visitors throughout the year, supporting both cultural and ecological tourism while contributing to the city’s sustainable development.

Find out more via: <https://eventi.comune.messina.it/>

**Sporting events; Taranto (Italy):** The Municipality of Taranto aims to reduce tourism seasonality by promoting diverse events to visitors. The city has identified that sporting events are of particular interest to tourists and drives socio-economic development of the area. The city has already hosted many important sporting events, such as the ‘Italian Aquathlon Championship’, the ‘Dominate the Water Race’, ‘Palio di Taranto’, ‘Taranto nel Cuore - Half Marathon’, ‘Sea Trophy 2023’, ‘Sail Grand Prix’. In 2026, the city will also host the ‘Mediterranean Games’. Additionally, the city leverages its profile as a sports destination to enhance inclusive sporting opportunities, hosting the ‘World Triathlon Para Cup’ and the ‘Paralympic Culture Festival 2023’. These events help promote the participation of people with disabilities in sports and increase community awareness towards inclusion.

Find out more via: <https://www.ta2026.com/en/>

#### 4.2.3.3 Creation of sustainable tourism sites: Konya; Skopje

**The Tropical Butterfly Garden; Konya (Türkiye):** A sustainable and smart tourism attraction, The Tropical Butterfly Garden, has the largest butterfly flight area in Europe. The garden hosts 20,000 live butterflies of 60 different species from around the world. The site not only protects biodiversity but also creates a unique nature experience for visitors. In order to enhance the quality of living organisms within the garden, plants with high oxygen production have been planted. The electricity in the attraction is produced by solar panels in the garden, covering 55% of its electricity needs. Now, the garden also contributes to diversifying the city's tourism offer and creating year-round activities in Konya.

Find out more via: <https://konyatropikakelebekbahcesi.com/en>

#### 4.2.4 SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

##### 4.2.4.1 Sustainable public transport: Coimbra

**Mondego Metro Bus Project; Coimbra (Portugal):** The Mondego Metro Bus project in Coimbra introduces an electric public transport system that aims to improve urban cohesion and reduce environmental impact. By connecting Coimbra with surrounding areas, it reduces travel times and promotes sustainable tourism by spreading tourist flows. The system offers benefits such as reduced noise, improved air quality and accessible, safe transport, while promoting local development and providing a more efficient, environmentally friendly alternative for residents and visitors alike.

Find out more via: <https://www.metromondego.pt/en/metrobus>

##### 4.2.4.2 Sustainable urban mobility planning: Brussels; Genoa; Lahti; Lublin

**Sustainable mobility; Brussels (Belgium):** Through such projects as the Good Move 2020-2030 regional mobility plan and the implementation of Low Emission Zones, Brussels strives to reduce carbon emissions and enhance air quality, ensuring a healthier and more sustainable future for its inhabitants and visitors. By developing cycling lanes and prioritising sustainable transportation and urban planning, Brussels not only mitigates the impact of climate change but also fosters a more enjoyable and accessible experience for tourists, who can navigate the city with ease while minimising their carbon footprint.

Find out more via: <https://www.brussels.be/what-good-move>

**The Urban Sustainability Plan; Genoa (Italy):** The Urban Sustainable Mobility Plan (PUMS) is a strategic tool for planning urban mobility over a 10-year horizon, aiming at environmental, social, and economic sustainability. It integrates mobility with urban and territorial planning, involving citizens and stakeholders while coordinating policies across sectors like transport, urban planning, and environment. The PUMS aligns with the European Sustainable Urban Development framework, promoting actions to combat climate change, enhance accessibility, and empower communities in urban transformation. Under PUMS, the city implements the 'Biciplan Metropolitano' – a sectoral plan to promote cycling mobility.

Find out more via: <https://www.comune.genova.it/tutti-gli-argomenti/mobilita/piano-urbano-della-mobilita>

**Mobility Research Centre and Green Electrification of Mobility Cluster; Lahti (Finland):** Lahti promotes sustainable mobility through the Electric Mobility Research Centre (EMRC) and the Green Electrification of Mobility Cluster (GEM). The EMRC, based at the University of Lahti, focuses on research in the field of electric transport, particularly in the areas of power electronics, mechanics and data, while GEM serves as a collaborative platform that brings together companies, research institutions and local authorities to develop and commercialise clean mobility technologies. These initiatives aim to address the challenges of sustainability in transport, offering benefits such as advancing electric transport solutions, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and supporting the city's transition to greener, more sustainable mobility for both the local community and visitors.

Find out more via: <https://www.lut.fi/en/research/partnerships-and-cooperation/kempower-electric-mobility-research-center-emrc>;  
<https://lahtigem.fi/home>

**Lublin Metropolitan Station as sustainable mobility hub; Lublin (Poland):** The Lublin Metropolitan Station (LMS), completed in 2024, exemplifies sustainable urban development. Recognised with the Green Building Award 2022 and previously shortlisted for the World Building of the Year award, LMS integrates transport functions while minimizing environmental impact. The project's comprehensive approach (aligned with sustainable construction principles) is praised not only for reducing environmental impact but also for incorporating renewable solutions, such as geothermal energy, rain and greywater reuse, photovoltaic bus shelters, and natural ventilation. Located in a revitalised industrial district, LMS enhances citywide connectivity, improves the area's image, and fosters better living and business conditions.



Find out more via: [https://archello.com/news/metropolitan-station-in-lublin-designed-as-one-of-the-most-sustainable-projects-of-its-kind-in-poland?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://archello.com/news/metropolitan-station-in-lublin-designed-as-one-of-the-most-sustainable-projects-of-its-kind-in-poland?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

#### 4.2.4.3 Sustainable outdoor tourism: Torino

**Routes to nature; Torino (Italy):** Torino's hill system offers unique natural landmarks, including Superga hill with panoramic views and Monte dei Cappuccini with its National Mountain Museum, accessible through hiking or public transport. With 70km of hiking trails (13 in total) and 90km of cycling paths, including the eco-friendly CoronaVerde route connecting parks and UNESCO sites, the city promotes active and sustainable tourism. This initiative benefits locals by enhancing public green spaces, while tourists enjoy active experiences by exploring nature. The region thrives through increased eco-tourism, supporting local businesses and contributing to environmental conservation.



© Municipality of Torino

Find out more via: <https://turismotorino.org/en/visit/things-to-do-and-things-to-see/outdoor/activities/tour-e-bike-corona-verde-cirie-lanzo>

#### 4.2.5 SUSTAINABLE INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

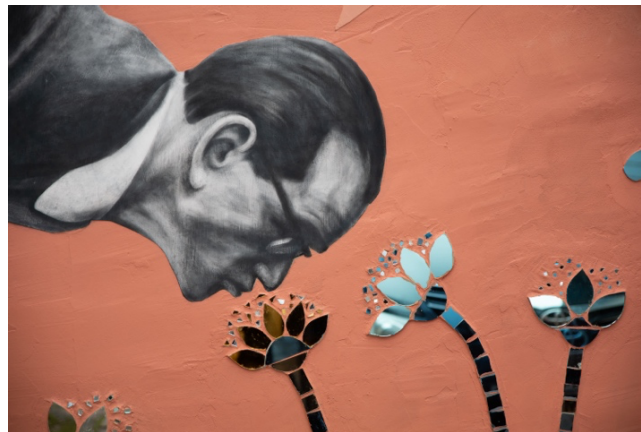
##### 4.2.5.1 involvement of Local Communities in Tourism Planning: Arezzo; Kaunas; Klaipėda; Torino

**Buy Tuscany marketplace; Arezzo (Italy):** In 2023, the 15th Buy Tuscany marketplace was held in Arezzo, showcasing the region's commitment to sustainable tourism and the promotion of local heritage. This event, organised by the Arezzo Intour Foundation in collaboration with various local partners, connects tour operators with businesses across Tuscany to promote the region's economy and unique cultural offerings. The marketplace serves as a hub for promoting local products, traditions,

and cultural experiences while fostering sustainable tourism practices. A key feature of the event is its focus on urban agriculture, encouraging a direct link between local gastronomy and sustainable tourism. By supporting these local initiatives, the event contributes to the city's cultural identity and its ability to provide authentic, sustainable experiences for visitors.

Find out more via: <https://www.arezzointour.it/info-buy-tuscany/>

**Street art tourism; Kaunas (Lithuania):** Kaunas's tourism strategy is centred on street art originating from the city itself. A way of reimagining and revisiting historical aspects of the city, the promotion of street art also lets its residents to reclaim spaces like abandoned buildings and reintegrate them into urban stories. Parts of street art have turned into famous characters and are now being used as promotional material by the tourism office. The logo of the Kaunas tourism company features a yellow kitten, a beloved character that visitors can encounter around the city walls. Visitors can purchase pins, clothing, and other souvenirs of street art characters that have become a part of the city identity.



© Kaunas IN, Kaunas City Municipality

Find out more via: <https://visit.kaunas.lt/en/see-and-do/sights/street-art/>

**Local economic growth; Klaipėda (Lithuania):** To create more sustainable tourism initiatives, the city of Klaipėda actively engages with local communities in the planning and decision-making processes of tourism activities. The city promoted community-led initiatives through partnerships with local businesses, organisations and residents, this way preserving its cultural heritage and natural resources. Furthermore, the city has put revenue sharing mechanisms in place, to ensure that tourism income benefits local communities, contributing to the overall well-being of its residents.

Find out more via: <https://klaipedatravel.lt/en/place-category/shopping/>

**Neighbourhood House for community engagement; Torino (Italy):** Torino's Neighborhood Houses, a network of eight community hubs, play a pivotal role in fostering local engagement. Managed by non-profits deeply connected to the area, they offer spaces for active participation in social and cultural life. These hubs promote unconventional tourism by highlighting the cultural and artistic heritage of various districts, including those further from the city centre. The initiative strengthens ties within local communities and encourages sustainable tourism, benefiting both residents and visitors.



© Municipality of Torino

Find out more via: <https://www.torinosocialimpact.it/en/ecosystem/associazione-rete-delle-case-del-quartiere-aps/>

#### 4.2.5.2 Involving Local Communities in Sustainable Initiatives: Braga

**Climate Week for promoting environmental sustainability; Braga (Portugal):** Braga hosts an annual 'Climate Week' to engage diverse audiences in environmental sustainability initiatives. The event includes lectures on energy efficiency, river clean-ups, workshops on composting and vertical vegetable gardens, and discussions on the challenges posed by climate change. Alongside this, the Municipality of Braga is committed to reducing carbon emissions, with plans for three major projects over the next two years: a Renewable Energy Project, an Energy Efficiency Programme for Public Buildings, and Sustainable Mobility Projects. These initiatives reflect Braga's dedication to finding innovative and sustainable solutions for a greener future.



© Municipality of Braga

Find out more via: <https://bragaverde.pt/climate-change-mitigation/>

#### 4.2.5.3 Sustainability education for local communities: Braga; Konya; Lublin; Lviv

**EcoMov; Braga (Portugal):** The EcoMov project aims to value and encourage learning and play in schools' outdoor spaces. This environmental education initiative involves children from the municipality's kindergartens and primary schools, who are made more aware of the environment and the importance of preserving it. Commendably, the EcoMov project has the potential to encourage local children to value the environment and contribute to its preservation, fostering a deeper sense of responsibility and care for their surroundings from a young age.

Find out more via: <https://www.cm-braga.pt/pt/0201/home/noticias/item/item-1-18451>

**Training courses for the local community; Konya (Türkiye):** Konya is implementing many initiatives in the field of socioeconomic sustainability. The Konya Metropolitan Municipality Vocational Courses (KOMEK) provides training for women in 190 branches, contributing to employment and production of handcrafted products. Successful graduates of KOMEK are employed in Zeybe, Zenobya, and Anatoya production facilities, focusing on producing touristic and souvenir goods. These products are sold in various stores and online at komekpazari.com, contributing to the circular economy.



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Find out more via: <https://komek.org.tr/index1.php>

**Youth-Led Climate Action; Lublin (Poland):** Lublin's 'Good Climate We Go Green!' initiative engages secondary school students in climate education and urban development. Through workshops and hands-on activities, students explored blue-green infrastructure, water retention, circular economy, and the ecological role of pollinators. The program culminated in an inter-school competition, where students designed sustainable improvements for their school grounds. Winning projects were selected for implementation by the municipality, fostering youth involvement in climate adaptation while enhancing urban sustainability.

Find out more via: <https://lublin.eu>

**Youth Strategy; Lviv (Ukraine):** Lviv's youth strategy is a long-term initiative for the empowerment of young people and their active participation in the city's development. The strategy, which runs from 2025 to 2035, aims to address the challenges faced by young people in a post-war environment by promoting creativity, social activism and international connections. Following the recognition of Lviv as the European Capital of Youth 2025, the strategy includes the establishment of youth centres, the creation of a youth fund and the promotion of international youth exchanges. Through events such as MoloDvizh, the OL Science & Technology Festival and others, the city provides opportunities for young people to engage in creative and entrepreneurial activities. These initiatives help to build the resilience of Lviv's youth and provide a platform for them to influence social change, benefiting both the local community and international visitors.

Find out more via: <https://www.youthforum.org/news/lviv-2025-a-story-of-resilience#:~:text=At%20the%20heart%20of%20Lviv's,the%20creation%20of%20youth%20centres.>

## 4.3 BEST PRACTICES IN DIGITALISATION

### 4.3.1 FACILITATING INFORMATION FOR SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS

#### 4.3.1.1 Digital Visitor Platforms: Brussels; Lahti; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; Porto; Sakarya

**A visitor platform for a complete experience; Brussels (Belgium):** Launched in 2023, the visit.brussels digital ecosystem invites visitors to explore the city's cultural diversity, history and local scenes through responsive website design. The www.visit.brussels website offers inspirational content, including navigation by themes, immersive videos, user-centric itineraries, up-to-date content, interactive maps tailored to captivate and inform about the myriad attractions in Brussels. Under the visit.brussels digital offer, the agenda.brussels and ticketing.brussels deliver information and facilitate the access to cultural events, concerts, shows, exhibitions, movies and guided tours. The visit.brussels website also contains tools such as an Event Planner, Experience Finder, and Venue Finder, to facilitate the organisation of professional events, and guides for the setup of international associations. All data concerning accommodations, international visitors' arrivals and museum attendance, as well as visitor studies and the destination's carbon footprint, are centralised on the 'Tourism Observatory' webpages hosted on visit.brussels web portal and made available to everyone. The data is also used in other policies, in alignment with the Brussels Capital Region Smart city strategy.

Find out more via: <https://www.visit.brussels/en/>

**Visit Lahti – Lakeland Finland; Lahti (Finland):** The Visit Lahti – Lakeland Finland is an online platform that provides comprehensive tourism information in several languages, addressing the needs of both businesses and consumers. It has been developed to respond to the requirement for easily accessible, up-to-date information about Lahti and the surrounding area, while at the same time promoting local businesses. Linked to the DataHub, it ensures the region's visibility on major international tourism sites. Tourists can access details in multiple languages and local businesses can use the platform to showcase their offerings. This integration helps to improve the visitor experience, while supporting local businesses and contributing to the overall growth of tourism in the region.

Find out more via: <https://visitlahti.fi/en/>

**LPA Visit Portal; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain):** Las Palmas de Gran Canaria's LPA Visit Portal is a digital platform that provides tourists with comprehensive and up-to-date information on the city's attractions, transport and services. Designed to

streamline trip planning, it allows visitors to organise their entire stay, from transport and accommodation to local points of interest, all in one place. By centralising essential travel details, the portal helps visitors plan their trip more efficiently. This benefits tourists by offering a one-stop resource for all their travel needs and promoting the city's diverse offerings, while also supporting the efficient management of tourism resources.

Find out more via: <https://lpavisit.com/en/>

**Digital infrastructure and tourism services; Porto (Portugal):** Innovative and digital, Porto is a city designed for the future, boasting cutting-edge digital infrastructure that creates a favourable ecosystem for startups and innovative entrepreneurship. This strong digital foundation supports various sectors of Porto, including its Tourism Office's digital services, where the city has excelled in offering smart, ICT-based services to enhance visitor experiences guiding them throughout their journey. The mobile-friendly VisitPorto website offers updated information on landmarks, gastronomy, cultural events, and themed routes while enabling purchases and real-time assistance via Live Chat and WhatsApp. Social media channels further engage tourists, providing updates and allowing them to share feedback. Porto's seamless integration of advanced infrastructure and accessible tourism tools highlights its dedication to enhancing visitor experiences and positioning itself as a modern, connected destination.

Find out more via: <https://visitporto.travel/en-GB>

**SATBIS; Sakarya (Türkiye):** The Sakarya Culture Tourism Digital Guidance and Information System (SATBIS) is a digital platform designed to enhance the region's tourism by providing comprehensive information to visitors and investors. Launched on 25 August 2015, SATBIS was developed with the support of Sakarya University experts and aimed to identify and showcase the tourism potential of the region. The system guides both tourists and tourism investors by displaying key information about local attractions, accommodation options, and service points. This project helps visitors plan their trips more effectively while promoting Sakarya's tourism resources, ultimately boosting the local economy and tourism sector.

Find out more via: <https://sakarya.goturkiye.com/>

#### 4.3.1.2 Digital City Maps: Lviv

**Accessible City Map; Lviv (Ukraine):** Lviv's Accessible City Map is a digital tool designed to help residents and visitors easily navigate barrier-free locations in the city. It was created to address the challenges faced by people with disabilities and

veterans in accessing public spaces. The map currently highlights over 100 accessible facilities, categorised for user convenience, promoting greater inclusion and ensuring that Lviv is a welcoming city for all. This initiative benefits both tourists and locals by improving mobility, while reinforcing the city's commitment to inclusivity and social inclusion.

Find out more via: [https://visitukraine.today/de/blog/3574/accessible-city-lviv-has-created-a-map-with-barrier-free-institutions-and-places?srsltid=AfmBOorcntz8Me9DopMoKN6\\_6KP0qUJBwoQCufclawwHPynaJYJzG7Wd](https://visitukraine.today/de/blog/3574/accessible-city-lviv-has-created-a-map-with-barrier-free-institutions-and-places?srsltid=AfmBOorcntz8Me9DopMoKN6_6KP0qUJBwoQCufclawwHPynaJYJzG7Wd)

**Flower Map; Lviv (Ukraine):** The Flower Map of Lviv is a digital tool developed to highlight the city's blooming flowers and trees in real time. Designed by the Lviv Tourism Department and the Department of Ecology, it addresses the challenge of keeping track of the ever-changing flowering seasons, especially in early spring when flowers bloom unexpectedly quickly. The map allows residents and visitors to explore over 50 locations where they can enjoy the beauty of magnolias, sakuras, tulips and other flowers. This digital resource not only offers tourists a unique route to enjoy the city's blooms but also provides locals with a convenient and up-to-date guide to ensure they don't miss out on the best of Lviv's spring beauty.

Find out more via: [https://visitukraine.today/blog/3728/a-map-with-flower-locations-has-been-created-in-lviv-where-can-you-admire-the-blooms?srsltid=AfmBOooRLJEQqK5LaVa7OrxXt\\_vNo4q7Bc9nlpNfGJdl32bVwHBB1X4l#locations-of-flowering-trees-and-flowers-in-lviv](https://visitukraine.today/blog/3728/a-map-with-flower-locations-has-been-created-in-lviv-where-can-you-admire-the-blooms?srsltid=AfmBOooRLJEQqK5LaVa7OrxXt_vNo4q7Bc9nlpNfGJdl32bVwHBB1X4l#locations-of-flowering-trees-and-flowers-in-lviv)

#### 4.3.1.3 Use of Artificial Intelligence in Communication: Kaunas; Torino

**Use of AI Chatbots; Kaunas (Lithuania):** Visitors to the Kaunas Tourism Information Centre's website are welcomed by an innovative AI-powered chatbot named Cat. This virtual assistant offers tailored responses to questions about flights, hotels, attractions, and tours, enhancing the visitor experience through advanced AI technology. What sets Cat apart is its ability to personalise recommendations based on individual interests, whether visitors are searching for activities, dining options, cultural sites, or hidden gems—ensuring their visit to Kaunas is truly 'kaunastic'. Developed by Lithuanian entrepreneurs, the chatbot not only enriches the user experience but also significantly reduces the workload of the Kaunas Tourism Information Centre staff by handling a large volume of enquiries with automated precision.

Find out more via: [www.visit.kaunas.lt](http://www.visit.kaunas.lt)



**Navigation Exploring Tourist Assistance; Torino (Italy):** NETA (Navigation Exploring Tourist Assistance) is a project recently launched by CTE-Next, aiming to revolutionise the tourism experience in Torino. Using generative AI, NETA will complement Turismo Torino e Provincia (TTP) services by providing real-time, customised itineraries via multimedia totems and a web app. This AI-driven system integrates local databases for reservations and information, offering assistance in over 50 languages. Additionally, the AI for MUSE project, developed by Torino University and Polytechnic, leverages AI and Virtual Reality to enrich museum visits, enhancing the cultural and historical experience for visitors.

Find out more via: <https://ctenext.it>

#### 4.3.1.4 Digital Applications Enhancing the Visitor Experience: Braga; Gaziantep; Genoa; Konya

**SMARTGuide application; Braga (Portugal):** The SMARTGuide application is an innovative tool that prioritises inclusivity and usability for tourists. It serves as an audio guide, automatically providing information when visitors are near specific monuments. With its mechanical voice feature, the app ensures accessibility for visually impaired individuals by narrating the history of the monument in question. Additionally, it allows users to create personalised itineraries and provides a heat map indicating the city's most crowded areas. This feature enables the Tourist Office to proactively send pop-ups, encouraging visitors to explore less frequented sites, thus promoting a more balanced distribution of tourism across Braga.

Find out more via: <https://www.smart-guide.org/destinations/de/braga/>

**Visit Gaziantep App; Gaziantep (Türkiye):** The Visit Gaziantep mobile application serves as a comprehensive digital guide for tourists, offering a wide range of services to enhance their experience in the city. Developed to meet the need for easily accessible and up-to-date tourism information, the app helps visitors navigate Gaziantep's rich cultural and historical landscape. It provides detailed insights into attractions, accommodation, transport, dining and local services, including bus schedules, routes and points of interest, all in multiple languages. By integrating with digital kiosks across the city, the app enhances the visitor experience with virtual tours, photos and maps, ensuring that tourists can easily find and learn about places of interest. The app also supports local businesses by providing contact information and satellite coordinates, helping both tourists and the local community.

Find out more via: <https://gaziantep.goturkiye.com/>

**Apps enhancing the tourist experience; Genoa (Italy):** Genoa’s tourist maps are centralised on the Geoportale website, offering easier access to tourism data. The portal integrates thematic maps, which include attractions, guided tours, public services and cycling facilities. Through Geoportale’s Geographic Information System (GIS), visitors and locals can access maps and attractions based on their location. Moreover, the website integrates data from the TourTax website – a portal dedicated to accommodation providers, addressing tax evasion, archival analysis, recovery assistance and support. Visitors can access information about accommodation facilities registered on TourTax on a geo-references map.

Find out more via: <https://smart.comune.genova.it/geoportale>

**Smart technology apps for visitors; Konya (Türkiye):** The city of Konya has implemented the ‘This is Konya’ application – a digital solution for tourists, which allows users to customize their routes with tourism spots based on personal preferences. Available in Turkish, English, and Arabic, this mobile app provides comprehensive information about the city and features functions such as booking taxis, accommodations, and restaurants, accessing ‘Tourist Friendly Business-certified’ places, creating sightseeing routes, and making online reservations with transfer service companies. The app also offers stories of streets with special historical and cultural significance and a direct contact option with the Tourist Information Office via the SOS button.



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Find out more via: <https://www.konya.bel.tr/s/konya-smart-tourism-app>

#### 4.3.1.5 Digital Tours and City Exploration: Coimbra; Klaipėda; Messina

**Napoleonic itineraries; Coimbra (Portugal):** The Napoleonic Itineraries project offers a digital, immersive experience that brings the history of the French invasions in Portugal to life. It addresses the challenge of enhancing historical tourism through modern technology and engaging visitors with the region’s military heritage. Using a

mobile app with QR codes, visitors can explore 19 key locations across the Coimbra region and beyond, experiencing virtual and augmented reality representations of historical events. This project not only enriches the visitor experience by offering interactive, time-travel-like journeys, but also promotes cultural preservation, sustainable tourism and regional cooperation, benefiting both tourists and the local community.

Find out more via: <https://napoctep.eu/en/colibri-6896/>

**Talking sculptures; Klaipėda (Lithuania):** The city of Klaipėda enriches the tourist experience through digitised routes and experiences. ‘Talking’ sculptures, scattered around the city, invite visitors to scan QR codes and listened to their stories, while digitised historic routes, such as the ‘1923 route’, offer immersive audio-guided tours for tourists. Through these initiatives, the city leverages digital technologies to bring its rich cultural heritage to life. These interactive experiences not only educate and entertain but also foster a deeper connection between visitors and the city's history and landmarks.



© TIC Archyvas, City of Klaipėda

Find out more via: <https://klaipedatravel.lt/en/place/talking-sculptures/>

**Hidden Messina; Messina (Italy):** The ‘Hidden Messina’ activity uses gamification to engage tourists in discovering the city’s hidden gems. Visitors take part in a treasure hunt, identifying specific architectural features to earn rewards, encouraging exploration and deepening their connection with the city’s heritage. Special pedestrian maps with QR codes guide tourists to key attractions, providing an informative and interactive way to explore the city.

Find out more via: <https://www.comune.messina.it/it>

#### 4.3.1.6 Virtual Exploration of the City: Braga; Coimbra; Skopje; Torino

**Viewpoint of Time; Braga (Portugal):** The ‘Viewpoint of Time’ is an innovative virtual reality experience that immerses visitors in the history and future of Braga. This unique tourist offering, viewed through virtual reality glasses, includes four key moments: a 3D recreation of the Bracara Augusta Theatre, a recreation of Braga’s Castle, a tram ride from the train station to Bom Jesus as it once was, and a glimpse into Braga's envisioned future. This distinctive experience allows participants to explore the past while imagining the future, combining historical depth with forward-looking inspiration. Designed to spark curiosity among visitors and encourage residents to rediscover their city, this initiative also fosters a deeper sense of belonging and identity within the local community. It exemplifies Braga’s commitment to balancing tourism with resident engagement, while showcasing the city’s rich cultural and historical heritage as a premier destination for both visitors and locals.

Find out more via: <https://visitbraga.travel/>

**CHARME Project; Coimbra (Portugal):** The CHARME project in Coimbra focuses on the digitalisation of cultural heritage to promote European identity, innovation, and economic growth. It addresses the need to modernise the presentation of heritage sites and expand access to cultural resources. By digitising landmarks such as the Almedina Tower and offering virtual tours of the Science Museum and the TUMO Centre, the project enhances the city’s tourism offer, making it more accessible and appealing. It also contributes to sustainable tourism development by integrating digital tools into the city’s broader tourism strategy, supporting both local and regional growth.

Find out more via: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/charme>

**Virtual Guide of Old Bazaar; Skopje (North Macedonia):** Skopje has developed a ‘Virtual Guide Old Bazaar’ app as part of its efforts to promote sustainable tourism and preserve cultural heritage. This app addresses the challenge of transforming ideas for sustainable tourism into tangible actions by engaging local communities, such as craftsmen in the Old Bazaar. It provides visitors with an easy-to-use digital platform that highlights the historical significance of the area and introduces them to local traditions and crafts. By incorporating virtual reality, it offers a unique and interactive way to experience the Old Bazaar’s rich heritage. This initiative benefits both tourists, by enhancing their cultural experience, and the local community, by increasing awareness of their crafts and history.

Find out more via: <https://rockproject.eu/news-details/299>

**AI, extended reality and 5G; Torino (Italy):** Torino has embraced cutting-edge technologies to enhance its tourism offerings, integrating artificial intelligence, extended reality (XR), and 5G connectivity into its cultural landscape. Over the past three years, several innovative projects have transformed visitor experiences. Immersive XR experiences in museums like Palazzo Madama, developed under EU co-funded initiatives such as 5GTOURS and TRialsnet, offer a fresh way to engage with cultural heritage. Additionally, the EC project 'Convince' introduced a robot guide, while widespread 5G-connected open stages have enabled pop-up concerts featuring distributed street artists. These innovations have paved the way for metaverse experiences and an integrated XR cultural network across multiple museums, amplifying cultural experiences and creating a dynamic attraction that encourages visitors to explore more of Torino's rich heritage.



© Municipality of Torino

Find out more via: <https://5g-ppp.eu/5g-tours/> <https://trialsnet.eu/>

#### 4.3.2 COLLECTING INFORMATION FOR SMART MANAGEMENT

##### 4.3.2.1 Open Data for Tourism Management: Gaziantep; Lahti; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

**Smart City Data Coordination Centre; Gaziantep (Türkiye):** Gaziantep's Smart City Data Coordination Centre uses big data and AI to improve city management and service delivery. Designed to address the need for efficient decision-making, it helps coordinate responses to public needs such as tourism and transport, while ensuring rapid action on issues such as safety or traffic problems. The centre collects and reports real-time data on tourism flows, environmental quality and resource management, providing the basis for informed decision-making and adaptation strategies. This data enables the city to take necessary and immediate action. The

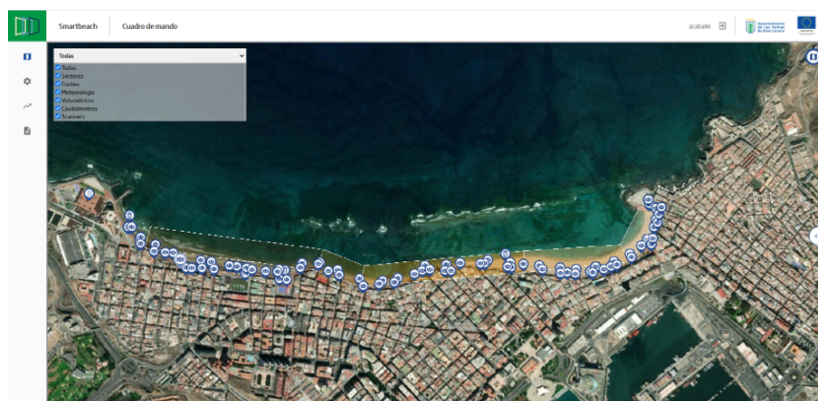
centre allows residents and visitors to easily report problems and track progress, improving satisfaction and safety in the city.

Find out more via: <https://akillikent.gaziantep.bel.tr/en/project/detail/data-coordination-center>

**Lenz Travel Experience; Lahti (Finland):** The Bis Lenz Travel Experience is a digital platform used by Visit Lahti - Lakeland Finland to track and report on tourism performance in the region. It has been developed to provide accurate, real-time data on various aspects of tourism, such as visitor numbers, overnight stays, social media performance and marketing campaign effectiveness. By collecting data from multiple sources, the platform allows local performance to be compared against national benchmarks. The platform is publicly accessible, providing key insights for local businesses and stakeholders and encouraging collaboration within the tourism sector to improve the region's competitiveness and business environment.

Find out more via: <https://bislenz.com/insights/p/87940aaf-a476-449f-b224-222b63dd0c36>

**Beach Management System; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain):** Las Palmas de Gran Canaria has implemented an innovative beach management system that uses videometry technology to provide real-time data on beach occupancy, tides and weather conditions. This initiative, which aims to improve safety, reduce overcrowding and promote sustainable tourism, benefits tourists by providing detailed information through the LPA Beach app, allowing them to better plan their beach visits. It also supports environmental research and management, providing valuable data for the University of Las Palmas to study beach evolution and climate change, while improving the overall experience for both residents and visitors.



© Las Palmas de Gran Canaria City Hall

Find out more via: <https://www.azti.es/en/las-palmas-de-gran-canaria-implements-aztis-kostasystem-technology/>

#### 4.3.2.2 Smart Urban Management: Genoa

**City management; Genoa (Italy):** Genoa Municipality and the University of Genoa have developed 'Controllo Dinamico' (Dynamic Control) app displaying key indicators on various aspects of the city's well-being, sustainability, and development capacity. Created under the ReactEU project, the app synthesises data into graphical dashboards, enabling users to track trends and compare with other Italian cities. It offers a user-friendly interface for analysing economic, infrastructural, social, and developmental aspects, available on both desktop and mobile platforms. Furthermore, in 2024 Genoa started monitoring traffic using checkpoints and big data through the Genoa Smart City project. Leveraging big data, the Municipality aims to enhance traffic and mobility, providing dynamic control for public administration and real time information for citizens and businesses. The project involves deploying mobile digital checkpoints and existing technological tools, networking all data to effectively manage traffic flows, serving as a city health indicator.

Find out more via: <https://www.liguriadigitale.it/esperienze/controllo-dinamico.html>

#### 4.3.2.4 Digital Solutions for Business: Lahti; Lublin; Porto: Torino

**3D Modelling and Visualisation; Lahti (Finland):** The 3D Modelling and Visualisation Service, developed by the University of Applied Sciences LAB, provides a digital solution for the design and presentation of event spaces. Created to help businesses in the meetings and events sector, the service enables potential clients to better visualise spaces such as convention halls, hotels, sports facilities and restaurants through interactive 3D models. By providing a clearer understanding of the options available, the service simplifies the planning process for local businesses and their clients. With the aim of introducing the technology to 80 local businesses by the end of 2024, this initiative is supporting the growth of Lahti's event sector and enhancing the city's attractiveness as a destination for meetings and conferences.

Find out more via: <https://digitm.fi/>

**Supporting local business and tourism; Lublin (Poland):** Lublin supports local businesses and enhances the tourism experience through initiatives like the 'Place of Inspiration' program, which promotes local cuisine and highlights venues that blend gastronomy with the city's cultural heritage and atmosphere. Participating restaurants are featured on a dedicated website, with promotional materials prepared through city-organized photo sessions. Additionally, the city leverages digital tools like the 'City Geoportal' and 'Lublin3D – Spatial Information System' to provide interactive maps and spatial data, supporting both visitors and business tourism. Online

resources, including tourist brochures, city games, and social media, ensure easy access to information.

Find out more via: <https://smartcity.lublin.eu/digital-transformation/?lang=en>

**Shop in Porto; Porto (Portugal):** The ‘Digital Commerce Neighbourhoods’ project aims to enhance street commerce by equipping local merchants with digital tools and resources to efficiently manage their businesses, boost product visibility, and attract more customers. With an investment of 3.3 million euros by 2025, this initiative promotes local economic development, territorial cohesion, and a higher quality of life. Additionally, the City Council has developed the ‘Shop in Porto’ platform, Portugal’s first digital marketplace exclusively for traditional commerce. This platform showcases over 1,600 local shops, offering product details, promotions, and customised itineraries for visitors.



© Bombarda Digital Lab, Porto

Find out more via: <https://www.porto.pt/en/news/an-investment-of-33-million-euros-to-transform-baixa-and-bombarda-in-digital-commerce-neighbourhoods>

**Torino City Lab, CTE-Next; Torino (Italy):** The City of Torino actively supports the establishment and growth of business accelerators and public innovation hubs to promote smart city solutions. Key initiatives include Torino City Lab and CTE-Next. Torino City Lab serves as a living lab, providing a real-world testing environment for innovative technologies, particularly in urban settings with a focus on culture and tourism. Complementing this, CTE-Next fosters the development of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things. Through



collaborations between tech companies, research organisations, and public institutions, CTE-Next aims to create a robust innovation ecosystem that extends into the rapidly growing sectors of tourism and entertainment.

Find out more via: <https://torinocitylab.it/en/>

### 4.3.3 TRANSFORMATION INTO DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE SHARING

#### 4.3.3.1 Digital Access to information: Barcelos; Kaunas

**Customer Orientation; Barcelos (Portugal):** Barcelos demonstrates a strong customer focus by providing multilingual content, multimedia resources and accessible digital platforms to enhance the tourist experience. To make navigation easier and more efficient, the city offers a range of digital tools and platforms. These provide visitors with valuable information on attractions, trails and local services. In addition, the city ensures seamless access to digital content through city-wide high-speed internet, allowing tourists to explore Barcelos effortlessly while staying connected. This approach helps improve accessibility and provides a more convenient and informative experience for visitors.

Find out more via: <https://www.cm-barcelos.pt/>

**QR code distribution; Kaunas (Lithuania):** Essential information for tourists visiting Kaunas is centralised in one guide called ‘Kaunastic Trip Tips’. The guide provides everything a tourists need to know upon arriving in the city, including information on public transport, parking, dining options (breakfast spots, local cuisine, fine dining, and pubs), places to visit and explore, shopping locations, and other important details – all conveniently accessible on one page. Stickers with the QR code leading to this website have been distributed all over the city – from hotels, restaurants, museums, to key tourist locations like the airport, railway station and bus station. The QR code makes it easier for visitors to access all important information at once.

Find out more via: <https://visit.kaunas.lt/en/kaunas-trip-tips/>

#### 4.3.3.2 Digitalisation in cultural spaces: Genoa; Konya

**Use of latest technology to enhance tourist experience; Genoa (Italy):** The city of Genoa has joined the Loquis project – the first travel podcast platform. A dedicated channel on the platform provides visitors with thematic itineraries, which tourists can listen to while walking along the city’s streets. Through the platform, visitors can listen to stories and interesting information about places around. To further improve the tourism experience, the city of Genoa partakes in the D.O.G.E. project, focusing on

digital enhancement and promotion. Under the project, the city has realised 3D digitalisation of UNESCO Rolli Palaces sites, virtual reconstructions of Strada Nuova palaces and is developing AI generated historical animations of these places to create a more immersive storytelling experience.

Find out more via: <https://www.loquis.com/it/loquis/488525/Genova>

**Digitalisation in cultural heritage; Konya (Türkiye):** The city of Konya is using smart technology and digital solutions to enhance museum experiences. The 'Taş Bina' digital museum provides visitors with information about Konya's attractions in just half an hour. Tourists that have limited time to visit all attractions of the city can get an idea of its cultural offering and see a virtual tour of the city. Additionally, the UNESCO World Heritage Site Çatalhöyük uses digital solutions such as gamification to immerse its visitors and offer a unique experience, allowing visitors to become archaeologists and assemble found pieces of the sites.



© Konya Metropolitan Municipality

Find out more via: <https://www.konya.bel.tr/hizmet-binalari-ve-sosyal-tesisler/tas-bina>

4.3.3.3 Enhancement of Digital Skills: Arezzo; Barcelos; Brussels; Matosinhos; Skopje; Torino

**Training programmes for SMEs; Arezzo (Italy):** Arezzo is committed to supporting local communities by fostering social inclusion and promoting authentic tourism experiences. The city actively collaborates with local businesses, community groups, schools, and universities to offer training and professional development in the tourism sector. In particular, Arezzo focuses on providing training programs for tourism SMEs, helping them embrace digital technologies, e-commerce, social media, and online platforms. These initiatives aim to enhance their online presence, improve the visitor

experience, and open new markets, ensuring sustainable growth for the local economy while boosting digital skills across the community.

Find out more via: <https://www.arezointour.it>

**Development of digital Skills; Barcelos (Portugal):** Barcelos has implemented several initiatives to support the development of digital skills, particularly in the crafts and folk arts community, an area of local tourism that can benefit greatly from improved digital communication. These initiatives include workshops on social media management, photography and ICT. In addition, the city is implementing the Digital Neighbourhood programme as part of Portugal's National Recovery Plan (PRR), offering local businesses the opportunity to enter the world of digitalisation. By offering these resources, Barcelos is helping local businesses to modernise, streamline administrative processes and improve the digital presence of the municipality, ultimately benefiting both tourists and the local economy.

Find out more via: <https://www.cm-barcelos.pt/>

**Enhancing skills and capacities of companies; Brussels (Belgium):** The hospitality.brussels cluster plays a vital role in fostering innovation, enhancing performance, and nurturing skills, all aimed at creating jobs and driving economic growth in the Brussels Region. It has organised various sessions presenting local digital companies to the hospitality sector. Moreover, through the participation in the Tourbit programme, it has brought expertise from other European regions. Through initiatives such as self-diagnoses of digital maturity, practical guides for digital transformation, 'Innovation Lunches' and webinars on Tourism 4.0 technologies, hospitality.brussels equips companies with the necessary knowledge and resources.

Find out more via: <https://hospitality.brussels/en/>

**Support for entrepreneurs; Matosinhos (Portugal):** The Matosinhos City Council aims to create a digital-friendly environment for the local entrepreneurs. It organises various workshops, designed to equip entrepreneurs with the necessary skills to navigate the digital world, with a range of topics from digital marketing to online business management. Additionally, in collaboration with Nest, the Matosinhos City Council organises the 'BOOST – Building Better Tourism' event to train and inspire local entrepreneurs. The event provides a platform to discuss future paths of tourism, allowing entrepreneurs to explore new ideas and strategies, learn from best practices from other cities and apply them to their own businesses. This international approach helps ensure that Matosinhos entrepreneurs are always at the forefront of digital trends.

Find out more via: <https://www.nestboost.pt/en/home/>

**Brainster Academy; Skopje (North Macedonia):** Through its partnership with the Brainster Academy for Innovations, Skopje is fostering creativity and technological advancements to transform the tourist experience. This collaboration engages young innovators in developing tech tools, apps, and concepts that make exploring the city more dynamic and exciting. By incorporating smart technologies like virtual and augmented reality, Skopje offers visitors new ways to engage with European culture and heritage. The initiative also provides students with hands-on opportunities to grow their skills and careers, while creating cutting-edge products that enhance tourism. These efforts position Skopje as a forward-thinking and innovative destination, showcasing its commitment to blending technology and cultural discovery.

Find out more via: <https://next.edu.mk/en/>

**Digital Education, Startups; Torino (Italy):** Officine Grandi Riparazioni (OGR) plays a pivotal role as Torino's most important cultural and innovation hub, supporting over 10 international accelerators in various sectors, including tourism, culture, and education. One key initiative, NextEdu, focuses on fostering digital education, preparing students for the challenges of the future. Additionally, OGR serves as a testing ground for technology innovations, such as the 2023 5G Jazz Jam Session, which experimented with 5G broadcasting for distributed artistic production. The City of Torino supports these programs by providing urban testing infrastructure and fostering an ecosystem conducive to growth and innovation.

Find out more via: <https://ogrtorino.it>

#### 4.3.4 INNOVATIVE MOBILITY THROUGH DIGITALISATION

##### 4.3.4.1 Digital Mobility solutions: Brussels; Konya; Sakarya

**Mobility as a service (MaaS); Brussels (Belgium):** Mobility around Brussels has been a crucial focus in technological investments. The MaaS ecosystem is materialised by an intuitive mobile application, FLOYA. Launched in 2023, it gathers all available private and public mobility services and integrates routes as well as solutions for scheduling, booking, and payment. For visitors, this application provides an easy access to the full range of transport services (train, streetcar, bus, metro, scooter, bike, car-sharing, taxis), enabling the combination of all of them in an efficient travel route to all Brussels' points of interest. The access to public transport is also facilitated with a digital ticket and direct cashless payment in the transport means or stations. Additionally, monitoring is being done by the STIB-MIVB transport agency on the

flow of travellers, and transport lines are regularly adjusted, in particular for events such as concerts, fairs or sports events.

Find out more via: [https://www.stib-mivb.be/article.html?l=en&\\_guid=40e900e3-461a-3c10-0187-9e9392f0b9fd](https://www.stib-mivb.be/article.html?l=en&_guid=40e900e3-461a-3c10-0187-9e9392f0b9fd)

**Smart public transport solutions; Konya (Türkiye):** Konya’s digitalisation solutions in public transportation provide permanent and innovative solutions for the urban mobility of tourists and locals. The ‘Line Management System’ application, integrated with the ‘Intelligent Public Transportation System’ (ATUS), uses smart card data to compile information about travel and passenger mobility in the city. To optimise the mobility of residents and tourists, Konya utilises the Central Traffic Operating System - METIS. This digital map-based, functional traffic control centre system maintains live connections with intersections according to international communication standards. It operates 24/7, remotely controls intersections, and performs statistical analysis based on current and past traffic data. The electronic guidance and information screens implemented in Konya’s city centre provide instant updates on average travel times between two points, road conditions, parking lot availability, accidents, and transportation situations.



© Konya Metropolitan Municipality

Find out more via: <https://akillisehir.konya.bel.tr/>

**Let’s Pedal to the Black Sea; Sakarya (Türkiye):** The ‘Let’s Pedal to the Black Sea’ project promotes bicycle tourism by creating digital platforms and bicycle routes across multiple countries, enhancing regional accessibility and supporting eco-friendly travel. Besides enhancing accessibility for cyclists, the project addresses the need for sustainable tourism development in the Black Sea Basin region by improving tourism infrastructure, encouraging eco-friendly travel and promoting local businesses. Addressing the need for sustainable tourism development in the Black Sea Basin, the project offers detailed information about 25 cycling routes, including

altitude, difficulty, and local attractions, fostering engagement with local businesses and tourism offerings. It boosts regional visibility, encourages cycling as an alternative travel mode, and enhances local economies through bike-friendly services and entrepreneurship initiatives. This initiative not only improves the travel experience for cyclists but also promotes sustainability and local development.

Find out more via: <https://letscycle.org>

## 4.4 BEST PRACTICES IN CULTURAL HERITAGE & CREATIVITY

### 4.4.1 REVIVAL OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

4.4.1.1 Cultural events & Festivities: Brussels; Gaziantep; Konya; La Palmas de Gran Canaria; Lublin; Porto

**A year-long programme of events; Brussels (Belgium);** Creative heritage in Brussels is present throughout the yearly programme, with initiatives addressed to residents and visitors. The 'I Love Science Festival' links innovation, scientific research and vocation, while the 'Comic Strip Festival' embraces the rich tradition of strip publication, attracting visitors from all over Belgium and editors from around the world, to perpetuate the interest for the 9th art. In 2023, the festival attracted 54.000 visitors and welcomed many major publishers from around the world, as well as some independent publishers. The event included a manga space and an auditorium where authors and the public could meet and interact. The event now places a special emphasis on accommodating people with limited mobility: the 2023 edition of the festival was marked by the acquisition of the 'Access-I' label, which attests to the availability on-site of the entire infrastructure required by people with limited mobility.

Find out more via: <https://www.visit.brussels/en/visitors/agenda/bd-comic-strip-festival>

**Cultural Road Festivals; Gaziantep and Konya (Türkiye):** Cultural Road Festivals in Gaziantep and Konya celebrate the rich cultural heritage of their respective cities while boosting tourism and economic growth. The festivals aim to preserve local identities and combat tourism seasonality by offering immersive cultural experiences. Gaziantep's festival showcases gastronomy, music, theatre, digital arts, and crafts, with 416 events in historic venues, attracting a global audience and fostering inclusivity with free entry. Konya's festival highlights its spiritual and artistic heritage, combining mystic music, performing arts, and traditional crafts to connect the city's history with modern culture. Both festivals benefit tourists by providing unique cultural insights and vibrant experiences, while stimulating the local economy through increased employment, business opportunities, and tourism income. These initiatives

also revitalise historic sites and strengthen community pride, ensuring sustainable cultural preservation and year-round tourism appeal.



© Konya Metropolitan Municipality

Find out more via: <https://www.turkiyetoday.com/culture/gastroantep-culture-route-53263/>; <https://kulturyolufestivali.com/en-us/homepage>

**Festivals and Cultural Events; Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain):** Las Palmas de Gran Canaria’s International Film Festival, International Theatre, Music and Dance Festival and Carnival Parade are key cultural events that provide both locals and visitors with accessible opportunities to engage with the city’s creative scene. These festivals address the need for high quality cultural experiences that engage both locals and visitors. The Film Festival brings global cinema to the city, while the Theatre, Music and Dance Festival, with its vibrant street theatre, transforms public spaces into cultural hubs that foster social exchange. The Carnival Parade, with its lively parades, competitions and performances, attracts thousands of tourists each year, generating economic benefits while strengthening the city’s cultural identity. These events create a festive atmosphere that encourages broad participation, strengthening community ties and making the city a dynamic cultural destination.

Find out more via: <https://lpavisit.com/en/>

**Festival of Lublin Legends & Festival of Art in Public Space; Lublin (Poland):** The Festival of Lublin Legends creatively revives the city’s urban myths and historical narratives through immersive theatrical and musical performances. Held in the Old Town Market Square and nearby streets, the festival transforms the area into a vibrant stage, recreating stories and atmospheres from the Middle Ages to the interwar period. This unique event engages residents and tourists alike, blending history with artistic expression to bring Lublin’s cultural heritage to life.

The Festival of Art in Public Space Otwarte Miasto / OPEN CITY, held annually for 15 years, complements these efforts by taking thought-provoking art installations into public spaces. Each edition centres around a specific theme, making art more accessible to the community while sparking dialogue. Additionally, the city is investing in technological advancements to promote learning about its history. Both festivals showcase Lublin's commitment to cultural preservation and innovation.

Find out more via: <https://east.lublin.eu/en/events/155-en/wrzesien/448-b-11-september-9-october-b-open-city-festival-of-art-in-public-space>

**Tourism seasonality and events; Porto (Portugal):** Porto has diversified its cultural entertainment offerings throughout the year to encourage longer visits and reduce seasonality. Major events such as Essência do Vinho, Festival DDD, and NOS Primavera Sound attract international audiences, while the city also embraces a wide range of performing arts, including theatre, dance, and contemporary circus. Additionally, Porto hosts significant sports competitions, such as the Marathon, Pro Skate League, Porto & Matosinhos Wave Series, and Rally de Portugal. However, the most authentic celebration is Porto's São João festival, where the 23rd of June becomes the longest night in the city, reflecting the vibrant local culture.

Find out more via: <https://smarttourism.cm-porto.pt/cultural-heritage-and-criativity/>

#### 4.4.1.2 Dedicated Heritage Years: Brussels; Genoa

**Art Nouveau year; Brussels (Belgium):** To showcase the diverse cultural heritage of the city, Art Nouveau was honoured in 2023 with a specific thematic year commemorating this artistic movement. The goal of the specific year was to strengthen Brussels' status as the world centre of Art Nouveau, attract people to explore its rich past in this subject, and establish ties between historical heritage and modern invention. This thematic year's major achievements include the successful launch of two digital communication campaigns and poster campaigns to promote Art Nouveau, the sale of 8.568 'Art Nouveau Passes' that allow access to various sites and exhibitions, and the huge success of our dedicated web page with 93.000 visitors. Specific tours were created also for people with disability, as well as temporary exhibitions and virtual tours.

Find out more via: <https://www.visit.brussels/en/visitors/agenda/brussels-capital-of-art-nouveau.html>

**Thematic years; Genoa (Italy):** Genoa dedicated the year of 2024 to the city's cultural heritage from the Middle Ages, with the aim of rediscovering a historical era that represented a period of great changes. The city created an extensive programme of



days dedicated to discovering the city's medieval heritage, from churches, abbeys, towers that have been part of the city to newly reopened sites, such as the Sant' Agostino buildings. The programme also featured immersive experiences, such as street theatre performances, medieval themed shows and events about Genoese history. Looking ahead, the main theme of 2025 is planned to be nineteenth century Genoa, offering tourists and residents literary itineraries following the path of the Grand Tour which passed through the city.

Find out more: <https://player.vimeo.com/video/951948665>

#### 4.4.1.3 Restoration of Cultural Heritage Sites: Konya; Lahti; Messina; Porto

**'Dar-ül Mülk Project'; Konya (Türkiye):** The city of Konya preserves its rich historical heritage through the 'Dar-ül Mülk Project' - Türkiye's largest restoration project focusing on Konya's historic city walls. In the framework of this project, by using DNA codes and historical images, sculptures of 12 Seljuk sultans were created. Their estimates sizes, facial features and body compositions were replicated with 95% accuracy, providing visitors with a unique historical perspective and an insight into the city's culture. The Dar-ül Mülk Exhibition Area, holding the exhibition of the wax figures, is amongst the twenty historical areas restored in the city within the project.



© Konya Metropolitan Municipality

Find out more via: <https://www.darulmulk.com.tr/>

**Revitalized Lake Vesijärvi; Lahti (Finland):** The revitalisation of Lake Vesijärvi is a key example of Lahti's efforts to turn environmental challenges into sustainable solutions. The lake was once heavily polluted by the industrial activities around the lake and became one of the most polluted lakes in Finland. In the 1980s, the city shifted its focus to environmental restoration, seeing it as an opportunity to advance research and develop new water management technologies. Over the years, these efforts have

successfully improved the lake's condition and turned it into a popular recreational area with activities such as canoeing, sailing, swimming and fishing. The revitalised lakeshore now offers scenic views and has become an attractive space for both locals and tourists, contributing to the city's cultural and environmental heritage.



© Visit Lahti

Find out more via: <https://greenlahti.fi/en/article/the-conservation-of-lake-vesijarvi>

**Instradart; Messina (Italy):** The 'Instradart' initiative in Messina focuses on revitalising historic areas of the city, particularly those that survived the 1908 earthquake and World War II bombing, through a blend of art, theatre and storytelling. It addresses the need to preserve and celebrate the city's heritage while engaging the community in creative expression. The programme includes outdoor exhibitions, live performances and guided tours that highlight the history and culture of Messina, providing both locals and tourists with a deeper, interactive experience of the city. By involving different artistic forms such as painting, theatre and music, Instradart promotes cultural engagement and social interaction, enhancing the city's appeal as a dynamic cultural destination.

Find out more via: <https://www.tempostretto.it/news/instradart-con-arte-musica-e-cultura-la-via-legnano-riprende-vita.html>

**Bolhão Market, Batalha Cinema and Palácio de Cristal; Porto (Portugal):** The reopening of Bolhão Market (Mercado do Bolhão), Batalha Cinema, and Palácio de Cristal demonstrates Porto's dedication to preserving its heritage while fostering continuous renewal. Bolhão Market, a long-standing fresh produce market at the city's heart, reopened in September 2022 after extensive refurbishment. It retains its traditional essence with fresh food stalls while offering a gastronomic experience through diverse restaurants. It also hosts dynamic events such as 'Global Kitchen', a year-round initiative bringing together international and Portuguese chefs to foster

cultural and culinary exchange. Batalha Cinema, a historic venue recently revitalised, now serves as a cultural hub for cinema enthusiasts. It focuses on film exhibitions, research, and dialogue, while also hosting cinema festivals, contributing to the city's rich cultural scene.



© City of Porto

Find out more via: <https://smarttourism.cm-porto.pt/cultural-heritage-and-criativity/>

#### 4.4.1.4 Transformation of Cultural Heritage Sites and Urban Spaces: Kaunas; Lahti; Matosinhos; Torino

**Initiatives celebrating local street art heritage; Kaunas (Lithuania):** The city of Kaunas encourages its residents to reclaim the city's abandoned buildings and communal spaces through street art. In 2016, the city hosted its first street art festival NYKOKA, fostering a genuine appreciation for this art form from its citizens ever since. Street art has helped to transform neglected urban areas into spaces for artists and connect residents with their neighbourhoods and communities. The Yard Gallery, an ever-changing open-air gallery, exemplifies the connection between local communities, transforming an inner courtyard to bring neighbours together. Since 2017, the 'Kauno Akcentai' ('The Highlights of Kaunas') initiative allows residents to help turn Kaunas into an open-air gallery. As part of this initiative, sculptures, light installations, and street murals enhance the city's public spaces.



© Kaunas IN and Kaunas City Municipality

Find out more via: <https://akcentai.kaunas.lt/>

**Sibelius Hall; Lahti (Finland):** Sibelius Hall in Lahti is an example of how industrial heritage can be adapted for cultural purposes. Originally built as a cellulose factory in 1907, the building was converted into a congress and concert hall, preserving its industrial past while creating a modern space for cultural activities. The design was inspired by the simplicity of the old brick buildings and the hall's location by the water, blending industrial history with contemporary wooden architecture. Sibelius Hall is renowned for its outstanding acoustics and is ranked among the top ten concert halls in the world. The transformation of this space has contributed to the cultural life of the city, providing a venue for both local events and international performances.



© Visit Lahti

Find out more via: <https://www.sibeliustalo.fi/sibelius-hall/?lang=en>

**Restoration and transformation of cultural heritage sites; Matosinhos (Portugal):** The city of Matosinhos is transforming its cultural heritage sites to boost tourism and local development. The restoration of the Monastery of Leça do Balio is a notable example of cultural transformation. Through restoration, this historical monument with impressive Gothic architecture, has been transformed into an event venue, while

a former factory building nearby has been remodelled into a vibrant center for companies, consumers and tourists, named Lionesa. As a centre of innovation and creativity, the building hosts shared workplaces, art galleries and restaurants. It shows how the city of Matosinhos is exploring synergies between tourism and cultural and creative industries.



© Municipality of Matosinhos

Find out more via: <https://www.lionesa.pt/>

**Car factory transformation; Torino (Italy):** Since the 1990s, Torino has undertaken various urban regeneration projects that have transformed former industrial sites into cultural and tourism attractions. The LINGOTTO car factory, renewed in 2003, now houses a congress centre, a mall, a concert hall, and the Pinacoteca Agnelli, an art collection featuring both historical and contemporary works. Similarly, OGR - Officine Grandi Riparazioni, restored in 2017, has been converted from a rail factory into a cultural hub that hosts performative and visual art events, as well as a congress centre, exhibition and concert halls, and a startup incubator, covering a vast area of 35,000 sqm with a restoration investment of €100 million. Additionally, the DORA PARK, was redeveloped between 2004 and 2007 from a former industrial area occupied by Fiat and Michelin, has become a 350,000 sqm post-industrial park that hosts major events such as the Kappa FuturFestival, one of Europe's leading music festivals, and TERRA MADRE, an international food and wine event.



© Michele D'Ottavio, Torino Urban Lab archive

Find out more via: <https://city.cri.cn/20210308/7b79df78-1c6a-5166-7188-9bc1dc0223bd.html>

#### 4.4.1.5 Establishing Cultural Institutions: Kaunas

**An immersive modernism experience; Kaunas (Lithuania):** The city of Kaunas and its residents are working to raise awareness and restore its modernist heritage. A unique example of this is the Art Deco Museum, housed in a 1930s Kaunas apartment. Recreated with original wall colours, furniture from the time and even era appropriate houseplants, the apartment now offers experiential tours recounting everyday life of the period, the restoration process, features of the furniture, or taste bread toasted in an 80-year-old toaster. The Amsterdam School Museum, opened in 2023, is another example of an immersive cultural experience. As the only building of the Amsterdam School architectural style in Lithuania, the apartment-museum showcases unique architectural heritage and allows visitors to immerse themselves into the stories of people that have lived in the apartment through experiential tours.

Find out more via: <https://visit.kaunas.lt/en/see-and-do/activities/kaunastic-experiences/time-travel-to-kaunas-1929-art-deco-era-apartment/>

#### 4.4.1.6 Preserving Traditions: Barcelos; Coimbra; Klaipeda; Lahti

**Pottery Museum; Barcelos (Portugal):** The Pottery Museum of Barcelos is a key cultural institution dedicated to celebrating and preserving the region's rich pottery and craftsmanship traditions. With a collection of over 9,000 pieces from Portugal and other Portuguese-speaking countries, the museum highlights Barcelos' designation as a UNESCO Creative City in the field of crafts and folk arts. Recent renovations have improved the museum's accessibility, with special attention to visitors with special needs, and created more welcoming spaces for everyone. By showcasing the art of

pottery, the museum not only supports cultural preservation but also strengthens the city's identity, benefiting both tourists and the local community.

Find out more via: [https://creativecity.barcelos.pt/#!?page\\_id=112](https://creativecity.barcelos.pt/#!?page_id=112)

**Women and Places; Coimbra (Portugal):** The Women and Places initiative in Coimbra highlights the region's heritage through the lives of historical and legendary women, linking their stories to specific places. It addresses the need to offer a fresh perspective on local heritage, focusing on the often overlooked contributions of women to history. By bringing these figures to the fore, the project raises the visibility of lesser-known historical sites, increasing tourist interest and enriching the local cultural narrative. As well as recognising the significant role of women in the region's past, the initiative encourages greater cultural engagement and community pride, benefiting both residents and visitors.

Find out more via: <https://www.coimbra.pt/2022/12/projeto-da-cim-regiao-de-coimbra-mulheres-e-os-lugares-apresenta-se-amanha-no-salao-brazil/>

**Preserving local cultural traditions; Klaipėda (Lithuania):** Klaipėda's cultural tourism strategy is centred around the preservation and promotion of its tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Educational programs and activities organised by institutions such as the History Museum of Lithuania Minor, the Sea Museum, and the Klaipėda City Municipality Center of Ethnic Culture play a crucial role in transmitting traditional crafts, customs, and history to both residents and tourists. The city's commitment to preserving cultural traditions is further exemplified through events and festivals that showcase traditional music, dance, and cuisine. Folk festivals, featuring performances of traditional songs and dances, provide visitors with an authentic glimpse into Klaipėda's cultural identity. Additionally, celebrations of national holidays, steeped in ethnic traditions, offer opportunities for immersive cultural experiences, where visitors can partake in festive rituals and customs alongside locals. A thriving artisan community of the city further supports the preservation of cultural traditions, showcasing handmade crafts and traditional souvenirs to visitors.



© Etnokultūros Centras, Klaipėda

Find out more via: <https://www.etnocentras.lt/en/>

**Sauna Culture; Lahti (Finland):** In Lahti, Finland’s sauna culture, recognised by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, is an integral part of both local life and the visitor experience. The city provides easy access to traditional sauna experiences, allowing tourists to enjoy this cultural practice during their stay. While locals typically use private saunas or visit public swimming pools, visitors can experience Finnish saunas in their accommodation, with many hotels, hostels and cottages offering sauna access as part of their package. In addition, the region offers a variety of sauna types, including lakeside saunas, stone age saunas and moss saunas. This widespread availability of sauna experiences enhances the cultural appeal of Lahti, offering both residents and tourists an authentic way to connect with Finnish traditions.

Find out more via: <https://visitlahti.fi/en/frontpage/professionals/dmc/wellness-and-sauna/>

4.4.1.7 Creating alternative heritage tours: Arezzo; Braga; Coimbra; Klaipėda; Lublin; Messina; Taranto

**Digital Detox Tour; Arezzo (Italy):** Arezzo has introduced innovative ‘digital detox’ tours aimed at providing visitors with the opportunity to disconnect from technology and fully immerse themselves in the city’s rich cultural heritage. These tours promote a mindful, balanced approach to tourism by encouraging visitors to step away from screens and engage with the historical sites, local traditions, and natural surroundings in a more profound way. The initiative not only offers a refreshing break from the digital world but also enhances the visitor experience by fostering a deeper connection to the intangible cultural heritage of Arezzo, such as its ancient art, architecture, and culinary traditions. This commitment to mindful tourism aligns with



broader efforts to offer sustainable and enriching experiences while promoting well-being and the preservation of local traditions.



© Arezzo Intour

Find out more via: <https://www.arezointour.it>

**BragaLit map; Braga (Portugal):** BragaLit is a literary map designed to highlight Braga’s rich literary and cultural heritage, showcasing the Portuguese language. Created using excerpts from the collection ‘Braga, Bimillennial City’ published by the Bracara Augusta Foundation, the map offers visitors an opportunity to explore the city through literary perspectives. This user-friendly map is especially tailored for national tourists, offering a unique way to discover Braga’s historic and cultural landmarks while immersing in its literary history.



© Municipality of Braga

Find out more via: <https://www.passeio.pt/en/mediateca/mapa-literario-de-braga-em-plataforma-online/>

**JEWELS TOUR; Coimbra (Portugal):** The JEWELS TOUR project in Coimbra focuses on promoting Jewish cultural heritage as a tool for sustainable tourism. It seeks to address the challenge of preserving and enhancing the memory of Jewish

communities, which have played an integral part in the city's history. Through the development of tourist routes and cooperation with European partners, the project aims to make Jewish heritage more accessible and appealing to visitors. In doing so, it helps to raise awareness of this important but often overlooked aspect of Coimbra's past, benefiting both the local community and the tourism sector.

Find out more via: <https://www.interregeurope.eu/jewels-tour>

**Themed tours; Klaipėda (Lithuania):** The city of Klaipėda offers visitors immersive experiences that delve into the city's diverse narratives and hidden gems. Themed tours curated by guides, historians, and artists cater to different interests and range from brewery tours and historical explorations to artistic excursions and nocturnal encounters. An example of creativity in city tourism are the tours crafted by the Seiko Dance Theatre organisation, which offers experiences that combine historical narratives with dance performances. An authentic experience for visitors looking for immersive cultural encounters.

Find out more via: <https://klaipedatravel.lt/en/place/tours-in-klaipeda/>

**Exploring Jewish heritage with Teatr NN; Lublin (Poland):** Teatr NN, a cultural institution dedicated to preserving cultural heritage and education, offers thematic trails commemorating Jewish history in Lublin. These guided walks, accessible via the Tmatic.Travel app, include routes like 'Lublin: From Brama Krakowska to Wieniawa. Jewish History Tour' and 'Former Jewish Quarter in Podzamcze'. These initiatives promote awareness and appreciation of the city's rich Jewish heritage.

Find out more via: <https://teatrnn.pl/przewodniki-lublin/lublin-spacer-sladamilubelskich-zydow-najwazniejsze-miejsc/>

**StreetArtMe, Art Tells the City; Messina (Italy):** The StreetArtMe, Art Tells the City initiative in Messina highlights key locations through artwork and guided tours. It aims to give visitors a deeper understanding of the city's history and cultural landmarks. The project invites young artists to interpret and represent significant monuments in the city through various art forms, including drawing, painting, photography and poetry. By encouraging artistic expression, the initiative provides an opportunity for community engagement and social inclusion, while offering tourists a more interactive way to explore the city's heritage.

Find out more via: <https://youngme.comune.messina.it/2023/01/promozione-della-street-art-citta-di-messina-realizzati-nuovi-interventi-artistici/>

**Underground archaeology routes; Taranto (Italy):** The municipality of Taranto invites the city's visitors and residents to a unique cultural experience – tours of hypogea, the underground archaeological sites. The 'Hypogea White Night' project provides tourists with an itinerary through the lesser-known alleys of old Taranto, unveiling remains of structures from the Greek, Roman and medieval ages. The event also involves local communities, with young people from the city welcoming visitors and informing them about the origins and history of the underground areas.

Find out more via: [https://www.comune.taranto.it/it/point-of-interest/738776?category\\_id=402211](https://www.comune.taranto.it/it/point-of-interest/738776?category_id=402211)

#### 4.4.1.8 Preserving Culinary Heritage: Lublin; Torino

**Reviving culinary heritage and community engagement; Lublin (Poland):** Lublin celebrates its diverse culinary heritage shaped by centuries of multicultural influences, including Polish, German, Italian, Ukrainian, and more. The city fosters a return to traditional recipes and local ingredients through initiatives like the 'Place of Inspiration' program, which honors restaurants embracing old flavors, such as 'Mandragora' and 'Perłowa'. Complementing this is the annual 'Cuisine of Inspiration' Festival, featuring workshops, tasting dinners, and themed menus highlighting regional products like honey, onion, and beetroot. Partnering with a local culinary university, the city organizes competitions to prepare aspiring chefs for the gastronomy industry, strengthening community ties and promoting Lublin's gastronomic culture by arousing interest in regional cuisine and preparing future staff who will soon graduate and join the local gastronomy industry.

Find out more via: <https://lublin.eu/en/what-to-see-do/tourist-culture-information/the-place-of-inspiration-program/>

**Slow Food; Torino (Italy):** Torino has capitalised on its rich gastronomic heritage, particularly through its support for Slow Food, a global movement founded in the Piedmont region in 1986. Slow Food advocates for the preservation of local food traditions and sustainable food practices. This philosophy has been integrated into Torino's tourism strategy, with events like Terra Madre highlighting sustainable and high-quality food. The city is renowned for its exceptional food and wine products, such as Langhe wines, Vermouth, and chocolate. Torino's commitment to safeguarding its gastronomic heritage is demonstrated through its promotion 'enogastronomic' tourism, which includes the organisation of food-related events, fostering a slow food tourism offer, and supporting local producers to ensure the sustainability of these intangible traditions.



© DMO Piemonte, Giorgio Perottino

Find out more via: <https://www.slowfood.com/de/events/terra-madre/>

#### 4.4.2 CULTURAL HERITAGE USAGE FOR NEW CREATIVITY

##### 4.4.2.1 Use of new technologies: Arezzo; Brussels; Lviv; Skopje

##### **Gamified heritage; Immersive Joust of the Saracen experience; Arezzo (Italy):**

Arezzo has transformed its Joust of the Saracen into an immersive, interactive experience through the use of virtual and augmented reality, 3D reconstructions, and gamified elements. Visitors can engage with the historical reenactment of the battle between Christian and Saracen knights, becoming virtual protagonists and exploring the city's artisan traditions, such as crafting armor and flags. The exhibition integrates holographic projections and interactive kiosks with multilingual content, offering an engaging way to experience Arezzo's intangible heritage. Additionally, the creation of the Arezzo Media digital archive enriches the visitor experience, making this a pioneering model for integrating technology with cultural preservation.



© Arezzo Intour

Find out more via: <https://museiarezzo.it/en/museum-the-colours-of-the-joust/>

**Bright Festival; Brussels (Belgium):** Since 2017, the Bright Festival has illuminated and celebrated Brussels' architectural heritage with a light-filled route through several neighbourhoods. By 2023, the festival had attracted 400.000 visitors. This event has had consistent growth: +18% in terms of international visitors and +300% in terms of 'indoor' visits. These statistics reflect the public's enthusiasm for this iconic event. The 2023 Bright Festival actively promoted sustainability, accessibility for people with limited mobility (an Access-I route), and decentralisation, with a new route in Schaerbeek that drew 80.000 people. The 2024 edition has made a new trail from the city centre to the European Quarter.

Find out more via: <https://www.visit.brussels/en/visitors/agenda/bright-festival>

**Pocket City AR Project; Lviv (Ukraine):** The Pocket City AR project, based in Lviv, is an innovative cultural initiative that brings Ukraine's architectural treasures to life through augmented reality. It addresses the challenge of preserving and promoting the country's cultural heritage while making it accessible to a wider audience, particularly through immersive technology. In Lviv, the project displays 8 digital models of key monuments, part of a wider collection of 24 models across Ukraine. By scanning QR codes on specially designed postcards, users can view 3D models of these landmarks, accompanied by audio guides in both Ukrainian and English. Aimed at promoting domestic tourism and supporting heritage conservation, the project provides an engaging way for locals and visitors to explore historical sites across the country.



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Find out more via: <https://techukraine.org/2021/05/26/techukrainegiz-pockerar/>

**Digital reconstructions; Skopje (North Macedonia):** Skopje utilizes digital innovation to preserve and showcase its rich cultural heritage through digital reconstructions of historical sites. One notable example is the archaeological site of Skupi, which includes the ancient Amphitheatre and Roman aqueduct. These sites have been enhanced with modern technology to create immersive experiences that seamlessly blend the past with the present. The digital reconstructions not only allow visitors to explore these ancient structures virtually but also serve as venues for cultural and musical events, offering a unique way to experience both history and contemporary culture.

Find out more via: <https://explore.mk/attractions/skopje-tourist-attractions/scupi-archaeological-locality/>

#### 4.4.2.2 Creating New Cultural Spaces: Barcelos; Lviv; Skopje

**The House of Creativity; Barcelos (Portugal):** The House of Creativity in Barcelos serves as an important hub for the city's creative industries, in line with the seven domains of creativity recognised by UNESCO. It aims to preserve and promote traditional crafts and folk arts, especially those in danger of disappearing, by providing a platform for local artisans and artists to showcase their skills. This initiative addresses the need to preserve cultural heritage while supporting the artistic and entrepreneurial development of the community. Through workshops, training and interactive events, the house helps to conserve traditional crafts and encourages innovation, contributing to Barcelos' recognition as a European leader in sustainable cultural tourism.

Find out more via: <https://www.creativetourismnetwork.org/barcelos-inaugurates-its-house-of-creativity/>

**Urban Camp; Lviv (Ukraine):** The Urban Camp in Lviv is a dynamic creative and support centre that aims to promote youth culture and help displaced families integrate into their new community. It was created to address the dual challenge of providing temporary housing for those displaced by war, while also providing a platform for creative development, street culture and socialisation. Located in the revitalised Palace of Culture, which had been abandoned for years, the centre not only serves as a safe space for displaced families but also hosts workshops and activities that nurture young talent and promote community engagement. Since its opening in 2023, Urban Camp has attracted over 2,000 visitors, providing both a supportive environment for Lviv's residents and a creative hub for young people, helping them to discover their potential while strengthening the social fabric of the city.



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Find out more via: <https://uc.in.ua/8/>

**Historical sites as contemporary events; Skopje (North Macedonia):** Skopje is revitalizing its cultural heritage by transforming historical sites into dynamic venues for modern events and cultural experiences, blending the ancient with the contemporary. This practice addresses the city's effort of engaging tourists and locals while preserving cultural heritage. The Skopje Light Art District for instance, launched as part of the ROCK project, brings together cultural festivals, lighting technology, and artistic installations, uniting tourists and the local community at historic sites where cutting-edge technology is being used for immersive cultural experiences. These initiatives not only enhance local pride and attract visitors but also raise awareness of Skopje's cultural heritage and creative potential. By offering innovative mobile apps for event monitoring, the city creates a dynamic tourist experience that blends the past with the present, meeting the expectations of modern audiences.

Find out more via: <https://cultureincrisis.org/projects/rock-regeneration-and-optimization-of-cultural-heritage-in-creative-and-knowledge-cities>

#### 4.4.3 MAINTAINING CULTURAL HERITAGE

##### 4.4.3.1 Cultural Heritage Management: Matosinhos; Sakarya

**Museum network; Matosinhos (Portugal):** The MUMA, Matosinhos' network of museums, plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting the city's rich heritage. This platform manages all main museums of the city, protecting and enhancing its valuable collection. The MUMA network not only protects tangible heritage but also celebrates the intangible heritage of Matosinhos. Through exhibitions, educational programs, and cultural events, the MUMA also preserves the traditions, customs and stories of Matosinhos' identity. The management and protection of cultural heritage in Matosinhos focuses on honouring the city's past, celebrating the present and

embracing the future through innovation in creativity and culture. The organised management of the city's museum network also provide a better experience for its visitors.

Find out more via: <https://www.cm-matosinhos.pt/pages/446>

**Municipality event information system; Sakarya (Türkiye):** Sakarya is dedicated to the restoration and preservation of its historical buildings and sites, aiming to make its cultural heritage accessible to both locals and tourists. The Sakarya Metropolitan Municipality's Event Information System keeps citizens informed about events and activities, fostering engagement with the city's vibrant cultural scene. Museums like the Sakarya Museum and cultural centers such as the Sakarya Office Art Center showcase the region's rich history and cultural traditions through exhibitions, art events, and performances. These initiatives not only protect historical sites but also enhance local pride and educate visitors about the region's cultural identity.

Find out more via: <https://www.turkishmuseums.com/museum/detail/2222-sakarya-museum/2222/4>