Media Alert

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Ancient walls, modern thinking: how Dubrovnik became Europe's newest tourism pioneer

DUBROVNIK, Croatia – The city known for its UNESCO-listed old town and stunning Adriatic coastline has just added a new accolade to its name. Dubrovnik has been awarded the 2026 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism, recognising its work in sustainable, inclusive and digital tourism – all while balancing the needs of visitors with the daily lives of locals.

Beyond the famous 'Game of Thrones' film sets and fortress walls, Dubrovnik is quietly becoming a leader in smarter, greener travel.

See the sights without the squeeze

The city's UNESCO-protected old town is home to iconic landmarks. The City Walls, with fortifications dating back to the eighth century, remain the most famous attraction. Nearby, the Rector's Palace once served as the official residence of the head of the Dubrovnik Republic and now houses the Cultural History Museum, filled with treasures from the city's past.

But Dubrovnik has made visiting these sites far less stressful. The Dubrovnik Pass offers entry to twelve key museums, galleries, palaces and the city walls in a single ticket. It also includes free public transport. Smarter still: the city uses pass data to predict crowd numbers, and visitors can check a live website to see exactly how many people are at each attraction before they go. No more queueing into the unknown.

Nature ten minutes away

A short ten-minute boat ride from the Old City Harbour takes visitors to the Island of Lokrum. It's a protected forest reserve and the third oldest nature protection area in Croatia, home to more than 150 bird species. Visitors can explore the remains of a Benedictine Monastery and its historic gardens on foot.

Back on the mainland, Dubrovnik offers beautiful beaches, nearby islands, and accessible summer fun. An accessibility database portal provides clear information for visitors with mobility needs.

First in Croatia to tackle plastics head-on

Dubrovnik takes its environmental role seriously. It has become the first city in Croatia to join the Plastic Smart Cities initiative, banning single-use plastics at public events and in public institutions. The shift is already encouraging local businesses to find creative solutions.

One standout example is the Maritimo Recycling initiative, which collects plastic from the Adriatic Sea and turns it into colourful sunglasses – a genuinely eco-friendly souvenir for visitors.

About the award

Dubrovnik is the 2026 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism. More information about the city's sustainable, inclusive and digital tourism initiatives can be found on the official initiative page.

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