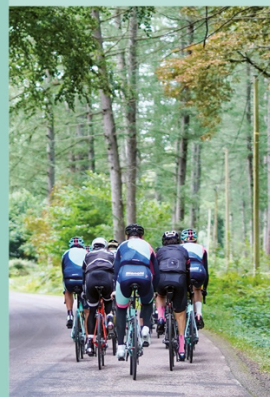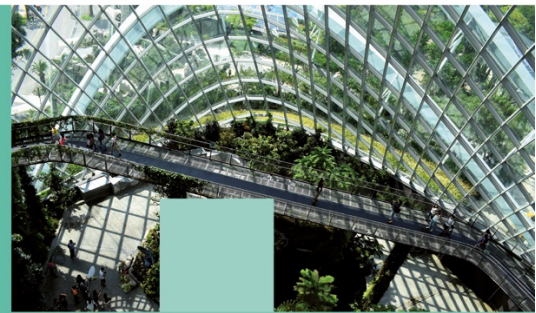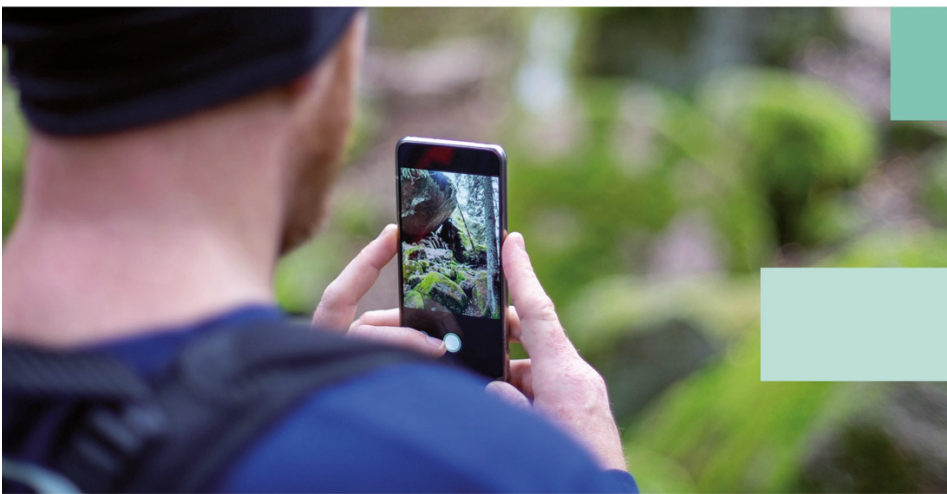# LEADING EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES IN EUROPE
from the 2025 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism competition

Title:
LEADING EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES IN EUROPE
from the 2025 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism competition
This report was prepared in 2025 for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE)

Key Subjects:
Exchange of best practices, sustainable tourism measures

January 2025

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1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism is an EU initiative implemented by the European Commission. Its aim is to recognise and award smaller destinations that have implemented successful strategies to boost sustainable tourism through green transition practices.

The European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism was first introduced as the European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) competition by the European Commission in 2007 as an initiative to reward non-traditional, emerging sustainable tourism destinations in Europe. It used to be run under a different theme each year and was based on national competitions. In 2019, the initiative was redesigned und updated in line with the European Green Deal and is set to contribute to the recovery and resilience of tourism destinations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism initiative aims to:

- showcase the best achievements in sustainable tourism and green transition practices across smaller European destinations
- promote the development of sustainable tourism in destinations, bringing value to the economy, planet and people
- establish a framework for participating destinations to exchange best practices and create opportunities for cooperation and new partnerships

2. PURPOSE OF THE BEST PRACTICES FROM THE 2024 EUROPEAN GREEN PIONEER OF SMART TOURISM COMPETITION

In 2024, the European Commission launched the second edition of the European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism competition. Destinations in EU and Single Market Programme – former COSME countries with populations between 25,000 and 100,000 inhabitants were eligible to apply. 16 destinations submitted applications. Benidorm (Spain) was selected as the 2025 European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism.

This collection of best practices has been derived from the applications that destinations submitted to the competition. The report showcases the selection of best practices in sustainable tourism and solely presents and relies on the data that the cities submitted in their applications.

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

3. PRESENTING BEST PRACTICES

3.1 NATURE PRESERVATION

3.1.1 Sea Walls and Drainage Systems; Benidorm (Spain): To adapt to the impacts of climate change, Benidorm has implemented several measures protecting its natural environment. From construction of sea walls to upgrading of drainage systems, these steps help address the challenges of rising sea levels and increased rainfall variability, while reducing the risk of flooding and coastal erosion. In addition to these improvements, the city maintains its beaches under strict environmental criteria, using chemical-free cleaning methods and installing eco-friendly amenities. These efforts contribute to the long-term resilience of the area and provide a model for other coastal destinations facing similar climate risks.

Find out more via: https://benidorm.org/en/city-hall/departments/environment

3.1.2 Environmental Protection; Tourist Destination Rogla – Pohorje (Slovenia): Established in 2024, the Pohorje Regional Nature Park is at the centre of the sustainability efforts of Tourist Destination Rogla – Pohorje (TDRP). The park plays a crucial role in conserving the extensive forest areas and rich biodiversity of the region. The Nature Conservation Information Centre Rogla, part of this initiative, serves as an educational hub divided into four thematic sections: Pohorje, Planje and Peatlands, Forests, and Wetlands. This centre educates visitors on the interdependence of nature and humans and promotes the preservation of natural habitats. It also promotes eco-friendly practices, such as using electric vehicles and bicycles and organized bus transport, to reduce carbon emissions and tourism's ecological footprint.

© Municipality of Zreče

Find out more via: https://www.rogla-pohorje.si/en

3.2 SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

3.2.1 Sustainable Energy Action Plan; Nea Propontida (Greece): Under the Sustainable Energy Action Plan, the municipality of Nea Propontida aims to promote energy efficiency and renewable energy to further green transition practices and improve sustainable consumption. These initiatives include the installation of solar lights in public areas to reduce energy consumption, upgrading municipal buildings with energy-efficient windows, low-energy devices, photovoltaic panels and geothermal heating. Moreover, the energy consumption of municipal facilities is offset by two photovoltaic parks in the municipality, each with 1MW capacity.

Find out more via: https://energypress.gr/news/fotovoltaika-systimata-sto-dimo-npropontidas

3.2.2 Municipal Eco-centre; Aveiro (Portugal): The municipality of Aveiro provides its residents with a space for depositing waste free of charge. The municipal eco-centre not only collects, recycles and reincorporates waste, but also encourages proper waste disposal by offering redeemable points for experiences and discounts for local products and services. An Exchange Market also contributes to extending the use of items, by providing a space for books, clothing and other household items exchanged between residents free of charge.

Find out more via: https://www.cm-aveiro.pt/servicos/ambiente/ecocentro-municipal

3.2.3 Smart Water Management System; Benidorm (Spain): A smart water management system has been implemented in Benidorm, which includes an advanced water recycling system that serves both public spaces and the private sector. A key feature of this system is the reuse of greywater for irrigation and public services, contributing to a 18% reduction in overall water consumption. The city has achieved a 95% water cycle efficiency, reflecting its commitment to sustainable water management practices. These efforts are monitored through ongoing measurements and indicators, contributing to a broader environmental strategy that not only optimises water use, but also supports the city's green transition goals.

© Visit Benidorm

Find out more via: https://benidorm.org/en/city-hall/departments/water-cycle
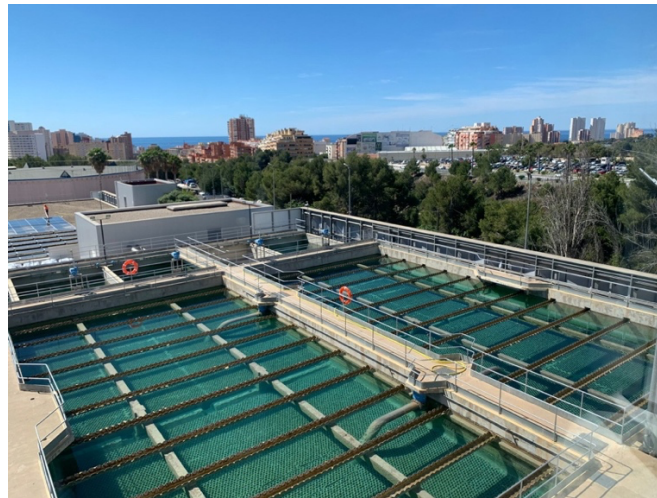
3.2.4 Harnessing Geothermal Energy; Alaşehir (Türkiye): Alaşehir uses its geothermal resources to produce sustainable electricity, contributing to Türkiye's green energy transition. The Alaşehir 1 Geothermal Power Plant, operational since 2015, generates approximately 300 GWh of clean energy annually, reducing reliance on fossil fuels. In 2023, the plant was enhanced with a solar energy unit, creating Türkiye's first hybrid geothermal-solar power plant. This innovative integration highlights Alaşehir's leadership in renewable energy in Türkiye, showcasing how geothermal resources can be combined with solar energy to achieve greater sustainability and significantly reduce carbon emissions.

Find out more via: https://www.thinkgeoenergy.com/zorlu-energy-commissions-first-hybrid-power-plant-in-alasehir-turkiye/

3.3 COMBATING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

3.3.1 Environmental Stations; Aveiro (Portugal): The municipality of Aveiro is focusing on assessing the air quality of the city through environmental stations. The installation of such stations monitors air quality, noise, and meteorological conditions, providing useful data to its Urban Platform where users can easily access information about the environmental characteristics of the city. In the second phase of this project, the air quality will be characterised using numerical air quality models, which will allow to simulate transport policies scenarios and understand their impact in the air quality and the citizen's health.

Find out more via: https://www.aveirotechcity.pt/en/activities/aveiro-tech-city-living-lab/urban-platform-hub

3.3.2 Regulating Cruise Ship Arrivals; Dubrovnik (Croatia): Dubrovnik has implemented measures to cap cruise ship arrivals as part of its strategic 'Respect the City' project, that started in 2017 to combat the impact of excessive tourism. In coordination with the world's largest cruise ship associations, the number of passengers was limited to a maximum of 4,500 per day or two ships at a time. Ships are now required to stay for at least eight hours, promoting a more balanced and sustainable approach to tourism while reducing the strain on the historic city centre.

Find out more via: https://www.dubrovnik.hr/vijesti/gradonacelnik-u-hamburgu-10537

3.4 SUSTAINABLE TOURISM MANAGEMENT

3.4.1 Deseasonalisation of Winter Destinations; Tourist Destination Rogla – Pohorje (Slovenia): The Rogla ski resort in the Tourist Destination Rogla – Pohorje (TDRP) is adapting to climate change by investing in year-round tourism initiatives and offering attractions for all tourist groups. The Park Mašinžaga – Phase 1 project at Rogla, integrates new hiking trails, nature educational trails, and adventure parks. This project fosters sustainable use of natural resources and attracts diverse visitors. Emphasising a connection with nature, the Mašinžaga project enhances ecological awareness among visitors. During the summer period, it offers outdoor activities like hiking, cycling, and wellness programs, reducing reliance on winter tourism and promoting sustainable development. This year-round approach mitigates seasonal environmental pressures and supports local economic stability.

© Slovenia Green

Find out more via: https://www.rogla-pohorje.si/en/about-destination/outdoor/

3.4.2 Diversification of the Tourism Offer; (Spain): To reduce tourism seasonality, Benidorm is diversifying its tourism offer to include health, education and eco-tourism. The city's move from a traditional sun and sea tourism model does not only reduce seasonal peaks but also provides year-round employment opportunities for locals. With eco-friendly golf courses, sustainable theme parks and cultural tours that explore local heritage and crafts, the city attracts visitors all year round. This diversification also helps to distribute tourism generated revenue more evenly across the community, supporting a more balanced and sustainable model for the local economy. Through this approach, Benidorm has transformed its tourism sector into a model of long-term sustainability.

© Visit Benidorm

Find out more via: https://en.visitbenidorm.es/ver/1141/turismo-de-salud.html

3.4.3 Smarter Visitor Management; Dubrovnik (Croatia): The Dubrovnik Pass is a digital solution designed to enhance visitor management by offering access to cultural landmarks, museums, and public transport. From 2025, visitors will pre-select visit dates when purchasing the pass, allowing for better distribution of visitor numbers. This solution reduces overcrowding, protects the city's cultural heritage, and improves the overall experience for both tourists and residents.

Find out more via: https://www.dubrovnikpass.com/

3.5 OFFERING GREEN TOURISM ACTIVITIES

3.5.1 Nature Tourism; Aveiro (Portugal): Focusing on nature conservation and protection, the municipality of Aveiro provides visitors with an almost 600 kilometres long route around the Ria de Aveiro and the São Jacinto Dunes Natural Reserve. Promoting its natural heritage and the Ria de Aveiro brand, the municipality

establishes itself as a nature tourism destination, educating visitors about nature protection and sustainable behaviour. Named as the first Portuguese Capital of Culture in 2024, Aveiro also had an opportunity to create a year-round programme of events that celebrates and promotes local heritage. Inviting tourists outside of the usual tourism seasons, the city provided accessible events in the realm of culture, creativity and technological innovation, as well as nature and biodiversity.

© Municipality of Aveiro

Find out more via: https://www.aveiro2024.pt/en/aveiro-2024/

3.5.2 Sustainable Outdoor Activities; Panevėžys (Lithuania): Panevėžys offers a variety of sustainable outdoor activities, including hiking events, canoe trips, and river clean-ups, which engage both residents and visitors in preserving the city's natural environment. These initiatives foster a culture of environmental responsibility while promoting physical activity and eco-tourism. Organised in collaboration with local communities and organisations, these activities contribute to the city's green credentials and attract visitors looking for sustainable travel options. With these initiatives, Panevėžys continues to enhance its reputation as an eco-tourism destination by blending nature conservation with community involvement.

© Paulius Vepštas

Find out more via: https://www.panevezysnow.lt/why-panevezys/

3.5.3 Green Tourism; Amarante (Portugal): The municipality of Amarante promotes its eco-tourism initiatives and outdoor activities to tourists. Hiking and biking infrastructure has been developed with different routes accessible to visitors and residents. The Ecopista do Tâmega trail follows a decommissioned railway route, while the Marão Trail offers different hiking paths varying in difficulty. Nature activities in the municipality are accessible to different audiences – in the Marão and Aboboreira Mountains, visitors can find trails surrounded by nature for hiking, mountain biking or birdwatching. While visitors looking for of health and well-being spots can relax in the Amarante Pure Termas & SPA.

Find out more via: https://amarantetourism.com/poi/estacao-nautica/

3.6 ENGAGING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

3.6.1 Education and Involvement in Sustainable Initiatives; Nea Propontida (Greece): The municipality of Nea Propontida aims to involve local communities in its green transition practices. The BeePathNet Project develops urban beekeeping in the area and integrates tourism with the agri-food sector, promoting local entrepreneurship and employment. The project has created the BeePath – a new tourist attraction highlighting local beekeeping traditions and educating visitors. The municipality further promotes local farmers and entrepreneurs by hosting festivals and events such as the Honey Festival, the Gastronomy Festival and the Sardine Festival, showcasing rich local heritage and culinary traditions and providing local communities with opportunities to promote their businesses.

© Municipality of Nea Propontida

Find out more via: https://sites.google.com/view/beepathnet-melissodiadromes/%CE%B1%CF%81%CF%87%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE-%CF%83%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%AF%CE%B4%CE%B1

3.6.2 Community Involvement in Tourism; Tourist Destination Rogla – Pohorje (Slovenia): Community involvement is integral to Tourist Destination Rogla – Pohorje's (TDRP) sustainability strategy. Residents are engaged in tourism planning through surveys, annual meetings, and a local supplier fair. These activities foster a sense of ownership and ensure that tourism benefits are shared with the local community. Cultural events, traditional crafts, and culinary experiences, promoted through the 'Okusi Rogle' brand, link visitors with locals and enrich the tourism experience. TDRP's approach to sustainable tourism ensures balanced economic performance and promotes local employment. The Foundation for Nature Pohorje, funded by contributions from ski pass sales, supports conservation projects and raises awareness about the importance of preserving natural resources. Community involvement in tourism planning ensures that the benefits of tourism are widely shared, fostering social inclusion and economic resilience.

© Jesse Štefane, Rogla-Pohorje

Find out more via: https://www.rogla-pohorje.si/en/enjoy/tastes-of-rogla/

3.6.3 Linking Tourists with Local Traditions; Benidorm (Spain): Benidorm involves local communities in tourism planning and decision-making while preserving its cultural heritage. Local festivals and events, such as the annual Film Festival and Historical Reenactments, play a central role in celebrating and safeguarding traditions, with local businesses and artisans playing an integral part in these celebrations. The city also offers programmes that connect visitors to its heritage, such as guided historical tours and gastronomy workshops with local chefs. These initiatives not only provide an authentic experience for tourists but also fosters a sense of pride among locals and generate tangible economic benefits.

© Visit Benidorm

Find out more via: https://en.visitbenidorm.es/ver/1163/fiestas-and-events.html

3.6.4 Engaging the Youth; Jurmala (Latvia): Jurmala involves its young residents in initiatives that promote community engagement and skill development. The city co-finances summer jobs in tourism and hospitality sectors, helping young people gain work experience and become more involved in the community. Additionally, the city of Jurmala organises workshops where young people are invited to share their insights that can improve their neighbourhoods and the urban environment. These initiatives foster a sense of belonging, empower young people and contribute to the development of the city.

© Administration of Jurmala Local Government

Find out more via: https://www.visitjurmala.lv/en/

3.6.5 Business Development Competitions; Jurmala (Latvia): The city of Jurmala aims to foster sustainable business practices and reduce environmental impact. Local entrepreneurs can support their businesses through a competition, receiving co-financing for innovative tourism projects. Examples of these projects include a floating solar panel park in post-purification water pools that reduces carbon emissions, smart lighting systems that improve energy efficiency, and an energy management system that monitors heat, electricity and water consumption in municipal buildings.

© Administration of Jurmala Local Government

Find out more via: https://www.visitjurmala.lv/en/

3.6.6 Community Garden Initiative; Panevėžys (Lithuania): The Community Garden Initiative in Panevėžys fosters stronger community ties while promoting sustainable urban agriculture. Organised by the Pragiedruliai Creativity Centre, the Community Garden encourages residents to grow vegetables together, enhancing local food security, reducing the environmental footprint of food production, and creating a shared experience. These gardens also provide educational opportunities, offering a platform for workshops on sustainable practices. The project supports a greener urban environment while empowering the community to contribute actively to sustainability efforts.

© Paulius Vepštas

Find out more via: https://pragiedrek.lt/en

3.7 ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

3.7.1 Interpretative Centre of Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Mining; Valongo (Portugal): Valongo has developed a Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Mining Interpretive Centre within Porto National Park to enhance the visitor experience and promote environmental education. The centre was created to raise awareness of the region's natural heritage and the importance of conservation. It serves as a hub for nature tourism, offering guided tours that introduce tourists to the area's unique flora and fauna, while highlighting the need to protect endangered species and biodiversity. The area also hosts interactive initiatives such as reforestation of native species, engaging local citizens to improve biodiversity, prevent forest fires and increase forest resilience.

Find out more via: https://www.cm-valongo.pt/municipio/contactos-uteis/poi/centro-de-interpretacao-ambiental-e-da-mineracao-romana-ciamr

3.7.2 Hydroponic Greenhouse; Panevėžys (Lithuania): Panevėžys has introduced an innovative hydroponic greenhouse to educate visitors about eco-friendly growing techniques and sustainable agriculture. Operated by the Panevėžys Regional STEAM Open Access Centre, the greenhouse offers hands-on workshops to demonstrate how hydroponics can reduce water consumption while boosting agricultural productivity. This initiative raises awareness about sustainable food production and equips residents and visitors with practical knowledge to adopt greener practices. By promoting environmentally friendly farming methods, Panevėžys showcases its commitment to sustainability and modern agricultural solutions.

© MODO fotografija

Find out more via: https://steamlt.lt/naujienos/technologijos-ir-tvarumas-panevezyje-pristatytas-modernizuotas-hidroponinis-siltnamis/

3.8 SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

3.8.1 Transforming Urban and Natural Sites; Jelgava (Latvia): Jelgava's natural and urban green infrastructures, such as parks, rivers and forest areas, play a pivotal role in improving air quality, reducing urban heat, and maintaining biodiversity. The city of Jelgava is actively transforming its natural infrastructure through various projects such as the 'Improvement of the degraded area of Pilssalas Street' project (2020), funded by the European Union, developed and preserved significant natural heritage by rehabilitating degraded areas and enhancing their functionality. In the meadows of Svete floodplain, previously overgrown with bushes, a recreation area has been created, including a network of wooden boardwalks, creating more than 1.6 kilometres long walking trails.

© Jelgava State City

Find out more via: https://www.visit.jelgava.lv/en/sightseeing/piedzivojums/nature-and-parks/item/3253-svetes-palienes-plavas

3.8.2 Improvement of Cultural and Historical Infrastructure; Sliven (Bulgaria): Sliven's commitment to sustainable tourism is evident in its ambitious project to reconstruct and renovate cultural and historical sites, combining energy-efficient measures with innovative approaches. This initiative includes the restoration of iconic landmarks such as the Tuida Fortress and the creation of thematic tourist itineraries enriched with digital elements. The project enhances accessibility while preserving cultural heritage, offering an eco-friendly and engaging experience for visitors. These efforts highlight Sliven's holistic approach to green tourism, connecting history with sustainability.

Find out more via: https://tuidacastle.sliven.bg/en/the-project.html

3.8.3 Green Regeneration of Industrial Areas; Liepāja (Latvia): Liepāja has repurposed its former industrial zones into vibrant green spaces, demonstrating the potential for sustainable urban development. These transformations preserve the city's industrial heritage while creating new public areas that enhance the quality of life for residents. By reimagining disused industrial sites, Liepāja offers a model for urban regeneration that balances history with sustainability. This approach revitalises the city while providing green oases for residents and visitors to enjoy.

Find out more via: https://liepaja.travel/en/homepage/

3.9 ACCESSIBILITY

3.9.1 Tourism for all; Nea Propontida (Greece): The municipality of Nea Propontida aims to improve accessibility of its cultural sites as well as the beach, making it accessible for all. The municipality provides autonomous access to the beach for people with disabilities with the help of a railway system for sea access, solar-powered changing rooms and accessible showers. The municipality is also improving accessibility to cultural sites, from the Petralona Cave to the fortification wall of Kassandra in Potidea. The Sustainable Urban Mobility and Accessibility Plans will further improve the overall accessibility in the municipality.

Find out more via: https://www.nea-propontida.gr/promitheia-systimaton-aytonomis-prosvasis-amea-stis/

3.9.2 Accessible Beach Complex; Liepāja (Latvia): Liepāja's accessible beach complex offers a welcoming environment for all visitors. Special facilities include swimming wheelchairs and audio booths that provide blind swimmers with vital information about water safety. These features ensure that everyone can enjoy the beach experience inclusively and independently. By prioritising accessibility, Liepāja sets an example of inclusive tourism, creating a destination where everyone can relax and connect with nature.

© Liepāja Region Tourism information Office

Find out more via: https://www.liepaja.lv/en/accessible-tourism/
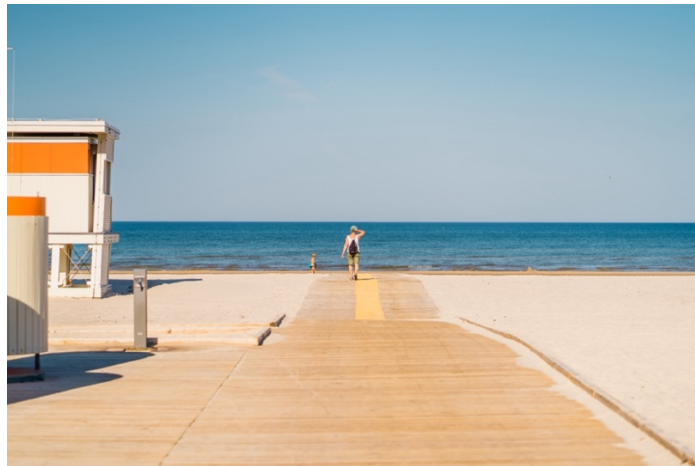
3.9.3 'Hear, Smell, Feel Liepāja' Route; Liepāja (Latvia): Liepāja's sensory route offers visually impaired visitors a unique way to experience the city's cultural and historical treasures. Guided by a trained blind guide, the route highlights key landmarks through engaging sensory experiences. This initiative exemplifies Liepāja's dedication to inclusive tourism, ensuring that everyone, regardless of ability, can access and appreciate the city's rich heritage. By blending accessibility with cultural immersion, the route enhances Liepāja's reputation as a welcoming destination for all.

© Liepāja Region Tourism information Office

Find out more via: https://mapeirons.eu/en/object/route-feel-liepaja/

3.10 SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

3.10.1 Promoting Sustainable Transport; Jurmala (Latvia): Jurmala promotes sustainable mobility and reduces the environmental impact of transport. A fee for visitors entering the city by car, put in place in 1996, reduces transit traffic and promotes eco-friendly transport options. Additionally, the city offers free public transport for residents, including city buses and free daily train rides to Riga, Latvia's capital. These initiatives encourage sustainable travel, benefiting both residents and visitors, while serving as a model for other destinations aiming to reduce their carbon footprint and promote greener transport choices.

© Administration of Jurmala Local Government

Find out more via: https://www.visitjurmala.lv/en/whats-on/getting-here/

3.10.2 Enhancing green mobility; Aveiro (Portugal): The municipality of Aveiro aims to reduce energy consumption and CO_2 emissions with changes and upgrades to its public transport system. 45% of the AveiroBus public transport network buses are fully electric, resulting in the elimination of more than 380 tonnes of CO_2 per year. As part of the public transport offer, Aveiro is operating the first 100% electric ferryboat developed in Portugal, providing transport for both tourists and residents between São Jacinto and Forte da Barra. The Salicórnia electric ferryboat eliminates more than 300 tonnes of CO_2 per year and increases capacity for transported vehicles and passengers. To further promote green mobility, the municipality of Aveiro provides its residents and visitors with an easy-to-use bike-sharing system – BUGA. The new BUGA bikes, with an integrated GPS system, make it possible for the municipality to see which routes are most travelled, resulting in better management of public spaces.

© Municipality of Aveiro

Find out more via: https://buga.cm-aveiro.pt/

3.10.3 Sustainable Urban Mobility and Green Spaces; Sliven (Bulgaria): Sliven enhances urban life with a sustainable mobility project featuring electric buses and modernised trolleys. These environmentally friendly transport solutions reduce emissions while improving connectivity for residents and tourists. New parks and pedestrian areas in the city create greener urban spaces, fostering a more liveable and inviting environment. Together, these initiatives highlight Sliven's dedication to sustainability and its vision for a greener future.

Find out more via: https://www.ceeweb.org/eufunds/best-practice.php?id=296

3.10.4 Relieving Traffic Pressure; Dubrovnik (Croatia): Dubrovnik's Park & Ride system aims to reduce traffic congestion in its historic centre while aligning with UNESCO guidelines. Located in Pobrežje, the parking facility features 624 parking spaces and connects to the city centre via public transport. A new traffic regime prioritises residents, ensuring sustainable urban mobility. This system protects Dubrovnik's cultural heritage while enhancing the visitor experience and maintaining the city's charm.

Find out more via: https://www.dubrovnik.hr/

3.11 PROMOTION OF CYCLING AND WALKING

3.11.1 Cycling Paths; Valongo (Portugal): Valongo has developed an integrated network of cycle paths to promote sustainable mobility options for both visitors and residents. In early 2024, the second phase of the cycling network was inaugurated, connecting two train stations and facilitating easy access to public transport. This

integration encourages the use of bicycles, enabling visitors to travel within the municipality and to nearby cities such as Porto. The initiative played a key role in Valongo winning the European Mobility Week 2021, highlighting its commitment to improving sustainable mobility and promoting eco-friendly travel choices.

© Municipality of Valongo

Find out more via: https://www.valongoinoutdoor.pt/

3.11.2 Cycling and Camper Infrastructure; Pordenone (Italy): Pordenone has introduced several initiatives to promote sustainable mobility and reduce environmental impact of tourism. Changes in city infrastructure include a free public bike hire service, that offers an eco-friendly way of exploring the city, a camper parking area and an extended network of cycle paths. Since 2018, the city has increased the length of its cycle paths from 14 metres per 100 inhabitants to 17.2 metres, encouraging both visitors and residents to choose more sustainable transport options. These initiatives contribute to making Pordenone a more accessible, inclusive and environmentally conscious destination for all.

Find out more via: https://www.pordenonewithlove.it/en/cosa-fare/sport/ciclying-mtb/cycling-through-parks-pordenone

3.11.3 Promotion of pedestrian routes; Aveiro (Portugal): Aveiro is enhancing its urban spaces to encourage both visitors and residents to explore the city on foot. By extending parking spaces outside the centre, widening pavements and introducing more public transport lines, the municipality is reducing traffic in the city centre and making it more pedestrian-friendly. The Aveiro pedestrian map invites tourists to visit the city by foot, provides information on estimated walking times between attractions and services of interest.

© Municipality of Aveiro

Find out more via: https://www.cm-aveiro.pt/visitantes/mapa-da-cidade

3.11.4 Promoting and Enhancing Cycling Tourism; Panevėžys (Lithuania): Panevėžys promotes eco-friendly tourism through an extensive network of 108 kilometres of bike lanes across eight scenic routes. Collaborating with local cycling clubs, the city organises popular cycling events that attract eco-conscious tourists while showcasing its industrial heritage and natural landscapes. By supporting sustainable mobility and reducing vehicle dependency, Panevėžys demonstrates its commitment to green tourism and environmental awareness. These efforts encourage both residents and visitors to explore the city sustainably while enjoying its cultural and natural assets.

© Elvinas Rokas Tamulynas

Find out more via: https://www.panevezysnow.lt/why-panevezys/

3.12 DIGITALISATION

3.12.1 Beach Management App; Benidorm (Spain): Benidorm has integrated smart technologies into its tourism management to improve both the visitor experience and the city's sustainability efforts. The city has developed an app that provides residents and tourists with real-time information about beach and weather conditions. Object counting cameras and control software provide data on visitor numbers, allowing the city to better manage visitor flows and reduce overcrowding, especially during high tourism months. With the help of this management technology, the city improves tourist satisfaction, creates a better experience for both locals and visitors, and reduces pressure on its infrastructure and natural resources. The system serves as an example of how smart technology can help address the challenges of overtourism and can be adapted by other destinations facing similar pressures.

Find out more via: https://benidorm.org/en/news/benidorm-implements-monitoring-system-measure-influx-people-its-beaches

3.12.2 Use of Technology to Mitigate Traffic; Liepāja (Latvia): Liepāja uses advanced traffic management solutions, including smart traffic lights and surveillance cameras, to improve road safety and reduce traffic congestion. Technology that detects red-light violations and optimises traffic flow, contributes to creating smoother and more efficient urban mobility. By prioritising innovative solutions, Liepāja enhances the travel experience for residents and tourists while supporting sustainable transportation practices. This initiative reflects the city's commitment to creating safer, greener, and more efficient road networks.

Find out more via: https://www.ubc-sustainable.net/news/smart-traffic-lights-liepaja-line-un-sdgs

3.12.3 Use of Virtual Reality and Digital Tools; Sliven (Bulgaria): Sliven leverages virtual reality and digital tools to offer immersive and educational tourism experiences. Visitors can explore historical landmarks through virtual reality, while augmented reality mobile apps provide access to 3D models and personalised itineraries. Through multilingual audio guides and interactive displays, the city also enhances its appeal to international visitors. By integrating technology, Sliven transforms its cultural heritage into an engaging, interactive experience for modern travellers.

Find out more via: https://mun.sliven.bg/en/index

3.13 SUSTAINABLE PROMOTION OF LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

3.13.1 Numerous Cultural Events; Pordenone (Italy): Pordenone hosts a wide range of national and international cultural events that enrich the local culture and attract tens of thousands of visitors every year. Notable events include Pordenonelegge, Italy's second largest literary festival, which attracted an estimated 110,000 visitors in 2023, and the Pordenone Blues&Co Festival, featuring world-famous musicians such as Alice Cooper in 2024. In addition, the Pordenone Art and Food Festival celebrates local culinary excellence, promoting the region's wine and food sector and supporting local producers. These events promote cultural pride, environmental awareness and community involvement, benefiting both tourists and residents.

Find out more via: https://www.pordenonewithlove.it/en/eventi/elenco-eventi

3.13.2 Cultural Offer for Tourists; Amarante (Portugal): The municipality of Amarante organises events and festivals with a focus on sustainability. By using recyclable materials and avoiding waste, some of the events, such as the 'Há Fest!', are classified as eco-events. To further their practices in sustainability, the municipality offers visitors a year-round programme of events at the Amarante Cine-Teatro and invites visitors to learn about the area in the Amadeo de Sousa Cardoso Museum, the Casa da Granja, the Monastery of São Gonçalo, the São Gonçalo Bridge and the Route of the Romanesque. The cultural offer of the municipality also includes its local cuisine – from meat to fish and sweets, as well as local green wine.

Find out more via: https://amarantetourism.com/cat-poi/eventos/

3.13.3 Promotion of Local Events; Valongo (Portugal): Valongo celebrates its local heritage with lively events such as the 'Feira da Regueifa e do Biscoito' and the 'Mercado Oitocentista'. These events aim to preserve and promote the cultural traditions and history of the municipality. The 'Feira da Regueifa e do Biscoito' is an annual festival that celebrates the most traditional foods of the town, regueifa (a type of bread) and biscuits, and gives small local producers the opportunity to showcase and sell their products. Visitors can also learn about the history of these products through workshops at the Oficina da Regueifa e do Biscoito. The 'Mercado Oitocentista' recreates a 19th century rural market, bringing the region's past to life. Both events help to preserve Valongo's cultural heritage, foster local pride and community involvement, while benefiting tourists by offering authentic experiences and supporting the local economy.

Find out more via: https://www.cm-valongo.pt/descobrir/eventos/evento/feira-da-regueifa-e-do-biscoito-mercado-oitocentista-de-30-de-maio-a-02-de-junho

3.14 CULTURAL HERITAGE PRESERVATION

3.14.1 Preserving cultural heritage; Alaşehir (Türkiye): The Philadelphia Ancient City in Alaşehir is a landmark of cultural and historical significance, featuring sites like St. Jean Church, the Ancient Theatre, and Yıldırım Beyazıt Mosque. To preserve its heritage, the municipality launched the Philadelphia Ancient City Trip Route Project. The initiative includes the installation of directional signage, information boards, and thematic itineraries, enabling visitors to explore key historical sites. By combining conservation efforts with improved visitor accessibility, the project ensures that Alaşehir's cultural treasures are safeguarded for future generations while enhancing its appeal as a sustainable tourism destination.

Find out more via: https://www.atasehir.bel.tr/