

*Press Announcement*

*Brussels, 25.09.2018*

## **Helsinki and Lyon selected as 2019 European Capitals of Smart Tourism by European Jury**

**EU announces two cities to hold the title of European Capitals of Smart Tourism in 2019 and recognises a further four cities for their outstanding achievements in: accessibility, sustainability, digitalisation and cultural heritage & creativity**

Helsinki and Lyon have been selected as the winners of the first edition of the EU's European Capital of Smart Tourism competition, following a jury meeting in Brussels on 24 September 2018. The official Award Ceremony will take place at the [European Tourism Day](#) conference, organised by the European Commission on 7 November 2018 in Brussels.

The European Capital of Smart Tourism is an EU initiative based on a proposal from the European Parliament, which secured its funding for 2018 - 2019 through a Preparatory Action. The initiative focuses on strengthening tourism generated innovative development in EU cities and their surroundings.

38 Cities from 19 EU Member States had applied to compete for the title but both Helsinki and Lyon stood out for their innovative tourism measures in all 4 categories of the competition, the exciting programme of activities they have put together to celebrate their achievements and their suitability to act as role models for other burgeoning smart tourism destinations during 2019.

The seven-member jury, comprising representatives from the European Commission, European Parliament, European Committee of Regions and the EU Member States: Bulgaria and Austria (holders of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union

during 2018), decided upon the two European Capitals of Smart Tourism 2019. Four further cities were announced as the winners in the specific categories: Accessibility (Málaga), Sustainability (Ljubljana), Digitalisation (Copenhagen) and Cultural Heritage & Creativity (Linz). These four cities will be recognised with European Smart Tourism Awards.

Commissioner Elżbieta Bieńkowska responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: "I congratulate Helsinki and Lyon for the outstanding solutions that they put in place to make tourism in their cities smart and innovative. Our objective at EU level is to foster the sustainable development of tourism by showcasing innovative solutions from EU cities in tourism. We believe that the European Capital of Smart Tourism initiative will help to establish a framework of exchange of good practices between European cities, including learning from each other and networking, creating opportunities for cooperation and new partnerships. Tourism is important for the EU economy so we all need to work together more effectively to be more competitive and grow in a sustainable way". Throughout 2019, Helsinki and Lyon will be given EU wide visibility. Both cities will be provided with expert communication and branding support, which will include the production of promotional videos, the installation of a purpose-built sculpture and bespoke promotional activities.

All of the winning cities will be awarded at the European Tourism Day on 7 November 2018 – a major EU tourism event - and featured at the exhibition where several hundred participants from all over Europe will have the opportunity to discover their best practices in the field of smart tourism. To view the programme and register for the event, please click [here](#).

For those not in Brussels in November, stay tuned for the exciting programme of events and activities taking place in the European Capitals of Smart Tourism during 2019.