



#EuTourismCapital

2023 European Capital of Smart Tourism Shortlist Announced!

From a pool of 29 candidates from all over Europe, seven cities made their way to the next stage of the European Capital of Smart Tourism 2023 competition.

The [shortlisted cities](#) were selected by a panel of experts, attaining the highest score across accessibility, sustainability, digitalisation, and cultural heritage categories. The following seven cities will now compete for the 2023 European Capital of Smart Tourism title.



SHORTLISTED FINALISTS EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SMART TOURISM 2023 AWARD



The European Capital of Smart Tourism is an EU initiative that seeks to foster pioneering, sustainable, and inclusive tourism development, as well as spread and facilitate the exchange of best practices in tourism. Since 2018, the competition has highlighted best practices and success stories from smart tourism role models across Europe. Previous winners Helsinki and Lyon (2019), Málaga and Gothenburg (2020), València and Bordeaux (2022) regularly top international rankings of sustainability, innovation, liveability, and integration of smart practices, and have become role models and forerunners for smart tourism in Europe.

In November 2022, the shortlisted cities will be invited to present their candidatures in front of a European Jury, who will select the 2023 European Capitals of Smart Tourism.

Meet the 2023 Shortlisted Cities

[Aarhus](#) (Denmark)

Denmark's second largest city, Aarhus is aiming to become CO2 neutral by 2030 and is therefore one of Europe's "100 European Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities 2030". Sustainable development is at the heart of the city's strategy, particularly in tourism. The local tourism organisation VisitAarhus has been designated and certified as a "Green Tourism Organisation", and around 70% of the hotels in the city hold a "Green Key" certification, meaning that your stay has a positive impact on the environment.



[Gijón](#) (Spain)

Located in northern Spain, the city strives to meet the challenges involved in sustainable tourism. In 2019 Gijón was awarded "Biosphere Gold Destination" certification, a credential granted by the Responsible Tourism Institute associated with UNESCO to destinations committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. The city is very advanced in the implementation of new technologies to improve governance and innovation; for instance, setting up Gijón DemoLAB, a space where companies can test the compatibility of their IoT technology with the city's network.



Pafos (Cyprus)

As a coastal destination, seaside tourism is important for the city. Since the beginning of the Blue Flag programme, a certification by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) for beaches, marinas, or sustainable boating tourism operators, six of Pafos beaches have been granted Blue Flag Status. It is based on several criteria relating to water quality, information provision, environmental education, safety, and environmental management.



Porto (Portugal)

Thanks to the “Porto Free Wi-Fi”, with more than 300 Access Points and still expanding, Porto with its 900-year history is at the digital forefront of European tourism. It allows residents and visitors to use the different digital platforms responding to their needs. For instance, ShopInPorto is a large digital window dedicated exclusively to traditional commerce. With more than 1,600 verified merchants promoting their commercial space, the platform foments digital visibility and attractiveness of the local business.



San Sebastián (Spain)

A destination with long standing cultural traditions, San Sebastian has conducted a Special Plan for Urban Cultural Heritage (2014) with information about norms for protection of the architectural, historical, or cultural value of the city. San Sebastián has also facilitated urban renewal projects to support the cultural and creative sector while integrating

landscape protection into land planning and management policies. Successful examples such as The Tabakalera, a former tobacco factory turned into cultural centre and the Hondalea.



Seville (Spain)

A city steeped in history and tradition, Seville is also improving accessibility and urban space management. The city has implemented projects such as “Sevilla Smart Accessibility Tourist & Events”, with ICT-based actions (GIS technology and AI tools) analysing and processing all information by establishing corrective actions and designing accessible routes between neighbourhoods, all of which is available for users through the Seville Accessible App.



Zagreb (Croatia)

Capital of the Republic of Croatia, Zagreb has a central part with a surface area of about 6.5km², with 81,669m of car-free streets and the city authorities plan to make the city centre a pedestrian zone. Zagreb wants also to encourage people to use bikes, with currently nearly 500km of bicycle zones, and as the only city that has dedicated a whole month to the popularisation of cycling, celebrated as “Žbicanj” in May since 2018.



News from the 2022 European Capitals of Smart Tourism Bordeaux and València

Smart tourism best practices sharing webinar in Dublin

On 13 September 2022 the Dublin Smart Tourism Office and the Dublin City Council's European Office hosted the Smart Tourism Best Practice Sharing Webinar. For the digital event, the 2022 European Capitals of Smart Tourism, Bordeaux and València, were invited to share and discuss their smart tourism strategies and achievements along with European Commission representatives and members of the Smart Dublin Bureau. Special guests to the event were Julie Benisty, Sustainable Tourism Manager of the Bordeaux Tourism Office, and Joan-Carles Cambrils i Camarena, Deputy Director of Visit València.

Read more news about the 2022 European Capitals of Smart Tourism Bordeaux and València [here](#).

The People's Climate Festival in Middelfart, Denmark

From 1 – 3 September 2022, the 2022 European Destination of Excellence Middelfart hosted the People's Climate Festival, an event that brings together stakeholders, citizens, artists, and politicians eager to put sustainability at the top of the agenda to find a common solution to climate change. Initially a local event, over the last three years the People's Climate Festival has grown in importance and assistance numbers at the national level in Denmark, gathering more than 10,000 participants in 2021 edition and seeking to attract international visitors. This year's programme comprised a variety of unique and curated workshops, activities, seminars, concerts, and events, all free of charge and entirely non-commercial. Find more information about the festival [here](#).



Stay tuned for the upcoming episode in the EU Smart Tourism Podcast

The next episode of the [EU Smart Tourism Podcast](#) series is coming out soon! Don't miss out on the latest news, best practices, and fascinating insights in the world of smart tourism. Learn more on the innovative ways past and the European smart tourism network incorporate smart tourism into the tourism experience for visitors and residents alike.



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