

Sustainable Cultural Tourism and Heritage Preservation Synergies

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European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN)

the only pan-European network of regional and local authorities, tourism boards and associations, universities and research institutes that brings together the cultural and tourism sectors to cooperate for **Sustainable Cultural Tourism** development and promotion



**Formed in Brussels in May 2009, as a merger of 2 previous networks
Over 40 members in 21 countries, 15 EU member states and 6 associated countries**

**Founding member of the European Heritage Alliance 3.3
Signatory of the European Tourism Manifesto**



Annual Awards since 2014

the only awards for sustainable cultural tourism



Since 2018 EYCH in partnership with:



**EUROPEAN
TRAVEL
COMMISSION**



Supported by other European Networks,
Associations and Cultural Routes





18th International Conference for Cultural Tourism in Europe

Visitor Experiences and Authenticity for Sustainable, Smart and Resilient Cultural Tourism Destinations



1 - 4 October 2025 | Sibiu | Romania



Supporting:



Glasgow Declaration
Climate Action in Tourism



Climate Heritage NETWORK
Mobilising arts, culture & cultural heritage for #climateaction



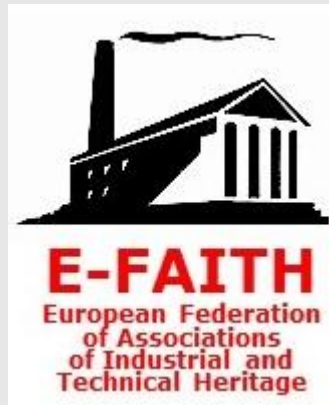
New European Bauhaus
beautiful | sustainable | together



EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SMART TOURISM



Partnerships



ECTN Charter for Sustainable Cultural Tourism



A Statement of principles on regional policies and strategies that guide the development, planning, management, operations and promotion of cultural and heritage tourism in the European Union and beyond for the benefit of destinations, communities, businesses, citizens and visitors

Originally proposed in 2014, revised in 2018 as ECTN's contribution to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

30 Topics of or related to Sustainable Cultural Tourism

Under a major revision in 2025 through open consultation



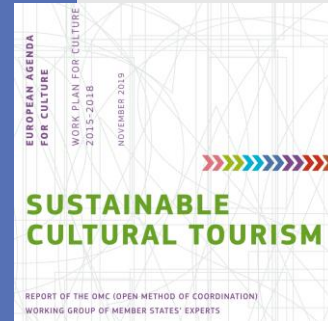
Sustainable Cultural Tourism Definitions

Cultural Tourism implies: “A type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the **tangible and intangible cultural attractions**/ products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and **cultural heritage**, culinary heritage, literature, music, **creative industries** and the **living cultures** with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and **traditions**”.

UN Tourism General Assembly, 22nd session (2017)

Sustainable Cultural Tourism is the **integrated management of cultural heritage and tourism** activities in conjunction with the local community, creating social, environmental and economic benefits for all stakeholders in order to achieve **tangible and intangible cultural heritage conservation** and sustainable tourism development. (European Commission DG EAC, OMC Report 2019).

Sustainable Tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities. (UNWTO).



Cultural Tourism Facts

- Cultural tourism accounts for approximately **37%** of global tourism.
- Cultural tourism in Europe represents approximately **40% to 50%** of all international tourism arrivals.
- For city breaks this % can be much higher in some countries.
- Cultural tourism grows faster than overall tourism demand.
- Cultural tourists have higher incomes, are more educated and have higher expectations than average.



European
Heritage
Hub



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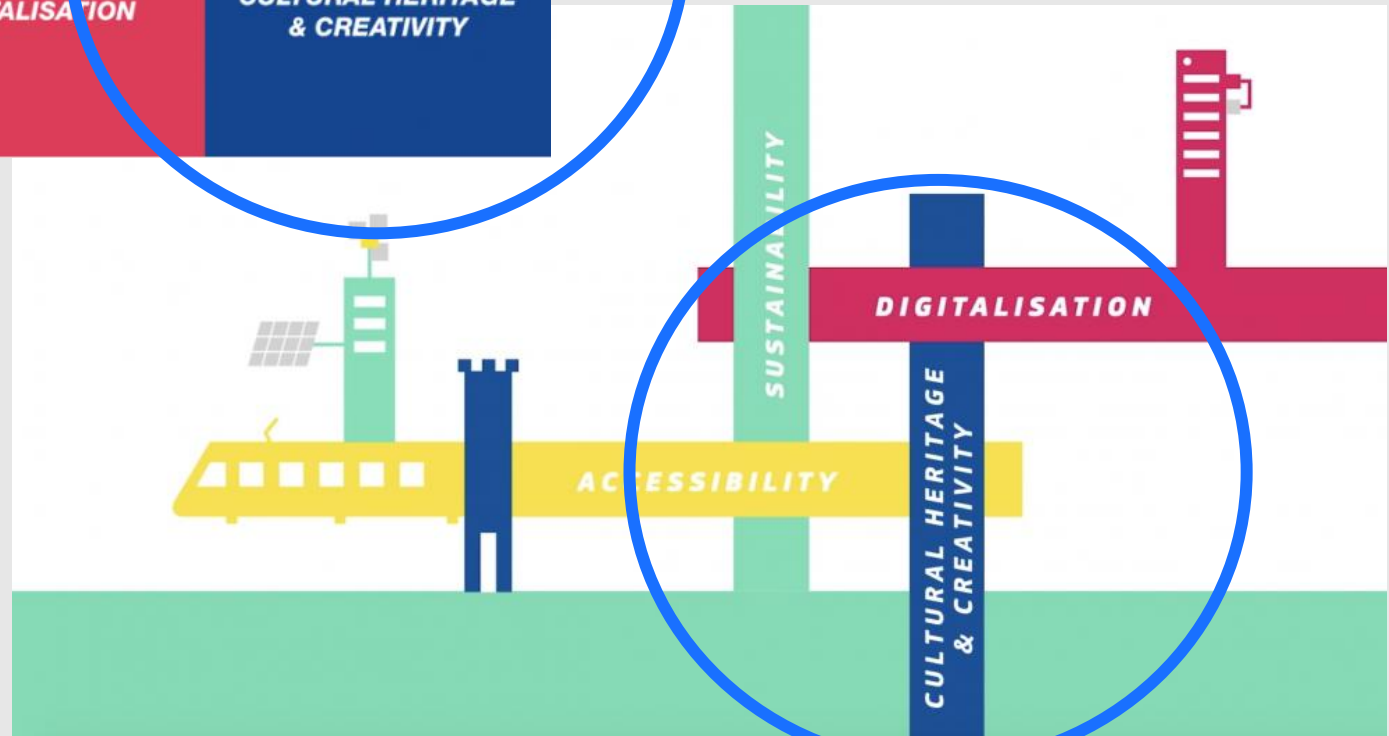
Synergies

- Visitors' interest induces efforts to preserve heritage and present it for attracting sustainable cultural tourism.
- Heritage preservation and promotion helps create sustainable cultural tourism products and services.
- Sustainable cultural tourism benefits local host communities and motivates them to improve their heritage offer.
- Preserved heritage enhances the visitors' experience, particularly through digitalisation facilities.
- Sustainable cultural tourism development can be the catalyst for digital transition in heritage promotion.



Cultural Heritage and Creativity

in the EU Smart Tourism Capitals initiative



Smart Tourism Capitals 2023-2024

With Cultural Heritage and Creativity

Dublin 2024



ECTN Member

Pafos 2023



ECTN Presidency 2021-2024: Pafos Regional Board of Tourism

European Capital of Culture 2017
UNESCO World Heritage Site



EU Transition Pathway for Tourism

- 27 topics on green and digital transition of the tourism sector with target year 2030
- Although no topic exclusively on cultural tourism, 10 out of 27 topics have direct reference to culture and heritage aspects
- Also relevant to advancing smart tourism
- Will form the basis for the new EU Tourism Strategy to be launched in early 2026.



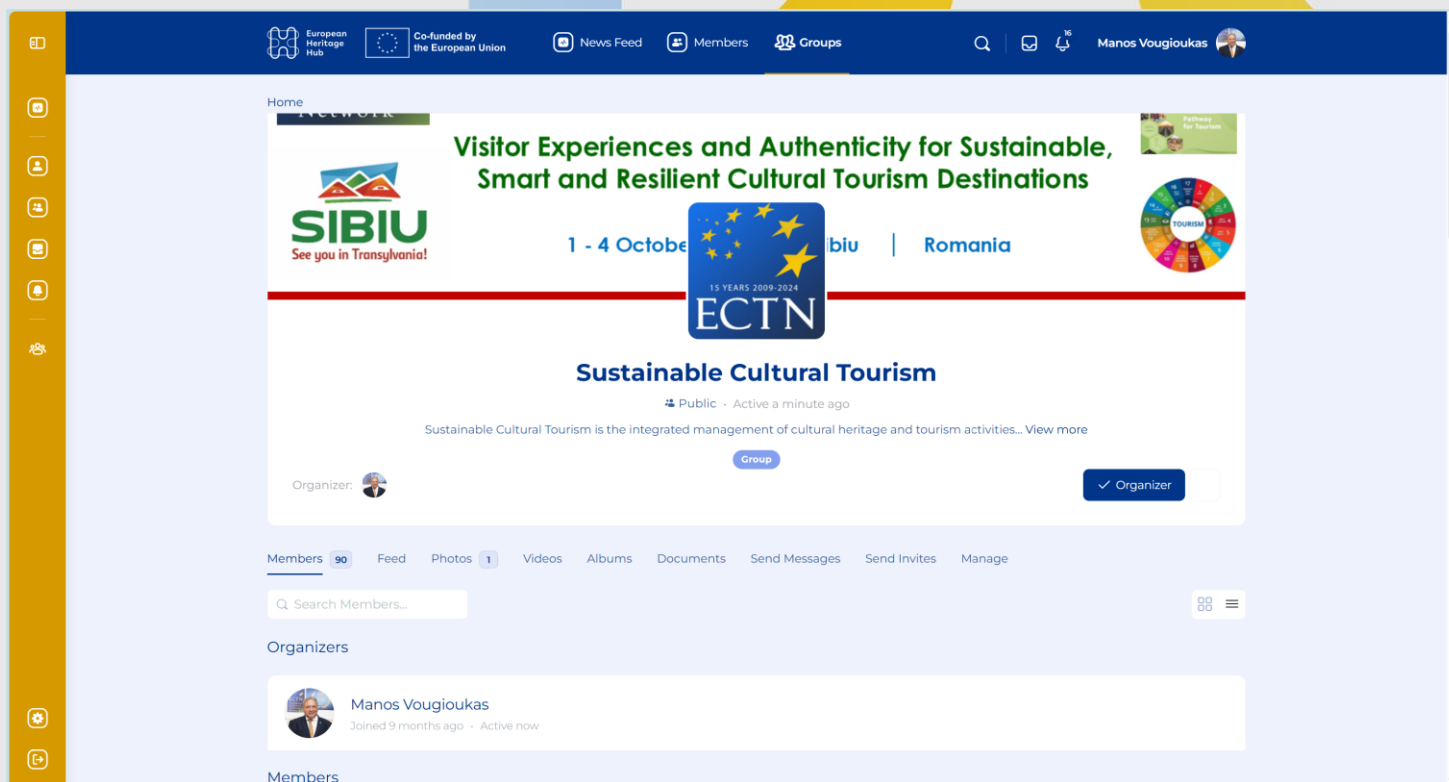
European Heritage Hub Activities

- ReInHerit Horizon CSA Handbook about Collaboration and Communication between Museums and Heritage Sites
- Links with ReInHerit Digital Hub : www.reinherit-hub.eu



Sustainable Cultural Tourism Group by ECTN

- Created 9 months ago (1 of 20)
- 90 members
- Potential platform for exchanges
- Framework for Culture Compass and ECTN Charter updating





Pafos Medieval Castle, Cyprus

Conclusion and next steps

- There are several important advantages for further exploring and exploiting synergies,
 - for the benefit of both sustainable cultural tourism development and heritage preservation and promotion,
 - in experiencing Europe's unique culture and heritage!
-
- Updating of ECTN "Charter for Sustainable Cultural Tourism" through co-creation.
 - Contribution on Sustainable Cultural Tourism to the new EU "Culture Compass".
 - Contribution on Culture and Heritage Tourism aspects to the new EU Tourism Strategy.

Thank you !



Visitor Experiences and Authenticity for Sustainable, Smart and Resilient Cultural Tourism Destinations



www.culturaltourism-network.eu