Cultural Tourism and Heritage: Threats and Opportunities

A Pan-European Conference organised in the framework of the European Heritage Hub project led by Europa Nostra and funded by the European Union

10 - 11 December 2026



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Draft Programme

Thursday, 10 December 2026
Acropolis Museum, Athens | 10.00–18.00

10.00–10.15 | Welcome and Introductory Remarks

- **Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović**, Secretary General, Europa Nostra and Leader of the European Heritage Hub project
- **Lydia Carras**, President, ELLINIKI ETAIRIA – Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage, and Head of the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Athens

10.15–11.00 | High-Level Opening Session

- **Apostolos Tzitzikostas**, European Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism
- **Lina Mendoni**, Minister of Culture, Greece
- **Olga Kefalogianni**, Minister of Tourism, Greece (Confirmed)
- **Agapi Sbokou**, President of the Greek Tourism Confederation (SETE) (Confirmed)

11.00–12.15 | Session I — EU Policies for Sustainable Cultural Tourism:

Examining how EU policies can support more sustainable and balanced tourism models, safeguard cultural heritage, address tourism pressures and benefit local communities. The session will explore opportunities to better integrate culture, heritage and tourism across EU policy frameworks and identify priorities for future European action.

Moderated by: ***Sneska Quaedvlieg-Mihailovic****, Secretary General, Europa Nostra and Leader of the European Heritage Hub project*

- **Stathis Kalyvas (GR)**, Gladstone Professor of Government and fellow of All Souls College at Oxford, Contributor to Kathimerini (Confirmed)

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- **Eduardo Santander (EU)**, Executive Director, European Travel Commission (ETC)
- **Daniel Attard (EU)**, Committee on Transport and Tourism, European Parliament
- **Tanya Hristova (BG)**, Mayor of Gabrovo Municipality, Bulgaria, and rapporteur for the CoR opinion on the Culture Compass for Europe
- **Elisabeth Koothaus, (EU),** Head of Tourism, DG MOVE, European Commission

12.15–12.30 | Coffee Break and Networking

12.30–13.45 | Session II — **From tourism pressure to positive change:** European destination practices. **Case studies** exploring how European cities and destinations are addressing tourism pressures, managing visitor flows, protecting local communities and safeguarding cultural heritage while supporting sustainable local economies.

Moderated by: ***Jimmy Jamar***, *Executive Vice-President of Europa Nostra*

Introduction by **Haris Doukas**, Mayor of **Athens, Greece:** Managing tourism in a historic capital (Confirmed)

Panel featuring representatives from the following historic cities: **Kotor, Montenegro**, **Kraków, Poland, Venice, Italy, Dubrovnik, Croatia** and **Barcelona, Spain**

13.45–15.15 | Networking Lunch

15.15–16.30 | Session III — **Heritage as a Catalyst for Sustainable Tourism** European frameworks, destination management and the role of cultural heritage in addressing tourism pressures.

Moderated by: ***Vanessa Fraga Prol***, *Advocacy and Partnership Manager, Europa Nostra*

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- **Manos Vougioukas (EU)**, Secretary-General of the European Cultural Tourism Network (ECTN) (Confirmed)
- **John Fitzgibbon (BG)**, Managing Director, Network of European Regions for Sustainable and Competitive Tourism (NECSTouR) (Confirmed)
- **Tim Fairhurst (EU)**, Director General, European Tourism Association – (ETOA) and Co-Chair, European Tourism Manifesto (Confirmed)
- **Caroline Couret (ES)**, Director, Creative Tourism Network (CTN) (Confirmed)

16.30–17.45 | Session IV — **Tourism and Climate Change:** Risks, Impacts and Resilience. Exploring the two-way relationship between tourism and climate change: how tourism contributes to environmental pressures and how climate change is reshaping destinations, threatening heritage and challenging the long-term sustainability of local economies.

Moderated by: ***Andrew Potts**, Heritage and Climate Action Advisor*

- **Peter Debrine (FR)**, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, sustainable tourism expert (Confirmed)
- **Majed Al-Hasanat (JO)**, Independent Sustainable Tourism Consultant and former Commissioner of the Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority (PDTRA)
- **Antonia Gravagnuolo (IT)** , Researcher at the Institute of Heritage Science of the Italian National Research Council (CNR ISPC) and architect (Confirmed)
- **Ege Yildirim (TR)**, Culture at COP31 Coordinator and Heritage Planner, Istanbul (Confirmed)
- **Emmanouela Doussis (GR),** Professor at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, UNESCO chairholder on climate diplomacy (Confirmed)

17.45–18.00 | Discussion and conclusions

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Friday, 11 December 2026

Ionic Centre, Athens | 09.30–17.30

ROUNDTABLES

Round table discussions will give insight into different aspects of tourism and climate crisis effects, giving voice to academics and professionals of the field and creating conversational space to highlight emerging issues and concerns.

09:30-10:00 | Welcome and Introduction

Introduction to the day's objectives, workshop methodology and expected outcomes.

10:00-11:20 | Round Table 1 — Historic Cities

Tourism pressure, housing and the preservation of living communities - Challenges and good initiatives

- **Avdi Varvara (GR),** Vice-Chairman Historic Hotels of Europe (Confirmed)
- **Ivor Ambrose (EU)**, Managing Director and co-founder of ENAT, the European Network for Accessible Tourism
- **Jose Antonio Donaire (ES)**, Commissioner for Sustainable Tourism Management at Barcelona City Council
- **Agata Wąsowska-Pawlik (PO)**, Director of the International Cultural Center and Head of the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Krakow
- **Maro Euangelidou (GR)**, Deputy Mayor of Urban Regeneration & Resilience for the City of Athens, Greece (Confirmed)
- **Nikolas Triantos (GR)**, Former President of the Technical Chamber of Greece – Corfu Regional Section (TCG / TEE Corfu), Greece

11.20–11.40 | Coffee Break and Networking

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11:40-13:00 | Round Table 2 — Islands and Coastal Areas

Carrying capacity, seasonality and climate resilience

- **Aleksandër Trajçe (AL) -** Executive Director, Protection and Preservation of Natural Environment in Albania (PPNEA) (Confirmed)
- **Mayor Anastasios Nikolaos Zorzos (GR)**, Santorini, Greece
- **Mayor Thodoris Tzoumas (GR)**, Sustainable Island tourism, seasonality and destination resilience - Skiathos, Greece (Confirmed)
- **Monitoring Tourism Pressures on Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Konstantinos Voglis (GR),** Assistant Professor in the Department of Tourism at the Ionian University (Confirmed)
- **Skoultsos Sofoklis (GR) ,** Assistant Professor in Sustainable Tourism and Culture, Harokopio University of Athens (Confirmed)
- **Dr. Francesco Lo Piccolo (IT),** University of Palermo
- Representative from **Türkiye** about coastline initiatives or **Cyprus**

13:00-14:20 | Round Table 3 — Rural, Mountainous Areas and Heritage-Led Regeneration

- **Greek Paths of Culture (GR),** ELLET (Confirmed)
- **Ivi Nanopoulou (GR)**, Board Member of MedINA - Institute for Nature and Anthropos, Agriculture (Confirmed)
- **Giovanna Barni (IT),** President of CulTurMedia LegaCoop
- **Luca Bruschi (IT),** Project Coordinator, DETOUR: Development of resilient tourism ecosystems along Mediterranean walking routes

14.20–15.20 | Networking Lunch

15:20-16:40 | Round Table 4 — Youth Perspectives on Tourism, Heritage and Climate Resilience

Engaging the next generation in shaping responsible tourism - Inspiring Initiatives

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- **EU Youth Hub -** Voluntary, independent deliberation center with thematics revolving democratic governance, AI ethics, and civic innovation (Confirmed)
- **Youth Climate Diplomacy Forum for Southeast Europe** – **Rania Papadopoulou,** Ph.D. candidate at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Confirmed)
- **Regeneration of mountain communities in Naxos Chrisostomos Kipritzis (GR),** Architect - member of the Local ELLET Committee of the island of Naxos (Confirmed)

16.40–17.30 | Closing Remarks and Next Steps

Expected Outcomes

- A shared understanding of the tourism and climate pressures facing Europe's historic cities, islands, coastal areas and rural communities.
- Exchange of practical solutions for managing visitor flows while protecting heritage, residents and local economies.
- Greater recognition of cultural and natural heritage as resources for sustainable tourism, climate adaptation and destination resilience.
- Recommendations for European and national policymakers, including in the context of the emerging EU Tourism Strategy.
- Stronger cooperation between heritage and tourism networks, local authorities, civil society organisations and destination managers.
- A basis for continued European dialogue and joint action towards more sustainable, inclusive and resilient destinations.