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TOURAL

Multidimensional model of tourism verticals driving the sustainable balanced growth among rural & remote grids and urban clusters of rural regions, fostering macro-regional cooperation

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Identified Good CCT Practices & Stakeholders Cooperation Level in Adrion & Black Sea

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Deliverable D2.1: Short Description
This deliverable is the Report on TOURAL good CCT practices identified. The report will also include the description of stakeholders' cooperation level in Adrion & Black Sea.
Keywords: good UCCST/CCT practices, cooperation, Adrion & Back Sea, TOURAL.

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Executive Summary

The present document is the deliverable D2.1 - "Identified Good CCT Practices & Stakeholders Cooperation Level in Adrion & Black Sea" of the TOURAL project, funded by the European Commission's European Research Executive Agency, under its HORIZON Coordination and Support Actions programme.

The main objective of this document is to provide a report on good UCCST practices identified through research conducted among project partners and stakeholders and through desk analysis.

Part of the document is also the description of stakeholders' cooperation level in Adrion & Black Sea, and statistical data.

The document presents a multilevel analysis - at regional, national, macro-regional and EU levels, in relation to UCCST (i.e. benefits for rural and remote areas, needs and challenges, practices with positive impact). Focus is on related policy instruments and available resources, and on projects funded through regional/macro-regional/Sea Basin (e.g. Euro MED, Adrion, Interreg) and H2020/HEU programmes.

List of Symbols and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
BSAM	Black Sea Assistance Mechanism
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CCT	Cultural & Creative Tourism
CMA	Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea
CST	Cultural Science Tourism
EU	European Union
EUSAIR	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
EUSDR	EU Strategy for the Danube Region
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
KAC	Knowledge Awareness Centre
SLT	Silver Tourism
SRIA	Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea
UCCST	UCNHT-CCT-CST-SLT
UCH	Underwater Cultural Heritage
UCNHT	Cultural & Nature Heritage Tourism
UCRR	Urban Clusters of Rural Regions
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
UW	Underwater

1 Introduction

Project TOURAL focuses on a multidimensional and unique model approach to tourism in rural and remote areas of Adriatic-Ionian and Black Sea areas. Through a multi-level analysis, the goal of deliverable D2.1 is to collect basic data for further project activities, with special emphasis placed on the project pilot locations - three regions from the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region (Italy, Croatia, Greece), and three regions from the Black Sea Basin (Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine).

1.1 UCCST model

TOURAL proposes and tests new multidimensional and integrative approach to tourism development, aiming to interlink different niche and sectors — rather than treating them as isolated activities. The goal is to create synergies among complementary tourism models that together enhance sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity.

The UCCST model is an integrated, multidimensional tourism development framework designed to connect and co-develop multiple niche tourism sectors into a single, synergistic system. It is a model that does not exist as such in the current tourism practice and scientific literature, but it connects the fragments and niches of tourism that the TOURALS project focuses on. It promotes the mutual growth and cross-fertilization of four complementary tourism domains:

1. **Underwater Cultural & Nature Heritage Tourism (UCNHT)** ➔ Focuses on the exploration and preservation of underwater archaeological sites, marine biodiversity, and coastal ecosystems, combining diving experiences with heritage interpretation.
2. **Cultural & Creative Tourism (CCT)** ➔ Encourages visitor engagement in local traditions, cultural heritage, crafts, and creative industries, fostering cultural exchange, sustainability and protection of cultural heritage and supporting creative economies.
3. **Cultural Science Tourism (CST)** ➔ Promotes science-based experiences where tourists participate in learning and research activities.
4. **Silver Tourism (SLT)** ➔ Targets the senior/retired population, providing inclusive, accessible, and wellness-oriented tourism options tailored to their needs.

The acronym UCCST was created by combining these abbreviations – UCNHT- CCT- CST- SLT.

Through this integration, the UCCST model aims to:

- Create new value-networks among regional and macro-regional stakeholders (public authorities, businesses, cultural institutions, academia, and local communities);
- Establish new value-chains supporting the design and delivery of innovative, sustainable, and inclusive tourism products and services;
- Foster participatory “co-work” processes (co-design, co-creation, and co-validation) involving diverse actors to ensure that tourism development reflects local assets, creativity, and community needs;
- Promote multidimensional and experiential tourism offerings, combining culture, creativity, science, and well-being in a way that enhances both visitor experience and local prosperity.

In essence, the UCCST model represents TOURAL's holistic tourism innovation concept - a framework for integrated, sustainable, and collaborative tourism development across European sea basins and rural regions.

Trought UCCST model TOURAL seeks to develop new value-networks across regions — uniting tourism operators, cultural institutions and associations, research canters, and local communities. These networks will establish new value chains that generate innovative products and services appealing to modern travellers seeking meaningful, sustainable, and experiential tourism.

Expected Impact

- Enhanced cultural heritage valorisation through innovation with protection and sustainability measures
- Diversified tourism offerings across coastal and inland regions.
- Strengthened regional cooperation and stakeholder capacity.
- Inclusive growth, with attention to aging demographics, gender equality and sustainability.

1.2 Deliverable Scope

The deliverable D2.1 - "Identified Good CCT Practices & Stakeholders Cooperation Level in Adrion & Black Sea" is a report on TOURAL good CCT practices identified. The report also includes the description of stakeholders' cooperation level in Adrion and Black Sea.

The purpose of deliverable D2.1 is to present research at the regional, national, and macro-regional levels in relation to UCCST tourism.

Deliverable D2.1 identifies and analyses statistical sources related to TOURAL regions, as well as cross-border & macro-regional strategies with respect to tourism (e.g. EUSAIR and CMA for Black Sea).

The deliverable D2.1 provides input to other project activities (T2.2/2.3/2.4 - CCT analysis, strategies' elements for policy pathways, level of stakeholder's cooperation at different levels).

1.3 Deliverable Structure

The deliverable D2.1 - "Identified Good CCT Practices & Stakeholders Cooperation Level in Adrion & Black Sea" consists of eight chapters:

Chapter 1 includes deliverable scope and deliverable structure.

Chapter 2 presents the methodology used in creation of the document.

Chapter 3 provides geographical and social environment description of the Adrion and Black Sea area with statistical information.

Chapter 4 brings analysis of UCCST tourism on different levels, from regional and national to macro-regional - sea basin level. Different policies, initiatives, instruments and strategies are analysed and presented as examples of good practice.

Chapter 5 outlines most important tourism stakeholders in the UCCST tourism and different models of stakeholders' cooperation.

Chapter 6 points to weaknesses and opportunities in UCCST tourism in the Adrion and Black Sea area on three different levels – regional, national and macro-regional – sea basin.

Chapter 7 brings an overview of cultural heritage in policies and practices.

Chapter 8 summarizes the document in a common conclusion.

Chapter 9 lists the sources of data used in the deliverable with hyperlinks to the sources of data.

Annex I. presents the questionnaire used in the research that preceded the creation of deliverable.

2 Methodology

The document was created based on data obtained from two sources: 1) desk research of online sources according to the topic and focus of the document; and 2) online questionnaire.

The online survey questionnaire was created using Microsoft Office Forms. The survey was available to participants from March 25 to May 15, 2024. and from October 25 to November 5, 2025. The link to the survey was sent to the TOURAL project partners through the joint mailing list (list-toural@iti.gr). Project partners could answer the questionnaire themselves or forward it to relevant stakeholders. A total of 20 responses were received (Table 1), 16 of which were responses from project partners (15 institutions out of 20, as 2 responses were from PP Atlantis). Four responses were received from an institutions or associations that is not a project partner (National Institute for Economic Research, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova; National Museum Zadar; International centre for Underwater Archaeology Zadar; HERA Adriatic Heritages Association)

Table 1: Participants in online survey

Number	Name of the institution	Country
1.	Zadar County Development Agency ZADRA NOVA	Croatia
2.	Association LAG DD, Tulcea County	Romania
3.	European Federation of Rural Tourism RuralTour	France
4.	Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)	Türkiye
5.	BOURGAS REGIONAL TOURIST ASSOCIATION	Bulgaria
6.	Civil Organization "Kinburn"	Ukraine
7.	National Ecological Centre of Ukraine (NECU)	Ukraine
8.	National Institute for Economic Research, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova	Moldova
9.	Municipality of Alonissos	Greece
10.	Balkan Heritage Foundation	Bulgaria
11.	ATLANTIS	Greece
12.	Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)	France
13.	ITACA, Associazione per lo Sviluppo Locale	Italy
14.	Atlantis Consulting S.A.	Greece
15.	Municipality of Nessebar	Bulgaria
16.	Aix-Marseille University	France
17.	Provincia di Teramo	Italy
18.	National Museum Zadar	Croatia
19.	International centre for Underwater Archaeology Zadar	Croatia
20.	HERA Adriatic Heritages Association	Croatia & Italy

The participation in the research was voluntary. Furthermore, the data of the respondents were collected only for the purposes of additional explanations and will not be publicly available.

In the introduction of online questionnaire, participants were introduced to the purpose of the survey. The questionnaire is attached as Annex 1 of this document.

The questionnaire consisted of 33 questions, and all questions were open type structured. The first three relate to demographic characteristics (name, contact, institution they present) of the participants, while other questions were thematically oriented according to the research objective.

From questions 4 to 15, through the answers of the respondents, material was collected for the multilevel analysis (regional, national, macro-regional area / sea basin) of UCCST/CCT tourism, and it was multidimensional - through inquiries about examples of good practice of:

- Policies - A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body.
- Initiatives - Undertaking activities with the aim of changing behaviour patterns, laws, and established practices.
- Instruments - Measures used to encourage tourism, for example.
- Strategies - A development planning document that determines development goals and priorities.

Through question 16, examples of cross-border and macro-regional projects financed by EU funds aimed at the development of tourism are sought. Questions from 17 to 22 explore weaknesses and opportunities in UCCST/CCT tourism at the regional, national and macro-regional level. From questions 23 to 25, focus was on tourism stakeholders - detecting stakeholders at the regional and national level and their cooperation.

From questions 26 to 32, focus was on cultural heritage in the context of existing policies and practices. Policies, initiatives, challenges, opportunities and methods of cultural heritage management for the purpose of sustainable tourism development and heritage protection are questioned.

The last – 33rd question was the final thought, an opportunity for the participants to add what they consider important for the topic, which was not covered by the earlier questions.

The answers are analysed and presented in this document, along with the data collected using the desk method.

3 Geographical and Social Environment with Statistical Analysis

As can be seen from the title of deliverable, the focus of this document is on the area along the three seas - the Adriatic, Ionian and Black Seas. All three of these seas are tourist attractive areas with a rich cultural and natural heritage.

3.1 Geographical Environment

The geographical scope of the analysis presented in this document is defined in principle along the three seas - the Adriatic, Ionian and Black Seas, more precisely, with two supranational strategic documents that define the strategic development of this region - EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region and The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea.

The Adriatic Sea is situated between two Peninsulas – Apennines and Balkan. The Adriatic Sea connects to the Ionian Sea at its southeastern end through the Strait of Otranto. Ionian Sea is situated between Albania (northeast), Greece (east), Sicily (southwest), and Italy (west and northwest).

Countries with access to the Adriatic Sea are Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Italy. Countries with access to the Ionian Sea are Italy, Albania and Greece.

Although they do not have a seacoast, San Marino and Serbia are also part of the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region. Italy is also part of the Strategy, but just the regions with a coast on the Adriatic and Ionian seas.

The countries along the Adriatic and Ionian seas together form the area of ADRION (Figure 1).

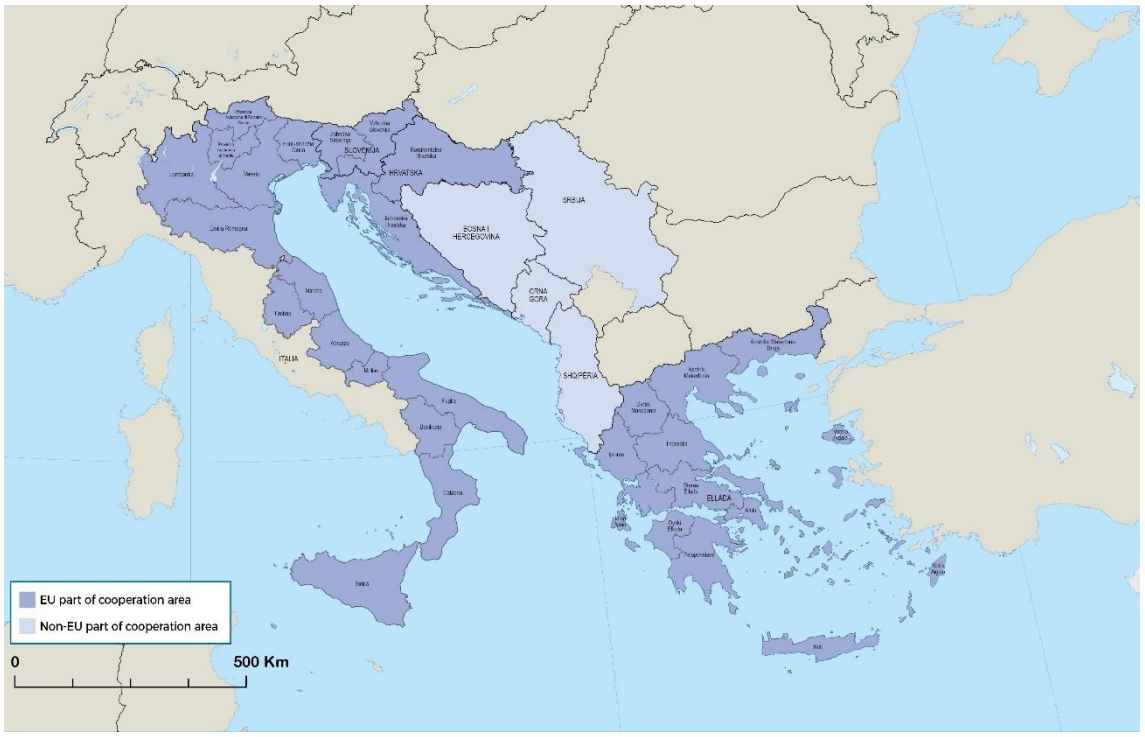

Figure 1: ADRION Countries

(Source: https://www.adrioninterreg.eu/index.php/about-program/cooperation-area/)

The Black Sea is situated in the southeastern part of Europe. It is also a natural border between Europe and Asia. It is bordered by Ukraine to the north, Russia to the northeast, Georgia to the east, Türkiye to the south, and Bulgaria and Romania to the west. It's connected to the Atlantic Ocean by the Bosphorus, the Sea of Marmara, the Dardanelles, the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea (Figure 2).

Although it does not have a coast on the Black Sea, Republic of Moldova is also part of The Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea.

Figure 2: Black Sea and surrounding countries
(Source: https://www.britannica.com/place/Black-Sea)

3.2 Social Environment

Countries in the Adriatic-Ionian and Black Sea regions differ in size, level of development, the political organization of states, number of inhabitants, and numerous other factors. One thing they certainly have in common, apart from sharing a common geographical space, is their orientation to tourism, which is significantly based on a rich natural and cultural heritage (Table 2).

Although the basic political arrangement is the same for all of them - a republic, the distribution of powers within the country and the way of governing varies, from countries with greater powers of the president to those where the parliament plays a decisive role.

These 17 countries have a total population of over 390 million inhabitants (390.988.854). During 2022 these countries were visited by 175 million tourists.

Since it is a geographical area of rich cultural history with continuous civilization flows, this is also reflected in the number of locations under UNESCO protection – in total 197 UNESCO sites.

Table 2: Overview of countries from the Adriatic, Ionian and Black Seas area

Country	Strategic cooperation	Population (2023.*)	Number of tourist arrivals in 2022. (in million)**	Number of UNESCO sites***
Albania	EUSAIR	2.832.439	7,2	4
Bosnia and Herzegovina	EUSAIR	3.210.847	0,9	4
Bulgaria	CMA	6.447.710	5,6	10
Croatia	EUSAIR	3.850.894	15,3	10
Georgia	CMA	3.728.282	3,7	4
Greece	EUSAIR	10.413.982	27,8	19
Italy	EUSAIR	58.997.201	49,8	59
Moldova	CMA	3.435.931	0,2	1
Montenegro	EUSAIR	626.485	2	4
North Macedonia	EUSAIR	2.085.679		2
Romania	CMA	19.054.548	1,7	9
Russian Federation	CMA	144.444.359		31
San Marino	EUSAIR	33.615	2	1
Serbia	EUSAIR	7.149.077	1,8	5
Slovenia	EUSAIR	2.116.972	3,9	5
Türkiye	CMA	85.816.199	50,5	21
Ukraine	CMA	36.744.634	2,2	8

* Eurostat for EU countries, Worldometers for other countries
** UNWTO
*** UNESCO
(Sources:https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_GIND__custom_7127262/default/table; https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country/ https://www.unwto.org/tourism-data/global-and-regional-tourism-performance https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat/)

Despite the tourist orientation, tourism pressure is not equal across all regions. Some regions are more attractive to tourists than others.

Data from 2021 (Figure 3) show that the regional distribution of tourism pressures was very uneven distributed, highlighting that mass tourism tends to be concentrated in relatively few regions. Regions outside of capital cities and other major urban areas often have a relatively small resident population and a large number of tourist arrivals[1]. The pilot areas of the TOURAL project are among the regions with a higher number of nights spent in tourist accommodation in relation to the number of inhabitants.

[1] Data for Ukraine are not available

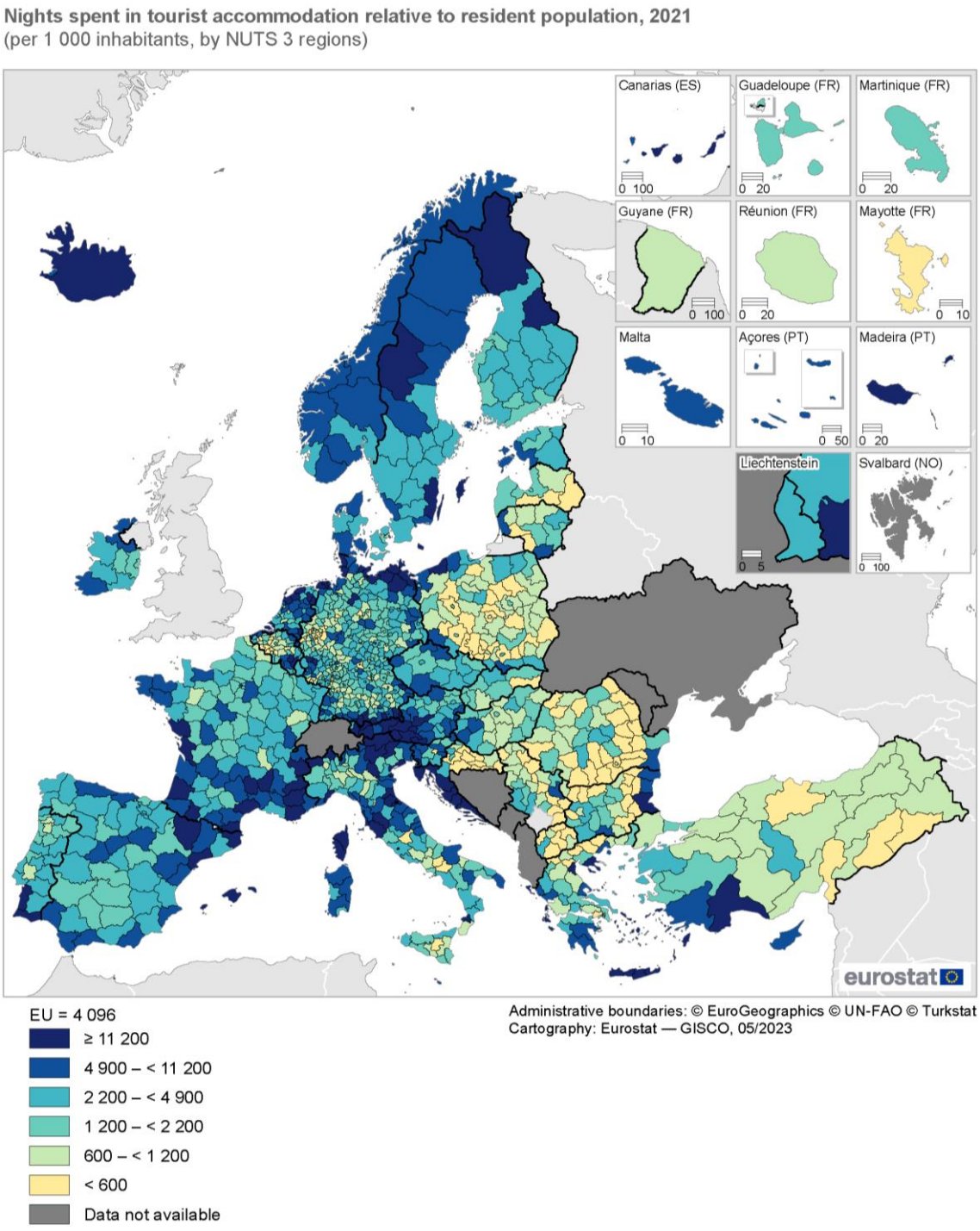

Figure 3: Nights spent in tourist accommodation relative to resident population

(Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tour_occ_nin3/default/table?lang=en)

2021 Eurobarometer Report on attitudes of EU citizens towards tourism (Figure 4) shows that the three most important aspects according to which they decide where to travel are the '*cultural offerings at the destination*' (44%), followed by the '*natural environment in the destination*' and

the '*the price of the overall trip*' (both 43%). All other answers have a significantly lower percentage. Socio-demographic analysis of the answers to this question showed that respondents' age is related to their reasons for choosing a destination to visit. The main differences can be observed between the 15-24 age group, on the one hand, and the older three age groups, on the other hand. For those in the youngest age group, the natural environment is on average a less important aspect on which to base their destination to visit on than for those in the older cohorts. 36% of those aged 15-24 mention this aspect vs. 43%-44% among the older respondents. On the other hand, the price of the trip is a much more important aspect for the youngest respondents, especially when compared to those aged 55 and over, 54% of those aged 15-24 mention this aspect, compared to 35% of those in the oldest age group. Similarly, respondents aged 15-24 are much more likely than those aged 55 and over to find the '*activities available in the destination'* an important factor when choosing their destination (40% vs 23%).

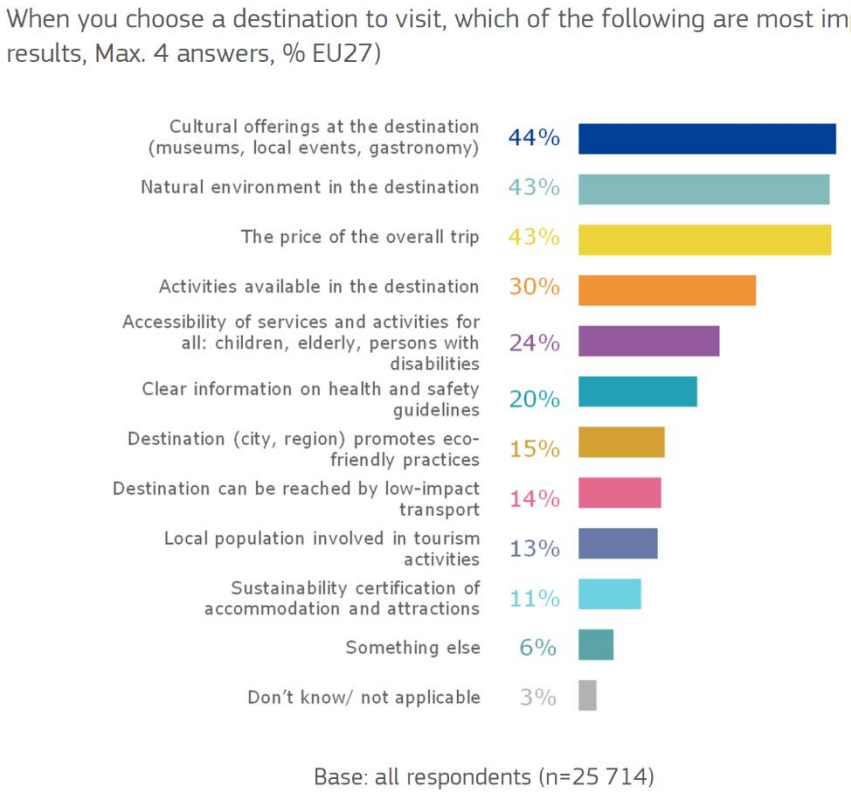

Figure 4: Key reasons of EU citizens for selecting a tourist destination
(Source: https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2283)

The same research showed that a large majority of EU citizens (82%) say they are prepared to change at least some of their travel and tourism habits to be more sustainable, and 15% say they are not prepared to do so (Figure 5). Socio-demographic analysis shows that, compared to their male counterparts, female respondents are somewhat more willing to change their travel and tourism habits to be more sustainable by taking the various actions described. For example, 58% of female respondents are ready to consume locally sourced products on holiday, compared to 53% of male respondents. And 37% of women are prepared to choose transport options based on ecological impact, compared to 34% of men. In line with these results, male respondents are more likely than female respondents to say that they are not prepared to change any of their travel and tourism habits (16% vs 13%). Compared to their younger peers, older respondents are less

prepared to change their travel and tourism habits to be more sustainable. Of those aged 55+, 18% say that they are not prepared to adjust their travel and tourism habits, compared to 15% of those aged 40-54 and 11% of both those aged 15-24 or 25-39. Correspondingly, younger respondents are more willing to take most types of actions. For example, 41% of those aged 15-25 and 39% of those aged 26-39 are prepared to choose transport options based on ecological impact, compared to 34% of those aged 40-54 and 32% of those aged 55+.

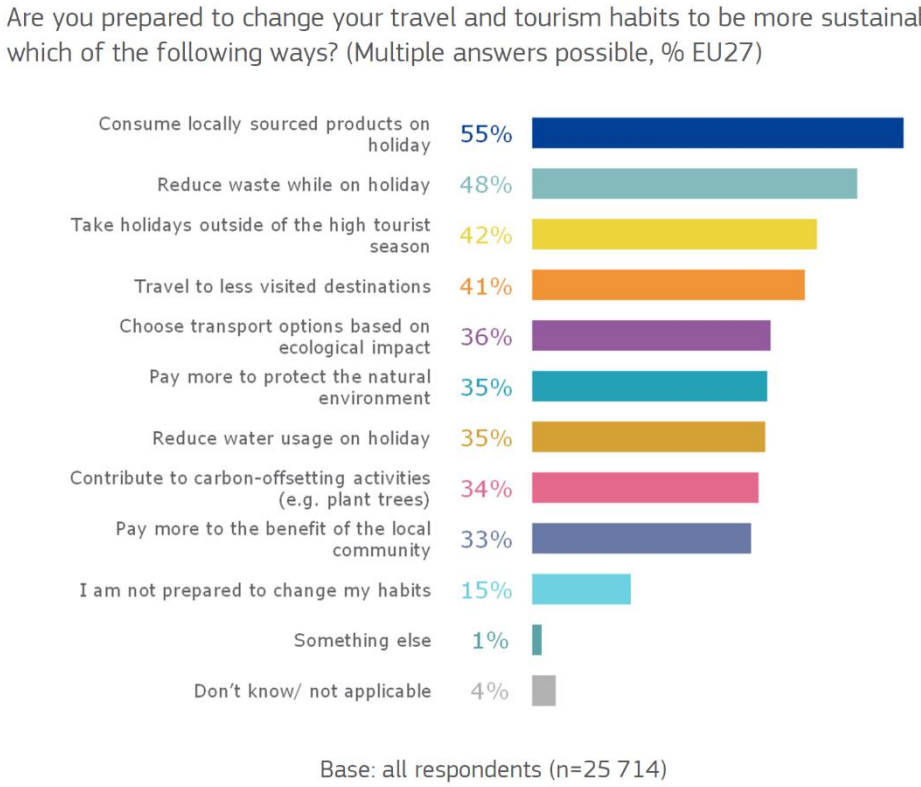

Figure 5: Willingness to take action for sustainable travel
(Source: https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2283)

3.3 Statistical sources

For the needs of further project activities, in accordance with the defined themes, it will be necessary to collect detailed statistical data of the project pilot areas.

Statistical sources related to TOURAL regions are:

- Eurostat - statistical office of the European Union - https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat

Region-1: North Sporades, Greece

- Hellenic Statistical Authority - https://www.statistics.gr/en/home
- Greek National Tourism Organisation - https://www.visitgreece.gr/
- Municipality of Alonissos - https://alonissos.gr/en/
- Village of Skopelos - https://skopelos.gr/en/

Region-2: Province of Teramo, Italy

- Istituto Nazionale di Statistica - https://www.istat.it/en/
- Italian National Tourist Board - https://www.enit.it/en
- Abruzzo Region, Department of Economic Development - https://abruzzoturismo.it/en
- Province of Teramo - https://provincia.teramo.it/

Region-3: Island of Pag / Village Šimuni, Croatia

- Croatian Bureau of Statistics - https://dzs.gov.hr/en
- Croatian National Tourist Board - https://croatia.hr/en-gb
- City of Pag - https://www.pag.hr/
- Tourist Board of the City of Pag - https://tzgpag.hr/en/

Region-4: Nessebar, Bulgaria

- National Statistical Institute - https://www.nsi.bg/en
- National Board of Tourism - https://tourismboard.bg/?lang=en
- Municipality of Nessebar - https://www.nesebar.bg/
- Nessebar Municipality Official Tourist Website - https://visitnessebar.bg/

Region-5: Danube Delta LAG, Tulcea County, Romania

- National Institute of Statistics - https://insse.ro/cms/en
- Ministry of Tourism of Romania - https://turism.gov.ro/web/
- Council of Tulcea County - https://www.cjtulcea.ro/sites/cjtulcea/TulceaCounty/Pages/default.aspx
- Asociatia Gal Delta Dunarii - https://gal-deltadunarii.ro/

Region-6: Kutsurub rural region, Ukraine

- State Statistics Service of Ukraine (Derzhstat) - https://stat.gov.ua/en
- State Statistics Committee of Ukraine - https://web.archive.org/web/20090604201323/http://www.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/regions/reg_mykol/
- The State Agency for Tourism Development of Ukraine - https://www.tourism.gov.ua/en/home
- Official website of Ukraine - https://ukraine.ua/

4 Multilevel Analysis of UCCST Tourism

Tourism is one of the fundamental branches of the economy in the Adriatic Ionian region, and it is significant in the Black Sea Basin. The tourists' motivation to visit the area, in addition to the natural beauty and proximity for guests from nearby countries, is largely driven by price advantages (it is more affordable than western Europe or distant overseas destinations). In the selection of destinations among those from the Adriatic-Ionian region and the Black Sea, the destination offer certainly plays a big role. UCCST tourism is a significant factor here, which has the potential for further improvement of the destination's offer with the aim of reduced seasonality.

With the aim of achieving the goals of sustainability and recognition of the destination, but also the protection of natural and cultural resources and heritage, various initiatives and instruments are implemented at all levels (regional, national, macro-regional / sea basin level), while policies and strategies set the framework.

Clarification of terms:

- Policies - A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body.
- Initiatives - Undertaking activities with the aim of changing behaviour patterns, laws, and established practices.
- Instruments - Measures used to encourage tourism.
- Strategies - A development planning document that determines development goals and priorities

4.1 Regional Level

Activities at the regional level are often the most visible in the "field" and are closest to the "base of operations". Activities of this type have less impact in terms of reaching people and territories but have the potential to be replicated as examples of good practice and lessons learned from others.

Table 3: Overview of activities at the regional level

Type of activity	Example of activity
Policies	• Regional law (example: Italy - regulation of the regional tourism system with a view to harmonizing and simplifying tourism regulations). • Regional programmes aimed at the development of tourism (example: Ukraine, The Program for the Development of Culture, Art and Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Kutsurub village council of the united territorial community for 2019-2022; The Program for the Development of Tourism and Resorts of Mykolaiv Region for 2021-2023; The Culture of the Mykolaiv Oblast program for 2021-2023; Sustainable development of tourism in ATU Gagauzia, Moldova - goal of the programme is to provide acceptable conditions for the long-term development of tourism in Gagauzia by attracting investment in development and improving the quality of tourist services). • Financial support of regional authorities aimed at the development of tourism (example: Croatia, Zadar County co-finances tourist events). • Mandatory protection (example: European Ecological Network NATURA 2000 (Alonissos, Sporades Greece, Danube Delta and Tulcea County -

Type of activity	Example of activity
	Romania); UNESCO (Municipality of Nessebar, Bulgaria, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve - Romania). • Membership in intergovernmental regional organisation (example: BSEC Working Group on Cooperation in Tourism was established in 1994 in order to promote regional cooperation in the field of tourism). • Regional Tourist Destination Management Organisations (example: Bulgaria). • Policies for the promotion of rural tourism e.g. the creation of tourist packages for visiting rural areas, financial assistance for the development of tourist infrastructure and support for traditional crafts and culinary specialties (example: Romania, Greece, Croatia, Serbia and North Macedonia).
Initiatives	• Joint actions to promote regional tourism offer (Italy, Memorandum of Understanding between the Abruzzo Region, the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts of Chieti Pescara and the Gran Sasso Chamber of Commerce, aimed at the implementation of joint actions to promote and enhance the regional tourism offer, including promotional interventions related to UCCST/CCT tourism). • Creation of an association of local tourist communities, with the aim of achieving recognition and greater visibility of common history and culture and natural heritage (example: Croatia, part of municipalities and a city in the area of Ravni Kotari in Zadar County). • Digital presentation of the tourist offers (examples: Ukraine, Travel through Mykolaiv Oblast; Romania: Platform for marketing on the level of rural communities on LAG areas). • Regional cooperation at the international level (example: Joint Varna Declaration of the Ministers in Charge of Tourism of the Member States of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation; Bulgaria-Romania initiative for CCT cooperation: Handbook on Creative Tourism was prepared; Bulgaria - Sister cities cooperation and twin towns partnerships). • Entrepreneurial initiatives that have a positive impact on the tourist traffic of the entire region (example: Ukraine - Local initiative of the Olvia Nuvo Winery; Moldova - Wine Tourism in the Codru Region). • Local and regional community initiatives (example: Greece - the cultural association of Alonissos organizes the Alonissos Dance festival showcasing Greek tradition and folklore; Ukraine – festival in Kutsurub rural territorial community; Moldova - Crafts and Artisan Villages; International movie festival – Sfantu-Gheorghe, LAG DD). • Volunteer activities (examples: Greece, Croatia, Romania - beach cleaning). • Environmental initiatives (examples: Greece - Alonissos is the first village in Greece to abolish the use of single use plastic bags; local-scale waste management linked with the tourism activity in the Greek island of Skopelos). • Intersectoral cooperation (example: France - Forum Tourisme Scientifique et Montagne in Occitanie initiative aims to bring together stakeholders from the fields of culture, tourism, science, and education to explore the

Type of activity	Example of activity
	potential of scientific tourism in enhancing mountain tourism experiences in the Occitanie Region). • Ensuring a special status for the territory – for example: Ukraine - petition to change the boundaries (expansion) of the territory of the "Biloberezhya Svyatoslav" National Park. Granting natural territories the status of a reserve provides legal leverage to regulate tourist activity, direct it towards sustainable tourism, and organize the planned future flow of tourists by arranging camping and recreation sites, ecological trails, etc.).
Instruments	• Funds from National Recovery and Resilience Plan - Intervention for the restoration and enhancement of the architectural and rural landscape heritage (example: Italy, Region of Abruzzo; Romania – Danube Delta, Tourist routes). • Funds from European Integrated Territorial Instrument Mechanism (example: Danube Delta). • Financial funds (example: Bulgaria, Municipality of Nessebar - tourist city taxes are reinvested in facilities for the tourism activity – in the marketing of the municipality as a tourist destination, in infrastructure, other tourist resources etc.; sustainable instruments to support and finance local and important for the community events and initiatives – Municipal Cultural Calendar and Municipal Fund "Culture"; Croatia – Zadar County provides loan for private renters for modernization of accommodation facilities with aim of raising the quality of services, Zadar County funds the organization of public tourist events).
Strategies	• Regional and local development strategy (example: Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Italy). • Tourism Development Strategy (example: Croatia; Bulgaria, Italy) • Action plan (example: Action plan of the BSEC working group on cooperation in tourism). • Regional Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization (RIS3) (example: Region of Thessaly in Greece). • European Integrated Territorial Instrument Mechanism (example: ITI Integrated Strategy for Danube Delta).

4.2 National Level

States and national authorities are the ones that most often pass laws, including those that regulate tourism activities and the cultural sector. At the national level, initiatives are also being taken to achieve greater influence and reach.

Table 4: Overview of activities at the national level

Type of activity	Example of activity
Policies	• National laws on tourism (example: Croatia, Ukraine, France). • National laws on the Protection and Preservation of Cultural Property (example: Bulgaria, Croatia, Ukraine, France, Greece, Romania; Italy, Türkiye).

Type of activity	Example of activity
	• State Agency for Tourism Development - central executive authority responsible for implementing the state policy in the field of tourism and resorts (example: Ukraine). • National Tourism Organization (example: Ukraine, Croatia). • Concept of Tourism Regionalization - In order to make better use of tourism resources by creating regional tourism products (example: Bulgaria). • Charter for Sustainable Tourism (example: Greece – document signed by Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Environment and Water).
Initiatives	• Tourist organisations targeting cultural tourism with the support of the Ministry of Culture (example: France - The Endless Journey, Visit Nantes All Year Long | Le Voyage à Nantes or Visiter Paris et la France - Excursion et Visite Guidées avec le Spécialiste du Tourisme). • Customized activities (example: Italy - Tourism of the Roots - The initiative aims to encourage the discovery of their roots and family history. The project called Italea is aimed at those who want to organize a trip to explore the places, traditions and culture of their ancestors). • Creation of Regional Touristic Destination Management Organisations (example: Romania). • Development of a specific identity of individual regions through branding of the country (example: Romania). • Concept for branding local goods and services offered by small and medium-sized enterprises in each tourist region (example: Romania). • Non-profit organization (example: "Union for Promotion of Rural Green Tourism Development in Ukraine" unite owners of farmsteads and tourists on the most powerful communication and marketing platforms, create an attractive and qualitative alternative to tourists for choosing a holiday in the form of rural green tourism and help owners of farms to achieve sustainable development). • Assistance in obtaining funding under EU programs for the construction of guest houses in rural areas (example: Greece), or for rehabilitation of houses in rural areas (example: Romania – transforming houses in Gastronomic Local Points). • Specialized routes for cultural tourism as result of cooperation (example: in Greece between monasteries; in Croatia cooperation of cities and county in the realization of The Routes of the Frankopans (the Frankopans were a noble historical family in Croatia). The cultural-tourist route "Paths of Frankopan" includes 17 castles, fortified towns and castles, and 3 sacred complexes; in Romania – Northern Dobroudja Monasteries' route). • Cooperation of different stakeholders in the field of tourism (example: in Greece all municipalities have to establish Council of Tourism with representatives from different areas, NGO and other stakeholders). • Cooperation (example: Bulgaria - Development of cooperation between local authorities, rural communities and private investors to create tourist products and packages). • Online promotion (example: Cyprus webpage supported by the Cyprus Deputy Ministry of Tourism, showcases a multidimensional approach to tourism development, it fosters the development of various niche sectors

Type of activity	Example of activity
	like cultural tourism, ecotourism, and agritourism, all working together to create a unique travel experience for visitors and generate mutual benefits for the tourism industry as a whole; Ukraine – webpage "Visit Ukraine" successfully works on creating an attractive image and promoting tourist services, all of which together have a positive impact on the development of tourism in the country).
Instruments	• Financial benefits (example: Bulgaria - The VAT rate for touristic business has been reduced to 9% (the overall rate is 20%). • Tax Incentive example: Italy – "Art Bonus" - a fiscal policy encouraging private donations for cultural heritage conservation. Strengthens public–private partnerships in heritage preservation. • Funds from National Recovery and Resilience Plan (example: Croatia - Investments in the renovation of cultural heritage buildings; Romania). • Financial instruments (examples: Italy: Fund for Sustainable Tourism - Ministry of Tourism finances accommodation facilities and tourism enterprises that will pursue the following objectives: promotion of forms of sustainable tourism, mitigation of tourist overcrowding, creation of innovative tourist routes and de-seasonalisation of tourism; promote ecological transition in tourism; support accommodation facilities and tourism enterprises in achieving sustainability certifications; Fund for the tourist promotion of "religious paths"; Single national tourism fund finances initiatives promoted by public operators for sporting, cultural and religious events and events as well as the implementation of interventions and works to improve the accessibility and accessibility of places of tourist interest; France - The government has opened a call for "Slow Tourism Initiatives" after the pandemic. In total 73 projects have been financially supported; Croatia - The Ministry of Tourism approves grants for tourism activities; Bulgaria - Financial instruments to support tourism in the rural areas by providing funding to improve tourism infrastructure in rural areas; Romania – Strategic Plan for CAP 2023 – 2027, funds for non-agricultural activities; slow tourism trend on Danube Delta channels. • Soft skills (example: Bulgaria - training and capacity programs to develop the skills of local residents to offer tourist services; Romania – LEADER actions for rural areas, with the aim of training the local people involved in tourism or connected sectors).
Strategies	• National development strategy (example: Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia). • National strategy related to cultural heritage (example: Croatia, France, Romania) • Strategic Tourism Plan (example: Italy, Ukraine, Moldova). • National Strategy for Sustainable Tourist Development (example: Bulgaria, Croatia). • Marine Spatial Plan (example: Bulgaria). • Marine environmental protection strategy (example: Ukraine). • National Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialization (example: Greece, Croatia). • National Strategy for Inner Areas (example: Italy). • National Strategy on Sea and the Coastline (example: France).

Type of activity	Example of activity
	• Management Plan for a protected area (example: Romania – MP for Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve). • Document announcement: The French government is developing a strategy to better control the flux of tourists in order to mitigate the impact on the environment.

4.3 Macro-regional / Sea Basin Level & EU / International level

Apart from the regional and national level, policies, initiatives and strategies adopted at the supranational level affect cultural heritage, tourism and its development.

4.3.1 Policies

Since we are dealing with a geographical area that is part of several independent countries, a common policy applicable to all countries does not exist, but there are established international conventions and recommendations that influence public policies in the field of tourism and cultural heritage.

UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ➔ A specialized United Nations body that encourages cooperation among its members in the fields of education and science, and aims to protect the cultural and natural heritage of humanity, which is why since 1972 it has been compiling the World Natural and Cultural Heritage List and the List of World Heritage in Danger, and since 2008 it has been maintained the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage**.** Protecting biodiversity, responding to artificial intelligence, advancing quality education, safeguarding heritage, and ensuring access to reliable information are some examples of the work that UNESCO does with its 194 Member States. Protecting and safeguarding the world's cultural and natural heritage and supporting creativity and dynamic cultural sectors – are recognized by UNESCO as fundamental to addressing the challenges of our time, from climate change to poverty, inequality, the digital divide and ever more complex emergencies and conflicts. An important part of UNESCO's work also relates to the development of international legal instruments – conventions, declarations and recommendations. In the context of the protection and valorization of cultural heritage and tourism, the following should certainly be mentioned:

- ***The World Heritage Convention (Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage)*** is an international treaty signed on 23 November 1972, which created the World Heritage Sites, with the primary goals of nature conservation and the preservation and security of cultural properties.
- ***Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*** is adopted in 2003 by The General Conference of UNESCO, at its 32nd session. The adoption of the Convention became a milestone in the evolution of international policies for promoting cultural diversity, since for the first time the international community had recognized the need to support the kind of cultural manifestations and expressions that until then had not benefited from such a large legal and programmatic framework.
- ***Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention (2001)*** ➔ Recognizing that underwater cultural heritage is largely undervalued, the 2001 Convention provides a common legally binding framework for States Parties on how to better identify, research and protect their underwater heritage while ensuring its preservation and sustainability. Underwater

cultural heritage is defined as all traces of human existence of a cultural, historical or archaeological nature which, for at least 100 years, have been partially or totally immersed, periodically or permanently, under the oceans and in lakes and rivers. The protection and preservation of underwater cultural heritage as historical relics allow for a better knowledge and appreciation of past culture, history and science.

- The ***1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*** was adopted by UNESCO in response to the widespread destruction of cultural heritage caused by war. Recognizing that cultural heritage belongs to all of humanity, the Convention established the first comprehensive international framework to safeguard monuments, artworks, manuscripts, and other significant cultural property.
- ***The UNESCO Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda (UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators)*** is a framework of thematic indicators whose purpose is to measure and monitor the progress of culture's enabling contribution to the national and local implementation of the Goals and Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites ➔ A non-governmental organisation working to conserve and protect cultural heritage sites around the world. With over 12.000 members in over 150 countries and territories, ICOMOS is the largest global organisation of its kind working in cultural heritage conservation. In line with its mission – "to promote the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of monuments, built environments, and cultural heritage places" – ICOMOS play a major role in the development of standards of good practice, what is available and presented through charters and doctrinal texts such as:

- ICOMOS Charter on the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites – 2008
- Guidelines for Education and Training in the Conservation of Monuments, Ensembles and Sites – 1993
- Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage - 1990
- Salalah Guidelines for the management of Public Archaeological Sites - 2017
- ICOMOS Charter – Principles for the Analysis, Conservation and Structural Restoration of Architectural Heritage – 2003
- ICOMOS Charter on Cultural Routes – 2008
- ICOMOS International Cultural Heritage Tourism Charter – 2022
- International Charter and Guidance on Sites with Intangible Cultural Heritage – 2024
- Charter on the Protection and Management of the Underwater Cultural Heritage - 1996

Considering that a significant number of countries in the project area are part of the European Union, EU policies aimed to tourism's development and protection and preservation of cultural heritage should be viewed in this context.

EU Policy for cultural heritage ➔ Culture is woven into the foundations of the European Union. The introduction to the Treaty on European Union refers to "drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe". It also specifies that one of the aims of the European Union is to "respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and […] ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced' (Article 3)". While policy in this area is primarily the responsibility of Member States, regional and local authorities, the EU is committed to safeguarding and enhancing Europe's cultural heritage through several policies and programmes.

The European Union recognizes cultural heritage as:

- tangible (castles, museums, works of art)
- intangible (songs, traditions, etc.)
- digital (born-digital and digitized)

It includes monuments, sites, landscapes, skills, practices, knowledge and expressions of human creativity. Collections conserved and managed by public and private bodies - such as museums, libraries and archives - and film heritage are also part of cultural heritage.

The European Union's role is to assist and complement the actions of Member States in preserving and promoting Europe's cultural heritage. EU data show that in the European Union, over 300,000 people are employed in the cultural heritage sector and 7.8 million jobs are indirectly linked to heritage (e.g. hospitality, interpretation and security).

With the aim of a clear and consistent presentation, EU policies, instruments and strategies are presented together for better understanding and interconnection.

The EU's strategic framework for cultural heritage are based na the following elements:

- European Commission Communication: "***Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe***" (2014). The policy document, entitled 'Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe', states that the sector is at a "crossroads" with reduced public budgets, falling participation in traditional cultural activities and diversifying potential audiences due to urbanization, globalisation and technological change. But it also highlights opportunities for Member States and stakeholders to work more closely across borders to ensure that cultural heritage contributes more to sustainable growth and jobs.
- ***New European Agenda for Culture*** (2018): protecting and promoting Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource is one of the strategic objectives.
- ***The European Council 2023-26 Work Plan for Culture*** sets out four priorities for European cooperation in cultural policy-making: 1) artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors; 2) culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society; 3) culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture; 4) culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relation. In total, 21 actions are defined under each of these priorities for the Commission, the Member States and for the presidencies of the Council. Plan includes activities such as: protection against climate change; natural and human-made disasters and trafficking; access to culture, cultural participation and democracy; international cultural relations, including Ukraine.
- ***The European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage*** (2018) recognizes that cultural heritage is a critical resource for the future that must be protected and enhanced for the coming generations. To achieve this goal, the framework proposes a series of actions under three clusters: capitalizing on technological tools for innovation, fostering social innovation, and strengthening skills in the field of cultural heritage. Framework presents a compelling vision for the role of cultural heritage in promoting sustainable development and social inclusion.

The importance of the ***European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018*** should certainly be highlighted. Its aim was to encourage more people to discover and engage with Europe's cultural heritage, and to reinforce a sense of belonging to a common European space. A special **Eurobarometer survey on cultural heritage** launched on the eve of the European Year revealed that a large majority of European citizens believe that cultural heritage is important to them personally (84%), as well as to their community (84%), region (87%), country (91%) and the EU as a whole (80%).

To celebrate the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) developed a series of interactive maps to gather visual information related to heritage. This platform allows users to explore more than 50 million artworks, artefacts, books, videos and sounds from more than 3.500 museums, galleries, libraries and archives across Europe. This web app features information about the following programmes and initiatives:

- European Heritage Label
- European Capitals of Culture
- UNESCO World Heritage List in Europe
- Information about the heritage under threat in Europe
- Europe's Digital Library
- DiscoverEU
- Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor
- Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

Other examples of successful EU initiatives in the valorization and protection of cultural heritage:

- ***The European Heritage Awards/Europa Nostra Awards*** ➔ put a spotlight on remarkable projects, initiatives and personalities in the field of cultural heritage. The Awards celebrate and promote the highest standards in heritage interventions, research, and education, training and awareness-raising, as well the longstanding dedication of professionals and volunteers.
- ***The European Heritage Days*** ➔ co-organised by the European Union and the Council of Europe, which launched the action in 1985. It is among the most widely celebrated participatory cultural events in Europe. During the European Heritage Days, thousands of monuments and sites open their doors, some of them normally closed to the public for the rest of the year. This allows people to enjoy free visits, learn about their shared cultural heritage and become part of safeguarding Europe's heritage for present and future generations.

EU Tourism policy ➔ The European Union supports, coordinates and complements the actions of EU countries related to tourism. EU tourism policy aims to maintain Europe's position as a leading global destination and to turn Europe into a sustainable destination, bearing also its social and environmental aspects. Some objectives are, notably, to maximise the industry's contribution to growth and jobs, as well as promote cooperation between EU countries and develop the attractiveness of Europe as a destination. Despite the notable disparities between EU countries, tourism represents an important part of the EU's overall economy. In 2019, it represented nearly 10% of the EU GDP and accounted for around 23 million jobs in the Union. In 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted the European agenda for tourism 2030. The agenda is based on the Commission's transition pathway for tourism and includes a multi-annual work plan with actions to be taken by the EU countries, the Commission and tourism stakeholders.

HEREIN is a European Cultural Heritage Information Network developed within the Council of Europe which brings together European public administrations in charge of national cultural heritage policies and strategies to form a unique co-operation network in the domain of Cultural Heritage.

4.3.2 Initiatives & Instruments

In the macro-regional and sea basin area, there are numerous examples of successful initiatives and instruments aimed at tourism and culture.

Interreg IPA ADRION is a European Transnational Programme that invests in regional innovation systems, cultural and natural heritage, environmental resilience, sustainable transport and mobility as well as capacity building. By bringing together eight Partner States, ADRION aims to act as a policy driver and governance innovator for the benefit of more than 70 million people in the Adriatic and Ionian region. Total budget for 2021-2027 period is 160,8 million of EUR.

Interreg Euro-MED is a European Territorial Cooperation Programme that aims to make the Mediterranean region smarter and greener and improve the governance between its stakeholders. Programme provides funds for projects developed and managed by public administrations, universities, private and civil society organisations. The program brings together 14 partner countries. Total budget for 2021-2027 period is 294 million of EUR.

Creative Europe programme is the European Commission's flagship programme to support the culture and audiovisual sectors. The Creative Europe programme 2021-2027 has a budget of 2,44 billion EUR. Creative Europe invests in actions that reinforce cultural diversity and respond to the needs and challenges of the cultural and creative sectors. The Creative Europe programme is open to cultural and creative organisations from EU Member States, as well as non-EU countries. Subject to certain conditions, countries of the European Economic Area, candidate/potential candidate countries and European Neighbourhood Policy countries can also participate in the programme.

Interreg Next Black Sea Basin Programme aims to remain a platform where the links between the participating countries are strengthened, new ones are created and where the regional actors get together and contribute to a sustainable management of resources for the benefit of local citizens. Goal of the Programme is to further deepen the cross-border cooperation in the Black Sea Basin in a transnational configuration. The Programme is applicable in 8 countries surrounding the Black Sea Basin. Total budget for 2021-2027 period is 94,46 million EUR.

Connect To Black Sea (The Blue Growth Initiative for Research and Innovation in the Black Sea) aims to advance a shared vision for a productive, healthy, resilient, sustainable, and better-valued Black Sea by 2030. The initiative will help to deeper connect Black Sea societies through a bridge of new knowledge, technologies and services. The initiative aims to foster human and infrastructure capacity building in coastal, marine, and maritime sectors in view of unlocking unique opportunities for a sustainable and environmentally friendly blue economy in the Black Sea.

Black Sea Synergy initiative is an institutionalised forum for EU cooperation encouraging cooperation between the EU and the countries surrounding the Black Sea and for tackling common problems while encouraging political and economic reform.

The Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) is guide to stakeholders from academia, funding agencies, industry, policy, and society to address together the Fundamental Black Sea challenges, to promote the blue economy and its prosperities of the Black Sea region, to build critical support systems and innovative research infrastructure and to improve education and capacity building.

The European Green Belt is an initiative that stretches along the former Iron Curtain, aiming for culture and nature conservation and sustainable development. It connects national parks, nature parks, biosphere reserves, and transboundary protected areas along the route.

European Destinations of Excellence (EDEN) - European Commission initiative (Small, Sustainable, the future of tourism): Promotes sustainable tourism practices in smaller tourist destinations, which stand out as tourism sustainability pioneers, seeking to inspire other EU tourism destinations in their green transition practices.

Adriatic Ionian Initiative In the framework of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative – established with the scope of strengthening regional cooperation in order to promote political and economic stability – a specific Round Table has been focused on the perspectives for the development of the tourism sector in the Adriatic-Ionian Sea Basin, with the sharing of best practices and projects, pertaining to cultural routes and cultural heritage as a generator for sustainable development.

Memorandum of Understanding between BSEC and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) was concluded in 2014 and the latter became a BSEC Sectoral Dialogue Partner. A Memorandum of Understanding between BSEC PERMIS and the Tourism Education and Training Centre of the Boğaziçi University was also concluded in 2002. These activities are aimed at strengthening the cooperation of the BSEC Member States in the field of tourism and further promoting the BSEC Region as one of the leading tourism destinations of the world.

4.3.3 Strategies

Several strategic documents focus on the observed macro-regional and sea basin area:

- EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region
- The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea
- European Union Strategy for the Danube Region

None of the countries is included in all three strategies, but many countries are included in two strategic documents.

Table 5: Countries included in macro-regional and sea basin strategies

Countries (* EU members)	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region	The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea	European Union Strategy for the Danube Region
Albania			
Austria*			
Bosnia and Herzegovina			
Bulgaria*			
Croatia*			
Czech Republic*			
Georgia			
Germany*			
Greece*			
Hungary*			
Italy*			
Moldova			
Montenegro			
North Macedonia			
Russian Federation			

Countries (* EU members)	EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region	The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea	European Union Strategy for the Danube Region
Romania*			
San Marino			
Serbia			
Slovakia*			
Slovenia*			
Türkiye			
Ukraine			

EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region ➔ The area covered by the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) is a functional area primarily defined by the Adriatic and Ionian Seas basins. This area is home to more than 70 million people. The Strategy is founded on four thematic priorities/pillars representing key challenges as well as key opportunities in the region. EUSAIR priorities/flagships were proposed as solutions for the main challenges of macro-regional importance consistent with national needs, as well as with the EU policy objectives for a greener, low-carbon and more connected Europe. For each pillar, specific topics and actions have been identified, taking into consideration the needs, urgency of the issue and the added value of joint actions taken to solve the existing challenges or build upon the future opportunities.

The Four pillars are:

1. Blue growth
2. Connecting the region
3. Environmental quality
4. Sustainable tourism

Pillar 4 *Sustainable tourism* coordinators are Croatia and Albania.

Pillar 4: Sustainable Tourism – specific objectives:

- Diversification of the macro-region's tourism products and services along with tackling seasonality of inland, coastal and maritime tourism demand.
- Improving the quality and innovation of tourism offer and enhancing the sustainable and responsible tourism capacities of the tourism actors across the macro-region.

To achieve the objectives, Pillar 4 is focused on two topics:

- Topic 1 – Diversified tourism offers (products and services).
- Topic 2 – Sustainable and responsible tourism management (innovation and quality).

Figure 6: Flagships of Pillar 4 of EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region

(Source: https://www.adriatic-ionian.eu/pillars/4-sustainable-tourism/)

Considering the focus of the TOURAL project on UCCST/CCT tourism in rural area, the two EUSAIR strategic projects within the Pillar 4 (Figure 6) have close points of contact with the TOURAL project:

- CulTourAIR Survey on cultural tourism demand in Adriatic-Ionian Region
  - The objective of the project is to collect information on the profile, attitudes and consumption of visitors to cultural attractions and events in Adriatic-Ionian Region in order to enhance the existing system of tourism statistics on cultural tourism and to facilitate informed decision making in relation to sustainable and responsible management of the overall cultural tourism product in Adriatic-Ionian Region, by developing a feasible methodology for data collection on cultural tourism demand based on best practice examples from EUSAIR countries in order to develop a more successful cultural tourism product.
  - The goal is to expand the tourist season all-year round by supporting the development of special interest tourism.
- AIR Cultural Routes
  - The objective of the project is to identify and develop a new governance model for Cultural Routes in the AIR countries. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe cover a range of different themes including European memory, history, art, cultural and natural heritage. Cultural routes are the strategy for slow and sustainable tourism, enhancing relationships with local culture, contributing to reduction of seasonality and increase of local employment.
  - The goals are: Tourism season all year around; Diversification od tourist offer; Brand-building of tourism products/services; Improving competitiveness and sustainability of cultural tourism.

The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea ➔ The Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) is a regional cooperation initiative within the Black Sea Synergy. It promotes collaborative solutions for a sustainable blue economy, fostering regional dialogue and maritime projects while preserving the marine environment. Established by the 7 participating countries (Bulgaria, Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Türkiye and Ukraine) and supported by the European Commission, the CMA is a unique cooperation framework, reinforcing regional dialogue between countries and stakeholders to jointly address challenges and opportunities of the blue economy sectors in the area.

Through the CMA, the Black Sea region aligns itself with other two EU sea basin initiatives (WestMED Initiative and Atlantic), in setting a basin-wide initiative for blue growth based on the sustainable use of maritime and marine sectors.

The Common Maritime Agenda for the Black Sea sets three goals to help generate sustainable growth in coastal regions. These goals are further elaborated into 10 priorities and actions for the promotion of enhanced cooperation on maritime affairs and blue economy among the participating countries:

1. Healthy marine and coastal ecosystems:
   - Ensure the protection and sustainability of the marine ecosystem.
   - Address marine pollution and plastic litter.
   - Support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture in the Black Sea.
   - Supporting innovative marine research infrastructures in the Black Sea.
   - Encourage the production, management, and sharing of marine and coastal environmental knowledge for effective environmental monitoring and observation.
2. A competitive, innovative and sustainable blue economy for the Black Sea:
   - Foster innovative business models, stimulate research and innovation, and sustainable growth and up-to-date jobs.
   - Promote transport and digital connectivity of the Black Sea.
   - Promote blue skills and blue careers as an engine for innovation and competitiveness.
3. Fostering Investment in the Black Sea blue economy.
   - Improve access to financial resources and promote sustainable investment in the blue economy.
   - Promote maritime entrepreneurship and clusters.

Complementing the CMA, the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for the Black Sea (SRIA) contributes valuable scientific insights for informed decision-making (Figure 7).

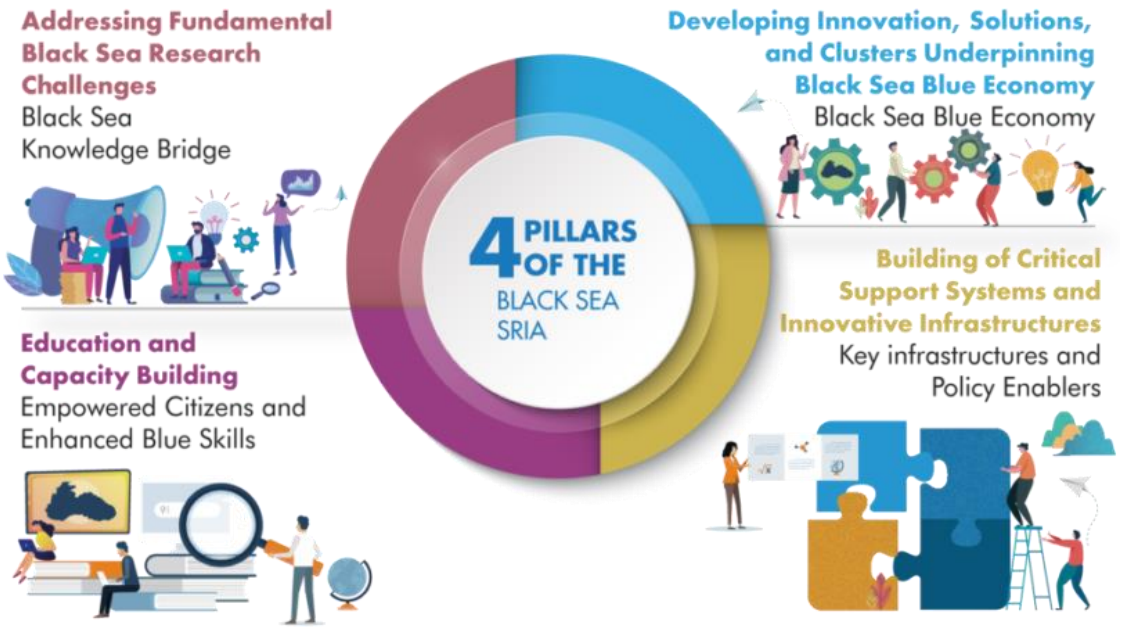

Figure 7: Four main pillars of the Black Sea SRIA
(Source: http://connect2blacksea.org/the-sria/)

The European Commission has set up the Black Sea Assistance Mechanism (BSAM) to support the implementation of the Common Maritime Agenda (CMA) for the Black Sea. BSAM collaborates with the CMA Steering Committee, providing operational and administrative support. It helps organize events, develop projects, and provides guidance on blue economy funding opportunities at the regional and national levels. The BSAM is reinforced by the support provided by National Hubs in each participating country.

European Union Strategy for the Danube Region ➔ The area covered by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) stretches from the Black Forest (Germany) to the Black Sea (Romania-Bulgaria-Ukraine-Moldova) and is home to 115 million inhabitants. The Danube Region Strategy addresses a wide range of issues; these are divided among 4 pillars and 12 Priority Areas (PA), among them is PA 3 - Culture & Tourism. The Danube region is characterised by a broad heritage of dense and diverse histories, cultures, ethnicities, religions, markets, societies and states. However, in terms of history and culture, people throughout the region have a shared heritage. As appropriate, Priority Area 3 "Culture, tourism and people to people contacts" uses these ties as levers to promote further cooperation among different stakeholders as well as for encouraging joint projects and tourism products. Romanian Ministry of Regional Development, Public Works and Administration and Bulgarian Ministry of Tourism are coordinating the Priority Area 3.

PA3 *Culture & Tourism* actions:

- ACTION 1: Promote sustainable tourism in the Danube Region and capitalise on EUSDR projects in the areas of culture, nature and tourism.
- ACTION 2: Support and promote cultural tourism in the Danube Region.
- ACTION 3: Invest in sustainable quality products, services, innovative forms and infrastructure in the fields of tourism and culture, promote skills, education and creating jobs in the related areas.
- ACTION 4: Develop a "Smart Destination Danube".

- ACTION 5: Promote and encourage the development of cultural activities and creative sectors.
- ACTION 6: Promote cultural heritage in the Danube Region.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Protection, rehabilitation, and promotion of the Cultural heritage of the Danube Region.

2. Promote sustainable tourism in the Danube Region and capitalize on EUSDR projects in the areas of culture, nature, and tourism.

3. Support for contemporary arts to tackle the impact of the pandemic crisis, through creative industries, innovation, and inter-sectorial specialization (COVID-19 recovery purpose).

5 Stakeholders' Cooperation in Adrion Macro-region and Black Sea Basin

The existence of a common goal is certainly one of the strongest motivators and drivers of cooperation at all levels. The existence of sources of financing that will enable the achievement of this goal is an additional force that acts as a cohesive factor. This is also reflected in the cooperation of stakeholders in Adrion Macro-region and Black Sea Basin.

5.1 Tourism stakeholders

Considering the high tourist activity in the Adrion Macro-region and Black Sea Basin and its significant economic importance, there is a large number of tourism stakeholders. Most of them operate at multiple levels - local, regional and national.

The most important tourism stakeholders:

- Relevant national ministries (Tourism, Culture, Environmental Protection, Sea/Maritime Affairs)
- State Agencies for Tourism Development
- Local and regional self-government (regions, counties, cities, municipalities, districts, oblasts)
- Local/regional/national tourist boards/organisations/committee
- Destinations management and product management company
- Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts
- NGO in tourism and culture
- Universities and secondary education institutions
- Institutions in culture
- Institutions for nature protection (national parks, nature parks, protected habitats)
- Tourism business (accommodation providers, travel companies, catering, agencies, excursion support, etc.)
- Producers of craft products (wineries, cheese factories, souvenirs and handmade goods, etc.)
- Companies that manage public transport (train, bus, tram, ferry, boat)
- Specialized unions and associations (hotel owners association, associations of cities and municipalities with the aim of promoting a specific area or product…)
- Local action groups
- Local and regional population
- Tourists / Visitors

5.2 Stakeholders' Cooperation

Common history, culture and geographical determinants are also factors that influence the creation of cooperation and the formation of partnerships. For example, cooperation between stakeholders from neighbouring areas that share a common space is more intense than that between distant countries and regions, but such cooperation also exists.

Analysing the different cooperation of stakeholders in Adrion Macro-region and Black Sea Basin, it is noticeable how these collaborations can be grouped into several groups according to the type of collaboration. Grouping could be done according to topic, intensity of cooperation, length of cooperation - the possibilities are numerous.

It should be noted that among the topics of cooperation - the predominant topics are the issue of sustainability, environmental protection, preservation of cultural heritage and creation of additional value of tourist content through the valorisation of cultural and natural heritage.

One of the cooperation models is the twinning of cities, municipalities or counties. For example, the Municipality of Nessebar (Bulgaria) maintains contact and twinning arrangements with the City of Dubrovnik (Croatia), and the City of Kotor (Montenegro).

During the analysis of cooperation, the two most common bases for cooperation between stakeholders were observed, namely membership in the same organization or project cooperation.

5.2.1 Membership in organizations

Membership in international organizations is the basis of cooperation. Organizations gather stakeholders from the same field or with a common goal/problem, and events where members of organizations gather serve as an opportunity to establish cooperation and further joint work.

Examples of organizations that serve as generators of stakeholder collaboration in Adrion Macro-region and Black Sea Basin:

- ***Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme*** - Launched by the Council of Europe in 1987, with aim to show how heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe contributes to a shared and living cultural heritage. In 2023, 47 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe were listed in 41 countries, with different themes from history and heritage to present-day Europe.
- ***European Institute of Cultural Routes*** (EICR) is the technical agency of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme. EICR was set up in 1998 as part of a political agreement between the Council of Europe and the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg and is located in Luxembourg. The Institute assists Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe in the evaluation cycles of certified Cultural Routes and candidate networks to the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification. The European Institute of Cultural Routes also implements European projects promoting greater awareness of the existing links between cultural heritage, tourism, regional development and the environment, and coordinates a University Network.
- ***UNWTO Regional Department for Europe - Regional Department for Europe*** serves the UN Tourism Member States in the Region for Europe to achieve the highest standards of performance in Tourism Policy and Tourism Governance by establishing adequate contents in the Programme of Work. The Region for Europe is the biggest and most diverse region in UN Tourism with 41 Member States, 2 Associate Members and 1 Permanent Observer. The countries in the region generate roughly one half of global international tourist arrivals. The majority of Members in the region belong to various supranational organizations, most notably the European Union, the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the EU Candidate Countries. The Department also collaborates with the non-member countries in the region.
- ***Black Sea Economic Cooperation*** (BSEC) is a full-fledged intergovernmental, regional economic organization, established in 1992, with the aim to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in the Black Sea region. It consists of 13 Members States. BSEC has more than 25 areas of cooperation, among them are culture and tourism. The BSEC Working Group on Culture has on its agenda a number of proposals and projects of interest to the BSEC Member States, such as: Gastronomy and Wine Tourism ("Black Sea Cuisine – Development and Promotion Program"); Film-induced Tourism; Maritime, Nautical and Cruise Tourism - Preparation of an International Conference on Attracting Cruise Tourism

in the Black Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean; Cultural routes/cultural tourism projects; Promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship in Tourism sectors; Silk Road projects; Seminars on how to attract more Chinese and Indian tourists to the BSEC Region; Participation in tourism events and fairs in BSEC Member States.

- ***The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions*** (CPMR) brings together more than 150 Regions from 24 States from the European Union and beyond. Through its extensive network of contacts within the EU institutions and national governments the CPMR has, since its creation in 1973, been targeting its action towards ensuring that the needs and interests of its Member Regions are considered in policies with a high territorial impact. It focuses mainly on social, economic and territorial cohesion, maritime policies and blue growth, and accessibility.
- ***RuralTour – European Federation of Rural Tourism*** is a professional tourism trade organisation representing rural tourism at the European level. It is formed by 28 national and regional provider organisations from 25 countries of geographical Europe, plus 4 affiliated members in 4 countries of Central Asia.
- ***Black Sea NGO Network*** established in 1998 is a regional association of NGOs from all Black Sea countries. The BSNN members, currently over 60, are brought together by the common concern for the decreasing environmental quality of the Black Sea and the need for the adoption of democratic values and practices in the Black Sea countries that follow the ideals of sustainability.
- ***Black Sea NGO Forum*** was launched in 2008 by the Romanian NGO Platform – FOND. The Forum has been organized with the support of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Commission, in the framework of the Black Sea Synergy. The Forum aims at increasing the level of dialogue and cooperation among NGOs in the wider Black Sea Region, strengthening the NGOs capacity to influence regional and national policies and to increase the number and quality of regional partnerships and projects.

5.2.2 Project cooperation

Projects financed by EU funds are a solid framework for the cooperation of stakeholders in Adrion Macro-region and Black Sea Basin in UCCST sector. There are numerous examples of successful projects that encouraged intense cooperation between stakeholders and had a replicative power that was recognized by other stakeholders or was used for upgrading and new projects.

Some of the projects are mentioned below (the goal was to show the diversity of the project - the time of implementation and partnership consortia from different countries):

Table 6: Overview of project cooperation

Name of the project	More about the project
RECULTIVATUR	Project start-end date: January 2011 – December 2013 Funding programme: 2007 - 2013 South-East Europe Through project was established cooperation between partners from Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Hungary, Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Greece for development of religious and cultural tourism.
REVIVE	REVIVE project is the continuation of the REFRESH - Refreshing Heritage Sites and Legends project initiated in 2018 on the occasion of the European Year of Cultural Heritage and the REFRESH+, finalised in 2022. The main aim was to explore ways

Name of the project	More about the project
	to promote cultural heritage while at the same time, building the capacities of young artists and strengthening international cooperation between cultural and educational sectors. Between November 2023 and October 2025, REVIVE will integrate knowledge and experience from six countries and cultures in a cross-sectoral approach, to explore the challenges of using cultural heritage as an inspiration, engaging young creative minds in enriching communities and experimenting with new living models, designs and approaches in declining historic towns and sites. This will be achieved through physical and virtual experimentation in four selected specific urban sites, each facing their own challenges common to many cities, towns and villages across Europe: Tržič (Slovenia), Iași (Romania), Cellino Attanasio (Italy), Turku (Finland). REVIVE explores topics of sustainability in heritage through living public spaces, digital technologies, arts and crafts and intercultural dialogue.
HERCULTOUR – HERa trademark, CULtural TOURism routes and visitor centres strengthening	INTERREG Cross-border Cooperation Programme Italy-Croatia 2014-2020 The aim of the project was to capitalise on the achievements of the HERA project (from 2013.) and to strengthen their sustainability by strengthening the activities of the HERA Association and strengthening the management of cultural tourism routes and visitor centres bearing the HERA label, in the territories of local partners, through the development of management plans, marketing plans and the implementation of additional promotional activities.
Tourism, Heritage, Creativity	Project start-end date: September 2020 – June 2023 Creation of cross-border tourist routes within the framework of the project was implemented by the Georgian Arts and Culture Centre, European Institute for Cultural Tourism EUREKA NPO (Bulgaria) and the Mykolaiv City Development Fund (Ukraine).
4BIZ – Boosting the Blue Economy in the Black Sea Region by Initiating a Business Collaborative Framework in the fields of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Coastal and Maritime Tourism and Maritime Transport	Project start-end date: June 2022 – May 2024 Funding programme: European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) (2021/2027) The 4BIZ Project aims to develop a collaboration framework that will bring together Blue Economy stakeholders in EU and eligible non-EU Black Sea countries to identify and tackle local capacity building needs to boost innovation, digitalization and investment in the Black Sea Blue Economy with the main focus on Fisheries and Aquaculture, Coastal and Maritime Tourism and Maritime Transport. Project locations are in Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Türkiye and Georgia.
InnoXenia PLUS	Project start-end date: January 2022 – June 2022 Funding programme: Interreg IPA ADRION Programme (2021-2027)

Name of the project	More about the project
	The Project InnoXenia PLUS is a follow-up of the previous funded project InnoXenia. InnoXenia PLUS was aimed at enhancing innovation within the tourism sector to make it more resilient to crises like COVID-19 and future challenges. The project consortium consisted of five partners and one associate partner - five countries of the Adriatic-Ionian region (Greece, Italy, Albania, Croatia and Slovenia).
MADE IN-LAND – MAnagement and DEvelopment of INLANDs	Project start-end date: January 2019 - June 2022 Funding programme: Cross-border cooperation program INTERREG V-A Italy - Croatia 2014 - 2020. The MADE IN-LAND project sought to harmonize the development of the potential of the hinterland with the needs and quality of life of the local community. Through the project, the accessibility of the cultural and natural heritage of inland areas to tourist visitors on the coast was promoted and improved, and innovative models were developed for managing the sensitive hinterland landscape. Project locations were in Italy and Croatia.
BLUEMED	Project start-end date: November 2016 – October 2019 Funding programme: Interreg Mediterranean Project was implemented in pilot areas in Greece, Italy and Croatia, aiming to develop sustainable tourism on islands and coastal areas, based on the sustainable management and promotion of UCH, through 3D reconstruction of selected cultural and natural heritage sites, VR and AR applications, the creation of digital exhibitions and the introduction of KACs, to promote the sites to locals and visitors and turn the areas into diving destinations. A roadmap was developed to transfer the integrated model created, that considered different aspects for the creation of UCNH sites and KACs located near the sites as poles of attraction for sustainable tourism development in the areas. BLUEMED PLUS project, was then developed to transfer the knowledge of the multidisciplinary BLUEMED model to three new sites in Adrion region, in Italy (Apulia), Albania (Vlora) and Montenegro (Budva) with significant results in the last case, promoting new destinations for the sustainable development of coastal tourism in the respective regions. "Med Dive In The Past" web platform: links underwater cultural and nature tourism destinations in Greece-Italy-Croatia. Provides information on region-highlights, accessible underwater cultural heritages sites (i.e. historical shipwrecks and submerged ancient settlements), diving parks, video footages and 3D online tours.
AI-NURECC PLUS	Project start-end date: December 2021 – December 2023 Funding: European Commission – DG Regio This project was coordinated by the CPMR in partnership with four stakeholders from the area: the Adriatic Ionian Euroregion, the Forum of Adriatic and Ionian Cities, the Forum of the Adriatic

Name of the project	More about the project
	and Ionian Chambers of Commerce, and the Association of Universities of the Adriatic Ionian area. Partners have joined their efforts to support the EUSAIR implementation, ensuring deep and broad territorial coverage while enhancing Regional and Local Authorities' appropriation of the EUSAIR main objectives and opportunities in the EUSAIR cross-pillar topics: "Research and Innovation", "SMEs Development", and "Skills Development". Project therefore supported entrepreneurship, transnational clusters, and digital innovation hubs activities for the EUSAIR.
MeDryDive	Project start-end date: March 2019 - March 2021 Funding programme: COSME programme Project developed a transnational thematic tourism product entailing travel packages in selected areas in Italy, Croatia, Greece and Montenegro, with core thematic the UCH sites, integrating personalized CCI apps (augmented Reality apps, serious games, videos) into the tourism product, enriching the experience of tourists, both divers and non-divers, and stimulating their interest on Underwater Heritage in the Mediterranean and diving. Among the results of the project was the development of a roadmap for the replication of such efforts in other areas, with selection criteria and parameters in order to promote accessible UCH sites and integrate the CCI applications and other tourism assets towards the development of cultural tourism in the area. The results had high publicity and received positive feedback from the public and the users of the apps but also the support of the local communities, which testifies the good practice of the initiative that aimed to raise awareness among the public and stakeholders about the prospects of the valorisation of UCH with the use of innovation CCI.
CulTourE4Youth Project	Project start-end date: January 2021 – December 2022 Funding: European Commission Project goal was to develop a regional paradigm as capacity building initiator in order to: - increase the knowledge and entrepreneurial culture of young people, to be able to meet market demands and identify business opportunities. - promote sustainable coastal tourism practices to develop new products, services and processes for sustainable cultural tourism. - motivate employers, educational institutions, policy makers and civil society, and facilitate synergies among them, to support youth entrepreneurship with concrete actions.
COASTAL – Collaborative land-sea integration platform	Project start-end date: May 2018 – October 2022 Funding programme: HORIZON Project goal was to improve the rural-coastal synergies in strategic business and policy decision making and collaboration between

Name of the project	More about the project
	coastal and rural actors. This is achieved by developing, demonstrating and applying a generic toolset and performance indicators by combining a multi-actor approach with system dynamics modelling. Partnership: a collaboration of 29 partners from 8 EU Member States (Belgium, Greece, Sweden, Spain, France, Romania, Finland, Norway) representing coastal and rural business entrepreneurs, administrations, and scientific experts. Objective: Co-creating evidence-based business roadmaps and policy solutions for enhancing coastal-rural collaboration and synergies.
HERICOAST	Project start-end date: 2016 – 2019 Funding programme: Interreg 2014 – 2020 Project goal aimed to create a toolbox in order to support 8 project partners from 6 EU Member States with improving their regional policies. Despite the obvious differences between the regional context of the partners' regions such as the rocky coast of Donegal, inland rivers in Castile and Léon and the Danube Delta, all of the regions are seeking for innovative ways to improve the management of their coastal and fluvial heritage based on an extensive stakeholder involvement. The experiences were summarised, analysed and put into a broader theoretical context in a research paper on inclusive heritage policy and management in coastal landscapes across Europe.

In addition to cooperation through EU projects, stakeholders also cooperate on other grounds. Example is local CCT cooperation between Bulgarian (BG) & Romania (RO) touristic companies – who jointly organize that tourists from Bulgaria go to concerts to Bucharest, RO.

6 Weaknesses and Opportunities in UCCST tourism

In analysing the potential of tourist areas, emphasis was placed on weaknesses and opportunities, i.e. a partial SWOT analysis was carried out. The risk related to the outbreak of new or the spread of existing conflicts, as well as environmental threats, was recognized as a universal threat.

The Adrion and Black Sea regions are characterized by strengths such as their diverse natural and cultural attractions and resources. Notably, the pilot locations of the project stand out due to their rich cultural and natural heritage.

It was also observed that most of the opportunities and weaknesses observed at the regional level extend to the national level, and subsequently to the macro-regional level.

Table 7: Multilevel overview of the weaknesses and opportunities of UCCST tourism

	Weaknesses	Opportunities
Regional Level	Seasonality (uneven temporal and spatial distribution of tourists) Lack of understanding of the potential of UCCST/CCT tourism among tourism stakeholders Lack of awareness of the need to develop a sustainable tourism Lack of innovation Resistance of the local population Depopulation Labor shortage Insufficiently experienced and trained employees in the tourism sector Environmental threats Security threats Insufficient and dysfunctional transport and communal infrastructure in tourist destinations Overbuilding Inaccessibility of content for people with disabilities and children Insufficient development of tourist infrastructure facilities Limited financial resources for marketing Lack of cooperation of tourism stakeholders	Sustainable, accessible and green destinations Cultural and natural assets Diversity of touristic offer The possibility of developing specific forms of tourism (culture, nature, creative sector, etc.) The potential of UCCST/CCT tourism for development in the pre- and post-season The recognized necessity of association (associations or joint work between tourism companies from the countries in the same area) Digitalisation of the tourism product Geographical proximity to major emitting tourist markets Available EU funding sources Tourists' sense of security in most of the project area

	Weaknesses	Opportunities
National Level	Low degree of diversification of tourist services (emphasis is placed on accommodation and food) Low investments in tourism Lack of an efficient management and coordination policy Lack of strategic vision, as tourism develops spontaneously in some areas Complex regulations and slow bureaucratic processes Legislative problems - frequent changes, unclear laws, non-compliance with the law Lack of a national policy regarding quality management and sustainability in tourism development Insufficiently effective quality control system in the sector High dependence of the cultural and creative industry from public funding Low accessibility performance in remote touristic areas Low level of synergies in tourism Lack of monitoring and data related to the tourism business sector Need of upskilling / reskilling of tourism personnel	Schengen area - easier movement of people Single Euro currency The recognized importance of tourism for the economy, which contributes to a more thoughtful approach to the development of tourism (reduction of seasonality, sustainability)
Macro-regional / Sea Basin Level	Geopolitical tensions Climate changes Different national legislations and development goals	Longer lifespan (silver tourism) Growing interest of tourists in sustainable and eco-tourism destinations Changing expectations from travel, tourists look for unique experiences we can provide rather than just the natural beauty

7 Cultural Heritage in Policies and Practices

Cultural heritage, whether tangible or intangible, is the foundation of the identity of any community and an important resource for sustainable social and economic development. In the context of growing interest in cultural tourism and the preservation the authenticity of local values, there is a need to understand existing policies, practices and challenges related to cultural heritage management. The aim of the set of 7 questions was to collect information on existing initiatives, strategies and examples of good practice in the field of preservation, valorisation and sustainable use of cultural heritage. The focus was on the role of cultural heritage in tourism development, its protection from the negative effects of excessive tourist pressure, as well as on identifying opportunities for creating innovative and sustainable tourism products based on heritage. The answers received contribute to a better understanding of the current state, challenges and potential of cultural heritage in the context of sustainable development and serve as a basis for future recommendations and the design of more effective policies in this area.

Across Europe, each country has a different legislative and institutional framework for the protection of cultural heritage. The differences are also reflected in different approaches to the integration of cultural policy, tourism and sustainable development, but many of the challenges that countries face are common and open up opportunities for cooperation.

For example, in Italy, the protection of cultural heritage is defined by regional laws through Regional Commission for Cultural Heritage ➔ The Commission is a collective body with inter-sectoral competence that aims to coordinate and harmonize the activities in the field of protection and valorisation of regional cultural heritage. It supports the integration among the different bodies, ensures an overall vision of cultural heritage, implements actions for the monitoring and evaluation of the measures adopted for the management and enhancement of cultural heritage. Regions also have laws (Regional Law No. 20 of 21 April 2023 in Abruzzo Region) ➔ The Law aims to create an integrated system of cultural activities, by promoting the collaboration among relevant public institutions and private stakeholders. It encourages the cooperation networks and the role of the local communities for the cultural development.

On the other hand, Croatia is an example of a country that manages the protection of cultural heritage at the national level, through a single law that applies to the entire country, while the heritage protection institutes are part of the national Ministry of Culture and have offices throughout the country.

What the legal framework defines with the aim of heritage protection is realized through various programmes and initiatives across Europe (and beyond) that support the protection and valorisation of cultural-heritage assets (through interpretation, digitalisation, creative reuse).

For example, Moldova has several ongoing initiatives that promote valorisation of cultural heritage through digitalization, creative reuse, and interpretation. One flagship effort is the National Digitization Centre at the National Library, launched with JICA support in 2022 to digitize rare manuscripts, books, and maps—preserving fragile collections and making them accessible online. The Digital Transformation of Cultural and Creative Industries Project, supported by UN agencies, expands this approach by training cultural professionals in digital tools and creating a national online register of creative organizations, linking heritage to innovation and

entrepreneurship. The cross-border project "KULtura" (Romania–Moldova) promotes shared intangible heritage—folk traditions, crafts, and music—by developing cultural tourism routes and interpretive experiences. The State Agency on Intellectual Property (AGEPI) also encourages creative reuse through its initiative "Valorization of Heritage through Intellectual Property Rights", showing how traditional crafts and symbols can inspire modern design and branding.

Table 8: Examples of projects aimed at the protected and sustainable valorisation of cultural heritage

Name of the project	More about the project
Rocca Calascio - Luce d'Abruzzo	The project is financed under the National Programme adopted in the framework of the Next Generation EU, aimed at creating a model of integrated and sustainable development for the valorisation of local cultural heritage, by promoting social cohesion, fostering innovation, enhancing tourism offer and improving the quality of life in local communities.
Nella Valle del Sagittario	The project is dedicated to enhancing the historical, artistic, and cultural heritage and aims to facilitate and enhance the enjoyment of the tangible and intangible heritage of the two Abruzzo municipalities of Introdacqua and Anversa degli Abruzzi by revitalizing local history and culture. Revitalizing these often small or very small towns, located in inland areas, is essential to prevent abandonment and depopulation.
Renovation of the complex of the former St Nicholas church and monastery in Zadar	The purpose of the project was the renovation and valorisation of the complex of former St Nicholas church and monastery in Zadar. The project ensured the renovation of existing and construction of new premises of the International Centre for Underwater Archaeology in Zadar (ICUA Zadar), their equipping and adaptation to new contents with the primary aim of improving the cultural, educational and scientific segment of the Centre. The implementation of the project contributed to the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.
Digital Museum	The Acropolis Museum enters dynamically into the world of digital technology and opens new channels of communication with the public. The large number of applications that were developed under the programme "Creation of the Digital Acropolis Museum" showcases the multiple aspects of its exhibits, offers unique experiences in its galleries and creates a new, exciting world for kids and grownups alike. At the same time its new website captures in a contemporary way the Museum's function and activities, provides multidimensional orientation and entertainment, renders all its collections open and accessible to the international community and moreover forms an attractive environment, designed specifically for children.

Investing in the valorisation of tourist heritage can have another negative effect - and that is excessive visitation and exposure. Although in predominantly tourist active areas, the burden on cultural heritage is too great and it is threatened or damaged, the awareness of the need to protect

heritage is increasing. In practice, a combination of policy, community involvement, sustainable tourism management, and education measures is implemented.

Table 9: List of possible measures and activities for the protection of cultural heritage

Measure	Activity
Regulation and Policy Framework	**Carrying Capacity Limits:** Establish limits on the number of visitors to sensitive cultural sites to prevent overcrowding and degradation. **Zoning and Land-Use Controls:** Designate protected zones where development is restricted or prohibited to preserve cultural landscapes. **Heritage Protection Laws:** Enforce strict heritage protection regulations and impose penalties for vandalism or unauthorized alterations.
Community Involvement and Empowerment	**Local Stewardship:** Engage local communities as stewards of heritage sites, giving them a voice in tourism planning and benefit-sharing. **Capacity Building:** Provide training for local residents to work as guides, craftsmen, or cultural interpreters, promoting sustainable livelihoods linked to heritage. **Cultural Revitalization Programs:** Support local traditions, arts, and crafts through community-led initiatives, ensuring living heritage is maintained.
Sustainable Tourism Management	**Visitor Management Systems:** Implement timed entry systems, online ticketing, and guided tours to control visitor flow and reduce site congestion. **Revenue Reinvestment:** Ensure that a portion of tourism revenues is reinvested in conservation, restoration, and site maintenance. **Environmental Impact Monitoring:** Regularly assess the physical and environmental impacts of tourism activities on heritage sites.
Education and Awareness	**Tourist Education Campaigns:** Use signage, brochures, and digital media to educate tourists about the cultural significance and preservation needs of sites. **Local Education Programs:** Integrate cultural heritage protection into local school curricula to build awareness from a young age. **Media Partnerships:** Collaborate with media and influencers to promote responsible tourism behavior.
Technology and Innovation	**Digital Documentation:** Use 3D scanning, virtual tours, and digital archives to document and share heritage, reducing physical strain on sites.

Measure	Activity
	Smart Monitoring: Deploy sensors or drones to monitor structural integrity and visitor behavior without invasive supervision.
International Collaboration	**UNESCO and ICOMOS Guidelines:** Follow best practices and conventions from international organizations on sustainable heritage management. **Cross-Border Initiatives:** For shared cultural sites, collaborate regionally to harmonize protection standards and tourism strategies.

Despite the increasingly developed awareness of the necessity of protecting cultural monuments and the ensured legal framework, it is the process that faces numerous challenges, primarily the source of financing and the seasonality / overcrowding of destination, then lack of expertise in conservation, heritage management, and sustainable tourism planning. Also, regulatory complexity and weak institutional coordination between cultural and tourism authorities slow down this process.

Cultural heritage is recognized as an unquestionable capacity for the development of cultural heritage-based tourism products through authentic, community-driven experiences. It is a process that should connect the past and the present in order to preserve it for the future. Considering the sustainability and protection of heritage, the use of digital technologies offers a great opportunity for development.

The practice of still low level of use of indicators or evaluation methods used to measure the impact of cultural heritage tourism initiatives on local development and heritage conservation is worrying - and this is a key step in balancing preservation and tourism development. Strengthening cooperation between different stakeholders was recognized as a key step towards achieving positive change.

8 Conclusions

Tourism is not an isolated island. The spillover effect is evident in tourism across all spheres. Environmental disasters and security threats know no borders. But even success knows no borders, because if someone's neighbour is successful, the neighbour who is less successful can also benefit from it, of course, if less successful neighbour recognizes the opportunity to capitalize on more successful neighbour's action.

Tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-region and Black Sea Basin carries enormous economic potential and is extremely important to the GDP share for all countries. At the same time, tourism is facing increasing challenges at all levels. Considering the large tourist travel the desire to capitalize on opportunities and strengths has never been greater. In this connection, the necessity of developing sustainable tourism that will promote and present cultural and natural heritage without damaging its ecosystem and existence has never been greater.

Seasonality, climate changes and demographic declines are *the enemies* that touristic areas try to fight more or less successfully - sustainability is the main weapon on which hopes are placed.

The great enemy of everything, including tourism, is war and security threats. Facing these challenges goes beyond the capabilities of tourism stakeholders.

Joint efforts are being made to address all these challenges. The TOURAL project also contributes to this process.

The importance of the TOURAL project lies in its multidimensional approach to tourism, based on less sensitive to seasonality UCCST tourism and focused on rural and remote areas.

Deliverable 2.1 provides an initial overview of the project area in the context of stakeholder analysis and their cooperation, as well as the weaknesses and opportunities that UCCST tourism has at different levels.

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- European Union Strategy for the Danube Region - https://danube-region.eu/
- Eurostat - statistical office of the European Union - https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat
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- Istituto Nazionale di Statistica - https://www.istat.it/en/
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- The European Heritage Awards/Europa Nostra Awards - https://www.europeanheritageawards.eu/
- The European Heritage Days - https://www.europeanheritagedays.com/
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- UNESCO - https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat/
- UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators - https://whc.unesco.org/en/culture2030indicators/#:~:text=The%20UNESCO%20Thematic%20Indicators%20for%20Culture%20in%20the,Targets%20of%20the%202030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development
- UNWTO Regional Department for Europe - https://www.unwto.org/europe/about
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- Worldometer - https://www.worldometers.info/

Annex I. Questionnaire

Questionnaire "***Identification of Good CCT Practices & Stakeholders Cooperation Level in Adrion & Black Sea***" is one of the activities within the TOURAL project, which is carried out within the Horizon Europe program. The goal of the TOURAL project is to propose a model that supports the tourism development of rural regions. The modeling approach will be multidimensional and will deal with the improvement of various types of tourism such as: cultural and natural heritage tourism, creative tourism, cultural-scientific tourism and silver tourism (tourism for the elderly). 20 partners from Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Italy, Croatia, France, Turkey and Ukraine participate in the project.

Questionnaire is base for extensive and elaborate multilevel analysis (desk-based research) on regional, national, macro-regional policies, initiatives, instruments and strategies focusing on tourism **UCCST/CCT*** to create knowledge base to support the other project's data and tools development (emphasis on any of UCCST sectors, identification of twin regions, established cooperations) with description of stakeholders' cooperation level in Adrion Macro-region and Black Sea Basin. The questionnaire has a total of 33 questions. The time required for completion depends on the amount of information you have at your disposal.

More about the project:

Web page: https://toural-project.eu/
X (ex-Twitter): www.twitter.com/Touralproject
Instagram: www.instagram.com/touralproject/
Linkedin: www.linkedin.com/company/101481925
Facebook: www.facebook.com/touralproject

For more information about the questionnaire, you can contact us at: marija.dusevic@zadra.hr (Zadar County Development Agency ZADRA NOVA)

Thank you!

**** UCCST/CCT tourism** - TOURAL multidimensional approach aspires to achieve a mutual development of multiple tourism niche sectors/models, through a blended mix of value-propositions related to underwater (UW), cultural & nature heritage tourism (UCNHT), cultural & creative tourism (CCT), cultural science tourism (CST), and silver tourism (SLT). In this context, TOURAL will foster the development of new value-networks of competent (regional & macro-regional) stakeholders, able to give birth and sustain new value-chains supporting the offering of new products/services for UCNHT-CCT-CST-SLT tourism (in short UCCST).*

Clarification of terms:
***Policies** - A high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body.*
***Initiatives** - Undertaking activities with the aim of changing behaviour patterns, laws, and established practices.*
***Instruments** - Measures used to encourage tourism, for example.*
***Strategies** - A development planning document that determines development goals and priorities.*

BASIC INFORMATION

1. Name and surname of the participant (the person filling out the questionnaire):
2. Contact e-mail:
3. Name of the institution:

REGIONAL LEVEL - Multilevel Analysis of UCCST/CCT Tourism

*The following questions are **optional**, answer them according to the information and knowledge you have at your disposal.*
The answer can be up to 4000 characters with spaces.
*If you want to provide **more than one example of good practice**, please **fill out the form again for every other answer**.*

4. Please provide examples of **policies** related to UCCST/CCT tourism at the regional level with which you are familiar with.
   Please, first write which region it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
5. Please provide examples of **initiatives** related to UCCST/CCT tourism at the regional level with which you are familiar with.
   Please, first write which region it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
6. Please provide examples of **instruments** related to UCCST/CCT tourism at the regional level with which you are familiar with.
   Please, first write which region it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
7. Please provide examples of **strategies** related to UCCST/CCT tourism at the regional level with which you are familiar with.
   Please, first write which region it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.

NATIONAL LEVEL - Multilevel Analysis of UCCST/CCT Tourism

*The following questions are **optional**, answer them according to the information and knowledge you have at your disposal.*
The answer can be up to 4000 characters with spaces.
*If you want to provide **more than one example of good practice**, please **fill out the form again for every other answer**.*

8. Please provide examples of **national policies** related to UCCST/CCT tourism at the national level with which you are familiar with.
   Please, first write which country it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
9. Please provide examples of **initiatives** related to UCCST/CCT tourism at the national level with which you are familiar with.
   Please, first write which country it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.

10. Please provide examples of **instruments** related to UCCST/CCT tourism at the national level with which you are familiar with.
    Please, first write which country it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
11. Please provide examples of **strategies** related to UCCST/CCT tourism at the national level with which you are familiar with.
    Please, first write which country it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.

MACRO-REGIONAL AND SEA-BASIN LEVEL – Multilevel Analysis of UCCST/CCT Tourism

*The following questions are **optional**, answer them according to the information and knowledge you have at your disposal.*
The answer can be up to 4000 characters with spaces.
*If you want to provide **more than one example of good practice**, please **fill out the form again for every other answer**.*

12. Please provide examples of **policies** at the macro-regional level with which you are familiar with.
    Please, first write which macro-regional area / sea basin it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
13. Please provide examples of **initiatives** at the macro-regional level with which you are familiar with.
    Please, first write which macro-regional area / sea basin it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
14. Please provide examples of **instruments** at the macro-regional level with which you are familiar with.
    Please, first write which macro-regional area / sea basin it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
15. Please provide examples of **strategies** at the macro-regional level with which you are familiar with.
    Please, first write which macro-regional area / sea basin it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.
16. Can you provide examples of cross-border and macro-regional projects financed by EU funds (Euro MED, Adrion, Interreg, H2020/HEU programmes) aimed at the development of tourism (UCCST sectors, identification of twin regions, established cooperations).
    Please, first write name of the project and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.

Weaknesses and Opportunities in UCCST/CCT tourism

The following questions are optional, answer them according to the information and knowledge you have at your disposal. The answer can be up to 4000 characters with spaces.

17. What do you see as **opportunities on regional level** in UCCST/CCT tourism:

18. What do you see as **opportunities on national level** in UCCST/CCT tourism:
19. What do you see as **opportunities on macro-regional level** in UCCST/CCT tourism:
20. What do you see as **weaknesses on regional level** in UCCST/CCT tourism:
21. What do you see as **weaknesses on national level** in UCCST/CCT tourism:
22. What do you see as **weaknesses on macro-regional level** in UCCST/CCT tourism:

Tourism Stakeholders

The following questions are optional, answer them according to the information and knowledge you have at your disposal.
The answer can be up to 4000 characters with spaces.

23. Who are the most important tourism stakeholders at the **regional level** that you are familiar with?
    Please, first write which region you are referring to, then name of the stakeholder, and why you consider that stakeholder to be the most important. You can identify more than one stakeholder in one answer.
24. Who are the most important tourism stakeholders at the **national level** that you are familiar with?
    Please, first write which country do you refer, then name of stakeholder, and why you consider that stakeholder to be the most important. You can identify more than one stakeholder in one answer.
25. Please provide examples of stakeholders' UCCST/CCT cooperation in Adrion Macroregion and Black Sea Basin.
    Please, first write which macro-regional area / sea basin it is and provide an example with links if possible, and explain why you consider it an example of good practice.

Cultural Heritage Policies and Practices

The following questions are optional, answer them according to the information and knowledge you have at your disposal.
The answer can be up to 4000 characters with spaces.

26. What policies or initiatives exist in your region/country for the preservation and management of tangible and intangible cultural heritage?
27. Are there programs or initiatives promoting the valorization (interpretation, digitalization, creative reuse) of cultural heritage assets? If yes, please provide examples of projects?
28. What measures or guidelines are in place to ensure that increased tourism does not threaten cultural heritage conservation (e.g., capacity limits, visitor management, restoration funding)?
29. What are the main challenges in integrating cultural heritage into sustainable tourism development (e.g., funding, expertise, regulatory issues, over-tourism)?
30. Which opportunities do you see for developing new cultural heritage-based tourism products in your region or country?
31. Are there indicators or evaluation methods used to measure the impact of cultural heritage tourism initiatives on local development and heritage conservation?

32. What improvements or policy changes would you suggest to strengthen cultural heritage tourism in your area?

Final Thought

The following question is optional. The answer can be up to 4000 characters with spaces.

33. Do you want to add something that is not covered by the previous questions, and you think is important for the topic of the questionnaire "Identification of Good CCT Practices & Stakeholders Cooperation Level in Adrion & Black Sea"?