

WORLD HERITAGE JOURNEYS IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



Brugge, Belgium © Botond Horvath / Shutterstock.com



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



World
Heritage
Convention



NATIONAL
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Palace and Park of Versailles, France ©Thomas Garnier

ABOUT THE PROJECT

With over 350 UNESCO World Heritage properties, the European Union (EU) is rich in outstanding natural and cultural heritage and is well placed to attract the growing demand for cultural tourism from key travel markets. These sites are not only important drivers of travel demand, but are also an excellent means for showcasing the EU's extensive history and cultural diversity.

The World Heritage Journeys in the European Union project is made possible thanks to a Preparatory Action voted by the European Parliament. This enabled the funding of a grant from the European Commission (Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs) to UNESCO. The objective is to create unique cultural heritage experiences through the development of thematic transEuropean itineraries. By including iconic and lesser known World Heritage sites, these routes will enable people to see Europe's World Heritage sites from a new and exciting perspective.

The project focuses on authenticity, innovation and sustainability. A rich mobile-friendly website is being produced by National Geographic, providing an important promotional tool for the World Heritage Journeys. The project is designed to attract key source markets to Europe such as China and the U.S.



Vilnius Historic Centre, ©MNSStudio / Shutterstock.com

WHAT ARE “WORLD HERITAGE JOURNEYS?”

The European Union has a fascinating collection of UNESCO World Heritage sites, which reflect the incredible depth and diversity of European culture. The sites tell of a rich history and the many ways in which European ideas, inventions, people and cultures continue to connect with the world.

The World Heritage Journeys will centre on the following four themes, and will connect UNESCO World Heritage sites spanning multiple countries.

Ancient Europe

Across thousands of years, Europe has seen great civilisations and empires rise and fall. Through diligent archaeological work over the past three centuries, much of Europe’s ancient past has been uncovered to tell the stories of its diverse peoples and their cultures.

Ancient Europe is a journey in time to experience the cities, landscapes and buildings that embody Europe’s ancient culture and history.



Acropolis, Greece © RossHelen / Shutterstock.com

Royal Europe

Europe’s Kings, Queens, Emperors and Empresses have left a unique legacy of heritage that still fascinates the world today. Europe’s castles, palaces and royal gardens are filled with stories of opulence, conquest, tragedy and innovation.

In particular, parks and gardens enable visitors to explore how European royalty influenced and impacted the world. Royal gardens not only served as important status symbols, they were key for the development of horticultural science. Today, visitors have the opportunity to explore these breathtaking parks and gardens while discovering for themselves the royal philosophy of harmony with nature.



Sintra, Portugal © Taiga / Shutterstock.com

WHAT ARE “WORLD HERITAGE JOURNEYS?”

Romantic Europe

The beauty of Europe has always inspired love. Whether it is in the hearts of honeymooners or the famous works of art, romance abounds across the continent. It is in the picturesque towns, grand cities, stunning churches, and even ancient temples.

Europe was also the birthplace of romanticism, a movement beginning in the late 18th century that embraced emotion and imagination, and influenced literature, music, art, and architecture across the world.

Romantic Europe takes visitors to World Heritage Sites that have been the locations for some of the most famous love stories of all time, to feel the inspiration for themselves. The journey invites its visitors to create their own unforgettable tales of romance.



Prague, Czech Republic © Stěpán Vrzala

Underground Europe

As the grandeur of Europe grew in cities across the continent, generations of workers toiled underground to power the unstoppable pace of development. From the gold that decorated the Middle Ages, to the wine used to toast revolutions, and the coal that fuelled the modern era, the world as we know it would never have been possible without the tough and dangerous labour taking place deep below the surface. Away from sight and often out of mind, these tunnels, caverns, mines and cellars have been hiding amazing stories about the lives of the people who helped build Europe.

Now open to the public, these incredible World Heritage sites often surprise with an eerie industrial beauty, offering visitors the chance to venture deep underground – and deep into history – of life and culture in the dark depths of Europe.



Champagne, France
© M. Jolyot / Association Paysages du Champagne



Paris, France © Ekaterina Pokrovsky / Shutterstock.com

WHAT WILL WE ACCOMPLISH?

The project addresses several key objectives:

- Leverage World Heritage branding and raise awareness of World Heritage sites in the European Union to increase the number of (international) visitors
- Encourage dispersal of visitors into less visited areas
- Improve the overall visitor experience in Europe and encourage repeat visitation
- Support sustainable growth of EU tourism
- Contribute towards safeguarding the EU's cultural heritage



Mediterranean diet © goodluz / Shutterstock.com



Wachau Cultural Landscape, ©Franz Hauleitner



Royal Domain of Drottningholm © Gomer Swahn/The Royal Court

HOW ARE WE DOING IT?

The project is being implemented through three parallel phases of work:

1) Assessment, Strategy Development and Site Selection

The first phase of the project includes the research and analysis of trends related to heritage tourism in key markets. During this phase, the project defines site selection criteria and identifies the sites and themes for the pilot part of this project.

Once this is done, the project conducts an analysis of tourism infrastructure, marketing, policy frameworks, and linkages surrounding the featured UNESCO World Heritage sites. Key partners are recruited to review the results of the research, fieldwork and analysis. Multi-stakeholder workshops are then held to define strategy and action plans for project implementation.

2) Platform Development, Marketing and Communication

This phase involves the development of destination marketing and management plans that provide tools and guidelines for marketing the journeys. Strategies for tourism-related promotion are being developed, with the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. A mobile-optimized web platform is being developed to publish inspirational and informational content about the World Heritage sites. The platform will help tour operators enhance their products with World Heritage sites and help promotional partners market the journeys.

3) Capacity Development, Policy Guidance and Monitoring

In this phase of work, key stakeholders review and inform destination management and marketing plans for each of the selected sites and journeys. Their input guides the development of capacity building tools to help World Heritage sites engage and collaborate with local and regional tourism stakeholders.



Upper Middle Rhine Valley © Pecold / Shutterstock.com

WHO ARE OUR PARTNERS?

This UNESCO project is being implemented in cooperation with the European Commission (Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs). It involves a wide range of stakeholders which include the European Travel Commission (ETC), national tourism administrations, heritage management authorities and organisations, tourism boards, hospitality industry stakeholders, local communities, sustainable tourism experts and corporate partners.

UNESCO has engaged National Geographic as one of the world's most recognised brands in cultural exploration and storytelling. National Geographic plays an important role in conducting fieldwork and research, facilitating stakeholder engagement, mapping the journeys and developing the web platform.



Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex, Germany © GNTB/Vinken



Aranjuez Cultural Landscape © Jose Ignacio Soto/ Shutterstock.com

CREATING NEW WAYS TO EXPERIENCE EUROPE'S CULTURAL WORLD HERITAGE



Venice, Italy © Bucchi Francesco/ Shutterstock.com



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