10.10.2019 – 11:00 Uhr

Gothenburg and Málaga selected as 2020 European Capitals of Smart Tourism

Brussels (ots) –

EU announces the two 2020 European Capitals of Smart Tourism and four awards to European cities for their excellence as tourism destinations in accessibility, sustainability, digitalisation and cultural heritage & creativity

Gothenburg (Sweden) and Málaga (Spain) have been selected as the winners of the EU's 2020 European Capital of Smart Tourism (https://smarttourismcapital.eu/) competition, following a European Jury meeting in Helsinki on 8 October. The winners were announced and received their awards on 9 October on the occasion of the European Tourism Forum in Helsinki.

In total, 35 cities from 17 EU Member States competed, out of which 10 shortlisted cities were invited to present their candidatures in front of the European Jury. Gothenburg and Málaga impressed the European Jury not only with their exemplary achievements across all four categories of the competition, but also with the impressive programmes of activities they intend to implement during 2020, and their capacity to act as a role model for other cities.

The European Capital of Smart Tourism is an EU initiative, proposed as a preparatory action by the European Parliament and implemented by the European Commission. It promotes smart tourism in the EU, fosters innovative, sustainable and inclusive tourism development and the exchange of best practices. It recognises outstanding achievements by European cities as tourism destinations in four categories: Accessibility, Sustainability, Digitalisation as well as Cultural heritage and creativity.

The two European Capitals of Smart Tourism will benefit from communication and branding support during 2020. This will include: a promotional video, a purpose-built sculpture for their city centres, as well as bespoke promotional actions.

Commenting on the winners, EU Commissioner El?bieta Bie?kowska, responsible for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, said: "I congratulate Gothenburg and Málaga for the outstanding solutions that they put in place to make tourism in their cities smart. Our objective is to promote smart tourism in the EU by fostering innovative, sustainable and inclusive tourism development in order to respond to new challenges in a fast-changing sector. Through the European Capital of Smart Tourism initiative, we seek to establish a framework for the exchange of good practices and networking between European cities and create opportunities for cooperation. The European Commission will support the two 2020 European Capitals of Smart Tourism to showcasing their outstanding initiatives and inspire other European cities to develop tourism in a smarter and more sustainable way".

In addition, four cities received 2020 European Smart Tourism Awards in recognition of their achievements in one of the categories of the competition: Breda (The Netherlands) in Accessibility, Gothenburg (Sweden) in Sustainability, Ljubljana (Slovenia) in Digitalisation, Karlsruhe (Germany) in Cultural heritage and Creativity.

For all the latest news on the European Capital of Smart Tourism (https://smarttourismcapital.eu/), sign up to our newsletter (https://smarttourismcapital.eu/newsletter/), or follow us on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/SmartTourismCapital.eu/) or Twitter (https://twitter.com/eu_growth).

Notes to Editors:

(1) Smart tourism responds to new challenges and demands in a fast-changing sector, including the expectation of digital information, products and services; equal opportunities and access for all visitors; sustainable development of the local area; and support to creative industries and local talent.

(2) The 2020 European Capital of Smart Tourism competition was open to submissions from 26 February 2019 to 10 May 2019. Terms and conditions are available at www.SmartTourismCapital.eu

(3) In the first stage of the competition, a panel of independent experts evaluated the applications. As the result of the evaluation, a shortlist of 10 finalist cities was established. All finalist cities demonstrated excellence across the four competition categories combined.

(4) In the second stage, representatives of the 10 finalist cities presented their candidatures and the programme of activities planned for 2020 in front of the European Jury. The European Jury met on 8

October 2019 in Helsinki and selected two cities to hold the title of the European Capitals of Smart Tourism in 2020.

(5) Helsinki and Lyon won the inaugural competition and jointly hold the titles of 2019 European Capitals of Smart Tourism.

(6) A selection of the most innovative projects, ideas and initiatives, submitted by cities competing for 2019 European Capital of Smart Tourism can be found in the Compendium of Best Practices (https://smarttourismcapital.eu/best-practices/), the go-to guide to smart tourism in the EU.

For further press information, contact:

European Capital of Smart Tourism Secretariat:
Antigoni Avgeropoulou, info@SmartTourismCapital.eu,
+49 (0) 30 70 01 86 390