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## The EU is looking for the European Destination of Excellence 2023 / The EDEN competition awards small, sustainable tourism pioneers

Brüssel (ots) -

Today, the European Commission launches the European Destination of Excellence (EDEN) 2023 competition. This initiative rewards the best achievements in sustainable tourism and green transition practices in smaller destinations across Europe.

The European Destinations of Excellence is an EU initiative, implemented by the European Commission. Its aim is to recognise and award smaller destinations that have in place successful strategies to boost sustainable tourism through green transition practices. The competition is founded upon the principle of promoting the development of sustainable tourism in destinations which brings value to the economy, the planet, and the people. The current 2022 European Destination of Excellence, Middelfart (Denmark) serves as the inaugural holder of the new and improved initiative and as a sustainable tourism pioneer throughout Europe.

In order to compete for the 2023 European Destination of Excellence title, destinations are asked to demonstrate their best practices in sustainable tourism and green transition. The competition covers EU countries as well non-EU countries participating in the COSME programme[1]. Applications will first be evaluated by a panel of independent sustainability experts. In the second step, 3 shortlisted cities will be asked to present their city's candidature in front of the European Jury. The European Jury will select one winner, the European Destination of Excellence 2023, which will be announced in November 2022.

The winning destination will be positioned as a sustainable tourism pioneer committed to the European Green Deal objectives and will receive expert communication and branding support at the EU level throughout 2023.

To apply, destination representatives are asked to complete an [online form](#). **The deadline for applications is 1 June 2022 at 17:00 CET.**

For all the latest news visit the [European Destinations of Excellence website](#).

[1]Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom. <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39579>

### Notes to Editors

1. Since 2007, the European Commission supported EU Member States and other countries participating in the COSME programme to reward non-traditional, emerging sustainable tourism destinations in Europe through the 'European Destination of Excellence' (EDEN) award. This action aimed to foster sustainable tourism destination management models across Europe by selecting and promoting EDEN destinations. To date, 175 destinations from 27 different countries have received the award under different annual themes.

2. In 2019 the "Study on EDEN evaluation" was carried out to assess the continued relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the EDEN initiative and the various actions implemented in its framework, as well as its coherence with other EU initiatives. Following the results and recommendations of the evaluation study, the European Commission relaunched the initiative, which is renewed, taking into account European Green Deal goals. In addition to the EU countries, it also covers non-EU countries participating in the COSME programme. The competition addresses smaller tourism destinations which can showcase their outstanding achievements in sustainability and inspire other tourism destinations in their green transition.

3. In 2021, Middelfart (Denmark) was selected as the 2022 European Destination of Excellence from among 50 other destinations that applied. Watch [here](#) the EDEN video for Middelfart.

4. The EDEN Award was implemented first as a pilot project and as a preparatory action initiated by the European Parliament and since 2011 has continued under the CIP/COSME programmes.

5. The competition for the European Destination of Excellence 2023 opened on 31 March 2022. Details on how to apply and terms and conditions can be found at <https://ec.europa.eu/eden>. The deadline for applications is 1 June 2022 at 17:00 CET.

6. The competition is open to cities and towns in the EU Member States and non-EU countries participating in the COSME programme, with a population between 25,000 - 100,000. For small states with total population below 1 million, destinations with above 5,000 inhabitants are eligible to apply. Please refer to the Guide for Applicants for more information.

7. Eligible applications will be evaluated against a set of established assessment criteria, by a panel of independent sustainability experts. The European Commission, based on the evaluation by experts, will shortlist 3 cities, which will be invited to present their candidatures in front of a European Jury. The European Jury will select one European Destination of Excellence 2023.

8. Destinations shortlisted as finalists will be announced in September 2022 and the winner will be revealed in November 2022.

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