How can cultural heritage, tourism activities and local communities be integrated in a sustainable way to improve deprived areas in Europe?



The EU-funded project **TexTOUR, Social Innovation and TEchnologies for sustainable growth through participative cultural TOURism**, aims to **co-design sustainable cultural tourism strategies and policies with the goal of producing social and economic benefits in deprived areas in Europe and beyond while preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage**.



To achieve its goals, the project sets up **Cultural Tourism Labs** at eight **pilots** located within and outside Europe. The selected pilots have different and complementary characteristics, they face multiple social, economic and environmental challenges. These enable the project's experts to develop a wide range of scenarios: inland and coastal areas, rural and urban, deprived remote or peripheral areas.

The pilots:

CRESPI D'ADDA, Italy . The best-preserved company town in Southern Europe
NARVA, Estonia, Russia. A post-industrial district on the border between Estonia and Russia
UMGEBINDELAND, Germany, Poland, Czech Republic. Home to half-timbered houses
VIA REGIA, Ukraine, Belorus, Poland, Germany, France, Spain. A symbol for European unification
TREBINJE, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia. Embracing the potential of Balkan diversity
TARNOWSKIE GÓRY, Poland. Historic silver and lead post-mining facilities
VALE DO CÔA ? SIEGA VERDE, Portugal, Spain. The most remarkable open-air ensemble of Palaeolithic art in Europe
ANFEH ? FIKARDOU, Lebanon, Cyprus. Two heritage jewels placed between sea and sky

In order to integrate cultural heritage, tourism activities and local communities in a sustainable way, the project has several socio-economic, scientific and technical **objectives**. Among these:

- identify the challenges linked to the promotion of cultural heritage
- demonstrate that cooperation between regions and countries can encourage cultural tourism development and socio-economic growth
- set out sustainable cultural tourism strategies
- create a platform in which to gather the generated knowledge to support policy makers and practitioners in assessing cultural tourism strategies and services and test it in the selected pilots
- create an adaptable inclusive and modular investment strategy
- understand how cultural tourism can promote local socio-economic development
- create an overarching, inclusive and modern European identity based on a network of local identities

The main impacts to which it aims:

propose new policies and strategies on cultural tourism as well as sustainable business models with public-private-people partnerships
preserve Europe's cultural identity, including minority cultures.

To learn more about the project: the leaftlet and TExTOUR website