

Benidorm emerges triumphant from Brussels: Awarded as the 'European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2025'

The Spanish tourist resort Benidorm has been awarded with the prestigious title of 'European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism 2025', a recognition supported by the European Commission that highlights the city's exceptional commitment to shaping the future of sustainable and innovative tourism. Benidorm was selected as the winning city after competing against six other European cities that had been shortlisted as finalists: Aveiro (Portugal), Jurmala (Latvia), Liepāja (Latvia), Nea Propontida (Greece), Panevėžys (Lithuania), and Sliven (Bulgaria).

Benidorm's mayor, Toni Pérez, who, along with Visit Benidorm's manager, Leire Bilbao, represented the city in Brussels to defend its project of sustainable destination, expressed his "immense satisfaction" with the award. Pérez said that this recognition as a 'Green Pioneer' "validates the commitment we made in 2015 to sustainability and smart tourism, which has become a model, example, and inspiration in our daily governance and for other cities around the world."

According to the mayor, "this green and blue vision of Benidorm that we once envisioned aligns perfectly with what an increasingly competitive tourism sector demands today—where sustainability sets the tone and where Benidorm has so much to offer the world." He also noted that throughout 2025, coinciding with the 700th anniversary of the city's founding under the Carta Poble, Benidorm will showcase this title as the sole destination recognized as a green pioneer for smart tourism. "This achievement is the result of years of work and countless efforts," he said.

Under the umbrella of Smart Tourism, the European Commission launched two competitions: the European Capital of Smart Tourism and the Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism, with the goal of promoting smart tourism in the European Union, strengthening and connecting destinations, and facilitating the exchange of best practices.

Initially, only four finalist cities were expected for the Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism award. However, the quality of the applications exceeded expectations, prompting the European Commission to expand the list to seven finalists after some candidates scored equally during the evaluation process.

Benidorm presented its full potential as a sustainable, accessible, and environment-friendly tourist destination to a European jury appointed by the Commission. The city explained why it should win this award and establish itself as a pioneer in sustainable tourism committed to the European Green Deal objectives. The recognition includes expert support in communication and branding at the EU level over the coming year.

The 'European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism' award is the successor to the 'European Destinations of Excellence' competition, established by the European Commission in 2007 to honor emerging, non-traditional sustainable tourism destinations in Europe. The Italian town of Grosseto was named the European Green Pioneer of Smart Tourism for 2024.