

PRESS RELEASE

World Heritage Site of Pafos selected as one of 34 World Heritage sites in the EU featured in ‘World Heritage Journeys’ sustainable travel web platform



The Department of Antiquities and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation announce their participation in the “World Heritage Journeys”, developed by UNESCO in collaboration with National Geographic, for the creation, for the first time, of a web platform dedicated to the promotion of sustainable travel to some of the most remarkable World Heritage sites in Europe. The initiative is co-funded by the European Union and features 34 selected World Heritage sites spread across 19 European Union countries.

UNESCO is now launching the web platform (<https://visitworldheritage.com>), and encourages people to ‘travel differently, travel deeper’, which means travelling beyond the major tourist hubs, staying longer and experiencing more of what the local region has to offer. In particular, the “World Heritage Journeys” launch will take place when UNESCO Paris Headquarters opens its doors to the public on 15-16 September 2018 for the celebration of the European Heritage Days.

“Our goal is to change how people travel. Staying longer in destinations, experiencing the local culture and its environment, and gaining a deeper knowledge and appreciation of World Heritage values,” said Mechtild Rössler, Director of the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO.

“World Heritage Journeys” invites travelers to travel along four cultural heritage itineraries – “Royal Europe”, “Ancient Europe”, “Romantic Europe” and “Underground Europe” - which intertwine to tell fascinating stories of Europe’s heritage and history. The website has practical information and tools to support travelers in planning their European holidays based on local knowledge about the destinations’ cultural heritage. “In addition to reaching travelers directly, we hope that the travel industry—including tour operators, travel agents, and local and national tourism authorities—will be inspired by the content we have curated, and will develop and promote authentic tourism that aligns with the goals of the project and reflects the outstanding universal value of World Heritage.”

World Heritage Journeys will also play a key role in attracting Chinese visitors to Europe for the 2018 EU/China Tourism Year, an initiative led by the European Commission and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People’s Republic of China in collaboration with the European Travel Commission (ETC). The website is available in English, Chinese and French. The platform also contributes to the goals of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage.

According to Frank Biasi, Director of digital development and travel programs at National Geographic Maps “This project is a great example of how National Geographic ignites the explorer in all of us looking to explore the farthest reaches of the Earth and beyond. It seeks to contribute to the economic health of the communities in and around the World Heritage sites, and guide tourists to unique cultural attractions and experiences, as recommended by local experts”. Biasi also says that “With this local knowledge, the website encourages travelers from North America, China and other major tourism markets to travel differently and travel deeper, and use the platform to inspire and plan their European trips.”

The Department of Antiquities and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation have been working in collaboration with UNESCO and National Geographic for over 18 months to develop inspiring and educational content to be featured on the platform. UNESCO has decided to include Pafos in the cultural heritage itinerary of Romantic Europe, as the birthplace of Aphrodite, the goddess of love (<https://visitworldheritage.com/Pafos>). Combined with other World Heritage destinations of romantic nature, the objective is to highlight the significance of Pafos’ archaeological and cultural heritage, in conjunction with other local values, such as the ones embedded in the unique nature, gastronomy, and hospitality, encountered in the broader region.

The promotion of these assets, as a whole, will attract visitors, and contribute in the sustainable growth of the island, and most importantly the reinforcement of the relationship between heritage and society. The information provided on the website, following the guidelines posed by UNESCO and National Geographic, is given in an attractive manner, and aims at establishing a bridge towards this end, by highlighting these values to locals and to people from abroad, deriving from different cultural contexts. This project also marks the close collaboration between the Department of Antiquities and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation aiming at further developing cultural tourism in Cyprus.

World Heritage sites participating in the “World Heritage Journeys”:

18th-Century Royal Palace at Caserta with the Park, the Aqueduct of Vanvitelli, and the San Leucio Complex (Italy)
Ancient City of Nessebar (Bulgaria)
Aranjuez Cultural Landscape (Spain)
Archaeological Area and the Patriarchal Basilica of Aquileia (Italy)
Archaeological Ensemble of Tárraco (Spain)
Archaeological Site of Olympia (Greece)
Champagne Hillsides, Houses and Cellars (France)
Cultural Landscape of Sintra (Portugal)
Gardens and Castle at Kroměříž (Czech Republic)
Historic Centre of Brugge (Belgium)
Historic Centre of San Gimignano (Italy)
Historic Town of Banská Štiavnica and The technical Monuments in its Vicinity, Slovakia
Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (Czech Republic)
Major Mining Sites of Wallonia (Belgium)
Mines of Rammelsberg, Historic Town of Goslar and Upper Harz Water Management System (Germany)
Mining Area of The Great Copper Mountain in Falun (Sweden)
Mont-Saint-Michel and its Bay (France)
Nord-Pas De Calais Mining Basin (France)
Palace and Park Of Versailles (France)
Palaces and Parks of Potsdam and Berlin (Germany)
Pafos (Cyprus)
Pont du Gard (Roman Aqueduct) (France)
Roman Monuments, Cathedral of St Peter and Church of Our Lady in Trier (Germany)
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (United Kingdom)
Sanctuary of Asklepios at Epidaurus (Greece)
Stari Grad Plain (Croatia)
The Par Force Hunting Landscape in North Zealand (Denmark)
The Royal Domain of Drottningholm (Sweden)
Tokaj Wine Region Historic Cultural Landscape (Hungary)
Upper Middle Rhine Valley (Germany)
Vilnius Historic Centre (Lithuania)
Wachau Cultural Landscape (Austria)
Wieliczka and Bochnia Royal Salt Mines (Poland)
Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in Essen (Germany)