

Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation

Join us in creating heritage
experiences with impact

Call for applications



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Are you seeking for ways to recreate tourism?

If your destination has been, like other tourist destinations, hit by the crisis of 2020/21, you are probably seeking ways how to recover and how to recreate tourism to make it more resilient in future.

If you find yourself in any of the situations below, please read on because we can offer you a solution.

Are you searching for ways to:

- create more **value-based and sustainable products and services?**
- satisfy visitors' hunger for **deep and unforgettable experiences** based on local heritage?
- connect with local **stakeholders?**
- engage both visitors and locals in **meaningful and participatory activities?**
- build **communication skills** and understanding of visitors' needs with your staff and locals?
- inspire people to **act sustainably?**

If the tourism in your place or region depends on protected areas, monuments, historic sites, museums, zoos, botanical gardens or other heritage places you might want to adopt the heritage interpretation approach to the recreation of tourism.



Engagement of local community © M- Šegulja

Interpretation is a communication strategy that uses first-hand experiences and provokes peoples' curiosity and interest by relating the site or object to the participants' own knowledge, experience, background and values while encouraging exchanges about critical issues and our common future. Interpretation makes local heritage more **meaningful** and people more **mindful** towards our shared values. In doing this, interpreters use not only face-to-face dialogues. They also make use of other media supporting the experience of heritage, including audio guides, panels, multimedia apps etc. We believe we can help you to change visitors' experiences of your place to get your community more connected and your visitors further enriched with deep experiences.

This journey starts with the **first step - receiving an IE training** for guides, hosts, planners or writers. [Join our initiative](#) and make your place a hub of interpretive experience.

Find out more

Interpret Europe (IE) is a charitable association that serves all who use first-hand experiences to give natural and cultural heritage a deeper meaning. More than 800 members from 48 countries support that aim.

Interpret Europe empowers guides and other tourism and heritage professionals with skills of value-based interpretation and uses principles of Education for Sustainable Development (UNESCO), which make all of us stewards of all heritage and of our common future. Annually, we run 40 courses on heritage interpretation in many European languages.

The IE Recreating Tourism Initiative aims in helping communities around heritage sites to (re)launch tourism in a healthier, more sustainable way. The initiative aims at supporting locals develop high-quality tourism experiences and more mindful visitors instead of mass tourism and is based upon training for local hosts, guides, planners and writers.

Who can apply? Any destination or community willing to develop tourism in an authentic and interactive way based on Interpret Europe training on heritage interpretation for local tourism professionals.

Communities should be represented by any organisation that is developing tourism products or services in a region. If you are a director of such organisation, a representative of local authorities or a tourism business owner, you can apply with your organisation or company on behalf of the destination.

IE Training Programme has been created by high performance coaching and 10 years of experience working in different countries with different organisations to scale up personal and professional development. IE diverse team of trainers offers expertise in several European languages.

[Find out more](#) about our training programme and [Join IE](#) to make your place a hub of interpretive heritage experiences.



Personal interpretation © Creative media

The success stories in four destinations

Our proposal for recreating tourism originates from the experience of past IE courses: inspired by our trainers, local communities decided to change their attitude towards tourism after being introduced to heritage interpretation. The result was a fundamental shift in the tourism development of these destinations, four of which we proudly present as success stories.

Two of the following success stories come from Istria, which as a region won a Lonely Planet Best in Travel 2021 award: [Readers' Choice Awards for Community](#). The reasons for the award mention, "The people living here are genuine and welcoming," and "Istria offers authentic and unforgettable experiences... each of which gives back to the local communities". Interpret Europe training may well have contributed to this success, as to date, IE run several courses there for more than 80 tourism professionals. Local tourism operators and service providers are open to new approaches and keen to use heritage interpretation to meet their strategic goals. You can read their personal accounts in the following pages.

A former industrial centre is back on the tourist maps



Walk with maid Margareta © M. Šegulja

Bakar, in Croatia was one of the largest industrial centres in the former Yugoslavia for more than five decades, carrying the stigma of a polluted city with no opportunity for economic recovery and tourism development. Bakar Tourism Board, influenced by Interpret Europe training, organized specialised courses on interpretation for local guides which resulted in numerous interpretive walks and activities – historical walks for children, a diverse competition in underwater photography, a tuna fest and gamified tours while they succeeded in engaging the local community.

Bakar Tourism Board received the [Golden Interstas 2020](#) award for Excellence in Tourism and most recently "[Simply the best](#)" award.

New tourism products were created based on appealing heritage stories. The local government, inspired by the traditional activity of tuna fishing, is launching an interpretive coastal park and a Museum of Fisheries Heritage.

“ The Certified Interpretive Guide course has transformed our way of thinking and we now see the same things in a different light. It has opened our eyes, given us some great ideas, knowledge and tools. We've also started many new projects based on our rich heritage.

Sonja Jelušić Marić, Director of Bakar Tourist board

From heritage unawareness to a strong destination brand

Ližnjan county, in Croatia, faced heritage unawareness, competition from famous neighbouring destinations and lack of a strong brand name. Its community had not realised the natural and cultural uniqueness of the area and there were no guides.

Local participants successfully participated at Interpret Europe's courses to guide visitors and provide them with a deeper meaning of their heritage. The local community has been involved ever since to enrich visitors' experience.

Since then, numerous interpretive events have been organized involving local gastronomy and product tasting, storytelling and workshops for children.

Tours of considerable quality were designed in a short time with little money. The Tourist Board offers them free of charge, so that guests can enjoy all the authentic aspects of the region.



Interpretive training event © I. Silla

“ The course was inspiring because it gave me a deeper dimension of looking at product development and heritage promotion, exactly what was needed for the recognition of the “experience”. The course participants made many great suggestions, some of which were implemented. It was a great starting-point for cataloguing heritage and putting ideas on paper to be delivered in a short time with little money and are still of good enough quality to promote the destination.

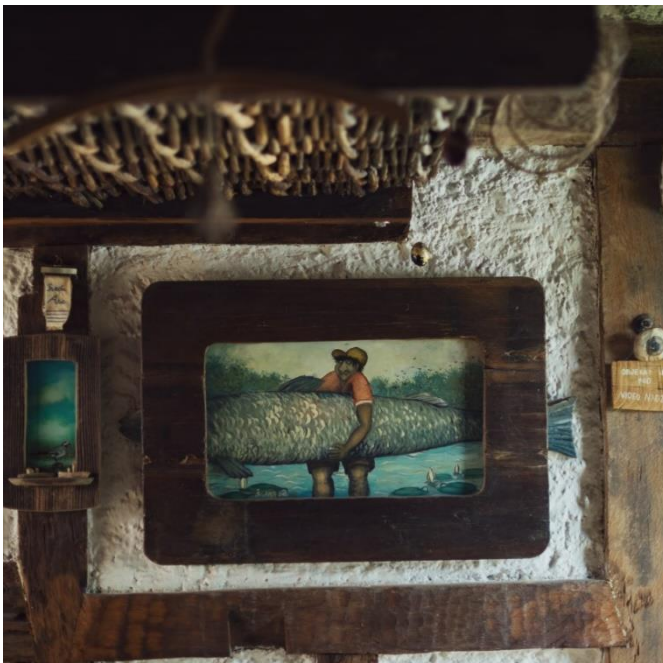
Natali Palko Zidrum, Director of Ližnjan Tourist board

Six villages in a remote place became a remarkable destination

Central Podravina, in Croatia, consists of six different villages in the hinterland, an underdeveloped tourist area with no inflow of money from tourist arrivals.

As a result of Interpret Europe training, the regional Tourism Board implemented a strategy based on the diversity of the six villages, turning their unique characteristics into six principal tourism attractions:

- Exceptional traditional cookies
- Naïve art of painting oil on glass
- Mystical nature
- Historical personalities and wine
- Graffiti village moved by a flooding river.
- Spirituality and the figure of Holy Mary.



Naïve art in a local art gallery © E. Milanović Glavica

The Tourism Board managed to engage local inhabitants at a stronger and more intimate level, and they organized Interpret Europe training and educational activities for the local destination organisations and their stakeholders, for which they got external funding.

IE courses have helped local professionals to identify many opportunities to expand their businesses to sustainable tourism. Many new products were created and three new projects were launched.

“ I took part in a Certified Interpretive Guide course in another country where I met many great people and made amazing friendships. I subsequently decided to organise the same course in my region and for some participants it was a life-changing experience due to a totally different approach to presenting heritage. They improved their guiding skills and have begun working together on joint projects, so I believe the real benefits from the course are yet to come.

Elizabeta Milanović Glavica, Director of Središnja Podravina Tourist board

Going beyond the typical "sea and sun" tourism model

Vrsar, in Croatia, is a beautiful coastal town on the Adriatic coast with attractive beaches, nautical tourism and fun family parks – a 'sea & sun' destination.



Vrsar viewpoint © S. Halembek

Interreg ADRIAN, the Adriatic Landscape Interpretation Network – ADRIAN project called the Casanova Interpretive Tour with more than 300 participants yearly, a multimedia interpretive centre and a gamified event called the "Historical Fair below the Castle, are just a few of the results of heritage interpretation training in Vrsar.

Vrsar Tourism Board decided to go beyond the sea & sun mass tourism model and create a 'sense of place', by shifting the tourist focus from the sunny beaches to the natural and cultural heritage of the town and its surroundings, in order to become a more competitive destination in the long run.

Together with an Interpret Europe team of trainers, they have educated local stakeholders and facilitators as well as restaurateurs, tasting facilities and culinary workshops, with the aim of creating experience on many levels.



Culinary heritage © M. Vekić

“ We would be delighted if our example encourages other destinations to invest in the training programme and adopt the interpretive approach for tourism development. It also acts as an incentive for us to continue improving heritage interpretation and becoming an even better example. :-)

Tea Štifanić, project coordinator

How to join the initiative?

Any business, destination, association, NGO or other legal entity can apply to this call and represent their community in three basic steps.

Step 1

Join our network!

Become an Interpret Europe [Institutional or Business](#) member and benefit from exchange with more than 800 professionals Europe-wide. Call is open until 31 December 2021.

Step 2

Organise an IE course in your community and invite stakeholders.

Invite guides, planners (architects, designers), copy-writers or hosts (heritage culinary, accommodation and other providers) to think out of the box and follow a training that will make them set on a new development of interpretive tourism in your community. It is important to invite also decision makers and other stakeholders for a stronger impact in the entire community.

Step 3

Implement your experience and ideas from the course for the future development of your site.

During the initiative we will bring cooperating partners in exchange. You will be able to present your case to a wide European public at the [IE conference](#) on 1-4 October 2021 (if you join by 15 August) and in a digital publication.

Milestones and deadlines

- **15 August 2021:** early bird application for joining the [conference 'Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation'](#) which runs from 1 to 4 October 2021. Join by this date and you will be able to present yourself in a special conference session dedicated to the initiative.
- **1-4 October 2021:** presentation at the IE conference Recreating tourism with heritage interpretation.
- **31 December 2021:** call for applications closes.
- **30 September 2022:** all training sessions have taken place.
- **31 December 2022** release of the publication Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation– a presentation of results and case studies.

By joining the initiative, you will:

- receive a label confirming that you are Interpret Europe's Training Partner.
- be promoted through our communication channels
- be invited to a special session at the IE conference 'Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation' in October 2021, if you join the initiative by 10 August.
- be promoted in IE's special brochure that will be distributed throughout Europe, to professionals, associations, institutions and networks such as EU Expert Group on Cultural Heritage, EUROPARC Federation, European Heritage Alliance, Europa Nostra, European Cultural Tourism Network etc.

Your community will have the opportunity to:

- co-create value-oriented, high-quality tourism products and experiences.
- increase authenticity and local identity
- learn how to effectively interpret heritage – for themselves and together with visitors.
- make communication more professional
- strengthen community bonds
- enhance visitor satisfaction
- use unique heritage to foster human and universal values among people
- direct tourism development towards a greener future.



Window of opportunity © M. Banks

Increase your impact by:

- promoting the initiative through your online channels
- convincing your destination decision makers to join the training courses
- assuring stakeholders are invited to the training programme.
- use networking opportunities and promotion as Interpret Europe member

Cannot join the entire programme?

If for some reason you can't take part in the entire programme, but your organisation is interested in attending / learning more about IE's training programme, you might want to fulfil only step 2 on page 8 and become an IE Training Partner by organising an IE course at your site.

Having more questions? Find answers in the Frequently Asked Questions paper [here](#).

[Join our initiative](#) email us at tourism@interpret-europe.net



Interpretive training event © I. Silla

Our supporters in recreating tourism in Europe



Greystones © H. Vičič

Get to know our team

Our IE Tourism Team is ready to support you!



Vasilka Dimitrovska
IE Tourism
Coordinator
(North Macedonia)



**Dubravko Fijacko
Max**
IE Gastronomic
Heritage Coordinator
(Croatia)



Nuria Mohedano
IE Events Coordinator
(Spain)



Bojana Sekulic
IE Country Coordinator
(Montenegro)

Contact us: tourism@interpret-europe.net

IE Conference 2021: Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation

Join us in our next conference from 1 to 4 October 2021.

Under the theme [Recreating tourism through heritage interpretation](#), we will merge heritage interpretation with sustainable tourism.

Inspiring speakers, hands-on workshops, thematic discussions and networking – it is exactly what you can expect from an IE web Conference!

Find out more [here!](#)

Summary

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European Association for Heritage Interpretation

www.intrepret-europe.net