

Crafting a sustainable future for Dubrovnik: New TUI Colourful Cultures project empowers artisans in Croatia

- *Initiative in cooperation with local organisation DEŠA empowers creatives through a sustainable fusion of traditional artistry and tourism*
- *Series of events, including pop-up art and craft events, workshops, and a Festival of Handicrafts will showcase Dubrovnik's rich cultural tapestry*
- *Project is part of the global TUI Colourful Cultures Programme, which protects cultural heritage and supports creatives in tourism destinations*

Berlin, 28 June 2024. *Dubrovnik, a city steeped in history and culture, is a top destination for global travellers. However, whilst the influx of visitors, which averages 36 tourists per local resident, has boosted the tourism industry, it has also increased living costs for locals. This economic impact is felt keenly by the custodians of the city's heritage and its artisans. To address this challenge, the TUI Care Foundation has partnered with local civil society organisation, DEŠA, to launch TUI Colourful Cultures Croatia. The initiative empowers female artisans, providing them with economic independence. It also enriches the cultural experience for tourists and fosters a deeper global appreciation for Dubrovnik's unique heritage.*

To rejuvenate and harness the city's traditional artisan skills, a series of cultural events will take place to provide a platform for creatives to showcase their talents and boost their income. Interactive pop-up events and workshops guided by skilled senior and innovative young artisans offer tourists the chance to immerse themselves in Dubrovnik's rich cultural legacy. They also serve as a conduit for the artisans to both earn from and share their heritage. A social shop run by DEŠA will exclusively showcase and sell the unique products made at these workshops, ensuring that the benefits of tourism flow back into the hands of the local community. A highlight of the initiative is the biannual Festival of Handicrafts, which attracts over 12,000 participants. The festival will spotlight artisanal displays and interactive sessions.

The project was officially launched in Dubrovnik by Helen Caron, Member of the Board of Trustees of the TUI Care Foundation and Ana Cvjetković, Executive Director of DEŠA.

Helen Caron: "Croatia's rich cultural heritage is not only cherished by its residents but it's also a powerful economic asset. By empowering local artisans through the TUI Colourful Cultures Croatia initiative, we're ensuring that tourism is a force for good, preserving tradition while creating sustainable livelihoods."

Ana Cvjetković, Executive Director of DEŠA: "TUI Colourful Cultures Croatia is a partnership between DEŠA and the TUI Care Foundation, which is dedicated to promoting local resources, cultural heritage, self-employment and local development, as well as enriching guest experiences. Over the next two years, we will host creative workshops and fairs at DEŠA in Lazareti, a hub where artisans and tourists can exchange

knowledge. Our collaboration began during the Corona crisis, offering workshops for children, youth, and women. We look forward to continuing our efforts in community development together.”

With a strong focus on empowering local women and promoting sustainable tourism, TUI Colourful Cultures Croatia aims to leave a lasting impact on Dubrovnik’s socio-economic landscape.

The initiative is part of the global TUI Colourful Cultures programme which includes projects in Mexico, Peru and Turkey and empowers artists and artisans to gain access to new income opportunities and promote their cultural heritage through tourism offers.

About the TUI Care Foundation

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Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world’s leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands.

About DEŠA

DEŠA is a civil society organization working on sustainable social - economic, cultural and environmental empowerment and community building. DEŠA strengthens social capital, especially the role of women and youth as bearers of positive changes in society. DEŠA’s mission is realized through awareness raising, lifelong learning and education, counseling, volunteering and direct work in the community.

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