



Bridging Horizons: Strengthening Cooperation, Resilience and Cohesion in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

Connecting Bridges through Culture and Mediterranean Diet - Creative Cooperation for Cohesion and Identity

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PILLAR: IV. Sustainable Tourism

TITLE OF THE SESSION:

Cultural Tourism and Mediterranean Diet as a Tool for Local
Sustainable
Development



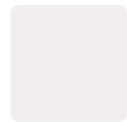
The Association of European Border Regions:

Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation Across Europe

- ❖ The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) established 1971, serves as a prominent Europe-wide organization representing border and cross-border regions.
- ❖ Its primary mission is to **highlight the unique challenges and opportunities** faced by these regions, raising awareness among politicians and the general public.
- ❖ By fostering communication, cooperation, and representation towards national and EU institutions, AEBR plays a vital role in strengthening cross-border collaboration and advancing regional integration across Europe's complex border landscapes.



AEBR: Border Regions as Bridges



Cross-Border Cooperation

Strengthening identity and social cohesion.



Culture as Meeting Point

Border regions become hubs of cultural exchange.



Europe of Regions

Building unity through shared heritage and culture.





Task Force Culture & Language: Building Bridges



Joint Projects

Supporting
festivals, heritage
trails, residencies



Local Development

Connecting
creativity with
regional growth



Cultural Prosperity

Turning diversity
into shared success





aim to break barriers



and empower local actors to cooperate pragmatically



while celebrating their unique differences



1

Diplomatic Tool

Culture serves as a diplomatic tool, fostering positive relations between neighboring countries.

2

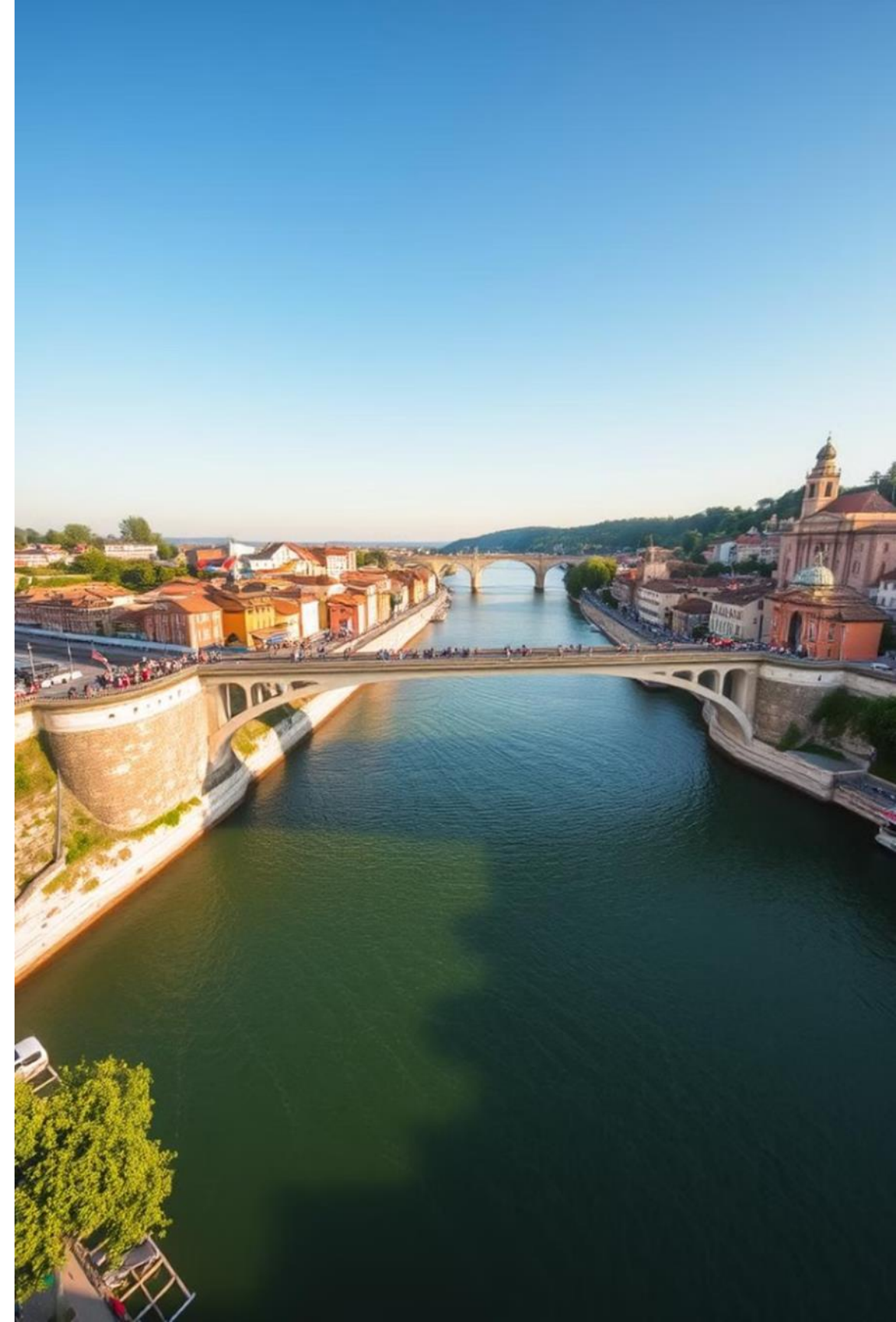
Mutual Respect

Promoting mutual respect and shared values through arts, festivals, and cultural exchange programs.

3

Soft Power

Cross-border areas can use soft power to diffuse tensions, enhance dialogue, and create opportunities for cooperation.



Strategic Link with AEBR Culture Task Force

- 1 Cross-Border Cultural Cooperation**
Enhance regional cohesion through shared culinary heritage and intercultural dialogue.
- 2 Focus on Peripheral & Rural Areas**
Revitalize less-developed border communities by reinforcing identity and craftsmanship.
- 3 Macroregional Cooperation**
Align with EUSAIR Pillars supporting sustainable tourism and connectivity.
- 4 Partnership & Visibility**
Leverage AEBR networks for flagship project status, policy influence, and event participation.



Cultural Diplomacy as a Bridge

Culture is a powerful bridge uniting identities across borders. It fosters cooperation, growth, and shared understanding.

Dialogue Through Art

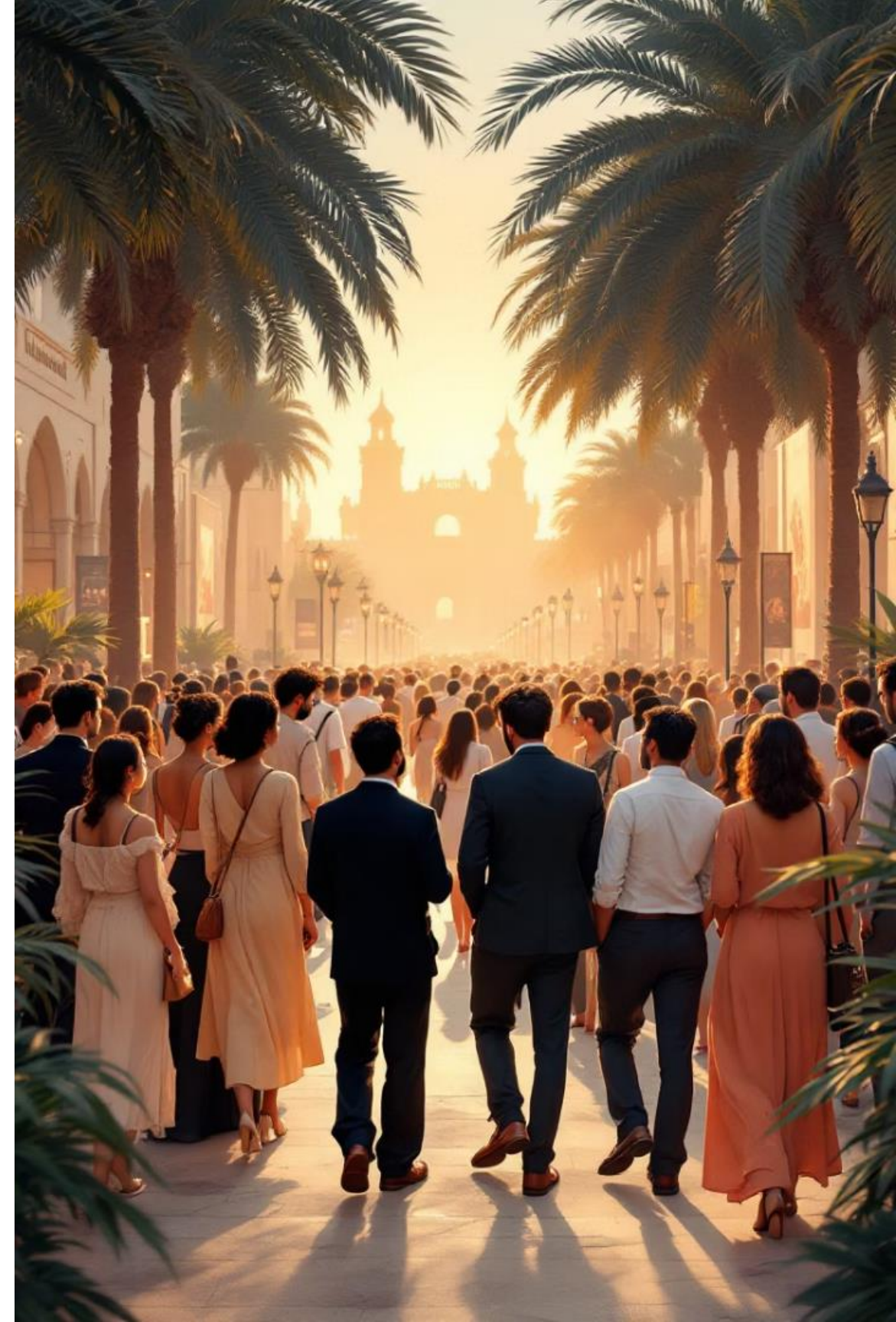
Joint festivals and exchanges break barriers and build relationships.

Cuisine Connects

Shared meals unite people from different backgrounds and regions.

Heritage Celebrations

Cross-cultural projects foster long-lasting understanding.





Common Ground: Cultural Heritage

UNESCO MEDITERRANEAN HERITAGE SITES

WWW.MIRSTRMATIKULPARY.COM



Transcending Borders

Shared heritage connects regions beyond geographic limits.

UNESCO Recognition

Mediterranean Diet and historic sites unite cultures worldwide.

Cross-Border Events

Cultural festivals celebrate intertwined histories and identities.



EU Strategy
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Main Objectives of the Initiative

Preserve Cultural Heritage

Maintain the Mediterranean Diet as a symbol of cultural identity and sustainable lifestyle, safeguarding traditional food practices.

Enhance Cultural Tourism

Integrate food, history, and community traditions into tourism offerings to create authentic experiences for visitors.

Support Local Economies

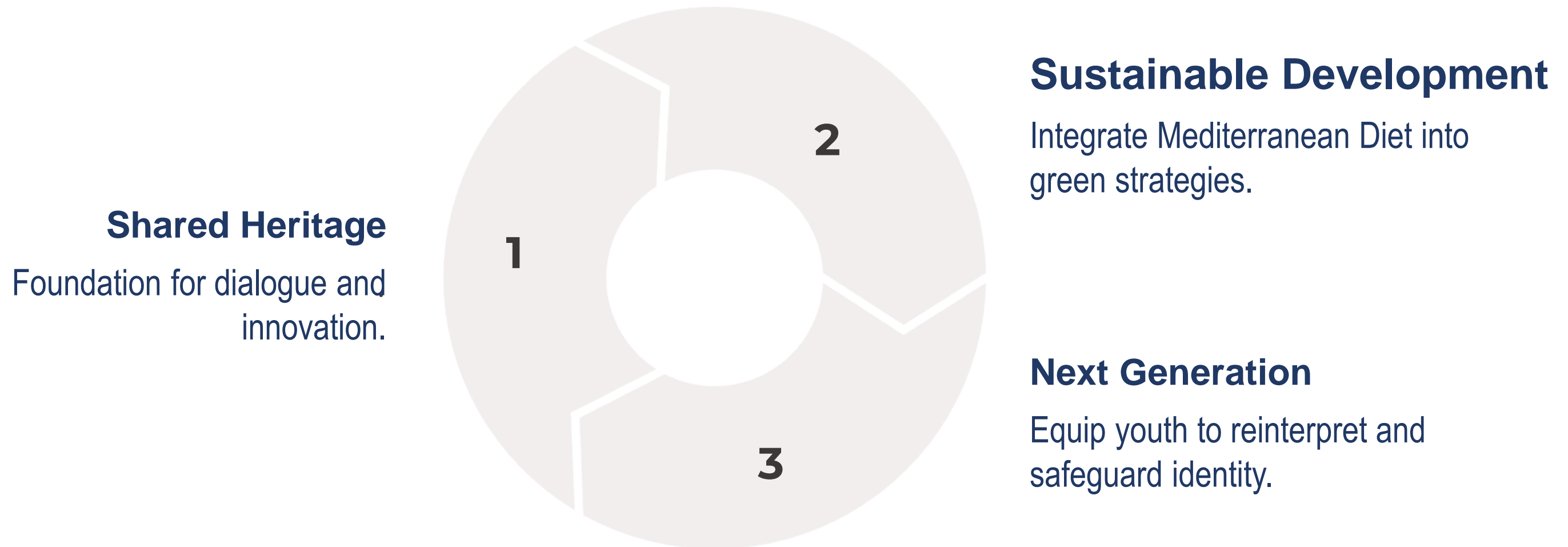
Empower SMEs and local producers through gastronomic entrepreneurship, agri-tourism, and promotion of regional products.

Foster Sustainability

Promote sustainable practices in agriculture, tourism, and cultural preservation, aligning with environmental and social goals.



Building a Resilient Adriatic-Ionian Region





Understanding Creative Cooperation

What It Means

Is the process of bringing together people, sectors, and regions through culture, innovation, and shared values to build something greater than the sum of its parts

How It Works

Cross-border initiatives connecting culture with tourism, agriculture, and economy.

In the Adriatic-Ionian region, creative cooperation is the key to turning our cultural diversity into a cohesive force for sustainable development, youth empowerment, and regional identity.

Social Cohesion and Empowerment

Youth Engagement

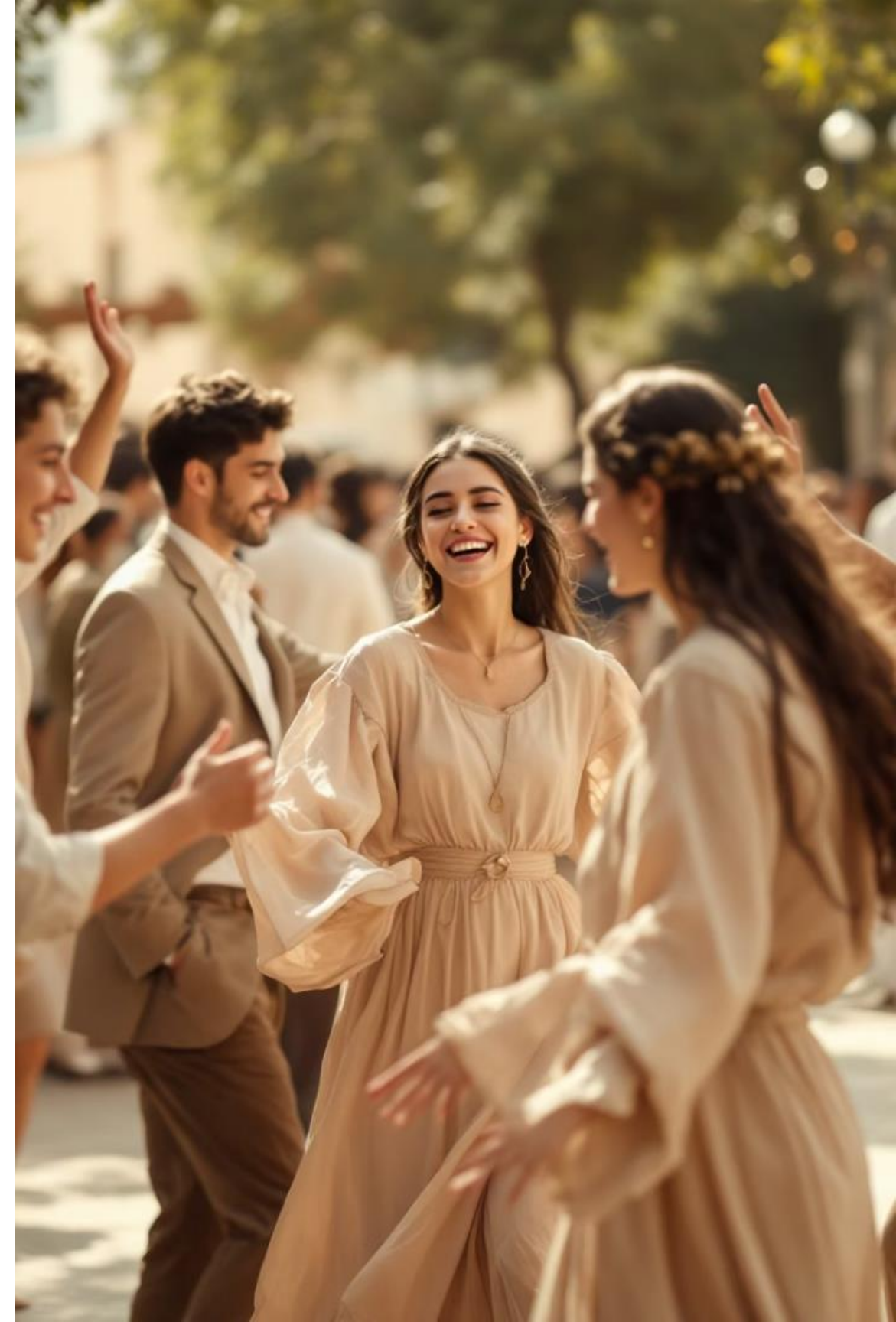
Traditional arts empower marginalized communities.

Inclusion Initiatives

Cultural projects promote mutual respect and belonging.

Community Bonds

Cultivating shared identity strengthens social cohesion.





Mediterranean Diet and Creative Future Cooperation

Mediterranean Diet

- Tradition of community, wellness, and sustainability.
- Driving education, culture, and tourism initiatives.

Creative Cooperation

- Gastronomy and tourism routes
- Festivals and storytelling
- Youth exchanges and creative hubs



Developing Cultural-Gastronomic Routes



Cross-Border Thematic Routes

Connect villages, heritage sites, farms, and festivals through curated itineraries.



Examples of Routes

- Olive and Vine Trail
- Legends & Myths
- Salt & Saints Coastal Walk



Tourism Experience

Offer immersive narratives and hands-on participation to foster deeper cultural understanding.

Empowering Youth and Creative Communities



Innovation

Supports new ideas
blending tradition
with future trends.



Collaboration

Encourages
partnerships
crossing borders
and sectors.



Sustainability

Nurtures long-term
cultural and
environmental
health.



QNeST : Quality Network on Sustainable Tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

QNeST project objectives, focused on preserving cultural heritage, protecting environmental assets, promoting the **Mediterranean Diet**, providing seasonal tourism services, and fostering innovation.



Four Key Cultural Routes

The project focuses on reinforcing four distinct routes, each highlighting different aspects of the Adriatic-Ionian region's heritage. These routes are designed to offer diverse and enriching experiences for tourists, while promoting sustainable practices.



Wine & Olive Oil
Routes

TM

Routes of Merchants,
Pilgrims & Travelers



Stone Routes



Water Routes



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OLIVE OIL

CAND CUISTUR



QNeST : Quality Network on Sustainable Tourism in the Adriatic-Ionian Region

"Adrion projects is not just a **funding program** — it is a movement that empowers our regions to rediscover their identity, **creatively cooperate across borders**, and **build sustainable futures** rooted in our Mediterranean way of life."





Together for a Mediterranean Future

In the future, we **envision** cross-border **gastronomy and cultural tourism routes** that weave **together** the stories of our shared **Mediterranean heritage**.

By encouraging **youth exchanges** and establishing **creative hubs**, we can ensure that the next generation of Mediterranean creators — chefs, artists, and innovators — **are inspired to continue telling our story in new, exciting ways**.



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Culture is our bridge.

Mediterranean Diet is our language.

Cooperation is our journey.

The future tastes Mediterranean, feels cultural, and belongs to all of us.



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Thank you for your attention!

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