

From Vision to Action: Advancing Sustainable Tourism

The Pillar 4 session at the 11th EUSAIR Forum brought together members of the Thematic Steering Group on Sustainable Tourism, youth representatives and practitioners to review progress under the revised Action Plan and discuss priorities for the period ahead.

The session was structured around three topics from the updated Action Plan — digital and green transition of tourism and cultural heritage, knowledge, skills and management, and greening of tourism products and services — and featured contributions from Greece, Croatia and the EUSAIR Youth Council.

Fotis Vlachos from the Hellenic Ministry of Culture presented findings on the perception of the Mediterranean across EUSAIR communities, underscoring the cultural dimension of sustainable tourism as a shared regional asset rather than a national narrative.

Linda Grebac, Director of the Tourist Board of Kašteliir-Labinci, presented the case of a Croatian village recognised by UN Tourism as the Best Tourism Village in 2025. The example illustrated how local ownership, community cooperation and a clear identity can serve as the primary drivers of sustainable rural tourism development. Iva Čaleta Pleša, Pillar 4 Coordinator at the Ministry of Tourism and Sport of Croatia, framed the broader significance: "Croatia in EUSAIR does not come only with strategies — it brings examples that already deliver results. Kašteliir-Labinci shows what happens when a local community takes ownership of its own development. This is a model worth sharing."

The youth perspective was provided by Adnan Solak of the EUSAIR Youth Council, who raised the question of what kind of tourism young people in the region actually want to develop — pointing to the gap between existing tourism models and the expectations of the next generation of both travellers and practitioners.

Discussion confirmed the Pillar's commitment to a transversal approach: linking coastal, hinterland, mountain and rural areas, addressing demographic and economic disparities across the macro-region, and aligning with EU green and digital transition objectives.