

# Interreg Europe DETOCS Project Newsletter 5

## Exchange of Experience Event in Campobasso

On 21–22 May 2025, partners & stakeholders of the **DETOCS – DEcarbonising the Tourism Industry Post Covid-19 Support** project gathered in Campobasso, Italy, for the 5th Interregional Exchange of Experience Event & Steering Group Meeting, hosted by the Municipality of Campobasso. Partners & stakeholders from eight regions met at the Casa delle Tecnologie Emergenti to share progress, challenges, and solutions for decarbonising the tourism sector. A Policy Improvement Workshop, “From Common



Challenges to Shared Solutions”, explored practical measures for boosting energy efficiency in tourism, tackling barriers such as financing constraints, regulatory gaps, and limited stakeholder capacity. Transferable solutions ranged from renewable energy communities to one-stop-shop advisory tools and sustainability awards, informing each region's forthcoming Action Plan.

Study visits showcased local best practices, including Pietracupa's public guesthouse powered entirely by photovoltaics and heat pumps, the Museo Contadino's energy upgrades, and Fossalto's award-winning energy community. Eco-Hotel Villa D'Evoli demonstrated how sustainable practices enhance both business resilience and visitor experience. Day two featured sites in Campobasso and the Molise region, such as the Alphaville Cinema-Theatre with deep energy retrofits, Hotel Ruffirio's large-scale PV and storage system, and Le Coccole wellness centre, where renewable energy supports spa facilities in restored historic farmhouses. The meeting closed with updates on the Joint Thematic Guidebook and communication activities, reinforcing DETOCS' mission to drive the green transition in tourism through knowledge exchange and cross-regional cooperation.

[Read more about the event & study visits on our website.](#)



### Inside this issue

5th Exchange of Experience Event in Campobasso .....	1
Regional Updates .....	2-5
About the project .....	5
Contact .....	5

### Upcoming News

Next partner meeting and Exchange of Experience Event to take place on 8–9 October 2025 in Burgas, Bulgaria.

### Project Budget

Total Budget: €1,980,883.00  
Interreg Funds: €1,567,416.40

### Timeline

01 March 2023 – 31 May 2027



### Joint Thematic Guidebook

The DETOCS project is preparing a Joint Thematic Guidebook to support the decarbonisation of the European tourism sector. A project outcome overseen by the **Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (CIHEAM MAICH)**, the guidebook will provide practical solutions, from energy efficiency measures to innovative approaches like virtual tourism, tailored to different climates and business types.

The guidebook will be translated into national languages and made available online to help policymakers and tourism stakeholders drive sustainable change. It will be officially launched at the Final Energy Efficiency Event in Bulgaria in October 2025, featuring study visits and policy discussions.

Stay tuned for the release on the DETOCS project website!

## Regional Updates

The DETOCS project consortium consists of 13 project partners & 1 advisory partner from across Europe. Project partners from Slovenia, Greece, Malta, Finland, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Netherlands have continued to make progress in identifying good practices for sustainable tourism. Read on to learn more!

### Slovenia

On 7 March 2025, DETOCS Lead Partner, **Local Energy Agency Spodnje Podravje (LEASP)**, hosted its regular stakeholder meeting, bringing together 25 participants from local and regional institutions, public authorities, and the energy sector. The event provided a valuable platform for collaboration, strategic planning, and the exchange of insights aimed at strengthening local energy policies through the adaptation of proven approaches from other European regions.



Central to the discussions was the identification of relevant and transferable good practices, as well as strategies to address policy implementation challenges and adapt measures to local needs and capacities. Participants explored how regulatory frameworks could be refined to support the region's energy transition while ensuring both practicality and long-term impact.

As a key outcome, stakeholders agreed on a strategic roadmap that sets out steps such as sustained stakeholder involvement, the drafting of legislative proposals, and the establishment of monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess results. This roadmap is designed to guide the integration of new measures into local policy, ensuring changes are both effective and sustainable.

The meeting reinforced the importance of cross-regional learning in shaping local energy governance. By drawing on insights and successes from across Europe, the Spodnje Podravje region is taking decisive steps toward building more resilient, future-oriented energy policies that support the shift to sustainability.

### Greece

During the 5th semester of the DETOCS project, the Region of Crete launched a dynamic dissemination initiative to boost public awareness and foster stakeholder engagement. On 29 May 2025, Nikos Papastefanakis, an external collaborator and colleague from the Region of Crete, appeared on a televised broadcast aired by a local channel (see image below).



During the interview, the core objectives and early outcomes of the DETOCS project were outlined. Viewers were given a clear overview of the project's purpose—highlighting how DETOCS supports data-driven regional development and informed decision-making across environmental, technological, and social sectors. Special attention was given to how the project's conclusions are designed to feed into regional policy planning, ensuring that Crete benefits from innovative and sustainable strategies. Further, on the 5th of July, DETOCS was featured again in the news — specifically, within [an article in a local newspaper with broad circulation](#) ("News of Chania/ Haniotika Nea"), titled "The clean energy transition in Cretan hotels is feasible".

The **Region of Crete** works closely with its fellow Cretan partner, the **Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (CIHEAM MAICH)**, to ensure that project results have lasting impact. As the technical partner, MAICH brings in-depth expertise to support evidence-based approaches, while the Region of Crete, as the policy-making authority, translates these insights into relevant, impactful policy change. This collaborative approach, reinforced by Crete's proactive public outreach, reflects a shared commitment to community-centred sustainability and to shaping effective, future-oriented policies.

### Malta

DETOCS partners from Malta are proud to present five diverse Good Practice Examples identified through the DETOCS project, addressing sustainable tourism from multiple angles. These initiatives support operators and tourists in adopting greener behav-

(continued on page 3)

iours, promote renewable energy, encourage eco-certification, recognise responsible practices, and provide evidence-based tools for policy guidance.

"GUEST – Supporting Guesthouses in Sustainable Transition" engages guesthouse owners with sponsored energy audits, helping them understand consumption, implement efficiency measures, and access renewable energy funding. The "Solar Heating at Paradise Bay Resort" initiative replaced fossil-fuel boilers with a solar thermal system, cutting oil use by 28% and reducing carbon emissions. "Eco-Certification for Hotels" encourages international sustainability labels, improving energy, water, and waste performance while boosting Malta's reputation as a green destination. The Malta Tourism Awards recognise excellence in sustainability, innovation, and workforce development across the sector. Finally, the Sustainability Indicators Toolkit & Tourism Satellite Account combines economic data with 29 tourism sustainability indicators, guiding policy and supporting the shift to low-carbon tourism.

These initiatives were delivered by the **University of Malta** and the **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism**, highlighting Malta's commitment to fostering sustainable tourism and sharing transferable models with other European regions.



(Above) Solar heating initiative in Malta

## Finland

The region of **South Ostrobothnia** has rolled out three innovative initiatives aimed at enhancing its tourism sector through digital transformation, sustainability, and collaboration, demonstrating a forward-thinking approach to modern tourism challenges.

The "XR-technologies as part of the traveller's customer journey" project introduced Extended Reality (XR) tools to local tourism SMEs, offering visitors immersive virtual experiences of the region's attractions. Workshops helped businesses explore practical XR

applications, strengthen digital skills, and integrate these technologies into their offerings. Beyond innovation, XR adoption also contributes to environmental goals: by enabling virtual visits, the project reduces the need for physical travel, lowering CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and supporting South Ostrobothnia's regional target of sustainable tourism growth.



The "Making Tourism SMEs' Sustainability Efforts Visible" project focused on improving the sustainability practices of tourism operators. Participating companies gained eco-labels such as Ekokompassi, Green Key, and Sustainable Travel Finland, enhancing both their environmental responsibility and market visibility. The project provided guidance on communicating sustainability efforts to visitors, helping businesses attract new customer segments, increase cooperation among operators, and align with broader regional and European sustainability objectives.

The South Ostrobothnia Tourism Forum was established to strengthen cooperation across the region's tourism sector. The Forum promotes the area's tourism image, encourages collaboration, and identifies priorities for future development. Meeting twice a year, it provides a platform for discussion, networking, and knowledge-sharing. By fostering transparency, trust, and shared objectives among stakeholders, the Forum contributes to the competitiveness and resilience of the tourism industry in South Ostrobothnia.

Collectively, these initiatives highlight South Ostrobothnia's commitment to innovation, sustainability, and collaboration. By combining cutting-edge technology, responsible business practices, and strong stakeholder networks, the region is setting a benchmark for sustainable and digitally-enabled tourism development in Europe.

## Italy

The **Municipality of Campobasso** in Italy has identified two best practices supporting sustainable tourism and energy transition in the region:

Energy Communities: Spanning the vast Campobasso area, these communities allow citizens and accommodation facilities to ac-

## DETOCS Good Practice Brochure

We are excited to announce the new **DETOCS Good Practice Brochure**, published in June 2025, which showcases sustainable tourism practices from each of the 8 DETOCS partner regions across Europe. This brochure will highlight the most relevant good practices identified by all partners, offering valuable insights into efforts made across different regions.

The purpose of the brochure is to share these inspiring examples with regional stakeholders, providing opportunities to learn from each other and adopt best practices for a greener tourism industry. All partners have printed and distributed the brochure amongst their local stakeholders, ensuring widespread access to these innovative solutions.

## What to Expect?

- Examples of sustainable tourism solutions from 8 countries
- Best practices in energy efficiency, waste reduction, and eco-conscious travel ☐
- Real-life examples from local tourism operators, hotels, and destinations
- A chance to adopt practices relevant to your region for a more sustainable future

You can access this valuable resource, amongst other reports & tools designed to inspire and support sustainable tourism across Europe in the **DETOCS Project Library**.

(continued on page 4)





#### 6th Exchange of Experience Event of the DETOCS project

The DETOCS project will hold its 6th Interregional Exchange of Experience Event & Steering Group Meeting on 8–9 October 2025 in Burgas, Bulgaria, hosted by the Municipality of Burgas. Partners will review progress, share achievements, and exchange solutions for decarbonising the tourism sector.

The agenda includes project updates, partner showcases, a discussion on policy improvement, and study visits to the Burgas Energy Community, the Energy Office Burgas, and St. Anastasia Island via solar-powered catamaran, as well as the Chengene Skele Cultural and Tourist Complex.

By combining strategic dialogue with practical examples, the Burgas meeting will reinforce DETOCS' mission to support a greener tourism industry across Europe.

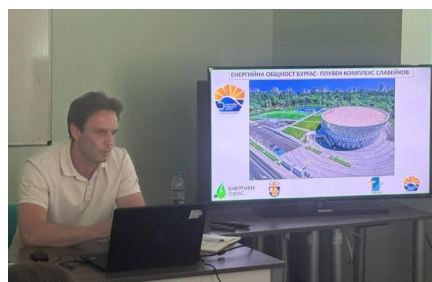
cess green energy as prosumers or consumers, even where on-site renewable installations are not possible. They foster environmental awareness, support energy independence, and promote collaboration between citizens, local authorities, and SMEs.

**ECO Hosting Project:** This initiative provides tourism businesses with online self-diagnosis and self-training tools to assess and improve their ecological performance. By guiding accommodation facilities on energy consumption and sustainable management practices, it raises awareness and supports decarbonisation across the sector.

To implement these practices, the municipality has integrated strategic tools into its regional action plan, including technical support points, funding for renewable energy installations, energy efficiency improvements, a "CARBON FREE" sustainability classification, and the promotion of sustainable mobility across municipalities. For its innovative initiatives, Campobasso was awarded the "Energy Transition Testimony" certificate by the energy service provider GSE, recognising its commitment to decarbonising tourism and promoting eco-friendly practices.

#### Bulgaria

On 10 July 2025, the fifth stakeholder meeting under the DETOCS project took place at the Business Incubator in Burgas. The event brought together representatives from **Burgas Municipality**, regional and local authorities, business stakeholders, and the non-governmental sector. The project's technical partner, the **Regional Energy Agency of Pazardzhik (REAP)**, joined online (*see image below*).



The meeting mainly presented the project's objectives and progress. Experts from Burgas Municipality introduced participants to the Long-Term Programme for Promoting the Use of Renewable Energy Sources and Biofuels (2021–2030), which will be updated through the project. Participants also explored inspiring European practices from Italy, including examples from Campobasso, where sustainable energy solutions are

implemented in tourist sites. These examples offered insight for applying similar approaches in Burgas.

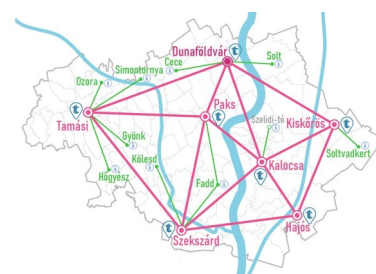
Another highlight was the Energy Community established by Burgas Municipality – one of Bulgaria's first citizen-led initiatives powering high-consumption public buildings with solar energy. The community, comprising citizens, SMEs, local institutions, and NGOs, is funding a 400 kWp photovoltaic system on the municipal swimming pool, a key facility hosting sports and tourism events. The initiative strengthens Burgas's image as a green and sustainable destination.

The event included online input from the Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW), which presented national and EU strategic measures for decarbonisation and a low-carbon transition. The MoEW highlighted the importance of local initiatives like Burgas and stressed cooperation between institutions, businesses, and civil society.

#### Hungary

The Operative Programme of the CDPA contains the Development of a Regional Tourism Management System (RTMS), the task of which is to operate a system for coordinated, sustainable and competitive regional tourism. The RTMS is a structure created for this purpose, with the aim of strengthening cooperation between local service providers, keeping tourism spending local, and developing a unified tourism image and offering for the region.

Based on the lessons learned and the good practices identified by the help of the DETOCS project, the tasks of the RTMS should be revised and extended. The focus of the system should be on the three aspects of sustainability, organisations and attractions joining the RTMS, are to make commitments related to their sustainability efforts, primarily in the area of energy modernisation. Sustainability, and the measurement system of the sustainable operation of touristic destinations and attractions needed to be identified among the tasks as well as the behaviour change, education of the service providers and customers.



The success of the RTMS depends largely on the cooperation of the participants and on co-ordinated and strategic management. With this in mind, a stakeholder forum will be held at the end of August 2025, where an operational framework for cooperation and the related work plan will be agreed upon by the parties involved- focusing on sustainability and the implementation of the DETOCS project's results. The regional (founding) centers of RTMS are: Dunaföldvár, Szekszárd, Tamási, Hajós, Kalocsa, and Kiskőrös .

plementing energy-saving measures. So far, at least 60 entrepreneurs have invested in interventions, with their progress being monitored by the municipality. Alderman Rutger Schonis emphasised: "Together we can reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the tourism sector and contribute to an energy-neutral Middelburg. Through the DETOCS project, we are able to exchange good practices for sustainable tourism between partner regions. These include energy-saving measures, low-energy forms of tourism, and promoting tourism with low CO<sub>2</sub> emissions."

## The Netherlands

With its ambitious climate policy, "Towards an Energy-Neutral Middelburg by 2050," the **municipality of Middelburg** is making significant strides towards a sustainable future. To encourage the tourism sector to save energy, a brochure has been produced containing 40 energy-saving tips. The first copy was presented on the morning of 19 May 2025 by alderman Rutger Schonis during the board meeting with the Association of Entrepreneurs Middelburg and Koninklijke Horeca Nederland.

The tips in the brochure range from simple measures to more comprehensive solutions, all aimed at reducing energy consumption and saving costs. The initiative is supported by robust communication and outreach efforts, including data collection from tourism entrepreneurs and energy experts, as well as collaboration across the wider tourism sector.

To further support the initiative, 500 flyers detailing the tips and available subsidies (*see image right*) have been distributed, and advisors are assisting 80 tourism entrepreneurs in im-

## Why DETOCS?

The Interreg Europe **DETOCS - DEcarbonising the Tourism Industry Post Covid-19 Support** project aims to support the recovery of EU tourism infrastructure sector following the Covid-19 pandemic, amidst the energy crisis, in a sustainable and low carbon way. In doing so, DETOCS complies with EU long-term policies for the decarbonisation of the economy. During the project implementation, good practices for sustainable tourism will be identified and exchanged amongst partner regions in Slovenia, Greece, Malta, Finland, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary and the Netherlands; meanwhile, project partners will aim to improve related policy in their regions through capacity building in the participating regions and the adoption of policies proven to be successful in other regions.

DETOCS contributes to EU Cohesion Policy, and specifically to the **"Policy Objective 2 (PO2): A greener, low-carbon Europe"**, as it promotes clean and sustainable energy transition of tourism infrastructure. The four-year DETOCS project has a total budget of **€1,980,883.00**, with **€1,567,416.40** provided by Interreg Funds.



## Final Conference

By the end of 2026, the DETOCS project will host its final public dissemination event in the Netherlands, coinciding with the last project partner meeting. The event will bring together executives, policymakers, and stakeholders from all participating regions to showcase regional achievements and project results. Project partners will actively present their work, while the event will be recorded and feature special video interviews.

## Contact

Tea Potocnik (LEASP)

Lead Partner

tea.potocnik@lea-ptuj.si



**Interreg Europe DETOCS Project**



**@DETOCS\_Project**



**[www.interregueurope.eu/detocs](http://www.interregueurope.eu/detocs)**

## Project Partnership



### Local energy agency Spodnje Podravje (SI) - Lead Partner

Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania - CIHEAM MAICH (EL)

Region of Crete (EL)

University of Malta (MT)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Tourism (MT)

Thermopolis Ltd. (FI)

Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia (FI)

Municipality of Campobasso (IT)

Regional Energy Agency - Pazardjik (BG)

Burgas Municipality (BG)

Central Danube Development Agency Nonprofit Ltd. (HU)

Middelburg Municipality (NL)

The European Institute for Innovation-Technology (DE)

