

RESOLUTION

on the Development Potential of Connecting Culture and Tourism
Using the Seviqc Festival as a Model of Cultural-Tourism Development,
adopted on 2 June 2025 by the
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Culture is the engine of sustainable tourism. In cooperation with local partners, the Seviqc Festival is developing a model of cultural tourism that links artistic experiences, heritage, and sustainable development. The Seviqc Festival concerts generate local promotion by connecting an international cultural programme with local tourism offerings and strengthening the role of culture in rural development. These are soft impacts that contribute to the growth of social and symbolic capital, where culture acts as a developmental mechanism.

Culture is not merely an addition to tourism; it is its strategic element. UNESCO has highlighted in several documents (e.g., Culture: Urban Future, 2016) that cultural tourism is one of the fastest-growing forms of tourism worldwide, with some estimates suggesting that over 40% of all tourists travel with the intention of experiencing culture.

Concerts in general—and especially early music concerts (the REMA network for early music, <https://www.rema-eemn.net/about/>, of which Seviqc is a member and which counts over 160 members)—represent unique experiences that cannot be replicated. This gives them high appeal for target audiences, particularly so-called “cultural tourists,” who on average spend more, stay longer, and respect the local culture and environment.

Events such as concerts held in heritage venues become storytelling drivers for destinations. The Seviqc Festival concerts promote more than just music. They also promote the heritage venues, local cuisine, accommodations, crafts, nature, and the overall experience of the place.

Numerous studies confirm that a cultural event is often a visitor's first contact with a destination, which can lead to repeat visits, long-term interest in the area, and even investment: heritage venues must be restored and maintained. Local identity, combined with high-quality cultural offerings, thus gains value in the eyes of both visitors and residents.

Integrating the cultural programme with local providers (accommodation, gastronomy, guided tours, etc.) is not merely an added value but a key approach to a comprehensive tourist experience. In our case, the Celeia Celje Institute is not just a promoter but an active co-creator of products that, by combining cultural content and regional specificities, build the destination's sustainable competitiveness.

The model of cultural-tourism packages, such as ***Summer Escapes with the Sounds of Early Music: Seviqc 2025***, is an ideal example of experience-based tourism according to the UNWTO methodology. It emphasizes authenticity, emotional value, and connection with the local environment.

The importance of cultural projects outside major urban centres is often underestimated. Yet festivals like Seviqc prove that top-tier art can thrive in small towns and put them on the European map. Such events stimulate tourism, decentralize tourist flows, and sustain life in smaller communities. This aligns with EU policy recommendations for smart villages and distributed tourism, where culture acts as the key link between heritage, community, and the economy.

Although a concert in itself is not a major direct economic investment, it holds high symbolic value. It strengthens local community identity, boosts self-confidence, and encourages collaboration between various stakeholders—from cultural workers to restaurateurs and tourism professionals.

Cultural presence builds social capital, which is crucial in the long term for the sustainability and inclusion of local populations. This means that cultural events are not a cost, but an investment in the community's soft infrastructure. The cultural-tourism offer under the brand *Summer Escapes with the Sounds of Early Music: Seviqc 2025* (<https://www.seviqc.si/invitation.3.html>) is much more than just "concerts." It is a systemic approach to tourism development based on cultural authenticity, heritage, collaboration with local stakeholders, and sustainable thinking. The Seviqc Festival succeeds in connecting international artistic standards with local realities—precisely the future of cultural tourism: to connect, collaborate, and create value.

References used:

- British Council: Culture in an Age of Uncertainty: A new study reveals the various types of value created by international cultural cooperation, as well as the benefits it can bring to societies under pressure. Link to the report: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-insight/culture-age-uncertainty>
- Council of Europe: Culture and Local Development: The Council of Europe emphasises that culture is an essential component and a key driver for effectively fulfilling the Council's core mission of promoting human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Link to the page: https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/culture?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- EU Smart Villages Policy Brief: Smart Villages and Cultural Heritage: This document analyses the concept of Smart Villages in the EU, including their definition, practical implementation, and implications for future policy development. Link to the report: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2021/689349/EPRS_BRI%282021%29689349_EN.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- European Commission: Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe: This extensive report (almost 300 pages) demonstrates the multifaceted benefits of cultural heritage for the economy, society, culture, and the environment in Europe. It also offers policy recommendations for realising its full potential. Link to the report: <http://blogs.encatc.org/culturalheritagecountsforeurope/outcomes/>
- KEA European Affairs: The Impact of Culture on Creativity: This report develops the concept of culture-based creativity, originating in artistic and cultural productions or activities that drive innovation, and going beyond artistic achievements or "creative content". Link to the report: https://keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/impactculturecreativityfull.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com
- OECD: The Impact of Culture on Tourism: This report analyses how culture affects the competitiveness and attractiveness of tourism destinations. Drawing on case studies from OECD countries, it shows how cultural elements – from arts and heritage to contemporary cultural practices – influence tourism flows, product development, and destination strategies. It also highlights the importance of collaboration between the cultural and tourism sectors in creating innovative, sustainable, and long-term successful destinations. Link to the report: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/the-impact-of-culture-on-tourism_9789264040731-en.html
- UNWTO: Tourism and Culture Synergies: The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) report on tourism and culture synergies highlights the symbiotic relationship and interdependence between the two sectors. Based on a survey of UNWTO member states and expert opinions, the report confirms that cultural tourism plays a significant role in global tourism today. It also shows how the sub-sector

has evolved in line with broader changes in tourism, shaped by lifestyle shifts, new forms of culture and creativity, and developments in technology and innovation. Link to the report: https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284418978?utm_source=chatgpt.com

- UNESCO: *Culture: Urban Future* – Global Report on Culture for Sustainable Urban Development: This global report, presented at Habitat III (2016), advocates for the integration of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development in urban policies. It highlights the key role of culture in shaping more inclusive, creative, and resilient cities. The report includes case studies from over 100 cities worldwide and provides recommendations for cultural governance models based on local identity, heritage, and participation. It is highly relevant also for smaller towns that wish to place cultural heritage at the heart of sustainable development. Link to the report: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245999>