



LEBANESE MINISTRY OF TOURISM

24th Mediterranean Exchange of Archaeological Tourism Paestum 27th-30th October 2022
Cultural Diplomacy for the valorization of the Archaeological Heritage and the Promotion of Cultural Tourism
Cafasso Tobacco Factory in Paestum on Friday October 28, 2022 at 18:00.

Eng. Walid Nassar

Minister of Tourism- Lebanon

Represented by Dr. Rachid Chamoun, Advisor to the Minister for International Relations

Excellences, Colleagues and Friends of Cultural Heritage

Within the embodiment of this cultural event, in collaboration with the Italian embassy in Lebanon and in affiliation with the Lebanese American University and the Ministry of Tourism, I feel honored by your invitation to be participating in this cultural forum by exhibiting “Lebanon Network of Historical Cities” towards the valorization of Archaeological Heritage and the Promotion of Cultural Tourism.

I stand with you today pursuant to the EPA Governing Board Meeting of the Enlarged Partial Agreement and the recent celebration of Lebanon’s accession as the 35th-Member State of the EPA into the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe. Lebanon is the very first Euro-Mediterranean Middle Eastern country to be a Member State to the EPA, within the Council of Europe.

Lebanon’s history has been shaped by its strategic location at the crossroads between the East and the West and the gate to the Middle East.

Homeland of the Canaanites/Phoenicians, the inventors of the alphabet, their civilization thrived on the east coast of the Mediterranean for more than 1000 years before conquerors arrived to the Levant. The country has witnessed the rise and fall of multiple civilizations whose mark can be felt today in Lebanon’s rich cultural heritage. Ancient Egyptians, Persians, Greek, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Crusaders, Mamluks, and Ottomans have succeeded each other in ruling the land. At the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Lebanon was briefly under the French mandate in the Levant before gaining its independence in 1943.

Lebanon’s rich cultural identity is reflected in its tangible and intangible heritage. Archeological sites are scattered along the coastline as well as in the mountains and the Beqaa Valley.

Lebanon has, Fifty-four diverse “cultural tourism and cultural heritage” sites allow us to test a wide range of scenarios: inland and coastal, rural and urban, and remote.



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The Natural heritage Protected Areas in Lebanon includes 8 Nature Reserves, 24 Natural sites, 5 Himas, 12 Protected Forests and 5 cultural heritage sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Our intercultural dialogue with our Euro Mediterranean and Middle Eastern partners shall benefit from and contribute to the cultural values and strategies of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, and seek towards enhancing and sustaining our institutional joint mission to disseminate knowledge about Lebanon Cultural Heritage.

The Lebanese Ministry of Tourism and the Lebanese Ministry of Culture join efforts toward the valorization of Archaeological Heritage, the promotion of Cultural Tourism, and awareness raising and knowledge-sharing projects on safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage in times of armed conflict and in time of peace in the Eastern Mediterranean region and beyond according to the provisions of the 1954 Hague Convention for the protection of Cultural Properties in times of armed conflicts and its two protocols making reference to the 1999 Second Protocol Guidelines of the Hague Convention .

Within the context of the main goal of the event “to promote sites and destinations of great archaeological value to facilitate marketing, to help create de-seasonalization, to increase economic opportunities and employment effects” , the Lebanese Ministry of Tourism has established a Destination Management Organization (DMO) system to facilitate the development of their basic principles for the operation. The core objectives of the DMO is to implement the decentralization of power, and reciprocally increasing chances for local community empowerment, creation of jobs, local cultural tourism guides and national awareness.

The DMO offices are entrusted with responsibilities that exceed the scope of the centralized state-level management. This meets our current strategic direction for decentralization through the launch of 37 new tourism offices across the country, all connected and supported through the Ministry’s Headquarters.

Lebanon’s Tourism sector remains robust, and will continue to evolve with the collaboration and support of the national and international organizations and institutions; especially as an integral part of the mission within the embodiment of this cultural event. We are keen to establish mutually beneficial Public-Private partnerships; we appreciate the collaboration, support and efforts of our national and international partners that are working in line with the ministry’s vision and action plan towards exchanging ideas and experiences about management procedures and conservation of the tangible and intangible heritage, and cooperating in cultural tourism and cultural heritage diplomacy.