

**Empowering small businesses and driving entrepreneurial innovation:  
TUI Care Foundation launches Futureshapers initiative in Greece**

- *Greek Tourism Minister Olga Kefalogianni, TUI Care Foundation Chairman Thomas Ellerbeck, and founder of Wise Greece Melina Taprantzi, launch new TUI Care Foundation programme in Athens*
- *Initiative drives sustainable growth and innovation in Greece's key sectors such as tourism, hospitality and food, by addressing needs of young entrepreneurs and small businesses*
- *Training programme for 1,000 aspiring entrepreneurs; selected candidates will participate in boot camp and receive stipends to launch entrepreneurial ideas*
- *Local artisans and producers will benefit from capacity building to increase their business opportunities*
- *Project is launched as part of the TUI Care Foundation's Entrepreneurship October, a month dedicated to highlighting support for sustainable businesses in tourism destinations*

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**Berlin, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024.** *Whilst the tourism sector in Greece continues to thrive, many young entrepreneurs and small businesses still encounter significant challenges in building and growing their ventures. These challenges include limited market access and a lack of educational resources that can support aspiring entrepreneurs. The new TUI Futureshapers Greece initiative aims to provide the necessary training, mentorship, and business links to support individuals and small businesses in developing innovative entrepreneurial opportunities that tackle social and environmental challenges.*

TUI Futureshapers Greece, launched by the TUI Care Foundation in partnership with Wise Greece, will offer a comprehensive educational course designed to train 1,000 participants from across Greece. The extensive virtual course equips aspiring entrepreneurs with the practical knowledge needed to launch or expand their business ideas in the sectors of tourism, food, culture, arts & crafts and cosmetics. Participants will benefit from hands-on guidance and mentorship from expert trainers and successful entrepreneurs, who will share best practices and offer personalised mentoring.

To support the most promising business ideas, the programme will invite the best ideas to present during a boot camp in Athens. The boot camp will include workshops, inspiring talks and opportunities to pitch. The best projects will be awarded stipends, enabling them to focus on developing their ideas without financial constraints.

Thomas Ellerbeck, Chairman of the TUI Care Foundation: "Tourism is an important cornerstone of Greece's economy. We want to make sure that everyone can benefit from the successful development of tourism in the country. We strongly believe that local participation is core to the sustainable and responsible growth of tourism. With TUI

Futureshapers Greece, we're harnessing the transformative power of the industry to foster entrepreneurial innovation and sustainable growth - for the benefit of Greece and all of its people. Our initiative addresses the challenges faced by small businesses and empowers young people to transform social and environmental challenges into entrepreneurial opportunities."

Melina Taprantzi, Wise Greece: "We are pleased that, with the support of the TUI Care Foundation, we will be able to launch the TUI Futureshapers programme in Greece. This initiative will support key sectors of our country, as well as entrepreneurs who either want to start a business or have already established a small business and are looking to innovate sustainably. Wise Greece remains committed to staying close to local communities and maximising its social impact whilst addressing the real needs of the people."

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In addition to the training component, TUI Futureshapers Greece will support a cohort of at least 60 small and medium-sized enterprises, local artisans, entrepreneurs, and producers in popular tourism regions such as Zakynthos, Peloponnese, Corfu, Epirus, the Cyclades and Rhodes. Through capacity building training and business opportunities, the initiative aims to enhance participants' skills in sales, product refinement, marketing, and digital campaigns. The most innovative SMEs will have the chance to collaborate with Wise Greece to showcase their products at "Local Gems exhibitions," promoting their products to locals, tourists and visitors.

To maximise its positive impact, the initiative will collaborate with leading Greek universities and the Greek National Tourism Organisation to ensure a broad outreach and support. In particular, the collaboration aims to attract students and young professionals interested in launching start-ups in the food and tourism sectors.

TUI Futureshapers Greece is a part of the global TUI Futureshapers Programme, which empowers people to turn social challenges into entrepreneurial opportunities in destinations such as Cape Verde, Zanzibar, Senegal, Portugal, Namibia and Tunisia.

TUI Care Foundation's 'Entrepreneurship October' is a month of activities dedicated to supporting sustainable businesses in tourism destinations. Through a series of project launches, it highlights the importance of empowering small businesses in tourism destinations with a holistic approach of financial assistance, mentoring and access to the tourism market.

### ***About the TUI Care Foundation***

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create

meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands. [www.tuicarefoundation.com](http://www.tuicarefoundation.com)

***About Wise Greece***

Wise Greece is a multi-awarded organization that, in 2020, was one of seven initiatives globally recognized by the United Nations and the World Bank for its work in the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030.

Over the past decade, Wise Greece has supported more than 100 small food producers and entrepreneurs to sell over 2,500 products in Greece and eight other countries, helping them run financially sustainable businesses. At the same time, it donates its profits from product sales to provide food supplies to families, children, and the elderly in need. To further maximize its social impact, Wise Greece organizes educational programs for children on sustainability, provides upskilling opportunities to unemployed people in rural areas, and empowers women through initiatives aimed at creating new job opportunities for them. Additionally, the organization collaborates with various stakeholders to promote a more sustainable and inclusive economy in Europe and beyond.

<https://www.wisegreece.com/en/>

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