

Italy – Croatia



Socializing Craft & Contemporary Art for Sustainable Tourism

SOCRAT Newsletter #3 | August 2026

A Look Back at the Final Months of SOCRAT

As the SOCRAT project approached its conclusion, the past few months were filled with inspiring collaborations, creative experimentation, and important milestones. From Creative Living Labs and international conferences to strategic policy discussions and the launch of new digital tools, partners across Croatia and Italy continued working together to strengthen the connection between crafts, contemporary art and sustainable tourism.

Here's a glimpse of everything that happened during the final phase of the project.

Creative Energy in Motion: Labs Across Italy and Croatia



The SOCRAT Creative Living Labs continued to flourish across the programme area, transforming local heritage into innovative cultural and tourism experiences through collaboration between artists, artisans, cultural institutions and local communities.

In **Istria**, the third Creative Living Lab, dedicated to **Ceramics and Sculpture**, took place in March across Labin, Pula, Vodnjan and Rovinj. Guided by local experts together with Italian artist-mentor Michele Giangrande, participants developed artistic works and prototypes for sustainable tourism inspired by the region's cultural identity.

In **Kvarner**, the Creative Living Lab “**Following the Camellia – Inspiration, Slowing Down, Creating**” invited participants to rediscover one of Opatija's most recognisable symbols. Combining cultural and natural heritage, visual arts and gastronomy, the laboratory resulted from the collaboration between Italian mentor Raffaello Fiorella, Croatian visual artist Kristina Kinkela Valčić, association Urbani separe, and Croatian Museum of Tourism.



Meanwhile, **Zadar County** hosted three Creative Living Labs exploring visual arts, traditional gastronomy, digital storytelling, stone and ceramics. Drawing inspiration from the landscapes, traditions and craftsmanship of Zadar, Nin, Ražanac and Pag, the laboratories brought together artists, craftspeople and local organisations to co-create authentic tourism experiences rooted in local heritage.



Joint Training Toolkit & Local Capacity-Building Workshops

To support the long-term transfer of the SOCRAT model, project partners developed the **Joint Training Toolkit**, designed to help tourism operators create authentic, community-based tourism experiences through collaboration with artists, craftspeople, cultural and creative industries, civil society organisations and public institutions.

The toolkit introduces practical methods for co-creation, social innovation and sustainable destination development, while encouraging tourism SMEs and local stakeholders to work together in developing new cultural tourism products.

To put these methods into practice, partners organised **capacity-building workshops** across all project regions, equipping tourism professionals, trainers and facilitators with the knowledge and tools needed to integrate creativity, local heritage and community participation into their everyday work.



Building Sustainability: Local Action Plans, Working Tables & Memorandum of Understanding

Ensuring that SOCRAT's achievements continue beyond the project's lifetime has been one of the partnership's key priorities.

During the final project phase, partners prepared Local Action Plans for Veneto, Puglia, Istria, Zadar and Kvarner, providing the basis for the **Joint Action Plan**, which translates the SOCRAT Strategy into a shared framework for future cross-border cooperation. Together, these documents define common priorities, coordinated actions and long-term pathways

for transferring and scaling the SOCRAT model throughout the programme area.

At the same time, regional **Working Tables** brought together local stakeholders to discuss future implementation of the project's results, while preparations for signing the **Memorandum of Understanding** confirmed the partners' shared commitment to preserving and further developing the SOCRAT legacy through continued cooperation and knowledge exchange.



SOCRAT Digital Platform Launched!

A major milestone of the project was the launch of the **SOCRAT Digital Platform**, a multilingual, cross-border online space designed to showcase the project's achievements and ensure their long-term visibility.

The platform presents the outcomes of all thirteen Creative Living Labs, promotes participating artists and artisans, and highlights partner territories as authentic cultural destinations. Beyond documenting the project's results, it serves as a valuable resource for visitors, stakeholders, and tourism professionals interested in discovering the SOCRAT approach and exploring creative cultural experiences across the Adriatic.

Check it out here: www.socratcrossborder.com



SOCRAT Presented in Brussels

On **24–25 June 2026**, SOCRAT was showcased in **Brussels** during a two-day side event hosted by the Veneto Region, bringing together project partners, policymakers and representatives from the cultural and tourism sectors.

The event highlighted the project's innovative methodology, with a particular focus on the **Creative Living Labs** as a successful model for connecting artists, craftspeople, cultural institutions and local communities. Partners also presented the **SOCRAT Action Plan**, discussed opportunities for policy uptake and project capitalisation, and explored synergies with the **MED4REGEN** project, opening new perspectives for sustainable and regenerative tourism development across Europe.



SOCRAT Academic Conference in Zadar



The **University of Zadar** hosted the international scientific and professional conference **“Co-creating Sustainable Tourism”** on **18–19 June 2026**, bringing together researchers, tourism professionals and project partners from several European countries.

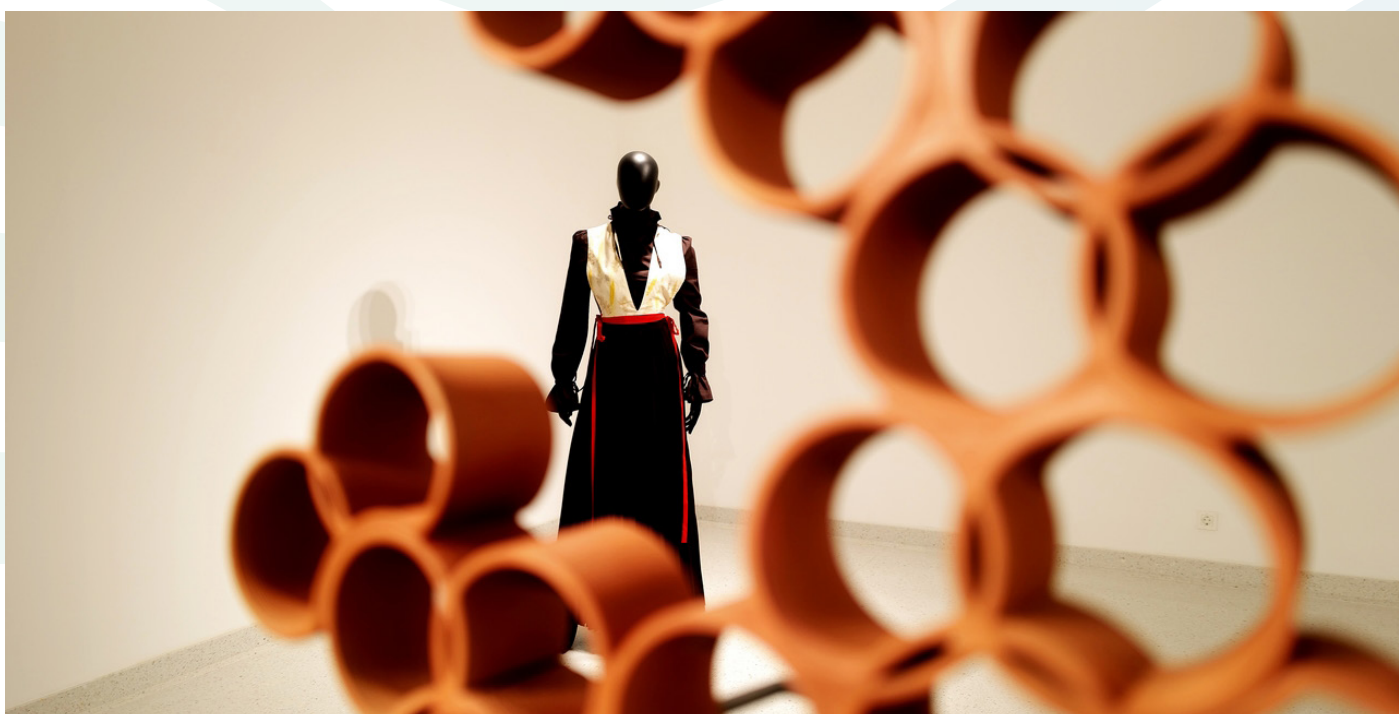
The conference provided a platform for exchanging research, practical experiences and innovative approaches to sustainable destination management. Discussions explored stakeholder participation, community engagement and the preservation of local cultural heritage, reinforcing the project's commitment to connecting academic knowledge with practical solutions for sustainable tourism.

Final Cross-Border Event & Exhibition “Shared Grounds” in Pula

On **7 July 2026**, the SOCRAT project celebrated its Final **Cross-Border Event** with the opening of the international exhibition “**Shared Grounds**” at the Archaeological Museum of Istria in Pula.

Organised by the **Region of Istria**, the exhibition marked the culmination of three years of collaboration between Croatia and Italy, bringing together the artistic outcomes of all thirteen Creative Living Labs. Visitors explored artworks, creative prototypes and storytelling videos that demonstrated how crafts, contemporary art and cultural heritage can contribute to more sustainable and authentic tourism experiences.

The exhibition provided a fitting conclusion to the SOCRAT journey while celebrating the creativity, partnerships and shared vision that have shaped the project from its very beginning.



Photos: Hassan Abdelghani



Stay Connected & Inspired



Although the SOCRAT project has officially come to an end, its ideas, partnerships, and creative spirit continue to inspire future collaboration across the Adriatic.

Follow SOCRAT and explore the project's legacy through its digital channels:

[Project website](#)

[Instagram](#) @projectsocrat

[Tik Tok](#) @socratproject

[LinkedIn](#) SOCRAT Interreg Italy-Croatia Project

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Together, we continue building bridges between creativity, cultural heritage, and sustainable tourism.

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