

# Making the past work for the present – and the future

*The cultural and historical heritage in the enlargement countries can be a valuable source of economic growth. The EU is helping the countries to preserve their heritage and take full advantage of this potential to boost tourism – as done in Albania.*

## ACCESS TO HISTORIC SITES

Albania has important vestiges of civilisations dating back to the Stone Age. These include artefacts and sites that have been classified as being from the Ancient Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, Renaissance and Modern periods. Several of its sites – including Berat – are on the UNESCO World Heritage list. However, many are difficult to reach, or have poor infrastructure facilities.

The EU contribution helped central and local governments to restore urban areas in and around selected historical heritage sites. Attracting more tourists encouraged the development of local businesses and led to better use of resources.

Four sites have benefitted from this project. In the old bazaar area of Korça, the inner streets have been repaired and lighting installed. A 1700-year-old mosaic was restored in the castle of Elbasan. Access was improved to the Via Egnatia, which was the crucial link between the Roman Empire's outposts along the Adriatic Sea and the Bosphorus in the east. In Shkodra, the historic street which leads up to the cathedral was restored, along with the facades of the buildings lining it. And in and around the castle in Berat, streets were paved, and water, sewage and lighting services were updated.

Cultural tourism is already generating a growing share of revenues, bringing valuable year-round business to towns that until now had little tourism traffic. But up until now preservation has mainly been focused on the discoveries themselves, rather than on improving the infrastructure that allows access and provides information. With this new integrated approach, restoring historic sites also provides benefits for the towns where they are located.



## Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)

## Albania

IPA – AN INVESTMENT IN EUROPE. AN INVESTMENT IN SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY.

The project ties in to provisions in the national action plan agreed on with the EU, which makes the development of tourism infrastructure and the protection of cultural heritage a priority. It is closely linked with overall socio-economic improvement, the promotion of competition, and free private initiative. In addition to benefits to the local economy, the impact includes increasing

the quality of life in the selected towns as new facilities are installed. Not to mention that there are more cultural opportunities and exchanges, which triggers more interest in further restoration.

The project is reinforced by other sustainable tourism projects underway, including restoration at other sites in Albania.

### PROJECT DETAILS –

Support to sustainable and integrated development of cultural and historical heritage

**Partners:**  
Albanian Ministry of Culture

**Total cost in €:**  
6.67 million

**EU Contribution in €:**  
5 million (75%) (planned)

**Start date:**  
June 2011

**End date:**  
March 2014

**Results:**  
Improved access and infrastructure at selected sites;  
increased tourist traffic; boost to local business

**Techniques:**  
Grant aid: implementation of works for rehabilitation of infrastructure in the historical areas in the towns of Berat, Korça, Elbasan and Shkodra

