Byzantine Thessaloniki

CIVIL NON-PROFIT COMPANY "BYZANTINE THESSALONIKI"

PHILOXENIA–HOTELIA 2026
Information Brief

FROM BYZANTINE HERITAGE TO CONTEMPORARY EXPERIENCE

Thessaloniki as a Distinctive Cultural Destination

Thematic Conference held within the framework of the 41st International Tourism Exhibition PHILOXENIA–HOTELIA 2026

Saturday, 14 November 2026

Starting time: 10:00 | Venue: TIF–HELEXPO, Pavilion 13, Open Stage.

INFORMATION BRIEF

The Starting Point: A Heritage That Can Be Transformed into an Experience

Byzantine Thessaloniki is much more than an exceptional ensemble of monuments. It is a living chapter in the city's identity — a cultural asset with the potential to enrich the visitor experience, distinguish the city's tourism offering and enhance Thessaloniki's international profile.

Today, the challenge is not simply to preserve and promote this heritage, but to connect it with the contemporary life of the city: its cultural routes, hospitality sector, creative activity, digital storytelling and the expectations of today's traveller.

How can historical memory be transformed into a coherent and authentic experience? How can cultural institutions, the academic community and the tourism industry work together to ensure that Byzantine heritage assumes a meaningful role in shaping the destination's identity and development prospects? These are the central questions that the conference seeks to address.

From Cultural Value to the Strategic Identity of the Destination

Cultural heritage can become a significant competitive advantage for a destination when it is not presented in isolation, but integrated into a compelling narrative, high-quality experiences and sustained partnerships. For Thessaloniki, its Byzantine legacy offers a distinctive opportunity: to connect history, art, architecture and spiritual tradition with contemporary cultural creativity and hospitality.

The Civil Non-Profit Company “BYZANTINE THESSALONIKI” proposes a meaningful dialogue between the academic and research communities, the competent cultural institutions and tourism professionals. The aim is not to offer yet another presentation of the historical significance of the monuments, but rather to explore practical ways in which this value can be translated into experiences, partnerships and new opportunities for the city.

Objectives of the Conference

- To highlight Byzantine heritage as a distinctive element of Thessaloniki’s cultural identity and a key factor in its international differentiation as a destination.
- To explore how monuments, historical narratives and cultural routes can be brought together to create coherent and meaningful visitor experiences.
- To strengthen the links between culture, hospitality, tourism services and destination promotion.
- To foster meaningful cooperation between cultural institutions, universities and tourism businesses.
- To examine the contribution of digital storytelling and contemporary communication tools to engaging new audiences.
- To bring students, young researchers and professionals into contact with ideas and practices that bridge academic knowledge and professional application.

Target Audience

The conference is addressed to representatives of cultural and institutional bodies, academics and researchers, tourism and hospitality professionals, executives of tourism enterprises, destination management and promotion organizations, as well as students and young professionals.

By bringing together academic expertise and professional experience, the conference aspires not only to generate ideas, but also to identify concrete opportunities for cooperation and pave the way for the next steps.

The Intended Contribution

The conference aspires to serve as a starting point for a more systematic discussion on the role of Byzantine heritage in contemporary tourism planning for Thessaloniki. Through concise, focused presentations and a structured dialogue, it seeks to identify priorities, actionable ideas and opportunities for cooperation that can inform and inspire future initiatives.

For the Civil Non-Profit Company “BYZANTINE THESSALONIKI”, the Byzantine legacy is not merely a testimony to the past. It is a source of knowledge, creativity and contemporary value — a living asset that can contribute to the quality of the visitor experience and to the future of the city.