

## MEET OUR PARTNERS - UNIVERSITY OF PAU AND PAYS DE L'ADOUR'S

The University of Pau and Pays de l'Adour (UPPA), composed of 4 campuses (Pau, Bayonne, Tarbes, Mont-de-Marsan) welcomes 14,000 students and 1,500 employees. It is labelled a university of excellence thanks to the e2s UPPA project (Solutions for Energy and the Environment) awarded by the French Ministry of Higher Education and Research. It has also been awarded a European University Label thanks to the UNITA project (Universitas Montium), which brings together, in addition to the UPPA, the Universities of Torino (Italy), Savoie Mont Blanc (France), Covilhã-Beira (Portugal), West Timisoara (Romania), and Zaragoza (Spain). With its 23 research units, 24 high-level expertise chairs, and 6 joint laboratories in association with major research organizations (CNRS, INRA, Inria) and institutional and industrial partners, UPPA is a major player in the scientific and economic development of the southern Aquitaine region.

### ITEM and the Château de Pau

The ITEM Research Laboratory is composed of specialists in various fields, mainly History, but also Art History, Archaeology, Anthropology, Spanish Civilization and Computer Science. It specializes in Cultural Heritage, Migration Studies, and the expression of power throughout the ages. Its researchers also work in a network at the regional level (Bordeaux, Toulouse, Poitiers), at the national level (Paris, Savoie-Mont-Blanc, etc.) and with Spanish universities across the Pyrenees (Public University of Navarre, University of the Basque Country, and University of Zaragoza). It also maintains regular links with the Casa de Velázquez in Madrid and the NOVA University Lisbon. These collaborations are complemented by regular relations with foreign universities further afield, such as those of Quilmes and La Plata in Argentina and Georgia in the United States.

Researchers at ITEM have also worked closely with the Château de Pau over the years. Located in the heart of Southwest France, the Château de Pau is successively lordly, royal, imperial. Today, it is a national museum that welcomes more than 100,000 visitors each year. Its long and rich history can still be read in its astonishing architecture, where Medieval, Renaissance and Romantic heritages are mixed. The castle is part of a vast domain composed of gardens and a forest park, a remnant of the magnificent complex built in the 16th century. The birth of the future Henry IV within these walls, on December 13, 1553, is recalled by the presence of his legendary cradle, a sea turtle shell. This event stands out as the major fact in the history of the monument.



Renovated and decorated in the 19th century, the castle presents a complete decorative set dating from the July Monarchy. Inserted in the gilded woodwork, about sixty tapestries, mainly from the 17th and 18th centuries, contribute to the splendor of this royal décor. This historic residence, to which the Second Empire in turn left its architectural mark, became a national palace in 1870, then a national museum in 1927. In addition to the objects presented to the public in the Royal Apartments, there are also rich collections, mainly based on the history of Henry IV, his legend and the iconography that has been devoted to him. The National Museum of the Château de Pau thus brings together on a renowned architectural and natural site, a unique artistic ensemble and a privileged pole for the study of iconography and the political and religious history of the 16th century. Today, it hosts cultural events and is part of the national heritage, and also hosts diplomatic events.

### Covid-19 Impact on Tourism Numbers at the Château de Pau: A Limited Impact?

In June 2020, the OECD estimated that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the international tourism economy in 2020 could decrease by between 60% and 80%.<sup>[1]</sup> At the end of the summer season in September, the French government pointed out that tourism results were nevertheless better than estimates made in Spring. Tourist receipts 'only' decreased by 30% to 35% in France.<sup>[2]</sup> The national tourism sector had benefited, among other things, from a significantly high number of domestic tourists, a variable identified by OECD experts responsible for reviving the sector. Thus, 94% of French people who went on holiday in July and August 2020 stayed in France.<sup>[3]</sup> Similarly, outdoor activities, on the coast or in the mountains, have won over the tourist clientele. The French executive, however, notes strong regional disparities. What is the situation in Pau, a town of about 80,000 inhabitants close to both the Pyrenees and the Atlantic coast?

According to various local actors in the tourism sector,<sup>[4]</sup> the Covid-19 pandemic has had an undeniable impact on tourism flows. Fears linked to the health situation and restrictions on movement contributed to limiting their numbers, as well as "re-nationalising" tourists. This observation therefore corroborates the analyses drawn at the national level. If the limitation of tourism flows has tended to be detrimental to attendance at museums and other touristic sites, the increase in local tourism has nonetheless contributed to the fact that the heritage sector in France has done relatively well. The same conclusion applies to tourist visits to the Château de Pau.



Due to the pandemic, the National Museum of the Château de Pau had to close its doors to visitors for a long period of several months. When it reopened in the summer, the museum was forced to adapt to new health regulations and strictly control the flow of visitors. Only one tour was offered to visitors between 1pm and 6pm, and another guided tour - by reservation only and in limited numbers - at 10:30am. The Museum's opening hours have been almost halved, but the number of visitors has not fallen sharply. In July and August 2020, there were 25,416 visitors, a drop of only 25% compared to the previous year. French visitors were proportionally more numerous than in previous years (approximately 90% of admissions, compared with 80% the previous year). The majority of visitors still came from the surrounding areas and neighbouring departments, and there is only a slight over-representation of tourists from the Paris region. The same observation can be made with regard to the foreign clientele: the number of visitors is decreasing, but their origins have hardly changed, apart from the absence of American tourists.

The National Museum of the Château de Pau is located in a region that receives relatively few foreign tourists. In the end, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a less than feared impact on tourism numbers. For instance, there is no break in the kinds of tourists that come to Pau and visit the Château (mostly local French tourists). We must keep in mind, however, that even though there is no real break in the type of tourists there is nonetheless a significant decrease in their numbers.

<sup>[1]</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/les-actions-engagees-dans-le-domaine-du-tourisme-face-au-coronavirus-covid-19-86db4328/>

<sup>[2]</sup> <https://www.gouvernement.fr/conseil-des-ministres/2020-09-16/le-bilan-de-la-saison-touristique>

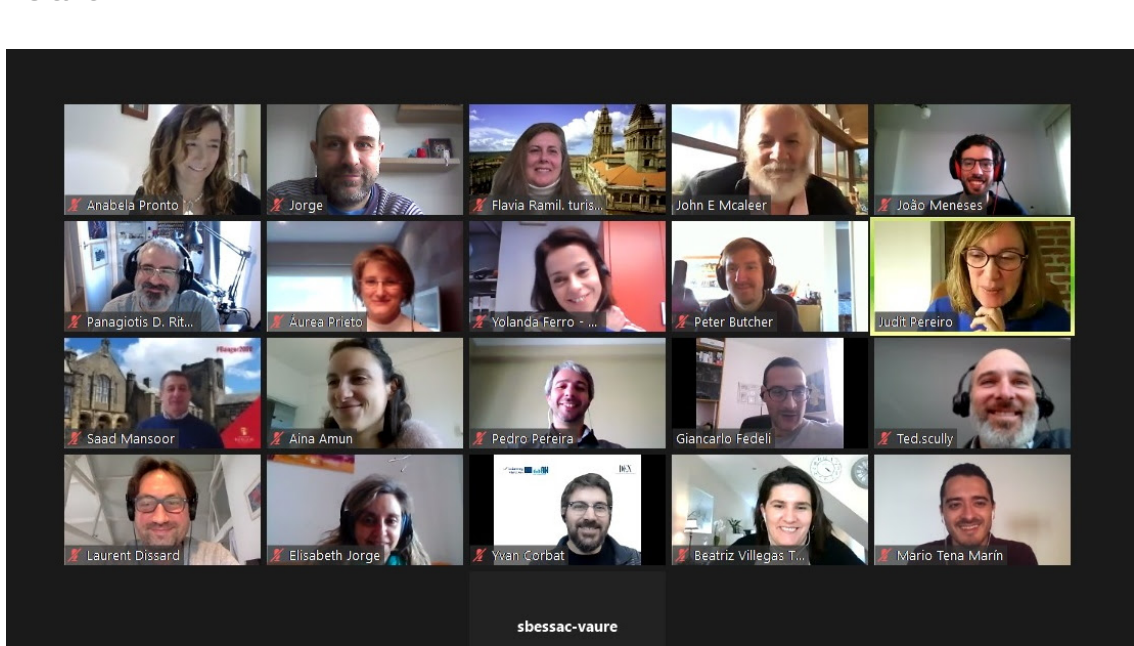
<sup>[3]</sup> Interview with Mrs Stéphanie Da Rocha, Director of the Pau Tourism Office, on 09/09/2020; extract from the Summer 2020 Report printed by the Services of the National Museum of the Château de Pau.

## STEERING COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING,

FEBRUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>

### BODAH held its fourth meeting in order to advance in managing tourist flows in heritage cities

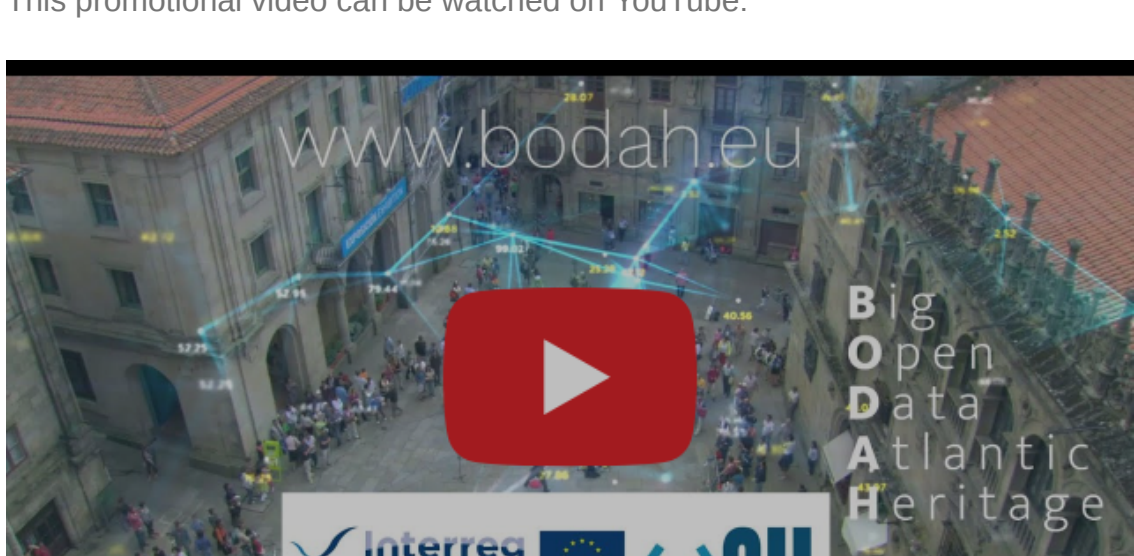
On February 18, the participants of the "Big and Open Data for the Development of New Processes towards Atlantic Heritage Management" (BODAH) European project held their fourth meeting. This virtual event featured the participation of entities from Spain, Portugal, France, Scotland, Wales and Ireland.



For detailed information click here

## PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

A promotional video of the European BODAH project was released in March 4<sup>th</sup>. This short video is intended to spread the main objectives of the BODAH project which include the use new technologies to support the sustainable development of tourism and people flows in heritage cities of the Atlantic Area. This promotional video can be watched on YouTube:



Alternative versions in [Spanish](#), [French](#) and [Portuguese](#) are also available.

## YOU MAY ALSO BE INTERESTED IN

- ETC published handbook on tourism forecasting methodologies
- UNWTO - Tightened travel restrictions underline current challenges for tourism
- UNWTO calls for a more equal and sustainable future for tourism at ITB Berlin Now
- Coronavirus: European Commission proposes a Digital Green Certificate

