

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
Participant:	10 – BASHKIA PERMET (PERMET)
PIC number:	905117089
Project name and acronym:	EUrban DECO — Exploring EU urban landscapes for a deconstruction of colonial narratives

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
Event number:	4		
Event name:	The influence of colonialism on local societies, migrations, international relations and EU cohesion .		
Type:	<p>The main actions were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4thTransnational Project Meeting (in presence) - Flashmob : Theatre performance by young people - Open seminar on the influence of colonialism on local societies, migrations, international relations and EU Cohesion -Open discussion “The effects of colonialism on international relations and EU cohesion and the relations between colonisers and colonised” ; Ambiguities and contradictions of coloniser/colonised -Local visits to the main places and landmarks in Permet expressing the Italian colonial influence 		
In situ/online:	In-situ		
Location:	Permet, Albania		
Date(s):	24-26.06.2025		
Website(s) (if any):	https://bashkiapermet.gov.al/eurban-deco/		
Participants			
Female:	77		
Male:	33		
Non-binary:	0		
From Albania (Local Participants):	93		
From Italy:	7		
From Spain:	3		
From France:	2		
From Greece:	1		
From Germany:	2		
From Portugal:	2		
Total number of participants:	110	From total number of countries :	7
Description <i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
WP5 – Eurban DECO - Fourth Transnational Event – 24/06/2025-26/06/2025 Partner organisations attending the event			

Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the XX century in Europe's Urban Memory (Atrium – Italy)
 Women of Mediterranean east and south European Network (Women - Italy)
 Município de Lousada (Portugal)
 Ayuntamiento de Benetússer (Benetússer - Spain)
 Universidad de Alicante (UA - Spain)
 Solution: Solidarite & Inclusion (Solution - France)
 NGO Nest Berlin (Nest - Germany)
 Bashkia Permet (Permet - Albania)



DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

23/06/2025

Arrival of participants from each partner organisation.

24/06/2025

4th Transnational Project Meeting (in presence)

The meeting took place at the Cultural Multifunctional Center "Odhise Paskali" and was opened with a warm welcome by Ms. Denisa Mamillo. It began with a discussion regarding the absence of the organisation "VITAL AID," followed by the final approval of the previous meeting's minutes by all partners.

A plenary discussion was held on the key topics each partner will present at the final conference of the project. A gender assessment report related to the Hague event (WP3) was presented by WOMEN and approved by the partners. The Municipality of Benetússer presented the draft programme and logistics for the upcoming event in Benetússer.



Ms. Bricciolani (ATRIUM) shared the list of deliverables required from Përmet and Benetússer. This was followed by a presentation on planned communication activities. Each partner gave an update on their preparatory and local activities.

The meeting concluded with a Q&A and a presentation by Mr. Marti from the University of Alicante on the mapping work completed so far.



Flashmob : Theater performance

As part of the EUrban DECO project, a flash mob-style theatre performance was organized under the guidance of Professor Dhimitrulla Proko, involving a group of young performers. The event was held to artistically explore Albania's historical experience under Italian fascist occupation and colonisation, aiming to raise awareness and spark reflection, particularly among younger generations.

The performance was introduced with a powerful speech highlighting the importance of historical memory, freedom, and civic responsibility. Through dramatizations inspired by three significant Albanian films—*Beyond Stone Walls*, *Red Poppies on the Walls*, and *The Girls with the Red Ribbon*—the students brought to life personal and collective stories of oppression, resistance, and resilience.

Each segment focused on different aspects of the era:

- *Beyond Stone Walls* told the story of Asimeja, a young girl challenging traditional gender roles and societal expectations to join the anti-fascist resistance.
- *Red Poppies on the Walls* depicted the experiences of orphaned boys under fascist indoctrination, highlighting youth resistance and sacrifice.
- *The Girls with the Red Ribbon* emphasized the vital role of young women in the underground resistance, courageously opposing fascist authority within the constraints of their school and community life.

The performances were rich in emotion, authenticity, and historical context, blending dramatic expression with educational value. They successfully conveyed messages of hope, courage, and the

enduring fight for freedom, contributing significantly to the broader objectives of the project



Open seminar on the influence of colonialism on local societies, migrations, international relations and EU Cohesion

The open seminar, led by Prof. Dr. Shyqyri Hysi, which is a distinguished academic and researcher known for his contributions to the study of Albanian history and culture. His work often focuses on the socio-political dynamics of Albania in the 20th century, with particular attention to issues of identity, memory, and occupation. The presentation focused on the long-term impact of colonialism—particularly Italian influence—on Albanian society, migration patterns, international relations, and EU cohesion. The presentation traced the evolution of Albania–Italy relations from before independence in 1912 through the fascist occupation and into the post–World War II period.

Key themes included Italy's early support for Albanian independence movements, the economic dependency created through unequal loan agreements, and the loss of sovereignty during the fascist occupation. The seminar highlighted how colonial policies shaped Albania's political structure, economy, and resistance movements, leaving a legacy that continues to influence its relationship with the EU.

The session concluded with reflections on the enduring effects of colonialism on national memory and current international dynamics, reinforcing the importance of addressing these legacies in modern European discourse.



Open discussion: “The effects of colonialism on international relations and EU cohesion and the relations between colonisers and colonised”

During this session two presentations were made Ms. Denisa Mamillo. The focus of the first one was on the historical and contemporary role of the Albanian diaspora in Italy and its impact on bilateral relations. The presentation traced the origins of the Arbëreshë community, descendants of Albanians who settled in Italy after the Ottoman conquest, highlighting their preservation of language, culture, and identity. Their contributions to Albania's national awakening through education, literature, and political activism were emphasized, particularly in the pre-independence era. The seminar also explored the post-1990 mass migration from Albania to Italy, driven by economic and social crises, and the resulting strong Albanian community that now plays a vital role in both countries. The discussion concluded by underscoring current Albania–Italy relations, marked by close diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties, with Italy serving as a key supporter of Albania's EU integration efforts.

The second presentation by Denisa Mamillo focused on a survey conducted in Përmet, Albania, examining local perceptions of colonialism despite the country never being formally colonized in the traditional sense. The findings highlight that historical occupations—particularly by the Ottoman Empire and Fascist Italy—are widely seen as “colonization in effect” due to their lasting impact on language, religion, identity, and cultural suppression. Elderly respondents emphasized loss and forced change, while younger participants expressed a desire for a deeper, more balanced understanding of history. Historians support the view that Italy's occupation reflected clear colonial characteristics. The presentation also explored how this legacy is visible in monuments, infrastructure, and gender roles, underscoring how past domination continues to influence Albanian society today.



The open discussion centered on the complex and often contradictory dynamics between colonizers and the colonized, especially from the perspective of individuals who live in European countries but originate from formerly colonized regions. A significant focus was given to the issue of dual belonging, where people experience both cultural integration and historical alienation. Special attention was placed on women's perspectives through the work of the WOMEN Association. They highlighted cooperation projects—the founding of the “Hapa te Lehtë” Center in Shkodër and the establishment of Gender Resource Centers in Albania and Montenegro—demonstrated a model of horizontal, peer-based collaboration that promoted empowerment, cultural exchange, and sustainable autonomy for women. These initiatives showed how shared leadership and locally driven efforts can foster real change, though they also raised the need to critically examine whether this cooperation truly reflected equality or unintentionally reproduced colonial patterns.

The discussion also addressed broader feminist critiques of international cooperation, especially from a decolonial lens. It questioned whether white European feminism can fully overcome its own inherited structures of privilege and racism to engage in truly equal partnerships. Participants explored how patriarchal and colonial forms of oppression intersect, but also how well-intentioned feminist activism can risk becoming a new form of dominance—whether through “civilizing missions,” humanitarian aid, or conditional development funding, as in the case of Albania's political alignment with Italy. The dialogue was enriched by contributions from Albanians that lives or had lived in Italy and from Giorgio

Ponti, an Italian working in Përmet and directing the local CESVI branch, who shared insights on development projects he has implemented in the area. The conversation concluded with an open and critical question: can a genuinely decolonial, transnational feminist cooperation be built—one that prioritizes convergence, mutual respect, and avoids reproducing colonial hierarchies?



EUrbane DECO project – Partners contributions on the influence of colonialism on local societies, migrations, international relations and EU Cohesion in their national context

The presentation on Portugal, with a focus on the Municipality of Lousada, examined the enduring impact of colonialism on local society, migration, and EU cohesion. It highlighted how Portugal's colonial past shaped national identity, post-colonial migration flows, and foreign policy, especially through relations with former colonies. The return of hundreds of thousands of settlers after decolonization led to major social and urban changes. In Lousada, immigrant populations from Brazil, São Tomé, Angola, and other countries contribute to demographic renewal, attracted by job opportunities, lower living costs, and quality of life. Local support services aid integration, though challenges of memory, identity, and inclusion persist.

The presentation from Benetússer focused on Spain's colonial legacy in Western Sahara and its ongoing impact on Sahrawi migrants, especially women, who face legal uncertainty and social exclusion. It highlighted the role of EU cohesion policies, such as ESF+ and the Cohesion Fund, in promoting migrant inclusion through local programs like PANGEA and Teixint Futur. These initiatives support legal aid, employment, and social integration, with a strong emphasis on empowering women. Benetússer's efforts showcase how local actions, supported by EU policies, can foster inclusive development and solidarity with formerly colonized communities.



Local visits

The second day of the event concluded with local visits to key landmarks in Përmet that reflect the legacy of Italian colonial influence. Participants first visited the former Italian army garrison, built in 1939 during the Italian occupation. This military base continued to be used during the communist era before being destroyed in 1997. One surviving structure from this complex is the Congress Hall of Përmet, which played a crucial role in Albania's political history. In May 1944, it hosted the Congress of Përmet, where the Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation was established as a provisional governing body, marking the beginning of a new political order in the country. The visit was guided by Ms. Aulona Meshini, Ms. Denisa Mamillo, and Mr. Gentian Lile. These visits provided tangible insights into the layered history of foreign presence, political transformation, and the lasting imprint on the town's architecture and collective memory.



26/06/2025
Local visits

The event concluded on 26/06/2025 with a cultural visit that highlighted the enduring legacy of wartime history in Përmet. Participants visited a memorial monument dedicated to the Albanian resistance against Italy, honoring the local struggle and sacrifices made during the war. The group also explored a historical bunker constructed by the Italian military during the Italy–Greece war. Uniquely repurposed, this former military structure now serves as a cheese factory, a local shop, and a tranquil tourist destination, blending history, local enterprise, and cultural tourism. This final visit offered a symbolic closure to the event by connecting past conflict with present-day resilience and innovation.



HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).