



Funded by  
the European Union



Citizens, Equality, Rights  
and Values programme



ATRIUM  
Architecture  
of Totalitarian Regimes  
of the XX Century  
in Europe's Urban Memory

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



2013 - 2023 TEN YEARS

women



women  
of mediterranean  
east and south european  
network



município de  
lousada



REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRIË  
BASHKIA PERMET



Universitat d'Alacant  
Universidad de Alicante



VITAL AID FOUNDATION  
EMPOWERING WOMEN & SAVING LIVES

# EURban DECO

Project 101143733

INFORMATIVE BROCHURE  
MUNICIPALITY OF PERMET





# PROJECT INFO

**EUrban DECO – “Exploring EU urban landscapes for a deconstruction of colonial narratives”**, running from March 2024 to February 2026, explore the colonial legacy inside today’s EU cities. By exploring symbols, romanticized narratives, and toponymy, the project aims to investigate the long-lasting influence of colonial ideologies in EU urban environments, starting a collective debate about their impact and promoting new narratives and shared cultural remembrance inside EU cities’ toponymy. The colonial legacy of Europe’s recent past will be put at the core of this transnational investigation aimed at raising awareness on the relationship between urban landscapes, historic memory and multicultural integration and attracting wider attention on the topic from public authorities and stakeholders.

- *The project is funded by the CERV Citizens, Equality, Right and Values Programme, Citizens’ engagement and participation strand – European Remembrance and involves partners from Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, The Netherlands, Albania and Germany.*



# PROJECT INFO

The key outcomes of the project are:

- Creation of updated urban maps for the seven cities involved in the project, highlighting key traces linked to the colonial legacy (toponymy, buildings, monuments)
- Organization of seven transnational events, each addressing a specific topic of European colonial history, that will actively involve key target groups such as immigrant communities, minorities, women and local authorities.
- Establishment of a transnational citizens' network aimed to attract policy makers' attention to the topic of colonial legacy in EU cities and demanding collective action to re-discuss it.

# PROJECT INFO

## PROJECT PARTNERS

- ATRIUM Association, Lead Partner (Italy)
- Ayuntamiento de Benetússer (Spain)
- SOLUTION: SOLIDARITE & INCLUSION (France)
- Municipio de Lousada (Portugal)
- Stichting Vital Aid Foundation (The Netherlands)
- Universidad de Alicante (Spain)
- WOMEN Association (Italy)
- Ngo NEST BERLIN EV (Germany)
- Bashkia Permet (Albania)

- **Budget:** € 166,495.00
- **Duration:** 24 months (1 Mars 2024 - 28 February 2026)



# ACTIVITIES REALIZED BY MUNICIPALITY OF PERMET

- Survey on colonial heritage and the presence of monuments, streets or other cultural products linked to the colonial past in Permet.
- Identification of intangible and tangible heritage linked to the colonial legacy (published on the website, scan the QR code on the last page)
- Organization of the transnational event on 24-26 June 2025 in Përmet

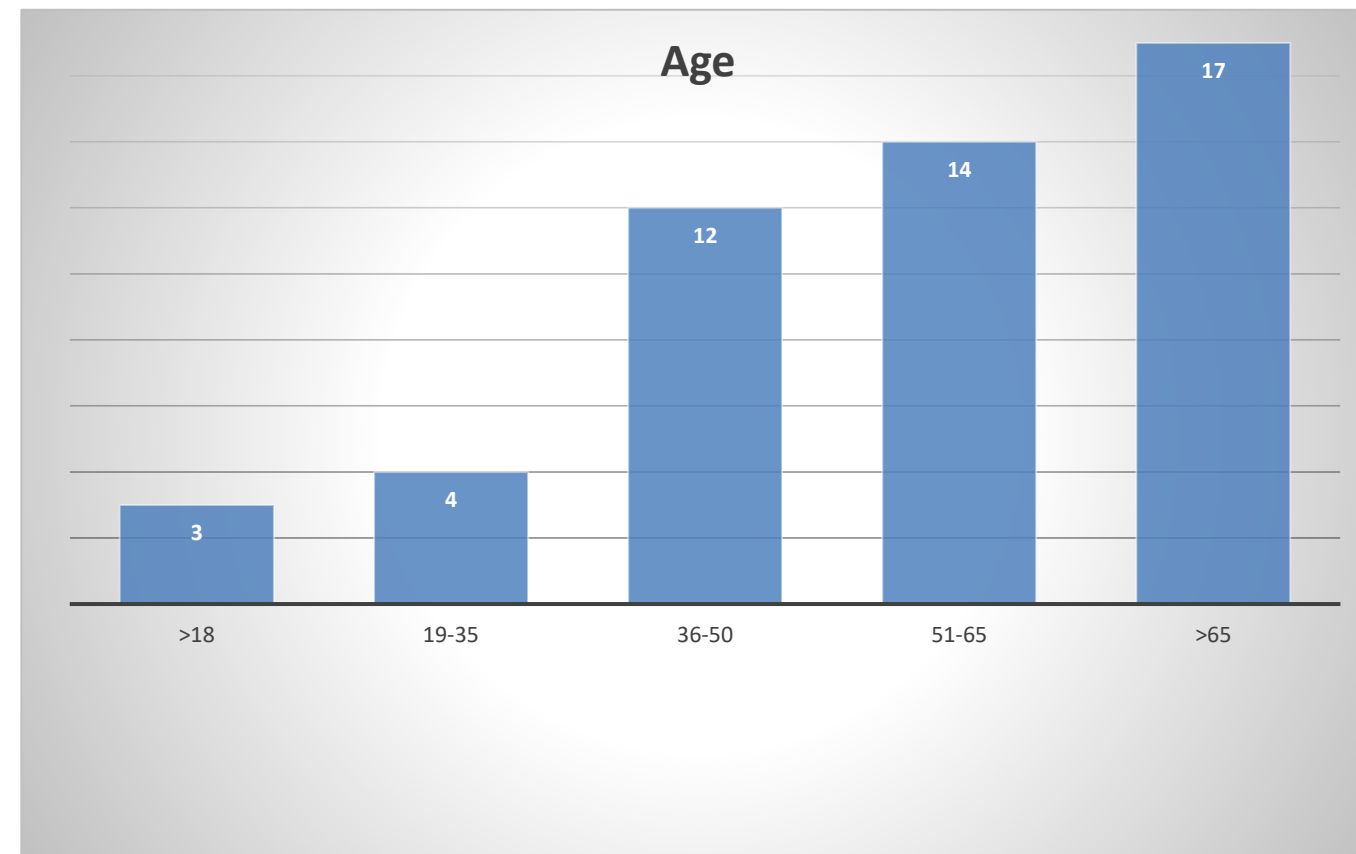
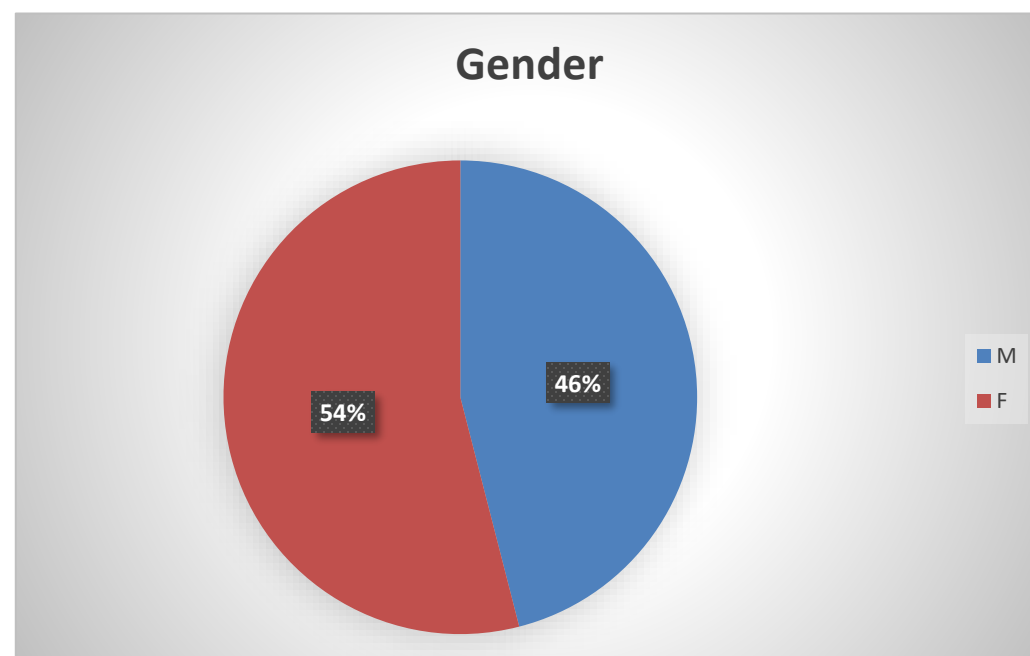
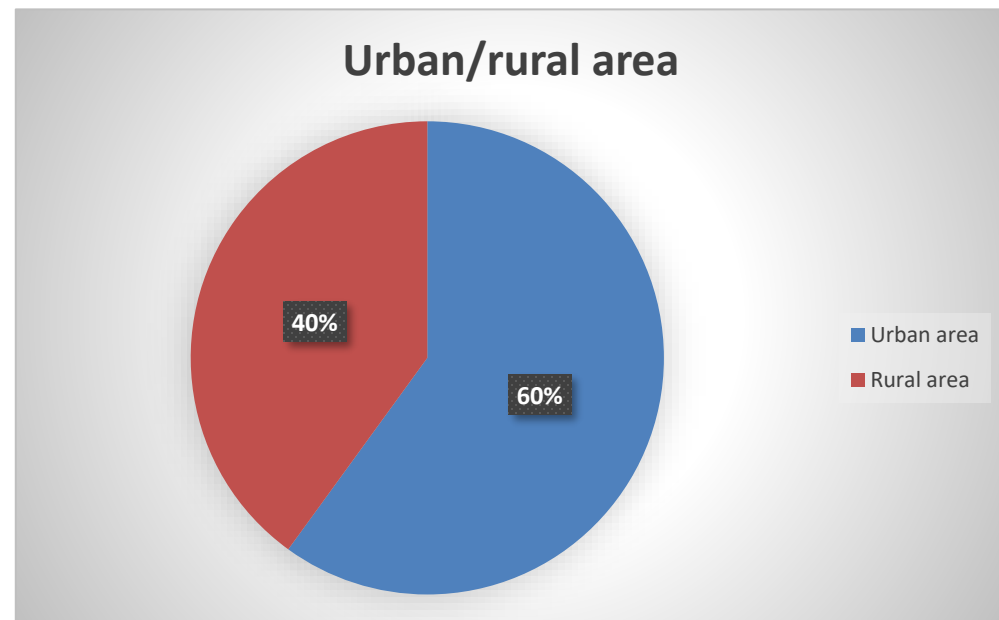


- +
- 
- Results of the *survey on colonial heritage and the presence of monuments, streets or other cultural products linked to the colonial past in Permet.*





# Profile of interviewers







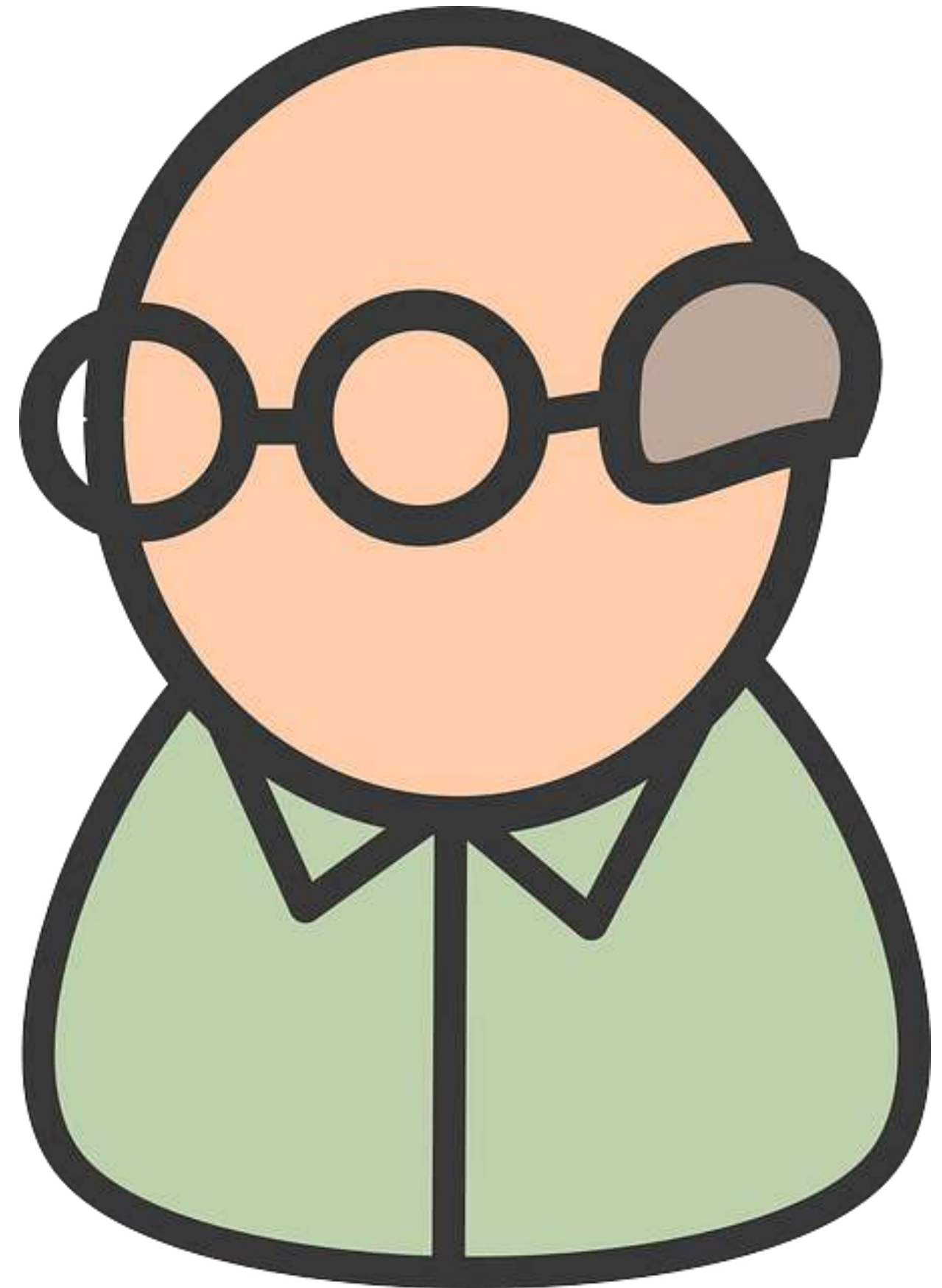
- Do you know about the colonial history of the country you live in? Do you think it was guilty of crimes such as crimes against humanity, slavery, etc.? Did the country you come from or where your family comes from (indicate which one) experience colonisation? Do you think it has been the victim of crimes such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, slavery, etc.?



While Përmet, like the rest of Albania, was not formally colonized in the way many African or Asian countries were, locals often speak of **foreign domination (especially Ottoman and fascist occupation)** as forms of “*colonization in effect*.” Their perception is shaped by **cultural loss, forced rule, religious change, and violence.**

# CULTURAL COLONISATION

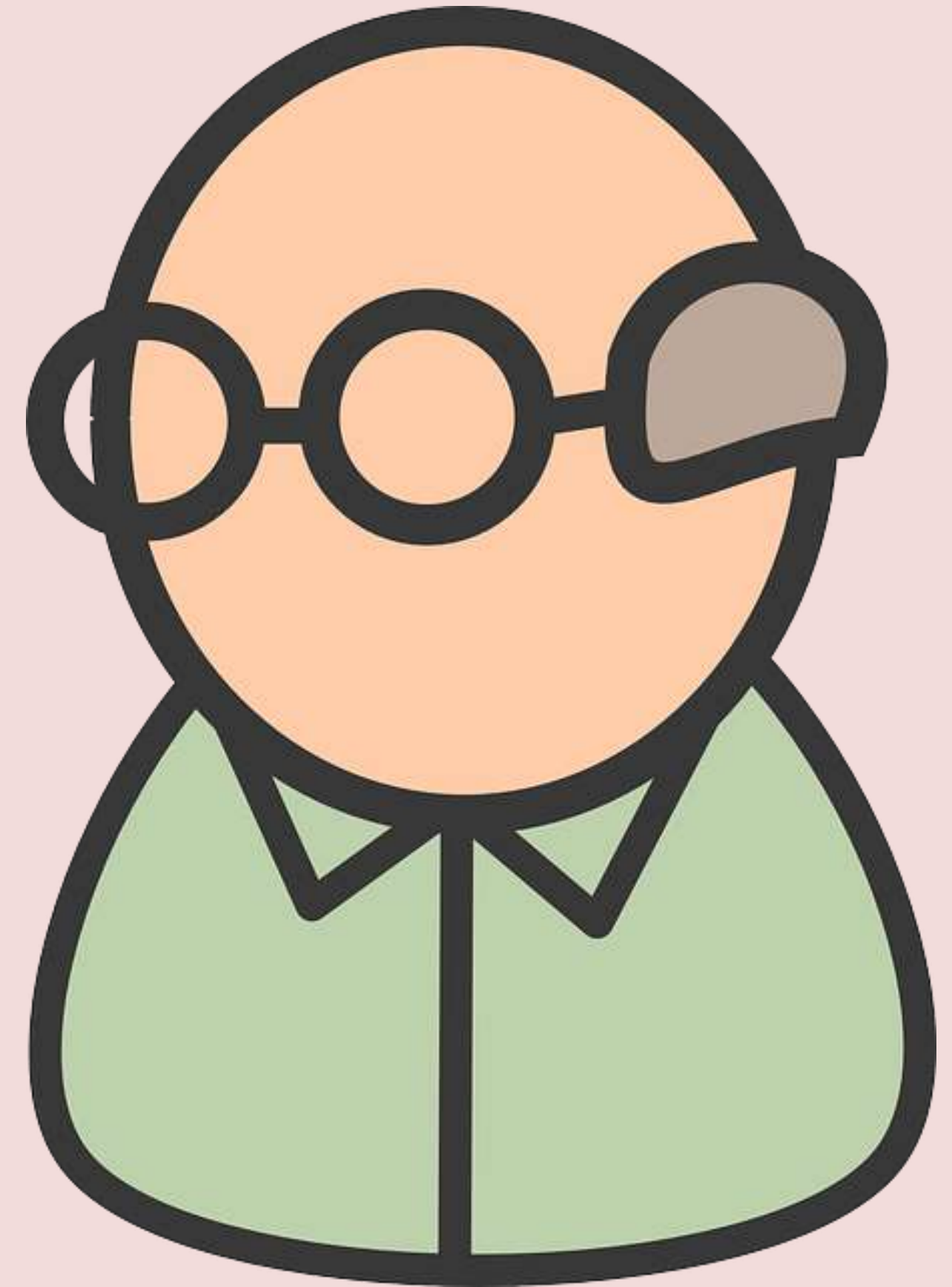
- They ruled us for centuries. We lost our language, our traditions were pushed down, and many had to convert.”
- It was colonisation, even if they didn’t call it that. They used us, taxed us, took our boys as janissaries.
- The Islamization and suppression of Albanian-language schools is viewed as an attack on identity.
- Despite the empire’s longevity, it is remembered more as a period of suppression than integration.





# COLONISATION: PERCEPTION OF ELDERY

- Albania's been a pawn in bigger powers' games, time and again.
- Let the young live free of old chains—we carry the past so they don't have to.
- *We didn't just suffer—we fought back. Përmet helped write the history of liberation.*
- The Axis powers committed crimes, yes. But so did our own government later. Prison camps, executions—let's not pretend only outsiders hurt us



# COLONISATION: PERCEPTION OF YOUNG PEOPLE

- “Maybe we weren’t colonised like India or Congo, but we were controlled, exploited, and silenced. That’s colonial in spirit.”
- History here is real, but complicated. It’s not just heroes vs. villains.
- We hear about the war, occupation, colonisation and communism all the time. But we want more than just stories of suffering—we want truth.
- We’ve suffered but so have others—it’s time to look forward.



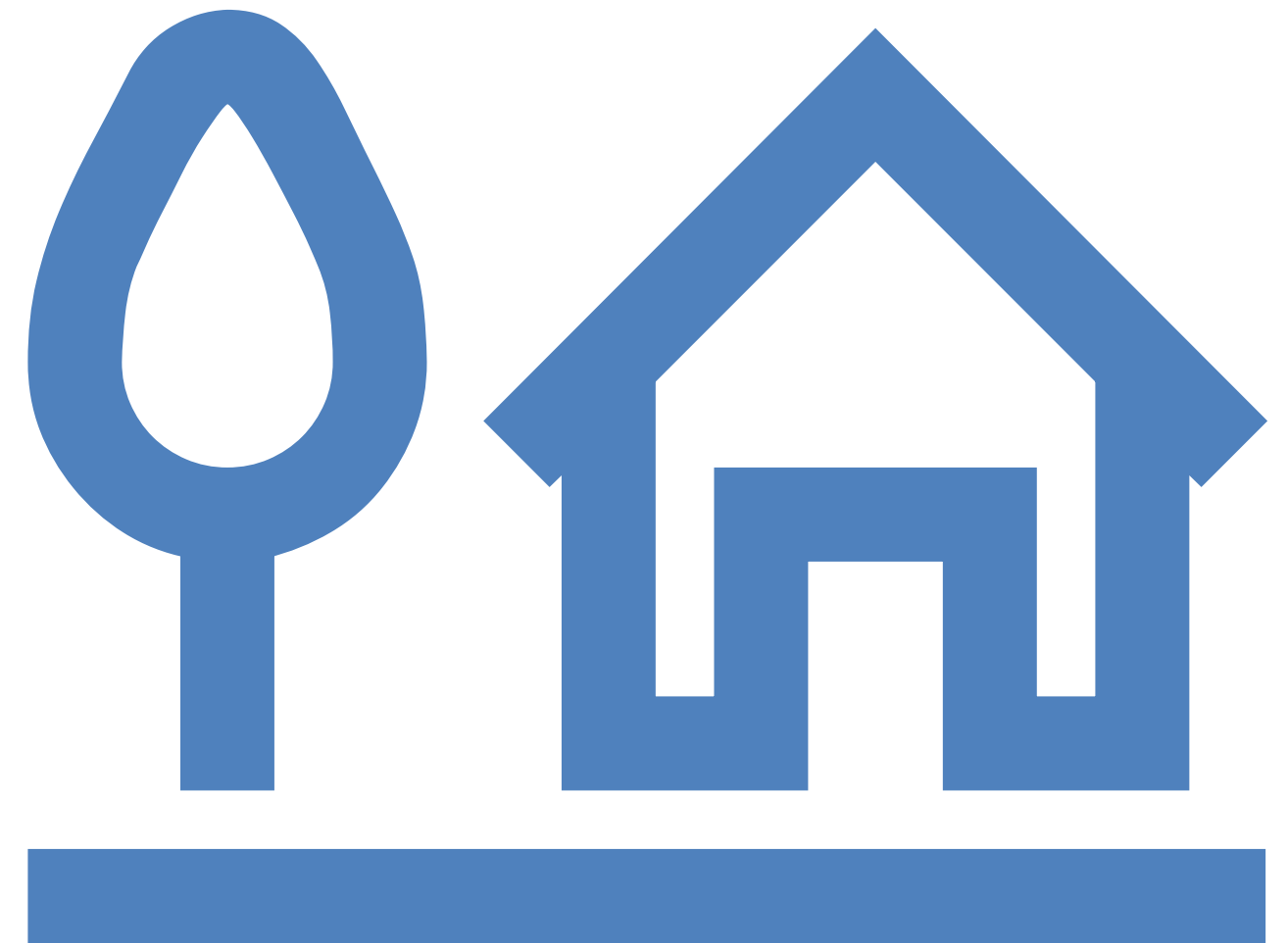


# COLONISATION: PERCEPTION OF HISTORIANS

- Although Albania was never formally a “colony” in the classic imperial sense, many **historians—both Albanian and international—consider Italy’s occupation of Albania (1939–1943)** a clear case of **colonial domination**, with ambitions, strategies, and practices that closely mirror colonialism.
- The language of liberation masked a program of exploitation.
- While Albania was not a colony in the conventional European colonial sense, it **was repeatedly occupied, dominated, and reshaped by foreign powers**, and many Albanians regard these experiences as forms of colonization and repression.



- Are you aware of the presence in the city of buildings and streets that refer to the country's colonial past? Which monuments and which street names you recall as part of the cultural heritage linked to the colonial past.





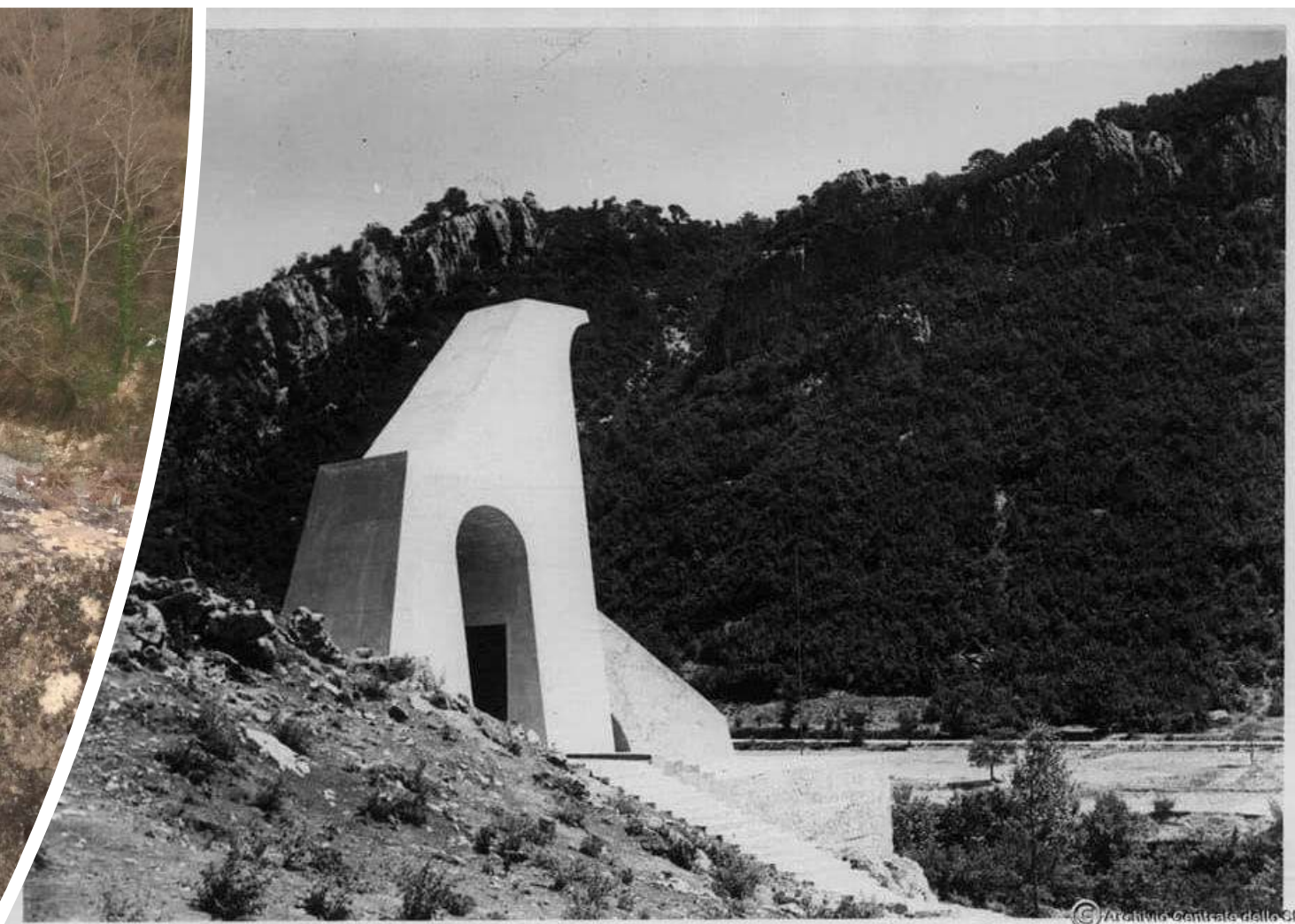


**MILITARY BASE**





- MEMORIALS OF ITALIAN-GREECE WAR





# BRIDGES, ROADS

---





**Do you see a link between colonization and discrimination against women in your country? Do you think that the colonial legacy still plays a role in discrimination against women today?**

In Ottoman times,  
women were hidden.  
They had no voice.  
That left a shadow for  
many years.

Even if colonizers  
didn't attack women  
directly, they built  
systems where only  
men had power.

It was the first time  
some girls saw a  
classroom, even if  
only for a few years.

Some women worked  
in the hospitals or  
cooked for troops—it  
was something  
outside the home

Italian engineers built  
roads and bridges in  
southern Albania,  
indirectly improving  
women's mobility and  
public visibility,

Not intended to  
promote women's  
rights—they were  
incidental results of  
Italian attempts to  
modernize or control  
the region.





TRANSNATIONAL EVENT: THE INFLUENCE OF COLONIALISM ON LOCAL SOCIETIES, MIGRATIONS,  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EU COHESION.

PERMET, 24-26 JUNE 2025



# EVENT AGENDA

**DAY 1 – 24  
JUNE 2025**

**4TH Transnational Project Meeting**

**Flashmob: Theatre performance**

**DAY 2 – 25  
JUNE**

**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”**

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

**Cultural Visits**

**DAY 3 – 26  
JUNE 2025**

**Cultural visits**



**Day 1 – 24  
June 2025**







# 4<sup>th</sup> transnational project meeting

The meeting was held at the Cultural Multifunctional Center “Odhise Paskali” and opened with a welcome by Ms. Denisa Mamillo.

- Topic discussed:
  - Absence of “VITAL AID”
  - Approval of previous meeting’s minutes
  - Plenary discussion on key topics for final conference
  - Gender assessment report (Hague event, WP3) presented & approved
  - Draft programme for Benetússer event presented by Municipality of Benetússer





+

# 4<sup>th</sup> transnational project meeting

Planned communication activities were presented, and each partner provided updates on preparatory and local work. The meeting concluded with a Q&A session and a presentation by Mr. Marti from the University of Alicante on the mapping work completed so far.

○



A person is performing on a stage. In the background, a large, light-colored backdrop features the year '1934' in large, bold, white letters. The performer is standing in the center of the stage, facing away from the camera. The stage floor is dark, and there are some chairs and equipment visible in the foreground.

# FLASH MOB: 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.





25

*The film “Beyond Stone Walls”* told the story of Asimeja, a young girl challenging traditional gender roles and societal expectations to join the anti-fascist resistance.







26

*The film “Red Poppies on the Walls” depicted the experiences of orphaned boys under fascist indoctrination, highlighting youth resistance and sacrifice.*







*The film “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.





Day 2 – 25 June 2025

---



## 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, explored the long-term impact of Italian influence on Albania's society, migration, and international relations. It traced Albania-Italy relations from pre-independence in 1912 through the fascist occupation and post-World War II period. Key points included Italy's early support for independence, economic dependency through unequal loans, and the loss of sovereignty under fascist rule. The session reflected on how these colonial legacies shaped Albania's politics, economy, and memory, and their ongoing relevance for EU relations today.







31

## OPEN DISCUSSION: “THE EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EU COHESION AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN COLONISERS AND COLONISED”

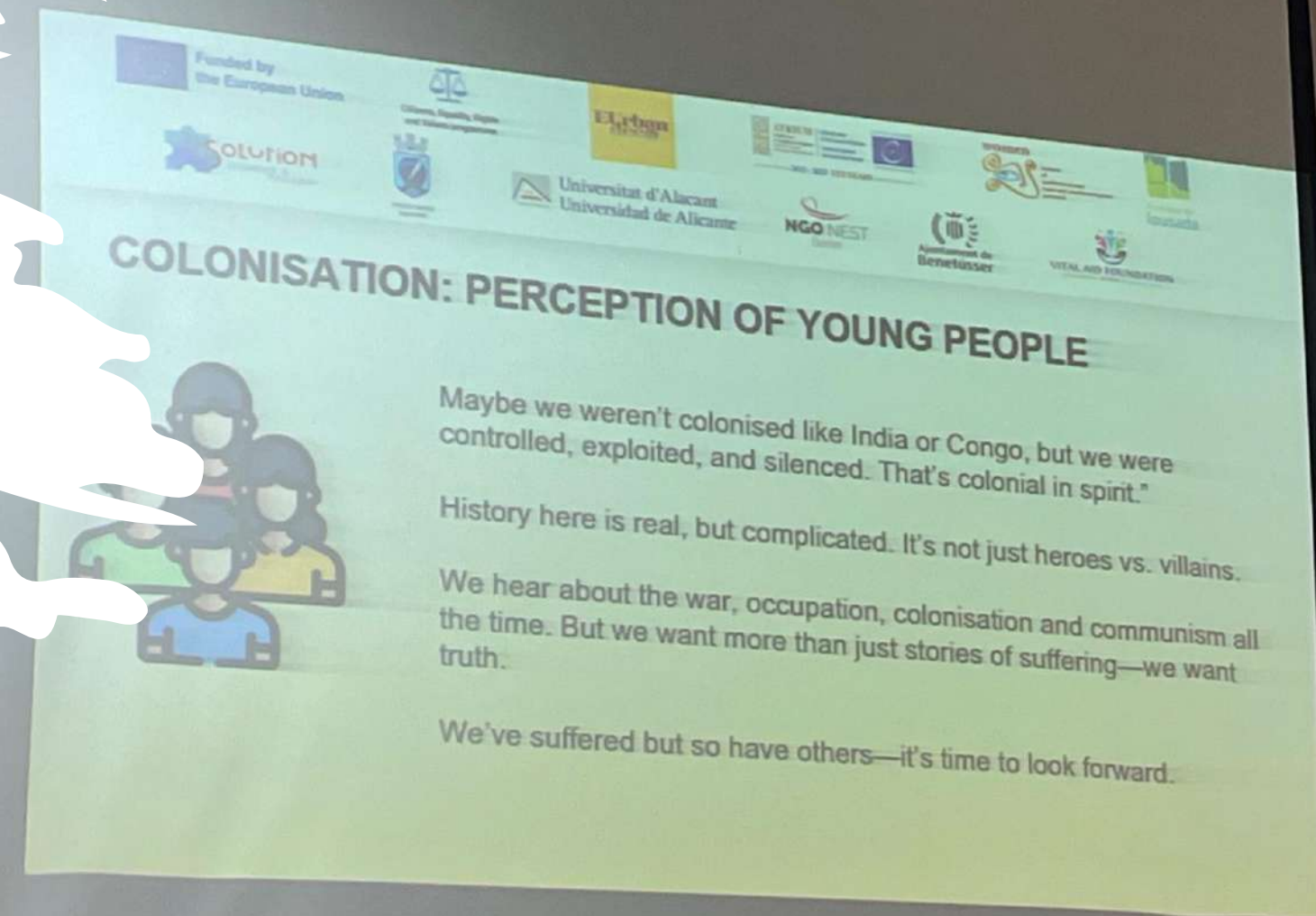
During the session, Ms. Denisa Mamillo delivered two presentations. The first examined the Albanian diaspora in Italy, from the Arbëreshë community’s preservation of language and culture to their role in Albania’s national awakening and the impact of post-1990 migration. It highlighted how today’s Albanian community in Italy strengthens diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties and supports Albania’s EU integration.





**OPEN DISCUSSION: “THE EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EU COHESION AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN COLONISERS AND COLONISED.**

The second presentation shared results of a Përmet survey on perceptions of colonialism, noting that Ottoman and Fascist occupations are widely viewed as forms of colonization due to their lasting impact on identity, culture, and language. Generational differences emerged, with elders recalling loss and forced change, and youth seeking a balanced historical understanding. The study stressed how these legacies remain visible in monuments, infrastructure, and social roles.







## **OPEN DISCUSSION: “THE EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EU COHESION AND THE RELATIONS BETWEEN COLONISERS AND COLONISED.**

The open discussion explored the complex dynamics between colonizers and the colonized, focusing on dual belonging experienced by people from formerly colonized regions living in Europe. Women’s perspectives, presented by the WOMEN Association, highlighted projects such as the "Hapa te Lehtë" Center in Shkodër and Gender Resource Centers, showcasing peer-based collaboration that promotes empowerment and cultural exchange. Participants critically examined whether such initiatives achieve equality or risk repeating colonial patterns. Broader feminist critiques questioned whether European feminism can overcome inherited privilege to form equal partnerships. The dialogue emphasized how colonial and patriarchal oppression intersect and warned that well-meaning activism can reproduce dominance. Contributions from Albanians living in Italy and Giorgio Ponti of CESVI added practical insights. The session closed with a call to build genuinely decolonial, transnational feminist cooperation based on mutual respect and equality.





## EURBAN 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.





## EURBAN DECO PROJECT – PARTNERS CONTRIBUTIONS ON THE INFLUENCE OF COLONIALISM ON LOCAL SOCIETIES, MIGRATIONS, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND EU COHESION IN THEIR NATIONAL CONTEXT

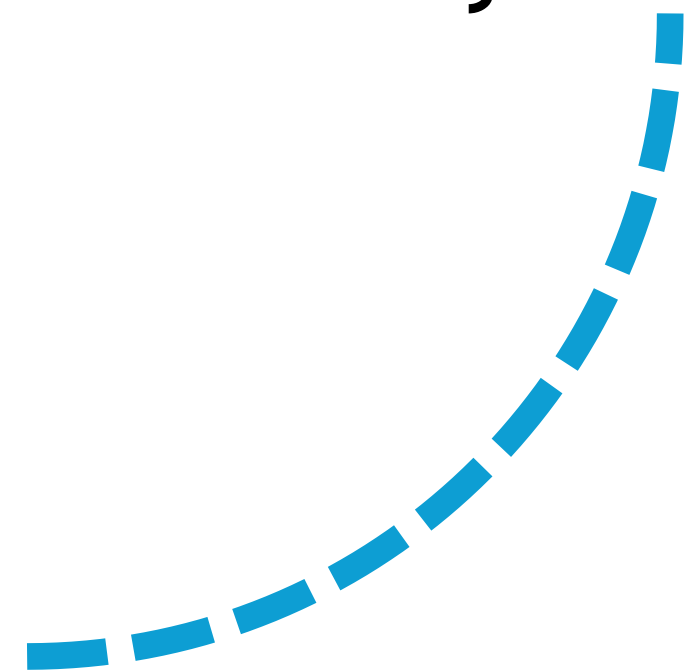
The presentation from Benetússer focused on Spain's colonial legacy in Western Sahara and its ongoing impact on Sahrawi migrants, especially women, who face legal uncertainty and social exclusion. It highlighted the role of EU cohesion policies, such as ESF+ and the Cohesion Fund, in promoting migrant 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 local visits aimed to provide participants with a deeper understanding of Përmet's complex historical layers, focusing on the legacy of Italian colonial influence and its lasting impact on the town's political, architectural, and cultural identity.






## Participants



37

The participants included representatives of the project partners as well as members of the local community, such as representatives from cultural institutions, NGOs, local guides, and representatives of the Municipality of Përmet.





The second day of the event concluded with a series of local visits to historically significant landmarks in Përmet, offering participants an in-depth look at the town's layered past and the enduring legacy of Italian colonial influence. The program began with a tour of the former Italian army garrison, constructed in 1939 during the Italian occupation of Albania. This strategic military complex, later repurposed during the communist era, stood as a symbol of shifting regimes and geopolitical tensions before its destruction in 1997.

Among the few surviving structures of this complex is the iconic Congress Hall of Përmet, a site of exceptional national importance. In May 1944, this hall hosted the historic Congress of Përmet, where the Anti-Fascist National Liberation Council was established as Albania's provisional governing body, laying the foundation for a new political order in the country.



The visits were expertly guided by Ms. Aulona Meshini, Ms. Denisa Mamillo, and Mr. Gentian Lile, who provided participants with historical context, architectural insights, and personal perspectives. Through these visits, attendees gained a tangible understanding of how foreign occupation, wartime upheaval, and political transformation have shaped Përmet's urban fabric and collective memory, leaving an imprint still visible in its cultural and architectural landscape.







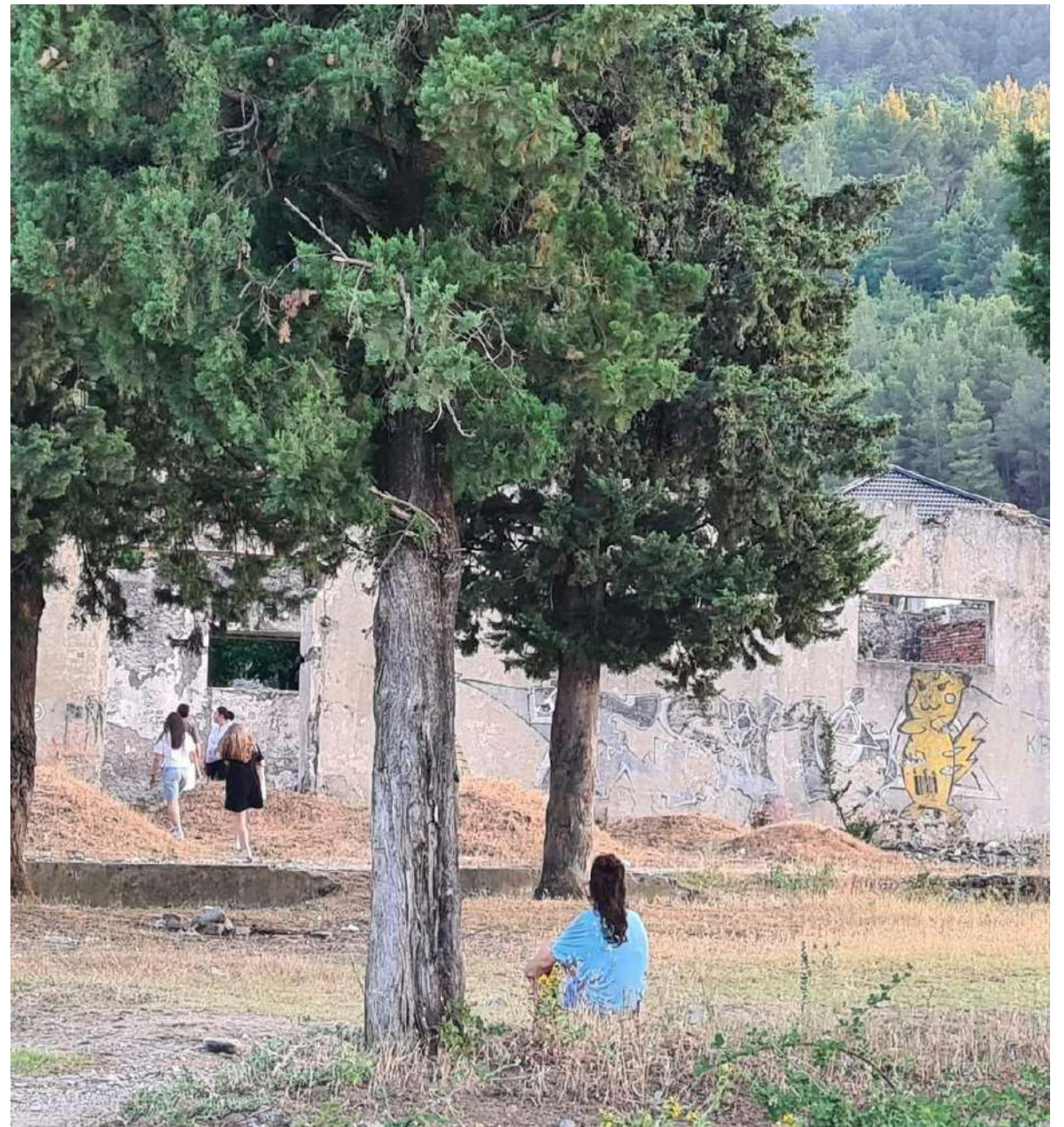






Fomer Italian military base





# Fomer Italian military base





# Permet Congress Hall

---







# Permet Congress Hall



# Permet Congress Hall






- Permet Congress Hall



ME 24.28 MAJ 1944  
U MBAJT  
KONGRESI I I<sup>TE</sup> ANTIFASHIST  
NACIONAL ÇLIRIMTAR  
I CILI VENDOSI:  
TE NDERTOHET SHQIPERIA ERE  
DEMOKRATIKE POPULLORE  
E PAS VULLNETIT TE POPULLIT,






**Day 3 – 26  
June 2025**

---



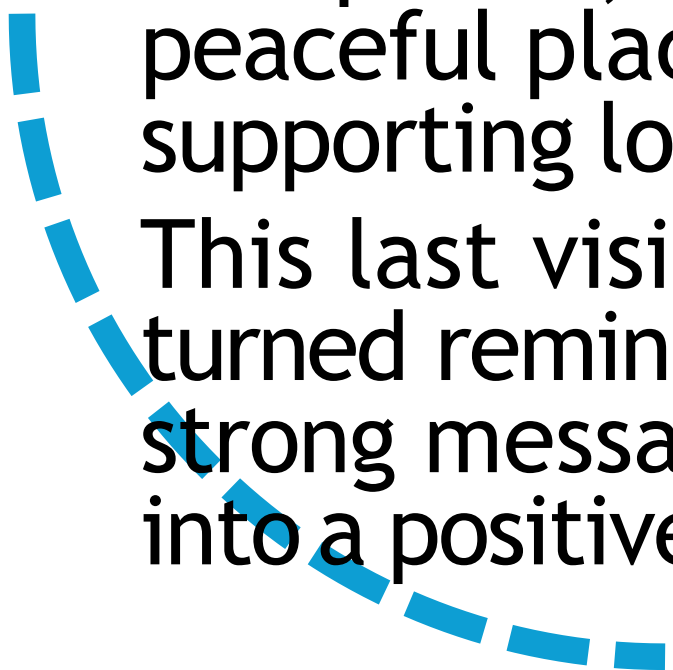




The event ended on 26 June 2025 with a cultural visit showing how Përmet keeps its wartime history alive while giving it new meaning. The first stop was a memorial monument dedicated to the Albanian resistance against Italy, honoring the bravery and sacrifices of the local people during the Second World War. Participants learned how Përmet became an important center of anti-fascist organization and how these events still shape the town's identity today.

The group also visited a bunker built by the Italian military during the Italy-Greece War (1940-41), part of a network of defenses in southern Albania. What makes this bunker special is how it has been reused: once a symbol of occupation, it is now a cheese factory, a small shop with local products, and a peaceful place for tourists. This creative change keeps the history visible while supporting local business and tourism.

This last visit gave the event a symbolic ending by showing how Përmet has turned reminders of war into sources of pride, work, and cultural value. It sent a strong message of resilience, showing how a community can transform its past into a positive future.







49

- Memorial for the war against Italy



- Italian bunker





- Italian bunker







- Italian bunker





- Italian bunker







Funded by  
the European Union



**ATRIUM**  
Architecture  
of Totalitarian Regimes  
of the XX Century  
in Europe's Urban Memory

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



2013 - 2023 **TEN YEARS**



For more information scan the QR code

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.