



## FINAL Conference Avrig, Romania 15 & 16 June 2011



# REPAIR Final Conference Report

## INTRODUCTION

*The Final Conference of the REPAIR Project was held in Avrigh and Sibiu, Romania on Wednesday and Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011. Avrigh is located in Sibiu County, Transylvania where the weather was warm and bright; the hospitality was equal to it, providing a wonderful atmosphere for work.*



Sibiu, the 2007 European City of Culture was occupied as early as 300 years B.C. The town was first documented in 1191 as the largest and wealthiest of the seven walled citadels built in the 12th century by German settlers known as Transylvanian Saxons.

The city guilds amassed enormous riches, which paid for the construction

of both the impressive buildings and the fortifications required to protect them. The Old Town of Sibiu retains the grandeur of its earlier days when the rich and powerful guilds dominated regional trade. Sibiu town, known as Hermannstadt in German, has a distinctly Germanic feeling and sections of the medieval wall still guard the historic area, where narrow streets pass steep-roofed 17th century buildings with overhanging gables before opening into vast, church-dominated squares such as Great Square and Little Square.



Sibiu is a pedestrian-friendly city with two easily accessible levels: the **Upper town**, home to most of Sibiu historic sights and the **Lower town**, lined with colourful houses on cobblestone streets and surrounded by imposing city walls and defence towers overlooking the river Cibin.

*REPAIR partners arrived in Sibiu, throughout the day of the 14<sup>th</sup> June and checked in to the Hotel Continental Forum and we were impressed and very happy with our accommodation. Colleagues took the opportunity to relax or wander through the squares of Sibiu Old Town, before meeting up in the evening to share a meal together.*



*We were all in high spirits and excited to see the location we had heard so much about during the lifetime of the project.*

*The Final Conference had arrived; it was here and we were ready for it!*

## FINAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

The programme for the REPAIR FINAL Conference was scheduled to take place over two full days in June 2011. The work plan and other arrangements called for two separate locations: 1. To provide partners a site visit to the Marsa Military Site located close to Avrig and the focus of the Local Action plan and 2. To provide a more conventional conference event which was held at the Ramada Hotel Conference Centre in Sibiu, the beautiful former European City of Culture to add substance to the event.

### Day One:

The order of the day was set to provide partners a visit to the Town Hall and to visit Marsa Military site that provided an appropriate setting for this practical session.

We received a very warm welcome, as always, from Arnold Klingeis, Mayor of Avrig and his team at the Town Hall of Avrig. Here was the opportunity for Mr. Mayor to introduce the key stages of his Local Energy Plan and his mission to develop Avrig into one of Romania's leading centres for renewable energy by 2020 and to become energy independent by 2030.



After meeting all the Staff at the Mayors Office we were taken by bus out to Marsa Military Site located a few kilometres outside Avrig town centre. The road was rough and meandered through the Marsa Industrial Site, where several years almost 50,000 people were occupied in making military equipment and munitions.

On arrival at our destination we saw a big contrast of a Marquee, erected in the woodland cleared especially for the occasion, sitting close to the old Army camp headquarters buildings that are in a near derelict condition. The contrast was impressive and gave partners a clear image of the size of the task and the vision that drives the work forward.



Arnold Klingeis, Mayor of Avrig once again welcomed partners; this time to Marsa Military Site the focus of the development plans both underway and planned. He explained how the site would be redeveloped into the location for Local Energy Production, a bio-diversity park and as a centre of renewable energy research by 2030.

Councillor Jane Chitty, Medway Council responded on behalf of partners by thanking our hosts for their warm welcome and hospitality. Councillor Chitty added how impressed she has been with the strong personal relationships developed between partners. She observed this to be a good sign for future cooperative working.

Clem Smith, Head of Economic Development, Social Regeneration and Tourism at Medway Council followed by commenting on why partners joined the project. Mr. Smith reminded us that we share the common challenge of finding new and productive uses for abandoned former military or heritage sites.



As the morning passed the temperature rose to a balmy 29 degrees outside the Marquee: however, inside it reached 40 degrees but a practical solution was found and the side panels of the Marquee were opened, providing a welcome breath of fresh air.

We agreed that some exercise would be useful at this point and set out on our guided tour of the site led by Mr. Lucian Isachi, formerly commander of the Army unit for three years. Lucian's in depth knowledge of the site, throughout the Soviet military period was invaluable in helping us to understand not only the effects that followed abandonment in the mid nineteen eighties but the potential redevelopment opportunities. Mr Isachi was very happy to show us the head quarters' buildings and to talk about the future uses planned for these.



A long walk in the warm sun gave us an appetite. On our return to the Marquee Lunch was ready to be served from the field kitchen brought in for the occasion.



We showed our appreciation to our chef in the time honoured way.

After lunch the Lead Expert, Hen Gerritse provided a full evaluation of the Local Action Plans prepared by partners throughout the project. His evaluation was fair and provided guidance to improve the continued development of the Local Action Plans after REPAIR project. Partners gained valuable insight into how other locations had approached the task. Hen held a workshop to determine how help partners used what they had learned from the exchange of experience.

Thematic Expert, Liz Mills then led the next item by providing the opportunity to develop **Ten-Top-Tips** drawn from the experience of partners through working on this URBACT project for publication on the REPAIR website.

Finally, Vincent Jasper, Lead Partner offered a summary of the day, before calling the meeting to a close. Partners returned to Avrig by bus and received a guided tour of the town, visiting the Brukenthal Manor House and the Gheorghe Lazăr Museum where some wonderful examples of local and traditional crafts are available.



*...Then - back on the bus to return to the hotel and prepare for Dinner at the Restaurant Hermania in Sibiu.*

## *Day Two:*

The programme for Day Two took place in the Hera Room at the Ramada Hotel, Sibiu. The Conference facilities were of the highest quality and we thank our colleagues in Avrig for organising such a wonderful setting for the occasion.

Vincent Jasper called the meeting to order and at the same time welcomed Local Support Groups located in the home cities by way of the online streaming of the event across the Internet as a web cast. This part of the event was organised by Medway Council and used software available to them in Medway. The set up was not without its difficulties but we all learned a lot on the day.

Vincent then invited Mr. Martin Bottesch, President of Sibiu County to formerly welcome REPAIR partners to the area.



Councillor Mrs Jane Chitty thanked Mr Bottesch for his warm welcome and expressed the view held by all partners that we had been very happy with what we had seen during our visit so far. Councillor Chitty went on to credit the beautiful city and cultural opportunities in Sibiu.

Vincent Jasper next invited Mr. Liviu Bailesteanu from the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism to speak to us about his experience of working with the European Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities and of course funding opportunities post 2014.

Mr. Bailesteanu referred to his work with EU Ministers on the matter of developing Sustainable Cities. He was pleased to note that REPAIR Project was focused on identification of policy as a means to levelling the playing field and to access the right kind of funding streams.

Clem Smith, Head of Economic Development, Social Regeneration and Tourism followed with a presentation aimed at informing the wider audience about the background reasons why REPAIR was an important project and why partners decided to join it.

Mr. Smith explained the main ambitions as being:

- ❖ To realise the socio-economic potential of our former military sites – “Jobs, Services, Assets”
- ❖ To place former military site regeneration at the heart of sustainable urban development
- ❖ Build sustainable and cohesive communities
- ❖ Achieve sustainable economic growth and prosperity for local people
- ❖ Improve the quality of life for our residents.

Mr. Smith continued by explaining the provenance of Project REPAIR, originating as it did in the **ASCEND Project** funded by Interreg IIIC – 2004-2007. The ASCEND partnership was made up of Medway, Charente Maritime, CID-Cartagena, M-P Systems-Venice Karlskrona, Rostock, New Dutch Waterline, Thessaloniki; and that the main aim was to develop a common approach model to the successful socio-economic re-use of former military sites. This was a practical project focused at site owners and resulted in the development of a powerful tool - a Model Management Framework, which provided a step by step guide to the successful socio-economic re-use of former military sites. In addition 25 Good Practice Examples of site regeneration were identified.

Five of the ASCEND partners continued in the REPAIR Project partnership and were joined by Paola, Malta, Florence, Italy, Kaunas City, Lithuania, Opava, Czech Republic, Avrig, Romania.

This partnership provided a very good mix of locations experienced in this type of work together with keen representatives from the new member states willing to learn. The synergy was excellent.

Mr. Smith continued by explaining that REPAIR advocates joined up working between policy makers for integrated sustainable urban development and that we define policy innovation to inform new policy at local, national and EU level.

We will also highlight and exchange good practice in sustainable site regeneration delivery and inform the development of future EU & Structural Funds policy, programmes and projects. These goals are in line with the aims and objectives of the URBACT II Programme and EU Policy, in particular REPAIR follows the aim of "Ensuring synergy between all the interventions financed by structural funds in the urban context and the effectiveness and visibility of Community intervention".



Mr. Smith continued by outlining the key challenges for REPAIR partners and other organisations operating in this field.

- ❖ **"No-one is an Island"** – Site owners, local policy makers and practitioners must see site regeneration as an integral part of a citywide sustainable urban development approach.
- ❖ **Former military sites as catalysts for sustainable urban development** – Imaginative schemes for the sustainable socio-economic re-use of sites and buildings can act as a vital forerunner to the development of sustainable cities policy.
- ❖ **Cross-fertilisation of sustainability innovation** – Much to be gained from both the exchange and transfer of good practice in sustainable site regeneration.
- ❖ **A valuable contribution to EU policy development** - the analysis of how sustainability principles are applied to former military sites can advance both EU policy and the effectiveness & efficiency of EU Structural Fund programmes.

The full list of outputs was also provided in Mr. Smith's presentation and followed by his presentation of the main principles adopted for the working method. These are known as the **Four Pillars**. The full definitions are shown here for reference but are expanded in the presentation residing on the Project website at [www.urbact.eu/repair](http://www.urbact.eu/repair).

#### REPAIR – The Four Pillars

**I) To achieve the sustainable re-use of heritage sites, through maximising energy efficiency, better waste management and greater use of renewable energies;**

**II) Develop alternative site uses & techniques, which best secure the long term preservation of the military heritage.**

**III) Maximise access to military sites by sustainable modes of transport, which minimise car use and decouple transport growth from local GDP growth.**

**IV) How the socio-economic re-use of the sites can maximise local jobs for local people and therefore sustainable communities and greater social cohesion.**

On completion, Mr. Smith introduced Dr. Malcolm Borg who would lead a discussion group on the subject of the Four Pillars. Dr. Borg, an independent consultant working for Paola in Malta, explained that he would talk about Conservation and went on to introduce the other panellists, their subject and the Pillar effected.

**Pillar I - Arnold Klingeis, Avrig – Local Energy Plan**

**Pillar II – Malcolm Borg, Paola – Zetjun conservation**

**Pillar III – Anton van Emst & Peter Ros, Utrecht & New Dutch Waterline – Transport plan**

**Pillar IV – Liliann Bjerstrom, Karlskrona Kommun – the Triple Helix**

In conclusion Dr. Borg referred to the cross cutting issues raised when considering each Pillar. It was clearly understood that one couldn't work on one of the subjects alone as they interact with each other. As a result, the principle of sustainable development is more likely to be achieved in the long run. The most important result, however is that planners are forced to consider a series of actions when planning future developments.

Lunch was served in the Ramada Dining Room following this group discussion and whilst service was in progress a video compilation of Day One was transmitted to the ULSG members back home through the Internet web cast.

After lunch Hen Gerritse, Lead Expert introduced himself and presented two main themes; a review of the Local Action Plan presentation he gave to partners the day before and his Pilot Regeneration Actions – an Integrated Strategy presentation.

Mr. Gerritse, had completed an in depth assessment of the Local Action Plans and provided us a short review of these. The outcome was that the Local Actions Plans could have been more effective and had led from the start on the development of the Pilot Regeneration Actions (PRA). The PRA were a result of the Local Action Plan development and led to a Development and Implementation Plan prepared for each of the two sites selected by partners – Le Murate, Florence and Paola Corradino, Malta.

Hen recommended the seven steps as the most important in development of an Implementation Plan. A strong management and coordination framework; to establish coordination and monitoring mechanisms; Agree on methodology for implementation; Define targets, milestones and indicators to evaluate the implementation and redirect the approach if needed; Make a detailed and realistic cost estimation; Prioritise projects based on legal and funding opportunities; local needs and regional and national priorities; Always try to start with a high potential projects to create credibility.

Hen ended his presentation with his main conclusions:

#### **Pilot Regeneration Actions - Main Conclusions**

1. The Pilot Regeneration Action is vital for testing the repair methodology
2. The development goal should be as close as possible to the strengths and specifics of the location
3. Projects with a wide integrated development goal have a better chance for funding. This has been achieved in Paola but the Florence focus could be wider as it is mainly focused on socio-economic issues at the moment
4. Managing Authority involvement is crucial in an early phase of the development of the Local Action Plan (LAP) to have the best guarantee of funding
5. Linking the LAP directly to the wider local/regional and development-planning strategies has been successfully achieved in Paola. The potential for further implementation in Florence would be increased if this approach had been chosen from the very beginning.

Hen handed over to his URBACT colleague Liz Mills, Thematic Expert who provided an excellent presentation on how the European Policy Recommendations were formed.

In her presentation Liz referred to *Adjustments to the 'EU toolkit'* based on a clear understanding of the importance of EU strategies, laws and funding etc. for work in cities. The knowledge gained was established through our experience shared during the project and this led to discussion about the present formulation of policy and how this might be enhanced.

The full list of Policy recommendations can be seen on the REPAIR website at [www.urbact.eu/repair](http://www.urbact.eu/repair).

Vincent Jasper, Lead Partner and Hen Gerritse, Lead Expert made a short presentation about the Ten-Top-Tips developed by partners during the conference. These were a lighthearted approach to the lessons learned collectively and intended to be a guide to other project managers in the future.

#### **Ten-Top-Tips**

1. Ensure you have real engagement with the Managing Authorities in future Operational Programmes (Con and Com).
2. Lobby for a certain percentage of the programme budget to be reserved for funding of actions and /or investments triggered by European Cooperation projects such as URBACT
3. Building a bridge between local action plans and implementation plans by providing extra financial resources
4. Choose your partners carefully – i.e. locations you would like to visit, ensure they are matched well to your needs and wants
5. Ensure that planning division of local authorities are involved in the implementation **throughout** the project lifetime
6. Ensure that political support is maintained **throughout** the project lifetime, not just at the high spots
7. From Lead Partner perspective make certain that sufficient resources (people) are available to work on the project.
8. Ensure that your project theme is connected to the National policy for urban issues
9. Ensure that your project is allowed access to external or thematic experts e.g. REPAIR. Short term thematic expertise - request flexibility in the choice of expertise at the mid term point, because you cannot be sure you have chosen the right expert at the start.
10. Enjoy the experience, develop friendships and maintain the network

Jean Loup Drubigny, Director Urbact Secretariat was asked to respond with his perspective of future funding post 2014. He was very positive about the future of funding programmes and aware of course of the significance of our results at this time. Jean Loup encouraged us all to be sure to maximise the opportunity to disseminate our outputs and results widely, especially to our local Members of European Parliament, EU Commission, Managing Authorities etc.

Jean Loup carefully avoided commenting on the Ten-Top-Tips in general. What he did say is that our suggestion, No 2 - concerning a percentage of the budget in future being allocated to practical actions, may well occur in the next round of URBACT Programme.

Mr Benoni Sfarog made a presentation about the integration of military sites into the local urban development scene and Mr. Vasile Tabara urged promoted the use of external expertise in the development of locations such as the Marsa Military Site.

The conference closed with questions from the floor facilitated by Vincent Jasper, Lead Partner who took the opportunity to congratulate colleagues from Avrig for interpreting so well his direction for the event.

All partners were content that the Final Conference had extended the knowledge base of partners and at the same time raised the profile of the project and in particular the host location.

The Conference was closed with an unscheduled word of thanks from Councillor Chitty to Mayor of Avrig and his team.

Delegates left the building and later regrouped for a guided tour of the City, which was most interesting and highly recommended to future visitors.

The evening events saw delegates returning to the Brukenthal Manor House in Avrig, where guests were greeted with roses from young people of the town and a 'look alike' Queen Elena and Count Brukenthal.



AN URBACT II PROJECT

URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants. URBACT is co-financed by the ERDF Funds and the Member States.

