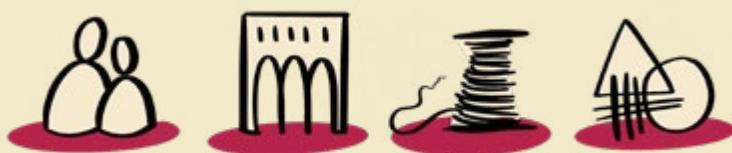


ARCHETHICS

Final network product

The urban landscape contributes to the full exercise of civil rights: the right to city, the right to nature, the right to culture.

Salvatore Settis



URBACT



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg

Credits

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ARCHETHICS network

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Forewords

"Toward a new civic commitment on our common past"

Camillo Acerbi - Councillor for Culture of the Municipality of Cesena

The totalitarian regimes, colonialism and ethnic conflicts that have characterised the entire history of the European continent, despite their great diversity, left behind remarkably similar legacies in numerous countries: monuments, buildings and even entire neighbourhoods designed to glorify the dictator or party in power and to use fear as a tool of social control against internal and external political adversaries. Decades later, this huge and complex heritage carries often a divisive and painful memory, sometimes erased from society, sometimes "normalized" or sometimes simply forgotten.

Faced with the **complex challenges of the present** and the wars shattering our continent and the entire world, this heritage can be one of the starting points to design cultural processes around a **common reflection on the past with local communities**. This heritage should be a valuable opportunity for reflection on the common EU past and a warning for the future.

ARCHETHICS project, of which this document represents the final output, was born precisely for that aim: to valorise and rediscover the EU dissonant architectures developing urban strategies and action plans first of all from an **ethical perspective**: without cancel the signs of their difficult past, but rather turning them into a tool for promoting the common values of **democracy, inclusion and cooperation** between peoples.

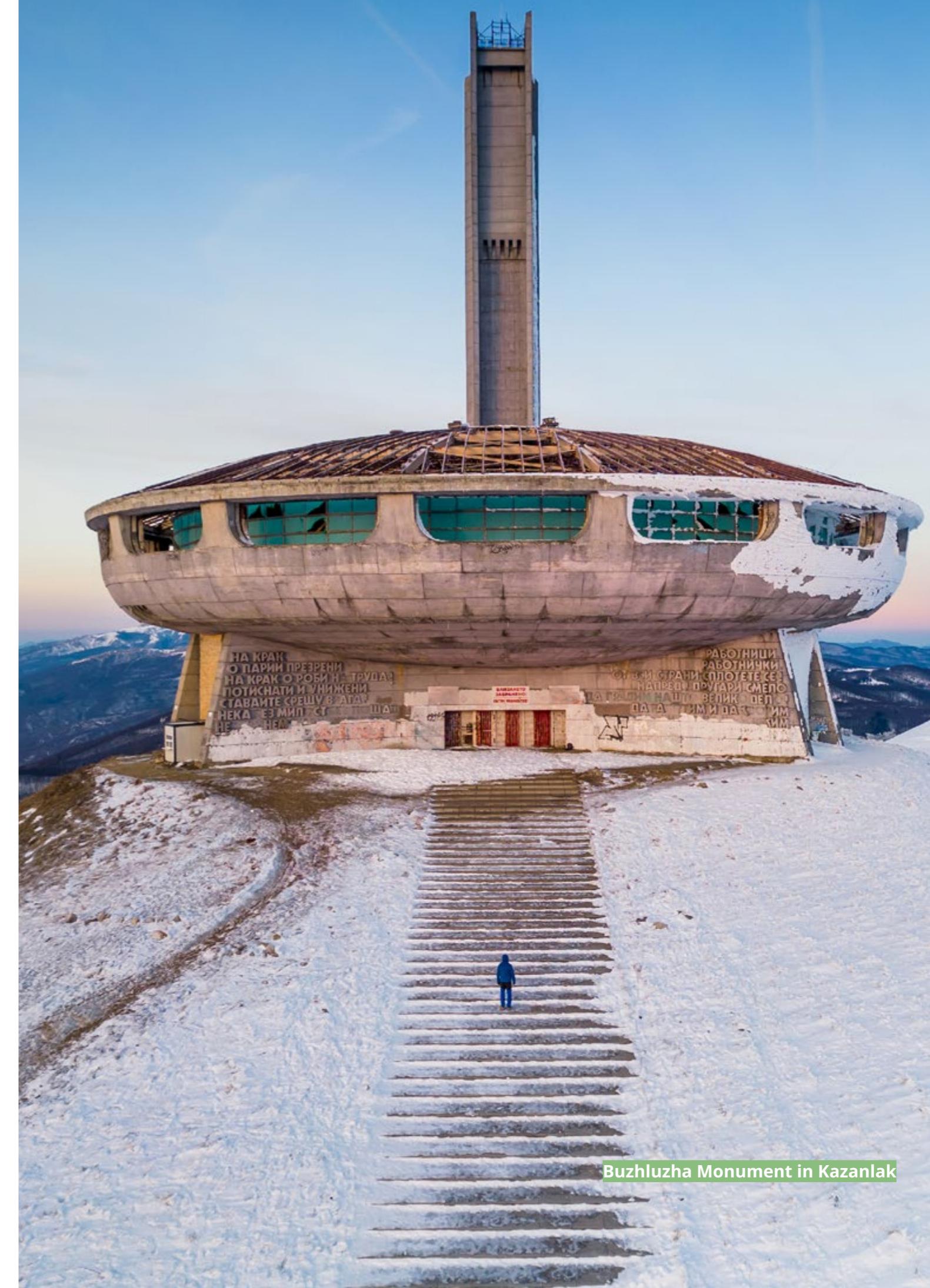
ARCHETHICS was inspired by and built upon the work of other EU networks, cities, and institutions that have been working with dissonant heritage for years, including, for example, the URBAN AGENDA of EU and the ATRIUM network.

This was also thanks to the activation of the local community and the exchange of best practices among the cities' project network: Cesena (Italy) as Lead partner, Permet (Albania), Kazanlak (Bulgaria), Krakow and Gdansk (Poland), Leipzig (Germany), Bétera (Spain) and Vila Nova de Cerveira (Portugal).

Over these three years of work, in our cities and among ourselves, many ideas have been born. Some of these have already been tested and are now concretely incorporated into the Local Action Plans within a broader development framework, useful for attracting new funding and imagining new projects on this issue, from a **European perspective**.

A necessary and virtuous path, on which we intend to continue working so that our dissonant heritage will be capable of actively engaging citizens in the discovery of a **collective and non-divisive memory** and in developing **new civic commitment to the common good** of today and tomorrow.

Thanks to all the associations, institutions, and individuals who have voluntarily and actively participated in this project, sharing their feelings, ideas, skills and curiosity to interrogate our past and imagine a little of our common future.



Buzhuzha Monument in Kazanlak

"Reshaping material and immaterial heritage to make our cities more attractive and inclusive"

Elisabetta Bovero - Director of Cultural Department and ARCHETHICS project manager

Why should we engage with dissonant and forgotten heritage? Why remember dark times when many democratic values are once again being questioned? How can we involve new generations in historical issues? How could architectural beauty coexist with the propaganda of dictatorships? How can we avoid the risk of instrumentalising a contemporary reinterpretation of dissonant heritage? How can we transfer the case studies from Action 10, "Integrated approach to Dissonant Heritage," of the Urban Agenda for the EU into our own urban contexts? Who should we involve to **build inclusive partnerships** to manage Dissonant heritage?

With ARCHETHICS, starting from a **solid theoretical framework** and a shared methodological basis, we worked in synergy across eight EU municipalities to make our cities more attractive and inclusive. We activated local communities through a **bottom-up design process** attentive to needs and to digital, green,

and gender-balance dimensions, embracing a multi-perspective approach.

The EU and local dimensions—thanks to the active involvement of partners and stakeholders—led to the development of work plans that represent the first stage of an ongoing process, linked to local policy, capable of **reshaping material and immaterial heritage**, generating new historical interpretations of territories, and creating new cultural routes able to foster awareness and attract new audiences.

The Municipality of Cesena, as Lead Partner, had the honour of guiding and accompanying this journey and extends its thanks to URBACT for its constant and precise support; to our Lead Expert, Ileana Toscano, for her rare generosity, passion, and expertise; to all partners for their commitment and friendship; and to all collaborators and local stakeholders for beginning to cultivate actions and projects for the enhancement of dissonant heritage.



Nowy Port in Gdansk

ARCHETHICS: a Network that doesn't work alone for dissonant heritage!

The heritage, that is called "Dissonant", addresses the problematic link between physical elements like architecture, neighbourhoods, monuments, urban public spaces, built during complex and difficult periods of European history, like totalitarian regimes, and the historical and political values those physical elements represent for people today. The collective and individual stories and memories surrounding these urban places add another layer of complexity to this heritage.

From June 2023 to December 2025, the ARCHETHICS Network opened a deep reflection on the **European Dissonant Heritage** present in many cities, to work on **the complex and diverse history of Europe** (focusing in particular on the Twentieth Century) and, through a critical examination of the past, come into the present to **promote democracy and solidarity**.

In particular, ARCHETHICS has **tested and co-designed a new participatory methodology for EU cities**, applying the URBACT method, to explore and enhance Europe's dissonant heritage through four integrated dimensions: Architecture, People, History and Ethics.

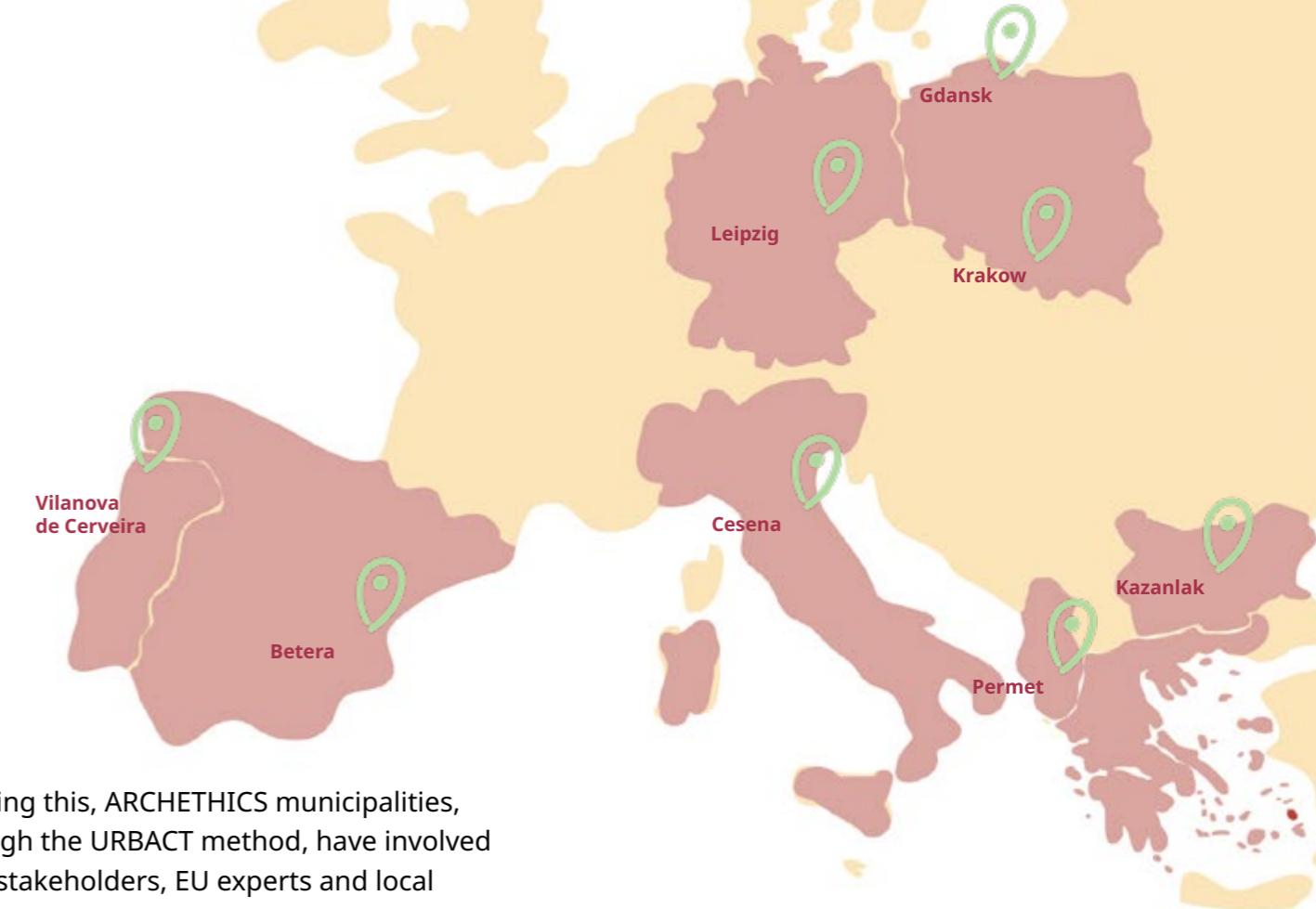
The Network **led by the Municipality of Cesena**, brings together 8 European cities of different sizes: **Cesena in Italy; Permet in Albania; Kazanlak in Bulgaria; Krakow in Poland; Gdansk in Poland; Leipzig in Germany; Betera in Spain; Vila Nova de Cerveira in Portugal**. These cities have in common the presence of dissonant heritage, characterised by very diversified typologies. In some cases, it is submerged or sleeping, discussed and controversial; it is located in different urban contexts, that is to say in the city centre or rural areas; it has different states of conservation and belongs to different eras.

The cities of Krakow (PL), Gdansk (PL), Kazanlak (BL) and Permet (AL) focus on **social realism** period by putting in the spotlight case studies about work neighbourhoods, cultural civic centres, propaganda monuments and buildings, symbolic heritages representing the communism and socialist ideologies. The city of Leipzig concentrates its research on the former Matthäikirchhof area, the urban area that belonged to "Stasi", during the **East Germany period**. The city of Cesena (IT) focuses on dissonant heritage sites, built during the **fascist period**, some educational and industrial buildings, and war infrastructures. Betera (ES) proposes to analyse an air-raid shelter and a trenches area belonging to the **Spanish Civil War**. Vilanova de Cerveira (PT) chose the Cerveira Castle, a **border infrastructure**, positioned in the city centre, now completely abandoned.

This work has been built on the findings of the **URBAN AGENDA for the EU Paper** and the valuable work of the Action 10 group and other European thematic networks that have been developing initiatives on dissonant heritage for years, such as **ATRIUM, EUROM, EUROCLIO and SITE OF CONSCIOUSNESS**.

Thanks to ARCHETHICS, the city's Network has discovered that they are not alone in facing this challenge. A dense network of Universities, Experts, Historians, Foundations and associations have been building cultural itineraries on this heritage for years! Cities achieved to intercept them both at transnational and local level.

Working on Dissonant heritage has provided a **space for dialoguing about the values of the European Union and fostering new opportunities for society, urban and regional development, cultural tourism, and education**.



In doing this, ARCHETHICS municipalities, through the URBACT method, have involved local stakeholders, EU experts and local communities to co-design the Integrated Actions Plans and test some activities in their cities. The whole process has demonstrated the importance of promoting participation for taking important decisions on the heritage that represent the story of European society, the history for arriving at democracy in Europe.

The final ARCHETHICS product presented here aimed at sharing living and adaptable tools and

reflections developed during the exchange and learning process and making them **available for small, medium and large EU cities that want to explore for the first time or even just continue the journey of discovery and questioning of their dissonant heritage**.

The final ARCHETHICS product is composed of 5 elements (chapters). They are:

The ARCHETHICS Action Planning journey

That summarises the process that accompany cities in producing the Integrated Action Plans;

The ARCHETHICS Common Glossary for Dissonant Heritage

That proposes a participatory approach to collaboratively define key terms and generate a collective vocabulary to talk about dissonant heritage;

The ARCHETHICS City Charter for Dissonant Heritage

That aims to navigate the complexity of dissonant heritage and find hints and tips to deal with it;

The ARCHETHICS Digital archive for Dissonant heritage

Developed with the idea to collect information, personal memories and stories and material objects of dissonant heritage.

The ARCHETHICS Living lab

That foresees an operational governance approach for a long term sustainability of the Integrated Action Plans.



ARCHETHICS

Action Planning journey

*Ileana Toscano,
URBACT Lead Expert*

ARCHETHICS Action Planning journey

ARCHETHICS proposed to work on dissonant heritage through a **multi-perspective approach**. This approach guided project partners in their reflection with local communities and stakeholders about dissonant heritage to co-design their integrated action plans.

Salvatore Settis - an Italian archaeologist and art historian concludes his book "Architecture and Democracy" tracing a link between architecture, citizenship and ethics:

The urban landscape contributes to the full exercise of civil rights: the right to city, the right to nature, the right to culture.

ARCHETHICS took inspiration from Settis to work on Dissonant Heritage as an opportunity to improve individual and collective identity, behaviour and memory, and strengthen the relationship between "architecture, citizenship and ethics".

The Multi-perspective approach designed by ARCHETHIS reflected on **History** as an historical

Methodology overview

To co-create this Network result it was organised an interactive session held in Leipzig on 2 July 2025, facilitated as a charrette workshop, a participatory methodology that uses drawing as a tool to share insights.

The workshop collected cities' experiences on working with their communities for two years on the ARCHETHICS project dimensions: architecture, history, ethics, and people. Participants were invited to share their insights.

source and research and **Architecture**, as urban space talks to people. The **People's** perceptions toward heritage and the micro-stories have been collected together with the public memories.

Empathy and ethics have been explored to connect emotions with heritage. And **through a critical interpretation of the past**, using arts, digital tools, pop-up initiatives, **ARCHETHICS has come to the present, learning about past to image the future.**

The multiperspective approach was broken up into four dimensions of project investigation: Architecture, People, History and Ethics that helped partners to read the dissonance of the cultural heritage.

Collectively finding key questions to interrogate the Dissonant Heritage is the key starting point.

Each dimension brought research questions to support the reflection at transnational and local level:

Emotions, ideas and relevant reflections were shared in a relaxing atmosphere, using something that after our childhood we are not familiar with: the drawing. Changing the communication approach from written words to drawings helped to emerge unexpected elements, more sensitive and touching. All workshop results were clustered per project dimension and discussed together.



Architecture

Is it right to keep a building that symbolises a difficult/dramatic past?

Or is it better to replace it?

How adaptive reuse, green solutions, circular approach, digital dimension could be used to enhance and regenerate dissonant heritage?



History

How can the public role of history support contemporary urban policies?

How can inclusive history telling build new cultural and tourist products on dissonant heritage?

How can fake news and misinformation be avoided?



People

How can we develop a multi-perspective approach on Dissonant Heritage (intergenerational, multicultural, gender balance)?

How to combine aesthetics, functionality, accessibility?

How can we make dissonant heritage become an attractive catalyst to reach new audiences?



Ethics

Which are the positive values that local communities recognise thanks to link with dissonant heritage?

How can a solid ethical framework be built around the dissonant heritage?

How can the positive values of dissonant heritage be considered common goods within urban policies?



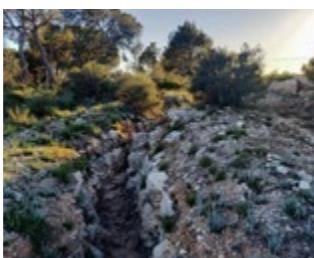
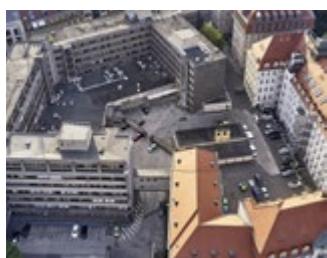
Reflection on the Multi-perspective approach through cities experience in the ARCHETHICS journey

The multi-perspective approach with the four dimensions has become the way to foster the integrated approach for dissonant heritage. ARCHETHICS partners have envisaged this approach at local level involving their stakeholders and local communities. **At the same time, the four dimensions were explored in depth at transnational level through master classes, focus groups, interactive sessions and study visits.**

In addressing the dissonant heritage of ARCHETHICS cities, **it should be considered that each city has a diverse heritage, belonging to different historical periods and different meanings for local communities.** In some cases those heritage really refer to periods of pain and fear, others are more like neglected places or icons of political wilings.

Also the architecture scale is different. There are:

- **Entire neighbourhoods**, built during social realism, in Krakow and Gdansk in Poland;
- **Huge architecture in the city centre**, that is the case of the Stasi headquarter in Leipzig in Germany;



Architecture

Iconic elements of architecture should be preserved. The example of the Stasi facade in Leipzig with the decoration that has been called "Stones hearing" can explain this statement. In the so-called "brutalist" and "dissonant" architecture there are elements to preserve, both for their features and meaning for local people. The participatory competition organised by the city of Leipzig showed that citizens want to keep the most iconic elements, even if a bigger part of the Stasi building will be destroyed. This approach is symbolic because it represents the willingness to keep memory of what happened in the past through some physical elements that composed the built environment. The same considerations should be addressed for the Buzdluzha Monument in Kazanlak, referring in particular to the inner mosaics that are a storytelling of the communist period in Bulgaria and in socialist world.

Demolish and re-use! Preserving by destroying. The re-use of dissonant heritage sites can pass through demolitions and transformations. Giving the opportunity to obtain again the use of an urban space, that for a long time was interdicted, is an important step to foster the right to the city, right to public spaces. To achieve this, dissonant heritage could sometimes be demolished partially or totally. In any case, those should keep memories of the history of the site. The case of Leipzig again showcases what this approach means. Indeed, citizens and stakeholders decided that most of the block where Stasi was must be demolished. This act returned to residents a public space.

Let people enter dissonant heritage sites: transform dissonant heritage to meeting places. All cities experienced the importance of involving locals in reflecting on dissonant heritage. What emerged from discussion in all partner cities is that citizens want not just to visit dissonant heritage, but to transform those spaces into meeting places where it is possible to open a discussion on memories and culture. It was said "From relic of control to places of culture and memory". The heritage of Cesena, Krakow, Gdansk will be treated in this way. In particular, Cesena is willing to transform the air-raid shelter into a Memorial museum. Krakow focused the work on the neighbourhood Nova Huta: the main square will be transformed from a road traffic island into a meeting place.

Dissonant architecture as a common good to benefit local communities. It was shared "We can use architecture for other purposes that benefit local communities". Dissonant heritage are public places/spaces. By keeping complexity and recognising the importance of historical remembrance, dissonant heritage becomes common good: a place owned by local people where debate on democracy, peace, solidarity and other common values are homed. Vila Nova de Cerveira worked in this sense. Through the ARCHETHICS process, the castle has been recognised by residents as an important place for locals.

City case studies

In **Leipzig**, the participatory process came up with the promotion of the so-called 'third place' in the Matthäikirchhof (Stasi block) to transform the urban area into a place where residents and visitors of Leipzig can easily meet. Against the backdrop of its history Matthäikirchhof exemplifies the dissonance between memory, transformation and shaping the future. It will feature meeting points and open spaces with formats for international, intercultural, and interreligious exchange and discourse—in line with the district's rich history.



In **Krakow**, the ARCHETHICS process addresses the regeneration of the Central square and the promenade that, by respecting tradition, will regain their former position in the ranking of city squares. Organising a series of workshops, open lectures, and panel discussions on dissonant heritage to enrich knowledge about the value of Nowa Huta urban space together with a green vision for the public spaces will give back to residents their public spaces as common goods.



History

Facts Checking. Collecting facts should be the approach for working on the historical aspect. Studying history in a three-dimensional way and valorising the expertise of historians is a starting point for building a common historical framework. From this common ground based on historical facts, it is possible to boost the collection of other elements and stories.

Not one single story! Many voices one heritage. All stories matter. A single story is not the truth, it is just a portion of the reality. Common stories and expert stories have the same importance. The stories of diverse people and marginalised groups must be collected to foster dignity to all voices, justice and equality.

Story-Telling with love. Respect for different perspectives, sensitivity and empathy when listening to stories that evoke difficult emotions and memories are the approaches to collecting stories with love and empathy.

Gendering dissonant heritage. The social roles of women have been used for propaganda. Traditional roles of women as well as the role in the workforce, resistance and leadership should be explored to understand "Who is telling the story about whom". This story reading fosters a novel approach to history. It boosts the creation of alternative narratives from different perspectives for an inclusive story-making process.

"Each time a girl opens a book and reads a woman-less history, she learns she is worth less."
- Myra Pollack Sadker

City case studies

In **Cesena** (IT), local administration and community are willing to create a digital MEMOTECA, an open portal to promote Cesena's local dissonant history, share the memories and stories of witnesses, give voice to younger generations through inclusive narratives that look to the future from the past. Moreover, the city will promote the creation of immersive and interactive cultural itineraries for schools and visitors through the main buildings of the city's dissonant heritage, with a focus on their history, memory and actualisation of themes related to war, propaganda, labour, gender, family and colonialism.

In **Permet** (AL), city and local stakeholders foster the creation of a digital archive of dissonant heritage documents and photos to preserve and share historical resources; using heritage sites for educational tours, workshops, and youth activities.





People

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City case studies

Vila Nova de Cerveira fosters Community Labs for Collective Memory to preserve and celebrate local history through community-driven research and storytelling initiatives. By actively engaging residents—especially elderly members of the community—the project will document and share oral histories, personal archives, and cultural traditions, ensuring that valuable heritage is not lost over time. As a testing action, the city realised the action called Curtas no Castelo – Castle Short Movies aimed to re-establish the Castelo D. Dinis as a cultural and social hub for the community. Around 130 students from primary and secondary schools were involved in film-making workshops to explore the castle's history and produce short films using smart-phones and simple editing tools.

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In **Bétera**, a participatory documentary on the Spanish Civil War was realised as a testing action of ARCHETHICS, focusing on the experiences of the children during the war, now in their 90s, who lived through the conflict in Bétera, with their testimonies, combined with historical documentation.



Ethics

Respect. All opinions, all dissonant points of view of the different history facets are important. Respect for other people, respecting emotions, feelings and memories should be the approach to talk about dissonant heritage to create a contact and a relation with the people.

Integrity. Interpreting the past with integrity, collecting all stories, all voices, especially the most unlistened, in order to build a shared future of peace, democracy and human rights.

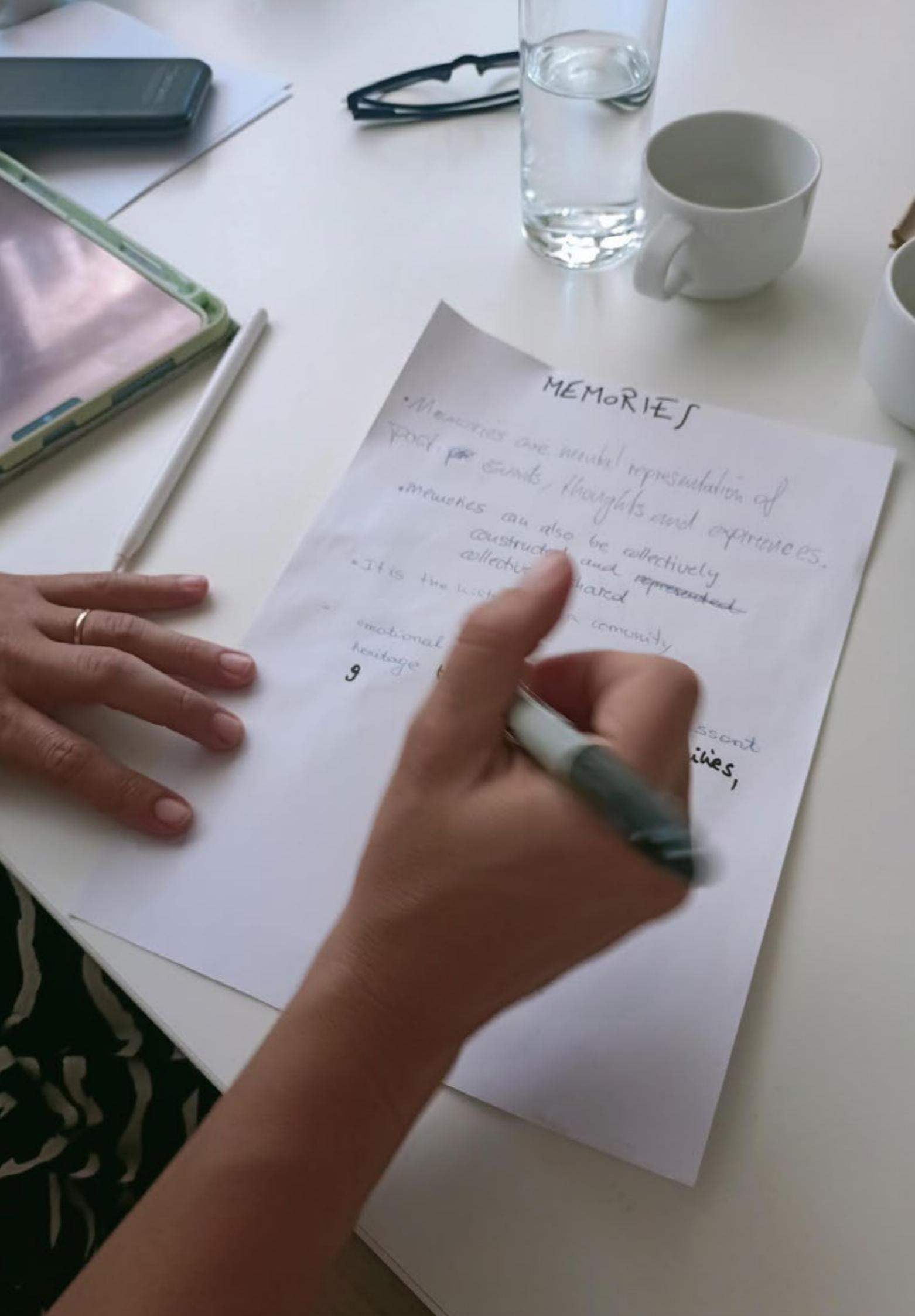
City case studies

In **Kazanlak**, the Buzludzha monument will be enhanced as a global cultural and tourist destination – a place for dialogue, education, and sustainable cultural tourism. The city is willing to foster education programmes for students and citizens about dissonant heritage and the connection with tourism. Among others, training for citizens to become local tour guides and a sustainable citizens involvement mechanism will be organised.

Freedom. By respecting other people and treating memories and history with integrity, we can allow the freedom to express opinions without judgment. The freedom to express ourselves is the foundation of the right to democracy.

In **Gdansk** to deepen knowledge and expand contacts with stakeholders and citizens, the city has organised as testing activities eight lectures on dissonant heritage. Other presentations after project end will be provided with the involvement of experts and community leaders followed by open discussions on various aspects of the dissonant heritage. These may include further guided walks, open-air exhibitions and joint work on legislative and investment project assumptions.





The ARCHETHICS Glossary: toward a shared language for dissonant heritage

*Sandra Rainero,
URBACT Ad Hoc Expert*

The ARCHETHICS Glossary: toward a shared language for dissonant heritage

This glossary was prepared by the ARCHETHICS partners as part of the network's roadmap, aiming to promote critical, community-driven approaches to **urban regeneration and democratic engagement**. It recognizes contested sites as both physical and ethical concerns and seeks to contribute to the advancement of their Action Plans.

Methodology overview

The ARCHETHICS Glossary was shaped through a participatory arts-based workshop held during the core meeting in Leipzig on July 1st, 2025. The workshop encouraged open-ended dialogue and reflective writing to co-create language that is multifaceted, inclusive and context-sensitive. The process involved refining a number of terms using methods such as Haiku and collaborative writing, aiming to build consensus while balancing the inherent ambiguity of language with a need for clarity.

Partners began by identifying terms they felt were central to understanding dissonant heritage. The final selection included eight terms:

- Dissonant Heritage**
- Memories**
- Complexity**
- Stories**
- Resistance**
- Forgotten**
- Empathy**
- Processing (Traumas)**

In addressing dissonant heritage, a form of cultural legacy marked by historical trauma, contested narratives and politically sensitive representation, the need for a common language becomes not only relevant but essential. This heritage often evokes divergent emotional responses, ideological positions and interpretations across communities and generations. Without a shared vocabulary, dialogue can break down, reinforcing division rather than fostering understanding.

Through working in pairs, partners explored each word through a dynamic process that blended conceptual analysis with creative interpretation.

Over the course of a "write-storming" session, these terms have evolved through multiple contributions and rotations that added reflections and built upon each other's insights. This iterative structure encouraged creative and critical thinking, allowing each word to accumulate meaning. The culmination of the exercise involved synthesizing these reflections into a Haiku, a compact poetic form of Japanese origins that consolidates feeling and thought into three lines. Traditional haiku follows a 5-7-5 syllable structure (3 lines), but creativity and flexibility were encouraged. Example Haiku (for the word "absence"):

Line 1 - 5 syllables:

E-cho in the hall,

Line 2 - 7 syllables:

Names lost to wind and to time—

Line 3 - 5 syllables:

We speak, they re-turn.

Why a common language on dissonant heritage is paramount for cities

This language building exercise is not self-serving, rather it helps key stakeholders in navigating through the complex dynamics of sustainable urban development, as fostered by URBACT.

A common language is vital to ARCHETHICS' broader policy goals such as enabling inclusive urban regeneration, developing ethical frameworks for reuse of problematic heritage and supporting cities in balancing historical accountability with future-oriented urban planning.

Furthermore, the development of a shared, inclusive language is also fundamental in the governance of complex cultural legacies. Dissonant heritage often sits at the intersection of historical accountability, ethical responsibility and contemporary urban policy. This requires decision-makers to deal with tensions between preservation, reinterpretation and regeneration. Without a common vocabulary, these processes risk misalignment between institutional actors, community stakeholders and civil society.

The final results reflect ARCHETHICS' commitment to its four guiding dimensions (Architecture, History, People and Ethics) and support the wider policy goal of shaping inclusive urban narratives, as also defined in the Network's Charter. It also responds to the network's strategic objectives of dealing with dissonant heritage, fostering intercultural and intergenerational dialogue and identifying innovative pathways for adaptive reuse and investment.

Ultimately, this glossary is intended not as an endpoint, but as a replicable method. It is meant as a **prototype for participatory language-making** that can be adapted by cities and regions seeking to engage with difficult heritage in constructive and democratic ways.

Words, Poetry and a method for meaning-making Dissonant Heritage

This glossary gathers the key concepts developed during the ARCHETHICS glossary workshop, reflecting the layered and often conflicting nature of dissonant heritage.

This first set of eight terms is not just a thematic list. It is the compact result of a creative and collective effort to give shape to what often can remain abstract or emotionally charged.

When reading these terms, one can realise that **dissonant heritage cannot be understood in isolation**. Each word is relational, gaining its full meaning only when seen in dialogue with the others. For example, "Memories" gains refinement when read together with "Processing," just as "Resistance" draws strength from the interaction with "Empathy." These connections highlight the nature of contested heritage, where emotion, history and spatial meaning are deeply intertwined.

Another key insight is that the **poetic form** - particularly the **Haiku** -allowed participants to move beyond policy or abstract terminology. It offered a space for **affective language, personal associations and cultural sensitivity**.



2. Memories

Memories are mental representations of past events, thoughts, and experiences.

They can be collectively constructed and shared.

They represent the history of a community.

Emotional connections link people, families, and groups to heritage.

Memories are not necessarily factual.

**Events from the past.
 Emotional connections.
 Not every time is true.**

3. Complexity

Complexity refers to how intricate a system, process, or structure is.

It encompasses multiple meanings and structures.

It highlights the interconnected layers of stories, emotions, people, perspectives, eras, and mindset shifts.

**Many different-
 Views in complexity.
 It shows.**

4. Stories

All stories matter.

Dissonant heritage includes incoherent, controversial, and personal narratives.

No single story holds universal truth.

Storytelling connects people.

Reality consists of diverse perspectives.

Winners often write history—we must also hear from the excluded.

Stories must be preserved to endure.

**Connecting people.
 Valuing diversity.
 Memories preserved.**

5. Resistance

To remain firm through time and circumstances.

To organize opposition to regimes or dominant forces.

To endure while envisioning a better future.

Resistance is not passive compliance, it is active engagement.

**Resistance makes you participate.
 Makes you overcome your fears.
 Makes you part of history.**

6. Forgotten

The loss of complexity in personal stories and historical links.

Abandoned spaces and intangible heritage fall into invisibility.

Absence of memory renders events and people unseen.

Forgotten does not mean non-existent, many truths remain buried.

**Absent memory.
Underground stories.
Dead memory.**

7. Empathy

The ability to understand and emotionally engage with contested histories through inclusive and respectful reflection.

The capacity to recognize multiple views and value dissonance as a driver for social cohesion.

To see a problem through someone else's eyes.

Empathy is not driven by personal opinion, it is not cruel.

**See with different eyes.
Emotionally engage.
Cruel, you be not.**

8. Processing (Traumas)

The change of perception around heritage within groups over time.

Engaging with heritage initiates collective introspection and meaning-making.

The process is informed by facts, inclusive participation and emotional reckoning.

It does not represent a positive experience in itself.

**Dissonance ignites-
Collective introspection.
Consciousness,
sense-making.**

**Let go resistance.
Be surprised by
the unknown.
Dive into the process.**

The value of a poetic glossary

The Haiku, a poetic Japanese form, opens space for reflection rather than explanation. It encourages participants to move beyond institutional or technical language and instead draw from lived experience, sensory imagery and personal memory. This proved especially powerful during the workshop for concepts like

A method rooted in inclusion

The method adopted for the glossary development is designed to be inclusive, making room for a wide range of voices and experiences across gender, cultural background and age, as we experienced in the microcosm of the workshop. By blending emotional expression with creative co-writing, it lowers traditional barriers to participation, especially for those who may feel excluded from institutional or specialized discourse. The process does not privilege expertise or fluency, allowing equal contributions regardless of the role or provenance. This makes it particularly effective for engaging women,

All in all, using Haikus during the workshop offered a fresh, human way to approach complex and emotionally charged concepts. While formal definitions seek clarity and uniformity, poetry allows ambiguity, subtlety and emotional depth. In just three lines, participants were able to express contradiction, vulnerability and hope. Rather than reducing the complexity of dissonance, Haikus gave it poetic form.

Trauma, Resistance, or Forgotten, which evoke strong and often conflicting emotions. The process also shifted participants' relationship to the concepts. Rather than defining words, they explored them and creatively play with their meaning.

migrants, minorities and people from diverse educational or social backgrounds. Importantly, the method also fosters intergenerational dialogue, enabling younger and older participants to reflect together on the meanings of heritage, memory and change. The poetic format encourages ethical interaction across generations, recognizing that understanding contested heritage requires multiple perspectives and temporal dimensions. In doing so, not only does the glossary become a tool for language-building, but also a platform for social connection and inclusive civic engagement.

Can this be a model for other fields? Yes. The poetic glossary is a replicable tool for any setting where contested narratives, emotionally charged contexts or multiple perspectives need space to emerge such as urban regeneration, education, community dialogue or even policy-making.

The glossary and the four ARCHETHICS dimensions

The ARCHETHICS Charter is a strategic document designed to help European cities confront and responsibly repurpose dissonant heritage. Structured around the four ARCHETHICS pillars or dimensions, it provides a holistic set of inputs for engaging with uncomfortable heritage. History builds the process with rigorous research and factual transparency, Ethics introduces value-based debate across competing narratives, People ensures inclusive participation and emotional relevance, while Architecture secures adaptive reuse and spatial stewardship.



This glossary serves as a practical supplement to the Network Charter's framework. Instead of defining dissonant heritage through strict categories, it facilitates cities in interpreting the Charter's principles in clear terms. The glossary follows the Charter's focus on including multiple perspectives and supporting engagement, offering a structured tool for knowledge sharing, stakeholder discussion and storytelling. Together, the Charter and glossary outline an approach for ethically navigating complex heritage issues.

The Glossary's future use and adaptations

This glossary can be more than a one-off exercise. It offers a **scalable and adaptable model** for building shared language around complex cultural issues. Its combination of conceptual reflection and poetic expression makes it particularly suited to contexts where facts, feelings and contested narratives interact. For dissonant heritage museums, policy documents and educational materials, the poetic glossary method can enrich interpretation and engagement. Here are some examples of how to use this approach in places and public discourse on dissonant heritage:

Museum labels could pair factual descriptions with community-generated Haikus, giving voice to diverse emotional responses and perspectives.

Policy documents addressing sensitive heritage, migration or memory could integrate poetic excerpts to humanize institutional language and highlight lived experience.

Educational programs can use glossary-building exercises to help students explore complex topics, such as colonial history, social justice or memory politics through both analytical and creative lenses.

This approach transforms passive reading into active reflection, helping audiences connect intellectually and emotionally. Communities can also create their own poetic glossaries by adapting this method locally. This process can be particularly meaningful in post-colonial or industrial areas, sites of conflict or multicultural neighbourhoods, anywhere there is a need to surface unheard voices and build collective understanding.

In this regard, this Glossary represents a simple toolkit for replication and adaptation, other resources may include a selection of starter terms relevant to local issues (e.g. Belonging, Justice, Silence, Loss etc.) and ideas for publishing or exhibiting the results such as murals, booklets, installations or online platforms.

Ultimately, **the ARCHETHICS glossary is not just about words, it's about process, presence and participation**. It offers cities and communities a **method to navigate sensitive histories, foster dialogue and co-create inclusive narratives** for sustainable urban development.



The former Matthäikirchhof area in Leipzig

ARCHETHICS

City Charter for Dissonant Heritage

*Nils Scheffler,
URBACT Ad Hoc Expert*

ARCHETHICS City Charter for Dissonant Heritage

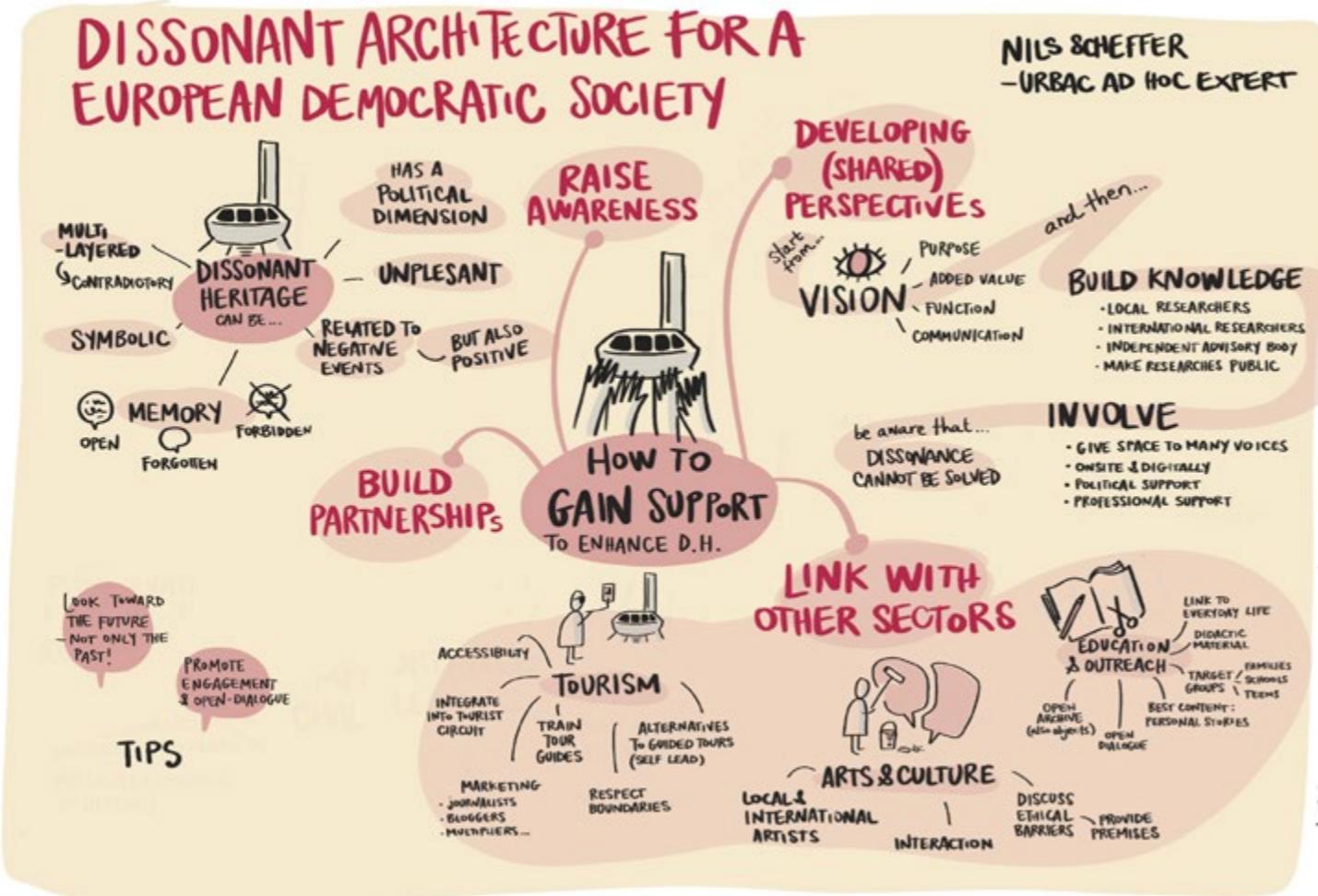
Methodology overview

This charter was developed through a political board meeting that was organised in Krakow on 2 April 2025. Indeed, during the Mid Term Reflection held in November 2024 (mid phase of project implementation) it was proposed to foresee a dedicated session for local politicians (mayors and city councillors) with the aim to engage them more on ARCHETHICS activities and ensure a long term sustainability for the realisation of actions included in the Integrated Action Plans. The partnership decided to provide this session during the Core Network Meeting that will be held in Krakow on 1-2 April 2025. Krakow is a Central Europe city with several direct flights from many destinations that makes the logistics easier.

The Political Board session was guided by

following the ARCHETHICS methodology that has envisaged a multi-perspective approach to read the dissonance of the cultural heritage through the analysis of four dimensions of project investigation: Architecture, People, History and Ethics. A round table with questions and answers provided by politicians focused on the following aspects:

- >How fostering a sound participation of people in dissonant heritage initiatives, with a special attention on the young people;
- >How collecting stories through inclusive approaches of storytelling;
- >What are novel possibilities of adaptive reuse of the dissonant heritage by promoting green solutions, circular approaches and digital dimension.



What characterises Dissonant Heritage?

Dissonant heritage encompasses a wide range of places and types. This can include individual monuments, buildings or complexes, as well as entire urban areas or villages. Dissonant heritage includes places of war, persecution, colonisation and propaganda, as well as sites associated with totalitarian state systems or parks, cemeteries, battlefields and places where atrocities have occurred. Also, architecturally striking post-war modernist buildings and ensembles as well as sites, areas and landscapes that bear witness to environmental degradation can represent dissonant heritage.

Dissonant heritage refers in particular to cultural and architectural heritage which evokes unpleasant memories and associations for society or certain social groups and/or which is perceived as politically and/or ethically tainted. It may have multiple competing meanings and interpretations, that are not in consonance with each other or even in conflict.

Dissonant heritage sites can be divided into places

- which are dominated by atrocities, e.g. concentration camps,
- which are representative or symbols of an oppressive system, but where no atrocities took place,
- where positive events have overshadowed the “difficult” ones.

Furthermore, a distinction can be made according to the **intensity of contestation, such as places**

- where dissonance is remembered and consciously dealt with and
- where the dissonance has been forgotten, is suppressed or is only presented in a one-sided manner.

These are important aspects and framework conditions to be taken into consideration approaching your dissonant heritage.



What is its potential and added value for EU cities?

Dissonant heritage sites in Europe are important architectural testimonies to the continent's complex history and unpleasant cultural heritage. **When their specific potentials are activated, they can be important locations for learning, remembrance and debate of this complex European history**; where authentic narratives and perspectives of events that have taken place there, can be experienced and discussed, while eyewitnesses are dying out. This can encourage critical reflection on our past and strengthen the democratic cohesion of our societies.

Approaching Dissonant Heritage through History, Ethics, People and Architecture

The ARCHETHICS network recommends a four-dimensional approach to develop the potential and added value of dissonant heritage, while also addressing the many challenges involved: History, Ethics, People and Architecture.

Following hints and tips for European cities that are willing to tackle the challenge of dissonant heritage, divided per project dimension.



Hints for HISTORY

The History dimension represents the sometimes **fragile relationship between public, institutional and personal memories**, which can have multiple, sometimes conflicting, meanings and interpretations. This dimension analyses uncomfortable memories, stigmas, fake news and hidden facts in dissonant heritage. It gathers and elaborates facts and knowledge about the dissonant heritage and its various perspectives. The History dimension provides the baseline for all the other dimensions, in particular for authentic narratives and storytelling. Key for this dimension is the development of knowledge about the dissonant heritage and possible perspectives.

Knowledge building

Dissonant heritage sites are often associated with strong emotions, which makes it difficult to have a proper discussion about what the site stands for, what should be communicated and how it should be (re)used. To create a basis for joint development and management of the dissonant heritage and to help to contextualise (use) ideas, perspectives and narratives, it is recommended that reliable knowledge and facts about the site and its dissonances are generated and incorporated into the discussion and development process. This will help to make the debate more fact- and knowledge-based.

Hints

Check facts with researchers to avoid spreading incorrect historical facts, avoid misinformation and create a solid basis for historiographical analysis.

Concentrate the knowledge building and fact checking on the knowledge and discussion needs of the **involved stakeholders**, as well as towards dissonant topics and perspectives, placing them in a historical context.

Involve national and international experts, researchers and historians in the knowledge building. This can help to ensure that results are recognised more readily and receive greater attention.

Set up an independent monitoring body that coordinates the knowledge-building and reviews results, thereby contributing to a broader recognition of the knowledge generated.

Present the results of knowledge building in an accessible and effective manner to the public, and integrate it into the discussion process. Communicate the knowledge vividly to the public through biographical, personal and everyday references.

Collect individual and community memories of the dissonant heritage as well as the living memory of the place today and how the community perceives it. Involve local historians for that.

Hints for ETHICS

The dimension of ethics **considers the competing values and meanings that Dissonant Heritage can represent**, or the values that can be discussed alongside and over the time (past, today and future values). The dissonance can provoke different, and sometimes competing opinions and interpretations among stakeholders, thus bringing different values to the table when dealing with Dissonant Heritage.

The dimension of ethics provides a space for remembrance, debate, dialogue and learning in the present day for the future.

The key to this is, when elaborating on values, meanings and narratives, that is done with the intention of increasing awareness and recognition of the multi-perspectivity of dissonant heritage, as well as encouraging reflection on it.



Hints

Stories and narratives should take into account a variety of perspectives and associations, positive and negative ones, if they are based on facts and knowledge.

Stories and narratives should reflect on democratic values such as freedom, solidarity and equity.

Involve different stakeholders, residents, initiatives, experts, etc. in a dialogue process when developing the stories and narratives.

Gain local stakeholders and institutions to support communicating the stories and narratives.

Hints for PEOPLE

The People dimension **involves stakeholders, residents, initiatives, experts, etc. in the (re)use and development of a joint, multi-perspective interpretation of the Dissonant Heritage**. It explores jointly what the Dissonant Heritage stands for and what lessons can be learned from the past for the future, encouraging dialogue, debate and discourse between people and institutions to transform the Dissonant Heritage into an engaging catalyst to strengthening our democratic societies.

Key for this dimension is to raise awareness about the Dissonant heritage and have a many-voiced participation and discussion process.

Raise awareness

The development and discussion of dissonant heritage is an ongoing process. When dissonant heritage is forgotten, when the debate is politically and socially problematic, or when different opinions compete with each other how to deal with dissonant heritage sites and their past, it is recommended to make dissonant heritage, the different perspectives, and its opportunities and added value become the subject of public awareness and discourse. The aim for that is to generate social commitment and political support to preserve, develop and (re)use the dissonant heritage.

Key for this are information and public relations activities, events and network activities to share and reflect on how to deal with the dissonant heritage and to reduce hesitancy to become locally involved.

Hints

If the dissonant heritage has not yet been publicly addressed, begin by focusing on the **added value and opportunities** that arise from dealing and reusing the dissonant heritage. This will enable critical aspects to be dealt with more effectively.

Develop messages that raise awareness and **interest in engaging with the dissonant heritage**, emphasising its potential and added value.

Recruit **known people as 'ambassadors'** who will publicly advocate to engage with dissonant heritage.

Link dissonant heritage to current topics, events and the everyday world.

Organise **target group-oriented, engaging information and public relations activities** to encourage broad discussion on addressing the dissonant heritage.

Organise target group-oriented, **interactive events that stimulate conversation**, provide information, spark interest, build motivation and identification, facilitate exchange of ideas, and reduce apprehension dealing with the dissonant heritage —ultimately lowering emotional barriers to become engaged.

Use local, national and international networking to draw attention to the dissonant heritage, open up new (European) perspectives on the dissonant sites when necessary and break through stalled discussions and ideological taboos in the local debates, giving them new direction.

Many-voiced participation and discussion process

Given the often controversial discourse and differing perspectives on how to deal with dissonant heritage, it is recommended that you initiate a participatory process to give voice to the many different opinions and perspectives, and to bring them together. The aim is to develop a shared vision for the (re)use and management of the dissonant heritage, supported by as many stakeholders as possible. Generating broad social and political support for the safeguarding and (re)use of the dissonant heritage is important, and can only be achieved through a joint discourse.

Hints

Engage with a wide range of stakeholders,

particularly those representing different perspectives on the dissonant heritage and its (re)use, or who can contribute to its development.

Create opportunities for open dialogue

to foster understanding of different perspectives.

Organise participation and discussions

on site and digitally, last in particular to engage younger generations.

Consolidate participation into thematic workshops

and working groups throughout the process.

Use professional support for the participation process

as managing dissonance and different perspectives can be challenging.

Build up trust to facilitate cooperation in dealing

with the dissonant heritage.



Hints for ARCHITECTURE

The dimension of architecture involves the meaningful and appropriate use or re-purposing of the dissonant heritage with regards to the history and events that have taken place there. This dimension not only **aims to preserve the dissonant heritage authentically, but also to use these spaces for an authentic and respectful reflection and debate on the dissonance from multiple perspectives on site**, exploring what it can tell us about the present and the future. Key for this is the development of a shared vision and a well-functioning management structure based on a diverse partnership.

Shared vision

To gain broad and sustained support for safeguarding and managing the dissonant heritage, it is recommended that the added value of addressing the dissonance is determined and a shared vision for the (re)use and management of the dissonant heritage developed or revised as necessary. The shared vision includes what the dissonant heritage stands for and represents, what is its purpose, what stories and narratives are to be conveyed, what function should the heritage site fulfil within the city and how to develop and use it. The vision should encourage a wide range of stakeholders to support the development of the dissonant heritage and collaborate on joint projects. A shared vision is an important basis for joint action and cooperation, and can contribute to a political and social atmosphere that facilitates dialogue about the heritage site and its dissonances.

Hints

Different perspectives on the dissonant heritage should be taken into account in the development of the shared vision, as long as they are based on a sound, fact-based foundation.

The development of the shared vision is not about the resolution of competing meanings and narratives, but about a **conscious and active handling in a social discussion process**.

Take up positive associations that may be linked to the dissonant heritage, as these can make it easier to deal with uncomfortable associations and topics, too.

Dealing with the dissonant heritage should **not lead to accusations of certain people or groups of people**, but should focus on drawing lessons for the future from the events of the past.

Well-functioning management

It is essential to preserve and maintain dissonant heritage sites, and to make them accessible as places to promote democracy and education, to communicate and commemorate the dissonances and to complement cultural tourism offers; being places where the past, present and future come together. This requires a sustainable and professional management, institutional funding, secured staffing and a broad professional and civil society network of stakeholders. This will consolidate and expand the core tasks of managing dissonant heritage in line with the shared vision, and anchor supporting partnerships.

For this, a central driving actor is key to the development and management of dissonant heritage, with the following core tasks:

- Preserving, maintaining and securing the dissonant heritage site(s) and its architectural structures.
- Educational, remembrance and mediation work regarding the events that took place in the respective historical context.
- Collaboration with other stakeholders to strengthen the social and community functions of the heritage site.

Hints

Acquire political and community support at all levels, from local to national.

For dissonant heritage sites of transregional importance, **involve relevant regional and national institutions** in the management, for example via steering and coordination committees.

Develop a clearly formulated and easily communicable **concept for the content-related work** of the dissonant heritage site(s).

Create a business plan to provide a solid business model for operating the dissonant heritage.

Create a conservation and maintenance plan, together with an investment and financing plan, for the dissonant heritage.

Acquire additional funding through institutional and project funding, as well as by generating own income.

Diverse partnership

To tap into the potential of dissonant heritage and do justice to its diverse functions and tasks, cooperation with other institutions and stakeholders is essential. They can contribute with their expertise and resources, enabling a broader range of activities and actions on site and improving the visibility and local anchoring of the dissonant heritage. This also can serve to win over 'local ambassadors' for the dissonant heritage.

Hints

Successful cooperation requires **continuity, transparency, trust and a shared vision**.

Recognise the different perspectives, narratives and emotions of the cooperation partners as part of the dissonant heritage.

Base the collaboration on the **interests and motivations** of the cooperation partners while bearing in mind the shared vision.

Motivate volunteers to become involved — these people tend to be highly motivated and committed.

Network with other sites, institutions and experts dealing with dissonant heritage, and exchange information about existing practices, activities and approaches. This will strengthen your professionalism.



Castelo de Cerveira



Congress hall of Permet

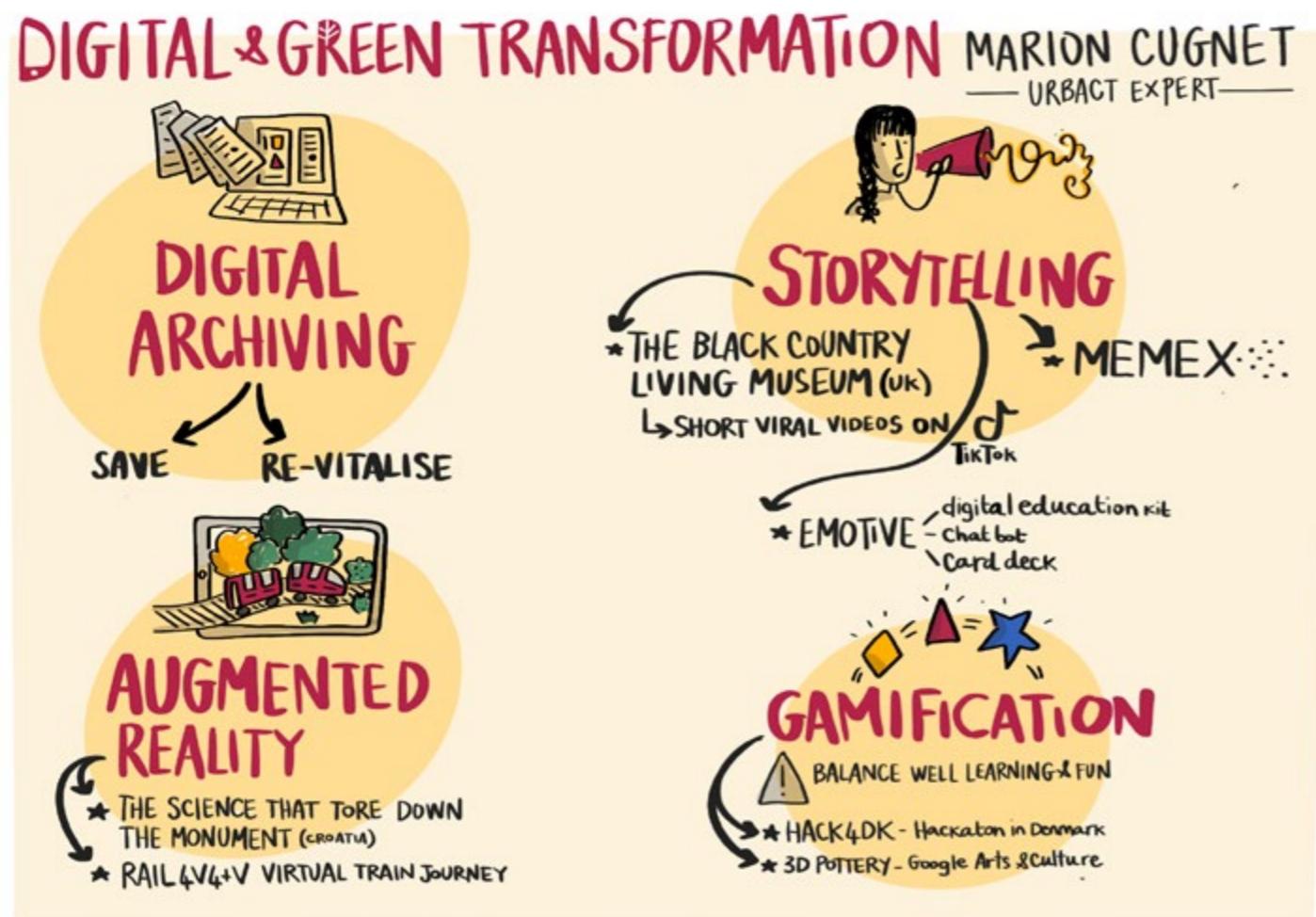
Creating a digital archive for ARCHETHICS

*Based on the presentation
developed by Marion Cugnet,
URBACT ad hoc expert*

Creating a digital archive for ARCHETHICS

Methodology overview

During the Mid Term Reflection held in November 2024, all cities expressed the need to collect memories, storytellings and pictures in a digital archive dedicated to Dissonant Heritage. It has been proposed to create an outline of the architectural idea of the archive for Dissonant Heritage. Based on the “**Mini-hackthon**” organised during the Bilateral exchange held in Vila Nova de Cerveira on 7 November 2024, an outline for a novel digital archive for enhancing dissonant heritage was realised.



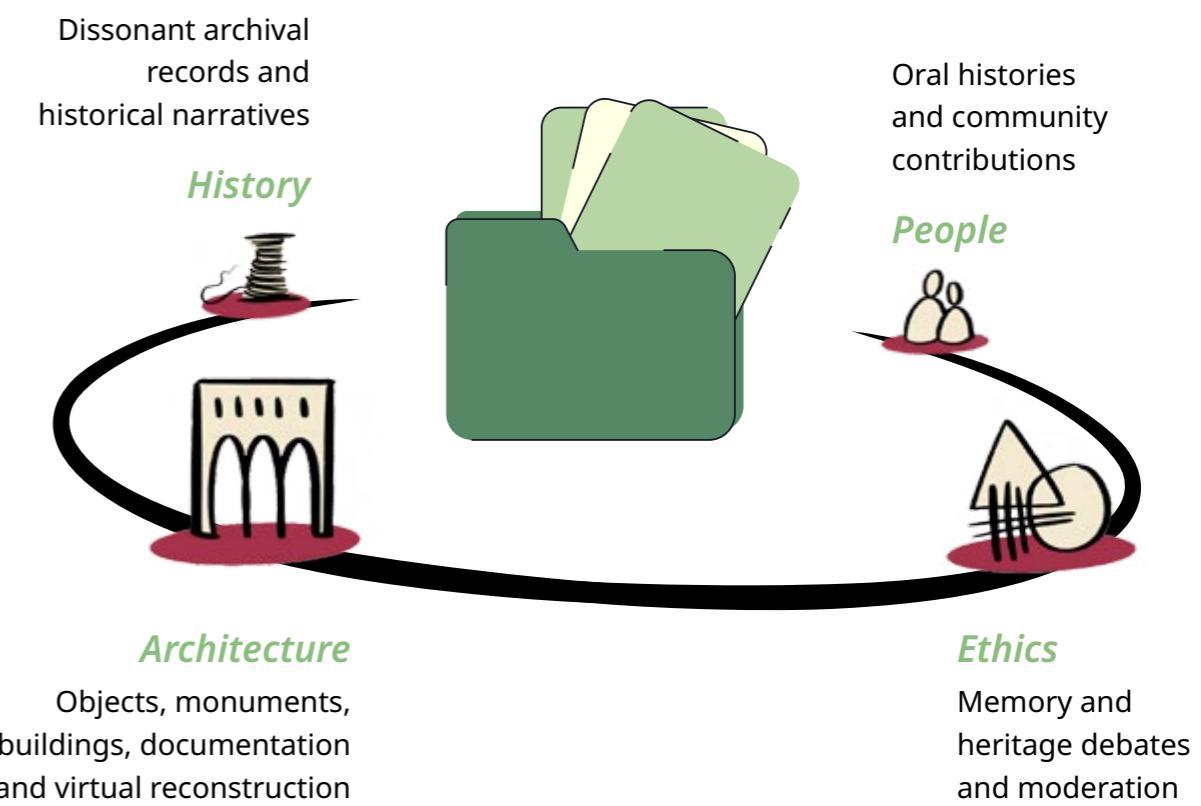
But what is a digital archive and why should ARCHETHICS need one?

A digital archive is a collection of materials - such as documents, images, audio recordings, videos, that are stored and preserved electronically, and organised for long-term access, which can have different purposes and dimensions.

In this regard, the ARCHETHICS project could benefit from creating one of its own. And, in particular, the objectives of a digital archive for ARCHETHICS could be:

- To preserve and document diverse heritage materials and narratives around dissonant heritage in the cities

- To foster dialogue, critical reflection, and education
- To ensure accessibility, inclusivity, and ethical representation
- To provide an interdisciplinary perspective linking dissonant heritage, societal impacts, ethical and architectural considerations
- To enable a multi-perspective approach across time, dimensions, themes, etc. across the 4 ARCHETHICS dimensions.



Guidelines for an ARCHETHICS digital archive

In order to build an effective tool, the archive should respond to the following principles:

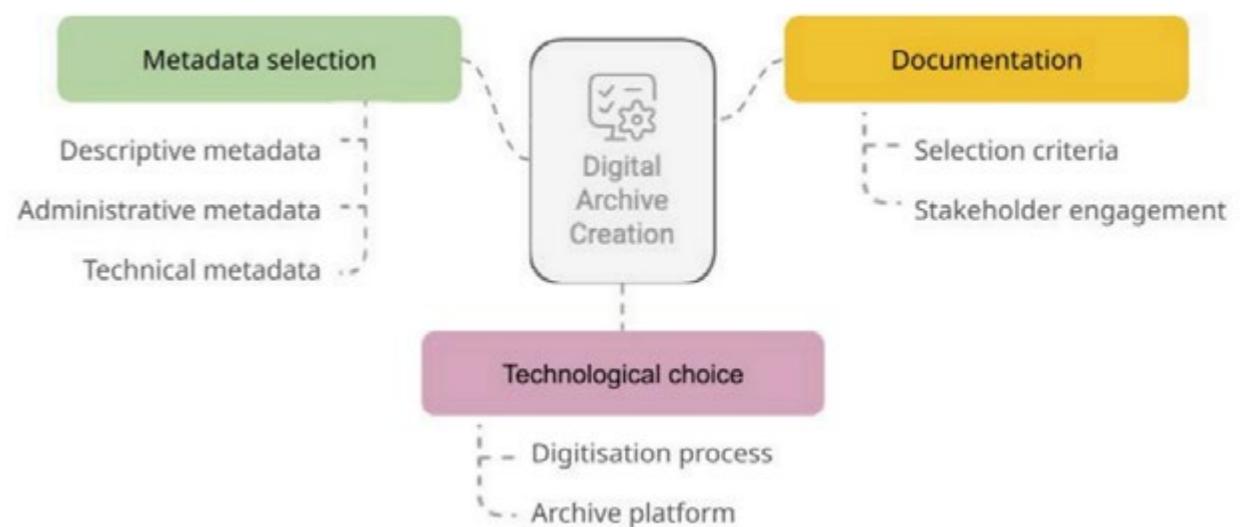
- **Open Access**, the tool promotes the broad dissemination of cultural heritage, allowing all to engage with the resources.
- **Accessibility**, the tool has to be designed to be usable by as wide an audience as possible
- **Integrity**, the archive maintains the authenticity, accuracy, and trustworthiness of the materials and meta-data.

The process of the creation: Key elements of an ARCHETHICS digital archive

The creation of a digital archive should be follow some core steps and core choices that regard:

1. **The meta-data selection**, namely the backbone of the digital archive, it includes any information that describes what something is. They could be descriptive meta-data, administrative meta-data and technical meta-data.
2. **The documentation**, namely the selection of materials and the content. In this choice, one must consider the copyright clearance, licensing and attribution, access restrictions, the digitisation process and the digitising methods, and the storage needs.
3. **The technological choice**, that is, the creation of the physical platform, its characteristics, the requirements for its accessibility and the possibility of user contributions, such as the implementation of a moderation system and compliance with ethical principles.

- **Interactivity**, the archive encourages active user engagement, users are not just viewers but also participants
- **Inter-disciplinarity**, the archive supports and encourages contributions and usage from multiple fields of study in order to enrich the archive's interpretation



A few more considerations for your digital archives:

- Engage a broad range of stakeholders in the development stage
- Address biases through co-design of interfaces, co-development of classifications of meta-data, crowdsourcing, selection for digitisation.
- Promote digital literacy for all.
- Ensure transparency, include all information with their sources
- Rethink and re-evaluate purposes and uses of digitisation, and the value of the non-digital in digital cultural heritage practices, think complementary!





Former educational center built during the Fascist period in Cesena

ARCHETHICS

Living Lab: an operational governance approach for a long term sustainability of the Integrated Action Plans

Participation through a multi-perspective approach is the methodology to make accessible dissonant heritage for people

*Ileana Toscano,
URBACT Lead Expert*

ARCHETHICS Living Lab

Methodology overview

On the 2nd July 2025 in Leipzig an interactive session was organised to collect highlights from cities' partners on the one hand to foster sustainability of the ULG after the end of the project on the other hand to advise other cities on working on dissonant heritage.

Key questions were shared with participants to help the brainstorming process. They are:

1. What is a good experience of participation with your local community that your city considers relevant and powerful to focus on Dissonant Heritage?
2. Which is the role of the Municipality to foster a participative /multi-perspective approach?
3. Who are the relevant local stakeholders for ensuring good results for addressing dissonant heritage?
4. What has been a successful approach to communicate with citizens and stakeholders about dissonant heritage?
5. What are your ideas to keep engaged citizens after the end of the ARCHETHICS project?
6. Which are your best tips for other cities to enhance dissonant heritage through the engagement of citizens?
7. What are the warning issues when starting a project on dissonant heritage? What are the tips for other cities?



Cities as platforms of mediation to foster participation and knowledge sharing

After two and half years of working on dissonant heritage, ARCHETHICS has come with some reflections to foster implementation and sustainability of the actions included in the Integrated Action Plan.

Indeed, the ARCHETHICS Living Lab aimed at supporting a **continuous process of participation** in the cities involved by the project also after the project ended. In doing that, the Living Lab enhances the role of municipalities. They should become "**platforms of mediation**", where citizens and stakeholders find a place to discuss warning issues, like dissonant heritage, and be involved in a process of learning and exchange for co-decision and co-creation.

Successful approaches and tips for cities

Following there are collected successful approaches used by cities during project implementation from 2023 to 2025 as well as some tips for other European cities that are willing to reflect and enhance dissonant heritage.

Participation

The local community can be engaged and kept involved on dissonant heritage topics by promoting **various forms of participation** capable of reaching **different target groups**, like **open lectures; memo walks; postcards of dissonant heritage; online surveys**.

Participation through a multi-perspective approach is the methodology to make accessible dissonant heritage for people.

Participatory process allows the possibility to talk and listen. Considering the complexity of dissonant heritage, the difficult memories and all the facet it is composed, ARCHETHICS advices to foster a participatory scheme by starting with the involvement of organisations and experts already working on dissonant heritage and then include other people in the debate and in the decision making process.

Municipality role

The Municipality should be a "platform" to collect, coordinate and mediate between city departments, local stakeholders, experts and citizens. Local politicians should be involved in the whole project levels. Testing actions are important as concrete and demonstrative momentum for keeping real the work with local communities and stakeholders to deliver Integrated Action Plans.

Relevant Stakeholders

Rights and diverse local stakeholders are the recipe for success. Among them, the key actors for dissonant heritage are: cultural organisations, Universities and historians, educational and communication sectors, creative companies, dissonant heritage users (or potential users) and private owners of the heritages. But, also **common citizens emotionally connected to dissonant heritage** are important stakeholders for an open and inclusive discussion.

Effective communication

Communicating the implemented work on dissonant heritage is essential to keep engaged participants and inform citizens. Successful experiences have been: **local exhibitions** (also interactive), **open lectures with experts** as a “translation process” from the Academy to people, **videos and movies** on dissonant heritage, information on websites and a whole good communication plan, but also **one to one meetings** and conversations with testimonials.

Engagement after project end

The engagement after the project ended should be fostered by planned actions to be implemented by local stakeholders. Among others, municipalities are willing to set up a **physical space** where meetings between stakeholders can continue and **promote temporary uses** in dissonant heritage sites to create new memories about the heritage. The temporary use of the heritages can be also seen as an interim phase - a testing experience before renovation of dissonant heritage sites.

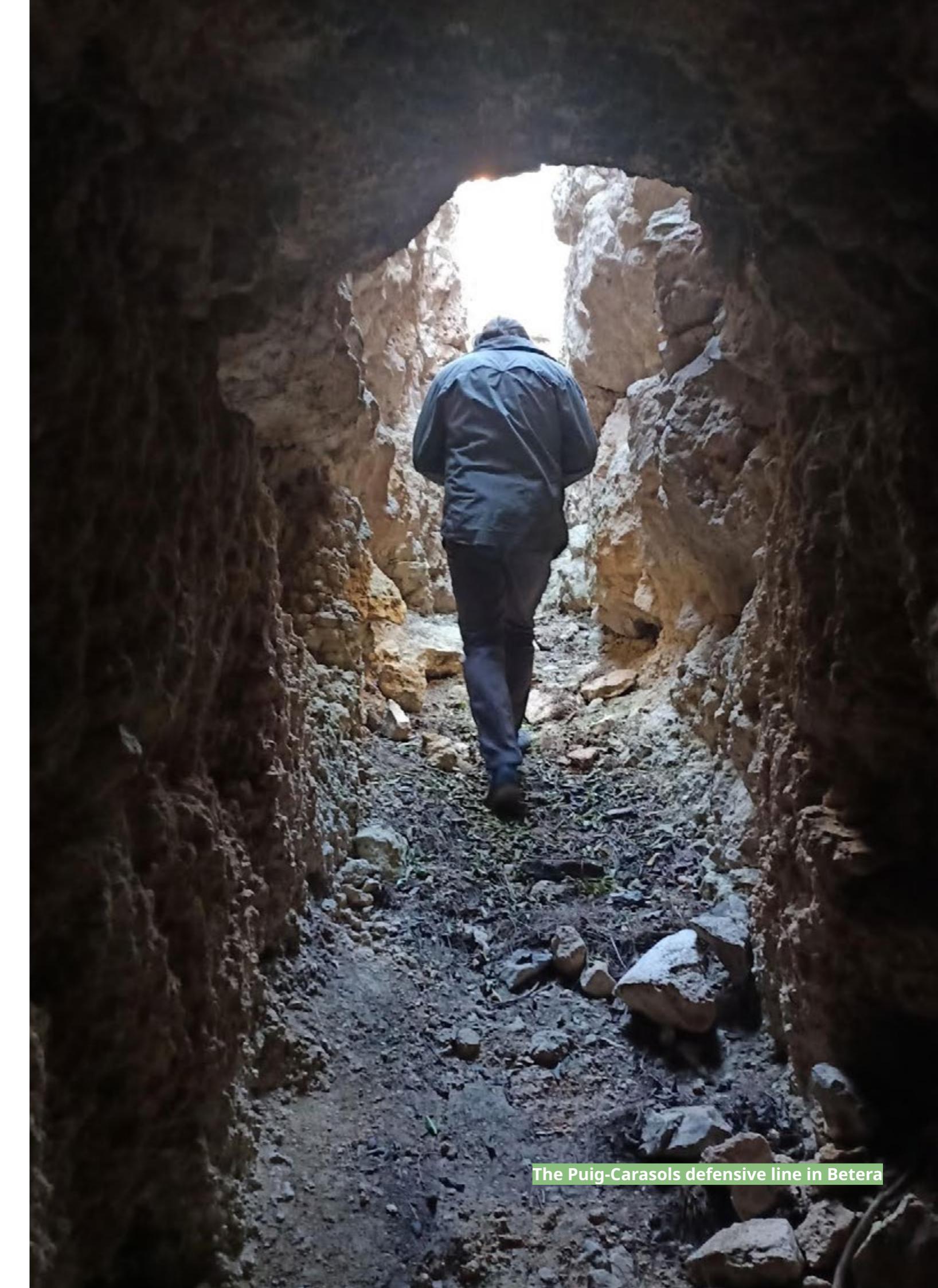
Moreover, ARCHETHICS cities have shared some recommendations for other cities and the warning issues to deal with dissonant heritage sites.

Recommendations for other cities willing to reflect on dissonant heritage:

- Do not be afraid to focus on Dissonant Heritage!
- Start designing the whole process with the relevant city departments.
- Involve existing groups working on Dissonant Heritage.
- Set up a positive storytelling and a catchy visual communication campaign.
- Forecast quick-winning results.
- Hire a good ULG coordinator with sound participatory skills for a good participative experience!

Warning issues

- Be prepared for political changes.
- Be careful with the glossary because dissonance heritage has several facets to consider.
- Keep attention where dissonance really lies and frame the dissonance.
- Care about the participation process and supervise the results.



The Puig-Carasols defensive line in Betera



Central square of Nova Huta in Krakow

Conclusion: the value of complexity

The work with the ARCHETHICS Network has been deep and emotional. It touched the **connections between the material and immaterial elements present in our heritage**.

Family and personal memories intersected historical facts and physical objects like architecture, monuments and public spaces.

But above all, the ARCHETHICS journey gave the opportunity for cities and communities involved to reflect **how hard it was to arrive at a democratic society**. Our cities, our public places still reflect this traumatic past showing in the urban landscape many presences of the difficult history of Europe to come towards a democratic present. But the ethical values that represent European democracy, like the respect for human rights and solidarity, need to be cared for day by day.

The Municipality of Cesena, Permet, Krakow, Gdansk, Kazanlak, Leipzig, Bétera and Vila Nova de Cerveira through the ARCHETHICS work have become **testimonials of those ethical values**. They committed to bridging the elements of their dissonant heritage to come close to their communities and share novel paths towards a future of collaborative exchange.



ARCHETHICS has also demonstrated how **difficult it is to engage with our history**, to study and understand the facts, to understand their implications, and to relate them to the political and social choices of our countries and our communities.

ARCHETHICS has shown how **the complexity is a value to be rediscovered and explored in a world that tends to simplify and polarise** (perspectives, languages, connections, opinions); it has demonstrated that the **imperfection** carved into the streets and buildings of our cities is an indelible mark that stands out as the sum of diversity (cultural, political, gender, personal and collective beliefs).

ARCHETHICS has proved **how navigating complexity collectively is challenging**, but it's precisely the democratic exercise we must continue to practice.

ARCHETHICS is not its final product, but rather a process that led to its creation. A process that cannot be exhausted in this document, but must continue, because it is the common result of human relationships and exchanges, even conflicting ones, between different visions and ideas about our past, present and future. And what is this process, if not an **attempt at democracy**?



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