

2Nite Journal #1

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Introduction

The first semester of the URBACT 2Nite Transfer Network (November 2024 – February 2025) marked the foundational phase of a transformative European journey. Inspired by the Good Practice of the Lead Partner, the City of Torino (Italy), which pioneered a multidisciplinary, proximity-led approach to urban security and nighttime governance through its original ToNite project (2019–2023), the network embarked on a structured transfer process.

Based on the bilateral site visits, the key focuses emerged:

- Torino (Italy): Good practice transfer and IMPATTO model
- Riga (Latvia): Soviet-era housing blocks in the Purvciems district
- Sant Boi (Spain): Youth leisure and caring city
- Cluj-Napoca (Romania): Post-industrial transformation in the Iris district
- Quadrilátero Urbano (Portugal): Intermunicipal governance and social housing spaces

Over these initial six months, the network established a common baseline through an international study visit in Torino followed by four intensive bilateral visits to Riga, the Quadrilátero Urbano network (Braga, Famalicão, Barcelos, Guimarães), Cluj-Napoca, and Sant Boi de Llobregat.



The primary goal of this first semester was twofold: to inspect the local spatial, administrative, and social realities of each partner city on the ground, and to begin adapting Torino’s core mechanisms, such as Collaboration Pacts, non-infrastructure proximity services, citizen storytelling, and participatory budgeting, to diverse urban contexts across Europe.

Turin

Following the URBACT kickoff meeting in Paris, the 2Nite project officially launched its first transnational Study Visit in Torino, hosted by the Lead Partner, the City of Torino, from November 27th to 29th, 2024. The event brought together nineteen participants representing all network partner cities, Riga, Cluj-Napoca, Sant Boi de Llobregat, and the Quadrilatero Urbano network encompassing four Portuguese municipalities. The primary objective was to introduce the partnership to the URBACT journey and explore how the best practices and methodologies pioneered in Torino could be transferred and adapted to each partner's home territory.



The meeting commenced with partner introductions and an overview of the network's structure, followed by an in-depth presentation of Torino's original ToNite project (2019–2023), funded under the UIA program on Urban Security. The Torino team outlined their multidisciplinary approach to managing public spaces and improving nighttime safety

perception along the Dora River, providing participants with essential context on the project's goals, administrative frameworks, and public grant mechanisms. On the second day, the group examined local-level implementation tools, working on stakeholder mapping and identifying transferable elements from Torino's methodology. The afternoon featured an extensive field tour of urban spaces refurbished through ToNite funding, including the Off Topic community hub, the 4,500-square-meter pedestrianized Viale Ottavio Mai, the participatory Salotto di Miranda, the Cecchi Point socio-educational youth project, the co-designed Giardino Pellegrino, and the Portineria di Comunità Porta Palazzo proximity service hub. The tour concluded with visits to the Torino Urban Lab and Torino City Hall.



On the final day, partners reflected on their site visit impressions and conducted a transferability study to establish the network roadmap. Each partner city evaluated its specific target area and desired social impact, focusing on how Torino's non-punitive, community-led approach could be integrated into their local policies. The exchange successfully established a shared baseline for the network, setting the stage for future co-design actions across all partner territories.

Riga

The 2Nite URBACT Transfer Network held a pivotal bilateral exchange in Riga, Latvia, bringing together the project's lead expert and representatives from the Lead Partner city of Turin, Italy. The visit focused on evaluating Riga's urban context, exchanging expertise, and establishing shared strategies to enhance nighttime safety and public space liveability. Strategic sessions commenced at Riga City Hall, providing an overview of municipal planning and security governance. High-level participants included the Vice Mayor of Riga, the Chairwomen of the City Development and Education, Culture, and Sports Committees, alongside delegates from the Riga Neighbourhood Residents' Centre, the Riga Municipal Police, and the State Police. Together, stakeholders discussed early strategies to tackle urban safety challenges and align Turin's ToNite proximity methodology with local governance.



Following municipal discussions, the delegation visited the Kaņepes Cultural Center to study community-led nightlife safety initiatives, drawing insights from international programs such as NightSchool, Sexism Free Night, and Enter The Void. The focus then shifted directly to the project's pilot target: the Purvciems neighborhood. At the nearby NGO House, the team met in person with representatives from the Purvciems Development Association and held an online dialogue with the Purvciems Neighbourhood Association. The visit concluded with an exploratory walk through Purvciems, giving guests a first-hand assessment of the area's physical spatial dynamics and specific safety needs.

Purvciems is Riga's most populous neighborhood, housing over 52,000 residents across a massive area dominated by Soviet-era high-rise apartment complexes. While ethnically and culturally diverse, the district faces significant structural hurdles, including a passive community, underdeveloped public infrastructure, and a lack of human-scale meeting spaces. Crucially, the courtyards surrounding multi-apartment buildings belong primarily to private homeowners rather than the municipality. This complex ownership structure limits direct municipal infrastructure investments, making public space upgrades reliant on collective resident consensus and active co-responsibility.



The meeting established a clear framework to bridge local challenges with actionable urban policy. Beyond physical and social upgrades in Purvciems, the methodologies refined through this pilot will directly feed into Riga's upcoming nighttime planning and governance policy. This comprehensive strategy incorporates targeted measures such as expanded nighttime transit, upgraded street lighting, and civic safety education. Because high-density Soviet-era panel block estates are widespread across Latvia and Northern-Central Europe, the co-design solutions and community engagement tools developed in Purvciems offer a scalable, transferable blueprint for cities seeking to build safer, more inclusive public spaces day and night.

Quadrilátero Urbano

The bilateral delegation traveled to Northern Portugal to collaborate with Quadrilátero Urbano, the intermunicipal network uniting the cities of Braga, Vila Nova de Famalicão, Barcelos, and Guimarães, to examine how night-time safety, spatial justice, and social cohesion can be cultivated across public housing developments home to diverse demographic groups, including local Roma communities. The visit served as a vital opportunity to translate the lessons of Torino's ToNite project into the Portuguese context, focusing on non-punitive, community-led approaches to urban security and neighborhood activation.



In Vila Nova de Famalicão, the itinerary began with an in-depth engagement alongside the Board of the Inhabitants Association at Associação de Moradores das Lameiras. The delegation inspected the association's social facilities to learn how long-standing neighborhood anchors build daily trust, provide essential proximity services, and foster civic engagement among residents. This was paired with a field evaluation of the newly rehabilitated Famalicão Mobility Interface (Centro de Transportes), where the team examined how modern transport infrastructure, improved lighting, and enhanced evening connectivity directly influence residents' perception of safety and encourage greater public use after dark.



Transitioning to Braga, the delegation gathered at the Human Power Hub for the official launch of the Quadrilátero Urbano 2NITE URBACT Local Group (ULG). This milestone meeting formally constituted a collaborative, multi-city co-governance platform bringing together municipal officials, civic associations, social workers, and urban planners across the four participating territories. Following the launch, the team embarked on an on-site field assessment in the Santa Tecla neighborhood, accompanied by representatives from the municipal social housing authority BragaHabit E.M. and local humanitarian partners such as the Braga Red Cross. The walk through Santa Tecla allowed the delegation to observe local spatial vulnerabilities firsthand and discuss flexible, culturally adaptable engagement methodologies, such as participatory mapping, grassroots storytelling, and low-threshold social interventions, designed to break down social barriers, empower marginalized residents, and transform underused public spaces into safe, inclusive gathering points.

Sant Boi de Llobregat

The 2Nite Project held a key bilateral visit in Sant Boi de Llobregat, bringing together representatives from the Lead Partner, Turin City Council, an expert appointed by the URBACT Secretariat, and local hosts from the Sant Boi de Llobregat City Council. The exchange commenced with a joint morning meeting at Sant Boi de Llobregat City Hall, where municipal politicians and technical experts provided an overview of the local context, strategic priorities, and ongoing safety and youth initiatives. The session set the foundation for understanding how Sant Boi addresses evening and nighttime leisure in public spaces, balancing community well-being, civic participation, and public security.



During the institutional exchange, the Deputy Mayor of the Cohesive and Transforming City outlined her area's focus on housing, youth, and related policies, framing the 2Nite project within the broader Community and Well-being Transformative Project. This initiative engages citizens by encouraging community-driven actions and fostering positive coexistence across various demographic groups. Labeled as transformative, the strategy actively aligns short-term local interventions with the city's long-term social objectives. Adding to this vision, the Councilor for Adolescence and Youth explained that local youth policies serve individuals aged 12 to 35, with a strong emphasis on providing healthy, accessible public leisure options for young people under the legal age. In this context, the 2Nite project offers Sant Boi a valuable framework to integrate European best practices into municipal policies, shifting the approach from passively waiting for resident requests to proactively identifying latent community needs.

From a public safety perspective, the Councilor for Public Security and the Marianao District detailed the city's preventive planning and operational structure, noting that crime levels in Sant Boi remain low, partly due to the absence of a subway system. Local prevention operates at the district level through monitoring, early warnings, and proactive neighborhood engagements, alongside reactive responses to resident claims. Programs like RodEscola further reinforce these efforts by promoting road safety in schools, healthy lifestyle habits, and respect for public spaces. Complementing these municipal safety measures, Sant Boi offers a vibrant array of social and cultural leisure spaces that allow young people to socialize and connect. The City Council hosts events such as a day-time celebration for 18-year-olds at Can Massallera, while collaborating with Fundació Marianao on initiatives like "Vente pa'ka," which offers late-night video game and sports sessions in municipal facilities. Furthermore, the "Fent Carrer" program directly engages youth in public spaces through street outreach and dialogue, helping them identify their needs and empowering them to organize their own activities.



The bilateral visit concluded with a physical tour focused on Sant Boi's primary evening and nighttime leisure hubs concentrated around the Rambla area and the historic old town. The delegation walked through these key zones, stopping at the entrance of the Can Castellet Cinemas before exploring the Cal Ninyo municipal facility and civic center. Participants inspected Cal Ninyo's multipurpose rooms, theater, and terrace, gaining first-hand insight into how municipal spaces are actively utilized both for programmed public actions and as headquarters for local cultural associations

Cluj-Napoca

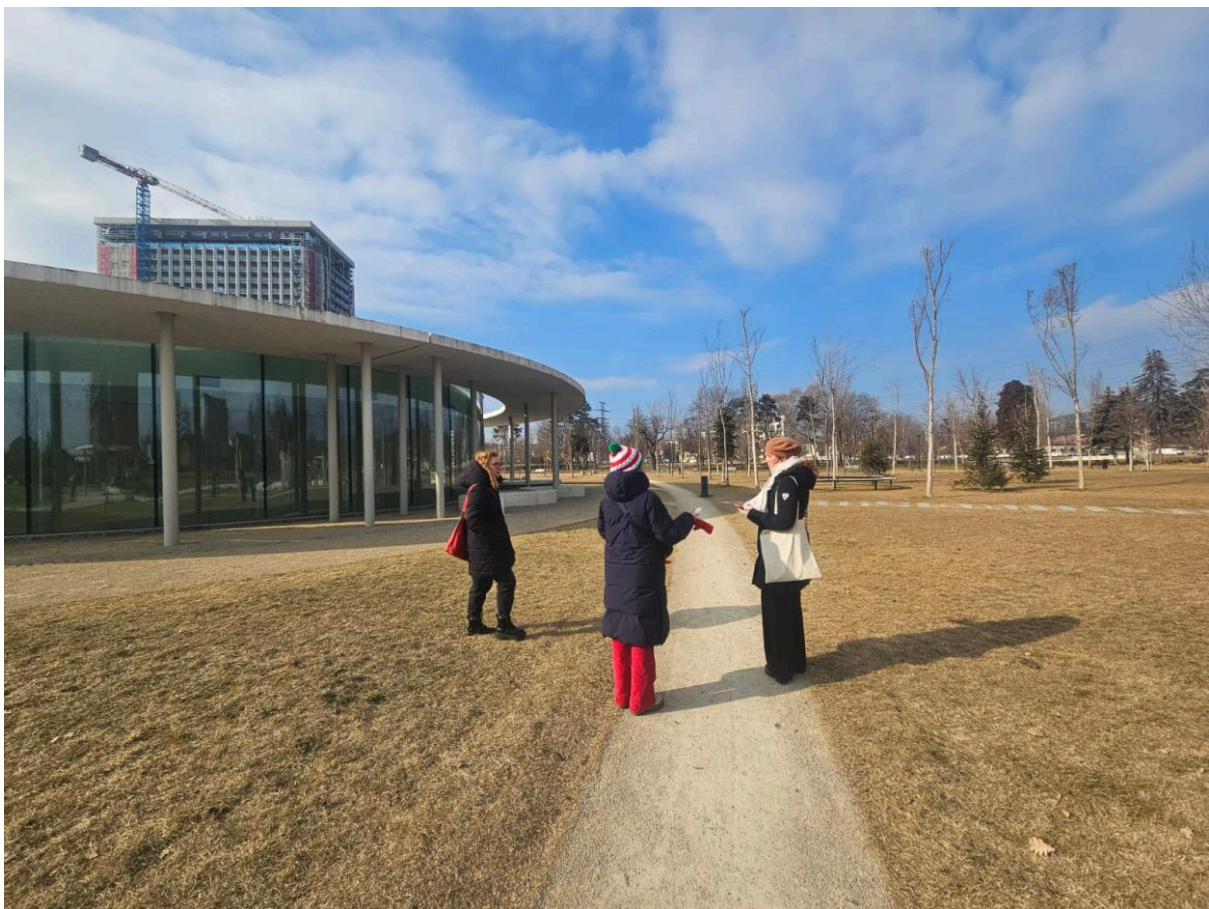
The bilateral visit of the 2Nite URBACT Transfer Network in Cluj-Napoca, Romania brought together municipal leaders, local technical experts, the 2Nite Lead Expert, and representatives from the Lead Partner, the City of Turin. Although Cluj-Napoca is widely recognized as one of Romania's safest urban centers, the city faces distinct nighttime challenges linked to rapid demographic growth, high-density nightlife districts, and infrastructure bottlenecks. To address these issues, municipal authorities have historically deployed measures such as expanding public lighting networks, increasing surveillance and police presence in entertainment hubs, and improving late-night transit options alongside community policing initiatives. However, the bilateral visit focused on expanding beyond traditional physical infrastructure by exploring how non-physical activations, such as social proximity services, civic storytelling, and underused public space revitalizations, can organically increase foot traffic, natural surveillance, and safety perceptions after dark.



A core focus of the visit was Cluj-Napoca's sophisticated use of civic storytelling to strengthen territorial connections, foster community trust, and promote cross-sector collaboration. The municipal delegation demonstrated how Cluj-Napoca City Hall utilizes storytelling across social media, digital platforms, and public events to communicate complex urban transformations. In physical urban regeneration projects, such as the major revitalization of the central square Piața Unirii, before-and-after narratives are leveraged to highlight the balance between historic preservation, pedestrian accessibility, and modern public amenities. Similarly, within its Smart City agenda, the municipality employs storytelling to translate technical innovations, such as smart mobility platforms and digital

portals into relatable human benefits for everyday citizens. Through the 2Nite network, Cluj-Napoca aims to refine these communication tools into structured community engagement mechanisms for underused neighborhood spaces.

The exchange also highlighted Cluj-Napoca's expertise in proximity activations and academic partnerships. Acting as an institutional connector, the municipality supports third-sector organizations, NGOs, tech hubs, and local universities to deliver social, cultural, and innovative activities in local neighborhoods. To evaluate these social outcomes, the city regularly partners with local university researchers to conduct rigorous impact assessments tracking public perception and community well-being. During the exchange, Cluj-Napoca shared valuable insights from its previous URBACT experiences, specifically the Innovato-R and Co4Cities networks, which enhanced its knowledge of civic co-management and public-private-academic collaboration.



Ultimately, the bilateral exchange established a clear framework for Cluj-Napoca's local 2Nite pilot project. Rather than relying on heavy physical construction, the city decided to focus its pilot strategy on an underused neighborhood area, integrating non-infrastructure solutions such as participatory spatial mapping, proximity service activations, and targeted storytelling. By combining these social interventions with an impact assessment framework developed in collaboration with local universities, Cluj-Napoca aims to build an inclusive, scalable model for nighttime liveability and equal service delivery across all its residential districts.

Key learnings

1. **Safety as an Organic Social Product:** Perceived nighttime safety cannot be achieved through punitive measures, surveillance, or hostile architecture alone; true urban security is an organic byproduct of active social presence, human proximity, and vibrant, well-lit community programming.
2. **Contextual Adaptation Over Direct Copying:** Replicating a successful urban model—such as Turin's *ToNite* practice—requires flexible adaptation rather than direct copy-pasting, tailoring governance mechanisms, grant frameworks, and spatial activations to each city's unique legal and architectural typologies (from Soviet-era high-rises in Riga to post-industrial zones in Cluj-Napoca).
3. **Digital Tools Serving Human Proximity:** Smart city technologies and digital security platforms (e.g., citizen reporting apps) yield maximum civic impact only when backed by on-the-ground human presence, street-level social outreach, third-sector organizations, and local community hubs.
4. **Sustaining Participation Through Inclusive Tools:** Overcoming resident apathy and "participation fatigue" requires shifting from passive public consultations to empowering local communities as genuine co-designers, utilizing hands-on, trust-building methods like participatory mapping, explanatory walks, and neighborhood storytelling.
5. **Cross-Departmental and Multi-Source Governance:** Effective nighttime urban management demands breaking down municipal silos by uniting urban planning, social services, public security, culture, and public transit around a unified co-governance model, supported by multi-source funding strategies that combine local grants with broader European frameworks.

