

Inner city Development Task Team

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Participants:

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10. Erik Visscher, City archives department. Policy Advisor - **Schiedam** (Netherlands)
11. Satu Heikkinen, Project Manager, Jyväskylä City Centre Vision 2030 - **Jyväskylä** (Finland)
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15. Julian Schahl, International Affaires- Eurotowns Secretariat - **Sindelfingen** (Germany)
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18. Astrid Illers, International office - **Detmold** (Germany)
19. Mariafrancesca Sidoli, Deputy Mayor for Commerce, Productive Activities and Enhancement of the Historic Centre— **Reggio Emilia** (Italy)
20. Gianluca Grassi, international Affairs, Cabinet of the Mayor, Municipality of Reggio Emilia(Italy)
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25. Marianna Roscelli, E35 Foundation – Reggio Emilia (Italy)

INTRODUCTION

Deputy Mayor of Reggio Emilia Mariafrancesca Sidoli gives the official welcome and opens the work of the Inner City Development Task Team for 2021. She underlines that the Municipality of Reggio Emilia wants to strengthen the policies of regeneration and relaunch the historic city centre. To achieve this, the international comparison becomes an essential step and the importance of a dialogue with other European Cities to find solutions to shared problems that, also due to the COVID -19 pandemic, have become even more urgent. That's why she thanks all the cities that have sent the good practices, there are already excellent food for thought and interesting examples to share and deepen.

Marianna Roscelli (E35 Foundation and contact person for the Eurotowns) reports the results of the collection of good practices. Good Practices' Issues are: Attractiveness and dynamism of the city centre and Governance. 9 cities involved (Varberg, Solingen, Girona, Reggio Emilia, Sindelfingen, Manresa, Roeselare, Schiedam, Detmold) for a total of 15 good practices collected.

Sabrina Rosati (E35 Foundation) presents "IdeaBoardz", an online tool through which each participant can leave comments, evaluations and make questions during the presentations. The collected material will be available to everyone and can be food for thought for the next Task Team meetings. Here the link:

<https://ideaboardz.com/for/Inner%20City%20Development%20Task%20Team%20/3634999>

Marianna Roscelli leaves the floor to Eurotowns member for the presentation of the good practices.

BEST PRACTICES PRESENTATION

DETMOND (Germany) - Astrid Illers

Immediate Program for Inner City.

The problems that the city had to face in its historic centre are parking, cleaning, and, above all, the large number of vacant shops. Due to this reason the city has begun to think about a relaunching of the historic centre, making it less commercial but more oriented towards cultural experiences of encounter and diversification.

The first step was to appoint an expert "Center Manager" responsible for reactivating the "life" of the historic centre. The function of the Center Manager is to connect the different local actors and the people who have ideas to reactivate the historic centre.

The activities developed are:

- a free delivery service for the shops in the centre;
- open stage for artists in the historic centre;
- cycle paths;
- orientation systems for pedestrians that connect the station with the centre;
- campaigns for waste recycling;
- public bathrooms;
- offices with play areas for children;
- sale of vouchers to buy in the city centre.

The funds for all these activities are both Municipal and state.

The creation of a working table involving all stakeholders is necessary in order to effectively implement these development ideas.

GIRONA (Spain) - Milena Oliveras

Pla Especial de Protecció I Reforma Interior del Barri Vell de la ciutat de Girona (Special Plan for the Protection and Interior Reform of the Old Quarter in Girona)

The renovation process of the Old Quarter of the historic centre of Girona began in the mid-1980s. Many palaces have been renovated and this renewal process continues today.

On an aesthetic level, the centre of Girona has a high concentration of historical and cultural buildings of considerable value, a fragmentation of urban properties: many buildings still in need of restoration and unpaved downtown streets. From the economic point of view, there is a lack of new investments. From the environmental point of view, there are services, such as the sewerage, to be redone. On a social level, part of the population still lives in conditions of extreme poverty, in uninhabitable houses.

Girona is an ancient city, with many monuments and it was necessary to analyse the architectural aspects and operate in order to safeguard and enhance the artistic and cultural heritage of the city.

Many actions have been taken to regenerate the old quarter, in particular:

- private help to redevelop ancient buildings;
- new areas for public housing;
- new roads for pedestrians and bicycles;
- connecting roads and paths to help residents and tourists enter and exit;
- expansion of car parks;
- centralization of public institutions (museums, universities, etc.).

The refurbishment and repopulation of the historic centre thanks to the massive redevelopment work begun in the 1980s, has brought with it other problems, in particular mass tourism that has created speculation in rents and the opening of a lot of activities related to tourism and entertainment, which during the Covid crisis did not hold up and closed.

The Municipality is therefore activating to create more sustainable and attentive tourism, and new areas are being created to decongest the city centre and to offer tourists more accommodation in other area of the city. The re-use and renovation of the old buildings is still ongoing and the challenge will be to find new uses and new strategic activities for these rediscovered spaces.

GAVLE (Svezia) - Annika Lundqvist

The city of Gavle has been involved in the development of the historic center since 1997. The Municipality has established a City centre leader and an event manager responsible for the activities. Gavle, especially in the last few years, has worked a lot on the issue of security. Currently, public/private associations are involving to develop and relaunch the historic centre.

MANRESA (Spain) – Sònia and Marc Orriols

Manrease is facing the same problems as many other European cities: vacant shops, elderly population, fragile population.

In the past years the Municipality has invested in many places of the city, but then it understood that it was better to invest in people and, through them, create a network of cultural and commercial activities that could help them. From this idea was born La Canal, a non-profit network that implements economic and social development actions for the benefit of vulnerable people. Canal is based in spaces made available by private owners and, in exchange, the Municipality pays all the maintenance costs. In this way, many activities such as craft or cultural workshops were born that help people to network and to support themselves economically. It is, in fact, a voluntary platform for the implementation and sharing of ideas, activities and projects. The purpose of la Canal is to be present in different areas of the centre and for this reason it changes location every 6-8 months. La Canal video: <https://youtu.be/jfVWcYehvb0>.

Another initiative proposed by the city of Manresa is called Hora feliz and consists in organizing 5 concerts on 5 different days of the week to cheer the patrons of the historic centre. Interviews with the characters who live in the centre are also broadcast.

ROESLARE (Belgium)- Gino Dehullu and Oliver Plancke

From an economic point of view, a large amount of money has been put in place to support the activities of the city centre. The main initiatives are:

- free advertising;

- coupons;
- free delivery;
- local shop website managed by the Municipality;
- weekly market;
- no taxes for public land use;
- focus on catering activities.

The city of Roeselare put a lot of effort into offering a hygienic and corona-safe environment in the city centre streets. In this way an effort was made to keep the core shopping area as attractive as possible, even in COVID times. The purpose of the hygienic shopping streets, is to maintain the attractiveness of the city centre streets by creating a safe situation where consumers can come and shop carefree.

SINDELINGEN (Germany) – Christian Jankowski

In 2020 we have started a process to develop a vision for the inner city of Sindelfingen. We call it 'Zielbild'. Sindelfingen, like many medium-sized towns in Europe, faces profound challenges due to digitalisation, transitions in consuming behaviour and mobility and many other factors. These challenges affect the inner city and threaten the expectations people have on it. With the "Zielbild-Process" we want to answer how we want to react on these trends, transitions and challenges. The vision of a new historic centre was born to respond to the challenges of the centre such as empty shops, lack of investment, change in consumption habits. To solve or deal with these challenges it is necessary to establish an action model that is shared by all local stakeholders. At the moment the task team is made by almost 20 stakeholders: shopkeepers, investors, local administrators, etc. The administration wants to focus on people to help them become motivated and positive people who know how to launch useful projects. Sharing of ideas, long-term projects and public participation, these are the aspects on which the municipality aims.

SCHIEDAM (Holland)- Erik Vissecher

The political vision for the development of the city centre was born in 2012 in response to the challenges of the historic city, such as lack of investors, empty shops etc.

The local administration has focused on making the large part of the centre pedestrian. The political vision has led to a revitalization of the historic centre, helping businesses to stay in the city, like the distilleries, historic activities that identify the city.

Today the city is living a positive moment, because the centre has become more attractive, more business activities are opening and new houses are building.

The Municipality has worked on different areas to repopulate the centre and make it vibrant:

- strengthen its identity;
- economic resilience;
- quality living for residents;

- create a good connection to the centre.

One of the projects highlighted in the discussion is “Museum Quarter”: in the heart of the historic city centre four museums are located. Oud City Museum was acclaimed as the best public museum of the Netherlands in 2019. The Jenevermuseum tells the story and heritage of the city: an important distilling centre, celebrating the traditional produce of our ‘national’ drink Geneva. The Museum mill is located in one of the highest historic windmills in the world and complements the story told by the Jenevermuseum. The city library is located in one of our most important monuments: Corn exchange. The aim is to strengthen these institutions and making them more visible in public space.

VARBERG (Sweden)- Max Wehlim

Varberg is a small city with a small historic centre that over the years has faced the problem of abandoning the activities in the centre by putting legislative restrictions on the creation of shopping centres outside the city centre. The good practices proposed by Varberg are simple but very attractive: POP-UP EVENTS a joint venture of public and private stake holders, empty and little-used spaces can be transformed into attractive pop-up-projects. Actors involved in the implementation of the Pop-Up-Projects are public, private and from the non-governmental sector, such as sports associations. From the public level, different divisions from the Municipality of Varberg are involved, and a group of members of the municipality promote and coordinate the projects to involve residents, local business and media.

Reggio Emilia (Italy) – Elena Marchesi

The Action Plan of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia is presented, with the many activities scheduled (politics, sport, culture, etc.). The importance of dialogue and political discussion is an important element to underline. The health emergency had a strong negative impact on the historic centre, especially due to the adaptation to the many **Government’s decree**

Some of the actions of the administration to support the activities of the historic centre:

- intensification of actions aimed at developing new business models (home, take-away, e-commerce);
- promotion of a network of "home purchases" and "home deliveries" to bring together Q&O;
- incentivize of technological innovation tools in the trade, catering and crafts sector with particular attention to new local platforms and their potential in terms of interconnection with the territory.

The main difficulty is linked to the correct reconciliation of the institutional requests with those expressed by the local representatives (governance work).

The presentation includes also the presentation of the activities carried out in the city centre during the Christmas period just ended. See more details in the slide.

Deputy Mayor of Reggio Emilia Mariafrancesca Sidoli explains also that for the City of Reggio Emilia the greatest difficulty is respecting the bureaucracy and administrative regulations which are often very stringent. Furthermore, it is often difficult to mix the level of dialogue and confrontation between the administration and local stakeholders, the parties often have different points of view.

NEXT STEPS

Sabrina Rosati (E35 Foundation) after the short break, presents the next steps proposal:

1. FEBRUARY 2021. Follow up: exchange of information and documents **(All partners)**
2. MARCH 2021. Inner City Development week. 2 thematic workshop for deeper exchanges and reflection on the topic to share new ideas and co-designing possible project for European new call.

Data proposal for the workshop are:

- 12 March: topic GOVERNANCE; **TO BE DEFINE**
- 16 or 17 March: topic ATTRACTIVENESS AND DYNAMISM OF THE CITY CENTRE. **(Reggio Emilia) TO BE DEFINE**

The cities could participate to both workshop or just one according to the interest of the city. Possible involvement of international key experts.

3. MARCH- MAY 2021. Follow up of the workshops in March 2021 **(All partners)**
4. JUNE-JULY 2021 (TO BE DEFINE). Study Visit and Public seminar in Reggio Emilia:
 - visiting local experiences;
 - getting deeper knowledge with key expert dealing about challenges/issues coming from co-design workshops. **(Reggio Emilia)**