

**re-value**

# The Constanța Collection

Constanța Study Visit  
Highlights and Insights

Version 1  
July 2024





Over 30 Re-Value project partners - mostly partners from Leading Re-Value Cities - met in Constanța, Romania, from 17 - 19 June 2024, for the fourth Study Visit of the Re-Value Capacity Development and Exchange Programme.

Participants were introduced to Constanța's rich history and culture, as well as its impressive collection of urban sustainability projects, spotlighting the city's commitment to improving access, safety, and comfort for residents and visitors - even when the projects are not as successful as they had hoped.

The Constanța Collection summarises the Constanța Study Visit experiences and the key contributions and insights from the Tactical Urbanism Workshop. The next Re-Value Study Visit will take place in Rijeka, Croatia, from 29-30 October 2024.

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*Re-Value Community of Practice members from Rijeka, Constanța, Písek, Burgas, Rimini, and Bruges, as well as scientific partners from IFLA Europe, Ecoten, NTNU, University of Nova Gorica, and ICLEI.*



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# 1 Constanța Study Visit Programme

The Constanța Study Visit was the second part of the “Black Sea Super Study Visit”, taking place from 17 - 19 June 2024 in Constanța, Romania. The cohesion and collaboration activities seamlessly continued after the Burgas Study Visit through the weekend, as about half of the participants boarded a chartered bus in Burgas to travel together to Constanța. During the 7-hour trip, participants were able to further process and discuss insights from the Burgas Study Visit, as well as create the architecture for the Rijeka Study Visit (planned for 29-30 October 2024) and a participatory workshop in Venice as part of the 2024 Biennale (among other activities).

The Constanța Study Visit was the first visit to a Re-Value Replication City and focused on The Peninsula, Constanța’s Waterfront Pilot area. The Study Visit was designed with the following four objectives:

- **Strengthen** the Community (of Practice) by continuing to create opportunities to professionally socialise and deepen relationships between partners in a relaxed environment;
- **Observe & Learn** about Constanța’s rich history and cultural influences, key landmarks and stories from the The Peninsula, and its ambition to sustainably (re)develop its city through coordinated planning efforts, substantial investments in its parks, cultural heritage, and built environment, and its on-going efforts to engage with residents, business owners, and visitors to create a thriving historic urban centre;
- **Advise & Encourage** the Municipality during a full-day interactive workshop on Tactical Urbanism (TU) that introduced and discussed TU approaches from around Europe and the world, including some great local examples in Constanța;
- **Take Action** by teaming up in four groups to explore, identify, and document potential locations for future interventions in The Peninsula, Constanța’s Waterfront Pilot area.

## 1.1 Strengthen the Community

Similar to the Burgas Study Visit, the Constanța Study Visit was designed with a more relaxed agenda, allowing ample time for unstructured socialising. We received positive feedback from the Community, who, by now, knew each other well enough to grow closer during this unstructured time. This often led to deeper, richer conversations between partners.

Notably, the Constanța Study Visit immediately followed the Burgas Study Visit. This timing allowed some project partners and city representatives to spend the weekend together, engage in leisure activities, get to know each other better on a personal level, and travel together by bus from Burgas to Constanța. This continuity was highlighted as a positive aspect for community building, relationship strengthening, and trust development.

Moreover, the "Peninsula Mission" module prominently featured community-building activities. Participants, divided into small groups, spent several hours actively engaging with one another through creative experiments, chalk drawings, and collaborative concept development, getting to know each other in a playful manner. They later shared their experiences with the larger group through informative and creative presentations. This module was particularly effective in fostering a sense of community and support among the participants.



The joint WhatsApp group created for the two Study Visits further strengthened the community. This group was used for sharing organisational information, such as locations, but more importantly, it facilitated informal exchanges. This channel allowed individual or small group experiences to be easily shared with the entire group through photos and comments. It provided a space for jokes and casual interactions, away from technical or organisational matters. The community-building effect of this channel was clearly noticeable, positively affecting group cohesion and enhancing collaboration on project work and beyond.

## 1.2 Observe & Learn

On Day One, the Re-Value Community of Practice gathered in the historical Museum of National History and Archaeology where **Cristian Cealera** and **George Lupascu** kicked the Study Visit off by sharing the past, present, and future of The Peninsula and Constanța. They led us through [2500 years in 60 minutes](#), from ancient times to [current urban development and refurbishment projects connected to the Peninsula](#) ([second presentation here](#)) and how the city, its inhabitants, and the Peninsula have changed over time. **George Lupascu** (ZMC) shared stories about the city's evolution since 1990 and the efforts it has made - particularly in the last 15 years - to establish itself as a modern, sustainable city and attractive international seaside destination. He shared the city's framework for sustainable urban development, including its plans, policies, and projects that support the vision. Participants were curious about the integration of the city's several sustainability focused strategy documents in the overarching city's framework and the political uptake of it. Also, the implications of Constanța being a Municipality and Metropolitan Area were addressed. Finally, the repercussions of the war in Ukraine on Constanța and its port were discussed.



*Introduction to Constanța's Past, Present and Future at the Museum of National History and Archeology*

The Community was then led through the treasury of the historic Museum where they got to see relics from mainly the Roman but also other epochs in which the history of Constanța is built upon today. Learning about the city's history was continued on the **walking tour** of the Peninsula with **Diana Slav** who knew “every secret about every corner” of the Peninsula area. The walking tour was a good chance to observe some of the most pressing challenges connected to urban mobility first-hand, especially irregular car parking on sidewalks, plazas, and streets, which provided a valuable basis for the Tactical Urbanism activities on the following day.



*Taking an entertaining local history and architecture tour with Diana Slav in Constanța's Peninsula district*

Later, during an open-air bus tour of the city, George Lupascu presented some of the key projects the city has implemented under their plans, including new streetscapes with improved sidewalks, dedicated bicycle lanes, street lighting and furniture; improving the public transport network by renewing the fleet including electric buses and charging infrastructure; smart city infrastructure; building modernisation and refurbishment examples; and cultural heritage preservation projects.





*Study Visit participants on the open-air bus tour from the Port to Mamaia (Constanța's beach resort district) to look at key projects and challenge areas.*

A further learning and reflection activity was the Constanța Study Visit's final session, which was designed to encourage individual and joint reflection, exchange, and continued collaboration. Participants had time to reflect on the past days, experiences and exercises, personal and professional learnings, supported by guiding questions. They further spent about 20 minutes with a visioning exercise, in which participants were invited to formulate (brave and creative) visions of possible futures connected to the Study Visit content and Constanța, as well as beyond in "What If..." sentences building on which they also specified respective next steps ("What Next / I will..."). After discussing these in small groups the session culminated in the "Constanța Commitments", made individually but exchanged in pairs, to hold each other accountable at the next Study Visit in Rijeka (29-30 October 2024).

*What if...*  
Write one or multiple visions here, of how things could be. Preferably related to topics or experiences of the Study Visit(s). Begin the visions with "What if..."

*What next... / i will...*  
Write one or multiple next steps here, leading to your vision(s). Begin the sentences with "\_X\_ need(s) to ...". If you are brave, begin the sentences with "I want to..." or even "I will..."

*Visioning exercise template, in which participants were invited to formulate (brave and creative) visions of possible futures connected to the Study Visit content and Constanța.*

### 1.3 Advise & Encourage

Day Two of the Constanța Study Visit started with a collaborative presentation and open discussion about Tactical Urbanism cases / examples from across Europe and the world.

The Municipality of Constanța and ZMC (Constanta Metropolitan Area) had expressed a wish to focus on urban sustainable mobility challenges, especially addressing traffic and parking inside the Peninsula Area, during their Study Visit. Thus, the Study Visit was designed around this focus. All of Day Two was a deep dive into Tactical Urbanism in theory and practice.





*Dr. Anna Kaczorowska introducing the collaborative presentation on Tactical Urbanism*

In a [collaborative presentation](#) Marco Acri, Anna Kaczorowska, Ingrid Lyngstad, Allison Wildman, and further experts and project partners presented Tactical Urbanism best practice examples from all over Europe and beyond nested in a typology of **7 types of Tactical Urbanism interventions**:

1. Street and Public Space Reclamation
2. Temporary Mobility Improvements
3. Public Art and Aesthetic Enhancements
4. Community Gathering Spaces
5. Greening and Environmental Projects
6. Social and Cultural Interventions
7. Traffic Calming Measures

The examples took participants to **Zagreb, Izmir, Lillehammer, Göteborg, Trondheim, Bohinj, Freiburg, Leeuwarden, Venice, Sofia, Glasgow, Paris and even Omaha and Portland (USA)**.

Participants were invited to contribute examples from their own cities or share examples of what they have seen elsewhere. Many added their experiences and examples spontaneously and the session was enriched by these. Find a list of these further examples [in chapter 2](#).



*Sharing tactical urbanism examples and other placemaking experiences during the Constanța Study Visit*

## 1.4 Take Action

After a lively discussion in the morning, participants took to the streets of Constanța in four groups to explore, identify potential intervention locations, and (creatively) document them. They were equipped with maps, pens, sidewalk chalk, postcards in Romanian to inform interested citizens about what was going on, and their smartphones to take photos. They were sent to four predefined zones:

**Zone 1** is a mix of individual housing and a touristic area with restaurants around.

**Zone 2** is the connection between the city and the seaside. There is a slope and many beautiful houses. This street transformed into a parking area after the Peninsula was pedestrianised. It is noisy during nighttime, as a lot of cars and motorcycles are passing by.

**Zone 3** is more of a cultural area. It is a mix of old cultural heritage buildings, and residential buildings built during communist times. These residential buildings are not integrated well into the existing historic urban fabric. The public square there is nice, but not well organised.

**Zone 4** had been destroyed during the communist times. Most of the area is occupied by flats built in the 1960s and 1970s. The public places are not so well organised. It is the first district you see when coming from the sea and Port area.



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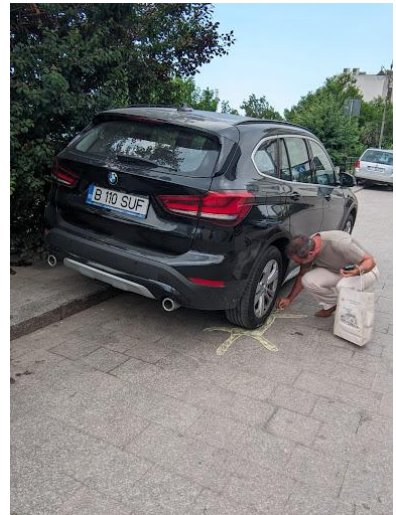
The teams were instructed to send up to eight photos of their interventions before returning to the venue. The images were arranged in a [digital presentation](#) and served as the foundation for short (15 minute) presentations on each team's results.



*Groups preparing for the Tactical Urbanism outside exploration and intervention exercise.*



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*Intervention examples from the tactical urbanism workshop during the Constanța Study Visit*

## 2 Tactical Urbanism input and exploration based workshop Day - further insights

In addition to the collaborative presentation on Tactical Urbanism interventions ([presentation with all examples with pictures here](#)), participants contributed examples from their own cities or shared examples of what they have seen elsewhere. Those experiences and examples shared spontaneously are listed below.

### Lies Debbaut (City of Bruges):

- Temporary activities in empty buildings of the Quay District: Airsoft (kind of paintball) and Kunstenaal (non-profit organisation that wants to help starting artists show their work to a large audience).
- Movie on the beach (each Thursday in July and August in Zeebruges)
- [Bruges Triennial](#): Bruges Triennial brings contemporary art and architecture to the unique UNESCO world heritage surroundings of the City of Bruges. Every three years, an artistic team invites (inter)national artists and architects to develop a new, site-specific installation for the city. The exhibit shows how temporary art and culture can become a permanent part of the city.
  - [Swim opportunities in de Reitjes](#) (little canals in Bruges)
  - [House of Time](#): non-profit organisation organising accessible activities, e.g., processing wood)
- Citizen budget for activities in the neighbourhood regarding to climate adaptation and mitigation (max 25.000€), citizens can apply for with their neighbourhood (from two neighbours)
- Neighbourhood budget to organise neighbourhood parties in their street, carfree street, play street
- [Circular Festival 2023](#): city furniture: benches and sculptures spread over de Quay District realised by citizens.





*City furniture: benches and sculptures spread over de Quay District realised by citizens.*



- Facade gardening: organised by the city, every citizen can ask for. One tile is removed and is replaced by a facade plant.
- Green chairs (almost 900) in the public domain are intensively used, initiating communities.



*Almost 900 green chairs are shared in the public domain in Bruges.*

#### **Dirk Ahlers (NTNU):**

- Oldenburg: Pop-up gardens in city centre and squares, between 2-10 metres squared. Some are temporary, others stay for longer. It is financed via a sponsorship model where users/pedestrians can chip in to co-finance the gardens.
- Park an old car in a parking lot, cut the roof of the car, put soil and trees in it.

#### **Didier Vancutsem (IFLA):**

- In crucial and important places the municipality puts mobile trees and smaller gardens. Citizens enjoyed that and requested the plants to stay. Some temporary installations have been officialised and made a permanent green space.
- La Paz traffic zebras (UNESCO world heritage): Young unemployed people get financial support from the city, are dressed as Zebras, and accompany people to cross the road.

#### **Allison Wildman (ICLEI Europe):**

- Abandoned shopping centre parking lot was repurposed as a bicycle practice space, with little hills and painted lines.
- [Adventure Lab](#) and geocaching: You can design online routes to guide people through the city to explore the city.

#### **Alin Vintila (Municipality of Constanța):**



- Large mural graffiti in the city centre of Constanța.
- Connecting the Casino Sea Promenade and the Touristic port in Constanța by repurposing a parking lot.
- Asphalt speed bumps (that make less noise than the ones that are added on top and can cause neighbour complaints) are praised as very effective.
- A mayor in Bogota fired the corrupt traffic police and hired thousands of clowns and memes (also re-trained fired traffic police staff) and the clowns publicly shamed people who broke traffic rules. It significantly calmed traffic.

## **George Lupascu (ZMC):**

- In Burgas statues of kids were installed next to the road and it calmed the traffic and raised attention to kids who want to cross the street.

## **Anna Kaczorowska (NTNU):**

- Outdoor workout areas as interventions. Especially during the Covid 19 pandemic they were very valuable alternatives to the gym.

## **Daniela de Rubeis (City of Rimini):**

- The world's largest floating stage in Bregenz on Lake Constance.
- Speaking of the construction of the floating theatre in Bregenz, a small Austrian city overlooking Lake Constance, a town of about 30,000 inhabitants set in an important natural environment that has enhanced the lake, an asset of the area, to the point of triggering a real urban regeneration.
- The history of everything starts from a very particular context. In 1945, Austria emerged defeated from World War II, during which Bregenz was severely affected by bombing. The citizens' desire to rebuild the cultural life of the city and the nation gave rise to the idea of organising a culture and sports week in 1946.
- The committee formed for the event had numerous difficulties in finding a venue for the performances and, after sifting through various options, decided during a walk by the lake that the stage could be anchored right in its harbour.
- In this way, with two rafts set up as best as possible, one for the orchestra and the other for dancers and singers, the first edition of the Festspiele saw the light of day, which was attended by some 25,000 spectators. For the occasion, pieces by Mozart, perhaps Austria's most representative composer, were performed.
- Since 1950, the rafts have been replaced by a real stage, the largest lake stage in the world.
- The Festival's approach is to involve, in opera performances and symphony concerts, a wider audience.
- The interesting thing about all this is how a lakeside architecture has generated a cultural, social and economic revival.
- Tourism and accommodation activities have increased, economic growth has gone up, and urban space has been optimised.
- Urban regeneration fostered a revival in every sense, finding culture as a pretext.
- The theatre on the water, the idea of the festival staging plays and musical works, was the motivation behind this. An attractive point, as cultural propaganda but economic recovery.

## **Alessandra Pesaresi (City of Rimini):**

- Public space in front of the train station was left abandoned by the state level for decades. The mayor of Rimini sent a message to the state level to request the refurbishment as safety was at risk in that area. The state then finally intervened and adapted the space.
- Small pop-up initiatives can be a first step of being a change. Start from the people. 950 volunteers in many self-organised groups have been constituted. It fosters social cohesion and neighbourhood cooperation and trust. Sometimes it could even start from the private rather than from the private side, as it could be of economic interest.
- “E-borg gardening” people from the neighbourhoods gathered to keep the maintenance of the green spaces of this area and increased the social cohesion of the neighbourhood.



## About Re-Value

The Re-Value partnership consists of nine European waterfront cities and selected European organisations that work to make the urban transition irresistible for everyone. This is done by demonstrating how climate neutrality and urban quality can be aligned, by re-valuing the cities' connection to their waterfronts, strengthening co-benefits and mitigating potential adverse impacts.

Ålesund (Norway), Bruges (Belgium), Burgas (Bulgaria), and Rimini (Italy) demonstrate how integrated urban planning and design can be optimally deployed to achieve climate neutrality and significantly reduce GHG emissions by 2030.

In addition, Cascais (Portugal), Constanța (Romania), İzmir (Türkiye), Písek (Czechia), and Rijeka (Croatia) learn, replicate and develop their own participatory story-building, data-driven scenarios and financial and partnership models on integrated urban planning and design to accelerate their journeys to climate neutrality.

The partnership is coordinated by Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) and is funded by the European Union's Research and innovation funding programme 'Horizon Europe'.

Learn more about the partnership and the outcomes on [re-value-cities.eu](https://re-value-cities.eu).

## Partners



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