



To be released immediately

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Abandoned buildings and areas reveal hidden treasures for urban development

What if dilapidated public buildings in a city centre could get a second life, attracting the attention of inhabitants and becoming a strategic hub for services and activities? The municipality of Empoli, Italy, showed to some of its European counterparts that urban interventions can stir positive changes, following the idea of an inclusive city, catalyst of urban, economic and environmental regeneration.

Empoli, Italy – On 21-22 January 2020 the municipality of Empoli welcomed a delegation representing several European public authorities with the aim of discussing **redevelopment and innovation for urban areas and public buildings**. This topic has been identified as one of the main urban priorities for the Tuscany region. Nonetheless, several actions have already been successfully implemented to solve this challenge, in particular in the Empolese Valdelsa region.

The **Agency for the Development of Empolese Valdelsa (ASEV)**, host of this new meeting of the **EURE project**, presented two of these good practices to the visiting delegation, all partners of the project. They first discovered **the project HOPE**, in the old town centre of Empoli. HOPE consists in the recovery and redevelopment of a very significant public property of historic value, located in an area that is strategic both at urban level and further afield for the union of the municipalities of the wider Empolese Val d'Elsa district. The second example, **Cittá+Cittá: Creativité Inclusiva e Sostenibile**, is part of the Innovative Urban Project developed by the municipalities of Poggibonsi and Colle Val d'Elsa. It includes actions to improve **abandoned and deprived areas** located between the south-western edge of Poggibonsi (District of Siena) with the purpose to act on all indexes of socio-economic identified by the area, including housing pressure, social exclusion, deterioration and pollution.

More good practices, implemented in Tuscany, were presented during a thematic seminar entitled *“Integrated Urban Innovation Projects and Related Policy Instruments: Regional Operational Programme of ERDF 2014-2020 in Tuscany”*. Local stakeholders involved in the EURE project and a group of students of the “Il Portormo” scientific high school joined the EURE project partners to discuss the key elements for a **successful urban intervention**, such as analysing the inhabitants’ needs, knowing the historical identity of the old centre, and ensuring the active involvement of local stakeholders.

This exchange was the second of a series of study visits taking place in the framework of the Interreg Europe EURE project. Partners took advantage of being together again to continue the work started a couple of months earlier in Brest, France. They exchanged additional feedbacks on the **Regional Reports** they are preparing and finalised the structure of a **Joint Report**. Each Regional Report will give an overview of the local urban system, the urban challenges identified on the studied territory and how the funds allocated by article 7 of the European Regional Development Fund Regulation are being used on partners’ territories. To elaborate these reports, partners benefit from the insights of a pool of experts and local stakeholders. The reports will be ready by the **end of January 2021** and will then be available on the **EURE website**. In the meanwhile, partners will keep identifying **good practices** on different themes linked to urban development to present them to their peers as ASEV did during the meeting in Empoli.

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More information:

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The **EURE project – Effectiveness of Environmental Urban policies to improve Resources Efficiency** – proposes the exchange of experiences as a way to improve the environmental performance management of EU urban spaces, including the urban areas with a low population density.



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