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Hospitality and Regenerative Care In Territories

Study trip to Italy

7–11 April 2026

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Guided tour of the city of Faenza



The city is organised around a central historic axis, inherited from the Roman period, notably featuring a major road linking the main centres (a system of connections between territories, in this case between the north and Rome). The bridge and the main roads play a structuring role in this layout. The current centre retains this layout, with a central square built on ancient foundations, gradually transformed during the Middle Ages and then in the modern era. The city has a population of around 60,000 and retains a medium-sized scale, where the ancient structures remain visible within the urban fabric.



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Historical developments and morphology of the city



The historic centre has developed gradually, with overlapping eras: a Roman foundation, medieval transformations, followed by contributions from the modern and Baroque periods. The central square, in particular, took on its current form from the 17th century onwards, in connection with developments such as the arrival of water in the city (monumental fountain). The surrounding buildings, often organised around internal courtyards, bear witness to a neoclassical influence and a layout comprising large residential complexes. The streets retain their ancient layout, with a strong sense of continuity in the urban organisation.



Various heritage features shape the landscape: the late 15th–early 16th-century cathedral, inspired by Florentine architecture, whose façade remains unfinished; the civic tower; and the palaces arranged around courtyards. The architecture blends Renaissance influences with local traditions (the style of the Po Valley). Some buildings were destroyed during the Second World War and subsequently rebuilt using the original materials, with a view to continuity. The arcades and shopping galleries also bear witness to an ancient organisation of commercial spaces.

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Recent risks and vulnerabilities of the area

The city has recently been hit by severe flooding (2021–2023), which caused significant material damage, particularly to homes and shops. These events, which were sudden and difficult to predict, highlighted a lack of insurance cover and a certain vulnerability among residents. The impact was mainly material, with no reported loss of life, but with lasting consequences for the urban and economic fabric.



Source: *The city of Faenza (Italy) submerged by rain, 17 May 2023. Screenshot from a video by "La Repubblica"*.

Historically, commercial activities were integrated into the town centre, with shops on the ground floor and production spaces sometimes located nearby or within the buildings (internal courtyard and workshop layout). This layout has evolved over time but remains partially visible. The town is also structured into districts or neighbourhoods, each with its own identity.

Craftsmanship and savoir-faire: ceramics

Ceramics play an important role in the local identity. The 'botteghe' (workshops) encompass the entire production process: design, creation, firing and sale. These workshops often operate as independent units, sometimes family-run, and pass on ancient craft traditions. Some are specialised (for example, workshops run exclusively by women) and produce both artistic pieces and everyday objects. Intergenerational transmission is strong, with workshops that have been active for several generations.

The manufacturing process is comprehensive: shaping the clay, initial firing, decoration (often highly refined), glazing, and then final firing. Styles can vary, drawing on local traditions, historical influences and contemporary adaptations (specific commissions, collaborations, exports). Production is both local and outward-looking.

Despite strong local roots, artisans are part of wider networks: participation in festivals, international exhibitions, exchanges with other countries (e.g. China), and hosting 'artist residencies'. This

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demonstrates a circulation of practices and an adaptation to a global market, whilst maintaining a local identity. The artistic language and techniques facilitate these exchanges, transcending language barriers.

Cultural life and community dynamics

The city boasts an active cultural life, with alternative venues complementing traditional facilities (theatres, events). These venues welcome a diverse audience and contribute to local dynamics. Collective initiatives, sometimes promoted by communities or groups, demonstrate a diversity of engagement beyond traditional institutions.

Some historic spaces, such as inner courtyards or squares integrated into palaces, have been opened to the public and repurposed. The decorations (inspired in particular by Renaissance motifs rediscovered in Rome) bear witness to artistic continuity. These places are now used both as heritage sites and as spaces for circulation or visits.

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Giulia, at the Cesarina in Faenza

06-04-2026

The welcome dinner took place in Faenza at Giulia, a member of the 'Italian Association of Cesarine', presented as a place that embodies traditional Italian hospitality based on the home, shared meals and the passing on of local traditions.



The dinner is conceived as an experience of conviviality and exchange rather than simply a catering service. The hospitality is based on a strong focus on people, their needs and inclusion, particularly through adapting dishes to different dietary requirements.

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Giulia emerges as the central figure in this experience. Deeply involved in welcoming guests, she presents the produce, explains the recipes and shares local culinary traditions in a familiar and informal atmosphere. Her career combines culture, teaching and heritage. Trained in archaeology and later in Italian literature, she also describes herself as a researcher and teacher, with a strong interest in cultural and linguistic transmission. Her work encompasses various areas: research, teaching, hospitality (Giulia also runs a holiday home in Brisighella, in the hills near Faenza) and the promotion of local traditions. In particular, she organises cookery courses and immersive experiences centred on Italian gastronomy, specifically the artisanal production of fresh pasta made entirely by hand using traditional techniques.

Our conversations also highlight her attachment to Italy's architectural and cultural heritage. Giulia mentions the challenges involved in restoring old houses and the importance of preserving them, despite administrative and financial hurdles. Through 'the Le Cesarine Association', Giulia thus develops an approach to hospitality based on conviviality, the passing on of knowledge, a focus on people and the promotion of local daily practices. She presents herself as a figure of cultural mediation, a crossroads between heritage, gastronomy, teaching and intercultural exchange.

The Twinning Association

07-04-2026

The Association, established on 14 September 1999 in Faenza, is a voluntary, non-profit organisation that supports the Municipality in its institutional relations with twin towns. It currently has around 80 members.

• Main objectives of the association:

- to help promote the concept of twinning as a union of communities which, by seeking to act from a European perspective, aim to share challenges, exchange different opinions and viewpoints on topics of common interest, and forge ever closer bonds of friendship;
- to identify areas for action, paying particular attention to the themes of culture (from art to gastronomy), young people and education, citizenship, sustainable development, economic and social development, social inclusion and solidarity;
- to improve understanding of political, social and cultural issues within European and international contexts;
- support twinning activities in agreement with all the institutions of the city of Faenza, the relevant province and the Emilia-Romagna Region;
- to develop exchanges between schools, associations and citizens, based on topics of common interest;

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- to promote projects aimed at establishing and maintaining good relations with twin towns, giving new impetus to and enhancing the concept of twinning, whilst encouraging its further development through initiatives, meetings, seminars, conferences, study trips, publications and any other action useful for achieving the set objectives;
- to collaborate with local associations sharing the same aims and objectives, in a spirit of solidarity focused on the well-being of the communities concerned.

Twin towns:

1. Toki (Japan) has been twinned with Faenza since 23 October 1979
2. Rijeka (Croatia) has been twinned with Faenza since 16 September 1983
3. Talavera de la Reina (Spain) has been twinned with Faenza since 23 October 1986
4. Timisoara (Romania) has been twinned with Faenza since 12 March 1991
5. Amaroussion (Greece) has been twinned with Faenza since 10 June 1992
6. Bergerac (France) has been twinned with Faenza since 13 November 1998
7. Schwäbisch Gmünd (Germany) has been twinned with Faenza since 18 March 2001
8. Gmunden (Austria) has been twinned with Faenza since 25 October 2008
9. Jingdezhen (China) signed a Friendship Agreement with Faenza on 20 April 2013.

President: Carla Benedetti
Vice-President: Maria Rosaria Scolaro

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The historical and cultural development of the Romagna region has its roots in the Roman and later Byzantine periods. The name 'Emilia' derives from the Via Aemilia, a major Roman road built in 187 BC to link Piacenza with Rimini, whilst 'Romagna' refers to 'Romangia', a territory under the influence of the Byzantine Empire. This history has shaped traditions, cultures and ways of life distinct from those of Emilia, which are still evident today in the local cuisine, social practices and territorial organisation. Despite the recent administrative creation of Emilia-Romagna after the Second World War, these historical identities remain strongly present.

Faenza itself developed in Roman times along the River Lamone, following the classical urban layout centred on the cardo and decumanus. This historical organisation still shapes the town centre and certain local traditions today.

Agriculture, tourism and the local economy

The region remains deeply rooted in agriculture, which has historically shaped the local economy. The hills are largely covered in vineyards, whilst the plains are home to orchards and cereal crops, forming agricultural landscapes that contribute directly to the region's identity.

The recent floods of 2023 and 2024 have severely affected the region, causing extensive damage to residential, agricultural and economic areas. These events follow the Covid crisis and mark a turning point for the area. Reconstruction is strengthening local cooperation and regional solidarity. Various support measures have been put in place, notably financial aid for businesses and schemes to revitalise the historic centre.

The local economy is also based on services, retail, catering and tourism. These sectors operate in an interdependent manner: agricultural produce feeds the local gastronomy, which in turn supports the area's appeal to tourists. Current challenges include the revitalisation of town centres, retaining the resident population, supporting local businesses, digital transformation and improving quality of life.

The 'Faenza Centro Storico Urban Hub' project is part of this approach to urban regeneration and territorial development, aiming to make the city centre more accessible, attractive and vibrant.

Faenza and its ceramic heritage

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Faenza stands as one of Italy's leading centres for ceramics. This ancient tradition, dating back to Roman times, shapes the city's cultural heritage, local economy and international image. The very term 'faience' derives directly from the city's name, a testament to its historical prestige.

The sector is based on a comprehensive ecosystem that brings together artisans, workshops, museums, technical training, cultural events and international networks. The savoir-faire has evolved over the centuries through techniques, decorations, colours and uses, whilst maintaining a strong artisanal continuity.

The International Ceramics Museum (MIC), founded in 1908 and subsequently rebuilt after the destruction of the Second World War with the support of major artistic figures such as Picasso, occupies a central place in this dynamic. It houses over 60,000 works covering the global history of ceramics from 4000 BC, as well as a specialist library, educational workshops and temporary exhibitions. The Carlo Zauli Museum completes this complex by showcasing the workshop and the work of the master ceramist.

Italian Association of Ceramic Cities



The presentation also highlights the role of the Italian Association of Ceramic Cities (AICC), established in 1999 to preserve and develop Italian artisanal and artistic production. This organisation brings together most of Italy's ceramic-producing regions and coordinates initiatives to promote culture, tourism and the economy.

In particular, the association organises 'Buongiorno Ceramica', a national event dedicated to discovering ceramic craftsmanship throughout Italy. It also develops international partnerships and works on new European geographical indications applied to artisanal and industrial production, considered a strategic challenge for the sector's recognition.

Ceramics are presented as a living heritage that continues to evolve through technical training courses, artist residencies, competitions, festivals and educational projects. Various social initiatives linked to ceramics are also developed, particularly projects involving people with disabilities or the younger generation.

Cultural events and local traditions

Faenza runs a significant cultural programme centred on ceramics and local traditions. The international 'Premio Faenza' competition, organised every two years since 1938, is dedicated to contemporary expressions of artistic ceramics.

The 'Argillà' event, held every two years in the streets of the historic centre, transforms the city into a vast market and exhibition space dedicated to artisanal and artistic ceramics. The event also features workshops, demonstrations, spectacular open-air firings, concerts and educational activities. It forms part of a European cooperation project launched with the French city of Aubagne.

Folk traditions remain very much alive through the historic organisation of the city's five districts ('Rioni'): White, Yellow, Green, Red and Black. These communities spend the whole year preparing major traditional events such as the Palio del Niballo and the Nott de Bisò. The Palio combines historical parades, equestrian

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competitions, flag-waving displays and historical re-enactments. The Nott de Bisò is based on the symbolic destruction of the Niballo, a figure that once represented the Saracen threat and, more generally, collective difficulties and adversities.

Territorial development and local governance

Local urban regeneration strategies are based on participatory approaches and integrated action plans involving local authorities, economic stakeholders, residents and European partners. These policies aim to support local businesses, improve town centres and enhance the area's appeal.

European projects play a key role in this process, particularly in the areas of urban regeneration, sustainable communication, citizen participation and cultural development.

Tourism development is directly linked to residents' quality of life. The region's appeal is based on heritage conservation, the preservation of local shops, sustainable mobility and a balance between tourist influx and daily life. Tourism is regarded as a comprehensive tool for territorial development, linked to local practices, cultural identity and the quality of urban spaces.

European openness and international cooperation

Faenza boasts a long tradition of relations with Europe and international cooperation. As early as 1968, the city received the "Premio Europa" for its commitment to European ideals and solidarity initiatives.

This dynamic is reflected today in numerous international twinning arrangements and partnerships on themes such as ceramics, culture and peace. The city is twinned with several European cities and also maintains a special relationship with Jingdezhen, the great Chinese city of porcelain and the world capital of majolica.

The region is thus part of numerous European and international networks involving artist exchanges, cultural cooperation, European projects and institutional partnerships. These collaborations enhance the region's international profile and support cultural and craft innovation

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These exchanges present ceramics not merely as a craft, but as a genuine tool for cultural exchange, learning and immersive experience. The project developed in Faenza is based on the idea that learning is built more through direct experience, encounters and practice than through a strictly academic approach.

The workshops are organised around a complete immersion in the local area: working in workshops, discovering decorative techniques, visiting museums, meeting artisans, exploring the vineyards and Ravenna, and visiting Venice and Florence. The experience goes far beyond the simple technical practice of ceramics.

The emergence of international exchanges around Faenza

The international exchange project began with Russia in the early 2010s. At that time, groups from Moscow began travelling to Faenza to discover the local ceramic savoir-faire. The organisation developed gradually through personal networks, university collaborations and meetings between artists, teachers and artisans.

The first Russian group arrived in Faenza in 2014–2015 following a lengthy period of preparation and 'scouting' aimed at identifying workshops capable of hosting foreign artists. Some artisans were initially hesitant, not immediately grasping the benefit of opening their workshops to international visitors. The meeting with Gino Geminiani then proved decisive: he immediately agreed to take part in the project, not only for financial reasons but out of a desire for human connection and cultural exchange.

This openness profoundly transformed the experience. The Russian participants worked in the workshops in the morning and then explored the local area in the afternoon. Connections were forged despite linguistic and cultural differences: the artists spoke Russian, Italian or the local dialect, but managed to understand one another through their artistic practice.

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The workshops are designed as spaces for living transmission. Participants learn decorative techniques, local ceramic traditions, and the materials and colours specific to Faenza. The Italian lessons are directly linked to the vocabulary of ceramics and professional techniques, transforming language learning into a concrete experience.

The concept of the 'workshop' plays a central role. The artisan workshop is presented not only as a workspace but also as a place for passing on knowledge, socialising and the collective construction of knowledge.

The project is largely based on a principle of personalisation. Each group is offered a 'tailor-made' programme designed according to its expectations, interests and technical level. This artisanal approach to organisation is considered essential to the success of the experience.

Emotions, art and interdisciplinary dialogue

The project gradually took on the name 'Emotions – the ceramics of painting', emphasising the role of emotions in artistic exchanges. Ceramics becomes a language that connects different forms of expression: painting, music, literature, performance and visual arts.

A particularly significant moment was 'Russian Week', organised in Faenza in 2018. This week combined an exhibition of paintings, artistic performances and cultural encounters with Russian artists. A performance blending Tchaikovsky's music, readings and live ceramic creation was described as a moment of great emotional intensity. Here, ceramics appeared as a tangible manifestation of music and words.

Gino's role and the transformation of the place

Gino occupies a central place in these exchanges. His workshop is presented as an open, vibrant and deeply human space. Following his passing in 2020, the issue of the disappearance of artisan workshops has come to the fore. Participants highlight that in Italy, many workshops close when their founder passes away, due to a lack of succession or a successor.

Faced with this risk, an association is set up to preserve the place and carry on its spirit. The aim is to transform the workshop into a space for co-working, artist residencies, training and international hospitality. The place must remain open to young people, artists and cultural exchanges to preserve the 'energy' and 'vibe' of the original project.

This transformation is also based on the search for a sustainable economic model that combines training, residencies, space rental and cultural activities. The project is gradually evolving towards a hybrid model that combines:

- artist residencies
- artisan co-working
- training workshops
- experiential tourism
- international exchanges
- cultural events

The aim is not only to produce objects, but also to preserve savoir-faire, values and human relationships. The spaces are designed as meeting places for artists, craftspeople, students and visitors from all over the world.

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Japanese, American and European artists are regularly hosted in residence. These exchanges demonstrate a constant commitment to international openness and the circulation of artistic practices.

Ceramics as a tool for experiential tourism

Ceramics is gradually becoming a genuine experiential tourism product. The aim is not only to showcase the workshops, but to offer a complete multisensory experience that combines:

- handicraft
- cultural immersion
- gastronomy
- landscapes
- human encounters
- exploring the local area

Visitors take part in the grape harvest, meet local artisans, and discover the materials and production techniques. Some Russian participants encounter vineyards or grapes for the first time right in the fields, transforming everyday activities into rich cultural experiences.

This approach is based on the concept of 'genius loci', or the spirit of the place. Local identity becomes a central resource of the tourism project.

Preservation of know-how and training

The exchanges place strong emphasis on the need to preserve traditional crafts related to ceramics. Training courses welcome amateurs, enthusiasts and professionals alike. Knowledge transfer can be academic but also entirely informal.

The workshops welcome:

- professional artists
- students
- amateurs
- people undergoing retraining
- international visitors

Preserving the techniques and work ethic of craftsmanship appears to be a fundamental challenge. The artisans working in the workshops create products with strong links to their region of origin. The shapes, objects and decorations are inspired by local traditions, particularly those of Sicily. Some objects, such as Sicilian ceramic jugs or heads, are reinterpreted in a contemporary style whilst retaining a strong sense of identity.

The refusal to use industrial moulds is presented as an artistic and cultural choice that allows production to retain a wholly manual and unique—yet also profitable—dimension. Indeed, the workshops also operate through direct sales, online orders and networks of galleries across Italy.

Faenza as an international ceramics ecosystem

Faenza is described as a region particularly conducive to the development of these projects thanks to:

- the presence of the MIC

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- the international ceramics network
- the city's historical reputation
- the concentration of workshops
- ongoing cultural exchanges

The proximity to the International Museum of Ceramics reinforces this dynamic, making the city an international meeting point for artists, researchers and craftspeople.

The city appears far more open on an international level compared to other Italian ceramics centres, which have remained more focused on their local market.

Finally, the discussions turn to the difficulties encountered: Covid, the war in Ukraine, economic hardships, and the destruction caused by the 2023 floods that affected some workshops.

Despite these crises, the project continues to evolve through new international partnerships, particularly with the United States and other European countries. The project's continuity is based on the idea of constant adaptation, cooperation and commitment to the values of openness, transmission and human exchange.

Taken together, these exchanges demonstrate how ceramics in Faenza have become a tool for international cooperation, cultural transmission, experiential tourism and regional revitalisation, bringing together craftsmanship, artistic creation, hospitality and local development

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Steering Committee

Wednesday 8 April



Discussions focus primarily on the operational structure of the project, with particular attention to financial aspects, the organisation of training courses and the planning of upcoming mobility activities.

To facilitate the inclusion of new arrivals, the meeting begins with a round of detailed introductions by the partners to clarify their profiles, the organisations they represent and the expertise they bring to the project.

The participants come mainly from the sectors of tourism, regional development, training, European project management and local government. Various organisations operate in the fields of rural tourism, heritage, entrepreneurship, higher education and support for local authorities.

The exchanges highlight significant territorial and cultural diversity among the partners (France, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Portugal, etc.). This diversity is presented as a strength of the project, enabling the comparison of different approaches to territorial development and hospitality. Participants regularly emphasise the importance of European cooperation, mutual learning and the exchange of local experiences.

The complementary nature of the partners' profiles is also highlighted: some partners contribute academic expertise (tourism, economics, destination management), whilst others bring operational experience in the field (tourist offices, local authorities, business support, regional development). This combination of theory and practice is presented as central to the project's rationale.

General schedule and organisation of mobility activities



Much of the discussion is devoted to finalising the schedule for the upcoming study visits and training courses already planned for the second half of 2026.

The first three visits are presented as phases of inspiration and observation, whilst the subsequent ones will be more focused on capitalisation, training and experimentation. The final phase of the project is to culminate in a final seminar in Bled, Slovenia.

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This planning is considered essential to enable partners to make advance arrangements for logistics, bookings and the mobilisation of the local public. A change of date and venue is always possible, but only if necessary and well in advance.

Financial management and budget monitoring

Financial monitoring plays an important role in the project. Several partners have expressed concerns regarding:

- the breakdown of expenditure by 'work package', particularly whether it is possible to adjust between WPs
- the available budget lines and, in particular, self-financing
- the methods for completing the financial tables
- the possibilities for transfers between activities

The coordinator points out that the main principle is based on adherence to the 'work packages' rather than the details of sub-activities. Some flexibility is possible within a single budget block, but significant transfers (>20%) between categories remain subject to restrictions.

It should also be noted that, before a new payment can be requested, a utilisation threshold of approximately 80% of the funds must be reached. Partners must therefore complete their financial statements in a timely manner to avoid administrative delays.

Discussions also highlight the practical difficulties associated with monitoring tools (calculation formulas, understanding tables, consistency of descriptions). A spirit of mutual support emerges among the partners to clarify the rules. Ivana has excellent knowledge of Erasmus+ projects; she is able to ensure the accuracy of many of the answers provided and to supplement them with her own experience.

Reporting, communication and administrative monitoring

The partners are informed that in June each will have to draw up an interim report summarising the actions carried out. A request is made for a simplified template (character limit, required structure) in order to standardise the contributions.

Expenses relating to communication, dissemination and project management are included in eligible costs. Participants are reminded that documentation of activities (photos, reporting, communication) is an integral part of the planned work.

Training phase: the operational heart of the project

The most detailed part of the discussions concerns the organisation of training courses, which are considered the central phase of the project. Partners must now adopt an operational approach: defining content, formats, target audiences and teaching methods.

Each partner is invited to propose training modules linked to their own expertise or region. The topics covered are numerous:

- Culture of hospitality and territorial development
- citizen participation, local cooperation and collective intelligence
- Regenerative tourism and local entrepreneurship
- heritage and territorial identity
- hospitality and quality of service

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Training courses must be designed as practical tools for local areas, rather than purely theoretical content.

Building a hybrid model: international modules and local modules

A two-tier pedagogical framework is gradually taking shape:

- a short international module, managed by the European partners (presentation, video, external speaker).
- a local module, delivered in the local language by local partners.

This distinction directly addresses the challenges associated with translation and multilingual facilitation.

The international module primarily serves to open up, inspire and share European experiences. The local module must then enable the local public to take ownership of the project.

The themes proposed at the international level are as follows:

- Culture of hospitality, territorial regeneration and entrepreneurship (Andrea Succi)
- Community Development (Andrea Succi)
- Citizen participation and local governance (Bruno Delamarche)
- Local and international tourism and the liveability of the area (Bruno Delamarche)
- Strategic territorial skills and hospitality (Giang Pham)
- Collective skills (Giang Pham)
- The territory (Giang Pham)
- GMT™ model (Andrea Succi)

The project document was presented with a proposal for 9 international modules, so there remains the possibility of delivering 2 modules for partners who wish to do so.

The language issue has become a central topic of discussion. Several partners, particularly those from Croatia and Slovenia, strongly insist that it is impossible to organise long-term training courses in English with a local audience.

The arguments put forward are numerous:

- loss of attention and energy due to simultaneous translation
- difficulty for participants in expressing themselves in a foreign language
- a decline in participation and interaction
- risk of courses being too long and lacking dynamism

The partners therefore uphold a clear principle: training courses for local stakeholders must be delivered in the local language. International partners may participate as observers, possibly with some translation support or during specific exchange sessions.

This discussion leads to a redefinition of the role of foreign partners: they are not necessarily direct trainers, but can intervene on an ad hoc basis, share experiences, or propose videos or short international clips.

Pedagogical approaches and adaptation to the target audience

The discussions highlight a strong desire to adapt content to different audiences:

- Public Administrators
- Administrative staff
- students
- Entrepreneurs

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- ~~public administrations~~
- associations (members, employees, volunteers)
- cultural workers
- young people

Please note that each region has its own cultural, social and economic context. The formats must therefore be flexible: a full day, several half-days, separate sessions depending on the audience, etc.

The partners also emphasise the importance of:

- case studies
- of real-life experiences
- testimonials
- real-life situations
- participatory processes

The aim is to deliver dynamic training courses rooted in local contexts. These courses are prototypes designed to be replicated.

Various initiatives develop conceptual approaches to hospitality. Hospitality is presented not merely as a tourism issue, but as a comprehensive local culture that involves:

- the quality of human relationships
- local cooperation
- a sense of belonging
- involvement of local residents
- collective intelligence

The discussions focused on various conceptual points on which the proposed training videos are based.

1) An important distinction is made between:
   - local resources (heritage, museums, landscape...)
   - the tourism product collectively built around these resources
2) The role of governance, cooperation and local networks is constantly highlighted.
3) Collective skills

Another central concept concerns ‘collective territorial skills’. The speakers explain that certain capabilities can only exist through collective action. The metaphor of Formula 1 is used: a team changes tyres in a matter of seconds thanks to collective coordination, whereas a single individual would take much longer. This logic is applied to territories and tourism.

4) Citizen participation and local development

The discussions also address the difficulties of mobilising residents and local stakeholders around territorial projects. Various partners explain their methods for:

- foster dialogue
- build participation
- foster collective projects
- strengthen a sense of belonging

The concept of ‘social capital’ is cited as an essential element of territorial development.

5) Territorial roots and local identity

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The partners regularly emphasise the importance of starting with the territory itself: its inhabitants, its practices, its resources, its stories and its specific characteristics. One idea recurs frequently: the more a territory is rooted in its own identity, the more it can open up to the world and develop a unique offering.

Heritage, local culture and everyday practices are seen as key drivers of attractiveness and differentiation.

6) Sustainability and mobility

The issue of the carbon footprint of travel is briefly addressed. The partners highlight the difficulty of reconciling European mobility with sustainability objectives, particularly in certain areas with poor rail services. A discussion is underway on car sharing, carbon footprint estimation and best practices in mobility.

At the end of the meeting, each partner is asked to propose a number of training topics by the end of June. The aim is to establish a minimum of nine common modules, which can then be adapted at local level.

Partners must also specify:

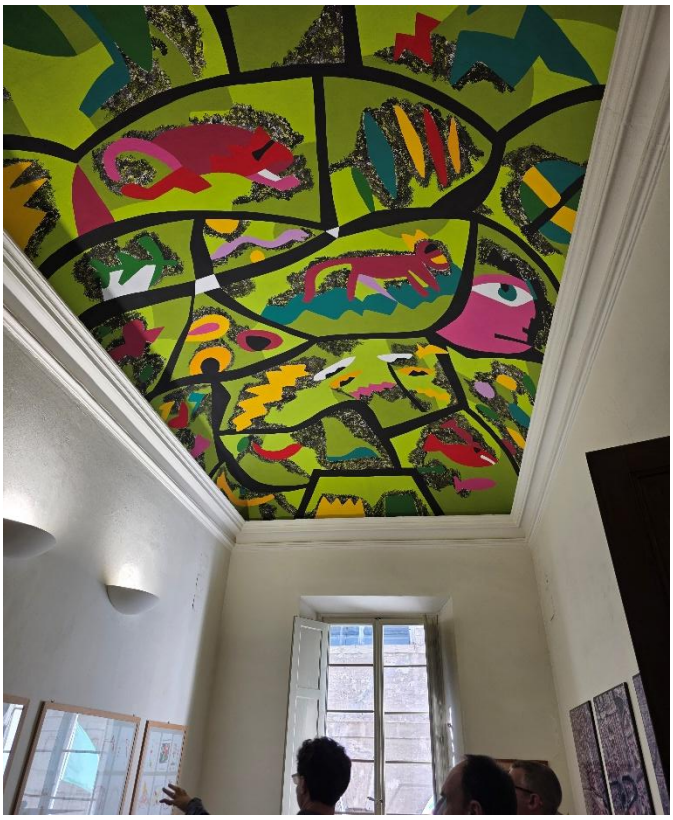
- possible dates
- the desired formats
- the target audience
- any requirements for international cooperation

Visit to the Palazzo del Podestà, where the Steering Committee meeting was held

The Palazzo del Podestà is a former bank and later administrative building situated in the heart of the city of Faenza. This building has gradually become a hybrid space combining public administration, architectural heritage and a museum of contemporary art. The building now houses services related to the local area, urban planning, the environment and the management of the municipalities within the territorial union, which covers approximately 600 km^2 between the plains and the foothills of the Apennines.

The building is the result of the merger of several medieval houses that were gradually transformed in the 18th and 19th centuries into the neoclassical style. In 1996, a major restoration project was launched to restore the building's historic structures, whilst integrating a contemporary approach. This restoration does not aim to freeze the heritage in time, but to create a dialogue between ancient architecture, administrative functions and contemporary artistic creation.

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Since 2015, the building has been officially designated a museum of contemporary art, whilst continuing to house the offices of local public services. Visitors are free to enter the workspaces, view the artworks and move around the building whilst the staff carry out their daily tasks.

This coexistence of administrative work and museum space is presented as an innovative approach aimed at bringing public institutions closer to citizens. Discussions highlight the idea that the administration should not be perceived as a closed or inaccessible space, but as a living part of the local area and its cultural identity. Working daily amidst contemporary artworks also helps to transform the relationship with administrative work and the professional environment.

City representatives present this model as relatively unique in Italy. The aim is as symbolic as it is functional: to make public heritage a shared space where heritage, work and culture coexist in everyday use.

The artists intervene directly on the vaults, walls, circulation spaces and administrative offices. The contemporary frescoes reinterpret, in particular, the neoclassical decorative styles and grotesque motifs inherited from Roman antiquity and later from the Renaissance.

One detailed example involves a work that plays on the Italian double meaning of the word ‘volta’, which means both ‘vault’ and ‘turn’. The work thus establishes a dialogue between temporality, architectural memory and contemporary creation. This logic of overlapping eras recurs regularly in the explanations: the contemporary interventions do not seek to erase the site’s history, but to extend its various historical layers.

The building thus becomes an experimental space in which the ancient heritage serves as a backdrop for new forms of cultural mediation.

The museum spread throughout the city

The talks also present the concept of the ‘diffused museum’ developed in Faenza. The museum is not confined to a single building but extends to various urban spaces: restaurants, walls, public spaces, administrative buildings or transport infrastructure. Contemporary works are distributed throughout the city with the aim of integrating art into everyday practices rather than confining it to specialised spaces.

The discussions return to the role of ceramics in shaping Faenza’s cultural identity. Several works on display in the building make direct use of ceramic materials or engage with local traditions of craft production. Some works feature ceramics from around the world to demonstrate Faenza’s international outlook and its integration into global artistic networks.

The speakers also explain that ceramics were long considered merely utilitarian objects, before gradually being recognised as an art form in their own right after the 1950s. Several prominent artists mentioned

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during the debate played a key role in this evolution, experimenting with new forms, new materials and new uses for ceramics.

The presence of sculptures, installations, natural materials and hybrid works demonstrates this evolution of ceramics towards much more open contemporary artistic practices.

The project's operation is based on an artistic selection overseen by a scientific committee tasked with ensuring the quality of the works on display. The discussions highlight the role of national cultural institutions and the Ministry of Culture in the project's official recognition. All works integrated into the building are validated through a scientific and institutional process.

Finally, the discussions reveal a broader reflection on quality of life at work and the role of culture in everyday spaces. Administrative staff work in constant contact with the artworks, whilst visitors simultaneously discover public activities and cultural spaces. This proximity aims to blur the boundaries between institutions, residents and cultural practices.

Art is presented as an element that contributes directly to well-being, territorial identity and the appeal of public spaces. The building thus becomes an instrument of cultural revitalisation as well as an administrative space.

The interplay of these elements highlights a territorial approach based on the integration of historical heritage, contemporary creation and public services. The project seeks to demonstrate that an administrative building can become a vibrant cultural space without losing its institutional functions.

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International Museum of Ceramics (MIC)



Monica presents the visit to the MIC – the International Museum of Ceramics in Faenza – as a journey through the global history of ceramics, from ancient civilisations to contemporary creation. Housed in a former convent and monastery, the museum is organised chronologically and geographically, with sections dedicated to China, Japan, Korea, pre-Columbian civilisations, the Mediterranean world, Islamic ceramics, the Italian Renaissance and, finally, modern and contemporary creation.

The museum is considered the world's most important museum dedicated to ceramics. It functions not only as an exhibition space but as a true cultural and scientific centre combining conservation, restoration, research, education and contemporary creation. Visitors are invited to consider ceramics not only as an artistic object but also as a technical, historical and cultural material.

Influence of the Islamic world and the circulation of knowledge

Particular attention is paid to the influence of the Islamic world on the development of European ceramics. Monica explains that numerous technical and artistic advances relating to glazes, enamels and firing processes were developed in Iranian and Arab territories before influencing Spain and then Italy.

This circulation of technical knowledge is presented as fundamental to the history of Italian majolica. These exchanges demonstrate how techniques travelled along trade routes, through the migration of craftsmen and via cultural exchanges between the Mediterranean, Europe and the East.

Faenza and the birth of majolica

The tour traces Faenza's central role in the European history of ceramics. From the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, the city developed a particularly significant production sector thanks to the quality of its workshops, technical expertise and the growth of trade.

The city already had several dozen workshops in the 14th and 15th centuries, making ceramics a leading economic sector but also a defining feature of local social and cultural life. The word 'faïence' itself gradually became an international synonym for Italian majolica through European trade networks.

The ceramics produced in Faenza evolved considerably during the Renaissance thanks to the development of new painting techniques, new colours and narrative decorations inspired by the Bible, mythology or literature. Each piece was conceived as a unique work of art, much like a painting.

Ceramic techniques and artistic innovations

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The explanations provide a detailed account of the various techniques involved in making, firing and glazing ceramics. Monica highlights the differences between the various types of ceramics: terracotta, majolica, stoneware and porcelain. Italian majolica, in particular, relies on the use of white glazes overlaid with coloured decorations made from metal oxides.

Some highly complex techniques (which I did not fully understand 😊), such as the metallic lustres developed in certain Italian centres, require multiple firings and the use of precious metals such as silver or copper. These processes originate directly from the Islamic world and bear witness to the high technical standard achieved by certain Renaissance workshops.

Regional variations are also highlighted: each area developed its own uses of materials, colours and decorations based on local resources and artistic traditions.

The museum as a living space for restoration, research and outreach

The MIC presents itself as a living space where heritage conservation, university education and cultural mediation intertwine. The museum has:

- a restoration department (with just one person working there 😊)
- educational workshops for schools
- a specialist library with 70,000 volumes
- conservation workshops
- university courses related to ceramic restoration

The restoration of the works appears to be an extremely technical and meticulous task. Monica explains that some pieces destroyed during the Second World War bombings are gradually being reconstructed from thousands of fragments that have been stored in boxes for several decades.

The museum also serves as a training centre for conservation and restoration students, who come here to learn techniques for handling and conserving materials.

War damage and the museum's reconstruction

The museum was severely damaged during the 1944 bombings, resulting in the loss of around 80% of the collections. Numerous works were recovered from the rubble and then gradually restored over the decades.

The museum's reconstruction relied largely on an international effort involving artists and collectors. Picasso played a significant symbolic role in this revival, supporting the museum and donating works. His commitment helped restore the institution's international standing after the war.

Modern and contemporary ceramics

The reconstruction of the MIC thus became a symbol of cultural resilience and international artistic cooperation. The exhibition also traces the evolution of ceramics towards modern and contemporary forms. From Art Nouveau onwards and throughout the 20th century, ceramics became a space for artistic experimentation involving numerous prominent artists.

The museum champions an open vision of ceramics as a contemporary artistic language capable of integrating very diverse practices.

These exchanges also highlight the current challenges facing the contemporary sector: lack of funding, the complexity of cultural networks, and the difficulty of providing long-term support for artists and experimental projects.

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Ceramics are presented as an international language connecting numerous regions and institutions. The discussions highlight collaborations with Slovenia, France, Japan, China and Portugal.

The mutual exchange of influences between China, Japan, the Islamic world and Europe is constantly highlighted to demonstrate that the history of ceramics is founded on constant cultural exchanges.

A significant part of the exhibition is devoted to the fascination that Chinese and Japanese porcelain held for Europeans. Until the 18th century, Europeans imported these objects on a massive scale without mastering the techniques of their manufacture.

Porcelain became a symbol of refinement, influencing not only ceramics but also the decorative arts, fashion, interior design and European aesthetic tastes. These exchanges show how Japanese and Chinese productions gradually adapted to European markets, whilst retaining their technical and artistic distinctiveness.

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The Pascucci Printing House: textile craftsmanship and the folk heritage of Romagna



The visit to the Pascucci Printing House in Gambettola forms part of a broader reflection on the artisanal skills that still shape the cultural and economic identity of Romagna today. The workshop is presented as one of the oldest artisanal textile printing houses still active in the region, founded in 1826 and passed down through five generations within the same family.

The print shop appears as a place where material heritage, the memory of craftsmanship and cultural transmission intersect. The business still relies on ancient manual techniques of engraving and printing on fabric, using hand-carved wooden blocks. These blocks, often centuries-old, constitute a veritable heritage of craftsmanship preserved within the family workshop.

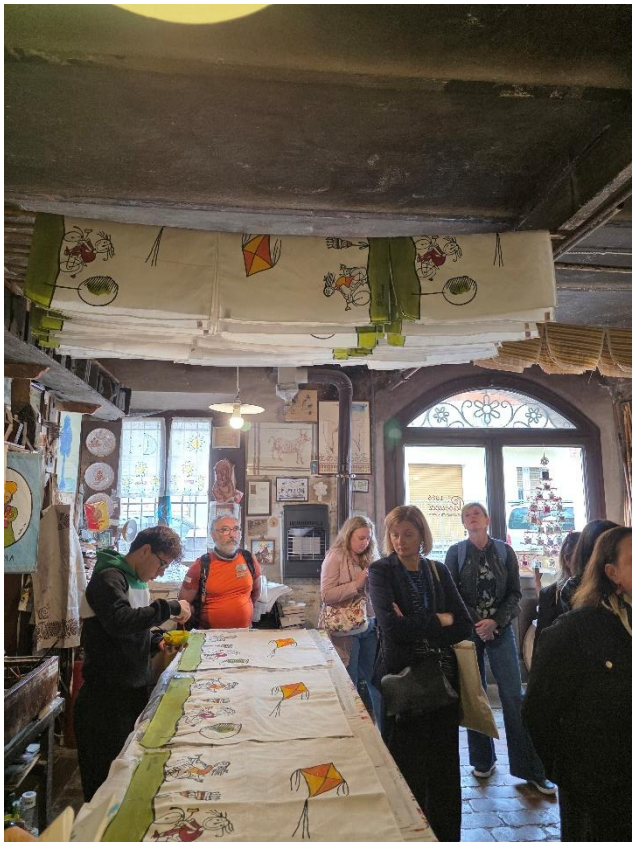
Discussions in the Gambettola area highlight that the region has a strong tradition of craftsmanship linked to restoration, textiles and manual trades. The expertise of Stamperia Pascucci is part of this historical continuity of a local economy founded on craftsmanship and the transformation of materials.

The 'rust printing' technique

One of the central elements of the visit concerns the traditional technique of "rust printing", typical of Romagna. This printing method is based on a pigment made from iron oxide, vinegar and flour, which creates that characteristic rust-brown colour of Romagna fabrics. The patterns are printed directly onto linen, cotton or hemp cloth using carved wooden blocks.



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The speakers emphasise the entirely manual nature of the process: the preparation of the pigments, the printing, the drying and the fixing of the colours require precise technical skill passed down from generation to generation. Production remains deliberately removed from industrial processes in order to preserve the product's artisanal identity.

This technique is also presented as deeply rooted in the daily life of the Romagna countryside. Historically, the printed fabrics were used to produce household linen, tablecloths and sheets, as well as items related to agricultural work or local festivals.

Everyday objects, folk culture and regional identity

The printing workshop is described as a living testament to Romagna's folk culture. The printed motifs – roosters, bunches of grapes, towers, flowers, geometric or religious symbols – directly evoke the rural imagery and domestic practices of the region.

The fabrics produced once accompanied the major events of social life: weddings, fairs, religious festivals or agricultural activities. Some large cloths were used in particular to cover oxen during fairs or village celebrations, combining practical function with a symbolic representation of family prestige.

Discussions in Gambettola also show that the area's artisanal heritage remains deeply embedded in local narratives, just as activities linked to recycling or the textile trades are evoked in other visits.

Family transmission and the preservation of fragile savoir-faire

The Pascucci Printing Works is presented as an example of exceptional family continuity. Despite the industrialisation of the textile sector and the gradual disappearance of numerous small artisanal printing workshops, the workshop has maintained its traditional methods and local operations, never employing more than 10 staff, regardless of demand or the economic history of the region.

The discussions highlight the economic fragility of this type of artisanal structure, which relies largely on:

- the transmission of skills;
- recognition of heritage;
- tourist interest;
- the cultural promotion of the local area.

The survival of these workshops seems directly linked to the ability of local communities to view these skills not merely as commercial production, but as a living cultural heritage, preserving identity and tradition.

Crafts, tourism and international outreach

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The visit also shows how the print shop has gradually opened up to a new audience thanks to cultural tourism. Today, the workshop serves as a production space, a demonstration area and a heritage site.

Visitors discover printing techniques, antique tools and the archives preserved by the family. This openness transforms the workshop into a space for cultural mediation where craftsmanship becomes a vehicle for local storytelling.

The print shop also develops collaborations with the worlds of design and contemporary fashion. Partnerships with luxury brands or artistic projects enable a link between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary creation, whilst giving international visibility to Romagna's savoir-faire.

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Federico Fellini's House



Memories of places, Fellini's legacy and the cinematic landscape

The interpretation of the region revolves largely around the figure of Federico Fellini, whose early years spent in Gambettola continue to shape a significant part of the local identity. The urban landscapes, public squares, markets, administrative buildings, theatres and historic shops are presented as elements that fuelled his artistic imagination and which later reappear in his cinematic universe. The territory is reinterpreted through cinema: the streets, houses and atmospheres of daily life become narrative backdrops in which memory, fiction and reality overlap.

The central square, cultural spaces and certain historic shops, such as the pharmacy, remain today as identifiable landmarks in stories linked to Fellini. The urban environment appears relatively well-preserved and retains a strong continuity with the landscape observed by the filmmaker as a child. This permanence of the urban setting reinforces the link between tangible heritage and cinematic memory.

The grandparents' house: family memory and cultural project

Fellini's grandparents' house occupies a central place in the stories. Situated outside the city centre but linked to local life thanks to a certain social affluence and the family's mobility, it represents an intimate space that profoundly marked the director's childhood. Several scenes from his films originate directly from this domestic setting, particularly those linked to the circus, popular shows or familiar figures.

The building gradually became a heritage issue of great significance. After years of neglect, the house was put up for sale for around €300,000 in the early 2000s. Its state of disrepair was then very advanced, raising

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fears that it would be lost or converted into a private residence. A strong civic movement developed to prevent this loss of heritage. Residents and associations entered the abandoned house to photograph the interiors, which had remained almost intact since Fellini's time. The circulation of these images stirred strong emotion among the public and intensified the pressure in favour of its preservation.

The restoration project ultimately cost around €500,000, funded thanks to the involvement of local authorities, the region and the Emilia-Romagna Film Commission. The works aimed to preserve the building's historic structures by reusing the original materials – beams, bricks, paintwork – whilst adapting the spaces for new cultural uses.

Today, the house hosts artist residencies, training courses, workshops and activities related to cinema, theatre, clowning and the performing arts. The venue is not conceived as a static museum, but as a living space for artistic creation and transmission.

The monumental tree and the memory of the landscape

The tree in front of the house plays an important symbolic role in stories linked to Fellini. Planted around 1918 in memory of a family member who fell during the First World War, it is now classified as a national monumental tree.

This tree is a central feature of Fellini's emotional landscape. During one of his returns to Gambettola after many years, he is said to have recognised the house primarily thanks to this tree. The correspondence also shows that this type of planting was part of local traditions and contributed to the landscape identity of the area.

Recognition, tensions and relationship with the territory

Fellini's return to Gambettola following his international successes, particularly after winning the Oscar for *La Dolce Vita*, is presented as a moment that was both celebratory and fraught with conflict. A significant section of the population organised a heartfelt collective welcome: gatherings in central squares, popular mobilisation and public celebrations surrounding the filmmaker's return.

At the same time, some criticism emerged, particularly in religious or conservative circles, which considered some of his films provocative or contrary to the social norms of the time. This dual dynamic reveals the complexity of the relationship between Fellini and his home region: popular admiration on the one hand, cultural and moral tensions on the other.

After *Amarcord*, this local recognition grew even stronger and Fellini gradually became a central figure in the cultural identity of the region.

Popular culture, carnival and the circus imagination

Carnival, folk performances and the circus occupy a central place in these exchanges. These cultural forms appear as structuring elements of the local collective imagination and Fellini's artistic universe.

The region is characterised by an ancient tradition of folk festivals, parades, travelling shows and carnival. This festive culture directly feeds into Fellini's aesthetic: his fascination with clowns, marginalised characters, travelling artists and folk performances.

The discussions recall that as a child, Fellini is said to have temporarily left his family to follow a travelling circus. Several scenes in his films, particularly those in which a child watches a circus pass by from his bedroom, find their direct origin in memories linked to the family home and the Gambettola area.

Archives, posters, costumes and objects linked to the circus world are now preserved as part of the local heritage. The discussions also touch upon the contemporary evolution of the circus, particularly the

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gradual disappearance of animal acts and the transformation of traditional forms of popular entertainment.

The local area as a narrative and immersive experience

The local area is also promoted through cultural mediation initiatives such as those developed by the Natura Magica association. The organised tours are based on an immersive approach that combines walking, storytelling and the sensory discovery of urban and rural landscapes.

The aim is to tell the story of the territory through the details of daily life, memories, small local stories and the places that marked Fellini's childhood. Markets, squares, trees, shops and agricultural landscapes become narrative devices that allow us to connect individual memory, collective history and cinematic imagination.

This approach prioritises lived experience, emotion and the sensory interpretation of places rather than a mere historical account.

Traditional economy and the culture of recycling

The exchanges also address a historically significant economic activity in Gambettola: the recovery and processing of materials, particularly metals. Long socially devalued because it was associated with waste, this activity is now reinterpreted through the contemporary principles of the circular economy.

The family-based nature of this economy involved several generations in the collection, sorting and processing of materials. After the Second World War, these skills became essential for clearing the land of the remnants of war – metals, bombs, mines – thereby strengthening their economic and social role.

This activity makes a sustainable contribution to the local economic structure and helps shape the image of a region capable of transforming marginal practices into a model of resilience and sustainability.

Economic diversification and cultural infrastructure

Alongside this recycling economy, other industrial sectors developed, particularly those linked to tobacco, with the presence of warehouses and factories. These activities bear witness to a gradual diversification of the local economic fabric.

Cultural infrastructure – cinemas, theatres, creative spaces – is also evolving whilst maintaining a strong sense of historical continuity. Several venues associated with Fellini are now being repurposed within a cultural framework that brings together heritage, cinema, theatre and contemporary creation.

Taken together, these developments show how Gambettola is progressively building a cultural development strategy based on the interplay between folk heritage, cinematic memory, civic participation and contemporary artistic creation.

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Tour of the town of Gambettola with Roberto



After visiting Federico Fellini's house, we were able to extend our tour of the area with our guide Roberto and his association, Natura Magica

Natura Magica: exploring the local area through walking and storytelling

The exchanges present the work developed by Roberto and Sergio from the 'Natura Magica' association, founded on an approach that combines walking, storytelling and the discovery of the local area. The organisation's principle is based on the idea of 'telling stories while walking' and drawing out narratives from places, landscapes and the details of everyday life. Walking thus becomes a tool for cultural mediation, linking heritage, local memory and the sensory experience of the area.

The association organises activities in the region's natural areas, particularly in the national parks near Faenza, where it also has a lodge that hosts groups and educational activities. The proposed routes are not limited to mountain hikes: they also include 'urban treks' that allow participants to rediscover urban centres through historical, cultural and imaginative narratives.

This approach is based on the search for 'small sparks' in local history: details, memories, anecdotes or characters capable of bringing out a broader narrative about the area.

Federico Fellini as a narrative starting point

The route presented in the transcript is based on the figure of Federico Fellini as a child. The idea is not to offer a traditional biographical tour, but to imagine how the future filmmaker might have been influenced by the landscapes, squares, markets and atmosphere of the area during his childhood.

The organisers explain that they conducted interviews with people who knew Fellini or who have memories linked to his presence in the region. Based on these accounts, several key locations were identified to construct a narrative itinerary through the city.

This approach seeks to bring out a sensitive interpretation of the area: to understand how an everyday environment can fuel the imagination, storytelling and artistic creation.

The local area as a source of artistic inspiration

The market square is one of the first stops on the route. It is presented as an important historical space linked to the trade in hemp, textiles, vegetables and fruit. These exchanges show how these traditional economic activities contributed to the visual, social and sensory atmosphere of the area where Fellini grew up.

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Agricultural production remains an important element of local identity today, particularly with regard to fruit and vegetables. The area is thus portrayed through its everyday practices, economic activities and ordinary landscapes rather than solely through its monumental heritage.

This narrative approach seeks to connect individual memory, local history and collective identity.

An immersive and experiential approach to heritage

The project developed by Natura Magica is based on an immersive experience of the area. Participants discover the places through oral storytelling, physical movement and direct observation of urban or natural landscapes.

This approach ties in with a form of experiential tourism in which the focus is as much on emotions, atmospheres and stories as on the monuments themselves.

Roberto's role and the link between science and storytelling

Roberto emerges as a unique figure who combines scientific work with cultural mediation. In his professional life, he works as a doctor specialising in underwater emergencies and hyperbaric chambers, dealing in particular with diving-related accidents. This scientific expertise contrasts with his role as a storyteller and local guide developed through Natura Magica.

This dual identity illustrates the project's cross-disciplinary approach, in which science, nature, memory and culture intertwine to form a single territorial experience.

The natural landscape and the geological memory of the territory

The exchanges also evoke the geology and natural configuration of the valley around Faenza. The area is described as an ancient alluvial plain shaped by watercourses and alluvial deposits. This geological reality partly explains the structure of the current landscape and certain environmental vulnerabilities of the area.

Taken together, these exchanges demonstrate a desire to develop a slower, more sensitive and narrative-driven relationship with the territory. Walking allows one to observe details, to take the time to tell stories and to forge a more direct connection with the places one passes through.

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Montetiffi to explore the historic pizza pans and take part in a piadina-making workshop



The exchanges take place in the Rubicone Valley, presented as a transitional area between agricultural hills, wooded areas and the first, rockier hills of the Romagna hinterland. The landscape has been profoundly shaped by human activity over the centuries: cultivated land, vineyards, ancient paths, small villages and natural spaces coexist in an environment considered both tamed and preserved.

The area is presented as the historical and cultural heart of this part of Romagna, characterised by an ancient heritage of fortresses, medieval villages and craft traditions that are still very much alive. The limestone hills rising from the neighbouring valleys strongly shape the landscape and create a natural separation between the gentler hills and the steeper areas near the Apennines.

The region promotes a tourism approach based on slowness, experience and authenticity rather than mass tourism. The suggested routes focus on discovering the landscapes, traditions and local people through hiking trails, encounters with local producers and experiences that combine nature, gastronomy and heritage.

Over 130 kilometres of trails criss-cross the area, linking woods, farms, vineyards and small accommodation providers. Hikes are often combined with tastings, meals, visits to wineries or wine-tasting experiences. Tailor-made routes are also organised to suit visitors' preferences, particularly in the evening or at sunset during the summer months.

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Traditional baking plates: a thousand-year-old artisan heritage



The tour then focuses on an artisan workshop specialising in the production of the traditional plates used to prepare *piadina* romagnola. These terracotta plates are one of the most emblematic objects of the local culinary culture.

Production has been documented since at least the 16th century, although experts believe this tradition is likely much older. For centuries, many families in the region have made a living from this craft, which is directly linked to the daily preparation of piadina in homes across Romagna.

The *piadina* itself is considered a very ancient form of unleavened bread, similar to other flatbreads found in various cultures around the world: pita in the Middle East, tortillas in Mexico or Mediterranean focaccia. Studies even cite similar archaeological finds discovered in Iran and Afghanistan several thousand years before our era.

This historical continuity illustrates the depth of the region's culinary traditions.

The workshop we visited is now run mainly by Rosella and her husband. Rosella appears to be the direct heir to a long family line of cooking plate makers. Her grandparents and great-grandparents were already in the trade, which has been passed down from generation to generation.

Accounts describe how this tradition was in danger of disappearing in 1998. At that time, the last remaining active craftsman was considering ceasing production for good following the gradual withdrawal of other families from the sector. Meeting this craftsman sparked a realisation: without immediate transmission, the know-how would have disappeared entirely. The business was therefore revived and relaunched with a view to safeguarding cultural heritage as well as artisanal production.

These exchanges highlight the human dimension of this transmission. The savoir-faire is presented as a cultural and family treasure far more than as a mere economic activity.

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Production relies entirely on locally sourced materials. Unlike many potters who import their clay, the workshop continues to use the specific clays and rocks of the Rubicone Valley.

Various types of stone and clay are collected from the nearby hills during the summer, then dried and ground into powder before being mixed with water to produce the raw material. Certain green or reddish rocks are typical of this geographical area and give the slabs their distinctive properties.

This commitment to local materials is a key element of the product's identity. Several external manufacturers have asked to purchase this specific clay, but the artisans refuse in order to preserve the regional and artisanal character of the production.

The process operates on a circular basis: broken slabs are crushed and then reused in new production runs. Even the ash produced by the kiln is reused in agriculture. The activity generates almost no waste.

Handcrafted production and a rejection of standardisation

Production remains entirely manual. Each slab is individually shaped by hand, without seeking rigid standardisation. The artisans claim this freedom of form and size as an essential part of their professional identity.



Unlike other artisanal productions that must adhere to precise dimensions, the tiles vary slightly depending on the craftsman's technique, practices and preferences. Discussions highlight that what is purchased is not merely a functional object, but the work of an individual and the expression of human craftsmanship.

Regional variations are also significant: between Ravenna and Rimini, the shape of the slabs changes progressively. Some are thicker and smaller, others wider and flatter, depending on local traditions. This lack of standardisation is championed as a form of artisanal freedom in the face of industrial logic.

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The accounts evoke the ancient methods of transporting the slabs before the advent of modern roads. Until 1953, the roads were unpaved and the slabs were transported on the backs of donkeys or mules in special baskets.

The slabs were then fitted with perforated handles that allowed them to be tied together to prevent them from breaking during transport. This organisation demonstrates how closely the craft was linked to the geography, infrastructure and transport conditions of the rural landscape.

The traditional kiln and the mastery of time

Firing is one of the most delicate stages of the process. The slabs are first dried slowly for several days to prevent the formation of cracks or air bubbles that could cause them to break. They are moved regularly within the drying areas to balance the humidity.

The traditional kiln then operates for around nine hours of heating, followed by two full days of gradual cooling. A temperature rise that is too rapid would cause the slabs to explode. Temperatures reach around 600–700 degrees. The fuel used comes mainly from small olive branches or local plant waste. The artisans emphasise that no trees are felled specifically for this purpose.

The entire process is based on a thorough understanding of materials, humidity, fire and firing time.

Tradition, change and cultural transmission

These exchanges give rise to an important reflection on the concept of tradition. Tradition is not presented as something immutable, but as a process of continuous transmission and adaptation. The word itself is traced back to the Latin ‘tradere’, meaning to transmit or pass on from one generation to the next.

The artisans explain that everything is constantly changing, but that certain practices survive precisely because they evolve over time. Everyone involved in this transmission plays an active role in the transformation of savoir-faire.

This dynamic view of tradition allows for the reconciliation of heritage preservation, contemporary adaptation and creative freedom.

The demonstration concludes with the preparation of piadina and the use of the cooking griddles. Visitors take a direct part in certain stages of the process and discover the traditional techniques associated with local cuisine.

Gastronomy appears here as a natural extension of artisanal heritage. The griddles are not merely historical objects, but tools still used in daily life and in contemporary forms of local hospitality.

The exchange as a whole thus demonstrates how a seemingly simple artisanal object becomes a distillation of local history, family memory, agricultural practices, technical know-how and cultural transmission in Romagna.

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Seminar on Collaboration and Local Development (Roncofreddo) with regional representatives from Visit Romagna



The meeting begins in a municipal library presented as a central hub of local life, which has developed over the years to become a space that is at once cultural, educational and social. The mayor highlights the efforts made to transform this facility into a place for intergenerational interaction, particularly aimed at children, families and community activities.

In addition to lending books, the library organises workshops, cultural events and social gatherings that allow residents to come together. It stands as a concrete example of the revitalisation of public services in small rural towns.

Local councillors also stress the importance of openness to the outside world and the need for rural areas not to become insular. Europe is cited as a vital opportunity to build partnerships, exchange experiences and strengthen local capacities. Participation in the European project is thus presented as a way to strengthen ties between areas facing similar challenges.

The European HARET project: knowledge transfer, skills and territorial development

Much of the discussion is devoted to presenting the European project, which brings together partners from Italy, Slovenia, France, Portugal and Croatia. The project seeks to reflect on the transformations of rural areas in the face of changes in tourism, migration, local economies and cultural practices.

The speakers highlight several key challenges:

- preserving traditional local skills;
- promoting artisanal know-how;
- keeping rural ways of life alive;
- passing on knowledge to the younger generation;
- creating networks between economic, cultural and social actors.

The project is divided into several phases:

1. study of the local areas;
2. gathering and sharing expertise;
3. capitalising on and disseminating experiences.

The concept of ‘capitalisation’ frequently arises in discussions: this involves transforming local experiences into resources that can be shared, transferred and reused in other local contexts (with the hope of also joining future European projects and establishing a European network)

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Participants also emphasise the importance of the knowledge economy: the loss of a business or a craftsperson also entails the loss of knowledge, practices and collective memory.

Vocational training, craftsmanship and the preservation of know-how

Representatives from a training body, acting on behalf of CNA – the National Confederation of Artisans – explain their work with local artisans and businesses. They organise training courses supported in particular by the European Social Fund to help young people, the unemployed and artisans to develop or preserve skills related to traditional trades.

The training courses cover:

- traditional crafts;
- textile printing;
- local manual trades;
- emerging tourism activities;
- the development of rural and mountain areas.

The speakers emphasise that, until recently, rural tourism was poorly organised in these areas. However, various programmes are now beginning to train tourism operators specialising in hilly and mountainous areas with a view to developing new forms of regional development.

Rural tourism, agriculture and a return to a more authentic way of life

Several local producers present their businesses and explain their decision to leave urban or salaried jobs to return to a rural life based on agriculture, hospitality and craft production.

A wine and olive oil producer recounts how he set up a bed and breakfast to showcase the history and culture of Romagna to visitors through local produce. His estate is situated in a small mountain hamlet where farming is particularly challenging, which, in his view, reinforces the need to protect these landscapes and these specific products.

Other accounts highlight:

- goat's cheese production;
- agritourism;
- extra virgin olive oil;
- jams and processed products;
- tasting workshops;
- educational experiences related to agriculture.

Several families report having voluntarily changed their lifestyle following the pandemic or after finding urban life unsatisfying. They wish to offer their children a more natural, peaceful and authentic environment.

The discussions also highlight the practical difficulties of this transition:

- very long working days;
- lack of time for communication and promotion;
- isolation;

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- administrative difficulties;
- low earnings at the start.

Alternative education and relationship with nature

The discussions also address the issue of education. Some parents have opted for outdoor schools or educational settings with strong links to the natural environment. These schools prioritise contact with nature, outdoor activities and a more experiential approach to learning.

This educational approach is presented as consistent with the new forms of rural life sought by many families involved in agriculture or local tourism.

Local networks and economic cooperation

A central theme of the discussions concerns the need to build cooperation networks between producers, restaurateurs, guides, accommodation providers, craftspeople and communities. Various organisations are coming together to pool:

- purchasing;
- services;
- insurance;
- energy costs;
- banking;
- communication.

This network-based approach makes it possible to reduce costs, carry out promotional and digital marketing activities whilst optimising available human resources, but above all to create a shared vision of the region and tourism.

Participants regularly emphasise the importance of mutual trust and human relationships in local economies.

Art, the local area and house-museums

A speaker presents a cultural project centred on the house-museum of her grandfather, an artist, architect and sculptor who explored the links between art and the local area. The house holds several thousand works and has become a hub for cultural transmission and tourism.

The project seeks to demonstrate that:

- art springs from the local area;
- the materials used come from the local landscape;
- artists maintained direct links with the local inhabitants, fishermen or farmers;
- artistic heritage cannot be separated from its human and geographical context.

The speaker also develops a ‘human geography’ project that uses artificial intelligence to link various monuments and local heritage sites.

Nature guides, trails and a slow exploration of the region

Nature guides explain their work in creating trails and hiking experiences. Their aim is to connect:

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- the coast and the hinterland;
- seaside hotels and rural areas;
- foreign tourists and local producers;
- nature and traditional knowledge.

For a long time, Italian trails were associated exclusively with the mountains. New projects now aim to develop routes that traverse hills, valleys, rivers and villages.

The guides highlight several challenges:

- the lack of a national legal framework for some trails;
- the need to obtain permission from private landowners;
- lack of institutional recognition;
- the need to train more guides.

Despite this, demand is rising sharply and a number of establishments are beginning to develop fully-fledged businesses centred on slow tourism and hiking.

The 2023 floods and landscape conservation

Local officials recall the severe floods of 2023 that hit the region hard. These events serve as a reminder of the importance of protecting landscapes, soils and environmental balance.

The current territorial strategy is based on two main pillars:

1. enhancing the landscapes and views offered by the hills;
2. supporting local products and businesses in the area.

The aim is not only to attract tourists, but above all to enable residents to live well in their own area, as they are the true wealth and attraction of the place, preserving its conditions.

The historical transformation of tourism in Romagna

Andrea Succi's presentation then traces the evolution of the tourism model in Romagna from the 1970s and 1980s onwards. The region, historically centred on mass seaside tourism, has had to progressively diversify its offering in the face of:

- globalisation;
- international competition;
- environmental crises;
- changes in tourism practices.

A significant episode is cited: in the 1980s, a massive seaweed bloom on the beaches caused a major shock whilst there were around seven million tourists on the coast. This event revealed the fragility of the exclusively seaside model.

The region therefore developed:

- nightclubs and nightlife;
- amusement parks;

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- conferences and business tourism;
- family tourism;
- nature tourism;
- food and wine tourism;
- cultural experiences.

In the 2000s and subsequently with the 2016 regional law, this diversification became a fully-fledged, structured regional strategy. Rural and experiential tourism is no longer seen as complementary to seaside tourism, but as a fully-fledged activity in its own right.

Regional policies now focus on:

- internal mobility;
- accessibility;
- social inclusion;
- themed itineraries;
- cooperation between businesses;
- networks of guides and interpreters;
- economic observatories;
- digital promotion platforms.

Hospitality, human relations and a critique of 'hyper-digitalisation'

Bruno Delamarche, a French representative of a tourist office, reflects on changes in the tourism hospitality sector. He explains that fewer and fewer visitors are physically visiting tourist offices due to digital tools, but that the need for human contact remains fundamental.

He distinguishes between three levels of hospitality:

1. contractual hospitality: simply providing the expected service;
2. expected hospitality: sharing knowledge about products and the local area;
3. unexpected hospitality: building a personal relationship, recommending a local producer or sharing a unique experience.

This vision champions a deeply human form of hospitality in the face of the growing hyper-digitalisation of tourism.

The Slovenian partners: international tourism and specialised training

The Slovenian partners present the Lake Bled region and their secondary school for tourism, hospitality and wellness. Bled is described as the iconic image of Slovenian tourism with:

- its lake;
- its castle;
- its island and its church;
- the surrounding Julian Alps.

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Slovenian tourism is highly internationalised: some regions welcome up to 95% foreign tourists.

The Slovenian school is a small institution with 250 students, strongly focused on practical training:

- hotel management;
- tour guiding;
- travel organisation;
- catering;
- mountain tourism;
- wellness tourism.

The institute also has its own training hotel with 74 rooms, enabling students to gain practical experience in the field.

European volunteering and support for local communities



Rita Teixera, a Portuguese partner, presents a youth centre and a community-run vegetarian restaurant involved in numerous Erasmus and European Solidarity Corps projects.

International volunteers support:

- organic farms;
- schools;
- educational projects;
- activities with children;
- local events.

Volunteering proves to be an important resource for rural areas facing labour shortages or isolation.

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Gastronomy as a territorial system

The conclusion returns to the creation of the 'I Rubiconi' network and to gastronomy as a tool for territorial cooperation. Restaurateurs, producers, cheesemakers, winegrowers and farmers work together in an atmosphere of mutual trust and promotion of local products.

The restaurateur explains that his work consists primarily of meeting producers directly at their farms, gaining an understanding of their daily lives and building lasting relationships. His restaurant depends directly on their work.

Gastronomy is thus presented not merely as a tourist attraction, but as a comprehensive regional system that links:

- agriculture;
- landscape;
- crafts;
- culture;
- hospitality;
- local heritage;
- economy;
- human relations.



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Steering Committee (at the Osteria dei Frati)

Friday 10 April 2026



The second steering committee meeting for this study trip to Italy focuses largely on the structure of the training courses, which are considered a key outcome of the project. Discussions centre on both content and teaching methods, adaptation to local contexts, and implementation procedures. The challenge lies in establishing a common framework whilst allowing each partner some flexibility.

Selection of topics and development of content

The discussions highlight that the definition of content is still at an exploratory stage. Various proposals emerge, often formulated in broad terms and then refined collectively. Among the selected themes:

- Integration strategies for territorial development
- The role of networking as a key factor for success
- Identification and enhancement of local potential
- Hospitality and quality of welcome
- Collective skills and teamwork

These topics are discussed, reformulated and sometimes questioned in their formulation. The challenge lies not only in defining the topics, but in finding perspectives that are relevant, understandable and useful to participants in the training courses.

Importance of good practices and concrete examples

There is a strong consensus on the need to start with concrete examples. Training courses must be based on real-life cases observed in the field (site visits, local initiatives, existing experiences). Good practices are considered a more effective starting point than theory, particularly to facilitate understanding and ownership.

The idea is to build content from concrete situations, and then extract transferable principles or lessons from them. This approach allows training courses to be directly linked to real-world situations.

Discussions highlight the need to avoid traditional, overly top-down formats. Participants stress that the target audience, particularly young people, is not very receptive to theoretical approaches. Various formats are mentioned:

- interactive workshops
- hackathons or intensive co-creation formats
- group work based on real-life cases

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- field research and presentation of findings
- The Slovenian partners from Bled and Krško propose holding their training courses during the week **of 17–21 May 2027**. This date coincides with the study visit to Osijek, Croatia, from 10–14 May 2027. The Slovenian partners specify that they wish to organise certain training courses specifically for:
    - public administrations,
    - young entrepreneurs,
    - students (both local residents and postgraduate students), with formats tailored to the specific audience.

As regards the content, several themes are associated with the future Slovenian training courses:

- community development,
- hospitality,
- collective territorial skills,
- culture of hospitality,
- territorial strategies
- inclusion and local development

The aim is to engage participants, encourage exchange and stimulate collective reflection. The training is designed as a space for generating ideas rather than top-down knowledge transfer.

A key focus is on integrating young people into training courses, particularly in the tourism sector. The idea is to draw on their perspectives and practices to renew approaches. This is achieved through:

- role-playing (e.g. working on concrete projects)
- incorporating their ideas into decision-making processes

Young people are seen as drivers of innovation, particularly in terms of communication, new ways of working and new audiences. Their involvement is also seen as a lever for encouraging local entrepreneurship.

Adaptation to local contexts

The training courses are directly linked to the challenges of local development. In each partner territory, they should enable:

- make the best use of existing resources (heritage, nature, energy, etc.)
- transform these resources into attractive offerings
- strengthen the involvement of local communities

A recurring issue is the difficulty in identifying and harnessing the potential already present in the territories. Training is designed as a tool to reveal these resources and propose methods for activating them.

Although a common framework is defined, each partner must adapt the training courses to their own context. Needs, target audiences and resources vary from one territory to another. Exchanges demonstrate a commitment to co-creation, with the possibility of adapting content and formats to suit local circumstances.

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This adaptation also applies to practical arrangements: organisation, duration, and coordination with other activities (visits, local events, etc.).

Preliminary preparation and participants' work

The aim is to engage participants prior to the training courses, for example through preparatory work:

- identification of local cases
- analysis of existing practices
- gathering information in the field

These elements then serve as a basis for discussion during the training. This helps to increase effectiveness and make the exchanges more practical.

Organisational constraints and planning

The organisation of training courses must take into account numerous constraints: local calendars, partner availability, and coordination with other events. Discussions highlight difficulties in aligning dates and coordinating activities across different regions.

An overall timeframe (from September 2026 to June 2027) has been set, but the exact dates have yet to be finalised. Adjustments are needed to take operational realities into account. A period of bilateral work between the lead partner and each local partner could be envisaged in order to set the dates and thus better take local circumstances into account. These meetings will be held via videoconference between May and June 2026.

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Risk Management Committee

Friday 10 April 2026 – l'Osteria dei Frati

The Risk Management Committee is an open forum for discussion, designed to identify difficulties and risks inherent in the project and to adapt the organisation and smooth running of the project. Its operation is based on a principle of transparency among the partners, who are encouraged to share their constraints, problems or needs without waiting for formal meetings. Please note that this committee is not confined to a rigid framework, but may be supplemented by informal or bilateral exchanges between partners.

Reporting constraints and necessary adjustments

One specific issue addressed concerns the planning of mobility and training activities, in particular the proposal to combine certain visits (for example, between different countries or territories). This idea quickly comes up against significant organisational constraints: the workload of host organisations, logistical preparation, and the impossibility of linking multiple events within too short a timeframe.

A specific case illustrates this limitation: organising a study visit combined with local training is not considered feasible due to the preparation time and resources required. This highlights a key point raised by the monitoring committee: the need to adapt initial ambitions to the partners' actual capacities.

Calendar management and coordination between partners

The issue of scheduling appears to be a central challenge. Discussions highlight considerable complexity linked to overlapping constraints:

- already planned local events
- institutional obligations
- the school calendar
- other ongoing projects

In this case, the monitoring committee serves to compare schedules and collectively adjust dates. It appears that some proposals need to be revised or rescheduled to remain realistic. Coordination between regions (for example, organising activities during the same period) is envisaged but remains difficult to implement systematically.

Organisational flexibility and continuous adaptation

Discussions demonstrate a willingness to maintain a degree of flexibility in the organisation. Partners acknowledge that some decisions cannot be made immediately and require further discussion. It is envisaged that bilateral meetings or planning tools (such as surveys on dates) will be used to refine choices. A bilateral meeting between the lead partner and all partners is to be scheduled before summer 2026 to define the testing phases.

No significant difficulties, but vigilance is maintained

At this stage, the partners have not reported any significant issues, which allows the formal committee process to be concluded swiftly. However, it should be noted that this does not imply a total absence of difficulties, but rather that these must be shared as they arise. Vigilance is maintained to anticipate any potential bottlenecks.

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Quality and Evaluation Committee

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The Quality and Evaluation Committee aims to verify that the activities carried out correspond to the set objectives, whilst allowing methods to be adjusted if necessary. The approach remains pragmatic: this is not a complex mechanism, but a simple framework for gathering feedback and structuring the analysis.

Feedback collection and evaluation tools

An evaluation system using standardised questionnaires, identical for all partners, is already in place. These questionnaires enable the collection of consistent feedback on the activities carried out (visits, meetings, etc.). The aim is to have a common basis for analysis, facilitating comparison between regions and the consolidation of results.

Partners are encouraged to complete these evaluations regularly. Some have already completed the questionnaires, which demonstrates a growing familiarity with the tool. The results are centralised in shared folders, accessible to all.

Analysis of results and capitalisation

The results of previous evaluations are available and can be consulted. They form a working basis for identifying strengths, areas for improvement and good practices. This capitalisation helps to inform collective discussions and adapt future actions.

The aim is not only to measure, but also to draw concrete lessons: to understand what works, what needs to be improved and how to adapt the next phases of the project.

Although the questionnaires are standardised, there is scope for modifying them slightly (testing, minor changes) to better meet the project's needs. This flexibility allows the tool to evolve without compromising its overall consistency.

Evaluation is therefore conceived as an evolving process, which adapts as the project progresses.

The quality committee is closely linked to the other strands, particularly training and communication. The feedback gathered can be used to improve educational content, adapt formats or guide content production. It thus contributes to greater overall consistency.

Overall, the discussions demonstrate a commitment to maintaining a simple, shared and operational evaluation system. The challenge lies in ensuring regular monitoring without overburdening the project's operations, whilst guaranteeing the capacity for analysis and continuous improvement

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Communication Committee

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The communications committee has a key objective for the project: to ensure continuous and structured visibility of the actions undertaken. This is not merely a matter of disseminating information, but of establishing a regular and consistent presence that showcases the partners, activities and results. The challenge lies in avoiding periods of inactivity in communication, particularly between in-person meetings (especially during the training pilot phase from April 2026 to March 2027), whilst maintaining an active presence on digital platforms.

Content production and promotion of partners

Particular attention is being paid to the production of varied content. The visits carried out have enabled the creation of a significant archive of materials (photos, videos, interviews), which must be progressively promoted. A specific format has been created focusing on interviews with partners, combining questions, answers and images from the field. This content allows us to introduce the project's stakeholders, highlight their roles and give a more concrete dimension to our communication.

In parallel, more general publications are planned, in particular to introduce the project, present the partners (using media such as roll-ups) and review the various stages (kick-off meeting, activities, etc.). The aim is to build a narrative of the project, starting with the main and associated partners to arrive at more targeted content.

Dissemination and partner engagement strategy

Dissemination relies largely on social media, particularly LinkedIn. A strategy has been put in place to post regularly and share content among partners. Partners are explicitly encouraged to engage (likes, shares) in order to amplify the reach of posts. Links are shared via WhatsApp to facilitate access and encourage responsiveness.

This approach is based on collective mobilisation: communication is not centralised solely on one actor (or one person: Rita Anna), but depends on the involvement of all partners. Dissemination at a local level is also encouraged, particularly through the publication of articles on local websites or in local media, which are considered an important dissemination tool.

Sustaining communication over time

A key point of discussion concerns the long-term management of the project. Between meetings, there may be periods with no visible activities. The strategy adopted is to anticipate these periods by producing and scheduling content drawn from past visits. This allows for a regular presence to be maintained and for the next phases (particularly training courses) to be prepared, which in turn will generate new content.

The idea is therefore to spread communication over time, alternating between institutional content, reports on experiences and the promotion of partners, in order to avoid any interruption in the project's visibility.

Monitoring, contribution and coordination

Partners are also invited to contribute actively, in particular by adding to shared folders (e.g. screenshots, locally produced content). This collection work is important for documenting the project and enriching communication materials.

Finally, coordination relies on simple and responsive tools (WhatsApp, shared folders), which allow information to be centralised and facilitate exchanges.

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