

**Community of Practice (CoP) Summary Report
6th Semester (July – December 2019)**

VIOLET Interreg Project

Brief Introduction

The 6th semester Community of Practice (CoP) meetings of the project partners of the ERDF funded VIOLET Project took place during July 2019 and December 2019. The project results and progress from the current semester at a local level were disseminated via the webspace and social media.

The 6th semester CoP meetings of the VIOLET Interreg Project and dealt extensively with the work related to the development of the Action Plan and Phase 2 monitoring activities. The Action Plans were presented to the regional Community of Practice members to increase the impact and raise awareness about the chances attached to the project.

Partners worked with their local CoPs to influence their policy instruments and to identify any additional policy that could benefit of the VIOLET exchange. Each partner has taken advantage of different tools in order to receive adequate feedback for its development.



South-East Regional Development Agency (Romania)

The 6th semester CoP meeting and corresponding WISE event for SE RDA took place on the 28th of November 2019 with the support of Buzau Municipality – project relevant stakeholder – in Buzau, Romania. Present at the meeting were 20 participants, including energy auditors, consultants on energy efficiency, site managers, public servants and school building managers. The CoP and WISE event was held together with the INNOTRANS “Enhancing transport innovation capacity of regions” project in order to give more visibility to both Interreg Europe projects. VIOLET envisages the reduction of CO₂ emissions through energy reduction in traditional buildings while INNOTRANS enables carbon emissions reduction through innovation in the transport sector.

During the 6th semester, SE RDA concentrated on finalising the development of the Regional Action Plan. After several consultations with ROP Intermediate Body representatives, it was decided to change the focus of the Action Plan and to concentrate on improving Priority Axis 5.1 “Conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage” as initially foreseen in the application, rather than Priority Axis 3.1 “Supporting energy efficiency, intelligent energy management and renewable energy use in public infrastructures, including in public buildings and in the housing sector”. Based on an in-depth analysis of Priority 5.1 provisions, SE RDA has realised the need to extend and to increase the impact of Priority Axis on energy efficiency-related measures since the actual objective envisages only heritage-related measures with no focus on energy efficiency. In particular, the Action Plan aims to revise and to update the project monitoring methodology (projects under implementation within PA 5.1) by introducing an energy efficiency-related approach as well as to increase the number of heritage buildings with improved classification of energy consumption, by providing owners with an easy-to-use methodology to evaluate the energy efficiency measures. These changes to the Action Plan was largely discussed during the COP meeting and the experience of stakeholders as ROP beneficiaries was used in order to integrate their feedback into the final version.

Additionally, given the high level of interest shown by the regional stakeholders in what concerns the exchange of experiences and learning on integration between heritage and energy efficiency in buildings (from a policy improvement perspective), a new Cooperation Agreement was concluded with Buzau Municipality (September 2019) – as a project stakeholder, an active local public administration in what concerns implementation of energy efficiency measures and one of the main 2014-2020 ROP beneficiaries in the region. By involving local public authorities (5 local authorities from 4 counties out of 6 Region’s counties) in VIOLET, SE RDA has made use of their experiences as ROP beneficiaries and supported us to identify the weak points of ROP implementation and propose measures for the policy improvement.



Cyprus Energy Agency (Cyprus)

The 5th aggregate CoP meeting was organised in conjunction with a staff exchange with the Municipality of Middelburg on the 3rd of December 2019 in Nicosia, Cyprus. Relevant participants from both the field of energy and culture heritage – including a representative from the Cyprus Architectural Heritage Organisation as well as a representative of the Managing Authority from the Energy Service, Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry – attended the event. The idea was to present the local actions addressed within CEA's Action Plan for the VIOLET Project, especially as three new stakeholders were invited to participate in the CoP meeting. These three new stakeholders – an architect from the Antiquities Department, a professor from the University of Cyprus [responsible for the Masters 'Conservation and Restoration of Historic Buildings and Sites'], and a mechanical engineer [expert on the Energy Efficiency of buildings and experienced with restorations] – participated in the meeting along with the other CoP members.

During the first part of the meeting, all the work done during PHASE 1 was presented in order to give the broader picture of the project and its impact up to this day. The main focus was the local Action Plan which was presented in order to get a feedback from all the participants, specifically for the Actions to be implemented in Phase 2. The second part of the meeting, which was held in English, was joined by two representatives from Middelburg Municipality. During this part of the CoP meeting and staff exchange, emphasis was given on the local financial incentives for heritage buildings. Two presentations were held, one from each relevant department within CEA [Antiquities Department and Preservation Sector], followed by a round table discussion. The discussion was very beneficial for both the CoP members and the Middleburg partners as it gave the opportunity to learn from each other's experiences, and to see what can be implemented at local level.

Additionally, feedback given during the roundtable discussions allowed for CEA's Action Plan to be modified accordingly. The members of the CoP agreed that the indicators should be adjusted after the approval of the Action Plan, but as a first step they need to be identified. At least one representative indicator was set for each of the Actions included in the Action Plan, whereas an overall indicator was established for the Action Plan as a whole. Members of the CoP representing universities and relevant NGOs identified some projects and actions that can be combined with VIOLET objectives, the local Action Plan and especially Action 3, the 'Issuance of Guidebook for the energy upgrade of heritage buildings'. Their recommendations were taken into consideration for the implementation of PHASE 2 of the project.

The CoP meeting concluded with two study tours: the first at a museum in the historic centre of Lefkosia, and the second at the site of a building currently restored to be used as community offices in the suburban village, Pera Orinis. The buildings were specifically selected based on pre-defined criteria. Both sites are declared buildings: the museum is housed in adjacent listed buildings, whereas the community offices are housed in an Ancient Monument. In addition, both of sites were included in the assessment which took place in the current semester to address local needs related to VIOLET's objectives. This assessment concerned the issuance of Energy Performance Certificates [EPCs] for heritage buildings and the selected two buildings presented a high ranking compared to other buildings.



During the study tours, the architects responsible for the two restorations, who are also members of the local CoP, provided detail descriptions for all the measures taken during the buildings' reconstruction in order to improve their Energy Efficiency. The event was deemed as very beneficial for all the participants as it presented the opportunity to see VIOLET's objectives from a holistic view, i.e. local actions, challenges, opportunities, regulations, incentives and site works. All the participants provided a valuable input with feedback, concerns and opinions. Most of these aspects were also included in the Submitted Action Plan for Cyprus.

Overall, the CoP members contributed actively through the whole meeting, providing important feedback, information and suggestions. The basic outputs of the meeting and the work implemented so far within the project, were:

On a policy level

- There is a positive response for addressing energy efficiency issues in heritage buildings, but is not easy for the Competent Departments to take initiatives or responsibility;
- There is a lack of dual expertise in the Competent Departments, however, they are positive in case of cooperation between departments;
- Except the technical aspects, the gap and the complexity in regards the energy performance of cultural heritage buildings, involves also economic and political aspects;
- The proposed policy improvements should promote targeted, measurable measures for the energy upgrade of heritage buildings;
- There is a positive response to small changes until more decisive decisions are made;
- It is impracticable to create an incentive plan solely for the energy upgrade of heritage buildings;
- The simplification of procedures and the definition of competencies regarding the energy performance of cultural heritage buildings, are essential.

On a technical level

- Whilst almost every heritage building can accommodate some energy improvements without harming either its special interest or environmental performance, an appropriate balance is needed to avoid measures that might increase the risk of deterioration of the building fabric or harm the building's character;
- Simple measures such as roof insulation can bring significant improvements, however they request relevant guidelines and dual expertise for energy efficiency and cultural heritage;
- Appliances and fittings can often be upgraded giving considerable savings without the need to substantially alter historic fabric;
- Maintenance and continuous use are an important factor - An older building that is kept in use and in a good state, it will generally perform much better than one that is neglected;
- On settlements that have a lot of heritage buildings, other techniques can be provided on community level, i.e. district heating, community photovoltaic system.

The Public Enterprise for Social Housing and Refurbishment in Andalusia, Regional Ministry of Public Works and Housing (AVRA) (Spain)

The sixth CoP meeting of the CoP took place the 4th of December 2019 in the headquarters of the Regional Ministry of Development, Infrastructure and Territorial Planning (CFIOT) and the Andalusian Housing and Rehabilitation Agency (AVRA) in Calle Pablo Picasso in Sevilla, Spain. The main purpose of this meeting was to present the last draft of the Action Plan before its final delivery on the 31st of December and discuss it with the members of the VIOLET CoP in Spain in order to collect their latest assessments and implement any necessary modifications. This working session was also used to discuss the contributions to the EU Policy Recommendation Paper being prepared by AVRA.

To open the 6th semester CoP meeting, both the General Secretary of Housing from the Regional Ministry of Development, Infrastructure and Territorial Planning (CFIOT) and the General Director of the Andalusian Housing and Rehabilitation Agency (AVRA) highlighted the relevance the meeting, as it was the last one before the delivery of the Action Plan. They also pointed out the fundamental role of the members of the CoP to support, promote and improve the Action Plan and they thanked to the members for their presence and involvement. The representatives from CFIOT and ACRA also spoke about the regional and European political context in which the VIOLET Project should be highlighted, and the opportunity that AVRA and CFIOT – and for instance, the Andalusian regional government – have to promote a strategic change in Andalusian policies. In this sense, the influence of the VIOLET project on PRPHIA actions that have already included energy efficiency parameters in the drafting of the VIOLET project or in the public tender was also highlighted.

Additionally, the CFIOT is developing some initiatives aligned with VIOLET, such as the drafting of the Plan Vive Andalucía, in which a line of rehabilitation of heritage buildings and another for research is foreseen. Another initiative discussed was the development of an inventory of Andalusia's historic buildings, which is to be set in motion with the intention of preserving the buildings' architecture and identity, as well as their utility. CFIOT also demonstrated the need to establish a very clear eligibility criteria in the ERDF OP so that the interventions promoted in the VIOLET Project can be implemented.

An overview of the current status of the VIOLET project was given by Marta Romero of AVRA, who also presented the timeframe of the project and the feedback from the JS and Bordeaux regarding the Action Plan and the EU Policy Paper. AVRA also summarised findings from the last CoP meeting. External experts, J.J. Sendra and Rosana Caro, presented the latest version of the Action Plan, emphasising that in the current context there is a need of decarbonisation the cities and to provide solutions for European policies related to rehabilitation and conservation of historical buildings considering energy efficiency parameters.

Roundtable discussions were, in which contributions were given as to how to improve the Action Plan. A main takeaway from the CoP meeting was that VIOLET is only the beginning of implementing a long-term strategy in Andalusia: all members in the CoP feel the need to continue working together, aligned with the objectives of VIOLET project. Many action and research topics were brought to light together with the statement that the next regional OP also must consider the findings and needs delivered thanks to the VIOLET project, and all the supporting strategies, programmes and plans concerning traditional building rehabilitation. To conclude the 6th semester CoP meeting, the Head of the Architecture Service from the CFIOT thanked the CoP members and invited them to the presentation of the final VIOLET Action Plan to be held in January 2020.



Municipality of Middelburg (Netherlands)

The Municipality of Middelburg engaged in two separate CoP exchanges for the VIOLET project within semester 6, once on the 3rd of September 2020 and again on the 5th of November 2020. The CoP includes stakeholders from various relevant disciplines who are often busy with conserving monuments and / or with energy consumption reduction. Together, the CoP boasts a lot of knowledge and expertise, and in this way they can learn from each other. Together the CoP discusses methods that have been used elsewhere and whether they might also be suitable for our project.

During a VIOLET knowledge exchange in July 2019, project leader Annet Hannewijk, Bernard Vercooteren and Rogier Havermans met with VIOLET partners Alec in Bordeaux. There, the Municipality of Middelburg gained knowledge of their Ma Rénov project, through which apartment owners are consulted and offered assistance in making their shared buildings energy efficient. The representatives from the Dutch municipality shared their knowledge gained with the other CoP members in the 6th semester CoP meetings. Based on the Ma Rénov project, the Municipality CoP came up with the SLH (Sustainable Listed House) Coach.

The SLH (Sustainable Listed House) Coach addresses the local problem that listed house owners – as a result of other actions made by the municipality – did make minor improvements to their monuments, but major energy-saving measures were not taken. Interviews revealed that owners dreaded the difficult licensing process, amongst having to find a good contractor and fearing that the measures were not being properly implemented. The SLH Coach takes the owner from A to Z by the hand: the owner can draw up concrete plan, develop a permit application, request multiple quotes from renowned companies and perform quality checks during and after the work. Currently, a test with five building owners is being considered to see if it has an effect.

Following the CoP meetings, CoP partner Erfgoed Zeeland has developed approximately 100 SLH (Sustainable Listed House) Passports. Many building owners have decided to implement energy efficiency measures (most small, but some large). After these measures are implemented, the Passport should be updated; however, this is not yet carried out, because it costs significant time and money. One of the ideas to solve this problem is to combine it with the biannual inspections that are already carried out for the listed houses.

Other significant actions from the 6th semester VIOLET CoP meetings include the opportunity to exchange with the Interreg 2 Seas project, Solarise: in Middelburg, solar energy is being generated for this project under the historic roof of the old town hall (so it is not visible to the public). Also, the CoP partner HZ University of Applied Sciences is going to allow students to do research with ‘blower-through’ tests in historic buildings and with insulating paint. Further on R&D, innovations are exchanged with each other during the CoP meetings. During the 6th semester CoP meetings, CoP members discussed innovative perovskite solar cells and energy storage in old silo buildings (e.g. pumping water with solar energy, energy from downward hydropower when the sun is not shining).

Finally, together with the CoP partners, the Municipality has developed their Action Plan. This will result in an improvement of local policy on the route to a carbon neutral Middelburg by 2050.



Local Energy and Climate Agency (ALEC) (France)

The 7th CoP meeting of the Local Energy and Climate Agency (ALEC) gathered 25 European partners and 15 local stakeholders on the 31st of October 2019 at the Urban Planning Agency of Bordeaux Metropole in Bordeaux, France. In the opening by Maryse Combres, a regional elected member in charge of energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, the CoP meeting focused on the benefits of the VIOLET project within the New Aquitaine region in France:

- They have launched three calls for projects on buildings energy efficiency on three types of buildings (groups of private housing, municipal social housing and social housing buildings (the building has to have a maximum of 20 housing units), with a 1000 € bonus for traditional buildings – this bonus would not have existed without the VIOLET project.
- They work with Alec and the support of CoP members to is related to the PREE (Regional Program for Energy Efficiency) which will be deployed in 2020. Some actions of this programme will be directly linked with traditional and old buildings, which would not have been the case without VIOLET project.

The 6th semester CoP meeting also allowed for the presentation of the CREBA tool, a French adaptation of the Guidance Wheel developed by the British organisation, the Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA). The aim of the tool is to help professionals who want to adopt a holistic and responsible approach regarding old buildings renovation by:

- Comparing different solutions in terms of technical, energy and heritage. The wheel present more than 50 measures that can be used for the refurbishment of old buildings.
- Identifying advantages and concerns of each measure and possible interactions between them. The concerns are colour coded – from green (nothing to report) to dark red (critical concerns) – and their summary is shown in the wheel rings for technical, energy and heritage concerns.
- Proposing the best bundle of options.

The wheel is both an aid to decision-making and a way of learning about traditional buildings renovation. It has been designed for professionals, but it could be also useful for homeowners of old/traditional buildings to verify that all the necessary steps are taken, without replacing professional consultancy. In addition to the CREBA tool, the CoP members were also presented the new French certification label for heritage buildings by a member of Effinergie.

This association aims to promote low energy consumption in built and renovated buildings, through the creation of several certification labels. It could be compared to Minergie in Switzerland or Passivhaus in Germany. To develop this new label and then to assess the projects, different organisations have been mobilised, including some French regions, architects, design and technical offices and two ministries (for construction and for architecture and heritage). “Efficient renovated old buildings” means low energy consumption level, heritage preservation and comfort improvement.

The 6th semester CoP also featured a presentation of Middelburg Municipality’s good practices. One of the objectives of the CoP meeting was to enable the European VIOLET partners and the local CoP



members to exchange, so the Municipality of Middelburg presented some good practices existing in the city, including:

- SUMO calculation model
- Free and easy permits for solar panels, insulation glass or sun-blinds
- Sustainable monument passport

Finally, the 6th semester CoP meeting concluded with the presentation of the VIOLET project, with a focus on the EU Policy Recommendations Paper.