

EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.

⚠ Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)

PROJECT	
Project name and acronym:	Solidarity Across Towns — SOLIDARITOWN
Participant:	Christmas Cities Network
PIC number:	905027364

EVENT DESCRIPTION	
Event number:	5
Event name:	SOLIDARITY, CHRISTMAS, CULTURAL ECONOMY BASED ON TRADITIONS AND HERITAGE (ASOCIATIA SE POATE, ROMANIA)
Type:	Training session (Local and Europeans) Multicultural dialogue (8 organisations) Discussion groups (Local and Europeans) Ideas LAB (Coordination groups)
In situ/online:	<i>In situ - Presential</i>
Location:	Romania, bucharest
Date(s):	09.02-12.02.2025
Website(s) (if any):	https://www.asociatiasepoate.ro/solidarity-christmas-cultural-economy-based-on-traditions-and-heritage/ https://revistalace.ro/solidaritown-solidaritate-patrimoniu-si-inovatie-antreprenoriala/
Participants	
Female:	32
Male:	28
Non-binary:	0
From Romania:	45
From Spain:	5
From Poland:	2
From Belgium:	2

From Slovenia	2		
From Italy	2		
From Portugal	2		
Total number of participants:	60	From total number of countries:	7

Description

Provide a short description of the event and its activities.

February 9–12, Bucharest became the meeting point for the fifth international meeting of the SOLIDARITOWN project, titled: WP5: SOLIDARITY, CHRISTMAS, CULTURAL ECONOMY BASED ON TRADITIONS AND HERITAGE, organized by the Se Poate Association.

The objectives of the meeting were:

- Raising awareness of Europe's cultural heritage
- Exploring the role of culture in fostering entrepreneurship and economic growth
- Discussing key challenges such as rural depopulation and youth unemployment

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS ATTENDING THE MEETING:

- Christmas Cities Network Association and Ayuntamiento de Torrejón de Ardoz (Spain).
- Ayuntamiento de Medina de Rioseco (Spain).
- Asociatia Se Poate (Romania).
- AUTOKREACJA FOUNDATION (Poland) and Municipality of Gorlice (Poland).
- Association Edushakers (Belgium).
- Center Za Podjetnistvo in Turizem krsko (Slovenia)
- Municipality of Genova (Italy).
- Associacao Educpro (Portugal)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES TAKEN PLACE

09/02/2025

Arrival of participants from each partner delegation at the location in Bucharest, Official welcome dinner, networking among participants, presentation of the schedule for the next two days, and setting up other organizational details.

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10/02/2025

The day began with the welcome and registration of participants at the Ibis Politehnica Conference Room. **The first session, Multicultural Dialogue: Cultural Heritage in Europe and Its Potential for Developing New Jobs**, adopted an Interactive World Café format, where participants rotated between three discussion rounds:

- Identifying valuable cultural resources in their communities
- Exploring the types of jobs that can be created from cultural heritage
- Brainstorming ways to transform ideas into concrete projects

Following this session, a group sharing and reflection discussion encouraged participants to think critically about their role in promoting cultural entrepreneurship. Each individual was asked to define one concrete action they could take in the next 30 days to support cultural heritage initiatives in their local communities.

After a break, participants regrouped for the next part of the agenda: **a Bucharest Heritage Journey**. Led by Geography students from the University of Bucharest, the tour highlighted some of the city's most iconic cultural landmarks. The experience not only allowed participants to immerse themselves in Romania's history and traditions but also provided a real-life example of how cultural tourism can be integrated into urban development without causing overpopulation and overconsumption. The tour served as a case study for sustainable cultural tourism, demonstrating how local heritage can generate employment opportunities while maintaining the authenticity of historical sites.

11/02/2025

The second day of the WP5 meeting took a more practical approach, shifting the focus to business models inspired by cultural heritage. **Ideas LAB: Workshop about generating new business ideas and projects under cultural heritage and traditions.** *Local Initiatives Showcase:* Participants engaged in brainstorming sessions, exploring creative ways to preserve traditions while addressing the challenges that such initiatives might encounter. The role-playing exercise explored the tension between preserving cultural traditions and adapting them to modern economic realities. Participants examined a scenario where a traditional village, known for its crafts, faced declining artisan numbers and disinterest from younger generations, despite increasing demand for handmade products.

The activity challenged them to find sustainable solutions by balancing the perspectives of local authorities, young entrepreneurs, and elderly artisans. It served as a tool for understanding the complexities of cultural heritage preservation, economic viability, and generational shifts, encouraging creative and strategic thinking.

Local Initiatives Showcase: One of the highlights of the day was a session led by Loredana Enache, founder of the slow-fashion brand Brâu. This initiative integrates modern elements with traditional garments, creating a culturally respectful and innovative approach to fashion. Loredana shared her inspiring journey of blending cultural preservation with entrepreneurship, demonstrating how Romanian traditions can be reimaged for the modern world. Her experience provided a tangible example of how heritage-based businesses can help revitalize rural areas and create sustainable economic opportunities.

Following this session, participants engaged in an **Open discussion on demographic shifts in Europe, particularly focusing on rural depopulation and aging populations.** The conversation emphasized the role of solidarity between cities and rural communities in ensuring that cultural traditions continue to thrive. Participants reflected on strategies to strengthen local economies through culture-driven projects and community-based initiatives. A key aspect of this discussion was the firsthand perspectives shared by young volunteers from the host organization, who come from and live in rural areas. They provided insights into the realities of one of Romania's poorest regions, describing the challenges they face, including limited job opportunities, lack of infrastructure, and the struggles of young people to remain in their communities. Their experiences highlighted the urgent need for sustainable economic alternatives that leverage cultural heritage while addressing modern needs.

To conclude the day, participants took part in a **handicraft workshop**, where they transformed the themes of tradition and creativity into tangible works. Led by young volunteers, the workshop emphasized the preservation of traditional arts while encouraging new interpretations.

The final session introduced participants to traditional Romanian symbols and their influence on cultural expressions, exploring their presence in various domains such as design, clothing, and architecture. This session reinforced the idea that heritage is both a treasure to preserve and a foundation for future innovation.

12/02/2025

Departure of participants.

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01/09/2022	Initial version (new MFF).