



creative **Clusters**  
in low density urban areas

AN URBACT II PROJECT



**Creative Clusters**  
in low density urban areas



**European Union**  
European Regional Development Fund

Connecting cities  
Building successes





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“...to preserve our scale as crucial as the development pattern itself.  
A pattern empowered in cultural and creative economies”

TELMO FARIA, Mayor of Óbidos (Portugal)

“Thinking small in a big way”

REMAKING BARNESLEY - Strategic Development Framework 2003-2033 (UK)

“We need to move from a traditional rural pattern to a more sophisticated one, with presence of urban attributes like cultural life, technological accessibility, competitive economic activities at global level and quality of life. For us creativity is a key driver for this vision”

SANTIAGO ARÉVALO, Mayor of Enguera (Spain)

## Main Message

The starting assumption of the project is that creativity can act as a driving force for economic development of small urban centres and not only of big cities. Thus, the main value-added that the work of the Creative Clusters network can produce is to transfer the “creative city model” (too much focused on big and middle-sized metropolis) to low density urban areas. In other words, to transfer a range of so far considered urban attributes (accessibility, cultural life, technological facilities, competitive clusters, global networking, etc.) to middle-sized and small towns.

This is relevant at European Union level because the project is going to explore the capacity of the creative issue to impulse a sort of leapfrog in terms of social and economic development for small and midsize towns as well as an excellent opportunity to re-think rural development.

## Objectives

The objective of this URBACT network is to promote the exchange of experiences and best practices and the proposal of policy recommendations and action plans related to creative clusters in low density urban areas. In this framework the concept of “low density urban areas” will match with both: the OECD concept of “intermediate region”; and the remoteness/proximity duality, or accessibility to a main urban hub, rejecting the urban/rural duality. It is also an intention of the partners to assist policy-makers and managers of Operational Programmes to define initiatives in this field, which may be selected for Structural Funds programmes.

# Key-Themes

As a result of the work carried out during the preparatory phase, five key sub-themes have been selected in order to focus the collective work of the partnership during the implementation phase (2009-2011):

- \\\\\\\\\\\\\\ **Creative clusters: diversifying local economic base & opportunities to young people.** The partnership will face not only the impulse of new emergent clusters in creative industries but also to use the creative issue to re-think some mature local industries in order to foster them with a new growth potential. Also, the challenge of job creation and employment opportunities especially for young local people will be an important issue to deal with.
- \\\\\\\\\\\\\\ **Events and cultural agendas as catalysts.** Culture and cultural life as key ingredients for addressing the creative city. A common assumption within the whole partnership is to blur the limits between the cultural and the economic development policies at the urban scale.
- \\\\\\\\\\\\\\ **Promoting the creative city: a new range of facilities and infrastructures.** This will be the more physical dimension of the work of the partnership. Different scales will be considered: from adapting public spaces and city centres to creative activities [where the mixing of land-uses is crucial as opposite to the past zoning schemes], cultural districts... always placing people at the core, to a new generation of facilities to creative business and entrepreneurs.
- \\\\\\\\\\\\\\ **Creative entrepreneurs and talented people: attraction and retaining.** Packaging financial and advising support measures specifically adapted to creative entrepreneurs and businesses. Branding the creative place will be considered here, as a framework for a smart and focused diffusion of these support tools.
- \\\\\\\\\\\\\\ **Setting the basis: creative education environments at local levels.** It must be underlined that many of the cities approaching seriously the creative paradigm are displaying innovative and creative local education systems in primary and secondary levels. In this field Reggio Emilia is a benchmark at World level, but also Óbidos or Barnsley are being active introducing advanced methods in public education. It is relevant to diffuse these practices.



# The Partnership



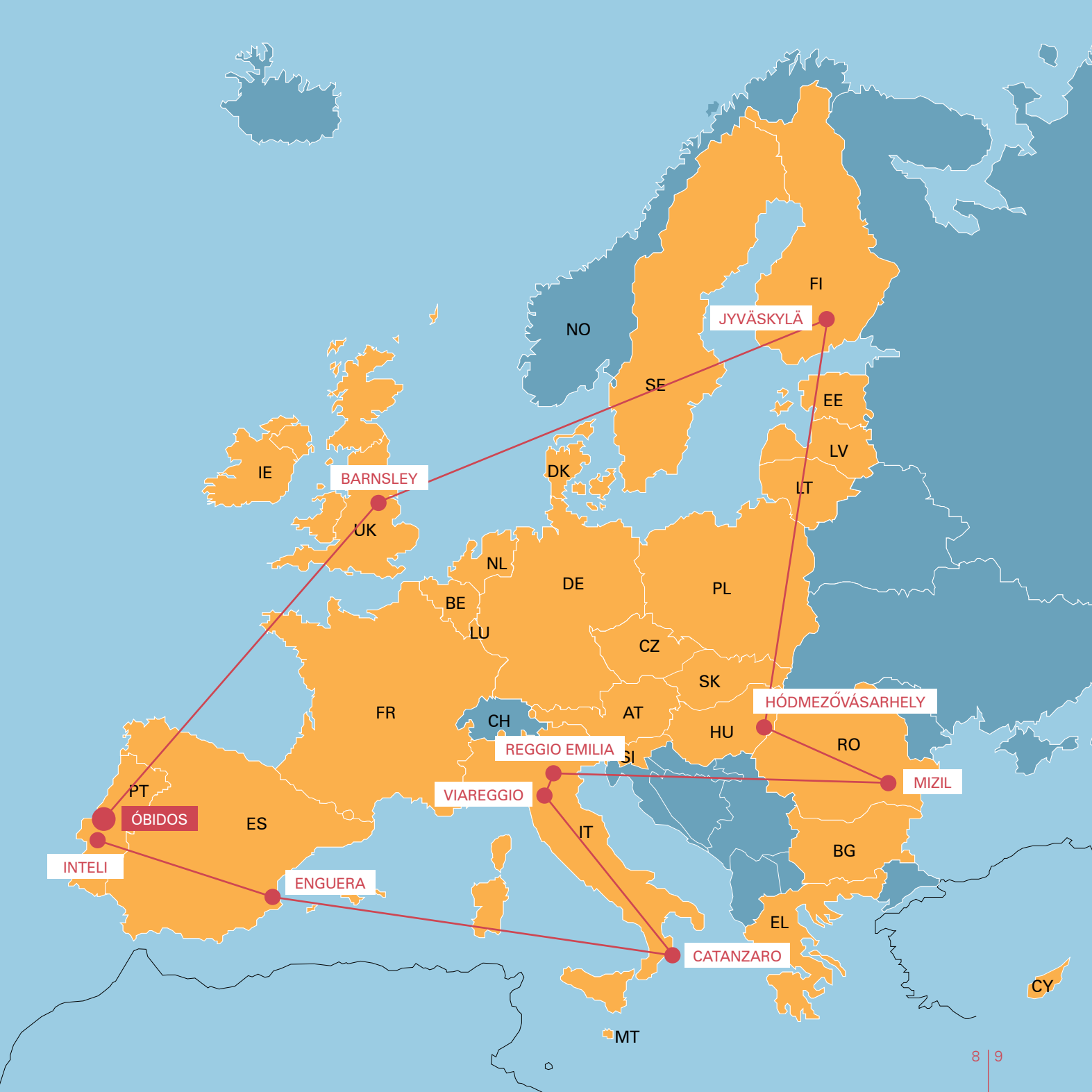
## Lead Partner

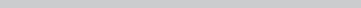
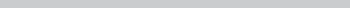
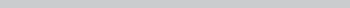
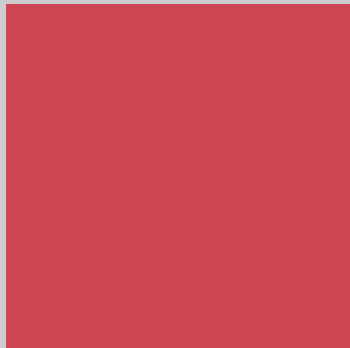
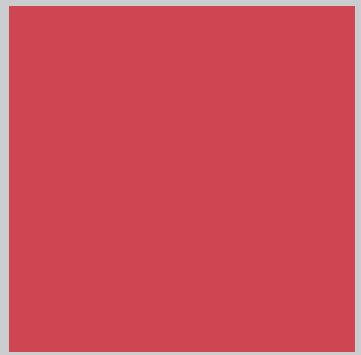
- ÓBIDOS [PORTUGAL]

## Partners

- BARNSELY [UNITED KINGDOM]
- CATANZARO [ITALY]
- ENGUERA [SPAIN]
- HÓDMEZŐVÁSARHELY [HUNGARY]
- INTELI - Intelligence in Innovation, Innovation Center Lisbon [PORTUGAL]
- JYVÄSKYLÄ [FINLAND]
- MIZIL [ROMANIA]
- REGGIO EMILIA [ITALY]
- VIAREGGIO [ITALY]







## Óbidos, Portugal [LEAD PARTNER]

### Small cities great visions

There is a formal strategy in Óbidos [10.875 inhabitants, 80 km. North of Lisbon] to become a creative, eco and healthy town based on distinctive endogenous assets, in order to turn into a unique place to live, work, learn and play at national and international level. Since 2002 Óbidos has been implementing a development strategy focused on Tourism, Culture and Economy. The Town Council has been organizing a number of events that attracted the attention to this historic town. The organization of these events implies a set of different areas that embrace creativity: content production, scenography, entertainment and acting, music, graphic design, marketing and advertising, multimedia, artistic creation and cultural research.

In the frame of URBACT the town aims to improve its on-going strategy “Óbidos Creative Town”. The Municipality expects to participate in the process of conceiving and implementing an economic and cultural development agenda oriented to low density territories, based on a specific spatial development model for the so-called “intermediate regions” (not urban neither rural). It is an agenda, in permanent construction, which bases its strategy on Creativity and Innovation counting with important undertakings such as the Technology Park of Óbidos, the only park exclusively dedicated to Creative Industries, as well as its incubation extension, ABC - Basic Support for Creativity, located in the old S. Miguel Convent.

Óbidos will contribute to the network through its experience on: new (creative) attributes to tourism; local cultural agendas and major events; creative education in primary and secondary schools; branding the creative place; networking local museums and cultural facilities; the creative small city working agenda.



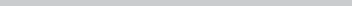
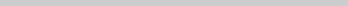
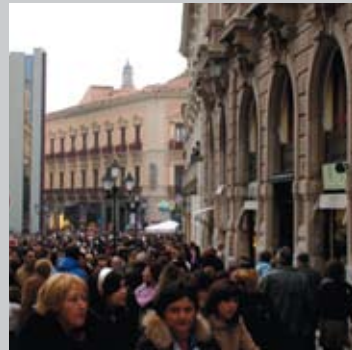
## Barnsley, UK

### Remaking the Northern England midsize town

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough [South Yorkshire] has a population of 218,000 [82,000 in town] and it has a great history as a centre of coal mining. By the beginning of the 21st century the town centre was characterized by a stagnant property market, an over abundance of bargain-orientated retail shopping and a one-dimensional night time economy based around the pubs & clubs sector for the young adult market. A huge regeneration effort followed to rebuild an economic base that would offer a future for people and to eradicate the dereliction left by industrial decline. Nowadays, Barnsley's ambition is to be a "21st Century Market Town" at the heart of an enterprising and innovative local economy, taking advantage of its central location.

From now on a new Creative Arts strategy will be put in place with a detailed focus on the development of creative industries. This is an opportunity for a real Local Action Plan within the URBACT framework.

The Municipality of Barnsley will contribute to the network through its experience on: re-using old industrial sites for creative activities; institutionalization of creative-focused local development; branding the creative place; PPP schemes in creative strategies; networking creative people; art incubators; new digital media cluster; re-thinking mature industries at the light of creativity-based models; and supporting tools for creative entrepreneurs.



## Catanzaro, Italy

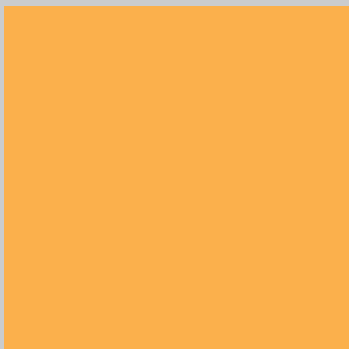
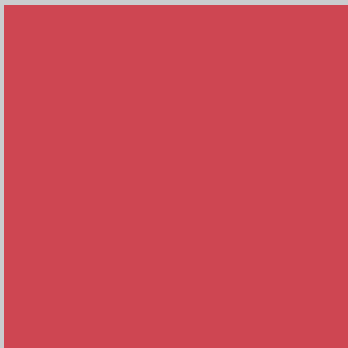
### Young and creative

Catanzaro [100.000 inhabitants] is the capital of Calabria. The city had never addressed the promotion of creative industries as an important aspect of a wider integrated approach to local development. The “Youth, Creativity and Local Development” project, the “Creativity Factory” project as well as the participation in the URBACT programme have been thought as an opportunity for tackling new approaches to the creative issue.

The main challenges Catanzaro is currently facing are unemployment and the dependency of most of tertiary sector on Public Administration. The urban area has an urgent need for economic and strategic repositioning, and the main direction should be the one to support further specialization in knowledge economy and advanced services, in environmental and historical valorisation and tourism.

New mobility systems and strategic plans in Catanzaro designing a new urban area, will determine urgent need for new services, new activities, new knowledge and expertise. Creative and cultural sector will have to play a very important role in sustaining new city projects and strategies.

Catanzaro will contribute to the network through its experience on: local strategic planning processes; reusing old buildings for creative issues; cultural and scenic-arts venues; and citizen participation.





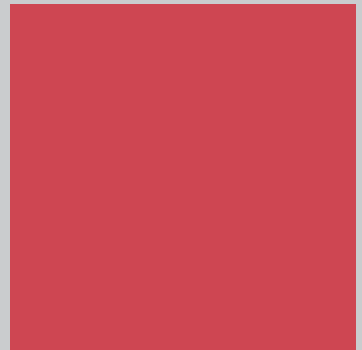
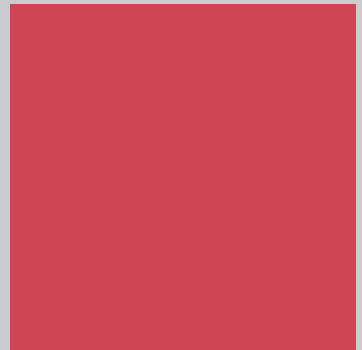
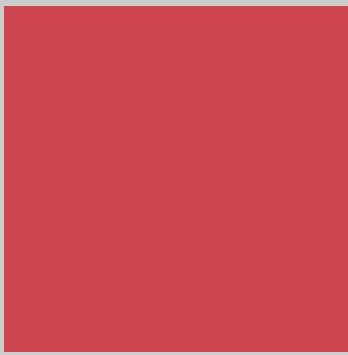
## Enguera, Spain

### The value of the unknown

Textile manufacturing and agriculture were for many years the main activities in Enguera [5.000 inhabitants, in Valencia region]. Nowadays, it is in the service sector where the most important bet for the near future of the village is taking place, basically nature tourism and activities related to culture.

The Enguera expectations on the URBACT network are: to handle actively with creativity and creativity-based activities to approach a local strategic planning for the coming years as a framework for: 1) emerging activities like eco-tourism which needs a cluster approach integrating another related activities like retail or culture; 2) creativity-based business models to give to some existing mature industries a new potential for growth; 3) creativity and knowledge-based models as a source for new start-ups placed in the culture sector or ICTs; 4) to explore some residential developments as a tool for attracting a new type of residents (the creative class) - Enguera as a place to live in not just for visiting; 5) to add a new dimension to the place-brand "Caroig" which comprises 23 localities; and 6) to enhance the local cultural agenda considering some major events inspired by creativity.

Enguera will contribute to the network through its experience on: developments in eco-tourism; inclusion of immigrant (talented) people; place branding at a supra-local level; and local museum network.

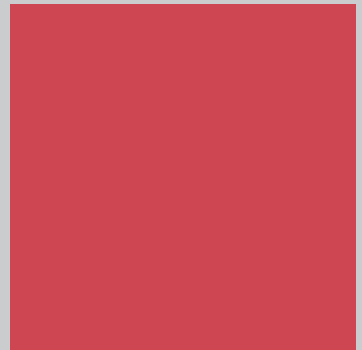
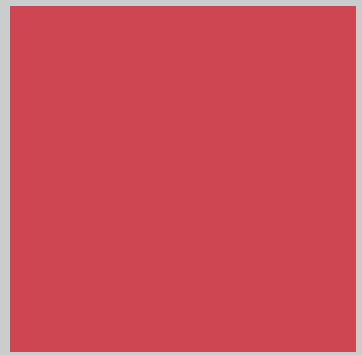


## Hódmezővásárhely, Hungary

### Ceramics and beyond: converging culture, industry and creativity

Hódmezővásárhely [50,000 people] is located in South-East Hungary, near the Romanian and Serbian borders. The biggest factories of the city are settled in the ceramic industry, a sector with a real growth potential. The ceramic industry's history is closely intertwined with the history of the city. As a real future developmental path the city is promoting a cluster strategy in ceramics, encouraging closer cooperation among all the parties involved: entrepreneurs, artists and designers. A city strategy on creative issues will clearly foster this cluster development. Hódmezővásárhely is also exploring strategies based on creative issues as a competitive advantage opposite to the work & live environments in big agglomerations. The central aim of the city is to give a boost to the development of the cultural dimensions and creative industries.

The City of Hódmezővásárhely will contribute to the network through its experience on: cluster development for revitalizing mature industries; integrated urban development strategies; and creative education in primary and secondary schools.

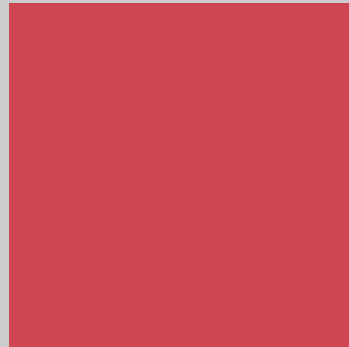
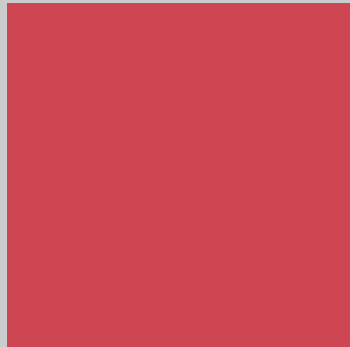
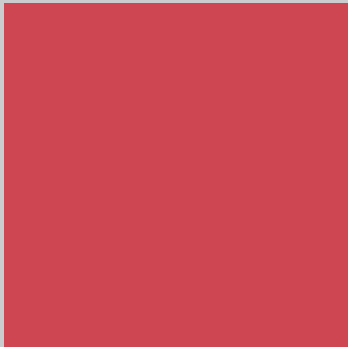
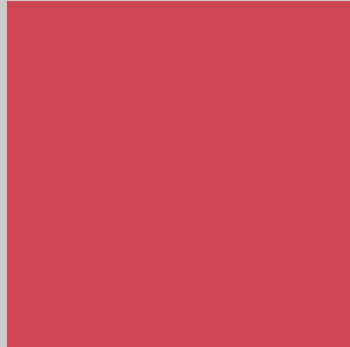


## INTELI, Portugal

### Think tanks for creative development models

INTELI, as a research centre on creative development models, is joining this URBACT network as a knowledge producer. This research body, based in Lisbon, will deliver a technical document with policy recommendations and strategic guidelines centred on promoting creative clusters in low density urban areas and it will set up a panel of European experts on creative issues. The idea is to give inputs to regional and urban European polices on creativity in spatial development, namely in the scope of the “European Year on Creativity and Innovation” (2009) and the production of the “Green Paper on Creative Industries”.

INTELI has also the expectation of contributing to the project through its contacts with other European and international networks, such as INTA - International Urban Development Association, AVEC – Alliance of European Cultural Cities or EUKN – European Urban Knowledge Network.



## Jyväskylä, Finland

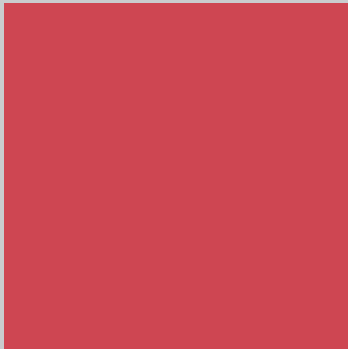
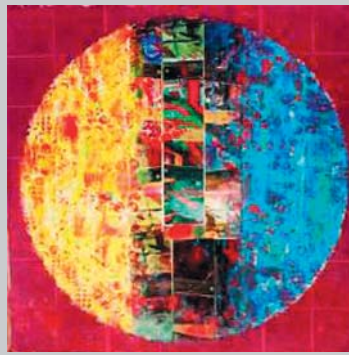
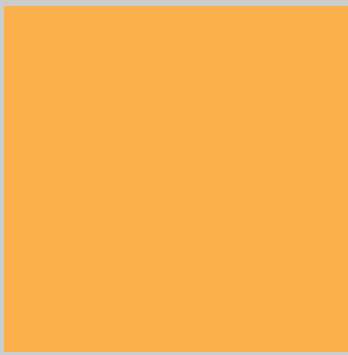
### The human technology city

Jyväskylä [130,000 inhabitants] is a youthful, lively and international city located in Central Finland, 270 km North of Helsinki. The site of many education-related firsts in Finland, Jyväskylä is known as a “city of schools” hosting two Universities: the University of Jyväskylä and the JAMK University of Applied Sciences and a number of innovative cross-field research institutes. The city is also famous for its many buildings designed by Alvar Aalto and the home of the annual Jyväskylä Arts Festival.

As in the whole Country Jyväskylä is very active re-shaping mature industries and promoting new productive realities throughout knowledge, technology and creativity. This range embraces clusters such as Forest Industry Future, Bioenergy cluster, Nanotechnology, Ubiquitous computing, New generation machines and equipment, the EduCluster [on education activities], the so-called wellness sector on technologies around sports and health sciences, or tourism and experience management. The vision for the area is to build an innovation ecosystem setting people at the core: that is the meaning of the place-brand “the human technology city”.

The main task of the city throughout this URBACT network is to find and to develop new kind of innovative services in the field of culture, creativity and wellness by supporting networking, by increasing the new kind of entrepreneurship and the cooperation between different sectors, like culture and technology, and by using that special knowledge, research and human technology done in the region.

Within URBACT framework Jyväskylä is appearing as a benchmark in innovative learning systems, new cluster readings for urban economies; and innovative facilities and venues for creative industries and activities.





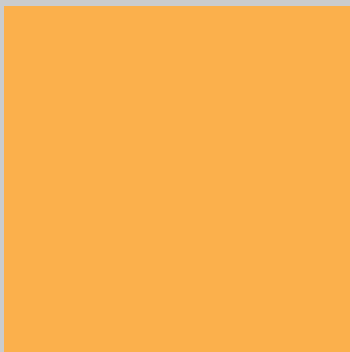
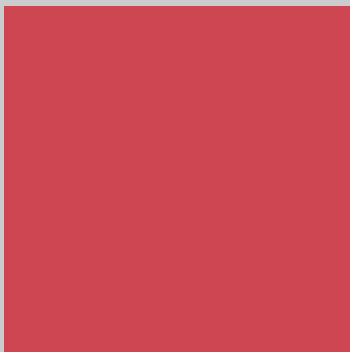
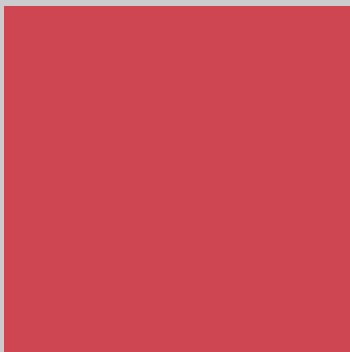
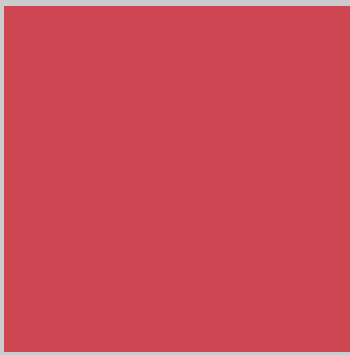
## Mizil, Romania

### Creating new conditions to fix people in town

The main challenges in Mizil [16.319 inhabitants, 90 km far from Bucharest and near Ploiești, the County capital] come from a transitional local economy, even with additional questions to overcome due to its condition as a low density urban area. One problem is the lack of qualified human resources, since a lot of skilled people migrated to Western European countries. On the other hand, small level of salaries in sectors like textile or food industry doesn't attract the skilled personnel that is still in the area and doesn't encourage the potential employers to train in different professions requested by the existing industries.

Nowadays, we cannot talk about creative industries in Mizil, but there is a range of related activities that can evolve in the future as creative industries. The Mizil URBACT Local Action Plan will be oriented to handle creativity-based activities as a source for job creation (retaining local talent) and as an additional tool for undertaking the current transitional period to a competitive market economy. It means: 1) opportunities for new emergent creative activities; and 2) creativity issue as a cross-cutting approach to re-think the existing mature industries.

Mizil will contribute to the network through its experience on strategic planning and local co-operation at county level.



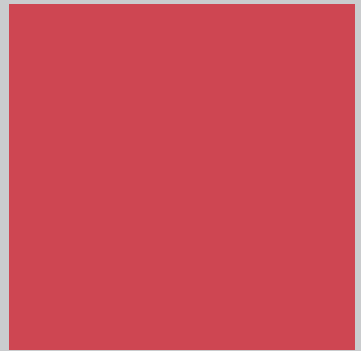
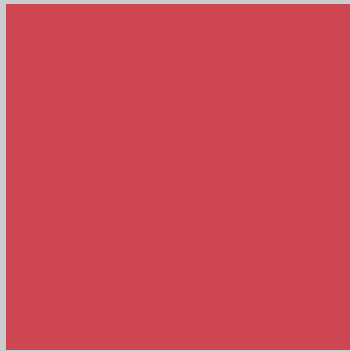
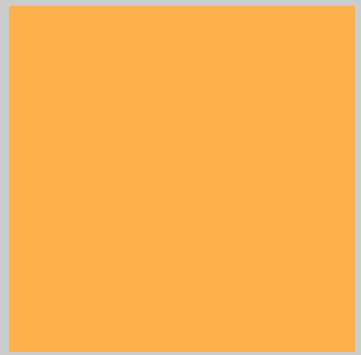
## Reggio Emilia, Italy

### Networking creative entrepreneurs around a new media cluster

Reggio Emilia [160.000 inhabitants, in Emilia Romagna] has a long history on 'classical' cultural economy. Theatre, dance and music are the clusters more developed with the presence of internationally well-known organizations and individual artists. The current city challenges are: integration of immigrants/social cohesion; urban regeneration (historic city centre); facilitating sustainable mobility; and city branding.

In the framework of URBACT the city intends to identify a local mix of actions which could foster the creation of a cluster on new media combining at once: new technological competences, entrepreneurial spirit and cultural/artistic sensitivity.

Reggio will contribute to the network through its experience on: creative education in primary and secondary schools; cultural life and agenda (especially in contemporary art); the WIFI city; strategic local planning; and social inclusion of minorities groups.



## Viareggio, Italy

### Charming life within a competitive local productive system

The economy of Viareggio (63.000 inhabitants, in the Tuscany sea-shore, the second town in the province of Lucca) is based on tourism, craft, industrial activity, fishing and floriculture. Concerning the industry Viareggio is home of a World leading cluster in shipbuilding. Viareggio is also well known for its Carnival. The local plan pursues sustainable development through the conservation, protection and enrichment of local resources by establishing the conditions for giving quality settlements, and to achieve environmental regeneration of the city. Moreover the plan promotes local actions to improve the protection of cultural heritage, and processing and recovery of existing buildings.

The city expects to share knowledge, experiences and innovative approaches in what concerns sustainability, urban regeneration, cultural heritage and creativity.

Viareggio will contribute to the network through its experience on: cluster development for revitalizing mature industries; integrated urban development strategies; citizen participation; and creative events.

## Further Info

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### LEAD PARTNER

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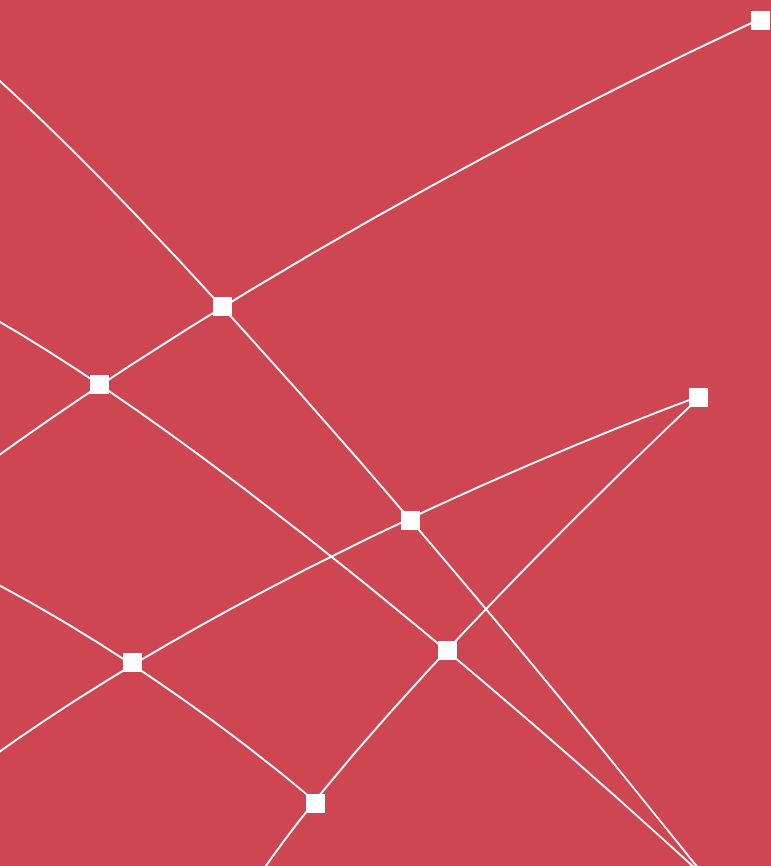
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### COVER

Óbidos Opera Festival  
Photo by Edgar Libório

[www.urbact.eu](http://www.urbact.eu)





# creative **Clusters**

in low density urban areas

AN URBACT II PROJECT

**URBACT** is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development. It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 181 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants. URBACT IS co-financed by the ERDF Funds and the Member States.

[www.urbact.eu](http://www.urbact.eu)



**European Union**  
European Regional Development Fund

Connecting cities  
Building successes

