

VIOLET — Newsletter #1

What is VIOLET?

Issues Addressed

VIOLET (preserVe tradItiOnal buILdings through Energy reduction) is an Interreg Europe project to preserve traditional and heritage buildings by simultaneously integrating both topics into policy planning, management and monitoring through inter-regional cooperation. If energy efficient renovation is not addressed in a forward-looking way, buildings that are now a valuable asset to owners will become a burden in the near future. VIOLET addresses the need for policy change to endorse the objectives of a building culture that is sympathetic to modern requirements of energy efficiency and carbon emissions, without endangering European architectural heritage. Given the history of our continent and the EU commitment to achieve energy savings and carbon reduction, the above-mentioned challenges prove common to most European regions. Thus, VIOLET will make an important impact on sustainable development, growth, job creation and preservation of EU cultural heritage.



Project photo VIOLET

2030 EU Targets

Due to the huge potential of the reduction of energy consumption in traditional buildings, long term sustainable development plays a vital role to the project. Given the substantial proportion of traditional buildings in the EU building stock, this will contribute significantly to reaching the EU targets set for 2030. In terms of impact on growth and job creation, VIOLET addresses two of the main economic sectors in Europe, focusing on cultural tourism and on ICT solutions.

VIOLET in the Long-Term

VIOLET will achieve lasting results with actions related to these key requirements:

- Multisector approach
- Technological and non-technological solutions for energy efficiency renovation
- Application of monitoring tools
- Capacity building
- Communities of Practice (CoP)

Thanks to a set of interlinked activities for interregional exchange, and communication and stakeholder involvement, VIOLET partners have developed these 5 Action

Plans to improve ERDF and local policy instruments on energy efficiency in traditional buildings.



Partners convene in Cyprus for a site visit to a historical building that will become energy efficient



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Save the Date!

Next International VIOLET Partner Meeting—
 Schwäbisch Gmünd, 15th-16th May

Next International VIOLET CoP— TBA

Project Data

Total budget: € 1,300,513.00
ERDF Funding: € 1,089,123.05
Project Duration:
 1 Jan. 2017—31 Dec.2021



Regional Knowledge Sharing — CoPs & Cyprus

What is a CoP?

A **Community of Practice (CoP)** within the scope of VIOLET refers to a community of local stakeholders within each partner region with the common goal of ensuring successful project implementation. The CoP members meet regularly to share knowledge and information in order to best implement and disseminate VIOLET practices and results.



At the second semester CoP, members brainstorm in breakout rounds to agree on some common grounds and prevailing views in Cyprus



*First CoP Meeting in Cyprus on the 24th of March 2017—
Local Stakeholders*

During the first and second semester of the VIOLET project, CoP members from across Europe met within their respective regions to ensure stakeholders were well-informed and up-to-date regarding current and future VIOLET activities and results.

In the first semester, each regional CoP was structured into two different parts; the first one focusing on enhancing the VIOLET CoP establishment on a political level and developing a concrete definition of historical, heritage and traditional buildings to find a common base for further actions; the second part of each meeting was the development of a multi-sectorial SWOT (Strengths,

Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analyses. Second semester CoP meetings were held to discuss specific next steps that were to be taken to achieve the project goals in the field of energy efficiency in historic buildings.

To provide an inside look into what goes on in a CoP meeting, and to shed some light on the significance of each CoP meeting, VIOLET partner Cyprus Energy Agency's first CoP meeting in Lefkosia, Cyprus on the 24th of March 2017 can serve as an example. Nineteen people from varying relevant sectors (ministries, municipalities, universities, private companies, NGOs, experts) were in attendance, bringing together for the first time relevant stakeholders from important sectors for a face-to-face discussion on the topic of energy efficiency and cultural heritage in buildings.

Many diverse views were discussed by VIOLET stakeholders at the CoPs in an effort to establish prevailing views. Here, local Town Planning and Housing Development representative, Ms. Kalava stated that traditional

VIOLET Project Cyprus' Community of Practise Outputs after the 1st Meeting

Strengths

- Expertise/Experience & Knowledge exchange
- Experts on Building Level (Architects/Energy/Contractors...)
- Combination of Policy Making & Technicians
- Engagement (Many sectors)
- Share Information/Data
- Structures in Schemes (Advantage of existing schemes on structures)
- Participatory process
- Access to different intensives for global renovation
- Easier, Faster & more efficient Processes
- Reduction/elimination of mistakes during the implementation of the suggested measures
- Integrated design
- Faster dissemination process with higher influence on people (social awareness)
- More available funds
- Political commitment - support
- Lower cost for the process

Weaknesses

- Time consuming procedures
- Higher possibilities for conflicts and disagreements
- Different prioritisation for each sector/domain
- No mutual understanding on technical solutions/applications/knowledges etc.
- More time is consumed in discussions and action might not be taken (no results obtained)
- Responsibilities might not be taken by the relevant parts
- Absence of political commitment

Opportunities

- Easier to reach the end users
- Flexible criteria for renovation
- Global understanding and a trend on energy issues (no need to start from the beginning)
- Higher influence on European Policies/Directives/laws
- Strict time frames (More urgent deadlines)
- Easier engagement of communication technologies & social Media
- Easier to make an impact on a national/international level
- Increased contribution of various parts/domains
- RES implementation
- Research institutes, new jobs and markets
- Partnerships between the public, private & academic sectors
- Availability of best practises
- Creation of new financial instruments for these buildings (reach private sectors)
- Development of high skills and qualifications
- Resolve of criteria complexity for renovations/restorations

Threats

- Absence of EU funds
- Change of Political status (priorities/policies might change)
- New Directives/policies/laws with different approach on the topic might arise
- Changes of the energy prices (lower prices might result to the loss of interest from some sectors)
- Lack of new technical solutions for traditional buildings (multisector approach cannot change this)
- Absence of qualifies and specific skills/experts
- Economic crisis - not enough money for investments on renovations (the construction sector will be affected)

VIOLET CoPs in Action — Semester 1 & 2



buildings in Cyprus are generally those built before 1946, the year in which the Streets and Buildings Regulation Law was created, before which buildings required concrete plans or permits to be built. This idea, amongst many other important topics presented at the Cyprus CoP meeting, is important for the stakeholders to discuss amongst themselves to better streamline the VIOLET approach; i.e. there is no “one size fits all” renovation approach when renovating buildings and their façades for energy efficiency in Cyprus.

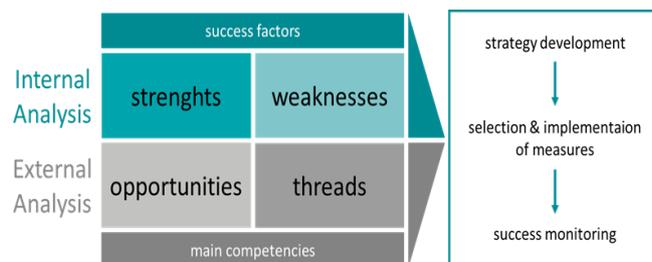
As a result of the CoP, VIOLET stakeholders in Cyprus now share the following prevailing view: "It is not easy to define/identify a type of ‘Traditional Building’, as we have many local and temporal variations. Therefore, for the purposes of this project, the selected buildings are limited to [those] that are currently excluded from the ‘Energy Performance of Buildings Law’. These can be listed buildings or buildings of historic value, ancient monuments or remarkable buildings of cultural heritage/architecture." In addition, another main outcome of the semester one CoP meeting in Cyprus was the results from a regional SWOT Analysis (see bottom of page 2).

Communities of Practice (CoPs) in other regions

Semester one and two of VIOLET proved to be very prolific in terms of yielding successful CoP meetings, which are vital to the project’s success.

Outside of the semester one CoP meeting in Cyprus, the VIOLET project also boasts semester one and two CoP meetings hosted by each project partner: the South-East regional Development Agency in Romania, the Cyprus Energy Agency in Cyprus, the Public Enterprise for Social Housing and Refurbishment in Andalusia in Spain, the Municipality of Middelburg in the Netherlands, and the Local Energy and Climate Agency in France.

Semester one CoP meetings can be summed up by each region’s SWOT analysis. The SWOT analyses—tools to identify specific strengths (S), weaknesses (W), opportunities (O) and threats (T)—are able to highlight specific regional challenges the CoP must work together to tackle, and to build a foundation for measures and actions that use the regional strengths as well as the project partners’ competences. In this way, the SWOT analyses represent a multisector approach, in which technical and non-technical solutions are developed and monitoring and capacity building is optimized.



Second semester CoP meetings, on the other hand, established specific measures to reach while engaging owners of traditional and historic buildings into the process to increase the energy efficiency of their buildings. The strategies to do this varied amongst regions and partners, ranging from active face-to-face discussions to newsletters and training events for building owners.



(above) Local stakeholders discuss the future of VIOLET at a second semester CoP meeting hosted by the Public Enterprise for Social Housing and Refurbishment in Andalusia and Regional Ministry of Public Works and Housing; (below) CoP meeting held by SER DA in Romania in semester 2.



Furthermore, VIOLET project results were evaluated within second semester CoPs. For example, early adaptations of photovoltaic panels in historic buildings show quick project implementation and boost the motivation of building owners to participate in the program. In this context, partners derived the communication of best practices and success stories independently as an important success factor for upcoming actions.

Finally, each partner developed an action plan for VIOLET during second semester CoPs, through which short- and long-term actions were set.

In conclusion, CoP meetings are vital in developing a strong foundation for VIOLET’s aim to achieve a long-term impact on sustainable development, growth, job creation and the preservation of EU cultural heritage.

Stay tuned for future Community of Practice results!

VIOLET Progress and Results — Semester 1 & 2 Overview

Kick-off meeting defines goals

VIOLET's official kick-off meeting in Tulcea, Romania—following a virtual introductory meeting—took place on the 11th and 12th of April 2017. Results from this meeting can summarize semester one.

During this kick-off meeting, VIOLET partners introduced themselves and their organisations and then went into detail regarding financial and technical reports, budget, partner reports, and general upcoming deadlines. Most importantly, the meeting gave the partners the chance to begin interregional learning activities, which focused on the definition of traditional buildings in the different regional contexts.



Port of Tulcea, Romania



VIOLET Partners at a site visit in Tulcea, Romania during the kick-off meeting on the 11-12th of April 2017

Some highlights of the VIOLET kick-off meeting were the participative exchange of experiences related to VIOLET amongst partners (presented by Valérie Degrangé of AL-EC) and the study visit within Tulcea County to examine the restoration and rehabilitation of two heritage buildings included in the regional tourist circuit.

Project management, presented by Sara Banchi of Resolvo, then laid down the rules and guidelines related to management and financial aspects of the project; e.g. partners were required to begin the process of identifying their first level controllers, as well as submitting their first project progress reports.

The kick-off meeting concluded with an overview on project communication, in which the partners outlined their goals to develop a project poster, a website, and social media pages. Semester one was already off to a good start, as exhibited through VIOLET's successful kick-off!

First Semester Project Results

The second official VIOLET project partner meeting took place on the 20th-22nd of September 2017 in Cyprus, during which the partners defined first semester progress for VIOLET.

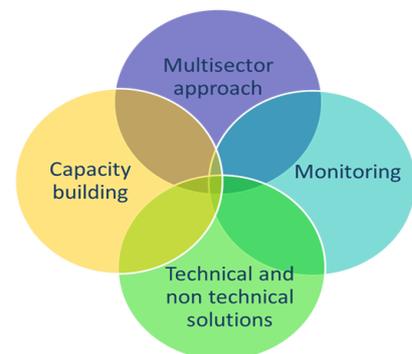
Some concrete first semester results of VIOLET presented at the second partner meeting in Cyprus include:

- All partners selected their first level controllers (FLCs)
- All partners established their Communities of Practice (CoPs)
- All partners worked on their first SWOT analysis (see page 2-3)
- Project brochures finalised and translated
- Communication templates

Second Semester Challenges & Results

The second official VIOLET virtual project partner meeting took place on 19th January 2018, during which the partners reviewed their second semester progress and planned for the future.

In the second semester, VIOLET partners delved deeper into the current challenges of project implementation, such as the lack of sufficient funding, technical difficulties in refurbishing buildings, lack of experienced professionals, poor communication of overly technical information on relevant goals (and lack of climate indicators), and hurdles due to heritage regulations of traditional buildings. These barriers are not shared amongst all partners equally.



Such barriers, however, can be overcome by sharing and implementing effective and transferable good practices (GPs) amongst partners, developing strong action plans to improve policy instruments, building capacity, and effective monitoring (measuring how many people whose competence in the relevant fields has increased thanks to interregional learning)—all of which being goals for the upcoming semesters...**Stay tuned!**

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VIOLET Partners — Reference Guide

Through cooperation among five regions at different stages of development and one expert advisory partner, VIOLET fosters a multi-sector, integrated planning approach bringing together organisations in charge of energy efficiency and cultural heritage on regional and EU levels.

Map of Project Partnership



Meet the Partners

 **South-East Regional Development Agency (Romania):** The lead partner, an NGO & a non-profit body of public utility responsible for the development policy programming and implementation in the SE Region of Romania.

 **Alec Local Energy Agency of the Bordeaux metropolis and the Gironde:** Alec supports upstream/downstream implementation of policies for energy & climate, offering neutral expertise for local stakeholders since 2007.

 **European Institute for Innovation - Technology:** An applied science organisation supporting the adaptations of regions to respond to the fast pace of development, in a variety of sectors.

 **Cyprus Energy Agency:** A non-governmental, non-profit organisation that contributes actively to the conservation of energy resources and the quality of life.

 **The Public Enterprise for Social Housing and Refurbishment in Andalusia:** A Public Housing Service focused on improving and upgrading the public participation and organisation of almost 85k dwellings.

 **Municipality of Middelburg:** A municipality at the southwest coast of the Netherlands (capital of the Province of Zeeland) with 1300 listed monuments.

Project partner information

Partner	Country	Contact
South-East Regional Development Agency (Lead partner)	Romania	Nina Irimia 0040339732414
European Institute for Innovation - Technology	Germany	Chris Ashe
Cyprus Energy Agency	Cyprus	Savvas Vlachos
The Public Enterprise for Social Housing and Refurbishment in Andalusia	Spain	Esther Castillo Domínguez-Adame: 0034 955 405 385
Municipality of Middelburg	Netherlands	Annet Hannewijk
Local Energy Agency of the Bordeaux metropolis and the Gironde	France	Valérie Degrange:

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