

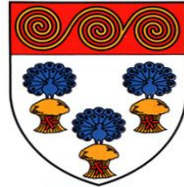


**European Union**  
European Regional Development Fund

**AT FORT**  
ATELIER EUROPEAN FORTRESSES



**INTERREG IVC**  
INNOVATION & ENVIRONMENT  
REGIONS OF EUROPE SHARING SOLUTIONS



## **PRESS CALL - KUNSILL LOKALI POALA**

DATA: It-Tnejn 22 t' April 2013

HIN: 08:30am - 09:30am

ATTIVITA': Il-Kunsill Lokali Poala bil-kollaborazzjoni ta' *'Poala Heritage Foundation'* se jorganizzaw Business Breakfast bit-tema *'At Fort'*

POST: Lukanda Excelsior, Floriana

KELLIEMA EWLENIN: Onor. Luciano Busuttill u l-Espert Olandiz, Mr Peter Ros min-*'New Dutch Waterline'*

## **Notes to Editor**

### **Paola Heritage Foundation and Council Project**

The Paola Heritage Foundation and the Paola Local Council have in the past two years collaborated in the development of the REPAIR Action Plan. Through this project the SPUR projects for the regeneration of the Corradino Royal Navy Prison and Lines adjacent has developed. Through AT FORT a Strategy and Conservation Management Plan with local stake holders is being compiled and developed. This is also part of the regeneration scheme through Tourism initiatives for the launching of the Heritage Trail which was developed in 2011-2012 by the Paola Heritage Foundation with the support of the Local Council.

### **AT FORT Atelier in Malta**

This is one of a series of AT FORT Ateliers supported by the different partners. The local Atelier here will be taking into consideration Adaptive Reuse of Forts the use of planning gains, best practice examples, local examples of PPP models, leasing and financing.

### **Background to the Project –Partnership at Fort**

The AT FORT PARTNERSHIP includes 11 partners, who are local and regional authorities, public bodies and knowledge institutes with experience in the field of cultural heritage utilization. Roles and task are distributed between the partners in a balanced way, building on their existing experience and transferable know how, and exploiting complementarities in the best possible way.

### **Many questions**

The importance of fortified heritage sites triggers the specialists and there are many challenges with still unanswered questions, in 2009 the NDW organised a European conference tackling issues such as innovative redevelopment techniques and ecology (presence of bats and vegetation within the fortified heritage sites habitat). Experts from 13 European countries were attending the conference, keen to exchange experience and knowledge on these specific topics, but of course many questions have not been answered given that they need in-depth and intensive cooperation and research.

### **Partners**

The partners that were invited to join the At Fort partnership, were selected on their specific know-how and experience, their geographic location as well as their capacity to directly influence policies and decision making processes at local and/or regional level.

## **21st century needs**

Fortified heritage sites and their surrounding landscapes built between the 16th and the 20th centuries represent a considerable cultural value in Europe.

Majority of these sites (particularly the partners sites) are situated close to urbanised areas, thus they represent a great potential for accomplishing socio-economic regional development goals. Although nowadays the surrounding urbanised territories are increasingly “conquered” by the development of new and modern constructions, there are several assets that haven't been tapped, representing great potential for increasing attractiveness of towns and regions.

The re-use and exploitation of renovated and revitalised fortresses, should be organised in accordance with the 21st century specific needs. These new economic functions will generate resources for future maintenance of the cultural values of these sites.

## **Conservation through development**

However, the "Conservation through development" concept (the motto of the Dutch Belvedere principle), which this project wishes to adopt, requires a cyclic thinking and a coordinated, integrated and systematic approach.

In order to maintain these cultural values and to make these fortified heritage sites real drivers of regional sustainable development, public bodies responsible for their operation, maintenance and exploitation must find solutions to the following problems and/or challenges:

1. In order to have the means and resources to preserve these assets (in the midst of decreasing public budgets) the exploitation of new economic functions (congress/event facilities, recreational activities, visitor centres, etc.) is indispensable. They offer many socio-economic potentials (new jobs, social employment, increase in regional revenues), opening a wide variety of possibilities for multifunctional use. Identification of best possible exploitation scenarios and creation of feasible development plans require a deep insight in the already existing examples.
2. There are important enabling conditions that need to be fulfilled and taken into consideration when creating new functions for a protected heritage site. Ecology (i.e. vegetation and bats), the use of renewable energies, accessibility, architecture- and restoration techniques, planning and landscaping are some of the most important factors that need to be considered. When dealing with these aspects, bodies responsible for the sites are often facing a conflict in policies/legislation (e.g. heritage protection vs. nature conservation or modern acclimatisation). By investigating good practices regarding enabling conditions, joint recommendations should be created to solve the conflicts and make regional/national/EU legislation conducive to redevelopment.

3. Management of fortified heritage sites call for enhanced governance models. Legal, organizational and branding aspects have to be rethought, innovation in financing models using good examples of PPP (which is a key for the management of these sites) is required.

Better governance requires smart vertical and horizontal cooperation schemes which have to be adapted to the very specific character of the sites, in line with the “Conservation through development” approach.