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DECORATOR Critical Thinking Symposium

CIRCULAR ECONOMY, BUILDING SECTOR & ART: GAPS, BUSINESS AND GOVERNANCE MODELS

Gorizia - Nova Gorica, 1-2 October 2024



The Decorator Project

The DECORATOR project aims to catalyze the circular transformation of the built environment in the Danube Region (DR) by conceiving the region as a real-life laboratory for exploring transformative practices promoted by the project. It focuses on circularity as a holistic challenge, encompassing ecological, technical, socio-cultural, and economic aspects. The project aligns with the New European Bauhaus initiative by pursuing circularity and the transition to a sustainable future as an aesthetic rather than solely a technological project. In approaching advanced technologies, it understands them as enablers to achieve sectoral transformation.



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Circular economy and the Building Sector

The circular economy has become a critical paradigm for rethinking how resources are used and managed, particularly in resource-intensive sectors such as the building industry. This approach contrasts with the traditional linear economy, where resources are extracted, used, and disposed of. In the building sector, circular economy practices aim to reduce waste, extend the life-cycle of materials, and minimize environmental impact. Adaptive reuse, a key strategy within the circular economy, has gained increasing attention as a way to retrofit and re-purpose existing structures, reducing the need for new construction and the consumption of raw materials. The circular economy in the building sector is emerging as a critical model for addressing resource efficiency, reducing environmental impact, and fostering sustainable economic growth.

The building sector is one of the largest consumers of raw materials globally, accounting for approximately 40% of global material use and 30% of all waste generated in Europe alone (European Commission, 2020). A shift towards a circular economy in this sector can address many of these challenges by creating closed-loop systems where materials are reused, recycled, or repurposed at the end of their lifecycle. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, a leader in circular economy research, emphasizes the potential of the circular economy to decouple growth from resource use by designing out waste and pollution, keeping materials in use, and regenerating natural systems (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019).

Critical Thinking Symposium

The activity is designed as a collective analysis of the present state of the art of circular of the building and art sector under the lenses of circular economy, with gaps and challenges, followed by a critical reflection about the perspectives to prepare the future. The symposium will bring together key actors from the research, technological, business and policy making communities in a context of horizontal knowledge sharing. The conversation will be guided by the identification of “gaps of circularity” functional to the design of new possible configuration of the business model incorporating DECORATOR principles.

The Critical Thinking Symposium is an occasion of critical imagination to the representatives of the technological, business and policy making communities stimulated to address the gaps with a C2C mindset. As a synthetic and condensed academic exploration of the circular economy in the building sector, the symposium will examine key concepts, strategies such as adaptive reuse, and draw on global and European experiences to identify gaps and opportunities for advancing sustainable practices.

Nova Gorica and Gorizia

Gorizia (Italy) and Nova Gorica (Slovenia) are unique twin cities, situated on either side of the Italy-Slovenia border, offering a fascinating blend of cultures, history, and contemporary innovation. These cities, historically divided, now represent a symbol of European unity and cross-border collaboration, making them an ideal location for a symposium. The cities' shared cultural heritage, combined with their distinct urban and natural landscapes, provides an inspiring backdrop for discussions on topics such as cultural exchange, urban regeneration, and European integration.

Moreover, Nova Gorica and Gorizia are set to jointly hold the title of European Capital of Culture in 2025, further emphasizing their commitment to cultural development and collaboration. This



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recognition highlights their importance as emerging cultural hubs, with a focus on sustainable urban development, historical preservation, and fostering artistic innovation. Hosting a symposium in these cities would not only allow participants to engage in meaningful dialogue but also to witness firsthand the cities' efforts to promote culture as a driver for economic and social renewal.



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Agenda October 1 (Day 1)

[Ex-Convento di Santa Chiara, Via Verdi 18, Gorizia](#)



8.30 - 9.00 Registration of Participants

9.00 - 9.20 Welcome to the Symposium Day 1

- Tomaž Konrad, Vice-director EGTC
- Matjaž Valant, Vice Rector for Sustainable Development and Technologies at University of Nova Gorica, Director Center for Green Technologies, CZT

9.20 - 10.00 about the Decorator project and the Symposium

- Gašper Juvančič, TPL, The project Decorator: contents, partnership and objectives
- Marco Acri, UNG, The Symposium: Sessions, objectives and practical info

Session 1 – Experiences of Circular Economy and the Building Sector – Moderate UNG

10.00 -10.30 Gillian Foster, JRC EU, Seville Office – The Building Process in a Circular Economy perspective;

10.30 - 10.45 Coffee break

10.50 - 11.20 Adriano Bisello, EURAC, Multiple Benefits of Urban energy efficiency and Smart City



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11.20 - 12.30 Case studies from partners area - Materials

- Sašo Seljak, SALONIT Alpacem Anhovo, SLO, Cement production: circularity in the process and products;
- Dušan Milutinović, CEO ACETRA, *The Sustainability of Construction in Mass Timber Design*.

12.30 - 13.45 Lunch Break buffet style

14.00 - 17.00 Session 2 - Circular economy in EU Twin Projects Circular Economy and Building Sector

(all JTS of EU projects have been informed with the request to provide contacts of ongoing and previous project merging)

- Matjaž Hribar, Faculty of Civil and Geodetic engineering, University of Ljubljana, [CROSS-REIS project](#), Horizon Europe Programme, *Mitigating Urban Challenges with Green-Blue Infrastructure: A Ljubljana Case Study*,
- Maria Rehbogen, Division management, Research and future topics, Zukunfts Agentur BAU; *The experience of the [ATTENTION](#) and [RiBA](#) projects in matching Circular economy and the Building Sector (online)*
- Anna de la Torre Fornell, University Ca' Foscari Venice, [Bauhalps project](#), Interreg AlpineSpace,

15.30 - 15.45 Coffee break

- Jasmina Nikić, RDA of Northern Primorska Ltd. Nova Gorica, CIRCLE project, ADRION Programme, SUBTRACT, Interreg Europe, <https://projects2014-2020.interregeurope.eu/subtract/>
- Marco Acri, University of Nova Gorica, from CLIC to GreenInCities through Re-Value and URBINAT: Circulare economy

Debate Session – Wrap-up Day 1

17.00 - 17.30 – End of day one. Optional walk in Gorizia



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October 2 (Day 2)

City Hall of Nova Gorica, trg. Edvarda Kardelja, Nova Gorica



8.30 - 9.00 Registration of Participants

9.00 - 9.30 Welcome to Nova Gorica

- Samo Turel, Mayor Občina Nova Gorica
- Mojca Stubelj Ars, X-Center, Go!2025

9.30 - 13.00 Session 3 - Economics: Arts, Culture, Heritage and circular economy

9.30 - 11.00 - Hosting ICOMOS International Committee on Economics of Conservation

- Christer Gustafsson, Former ICOMOS ISCEC Secretary General, University of Uppsala, *Integrated conservation and local action programmes*
- Luigi Fusco Girard, Università degli Studi di Napoli, ICOMOS ISCEC Member and former president – *Circular Economy and Cities in a Human Centered Perspective*
- Christian Ost, President of Lemaire Center, ICOMOS ISCEC member and former president, *Circular Economy and Heritage Adaptive Reuse Business Models*

11.00 - 11.15 Coffee break

11.15 - 12.30 - Hosting ICOMOS International Committee on Economics of Conservation and Introducing arts and Circular economy



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- Massimiliano Mazzanti, University of Ferrara, SEEDS Network, *The Economic Returns of Circular Economy Practices*;
- Xavier Greffe, Université Paris 1, La Sorbonne, ICOMOS ISCEC president, Circular Economy, Building Sector and Art Models;

12.30 - 14.00 Lunch Break buffet style

14.00 - 17.00 Session 4 - creativity, Arts and Circular Economy

- Juri Krpan, Art director, Kersnikova Institute
- Manca Bajec, Goldsmith College London, Art and Circular economy
- Marta Rota, architect and researcher, University of Arts Linz;

15.30 - 15.45 Coffee break

- Alenka Mauko Pranjić, ZAG, Rebuilt Project, Central Europe programme, and Cinderella Project, HORIZON2020 programme.
- Alice Mestriner & Ahad Mosleni, Artistis, Materiaprima, Memoriplastica, Humus
- IoDeposito+UNG, mentions about the Peripheral visions project and Artistic Residencies

17.00 - 17.45 Round table, Debate and conclusions.

Objective is to summarize Gaps, Challenges and Business Models, as highlighted during the different sessions, and possibly elaborate some more. Future perspectives based on the symposium, including future developments (such as publications, collaborations, etc.) will be also investigated in the final session.