



SUMMARY REPORT OF DESKTOP RESEARCH

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Promoting common values, inclusion, civic engagement and participation through skills development in the arts and innovative digital practices



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TOPICS

- Social Documentary
- Active citizenship and community engagement
- Social inclusion

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SUMMARY REPORT OF DESKTOP RESEARCH (IOI)

A basic premise for the ENACTING project to be effective in its goals is to consider the challenges in the field, and the needs of the target groups in the urban setting.

This Desktop research to identify each partner city's environment specificities and challenges was the necessary start of the social research methodology developed within the ENACTING project.

The consortium designed a semi-constructed template with 4 key questions to support the research and to be able to do a comparative analysis of the results.

This template was tested by the researchers of the project's consortium in 5 cities, presented here in alphabetical order: Athens, Dresden, Florence, Larissa, and Marseille.

The results are extremely rich in historical data, cultural information, events and ways of responding to and dealing with the challenges of urban environments. They are an ideal boost to unravel the tangle of local reality and synthesise the basic idea of social documentaries.

However, the results are not generalisable. They include the perspective, cultural and social contracts and experiences of the users of these templates. Some elements of the local environment are more illuminated while others may be absent. The aim is not to provide a complete and exhaustive examination of the local context, but to represent one aspect of reality as perceived by the users of this research tool.

The following is a summary of the results of the desktop research in each city of the ENACTING consortium. It is followed by a comparative analysis of the results and the report concludes with useful comments on the use of the template (which can be found in the ANNEX).

ATHENS

Athens is the capital of Greece, located in the Attica region, and it has a population of approximately 3,153,255 inhabitants. It is the country's biggest city and the centre of economic and cultural life¹. Its population is very diverse with a significant presence of migrants and refugees². The



¹ World Population Review, Athens Population 2021

² Caritas Hellas (2020), 'CARITAS IN GREECE PROTECTS THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES FACING COVID-19' Retrieved from <https://caritas.gr/en/other-news-en/caritas-in-greece-protects-the-rights-of-migrants/R>

ancient features of Athens are still present and give Athens its unique worldwide identity, while most of the monuments are located in and around the natural centre of Athens. The core economic activity is found in the service sector, like business, research, and trade³. Recently, Greece's economy experienced a period of significant recovery after the financial crisis of 2009, but the situation changed again after the outbreak of Covid-19⁴.

The challenges that emerge in the city of Athens are a lot, with the most significant being the phenomena like racism and/or hate. Far-right and racist violence through attacks and plots occur often, while the incidents coincide with the rise of the far-right party of Golden Dawn. Intolerance against migrants is another challenge emerging⁵. Young immigrants have not yet been integrated into either the social or professional life of the country. Most of them report not feeling threatened, but do feel discriminated against at high rates⁶. Unemployment, and especially youth unemployment, is one of the principal economic and social issues⁷. The last decade's financial crisis has significant impact on all aspects of everyday life and also on the mental health of the population⁸.

Among the initiatives to alleviate the challenges presented above is the National Strategy for Integration launched by the ministry of Asylum and Migration, which analyses the legislation on legal migration and asylum, highlights strategic objectives and policy axes, and proposes actions to achieve them. Also, regarding the educational system, the Ministry of Education and Religion has tried to include the integration of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, by streamlining the integration process in the educational process. In addition, civil society has been very active in supporting and assisting all state activities. NGOs' activities focus on the integration and facilitation of vulnerable groups. Among their aims are supporting migrants and refugees, especially unaccompanied minors⁹, providing child and family protection services to asylum seekers¹⁰, and supporting the integration of the recognized refugees¹¹. Last, "O Allos Anthros" is a community soup kitchen on the local level that supports people suffering from homelessness and hunger after the 2010 Greek debt crisis¹².

³ European Commission Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Retrieved from <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regional-innovation-monitor/base-profile/region-attiki>

⁴ World Bank national accounts data (2021) Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=GR>

⁵ Jacob Aasland Ravndal, Sofia Lygren, Anders Ravik Jupskås and Tore Bjørgo, 2020 'Right-Wing Terrorism and Violence in Western Europe, 1990 – 2019' Center for Research on Extremism: The Extreme Right, Hate Crime and Political Violence University of Oslo Retrieved from <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/publications/c-rex-reports/2020/rtv-trend-report/c-rex-rtv-trend-report-2020.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.dianeosis.org/research/oi-ellines-kai-to-prosfygiko-provlima/>

⁷ ELSTAT HELLENIC STATISTICAL AUTHORITY, Report on 'GREECE IN FIGURES April - June 2021'.

⁸ Konstantakopoulos G, Pikouli K, Ploumpidis D, et al. 'The impact of unemployment on mental health examined in a community mental health unit during the recent financial crisis in Greece' (2019), *Psychiatriki* 30(4):281-290.

⁹ Solidarity Now (2020) "STEP-BY-STEP": PROGRAMME FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN FROM SOLIDARITYNOW' Retrieved from <https://www.solidaritynow.org/unaccompanied/>

¹⁰ tdh.ch (2021) Retrieved from <https://www.tdh.ch/en/our-interventions/greece>

¹¹ IOM (2021) Retrieved from <https://greece.iom.int/el/%CF%83%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD-%CE%B5%CE%BB%CE%BB%CE%AC%CE%B4%CE%B1>

¹² The borgen project (2021) 'THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON POVERTY IN GREECE' Retrieved from <https://borgenproject.org/impact-of-covid-19-on-poverty-in-greece/>

The COVID-19 situation affected the unemployment rate in Greece¹³. The pandemic caused another recession due to the economic fallouts, while the lockdowns and restrictions significantly impacted the citizens' professional life and economic activities¹⁴. Stress and fear feelings also increased. Furthermore, the situation for migrants stuck in camps on the Greek islands got worse. Covid-19 intensified the already difficult conditions under which migrants and refugees were living in overcrowded camps and identification centres¹⁵. On the other hand, there was a major decrease in the number of refugee and migrant arrivals¹⁶.



DRESDEN

Dresden is the capital of the Free State of Saxony and has a total of 569,061 inhabitants¹⁷. The city is characterised by its natural landscapes and has a worldwide reputation as a city of art and culture for its museums, the classical architecture of the reconstructed old town¹⁸, and the great number of galleries, theatres and spaces dedicated to art. Before becoming the capital of the re-established state of Saxony, Dresden had a long history of both splendid eras and times of tragedy¹⁹. Dresden plays a significant role in the international market. The driving force behind economic development

¹³ World Bank national accounts data (2021) Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=GR>

¹⁴ Vatavali, F., Gareiou, Z., Kehagia, F., & Zervas, E. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on Urban Everyday Life in Greece. Perceptions, Experiences and Practices of the Active Population. *Sustainability*, 12(22), 9410. doi:10.3390/su12229410 Retrieved from <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/12/22/9410>

¹⁵ Caritas Hellas (2020), 'CARITAS IN GREECE PROTECTS THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES FACING COVID-19' Retrieved from <https://caritas.gr/en/other-news-en/caritas-in-greece-protects-the-rights-of-migrants/>

¹⁶ Save the Children (2020) 'REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS AT THE WESTERN BALKANS ROUTE REGIONAL Balkans Migration and Displacement Hub Data and Trends Analysis OVERVIEW 2020' Retrieved Retrieved from https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/refugees_and_migrants_balkans_regional_overview_2020_sc_bmdh_data.pdf/

¹⁷ <https://www.dresden.de/en/city/statistics/Population.php> (Last retrieved on 06.09.21)

¹⁸ Mundus, J. (2013). Die Hürden für werdende Eltern. *Sächsische Zeitung*, ZDB-ID 2448502-0, 20.

¹⁹ <https://www.dresden.de/en/city/history.php> (Last retrieved on 06.09.21)

History.com Editors (2021, November 5). Bombing of Dresden. Retrieved from <https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/battle-of-dresden>

Sobeslavsky, E. (1999). Die „Gruppe der 20“ in Dresden; eine bemerkenswerte Erscheinung der friedlichen Revolution von 1989/90. Entwicklung, Strukturen und politische Bedeutung. In: G., Heydemann, G., Mai, W., Müller (Eds.). *Revolution und Transformation in der DDR 1989/90*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot Verlag

is the three key sectors²⁰ of microelectronics, new-generation materials, and the life sciences. A great number of companies in the creative sector are also based in Dresden²¹.

The biggest challenge that Dresden faces is the lack of safety for the increasing number of cyclists, while the suitable pop-up cycle lanes for them are absent²². Furthermore, the housing market keeps increasing, as the level of vacancies becomes lower, creating thus a need for affordable housing in all parts of the city²³. Pegida is also a big concern of the Dresden people. Pegida is a group of members of the right-wing spectrum, classified now as extremists, who claimed to fight against Islamization and used to demonstrate during the refugee crisis²⁴. Some more issues and challenges are the change of life during the pandemic²⁵, the shortage of staff in schools and the bloom of private schools²⁶, and the lack of affordable space for artists and creative people.

Many initiatives emerge in Dresden aiming at the alleviation of the challenges mentioned above, approaching for example the cycling concept in a critical-constructive manner and giving suggestions on the run-up. Also, an attempt for affordable housing is made by limiting the rent or expropriating the large housing companies. Regarding democratic values challenges, some initiatives focus on creating projects for young adults excited about active citizenship, based on diversity. Also, there are resistant anti-fascist activities against the neo-Nazi commemoration ceremonies and the Pegida movement extremism. Furthermore, there are a lot of other actions for supporting the industries and artists threatened by the Corona crisis, promoting independent learning, or providing space to artists.

The sectors that have been affected by the Covid-19 crisis are the Cultural and Creative ones, as well as travel and hospitality²⁷, presenting a great reduction in sales. One great initiative to deal with this problem was to transform the vacant stores into art spaces²⁸. Furthermore, violence increased during the pandemic lockdowns, as the Corona crisis intensified problems

²⁰ <https://www.dresden.de/en/business/location/key-sectors.php> (Last retrieved on 06.09.21)

²¹ Baumert, J. (2018, August.08.22). Sächsische Zeitung, Wie gut geht es Dresdens Künstlern? Retrieved from <https://www.saechsische.de/wie-gut-geht-es-dresdens-kuenstlern-4000111.html> (Last retrieved on 06.09.2021)

²² <https://www.adfc-dresden.de/index.php/neuigkeiten/2494-fahrradklima-test-2020-nein-zu-pop-up-radwegen-haelt-dresden-im-radklima-tief> (last retrieved on 03.11.2021)

²³ Vollmer, J. (2020, February 27). Tausende Wohnungen in Dresden sind leer. Retrieved from https://www.saechsische.de/plus/mieten-wohnungssuche-wohnungsnot-wohnungsmarkt-in-dresden-stehende-tausende-wohnungen-leer-5177042.html?gclid=CjwKCAjwiY6MBhBqEiwARFSCPpYpAGsfQVCw-NJXkxZljKu8JCfefsq_MJRRf3rRH_LE_r29zJ5EhoCidoQAvD_BwE

²⁴ bka (2021, May 7). Sächsischer Verfassungsschutz stuft Pegida als extremistisch ein. Retrieved from <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/pegida-in-sachsen-verfassungsschutz-stuft-bewegung-als-extremistisch-ein-a-6b9e59ba-f98e-4e2a-94c0-37c669f7ad6a>

²⁵ <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/478220a4c454480e823b17327b2bf1d4> (last retrieved on 04.11.2021)

²⁶ dpa (2019, August 8). "Boom ist ungebrochen": Privatschulen in Sachsen mit Zulauf. Retrieved from <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bildung/bildung-dresden-boom-ist-ungebrochen-privatschulen-in-sachsen-mit-zulauf-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-190807-99-373331>

²⁷ https://www.destatis.de/DE/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2021/03/PD21_N023_p001.html (Last reviewed on 07.09.21)

²⁸ Bielmeier, D. (2021, August 27). Kunst und Kultur soll leere Geschäfte in Dresden füllen. Retrieved from <https://www.saechsische.de/dresden/einkaufen-in-dresden/kunst-soll-leere-laeden-in-dresden-fuellen-5513094-plus.html>

in families. This increase was reinforced by the fact that the schools were closed, and teachers could hardly notice violence and abuse in the families²⁹. On the other hand, PEGIDA's protest rituals were eliminated from the streets³⁰, as they couldn't conform to the new safety and health regulations.

FLORENCE

Florence is the capital of Tuscany, with a population of 359.675 inhabitants³¹, The Tuscan population has been decreasing since the end of the Eighties, being also subject to progressive ageing. The social context in Tuscany is characterised by polycentric urbanization. The economy is largely based on the tertiary sector, even though poverty and social exclusion are increased. The work condition is fragile for young adults, as they encounter difficulties in entering the labour market. The unemployment rate has risen, being reinforced by the phenomenon of NEET youth.

Probably the most specific challenge for the city of Florence is sustainable development in relation to mass tourism³², raising a need for redesigning the tourism sector. Another challenge is that artists and cultural and creative professionals often work in precarious circumstances, and were affected by the pandemic, being excluded or partially covered by social security protection³³. Furthermore, the



unemployment challenge blocks young people from building an independent personal and professional life. The challenges in the Cascine neighbourhood, where PARC Performing Arts Research Centre is located and ENACTING actions will take place, are also many. Issues that exist in also other Italian neighbourhoods are observed, like petty crime, prostitution and drug dealing. Also, citizens, and especially youth, face difficulties in integrating with citizens from other countries and in socializing, raising phenomena like marginality.

²⁹ https://www.dresden.de/de/rathaus/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/2020/04/pm_026.php (Last retrieved on 07.09.21)

³⁰ Volk, S. (2020, March 30). Germany: is the COVID-19 pandemic weakening the far right?. Retrieved from <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/countering-radical-right/germany-covid-19-pandemic-weakening-far-right/> (Last retrieved on 07.09.2021)

³¹ ISTAT Italian Institute of Statistics, provisional data on the demographic balance 2021, www.demo.istat.it

³² Francini, C. (2011). Sustainable Tourism and Historic Center of Florence UNESCO Management Plan. Firenze, Polistampa

³³ <https://panteia.com/news/panteia-study-published-on-the-status-and-working-conditions-of-artists-and-cultural-and-creative-professionals/>

The third sector is becoming a key player in answering the needs for alleviating the challenges³⁴. Furthermore, there are many regional laws and many agreements for the interventions to be carried out on the territory³⁵, like “GiovaniSi” programme for example which accompanies young adults from school to profession³⁶. In the Cascine Neighborhood, a number of organizations manage youth centres with training courses, while there is also a focus on supporting students to fit into the work environment. The reconfiguration of the historic Parco delle Cascine constitutes also an initiative aiming at the recovery of the community-focused functions of the public park, while the PARC Performing Arts Research Centre is part of this challenging sustainable process of urbanisation.

Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected the young generation, whose social interactions are the base of health, mental and emotional development. Also, the pandemic had an impact on the everyday life of artists, with cancellations of performances and changing working conditions, leaving some of them without any regular sources of income. Covid-19 has also exposed the fragility of a labour market increasingly shaped by the growing gig economy, zero-hour contracts and self-employment. Thus, the pandemic has deepened the gap between the better protected cultural institutions and employees, small associations and freelancers that lack traditional employment benefits.



LARISSA

Larissa is the capital and largest city of the Thessaly region, situated in Central Greece. Its population is approximately 160.000 inhabitants³⁷. Larissa is an important agricultural heartland, with significant production infrastructures and vast trade activity.

The whole of Larissa city has been characterized as an archaeological monument by the Ministry of Culture, as the contemporary city is built and layered upon the remains and monuments of the ancient city³⁸. It is a very

³⁴ <https://www.cesvot.it/comunicazione/news-e-comunicati-stampa/il-terzo-settore-toscana-numeri-e-tendenze>

³⁵ <https://www.politichegiovani.gov.it/attivita/accordi-e-compartecipazioni/regioni/>

³⁶ <https://giovani.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/scheda-Giovanis%C3%AC-nel-PRS-2016-2020.pdf>

³⁷ Hellenic Statistical Authority (2014). Population-Housing Census 2011. Retrieved from:

https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics?p_p_id=documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN&p_p_lifecycle=2&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_cacheability=cacheLevelPage&p_p_col_id=column-

[2&p_p_col_count=4&p_p_col_pos=1&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_java_x.faces.resource=document&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_In=downloadResources&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_documentID=310596&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_locale=el](https://www.statistics.gr/el/statistics?p_p_id=documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_2&p_p_col_count=4&p_p_col_pos=1&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_java_x.faces.resource=document&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_In=downloadResources&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_documentID=310596&_documents_WAR_publicationsportlet_INSTANCE_qDQ8fBKKo4lN_locale=el)

³⁸ Γαλλής Κ. Σακκελίων Γ. Σπανός Κ. (1985) Λάρισσα: Παρελθόν και Μέλλον 26- 24/08/1985, Minutes of the 1st Historical - Archaeological Symposium, 26-28 May 1985, Larissa: Municipality of Larissa

youthful and vivid city, rich in cultural activities and events. The combination of the pedestrian streets close to the important historic monument and Pinios river create the commercial centre of the town, functioning also as a meeting point.

The main concerns of local youngsters in Larissa are employment, education system, environment, the financial crisis, and migration/ refugee crisis³⁹. Young people's decision to move to other cities/countries in search of better jobs or training opportunities constitutes one of the biggest challenges for local authorities and the whole community. Environment issues and sustainability, like climate change or the use of public spaces, concern also young people. Inclusion of the migrants and eliminating their invisibility is also an issue for the local community, as well as the accessibility-inclusion of disabled people in public life, through means and actions that raise awareness. Furthermore, freedom of expression, reproducing stereotypes, patriarchy, religious fanaticism, racism, and sexism against minorities are also challenges, raising a need for an inspiring local identity and culture.

Trying to deal with the challenges above, the Municipal Youth Council was established in 2020⁴⁰. There are also several informal youth groups, either with a political character, or a cultural one, supporting vulnerable groups based on social solidarity. The MAKE USE group⁴¹ led a public initiative for responsible use of public spaces, involving citizens in the actions and responding to the perception that sets young people as responsible for the pollution of the city. The group also conducted the research "Me, my body and the others"⁴², trying to identify young people's views on the meaning of the body in the public space. Furthermore, there are a lot of initiatives working on accessibility for disabled people, through promoting sign language for example or designing educational activities. One of them is the Mill of Performing Arts Festival, one of the most important initiatives and events in Greece aiming to increase accessibility and inclusion⁴³.

All the initiatives mentioned above were affected by COVID-19 and the related restrictions, as cultural and sports/activity facilities closed, raising a discussion about claiming back the public space. Youth has been blamed for the rising cases of COVID-19, gathering in groups not keeping the precaution measures, and also littering the public spaces. Last, COVID-19 severely aggravated the exclusion of disabled people and migrants, the former being a high-risk group avoiding in most cases any contact with others, the latter being considered an agent of uncontrollable infection.

³⁹ <https://smouth.com/research-young-people-ask-young-people/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.larissa-dimos.gr/el/o-dimos/dimotiko-symvoyoilio-neolaias1>

⁴¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REBGDv4FOBY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JA9loar66c&t=177s>

⁴² <https://smouth.com/make-use-sexulaikotita/>

⁴³ <https://smouth.com/mpart-seven/>

MARSEILLE

Marseille is the second city of France, situated within the region of Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur, with a population of more than 870.000 inhabitants⁴⁴. The unique characteristic of the citizens is that the poorest people live in the centre, and not on the outskirts of the city⁴⁵. Marseille is a multicultural popular city with rich ancient history and important cultural influences⁴⁶. The cultural life in Marseille is intense and unique, with its museums, a great number of theatres, and different kinds of art spaces⁴⁷. Marseille's identity is switching, influenced by urbanization and gentrification. La Plaine neighbourhood has gone recently through a big renovation, which destroyed the main square, ending the traditional market, thus displacing the inhabitants⁴⁸, while the northern districts experience isolation from the rest of the city, and also suffer from the degradation of the housing, social needs, the quality of education, and the lack of security.

The social issues of Marseille revolve around the question of housing, poverty, access to employment, education, and public transport. Poverty is very obvious in the centre of the town, while the poorest neighbourhood in France is located in Marseille, setting the poverty rate very high⁴⁹. At the same time, Marseille has at least three very rich neighbourhoods. The issue of bad housing is the most famous one in Marseille. There were even tragic incidents of



⁴⁴ Marseille, Wikipedia. Retrieved from <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marseille>

⁴⁵ Part des ménages à bas revenus, l'exemple de Marseille, cartotheque de l'ANCT. Retrieved from <https://cartotheque.anct.gouv.fr/media/record/eyJlJlJoiZGVmYXVsdCIsIm0iOm51bGwslmQiOjEsInliOjM1MH0=#:~:text=Le%20taux%20de%20pauvret%C3%A9%20est,pauvret%C3%A9%20sont%20sup%C3%A9rieurs%20%C3%A0%2039%20%25>

⁴⁶ 2600 ans d'histoire, Marseille's webpage. Retrieved from <https://www.marseille.fr/decouvrir-marseille/histoire-de-marseille/pr%C3%A9sentation>

⁴⁷ Tout savoir sur les salles de spectacle à Marseille, Le guide Marseille. Retrieved from <https://www.leguidemarseille.fr/tout-savoir-sur-les-salles-de-spectacles-de-marseille/2384/#:~:text=Marseille%2C%20c'est%2041%20th%C3%A9%C3%A2tres,n'est%20plus%20%C3%A0%20faire>

⁴⁸ La Plaine : après l'abattage des arbres, ils érigent le mur de la honte, La Marseillaise. Retrieved from <https://www.lamarseillaise.fr/archives/apres-l-abattage-des-arbres-ils-erigent-le-mur-de-la-honte-BGLM073103>

⁴⁹ Enquête sur le 3ème arrondissement de Marseille, France Culture. Retrieved from <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/les-pieds-sur-terre/enquete-sur-le-3eme-arrondissement-de-marseille-12-larrondissement-le-plus-pauvre-de-france>

collapsing buildings or movement of citizens to temporary accommodations⁵⁰, creating a social crisis for which the municipality of Marseille is considered to be responsible. The issue of bad housing affects also the students and teachers, as it includes schools and unsanitary buildings. Furthermore, the education levels of many inhabitants are low and thus worrying, affecting their quality of life, and aggravating the discrimination towards them. The unemployment rate is also high compared to other large cities⁵¹.

Trying to deal with the housing issue, the Goethe Institut coordinated creative protests, while the 5th November Collective was formed to defend the rights of the victims of bad housing. Some other initiatives try to give space for the inhabitants to share their experiences or to shelter social and cultural organizations. The prefect also signed a rehousing charter. Public authorities created the local mission in order to accompany young people in their professional integration, trying to alleviate the challenge of unemployment. Initiatives for the alleviation of poverty and inequalities include actions and activities that support populations that face difficulty, limit the discrimination against migrants, and obtain discounts for citizens with low income when using public transportation. Also, they fight against homophobia/transphobia, inequality between men and women, bullying, and promote sharing and helping one another. Regarding education, there are initiatives for integrating allophone pupils into regular classes, training for young people without a diploma, and also offering education opportunities for free.

Covid-19 has significantly aggravated the issues mentioned above by limiting access to support programs for housing, especially for migrants. Also, unemployment increased as many people lost their jobs. Especially, the artists were the most affected, and working conditions become more fragile, widening thus the gap between the population's income and the rise in the cost of living. In addition, poverty increased as access to food and health care became more difficult, especially for migrants. Finally, even though educational structures kept functioning, it is clear that online courses affected the quality of teaching and caused a lot of drop-outs, raising a need to especially support the poor pupils.

HIGHLIGHTS

Reading this report about the cities of Athens, Dresden, Florence, Larissa, and Marseille, one can easily observe the similarities, as well as the differences that arise among the five cities.

First of all, regarding the general information that is provided, every city is the capital of its region, but Athens is the capital of Greece, and Marseille is the second biggest city in France. On the other hand, their population differs a lot. The smaller one belongs to Larissa and the bigger one to Athens. Even though the five cities present many differences in their evolution and the way they were formed, they all present a long history, and they constitute important

⁵⁰ Effondrement des immeubles rue d'Aubagne Marseille, Wikipedia. Retrieved from https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Effondrement_des_immeubles_rue_d%27Aubagne_%C3%A0_Marseille

⁵¹ Au premier trimestre 2021, le taux de chômage est quasi stable à 8,1 %, INSEE. Retrieved from <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/5400024>

economic centres for their region. More importantly, the sector of **arts and culture** is strong and developed in every city, making it famous either for its museums and galleries or for its monuments. Also, according to the data, the municipality of every city and different art groups and initiatives seem to take advantage of the art spaces, creating cultural events for the citizens.

Regarding the challenges that each town faces, it is obvious that every city experiences its unique issues and problems. Still, a lot of them are common. For example, **unemployment**, especially for young people, is an issue that concerns almost all cities: Athens, Florence, Larissa, and Marseille. Also, phenomena like the **refugee crisis** that relate to the lack of integration and marginality can be observed in Athens, Dresden, and Larissa. Especially in Athens and Dresden, there were reported challenges related to **right-wing violence**. Furthermore, issues on **education and training** are a common challenge for Dresden, Larissa, and Marseille. Last, it is important to refer to the unique problems of traffic and housing in Dresden, sustainable development regarding the mass tourism in Florence, the inclusion of and accessibility for disabled people in Larissa, and public transportation in Marseille.

It is also common that all five cities present initiatives that try to deal with and alleviate the above challenges. In some of them, the municipality and the local and state authorities take the responsibility for dealing with the issues, like in Athens, Florence, and Larissa. However, it is common that in each one of them there are initiatives from different kinds of organisations and the local community, dealing with the challenges in different ways, but with the common characteristics of trying to support the citizens and especially the ones that face difficulties in their everyday life.

Finally, the Covid-19 pandemic situation and the restrictions that followed affected all five cities. The increase in the unemployment rate was common in Athens, Florence, and Marseille, especially for the young generation. Artists and creative people were also affected in Dresden, Florence, and Larissa. Furthermore, the refugee crisis intensified in Athens and Larissa. Last, there were also observed some unique problems and issues, like the intensified family abuse in Dresden, and the use of public spaces in Larissa.

CONCLUSION — IMPORTANCE OF THE TOOL

This desktop research is a tool through which five different organisations provided specific information about the city they are located in. More specifically, five organisations in Athens, Dresden, Florence, Larissa, and Marseille, answered four open-ended questions about the specificities and challenges of their cities.

The tool was carefully designed giving all the necessary information about the project to each organisation that answered it. The four open-ended questions were clear, giving space to the person answering to be descriptive, while they also provided the limits among which the answer should be. Also, examples were given for every question in order to trigger the mind of the person answering, getting in this way more information about each city. Four questions of the tool were about general information about the city, the challenges that the city and its

citizens face, the initiatives for the alleviation of those challenges, and last, the consequences of Covid-19 on the initiatives.

Studying the report of each country, it is really important to refer to the amount and diversity of the information that is provided. Even though describing the issues of a city can be a really hard task, it is obvious that each partner's researcher(s) managed to give a clear scientific view of the way the citizens experience life in their city, being descriptive and concrete at the same time.

In addition, it is worth mentioning that the form of the questions, their number, and the guidance they give to the people answering through examples, support later a detailed, yet easy, reading for the person studying the answers. In this way, the readers create a clear picture of each city and the challenges they face. Furthermore, they can easily compare the information they receive between the cities, and observe the similarities and differences between them.

Finally, according to the above characteristics, this type of desktop research can be a very useful tool for different organisations or groups that collaborate and aim to promote common values and inclusion. The tool gives in some pages the opportunity to get to know the specificities of other cities or groups, creating a friendly space to meet in between and inspire from both the similarities and differences. Thus, common issues can be fought through exchanging methods and experience, while differences can be observed from a new perspective, developing new skills and creating a new innovative dynamic in solving problems and alleviating challenges.



Promoting common values, inclusion, civic engagement and participation



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ANNEX: IOI DESKTOP RESEARCH TEMPLATE

This desktop research aimed to identify each partner's country's environment specificities and challenges according to the main project objectives.

The same methodology can be followed by future end-users, with slightly varied questions/requirements.

It includes 4 open-ended questions that we recommend be briefly completed.

At the end of the questionnaire, the references should be added by using the APA citation. The same citation should be used for mentioning the references inside the text (for guidance please check at the end of the document).



QUESTIONS

- 1. Please provide a brief description of the area in which you are active (local status) / not more than 5.000 characters-spaces included**

For example, City or region (do we want to add a map?), Population, composition, local peculiarities, local production, state structures, recent historical data, etc.

- 2. Are there any local specificities and challenges that concern the local people, your organisation and the municipality? Please describe these specificities and challenges thoroughly and concisely based on valid sources. Please add all references using the APA citation / not more than 9.000 characters-spaces**

For example, extremism, environmental issues, mental health issues, isolation, low economic level, violence, criminality, low education level etc.

3. Are there any initiatives to alleviate these challenges? / not more than 6.000 characters-spaces

For example, public and/or private sector, civil society, programs, research and/or good practices at the local level etc.

Only for partners: In case of existing research and/or good practices please provide a link for each of them (preferably in the English language)

	Title of the initiative and a short description / not more than 500 characters-spaces	Link
1		
2		
3		
	<i>In case of more than 3 links please add lines below</i>	

4. To which extent have the above-mentioned specificities and challenges been affected by the COVID-19 crisis? / not more than 3.000 characters-spaces

REFERENCES

Guidance for APA citation: <https://www.mendeley.com/guides/apa-citation-guide>



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