

CASE FOR STUDY n°2

KPD PRISON (MARIBOR, SLOVENIA) REGENERATION PROCESS THROUGH PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

OVERVIEW OF THE REGENERATION PROJECT	LOCALISATION AND CONTEXT
<p>Type of brownfield: Former prison</p> <p>Budget: € 4,1 million (from 2008 to 2022)</p> <p>Starting date of the project : 1997</p> <p>Current status of the project: Ongoing</p> <p>Type of intervention : Permanent</p> <p>Intervention axis: Culture, social innovation, economic development</p>	<p>Country: Slovenia</p> <p>Region: Drava</p> <p>Town: Maribor</p> <p>Geographic context: A post-socialist town of 97,000 inhabitants close to the Austrian border. Former industrial capital of Slovenia, it suffers from high unemployment since the 1990s.</p>

DESCRIPTION OF THE INITIAL BROWNFIELD

The brownfield used to be a five-wing men’s penitentiary. Built in the 1890s and partially demolished in 1942, it was definitively closed in 1963. Located on the right bank of the river Drava (A), in a strategic area undergoing densification and only 1km far from the city centre, the building stands alongside a shopping centre (B) built in 2000. It is surrounded by a large area informally used as a parking lot (C). The ownership of this large building (16.000m²) is fragmented. The central and eastern wings (1-2) belong to the Municipality, while the western area (3) is now owned by the Regional Development Agency. Both southern wings are owned by private parties (4-5). The entire complex is listed as cultural heritage.



REGENERATION PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The regeneration process is still ongoing; the project went through different phases of development, targeting different objectives that had not all been defined *ex ante*. The vision first developed in 1997 focused on the refurbishment of the two public-owned wings, in order to host cultural and commercial activities through lease agreements, and to welcome public-funded organisations. A first part of the regeneration process was thus achieved. Between 2016 and 2018, a new dynamic started with Maribor’s participation in the URBACT network “*2nd Chance: Waking up the sleeping giant*”. This project aimed at fostering a participative reflection concerning the future development of the building and encouraged master students to conceive alternative scenarios for the regeneration. Three concepts were developed : “Cultural Centre Maribor”, “Market Way”, and “Island Awakening”. However, they were not implemented as such in the following years due to funding obstacles. Currently (2022) the Regional Development Agency is designing a regeneration project for the public-owned eastern wing, still partially abandoned, as well as the northern wing, for economic development purposes (SMEs incubator).

RESULTS (AS OF 2022)

The multi-phase redevelopment of the building and the fragmented ownership have led to uneven results. As of 2022, two wings have been regenerated. The extension of the northern wing (called *Karantena*, the former prison hospital) hosts cultural and artistic activities, businesses and events. The works have been financed through PHARE (EU pre-accession instrument at the end of the 1990s). The western, as well as part of the eastern wings have been renovated in 2008 and host the offices of the Regional Development Agency and the National Institute for Protection of Cultural Heritage, but also between five and seven innovative businesses contributing, through their rent paid to the Regional Agency, to the self-sufficiency of the site. The rest of the eastern wing and the entirety of the northern block (excluding *Karantena*) are now still empty and in state of decline, although further interventions are foreseen. In those spaces, ground floors are used as warehouses for old industrial machines. The two southern wings, belonging to private owners, are currently being refurbished. One of these wings is expected to host a memorial museum (Josip Broz Tito was imprisoned there in 1933), while the other will probably be converted into a youth hostel. Regular meetings are currently held between public authorities and private owners.

CONTEXT AND ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT



The Municipality of Maribor had acknowledged the strategic location of the building for urban densification purposes. The regeneration of the western wing was made possible thanks to the Austria-Slovenia INTERREG funds after the country joined the EU in 2004. The role of European policies was also crucial in 2012, when Maribor was selected as European Capital of Culture, identifying KPD as a key building for cultural development.

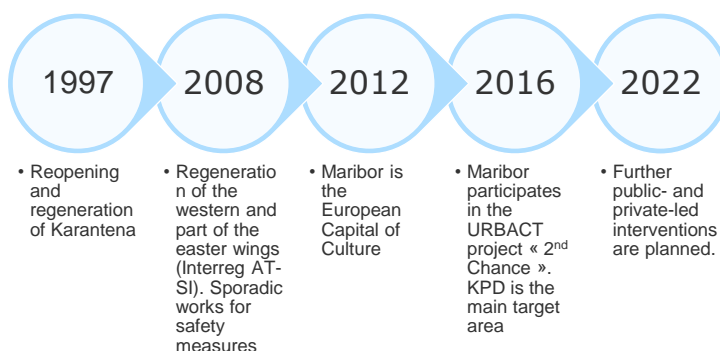


IMPLEMENTATION PHASES



The building has undergone step-by-step interventions without a specific long-term plan but pragmatically based on available funding.

- The first phase (from the 1990s to 2008) consisted of sporadic interventions
- At a later stage, the Municipality integrated prospective European tools and practices such as the setting of an URBACT local group
- In 2022, public interventions are foreseen in the northern wing (SMEs incubator). Private-led actions will be implemented in the southern wings (museum and youth hostel)



SUCCESS FACTORS



- A pragmatic regeneration process, based on multi-scale funding opportunities and open to European tools and instruments
- The use of innovative bottom-up instruments (student workshops, idea competition, focus groups, study visits...)
- The involvement of the Regional Development Agency, which settled in the complex and worked in strong collaboration with the Municipality, aiming for public-led action but working as a private actor (collecting rents from other businesses in the site).

OBSTACLES AND DIFFICULTIES MET



- The brownfield's size required large fundings. The estimated costs of the implementation based on the URBACT design was €6 million. The cost of the northern and eastern wings regeneration (ongoing) will reach €10 million
- The innovative approaches were stopped by the lack of funding opportunities targeting specifically brownfield regeneration and allowing to implement such projects
- Slowness of decision-making process, and inconsistency due to a step-by-step approach

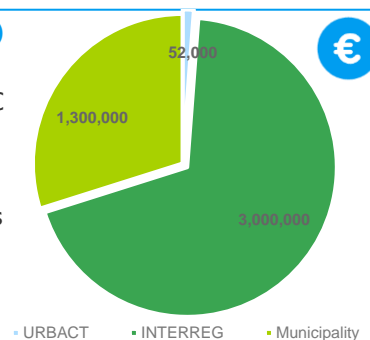
GOVERNANCE OF THE PROJECT

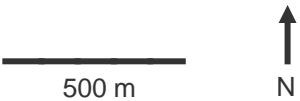


- The Municipality played a central role in the regeneration of *Karantena* (cultural and artistic centre) and was directly involved in the URBACT network in 2016, together with Maribor Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.
- The Regional Development Agency oversees the management of the ongoing renovation project. Meetings are held with private owners.

FUNDING (in €)

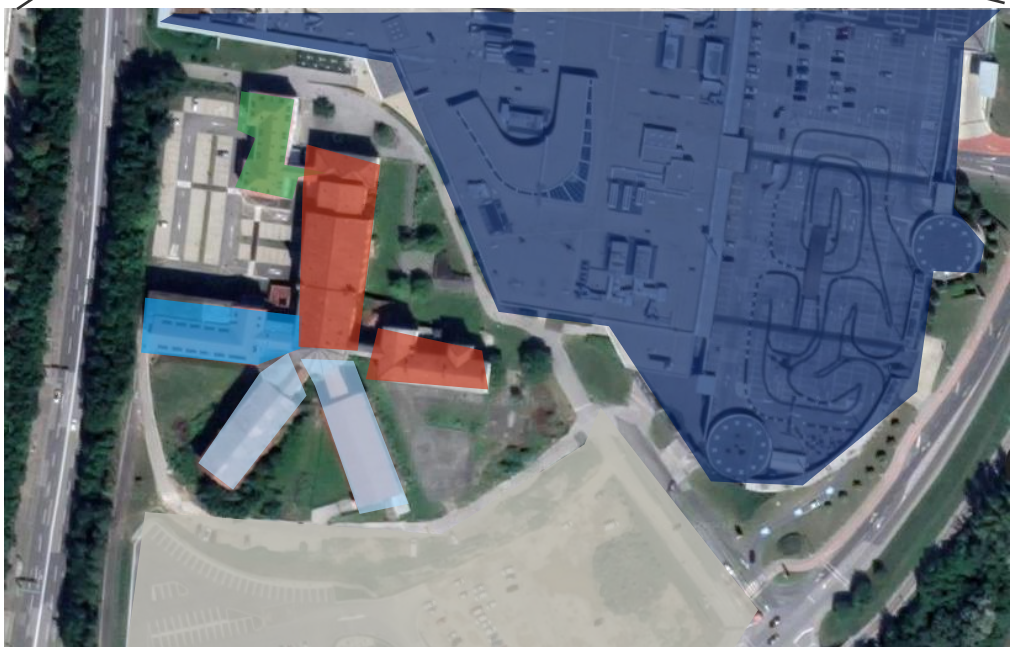
From 2008 to 2022, more than € 4,1 million have been invested into the KPD building. The previous costs of Karantena regeneration project are not known.





On the left: the KPD prison (in blue) and Maribor historical centre. Below: KPD wings (with property and current renovation status) and surrounding functions.

Source: Google Maps screenshot



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|--|--------------------------------|
| Western wing, owned by the Regional Development Agency and renovated in 2008 | Shopping center opened in 2000 |
| Southern wings, privately owned and still abandoned | Informal parking lot |
| Northern and eastern wings, public-owned and mostly abandoned | |
| Karantena, public-owned, renovated in 1997 | |

SOURCES

Waking up the sleeping giants. The 2nd Chance Network's Project Brochure, 2017. URBACT, 40 pages.

Sustainable and Circular Re-Use of Spaces and Buildings, Handbook, 2019. Urban Agenda for the EU, Città di Prato. 72 pages.

Interview with Uros Rozman, from the Regional Development Agency, 4th February 2022.