

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

PROJECT	
<b>Project name and acronym:</b>	Embracing Our Shared Past - EPIC
<b>Participant:</b>	SDRUZHENIE ZA INOVATIVNO MISLENE (AIM)
<b>PIC number:</b>	890868371

EVENT DESCRIPTION			
<b>Event number :</b>	1		
<b>Event name:</b>	European Cultural Fusion Festival		
<b>Type:</b>	Open Conference		
<b>In situ/online:</b>	In-situ		
<b>Location:</b>	Bulgaria, Bansko and Strumyani		
<b>Date(s):</b>	28-30 May		
<b>Website(s) (if any):</b>	<a href="https://aim-org.eu/epic/">https://aim-org.eu/epic/</a>		
Participants			
Female:	194		
Male:	65		
Non-binary:	3		
From country 1 [Bulgaria]:	56		
From country 2 [Italy]:	9		
From country 3 [Greece]:	145		
From country 4 [Slovenia]:	46		
From country 5 [Spain]:	6		
Total number of participants:	262	From total number of countries:	5
Description			
<i>Provide a short description of the event and its activities.</i>			
<p>The “EPIC Cultural Fusion Festival,” held in Bansko and Strumyani, Bulgaria, on May 28–30, 2025, was an international town-twinning event organized under the European program “Embracing Our Shared Past” (EPIC). Hosted by the Municipality of Strumyani in partnership with AIM and supported by municipalities from Italy, Greece, Slovenia, and Spain, the event aimed to deepen European solidarity by using culture and heritage as bridges for understanding, cooperation, and shared identity.</p>			

The three-day workshop brought together local authorities, NGOs, cultural practitioners, and policy experts to explore how local traditions and heritage practices can strengthen European values. The consortium included second-level local government bodies such as the Municipality of Strumyani (Bulgaria), Comune Di Soriano Nel Cimino (Italy), the Municipality of Veroia (Greece), the Municipality of Novo Mesto (Slovenia), and the Ajuntament de Sueca (Spain), as well as civil society actors such as AIM (Bulgaria), EQUALINE (Greece), and ZAVOD BOTER (Slovenia).

Day 1 was primarily dedicated to participant arrival, welcoming, and networking. Guests were received in Bansko with informal introductions and coffee, followed by an opening speech that set the tone for cross-cultural collaboration. A relaxed welcome dinner in the evening offered participants an early chance to connect in a friendly, intercultural setting.

Day 2 opened formally with a presentation of the agenda and project vision, followed by short speeches on culture and heritage preservation in Europe. Representatives from the participating municipalities presented their perspectives on European integration and community cohesion. The afternoon featured expert speeches on the role of cultural identity, EU heritage policy, and cultural diplomacy. Participants engaged in a moderated discussion on building unity through shared values, followed by a hands-on cultural workshop where municipalities presented traditional dishes and shared the stories behind them. The day concluded with a shared dinner to further enhance community bonds.

Day 3, the final day, focused on thematic exploration and training. Morning sessions included "Folk Traditions as Living Heritage," "Why Culture Matters to Our Future," and "Cultural Leadership for a Shared Future." These were followed by two-part workshops on using culture to overcome division and linking local traditions to European policy. The interactive format encouraged collaboration and practical idea development. A Q&A session allowed reflection on grassroots cultural innovation. In the evening, participants enjoyed a cultural night with storytelling and performances representing their regions.

The final activities of the event took place in Strumyani, beginning with a study visit to the municipality's decision-making departments, offering a close look at governance and cultural programming. An open forum featured artistic performances themed "Voices and Movements of Unity," and the concluding lab session allowed stakeholders, including mayors, citizens, and NGO leaders, to co-create a symbolic "Cultural Declaration of Unity." After a closing ceremony and lunch, participants departed with a renewed sense of European belonging and cultural purpose.

Dissemination efforts were integrated throughout the event. Activities were documented via video and photography, while social media channels provided real-time updates to audiences across Europe. Local and regional media highlighted the event's significance, and informational materials, such as newsletters, posters, and event kits, were distributed among participants and their home communities. The outputs of the event, including the Cultural Declaration of Unity, will continue to be shared post-event to maximize reach and sustainability.

To conclude, the EPIC event demonstrated the power of youth-led and community-driven initiatives in shaping a united and inclusive Europe. Through thoughtful discussions, creative workshops, and cultural exchange, participants deepened their engagement with European identity, sustainability, and solidarity. The Municipality of Strumyani, in cooperation with AIM and its European partners, provided an empowering space for dialogue and joint action. As participants return home, they carry with them the tools and momentum to initiate further cooperation and bring the EPIC spirit to life across Europe.

The Agenda of the EPIC Town Twinning Event is presented below:

### **Embracing Our Shared Past**

#### **EPIC**

**Project No: 101157634**

**Call: CERV-2023-CITIZENS-TOWN-TT**

#### **Agenda**

#### **Bansko & Strumyani, Bulgaria**

Time Slot	Session Day 1 - Bansko
15.00 – 15.30	Participants' Registration & Welcome Coffee

15.30 – 15.45	Welcome Greetings and Introductory Speech
	Mr. Emmanouil Kolyvas, President of AIM
15.45 – 16.00	Agenda's Presentation and Introduction to the Perspective of Culture and Heritage Preservation in Europe
16.00 – 16.30	Introduction of the participating bodies –European integration and solidarity in each one's country
	Representatives from:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Municipality of Strumyani, Bulgaria</li> <li>• Comune Di Soriano Nel Cimino, Italy</li> <li>• Municipality of Veroia, Greece</li> <li>• Municipality of Novo Mesto, Slovenia</li> <li>• Municipality of Penne, Italy</li> <li>• Ajuntament de Sueca, Spain</li> </ul>
16.30 – 17.00	Speech : The Power of Cultural Identity in a United Europe
	Speech delivered by a Cultural Policy Expert
17.00 – 17.30	Speech : Preserving Cultural Heritage in Modern Europe
	Speech delivered by a Policy Advisor
17.30 – 18.00	Coffee Break
18.00 – 18.30	Speech : Moderated conversation on how cultural diplomacy strengthens European cooperation.
	Speech delivered by a Historical Expert
18.30 – 19.00	Open Discussion
	Building Unity Through Shared Cultural Values
19.00 – 19.30	Workshop
	Each municipality presents and shares traditional dishes. Open tasting event with chef demos and cultural storytelling.
20.00	Welcome Dinner
Time Slot	Session Day 2 – Bansko
10.00 – 10.30	Participants' Welcome
10.30 – 11.15	Session 1 : Folk Traditions as Living Heritage
11.15 – 12.00	Session 2 : Why Culture Matters to Our Future
12.00 – 12.30	Coffee Break
12.30 – 13.15	Session 3 : Cultural Leadership for a Shared Future
13.15– 14.30	Lunch
14.30 – 15.30	Training Workshop – Part 1
	Culture as a Bridge for Overcoming Division, Building Belonging
15.30 – 16.30	Training Workshop –Part 2
	How Local Traditions Feed European Policy
16.30 – 17.30	Training Workshops' Q&A and Reflections
	Examples of bottom-up cultural innovation shaping EU programs
20.00	Cultural Evening and Dinner
Time Slot	Session Day 3– Strumyani
10.00 – 12.00	Study Visit to the Municipality of Strumyani & Decision-Making Departments of Central Macedonia for sharing loops and experiences
12.00 – 12.30	Open Forum

**Voices and Movements of Unity in Cultural Performances**

12.30 – 13.00    Lab

Mayors, Citizens, and NGO Leaders Discuss for Cultural Declaration of Unity

13.00 – 14.00    Lunch

13.00 – 14.00    Closing Ceremony and Participants Departure

**Dissemination and Publication's Links on the organizations/municipalities' websites:**<https://aim-org.eu/epic/>**Dissemination and Publication's Links on Social Media :**<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=712614871573592&set=a.712616114906801>

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
VERSION	PUBLICATION DATE	CHANGE
1.0	01.04.2022	Initial version (new MFF).