

## EVENT DESCRIPTION SHEET

*(To be filled in and uploaded as deliverable in the Portal Grant Management System, at the due date foreseen in the system.)*

 *Please provide one sheet per event (one event = one workpackage = one lump sum).)*

PROJECT	
<b>Participant:</b>	[102] - [European Alternatives]
<b>PIC number:</b>	[887839352]
<b>Project name and acronym:</b>	[TransEuropa Assemblies] — [TEA Project]

EVENT DESCRIPTION		
<b>Event number:</b>		[8]
<b>Event name:</b>		Holding Space, Transnational Assembly
<b>Type:</b>		Transnational Assembly
<b>In situ/online:</b>		<i>In situ</i>
<b>Location:</b>		Cluj-Napoca - Romania
<b>Date(s):</b>		14/10/2023
<b>Website(s) (if any):</b>		<a href="https://euroalter.com/holding-space-transnational-assembly/">https://euroalter.com/holding-space-transnational-assembly/</a>
Participants		
Female:		70
Male:		36
Non-binary:		2
From country 1 [Romania]:		62

From country 2 [Croatia]:		1		
From country 3 [Belgium]:		1		
From country 4 [Bulgaria]:		2		
From country 5 [Czech republic]:		5		
From country 6 [France]:		7		
From country 7 [Germany]:		1		
From country 8 [Greece]:		2		
From Country 9 Hungary		21		
From country 10 Italy		3		
From country 11 Spain		2		
From country 12 Sweden		1		
Total number of participants:		108	From total number of countries:	12

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

### 1. Introduction and general recap of the event's goals and purpose + description of the audience profile

The Holding Spaces Transnational assembly emerged from the previous assemblies which explored our relationship to physical spaces, virtual spaces and mental spaces from different perspectives, particularly those of people facing exclusions. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions, brainstorm ideas and opinions, and to exchange them from a transnational perspective, with individuals and representatives of local collectives from more than 10 different countries. The assembly included civic arts, individual reflection, group work, short speeches and cultural exchange. The aim of the assembly was to explore the commonality of social issues and building a community to find inspiration and hope in each other, to recognise community struggles, and to find a sense of principled solidarity.

The title of the assembly refers to:

- physical space: Cluj-Napoca is a city experiencing high gentrification and as a result the most vulnerable parts of its population is being pushed to the outskirts of the city, with less opportunities in job, access to culture and to public services. This is especially the case for the local Roma community which has been segregated for decades, as a result of the local decisions made by the municipality in place. Forms of urban exclusion are going on in many different parts of Europe, exacerbated by the cost of living crisis and property speculation.

- digital space: Cluj-Napoca is a digital hub for Romania and for the region of Transylvania, and is thereby one of the places where our digital life is created and managed, and so an appropriate place to talk about equality and exclusion..
- mental space: gentrification consequences are about more than our houses and homes – it is also about the urban and natural environments which in turn impacts our mental spaces. Being physically pushed out creates long-lasting mental barriers and limitations for those people seeing their access to the city centre so restricted that several generations born into those conditions will never feel welcomed in this city where they were born . Climate change and degradation changes the physical space we live in but also affects our mental wellbeing

## 2. Programme, profile of participants, methodologies

The transnational assembly was spread into three parts. The goal of this methodology was to facilitate the involvement of harder to reach communities, namely the local Roma community.

Participants to the assembly covered these types of profile, both coming from Cluj-Napoca and from other countries:

- Cultural workers, running and/or founders of independent cultural places
- CSO representatives
- Artists
- Writers
- Academics
- Representatives of feminist groups
- Representatives of the Roma community
- Youth and students rights activists

According to our analysis, 75 per-cent participants were female or non binary, 15 per cent LGBTQI, 30 per-cent are ethnicised as Roma, 50 per cent were low income or unemployed, 40 per cent without further education.

### Part 1 - Artistic workshop

In order to build trust with the local Roma population for their participation in the assembly, the artist Marion Colard was invited to organise an artistic workshop in Patarat, which is one of the biggest Roma camp of the EU. For decades, the Roma population has been forced to remain living in dumps, right next to a waste management site. Marion Colard uses photography and arts as a way to recreate connections amongst the Roma community, particularly women and children. Marion's Intervention with Pata-Rât's Children: Marion's goal is to create art with the children of Pata-Rât, helping to rebuild their identities and community spirit through creative expression.

### Part 2 - Transnational Assembly

The assembly took place in Tranzit House, which was established in 1998. Originally a synagogue, it was transformed into a vibrant cultural space. However, it's important to recognize that independent cultural spaces like this one are increasingly threatened by real estate pressures in Cluj-Napoca, leading to evictions and the disappearance of museums. Tranzit House stands in the heart of the city, a place where many artists are often pushed to its margins. This situation was relatable for the guests of the assembly who witness and experience similar struggles in other European cities.

After a recap of the recommendations coming from previous assemblies leading up to this transnational assembly, the assembly was divided into the three different types of spaces detailed earlier:

#### 1. Physical Spaces

In 2020, there was a significant eviction of the Roma community in Cluj. This was not the first instance; previous evictions date back to 1990 when many were moved to Pata-Rât. The 2010 eviction sparked a response from the city's academics and civil society, leading to reparatory actions. People decided to take a stand against these injustices. The Social Housing Now Movement emerged, advocating for social housing rights through protests, publications, legal actions, and support for those facing eviction. They help people navigate bureaucratic systems and organise to protect their rights.

One woman from the Roma community shared her experience: she was the first to be evicted. Despite initiatives for social housing, there's still immense pressure on the community. Her children have faced harassment from social services, and their educational support was cut off by the municipality. They no longer receive study grants, and their access to basic financial services is restricted.

Other testimonies from Pata-Rât residents were shared:

One resident shared, “I was evicted and now live in Pata-Rât with my four children. I have a significant debt for my housing and had to go to trial. Despite my situation, my children’s scholarships were cancelled by the state, and they struggle to find employment. We face harsh conditions and need medical help, affordable transportation, and decent living conditions.”

Another resident, 73 years old, said, “I live here with my daughter and four other families. We are marginalised, with no access to basic amenities or medical help. We live in deplorable conditions, surrounded by rubbish and unbearable smells. We need authorities to address our plight.”

A third resident questioned, “Why don’t we deserve a house? We pay for water and electricity like any other citizen, yet we lack basic advantages and rights.”

Following deliberation in small groups about forms of urban exclusion and how they could be addressed, the assembly interacted with the art exhibition of photographs made in Pata-Rat and the spatial disposition of Transit House to decide how to place and group their recommendations for visitors to the exhibition to see, adding a further reflection about physical space, context and accessibility.

## 2. Digital Space

The digital space is unique in that it allows us to exist without physical bodies, making it a realm where our physical conditions cannot limit us. It’s a space for collective intelligence and challenging social constructs, fostering new communities and connections.

Unlike previous generations, we now have a sense of connectedness that transcends borders. Reflect on the early internet of the 90s, which was envisioned as a space beyond national constraints. John Perry Barlow’s “Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace” highlighted this vision.

However, access to virtual spaces often depends on physical privilege, such as the subscriptions, updates, and software we can afford. Many of us agree to terms and conditions we don’t fully understand, and coding languages remain foreign to most. As virtual spaces become increasingly privatised and commercialised, our rights are eroded, and our data is sold, influencing political campaigns. There’s a lack of care for these spaces, and they are riddled with racial and gender biases.

We must understand how to reclaim and protect our digital spaces as citizens of the internet. Initiatives like the Cyber Feminism Index by Mindy Seu provide examples of efforts to challenge these issues.

In this section participants discussed and collaborated to make online collages of images which showed inclusion or exclusion in the digital space. These images were then used for further reflection to generate proposals and recommendations.

## 3. Mental Space

In order to become more aware of mental space, participants listened to poems and did meditation exercises, reflecting on connections with natural spaces and other people, and becoming more aware of emotions and feelings. These exercises led to group deliberation on what could be done to improve mental health in Europe, and also the creation of short theatrical performances or group movements that could illustrate these recommendations.

### 3. Final recommendations collected during the assembly

Physical space:

- Housing rights movements are overall very well organised across the cities and are organising more and more transnationally. The housing crisis is the consequence of broader issues encountered by the most vulnerable, it makes visible deeper dysfunctions. A policy approach to addressing housing should address the multiple factors that result in poor housing, from lack of housing stock, to property speculation, to bad land use planning, racism and highly unequal wages.
- Being in bad quality housing brings other forms of marginalisation and exclusion, such as difficulty of access to public services (public transport, health, education etc), culture, the job market. Municipalities, or at default the regional administration, ought to knowledgeable these inequalities and invest to limit them

Digital space:

- Inequalities existing in in-person life are not only echoed but amplified when transferred into digital spaces. These exclusions and inequalities should be taken into account when online processes are used for granting scholarships or other opportunities.
- The market of data needs to be better regulated to protect EU consumers and EU internet users

Mental space:

- Mental space should be included as key component of fundamental rights, as it should be considered equally important to the right to physical integrity
- Working rights and regulation should protect mental health and more attention should be paid to identifying kinds of work and working conditions that can be particularly harmful to mental health to better protect workers.

- Campaigns raising awareness about mental health and particularly about PTSD including for victims of sexual violence should get special support from the EU

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