

BioBOND: Bonding Cities for a Bio-Driven and Sustainable Urban Future - A European Town Twinning Event for Sustainable Urban Transformation was held in Alexandreia, Greece, from 5 to 7 May 2026

From 5 to 7 May 2026, the Institute for Promotion and Certification of Agri-Food Products, in cooperation with the Municipality of Alexandreia, successfully organised the European Town Twinning event of the project “BioBOND: Bonding Cities for a Bio-Driven and Sustainable Urban Future”, under the framework of the CERV Programme. The event focused on the role of sustainable urban transformation in shaping the future of European communities, with particular emphasis on the principles of the New European Bauhaus initiative. Bringing together local authorities, civil society organisations, experts and citizens, the event created a platform for dialogue on how public spaces can become greener, more inclusive, aesthetically valuable and resilient, while strengthening civic participation and community well-being. Through knowledge exchange and mutual learning, participants explored innovative approaches for designing urban environments that place people, sustainability and social cohesion at the centre of local development.

The partner consortium included five participating countries: Greece, Italy, Poland, Bulgaria and Serbia. The participating partners were the Institute for Promotion and Certification of Agri-Food Products from Greece, Comune di Calimera from Italy, Gmina Andrespol from Poland, Petrich Municipality from Bulgaria and Regionalna Razvojna Agencija Backa DOO Novi Sad from Serbia. Through this cooperation, the project brought together municipalities, local authorities, civil society organisations, youth representatives and citizens to explore how European towns can respond collectively to common environmental and social challenges.

Kicking off on Day 1, participants arrived according to their group schedules and were welcomed in an informal setting that encouraged first exchanges among the delegations. The welcome dinner created a friendly and collaborative atmosphere, allowing participants to meet one another, share initial impressions and set the tone for the discussions and exchanges that would follow during the main conference programme.

Day 2 marked the core of the BioBOND event, with the main conference activities taking place at the Cultural Center of Alexandreia. The day opened with registrations and welcome coffee, followed by institutional greetings and an introduction to the Town Twinning project. The Municipality of Alexandreia welcomed the participants, while representatives from the partner organisations presented their local contexts and highlighted the importance of cooperation between European towns in addressing shared challenges related to sustainability, urban resilience and civic engagement.

Following the welcome, the agenda moved into a broader discussion on sustainable urban transformation and the role of public spaces in community life. Mr. Christodoulos Arxontis, Political Scientist, delivered the session “Transforming Public Spaces for Sustainability”, introducing the BioBOND project and its alignment with the CERV Town Twinning call. His presentation also explored the European Green Deal and the New European Bauhaus initiative, underlining how

European priorities can be translated into practical local action for more sustainable and inclusive public spaces.

The programme continued with expert contributions on European environmental policies and local sustainability strategies. Mr. Anastasios Veniopoulos, Lawyer and EU Project Manager, presented the session “Exploring EU Policies for Sustainable Urban Transformation”, focusing on the Biodiversity Strategy, the Circular Economy Action Plan and the EU Climate Pact. Through this session, participants examined how EU policy frameworks can support municipalities in developing greener urban strategies, strengthening climate resilience and connecting local initiatives with wider European goals.

Attention was also given to the exchange of local experiences and transferable practices. Mrs Ioanna Kynigopoulou, Political Scientist, presented the session “Best Practices for Eco-friendly Public Spaces and Youth-led Projects”, bringing forward case studies from partner towns and examples of projects undertaken by youth to support local environmental action and civic engagement. The discussion allowed participants to explore how successful practices can be adapted to different local realities and how public spaces can become more environmentally friendly, inclusive and accessible for citizens.

The conference also explored the human and behavioural dimension of sustainability. Mrs Stella Ntouvi, Psychologist and EU Project Manager, delivered the session “Behavioral Change and Community Well-being in Sustainable Cities”. Her presentation focused on how people relate to public spaces and what motivates pro-environmental behaviour, emphasizing that sustainable urban transformation is not only a matter of policy and infrastructure, but also of everyday habits, community well-being and active citizenship.

The conference day concluded with closing remarks, during which the main insights and outcomes of the sessions were brought together. Participants reflected on the importance of cooperation between municipalities, citizens and civil society, as well as on the need to connect European policy frameworks with local experiences and practical community needs.

Across all sessions, the BioBOND agenda fostered an inclusive environment where European policy priorities met local realities, and where strategic planning was connected with community participation and practical exchange. The event strengthened dialogue among municipalities, civil society actors and citizens, while encouraging participants to think critically about the future of urban spaces and the role of local communities in driving sustainable change.

In conclusion, the BioBOND event demonstrated the power of Town Twinning in connecting European communities and transforming shared challenges into opportunities for cooperation. Through insightful presentations, open dialogue and the exchange of practical experiences, participants deepened their understanding of sustainable urban transformation, civic engagement and European cooperation. The Municipality of Alexandreia, in cooperation with the Institute for Promotion and Certification of Agri-Food Products and the European partners, created an empowering space for dialogue, learning and future collaboration. By embracing the values of the New European Bauhaus—sustainability, inclusion and aesthetics—the event highlighted how

local communities can actively contribute to shaping more liveable, resilient and people-centred urban environments. The event closed with a strong sense of shared commitment, leaving participants with valuable knowledge, renewed motivation and stronger connections to support the development of greener, more resilient, inclusive and future-oriented cities across Europe.