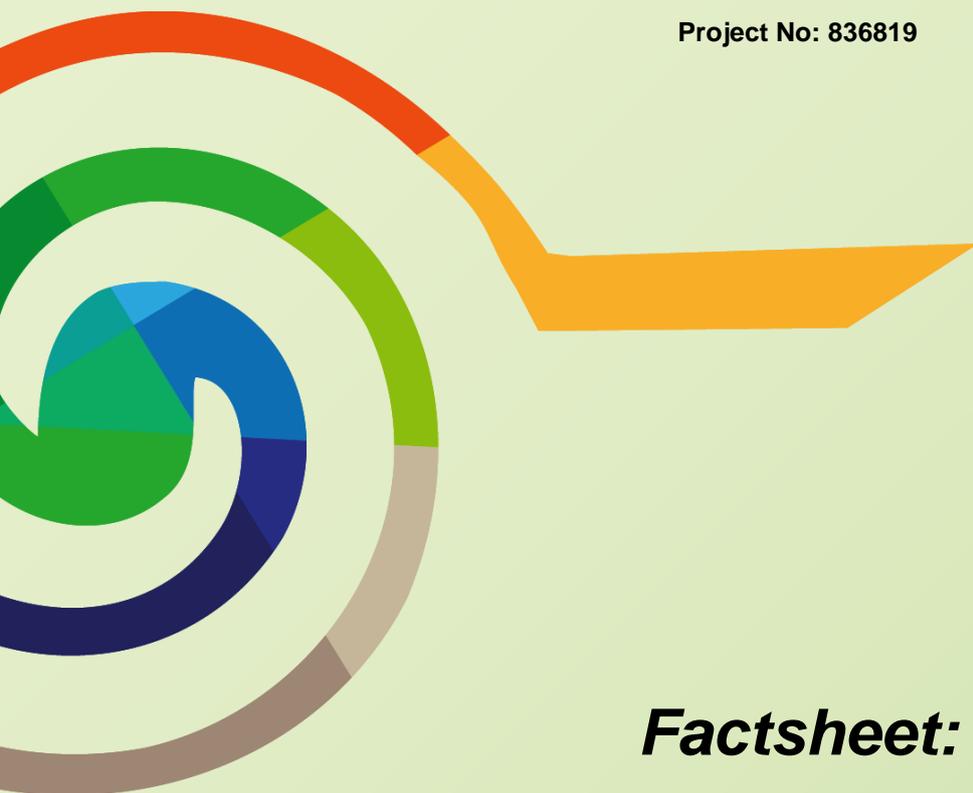


Smart strategies for the transition in coal intensive regions

Project No: 836819



***Factsheet:***  
***Petrila Planet-steps towards reactive  
art, Jiu Valley, Romania***

SEPTEMBER 2019



GET

## Description

The conversion of the Petrila Coal Mine was the main purpose of a 2012 initiative, significant in the contemporary Romanian landscape. At the initiative of ADERF - the Association of Romanian Students and PhD students in France and the Cultural Association "Condiția Română", in the autumn of that year the workshop "Petrila - Regeneration of an industrial landscape" was organized. The expected result of the workshop was to find strategic directions for the development of the city of Petrila in relation to a scenario of reuse of its industrial heritage - the Petrila Mine. At the end of this first initiative, an X-ray of the city and the relationship between it and the mine was created. The workshop was repeated during 2013, through editions 2 and 3, the final product being the pre-feasibility study "Preservation, security and functional conversion of structures with patrimonial value within the Petrila mining operation", which was at the base of the classification of the ensemble in the List of Historical Monuments. In the same year, the feasibility study resulted in the postindustrial urban regeneration workshop was unanimously voted by the Petrila Local Council. Thus, through this decision of the Local Council, pressure was placed on the mining company to modify the demolition solution.



Figure 1: A part of the former mining ensemble

(source: Planeta Petrila NGO)

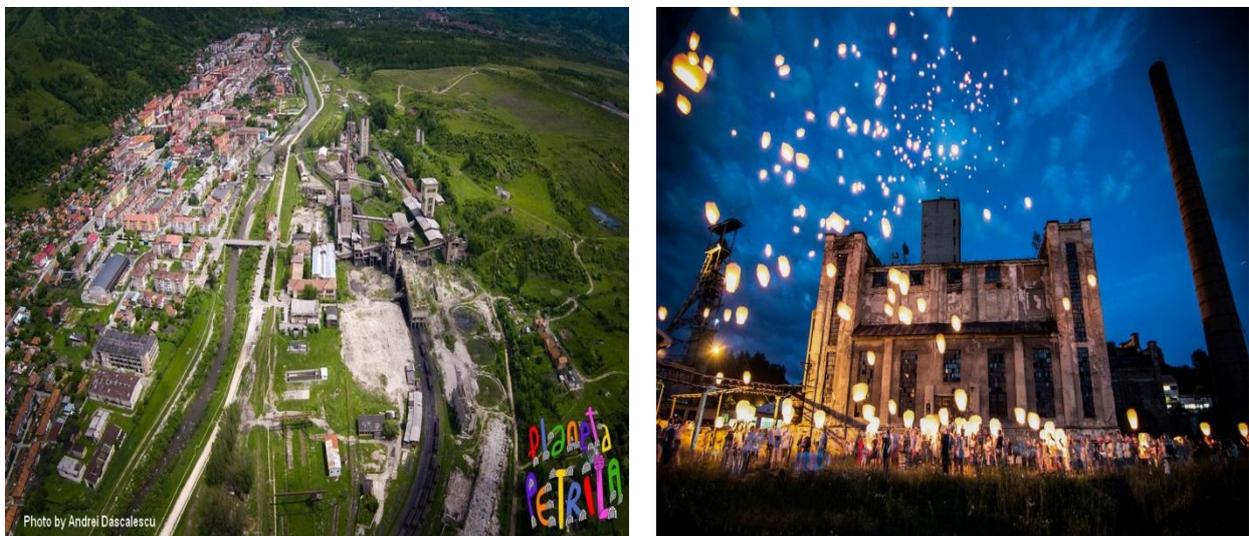
1. **Location:** Petrila, Jiu Valley micro-region, county Hunedoara, West Region, Romania
2. **Type of action:** Conversion of a mining site into a museum and diving facility
3. **Actors:** Petrila Planet Association, City Hall of Petrila
4. **Financing conditions:** -
5. **Fund(s):** voluntary actions

2014 is the year of the first participatory intervention in the Petrila mine site: StartUpPetrila is a first physical action, a small scale representation of the existing potential: the former pump station inside the mine site is enhanced by a temporary intervention, which in the meantime opened to the public. This space has remained, until now, in the management of the local association "Condiția Română", whose representative is already the well-known artist Ion Barbu. Also, a set of urban interventions temporarily activated the bank of the East Jiu River, the boundary between the mine and the city. Organized by the PlusMinus Association, the project assumes a concrete, real, conversion result of one of the buildings, without patrimonial value, which was made available by the City Hall of Petrila City. The initiators decided to open it to the public through a project designed and carried out with the inhabitants, a participatory experiment implemented under the guidance of architects and

artists, Romanian and German. The result was the inauguration of the PompadouCenter, a cultural center for the Petrila citizens, open for cultural events of the community.

In January 2015, the official classification procedure is officially announced, through an address from the County Directorate for Culture Hunedoara to the Valea Jiului Mine Closing Society (SNIM VJ) and Petrila City Hall. As a result of this act, the demolition of the buildings was stopped. In the same year, in August, Petrila held the "Days of Industrial Heritage", organized by the Romanian Cultural Society, ADERF and PlusMinus. During the event was placed the identification plate as a historical monument of the Petrila mine assembly, an action that connected the industrial assembly.

The year 2016 records the classification in the List of historical monuments, the category ensemble, value group A, of the Petrila Mining Exploitation, with the following subcomponents: the building of the old compressors and the thermal power plant with the chimney and the Deak mine (in the value group A), the mechanical workshops, the new shaft with skip, the central shaft (tower and hall) and the old preparation plant (in value group B). In the same year, in November, the documentary "Planet Petrila" (movie director Andrei Dascalescu) is launched at the International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam - IDFA 2016. After the national premiere in Petrila, on June 4, 2017 was dedicated to the traveling design of the documentary in the country and abroad. The public projections of the movie "Planet Petrila", its regular broadcast on small and big screens, but also its widespread appreciation have led to a change of perception and, finally, a positive reaction from the local community regarding the conversion process the patrimonial ensemble. What was initially considered a step by professionals from areas little familiar with Petrila, episodic appearances in the locality, gradually became a general discourse appreciated throughout the Jiu Valley. A category of values less specific to the local community or, rather, less specific to local decision-makers and informal leaders visible in public life was brought to light. These values refer to a positive attitude in relation to the nearby built environment and its heritage value, documented in all its stages and illustrated by the film.



**Figure 2: (left) Petrila City, Foto Andrei Dascalescu; (right) StartUPPetrila, 2014: lights were lifted in the air by the participants**

(source: Planeta Petrila NGO)

At the end of 2017, the "Program for regeneration through cultural initiatives" (PRIC) was initiated, a coordinated process of action, whose final aim is the development of the new administrative, economic and cultural of Petrila together with an active and open local community. The bases of this initiative were: researching existing and possible needs and opportunities, mapping local, regional and national resources and facilitating public participation of the inhabitants. The first stage of PRIC consists in the generation and implementation of cultural events, in the form of tactical actions that will facilitate the attainment of visible results in the short and medium term, that will gain the trust of the

administration and the locals, to test and validate the directions offered by PRIC and which to contribute to the increase of the cultural consumption at the local level, to the gradual development of the new public and, finally, to the reintroduction of the mine in the collective mind and to the increase of the pressure for the conversion. The short-term objectives aimed at forming the administrative structure of coordinating the process of reconversion of the patrimonial ensemble, organizing cultural events that maintain the general interest on the Petrila subject (also involving an increasing number of locals), the transfer of the ensemble from the property SNIM VJ in the property of the city of Petrila and the inclusion of the objective in the list of members of the association ERIH-European Route of Industrial Heritage.

Following the natural process, according to the agreed action plan, in January 2018 a meeting was held on the future of the Petrila mine, organized by the initiative group of professionals in the field of heritage and cultural interventions, together with the representatives of the City Hall of Petrila City, of SNIM VJ, the RUR coordinator for the city's General Urban Plan. After a few hours of constructive dialogue, a declaration of commitment was signed on four essential points in the evolution of the process, including the establishment of the Petrila association by all the above-mentioned actors and the financial contribution of the City of Petrila to the short-term action plan.

On the administrative level, the establishment of "Petrila Planet Association" was completed in August, with the following founding members: City Hall Petrila - local public authorities, Plusminus Association - representatives of professionals who worked for the classification of the ensemble, Ideilagram Association by artist Ion Barbu - initiator of the appeal rescue of the mine, ACV Petroșani - representative of the local NGO environment. The next steps consist in the application for enrolment in ERIH and the initiation of formal partnerships with similar bodies in Europe. Along with the decision to set up this organization, contacts were also made in Europe.



**Figure 3: A group of German tourists visiting the Mining Rescuers' Museum**  
(source: Planeta Petrila NGO)

Planeta Petrila sets out the objective to attract artists, specialists, authorities and local public under the umbrella of a multidisciplinary event, in an exercise to re-imagine the entire Petrila Mine. The inhabitants of the city, students in practice and external volunteers work together with the community of artists, specialists' architects and urbanists to create visualizations of a possible future, built from the re-depiction of the industrial past. From a thematic point of view, the Petrila Cultural Exploitation functions as an x-ray of the expectations of the locals and of the possible projections related to the functional reconfiguration of the Petrila mine and the outline of a new local identity.

From a methodological point of view, Planeta Petrila combines interdisciplinary techniques of interpretation of an industrial heritage site, artistic research inspired by anthropology, methodologies of audience development (audience development) and techniques of public

involvement (public commitment) in order to evaluate the existing potential and to develop a local community around the process of regeneration through culture.

## Achievements

The most important achievements include:

- the recognition of the mine as a national importance heritage ensemble, in the domain of industrial heritage;
- the adaptive reuse of the buildings, part of an informal reinvention process;
- the initiation of an NGO, to promote the reconversion process;
- bringing Petrila Planet phenomenon to the EC attention, in Brussels, through the active attendance of Arch. Mihai Danciu during both working group meetings of the European Platform “Coal Regions in Transition” (April and July 2019);
- the most important cultural heritage – as the touristic objective in the Jiu Valley, with the greatest number of tourists.

## Challenges

- the lack of options regarding the initial solution for mine closure;
- the restrictive attitude of the mining company personnel;
- the lack of vision from the local and county administrations representatives.

## Enabling conditions

The most important enabling conditions are:

- existence of a very important industrial heritage;
- existence of determinant key actors as: very well-known local artist, a former miner, a documentary director, an international team attached to the project;
- willingness of the local authorities to request the reconversion process.

## References and further links

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