UNLOCKING DIALOGUE & ACTION

A CONCEPT FOR SPAÇ PRISON
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The preservation of cultural heritage is an important area that Sweden is actively supporting in the region and in Albania. I am glad that we have been able to support the much-needed preservation of Spaç at a time when it risked collapse which would have meant that it would be lost to future generations. History has a lot to teach us and helps us understand who we are and what successes and mistakes have taken place. By acknowledging and dealing with reconciliation with the past we are better equipped to step into the future.

Johan Ndisi
Ambassador of Sweden to Albania
Spaç Prison in 2013, with the core of the prison in the middle foreground and the free workers’ buildings in the background.
WHY SPAÇ? A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

THE SITE

Located in the poor, sparsely populated district of Mirdita, north-central Albania, the rocky valley of Spaç is incredibly remote, a natural prison. During the 1960s, Albania’s Communist authorities took advantage of this isolation and built a prison there on the model of the Stalinist gulag—harsh natural conditions combined with forced labor in a mine.

Spaç Prison was built onto a terraced slope of the mountainside. Above the prison, there were five mine entrances, on various levels. The two cell blocks and various support buildings were constructed on an improvised platform overlooking the river. This cluster formed the nucleus of the prison complex, framed on its south side by the main gate. Given the remoteness of the prison and the steep terrain, perimeter walls were not needed. Instead, barbed wire fencing, marked with occasional guard posts, surrounded the entire complex, meeting at the front gate. Just outside this gate stood the administrative buildings. Further down the road, two tall towers housed the technical staff of the mine and prison, along with their families.

THE STORY

Prior to 1968, Communist Albania had two types of prisons—isolation prisons and forced labor camps. Spaç combined the two, under the name Re-Education Unit 303. As in other Communist countries, many of Albania’s prisoners were jailed for political reasons. The National History Museum in Tirana estimates that the Communist regime held nearly 50,000 people for political reasons, in a system of 23 prisons and 48 internment camps. With a maximum prison population of around 1400, Spaç was one small cog in the larger machine of oppression, but the
FREE WORKERS' AREA

1. Offices and cafeteria
2. Dormitory
3. Ruin of office building
4. Ruins of apartments

CORE PRISON AREA

5. Prison command building
6. Guard house at the main entrance
7. Meeting space for prisoners and their relatives
8. Infirmary
9. Cafeteria
10. Prison dormitories
11. Ruins of the toilets and roll call terrace

Road to the prison
mine galleries

Road to Reps / Tirana

SPẠÇ PRISON
Spaç Prison while in operation. Photo: Archive of the Interior Ministry
inhuman conditions of the mine and the high profile of some of the camp’s political prisoners, many of them intellectuals, gave it great symbolic weight.

One episode of resistance in this hellish prison continues to inhabit the public memory—the Spaç revolt. From May 21-23, 1973, the prisoners at Spaç took control of the prison in a general revolt. This event is one of the watershed moments in the history of the site. Two factors contributed to the outbreak of revolt at this particular moment. One was a liberalizing movement that the Communist Party briefly encouraged in the early 1970s, only to retract and denounce it a short time later. The other was the ‘medieval’ working conditions in the mine. Prisoners were subject to long hours underground, working by hand in stifling heat that could reach 40 degrees, their lungs clogged by toxic dust and fumes. Even as the Communist regime repeated the slogan “Man is the most precious capital”, it dehumanized those it sent to work in the mines.

For two days, the prisoners held control of the camp, raising the Albanian flag without its Communist star (the flag used by Albania today) and shouting in unison such forbidden phrases as “We are with Free Europe!” “Freedom or Death!” and “Down with Communism!” Many consider this one of the most influential political revolts against Albania’s Communist dictatorship. When the revolt was put down, its leaders were executed and the rest given harsher prison sentences, but the event succeeded in gaining Spaç a place in the collective imagination of the country.

**Spaç Today**

The physical presence of Spaç Prison today bears witness to past and present acts of oppression. Stories of suffering and violence at Spaç help us to understand how the machinery of oppression operates at its fullest power. However, the site also teaches us how to break the cycle of oppression through active resistance — by showing respect and humanity, preserving dignity, creating art.

The processes that erode democracy and degrade humanity are cyclical. Albania went through this cycle under the country’s former Communist regime (1944-1991). But even though the regime has changed, the legacies of the past live on. Breaking the cycle of injustice and oppression requires action from all of us. The lessons that we find at Spaç Prison can help to show us how. Through the preservation and interpretation of Spaç Prison, we urge visitors to take individual responsibility for the democratic health of their society today. Spaç Prison should serve as a place for dialogue.
Spaç Prison is the only place of its kind to be listed as a protected cultural heritage site in Albania. However, the listing of the site in 2007 was accompanied by the concession of mining rights at the site to a private company. Today, the former prison is in ruins, while the mining presence is strong – a new factory was completed on site in 2017. The presence of a mining company at Spaç Prison adds to the complexity of the place—raising tensions between the historical usage as a mine (plus the region’s need for economic development) and its status as a place of persecution.

In 2014, Cultural Heritage without Borders-Albania (CHwB) brought together for the first time an array of national, local, public and private stakeholders within the framework of the ‘Dialogues for Spaç’ project. Through a series of inclusive visioning workshops, this project resulted in a detailed action plan for Spaç Prison. The Spaç Action Plan and the working group that it launched have served as a strong foundation for the ongoing efforts to save and promote Spaç Prison as a site of memory.

Since the conclusion of the ‘Dialogues for Spaç’ project, CHwB has continued to facilitate dialogue sessions with interested stakeholders. These sessions are among the first of their kind in Albania in terms of sharing information, co-deciding and coordinating action regarding Spaç Prison. Those taking part have included local inhabitants of Spaç, former political prisoners, local government, central institutions, other non-profit organizations and associations, as well as representatives of the mining company operating in Spaç.

Besides these coordination efforts, CHwB has also played an important role in promoting the site both nationally and internationally, nominating Spaç Prison’s to the World Breaking the cycle of injustice & oppression requires action from all of us.
Monuments Fund’s World Monuments Watch list, as well as securing support and recognition from the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

In order to halt the continued degradation of the site, CHwB conducted in 2017 the first physical interventions since the prison’s closing. These emergency consolidation efforts included the replacement of the hydro-insulation layers on the roofs and the installation of shoring and supports in buildings at risk of collapse. While these measures are only temporary, they will give the remaining structures at Spaç Prison the chance to survive until more extensive conservation measures can be taken.

In 2017, CHwB also conducted a series of site visits and focus group sessions, which were designed to gain input on the future of Spaç Prison from a diverse group of future audiences. The results of these focus groups can be found at: chwb.org/albania

In support of the site concept, CHwB has conducted extensive on-site and archival research, as well as interviews with former prisoners and staff of Spaç Prison. Background materials from these efforts can be found at: spacdialog.org

CHwB’s long-standing commitment to Spaç has served as the basis for the development of a comprehensive and realistic memorialization concept that will guide the future efforts for this important site.
OUR VISION FOR SPAÇ

Even though Spaç Prison has been closed for more than 20 years, it is still a place of oppression. The ruins of the former prison are a witness to both the atrocities of the past and the seeds of oppression that exist in society today. By our silence in the face of prejudice and injustice, we allow these seeds of oppression to slowly erode democracy. Just like the forces of erosion, this process can be so gradual that we may not notice until it’s too late — and democratic society has collapsed. **Spaç Prison shows us that we all must be active in opposing prejudice and in promoting justice and human rights.**

In this regard, the mission of Spaç Prison is twofold:

1. To honor the memory of all those who suffered under the harsh conditions of Spaç Prison;
2. To provide to visitors with a human-focused ‘civic education’ that helps them to understand how oppression arises in society and impels them to take positive action, as individuals and as members of society.

As a site that educates in a deep and experiential way, Spaç Prison will draw out the universality of human society that is revealed by its experience of ‘the Worst’.

Spaç shows us how small the step is from common stereotypes to dangerous prejudices; from insults and bullying in the school yard to stones thrown against institutions or against people; from fear to aggression; from patriotism to the rejection of others; from the ordinary diligence of government bureaucracy to the extraordinariness of human enslavement in Spaç.

Spaç shows us how this chain of prejudice and violence begins inside each of us — by our mental exclusion of those who are different, which leads the way to social exclusion...
Spaç shows us how we become complicit in oppression — because crimes against humanity only need ordinary people to choose to be bystanders, hiding behind blind submission to authority, group conformity, passivity, or scapegoating.

But, Spaç also shows us how even at ‘the Worst’ moments of society, strong people emerge and choose to resist. Their resistance takes a number of forms — individual or collective, spontaneous or organized, public or clandestine — that inform our civic duty today, encouraging us to show respect and humanity, to speak out, to preserve dignity, to create art.

Spaç Prison is a place for dialogue that encourages us to take action. At Spaç today, the goal is for young visitors to leave this place not crushed by tragedy but encouraged in their civic duty. Enlightened by the experience of ‘the Worst’, they will learn how to identify and resist the seeds of oppression, in order to build a more just and democratic society.

Following the darker moments of humanity, we often take up the call of “never again”. Spaç is a site of memory that shows us how to go beyond “never again”. Taking action is more than a choice. It is a duty.
AN INTRO TO THE CONCEPT

In support of the vision for Spaç Prison outlined above, CHwB has developed a concept for the site, based on the two overarching ideas:

1. **Creating a safe space for dialogue** that provides the visitors the adequate spaces and much-needed contact points with survivors’ stories that will enable understanding of individual and collective mechanisms that in the past have led – and can lead again to – the “Worst” (dangerous societal processes).

2. **Turning memory into action:** The key that leads from memory to action in Spaç is civic education deployed in qualitative and multiple ways in order for the site to be appropriated by different generations for different reasons if the goal of “Never Again” is to be reached and surpassed. As a place of reflection but also as a socially engaged cultural venue, Spaç will allow a multiplicity of voices to emerge and be recognized. It will enable not just dialogue between persons, but also dialogue between past and present. This will allow visitors to contextualize and act upon contemporary struggles based on the lessons of the past.

The conservation approach of this concept is to preserve Spaç Prison in its current form, rather than to restore major portions of the site. A full restoration of the former prison would erase the site’s recent history of abandonment, which reflects the post-communist transition of Albania. Future consolidation efforts beyond the scope of this project will secure the long-term stability of the site. Through this present concept, the site will be interpreted for visitors and made safe for many kinds of on-site activities. The core of the former prison will be the main focus of the visit by serving as a remembrance area. It will bring the visitor into direct contact with the complex history of Spaç Prison and of those who experienced it. The “free workers” part of the prison will provide the supporting functions that will enable the visitors to delve into reflecting and taking individual responsibility for the democratic health of society today.
**KEY OBJECTIVE 1  CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR DIALOGUE**

**Component A  Improving visitor experience and safety on-site**
- A1 Setting up a visitor itinerary
- A2 Providing basic orientation & interpretation
- A3 Improving visitor safety and site security

**Component B  Establishing a multifunctional visitor center**
- B1 Setting up a multifunctional visitor center

**Component C  Creating attractive memory based products for increased visitation**
- C1 Setting up ‘Voices of Spaç’ visitor experience
- C2 Designing the reconstruction of key elements of the former prison

**KEY OBJECTIVE 2  TURNING MEMORY INTO ACTION**

**Component D  Developing site-based civic education programs**
- D1 Establishing a training center for history teachers
- D2 Holding an international summer-school on memory & human rights activism

**Component E  Activating the site as a socially engaged cultural venue**
- E1 Creating accommodation inspired by art generated from Spaç
- E2 Organizing the “Parrhesia Days” in Spaç
Road to the prison
mine galleries

Itinerary
Safety railings
Barbed wire fences
partial reconstruction
Watch towers
reconstruction
Interp
Interpretative elements/panels
Orientation panels
Landscape viewpoints
Events
Access denied
New multifunctional building
Artistic rooms

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MAP OF PROPOSED INTERVENTIONS

- Itinerary
- Safety railings
- Barbed wire fences
- Partial reconstruction
- Watch towers
- Interpretative elements/panels
- Orientation panels
- Landscape viewpoints
- Events
- Access denied
- New multifunctional building
- Artistic rooms

Road to Reps / Tirana
The entire proposed project for Spaç Prison comprises 7 years of activities with a total budget of 2,420,600 euros. These activities are spread across 2 main phases, each of which follows the overall goals of creating a safe space for dialogue and turning memory to action at Spaç Prison. Phase 1 is treated in detail within this Concept document, setting the stage for Phase 2 of the project. Given that the implementation of Phase 1 will be instrumental in setting the timeline for Phase 2, for the moment, CHwB has developed a Priority Sequence (facing page) only for Phase 1 of the project.

Several important activities must be considered in light of Phases 1 and 2, in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the site. They include:

- Enlargement of the protected area of Spaç Prison
- Unified management of the site under a single institution
- Providing safe visitor access to the mining galleries.

These actions would require additional financial and political investment. At the moment, these actions have been omitted from phases 1 & 2 given that they depend on factors beyond our control.
**PRIORITY SEQUENCE: PHASE 1 (2 YEARS)**

**KEY OBJECTIVE 1**

**PRIORITY ACTIONS**

These three sub-components are crucial for establishing a safe and functional site for the activities and interventions that follow.

- **A1** Base visitor itinerary (5 mos.)
- **A2** Providing basic orientation & interpretation (9 mos.)
- **A3** Visitor safety & security (6 mos.)
- **B1** Multifunctional visitors’ center (8 mos.)
- **C1** ‘Voices of Spaç’ tour packages (7 mos.)
- **C2** Design reconstruction of key elements (7 mos.)

**LEGEND**

- Interpretation
- Infrastructure
- Events

**NOTES**

Some components in key objective 2 require the completion of components in key objective 1 (e.g. the multifunctional visitor center is required for the international summer school). Components shown in parallel do not necessarily need to occur simultaneously.

**KEY OBJECTIVE 2**

- **D1** History teacher training center (7 mos.)
- **D2** Int’l summer school on memory & human rights activism (7 mos.)
- **E1** Art hostel rooms (9 mos.)
- **E2** Parrhesia days (7 mos.)
# ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGET: PHASE 1 (2 YEARS)

## PHASE 1: STRATEGIC ANALYSIS AND INITIAL SITE ACTIVATION

Phase 1 is essential to jump-starting the process of activating Spaç Prison as a site of memory. This phase would cover a span of 2 years, which has been planned out in detail within the Spaç Concept developed by CHwB-Albania. This phases is ready for implementation, in consultation and cooperation with key stakeholders. The projected budget for phase 1 is **490,600 euros** over 2 years.

### KEY OBJECTIVE 1 | CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR DIALOGUE
| Component A | Improving visitor experience and safety on-site | 71,700 |
| Component B | Establishing a multifunctional visitor center | 224,000 |
| Component C | Creating attractive memory based products for increased visitation | 53,900 |

### KEY OBJECTIVE 2 | TURNING MEMORY INTO ACTION
| Component D | Developing site-based civic education programs | 74,000 |
| Component E | Activating the site as a socially engaged cultural venue | 67,000 |

| | TOTAL | 490,600 EUR |
ESTIMATED TOTAL BUDGET: PHASE 2 (5 YEARS)

PHASE 2: FULL ACTIVATION OF THE SITE

Phase 2 deepens the engagement in successfully activating the site and ensuring its sustainable operation in the mid-term. Given that this phase is a continuation and solidification of the actions from phase 1, detailed planning for the implementation of phase 2 rests on the results of the first phase. This means that the exact timing of activities in phase 2 is still to be defined. The projected budget for phase 1 is 1,930,000 euros over 5 years.

Note: This Concept document focuses primarily on Phase 1; therefore, Phase 2 is not treated in detail.

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|               | TOTAL | 1,930,000 EUR |
KEY OBJECTIVE 1
CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR DIALOGUE

Component A
Improving visitor experience and safety on site

Component B
Establishing a multifunctional visitor center

Component C
Creating attractive memory based products for increased visitation
SETTING UP A VISITOR ITINERARY

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Today, most of the estimated 2,000 visitors per year at Spaç arrive independently, without a guide or other means of navigating and making sense of the former prison. On site, they find some basic informational panels that indicate the function of various buildings — but without providing a broader context or thematic approach. Perhaps a few of the temporary signs remain that warn visitors which spaces are dangerous and which are (more) safe, but most of these are gone. In sum, there is no clear indication of how a visitor might move safely through the site and in which way one should begin to understand it.

Given its participation in many tours of the site, as well as a deep architectural understanding of the current state of the structures, CHwB-Albania can apply its compiled knowledge to produce a safe and informative itinerary for visitors. This project would chart out the most logical way for a visitor to move through the site, while avoiding any unsafe areas.

The resulting visitors’ map would include site orientation, site safety information and a basic level of historical interpretation. This map would be printed and distributed to visitors either via guides or (at a future date) via the on-site visitor’s center (see sub-component B1). This map would also directly serve as a basis for establishing semi-permanent interpretation at various key locations throughout the site.

KEY OBJECTIVES

To increase visitation at Spaç by providing foundational history and safety information via a site map and itinerary:

1. Facilitate visitors’ spatial and historical understanding of the site by establishing a logical itinerary for a first exploration of the prison;
2. Improve visitor safety at Spaç Prison by clearly mapping a safe itinerary;
3. Introduce visitors to some of the key concepts undergirding the future interpretation and development of Spaç Prison as a site of conscience.
A PROPOSED VISITOR ITINERARY FOR SPAÇ PRISON

Proposed itinerary

New multifunctional visitor center (sub-component B1)

Road to the prison mine galleries

A. First view of the prison core
B. ‘Free workers’ zone
C. Entrance to the core prison zone
D. Meeting space for relatives
E. Ruins of the isolation cells
F. Upper yard of the camp with cafeteria and infirmary
G. Prisoners’ dormitories, ruins of the bathrooms and roll call terrace

Road to Reps / Tirana
MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED

- Base itineraries tested with various guides and audiences for the Spaç Dialogues and Focus Groups
- Detailed site and building surveys completed

PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Municipality of Mirdita
- Institute of Integration of Former Persecuted Persons
- Institute for the Study of Crimes & Consequences of Communism
Students from the field of cultural heritage management participate in a tour of the site as part of a CHwB focus group.
PROVIDING BASIC ORIENTATION & INTERPRETATION

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Spaç Prison already hosts c. 2,000 visitors annually. But without a guide, the information available on site is poor. At the moment, most independent visitors that come to Spaç Prison are left to their own devices for navigating and understanding the site. They encounter only a few well-meaning, but basic informational panels in varying states of decay. With the map and itinerary that would be developed through sub-component A1, visitors will have basic information and orientation.

However, Spaç Prison is a site where the voices of those that experienced it must come through strongly. The best way to reach audiences and help them discover the site’s importance and its relevance for issues like human rights and social justice today is through an interpretive approach. Through this approach, we would gather historical information, the voices of prisoners and workers and available visual materials, uniting them under a set of themes and guided by a set of learning, behavioral and emotional objectives for the site. The resulting interpretation plan would guide the development and production of interpretation panels (accompanied by orientation signage), as well as other interactive interpretive installations, as appropriate. It would also lay the groundwork for future audio-visual installations, as well.

KEY OBJECTIVES

To improve the visitor experience and increase the number of visits at Spaç Prison by providing a base level of on-site interpretation:

1. Facilitate visitors’ understanding of the importance of the site and its history with basic orientation and interpretation;
2. Provokes visitor response to the human rights and social justice issues represented by the site and relate those issues to visitors today.
PROPOSED INTERPRETIVE INSTALLATIONS FOR SPAÇ PRISON

Itinerary
- Interpretative elements/panels
- Orientation panels
- Landscape viewpoints
- New multifunctional visitor center

Road to Reps / Tirana

- Road to the prison
- Mine galleries
- Work in the prison’s mines
- Life in the prison dormitories
- Punishment and resistance in isolation
- Meetings between prisoners and their families
- Entering the prison
- A natural prison: Explaining the security of the site
- ‘Free workers’ and the workings of the system

A2
MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED

• Base itineraries tested with various guides and audiences for the Spaç Dialogues and Focus Groups
• Detailed site and building surveys completed

PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

• Ministry of Culture
• Municipality of Mirdita
• Institute for the Study of Crimes & Consequences of Communism
• Authority for Information on Former State Security Documents

TIMELINE ESTIMATE

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<td>Unified design of interpretive installations</td>
<td>Approval by authorities, production and installation of interpretive components</td>
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BUDGET ESTIMATE (EUR)

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Concept for a historical overview panel placed on site
An empty cell in the main prison block at Spaç
Concept sketch of visitor interpretation inside a former cell
IMPROVING VISITOR SAFETY AND SITE SECURITY

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Spaç Prison is currently in an advanced state of decay, having been abandoned for the past 20 years and stripped of all valuable materials. As such, the semi-ruined site is a dangerous place for visitors, especially for elderly or disabled people. In addition to uneven terrain and some buildings with structural instabilities, the site lacks such basic safety amenities as hand or guard rails. With no running water or electricity on site, services are non-existent and a lack of staff or office space means that the closest first aid station is at the neighboring mining company.

Visitation at Spaç can be made much more safe and attractive with some basic safety interventions such as installing railings, stairs and internal fencing to enable safe circulation within the prison areas. In conjunction with sub-components A1 and A2, safe and restricted areas would be designated on the visitor map and with clear signage. In preparation for guided tours and on-site staff, an emergency plan would be developed for the site and shared with guards and staff. Finally, given the site’s remote location, there is the risk that past investments in the stabilization of the structures and future investments in restoration, interpretation and visitor services could be lost to vandalism or looting. Therefore, guards are needed to secure the area from thefts, vandalism and other threats.

KEY OBJECTIVES

To increase visitors’ physical safety while respecting the historical integrity of the site:

1. Improve visitor safety and safety-awareness at Spaç prison by clearly indicating safe and unsafe zones;
2. Improve safety awareness of staff and guides by developing an emergency plan for the site;
3. Protect the integrity of the site and investments made by preventing unauthorized access and vandalism on site.
Former cafeteria building supported by temporary stabilization

Signage indicating unsafe areas on site
MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED

- Base itineraries tested with guides and audiences during CHwB’s ‘Spaç Dialogues’ and ‘Focus Groups’
- Detailed site and building surveys completed
- Emergency stabilization and hydro-insulation completed

PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Ministry of Culture
- Local inhabitants and emergency responders
- Municipality of Mirdita

TIMELINE ESTIMATE

MONTH 1
- Training & employing guards
- Study of safe/unsafe areas in conjunction with visitor itineraries

MONTH 2
- Implementing trainings for emergency plan and site safety procedures

MONTH 3
- Approval from authorities and installing safety features on site

MONTH 4
- Developing an emergency plan and intervention proposal for safety installations

MONTH 5
- Budget Estimate (EUR)

MONTH 6
- Studying safe/unsafe areas and developing the intervention proposal for installing railings, stairs and fencing; using historical research conducted on previously-existing railings and fencing
- Developing and implementing trainings for an emergency plan on site
- Installing safety features and creating accessible pedestrian pathways on site
- Training & employing 24-hr guards for 1 year
- Site conservation, cleaning and consolidation works

BUDGET ESTIMATE (EUR)

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<td>Training &amp; employing 24-hr guards for 1 year</td>
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<td>Site conservation, cleaning and consolidation works</td>
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<td><strong>40,700</strong></td>
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PROPOSED SAFETY ELEMENTS FOR SPAÇ PRISON

- Itinerary
- Safety railings
- Access denied
- New multifunctional visitor center

Road to the prison
mine galleries

Road to Reps / Tirana
ESTABLISHING A MULTIFUNCTIONAL VISITOR CENTER

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The former prison of Spaç is even today a remote place when it comes to access and basic services that need to be offered to the visitors. Being abandoned and looted for many years has only added more layers to the challenging situation. The site at the moment can offer only self-guided tours at the remaining ruins and damaged buildings or a few outdoor activities guided by former prisoners. There is no safe indoor space that can offer even the minimum of conditions for other kinds of activities.

We see Spaç playing a very important role as a place for dialogue and action in relation to the communist past and its effects. As such, Spaç needs appropriate spaces for these activities to be carried out. The installation of a new, flexible multiuse space is seen as the best option for grouping the different services and functions, such as toilets, an info desk and configurable meeting/workshop areas. This new multifunctional space will avoid the use of the various remaining historical structures and will concentrate the financial and technical efforts in one place.

KEY OBJECTIVES

To enable Spaç as an independently functional place for visiting, learning, remembering and taking action by:

1. Providing on-site services for the visitors and coordination space for the functioning of the site;
2. Providing spaces for re-creative, educational and income generating activities;
3. Increasing the frequency and typology of activities in Spaç by providing the necessary conditions.
We cannot take Spaç and bring it to Tirana. But we must take Tirana and bring it to Spaç.

Spaç Focus Group with museum professionals, 21 June 2017

Concept sketch of future multifunctional visitors’ center at Spaç
TIMELINE ESTIMATE

MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED

- Detailed site and building surveys completed
- Emergency stabilization and hydro-insulation works completed

PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Ministry of Culture
- Municipality of Mirdita

BUDGET ESTIMATE (EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailed project and implementation follow up</td>
<td>9,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works implementation – for wooden structure type of building (300 m2)</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment/furniture installation</td>
<td>35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>224,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Proposed location of future multifunctional visitor center
SETTING UP ‘VOICES OF SPAÇ’ VISITOR EXPERIENCE

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Spaç Prison is a place whose human stories resonate with visitors. The ability of Spaç, as a site, to bear witness to the suffering and strength of those imprisoned there rests on its ability to convey their stories in the first person. The Spaç focus groups conducted by CHwB Albania in 2017 revealed that the kind of living testimony provided through the guided tour was central to the interpretive and educational approach to Spaç. At the moment, given the lack of interpretive installations on site, a guided tour is the only way for visitors to Spaç to encounter its first-hand narratives. Yet, such tours are infrequent and generally occur only in conjunction with another activity (e.g. a workshop, commemoration or study visit) organized by an organization.

A regularly scheduled, diversified set of tours is needed, in order to provide greater access to the stories of those that experienced Spaç Prison firsthand. Various types of tour packages will provide different windows of insight into the site:

• Survivors’ tour: Guided tours with firsthand witnesses;
• Interactive tours: E.g. “Hands-on History”; “Hard-hat” tour and “Find the writing on the wall” educational competition;
• Audio-guides distributed via an audio-guide app.

The ‘Voices of Spaç’ visitor experience would be designed together with those who witnessed life in Spaç firsthand.

KEY OBJECTIVES

To improve the visitor experience and increase the number of visits at Spaç Prison through creative types of visits:

1. Facilitate visitors’ historical understanding and emotional connection to the site through the voices of those who experienced Spaç Prison firsthand;
2. Provoke visitor response to the human rights and social justice issues represented by the site and relate those issues to visitors today.
“[It was] remarkable having this man whose father worked at the prison, who has spent his life becoming a witness, giving the tour. He was authentic (...) His life is bearing witness to what his family was involved in, whether by wish or not, during those years.”

Spaç Focus Group with foreign tourists, 21 May 2017
**MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED**

- Base itineraries tested with various guides and audiences for the Spaç Dialogues and Focus Groups
- Detailed site and building surveys completed

**PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- Ministry of Culture
- Municipality of Mirdita
- Former prisoners and other direct witnesses to Spaç
- Institute for the Study of Crimes & Consequences of Communism
- Authority for Information on Former State Security Documents
- Tour operators

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**TIMELINE ESTIMATE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH 1</th>
<th>MONTH 2</th>
<th>MONTH 3</th>
<th>MONTH 4</th>
<th>MONTH 5</th>
<th>MONTH 6</th>
<th>MONTH 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collecting content / narratives and developing guide plans for the various tour packages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing and holding four 3-day trainings for guides for each type of tour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Producing the audio-guide app</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing narrative / recording audio-guide</td>
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**BUDGET ESTIMATE (EUR)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Budget (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collecting content / narratives and developing guide plans for the various tour packages</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holding four 3-day trainings for guides for each of the types of tours</td>
<td>6,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing the narrative and recording an audio-guide</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producing an audio-guide/app</td>
<td>4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>20,400</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mockup of a self-guided app for Spaç Prison
DESIGNING RECONSTRUCTION OF KEY ELEMENTS OF THE FORMER PRISON

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Many of the important elements that composed the former prison of Spaç are ruined or completely gone. This has made it nearly impossible for self-guided visitors to visualize the site on their own. Even those fortunate enough to visit Spaç Prison with a guide may have a difficult time imagining it as a prison. The complexity of the prison when it was fully functional makes it even more difficult to understand the mechanisms of such a place of persecution. Missing or ruined elements like the barbed wire fence, the interior of the prisoners’ cells, the watch towers surrounding the outer fence and the space where family members used to meet with prisoners were often highlighted as crucial elements of the narratives during our guided visits and focus groups.

The reconstruction of few key elements will have a very important role in recreating and understanding peculiar moments of life in Spaç. This, in combination with the previously-mentioned interpretation efforts (sub-components A1 & A2) will give visitors a fuller picture of the site. Visitors will be overwhelmingly struck by the site’s most recent layers of history, allowing them to discuss the site’s meaning and past usage, as well as its history after the 1990s.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Increasing the understanding of the communist persecution mechanisms and enhancing the visitor experience of the site through minor key interventions.

1. Using the former prison of Spaç and the related testimonies as a unique living example of the oppressive communist regime of Albania;
2. Creating a clearer environment of understanding and interpreting the history and function of Spaç by reconstructing key elements of the prison.
Spaç cell blocks, currently without handrails, windows or doors

Concept sketch with selected reconstruction at the cell blocks
Milestones already achieved

- Detailed site and building surveys completed
- Documentation of elements to reconstruct completed
- Emergency stabilization and hydro-insulation works completed

Partners for implementation

- Ministry of Culture
- The Institute of Former Persecuted Political Persons
- Former political prisoners in Spaç and local inhabitants
- Institute for the Studies of Crimes and Consequences of Communism
- Authority for Information on Former State Security Documents
- Central Film Archive

Timeline estimate

<table>
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<tr>
<th>MONTH 1</th>
<th>MONTH 2</th>
<th>MONTH 3</th>
<th>MONTH 4</th>
<th>MONTH 5</th>
<th>MONTH 6</th>
<th>MONTH 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research phase, testing and consultation</td>
<td>Development of detailed project</td>
<td>Getting approval from Ministry of Culture</td>
<td></td>
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Budget estimate (EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Budget (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research phase of original elements (detailed archival work and interviews)</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field testing solutions; public and expert/witness consultations</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development and approval of detailed project proposal</td>
<td>11,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>33,500</strong></td>
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</table>
Concept sketch showing historically-accurate reconstructions of watchtowers and barbed wire fencing
All my life I had tried to imagine what the gate of hell looked like, only to find it here in the camp. It was the simplest thing, the most ordinary thing. Its extraordinariness relied on its power. The power to separate two worlds: the world of pain from the world of happiness.

Maks Velo, Spaći (novel)
Current photo of the main gate of Spaç Prison
KEY OBJECTIVE 2
TURNING MEMORY INTO ACTION

Component D
Developing site-based civic education programs

Component E
Activating the site as a socially engaged cultural venue
ESTABLISHING A TRAINING CENTER FOR HISTORY TEACHERS

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Often in Albania today, the recent traumatic history of the country is used as a divisive tool. History curricula and textbooks are characterized by a dominant narrative, with minimal integration of topics like life in communist Albania, not to mention difficult subjects like oppression, persecution or genocide. Most importantly, an increasingly higher number of teachers don’t have direct experience with sites of persecution, nor with former persecuted persons. Yet, we too easily forget that history teachers are the ones that prepare young people for wrestling with the many political, cultural, and ideological interpretations, and (ab)uses of the past.

The training center established in situ will provide the history teachers with a program that is prepared, and delivered from a multi-perspective and democratic angle. Integrated to real-life teaching, the training will enable them, and ultimately the students, to critically interpret the creation of narratives and their potential to build (or not) mutual understanding of the root causes of violence, discrimination and exclusion in society. Teaching is critical for the development of individual processes that enhance capacity to act and resist, such as autonomy in thinking, moral values, openness and respect for others.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Improve history teaching about communism in Albania and its consequences by providing the history teachers with effective tools and resources to teach about this period:

1. Developing training program that becomes part of the national curriculum;
2. Increasing opportunities for history teachers to meet and work directly with former persecuted persons;
3. Strengthening teachers’ own knowledge and confidence in teaching intellectually complex and emotional issues.
Breaking the cycle of injustice requires action from all of us.
TIMELINE ESTIMATE

MONTH 1
Analysis of demand and proposal of curricula

MONTH 2
Providing info on training opportunities

MONTH 3
Implementation of trainings & workshops

MONTH 4

MONTH 5

MONTH 6

MONTH 7

BUDGET ESTIMATE (EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount (EUR)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of the demand, identification of teachers, educators &amp; contributors, development of curricula</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing information on training opportunities</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of trainings &amp; workshops</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishing and running center management office (equipment and 12 months opex for 2 staff)</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td><strong>42,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED

- Relations built with Ministry of Education & Sports of Albania - Institute for Development of Curricula
- Relations built with history teacher representatives both locally and internationally

PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth - Institute for the Development of Curricula
- Institute for the Study of Crimes & Consequences of Communism
- History Teachers Association “Youth & History”
- Euroclio - European Association of History Educators
- Former political prisoners in Spaç and local inhabitants
To visit Spaç is to gather the courage to understand: I come from a persecuted family... Here I understand even better what I was never told... The silence must be broken.

Spaç Focus Group with history teachers, 6 May 2017

One possible floorplan for the multifunctional visitors’ center, when used as a training venue
HOLDING AN INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SCHOOL ON MEMORY & HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISM

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

For the peace and stability of Albania, it is crucial that its citizens begin to explore and confront the history and legacies of its Communist past. As an important site of memory, Spaç Prison can serve as a vital touch point, from which Albanians can begin a healthy and productive dialogue about their difficult past.

This project proposes to ‘activate’ Spaç Prison, as a place for dialogue of national and international relevance — providing both a touch point for addressing the difficult past and applying valuable human rights lessons to the future. A 10-day summer school will bring together prominent national and international voices to work with youth and activists on the following themes:

• Human rights: Using a rights-based approach to heritage sites from a difficult past in order to help heal societal wounds;

• Youth empowerment: Getting youth more involved in issues of human rights and dialogue in Albania;

• ‘Memory to action’: Connecting past struggles to today’s movement for human rights.

The curriculum, methodology and results of the summer school will be published as an interactive learning kit, in order for schools and other sites in the country and abroad to engage with historical dialogue at sites of conscience in a similar manner.

KEY OBJECTIVES

To ‘activate’ Spaç Prison as a site of memory that draws on its history to address human rights issues relevant to today:

1. Promote Spaç Prison as a place of dialogue for the human rights and social justice issues of the past and present;

2. Increase the amount of visitors and the depth/engagement of each visit to Spaç Prison.
The need to remember often competes with the equally strong pressure to forget. Even with the best of intentions – such as to promote reconciliation after deeply divided events by ‘turning the page’ – erasing the past can prevent new generations from learning critical lessons and destroy opportunities to build a peaceful future.

International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
sitesofconscience.org

Views of the ‘Dialogues’ workshops show how a summer school might look
TIMELINE ESTIMATE

MONTH 1  |  MONTH 2  |  MONTH 3  |  MONTH 4  |  MONTH 5  |  MONTH 6  |  MONTH 7

Developing the curriculum and planning for the summer school

Implementing the 10-day summer school

Developing and producing the learning kit

BUDGET ESTIMATE (EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Cost (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing the curriculum for the summer school</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing the 10-day summer school</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the learning kit</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing the learning kit - 1,000 copies</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>32,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED

- ‘Dialogues’ toolkit developed with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
- Relations built with local residents and main national stakeholders

PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Ministry of Culture
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
- Institute for the Study of the Crimes and Consequences of Communism
- The Institute for Democracy, Media & Culture
- Former political prisoners in Spaç and local inhabitants
- Municipality of Mirdita
Views of the ‘Dialogues’ workshops show how a summer school might look.
CREATING ACCOMMODATION INSPIRED BY ART GENERATED FROM SPAÇ

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

The towering Munella Mountain, the remains of churches and traditional fortified houses, as well as industrial heritage, are all points of interest easily accessible from Spaç Prison. Additionally, the highway that links Kosovo to Albania, a major thoroughfare for tourist traffic, draws 1.8 million vehicles very close to Spaç Prison each year.

The former free workers’ buildings on site can provide accommodation to the visitors at Spaç Prison and allow them to be strategically located at the heart of the region’s many other points of interest. On-site accommodation would also help promote Spaç as a place of arts, where artists and intellectuals used their creativity to survive, deride or resist persecution. Visitors can stay overnight at the former free workers’ buildings, where the rooms will be transformed into a unique artistic hostel. Each space will be inspired by a specific story/concept related to artistic creations made in Spaç by former prisoners (Oseku paintings, Velo sculptures, writings from Lubonja, Zhiti, etc). Besides tourists, the rooms can also accommodate teachers, students and visitors involved in on-site activities. As a pilot case, this project will initially convert 5 rooms from places of isolation and physical discomfort into quality spaces of personal freedom and artistic expression, with the help of international and local artists.

KEY OBJECTIVES

To convert Spaç Prison into an important hub for visits to Mirdita:

1. Provide the chances for a unique accommodation experience in a meaningful and respectful way to the history of Spaç;
2. Increase length of stay of tourists and travellers on-site and in Mirdita region overall;
3. Promote creative integration of art and activism (“artivism”) as a way to engage with, explore and understand difficult stories.
Concept sketch of a future art hostel room at Spaç, featuring art by former Spaç prisoner Maks Velo
**MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED**

- Detailed site and building surveys completed
- Emergency stabilization and hydro-insulation works completed
- Relations built with local residents able to provide auxiliary services (local food, cleaning, etc)
- Relations built with former prisoners in Spaç

**PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- Former political prisoners/artists related to Spaç
- Local inhabitants
- Mirdita Tourism Info Center (“Info-kulla”)
- Ministry of Culture
- Municipality of Mirdita
Eighteen years ago, Ali Oseku was this country’s most celebrated set designer, a painter who had won a national competition and had been awarded a Communist order, *Up With Revolutionary Spirit*. He was 28 years old. Overnight, he was condemned as a modernist who had fallen under the evil spell of Picasso, Chagall and, worst of all, Jackson Pollock and Salvador Dali.

ORGANIZING THE “PARRHESIA DAYS” IN SPAC

RELEVANCE OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY

Among the poorest regions in the country, Mirdita is also one of the richest ones in terms of history, traditions, costumes, culinary, a potential that needs to be properly exposed to national and regional publicity in order to attract more visitors, change its reputation and generate additional opportunities for local socio-economic development.

Spac’s history and spirit of place are also a powerful link to organizing an alternative cultural event strategically designed to both improve the territory’s image to attract visitors and honor the memory of the place and its people. The site’s history and the many symbolic acts of resistance inspire a thematic public event structured around the notion of parrhesia. Parrhesia (in Albanian: troç) is an ancient Greek word that embodies an obligation to speak the truth for the common good, even at personal risk. With a clearly socially engaged agenda, the Parrhesia Days offer multiple artistic performances (concerts, community-based theater, local gastronomy fair, book-reading sessions, documentaries projection) carefully curated to engage with the public on the topics of “human rights oppression” and “cultural loss” while offering them the possibility to become acquainted with local traditions and appreciate local products.

KEY OBJECTIVES

To improve the image of the area by organizing a highly qualitative cultural event that offers the visitors a memorable experience of the area and its history:

1. Promote the more “positive” aspects of the local traditions and histories of Spac and Mirdita region;
2. Provide the local inhabitants additional income-generating opportunities based on their traditions and skills;
3. Promote creative integration of art and activism (“artivism”) as a way to engage with, explore and understand difficult stories.
Concept sketch for a ‘Parrhesia Days’ event in Spaç
TIMELINE ESTIMATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH 1</th>
<th>MONTH 2</th>
<th>MONTH 3</th>
<th>MONTH 4</th>
<th>MONTH 5</th>
<th>MONTH 6</th>
<th>MONTH 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting up team, developing event program</td>
<td>Event marketing and promotion of key messages</td>
<td>Holding the event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

BUDGET ESTIMATE (EUR)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Cost (EUR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary research, establishment of event team, developing the program, contracting performers</td>
<td>5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing the event</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion and dissemination of projects results</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>22,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MILESTONES ALREADY ACHIEVED

- Key orientations for the event defined after the focus groups conducted in 2017
- Relations built with several socially engaged former political prisoners in Spaç
- Relations built with local inhabitants and service-providers

PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Former political prisoners/artists related to Spaç
- Mirdita Tourism Info Center (“Info-kulla”)
- Municipality of Mirdita
- Ministry of Culture
I don’t remember exactly the year. Together with Stavri Rafaeli, the tenor (…) we have organized a concert in the mining gallery, on our third shift and under the lanterns. Those who haven’t experienced it cannot imagine how wonderful it was. A concert made of only clapping along with the singing. I sang pop music; Stavri sang *La Traviata* and Hysen Xhani traditional Tirana songs. A miracle, one of the best concerts of my life!

Sherif Merdani, Albanian singer, on the impromptu concert organized in the mines of Spaç Prison on New Year’s Eve.
TAKING ACTION IS MORE THAN A CHOICE. IT IS A DUTY.