**Press Release**

Vienna, 4 June 2025

# **Awakening sleeping beauties – Integrating Nature Based Solutions with New European Bauhaus values for sustainable, inclusive and resilient societies**

**Sleeping Beauty**, a project funded by the European Commission, aims to **awaken the *beauty* of overlooked and neglected public spaces, transforming them into vibrant areas that foster thriving cities and communities, inspired and connected by the beauty of nature.** From June 4–6, 2025, the project officially launched with an event held at Vienna’s Filmquartier, bringing together partners from across Europe to begin the revitalization of **six “sleeping beauties” (pilot sites) located in Riga (LV), Wroclaw (PL), Fröseke (SE), Bolzano (IT), Kozani (EL), and Collegno (IT).** These sites will be transformed into beautiful, multifunctional living spaces guided by the principles and values of **Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)** and the **New European Bauhaus (NEB)**—merging sustainability, inclusiveness, and aesthetic quality.

A map of europe with text and birds

AI-generated content may be incorrect.The Sleeping Beauty project kicked off in style, immersed in a theatrical setting, full of creativity, nature and life. The launch event took place at Vienna’s **Filmquartier**, a former sealed-off and neglected space that has been been transformed into a vibrant green oasis in the heart of the city. This space, once forgotten and lifeless, now reflects the very essence of the project’s mission: **awakening the beauty of neglected public spaces**.

**Reviving Forgotten Spaces: From Neglect to Nature-Inspired Public Places**

Coordinated by AIT Austrian Institute of Technology, Sleeping Beauty unites **21 organisations from 9 European countries** with one shared goal: to awaken the potential of overlooked, underused, and forgotten public spaces—what we call “sleeping beauties.” The project will work across **six pilot sites** in **Riga (LV), Wroclaw (PL), Fröseke (SE), Bolzano (IT), Kozani (EL), and Collegno (IT)**. These sites are embedded in diverse climatic and socio-spatial contexts—ranging from rural to urban—and face a variety of challenges such as **urban heat islands, depopulation, limited greenery, or light pollution**. Each site will be reimagined as a **beautiful, multifunctional living space**, designed through the integration of **Nature-Based Solutions (NBS)** and **New European Bauhaus (NEB)** values. By combining sustainability, inclusion, and aesthetics, the project aims to reconnect people with nature and redefine what public space can be.

*“Sleeping Beauty strives to uncover hidden gems that lay dormant under the dust of decades of neglect or mono-functional mainstream use and makes them shine again”,* says Gudrun Haindlmaier, project coordinator of Sleeping Beauty.

To guide its transformation process, **Sleeping Beauty** follows six core principles: **Regenerate, Re-value, Re-use, Re-connect, Re-organise**, and **Replicate**. These principles form the backbone of the project’s approach, guiding the demonstration of creative combinations of NEB & NbSto **enhance biodiversity, well-being, health, resilience, and inclusiveness**. They support the co-creation of solutions that ensure equitable access to public space, multifunctionality, and a high-quality aesthetic experience.

**Our approach to combining New European Bauhaus & Nature based solutions**

Sleeping Beauty seeks to merge NEB values with NbS through a creative, transdisciplinary, and co-creative process. The project follows a three-phase framework—**Framing and Exploring, Practicing Innovation, and Upscaling and Sustaining**—to reawaken the beauty of each pilot site. Across all phases, **iterative co-creation loops** involving diverse stakeholders will guide the work, redefining the “natural beauty” of each pilot site. This process will generate a **Compendium of New Practices,** a living collection of strategies and methods that bring together expertise from design, construction, ecosystem science, climate adaptation, inclusive practices, co-governance, and technological innovation.

**The Beauty of working together**

At its heart, Sleeping Beauty is about the **power and beauty of collaboration**. The project promotes awareness, empowerment, and co-creation across a wide range of stakeholder groups. To support this, the Community of Practice (CoP) acts as a central tool—breaking down knowledge silos and organisational barriers across regions and disciplines. The **CoP is designed as a trusted and inclusive space** where civil servants, experts, and community members can come together to exchange knowledge, ask questions, share experiences, and grow capacity. Sleeping Beauty will run for four years, laying the groundwork for a new vision of public space. You can keep up with project progress on this **LinkedIn page**.

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**Project information**

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