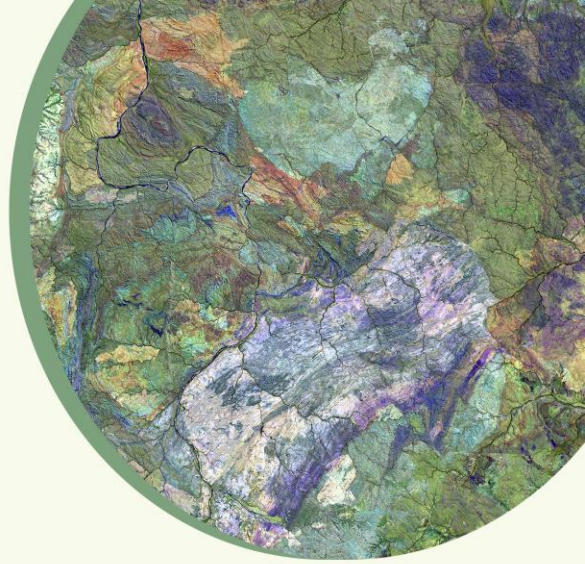


BOLSTER Mid-Term Conference in Porto, Portugal



1st Day – January 22 2024

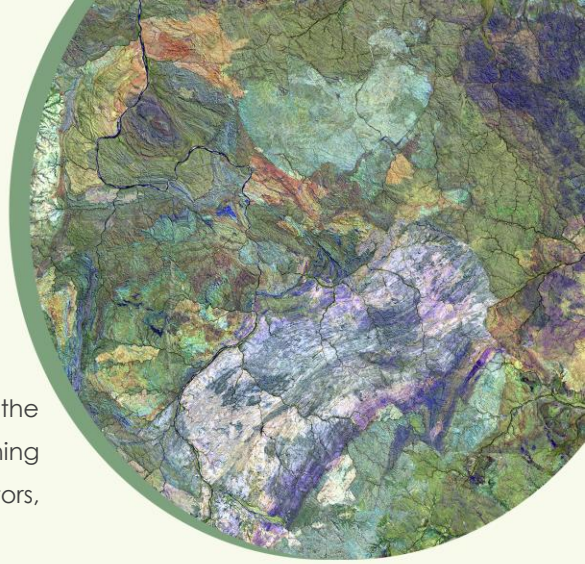
The first day of the conference (22 January) was exclusively for the BOLSTER project consortium. After arriving in Porto, the partners met in person for the second time. During the first few hours of the meeting, each WP Leader presented their results from the first year and a half of work on the project. Overall, the project is progressing well, has already produced results and is heading for another successful year and a half.



After the management meeting, the partners from the University of Economics in Katowice (UEKat), Marcin Baron and Artur Ochojski, hosted an internal workshop on BOLSTER foresight with LJTAs and MAFs.

Multi-Actor Forums (MAFs) are participatory platforms for key actors involved in Just Transition. By practicing and developing deliberative processes, MAFs aim to increase social acceptance of transition plans by better addressing the needs of marginalised groups. While the MAFs are the main groups of stakeholders involved in the daily activities of BOLSTER, the Local Just Transition Alliances (LJTAs) support the consortium by providing guidance in the seven target EU regions - Istria HR, Stara Zagora BG, Prahova RO, Upper Silesia PL, Halle DE, Hainaut BE, Leon ES.





2nd Day – January 23 2024

The second day (23 January) marked the official start of the conference, as it was the first day open to the public. The morning began with a presentation of the project by one of the coordinators, Michiel Stapper from Tilburg University (TiU).

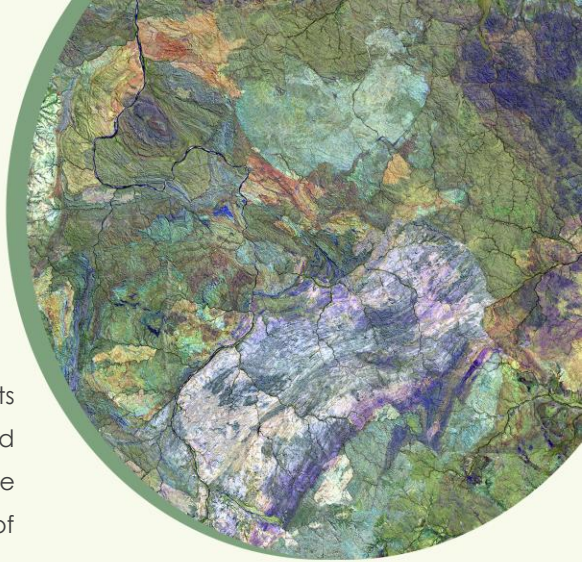
This was followed by keynote speaker Stefan Bouzarovski, a geographer from Manchester University, who gave a presentation entitled 'Political ecologies of just energy transitions: A critical geography'. In the session, he shared an overview of just transition by various authors, showed possible outcomes and some practical examples in Poland.



Given that the conceptualisation of Just Transition - challenges, results and suggestions for further research was the focus of this conference day, the presentation by Miłostawa Stępień (Bankwatch) was very valuable. She shared her experience and some insights on the follow-up of the Just Transition Fund, followed by participants working in groups to answer and discuss three points: 1) Can BOLSTER be useful for developing these policy recommendations? If so, how? (2) 3 ideas for important aspects of the recommendations that could be developed. (3) 1 human story that relates to the recommendations.

In the afternoon, two workshops were organised. The first was a World Café, organised by Nevelina Pachova (RMIT Europe) where seven working groups were set up to focus on different themes: Vitality, Insecurity, Transport, Education, Environment, Health and Other (Employment, Housing, Land Ownership, etc.). The groups also reflected and discussed the priorities and problems experienced by different communities (women, youth, Roma communities and other socio-economically disadvantaged groups) in the seven regions of Europe targeted by the BOLSTER project.





2nd Day – January 23 2024 (cont.)

The workshop finished when each group presented their results and measures to overcome the challenges identified, discussed together how feasible and transferable those measures could be across regions, and what challenges there might be in terms of implementation and transferability.

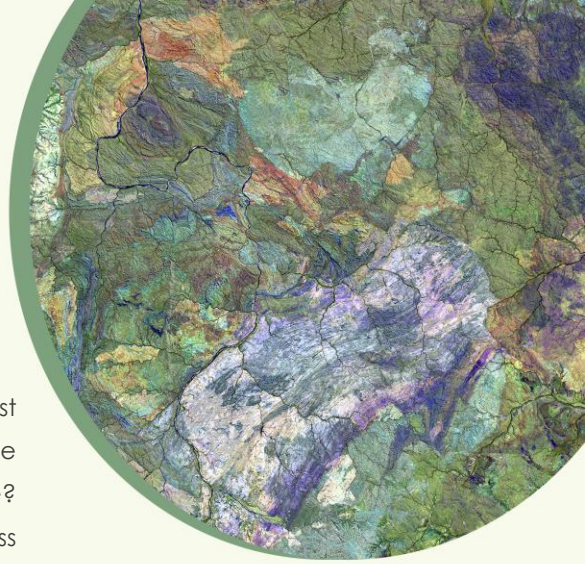


The second workshop, entitled "How can we monitor JT processes?" was organised by Asel Doranova (TIU) and Sabina Hodžić (University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management - FTHM).

In this session, Asel and Sabina presented an overview of monitoring frameworks and tools for JT, addressed JT monitoring using the participatory approach and tested the group work approach. The conference participants were divided into several groups and role-played the problems of different social groups and communities. There were two tasks, namely (1) Describe the VISION of the town of Labin being JUST and more Sustainable and (2) How would you suggest measuring or assessing the listed characteristics of Just and Sustainable Labin?

The day ended with a visit to the riverside areas of Porto and Vila Nova de Gaia, including a cable car ride. This was followed by an informal dinner for the participants to taste a traditional dish from the Porto region, "Francesinha".





3rd Day – January 24 2024

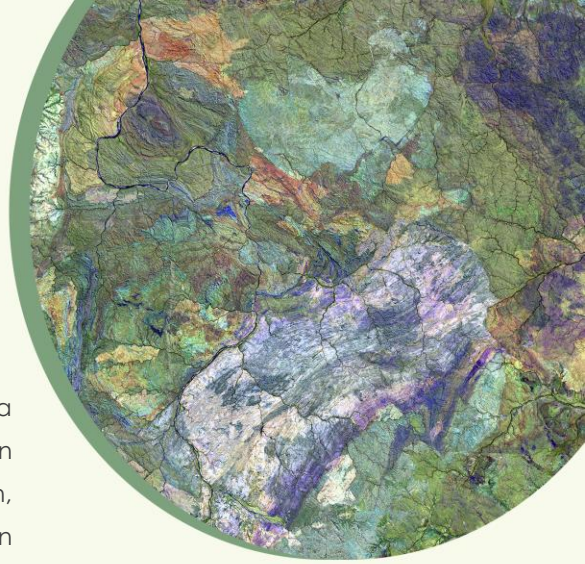
The third day (24 January) focused on knowledge transfer on Just Transition and what means and how to leave no one behind. The first session of the day was the workshop "Just Enough, in Time? How the Just Transition Fund programme is managed across multiple levels of governance" organised by Julius Veenstra and Martijn Groenleer (TiU), and involved work groups for preliminary discussion and at the end a plenary discussion.



Then the first academic session began with four presentations:

- Jessica Clement (ULiège) and Artur Ochojski (UEKat): "Fostering Just Transitions in Transformative Innovation Policy: Channelling multilevel instruments to engage marginalised communities".
- Sabina Hodžić (FTHM): "The role of the financial sector towards energy justice".
- Adriana Verán and Nevelina Pachova (RMIT Europe): "Going against the wind or shifting the winds towards inclusive and transformative change? Insights from the JTR of Leon".
- Anaëlle Bueno Patin (TiU): "Steeling power away? Participatory politics of just transition: A case study from the Dutch region of IJmond".





3rd Day – January 24 2024 (Cont.)

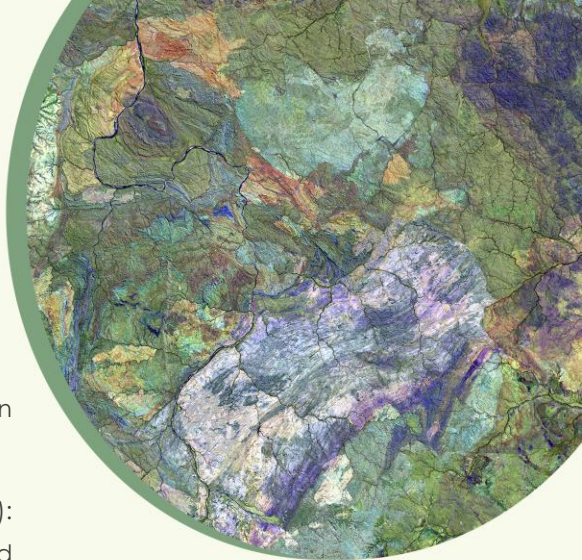
In the afternoon, keynote speaker Adrian-Nicolae Furtuna presented a workshop on Roma history: "Roma minority in Romania from slavery to civic engagement". In this session, Furtuna described the evolution of Roma communities in Romania, and the gradual increase of their rights, combining historical facts with his own story as part of this marginalised community in so many parts of Europe.



The last session of the day was a panel discussion by Ammalia Podlaszewska (Culture Goes Europe) and Marcin Baron (Katowice University of Economics) with representatives of the target regions on "How to facilitate communities for a just transition".



The day ended with a visit to the historic centre of Porto and a gala dinner where conference participants and consortium partners got to know each other better and shared their personal and professional experiences.



4th Day – January 25 2024

The fourth and final day of the conference (25 January) began with an academic/practitioner session with three presentations:

- Julián Martínez Bejarano (Instituto para la Transición Justa): "Lessons learned towards better addressing social and environmental challenges"
- Stavroula Demetriades (EUROFOUND): "Just transition: role, opportunities and challenges for policy actors"
- Michiel Stapper (TiU): "Comeback Kids - How Eindhoven and Cluj turn around economic decline".



The last session of the conference was a joint one involving the Just Transition Cluster, composed by the BOLSTER project and its sister projects - AdJUST and TANDEM. Caíque Carvalho (Crowdhelix) opened the session, introducing each project, the creation of the cluster and the past and future joint activities. Then, a project representative presented their first results:

- BOLSTER: Michiel Stapper (TiU) presented the objectives of the project, the case studies, the data collection methodology, the activities carried out and the first results.
- AdJUST: Ioana Petrescu (Pur și Simplu Verde) presented the project and some of the work it has done so far, including the stakeholder meetings held in Spain and Romania in 2023, the steps to be taken in both regions and the next steps of the project.
- TANDEM: Samyajit Basu (VUB MOBI) presented the evolution of the project, its objectives, case studies and methodology in a dynamic presentation where several TANDEM partners, namely Camila Canelas (Ecoserveis), Daniel Gerdes, Michael Klingler, Nona Galvany and Seona Candy got to share their insights.

