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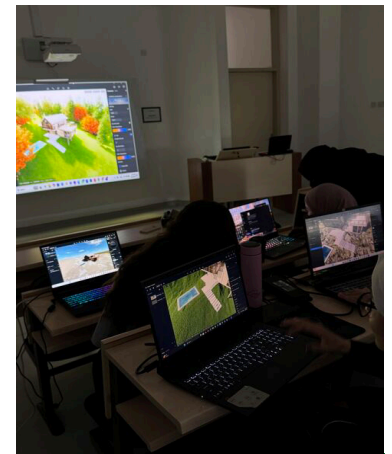


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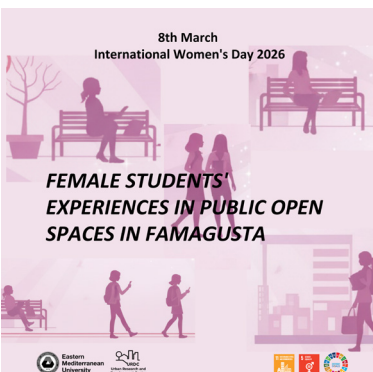
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EMU URDC 2026 Vision/ Theme Statement

Public Space and Social Resilience

For the 2026 academic year, the Urban Research and Development Center (URDC) at Eastern Mediterranean University adopts “Public Space and Social Resilience” as its overarching theme, reflecting the Center’s commitment to advancing inclusive, sustainable, and socially responsive urban environments. This theme builds upon URDC’s long-standing engagement with public space, urban design, and sustainability, while responding directly to the spatial, social, and environmental challenges facing Northern Cyprus and the wider Eastern Mediterranean region.

Public spaces—such as streets, squares, parks, waterfronts, heritage areas, and campuses—play a fundamental role in shaping everyday urban life. Beyond their physical form, these spaces function as critical arenas for social interaction, cultural expression, care, and collective identity. In contexts marked by climatic stress, socio-economic inequality, governance challenges, and prolonged uncertainty, the quality and accessibility of public space become central to a city’s capacity to sustain social cohesion and adaptability. URDC’s 2026 vision positions public space as a key driver of social resilience, understood not only as the ability to withstand shocks, but as the long-term capacity of communities to maintain inclusive public life, social ties, and shared values.

The theme emphasizes the relationship between everyday practices and resilience, recognizing ordinary spaces and daily routines as essential sources of urban knowledge and social strength. By focusing on lived experience, URDC aims to foreground the voices and needs of diverse user groups, including women, youth, older adults, and marginalized communities, whose interactions with public space are often overlooked in conventional planning and design processes. Particular attention is given to historic, small-scale, and transitional urban contexts, which characterize much of Northern Cyprus and offer valuable insights for global urban discourse.

In 2026, URDC will advance this vision through interdisciplinary research, community outreach, living laboratories, public space audits, workshops, exhibitions, and international collaborations. These activities will integrate climate-responsive design, gender-sensitive and inclusive approaches, participatory methods, and heritage-aware strategies, contributing to more equitable, adaptive, and livable urban environments. The theme aligns closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—especially SDGs 11, 5, 10, 13, and 17—and reinforces EMU’s role as an engaged academic institution addressing societal and environmental challenges

through research, education, and outreach. Through the theme Public Space and Social Resilience, URDC reaffirms its mission to generate locally grounded and internationally relevant knowledge, positioning public space as a foundational element of resilient cities and communities.

Key Words and Thematic Areas for URDC 2026

- Public Space and Public Life
- Social Resilience and Community Well-being
- Everyday Urbanism and Lived Experience
- Inclusive and Gender-Responsive Design
- Accessibility and Universal Design
- Climate-Responsive Public Spaces
- Urban Commons and Collective Use
- Heritage, Memory, and Identity in Public Space
- Participation, Co-creation, and Civic Engagement
- Small Cities and Non-Metropolitan Urban Contexts
- Campus–City Relations and Living Laboratories
- Sustainable Development Goals and Urban Policy

URDC Contribution to the Community-Based Vision Development Workshop on Ayluga Wetland, Famagusta Municipality

In order to plan and discuss the future of the Ayluga Wetland in Famagusta, a Community-Based Vision Development Workshop was held on 7 March 2026, organised by the Sustainable Wetlands Initiative for Famagusta’s Transformation (SWIFT) Project, implemented by the Famagusta Women’s Centre Association (MAKAMER) funded by the European Union Aid Programme for the Turkish Cypriot community.

URDC contributed to the workshop with direct involvement from URDC vice director Assoc. Prof. Dr. Müge Riza, one of the co-leaders of the European Union funded SWIFT project, as a member of the organizing committee and URDC board member Assist. Prof. Dr. Pınar Uluçay as invited participant.

The workshop brought together more than 50 experts and residents including academics,

public sector and NGO representatives as well as private sector stakeholders, to develop a vision for the future of the Ayluga wetland area. The aim of the one-day workshop was to contribute to the development of policies and practices focusing on protection and sustainable management of the Ayluga Wetland as an integral part of the city.



Our Executive Board Member, Assist. Prof. Dr. Pelin Karakuş Shared her Insights on the Importance of Public Health in Cities and City Spaces

Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), Urban Research and Development Center (URDC) Executive Board Member, EMU Department of Psychology academic staff member and Head of the Space–Identity–Memory Research Group Assist. Prof. Dr. Pelin Karakuş Akalın issued a statement on 7 April – World Health Day:

“Today, the concept of health is understood within a highly dynamic, multidimensional, and contextual framework. In particular, the view that health is not merely an

individual condition, but is shaped by social and environmental factors, has become increasingly prominent. Within this framework, emphasis is placed on the determining role of factors such as income, education, housing, environment, and urban planning on health. The discipline of psychology also approaches health as a multilayered state of well-being. In studies conducted particularly within the field of environmental psychology, the cities we live in emerge as primary living environments where the social and

environmental determinants of health intersect. It is well established that the sense of attachment we develop to cities has positive effects on our psychological well-being, mental health, life satisfaction, and overall quality of life. In this context, cities, much like our homes, can transform into places we long for when we are away and feel happy to return to—places that carry meaning for us. In other words, we can come to love the cities we live in. The development of this sense of belonging is closely related not only to our individual orientations, but also to the

opportunities offered by the city and our ability to access them To the extent that we are able to find a place for ourselves within a city, and experience urban life in ways that affirm our existence, we come to feel a sense of belonging to that city.

According to research in environmental psychology, one of the key conditions for developing a positive relationship with the city we live in is the ability to feel safe within it. A sense of safety emerges when the urban environment provides a certain level of control, stability, and predictability. For instance, we may feel uneasy in poorly lit areas, in spaces where visibility is limited, in neglected environments that have long been unused, or in neighborhoods where we cannot anticipate what lies around the corner. What alleviates this sense of unease is the degree of control we perceive over our surroundings. This perception of control is closely tied to how well we know the city and how accessible opportunities for gaining such familiarity are. The more easily we can navigate different parts of the city—and the better we know its main streets, squares, side roads, and even its less visible neighborhoods—the stronger our sense of control becomes. If we can quickly determine how to get from one district to another, confidently give directions to someone asking for help, or mentally visualize the city’s layout in detail, it indicates that we have developed a strong cognitive understanding of that place. This sense of familiarity, in turn, becomes one of the primary sources that foster our attachment to the city we inhabit.

Perceptions of urban safety are shaped not only by environmental conditions but also through social processes. Our participation in urban life is closely linked to the extent to which we are recognized and acknowledged by different social, economic, and identity groups. The more we feel free from concerns about discrimination based on any aspect of our identity—whether in the city center, on the street, or within our own neighborhood—the more we come to experience a sense of belonging to that city. Accordingly, one of the key pathways to fostering attachment to place lies in being part of communities where we can exist authentically as ourselves. The spaces where such a sense of community is cultivated are often public areas that bring people together. Parks, squares, waterfronts, and other shared environments, along with the social and cultural activities held within them, create opportunities for interaction and encounter. These experiences enable individuals to form new connections and build shared meanings through collective experiences.

Over time, these shared social practices evolve into spaces where collective bonds with the city are formed and a sense of belonging is reinforced. Research in environmental psychology suggests that cities, in this respect, function as settings in which both personal and social identities are shaped



Assistant. Prof. Dr. Pelin Karakuş and expressed. In a sense, the cities to which we become attached turn into spatial extensions of ourselves—places that reflect who we are. This spatial grounding indicates that our connection to the city becomes an integral component of our self-concept and self-worth. As a result, individuals who feel a strong attachment to their city are more likely to experience a sense of inclusion in life and greater psychological resilience. Such attachment may also lead individuals to perceive themselves as more privileged or fortunate compared to those living elsewhere, and can transform into a motivating force that encourages them to care for, protect, and improve their city.

Studies examining the relationship between natural environments and psychological health indicate that urban natural resources play a significant role in linking place attachment with mental

well-being. Research shows that access to parks, green spaces, waterfronts, and natural scenery within cities contributes to mental restoration and the replenishment of cognitive resources. Such environments have been found to support processes of attentional regulation, stress reduction, and emotional recovery. However, in an era where the effects of global warming and climate change are becoming increasingly visible, the sustainability of these resources is under growing threat. The degradation of the natural fabric of cities, the reduction of green spaces, and the depletion of essential environmental resources can undermine the relationships we establish with both place and community. Environmental psychology research further highlights that these impacts are disproportionately experienced by socially and economically marginalized groups—such as children, women, older adults, and low-income populations.

According to these studies, such groups are not only more exposed to environmental risks but also have more limited access to the resources needed to cope with them.

In this context, the bond established with cities should be understood not only as a sense of belonging, but also as a protective psychological and social resource for individuals. Meaningful connections between individuals and their living environments can foster a sense of continuity and resilience in the face of social uncertainties and potential losses; however, the weakening of these bonds may further intensify existing inequalities. Therefore, understanding how urban residents experience their living environments constitutes an essential component of comprehending the social and psychological dimensions of health.

Indeed, this year the World Health Organization marks

World Health Day with the call, ‘Together for health, stand with science,’ highlighting the societal value of scientific knowledge. This call also invites a reconsideration of how knowledge for health is produced. In this regard, it is essential to promote research approaches grounded in interdisciplinary collaboration, participatory methods, and the inclusion of urban residents’ voices. Within such a shared framework, making the needs and expectations of local communities visible—particularly through their own narratives—and ensuring that this knowledge informs urban design processes and is effectively communicated to decision-makers and practitioners are critical. Equally important is that public authorities recognize and utilize this knowledge to the extent it deserves. These steps constitute fundamental building blocks for creating more inclusive and healthier living environments.”

3rd International School on Urban Morphology (ISUM)

We are delighted to announce the successful completion of the 3rd International School on Urban Morphology (ISUM) in Famagusta!

Organized by the Eastern Mediterranean University Urban Research and Development Center (URDC) in collaboration with ISUF – International Seminar on Urban Form and CyNUM – Cyprus Network of Urban Morphology, this year’s School brought together an inspiring international community of scholars, researchers, and emerging urbanists.

Over the course of the program, we had the pleasure of welcoming 35 participants from 22 countries — including 8 African, 6 Asian, 6 European, and 2 American countries — to engage deeply with the urban landscape, history, and future potentials of Famagusta. Through lectures, fieldwork, discussions, and design-oriented explorations,

ISUM

3rd International School on Urban Morphology

Famagusta, Cyprus | 23-30 April 2026

Program Schedule

22 April Wednesday

23 April Thursday

24 April Friday

25 April Saturday

26 April Sunday

27 April Monday

28 April Tuesday

29 April Wednesday

30 April Thursday

09:00-10:00 Opening Ceremony

09:30-11:00 Lectures & Discussions

11:00-11:15 Short Break

11:15-12:45 Lectures & Discussions

12:45-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-18:00 Visit to the City & Site

18:00 End-of-day Session & Planning for the Next Day

09:00-09:30 Introduction to the International School of Urban Morphology

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participants examined the city's complex urban morphology and developed thoughtful ideas for its future transformation.

We are proud to have hosted such a vibrant and diverse group in

Famagusta and grateful to all participants, tutors, collaborators, and supporting institutions who contributed to making this international learning experience so meaningful. Famagusta once again became a living laboratory for urban morphology, critical inquiry, and shared urban imagination.



Group Pictures from the ISUM Workshop

Beginner-Friendly D5 Render Workshop at EMU

We are pleased to announce the successful completion of our beginner-friendly D5 Workshop, hosted by the Urban Research and Development Center (URDC), on Friday, May 22, at the Faculty of Engineering.

A special thank you to Sajida Siddig, student at the Department of Architecture and D5 CampusAmbassador, for leading the workshop and introducing students to the possibilities of architectural visualization through D5 Render. During the session, students were introduced to the program and guided through the basics of the interface, main tools, and workflow. After the introduction,



participants worked on a small practice project, allowing them to apply what they learned and explore the software through hands-on practice.

Thank you to all students who joined and actively participated in the workshop.



You can find the the top 3 winners' projects from our workshop by pressing <https://urdc.emu.edu.tr/en/Documents/winners.pdf>

Collaborative Event for World Environment Day 2026: 'A Glocal Call for Climate Action'

A Collaborative Event on the 2026 World Environment Day: A Glocal Call for Climate Action On 3 June 2026, a documentary screening and panel discussion titled "There Is No Other Cyprus" was held at the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) Activity Center to mark World Environment Day (5 June). The event was organized jointly by EMU's Urban Research and Development Center (URDC/KENT-AG), Community Involvement Center (CIC/TDM), the Famagusta Women's Center Association (MAKAMER), and the Yeniboğaziçi Women's Association (YEKAD).

The event focused on the rapid environmental degradation in northern Cyprus resulting from uncontrolled urbanisation, overdevelopment, pollution, and climate change. Following the screening of the documentary, experts from different disciplines discussed environmental challenges and sustainable solutions. The program was attended by Nilden Bektaş Erhürman, an environmental engineer and the spouse of Turkish Cypriot leader Tufan Erhürman, highlighting the growing importance of environmental issues in public discourse. Speakers from civil society organisations and EMU emphasised that climate change is no longer a distant threat but an urgent reality affecting public health, cultural heritage, biodiversity, and future generations. They stressed that environmental protection is a shared social responsibility and that women and civil society

organisations play a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting collective action.

EMU representatives underlined that sustainability must move beyond rhetoric and become embedded in education, governance, and everyday practices. They noted that climate change, water scarcity, energy challenges, biodiversity loss, and environmental pollution have become interconnected global crises with direct local consequences for Cyprus.



A Group Picture from the Event

The documentary "There Is No Other Cyprus," a joint production of the PRIO Cyprus Centre and the Cyprus Green Action Group, was then screened. Directed by Faik Uzuner and Doğu Bozkurt, and coordinated by Mete Hatay, the film examines environmental degradation in Northern Cyprus, including unplanned construction, marine and soil pollution, and the destruction of natural habitats.

The documentary aims to increase public awareness of climate change and the need for sustainable development.

A panel discussion followed the screening, featuring PCC research consultant Mete Hatay, environmental activist Feriha Tel, economist Mertkan Hamit, and director Faik Uzuner. Moderated by

Naciye Doratl, the discussion explored climate change, environmental protection, sustainable living, and Cyprus's environmental future from multiple perspectives.

The event served as an important platform for raising environmental awareness and encouraging cooperation among universities, civil society organizations, local communities, and policymakers in addressing the island's growing ecological challenges.



Social Media Awareness Posts

International Women's Day - 1

08 March 2026

On 8 March, International Women's Day, EMU URDC in collaboration with EMU-SDGs Club celebrate gender equality, empowerment, and the vital role of women in shaping inclusive and resilient cities and communities.



This PSA was prepared as part of the course Arch320, The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, in the Department of Architecture undergraduate program. It reflects the importance of equal opportunities, safety, and representation in public and professional spaces. Gender equality is not only a social imperative but a spatial and cultural one—for people, planet, and future generations.



The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :

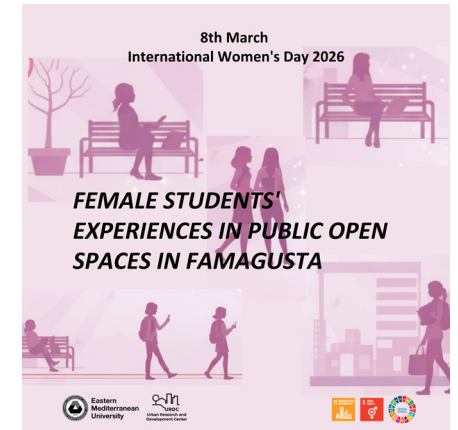


International Women's Day - 2

08 March 2026

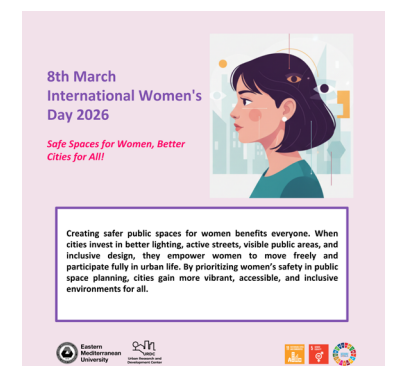
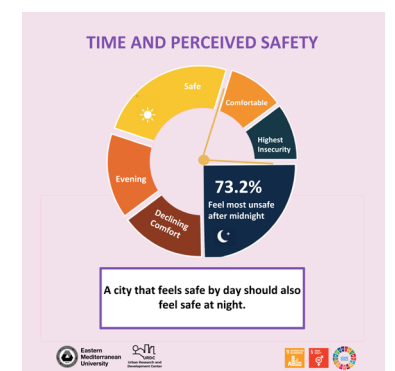
Safe Spaces for Women, Better Cities for All

Cities should enable everyone to move freely, confidently, and safely. Creating safer public spaces for women benefits entire communities. When urban environments incorporate good lighting, active streets, visible public areas, and inclusive design, they foster greater participation, accessibility, and social vitality.



On 8 March, International Women's Day, we are pleased to share the initial findings from our research on women students' experiences of safety, in public open spaces in Famagusta.

This work highlights the importance of designing inclusive urban environments where women can access, use, and enjoy public spaces without fear or restriction.



The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :



International Day of Forests

21 March 2026

On 21 March, International Day of Forests, EMU URDC, in collaboration with EMU_SDG Club, highlights the vital role of forests in supporting biodiversity, regulating climate, and enhancing the quality of life within urban and rural environments.



This PSA was prepared as part of the course Arch320, The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, in the Department of Architecture undergraduate program. It reflects the importance of protecting forest ecosystems, promoting sustainable land use, and integrating nature into design and planning practices.

World Water Day

22 March 2026

Water is not just a resource; it's the foundation of life, cities, and communities.

On 22 March, World Water Day, EMU URDC, in collaboration with EMU_SDG Club, highlights the critical importance of water in sustaining life, shaping resilient environments, and supporting equitable communities.



This PSA was prepared as part of the course Arch320, The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, in the Department of Architecture undergraduate program. It reflects the significance of responsible water use, conservation, and the role of design in addressing global water challenges. Water sustainability is not only an environmental concern but also a social and spatial one for people, planet, and future generations.



The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :



International Day of Zero Waste

30 March 2026

Small actions lead to big impact. From reducing waste to rethinking our daily habits, every step counts toward a more sustainable future.

On 30 March, International Day of Zero Waste, EMU URDC in collaboration with the EMU-SDGs Club emphasize the importance of everyday actions in reducing waste, promoting recycling, and encouraging more responsible consumption patterns.



This PSA was prepared as part of the course Arch320, The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, in the Department of Architecture undergraduate program. It reflects how simple daily habits as reduce, reuse, and recycle can collectively contribute to environmental protection and resource efficiency. Advancing zero waste is not only an environmental responsibility but also a social and spatial commitment.

For people, planet, and future generations, let us reduce, reuse and recycle!

World Health Day

07 April 2026

On 7 April, World Health Day, EMU URDC, in collaboration with EMU-SDGs Club, highlights the interconnected nature of health, well-being, and equitable access to resources in shaping sustainable communities.



This PSA was prepared as part of the course Arch320 - The UN

Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, in the Department of Architecture undergraduate program. It reflects the links between nutrition, clean water, health services, and social equity, emphasizing the importance of SDGs 2, 3, 6, and 10. Promoting health is not only a medical concern but also a social, environmental, and spatial commitment.



The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

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International Day for Monuments and Sites

18 April 2026

On ICOMOS International Day for Monuments and Sites (IDMS), celebrated each year on 18 April, focuses on “Living Heritage” and “Emergency Response” in the conservation of heritage affected by disasters and conflicts, in 2026. Let’s all think how we can respond and what kind of actions we can take for the future of cultural heritage!



Earth Day

22 April 2026

On 22nd of April, Earth Day, EMU URDC, and EMU_SDG Club highlight the power of individual and collective action in protecting our environment and shaping a more sustainable future.

This PSA was prepared as part of the course Arch320 - The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, in the Department of Architecture undergraduate program.



It emphasizes that everyday actions such as recycling, water conservation, tree-planting, and the use of clean energy—play a vital role in safeguarding our planet. These grassroots efforts demonstrate that meaningful environmental change is both achievable and necessary, reinforcing the importance of SDGs 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, and 15.



The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :



International Day for Biological Diversity

22 May 2026

On International Day for Biological Diversity, EMU URDC, in collaboration with EMU-SDGs Club, highlights the importance of protecting biodiversity and maintaining the balance of ecosystems that support life on our planet.



This PSA was prepared as part of the course Arch320 - The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, in the Department of Architecture undergraduate program. It emphasizes the value of biological diversity in sustaining healthy environments, resilient communities, and a more sustainable future. Preserving biodiversity is essential not only for nature itself, but also for human well-being, climate resilience, and future generations.

WUF13 - Baku Call to Action

26 May 2026

As the Eastern Mediterranean University Urban Research and Development Center (EMU URDC), we support the World Urban Forum – Baku Call to Action for safer, more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable cities.

We believe that housing is a fundamental human right, and that safe housing, quality public life, and social resilience form the foundation of just cities. Through



the lenses of urban research, design, participatory governance, and sustainability, we emphasise the importance of collective efforts toward developing climate-resilient, inclusive, and human-centred living environments.



The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :



We believe that universities are important actors shaping the future of cities through knowledge production, social responsibility, and local-global collaborations, and we join the call for more livable, safe, and resilient cities and communities for all.

You can access the original document of the Call through the link: https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2026/05/wuf13_baku_call_to_action.pdf



World Environment Day - 1

05 June 2026

On World Environment Day, EMU URDC, in collaboration with the EMU-SDGs Club, highlights the importance of environmental stewardship and collective action in creating a more sustainable future.

This PSA was prepared as part of the course Arch320 - The UN Sustainable Development Goals: An Interdisciplinary Approach for the Future of Our Planet, in the Department of Architecture undergraduate program. It emphasizes the responsibility we all share in protecting natural resources, reducing environmental impacts, and promoting sustainable practices in our daily lives. Environmental sustainability is a collective commitment that supports healthier communities, resilient ecosystems, and a better future for generations to come.



The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

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World Environment Day - 2

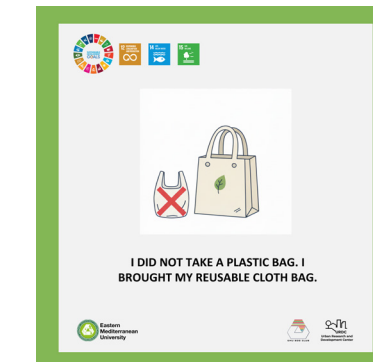
social media campaign

05 June 2026

POST on Instagram:

Protecting our environment begins with the choices we make every day. From saving

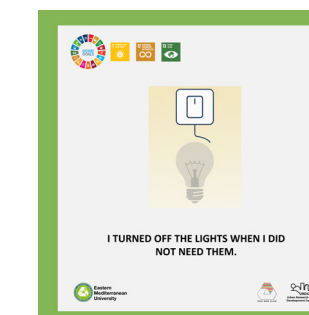
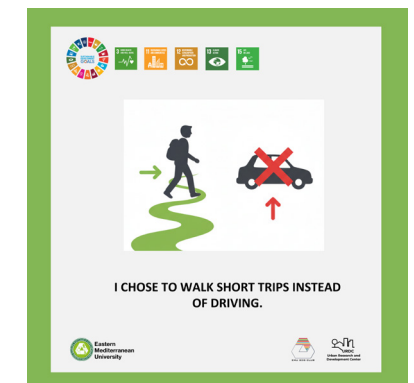
water to reducing waste and making more sustainable decisions, small actions can create a lasting impact.



This series highlights simple steps that each of us can take to contribute to a healthier and more sustainable future.

- Every drop saved matters.
- Every responsible choice counts.
- Every action makes a difference.

Together, we can build a more sustainable world.



The videos are available on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@EMU_URDC

Follow us on :



URDC Executive Board Members Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ege Uluca Tümer and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevter Zafer Cömert conducted research studies at the City Space Architecture in Bologna

Following the previous collaborations between EMU Urban Research and Development Center (URDC) and City Space Architecture (CSA), a non-profit cultural association registered in Italy, our executive board members Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ege Uluca Tümer and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevter Zafer Cömert conducted their research at the Public Space Museum of CSA in Bologna during July and August.

Adaptive Reuse of Medieval Fortifications in Italy – research by Ege Uluca Tümer

Ege Uluca Tümer has been carrying out her research titled “Adaptive Reuse of Medieval Fortifications in Italy” at CSA from 1 July to 31 August 2026. Her research focuses on the conservation, management, public use, and contemporary reuse of historic fortifications. Using Bologna as a base, Tümer has conducted field research in several historic walled cities, including Ferrara, Montagnana, Cittadella, Verona, Bergamo, Mantova, Sabbioneta, and Lucca. The study comparatively examines how medieval walls and defensive structures are integrated into present-day urban life and how conservation priorities are balanced with new public functions. The research combines systematic site surveys, archival and documentary

study, and meetings with local authorities and relevant professionals. Particular attention is given to the reuse of fortifications as parks, walking routes, cultural venues, visitor facilities, and other public spaces. Through this comparative study, Tümer aims to contribute to current discussions on how historic fortifications can be conserved sustainably while remaining active and meaningful components of contemporary cities. Her research residency in Bologna will continue until the end of August 2026.

Morphological Transformation of Public Spaces in the Context of Evolving Urban Life and Cultural Diversity - research by Nevter Zafer Cömert

Nevter Zafer Cömert, Vice-director of the Executive Board of URDC, conducted her research study at the City Space Architecture between 29 June and 31 August. Her research focuses on the morphological transformation of urban public spaces in relation to evolving urban life and cultural diversity. The study examined how changing lifestyles, population

mobility, migration, socio-economic transformations, and increasing cultural diversity influence the ways in which public spaces are used, appropriated, and transformed. Particular attention was given to the relationship between urban morphology and everyday social practices, focusing on how



historically established urban forms adapt to contemporary patterns of use. The research contributes to a broader understanding of public space as a dynamic component of the urban system rather than a fixed spatial category. It highlights the interaction between physical urban form, cultural diversity, and changing patterns of everyday life, particularly within historically layered urban environments. Both of our members' research was conducted during Research Leave

URDC was represented at 6th international, interdisciplinary “Past Present and Future of Public Space” Conference in Bologna

The Urban Research and Development Center (URDC) participated in the 6th International, Interdisciplinary Academic Conference “Past, Present and Future of Public Space,” held in Bologna, Italy, on 7–9 July 2026 and promoted by City Space Architecture. The conference brought together international researchers and practitioners to exchange perspectives on contemporary challenges and emerging approaches concerning public space.

Representing URDC, Prof. Dr. Şebnem Önal Hoşkara, the Director of URDC (and also a visiting professor at RWTH Aachen University in Germany and a professor at Beykoz University in Istanbul on her sabbatical leave this year), and Research Assistant Mahmoud El Doukhi presented the Center's ongoing research project entitled “Experiences of Safety and Public Open Space Use among Female Students in Famagusta, Northern Cyprus.” The presentation introduced the research within the broader discussion of gender, public space, mobility, and urban inclusion.

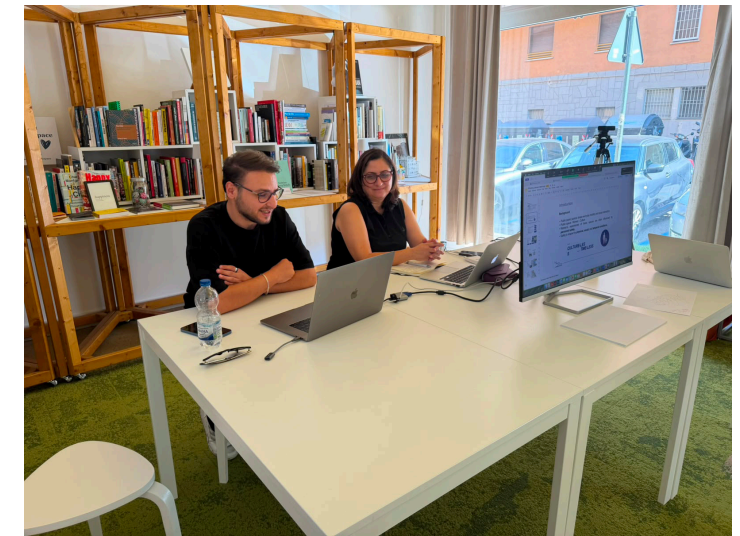
The study investigates how female university students experience and perceive safety in the public open spaces of Famagusta and how these experiences are affected by spatial, environmental, and temporal conditions. Focusing on a student-oriented urban context in which walking and

the everyday use of streets and public spaces play an important role, the research examines differences in perceptions of safety across locations and between daytime and nighttime use. A mixed-method approach combining surveys, spatial observation, and safety mapping is being used to connect users' experiences with characteristics of the physical environment.

The initial findings, based on 176 female participants, reveal a marked difference between daytime and nighttime experiences of public space. While 82.9% of respondents reported feeling safe during the day, only 34.6% reported feeling safe after dark. The preliminary results further underline the role of lighting, visibility, social presence, connectivity, and active frontages in shaping perceptions of safety and influencing movement choices.

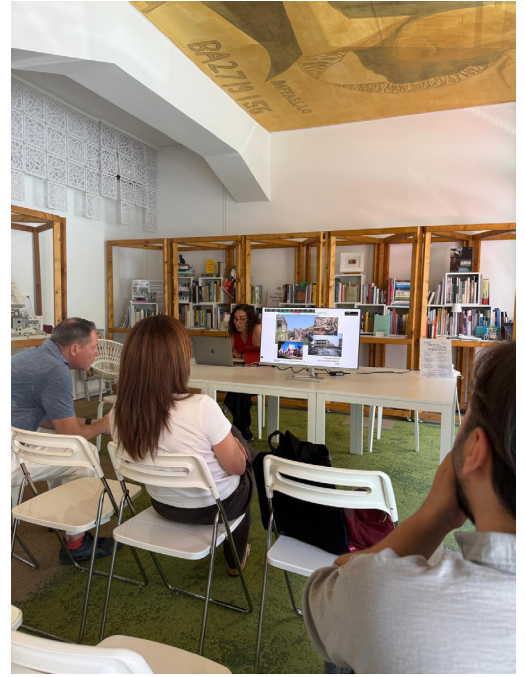
These findings will inform the next stage of the ongoing

project, which will move toward detailed spatial analysis and the development of gender-sensitive urban design recommendations and proposals for selected public spaces in Famagusta.



In the same conference, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevter Zafer Cömert, our executive board member, presented a joint research-based design project with Prof. Hoşkara on 'Climate-Responsive Landscape Planning for Equitable Communities: Rauf Raif Denктаş Memorial and Republic Park, Nicosia, Cyprus'. This study explores how sustainable landscape planning can improve both environmental resilience and social equity, using the Rauf Raif Denктаş (RRD) Memorial and Republic Park in Nicosia, Cyprus, as a case study. The park was redesigned by the authors under URDC last year.

participates in rebuilding places in Famagusta? Can public space foster long-term peace within the city? In the session, to discuss these questions, Nevter Zafer Cömert presented the evolution of public spaces in Famagusta, concentrating on the Maras region, while another executive board member of URDC, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ege Uluca Tümer, presented her research on Transformation of Public Spaces in Post-Conflict Cities: Namık Kemal Square in Famagusta.



Last but not least, URDC has organized, by invitation, a Special Session on Public Space in Post-Conflict Territories. Moderated by Prof. Dr. Şebnem Hoşkara, the session has taken Famagusta as a case study and discussed the following questions: Can public space heal the divided societies in Famagusta? How should contested memories be represented across the different fragments of Famagusta? Who



**Eastern
Mediterranean
University**



**Urban Research and
Development Center**

Contact

Eastern Mediterranean University
Urban Research and Development Center
(URDC)
Famagusta, North Cyprus

Tel: +90 392 630 2588
urdc.emu.edu.tr/en

Initial Graphic Design: Dr. Amirhossein Karimizadeh

Issue Layout: Res. Assist. Mahmoud El Doukhi

URDC Executive Board

Prof. Dr. Şebnem Hoşkara (Director)
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nevter Zafer Cömert
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