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UCare

Urban Climate Adaptation and Recovery Efforts through Green Infrastructure in Black Sea Basin – UCare/ BSB00822

Newsletter nr. 2 **April – August 2026**

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Under the Experts' Lens

The French Park in Ungheni: A Complex Dendrological Profile



From now on, the ecological reconstruction and development of the French Park in Ungheni will be carried out in accordance with a study conducted by a team led by Ion Roșca, PhD in Biology, Director of the "Alexandru Ciubotaru" National Botanical Garden (Institute) in Chișinău.

During May and June of this year, an inventory and mapping of plant species was carried out in the French Park, the largest urban green area in Ungheni Municipality, covering a total of 13.9 hectares and located on the left bank of the Prut River, near the Palace of Culture.

The specialists' conclusion: the area has remarkable ecological complexity and value, constituting an urban natural heritage asset whose significance extends far beyond the conventional ornamental function.

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Under the Experts' Lens

The French Park in Ungheni: A Complex Dendrological Profile

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Conclusions
Academic Summary

- The dendrological inventory of the French Park, carried out within the UCare Project, documented an **urban green ecosystem of remarkable complexity and ecological value.**
- The **2,608 specimens belonging** to **34 dendrological species** (29 deciduous and 5 coniferous), distributed across an area of 13.9 hectares, constitute an **urban natural heritage asset whose significance extends far beyond the conventional ornamental function.**
- From a biogeographical perspective, the park's location on the left bank of the Prut River gives it the **status of a riparian ecological corridor of regional importance**, integrated into the Black Sea Basin habitat network.
- Analysis of the compositional structure reveals a **predominance of native and naturalised species** adapted to continental climatic conditions (Dfb Köppen–Geiger), with *Tilia platyphyllos* (448 specimens), *Ulmus pumila* (416) and *Populus alba* (226) as the defining species.
- This structure reflects both the natural dynamics of riparian vegetation and historical anthropogenic landscaping interventions.
- However, the presence of 317 specimens of invasive species (12.2% of the total) — predominantly Robinia pseudoacacia and Acer negundo—indicates significant **ecological pressure** on the biocenotic balance, requiring a systemic and sustained management approach.
- The phytosanitary assessment confirms the generally **favourable condition** of the tree stand: 47.1% of the species are in good phytosanitary condition and 52.9% are in satisfactory condition, with no active fungal diseases or significant pests.
- The absence of severe abiotic stress (sunscald, salinisation, compaction) indicates an **ecosystem that is stable** in terms of physical factors.

Inventory Dashboard

Quantitative summary of the dendrological inventory: 2,608 specimens distributed across 34 species, with summary parameters on composition and phytosanitary condition.

2608 Total specimens — 34 tree and shrub species	**2004** Trees — 76% of total vegetation	**604** Shrubs — 24% of total vegetation
29 Deciduous species — 85% of total diversity	**5** Coniferous species — 15% of total diversity	**47.1%** Good phytosanitary condition
52.9% Satisfactory condition	**0** Pests/ Diseases	**13.9** Hectares Total area

For the French Park, ornamental value must be balanced with resilience to urban conditions and the contribution to biodiversity.

ANALYSIS of strengths and weaknesses

Strengths

High biodiversity
34 species/2,608 specimens across 13.9 ha—a taxonomic diversity above the average for regional urban parks.

Good phytosanitary condition
100% healthy tree stand (good/satisfactory), zero active fungal diseases, zero major pests.

Valuable riparian character
Valuable ecological corridor along the Prut River with native hygrophilous species (Populus, Salix)—a rare habitat in an urban context.

Weaknesses

High invasive pressure
12.2% invasive species—competition with native flora and degradation of the biocenosis.

Hydrological vulnerability
Exposure to river flooding (Prut) and pluvial flooding, with low-lying topography (former lake) and no adequate drainage.

Vertical stratification deficit
A structure dominated by mature trees; insufficient natural regeneration and diversified shrub layer in some areas.

The weaknesses are not irreversible deficiencies, but opportunities for strategic intervention.

Under the Experts' Lens

Inventory and Mapping of Plant Species in the Urban Green Areas of Thermi Municipality

The Thermi area in Greece is recognised as a true "green oasis" in the eastern suburbs, being one of the most attractive destinations for relaxation in nature, hiking and outdoor activities. Thermi Municipality is currently actively involved in the project "Urban Climate Adaptation and Recovery Efforts through Green Infrastructure in Black Sea Basin —UCare/BSB00822", through which it has successfully inventoried and mapped plant species in its green areas, providing a clear picture of them.

The results are as follows:

100,061 square metres mapped: assessment and spatial analysis of 77 urban green areas in Thermi, Triadi, Nea Raidestos, Neo Rysio and Tagarades.

74 plant species recorded: a comprehensive biodiversity register comprising 43 tree species, 25 shrub species, 5 aromatic/herbaceous species and native ground-cover grasses.

Digital GIS database: creation of a spatial database in shapefile (.shp) format, enabling local authorities to accurately monitor the municipal green heritage.

Good practice guide: development of guidelines focused on selecting native and drought-resistant species, using water-efficient landscaping techniques and implementing smart irrigation systems.



An atlas of species characteristic of the three partner cities—Ungheni, Thermi and Tulcea—will also follow.

Thermi: Community and School Engagement

Participatory workshops, educational modules and greening interventions took place in Thermi from April to August within the UCare project.



Five school community gardens were established, with the active involvement of approximately 320 pupils and parents.

Thermi Municipality carried out three tree-planting actions in important local areas, adding 90 trees to the municipal green-space network.

After pupils and volunteers planted a total of **50 trees on Gennadiou Street** in the Thermi expansion area in March 2026, a further **40 trees** were planted in the Thermi dam area on 4 May, thereby creating a natural noise barrier for the adjacent area.

Three community volunteer groups were established, comprising young people, teachers and residents of the Thermi expansion area.

Seven interactive community workshops and participatory activities were held, including: an open participatory session at the Thermi Cultural Centre Library to present the preliminary design study for the new park in the Thermi expansion area; community environmental festivals (the "Spring Festival", held at Primary School No. 2, and "Garden Bar", held at Primary School No. 4); and the "Little Chefs in the Garden" workshop.





UCare E-Learning Platform –

A Digital Space for Exploring Green and Resilient Cities

How can we make cities greener, healthier and better prepared for climate change?

The UCare E-Learning Platform brings together knowledge, practical examples, tools and interactive experiences dedicated to urban adaptation and green infrastructure in one place!

At the heart of the platform are **seven e-learning modules** exploring climate change and urban risks, biodiversity, sustainable urban planning, green and blue infrastructure, nature-based solutions, urban resilience and practical examples of adaptation.

For those who prefer learning through dialogue and concrete examples, the platform offers **10 recorded webinars** on topics such as urban biodiversity, green policies, green and blue infrastructure, nature-based solutions, climate resilience and the preparation of local action plans. The information can therefore be accessed at any time and at each user's own pace.

The experience becomes even more interactive through **six filmed 360° excursions**, which allow users to explore relevant examples and spaces without the need to travel physically.

The following can therefore be visited virtually:
- *Delia Lake, "Micul Cluj" Central Park* and the cycle lanes in Ungheni Municipality (Republic of Moldova);
- *The dam* in Thermi (Greece);
- *"Ciuperca" Park* in Tulcea (Romania).

These provide a visual perspective on urban adaptation solutions and practices and transform learning into an exploratory experience.

The platform also includes **four 360° virtual tours** through which users can discover green infrastructure spaces and solutions in an immersive format: the French Park during its revitalisation, Delia Lake, "Micul Cluj" Central Park, and Independence Square together with the chestnut-tree alley in Ungheni Municipality.

It is a way to "visit" places, observe implemented solutions and understand more easily how nature can be integrated into the urban environment.

Another valuable tool is the interactive maps, which enable exploration of the relationship between the city, climate and green spaces. Users can analyse, among other things, **Surface Urban Heat Island Intensity (SUHI), the Universal Thermal Climate Index (UTCI)** and **land cover**, as well as tools for climate data analysis and urban adaptation.

The platform also provides access to publications and information materials developed within the Project "Urban Climate Adaptation and Resilience Efforts through Green Infrastructure in the Black Sea Basin– UCare", BSB0082.

These publications are useful for exploring the topics in greater depth. Interested users can also **access a photo gallery documenting the activities**, examples and experiences developed within the project.

The contact section facilitates communication with the team and partners involved in the project.

Through this combination of courses, webinars, maps, 360° experiences, virtual tours, publications and visual materials, **UCare** becomes more than a training platform. It is a digital space for discovery, learning and inspiration, created for everyone interested in greener cities, biodiversity, nature-based solutions and community adaptation to climate change.



Explore. Learn.
Discover solutions.
Inspire change in your city.

Discover the UCare E-Learning Platform - https://www.ucare.pro/

Green Cities for the Future: Exchange of Good Practices among Ungheni, Tulcea and Thermi

From April 1st to 4th, representatives of Ungheni Municipality City Hall and the Regional Centre for Sustainable Development carried out a study visit to Tulcea Municipality, Romania, with the main objective of exchanging good practices in the regeneration of urban green infrastructure in response to the challenges posed by climate change.

During the visit, the hosts presented their experience in implementing sustainable development projects and models for developing and managing urban green spaces. Specialists in landscape architecture and green-space management emphasised the importance of a sustainable approach to their design and maintenance, paying particular attention to proper implementation methods to protect existing trees.

In turn, the partners from Ungheni and Thermi, Greece, shared their experience in green infrastructure planning, highlighting the essential role of these spaces in increasing urban resilience and improving residents' quality of life.

Urban regeneration projects under implementation or planned in Ungheni Municipality were also discussed, including the modernisation of the French Park, the revitalisation of Delia Lake, the development of "Micul Cluj" Park and the rehabilitation of Twinning Square. These initiatives reflect the local authorities' commitment to developing a green, modern city adapted to current needs.



The visit programme also included field trips during which participants examined concrete examples of regenerated green spaces in Tulcea, regarded as successful models of sustainable urban landscaping.

Highlights included the Fishing Village Museum and the Danube Delta Museum, institutions that promote natural resources and local traditions and offer an authentic perspective on the way of life of communities in the area.

Trees Planted by Ungheni Residents near the Fishing Village Museum in Tulcea

Dozens of trees were planted by representatives of Ungheni Municipality and the Regional Centre for Sustainable Development during their visit to Tulcea in April of this year.
The Ungheni participants helped green a plot of land near the Fishing Village Museum, alongside colleagues from the host city and from Thermi, Greece—partners in the Project "Urban Climate Adaptation and Recovery Efforts through Green Infrastructure in Black Sea Basin.

In doing so, they once again demonstrated the importance of community involvement and international cooperation in promoting a healthy and sustainable environment and improving residents' quality of life.







Tulcea Municipality – Local Action, Cooperation and Community Engagement

Between April and August 2026, Tulcea Municipality, a partner in the project "Urban Climate Adaptation and Resilience Efforts through Green Infrastructure in Black Sea Basin"—UCare, continued implementing its planned activities, focusing on the development of urban green infrastructure, the involvement of the community and young people, and the strengthening of transnational cooperation among project partners.

In April, **the five UCare Green Clubs** were finalised in four educational institutions in Tulcea – "Ion Creangă" Theoretical High School, the High School of Arts, "Brad Segal" Theoretical High School and "Elena Doamna" Secondary School–as well as within the "Lotus Scouts" organisation.

The five clubs bring together **75 active members** and provide a framework for young people's long-term involvement in activities dedicated to the environment, biodiversity and green infrastructure.

During the same period, the UCare Volunteer Group in Tulcea was established, with 45 founding members.





Through its local activities and participation in the partners' joint actions, Tulcea Municipality contributes to turning UCare's objectives into concrete initiatives that bring together green infrastructure, community involvement, environmental education and transnational cooperation in support of greener, more sustainable and climate-resilient cities.

Between April 20th and 27th, four demonstration gardens were established at educational institutions, with the participation of 64 pupils and under the guidance of a horticultural specialist.

The activity gave pupils the opportunity to participate directly in creating green spaces and to understand their role in improving the quality of the urban environment.

The community garden component was expanded from July 1st to 15th, when **five community gardens** were established, one in each of the five homeowners' associations involved in the project, in different areas. The activity was preceded by meetings with residents and discussions on the effects of climate change and the role of neighbourhood green spaces in increasing urban resilience.

To encourage community involvement, the five gardens took part in the "Greenest Residential Area" competition. Homeowners' Association 55 was named the winner and received a voucher worth 1,000 lei to purchase planting material. Through their demonstrative and participatory nature, these interventions are pilot projects with the potential to be replicated in other areas of the municipality.

Activities dedicated to green infrastructure were complemented by information and awareness-raising actions.

On Earth Day, April 22nd, Tulcea Municipality organised a **Climate Action Street Fair** featuring public information activities, themed competitions, planting demonstrations and a flash mob, with approximately 800 information materials distributed. During the same period, two environmental art events were organised, using artistic means to promote messages about urban biodiversity and adaptation to climate change.



One Goal: A Greener Future

Five days. 25 young people. Three countries. One challenge: how do we build greener and more resilient communities?

From July 20th to 24th , Ungheni Municipality became a space for ideas, creativity and international collaboration as it hosted the "Green Deal" Youth Camp.

Young people from Ungheni, Tulcea and Thermi came together to learn, exchange experiences and, most importantly, discover that change can begin with them.



Camp participants discussed climate change, green infrastructure, renewable energy, sustainable mobility and the circular economy, rapidly moving from theory to practice. Interactive workshops, study visits and work in international teams challenged them to find concrete solutions to the environmental problems facing their communities.

One of the most creative moments was the materials reuse workshop, where objects that might have become waste were transformed into genuine works of art. Through the bicycle tour and the "Ride Together, Green Forever" flash mob, the young people demonstrated that a more sustainable lifestyle can be active, joyful and contagious.

A symbolic moment was the signing of the "Youth Green Deal", through which participants committed to becoming advocates for environmental protection and responsible behaviour in their own communities.

The participation certificates marked the end of the five days, but not the end of the collaboration. The young people returned home with new ideas, international experiences and friendships that transcend borders. For many participants from Romania and Greece, Ungheni became a destination they would like to visit again.

The "Green Deal" Camp showed that when young people come together, ideas flow, friendships grow and change begins to take shape.

Three countries. One generation. A green future we are building together!

Better Prepared for a Greener Future in Ungheni

Peste 500 de elevi din liceele „Mihai Eminescu", „Gheorghe Asachi", „Ion Creangă" și „Alexandr Pușkin" din Ungheni au participat la lecții interactive, desfășurate în cadrul Programului educațional „Efectele schimbărilor climatice și soluții verzi" din proiectul „Adaptarea Urbană la Climă și Eforturi de Redresare prin Infrastructură Verde în Bazinul Mării Negre – UCare" (BSB00822).

Under the same programme, two webinars were organised with more than 80 participants: volunteers, representatives of local public administration, public institutions, non-governmental organisations and local initiative groups, pupils and teachers. Discussions covered the role of urban biodiversity and every citizen's responsibility to protect it, the effects of climate change on the urban environment, and the risks and vulnerabilities of cities.



Practical Solutions for Climate-Resilient Cities

How do we turn climate challenges into concrete solutions for our cities? The answer was explored over two weeks through 10 webinars and online workshops organised under the educational programme of the project "Urban Climate Adaptation and Resilience Efforts through Green Infrastructure in Black Sea Basin—UCare" (BSB00822), from 14 to 30 April 2026.

From Knowledge to Action

The programme was built around a simple principle: learning is more valuable when it can be transformed into action. Participants therefore did not limit themselves to theoretical presentations; they took part in interactive discussions, practical exercises, analyses of real situations and exchanges of experience with experts and professionals in the field.

Particular emphasis was placed on citizen involvement, collaboration among different local stakeholders and identifying solutions that can respond directly to community needs.

Inspiration from European Experience

Throughout the sessions, **examples of good practice from Italy, Spain, France, Switzerland, Austria, Denmark, Romania and the Republic of Moldova** were presented, offering participants a diverse perspective on how cities can respond to climate risks.

From green and blue infrastructure and nature-based solutions to urban biodiversity, sustainable planning and green policies, the examples analysed demonstrated that climate change adaptation can become an opportunity to create healthier, more attractive and safer urban spaces.

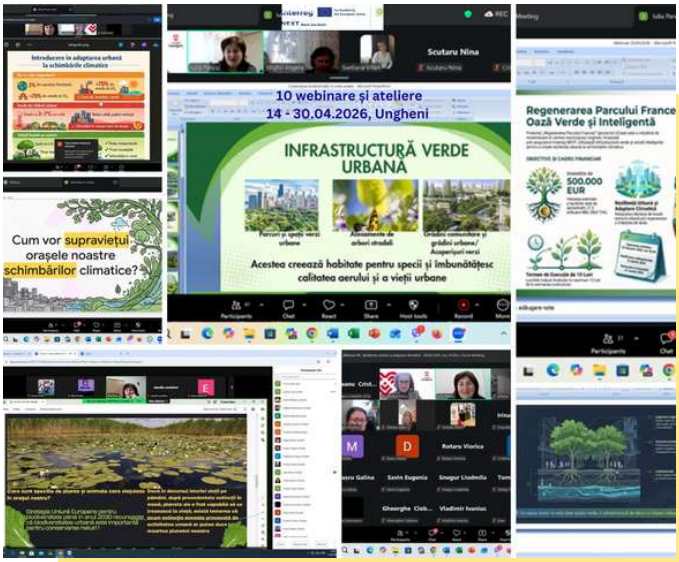
Tools for Ungheni

An important objective of the programme was to transfer knowledge to the local level.

Participants explored tools and approaches that can be adapted and applied in Ungheni, contributing to the development of concrete measures to increase urban resilience.

The topics covered included **urban climate change adaptation, biodiversity and nature conservation in cities, sustainable urban planning, green policies, green and blue infrastructure, nature-based solutions, urban resilience and the preparation of local action plans.**

Through dialogue, practical examples and collaboration, the 10 webinars and workshops contributed to strengthening local capacities and building an active community of professionals concerned with sustainable urban development.

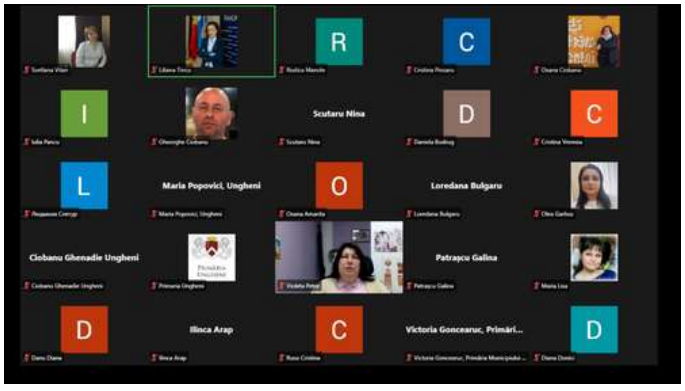


We Learn. We Collaborate. We Act

The UCare educational programme demonstrated that climate resilience is built together—through knowledge, partnerships, community involvement and solutions adapted to local realities.

Support materials for the webinars and workshops are available on the **E-Learning Platform** developed within the project — www.ucare.pro

The 10 sessions brought together **474 participants**— representatives of local public authorities, educational institutions, civil society and other relevant fields— confirming the growing interest in practical climate change adaptation solutions and in a greener, more resilient urban future.



From a European Project to Twinning

Tulcea and Ungheni Are Officially Twin Cities

The two municipalities—Ungheni, located on the banks of the Prut, and Tulcea, on the banks of the Danube—grew closer in 2025 with the launch of the project "Urban Climate Adaptation and Resilience Efforts through Green Infrastructure in Black Sea Basin—UCare/BSB00822".

During meetings organised by the project, mayors Vitalie Vrabie and Ștefan Ilie were already discussing their intention to formalise the relationship between the two municipalities through a cooperation and twinning agreement.

Ungheni is the project leader, and the partners are Tulcea Municipality in Romania, Thermi Municipality in Greece and the Ungheni Regional Centre for Sustainable Development.

The UCare project aims to regenerate green spaces, protect biodiversity and introduce measures that enable cities to better withstand the effects of high temperatures and climate change.

The two newly twinned cities recognised that they have much to learn from and share with one another, and they seek school exchanges, cultural cooperation and new joint projects in the future.

The twinning agreement signed by mayors Vitalie Vrabie and Ștefan Ilie provides for cooperation in public administration, education, culture, health, sport, social protection, and economic and urban development, as well as the possibility of jointly preparing projects for European funding.



Regarding urban climate adaptation and resilience through green infrastructure, the two cities already have experience that can be studied and replicated.

The ABC of the UCare Project

Urban climate adaptation:

Preparing cities for extreme weather events such as heatwaves, drought or flooding by changing how urban areas are managed and built.

Green infrastructure:

The use of natural and semi-natural elements—such as parks, green spaces, tree planting and the modernisation of recreational areas—instead of concrete structures.

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