

„Danube Culture Platform – Creative Spaces of the 21st Century“

Austria is lead partner of an EU project in the field of art, culture & tourism

These days an ambitious EU funded project, which should boost cultural and touristic ties in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, has been launched in Vienna. Following the heading “Danube Culture Platform – Creative Spaces of the 21st Century” a strategy will be developed to convey heritage sites and historical events along the Danube in a contemporary way to an international audience by means of innovative approaches using ICT (information and communications technology) and artistic interventions.

The Danube Culture Platform is implemented by the Federal Chancellery as the leading partner in cooperation with 8 project partners and 10 associated partners from 8 Danube countries in the frame of the Interreg Danube Transnational programme. The aim is to involve all 14 countries which are taking part in the EU Strategy for the Danube region (EUSDR). Besides the EU member states Austria, Germany (Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria), Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria also the bordering states Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are included. Up to 85% of the total project budget of 1.7 million are financed by the EU.

Probably the most exciting point of the project is the intention to explore undiscovered cultural heritage sites (“hidden heritage hot spots”) and historical events along the Danube and its water connections to visualise them by using artistic means.

Art – culture – tourism: These three terms provide a tight definition of the cornerstones of the Danube Culture Platform.

The European history forms the foundation. The cultural traces with their known and their yet to be discovered, hidden sites will be connected into new cultural routes. With the European Institute of Cultural Routes the project has managed to attract a renowned and

strategically important partner. These routes have important integrative power and are most appropriate for cultural tourism.

Under the lead of the Federal Chancellery of Austria a cultural policy network will be established comprising representatives of institutions and NGOs in the fields of culture and tourism from all 14 EUSDR countries.

The study “Mapping of places of history” will be the scientific basis of the project. It includes a mapping on cultural routes and interesting historic places with important data.

The banner of the pilot projects of the Danube Culture Platform is “Heritage reloaded”: The focus is on high tech and digital visualisation but also contemporary art and classical exhibition formats, which can be enriched with film or animation. As the hidden heritage sites are a major focus of the project the concept of making the invisible visible appears to be particularly relevant.

What does invisible mean in this context? It is about places which are unknown because they are situated below ground level, destroyed or repressed for political or societal reasons. These places, for example a Roman bathhouse in Upper Austria or the destroyed synagogue of Vidin in Bulgaria, will be digitally reconstructed through 3D-visualisations or given new life through artistic interpretation.

Specific activities in the frame of the project were launched at the expert workshop “Discovering Hidden Heritage” on April 20th in Vienna covering the theme of cooperation of culture and tourism. Two more workshops will follow: In the spring of 2018 the workshop will deal with the facilitation of history in Linz and in the autumn of 2018 the focus will be on promotion of cultural exchange in Regensburg.

The EU project Danube Culture Platform will run until June 2019. At the final project conference all results will be summarised and new models for innovative cultural routes will be presented.

Website: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/cultplatform-21>

Project data:

- Project budget: around € 1,7 Mio, 85% co-funded by the EU
- Duration: 30 months, January 2017 – June 2019
- 9 financial partners and 10 associated partners from 8 Danube countries

Project partners:

- Federal Chancellery of Austria, Division II: Arts and Culture (Lead) (AT)
- State of Upper Austria (Directorate Culture represented by the Museum of Upper Austria and the Upper Austrian Cultural Quarter) (AT)
- Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts Baden-Württemberg (DE)
- Ministry of Culture and National Identity of Romania (RO)
- Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG)
- Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria (BG)
- City of Regensburg (DE)
- Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, Pécs (HU)
- Danube Competence Center, Belgrade (RS)
- Associated Strategic Partners (no financial involvement): European Institute of Cultural Routes (LU), Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia (RS), Academy of Arts Novi Sad, University of Novi Sad (RS), Akademie Schloss Solitude (DE),

Municipality of Vidin (BG), Hungarian Limes Association (HU), MOTOVILA, Centre for the Promotion of Cooperation in the Cultural and Creative Sectors (SI), WGD Danube Upper Austria Tourism Ltd (AT), Cultural Network Lower Austria (AT), Danube Cultural Cluster (AT)