

**Invisible Fortresses: Ada Kaleh -**

**Public consultation memorandum**



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| Attendees | On 17th October a public consultation with the theme of hidden citadels – Ada Kaleh citadel was organized in Drobeta-Turnu Severin at the multifunctional pavilion in Crihala Forest, as part of CultPlatForm\_21 project. The event was attended by 65 people from different institutions and relevant stakeholders at national level. A complete list of the attendees is attached to this minute. |
| Agenda  12:30 – 17:00 | **Part 1 – Introduction and general framework**   1. Welcome Speeches 2. Presentation of the transnational project, of the research study on hidden heritage and of the pilot project concept 3. Presentation of local actions related to cultural heritage   **Part 2 – Capitalization on the hidden heritage in Drobeta-Turnu Severin**   1. Creative means of capitalization of the hidden heritage – panel discussion 2. Generating ideas for the future Art Festival – the pilot project 3. Conclusions |
| Purpose | The purpose of the public consultation was to:   * present CultPlatForm\_21 project, a project financed under Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, which gathers 19 organizations from 8 partner countries, including the Ministry of Culture and National Identity from Romania, with the aim to develop public policies related to the cultural routes in the Danube region; * present the study on hidden heritage in Romania conducted as part of CultPlatForm\_21 projects and its main findings; * present the concept of the pilot project to be implement as part of CultPlatForm\_21, which is going to be an International Art Festival organized in Drobeta-Turnu Severin and dedicated to the topic of hidden citadels and in particular to Ada Kaleh citadel; * identify suitable creative and innovative means of interpreting hidden heritage, especially related to the Danube river and the Drobeta-Turnu Severin – Orșova region; * identify proposals and suggestions for activities, interventions and themes that should be included in the Art Festival. |
| 1. Welcome Speeches | The public consultation started with a series of brief welcome speeches from organizers and local stakeholders.  **Ioana Ivanov**, *Associate Partner, CIVITTA Strategy & Consulting* welcomed all the participants on behalf of the company responsible for offering external expertise to the Ministry of Culture and National Identity Romania as part of the transnational project regarding the Danube River and presented the agenda of the public consultation.  **Monica Drăgan**, *Deputy Director, Ministry of Culture and National Identity Romania*, presented the role of the Project Management Unit, the department responsible for managing reimbursable and non-reimbursable funds on behalf of the Ministry of Culture, presenting at the same time examples of projects coordinated by this Unit.  **Renatta Nanciu**, *Vice-President, Mehedinți County Council*, presented the Council’s vision for Șimian Island and Ada Kaleh citadel, whose history should be capitalized on and brought to present, as well as the Council’s previous efforts in developing this site and the challenges encountered.  **Doinița Chircu**, *Manager, Iron Gates Region Museum*, presented the historic context that determined the current situation of the Șimian Island and Ada Kaleh citadel and the role of local authorities to support concrete actions for the sustainable development of this site. The Museum has always had a very important contribution to preserving this heritage and is currently interested in developing new and innovative means of interpreting the region’s valuable monuments.  **Dobre Mirea-Mihaela**, *Head of Service, Directorate of Historical Heritage and Cultural Tourism - Drobeta Turnu-Severin*, stressed the importance of art and creativity as means of bringing the hidden heritage to life and appreciated the benefits of a public consultation on this subject. |
| 2. Presentation of the transnational project, of the study and of the pilot project | The first presentation on this topic was held by **Andreea Ursuleasa**, *Project Manager, Ministry of Culture and National Identity Romania*, who presented the CultPlatForm\_21 Project, as part of the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme. The main topics presented contained details about general objectives, budget, timeframe and partners, being followed by a brief description of the project’s subject on hidden heritage, means of identifying and capitalizing on its value and example of similar initiatives developed in partner countries. In the end, the presentation offered an overview of the project’s steps, from the elaboration of a preliminary study on hidden heritage in Romania to the organization of an International Art Festival as a pilot project.  The second presentation held by **Andreea Maier**, *Senior Consultant, CIVITTA Strategy & Consulting*, described the main findings of the study on hidden heritage in Romania and the main reasons for selecting the pilot project. The first part of the presentation was dedicated to the context of the project presenting the definition of hidden heritage and the Danubian framework. The second part offered a series of details on the process of conducting the study on hidden heritage, the European Danubian identity, the elements of hidden heritage identified in Romania related to this identity, good practices taken into consideration and recommendations regarding heritage interpretation and preservation. In the end, the presentation stated the main reasons for choosing the region of Drobeta-Turnu Severin – Orșova, the theme of invisible fortresses and citadels and Ada Kaleh citadel as the main topic of the future pilot project. |
| 3. Presentation of local actions related to heritage | The first presentation held by **Iulian Canov**, *Wolfhouse Productions*, regarded the masterplan and the development vision proposed for the Șimian Island as part of a project conducted by Mehedinți County Council in 2014 with the aim of increasing the visibility and the activities on the island. The project started with the assessment of the current situation and the research on similar case studies on which the strategic principles and objectives for the island were based. During the presentation a series of details were offered regarding the proposed zoning, development concept or illustrations of suitable activities to be performed on the site. Unfortunately, this vision is not possible to be put into practice at the moment because of administrative obstacles related to the ownership of the land on the island.  The second presentation on this topic was held by **Dobre Mirea-Mihaela**, *Head* *of Service*, *Directorate of Historical Heritage and Cultural Tourism - Drobeta Turnu-Severin*, who described the main local projects conducted by the Directorate. The most important actions recently implemented included the restoration of the medieval citadel of Severin, the rehabilitation of the Arts Castle and the capitalization of Crihala Forest, through building a multifunctional pavilion and an open-air stage. All these sites are now major attractions both for tourists and local inhabitants, proving that the field of culture is very important in the city’s development. |
| 4. Creative means of capitalization on the hidden heritage – panel discussion | The panel discussion on creative means of capitalization on the hidden heritage was developed around seven panelists from different fields of work and it was moderated by **Ioana Ivanov**, *Associate Partner, CIVITTA Strategy & Consulting.* At the beginning, each panelist stated their point of view regarding the topic under discussion.  **Alina Rizescu**, *RIZI Design*, emphasized the importance of experiential means of heritage interpretation in order to make visitors interact with monuments, history and attractions, increasing the possibilities to transmit a local and hidden / lost context to a great variety of people, even from different cultures.  **Gabriel Kelemen**, *West University of Timișoara*, emphasized the role of local cultural identity which could contribute to increasing the attractiveness of a region with a poor economy like Drobeta-Turnu Severin – Orșova. This identity could be revealed through local infrastructure projects, new technologies and innovative means of heritage interpretation. Mr. Kelemen highlighted the theme of Danubian multiculturalism which should define any cultural intervention in Drobeta-Turnu Severin.  **Leona Chițoiu**, *Modulab*, stated that nowadays people are more stimulated by the interaction between art, science and technology because the contemporary tourist and visitor is more and more interested to learn and to be a part of the experience, rather than to be a spectator. This principle should be taken into consideration when proposing new means of heritage interpretation.  **Sabin Șerban**, *Augmented Space Agency*, based his intervention on the role of virtual and augmented reality as a means of adding value to reality. This approach can bring a new point of view to the user and at the same time it can help unravel hidden aspects, inaccessible before.  **Iulian Canov**, *Wolfhouse Productions*, concentrated his intervention on the sustainability of the pilot project, the organization of an International Art Festival related to Ada Kaleh and its history, emphasizing the need of long lasting benefits for the site and the local community. Some examples of desirable effects can be: to raise the awareness of the population and the visitors about Șimian Island and Ada Kaleh citadel, to increase the number of people actually visiting this site, to place billboards presenting the citadel or use other types of communication such as artistic interventions, information centre, etc., to raise the local and national stakeholders’ interest in recovering the island or to bring it to life through cultural interventions.  **Elena Belciu**, *CINETic*, emphasized the opportunity offered by the digital technologies to make heritage more accessible, because this instrument can offer a unique experience on the ground (for example, by using tools such as geolocation or VR), but at the same time it can provide the means to experiment the action simultaneously in other places as well.  **Dobre Mirea-Mihaela**, *Directorate of Historical Heritage and Cultural Tourism - Drobeta Turnu-Severin*, spoke from a social point of view, stating that the local community is a resource that should definitely be taken into consideration when proposing actions regarding the city or the region. The local inhabitants’ opinion should play an important role in the decision making process, but their history and their lifestyle could also provide inspiration for artistic interventions. |
| 5. Generating ideas for the future Art Festival | The last part of the public consultation was dedicated to a debate involving all the participants for brainstorming ideas, proposals or challenges regarding the process of organizing an International Art Festival in Drobeta-Turnu Severnin with the main topic of hidden citadels and Ada Kaleh citadel. The discussion was based on a series of starting points such as the main coordinates for the festival or the main questions that needed answers, all of which were announced by the moderator.  **The main coordinates for the festival** implied the organization of a major event lasting approximately 4 days that could comprise a varied series of activities such as: guided visits to Ada Kaleh citadel and Orșova, exhibitions, workshops and creative classes, talks and debates, performances and movie shows etc.  **The main questions** were structured according to the main types of stakeholders attending the public consultation (public stakeholders, private stakeholders and universities) and referred to:   * How can the festival be connected to the city and to the local community? * How can the hidden heritage be brought to life by contemporary means of interpretation? * How can educational activities contribute to the interpretation of and capitalization on hidden heritage?   Based on these facts, the debate approached different topics of interest for the subject under discussion.  First of all, the importance of **the location of the festival** was emphasized by all the participants since this aspect will have a direct influence on the activities and interventions proposed, their scale or existing conditions. Because of administrative challenges, the event is not possible to take place on Șimian Island, but various proposals were launched during the discussion, such as: The Iron Gates Region Museum, the medieval citadel of Severin, the Arts Castle or a broader area on the bank of the Danube. The organization of simultaneous activities in different locations was considered due to its potential of activating the entire city, but the need of a main venue was also stressed as a place where the main activities should take place.  The second very important subject under discussion was **the overall budget of the festival and funding opportunities**. The existing financial resources for the festival as a pilot project in CultPlatForm\_21 is of approximately 60,000 EUR, but alternative sources of funding were also proposed to expand this budget. Some of this alternatives could be: using the instrument of crowdfunding, identifying other sources of funding for cultural projects (e.g. AFCN funding, non-reimbursable financing under Law no. 350/2005 etc.), applying for private funds or even identifying other local partners (The managers of the Severin Citadel already expressed their interest of being a co-funder of this festival).  Another topic of interest was related to **the overall approach of the process of organizing the Art Festival**. One of the aspects emphasized was the importance of the *target audience* of this event, that could be a niche event dedicated only to professionals and art enthusiasts, but it was recommended that the festival should also be addressed to the general public – locals and tourists alike (for this a wider range of activities should be considered, such as music concerts, celebrations etc.). At the same time, it is very important *to involve as many young people as possible*, a few suggestions for this being: to launch an open call / invitation that should be disseminated in schools and universities, to organize brief conferences about the festival that should be broadcasted at national level (e.g. through a YouTube channel) or to include interesting interventions and themes in the festival such as interactive actions (e.g. Game Jam, Hackathon etc.) or mysterious, challenging topics.  Another important aspect related to the general approach was about the *selection of activities and interventions that will be included in the festival*, the need of a curator being also emphasized. At the same time, the participants proposed that a call of projects and ideas should be organized, taking also into consideration the amount of time and resources needed to prepare these interventions (e.g. for a digital installation a minimum of two moths is required, while for workshops or participative actions the period could be shorter, but some materials should previously be prepared).  In addition, the topic of **local resources and relevant themes** that could be approached during the festival was also discussed. In terms of local resources, historic legends, stories from previous inhabitants of Ada Kaleh citadel or photos and artefacts from The Iron Gates Region Museum are valuable assets that should be capitalized on. Apart from this, it is very important to take into consideration the mirror effect of the Danube between Romania and Serbia, or the strategic axis Timișoara – Drobeta-Turnu Severin – Craiova when establishing the target audience or the territorial resources.  Based on this aspects, a series of **concrete proposals** were already launched regarding the Art Festival, such as:   * Organizing a Game Jam during which teams of participants should propose a game on a given topic; * Developing holograms of lost heritage (e.g. Ada Kaleh citadel, Traian’s Bridge etc.); * Organizing a workshop on sustainability to identify possible benefits for the local community after the festival; * Organizing meetings, talks or debates with former inhabitants of Ada Kaleh citadel; * Using video mapping technique to present photos or scenes about Ada Kaleh citadel on unique / interactive structures; * Organizing activities dedicated to light and installations using lights to emphasize the interaction between water and light (e.g. festival of lights); * Semi-temporary installations build with the participation of local inhabitants for the public space along the Danube (following the example of other similar initiatives such as Someș Delivery); * Developing itinerant exhibitions that could be presented in other cities or in partner countries from CultPlatForm\_21 project after the festival; * Building an interactive installation that could simulate sounds from Ada Kaleh citadel; * Organizing connected events such as exhibitions, theatre plays etc. to activate the entire city.   In the end, the topic of **sustainability** was discussed regarding the lasting benefits of the festival for the city and for the local community. Some examples were proposed such as: building a permanent quay on the Șimian Island, an information point or information panels, activating other degraded buildings in Drobeta-Turnu Severin or permanently keeping some art installations produced for / during the festival. This could contribute to the overall success of the event and could further be the base for the decision of local authorities to organize other editions of the festival. |
| 6. Conclusions | The public consultation concluded with a brief presentation of the immediate next steps: to keep the participants informed about the development of the pilot project and further consult them on concrete proposals for the Arts Festival (possibly by means of an online questionnaire), which could be the base for the activities organized during the event.  In addition, a general aim was proposed for the Art Festival, that is to become a manifesto of the local community and local public authorities to recover the Șimian Island and Ada Kaleh citadel so that in the future this site could host other editions of the festival. |