



9th International Danube Conference on Culture

Staying strong together

Ulm, 8 – 10 May 2022

- Report -

Sunday 8 May, 18.00, Ulm City Hall

The conference began with a get-together and reception on the invitation of the City of Ulm and greeting words by Martin Bendel, First Mayor of the City of Ulm
Music: Dieter Kraus Sax Group – Jazz from the Danube

Monday 9 May, 9.00, Stadthaus Ulm

Musical introduction: Oxana Krut (Ukraine, piano)

Opening words:

- Gunter Czisch, Lord Mayor of the City of Ulm
- Petra Olschowski, State Secretary, The Ministry of Science, Research and Arts Baden-Württemberg
- Vidosava Enderić, Assistant Provincial Secretary, Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Provincial Secretariat for Regional Development, Interregional Cooperation and Local Self-Government; also representing the Vojvodina Presidency of the Working Community of the Danube Regions (ARGE Donauländer)
- Irina Cozma, European Union's Strategy for the Danube Region, Priority Area 3, Bucharest



State Secretary Petra Olschowski, Lord Mayor Gunter Czisch (right) and the organisation team: Paul F. Langer, Dr. Márton Méhes, Prof. Peter Langer (from left)

9.30 – Opening panel: **Let's stay strong together! – Solidarity with our Ukrainian colleagues!**

None of us expected this during the preparation of our Danube Conference on Culture: War in Europe – in the largest Danube country: Ukraine! Putin is letting the Russian army invade Ukraine – justified with lies and hatred. Thousands of people have already died, millions are fleeing from the aggressor. Ukraine needs full solidarity! We took this into account at our conference, e.g. by investigating opportunities to include more Ukrainian artists and cultural operators into regional cooperation and networking.



Prominent artists and cultural managers from the Danube region attended the panel:

- Oleksandra Yakubenko (independent cultural expert, Kyiv)
- Ivan Petrović (president of the board of EXIT Foundation, Novi Sad)
- Prof. Reinhard Johler (cultural scientist, University of Tübingen)
- Bálint Bachmann (architect, rector of the Metropolitan University, Budapest)
- Moderated by Annette Schmidt (SWR, Germany)

Monday 9 May, 11.30 – 13.30: Workshop 1 – Stadthaus Ulm

“Cities of culture in the Danube region – How to boost creativity and solidarity in times of crisis?”

With:

- Friderika Mike (director of programme development, Veszprém-Balaton 2023)
- Mona Jas (managing director, KinderKunstLabor, NÖ Landeskulturhauptstadt St. Pölten 2024)
- Lisa Neuhuber (programme manager, Bad Ischl – Salzkammergut 2024)
- Lucia Dubačová (director, Trenčín 2026)
- Oleksandra Yakubenko (independent cultural expert, Kyiv)
- *Moderated by Márton Méhes (EDA/Danube Cultural Cluster)*

The cultural sector has suffered a lot during the pandemic and it has been confronted with the climate crisis for years. Now we are facing a war in our Danubian neighborhood: Global crises are overlapping each other in these years.

Cities of culture are especially sensitive to crises. European Capitals of Culture (ECoCs) and candidate cities develop projects and concepts as answers to the pandemic and the climate issues. They have immediately expressed their solidarity with the Ukrainian creative sector. Such cities stand for close cooperation, dialogue and European values in general.

However, beside the global crises they also face different local social-cultural challenges they try to respond to. Some of these are of European or even global relevance too.



For the Veszprém-Balaton 2023 project it is one of the priorities to rely on **local communities** and to strengthen them (raise their capacities, provide funding, find spaces). This bottom up social-cultural structure development is at the same time the fundament of Europe. Veszprém would also be interested in more cooperation and exchange with other cultural cities in the Danube region.

Bad Ischl-Salzkammergut 2024 faces similar problems: Can you imagine a cultural capital without **institutional capacities**? Capacity building is therefore at the heart of their ECoC programme, as is the **reflection of history and traditions**. Reflection with the help of culture and arts is a Europe-wide need combating nationalism. In the Trenčín 2026 program plans we will find projects related to several global challenges such as **democracy, peace and climate**. Trenčín relies on the power of culture and arts to **emotionalize and mobilize people**, and to **change the perspective**.

St. Pölten is a good example for an ECoC candidate city that implements huge parts of the bidbook even without winning the title. One of these flagships is the new KinderKunstLabor positioning children and **young people as explorers and co-creators** (instead of becoming merely a "target group"). At the KinderKunstLabor youngsters will have the opportunity to reflect social and global challenges through arts - developing their own concepts for how to tackle the problems.

The Ukraine Capital of Culture Programme is a good example for a national capital of culture initiative before joining the ECoC programme. It is so tragic that the city of Mariupol was the last UA Capital of Culture in 2021 with a lot of innovative and creative programmes and collaboration activities. But culture is not "frozen" because of the war. It is more than ever important to actively keep the dialogue and the cooperation with the cultural sector in Ukraine. In addition to the presentations and the following dialogue about the legacy of large scale culture projects, the participants summarized that they would like **to learn more from each other** in the future, and are very much interested in investigating how **a new alliance of cultural cities in the Danube region** could look like.

(Dr Márton Méhes)

Monday 9 May, 11.30 – 13.30: Workshop 2 – Haus der Donau

“Financing instruments for cultural projects in the Danube region.”

The Corona pandemic has posed major financial challenges for many cultural institutions and practitioners. Now, during the reconstruction process, the question often arises as to which funding possibilities exist for future cultural projects. There are many regional, national, European, and international funds of different sizes and levels of complexity to choose from. In this workshop, different possibilities were presented, discussed and experiences exchanged – for example the new INTERREG B Danube Programme, the establishment of our Danube Small Project Fund and other funding instruments.



The workshop dealt with financing instruments for cultural projects in the Danube Region. The Corona pandemic has presented many cultural institutions and cultural practitioners with major financial challenges. Against this backdrop, many are asking what financing options are available for future cultural projects. There are several regional, national, European, and international funds of varying size and complexity to choose from. In this workshop, different possibilities were presented, discussed and experiences were exchanged. For this purpose, six experts from the field of cultural funding were invited, who were able to provide relevant contributions. The following is a brief summary of the short presentations:

1. Dr Volker Wedekind is a ministerial councillor in the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts in Baden-Württemberg (MWK) and thus head of department for the areas of art and music academies,

music promotion, protection of cultural assets and restitution, international cultural relations. He showed how the MWK acts as a strong supporter of the Danube Society promoting international cultural cooperation. One example of this is that the MWK is the initiator of the Danube Culture Conference series and has been supporting the annual event since 2013. Many of the EDA's activities are also made possible by the MWK's support. Mr. Wedekind presented examples of the MWK's strong commitment to the cultural landscape in the Danube region and also provided examples of funding Danube-related cultural projects that take place in cooperation with partners in Baden-Württemberg.

2. Irina Cozma is part of the PA3 team of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, which has been the main political basis for the cooperation of the diverse Danube Region since 2010. PA 3 stands for the area of culture and tourism. In this context, Irina represents the Directorate General for Regional Development and Infrastructure at the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration in Romania and spoke about the important aspect of Danube Region-wide communication during the workshop. The PA3 communication platform is open to project promoters for their publications and reaches a broad network of cultural practitioners in the Danube Region.
3. Adriana Nicula works as an Information, Communication and Selection Officer in the Regional Office for Cross-border Cooperation Romania-Ukraine and is involved in information activities, project evaluation, etc. at the level of the Joint Operational Programme Romania-Ukraine. In the context of the Ukraine crisis, it is an important concern to further promote culture, besides the humanitarian support. Adrian Nicula described in her presentation how Romanian-Ukrainian projects have been supported various projects through their funding programme: the renovation of theatres, the opening of new museums, the highlighting of common cultural heritage in border regions, etc. The partners of these projects established close contacts on an institutional and personal level that are basis for help when the war came.
4. Amir Kalajdzini is the representative of the National Contact Point for the INTERREG B Danube Region Programme at the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Tourism in Baden-Württemberg. He presented the Transnational INTERREG Danube Region Programme, a funding programme for stakeholders from the Danube Region who want to find common solutions to common challenges in the fields of economy and labour, climate change and environment, and culture and social affairs. He focused on funding opportunities for the programme's specific objective of strengthening the role of culture and tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation. He calls on interesting consortia with good projects for culture to prepare for the first call of the new programme that will be launched in the second half of 2022.
5. Dr. Ágnes Sebestyén is a programme officer in the education department of the Baden-Württemberg Stiftung in Germany. Her presentation focused on the funding opportunities offered by the Baden-Württemberg Stiftung within the framework of the Perspective Danube programme. The programme supports projects in the areas of education, culture and civil society with a focus on the Danube region and the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Due to current events, a call for humanitarian aid projects in connection with the war in Ukraine was also presented.
6. Annemarie Türk lives and works as a freelance curator and consultant in Vienna. She is an expert on cooperation in the fields of visual arts and literature in South Eastern Europe, especially with the European network TRADUKI, which she co-founded. She presented the many specific struggles for funding artists and cultural workers in the Danube region and gave important insights to the workshop participants.

In the discussion, various practical aspects about the different funding approaches were discussed. Among other things, the own contribution, the challenge of pre-financing and the accounting issues with some funding programmes were discussed. In summary, it can be stated that there are some funding pots in the Danube Region for the cultural sector. The challenges are often linked to the specific project ideas and the funding pot-related criteria.

(Paul F. Langer)

Monday 9 May, 11.30 – 13.30: Workshop 3 – Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm

“New European Bauhaus on the Danube”

The theme of the workshop was a reflection of the European Union's "New European Bauhaus" program from different perspectives of the Danube countries and their specific problems and issues. The workshop was a further step in the joint initiative of the Foundation Hochschule für Gestaltung HfG Ulm and the European Danube Academy with the aim of establishing a forum for the projection of the "New European Bauhaus" on the Danube region. The specific diversity of the Danube region offers itself particularly well for an implementation of the transformation processes of the spatial environment pursued by the New European Bauhaus.

The rooms of the historic HfG Ulm as a successor institution of the historic Bauhaus in Dessau presented an ideal conference venue. In the lively discussion with single contributions and the panel discussion the relevance of the European question for the Danube countries was underlined: the project manager of the NEB in the staff of the president von der Leyen, who was connected by zoom from Brussels, strongly encouraged to consequently follow the chosen path and to officially integrate the idea of a "New European Bauhaus on the Danube" into the EU initiative. The concept presented by Ute Meyer from Biberach University of Applied Sciences led into the panel discussion with Balint Bachmann (Rector of the Metropolitan University Budapest), Ilinca Constantinescu (architect and urbanist, Bucharest), Zdravko Kozinc (Iskriva Institute, Ljubljana) and Ivan Kucina (architect, Belgrade/Dessau), moderated by Ute Meyer. The panelists' contributions of words and pictures made it clear that the topic addressed is already present in many ways in the Danube region and thus no new territory is being entered - a transnational initiative therefore finds good conditions for successful implementation here. Corresponding further concepts can usefully build on this experience. The workshop ended with the presentation of the statement "New European Bauhaus on the Danube - an Initiative for Transformation by Design" by the project partners HfG Ulm, European Danube Academy and the Initiative urban.es.land of the Biberach University of Applied Sciences.

The positive feedback from Brussels and from the participants is a strong basis for the further activities of the project partners, which can build on the essential findings from the workshop: the sustained interest and the willingness to participate, the explicit desire for transnational cooperation and for professional exchange of experience as well as for already expressed ideas for concrete joint professional projects for the current European funding program framework within the EUSDR.

(Alexander Wetzig)



With:

- Bálint Bachmann (architect, rector Metropolitan University, Budapest)
- Ilinca Constantinescu (IDEILAGRAM Association, Bucharest)
- Ivan Kucina (Dessau Institute of Architecture DIA; Dessau/Belgrade/Rome)
- Ute Meyer (Biberach University of Applied Sciences HBC)
- Ruth Reichstein (Representative of IDEA 2 / European Commission, Brussels)
- Mateja Softić (Iskriva, Institute for creative development of local potentials, Ljubljana)
- *Moderated by Alexander Wetzig (chairman of the board of trustees of the Foundation "Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) Ulm"), Peter Langer (EDA), Dana Hoffmann (Ulm)*

Monday 9 May, 15.00, Stadthaus Ulm



Musical intervention by Sascha, Dascha and Oleksandr Klimas (Ukraine – violin-piano)

15.15 – Public Presentation of the Danube Small Project Fund for Culture (DSPF)

- Opening: Volker Wedekind (The Ministry of Science, Research and Arts Baden-Württemberg)
- Presentation of the DSPF: Paul F. Langer, Márton Méhes, Annemarie Türk

- Statements by the stakeholders, official signing of the founding agreement, presentation of the structure and the mechanisms of the DSPF

16.00 – **Presentation of the granted projects of the 1st Call of the DSPF:**

- "Between You and Me" (Klara Hahn, Regensburg, DE)
- "The Transformative Power of Open Spaces" (Serena Laker, St. Pölten, AT)
- "Living Cultural Treasures of the Danube" (Carmen Stadelhofer, Ulm, DE)
- "Danube bridges. Literature about the Danube at the Danube" (Lajos Parti Nagy, Budapest, HU)
- "Danube Day of Music 2022" (Dávid Zsoldos, Budapest, HU)



Official Launch Ceremony of the DSPF 2nd Call

Monday 9 May, 19.00, Ulmer Münster



Organ concert / charity event for Ukraine in the famous Ulm Minster for all conference participants.

Tuesday 10 May, Stadthaus Ulm

9.00 – Danube Café

With, despite and after covid: good examples and promising initiatives – selected Danube-wide projects and collaborations on the spot presented and discussed by project representatives. Conference participants were invited to join the roundtables.

Table 1: “Cultural Routes & Stories along the River”



- Transdanube Travel Stories (Simone Burster, Ulm, DE)
- Sultans’ Trail (Wolfgang Limbert, München, DE)
- Danubia Voyage (Gael Chaillat FR & Ramona Poenaru RO, Strasbourg)
- The new Central Museum of the Danube Swabians Ulm (Christian Glass, Ulm, DE)
- Empathy along the Danube (Oana Ionel, Bucharest, RO)
- Moderated by Peter Langer (European Danube Academy)

Table 2: “Transnational Festivals & Regional Platforms”



- Internationales Donaifest Ulm/Neu-Ulm (Sebastian Rihm, Ulm, DE)
- MOST – Bridge for Balkan Music (Barna Petrányi, Budapest, HU)
- Danube Dialogues Festival Novi Sad (Vesna Latinović, Novi Sad, RS)
- Danube Women Stories (Sabine Geller, Ulm, DE)
- DANUrB+ – DANube Urban Brand+ (Annamária Orbán, Budapest, HU)
- RESTART_4DANUBE (Laura Boanta & Alexandru Marin, Bucharest, RO)
- Moderated by Dezső Szabó (Liszt Institute – Hungarian Cultural Centre Stuttgart)

The table began with a short introduction by the moderator, which dealt with the situation of culture after COVID. Our table agreed that the cultural policy management of the particular countries considers the support of their own institutions, artists and creators who are very much affected by the crisis to be a priority, it is expected that partnership collaborations will become more difficult temporarily. Although, after the crisis, culture, cultural diplomacy, can play a greater role than ever before, primarily in restoring trust, both to strengthen people-to-people contacts and to strengthen relations between countries.

Afterwards, the participants demonstrated on their projects, how they match the challenges in the Danube region. It was a good mixture of two festivals (Danube dialogues contemporary art festival and the Danube international cultural festival) two interregional projects (Restart 4 Danube Boosting creative industry in urban regeneration for a stronger Danube region and DANUrB BRAND-A journey connecting communities) and two Danube-projects (Danube Women Stories and Most Project Bridge for Balkan Music). A very vivid discussion about perspectives followed the presentations. The main questions circulated about the future, primary whether there are any additional financing possibilities. The participants agreed that the personal character and approach would be more important. The questions, what is more valuable, to cooperate with a state organisation or with a company and about the social responsibility were also in the focus of our discussion.

We all shared the view, that one of the most important fields of rapid development are cultural industries. Therefore, it is necessary to define national policy in this field as well as local one; particularly when towns are concerned. Studies in cultural management overall the Europe are lacking international dimension. To have success in these activities of utmost importance is process of mapping of cultural resources. Evaluation is mostly lacking instruments to define which cultural initiatives and undertakings are most successful as well as to prove that national cultural policy is innovative, effective and efficient. This culturally much diversified region offer numerous cultural monuments, institutions, initiatives and projects as well as pleasant staying in many towns. Special efforts have been made to make these destinations presented in new media, in the last period efforts has been made to develop cultural tourism and creative industries.

In European countries one of the most important tools for cultural development, particularly when cities are concerned, is strategic planning. This tool has to be defined on national, regional and local level. At the same time it has been asked from cultural institutions and organization also to fulfil this task. Some of them have been focused on erecting new cultural infrastructure despite are they big or small in size like towns other, on contrary, biggest efforts had put on as many as possible cultural projects.

Finally, it is to underline, that in European countries one of the most important tools for cultural development, particularly when cities are concerned, is strategic planning. This tool has to be defined on national, regional and local level. At the same time, it has been asked from cultural institutions and organization also to fulfil this task.

(Dr. Dezső B. Szabó, Liszt Institute-Hungarian Cultural Center Stuttgart)

Table 3: “Artistic Cooperation & Residencies”



- Kunst am Strom – Art on the Stream (Yulian Stankulov, Sofia, BG)
- Geheimnisvoll – Mysterious (Swantje Volkmann, Ulm DE & Márton Méhes, Vienna, AT)
- MS-FUSION A.I.R. (Rainer Prohaska, Vienna, AT)
- Donumenta ART LAB (Regina Hellwig-Schmid, Regensburg, DE)
- Female Artists from the Region of Ulm (Martina Strilic, Galerie Tobias Schrade, Ulm, DE)
- Moderated by Martina Strilic (Galerie Tobias Schrade Ulm, DE)

Summary and perspective



Passing the relay to the host of the 10th International Danube Conference on Culture 2023 in Novi Sad, capital of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, Serbia.

According to all participants and the organisers, the 9th International Danube Conference on Culture was a successful and big step in further cultural cooperation along the Danube. The presentation of many interesting projects, the discussion in the workshops and roundtables led to new connections and a common spirit. Solidarity with our Ukrainian friends will be our constant obligation! Let's stay strong together!

See you again at the 10th – anniversary – International Danube Conference on Culture from April 22nd to 24th, 2023 in Novi Sad!

(Peter Langer)



Partners of the 9th Danube Conference on Culture in Ulm:

- Ministry of Science, Research and Arts Baden-Württemberg as initiator
- Donaubüro gGmbH Ulm/Neu-Ulm
- "Kulturreferentin" for the Danube region at DZM Ulm
- "Stiftung HfG" Foundation Ulm
- Danube Cultural Cluster
- Organised by the European Danube Academy Ulm (EDA)

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