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DANUBIAN SMALL & MEDIUM CITIES

Report of data collection of
good practices and teaching/
learning cross border
cooperation on Danube SMCs,
for transferring research
and innovation in continuing
education

02



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Report of data collection of good practices and teaching/ learning cross border cooperation on Danube SMCs, for transferring research and innovation in continuing education

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Creative Danube: Innovative Teaching for Inclusive Development in Small and Medium-Sized Danubian Cities

The Danubian_SMCs consortium is composed by 7 European organisations:

UAUIM	Universitatea de Arhitectură și Urbanism „Ion Mincu” din București (Lead partner)
BME	Budapesti Műszaki és Gazdaságtudományi Egyetem
UNS	Univerzitet U Novom Sadu
UBGD	Univerzitet U Beogradu
UWK	Universität Fur Weiterbildung Krems
STU	Slovenska Technicka Univerzita V Bratislave
TUW	Technische Universitaet Wien



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Creative Danube: Innovative Teaching for Inclusive Development Small and Medium-sized Danubian Cities project (2019-2022) dubbed Danubian_SMCs was funded through the European Union's Erasmus+ Programme and was implemented by an international consortium of seven universities from five Danube Region countries. The project was coordinated by the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism of Bucharest, Romania and included two universities from Austria (University for Continuing Education Krems – UWK and the Technical University of Vienna – TUWIEN), one from Slovakia (the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava – STU), one from Hungary (the Budapest University of Technology and Economics – BME), and two from Serbia (the University of Novi Sad – UNS and the University of Belgrade – UBGD). An important result of the project is this report, published in six languages – English, German, Slovak, Hungarian, Serbian, and Romanian. It presents good practices and teaching/learning cross-border cooperation in Danubian_SMCs for transferring research and innovation in continuing education.

The first part of the book is based on a 2021 survey that was carried out among lecturers in Architecture, Urban Planning, Landscape Architecture and Geography from the universities of the Danubian_SMCs partnership. Drawing on the written responses and data received, the first chapter summarizes the interdisciplinary and intercultural teaching practices of the seven universities in relation to the knowledge, understanding and planning of small and medium-sized towns along the Danube, highlighting the role of not only research and innovation, but also the hands-on training that deals with real places and real problems in the learning and teaching processes of higher education. The second chapter presents examples of good practice found in international projects implemented by Danubian municipalities that also bear relevance to education practices. Even though these examples come from various riparian towns on the Danube they include events, promenades, and places that display similarities. The third chapter focuses on the university and its students and faculty that take the initiative of working on the development of a small or medium-sized town on the Danube River. We look at how exploring the potential of a location, meeting and working together with the local communities through small-scale projects, workshops or various other activities take these initiatives to the next level.

The work started with the collection of good examples. Following careful discussions, a certain number of these were selected by the partnership to be processed in more detail using a standardized datasheet. This process,

in addition to the online meetings, was completed and finalized at the in-person meetings of project, called Intensive Programmes (IP), held in Vienna, Austria (2020), Sremski Karlovci, Serbia (2021), and Călărași, Romania (2022). In the book, each partner provides six examples via a short narrative description and illustration. These are grouped according to the topic they address rather than based on their geographic location. At the same time, clicking the hyperlinks in any of the 6-language report will point to further information available in that particular language, while the interactive map on the last page of the report includes all the English-language datasheets collected in the initial phase of the project that provide detailed information.

The Danubian_SMCs partnership hopes that this collection of good examples will be a source of inspiration and will raise awareness of the cohesive power of the Danube River not only among academics and students, but also in the ranks of communities of many small and medium-sized towns and cities. Furthermore, it is also paramount for all these actors to be mindful of the importance of learning about and preserving cultural diversity and the potential for development through international educational cooperation.

EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT OF DSMCs

UWK

TUW

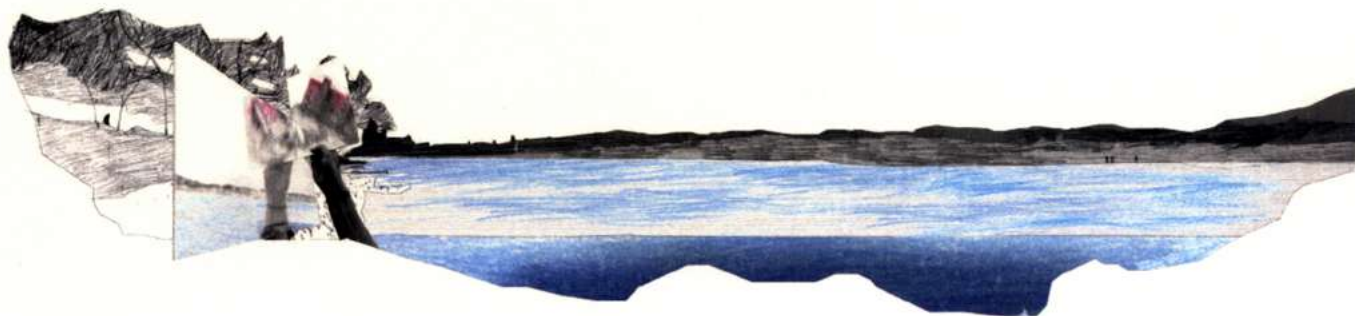
STU

BME

UNS

UBGD

UAUIM



Crossborder Danubian landscape in Esztergom and Stúrovo, drawing by L. Bedő. / BME

DSMCs PARTNERSHIP

The Danubian Small and Medium-Sized Cities (Danubian_SMCs) Erasmus+ project is based on the collaborative work of seven university partners from Krems, Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Novi Sad, Belgrade, and Bucharest, teaching future architects, landscape architects, and planners.

UWK / KREMS, AUSTRIA

[University for Continuing Education Krems](#)

[Faculty of Education, Arts and Architecture](#)
[Department for Building and Environment](#)

The University for Continuing Education Krems (UWK) is the leading institution for continuing education in Europe, and the only public university for continuing education within the German-speaking world. Since its foundation in 1995, the UWK has a deep impact on dealing with issues society faces. Approximately 8,000 students are currently enrolled in the UWK. The research is centered on contemporary and future societal challenges. In a transdisciplinary context we build bridges between basic research and practice-oriented application, between individual disciplines and in particular to society. The team involved in the Danubian_SMCs project comes from the Department for Building and Environment. The Department has distinguished itself with its focus on current social issues, combining expertise in ecology, economy, and culture to develop sustainable architecture and living environments. The Department's functional core competencies include energy-efficient, environmentally sensitive building optimization, blending constructional expertise with findings from human sciences, calculating and analysing lifecycle costs of buildings, and questions on how to preserve and develop UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Developing strategic measures

for managing historic cultural landscapes, settlements and infrastructures – including world heritage sites – and their authentic development are immediately integrated into the research conducted in the programs run by the Centre for Architectural Heritage and Infrastructure. Lately, the Department participated in projects related to Danube: e.g. **DANUrB** (Danube Urban Brand), **ComPaRe** (Complex Participatory Reconstruction of Urban Structures), **Living Danube Limes** (Valorising cultural heritage and fostering sustainable tourism by LIVING the common heritage on the DANUBE LIMES as basis for a cultural route).

UWK campus is in Krems's refurbished tobacco factory at the doorstep to the UNESCO cultural landscape of Wachau. / UWK





The main building of TU Wien, which also houses the Faculty of Architecture and Spatial Planning, is located in the heart of Vienna. / ©TU Wien/ Matthias Heisler

TUW / VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Technical University of Vienna
Faculty of Architecture and Planning
Institute of Spatial Planning
Research Unit of Local Planning + Spatial Simulation Lab

TU Wien is Austria's largest research and educational institution in the field of technology and natural sciences. More than 4,000 scientists are researching "technology for people" in five main research areas at eight faculties. The content of the studies offered is derived from the excellent research. More than 26,000 students in 53-degree programs benefit from this. With currently 7,400 enrolled students and around 250 staff in the scientific branch alone, the Faculty of Architecture and Planning is one of the largest architecture and planning faculties in Europe. Within the Institute of Spatial Planning, the RU of Local Planning, and the Spatial Simulation Lab (Simlab) are partners in the Danubian_SMCs project. Since the complexity of current urban and local planning issues requires adequate, modern, and innovative solutions for an efficient way to handle such challenges, their research focuses on strategic spatial planning and inward development of settlement systems as well as the further development and the implementation of visual support tools for complex planning tasks. The Simlab deals with tasks ranging from the development of decision support tools in energy planning and urban mining to the preparation and visualisation of migrant community data in various European cities. The interdisciplinary team of the Simlab holds competences in the fields of architecture, urban and spatial planning, GIS, web mapping, computer science and visual analytics. The team can draw on the experience gained in several EU-wide projects and has also been a partner in the DANUrB (Danube Urban Brand) project.

STU / BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava
Faculty of Architecture
Institute of Land Use and Urban Design

The Faculty of Architecture and Design is one of seven faculties at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. It is the largest and oldest school of architecture in Slovakia; the beginnings of architecture education date back to the academic year 1946/1947 and are associated with the study field Civil Engineering. The Faculty of Architecture and Design today is a creative and competitive institution with open-minded staff and successfully exploits international cooperation possibilities in research and education. Especially through the Erasmus+ mobility program, the faculty offers exchange possibilities with more

than 50 partner institutions all over Europe. Annually dozens of students of the FAD study abroad as well as international students arrive to study at the FAD.

At the Institute of Land Use and Urban Design, the emphasis is put onto the urban design processes as well as on more complex topics of land use and urban planning. The Institute actively develops the knowledge in the respective scientific disciplines and implements it into the professional profile of its graduates. These include also topics of dimensions for designing urban settlements and zones, urban economics, land use planning, and others that together create the conditions for a complex approach to research and education. The topic of Danube cities and regions overbridges the team members with different backgrounds, since multidisciplinary of the team is one of the Institute's benefits.

The institution of FAD STU is located in the city centre of Bratislava. / STU



BME / BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Budapest University of Technology and Economics
Faculty of Architecture
Department of Urban Planning and Design

The university was founded in 1782, and since it has been regarded as Hungary's number one technical higher education institution. Today, its eight faculties and 76 departments employ around 1200 teachers, and they provide nearly 5000 courses each semester.

The partner working on the DSMCs project is the Department of Urban Planning and Design at the Faculty of Architecture, which has been in existence since 1929. The Department's mission is to bring together the different disciplines involved in urban planning and design (architecture, landscape architecture, civil engineering, etc.) and in urban research (sociology, economy, policy, human geography, etc.), to introduce multidisciplinary thinking into architecture and to ensure the presence of architecture within urbanism. Architecture and the city are inseparable but have different roles in the educational structure: in the architectural courses (Integrated MSc, BSc, and MSc), the emphasis is on architectural and urban design, while in the doctoral and postgraduate courses, a more complex urban approach is dominant. At the BME Department of Urban Planning and Design, the development, planning, and research of the settlements along the Danube riverbanks present fundamental themes. In recent years, the department prepared a study on the relationship between Budapest and the water, several students' projects were focused on the future of Danubian cities, and the **DANUrB** (Danube Urban Brand) and **DANUrB+** Interreg projects are led by the Department.



The BME campus is in the historic centre of Budapest, by the Danube. / BME



The UNS central campus is located on the left bank of the Danube. / UNS

UNS / NOVI SAD, SERBIA

University of Novi Sad
Faculty of Technical Sciences
Department of Architecture and Urban Planning

The UNS is one of the largest educational and research centres in Central Europe, which belongs to the group of comprehensive universities, with nearly all fields of science and higher education. The Faculty of Technical Sciences ranks among the largest and most developed faculties in the region, established in 1960. It consists of 13 departments, 10 administrative services and 31 research centres, with over 15.000 students and 1.200 employees. The Department of Architecture and Urban Planning was founded in 1996, since the idea of researching this interdisciplinary field between technical and technological sciences, social sciences, humanities, and arts has been continually

developing until today. Classes are held at two study programs at undergraduate academic studies (Architecture; Scene Architecture, Techniques and Design), five study programs at Master academic studies (Architecture; Digital Technologies, Design and Production in Architecture; Regional Planning and Development; Scene Architecture and Design; and Scene Architecture and Technique), as well as two programs at doctoral academic studies – scientific doctoral studies (Architecture), and artistic doctoral studies (Scene Design). The activities of the Department are divided into teaching, research, and activities related to direct interventions and practical application of knowledge and experience in the context of modern everyday life. The team consists of several researchers with expertise spanning areas of architecture, urban planning and design, and regional planning and development. They gained experience in several European research projects such as Tempus, Cost, Jean Monnet, Erasmus+, and Interreg, and has also been a partner in the DANUrB (Danube Urban Brand).

UNBG / BELGRADE,
SERBIA

[University of Belgrade](#)
[Faculty of Architecture](#)
[Department of Urbanism](#)



The University of Belgrade is in the old city centre of Belgrade/ UNBG

The Faculty of Architecture and Design is one of seven faculties at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava. It is the largest and oldest school of architecture in Slovakia; the beginnings of architecture education date back to the academic year 1946/1947 and are associated with the study field Civil Engineering. The Faculty of Architecture and Design today is a creative and competitive institution with open-minded staff and successfully exploits international cooperation possibilities in research and education. Especially through the Erasmus+ mobility program, the faculty offers exchange possibilities with more than 50 partner institutions all over Europe. Annually dozens of students of the FAD study abroad as well as international students arrive to study at the FAD. At the Institute of Land Use and Urban Design, the emphasis is put onto the urban design processes as well as on more complex topics of land use and urban planning. The Institute actively develops the knowledge in the respective scientific disciplines and implements it into the professional profile of its graduates. These include also topics of dimensions for designing urban settlements and zones, urban economics, land use planning, and others that together create the conditions for a complex approach to research and education. The topic of Danube cities and regions overbridges the team members with different backgrounds, since multidisciplinary of the team is one of the Institute's benefits.

UAUIM / BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

["Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism from Bucharest](#)
[Faculty of Urban Planning](#)
[Urban and Landscape Design Department](#)

The UAUIM is the oldest and most important academic institution in the field of architecture and urbanism in Romania established in 1952. With more than 3800 students and almost 400 people in the academic and research staff, UAUIM closely collaborates with different other state institutions, regional and local authorities, academic institutions, NGOs, and other national and international research units. The UAUIM has been internationally recognized and is part of the major European inter-university networks as AESOP, RIBA, EAAE, UNISCAPE, and ECLAS that confirm the strong competences in the higher education of architecture, urbanism, and landscape. The University consists of three faculties: Faculty

of Architecture, Faculty of Urban Planning and Faculty of Interior Architecture. UAUIM is the Lead partner of [Danubian_SMCs](#) Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership with the member team from the Faculty of Urban Planning, Urban and Landscape Design Department. The faculty carries on 4 Bachelor level programs, 6 Urbanism Master Level Programs, Urbanism Doctoral School, and coordinates courses at Master of Science level in Landscape and Territory. The members of UAUIM, through Faculty of Urbanism staff form a teaching and research corpus who covers various fields of expertise related to territorial and urban planning: research studies and innovation in field of urban and regional development, morphology, landscape planning and research, economic development, ecology and environmental protection, social aspects, mobility, consultancy and legal expertise on National Planning Framework, spatial and urban development, territorial planning and development strategies, urban design, landscape planning and design, master program curricula.

The main façade of the old building of UAUIM in Bucharest urban core. / UAUIM

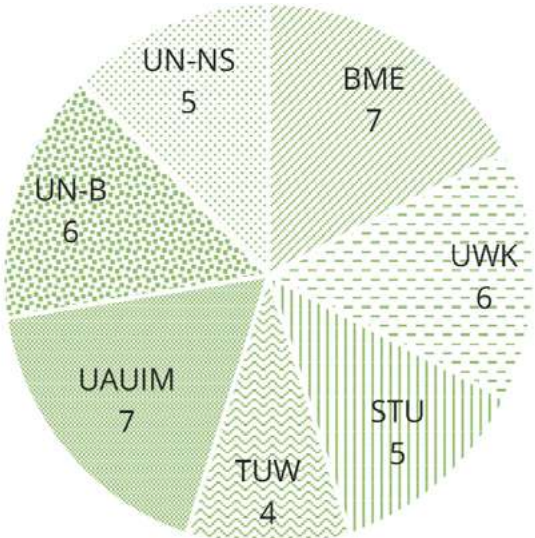


The online survey was completed in the summer of 2021 by people actively working in the Danubian_SMCs project in seven partner institutions - UWK, TUW, STU, BME, UNS, UBGD, UAUIM - in five countries - Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, and Romania. Their feedback is the basis for the presentation of the experiences in the educational environment and teaching methodology related to small and medium-sized towns along the Danube.

This first chapter follows the objectives of the Erasmus+ project and it is divided into three sub-themes: interdisciplinarity, interculturality, and the role of research and innovation in the learning and teaching processes of higher education.



English names of the departments involved in the Danubian_SMCs project.



Distribution of the number of teachers completing the survey per partner.

INTERDISCIPLINARITY

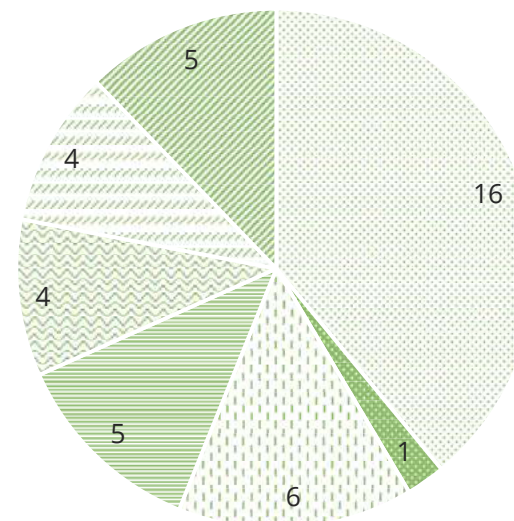
The Danubian_SMCs partnership is interdisciplinary in its composition. The names of the universities, faculties, and departments reflect the educational differences within the participating countries. Architecture and Urbanism has an independent university in Bucharest, meanwhile in most cases in Central and Eastern European countries, Architecture (Budapest), Planning (Vienna), or Architecture and Planning together (Bratislava) present a separate faculty of a technical university, or just a part of a technical faculty, e.g. in Novi Sad. The English language names of the departments and qualifications of the staff members, so teachers and researchers

involved in the Danubian_SMCs project reflect the interdisciplinarity of the project very well. At the same time, this diversity of the official name of departments also suggests that there is no international consensus on how to describe exactly this fields, the project-based higher education of urban issues. On the one hand, there is the holistic and multidisciplinary general term 'urbanism', while on the other hand, word combinations try to convey the discipline, e.g., architecture and urbanism, urban design and urban planning, building and environment, urban design and landscape architecture, urban planning and design, etc.

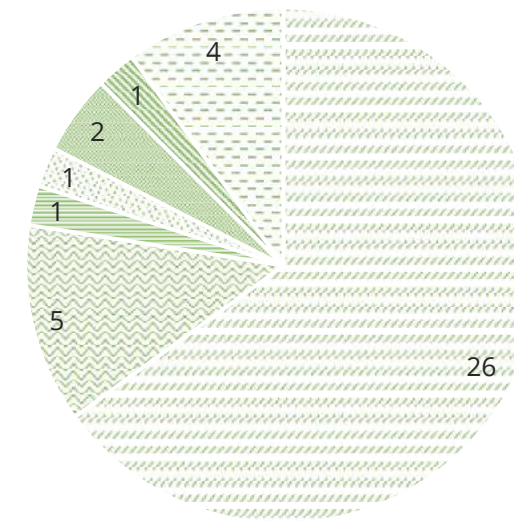
The interdisciplinary approach is an obligation when teaching urban topics, so the subject of medium-sized and small towns along the Danube demands this method as well. Because the objective is to discover, understand, and provide tools for developing not only the built but also the social environment. But the higher education system and the academic context have traditionally been rigidly organised by disciplines structured, but thanks to international projects and some national initiatives, there are increasingly positive changes towards interdisciplinarity: inter-faculty or inter-departmental cooperation, involvement of visiting scholars, external experts, or stakeholders facilitating this process.



North of Budapest, Serbs, Croats, Germans, Hungarians, and Slovaks lived together in Szentendre. / BME



English names of the faculties participating in the Danubian_SMCs project (with number of staff in the survey). Architecture (16: BME, UBGD, UAUIM,), Economics and Social Sciences (1: BME), Education, Arts and Architecture (6: UWK), Architecture and Design (5: STU), Architecture and Spatial Planning (4: TUW), Urban Planning (4: UAUIM), Engineering (5: UNS).



Qualifications of academics and researchers involved in the Danubian_SMCs project: the Danubian_SMCs project participants are architects (26), some planners with a previous degree in architecture (5) or geography (4), and others arrive from other urban disciplines like civil engineering (2), urban geography (1+1) or economics (1).

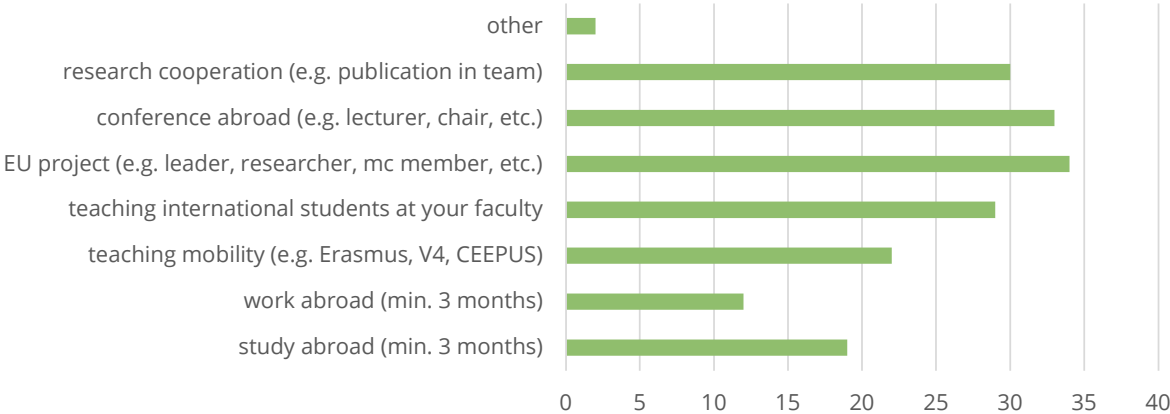
INTERCULTURALITY

The Danube is the most international river in the world. It crosses Europe from the Black Forest to the Black Sea, passing through ten countries on its nearly 3,000-kilometre journey: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and Moldova, all of them Danube countries in different ways. As Claudio Magris writes in his novel "Danube" (1986, English edition 1989, p18): "The river has many names.

Among some peoples the words Danube and Ister were used respectively for the upper and lower courses, but sometimes for the entire length. Pliny, Strabo and Ptolemy wondered where the one ended and the other began: maybe in Illyria, or at the Iron Gates. The river, which Ovid called "bisnominis" or double-named, draws the German culture, with its dream of an Odyssey of the spirit, towards the east, mingling it with other cultures in countless hybrid metamorphoses in which it finds its fulfilment and its fall."

Currently, almost 40% of the Danube's total length is a border river. After the German-speaking (German and Austrian) upper parts, the mixing of cultures and languages intensifies. Most of the cities along the river are intercultural, and the two banks opposite each other are home to similar or characteristically different cultures and languages. In the past, multilingualism was a given necessity and opportunity here.

In the universities of the Danubian_SMCs partnership, the language of instruction has been the local language since the second half of the 19th century, whether German, Slovak, Hungarian, Serbian, or Romanian. But in the 21st century, the need and process of internationalisation of higher education have led to an increasing number of exchange students, as consequence, not only English-language courses but also some full programs in English were introduced. Simultaneously, research and international cooperation use academic English to communicate, present, and publish, so more and more academic publications are prepared in English on and in the Danube region, as well. English became the language of networking, and its common use allows universities to discover each other, cooperate in various European Union projects, and formulate shared future educational and research goals.



International experiences of academics and researchers involved in the Danubian_SMCs project.

But the language is the culture itself. That is why local languages still have and will always have an important role along the Danube. Obviously, everyone expresses themselves more nuanced in their native language, and in this part of Europe, most locals do not understand English. Local university teachers and researchers have a dual responsibility: to preserve, transmit, and develop knowledge-based on local culture and language, but at the same time, to integrate it directly into the international teaching and learning process, into the international scientific and professional discourse.

Multilingualism is an essential skill in the Danubian_SMCs partnership. In Central and Eastern European universities, a prerequisite for teaching and research positions is a good command of English and a second foreign language in addition to the local language. The Slavic people (e.g., from Serbia and Slovakia) understand each other's easily, or several participants speak German or Western European Latin languages well. But it is sure that all academics who are open to international cooperation are also receptive to the diversity of cultures, and here in the Danubian_SMCs project, they are looking for a "Danubian" common language, opportunities for intercultural dialogue and mutual learning and teaching.

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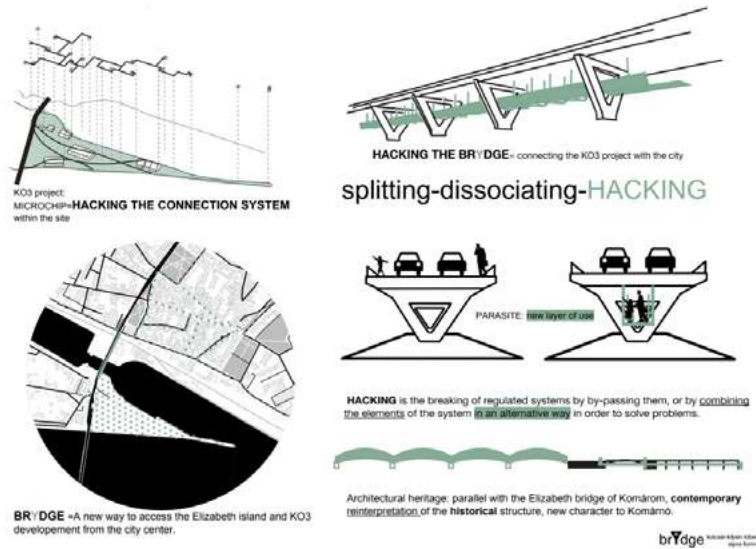


Based on scientific research, professional assignments, teaching experience, and personal experiences, the Danubian_SMCS project has developed a complex data collection (survey, data sheets, references), to which all seven university partners contributed with almost equal amounts of information. The small and medium-sized towns along the Danube are an excellent platform for the introduction of methodological innovations in the education of architects, landscape architects, and urban planners.



A pie chart illustrating the frequency of app usage. The chart is divided into three segments: a small segment with diagonal green lines labeled '8', a large segment with a dense green dot pattern labeled '18', and a medium segment with a sparse green dot pattern labeled '14'.

Frequency	Count
Often	8
Sometimes	14
Rarely	18



Urban design project between Komárom, Hungary and Komárno, Slovakia. / BME

RESEARCH BASED PLANNING

The essence of the research-based planning educational method is to integrate research into the planning process. Both theoretical qualitative research based on literature and practical quantitative research collecting and evaluating data are useful tools for teaching and learning. This method encourages independent thinking and places the locally attached contemporary problem in a wider context, open toward international and timeless professional knowledge. These new dimensions make students aware of the value and shortcomings of their own research and planning skills and encourage them to explore and develop. In addition, the research contributes to improving the quality of designs. The Danube provides an exciting setting for this process because the river connects places but also helps to raise awareness of the local differences behind similar riverbank situations. The Danubian_SMCs partnership uses this teaching and learning method in planning and design studios.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY

Urban studies is a necessarily multidisciplinary field, but academic and university systems mainly operate along strict disciplinary lines. Different departments (e.g. in Belgrade), faculties (e.g. Bucharest), or even universities (e.g. Budapest) teach architects, landscape architects, and urban planners separately. On the teaching side, multidisciplinary is more or less present, but not among students, as there is generally no cooperation between departments, faculties, or universities. Optional courses, workshops, summer schools, training courses, study trips, etc. provide a real opportunity to bring disciplines closer together. The intensive programs of the Danubian_SMCs partnership have also allowed learning about the values and difficulties of multidisciplinary teamwork.

INTERNATIONALITY

Internationalisation is an educational management method based on interculturality and acceptance of cultural diversity. It models the world of global development and design process in an educational context. During the Danubian_SMCs project, internationality manifests itself in different forms in the seven universities. The German or English language courses at the Austrian universities (UWK, TUW) attract many foreign visiting lecturers and students who study in joint courses. In other partner universities, e.g. in Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, and Romania, almost all lecturers are local. In Budapest (BME), an English-language course in architecture has been running since 1983, but foreign students study separately from Hungarians. At several universities, foreign exchange students work together with local students, even using several languages simultaneously (UBGD, UAUIM, UNS, STU). In addition, every partner has experiments in teaching methodology that make international presentations, workshops, and exhibitions a compulsory part of the course. The Danubian small and medium-sized cities project offers a good opportunity to facilitate the internationalization of the partner universities.

Vukovar Centre, Croatia / BME



EXIT

Each partner university operates according to its own educational system. The international credit system is supposed to facilitate interoperability, but in reality, it works well only in a few institutions and for a few students, because old patterns remain, expectations, opportunities, and requirements differ. University education should be a compulsory part of providing an international experience to explore other contexts: cities, people, and other educational methods in an organised way. Most students in post-socialist European countries do not have the opportunity to realise an exchange, to participate in a workshop, nor are their teachers motivated to do this extra work without recognition. It is therefore important to set up various international funding programs encouraging cross-border regional or thematic cooperation. All the trainers who completed the Danubian_SMCs survey believe in this teaching and learning method of complementing everyday education and deepening knowledge. For those who want to plan and design liveable and lovable urban environments, so for future architects, landscape architects, and planners, these events meeting and working with others outside the university could be milestones during the education process. Danubian_SMCs partnership had several design studios with study trip and fieldwork in a small or medium-sized Danubian city, and it organised three international workshops: an online one because of the Covid, but two in person, in Novi Sad/Sremski Karlovci in 2021 and in Calarasi in 2022.

Site visit in Călărași, 2021. / UAUIM



Public event at the end of the students' workshop, Răckeve riverbank, 2022.
/ BME

INVOLVEMENT

There is a particular learning and teaching value when local professionals and stakeholders are involved in the implementation process of urban research, planning, and actions. In this way, those who come from the university are not only passive observers, mediators, or designers, but also get to know the real processes and actors that shape and use the place every day. Students and teachers step outside the walls of the university, enter the real world, approach the profession, even develop a connection with the local actors and users, or find a relevant professional topic for further learning/teaching (for example, in the case of Danubian_SMCs, the role of water in the urban environment, shrinking cities, rehabilitation of industrial sites, renaturalisation, etc.).

For the locals, these encounters can also be fruitful, as young external “eyes” from far away can see, appreciate, and plan differently from what they are already familiar with. As consequence, they can get new ideas and new perspectives, and start to think a little more responsibly about the values and future development potentials of their own Danube commune. Maybe some young local people, based on this exchange experience, decide to study architecture and urbanism, or just become more active in the local development process. In this way, the involvement is reciprocal, the participants reassess their own knowledge, bring their theoretical and practical worlds into contact, and experience a diversity of perspectives and approaches. However, every participant may become more accepting and open-minded as a result of the shared experience.

Chapters 2 and 3 of this book, divided into three sub-themes, present good practices of Danube municipalities, events, promenades, and places with international and educational content. On the other hand, it presents good examples of university partnerships in education, plans, workshops, and on-site actions, most of which are already characterised by exit and involvement. In addition to the standardized, summarising and evaluative descriptions of this book, the interactive map of the Danubian_SMCs project makes available more detailed background material (datasheets) in English produced by the DSMCs partners.



The DSMCs project results in three coordinated books. The first one is a comparative study presenting and evaluating the teaching/ learning methods of the most relevant existing university courses of the partnership. The second one, summarises national and international good practices from two different points of view: on one hand, it presents good practices of Danubian municipalities with international and/or educational content, and on the other hand, the university partnership collects educational examples related to Danubian small and medium-sized cities.



The objective is to transfer this knowledge to larger local communities, to promote mutual understanding, to establish new links or to strengthen existing ones between educational institutions and municipalities of DSMCs. To achieve this goal this book is translated and published in six languages: English, German, Slovak, Hungarian, Serb, and Romanian. The third book is based on the two others and on the shared experience of DSMCs Intensive Programmes to propose a plan for a potential future joint training program of the Erasmus+ partnership on DSMCs.



GOOD PRACTICES OF DSMCs

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DANUrB workshop in Backa Palanka, 2018. / BME

EVENTS

In addition to the well-known festivals of the major cities along the Danube (e.g. Vienna: Danube Island Festival, Budapest: Sziget, Novi Sad: Exit, etc.), also many small and medium-sized cities organize international events. The DSMCs partnership presents some of these, where not only the international dimension is of particular importance, but also the chosen theme makes the event educational and awareness-raising. Besides the festivals in border towns such as Passau, Komárom, Golubac, and Călărași, the Danube River itself carries a message of multinational coexistence. This is evidenced by the **Busó festivity of the Šokac people in Mohács** (Hungary), a masked end-of-winter carnival custom, held since the end of the 18th century, which in 2009 was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Since 1988, the International Danube Festival in Ulm and since 1994 the international **Danube Days** have been trying to rediscover and perpetuate the values of the Danube and will hopefully encourage the creation of new ones.

EUROPEAN WEEKS, PASSAU / GERMANY & AUSTRIA

Passau, the German-Austrian border town where the Inn, the Ilz, and the Danube meet, has been hosting a classical music festival since 1952. The so-called **European Weeks** has been the first festival dedicated to mutual European exchange after World War II, serving to build bridges between cultures ever since. In the decades of the Cold War, it was one of the few festivals where creative artists from a politically divided Europe could

meet. Besides concerts and performances, the European Week also involves local educational institutions and organisations, such as the music school of Passau, where pupils can exchange and have joint rehearsals with internationally renowned musicians and artists abroad. The University of Passau is also involved in the festival in various initiatives, such as the mobile stage "SouNdBlaster" designed by students, or by the announcement of a prize awarded for the best thesis dealing with the sustainability goals of the UN, granted during the European Weeks.

Passau's historic centre on the Danube. / pixabay





Rope pulling on the Elisabeth Bridge connecting two countries and two cities. / BME

KOMÁROM DAYS / HUNGARY & SLOVAKIA

Facing each other on the banks of the Danube are Komárom (Hungary) and the historic North Komárom (Komárno, Slovakia), which have been separated by the river as a border since 1920. The two towns have been organising a joint **street running race** since 1975 and have hosted the **Komárom Days** every spring since 1992. A shared history and future are celebrated in the towns' public squares, on the banks of the Danube, and in the fortresses. The Elisabeth Bridge on the Danube is a prominent venue for events, a symbol of connectivity, a place for running races, tug-of-war, the strongest man of Komárom competition, and an evening light show. The young people of the "twin cities" meet at numerous exhibitions and events that strengthen multilingual and multicultural values, such as the "Dobré slovo" (Good Word) language competition, a history quiz, or a joint concert of the students at local music schools. Over the years, the event has grown beyond a local event of the two cities and attracts more and more visitors from the regions along the Danube.

FESTIVAL OF HISTORY FILMS, GOLUBAC / SERBIA

Golubac, Serbia, on the Serbian-Romanian border at the Iron Gate, launched its International Festival of Historical Films in 2018. Its title, "**Under the surface**", refers to the Danube and the interweaving of historical layers and events. The event aims to attract international filmmakers and audiences interested in the history of the Iron Gate region, and to bring local natural and cultural heritage into the international discourse through the event. The festival is linked to education in several ways: on the one hand, it presents the culture of the Danube in a new way through the actors and tools of the film industry in

the age of images, while, on the other hand, the historical films, which are in the focus, aim to reveal the lost or forgotten heritage of the past. In Golubac, on the border between the middle and lower Danube, this is of great importance, as the scientific and artistic presentation of the past offers many new opportunities for the future.

MUSIC FESTIVAL, CĂLĂRAȘI / ROMANIA

In 2018, a new music festival initiative, **Three Smoked Olives** (3SO), has chosen a special location: an island on the Danube, on the border between Romania and Bulgaria, between Călărași and Silistra. It is a world shaped and shaped by water, where nature is still the Lord: the Danube surrounds it, the blue sky is endless, the place is inhabited by seagulls, and the sandy beach is constantly changing. It is in this untouched world that the electronic music festival will arrive for a few days. In 2020, students from the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism in Bucharest held a workshop to teach what and how to build shelters, furniture, etc. that can be dismantled or quickly decomposed, so that after the festival the place can be returned to nature without human traces. Participants' memories preserve the natural, human, and musical experience of the 3SO festival.



Spectators at the festival of history films. / UBGD

In the early morning on the 3SO Danube Island. / UAUIM





Ulm at the Danube. / pixabay

DANUBE FESTIVAL, NEU-ULM AND ULM / GERMANY

The twin cities Ulm and Neu Ulm on the Danube in Germany have been home to a creative arts festival every two years since 1988. The “Internationales Donaufest” (International Danube Festival) aims to bring together the cultures of the Danube regions. Exhibitions, performances, concerts, and craft fairs all give a sense of the diversity of the Danube region to the hundreds of thousands of visitors. The “We are Europe” international youth camp is also part of the event, where professional artists, drama teachers, and young scientists host various workshops on cultural topics of relevance along the Danube. The 80 participants from different countries show on a small-scale, how living together and cross-cultural exchange can work in real life, supplementing the cultural dimension of the festival with political and societal aspects.



The logo of the Szigetzug Danube Days in 2021. / BME

SZIGETZUG DANUBE DAYS / HUNGARY

Ráckeve is a small multi-ethnic (Hungarian, Serbian, German) town located 45km south of Budapest on Csepel Island. It is the centre of the Szigetzug sub-region, where the Szigetzug Danube Days are organised from 2018 onwards by local organisations, at the initiative of the Interreg DANURB project. Exhibitions, underwater archaeological research, children’s activities, music and dance events will raise awareness of the Danube heritage and the power of cooperation among the inhabitants and visitors. BME students have also been involved in the preparations for the festival, presenting their design projects and street furniture on the Danube promenade. It was here that the board game “DANURBanity” was used for the first time, applying gamification as an effective tool for education and community building, to convey the common and local values of the Danube to people of all ages in a playful way.

Aerial view of Ráckeve. / BME



CSILIZKÖZ'S LOCAL MARKET, ŇÁRAD / SLOVAKIA

In 2018, the **Traditional Farmer's Market of Csilizköz** was launched by the Summer Farmers. Through the sale of local agricultural products, they strengthen their own identity, support the local artisanal producers and provide a new opportunity to bring together the wider Danube region. The market is now held at least four times a year and attracts more than 3,000 visitors from the Slovak and Hungarian sides of the Danube. The success of the market has also acted as a catalyst for new initiatives to raise awareness of the past and present development potential of this traditionally agricultural area on the Danube, linked to the eco-economy. Ňárad is one of the Danube villages that have been populated in recent years by people moving to the Bratislava area, so community building based on local values is an important message for them too.

Market feeling in Ňárad. / STU



WATERSPORT CAMP, SMEDEREVO / SERBIA

The Danube is the world's most transnational river, crossing 10 countries and almost 40% of its total length is a border between countries. Since 2007, the **EU's Interreg Cross-Border programme** has supported thousands of cross-border cooperation projects, many of which have been along the Danube between Hungary and Slovakia, Serbia and Croatia, Serbia and Romania, and Romania and Bulgaria. Smederevo in Serbia and Ghilad in Romania ran a programme for young people with a healthy lifestyle message based on water sports. As part of the project activities, international **summer sports camp** on the Danube was organised. In addition to children's leisure activities, sports competitions, and cultural programmes, teachers, volunteers, and decision-makers met to reflect together on how to promote healthy lifestyles and how to base everyday well-being on physical activities. The natural assets of small and medium-sized towns along the Danube can provide a strong backdrop for this.

Children in the swimming pool of Smederevo. / UBGD



Visit at the Smederevo Fortress. / UBGD



Sandy islands near Călărași. / UAUIM

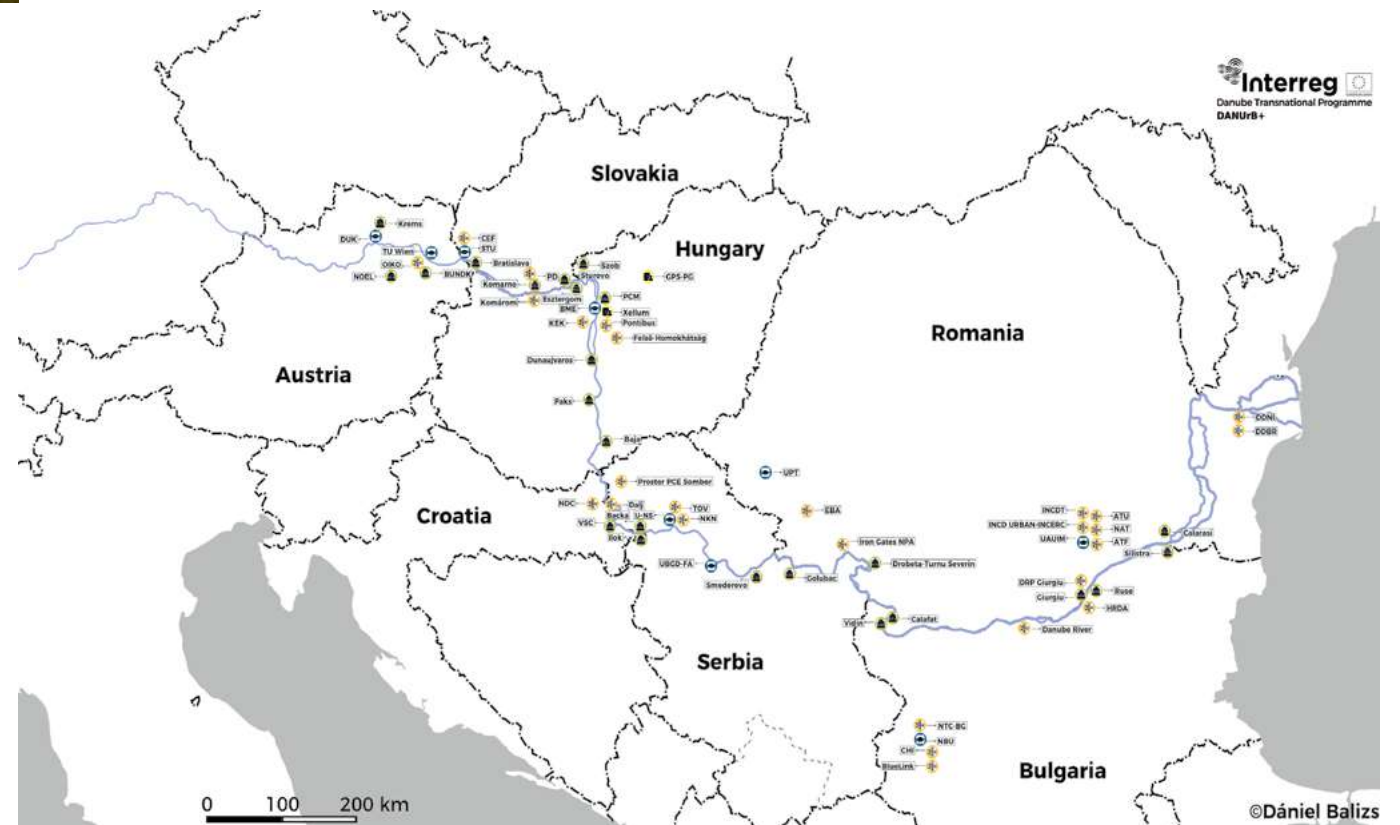
PROMENADES

Festivals are linked to a specific location or a smaller area, they extend in time and usually last a few days in a year. In contrast, good examples, called promenades, are spread out along the Danube and will hopefully prove to be long-term initiatives that strengthen the identity of the communities living by the Danube. Since the enlargement of the European Union, several programmes have been launched to promote international cooperation in support of Danube-related developments, such as improving the conditions for transport across the river (bridges, anchorages), on the river (boating, rowing, swimming) or along the river (by car, bicycle, on foot). In addition to changing the physical environment, “mental bridge-building” is also becoming increasingly important. Participants of the DSMCs Erasmus+ programme were involved as partners in the Interreg Danube projects **DANUrB** (2017-19) and **DANUrB+** (2020-22), and are working on the development of a Danube brand, a cultural “promenade” along the river, based on shared values and similar professional and educational tasks.

“Promenades” examples collected by the Danube Small and Medium Cities (DSMCs) partnership present on-the-water-options: crossings between two countries (Bač - Vukovar), or along the river for boats (Wake up!), rowers (Linz-Ottensheim), swimmers (Călărași) and fishes (Wilhering).

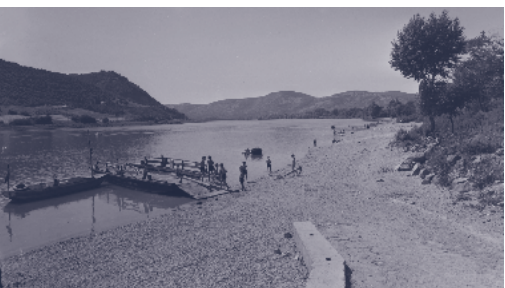
Another group of promenades stay on the riverbanks: developing near-shore tourism opportunities in two countries (Central Danube Tour), bringing together residents of a multi-ethnic region, or introducing young people to the world of the Danube (Regensburg).

The DANUrB partnership developing since 2017. / BME





The "Golubica" ferry between Bač (Serbia) and Vukovar (Croatia). / UNS



Ferry between Visegrád and Nagymaros (Hungary) in 1955. / Fortepan/UVATERV

DANUBE FERRIES, BAČ – VUKOVAR / SERBIA & CROATIA

There are hundreds of ferry crossings on the Danube, almost half of which are car ferries, the rest are open only to pedestrians and cyclists. In the 21st century, there seems to be less and less reason to use them, even though they offer a timeless, on-the-water experience. There are places on the Danube that can only be approached in this way, and there are municipalities where the ferry crossing has not only a real but also a symbolic cohesive force.

Before the Yugoslav Wars (1991-2001), a ferry crossing operated between Bač in Serbia and Vukovar in Croatia. The revival of family, friendship, and trade links between the two sides of the Danube was helped by a Dutch initiative in 2009, the "Golubica" (pigeon) ferry. However, in 2013, when Croatia became a member of the European Union, the Danube became a border zone not only between two countries but also between EU and non-EU territories, with tighter controls. Due to unresolved administrative problems, the possibility to cross the Danube officially ceased again, but Bač and Vukovar try to manage to ensure that their residents could continue to use the ferry.

Development of international passenger ship stations in Serbia. / UNS



„AWAKE THE DANUBE », CRUISE ON THE RIVER / SERBIA

Based on the UN programme, the development of infrastructure for Danube transport - river transport and local and international navigation - was launched in Serbia in 2017. The "Awake the Danube" project initiated setting up the passenger terminals in 11 municipalities on the Serbian stretch of the Danube, most of which are small or medium-sized towns (Apatin, Sremski Karlovci, Smederevo, Golubac, Donji Milanovic, Kladovo), and some of them are border towns. The project also introduced new opportunities for the natural and cultural heritage promotion, tourism, and development. For example, setting up the floating structure in Sremski Karlovci is accompanied by the infrastructural work on the improvement of accessibility to the Danube bank, and reconstruction of the railway line and station. The city of Sremski Karlovci is also a venue for university courses in urban architecture and international workshops, where future architects face exciting challenges in weaving together the cultural and natural values of the historic city core, the wine region, and the Danube area. In addition, water transport and tourism development linked to the river is of particular importance not only for the Danube municipalities but also for the wider region. It is hoped that they will make the multi-ethnic Central Danube region better known, more attractive, and more visited.

REGATTA, OTTENSHEIM / AUSTRIA

Rowing on the Danube connects settlements in space and time, and water tours promenade along the whole river or smaller stretches of it. It is a shared heritage, a shared opportunity that transcends borders. Work, fun, even competition. The Danube is the venue of many river regattas. The special feature of Linz-Ottensheim is that its two-kilometre-long rowing course was created in a branch of the Danube that was closed off due to the construction of the local Danube hydroelectric power station. It has a service infrastructure suitable for rowing competitions and hosted the first international Regatta in 1990 and the World Rowing Championships in 1997 and 2019. A foundation runs the facility and the regattas. The reuse of the site is exemplary, as a natural landscape drastically transformed by human activity due to an industrial development based on renewable energy can provide valuable environmental quality and uses. It also helps the cooperation and international visibility of the towns on both sides of the Danube, as the small town of Ottensheim, where the Danube branch and the hydroelectric power station are located, is co-naming the Regatta with the nearby city of Linz.

Ottensheim / Google Earth





Summertime at Samskara Beach on the Danube. / UAUIM

DANUBE BEACHES, CĂLĂRAȘI / ROMANIA

In contemporary urban development, the so-called blue infrastructure, water, is becoming increasingly important. The Danube is a huge river, flowing for thousands of kilometres. In some parts, its natural features (sand reefs) or human interventions (built islands, beaches) allow bathing on the Danube. In recent years, changes in the use of the riverbanks, the transformation of industrial activity, the introduction of more environmentally friendly wastewater treatment technologies, etc. have led to an improvement in water quality. More and more municipalities along the Danube are designating and operating open beaches, but private investors have also started to emerge. The sandy beaches of Călărași on the Lower Danube stretch, which have been used for decades, are attracting more and more users, not only from the city but also from the surrounding area and even from Bucharest, 120 km away. The **Samskara-Beach** (former Plaja Mare, the “Big Beach”) is one of the beaches developed and operated by a private company and is a good example of how a local quality intervention can help to revalue the wider natural and municipal environment, raise awareness of local heritage and stimulate the economy.



Stations of the Central Danube Tour. / UNS

FISH MIGRATION ROUTE, OTTENSHEIM-WILHERING / AUSTRIA

The longest artificial fish migration route in Europe is a valuable example from an ecological, economic, spatial planning, nature, and landscape conservation point of view. In accordance with the guidelines of the **International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River** (ICPDR), the LIFE+ programme helped to build a 14 km long canal bypassing the Ottensheim hydroelectric power station to mitigate its environmental and ecological impact. Six monitoring points will provide data on the use and quality of the fishway so that it can be researched, maintained, or even used to provide knowledge on other river sections of this man-made habitat.

CENTRAL DANUBE TOUR / SERBIA & CROATIA

Eastern Croatia and Western Serbia are trying to present themselves as a single tourism development product on the international market as the “**Central Danube Tour**”, with its multi-ethnic heritage and natural and cultural attractions. It offers nine thematic promenades along the Danube and thus also across the border between the two countries, supports the organisation and implementation of joint events, and promotes the region. This EU-funded cross-border Interreg programme has been designed to develop a new type of “slow” tourism, focusing on local values: unspoilt landscapes, healthy lifestyles, local traditions, and food.



Kisoroszi, the most beautiful Danubian beach in Hungary. / BME

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Skyline of the crossborder twin cities, Komárno (SK) and Komárom (H). / BME

PLACES

The events are time-bound, the promenades link places, the places are immovably fixed to a point on the Danube. Along the Danube, there are hundreds of settlements, towns, cities, and villages. The places have different scales, each has a unique history, character, and potential for the river as a whole (Paks). At a closer look, the individual parts of the settlements are also diverse (campus in Gabčíkovo), but it is most of all their small components, the buildings and the immediate surroundings of the buildings (Water Power Station, Paper Mill, Synagogue) that people perceive and experience. There is much to discover along the Danube. On the Hungarian section of the river, first-year architecture students present their “ready-made” houses, talk about places, and dream of the future.



Ybbs-Persenbeug hydroelectric power station. Austria / VERBUND, UWK

POWER PLANT TOURS, YBBS AN DER DONAU / AUSTRIA

In Austria, the Danube Cycling Route passes through many exciting places, one of which is the Ybbs-Persenbeug hydroelectric power station, which has been open to visitors since 2006. The huge industrial site attracts not only tourists but also many school groups: tours of the museum and the power plant, interactive demonstrations, and treasure hunts are part of the programme. It is an example of environmental, economic, and social sustainability, where the urban and natural landscape, inherited but constantly reshaped by man, coexists in an exemplary way. The hydroelectric power plant uses river water as a renewable energy source and, beyond its basic function as an industrial building, it is a place of learning and entertainment for visitors.

Site visit at the Wachau Region. / UWK



REFUGEE CAMP, GABČÍKOVO / SLOVAKIA

In 2015, during the European migrant crisis, the Slovak Technical University (STU) offered its campus in Gabčíkovo to asylum seekers. However, most of the arrivals tried to settle in neighbouring Austria, and the buildings were eventually offered to the Austrian government. For two years, Syrian families, nearly 1200 people, populated the university campus, waiting for the official Austrian decision on refugee status. The situation had no negative impact on education, and the university implemented an internationally outstanding model of solidarity in a small town near the Danube border.

Accommodation building in Gabčíkovo. / STU



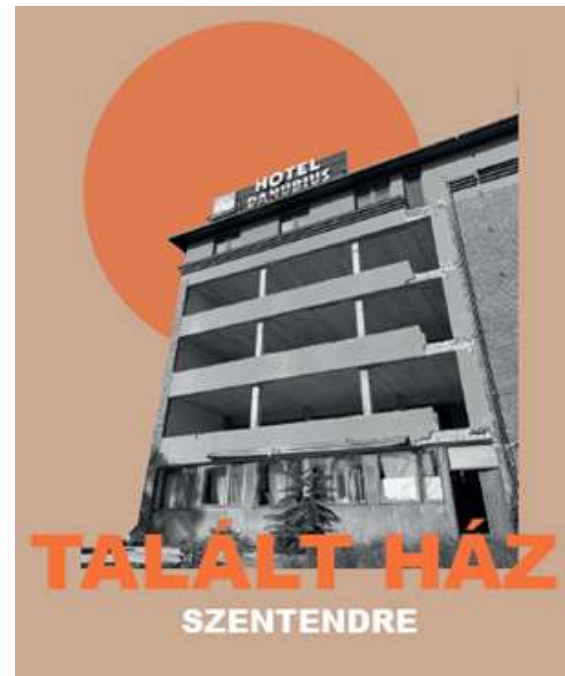
PAPER MILL, COMANA-GIURGIU / ROMANIA

Papermaking is a water-intensive process, so there were many paper mills along the Danube, where the power of water was used to prepare and grind the raw material (for example, the [Hungarian Paper Museum](#) in Dunaújváros). Building on this tradition, the [Paper Mill Foundation](#) in Comana, Romania, has aimed to pass on local rural craftsmanship. Since 2012, the visitor centre has been a place to learn and practice the crafts of bookmaking (handmade paper, book printing, and bookbinding) and construction (weaving with hand looms, basket weaving, forging, pottery, woodworking, traditional cooking, baking, etc.). Workshops and summer camps for children and adults are organised alongside the museum, raising awareness of these intangible cultural values through teaching and learning about heritage.



The Paper Mill in Comana. / UAUIM

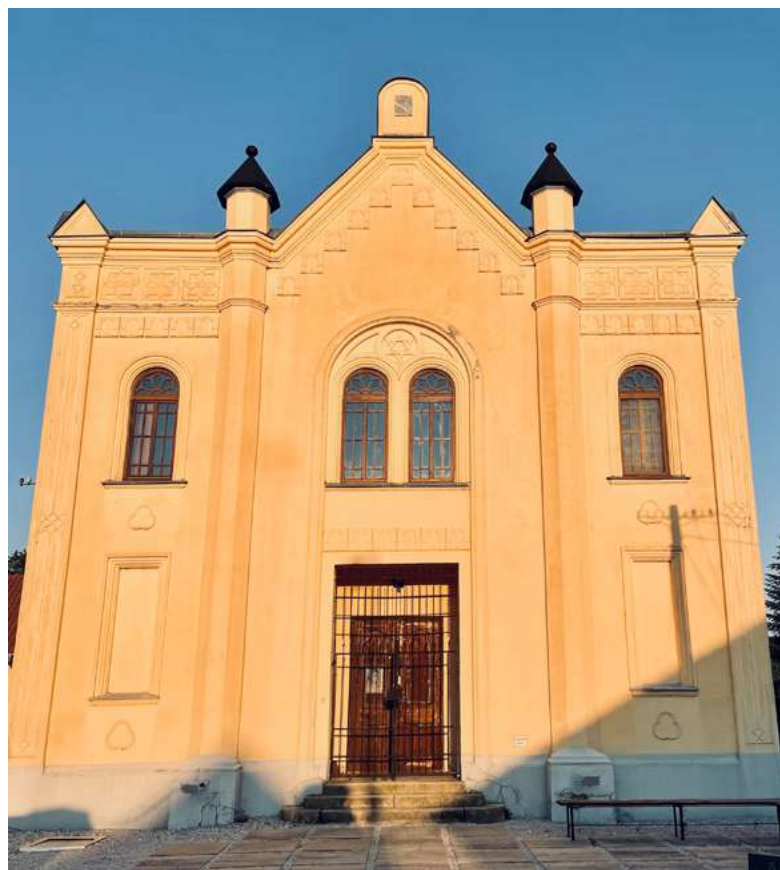
A "ready-made" house: former hotel building in Szentendre. / BME



AT HOME GALLERY, ŠAMORÍN / SLOVAKIA

The “At Home Gallery” started in the apartment of a young couple returning to Šamorín, who within a few years, in 1996, received the building of the neighbouring dilapidated synagogue from the community and renovated it privately to a high standard. By saving the building, they not only perpetuated the spirit of the place, but also developed it into an international contemporary art venue. The synagogue’s exhibition hall and, in the summer, its garden, host art exhibitions, alternative music and media performances. The gallery in this small town on the Danube is a model experimental multicultural centre.

The view on the reconstructed Synagogue, „At Home Gallery” since 1996. / STU



CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE, PAKS / HUNGARY

Paks, a medium-sized city on the Danube, is home to Hungary’s only nuclear power plant established in the 1970s. At that time, the so-called tulip panels received considerable attention in the architectural discourse, as did later the organic church designed by Imre Makovecz, built between 1988-1990, which made Paks internationally interesting with regards to contemporary architecture. Since 2000, Paks Municipality in cooperation with the Nuclear Power Plant has carried out ambitious building renovations, transformations, and new constructions. It is exemplary that they did not think merely in terms of individual buildings but tried to develop the urban physical and social contexts, taking into account sustainability, liveability, identity, and education. For instance, the neoclassical **Erzsébet Hotel** was renovated and extended, the **Paks Gallery** was installed in the former industrial hall of the local cannery, and the transformed **Deák House** became a local museum focusing on the Danubian heritage.



Market at the renovated Erzsébet Hotel in Paks. / BME

Deák House, museum on the Danubian heritage in Paks.W / BME



TEACHING-LEARNING IN DMSCs

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02

Kelheim
Regensburg

Krems
Wachau Region

TUWien

Holice

Komarno

Štúrovo

Szob

Dunaújváros

Esztergom

Bačka Palanka

Kremski Karlovci

Pančevo

Smederevo

Golubac

Braila

Călărași

Sfiștofca

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The Elisabeth Bridge at Komárom, drawing by B. Bene. / BME

PROJECTS

DSMCs Erasmus+ project participants teach and study at higher education institutions, mostly at departments of urban planning and design at technical universities. Under the heading of projects, we present some of the work of students of architecture, landscape architecture, and urbanism, focusing on a Danube region, a small or medium-sized town, or a city within the courses. University education is a field of experimentation, and as the design process is not overly constrained by reality, the designs are not commissioned, and therefore they are boldly visualised, reflecting local conditions. Municipalities that work with universities get fresh, youthful, and valuable ideas that seek solutions to local issues, using international contemporary theories and good practices. The joint preparation of the planning process and the presentation of the results on the spot is a learning experience for all. The designs are diverse, sometimes provocative, projecting the future of the Danube region.

DANUBE BASIN / GERMANY, AUSTRIA, SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, SERBIA, ROMANIA & BULGARIA

The students of the master's programme in Spatial Planning at TU Wien have been working on integrated spatial strategies in the Danube regions in a lecture series between 2013 and 17. The programme followed the course of the river, and over the five years, students visited cities in seven countries, including small and medium-sized towns on the Danube (e.g. Kehlheim, Passau, Melk, Brăila, Tulcea, Ruse, Silistra). They met with local stakeholders, representatives of the administration, researchers, planners, etc. who were influencing the development. The students prepared strategic plans based on their knowledge and personal impressions gained during the study trip, as well as on professional materials and international literature. The planning process was facilitated by experts in strategic environmental assessment and water management, in addition to the lecturers. The students worked in large teams and the collaborative work was based on questioning, dialogue, discussion, and debate.

Boat trip at Sulina, the last settlement on the Danube before the Black Sea. / TUW



DANUBE Rivering



The Danube topics: dandering, exploring, living. / TUW

WACHAU REGION / AUSTRIA

The Wachau Cultural Landscape has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2000. This priority tourist region along the Danube between two Austrian cities, Melk and Krems, stretches for almost 35 kilometres along both banks of the river. In 2017, spatial planning students from TU Wien summarised further development potentials of the region in a publication entitled 'Chances'. Their learning and teaching process has been greatly enriched by the inclusion of an international multidisciplinary DANURB event. After a preparatory phase of six months' work, 51 students, mostly architects, from four other Danube countries came to Krems for a week to explore the region with the students from Vienna, brainstorm about its future, and then prepare joint presentations. The results of the workshop brought new perspectives to the planning process and gave impetus to further ambitious work.

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DANUBE. THE BORDERLINE / SLOVAKIA

In the vertical design studio, the architecture students had the possibility to be the chief architects of six villages, small or medium-sized towns along the Danube (Nárad, Sáp, Zlatná na Ostrove, Holice, Komárno, Gabčíkovo). The chief architect is a kind of moderator but still a professional architect, who knows the municipality very well and represents the public interest and local values in developments. His work covers all levels of urban design and architecture, from the entire municipality to the smallest buildings. It is therefore important to raise awareness of this public role and prepare students for this potential career path as well. The students organised individual and group meetings with local stakeholders (residents, politicians, entrepreneurs) and, in addition to collecting data for planning, shared their ideas on the border, on multiethnicity, and on the imagined future of the Danube and the border region. At the end of the course, they presented to the locals their urban design plans for their settlements. Not only did they improve their professional knowledge, but also their verbal and visual communication skills and their ability to understand a local community.

Sáp's urban development concept. / STU



Students' team in Holice, Slovakia, 2020. / STU





Neštin Ethno village, plan of Marijana Davidović. / UNS

VOJVODINA REGION / SERBIA

The central city for the planning exercise was Bačka Palanka in Serbia, but the students also explored and evaluated the surrounding settlements in Vojvodina region and even Ilok in Croatia, just across the river. They looked at the components of the Danube identity, the cultural, natural, and human resources linked to the place, and planned possible directions for development. In the process of diploma planning, it was very inspiring that the Novi Sad students had previously participated in an international Bačka Palanka - Novi Sad DANUrB workshop, touring both sides of the border, reflecting with foreigners on the values of the region, their preservation and development potential. They also met the officials in the local government's development agency and the tourism organisation. Some of the students' work were presented at 26th International Urban Planners' Exhibition in Niš in 2017.



Students' site visit. / UNS

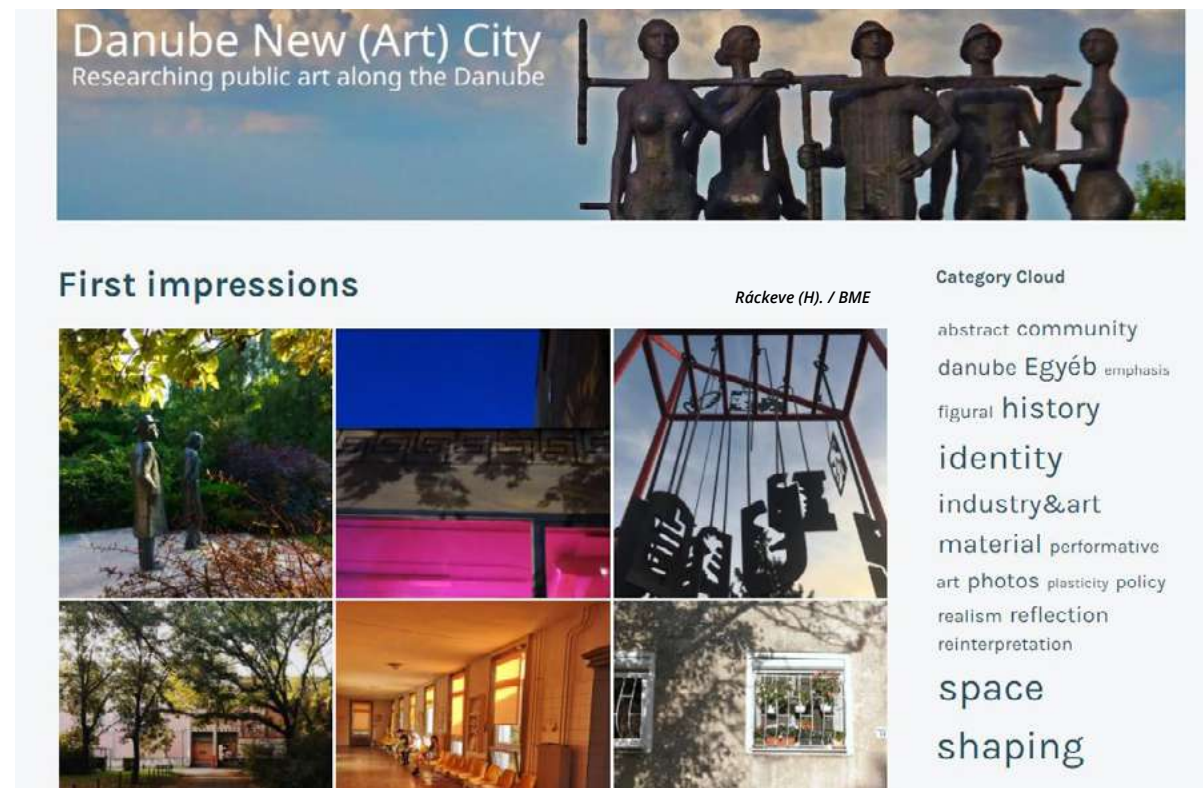
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DANUBENEWARTCITY, DUNAÚJVÁROS / HUNGARY

Dunaújváros is a planned socialist new town on the Danube, where a unique natural environment has created a singular combination of industry, urban development, and the arts. The experimental nature of the course focused on artworks in public spaces but approached the subject from the perspective of the city rather than art. The design was based on thematic research, and the results of each phase were published in Hungarian and English by the students on a website, [DanubeNewArtCity](#). Another special element of the learning and teaching

process was that in the second part of the semester, the Erasmus+ exchange students' project course on urban energy, which also involved designing for Dunaújváros, was combined with the Hungarian pilot studio. The two groups could get to know each other's skills, their creative approaches, oral and visual presentation methods, consult each other's designs, and use each other's results to think further about their own designs. A selection of the designs produced in the planning courses on small and medium-sized towns along the Danube at the Department of Urban Planning and Design of the Budapest University of Technology was published in a [booklet](#).

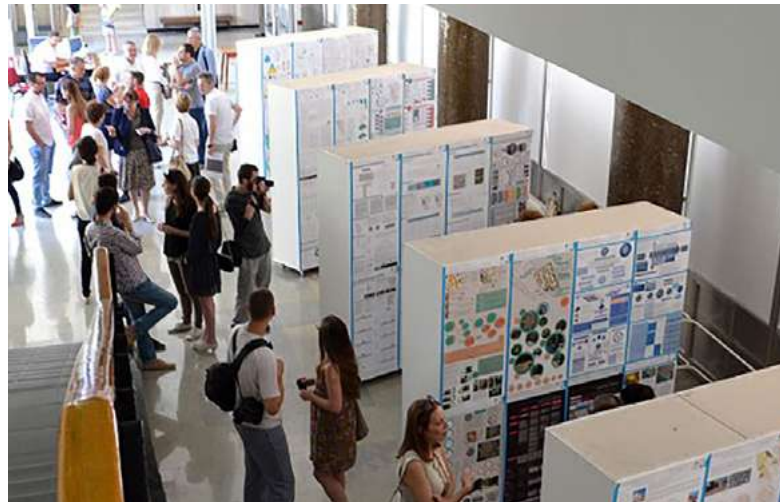
Hungarian and international students' website about Dunaújváros. / BME



PANČEVO / SERBIA

The Municipality of Pančevo and the master's programme in Urbanism at the University of Belgrade have been working together for many years. The city's development strategy (2014-20) provided the framework for the municipal planning, during which the students worked in constant consultation with local stakeholders, reflecting on real and local issues. Communication and participation have been key elements in the planning process, with students and teachers from the University and the leaders and residents of Pančevo Municipality working towards a common goal. The students' diploma projects provided innovative proposals for the renewal of the city centre, for strengthening its resilience, and for urban cooperation embedded in the local community. The projects were published in a joint **publication** and exhibited at the City Hall. The best student project was selected and included in the city's 2017 strategy. The used method, which allows mutually beneficial cooperation between the local municipality and the university, was recognised by the University of Belgrade, as an important academic research result.

*Students' projects exhibition in Pančevo City Hall.
Serbia. / UBGD*



Students' projects presentation in Smederevo, Serbia / UBGD

SMEDEREVO / SERBIA

The students of architecture from the University of Belgrade developed projects focused on three major areas within Smederevo and the connections between them: the city centre, the fortress, and the former industrial area. The student course was divided into three main parts: the urban planning process, the seminar that covered the general theoretical foundations of sustainable environmental design, and the workshop focused on the urban safety aspects.

The workshop started with fieldwork and document analysis and built on these with various vision scenarios. The innovative academic methods included mental mapping, SWOT analysis, design thinking techniques, and collaborative methods such as brainwriting and superheroes, which take you out of the familiar thinking processes, and develop imagination and collaboration. The project proposals were then used as the basis for the further development of the detailed urban and architectural design.



Renewal of the main axis between the station and the Danube. / UAUM

Students from the second year of **Master of Landscape and Territorial Planning** (2019 -2021) from UAUIM have designed the small town of Călărași on the Danube. Their aim was to explore and re-evaluate the built and natural heritage of the place and to promote the revival of tourism. **Their plans focused** on public spaces, parks, roads, and riverside areas that would provide access to the town's attractions and along which others could be developed. They thought in terms of systems, modelling possible tourist movements within the city and the needs of local residents, designing continuous green urban corridors, making public spaces pedestrian-friendly, and modifying their atmosphere through contemporary architecture, landscape architecture and design. Access points to the city were given a prominent place in the plans, and the road gates and the area around the railway station were redesigned.



Participants of the DSMCs IP02 workshop in Novi Sad, 2021 November. / BME

WORKSHOPS

Workshops are an important component of university courses teaching design at different scales. They allow teachers and students to meet and work together, usually for a week, in an unfamiliar place but on a topic which everyone is familiar with. The learning process is enriched by the different cultural backgrounds and skills, local knowledge, the success of solving communication difficulties arising from multilingualism, etc. However, in addition to the differences, the recognition of similarities is also an important result, along with learning to have the same references, presentation techniques, a familiar university atmosphere, and even a sense of déjà vu in the Danube region, especially in post-socialist cities, which strengthens the sense of belonging. Thanks to the European Union's cooperation programmes, more and more students are able to experience such workshops at home or abroad.

Despite the difficult travel conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the DSMCs partnership managed to organise three Intensive Programs (IP) with student workshops during the project: the first online in 2020, the second in 2021 in Novi Sad/Sremski Karlovci, Serbia, and a final one in 2022 in Bucharest/Călărași, Romania, where the team of nearly 50 students and teachers worked together. Thanks to partner universities and the Erasmus+ programme, secondary schools are also gaining more and more experience in international workshops, and this selection presents some of the ones that took place in small and medium-sized towns along the Danube.

TU Wien's Simlab conducted an online international course dealing with modern data acquisition technologies in the context of spatial planning in Danubian cities, focussing on the two aspects of accessibility and bikeability. Students collected relevant sites and locations in their home cities related to these topics, generated markers and tracks with their smartphones, and then visualised their findings on interactive maps on a [project blog](#). An innovative aspect of teaching was a cross-linkage of online and offline methods, with data acquisition happening on-site, while data analysis, preparation, assessment, and visualisation were carried out remotely. Besides providing theoretical input lectures, Simlab also invited all participants to online troubleshooting to discuss the state of the projects, difficulties encountered, and ways of dealing with these.

DSMCs IP01:

SENSING AND MAPPING THE CITY / AUSTRIA, SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, SERBIA & ROMANIA



Bikeability study in Vienna made on the online DSMCs IP01 workshop, 2020 October. / TUW

DSMCs IP02: URBAN ACUPUNCTURE, SREMSKI KARLOVCI / SERBIA

The methodological approach implemented during the international teaching lab held at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad was based on the urban acupuncture and participative approach. During the pilot site visits to the nearby Danubian city of Sremski Karlovci, students selected the locations for intervention and defined the thematic and conceptual approach. They searched for historical, cultural, social, touristic, natural, and other local elements relevant to potential micro-location interventions and were also encouraged to interact with residents and visitors, to observe and communicate, and to acquire relevant information to create a user-oriented design. The activity fostered the idea that proposals for interventions in urban space based on bottom-up participatory processes and urban acupuncture are fruitful methods for envisioning improvements in urban conditions and living environments.

Students' presentations at DSMCs IP02 workshop in Novi Sad, 2021 November. / UNS



Poster of an international team of the DSMCs IP02. / UNS



Water activities on Danube and Borcea, Romania. / UAUIM



Dream shredder designed by I. Cojocariu, on the Central Park waterfront of Călărași. / UAUIM

DSMCs IP03: LIVEABLE CO-CITY, CĂLĂRAȘI / ROMANIA

The methodological approach of this activity is to go through a gradual and nuanced process of understanding, co-planning and co-design with the local community, in the spirit of inclusive development of the city. The teaching lab contributes with new perspectives, a creative body of knowledge, and customised data obtained by the students, about the spatial and social inclusion/exclusion, the marginal areas of the city and the peripheral urbanity. The results of this activity have been prepared to provide support for the Danubian Small and Medium Cities development and to involve stakeholders in a true debate about inclusive development. The activity addresses both the formal and the informal educational framework, involving students, experts, residents, administration representatives, and other decision-makers, gaining specific competencies, knowledge, and skills of interdisciplinary interaction.

Report of data collection of good practices and teaching/ learning cross border cooperation on Danube SMCs, for transferring research and innovation in continuing education



CREATIVE DANUBE: INNOVATIVE TEACHING FOR INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT IN SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED DANUBIAN CITIES

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CONNECT Călărași



Poster of an international team of the DSMCs IP03. / UAUIM



Students and teachers exploring Golubac from the Danube. / UBGD

EXPERIENCE THE CITY ON FOOT, GOLUBAC / SERBIA

The theme of the **international urban design workshop** in Golubac was the city's open space network. Within this workshop research, the user's participation and their habits were very important. The pedestrian use, their perception, and individual experience of space provided a unique perspective for students' analysis and design. This process had several steps: SWOT analysis based on the survey, conceptualisation, programming, and designing for a concrete urban segment in central Golubac (square, street, park, or riverfront section). The aim of the workshop was to raise awareness of this multi-directional perspective and to analyse and design the waterfront area. Austrian, Slovak, Hungarian, Serbian, and Romanian students, mostly in architecture, worked together in small international teams. In a few days, they produced a public space catalogue of Golubac providing spatial concepts of possible urban design development directions. At the end of their work, students presented their posters to each other and to the local audience in the town's cinema hall.



Regensburg's historic centre on the Danube. / pixabay

SHARING HERITAGE, REGENSBURG / GERMANY

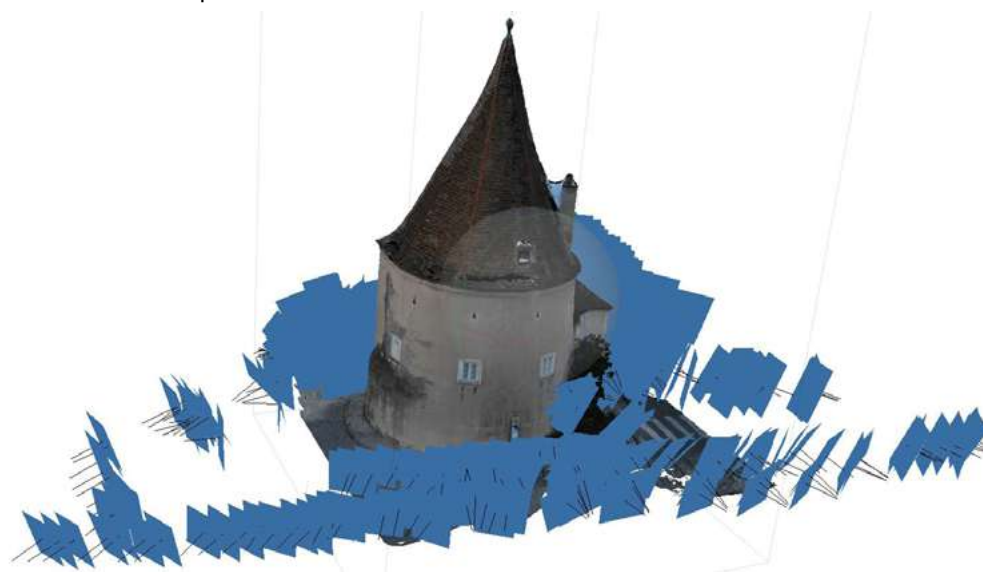
Regensburg is the northernmost city on the Danube with rich cultural heritage, its historic centre, and the district of Stadtamhof have been UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2006. The Donaugymnasium participated in the Erasmus-Plus Project "**Sharing Heritage**" and hosted a workshop week aiming to acquire knowledge on the city's Jewish heritage. With the help of the local Heritage Office and architects, students from four countries, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, and Germany, learned about the historical facts and sites and their significance and role in the social context. They did this using analogue tools (e.g. modelling, mental map drawing) and digital (e.g. Actionbound app). The workshop highlighted for the future generation the importance of places of memory, the interrelation of heritage with past, present, and future and also on the societal and societal implications and importance of heritage sites on the city as a whole.

CROSSBORDER CULTURAL HERITAGE, KREMS / AUSTRIA



Participants on the field trip in the Wachau valley. / UWK

In the framework of the KULREG programme, Austrian and Czech students of architecture, social geography, and art history worked together to explore and compare the potential for heritage-based tourism development in two nearby regions. The aim was to document the diversity of assets, so the teaching method used was based on a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. The introductory lectures covered, among other things, cartographic techniques, with modern tools such as aerial photography, laser scanning, and photogrammetry, in addition to traditional geodetic measurements, presented by invited local experts. They jointly evaluated the visualisations of the areas concerned and discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the different representations. In the remaining practical part of the workshop, the lessons learned were applied to the example of Krems.



3D-visualisation of an object in Krems created using photogrammetry method; Vratislav Zika. / UWK

LOST HERITAGE, KREMS / AUSTRIA

The workshop objective was to develop ideas, concepts, and measures to create interest and share knowledge about something that cannot be seen or is already vanished, maintain or rebuild ruined structures that lost their original meaning, present those structures to the public and develop concepts for usage and preservation. The task for the participants was to identify, define and describe forgotten or invisible cultural heritage through historical illustrations and plan documents, information available online and on-site research, and develop concepts and measures of how this forgotten cultural asset can be made visible and experienced again. Six working groups focused on six different items representing forgotten or at-risk heritage in relation to the river Danube in Krems and Stein: the medieval harbour in Krems, the old waterfront in Krems, the old waterfront in Stein, the Danube University and its Campus, the historical city centre of Krems, the old town walls of Krems.

RESEARCH CAMP, KREMS / AUSTRIA

More than 100 university students and teachers from six Danube countries spent a week in Krems in March 2017 as part of the DANUrB programme. The theme of the on-site research camp was the UNESCO

World Heritage Wachau region, which the international team explored together with local experts during study trips along both banks of the Danube, crossing the river several times. During the workshop, the students studied the potential for further development of the region at different scales, using the Wachau as a model, and the teachers discussed the research methodology. The multidisciplinary introductory lectures were followed by brainstorming and field visits to collect data and to start adapting theoretical ideas to reality. Finally, in a workshop facilitated by the faculty, they produced coherent presentations in English. These were presented not only to the research camp participants but also to the local decision-makers and those interested in the development of the Wachau region.

Students of the Indian Rizvi college at the workshop, 2019. / UWK





Dunaújváros, new socialist town, site of several international workshops. / BME

ACTIONS

A Projects are academic works; Workshops go beyond the scope of training and usually result in plans being prepared at an external site and location within a given timeframe. An action is defined as an event in small or medium-sized towns along the Danube that is linked to university training and involves local people. It is not just a project but a cooperation between universities and a city (e.g. a laboratory) in research and design over several years. Not just a presentation of a plan for a couple of hours but a high-quality exhibition opens to the public. Not just an exciting and unusual youthful idea but a built installation, e.g. a bridge, a tower, a bench, etc. All this requires not only the enthusiasm of the university partners but also the will and cooperation of the local people to develop the site, get the permits, and last but not least, the financial resources. Here are some examples

funded by international EU programmes.

TRAVELLING EXHIBITION / AUSTRIA, SLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, SERBIA, ROMANIA & BULGARIA

Of the 20 partners of the DANUrB Danube Interreg project, 7 represented universities, so between 2017 and 2019, several urban planning, urban design, architecture, and landscape architecture projects were prepared for different sites along the Danube. Students approached the topic from many directions, with different sensitivities and cultural backgrounds. Among the designs, there were the sounds of the Danube, the perspectives of local communities, literary adaptations, experimental visualisations, food, or individual stories captured in photographs taken on different stretches of the river. The **travelling exhibition** not only allowed the students to get to know each other's work but also gave visitors to the exhibition venues - Krems, Bratislava, Esztergom/Stúrovo, Budapest, Ráckeve, Belgrade, Vidin/Calafat, Giurgiu/Ruse, Bucharest, Tulcea - a sense of the strong links and new connections the Danube forges between places that seem so far apart.



Travelling exhibition in underused heritage of Komárno fortress, Slovakia. / STU

Travelling exhibition in the public library of Ráckeve, Hungary. / BME





International meeting in Brăila. / UAUIM

URBAN LABORATORY, BRĂILA / ROMANIA

In collaboration with the City of Brăila, Norwegian students from the Bergen School of Architecture worked with Master of Urban Design students from the "Ion Mincu" University of Architecture and Urbanism from Bucharest, as part of a **three-year EU programme**. They created a so-called "**urban laboratory**" using the city of Brăila to look for alternative solutions to the shrinkage affecting most of Europe's peripheral small and medium-sized towns. Architecture and urban planning, and the two far ends of Europe, north and south, were approached through theoretical and research findings, joint events, and the involvement of Brăila's inhabitants in this intercultural thinking. The results of the process have become a **model for practitioners and local decision-makers** and have contributed to raising awareness of the goals of social justice and urban resilience.

Open air students' projects exhibition in Esztergom, 2017. / BME



BRIDGEHEADS, ESZTERGOM - ŠTÚROVO / HUNGARY & SLOVAKIA

The **research-based design studio** was based on the idea of a "bridgehead", and it aimed to create a mental, visual, or even physical bridge between the two banks of the Danube, two countries, two cities, Esztergom and Párkány. The six-month project involved a competition, a study trip, thematic research, and then the design of an environment, after which the group of students decided together which ideas were interesting and could be implemented with the involvement of local people on the Danube Day at the end of June. The winning concept titled RefleXio encouraged the participants to explore the place, take pictures and share them. Students created reflective surfaces and a map of both cities, and then anyone could use a mirror to show simultaneously themselves and the other side in their photos. The photos could be seen on the social web and their actual location was displayed on the map as a marked point.

Students before the public action on the Maria Valeria Bridge over the Danube between Hungary and Slovakia, 2017. / BME



EXHIBITION IN KOMÁRNO FORTRESS / SLOVAKIA

More than 50 architecture students from STU Bratislava and BME Budapest worked together to design the twin cities of Komárno (Slovakia) and Komárom (Hungary), on both sides of the Danube. The six-month "parallel" studio work was complemented by several joint events. At a meeting in Budapest, the students presented their concepts to each other in English, and then prepared summary tables of the different types of plans (**heritage**, urban planning, environmental design, etc.) in the same format. These formed the basis of the exhibition organised in the Komárno Fortress, the **opening** of which turned into an important local, but also cross-border, professional event.

Opening discussion of the exhibition in the space of the old ammunition factory in the Komarno Fortress. / STU



SFIȘTOFCA, DANUBE DELTA / ROMANIA

The aim of the university courses was to familiarise students with the use of natural materials from the **Danube Delta region** and **traditional environmentally** conscious building techniques. Theoretical presentations exploring the natural and cultural values of the region were complemented by practical activities such as reed bundling, basket weaving, woodcarving, metalworking, etc. They explored the local architectural heritage and then worked with the local people **to find strategies** to counteract the process of depopulation. In the future, Sfiștofca was conceptualised as an autonomous eco-village and some small installations were built for the settlement.



Students at the Danube Delta camp, Romania. / UAUIM



Delivery of building materials from the PONTipoly installation to the site of the building camp in Szob, Hungary, 2021. / BME

PONTIPOLY, SZOB / HUNGARY

Szob is a small town on the Hungarian-Slovakian border, where the two countries are separated by the river Ipoly, which here joins the Danube. An international team of students built a bridge over the river as part of a summer building camp. The temporary wooden bridge was laid by connecting 24 canoes, allowing for a few hours a pedestrian crossing of the national borders between the villages of Ipolydamásd (H) and Chľaba (SK), at the same spot where a permanent small bridge is hoped to be built soon.

Then, campers, residents, and visitors picnicked together near the Danube on both banks of the Ipoly river, marking not only the location but also the summer reopening after the closures of the COVID-19 pandemic. The **'bridge action'** was a spectacular element of a larger project, which involved a six-month experimental design studio at the university. The students designed outdoor furniture for the Danube bank and other public spaces in the town of Szob based on consultations with the locals and in response to real needs, building them by themselves from the wood used for the bridge.

DSMCs INTERACTIVE MAP WITH DATA- SHEETS



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