

First Routes4U conference for the Danube Region (EUSDR)

"Strengthening regional development through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe"

6 November 2018. Bucharest, Romania.

WORKSHOP 2 | PARTICIPATIVE AND TRANSNATIONAL STORY-TELLING: CULTURAL HERITAGE FOR CONNECTING THE DANUBE REGION

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INTRODUCTION

The Danube Region, as a central European region, can be considered to be a melting pot of cultural influences which have shaped the European continent as a whole. The Danube River, since the creation of the first cultural layers, has been one of the main exchange routes of people and ideas in Europe. This Region has bear witness to the majority of migrations and cultural shifts which have influenced the creation of what we consider today to be the elements of European identity. Like all regions of Europe, the Danube Region is not a homogeneous one. The wide diversity of nations, languages, religion and traditions is a statement to the aforementioned processes.

The Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention) states that

"cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time". This definition formulates an adequate framework for better understanding all the elements which construct cultural heritage and can be a factor for its better connection."

As the most international river basin in the world, the Danube features numerous touristic and heritage highlights. It should come to no surprise that The European Union Strategy for the Danube Region states that we should focus on the promotion and protection of cultural diversity and that the diversity of the Danube Region is its strength on which we should build. This is just one of the aspects which play a key role in the establishment of the Danube Region as important European tourist destination.

The current, already created, **Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe considerably promote the stipulated values and create a framework for the development of cultural cross-border cooperation with the common goal to develop the Danube Region as a European brand.**

The common heritage of Europe fosters the development of a peaceful and stable society, founded on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. This doesn't exclude the representation of European not commendable history and heritage, related to the

Routes4U Project

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by the European Union
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foundation of totalitarianism and human rights violation. *Dissonant* and *unwanted* heritage is indeed a part of common European heritage. The contrary, the knowledge and recognition of this "uncomfortable" heritage can contribute to the dialogue, by encouraging reflection on the ethics and methods of presentation of the cultural heritage, as well as respect for diversity of interpretations. It should also be noted that if not interpreted and presented correctly, this heritage can increase discordance rather than being an element of unification.

The development of an acceptable and sustainable transnational interpretation and storytelling of cultural heritage in the Danube Region, as mentioned, must be grounded on respect for diversity of interpretations, but also scientific objectiveness, comprehensiveness and consensus; not on the compromise on its role in utilisation of the mentioned cultural heritage in cross-border activities.

Civil society, their inclusion and participation, have a vital role in the promotion of common European heritage and this is valid also for the Danube Region. Local communities' perception of what is local, national, regional or European cultural heritage is, and the values given to it, is a basis or obstacle in view of a further regional unification, cooperation and development.

OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the workshop is to **analyse already existent examples of good practise of Cultural Routes of Council of Europe that are represented in the Danube Region and to explore the role of civil society in promoting heritage as a basis of common identity**. We will also discuss examples of participative and transnational interpretation and storytelling of cultural heritage as a means of connecting the Danube Region.

We will discuss the public responsibilities for cultural heritage and the importance of proper organisation. Furthermore, we will reflect on the impact that the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage may have on development of quality of life as a whole. We will explore the methods of presentation and narration, based on proven good practices, to recommend frameworks in the context of future projects.

As the Cultural Routes provide opportunities of enhanced cooperation and exchange of knowledge and capacities between the members of the network, we will analyse already existing examples of networks and formulate possible partnerships relating to regional cultural heritage interpretation and promotion.

After analysis of the Cultural Routes which deal with dissonant heritage in the Danube Region, we will state recommendations on how to interpret and present dissonant heritage in the Region.

The final objective of the workshop is to formulate recommendations and identification of good-practices on how to involve communities in heritage interpretation and promotion, in the Danube Region, through cultural heritage and in particular through the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe.

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

1. What are the good practices of transnational interpretation and storytelling of cultural heritage in the Cultural Routes of Council of Europe that are represented in the Danube Region, and what are the challenges in their implementation?
2. What is the role and what are elements of good practise in cross-border civic cooperation in local communities, educational and cultural institutions, nature protection and promotion institutions and organisations which can be implemented in the development of new Cultural Routes in the Danube Region?
3. What are the good examples of frameworks for narration and presentation of local and common cultural heritage in the Danube Region?
4. What are the values of dissonant or unwanted heritage in the Common European Cultural Heritage framework, and in particular in the Danube Region?
5. How necessary is it to address/present dissonant or unwanted heritage through their inclusion in cultural routes?

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