

Transdanube Travel Stories – Kick-Off Conference

On 22nd September 2020, the EU-funded project 'Transdanube Travel Stories - Sustainable mobility linking Danube Travel Stories' officially started with an online Kick-Off Conference. Around 40 participants of the seven partner countries learnt more about the main aim of the project to support sustainable tourism in the Danube region by implementing innovative promotion concepts (new narratives) and sustainable mobility management tools.



(Photo: © WGD Donau Oberösterreich Tourismus GmbH-Hochhauser)

The Kick-Off Conference of the 'Transdanube Travel Stories - Sustainable mobility linking Danube Travel Stories' project was taking place online on 22nd September 2020. The conference was opened by Ana Leganel, representing the EU-funding programme Interreg Danube Transnational; Robert Thaler from the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology, which has initiated the project and is embedding the project in the Transport-Health-Environment PanEuropean Programme; and Günther Lichtblau from the Environment Agency Austria, which is Lead Partner of the project.

Within the project, new narratives and mobility management together with advanced institutional capacities shall provide the framework to better position the Danube as a unique sustainable tourism destination on the market resulting in more European citizens experiencing European cultural and natural heritage in a sustainable way.

The keynote speakers introduced the framework within which the project is situated. Stefano Dominioni, Executive Secretary of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) and Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes highlighted the importance of the Danube region and introduced the European Council routes, five of which - namely Saint Martin of Tours Route,

European Route of Jewish Heritage, Iter Vitis Route, Réseau Art Nouveau Network and Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route - are represented in the project.

Georg Steiner, Tourism Director of the Linz _Tourist Board, introduced “narratives” as innovative tool in tourism. This new approach does not only list destinations but includes various forms of experience of cultural heritage by visitors (e.g. augmented reality).

Finally, Petra Riffert, the Secretary General of the Danube.Pearls Network gave an insight into the management of sustainable mobility and its importance in tourism. The Danube.Pearls network was founded in May 2019 within the framework of the previous project `Transdanube.Pearls`. In this network, members from 11 regions along the Danube dedicate themselves to sustainable mobility in tourism.

Andreas Friedwagner (Verracon GmbH) showed how the three presented concepts (cultural routes, narratives and mobility management) are interlinked within the project. Lead by the Environment Agency Austria, nine project partners, representatives of different cultural routes, the Danube Parks Network and the Danube.Pearls, participate in the project. During the two-and-a-half-year implementation period, the partners from seven countries will develop new stories that combine selected destinations of cultural routes to a trail. The stories can be experienced at destination and trail level. Mobility management will facilitate visitors to travel there and around by sustainable means of transport.

The project, funded by the European Interreg Danube Transnational Programme, is planned to run until 31 December 2022, and has a total budget of 1.82 Million Euros.

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