THE TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT "BRIDGE LIFELINE DANUBE"

The contribution of academic institutions to European stability, with particular attention to the Danube region.

DANUBE RECTOR'S CONFERENCE

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INHALTSVERZEICHNIS

THE TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT – BRIDGE LIFELINE DANUBE 3
PREFACE 3
PROJECT PURPOSE 3
METHODOLOGY 4
ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT 4
EXPECTED RESULTS 5
LITERATURE 6

THE TRANSNATIONAL PROJECT – BRIDGE LIFELINE DANUBE

PREFACE

The Institute of Landscape Architecture and Landscape Management at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Vienna obtained June ´99 a project for Provision of ERDF-funds (INTERREG IIC) in the Operational Program for the Central, Adriatic, Danubian and South- Eastern European Space (CADSES).

The project "BRIDGE Lifeline Danube" initiates the launching of a cooperative spatial planning process for Sustainable Development and Open Space Design and a communication network of cities along the Danube (SCHINDEGGER: 1999).

The ambient relationship between the demands and the impact of usage is the subject of the project. Solutions will be found according to the principles of sustainability which will contribute to the up-keep and improvement of basic ecological functions as well as to the city's outlying area. The ecological upgrading of these areas will increase their social and economical value (SCHREMMER: 1997).

The main objective of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) is, to initiate co-operation in the field of spatial development to enhance sustainable development and to take first steps to develop elements for the purpose of,

- Creating networks of city councils and universities,
- Promoting the development of environmentally compatible knowledge,
- Encouraging sustainable development and promoting research and maximizing the dissemination and utilization of their results.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The idea of the "BRIDGE Lifeline Danube" project in the future, is to intensify **city partnership** for cities along the Danube and to initiate a process of cooperation among the **universities and city planning departments**. The overall goal of the project is to establish a dialogue between cities and universities, discussing specific questions and develop good practices for sustainable land use along the Danube. For this reason a **city network** will be built up to maintain the cultural and ecological heritage of the Danube region. Participating cities are Deggendorf, Passau, Linz, Krems, Wien, Bratislava, Györ and Budapest.

METHODOLOGY

The problem of the present is a problem of traditional paradigm in science, economy and politics. Future models will not be based on one paradigm, but will be the result of a dialogue between different paradigms (SCHARMER: 1996). The intellectual design to create the infrastructure of a ´learning society´ according to SCHARMER follows three principles:

1. **Planning for real**
   Transparent public planning processes sustained by citizens. The methodology of future ´search conferences´ enables to create modified visions of the future.
2. **Learning for real**
   The university will be the centre of a learning society as well as a dialog arena for all participants in society. This form of communication will promote a new quality of planning. This can be demonstrated by action research.
3. **Working for real**
   To develop a sustainable future, the soil sciences will initiate the quarterly sector of economy. This quarterly sector includes in contrary to production and services, all these measures which involve nature protection and management, social issues and life long learning. This methodology of economic process will be supported through case studies which are part of the activities of our project.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

The intended activities within the project structure are working phases for scientific research and meetings to have an exchange of knowledge between **universities** and **city councils**. The **coordination office** at the Institute of Landscape Architecture and Landscape Management in Vienna has to arrange co-operation between the partners of the project and organization of meetings and research activities. The arrangement of the **meetings** is to conceptualise the comparability of planning methodologies and data collection.

A "new paradigm of work" is sweeping the post-industrial world. The new buzz words have become learning, empowering, democratising, partnering. The **future search conference** methodology is a participatory planning method to bring people together across diverse and improbable boundaries to do joint planning (WEISBROD: 1993). The conference uses a systematic process in which groups from different disciplines, theoreticians and practitioners, design the future they want. We will work with 40 participants from eight cities along the Danube, for three days, identify common ground, discovering perspectives for future activities and imagining the system's most desired future and formulate creative strategies and measures.

Later on we will organize a **seminar** to exchange the results of data collection analysis and diagnosis, monitoring and management of data and exchange of experiences. Finally we arrange a **conference** to facilitate dissemination of good practices and initiating realization and dissemination of the products.

EXPECTED RESULTS

This interdisciplinary trans-european project is about the working out of perspectives and concepts for the improvement and maintenance of sustainable regions along the **Danube**. This project serves as a dialog arena for a collective learning process shared by administrative managers, lecturers and researchers of different disciplines, to experience another comprehension for planning.
The regional and environmental planning should be a model for the sustainable development of the Danube for years to come. Universities and city planning departments from **Deggendorf to Budapest** should work on developing open spaces **along the Danube** to provide for basic social and ecological functions. An intensive cooperation among all partners is required to develop the idea of the rationalisation of Europe and bring the Danube regional awareness to the foreground.

As a result of the "BRIDGE Lifeline Danube" project, we expect models of good practices. The models should help maintain the social and ecological functions of the living areas along the Danube and should lead to an improvement. Depending on the type of planning philosophy in each city and the type of thought, the results can be realized within different fields. The results and long term benefits of the BRIDGE project will be,

1. a **dialog and communication process** to promote ecologisation within the Danube region. Ecologisation means, "shaping our interaction with the environment in an intellectual, material, spatial, social and emotional sense to achieve a lasting/sustainable quality of living for all." (POSCH: 1997)
2. within the political context of the project we have to develop new **strategies for planning** processes:
    - Mixed use of space promotes proximity and reduces traffic problems.
    - Maintenance and protection of bio corridors in large open space systems can be used as a basic tool for urban development.
3. one of the first activities will be a **concrete measure** to build a bike bridge between Slovakia and Austria near Devin. Students of the Technical University in Bratislava and the University of Agricultural Sciences in Vienna will start September 99.

Other measures are,
- The development of a higher-quality tourism and the creation of transnational tourism routes.
- The goals of future activities will be to promote transdisciplinary institutional structures within AGENDA 21 activities along the Danube and should flow into political and administrative reality.
- The integration of ecological design within city and regional planning.
- The integration of modern information techniques for the creation of a database as tool for scientists, public officials and citizens.

In addition to the above measures many questions and problems should be supported by diploma works and thesis. I would like to invite everybody present to participate in our project. You will find more information on our homepages under http://ifl@boku.ac.at.

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