

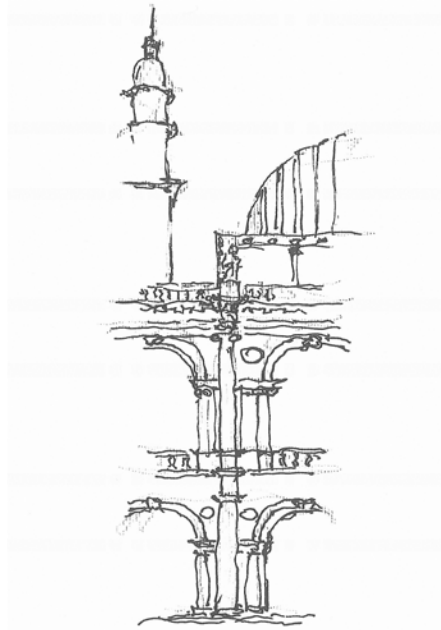
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**COOPERATION BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES AND UNIVER-  
SITIES IN THE DANUBE REGION**

Paper presented  
by

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The longest river of Europe, the Danube, connects within its neighbouring states, different cultures, religions and languages. The Danube region is a political and geographical definition which includes cultural and ecological dimensions. The metaphoric aspect of the Danube region is most of all an ecological one as *F. Schindegger* points out and he suggests that regional development could help to connect these various dimensions. (SCHINDEGGER: 1999a)

Since the fall of the Iron curtain in 1990 the regional development of Eastern Austria was forced to change in relation to the new circumstances. After a euphoric beginning the cooperation between countries weakened. These changes were described in various studies. (SCHREMMER: 1992,p.21-23; PELINKA: 1996) They pointed out political, administrative and economical differences between east and west. On the other hand we find a much more optimistic view of the future within the reform countries. (IVANICKA: 1995)

From the very beginning, after the silent revolution, good contacts in central Europe started on behalf of ecological reasons. The political transformation in 1989 offered the chance to make the growing of a common multicultural identity, which includes the protection of nature and sustainable development of the Central Danube Region. (POLITISCHE ÖKOLOGIE: 1990)

The Institute of Landscape Architecture and Landscape management at the University of Agricultural Sciences in Vienna is currently working out some transdisciplinary projects. The idea of the BRIDGE project 'Lifeline Danube' is to intensify city partnership for cities along the Danube and to initiate this co-operative spatial planning process among the universities and city planning departments. Expected results are to initiate a common language for spatial planning from an organisational and political point of view between universities and city councils. Participating cities are Deggen-dorf and Passau in Germany, Linz, Krems, Wien in Austria, Bratislava in Slovakia, Győr and Budapest in Hungary.

The Project "BRIDGE Lifeline Danube" runs under the Community Initiative INTER-REG IIC within the Operational Programme Central, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern Europe Space (CADSES). The Project "BRIDGE Lifeline Danube" understands itself as the initial project at the beginning of a process for persistent development along the Danube. Creating a partnership between the participating cities, the administrative units (city councils) and the universities is an essential part of the project. The INTERREG IIC Community Initiative aims to foster transnational co-operation in the area of spatial planning. The Community Initiative within the Operational Programme CADSES encourages the participation of neighbouring states to the EU, by the PHARE-CBC program.

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 cities
- Promoting the development of environmentally compatible information
- Encouraging sustainable development and

- Promoting research and maximizing the dissemination and utilization of their results.

The creation of a city network of universities and municipalities shall describe problems of the boundary between two systems. From this time onwards the question is, which strategies shall be developed to improve cooperation. The overall goal is to implement the matter of sustainability within all issues.

## 2 LEARNING AND PLANNING FOR REAL PROBLEMS

The crisis of the present could have an effect for the turning point of our old ways of thinking in science, economy and policy. This means that mental models of the future depend not only on one paradigm, it could be a dialog between different paradigms. Society as a 'learning organisation' is based on discovering 'common ground' and imagining ideal futures, to improve planning within all sectors of business, government, education and labour. (WEISBORD: 1993)

But that means we have to adjust a program for a comprehensive project management according to 'planning for real', research management at our universities including more practical issues for a 'learning for real' and finally transforming the results within an economy of the quaternary sector by 'working for real'.

Learning for real problems means, that the university will be the heart of a learning organisation, as a dialog arena and research laboratory for all actors within our society. This kind of communication will generate new qualities within the planning process.

We believe that most of the outstanding problems in our time are problems caused by our thinking. This leads us to the central question of what learning really is? It is not only gaining knowledge, much more important is obtaining a better quality to use this knowledge. The creation of knowledge certainly involves interaction between two kinds of learning. (NONAKA, I./ TAKEUCHI, H.:1995)

- The first kind of learning is obtaining "**know how**" in order to solve specific problems based upon existing premises. This kind of learning has helped us to survive.
- The second kind of learning is establishing **new premises** (paradigms, schemata, mental models, or perspectives) to override the existing ones. Of course its a necessity to know about both kinds of knowledge.

This includes the process of constant communication, learning together with others, developing key qualities, like systems approach and project management, to create optimistic visions of the future in a constant team dialog.

Planning tries to intervene in this complex process so that it comes to changes in our environment. These can be reached by developing strategies that lead to a change in behaviour. All process orientated changes require a principal understanding of the necessity for the changes. Only if mankind understands that these changes have a positive effect on the quality of their own lives as well a on their regions, changes will be possible.

The future search conference methodology is a participatory planning method to bring people together across diverse and improbable boundaries to do joint planning. (WEISBORD: 1993) It is an instrument which enables large groups of people, with divergent views and interests, to develop possible agreements and goals. We were using this method for our project at our kick-off meeting in Krems. Within a systematic process groups from different disciplines, theoreticians and practitioners were designing structures for future activities.

### **3 ECOLOGISATION OF THE DANUBE REGION**

The program Ecologisation of the Danube region offers the chance to realize a trans-disciplinary approach within social economic, technological and human science structures, to implement it within the political- administrative system. An elaboration of strategies for improving cooperation of city councils and universities will be established to improve landscape managing and open space issues along the Danube. Ecologisation means to establish sustainable development issues as a progressive task within all political levels.

The Ecologisation of the social development means to introduce principles of ecology, environmental protection and education into all areas of social progression. Consequently a verbal formulation of an independent ecological policy has to be established and has to be accepted by the entire society. Ruzicka suggested that "the expert of ecology and environmentalistics must have a broad interdisciplinary education and the ability to think creatively. This problem requires changing the system of passive receiving knowledge to active access in its gaining and appropriation" (RUZICKA: 1995, p.145-151).

From a systematic view, it can be said that ecological policy must guide the level of ecological awareness of society, enforce ecological ideas in legislation and economics, guide the strategy of space organization and land-use, as well as influence the technological activities. MIKLOS: 1995, p.201) "Condensed to one sentence, 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)

### **4 ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS OF THE PROJECT**

The first activity of our project was a future search conference, which took place from the 4th to the 7th October 99 at our kick-off meeting in Krems. The participants decided on 7 different projects which were elaborated by representatives of the universities and municipalities in the bygone month. The intended aim of the project to introduce the Ecologisation of the Danube Region, was presented several times at international conferences.

During winter semester 2000/2001 several meetings took place, like the 'hot spot' initiative and a design project for a bike path bridge across river Morava. The landscape planning departments from TU Bratislava, BOKU Vienna and FH Deggendorf were initiating this project to reconstruct the old connection between Devinska Nova Ves and Schloßhof. First results of this university project were presented to the city council and the public in the town hall of Bratislava, April 2000.

In its second phase after the "Future Search Conference", the project "BRIDGE Life-line Danube" has shown high motivation of all participants. At the seminar in Brati-

slava from 12<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> April 2000, more than 40 participants were proving the state of the art of their projects.

End of November 2000 the results were presented to the public on the occasion of a conference in Győr – Hungary. Important items are the development of regional and urban projects, creating compatible information and various measurements in landscape architecture and planning along the Danube.

#### 4.1 Regional and urban development

- + **Bio corridor.** Creating a methodology for bio corridors
- + **Donaumaum.** Case study of regional and urban aspects along the Danube

#### 4.2 Development of environmentally compatible information

- + **Website BRIDGE.** [www.lifelinedanube.net](http://www.lifelinedanube.net) (under construction)
- + **Kulturschiff** Ottensheim. Cultural event on board of an old ship

#### 4.3 Landscape architecture and planning along the Danube

- + **Hot spots.** Open space planning along the Danube. The city planning departments of Linz, Wien, Krems, Bratislava and Budapest are preparing concrete initiatives for improving recreation activities and open space design projects along their riversides.
- + **'Bridge'** across river Morava. The design process has been finished. A public presentation took place in the city hall of Bratislava April 2000.
- + **Bike path** along the Danube and in the Trilateral region of A,H,SK

The city partnership created in the frame of "BRIDGE-Lifeline Danube" shall in any case create synergies and further cooperation. This project's help to break down barriers and people in the individual cities realize that they are getting closer. One problem is the difference of awareness between Western 'Europe and the countries in transition. In addition, there is the economic difference in these countries and the fear that the labour situation in Austria could change when the borders open. However, there are also wonderful examples for synergy, and people become partners. The point is to find the common denominator and to join forces. We should not dig trenches but build bridges instead. (PRUSA: 2000)

Richard ERNST was talking at the Transdisciplinarity conference in Zurich last year about the future of science and Transdisciplinarity. He was introducing himself as an 'old saucier' who wanted to give one central message to the auditorium. What we need is personal **responsibility**,

- in research
- responsibility of public teaching and
- responsibility of contributing towards the conception of a lasting global order.

We as teachers are in a very privileged situation. We have to be responsible and this needs lifelong learning and also working in the real world, organize public teaching, give lectures, go to the medias and let people understand what we are doing.

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