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**PERMACULTURE –
CONCEPTUALIZING PRODIGIOUS WISDOM
WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY**

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PERMACULTURE – CONCEPTUALIZING PRODIGIOUS WISDOM WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY

The University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences in Vienna organizes a Sokrates Erasmus Intensive programme for a “Permaculture Design Course 2012” in the Seestadt Aspern in Vienna. In close cooperation with representatives of the City municipality and local representatives students from the Danube region will work on open space concepts within the Seestadt. These concepts shall be the ground stone for an introduction of comprehensible arguments for a green network. The Project will be organised within a summer-school-design course, which will lead to disseminate best practices of permaculture design principles and patterns to the public for local open space development.

The visionary development of the city quarter Aspern in Vienna’s 22nd municipal district Donaustadt is emblematic of the future-oriented positioning of Vienna. During the next 20 years, a forward-looking city of the 21st century will emerge on the biggest area earmarked for



urban development across Vienna’s entire municipality territory, says the mayor of Vienna, Michael Häupl. The enlargement of the European Union has pushed Vienna from the geopolitical periphery into a central position with historically evolved good neighbourly relations and huge economic growth potential. In this context, Aspern has become an important strategic area for Vienna’s urban development, which is reflected in the focuses defined by

the Vienna Urban Development Plan 2005, which identifies the target area U2 Donaustadt/Aspern Airfield as one of the 13 hot spots of urban development. The integration of permacultural design concepts with the new Seestadt could be of great impact for future city planning.

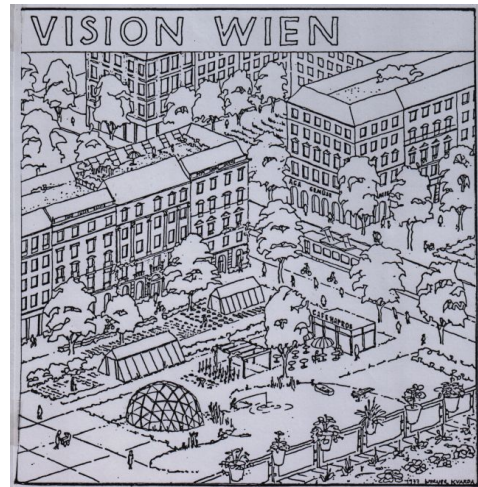
Permaculture design is a system of assembling conceptual, material and strategic components in a pattern which functions to benefit life in all its forms. It implies any form of design that minimizes environmentally destructive impacts. The aim of this design is to conceptualize prodigious wisdom and permaculture principles with the goal to minimize resource depletion, to preserve water cycles and protect soil, to establish community gardens, and to foster the urban metabolism. Permaculture is a holistic approach to human culture for conceptualizing old wisdom with modern technology. It is an attempt to integrate several disciplines, including ecology, geography, ecological gardening and agriculture, vernacular architecture, spatial planning, appropriate technology, renewable energy and many others.

The traditional university with its positivistic approach is prepared for creation of scientific knowledge. But real world problems often cut across existing disciplines. Therefore transdisciplinarity offers the prospect of generating relevant knowledge which implies cooperative research driven by social needs and through mutual learning. Transdisciplinarity is a new form of learning and problem solving involving cooperation among different parts of society (e.g. local self-government and academies) in order to meet complex social challenges.

We intend to work in a permaculture design course with students from Danube countries and Western European countries on facts and trends about ecological, technical and economic structures in the existing built up and open space areas within the new town Aspern Seestadt and its environment. This means building a network of green spaces connected to the agricul-

tural region of the Marchfeld, fostering community gardens, establishing concepts for solidarity economy by integrating existing horticulture companies, designing ecological models for vertical house greening, roof gardens, leisure activities etc.

We will transfer knowledge and demonstrate good land use practices, especially in the field of urban gardening and farming, as well as new concepts for the procedure of a master-plan in relation to responsible land-use. Finally we will elaborate several proposals for the representatives of the universities and the city council in Vienna and also for representatives of science and political administration will be elaborated. The aim of the project is to apply scientific knowledge in the public domain, by using the results of previous projects in permaculture (related to the public open space, semi-public and private green) and to implement measures of permaculture patterns permeating a green net-work. In 1977 Werner Kvarda was drawing a perspective about the future of the central city. The actuality of this drawing is given more than ever.



The project PCD-AS will be implemented due to key activities organized in 4 different phases

- Important part will be a comparison of experiences from each country. It supports sharing of knowledge from existing projects and helps network building.
- Within the first week of the project we will generate a joint model of interdisciplinary planning, to identify best practices and also practical and scientific gaps.
- Within the second week, the participants will follow the outcome of the action plan and work out in different groups various proposals for the open spaces in the Seestadt.
- Dissemination and exploitation: The learning outcome will be a comprehensive paper carried out by each group. Finally the project will end up presenting best practices of the project week and we will present it to the public. The expected outcome and project results will be summarized in a compressed version for a publication, also in the media, and further on translated into native languages, for target groups.

In the context of global change strategies for economic and social cohesion within the accession countries and between regions, we will transfer the knowledge of permaculture principles from Western European countries to our neighbouring states. The ACADEMIA DANUBIANA has been established to promote a higher degree of territorial integration. It focuses on a scientific and educational network within various disciplines and paradigms in planning and systems design.

Within the Danube Strategy¹ in priority area B6 (to preserve biodiversity, landscapes and the quality of air and soils) the Academia Danubiana is mentioned as an example of a project. "To implement the strategy for soil protection - Responsible, multifunctional use of land and soil and interlinkages to the regional development, as well as new governance tools and the "learning region" concept would be developed. The project Permaculture Design Course-Aspern Seestadt should link to the work already undertaken by the Academia Danubiana in this field.

¹ European Union **Strategy for the Danube Region**. {COM(2010) 715 final}
http://www.oerok.gv.at/fileadmin/Bilder/2.Reiter-Raum_u_Region/4.Europ-Raumentwicklung/Makroregionen/EUSDR/Docs/2010-12_EUSDR_ActionPlan_EN.pdf p.52