



Press Release

Danube region commits to sustainable mobility in tourism

15 organisations from 9 European countries along the Danube encourage the development of a Network of Destinations (“Pearls”) to offer their visitors and inhabitants the possibility to travel and explore the Danube region with sustainable means of transport.

Ulm, 15 March 2017 – Over 100 participants, representatives from ministries, national and regional organizations and municipalities attended the Kick-Off Conference of the EU-project “Transdanube.Pearls” in Belgrade on 1st March 2017. The conference was hosted by the Regional Development Agency Eastern Serbia (RARIS) and supported by the Serbian Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection. The event followed a two-day partner meeting in which 15 financing project partners from 9 countries discussed the upcoming actions to foster sustainable mobility and tourism along the Danube for inhabitants and tourists.

On the basis of a successful collaboration in the previous EU-project “Transdanube”, funded under the former South East Europe Programme and under the leadership of the Environment Agency Austria, the project partners of the new project “Transdanube.Pearls” emphasize the need to establish sustainable mobility solutions and tourist services that rely on the use of eco-friendly means of transport such as trains, busses, ships or bikes. For this purpose, a network of destinations (“Transdanube.Pearls”) committed to sustainable mobility in tourism will be developed, with the goal to improve sustainable mobility to, within and between these destinations, aiming to reduce the need for private car transport. This will create a unique selling proposition for the participating destinations, increase the attractiveness of the whole Danube region and above all, reduce the negative impact on the environment. The EU-project will last for 2,5 years and is co-funded by the Interreg – Danube Transnational Programme with an overall budget of 2.9 Million Euro. The project “Transdanube.Pearls” is bringing together a strong partnership consortium, composed of 15 financing project partners and 24 associated strategic partners, including ministries, regional and national development



agencies, cities, regions, NGOs, non-profit organisations and tourism/transport associations. The Kick-Off Conference took place in Belgrade back to back with a workshop of "THE PEP Partnership on Cycling". A shared vision and common actions addressing challenges such as the negative impact of transport on the environment and the implementation of sustainable mobility in tourism along the Danube are of high importance, as outlined by Günther Lichtblau, Head of the Department Mobility and Noise of the Environmental Agency Austria. He further argued, that it is important "to develop the Danube region as European brand". A first step was the ceremonial signing of the "Common Vision for Sustainable Mobility in Tourism", developed in the forerunner project "Transdanube" by the new project partners and stakeholders. Furthermore, good practices from the mobility and tourism sector were presented and discussed such as the success story of the "Alpine Pearls", the competences of the "Mobility Information Center Burgenland" or the positive impact of cycling tourism on local and regional economies.

During the project lifetime each destination will foster sustainable mobility in tourism through a comprehensive set of actions, such as the implementation of mobility information centers and mobility managers, the elaboration of dedicated capacity building measures for local and regional stakeholders and the improvement of information on mobility and tourism for inhabitants and tourists. In addition to that, pilot actions on bike rental, carriage, parking systems or cycling paths will be carried out in order to enhance sustainable mobility along the Danube. In summer 2017, experts from the mobility and tourism sector will travel along the Danube for 21 days using only sustainable means of transport! This tour will provide valuable inputs about the relevant touristic points of interest, the possibilities to get there with sustainable mobility services and the availability and accessibility of information on sustainable means of transport to, between and within future Pearls.



Picture 1: 15 project partner from 9 countries celebrate the official start of the EU-project "Transdanube.Pearls" © RARIS



Picture 2: The new project partners sign the “Common Vision for Sustainable Mobility in Tourism” © RARIS

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