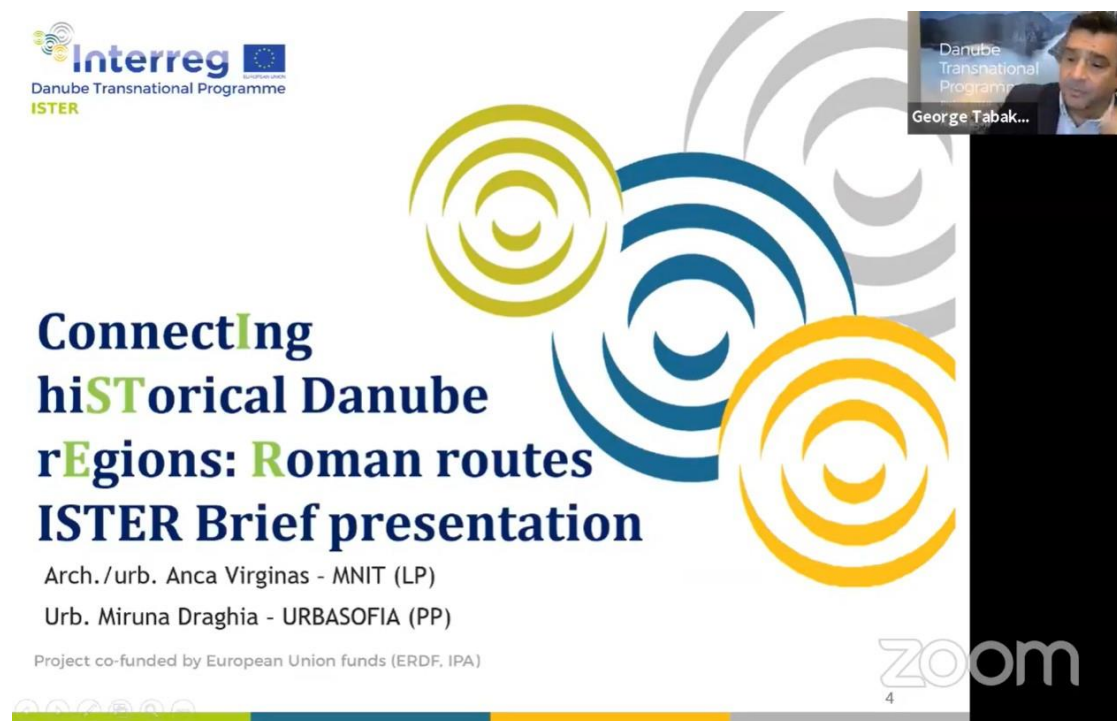


BUILDING TRANSNATIONAL BRIDGES FOR CONNECTING ROMAN ROUTES

ISTER public kick-off meeting, 17th November, 2020

The aim of the meeting, as suggested in the title, was to reach out a wider group of potential stakeholders and raise awareness about the ISTER project among potential synergic initiatives.



The image shows a Zoom meeting interface with a presentation slide. The slide features the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme ISTER logo in the top left. The main title of the slide is "ConnectIng hiSTorical Danube rEgions: Roman routes ISTER Brief presentation". Below the title, it lists "Arch./urb. Anca Virginas - MNIT (LP)" and "Urb. Miruna Draghia - URBASOFIA (PP)". At the bottom of the slide, it states "Project co-funded by European Union funds (ERDF, IPA)". The Zoom logo is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide. A video thumbnail in the top right corner shows a man, identified as George Tabakov, speaking. The slide has a decorative background of overlapping concentric circles in yellow, blue, and grey.

The online meeting took place on 17th November, when more than 100 participants gathered via Zoom to explain, understand or inform about the ISTER project. The meeting was held in two modules. During the first module the project partners and engaged with the topic authorities shed light on how in particular the ISTER project deals with the preservation and valorization of the Roman Routes heritage along the Danube river.

The event was opened by the first-module moderator George Tabakov – Chairman of Bulgaria Economic Forum - the Communication Leader of the project. Mr. Tabakov welcomed Anca Virginas – the Lead Partner of the ISTER project. Mrs. Virginas presented how the idea of the project was born and shared how interestingly she chose the name of the project. In fact, “Ister” used to be the name of the Danube river in Ancient Greece, so this completely fitted in the territorial context of the project.

The overall objectives of ISTER were further clarified by Mrs. Miruna Draghia, working for URBASOFIA, WP Leader of the project. She presented that rediscovering and reviving the ancient network of roads and settlements and designing eco-cultural corridors leverages on a few key pillars. They are as it follows - building sustainable knowledge, enhancing physical and non-physical accessibility and creating common narrative and branding strategy not only among the ISTER partners, but also inviting similar projects to join the idea of ISTER to create long-lasting collaborations and strengthening cooperation.

It was interesting for the audience to hear that the Ecomuseum Casiliano (in Rome) is an Associated Partner of the project. They involve citizens of the rediscovery of the Roman heritage via numerous digital resources, research projects and restorations.

Another keynote speaker was the former minister of culture of Romania – Ms. Csila Hegedüs, who is now President of the “Transylvania Trust” Foundation and a researcher at the “European Strategies Research” Institute in Budapest. In 2014 she made a project proposal, together with the Museum of History in Transylvania, through which to include the frontiers of the Roman Empire in Romania in the UNESCO tentative list - The Limes National Programme. Unfortunately, she stumbled upon numerous obstacles, so she sees and appreciates the ISTER project as a great opportunity for sharing the necessary tools and items in introducing Romanian heritage objectives.



Mr. Ștefan Bâlici made the transition from the territorial dimension to a more detailed dimension by briefly hinting some methods and intervention principles of approaching the conservation of material heritage with special focus on archeological sites.

As a conclusion of the first part - Felix Marcu, Director of the National Museum of Transylvanian History – Lead Partner of the project, met us with the history of the museum and took us around it in a virtual exhibition tour, entitled „Frontiers of the Roman Limes in Romania”.

As for the second module of the meeting – it went in two sections, both of which were moderated by Mr. Pietro Elisei, General Director of URBASOFIA. The first part was a panel discussion with three panel-participants, whose organizations were involved in 3 different Cultural Heritage related projects:

- Felix Marcu - Lead partner representative, ISTER project
- Anna Maria Kraiser - Lead partner representative, Living Danube Limes project
- Danilo Ceh - Lead partner representative, Archeo Danube project

Their discussion pointed out some key aspects in the field of cultural heritage preservation and rediscovering, marking them as a beneficial aim not only in the sphere of culture, but also in the social, economic and tourist development of the cities.

During the conversation they suggested relevant approaches for this aim, such as activating a cluster at local level through an approach that involves as many stakeholders as possible both from private and public fields. In the same context of shared experience and interests, they emphasized on the usefulness of exchanging good practices between cultural workers, city developers and policy makers in dedicated events. Mrs. Anna Kraiser stated, as from her cultural-related experience, that there should be set out different opportunities for generating local funds, through which the Cultural Heritage be more visible and accessible for the tourists.

Also, it was pinpointed that the involvement in Cultural Heritage related projects can lead to improvements in local legislation thus avoiding negative practices of heritage preservation.

As a conclusion of the whole meeting, during the Q&A section, it was once again highlighted that the ISTER project is not looking just for touristic development but also for the local community to have the opportunity of rediscover their history and develop their businesses, thus setting it out as a multi-aspect activity, with straightforward objectives and aims, yet which may be broaden to the field of each participant.



PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Pietro Elisei

- 1. How would you define the gap between scientific approach, practice and policy making towards the sustainable use of the Roman Routes heritage?**
- 2. How can territories (rich in Roman heritage - built assets and routes) articulate conservation/ preservation measures with future development?**